



WOMEN'S CENTRE FOR HEALTH MATTERS INC (WCHM)

Project Report

***Cultural Awareness Training for
ACT Women's Services***

August 2010

Executive summary

Australia's combination of Indigenous populations and history of immigration has meant that multiculturalism and ethnic diversity are integral components of Australian society. Humanitarian and refugee entrants from Africa, the Middle East and South East Asia comprise increasing numbers of new and emerging communities recently settling in the ACT. They are often more visibly different in appearance and culture to more established migrant groups and may face more immediate barriers to effective settlement and racism.¹ New and emerging groups are defined as being small in number, newly arrived, and are more vulnerable than established communities as they often lack established family networks, support systems, community structures and resources, and have poor English language skills.²

Cultural competence is extremely important for any individual or organisation seeking to foster constructive interactions between members of different cultures and to operate professionally and effectively within a multicultural context.³

While ACT women generally are better educated, have higher incomes and housing standards than women nationally, current research commissioned by WCHM highlights the fact that ACT Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) women are experiencing increased social, cultural, political, and economic marginalisation, and an overall reduced standard of living which is impacting on their health and wellbeing⁴. Recurrent themes have emerged from these studies identifying significant factors which influence barriers to how these women access and interact with services and information. Ethnic groups which are particularly vulnerable are those who have entered under the Humanitarian Program, as they are usually highly traumatised, and often have little or no English skills. This contributes to the magnification of a variety of complex support needs and issues for these women, with the additional risk of them falling through gaps in service provision.

Meeting the communities growing expectations and being responsive to changing community needs is a challenge for all community services and government agencies. Feedback on service quality and issues around access, especially for vulnerable groups, are an integral part in the evolving nature of community services.

National and ACT Health initiatives and policies reflect recognition that culture and language are central to the successful delivery of health and community services, such as the ACT Multicultural Strategy 2010-2013, which provides guidance for government and community services to address identified issues experienced by CALD communities. Social inclusion and community connectedness are embedded in enabling policies, and the Strategy has identified six areas of focus to be addressed over the next four years – language; children and young people; older people and aged care; women; refugees, asylum seekers and humanitarian entrants; and intercultural harmony and religious acceptance.

¹ FECCA, 2009, *New and Emerging Communities Policy Statement*.

² *ibid*

³ Ethnic communities' Council of Victoria, 2006, *Cultural Competence Guidelines and Protocols*.

⁴ Sarah Maslen, 2008, *Marginalised and isolated women in the Australian Capital Territory*, WCHM; Canberra. *Project: Cultural Awareness Training for ACT Services*

Following on from WCHM research report findings (Brewer 2009)⁵ that ACT services who work with CALD women need to be more sensitive, skilled, and well informed about issues facing women from new and emerging cultural groups, WCHM hosted a forum for ACT service providers to discuss the next steps required in moving forward with the findings of the research. Two key priorities were identified that needed addressing –

- *The Need for Cultural Sensitivity*

While broader cultural awareness training available in Canberra was important, what ACT services really wanted was culture-specific information about the groups they were most likely to encounter in their work, especially with regard to information about emerging new communities.

- *Discrimination/Racism*

It was also widely agreed that CALD women continue to face discrimination and racism. One of the main reasons identified was the small number of CALD women in leadership roles, which led to a lack of positive role models for other CALD women in the community.

Funding for a project to address these issues was provided by CIT under its new Community Skills /Training Support Grant to –

- Build the cultural capacity of ACT service providers by presenting cultural awareness training with a specific focus on gender differences and the needs of women from new and emerging cultural communities in Canberra; and
- Expand the capacity of identified women within the CALD community by mentoring them to develop useful skills such as public speaking, and the development and delivery of training sessions.

The project was professionally facilitated to create training modules by volunteer refugee women about their culture and experiences as a refugee settling in Canberra. This is a unique program based on the lived experiences of the women to be advocates and leaders within their communities, and deliver gender-sensitive information to ACT services.

This has the potential to add value to how ACT services engage with their communities, and to create sustainable system-wide improvements with effective strategies for building CALD women's capacity to access health and wellbeing information and support that meets their needs.

The cultural training program covers four key areas of content (known as the 4 C's) :

- **CULTURE** - Country of origin, ethnic diversity, religion, social and traditional family structures, health and education
- **CONFLICT** - The political conflict that led to leaving their homelands
- **CAMPS** - Life and issues in refugee camps
- **CANBERRA** - The community in Canberra, settlement considerations and challenges including language and communication, health, and issues affecting access to community services, education and employment.

⁵ Rebecca Brewer, 2009, *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Women in the ACT: Barriers and Enablers to Achieving Social Connectedness*, WCHM, Canberra

Through the implementation of this program, it is hoped these targeted multicultural aspects will provide ongoing and invaluable information to support service providers to re-evaluate the way in which they provide support to the CALD community within their service frameworks. It also fulfils one of the recommendations in the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia's (FECCA) policy statement for programs to ensure the successful settlement for all migrants, refugees and humanitarian entrants, supporting new and emerging communities, and overcoming cultural barriers to accessing appropriate services.⁶

⁶ FECCA, 2009, *Supporting New and Emerging Communities to Participate in and Contribute to Australian Society*
Project: Cultural Awareness Training for ACT Services

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Introduction

The organisation - WCHM

The Women's Centre for Health Matters Inc. (WCHM) is a community-based organisation which works in the ACT and surrounding region to improve women's health and wellbeing. WCHM believes that the environment and life circumstances which each woman experiences affects her health outcomes.

WCHM has a particular focus on groups of women who are, or are at risk of being, marginalised or socially isolated, and uses social research, community development, advocacy and health promotion to:

- Provide women with access to reliable and broad ranging health-related information which allows informed choices to be made about each woman's own health and wellbeing; and
- Advocate to influence change in health-related services to ensure responsiveness to women's needs.

Project Background

Identified need

Meeting the communities growing expectations and being responsive to changing community needs is a challenge for all community services and government agencies. Feedback on service quality and issues around access, especially for vulnerable groups, are an integral part in the evolving nature of community services.

The 2002 report *The Status of Women in the ACT*⁷ noted that marginalisation and isolation of women in the ACT remains a significant issue. Further research by WCHM in 2008⁸ identified continued gaps in policy and service provision for all groups that are at risk of marginalisation and isolation. The report further identified that ACT women from CALD backgrounds experience an additional variety of complex and compounding issues which impact on their ability to access services and information to support their health and wellbeing needs.

