



Wilton Park



Image: DFID

Report

Building a shared agenda on prevention of violence against women and girls

Tuesday 7 – Friday 10 May 2019 | WP1657

In partnership with:



Department
for International
Development

Wellspring
Philanthropic Fund
Upholding human dignity | Unlocking human potential



Report

Building a shared agenda on prevention of violence against women and girls

Tuesday 7 - Friday 10 May 2019 | WP1657

In partnership with Department for International Development and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund

Introduction: A critical moment for the field

The field of preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG) is at a critical point. The huge increase in global knowledge and evidence over the past decade has provided 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 are showing promise and demonstrating that dramatic reductions in VAWG are possible within programmatic timeframes. Investment in prevention has also increased, along with the number and type of actors committing time, resources and political will to end VAWG. On the other hand, shocking levels of violence and abuse continue in some parts of the world, and at the same time, globally, we face concerted efforts to roll back progress on women's rights.

At this pivotal moment, it is important to consolidate and disseminate the available evidence as effectively as possible to advance the prevention of VAWG. The ambition, in line with the global goals, is to end all forms of VAWG. In order to achieve this, successful approaches which lead to sustained change need to be brought to scale, alongside continuing to increase the evidence base of what does and does not work to achieve sustainable and scalable change for different groups in different contexts. This will bring significant challenges including the need for new and sometimes uncomfortable partnerships, and the need to recognise the centrality of the women's movement to the field to ensure accountability and retain a political focus on transforming systems of power and patriarchy.

This unique Wilton Park event, in partnership with the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund (WPF), brought together over 50 diverse actors including civil society, academics and policymakers to share the latest evidence and to discuss the opportunities presented by this new knowledge to set a high level of ambition on preventing VAWG, commensurate with the scale of the challenge globally.

Focusing on intimate partner violence (IPV) and non-partner sexual violence (NPSV), the meeting sought to build relationships and momentum around prevention of VAWG and achieve the following objectives:

- To learn about the latest evidence on what works to prevent VAWG and how this is linked to broad development goals
- To explore effective policies and programme design from diverse sectors and regions
- To identify effective strategies for scaling up violence prevention
- To build consensus around priorities for action and investment and how to progress these priorities.

Key debates in the field of VAWG prevention

1. The substantial progress in building the evidence on VAWG prevention, in particular demonstrating that such violence is preventable within programmatic timeframes and even within challenging settings, affords opportunities for the field to broaden the reach of its partnerships, seek increased funding, and raise the scale of its ambition. Along with these opportunities come new challenges, as well as existing tensions that the field must contend with.
2. Key debates centre around how to create a coherent narrative within the field regarding the state of the evidence on prevention, the implications for policy and programming, and the direction for further research in order to take these messages on VAWG prevention to a wider multi-sectoral audience. There is a tension around whether there is sufficient evidence on how to effectively scale up prevention work as well as the need for investment in further research in this area. Reaching new actors and engaging them in VAWG prevention can throw up challenges to the political values that have driven the agenda, however addressing VAWG at the scale needed will mean developing new and unusual partnerships, some of which may be uncomfortable. This is a tension that remains unresolved and will be an area of constant negotiation.
3. The need to retain a political approach within VAWG prevention is a recurring theme. Keeping women, and the ultimate goal of women's rights, wellbeing and agency at the centre of the VAWG prevention agenda ensures that preventing VAWG does not become a technocratic exercise that fails to shift structural barriers or that sidelines women's voices and the critical role of women's rights organisations and movements in the process of change. However, how to strike the balance between the pragmatism of wider partnerships and leveraging sectoral programmes to 'add-on' VAWG prevention, and values-driven work led by women's organisations with a clear political agenda around women's human rights is contested.
4. Linked to this, the politics of knowledge production and the use of evidence is an area that the field is grappling with. Currently the vast majority of resources and authority around 'knowledge' are situated in the global north. Local knowledge, and particularly women's voices, are seen as anecdotal. Practice-based knowledge needs to occupy a more central space in the field alongside academic knowledge. In addition, knowledge is not disseminated evenly within the field, and the use of evidence is itself political. The fact that data can be ignored if it is not convenient, or negative results can be buried, is a reminder of the need to keep a feminist political lens to VAWG prevention, as evidence alone will not lead to progress.
5. The funding gap continues to hamper the field from addressing violence at the level that's needed, with funding for VAWG making up a tiny proportion of ODA (estimated 0.002%), and only a small proportion of that reaching civil society organisations working in the global south. Yet the current aid architecture overlooks the majority of women's organisations who are often well placed to lead prevention work. The influx of larger amounts of funding into the field could well exacerbate this imbalance as such organisations are not well placed to access or absorb large amounts of funding due to historically being chronically under-resourced.

