



Coming Out/Coming Together:

a training program for CaLD people with disabilities, their families and carers.

November 2005

A project funded by the Office of Multicultural Interests

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Introduction

Coming Out/Coming Together was a project funded by the Office of Multicultural Affairs. The main aim of the project was:

The development, implementation and evaluation of a community awareness program that addresses the cultural and disability barriers of people with disabilities from CaLD backgrounds in accessing available disability and community support services.

The objectives of the project were to:

- Facilitate a greater awareness of disability and related services with the client group,
- Raise awareness of CaLD people with disabilities and their carers/families and communities,
- Enable consumer participation and empowerment and to enhance self determination - through the involvement of people with disabilities in facilitating the design and delivery of the awareness-raising program, and
- Enable EDAC staff and the trainee community Support Workers to provide workshops with consumers.

Background to the project

It has long been recognised in the literature and by workers in the field that there is little reliable data on the use of disability services and facilities by people with disabilities and their families/carers from CaLD backgrounds.¹ However, it has been suggested that although 15.4% of people with disabilities are from CaLD backgrounds², only 4.3% of these people participated in disability services and 'were less likely to report unmet needs or seek assistance'. In Western Australia, the Disability Services Commission reported that in 2001/2002 only 2% of its clients were from non-English speaking background countries.³

Some of the reasons given for the low utilisation of services were identified as:

- *A lack of culturally appropriate and translated information*
- *Cultural factors such as stigma and different attitudes towards disability*

¹ . See 'National Disability Advocacy Program Review Report' in *On the Sidelines*, 2000, AGPS, Canberra. p.24.

² . Cited in EDAC, *Supporting CaLD Carers: The service needs of culturally and linguistically diverse carers of people with disabilities*, 2003, EDAC, Perth. p. 13.

³ . EDAC, *Supporting CaLD Carers: The service needs of culturally and linguistically diverse carers of people with disabilities*, 2003, EDAC, Perth. p. 14.

- *Language barriers*
- *Lack of culturally responsive services and staff*
- *Inconsistent data collection, and*
- *Insufficient resource allocation for CaLD families⁴*

This project was designed to overcome some of these barriers by providing CaLD people with disabilities, their families and/or carers with relevant information on disability services in a culturally and linguistically appropriate form and their rights in accessing such services. It also offers the opportunity to explore attitudes to disability in their own cultural communities and in Australia.

This allows people CaLD people with disabilities and their families/carers to understand the basis on which policies are designed and the services and programs which emerge from them. With this understanding, they are in a better position to take access the services available to them and to reduce the degree of cultural divergence towards disability and disability services.

Methodology

The main focus of this project was to introduce an awareness of disability services to CaLD people with disabilities and their families/carers and to include community members in its development and presentation. To realise this, a program of workshops in two stages was implemented.

The aim of the first workshop was to train selected community members in planning, promoting and presenting workshops to their communities in collaboration with EDAC training staff. The second phase of the project was the delivery of information dissemination workshops to CaLD people with disabilities and their families/carers from those select communities in partnership with EDAC training staff.

The number of communities identified to receive these workshops was limited by time and funding constraints.

⁴ . DSC, 'Addressing the Needs of Ethnic People with Disabilities', 1999, Disability Services Commission (Internal Report), Perth.

Implementation

Five community groups were identified as benefiting from awareness raising and information dissemination workshops. Three groups were acknowledged as having particular needs which might not be being met in the disability area- African communities. Arabic speaking communities and the Vietnamese community. Prospective Community Facilitators from these communities were recruited from the Support Worker Training Program managed and organised by EDAC and conducted by TAFE, through agencies such as ASSeTTs and through contact with the Presidents of these communities.

The Community Facilitators for the other two community groups - Macedonian and South East Asian communities - were identified through the Support Worker Training Program (TAFE) and people known to EDAC.

In total, ten people were contacted by phone with follow-up letters (see Appendix 1a) inviting them to take part in the program. This resulted in eight people taking part in the *Train the Trainer* workshop.

Training the Community Facilitators. (see Appendix 1)

A *Training the Trainer* workshop for Community Facilitators was held on the 29 May 2005 at EDAC. The workshop ran from 10 am to 2.30 pm and was conducted by two EDACs staff members.

The general purpose of this workshop was to assist participants in understanding the content of workshops to be delivered to the community and to inform them of their role in the project. The workshop was delivered using experiential techniques, group discussion and information dissemination and covered the following issues;

- Understanding disabilities
 - Definitions of disability (information)
 - Cultural context of disability for each participant (small group exercise)
 - Disability in the Australian context (small group exercise)
 - How to move cultural attitudes towards positive perceptions of disability (group exercise)
- Rights and legislative obligations (information)

- Service provision in Australia (information)
 - State and federal agencies
 - Accessing services
 - Advocacy and complaint mechanisms
- Workshopping in your communities (discussion)
 - Aims of community workshops
 - Outline for community workshop
 - Your role and EDACs role in running the workshops
 - Ideas for getting people involved in workshops

Following this workshop, a timeline was devised for the delivery of community workshops, in collaboration with the Community Facilitators. Although this was changed several times, depending on the availability of the Facilitators, the general schedule finally resulted in:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| • Macedonian community | 21 June |
| • African communities (1) | 9 July |
| • Arabic speaking communities | 26 July |
| • Vietnamese community | 17 October |
| • South east Asian communities | 19 October |
| • African communities (2) | 19 November |

Community workshops (See Appendix 2)

A total number of 55 CaLD people with disabilities and their families/carers attended the community workshops. Interest and attendance ranged from a full workshop to the cancellation of one.

