



Culturally Responsive Disability Support-Community Access Network (CAN)

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Glossary

NSW	New South Wales
SPRC	Social Policy Research Centre
SVDPNSW	St Vincent de Paul Society New South Wales
UNSW	The University of New South Wales
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NDIA	National Disability Insurance Agency
LAC Program	Local Area Coordination Program
LACs	Local Area Coordinators
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

Executive summary

The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in 2013 was considered one of the most significant social policy reforms in Australian history. In the era of NDIS, the historical underrepresentation of people with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds using services remains a problem (Heneker, Zizzo, Awata, & Goodwin-Smith, 2017; Senaratna, Wehbe, & Smedley, 2018; Zhou, 2016). The earlier research has focused on poor accessibility and quality of NDIS disability support for people with disability and their families from CALD backgrounds. New research is needed about how to organise culturally responsive disability support in the context of NDIS.

Since the NDIS roll out, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has partnered with a range of community-based organisations nationwide to deliver Local Area Coordination (LAC) services. St Vincent de Paul Society NSW (SVPNSW) is supported by the NDIA as a Partner in the Community (PITC) to deliver the Local Area Coordination Program in the service areas of Sydney, South East Sydney, South West Sydney, Central Coast and Hunter New England. One of the initiatives the SVPNSW LAC Program has undertaken to provide culturally responsive support to CALD communities is the Community Access Network Strategy (CAN Strategy).

The SVPNSW LAC Program collaborated with the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at the University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney) to conduct a preliminary case study on the CAN Strategy for Australian Chinese people speaking Mandarin or Cantonese. The purpose of the research was to explore how the SVPNSWLAC Program responded to the needs and preferences of Australian Chinese communities in the context of NDIS. The research was a qualitative case study that collected voices from the parties involved in CAN, especially from the Australian Chinese people with disability and their families.

Community Access Network

Launched in March 2018, the CAN Strategy has three goals:

1. Equip participants from CALD backgrounds with the skills and knowledge to utilise the NDIS
2. Develop a network of relationships with key stakeholders and participants from CALD backgrounds
3. Enhance Local Area Coordinators' (LACs) knowledge about cultural responsiveness.

The CANs target four of the largest language groups in the SVPNSW LAC Sydney service areas which include Arabic, Vietnamese, Mandarin and Cantonese. The CANs operate via monthly face to face sessions which take place at local community venues. Each session runs for about three hours, with three parts: information delivery, morning tea and networking, and one-to-one consultation with SVPNSW LACs. By the end of 2018, the SVPNSW LAC Program had facilitated 23 sessions for approximately 291 people with disability and carers from the four cultural communities.

Rationale and operational logic of CAN

The research indicated that the SVDPSW LAC Program operated CAN with a co-production approach that embodied the goals of cultural responsiveness held by the SVDPSW LAC Program management team. Their working definition of cultural responsiveness was to make decisions about the content and process of CAN through co-production with the Australian Chinese participants. The SVDPSW LAC Program focused on identifying on-going ways to learn about the Australian Chinese participants' unmet needs and ways to address these needs by partnering with them. The goal of the SVDPSW LAC Program in facilitating the monthly Mandarin and Cantonese CANs was to build the capacity of Australian Chinese participants to better navigate NDIS and form a sustainable support between each other.

The way CAN operated demonstrated top down facilitation of the co-production. The SVDPSW LAC Program staff learnt by working with the Australian Chinese participants and adjusting the CAN processes in response to the new knowledge gained from the reflective practice. The SVDPSW LAC Program staff gradually developed the relationship with the participants, which facilitated the continued rounds of organisational learning and cultivated the partnership with participants.

Overview of CAN outcomes

The research suggested that CAN was on track to achieve its intended outcomes. Both the Australian Chinese participants and SVDPSW LAC staff appeared to gain benefits from CAN. The achievements varied slightly across the three goals.

CAN included information delivery sessions and one-to-one consultation with SVDPSW LACs to enhance Australian Chinese participants' knowledge about NDIS and their capacity to navigate support services. The participants who were interviewed said they were satisfied with the knowledge they received from CAN. Most participants stated that personal consultations with SVDPSW LACs exceeded their expectations and that it was an effective arrangement.

CAN employed multiple approaches to strengthen the participants' social networks, such as introducing them to NDIS stakeholder organisation representatives, encouraging information sharing between the participants and facilitating opportunities for participants to socialise. Some participants with children with similar disability and similar age had begun to exchange some peer support. It seems that the partnership between the SVDPSW LAC and other NDIS stakeholder organisations not only helped CAN meet the Australian Chinese participants' needs effectively, but also shared the practices of the SVDPSW LAC Program's implementation of culturally responsive support around the sector.

The SVDPSW LAC staff benefited from CAN in various ways. The SVDPSW LAC Program managers reported that working with the Australian Chinese participants provided them with experiences to draw implications to enhance the operation of CAN and other parts of the SVDPSW LAC Program. SVDPSW LACs reported that they had learnt from the participants practical experiences about navigating support services.

Participants said that they appreciated staff who exhibited two qualities they defined as essential to good cultural responsiveness – dedication and competency to achieve the goals of the LAC

service. This finding emphasises the priority of framing culture within wider quality goals such as person-centred practice.

