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The importance of understanding CALD demographics and data collection

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What will this resource cover?

This resource will look at how you can capture the demographics of your potential clients, and compare this data to the numbers of the actual people accessing your service. The gathering of data is critical in determining whether there is a gap between the potential and actual numbers of people who *should* and who *are* accessing your service. This will form the evidence base of any strategy that may follow to address any potential gaps that may be found. In order to engage with communities, you need to firstly find out who is out there, and who exactly you should be engaging with. Some tips on how to get started, and a case study with follow-on questions will also help to illustrate the content.

Essential information

Setting the scene: What do we know already?

CALD data as it relates to numbers of people with disability hasn't been thoroughly mapped at present. However, one project which has begun the process of pinpointing accurate data has been the National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) Datacube project which has worked to create an accessible public database where specific data segments could be used for planning and research purposes. Existing data suggests that:

- According to the 2011 Census 11.5% of the Queensland population speak a language other than English (LOTE) at home totalling over 500,000, and 21.69% were born overseas, representing just over 1 in 5 people who live in Queensland.

- Data captured by NEDA suggests that "*One in every four people with disability is a person of either first or second generation Non-English Speaking Background (NESB), representing approximately 1 million people across Australia[1]*".

- Diversitat (A community services organisation based in Geelong) concludes that "*People from non-English speaking backgrounds with disabilities face multiple barriers and are less likely to access government-funded disability support services than others with disabilities (Productivity Commission, 2009). These support systems can include community support, respite services, employment*

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[1] http://www.neda.org.au/index.php/news/fact-sheets?showall=&start=1

services and accommodation support[2]". The issue of CALD communities not accessing essential services could impact on the lack of data collected and available.

From an initial collection of existing data, it is apparent that CALD people with disability make a sizable market, however they are underrepresented when it comes to their usage of disability support services. As the concept of inclusion, person centeredness and fairness is the foundation of an effective disability market, this difference is one that will further impact CALD people with disability and service providers in a world where individual financial care packages are the prime funding model.

Why CALD data collection is important?

Data capture is important as it forms the evidence of *who* you should be engaging within the perimeters of what service your organisation is offering. This is the examination of your potential audience. After determining your potential audience, it is important to examine the demographics of your current client base to pinpoint any differences. This is the consideration of your actual audience.

From there, you can use this data to create a targeted marketing approach to promote your services and support options for example. This data is also essential in creating a starting point to monitor service delivery on a continuous basis.

Essential good practice tips

Tips on examining your potential client base
There are some simple steps that will help to start the process.

It is important to take a step back and think about where to start. Developing a strategy around CALD data collection will help to shape the focus of what you will be capturing, and for what purpose. When developing a strategy and purpose for data collection it is important to consider the following:

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[2] http://diversitat.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Diversitat-disability-findings-report-FINAL.pdf

- Think about what data you *really* need to capture. For example, if your service provides programs that are targeted at youth and early intervention, then tailor your search to these groups;

- As a minimum, core sets of indicators comprise of; language spoken at home, country of birth and English language capacity. Census data can be found here: http://www.abs.gov.au/census and can provide a picture of the demographics of the areas that your organisation services. Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH) also have a list of links that contain access to CALD data that may also be beneficial in getting started and can be found here: http://www.ceh.org.au/resources/publications#demographics

- Department of Social Services (DSS) settlement data is also provides more detail on the demographics of visa entrants in your local area. The database and DSS contact details can be found here: https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/settlement-services/settlement-reporting-facility

- Keep in mind that it is important to access sources that are up-to-date and reliable;

- It is also essential to determine what data your organisation already has access to. It would be worth considering undertaking an audit on any existing information within your organisation. You do not want to start a new project or analysis if there had been a past data project or analysis already completed in your organisation that you could gain access to;

- Undertaking a mapping exercise by conducting an audit of all known community groups, ethno-specific organisations, community leaders and inter-agencies (groups of agencies) that may be relevant to your potential client base;

- Within this mapping exercise, it is also important to consider how relevant or engaged these stakeholders would be in either working with your organisation to provide knowledge or information regarding their community, and also, how engaged these stakeholders would be in supporting your client group in other ways that complement the services that your organisation provides. It may be worth ranking these stakeholders by their level of potential engagement;

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- Utilising the strengths of your current colleagues or staff by tapping into their knowledge of external stakeholders who are operating within CALD communities, or servicing CALD communities. A working group could be set up within your team or organisation, made up of people interested and skilled in collecting data who have specialist knowledge of the CALD community landscape.

