



Road to Employment

Interim report

Prepared for: JFA Purple Orange

October 2021

Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Sydney

Karen R. Fisher, Sandra Gendera

Flinders University, Adelaide

Sally Robinson, June Alexander

For further information:

karen.fisher@unsw.edu.au

Acknowledgements: Ellen Fraser-Barbour, Isabella Burton Clark, Kellie Howe, Letitia Rose, Tracey Wallace

Social Policy Research Centre

UNSW Sydney NSW 2052 Australia

T +61 2 9385 7800

F +61 2 9385 7838

E sprc@unsw.edu.au

W arts.unsw.edu.au/sprc

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The Social Policy Research Centre is based in the Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture at UNSW Sydney. This report is an output of the Road to Employment evaluation study, funded by JFA Purple Orange, South Australia.

Suggested citation

Gendera, S., Fisher, K.R., Alexander, J., Robinson, S. (2021). *Road to Employment Project Interim Report*. Sydney: Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Sydney.

Words and meanings

Co-design

Short summary

Road to Employment is a 3-year Department of Social Services (DSS) funded project run by JFA Purple Orange to address barriers to employment. This interim report is about the project implementation, up until September 2021.

Road to Employment uses a lifecourse approach from childhood to adulthood to change work expectations about people living with disability. The premise of the project is that the way the community thinks about and perceives disability needs to change for people with disability to participate equally in education and work and reach their full potential. The project works with stakeholders

Executive summary

This interim report is about the implementation of the Road to Employment project. The data for this report are from April 2020 to September 2021. The report was written by UNSW Sydney and Flinders University, Adelaide with input from the senior project staff who manage and deliver the project.

Road to Employment

People with disability of all ages experience many barriers to finding and staying in work. Most people want to and can work when they receive the support and opportunities they need. The 3-year Road to Employment project uses a lifecourse approach from childhood to adulthood to change work expectations about people with disability. The premise of the project is that the way the community thinks about and perceives disability needs to change for people with disability to participate equally in education and work and reach their full potential. The project works with stakeholders in school communities, employers and workplaces to influence employment expectations.

Raising the Bar Workshops. Co-designed workshop materials and content are developed for five different audiences: parents, teachers, and young people at key points in their education and lives. Workshops are delivered to parents of pre-school aged children to raise the expectations about pre-schoolers participating in mainstream schools and classrooms. The first workshops to parents of pre-schoolers have been delivered. The workshops for year 5 and 6 and year 9 students, their parents and teachers raise expectations about future employment. A mentoring program for year 9 high-school students will also be developed to assist students to identify their employment related strengths and goals and make plans for the future. Road to Employment will deliver several workshops to the different target groups.

Employers and workplaces. Road to Employment established two industry-based Communities of Practice in finance and accounting, and in the aged care industry. These groups of people with lived experience, employers and project staff meet regularly to drive change in their industry, workplaces and organisations. The goal of the Community of Practice groups is to increase the capacity of employers to address barriers in their work practices and to create work opportunities and inclusive cultures. Employers in the Communities of Practice also have access to tailored business mentoring from JFA Purple Orange. Four employers and organisations have participated in disability inclusive mentoring and training.

Impact of Road to Employment to date

Road to Employment is half-way through the project. All planned project activities are established. The activities with employers and school communities are progressing. Key relationships with par(h)]

facilitated the project to recruit and support businesses through the disability inclusion mentoring.

The impact of the Raising the Bar workshops has relied on engagement from school leaders and interest from stakeholders such as parents, teachers and students to take part in workshops and mentoring. Maintaining and managing relationships has been a central part of the co-design process where sometimes large groups of up to 14 people with lived experience and from different professional backgrounds work together to design cohesive workshop materials. The Raising the Bar co-design group are investigating how to increase the impact of the workshops in the future, reach more parents and teachers and continue aspects of the workshops that are sustainable for the future.

Community of Practice groups and the Raising the Bar workshops are built on the principles of co-design and leadership of people with disability. The Road to Employment project employs staff living with disability and creates opportunities for leadership of people with disability across its management and governance groups. Maintaining the input and voices of parents, teachers, young people and project staff with disability has ensured that the project and its activities remain aligned with their objectives. Community stakeholders perceived that the co-design and leadership of people with disability added to the credibility and effectiveness of Road to Employment.

