TOGETHER FOR EQUALITY & RESPECT:

TFER Interim Evaluation Report 2017-2021

Collective Vision:
A society where women live free from men's violence – where every girl and boy grows up to be equally valued, heard and respected, and with equal access to opportunities.

TOGETHER FOR EQUALITY & RESPECT

Acknowledgment of Country

Women's Health East acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners of the land on which we work and on which the Together For Equality and Respect partnership takes place. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and embrace the opportunity to learn from emerging leaders.

Contributors

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Together For Equality and Respect (TFER) Partnership provides a platform for organisations in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) to prioritise and work together on efforts to prevent men's violence against women.

This report presents the interim evaluation for TFER 2017 – 2021 based on data collected under the TFER Evaluation Plan for the years 2017-2019.

KEY FINDING

TFER partners are successfully directing their efforts towards the components of systems change to promote gender equity and reduce violence against women in the Eastern Metropolitan Region.

ENABLERS

A critical enabler: TFER Capital

The strongest theme that emerged through the TFER Partner interviews is what the Evaluation Working Group has categorized as **TFER Capital: the capital build through working together in partnership over many years with a shared focus on Gender Equity and Preventing Violence Against Women (PVAW) and which has resulted in a growth in confidence, networks and skills that support collaboration and partnership.**

TFER Capital appears as an enabler across all six objectives. The investment in partnership from all funders and partner organisations, and specifically through the leadership of Women's Health East, with support from the regional Primary Care Partnerships and the TFER Leadership Group is beginning to show clear benefits for the prevention of violence against women in the region.

Systems change is a long-term proposition. While relationship management, capacity building and other supports to build and maintain collaboration are hard to convey in cost-benefit analysis, or as systems-impact or measures of progress, there are a number of indications that this has genuinely facilitated the partnership to make a meaningful contribution to the work identified under the six objectives of the TFER Strategy. A light exploration of the literature on the impact of long-term partnerships for prevention indicates that there is very little research which has been done on the legacy of purposeful collaboration that the TFER partnership represents.

"I really feel like those things wouldn't happen without TFER being there for all the reasons we've already mentioned: collaboration and sustainability and having a place to go and having resources and expertise and that real depth of knowledge in the region. So as a partnership... we've seen huge gains and then to see the changes in the community as well."

"I think for me it's around that opportunity for organizations to work together from a variety of different settings and organisations with that collective vision around preventing violence against women. So it's around partnerships, capacity building, not duplicating the work... it's that collective work which is so crucial to make sure that you're not duplicating and you're actually working together. And you need someone to do that work and that's what TFER does - it can actually bring people together."

Enabler: The Collective Impact Framework

Under the collective impact framework, the role of supporting the administration and guidance of efforts for change are managed by the Backbone Organisation. In the case of TFER, that is Women's Health East with support from participating organisations such as the Primary Care Partnerships, and members of the TFER Leadership Group. For partner organisations, TFER is a wonderful opportunity to share resources and expand reach and impact on their own terms, relying on the support of the backbone organisation for administration, planning and evaluation of the partnership work.

Continued evaluation of the TFER Strategy and partnership requires long term support for the Evaluation Working Group with resources and funding. This could be through academic partnership. It also requires that the TFER tools designed to support partners with evaluation should be used and promoted amongst partners.

Other Enablers

Workforce characteristics: champions, critical friends and relationships

Another key enabler is the TFER workforce. Gender equity champions, critical friends and relationships and networking are key ongoing enablers for partnership work. Members of the workforce who are passionate about prevention and those with long term TFER experience have successfully supported and advanced the work of collaborating teams. This experienced and passionate workforce are another valuable TFER resource.

> "A real enabler is passion... And you can't teach that to someone. Passion has to come from within you."
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> "I think we're in a really good place where people at the top are getting it, and it's coming from the bottom as well."

The tension between prevention and response

Media and community focus on the tertiary response sector can prove challenging for partners advocating for work in prevention and gender equity. Some TFER partners successfully harnessed the opportunities inherent in the widespread engagement in rates of violence and tertiary response to advocate for prevention and make the connection between gender equity and violence against women and to deliver a prevention message.

Funding and resourcing

The influx of funding and the resourcing of project work through dedicated staffing is the third key enabler of the partnership work. The external political and social environment is instrumental for the funding and resourcing of TFER partners: in many instances the groundswell of community engagement in the #MeToo movement, the Royal Commission into Family Violence and the response by the Victorian Government through policy and legislation has enabled much of the work towards gender equity for TFER partners.

> "[The funding] enabled us to get an external independent evaluator who had the skills … We were very keen to do some peer reviewed publishing. We know that it has an influence at policy level for the decision makers."

CHALLENGES

Key challenge: Resistance and backlash

A critical challenge for TFER partners is resistance and backlash. This has occurred in both organisational and community settings. Resistance within the community and staff can be addressed if practitioners are suitably trained to manage resistance. Organisational resistance is more difficult to overcome.

> "I had to respond to the difficult people [who commented on a social media post] and there was a lot of swearing and I had to block people from the page and it was just getting really personal on each other. And we haven't had that before so it was - it took its toll. It took a long time to try and respond to these people and I didn't know how to respond."
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> "So I think no matter how you focus it as 'this is an issue for women and we acknowledge that it does occur for men', men still have a problem with it, with them, or being labelled."

Other Challenges

Funding and resourcing

Inevitably, lack of funding and inadequate resourcing remains a key challenge to progression of work under the TFER Strategy.

> "Thinking of the sporting clubs; a lot of them don't have female change rooms, so when we do go in there to talk about gender equity work and culture change that's something that they'll bring up – "Well, we don't have the change rooms. Are Councils going to provide change rooms?"

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the interim evaluation for Together for Equality & Respect (TFER) 2017 – 2021 based on data collected under the TFER Evaluation Plan for the years 2017-2019.

TFER is a long-standing cross sector partnership of more than 35 organisations working together using a collective impact approach to prevent violence against women. TFER is a partnership with a shared commitment to coordinate and integrate efforts to prevent men's violence against women across the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR). The TFER Partnership includes an identified lead or backbone support organisation (Women's Health East), a Leadership Group and an Evaluation Working Group (EWG). Women's Health East as the backbone organisation is supported by the Inner and Outer East Primary Care Partnerships and funding from the Victorian State Government.

The Leadership Group and EWG are made up of representatives from TFER partner organisations with specific skills, experience and enthusiasm from across the diverse Partnership, including Women's Health, Local Government, Community Health and Primary Care Partnerships.

The TFER EWG would like to extend their profound thanks to all those TFER partners who participated in interviews, completed the survey and in any other way contributed to this interim evaluation report. We also thank Dr Sue Rosenhain, Jayde McBurnie and Samantha McGuffie, TFER Managers at Women's Health East between 2013 and 2020, who have contributed so much to the regional prevention of violence against women and the TFER Evaluation through their tireless commitment to the Partnership.

EVALUATION METHODS

The findings of this report use the results of the 2019 TFER Partner Survey, and analysis of a series of qualitative interviews with 32 TFER partners during the second half of 2019. The TFER Evaluation Working Group sought to understand the challenges and enablers of work under the six TFER objectives.

BACKGROUND

TFER is a complex intervention, with many active initiatives undertaken across organisations and communities within the EMR.

Components of the TFER intervention include:

- Policy/Systems and Structural Change;
- Capacity Building;
- Community Awareness and Advocacy;
- Evidence Building; and
- Partnership Building.

There are three key theoretical frameworks that inform the TFER Theory of Change

- Collective Impact;
- Systems Change; and
- Developmental Evaluation.

The key purpose of using developmental evaluation as a guide is to enable the TFER partnership to continually adapt and change within the complex and volatile environment within which efforts to prevent violence against women exist.

THE TFER ACTION PLAN 2017-2021

The TFER Action Plan is a document that records and coordinates collective action and intended impact, and maps cross sector activities occurring under the TFER Strategy.

