

SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES PILOT

2018 - 2021

South East Community Links Pilot Report: an overview of our achievements, our learnings and our recommendations for the future of family violence primary prevention work with migrant and refugee communities.

Table of contents

Acknowledgments.....	2
1. Executive summary	0
2. Introduction	3
3. SECL community action for change	5
3.1 Forming Community Advisory Groups	5
3.2 Community capability building	6
3.3 Co-design and co-facilitation	8
3.4 Community driven development of multilingual resources	12
4. SECL Organisational Action for Change.....	15
4.1 Policies and procedures	15
4.2 Training and increased prevention capability.....	16
4.3 Systems and data collection	18
4.4 Sector Partnerships for change.....	19
5. Conclusion.....	21
6. Recommendations	22
6.1 Resourcing and Scope	22
6.2 Reporting and Evaluation.....	24
6.3 Collaboration with CALD communities	24

Acknowledgments

SECL gratefully acknowledges the enormous contributions made by CALD community organisations whose members dedicated their time toward the Pilot planning and delivery of project activities and provided SECL's Pilot with insights and cultural knowledge.

Indian Community

Federation of India
Friends of Children Foundation
Indian Care
Shakti
Sikh Australian Foundation
Sikh Volunteers Organisation
Vishva Hindu Parish of Australia
and Chithambaram Srinivasan (former VMC Commissioner)
Rachna Bowman

Afghan Community

Afghan Australian Civil Society Organisation
Allah Mohammad Ali Fatima
Hassan Hussein Federation
Noor Foundation
Victorian Afghan Associations Network
Youth services (City of Casey)

African Community

Afri Aus-care
Afro Youth
Anyuak Community
Carers of Africa
Chollo Community
Community in Abundance
Daughters of Jerusalem
Entrepreneurs Movement Club
Lopit Community Association
Nuer Community of Victoria
Oromo Community Leaders – Dr Tarekegn Chimidi
Roost of Hope
South Sudan Equatorians Association Inc.
South Sudanese Women's Support Group
African Women's and Families Network
PAADN – Pan-African Australasian Diaspora Network
VYSSA Inc – Victorian Youth Support Services Association Inc.

1. Executive summary

The Victorian Government recognises that prevention strategies need to be tailored and relevant to people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Policy directions have utilised key learnings, principles and standards of important work undertaken by Our Watch, VicHealth, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, InTouch and numerous other organisations. In accordance with the Recommendations of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, the Safer and Stronger Communities Pilot ('the Pilot') was designed to test what works best to prevent family violence in multicultural communities.

Over a 2.5-year period (2018 – 2021), The Department of Premier and Cabinet funded projects in five regions across Victoria where there are high levels of resettlement and where there are also high levels of family violence incident reporting. Support has been directed to five Lead Providers with expertise in work with migrant and refugee communities: the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Diversitat, the Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District, MiCare and South East Community Links. These Lead Providers have worked with identified partners and local community groups toward building prevention expertise and cross-cultural capacity, supported by enhanced local partnerships.

Although a mainstream service provider, South East Community Links has a 50-year history working in partnership with local diverse communities across the south east of Melbourne. In this time, people from over 170 different cultural backgrounds have settled in the region and today the City of Greater Dandenong, our principal place, is the most culturally diverse local government area in Australia with approximately 70% of residents speaking a language other than English at home.

SECL was privileged to be selected as a Lead Provider and to have the opportunity to work closely with our local communities in an area which we recognise is new, confronting, challenging and inspirational for our community members. Commitment to the Pilot objectives was demonstrated at all levels of SECL. Our Board, Executive team, staff, volunteers, students and community members were immersed in the overall goal of holistic change for increased gender equality and the prevention of violence against women.

At an organisational level, SECL's Pilot utilised the Workplace Equality and Respect (WER) standards to implement change. After thorough review and with an intersectional lens, our organisation adopted new and improved workplace policies and procedures. We strengthened staff, volunteer and student capability with training and induction processes, and we introduced more refined systems and data collection methods to identify and support our victim/survivor clients to access support services.

Our work with our Pilot's target communities relied on trust, genuine partnership development, active contribution and respect, demonstrated through SECL's Community Advisory Groups. The co-design and co-facilitation of community activities was made possible through the dynamic and rigorous work of Afghan, African and Indian community members. Active community contribution resulted in the direct participation of 580 community members and the creation and production of multilingual 'Change the Story' videos with a reach to over 6,000 community members.

Although challenged by various factors that are typically part of all community engagement work, the greatest challenges were presented by the COVID-19 pandemic that impacted the design and delivery of our work. Not only were we compelled to adapt our methods of engagement, but more serious to our service was the impact that the pandemic had on our clients, community members and the repercussions of increased family tensions to the safety of women and children in our local communities. As widely reported, the stressors on family relationships and households were many and complex and the relevance of our Pilot work was acute and profound in this evolving climate.



With a keen eye to progressing our significant Pilot developments and achievements, we provide our insight to the effectiveness of undertaking family violence prevention work with migrant and refugee communities. As a result of the Safer and Stronger Communities Pilot, SECL's work led to overwhelmingly positive outcomes within our own organisation and to significant change through productive and effective community relationships. Our findings and evaluation recommend that the following key points be considered for future directions and funding of similar such projects.

