



Government of Western Australia
WA Country Health Service




Compassionate Community Connectors

Partnership project between community and health service

Professor Samar Aoun



SOUTH WEST
**Compassionate
Communities**
NETWORK



*Every person, every
family and every
community knows
what to do when
someone is caring,
dying or grieving.*

SOUTH WEST
Compassionate
Communities
NETWORK



Fig. 1 GroundBreaker communities located around Australia.

Researching Compassionate Communities in Australia:

A short-term longitudinal study.

**Debbie Horsfall, Helen Psychogios,
Holly Rankin-Smith, Niki Read, Kerrie Noonan**



THE ~~GROUND~~SWELL PROJECT





The Compassionate Communities Connectors model for end-of-life care: a community and health service partnership in Western Australia

OBJECTIVES

- To develop, implement and evaluate a model of community volunteers to support people living with advanced life limiting illness / palliative care needs
- To develop and evaluate a training program
- To assess the feasibility, acceptability and preliminary effectiveness of this community model of care.



Project anticipated outcomes

- Primary outcome

- Increase in social connectedness

using the modified Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey (mMOS-SS)

- Secondary outcomes

- Decrease in hospital utilisation
 - Decrease in caregiver support needs
 - Increase in advance care plans
 - Satisfaction with the model of care: family, connector, health service



ROLE OF CONNECTORS

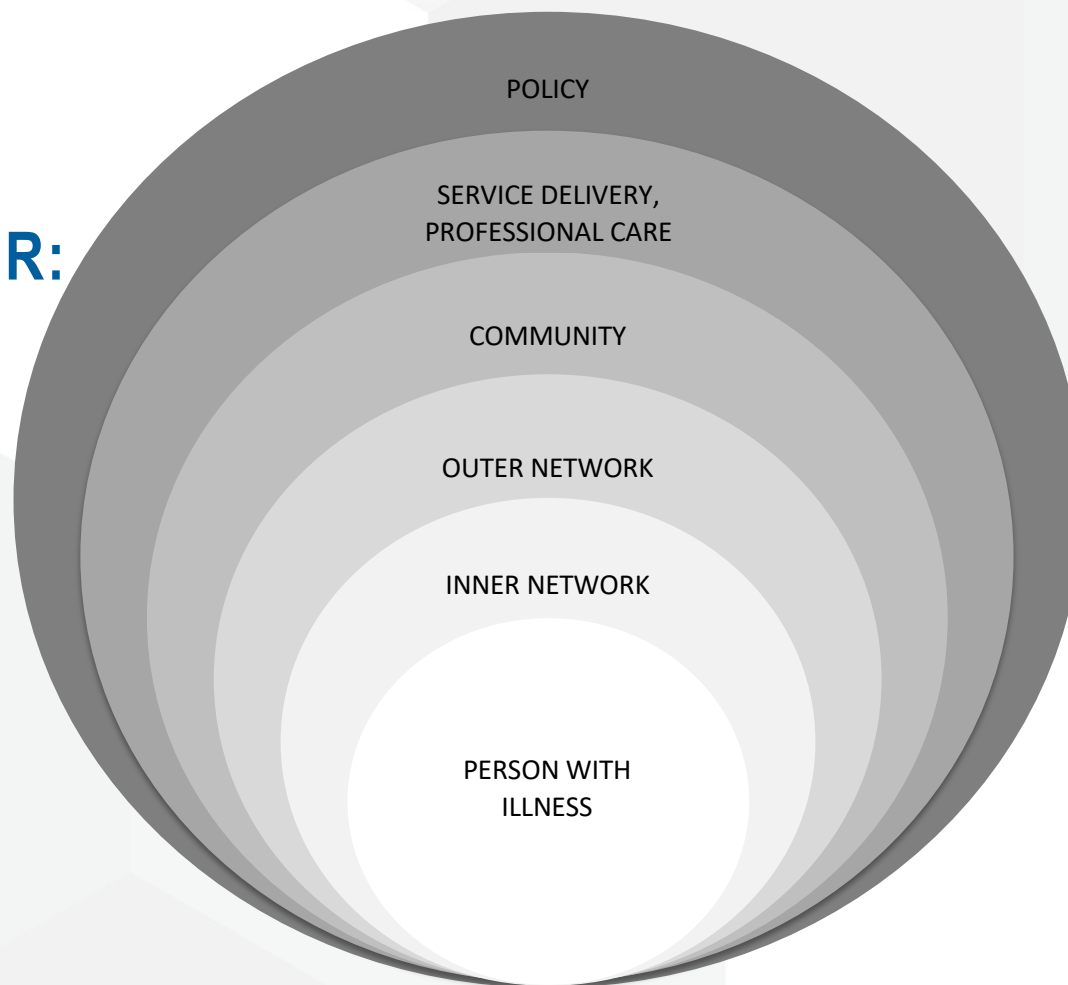
Connectors provide assistance to the person affected by advanced illness and their family by identifying the additional social and practical support they may require from within their local community and tap into formal and informal sources.



