



The Ethnic Communities Violence Prevention Programme Process and Outcome Evaluation

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MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

 **POINT**
& ASSOCIATES

THE ETHNIC COMMUNITIES VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMME PROCESS AND OUTCOME EVALUATION

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"He maha ngā reo, kotahi te ngākau - he oranga mō te iwi."
Many voices, one heart - wellbeing for the people.

Ngā mihi,

Annalise Myers, Alex Woodley, and Eloise Woodley-Phillips
Point and Associates (Aotearoa) Ltd



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SUMMARY

Executive Summary

This report is an evaluation of the Ethnic Communities Violence Prevention (ECVP) programme. The ECVP programme represents a significant step in Aotearoa New Zealand's efforts to prevent family violence and sexual violence (FVSV) within ethnically diverse communities – communities that have historically been underserved and underrepresented in the FVSV sector.

Developed under the first action plan of Te Aorerekura - National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence, the ECVP programme seeks to build capability, support community leadership, and develop an evidence base for culturally grounded prevention through co-design, community mobilisation, and targeted support.

The ECVP's primary goals include:

- Supporting community-led prevention activities tailored to the needs and aspirations of ethnic communities.
- Resourcing and upskilling ethnic community organisations and those working with ethnically diverse communities on violence prevention.
- Generating deeper insights into the experiences, challenges, and needs of these communities.
- Building a robust evidence base to inform future FVSV policy and investment.

Process and Approach

The programme adopts a community mobilisation approach, engaging and empowering communities to take collective action and co-develop prevention solutions based on their strengths, culture, and lived realities.

To support the work, the Ministry of Social Development undertook a literature review and data mapping on FVSV within ethnic communities, facilitated national workshops to gather community-specific perspectives on prevention and response, and developed a community voice report and monthly monitoring tools.

The Ministry of Social Development has designed key tools and resources, including a co-designed Community Mobilisation Toolkit,¹ a Theory of Change, and a Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL) framework to guide implementation and evaluation.

1 At the time of the evaluation this was in draft form.

Evaluation Purpose and Scope

Between June 2024 and June 2025, eight South Asian Trial (SAT) partners and 22 Innovation Fund (ECIF) partners were funded to develop FVSV initiatives. The evaluation was commissioned to strengthen the evidence base and ensure accountability for the SAT and ECIF initiatives, by assessing their implementation, emerging outcomes, and potential to inform future FVSV prevention in ethnically diverse communities. Data was gathered through interviews, focus groups, site visits, community feedback, and an analysis of partner reports. The evaluation is grounded in the ECVP Theory of Change and reflects the programme's developmental nature.

Key Findings and Emerging Impact

Although the initiatives have been carried out over a limited timeframe, they are already showing promising signs of impact. Key findings include:

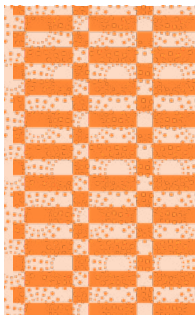
- A willingness amongst participants attending initiatives to discuss FVSV prevention.
- A surge in disclosures of violence once relational foundations were built.
- Signs of shifts in gender attitudes, relationship norms, and help-seeking behaviour.
- The development of community champions and leaders, which is helping to build a sustainable prevention workforce.
- Evidence that ethnically diverse communities and culturally safe services are working together more closely.
- The creation of culturally appropriate prevention resources, including podcasts and community resources.

The initiatives demonstrate that culturally grounded prevention approaches can begin to catalyse change more quickly than traditionally expected, while also laying the groundwork for longer-term, intergenerational shifts.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Initiatives faced several challenges, including:

- Starting sensitive FVSV conversations in communities where awareness is low or stigma is high.
- Navigating cultural norms, intergenerational tensions, and power dynamics.
- Addressing practical barriers such as transport, childcare, language, and digital access.
- Building community readiness and trust, which takes time and relational investment.



**Culturally grounded approaches
are catalysing early change in
violence prevention.**

- Operating within the constraints of short-term, pilot-style funding that does not align with the long-term nature of prevention work.

Strategic and Social Value

The ECVP programme is showing early indications of strategic and social value. It is:

- Beginning to reach communities that mainstream approaches have not adequately served.
- Contributing to the development of culturally grounded prevention leadership and capability.
- Strengthening protective factors and showing early signs of shifting attitudes and norms around violence.
- Potentially encouraging parts of the wider service system to consider more culturally responsive practices.

While still developing, these patterns suggest potential for longer-term impact and offer a foundation for continued learning and adaptation.

Flexible commissioning through flexible funding, co-design, community leadership, and a tight-loose-tight framework that allows for innovation while maintaining accountability, is helping to underpin these results.

Alignment with National Strategies

The evaluation of the ECVP programme demonstrates strong alignment with the Te Aorerekura Action Plan 2025–2030 and highlights the potential for further strengthening the plan's impact. While the plan recognises ethnically diverse communities as a disproportionately impacted group, this evaluation identifies an opportunity to better integrate their specific needs into the plan's activities to ensure a more inclusive and effective response.

Conclusion

The ECVP programme is beginning to demonstrate the potential of culturally grounded, community-led prevention to foster locally driven FVSV prevention. There are indications participants are gaining knowledge, reflecting on gender roles and relationships, and taking action to shift dynamics individually in their whānau and communities. Community leaders involved with the initiatives are modelling safe, respectful relationships. While the work remains in its early stages, the foundations for sustainable prevention are being laid.

Continued investment, capability support, and system responsiveness will be essential to maintain and build on this momentum.

The ECVP programme offers a promising blueprint for a more inclusive, community-anchored FVSV prevention system that reflects the realities and aspirations of Aotearoa New Zealand's ethnically diverse communities.

Recommendations

The recommendations address funding, capability building, inclusive engagement, community leadership, systems change, and evidence development, and are intended to guide future policy, practice, and investment decisions.

- Continue and expand flexible, multi-year funding and capability-building support for ethnically diverse communities.
- Prioritise ethnically diverse communities in future FVSV strategies and funding.
- Use community-wide and intergenerational approaches to prevention.
- Strengthen strategies to engage men and boys.
- Share accessible evidence and prevention frameworks.
- Facilitate cross-community collaboration and the sharing of best practices.
- Embed ongoing, culturally appropriate monitoring and evaluation.
- Ensure service readiness and capacity to respond to disclosures safely and appropriately.
- Advance systems change and visible leadership across government and the sector, and demonstrate sustained government commitment through long-term funding, partnerships, and policy leadership.



OVERVIEW

Overview

This report provides an overview of the delivery and progress of the Ethnic Communities Violence Prevention (ECVP) programme, with a particular focus on the implementation of two key workstreams: the Ethnic Communities Innovation Fund (ECIF) and the South Asian Trial (SAT).

It describes the context, approaches, and activities undertaken through these initiatives, and presents early-stage insights into implementation and emerging patterns of change.

Context and Purpose

This evaluation was commissioned to strengthen the evidence base for FVSV prevention in ethnically diverse communities and ensure accountability for the effective and appropriate implementation of the ECIF and SAT initiatives. It will support the Ministry of Social Development, the ECVP team, and community partners in understanding the effectiveness of current efforts and inform future strategy and practice.

Learning and Knowledge-Building Objectives

Specifically, the evaluation seeks to increase understanding of which strategies are most effective in preventing and responding to FVSV in culturally diverse contexts. The evaluation explores how community insights and lived experiences inform the design, delivery, and adaptation of FVSV prevention activities. In doing so, it aims to offer guidance for developing future culturally relevant and community-led initiatives. It also seeks to contribute to the national and international literature by documenting innovative, culturally grounded, and community-driven approaches to FVSV prevention.

Accountability Objectives

The evaluation also seeks to assess whether the ECIF and SAT activities are being implemented as intended, with fidelity to their design and responsiveness to community needs. It examines whether resources are allocated and used efficiently and equitably across the initiatives. In doing so, the evaluation assesses whether the programmes achieve their intended outcomes in FVSV prevention and response. It also provides insights to ensure that the Ministry of Social Development and its partners have access to robust qualitative data to inform their decision-making and communications with stakeholders.

Background

The ECVP team and work programme at the Ministry of Social Development were established as

Evaluation supports future strategy through community-led, culturally grounded insights.

part of the Government's commitment to addressing FVSV in ethnically diverse communities.² Te Aorerekura, New Zealand's National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence, specifically Action 23 (Action Plan, 2021–2023), called for the development of prevention programmes for ethnic communities, a traditionally underserved sector.

The primary goals of the ECVP programme included:

- Supporting community-led prevention activities tailored to the needs and aspirations of ethnic communities.
- Resourcing and upskilling ethnic community organisations and those working with ethnically diverse communities on violence prevention engaged in these efforts.
- Generating deeper insights into these communities' experiences, challenges, and needs through research and evidence-based programming.
- Using the above to build a strong evidence base to inform future policy and investment decisions.

Programme Timeline and Developmental Context

The ECVP programme's strategic approach integrated key principles and focus areas, including community leadership, targeted subcontinental work (such as the SAT), a research and trial methodology, a commitment to intersectionality, and an emphasis on collaborative practice across sectors. These elements are woven throughout the programme's design and implementation, shaping how initiatives were delivered and evaluated.

The ECVP programme was a time-limited initiative ending in June 2025. Most of its early stages focused on foundational and developmental work rather than direct implementation. This groundwork included a rapid literature review on FVSV prevention in ethnically diverse communities, mapping of relevant administrative data, extensive community engagement activities, and the development of core design tools such as a Theory of Change and a Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning (MERL) framework.

Community engagement was a central pillar of this initial phase, with workshops involving ethnically diverse communities across Aotearoa New Zealand. These engagements generated insights into culturally specific understandings of FVSV, as well as community-led priorities for prevention. This foundational work culminated in the co-development of ECVP's Theory of Change and MERL framework, anchoring the programme in the lived realities, voices, and leadership of the communities it aimed to serve.

² Ethnic communities, as defined by the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, include anyone who identifies their ethnicity as African, Asian, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and/or Continental European.

The SAT and ECIF initiatives, which form the focus of this evaluation, were implemented in the later stages of the ECVP programme, starting in June 2024 and ending in June 2025. As such, they should be understood as part of an ongoing developmental process, rather than fully mature interventions. Many providers were still in the early delivery phases during the evaluation period, which ended in April 2025.

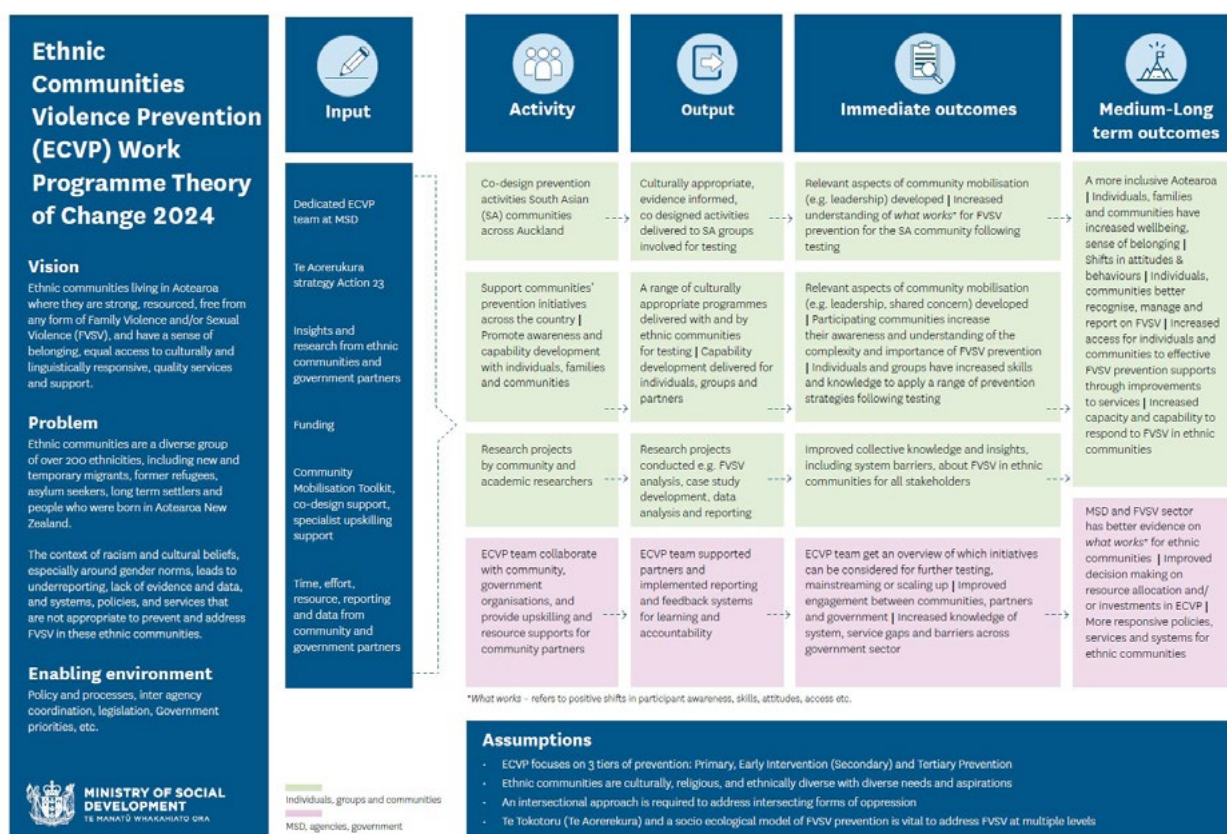
This timeline provides important context for interpreting the findings of this evaluation. It helps explain why some outcomes are still unfolding and reinforces the evaluation's value as a contribution to future learning rather than solely an assessment of the programme's effectiveness.

Theory of Change

The Ethnic Communities Violence Prevention (ECVP) Work Programme's Theory of Change (Fig 1, below) sets out the strategic direction for enabling ethnically diverse communities in Aotearoa New Zealand to live free from FVSV. Encompassing over 200 ethnic identities, including recent migrants, people from refugee backgrounds, long-term settlers, and those born in Aotearoa New Zealand, many ethnically diverse whānau and communities face systemic barriers such as racism, gendered cultural expectations, and services that are not culturally responsive. These challenges contribute to the underreporting of violence, gaps in data, and inadequate prevention and response systems.

The vision of the ECVP programme is for ethnically diverse communities to be strong, resourced, and connected, with a sense of belonging and equitable access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services. The programme brings together a dedicated Ministry of Social Development team, government and community partnerships, research insights, and

Fig 1: Theory of Change



March 07, 2024 | RSE Insights

tools to achieve this. The vision is supported by policies, including Te Aorerekura (specifically Action 23) funding, and a focus on learning and accountability.

Core activities include co-designing and testing prevention programmes (e.g., with South Asian communities), supporting capability-building across individuals and groups, and investing in research led by community and academic partners. These activities aim to develop leadership, increase awareness and understanding of FVSV, and build knowledge about what works in diverse cultural contexts.

The Theory of Change assumes that an intersectional and multi-level approach is essential, recognising the need to address individual behaviours, community dynamics, and structural systems. Over time, the programme seeks to shift attitudes and behaviours, strengthen prevention capabilities, and improve service access and responsiveness. It also aims to inform more effective policy and investment decisions across government by generating robust, community-based evidence.

