



Grampians Community of Practice Evaluation Report

Prepared by Women's Health Grampians
for the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust

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Project details

Project title - Grampians Preventing Violence Against Women (PVAW) – cross community collaboration

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Background

The Grampians Community of Practice for the Prevention of Violence Against Women (GCoP-PVAW) is an initiative by Women's Health Grampians (WHG) to support organisations working to prevent violence against women to develop strategic approaches and implement high quality prevention projects. It is now one of several key strategies within the Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) initiative; a region wide initiative to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women and children. The GCoP-PVAW predated the region-wide strategy (CoRE), and importantly, provided the foundation on which to build this long-term, collective impact and social change initiative.

CoRE is a partnership of organisations, businesses, clubs, groups and networks from across the Grampians Region that share a vision for safe, equal and respectful communities. All member organisations have committed to the goals outlined in *Communities of Respect and Equality: A plan to prevent violence against women and their children in the Grampians Region*, and aim to embed structures, policies and practices within their organisations that address gender inequality.

A Community of Practice (CoP) is a forum for those undertaking prevention activities to connect, learn, share experiences, identify common challenges, trouble shoot as a group, generate solutions-focused know-how, and learn from one another. It builds the capacity and knowledge of attendees whilst forming a community to support one another.

The GCoP-PVAW seeks to:

- assist people to access resources
- translate research into relevant and accessible knowledge
- facilitate the exchange of skills and knowledge, and
- provide opportunities for people to support each other, develop working relationships and share problem-solving strategies with one another.

GCoP- PVAW sessions are conducted regularly (often quarterly) in various locations across the Grampians region.

GCoP-PVAW project objectives

WHG Project Objective:

- Increase the uptake and implementation of evidence-based PVAW initiatives across the Grampians region

HMSTrust objectives:

- Rural and regional Victoria
- Building organisational capacity
- Extending opportunity
- Collaboration and partnership

Evaluation methodology

In evaluating the GCoP events, WHG sought to determine whether the program had met both the WHG and HMSTrust's objectives. In doing so, the following key evaluation questions have been addressed:

1. What was the project reach?
2. Were the topics varied, appropriate and valued by participants?
3. Were the sessions of a high quality?
4. How have the sessions influenced CoRE member intention and practice in relation to PVAW activities?

5. How has the GCoP model evolved over time and is it sustainable?
6. What impact has the GCoP had on the CoRE initiative?

Data from a variety of sources has been collected and analysed to address the evaluation questions. Data sources included:

- GCoP event registration and attendance data.
- Participant evaluation forms.
- CoRE member responses to questions in the Annual Member Snapshot reports.
- Interviews with participants who were not CoRE members (to ascertain any barriers to membership).
- An interview with the WHG Program Manager.
- Additional program information.

Selected quotes have been included to illustrate points.

Evaluation findings

1. What was the project reach?

As per the project plan, nine GCoP events were held across the two years from June 2015 to June 2017, with events held in Ballarat, Horsham, Beaufort and Ararat. An analysis of participation data showed:

- There were approximately 300 total attendances from the Grampians region.
- The vast majority of participants were from CoRE member organisations.
- Attendance at each event ranged from 12 to 81 CoRE members, with an average of 33 CoRE member attendees at each event.
- Of the 67 CoRE members (at the time), 55 (82%) had staff attend at least one GCoP.
- 48 individuals attended more than one CoP event.

2. Were the topics varied, appropriate and valued by participants?

The GCoP events covered a wide range of issues related to PVAW. The format of each session varied but typically includes a mix of content delivery, interactive discussion and information sharing. Discussion papers were circulated to prompt deeper engagement. Most sessions featured at least one guest speaker who was a well-regarded expert in their field.

See Appendix A for a summary of topics covered.

