

INCLUSIVE WORK program

IMPACT REPORT R3

2022



The GOGO Foundation



INTRODUCTION

An initiative of GOGO Foundation, the Inclusive Work Program (IWP) is a 9 week educational, wellbeing and work-immersion program designed to create targeted pathways to employment for women and non-binary people facing complex barriers to employment. These intersecting barriers include experience of domestic and family violence, poverty, mental ill-health, negative experience of the child protection system, single parenting, social isolation, and trauma. The program is trauma informed and recovery based. Direct impact from Round three of the IWP includes prevention of domestic and family violence and protecting parenting relationships to avoid the removal of children from their mothers. Our advocacy for participants in the program addresses participants immediate needs and helps reduce the risk of re-traumatisation.

IWP is funded by the Office for Women, **Women's Leadership Development Program**. Round three of the program was delivered between August and October 2022 in conjunction with our program delivery partners Jigsaw and the Village Foundation.



Our theory of change is if we support participants to understand wellbeing and self-care, learn foundational work skills, and experience work immersions all in a safe, supportive learning environment it will result in **improved wellbeing and confidence, re-identification of work capabilities, understanding the modern workplace and how it can be a supportive environment, the benefits of peer support and belonging, and understanding the power of kindness and acceptance.**

All of these outcomes combined with opening up our networks for a variety of work opportunities with inclusive employers, should lead to opportunities to gain safe, suitable and stable long-term work. These outcomes should lead to financial stability, personal agency and resilience.

In order to affect transformational change participants must use the tools they are taught during the program and be willing to do the internal work that is required to affect life changing impact. We also understand that for a variety of reasons not all participants will complete the program.

Reflections on Round 3 from CEO

Round 3 of our Inclusive Work Program was particularly challenging. We started with 7 women and in week 4 one decided to withdraw. The reason she gave was "the program was not for her, she was not ready or willing to make changes".

Four of the remaining 6 in the group had very complex needs including addiction, psychological disorders, imminent threat of DV, a Child Protection case, and one with overt levels of hostility that were impossible to predict. The importance of our advocacy and personalised care for this group both within session time and outside course hours became critical to their survival and positive experience of the course.

Our staff - Tam, Malika, Janine and Nikk, and our facilitators Tiff and Geraldine, were called upon to take extra special care of ourselves during some really tough times. Our weekly huddles and slack channels, and regular check-ins ensured we managed these challenges.

We are increasingly aware that the Inclusive Work Program is filling the void at the crucial and invisible intersection of seriously complex social issues. That is, the intersection of current and historical policy failure and social inattention where no support has been provided or is available. We are being referred women who have been left to survive with minimal and inadequate support, complex social issues and mental health issues, with impenetrable barriers to personal protection, well being, agency, and safety, to name just a few of the most immediate needs. For these women the impossibility of being able to peacefully live on our planet and have anything other than a life of unmet insecurity and vulnerability is real. We have been made acutely aware throughout the duration of the program, triage and advocacy play a featuring role for GOGO staff to enable participants to re enter the workforce with stability, support and connected with allied services to ensure they are surrounded by a safety net.

The biggest learning from round 3 was that the advocacy role we have always played has become visible to us, to our participants and to our Board. It is a vital component and its impact profound. Whilst building the women's capacity to self-advocate, their needs so often land on hostile, biased, judgemental and unhearing ears. They anticipate and expect this bias and I have listened and heard the unkindness their asks meet over the phone way too many times. It is treason. Supportive intervention from our team is critical.



Sarah Gun

STAFF UPDATE & REFLECTION FROM PROGRAM MANAGER

Round 3 has seen us introduce Malika Singh to the GOGO Foundation staff assisting with in the presentation of the Inclusive Work Program. Malika comes to us with a Bachelor of Psychology and currently working towards a Bachelor of Social Work. To compliment her education Malika is wise beyond her years, her warm empathetic nature and lived experience Malika embodies all that is GOGO. Coupled with her intimate knowledge of the IWP through her work presenting Foundational work skill sessions with past IWP groups through her employment with Jigsaw, Malika seamlessly become an integral part of the success of the IWP.

As round 3 of the IWP unfolded it became very clear that this would present challenges not yet encountered. Throughout the 9 week program layers of deep trauma were revealed and it was clear we would have to dig deep into our resources to ensure each person received the support, kindness, representation & care that they needed. The reality for these women is that until IWP the systems in place had failed them, were completely inadequate to provide the safety net and community they so desperately needed and deserve.

Through round 3 we witnessed breakdowns, walk outs, suicidal ideation, drug use, homelessness, violence and more. However throughout this turmoil we saw beauty, to watch a human reconnect with their authentic self, to reclaim pieces that were lost or forgotten and return to themselves is something truly magical and a privilege.

