



Final grant report: Family Fundamentals

Project title	Family fundamentals - CALD seminars
Grant recipient	Child Abuse Prevention Service
Project manager	Yulia Guerchenzon
Position	Family Support Worker/Project Officer
Law and Justice Foundation awarded amount	\$13,954.55
Grant period	May 2012 – January 2013
Date of this report	30 November 2012

Description of the project

Describe the project in just enough detail so that anyone can understand it. What was the aim of the project, who was the intended audience and what strategies did you implement to achieve the aim?

The Family Fundamentals project was a joint initiative between Auburn Diversity Service, SydWest Multicultural Services, Macquarie Legal Centre and CAPS (Child Abuse Prevention Services). The project aimed to provide families in the Auburn and Blacktown with an opportunity to learn more about family law, rights and responsibilities and happy healthy relationships. This was done through the delivery of three culturally specific workshops in Auburn and three culturally specific workshops in Blacktown.

Aims and objectives of this project are as follows:

- To provide family law information for CALD families residing in Auburn and Blacktown with an aim to educate the communities about their rights and responsibilities.

To provide CALD families with information about government bodies and services that can help when the family is experiencing relationship difficulties or going through separation.

The project – what happened?

How did the project come about?

The project addressed one of the most current and significant concerns of CALD families living in Western Sydney - family breakdown and relationships. The evidence for this comes from CAPS receiving a large number of calls and referrals from or relating to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) families, who are experiencing a high level of distress and confusion due to custody and access issues, breakdown of family relationships and government intervention over child protection matters.

The project used a collaborative and strengths based approach, to work with services (including Auburn Diversity Services, SydWest Multicultural Services, Macquarie Legal Centre and CAPS), to assist the Arabic and Amharic speaking community in the West to gain better understanding of Family Law in Australia. In addition the project also worked towards raising awareness amongst these communities about the support services and agencies that are available to them when experiencing relationship difficulties such as domestic violence, separation or divorce.

Briefly set out the project stages and what happened in each stage.

Project planning

- Preparation of project documentation, budget and timeline.
- Confirmation of partner organisations, presenters, locations, session dates.
- Project planning meetings.
- Consultation with community group representatives.
- Collation of resources.
- Seminar content planning and development.
- User group testing.

Project implementation

- Session promotion through relevant networks and community language media.
- Event coordination.
- Delivery of workshops including completion of pre and post evaluation forms.
- Budget management.
- Mid-project reporting.

Project evaluation and reporting

- Review of pre and post evaluation forms.
- Consultation with partner organisations and other stakeholders.
- Collation of observational feedback.
- Post program follow up interviews with participants.
- Outcome and budget review.

Preparation of report.

If grant materials were produced:

How were they distributed?

Whilst no materials were specifically produced as a part of this grant, at each seminar the participants received an information bag which had brochures from the organisations involved detailing the services they provided as well as resources from Law Access in Arabic or Amharic.

What was the extent of the distribution?

The participants at the sessions received an information bag. Auburn Diversity Services requested extra information bags for their clients who were unable to attend the sessions due to conflicts.

Now that the project has concluded, how did the implementation and/or the outcome differ from what was originally intended? Did anything surprise you? Were there any unintended outcomes?

The project delivery mix changes slightly when it was determined that the Arabic community would benefit from an additional workshop, whilst the Amharic community was not large enough to warrant 3 workshops. As such an additional Arabic workshop replaced one of the existing Amharic workshops.

There were some unexpected outcomes with Blacktown SydWest Multicultural services. Due to the nature of the work the staff members had not communicated clearly about the final seminar and there was no venue booked. CAPS' staff member waited for approximately 30minutes, at that time no clients had arrived to the organisation asking about the workshop so it was assumed that no clients would be arriving and it was agreed to cancel that workshop.

The partnership with Auburn Diversity Services worked very well with Auburn Diversity Services promoting the seminars within their service and communicating clearly with CAPS about the expected outcomes.

Due to the organisational difficulties with administering the project seminars long term follow up with clients. We have received feedback from Auburn Diversity Services that their clients found the information very useful and they would like similar workshops in the future so that more people can receive this information. Auburn Diversity Services advised that they are still in contact with their clients.

Evaluation

What questions did you ask to evaluate whether you had achieved your aim?

We asked the participants how they felt at the end of the seminar and why. We also asked them to comment on where they could go to seek assistance in the future or seek further information. The evaluation forms were developed in partnership with the Law and Justice Foundation and are attached.

What data did you gather to answer your questions?

Arabic

Almost all of the participants that answered the post seminar evaluation stated that they felt satisfied or confident (81%). Over half of the respondents stated that they had learnt new information and that they found the information valuable (81%).

93% of respondents were able to name at least one organisation that they could go to for more information. Only 56% of respondents were able to name at least one organisation that they could go to for more information as identified in the pre-seminar evaluation.

Amharic:

Almost all of the participants that answered the post seminar evaluation stated that they felt satisfied or confident (90%). Over half of the respondents stated that they had learnt new information (90%).

80% of respondents were able to name at least one organisation which they could go to for assistance as identified in the pre-seminar evaluation. This increased to 100% of respondents being able to name at least one organisation they could go to for more information in the post-seminar evaluations.

Did you achieve your aim? What did you find out?

We did achieve our aims of:

- To provide family law information for CALD families residing in Auburn and Blactown with an aim to educate the communities about their rights and responsibilities.
- To provide CALD families with information about government bodies and services that can help when the family is experiencing relationship difficulties or going through separation.

We found out that families are very interested in the topics of Family Law and Child Protection and discussing these in a safe space allows them to seek information that they may not usually access.

During the seminars the predominant questions pertained to divorce, property settlement and the airport watch list.

Conclusion and recommendations

What is your conclusion?

Overall, the project has been successful and has met a clear community need.

A significant recommendation for the future is to utilise a less formal approach to seminar evaluation, by budgeting in extra time for a group evaluation discussion. This would overcome the literacy and evaluation engagement challenges. It is further recommended that partner agencies not be utilised in the supply of venues, to counter any booking or venue coordination issues. A more effective approach has been to run projects at independent sites such as local community centres and for the lead agency to retain full logistical coordination for the project.

What are your recommendations for improvements both for the intended audience of your project, and for the strategy you used to achieve your aim? What would you do differently next time?

Written resources or the use of written power point presentations have not been particularly effective as a part of this project as many of the clients are illiterate. In the future it would be more cost effective to do without these items and instead add in additional question time, which was highly popular and seemingly a more impactful way of reinforcing key messaging than providing take-away resource packs.

Further, the project team perceives that the use of community language media had little to no impact on recruiting clients for these projects. This is an additional expense that would be eliminated if the project ran again in the future. Clients would instead be recruited through community partnerships and networks.