

Working Together With Men: Summary Report

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The project and its impact

Working Together with Men is an innovative violence prevention project based on community engagement and mobilisation. The project aims to contribute to the prevention of violence against women by engaging men to develop and implement primary prevention strategies in their local communities.

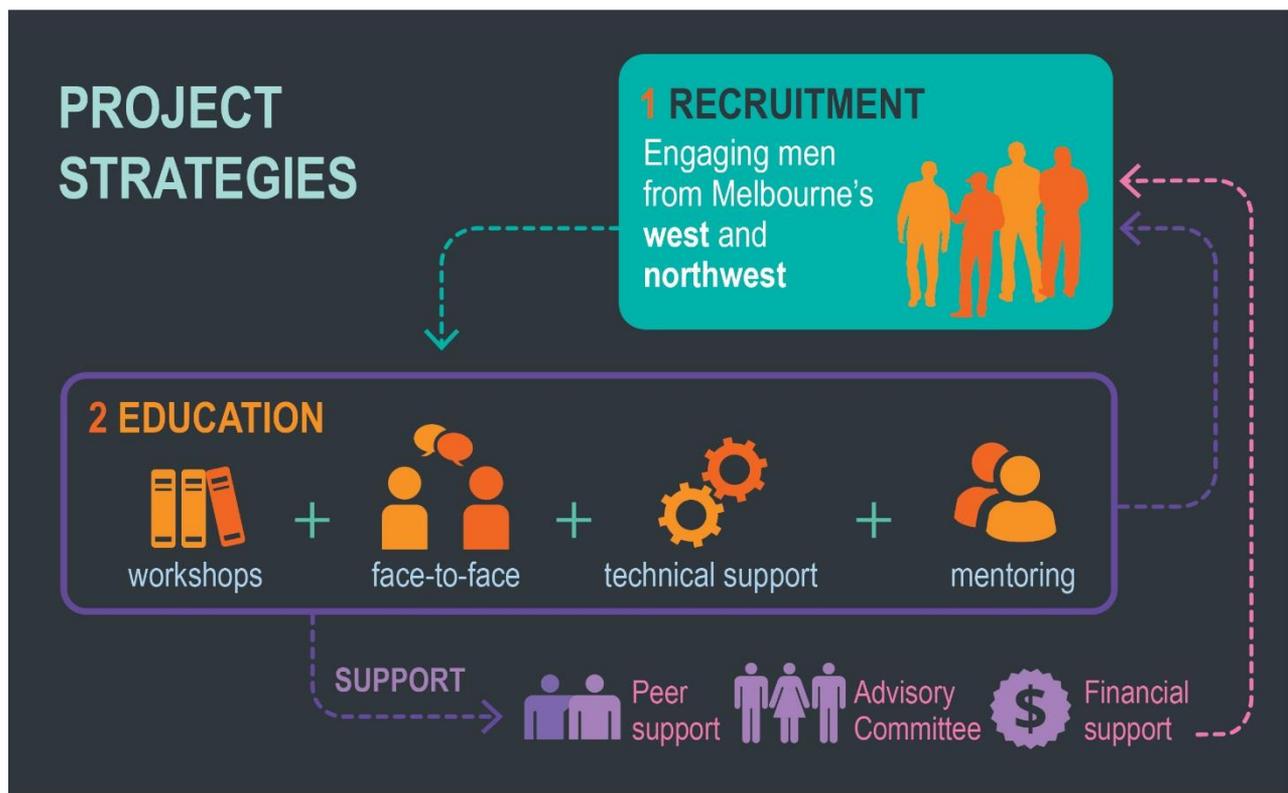
Working Together with Men was the focus of an impact evaluation, conducted by Dr Michael Flood from the Queensland University of Technology. This document provides a short summary of this evaluation.

How the project works

Working Together With Men focuses on recruiting men from the community, training them, and then involving them in project planning in activities to prevent violence against women.

The Working Together With Men project took place over 2015-2017 in Brimbank, a local government area in the west and northwest of the city of Melbourne. The project was coordinated by the HealthWest Partnership, a consortium of community organisations including IPC Health, Brimbank City Council, cohealth, and Women's Health West, and funded by the federal Department of Social Services. Figure 1 shows Working Together With Men's key strategies and activities.

Figure 1



Working Together With Men uses a range of strategies to educate, train, and mobilise men as violence prevention advocates. The project began with community-based recruitment, through information sessions. Sixty or so men, from diverse backgrounds, participated in these opening events. Men interested in continuing in the project then took part in face-to-face education, in a

series of educational workshops and sessions. They received support and mentoring from a dedicated project coordinator and guidance from an Advisory Committee. The seven men who continued with the project throughout its two years took part in training workshops, project planning sessions, and regular social meetings. In 2017 these men designed and implemented their own local violence prevention projects.

The project's impact

Impact evaluation was built into the design and implementation of the project. Dr Flood coordinated the evaluation, in collaboration with the project coordinator, Dr Cuong La. The evaluation used diverse forms of data to assess the project's impact, including both quantitative data (surveys) and qualitative data (interviews, focus groups, observation of project events, and a desk review of documents). This document summarises the evaluation's findings, and these are described in more detail in the full report.