- SECL's partnership approach with CALD communities provided measurable and significant value; SECL recommends that CALD family violence prevention strategies are highly effective when processes of co-design and co-facilitation are strong features from the commencement of community engagement through to the delivery of project activities; projects which incorporate co-design and co-facilitation as strong features should be considered for increased future funding

- SECL acknowledges the benefits of flexible funding and our Pilot outcomes demonstrates the importance of utilizes resources through such funding; we recommend that flexible funding is considered as an inherent component of CALD community engagement which can be utilized to financially support the community work undertaken by active and dedicated CALD community members, such as the bi-lingual support work, co-design, co-facilitation and promotional work undertaken by SECL's Pilot Community Advisory Group members
- That culturally relevant tools be developed and created through co-design processes and that the development of such tools be prioritized to address the lack of such resources; CALD community feedback emphasized strongly both the importance of developing the multilingual 'Change the Story' resources, as well as the invaluable contribution of CALD individuals in the actual process of developing these resources
- The engagement of men and boys in prevention work was instrumental to our Pilot's successes and SECL recognizes the increased possibilities for impact when men and boys are actively engaged in prevention activities; as such, we recommend that prevention project inclusion of male co-facilitators be considered as integral to prevention work with CALD communities and that project timeframes allow for the training of male co-facilitators
- Longer term investment in prevention work should be strongly considered to allow for a minimum of three-year funding; longer duration would facilitate increased strategic project planning and increased investment in activities that deliver on attitudinal and behavioural change and have the capacity for ongoing reinforcement and wider reach of messaging
- Given the successful contribution of a specialist multicultural family violence service provider, that increased resourcing be dedicated to InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence, in order to facilitate increased capacity for response to referrals and for response to capability training and requests for secondary consultations from mainstream service providers
- In recognition of the important value of the functions of the Communities of Practice forum to provide a mechanism for information sharing and capacity building, SECL recommends that such a forum is resourced to have an expanded role that facilitates functions for reflective practice and continuous improvement
- Our learnings on the specific issues faced by CALD victims/survivors recommends that a family violence specialist service provider (such as InTouch or Safe Steps) be resourced to have a dedicated position in the Communities of Practice forum; their expertise was invaluable and future projects would be further strengthened by the dedicated function of such organizations in such a forum, which supports service providers to enhance safe referrals and to better respond to identified barriers and the unique complexities in working with CALD community members

2. Introduction

Recommendations of Victoria's Royal Commission into Family Violence include the need to invest in actions which aim to prevent violence before it occurs and to deliver prevention programs that reflect our diverse community. These recommendations are in recognition of the markedly different experience of family violence and of service response for people from culturally diverse communities. For diverse communities, family violence is characterised by both the complexity and intersectionality of social and economic marginalisation, as well as the increased likelihood of facing barriers to access for appropriate family violence supports.

The Victorian Government recognises that prevention strategies need to be tailored and relevant to people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. The Royal Commission Recommendation 142 is that:

“The Victorian Government ensure that family violence community awareness and prevention programs and activities use language, imagery and messaging that reflect the diversity of the Victorian community. Prevention work should be developed in consultation with relevant communities and be evaluated in order to refine future practice....”

Recognising that family violence is serious, prevalent and preventable, the Victorian Government has established a broad reaching policy framework which is underpinned by the Royal Commission's recommendations and supported with strategies, a whole of government approach and collaborative work. Victoria's Family Violence Outcomes Framework has set out four key outcomes in relation to prevention:

- All Victorians experience respectful relationships underpinned by human rights and gender equality
- Victorians do not tolerate family violence
- Victorians hold beliefs and attitudes that reject gender inequality and family violence
- Women and men, and girls and boys are equal

These are the key overarching outcomes of all work undertaken to support family violence prevention, however, the Victorian Government seeks to identify prevention approaches which are nuanced, effective and evidence based among Victoria's culturally diverse communities. The development of the Safer and Stronger Communities Pilot has facilitated the opportunity to test prevention approaches across a range of regions and diverse communities. Informing the establishment of the Safer and Stronger Communities Pilot are a range of policies, frameworks and strategies, which include:

- Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy
- Free from Violence: Victoria's Strategy to Prevent Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women
- Change the Story: A Shared Framework for the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children (Our Watch, VicHealth, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety)
- Workplace Equality and Respect (WER) standards
- The Multicultural Policy Statement, Victorian and Proud of it
- The Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement
- Intersectionality Matters Guide, developed by Multicultural Centre for Women's Health

Utilising key learnings, principles, standards and recommendations of these important works, the Safer and Stronger Communities Pilot ('the Pilot') has had at its core, the test of what works best to prevent family violence in migrant and refugee communities. Over a two-year period (2018 – 2020), the Pilot has funded projects in five regions across Victoria where there are high levels of resettlement and where there are also high levels of family violence incident reporting. Support has been directed to five Lead Providers with expertise in work with migrant and refugee communities: the Brotherhood of St Laurence, Diversitat, the Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District, MiCare and South East Community Links.

Importantly, the Pilot has sought a holistic approach from its Lead Providers, requiring that Lead Providers apply actions for change in their own organisations, while developing collaboration for change with CALD communities. Across the Pilot projects, Our Watch and Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) have guided the roll out of the Pilot, with the provision of training, ongoing advice and support for consistency and best practice across all Pilot sites.

There are two integral parts to the Pilot:

- an internal focus on organisational and workforce capacity building, and
- a focus on engaging with people from migrant and refugee backgrounds

South East Community Links delivered the Safer and Stronger Communities Pilot in the Southern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne, working with diverse migrant and refugee communities in the City of Greater Dandenong and the City of Casey. Over the two-year period, the Pilot provided our organisation immense opportunity with dedicated resources to allocate time, staff, review and evaluation toward project objectives, methodology, planning and delivery of Pilot activities.

The Safer and Stronger Communities Pilot offered SECL the opportunity to work at multiple levels and facilitate a holistic approach to the prevention of family violence in migrant and refugee communities in the Southern Metropolitan Region. Our work required that we not only utilise our existing knowledge of CALD family violence issues, but that we further inform our practices, both at an internal level and at an external engagement level, based on our ongoing consultation with Pilot Partners and on our committed collaboration with community members.

Pilot Partner expertise and community member expertise were relied upon to continuously inform SECL's Pilot activities, which have transformed our own organisation's capacity in prevention work and have transformed community member capacity to engage in a process of community attitudinal change and to access an increasingly responsive service system.