In 2009 the Women's Centre for Health Matters (WCHM) published a major piece of research *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Women in the ACT: Barriers and Enablers to Achieving Social Connectedness*. One of the key findings of this research was that ACT services that work with CALD women need to be more sensitive, skilled, and well informed about issues facing women from new and emerging cultural groups in the ACT. Furthermore, many ACT service providers who were interviewed as part of this research felt Canberra was lagging behind Sydney and Melbourne in regards to innovative ways of working with CALD groups.⁹

In May 2009 WCHM hosted a forum for ACT service providers to discuss the next steps required in moving forward with the findings of the research. Of the 15 key findings in the

⁷ Select Committee on the Status of Women in the ACT, *The Status of Women in the ACT*, 2002

⁸ Sarah Maslen, *Marginalised and Isolated Women in the ACT*, WCHM, Canberra, 2008

⁹ Rebecca Brewer, *Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Women in the ACT: Barriers and Enablers to Achieving Social Connectedness*, WCHM, Canberra, 2009.

research, those attending the forum identified 6 which they felt were interlinked and should be treated as a priority:

- language concerns
- information about services available (linked with language concerns)
- discrimination and racism
- mental health issues
- need for cultural sensitivity
- legal issues

This project addressed two of these key priorities:

- ***The Need for Cultural Sensitivity***

Those who attended the forum reported that cultural awareness training available in Canberra was inadequate and not targeted to the specific needs of women and women's services. It was felt that anyone who was working with CALD women should have access to cultural awareness training which informs them about the *specific issues facing each culture*. Furthermore, services reported that while broader 'cultural diversity' training was important, what they really wanted was culture-specific information about the groups they were most likely to encounter in their work, especially with regard to information about emerging new communities.

- ***Discrimination/Racism***

It was also widely agreed that CALD women continue to face discrimination and racism. One of the main reasons identified was the small number of CALD women in leadership roles, which led to a lack of positive role models for other CALD women in the community.

Project Design

The Project

Drawing on the identified needs from WCHM's previous research and consultations with ACT services, the project aimed to address two identified priority areas by ACT service providers and multicultural organisations working with CALD women by

- Building the cultural capacity of ACT service providers by presenting cultural awareness training with a specific focus on gender differences and the needs of women from new and emerging cultural communities in Canberra; and
- Developing the capacity of identified women within the CALD community, providing them with useful skills such as public speaking, and the development and delivery of training sessions.

This is a unique program based on the lived experiences of the refugee women and communities taking ownership of their culture, with the hope that this approach will add value to how ACT services engage with their communities.

The development of this program for training CALD women to be leaders within their communities and deliver culture and gender-sensitive information to ACT service providers, has the potential to create sustainable system-wide improvements with demonstrably effective strategies for building women's capacity to access health and wellbeing information and support that meets their needs.

Reference group

A reference group comprised of key stakeholders from local community and government services providers was established to

- Provide expert knowledge, experience and information in the development of the project and its content
- Create a plan for informing key stakeholders of the project
- Assist WCHM to identify and link to possible emerging communities and service providers
- Provide feedback on the approaches being considered and the design of the main elements of the project
- Monitor the project implementation and results

Members of the reference group included

- WCHM Executive Director – Marcia Williams
- WCHM Project Officer – Robyn Taranto
- Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) Training Consultant – Serena Ann
- Multicultural Women's Advocacy ACT (MWA) – Elena Sione, Jelena Serna, Riitta Palasrinne and Agnes Miller
- ACT Office for Multicultural Affairs (OMA) – Rebecca Glasgow
- Women's Health Service (WHS) – Deborah Colliver
- Companion House – Vesna Golic
- YWCA Housing Support Unit – Taryn Hocking

Partnerships and Stakeholders

The project was undertaken in collaborative partnerships with the Multicultural Women's Advocacy ACT, the Women's Service Network, and the Canberra Institute of Technology.

The project was funded under the CIT Community Skills/Training Support Grants, and it was anticipated the project would, in addition to the project aims, strengthen the community involvement between CIT and the ACT community. For many migrant women settling in Canberra, the CIT is often their 'first point of contact' with the service system through the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP). While Canberra has a wide range of services available to CALD women, they are often unaware that these services even exist. In fact 'unfamiliarity with available services' was considered one of the most crucial issues facing CALD women in Canberra. This means that CIT is in a unique position to improve the social connectedness of these women by forming solid partnerships with the community sector.

CIT provided a staff member, Serena Ann, as a training consultant to this project for up to 3 hours per week over the project implementation. Serena Ann has a professional background in development and delivery of cultural competency training and of work with refugees. She worked closely with the WCHM Project Officer on the training design and content and once the trainee participants were recruited, supported training sessions as required.

A range of service providers and multicultural organisations provided input on identifying the new and emerging cultural groups, and, to ensure that the cultural awareness training met their needs, they also identified essential culture-specific information.

Companion House

Companion House is a government funded community-based organisation that works closely with newly arrived and longer term humanitarian entrants. Companion House has established links with the identified communities and provided important links into the CALD communities.

Methodology

Narratives or stories of lived experience are a part of everyday life as people share their experiences with others, negotiate their meaning and assess the next step for action. Stories of lived experience can *provide insights into how forced migrants seek to make sense of displacement and violence, re-establish identity in ruptured life courses and communities, or bear witness to violence and repression*¹⁰. By listening to people telling about who they are and their past offers a way for finding meaning into the social and political contexts that have shaped, and continue to shape, their lives and how they engage with it. Listening to stories honors the oral traditions of many cultures and hence a very appropriate method for the women to deliver the training. It allows the suffering and issues of social isolation to be shared, to become visible, present and embodied.

¹⁰ Marial Eastmond, *Stories as Lived Experience: Narratives in Forced Migration Research*, *Journal of Refugee Studies* Vol 20 No 2, 2007

For the CALD women this meant a great deal of reflection as they would 'step outside' their experiences and culture, to assume the perspective of an external observer in order to identify and then explore their personal and cultural histories. This was necessary for them to be able to revisit various conflict situations, which at times was a difficult process for them. Over time, they found words to express their experiences and were facilitated to condense the stories into a concise and informative narrative. Support by the Project Officer was embedded throughout the training to ensure the needs of the women were met.

Project Implementation and Evaluation

Implementation of the project involved 5 phases:

- Consultation
- Recruitment
- Collaboration with CIT
- Program Development with Women
- Piloting the training to Service Providers

The overall project outcomes are as follows:

- Staff of the ACT women's services who participated would have a sound knowledge of southern Sudanese and Mon communities in Canberra. They would be particularly aware of the specific issues facing women in these cultures, which will allow them to better meet the needs of the people they support
- The CALD women trainers from these communities would have the knowledge and skills to develop and deliver training on their cultures to the broader ACT community, and be spokeswomen for cultural understanding in our community
- The expansion of the project for a sustained approach to enhance the cultural competency of ACT service providers' interactions with CALD communities

Consultation

Initially, a range of service providers were invited, via email, to identify the new and emerging cultural communities to be targeted for the project and also women leaders in these cultural communities who would be suitable for the project. The second stage involved service providers identifying the specific content about the emerging cultural groups that they are most likely to need in order to provide appropriate services. This involved a range of approaches including facilitating a workshop and ongoing communication with various services and organisations as required.

A workshop was conducted with 19 service representatives (see appendix). The workshop agreed on the target CALD groups for this project (Southern Sudanese, Mon and Karen Burmese), and culture-specific information needs for different sectors (e.g. domestic violence providers versus a health service). A comprehensive list of topics was generated, with four underlying themes, (the four C's):

- CULTURE - Country of origin, ethnic diversity, religion, social and traditional family structures, health and education
- CONFLICT - The political conflict that lead to leaving their homelands
- CAMPS - Life and issues in refugee camps
- CANBERRA - The community in Canberra, settlement considerations and challenges including language and communication, women's health, education and employment.

The Reference Group confirmed the outcomes of the consultation process.