The project has a Steering Committee that provides advice to the project. It also has an internal project team that meets fortnightly and reports to the CEO quarterly. The team engages all staff connected to the project. This includes the Enabled Youth Disability Network who are involved in co-designing the Raising the Bar Workshops and delivering the mentoring program in schools.

Maintaining central lines of communication within and across the different parts of the project has been critical to the project's success. The project management and governance structures have connected the individual parts of the project to the whole; stakeholders feel informed and can have meaningful input; the project is linked to external resources or funding where relevant; and activities are linked to other Purple Orange programs to avoid duplication or unintended overlap (e.g., school mentoring for year 9 students).

Research is an important part of Road to Employment. Together, JFA Purple Orange and the stakeholders are delivering the project, while they and the researchers document and learn from changes to the processes and stories of significant change. This formative research means that future projects can learn from the process and outcomes of this project.

Future directions

The project could consider collecting and aggregating good practice lessons from its co-design work and group moderation - how to do it well, and make it accessible to a broader audience.

It could consider how to address sustainability and the project legacy. Questions include what activities should remain, can some activities be commercialised or expanded and how should these decisions be made (governance).

The project will need to continue to connect the separate parts of the project, and invest in promomorkested(or)7 (k)44 (es)4 (ted(pul)6 (dw (e)10s)14 9.9 (phe))TJ13.)2 (c)14 (om)7

1 Road to Employment

Structure of the report

This interim report presents findings about the implementation of the Road to Employment project in its second year; it discusses what Road to Employment is (Section 1) and how it is achieving its goals (Section 2); and outlines questions about the possible challenges and how they can be addressed (Section 3). Section 4 summarises the research framework and methods to evaluate Road to Employment. The appendix contains summaries of the project activities and data that support the findings in this report.

The project

Road to Employment is a 3-year Department of Social Services (DSS) funded project that takes a lifecourse approach to address barriers to employment. It commenced in April 2020. The project recognises that attitudes towards and of people with disability can have influence during childhood and adulthood. Action to support workforce participation can start with supporters during childhood and extend to support in workplaces during high school and adulthood to influence long term change. Road to Employment applies several processes to increase employment opportunities, improve employment practices, and influence work expectations for people with disability.

Road to Employment project				
Activities with employers		Activities with schools		
Changing employment expectations with employers and workplaces		Changing employment expectations in schools and with families		
Community of Practice aged care	Business mentoring to aged care employers	Raising the Bar co-design group		
Community of Practice finance	Business mentoring to finance and accounting companies	Working party parents of pre-school aged children	Working party year 5 & 6 parents, teachers	Working party year 9 parents, teachers
Community of Practice – future possibility		Deliver Raising the Bar co-designed workshops to parents, teachers and students in schools		

Year 9 student mentoring (r)-51 student mentoring

Disability employment

Community of Pr

Project governance – staff, management group and Steering Committee

The project has five staff members involved across the industry and school parts of the initiative. They have expertise and lived experience in disability employment and education. During the implementation phase the project established an internal project team that involves all staff on the project and senior leaders from JFA Purple Orange. This group is responsible for the day to day project decisions and communication to the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee originally met quarterly and now bi-annually. The group includes about 15 members. The Committee has diversity and representation from high policy levels, advocacy, and employment services. It includes a government representative of the SA Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family businesses; a representative of the Equal Opportunity Commission and the Disability Royal Commission, and representatives from employment services and national employer associations; as well as members of the Purple Orange team. Some members are people with disability. The Committee's priority for Road to Employment is to focus on attitudinal and systemic change by identifying change processes that are effective in schools,

2 Impact of the project

This report is about the project from April 2020 to September 2021. The planned project activities have now all been established. Activities with employers have progressed and the impact on employment opportunities are emerging for people with disability. The co-design activities in schools are well underway. One of the five Raising the Bar workshop modules is fully developed. The first two workshops to parents of pre-school children were positive. Details about the activities are in Section 3. A summary of the impact is below.

Impact on employer expectations

The project has completed most of its design phase with employers and the established two **Community of Practice (COP)** groups. Each Community of Practice has determined a goal for the group that aligns with the project objective to change expectations and create employment opportunities.

The **Finance Community of Practice** group developed a disability inclusion resource kit for small to medium size employers and launched the kit at an educational event in October 2021. The event was hosted by the Chartered Accountants of Australia and New Zealand (CAANZ) and CPA Australia. These two professional bodies commonly do not host events together. The launch was recognised as a significant achievement for the project to have secured the interest, commitment and support of both industry bodies. It was also a strong message to the sector on the importance of inclusion in the workplace.

