

**Strategic Directions for the
NSW Multicultural Health
Communication Service**

2002-2007

Foreword

The NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service (Multicultural Communication) fills an important role in the NSW health system. It increases access to health services for people whose first language is not English by providing them with the same health information as the rest of the NSW population.

Strategic Directions 2003-2007 presents a coordinated approach by Multicultural Communication which will create new partnerships while consolidating those already in existence. These partnerships will be critical in the development of culturally appropriate communication strategies to improve access to information and services for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD).

This approach will mean more systematic planning for the provision of quality information in key priority health areas. The strategy will be two-pronged:

1. meeting the needs of different communities for specific information
2. providing a comprehensive coverage of topics relating to health promotion, service utilisation, health education and the management of chronic diseases and conditions in languages other than English.

It will also involve steps to increase the distribution of multilingual information throughout the health system.

The overall aim for the Service is that all people from CALD communities in NSW will have access to high quality information about:

- the use of the health care system
- the diagnosis, treatment and self-management of significant health problems
- ways to prevent illness/injury and premature death.

I endorse this document and recommend its strategies.



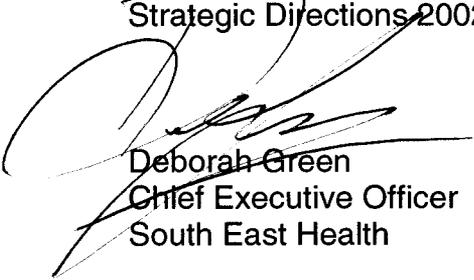
Robyn Kruk,
Director-General

Foreword

Whilst the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service (Multicultural Communication) is a state-wide service, it can only achieve its aims through a close working relationship with Area Health Services.

It is pleasing to note that this document reflects a commitment to close collaboration with Area Health Services in Multicultural Communication's work. The staff who work directly with non English speaking patients/clients utilise the resources of Multicultural Communication, and are in the best position to ensure that those patients/clients receive information about important health issues and health services. By involving Area staff in both the developmental stage of information as well as the implementation of communication strategies, Multicultural Communication will ensure that its products and resources are of most value to its consumers.

South East Health is pleased to host this important Service and I endorse its Strategic Directions 2002-2007.



Deborah Green
Chief Executive Officer
South East Health

September, 2002

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Executive Summary

The NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service (Multicultural Communication) works with health services across NSW to ensure that non English speakers have access to appropriate information about health. The service improves the access of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities to health information and services, and informs non English speakers about the health priorities of the Department of Health. Since the establishment of the Service in 1997 there have been some major achievements including:

- design and development of an innovative multilingual website in a wide range of languages
- regular production and publication of new material, together with a review system to ensure currency
- development of NSW Health's Policy on the publication of multilingual resources 'Guidelines for the Production of Multilingual Health Resources by Area Health Services, NSW Health Department and NGOs funded by NSW Health'
- establishment of partnerships with the Department of Health in Tobacco Control, Physical Activity and Injury Prevention to plan, implement and evaluate multilingual health campaigns
- provision of advice and delivery of projects to a range of Government agencies including NSW Department of Sport and Recreation, RTA, NSW Department of Community Services, NSW Cervical Screening and NSW Premier's Department.

The current plan identifies 12 priority health areas around which Multicultural Communication will focus its core business activities in the next five years. These are

Aged Care	Early Childhood	Maternity
Asthma	Family Planning	Nutrition
Cancer	Heart Disease	Physical Activity
Diabetes	Injury Prevention	Tobacco Control

The goals are to:

1. consolidate the relationship with individuals, policy units and relevant structures within the Department of Health to ensure their participation in all aspects of the work referred to in this plan.
2. create partnerships with significant NGOs to deliver communication strategies for CALD communities in NSW.
3. work with Area Health Services to improve the access of CALD communities to relevant and timely multilingual information.
4. expand strategic relationships with ethnic/non English language media and groups interested in working with ethnic media to deliver health related information to CALD communities.
5. identify and document the principles and processes that ensure best practice standards in developing communication strategies.
6. establish systems for implementing the standards developed in Goal 5
7. build the capacity of Multicultural Communication
8. provide evidence to guide and assess the Service's work.

1. Introduction

Strategic Directions for Multicultural Communication 2002-2007 sets out what the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service does and why, and who contributes to the provision of health information for non English speakers in NSW.

