

Evaluation of the Action for Equality programme

Summary of Evaluation Findings

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1. Introduction to the evaluation

Working with men and boys is increasingly recognised as an important approach to address and prevent gender based violence and discrimination. Equal Community Foundation (ECF) has been an advocate and practitioner of this approach since 2009. In that time, ECF has worked with more than 3,000 adolescent boys across 28 low income urban communities in Pune and Mumbai.

In 2015, ECF and the Savitri Waney Charitable Trust commissioned an external evaluation. Dr. Sonal Zaveri, an independent consultant and expert in evaluation, child rights and participation conducted the evaluation. This is a summary of the full evaluation report. The full evaluation report is available [here](#).

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the outcomes achieved by the ECF's community programmes so far; their relevance, coverage, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. The evaluation also considered the added value of ECF's organisational role in developing and supporting its community-based programmes. The evaluation is intended to inform the development of a strategy for the future of the Action for Equality and ECF's work, with an emphasis on ways to develop the programme further, improve and replicate it and scale up the approach.

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The evaluation was executed in five phases:

- a literature review of programme-related documentation and secondary analysis of programme monitoring data;
- a survey of current and former programme participants;
- workshops with ECF programme staff and management;
- Use of qualitative tools for data collection including adolescent friendly participatory tools; and
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and one to one interviews with programme participants, family members and stakeholders.

Evaluation scope

The evaluation involved Action for Equality participants from seven communities, all of whom have been involved in the programme or continue to do so. It covers the period from the beginning of the Action for Equality programme (Cycle 1) to the end of January 2015 (Cycle 11). The evaluation explored achievements and outcomes of the programme and how these were perceived and experienced by:



- programme participants and their female family members;
- members of the ECF programme and management teams; and
- ECF partners and donors.

The evaluation also examined the factors influencing such outcomes and how they have impacted the development, implementation and result of the programme. These factors include:

- support provided by ECF,
- the structure of the programme,
- programme methodology; and
- relationships between the organisation, communities, participants and their families.

Evaluation approach

A hybrid evaluation approach was used to frame the evaluation. A gender transformative lens was used to frame the inquiry, gathering the data, and in anchoring the interpretation of the findings. This framing was critical since ECF’s work was related to **transforming** traditional engendered concepts of manhood and power relationships towards a more equitable relationship that **results** in addressing gender discrimination and violence. Along with a gender transformative evaluation approach (some call this “feminist evaluation”), both Utilization-focused and Developmental evaluation approaches were used. Developmental evaluation helped to develop exploratory outcome related questions as ECF’s approach was an innovative one and pathways of change were emergent. Use and Users of the evaluation were identified from the beginning.

The evaluation findings will be used to inform the development of a strategy to improve, replicate and scale up the Action for Equality programme. To ensure that the evaluation met the needs of its primary users, ECF’s stakeholders and partners had a high degree of involvement in the evaluation process. For this reason, a collaborative and utilisation-focused approach was used. Although the evaluation was led by an independent external consultant, it was supported by internal evaluators from ECF. Other internal and external stakeholders were involved throughout the process to:

- provide inputs on the focus of evaluation;
- support and collect primary data;
- conduct a secondary analysis of monitoring data; and
- provide feedback to the lead evaluator.

This helped to ensure that the evaluation process was fully understood and co-owned by ECF and that the final evaluation reports will be useful and used by them as its primary users.¹

Evaluation Activities

Documentation and monitoring and evaluation data already existed about the Action for Equality programme. General information and several hypotheses about the programme could be drawn from a review of these documents and through a secondary analysis of the monitoring and evaluation data. However, in order to address some gaps in information on perceptions of programme impact and for corroborating these hypotheses, primary data was also collected. The evaluation used a number of different methods to collect this information. Annex 1.2 provides an overview of the data collection methods and their purpose in the evaluation.

The evaluation included a variety of stakeholders, representing different perspectives on the programme: programme participants, programme staff, donors, and partners. A survey was conducted with 66 randomly sampled programme participants from different communities and who had been involved in AfE during different cycles; Focus Group Discussions were conducted with ECF programme and management teams, programme

¹ The full Terms of Reference for the evaluation and evaluation plan can be seen in Appendix 1.1



participants and their female family members; and eight semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders were conducted.²

² More information on the evaluation methodology can be found in the [full report](#)



2. Document Review and Secondary Data Analysis

About ECF

Equal Community Foundation (ECF) is based in Pune, India. Since 2009 ECF has been working towards the goal of raising every man in India to end violence and discrimination against women.