A summary of the TFER Action Plan 2017-2021 describes the model under which the TFER Strategy is operationalised in the EMR. (see page 9)
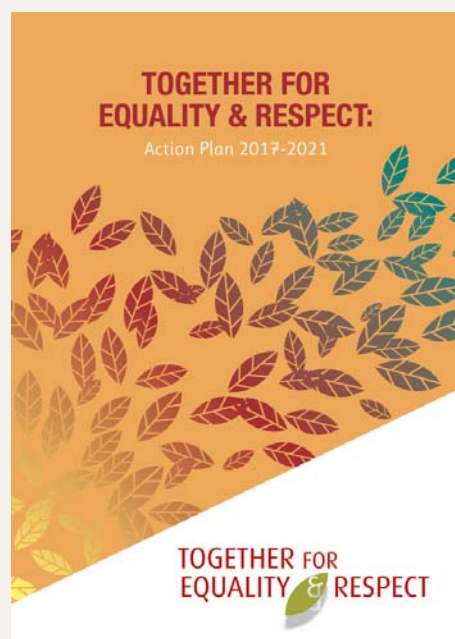
SUMMARY OF THE ACTION PLAN

STRATEGIC DIRECTION	GOAL	FOCUS AREA	OUTCOME
LEAD AND ACHIEVE CHANGE	Organisations will lead initiatives that work with the community to enable equality and, equal and respectful relationships.	Work with the EMR community across all settings.	People in the EMR have high support for and take action on gender equality and gender equity.
		Work with diverse community groups within the EMR.	All community groups in the EMR are engaged in gender equity and prevention of violence against women.
ADOPT AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE EVIDENCE BASE	Organisations will adopt evidence informed primary prevention action and evaluation to prevent men's violence against women, and contribute to the evidence base.	Contribute to the evidence base.	The evidence base for prevention of violence against women includes findings from TFER and TFER Partners.
BUILD ORGANISATION AND WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE	Organisations will invest in building their capacity, and that of their workforce, to address men's violence against women.	Organisational change.	Organisations in the EMR have established systems that promote and enable gender equality.
		Workforce capacity.	The TFER Partner workforce has the capacity to support, lead and participate in gender equity initiatives.
STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS	Organisations will work in partnership to prevent men's violence against women and to reinforce prevention initiatives.	TFER Partnership.	TFER enhances the partnerships created and outcomes achieved towards prevention of violence against women in the EMR.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

STRATEGIC DIRECTION:
LEAD AND ACHIEVE CHANGE

GOAL

Organisations will lead initiatives that work with the community to enable gender equality, and equal and respectful relationships.

Focus Area 1: Work with the EMR community across all settings

Objective 1:
At the completion of the TFER 2017-2021 Strategy, there will be an increase in the proportion of people in the EMR who have high support for gender equality and gender equity.

TFER Medium term outcome 1:
People in the EMR have high support for and take action on gender equality and gender equity.

Focus Area 2: Work with diverse community groups within the EMR

Objective 2:
At the completion of the TFER 2017-2021 Strategy, there will be a greater diversity (cultural, age, geographic, etc.) of population groups engaged in gender equity and/or PVAW initiatives in the EMR.

TFER Medium term outcome 2:
Diverse community groups in the EMR are engaged in gender equity and the prevention of violence against women.

The links between working with communities and TFER workforce capacity building

TFER partners, particularly those from larger organisations, noted that workforce development and capacity building was also contributing to community attitudes due to the large numbers of staff that both work and live in the EMR. Therefore workforce capacity building appears as a strong enabler for changing community attitudes in the region. Changing understanding, and knowledge gained, in the workplace should result in action in the home and in the community: "I think one of the things we're trying to do in our team is make the connection between the public life and the personal life."

Key enablers to work with the EMR community for PVAW

TFER AND TFER CAPITAL	
Backbone Support: Work of Women's Health East in organising TFER events and capacity building.	"it's around that opportunity for organizations to work together from a variety of different settings and organisations with that collective vision around preventing violence against women: partnerships, capacity building, not duplicating the work. Rather than individual organizations doing that work it's looking at how we can share resources together and making sure we're providing those key messages to communities. And you need someone to do that work and that's what TFER does – it can actually bring people together."
Relationships and communications: Partners talked repeatedly about strong relationships, seeking and finding opportunity through existing relationships, sharing resources between people and organisations; a culture of open communication.	"We all shared the load of delivering initiatives and we all had a really great shared understanding of what each other's skills and knowledge base is, and how different everyone is as well. And I think that needs to be celebrated more."
Working in Partnership: This has both challenged and enabled TFER partners to initiate and progress work. On balance, while there has been some challenges, the rewards are significant and most TFER partners reflected that working in partnership has been a strong enabler for the work. There was a strong sense through the interviews of confidence and capacity to work in partnership, and an understanding that impact and reach are positively influenced by working in collaboration and across settings. This is also considered to be part of TFER Capital. Working in Partnership increases the reach and impact of the work. Connections are made with a wide group of organisations and communities which leads to further opportunity.	"Any other project that we were to take on, it would be in partnership with either another TFER organisation, partnering organisation, or community group." - "That piece of work came about because we were at a … meeting and then we said 'well there's no one that's really doing anything LGBTIQ friendly or overtly LGBTIQ and… why is that?' So we tried to dig a bit deeper and [another TFER partner], ourselves and [a new partner] …thought why not? Let's explore that a bit more and hear from young people."
TFER Capital: a growing confidence and capacity: A number of partners referred to the capital built through working together in partnership over many years, with a shared focus on Gender Equity and PVAW as an enabler for their work. There were a number of ways that TFER Capital has enabled work in the region: • The TFER Objectives allowed organisations to tailor their work to fit in with one or more of the focus areas of the TFER Strategy. • A focus on intersectionality in the second TFER Strategy has been picked up by TFER partners readily. • TFER has contributed to a growing confidence with work in partnership and to build and maintain relationships both internally (within and across organisations) and externally (with communities and other organisations).	"Education was identified as a priority setting already in the shared action plan for TFER. So we didn't have to advocate for any of that or advocate for education to be seen as an important setting in which to work – that was already there." - "[We have taken] the time to meet with elders and the people involved in the project, but not just as a one-off and keeping a really open mind, and not just doing 'oh if I just change all of the images to be non-white people and put some Aboriginal dot paint artwork on some of the slides' I've kind of checked that box." - "I think we're incredibly lucky in the Eastern region having the regional women's health strategy being established because preventing violence against women is already a priority and the partnerships already exist."

TFER AND TFER CAPITAL (Continued)

Interdepartmental reach: For Local Government and other larger organisations there was also the sense that inter-departmental relationships were growing collaboratively and enabling health promotion staff to implement activities and improve reach. This is considered to be an outcome of the focused work over the previous six years, and growing confidence of the health promotion workforce (TFER Capital). The external political and social environment may also be playing a part.

TFER partners reflected that impact has been amplified through the long term partnership.

"[More] staff are starting to become aware of family violence as well as gender equality and their role that they have in it, and that only helps us - it's not just a couple of workers that hold that knowledge, they're doing the work that is everyone's responsibility and everyone's role and people are starting to put gender lenses over what they're doing and the conversations that they're having, which changes their practice."

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"You can put a lot of energy and effort in and things take time, but to see the changes that have happened - I'm thinking about things like the changes in sporting clubs and empowering women to be involved - and seeing that there are people out there in the community who are engaging in that and there's been real significant changes for people living, working, playing in our region and their lives are shifting."

PASSIONATE PEOPLE/CHAMPIONS/CRITICAL FRIENDS

TFER Workforce: The workforce is full of passionate people. They are inspired by working in new settings, by learning new things and implementing new work, and sharing their knowledge with communities and staff in the region.

"It's not just a couple of workers that hold that knowledge … the work [is] everyone's responsibility and everyone's role, and people are starting to put gender lenses over what they're doing and the conversations that they're having."

Passionate communities: The TFER workforce is enabled by the passion and power of communities and the champions who emerge.

"[The Youth] leaders are amazing. A lot of them are studying some sort of social work psychology, social science, and have really strong passion and just so smart – all over it."

THE TENSION BETWEEN RESPONSE AND PREVENTION

Some TFER partners successfully harnessed the opportunities inherent in the widespread engagement in rates of violence and tertiary response, to advocate for prevention and make the connection between GE and violence against women and to deliver a prevention message.

"It's really exciting because we might get approached by a community setting that's wanting to have discussions around responding to family violence and then we can initiate a discussion around recognising that gender inequality is the driver of violence against women in the community and talking to them about the potential of exploring prevention activities."

