

The Funding Network

Evaluation of impact on non-profit alumni

October 2020



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Executive Summary

The Funding Network (TFN) seeks to build the capacity of grassroots¹ non-profits, deepen the culture of giving in Australia and inspire greater community engagement. Since 2013, TFN has facilitated more than \$15.5 million for 362 grassroots non-profit programs. While its live crowdfunding events remain the central focus, TFN has continued to expand the range of services and support it provides to build the capacity and networks of non-profits, contributing to the ability of non-profits to create greater impact in their own communities.

This report forms the second impact evaluation commissioned by TFN to understand the outcomes that it creates for non-profit organisations. It builds on a 2017 impact evaluation conducted by Social Ventures Australia (SVA), which found that the collective benefits of the fundraising and other supports provided by TFN had significant and sometimes transformational outcomes for non-profits. This updated evaluation contains the findings of a survey, interviews and other data collected by TFN and reviewed by SVA, which together provide a rich picture of the continued impact of TFN on the organisations it serves.

Findings

Overall, the TFN experience has proven to be both enjoyable and impactful for non-profits. Results of the 2020 evaluation were similar to the previous 2017 evaluation, however the depth of impact appeared to have increased for many participating non-profits. In 2020, there was a greater proportion of respondents who stated that TFN had a 'very important' or 'critical' impact on their organisation and there also appeared to be further increased value attributed to the capacity-building and relationship-building aspects of the TFN experience. This suggests a positive reflection on the continued refinement of the TFN program over time.

As we saw in 2017, for some non-profit alumni the non-monetary elements of the TFN experience are even more valuable than financial donations. They can also have a longer-term impact, as these new skills and networks are being utilised well beyond the period of direct involvement with TFN. The table below summarises key findings of the 2020 evaluation, and compares results to 2017, demonstrating that TFN has continued to be a positive experience for non-profit alumni and, in an increasing number of cases, it has been critical to unlocking growth and progress.

¹ Grassroots organisations are defined by TFN as non-profits with less than \$1m average revenue over the previous 3 years.

Figure 1 – Summary of findings²

	2017	2020	Change
Average rating of overall positivity of the experience for non-profit alumni (out of 10)	8.9	9.1	↑
Average rating of overall positivity of working with TFN (out of 10)	8.5	9.0	↑
Alumni that say TFN had a critical or important impact on their ability to get to where they are now	68%	85%	↑
Alumni that say financial donations received as a result of TFN event were extremely or very valuable to their organisation	80%	90%	↑
Alumni that say relationships formed, marketing and promotions and other non-monetary elements of TFN (combined) were extremely or very valuable to their organisation	38%	50%	↑

Insights

- Non-profit alumni continue to reflect very positively on the TFN experience:** The majority of TFN non-profit alumni had overwhelmingly positive experiences with the average rating of experience trending upwards over time. The professionalism of TFN, well organised events and activities, and the friendly and supportive team were noted as contributing to the overall experience for non-profit alumni.
- TFN continues to play a key role in the growth of grassroots non-profits:** The previous evaluation found that TFN had the most substantial impact for early-stage organisations (under \$100,000 annual revenue), for whom the injection of funds and other supports could significantly boost their potential for impact. This evaluation supports these findings but shows that TFN was also seen to have had a 'critical' impact for somewhat more established organisation as well (particularly those up to \$500,000 annual revenue).
- In terms of relative value, fundraising continues to be the most valuable aspect of the TFN experience:** The majority of participants felt the financial donations as a result of being involved with TFN were very or extremely valuable to their organisations as seen in the 2017 report.
- However, non-monetary aspects are not far behind fundraising in terms of their value for non-profits:** Many non-profit alumni mentioned the non-monetary elements of the program as having a longer-term and sometimes even more significant impact than the financial gains.
- Networking opportunities and relationships were considered especially valuable:** 68% of survey respondents rated relationships and networks gained through the TFN experience as either very or extremely valuable – higher than in 2017 (58%).
- TFN's pitch coaching continues to receive substantial praise from non-profit alumni:** Pitch coaching in particular was considered a valuable element of the program. Smaller organisations with less experience in pitching found pitch coaching the most beneficial. The majority of organisations continue to use the skills they learned through the TFN program, particularly storytelling.

² Some summary finding numbers are different to the previous 2017 report as survey questions were changed for the 2020 evaluation.

- **Involvement with TFN increases the credibility of non-profit alumni with donors:** Consistent with 2017, the majority of organisations felt their credibility increased as a result of being involved with TFN which often resulted in additional funding opportunities or new relationships.
- **In-kind donations and additional offerings created substantial value:** 82% of respondents received some form of in-kind donation which was up from 2017 (65%) – almost half (45%) of respondents found these to be very or extremely valuable. In-kind donations from corporate sponsors seemed to be most impactful for organisations. In addition, more recent offerings, such as access to the Kilfinan mentoring program, were seen as providing substantial value.

What this means for TFN

Since the previous evaluation, TFN has maintained its positive impact for TFN non-profit alumni and further deepened this for some. The combined emphasis on fundraising, skills development and networking opportunities is essential to this impact – together these elements are more powerful for non-profits than any single element could be on its own. TFN can continue to create impact by focussing on the early-stage grassroots organisations for whom it appears to have the greatest benefits. Over the coming months and years, it can further support organisations to weather the difficulties created by the COVID-19 pandemic, including building on the lessons provided by the recent virtual events. Furthermore, TFN can continue to explore opportunities to further extend the benefits of its live crowdfunding events by helping non-profits to maintain and broaden connections with supporters after the events.

About SVA

SVA is a non-for-profit organisation that works with partners to alleviate disadvantage – towards an Australia where all people and communities thrive. SVA's services are designed to scale social impact, helping business, government and philanthropists to be more effective funders and social purpose organisations to be more effective at delivering services. For more information about SVA, please see: www.socialventures.com.au

Professional Disclosure Statement

SVA has prepared this report in good faith on the basis of our research and information available to us at the date of publication ("Information") without any independent verification. SVA does not guarantee the accuracy, completeness or currency of the Information.

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About The Funding Network Australia

Overview

Since 2013, TFN has been bringing people together to find, fund and support grassroots social change programs that directly help people in need. Through its interactive live crowdfunding events, TFN connects grassroots non-profits to people and organisations interested in investing their money, time and talent to drive social change. TFN works to increase the ability of the non-profit sector to deliver life-changing services while spreading the joy of giving and deepening community engagement. It does this through TFN Live, its flagship live crowdfunding events for grassroots charities, and TFN Learn, its workshops and white label crowdfunding events for the broader philanthropic and non-profit sector. TFN Australia is part of a global network that includes affiliates in 20 countries around the world. The Funding Network was founded in the UK in 2002 and introduced in Australia in 2013 by Lisa Cotton and the late Steve Lawrence AO. To date, the global network has raised over \$27 million for 2,000 non-profits.

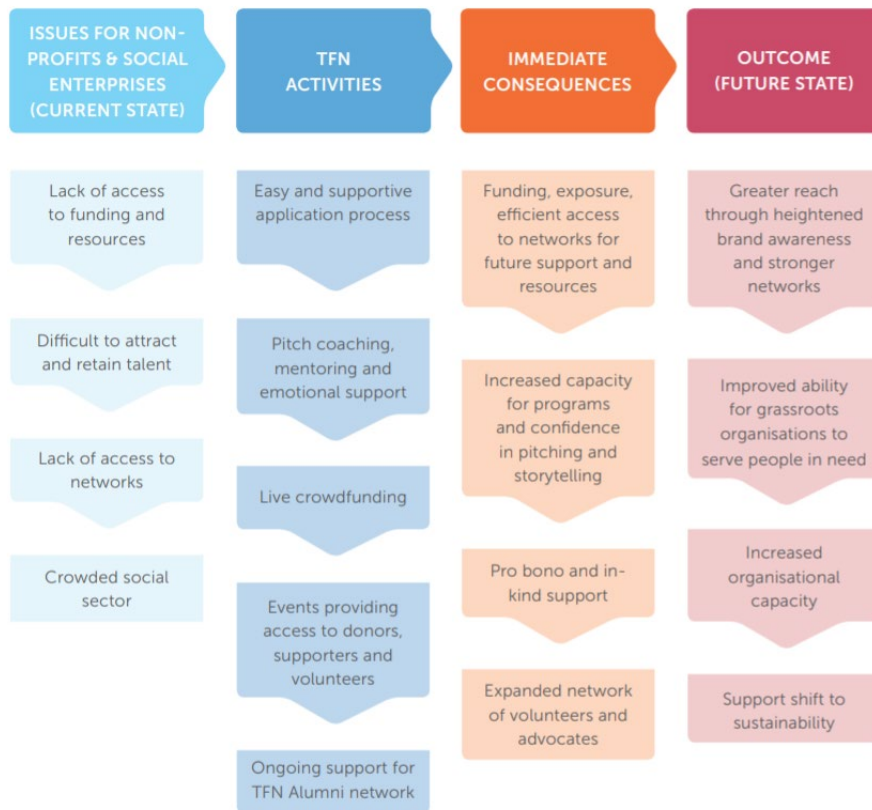
At TFN events, presenters share their stories and invite audience members to donate to their organisations. Anyone can attend and pledges start at \$100. Following the pitch, audience members choose to donate to one or more of the non-profits and in some cases also commit to providing further in-kind or pro bono support. The funding target for each event varies depending on the amount of matched funding secured prior to the event, the location of the event, and how well established TFN is in that market. The goal for each presenting organisation is typically \$15,000; the average raised per organisation between 2017 and 2020 was \$35,000. In addition to the fundraising event, non-profits also receive support from TFN including pitch coaching, marketing and promotion and access to a network of supporters. After the event, as a valued member of the TFN alumni community, non-profits get access to additional capacity building opportunities and pro bono support.

About TFN's approach

TFN seeks to respond to common barriers faced by grassroots organisations, utilising the power of storytelling to create connections between non-profits and potential supporters. TFN's interactive live crowdfunding events as well as workshops and white label crowdfunding events for the broader philanthropic sector and non-profit sector, connect grassroots non-profits to people and organisations interested in investing their money, time and talent to drive social change. This supports non-profits to increase their ability to deliver life-changing services while also spreading the joy of giving and deepening community engagement.

TFN's model is based on a Theory of Change, which outlines an understanding of the key issues faced by both non-profits and donors wanting to engage in meaningful philanthropy, the activities TFN undertakes in response and the consequences that can be expected. Below is an extract of TFN's Theory of Change for the non-profits and social enterprises with which it partners.

