

CO-CREATING AN AGENDA:

Practice-Based Learning
and Knowledge (PBL/K) for
Women's and Feminist
Movements to End
Violence against Women
and Girls

SVRI FORUM 2024
WORKSHOP REPORT

Co-Facilitated with Raising Voices,
What Works 2 Programme and
UN Trust Fund to End Violence
against Women.





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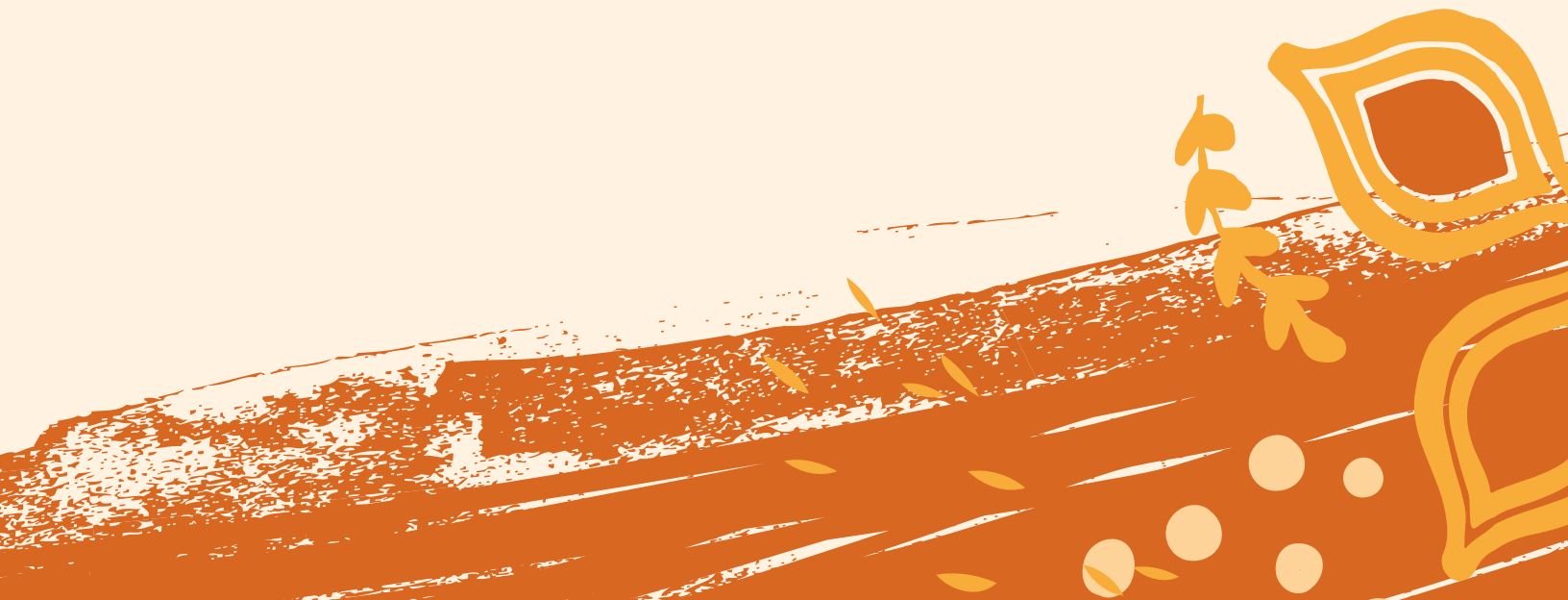




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Executive Summary

This paper summarizes the 2024 SVRI Forum workshop on practice-based learning and knowledge (PBL/K) in the context of ending violence against women and girls (EVAW/G) and feminist movements. Held on October 21, 2024, the workshop, co-organized by Raising Voices, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, and the What Works 2 Programme, gathered over 90 participants, including practitioners, activists, researchers and donors.

The workshop aimed to be participant-driven and involved several partners as co-facilitators and presenters in design and implementation. This included co-creating content and co-designing the workshop through an iterative co-creation process over eight months engaging more than 29 people across 14 organizations representing practitioners, researchers and donors/grant-making organizations.

Key objectives of the workshop included enabling participants to learn about PBL/K and its importance and value in EVAW/G work, as well as sharing insights on how to elevate PBL/K to maximize its uptake in EVAW/G policy, research and practice. The workshop was structured around three main parts on (1) what practice-based learning and knowledge is; (2) challenges, opportunities and solutions in documenting, co-creating, resourcing, and/or legitimizing PBL/K and (3) ideas for collective action on PBL/K.

The co-organizers champion PBL/K as a political stance challenging traditional hierarchies of evidence. By amplifying practitioners' real-world insights, PBL/K enriches EVAW/G efforts, decolonizes knowledge, and centers practitioners' voices and community expertise. It complements academic research, capturing the "how" and "why" of effective community interventions while fostering innovation, accountability, and inclusive feminist discourse.

The workshop opened with a presentation by Raising Voices on PBL/K in the EVAW/G field. PBL emphasizes an active, ongoing learning process informed by direct experiences, while PBK refers to the resulting knowledge. PBL/K, distinct from other approaches to generating evidence, centers practitioners' insights. Raising Voices highlighted key features of PBL including practitioner-led, structured but flexible, courageous and intentional, accessible and inclusive, pursued actively and creatively. Raising Voices shared strategies to integrate PBL throughout the programme cycle using accessible tools and diverse formats like storytelling, art, and podcasts.

Examples from Raising Voices and partner organization CEDOVIP illustrated these principles in action. But the co-organizers intentionally chose not to provide prescriptive "how-to" guides for PBL/K. This decision honored the goal of allowing practitioners' experiences and examples to surface organically, reflecting the fluid and context-specific nature of learning that can be tailored to meet diverse needs.

The workshop aimed to be participant-driven and involved several partners as co-facilitators and presenters in design and implementation.

Next, the What Works 2 Programme team led a discussion on opportunities and challenges in advancing PBL/K within EVAW/G research and programming. Building on lessons from What Works 1, they emphasized feminist principles, centering Women's Rights Organizations, South-South collaboration, and accountability to communities. Challenges include limited resources, time constraints, and balancing PBL/K with traditional research.

Examples highlighted by partners like Bantwana Initiative, Women Unlimited, and MASUM showcased PBL/K's value in refining strategies, enhancing advocacy, and informing programming. These initiatives emphasized iterative learning, storytelling, and community-based approaches, while advocating for greater recognition and integration of PBL/K into policies and funding frameworks. What Works 2 and the partners facilitated an active group discussion on opportunities for elevating PBL/K and tackling challenges, documented to inform collective action planning.

The final workshop segment took initial steps towards defining collective actions to elevate PBL/K across the EVAW/G field. Building on past SVRI Forum discussions, the UN Trust Fund proposed five key actions: (1) consolidating practitioner insights; (2) disseminating PBL/K through diverse and inclusive means; (3) networking to exchange PBL/K via communities of practice and mentorship, (4) advocating for the integration of PBL/K into policy, research and programming, and (5) resourcing PBL/K through dedicated donor support and grants.



Participants identified resourcing as the top priority, followed by influencing, while consolidation, dissemination, and networking were also deemed significant. Practical examples of collective and individual action were then shared by partners including CEPLAES in Ecuador, Breakthrough Trust in India, the Institute of Young Women Development in Zimbabwe, the Prevention Collaborative and the SVRI Safe Futures Hub. These initiatives illustrate the transformative potential of collective efforts to mainstream PBL/K in policy, practice, and advocacy.