The experience of facilitating such a complex group as Program Manager, I found that the learnings and growth from this cohort were exponential. One of the biggest was that it is a privilege to be involved with this body of work, as it is to be a participant. The possibilities, opportunity, community connection, kindness are unique and this is something firmly in the front of my mind when accepting and holding space for the people applying for and partaking in the IWP. I have become far more astute in recognising those we can help and those we need to assist find alternative services.



Tam Norris

IWP PARTICIPANT DATA

Attendance

6 out of 7 participants completed the program

Very high attendance rate of 92%

Participant backgrounds

- All six people identified as female
- Culturally diverse participants, one person identified as Aboriginal and one as Pakistani.
- Each person had a different employment journey with time out of stable work ranging from 2 years to no work history at all.
- 50% are single Mothers
- 83% experienced childhood trauma or sexual assault
- 100% have experience domestic violence
- 66% have a past or current substance addiction

The most significant barriers to getting work identified by our participants were:

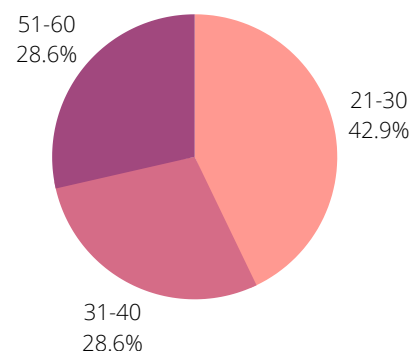
- Mental ill health
- Experience of domestic and family violence
- Limited personal networks to draw on for connections
- Potential homelessness
- Childhood trauma

FIRST AID CERTIFICATE COMPLETION

83% of the group completed a St John's First Aid Certificate

RESUME & COVER LETTERS

100% of participants have a personalised up to date resume and basic template cover letter to individualise for specific job application



Age of Participants

OUTCOMES – WHAT THE WOMEN TOLD US:

A BASELINE AND END OF PROGRAM SURVEY HELPS US MEASURE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR THEORY OF CHANGE. THIS DATA PROVIDES US WITH A SHORT-TERM PICTURE OF THAT EFFECTIVENESS.

Wellbeing outcomes

100%

of participants reported increased personal wellbeing.

100%

of participants reported increased belief in work abilities.

100%

of participants reported increased confidence in getting a job.

Work readiness

100%

of participants have updated CV and cover letter templates.

100%

reported increased clarity on next steps for career development.

100%

are able to identify and articulate the strengths and weakness of their work skill set.

100% of participants told us they feel more equipped to cope with barriers to employment

STORY TELLING

Shining lightness where darkness lives...

Before starting the IWP with GOGO Foundation I would've described my life as heavy – like I was carrying the weight of the world on my shoulders, stagnant and avoiding the difficult decisions that were holding me back from moving forward.

The IWP provided me with a safe place to land and empower me to start rebuilding my life step by step, I don't have to face my obstacles alone anymore. Without the support of the team from IWP advocating for me, I wouldn't have been able to break down the barriers preventing me from reaching my full potential.

Previously bogged down by shame and fear and not feeling worthy, I finally felt capable of breaking down these barriers one by one...

Over 10 years ago I escaped a domestic violence relationship whilst I was in my final year of study at Uni. After numerous attempts to complete my degree over the years, I found myself crippled by shame and my goals of finishing unattainable. During week 8 of the course, I was supported by Sarah and Tam to contact the Uni to seek re admittance into the degree and finally face the darkness I've been carrying around. I have now been accepted to complete my studies next year.

My hands shook as i opened the work book.

Me, study?? I didn't even finish year 10. How can I possibly complete a Cert II in Community Development. The anxiety creeps in, as do the voices of doubt, the voices I have heard & believed in all of my life & they shout louder. The critical inner voice was trying to win again. BUT NOT TODAY. Today I run with the future, not the past, with the support of the IWP Im getting it done. I'm breaking the cycle of intergenerational trauma to create a different future for myself and my children.

"I finished my workbook for the Cert 2. I'm so proud "



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

It's not always easy to capture the special nature of IWP. Below are a few examples of support provided to our participants by our program staff. We know these things make a huge difference in their personal and professional development, and are not readily available through mainstream employment services and programs.

This is the GOGO way!

1

Advocacy

Advocating on behalf of our participants to access vital services such as dental care, housing authorities, domestic violence services & NDIS support for themselves and/or children, accompanying participants to medical & psychological appointments and communicating with family members

2

Financial Empowerment

Access to a barrier removal fund where we can offer micro loans with payment plans, and pay costs to remove barriers. This can be anything from clothing, carparking, medication, metrocards. We also arrange free tax returns to release the burden of unattended tax obligations, find and sort superannuation and educate to build financial understanding.