Building collaborative relationships with service providers during this consultation process was helpful to identify culturally appropriate channels to engage with the CALD communities. For example, initial consultation with Companion House helped the Project Officer identify relevant community leaders and negotiate cultural attitudes and views in seeking their assistance in the project. Companion House also provided guidance with the recruitment processes.

The service providers who engaged in the consultation process, particularly the workshop, expressed enthusiastic support for the project aims, and an eagerness for the training to be available for rollout as soon as possible. Many of the attendees present at this workshop subsequently attended the pilot presentation in July.

Recruitment

The success and sustainability of the project relied on CALD women's commitment to project development, their current skill suitability and their future availability for program rollout. Additionally, to address intergenerational issues, the aim was to recruit both a younger and an older woman from each CALD group.

WCHM linked with Companion House, who offered their assistance and support to help identify and invite women to participate. We would like to especially acknowledge Hongsar Channaibanya for his enthusiasm for the project and for connecting WCHM with both the Mon and Karen women, and James Mayen for his assistance with the Sudanese women. As a result of their efforts we were able to recruit seven women to participate—three from Southern Sudan, and two from each of the Mon and Karen communities. When one of the Karen women left the project, the Karen participants recommended another Karen woman who then joined the group for a short period.

The women were engaged in the project as WCHM volunteers and at the outset, and were informed about the purpose of the project, their rights and benefits as participants, and WCHM's obligations to them. In recognition of the time and knowledge they contributed to the program development, each woman received gift vouchers and transport reimbursements.

The women had varying levels of education—English and other community services qualifications from CIT; and Sudanese qualifications in Psychology, pre-School Education, Business and Accounting.

The women were expected to gain the following benefits:

- Developing skills such as public speaking and presentation
- Ability to design training sessions
- Practical training skills and experience that can be shown for future employers
- The capacity to deliver ongoing cultural sensitivity train to service providers
- Improving the contact of their community with the types of services their community accesses

Of the eight women who volunteered to participate in this project, only two (one Sudanese and one Mon woman) completed the full program, which included presenting a pilot training session to service providers.

With the Sudanese women, one had to return unexpectedly mid-way through the training to Sudan for family reasons and had to withdraw. The second Sudanese woman attended 11 of the 18 training sessions, but also experienced unexpected family situations which prevented her from completing the program.

Of the two Mon women participating, one withdrew due to work and family reasons.

All three Karen women were unable to complete the program. One woman obtained fulltime work which impacted on her availability. The elder Karen woman withdrew due to her commitments to her full-time English studies and her very active role within her community, which involved numerous activities for fostering links between the Karen and wider ACT communities (for which she had received a Harmony Day Community Leadership Award). The third Karen woman had to return unexpectedly to a Thai border refugee camp for emergency family reasons.

This result highlights the complexity of lives for refugees in their ongoing settlement experience as they negotiate complex health and lifestyle adjustments, the high priority for them of the needs of their families both in Canberra and in their homelands, and the competition for their time to engage outside of their communities.

Concepts of time in many cultures are very different to our Western views and flexibility was required to adapt training schedules and meetings to reflect this while at the same time being mindful of the project timeframe. The learning from working with the CALD women is that flexibility and understanding are required to adapt to and embrace the particular life situations and commitments of the CALD community.

Feedback from the Karen woman who withdrew towards the end of the program made the following comments about new strengths she gained and new ways of supporting women in her community:

“By working with other women from other cultural background and have similar experiences inspire me to develop my skills, gain different techniques to deliver presentation”

“I’m more involved in women’s groups and I feel like this is part of my duty to do”

Collaboration with CIT

The WCHM Project Officer conducted initial background research into refugee issues generally and specific research relating to the project’s identified cultural groups. This research informed the theoretical components of the program content and development, and the resource-kit for service providers.

The CIT Project Officer worked closely with the WCHM Project Officer to develop a training schedule for the CALD women.

The training schedule had several key components:

- Personal and group empowerment activities to build a sense of group and belonging. It was important to initially build a sense of safety and trust so the women could build on their self esteem and confidence to share stories of their experiences, and to draw out issues for advocacy and common narratives
- Encouraging participants to take ownership over their own learning and participation by reflecting on and establishing their own goals and objectives for the training
- Provide facilitators with information about any skills training needed by the women early in the program so that these could be delivered as they developed the training content
- Understanding of various training modes. This included communication and presentation skills to support clarity and confidence about the women's personal presentation styles
- Provide an overview of the Community Services sector. By understanding the roles and responsibilities of ACT service providers would have two key benefits-
 - Introduce the women to the types of services they are likely to deliver training to
 - Provide information about services which they may be able to pass on to others in their communities, thereby increasing their leadership capacity
- Strategies to identify core and secondary information for the Mon, Karen and Sudanese groups to meet service provider information needs, and then prioritise to develop a training session

Program development with women

The delivery of the training program to the CALD women had to be negotiated to meet the competing commitments of the women. All the women were involved in providing varying levels of support to their community members. As their religion plays a vital part in their everyday lives and attending to church or temple duties and functions was a high priority for some, these personal commitments were respected in all negotiations throughout the project. In addition to this, two of the seven women were engaged in full-time English studies at CIT, and three were working part-time. With these constraints it was necessary to deliver training on weekdays for the Sudanese and on a Sunday for the Mon and Karen group. This approach proved beneficial in overcoming the otherwise logistical difficulties with the program, as well as accommodating the need for culturally specific activities for some of the program development. All training was delivered at WCHM's offices in Pearce over a four month period and were conducted in a series of 4-5 hour workshops for each group held 1-2 times weekly depending on availability of the women. In all, there were 18 sessions conducted with the Sudanese women and 15 sessions with the Mon and Karen women.

The structure of the training for the women involved covering communication and presentation skills theory and practice, and logistics on how to move forward with the project development. The sessions began with identifying issues followed by an informal chat, then allowing the women to write down key information followed by the Project Officer facilitating shaping the text with them. A range of topics were covered in depth, such as their culture and traditions, political conflict leading to refugee status, life in refugee camps, the journey to Canberra, and their resettlement experiences and challenges. There was a particular focus of women's health and needs, language and communication issues, education and employment challenges, and the barriers their communities face in accessing services in the ACT.

It was important to foster trust and rapport with and among the women from the beginning, and to maintain a genuinely respectful and non-judgemental attitude within the groups. This then provided a safe space for the women to explore and share their many personal stories which were then woven into the presentation content.

Throughout this process, the women were mentored to develop their skills and confidence as trainers; to develop leadership qualities; to encourage them to achieve their fullest potential and personal goals; and to foster supportive relationships both within the organisation, with the other participants, and to expand their networks outside of their communities. The women were given support with transport, and when necessary, the Project Officer would meet with them in a more convenient location. These factors encouraged their continued engagement with the project. The women provided positive feedback to this mentoring process, for example, one woman is now doing mentoring in her own community as a direct result of participating in this program. This is evidence of the volunteers' growth in confidence and capacity to embrace how they can contribute to their community in ways they previously had not imagined.