The state of the evidence on prevention of violence against women and girls

6. Although there are still gaps in our understanding, much more is known now than ever before about the key drivers of IPV and how it can be prevented.
7. Low education, exposure to violence in childhood, unequal power in intimate relationships, and unequal gender norms and attitudes increase the risk of experiencing IPV and NPSV. Low education, child maltreatment, exposure to violence, harmful drinking and attitudes accepting violence and gender inequality increase risk of perpetrating IPV.

Effective prevention approaches

8. Significant learning from DFID's flagship What Works to Prevent VAWG programme¹ (including 13 countries in Africa and Asia) has highlighted how VAWG can be prevented in programmatic timeframes, through different types of interventions including combined economic empowerment and gender transformative interventions; community-level social norms interventions; interventions with children; and couples interventions.
9. Taken together, the evidence from What Works demonstrates that context matters, the scale and dynamics of VAWG vary substantially by country and community, and interventions don't necessarily work in every setting. This highlights the importance of carefully selecting and adapting approaches for different settings, maintaining fidelity to core principles, and where possible working closely with those who developed the approach to ensure adaptation does not dilute elements of the model which are critical to success (see box).
10. Evidence presented by Raising Voices and the Learning Collaborative² shows that we now have strong evidence of the effectiveness of community mobilisation on social norm change to prevent VAWG, including in programmatic timeframes when the work is done intensely. Echoing the findings from What Works, critical elements include allowing sufficient time, working through critical reflection rather than top-down didactic methods, and working multi-sectorally to enhance impact.
11. A recent rigorous review of global research on school-related gender based violence (SRGBV)³ found strong evidence that interventions with children in educational settings can increase their capacity to prevent and respond to violence within a context that responds to their needs, and that interventions with community members that create space for dialogue around social norms can help to reduce violence. However, further evidence is needed on institutionalising and sustaining whole-school approaches to SRGBV prevention, building effective child protection policies and practices in and around schools, utilising opportunities such as curriculum development and teacher training, and engaging actors enacting policies.

Critical success factors for IPV prevention

While the approaches vary, some **common element** across effective interventions include:

- Context- and population-appropriate
- Address important and amenable drivers of violence for the context
- Are multi-component and have a strong theory of change
- Based on theories of gender & power
- Work with women *and* men or girls *and* boys
- Use effective behaviour change methods for training components: including critical reflection, skills building, experiential learning and building empathy
- Provide sufficient time for change (18-24 months and beyond)
- Delivered by purposefully selected, well trained, experienced and well supported facilitators or volunteers
- Sufficient time to design, adapt and pilot approaches before evaluating.

¹ www.whatworks.co.za

² <http://irh.org/projects/learning-collaborative-to-advance-normative-change/>

³ http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/SRGBV_review_FINAL_V1_web_version_2.pdf