One of ECF’s guiding principles is that violence against women is an issue equally relevant for men as for women. ECF’s premise is that if adolescent boys have the opportunity to learn about human rights, develop the capacity to understand and challenge the social norms in their own life, develop leadership skills, and are supported to take collective action to promote gender equality, then they will:

- recognize the value and justice of gender equality;
- take individual and collective action to prevent violence against women in their lives and communities;
- advocate an end to violence against women by their peers and others in the community.

ECF is structured in a way that embodies two key roles:

1. As an innovator in the design, development and implementation of tools and programmes to engage adolescent boys to prevent violence against women
2. As a knowledge partner for those who want to discuss, debate or learn how to successfully engage adolescent boys to prevent violence against women

In combining these two roles, ECF develops programmes that provide evidence that working with adolescent boys is an effective approach to preventing violence against women. It integrates a Research, Development and Evaluation programme, which plays a key part in bridging these two roles and demonstrate, communicate and learn from successful practices towards ending violence and discrimination against women and girls. Its second role, as knowledge partner is aimed to raising awareness and understanding about working with adolescent boys among donors, policy makers and other practitioners working to prevent violence against women.

About Action for Equality

Action for Equality (AfE) is a community-based programme that aims to bring about behaviour and attitude change regarding gender and gender based violence among adolescent boys aged 14 to 17. The programme is conducted in some of Pune’s low income communities. Programme mentors use a structured curriculum to work intensively with participants in group education sessions.

The full AfE programme lasts 18 months and is comprised of three separate stages:

Foundation Programme	Action Programme	Leadership Programme
1 Cycle = 15 weeks	1 Cycle = 15 weeks	1 Cycle = 10 months

Foundation Programme

The focus of the Foundation Programme is to develop participants’ knowledge about issues related to gender and to develop skills such as critical thinking, communication and discussion. This is to enable them to recognise and challenge the social and gender norms around them. At this stage, participants are encouraged to make attitude and behavioural changes related to gender at the individual and household level.



The Foundation Programme is conducted in 'Cycles' lasting 15 weeks each. During that time, participants meet once a week with a programme mentor who facilitates the programme curriculum. Those participants who attend at least 60 percent of these sessions are encouraged to join the next stage of AfE - the Action Programme.

Action Programme³

During the Action Programme, participants are encouraged to start taking collective action to address gender issues that are relevant for their communities and families. Over 15 weeks of the Action Programme, participants, under the support and guidance of the programme mentor, learn about gender issues in depth and discuss and develop ways of addressing these issues in their communities. The aim of this programme is for participants to start taking more initiative in designing and leading actions and for programme mentors to take a more supportive rather than directive role.

Leadership Programme

ECF understands that, to be sustainable, the AfE programme must eventually be led and owned by members of the community. To do this, the AfE Leadership Programme was created to nurture leaders from those in the Action programme. These leaders are supported to develop the skills to plan and implement activities related to the prevention of violence against women in communities. During the Leadership Programme, participants meet for leadership training once a month, focusing mainly on the development of skills in the context of advocating the principles of equality.

³ At the time of the evaluation, the AfE Action Programme was in the process of being restructured. Prior to the evaluation, the Action Programme was structured to take place in six-week modules on an ongoing basis. At the time of the beginning of the evaluation, the changes described above have started to be implemented. However, data collected and used in this evaluation came from participants involved in the previous iteration of the Action Programme.



Action for Equality in Numbers

During the period of time covered by this evaluation (2009-2015), Action for Equality (AfE) had reached 2,831 adolescent boys through its Foundation Programme.⁴ During eleven cycles of implementation over this period, the Foundation programme was conducted in 24 communities across Pune, as well as four communities in Mumbai. Of these communities, 13 in Pune have hosted AfE consistently for all 11 cycles. However, the programme was discontinued in Mumbai after two cycles due to logistical challenges of conducting the programme at a distance from the main centre in Pune.