Comments from the Sudanese and Mon women who completed the program:

1. New support networks, eg information about new service providers

"I was happy because I have met more than 10 different services and I want to meet with them separately and am happy if they want to know more"

"I learnt how service providers work with communities like my Mon community. I have made contact with 10 new service providers"

2. New strengths that you have gained

"Confidence – I now speak more confidently because I know what I am talking about. I have a stronger commitment to let the service providers know about my community and help them solve the problem that will come through their workplace"

"Confidence, 90% increase. Now I can speak anywhere, I am not afraid of talking. I understand now that others want to help, from the responses to my presentation. I know they want to listen to me, that makes me confident to speak"

3. New ways of supporting women in your community

“Now I want to meet with our community especially women and talk with them about different services and help them to know which services they can go to”

“By giving them some information they need, eg health, parenting. Now I am confident to help them when they need help, and I am happy to help. Now I want learn and help them more about their health, I would be happy to talk them in groups if possible”

4. Any other skills or learning gained

“I learnt how to join from one topic to another, how to link information, how to develop a training program. I feel I reached the level that I can talk in public with service providers about our culture. I developed how to manage time for presenting and how to summarise important points to meet timeframes”

How to concentrate on main points. When I talk I look at people, before I couldn't look at people's faces when talking. This makes me more confident. First I afraid, now when they look at me, more connection. How to analyse different topics. How to know my story and speak clearly. To make friendship with other women, easier than before. Before not easy to make friends. Able to put information what I need to present to the service. Now I bet better I know the connection between the subjects.

5. Any additional comments/ stories you have about any change you have noticed since you began the training.

“Everything that I wanted to achieve (for my goals) I have achieved. Because of this trainer, she has qualifications and skill to train bicultures and she did it step by step to help us manage our activities. Also we developed trust between us and the trainer. In the end I did achieve, I am very happy no. , I feel I have the responsibility to let service providers know about our culture and the challenges facing us, especially the women”

“I'm not scared anymore, wherever I go”

Piloting the training to ACT services

Separate Sudanese and Mon pilot training sessions were delivered to ACT services to assist with advice and feedback to ensure the training met the identified needs of providers before the future roll out to ACT services. The Sudanese session was held at WCHM on 14th July and the Mon presentation was held on 15th July 2010. Both sessions were for 3 hours and eleven representatives from a diverse range of services attended, along with 5 staff members from WCHM (See Appendix 5).

The presentation was facilitated by the Project Officer and co-presented with the cultural trainer. Key topics were covered under the 4 C's—Culture, Conflict, Camps and Canberra—which were identified earlier by service providers. An introduction was presented to the groups to inform them of the intent of the session and the format. As feedback on the delivery style and content was crucial, it was requested that the attendees refrain from questions to the end. Resources were also handed out for feedback on usefulness and relevance for the service providers. These included -

- pre-reading community profiles
- Mon/Sudanese 'What would help' checklist
- From the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) :

- Burmese Community Profile
- Fact Sheets:
 - Refugee and Humanitarian Visas
 - #60 - Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Program
 - #66 - Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS)
 - #67a - Pre-departure Medical Screening (PDMS)
 - #91 - Translating and Interpreting Service
 - #92 - Settlement Grants Program
 - #96 - Eligibility for Settlement Services

The training for service providers was designed to raise questions about how ACT services are perceived by the CALD communities, and to stimulate service provider consideration of solutions to those questions by providing them with more information about the specific needs of their clients.

Pilot Presentation responses

Listening to the lived experiences of the women was strongest part of feedback, and the attendees felt they could share these stories with colleagues.

"... the subtleties came through that would not come up with only written material"

"Very powerful"

"The personal approach takes the information to a more 'experiential' understanding"

"Absolutely – the lived experience is always more meaningful and stays with you"

"Not only add value but relevance as well, because of authenticity and honesty of the presenter"

"It gives more depth to experiences by these communities, and helps you have a better understanding of the experiences they have had"

Overall, the majority service providers found the relevance of the training to their work 'very useful' to 'useful'.

"The information was well presented. A consistent, logical flow linking the historic and the present day experience of the Sudanese community members in the ACT"

"Fantastic – really fills in gaps of understanding"

"Information about different cultures is so important so service can tailor their own service to be appropriate"

Almost half would be able explain to another colleague the differences in the cultural groups as compared to the Australian context, and others thought they might.

There was unanimous confirmation from all attendees that they would recommend their colleagues attend training as well. There was a strong emphasis that the training would be valuable to deliver to government agencies as well as community service providers.

“ Yes – certainly service provision organisations. I think very important for government organisations to hear stories”

On the length of the session, most agreed that the 3 hours was sufficient, but some proposed changes which ranged from extending training to a 1-day format to a 45-min ‘grab’ session. This reflected the different needs and time availabilities of services. The pilot demonstrated that the content could be presented within a 3-hour timeframe, however feedback was very strong indicating they wanted more time for questions and to explore practical strategies the services could adopt.

There was need to again clarify to the attendees that it was not within the scope of the session to supply answers to the specific needs of different services. The aim is to inform and give them an understanding of the challenges faced by refugees so those attending can go back to their organisations and discuss the issues and find ways that are relevant to their specific service delivery.

It was also suggested that more visual resources (such as pictures and cultural artefacts) would enhance the presentation.

“The presentation and handouts articulated the issues faced by women as a refugee and in Australia”

“I would have liked to have read these handouts before I got here, but probably won’t have had time, however it would have helped. Great to have the immigration fact sheets too”

The ‘What would help’ handout was well received as a useful resource. They reported the other resources for possible post-training resource kit had some good information, but not sure if they would actually read it.

Project Achievements and Learnings

Achievements

As a result of this project a program for cultural awareness training for either the Southern Sudanese or Burmese Mon communities is now available as an opportunity for ACT community service practitioners (such as family support workers, refuge workers, health workers and emergency service workers) to listen to the lived experiences of women aimed to help services better understand the issues in delivering more culturally sensitive services to these communities in the ACT and how to work more effectively with them.

For the participating CALD women the project was able to build on their capacities and confidence to be trainers. This was identified in their final feedback acknowledging their personal goals for the project were met by:

- Increased confidence to speak with others, both within and outside of their communities
- Increased skills for developing and presenting a training session about their culture and experiences as a refugee woman in Canberra
- Increased confidence to present and share their knowledge on an equal basis
- Time and self-management skills
- Exposure to other organisations to increase their networks
- The ability to transfer what they learnt to their communities, and be a mediator between their community and service providers
- Increase in their understanding of the community services sector and the diversity and roles of service providers

The rapport developed between the women and the Project Officer enabled a respectful pathway to negotiate and address any emerging project issues, including any relevant personal issues that would impact on their participation.

While the older women from both the Sudan and Karen group were not able to maintain involvement to the end, it was clear that younger women were very able to input the program and become trainers.

The development of strong partnerships with other organisations was key to the success in identifying the target groups and training content for service providers, and providing feedback on the pilot training.

Learnings - What could have been done differently?

- **Funding and Project Timeframe**

Delays in obtaining grant funds (Nov 25) created setbacks with recruitment of the Project Officer. This impacted on the progress of the project due to the unavailability of many services over the December/January period which created tight deadlines. If there are delays in funding approval this should be taken into account with the project commencement date so that the full length of the project schedule is included.

- **Recruitment**

A key learning was really about the great complexity of the lives of the women and the pressures on them. Most of the women had been in Canberra for several years and yet the demands from issues that arose for them as refugees were still pressing, such as language; employment; and family issues resulting from cultural shifts impacting on traditional family structures and values.