OPPORTUNITIES

- Engagement is key: once communities are engaged the prevention message can be heard
- Assist partners to better articulate the link between prevention and response
- Community understanding of the need for a response sector provides an opportunity to talk about prevention
- Consistent messages and messaging to maintain integrity of prevention
- Seek opportunities for prevention where there is increased funding for the response sector

THE EXTERNAL POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

State Government: Support for gender equity and PVAW has been a strong enabler for interviewees.	"Respectful Relationships came on board, so that gave us access to this enormous resource out in the community to provide support to schools."
Media: There has also been strong support from the current social environment and the media around the #Metoo movement. Media coverage of women's sports is also having an effect in communities.	"It's very much front and centre... you know most days on the news there is something ... the royal commission or the stats. So ...there is that constant theme. It becomes topical, so for people its front and center. A few years ago we wouldn't be having those conversations." - "The professionalisation of women's sport – I think that had a lot to do with it. People can see clear cut, the heroes and heroines...and so that creates a demand on organisations to respond to the council changing rooms or supporting that movement to actually happen in different ways. I've seen it."
Communications: One TFER partner reframed their language to mitigate backlash; they found that conversations around 'men's health' enabled community conversations and minimised the potential for backlash better than a 'men, gender and masculinity' frame. Others found language to be a powerful tool for engagement.	"I think really it's about being respectful and mindful of where people are at. I think that's really important. I think it's really important to listen but also use language that's appropriate. I think sometimes in the sector we get caught up with language. And often that doesn't translate to your audience. So I think for me what I've learned is just keeping it real."
OPPORTUNITIES	• Explore ways in which the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) could enhance environments to support GE in organisations and communities • Involve communications and marketing staff in training about GE and responding to backlash • Provide partners with communications to mitigate backlash in communities

FUNDING

Diverse funding: Having diverse sources of funding has supported partners to implement new work and to extend the reach of their work to new audiences. In particular corporate philanthropic grants, while usually short term, provided opportunities to secure further investment and support.	"It was really good to see how many people attended. And they asked lots of questions. We had quite a number of them come up to us later to talk about how fantastic it is 'Oh you should do this in workplaces' and you know ideas around that...and now they've asked us to go back because they fund a number of programs every year."
Economic realities: Becoming gender equitable has economic and sustainability benefits for organisations like sporting clubs.	"They're realising that those clubs that have embraced girls' teams and the like in those kinds of settings have a stronger future essentially."
OPPORTUNITIES	• TFER to promote the economic and sustainability benefits of gender equity

EMBEDDING GENDER EQUITY

Partners are working to increase gender equity across all community settings by including GE as a mandatory requirement. One TFER partner has instituted mandatory GE training for all sporting club members. Another has embedded GE as a funding requirement.

"We're also having conversations about gender when we roll out our community grants program now. So we're asking everyone to put a gender lens on their applications and talk about how they've got to promote gender equality through whatever program or activity they're doing regardless of what their goal is."

OPPORTUNITIES

- Strongly promote the practice of embedding gender equity into all aspects of health promotion in both communities and organisations
- Assist practitioners who need further support to incorporate intersectionality into their work

WORKING IN SETTINGS

Working in schools: Some TFER partners working in schools benefitted from using established models and structures for interventions, such as the TFER Critical Friends model. Working with peer leaders was also seen as a significant enabler.

Working in Sporting Clubs: TFER partners working in sporting clubs benefitted from using established models for intervention (in particular the Champions model), reaching out for support from others who had experience in sporting clubs, and having a dedicated staff position as a point of contact for the clubs.

Working with Interfaith networks: TFER partners reported the following enablers for work in interfaith networks: existing relationships; including community members with lived experience of family violence; having a range of expertise on the networks to share workloads and skills; and having diverse group representation on the networks.

"In some ways the model (TFER Critical Friends) enabled us to understand what our role is.... I think there had been some confusion with partners around what our place in this space was in this work. And I feel like this just kind of gave us a bit of a guidance to what we can do."

"[We recognised] that a lot of the community agencies are already working in schools and had good relationships as well, and can provide a structure for how that can actually work with schools and further support Respectful Relationships roll out."

"And then these young people come in and deliver the content - just everything, the way they dress, the way they talk, the way they address the young... they're just on the same level kind of thing. You know I think that really it does help."

"I think we might focus more on sporting clubs. I just think in terms of practicalities, doing sporting clubs...there are some aspects of it that make it a bit easier for us to implement."

OPPORTUNITIES

- Seek opportunities for future work in corporate workplaces, tertiary education (working with new sectors such as TAFE)
- Gain support amongst partners for working with young people
- Tailored messages for specific communities would benefit partners
- Share knowledge and practice between the inner and the outer eastern regions, particularly around work in school settings

Key challenges to work with the EMR community for PVAW

COMMUNITY CAPACITY/RESISTANCE/BACKLASH

Settings: Community resistance was noted in specific settings, such as sporting clubs, attributed to a lack of understanding in the community.	
16 Days: Organisations need to be prepared for social media backlash.	"I had to respond to the difficult people [who commented on a social media post] and there was a lot of swearing and I had to block people from the page and it was just getting really personal on each other. And we haven't had that before so it was, it took its toll. It took a long time to try and respond to these people and I didn't know how to respond."
OPPORTUNITIES	• Involve communications and marketing staff in training about GE and responding to backlash • Broaden the 16 Days campaign to include internal organisational messaging, as well as community messaging. Raise awareness that organisations must act to ensure they are GE compliant before asking the community to do the same

INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL AND WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

Workforce: Staffing is both a challenge and an enabler. The challenges arise in the loss of experienced staff. This impacts long-term projects and partnerships; knowledge is lost and relationships need to be rebuilt.	"This project had been kind of picked up by several people and the end result looked very different than what was submitted initially for the grant funding."
Resistance: It can be a challenge to keep the language of prevention strong when there is internal resistance to the message of preventing men's violence against women, particularly if social media backlash is anticipated.	
OPPORTUNITIES	• Create a repository for communications about TFER that can be easily shared with new staff • Support women in the workplace • Conduct 'exit interviews' with staff who leave, and 'stay interviews' with staff who stay to inform staff retention strategies • Ensure long-term funding for health promotion positions

FUNDING AND RESOURCING

Infrastructure: It can be expensive to change environments to support gender equity: for example, upgrading of sporting clubs and facilities.	"Thinking of the sporting clubs, a lot of them don't have female change rooms. So when we do go in there to talk about gender equity work and culture change that's something that they'll bring up–'Well, we don't have the change rooms. Are Councils going to provide change rooms?'"
External funding: Some TFER partner organisations are not internally funded for prevention work and rely on external funding sources. For all TFER partner organisations, when external funding ceases, opportunity and sustainability are impacted.	"It's actually been the community groups that have approached us for that training. They are keen to know more about family violence and what some of the drivers are... unfortunately now that training can't be delivered."
Sudden funding: Some TFER partners felt that the sudden influx of government funding has resulted in some quickly planned interventions that may not have considered intersectionality and equity.	
Resourcing shortfall: Limited staff resources impact ability to grow and promote programs, or to capture emerging opportunities (for example expanding the Respectful Relationships program to new settings such as faith or youth groups).	"With all the competing demands of trying to lock in workshops, trying to improve the quality of the program, trying to recruit leaders, we [also] want to expand it into the primary school space. That's something that we'd like to do. We just haven't had the time to do it."

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Both internally (inter-departmental) and externally (inter-organisational) there are challenges with negotiating different ways of working, managing expectations and sustainability. Members of working groups will have varying degrees of capacity to understand and implement prevention activities. There can be tension between the purpose of the group and the individuals within it.	"If you have a great idea it may not sit in your department, and so part of the challenge is trying to bring in another department and get them to see it as important too. And even though they did express a lot of support for it that it didn't translate to action on the ground."
OPPORTUNITIES	• See Enablers: Working in Partnership

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

Time: Working with the community takes time. Partners need to wait for strategic moments to engage.	"We had to wait for a lot of time until these big meetings happen. Identifying specific milestones to even let out the message. Otherwise we felt that it would not go anywhere."
Sustainability: It is a challenge to step back from a project and have it run sustainably by the community.	
OPPORTUNITIES	• Promote the understanding of TFER by all partners. Prevention through TFER is a long term, complex intervention • Build capacity of practitioners to promote sustainability across community work

WORKING IN SETTINGS

Working with Schools: Schools are difficult to engage. They are time and resource poor and partners have encountered resistance from both teachers and school communities. Each school and each community is different and will present with different needs and challenges.

There are also many enablers for working with schools. See **Enablers: Working in settings**.

"We've tried to approach them in a number of ways; through council, through school youth services, through other departments at our organisation that had connection to the schools, through going to network meetings and presenting through the Department of Education, and that just hasn't taken off."

Working with playgroups: It is time consuming to build relationships with council and early years and to build capacity for understanding the purpose and importance of the work.

Working with Sporting Clubs: The clubs are time and resource poor. They can be hard to engage in training when they are locally based and resistant to travel to attend regional sessions. The training may only be having a limited effect on club culture.

"So when venues email me back, what I say is 'we can come again if they need us to'. Nobody's taking me up on that, even though I was promising our time."

