

Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability Summary Paper of Independent Evaluation Findings

Program Rationale

Increasing women's wellbeing and preventing violence against women with disabilities are strategic priorities for Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV). A key initiative to support this is the WDV *Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability* funded through Victoria's Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women and Children 2012-2015.

The need for violence prevention programs tailored for people with disabilities and the disability sector is well supported. The higher risks of violence against women with disabilities is documented in research such as [Voices Against Violence](#) and [Stop the Silence](#). Further, the [National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey](#) and the [Scope 1 in 4 Poll](#) have findings indicating a need for tailored prevention programs on violence against women with disabilities.

About the Workforce Development Program

The *Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability* is designed to change culture across whole organisations, working with clients, staff, managers and executives. The aim is to increase awareness of how to deliver gender equitable and sensitive services as a strategy for improving women's well-being and status and reducing gender based violence.

As frontline service providers, disability workers and managers are in a key position to support women with disabilities to uphold their right to achieve their goals.

The objective of the program is to improve the quality of gender sensitive practice amongst disability workers by improving their knowledge and skills in regard to:

- Concepts of gender, gender equality, gender relations and sex
- The socio-economic disadvantage of women with disabilities and its impact on social inclusion
- Human rights obligations pertaining to gender and disability
- The relationship between marginalisation, disability, gender stereotypes and violence
- Gender sensitive practice in delivering disability services
- Good practice in health promotion and primary prevention of violence against women

The *Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability* is a cultural change program that develops robust governance and organisational partner engagement to guide the development and implementation of all program components including evaluation.

Program Components

The Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability consists of:

1. Co-Facilitator Train the Trainer Programs
2. Delivery of:
 - Disability Support Workers Workshops
 - Service Management Leadership Workshop
 - Senior Executive Leadership Workshop
3. Peer Education/Empowerment Programs for women with disabilities
4. Follow up Communities of Practice (COP)

Co-Facilitation Model

Fundamental to the program is training women with disabilities to co-facilitate the training with violence prevention trainers from women's health and violence prevention and response services. This model demonstrates equitable professional relationships between the co-facilitators.

Piloting of the Program

WDV piloted all Program components with two Victorian disability support organisations (Yooralla and Gateways Support Services) throughout 2014/2015 alongside an evaluation process that was completed in August 2015.

Train the Trainer Programs

- Eleven women with disabilities and eleven prevention of violence against women (PVAW) sector workers trained to deliver to staff of disability support organisations. Ten co-facilitators were contracted to deliver the training.
- Two women with disabilities and three Centre Against Sexual Assault trained to deliver peer education/empowerment program

Human Rights and Quality Services: What does gender have to do with it?"

training was delivered to a total of 170 staff from two disability support organisations:

- 91 Yooralla staff and managers
- 79 Gateways Support Services staff

Two follow up COPs were established at each pilot site with four sessions held over a period of 4-6 months. (18 Yooralla and 20 Gateways members which included staff, managers and women with disabilities.



Co-Facilitators Jax Brown and Emma Mahony with Gateways leadership team.

“Women with Disabilities: Our Right to Respect!” Peer Education/Empowerment Program was delivered to eight women with disabilities. The program provides an opportunity for women with disabilities to build understanding of rights, healthy relationships, what violence is and how to seek support to feel safe. At the same time, participants can build confidence and relationships to improve well-being.

Evaluation Framework

Purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation investigated the following questions emerging from the Project Logic (Attachment 1).

- What has been learnt about the delivery of the Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability?
- To what extent and in what ways has the Program achieved its aim of increasing the capacity of disability organisations to deliver safe, respectful services that are gender sensitive and gender equitable?
- How effective is the Program in increasing knowledge, awareness and capacity in gender equitable and gender sensitive service delivery?