This project aimed to ensure a sustainable project outcome by recruiting two women from each ethnic group, allowing for the complexity and demands on refugees which can impact on their ability to continue commitment and also to address intergenerational issues. However, this was not the case as the three Karen women were able to complete, and two of the three Sudanese women also did not complete. Future recruitment for such a project could aim for more participants initially to allow for a more sustained participant outcome.

Another learning is the recognition that culturally appropriate avenues for recruitment protocols is a relatively complex process and may take longer than anticipated, and a realistic timeframe needs to account for a 4-step recruitment process which involves –

- first consulting the key stakeholder organisations who are in touch with those communities
- second, consultation with community leaders
- third, those leaders approaching people in their communities to find out availability
- fourth, interviewing the women to determine suitability and availability for participation in the project.

- **Implementation of the training schedule for the women**

There was an information overload for the women at the beginning phase due to presenting the theoretical component covering communication and presentation skills, and the overview of the community services sector. For a more balanced approach to theory and cultural content input from the women, adjust the theoretical components to be covered over a longer timeframe in a tandem approach alongside the women's development of the program content.

- **Cultural training delivery to service providers**

Overwhelmingly service providers attending the pilot sessions expressed a strong desire to have been able to ask questions during the presentation. The decision to restrict questions to the end for the pilot sessions was to focus on feedback on the delivery style.

In order to balance this request for future training sessions with maintaining a delivery flow, a handout running sheet of the topic format will be provided for attendees with a dual purpose - to inform of the overall topic content which may then circumvent some questions which would be addressed later in the presentation, and - to provide a systemic approach for taking notes by attendees, which may also serve as a means to share the presentation content with their work colleagues.

Outcomes for CIT

CIT is the key institution that refugees are engaged with to gain the opportunities of education and training for successful inclusion into Australian society. NGOs like Companion House and others such as CatholicCare are clearly supportive of this process as are other training and education institutions. CIT, however, is the most significant instrument for social inclusion because it can offer the women options for a vocational path and a tertiary path. What we have found from project inputs from the women is that they see CIT as the key link in that respect.

Discussions arose in the course of the project implementation on issues affecting these particular refugee communities. Where these discussions related to refugee needs for training and education and their participation in CIT courses, it was possible to explore these issues for identification to CIT:

- CIT already has a profile in the Sudanese, Mon and Karen communities mainly through English languages classes. What arose as an issue was a need for more specific services for refugees, once having a modicum of English language, to enter education and training pathways, stay in them, and to direct themselves through these pathways appropriately where these opportunities lie through CIT courses. Women from all three communities identified their own needs in this respect, but particularly identified the negative impacts on themselves and their children. Some of these impacts included their male youth and older males dropping out of English classes and not furthering their education. This was mainly due to a loss of confidence and status they experienced on arrival with changes in their role in relation to their community.
- In the refugee Mon, Karen and Sudanese communities there has been an issue of young people of high school age facing serious barriers to acquiring education and training in Canberra, due to either no prior education or such limited prior education that they cannot join in high school classes. The method of placement the project participants described was that these youth undertake English classes for 6 months, then are placed in high school at the age level they would expect to be had they proceeded as usual through the education system. Still not fully fluent in English and without even the basics of education, numbers of them flounder. The women gave examples of such young people, particularly males, who find it demoralizing and exit having lost confidence and motivation for education and training and being unable to work in anything but unskilled occupations. CIT does provide courses for such youth such as *Access 10*. However, the women spoke of the delays in learning about such training and education options for their children and themselves, and the difficulty for them with getting help to find a pathway through the necessary training, and subsequently to securing jobs.

- Another gap identified by the women concerned what may be basic information to many Australians relating to health and coping with problems such as drinking and gambling was not known to them. It was suggested that one way to get more information to refugee students was to use the avenue of weaving this type of information throughout the Certificate IV courses in English, rather than presenting this information mostly at the commencement of their English training and at a time when they understood little and were overwhelmed by their multiple and complex settlement adjustments. By this time refugees may have sufficient English to understand material presented around, for example health promotion information and the various community services available to them.

Possible strategies for CIT to consider:

- English classes to expand the focus from everyday life skills to also incorporate bridging language and skills for vocational courses at CIT
- Greater integration between departments, e.g. English, to include programs with childcare and parenting, cooking, health, media, ICT, etc.
- CIT to seek more partnerships with NGOs to mentor English language students in specific vocational areas, e.g. aged care, disability, community development
- Specialised bridging courses for technical language e.g. Health and community, and possibly more advanced course to support medical terminology for nursing, etc.
- Increase CIT liaison with refugee students on matters of current and further training, by methods such as
 - Mentoring in vocational pathways and guidance
 - Regular in-class presence informing of options and support addressing needs such as
 - Centrelink hour requirements 19hrs/20 hrs. We are informed by women they do not know they can ask for a letter for Centrelink to cover their full-time obligations
 - Connecting them to other parts of CIT outside of the language area so they can get a broad sense of the possibilities for training while they work as well as fulltime training
 - Revisit some of the key needs throughout the course as their English improves and they are not overwhelmed with dealing with their immediate settlement issues and challenges

How the Project added value to WCHM

Working closely with community representatives and building understanding of cultures and issues faced by women in these cultures supported WCHM to:

- Gain specific information on Sudanese, Mon and Karen cultures, particularly in relation to issues around women, their roles, expectations and needs
- Utilise the insights into the needs of Sudanese, Mon and Karen women enabled WCHM to instigate other projects that address their needs and gaps in unmet service provision
- Develop new networks into the communities via the participating women
- Provide the opportunity for ongoing partnerships with both the women and their communities to engage with future WCHM projects, e.g. the CIT audio/visual Sudanese DVDs; proposed peer support project.
- Strengthen partnerships with organisations such as Companion House who supported the recruitment process for the CALD women. They also provided advisory support in the initial stages of the project
- Support the individual women in an ongoing capacity to have a voice within their own community as well as the larger ACT community via the delivery of the training rollout to ACT services

Education and training is a relatively new area for WCHM. The project developed WCHM skills to undertake similar work in the future:

- With the completion of the training of the women to be cultural trainers, the organisation now has the capacity to facilitate the rollout of the training to service providers, and to maintain support for the women to deliver the training
- This project provided a model of training using lived experience of the women, thus integrating the voices of women from those communities into the mainstream
- The project provides a unique model for gender-based and culture-specific training to be delivered in a way that creates equal dialogue between the cultural community and the sector, and promotes mutual respect on both sides

The delivery of the program to ACT services will increase WCHM's presence to better network within the community sector in the role of increasing connection of women's services and needs of CALD women:

- The project has generated an awareness of the needs of the Southern Sudanese and Mon communities and an awareness, openness and motivation from service providers about the outcomes of the project
- Cross sectoral awareness amongst service providers of the recognition to form partnerships and not silos, e.g., ACT services working collaboratively to identify specific cultural training content to address gaps in information needs of the sector.