Figure 2 – TFN's Theory of Change for non-profits

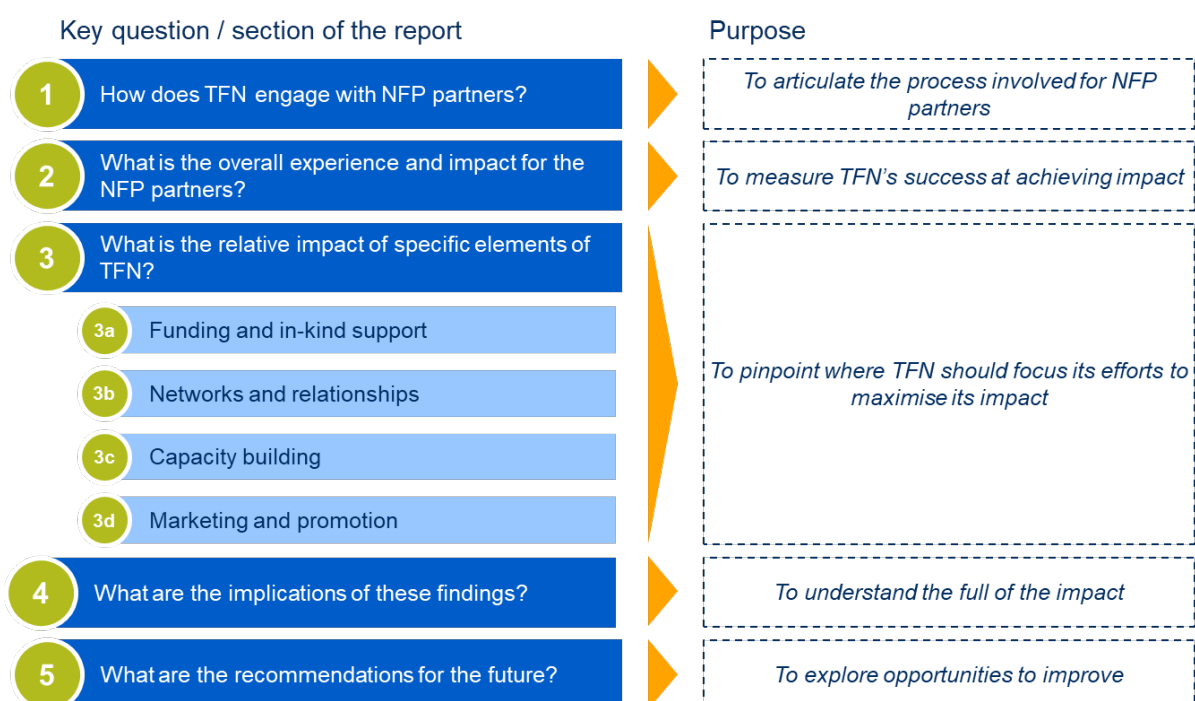


Purpose and design of the evaluation

Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the impact TFN has on its non-profit alumni over time. It aims to answer five key questions to provide a deeper understanding of the multi-dimensional effect of TFN's approach³. These were the same questions posed by the 2017 evaluation, with this report providing an update on the findings and changes over time. Insights generated through this research will help TFN to understand where it should focus efforts across the next phase of its journey.

Figure 3 – Questions answered by this project



While the above formed the core focus of the evaluation, additional questions were asked of survey respondents and interviewees to understand the more recent impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had for their organisations and to explore emerging insights about TFN's own adaptations to COVID restrictions (including three events held in 2020 – one event in early March prior to COVID restrictions and two virtual online events).

Design

TFN commissioned SVA Consulting to undertake an independent evaluation of its impact on its non-profit alumni. SVA Consulting worked with TFN to design and conduct the evaluation and produce this report, building on the 2017 evaluation.

The evaluation was designed to test and explore TFN's Theory of Change⁴ for non-profits. This was done through three key methods:

- **Survey** – A survey was issued to 69 non-profit alumni who had participated in TFN events since 2017. A longer form survey was sent to 60 TFN non-profit alumni who presented between 2017 and 2020, with a 55% response rate, and a shorter form survey for more recent non-profit alumni was sent to nine

³ See Figure 3.

⁴ See Theory of Change, Figure 2.

organisations, with a 77% response rate. In total, 40 responses were received, which is a 58% total response rate. The survey included a mix of both structured and open-text questions.

- **Exploratory interviews** – A total of 14 interviews were conducted with a diverse sample of non-profit alumni. These were selected to provide a mixture of organisation size, focus areas, location and year in which they presented at a TFN event. The interviews were semi-structured. There were some set topics within an open format, designed to allow for deep exploration of emerging insights. The first two interviews were conducted together by SVA and a TFN staff member. The remainder were conducted by the TFN staff member, with extensive notes based on recordings provided to SVA. Note the interview participants were also asked to complete the survey - interview results should be interpreted as shedding further light on the insights provided by the survey, rather than insights from a new group of respondents.
- **TFN operational data** – TFN collects data on the donations received and other details of each event as well as financial and in-kind supports provided after the events (known as leveraged impact). This was reviewed and incorporated in the evaluation.

Survey and interview questions were designed to provide an understanding of the overall experience and impact for non-profit alumni as well as the relative value of specific elements including funding, in-kind support, networks and relationship building, pitch coaching and marketing and promotions. Survey and interview questions were largely the same as those asked in 2017, however some were posed in a slightly different way in order to provide more clarity and accommodate changes in the survey platform. As mentioned above, additional questions were also added to gather emerging insights related to the impacts of COVID-19 for non-profit alumni. Open ended questions were included to uncover any unexpected insights from respondents. A strong dataset was obtained which covered over half of non-profit alumni between 2017 and 2020.

Limitations

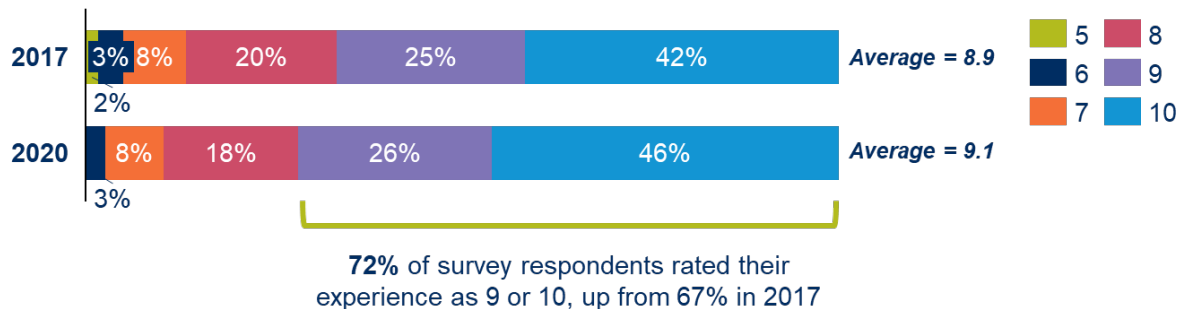
This evaluation has four key limitations:

- Limited to non-profit alumni: TFN sets out to generate impact for non-profit alumni, businesses, donors and the broader community, however this evaluation only explores the impact for non-profit organisations who have participated in TFN flagship events. It does not include the impact for other stakeholders or people involved in TFN's fee-for-service offerings.
- Limited independence in interview data: TFN staff were involved in or conducted all interviews. In some cases, this could potentially limit the respondent's willingness to provide honest and open feedback on the program, however this was mitigated by also asking interviewees to complete the anonymous survey.
- Limited to direct impact of TFN events and follow-up support: The research does not assess the impact that TFN's non-profit alumni have had in their respective communities in terms of outcomes they achieved or return on investment.
- Limited to the reflections of one person: The survey was only completed by one member of each organisation. In some cases, there was a change in staff or other reasons that the person completing the survey was not the person who pitched at the TFN event. The survey did not explicitly ask the respondent about this. Some results may be affected because of this, however this is not expected to have a significant impact on the overall findings.
- COVID-19 pandemic program changes: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions, TFN had to pivot its live crowdfunding events to online events. A few survey and interview participants only experienced the virtual format; 2-3 respondents applied to pitch at an in-person event that was changed to a virtual format due to COVID restrictions. This may have affected their experience and feedback.

Overall experience

Overall, the non-profit alumni felt the TFN experience had been beneficial, enjoyable and impactful for their organisations. The results in Figure 4 show an average rating of the overall positivity of the experience being 9.1 out of 10 which is similar to the average rating from the 2017 evaluation. Over two-thirds of respondents rated their experience a 9 or 10 out of 10, indicating a very positive experience.

Figure 4 – Survey results: How would you rate your overall experience of presenting at the TFN event?



Survey and interview participants felt the format of TFN's program, both the event and supports provided, contributed to their overall positive experience. Some participants used words such as 'life changing' and 'the experience of a lifetime' when describing their involvement with TFN, emphasizing the positive impact of the overall experience.

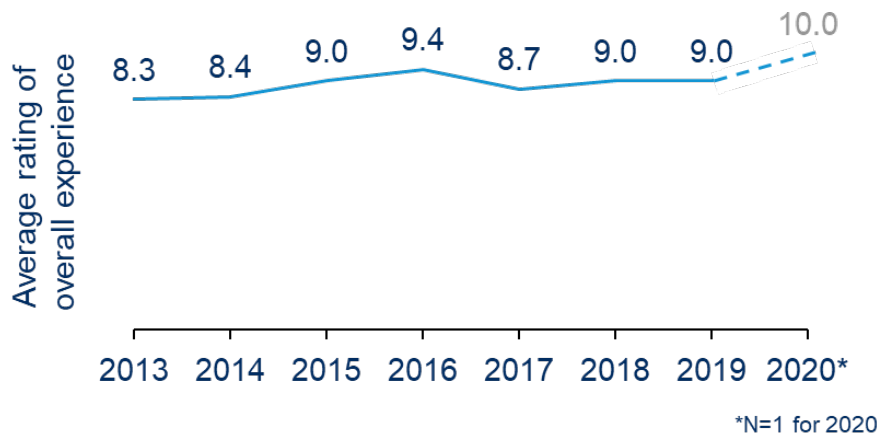
"This was a very well organised and executed event. I was made to feel empowered and valued. The outcome of the event and the amount of money that was raised on the night is life changing for the not-for-profit sector."
Survey Respondent 2020

"TFN is an experience of a lifetime. If you get the chance to be a part of an event, buckle up and enjoy the ride of a lifetime!" Survey Respondent 2020

"It was a great experience... From start to finish, everything was really well organised and well communicated. It has meant a huge step up for us." Interview Participant 2020

Reflections on the overall experience have remained positive over time. As seen in Figure 5, there has been a small increase in the average experience rating over the past few years, noting only one result was received from a 2020 participant, which was a '10'. While the data shows a positive upward trend, it is not possible to assess whether the results are affected by the relatively small sample size and/or recency bias, or whether the experience has markedly improved for participants. Some results may also be impacted by a change in leadership or staff resulting in those taking the survey not being the individuals who participated in the TFN program. Despite these uncertainties, the results indicate that TFN has provided a consistently positive experience with no significant drops in any of the years since the program was established.

Figure 5 - Survey results: Change in average ratings of the overall experience over time⁵



Impressions of TFN

Respondents reflected that the support they received and the relationships they built with TFN were significant contributors to the overall success of the program. Non-profits valued the opportunity to work with TFN, with the average rating of their experiences being 9 out of 10 in 2019 as seen in Figure 6, which is similar to the average of 8.6 in 2017.

Survey respondents commented on the professionalism and organisation of TFN's processes as well their enjoyment in working with the TFN team. Both these elements seem to have contributed to the overall positive experience for participants.

"Being involved with TFN was seamless and lots of fun, with an amazing result." Survey Respondent 2020

"TFN do not just provide a path to raise funds they also provide ongoing development and support of your charity via the TFN Non-profit Alumni Program that offers access to their partner network.[We] cannot speak highly enough of the great work by TFN and how exciting it was to be involved with their event."