Evaluation Approach

Using a formative and impact approach, this evaluation was designed to investigate the following aspect of the Program:

- Governance and organisational partner engagement
- Co-facilitator recruitment process and Train the Trainer program
- Gender and disability learning package and training delivery
- Changes in individual learning, behaviour and practice
- Organisational and cultural change
- Improvement in the lives of women who are users of the service/s

Methodology

Mixed methods; qualitative and quantitative data were utilised:

- Interviews with organisational staff
- Interviews with co-facilitators
- Interviews with WDV staff
- Focus groups with staff attending training
- Focus group with peer education participants
- Observations
- Reflection workshop for the Project Advisory Group and Project Implementation Groups
- Online surveys
- Various program data

Analysis

The Project Logic informed the analysis of data along with Kirkpatrick's¹ framework for evaluating training programs. Kirkpatrick sets out four levels for the evaluation of training programs:

- Reaction - what the participant thought and felt about the training (happy sheets)
- Learning - the resulting increase in knowledge or capability (ascertained through tests and exams)
- Behaviour – the extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation/application of the learning
- Results - the effects on the business or environment resulting from the participants' performance.

This evaluation has focused on the latter two levels which are generally the realm of independent evaluators.

¹ First published in 1959, Donald Kirkpatrick developed a framework for evaluating education programs. See also Kirkpatrick, Donald and Kirkpatrick, James, *Evaluating Training Programs*, 2009, Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Evaluation Key Findings

Overview

Partnership, organisational commitment, the centrality of women with disabilities and the effectiveness of the co-facilitation model are key strengths of the highly ambitious, Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability (the Program) developed and delivered by Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV).

This Final Evaluation Report finds strong evidence to support the continuation of the Program, and offers a range of suggestions to refine and strengthen the Program.

“the marked difference I have observed in staff approaches to working with women with disabilities, in particular between staff who have completed the training and those that have not. Moving from managing one residential service to another has highlighted this for me.” (Disability Service Manager)

Also widely acknowledged was the skilful, respectful and flexible partnership approach between WDV and the pilot organisations, the members of the PAG and PiG, and women’s health, legal, family violence and sexual assault services which underpinned the Program.

The commitment to the Program demonstrated by senior organisational staff in mobilizing resources and championing the training was influential in the successful piloting of the Program.

The centrality and partnership with women with disabilities in the design and delivery of the Program had a powerful impact on participants and is a stand-out success of the Program.

“I wasn’t aware of my own opinions and beliefs. It made me, in the workplace and my personal life, be more aware of gender and how it plays out in my life.” (Disability Support Worker)

The sharing of their personal experiences made the training ‘real’ for many participants. The combination of women with disabilities and prevention of violence against women (PVAW) sector workers as co-facilitators resonated strongly with training participants who appreciated the experience and knowledge that co-facilitators brought to the training.

The piloting of the Program has provided a rich environment for testing the Program and delivery method. This has enabled valuable learning in all aspects of the Program including for both pilot organisations. This evaluation finds surprising little difference in the impact of the Program across the two pilot sites.

The evaluation finds that the training had mixed results. The data suggests that some people experienced significant learning; some found the training hard to relate to their circumstances, and a small group had a negative experience of the training.

There is clear evidence of a greater level of awareness of the prevalence of violence against women with disabilities and to a lesser degree the importance of gender sensitive service delivery. This is demonstrated in a greater level of conversation and discussion about these issues across the two pilot organisations.

There is also evidence of changes in practice and organisational cultural and policy changes which is likely to lead to improved gender sensitive service delivery.

The high level of energy and interest in relation to organisational COP also demonstrates the ongoing interest and commitment at an organisational and staff level to continue learning in this area.

Governance and Partnership

Key Findings: Governance and Partnership Approach

- Skilful, respectful and flexible partnership approach between pilot sites and WDV
- Valuable contribution and partnership of women's health and family violence services
- Valuable role of Project Advisory Groups and Project Implementation Group
- Wide ranging expertise of governance groups
- Sustained effort
- Tenacity and flexibility of WDV
- Engagement and leadership of senior staff – mobilising resources and championing training.

WDV established a range of governance structures and mechanisms which have supported the development and delivery of the Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability including a Project Advisory Group (PAG), Project Implementation Groups (PiG) and memorandums of understanding (MoUs).

The evaluation finds the governance mechanisms, the PAG and PiG, have been valuable in supporting the implementation of the Program including providing advice and problem solving.

The PAG brought together cross sector representatives including those from the pilot sites, primary prevention experts, disability peak bodies and government representatives. The PAG met regularly with six meetings held from October 2013 to July 2015, and was guided by a clear terms of reference. PAG minutes record high levels and regular attendance by members which demonstrates a high level of engagement and interest in the Program.