OPPORTUNITIES

- See the enablers for working with schools
- TFER to recommend and promote the Critical Friends Model

Process measures

The TFER partner survey identified that TFER partners are working across a number of settings, both in the community and within their own organisations. TFER partners are most active in the following community settings:

SETTING	NO. OF PARTNERS WORKING
Prevention workforce	10
Early years	9
Schools	8
Media (social marketing)	7
TFER organisations' workforce	5
Sporting Clubs	5
Non-TFER organisations	3
Community groups (general)	2
Maternal & Child Health	2
Neighbourhood houses/U3A	2
Tertiary Education	3
Licensed Venues	1
Interfaith/faith	1

The TFER partner survey identified that TFER partners are currently working with the following community groups:

COMMUNITY GROUP	NO. OF PARTNERS WORKING
Aboriginal Community	3
Youth (see early years and schools)	9
Older People	1
Women	6
Men	2
Women with Disabilities	2
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities	2

What change did the activities seek to make:

- Most activities were targeting awareness raising and knowledge building – in order for participants to take action;
- Four activities noted they were directly targeting participants to take action through provision of resources; and
- Reach was not consistently noted, however that which was noted was indicated for awareness raising predominately.

Summary

The TFER Partnership and the capital built through collaboration across more than six years of partnership in the EMR is highly valued by partners and contributes to growing levels of sophistication and confidence among health promotion practitioners and leadership. Along with increased funding and resourcing for the region, the TFER partnership and TFER Capital is a critical enabler for the work.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION:
ADOPT AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE EVIDENCE BASE

GOAL

Organisations will adopt evidence informed primary prevention action and evaluation to prevent men's violence against women, and contribute to the evidence base.

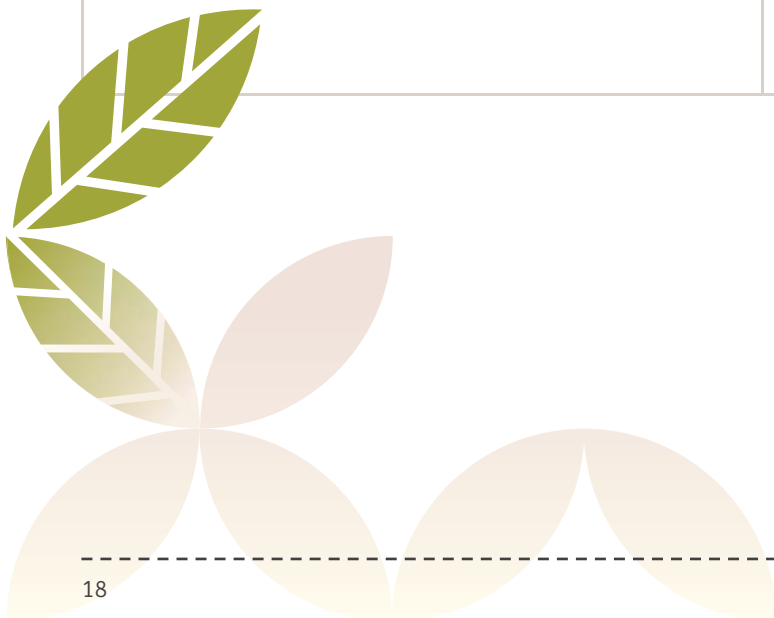## Focus Area 3: Adopt and contribute to the evidence base

Objective 3:
At the completion of the 2017-2021 Strategy, the evidence base for primary prevention of violence against women will include contribution of findings from TFER.

TFER Medium term outcome:
The evidence base for PVAW includes findings from TFER and TFER Partners.

Key enablers to evaluation and dissemination

Funding: Not unexpectedly, funding is a strong enabling influence on the work of evaluation and dissemination, particularly when this forms part of the obligations on the part of the organisation being funded.	"[The funding] enabled us to get an external independent evaluator who had the skills…We were very keen to do some peer reviewed publishing. We know that it has an influence at policy level for the decision makers."
Evidence base: The growing evidence base for evaluation enabled some practitioners to feel confident in evaluating their work. In this regard, the TFER Evaluation Plan and the support of the TFER EWG was also an enabler.	"Particularly with the aligned TFER evaluation. You know that's aligned with other organisations IHP plans as well…. I think that's just helping all of us to see how we can all align our work better."
TFER Capital: Collaboration supports evaluation efforts through the sharing of skills and resources.	"It's what drives you I think, knowing that you can always call on someone to offer you guidance or catch up for a meeting if you're not sure about, 'how could I evaluate this project better or what did you do to promote this in a way, what sort of messages did you use?'"

Key challenges to evaluation and dissemination

Culture of evaluation: Without an understanding of the importance of evaluation, and resourcing and capacity building for it, evaluation practitioners will find it difficult to evaluate effectively in a collective impact framework.	"It's a challenge and a frustration in the sector more broadly that evaluation is not respected. That's not quite the right word; prized, valued, even…"
Resourcing: Lack of time, resourcing and staff to properly consider, implement and disseminate results from evaluation, particularly in circumstances where there is a sudden influx of government funding – some practitioners are frustrated that the opportunity to evaluate well and assess the impact on diverse communities cannot be done properly.	"Considering the amount of work that goes into that, how do we make sure that there's resources then that allows us to turn that into the dissemination that we want … Is that about journal articles. Yes, it's hard that area."
The nature of partnership work: With shared work, the responsibility for evaluation is not considered in detail or is overlooked.	"[We have not evaluated], not in the last twelve months … it's more rare than common. And that probably is because there's been other health promoting partners involved in that work."
Regional geographic boundaries of the TFER partnership: As organisations merge and become larger and cross regional boundaries, practitioners are finding it challenging to determine what the regional contribution of their work is.	"Because how you can think about a program which is physically based here but doesn't necessarily have an extraordinary influence actually on the ground here… And about where the contribution … is to a regional program."
Limitations of the evidence base: Issues arise when the evidence base is not fully formed (for example, elder abuse).	
Embedding GE across health promotion work: Applying a gender lens to wider health promotion activity (for example, not all health promotion work is planned and evaluated with a gender lens).	"They collected the information, but they hadn't considered analysing it in terms of gender."
OPPORTUNITIES	• Disseminate TFER evaluation tools to partners as soon as possible. Plan ways to help partners use the tools and communicate the importance of evaluation through communities of practice, workshops and other forms of assistance • The TFER Leadership Group to discuss the challenges of TFER geographic boundaries and how those challenges could be overcome • Support partners working in emerging areas to contribute their findings to the evidence base. PCPs and WHE could consider ways to build capacity • An ongoing direction under Objectives 4 and 5 is the use of a gender lens and intersectionality in all core work • Greater support from DHHS for collective reporting

Process measures

The 2017 results have been added to this table for interest and as a guide to how TFER partners are tracking over the four years of the TFER Strategy 2017-2021.

INDICATOR	NUMBER OF PARTNERS (2019)	2019 RESULTS	2017
Number of organisations that contributed data to the Collective Impact evaluation	19 TFER partner organisations returned the TFER Evaluation survey. One other organisation contributed by participating in an interview.	69%	77%
Number of TFER and PVAW presentations completed at national, state, and local conferences by TFER partners	Nine organisations responded that they had 'Contributed to the evidence base through presentations' at National, State and local conferences about TFER and prevention of violence against women'	31%	37%
Number of articles published in peer reviewed and industry journals	Two organisations had published an article in a peer reviewed or industry journal. Five organisations had articles published or projects showcased in Prevention of violence against women network newsletters.	7% 17%	17% 10%
Number of TFER Partner activities contributing to state and national PVAW activities	Nine organisations contributed to State and National PVAW activities.	31%	20%
Number of evaluation reports made available to TFER Partners and broader community about activities within the TFER Action Plan	Six organisations produced public reports about TFER related programs (i.e. case studies, evaluation). Organisations also shared the results of their evaluation through: • TFER community of practice (3) • Through their organisation's website (6) • Through The Well (3) • Through TFER website (2) • Via email to colleagues including WHE (3) • Informally (1) • Through local groups and networks (2)	21%	40%

Lower numbers of articles in peer reviewed journals is indicative of the extra time, resources and skill required to undertake those articles and possibly also the long-term and sophisticated nature of the interventions applied by TFER partners.

Summary

TFER partners are tracking well towards increasing rates of evaluation activity when compared with 2017. The high number of organisations publishing articles in newsletters and contributing to state and national PVAW activities is an indication of the growing confidence of TFER partners in their work (TFER Capital). Measurement of the progress measures will be facilitated by distribution of the TFER Evaluation tools.

BUILD ORGANISATION AND WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE

GOAL

Organisations will invest in building their capacity and that of their workforce to address men's violence against women.