Collaboration at the service provider level was founded on principles of trust, connection, openness and genuine commitment. These same principles were embedded in our relationships and work with identified CALD community groups throughout all stages of the SECL Pilot and our Community Advisory Groups presented SECL with opportunities for fundamental partnership development at the grass roots level.

3. SECL community action for change

Engaging community members was instrumental to our successful project outcomes. Engagement relied greatly on the work of SECL bilingual and bicultural project staff whose cultural knowledge empowered our approach and guided our key methods for engagement:

- forming Community Advisory Groups
- facilitating community capacity building activities
- Co-design and co-facilitation
- Community driven development of culturally relevant resources

3.1 Forming Community Advisory Groups

SECL's commitment to genuine partnership with our community members characterised our approach from the very beginning of our Pilot as we aimed to establish a Community Advisory Group (CAG), that would be representative of our Pilot's target communities: Afghan, African and Indian. With the support of InTouch, SECL devised a detailed Expression of Interest template to recruit CAG members. Our approach allowed our organisation and community members to formalise CAG commitment and expectations.

Under the broader CAG forum, three separate CAGs were formed with a combined membership of 20 community participants contributing to the Afghan, African and Indian CAGs. Each of these groups had Terms of Reference developed which detailed clear roles of CAG members.

Mentoring advice to CAG members was on-going and essential to fostering strong rapport and understanding of project goals and direction. This occurred during CAG meetings, but more frequently via phone calls and individual meetings with CAG members at places convenient to them. Overwhelmingly, CAG members were heavily committed to ongoing meetings, to project goals and outcomes and to actively contributing to co-design and co-facilitation of prevention work.

"It really helped me understand how important it is to work with likeminded people and the work, effort and time that goes into this project. Because of the hard work that I saw I am more confident and forward going in this space."

The three CAGs were the rock in our community prevention work and developed into cohesive, committed and productive teams. They embraced training opportunities to further develop meaningful prevention activities in their respective communities and were a pivotal vehicle for our Pilot to connect with existing groups, as well as to identify gaps for SECL to address needs and subsequently, tailor our prevention work. Our Pilot focused CAG work on key areas of capability building, co-design and co-facilitation of workshops/programs, and developing culturally relevant resources.

The feedback offered by our CAG members was very positive with many expressing that their participation gave them opportunity to learn and develop and to have a voice for what approaches and activities would work in their respective communities. They articulated clearly their feelings of empowerment as they felt a strong part of new developments and at the forefront of change both as individuals and as members of their broader communities.

100% co-design members who completed the end of project survey stated that they had greater capacity to contribute to family violence prevention.



“Being community advisory for this project have empowered me to get further training and work to be part of the family violence prevention. As I like to build my future career in family violence prevention and be someone helpful for the communities.”

“Yes, I gain the knowledge and understanding of impacts of FV and how to present the facts and myths to my community. I feel its women’s right to know about what affects their well-being and that they matter”.

“The project Team members were exceptionally kind, helpful, provided training, got to understand the culture and tradition of others. There was unsaid respect for each other opinion and matter presented were well received and presented in a respectful manner. This open up my eyes and understanding to FV and how this space is necessary for women and children to feel safe. My biggest take was my own healing, knowledge and understanding of impact of FV that has on a person. the team co-operation was fantastic and there was a common ground to thread and work with.”

3.2 Community capability building

Aware that the strength and extent of our Pilot's reach and impact would be greatly dependant on the capacity of the CAG members to work on the Pilot's objectives, SECL initially focussed on CAG capability building. Our Pilot sought to define the existing skill set of CAG members and address their needs for increased capability that would best equip and empower them to undertake project activities. Our work in capability building with the Pilot's CAG members involved a range of processes and activities at various stages, including:

- CAG members participated in Training Needs Analysis offering Pilot insights into their current level of understanding of family violence and gender equality and the areas of knowledge to be strengthened through tailored training that was developed to address need
- Mentoring advice was ongoing to CAG members and essential to fostering strong rapport and understanding of project goals and direction
- CAG members attending the formal 'Recognise, Respond and Refer' training delivered by Intouch and gender equality and family violence training delivered by Multicultural Centre for Women's Health.
- Via email and face-to-face meetings, SECL provided CAG members with videos, articles, reports and statistics (circulated through BASECAMP) to build their knowledge of family violence and the impact of prevention. These communications included the dissemination of: Change the Story, Men of Brimbank, Breaking Boundaries, Men's Adelaide SBS documentary and UN Gender Equality videos.
- Local Strategic Working Group members and CAG members built both their knowledge and formed relationships through the MCWH training, which they all attended and harnessed synergies to collaborate on the project, with

80% of participants were able to describe how gender inequality contributes to family violence

"MCWH training helped me for the first time see the link between gender equality and family violence", African female CAG member.

"It's not as simple as telling the community to go to the police if they are experiencing family violence as their experience of the police is racialized", Indian CAG member.

3.3 Co-design and co-facilitation

In developing SECL's Community Action Plans we detailed key pieces of information:

- our target communities and demographics
- target number of participants
- capacity building plan
- co-design approach of prevention activities
- bi-lingual support needs and opportunities for flexible funding expenditure

Instrumental in this process were our CAG discussions which guided and informed our prevention need mapping exercise which in turn, further defined community need and readiness for prevention work.

CAG member insights were instrumental in informing SECL's Pilot on the prevalence of family violence in each community and the ways that CAG members believed prevention activities would have an impact. Through meetings and workshops with each of the Afghan, African and Indian CAGs, unique and nuanced community perspectives shaped three separate designs of Community Action Plans. Prevention work was tailored to each community by training workshops inclusive of new case studies and methods which were reflective of both need and effectiveness in each community.