An analysis of feedback gathered from participants after each event (over 90 forms in total) showed that:

- Participants really valued the GCoP sessions and consistently praised the quality of the guest speakers.
- They found the topics informative and relevant to their work in preventing violence against women.
- Opportunities to network and share information with like-minded colleagues from across the region were greatly appreciated.

‘The presentation was fabulous; provided much insight and ‘food for thought’ going forward. The panel was equally enjoyable.’

‘I enjoyed the practical information and explanation of complex terms and issues.’

‘Information and examples were very valuable.’

3. Were the sessions of a high quality?

Participants were consistent in their praise of the event organisation. They spoke positively about the guest speakers, panel discussions, resources provided, information sharing opportunities, and even the catering.

‘Well run, great agenda and speakers.’

‘The presenter was fantastic! He spoke well, gave examples and captivated the audience.’

‘A terrific, well-oiled forum.’

4. How have the sessions influenced CoRE member intention and practice in relation to PVAW activities?

Participants were asked what actions they would take in their organisation or community following the GCoP events.

A wide range of intentions were cited, including:

- Sharing session content and resources with others, including members of their leadership groups.
- Promoting and reinforcing PVAW messages.
- Challenging inappropriate behaviour.
- Reviewing the use of data in PVAW initiatives.
- Revising relevant organisational strategies/policies to include PVAW commitments e.g. media strategies.
- Considering new ways of engaging men in PVAW initiatives.
- Championing their organisation's CoRE Action Plan.
- Problem solving with colleagues – to address issues such as unconscious bias, gender inequality, increased opportunities for women etc.
- Establishing a Gender Equality Action Plan.

Results for Annual Member Snapshot reports reinforced that CoRE members greatly valued the CoP events and found them useful in supporting their CoRE commitments. Sixty-one percent of responding members had attended GCoP events. When asked which three CoRE resources had been the most valuable/useful (from a long list of available resources), the GCoP were the third most valued resource across the member group. Approximately a third (31%) of responding members found the GCoP sessions 'very useful' and a roughly quarter (24%) found them useful.

'I feel that I learned more than I expected to and met some great people with unique experiences and skills.'

5. How has the CoP model evolved over time and is it sustainable?

GCoP sessions were initially 'open invitation' – designed to bring together a diverse range of people from various sectors, interested in PVAW. While the CoRE initiative was in its early stages, it was important to engage widely to raise awareness of strategies to prevent violence against women and children, to increase the profile of CoRE and increase membership. To draw attention to PVAW issues and CoRE, high profile, expert guest speakers were often a feature of the earlier GCoP sessions.

Now, two years into the CoRE initiative, WHG has considerable internal knowledge and skills in supporting GCoP events. Expert speakers are no longer needed to inspire the community. The focus of GCoPs has transitioned from awareness raising to action, and the GCoP target group has been narrowed to the CoRE Liaison person from each CoRE member organisation; stakeholders identified during the 2017 CoRE Regional Strategy Reflection as needing better engagement.

This shift was always the intention and has led to a more appropriate and sustainable model for CoRE members going forward. The new GCoP format has allowed for better engagement with CoRE members, and built a more focussed community of CoRE members, able to share experiences and common challenges, and work together to develop real-time, localised solutions, by combining current evidence-based practice with local know-how and experience. GCoPs have become a platform for regular connection and sharing of progress and ideas.

As GCoP events work to build the capacity of local CoRE members to undertake quality actions to address gender inequality and prevent violence against women, they lead to, and support, sustainable changes within participating organisations.

Information arising from the GCoP sessions, including summaries of discussion and activity outcomes, is distributed locally in the Grampians region via the Women's Health Association of Victoria (now GenVic) networks and presented at their forums. Documentation and evaluation of the CoP model as a way

forward for regional action on the prevention of violence against women, will be shared with policy makers at state and federal levels.

Going forward, the GCoP model will continue with quarterly, two-hour, sub-regional sessions working mostly with CoRE members.

