

**Summary record
NOT FOR CIRCULATION**

Informal expert consultation: How can we build on DFID's *What Works to Prevent Violence* Programme to be ambitious and support real progress towards SDG5.2?

16 March 2018, 11:00-13:00, UK Mission, New York

This is a record of the discussion, not a statement of what DFID will do. It seeks to record all of the opinions raised: as such, there are some suggestions which are in contradiction to each other or suggest alternative approaches or priorities.

1. Overarching messages

- **Build on the reputation, strengths and achievements of the What Works to Prevent Violence programme**, notably rigorous research and innovation, and learning and capacity development within and across regions. Consider how to leverage results from What Works to encourage investment in the scale-up of interventions and build momentum around prevention. However, we don't simply need more of the same; for example, DFID should consider how to go beyond only project level and discreet interventions.
- **Important to get the right balance between research, innovation, implementation and scale-up**. Scale-up is key but investing in innovation and supporting new ideas in programming and piloting of new approaches/methodologies is also crucial (we should not focus only on adaptation of existing models). At the same time, whilst there are still research questions to answer, there is also a need to balance what we don't yet know with implementing and scaling what we already know or can be relatively confident of.
- **Build on DFID's comparative advantage and consider complementarity with others in the field**. There are now many more players including funders interested in the same questions as DFID (e.g. around intersectionality, and getting research into practice) who don't necessarily come from the traditional VAWG field. Important to think about complementarity and consider a potential consortium approach.
- **Use DFID's convening power to facilitate organisations coming together to learn from each other, strengthen capacity, and build coalitions/networks to support co-ordinated action** (e.g. at a district level or within a particular sector such as the garment industry). DFID is well-placed to support cross-regional exchange and coalition building; help convene the development and humanitarian sectors or the VAW and VAC fields toward more collaborative action; and champion the need for evidence-based learning at the global level with other donors. This could go beyond grantees directly involved in any potential programme (although it should be noted that DFID has more limited influence in certain parts of the world such as Latin America and East Asia).

- **Prevention is the right priority but it is important to also address response** (especially in conflict), and secondary and tertiary prevention not only primary (especially for high risk groups). Response can have spill overs for prevention.
- **Think expansively about research.** Consider not only whether an intervention works or not, but also the pathways of change, why it has worked and whether the change is sustained. Important to capture practice-based learning too: what we can learn from the implementation of interventions? And consider more longitudinal research.

2. Process, partnerships and accountability

- Consider how the research design process could itself be used to drive change, e.g. by **engaging and consulting** with governments, local CSOs and other potential stakeholders and users early, to build buy-in to later findings and recommendations (e.g. which types of evidence would be most useful in driving change in their contexts?).
- Particularly important to set out requirements and resources to **consult with women and girls** throughout the research process in a meaningful way.
- Recognise that **women's rights organisations** are well-placed to reach the hardest to reach, both in terms of conflict and humanitarian settings where access is difficult, and in terms of reaching people on the margins of society. Important to:
 - Deliberately and meaningfully include WROs in research processes.
 - Build mechanisms into any potential programme to ensure accountability to WROs, and to women and girls.
 - Think about programme delivery mechanisms that enable WROs to be meaningful partners, to access funds, and to drive and conduct their own research on their own work.
 - Recognise risks of backlash and need for additional support e.g. specialist training in trauma, self-care etc.
- **Women's Funds** are a pass through mechanism that DFID could engage with to reduce its own risk to fund these groups. Women's Funds do not just pass the money on but do valuable accompaniment that can mitigate backlash and build organisational capacity.
- Consider broadening the focus on civil society beyond WROs and women's movements to include '**women in movements**' – how can we contribute to documenting the VAWG-prevention effects of different social movements, and women's leadership and activism within them?
- Consider supporting, researching and learning from **coalitions/networks** of organisations working together.
- Views on working with **governments** differ:
 - Some question if this is DFID's comparative advantage: other players such as the UN are already doing this, and there is a risk of investing a lot for little impact.
 - Others felt that engagement with governments is important for sustainability, or noted that bypassing governments can have the effect of depoliticising the work by suggesting that there is a set of technical interventions and lessons that can be distilled and then applied elsewhere. Questions of how to work with government, and which parts of government, are perhaps the more central issues.

3. Scale-up

- **Unpack what we mean by scale-up and re-think the term.** It's quite instrumental – consider integration, advancement, progress – and remember that not everything happens through projects. The term also tends toward a discussion of 'scaling up' from small into big rather than proliferation and viral spread of ways of working.
- A focus on scale-up could consider:
 - **adapting large-scale programmes that are not directly or explicitly addressing VAWG prevention to integrate this**, including DFID programmes,
 - testing a **package of interventions** in a particular context, working at different levels and/or across sectors (e.g. education, economic empowerment, etc),
 - **facilitating and learning from processes of translating/adapting 'effective' models into other contexts** (how to maintain the fidelity of the intervention?),
 - perhaps through setting up **Regional Learning into Action hubs/processes** which bring together programme staff (gov't and NGO?), with regional/international mentors, and researchers from universities in the region (Raising Voices is looking at establishing regional technical hubs for training on the SASA! model).
 - while significantly **strengthening the capacity of NGOs and other key actors** to evaluate/research and learn from their own work
 - and investing in **research and evaluation** to generate learning and evidence on what works to prevent VAWG at scale.
- Potential entry points: **education, gender budgeting, institutional accountability** (how people can hold institutions to account).
- Be wary of a focus on legal and justice system reform: can invest a lot without much evidence of impact.
- Is a whole field of science that looks at how to effectively and efficiently scale-up and sustain interventions.
- Think about **sustainability of impacts** as well as scale. We don't know what happens in the long-term to our interventions: no one has tested beyond two years. Are the benefits reaped into the future or is there backlash?
- UNDP's global GBV programme is an interesting model of testing the integration of VAWG prevention into large sector programmes such as environment, economic development and livelihoods, including by planning and costing for violence action plans at district/sub-district levels.