Our nuanced approach resulted in culturally relevant and specificity of actions, thus facilitating opportunity to test what works in prevention at the grass-roots level. The following series of workshops were co-designed and co-delivered over many months and in their entirety, they were driven with the engagement of SECL's CAG members:

- Afghan Women's Self Development workshop series – 9 week program with 13 participants
- African Boys' and Men's Soccer program – 5 week program with 20 participants
- African Young Women's Leadership Group workshop series – 5 Saturday online sessions with 19 participants
- Building Safer and Stronger Communities Indian program – 5 week training with 16 participants
- Strengthening African Australian Families program – 5 week training program with 21 participants

Aiming to test the effectiveness of our activities, individuals who participated in these workshops and programs completed pre and post evaluations, which provided our Pilot with information on participant learnings. Evaluation results revealed a significant increase in understanding and awareness of:

- gender equality
- the connection between gender inequality and family violence
- the forms of family violence
- family violence supports, and
- a positive attitudinal shift in understanding that family violence isn't just a family issue

Overwhelmingly, participant evaluation responses highlighted a different appreciation of family violence as a community issue, as an issue that needs to be talked about rather than suppressed. Participants reported that there was a marked shift in their thinking relating to the condoning of violence against women and their willingness to challenge sexism in their community. SECL's family violence prevention workshops resulted in shifts in attitudes and increased knowledge, awareness and skills, with our participant evaluation data consistently highlighting behavioural and attitudinal change.

Increased community strategies and willingness to challenge sexism and violence condoning attitudes

From the Afghan Women's Self Development program evaluations, more participants described themselves as challenging sexism and violence condoning attitudes with peers and community at the end of the project with

67% of participants said they do challenge sexism and violence condoning attitudes with their peers and community

100% of participants described themselves as feeling more comfortable with having discussions with family and friends about gender inequality and family violence where appropriate.

Increased community awareness of gender inequality as a driver of family violence

From the African Boys' and Men's Soccer program, participant evaluation at program completion

62% of participants felt more comfortable having discussions with family and friends about gender inequality where appropriate

Within this group 95% of participants stated that they believed that gender equality was important



Increase in women's leadership capacity and involvement in decision-making

From both CAG member survey comments and program participant evaluations, the strengthened capacity of women was consistently highlighted

"The more I learn and understand about family violence I can pass on what I have learned to others in my community."

"This project has been so good as we are talking about the violence and normally our people (South Sudanese) don't want to talk about it, we keep shut and we hurt, and we need to stop doing this and talk to people and say no, no more!"

"A new knowledge I learnt that women's has the rights to go and speak up for themselves."

"The most powerful thing I learnt during this course is the ability for us to make changes as a community which can lead to changes in the whole country like what happened in Rwanda."

Decrease in attitudes and excuses that justify, excuse, or minimise family violence and its impacts

From the African Young Women's Leadership Program

pre workshop survey responses included mental health, unemployment, drug and alcohol as drivers of family violence; however, post workshop survey answers predominantly listed gender equality as the driver of family violence.

From the Building Safer and Stronger Communities Indian program, our pre and post participant evaluation data highlighted

an attitudinal change about the right of men to control some aspects of a woman's life; this changed from 'strongly agree' in pre-program responses to 'strongly disagree' in post program responses.

Increased skills and capacity to engage in respectful relationships

From the Building Safer and Stronger Communities Indian program, our pre and post participant evaluation data highlighted

A significant increase in the proportion of participants able to describe the values of a healthy relationship

Increased recognition of traditions and values that promote positive and healthy relationships

From the Afghan Women's Self Development program evaluations

all participants were able to describe cultural traditions that promote positive and healthy relationships which included; a strong sense of family, respect for all members including women, equal rights for education, and cultural and religious celebrations.

3.4 Community driven development of multilingual resources

The lack of culturally appropriate prevention tools and resources was identified by our CAGs at the early stages of our Pilot. Although SECL's project provided CAG members with numerous resources to build both CAG and community understandings of family violence and prevention, there was a glaring lack of resources and tools that would reach local CALD communities. Considerations to adapt the 'Change the Story' visual tool for target communities in Melbourne's south east region were welcomed strongly by our CAGs.

In particular, SECL worked intensely with our Afghan and Indian co-design group members to develop adapted versions of the 'Change the Story' tool, a video which illustrates the drivers of violence against women and what works to prevent it based on the national framework, 'Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia'. The result has led to the production of five different versions of the 'Change the Story' tool with the graphics, animation and language utilised in each video reflective of the unique cultural experiences and nuances for the target local communities of Tamil, Punjabi, Hindi, Dari and Hazargi.



These newly created tools are now widely available and easily accessed through the Our Watch website: <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/multilingual-change-the-story>

SECL and our CAG members are very proud of the final product and we are privileged to have developed these through a community driven process. We have disseminated these multilingual resources widely, as we have:

- given Our Watch permission to share these resources with their international partners
- shared these with many service providers
- uploaded these on our SECL website

The opportunity for SECL's multilingual co-design team to create these resources empowered our CAG members to be actively and directly involved in a process for community change. Their direct contribution in the creation/production stage, coupled with their role in the promotion of these tools in the community, have offered real and tangible insights into the reinforcing elements of primary prevention work when CALD community inform the content with cultural knowledge that is nuanced to reflect their specific community values.

“Development of a visual tool like that of the video produced helps in sending the message to the community in their own language”.

“It was empowering as the project provide an opportunity to work and create resources, i.e. Change the Story In Punjabi, Building Safer and Stronger communities and the trainings attended. The increase confidence in developing and educating the community on Family Violence”.

SECL's newly created multilingual 'Change the Story' tools were launched at the City of Casey's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence. At The event, SECL was invited to speak with keynote speaker Natasha Stott Despoja. Alongside launching the Dari, Hazaragi, Tamil, Punjabi and Hindi 'Change the Story' videos, we promoted our co-design community prevention work as part of the Safer and Stronger Communities Pilot.

Furthermore, we have utilised the videos in ongoing in-language community workshops and sought feedback from participants through workshop evaluations. Community workshops have been facilitated by SECL bi-cultural and bilingual staff with Punjabi, Hazaragi, Tamil and Dari and the 'Change the Story' multilingual videos were screened as part of our community prevention work. Specific evaluation questions sought participant feedback on the value and effectiveness of the resource and responses were by and large positive.