Facilitators of CAN outcomes

Organisational facilitators

- Consistency between the way cultural responsiveness was conceptualised in the design of CAN Strategy and the practices implemented in the CAN sessions.
- Continuous reflective learning and prompt action putting responses into practice

Project facilitators

- Dedicated LAC CALD Engagement Officer experienced in culturally responsive practice and SVDPSW LAC staff who expressed interest in CAN
- Partnering with other NDIS stakeholder organisations that participated in the sessions and Local Councils
- A language and culture friendly environment

1 Introduction

The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in 2013 was considered one of the most significant social policy reforms in Australia. The NDIS aims to enhance the independence of people with disability, improve social inclusion by providing greater opportunities of employment, education and training, as well as increase their social and emotional wellbeing (NDIS, 2017). In the era of NDIS, the historical underrepresentation and shortage of quality disability services for people with disability from culturally diverse backgrounds remains a problem (Heneker, Zizzo, Awata, & Goodwin-Smith, 2017; Senaratna, Wehbe, & Smedley, 2018; Zhou, 2016). What is more, it has been argued that the emphasis of personalised services and self-empowerment in the context of NDIS means that it may be more difficult for people from culturally diverse backgrounds to access high quality NDIS services (Purcal, Fisher, & Meltzer, 2016; Soldatic, van Toorn, Dowse, & Muir, 2014). Earlier research has focused on poor accessibility and quality of NDIS disability support for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. New research is needed about how to organise culturally responsive disability support in the context of NDIS.

Since the NDIS roll out, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has partnered with a range of community-based organisations nationwide to deliver Local Area Coordination (LAC) services. SVDPSW is supported by the NDIA as a PITC to deliver the LAC Program in the service areas of Sydney, South East Sydney, South West Sydney, Central Coast and Hunter New England. SVDPSW's mission to offer a "hand up" to people in need of support and its vision to shape a more just and compassionate society give the SVDPSW LAC Program an ongoing drive to improve the experience of NDIS participants including people from CALD backgrounds. In addition, SVDPSW delivers the Ability Links NSW program in the Hunter, Central Coast and Sydney Metro South regions. Ability Links NSW provide free services to promote inclusion in the community. The services support people with disabilities, their families and carers to fulfil their goals by linking them with businesses and organisations in the community to make shared spaces physically and socially accessible.

One initiative of the SVDPSW LAC Program to provide culturally responsive LAC support is the CAN Strategy. Launched in March 2018, the CAN Strategy has three goals:

1. Equip participants from CALD backgrounds with the skills and knowledge to engage effectively with the NDIS
2. Develop a network of relationships with key stakeholders and participants from culturally diverse backgrounds
3. Enhance SVDPSW Local Area Coordinators' (LACs) knowledge about cultural responsiveness

The CAN Strategy was developed by the SVDPSW LAC CALD Engagement Officer to pilot an approach to provide regular support to participants, carers and family members from language groups that were significantly represented in the SVDPSW LAC districts. This includes participants, carers and family members with Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese and Vietnamese speaking backgrounds. Another factor in selecting these language groups was the significant representation of people who 'don't speak English well' or 'don't speak English at all' aged in the 0–65 age range. SVDPSW LAC utilises other strategies across the Program to reach other

language groups for example, developing multilingual resources and working with community groups and services to tailor responses most suitable for certain language groups.

Some of the models that were reviewed in the process of designing the CAN Strategy included:

- Peer support models (for example, peer support models developed by Diversity and Disability Alliance)
- Social networking theories
- Feedback from community consultations
- Community advisor models developed by the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (VFST); and
- Lessons learned in other projects the SVDPNWS LAC CALD Engagement Officer had worked on

The project has two stages. Stage one was March–December 2018. The focus of this stage was to test the CAN model's workability and suitability to the target language groups. Stage two is February 2019–June 2020 where the SVDPNWS LAC Program will modify the CAN strategy based on the feedback from stage one. Continuity of the CAN strategy after June 2020 relies on recommissioning the LAC Program from NDIA to SVDPNWS NSW.

The CANs run at the following venues: The Bryan Brown Theatre and Function Centre in Bankstown library for the Arabic and Vietnamese group, Campsie Library and Knowledge Hub for the Mandarin group, and the Hurstville Library for Cantonese group. A new CAN for the Arabic community in Liverpool was established in December 2018 resulting in five CANs the SVDPNWS LAC program facilitate. Each CAN session is about three hours, with three parts: information delivery, morning tea and networking, and one-to-one consultation with the SVDPNWS LACs. The sessions are designed for five to twenty participants. In stage one, four to six professionals were available in each session:

- Facilitator: the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Engagement Officer (the officer)
- Guest speaker for the information delivery section: SVDPNWS LAC or a representative from other NDIS stakeholder organisations
- Interpreter
- SVDPNWS LACs who expressed interest in CAN: two or three SVDPNWS LACs, with at least one who speaks the participants' language. They were available for one-to-one consultations with participants about engaging with NDIS.

By the end of 2018, the SVDPNWS LAC Program had facilitated 23 sessions for approximately 291 people with disability and their families from the four cultural communities.

The SVDPNWS LAC Program collaborated with the Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney) to conduct a preliminary case study on the CAN sessions for Australian Chinese people speaking Mandarin or Cantonese. The purpose of the research was to explore how the SVDPNWS LAC Program responded to the needs and preferences of Australian Chinese communities in the context of NDIS.

The research collaboration focused on the Australian Chinese communities for two reasons. First, the research team acknowledged the diversity within culturally diverse communities and decided to focus on one cultural community. Second, the research team had a bilingual researcher who speaks Chinese and English, which made it easier to build rapport with the Australian Chinese participants and collect data.

The research collaboration runs from September 2018 to June 2019. The research was a qualitative case study that collected voices from all parties involved in CAN, especially from the Australian Chinese people with disability and their families. The methods are summarised in Appendix 1.

