

African Communities Action Group (ACAG)

Terms of Reference

Background

Strengthening Families, the training program piloted in 2008 under the Toowoomba Multicultural Child Protection Project, has built a platform for reinforcing positive family functioning in the Sudanese community.

The three training modules, Child Rearing and Family Functioning, Youth, and Cultural Transition and Gender Relations, have a recognised and accepted delivery profile, based on the collaborative efforts made by the service providers, Sudanese Elders and participants involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of these modules.

To further the work of *Strengthening Families*, a key recommendation from the Project's evaluation report, unanimously adopted by participating agencies, was to establish:

a consortium of agencies' conveners to coordinate, promote and deliver a calendar of *Strengthening Families* workshops to meet the needs of men, women and youth in the Sudanese community and build on the successful pilot outcomes.

In response to this recommendation, in late 2008 the African Communities Action Group (ACAG) was formed, made up of key regional agencies and service providers.

The role of ACAG is to extend the delivery of the *Strengthening Families* modules to African community members and ensure that the quality of training is maintained.

In 2009, ACAG begins a journey in community sustainability. In delivering the *Strengthening Families* training, ACAG will forge closer links among agencies developing policies and programs for new and emerging communities in Toowoomba and surrounding areas.

Terms of Reference

The aims of the African Communities Action Group are to:

- facilitate the delivery of the *Strengthening Families* training modules within the African communities, to obtain a high level of stakeholder collaboration and community participation
- support agencies delivering *Strengthening Families* training by:
 - maintaining a register of suitable trainers
 - brokering cross-cultural and interpreter training for agencies and trainers
 - advising on participant recruitment
 - maintaining a register of past participants
 - sourcing appropriate workshop venues
 - coordinating a calendar of training

- overseeing promotion and publicity
- receiving and acting on evaluation reports, structured by ACAG, from agencies delivering training
- coordinating other arrangements necessary for successful delivery of training
- liaise with the Sudanese Elders and participants on issues arising out of training events and assist in developing an appropriate response to these issues
- ensure consistency in training delivery across participating providers by monitoring performance and assessing outcomes against agreed measures
- reflect systematically on the practice of collaboration as training progresses, to enhance agencies' capacity for sustainable future delivery
- undertake program reporting to identified stakeholders, including African community members and relevant government and non-government agencies.

Policy framework and commitments

The work of ACAG will be guided by the Queensland Government's Department of Communities Multicultural Action Plan 2008-2009.

The Queensland Government has also recognised particular challenges for people in Queensland with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and has identified three priorities, applicable to all funded government departments and service agencies, and to be addressed through their Multicultural Action Plans for 2008-2009.

The three priorities are:

- refugee issues, particularly among African refugees
- Pacific Islander communities' issues
- accessibility of services provided by Government funded nongovernment organisations to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Life span and review

The ACAG Terms of Reference will guide the group's work for the twelve month operating period from January to December 2009.

The Terms of Reference will be formally reviewed in January 2010.

The *Strengthening Families* Project for 2009 will be reviewed on the basis of evaluation reports provided to ACAG members delivering training throughout the year, and other feedback.

Exclusions

The following will not be part of the role and aims of ACAG:

- to make changes to the overall purpose of ACAG prior to the review of its Terms of Reference in January 2010
- to act as a non-specific forum for news and information exchange concerning general CALD community issues.

Meeting procedures

- ACAG meets once a month over its operating period, unless otherwise agreed at the previous meeting
- Meetings do not exceed 2 hours
- Meetings follow standard meeting procedures
- The Chair prepares and distributes a written agenda at least 7 days before a meeting
- Members may provide new agenda items for meetings, out of session. These items must be forwarded to the Chair ACAG for inclusion in the agenda no later than 7 days prior to the meeting. The Chair distributes meeting minutes to all members within the following week
- The Chair manages the ACAG membership and communications lists (including the names, addresses, phone numbers and a brief description of services provided)
- A copy of the Terms of Reference may be provided by the Chair to agencies who are not ACAG members, following a formal request by an agency manager for information on the role and aims of ACAG

Membership

- 1 ACAG is an 'action working group' tasked to coordinate delivery of the *Strengthening Families* training within a sustainable community development framework.
- 2 ACAG recognises that closer working links between ACAG member agencies will be a contributing factor in strengthening African communities' family life.
- 3 Group members will incorporate their ACAG work roles into their agency work plans and strategic directions and include ACAG outcomes in their agency reporting.

Meeting venue and times

To ensure continuity and efficiency, and to help build closer agency links, ACAG meetings times will be arranged in blocks of three meetings at the following venues:

January to April 2009

Mercy Family Services 104 South Street Toowoomba

May to August 2009

Toowoomba Advocacy and Support Centre 223 Hume Street Toowoomba

August to December 2009

East Creek Neighbourhood Centre

Proposed schedule of meetings for the 2009 term

Last Wednesday of each month

9.30 am to 11.30 am

Wednesday 25 February 2009

Wednesday 25 March 2009

Wednesday 29 April 2009

Wednesday 27 May 2009

Wednesday 24 June 2009

Wednesday 29 July 2009

Wednesday 26 August 2009

Wednesday 30 September 2009

Wednesday 28 October 2009

Wednesday 25 November 2009

Wednesday 16 December 2009

Contact for ACAG

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