

# Climate Change Adaptation Research Grants Program

## - Human Health Projects

### **Project title:**

Displaced twice? Investigating the impact of Queensland floods on the wellbeing and settlement of a cohort of men from refugee backgrounds living in Brisbane and Toowoomba

**Principal investigators:** Dr Ignacio Correa-Velez

**Lead organisation:** La Trobe University

### **Objectives:**

In December 2010, the first ever longitudinal study of health and settlement among refugee men (SettleMEN project) was completed. Findings for this cohort of 233 men revealed increasing levels of wellbeing after arrival in Australia, satisfaction with health services, improvement in family functioning, and greater social support. These men, however, face significant social exclusion that can seriously impact their successful integration into the Australian community; high levels of unemployment, low income, and increasing discrimination. The challenges for those men resettled in regional areas are even greater. At least 40% of the SettleMEN participants live in or close to areas affected by the floods that devastated Southeast Queensland in January 2011. As we have recent pre-disaster measures of health and settlement, this proposed follow-up study offers a rare opportunity to investigate the impact of an extreme weather disaster on a resettled refugee population.

This is a 2-year longitudinal descriptive study that uses a peer interviewer model and a mixed method approach. It builds on the success of the SettleMEN project which achieved a retention rate of 90%. An annual survey will be administered to participants over two years employing the same standardised instruments used in the SettleMEN study. Additional tools will be used to assess participants' exposure and adaptive capacity to the floods. Two focus groups will be conducted annually (n=12 each group) to assess in more detail participants' longer-term settlement and their perspectives of vulnerability and adaptive capacity to environmental disasters. Mixed effect models (GEE) will be used to analyse the quantitative data. Thematic and content analysis will guide the interpretation of the qualitative data.

The study will generate evidence based knowledge of those elements and resources that best support refugee men's longer-term settlement and their capacity to adapt successfully to extreme weather disasters.

### **Project design and methods**

x