Samhpors, a village activist and survivor of violence is supporting victims of violence and women and girls with disabilities in her rural community.

Credit: Gnem Touch/ADD International (Cambodia).

By the end of the workshop participants' familiarity with PBL/K had increased (by 40 percentage points according to the pre and post workshop survey), and its importance to EAW/G efforts was widely recognized and reaffirmed. Participants led discussions and provided important reflections throughout the workshop. Including:

- ✱ **DEFINING AND DISTINGUISHING PBL/K:** Participants agreed with the definition of PBL/K but called for clearer distinctions from participatory research methods. Many already engage in PBL/K without explicitly recognizing it, with some recommending clearer guidelines for practitioners. Some researchers called for clarity on the balance of PBL/K versus theory-driven approaches and academic research when informing policy and programming.
- ✱ **IMPORTANCE OF PBL/K:** Generally valued for its feminist aspirations, grounded in community-driven knowledge, with potential to influence EAW/G policy and programming. It was seen as essential for amplifying women's voices and creating accessible, impactful evidence. Participants valued and agreed with the notion of PBL/K as a political stance.
- ✱ **KEY CHALLENGES IN ELEVATING PBL/K:** included a lack of dedicated funding, resistance from some donors and academics due to concerns over bias and rigor, and difficulty integrating PBL/K with some M&E and donor-driven approaches. Organizational capacities and learning cultures and the absence of guidelines were also raised and the risk of PBL/K being extractive of communities and/or placing an additional burden on practitioners.


By the end of the workshop participants' familiarity with PBL/K had increased by 40 percentage points according to the pre and post workshop survey.



Participants identified opportunities for collective and individual action work on:

- 1 COMMUNITY BUILDING AND NETWORKING:** Participants recommended forming peer learning circles and communities of practice to share PBL/K experiences, resources, and knowledge, using platforms like SHINE and SVRI Forum to maintain ongoing dialogue.
- 2 DEVELOPING TOOLS AND FRAMEWORKS:** Some participants recommended co-creating and disseminating tools and frameworks for implementing PBL/K. This includes creating accessible online learning resources, documenting practices, and guidance on diverse formats like oral histories and storytelling. Other participants cautioned against how-to guides for PBL/K, encouraging instead an organic approach to it, especially to manage the challenge of PBL/K feeling like a burden or donor obligation.
- 3 STRATEGIC ADVOCACY AND DONOR ENGAGEMENT:** Participants recommended the development a collective business case for PBL/K to demonstrate to donors its value in achieving EVAW/G outcomes, advocating for funding that supports learning activities and sensitizing donors and policymakers to the transformative potential of PBL/K.
- 4 CAPACITY BUILDING AND INCLUSIVE SUPPORT:** Participants recommended training, fellowships, and resources to enhance PBL/K capacities. Infrastructure and technology solutions also needed. This includes advocacy for equitable, decolonized funding models that reduce barriers to implementation, such as time and financial constraints.
- 5 ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRATION:** Participants recommended the creation of spaces for intentional reflection and learning within organizations to integrate PBL/K into daily work. Promoting organizational cultures that value and prioritize PBL/K and identify and elevate existing PBL/K efforts.
- 6 KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION AND COLLABORATION:** Participants recommended the publication of joint articles, position papers, and reports to consolidate and amplify the importance of PBL/K. Use existing platforms to disseminate knowledge, influence policy, and encourage cross-organizational exchanges to share successes and challenges.
- 7 COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH AND PRACTITIONER PARTNERSHIPS:** Participants recommended the promotion of collaboration between researchers and practitioners to integrate PBL/K into research, and thus policy and programming, ensuring that it is recognized as a legitimate form of evidence. This includes advocacy with research and academic journals.

The workshop closed with 89 participants signing up to continue the conversation and agreeing to take part in discussions on collective actions and outcomes post-workshop.



1 Introduction

- * **ABOUT THIS PAPER:** This paper summarizes the 2024 SVRI Forum pre-conference workshop on practice-based learning and knowledge (PBL/PBK) in the context of ending violence against women and girls (EVAW/G) and feminist movements. It consolidates key content and captures the insights shared, recommendations and individual and collective actions agreed upon for post-workshop collaboration.
- * **ABOUT THE WORKSHOP:** The workshop, held on 21 October 2024, brought together VAW/G practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and funders to explore practice-based learning and knowledge (PBL/K) as a catalyst for feminist movements to end violence against women and girls. It was co-led and organized by Raising Voices, the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women and the What Works 2 Programme, with support from over 29 people and 14 organizations in total (see the acknowledgements section).

The workshop had two primary objectives:



To learn about practice-based learning (PBL) and knowledge (PBK) and its importance in the knowledge and evidence base on EVAW/G and women's and feminist movements. Participants learned about types of PBL/K (the process and output), how it could add value to EVAW/G work and had an opportunity to share practical experiences and examples, connecting with other practitioners, researchers, policy makers and others interested in the topic.



To be part of a vibrant dialogue on practice-based learning (PBL) and knowledge (PBK), sharing insights and hearing from others on the opportunities and challenges for elevating PBL/K, including how to maximize uptake in EVAW/G policy, research and practice. The workshop was intended as a space for a diverse group of practitioners, researchers, policy makers and more, to share ideas and co-create commitments towards a collective agenda for PBL/K, that could be taken forward individually and collectively after the event.

The workshop was structured around three main parts on

1

what practice-based learning and knowledge is;

2

challenges, opportunities and solutions in documenting, co-creating, resourcing, and/or legitimizing PBL/K and

3

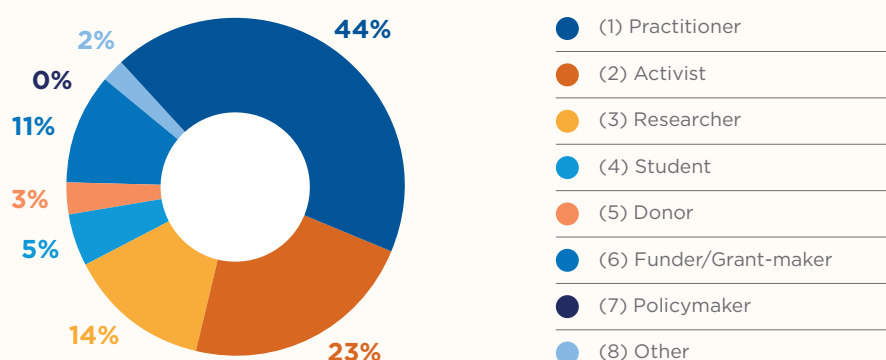
ideas for collective action on PBL/K.

The workshop opened with reflections on why PBL/K is a key feature of the SVRI Forum. The recognition of PBK as a vital complement to the evidence-base for EAW/G by SVRI and partners has emerged over several years.¹ SVRI recognizes PBK as a crucial complement to evidence-based approaches in the EAW/G field, adding context, analysis, and intersectionality.² In 2022, they introduced a new abstract type to highlight PBK (a practice that continued in 2024 as well), with the explicit aim of ensuring that the knowledge and experiences of practitioners is firmly integrated into presentations and discussions.

The 2022 Forum report emphasized the importance of capturing, analyzing, and sharing PBK as a vital source of knowledge and recommended *“identifying and exploring its limitations and strengths, as well as appreciating how it can complement other sources of knowledge and research”*.³ Hence PBK emerged as a priority topic for discussion at SVRI Forum 2024, within the overall theme of *“advancing the science: methods and measures”*.⁴

* **ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS:** Over 90 people attended the workshop, mainly practitioners and/or activists, followed by researchers and/or academics as well as donors/funders/grant-makers.

