**Project Draft**

**Background / Approach**

Background

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) individuals with disabilities face unique barriers to accessing inclusive support services in Australia.

These barriers include:

* Limited understanding of complex systems such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
* Language and cultural barriers that hinder effective communication and navigation of services.
* Inadequate cultural competence among service providers, resulting in unmet needs.

Despite efforts by various organizations to address these challenges, gaps remain in providing personalized, culturally sensitive, and empowering solutions for CALD individuals. This is particularly true for individuals seeking assistance with life skills, employment, and community participation. **Solution Ideas Ability Boutique** seeks to bridge these gaps by prioritizing a human right-based approach that fosters independence and holistic support.

**Approach**

This project focuses on evaluating and expanding **Solution Ideas Ability Boutique’s**  service offerings to better support CALD individuals with disabilities, guided by the following scope:

1. **Restating the Problem:**

The primary challenge is ensuring that CALD individuals with disabilities can access inclusive, culturally appropriate, and comprehensive support services that empower them to lead independent fulfilling lives.

1. **Project Scope:**

The project will specifically focus on the following areas:

* **Cultural Competence Training:**

Exploring opportunities to provide training for staff and external service providers to ensure inclusivity and cultural sensitivity in service delivery.

* **Empowering Storytelling:**

Developing marketing strategies that showcase client success stories, emphasizing Ability Boutique’s commitment to human rights and diverse service offerings.

* **Transitional Housing and Skill-Building:**

Investigating the feasibility of introducing short-term transitional housing services as a complement to existing programs like Circles of Support.

* **NDIS Navigation Support:**

Strengthening advocacy and system navigation services to empower clients in accessing the support they need.

This focused approach will enable **Solution Ideas Ability Boutique** to innovate and grow while maintaining its core commitment to empowering CALD individuals with disabilities through a human right-based model.

**Case studies**

Below are the details of four particularly successful examples of companies and services provided within companies that cater to CALD disabled individuals within Australia, selected as standing out above the rest due to their alignment with Solution Ideas Ability Boutique’s values and human rights-based model. Each of the following case studies is a real success story from the clients of these organisations and each highlights an area of importance in their services that could be beneficial to Solution Ideas Ability Boutique in providing inspiration for potential empirically successful expansions to services, as well as offering a snapshot of the wide variation in client needs and the ways these are being responded to across the sector. It is important to note that it was difficult to find companies that publicly shared success stories from their clients but those that did really stood out from the crowd as demonstrating a true commitment to their clients’ wellbeing and taking pride in their services- so that in itself is an idea for a way Solution Ideas Ability Boutique could appeal to potential future clients.

**Diversity Disability Services**

- QLD based

- <https://diversedisabilityservices.com.au/>

**Disability and Employment Support for a Somali Refugee**

* **Background**: A Somali refugee with a disability struggled to find meaningful employment in Australia. The individual faced both physical limitations due to their disability and cultural barriers in the workplace, including lack of understanding about their needs.
* **Intervention**: Diversity Disability Services assisted the individual by providing tailored employment support services, including finding employers who were open to working with people from refugee backgrounds. The service also helped the individual gain disability-related support to enhance their work performance, such as workplace modifications and transport assistance.
* **Outcome**: The individual was able to secure employment with a company that provided the necessary adjustments. Diversity Disability Services continued to support the individual by facilitating communication with the employer to ensure that the workplace remained accessible and inclusive.
* **Impact**: The individual experienced greater independence and financial stability, while the employer benefitted from a more diverse workforce. The case also highlighted the importance of providing tailored support to refugees with disabilities, particularly in terms of employment opportunities.

**Australian Multicultural Community Services (AMCS)**

- VIC based

- <https://amcservices.org.au/>

**Aged Care and Disability Support for an Indian-Australian Couple**

* **Background**: An elderly Indian-Australian couple was facing challenges with the husband’s mobility issues due to age and arthritis. They were also struggling with language barriers as they were more comfortable speaking Hindi and Punjabi. The couple was unaware of the aged care and disability services available to them through the NDIS.
* **Intervention**: AMCS helped the couple navigate the NDIS system and connected them to aged care and disability services. They also arranged for a bilingual support worker who could communicate with the couple in their preferred language. The service worked closely with the couple to identify appropriate supports, including home modifications and mobility aids.
* **Outcome**: The couple received the necessary support, including a walker, home modifications to improve accessibility, and regular visits from a care worker. AMCS also ensured that the couple understood their rights and options through culturally appropriate resources.
* **Impact**: The husband’s mobility improved significantly, and the couple felt more secure and independent in their home. They also appreciated the assistance in navigating the system and the culturally respectful approach that AMCS provided.