‘CHANGE THE STORY’ VIDEO CALD COMMUNITY RESPONSE

The video has been viewed by diverse community groups in SECL’s prevention workshops – the following feedback was collated from workshop participants with 60% evaluation completion rate

From the Punjabi community workshop, evaluation responses indicated that

57% of participants felt that the video improved their understanding of gender inequality

86% of participants indicated that the video improved their understanding of family violence and its impacts on women and children

86% felt the video in Punjabi explained how family violence might occur in their community

All participants agreed that the video in Punjabi was an excellent way to communicate gender inequality and family violence

From the Afghan Hazaragi community workshop, evaluation responses indicated that

57% of participants indicated that the video improved their understanding of family violence and its impacts on women and children

57% felt the video in Hazaragi explained how family violence might occur in their community

72% agreed that the video in Hazaragi was a good way to communicate information about gender inequality and family violence

From the Tamil community workshop, evaluation responses indicated that

80% of participants felt the video improved their understanding of gender inequality

80% indicated that the video improved their understanding of family violence and its impacts on women and children

80% felt the video in Dari explained how family violence may occur in their community

All participants agreed that that the video in Dari was a good way to communicate information about gender inequality and family violence

From the Afghan Dari community workshop, evaluation responses indicated that

94% felt the video in Dari was an effective way to communicate information about gender inequality and family violence

All participants stated that the video in Dari improved their understanding of family violence and its impacts on women and children

78% agreed that the video in Dari improved their understanding of gender inequality

78% indicated that the video in Dari did explain how family violence may occur in their community

4. SECL Organisational Action for Change

Our commitment to change was the underlying principle in all our Pilot work and was inclusive of the change we wanted to see in our own organisation. We undertook a thorough review which applied the Workplace Equity and Respect Standards and an intersectional lens across all the domains of our service provision. SECL's work for organisational change involved all of our staff, volunteers and students at various stages and have culminated in changes across the following areas:

- Policies and procedures
- Training and increased prevention capability
- Systems and data collection
- Sector partnerships for change

4.1 Policies and procedures

SECL's commitment to a process of change is one that requires that change is not only reflected in the communities to which we deliver our services, but that our own organisation reflects and demonstrates the change that we seek to drive. This Pilot provided SECL with the resources to examine and improve our internal policies, procedures and systems with specific focus on workplace equality, the prevention of family violence and our response to family violence disclosures from staff, students, volunteers and clients. Our internal review and subsequent implementation of changes to our organisation were guided by the Workplace Equality and Respect (WER) Standards.

Collaboration across SECL's Leadership and Management Teams led to the development of our WER Organisational Action Plan, which identified the need to incorporate an intersectional lens to our policies and procedures. Approval of SECL's re-drafted and newly created policies and procedures has resulted in the embedding of an intersectional lens to our workplace staff practices and includes the adoption of SECL's:

- Family Violence Identification, Prevention and Response Policy
- Family Violence Prevention and Response Procedure with Safe Referral Pathways
- Safety Plan Template
- Workplace Family Violence Procedure
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Leave and Attendance Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy

Commitment to enhancing equality and women's progression within SECL recognises greater diversity of LGBTQI people and women's lived experiences. Our updated and new policies and procedures provide for two days of paid family violence leave, in addition to five days of unpaid leave. This change was supported with training by Our Watch and SECL has also introduced new leave policy so that our staff are now able to utilise approved cultural and religious leave.

SECL's new Safety Plan Template was developed with strong staff contribution and feedback which brought together the most effective and user appropriate elements of several other SECL templates. With a focus on access to immediate and responsive service and support, our new Safety Plan Template limits potential lack of clarity posed by multiple previous organisational templates.

4.2 Training and increased prevention capability

Parallel to our organisation wide review and redevelopment of policies and procedures, SECL's Pilot undertook the delivery of the WER Standards training across the whole organisation, to include our Board, our Executive Team and client facing staff, students and volunteers.

The Pilot offered SECL the opportunity to conduct an internal audit of staff family violence training. It was identified that although many of our staff had completed training in various subject-specific family violence areas, there was a need to undertake comprehensive training on family violence, to include skill development on identification of, through to response to, family violence.

Our broader engagement in multiple training opportunities with family violence specialist providers, as well as our family violence bystander training sessions, has resulted in a significant shift in confidence among SECL staff capacity to undertake family violence work. Throughout the duration of the Pilot, our training was inclusive of our volunteers and students, in recognition of both their invaluable contributions to our organisation and the importance of building capability in a holistic way and with broad reach.

*Training evaluations of **Multicultural Centre for Women's Health***

'Preventing Family Violence and Promoting Gender Equality' demonstrates that

as a result of the training workshop, SECL staff strengthened their knowledge of violence against women with 65% describing their knowledge as 'very good' after completing the training, compared to only 37% prior to the training

SECL staff understanding of gender equality was strengthened as a result of the training workshops: pre-training evaluations reported 33% of staff had 'very good' understanding, compared with 58% at the completion of training

*Training evaluations of **Bystander Training***

A significant increase in their knowledge of bystander intervention pre-training evaluation results show 47% of SECL staff members described their knowledge of bystander intervention as 'poor' to 'fair', compared to after the training with 89% describing their knowledge as 'excellent' to 'very good'

53% reported that they had a 'poor' to 'fair' understanding of the role of bystander intervention in promoting gender equality; after the training 87% of participants described this understanding as 'excellent' to 'very good'

Over the two-year Pilot period, our staff training evaluations consistently confirmed strengthened family violence prevention capability with

85% of SECL workforce describing that they are now better placed to undertake family violence work

Training evaluation results indicated that SECL staff had strengthened their knowledge of violence against women and their understanding of gender equality. Staff specifically reported an increase in their capability to:

- apply an intersectional approach to SECL's generalist work and to prevention work
- respond appropriately to family violence disclosures
- support victims of family violence to receive the appropriate support they require

The Pilot harnessed collaboration with Pilot partners and multiple other organisations to facilitate SECL staff participation in a range of training workshops. Instrumental to strengthening our staff capability were our partnerships with: InTouch Multicultural Support Service Against Family Violence, Women's Health in the South East (WHISE), Our Watch, Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) and Family Safety Victoria.