3

Trauma informed facilitation

Curating space for emotional breakthroughs, self-awareness and reflection and offering alternative somatic therapies for the release of long held trauma

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

Work immersion days prove to be a special and unique opportunity for our participants to meet wonderful people, learn from inclusive work cultures and practise their interview skills! In round 3 we provided opportunities and experiences only found in the IWP. These experiences included floristry on our first day, yoga and tree-climb as team building exercises, and exploring work places including Beyond Bank and SA Care to open doors and possibilities.



Yoga

Opening our minds & experiencing another form of mindbody medicine. Our bodies hold trauma, stress, anxiety, rage and sadness.

Dru yoga allows the gentle, subtle release of emotional pain, and IFS is a therapy to help us to 'meet our parts', to understand our conflicting perspectives which allows us to find our inherent self.



Tree Climb

"Trusting that if I fall, something or someone will be there to catch me, to lift me up again so I can create, grow, be curious, try and expand, dare, jump and just see where I land.."



Beyond Bank

"Invaluable advice on resumes, cover letters, mock online interviews with Beyond Bank Staff, allowed all the skills we have learnt to be put into practice. Something extra special was Meeting Crystal who once sat as a participant in the IWP and is now employed by Beyond Bank".

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED

VULNERABILITY WE WERE CALLED TO MANAGE IN ROUND 3

- Serious diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health issues, mostly resulting from trauma but also from poor healthcare such as 10 minute doctor's appointments that treat deep trauma with blame, superficial solutions, bias, impatience and judgement.
- A mental health care system that is broken. This includes expensive psychiatrists that take months to get into, the community mental health triage team that cannot help because they are dealing with people in psychosis and "you are not at-risk enough for us".
- Deeply complex intergenerational and lifelong dysfunction from colonialism and racism and unsafe families. This results in exclusionary systems, compound trauma, worsening poverty and dysfunction, children and mothers at risk of separation.
- The coal-face of domestic violence and the risks women and services have to manage. The nuances and emotional turmoil of juggling and managing these risks are profound, heart-wrenching and very real

ADVOCACY MOMENTS TO SUPPORT BARRIER REMOVAL

- attended women's legal service with 2 participants
- sought registration of birth for a 1 year old aboriginal baby
- sought a birth certificate for this same child
- helped arrange ID cards and medicare cards
- sought to re-register licenses and access funding for driving lessons and licensed companions to accumulate the 75 required learning hours
- sought advice from SAPOL about outstanding fines and charges
- sought advice from SAPOL Family and Domestic Violence services regarding best options, strategies to stay safe and procedures
- attended the Emergency Department at the RAH and an overnight stay to support a woman having a mental health crisis.
- Supported a women experiencing an unsafe home into overnight accomodation to allow for sleep and recovery from exhaustion

As a Foundation we are building our capacity, capabilities and expertise in supporting these brave, resilient and worthy women. The program continues to be refined as we understand and address the unique circumstances of each of our participants and learn from their journeys.

CERTIFICATE II COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In Partnership with DaVange Training IWP Participants have to opportunity to complete a Certificate II in Community Development in addition to completing The Inclusive Work Program. The IWP has been designed to include modules of the cert 2 which allows students to cover the content and requirements of the qualifications as they progress through the 9 week course. Many of of participants have never studied, or not studied for many years. For those who have no formal qualifications earning this certificate is a huge achievement, a catalyst for further studies, qualifications for future employment and something for each person to be extremely proud of.

In recognition of this achievement the previous two IWP cohorts will be formally presented their qualifications by Minister Katrina Hildyard at a graduation ceremony at Parliament house in November 2022.



GOING THE EXTRA MILE

Regular care for a toddler throughout the program so a single mum could attend & complete IWP

Staff increased understanding of addiction and how vital a community is for full recovery

Constant guidance, reassurance & motivation via text messaging & phone calls throughout the program & beyond

Ongoing community support through IWP Plus for past & present participants

Acting as referees for job applications and housing leases

Resume writing and cover letters tailored to individuals and specific employment opportunities

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IWP is made possible with support from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Office for Women.

We thank all of our program participants and partners for their ongoing support of the Inclusive Work Program and the GOGO Foundation these include

- The GOGO Foundation Board
- Village Foundation
- Jigsaw Australia
- Community Bridging Services
- Beyond Bank
- SA Care
- Inner Retreats
- Wespac Foundation
- Quick Brown Fox Finance
- Anthea Henningson
- Nikkola Palmer
- MediPedi Foot & Hand clinics
- DaVange Training

Lastly it would be remiss of us to not make special mention and acknowledge our amazing facilitators, Dr Tiffany De Sousa Machado from Village Foundation and Geraldine Fuenmayor from Jigsaw. The expertise and energy they bring Wellness Wednesdays and Foundational studies is pivotal to the success of the Inclusive work program content, but the kindness, compassion, and sacred masculine you bring to The IWP ensures this unique program is a life changing experience for those who are fortunate to partake in you teachings.



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