Appendix 1 : Project Plan

| Milestones | Performance Indicators | Timeframe |
|---|--|--|
| Recruitment of project officer | Project officer recruited | Nov 2009 |
| Recruitment of project reference group | Progress reference group established | Early Dec 2009 |
| Consultation with ACT women's services to identify content required and development of a training outline | Outline of training developed based on women's services needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey of needs ▪ Workshop ▪ Finalise | End Dec 2009 Mid Jan 2010 End Jan 2010 |
| Recruitment of CALD women to become cultural awareness trainers | Women from at least 4 large/ emerging cultural groups recruited to project | End Jan – mid Feb 2010 |
| Train CALD women to develop culturally specific training modules and learn how to deliver training sessions | CALD trainers current skill-set identified and their personal training needs mapped All leaders have training sessions developed and practiced in delivering Training program to CALD trainers completed | Mid Feb 2010 – Mid April |
| Develop and deliver training calendar with sessions to women's services | Targeted ACT women's services enrolled in training sessions | Early Feb 2010 |
| Training delivery by CALD women | Training delivery to services completed | Mid – End April 2010 |
| Evaluate program | Evaluation framework developed and agreed Evaluation of project completed | End April/ early May 2010 |
| Develop plan for expansion of the program to other ACT services | Plan developed outlining how the training could be expanded to other ACT services | Mid May 2010 |
| Finalise program | Final report to ED | End June 2010 |

Appendix 2 : Service Providers Attendance Workshop (January 19, 2010)

Workshop was conducted at WCHM's offices in Pearce and facilitated by the WCHM Executive Director and Project Officer, with support from CIT Training consultant. The workshop was attended by 19 participants from the following organisations -

ACT Council of Social Services (ACTCOSS)
ACT Mental Health
CatholicCare
Communities@Work
Companion House
Beryl Women Refuge
Domestic Violence Crisis Service
Doris Women's Refuge
Hiera Women's Refuge
Mental Health Community Coalition
Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services (MARSS)
Red Cross Migrant Support
Sids and Kids
Toora
Victim Support Services
Women's Health Service
YWCA Housing Unit

Appendix 3 : Recruitment Flyer



Seeking your assistance and support

We are the Women's Centre for Health Matters - a community-based organisation which works in the ACT and surrounding region to improve women's health and wellbeing. We are working with the ACT Women's Services Network and Multicultural Women's Advocacy ACT and the Canberra Institute of Technology on a project to help support services in the ACT to develop a better understanding of new and emerging cultural groups. This will mean that members of new communities arriving and settling in the ACT receive services that are culturally appropriate to them.

The funding we have from CIT is to develop, deliver and test some cultural awareness training to ACT services about the Sudanese, and the Burmese Mon and Karen communities.

The project will support and train several women from within each of the communities. They will develop the content and present the training about their communities and their culture to the services.

We are seeking your help in identifying women from your community who would be interested in becoming trainers.

The benefits for the women involved include:

- developing skills such as public speaking and presentation
- ability to design training sessions
- improving the contact of your community with the types of services your community accesses
- practical training skills and experience that can be shown for future employers
- once the program is completed in June, we will continue to assist the trainers to deliver to interested groups
- gift vouchers for goods from major stores in Canberra for your time and to cover travel and other costs while in the program. This will be \$25 voucher per session, plus taxi voucher if required.

We would appreciate your help with finding women who want to participate in the project, and they would need to have time to spare during the next three months.

For more information, contact:

Project Officer

Women's Centre for Health Matters

p: 02 6290 2166 | f: 02 6286 4742

Appendix 4 : Recruitment Criteria

WOMEN'S CENTRE FOR HEALTH MATTERS INC (WCHM)

Project: Cultural Awareness Training for ACT Women's Services

Recruitment Criteria for

CALD Women Trainers

1. English Language skills – for both reading and writing
2. Good presentation and communication skills
3. Basic computer skills
4. Commitment to taking on a leadership role working in the community and supporting their community
5. An understanding of the cultural issues facing women in their culture accessing ACT service providers
6. They are identified and endorsed by their communities and elders to be appropriate and representational trainers
7. Have the support of their husbands/families to participate in the program
8. Available to attend a minimum of three part-time training sessions per week for 8 weeks at WCHM in Pearce for developing required skills and training modules, and to then attend and deliver cultural training sessions to ACT service providers as required.
9. Resident of the ACT

Appendix 5 : Plan - Program development with women

Cultural Awareness Training for ACT Women’s Services

| Input for Outcome for Training Training | Topic | Intermittent Feedback |
|--|--|--|
| <p>safety Ex: Spin-the-Yarn of personal Ex:My Hopes and goals outcomes Group Rules Project Overview</p> | <p>Introduction & Connecting Getting to know each other Personal hopes and goals from program</p> | <p>Sense of Clarification</p> |
| <p>Ex: How well do you? Priorities Homework: Collect cultural Permission for Leadership information Community Serv input</p> | <p>Why are we here? (Training) Scenarios</p> | |
| <p>Ex: Collect info F: Role model presentation styles and Increased Motivation Ex: What suits me best? (What I have/ what I need)</p> | <p>We are Trainers/ Communicators - Models of cultural community (who are women teachers? What do they do? How do they do it?) - Models in Australia - Types of presentations - What suits me best?</p> | <p>Clarity</p> |
| <p>Brainstorm + Cards Content for ID Topics group identified Service Provider topics list Information from Revise Topics providers with women’s</p> | <p>Identify Training Content - What we want you to know - What you are asking us for</p> | <p>Training each service integrated</p> |
| <p>Ex: Prioritising topics prioritised Clarify modules with CIT worker</p> | <p>Identify and Prioritise Modules - ID core & accessory info for Mon, Karen and Sudanese groups</p> | <p>topics Modules</p> |

F: Community Sector overview
next steps Book SPs for training delivery

- Prioritise modules and how each cultural group wants to develop them

Agreement on

Identified modules prepared

Developing Ourselves as Trainers

- Construct modules and develop resources
- Practice and present training in a timeframe
- Practice at adapting modules
 - Assess info handouts

Modules

practiced
Draft info sheets for service providers modules

Presentations

presentation

Integrated

Ex: How well do you?

What I learned / What would I change

- Training Feedback and Evaluation

Appendix 6 : Participating ACT Services in Program Pilots

Sudanese Cultural Training

ACT Emergency Services Agency
ACT Health – Midwife
Beryl Women Refuge
Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
Companion House
Hiera Women’s Refuge
Mental Health Community Coalition
Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services (MARSS)
Office of Multicultural Affairs
Women’s Health Service
YWCA Housing Support Unit
Plus 5 staff members from WCHM

Mon Cultural Training

ACT Emergency Services Agency
ACT Health - Midwife
ACT Human Rights Commission
ACT Office for Women
Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
Companion House
Mental Health Community Coalition
Office of Multicultural Affairs
Women’s Health Service
YWCA Housing Support Unit
Plus 5 staff members from WCHM

Appendix 7 : Sudanese Pilot Presentation feedback

1. I would rate the relevance of this training to my work as

- All 11 answered this question
- 6 out of 11 found it *Very Useful*
- 4 out of 11 found it *Useful*
- 1 out of 11 was *Uncertain*

"The information was well presented. A consistent, logical flow linking the historic and the present day experience of the Sudanese community members in the ACT"

"Fantastic – really fills in gaps of understanding"

"I found this training extremely helpful as we work with a lot of Sudanese women"

2. I would be able to explain to another colleague the differences in the cultural group as compared to the Australian context

- All 11 answered this question
- 7 out of 11 responded *Yes*
- 4 out of 10 responded *I think so*

"From a service perspective, reasons for Sudanese perhaps not accessing services eg disability services are clearer, which I have explained to colleagues"