Integrating prevention of VAWG into programming in other sectors

12. In addition to these targeted VAWG prevention programmes, there is emerging and growing evidence that interventions in other development sectors can impact on levels of violence. In particular, there is now relatively strong evidence of the impact of cash transfer programmes – ranging from 11-66% reduction in IPV in different contexts. Evidence suggests that cash transfers, coupled with behaviour change components and group work with women, can lead to sustained reductions in IPV even where programmes do not have an explicit focus on VAWG prevention. The likely pathways to prevention are through shifting dynamics at the household level i.e. economic security affecting emotional wellbeing, shifting intra-household dynamics, and women’s empowerment. Impacts on IPV depend largely on the reaction of men in the household to women’s increased agency.
13. The health sector can play a pivotal role in both response and prevention of VAWG, offering an important window of opportunity to mitigate harm, prevent recurrence, increase women’s safety and prevent the ‘intergenerational’ impact of VAW. An upcoming systematic review on VAW prevention in the health sector finds promising evidence of the effectiveness of women centred-care and front line psychological first aid, mental health interventions, and psychosocial support interventions, and interventions focused on children who witness IPV at home; whilst evidence suggests blanket screening for IPV is not effective. However, these interventions work differently for different forms of violence (with more impact on physical than sexual violence).
14. Evidence shows that mental health and IPV have a cyclical relationship, with women who have experienced IPV more likely to experience depressive symptoms and vice versa. Evidence also suggests a positive association with male partners’ problematic drinking and the frequency and severity of IPV. Evidence suggests that brief interventions (consisting of just 4-8 sessions) exist that can be delivered by lay providers to successfully reduce hazardous drinking, depression, anxiety and trauma-related symptoms, and that such programmes can also reduce violence in the family, including IPV.

VAWG prevention in fragile settings

15. We know that the odds of a woman experiencing IPV in conflict and emergency settings can be up to three times higher, due to a combination of pre-existing, new and exacerbated risk factors. However, there is currently limited evidence of what works to prevent VAWG in these fragile contexts. Community-based programming in these settings targeting attitudes, behaviours and social norms change shows promise but few evaluations have been completed and none during more acute phases of emergencies. There is an urgent need to build on the emerging evidence base in such contexts, carefully adapting approaches from more stable contexts.

Social and economic costs of VAWG

16. Research from the What Works programme has demonstrated the magnitude of the unrecognised costs of VAWG to women, households, communities, businesses, sectors and the overall economy, and has highlighted the significant *cost of inaction*. VAWG deepens household poverty, impacting on both paid and unpaid work, and children’s education. Research has found that survivors may lose on average between 5-11 days of economic activity a year. In Vietnam missed unpaid care work amounted to approximately 0.4% of GDP, and in Ghana 65 million working days are lost each year as a result of VAWG⁴. Evidence from Pakistan found that children of families experiencing IPV missed 5 days of school per year⁵.

Costing prevention interventions

17. Emerging evidence from What Works suggests that VAWG prevention can be cost-effective and delivered at a low cost per beneficiary for certain populations, although evidence is still limited. Using the measure of number of IPV-free years for women, evidence from evaluations of both COMBAT in Ghana and Stepping Stones and Creating Futures (SSCF) in South Africa suggest positive impacts. When looking at

⁴ <https://whatworks.co.za/resources/reports/item/596-economic-and-social-costs-of-violence-against-women-in-ghana-summary-report>

⁵ <https://whatworks.co.za/resources/reports/item/598-economic-and-social-costs-of-violence-against-women-in-pakistan-summary-report>

the mean cost of averting a DALY⁶, results suggest approaches such as COMBAT (Ghana) and Indashyikirwa (Rwanda) may be highly cost effective.

18. Factors that are found to influence the cost effectiveness of interventions include: the comprehensiveness of the intervention; the cost of set-up and adaptation; human resource costs which are influenced by the intensity and duration of the intervention, skills needed, and cost of community engagement; platforms and scale of units of intervention; and finally the range, type and duration of effects. Costing data, whilst useful to make the case for further investment, must not undermine the rights-based argument for VAWG prevention or the ultimate goal of gender equality.
19. Lessons can be learned from successful scale up of HIV prevention, including the need for more routine costing as interventions are scaled up; collecting routine data on the societal costs of inaction (for example gathering data on the value placed on a lack of safety and security); co-financing models; and scenario modelling across populations.