The **Aged Care Community of Practice** focused on the griseoal h0.00(254-0458002106(12)

Resourcing for this intensive project activity, the development of the group traineeship program for the aged care sector and assistance to the five aged care

The remaining Raising the Bar modules to parents, teachers and students of primary and high school cohorts will be piloted in late 2021 and early 2022.

The mentoring for year 9 high-school students was re-organised to align with other JFA Purple Orange activities in schools. In the second half of the project, the activities to influence employment expectations in schools and with supporters will focus to deliver the workshops (up to nine times) and implement the mentoring to high school students.

program and resource kit have been essential. Connecting to resources and knowledge within the groups and externally meant they could scale up their vision beyond the individual participants.

Road to Employment includes a range of activities to achieve its objectives, which the employers benefited from. In addition to the Community of Practice, at least several finance and aged care employers chose to engage in the personalised mentoring and training in disability inclusion offered by Road to Employment. Once these employers defined the barriers they wanted to tackle, such as

4 Future directions

This section raises considerations for the ongoing implementation and strengthening of Road to Employment. The questions are based on the review of project documentation

Road to Employment is using a range of media and marketing to promote their activities and increase the impact of their work. These include videos, social media, news articles and event launches

5 Research design

Research approach and questions

The SPRC and Flinders University research team are undertaking the developmental evaluation of Road to Employment from September 2020 until March 2023.

The key research questions for this evaluation are:

1. What effect did the projects have on people with disability seeking to be employed and employment opportunities?

- extent to which the project achieves the intended outcomes (project logic)
- extent to which the project meet the grant outcome measures
- impact on workplaces, industries, teachers, parents, young people and adults with disability

2. What processes were effective for the projects to connect people to employment opportunities and to improve the expectations and practices of employers, schools, families and communities to employ people with disability: school-based workshops, mentoring, one to one support, communities of practice?

- extent of and how the project built successful partnerships
- impact of codesign and inclusive steering group on the project
- impact on the people from participating in the codesign
- how the project influences other workplaces and professionals
- lessons learnt and good pract

knowledge and iterative knowledge from the evaluation as it progresses to contribute to project improvement during the life of the evaluation. This method includes providing opportunities to share and reflect on learning with the aim of refining elements of the project.

Co-design occurs during the first part of the evaluation. The co-design process improves the evaluation approach and methods. The co-design includes collaboration between the evaluators and people from JFA Purple Orange, the Steering Committee and the Communities of Practice, including people with disability and lived experience (parents with children with disability) in all groups.

Methods, questions and rationale

The evaluation uses a mixed method design. Data is collected by the research team and members of the Road to Employment project. The aim of the research is to assess the processes and impact of the project. The main data sources include interviews with one or two stakeholders, small group discuearuderparen-10.(t)12 ()4 (, (o)-Tc 0.7 (

6 Appendix: Summaries of project activity

Part A Raising employment expectations, practices and creating opportunities for employers and people with disability.

6.1 Community of Practice (COP) Aged Care

There is a real opportunity for us, once we get some trainees on the ground, to really promote the heck out of it. I reckon there's going to be really lots of great stuff that we're going to be able to put out there. (Aged care COP stakeholder).

Members also identified a need to share resources and ideas across

recruitment round. However, though the influence of the group, exploring further changes to the Achiever program and providing employment opportunities to people living with disability remains an important priority

Disability employment

“It is so hard to find that information, to have it delivered as a free workshop is really important. Hopefully now we can deliver it many more times in different areas, to different groups of parents is really, really important. Because where else do you find that information as a parent, when you're so busy and tired and are hearing so many different things?” (Member working group party)

- Identifying specific stakeholders for the different working groups has been challenging, for example, early childhood educators for the pre-school group. Mostly the project couldakeh-3 (ng t)2 (he)-5 d (or)7 (serul)16 ()10 (t)2 (he)10 (pr)7 (e)]TJ0 T9
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essential it is important to ensure they have the support in place to participate (information is shared in advance to help people prepare), feel supported (during and after group meetings) and included in the decision-making process (input from the group is condensed and distilled).

Reflection and de-briefing are important tools for group facilitators and chairperson to undertake regularly, ideally after every co-