The breakdown of attendance was as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| • Macedonian community | cancelled |
| • African communities (1) | 12 |
| • Arabic speaking communities | 6 |
| • Vietnamese community | 19 |
| • South east Asian communities | 13 |
| • African communities (2) | 5 |
| Total | 55 |

The workshop planned for the Macedonian community was cancelled because of a lack of interest by community members, despite two months of planning and promotion by the two Community Facilitators and the EDAC training officer.

The Community Facilitators were essential in assisting in planning each workshop, identifying an appropriate venue, suggesting catering options and promoting the workshops within their communities. Whilst most of the originally trained Community Facilitators continued with the project until their workshops had been completed, there were two instances where Facilitators were replaced due to their other commitments. These Facilitator's workshops were at the end of the project program, which suggests that the time period between training and involvement with planning and running their workshops was too long and momentum had been lost. In both instances the community workshops went ahead with the assistance of substitute Facilitators.

Where possible, two planning meetings were held with each Community Facilitator. An agreed time plan and task list was held by the Facilitator and the EDAC trainer. These meetings were supported with on-going contact by phone and emails. The tasks of promotion, venue and catering and workshop presentation differed between communities.

Promotion.

The promotion of the workshop to community members was achieved in a variety of ways. To start, a flyer was developed which, in one case, was translated into the community language. Unfortunately, the workshop that this flyer was directed towards had to be cancelled for lack of participants. This was probably because flyers were assumed to work via public locations such as shop windows, doctors' surgeries, etc. It was found that emailing the fliers to individuals was a far more effective method of promotion.

An even more effective method of promotion was personal contact with known CaLD people with disabilities and their families, and with agency workers who personally contacted their clients and recommended their participation in the community workshop.

Another form of promotion included using radio programs such as Mosaic and specific ethnic radio programs. It is not known how effective this might have been although none of the participants canvassed mentioned hearing about the workshops on radio broadcasts.

Venue

A variety of venues were used for the workshops, each suggested as the most suitable and appropriate for the community concerned. In some cases, a venue in a central location was advised, in other a location familiar to participants was

suggested and, in another, a venue with access to easy catering was recommended. The following venues were used.

- African communities (1) MSC seminar room, North Perth
- Arabic speaking communities Heart Foundation, Subiaco
- Vietnamese community Herb Graham Centre, Mirrabooka
- South east Asian communities Cambridge Forum, Wembley
- African communities (2) MSC seminar room, North Perth

Catering

Catering for lunch was also planned to meet the dietary and social requirements of each community. Hallal food was ordered for the Arabic speaking and African community workshops whilst community members catered for the Vietnamese workshop. The South East Asian group had a choice of food in an Asian food hall. Morning tea was organised by the EDAC trainer.

Workshop presentation.

In all workshops, except for the South East Asian communities' workshop, interpreting was required. The Community Facilitator undertook this task. In one African workshop the Facilitator was required to interpret in two languages, Swahili and French. The Facilitators overall performed this task very well.

Two guest speakers were invited to participate in the presentation of various workshops. The Vietnamese workshop had the benefit of a Vietnamese-speaking guest speaker who was able to explain the aspects of his service - Centrelink - and answer questions, which were of immense help and interest to the participants. This guest also spoke and answered questions in English at the South East Asian communities' workshop. A training officer from the Equal Opportunities Commission was also invited to participate in the workshop presentations to one African workshop and the Arabic-speaking communities workshop. He spoke on human rights, discrimination and equal opportunity in Western Australia and was available to answer questions.

Over the course of the delivery of the workshops it was crucial to develop a flexible approach to each, adjusting the content and presentation to suit the community and their language needs. For example, it was necessary to reduce the amount of information delivered in workshops, which required an interpreter because of the time required for interpreting. The start and finishing times were also altered to fit in with the schedules of participants. Some workshops had to be cut short because of the limited respite time available to the

majority of participants who were carers. Both the first and second workshops for the African communities started an hour later than planned because they were held on Saturdays and participants stated that they had other activities on those days. (The Community Facilitators suggested that Saturdays were the best days for these communities because of work and language classes on weekdays). It should also be noted that, after the late start of the first African workshop, the second was deliberately timed to start an hour later. Even then, the workshop commenced an hour later than advertised.

