

Summary of evaluation of SSI's CultureReady Project

March 2022

Background

CultureReady: An NDIS workforce for our diverse community (CultureReady), is a series of training sessions designed to build the capacity and capability of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) service providers, and increase the capability of NDIS workers to deliver quality culturally responsive disability supports to participants from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Delivered by Settlement Services International (SSI), funding to deliver the CultureReady project was secured through the Jobs and Market Fund (JMF) in early 2020. The JMF is an initiative of the Australian Government's Department of Social Services (DSS), designed to support the growth of the NDIS market and workforce.

While originally envisaged as face-to-face learning, CultureReady was delivered through an interactive online program of stand-alone training sessions. Reflecting priorities identified in the National Disability Insurance Agency's (NDIA) *Cultural and Linguistic Diversity*

Strategy 2018, these sessions addressed four topics of importance to providing culturally responsive disability supports to people from CALD backgrounds:

1. **Fundamentals of culturally responsive practice in a disability context.**
2. **Working with interpreters.**
3. **Engaging CALD communities.**
4. **Recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.**

The CultureReady project commenced workshop delivery in July 2020 and ended in November 2021. Training sessions were delivered to groups of participants from varying organisations, and as "in-house" sessions to groups of employees from a single organisation.

SSI engaged Michelle Dodd Consulting to undertake an evaluation between July 2020 and July 2021. The evaluation considered both the quality of the training experience as well as the impact of CultureReady on culturally responsive practice of training participants.

Methods

A mixed methods approach to this evaluation was adopted. It involved the collection of data from training participants, in pre- and post-training online surveys (from July 2020 to July 2021), and – for those that opted to participate – a three month post-training survey via SMS. Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured telephone interviews with 19 training participants, and five organisational and sector leaders at two different times throughout the project, as well as from comments

provided through open-ended questions in the online surveys.

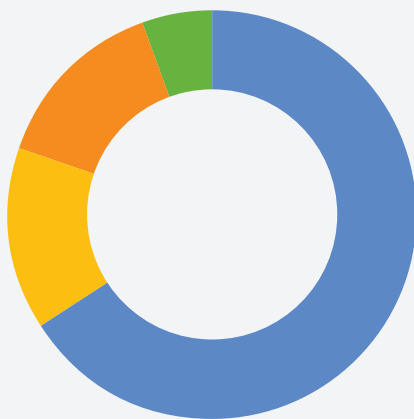
Data collected covered areas such as: expectations and experience of the training, particularly in a COVID-19 context; attitudes toward supporting people with disabilities from CALD background; the perceived impact of the training on culturally responsive practice; and perceived barriers to culturally responsive practice, particularly in an NDIS context.

Findings

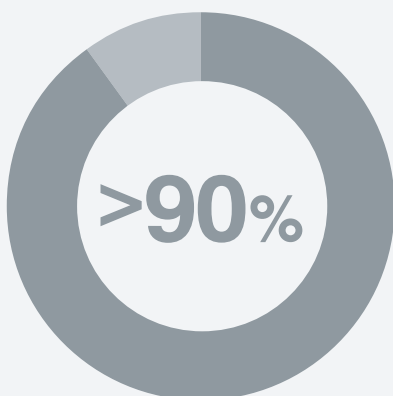
As of 31 July 2021, 202 CultureReady sessions were delivered to 2661 individual training participants.

The module, Fundamentals of culturally responsive practice in a disability context, was by far the most attended session with 66% of the individual training participants attending. Two other modules, Working with interpreters and Engaging CALD communities had a similar rate of attendance, at 15% and 14% respectively, with the fourth module Recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce attracting 5%.

Individual participants to CultureReady workshops

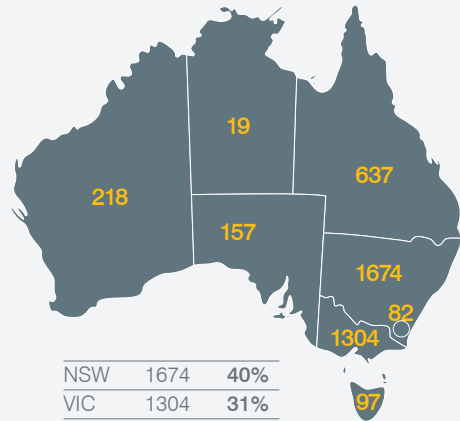


- Fundamentals of culturally responsive practice in a disability context (1757)
- Working with interpreters(386)
- Engaging CALD communities (374)
- Recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce (144)



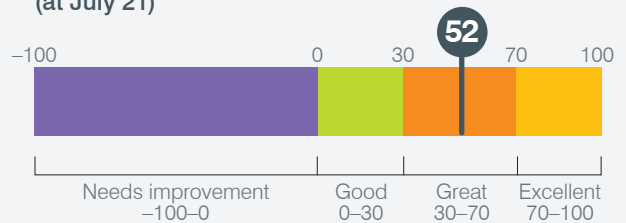
of respondents saw our training as relevant to their work

Individual participants by State or Territory



NSW	1674	40%
VIC	1304	31%
QLD	673	16%
WA	218	5%
SA	157	4%
TAS	97	2%
ACT	82	>1%
NT	19	<1%

CultureReady workshops Net Promoter Score (at July 21)



The post-training surveys (N=1676) had a strong response rate (79%), while the response rate to the follow-up survey via sms (N=103) was lower (25%).

The majority of training participants were frontline workers, and frontline and team managers, from NDIS providers in Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria.

