

Sarah Macdonald

Sarah Macdonald | LinkedIn | (0064) 27 921 8614 | Sarah@interculturalconnections.net

Professional Profile

A dynamic and purpose-driven Social Entrepreneur with skills in Learning and Development and Community Development with a unique blend of roots in Aotearoa New Zealand and a global perspective shaped by life and work experience. I develop and implement programs promoting Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) in workplaces as well as in community settings. Guided by a rights-based lens and informed by United Nations frameworks and Te Tiriti o Waitangi (New Zealand's foundational agreement between the Settler Government (British Crown) and Indigenous Māori), I am passionate about creating safe, inclusive, and transformative learning environments and driving social innovation projects that bridge cultural divides and empower individuals from all backgrounds.

With a focus on trauma-informed approaches, a deep respect for lived experiences, and the integration of *Systems Change Innovation* inspired by *The Water of Systems Change*, my work is grounded in the belief that meaningful learning emerges from courage, dialogue, and evidence-based frameworks. I specialise in innovative training design, fostering collaboration and understanding across diverse communities and organisations, and driving sustainable, actionable change.

Professional Skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialist in Intercultural Framing and Neurodiversity at Work• Specialist in Migrant and Refugee Settlement• General Learning & Development Implementation• Human Rights Based Frameworks• Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Systems Change Innovation• Te Tiriti Responsiveness and Integration• Trauma-Informed Approaches• Strategic/Inclusive Learning Design• E-learning Design & LMS Implementation• Articulate Rise• Strategic Engagement• Advocacy Planning and Campaigns• Peace Education Methodology

Professional Experience

Founder & Consultant – Intercultural Connections, <http://www.interculturalconnections.net>
2022– Present

- Lead a consultancy focused on transforming organisational culture through Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) principles.
- Provide strategic guidance to embed JEDI into organisational strategies and systems.
- Design and deliver customised training on neurodiversity, respectful communication, conflict resolution, and mental health support.
- Offer coaching and mentoring to enhance intercultural understanding and inclusive leadership.
- Collaborate with expert practitioners to deliver tailored, impactful solutions for diverse organisations.

Co-Founder, Arts Connections Oceania, <http://www.artsconnectionsoceania.com>

April 2017 – Present

- Co-founded Ethno New Zealand, organising marae-based youth music residencies.
- Facilitate international musical exchanges promoting intercultural dialogue.
- Develop community arts programming

Head of Capability, Diversity Works New Zealand, Auckland, New Zealand

November 2023 – September 2024

- Developed comprehensive DEI training strategy with blended learning methods, launching a professional accreditation programme for DEI practitioners.
- Collaborated with technical experts to create eLearning modules using Articulate Rise, tailored to Aotearoa New Zealand's cultural context.
- Established strategic partnerships with subject matter experts to align learning objectives with DEI goals.

Learning and Development Advisor, Diversity Works New Zealand, Auckland, New Zealand

August 2022 – November 2023

- Designed training programmes integrating Te Tiriti Responsiveness and cultural competency.
- Created a System Change Suite of Learning, including workshops on Systems Change Mindset, Design Thinking, Theory of Change, and Diversity Data Collection.
- Developed resources focusing on intersectionality and workplace inclusivity.

Community Sponsorship Coach, HOST International Aotearoa, Auckland, New Zealand

February 2022 – August 2022

- Co-developed training packages for Community Refugee Sponsorship Programme.
- Engaged stakeholders and promoted programme at community events.
- Supported sponsors in navigating immigration and UNHCR systems.

Stakeholder Engagement and Training, Refugees as Survivors NZ, Auckland, New Zealand

February 2018 – January 2022

- Developed and delivered trauma-informed, culturally responsive training programmes across community and professional sectors.
- Spearheaded Mental Health De-stigmatisation Train the Trainer programme, facilitating workshops for community members and professionals.
- Led volunteer management and youth leadership initiatives to support refugee communities.

Workshop Development, Auckland Regional Migrant Service Trust (Belong Aotearoa), Auckland 2016

- Designed and delivered workshops supporting migrant integration in Auckland.
- Enhanced skills in writing effective learning objectives and fostering networks.

Early Professional Experience 2000 - 2010

- **Early Childhood Educator (English/Spanish)**, Pecosetes Centro Infantil Bilingüe, Spain.
- **Freelance English Language Teacher**, using drama and song for facilitation, Spain
- **Teaching Assistant**, Starfish Country School Foundation, Chiang Mai, Thailand.
- **Student Support Teacher/Mentor**, Athena Montessori College, Wellington.
- **Co-Owner**, Viva Mexico, Wellington
- **Entertainer (Fire dancer) & Hospitality Professional**, Greece

Education

Master of Human Rights (First Class Honors) | Auckland University of Technology

Bachelor of International Studies (Conflict Resolution) | Auckland University of Technology

Partial Bachelor's Degree (Development and Education) | Victoria University, Wellington

Professional Development

Workplace Inclusion Accredited Professional | Diversity Works New Zealand | August 2024

Need-Based Coaching Foundations Certificate | October 2023 – March 2024

Train the Intercultural Trainer | European Institute for Intercultural Development | 2020

International Coaching Federation Qualification (In Progress)

Interests and Activities	History of Volunteer Engagement 2012 - Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Culture• Travel• World Music• Food• Meditation• Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board Member, Konini School Auckland• IDEA Committee Member, JM International• Resettlement Volunteer, New Zealand Red Cross• Volunteer Educator, AUT Refugee Education Centre• Mentor, AUT/Ministry of Education REAP Program• Volunteer, Asylum Seeker Trust

Testimonial Highlights

"Sarah is hardworking and multifaceted, leading varied teams and driving key projects across diverse scopes and disciplines. She is deeply committed to lifting up marginalised voices and embedding te ao Māori into her mahi, making her an invaluable asset to any team." — *Sarah Baylis, Marketing and Engagement Manager, Diversity Works New Zealand*

"Sarah's open, non-judgemental, and trauma-informed approach resonates deeply with audiences. Her neurodivergence webinar inspired and informed attendees, earning exceptional feedback. She combines expertise with humour, creating engaging learning experiences." — *Louise Cowpewart, Ph.D, CEO at MindMatters Clinic*

More references available upon request