"My knowledge is always increasing – my colleagues will be attending this training"

"The session was very informative. Resources useful. Lots of detail was shared"

3. I now better understand the issues faced by women from this ethnic group

a) As a refugee

- All 11 answered this question
- 7 out of 11 responded *Yes*
- 4 out of 10 responded *I think so*

b) In Australia

- 10 out of 11 answered this question
- 7 out of 11 responded *Yes*
- 3 out of 10 responded *I think so*

"The presentation and handouts articulated the issues faced by women as a refugee and in Australia"

"The information of their struggles as a refugee. The context of their culture in Sudan. And Implications for understanding challenges of adapting in Australia"

4. Do you now have a better idea about how your services can be delivered to women from this ethnic group?

- 10 out of 11 answered this question
- 7 out of 10 responded *Yes*

- 1 out of 10 responded *I think so*
- 2 out of 10 responded *Not Sure*

"I have a greater appreciation of the Sudanese family structure and how closely linked families are, how decisions made by a service provider can have a far reaching impact on families"

"Particularly interpreters"

5. Did the lived experiences of the women from the community add value for the presentation?

- All 11 answered Yes

"The experience of the speaker gave a human face to the issues confronted by Sudanese women"

"Makes it real"

"I really like the idea of providing the history and experiences of the Sudanese people through the telling of lived experiences"

"Absolutely – the lived experience is always more meaningful and stays with you"

"Not only add value but relevance as well, because of authenticity and honesty of the presenter"

"It gives more depth to experiences by these communities, and helps you have a better understanding of the experiences they have had"

"Is believable, is first hand, not transformed information. It gives human aspect to the theoretical knowledge"

6. Any positive feedback you would like to give about the Mon/ Sudanese presenters?

- All 11 answered this question

"Very engaging, and delivered training very well"

".. very informative and respectful. Brilliant – thankyou"

"... very competent, honest, open, her presentation was clear and confident – great"

7. Were there any themes missing that would have been of value?

- 9 out of 11 answered this question

"A younger female speaker would have been useful to obtain a youth perspective"

"Family violence. How to actually deal with the issues that comes up here given the vast differences in cultural backgrounds, ideas and beliefs"

"One issue we have is with these families nutrition and maybe a bit more on how we may be able to assist with this"

8. Any other comments or suggestions that you think might improve the presentation?

- 9 out of 11 answered this question

“Longer, at least one day workshop – background and history followed by life here and Q &A of better ways we can assist Sudanese women and their families to better adjust here. Who are the recognised elders in the community? Is there currently anyone in the community that people are going to for advice?”

“Pictures or PowerPoint could illustrate the initial part of presentation. How village looks like, how fields, bush, house looks like?”

“Have a more open discussion and more time for questions”

9. Any other additional pre-reading that would have been valuable?

- 5 out of 11 answered this question

“No, I think it was done well”

“Reading material would be great beforehand (which you said you would do in the future)”

10. Would you recommend this to other organisations?

- 10 out of 11 answered this question

“Yes absolutely!”

“Yes – interested in ensuring relevant ACT government agencies can participate”

“Yes – certainly service provision orgs. I think very important for government organisations to hear stories”

“Yes, I would (more into government departments)”

Appendix 8 : Mon Pilot Presentation feedback

1. I would rate the relevance of this training to my work as

- 9 out of 11 answered this question
- 5 out of 9 found it *Very Useful*
- 3 out of 9 found it *Useful*
- 1 out of 9 found it *Possibly Useful*

"Although I know the Mon community I have heard new things"

"...the specific issues for women in emerging refugee communities is highly relevant"

"Information about different cultures is so important so service can tailor their own service to be appropriate"

2. I would be able to explain to another colleague the differences in the cultural group as compared to the Australian context

- 8 out of 11 answered this question
- 3 out of 8 responded *Yes*
- 5 out of 8 responded *I think so*

"Yes I believe it will be important for all staff not only for Mon culture but also as a reminder of the importance of cultural awareness"

"The handouts and references provided ensure I could do this. This would not be as useful as the richness and complexity provided by the Mon presenter"

"This was a personal story and I would not be sure whether I can generalise"

3. I now better understand the issues faced by women from this ethnic group

a) As a refugee

- 8 out of 11 answered this question
- 6 out of 8 responded *Yes*
- 2 out of 8 responded *I think so*

b) In Australia

- 8 out of 11 answered this question
- 6 out of 8 responded *Yes*
- 2 out of 8 responded *I think so*

"I had no knowledge of any aspects of the Mon community - I do now"

"Yes – well balanced presentation – covers many areas and also potential areas eg males not working leads to family difficulties in future"

4. Do you now have a better idea about how your services can be delivered to women from this ethnic group?

- 7 out of 11 answered this question
- 6 out of 7 responded Yes
- 1 out of 10 responded *I think so*

"We constantly need to be updated about each new group that arrives"

"I think more contact with the community to offer an appropriate and welcoming and safe service for them"

5. Did the lived experiences of the women from the community add value for the presentation?

- 8 out of 11 answered this question
- All 9 responded Yes

"Makes it more real"

"Yes, important – the subtleties came through that would not come up with only written material"

"Presentation was clear, consistent, authentic and made impression"

"Very powerful"

"Very much so. The personal approach takes the information to a more 'experiential' understanding"

6. Any positive feedback you would like to give about the Mon/ Sudanese presenters?

- 9 out of 11 answered this question

"Fantastic, really interesting and explains the culture and issues around the Mon people"

"She was very effective – her explanations were focussed, thematically ordered and highly relevant"

"Presentation was clear, consistent, authentic and made an impression"

"Articulate, warm, honesty"

7. Were there any themes missing that would have been of value?

- 6 out of 11 answered this question

"No, it was a comprehensive presentation"

"What works for the community? What are the achievements of the community in their settlement in Australia and what helped them make those achievements"

“Yes – I would like to hear more personal stories about who and what has helped their journey. Not necessarily service providers and more practical solutions for effectively engaging with ‘mainstream’”

8. Any other comments or suggestions that you think might improve the presentation?

- 7 out of 11 answered this question

“Suggestions at end of session around examples of things that made it easier”

“Have a running sheet”

“I think some visual material would assist – eg I know there is a Mon woman dancing group (helps to connect through visuals and understand the richness of the culture)”

9. Any other additional pre-reading that would have been valuable?

- 7 out of 11 answered this question

“I would have liked to have read these handouts before I got here, but probably won’t have had time, however it would have helped. Great to have the immigration fact sheets too”

“I think the reading would have been good to have before the presentation”

“No – it was useful. Perhaps a bit too much technical stuff about Visa process etc. Could be a bit overwhelming to people and not directly relevant to presentation”

10. Would you recommend this to other organisations?

- All 11 answered this question
- All responded with a Yes

“Yes absolutely!”