Programme communities comprise diverse ethnic and religious populations, but all are similar in being low income urban communities. AfE is aimed primarily at adolescent boys aged 14-17. However, the majority of Action for Equality participants are aged 13 and 14 years old. However, there is a proportion who are older and younger - the programme has included participants between the ages of 11 and 20.⁵ As well as representing a wide range of ages, Action for Equality has also engaged participants from different ethnic, language, religious and caste groups.⁶

Of the more almost 3,000 adolescent boys who have participated in the Action for Equality programme, 1656 have remained engaged in the programme until the end of the 15 week - almost 60 percent. Retention in the Foundation Programme has improved from the beginning of the programme. In the first cycle of AfE, 45 percent of participants completed the Foundation Programme, this number increased to 86 percent in Cycle 11.⁷

Whilst retention in the Foundation Programme has consistently improved, the number of participants who have transitioned into the Action Programme and Leadership Programme has been inconsistent. A total of 693 participants who completed the Foundation Programme have participated in the Action Programme, a transition rate of 42 percent.⁸ Similarly, although Action for Equality has encouraged almost 100 participants from AP to train as leaders for gender equality in their communities, this number is a little more than one in ten of the participants who completed the Action Programme.

⁴ See Annex 2.1. for breakdown of Action for Equality participation in all programmes for Cycles 1-11

⁵ See Annex 2.2.1 for breakdown of AfE FP participation by age

⁶ See Annex 2.2 for demographic information on AfE participants

⁷ See Annex 2.1.1

⁸ See Annex 2.1.2



Key Messages

For the purposes of the evaluation, the internal evaluators, working under the lead of an independent external consultant, undertook a review of programme documents, curricular material and research reports; and a secondary analysis of programme monitoring and evaluation data was undertaken. Key messages from the review and analysis are summarised below.

Demographic profile of participants

Age

Since AfE started implementation in 2009, the average age of FP participants has decreased to under 14-year olds. Although aimed at adolescent boys aged 14-17, less than 50 percent of all participants have been in that age group (less than 25 percent have been older than 14). The remaining 50 percent of FP participants are aged 12 or 13 years.

Caste

Although participants from all castes are as likely to enrol in AfE, those from scheduled castes and tribes are more likely to complete the Foundation Programme and transition to AP and LP. Participants from open caste are less likely to complete the FP and transition to AP and LP. Anecdotally, programme mentors suggest that adolescent boys from open castes do not view violence against women as an issue that is as relevant for them as it is for those from scheduled castes. Programme mentors have also suggested that participants from these communities are also more likely to have extra-curricular tuition classes and are unable to attend ECF sessions at the regular scheduled time.

Minority groups

Like caste, AfE is open to participants from all religious communities. However, AfE has been conducted in just two communities with a non-Hindu majority of participants. However, neither community was still hosting the programme at the time of the evaluation. In those two communities, enrolment and retention rates were higher than average. Although in the minority communities, completion and transition rates among participants from religious minority groups are higher than those of Hindu participants. Further information would need to be collected to offer an explanation for this.

AfE programme sessions are conducted in Marathi - the language of Maharashtra. However, there are many families who live in Pune's low income communities who do not speak Marathi. This includes families who have migrated to Pune from other states. Adolescent boys who are unable to speak Marathi fluently are not currently being reached by AfE. Making AfE sessions available in Hindi or another commonly spoken language would help to increase the reach of the programme.

Factors influencing programme enrolment, retention and outcomes

The secondary analysis found that there were two main factors related to programme enrolment, retention and positive outcomes.

1. Age

Younger participants, aged 12-13, are most likely to join the programme, complete the Foundation stage and transition to the Action and Leadership Programme. Relatives of participants aged 12 and 13 are also more likely to report positive outcomes from the programme, including willingness to share and discuss programme content,



being respectful to female family members and a greater willingness to perform household chores.⁹ Whether this was because younger boys are inherently more likely to be compliant or if it is a result of participation in the AfE programme was beyond the scope of this evaluation.

2. Attendance

Attendance at FP modules is also positively related to transition to AP and LP. Participants who attended at least 90 percent of FP modules are three times more likely to transition to AP and three and a half times more likely to transition to LP than those who completed FP with attendance at 60 percent. Also female relatives of participants with 90 percent attendance were more likely to report positive outcomes in all areas of attitude and behaviour change, participants were 30 percent more likely to share information with their family, influence their relatives and demonstrate more gender equitable behaviour at home.¹⁰

⁹ See Annex 2.3.1

¹⁰ See Annex 2.3.2



3. Evaluation Findings

Introduction

The findings of the evaluation were derived from the document review, secondary analysis of existing monitoring and evaluation data, as well as primary data collected from a survey of programme participants, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. This section presents a selection of results (a complete presentation of results can be found in the [full evaluation report](#)).