It begins with a history of the Service including the achievements since its inception, the rationale for this type of service, and an outline of the work undertaken in the development of this document. It is followed by a description of the priority areas for 2002-2007, and includes a list of the goals and broad strategies for realising these goals over the next five years.

The document is intended primarily for public health practitioners and health service managers within the Department of Health, Area Health Services and relevant non-government organisations. Business plans will also be developed for each financial year and annual reports will follow the terms specified in the business plan. Documents outlining the best practice models being adopted by the Service are also forthcoming (see Business Plan 2002-2003 for details).

Multicultural Communication has six full time equivalent positions including a manager, a communications officer, a systems manager and part time positions for a policy officer, a research officer, a liaison officer and an administration officer.

The Service is located on the campus of Sydney Hospital and Sydney Eye Hospital within South East Health. The Manager of the Service is responsible to a Management Steering Committee in relation to the Service's operations, and is administratively responsible to the Chief Executive Officer of South East Health via the Director of Nursing and Community Development. The composition of the Management Steering Committee reflects the state-wide focus of the service and includes Area Multicultural Coordinators, an Area Health Promotion Director, representatives from the Department of Health (Primary Health and Community Care, Health Promotion, and Information Production and Distribution) and the Director of Nursing and Community Development (South East Health). The Service also takes advice from a subcommittee (Multilingual Information Committee) that has state-wide representation from staff working in multicultural health.

Funding for the Service is provided by the Department of Health to cover infrastructure costs and to enable the service to perform core business. Additional tasks, which incur added costs are undertaken where funding is provided. Multicultural Communication also seeks opportunities to generate additional funds to enhance its services.

2. Policy Context and Rationale of the Service

2.1 Policy context

The rationale for the establishment of the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service was based on recommendations from the 1991 NSW Health Plan for a Culturally Diverse Society. That plan identified the need for the development of a co-ordinated state-wide approach to reach people who speak languages other than English, particularly those living in rural areas. The Service commenced its operations in December 1996 with a charter to ensure that non English speakers would have quality information that would allow them to make informed choices and changes for better health, and proper access to existing health facilities and services. The Service's role today is reaffirmed by *Principles for the Provision*

of Health Services to a Culturally Diverse Community (Department of Health: in production 2002), which states that “People from culturally diverse backgrounds have the right to access appropriate information about their health and acceptable, quality health services which respect and recognise their linguistic, cultural and religious needs.”

Multicultural Communication has become the central point for the collection and exchange of multilingual health resources, and the Service’s website provides shared access across the state to these resources.

2.2 Ongoing needs in a multicultural society

Almost 30% of the population of NSW was born overseas, over a quarter from non English speaking countries. People of non English speaking background have migrated from over 100 different countries. A language other than English is spoken at home by 24.12% of people over the age of 5, but many of these have limited English language proficiency with 15% reporting that they spoke English ‘not well’ or ‘not at all’ (2001 Australian Census).

In responding to this linguistic and cultural diversity, Multicultural Communication is obliged to set priorities for delivering information as it would not be possible to respond to all the needs in the CALD communities. The criteria for establishing priorities are:

- the expressed needs of the health system to provide services to particular groups
- specific health issues of particular language groups
- financial resources
- availability of health workers to deliver the resources
- English language proficiency
- population size
- recency of arrival.

Health literacy can be defined as the cognitive and social skills which determine the motivation and ability of individuals to gain access, to understand and to use information in ways that promote and maintain their health. Given that English is the language of mainstream service provision, those individuals with limited proficiency in English are not able to attain optimal health literacy without additional support. By providing multilingual resources Multicultural Communication contributes towards improved health literacy for CALD communities, through enhancing communication between health providers and their clients. Clients who prefer to speak English will have a valuable reference in their own language, and will be able to share the information with carers or family members, those who are not proficient in English can take the resource away for reinforcement after the consultation.

The Service also facilitates discourse around health through working directly with CALD communities. Campaigns undertaken for NSW Health make use of a whole range of networks or groups, both formal and informal, to reach non English speakers. Multicultural Communication works with ethno-specific community and welfare organisations and community media outlets to deliver health-promoting information through such channels as:

- Churches
- Community television
- Ethnic organisations
- Language schools
- Migrant service organisations
- Newspapers
- Radio

By using established networks to target individuals within a community, we seek to develop strategies that encourage, reinforce and assist individuals to make use of the information provided. The ideal is a campaign that continues to build within a community.