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ROLE OF CONNECTOR: ENHANCE NETWORKS AND CIRCLES OF CARE





ROLE OF CARING HELPERS

Caring Helpers can be members of the family, friends, neighbours or other people in the community who are willing and able to assist with activities such as:

walking the dog, doing the shopping, collecting a prescription, going to the library, mowing the lawn, making a snack, tidying up or sitting with a person who needs a break.



The Compassionate Communities Connectors model for end-of-life care: a community and health service partnership in Western Australia

Samar M. Aoun , Julian Abel , Bruce Rumbold, Kate Cross, Jo Moore, Piari Skeers and Luc Deliens

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Abstract

Background: There is an international drive towards increasing provision of community-led models of social and practical support for people living with advanced illness.

Aim: This feasibility project aims to develop, implement and evaluate a model of community volunteers, identified as Compassionate Communities Connectors, to support people living with advanced life limiting illnesses/palliative care needs. The aims also include the development and evaluation of a training programme for volunteers and assessment of the feasibility, acceptability and preliminary effectiveness of this model of care.

Methods: The approach seeks to map and mobilise people's personal networks of care through the Connectors enlisting Caring Helpers (community volunteers). Up to 10

Correspondence to:



CONNECTOR 2-DAY TRAINING PROGRAM AND TRAINING MANUAL

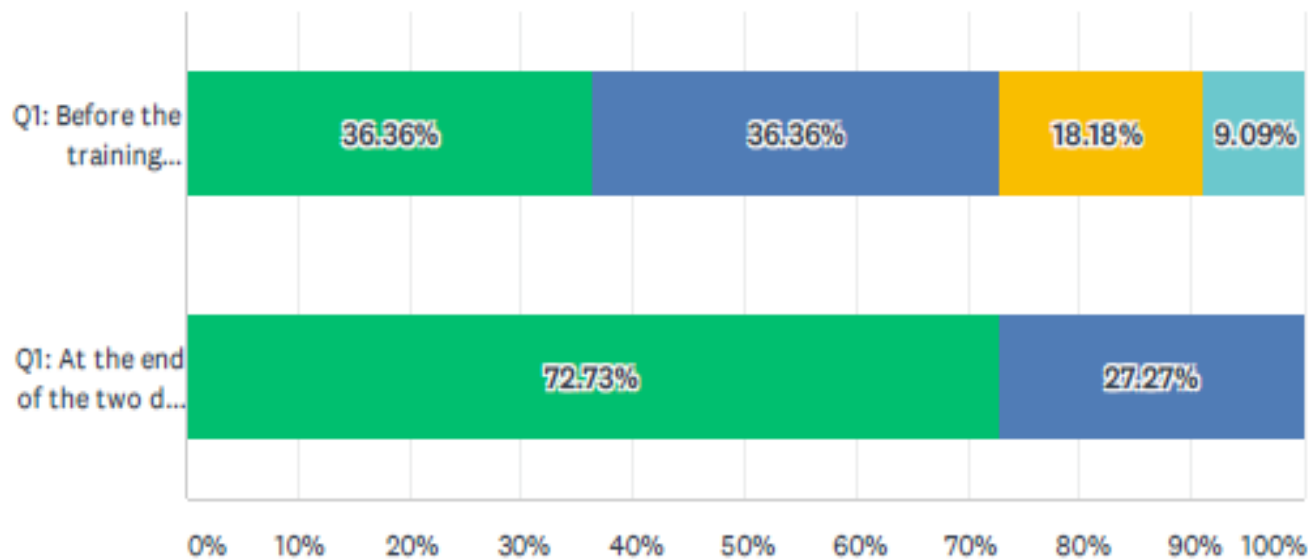
- Understanding the public health palliative care approach and Compassionate Communities.
- Understanding advanced illness and the role and capacity of the Palliative Care Team.
- Death literacy and advance care planning
- WA Country Health Service Volunteer program rules and regulations
- Communication skills and confidentiality
- Self-care, boundaries and endings
- Research protocol, process and evaluation tools