The findings are organised around the key evaluation questions of strategic concern to ECF and are delineated by the five OECD DAC¹¹ criteria (relevance, reach, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability); as well as the role of ECF as an organisation in supporting and enhancing these results and outcomes. A key evaluation question is stated under each criterion, with indicators specified for each.

3.1 Relevance

To what extent are the outcomes of the Action for Equality programme consistent with the needs of adolescent boys?

Indicators

- AfE is relevant to the needs and challenges faced by adolescent boys;
- AfE is consistent with the needs of female members of the community;
- AfE recognises and addresses social norms and behaviours;
- AfE meets local community and national needs;
- AfE activities and outcomes consistent with ECF objectives and overall goal

Relevance of AfE to the needs and challenges faced by adolescent boys:

Participants, parents and ECF community partners found the content and outcomes of AfE to be relevant to the needs and challenges faced by adolescent boys. Although stakeholder feedback was sought and found critical to the initial design and development of the AfE model and curriculum, there was less evidence of their input being meaningful to the subsequent development, implementation and monitoring of AfE.¹²

Relevance of AfE to participants' social norms and behaviours:

The evaluation found that social norms have affected the design, implementation and outcomes of AfE at all levels. A tension exists between conservative social norms and the AfE programme, which informs and critically engage adolescent boys in challenging these norms. ECF is investing in training for its staff and programme mentors to both recognise those social norms themselves and to develop skills to facilitate that process in participants. The organisation also recognises that social norms can limit the extent to which families are able to provide an enabling environment for participants to change their gender behaviour and attitude. In response, ECF is looking at ways to positively engage parents and families.

Relevance of AfE to local and national needs and challenges:

The evaluation found that ECF's various external stakeholders and staff recognise that addressing the factors related to violence and discrimination against women is critically important nationally and internationally. Working with men and boys is becoming increasingly recognised, in India and globally, as an effective way of preventing

¹¹ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) - Quality Standards for Development Evaluation. For more information, see: <http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>

¹² It should be noted that, at the time of the evaluation, the process of restructuring the AP and LP was underway, with meaningful participation and consultation of programme participants.



and reducing violence against women. As one of the first organisations in Maharashtra to work with adolescent boys, ECF is ideally placed to share its learning and experience gained from AfE with other local, national and international organisations.¹³

¹³ Although outside the remit of this evaluation, ECF's other programme, Project Raise, is currently working with 20 organisations that are involved with issues related to trafficking in West Bengal. This to enable them to adapt AfE and integrate men and boys into their existing work with women and girls.



3.2 Programme reach

Is AfE reaching all adolescent boys with opportunities differentiated to their needs and circumstances?

Indicators

- AfE reaches all intended groups: socio-economic, ethnic, caste, religious and language groups;
- AfE is adapted to the needs of all intended groups;
- AfE is targeted at ages appropriately for knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviour change

AfE's reach to all intended groups of adolescent boys:

The evaluation found that AfE has reached a wide range of adolescent boys between the ages of 11 and 20 in 28 communities in Pune and Mumbai. These communities represent all religious groups, different castes and families of low socio-economic status. However, despite being aimed primarily at adolescent boys aged 14 to 17, AfE has been less effective at attracting adolescent boys aged 15-17. The vast number of participants who enrol and remain in the programme are aged 12 to 14.¹⁴ Younger participants who enrol at age 12 or 13 are also most likely to transition into the AP and LP.

Although AfE has included participants from all religious and caste groups, most of the communities where AfE is conducted are comprised of predominantly Hindu populations, with the majority comprised of scheduled caste families. Only two communities have a non-Hindu majority population (in one of these communities, AfE was discontinued after one cycle).¹⁵ As a reflection of this, more than 80 percent of AfE participants are Hindu, with 11 percent Buddhist and 8 percent Muslim.