This report presents the findings about how CAN operated in stage one. The following sections present findings about the following aspects:

- Rationale of CAN
- Operational logic of CAN
- Outcomes of CAN
- Challenges encountered
- Facilitators of positive outcomes

The CAN strategy is one of several ways the SVDPSW LAC Program is seeking to engage, support and build capacity amongst CALD communities. Other strategies include developing resources, working in partnership with multicultural groups, training, resourcing and supporting SVDPSW LACs SVDPSW and developing effective policies and procedures. SVDPSW recognises that long-term engagement of CALD communities requires a whole of program approach.

2 Rationale and operation of CAN

This section describes the rationale and operational logic of CAN in stage one. It outlines the understanding of cultural responsiveness applied by the SVDPNSW LAC Program managers, followed by a summary about CAN's operational approach. The research data suggested that the SVDPNSW LAC Program operated CAN with a co-production approach consistent with their plans and goals for cultural responsiveness.

Rationale of CAN

The SVDPNSW LAC managers seemed to reach a consensus on their approach to how to become culturally responsive¹. The organisation's role was to find on-going ways to learn about the Australian Chinese participants' unmet needs and ways to address these needs by partnering with them. The organisation's goals for the Australian Chinese participants were to enhance their capacity to better navigate NDIS and form sustainable support. A manager said:

We need to understand who the people are we are dealing with; we need to have really close connection with people within community, develop trust within the community; we need to do a lot of listening, to actually hear what people are saying... Also have a level of humility to take on feedback and make changes we need to. Because over time people's needs will change and we need to hear that and hopefully can respond to it.

As the groups mature and develop. The groups themselves decide how they will continue ... Different ones run in different ways ... I don't think it is a problem if one group says no I want a 6-week time frame or 8-week time frame, or I am ready to stop. And then another group ... becomes a friendship group and they go out for coffee, and they meet now and then. I think there is a room for lot of this. And that is healthy, that is how groups operate in communities ... It really depends on the needs of people within that group.

The managers reported that the SVDPNSW LAC Program's role in CAN was twofold: ongoing learning about participants' needs and suitable ways to meet the needs; and partnering with participants for the learning purposes. The SVDPNSW LAC CALD Engagement Officer explained how the two roles intertwine. They designed CAN so that cultural responsiveness had multiple phases. At each phase, organisation learnt new knowledge by working with the participants. The learning activities were intended to enhance organisation-participant partnership which triggered the next phase of learning:

My understanding of cultural responsiveness is that there is a component of on-going learning about what you are doing. The old term is cultural competence which indicates that you have already been arrived, you have already been an expert. You don't have much more to learn. Whereas culturally responsive is more about being on a continuum of learning around how to work with cultural diversity ... It is not making big assumptions as just because people are from Chinese background they will like things in a certain way ... It is also about what you can do to make environment more welcoming as well ... CAN has

¹ We interviewed three managers from the LAC Program: a senior manager, a middle level manager and CALD engagement officer.

many phases. The more you build rapport with people, the more you can introduce these [learning] opportunities.

The managers explained that the participants play two roles in the helping organisations achieve cultural responsiveness: shaping organisation's learning path by informing the SVDPNSW LAC staff about their unmet needs and how they would like them to be met; and informing the staff and each other what support would help them to independently and sustainably navigate the NDIS. A manager said:

Whenever we have these goals like capacity building, it's always in terms of what the particular capacity of that group is ... Let them grow organically as well. So that becomes a way of ultimately handing over all to the participants ... We need to guide them in the early stages, but the ultimate goal would be to be able pass it over to the groups, so that they can manage themselves. They can still invite us back, to get information if they need it to get some support if they need it ... a kind of self-sustaining.

Operational logic of CAN

The way CAN operated demonstrated top down facilitation of how the SVDPNSW LAC managers conceptualised cultural responsiveness. The SVDPNSW LAC Program staff learnt by working with the Australian Chinese participants and adjusting the CAN processes in response to the new knowledge gained from the reflective practice. They also gradually developed the relationship with the participants, which facilitated the continued rounds of organisational learning and cultivated the partnership with participants. The following description outlines the two core components of CAN's operational logic: ongoing learning through reflective practice and relationship building with participants.

1. Continuous reflective learning and prompt responses into practice

A strong sense of continuous reflective learning and prompt action was found across the SVDPNSW LAC managers and all aspects of the way CAN operated. The senior manager commented:

[CAN] grew from a need and a way of addressing the need ... doing something and asking, is this meeting your needs and what would you like, getting some agreement and getting some buying from people.

Before CAN Strategy, the SVDPNSW LAC Program ran a series of general information sessions called 'Making the Most of My NDIS Plan' across the SVDPNSW LAC service districts. The SVDPNSW LAC Program selected topics and delivered NDIS information to people with disability and their families. The sessions in the culturally diverse communities were similar to those in other communities. The middle manager noted that the attendance rate in culturally diverse communities was lower. This result indicated to her that groups from culturally diverse backgrounds needed supports that were tailored to their needs:

Unless we have particular workshops for different language groups with interpreters, it would be very unusual for different language groups to come to our general workshops.

The senior manager stated that three characteristics of the way CAN operated were based on the feedback from participants with culturally diverse backgrounds to 'Making the Most of My NDIS

Plan'. The characteristics were fixed frequency, time and venue of sessions; tailored contents for groups from culturally diverse backgrounds; and social networking:

Initially we had one session when we did manage to connect with people and communities and started to get people in. Sometimes they would say that could we come back, and by the way could you talk about X.