Focus Area 4: Organisational Change

Objective 4:
At the completion of the 2017-2021 Strategy there will be an increase in the number of organisations in the EMR that have established systems that promote gender equality.

TFER Medium term outcome:
Organisations in the EMR have established systems that promote and enable gender equality.

Key enablers to organisational change

TFER CAPITAL	
The impact of six years of regional collective work to support organisational change has come through as a strong enabler in analysis of the TFER partner interview transcripts. And while some organisations have found it challenging to maintain momentum on the journey through organisational change, many others have found that earlier work has led to increased flow of activity and cultural change. Previous work is seen as a strong enabler. TFER partners noted the following key actions that facilitated conversations and profiling of gender equity as an organisational issue: ● GE auditing ● GE Action plan	"The best thing has been how easy in some ways some of the work has now become. Because there's been a cultural conversation, so getting the seat at more tables, and when we did for example the rollout of the survey for the gender audit I didn't actually get a complaint this time. So that's massive. So it's not necessary that everybody agrees but there's almost like 'Oh yes. Gender is part of business. Now this is what we do. This gets rolled out'."
After six years of the TFER partnership, some organisations feel that gender equity has been significantly established as guiding organisational culture.	"Some of the new staff that I've seen come into senior leadership positions, if they don't get it when they arrive they get it pretty quickly - what this organisation is about. And they see value in this work."
OPPORTUNITIES	● The external policy environment will remain central to GE organisational response. In a post Royal Commission/Covid-19 environment there is an opportunity for the prevention sector to align with the response sector, without diluting the prevention message

ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY AND CULTURE

An organisation's mission, vision and strategic plan are leverage for discussion and action around gender equity and alignment. The current appetite for merging and expanding has provided opportunity to include GE in newly conceived strategies and policies. In many respects this is the outcome of six years of partnership around the TFER Strategy and the consistent advocacy of the regional health promotion workforce in seeking out opportunity to embed gender equity across organisational policy. Many TFER partners noted that gender equity had been included in new strategic documents, from whole organisational strategic plans, to departmental plans such as Human Resources/P&C.	"You know, policies and strategies are kind of authorising environments. They make the links in people's heads about why we do this. And they just give it more, you know, they strengthen the positioning."
OPPORTUNITIES	• The Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) will have implications for larger organisations in the EMR and provides leverage for organisational change • Use the opportunity to report activity undertaken under a GE Action Plan within the final evaluation survey in order to compare between 2017 and 2021

CHAMPIONS

Top down: Commitment and support from leadership is a key enabler. So many TFER partners cited access to and support from a senior leader as a strong driver of organisational change.	"[S]he's committed to HR supporting me to do another audit this year."
Bottom up: The work is equally enabled by commitment and support from operational staff.	"My team has been really instrumental in supporting me in terms of driving the project. You know without that support, if you don't have that support, you can't you know get very far."
Health promotion staff are also working to create champions in their workforce.	"The purpose of the group is to develop an action plan that will obviously take into consideration areas for improvement, identify gaps, really provide a voice for staff to be involved in the process. Because it's not just about developing an action plan, I think it's about people taking ownership."

RELATIONSHIPS AND CHAMPIONS

Building internal organisational relationships and capacity with People & Culture and Marketing & Communications has become essential to embed gender equity within organisational practice.	"[People & Culture are] not just seeing this as an add-on thing, it's actually incorporated into our culture."
OPPORTUNITIES	• Support champions and passionate people within organisations to collaborate with health promotion specialists to facilitate change

RESOURCING AND CAPACITY BUILDING	
TFER partners have appreciated the resources that have been produced and are publicly available: Our Watch Workplace Equality Report, gender equity online modules produced by GenVic and MAV, and using established models such as champions of change.	"[F]or that project I used a champions model; having two members from each department - one people leader and one employee - testing these things with their teams. And through that I've found that a champion model was really successful. And I'm finally getting some internal traction."
Support from Government and increased funding has been a significant enabler.	"I think some of the enablers [are] the environment in which we now exist, which is quite different to what it was in 2016 externally; politically with state governments, with Safe and Strong, with the Gender Equality Act coming up,... with Our Watch stuff being really integrated, with gender becoming part of our language. We're not operationalizing it to the extent we want to yet, but we've paved the way."
Another enabler is the capacity building and training that the Women's Health East (TFER Capital) provided.	"[The WHE training] included the introductory sort of gender equality work at a staff level, but it also had some targeted at a more advanced level of gender equality work for HR, the Executive. So what I'm thinking is, the policies that have been redone in that period and the procedures and the thinking - hopefully that's made its way into the systems, into the actions."

THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT/MEDIA	
The State Government focus on gender equity has been a strong enabler.	"If the legislation doesn't say you have to do it, it's hard to get it to happen. So the reason people have even got as much traction here now is because we have the Royal Commission."
Some TFER partners are using opportunities provided through mandatory processes, such as accreditation, to pursue organisational change activity. It illustrates that the TFER partnership has a substantial role in continuing to advocate for organisational change towards gender equity and maintaining the activity as a priority to support health promotion staff over longer time frames.	"One of the enablers at this period of time has been that we are going to be going through accreditation fairly soon. We're updating all of our policies and procedures at the moment. So it was quite timely to be 'Well have you also taken into consideration some of the recommendations from the gender audit process as well'. So that did help get that on the platform. Provided a platform for us to leverage off."
Media coverage of the impact of gender inequality has been motivating for some TFER partners.	"Thankfully, we haven't had any really bad press..., and I view that as actually quite a positive for us because it really does continue to drive the work for us."

Key challenges to organisational change

STAFFING AND RESOURCING	
Staff turnover: As with other TFER objectives, staff turnover is a key issue for organisations moving through the organisational change journey.	"And really I think what we need to do is re-audit the organization, because it's totally different to the one that was audited three years ago."
Resourcing: Including time and funding has also impacted ongoing work.	"I've only had the option to review one of our policies, which is a relatively new one. And so you know it comes down to work capacity and resourcing to be able to. We have a lot of policies. A policy for everything."

ORGANISATIONAL AND WORKFORCE RESISTANCE

The different types of organisational resistance: There have been challenges for organisations, which indicates that the movement from enablement through to engagement is challenging at each step. Momentum through the journey of change is affected by a number of issues including, workforce instability and the loss of staff champions, the length of time it takes to undertake auditing and action planning, and the recognition that in practice intersectionality and complexity influence outcomes inequitably.

Organisational resistance takes a number of forms, from passive to active, and includes allowing competing priorities to move attention from internal change, not resourcing internal work adequately, and reliance on leadership 'champions' to progress the work.

Prepare for resistance: Practitioners also need to be well prepared to encounter resistance during workforce training.

"[An enabler would be] to have support higher up the chain. And when we had that for a while it was great, we got a lot of traction, but it changes as management changes. If it's not understood at that level then people don't see and value the importance of the work."

"So we've done some of that training - we need the systems in place to support. That's tough to do."

"If we were to roll that Gender Equity to training to staff, the best process for us would be to deliver at the management forum first so that we could iron out any concerns and say that we felt confident that it was supported and understood by management before it was delivered to staff."

OPPORTUNITIES

- Use the VicHealth (En)countering Resistance strategies as a way to build capacity in intervention in organisational resistance

COMPETING PRIORITIES, CORPORATE EXPANSION, RESTRUCTURING

The current health services environment has seen numerous restructures and mergers. Merging organisations results in changes in staffing, organisational change activity adjusted to bring differing levels of readiness for change into alignment, previous auditing and action planning to be rewritten.

"I suppose it's time but it's also the competing needs of the organisation … over the last few months it's been about securing funding… we've had to do training, we've had to write up policy, procedures….trying to just keep up with the system is another competing demand."

ENGAGEMENT ACROSS ORGANISATIONAL TEAMS

As organisation's attempt to deliver change to support gender equity it has become evident that practitioners need to engage diversely across teams, such as People & Culture, Marketing and Communications, to facilitate their work. This is another challenge for many health promotion teams in terms of recruiting champions and the time and resources required to communicate and persuade.

TFER Capital is considered a strong enabler of work across interdepartmental teams and organisations.

"Because it has been a challenge in knowing how to work with the teams, to then get them to change their work. There something that feels really difficult. I think a lot of people think they 'can't see how I can implement' and think it's going to make a difference. So it really is about sitting down with those individual teams and really supporting that process."

OPPORTUNITIES

- Involve communications, marketing and cross-sectoral staff in training in GE

Process measures

Process indicators were captured through the TFER Partner Survey 2019.