**Access Community Services (Access)**

- QLD based

- <https://www.ssi.org.au/>

**NDIS Support for a Chinese-Australian Family**

* **Background**: A Chinese-Australian family faced difficulties in accessing the NDIS for their teenage son, who had an intellectual disability. The family’s primary language was Mandarin, and they had limited understanding of the NDIS process.
* **Intervention**: Access Community Services provided language support and case management to assist the family in applying for NDIS funding. The service worked with interpreters to ensure that all forms and documentation were understood. They also helped the family navigate the system to ensure that their son’s needs were clearly communicated to the NDIS planners.
* **Outcome**: The family successfully gained NDIS funding for their son’s therapy, support workers, and social inclusion activities. They also received regular updates and assistance from Access Community Services to ensure that the support plan remained relevant to the child’s evolving needs.
* **Impact**: The child received critical support services that improved his social skills and quality of life. The family felt empowered and confident in navigating the NDIS and disability services, and they appreciated the cultural sensitivity shown throughout the process.

**The Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health (CEH)**

- VIC based

- <https://www.ceh.org.au/>

**Training for Disability Providers**

* **Background**: Several disability service providers in Victoria were facing challenges in understanding the unique needs of clients from CALD backgrounds, including the need for interpreters and cultural competence when working with individuals with disabilities.
* **Intervention**: CEH provided training workshops and resources for disability support providers to enhance their cultural competence. The training included guidance on communication barriers, cultural sensitivities, and the use of interpreters, as well as specific strategies for working with CALD individuals who have disabilities.
* **Outcome**: Disability service providers became better equipped to meet the needs of CALD clients. They learned how to adapt their service delivery models to provide culturally safe and accessible services, ensuring individuals with disabilities received better and more inclusive support.
* **Impact:** The training improved the overall experience for CALD clients with disabilities, as service providers were able to tailor their approaches and deliver more culturally sensitive and accessible care. This led to higher client satisfaction and better health outcomes.

**Competitor Analysis**

#### **Diverse Disability Services (QLD based)**

In terms of employment services, DDS successfully supports employment for CALD individuals, including refugees, by providing tailored placements and ongoing employer liaison. For example, their work with a Somali refugee highlights their expertise in combining cultural sensitivity with practical employment solutions, such as workplace modifications and transport support.

Ability Boutique offers specialized employment mentoring programs like "Rebranding Yourself," focusing on personal development and employability. However, its employment support doesn’t currently include DDS’s level of tailored job placement and workplace adaptation. DDS’s employment support excels in addressing specific employment barriers and building employer partnerships. Ability Boutique could enhance its employment mentoring by integrating similar employer collaboration strategies and tailored workplace solutions.

In terms of accommodation and housing, DDS provides extensive housing options, including SDA and SIL, designed to improve liveability and independence. Their transitional housing program also helps participants develop life skills, such as cooking and socializing, in preparation for shared or independent living. Ability Boutique’s services do not focus on accommodation but rather on broader community participation and life skills development. Programs like Circles of Support enable individuals to build networks and achieve personal and professional goals, which can complement housing-focused programs.

**Key Takeaways**

**1. Introduce Transitional Housing Support with Skill-Building:** Ability Boutique can expand its life-skills programs by offering transitional housing services that prepare individuals for independent living. This could include short stays where clients learn essential skills like cooking, budgeting, and socializing in a supported environment. Such a service would complement their Circles of Support framework, helping participants build networks while developing independence, without needing to replicate DDS’s full housing model. This unique integration would further Ability Boutique's focus on empowerment and holistic support.

#### **Australian Multicultural Community Services (AMCS) (VIC Based)** AMCS specializes in culturally sensitive aged care and disability services, often stepping in where language and cultural barriers create roadblocks for families. Their use of bilingual support workers and resources tailored to CALD clients ensures clients like the elderly Indian-Australian couple feel respected and understood. AMCS’s success lies in navigating complex systems like the NDIS with cultural sensitivity. However, their focus is narrower - primarily on aged care and mobility. Ability Boutique’s approach to life skills development, children’s services, and community participation presents a more inclusive and future-focused model. For example, Ability Boutique’s storytelling mentoring or systemic advocacy programs touch on areas AMCS does not prioritize, such as building long-term life skills and advocating at tribunals.

**Key Takeaways**

**1. Client Storytelling as Marketing:** Both competitors excel in showing how they change lives. Ability Boutique should adopt a similar strategy by sharing detailed client narratives, highlighting its human-rights-driven model and diverse service offerings.

**2. Focus on Comprehensive Life Services:** While competitors excel in specific niches, Ability Boutique’s unique advantage is its all-encompassing support system, from life transitions to systemic advocacy. Build on this strength by emphasizing its ability to deliver empowerment beyond employment or aged care.