Ultimately, the ECVF programme seeks to contribute to a more inclusive, connected, and safe Aotearoa New Zealand, where ethnic communities have the resources, voice, and capability to prevent and respond to FVSV.

The ECVF programme is grounded in a community mobilisation approach that places ethnic communities' strengths, leadership, and lived experiences at the centre of shaping, delivering, and sustaining solutions. It reflects a commitment to empowering communities to lead the changes they wish to see, drawing on their unique cultural values, knowledge systems, and care networks.

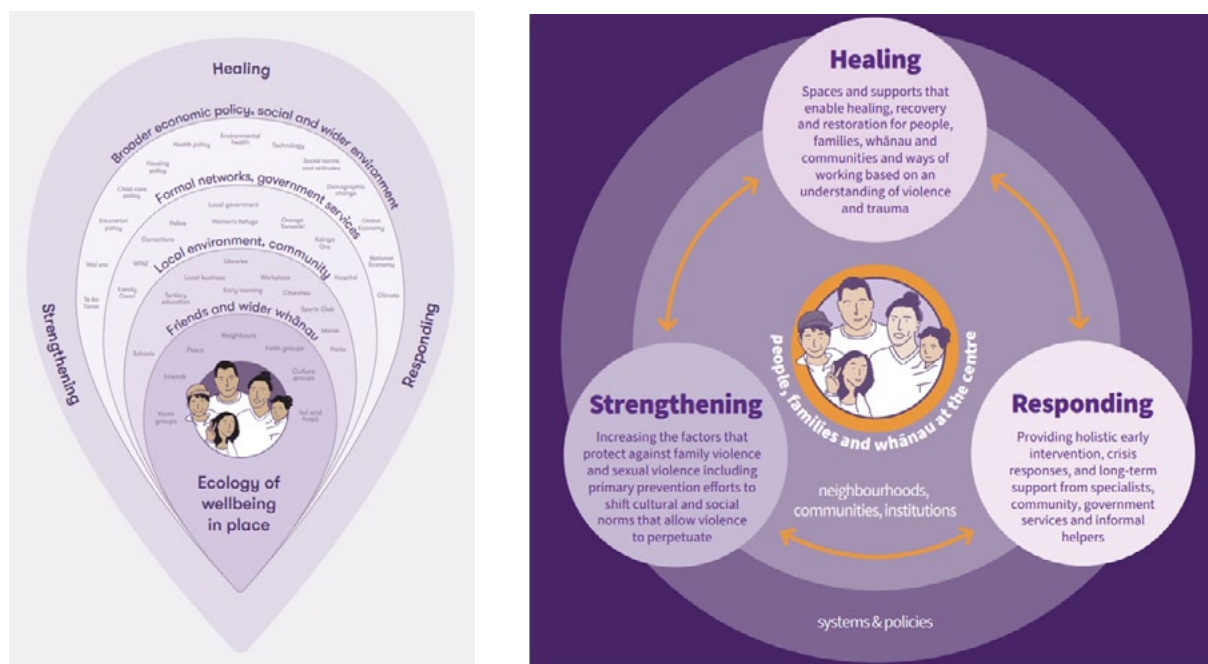
To support the application of this approach, community partners were provided with a Community Mobilisation Toolkit.³ The toolkit outlined key principles and practical guidance. It describes community mobilisation as a long-term, community-led approach to preventing FVSV. Grounded in strengths-based and holistic principles, this approach supports communities in building their own capacity over time in ways that are responsive and organic. Community mobilisation encourages widespread participation, fosters critical thinking, strengthens leadership, and deepens cultural connection. It focuses on strengthening protective factors and addressing the underlying drivers of violence while creating inclusive spaces for people to come together, take action, and lead change. A key aspect of the approach is recognising community readiness: how prepared a community is to take action on a particular issue. The toolkit introduced a four-phase co-design process: exploring community strengths and needs, generating ideas, testing and learning through pilot initiatives, and scaling what works.

The programme takes a socio-ecological approach to prevention, acknowledging the complex interplay of individual, relational, community, and societal factors contributing to FVSV. The approach has been locally and culturally adapted through the Tokotoru model, a whānau-centred, systems-based framework embedded in Te Aorerekura.

The Tokotoru model (Fig 2) highlights the interconnected nature of individual wellbeing, whānau relationships, and wider community environments. It identifies three overlapping dimensions essential to wellbeing: strengthening, responding, and healing. Strengthening builds protective factors and resilience; responding ensures timely, holistic, culturally grounded support; and healing is designed to address trauma, promoting restoration and balance. These elements operate together, reflecting a shared responsibility for safety and wellbeing.

³ At the time of the evaluation this was in draft form.

Fig 2: The Tokotoru model



FVSV prevention

In the context of this evaluation, FVSV prevention refers to community-led, culturally responsive efforts that aim to reduce the likelihood of violence occurring or recurring within families, relationships, and communities.

Cultural responsiveness refers to an approach that recognises and respects the unique cultures, values, and beliefs of each person and community, and integrates this understanding into how services are delivered (Te Puna Aonui, 2021; Ministry of Social Development [MSD], 2023). In practice, being culturally responsive means acknowledging how culture shapes experiences of harm and healing, and adapting interventions to fit cultural contexts (What Works, 2022). This is not an 'add-on' but a core part of effective practice, especially when addressing sensitive issues like FVSV (New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse [NZFVC], 2020).

FVSV prevention encompasses both primary prevention, addressing the root causes of violence such as gender inequality, racism, social isolation, discrimination, and intergenerational trauma, and early intervention strategies that support individuals, whānau, and communities who may be at risk of either experiencing or perpetrating harm (MSD, 2022). Within ethnically diverse communities, intersecting drivers such as migration-related stress, disconnection from culture or language, visa dependency (particularly for women), lack of culturally responsive services, and fear of bringing shame to one's family or community exacerbate vulnerability. Language barriers, mistrust of authorities, and insecure immigration status may further limit access to support (NZFVC, 2021; El-Kafafi et al., 2019).

Prevention goes beyond stopping individual incidents of violence. It involves transforming the social and cultural conditions that give rise to violence in the first place, creating environments where people can build healthy, respectful relationships, strengthen whānau and community ties, and shift collective attitudes and behaviours over time toward non-violence.

Protective factors that help establish non-violence as a social norm are outlined in *Te Aorerekura: National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence* (2021, p.15). These include strong cultural identities and a sense of belonging, parenting and caregiving support

for child development, equitable access to resources and opportunities, positive community connections and social supports, and equitable gender roles and norms. *Te Aorerekura* further identifies drivers of violence - the structural, systemic, and ideological conditions that enable the misuse of power, including a lack of support for individuals, and whānau; social and economic deprivation; inadequate system responses; racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia, institutional and systemic bias; and harmful drug and alcohol use. These factors interweave with broader systems of oppression, including colonisation, and must be addressed if violence is to be prevented.

FVSV prevention also focuses on building community capability by developing knowledge, confidence, and locally led systems to recognise, respond to, and reduce violence. These efforts must be culturally safe, community-driven, and sustainable, ensuring that prevention approaches reflect the worldviews, values, and lived realities of ethnically diverse communities in Aotearoa New Zealand (ECVP, 2024).

Prevention differs from response-based services, which are typically activated after violence has occurred and focus on crisis intervention, safety planning, legal support, counselling, and healing. While these services are vital and must be well-resourced, they address harm downstream. Without a strong foundation in prevention, efforts risk becoming locked in cycles of crisis and response.

This evaluation recognises that prevention is not just an activity but a way of working - prioritising upstream, proactive action; reinforcing cultural identity and belonging; strengthening protective factors; and fostering long-term, relational, and community-led change. Effective prevention requires sustained, locally driven approaches rooted in trusted relationships, equality, and community leadership.

It is widely recognised that FVSV in Aotearoa New Zealand is gendered. *Te Aorerekura* notes that while anyone can experience or use violence, men are significantly more likely to be perpetrators, particularly in intimate and family relationships (Te Puna Aonui, 2021, p.15). MSD further highlights that men not only use violence more frequently but also cause more severe harm (MSD, 2020, p.6). Consequently, *Te Aorerekura* identifies the engagement of men and boys as essential to shifting social norms, attitudes, and power dynamics that underpin violence. It is asserted that prevention approaches must promote gender equity and support men to challenge harmful behaviours, take responsibility, and become active participants in ending violence (Te Puna Aonui, 2021, pp.14–17).

This approach aligns with international evidence, including the work of Our Watch in Australia, which emphasises that sustainable prevention requires a whole-of-community approach that actively involves men and boys (Our Watch, 2021a). The frameworks from Our Watch assert that prevention must move beyond reactive service delivery and individual behaviour change to address the underlying gendered drivers of violence (Our Watch, 2015; 2021b). Their work highlights the importance of engaging men as both potential perpetrators and as allies and leaders in promoting respectful relationships, modelling healthy masculinities, and driving systemic change.

Together, this evidence reinforces the need for culturally appropriate, community-led strategies that engage entire communities as part of a collective solution to ending FVSV in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Evaluation scope, approach and method

Scope

The evaluation focuses on two key streams within the ECVP programme: the Ethnic Communities Innovation Fund (ECIF) and the SAT. It examines both process and outcomes, with particular attention to these activities' design, delivery, and effectiveness in preventing and responding to FVSV within ethnically diverse communities. It also explores the contextual and design factors that may be influencing outcomes and learnings that could inform future FVSV prevention work. A list of the initiatives commissioned under these work streams is appended (see Appendix One).

About the Initiatives

The Ethnic Community Innovation Fund Initiatives

The ECIF supported 22 community-led initiatives focused on FVSV prevention, early intervention, and capability-building within ethnically diverse communities across Aotearoa New Zealand.

These initiatives were designed to prevent FVSV by strengthening protective factors, building community leadership, and embedding culturally grounded approaches. Initiatives such as those by the African Community Council Wellington, Shakti, and Shama focused on education and raising awareness of FVSV through workshops and campaigns. Others addressed specific needs. The Acorn Autism Charitable Trust and Family Action, for example, supported families with neurodiverse children and survivors of sexual harm, while Diversity Counselling NZ focused on child sexual abuse prevention in Chinese and Indian families.

Several initiatives focused on building community capability and resilience by cultivating local leadership and fostering social connection, including Cultural Conversations in Nelson, Tairāwhiti Multicultural Council in Gisborne, and Stopping Violence Dunedin in the South Island. The Fatimah Foundation and Burmese Rohingya Welfare Organisation wove cultural values and religious teachings into prevention work. The Ethnic Rainbow Alliance developed inclusive competency-building workshops on how to work with those from rainbow communities. Meanwhile, organisations such as Migrant Aotearoa, Iranian Women in New Zealand, and Southland Help responded to deep-rooted challenges such as intergenerational trauma, migration stressors, and rural isolation by offering holistic, culturally attuned pathways to safety, wellbeing, and belonging. The community partners worked alongside South Asian, African, Middle Eastern, East and Southeast Asian, LGBTQIA+, and migrant and refugee-background communities. The ECIF focused on three interlinked areas:

- Developing and testing activities with change-ready ethnic communities and providers.
- Building collective knowledge and insights, generated by and for ethnic communities.
- Establishing and developing ethnic-specific services and support to grow the capability and capacity of the sector.

The South Asian Trials

The SAT engaged eight community partners who were commissioned to co-design and pilot FVSV prevention initiatives within South Asian communities.

Some focused on socially isolated groups, such as Age Concern Auckland's workshops and podcast for older adults and NZ Ethnic Women's support for migrant women. Others, like Iranian Women in NZ, addressed the needs of young women with refugee backgrounds.

Faith-based organisations such as the Fatimah Foundation worked to integrate religious teachings into prevention and wellbeing messaging. Creative approaches were taken with initiatives such as Kāhui Tū Kaha using gardening to explore family dynamics, Shama engaged ethnic youth through creative media, peer-led design, their 'Chai and Chat' podcast engaging youth and families in open dialogue, and Social Wealth using a community dance class and social media to promote healthy relationships.

These community partners worked alongside Afghan, Bangladeshi, Indian, Maldivian, Pakistani, South Indian, and Sri Lankan communities, and people from faith-based communities, including from pan-Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu faiths.

SAT community partners were guided through a rapid co-design process that placed community voice at the centre. This included structured feedback loops, tailored co-design mentoring, and facilitated reflection sessions, enabling community partners to continuously refine and adapt their activities in response to community needs and insights.

Priority groups

The initiatives engaged with the Priority Groups identified in Te Aorerekura, including children and young people, women, older adults, rainbow communities, disabled people, rural communities, and families. Some also worked specifically with men.

Activities

The initiatives embedded prevention messages into a range of culturally resonant and community-focused activities. These include cooking classes, art workshops, and storytelling sessions. Prevention messaging was also shared at community gatherings such as shared meals, sports, and festivals where people naturally come together. Faith-based settings, including workshops or discussions within places of worship, offered additional spaces for sharing these messages in alignment with community values. Peer-led support groups, language-specific sessions, and informal social events such as coffee mornings or shared childcare activities provided further opportunities for participants to connect, share, and reflect.

Support Provided

A dedicated team within the Ministry of Social Development supported both the ECIF and SAT initiatives, bringing extensive subject expertise and experience working with ethnically diverse communities.

The ECVP programme offered community partners multiple layers of tailored support. Community partners completed FVSV prevention training and community mobilisation training and had access to community mobilisation resources. ThinkPlace⁴ was commissioned to provide co-design training, mentoring, resources, and reflection sessions for the eight SAT community partners. A community mobilisation specialist offered additional training and resources to both SAT and ECIF community partners, while The Policy Place⁵ offered capacity-building support to organisations to help them strengthen their organisational policies and

4 ThinkPlace is a global strategic design consultancy that uses human-centred, co-design, and systems thinking approaches to address complex social, environmental, and policy challenges.

5 The Policy Place is a New Zealand-based consultancy focused on policy development, strategy, and research. They support organisations to create community-informed policy by combining kaupapa Māori principles with systems thinking, and participatory design.

procedures. The Ethnic Communities Network played a key role, offering advice and guidance to the ECVP team.

Out of Scope

The long-term outcomes of the ECVP programme beyond 2025, conclusions on the overall programme effectiveness, cost-benefit analyses or return on investment, and definitive attribution of FVSV prevention outcomes to specific ECIF or SAT activities were out of scope for this evaluation. Broader ECVP workstreams and unrelated research projects were also not included in this evaluation.

Evaluation Approach

This evaluation has been guided by the ECVP programme's Theory of Change, focusing on how community-led, culturally grounded approaches can shift behaviours, strengthen protective factors, and promote wellbeing and safety. It uses a developmental and participatory approach, recognising that many initiatives are in the early stages of implementation and highlighting the importance of ongoing learning and adaptation. The evaluation sits within the ECVP programme's MERL framework, which supports progress tracking, outcome assessment, and continuous improvement in policy and practice.

Method

Method Overview

The evaluation followed a four-phase approach to build a comprehensive understanding of the ECVP initiatives' implementation and impact. It combined scoping, site observations, qualitative data collection, and thematic analysis to identify emerging outcomes and lessons. A full description of the methods used, ethics considered, and limitations of the evaluation are appended (see Appendix Three).

Phase One: Scoping through Surveys and Interviews

Initial mapping involved online surveys and interviews with SAT and ECIF community partners. A total of nine partners completed the online questionnaire and 27 staff participated in interviews, offering early insights into the design, delivery, and emerging impacts of the initiatives, including challenges and community readiness.

