

Guide to effectively engaging with CALD communities based on lessons learned during COVID-19: Centacare FNQ



Settlement
Council
of Australia

AT A GLANCE

Target participants: Health and Settlement stakeholders and their networks across six regions in Queensland.

Aim of program: To create a guide, reflective of the lessons learnt from COVID-19 that is culturally appropriate and responds effectively to the needs of communities across Queensland during the pandemic as well as future crises.

Organisations involved:

Centacare FNQ, Refugee Health Network QLD, Communicable Disease Control / Tropical Public Health Services, Sexual Health Cairns Hinterland Hospital Service, Toowoomba Refugee & Migrant Services, Preventative and Prison Health, West Moreton Health Services, Brisbane South Primary Health Network, Multicultural Communities Council Ltd Gold Coast, Multicultural Families Organisation, Townsville Multicultural Support Group, Townsville Hospital & Health Service, Multicultural Australia, QPASTT and Dr Paul Schmidt.

Location: Queensland wide – led by Centacare Far North Queensland (FNQ) with the support of Refugee Health Network QLD

Funding: Queensland Health through the CALD COVID-19 Health Engagement Project (CCHEP) and Refugee Health Network QLD



CALD Community Leaders along with Local Government Leaders, Centacare FNQ Staff celebrate Community Information Day

INTRODUCTION

From May 2022 – March 2023 the project worked across six different regions of Queensland to develop a guide of engagement for working effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. Our work was reflective of the lessons learned during the pandemic and informed by both frontline services and communities. We used their learned perspectives on how to build capabilities and respond to this next phase of 'living with COVID-19'.

The project identified innovative local initiatives and examples of community engagement best practice. These initiatives were driven by a deep understanding of community and had contributed significantly to the resilience of Queensland throughout the pandemic.

The Project incorporates the shared key engagement principles as a fundamental guide in engaging CALD Communities. Our approaches are reflective of respectful relationship building and strong community-led resilience. The project outcome delivered a living resource guiding a broad range of stakeholders (including government) on how to work effectively with CALD communities on matters of health.



Fabien Rwigema from Centacare FNQ Youth Engagement Team receives COVID-19 vaccination at Community Vaccination Day

OUTCOMES

The initial outcome of this project is the development of a guide of engagement, empowerment and a living toolkit available online for users. This included developing new models of engagement such as:

- **Triangle of Trust Model**: Created as part of the Engagement Framework, this model captured the key themes for better understanding and working with community - *Engagement, Empathy and Empowerment*. The three themes were seen to be connected by the shared value of Trust. Trust is essential for a community to have confidence in a service, and to drive their genuine partnership in achieving best outcomes for community members.
- **Tree of Empowerment Model**: Settlement services and community leaders provided rich information through a range of consultations on their experiences throughout the pandemic. The project team used this information and learnings to build a complementary Community Engagement Model called the Tree of Empowerment - that can be used as a tool for building strong relationships that lead to empowered communities.
- **A living Toolkit** (an online resource) was launched virtually on 20th March 2023. The Toolkit encompasses a range of regional case studies and practical tools around community consultation, community engagement, community and community leader resilience. (See links below).

Eventual outcomes and impact for organisations and communities will be evaluated in the future.



The Triangle of Trust



Tree of Empowerment and Triangle of Trust models

POINT OF DIFFERENCE

The project built the capacity of a broad range of stakeholders to engage better with CALD communities. This is unique from most initiatives, which target CALD communities to improve their engagement with systems. This approach makes systems more accessible overall. CCHEP had a State-wide focus, including working with regional stakeholders across Queensland to facilitate effective and appropriate engagement and responses to the pandemic within the CALD communities.

CCHEP honoured the Queensland regions and their unique relationships and experiences with their local communities, many of whom have supported their CALD communities through a range of environmental crises over the last decade, by allowing the project to be regionally led.



Leah Nizeyimana a Congolese new arrival in FNQ receiving support on Community Information Day

KEY LEARNINGS

1. Trust is essential for a community to have confidence in a service, and to drive their genuine partnership in achieving best outcomes for community members.
2. Engagement goes beyond interacting with a community unilaterally. It is individualized and relational based, involving open-mindedness and a genuine willingness to collaborate.
3. Engagement is underpinned by a strengths-based approach.
4. An empathic approach to connection is about authentic relatability, deeply entrenched in a genuine willingness to listen and adapt one's attitude and actions. Taking an empathic approach is to go beyond ensuring there is no language barrier. An empathic approach to community is one which recognises that community perspective, and a respect, understanding and adaptability of systems to how a community lives, will lead to better and more sustainable outcomes.
5. Empowerment respects the autonomy and innate strengths of CALD communities. Empowered communities decide the support they need that is right for them.
6. Regional experience through COVID-19 offers valuable best practice approach to effective and sustainable community engagement and it should play an important role in dialogue around whole of community engagement and approach.

For more information visit:

<https://www.refugeehealthnetworkqld.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/A-Guide-to-effectively-engaging-with-CALD-communities-Based-on-lessons-learnt-during-COVID-19.pdf>

<https://www.refugeehealthnetworkqld.org.au/learnings-about-cald-engagement-during-covid-19-in-qld/>

<https://www.refugeehealthnetworkqld.org.au/cald-covid-health-engagement-project/>