PRE AND POST TRAINING EVALUATION

Q4 Asking someone what practical and social needs they would like help with

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0



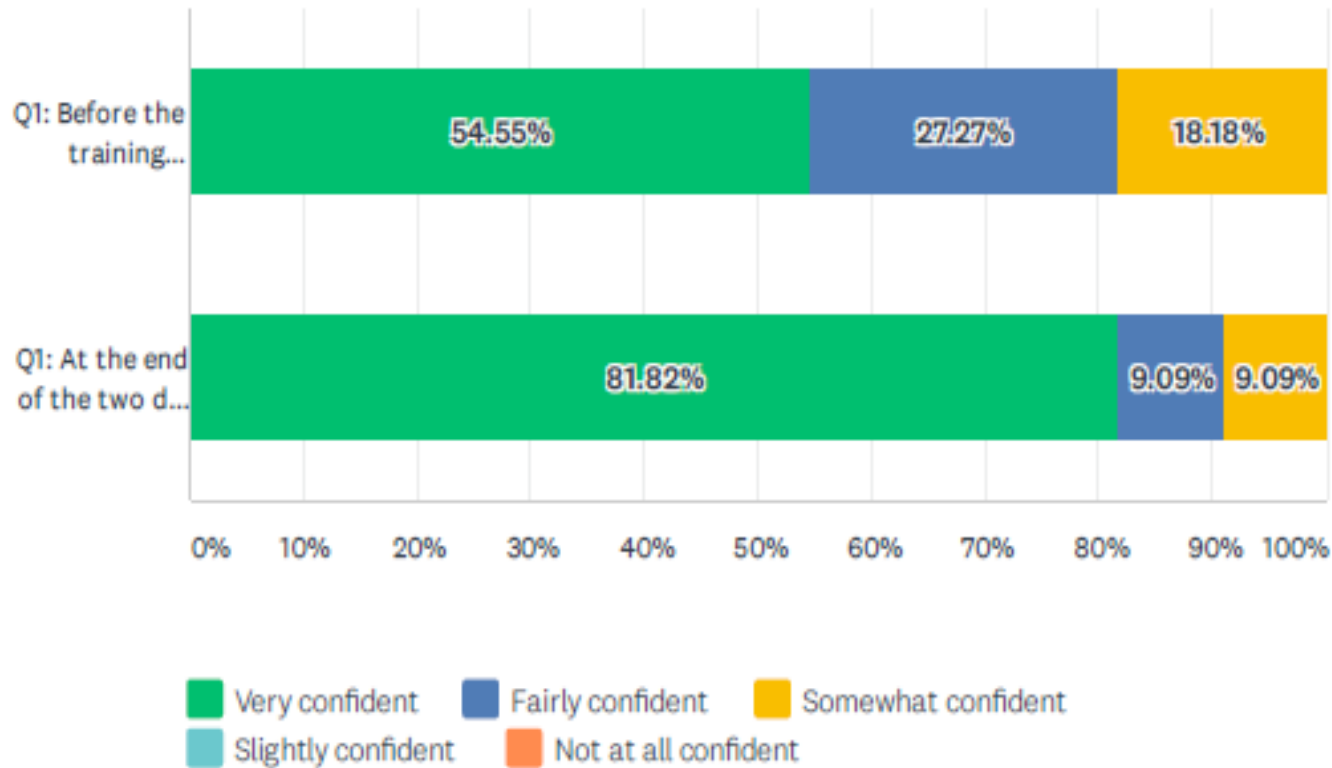
Very confident Fairly confident Somewhat confident
Slightly confident Not at all confident



PRE AND POST TRAINING EVALUATION

Q14 Listen to the concerns of the dying patient

Answered: 22 Skipped: 0





COMMENT FROM CONNECTOR AFTER TRAINING

“It was great to talk freely about death with like-minded people. The resources provided were great. Everybody is kind, caring, compassionate. Would love more training/ chats/ catch ups”.