3. Achievements

3.1 Website

The Service has established and maintains a unique website containing over 450 publications covering 33 subjects in 45 languages (including English) which can be accessed through both the intranet and the Internet. The website was selected in July 2002 as one of the 26 most prestigious sites in the NSW government and the Service was invited to present a case study in the eGovernment First Conference at Technology Park in Sydney.

During the last three years Multicultural Communication has added to the web 240 multilingual publications produced by other services. These include Area Health Services, clinics and hospitals, sections of the Department of Health, non-government organisations (NGOs) and other State government departments.

All publications on the web have been reviewed for their accuracy and a system for periodic reviews is in place. As a result of the first review, 98 publications were removed from the web.

In 2000 the website was linked to a fax back service for those without access to the net.

Use of the website on both intranet and Internet sites has continued to increase since the creation of the site. In the six months preceding the development of this plan, hits on the intranet site increased from 18,340 to 27,749 and the Internet from 118,901 to 208,526.

Figure 1 Internet hits 2002

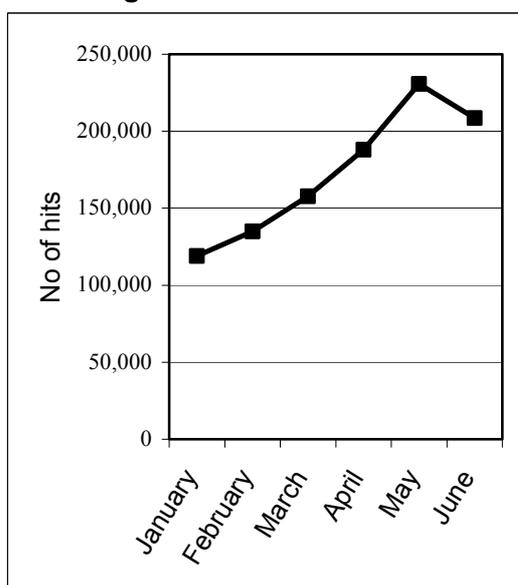
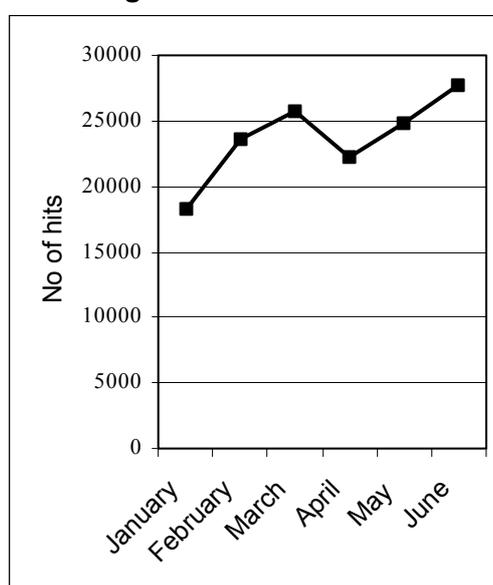


Figure 2 Intranet hits 2002



3.2 Multilingual Publications

Multicultural Communication has regularly produced and published new material under the fact sheet program (formerly known as Better Health Columns). In addition the Service has produced major publications on particular topics of need, often in conjunction with other organisations including the Department of Health. The following were all produced and published on the Service's intranet and internet sites:

- 159 fact sheets in 16 or more languages
- 17 special publications funded by the Department of Health
- 221 publications by Area Health Services and other agencies

During the period of the last strategic plan the Service developed an ongoing review system to ensure the accuracy and currency of all publications.

3.3 Policy and protocols

The Service has developed and promoted a Policy for NSW Health (*Guidelines for the Production of Multilingual Health Resources by Area Health Services, NSW Health Department and NGOs Funded by NSW Health*), to ensure that appropriate resources produced in any Area Health Service will be shared across the state, and therefore maximise the benefit to CALD communities while reducing duplication.

It has also developed and promoted guidelines and protocols related to the production of translations, ways to develop multilingual texts and guidelines for checking translations.

