

CCOEI 2018 Excellence Award

Gitta Clayton.

Director, The Hope Project. Community Engagement Coordinator, Croydon Hills Baptist Church. Coordinator, Maroondah Winter Shelter



Gitta has been employed within the migrant and refugee field for almost 20 years. As the daughter of migrant parents from East Germany, she has experienced what life can be like growing up with parents from overseas who could not speak English and had to learn the Australian way of life.

Gitta was employed with AMES Australia for 18 years managing the Volunteer Tutor Program in North East Melbourne. She had the pleasure of meeting over 1800 dedicated volunteers in that time and the privilege of meeting many newly arrived migrants and refugees.

Gitta is a Director of The Hope Project, a charity supporting Karen refugees on the Thai/Burma border and she has made several trips to the area where she has met the families of many of the Karen who have settled in Australia.

As the Community Engagement Coordinator at Croydon Hills Baptist Church the diverse role includes providing support and advocacy to the local Karen community, supporting the playgroups, Men's Shed and more recently, coordinating the Maroondah Winter Shelter.

Gitta has been the mainstay of many working groups ensuring migrant and refugee participation and successful settlement in Australia. She has inspired community workers and services alike and helped to raise awareness of gaps and barriers. Gitta contributed to The Refugee Celebration 2014, The Refugee Welcome Celebration 2015, The CCOEI Refugee Health Forum in 2016, Family Violence and Youth Forums. In addition the *Together in Harmony* event in March 2018 which was short listed for a HART Award. Gitta is well respected for her decisive and inspiring contributions of excellence to migrant and refugee services in the Eastern Region. The CCOEI Committee of Management congratulates Gitta on her nomination for this well-deserved award.



**Gitta Clayton (left)
and
Jasmina Mulugeta**

Photo by Heather Cosgriff