Survey Respondent 2020

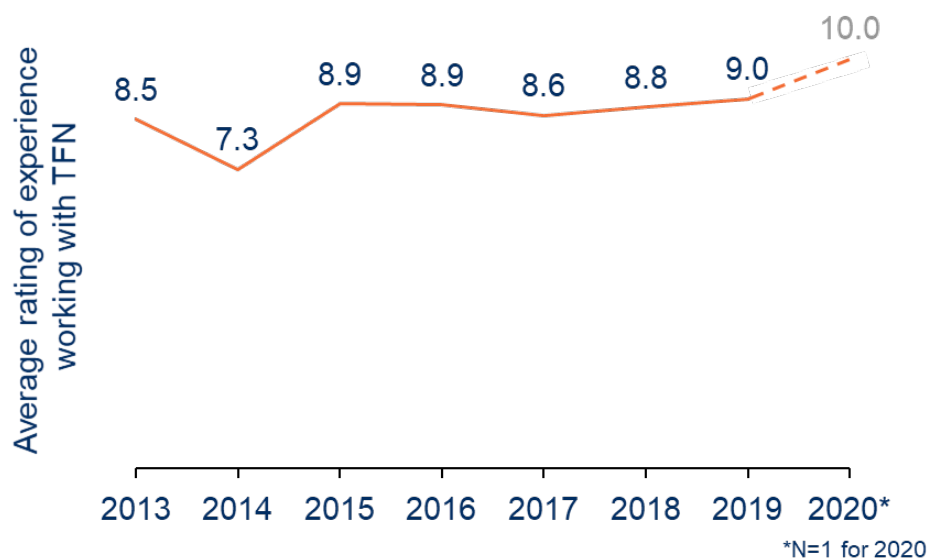
"The overall experience, the training, meeting local connections etc was great, but what was amazing was that even though it was a short working timeframe I felt a very close connection was developed, a high level of support, a very safe space. [It] feels like the team is wrapping its arms around you. Not just the one-to-one training. It was the whole package. Culminating in a great event night. A team of professionals that gave me confidence." Interview Participant 2020

Survey results of participants rating their experience of working with TFN has trended upwards over time (noting the small sample size in 2020). This reflects the sentiments of both survey respondents and interview participants with the majority providing positive comments about TFN.

Those that rated their experience in working with TFN as a 6 or 7 out of 10 provided comments to the effect that they were unsuccessful in securing longer-term donors or sponsors. While this is not directly related to the experience of working with TFN, it speaks to an expectation of success as seen by the participating organisations which could be contributing to their rating of TFN.

⁵ Note: Organisations that presented or pitched at events more than once are not included.

Figure 6 - Survey results: Change in average ratings of working with TFN over time⁶



What was the overall impact of TFN on non-profit alumni?

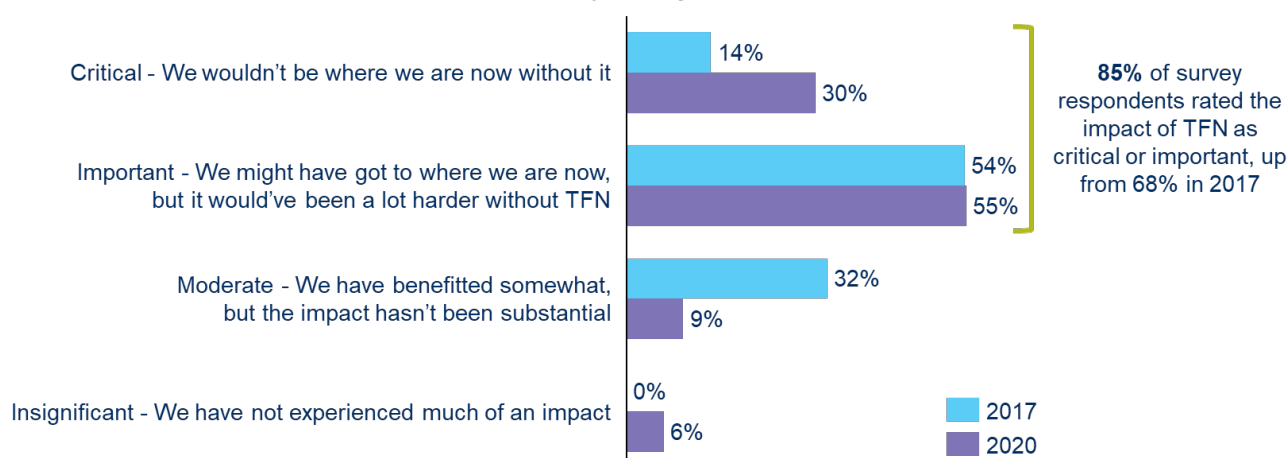
Overall impact

The majority of survey respondents (85%) felt the impact of their affiliation with TFN was either critical or important to their organisation, up from 68% in 2017. While respondents had varying experiences of how TFN impacted their organisations, all respondents felt the experience had benefit.

For some TFN non-profit alumni, the experience was viewed as critical to their organisation (30%), which was a higher proportion of participants than in 2017 (14%), as seen in Figure 7. For these organisations, a mixture of funds at a time when they were needed, development of new skills, meeting different organisations and exposure to a network of philanthropists all contributed to the overall impact on their organisations.

A very small number thought the overall impact was insignificant (6% or 2 non-profits) but still felt they had benefited in some way. They did not specify as to why the overall impact was insignificant.

Figure 7 - Survey results: Overall, how much of an impact has your involvement with TFN had on your organisation?⁷



⁶ Note: Organisations that presented or pitched at events more than once are not included.

⁷ 2020 results are from longer-form survey only.

Why did TFN have a ‘critical’ impact on some organisations?

Almost a third of survey respondents (30% or 10 respondents)⁸ felt the overall impact of their involvement with TFN was critical to their organisation, an increase from 14% of respondents in 2017. These organisations mentioned that as a result of their experience with TFN, their organisations were able to expand their reach to new locations, grow their activities or increase their financial sustainability.

“Without TFN funding our service would’ve closed. The funding gave us new life and the chance to grow, which we certainly have.” Survey Respondent 2020

“The money received from the event resulted in [our organisation] reducing the costs of providing our services, resulting in more places being available to young people.” Survey Respondent 2020

The non-profit alumni who found the impact of TFN ‘critical’ to their organisations typically found the fundraising element and capacity building supports (including pitch coaching) to be the biggest contributors to this impact. All of these organisations reported that the financial donations received from the program were extremely valuable. The majority also met people through the TFN event that became supporters or donors of their organisations and found these relationships to be very or extremely valuable. There also seems to be lasting change for these non-profits, who have continued to use the skills they developed through the TFN program to support their organisations.

“The experience with TFN was priceless. Not just for the organisation as a whole and the funding that came from the event but also the personal development through the pitch coaching. I’ve used the knowledge from the pitch practice continuously when presenting the organisation to funders, donors and at forums. It’s helped me be more confident in communicating our message to the public.” Survey Respondent 2020

“Without the funding we received, our organisation would not have been able to run so smoothly and more volunteers would have been needed to accomplish our daily needs... The confidence from the whole experience I have gained is priceless. Without this, I would not be able to speak so confidently to groups and other organisations to help spread awareness and gain more funding.” Survey Respondent 2020

The majority of these organisations (70%) also felt the in-kind donations they received were extremely or very valuable and the majority (60%) accessed other offerings of the TFN Non-profit Alumni Program, such as Kilfinan Australia mentoring, pro bono legal or accounting advice and TFN workshops. This highlights that the combination of funding and other capacity building aspects of the TFN program contributes to the ‘critical’ impact for some organisations.

For whom was the impact ‘critical’?

The majority of those who described the overall impact as critical presented at a TFN event in 2018 (5 respondents) or 2019 (4 respondents), and one in 2017. As seen in Figure 8, these organisations varied in size – this differs from 2017 in which most of those organisations who found the impact to be ‘critical’ were early-stage organisations (less than \$100,000 annual revenue)⁹. These results suggest that TFN continues to play a very important role with small emerging non-profits but can also create substantial impact for medium and larger-sized organisations as well.

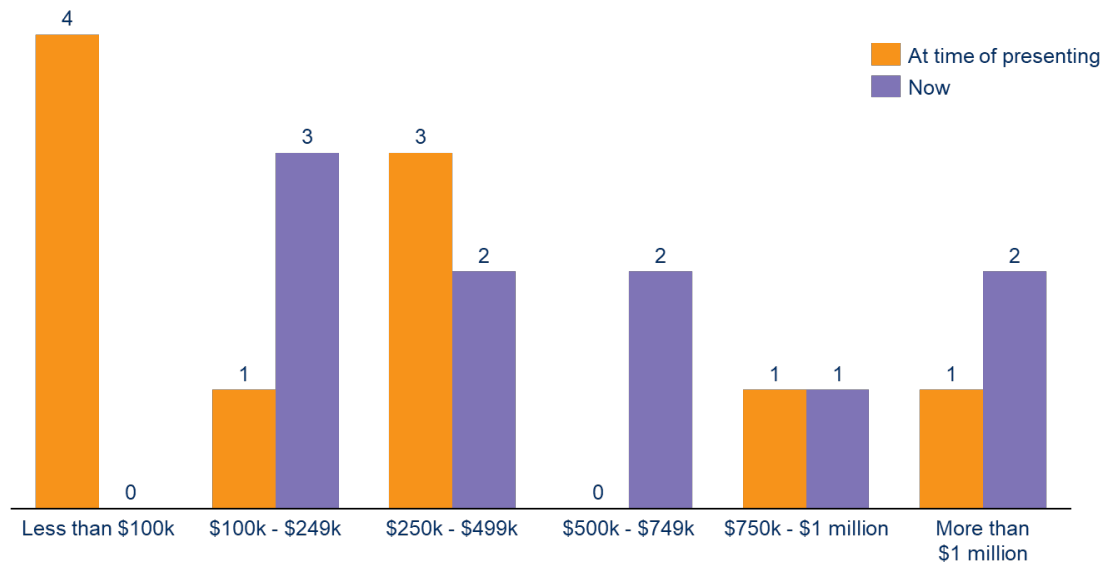
“The entire TFN experience has been the most valuable lesson in my 19 years in the NFP sector. To gain the confidence in not only my own ability to tell the story of our organisation but to be confident that as an organisation we have much to be proud of and there is genuine desire in community to see us do well. It helped me to stand back and look at our offerings through a different lens and understand the value that our community and key stakeholders see. It helped me turn the table in negotiations. I no longer go into a meeting “cap in hand” when seeking support, I go in armed to tell them why they need us and [why they] would be foolish to miss out on such an opportunity.” Survey Respondent 2020

⁸ Overall impact was only asked in the longer form survey (n=33).

⁹ See Figure 1 in Appendices.

TFN continues to be a catalyst for growth in many organisations – as can be seen below, 80% of this group of organisations experienced revenue growth by the time they took the survey, with the majority of growth being between \$250,000 and \$500,000 annual revenue growth.

Figure 8 – Survey results: Size of organisations that described TFN's impact as 'critical'



Where was the TFN experience less significant?

A small number of non-profit alumni felt the overall impact of their experience with TFN was insignificant (6% or 2 survey respondents) and some felt it only had a moderate impact (9% or 3 survey respondents). Those that felt the impact was insignificant didn't comment as to why. However, from other findings on these organisations, one non-profit didn't make any lasting network connections as a result of the event¹⁰, although did find the financial donations very valuable. The other did make connections with supporters but only received a small amount of funding as a result of the event.

