



WhatWorks
TO PREVENT VIOLENCE



WHAT WORKS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION PROGRAMME

THEMATIC PAPER 2: RESEARCH UPTAKE

The impact journey is often a long and winding road

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Thematic Paper 2: Research Uptake – The Impact Journey is Often a Long and Winding Road

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About What Works: The What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls programme is a flagship programme from the UK Department for International Development, which is investing an unprecedented £25 million over five years to the prevention of violence against women and girls. It supports primary prevention efforts across Africa and Asia that seek to understand and address the underlying causes of violence, and to stop it from occurring. Through three complementary components, the programme focuses on generating evidence from rigorous primary research and evaluations of existing interventions to understanding What Works to prevent violence against women and girls generally, and in fragile and conflict areas. Additionally, the programme estimates social and economic costs of violence against women and girls, developing the economic case for investing in prevention.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	African Development Bank
ASM	Annual Scientific Meeting
COMBAT	Community Based Action Teams (to prevent VAWG)
CoP	Community of Practice
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CSW62	62 nd second session of CSW 12-23 March 2018.
DFID	Department for International Development
DVC	Domestic Violence Coalition
EAA	EAA Media
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FE	Final Evaluation
GAGE	Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
HTAC	Help the Afghan Children
IAB	International Advisory Board
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
ISSER	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research
JoSS	Judiciary of South Sudan
KAI	Key Actor Interviews
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MoGCSW	Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MTR	Mid-Term Review
QA	Quality Assurance
R2A	Research to Action
RCT	Randomised Control Trial
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RU	Research Uptake
RUPR	Research Uptake Progress Report
SABC	South Africa Broadcasting Corporation
SAMRC	South Africa Medical Research Council
SDD	Social Development Direct
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SPDC	Social Policy and Development Centre (Pakistan)
SRO	Senior Responsible Officer
SVRI	Sexual Violence Research Initiative
TA	Technical Advisor
ToC	Theory of Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNTF	United Nations Trust Fund
VPF	Violence Prevention Forum
VSO	Voluntary Services Overseas
WW-VAWG	What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (Programme)

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

This is Thematic Paper 2 in a series of papers being produced by the Evaluation Team of the DFID-funded What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (WW-VAWG) Research and Innovation Fund as the portfolio of evaluation activities draws to a close. The WW-VAWG is a multi-year, multi-component research and evidence programme focused on identifying ways to eliminate VAWG.

In parallel to the WW-VAWG implementation components, an independent evaluation component was commissioned in 2016, tasked with assessing the extent to which evidence is being used to inform decisions to invest in VAWG policies and programmes in the global south. These Thematic Papers form part of the activities of the final evaluation (FE) of WW-VAWG, and themselves comprise a trilogy of papers focused on research, research uptake and innovation.

1.2 FOCUS

The purpose of this thematic paper is fourfold:

1. To describe and explain where and how the WW-VAWG programme has had an influence on policy and practice
2. To map the role of evidence, intermediary actors, and policy audiences in bringing about a specific incidence of change
3. To present and critique the programme's approach to research uptake and analyse the extent to which specific activities contributed to impact
4. To share lessons about optimising uptake and impact through a strategic and intentional approach to policy influence.

This paper will focus on examples where evidence from the programme (findings, approach etc.) has explicitly and visibly been taken up and used to inform the thinking, processes and actions, of other individual or institutional actors. This could be at national, regional or global level. By investigating and documenting the story of research uptake, focusing on both the evidence and the processes by which it is being communicated; and the context in which it has been made visible, accessible and taken up and used, we hope to chronicle both the contribution of the What Works programme to bringing about change, and to demonstrate principles of how to maximise policy influence with research that may be of use to others working in the field.

1.3 WHO THE PAPER IS FOR

The thematic paper has been written in 'plain English' with a non-technical audience in mind. It is aimed at three specific audiences: first, those who were involved in the What Works programme itself, to provide a critical reflection of whether and how their strategic uptake activities contributed to bringing about the positive changes they sought and why; second, researchers, practitioners and communications professionals who interested in the 'art and science' of research uptake; and third, evaluators who are looking for strategic approaches to evidence policy influence and impact in this and other development sectors. It presents a critical observation of the performance and emerging impact of the programme, drawing on both the literature around research uptake and the promises of the programme itself.

Once approved, a short summary of the thematic paper will be produced along with a slide deck so that it can be shared easily with the programme, its donors and the broader community around VAWG prevention. We will use the suite of materials to support a webinar on the website Research To Action¹ to reach research uptake and evaluation professionals interested in our approach and findings from the study.