Who is helping?
Who can you ask for help?

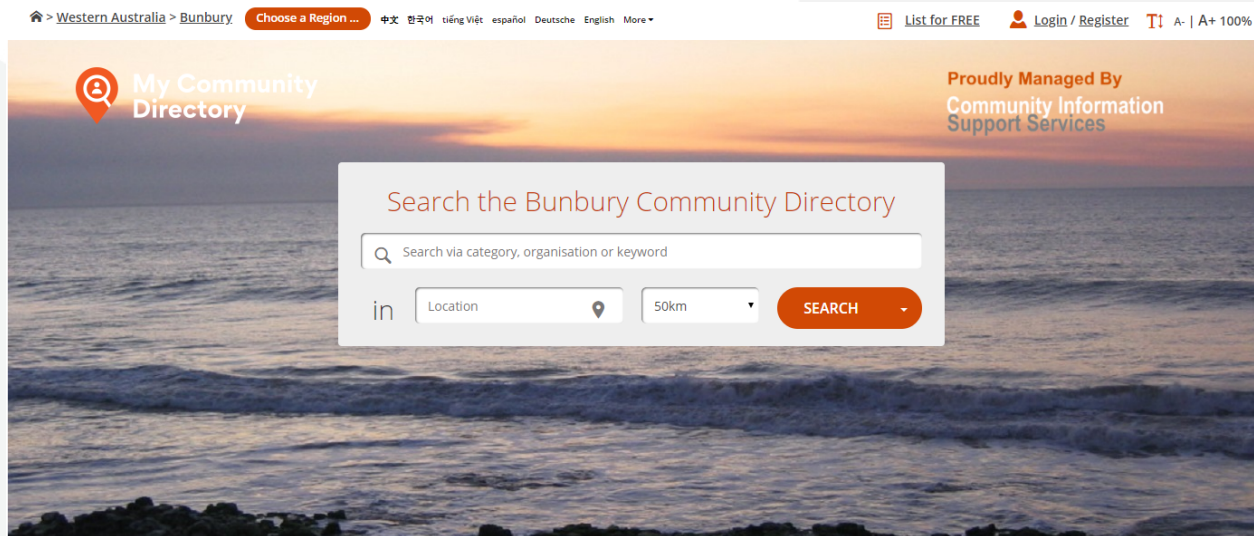




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COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