Those that felt the impact was moderate found the funding received at the event to be the most beneficial aspect of working with TFN, and they each met people who introduced them to their networks or became supporters of their organisations. Two-thirds did not receive in-kind support and only one accessed additional offerings from the TFN Non-profit Alumni Program. There is no strong link between size and age of the organisations and their rating of insignificant or moderate impact.

For at least one respondent, a changeover in staff resulted in a moderate impact rating, as donors did not translate into longer-term supporters due to a loss of direct connection. For another, the fact that TFN was entering into a new market meant that there were less established networks of donors – something that could potentially improve over time as TFN hosts more events in this city.

"The funding we received allowed us to do what we said we would. But we weren't able to leverage the opportunity and transfer those donors into long term supporters because of the changeover of staff."

Survey Respondent 2020

"It is difficult to measure the overall impact of our affiliation with TFN. Certainly being a first for [our city] was important, and being in the room with [our city's] perhaps most well recognised philanthropists was impactful. I suspect that more events in [our city] (or online for a [local] audience) will broaden the reach of the network, and amplify the impact, stories and recognition... Once it has critical mass it will be incredibly valuable to local purpose driven organisations." Survey Respondent 2020

¹⁰ Note: TFN asks people who pledged at an event if they would like to be connected with non-profits after each event.

The survey and interview results suggest that non-profit alumni have high expectations of being successful in both obtaining significant funding at the event and a network of ongoing donors or supporters – both of these contribute to their reflections of the overall impact. While the above organisations still reflected on benefits from their experience, when comparing themselves to other TFN non-profit alumni they felt the impact was not as substantial for their organisations.

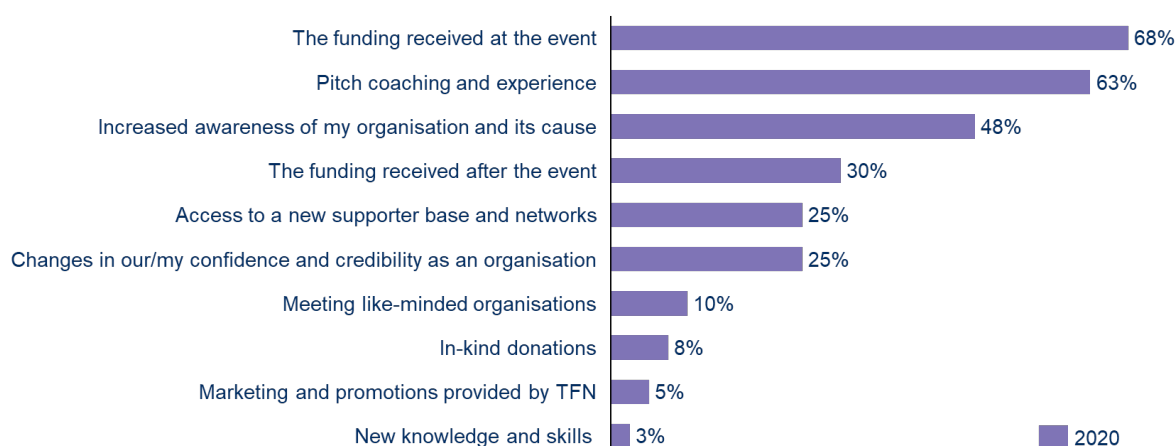
How did individual elements of TFN contribute to the overall impact?

Overview

Which elements were most beneficial?

Survey respondents were asked to select the top three most valuable elements of their TFN experience, in the aim of understanding which elements have the strongest contribution to overall impact. As seen in Figure 9, the results show the funding received at the event was the most commonly selected element, followed by pitch coaching, and increased awareness of organisations. The 2017 report asked participants to rank the relative value of the different elements¹¹, and similarly found the funds received as the clearly favoured activity with 70% of respondents ranking it as the number one element of the program. The most significant difference between the two data sets was that the 2017 evaluation found access to a network and supports as the second most valuable element of the program – in 2020 this was less frequently ranked among the top three.

Figure 9 – Survey results: What were the most beneficial aspects of working with TFN and participating in the TFN event? (Please tick the top 3)



Interview participants were again asked their top three most valuable elements of the TFN experience. They were not prompted with a list of activities during the interview and could include any aspect of the experience, hence the different categories in Figures 9 and 10. (However, as noted above, most interview participants also completed a survey, so may have been influenced by the options the survey presented). As seen in Figure 10, while key themes were consistent with survey responses, during the interviews respondents tended to emphasise the value of the connections and relationships as the most valuable aspect of the program, followed by capacity building elements including pitch coaching.

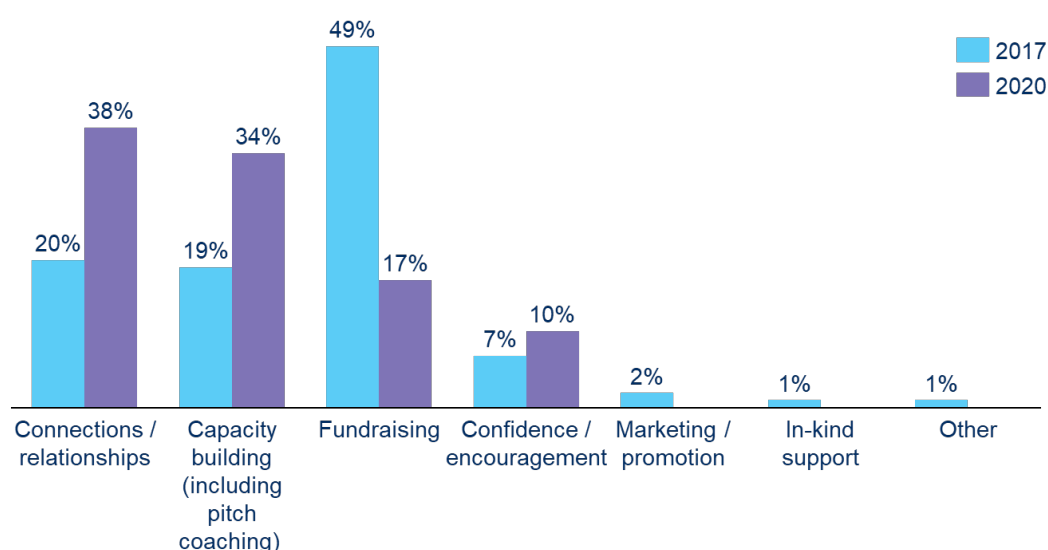
Interestingly, when asked about the relative value of the different elements, interview participants tended to regard the value of the non-monetary elements as being above the actual fundraising – more so than in the 2017 evaluation (in which respondents found fundraising to be responsible for about half the value of the overall experience). There could be a number of reasons for this shift in responses, and caution should be exercised in reading too far into the results (noting a relatively small sample size) but overall this is consistent with other

¹¹ See Figure 2 in Appendices.

interview comments suggesting that the wrap-around supports for organisations are considered as important if not more important than the financial gains to some participants.

“The funding was absolutely great. But the other things were actually more important. [It] allows us to give enhancements for families that is so important beyond the bare minimum. It is the difference between patching people up and strengthening them, empowering them. For a significant number of people - entire families. [It] could be the difference for future life outcomes. When you can do that 20-50 times over, that's community impact.” Interview Participant 2020

Figure 10 - Interview findings: Most valuable TFN elements (as assigned by interview respondents)



Value of fundraising

It could be expected that the *relative* value of fundraising would vary for organisations in different circumstances – for some, lack of funds may have been the most significant issue facing their organisation, while for others, gaps in skills or other elements may have been more pressing. Regardless of the relative emphasis they placed on fundraising, almost all respondents found this element to be of considerable value.

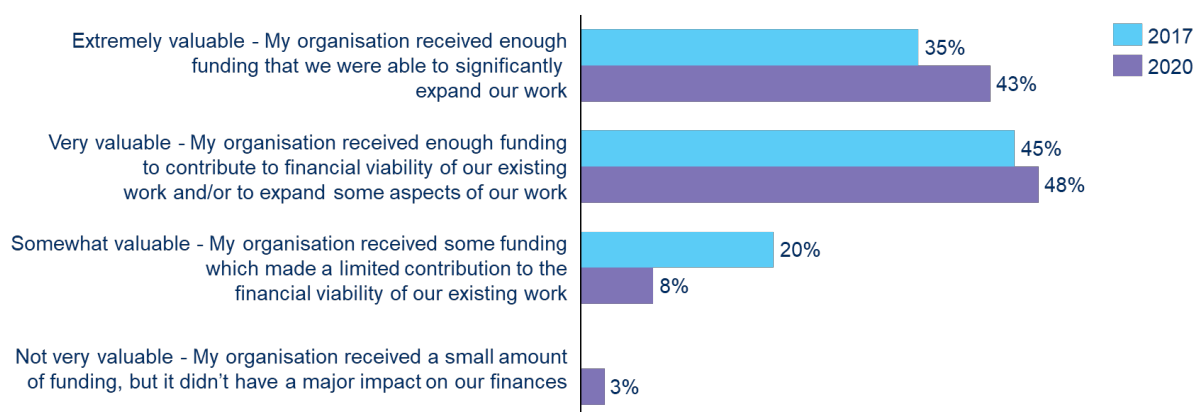
When survey respondents were asked to reflect on the value of funding to their organisation, 90% found financial contributions extremely valuable or very valuable, similar to the 2017 findings (80%) as seen in Figure 11. This was also supported by comments made in both survey responses and interviews where participants described the funding element as a ‘springboard’ or ‘catalyst for growth’.

Funding helped to unlock other benefits for organisations. It was described as a key enabler for growth, allowing organisations to focus on developing their operations, rather than focusing on fundraising. The fundraising experience through the TFN event also contributed to some organisations securing additional funding opportunities beyond the event, as organisations had increased confidence to actively seek further funding or felt their credibility increased as a result of securing philanthropic donations.

“The funding was specifically to broaden our reach to a new area and we've maintained that. We got further funding for the coordination role and TFN funding probably leveraged that additional funding. It gave us a bit of certainty to seek additional funding.” Interview Participant 2020

“The events themselves are still significant because they funded a pilot that we were able to build off and really enhanced our credibility and story as an organisation.” Interview Participant 2020

Figure 11 - Survey results: How valuable were the financial donations received as a result of the event (either at the event or through connections made at the event)?



The majority of survey respondents (68%) included the funding received at the event in their top three most beneficial elements of the TFN experience. Furthermore, 30% of respondents included funding after the event in their top three most beneficial elements, suggesting that for many organisations, fundraising *after* the event may be as valuable or even more valuable than on the night of the event. To date, TFN has identified that non-profit alumni have benefited from nearly \$4 million in leveraged support. This covers additional funding, pro bono professional services support and also in-kind support.

From these results it is evident that funding provided as a result of the TFN program is contributing to improving the ability of non-profits to have greater reach and serve more people in need, consistent with the intended outcomes described in the Theory of Change¹².

Value of relationships

Connections and relationships were emphasised as the most important element during interview conversations and were frequently named as one of the top three most valuable elements in the survey responses (as seen in Figures 9 and 10). When survey respondents were prompted to rate the value of the relationships and networks they developed as a result of the TFN experience, 68% rated it as an extremely valuable or very valuable element, up from 53% in 2017, as seen in Figure 12.

Survey results showed the majority of relationships and networks gained through the TFN program were supporters who gave in other ways than monetary donations (68%), followed by people who helped spread an organisation's message (65%) and people who have introduced organisations to their networks (60%). Almost half of survey respondents (45%) met people who became donors to their organisations and the vast majority (83%) met multiple types of supporters through their TFN experience. These findings demonstrate that the TFN program is providing non-profits with efficient access to networks for future supports and resources and contributing to the development of stronger network relationships consistent with TFN's Theory of Change¹³.