Figure 1: Percentage of participants who attended by type



At the start and end of the workshop participants were asked about their knowledge of PBL/K and to rate its importance to the field of EAW/G from their perspective.

At the start of the workshop, 57% of participants reported being either not familiar (6%) or somewhat familiar (51%) with the topic. By the end of the workshop, this decreased, with no participants reporting being not familiar and only 12% reporting being somewhat familiar. Overall familiarity increased from 43% to 84%, with those identifying as “familiar” rising from 27% to 24% and “very familiar” increasing from 16% to 64% (Figure 2).

1 Examples include: Prevention Collaborative (2019) “Elevating PBK within Prevention Programming” SVRI Workshop, October 2019, <https://www.svri.org/forums/forum2019/Presentations/Elevating%20Practice%20based%20Knowledge%20within%20Prevention%20Programming.pdf>

2 SVRI-Forum 2024 PBK-Webpage: <https://www.svri.org/svri-forum/#practice-based-knowledge>

3 SVRI Forum 2022 Report: <http://www.svriforum2022.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/SVRI-Forum-2022-Report.pdf>

4 SVRI Forum 2024 themes: <https://www.svriforum2024.org/about/themes/#1690543517271-d9557a96-2687>

Regarding perceptions of importance, participants initially rated the importance of PBL/K quite highly. Only 3% considered it “not important,” and none rated it as “somewhat important” at the start. By the end, no participants rated PBL/K as “not important” or “somewhat important.” The percentage of participants who thought PBL/K was “important” remained steady at 29%, while those rating it as “very important” increased from 68% to 71% (Figure 3).

Figure 2: How would you rate your familiarity with the concept of PBL/K?

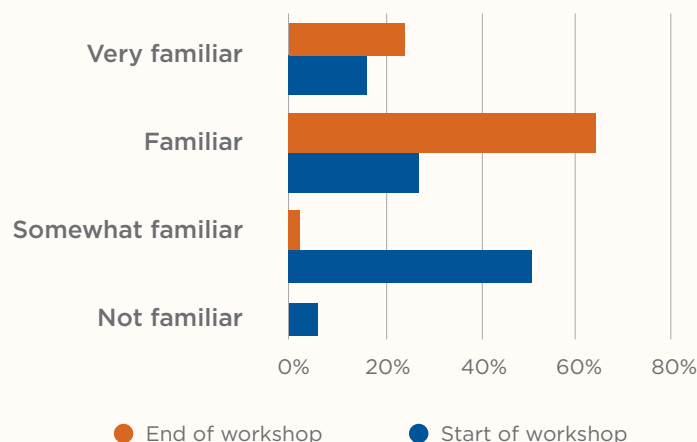
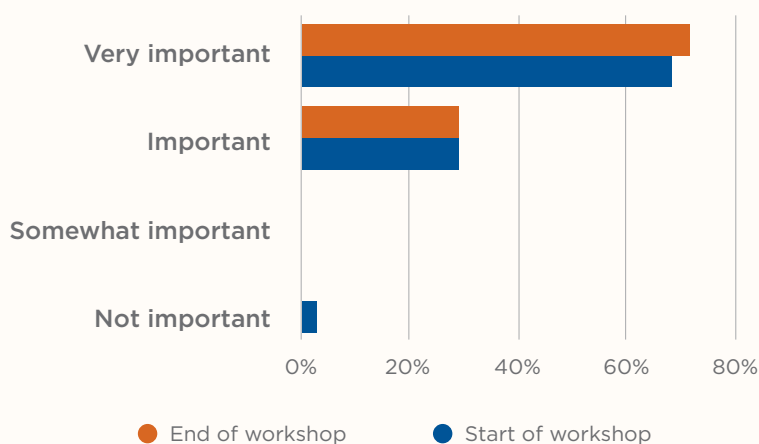


Figure 3: How would you rate the importance of PBL/K to the EAW/G field?



2 What is Practice-Based Learning and Knowledge?

The workshop began with a presentation by Raising Voices on practice-based learning and knowledge (PBL/K). PBL/K have long existed as terms in various fields of practice and research; however, Raising Voices is the first known organization to introduce and conceptualize both within the EVAW/G field (see Box 1 for the Raising Voices definition).⁵

Box 1

Raising Voices definition of Practice Based Learning

We understand **practice-based learning** as the cumulative journey of intentional learning over time, informed by insights gained from direct experiences, observations, stories, informal reflections, monitoring processes, and more”.

Practice-based knowledge (sometimes called ‘practitioner knowledge’) is the knowledge that emerges as a result”.

**Practice refers to engaging in the day-to-day work of violence prevention, e.g., developing, implementing, adapting, and supporting program and advocacy efforts.*

**The language of learning rather than knowledge emphasizes process over product. Learning is an active, generative, and organic process.*

A key distinction between practice-based learning and practice-based knowledge is that PBL emphasizes the active, ongoing process of learning, which can be an organic process while PBK focuses on the knowledge (the product) generated. ‘Practice’ is used to describe engagement in the day-to-day work of violence prevention, including community-based programming, advocacy, communications, training and more. Practice is inclusive of all stages of programming, from ideas generation, to development, implementation, and technical support. PBL/K is distinct from other forms of knowledge, making a unique and meaningful contribution to the field.

5 Raising Voices (2022) “Nurturing and Elevating Practice-Based Learning” Learning from Practice Series No. 8: Organizational Perspectives, Kampala, Uganda: Raising Voices, https://raisingvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Learning-from-practice-No-8_final.pdf



Discussing the portrait of an abuser.
Credit: Nina Kankanyan/ Women's Support Center (Armenia).

For Raising Voices, PBL has five key features:

- 1 PRACTITIONER AND ACTIVIST LED:** It centers the experience and expertise of those who directly engage in violence prevention, working closely and learning together with community members.
- 2 STRUCTURED YET FLEXIBLE:** Guided by fit-for-purpose and planned learning activities while preserving the flexibility to address emerging program dynamics.
- 3 COURAGEOUS AND INTENTIONAL:** Nurtured by a deliberate organizational learning culture that provides space to ask difficult and critical questions and encourages learning from failure.
- 4 ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE:** Not limited to a technical team with specific qualifications. Practice-based learning recognizes and values diverse roles and contributions.
- 5 PURSUED ACTIVELY AND CREATIVELY:** Learning activities can be locally defined, including formal and informal processes.