Gender & Disability Workforce Development Program – Project Advisory Group meeting

Through the PAG, and the commitment of its members in attending and contributing to meetings, a diverse range of expertise and experience assisted in informing and guiding the implementation of the pilot. One PAG member described the Program as *“catching a wave”*.

WDV invested heavily in strategic partnership effort with the range of organisations participating in the Program. This includes with key senior staff in both pilot sites, and also with specialist organisations such as women’s health, family violence, sexual assault and legal services to build constructive collaborative relationships and to support the delivery of the Program. This assisted in ensuring the Program was developed and supported through specialist knowledge and the participation of skilled trainers.

Fundamental to the design and delivery of the Program has been the strength of partnership between WDV and the pilot site organisations: Yooralla and Gateways. This partnership approach has forged strong, respectful and enduring relationships that have successfully navigated a range of complex and sensitive issues.

Senior organisational staff from the pilot sites commented on the value and strength in partnering with a complementary organisation to implement the training, and that the partnership could be an ongoing one rather than be solely about a one-off project. Senior staff also reported on the responsive, proactive, open and skilful manner in which difficulties or challenges were dealt with by WDV program staff – *“you need a genuine partnership to do that.”*

Where changes or modifications were made in response to issues raised, they were described as being made ‘in partnership’, and through the use of champions within the organisation.

“It’s a test of partnership in working with tight timeframes. Every time I emailed her, she came right back to me. That impresses me in terms of getting good outcomes, commitment and skills.”
(Pilot Site Manager)

The commitment by senior organisational staff to mobilize significant agency resources and to prioritise the training has been significant in enabling the pilot to go ahead, and in ensuring a significant number of leadership/management and support staff participated in the training.

The evaluation finds that key to the successes of the pilot program has been the strength of commitment from all participating organisations which has included contributing significant resources, particularly through the participation of staff to support the training.

Co-facilitation Model

Key Findings: Impact of Co-facilitation Model

- Strong support for co-facilitation from training participants and co-facilitators
- Co-facilitators learning the role and became more organised and confident during the program
- Powerful exchange of skills and experience by working in co-facilitation teams
- Train the Trainer successful in building strong and respectful relationships between co-facilitators
- More time on the content of the training package required during the Train the Trainer
- Comprehensive and flexible support program for co-facilitators
- Observational element confused roles and had a negative impact for some co-facilitators

The combination of women with disabilities and prevention of violence against women (PVAW) sector trainers as co-facilitators resonated strongly with training participants who appreciated the experience and knowledge that co-facilitators brought to the training.

The centrality of women with disabilities in this Program as co-facilitators and partners is a standout highlight. Training participants frequently cited that the women co-facilitators with disabilities made the training 'real'.

"It made it real; sharing their stories" (Disability Support Worker)

The personal experiences related by women facilitators with disabilities were a key contributor to the engagement of staff in the training. Governance group members and senior organisational staff acknowledged the commitment of WDV to the involvement and partnership with women with disabilities.

"Great it was presented by people with disabilities and hear their take on life." (Disability Support Worker)

The partnerships between WDV and the range of women's health, family violence, sexual assault and legal services was instrumental in ensuring that the pilot was delivered with the support and participation of practitioners with specialist knowledge and expertise. This included partnerships between WDV and the following organisations:

- Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault
- South East Centre Against Sexual Assault
- Women's Health West
- Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West
- Women's Health Goulburn North East
- Women's Health East
- Women's Legal Service Victoria
- WRISC Family Violence Support

While these partnerships were not formalised, that is, not bound by a partnership agreement or MOU, they were successful in that in each organisation demonstrated their commitment and support to the program by identifying suitable staff and supporting them to participate in the Program. This resulted in the participation of a range of cross sector practitioners at each training session delivered.

The co-facilitators participated in a five-day Train the Trainer Program and were supported through a Reflective Learning Strategy which included, one-on-one and co-facilitation team delivery planning, observation and feedback during the training delivery, pre-training briefing and post-training debriefing, and a Trainers' COP.

The Program has had a significant impact, largely positive, for co-facilitators. The Train the Trainer Program and Reflective Learning Strategy has been influential in creating strong bonds amongst co-facilitators, developed new skills, and built the confidence of co-facilitators in both content and delivery of the training.