¹² See Theory of Change, Figure 2.

¹³ See Theory of Change, Figure 2.

"Increasing our networks and opportunities to engage a wider audience is important to us. TFN provided a platform to reach our goals which would otherwise be challenging to achieve." Survey Respondent 2020

"We formed a relationship with an individual who has provided funding through their Foundation, who has offered ongoing mentoring and who has facilitated introductions to a range of other individuals and organisations to support our development. They also provided us with a responsive grant to initiate a new relief program for our beneficiaries who have been affected by COVID-19." Survey Respondent 2020

"The icing on the cake is the networking. You are exposed to many new people that you wouldn't have the opportunity to meet normally. At the event, you can walk up to anybody and have a chat."
Interview Participant 2020

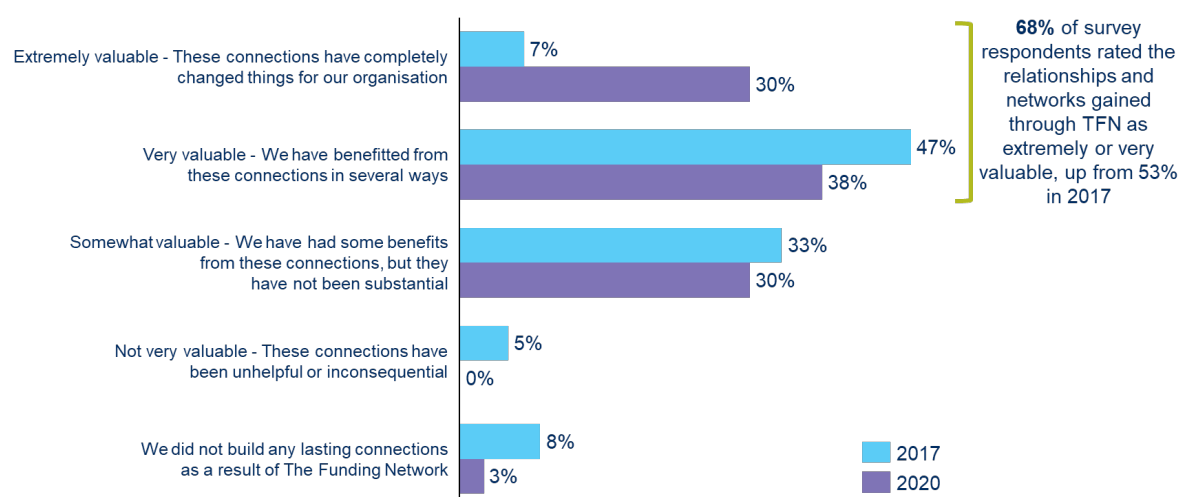
The interview comments support these findings, with the majority mentioning the importance of the network they have developed as a result of their TFN experience. Many interview participants also mentioned the value of being a part of the TFN non-profit alumni group.

"The continual connection with TFN is great - being an alumni gives us standing." Interview Participant 2020

Some organisations struggled to maintain connections with supporters after the TFN event, which contributed to their overall rating of the relationships and network aspect of their experience. It should be noted that TFN provides donors with an option of whether or not to be connected with non-profits after each event, meaning those ongoing connections are driven by the donors themselves.

"A donor in the room approached us about collaborating on a project together. It did not transpire in the end, but we learnt a lot about each other's goals and missions and enjoyed getting to know each other."
Survey Respondent 2020

Figure 12 – Survey results: How valuable were the relationships and networks you gained through The Funding Network?



Value of capacity building

Capacity building supports (including pitch coaching) were very frequently mentioned among the topmost valued elements (as seen in Figures 9 and 10). Pitch coaching continued to be seen as a highly impactful aspect of the TFN experience for a very large proportion of non-profit alumni, consistent with the findings of the 2017 evaluation. As seen in the 2017 results, survey results show a notable shift in the confidence of non-profit alumni,

prior and post the pitch coaching, as seen in Figure 13. Equally, the comments provided through the survey responses and interviews highlight the benefits of pitch coaching which included increasing confidence and improving storytelling skills.

"[Pitch coaching] increased our self-confidence and this translated into people's confidence in us."
Survey Respondent 2020

The delivery of the pitch coaching was mentioned by numerous survey and interview respondents as a key element to its overall success. In particular, the structure and one-to-one supports provided to participants were considered highly beneficial.

"Structured and easy to follow, pitch training at its very best! Providing impact through the art of storytelling is what this coaching provided." Survey Respondent 2020

"Ease of explanations from the TFN pitch coach gave me added confidence to communicate exactly what we needed and how it would be used. The donors, therefore, felt happy to support us, [and] give with trust that they understood what we would do with their funds." Survey Respondent 2020

Some non-profit alumni found the pitch coaching especially valuable, calling it a 'game-changer'. Comments from both survey and interview results found that pitch coaching was particularly helpful to organisations or individuals who had little previous experience in pitching, particularly smaller organisations.

"[Pitch coaching] allowed us to tell our story in a dignified respectful manner. [It] gave us a more professional face. It showed to local partners and community that we actually do sophisticated work." Survey Respondent 2020

"The pitch coaching we received is still being used today! Before TFN there was no way I'd pitch to anyone, recently I pitched in front of 950 people. The pitch coaching is an absolute game changer!" Survey Respondent 2020

These findings validate that the majority of non-profit alumni have experienced an increase in belief in their programs and confidence in pitching and storytelling as a result of participating in the TFN program, as intended in the Theory of Change¹⁴.

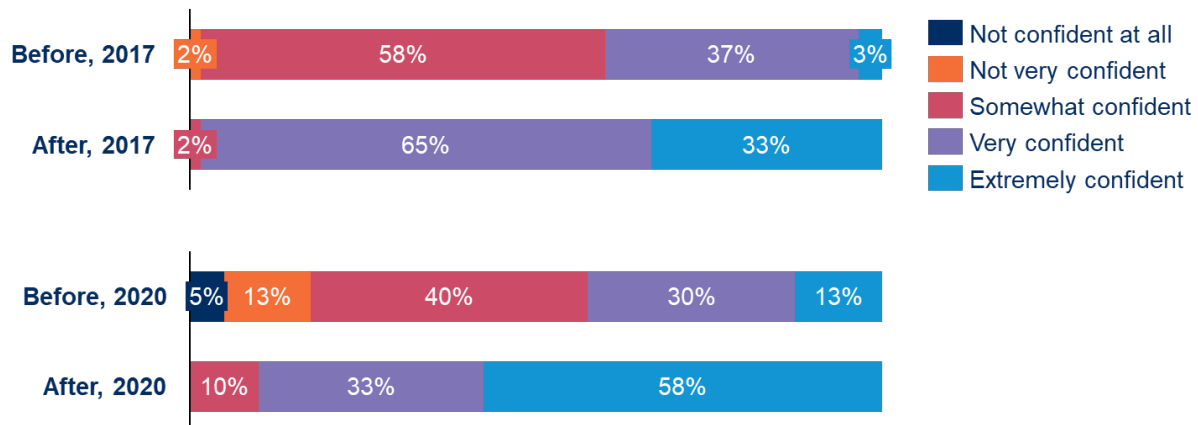
On the other hand, some respondents (5% or 2 non-profit alumni) didn't get as much out of the pitch coaching. Comments provided by these participants reflect the reason for this largely being due to their previous experience in pitching.

"Already had it under our belt but it was a useful refresher." Survey Respondent 2020

"I didn't love the pitch coaching - it was one dimensional, a very specific way to pitch and that was not my natural approach. I already had done a lot of pitching including multiple TED Talks. Specifically, if the coaching could have been more tailored rather than a one size fits all approach. Understanding people's strengths and working on that." Interview Participant 2020

¹⁴ See Theory of Change, Figure 2.

Figure 13 – Survey results: How confident were you in ‘pitching’ your idea / your organisation before and after the pitch coaching and support from TFN?



Value of marketing and promotions

The majority of survey participants found the marketing and promotions through TFN somewhat valuable or very valuable, as seen in Figure 14. The impact appeared to vary between different organisations. Many respondents continued to find it challenging to identify specific outcomes related to marketing or promotions from TFN.

Figure 14 – Survey results: How valuable have the marketing and promotions provided by TFN been for your organisation



Among those who commented on the value of marketing and promotions, a number mentioned the value they have gained through their pitch video, which they have been able to re-use to seek further funding and support.

“Our pitch video is now a great tool for us. Great value in helping me to get people to understand [our organisation]. It has also helped with recruitment.” Interview Participant 2020

“The last pitch video we have used again and again to communicate our work to others...but also to recruit new people to the team. [We have] garnered a lot of ongoing support through the video.” Interview Participant 2020

Some non-profits experienced particularly significant benefits from increased exposure through the ABC TV *Compass* program. This opportunity allowed some non-profit alumni to broaden their audience and open up their networks to a national stage.

Some interview participants felt they couldn't distinguish between TFN marketing impacts and other funders or programs they were involved with.

"TFN [and other funders] funding were all about the same time and [it's] hard to know which contributed to the promotion of us. Hard to know what comes through [other funders] vs TFN." Interview Participant 2020

"An added benefit was the ABC TV Compass program. It has definitely translated to additional support. And more connections... We now direct [funders] to the program when talking to new funders or refer to it in grant applications." Interview Participant 2020

"We were lucky enough to have the event we pitched at be part of the ABC series. The exposure for the organisation has been unbelievable. There has been a lot of connections which increased the organisation's capacity to grow and provide more programs." Survey Respondent 2020

Marketing and promotions have contributed to an increase in exposure for some organisations and led to additional promotion for some non-profit alumni. This increased exposure as a result of the TFN program has resulted in increased brand awareness for many organisations, an intended outcome of TFN's Theory of Change¹⁵.

An increase in credibility seems to be a by-product of working with TFN which has assisted some organisations in obtaining further funding partners or developing new relationships. Consistent with 2017 results, the majority of participants felt their organisation's credibility had increased due to their association with TFN, as seen in Figure 15. This was also supported by survey and interview comments with some participants suggesting that the increase in credibility resulted in additional funding opportunities or new relationships.

"[There is an] element of credibility being associated with TFN and being on the YouTube channel. [It is] awareness raising to develop new relationships." Interview Participant 2020

"We've used the pitch video for our own marketing and social media. [We] use it as an example of how to pitch. The TFN YouTube channel is good - lots on it." Interview Participant 2020

Some interview participants mentioned the increased credibility that has resulted from being part of the TFN non-profit alumni network, which has also supported with funding relationships.