3.4 Communication campaigns

In collaboration with the Department of Health, Multicultural Communication planned and implemented the multilingual component of the following campaigns:

- Food safety 1997
- Smoke alarm 1998
- Falls prevention 2000-2
- Active Australia 1998-2001
- Gentle exercise 2000
- Recruitment of bilingual fitness leaders 1999-2000
- World No Tobacco Day 2001-2002
- New Year's Eve 1999
- Nursing recruitment 2000

3.5 Consultancy work for other agencies

Multicultural Communication has provided advice to and delivered projects for a range of Government agencies including:

- Department of Sport and Recreation - Water Safety 2001
- NSW Cervical Screening communication strategy 1999
- Department of Community Services child protection resources 1999
- NSW Refugee Health Service, Health Information Program, radio segments 1998, 2000

3.6 Research

Initiated both by Multicultural Communication and on contract to other agencies the following research was conducted:

- Food safety focus group research 1997
- Arabic and Khmer media utilisation surveys 1998 and 1999
- Child restraint focus group studies for RTA 1998
- Kids Safe Survey 1998
- Breastscreen focus group research 1999
- NSW Cervical Screening survey evaluation 1999
- Assistance with NSW Health Survey 1997-2002
- Families First Multicultural Project (SWSAHS) 1999-2000
- Central Sydney Chinese survey 2000
- Hurstville Chinese smoking survey 2001
- Smoke free legislation dining survey 2001
- Literature review on early parenting programs Women's Health (SESAHS)
- Cultural awareness training – evaluation (SWSAHS) 2002

4. Development of the Plan

4.1 Consultations

Directors of Health Promotion and Women's Health were consulted via a mail questionnaire to assess their familiarity with our current operations and to canvass ideas on the best ways to address the communication needs of non English speakers. The survey revealed a high level of support for work undertaken by Multicultural Communication. The importance of the Service's role beyond producing translated resources was recognised by some of the Health Promotion Directors. The majority of those surveyed regarded multilingual resources as essential tools for health practitioners in health promotion and clinical practice. Suggestions with respect to future resource development included:

- requests that resources be written in collaboration with CALD communities to ensure they are culturally meaningful,
- comments reflecting the need to cater for low literacy rates in certain communities
- a request for translated text to be published so that it can be used in other formats
- the need to continue to address duplication that occurs with production of many resources was highlighted as an important role
- engagement with the Divisions of GPs was mentioned as a valuable focus.
- a key issue raised by these managers was the lack of web access for many hospital and community staff.

The Health Care Interpreter Service Managers were consulted in their state-wide meeting and they endorsed the directions being proposed for the next five years. The Multilingual Information Committee and the Managers of Multicultural Health and state-wide services were invited to comment on the draft plan and their comments have been incorporated.

4.2 Planning

Core business for Multicultural Communication includes:

- looking after the state-wide communication needs of health workers with CALD patients, clients and communities
- production of resources with state-wide applicability and distribution
- providing advice on communication strategies
- facilitating distribution across the state through new technologies
- collecting resources, acting as a clearing house for multilingual resources
- promoting communication strategies for CALD communities to NGOs
- seeking opportunities for the development of communication tools for CALD communities, utilising other government departments, NGOs or Area Health Services
- providing consultancy services for communication with CALD communities on health related issues across NSW government.

To consolidate this core business, this plan will concentrate on:

- identifying partnerships and organisational approaches
- focusing on what Multicultural Communication can do to ensure that there is a sustainable system to ensure that all CALD patients, clients and communities receive high quality information.
- continuing to raise the profile of the service
- continuing work on improving communication strategies with CALD communities
- being included as part of the debate on health directions
- becoming more closely integrated with key policy areas within the Department of Health

5. Priority Health Areas

For 2002-2007 Multicultural Communication has chosen strategic directions that concur with public health priorities, as well as significant life stages or events that involve health service utilisation and chronic diseases. More specifically the priority health issues are:

Aged Care	Heart Disease
Asthma	Injury Prevention
Cancer	Maternity
Diabetes	Nutrition
Early Childhood	Physical Activity
Family Planning	Tobacco Control

Mental health, drugs and alcohol, HIV and sexual health and cervical screening were not considered for inclusion in this plan as there are peak organisations in Health that have responsibility for coordinating communication around these issues for people from CALD communities.