Phase Two: Site Observations

Site visits were conducted at all eight SAT initiative sites to observe activities, cultural markers, and community engagement. These observations provided valuable contextual understanding and highlighted the role of local environments in shaping delivery.

Phase Three: In-depth Qualitative Data Collection

Interviews and focus groups were conducted with a total of 205 participants, including 157 community participants, 15 community mobilisers, 26 project leaders, and seven sector experts. The approach was culturally responsive, offering flexible options for participation, language support, and safe spaces. Rich insights were gathered into participant experiences, outcomes, and lessons learned.

Phase Four: Thematic Coding and Analysis

All qualitative data and partner reports were thematically coded and analysed. This iterative and reflective process ensured cultural relevance and analytical rigour. Triangulation of data

sources and validation through participant feedback further strengthened the credibility of the findings.

Ethics

Ethical considerations were of prime consideration throughout the evaluation, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and minimising harm. Special care was taken to ensure cultural safety and wellbeing, particularly given the sensitive nature of FVSV and the diverse backgrounds of participants. Collaboration with community partners ensured engagement was respectful, inclusive, and reflective of lived realities.

Limitations

Key limitations included the timing of data collection (the evaluation was undertaken during the early implementation period), potential self-selection bias, digital access and literacy challenges for online participation, group dynamics affecting openness, and the absence of a comparison group. These factors may limit the generalisability of findings. Future evaluations should consider longitudinal designs, expanded and flexible participation methods, and increased investment in culturally safe and inclusive approaches.



FINDINGS



The Findings

Trauma- and violence-informed practice is the foundation for community-led prevention

The ECVP initiatives are grounded in a trauma- and violence-informed approach, recognised across the programme as a foundational principle in FVSV. This approach acknowledges the complex, cumulative, and often intergenerational impacts of trauma experienced by many within Aotearoa New Zealand's ethnically diverse communities.

Most community partners, while not clinical specialists, appear to be adopting a trauma- and violence-informed approach, integrating practical strategies to support safety and wellbeing including:

- Recognising harm, coercive control, and trauma responses.
- Promoting healthy relationships and emotional expression.
- Sharing coping strategies such as grounding, regulation, and help-seeking.
- Raising awareness of rights and available support.
- Reducing stigma around mental health and violence.

Delivering trauma-informed, community-led prevention has helped community partners to create spaces which prioritise safety, choice, respect, and collaboration, while enabling the recognition of distress and withdrawal.

There is evidence that this approach is expanding beyond core partners, to community champions and informal leaders, amplifying the reach and impact of this approach.

"I became a community champion because of my exposure to family violence and work with children. This role has benefited my community and helped me grow. The training improved how I work with children and families."

Community Champion

Discussions acknowledging trauma and violence, its impacts, and pathways to healing are emerging in workshops and events. Stories of forced migration, family violence, and mental distress are being shared and met with empathy.

"A woman [spoke] about the trauma of having to flee the country and how she has had to seek help with post-traumatic stress. Everyone was really supportive."

Community Leader

Some initiatives have incorporated trauma-informed design principles in innovative and practical ways into their activities. One community provider, for example, provided swimming classes. These were inspired by neuroscience-based approaches to trauma recovery. These classes involved repetitive movement and breath control, which research (van der Kolk, 2014) suggests can help regulate the nervous system and promote a sense of calm and safety. Participants reported a range of benefits beyond physical activity, including reduced stress, improved fitness, strengthened social connections, and increased confidence. This example shows how evidence-informed and culturally responsive design are being used to create accessible pathways to healing and wellbeing.

FVSV Prevention at an Individual Level

This section explores how the ECVF initiatives are fostering individual-level shifts in attitudes, behaviours, and understanding of rights, highlighting early signs of change in personal relationships, economic independence, and legal literacy.

Examining beliefs and relationships is driving positive behaviour change

Many participants attending classes, workshops, and events said they were examining and questioning their beliefs around gender norms, equity, and healthy relationships. They are responding to questions being posed. What does a healthy relationship look like? How do we show respect? How does this affect our children?

There are early signs of attitudinal and behavioural change in response, with some participants now engaging in conversations about FVSV and reassessing their views on gender and relationships. Participants are also becoming more aware of how their behaviour affects their children.

“The interesting thing for me was I realised the stuff we thought was right to do and be in life, it wasn’t right. It has caused harm; it hurts our children.”

Male Participant

There are signs that shifts in attitudes and beliefs are beginning to influence the dynamics within participants’ relationships, families, peer groups, and communities. Some participants say they are modelling positive change with others, helping to amplify the prevention messages across their networks.

“It’s not enough to acquire knowledge. I self-check, share and endeavour to my new knowledge into action. Be an example by practicing what I have learnt.”

Participant

An analysis of 168 monthly reports submitted by ECIF community partners between July 2024 and March 2025 echoes these findings. Approximately one-third of the 22 ECIF community partners observed that participants are now discussing behaviour and safety with peers (32%), have made positive changes for themselves or their families (33%), or have asked for help or support (35%), with almost one in ten (9%) saying their participants accessed a helpline. While no baseline data was collected, community partners believe these are signalling attitudinal and behaviour changes.

Economic empowerment is increasing confidence, agency, and safety

Some initiatives are supporting women's economic independence by providing education, skills development, and access to employment opportunities. Workshops, for example, are exploring topics such as identifying financial control, recognising financial abuse, and understanding banking, credit, and mortgages. This approach is enabling participants to explore and discuss challenging and controlling behaviours in their lives, particularly in relation to financial decision-making. It is also supporting the development of practical financial skills and prompting reflection on harmful norms and dynamics within the participants' relationships.

The participants reported gaining a newfound confidence and ability to take control of their personal finances, sometimes for the first time. One woman described finally gaining access to her own bank cards. Others shared that they had started engaging with previously unfamiliar household financial matters, such as budgeting or managing a mortgage.

"Even someone dominating financially might not know they're being abusive – So, education really matters."

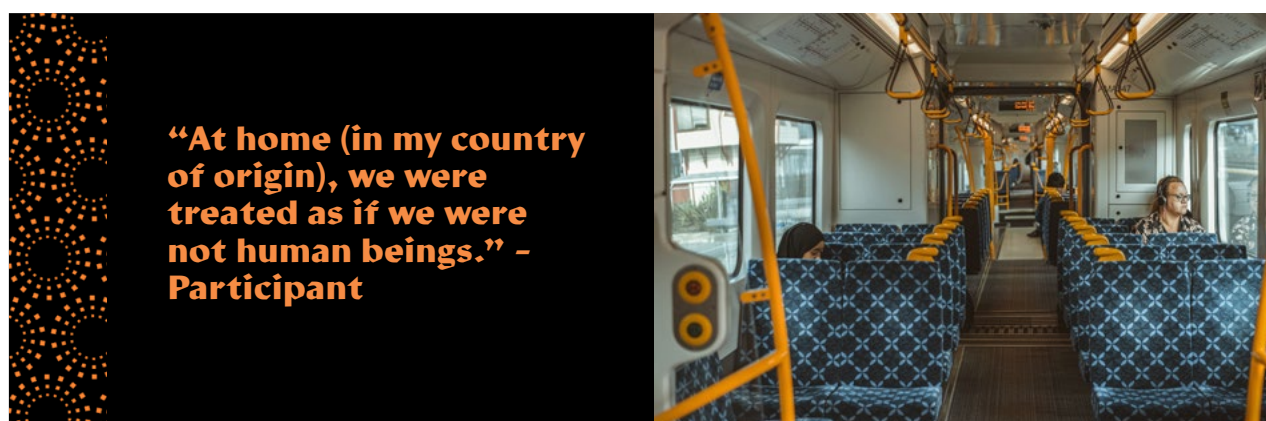
Community Partner

Some initiatives are actively addressing key drivers of violence, such as visa dependency, immigration insecurity, and social isolation, that are often exploited as tools of coercive control. These efforts include supporting pathways to employment, English language learning, skills development, and legal rights education. While such initiatives may not change a person's visa status, they are designed to strengthen protective factors by reducing dependency on abusive partners, improving access to support, and fostering social connection and confidence.

By equipping participants with knowledge about their rights, building practical skills, and enhancing their ability to navigate systems safely, these supports have the potential to help shift harmful power imbalances and increase a sense of agency and safety. As one community partner explained:

"Family violence and sexual violence are under-reported. Women fear that their partners will be sent to prison or deported if they report violence. That would leave them without a valid visa, often with less English than that of the partner, no income, car or driver's license."

Community Partner



Understanding the law is helping participants recognise harm and assert their rights

Community partners are having conversations about the differences between behaviours accepted in their countries of origin or transit and the legal expectations in Aotearoa New Zealand. These are being introduced in classes, workshops, events, and gatherings.

“Many have come from countries or refugee camps where there are no laws around family violence, so these concepts are new.”

Community Leader

Facilitators and community champions are trying to balance an approach that both respects cultural identity and balances this against practices that may conflict with New Zealand’s legal protections. Rather than directly confronting deeply held beliefs, they describe beginning by affirming shared community values, such as care, respect, and protection, and encourage participants to think about how certain behaviours may cause harm. The facilitators are using reflective questions like, “How does this align with what we want for our daughters, sons, or ourselves?” Facilitators say that whilst some participants initially express beliefs rooted in cultural norms, safety and consent are New Zealand laws, not opinions and it is important for all participants to understand this.

“The guy said, ‘I paid bride price for her so she can’t deny me sex...’ We (point out that we) respect our culture, but there are things in our culture that are not helping you in this new land. ... This is not just my opinion. This is the law.”

Community Partner

Community partners say discussions appear to be contributing to an increased understanding of the legal landscape, enabling all genders to more clearly recognise their rights and identify behaviours that may be harmful or unlawful.

FVSV Prevention at a Relationship Level

This section explores how the ECVF programme is fostering shifts in relationship dynamics by building awareness of healthy relationships, strengthening informal support networks, and enabling early disclosure and intervention.

Examining beliefs and behaviours is driving positive relationship change

Across nearly all the initiatives are indications that participants are developing a deeper awareness of what constitutes a healthy relationship and the kinds of behaviours that may amount to FVSV.

Young women and couples, in particular, are demonstrating a promising shift toward healthier relationship expectations. For example, at workshops designed to support young women to grow in confidence, they are being taught to recognise unhealthy dynamics and identify

“It is different here. You can’t do that here. That’s the law.” – Participant

early warning signs of potential harm. Interestingly, the initiative uses a male facilitator with a background in psychology and who had worked in family violence support services. He is leading weekly conversations with young women about healthy relationships.

The young women interviewed said it was helpful to have a facilitator talk about relationships from a male perspective. They said they wanted their future relationships “to be different from (their parents) - more of an equal partnership.” Having a male facilitator talk about this and what it could look like made it seem possible.

“Learning about healthy relationships has helped me understand what I should expect and what I deserve in the future ... I’m learning to speak up for myself and think about what makes me feel safe and valued.”

Participant

Many participants report increased sources of informal support, creating opportunities for women to access information, build confidence, and disclose violence

Many of those interviewed described the emotional and social toll of displacement, including cultural loss, weakened ties to familiar support networks, and feelings of loneliness and isolation. While rainbow individuals, young people, older adults, and families with neurodiverse children seemed particularly vulnerable, these challenges appeared to be widespread.

[A woman and her husband] needed help when they first had children ... this community has now become her aunts, cousins, and grandparents.”

Community Leader

Isolation can have a particularly significant impact on communities that traditionally rely on collective approaches to resolve conflict. In their countries of origin or transit, extended family or community elders often played an active role in mediating disputes and de-escalating tensions before they escalated into violence. The absence of these informal support systems can make everyday conflicts harder to manage and increase the risk of harm.

In response, many initiatives are focusing on helping people rebuild social connections and peer support networks that alleviate isolation and foster a sense of belonging. “And the events are fun!” A women-only event led by young Muslim women, for example, offered an opportunity for women under 30 in Auckland to get together, share experiences, and build new relationships. Instead of directly addressing FVSV directly, the event focused on personal and relational wellbeing, including embedding prevention messages, such as how to make friends in a big(gish) city. One woman pointed out “there’s a large Muslim community in Auckland ... that just don’t have the connections with each other. Because there’s not events like this. There’s nothing that we could come together and do.”

“[After participating in our programme] one participant felt empowered enough to tell her husband that was it. If he did it again, she was going to leave.”
- Community partner

Classes, workshops, and activities are enabling participants to connect with others and cultivate a renewed sense of inclusion

"Last year I was just home doing nothing and housework and picking and dropping off children, and now I'm going to classes and chatting with my friends and sometimes at the weekend I make some plans with my friends, so I'm so happy."

Participant

This does not just impact loneliness. Participants described relying on friends and peers formed through these initiatives as sources of trusted support, offering "helpful" help and providing soft entry points for disclosure and early intervention. These developing networks are contributing to key protective factors, such as social connectedness, access to trusted relationships, and community cohesion. For many, this has led to shifts in confidence, agency, and belonging. One participant in the SAT (a nine-month, two-day-per-week programme) described the difference this sense of connection was making:

"After the programme, women say 'I am now part of humanity. We can do anything now, I'm strong and can do anything'."

Participant

For some women, participation in group activities is not straightforward. Community partners cite examples where women's involvement is being restricted or closely monitored by controlling male partners, limiting their access to support and social connection. To navigate this, initiatives are offering non-threatening, socially acceptable activities like sewing, cooking, or swimming classes as safe entry points. These activities are more likely to be permitted by partners and create opportunities for women to leave their home, connect with others, and begin accessing support. As one community partner explained in regard to a participant who sought support:

"She did do the cooking classes, and he actually stopped her... same with yoga... but for whatever reason, he's never stopped her from doing the swimming."

Community partner

The community partners note that taking this approach reduces the risk of a backlash or punitive control at home, which could escalate harm or prevent help-seeking, and it is creating opportunities for women to access information, build confidence, and disclose violence.

Positive parenting practices are replacing physical discipline and strengthening family relationships

Parenting workshops are helping participants understand child development and neurodiversity and nurture parenting strategies while educating families about New Zealand's legal standards regarding non-violent discipline. For some, this marks a shift from parenting norms in their countries of origin.

"It's acceptable to smack your children in another country, but here no. You need to be aware of all these things when you move to a new country."

Participant

Hands-on activities are helping the participants to reframe their parenting practices in ways that are aligned with New Zealand law. One participant described how a gardening class

became a way to discuss child development, which led to discussions on positive parenting practices and alternatives to physical discipline.

"I loved coming in the gardens and connecting our life with nature. ... we just cannot take plants and our younger children for granted."

Participant

Increased disclosures signal trust and also highlight unmet need

Perhaps one of the most significant and unexpected shifts observed across the ECVF programme is the number of FVSV disclosures being generated through the initiatives. While studies tend to show lower levels of FVSV among ethnically diverse communities compared with other groups (Fanslow & Gulliver, 2021; Ministry of Justice, 2023; MSD, 2025), this evaluation suggests that these figures are likely to be significantly under-reported. Almost all community partners and service providers interviewed reported receiving multiple disclosures. These included experiences of FVSV and unresolved trauma before arriving in New Zealand, adding a level of complexity to seeking help in New Zealand.