“Yes, I would (more into government departments)”

“Yes – certainly service provision organisations. I think very important for government organisations to hear stories”

“Yes – interested in ensuring relevant ACT government agencies can participate”

Appendix 9 : Women Participants’ Feedback Summary

Project: Cultural Awareness Training for ACT Women’s Services

Participant’s Feedback Summary

| | Mid-Training (2xMon, 2xKaren, 2xSudanese) | Post-Training (1xMon, 1xKaren, 2xSudanese) |
|---|--|---|
| <p>1. What new information/skills did you learn related to any of the following :</p> <p>1.1. New support networks, eg information about new service providers</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – WCHM – Women’s Health Service – Women’s Services Network – YWCA – “Passing information from different women’s groups and meeting different people from different backgrounds”. Agot | <p><i>In addition previous support networks: WIRC PGL</i></p> <p><i>I was happy because I have met more than 10 different se4rvices and I want to meet with them separately and am happy if they want to know more. LC</i></p> <p><i>I learnt how service providers work with communities like my Mon community. I have made contact with 10 new service providers PP</i></p> |
| <p>1.2. New strengths that you have gained</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “Now I understand that we are equal as Australians and other communities. I can talk the world about my nationality” PP – “English, understanding more about my story and I can tell Mon story to other community. It make me feel stronger to talk to someone”. – “Able to talk about my cultural values and views and perspectives of living, why we are here (in Canberra)”. – “How to speak about our community”. – More comfortable and relate more to my own culture and to express my culture to others. More confidence sharing with the | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – “By working with other women from other cultural background and have similar experiences inspire me to develop my skills, gain different techniques to deliver presentation”. PGL – Confidence – I now speak more confidently because I know what I am talking about. I have a stronger commitment to let the service providers know about my community and help them solve the problem that will come through their workplace. LC |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | <p><i>other women has given me more experience/information about our culture and the other tribes”.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>“Talking before people”.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Confidence, 90% increase. Now I can speak anywhere, I am not afraid of talking. I understand now that others want to help, from the responses to my presentation. I know they want to listen to me, that makes me confident to speak. PP</i> |
| 1.3. New ways of supporting women in your community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>“More knowledge and experience”</i> – <i>Greater understanding of their own culture, and more motivation to help their community.</i> – <i>“Discuss the problems and investigate the issues in a community then speak out.</i> – <i>“I look at the Contact Book”.</i> – <i>“already involved with women, can tell other women about WCHM and how they can help them”. Shinthu</i> – <i>“My experience from this course I am more comfortable with talking with other women in my community. I have the skills to help others, especially women in learning groups, and to value our culture more”.</i> – <i>“Connecting women to women and know how to gain information and pass it”.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>“I’m more involved in women’s groups and I feel like this is part of my duty to do”. PGL</i> – <i>Now I want to met with our community especially women and talk with them about different services and help them to know which services they can go to. LC</i> – <i>By giving them some information they need, eg health, parenting. Now I am confident to help them when they need help, and I am happy to help. Now I want learn and help them more about their health, I would be happy to talk them in groups if possible. PP</i> |
| 1.4 Any other skills or learning gained | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>“I think I have to find more about Mon community”.</i> – <i>“Travelling far to attend the training gave me a sense of tolerance, confidence to learn new things”.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>“Aware of using professional language for the community services sector”.</i> – <i>I learnt how to join from one topic to another, how to link information, how to develop a training program. I feel I reached the level that I can talk in public with service</i> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | | <p><i>providers about our culture. I developed how to manage time for presenting and how to summarise important points to meet timeframes. Skills to co-deliver. LC</i></p> <p><i>– How to concentrate on main points. When I talk I look at people, before I couldn't look at people's faces when talking. This makes me more confident. First I afraid, now when they look at me, more connection. How to analyse different topics. How to know my story and speak clearly. To make friendship with other women, easier than before. Before not easy to make friends. Able to put information what I need to present to the service. Now I bet better I know the connection between the subjects. PP</i></p> |
| <p>2. What have you liked about the training so far?</p> <p>2.1 other women in the group</p> <p>2.2 activity</p> <p>2.3 themes</p> <p>2.4 discussion</p> <p>2.5 facilitation/ support from WCHM staff</p> <p>2.6 the venue/location</p> <p>2.7 length of sessions</p> <p>2.8 day and time of training</p> <p>2.9 frequency of sessions</p> <p>Any other</p> | <p>2.1 11111 = 5</p> <p>2.2 11111 = 5</p> <p>2.3 11111 = 5</p> <p>2.4 11111 = 5</p> <p>2.5 111111 = 6</p> <p>2.6 11 = 2</p> <p>2.7 11 = 2</p> <p>2.8 111 = 3</p> <p>2.9 111 = 3</p> <p>– <i>“I like the way the facilitation was done – breaking it down into simple ways and easier to talk about the issues in a clear way”.</i></p> <p>– <i>“All these are convenience; the training</i></p> | <p>2.1 111=3</p> <p>2.2 11 =2</p> <p>2.3 111=3</p> <p>2.4 111=3</p> <p>2.5 111=3</p> <p>2.6 11 =2</p> <p>2.7 1 =1</p> <p>2.8 11 =2</p> <p>2.9 11 =2</p> |

| | | |
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| | <i>gives me a knowledge of how I belong to my community”.</i> | |
| 3. What have you not liked about the training so far? 3.1 other women in the group 3.2 activity 3.3 themes 3.4 discussion 3.5 facilitation/ support from WCHM staff 3.6 the venue/location 3.7 length of sessions 3.8 day and time of training 3.9 frequency of sessions Any other | 3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5 3.6 1 3.7 11 = 2 3.8 1 3.9 1 – Venue too far away from area. Wanted more time for sessions. – <i>“I don’t have one. I’m ok”.</i> – <i>“More time.. probably 6months”</i> – For Mon-Karen, time was ok but Sunday conflicted with spending time with family, and would ideally like meet x2 weekly. | 3.1 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.5 3.6 1 - too far away 3.7 3.8 3.9 |
| | – More practicing and information – <i>“I think I good at talking and speaking English better than before”.</i> – <i>“Continue with what we are doing now and finish up my presentation”</i> – <i>“continue building my skill”</i> – <i>‘Make my presentation more professional, so summarise better, to be more concise, and have better flow, eg special stories”.</i> – <i>“Work more on how to share women’s matters with the women in my community”.</i> | - - PGL - - LC - - PP |

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| <p>4.2 Any other comment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“WCHM make me feel stronger to talk about something”.</i> - <i>“The training is interesting and fun. I mean I don’t feel boring. I learn more about my culture and history. Also I feel comfortable to talk”.</i> - <i>“In this period I really enjoy this training because in every session I am learning more and getting more confidence, and improving my skill and the way I think”.</i> - <i>“The training has positive output”.</i> | |
| <p>5. Any additional comments/ stories you have about any change you have noticed since you began the training.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>“We all listen to and respect each others views and values. Class is simple so I feel more comfortable to talk”.</i> - <i>“I can connect better with other refugees and when they are saying their stories I can imagine the way it was there. I feel it will make me a better worker at Companion House”(currently this woman is working part-time at CH)</i> - <i>“Lots of information, but now putting all bits together”.</i> | <p><i>“I feel more confident to work with other women and more concern about women’s need and health”. PGL</i></p> <p><i>Everything that I wanted to achieve (for my goals) I have achieved. Because of this trainer, she has qualifications and skill to train bicultures and she did it step by step to help us manage our activities. Also we developed trust between us and the trainer. In the end I did achieve, I am very happy now, I feel I have the responsibility to let service providers know about our culture and the challenges facing us, especially the women</i> <i>LC</i></p> <p><i>I’m not scared anymore, wherever I go PP</i></p> |