"I learnt that I can do this stuff and that I am worth employing in this sphere." (Co-facilitator)



"We got a certificate that we had completed that training, at end of our last meeting. You can't underestimate the power of what that means. Everyone was very proud to hold it – a lot of blood sweat and tears went in to it. You can't underestimate the validation that that brings."

(Co-facilitator)

Women co-facilitators with disabilities reported gaining significant skills and understanding about violence against women, and PVAW sector co-facilitators reported gaining significant learning and skills about the everyday issues facing women with disabilities.

"I have a deeper understanding about women with disabilities – and will now always include this in whatever I am involved in." (Co-facilitator)

Unintended impacts for co-facilitators include the high level of unpaid time required to prepare for the training. Some modification to the training package to streamline co-facilitation was suggested. The evaluation suggests that the delivery of further training sessions and the pairing of co-facilitators is likely to build strong co-facilitation teams who require less formal support and supervision.

Delivery of Training and Community of Practice

Delivered across two pilot sites, the training program reached a total of 170 participants: 91 at Yooralla (80% women and 20% men), a large state-wide disability support organisation, and 79 (76% women and 24% men) at Gateways Support Services (Gateways), a medium sized disability support organisation based in Geelong. Eight women with disabilities participated in a peer education program trialled in one site.

The Program was delivered by ten co-facilitators, five women co-facilitators with disabilities and five PVAW sector co-facilitators. Pilot site communities of practice (COP), established at the conclusion of training delivery, supported the ongoing awareness and skill development of participants.

Key Findings: Training Program Elements

- High level of impact of prevalence data
- High level of engagement with experiential exercises
- Mixed views about speaker panels
- Engagement with action plans but more support needed to enact them
- Role playing useful in practising skills for some participants
- Positive feedback about training together as a leadership team

On balance the evaluation finds the delivery of leadership team, and support worker training to be an effective approach and one that should be retained. The evaluation data indicates that the training has had the most significant impact in raising awareness of gender inequality and the prevalence of violence against women with disabilities for training participants. Some evaluation participants reported knowing more about the issues from a woman's perspective following the training.

"A better understanding of the prevalence of inequity and violence amongst women, especially those with a disability." (Service Manager)

"Got a big picture of the whole situation and how much it can happen" (Disability Support Worker)

The evaluation finds that the training package could have been more tailored toward the organisational circumstances and range of programs delivered by the pilot organisations. For example, accommodating the needs of support workers from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds, demonstrating the relevance for workers who work in gender specific sites (such as a male only, or female only house), and providing more practical examples and resources to assist in the practical application of the concepts.

A revised and more nuanced training package that is tailored to various organisational contexts, is clearer in its key messages and learning outcomes, and that provides additional practical exercise and resources, along with strengthened co-facilitation teams is likely to improve the impact of the training for a greater number participants.

Key Findings: Impact for Training Participants

- Increased awareness of gender equity, the rights of women with disabilities
- Increased awareness of violence against women with disabilities
- Increased confidence in talking about the rights of women with disabilities and gender equity
- Following through with action plans developed during the program

This evaluation finds very little difference in the impact of the Program across the pilot sites. It finds evidence of significant impacts for participants of the training.

Many evaluation participants also reported increased skills and confidence in talking about issues such as gender equality and violence against women with disabilities with their colleagues and managers. Most evaluation participants reported that they would recommend the training to other staff. Some staff also suggested that further training on these issues should be offered to staff.

“I am passionate about it [rights of women with disabilities]. I am trying to be much more aware.”
(Disability Support Worker)

“Reaffirmed the amount of power we have over our clients and how we must be mindful (constantly) how we use it”. (Disability Support Worker)

Key Findings: Peer Education Program Strengths

- Positive feedback
- Stories about women with disabilities, even where this was upsetting
- The pitch of the course
- Co-facilitation by a woman with a disability
- Participation by CASA service
- Confidentiality of the group so women could talk freely about themselves and their lives
- Potential and support for a locally available ongoing women’s group
- Importance of follow-up support

The “Our Right to Respect” program has been well received by women with disabilities. The model is rights based, and aims to empower women and provides interactive information regarding relationships, sexuality and safety. The peer delivered program is evidence based and builds on learnings from similar programs.