Initiative champions, who often share cultural backgrounds with participants, frequently serve as trusted first points of disclosure. Disclosures, however, are not only occurring through one-on-one interactions but also within group settings such as classes, workshops, and community events. One community partner, concerned about the number of referrals from ethnically diverse communities, facilitated a workshop which resulted in many of the women disclosing, with a further wave of disclosures relating to harm experienced by their daughters.⁶

Disclosures are widely seen as a positive development, as community partners believe it indicates a growing trust in culturally grounded initiatives and a willingness among community members to speak more openly about previously hidden experiences of harm. This also suggests that barriers to disclosure are beginning to be overcome.

At the same time, it highlights the scale of previously unmet need. It underscores the importance of ensuring that referral pathways and support services are adequately resourced to respond in safe, timely, and culturally responsive ways.

The programmes are establishing the conditions to support intergenerational change

Many participants, particularly young women and parents, have expressed aspirations for the next generation to experience healthy, more equitable relationships. Parents described making efforts to become more open in expressing affection and emotional connection, recognising that even small shifts might help foster emotional literacy and promote more positive relational patterns within families.

For some, this has meant challenging entrenched norms around emotional expression and showing affection, especially in front of others and their children.

"It's not easy to hug each other in front of other people. But it's getting easier and easier

⁶ The Ministry of Social Development at a national and regional level have followed up with the organisation to coordinate additional support.

for us to express our love in front of each other. Our children also need to see this good relationship. The impact has been huge.”

Participant

Young women in particular appear to be “fierce advocates for change”, vocal in their desire to challenge harmful norms and shape a safer future. One participant said she was motivated to make a podcast because she was concerned that many South Asian people struggle with sexual abuse and mental health, and “it made me determined to do something.” Another talked about recognising and wanting to address oppression.

“We should ask ourselves how to make changes within our families and community first, so women and girls feel safe.”

Young Woman Participant

They are creating and exhibiting art, poems, and creative works highlighting their concerns and aspirations.

“I have used my new knowledge by talking to my parents about how I am feeling and not suppressing it.”

Young Woman Participant

Girl of Light



The girl of the moon of light is our story
Her hut is in the heart of Asia
The one who has been fighting for centuries
With the darkness of men's rule
The wind, longing for the texture of her hair
Sings a song in the plains
She has never seen the fog or the moon
Her dance around the fires
But she has always been
A prisoner in chains
Arise, beautiful lady of Asia
Take up a pen and with the symbol of freedom
Light up these old beliefs
Step on the path of dreams
Grow, blossom, plant hope
The earth expands with the breadth of dreams
The girl of Afghanistan dances in the darkness of the night
under the dark sky
with eyes full of distant dreams
in search of light on the path of freedom
barefoot in fire.
We will pass through this fire barefoot, O sky, be your witness.

Written and illustrated by young women participants

FVSV Prevention at a Community Level

This section explores how the ECVP programme is fostering community-wide awareness, leadership, and collective action to shift social norms, challenge stigma, and build culturally resonant support systems that prevent FVSV.

The programmes are building community awareness of FVSV and positive norms

Community partners report a growing recognition within their communities that FVSV are not problems confined to “other” communities but are issues that also affect their own. In some cases, simply raising the issue has increased awareness, as participants had not previously considered FVSV to be a concern within their community.

“It’s true. It’s what’s happening in our community. I never thought this is going to be happening to us. But the reality is that, since meeting and talking to more people ... (I have learned) this is happening in the community.”

Participant

Community leadership and coordinated supports are growing

Many SAT and ECIF community partners are working together with community leaders, faith leaders, influencers, respected aunties, and youth advocates, who influence social norms and behaviours. They are also identifying community champions - trusted, culturally connected individuals who they are training in FVSV prevention. They are not formal service providers, but rather people others might turn to for advice, support, or guidance. As one champion said:

“I learned what red flags to look for... not just for women, but for children, disability, rainbow communities. This training gave me confidence.”

Community Champion

The champions report they are now recognising early signs of harm, promoting healthy relationships, and initiating conversations around FVSV in ways that align with their communities’ values and lived experiences.

In some cases, the FVSV training is having a ripple effect throughout the wider community. A faith-based school for children teaching weekend religious classes, for example, brought temple teachers together to discuss protective and risk factors in children’s lives. They say they have moved away from fearing they might be interfering, to now having friendly conversations with parents about low-level concerns and issues. In response they are providing them with practical suggestions, sharing resources, and suggesting parenting classes. The teachers are also applying these prevention insights in the early childhood centres and schools they work at.

We’re not social workers, but we are connectors. And we understand the cultural lens – that matters.” – Community partner

Community are leading the conversations

Champions, peer advocates, and faith leaders are helping to open up conversations about FVSV in places where these topics may not have been traditionally discussed, such as at community events, celebrations, or religious gatherings. For example, during Eid al-Fitr, messages about safety, respect, and non-violence were woven into spiritually significant teachings, in line with the values of both faith and prevention. A community leader offered blessings to the families present and reflected on how shared tasks, such as cooking and childcare, can build resilience and strengthen family bonds, particularly during Ramadan. She encouraged participants to use moments of family tension as opportunities for patience, understanding, and connection.

One community partner noted the importance of trusted messengers, explaining:

“People really wanted the message to come from religious leaders and from a religious point of view.”

Community Partner

Community partners believe that it is helping to reduce the stigma and silence that often surround these issues. The involvement of faith leaders, in particular, is helping to challenge harmful interpretations of scripture and promote values of equality and non-violence. Several of the community partners mentioned that the moral and cultural authority of religious leaders is helping to increase the reach and credibility of prevention messaging.

Creative and relational approaches to engagement are helping start conversations

Many initiatives are using unexpected and culturally resonant activities, such as dance classes and community celebrations, not simply as entry points for attendance, but as ways to talk about FVSV prevention. These environments are not just non-threatening, they are fun – and helping conversations to unfold.

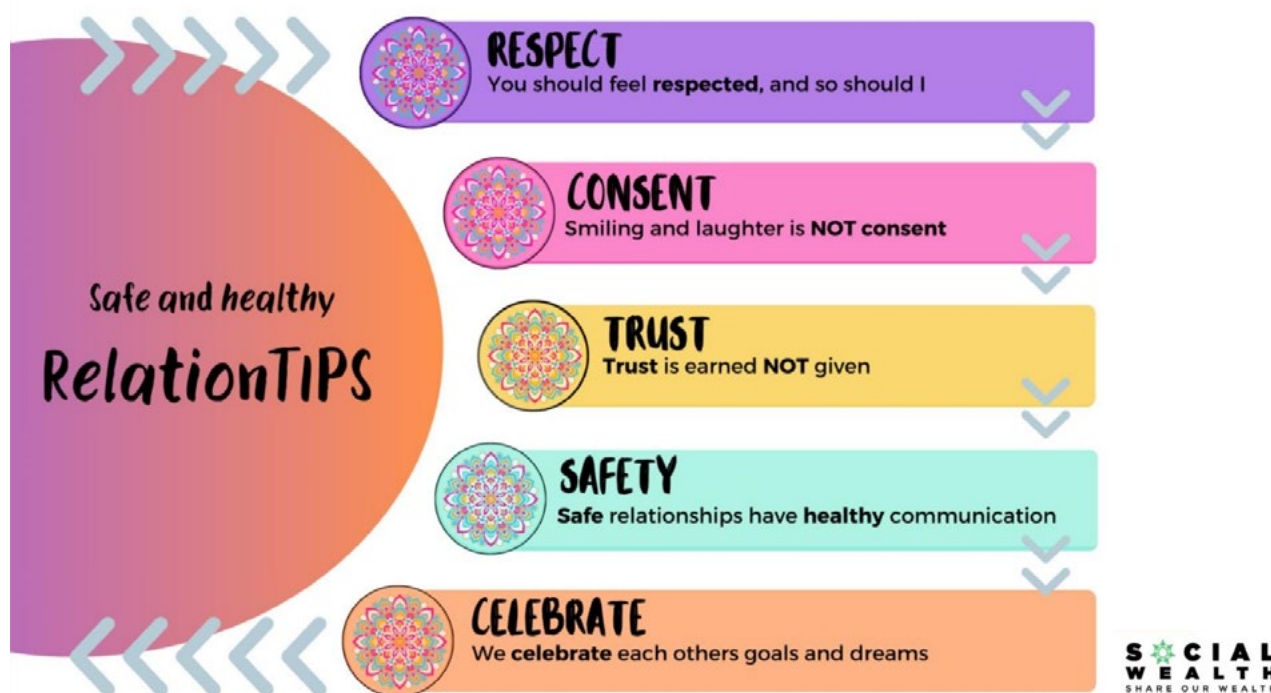
One example is Bhangra Fit; a local dance class designed to promote community cohesion by bringing different parts of the community together. The classes are open to everyone and aim to build connections within the community while providing a culturally appropriate space for both males and females. It begins with a dance teacher leading participants through simple routines designed to be fun and inclusive. Alongside this, a young social influencer facilitates discussions grounded principles such as respect, trust, consent, safety, and community. Participants are invited to connect with others they don't know, reflect on these values, and share their thoughts on post-it notes. The facilitator then gathers these contributions and highlights key themes as the sessions progressed. The dance sequences culminate in a group circle where participants perform moves together, which is designed to reinforce feelings of community connection and inclusion. The facilitator explained that they used dance to welcome others and demonstrate community values. Participants are also invited to share food, continue conversations, and make new connections.

Rather than naming violence directly, some facilitators across the initiatives are using strengths-based language to talk about wellbeing, connection, and relational values. This indirect and culturally attuned approach is allowing for the gradual introduction of more challenging topics, particularly for participants who might otherwise disengage or feel confronted.

“Family violence and empowerment of women are not topics you can start right away. So, we just work around these topics indirectly.”

Community partner

Fig 3: Prevention resource example



By embedding prevention messages in uplifting and familiar formats, community partners are also reducing the risk of backlash or resistance, especially in contexts where fear of partner control or cultural stigma may prevent participation.

“Cultural sensitivity and the fear that abusive partners might prevent attendance at our events [meant] we toned down the language in our promotional materials.”

Community Partner

These creative strategies are not just about softening the messages; they are about finding ways to engage communities in prevention on their own terms and at their own pace. The community partners note that even small acts are signals that FVSV is no longer visible or acceptable.

Prevention resources are multilingual and delivered in culturally adapted ways

Some community partners are producing widely accessed cultural resources. For example, an influencer with over 200,000 followers is reposting FVSV prevention messages from a community dance class on Instagram, significantly amplifying the messages.

Newly released podcasts are already achieving extensive reach across their target communities. These are not just translations of existing resources. A podcast by Age Concern, for example, was grounded in community workshops led by skilled cultural leaders who understood how to discuss elder abuse in ways that resonated with participants from their communities. These workshops focused on elder abuse risk factors pertinent to South Asian communities, such as social isolation, language barriers, financial control, physical and emotional neglect, and intergenerational family dynamics. Through relatable examples and culturally sensitive discussions, participants reflected on caregiving roles, signs of abuse and where to seek help, shaping the podcast content to reflect authentic community experiences. This approach enabled Age Concern to produce accessible, community-informed resources that directly address the lived realities of elder abuse in South Asian communities. At the time of the evaluation, the Age

Concern podcast on elder abuse had attracted over 7,000 listeners.

While it is too early to ascertain the impact, the podcast resulted in 30 inquiries to Age Concern within the first 48 hours following its release.

Shama too has recently launched a new 'Chai and Chat' podcast, which is being released weekly on Spotify.

A range of materials and resources are being developed and adapted to better meet the diverse needs of the communities involved. Community partners, such as Age Concern, translated their resources into Punjabi. Hard copy resources, such as a healthy relationships card developed by the Social Wealth initiative, have also been produced. The Ministry of Social Development produced a resource, *Our Culture, Our Pride: No Excuse for Abuse*, in Hindi, Punjabi, Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Simplified Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, and English.

As not all communities rely on written communication, as it is noted that some initiatives are incorporating oral storytelling and spoken-word formats to align with their cultural communication styles.

Collective action and community support are building and mobilising

There are indications that community support is building. One-third of community partners report that participants are asking to become more involved in supporting the work (35%) or bringing friends or family along to participate in the initiative (32%).

It would appear that the wider community is also supporting this work. For example, schools are supporting classes by providing weekend access to classrooms for programme delivery. Local councils are also playing a role by offering discounted access to community facilities such as pools, assisting with transport, and exploring ways to reduce participation barriers. This access to community infrastructure is helping to support engagement.

Targeted groups are getting targeted messages

While some programmes are taking a whole of community response, with prevention efforts being woven into broader community events, others are working with target groups such as the elderly, or with groups such as girls, women and couples, to strengthen supports across family structures.

"We were not sure if we should work only with young girls or married women or couples. Some of the women said 'What about our husbands? They are the ones that need support.' So we did."

Community Partner

Many of the interviewees talked of the importance of engaging men as a priority group when undertaking this work, aligning with evidence that sustainable change requires the active participation of all genders. Community partners recognised that men are both key influencers within families and communities and, disproportionately, the primary users of FVSV. They saw engaging men is therefore essential to addressing the gendered drivers of violence and promoting respectful, equitable relationships.

"It takes all of us to change our culture. You cannot change anything without men."

Community Partner

Engaging men in FVSV prevention is challenging. Traditional gender norms that equate masculinity with dominance, control, and emotional restraint can make it difficult for men to openly reflect on their behaviours or engage with prevention initiatives. Shame, stigma, and fear of being labelled as violent or "bad" discourage participation, particularly when programmes are perceived as corrective or punitive.

Men in one initiative reported that structured programme formats made it feel as if they were being "fixed" or corrected following experiences of being mandated to attend programmes in prison. In response, the initiative designed a less formal, supportive setting – a series of informal but facilitated catchups – which allowed conversations to flow more naturally.

The men said this shift was helping to create a more supportive environment where they felt comfortable sharing experiences, reflecting on relationships with their children and ex-partners, and exploring ways to strengthen decision-making, empathy, and communication. They felt that discussions about co-parenting and family were emerging naturally and those interviewed said the informal gatherings were helping contribute to the development of practical co-parenting strategies and the establishment of more respectful family relationships.



FVSV Prevention at a Societal Level

This section highlights how the ECVF programme is fostering connections between communities and support services, encouraging system-level adaptations to improve cultural competence, responsiveness, and trust, and laying the foundation for a more inclusive and integrated response to FVSV.

Programmes are improving access to support services

Stronger links are being built between ethnically diverse communities and support services. The initiatives are helping participants understand the broader ecosystem of support, showing that there is a network of people and organisations they can turn to. Knowing that trusted services are available, including counselling, housing support, health providers, cultural groups, police, and legal assistance, is increasing clarity around where to go for help. Some participants are now beginning to access these supports. Community partners, in particular champions, are playing an important role in this process, offering guidance, making referrals, and connecting people to services.

Support services are improving community responsiveness

The initiatives are helping wider support services, and health services and government agencies to broaden their reach and successfully engage groups previously underserved or socially disconnected.

They are showing that the burden of change cannot rest solely on individuals or communities. Services and systems must also adapt, reach into communities, build relationships, and earn trust. In many communities, a fear and distrust of authorities have created barriers to help-seeking. The initiatives are helping to break down these barriers and get services to “change how they do things” by demonstrating what culturally grounded engagement looks like.