"As soon as we got TFN under our belt, we got [another two funders] - a lot of very high accolades that obviously looked at our linkage with TFN and had credibility." Survey Respondent 2020

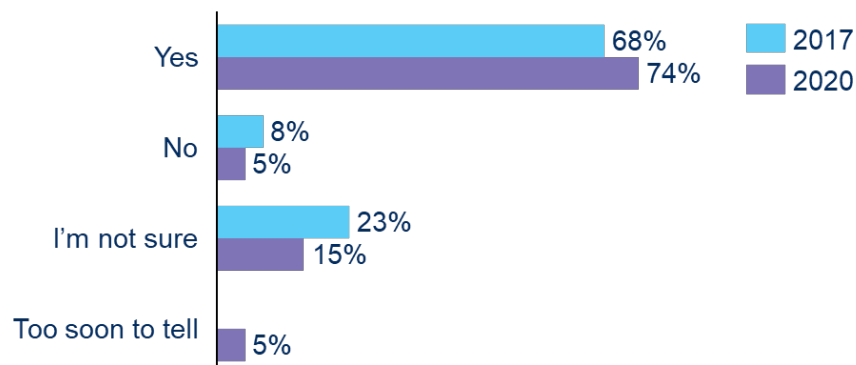
"Being a TFN alumni gives us credibility to other funders." Interview Participant 2020

The increase in credibility experienced by non-profit alumni appears to be supporting increased exposure, increased access to networks and supporting organisations to have an increased belief in their organisations, all desired outcomes of TFN's Theory of Change¹⁶ which are believed to contribute to non-profits having greater reach through heightened brand awareness and stronger networks.

¹⁵ See Theory of Change, Figure 2.

¹⁶ See Theory of Change, Figure 2.

Figure 15 – Survey results: Do you feel that association with TFN has helped to increase your credibility with donors?



Value of in-kind donations

The majority of survey respondents (82%) received in-kind support as a result of the TFN event, which was higher than the 2017 results (65%). Almost half of survey respondents (45%) found the in-kind donations to be either extremely valuable or very valuable, which was also higher than the 2017 results (30%). However, the impact of these donations varied for TFN non-profit alumni, and this element was less frequently mentioned by respondents as being one of the *most* valuable elements of their TFN experience, as shown in Figures 9 and 10.

For those that did receive in-kind supports, the value in receiving these was highly regarded and often translated to tangible impact for the organisation. Comments from both the survey and interviews emphasize that in-kind supports from corporate sponsors seem to have the greatest impact on organisations, potentially because of their larger resources.

"In-kind support has greatly assisted us to gain DGR status." Survey Respondent 2020

"Our relationships with Deloitte has deepened and they worked with us – e.g. to build out our new analytics dashboard. [We received] low bono and pro bono [support]." Interview Participant 2020

"We had one of the corporate sponsors offer to do pro bono bookkeeping for a couple of years which was great." Interview Participant 2020

Figure 16 – Survey results: How valuable were the in-kind donations gained through The Funding Network?



Emerging insights on the impact of COVID-19

Impact of COVID-19 for non-profits

The majority of survey respondents (83%) noted their organisations' revenue had been significantly impacted by COVID-19. While some may have received crisis related boosts in income, comments provided by survey respondents suggest the majority experienced negative impacts. The cancellation of fundraising activities and a loss in fee for service income were the most common drivers of a negative impact on revenue.

"All major fundraising events were cancelled. One major donor of \$120k per annum pulled their funding."
Survey Respondent 2020

"If anything, our revenue has increased slightly due to extra grants and funding to support people during this pandemic." Survey Respondent 2020

Some revenue impacts seem to have been positive for organisations with additional grants supporting them, however others weren't able to secure sufficient funds.

"Revenue from trade has decreased by over 75%, revenue from philanthropy has been reasonably stable but we envision that this will be more difficult to maintain in the coming months." Survey Respondent 2020

"Although we have been successful with a number of grants, we are unable to continue our fundraising events and fee for service offerings that provide income for the organisation." Survey Respondent 2020

It was mentioned by a few survey respondents that the TFN experience and funds raised through virtual events has been an extra support for organisations during COVID-19 which is highly appreciated.

"It's hard to tell at the moment COVID-19 has been so huge and it's swallowed up so much of our resources right now we're struggling and TFN have been a big supporter." Survey Respondent 2020

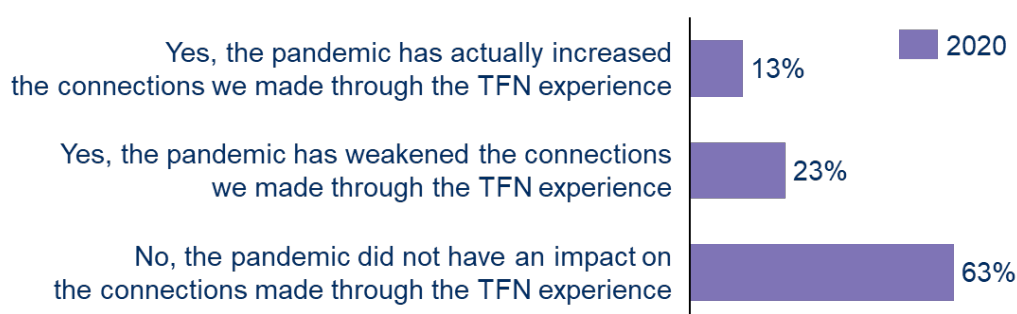
Encouragingly, the majority of survey respondents (63%) felt the pandemic had not impacted the connections they made through the TFN experience, as seen in Figure 17. Some survey respondents (13%) even felt the pandemic has strengthened the connections made. Interview responses shed further light on these experiences, noting some proactive engagement from supporters in asking how they can further contribute, or reinforced their support.

"If anything [our relationships are] more on track - they have reinforced their support to us. [They] contacted us immediately to see how we were going." Interview Participant 2020

However, a sizeable proportion (23%) felt the pandemic had weakened the connections they had made through TFN. Interview responses highlight the reasons for this could be due to a redirection of philanthropic funds or resources.

"A philanthropic foundation was interested but bushfires and COVID19 grants meant the round [was] postponed." Interview Participant 2020

Figure 17 – Survey results: Has your revenue been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?



Emerging insights on virtual TFN events

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, TFN has had to cancel its in-person events and rapidly shift to an online format. At the time of the evaluation, there had been three virtual pitch events. The survey included a small number of participants from these events, but overall insights about their impact and their comparison to in-person events are still emerging. The below points capture the reflections of both TFN staff and some of the initial participants.

Virtual events allow non-profits to reach a broader audience

TFN's entire network (database) are invited to virtual events, not just those located in the event's geographic region, thus broadening the reach of non-profits. As a result, more people can 'attend' virtual events meaning these pitch events become national, and in some cases international. This has the potential to increase the impact for presenting organisations – something TFN will continue to test over time.

Pitch coaching is held over two sessions and presenters participate in a dress rehearsal, increasing the support provided through the process

Pitch coaching is held over two online sessions, one week apart. This gives presenters more time to craft and refine their pitch between sessions and reduces the intensity experienced in the 4.5-hour workshop. In addition, all presenters participate in an online rehearsal before the event, receive feedback from the pitch coach and have the opportunity to watch their recorded pitch, assisting them to adapt and refine in the lead up to the event. This has often resulted in higher quality pitches and may hold lessons for future events, even once in-person sessions are allowed again.

Guests can interact with each other and the presenters in real time at virtual events

The interaction between guests and presenters at a virtual event via the chat feature has been lively and there is an added element of fun with the online format.

Funds raised virtually have been significant

The funds raised at virtual events have been significant, with an average of \$180,000 raised per event. Initial data suggests that the giving rate (percentage of people who donate) has increased while the average amount donated per person has decreased.

Whilst the experience is different, it doesn't seem to hinder the end results

Although it is a different experience for presenters who are pitching to a computer screen rather than to a live audience, the presenters have delivered high-quality pitches that have been successful in raising funds. The COVID-19 pandemic has meant there was no choice but to go virtual – while it has its pros and cons, the experience to date suggests that there may be a merit in considering virtual or hybrid events as part of the TFN offering in the future.

Post-event networking is limited through virtual events

The virtual event format does not provide the opportunity for presenters to mingle with guests in the way they can before and after an in-person event. Many presenters have said how much they enjoy talking to interested guests over a drink after the event, however there is a lot of 'chat' during the event and TFN could explore how, via the chat function, to encourage virtual guests to connect with presenters.

"The virtual event was probably a downer for me rather than if you're in the room with people. Online you don't get evidence / feedback that your pitch resonates until afterwards... Although being able to see the pledging was great. Couldn't have gone better. The goodwill was there with the donors. The crowd was totally behind us!"
Interview Participant 2020

"The event was great - virtual meant I was actually less nervous, it suited me. I'm quite comfortable online rather than in front of a large audience. Some people will find online harder." Interview Participant 2020

What are the implications of the findings?

Impact for end beneficiaries

This evaluation demonstrates that TFN has significant positive outcomes for the non-profit alumni it supports. Qualitative commentary provided through the survey and interviews suggests that this has gone on to have substantial impact for the communities in which these organisations work, however it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to test the impact for end beneficiaries any further.

Since its inception, TFN has focussed on supporting grassroots organisations with strong ties to the local communities in which they work – it believes that these types of organisations are often in the best position to understand and address the systemic forces at the root of community problems. The 2018 ACNC Report¹⁷ shows that 77.3% of non-profits in Australia are grassroots (under \$1 million revenue) and they get just 3% of total sector revenue. Just over 30% of charities operate in regional and rural Australia and their fundraising needs are also significant. The 12-month impact reports collected by TFN provide further insight into the reported outcomes for end-beneficiaries¹⁸.

What's working well for non-profits?

The overall impact is significant for non-profits, especially early-stage grassroots organisations

The majority of non-profit alumni (85%) felt the overall impact of their involvement with TFN had a critical or important impact on their organisations which was an increase from 2017 results (68%). The most impactful experiences were facilitated by a combination of funds, skill development and networking opportunities for organisations. The suite of activities offered through the TFN program is collectively contributing to its impact.

Early-stage organisations are more likely to experience transformational impacts from their experience as a result of the injection of funds and access to other supports.

¹⁷ACNC, *Australian Charities Report 2018*, <https://www.acnc.gov.au/node/5806828>

¹⁸ TFN Alumni Impact Reports, <https://www.rootsofchange.org.au/>

Non-profit alumni reflect positively on their experience with TFN

The experience of the TFN program is overwhelmingly positive for the majority of organisations, with an increasing trend in average ratings of the overall experience and working with TFN over time. The professionalism of TFN, well organised events and activities and the friendly and supportive TFN team are all contributing to this positive experience for non-profit alumni.

Funding remains the key attraction for non-profits and unlocks a range of benefits

The majority of participants rated the financial donations received as a result of working with TFN as either very valuable or extremely valuable to their organisations. The main benefits of funding were described as enabling growth and allowing organisations to develop their operations.

Capacity building and networking opportunities are contributing to the impact on non-profits, beyond the life of the program

Capacity building skills and networking opportunities were highly regarded by non-profit alumni and have contributed to ongoing impact for them, beyond their involvement with TFN. Pitch coaching was particularly impactful in increasing the confidence of TFN non-profit alumni, and the majority of respondents found the coaching very impactful.

Collectively, TFN's activities are contributing to the intended outcomes of the program

As seen in the Theory of Change for non-profits¹⁹, the suite of TFN supports and activities aim to increase funding, exposure, access to networks, an increased belief in programs and confidence in pitching for non-profits. The evaluation demonstrates that these outcomes are indeed occurring. There is also evidence to suggest that this is resulting in the longer term outcomes articulated in the Theory of Change, including greater reach, heightened brand awareness and stronger networks and providing non-profits with the ability to better serve their end-beneficiaries.

Emerging results suggest a role for virtual events as part of the TFN offerings

While there are only a limited number of virtual events from which to draw insights, the initial experiences suggest that virtual events can achieve similar results for non-profits and may even expand their reach to a larger pool of donors. These insights will continue to be tested as TFN runs more of these types of events.