And also in some of the early sessions, sometimes people came and they know each other ... But in other times as presenters were talking to people, people in the room would connect, and saying "I have similar issues" or "when that happened to me, I did this and that". They were starting to make tenuous connections between people who did not actually know each other. So it was almost a natural point then to say well ok, why don't we bring this group back again ... Going from that you will see a model ... We put it out there and bring people in.

After the launch of CAN Strategy, the SVDPNWS LAC Program staff kept learning from and putting into practice new responses to ensure each session was participant-centred. Each CAN session had a theme that largely stemmed from the participants' feedback. During each session, the officer listened to the topics participants discussed or asked about the most, and suggested a theme for the next session to solicit their opinion about it. The SVDPNWS LAC CALD Engagement Officer also made constant adjustments based on the participants' comments. For example, in one session the SVDPNWS LAC CALD Engagement Officer introduced how to search for services. All the websites were in English, so in the next session, the officer highlighted the websites that had Chinese channels and included their snap shots on the handouts. Similarly, the SVDPNWS LAC CALD Engagement Officer noticed the interpreters' attitudes and participants' comments about the interpreters so that she could select the ones who were most effective.

The SVDPNWS LAC Program established various formal learning resources to support CAN.

- The SVDPNWS LAC CALD Engagement Officer facilitated a SVDPNWS LAC CALD Engagement Working Group with colleagues from various SVDPNWS LAC offices. The group met monthly to develop learning resources for CAN.
- The SVDPNWS LAC Program organised an external CALD Engagement Reference Group. The reference group included NDIA, a peer mentor from a user led service, two advocacy organisations for people with disability from culturally diverse backgrounds and a multicultural peak body. The LAC CALD Engagement officer frequently updated the reference group on CAN's operation and sought advice.
- The SVDPNWS LAC Program collaborated with SPRC to examine the operation and intended outcomes of CAN.
- In December 2018, the SVDPNWS LAC CALD Engagement Officer organised an end of year reflective meeting with three SVDPNWS LACs who attended some CAN sessions. They reflected on CAN's operation and brainstormed how to improve CAN in the next stage.

2. Relationship building with Australian Chinese participants

The CAN participants developed at least three types of relationships in stage one – general satisfaction with the CAN staff, trust in some SVDPNWS LACs who attended CAN sessions and a

sense of belonging to CAN. The relationships were generated by a range of factors and had multiple effects in the SVDPNWS LAC Program's learning activities.

The participants stated that they were satisfied with CAN sessions. When asked about their reasons for their satisfaction, they all mentioned two things: the language friendly environment with interpreters and bilingual SVDPNWS LACs; and the information delivered about NDIS. Most of them reported that the face-to-face consultations with SVDPNWS LACs exceeded their original expectation about just receiving information about NDIS. This feedback reinforced the accuracy of the SVDPNWS LAC Program's expectations about the participants' unmet needs and how to address them.

Some staff and participants described how trust developed in CAN. A SVDPNWS LAC described how a participant with disability came to trust the staff through CAN as the SVDPNWS LAC demonstrated her capacity to resolve his problems with NDIS. He received NDIS funding before attending CAN, but no one had checked whether he had contacted his allocated support coordinator, who did not contact him either. When he attended CAN he had not used this NDIS funding that had been available for almost three months. He expressed his helplessness to the bilingual SVDPNWS LAC at CAN, telling her that he did not know how to complain because he did not speak English and did not know how to start using his NDIS funding. After the consultation, the SVDPNWS LAC provided support, helping him to find out what caused the problem, searching for Cantonese-speaking support coordinators, and following up to ensure that he and new support coordinator made contact. These actions generated ongoing trust between the participant and the SVDPNWS LAC. He continued to call the SVDPNWS LAC occasionally, sending his greetings and updating her on his NDIS funding. Similarly, one participant said that:

The officer is very friendly. CAN is safe, trustworthy and reliable. Because of it, now I know that if I encounter any issues in NDIS, I can find professional support from them in the monthly sessions ... They are whom I trust and am willing to resort to.

It was evident that the participants' satisfaction was generated from the approach, knowledge of NDIS and follow up practices of the staff in the SVDPNWS LAC Program. The feedback about satisfaction informed the SVDPNWS LAC Program's learning responses. When the participants trusted the staff in CAN, they seemed more willing to be open with the SVDPNWS LACs about their needs, which triggered a next round of learning. A SVDPNWS LAC reported that after some participants built a rapport with her, they confided to her that they relied on CAN because they did not receive as much information from their own LACs as they did in CAN. They preferred not to confront their LACs with their dissatisfaction or raise a formal complaint.

At the time of writing this report, SVDPNWS LAC was developing a new 'Cultural Responsiveness' training module to be included in the SVDPNWS LAC induction program. It is anticipated that further training, resourcing and support for LACs in this area will continue to strengthen the capacity of staff to work effectively with participants, carers and families with CALD backgrounds.