Alongside our partners, SECL's workforce capability strengthening through training included areas of promoting gender equality, recognition and response with referral, the intersect between family violence/forced marriage/dowry abuse, bystander action to prevent family violence, families and trauma, elder abuse and aged care, unpacking resistance and vicarious trauma and self-care.

The longstanding organisational change for SECL, as a result of the Pilot's focus on increased capability, has been manifold:

- SECL workforce (staff, students, volunteers) have strengthened skills to respond with confidence to disclosures of family violence
- we have embedded processes that place our workforce capability at the forefront of our organization, and
- SECL workforce have increased capacity to be active bystanders in prevention

SECL now has dedicated family violence prevention training which is incorporated in SECL's staff induction. On-going professional development and enhanced supervision are now specifically dedicated to SECL's workforce capacity to identify, respond and refer family violence victim survivors.

4.3 Systems and data collection

Consistent with our expanded training learnings and outcomes, was the development of enhanced SECL client systems and data collection methods that would provide for significant improvement of our organisation's capacity for service response. Our work in developing our own organisation's Safe Referral Protocol was a direct outcome of SECL's staff participation in the training provided by InTouch through the Pilot's Community of Practice forum. Additionally, our participation in the family violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) framework training has supported workforce capacity building and at the same time, afforded SECL the opportunity to highlight areas in need of increased system responsiveness for women of migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Furthermore, the Pilot facilitated enhanced opportunities for SECL staff to be working in our integrated service delivery model, "The Bridge to Social and Economic Mobility". Targeted training (including family violence training) has resulted in more accurate identification of the root issues that bring clients to SECL. This approach lends to more holistic and intersectional perspectives being applied across this systems-based approach, rendering strengthened capacity for clients to uphold their rights and achieve their short and long-term goals.

SECL's improved data collection systems and associated training has led to significant improvements in the ways in which we capture our client facing work. For this Pilot, this has allowed us the opportunity to better understand the impact that our family violence workforce capability building has had on our client work and the client outcomes achieved. SECL now more clearly articulates information related to client referrals made and received, and the reasons for clients seeking assistance.

As a result of our Pilot work in improving SECL's client reporting systems and data collection methods, coupled with our organisation wide comprehensive training, we have reached a strengthened responsiveness, with higher numbers of client referrals and a more informed advocacy position:

- Client data revealed a significant increase in demand for SECL services from individuals experiencing family violence
- SECL referral data also demonstrated a significant growth in the number of SECL referrals to family violence specialist services, including legal services, with our family violence referrals more than doubling in the Pilot period
- Improvements to the consistency and accuracy of our client management/reporting systems has produced clearer and more meaningful data, which in turn has translated to more pointed understandings of systemic gaps. Consequently, SECL's advocacy position is founded on specific data which has highlighted inherent flaws of the existing family violence response model, in which a woman's access to ongoing holistic support from a specialist service is dependent on whether she has left an abusive partner.

The improvement of our data collection and client reporting systems is an ongoing process and we are continuously seeking and identifying ways to enhance these systems in ways that best enable SECL to respond effectively and appropriately to our clients.

4.4 Sector Partnerships for change

Our Pilot Partners have been instrumental in the development of our activities. Our Watch and the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health have been consistent positive supports that have provided SECL's Pilot with a rich understanding of gender equality, intersectionality, and insightful examples of prevention activities with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, as well as support and positive encouragement from the Pilot's commencement.

As part of our Pilot, a Local Strategic Working Group (LSWG) was established in the early stage of the two-year project with representation from: InTouch Multicultural Support Services Against Family Violence, Women's Health in the South East, the Colman Foundation, Wellsprings for Women, Uniting Care Connections, City of Casey and City of Greater Dandenong. With clear Terms of Reference, the LSWG facilitated training needs analysis and subsequent training with the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health. Our LSWG members were also engaged in the health training sessions delivered for our Community Advisory Groups, thus providing opportunities for strengthened understandings between target CALD communities and service providers.

Our partnership work has seen strong inter-agency collaboration throughout the Pilot, resulting in SECL's participation in forums, mutual contribution to joint activities and foundational work on lasting partnerships with key organisations. In particular, we now have established partnerships with:

- Women's Health in the South East (our lead prevention agency in the southern region) – strong Pilot contribution to the Preventing Violence Together Community Forum and the Creating Respect Together: Annual Think Tank
- InTouch Multicultural Support Services Against Family Violence – facilitation of multiple training sessions and development of protocols for co-location of SECL staff member: SECL financial counsellor is now outposted one day per week at the Dandenong InTouch office location
- Family Safety Victoria – SECL's provision of feedback on the MARAM Framework from a CALD perspective, which resulted in the production of a detailed report with recommendations for improvement; additionally, SECL was supported with Family Safety Victoria funding to support our family violence work with multicultural families and women and continue building awareness and practice in the MARAM framework
- Enliven – expertise provided to SECL's Pilot work with the Afghan Community Advisory Group in the development of the 'Change the Story' project, as well as continued collaboration toward post-COVID response to high numbers of CALD community members who lost employment during the pandemic.