Between 2017 and 2019 some questions for Objective 4 were changed. The comparative table below includes the 2017 results for interest. The 2019 results are indicative of change towards goals only over the two years of the interim evaluation.

	INDICATOR	2019 Number of organisations (18 TFER partners provided data)	2017 Number of organisations (21 TFER partners provided data)
1	TFER partners who have completed a gender equity audit, or self-assessment	9	11
2	TFER partners who have completed a GE audit or self-assessment since 2017	4	N/A
3	TFER partners with a GE policy OR written commitment to GE in the workplace	12	15
4	TFER partners with a GE procedure	N/A	5
5	People in senior positions demonstrate commitment to and leadership on gender issues	N/A	17
6	Budget allocation for staff training or other workforce development activity in GE	10 (2 unsure)	8
7	Designated responsibility for promoting GE in the organisation	N/A	17
8	Action taken to recruit, mentor and retain a representative number of women on the board of the organisation	10 (4 do not have a board)	2
9	Organisation has a stand-alone gender equity/equality policy (In 2017 asked: Organisation has a written policy/policies that affirm a commitment to GE)	4	11
10	Organisation has a family violence leave policy (not asked in 2017)	13	N/A
11	Organisation has procedures that enact the GE policy/policies	15 (Family Violence leave policy) 2 (GE policy)	5
12	Organisation has reviewed existing policies with a gender lens	6 (1 unsure)	N/A
13	Gender impact of projects, programs and services monitored and evaluated	2 for all policies 7 for policies focused on PVAW	3
14	Feedback from community consultation analysed by gender	4 (6 unsure, 2 don't do community consultations)	3
15	Sex-disaggregated data used for workforce/HR planning	N/A	3
16	Sex-disaggregated data used for planning projects, programs and services	N/A	7
17	Organisation uses sex disaggregated data (collects male/female demographics in any data collected)	8 (6 unsure)	N/A
18	Organisation has an action plan for organisational change for gender equity	5 (8 currently in development)	N/A

Analysis of the process indicators

The external environment could be considered a driving force for high level change in organisations. This is a key difference between the 2017 and 2019 results under indicators 8, 11 and 13 as Family Violence Leave is established as standard HR policy and increased legal, media and community focus on women in leadership and diversity on boards.

Resources and tools

TFER partners used a number of different tools and resources for promoting organisational change towards gender equity. The most commonly used:

- TFER GE audit guide
- TFER Self-assessment tool
- TFER Workplace gender equity survey tool
- The Our Watch Workplace Equality & Respect Standards or associated tools
- TFER/Manningham Matrix document analysis tool
- Gender pay gap analysis tool

Summary

Continued work to support champions in the workplace, particularly amongst leadership, is essential. New Victorian legislation could provide some leverage.

Focus Area 5: Workforce capacity

Objective 5:
At the completion of the 2017-2021 Strategy, the TFER partner workforce will have greater capacity to support, lead and participate in gender equity initiatives.

TFER Medium term outcome:
The TFER Partner workforce has the capacity to support, lead and participate in gender equity initiatives.

Key enablers to workforce capacity building

TFER CAPITAL AND THE TFER COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The capital built through six years of the TFER partnership is a strong enabler of the work. Organisations which have begun the journey of organisational change to support gender equity are more able to build workforce capacity in formal and informal ways than others.	"[That] openness to talk on issues, and sometimes even at lunch just to talk on an issue which is gender equity, and I feel like everybody's open about it and they talk about it which is good. Yeah there's awareness raised, I think, of that."
The inclusion of gender equity in practices and procedures, the skilled workforce and ongoing capacity building, creates an organisational culture supporting of gender equity.	"One of the key things out of this is the increase in capacity of our staff, of our colleagues, to apply a gender equity lens in consideration in their work."
TFER health promotion practitioners also value the TFER Community of Practice as a support for their own capacity, particularly around intersectionality.	"[There's] two bonuses there: that WHE provides opportunities for project partners to share their learnings, but also potentially you get external skilled people to come out to deliver sessions. Which I see as a bonus because sometimes it enables all of the TFER partners just to be working together in the space rather than thinking about coming to present on a particular topic as well. I like them both. And we've been given the opportunity to share our leanings at a number of the TFER community of practices as well. And that's exciting for us to be able to share that knowledge."
OPPORTUNITIES	• Distribute and promote the TFER evaluation tools for workforce capacity building initiatives

WORKFORCE CHAMPIONS

Interviewees valued champions within leadership who ensured their teams were available for training opportunities.	"The enablers on the flip side are an amazing cohort of leaders who make sure their teams are there. Who talk it up; we put it on team meeting agendas and make this space."
Management support for personal development was highly valued by health promotors for their own capacity building.	
Formal training can be backed up with champions conducting informal conversations in the workplace.	"I think that's why we've done formal training and wanting to explore that more [so] continually having conversations at lunchtime and things like that, so that it's not getting dropped off the radar."

Key challenges to workforce capacity building

TRANSLATION OF THEORY INTO PRACTICE

Workforce training is inadequate without time and resources to support staff to implement their training into their day to day work.	"I think for a lot of people those workshops are really good at building understanding and building some practical ideas around what that looked like. However, they went back to their workplaces, they had 10 projects on the go and they didn't have time to actually look into having an advisory group that's truly intersectional to give perspectives, or they didn't have the connections they needed to particular communities to lead work, to resource other communities to lead work." "The other challenge is people accepting…that they can actually be part of the solution. So I think for a lot of people that attend training they sometimes get overwhelmed by family violence or the impacts of gender inequity and then walk away thinking 'oh this is such a huge issue. I don't know what I can do'. And then may end up doing nothing."
OPPORTUNITIES	• Incorporate a practical element in workforce training to contextualise the information for staff

RESISTANCE: ORGANISATIONS, LEADERSHIP AND WORKFORCE

From Leadership.	"There are barriers. Not every leader is on board, and obviously leaders hold huge amounts of power that can make it more difficult [getting] access to their teams and staff looking over trainings and workshops, undermining messages potentially. That's a small part. But it does happen."
From Staff.	"[The] usual challenges within that space of training 800 people on gender. It was around different understandings and political persuasions around what gender equality looks like. Every form of resistance that you can imagine, you had in that space."
Organisational Resistance: Competing priorities is an issue, which could be described as a form of organisational resistance to support for gender equity measures. Larger organisations are more likely to also encounter inter-departmental resistance.	"Currently the support …for staff is not great. Because there is already so many other mandatory modules. So, the headache of compliance already is [that it's] such a handful to bring in something more." "Councils are massive places and you can have a part of a Council which is extraordinarily committed to gender equity… And then you go into another setting, but in the same local government area, and they just won't open the door or take your calls."
OPPORTUNITIES	• Expect resistance to social change; include management of resistance in any capacity building • Promote the view that resistance is an opportunity to educate

Process Measures

PROCESS MEASURES: TFER SURVEY QUESTION	RESPONSES
Have you delivered workforce training for gender equity and/or the primary prevention of men's violence against women, from July 2017 until now?	• Yes: 11 • No: 6 • No response: 2
Do you have training for gender equity/equality integrated into your organisation's practice/systems? i.e. induction processes	• Yes: 7 • No: 10 • No response: 2
What training was delivered?	• Training was delivered through an orientation program (3) • Training covered general gender equity, introduction to PVAW, and focused modules on: respectful relationships; elder abuse; unconscious bias; active bystander; challenging gender stereotypes in early childhood; supporting fathers; LGBTI inclusion; Speaking Out advocacy; Change the Story. • Some training was delivered by WHE, EDVOS, Women with Disabilities.
How did you implement the training?	Training was delivered at • All staff meetings: 5 • Team meetings: 7 • Executive meetings: 1 • Through orientation: 2 • By e-learning modules: 1
Was the training stand alone, or part of a broader plan for workforce capacity building?	• Stand alone: 3 • Broader plan: 7 • Both: 1
In addition to formal training, have you implemented any other activities for capacity building with staff for gender equity/equality?	• 8 TFER partners responded with a variety of other activities for capacity building.

Summary

Workforce capacity building should include strategies to manage resistance and backlash, time and guidance to incorporate gender equity into everyday work, and use the TFER workforce capacity building evaluation tool to evaluate.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION:
STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS

GOAL

Organisations will work in partnership to prevent men's violence against women and to reinforce prevention initiatives.

Focus Area 6: TFER partnership

Objective 6:
At the completion of the 2017-2021 Strategy, implementation of the TFER Action Plan enhances the partnerships created and the outcomes achieved towards the primary prevention of violence against women across the EMR.