The observation of the last sessions in 2018 indicated that participants formed a third level of relationship through a sense of belonging to CAN. New participants joined CAN each month, many of whom were recommended by the current participants. During the session break, one participant said she felt the support in CAN assisted her to feel comfortable, for example through the provision of food, hiring interpreters and inviting experienced practitioners. She stated she intended to invite

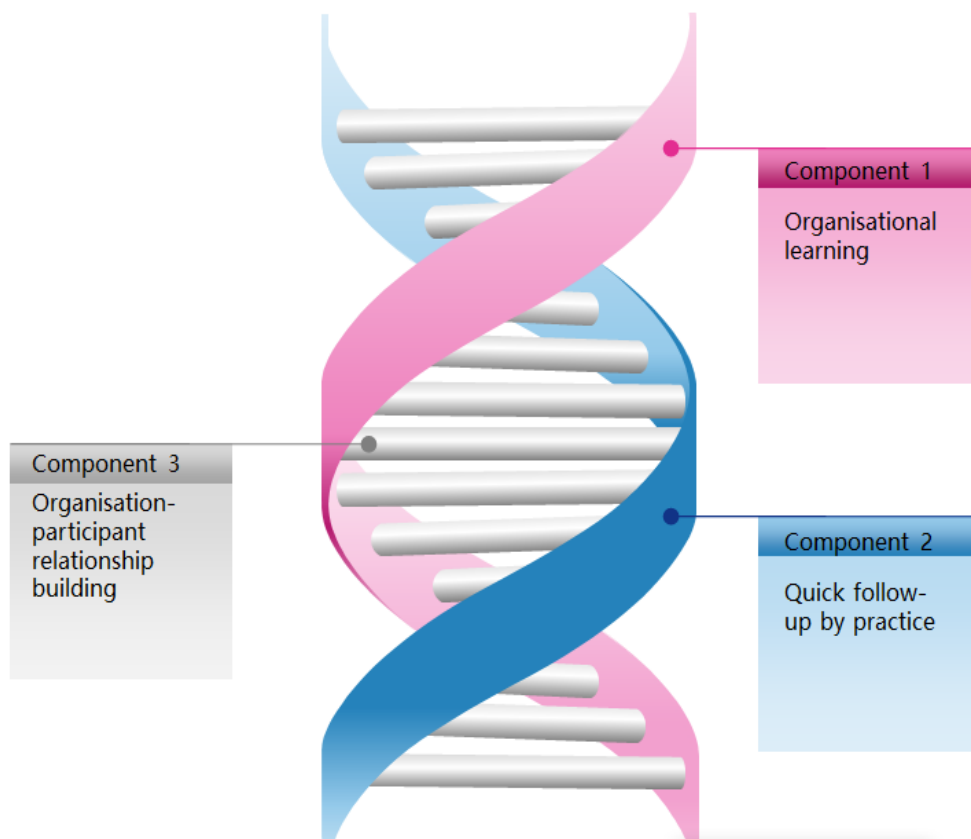
her friends to join CAN so that they could similarly benefit from the high level of support. The noted sense of belonging to CAN among some participants differed from the former two levels of relationship in that driven by the sense of ownership, the participants were observed to be willing and ready to participate more in CAN.

In the last session for Mandarin group, the officer invited the participants to comment on CAN in 2018 and provide advice for next year, all the participants participated enthusiastically. Their feedback was written on a white board and covered topics about almost all aspects of CAN. The suggestions included observations that overlapped with the suggestions in the practitioner interviews. For example, participants suggested the SVDPSW LAC CALD Engagement Officer arrange an interpreter who speaks both Mandarin and Cantonese. They said that this arrangement might enhance the efficiency of CAN sessions because more Australian Chinese participants could receive the same information from each session and have more opportunities to meet peers.

Summary

CAN's operation was a co-production approach which embodied how the SVDPSW LAC managers conceptualised cultural responsiveness. As demonstrated by Figure 1, the operation of CAN in the past nine months formed a complete round of co-production between the SVDPSW LAC Program and participants. At this round, the SVDPSW LAC Program learnt by working with Australian Chinese participants, reflecting on practice and responding with practice change. The Program staff gradually developed relationships with the participants, which led to further rounds of organisation learning.

Figure 1 Co-production approach of the operation of CAN



3 Outcomes from CAN

The research suggested that CAN was on track to achieve its intended outcomes. Both the Australian Chinese participants and staff of the SVDPNWS LAC Program appeared to gain benefits from CAN. The achievements varied slightly across the three goals.

Equip participants from culturally diverse backgrounds with the skills and knowledge to engage effectively with the NDIS

CAN included information delivery sessions and one-to-one consultation with SVDPNWS LACs to enhance Australian Chinese participants' knowledge about NDIS and their capacity to navigate support services. In each session, the officer selected a topic about NDIS and skills to navigate the system and invited experts to deliver in-depth information about the topic. Selecting the topic was based on the participants' feedback in the previous sessions. Presentation, questions and answers and sharing personal experiences among participants were interwoven in the information delivery section.

The participants who were interviewed said they were satisfied with the knowledge they received from CAN. A carer said that even though she attended CAN twice and the topics were not the most urgent concerns to her, she still found the information was helpful because it prepared her for various challenges in the future:

I may not be able to attend all CAN's sessions. The existence of CAN eases me with less worry, because I know CAN will be waiting there to help me if I encounter any challenges.

Another example was that the SVDPNWS LAC CALD Engagement officer delivered a presentation about how to thoroughly read service agreements to protect consumer rights. The topic led to a vigorous discussion and information sharing among the participants. One participant commented:

Now I know why I suffered losses in the past. Next time, I will find an interpreter, carefully look through the agreement and negotiate with service providers.

As a compliment to the information delivery section, the personal consultation section with SVDPNWS LACs was designed to provide participants with more precise supports. Most participants stated that the personal consultations exceeded their expectations and that it was an effective arrangement. One participant commented:

Face-to-face consultation was the most meaningful section to me. It means whenever you encounter challenges, you just tell them [SVDPNWS LACs]. [Before CAN], there were so many things that I needed advice about but could not find an appropriate person to resort to. Now in CAN, I can find the persons I have been looking for ... I cherish this arrangement the most.