What could be improved?

Some non-profit alumni would benefit from support in maintaining or connecting with supporters after the event

Consistent with the 2017 findings, some non-profits felt they could have benefited from support in reaching out to funders after the TFN event²⁰ or being connected with interested philanthropists who couldn't make the event. There could be potential for a more structured networking process after the TFN event with non-profits being matched with the most interested philanthropists.

Further opportunities for non-profit alumni to further share their progress with supporters

Some non-profit alumni felt it would be beneficial to provide an opportunity to further share their progress with interested philanthropists. There were suggestions of a follow-up event to share progress and provide feedback on their progress reports to donors so they can continue to improve their communication with these donors.

While TFN already shares updates six and 12 months following each event, the comments suggested that this could go even further to include live communication opportunities.

Providing an opportunity for non-profit alumni to pitch outside of their local communities

It was mentioned by some non-profit organisations that they felt it could be beneficial to provide an opportunity to pitch outside of their local communities and potentially on a national scale. With the implementation of virtual

¹⁹ See Theory of Change, Figure 2.

²⁰ Note: TFN provides funders with an option of whether or not to be connected with non-profits after each event, meaning it is up to the funders to decide whether or not to share their contact details.

events, which provides an opportunity for supporters who are not physically in the same location to attend, this is occurring and could be a consideration for TFN moving forward.

Facilitating the TFN non-profit alumni group to connect

Some non-profits felt it would be beneficial to provide an opportunity for the larger TFN non-profit alumni group to meet. This could be a more targeted approach in connecting similar organisations within the non-profit alumni network, or a broader opportunity for non-profit alumni to share their learnings and experiences.

Potential for a hybrid pitch event in the future

There was feedback from some non-profit alumni who presented at a virtual TFN pitch event that they would have preferred a live event. While this was not possible during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was suggested that in the future there could be an opportunity for a hybrid event, with presenters and some supporters at a physical event with others joining online (like a modern take on a telethon). This could also support the opportunity for non-profits to pitch outside of their local communities.

References

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Social Ventures Australia, 2017, 'The Funding Network- Evaluation of impact on non-profit alumni', Dec 2017.

The Funding Network, 2020, 'Capabilities Statement', July 2020.

The Funding Network, 2020, 'Our Impact', accessed at (<https://www.thefundingnetwork.com.au/impact/our-impact/>).

The Funding Network, 2020, 'Roots of Change', accessed at (<https://www.rootsofchange.org.au/>).

Appendices

About the TFN experience for non-profit alumni

Non-profits have multiple touchpoints with TFN during the preparation, execution and follow-up of each TFN event. These include:

1. Application process: Interested organisations complete a short application form and submit it to TFN.
2. Shortlisting: Against set criteria, TFN shortlists applicants with the aim of identifying grassroots non-profits with innovative solutions to social problems that align to potential corporate and philanthropic foundation support and general audience appeal. It also undertakes extensive due diligence on the shortlisted applicants including their financial positions to ensure they are governing and operating in a responsible manner.
3. Selection panel interviews: Shortlisted applicants are invited to an interview with an independent selection panel (usually conducted over the phone or Zoom). Following these interviews, three non-profits are selected to present at the event.
4. Pitch coaching: Selected presenters attend a 5 hour pitch coaching workshop run by one of TFN's professional low-bono contracted coaches. They receive support to craft concise, high impact stories, a powerful narrative and case for support, which they deliver at the TFN event. (Due to COVID-19 restrictions these workshops are now conducted online over two shorter interactive sessions).
5. TFN event: Non-profits attend the TFN event and deliver a six-minute pitch to a room of individuals, businesses and philanthropists curated by TFN. Audience members are invited to ask questions and then choose to donate to one or more of the presenters. They can also register their interest in providing in-kind or pro-bono support and are encouraged to mingle with the presenters afterwards to find out more. (Due to COVID-19 restrictions events since April 2020 have been delivered virtually online via the Crowdcast platform).
6. TFN collects the pledged donations and transfers the funds raised to the non-profits through grant agreements. In agreement with the presenting organisations, TFN retains 10% of funds raised to support its operations. Non-profits receive the funding about 6 weeks after the event along with a list of potential supporters who have agreed to have their details given to the non-profits.
7. Alumni reporting and follow-up: Following the pitch event, non-profit partners join the TFN Non-profit Alumni Program, which provides additional opportunities for them to access pro bono support, mentorship and training, which is ongoing. TFN tracks non-profit alumni impact following the event and asks for updates on any additional financial or in-kind support received as a result of TFN connections. TFN contacts alumni at the 6-month mark to request a short video update which is sent to supporters. At the end of the 12-month period, non-profit alumni are asked to acquit funds by submitting a more detailed report outlining the impact they have achieved in their communities as a result of the funding provided through TFN. This report and the video of their pitch at the event can be found on TFN's Roots of Change website (<https://www.rootsofchange.org.au/>).

Interview Respondents

Organisation	Presenter Name
Emerge Women's and Children's Support	Paula Westhead
Feel the Magic	James Thomas
First Step	Patrick Lawrence
Forever Projects	Mark Dombkins
GG's Flowers	<u>Nipuni (Nip) Wijewickrema</u>
Happy Paws Happy Hearts	Zoe Black
Library for All	Rebecca McDonald
Lively	Anna Donaldson
Mama Lana's Community Foundation	Lana Borg
Ocean Mind	Rachael Parker
Pink Elephants	Sam Payne
The Farm in Galong	Kate Cleary
Upper Murray Family Care	Steve Thompson
Women and Mentoring	Tricia Ciampa

Interview Guide

Pre-Interview

Background to the evaluation:

Hi, thanks for making the time to chat to us about your experience with TFN.

How are you going in this new CV-19 world?

It has been a difficult start to 2020 for everyone. Fortunately, TFN has been able to pivot to virtual events and in June TFN celebrated its 100th event, so we/they are taking the opportunity to evaluate the impact of TFN for the non-profit partners that have presented at events in the past 3.5 years.

In 2017, TFN worked with [Social Ventures Australia \(SVA\)](#) to undertake our first comprehensive Impact Evaluation to understand the real impact we were having on our non-profit partners beyond the event itself. The results were very encouraging.

TFN is working with Social Ventures Australia to undertake this second round of research and evaluation and we will produce an impact evaluation report later in the year which outlines the findings.

Who am I / are we?

SVA is a non-profit organisation that provides funding, investment and advice for social purpose organisations. SVA was engaged to work with TFN to do this evaluation. Hanna is on the project team and will be writing the report. Carolyn has been with TFN in Victoria since the beginning of 2018 and is currently Acting Non-Profit Partnerships Manager whilst Tom Trout is having some extended leave. Carolyn has more than 10 years of experience in the philanthropic sector and has worked closely with many non-profits so she understands many of your objectives, challenges and successes.

Please feel free to share your open and honest feedback.

What we're looking for from you:

- We want to hear about your experience! We have a few basic questions to guide our chat, but overall this is just a conversation to hear more from you about what the overall impact TFN has had for you.
- We've booked in one hour, but we might finish early.
- **Please note: We're recording this interview just for note-taking purposes. Is that ok?**

Interview Questions

Question 1 - Tell us a little about your experience with TFN.

Potential prompts:

- What year was it?
- How did you hear about TFN?
- What was the application and pre-selection process like?
- What was the pitch coaching and preparation like?
- What was the experience like on the night?
- What did you expect to happen versus what actually happened?

Question 2 - What were the best things about working with TFN? Why?

Potential prompts:

- The funding received at the event
- The funding received after the event
- In-kind donations
- Access to a new supporter base and networks
- Increased awareness of my organisation and its cause
- Pitch coaching and experience
- Meeting like-minded organisations
- New knowledge and skills

- Marketing and promotions provided by TFN
- Changes in our confidence and credibility as an organisation

QUESTION 2A – Can you tell us what the top 3 best things were?

QUESTION 3 – What would've made the experience better for you?

Potential prompts:

- What could've been improved? The application process, pitch coaching and preparation, the event coordination, follow-up?
- What would you have liked to know then that you know now?

QUESTION 4 – Did you meet any new people through the TFN event that you have continued to work with afterwards? Tell us more about that.

Potential prompts – did you:

- Meet people who became donors
- Meet people who became supporters (in ways other than monetary donations)
- Meet people who have introduced you to others in their networks
- Keep up relationships with the other presenters from the event
- Meet people who have helped spread your message
- Has Covid-19 impacted the relationships you made through the TFN event? How?

QUESTION 5 – What did the donations you received through TFN mean for you?

Potential prompts:

- How valuable were the funds received?
- How valuable were in-kind donations?
- What did these mean for your organisation? Did you expand/change/etc?
- What have the longer-term benefits been?
- Has the Covid-19 pandemic influenced TFN donors to support you more?

QUESTION 6 – How did the pitching experience impact you? Did this change the way you felt about presenting or sharing your organisation's story with others?

Potential prompts:

- Did your confidence change from before to after the coaching, event, etc.
- How did the donors react to your pitch?
- What impact did this have for you?

QUESTION 7 – How did TFN's marketing and promotion affect your organisation?

Potential prompts:

- How did this affect awareness of your organisation?
- Did your relationship with TFN help to build credibility with donors?

QUESTION 8 – Tell us about the overall impact TFN has had for your organisation.

Potential prompts:

- Where were you then and where are you now? How much of that is due to TFN?

QUESTION 9 – Can you tell us how the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions have influenced your organisation? What has it meant to the people you support? (Virtual Event only question)

Potential prompts:

- Reduced income
- Increased demand on our services
- Need to change the way we operate and deliver services?

QUESTION 10 – Can you tell us about your experience of being involved with a TFN Virtual event?

Potential prompts:

- Do you think the experience and outcomes were reduced because of the virtual environment?
- Do you think you raised as much as you would have at an in-person event?

Survey Questions (long-form)

PRE-SURVEY – Introduction

The Funding Network (TFN) measures its success through the outcomes achieved by its non-profit and social enterprise partners. Today we are asking you to share your honest feedback on how working with us helped you achieve your goals.

Your anonymous feedback will be shared with our independent evaluator, Social Ventures Australia (SVA), and will be considered as part of an evaluation of our impact on non-profit partners who have pitched at TFN flagship open-application events since 2017. This is the second impact evaluation that SVA has conducted for us. You can read more about our first evaluation here (<https://www.thefundingnetwork.com.au/impact/our-impact/>)

This **anonymous 15-minute survey** will help us understand:

- Which aspects of the program are working well?
- What things we should do more or less of?
- How we can improve?

Whether you worked with TFN last year or three years ago, we would love to hear from you! Your stories and insights, will help shape the next phase of TFN's operations.

Please contact Carolyn Munckton, Acting Non-Profit Partnerships Manager at TFN – carolyn.munckton@thefundingnetwork.com.au – if you have any questions about the Impact Evaluation.