TFER Medium term outcome:
Implementation of the Action Plan enhances the partnerships created and outcomes achieved towards prevention of violence against women in the EMR.
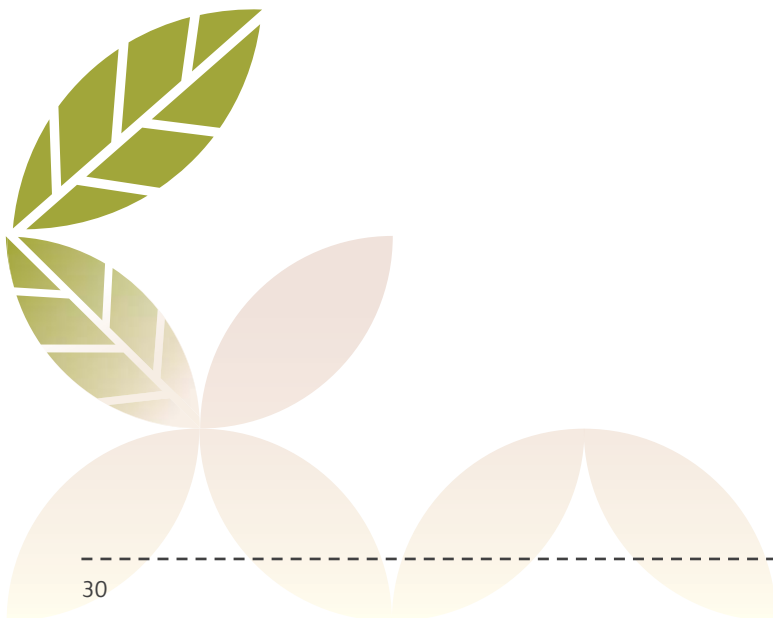
Key enablers to the TFER Partnership

THE WORK OF THE BACKBONE ORGANISATION (WOMEN'S HEALTH EAST)	
Dedicated TFER Manager: provision of personalised support for TFER partners. A number of TFER partners mentioned the support of the TFER manager as a strong enabler for their work.	"I think it was just providing that expertise as well. So we've had [the TFER] Manager come to several meetings to help develop projects or provide advice. Also when we were running, [the program] and they had a set of questions they normally ask; people ran it by [the TFER Manager] to align those questions with TFER outcomes so that they could be utilised."
The TFER community of practice.	"[Peer] support is really vital in this work because you're going to come across resistance, disclosures etc. It's about actually how equipped you are really to handle them – so it doesn't put you off. You know coming across resistance – really it takes a particular type of person as well to actually keep going and to keep momentum and keep the passion, because that's what TFER provides; that you're not alone. And this isn't unique to you. What you're experiencing isn't unique to you, other people also experience similar challenges and barriers."
Providing opportunities: Identifying gaps.	"[That's] been huge; one of our schools got ten thousand dollars [from a TFER partner] because WHE identified a gap in their action plan that they needed support with."
Evaluation: Development of an evaluation plan and tools to support evaluation. Communication around evaluation and the TFER evaluation plan mitigates the tension between collective and individual success.	"I've already heard some good feedback around the accessibility of it being, I guess, much improved from practitioners' point of views in terms of being able to comprehend what the documents try and tell them, which in the past was a real you know it came up in the last evaluation that people didn't understand, it was too high level." - "[It] helps having TFER help facilitate those partnerships but also through the evaluation process. Obviously collecting information about what everybody's doing and identifying where the gaps are is really useful...the idea is that everybody's doing bits of work that are feeding into this goal."
TFER Governance and working groups: Membership of a TFER governance or working group is another way in which TFER partners can build their knowledge and understanding of TFER and regional prevention work. Practitioners with managers that sit on the TFER Leadership Group have a strong sense of connection and responsibility for the TFER partnership.	"I actually feel that my understanding of TFER has significantly grown since being a part of the Evaluation Working Group. I really felt like that provided me with an opportunity to really understand the way in which TFER is structured and its governance processes and also to feel like I have more of a stake in the work that occurs in TFER because I'm now part of one of the working groups..."

TFER CAPITAL	
Trust.	"My trust of TFER is quite high…I have a lot of trust in it. I see its value because it aligns all of our interpretation of the current literature, as well it gives us a common language almost in what we're talking about, which I think makes us more powerful overall. And then that gives us more buying power when we're going out into the community trying to make change. I see that but I don't think that would be anywhere near as powerful without TFER."
Leverage and accountability.	"[TFER] adds a layer for leadership here about what we do and how it connects regionally. I think that's quite an important component. We talk about the national, state and regional levels. We talk about what we're doing and how all the values align between Our Watch and now Safe & Strong and TFER and us. That's why we make certain decisions… We're able to actually show how there's an evidence based model and everyone's on board … And I think it's helped coordinate our messaging fairly similarly in terms of use of language and resources as well." ------------------------- "But the fact that we can put TFER in there - I think it carries weight, because it is a regional document with regional partners."
Steering and guiding regional work.	"[The] political agenda and the Royal Commissions - those things have come in the middle of TFER's existence and…the strength of the partnership was such that it could ride that wave - because there was a lot of people thinking that this was their opportunity to shine and forgot about being part of a partnership…but TFER kept things steady."
Strong regional capacity: Six years of partnership under the TFER Strategy has created an environment in which action is becoming more sophisticated and there is improved readiness to take advantage of opportunity.	"[We] have a GE focus in our work but it might not necessarily be TFER pieces of work but being involved in TFER has influenced that, having that lens over some of our work ------------------------- I think the second strategy has seen us reach a stage where we can actually do some work together to address gaps rather than just bringing together all the bits everybody is doing and saying "oh look at this collective work" and "let's evaluate it collectively".
Growing confidence and capacity to work in partnership.	"[You] could say that in the beginning if funding came in for GE work, people would have gone to WHE and TFER and asked for help: 'what does this mean, how do we do it and can we partner with you and can we be involved in what you're doing?' Funding's come in two or three or four years later - people are capable of doing that themselves…people are much more skilled, much more knowledgeable and can do the work much more appropriately without the level of support that had probably been required in the past."
A strong partnership enables collective effort and impact.	"We would not be able to achieve anywhere near the level of outcomes that we are able to report on to our funder if it wasn't for the fact that we can partner with TFER."

RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS

Relationships and networks are a strong enabler for collaborative work.

Relationships and networks facilitate partnership, provide peer support and opportunities for informal knowledge sharing.

"[For] me it's an opportunity to develop relationships with people working in this area. As someone who's relatively new to health promotion and gender equity work, there's a whole room of leaders to talk to and find connections with. So for me personally that's probably the number one. So I've already seen one project emerge out of that... [TFER Practitioner] connected with me through TFER. We wouldn't have met, I think, otherwise."

- -

"You always got this group that you can connect back into, to make sure [your work] is grounded in evidence and theory, and you know that you are on the right track."

Key challenges to the TFER Partnership

CHALLENGES FOR THE BACKBONE ORGANISATION

There are many challenges for the backbone organisation of a collective effort. It is recognised that WHE requires consistent support to ensure that the backbone functions are sustained.

It was noted by some partners that the contribution of the regional PCPs supports the work of the Backbone Organisation but is not recognised by the TFER partners. Other organisations have allowed staff to join TFER working groups but not allocated extra resources to support them to do this.

The role of a TFER Manager is viewed as being integral to the sustainability of the collective work by partners.

"The problem is currently that members [of the TFER working groups] do that on top of their own workloads, which is stressful and not sustainable for them as individuals. And they're all women. So - thinking about women's health is what we're doing here."

The work of building and sustaining the partnership is time consuming and resource intensive.

"[Constantly] evolving and growing and reflecting is a really key part of the TFER partnership in terms of new partners that come in and re-engaging with ones that may have become less connected."

The governance and operational groups under TFER require resourcing.

"[The] operational and governance models are probably pretty unique, but also an ongoing challenge..."

OPPORTUNITIES

- Alternative means of support for WHE may be required in the event of the Primary Care Partnerships losing funding

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships between TFER partner organisations involve a different set of challenges.

"[To] enter something collective, there's negotiation involved and sometimes you do lose out on the particular focus that you would take in your own work."

Relationship building takes time.

"[You're] looking at a good two years of relationship work just there to get into that collective vision."