The community partners believe that visits to the police station, for example, where the police welcome the participants and talk about their role and how they can support them, have begun to shift the distrust of the police. This is also helping to reinforce an important message: violence is not a private or family-only matter but a community and societal issue and is taken seriously. It is helping to lay the groundwork for improvements in the ways the system responds.

“The police talk to them about their roles here and how close they are in the community. They don’t need to be afraid to go there. They do a tour inside the police station.”

Community Partner

A more integrated and responsive ecosystem is being created

Growing collaboration between ethnic community partners, Māori organisations, local councils (including access to public facilities), and FVSV services is helping to build a more connected and responsive support system. Rather than working in silos, these groups are beginning to coordinate efforts, share information, and develop approaches in response to their needs.

An example of this integration is the developing relationship between ethnic champions and the Rotorua police:

“The newly appointed Ethnic Liaison Officer at the Rotorua police station is very pleased to have the six ethnic champions to call on when he is dealing with family violence cases.”

Community Partner

These kinds of collaborative approaches are helping to strengthen the overall system by bridging gaps between formal services and communities. They are also helping to build systems which are more culturally informed and accessible.

Community trust, cultural competence, and sustainability is building

The initiatives are also helping to build trust where it has often been absent, particularly between communities and systems that have historically overlooked or misunderstood them. This is being developed through authentic relationships.

“Without genuine relationships, if we put this programme out to the wider Auckland community, it wouldn’t have worked so well.”

Community Partner

Cultural alignment is being woven into the fabric of these initiatives, not treated as an add-on. From food and venue choices to faith-sensitive scheduling, community partners are ensuring that the activities and messaging feel familiar, respectful, and relevant. These details are signalling that communities are not being asked to adapt to the system - the system is learning to meet them where they are. This approach is helping to redesign how prevention and support can be more effectively delivered in ethnically diverse communities and contributing to a more inclusive social fabric - one where diverse worldviews shape how support is designed, offered, and experienced.





LEARNINGS



Learnings about Investing in Community Mobilisation

Strengths

The ECVP programme, aligns with the strategic objectives of Te Aorerekura Action Plan 2025–2030.

Te Aorerekura calls for a system transformation focused on building strengths and wellbeing, empowering communities, developing a skilled and culturally competent workforce, prioritising prevention, creating safe and integrated responses, and increasing healing. The ECVP programme aligns with all six of these strategic shifts outlined in Te Aorerekura (see the section on Strategic Alliances, pg. 38 for details). It also aligns with the ECVP Theory of Change, which emphasises culturally grounded, co-designed, and community-led approaches, and is supported by early evidence of strengthened protective factors, enhanced local leadership, and shifts in social norms.

“When we come here, the sessions make us look into ourselves and be aware ... a healthy relationship is not controlling and abusing your family members.”

Male Community Participant

Investment has strengthened workforce and community capability

Through investment in the ECVP initiatives, skilled and effective FVSV community facilitators and mobilisers are being identified and supported, strengthening the workforce for future prevention efforts.

Local leadership pipelines are also being nurtured, with the development of ethnic champions and local leaders, helping to embed prevention leadership within the communities. There are indications that organisational capacity and capability are also growing, with community groups expanding their skills, networks, and resilience.

These investments have the potential to contribute to the development of sustainable, community-led prevention infrastructure. Over time, this approach is likely to help reduce reliance on crisis services by enabling earlier, more effective responses to violence within communities.

Early evidence of behaviour and norm change

Although the prevention of FVSV is widely recognised as requiring sustained, intergenerational effort, the ECVF initiatives are already demonstrating early indicators of positive change. As documented throughout the evaluation, evidence from provider reporting, interviews, and community engagement activities suggests that the foundational work being undertaken is showing signs the participants' attitudes, behaviours, and community norms.

They demonstrate the potential of investment in culturally responsive and community-led prevention strategies to shift entrenched norms and behaviours, even within the early stages of implementation. While full-scale transformation will take time, the momentum observed to date underscores the value and potential of the ECVF approach.

Initiatives use culturally resonant practices to embed prevention messages in community contexts.

Community champions, faith leaders, and peer advocates are actively engaging participants and delivering prevention messages in ways that resonate, such as cooking, dance, gardening, and storytelling. There are early indications that these efforts are contributing to increased awareness of healthy relationships, greater confidence to challenge harmful behaviours, and an enhanced willingness to support others.

"You can't put messages out there that are sort of banging in someone's face and being traumatic. It's got to be fun and positive but also encouraging."

Community Partner

An increase in FVSV disclosures indicates a readiness to engage.

When the conditions are supportive, there appears to be a readiness to disclose. This has highlighted system-level challenges, as some community partners have faced considerable pressure to respond without adequate resources or crisis-response capacity. This finding underscores the importance of strengthening system readiness and ensuring culturally safe, responsive, and trustworthy support pathways.

"In my culture it is really a big thing if something is going on at home, you can't bring it in front of the people. But now we have got more confidence, now it is normal, we can bring those out to make it more comfortable with ourselves."

Participant

The programme is mobilising community knowledge and leadership to create conditions for sustainable prevention.

The programme is mobilising community knowledge and leadership to create conditions for sustainable prevention, with FVSV prevention efforts extending into underserved communities,

supported by flexible funding and commissioning that foster local adaptation and culturally competent collaboration.

Investing in the ECVP initiatives has resulted in deep community engagement with FVSV

Because the ECVP initiatives are embedded within their communities, they have engaged ethnically diverse groups that mainstream services often fail to reach. The evaluation report offers numerous examples demonstrating deep community engagement and increased disclosures. Given that building trust takes time and targeted funding is essential for reaching underserved communities, this suggests a likely positive return on investment.

Challenges

This section outlines the practical, cultural, and systemic challenges that ECVP initiatives face in implementing FVSV. This highlights the need for sustained collaboration, inclusivity, community readiness, and support systems to address entrenched norms and barriers to change.

Knowing where to start

While some community partners had clear ideas about how to begin addressing FVSV, others found the task overwhelming. Taking the first step was difficult, particularly when it involved breaking the silence around deeply private or sensitive issues, or challenging entrenched cultural and family beliefs. For many, initiating even small or early conversations required significant courage. Community mobilisation techniques brought people together to define priorities, making it easier to identify starting points and pathways forward.

“We are not going to solve all the problems [but] we can provide a safe place (to start) the conversation about family violence.”

Cultural Leader

Understanding the difference between prevention and crisis services

Transitioning from a crisis response model to a community mobilisation and prevention-focused approach marked a significant shift in practice for those involved in FVSV response provision. While most partners were already well embedded in their communities and some had experience responding to urgent needs, the concept of primary prevention - intervening before harm occurs - was less familiar. As a result, some partners initially gravitated toward crisis support, particularly in the absence of a clear understanding of prevention during the early stages of the programme. Once it became more widely understood, community partners were able to reorient existing initiatives, such as women’s wellbeing programmes or seniors’ groups, to integrate messages about healthy relationships and safety.

Communities were not always ready to hear the messages

Communities vary in their understanding of FVSV, their willingness to engage with the issue, and their capacity to take action. Readiness tools are supporting communities to assess their

current state, identify existing strengths, and determine where and how to begin engagement most effectively.

Some community partners spoke of the challenges of raising awareness in communities that do not see FVSV as an issue. Others noted that some groups in the community were more ready than others. Young people, in particular, were identified as a group who wanted to see change.

Some communities have low awareness or acknowledgement of FVSV

One of the key challenges faced by the initiatives is that, even when FVSV is raised as an issue it is often met with denial, minimisation, or deflection. Disclosures are being reframed, dismissed, or attributed to others, making it difficult to have the conversation or validate lived experiences. In one session, young people shared personal experiences of violence, only to have some elders claim the issue belonged to another cultural subgroup. Similar pushback has occurred around messages promoting gender equality, revealing deeply held patriarchal norms.

Community partners are employing a range of strategies to respond to this resistance. They point out that change requires more than simply providing information. They have found they need to avoid blame or confrontation and anchor conversations in shared values such as safety, respect, and care for children. The community partners note that lasting change is unlikely to result from one-off events, as attitudes are shaped over generations. They reiterate that involving faith and community leaders is particularly helpful when responding to resistance as they can reinforce and lend credibility to the messaging and help to shift norms from within.

There are several practical barriers to participation

The community partners say that the practical challenges and barriers to participating in initiatives must be considered and addressed. Measures such as transport assistance, childcare, and language-sensitive delivery models help enable full participation but are not widely available.

Some initiatives found intersectional complexities difficult to grasp

There is an increase in the awareness of the complexity of FVSV, including its cultural, structural, intersectional, and intergenerational dimensions, and that factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, faith, migration status, class, disability and sexuality interact in complex and often under-recognised ways.

Addressing intersectionality has been a significant challenge for many initiatives. Some conversations, about sexuality for example, are challenging, particularly when they touch on deeply held cultural or religious beliefs.

Identifying shared values and using techniques to build compassion and empathy were effective. One activity still being trialled involved creating and naming personas to encourage participants to better understand and connect with others' experiences.

Power dynamics within communities make it difficult for some people or groups to contribute

Several initiatives found that without purposefully designed and culturally safe spaces, some participants, particularly women, young people, and rainbow community members, felt unable to speak openly or contribute. In mixed-group settings, power imbalances relating to gender, age, or sexuality limited participation and silenced some voices. One community partner observed that in sessions where men were present, women who had previously been engaged became noticeably quiet or withdrew from the discussion entirely.

**“I soon realised that once the men were in the room, the women did not speak”
- Community partner**

This challenge highlighted that true inclusion cannot be assumed; it must be actively and thoughtfully built. Some initiatives adapted their approaches by offering separate spaces, culturally specific sessions, and multiple modes of participation to ensure that different community voices could be safely heard and valued. Creating inclusive environments requires intentional design.

Intergenerational differences are challenging

Navigating cultural expectations and generational differences was a recurring theme, particularly among South Asian families. One interviewee reflected on the tension between traditional values and the lived realities of younger generations growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand. She noted that many parents felt uncomfortable discussing topics such as sexuality or dating, yet recognised that young people would inevitably encounter these experiences. The challenge, they said, was finding ways to support young people in developing healthy relationships while respecting cultural identity. This was addressed by starting with less sensitive topics like friendship and respect, using facilitators who understood both the cultural norms and the local Aotearoa context, and showing ways healthy relationships align with core values. Engaging community leaders, elders, or cultural champions who could model balanced approaches further was helping families bridge generational divides and supporting young people to have these open conversations.

The importance of choice

A key challenge identified by interviewees is the lack of choice in FVSV violence response services. Ethnically diverse communities have varied needs, and a one-size-fits-all approach is neither effective nor equitable. While some individuals feel safest accessing culturally or faith-based, community-based services, others prefer the anonymity and wider system access offered by mainstream services. However, participants and community partners consistently noted that in some areas neither of these options are available nor accessible.

This lack of choice risks further marginalising communities, limiting engagement, and undermining the effectiveness of prevention efforts. Without investment in culturally specific and culturally responsive mainstream services, the system cannot fully meet the diverse needs of the communities it aims to serve.

Community mobilisation takes time

Both SAT and some ECIF initiatives used the Community Mobilisation Toolkit the Ministry of Social Development provided. Community partners found that community mobilisation takes time and requires a combination of qualities, cultural knowledge, subject-matter expertise, and strong community relationships. When organisations had limited expertise internally, they needed time to find, recruit, and integrate the right individuals or partners to lead or support the work.

There were initiatives that experienced delays in implementation due to the need to hire staff with specialised expertise or to build the relationships and connections necessary for community engagement. Some initiatives overcame the challenge of needing to take time to connect and build trust, by collaborating with community partners and organisations who were already connected to the local area or community.

The current funding environment is a challenge to working together

Community partners noted that despite efforts to foster collaboration, the current funding environment creates barriers to working together. Competition for limited resources can lead organisations to focus on protecting their funding rather than sharing ideas, strategies, or collaboration opportunities. They also observed that working across cultures can be challenging, with differences in values, ways of working, and knowledge. Although trust between initiatives has grown, it has taken time to develop. As one interviewee observed: trust will only grow at the pace of relationships.

Partners also shared concerns from community leaders, organisations, and members about whether the Government will stay committed over time to working with ethnically diverse communities on preventing violence. They worried that progress could slow or be lost without ongoing support, affecting the outcomes the initiatives are working toward.

Some community partners felt as though their expertise was not acknowledged

Community partners deeply valued the co-design process and would have liked opportunities to contribute more of their existing prevention expertise from the outset. Many brought rich experience in kaupapa Māori-informed practice, health promotion, and FVSV prevention, and saw opportunities where they could have shared and build on this collective knowledge.

“There was a room full of community members with years of experience advocating to end family violence and sexual violence. The room had so much expertise, but it was not acknowledged.”

Community Partner

They suggested that in addition to expert presentations, future processes could include peer-led sessions that allow the community partners to highlight what they have tried, what has already worked for them, and to explore how these approaches might be adapted in different cultural contexts.

Some participants noted that earlier relationship-building could have fostered greater

collaboration and mutual support. While whanaungatanga and support were present, opportunities were somewhat limited. With more deliberate time at the outset to establish connections, these support networks could have been stronger, and it may have led to greater collaboration, strengthened peer support, and created a more inclusive environment.

Participants valued momentum but also highlighted the importance of pausing to reflect and adapt. They saw benefit in building in time for regular reflection to ensure the process stayed aligned with FVSV prevention goals and responded to emerging needs.

“We needed to stop and reflect more often... If we had, we would have noticed we needed to develop FVSV resources to share information and stay focused on prevention.”

Community Leader

As initiatives needed to continue to innovate, they would have liked support to develop their own theories of change. A robust developmental evaluation framework, along with ongoing access to developmental evaluators, might have helped them to guide and measure their progress.

Differences between SAT and ECIF

While the SAT and ECIF initiatives adopted community-led, culturally grounded approaches to FVSV prevention, they had different starting points and processes.

SAT initiatives used a structured co-design model and placed a strong emphasis on training, community readiness assessment, and the integration of prevention frameworks

SAT initiatives undertook a comprehensive community mobilisation and co-design process. They invested heavily in building knowledge of underlying attitudes towards violence, understanding community readiness, and identifying protective and risk factors specific to key groups such as young people, the elderly, women, and men.

Training played a central role. Organisations received community mobilisation, FVSV prevention and co-design training, which helped build their organisational capability to create and lead prevention activities.

Funding allowed them to contract specialist skills and release staff to engage in the development process. SAT initiatives emphasised continual learning, using feedback loops to refine their activities in real-time and embedding new knowledge and skills into their approaches. This process encouraged innovation, allowing community partners to experiment with new ideas and scale engagement according to community readiness.

SAT partners often faced time constraints due to the intensive development process and short delivery window.

The ambitious scope of the SAT approach presented challenges. Tight timeframes and the need for significant staff commitment made managing training and co-design phases challenging. There were only 13 months from start to conclusion, including the co-design process. This left little time for implementation.

There were also knowledge gaps around prevention frameworks and FVSV language, which some community partners felt would have been helpful to understand earlier in the process. Some participants, for example, would have liked more time to explore and apply key concepts like

SAT initiatives focused on structured co-design, intensive training, and building new prevention capabilities, while ECIF initiatives mobilised quickly by drawing on existing relationships and community strengths. Both models highlighted the importance of cultural safety, adaptability, and continuous engagement.

community mobilisation. They felt the process moved too quickly into design work before they had fully grasped the core ideas, especially around community mobilisation. They wanted deeper learning opportunities, including one-on-one sessions and stories from other initiatives.