Overall CultureReady was very well-received, and content considered to be of a high quality and relevant to training participants across all modules.

Culturally responsive capability of individual NDIS workers

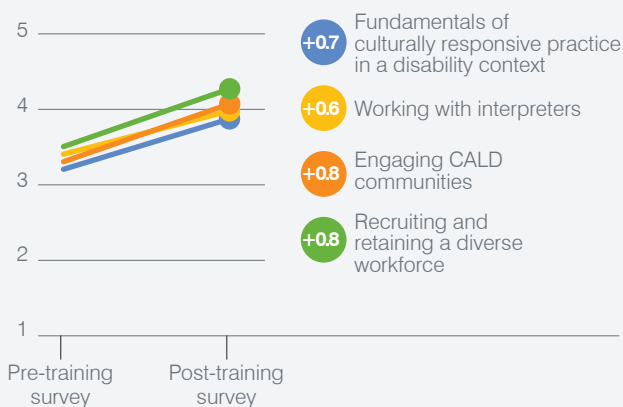
NDIS workers reported increased understanding and awareness of issues to consider when supporting people with disability from CALD backgrounds.

“Very informative and a great basis to now go forward and support more community members who have NDIS plans or are enquiring re NDIS.”

(Module 2 training participant, post-training survey)

Increased confidence in working with people with disability from CALD backgrounds after the training was also reported across all modules, along with high levels of motivation to change practice, that remained high in the 3 month follow-up surveys for training participants from Modules 1, 2 and 3 (all rated above 80%). Examples of changes to practices reported in the 3 month follow up survey included providing access to translated documents such as service information and reports, increased use of TIS services, and revising processes and policies.

Comparison of confidence scores between pre and post-training surveys (average)*



*rating from 1 to 5, with 1 “not confident at all” and 5 “very confident”

In semi-structured interviews with people who attended CultureReady training, training participants reported a range of issues they face when working with people with disability from CALD backgrounds, citing these as reasons why changes in practice and service delivery systems were difficult to achieve. These included:

- knowing the details of specific CALD backgrounds (e.g. that people from different regions of the same country may have different languages, attitudes, beliefs, expectations etc);
- matching culturally appropriate staff, such as gender (although it was stated by several interviewees that this is not necessarily a CALD-specific issue);
- negotiating attitudes toward disability and inclusiveness (i.e. for some cultures disability should be hidden); and
- managing family expectations about decision making and appropriate activities.

Capacity and capability of NDIS service providers

“There is more conversation occurring between staff about their culturally responsive practice, and people are asking more questions about how to better support customers from CALD background.”

(NDIS Provider Manager, Phase 2 interviewee)

In stakeholder interviews NDIS providers reported high level of awareness of the need for culturally responsive service delivery with respect to engaging with people with disability from CALD background. They also reflected on a range of barriers to good practice in culturally responsive service delivery – such as time constraints and access to appropriately skilled staff, along with barriers to accessing quality training for staff.

While NDIS providers reported active cultural engagement practices at an individual level with NDIS participants, limited broader community engagement occurs, as evidenced by very few initiatives targeting communities and locations with high prevalence of CALD communities.

With respect to staff, all NDIS providers interviewed talked about including organisational values in induction processes but acknowledged there is no specific attention given to how those values might be interpreted and actioned within different cultural contexts. Overall there was demonstrated willingness to change practice in service delivery to ensure it is culturally responsive but little evidence this was occurring due to the barriers cited above.

Key Points

- Overall CultureReady was very well-received, with the quality of training delivery highly rated across all modules.
- Relevancy of content was highly rated for all modules.
- Differences in practice were not necessarily reported within the timeframe of the project, however NDIS workers reported increased understanding and awareness of issues to consider when supporting people with disability from CALD backgrounds, along with very strong motivation to change practice, and high levels of confidence to change across all learning areas.
- NDIS providers reported a range of barriers to good practice in culturally responsive service delivery, along with barriers to accessing quality training for staff.
- The quality of the training was consistently ranked highly across all learning areas, with training participants commending presenters' content knowledge and presentation skills, and highly complimentary of the case studies used during the sessions as a meaningful and engaging way to illustrate theoretical content.

Key recommendations for the sector

The evaluation recommendations encompass NDIS system changes, workforce development and engagement strategies, stakeholder engagement, and NDIS provider quality initiatives that would facilitate improved NDIS outcomes for people with a disability from CALD background.

In the context of the review of the NDIA's *Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy 2018*, with a refreshed National Disability Strategy imminent, and the recent release of the NDIS National Workforce Plan: 2021–2025, the learnings from the CultureReady project are timely.

The NDIA should work to ensure that the next iteration of the CALD Strategy give greater consideration to culturally responsive practice training, such as that delivered by CultureReady. The NDIA should also consider all opportunities to make system changes that facilitate opportunities for improved culturally responsive practices at individual NDIS participant and broader CALD community levels.

DSS should consider opportunities to include aspects of culturally responsive practice training as it progresses initiatives in the Workforce Plan. The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission should consider how it can increase the visibility of what constitutes culturally responsive practice by NDIS providers.

NDIS providers and the broader NDIS sector should be proactive in providing suggestions to government on how to increase engagement with, and improve the support delivered to, people with disability from CALD backgrounds.

This evaluation also demonstrated that SSI is skilled at developing and delivering high-quality culturally responsive practice training. CultureReady has also demonstrated that SSI can move quickly to adapt training content for online delivery, and deliver this in an engaging way that delivers high quality outcomes.

REFERENCE

Michelle Dodd Consulting. (2021). CultureReady Project Evaluation Report