For each of the identified priorities, the development of partnerships between Multicultural Communication, health service staff and members of CALD communities will be the leading strategy. This process will involve consultation with health workers and key community representatives to ensure high quality evidence-based information is developed. The information must correspond to the information and advice clients receive from their health professional while at the same time being both culturally appropriate and relevant.

Some topics, such as nutrition or child protection, need to accommodate specific cultural practices, beliefs and knowledge of individual communities and these topics will require resources developed ethno-specifically. Other topics or the special needs of some communities will require the development of alternate communication strategies to the written multilingual resource, e.g. audio/visual resources, media campaigns, community education using bilingual workers. To respond to these types of needs Multicultural Communication will wherever possible work in partnerships with key staff at the Department of Health, Area Health Services, and major NGOs to develop the appropriate communication strategy.

Multicultural Communication will continue producing generic publications about the following types of issues - legislation, health services, new knowledge, medical tests and procedures, and information relating to the management of some health conditions.

6. The Strategic Goals 2002-2007

Goal 1 Work with Area Health Services to improve the access of CALD communities to relevant and timely multilingual information

Multicultural Communication would like to work with both multicultural health workers and mainstream health services staff on identifying and developing communication strategies to respond to the needs of Area Health Service staff and their clients. This approach is aimed at linking Multicultural Communication's production of multilingual resources more closely with both the needs of health staff to provide information for their non English speaking staff, and the perspectives of the CALD communities for whom these communication strategies are being developed. These partnerships will enable Multicultural Communication to be better informed of communication issues.

Multicultural Communication will bring to these partnerships expertise in needs assessment, multilingual resource development and evaluation. The Service also has a modest budget for producing resources. Multicultural Communication relies on health staff contributing medical expertise and where possible engaging with representatives from CALD communities to identify their needs. From ethnic health staff we will seek comments on the cultural relevance of information produced. For each priority issue, Multicultural Communication aims to establish a partnership. Information gained and the communication solutions developed will be shared.

Given the modest budget for responding to communication needs, a key role for the Service is alerting other lead agencies in health, including the Department of Health, about resource requirements and pursuing opportunities to attract alternative sources of funding.

Multicultural Communication is also interested in developing partnerships with Area Health Service staff in order to improve access to existing resources by both staff and their clients, and monitoring the use of these resources.

Objectives	Outcomes
1.1 Initiate partnerships with Area Health Services staff to review the communication strategies for CALD communities in relation to the priority health issues identified in this plan.	1.1 Communication strategies are identified for each of the priority issues in this plan.
1.2 Advocate for the development of communication strategies in response to the needs identified in 1.1	1.2 Resources committed for communication strategies.
1.3 Produce multilingual resources in accordance with the Fact Sheet budget and additional funding provided	1.3 At least 15 resources produced annually
1.4 Liaise with Area Health Service staff (including bilingual health workers) to obtain cultural information relating to health issues being addressed.	1.4 Multilingual publications being produced by Multicultural Communication are culturally relevant and appropriate.
1.5 Improve the distribution of multilingual resources to Area Health Service staff	1.5 Increased number of publications distributed by health workers in Area Health Services
1.6 Engage Area Health Services further in the provision of information in languages other than English	1.6 Increased number of health workers distributing multilingual resources

Goal 2 Consolidate the relationship with individuals, policy units and relevant structures within the Department of Health to ensure their participation in all aspects of the work referred to in this plan.

This consolidation will be focussed around two issues:

- improving the process for development and approval of multilingual publications
- identifying opportunities for Multicultural Communication to be involved in the development of communication strategies.

Objectives	Outcomes
2.1 Expand the number of policy and service areas with whom Multicultural Communication has established working partnerships.	2.1 An increase in the number of service or policy areas within the Department of Health with whom Multicultural Communication has a working relationship to include those units responsible for the priority health issues identified in this document.
2.2 Improve process for Departmental involvement in reviewing communication strategies on key priorities and approval of multilingual resources.	2.2 Timelines in the approval and review processes for multilingual resources are adhered to.
2.3 Seek additional funding for priorities identified from the work undertaken in the partnerships with Area Health Services and non-government organisations.	2.3 Funding attracted to address priorities identified by Area Health Services and NGOs.
2.4 Organise the multilingual component of state-wide health promotion and health communication campaigns in accordance with the funding provided by the Department of Health.	2.4 Campaigns are implemented as requested by the Department of Health.