Raising Voices shared ideas on how to nurture PBL throughout the programme cycle, including:

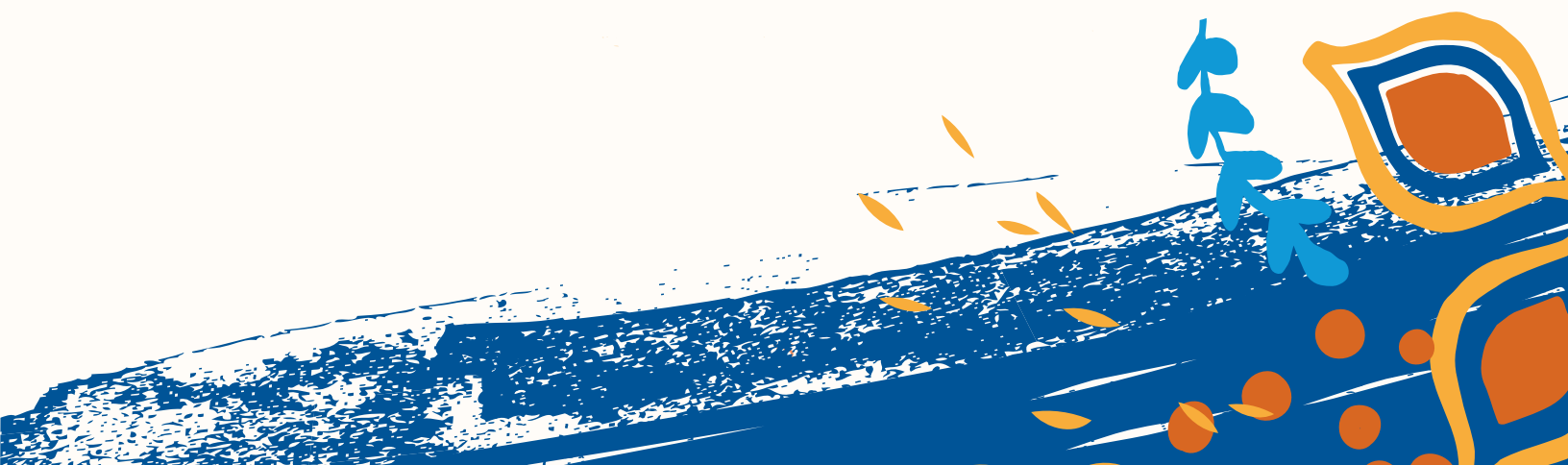
- * **DURING DESIGN AND ADAPTATION:** Using community dialogues, observations, and internal learning initiatives, including reflective spaces with staff and community members.
- * **DURING MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION:** Using simple, accessible monitoring tools that engage community activists in learning, regular feedback sessions with staff, etc.
- * **DURING ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES:** Encouraging team reflections (pause and reflect), encouraging curiosity, and critical thinking. Honest and open spaces, synthesis of lessons.
- * **DURING DOCUMENTATION AND SHARING:** Diverse, inspiring formats like storytelling, artwork, videos, podcasts, academic writing, briefs, case studies, and more.

Several examples of PBL/K were provided at the workshop by Raising Voices and their partner the Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP).

Example of Practice-Based Learning and Knowledge:

Raising Voices and their partner Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP) provided an example of how PBL was critical to informing violence prevention programming in Uganda. During the implementation of the SASA! violence prevention methodology, practitioners observed that focusing on shifting gender roles initially led to increased conflict among couples. Through intentional learning and reflection, the programme implementers adapted the methodology to emphasize core relationship values, such as mutual respect and care, resulting in more constructive outcomes.

Raising Voices also demonstrated how practice-based learning enhanced the SASA! research process. By integrating PBL, the research team gained a deeper understanding VAW within the community and improved their research tools. Additionally, engaging staff in unpacking research findings helped validate the results, ensuring they were grounded in practitioners' real-world experiences. Raising Voices shared examples of disseminating PBK through various formats, including briefs, case studies, academic papers, and videos, which are listed at the end of this document.





3 The importance and value of practice-based knowledge and learning

Women's and feminist movements foster environments where members can actively participate in theorizing and analyzing their experiences.

Raising Voices and the co-organizers of the workshop see investment in PBL/K as a political stance that challenges the hierarchy of 'what counts' as evidence. As practitioners and activists, visibilizing learning is empowering—it nurtures confidence in thought-leadership, inspires creativity and innovation, and ensures insights contribute to the broader discourse. It enriches the global knowledge base on EVAW/G by ensuring the experiences of practitioners and activists shape programming, research, policy, and funding decisions.

PBL/K emerged as a necessary counterbalance to research predominantly led by Global North academia, where traditional methods like randomized control trials (RCTs) are often prioritized. Organizations like Raising Voices and others have advocated for the equal value of PBL/K alongside RCTs and other forms of evidence. This is essential in creating a comprehensive, contextualized knowledge base—and mitigates the current trend of privileging knowledge generated in academia or by monitoring and evaluation experts.

This aligns with the growing movement to decolonize knowledge and bring practitioner voices and community expertise to the forefront of EVAW/G discourse. Women's and feminist movements foster environments where members can actively participate in theorizing and analyzing their experiences, valuing diverse forms of expression such as oral traditions and art to reshape mainstream narratives and amplify the voices of women, girls and marginalized groups.

Furthermore, without PBL/K, there's a risk of research, programming, and policy missing the essential "how" and "why" of what works within specific communities. PBL/K captures the real-world insights of those directly engaging with communities, sparking innovation, ensuring accountability, and informing quality, context-responsive programming. PBL/K contributes to the EVAW/G in multiple ways and complements other forms of research. A practitioner-researcher partnership can bring mutual growth, blending on-the-ground expertise with research rigor to create stronger, more effective EVAW/G solutions.

Raising Voices advocates for rigor and responsibility in PBL/K i.e. that it must involve a rigorous process of collectively analyzing and interrogating emerging insights, while remaining grounded in direct programming experiences. This kind of rigor is distinct from that applied to academic research and other methodologies, however no less essential.

4 Participant reflections on practice-based knowledge and learning

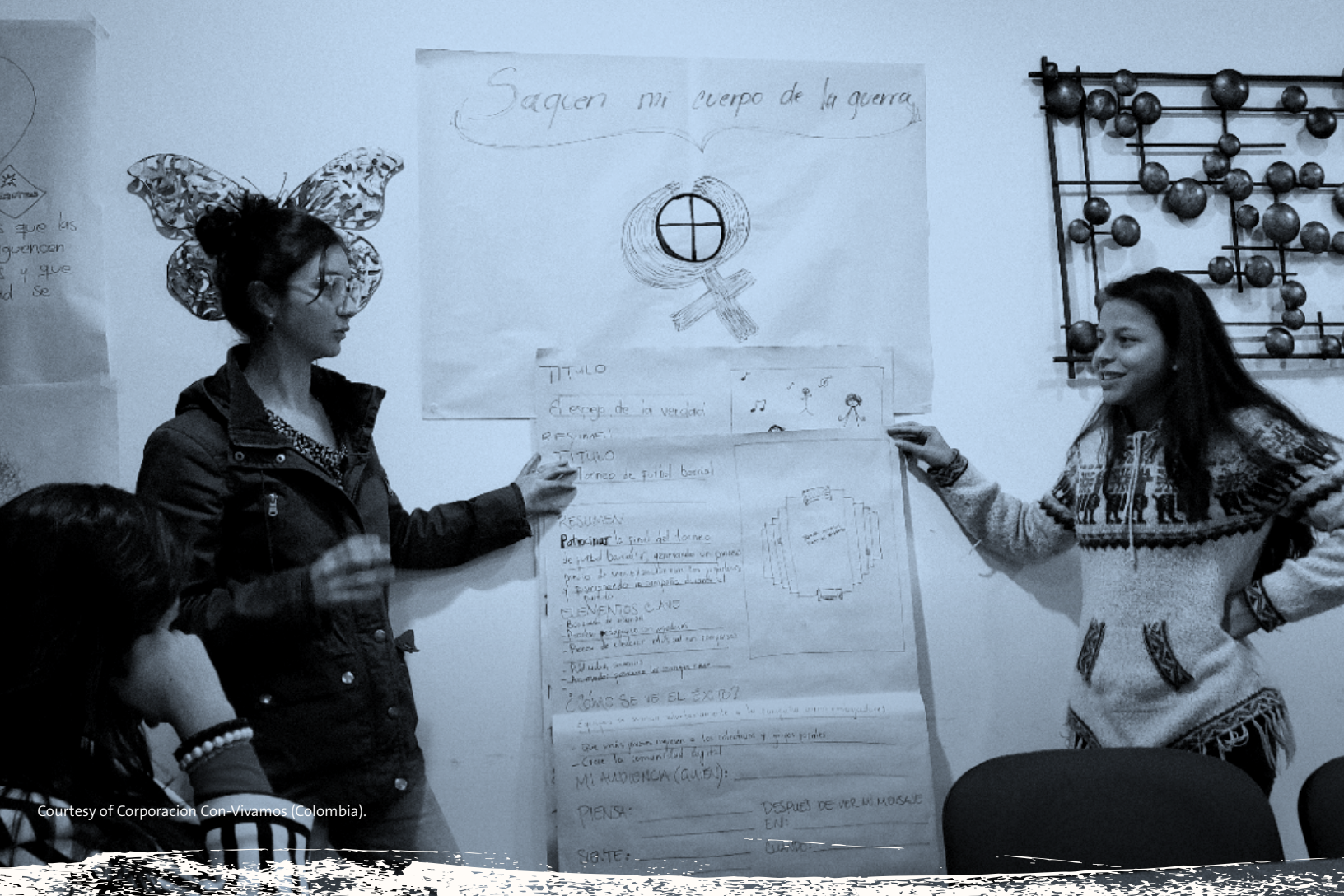
Participants were provided time to reflect individually and in plenary discussion on the first part of the session which covered “what” PBL/K is and its importance to the EVAW/G field. Commonalities across the reflections included:

Blue text denotes real quotes from participants to elevate the voice of participants.

- * **General concurrence with the definition of PBL/K**, however some participants asked, “*what is not practice-based learning?*” suggesting more clarity is needed.
- * **Participants understood that PBL/K is distinct from other forms of knowledge** processes (such as research and/or encompassing more than M&E6) and recognized that it is already happening albeit by a different name “*We do PBL everyday but never knew it was PBL*”⁷.
- * **That PBL/K complements other forms of knowledge** and research and has value in the hierarchy of knowledge: “*PBL provides a more open space to bring community learning to multiple scales of research and learning*”.
- * **Some participants would like clarity** on the difference between PBL/K and other qualitative and participatory learning approaches: “*I am wondering how new it is though, as participatory approaches have been around a long time*”. “*Made me think about overlaps between critical, qualitative and participatory methods in academic research overlap w/ PBL/K*”.
- * **Participants generally agreed that it is highly important to the EVAW/G field** because it is grounded in the insights of practitioners and communities to deepen programming and research:
 - “*The value of PBL/K is so important for adding elements of innovation and experimentation into programming*”.
 - “*The value of the voices of the people is being heard – not just academic research*”.

6 For Raising Voices for example, while practice-based learning can include learning from M&E, it is far more expansive. It encompasses the practical know-how that comes from experience as well as a wide range of learning opportunities – through consultation, observations, reflection, feedback mechanisms, dialogue and more.

7 Some participants recognized that Practice-Based Learning (PBL) was already taking place within their organizations, albeit under different names. What was new to them was the advocacy and recognition of PBL as an intentional practice, often tied to a specific political stance.



Courtesy of Corporación Con-Vivamos (Colombia).

- * **Agreement that it is a political stance:** *“PBK is a political stance and I like how it is recognized as such, especially in a framework which is manifested on a system that is still very heavily western colonial and hetero capitalist”.*
- * **Endorsement of the five key features of PBL/K presented by Raising Voices:** *“5 key features and visual representation, clearly and precisely put”.*
- * **And that rigor and responsibility in PBL/K is important:** *“What stood out for me is the ways that we can make/ensure that our practice-based research is rigorous – through (1) technical peer reviews and (2) engagements with the team/staff to further discuss insights on and how we got to where we are”.*
- * **Questions were raised about:**
 - **Feasibility:** especially on the practicalities of being able to document PBK and skill/time needed that may not be available in all contexts, especially grassroots, complex and crisis contexts.
 - **Biases:** questions over whether PBL/K takes a feminist approach, how it eliminates potential biases in knowledge gathered, and whether it really benefits communities.
 - **Risks:** general points about the need for funding, risk of PBL/K not being supported by donors, lack of capacities, risk of overburdening small feminist organizations with further responsibilities/ reporting, and the urgent need to advocate for PBL/K.

5 Challenges, opportunities, and solutions in PBL/K

The lack of established systems for capturing PBL/K and language differences highlights the need for inclusive practices.

The What Works to Prevent Violence Impact at Scale Programme⁸ team led the second part of the workshop. Building on some of the reflections shared by participants in part 1 of the workshop, the discussion explored exciting opportunities and some challenges in documenting, co-creating, resourcing, and legitimizing PBL/K among partners working on EVAW/G.

To set the scene, the What Works 2 team outlined their commitment to promoting, generating, and applying PBL/K in the second phase of the program (What Works 2), drawing inspiration from Raising Voices and other partners. This commitment emerged in the transition from What Works 1 to 2, with key lessons learned, including: the importance of engaging Women's Rights Organizations as leaders in EVAW/G; the need for greater accountability to communities; the advantages of South-South technical support; the value of creating space to generate and apply PBL/K within the team and with partners; and the aspiration for the program to be an “aspirational feminist” initiative as a guiding principle.

The What Works 2 team identified opportunities to elevate PBL/K, offering inspiration to other donors and partners in the EVAW/G sector. As a leading evidence-building programme with various types of grants, it has a unique chance to center and amplify the voices of women and girls in all their diversity through PBL/K. This includes supporting, generating, consolidating, and sharing learning about EVAW/G processes and identifying what it takes to scale initiatives ethically, with a focus on equitable and feminist partnerships.

As What Works 2 progresses, challenges have emerged. Most notably, limited time and competing priorities for practitioners and activists to dedicate to PBL/K; building trust and relationships among funders, grantees, and researchers to allow space for reflection and learning, including from failures; and budget constraints, especially when PBL/K is not prioritized from the beginning. Additionally, the discourse around the perceived divide between PBL/K and scientific research creates further competition for attention. The lack of established systems for capturing PBL/K and language differences highlights the need for inclusive practices to ensure that all voices are heard and valued. Despite these challenges, the opportunities remain significant, and solutions are being explored based on the experience of partners, as illustrated by the examples below which were shared by partners Women Unlimited/Bantwana Initiative and MASUM at the workshop.

8 A seven-year initiative funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) funding projects in Africa, Asia and MENA to innovate and scale-up effective models to prevent violence against women and girls.



Example of Practice-Based Learning and Knowledge:

Women Unlimited/Bantwana Initiative, partners in the What Works 2 programme, shared their experiences with PBL from the Campus Sexual Harassment Project Initiative (CSHPI) in Eswatini.

Their PBL approach emphasizes the essential role of hands-on practitioner experiences, allowing on-the-ground realities to shape programme implementation. For the CSHPI, PBL is an iterative process, continuously informed by field observations, after-action reviews, and reflections, and it thrives on fostering a safe, learning-centered environment within implementing organizations.

CSHPI partners have greatly valued collaboration with funders like What Works 2 and the UN Trust Fund, who provided resources and support to intentionally strengthen the PBL approach. PBL has allowed CSHPI partners to quickly adjust strategies based on participant feedback, enriching advocacy and influencing efforts. It has also helped them navigate community backlash and political sensitivities by refining methods in response to real-time input.

However, challenges remain including the lack of prioritization of PBL by funders who often undervalue it and the difficulty of integrating flexible PBL methods into rigid project designs. Solutions include advocating with funders for PBL/K to be embedded (and resourced) within the project from the start to enhance implementation.

Example of Practice-Based Learning and Knowledge:

Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM), an NGO partner of the What Works 2 programme in India, also shared their experiences with PBL/K.

Their PBL approach emphasizes a community-based model that generates case stories and amplifies women's voices through documentation of practitioner insights, support groups and women's collectives. PBL is embedded throughout the programme with monthly staff meetings and specific case reviews, using photos and storytelling to inform project implementation. PBL/K is essential to monitoring the work at Masum's counseling center, ensuring that lessons from case management shape practices.

MASUM's "community-based learning" approach to PBL/K has strengthened their work by improving case referral mechanisms, coordinating responses for survivors, building the agency and confidence of young girls in the programme, and bolstering the women's movement through the PBL approach. It has also practically informed training curricula, including those for government representatives. Challenges include advocating for the recognition of PBL/K within the evidence base to inform and influence policy. Through a range of publications, MASUM aims to elevate PBL insights to influence policy, programming, and funding decisions.

6 Participant reflections on challenges, opportunities and solutions

Participants were invited to reflect in group work and plenary discussion on the second part of the session which covered challenges, opportunities and solutions. Commonalities across the reflections included:

Blue text denotes real quotes from participants to elevate the voice of participants.

CATEGORY	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES / SOLUTIONS
Advocacy and Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PBL/K undervalued by donors and academic journals. Resistance in EVAW/G field to non-traditional learning and evidence approaches. Difficulty in shifting donor-driven priorities that favor scientific, evidence-based approaches. <p><i>"Academic journals do not value PBK and yet this "evidence" is valued by policy makers".</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for policy recognition of PBL/K by highlighting its value to policymakers. Shift donor priorities towards flexible, PBL/K-friendly funding. Educate stakeholders on integrating PBL/K into existing frameworks. Promote PBL/K as women's movement approach. <p><i>"Grant-makers to better support implementing partners to advance PBL".</i></p>
Funding and Donor Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of PBL/K-dedicated funding. Donor timelines limit reflection / PBL approaches. Tension between donor agendas and local needs. Resource competition reduces collaboration. <p><i>"We do not have the resources to translate PBK back in English and vice-versa".</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek learning grants and funding for experimentation. Advocate for trust-based, decolonized funding models, promoting community ownership. Engage donors with qualitative, narrative-driven PBL/K approaches that balance quantitative data needs. Encourage long-term, flexible funding. <p><i>"Market" this idea strategically, create a proposal to take to donors'</i></p>
Implementation and Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear PBL/K guidelines. PBL/K perceived as extractive without community input. Confusion over PBL/K definitions. Difficulty balancing PBL/K with scientific, research approaches and, for some, M&E. <p><i>"Can we integrate / strike a balance between PBK, numbers needed for donors and stories, i.e. between traditional M&E and PBL/K?".</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop structured guidelines and decentralized models for PBL/K. Co-create PBL/K with communities to ensure equitable, sustainable learning. Synchronize PBL/K definitions across stakeholders. Use tools to integrate PBL/K with M&E, enhancing organizational coherence. <p><i>"Methodologically demonstrate this is complementary research and traditional M&E and not opposed to it".</i></p>

CATEGORY	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES / SOLUTIONS
Knowledge, Documentation, and Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent /lack of documentation loses learning. Limited visibility and recognition in academic platforms. Language barriers affect dissemination. Limited strategic dissemination. <p><i>"We do not have dedicated journals or conferences".</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage daily documentation by practitioners to build PBK. Partner with researchers to enhance visibility of PBL/K. Create platforms (journals/conferences) for PBL/K findings and translate into multiple languages. Leverage tech to store and share PBL/K knowledge. <p><i>"Recognize different formats of knowledge, e.g. songs, poems, survivor stories".</i></p>
Community and Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to establish joint ownership with communities. Limited recognition of women as knowledge builders. Resistance to decentralized learning. <p><i>"Another challenge is that PBK feels extractive to communities we are working in".</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a community of practice recognizing women and frontline practitioners as key contributors. Decentralize knowledge and promote joint ownership with community organizations. Strengthen local solutions through active community involvement, promoting sustainability. <p><i>"Ensure it is not extractive and does not replicate power structures by using existing community structures for learning".</i></p>
Organizational Structure and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations aren't structured for decentralized learning. Resistance to learning from failure. Lack of synchronized buy-in across departments. <p><i>"Need to be nimbler for PBL/K, it is an iterative process that requires decentralization – culture of organizations"</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed PBL/K into organizational culture to enhance adaptability. Cultivate a learning-from-failure culture to support agility. Build alignment on PBL/K principles for cohesive learning. Simplify barriers to PBL/K by removing restrictive educational requirements. <p><i>Remove educational / institutional requirements / expectations for knowledge holders /documenters.</i></p>
Theoretical and Academic Rigor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear role of theory in PBL/K. Lack of standardized rigor assessment. Questions on whether practitioner biases could affect credibility. Missed partnerships with researchers. <p><i>"Theory used to lead practice, but now practice leads theory, where does theory lie in PBL?".</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen PBL/K frameworks by fostering collaboration between practitioners and researchers. Develop standardized tools for rigor and credibility, building PBL/K legitimacy (whilst guarding against the limiting the fluidity of PBL through too much standardisation, that risks contextual richness and diversity of approaches being documented. Increase transparency by addressing biases and integrating practitioner insights into academic standards. <p><i>"Disrupt power dynamics by allowing practitioners / participants to provide knowledge".</i></p>

7 Towards a collective agenda for practice-based learning and knowledge

The final part of the workshop focused on the question of what we could do as a collective on PBL/K. The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women set the scene by summarizing what recommendations on PBL/K had been made at previous SVRI Forums and in previous discussions, such as the workshop hosted by the Prevention Collaborative in 2019.

“To have collective impact, organisations need to find ways to collaborate openly in a wider movement of learning for social change”.

Prevention Collaborative, SVRI Forum 2019

It has emerged over the years that whilst individual organizations can enhance PBL/K internally, it takes a collective effort amongst stakeholders to prioritize PBL/K across the EAW/G field, to maximize uptake in EAW/G policy, research and practice.

Using the UN Trust Fund as an example, the team presented five key ideas for collective actions that can be taken by individual organizations and as a collective, for discussion at the workshop.

Key Collective Actions on PBL/K

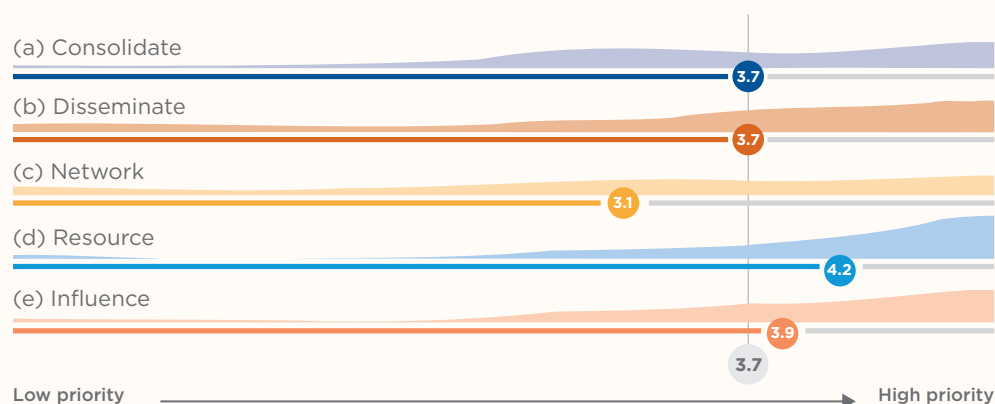
- * **CONSOLIDATE:** Collaborate with and/or support EAW/G activists and practitioners to analyze and consolidate PBL/K. For example, the UN Trust Fund has co-created and consolidated PBK with practitioners, in knowledge products (see examples at the end of this report).
- * **DISSEMINATE:** Create platforms, alternative formats and open spaces for dissemination of PBL/K. For example, the UN Trust Fund has co-created PBK with practitioners and disseminated through podcasts and videos, amongst other formats.
- * **NETWORK:** Create knowledge exchange, communities of practice, training, mentorship with/for/by practitioners and activists on PBL/K. For example, the UN Trust Fund created “SHINE”, an online hub for practice-based knowledge exchange and networking in 100+ languages.
- * **INFLUENCE:** Advocate to influence research, funding, policy and programming to incorporate PBL/K. For example, the UN Trust Fund strategically amplifies PBK to inform policy making through reports to the Commission on the Status of Women, Donor Reports, etc.
- * **RESOURCE:** Dedicate funding or grants for PBL/K provided by donors, grant-makers and other stakeholder and other commitments. For example, the UN Trust Fund launched a dedicated budget for PBL/K within grants under the new ACT programme.



Budget training for local women and girls in Isiolo.
Credit: CREAW (Kenya).

Workshop participants were asked to reflect on the proposed collective actions above and rank them in order of priority from (1) Low Priority to (5) High Priority. Resourcing PBL/K was recommended as the top priority, followed by influencing and advocating for PBL/K, with consolidation and dissemination joint third priority and networking the last one. However, all five actions received at least a rating of 3 out of 5, signally that all five had support (Figure 2).

Figure 4: Ranking of collective actions for PBL/K by level of priority according to participants



This part of the workshop closed with practical examples from five partners of how PBL/K is being elevated and prioritized through individual and collective action to maximize uptake in ERAW/G policy, research and practice.

Examples of Collective Action for Practice-Based Learning and Knowledge:

- * **MS. SONIA GARCIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CEPLAES IN ECUADOR** emphasized the organization's "refection, action, reflection" framework to integrate practice-based knowledge into research and implementation while advocating for the recognition of women activists as knowledge holders and ensuring their access to spaces of power to elevate PBL/K.
- * **MS. SOHINI BHATTACHARYA, CEO OF BREAKTHROUGH TRUST**, highlighted the organization's standardized approach to practice-based learning, fostering shared knowledge across 14 partner organizations to develop a unified curriculum and media tools, while advocating for funders to include PBL/K budgets and emphasizing youth engagement to build agency and critical thinking.
- * **MR. KUDAKWASHE MUNEMO, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR AT THE INSTITUTE OF YOUNG WOMEN DEVELOPMENT (IYWD) IN ZIMBABWE**, emphasized fostering a culture of learning through reflection and learning circles, while advocating for investment in PBL/K to empower grassroots feminist organizations and ensure time and space for peer learning, co-creation through the integration of PBL/K into policy and procedure.
- * **DR ERIN STERN, SENIOR ASSOCIATE AT THE PREVENTION COLLABORATIVE**, highlighted the organization's commitment to practice-based knowledge in prevention programming, including a guidance note on collecting and elevating PBK, the "Prevention Triad Tool" to integrate practice into implementation, and evidence and practice briefs to adapt models across contexts and address gaps in the field.
- * **MS. ARTI MOHAN, LEAD TECHNICAL SPECIALIST AT THE SAFE FUTURES HUB**, outlined the hub's mission to scale up successful programs by redefining knowledge, investigating PBK's role in the evidence base, and developing a non-prescriptive PBK framework with guidance on recognizing practitioners' experiences as knowledge and addressing ethical considerations.

To sum-up: The final workshop presentations explored collective actions to advance PBL/K across the EVAW/G field. The UN Trust Fund outlined five key actions: consolidating, disseminating, networking, influencing, and resourcing PBL/K, with participants prioritizing resourcing as the most critical. Practical examples from organizations like CEPLAES, Breakthrough Trust, IYWD, SVRI/Safe Futures Hub and the Prevention Collaborative showcased how PBL/K can be integrated into policies, research, and practice, emphasizing collaboration, advocacy, and capacity building to maximize impact.



8 Participant reflections on collective actions

Participants were provided time to reflect in group work and plenary discussion on ideas for collective action for practice-based learning and knowledge. Commonalities across the groups included:

Blue text denotes real quotes from participants to elevate the voice of participants.

- * **COMMUNITY BUILDING AND NETWORKING:** Form peer learning circles and communities of practice to share PBL/K experiences and resources; use platforms like SHINE and forums such as SVRI to foster continuous exchange and collaboration on PBL/K; maintain networks from workshops to support ongoing dialogue and joint initiatives.

“Form a community of practice on PBK where we would share best practices, for instance, one organization per month could have the space to present”.

- * **DEVELOPING TOOLS AND FRAMEWORKS:** Co-create rigorous tools, models, and a guiding framework for promoting PBL/K; building accessible online learning experiences to share PBL/K concepts and methodologies; documenting PBL/K practices as examples including how to integrate diverse approaches such as oral histories and storytelling.

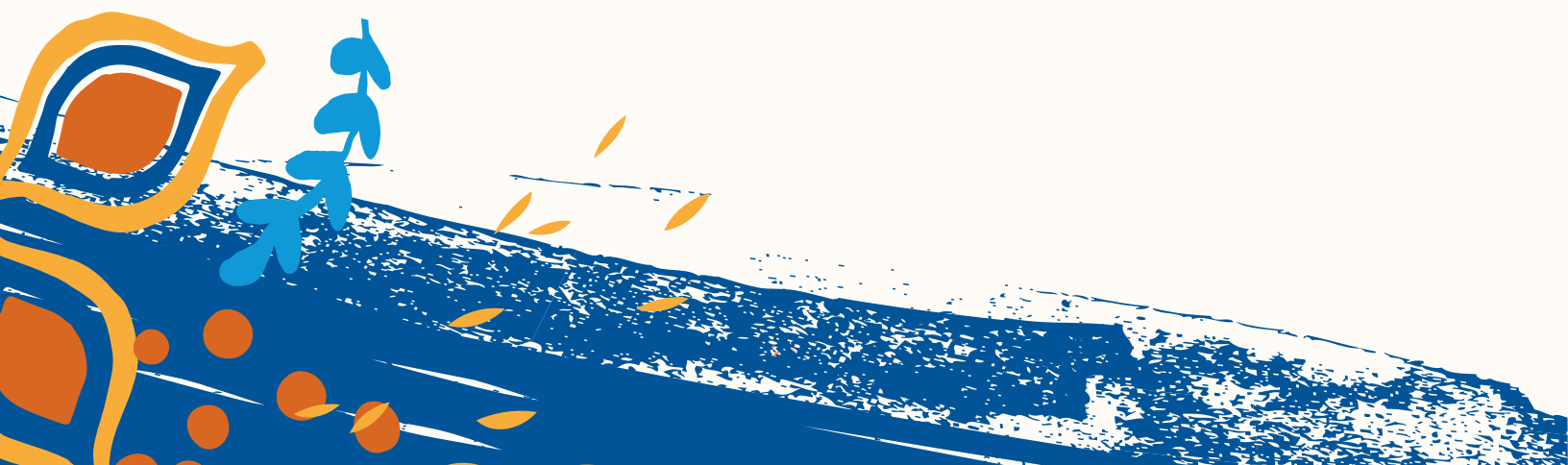
“Develop some sort of online learning for practitioners to understand what PBK is and the work we are doing around it”.