2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This section describes the range of methodological approaches we used to deliver this thematic paper. These include semi-structured interviews, documentary analysis, field visits and observations, which allowed us to investigate, describe and seek to explain the programme's observable impact on policy and practice.²

We drew on the **academic literature** on evidence-informed policymaking and research uptake to present a more nuanced set of 'staging posts' on the pathways to impact (**Box 1**). These were introduced to the WW-VAWG programme from Inception phase and used as the framing device for conversations about progress being made through the following four years. This included capturing interim progress against these markers in the Research Uptake Progress Reports (RUPRs)³, as well as the Mid-Term Review.

Box 1: Framing Progress in Research Uptake⁴

1. **Discursive changes** (that reflect a new or improved understanding of a subject)
2. **Increased appetite and demand** for evidence (that indicate awareness of the subject and appetite to know more – predates discourse changes, and proof of use). This is linked to **Attitudinal changes** (changes in the way policy actors think about a given issue)
3. **Procedural changes** (changes in the way certain processes are undertaken)
4. **Content changes** (changes in the content of policies including strategy papers, legislation and budgets)
5. **Behavioural changes** (more durable changes in the way that policy actors behave (act or relate to others) as a consequence of formal and informal changes in discourse, process and content)
6. **Impact and scale up** (concrete positive changes in policy and practice that have resulted in / will directly lead to benefits in people's lives around VAWG; and replication and adoption in other programmes)

We also drew on the **Research Excellence Framework** (REF) to develop a metric for assessing the broader impact of the What Works programme and the contribution of its research uptake activities to that impact. The REF defined impact as 'an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia'. The REF

¹ Research to Action is a global website aimed at researchers and practitioners who are interested in practical approaches to research uptake www.researchtoaction.org

² What Works Now? Evidence-Informed Policy and Practice (2019) Annette Boaz, Huw Davies, Alec Fraser, Sandra Nutley

³ Part of the wider evaluation, three RUPRs were produced over the course of the programme focused on tracking RU in September 2017, October 2018, April 2019.

⁴ Adapted from ⁴ Monitoring and evaluation of policy influence and advocacy, Josephine Tsui, Simon Hearn, and John Young, ODI Working Paper 285, 2014

was also used by the evaluation team to assess the programme’s research quality (see Thematic Paper 1: Research).

We adapted the REF to capture both the programme’s progress towards the more nuanced policy influence ‘staging posts’ and to critique approach and performance in the following four areas: research uptake strategy; capacity; engagement and strategic communication (**Figure 1**). These were the four elements designated as essential in DFID’s Guide to Research Uptake⁵. We critiqued these four elements as well as their contribution to the observed outcomes.

Figure 1: Dimensions of Research Uptake & Anticipated Progress at FE

Dimension	Definition	Expectations By End Of Programme
Evidence Of Impact	High quality evidence, synthesis, packaging and communication setting the best possible foundation for influencing policy and programme change, with an awareness that impact can be unexpected or sudden.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WW-VAWG evidence (includes both process and findings) has influenced policy and practice as evidenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased appetite and demand for evidence ○ Discursive changes ○ Procedural changes ○ Content changes ○ Attitudinal changes ○ Behavioural changes ○ Impact and scale up • Programme can evidence its contribution to the changes witnessed (pathways to uptake) • Programme has identified and captured lessons learnt about where it has had impact and why
RU Capacity	Research uptake is acknowledged as an important part of the research cycle at both individual and institutional levels. Resources and staff capacity to undertake demand-driven, feasible and flexible research uptake planning and related activities are present within the research and implementation teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient capacity across the team (across all RU skillsets) to effectively engage and influence priority stakeholders • Evidence of built capacity being used to effectively engage and influence outside of the WW-VAWG programme • Existing capacity for uptake is recognised and deployed effectively to achieve influencing objectives
RU Strategy	High quality and context-appropriate RU plans including regular reflective processes and flexible engagement timelines, which are feasible to implement, and responsive to actual and emerging demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy updated and used as a ‘living document’ to guide programme uptake activities • Learning from strategy implementation has been captured and used to guide programme activities (including prioritisation and resource allocation) • Stories of positive impact and lessons learned captured and communicated

⁵ Reference DFID background paper on Research Communications for DFID Research Strategy 2008