In the end of one session, a carer approached the LAC CALD Engagement Officer and said:

I come here, learn a lot, feel better. You are helping us. This is very good.

These appreciative comments demonstrated that CAN had enhanced the participants' knowledge about NDIS and capacity to navigate the system more confidently.

Develop a network of relationships with key stakeholders and participants from culturally diverse backgrounds

CAN employed multiple approaches to strengthen the participants' social network, such as introducing them to NDIS stakeholder organisation representatives, encouraging information sharing between the participants and facilitating opportunities for participants to socialise. Examples were that some participants approached the guest speaker from Centrelink for further consultation. The guest speaker from the Council for Intellectual Disability (CID) invited the participants to attend events hosted by CID. A participant said she valued the networking in CAN because:

Chinese families lack social networking ... Most of the time, they just don't know whom they should resort to. It's like they don't know where is a right way to get out of the maze.

A guest speaker of CAN who is from an NDIS stakeholder organisation said that she liked the design of CAN and she suggested her team to employ CAN's approach and launch projects for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. It seems that the partnership between the SVDPNWS LAC Program and other NDIS stakeholder organisations not only helped CAN meet the Australian Chinese participants' needs effectively, but also disseminated the SVDPNWS LAC Program's understanding about culturally responsiveness around the sector.

In each session, there was a 20-minute morning tea for participants, SVDPNWS LACs and guest speakers. A manager attended a session and recalled how the participants socialised during the break:

I think it [the arrangement for networking] is great, because I saw people talking and opening up to each other. They weren't just talking about food or weather, they were talking about their NDIS experiences. To me that's opening up. That's actually sharing their ideas, realizing that you are in a group where people sharing their experiences and talking about that ... There are a few people having a laugh, enjoying themselves.

Some participants with children with similar disability and age had begun to exchange some peer support. For example, two mothers met each other in the last session for 2018. They found that their sons were both teenagers and had high function autism. Even though it was their first meeting, they found many common topics and exchanged their contact details. A couple weeks later, they decided to do the research interview together. One of these mothers stated that the most two valuable benefits she reaped from CAN were the knowledge about NDIS and opportunity to meet the other mother. Most of the other participants who were interviewed reported that they did not do much socialising and follow-up networking outside the sessions because they did not find people who had similar disability needs or NDIS experiences.

The managers and SVDPNWS LACs who participated in CAN also identified a participant who might want to consider becoming a peer leader. Participants, staff and guests who were interviewed noted her willingness to share experiences about how she navigated NDIS.

Enhance SVDPNWS LACs' knowledge about cultural responsiveness

The staff benefited from CAN in various ways. The SVDPNWS LAC managers had the opportunity to learn about effective practice to improve cultural responsiveness. They tested their design assumptions about the Australian Chinese groups' unmet needs and ways to address them; and identified new enhancements to their practices. Some of the lessons were that the Australian Chinese participants seemed to take longer time than the other two cultural groups to open up with the staff about their comments on CAN and concerns about NDIS. In response, they focused more on relationship building with the Australian Chinese participants. Most participants in both the Cantonese and Mandarin groups were carers and mainly women, who were also more active in the CAN sessions than the men. These observations echo literature that cultural perception of disability affect some people's willingness to access disability support (Bronheim, Goode, & Jones, 2006).

From the perspective of frontline SVDPNWS LACs, CAN was a valuable learning opportunity. One SVDPNWS LAC reported that what she had learnt from the participants complemented the LAC Program's training and enabled her to better support her participants.

They [the participants] shared experiences about how to look for service providers and which service provider offered high quality supports. Some of what they discussed were not what you would obtain from formal [SVDPNWS LAC] training ... They also discussed how to better use NDIS, how to negotiate with service providers to modify service agreements ... We [the SVDPNWS LAC program] only have one service agreement template and it is unchangeable ... We did not provide this kind of training, so I did not have this knowledge and experience ... I learnt these things from the participants.

Participants said that they appreciated staff who exhibited two qualities they defined as essential to good cultural responsiveness – dedication and competency to achieve the goals of SVDPNWS LAC. This finding emphasises the priority they placed on framing culture within wider quality goals such as person-centred practice. The finding also suggested that factors like language and same cultural backgrounds that are highlighted in the literature were important but not sufficient (Ziguras, Klimidis, Lewis, & Stuart, 2003). The three qualities of SVDPNWS LACs that participants identified as important are discussed below.

1. Professional commitment to quality service provision

Many participants contrasted the high quality of the CAN LAC support with their experience of poor disability support elsewhere, which they attributed to professional commitment to quality service provision. A participant criticised her support coordinator:

She never actively provided thoughtful and useful information. It seems that she only cares about how to earn money from the contract. ... She has no passion to provide disability support.

Another carer recalled an unsatisfactory plan meeting she experienced:

I spent lot of time preparing many materials [for the meeting]. S/he [the LAC] did not even give the materials a glance. Once s/he arrived, s/he said, 'you don't need to talk [much], let's just fill out the forms'. S/he opened laptop, went through the questions, and announced the meeting was over. S/he just took pictures over the prepared materials

saying that s/he will have a look at them later. When the funding was allocated, it only had \$5000. We asked many service needs, and most of them were not reported to NDIA ... We did not even have core support funding ... We requested a review and received another \$1200 for core support.

The participants reported that they sensed whether a SVDPSW LAC was committed to quality support through small details. For example, a participant said that the two LACs her family worked with never approached them proactively. Yet in contrast, the CAN LAC impressed her even though they only met once:

She looks like a person who loves to help others ... You could see the passion through her eyes. When she talked about her job and disability supports, she had a passion. I could sense that passion. She told me that she liked to empower people with disability. Her words were touching.

