Case Study: Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO)

Adapting W3 to Illustrate Unique Contributions to the HIV Response

The Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO), Australia’s peak national organisation for the community HIV response, has adapted the W3 framework to support AFAO and AIDS Councils across Australia to strengthen their alignment with the policy system and better demonstrate the connection between work happening on the ground and high-level HIV indicators, such as reducing HIV transmissions and improving wellbeing for people living with HIV.

Working with Alison Barclay Consulting, AFAO sought to better describe the unique peer-led contributions of AFAO and AIDS Councils to Australia’s HIV response. The Theory of Change project adapted the concepts of the W3 project to support AFAO and AIDS Councils describe the relationship between their work and distinct approach to health promotion, and system-level indicators of the HIV response.

By taking a systems thinking approach to the dynamic environment that AFAO and AIDS Councils work in, the Theory of Change project recognises that although the connection between a single system intervention, such as a program or digital campaign, and HIV level indicators is hard to articulate, understanding AFAO and AIDS Council processes and situating these within a system of responses can help define the unique contribution that peer-led interventions have within the HIV response.

The project demonstrates this through a linear process and first defines the indicators of AFAO’s and AIDS Councils’ unique engagement, adaptation and alignment functions. These indicators illustrate the way that AFAO and AIDS Councils are embedded within their communities and foster safe spaces (engagement), respond rapidly to the changing needs of communities (adaptation), and act as an intermediary between community, government, academic institutions and health services (alignment).

These functions are used to form the basis of their system influence as responsive, trusted, credible and relevant actors in the HIV response, both in the context of community influence as well as policy influence. This position of influence informs the peer education, peer service delivery and peer leadership of AFAO and AIDS Councils and how the actions of peer-led responses in the HIV response
interact with high-level policy indicators. It provides a simplified, clear way to both explain the work of AFAO and AIDS Councils and their role within the HIV response.

Tools from *Theory of Change* were released in early 2018 and accompanied by a series of case studies that help illustrate the framework and its application in the work of AFAO and AIDS Councils. Although outcomes are still to emerge, the project provides the opportunity to help develop a mechanism by which to capture the impact of peer-processes, replacing a sense of “knowing” that peer-led responses work through anecdotal and personal experience, with more rigorous evidence and analysis. In turn, this strengthens the capacity of AFAO and AIDS Councils across Australia to both articulate and demonstrate the unique contributions of peer-led actions in the HIV response.


See the *What Works and Why (W3) Project: Impact Analysis* for more case studies and to read about the way the W3 Framework is impacting other peer and community-based organisations. The report is available in the publications section at [www.w3project.org.au](http://www.w3project.org.au)

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