

Participant planning in the NDIS

- *Planning is a critical step in facilitating the opportunities enabled under the NDIS, especially as participants transition from clients of state systems to citizens under the NDIS. NDIS planning however is constrained by pressure of time and by participants not familiar with thinking about goals and aspirations.*
- *Reports from the ground indicate that planning does not assist participants to aspire to an ordinary life and develop strategies to implement their dreams.*
- *What can the NDIA do to improve the effectiveness of participant planning?*

The NDIA needs an alternate approach to planning.
The IAC proposes differentiating between a life plan and a funding plan.

Features of 'good' planning

- The person "owns" the planning that reflects their interests, identity, culture and aspirations.
- People who know the person well may be asked for advice and ideas.
- Professionals may be asked for advice.
- The person and those who know him/her well decide:
 - what advice is taken and acted on.
 - what is important **to** the person, not what is important **for** the person.
 - priorities and the compromises that may have to be made to put the plan into action.
- The plan is the vehicle to achieve the goal; it is not a goal in itself.
- Planning takes significant time and thought with multiple conversations, opportunities to deepen understandings, raise expectations, build visions, hear stories, consult with others, again and again.
- There is no one-way to plan. The key to positive outcomes comes from the depth of understanding and authenticity in relation to identified themes.

Features of NDIS planning

NDIS participant planning **may not** give sufficient focus to:

- active participation of the participant
- building high expectations and aspirations as a valued and contributing individual
- supporting the participant to make decisions
- active facilitation of inclusion
- identifying and strategizing ways to overcome barriers to success as well as the negative impacts of stereotypes.

An alternate approach

Differentiate between a

- life plan of goals and aspirations that maximises participation and inclusion and is developed in the context of enduring relationships
- funding plan is reasonable and necessary support to deliver the life plan.

The way forward

- The current NDIA process is considered a funding plan process with participant given an indicative budget and specific funding to develop a life plan.
- The life plan is developed in an iterative process.
- The life plan is submitted to the NDIA for approval.
- Following decisions about R&N funding package, the NDIA should devolve control and choice to the individual as to how funds spent.
- The NDIA should develop a framework to address the above.