“We just wanted more time to talk one-on-one about community mobilisation with the specialist... We were already designing our initiative before we had a good understanding.”

Community Partner

In a few cases, the target groups chosen were outside the community partners' usual relationships, causing implementation delays. For example, community partners based in one area were trying to deliver an initiative in another area. Physical space limitations and insufficient opportunities for peer-to-peer learning across the initiatives added to the pressures, although final reflection sessions helped address some of these issues.

ECIF initiatives built on pre-existing community relationships and local knowledge, enabling more immediate mobilisation and flexibility.

In contrast, ECIF initiatives are largely built on community partners' existing strengths, relationships, and community expertise, allowing for quicker mobilisation. Many community partners leveraged existing high-trust relationships, local networks, influencers and community knowledge when developing the initiatives. This foundation enabled them to adapt quickly to participant needs and offer a broad range of activities across diverse target groups, including women, youth, couples, rainbow communities, elderly people, rural populations, and parents with neurodiverse children.

The ECIF community partners demonstrated flexibility and responsiveness, often tailoring their initiatives to overcome practical barriers to participation. Indications of positive change were observed across many of the initiatives.

ECIF partners expressed a desire for more training and peer learning opportunities, especially around prevention language and theory

ECIF community partners expressed a desire for greater connection with the Ministry of Social Development and other community partners, particularly to access community mobilisation training and develop a stronger shared prevention language and evidence base.

The short-term nature of funding created sustainability concerns, as increasing community engagement raised expectations for ongoing support without clear pathways for future resourcing. Local crisis service providers also reported difficulties responding to disclosures of violence within the limits of their funding and expertise. In several cases, the wider community's limited understanding of prevention led to inappropriate referrals, compounding the demand on community partners.

One community partner expressed a lack of willingness to work with those from the rainbow community. It is strongly recommended that initiatives agree to take an inclusive approach under the grounds of the Human Rights Act.⁷

Both streams highlighted the need for sustained support and inclusive approaches to effectively serve diverse communities

Overall, while SAT initiatives followed a more structured, intensive development model focusing on building new capabilities and innovations through co-design, ECIF initiatives advanced more rapidly by drawing on pre-existing relationships and knowledge. Both approaches highlighted the importance of cultural safety, adaptability, and continuous community engagement. Yet both also underscored the critical need for sustained investment, capacity-building, and opportunities for shared learning to support long-term, community-driven change.

As some community partners had not yet begun implementation at the time of the evaluation and others were in the early stages, it is too early to confidently draw conclusions about the differences between the work streams regarding outcomes or impact.

The differences between SAT and ECIF are described in Table 1 (p. 37).

⁷ These grounds include sex, marital status, religious belief, ethical belief, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, disability, age, political opinion, employment status, family status, and sexual orientation.

Table 1: Differences between SAT and ECIF

Feature	South Asian Trial (SAT)	Ethnic Communities Innovation Fund (ECIF)
Design & Readiness	Structured, phased approach; assessed community readiness and risk/protective factors.	Flexible; built quickly on existing relationships without formal readiness assessment.
Target Groups	Focused on specific groups (youth, elderly, women, men); sometimes outside community partners' existing client base, causing delays.	Community partners mostly worked with familiar groups, enabling faster startup.
Capacity Building & Training	Extensive training in community mobilisation, family violence and sexual violence prevention, and co-design; built significant organisational capacity.	Relied on community partners' existing skills; less formal prevention and mobilisation training upfront.
Time Management	Training and co-design processes placed high time demands on staff.	Flexible timing, but some resource gaps emerged and needed to be filled during implementation.
Innovation & Responsiveness	Encouraged innovation within a structured framework; integrated feedback loops.	High flexibility supported creativity and responsiveness to community needs.
Specialist Expertise	Funding supported hiring specialist skills and expert support.	Community partners used community knowledge but had less access to external specialist support.
Inclusivity & Human Rights Focus	Mixed; some community partners embraced inclusiveness; variability in rights-based approach readiness e.g., to work with rainbow communities.	Wide diversity encouraged cultural responsiveness but lacked rights-based approach so could work with whoever they chose to.
Cohort Learning	Reflection sessions improved shared learning.	Fewer mechanisms for cross-community learning despite national scope; community partners requested more opportunities.
Managing Disclosures	Some preparedness due to structured approach, although not central to design.	High number of disclosures strained unfunded crisis response capacity.
Overall Strengths	Deep capacity building; structured readiness and training; specialist input.	Flexibility, rapid mobilisation, strong community engagement, and culturally tailored responses.
Overall Weaknesses	Time/resource intensive; challenges with target group alignment and inclusivity consistency.	Gaps in prevention training and peer learning; crisis response under-resourced.

Investing and Commissioning Well

Investing in and commissioning FVSV prevention initiatives is essential for achieving long-term, sustainable change.

Purposeful commissioning helps to build community capability, improve access to prevention, and enable communities to lead the changes that matter to them.

A key factor underpinning the success of ECVP initiatives has been their capacity to innovate and adapt in real time. This has been enabled by a commissioning approach that uses a “tight-loose-tight” model: clear expectations and outcomes are set at the outset, communities are trusted with flexibility in how they achieve them, and accountability is maintained through shared reporting and reflection. This approach is underpinned by an acknowledgement that while shared goals are essential, innovation requires space for local solutions to emerge and evolve and communities are best placed to design and adjust their responses in ways that use their strengths, needs, and challenges.

Flexible funding has been instrumental in enabling this responsiveness. Rather than locking providers into rigid deliverables, it has allowed partners to recalibrate activities, respond to insights, and pursue community-led solutions as they develop. This adaptability has been central to the effectiveness of many ECVP initiatives, enabling partners to remain grounded in their communities while meeting broader system goals. Importantly, it also supports the development of genuine partnerships between communities and funders, based on trust, shared purpose, and the recognition of communities’ expertise in shaping what works.

Sustainability

Sustainable change requires long-term investment and shared leadership

The community-led foundations show potential for sustainability. While training community leaders, facilitators, and mobilisers are helping to ensure that prevention knowledge and practice can continue beyond the life of individual projects, a key barrier to sustainability is the short-term nature of the current funding. With the programme scheduled to end in June 2025, many initiatives risk losing momentum just as it is starting to build and outcomes are beginning to show.

Community mobilisation is a long-term strategy. Sustainable impact will require longer-term, predictable funding that supports community partners in maintaining partnerships, deepening their work, and reaching underserved communities.

Equally important is the visibility of commitment from government leaders. Communities must see themselves in the strategies, not just in funding decisions, but through representation, leadership, and long-term engagement. Support from the Government and system leaders reinforces that this work matters and that communities are valued partners in creating change. Sustainability, therefore, depends not only on financial investment but on enduring relationships, shared leadership, and a genuine commitment from the Government to maintain this work.

While the ECVP programme has laid important groundwork for sustainable FVSV prevention within ethnically diverse communities, its future depends on continued investment and long-term commitment to equity and community-led change.

Strategic Alignments

The ECVP programme demonstrates alignment with the strategic shifts and focus areas outlined in the Te Aorerekura Action Plan 2025–2030

Ethnically diverse communities are identified in the Action Plan as a group disproportionately impacted by violence, experiencing more serious harm more often. While the plan acknowledges the compounded risks these communities face, and commits to including their voices and needs in implementation, their specific needs are not yet reflected in the plan's activities. This evaluation highlights the promising work of the ECVP programme in reaching and supporting these communities, provides further evidence of needs and potential solutions, and underscores sector-wide readiness to engage. It is recommended that the inclusion of ethnically diverse communities in the plan be revisited to ensure the Action Plan effectively addresses and supports this underserved population.

Table 2 summarises areas of alignment with the six strategic shifts, while Table 3 summarises the alignment with the seven focus areas in the second Action Plan in Te Aorerekura. More details are outlined in Appendix Three.

The ECVP programme demonstrates partial alignment with the evaluative requirements of the Social Investment Agency (SIA)

The commitment of the ECVP programme to developmental approaches, community voice, and culturally responsive design is aligned with the requirements of the SIA. Similarly, the inclusion of a Theory of Change as a foundation aligns with the Level 1 standard for showing 'what works' by offering coherence and causal links between programme elements and observed outcomes. However, the limited timeframe of the evaluation, the absence of a formal control or comparison group, and the emerging nature of many initiatives mean that the evidence base for sustained, scalable impact is still developing. The evaluation's emphasis on relational engagement, culturally grounded approaches, and early outcomes provides insights but should be viewed as indicative rather than definitive evidence of long-term impact.

Table 2: Alignment with the six strategic shifts in Te Aorerekura

Strategic shift	Alignment in ECVP evaluation
1. Strength-based wellbeing approaches	ECVP builds on community strengths, cultural identity, and protective factors like peer support and belonging, rather than focusing solely on risks and deficits.
2. Mobilising communities	The initiatives are community-led and culturally grounded. They empower ethnically diverse communities to design and lead their own prevention activities, engage men, and build champions and leaders.
3. Skilled, culturally competent, sustainable workforce	Training and capacity-building are key features. Community leaders, champions, and facilitators receive ongoing support to deliver culturally safe, trauma-informed prevention.
4. Investment in primary prevention	The initiatives focus on preventing violence before it occurs by raising awareness, challenging harmful norms, promoting healthy relationships, and supporting parenting.
5. Safe, accessible, integrated responses	ECVP strengthens connections between ethnically diverse communities and formal services. It helps services become more culturally safe and responsive, while addressing barriers like language and trust.
6. Increasing healing capacity	Trauma- and violence-informed approaches are integrated across the initiatives, supporting healing and resilience for individuals and families.

Table 3: Alignment with the seven focus areas in the second Action Plan in Te Aorerekura

Focus area	Alignment in ECVP evaluation
1. Investing and commissioning well	ECVP builds on community strengths, cultural identity, and protective factors like peer support and belonging, rather than focusing solely on risks and deficits.
2. Keeping people safe	The initiatives create safe spaces for disclosure and learning. They help reduce isolation, build trust, and promote non-violence in relationships.
3. Stopping violence	By raising awareness, addressing harmful norms, and supporting early intervention, the initiatives directly contribute to stopping violence.
4. Protecting children and young people	Parenting programmes, youth-focused activities, and intergenerational approaches strengthen protective factors for children and youth.
5. Strengthening the workforce	ECVP develops a skilled ethnic prevention workforce through training, peer learning, and leadership development.
6. Taking action on sexual violence	The initiatives address sexual violence openly, use indirect entry points to ease stigma, and connect survivors to culturally safe services.
7. Preventing violence before it starts	Prevention is at the heart of the initiatives – from community education to relationship-building and economic empowerment activities.



CONCLUSION



Conclusion

The ECVP programme is beginning to demonstrate the potential of culturally grounded, community-led initiatives to foster locally driven FVSV prevention. There are clear indications that participants are gaining knowledge, reflecting on gender roles and relationships, and taking action to shift dynamics at individual, whānau, and community levels. Community leaders involved in the initiatives are modelling safe, respectful relationships, and there are emerging signs that participants, particularly young women, are questioning social norms.

The ECIF helped empower ethnically diverse communities across New Zealand to lead culturally responsive FVSV prevention initiatives, fostering innovation, community ownership, and local engagement. They built on community partners' existing strengths and trusted relationships, enabling rapid mobilisation, flexible delivery, and responsive, culturally relevant activities across diverse groups. While many initiatives showed early signs of positive change, partners also expressed a need for more training, peer learning, and ongoing access to experts who could provide support for their work.

The Auckland-based South Asian Trial was established in response to high FVSV rates within South Asian communities. The initiatives were co-designed, community-led and sharing learnings was encouraged. While this targeted subcontinent approach was designed to build a deeper understanding of culturally appropriate FVSV prevention, it also risked oversimplifying the diversity of South Asian communities. The approach shows promise; however, building the relationships and trust needed for meaningful collaboration and knowledge sharing takes time. Sustained support is essential for fostering these connections and enabling communities to work together effectively.

Given that some community partners had not commenced implementation and others were still in early stages during the evaluation period, it remains premature to draw confident conclusions about variations in outcomes or impact across the ECIF and SAT work streams. While the work remains in its early stages, it would appear the foundations for sustainable prevention are being laid. Continued investment, capability support, and system responsiveness will be essential to maintaining and building on this momentum. Sustained collaboration, learning, and adaptability will also be critical to addressing gaps in inclusivity and ensuring that prevention efforts are both effective and enduring.

The ECVP programme offers a promising blueprint for a more inclusive, community-anchored FVSV prevention system, one that reflects the realities and aspirations of Aotearoa New Zealand's ethnically diverse communities and that holds potential to drive meaningful, long-term, and systemic change.



RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to strengthen the effectiveness, cultural relevance, and sustainability of FVSV prevention initiatives within ethnically diverse communities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

These recommendations are drawn from the evaluation findings and align with the Theory of Change. These are aimed at key decision-makers and stakeholders, including the Ministry of Social Development, other government agencies, policymakers, funders, and community partners. They aim to inform future strategy, investment, and system coordination, while supporting community-led leadership, prevention capability, and long-term social change.

Note: The priorities are starred and in bold.

To enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of FVSV prevention initiatives within ethnically diverse communities in New Zealand, it is recommended:

Continue and expand the programme

- ★ **Sustain flexible funding and capability-building for ethnic community partners to continue developing locally grounded, culturally led prevention approaches.**
- ★ **Support multi-year funding models to enable long-term planning, deeper community engagement, and sustainable change.**
- ★ **Provide access to community mobilisation and co-design capacity-building support, and resources.**

Maintain ethnically diverse communities as a priority

- ★ **Recognise the significant under-reporting of violence within ethnically diverse communities, as evidenced by the surge in disclosures once relational foundations are built. These communities must remain a prioritised target group across strategies, action plans, and funding streams.**

Strengthen the design of prevention initiatives, community capability, and links to the Theory of Change

- ★ **Build community capability by equipping leaders, champions, and facilitators with the tools to lead culturally grounded, community-based prevention to reflect the ECVF Theory of Change focus on strengthening local infrastructure.**
- Consider using indirect, non-threatening activities (such as gardening, swimming, dancing, or cooking) as accessible entry points for discussing sensitive issues.
- Develop multi-layered, intergenerational programmes, recognising that shifting norms and creating change requires long-term, family- and community-wide engagement.
- Expand targeted strategies to engage men and boys, recognising their critical role in challenging harmful norms and promoting respectful relationships.

Strengthen the evidence base and resource access

- Share accessible evidence bases and prevention frameworks that ethnically diverse communities can draw upon. These should utilise research-informed principles while respecting diversity in lived experience.
- Share multilingual resources and provide access in formats that groups with limited written language or literacy can also use.
- Develop training and facilitation guides to grow the capacity of community champions and peer facilitators in violence prevention and healthy relationship promotion.

Foster collaboration and movement-building

- Promote collaboration across all communities, including rainbow, disability, and refugee groups, and ensure funding mechanisms enable cross-community partnership rather than competition.
- Encourage sharing of best practices and resources through facilitated networks, mentoring, and peer learning opportunities.
- Provide flexible funding structures that allow for programme adaptation, innovation, and scaling successful approaches.