Priorities for future research on VAWG prevention

20. The field's knowledge on prevention of IPV has been significantly expanded. However less is known about what works to reduce multiple and often overlapping forms of VAWG, such as NPSV, harassment in the workplace, and violence in public spaces. Much of the research on effective prevention of IPV may be transferable as lessons for tackling other forms of violence, such as sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH), but there are also gaps still to be filled.
21. Understanding how to translate effective small scale programmes to reach larger numbers of people is a key next step for the field. Little is known about how to scale up behaviour change programming effectively, and further investment in implementation research embedded in programmes as they are replicated, learn and adapt will be critical. In addition more research is needed on other routes to scale such as opportunities for policy interventions that can have a macro level impact, or how to harness large-scale sectoral programmes, such as education or social protection, to prevent VAWG.
22. Whilst significant reductions in VAWG have been seen through robustly evaluated interventions, the question remains of how to eliminate VAWG altogether. Where some interventions are effective for the majority of participants, none were effective for all and more research is needed to understand how to reach all women and girls regardless of age, disability, ethnicity and other axes of discrimination.
23. There are many new learning frontiers, or areas of innovation, for the research agenda to look at. Many locally developed interventions exist that have not yet been evaluated or optimised which researchers can shine a light on; the evidence base on prevention in humanitarian settings is still emerging and more investment is needed; and more longitudinal research is needed to understand the sustainability of effective approaches, and the intergenerational impacts of violence and violence prevention.

The challenges and opportunities to meet the goal of ending VAWG

24. The VAWG prevention field is currently held back by a lack of coherent understanding and consistent messaging about what is effective and what the priorities are in programmatic and policy terms, which can be used to engage a wider set of partners in tackling VAWG. This is underpinned by fragmented coordination within the field. At this point in the field's development there are also significant challenges in taking the next step from small to large scale work and the current lack of research on how to do this effectively. In tandem with these challenges, the mismatch between funding levels and funding needs, and especially funding to groups of key actors such as women's rights organisations and movements means that not all actors in the ecology of the field are able to maximise their potential roles. The risk of depoliticization and loss of control of the agenda presents a barrier to creating broader partnerships for change.

⁶ Disability Adjusted Life Year https://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/metrics_daly/en/

The key challenges of how to effectively scale up, funding scarcity and imbalance in the ecology of the field are discussed further below.

The challenges, risks and opportunities of scaling up prevention programming

25. It is important to distinguish between *scaling up* and *working at scale*. Scaling up must be an intentional process that is carefully planned, considers sustainability, engages multiple actors and is characterised by overlapping phases or ‘waves’ rather than discrete steps. There are different types of scale up to consider: horizontal (replication in another geography), vertical (institutionalisation), grafting (adding components to an existing initiative), or part integration (i.e. integration of core principles of a successful approach like SASA!). In addition to scaling up community-based interventions, there are other potential entry points such as social protection programmes, legal reform and secondary education which can achieve results at scale.
26. Multisectoral interventions may present opportunities to test and innovate, and if successful quickly scale up effective interventions through existing programmes. This can also help to reach new beneficiary groups and contribute to leaving no one behind. Considering SDG 5.2 as an SDG accelerator has allowed UNDP to integrate prevention into the green climate fund in Uganda, and women’s economic empowerment programming in the Syria response.
27. More research is needed to understand the implementation challenges of scaling up prevention interventions, in particular to understand how to design, implement at scale and measure social norm change interventions. Sustained behaviour change, whilst achievable within programmatic timeframes for small-scale interventions, will still require long-term investment to achieve change at scale for whole communities or countries.
28. Given the continuing gaps in understanding how to effectively scale up, the field risks wasting resources on impact evaluations of interventions that are not yet ready to be taken to scale, and there is more investment needed in implementation research to further test and adapt interventions during scale up, as well as to partner with the many innovative interventions that have not yet been evaluated to learn from locally-designed approaches.
29. With relatively few prevention approaches rigorously evaluated there is a significant burden on small organisations with proven effective approaches to provide technical support for replication by others without necessarily having the infrastructure in place to handle such demands. Building the infrastructure for scale up needs to recognise the role of organisations who have originated such models and provide support for their role.
30. A further lesson for effective scale up is unsuccessful replication of proven approaches to different settings. Experience from scaling up SNs approaches has highlighted six interconnected insights to take social norm change approaches rooted in social justice practices and principles to scale. These include aligning with the values of the original model, fidelity to the methodology and working with originators of the model; and the need ensure adequate time, prioritize accountability to communities, and re-examine the role of governments and international organisations⁷.
31. A focus on the big structural drivers of power and patriarchy that underpin VAWG is also a route to tackle VAWG at scale. Building, supporting and nurturing movements, including working across traditionally siloed thematic areas, is key to shifting these structural drivers.

The funding landscape for VAWG prevention

32. There is a scarcity of funding for the women’s movement; the median annual income of WROs is just \$20,000, 98% of feminist and women’s rights organisations (WROs) do not have money raised for next year, and 50% of these organisations have never received core support or multi-year funding⁸.
33. At the same time, we know there is a well-coordinated and increase in funding going to groups seeking to roll back women’s rights. A lack of core funding undermines the movement and its ability to play its critical role as political agents of change. Evidence from an evaluation of the Australian Department for Foreign

⁷ https://salamandertrust.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/0.CUSP_Overviewdoc_Insights_interactive.FINAL_.pdf

⁸ <https://www.awid.org/publications/beyond-investing-women-and-girls-mobilizing-resources>

Affairs and Trade (DFAT), who have increased funding to WROs by ten-fold, have demonstrated the catalytic and transformative impact of longer-term core funding.

34. While it may be increasing, funding for VAWG prevention does not yet reflect the size of the challenge. A mapping of global funding patterns over the past five years, finds that less than 5% of ODA goes to dedicated funding targeting gender equality as its prime objective, and it is estimated that less than 0.002% of annual ODA goes towards tackling VAWG⁹. Only 0.3% of all human rights funding goes on women with disabilities¹⁰.
35. Fundraising places a significant burden on WROs, diverting attention away from much needed advocacy and programming work. At the same time, there is increased competition from more traditional development partners – who may not bring sufficient gender expertise. Significant resources are wasted by multiple funders undergoing intensive procurement process and due diligence of the same organisations. There is a need for much better coordination among responsible funders, and more coordinated funding mechanisms or networks conducive of longer-term change and necessary to build resilient and sustainable feminist movements. Further, there is a need for stronger cross issue and cross-movement funding, where *transformative funding* reflects diversity and intersectionality within the women's movement.
36. While the overall 'pot' for gender equality remains comparatively small, there is a need to look to see if there are opportunities presented by other sector funds – such as the green climate fund and funding towards economic empowerment. There has been a lack of focus on domestic funding opportunities – with lessons to be learned from integrating HIV prevention efforts within national health sectors.

Strengthening the ecosystem

37. Governments, civil society, donors and researchers all have a role in the ecosystem to prevent and respond to VAWG. Different actors are best suited to particular contributions, though these may change in the future, and need to be funded or otherwise supported to carry out these roles. For example, governments are well placed to provide resources and services, but not to lead community-based social change, whereas women's rights organisations have the political analysis and networks to do prevention work at community level.
38. Due to the sustained efforts by the women's movement, policy makers and organisations, addressing VAWG is central to global human rights and development agendas. Women's movements play a critical role in the ecosystem of prevention through frontline service delivery and advocacy for legal and policy reform, as well as holding governments and other actors in the field accountable to women and to the overarching political goal of gender equality. There is a need for increased funding and support to women's organisations and movements as critical agents, recognising their multiple and pivotal roles, not just as implementing partners.
39. As well as strengthening the roles of actors within the field, working at scale requires collaboration with other sectors, and sometimes uncomfortable partnerships with unusual allies.

Opportunities and strengths within the prevention field

40. Whilst the challenges are not insignificant, the advancement of knowledge and evidence of effective prevention and the increasing expertise within the field make it well placed to tackle the challenges ahead. Initiatives already exist or are being developed to meet the needs of the field in terms of communication, coordination and common messaging. These include the following:

⁹<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5656cae6e4b00f188f3228ee/t/5d06db1397e054000155a074/1560730394825/Wilton+Park+Spread.pdf>

¹⁰ Ibid.

41. The WHO's **RESPECT initiative**¹¹ provides a framework for engaging policymakers in VAW prevention, building on the UN Women Prevention Framework to consolidate what we know in simple way to communicate more easily and develop and share common messages. The initiative includes a 'live' summary of the evidence base which will regularly be updated.

42. UN Women are currently building on this to develop an **implementation guide** for governments, civil society and other practitioners to design, implement and monitor comprehensive prevention interventions that are adapted to the local context.

43. The **Sexual Violence Research Initiative**

(www.svri.org), is a global network to advance quality research on SV in LMICS. Currently housed in the South Africa Medical Research Council, it is transitioning to become independent. It addresses other forms of VAWG as well as sexual violence, and also links with violence against children. The next global conference is October 21st 2019 in South Africa providing a safe space to connect and recharge. SVRI provides grants through a joint funding with the World Bank to support research including on-granting and capacity building.

44. The **Prevention Collaborative** (www.prevention-collaborative.org) is a platform focused on resources for practitioners and social movements to build capacity on the nuts and bolts of programming through practice-based learning and evidence from research. It works through creating learning partnerships with a two year commitment to mentor, and runs a Community of Practice. It is intended as a collective resource for field which is evidence informed and feminist driven to elevate practice.

45. **Association of Women in Development** (www.awid.org) has been researching and analysing trends in funding for women's rights and to women's organising over many years through the Resourcing Feminist Movements initiative, as well as developing advocacy responses and strategies to mobilise funding for women's movements and organisations.

46. **COFEM** (www.cofemsocialchange.org) is a loose coalition of feminists from the global south and north including practitioners, researchers and funders. It came together as response to finding the GBV field deviating from women's rights and creating transformation, and depoliticization of agenda. Joint strategizing to re-feminise the work. Feminist Pocketbook – 10 issues to provide language.

47. The **Spotlight Initiative** (www.spotlightinitiative.org) is a EU/UN partnership providing 500m Euros for the eradication of VAWG. Spotlight was conceived of to accelerate the achievement of multiple SDGs and ensure no one is left behind. It has six pillars, the 6th of which is on investing in women's movements.

48. **Cash Transfer and IPV research collaborative** (www.ifpri.org/project/cash-transfer-and-intimate-partner-violence-research-collaborative). The goal of the collaborative is to influence the social protection field and other economists to integrate action on VAWG prevention into their programmes.

49. **UN Women's Global Knowledge Platform** (www.evaw.unwomen.org/en) contains tools on programme design and policy guidance, as well as a global database on VAWG based on UN member state submissions on policies and legislation.

50. **PAWHR – Philanthropy Advancing Women's Rights** (www.Pawhr.org/donors) consists of 12 private donors working together to channel more and better funding to women's human rights and feminist organisations to strengthen the women's funding ecosystem.

51. **Leading from the South** is a Dutch government initiative to resource advocacy on women's rights led by three regional women's funds and a global fund for indigenous women's rights.

Seven strategies to prevent VAW

Relationship skills strengthened

Empowerment of women

Services ensured

Poverty reduced

Environments made safe

Child and adolescent abuse prevented

Transformed attitudes, beliefs, and norms

¹¹ <https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/preventing-vaw-framework-policy-makers/en/>

52. **What Works**, the DFID funded VAWG prevention research programme, has created a community of practitioners and researchers generating new knowledge for the field. A successor programme will be starting in 2020 looking to fill research gaps on adaptation, different ways to achieve scale, and innovation.
53. **GBV Prevention Network (www.preventgbvafrica.org)** is a dynamic group of activists and practitioners committed to preventing violence against women in the Horn, East and Central Africa. The network has over 500 members and is working in 18 countries.
54. **The community for understanding scale up (CUSP)** is a group of nine organizations working across 3 regions with robust experience in scaling social norm change methodologies in various contexts—the Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP), Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS and Gender Equity (IMAGE), the Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University, Oxfam, Puntos de Encuentro, Raising Voices, Salamander Trust, Sonke Gender Justice, and Tostan.

Build wider consensus: Whilst substantial consensus emerged from Wilton Park around priorities for the VAWG prevention field, there is a need to build wider consensus with a broader more inclusive group, with a focus on reaching out to organisations based in the global south and on exploring new partnerships that can leverage significant resources.

Develop a collective narrative and increase cooperation and partnership: Greater coordination within the field was seen as critical to advancing the prevention agenda, between donors, practitioners and researchers, and across sectors, through better communication, common purpose and messaging and expanded partnerships. The RESPECT framework was cited as a providing a common agenda for the whole field to unite behind.