Influencing political scale-up

- There is fatigue with gender mainstreaming. Need to build a political coalition of actors to counter this. VAWG can offer a concrete entry point for mainstreaming.
- In terms of high level policy influencing, this is in part about DFID/UK using its influence to take the VAWG agenda outside the usual spaces into more "mainstream" spaces e.g. within modern slavery, or conflict and humanitarian spaces, or leave no one behind.
- However, there is a risk of wrapping too much into a potential successor programme. Any next phase does not need to take all of this on – some VAWG integration within DFID's other major sectoral programming could play a big role. Still, the relationships between any next phase and this sectoral

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mainstreaming needs to be clearly thought through and articulated as synergistic rather than simply parallel.

Conflict and crises

- VAWG prevention in conflict and crisis is an important focus for research and practice – there is a key opportunity in these settings as norms are disrupted. A focus on conflict should be **embedded across all learning frontiers**.
- Important to **avoid reinforcing a development/humanitarian dichotomy**, given the extremely protracted nature of many ‘emergencies’. Consider going beyond conflict settings to also include fragile contexts more broadly.
- Most useful to combine prevention, response, and **risk mitigation** (e.g. through integrating VAWG into sectors such as WASH, food security, cash transfers etc).
- Consider how to **adapt effective programmes from non-emergency settings**: Do we need reduced dosage or brevity? Different delivery mechanisms?
- Important to **emphasise innovation** as well as adaptation, and design interventions in conflict and crisis settings with the **potential for scale** in mind (recognising opportunities here given normative and institutional change that often characterise these settings).
- Focus on a range of contexts **beyond only IDP camp settings** e.g. acute emergencies, urban settings, protracted crises.
- Would be useful to understand more about the drivers of **early/forced marriage**, what prevents or reduces this, and how services can be specifically tailored to respond, specifically in humanitarian settings where caregivers often perceive marrying their girls to be a protective measure.
- Are gaps in empirical data around intersections of VAWG and peacebuilding and statebuilding processes.
- New World Bank/UN joint study “Pathways for Peace” is a potential entry point to link this work to the wider conversation on conflict and fragility.
- Note that the SASA! model is being tested for humanitarian settings.

VAWG-VAC

- Agreement that how to programme to address violence against **adolescent girls** is an important focus – this would build on early marriage findings from What Works South Sudan study, COMPASS, and GAGE. Requires being deliberate in how we reach adolescent girls. At the same time, violence prevention interventions should not be another layer on the multiple programmes (education, health, etc.) that target adolescents: the real challenge is how to integrate and coordinate these multiple programmes for a holistic response. Also need to consider **technology facilitated violence**, which is an emerging area of concern for adolescents.
- There is a particular gap in evidence around children *witnessing* IPV.
- Psychosocial interventions are typically very costly and difficult to deliver. What are the most effective models?
- Consider a focus on changing institutions, including family institutions.
- Test early childhood development, parenting, school-based interventions.
- Note that the IRC is currently investing in the development of a programming model to address co-occurrence, which includes formative work on intersectionality and how this influences violence in the home (i.e. disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc).

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Using evidence to support learning and influence action

- Frame any potential next phase in terms of moving into action and putting the evidence base to work.
- An important focus is significantly **strengthening the capacity of NGOs and WROs to evaluate/research and learn from their own work**, through an emphasis on supporting Southern organisations to drive and conduct their own research on their own work, perhaps supported by **regional learning to action hubs/processes** (the Prevention Collaborative is one interesting model).
- Capacity building for the purpose of resource mobilisation is also important as sustainability of an EVAW intervention is most of the time tightly linked to building the sustainability of an organisation.
- There is still a lot of evidence not being accessed or used, especially by smaller organisations doing work on the ground. How can we **utilise different mechanisms/platforms** to support this? UN Trust Fund and women's funds can be important partners for getting evidence to local/smaller organisations. Growth of younger leaders and advocates suggests we need to be innovative about the platforms we use to reach younger people (e.g. apps).
- Different institutions learn differently, and **a variety of methods of building capacity to understand and use evidence are needed** to reach specialists, non-specialists (to do integration/mainstreaming – including providing non-judgemental spaces to discuss challenges and lack of capacity) and management/leadership. Personal interaction/engagement is key.
- English bias in language can be a major barrier to evidence use.
- DFID has a functioning evidence and advice service in the helpdesk, which has potential to be broadened out to a wider audience, potentially in combination with an online knowledge platform e.g. UNW's VKC. Useful to learn lessons from ODI's positive experience with their knowledge platform.
- Consider building further analysis of data and evidence from the current WW programme into any second phase, in order to leverage these findings to encourage uptake and investment in scale-up of interventions (e.g. around sector specific costs).
- How to link to/influence Spotlight?

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