‘I enjoyed the diverse range of people in the room and everyone’s passion and willingness to contribute and respect one another’s opinions.’

6. What impact has the CoP had on the CoRE initiative?

The GCoP encouraged a significant number of organisations to engage in PVAW issues and built a basic level of knowledge on PVAW, that helped create the CoRE initiative. It then became one of a range of strategies designed to support CoRE members to make their membership meaningful and implement changes that address gender inequality and help prevent violence against women.

It is clear from feedback from participants and CoRE members that the GCoP events have helped maintain momentum and commitment to the CoRE initiative, and added value to the activities undertaken by members as part of their commitment to CoRE.

Particular impacts have included:

- *Stronger relationships and collaborations between CoRE members*

CoRE members obviously saw value in the GCoP, with 82% of members having supported staff to attend GCoP events. Opportunities for networking was one of the most valued attributes of the GCoP events.

‘Good cross sector of participants provides great opportunity for information sharing and networking.’

- *Increased organisational capacity to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women*

As outlined in Question 4, participants gained a great deal of practical knowledge from the GCoP sessions and left with clear intentions to spread their learnings and increase the capacity of their organisations to meet their CoRE commitments.

- *Translation of current research into relevant and accessible knowledge that will enhance project planning, implementation and monitoring*

As shown by an analysis of the 2018 Member Summary Reports, members are translating their CoRE commitments into quality actions. Overall, members appeared to be making good progress on CoRE commitments and translating their intentions into quality actions. WHG reported 89% of members were on track with progressing their CoRE commitments, and noted about 56% would be considered ‘high performing’ members. Fifty-one members (57%) had mapped their activities against the five essential action areas as outlined in the national framework for preventing violence against women - *Change the Story*. Forty-three members (88%) had embedded at least some communication processes to ensure CoRE actions are regularly monitored and progressed.

The GCoP events are one of several strategies to have influenced these outcomes and supported members to translate research into best-practice.

- *Increased CoRE membership*

CoRE membership continues to grow monthly. In most cases, new members are influenced to join by a range of factors. Before the model changed to focus on existing members, the influencing factors included GCoP events.

Discussions with the only two GCoP participants who were from organisations that were not CoRE members at the commencement of this evaluation showed that the events had confirmed their commitment to PVAW and built their confidence and capacity to form a case and take to management. Both have since become a CoRE members.

- *Increased access and availability of resources and tools to improve PVAW practice*

The resources and tools distributed at each GCoP event are listed in Appendix A.

Conclusion

The GCoP events have clearly made a valued contribution to the CoRE initiative and the prevention of violence against women action in the Grampians region. Participants consistently praised the high quality of the sessions and the excellent networking opportunities they provided. Content prompted strong intentions to strengthen organisational commitments to CoRE and participants left engaged and motivated to do more. Annual reports from CoRE members showed that these intentions were realised, and that GCoP events helped strengthen their CoRE commitments.

Through the delivery of a diverse program of engaging topics, highly relevant to the work of CoRE members, the GCoPs have been effective in supporting organisations across the Grampians regions to promote gender equality and help prevent violence against women. The evolution of the GCoP model, to one that is focussed on drawing CoRE members together to learn from each other's experiences, sets the initiative up well for positive engagement into the future.

Appendix A

Community of Practice Event Overview

Comprehensive information about each of the sessions can be found on the [WHG website](#), including discussion papers, copies of the presentations, CoRE videos and photos taken at the events.