Strengthen evaluation and learning

- Embed ongoing, culturally appropriate evaluation methods to track outcomes, assess impact, and support continuous improvement.
- Invest in research to deepen understanding of the prevalence, drivers, and response needs for FVSV within ethnically diverse communities.

Ensure safe responses to disclosures

- ★ **Establish appropriate structures and funding before new initiatives are launched to respond effectively to disclosures of violence.**
- ★ **Resource trauma- and violence-informed, culturally safe, and accessible services that can meet the needs of victim-survivors identified through community initiatives.**
- Build mainstream service readiness, training community partners to respond to disclosures with cultural safety and respect.

Commit to systems change and coordinated response

- Strengthen partnerships between community and government agencies, working collaboratively to improve prevention and response across sectors (e.g., the Ministry of Social Development, Immigration NZ, ACC, Oranga Tamariki, WorkSafe, police).
- Establish a coordinated response framework for addressing violence disclosures in isolated and rural communities, including the farming sector.
- Ensure that intersectionality is recognised and addressed at a systems level, especially for people belonging to multiple high-risk groups.

Show visible commitment and shared leadership

- Government and system leaders must provide visible, ongoing commitment through funding, representation, relationship-building, and leadership in prevention.
- ★ **Empower communities as equal partners in designing and delivering solutions.**
- Sustain investment in community leadership development, co-design processes, and inclusive, relationship-based practices.

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Appendix One

Glossary of Terms

Action Plan (2021-2023) Action 23

A directive within Te Aorerekura, Aotearoa New Zealand's national strategy to eliminate FVSV. Action 23 focuses on developing tailored prevention initiatives for ethnic communities and improving culturally responsive systems.

Aotearoa

The Māori name for New Zealand, commonly used to reflect a bicultural or decolonising lens.

Culturally Grounded Prevention

An approach that centres the values, beliefs, practices, and lived experiences of specific cultural communities in designing and delivering FVSV prevention initiatives.

Community Mobilisation

A long-term, relationship-based strategy that supports communities to take collective action. It builds leadership, strengthens networks, fosters participation, and empowers communities to co-create solutions to address FVSV. The ECVP programme developed, tested and refined a Community Mobilisation Toolkit to guide this approach.

Community Partners

Ethnic community organisations (including ECIF and SAT partners) that co-designed and implemented FVSV prevention initiatives. They played a vital role in fostering trust, reaching underserved groups, and embedding cultural responsiveness in practice.

Co-Design

A collaborative and participatory design process involving community members and stakeholders in shaping prevention initiatives from the ground up.

ECIF (Ethnic Communities Innovation Fund)

ECIF was one of the two funding streams in the ECVP programme. Of the 25 initiatives it supported, 3 focused on research and were out of scope for this evaluation, while the remaining 22 focused on delivering prevention initiatives and were included.

ECVP (Ethnic Communities Violence Prevention)

A Ministry of Social Development programme supporting community-led, culturally grounded prevention of FVSV within ethnically diverse communities. It includes two community-led streams: ECIF and SAT.

Ethnic Communities

As defined by the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, this includes individuals who identify as African, Asian, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and/or Continental European.

FVSV (Family Violence and Sexual Violence)

An umbrella term for harmful behaviours occurring within families, intimate relationships, or sexual contexts. Includes physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological harm, coercion, and control.

Intersectionality

A framework that recognises how overlapping identities (e.g., ethnicity, gender, age, disability, migration status) can produce unique experiences of marginalisation and barriers to support.

Kaimahi

A Māori term for workers or staff, often used in community and social services contexts. In the ECVP setting, kaimahi may include cultural navigators, community leaders, or prevention facilitators.

Mana

Māori concept referring to authority, respect, and dignity. Supporting mana-enhancing practice is a key principle in culturally responsive work.

Manaakitanga

A Māori value of hospitality, care, respect, and generosity towards others. It describes the atmosphere and approach needed in safe, healing community spaces.

MERL Framework (Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning)

A co-developed tool used in the ECVP programme to guide progress tracking, reflection, and contribution to systems change.

Misogyny

Dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women. In ECVP prevention education, misogyny is addressed as a driver of gender-based violence, including internalised and culturally reinforced forms.

Ministry of Social Development

The lead government agency responsible for funding and administering the ECVP programme.

Participants

Community members who attended ECVP initiatives, including workshops, classes, and prevention programmes. Participants included youth, parents, elders, faith leaders, men, and rainbow community members, among others.

SAT (South Asian Trial)

The second stream of the ECVP programme. SAT supported eight South Asian community partners to test and co-design tailored prevention approaches relevant to their cultural contexts.

Te Aorerekura

New Zealand's national strategy to eliminate FVSV. It sets out six strategic shifts and seven focus areas to guide transformational, community-led systems change.

Theory of Change (ToC)

A framework used to map how programme activities contribute to outcomes over time. The ECVP ToC clarifies assumptions, outcomes, and change pathways for prevention work.

Trauma- and Violence-Informed Practice (TVIP)

An approach that acknowledges the effects of trauma and violence, promoting culturally attuned, empowering, and safety-focused practices.

Whānau

Māori term for extended family, often encompassing broader kinship or community-based networks. Central to wellbeing and culturally grounded prevention.

About the Initiatives

South Asian Trial Initiatives

Age Concern Auckland Trust

Delivered elder abuse prevention workshops for isolated South Asian seniors, using translated resources and radio podcasts to increase awareness and promote help-seeking.

Fatimah Foundation

Hosted monthly capacity-building workshops for Muslim community influencers, integrating Islamic teachings with neuroscience, trauma, wellbeing, violence, parenting, and legal topics to encourage behaviour change.

Iranian Women in New Zealand (IWIN)

Co-designed a wellbeing programme for Afghan young women with refugee backgrounds, addressing trauma, cultural barriers, and access to education, employment, and support.

Kāhui Tū Kaha Limited

Created workshops for South Asian communities using gardening metaphors to explore cultural values and family dynamics, promoting protective behaviours and relationship skills.

New Zealand Sikh Women's Association

Held workshops and intergenerational events to promote healthy family relationships, bicultural identity, and understanding of New Zealand laws and support systems.

NZ Ethnic Women Incorporated

Developed a skills-based programme for isolated Indian and Afghan women with limited English, covering language, financial literacy, legal rights, and supported access to services.

Shama Ethnic Women's Trust

Engaged young South Asian women to co-design and deliver the Chai and Chat podcast series, fostering culturally relevant conversations with peers and parents about healthy relationships.

Social Wealth Limited

Launched Bhangla Fit in collaboration with iwi partners to celebrate culture and promote protective factors and healthy relationship messages through social media, community events, and engaging conversations.

Ethnic Community Innovation Fund Initiatives

Acorn Autism Charitable Trust

Supported South Asian families to reduce stigma around autism through parent training workshops and community engagement.

African Community Council Wellington

Mobilised African communities in Wellington through multimedia campaigns, training, and grassroots outreach to address FVSV.

Auckland Tamil Association

Developed culturally sensitive strategies using Tamil language helplines, support groups, and workshops to confront gender inequality and violence.

Bhartiya Samaj Lower North Island

Delivered educational workshops for South and Southeast Asian elders to raise awareness of abuse and promote respectful relationships.

Burmese Rohingya Welfare Organisation

Raised awareness of child sexual abuse and family violence among Rohingya community members, engaging all age groups and leaders.

CNSST Foundation

Launched a community hub offering culturally and linguistically tailored FVSV prevention resources for East Asian migrants.

Cultural Conversations

Fostered social cohesion in Nelson's ethnic communities through educational workshops, cultural events, and community gatherings.

Diversity Counselling New Zealand

Developed child sexual abuse prevention resources through community-led workshops and research in Chinese and Indian communities.

Ethnic Rainbow Alliance

Delivered Rainbow competency training to ethnic communities, improving inclusion and capacity to respond to sexual and family violence.

Family Action

Created a support programme to help ethnic caregivers of sexually harmed children navigate the impacts and legal system.

The Fatimah Foundation (SAT and IF)

Led a community-based initiative with Muslim men focused on healing, accountability, and proactive non-violence.

Iranian Women in NZ (SAT and IF)

Delivered programmes to Iranian and Afghan families focused on healthy relationships, gender equity, and parenting support.

Migrante Aotearoa

Addressed intergenerational trauma and family wellbeing in Filipino communities through workshops, therapy, and community hui.

Rotorua Multicultural Centre

Promoted awareness of family violence in Rotorua's ethnic communities by training local champions and using social media campaigns.

Sahaayta

Implemented a community-led prevention and education programme for South Asian communities focused on youth, history, and spirituality.

Shakti Community Council

Launched a digital outreach campaign providing culturally specialist information about gender and family violence in migrant communities.

Shama Ethnic Women's Trust (SAT and IF)

Expanded prevention training for ethnic youth, parents, and women leaders across multiple ethnic and geographic groups.

Stopping Violence Dunedin

Strengthened community responsibility and service connections for former refugees and migrants to promote healthy relationships.

Southland Help Rape and Abuse Crisis Support

Co-designed prevention and therapeutic responses with rural ethnic communities, grounded in traditional and culturally relevant practices.

Tairāwhiti Multicultural Council

Ran prevention workshops and produced a multilingual video campaign to promote safe communities in Gisborne's ethnic populations.

Tautoko Mai Sexual Harm Support

Built ethnic-specific services in Tauranga through awareness activities, stakeholder collaboration, and community-led discussions.

Wellbeing Charitable Trust

Delivered targeted workshops and launched awareness campaigns for diverse ethnic groups while developing long-term service plans.



Appendix Two

Methods

The evaluation was undertaken in four phases. Each evaluation phase is built progressively to develop a comprehensive understanding of the initiatives. Phase One scoped and mapped the field, providing an initial overview of the communities involved, the design and delivery of the initiatives, and early indications of what was working well or not. Phase Two added real-world context through site visits to SAT initiatives, allowing evaluators to observe how initiatives operated within their local environments. Phase Three delved deeper into these experiences, gathering rich qualitative data from participants, community leaders, and sector experts to explore outcomes and impacts in more depth. Finally, Phase Four integrated all data sources through thematic coding and analysis to generate cohesive, evidence-based insights.

Phase One: SAT and ECIF Online Surveys or Interviews

The purpose of this phase was to provide an overview of the communities involved, the initiatives being delivered, how they were developed, who was involved, what was going well or not so well, for whom, and any early signs of change.

All ECVP SAT and ECIF community partners were invited to either complete an online questionnaire or take part in an interview with the evaluator. They could also request a translator if needed.

The data was collected using Microsoft Forms and online interviews were conducted on Microsoft Teams.

Between November and December 2024, nine SAT and ECIF community partners completed the online questionnaire and 27 staff from SAT and ECIF community partners chose to be interviewed.

All interviews were transcribed. The interview and survey data were then coded, analysed, and themed.

Phase Two: Site Observations with SAT Initiatives

The second phase of the evaluation included visits to all eight SAT Initiative sites. The purpose of the site visits was to better understand the environment, physical setting, cultural markers, what the initiatives were doing, and who was attending and to gain any contextual insights that might inform the evaluation.

Phase Three: Interviews and Focus Groups

The third phase of the evaluation involved undertaking focus groups and interviews with those leading or participating in the initiatives. While the purpose was to gain a deeper understanding of the initiatives by exploring the lived experiences, perspectives, and outcomes for those directly involved, the evaluation was grounded in a relational and inclusive approach. This is designed not only to gather insights, but to serve as a positive and empowering experience for participants.

Through focus groups and interviews with community participants, mobilisers, project leaders, and sector experts, the evaluation sought to uncover what motivated engagement, what participants gained, what challenges they faced, and how the initiatives were making a difference in their lives and communities. This phase also aimed to identify culturally specific insights, lessons learned, and areas for improvement to strengthen future delivery.

The evaluation team adhered to the Ministry of Social Development's sustainability guidelines by avoiding travel outside Auckland. The plan was to deliver the focus groups online. While this approach aligned with best practices for reducing environmental impact, it also required careful consideration of the specific needs of ethnically diverse communities. The team offered alternative options to online focus groups to uphold participant safety and comfort. The evaluation team prioritised in-person engagement through trusted facilitators and interpreters from the local region. Phone and online interviews were also offered if preferred at a time convenient to the participants. Engagement sessions were scheduled flexibly across weekdays, evenings, and weekends.

The approach required flexibility and strong relationship management. Overcoming potential barriers and providing culturally and contextually appropriate spaces for participants to share their experiences, impacts, and outcomes safely were considered essential.

A total of 205 people from both the SAT and ECIF initiatives were interviewed or attended focus groups. This included 157 community participants, 15 community mobilisers, and 26 community project leaders. Seven sector experts and advisers who supported the initiatives were also interviewed.

Participants were encouraged to communicate in the language they felt most comfortable using. Facilitators conducted focus groups with interpreter support where required. Twelve of the 14 focus groups chose to have translators, co-facilitators, or both. This approach enabled participants to read, speak, and write in their language of choice, including Arabic, Farsi, Punjabi, Spanish, Urdu, and Hindi. The focus groups were catered, and community participants were each given a \$50 voucher to thank them for participating.⁸

The evaluation involved a broad range of stakeholders across the 30 funded initiatives, including community partners, programme leaders, facilitators, community champions, and community participants. Community partners funded to lead and implement the initiatives were asked about the types of activities delivered, who participated, what worked well, the challenges encountered, lessons learned, observed outcomes, and the contextual factors that influenced those. Within these organisations, programme leaders played a key role in coordinating delivery and reporting. Facilitators were responsible for running workshops, hui, and group sessions, engaging directly with community members. Community champions, often trusted and influential figures, supported mobilisation by raising awareness, challenging harmful norms, and encouraging participation. These roles worked together to ensure that initiatives were culturally grounded, accessible, and community-led.

Community participants were asked about their motivations for joining the initiatives, the activities they participated in, what they enjoyed or found challenging, what they gained from

⁸ Note that some of the focus groups were held during Ramadan. Food vouchers were provided so that food could be purchased and provided when the fast was broken after sunset. Some chose to be interviewed after Ramadan.

participation, how they applied what they learned, any additional learning needs, and their suggestions for improvement.

This multi-perspective approach allowed the evaluation to capture implementation insights and participant experiences from diverse experiences.

Phase Four: Thematic Coding and Analysis

All interviews and focus groups were transcribed. To ensure participants' voices were accurately represented, responses gathered in participants' preferred languages were translated into English by experienced translators familiar with the cultural context and transcribed. Particular care was taken to preserve the meaning, tone, and nuance of participants' responses, especially when addressing sensitive topics such as FVSV.

The initiatives were required to provide the ECVP team with monthly reports. All monthly reports and survey responses from the initiatives between July 2024 and March 2025 were collated and analysed.

The evaluation team used thematic coding to identify patterns, recurring themes, and insights across the data sources. This qualitative analysis approach provided a deeper understanding of participant experiences and perspectives, highlighting shared and unique community narratives. The coding process was iterative and reflective, and the findings were triangulated. It is noted that the interviewer used reflective practice to sense-check the findings with the participants during the interviews and focus groups. This helped to ensure cultural relevance and analytical rigour were maintained throughout.

In addition to the report, many community partners were provided with individual feedback summaries to use in future reports and funding applications and to share with their key stakeholders.