Adaptation of AfE to the needs of all intended groups:

Whilst AfE is open to all adolescent boys, the lack of diversity detailed above suggests a lack of differentiation in AfE's content or approach to inclusion. An approach that is adaptable and sensitive to the needs and expectations of different groups could help to improve the participation of minority, marginalised groups or individuals representing a particular risk of perpetrating gender violence. This includes those living in muslim communities, adolescent boys aged between 15 and 17, those not in education, employment or training and those who speak a language different from Marathi.

Age-appropriateness of AfE for intended knowledge, attitude, skills and behaviour change:

The AfE curricula seems to be age-appropriate and incremental for the intended age group of 14-17. Revisions to the FP curriculum emphasise the development of skills, such as critical thinking, reflection and discussion, rather than knowledge transfer from mentor to participant. However, the age group most likely to participate in the programme is 12-14, for which this approach and related activities may not be as effective or engaging. Within ECF, there are ongoing discussions to ascertain that programme activities and content, particularly related to sex and sexuality, are appropriate for younger participants. During the evaluation process, this discussion was extended to considerations about how intended programme outcomes are impacted by the younger age of participants.

¹⁴ See Annex 2.2.1 for breakdown of participants by age

¹⁵ See Annex 2.2.3 for breakdown of communities by caste



3.3 Efficiency

Does ECF deliver intended results in a way that makes good use of resources?

Indicators

- ECF makes good use of available resources;
- Resources have been adequate;
- AfE is of quality appropriate to the resources provided;

Programme Staff:

The main costs for AfE are related to staff salaries. The evaluation found that programme mentors are a critical factor in the enrolment and retention of participants and they significantly impact outcomes for participants. ECF requires programme staff to demonstrate personal and professional attributes that are not usually developed through mainstream systems of training and professional qualifications.¹⁶ These include facilitation skills, management of participatory and collaborative learning, encouragement of critical thinking and discussion. The sensitive content of AfE also demands that programme mentors are confident, knowledgeable, sensitive and able to communicate well - often requiring them to take on the role of a counsellor. In recognition of this, ECF has invested significantly in developing the skills and capacity of programme mentors to deliver a quality and effective programme.

However, resource and funding constraints result in the need to minimise costs. ECF is able to pay its key staff at nominal or below-market rates. This is a cause for concern for ECF. The organisation does not have the resources to formally recognise the professional identity of mentors with commensurate remuneration or with opportunities for career development and advancement. These risks minimise the status and demotivate mentors and ECF risks the loss of those who seek development opportunities or advancement.

Availability of resources

The evaluation found that ECF has built up a considerable body of institutional knowledge, experience and learning. It's investment in Research, Development and Evaluation has resulted in an evidence-based development of AfE, including its curriculum and monitoring and evaluation systems.

There is potential for this knowledge and experience to make a significant contribution to the emerging national and international approach to working with men and boys; and to scale up and replicate AfE. As ECF's profile has increased, it has been approached by other non-governmental organisations and corporates who wish to engage with men on gender issues.

However, ECF is currently working at maximum capacity and does not have means and resources to work beyond its current programme. Still at a nascent stage of development funding, there is a lack of strategic investment in the area of working with men and boys. This want for stable funding opportunities runs the risk of limiting the potential impact of ECF's work.

Maximising available resources

ECF has responded to this unfavourable funding environment by developing a lean management and administrative structure; has creatively employed skilled volunteers and has invested in building the capacity of its local staff. However, considering the critical role that programme mentors play in ensuring participation and achieving positive outcomes, it is important to maximise their inputs, which is not always the case. The number of participants in each community, per cycle has been inconsistent, varying from eleven per community to just three.

¹⁶ Most programme mentors are qualified with a post-graduate Masters in Social Work (MSW)



The timing of cycles can also negatively impact participation, with low attendance in sessions in the summer and during festivals - all of which could be planned and adapted for.

The evaluation found that coordination and collaboration with community based organisations has the potential to complement ECF's work and could be effective in increasing participation in AfE. In three communities where ECF already has a strong, collaborative partnership with an existing women's organisation, enrolment and retention has been consistently high. The programmes have been supported by parents and outcomes have been consistently positive. Such partnerships with organisations working with adults (including boys' parents, teachers and neighbours) have the potential to support ECF in creating a supportive, enabling environment for sustained attitude and behavioural change in adolescent boys.