2. Reliable support

The participants valued reliability from SVDPSW LACs who followed up their advice after the CAN sessions. A participant reported that after meeting at CAN, the SVDPSW LAC sent her an email introducing a peer support group that the SVDPSW LAC mentioned on the session. However, another participant mentioned that a SVDPSW LAC promised to give her a follow up phone call, but she waited all afternoon and did not receive the call.

A SVDPSW LAC stated that the participants she worked with were from diverse cultural backgrounds and she seemed to have established trust with them. Some of them called her occasionally to say hello and even invited her for afternoon tea. She said she developed trust through trying to see the participants' perspective and proactively conducting follow ups:

What a responsible LAC would do was to make a follow up call and ask him 'Hey, how are you going?', checking whether the support coordinator had contacted him. In theory, we LACs didn't have to do the follow up because we had handed over the [man's] case to the support coordinator ... After recommending the gentleman to an organisation which would arrange him a new support coordinator, I did one more thing. I called the organisation and asked them whether they had Cantonese-speaking support coordinators. I told them [about the problems] the gentleman encountered in the past ... I was afraid he might not be able to clearly explain his situation to them or he might say something wrong because he himself was confused about NDIS. ... [Although not my responsibility], I still did these things.

3. Professional knowledge

The participants' comments suggested that they expected to see more SVDPSW LACs with relevant knowledge and good communication skills. A carer recalled why one of the SVDPSW LAC presenters had left a deep impression to her:

I have attended many workshops about NDIS. Today's presentation was an impressive one. The presenter delivered information very straightforward and clearly. Whenever we asked questions, the SVDPSW LAC was able to quickly provide answers or tell you where to search answers.

In summary, in the pilot stage, CAN increased the knowledge and skills of the Australian Chinese participants by delivering targeted information and personalised consultations. The participants' social networks were gradually developed through meeting NDIS stakeholder organisations at CAN. Signs of peer support were developing between some carer participants whose children had similar disability and ages. By partnering with other NDIS stakeholder organisations CAN was able to meet the participants' needs effectively and disseminate the SVDPNSW LAC Program's understanding of cultural responsiveness around the sector. CAN also benefited the managers and frontline SVDPNSW LACs who learnt how to improve their practice to be more culturally responsive.

4 Challenges

CAN achieved positive outcomes at the pilot stage, as outlined in the previous sections. This section discusses the challenges that CAN encountered, most of which have been identified by the SVDPSW LAC managers as the foci of next round of learning.

1. Managing the size and quality of CAN

Both the SVDPSW LAC managers and some participants planned to reach out more Australian Chinese people with disability and their families so that more people could benefit from CAN. However, several participants were concerned that increasing the size could compromise the quality of CAN because more participants could reduce the time for one-on-one consultation with SVDPSW LACs. They suggested that this tension between size and quality could be addressed by:

- Setting up participation norms such as time limits for each person in open discussions and face-to-face consultations
- Facilitating group discussions for participants to share information
- Encouraging more SVDPSW LACs to attend.

2. Reaching people with disability

The SVDPSW LAC managers noted that in the Chinese groups, fewer people with disability attended than carers. They suggested:

- Using the existing relationship foundations between Ability Links NSW and people with disability from Chinese background to attract more participants
- Conducting public information sessions about disability in Chinese communities to address potential barriers for people with disability to external support
- Using public media and traditional events in Chinese communities to publicise CAN
- Supporting participants to become champions of CAN.

3. Variable participation

Topics for each session were chosen through discussion between the officer and the participants based on their interest in the previous one. Sometimes participants who expressed the interest were not able to attend the next one and the topic was not the urgent concern for the participants who did. They made suggestions to address the inconsistency:

- Making a list of topics of the next couple sessions and informing participants in advance so that they could arrange their schedules to attend the sessions relevant to them
- Choosing topics that have general interest so they are relevant to most participants.

4. Addressing participants' contextual concerns

Some concerns that the participants expressed were beyond the scope of SVDPSW LAC support. For example, the participants complained that some service providers provided poor

quality services. The participants also mentioned some systematic issues about NDIS, such as high turnover of LACs, and some NDIS policies seeming rigid and not person-centred. Solutions they suggested to ease their concerns included:

- Inviting guest speakers from disability advocacy organisations and NDIA
- Running panel discussions on particular topics and inviting relevant organisations.

5. Peer support group and sustainability

The participants particularly valued enhancing their NDIS knowledge and skills from the CAN staff and speakers. The secondary source of information through peer support within the Australian Chinese groups seemed to be slower than the other groups. Three suggestions could be explored in the next stage:

- Fostering particular connections between participants who have similar support needs or familiarity with NDIS; some networking and peer support between some carers is developing along these groupings
- Providing opportunities and encouraging the participants to contribute actively in CAN sessions; examples are naming their role, such as CAN learning partners, inviting participants to co-host the information delivery and inviting them to become members of the SVDPNWS LAC Program's external reference group
- Providing training support to potential peer facilitators.

6. Extending the value of CAN to SVDPNWS

The SVDPNWS LAC managers observed the potential generalisable benefits of the CAN practice experiences to the SVDPNWS LAC Program and SVDPNWS to improve practices in other services about cultural responsiveness, person centred support, NDIS related practice and co-production processes. Understanding how to extend these benefits and sustain them in CAN and the rest of SVDPNWS NSW remains an untapped opportunity. Two possible suggestions were:

- Developing CAN as a training base for SVDPNWS LACs by allocating junior LACs to do shadowing in CAN
- Inviting CAN's LACs and participants to present in SVDPNWS's internal training about cultural responsiveness.