The content and presentation of community workshops was similar to that of the Community Facilitator training workshop with some modifications. The general program for each was as follows:

- Introduction to workshop
 - What is EDAC
 - Introduction of participants
 - Expectations of the workshop (in small groups)
 - Brief history of attitudes towards *disability* in Australia
- The way we see *disability* determines what resources and services we access (small group discussion)
 - What is a *disability*? How do you see *disability*?
 - How does your community see *disability*
 - What is *disability* in the Australian context
 - What differences are there
- Rights in Australia for the individual and the family
 - Advocacy
 - Organisation and use of services (Using the Resource package)
 - State government
 - Federal government
 - Non-government and community organisations
 - Accessing services
 - Centrelink
 - Accommodation and accommodation support (HAAC)
 - Equipment (Lotterywest)
 - Education and Employment
 - Other agencies
 - EDAC
 - LAC's
 - Service Standards
 - What to do if you are not satisfied with the services you are receiving
 - Final discussion and evaluation

Evaluation

The evaluation of this project is based on 16 completed and 19 partially completed and returned evaluation forms, which were filled out by most participants at the end of the workshops. The only group not to complete evaluation forms were participants from the Arabic speaking communities who preferred to continue the discussion of resources at the conclusion of the workshop, rather than fill out the forms. Apart from this group, forms were not completed by the 14 participants who either left the workshop early or chose not to fill out the form.

The Vietnamese workshop participants completed forms but did so in Vietnamese. Without the benefit of having these translated (due to cost and time), only the answers to one question could be used as this involved circling a number. In other workshops, Facilitators assisted participants in completing their forms in English.

The following answers to evaluation form questions have been condensed and the most frequent responses to written questions used. Percentages have been roughly calculated and give a general idea only.

1. *What did you find was the most interesting section of the workshop?*

- Human rights 45%
- Everything 32%
- Attitudes to disability 23%

2. *What was the least interesting section of the workshop?*

- All were interesting 85%
- Human rights 3.7%
- Disability 3.7%
- Centrelink 3.7%
- Didn't understand much 3.7%

3. *How much do you think you learnt about disability, services, etc from this workshop?*

1 not much	2	3	4	5 a lot
1		14	10	13
2.5%		37%	26%	34%

Comments: Didn't learn a lot because the workshop was too short.

4. *What do you think was the most important thing you learnt today?*

- Centrelink and DSC 28.5%
- Individual and human rights 28.5%
- Resources 7%
- Attitudes to disability 36%

5. *Do you think the hours for this workshop were sufficient?*

- Yes 68%
- No 31%

Comments: Most thought the workshop was *not* long enough. One respondent thought the workshop was too long and one thought it was just right.

6. *Do you think the handouts are useful?*

All but one response suggested that the handouts were useful. One commented that they hadn't read them yet.

7. *Can you suggest ways of improving the workshop?*

Comments included:

- Organise a more comfortable room
- Should be longer
- Explain services in detail
- More time needed for longer discussion
- Have it over a few days
- Provide transport for everyone
- Inform people earlier
- Start later
- Start earlier

Any other comments

- Enjoyed the workshop, very informal and informative
- Need more time
- Was of good benefit

Follow up evaluations

Contact was also made with the Community Facilitators at the time of writing this report to obtain any comments from the participants over time.

African Communities 'workshop (1)

Feedback from the Community Facilitators suggested that participants would have appreciated a longer workshop and stated that they would attend another similar workshop if it was offered.

South East Asian Communities' workshop.

The Community Facilitator commented that follow up conversations with several participants suggested that they had enjoyed the workshop as a learning experience and social event. They had gained much information but suggested that the workshop was too short. They would like to have a follow-up workshop that ran for a full day and just focused on current issues and service delivery.

African Communities' workshop (2)

This workshop was the last to be held in the program and was considered too close to the writing of the report to provide any useful long-term feedback to evaluate.

The Community Facilitators for the Arabic speaking communities' workshop and the Vietnamese community workshop could not be contacted for comment.

Recommendations

- To continue the program of workshops with people with disabilities, their families and/or carers from CaLD backgrounds.
- To consider the length of time (from 3 to 4 hours) of each workshop depending on the community involved.
- To continue the inclusion of Community Facilitators in the development, promotion and presentation of workshops on culture, disability and services in Western Australia.
- To present two Community Facilitator workshops, one in April and one in July, so that interest and momentum can be maintained throughout the year.
- To invite more guest speakers from services such as Centrelink, DSC, etc to explain their services and provide an opportunity to answer participant's questions.
- To select more appropriate venues which participants find more familiar and accessible.
- To tie the workshop in with a talk to the ethnic community selected such as the community's women's group, about disability policies, services and programs and the role of EDAC in Western Australia. This would not only make members of the community more aware of disability but provide an opportunity to further promote the workshop.

References

- EDAC, *Supporting CaLD Carers: The service needs of culturally and linguistically diverse carers of people with disabilities*, 2003, EDAC, Perth.
- DSC, 'Addressing the Needs of Ethnic People with Disabilities', 1999, Disability Services Commission (Internal Report), Perth.
- 'National Disability Advocacy Program Review Report' in *On the Sidelines*, 2000, AGPS, Canberra.

Full Report it is available at the Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre