



Preventing Violence against Women and Girls in 2022: Listening and learning from the sector

What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls: Impact at Scale

A seven-year initiative funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to scale up evidence-based, practice-informed prevention of violence against women and girls. The programme will invest £67.5 million to prevent and contribute to eliminating violence against women and girls (VAWG) by:

- Systematically designing, implementing, and rigorously evaluating a range of approaches to scaling up violence prevention efforts, translating proof-of-concept evidence into robust, large scale programmes and strategies.
- Designing, piloting, and testing new theory-driven violence prevention approaches (innovation).
- Strengthening long-term capability and capacity to deliver cutting-edge, evidence-based violence prevention programmes across the programme's grantees, the UK Government (principally FCDO), and developing country governments
- Using evidence to influence a more effective, scaled-up global response to end VAWG.

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1. Introduction

In November 2021, FCDO launched its flagship global programme *What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls: Impact at Scale* (What Works 2), a successor to the original What Works programme (2014 - 2020). As the programme team set out our approach for external engagement, rooted in the programme's feminist principles, a key commitment was to start by listening.

The stakeholders working to prevent violence against women and girls are diverse in their identity and the communities they serve. Collectively the field spans activists and small community organisations to global programmes and funds working worldwide. It includes researchers, survivor-led groups, donors, practitioners, activists and politicians. It is diverse, it embraces innovation and it is vastly under-resourced compared to the need. Above all, it includes a wealth of expertise on what works in violence prevention and deep commitment to the agenda.

In December 2021, *What Works 2* started a series of 15 listening consultations to ask practitioners, funders, researchers, and other experts from around the globe working on prevention of VAWG what they wanted to see from the programme. We asked about the state of the sector in 2022 and how the programme could support the prevention field to overcome barriers to support, implement, and scale evidence-based VAWG prevention with a focus on three key areas: generating, accessing and using evidence; funding; and strengthening the VAWG prevention field through building shared agendas and action. These discussions were complemented by key informant interviews with a smaller number of stakeholders representing key institutions. The consultations involved over 200 participants from anglophone and francophone Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and across Europe and North America. The consultations included different stakeholder groups such as practitioners, multilateral agencies, humanitarian practitioners, researchers, development banks, donors and funders.

This paper summarises what we learned about the state of the sector and the challenges being faced to deliver and scale evidence-based VAWG prevention. The paper also outlines the key conclusions and recommended priorities for the field, and the commitments of What Works 2 with respect to what we have heard during inception. Many of the challenges for the field will remain a critical part of how we interrogate our work as the programme moves forward for the coming 6 years, as well as how we come together collectively to engage with the many opportunities.

The listening exercise

What Works 2 held **15 listening consultations** with over **200 participants** working on preventing violence against women and girls.

We listened to people from around the world:



- Practitioners
- Donors and funders
- Researchers
- Multilateral agencies
- Other Experts

We asked:

What is the state of the sector in 2022 and how can we support the prevention field to:

- Generate, access and use evidence
- Ensure more and better-quality funding
- Build shared agendas and action



2. The world in 2022 and what this means for VAWG prevention

VAWG prevention work is affected by and embedded in the forces at work in the world and communities around us. The consultations highlighted the following key external factors which impact on the VAWG prevention field, namely: the significant knowledge and expertise within practitioners and activists in the women's rights organisations working around the world on VAWG prevention, the impact of COVID-19 and the shadow pandemic of VAWG, reductions in aid funding within a context of limited VAWG prevention funding, the rise of post-truth populist politics that can stoke distrust of evidence and polarise opinion for political ends, a backlash challenging progress on women's rights happening in different parts of the globe,¹ implications of the war in Ukraine and the challenges it highlights for the multilateral system, as well as increased levels of VAWG in emergencies. The strength of the women's movement and its achievements over decades provides a critical body of work we can draw on of what creates sustained change.

COVID-19 and the accompanying lockdowns have had significant physical and economic impacts on people, communities and countries worldwide; including a rise in reported levels of intimate partner violence² with devastating consequences for women and girls in many parts of the world. The economic impacts of COVID-19 have seen national economies contract the world over, putting significant pressure on limited government resources for VAWG prevention and response services in some countries. Frontline service providers and women's rights organisations have often been severely impacted by increased demand, reduced resources and where development or humanitarian VAWG programmes have seen international staff returning to their countries of origin. The financial contraction has also seen some governments moving away from commitments to international aid funding or replenishment of Development Bank funds.³ It will be important to monitor and document the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on VAWG prevention efforts in communities where What Works 2 funds, in particular the legacy of lost resources alongside increased rates of violence.

Awareness is growing of the importance of **grassroots local VAWG prevention** expertise in prevention services and influencing implementation of government action. The COVID pandemic highlighted this role, and along with it a renewed interest by some national governments to addressing VAWG, including through commitments in the UN Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence. Donors are also starting to look at ways to get funding to the grassroots organisations and women's movements, with awareness of in the dividend available for investments in local and national level VAWG prevention work through networks, organisations and coalitions.

The **geopolitical situation** is very unpredictable and fast-changing. The war in Ukraine, and the economic sanctions that are impacting on the Russian economy and the wider global economy will have huge geopolitical and economic ramifications for years to come. Oil prices have been at record levels and there are impending global energy and food shortages. Geopolitical tensions have challenged multilateral institutions and agreement around shared goals like those on development and climate change⁴, and some national political debates have become polarised and insular.⁵ This has contributed to shrinking civil society space and to erosion of rights and violence against marginalised groups including women and girls who don't conform to binary gender stereotypes or heterosexual identities. There are great examples of allyship across different social groups that can be built on including at the level of social media, but a challenge also in that social media has increasing influence including playing a role in strategies of disinformation and division (e.g. around vaccines).⁶

Lockdowns across the globe have accelerated the rise of **VAWG in online spaces, and fast-tracked campaigns to address it**. Technology facilitated Gender Based Violence (TFGBV) is a growing issue that significantly impacts minoritized women, girls and LGBTQ+ communities who often experience multiple layers of discrimination and abuse. It is a growing security risk for women or LGBTQ+ leaders and organisations engaging in the online space as part of social movements. Whilst governments and social media companies are developing systems, policies and laws to address TFGBV, campaigning orgs like Glitch are playing an important role to ensure regulation works for those that need it.

The scale of the **humanitarian crisis** in Ukraine is huge, but equally other global crises are undermining progress on women's rights and increasing risks of VAWG for many women and girls, including in Afghanistan, Syria, Myanmar and South Sudan. How donors can support and resource VAWG prevention work and women's rights organisations in these spaces are critical questions. Intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, early marriage and other forms of violence have all been shown to increase during crisis, migration and post-crisis when armed actors return to their communities. At the same time challenges such as conflict, hunger, climate change, displacement and hardship drive increased levels of VAWG including trafficking and child, early and forced marriage (CEFM).

What is the state of the VAWG prevention sector in 2022?

We face considerable **external challenges** to preventing VAWG

Impact of COVID-19 and shadow pandemic of VAWG

Reductions in aid funding

Rise of post-truth populist politics that undermine evidence and polarise opinion

Backlashes against progress towards women's rights

Emergencies such as conflict, hunger, climate change and displacement

Unpredictable and fast-moving geopolitical situations

But there are also **opportunities**

Strength of the women's movement and its achievements over decades

Growing knowledge and expertise on VAWG prevention

Increases in funding for VAWG prevention

Funding for VAWG prevention has increased in the last seven years⁷, including through the UK's investment in the two What Works programmes, as well as significant investment by governments and private donors.⁸ The US Government's upcoming gender-based violence strategy provides a new impetus by an influential global donor, one that is spearheading growing coordination and discussion amongst VAWG prevention donors and foundations championing VAWG prevention. However, funding for VAWG prevention is still a very small part of global aid spending and remains inadequate to the challenge. Between 2013-2018 funding for response and prevention of gender-based violence was approximately USD 2.042 billion or 0.002% ODA.⁹ Sectors which see bigger funding flows show promise for integrating VAWG prevention. For example, social protection spending during COVID19 totalled US\$789.8 billion,¹⁰ and there is evidence that cash transfers in particular can contribute to reductions in VAWG.

Quality of funding is as important as quantity. A well designed and targeted programme can deliver significant impact, but if funding is short-term, not evidence-based and inaccessible to women's rights organisations that potential is not realised. The design of funding mechanisms and aid budgets for VAWG prevention need to channel funds to those with expertise, experience and commitment, especially those working to prevent VAWG in their communities.

Whilst progress towards gender equality, women's rights and tackling VAWG is happening around the world, it is not uniform. Reactions against progress on gender equality have seen **backlash and regression** in some areas such as access to sexual and reproductive health and rights and women's participation in public life, as well as specifically around VAWG. Change isn't linear and opposition to increased rights and freedoms for women and girls is well funded and well organised. But it is also not always able to win. Holding the ground for hard won women's rights achievements can be a success in itself and as such these should be recognised, celebrated and used to inform our strategy. Regularly reviewing the external context for VAWG prevention work will be critical for What Works 2 over the life of the programme.

3. Towards Scale: The Evolution of the VAWG Prevention Field

There has been a significant increase in global knowledge and evidence on VAWG prevention over the past decade, demonstrating both opportunities and momentum towards real, transformative change in the lives of women and girls. Whilst further research and data is still very much needed, diverse strategies have shown promise and demonstrated that dramatic reductions in VAWG are possible within programmatic timeframes¹¹. Investment in prevention has also increased, along with the number and type of actors committing time, resources and political will to end VAWG. New field-building initiatives have emerged including the [Shared Research Agenda](#) (led by The Equality Institute, and The Sexual Violence Research Initiative), the [Shared Advocacy Agenda](#) (led by The Accelerator for Gender Based Violence Prevention), and The Prevention Collaborative's [knowledge hub](#). This expansion of the field offers opportunities to further build new partnerships, increase quality and quantity of funding, and iterate promising approaches to achieve impact at scale. The consultations highlighted the collective appetite for collaborative action in the context of the external challenges and significant opportunities in the field.

Opportunities and challenges in funding for prevention

The VAWG prevention field is increasingly coming together to advocate for more and better-quality, accessible and sustainable funding. Funding is typically short-term and small scale, particularly



humanitarian funding. The current funding structures and timescales weaken the effectiveness of interventions, the linkages between research and practice, and the capacity to translate evidence into practice. The slow pace of accessing violence prevention resources was particularly highlighted when coming from national government ministries with slow bureaucratic processes. In addition, funding is very projectized and there is very little funding for system-wide strengthening. The commitment of the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence to increase quality, flexible funding to women and girls-led organisations, and the recent launch of the Shared Advocacy Agenda to increase quantity and quality of funding mark shifts in the right direction.

Increases in funding for scaling brings opportunities to the field, but risks concentrating resources to a small group of larger institutions and organisations that already use evidence-based methodologies and have staff capacity. There is a risk that smaller grassroots organisations that are doing important work but have limited bandwidth to take on more requirements (i.e. additional reporting, burdensome due diligence processes) may miss out.

Funding for organisational strengthening can support WROs and smaller CSOs working on VAWG prevention to access funds. The low organisational capacity of smaller organisations can impact development of programme quality, leadership skills, learning and evaluation - creating a cyclical issue for accessing funding with donors seeing such funding as 'risky'. Organisational capacity development can be part of funding to make sure grants and opportunities are accessible to smaller organisations. Ensuring intentional support is important, especially around technical approaches (i.e. how to conduct research on methodologies to generate evidence, or how to write proposals for grant funding to generate evidence on VAWG prevention methodologies). This would enable smaller organisations to provide much needed services and capitalise on initiatives led by other sectors such as technology.

There is a pool of untapped learning as research remains underfunded, in particular southern-led research, with regional consultations emphasising low budgets and limited resources available to document and share evidence, conduct evaluations, or produce knowledge products.

There is a disconnect between funders and practitioners. There appears to be a lack of knowledge of who funds prevention work, especially amongst small organisations, Women Rights Organisations, practitioners and researchers. Where donors are identified, they risk watering down impact by providing grants with stringent conditionalities and inflexible requirements that do not speak to locally identified needs or lack fidelity to proven VAWG prevention models and expect strong outcomes from approaches that 'cut corners'.

The accessibility of funding is affected by regional variations in investment for prevention work and organisational competition. With most of the funding originating from the global North and driven

by donor interests, global South actors need more representation at decision-making tables on how funding is used and prioritised. Where local funding is available, there is competition between national and local organisations and international NGOs which tends to squeeze out WROs. Anglophone African practitioners shared the challenge of competing for funding with the space for VAWG prevention work often dominated by INGOs, where local CSOs or WROs were challenged to compete with limited networking or fundraising capacity, and they highlighted the need for collaborative partnerships. There was also a strong emphasis on the way national structures and government policies and approaches play out differently even in neighbouring countries, and a call for national governments to have greater peer support to improve practice on VAWG prevention.

Funding for innovation remains a gap, especially where innovation entails perceived risk or being ‘un-evidenced’. Donors should fund innovation, but also be prepared to keep investing where approaches are successful, providing long term funding for scaling.

Priorities for learning and evidence to action

Although we know much more than a decade ago about what works to prevent VAWG the field remains focused on filling remaining evidence and knowledge gaps, and the work of the [Global Shared Research Agenda](#) has aligned thinking across the field on priority research areas. However, accessing and applying existing evidence and knowledge is an ongoing task, with variations in uptake across regions and sectors.

Barriers to accessibility of VAWG prevention evidence reduces uptake - The academic nature of evidence produced can reduce the likelihood of it being understood and used by practitioners and activists. This is aggravated by the long timelines necessary to complete and publish research, and the predominance of research in English. Combined, these barriers make it difficult for practitioners to access and apply the evidence available quickly. Evidence should be simplified and unpacked for different audiences so that more evidence-based approaches can be accessible to front-line practitioners and activists. This requires both translation into accessible formats and also the right kind of dissemination through communication channels that practitioners and activists use.

Accessible regional evidence on VAWG prevention is lacking - Participants from all regional consultations highlighted a lack of nationally specific data on VAWG that could inform evidence-based programming, research and advocacy. This was largely attributed to an absence of coordination between the state, CSOs, and funding opportunities – including limited funding for nationally and locally led research and dissemination. A lack of regional expertise was particularly highlighted by the MENA consultation, with few Arabic speaking experts able to utilise the global evidence that is available.

Research is needed to fill remaining evidence gaps - Certain groups and their experiences of VAWG are still under-researched, including violence against women and girls with diverse sexual orientation and gender identities, women with disabilities, older women, widows, indigenous women, sex workers, amongst others. Thematic gaps in research are also evident, such as the mental health and psychosocial needs of survivors, the role of technology in reducing VAWG, the relationship between VAWG prevention and crime and prosecution; and on forms of violence beyond intimate partner violence including structural violence, violence in educational and health settings and violence in public spaces. Situational events and their impact on VAWG also require deeper understanding, such as the impact of covid-19 on VAWG, or the impact of regional policy changes on VAWG prevention. More contextual methodologies are required to consider prevention in acute emergencies and protracted settings.

Adapting to evidence as it emerges would be beneficial to long-term projects through flexible funding agreements and ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Where research suggests approaches are not working midway through a long-term project it would be better to change approach than wait for its completion to then make adaptations.

Innovate to capture and share practice-based knowledge - Practitioner groups often have limited time and resources to produce briefs and papers, and a lack of time to read or apply lessons from written documentation. There is a need to support these stakeholders to have the time in their programming design and delivery and final evaluations to capture and apply their experience. This is both a question of funding for the time and resources to do this and having it as a priority between practitioners and funders.

Facilitate donor collaboration and knowledge sharing. Some regional donors in attendance expressed interest in collaborating on research questions to ensure meaningful data is collected and continue to encourage and support strong partnerships between researchers, practitioners, and donors.

Research and programming can put women and girls at heightened risk of violence. Whilst all work to prevent VAWG carries the risk of backlash, security concerns for LGBTQI+ activists can make evidence and analysis particularly hard to capture and share in safe ways. This issue of security was also highlighted with respect to women human rights defenders and leaders in women's movements whose work challenging the structures and institutions perpetuating violence against women and girls puts their lives at direct risk.

Building the field: Regional and sectoral considerations

Opportunities and challenges in relation to both funding and knowledge-building reflect gaps between funders, researchers and practitioners that need bridging in order to further strengthen the field.

Meeting the knowledge needs of practitioners requires re-thinking how we view evidence. Engaging with practitioners on their terms in ways that are useful and meaningful to them is critical for application of knowledge broadly and with specific reference to capturing practice-based knowledge and innovative ways to share and use this knowledge. Resources are needed for practitioners to have the time and incentive to invest in gathering data and evidence, evaluation or disseminating findings from within regions, in particular through co-design and co-creation of research on VAWG with women's groups themselves and feeding back the data to communities.

The national level is politically critical. The programme should work with partners to map out strategies they will lead to influence national government attention and policies. The programme can support partner-led advocacy by facilitating linkages between governments, donors and national to local WROs. In particular supporting marginalised groups experiencing VAWG to advocate for their rights and prevent VAWG is a political act. Key questions remain about how to build sustainable approaches into the programme so that the results last beyond the end of the programme, and how to make VAWG prevention something that is politically rewarded.



What are the priorities for VAWG prevention in different regions?

Middle East and North Africa :

- Strengthening the capacities of women-led organisations
- Using advocacy and campaigns
- Harnessing advances in technology
- Building the evidence of what works in acute emergencies and protracted settings

Latin America:

- Addressing racism and intersecting marginalisation
- Links between VAWG and forced displacement
- Security threats and political persecution of feminist movement
- Expanding and scaling up preventing projects

Africa:

- Peer support for national governments on VAWG prevention
- Longer term programming and funding in marginalised settings, e.g. hard-to-reach rural areas

Asia and Southeast Asia:

- Creating safe ways for survivors to be involved in VAWG prevention
- Understanding local context and power dynamics

Attention to specific regional dynamics can unlock greater progress at regional level.

- In **Asia and Southeast Asia** where the perpetration of VAWG is so widespread and normalised at a social and cultural level it is critical to create safe ways for survivors to be involved in VAWG prevention programmes and inform the work, without threats and intimidation; and to understanding the local context and power dynamics including looking at local leaders and gate keepers as part of designing programmes.
- In the **Middle East and North Africa** using advocacy and campaigns is an important means to change approaches by government or by the public to VAWG prevention. Advances in technology can be used in service of VAWG prevention work and building the evidence base of what works in acute emergencies as well as protracted settings is critical; and strengthening the capacities of women-led CBOs to support survivors in their communities and support existing active networks and coalitions to share experiences and disseminate knowledge on prevention.
- In **Latin America**, racism and intersecting marginalisation of particular groups of women and girls has a significant effect on approaches and resources for VAWG prevention or response efforts. The failure of state actors and services to adequately address racism and misogyny aggravates cycles of violence leading to high levels of femicide and other forms of VAWG. There is a critical relationship in the region between GBV and forced displacement that needs greater resources and attention and there is political persecution of the feminist movement by state and non-state actors that creates significant security threats. There are few approaches or specific prevention projects, either from the State or civil society organisations, and those that do exist are pilots and viewed as difficult to scale.

- In **Africa**, national structures and government policies and approaches play out differently in neighbouring countries, and national governments could benefit from greater peer support to improve practice on VAWG prevention. Long term programming and funding is needed from in marginalised settings like hard-to-reach rural areas.

Collaborative partnerships can strengthen the capacity of national and local practitioners and researchers. More should be done to pilot and capture learning from effective partnership models that avoid traps of competition. Practitioners face the challenge of competing for funding for VAWG prevention work in a space often dominated by INGOs, where local CSOs or WROs compete with limited networks and resources for fundraising. Similar researchers from LMICs found accessing research funding a challenge and look to partnerships with researchers from HICs to rebalance access to resources.

Greater understanding of and advocacy on the cost-effectiveness of VAWG prevention can help build a better case for government investment in VAWG prevention. To take discussion about VAWG prevention beyond the usual audience and reach other sectors requires more evidence that speaks to other sectoral outcomes. There is a need to build a multi-sectoral response that goes beyond silo-ed VAWG programming and helps to integrate robust VAWG prevention elements into other sectors.

Services remain a critical gap and support to survivors must accompany prevention. There was a strong call for services supporting girls experiencing violence to prioritise and support girl's leadership and girl-led organisations. The education system was also identified as a support structure to address and prevent VAWG.

Funding for research is mismatched with needs with funding being either too small and short-term or too large and complex. Researchers also experienced the challenge of working with VAWG prevention practitioners that have limited resources, limited time and sometimes limited capacity to be part of research programmes. The competing priorities of stakeholders can make for time consuming negotiations in research work, and there was recognition of the need to work more with researchers from LMICs. There was a strong appetite for greater research into VAWG prevention with marginalised women and girls and a real desire for longitudinal research over large timeframes to enable cost-benefit and impact analysis.



Additional barriers to prevention in humanitarian setting include security, contextual complexity, funding modalities and perceived mandate. Prevention is often seen as irrelevant or unfeasible in humanitarian settings - either seen as not lifesaving and not therefore a priority versus response and/or the security situation does not allow for longer term programming needed for effective prevention. There is a lack of capacity in humanitarian organisations and actors, including misogyny and a male dominated workforce, and capacity issues related to high and rapid turnover of staff. A lack of organisational commitment to prevention work amongst humanitarian organisations, including seeing it as not the responsibility of humanitarian actors but instead of development actors, and not the responsibility of humanitarian actors because it is in the private sphere. This is compounded by limited evidence of what works in humanitarian settings. In addition, funding does not flow to community organisations but stays in the hands of international actors including INGOs and UN agencies to an even greater extent than in development settings. Donors are unwilling to fund response and prevention together, which is critical for ethical reasons and there is a perception that what funding there is goes towards 'work with men and boys'.

4. Overarching priorities for strengthening the VAWG prevention field

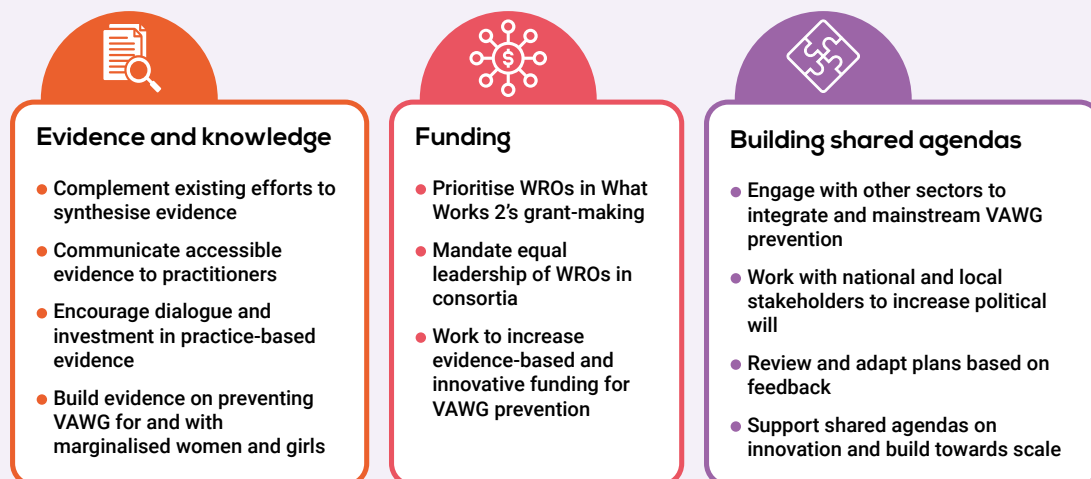
Create space for sharing, learning and strategizing – there is significant appetite for creating and facilitating spaces for stakeholders in the prevention field to learn from each other, to share early findings of research, the successes, challenges and ‘failures’ of programming, and two-way learning to strengthen capacity. This includes, in particular, learning about adaptation of evidence-based approaches between contexts and the process of scaling.

Make existing evidence on prevention widely accessible – Whilst the VAWG research community and prevention actors working at the global level are conversant with the existing evidence base, regional practitioners (i.e. Asia, Southeast Asia, MENA, Pan Africa, LAC, UK) expressed mixed or limited familiarity and understanding of available resources. The repeated request in the listening consultations for a more centralised evidence platform indicates the global reach of existing platforms for knowledge evidence and dissemination is limited. Key issues around accessibility included translation and the need to use new formats and channels beyond briefs and reports.

Break down hierarchies of knowledge around where evidence is produced, what counts as evidence, the value of practice-based knowledge and who can be a researcher. Practice-based learning should be valued and elevated alongside evaluative evidence and evaluations and research should contain a strong qualitative component alongside quantitative methods. VAWG prevention priorities for research and evidence gathering need to be contextual and set from the global South. The whole sector needs to continue to develop understanding of what it means to decolonise VAWG prevention programming and research.

Fund holistic programming - Evidence availability and application is not the only barrier to effective prevention. Socio-cultural norms, religious and social prejudices. and existing legal and political frameworks were cited as barriers. VAWG prevention could benefit from multi-faceted approaches in order to ensure behaviour change and social and gender norm shifts, that layer, for example, media and communications, legal reform and response activities with prevention approaches. Funding is needed for holistic programming that works across the socio-ecological model.

How will What Works: Impact at Scale support the priorities of the VAWG prevention field?



Engage other sectors in VAWG prevention – Other sectors, including education, health and social protection, can contribute to VAWG prevention. Engaging in cross-sector learning on shared research agendas can provide platforms for integrating prevention into other sectoral programming by demonstrating the benefits in terms of synergistic outcomes and testing routes to scaling impact.

Strengthen inclusion and representation at every stage of programming – the VAWG prevention field still has much to learn about how to effectively reduce experiences of violence for women and girls facing elevated levels of violence on account of intersecting axes of discrimination, for example women and girls living with disabilities, adolescent girls and women and girls with HIV amongst others. From the design stage through to evaluation, social inclusion should be a key consideration. This includes diverse women and girls and the organisations they lead being represented as partners, funding recipients, on advisory committees and in programme leadership.

Work for systemic change in funding for VAWG prevention – The field remains hampered by limited funding reaching the women’s rights organisations leading transformative work. More and better funding for prevention requires changes in donor funding structures, better donor collaboration, and for all actors in the prevention field to recognise and elevate the work that WROs are leading.

5. How will *What Works: Impact at Scale* respond to these findings?

‘What Works: Impact at Scale’ aims to contribute to the field of VAWG prevention working thoughtfully and in collaboration within the ecosystem of actors to elevate the field as a whole, in line with what we have heard through the process of listening.

Evidence and Knowledge

What Works 2 will actively seek to complement, not duplicate, existing efforts in the field to synthesise knowledge and evidence, including by using our web portal to direct interest to existing knowledge hubs and web platforms. Any new products will be created to fill known gaps or build on existing work, as well as speaking to the work of the programme.

What Works 2 will work to close the gap in communicating the evidence to practitioners in accessible ways that work for them. This includes supporting the production, dissemination and use of accessible and relevant materials and information about evidence-based approaches to VAWG prevention, including funding translation of key products. Research uptake of existing evidence is an immediate need prior to the programme generating further evidence.

What Works 2 will encourage a constructive dialogue between practitioners, donors, implementers and researchers on the role of practice-based evidence and how to apply it, and will encourage investment in this.

What Works 2 will build greater understanding of prevention for and with marginalised women and girls by working with those whose needs are not currently or typically met in VAWG prevention due in part to intersecting layers of exclusion or marginalisation created and exacerbated by lack of political leverage.