EVALUATION OF PARTNERSHIP WORK

All partners should be prepared to commit resources to a shared plan for evaluation in order to determine the impact of the shared work.	"[It's] incredibly important having a culture of evaluation. That means you've got the time, you've got the resourcing, you've got the sounding boards. People understand why you're taking a day to write an evaluation plan."
There is tension between individual and collective effort.	"TFER will always get a challenge from…the branding of pieces of work when people do something collectively. So for example if we work with TFER on a TFER initiative and it's branded as TFER, that's great but what then happens is you lose the visibility of individual partners' input to that for their funders to be able to see."
It is a challenge to show impact in the area of the broader TFER goals.	"You know, what we're actually trying to bring about - this shift in an entire culture. That's pretty enormous."
OPPORTUNITIES	• Explore an academic partnership to provide evaluation support for WHE and facilitate contribution to the evidence base

DIFFERENCES IN CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY

Varying levels of readiness and capacity across the partnership. TFER partners have reported having to build capacity of staff, in both new and established partner organisations, around prevention. This theme also includes the tension which exists between response and prevention.	"The best way to do it isn't always the way that people are ready to do it." "[There's] a lot of pressure from State Government to move into all areas of family violence. And although there's so much value in preventing family violence broadly and all the subsets within, again…it would mean that that distracts from progressing our current work…"

Summary

Most discussion of the challenges around working in partnership and the TFER partnership have come from the Backbone Organisation and those organisations such as Primary Care Partnerships who support the Backbone in its work. There were very few challenges mentioned by the working partnership. This is a really interesting finding. A reflection is that the work of the Backbone needs to be adequately resourced and formal commitment around resourcing and expectations from the partnership should be sourced. For partner organisations, TFER is a wonderful opportunity to share resources and expand reach and impact on their own terms, relying on the support of the Backbone Organisation for administration, planning and evaluation of the partnership work.

CONCLUSION AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

TFER Capital was the enabler most commonly mentioned by TFER partners as contributing to their success. Another strong and related enabler for promoting GE in the region is working in partnership. TFER Capital is the capital built through working together in partnership over many years with a shared focus on Gender Equity and PVAW, which has resulted in a growth in confidence, networks and skills that support collaboration and partnership. TFER Capital appears as an enabler across all six objectives.

THE EVALUATION WORKING GROUP HAVE MADE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THIS INTERIM EVALUATION.

The first recommendation of the Evaluation Working Group is to consider that while TFER Capital is a strong enabler, the external environment is still key to how successful the partnership can be. The current political and social environment, the media surrounding the #MeToo movement, and legislation promoting gender equality initiatives has created opportunities for primary prevention in the region.

RECOMMENDATION

1 Anticipate changes to external policy and media environments over the final years of the TFER Strategy 2017-2021 and focus on adaptation to ensure sustainability of the work. While TFER Capital is a very strong enabler of the partnership, the external environment is still key to how successful that partnership can be.

The work of Women's Health East as the Backbone Organisation needs to be adequately resourced and formal commitment around resourcing and expectations from the partnership should be sourced.

RECOMMENDATION

2 The TFER backbone work should be supported and resourced in the long term.

Continued evaluation of the TFER Strategy and partnership requires long-term support for the Evaluation Working Group, with resources and funding. This could be through academic partnership. It also requires that the TFER tools designed to support partners with evaluation should be used and promoted amongst partners.

3 Contribute to the evidence base (Objective 3 TFER Strategy). Identify an academic institution to partner and produce research and resources. The University sector can provide low cost student/academic support to build resources for advocacy and evidence.

Another key enabler is the TFER workforce. Gender equity champions, critical friends and relationships and networking are key ongoing enablers for partnership work. Members of the workforce who are passionate about prevention, and those with long term TFER experience, have successfully supported and advanced the work of collaborating teams. This experienced and passionate workforce are another valuable TFER resource.

RECOMMENDATION

4 Create systems in which long-standing TFER partners, champions and passionate people can be rewarded and utilised to support the partnership. Create stronger networking opportunities, including, for example: online modalities; adopt the critical friends model; develop a speakers bureau; create ways to endorse TFER champions; and improve orientation processes to incorporate accessibility to TFER champions.

The most critical challenge for TFER partners is resistance and backlash. This occurred in both organisational and community settings. Resistance within the community and staff can be addressed if practitioners are suitably trained to manage resistance. Organisational resistance is more difficult to overcome.

RECOMMENDATION

5 The TFER Leadership Group must continue to support organisational change and leadership commitment, in order to mitigate organisational resistance to change. Organisational resistance includes de-prioritisation of GE work and unsustainable funding of GE officers and other health promotors. Continue to advocate for, and support action to build organisational and workforce excellence (Objective 4 TFER Strategy). Backlash and resistance training for practitioners should also be an ongoing commitment.

Media and community focus on the tertiary response sector can prove challenging for partners advocating for work in prevention and gender equity. Some TFER partners successfully harnessed the opportunities inherent in the widespread engagement in rates of violence and tertiary response to advocate for prevention and make the connection between GE and violence against women and to deliver a prevention message.

RECOMMENDATION

6 Explore opportunities to connect prevention and response and how can this be used to leverage community engagement. Support practitioners and leadership to understand the prevention continuum and harness community and organisational interest by promoting the association between harms and GE.

APPENDICES

OBJECTIVE ONE AND TWO:

Work with the EMR community across all settings/Work with diverse community groups within the EMR

In the workplace:

- Involve communications and marketing staff in training about GE and responding to backlash
- Support women in the workplace
- Conduct 'exit interviews' with staff who leave, and 'stay interviews' with staff who stay to inform staff retention strategies
- Ensure long-term funding for health promotion positions
- Explore ways in which the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) could enhance environments to support GE in organisations and communities

Communications:

- Broaden the 16 Days campaign to include internal organisational messaging, as well as community messaging. Raise awareness that organisations must act to ensure they are GE compliant before asking the community to do the same
- Assist partners to better articulate the link between prevention and response
- Provide partners with communications to mitigate backlash in communities
- Create a repository for communications about TFER that can be easily shared with new staff
- Consistent messages and messaging to maintain integrity of prevention
- Promote the understanding of TFER by all partners; prevention through TFER is a long term, complex intervention
- Share knowledge and practice between the inner and the outer eastern regions, particularly around work in school settings

Working with communities:

- TFER to recommend and promote the Critical Friends Model
- TFER to promote the economic and sustainability benefits of gender equity
- Engagement is key; once communities are engaged the prevention message can be heard
- Community understanding of the need for a response sector provides leverage for talk about prevention
- Assist practitioners who need further support to incorporate intersectionality into their work
- Build capacity of practitioners to promote sustainability across community work
- Strongly promote the practice of embedding gender equity into all aspects of health promotion in both communities and organisations
- Seek opportunities for prevention where there is increased funding for the response sector
- Seek opportunities for future work in corporate workplaces, tertiary education (working with new sectors such as TAFE)
- Gain support amongst partners for working with young people
- Tailored messages for specific communities would benefit partners
- Encourage and support TFER partners to use evaluation tools developed by the TFER Evaluation Working Group to measure change as a result of their GE work

OBJECTIVE THREE:

Adopt and contribute to the evidence base

- Disseminate TFER evaluation tools to partners as soon as possible. Plan ways to help partners use the tools and communicate the importance of evaluation through communities of practice, workshops and other forms of assistance

- The TFER Leadership Group to discuss the challenges of TFER geographic boundaries and how those challenges could be overcome

- Support partners working in emerging areas to contribute their findings to the evidence base; PCPs and WHE could consider ways to build capacity

- An ongoing direction under Objectives 4 and 5 is the use of a gender lens and intersectionality in all core work

- Greater support from DHHS for collective reporting

OBJECTIVE FOUR:

Organisational Change

- Use the VicHealth (En)countering Resistance strategies as a way to build capacity in intervention in organisational resistance

- The external policy environment will remain central to GE organisational response. In a post Royal Commission/Covid-19 environment there is an opportunity for the prevention sector to align with the response sector, without dilution of the prevention message

- The Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic) will have implications for larger organisations in the EMR and provides leverage for organisational change

- Support champions and passionate people within organisations to collaborate with health promotion specialists to facilitate change

- Involve communications, marketing and cross-sectoral staff in GE training

- Use the opportunity to report activity undertaken under a GE Action plan within the final evaluation survey in order to compare between 2017 and 2021

OBJECTIVE FIVE:

Workforce capacity building

- Incorporate a practical element in workforce training to contextualise the information for staff

- Expect resistance to social change. Include management of resistance in any capacity building. Promote the view that resistance is an opportunity to educate

- Distribute and promote the TFER evaluation tools for workforce capacity building initiatives

OBJECTIVE SIX:

TFER Partnership

- Explore an academic partnership to provide evaluation support for WHE and facilitate contribution to the evidence base

- Explore alternative means of support for WHE's role as the backbone for collective impact in the event that the Primary Care Partnerships loses funding.