- * **STRATEGIC ADVOCACY AND DONOR ENGAGEMENT:** Develop a collective business case for donors demonstrating PBL/K’s value in achieving EVAW/G outcomes; advocate for donor funding that includes dedicated budgets for staff and learning activities; sensitize donors, researchers, and other stakeholders about PBL/K’s transformative potential.

“[We] need to make business case to donors to fund this. Influence donors tactically – show how this helps/ is important to EVAW”.

- * **CAPACITY BUILDING AND INCLUSIVE SUPPORT:** Provide training, fellowships, and resources to enhance PBL/K capacities within organizations; focus on equitable funding models that support local partners and address barriers to implementing PBL/K (including time); reduce the burden on practitioners by offering tools and external support for PBL/K activities.

“Overcoming barriers – finance, mobility, unpaid care burden”.





Training of AREF gender coordinators and managers on gender and ending gender-based violence.

Credit: Association Ennakhil (Morocco).

- ✳ **ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRATION:** Create space for intentional reflection and learning to integrate PBL activities within daily work; promote organizational cultures that value and promote PBL/K; identify and elevate existing PBL/K efforts.

“Many organizations are already doing PBK without identifying it as such. It is important to start by assessing internally which PBK is already produced”.

- ✳ **KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION AND COLLABORATION:** Publish joint articles, position papers, and reports to consolidate and amplify findings and the importance of PBL/K; leverage existing platforms and forums for disseminating knowledge and influencing policy; encourage cross-organizational exchanges to share evidence, successes, and challenges.

“Develop exchanges and bridges, maybe into smaller groups, to have more time to share evidence and understand how other organizations are doing PBK”.

To sum-up, participants reflected on collective actions to advance PBL/K, emphasizing the importance of community building, tools and frameworks, strategic advocacy, capacity building, organizational integration, and knowledge dissemination. Key ideas included forming peer learning circles, creating accessible tools and online resources, developing a business case for donor support, and fostering organizational cultures that prioritize PBL/K. Participants also stressed the need for publishing and sharing findings to amplify impact and strengthen cross-organizational collaboration.



9 Closing and final reflections

At the end of the workshop participants recapped on the overall objectives of the workshop and were asked to complete the post-workshop survey (see the Introduction for more details).

Participants were invited to join a continuing conversation on the topic of PBL/K on “SHINE,” the UN Trust Fund’s online knowledge exchange hub and asked to provide contact details to receive resources and co-create the final workshop document after the event.

Lastly, participants were provided with time to reflect on (1) key takeaways from the workshop and (2) ideas for individual action after the event. Commonalities included:

Key takeaways from the workshop:

Blue text denotes real quotes from participants to elevate the voice of participants.

- * **THE IMPORTANCE OF PBL/K:** Recognizing PBL/K as a crucial tool in EVAW/G work, particularly for advocating for policy change. *“PBL is important to document the work we do with communities and women. It is an important tool to advocate and change policy since it is inclusive, accessible and based on feminist approaches”.*
- * **INTEGRATION OF PBL/K:** Understanding that PBL/K is not just about monitoring and evaluation but involves pausing and reflecting to create greater impact and deepen learning. *“PBL is more than monitoring and evaluation in organizations, [we] need to pause and reflect to create better impact”.*
- * **CREATING AN ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING CULTURE:** Emphasizing the need to cultivate a learning culture within organizations and integrate PBL/K intentionally in programming.
“There is gap and need for PBL and PBK. Although I have been doing it (PBK), it was not intentional and as a result I got demotivated in my work”.
- * **FEMINIST APPROACH:** PBL/K must be inclusive, accessible, and rooted in a feminist framework, amplifying women’s voices and local expertise within communities.
- * **RIGOR AND PROCESS:** The importance of ensuring rigor in PBL/K and creating dedicated spaces for its development outside of traditional research frameworks. *“Creating a separate space for PBL/K so it doesn’t get swallowed up by research”.*
- * **COLLABORATION AND INCLUSIVITY:** Strong emphasis on collaboration, sharing knowledge, and creating partnerships to advance PBL/K and its integration into programs.
- * **FUNDING CHALLENGES:** Identifying funding as a common challenge and the need to advocate for financial support for PBL/K initiatives.
- * **COMMUNITY AND NETWORK BUILDING:** The value of creating regional or global learning communities on PBL/K including learning from direct experiences and survivor networks.

Key individual actions to be taken after the workshop:

- * **ADVOCATING FOR PBL/K:** Share the concept of PBL/K with organizational leadership and advocate for an evaluation of current practices to better incorporate PBL/K.

"I will share with my organization top head about PBK and advocate for an evaluation of what is being practiced and what not".

- * **POSITION PAPER AND DOCUMENTATION:** Write a position paper or documentation on current projects to reflect on PBL/K and its importance for programming and research.

"I am going to write a position paper on one of my projects [and PBL/K] I am working on".

- * **CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION:** Keep the dialogue going within the organization and the wider community, including through SHINE to share knowledge and experiences.

"I will look at PBL examples – Safe Futures, Raising Voices, What Works 2, Prevention Collaborative".

- * **INTEGRATION INTO PROGRAMMING:** Encourage organizational staff to deepen their PBL, ensuring that it is a valued and integrated as part of programme adaptation and delivery.

- * **FUNDING AND BUDGET ADVOCACY:** Advocate for the inclusion of PBL-related funding in partner budgets and inform funders about learning grants to support PBL.

- * **COLLABORATING WITH RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS:** Connect with researchers and practitioners working on PBL/K more intentionally. *"We will work to integrate PBL in our research work, particularly in our women diaspora leadership programme".*

- * **ENHANCING INTERNAL LEARNING:** Cultivate a learning culture within the organization by recognizing where PBL/K is already happening and building on those practices.

"I need to cultivate a learning culture in my organization and identify the ways in which PBL/K is already happening even if we don't name it that way currently".

- * **EXPANDING AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE:** Share examples, join networks, and contribute to making PBL/K visible by writing and disseminating PBL learnings responsibly.

To sum-up, the workshop concluded with participants reflecting on key takeaways and identifying actions to advance PBL/K. Key insights included recognizing PBL/K as essential for policy advocacy, fostering organizational learning cultures, and embedding feminist, inclusive, and rigorous approaches. Participants emphasized the need for collaboration, funding advocacy, and creating dedicated spaces for PBL/K outside traditional research frameworks. For individual actions, participants committed to advocating for PBL/K within their organizations, integrating it into programming, and sharing knowledge through networks like SHINE. Plans included writing position papers, evaluating current practices, and promoting funding for PBL/K. Building organizational learning cultures and collaborating with researchers and practitioners were highlighted as critical next steps.



The workshop closed with 89 participants signing up to continue the conversation and agreeing to take part in discussions on collective actions and outcomes post-workshop.

10 Resources and further information

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