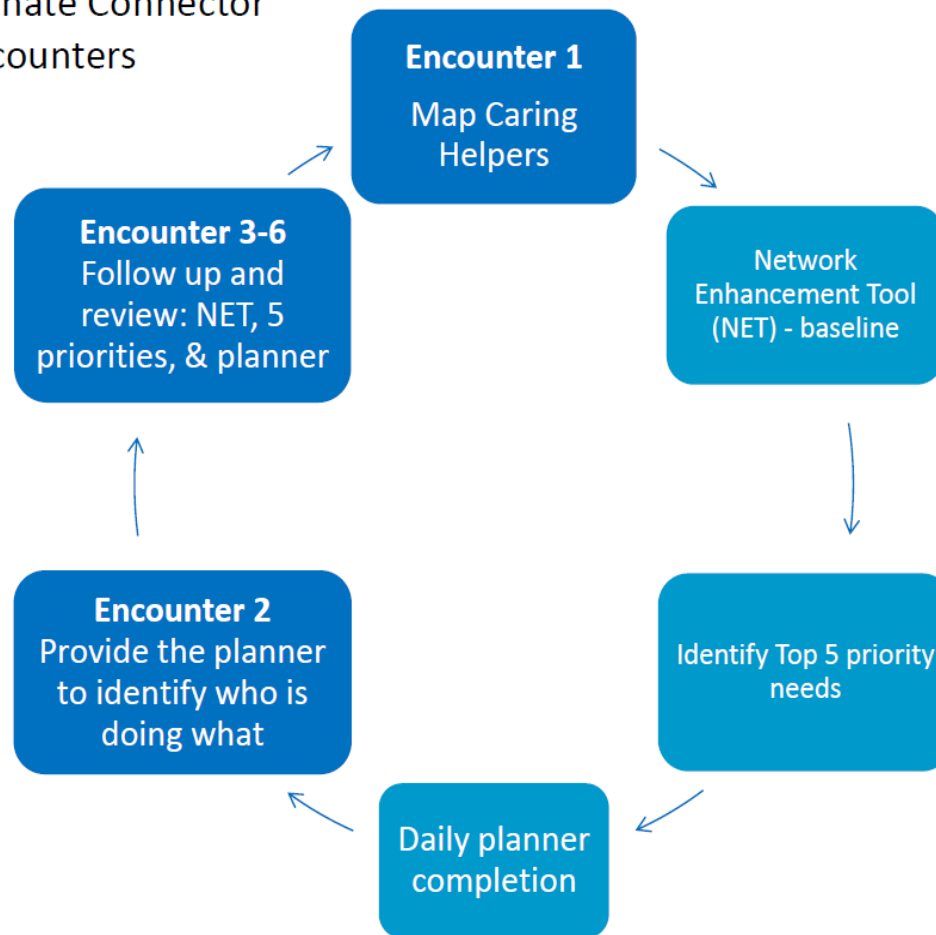


- Australians face a range of social, health and welfare challenges. Solving these requires information. However good information is hard to find. My Community Directory is the one place Australians find quality, online health and community information to meet these challenges now and in the future.



CONNECTOR 'ENCOUNTERS' OVER 12 WEEKS

Compassionate Connector
Encounters





CURRENT RECRUITMENT STATUS

- 15 community members showed interest to take up the Connector role and were interviewed.
- 11 were able to attend the two-day training program in July
- 9 are now involved in implementing the intervention
- Referrals from the palliative care service commenced in July
- First 4 months
 - **13** patients and **8** carers consented to participate



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PREPARING COMMUNITIES: RECRUITING MORE FAMILIES AND CONNECTORS



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NETWORK

Compassionate Community Connector Project

BUNBURY

Seeking volunteers and patients with advanced illness who may benefit from support.

The Compassionate Community Connector Project is about linking patients and their carers with a trained volunteer connector who will help identify extra social and practical support during a challenging time. It's about fostering more supportive communities for people nearing end of life.

The types of support given and received could include: Shopping, collecting prescriptions, transport, meals, walking/feeding a pet, writing a letter, having a cuppa and chat, hanging out the washing or support accessing formal services.

Hear more about how you can participate

Monday, December 7
From 1.30pm - 3pm
WA Country Health
Bunbury Tower - 10th Floor
Victoria St, Bunbury
Afternoon tea provided
No RSVP required. We look forward to seeing many community members attend this important information session.

Leanne O'Shea - 0407 995 978 or
compassnetworksw@gmail.com





WHO HAS PARTICIPATED SO FAR?

- Patients' average age is 68 years
- 7 female & 6 Male
- 5 patients live alone
- Primary diagnoses:
 - Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
 - Cancer
 - Heart failure
 - Neurological
- Carers' average age is 69 years.
- 5 Female & 3 Male
 - 5 Retired
 - 1 Full time Carer, not retirement age
 - 2 working



FIRST FAMILY THROUGH THE 12-WEEK CYCLE

- **Patient** – Female, 78 years with end stage COPD, on home oxygen
- **Pre-Intervention** - 3 ED presentations leading to 3 admissions Jan-Jun 2020;
- **Post-Intervention** - no ED presentations or hospital admissions since consent to participate
- **Carer** – Male, husband, 80 years with health conditions
- No friends or relatives to talk about what is on his mind
- **Network Enhanced by:**
 - Regular social visits & support
 - Craft visits
 - Animal companion



CONNECTOR ENCOUNTERS

- 6 visits to family
- 7 phone calls to family
- Supports:
 - Carer gardening support & social interaction
 - Patient card making
 - Patient social visit
 - Animal companion visits