<p>Engagement</p>	<p>Demand-driven engagement with the key stakeholders of research at all levels, which is systematically designed, feasibly implemented and monitored with the purpose of iterating the engagement plans. Evidenced relationships are built, and there is increased visibility and reputation of both VAWG findings produced and organisations involved in its generation and communication.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appetite and demand for evidence identified and effectively satisfied with high quality products and activities • Programme shows understanding of the information needs and evidence gaps of its target stakeholders and involves them in framing final evidence products and events • Patterns and results of engagement have been captured
<p>Strategic Communications</p>	<p>Demand driven and innovative communications containing clearly defined policy or practice implications appropriate to the target audience. Materials are effectively synthesised, packaged and disseminated, giving due consideration to the strength of the evidence generated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence framed and crafted to suit target audiences • Evidence effectively communicated /used to engage stakeholders in most appropriate formats • Range of techniques used (e.g. digital + face-to-face) to raise profile and engage audiences in meaningful conversations that contribute to outcomes

We drew on the initial **RU Literature Review** that was produced as part of our Inception Report 2016, to reference current theories and practices on how evidence informs policy and practice and to review the programme’s internal monitoring documents. We updated the Evidence Table that had been produced as part of our MTR to show the nuanced research uptake themes that had emerged by the end of the programme. This was systematically applied to all WW-VAWG programme documentation produced since the MTR.

We **critiqued the WW-VAWG programme’s digital platforms, engagement strategies and resulting analytics** (where data was made available) for What Works website and digital platforms (Facebook and Twitter specifically) using benchmarked ‘best practice’ for engagement on these sites.

We conducted a range of **semi-structured interviews / key actor interviews (KAIs)** with priority groups as defined by the programme’s Research Uptake Strategy including internal programme staff; programme partners; audiences who have been targets for the work e.g. end users, advocates and intermediaries identified in the RU strategy and other ‘key influential and champions’ who we would expect to have heard of the work, but who are not explicitly identified as targets by the programme.

We **focused especially on countries where ‘something special happened’** across all three themes of the evaluation; either in the research itself; around innovation; or where uptake and impact was already visible. This included Nepal, Pakistan, South Sudan, South Africa and Ghana. We developed a coding table to capture anything significant said about research uptake by the people interviewed in the KAIs and used an Evidence Table to review the monitoring documentation produced by the programme.

We drew on the evaluation team’s **three interim RUPRs** – themselves based on key actor interviews and documentary reviews - which shortlisted potential cases based on early signs of uptake.

2.1 METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

We note the following limitations of the paper: first, that we could not access all of the key informants who played a role in the uptake process; second that we could only identify a small sample of those who have been influenced by, have accessed and potentially used the evidence to inform their own work, and these have been largely provided by the programme itself, and third, that we take claims of uptake that we cannot independently validate, 'on trust' e.g. where uptake has informed 'invisible processes' or off the record plaudits for the work etc.

Now we provide an overview of literature on theory based approaches to evaluating policy influence and research uptake before discussing key findings.

2.2 THE THEORY-BASED APPROACH TO EVALUATING POLICY INFLUENCE AND RESEARCH UPTAKE

2.2.1 NO SILVER BULLETS BUT WITH RESEARCH MUST COME UPTAKE ACTIVITIES

The growing body of work about how evidence informs policy and practice is in agreement about two things. First, that there is no 'silver bullet' to bringing about change however robust and relevant is the evidence used; and second, that there are some basic rules that optimise the changes of positive outcomes.

'A recent systematic review of social science evidence use within policy and practice, found that interventions are more successful when they combine communicating research with improving access to evidence whilst at the same time addressing the motivations and incentives of decision makers to use evidenceⁱ.

The importance of ensuring that research is used as part of broader ending VAWG campaigns is highlighted by the UN Women's campaign guide, which acknowledges the importance of 'multi-pronged' approaches. The authors discourage a sole focus on research, stating that: "The time, energy and campaign resources spent on producing a quality report may be wasted if it is not accompanied by a deliberate strategy to ensure that it gets read and receives the necessary attention, particularly by primary targets."

2.2.2 INFLUENCING VAWG POLICY

Advice on influencing VAWG policy includes: conducting a situational analysis; engaging with stakeholders and decision makers early on in the process; utilising traditional mediums such as policy briefs to communicate with policy makers but also undertaking policy modelling; employing alternate communications methods such as street theatre or convening a conference to spread awareness of an issue. A WHO Evidence Briefing on VAWG states that: "*Research shows... that the most successful media interventions are those that begin by understanding the behaviour of their audience and engage its members in developing the intervention.*"⁶

While there is no exact science behind promoting better research uptake, there is a growing body of work that explores how to optimise uptake. A recent systematic review of the barriers and facilitators

⁶ 'Violence prevention the evidence: Promoting gender equality to prevent violence against women', WHO (2009) p. 11 URL: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/gender.pdf

to the use of evidence by policy makers conducted by Oliver et al. discovered some trends within the area of health policy. In over two thirds of studies “timely access to good quality and relevant research evidence, collaborations with policymakers and relationship - and skills-building with policymakers are reported to be the most important factors in influencing the use of evidence”ⁱⁱ. The top factor found to facilitate evidence use by policy makers was improving access.

Finally, the literature presents a consistent picture of the difficulties of measuring success in influencing (Chapman and Wameyo)⁷ including subjective gains: defining success is tricky and varies depending on who is asked; long horizons: influencing work is long term and change can be slow and incremental; contribution vs attribution: it is easier to show the former especially in complex situations; evidence is only one of the many factors that contribute to policy decisions, which are also influenced by politics and the beliefs, ideology, individual experiences and expertise of policymakers (Pellini et al)⁸. Sustaining the commitment of policymakers to using evidence for implementation requires strengthening institutional capacity, as well as understanding and addressing the political environment, and particularly the incentives facing policy makers that supports the use of evidence in policy cycles (Hawkes et al)⁹.

Against this backdrop, where uptake ‘happened’ we looked for evidence of the drivers of uptake and information about the contexts in which it happened, to help us explain the ‘why and ‘how’ questions. We look out for three conditions for change:¹⁰ first, because of a change in context; second, because of the power of the evidence; and third because of the strategic approach and engagement efforts of the programme itself.

These principles, drawn from the literature, have been used to inform our approach to critiquing the WW-VAWG programme’s research uptake, and to contextualising any outcomes identified.

2.2.3 WHAT RU IMPACTS WERE WE EXPECTING?

The programme’s research uptake ambitions are framed as an explicit logframe output (#5: Effective identification and engagement of target audiences and dissemination of findings to promote use of What Works evidence (including to UK Government, international agencies, civil society and national and provincial/local governments). A second output relating to the capacity of the programme to generate robust research and effectively communicate it (logframe output #5), is also pertinent to whether and how the programme achieved its influencing objectives.

The global programme was contracted as three independent and separate components as follows, and subsequently managed as one global programme with complementary and synergistic ambitions.

- **Component 1:** The largest WW-VAWG component and led by SA MRC, which provided grants to test new approaches to tackle VAWG, operations research and evaluation of these;
- **Component 2:** Led by the International Rescue Committee, funded research into VAWG in humanitarian conflict settings, and
- **Component 3:** Supported and tested new methodologies for assessing the economic and social costs of VAWG.

⁷ Monitoring and Evaluating Advocacy: A Scoping Study, Chapman and Wameyo, ActionAid 2001

⁸ Knowledge, Politics and Policymaking in Indonesia edited by Arnaldo Pellini, Budiati Prasetyamartati, Kharisma Priyo Nugroho, Elisabeth Jackson, Fred Carden, Springer 2018

⁹ Strengthening capacity to apply health research evidence in policy making: experience from four countries, Sarah Hawkes et al. Health Policy and Planning, 31, 2016, 161–170

¹⁰ Policy Influence Monitoring project conducted for International Institute for Impact Evaluations 3ie

- **Component 4:** Comprised the whole evaluation of the WW-VAWG programme.

3 RESULTS – WHAT IS THE PROGRAMME'S IMPACT?

Using the framing described in Box 1 above, we provide an overview of the changes identified within the WW-VAWG programme. We recognise that, in reality, these categories of change are not discrete and examples of the changes brought about could fit into more than one category. The purpose of presenting them in this way is to illustrate the many ways in which the programme has had an influence on multiple dimensions of policymaking.

3.1 DISCURSIVE CHANGES

Discursive changes are examples of the programme having prompted others to have a new or improved understanding of a subject. They include the Minister of Sindh Province explicitly talking for the first time about the economic costs of VAWG in a speech where he specifically mentioned the work of the C3 partner in Pakistan, the Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC).