3.4 Effectiveness

Is AfE achieving the intended outcomes?

Indicators

- AfE has a clear theory of change;
- There is a system and resources to monitor and evaluate the outcomes for AfE;
- AfE intended outcomes are achieved and demonstrated;

This section presents a selection of results for effectiveness, a complete presentation and discussion of results can be found in the [full report](#).

AfE Theory of Change

The evaluation process with internal stakeholders highlighted that though there was an inherent logic to the AfE theory of change, the intended programme outcomes and the groups of adolescent boys who were actually participating in the programme were incompatible. The work being done by ECF and the participants involved in AfE are related more directly to the *prevention* of violence against women, rather than to the stated goal of *reduction* of violence against women.

During participatory workshops conducted by the external evaluator, AfE’s intended goal was discussed. The emphasis was on the extent to which the results and achievements of the programme were relevant and realistic for work with young adolescents. It was also agreed that the programme does not actively reach out to adolescent boys who are either already perpetrating violence or who represent an increased risk of perpetrating violence. The younger boys were unlikely to have been violent or abusive against girls or women. For this reason, the work being done in AfE with these participants is more accurately about preventing violence, rather than reducing violence.

Monitoring and evaluation

ECF has implemented a robust and sophisticated system for Monitoring and Evaluating (M&E) the outcomes for AfE. The system is the result of an reflective and iterative process involving programme mentors, management and programme participants. It has the capacity to collect formal and systematic evidence on the achievement of all AfE programme outcomes, including attitudinal and behavioural changes - inside and outside the programme. The M&E system also effectively uses data to improve and develop the AfE programme.

Achievement of intended AfE outcomes

The evaluation found evidence of positive outcomes from AfE, including:

- improved knowledge on gender-related issues and understanding of gender equitable norms;
- changes in attitude toward gender related issues such as dowry, violence against women, street sexual harassment and victim blaming;
- shift in perceptions and stereotypes about girls and boys;
- increased confidence and communication skills;
- improved relationships with family; and
- behavioural changes, such as discussing issues with parents, undertaking more domestic chores, showing more respect at home toward female relatives.

The evaluation used a survey¹⁷ to measure attitudes on a number of gender related issues. FGDs with participants and their mothers were also facilitated to examine the extent to which AfE achieved its intended

¹⁷ The Evaluation Survey Form can be found in Appendix 1.3



outcomes. The findings from these evaluation activities expand and reinforce some of the key messages from the document review and secondary analysis of existing monitoring data. These findings are summarised below.

Intended Outcome: Improved relationships

Adult women who participated in the evaluation reported that they had experienced improved relationships with the participant since he became involved in AfE. For some women, this had resulted in better and more respectful communication between themselves and the participant; reduced use of abusive language, willingness to discuss substantive subjects and share information. One described the atmosphere at home as more ‘pleasant’ since the participant became involved in AfE.

Intended Outcome: Prevent discrimination at household level

One of the first practical ways in which FP participants are encouraged to prevent discriminatory practices and challenge gender norms at the household level is, to share the burden of household chores. The evaluation found that this was one of the most common behavioural changes reported by female family members and participants. Female FGD participants reported an increased willingness among participants to share household chores, including more ‘domestic’ tasks such as making tea, washing dishes, shopping, fetching water, picking up plates after meals and sweeping the floor.

Intended Outcome: Support for and knowledge of gender equitable norms

The evaluation survey was conducted with participants who completed the FP between Cycles 1 and 11. 58 percent of survey respondents demonstrated moderately gender equitable attitudes, with only 4.3 percent demonstrating equitable attitudes.¹⁸

Survey responses from participants who had completed FP the cycle just before the evaluation (Cycle 11) were more likely to demonstrate stronger support for gender equitable norms than those from earlier cycles. Indeed, the survey results suggest that support for gender equitable norms decreases the longer the participant is out of the FP.¹⁹

The survey results were disaggregated by attendance rates. The participants were split into two groups: those who attended 60 percent of FP sessions and those who attended 90-100 percent of the sessions. This meant that the evaluation was able to examine the finding from the secondary analysis that attendance at FP is related to positive outcomes. These results suggest that there was no significant link between attendance in the programme and more gender equitable attitudes. Overall, there was very little difference in gender attitude between the two groups. Neither was there a difference between those who participated only in FP and those who transitioned to AP and LP.²⁰