Tools

The survey and interview tools are appended. In the exploratory phase, the community partners were asked to share information about their organisation, the design and delivery of their initiative, and their early learnings. The questions covered:

- Initiative details, including the fund received, target communities, main activities, and where and when initiatives were implemented.
- Design and development processes, including who was involved, what evidence informed the work, cultural considerations, and whether they received adequate support.
- Community context and cultural needs, including how their approach differed from mainstream responses and how they drew on community strengths.
- Community engagement, including how members were involved, how feedback was gathered, and what resources were useful.
- Key learnings and early outcomes, including what worked well, what was challenging, emerging changes, and influencing factors.
- Reflections and recommendations, including advice for others and future directions for prevention efforts.

Community partners and participants were then invited to reflect on their experiences in the initiative, including:

- Motivations for participating and what initially drew them to the initiative.
- Activities they were involved in and what they found most enjoyable or challenging.
- Key learnings and new knowledge or skills gained, and how these have been applied.
- Suggestions for improvement, including what they would like to see more of, add, or change.
- Additional learning needs and any final reflections they wished to share.
- These interviews were designed to understand participant engagement, impact, and areas for strengthening future initiatives.

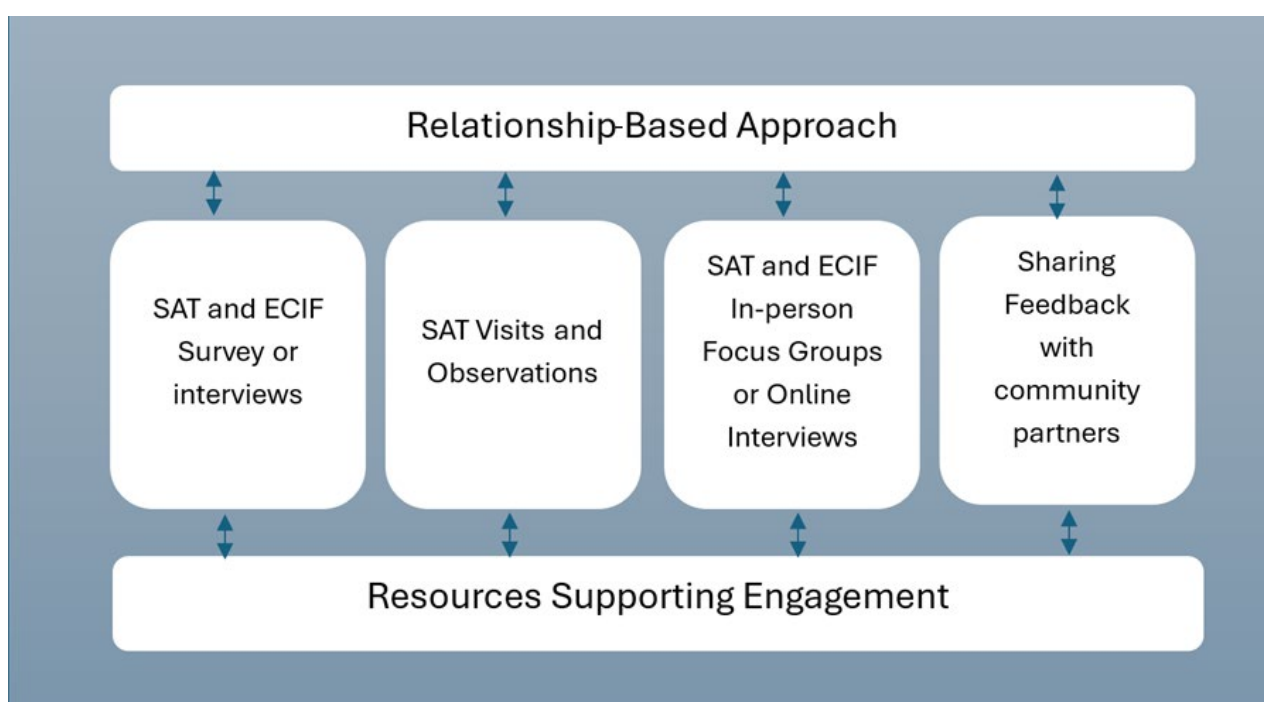
Ethics

The Ministry of Social Development approved this evaluation following a formal application and discussion process with its Ethics Committee. Ethical considerations were embedded throughout the evaluation design and implementation, particularly in recognition of FVSV's sensitive nature and the diverse cultural contexts of participating communities.

Key ethical principles guiding the work included informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and minimising harm. Given the potential risks of re-traumatisation or social repercussions, particular care was taken to ensure cultural safety and emotional wellbeing. This included working closely with community partners to determine safe, appropriate ways to invite participation, conducting focus groups in familiar and trusted environments, and using interpreters or bilingual facilitators where needed.

The evaluation team prioritised community-led and strengths-based approaches, ensuring that engagement was respectful, inclusive, and reflective of participants' values and

An overview of the evaluation process



lived experiences. Ongoing feedback loops with community partners supported ethical responsiveness throughout the process.

Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the evaluation findings, which relate to the evaluation design, methodology, session delivery, and data collection tools.

Timing:

During the evaluation period, some initiatives had not been fully implemented, and the programme had not been completed. The findings largely reflect emerging outcomes and initial learning rather than longer-term impact. Future evaluations should consider a longitudinal design to assess impact over time.

Data Collection Methods:

The original evaluation plan proposed online focus groups to increase participation outside Auckland. While online delivery broadened geographic reach, it also introduced participation barriers related to digital access, literacy, safety, and privacy. These challenges were particularly significant for participants living in crowded households, experiencing trauma, or unfamiliar with technology. In response, telephone interviews and in-person focus groups were offered, but these alternatives may not have fully resolved participation challenges.

Language and Interpretation:

Interpreters and translated materials were used to support accessibility but discussing sensitive topics such as FVSV in the presence of interpreters may have affected participants' comfort and openness. Some nuances may also have been lost in translation, potentially limiting the depth of understanding gained.

Voluntary Participation and Self-Selection Bias:

Participation in interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires was voluntary, which likely introduced self-selection bias. Those more confident, engaged, or positive about the programme may have been overrepresented, while the perspectives of individuals with negative experiences or higher barriers to participation may not be fully reflected.

Survey vs. Interviews:

The evaluation used an online survey to gather broad insights, but the optional in-depth interviews generated richer, more detailed information. Starting with interviews to inform a more tailored survey could have improved data quality and captured more nuanced, community-specific priorities.

Group Dynamics and Data Quality:

Group settings can inhibit participants from sharing deeply personal or critical reflections, especially in the presence of interpreters, time constraints, or perceived confidentiality risks. Creative methods such as written reflections or one-on-one interviews were used to mitigate this, but limited time for follow-up may have restricted the depth of insights.

Lack of a Comparison Group:

The evaluation did not include a control or comparison group, consistent with many community-based, culturally specific approaches. However, this limits the ability to isolate the direct impact of the ECVI initiatives from other external or contextual influences.

Considerations for Future Evaluations

While these limitations are not uncommon in developmental, community-led evaluations, they highlight several areas for improvement. Future efforts should consider earlier engagement, the use of flexible data collection methods that offer participants choice, and an acknowledgement that online surveys and focus groups may not be effective for all community members. Also, investment is needed to ensure safe, culturally appropriate spaces for participation and to enable deeper exploration of community perspectives over time.

Tools

ECVP Process and Outcome Survey

The Ministry of Social Development, Ethnic Community Violence Prevention Programme, has commissioned Point and Associates to evaluate the Ethnic Community Innovation Fund and South Asian Trial initiatives to capture the learnings and outcomes. The following survey questions will help us understand your community focus, initiatives and early learnings. Your input will ensure the research captures community voices and experiences.

If you prefer to answer the questions without using the online survey, please email Annalise Myers.

1. Tell us a little about you and your organisation.
2. What is the name of your organisation?
3. Your name, role and contact details?
4. About your initiative
 - Which fund did you receive?
 - Innovation Fund / South Asian Trial / Both
5. Does your initiative have a name?
6. What are the main activities of your initiative?
7. Who was it designed to reach? e.g., particular ethnic or faith-based groups, Women, Children, Youth, Rainbow, Older people, People with disabilities, and/or Rural communities.
8. Where are your initiatives being implemented? For example, region, place-based, schools, faith-based hubs, workplaces, etc.
9. When did your initiative start?
10. Who was involved in the development of your initiatives?
11. How long did it take? Did it go through several phases, and if so, why?
12. What evidence and experience did you use to develop your initiative?
13. Did you get the support and resources needed in the design phases?
14. What else might have been helpful?
15. What important design considerations have you made? (e.g., cultural, linguistic and spiritual beliefs, gender roles, hierarchies, culturally specific aspects of violence and prevention).

Cultural Needs of Your Community

1. How might these differ from a mainstream response to family violence or sexual violence prevention?
2. How has your initiative been able to harness your community strengths?
3. What challenges or barriers were identified in your community related to FVSV, and how did you address them?

Community Involvement

1. How were community members engaged in the activities? (e.g., participants, volunteers and stakeholders).
2. How are you currently gathering feedback?
3. What resources have been helpful? Is there anything else that could have been helpful?

Key Learnings

1. What have been the key success factors?
2. What have been the key challenges?
3. What are you learning?
4. If you were to undertake an FVSV initiative again, what might you do the same, and what might you do differently?

Early Outcomes

1. What was your initiative hoping to achieve?
2. Has your initiative made a difference? Can you describe the difference it has made and for whom?
3. What is influencing the outcomes, both hindering and enabling them?

About the Future...

1. What ideas, insights and lessons can be shared with other communities or initiatives working on FVSV prevention?
2. Do you have any recommendations for other FVSV prevention initiatives in your community, for mainstream providers, the sector or the Ministry of Social Development?

Would you like a summary of the evaluation findings?

- Yes/No

Can we contact you if we have any follow-up questions?

- Yes/No

Any final comments

Focus Group and Interview Discussion Guide

What motivated you to join?

What activities did you do?

What have you enjoyed the most?

What was challenging?

What did you learn that has been most helpful?

How have you used your new knowledge and skills?

How could we improve future initiatives?

What would you like to do more of?

What would you like to add or change?

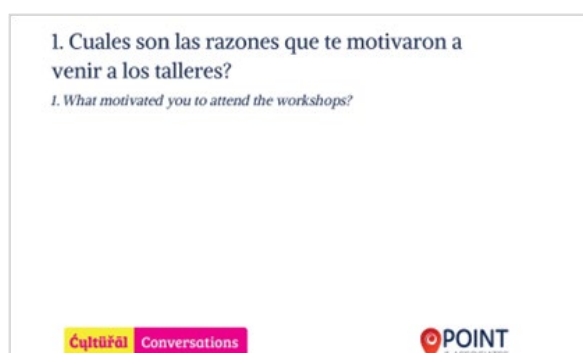
Is there anything else you would like to learn?

Any final comments?

Example of Focus Group Invite



Example: Focus Group A2 poster tailored for each group, including translation.





Appendix Three

Alignment with the Second Te Aorerekura Action Plan (2025–2030)

The evaluation of the Ethnic Communities Violence Prevention (ECVP) programme shows it aligns strongly with both the strategic shifts and focus areas outlined in the Second Te Aorerekura Action Plan (2025–2030).

The ECVP initiatives reflect all six of the strategic shifts outlined in Te Aorerekura, including a strengths-based, wellbeing approach that focuses on enhancing protective factors such as cultural identity, belonging, and peer support rather than focusing solely on risk or deficits. The initiatives mobilise communities by empowering ethnic groups to design and lead their own prevention activities. They build leadership by training community champions, peer advocates, and faith leaders who promote non-violence and support positive change.

The development of a skilled, culturally competent, and sustainable prevention workforce is a central feature of the programme. Leaders and facilitators receive ongoing training and support to deliver trauma-informed, culturally responsive services. The initiatives also demonstrate a strong investment in primary prevention, engaging families and communities before violence occurs. They promote healthy relationships, challenge harmful norms, support parenting practices, and foster early intervention when risks are identified. By building trusted connections between ethnically diverse communities and formal services, the programme is helping mainstream organisations become more culturally safe, accessible, and effective – addressing a key strategic shift in Te Aorerekura towards integrated and responsive systems. Trauma- and violence-informed approaches across the initiatives further contribute to individual and collective healing, in keeping with the call within Te Aorerekura to increase healing capacity.

The programme also aligns well with the seven focus areas of Te Aorerekura. It exemplifies investing and commissioning well by using flexible funding models, building community partner capacity, and enabling co-design approaches that allow communities to develop locally grounded solutions. ECVP initiatives keep people safe by creating culturally safe spaces for disclosure, learning, and support. They work to stop violence by raising awareness, reducing stigma, challenging harmful social norms, and promoting early help-seeking. Many activities protect children and young people by strengthening parenting practices and creating peer support networks for youth.

The programme also strengthens the prevention workforce by developing skilled facilitators and leaders within ethnically diverse communities. Taking action on sexual violence is another key area of alignment. The initiatives use both direct and indirect approaches to raise awareness and address sexual violence, and they connect survivors with culturally safe services. Finally, the initiatives are firmly grounded in prevention before harm occurs, which is the foundation of the long-term vision within Te Aorerekura.

Through education, community mobilisation, economic empowerment, and the creation of safe, supportive environments, the ECVP programme is working to stop FVSV before it starts.

Additional alignment is seen in the programme's recognition of community readiness and its use of layered, incremental approaches. The initiatives acknowledge that communities have different starting points and tailor their engagement, accordingly, reflecting the understanding of diverse readiness levels outlined in Te Aorerekura. The programme also integrates an intersectional lens, addressing how multiple identities – such as ethnicity, gender, age, disability, and rainbow identities – intersect and influence experiences of violence and access to support.

Finally, the ECVP evaluation aligns with the emphasis in Te Aorerekura on systems change and partnerships. It highlights the importance of improving mainstream services' cultural competence and fostering collaborative relationships between ethnic community partners, Māori organisations, councils, and family violence and sexual violence services. The programme promotes evidence-informed practice, with ongoing evaluation, reflective learning, and the development of shared frameworks that communities can easily draw upon.

Overall, the ECVP programme and evaluation reinforce the vision and priorities of the Second Te Aorerekura Action Plan. The findings show that when prevention approaches are culturally grounded, community-led, and supported by strong partnerships and flexible investment, they can achieve change even within relatively short timeframes. Sustained investment, ongoing partnership, and system-level transformation will be essential to building on this momentum and achieving long-term, community-led prevention of FVSV in ethnically diverse communities across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Additional alignments with framework (see page 40 for more information)

Community Readiness and Layered Approaches

The report recognises different starting points and readiness levels in communities, which aligns with the emphasis in Te Aorerekura on tailoring approaches.

Intersectionality

The ECVP evaluation reflects the recognition in Te Aorerekura that multiple identities (e.g., ethnicity, gender, age, disability, rainbow) affect experiences of violence and access to support.

Systems Change and Partnership

The evaluation recommends improving mainstream services' cultural competence and fostering partnerships – aligning with Te Aorerekura for systemic transformation and whole-of-government-community collaboration.

Evidence-informed

The report's call for ongoing evaluation, shared frameworks, and evidence-informed practice reflects the emphasis in Te Aorerekura on learning and continuous improvement.