	Date	Session topic	Location	# Attendees*	Tools and resources provided
1.	24 June 2015	The Way Forward: Advancing the Prevention of Violence Against Women in the Grampians Region and Upcoming Funding Opportunities	Ballarat	20	Guest presentations: Presentation from Dr. Liz Branigan Presentation from Bryony Green Short film with key messages from the session
2.	3 March 2016	Preventing Violence Against Women Before it Occurs: Why Data Matters	Ararat	29	Discussion paper: Making Data Meaningful Guest presentations: Guest Presentation_Fiona Dowsley (CSA) Guest Presentation_Hayden Brown (CoGD) Guest Presentation_Lisa Buckland (CHCLC) Guest Presentation Darlene Henning-Marshall (WHG) Short film with key messages from the session
3.	7 June 2016	Change the Story: How the National Framework Can Support Your Work	Ballarat	12	Discussion paper: Change the Story: How the National Framework Can Support Your Work Guest presentations: Carolynne Hamdorf Dee Micevski Active Women (Talia Holloway-Roden) FedUni Presentation (Adrian Tinetti) Local Initiatives
4.	9 June 2016	Change the Story: How the National Framework Can Support Your Work	Horsham	20	As per Session 3
5.	7 Sept 2016	Unconscious Bias and Promoting	Beaufort	25	Discussion paper: Unconscious Bias & Promoting Gender Equality

* WHG staff also attended CoP events but have not been included in these figures.

		Gender Equality			<p>Guest presentations:</p> <p>Unconscious Bias and Talent Management</p> <p>Women in Fire and Emergency Leadership Roles, How can we improve gender balance?</p> <p>Grampians Community of Practice for the Prevention of Violence Against Women</p>
6.	29 Nov 2016	Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE): Celebrating Local Stories of Action	Ballarat	81	<p>CoRE Taking Action video</p> <p>Guest presentations:</p> <p>4 local CoRE members presented on actions they were taking, the enablers they found, the challenges and how they overcame these. Local Stories video #1 was filmed</p>
7.	16 Feb 2017	How do we Engage Men and Women, Boys and Girls?	Ararat	41	<p>Discussion paper: How do we Engage Men and Women, Boys and Girls?</p> <p>Guest presentation: Engaging Men and Boys in Preventing Violence Against Women</p> <p>Short Film with key messages from the session</p>
8.	27 July 2017	Equality and Respect for Everyone: Supporting Diversity and Inclusion	Ballarat	55	<p>Discussion paper: Equality and Respect for Everyone: Supporting Diversity & Inclusion</p> <p>Guest presentation: Supporting Diversity and Inclusion</p> <p>Short film with key messages from the session</p>
9.	13 Sept 2017	Understanding the Role of the Media in Preventing Violence Against Women	Beaufort	14	<p>Gender Audit Tool (new subregional model)</p> <p>Discussion paper: Working with Media and using Communications to Prevent Violence Against Women</p> <p>Guest presentation: Media & Communications for Prevention of Violence Against Women</p> <p>Short Film with key messages from the session</p>
<p>These GCoP sessions has led to the development of an ongoing model of delivery – with 3 sub-regional GCoPs delivered on the same topic across three locations. This approach supports more localised networking and reducing to a 2-hour meeting style has improved attendance of more senior staff. WHG also provides special interest based CoPs to assist Communications workers with specific support. They will commence a CoP for the Sporting sector later in 2018. These Special Interest Group CoPs will be held twice a year.</p> <p>The following CoPs have occurred post the funding provided. WHG will continue to be able to build on the foundations provided by this funding.</p>					
10.	March/April	Local CoPs	Ballarat	12	<p>Topics covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender inequality in the Grampians report – key findings;

	2018		Ararat Horsham	10 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the CoRE gender audit tool; • Preparing for the CoRE annual progress report; • GenVic workforce development consultation; • future needs and topics identified.
11.	May 2018	Communications CoP	Beaufort	13	<p>Topics covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and objectives for working group; • Key messages - How to include the key messages in your communications and media releases; • Information sharing opportunity; • Future working group topics; • Upcoming opportunities.
12.	July/August 2018	Local CoPs	Horsham Ararat Ballarat	11 10 30	<p>Topics covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of CoRE Gender Lens Assessment Tool; • Showcasing new Local stories #2 video; • CoRE member presentations on actions they are taking.