Although participants did not demonstrate significant support for gender equitable norms in the survey, on survey questions and issues directly addressed in the FP curriculum and actions encouraged by programme mentors, they did demonstrate significant support for gender equitable norms, namely, issues related to dowry, equitable sharing of household and caretaking chores and concepts of masculinity. This suggests that participants’ knowledge has improved on gender issues explicitly addressed in the curriculum, but they have not yet developed sufficient critical thinking skills to apply that knowledge to issues not directly addressed.²¹

¹⁸ See Statistical Annex 2.4.1

¹⁹ See Statistical Annex 2.4.3

²⁰ See Statistical Annex 2.4.4 and 2.4.5

²¹ The need to develop these skills has been recognised by ECF and the process of training programme mentors to facilitate the development of these skills was underway during the evaluation. The FP curriculum also places importance on the development of these skills through debate and discussion.



The conclusion to be drawn from these survey results is that deep-seated gender attitudes are extremely difficult to change. Survey results from participants who completed the initial FP stage of AfE show that moderate change can be achieved through improved knowledge, but that once no longer involved actively in AfE, this knowledge does not necessarily result in sustained attitude change. Factors such as exposure to more modules or remaining in the programme longer do not seem to significantly impact the gender attitudes of participants either. This suggests that knowledge alone is insufficient to lead to long term, sustained attitude change. The ability to use knowledge to think critically is required in order to challenge entrenched gender norms.

Although ongoing and consistent interaction with adolescent boys is critical to achieving the support for gender equitable norms that the AfE programme seeks, the programme must be developed such that participants develop critical thinking skills and internalise the understanding of issues raised through AfE.

Unintended AfE outcomes

The evaluation also found evidence of positive unintended outcomes of the AfE programme which, although not part of the AfE theory of change, were valued by programme participants and family members. These included:

- more motivation to study
- less likelihood of becoming part of negative peer groups
- less 'roaming' around the community, which was related by participants to a reduced likelihood of perpetrating street sexual harassment.

These outcomes could be integrated into the AfE model and theory of change. They can be recognised as indicators of the incremental changes that form part of the change pathway.



3.5 Sustainability

Is AfE sustainable and are its outcomes likely to be sustained?

Indicators

- Will the outcomes from AfE be sustained if the programme ends?
- Are participants and communities motivated to maintain the programme without ECF's support?

Community support:

The likelihood of AfE being sustained is enhanced when there is strong demand and support from participants, parents and their communities. In most cases, when early efforts have been made by programme mentors and community partners to raise awareness of the programme, it has received support and demand for the programme to continue and expand. However, this support is limited to those who experience direct contact with programme mentors or field staff from community partner organisations. In cases where that support has not been present, programme mentors have reported experiencing difficulties in mobilising participants or in hosting the programme without disruption. In at least one community, the programme was abandoned when religious leaders opposed the content of the programme.



3.6 ECF Added Value

What added value does ECF as an organisation bring to the approach of working with adolescent boys to prevent gender based violence?

Indicators:

- What is unique about ECF as an organisation?
- How does ECF support the work of AfE?

ECF has a clear position as a learning and innovating organisation in the area of working with adolescent boys to prevent violence against women. This is evident through its reflexive practice and willingness to learn from experience - their own and that of other organisations - and integrate new ideas.

ECF is unique in the value and importance it places on processes of monitoring and evaluation; and its willing not only to measure success, but also to integrate learning from what has not worked into programme improvement and development. ECF has been innovative in designing and developing its own AfE curriculum, model, resources and learning materials. However, ECF is also willing and open to sharing resources, expertise and experience in order to scale up the approach of working with adolescent boys to other practitioners and organisations.