PAGE 1 – Tell us a little about your organisation

1. **What year was your organisation established?**
[Open text field]
2. **How big was your organisation (by annual revenue) at the time that you presented at the TFN event?**
 - Less than \$100k
 - \$100k - \$249k
 - \$250k - \$499k
 - \$500k - \$749k
 - \$750k - \$1 million
 - More than \$1 million

3. How big is your organisation now?

- Less than \$100k
- \$100k - \$249k
- \$250k - \$499k
- \$500k - \$749k
- \$750k - \$1 million
- More than \$1 million

4. Has your revenue been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes or No

Would you like to comment? (open field)

PAGE 2 – Tell us about your experience with The Funding Network (TFN)

5. What year did you present at a TFN event? (Select all that apply)

- 2017
- 2018
- 2019
- 2020

6. How would you rate your overall experience of presenting at the TFN event?

(Scale - 1 to 10)

7. How would you rate your experience of working with TFN (before and after the event)?

(Scale - 1 to 10)

8. What were the MOST beneficial aspects of working with TFN and participating in the TFN event?

(Please ONLY tick the top 3)

- The funding received at the event
- The funding received after the event
- In-kind donations
- Access to a new supporter base and networks
- Increased awareness of my organisation and its cause
- Pitch coaching and experience
- Meeting like-minded organisations
- New knowledge and skills
- Marketing and promotions provided by TFN
- Changes in our/my confidence and credibility as an organisation

9. Please explain your Top 3 choices. (Include relevant context if possible. For example, what would have happened without the funding received? How you used the new skills acquired? Were there any responses that were not relevant to you?)

[Open text field]

10. What were some of the other benefits of participating in TFN? Why were they important to you and your organisation?

[Open text field]

PAGE 3 – Tell us about the relationships you developed through TFN

11. Did you meet any new people through the TFN event that you have continued to work with afterwards? (Tick all statements that are true for you.)

- I met people who became donors of my organisation
- I met people who became supporters of my organisation (in ways other than monetary donations)
- I met people who have introduced me to others in their networks

- I kept up relationships with the other presenters from my event
- I met people who have helped spread our message
- Other (Describe)
- I haven't kept in touch with many people from the TFN event
- Other.....

12. How valuable were the relationships and networks you gained through The Funding Network?

- Extremely valuable - These connections have completely changed things for our organisation
- Very valuable - We have benefitted from these connections in several ways
- Somewhat valuable - We have had some benefits from these connections, but they have not been substantial
- Not very valuable - These connections have been unhelpful or inconsequential
- We did not build any lasting connections as a result of The Funding Network

13. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your connections made through the TFN experience?

- Yes, the pandemic strengthened our connections
- Yes, the pandemic weakened our connections
- No, the pandemic did not have an impact on the connections made through the TFN experience

14. Can you provide a story about a beneficial relationship you formed as a result of a TFN event?

[Open text field]

PAGE 4 – Tell us about the donations you received through TFN

15. How valuable were the financial donations received as a result of the event (either at the event or through connections made during the event)?

- Extremely valuable - My organisation received enough funding that we were able to significantly expand our work
- Very valuable - My organisation received enough funding to contribute to financial viability of our existing work and/or to expand some aspects of our work
- Somewhat valuable - My organisation received some funding which made a limited contribution to the financial viability of our existing work
- Not very valuable - My organisation received a small amount of funding, but it didn't have a major impact on our finances

16. How valuable were the in-kind donations and network connections received as a result of the event (either at the event or through connections made during the event)?

- Extremely valuable - The in-kind support we received had a major positive impact on our organisation's strength and/or the work we do
- Very valuable - The in-kind support we received had some positive impacts on our organisation's strength and/or the work we do
- Somewhat valuable - The in-kind support we received impacted a few areas of our organisation/work but was not substantial
- Not very valuable - The in-kind support we received was unhelpful or inconsequential
- We did not receive any in-kind support as a result of the event

17. Have you accessed or benefited from other offerings of the TFN Non-profit Alumni Program? (please tick any of the options that you've accessed/been involved with)

- TFN workshops (i.e.: Networking, Impact Storytelling, etc.)
- Pro bono legal or accounting advice via TFN
- Kilfinan Australia Mentoring
- TFN Bulletins/Newsletters
- Other

How have you benefited from these offerings? (open text field)

18. Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected in-kind donations received the TFN experience?

- Yes, the pandemic has actually increased the in-kind support we received through the TFN experience
- Yes, the pandemic has reduced the in-kind support we received through the TFN experience
- No, the pandemic has not affected the in-kind support we received through the TFN experience

PAGE 5 – Tell us about your ‘pitching’ experience

19. How confident were you in ‘pitching’ your idea / your organisation before you approached TFN?

- Extremely confident - I knew exactly what to say and do and knew it would be effective
- Very confident - I had a strong idea of what to do and say and thought it would probably be effective
- Somewhat confident - I had some idea of what to do and say but wasn't sure how effective it would be
- Not very confident - I didn't really know what to do or say
- Not confident at all - I had no idea what I was doing

20. How confident were you in ‘pitching’ your idea / your organisation after the pitch coaching and support from TFN?

- Extremely confident - I knew exactly what to say and do and knew it would be effective
- Very confident - I had a strong idea of what to do and say and thought it would probably be effective
- Somewhat confident - I had some idea of what to do and say but wasn't sure how effective it would be
- Not very confident - I still didn't really know what to do or say
- Not confident at all - I still had no idea what I was doing

21. What impact did the experience of pitch-coaching and presenting have on your ability to articulate the ‘story’ of your organisation? Did it help you to access support from donors / others?

[Open text field]

PAGE 6 – Tell us about the marketing and promotion provided by TFN

22. How valuable have the marketing and promotion provided by TFN been for your organisation?

- Extremely valuable - We have experienced a substantial increase in awareness of our organisation
- Very valuable - We have experienced a noticeable increase in awareness of our organisation
- Somewhat valuable - We have experienced some increase in awareness, but it has not been significant
- Not very valuable - We have not noticed much change in awareness of our organisation

23. Do you feel that association with TFN has helped to increase your credibility with donors?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

PAGE 7 – Tell us about the overall impact TFN has had for your organisation (and anything else you'd like to add!)

24. Overall, how much of an impact has your affiliation with TFN had on your organisation?

- Critical - We wouldn't be where we are now without it
- Important - We might have got to where we are now, but it would've been a lot harder without TFN
- Moderate - We have benefitted somewhat, but the impact hasn't been substantial
- Insignificant - We have not experienced much of an impact

25. Please describe the reason for your answer above.

[Open text field]

26. Is there anything TFN could do differently that would help to create stronger impact for organisations like yours?

[Open text field]

27. Do you have any other comments?

[Open text field]

Survey Questions (short form)

PRE-SURVEY – Introduction

The Funding Network (TFN) measures its success through the outcomes achieved by its non-profit and social enterprise partners. Today we are asking you to share your honest feedback on how working with us helped you achieve your goals.

Your anonymous feedback will be shared with our independent evaluator, Social Ventures Australia (SVA), and will be considered as part of an evaluation of our impact on non-profit partners who have pitched at TFN flagship open-application events since 2017. This is the second impact evaluation that SVA has conducted for us. You can read more about our first evaluation here (<https://www.thefundingnetwork.com.au/impact/our-impact/>)

We appreciate that your TFN experience was only recent, but any feedback you can give us is greatly appreciated. Not all questions may be applicable, so don't worry about answering them as it may be too soon to give a direct answer. Your stories and insights, will help shape the next phase of TFN's journey.

This **anonymous 10-minute survey** will help us understand:

- Which aspects of the program are working well?
- What things we should do more or less of?
- How we can improve?

Please contact Carolyn Munckton, Acting Non-Profit Partnerships Manager at TFN – carolyn.munckton@thefundingnetwork.com.au – if you have any questions about the Impact Evaluation.

PAGE 1 – Tell us a little about your organisation

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- Less than \$100k
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- \$250k - \$499k
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- \$750k - \$1 million
- More than \$1 million

3. Has your revenue been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes or No

Would you like to comment? (open field)

PAGE 2 – Tell us about your experience with The Funding Network (TFN)

4. **How would you rate your overall experience of presenting at the TFN event?**
(Scale - 1 to 10)
5. **How would you rate your experience of working with TFN (before and after the event)?**
(Scale - 1 to 10)
6. **What were the MOST beneficial aspects of working with TFN and participating in the TFN event?**
(Please ONLY tick the top 3)
 - The funding received at the event
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7. **Please explain your Top 3 choices. (Include relevant context if possible. For example, what would have happened without the funding received? How you used the new skills acquired? Were there any responses that were not relevant to you?)**
[Open text field]
8. **What were some of the other benefits of participating in TFN? Why were they important to you and your organisation?**
[Open text field]

PAGE 3 – Tell us about the relationships you developed through TFN

9. **Did you meet any new people through the TFN event that you have continued to work with afterwards? (Tick all statements that are true for you.)**
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 - I haven't kept in touch with many people from the TFN event
 - Other.....
10. **How valuable were the relationships and networks you gained through The Funding Network?**
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 - Not very valuable - These connections have been unhelpful or inconsequential
 - We did not build any lasting connections as a result of The Funding Network
11. **Has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your connections made through the TFN experience?**
 - Yes, the pandemic strengthened our connections
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12. Can you provide a story about a beneficial relationship you formed as a result of a TFN event?
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- Not very confident - I still didn't really know what to do or say
- Not confident at all - I still had no idea what I was doing

18. What impact did the experience of pitch-coaching and presenting have on your ability to articulate the 'story' of your organisation? Did it help you to access support from donors / others?

[Open text field]

Would you be willing to leave a testimonial about TFN's pitching? (Just make a comment in 100 words or less)

PAGE 6 – Tell us about the marketing and promotion provided by TFN

19. How valuable have the marketing and promotion provided by TFN been for your organisation?

- Extremely valuable - We have experienced a substantial increase in awareness of our organisation
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PAGE 7 – Your other thoughts

21. Is there anything TFN could do differently that would help to create stronger impact for organisations like yours?

[Open text field]

22. Do you have any other comments?

[Open text field]

Additional figures

Figure 1 - Survey Results 2017: Size of organisation that described TFN's impact as 'critical'

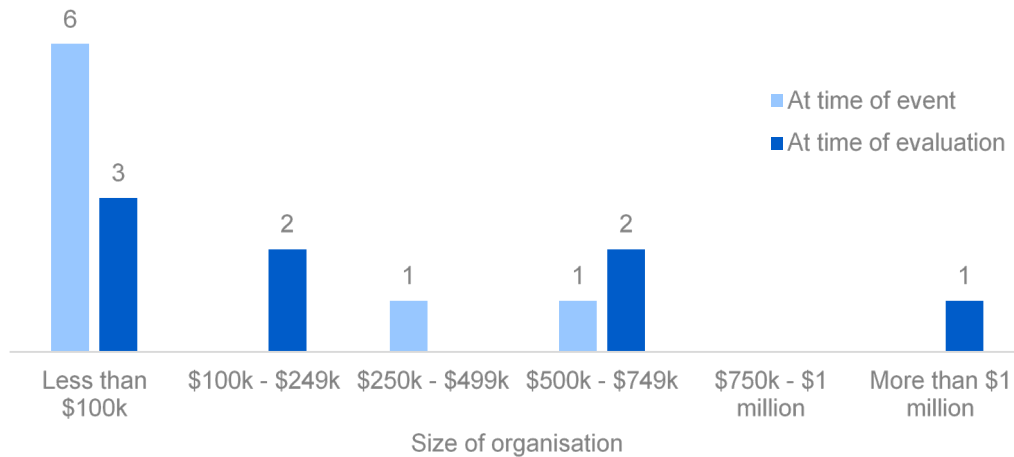


Figure 2 - Survey Results 2017: What were the most beneficial aspects of working with TFN and participating in the TFN event?