Undoubtedly, SECL's dedicated funding for the Pilot afforded our organisation the opportunity and the required time to develop genuine and committed partnerships, which were critical to the successful positive project outcomes and additional bi-products of partnership work. With the establishment of trusted connections with other service providers, tangible project benefits included:

- Further funds through the Enhanced Pathways to Family Violence grant to build on SECL's capability and student capability as a future workforce equipped in Family Violence response
- City of Casey invited SECL to launch our multilingual CALD 'Change the Story' videos at council's 16 Days of Activism Against Family Violence in November 2020, with keynote address by Our Watch Founding Chair, Natasha Stott Despoja

- Invitation from Red Cross' Forced Marriage Project for inclusion of SECL on their Strategic Working Group in 2021
- SECL participation in a research project led by a University of Melbourne PHD student into Bacha Posh (a practice in which some families without sons will pick a daughter to live and behave as a boy)
- Referral of three community associations involved in the SECL Pilot to our Strategic Partnership project (funded by the Department of Premier and Cabinet) to build association capacity and provide further supports
- City of Greater Dandenong ongoing research support as well as showcasing SECL's multilingual 'Change the Story' videos on the big screen in Harmony Square during Harmony Week 2021 and for several weeks thereafter. Commitment to the Pilot objectives was demonstrated at all levels of SECL. Our Board, Executive team, staff, volunteers, students and community members were immersed in the overall goal of holistic change for increased gender equality and the prevention of violence against women.

5. Conclusion

At an organisational level, SECL's Pilot utilised the Workplace Equality and Respect (WER) standards to implement change. After thorough review and with an intersectional lens, our organisation adopted new and improved workplace policies and procedures which are now entrenched in SECL and have been embraced by our entire organisation. We strengthened staff, volunteer and student capability with training and induction processes, which were supported strongly, and will continue to be supported, through our partnerships with family violence specialist providers.

Across our organisation and across all of our program areas, we now have a workforce that is skilled in the identification and response to clients facing family violence. Importantly, our workforce's capacity to respond has been strengthened further by their increased awareness of the multiple factors affecting refugee and immigrant women and families in this context.

The Pilot's work at SECL has also made inroads in the development of more refined systems and data collection methods to identify and support our victim/survivor clients to access support services. This area of work is being reviewed on an ongoing basis through our new client reporting data systems, with a view to capturing detailed client information that reflects the complexity and intersectionality of factors affecting our client group.

Our work with our Pilot's target communities relied on trust, genuine partnership development, active contribution and respect, demonstrated through SECL's Community Advisory Groups. The co-design and co-facilitation of community activities was made possible by the dynamic and rigorous work of Afghan, African and Indian community members.

SECL felt deeply privileged to have had the chance to work so closely with these dedicated co-design members who became part of the SECL family during the challenging lockdowns of 2020 and brought our attention to problem solving on broader issues than the pilot, creating meaningful connections with leaders and their community. SECL applauds the work undertaken by our CAG members – without their commitment, contribution, expertise and cultural knowledge, our reach to community members would have not been as extensive:

- our co-designed and co-facilitated workshops reached 580 direct participants
- we engaged and consulted with 27 CALD organisations and associations
- our multilingual 'Change the Story' videos have been shared with 60+ communication channels and have an extended reach of over 3,000 individuals

The work undertaken throughout SECL's Pilot, in the domain of our internal organisation and that of target CALD communities, has been evaluated through surveys, pre and post training evaluation questionnaires, and through small focus groups. Our findings have confirmed that SECL's activities achieved the aims of the Pilot's overarching key elements, but have also provided our organisation with important learnings which inform SECL's recommendations.

"I have rights that no one can take them away from me. There is support available and I am not alone."

"The most powerful thing I learnt during this course is the ability for us to make changes as a community which can lead to changes in the whole country like what happened in Rwanda."

6. Recommendations

SECL's Safer and Stronger Communities Pilot project achievements have been manifold and have resulted in a multi-pronged approach for change in organisational processes and in community attitudes that support the prevention of family violence. Essentially, we were charged with the task of testing the effectiveness of different activities aimed at achieving the Pilot's key elements amongst CALD communities. In detailing our achievements, we draw conclusions on effectiveness and challenges, and provide recommendations for future projects in primary prevention work with refugee and migrant communities.

6.1 Resourcing and Scope

The Pilot's allocation of funds has facilitated much welcomed dedicated resourcing for prevention work. Based on our Pilot learnings and challenges, SECL recommends that

- i. **projects incorporate reflective practice** in their approach; the SECL pilot team reflected in an ongoing and formalised way, through reflective journaling practices and regular debriefing and reflection meetings, on the challenges and successes of the project. This provided opportunity to assess project challenges and successes, as well offering guidance and support to the SECL prevention team of two practitioners and one manager. Our incorporation of reflective practice facilitated action research to occur with improvements and adaptations being embedded on an ongoing basis, and we strongly recommend that this be a strong feature of primary prevention work
- ii. **projects engage bicultural and bilingual staff**; SECL's workforce is reflective of the communities which we seek to engage and this fosters inroads for connection through shared experiences of dislocation, migration, resettlement, transitioning and the intersections of biculturalism as lived by our migrant and refugee community members. SECL's project successes in community engagement have been greatly underpinned by the value and benefit for rapport building through having staff that can speak other languages and are thus, best placed to connect with CALD communities and community leaders
- iii. **projects receive dedicated funding** for comprehensive prevention work with CALD communities; SECL's Pilot achievements were made possible through the funding allocated to our organization from the Safer and Stronger Communities Pilot fund. However, we strongly recommend that longer term investment in prevention work be strongly considered to allow for a minimum of three-year funding, as longer duration would facilitate increased strategic project planning and increased investment in activities that deliver on attitudinal and behavioural change which require long term rapport building with CALD communities
- iv. **projects build partnerships with specialist CALD family violence service providers**; SECL's Pilot primary prevention work was strengthened by our partnership with In Touch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence and with Women's Health in the South East. SECL further recommends that increased resourcing be dedicated to InTouch, in order to facilitate increased capacity for response to referrals and for response to capability training and requests for secondary consultations from mainstream service providers