The Peer Education Program, trialled in only one site with eight women shows promising results in being a positive experience for some of the small number of participants.

Reasons for low numbers of registrations as well as high number of cancellations include timing and competing activities, lack of information and explanatory support provided to individuals as well as worker and family concern and protectiveness of women being exposed to content that may be upsetting.

Women who participated in the peer education program were very positive about the experience.

"It's a good idea – women coming together." (Program Participant)

Based on the evaluation data, there are opportunities to strengthen and improve the program. While the initial results of the peer education program are promising, the evaluation finds that further testing of the peer education model is required.

Given the nature of the content and discussions generated through the program this report suggests that WDV consider a formal partnership with a Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) to further develop, deliver and test the program. This would increase the level and proximity of support available to participants should they disclose their experience of violence and or become distressed or upset by the nature of the discussions.

Key Findings: Communities of Practice

- Real opportunity to embed learnings
- High level of energy and interest
- Diversity of topics explored
- Demonstrated commitment to continuing organisational learning and COP

The intention of the COP model, to bring training participants, women with disabilities and other stakeholders together to continue their learning and application of that learning in the workplace, has been well fulfilled.

The COP membership included a 'slice' of organisational training participants, working across a range of levels and services within each organisation and women service users. Importantly, the COP have generated an energy and excitement about ways in which to apply the concepts and learning from the training into practice within each organisation.

The interest in, and potential of the COP was observed by the evaluators, through the wide ranging topics of discussion, participatory process encouraged by the co-facilitators that enabled everyone to have a voice, and the interest in maintaining the COP as expressed by participants.

The COP show real potential to continue to embed learnings and skill development. The level of energy, interest and diversity of topics explored and/or identified in the COP at the pilot sites points to the organisational commitment to keep issues of gender and violence against women with disabilities firmly on the table, and to a need for the COP to continue.

A challenge arising from the implementation is how to keep the COP active, and how to resource the facilitation required given the specialised knowledge and somewhat technical nature of understanding gender equity and violence against women.



Co-facilitators Kristen Sheridan and Colleen Furlanetto facilitating a leadership workshop

Key Findings: Organisational and Cultural Change

- Changes in practice
- Sharing information about the training in general
- Increased discussion of women and human rights
- Increased awareness of violence against women
- A commitment from senior managers to support staff participating in further learning and development such as the COP

Evaluation participants reported that the training has highlighted the need for organisations to improve the knowledge and skills of staff in order to maximise the empowerment and skills of women with disabilities to know their rights and to access support when required. They also reported that there is more work required to improve understanding and skills in supporting women who may be non-verbal and/or may have profound disabilities and limited experiences.

“Now when we have conversations, we introduce concepts of gender; it’s actually discussed as a point in decision making. There has been a shift in our conversations since the training.”
(Disability Support Worker)

The evaluation has found examples of action taken, in response to participating in the training, to directly improve the circumstances for women who are users of services provided by both organisations. This includes:

- Workers advocating for the individual needs of women
- Talking to women directly about an issue of concern;
- Linking individual women into other service providers
- Raising issues about individual women with their manager and/or specialist agency staff such as a CASA worker.

“For me, I am more conscious of behaviour now. In the past if I heard something, I wouldn’t really do much. Now I go and have a look and see what their behaviour is. I have seen that change in other staff who have done the training. They do the same thing now.” (Disability Support Worker)

Other practice changes include incorporating gender equity discussion as standing agenda item for team meetings and with staff who did not participate in the training; increase in observation skills; taking by-stander action and encouraging respect amongst “customers”.

“We put the action plan [developed during the training] into our mission statement for the house.” (Disability Support Worker)

“We have tried to include into our quality plans...an element of human rights and zero tolerance for abuse and neglect. It fits with empowering women and role modelling appropriate language and behaviour.” (Senior Manager)

Key Findings: Challenging and Unintended Impact

- Understanding of key concepts
- It doesn’t involve me - Gender specific sites (e.g. all male or female houses); ‘We already treat everyone equally’; and ‘We practice individualised care/support’
- No imperative/policy or practice requirement
- Training package insufficiently nuances for audience - English Language proficiency; Working with people with highly complex needs; and Levels of experience and qualifications
- For male participants – acknowledging the impact for men in hearing the statistics and acknowledging the nurturing and caring role that men can play

A range of issues impacted on the ability of some participants to grasp key concepts of gender equity and violence against women with disabilities. Some participants raised concerns about the level of abuse experienced by men with disabilities and felt concerned about the lack of engagement or discussion of this in the training.