Enabling

- Arranged air-conditioning quotes
- Arranged Home hair cut
- Sorted paperwork and found the Advance Health Directive
- Increased carer services through My Aged Care



PATIENT AND CARER FEEDBACK

- I love it when [caring helper] comes, she's my legs
- It's more about the chat than the gardening
- The garden was going to ruins and I could not fix it by myself (Carer a very passionate gardener)



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HOME CARD MAKING



I love it
when
Annette
comes, she
is my legs



CONNECTOR FEEDBACK

- “Helping people in a difficult situation connect and find support from those in the community has been a delight”
- “Being able to connect volunteers (Caring Helpers) to those in need has brought very obvious benefits to both the volunteers and the receivers”
- “The volunteers I have been able to connect with the families wanted to give and care but weren’t sure how to find folks in need”



PALLIATIVE CARE TEAM FEEDBACK

- “They are really enjoying having a Connector and the helpers”
- “She is very socially isolated and our professional service is not enough to meet her social needs so I am very happy for her that she has a consistent person to talk to”.
- “She does need to have someone to talk to about the losses she is facing with regards to her health and loss of independence but can also focus on doing something she is capable of”.
- “She had some lovely cards to show me when I last visited her, which was very positive”.

UP TO ALL OF US TO CONNECT THE DOTS

Public Health Approach to Palliative & EOL Care

ENABLERS

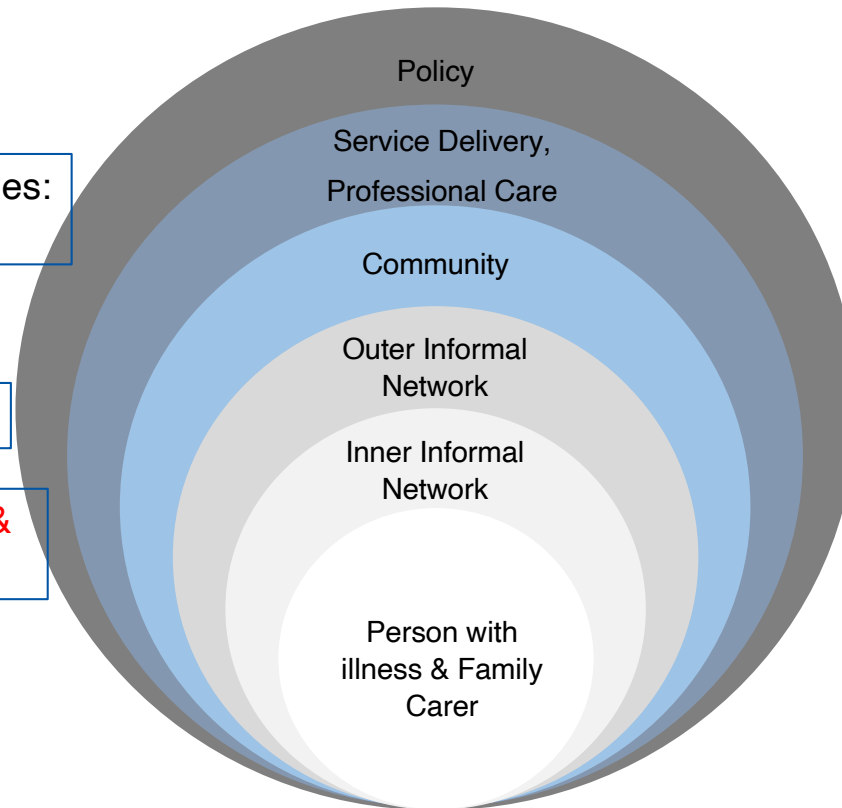
Digital and Assistive technologies:
Telehealth, Equipment

Advance Care Planning

Education & Training Programs

Compassionate Communities &
Social Network Enhancement

Not For Profit organisations
&
Other NGOs



CIRCLES OF CARE

INTEGRATION OF SERVICES

Disability Sector, NDIS

Aged Care Sector

Specialist Palliative Care

Generalist Palliative Care

Disease specific clinics

Primary Care &
Allied Health Care



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- Project Reference Group
- Participating families

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