Goal 3 Create partnerships with significant NGOs to deliver communication strategies for CALD communities in NSW

Multicultural Communication will engage NGOs with specialist knowledge in joint projects to address the priority health issues identified in this plan. Multicultural Communication will bring to these projects the framework and specialist knowledge for developing and distributing multilingual resources. It is envisaged that NGOs will provide high quality information to underpin the development of any multilingual resource. Funding for the development of resources will be negotiated on a case by case basis depending on the communication solutions proposed.

Objectives	Outcomes
3.1 Increase the commitment from major NGOs to the provision of information/ education in languages other than English.	3.1 An increase in the number of NGOs with which Multicultural Communication has worked in partnership to provide health information in languages other than English.

Goal 4 Expand strategic relationships with ethnic/non English language media and groups interested in working with ethnic media to deliver health related information to CALD communities

This is a major strand of the Service's work involving regular liaison with electronic and print outlets to increase the coverage of health issues. These contacts will involve:

- the promotion of health information available in languages other than English on Multicultural Communication's website to SBS and other significant community broadcasters and newspapers.
- the continued provision of health information to selected ethnic newspapers in accordance with our Fact Sheet Program.
- management of the multilingual component of state-wide campaigns

Objectives	Outcomes
4.1 Develop and trial strategies to advocate for an increase in health related issues to ethnic media	4.1 Increased media discussion and delivery of health related messages
4.2 Continue/increase the provision of health information in the ethnic press.	4.2 Increase in the number of non- English language media agencies directly receiving multilingual health information from Multicultural Communication

Goal 5 Identify and document the principles and processes which ensure best practice standards in developing communication strategies

The documents proposed below will be an important communication tool for those both inside and outside the service. They will also provide the basis for ongoing discussion and review of the work undertaken by the service.

Objectives	Outcomes
5.1 Establish benchmarks against which the work undertaken by the Service will be evaluated	5.1 Communication strategies developed can be demonstrated to be of a high quality
5.2 Contribute to knowledge about excellence in communication	5.2 Information about communication strategies is widely available

Goal 6 Build the capacity of Multicultural Communication

Pivotal to improving the quality and capacity of the Service's work is the external project work, the website development, staff training, and the guidance provided by key personnel in the health system.

Objectives	Outcomes
6.1 Attract consultancy assignments from other government departments that will either increase the knowledge and skills of staff or add resources to the Service	6.1 Multicultural Communication has an increased number of financial resources available for its core business
6.2 Develop partnerships with other government departments or academic bodies that increase the knowledge and skill of staff or facilitate the goals of the service	6.2 Communication strategies for CALD communities in relation to health undertaken by the NSW government are informed by the shared expertise and knowledge from both Multicultural Communication and academia.
6.3 Maintain and increase the effectiveness of the Service's website	6.3 Increased number of multilingual resources downloaded from the intranet and internet
6.4 Increase the skill level of the Service	6.4 Multicultural Communication has a highly trained and effective team
6.5 Ensure that the Service's work is guided by expert advice on a formalised basis	6.5 Multicultural Communication receives regular information and advice
6.6 Provide the infrastructure necessary for the Service to run efficiently	6.6 All administrative procedures are conducted in accordance with Area Health Service protocols

Goal 7 To provide evidence to guide and assess the Service's work

The key focus of evaluation will be to provide information to guide future activity with respect to the most appropriate communication strategies for specific communities, and the effectiveness or utilisation of multilingual resources.

Objectives	Outcomes
7.1 Develop profiles of the individual communication needs for selected CALD communities in NSW. These profiles will identify the best access points for each community.	7.1 The selection of resource formats for individual communities is based on knowledge of the communities.
7.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of health communication strategies/resources developed by Multicultural Communication.	7.2 A sample of the resources produced by Multicultural Communication is tested for their effectiveness with their target audience.
7.3 Monitor the distribution and promotion of multilingual resources across Area Health Services	7.3 Improved distribution and promotion of multilingual information.
7.4 Develop mechanisms for monitoring the utilisation of multilingual resources by health services staff.	7.4 Data is available to describe the utilisation of multilingual resources by health services staff