Funding

What Works 2’s grant-making will prioritise WROs, and mandate equal leadership of WROs where they are participating in consortia. What Works 2 will explicitly be inclusive of women, girls and



gender diverse people and will ensure that a proportion of grants and associated research within the programme is ringfenced for women and girls with disabilities and groups from the LBT community, explicitly including these groups in grant-making calls.

We will consider all parts of the ecosystem of VAWG prevention and how effective VAWG prevention requires the funding of that ecosystem. This includes particularly looking at ways to get funding to the local level that can be the most unrecognised, but is a critical part of VAWG prevention programmes and research: grassroots practitioners, women's movements, local researchers and activists.

We will work to address the lack of well-directed resources to support effective and innovative VAWG prevention policies and programmes. This includes working with the donors and foundations funding VAWG prevention to increase the quality and quantity of evidence-based funding; looking for ways to engage newer donors in this space; and working with national WROs to build incentives and co-create demand by donors in a particular country or region to fund VAWG prevention. It also includes working with particular donors or multilaterals funding large scale sector programmes that could better mainstream and scale VAWG prevention in national or local programmes.

Building Shared Agendas

What Works 2 will engage with other sectors such as girls' education, humanitarian and social protection to pursue opportunities to integrate and mainstream VAWG prevention into existing large-scale platforms to optimise their impact on reducing violence. We will document effective scale up of evidence based VAWG prevention in the language and incentives of those sectors and build greater experience of scaled and mainstreamed practice.

We will work with national and local stakeholders to understand and help shift lack of political will or lack of reward for effective VAWG prevention. We will build understanding of what actions can work where policymakers, leaders and other "gatekeepers" are unwilling, opposed or are distracted by other 'priorities'. This includes where there is not enough of a political reward for the time and investment needed to make the changes. This raises questions about how the sector should work with partners at the national level to strengthen the political will of national governments and international donors to invest in evidence-based approaches to VAWG prevention.

We are committed to reviewing and adapting plans based on feedback and consultation. We recognise the importance of being accountable and flexible in our work, acknowledging that the programme is just one part of a wider VAWG prevention ecosystem of actors. We are looking forward to collaborating across the field to support innovation and build towards scale.

Endnotes

- 1 See for example [Rollback on Gender Equality and Women and Girls' Rights in International Fora Since 2016 \(ids.ac.uk\)](#)
- 2 See for example WHO <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-SRH-20.04> or this from <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/domestic-abuse-and-covid-19-a-year-into-the-pandemic/>
- 3 See for example ICAI <https://icai.independent.gov.uk/icai-review-finds-the-uks-initial-aid-response-to-covid-19-was-strong-but-later-undermined-by-reductions-to-aid-budget/> or Devex <https://www.devex.com/news/devex-newswire-ida-replenishment-stumbles-over-uk-cuts-102341>
- 4 See for example [Multilateralism Is in Crisis – Or Is It? | Global Challenges](#) but also this about how it relates to COVID [Expect the COVID-19 Pandemic to Cause a Spike in Global Unrest \(foreignpolicy.com\)](#)
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 See for example [COVID-19 vaccine misinformation - POST \(parliament.uk\)](#)
- 7 OECD-DAC data - <https://donortracker.org/insights/life-free-fear-financing-end-gender-based-violence>
- 8 Government donors USA, Canada, Sweden, UK, Ireland, Spain, Australia, Norway, Finland, EU and foundations like WellSpring, Ford, and funds like Spotlight and UN Trust Fund.
- 9 Global scoping of advocacy and funding for the prevention of violence against women and children <https://www.equalityinstitute.org/media/pages/projects/global-scoping-of-advocacy/2999821672-1595397595/wilton-park-spread.pdf>
- 10 World Bank document <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/295321600473897712/social-protection-and-jobs-responses-to-covid-19-a-real-time-review-of-country-measures-september-18-2020>
- 11 A rigorous global evidence review of interventions to prevent - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | What Works <https://ww2preventvawg.org/>

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