Strengthen the ecology of the field: Supporting and strengthening the women's movement and women's rights organisations emerged as a clear priority, recognising their critical role in VAWG prevention and response and the chronic under-resourcing and level of political threat within which they operate.

Leverage an increase in the overall amount of funding for VAWG prevention and response: Leveraging a larger overall 'pot' of funding for VAWG prevention, commensurate with the scale of the challenge and the importance of the issue, will be needed to fund the future research agenda, to work at scale, and to strengthen the ecology of the field with a particular focus on women's movements and women's rights organisations if the field is to realise its high level of ambition.

Continue to build the evidence: Gaps in evidence and knowledge remain, particularly with regards to how to effectively scale up successful small scale work, and how to have impact at scale through community-based programming, policy change or working through other sectoral platforms. There is also a need to rebalance the emphasis on academic evidence and give greater value and voice to practitioner knowledge and knowledge originating from the global south.

Retain the political heart: Nothing short of a revolution is required to reduce, and ultimately end, VAWG, by transforming underlying power and structures that uphold gender inequality. VAWG is an entry point to do this, and the VAWG prevention field must ensure that it retains an explicit political approach that goes beyond reducing VAWG to the transformative goal of increasing women's choice, bodily integrity and happiness. The field must also recognise that a strong focus on evidence risks creating a technocratic focus which undermines the political nature of the work.

Build trust and collective self-care within the field: Self-care was recognised as an important part of maintaining a movement to end VAWG, especially for women's rights organisations and individuals working in frontline service delivery in highly patriarchal societies. Collective self-care is also important for the field, recognising the different roles that individuals and organisations play in VAWG prevention, and creating trust and alliances to sustain action on prevention.

Broaden the focus to end all forms of VAWG for everyone: The evolution of the field, which has to date focused on IPV and had relatively little to say about VAWG and intersectionality, needs to broaden its focus to expand the evidence base and attention to all forms of VAWG including sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, violence in public and digital spaces, and the experiences and effectiveness of interventions for marginalised groups of women such as sex workers, women with disabilities, adolescent girls, and trans women amongst others.

Recommendations from the conference

A number of next steps are needed to strengthen the VAWG prevention field, the first of which is acknowledgement within the field and externally that whilst there is still much to learn, the field is no longer new and is well placed to advance the prevention agenda. The next phase of evidence generation on VAWG prevention needs to embed research within programmes to iteratively adapt and refine approaches as they are scaled up, building a solid understanding of how to scale up whilst retaining impact and attention to the wider political goal of women's rights.

Secondly, the VAWG prevention field needs to build greater trust, collaboration and consensus within the field, as well as continuing to openly and respectfully debate issues where there is divergence. In order to increase momentum behind prevention of VAWG the field also needs to broaden its membership to include, in particular, more actors from the global south and marginalised groups to ensure we leave no one behind, but also to be open to work with a wide range of partners from other sectors to advance the agenda whilst upholding a feminist approach.

All actors within the field have the responsibility to support and strengthen women's rights organisations, including critically channelling more funding to them at all levels in ways which support their agency in the field, and giving political space to voices and organisations from within women's rights movements.

This Wilton Park meeting was acknowledged as an important moment in the evolution of the field, and a follow up event was proposed to be held in the global south within the next two years. A global platform on ending all forms of VAWG was recommended, as was greater coordination between funders to support prevention of VAWG

Kate Bishop

Principal Consultant, Gender Based Violence, Social Development Direct

Jenny Holden

Senior Technical Expert, Social Development Direct

Wilton Park | June 2019

Wilton Park reports are intended to be brief summaries of the main points and conclusions of an event. Reports reflect rapporteurs' accounts of the proceedings and do not necessarily reflect the views of the rapporteur. Wilton Park reports and any recommendations contained therein are for participants and are not a statement of policy for Wilton Park, the FCO or the UK government.

Should you wish to read other Wilton Park reports, or participate in upcoming Wilton Park events, please consult our website www.wiltonpark.org.uk. To receive our monthly bulletin and latest updates, please subscribe to <https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/newsletter/>