Working Together With Men has been successful at recruiting men into violence prevention education, educating them about violence against women and its prevention, and building a supportive and motivated group of prevention advocates. Figure 2 summarises the impact of the project.

Figure 2



Objective 1: Engage men

The project was successful in the first instance in recruiting a group of male violence prevention advocates and sustaining their long-term participation.

The Working Together With Men project was effective in engaging an initial group of men, and then supporting a smaller group's participation as volunteers over the life of the project. The project has proven effective at providing an engaging, rewarding experience for its participants. The men who have taken part throughout the project emphasise the support and friendship they

have found. Working Together With Men also had strong buy-in and support from the partner organisations. The project has become an important example for these organisations and wider prevention networks of the value of engaging men in violence prevention.

Objective 2: Increase men’s awareness and understanding of violence against women

Working Together With Men has been effective in increasing participants’ understanding of men’s violence against women. Evidence for this comes from the qualitative interviews and focus groups, although quantitative data is not available.

The men who took part describe increases in their understandings of and commitment to taking action on violence against women. Both mid-way through the project and at the project’s end, they commented that they now know more about violence against women: about the diverse forms it can take, its causes or ‘drivers’, and its links to gender inequality. They emphasised that they now see the issue of violence against women as a crucial one, they endorse and advocate for gender equality in relationships and families, and they look critically at their own treatment of their female partners. Female partners interviewed for the project support these accounts. At the same time, some low-level violence-supportive attitudes did persist for some men.

Objective 3: Build men’s capacity to implement violence prevention initiatives

Working Together With Men also aims to build men’s capacity to engage in violence prevention work.

Many of the men who turned up for the project’s opening information sessions already felt a strong sense of their role in preventing violence against women, although their confidence in their skills in violence prevention was more uneven. Comparing the men who continued to participate over the next two years and the men who did not, the former group already had a greater level of involvement in actual prevention efforts, a stronger sense that violence against women is a personally relevant issue, and a higher sense of skill in prevention. These seemed to become even stronger, however, over the course of the project. By the end of the project, the men reported an increased capacity to design and implement violence prevention initiatives, with nearly all agreeing that they had knowledge and skills in prevention.

Objective 4: Support men in implementing violence prevention initiatives

The men who took part in Working Together With Men developed a diverse range of projects:

- Ethiopian community education: An education session for leaders and other members of the local Ethiopian community; Development of an education manual on violence against women and its prevention, for the Ethiopian community
- Brimbank Men’s Pledge: A written pledge involving a commitment to non-violence and to pro-social action, distributed on the street and through community events
- Education in an adult learning centre: Education on violence against women and its prevention to students in adult learning settings
- IPC Health policy: Establishment of the prevention of violence against women as a strategic priority within IPC Health
- Sierra Leone Soccer Club: Education for club management and players; Messages regarding non-violence and respect on players’ t-shirts; Education in mothers’ group regarding respectful relationships
- Respectful relationships education work in a primary school: Cooperative games among children at a school; Discussions with parents regarding violence and respectful relationships

These projects do fit well with existing standards for effective practice in violence prevention. Although they necessarily are small in scale, and developed by volunteers who are new to the violence prevention field, they are promising initiatives which are likely to make positive contributions.

These projects, first, are informed – they address the gendered drivers of violence against women, as they were encouraged to. Second, they rely on well-tested strategies for change. Four of the six projects use face-to-face or direct education, two also draw on communications or social marketing, and one each draws on community mobilisation or organisational policy change. Third, the designs of most projects are likely to engage participants: their methods are interactive and participatory, their activities are long enough to make change, and they rely to some extent on skilled educators. Fourth, the projects are designed to be relevant to the communities and contexts in which they are delivered.

Replicating the project

Projects such as Working Together With Men should be replicated in other settings and scaled up. The full report on the impact evaluation provides detailed recommendations on how best to do this. Summarising these, replication and scaling up of Working Together With Men should involve:

- The use of further strategies for recruiting participants;
- Education for participants which makes greater use of accessible materials on violence prevention, focuses more on prevention, has an intersectional analysis, includes skills development, and involves space for critical self-reflection;
- More extensive technical support in project planning;
- Room for more diverse forms of violence prevention advocacy by participants;
- Greater inclusion of accountability processes, including within the project's advisory group, between the project and feminist and women's groups, and by project participants in developing their projects.

Conclusion

Working Together with Men is a significant project for the violence prevention field in three ways: (1) it combines three important strategies of violence prevention: community engagement, community mobilisation, and engaging men; (2) it includes a substantive evaluation of impact; and (3) it has had a significant and positive impact. The project's success has depended on effective participation, long-term education, intensive facilitation, expert guidance and advice, and resourcing.

Note

For the full report on the impact evaluation of Working Together With Men, please see this report: Flood, M. (2018). *Working Together With Men: Final evaluation report*. Melbourne: Healthwest Partnership.