A number of participants also reflected that gender did not apply in their circumstances. This appeared to be where the house was an ‘all male’ or ‘all female’ house. These participants appeared unable to apply the concepts of the training within their workplace location, and outside the immediate sphere of their workplace location, or within a broader organisational or community context.

This contrasts with those participants who fully engaged with the concepts, were able to relate them to their professional and personal life and for example went on to discuss them with colleagues, friends and family. Co-facilitators did note a shift for some training participants who initially thought that gender was not an issue for them.

A number of participants raised the issue of multiple levels of disadvantage experienced by people with disabilities one of which was gender, and that the training should cover this in more depth. This issue was particularly raised at senior executive/manager level training.

The main concern raised by some participants was that some of the training was not well tailored to the context of the work, and this resulted in a level of disengagement between co-facilitators and training participants. The training package did not respond to the demographics, background and context for a small but significant cohort of disability support workers. For example some training sessions comprised disability support workers from a wide range of cultures and English language proficiency levels, significant differences in levels of experience, qualifications and training.

Some senior staff reported that the training also raised awareness about what it means to demonstrate respect for women and the importance of men in being good role models, although some participants reported that there was little acknowledgement from presenters about the positive role of men. Some men participating in the training reported that they felt uncomfortable being a male in the room at times, and felt that some of the responsibility for the prevalence data was personally directed at them, noting that this was not the case for all men participating in interviews.

Some key challenges experienced in engaging pilot organisations in the program and its administration include:

- Operational and response driven nature of direct service
- Competing priorities within disability sector reform
- Limited resources for learning and development
- Shift work, back fill and little non-contact time for disability workers
- Recruitment to Peer Education Programs
- Many hours of additional (unpaid) work for co-facilitators in order to feel confident and across the material
- High levels of fatigue for women co-facilitators with disabilities

Sustainability

There is a need for sustainability planning around two key aspects: the sustainability of the Program, in particular through the strengthening of the co-facilitation team, and the sustainability of organisational cultural change.

There is strong evidence that this ambitious pilot program has ‘turned on the lights’ for the two pilot organisations in relation to gender equality and its impact on gender sensitive service delivery.

The degree to which this can be maintained and the growing awareness of the importance of this issue can translate into ongoing organisational change could be an important area of further investigation and evaluation. The sustainability of the Program and its impact to effect organisational cultural change is constrained by the pilot nature of the Program.

“I will commit to support my team to embrace the changes needed and support them fully in their action plan”. (Team Leader)

Key to sustainability is the need to build the team, capacity and capability of the co-facilitators to deliver the Program. This will require re-engagement of co-facilitators, ensuring they have sufficient opportunity to deliver enough training programs in order to consolidate their skills in both content and co-facilitation.

Further investment is also required to assist pilot organisations to continue their journey toward gender equity and in creating the structures and supports that will result in the delivery of gender sensitive services for all women with disabilities. This might take the form of follow-up or refresher training, further practical resources to assist in applying the concepts, embedding of COP through a program to support the pairing of a program co-facilitator and an organisational member to co-facilitate a longer term or ongoing COP, and other workplace gender equality strategies.

Policy Implications

- Program indicates gender as 'a gap' for disability organisations
- No guiding policy framework or imperative
- Specialist and technical nature of gender equity and violence against women training
- Value of COPS in keeping discussions about gender 'alive'
- Sustainability of program and organisational culture change

Concluding Summary

The piloting of the Program has provided a rich environment for testing the Program and delivery method. This has enabled valuable learning in all aspects of the Program including both pilot organisations. This evaluation finds surprising little difference in the impact of the Program across the two pilot sites.

The evaluation finds that the training had mixed results. The data suggests that some people experienced significant learning; some found the training hard to relate to their circumstances, and a small group had a negative experience of the training. There is clear evidence of a greater level of awareness of the prevalence of violence against women with disabilities and to a lesser degree the importance of gender sensitive service delivery. This is demonstrated in a greater level of conversation and discussion about these issues across the two pilot organisations.