4. Recommendations

The evaluation recognises the importance of working with adolescent boys as a way of addressing some of the drivers of violence and discrimination against women. To strengthen the AfE programme, several recommendations are made under the themes provided below:²²

Reach

1. The content and activities of the AfE programme should be adapted to ensure they are appropriate to the age of those who are participating in the programme; or approach should be adapted to encourage full participation of those in target group
2. Approach and content should be differentiated to meet the different needs of those not currently included in the programme, including language, session timings, and sensitive topics

Efficiency

1. ECF should continue to invest in developing and improving the skills of programme mentors, with a particular focus on facilitation skills
2. ECF should form complementary collaborative partnerships with community organisations and other community stakeholders in order to build a wide base of support and demand for AfE
3. Develop an enrolment and retention strategy to ensure each cycle reaches the optimal number of participants in each community
4. ECF should develop a strategy to increase the number of participations who transition to AP and LP after completing the initial FP
5. ECF should develop an advocacy strategy and work with civil society, donors and key influencers to promote its approach. This will increase enrolment and contribute to an enabling environment
6. ECF should continue to use creative ways of obtaining funding from national and international funders

Relevance

1. ECF should continue to create programmes that respond to the needs of participants
2. AfE should develop systematic and meaningful ways to ensure participants are involved in design, implementation, development and evaluation of the programme

Effectiveness

1. AfE Theory of Change should be revised to clearly articulate programme focus on goal of preventing violence against women
2. AfE Theory of Change should be developed to reflect the incremental causal pathways required to achieve final programme outcomes, that is the small changes that are take place before programme outcomes can be observed
3. ECF should continue to emphasise research, monitoring and evaluation and examine ways to share this learning to other practitioners

Sustainability

1. ECF should develop complementary and collaborative partnerships with organisations working with community stakeholders to support the creation of an enabling environment for adolescent boys to sustain attitude and behaviour change
2. AfE should develop the Action and Leadership Programmes so that meaningful opportunities are created for participants to engage in issues relevant to their community

²² For the full and original set of recommendations, please refer to the full evaluation report





5. Evaluation validation

The evaluation of ECF’s Action for Equality programme was conducted between April to July 2015. In September 2015, the findings of the report were presented to the programme and management teams. This presentation was followed, a month later in October, by a Validation Meeting. At this meeting, the programme and management teams discussed how the evaluation findings had been interpreted and integrated into the development of the programme.

The following is a summary of the ECF response to the recommendations of the external evaluation:²³

Recommendation	Action taken / to be taken
Change AfE goal to reflect <i>prevention</i> rather than <i>reduction</i> of violence against women	AfE goal has been changed to reflect its work with boys and young men to prevent violence and discrimination against women.
Develop AfE Theory of Change to reflect incremental change pathways	AfE team has begun a structured process that will deliver a developed Theory of Change that articulates the pathways of change required to achieve programme outcomes.
Develop enrolment and retention strategy	AfE team has re-designed the delivery model, aiming to give more time to later stages of AfE (AP and LP) and ensure there is enough quality time for mentors to support volunteers and leaders. In addition, plans are being developed to strengthen stakeholder engagement outside of the AfE sessions. ²⁴
Ensure age-appropriateness of FP approach and contents	<p>The target group for AfE has been extended to include adolescent boys aged 13-17, which will be separated into early adolescent groups and adolescent groups.</p> <p>The FP Curriculum and Facilitator’s Guide will be adapted to provide facilitators with age-appropriate ideas and activities for each module.</p> <p>Programme mentors will be asked to enrol participants from one age group each cycle.</p>
Develop capacity of programme mentors	<p>ECF will continue to invest in the training and professional development of programme mentors.</p> <p>A coaching component has been integrated into the mentor training.</p>
Develop complementary collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders and organisations	<p>ECF will formalise and structure ongoing engagement with existing community stakeholders that includes women, girls, older men and other community members and strategic partners such as organizations working with women and girls. .</p> <p>Earlier, the focus of our stakeholder engagement was to increase participation in the program. ECF recognises the need to compliment</p>

²³ The full text of the management response to the evaluation recommendations can be found in Annex 3

²⁴ The new AfE delivery model can be found at this [link](#)



	initial efforts with emphasis on articulating key messages and expected outcomes of the program in their interaction.
Use creative ways to secure national and international funding	ECF has secured funds to support core operations for the next 10 months and are working on a strategy to diversify sources of income.
Develop advocacy strategy and networks with civil society, donors and key influencers	<p>ECF is keen to share its programme materials and experience from AfE with practitioners, funders and policy makers.</p> <p>Through Project Raise, ECF has already started work with eight organisations in West Bengal to support them to adopt AfE. There is a strategy to increase this to 100 organisations over the next five years.</p>



Annexes

Please click on this link to see all the annexes me