- v. **projects are strengthened by organisational change in service providers**, which complements community primary prevention work. SECL's experience of applying the WER standards to our own organization resulted in positive changes which allowed for an intersectional lens in our internal processes and systems. SECL strongly recommends that consideration be given to the potential benefits of maintaining the two main foci of this Pilot and that the funding of internal organisational change be considered as complementary to community targeted attitudinal/behavioural change in primary prevention work with CALD communities
- vi. **the Communities of Practice forum has an expanded role** that facilitates functions for reflective practice and continuous improvement, in addition to its information sharing and capacity building functions
- vii. **projects be supported further by a family violence specialist service provider** (such as InTouch or Safe Steps) that can be resourced to have a dedicated position in the Communities of Practice forum. SECL's Pilot project gained guidance through our collaboration with family violence specialist service providers, however, we recommend increased resourcing to such providers which could strengthen their capacity to support service providers to enhance safe referrals and better respond to identified barriers and the unique complexities in working with CALD community members



6.2 Reporting and Evaluation

SECL's qualitative data, quantitative data and anecdotal information provided our Pilot with valuable insights. SECL recommends that the effectiveness of future prevention work evaluations consider the following

- i. **projects undertake consistent use of quantitative and qualitative evaluation tools** to capture community understanding and attitudes pre and post project primary prevention activities; SECL utilised evaluation tools for each of our project activities which strengthened our capacity to reflect on project learnings, outcomes and opportunities to adapt our work. Importantly, in recognition of CALD communities as high context communication cultures, our project sought to capture qualitative data for evaluation on an ongoing basis
- ii. **a clearly defined role of an external provider for overall project evaluation** (in this case, the University of Melbourne) from project commencement, in order to eliminate time required for the clarification of roles and expectations
- iii. **the adaptation of project activities may render altered outcomes in a changing climate and evaluations should clearly take account of these changes;** SECL's planned project activities were affected and altered as a result of the COVID19 pandemic. Our project dedicated the required time to transition project activities to COVID appropriate platforms, which consequently required evaluations to be undertake in a different method and to factor these alterations to project activities and outcomes
- iv. **projects incorporate an enhanced reporting template with features that allow for clearer tracking of activities, outcomes and learnings;** SECL provided detailed data and information to complete our reporting, but additional reporting features could extend opportunities for tracking project activities and outcomes

6.3 Collaboration with CALD communities

Numerous SECL Pilot project achievements have resulted in successful outcomes, however learnings and challenges of our project collaboration with CALD communities were immense, enriching and insightful and afford our organisation to recommend that

- i. **Co-design and co-facilitation with CALD community members** should be strong features of CALD family violence primary prevention strategies and should be prevalent from the commencement of community engagement through to the delivery of project activities; SECL's project activities were highly effective with CALD communities and much of this we attribute to the work of our co-design group members and co-facilitators. The cultural knowledge that they brought to our project was invaluable and their participation in training strengthened their capacity to undertake tasks of design, planning, facilitation of community workshops and actively engaging CALD community members
- ii. **the formation of Community Advisory Groups (CAGs)** is an effective method to engage with target CALD community members and SECL recommend that projects should adequately resource CAGs to support capability building of its membership with training and skill development. SECL's Pilot worked closely with each CAG and with individual CAG members by providing ongoing mentoring support, in addition to the group meetings and the formal training and education provided by the project's activities. This process strengthened their capacity for

ongoing project work and we strongly recommend the value of highly engaged CAGs for projects undertaking CALD community prevention activities.

- iii. **flexible funding allows for broad scope to engage CALD community members;** SECL's project work was greatly supported by this flexible funding and we recommend that in future prevention work with CALD communities that it be maintained as an inherent component of CALD community engagement. It allowed our project to utilize funds to financially support the community work undertaken by active and dedicated CALD community members, such as the bi-lingual support work, co-design, co-facilitation and promotional work undertaken by SECL's Pilot Community Advisory Group members
- iv. **culturally relevant resources be developed and created through co-design processes** and that the development of such resources be prioritized in future prevention projects to address the lack of such resources
- v. **projects acknowledge the adaptability and resilience of CALD community groups** to engage in changed circumstances; SECL's target communities adapted to the online environment, although they prefer face to face communication. SECL's online workshops which were held during COVID lockdowns were still hugely successful with community members (between 8 and 18 participating) in different workshops. These online workshops provided project learnings, but ultimately provided opportunities for connection among participants who were otherwise very isolated during the prolonged periods of lockdown.
- vi. **projects facilitate joint training workshops for CALD community and service providers;** CALD family violence prevention projects include strategies and activities that facilitate participation of CALD community members and service providers in joint training workshops and joint relationship building forums
- vii. **the lived experience of CALD victim survivors and prevention examples from other countries** be included in the content of community workshops in CALD family violence prevention projects; SECL's community workshops included examples from other countries. especially from our target communities' countries of origin, and this proved to be an area of great interest and a point of inspiration in the possibilities for change among our community members. This type of content inclusion supports the removal of barriers that may prevent community openness to discussion and also serves to inspire community action for change. Workshop feedback provided suggestions that content should include the lived experience of CALD victim survivors and we recommend that future prevention projects with CALD communities incorporate this. SECL will undertake the adaptation of our content to include the personal stories of women who have experienced family violence and their journeys.
- viii. **the non-homogenous descriptors and characteristics of CALD** communities be given greater consideration in the project planning of CALD community engagement; in recognition of linguistic variations, tribal differences, diverse pre-settlement experiences and disparate settlement patterns, prevention work with CALD communities should factor community divisions and differences (as demonstrated by SECL's Pilot work with the diverse African communities, which adopted a broad descriptor to a very diverse community)
- ix. **projects recognize the varying time constraints of CALD community members** who are active contributors and that their capacity to allocate time to project activities may not align with project timelines; SECL were unable to progress work with our Indian CAG for a two-month period which was the timeframe that Indian CAG members had travelled to India to visit family.