Tips on examining your actual client base

In order to determine who is accessing your service, the below tips can act as a starting point:

- Access the practicality of your client database to produce data reports that may be able to extract and output information on the demographics of your client base;

- When collecting qualitative data from clients including interviews and client surveys, these need to be done in a culturally sensitive manner. Some key considerations are listed below:

  - Some clients may not be proficient in English and may need the use of interpreter to respond accurately;

  - Others may not be literate in their first language, and this needs to be taken into consideration if a client is completing a written form in language;

  - The person may not be proficient in English, and also have a disability that renders them unable to verbally communicate, or physically unable to complete a written form, and considerations need to be made around how to approach this in a culturally sensitive way;

  - In some cultures, a question around 'date of birth' may not be straight forward. To give an example: for the older generation of people born in Iraq in rural areas, most people were given the birth date of 1st July as their exact date of birth was unknown. Also, some people may not have had access to their birth records in their country of origin, and others may understand their date of birth as falling in a particular season, or according to a different calendar;

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- The concept of gathering personal information may be looked upon with suspicion by a person who has undergone past trauma. It is important to clearly communicate the purpose of the data collection, and the measures taken to ensure confidentiality in storing client transcripts etc. Informed consent to share personal information is very important throughout the process, whereby the person understands that they have a choice to give this information;

- Transparency around how their personal information will be used is also of key importance, and this needs to be clearly communicated to the person;

- Be mindful that some questions may cause feelings of past trauma on behalf of the client. For example, the collection of personal information may have been used against a client by a government or authority structure in their country of origin.

Basic Questions to collect

- Which country were you born in?

- When did you arrive in Australia?

- What is your preferred language?

These questions also follow basic ABS Census search perimeters which makes it easier to compare the data that you have collected in your potential client base search against the data that you have collected to determine your actual client base.

What to do after the data is collected?

A good quality analysis of data is just as important as the process of collecting data. Think about what the data is telling you, and link back to the reason why you are collecting data in the first place.

After you have collected the data, it may be worth thinking about the following;

- What groups are accessing your service and which groups aren't and why?
- Over time, has this data changed and is the gap between your potential and actual client base decreasing?
- It is also important to consider what resources are needed and also how you will update relevant CALD data and demographics in order to feed into service planning and design in a continuous fashion. Think about who will be responsible for updating this data. At what intervals will the data be revisited and updated?

Other benefits of CALD data collection

A Western Australian public-sector resource[3] outlines some clear benefits for collecting and understanding CALD data and demographics. Although this resource is designed for the government sector, it contains relevant points which can be used for the community sector and disability service providers.
Collecting data relating to diversity can help to:

- Assess and measure the impact of policies and programs on different groups in order to improve outcomes;
- Review, plan and deliver services that meet the needs of communities, including new migrants and refugees;
- Respond effectively and in a culturally appropriate way to community needs
- Assess clients' cultural and linguistic requirements, such as the need for interpreters and bilingual staff;
- Identify specific needs in relation to issues such as literacy, employment, health, community safety and wellbeing;
- Substantiate funding applications for CALD-specific programs and services;
- Ensure staffing and skills are representative of an agency's client base;

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[3] https://www.omi.wa.gov.au/StatsInfoGuides/Documents/lga_guides/Engaging_Communities.pdf

- Indicate which groups are using essential services and how satisfied they are with them.[4]

Case Study

Geraldine is a disability support team leader in Logan and is given a project by her manager to investigate how their organisation can better meet the needs of people with disability from diverse backgrounds. From her perspective, it is observed that not many CALD clients are accessing their service, however, the office is located in an area with high CALD density. As the organisation is undergoing immense change in the shift from block to individual funding, the organisation is thinking that it may be a good time to unearth some data to firstly prove this inconsistency, and try and find ways to lift barriers to access and better understand CALD people with disabilities and their communities.

Key Questions

What is the first thing that Geraldine should do before starting the project?
Who should Geraldine talk to within her organisation?
What websites or other resources should Geraldine be accessing?

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[4] https://www.omi.wa.gov.au/StatsInfoGuides/Documents/lga_guides/Engaging_Communities.pdf