There is also evidence of changes in practice and organisational cultural and policy changes which is likely to lead to improved gender sensitive service delivery. The high level of energy and interest in relation to organisational COPs also demonstrates the ongoing interest and commitment at an organisational and staff level to continue learning in this area.

Summary of Program Strengths

- Highly ambitious program
- Expertise, commitment and sustained effort by WDV
- Importance of partnership, organisational leadership and commitment
- Centrality of women with disabilities; importance and effectiveness of co-facilitation model; and building capacity and capability of co-facilitators
- Elements work well as a package - Use of interactive and engaging training activities and usefulness of resources - though refinement needed
- Positive impact for training participants
- Further testing of the peer education program required
- Communities of Practice

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That WDV undertake a staged roll out of the Program to disability organisations that demonstrate a willingness to commence a journey towards gender equality, and to partner with WDV in program delivery.

Recommendation 2: That organisations identified as suitable to participate in the Program demonstrate their commitment to a partnership approach including the involvement of the CEO, ability to mobilize resources, and a contribution towards logistics.

Recommendation 3: That WDV continue to maintain active input and partnership with women with disabilities in all aspects of any further roll out of the Program.

Recommendation 4: That the following key elements of the Program be maintained:

- The partnership approach with organisations
- The co-facilitation by women facilitators with disabilities and PVAW sector co-facilitators
- The training and support for co-facilitators
- Training that focuses on both leadership teams and support workers
- Communities of practice.

Recommendation 5: That the peer education program is further tested and the following refinements be considered:

- That WDV formally partner with a CASA (or CASA Forum) to deliver and test the model
- That WDV develop an action research model to further test the peer education program.

Recommendation 6: That WDV continue to work with the co-facilitation team to build their capacity and skills in delivering the Program including:

- Developing co-facilitation teams to build on their growing expertise in co-facilitation
- Providing refresher training for facilitators focusing on refinements to the training package, and extending their skills to facilitate COP
- Providing sufficient support, including paid hours, for co-facilitators in preparing to deliver training.

Recommendation 7: That the recruitment of additional facilitators seek to include male co-facilitators.

Recommendation 8: That the following refinements to the Program be considered:

- That mixed support worker training groups (across a range of service types within the organisation) be trialled
- That the support worker training be reduced to one and a half days (consecutive).

Recommendation 9: That WDV undertake an independent assessment of the training package to consider:

- The accessibility of the language and concepts
- Additional practical exercises and resources
- A reduction in the duration of the support worker training.
- The development of a range of modules that can be selected depending on the context of the organisation.

Recommendation 10: That WDV review the program administration to identify opportunities to streamline processes, and that the future program design incorporate an administrative support component.

Recommendation 11: That WDV consider additional investment in work to foster ongoing cultural change at the pilot sites which might include:

- Follow-up or refresher training
- Practical resources to assist in applying the concepts
- Embedding of COP through a program to support the pairing of a program co-facilitator and an organisational staff member to co-facilitate a longer term or ongoing COP
- Policy development and review, and workplace gender equality strategies.

Recommendation 12: That WDV secure resources to examine the medium and longer term impact of the Program.

Additional findings since the independent evaluation

The outcomes continue beyond the program timeframes and evaluation process.

Reports received by WDV include:

- Increased employment opportunities for co-facilitators
- Co-facilitators making representation on to Victorian inquiries
- Women with disabilities taking court action
- Increase in regional initiatives that focus on prevention of violence against women with disabilities
- Increased gender and disability focus in regional violence prevention plans
- Forming of cross sector collaboration and networks



Cross sector collaboration in action during panel session in disability support worker training.

Next steps

Following completion of the program and these encouraging program evaluation findings, extension of funding was announced in July 2015 by the Hon Fiona Richardson, Minister for Women and Minister for Prevention of Family Violence.

“Advocacy and education through this program are fundamental in promoting and upholding the rights of Victorian women with a disability and reducing the risk of gender-based violence.”

WDV will be implementing the evaluation recommendations and offering disability support organisations the opportunity to participate in the next stage of this exciting cultural change program.

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The Workforce Development Program on Gender and Disability is supported by the Victorian Government