5 Facilitators of positive outcomes

The research identified factors that facilitated CAN's success at organisational and project levels.

Organisational facilitators

- Consistency between the way cultural responsiveness was conceptualised in the design of CAN and the practices implemented in CAN
- Continuous reflective learning and prompt action putting responses into practice.

These two factors built trust in CAN from the Australian Chinese participants because they demonstrated the SVDPSW LAC Program's commitment to the co-production process and respect of Australian Chinese communities. The approach of the SVDPSW LAC Program and the relationships formed in CAN contributed to a continuous learning process for the SVDPSW LAC Program to pursue cultural responsiveness.

Project facilitators

- Dedicated session facilitator experienced in culturally responsive practice and SVDPSW LAC staff who expressed interest in CAN

The successful implementation of CAN seemed to be due to the staffing structure. The Australian Chinese participants expressed appreciative comments about the quality of their approach. The participants commented on their commitment to the SVDPSW LAC service goals and their preparedness to learn new ways to enhance their work competency.

- Partnering with other NDIS stakeholder organisations that participated in the sessions and local Councils

The partner organisations made two contributions to the positive outcomes of CAN. First, they supported CAN's operation, such as recommending and identifying prospective participants, providing in-kind venue for CAN sessions, and helping address participants' needs by delivering presentations on CAN. Second, they helped improve CAN at strategic level by participating in the research project and joining the SVDPSW LAC Program's external reference group. What is more, the partnership with other organisations helped disseminate the SVDPSW LAC Program's implementation of culturally responsive support around the sector.

- A language friendly environment

The Australian Chinese participants reported that they were initially attracted by CAN's language friendly arrangements, such as bilingual SVDPSW LACs and interpreters. In addition, it seemed that what they valued most was the organisation's dedication and competence to deliver high quality SVDPSW LAC services. In this light, CAN's language resources were perceived by the participants as one of the basic tools that demonstrated CAN's capacity to better support Australian Chinese people with disability and their families.

Appendix 1 Research methods

This section presents a brief summary of the methods employed by the research.

1. Ethical considerations

The research was a qualitative case study and incorporated inclusive research principles to prioritise the voices from Australian Chinese people with disability and their families. The research team acknowledged the importance of disability inclusive research practice (Fisher & Robinson, 2010) so that people with disability and their families could actively engage in providing a valid evidence base that can inform CAN's operation at next stage. The research team followed the principles of the National Disability Research and Development Agenda, which reflects the UNCRPD and refines knowledge from international research experience.

The research complied with ethical standards outlined in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007). In the research, ethical conduct included recruitment of research participants at arm's length from the research team, collecting observation data after receiving consent from the research participants, providing bilingual version of information sheet, and protecting the research participants' personal privacy. The methodology outlined in this report have been approved by the UNSW Australia Ethics Committee, approval number HC 180366.

2. Data collection

The data collection methods comprised observations and semi-structured interviews with the parties involved in CAN, including the Australian Chinese participants, representatives of NDIS stakeholder organisations who were invited to CAN, SVDPNSW LACs who attended CAN session for Australian Chinese groups, and SVDPNSW LAC managers. The sample sizes are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Research participants

	Number
Australian Chinese participants:	
Cantonese group	3
Mandarin group	6
Representatives of NDIS stakeholder organisations	2
LACs who attended CAN Australian Chinese sessions	3
LAC managers	3
Total	17

The SVDPNSW LAC Program allowed a bilingual researcher (Qian Fang, SPRC) to join CAN sessions for the Australian Chinese participants. The fieldworker started collecting observation data from September 2018. The observation notes focused on: the topic and structure of each session; how research participants engaged in each session, including their comments, interactions with the officer, SVDPNSW LACs and peers; the research participants' informal

communications with the fieldworker; and the fieldworker's reactions to the observations at the sessions. The aim of collecting observation data was to explore how the SVDPNSW LAC Program operated CAN to achieve the planned goals.

The topics of interviews included research participants' reflections or comments on the CAN sessions; and understandings about the cultural responsiveness of SVDPNSW LAC and other NDIS stakeholders. The aim of conducting interviews was to collect participants' understandings of the cultural responsiveness of NDIS and SVDPNSW LAC service provision, and the implications of CAN sessions for enhancing the experience of participants, families and communities.

Inclusive methods were used to facilitate the participation of people with disability and their families in the research. Interview questions were flexible and adjusted by the researchers according to the communication needs, capacity and preferences of the research participants. The research team developed bilingual versions of the information and consent forms written in plain English and Chinese to ensure that the research participants were more comfortable in participating in the research.

3. Data analysis

The research employed thematic analysis and grounded theory to analyse data. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the themes associated with the research participants' understandings of culturally responsive supports and outcomes from CAN. Grounded theory was applied to identify the rationale and operational logic of CAN.

4. Reporting

The draft report will be delivered in the end of February 2019 and amended with comments from the SVDPNSW LAC Program, the Australian Chinese participants and other stakeholders as agreed. The final report will be provided to the SVDPNSW LAC Program in April. With the permission of the SVDPNSW LAC Program, the report will be published online. In addition, the report may be distributed specifically to disability advocacy organisations for dissemination and enhance awareness of culturally responsive disability services.

A summary of the findings will be returned to the research participants. The summary will be in bilingual form written in plain English and Chinese. In consultation with the SVDPNSW LAC Program, the research findings will also be disseminated through conference, seminar presentations, forums and journal articles.

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