

EVALUATION REPORT

Needs Assessment and Action Plan Professional Development Pilot [2017-2018 Q4]

In concert with IRCC's requirement as per the *Regional Professional Development Framework*, Saskatchewan settlement sector participated in the pilot of AAISA's online PD course **Needs Assessment and Action Plan**.

Prior to participating in the said PD pilot, SAISIA canvassed all IRCC-funded service providers across Saskatchewan. In selecting learners, Saskatchewan participating agencies were encouraged to identify learners who would most benefit from the learning opportunity.

As per IRCC recommendation, 13 learners were identified for this initiative. Most of the Saskatchewan learners were Frontline staff while PD Contact per participating agency were Managers and or Executive Directors. Each participating agency agreed to provide feedback to SAISIA upon completion of the training course.

This report represents SAISIA's evaluation of the Saskatchewan learners and PD contacts' feedback as per the **2017-2018 Quarter 4 Regional Professional Development Pilot**.

Learners' Feedback:

Experience of the Course

Overall, PD learners reported to have had very good experience from participating in the online learning. However, time allotted to the course was reported as challenging. It was noted that the course was very intense and difficult to meet work commitment while following the course delivery and assigned readings.

Communication with AAISA staff before and during the course

Some learners reported to have had a very communication experience with AAISA staff, answering questions very quickly and in a professional manner. "The constant communication and quick responses motivated me to keep on continuing with the course and keep the consistency," a learner said. Notwithstanding, some challenges occurred with the Learning Management System including difficulty navigating the online platform.

Relevance of course to Learner's work

About 60% of learners reported relevance of course to their work. 40% of learners, particularly those whose frontline job is not specific to mainstream settlement services, felt left out on some of the course modules. Specifically, 3 Employment Counsellors who participated in the PD learning expressed concern in relating most of the course outline and learning activities to their work as Career Practitioners. Also, 2 settlement frontline learners noted that course facilitator did not seem to have an in-depth understanding of the realities of frontline work.

P.D. Contacts' Feedback:

Agency's experience of participating in the pilot course

Overall, Saskatchewan PD Contacts expressed satisfaction and gratitude for the opportunity. However, they [PD contacts] all shared similar concern regarding the amount of time required from learners to attend learning sessions thus making it challenging for learners to be involved in their everyday work.

Agency's experience of the online learning platform

According to PD Contacts, learners in reporting back to their agencies indicated that course modules and structure of delivery was heavier load than they had anticipated and that the training in general took up more time than was initially communicated to them.

Another learner commented about group work that needed to be complete during the session and wondered how AAISA measured learners' engagement in this regard as it was easy for people that didn't want to participate to hide behind their computer, not use their microphones etc, which made the group work challenging.

AAISA's support for participating agency

Overall, PD Contacts across SK participating agencies expresses satisfaction in relation to technical support from AAISA team. The technical support team at AAISA was really good and always able to figure out technical related issues. That said, it was reported that technical issues occurred at every session which led to learners having to log in an hour before each session and, in turn, took more time out of the day's work.

Agency's interest to participate in future online PD courses offered by AAISA

Saskatchewan participating agencies all expressed interests to participate in future PD training opportunities with the following recommendations for the attention of AAISA and IRCC:

1. **AAISA** to refine course outline to enable learners achieve quality learning objectives
2. **IRCC** to consider funding more than 1 learner per participating agency
3. **AAISA** to facilitate in-person PD courses for effective learner engagement and course delivery quality assurance
4. **AAISA** to expand Regional PD curriculum to include modules suited for Career Counsellors
5. **AAISA** to offer PD courses on specific topics such as:
 - a. Mental Health
 - b. Working with immigrant fathers to prevent violence
 - c. Licensing in regulated professions
 - d. Conflict Resolution
 - e. Trauma Informed Approach for front line workers
 - f. Support and pathfinding opportunities related to job readiness/labour market integration
 - g. Outcome measurement and evaluations
 - h. Case Management
 - i. Understanding the Settlement and Integration sector [Settlement and Integration 101]
6. **IRCC** to consider providing funds for Professional Development training opportunities beyond IRCC-funded service providers

In closing, SAISIA extends appreciation to IRCC for financially enabling Saskatchewan learners to participate in the pilot initiative. Similarly, warm appreciation to AAISA for leading the project as well as MANSO for the regional collaboration.

SAISIA