The evidence has helped DFID to increase its convening power across government and opened doors to talking about social violence more broadly. In particular, there was a feeling that C2 work on peace and security (especially work on South Sudan) had helped to nuance and bring subtlety to the UK government's ongoing work on the ending VAWG Action Plan.¹¹

In Tajikistan WW-VAWG evidence and engagement resulted in recognition of the importance of the issue (of VAWG) by the British High Commission, Gender Thematic Group and the national Tajik government and the need to prioritize both research and funding. This in turn led to continued discussion with key stakeholders about the need to scale up to other areas in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

3.1.1 INCREASED APPETITE AND DEMAND

This category of change includes where the programme has been brought to the attention of others and this prompts a positive response. For example, they may ask for more information; invite WW-VAWG to present a paper or to attend a conference; ask them to be part of an expert panel, provide technical/consultancy advice, discuss the implications of findings in a particular country with key decisionmakers etc. Examples include:

- Numerous invitations to present findings and participate in expert discussions at high level conferences and events UN e.g. C2 work on Raqqa cash transfers at the DFID and World Food Programme-hosted Grand Bargain Cash Work Stream Workshop held in Rome, 16-17th May 2019. Inclusion in such events is testament to both the perceived contribution of this evidence to fill gaps in knowledge, and the credibility of the programme itself.
- Series of phased webinars delivered to UN Women and country Gender Focal Points in July 2016, November 2018 and June 2019 which led to evidence being used to influence the design of new programmes within the UN Family, including the Spotlight initiative.
- Baroness Sugg (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for International Development since 23 April 2019) often asks the DFID team for updates on the programme before she goes to conferences to find out latest progress on What Works.

¹¹ UK national action plan on women, peace and security 2018 to 2022

- Demand for follow-on research to include:
 - C2 secured funding to re-examine data sets on adolescent VAWG in South Sudan through an open call with GAGE programme¹²;
 - C3 team have been involved in new research being commissioned by UNWomen in Mongolia, Morocco and Ethiopia and to help develop guidelines to integrate costings into the ongoing programmes of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in the Arab Region and to train others how to do it.
- Presentations to World Bank education, data protection and health desk staff with one-to-one clinics following (March 2019)
- WW-VAWG invited to feed into GIZ Euro8m to UNFPA Eastern and Southern Africa programme design
- Sustained, strong demand for evidence on prevention comes from the UN Trust Fund (UNTF) to End Violence against Women's more than 200 grantees. WW-VAWG evidence has been 'critical in informing internal thinking and engaging practitioners around it'¹³

3.2 PROCEDURAL CHANGES

These include changes in the way certain processes are undertaken. Example include:

- Recommendation to use What Works evidence by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Office of Development Effectiveness (ODE) as part of Australia's ongoing commitment to end VAWG.
- The Consortium director invited to become member of UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women Inter-Agency Programme Advisory Committee (PAC). This committee made the decisions around the disbursement of \$ 13 million for the 36 grantees. Prompted by the WW-VAWG findings from the Right to Play project in Pakistan on school-based interventions and their impact on peer violence, corporal punishment and domestic violence, the Trust Fund's Evidence Hub conducted its own 'deep dive' into the archive of evaluations to draw lessons from the portfolio of projects that have worked on girl's education and school-related violence in 42 countries in the past decade.
- Strengthened evidence systems in implementation partner International Alert, who have organised internal learning workshops on methodology and tools and approaches; brought in other organisations to learn from their findings; and worked on incubating new ideas which adapt the 'exceptionally rigorous approach' of WW-VAWG to their sector and the practical constraints of donor funding for implementation.
- VSO Nepal now integrates research in their external project proposals as an explicit 'ask' because they are convinced by the value of generating and using evidence in their programme design and implementation

3.3 CONTENT CHANGES

Content changes includes any changes seen in the content of policies including strategy papers, legislation and budgets. Examples include:

- Evidence has been explicitly incorporated into other organisations' guides and procedures e.g. The UN RESPECT FRAMEWORK, launched in May 2019 by WHO, UN Women and eleven other partners including DFID and Sida. The framework is a set of evidence-based action-oriented steps

¹² Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) is a nine-year (2015-2024) mixed methods longitudinal research and evaluation study that is generating evidence on 'what works' to enable adolescent girls and boys to emerge from poverty and fast-track social change for young people, their families and communities.. <https://www.gage.odi.org/>

¹³ Submission to the evaluation by Shruti Majumdar and Gemma Wood, UN Women

that enables policymakers and practitioners to design, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate interventions and programmes using seven strategies to prevent VAW. The strategies are summarised in R.E.S.P.E.C.T, with each letter representing one strategy. It draws on the findings of WW-VAWG and the digital version has been structured to include an evidence section that can be linked to the WW-VAWG evidence as it becomes available.

- WW-VAWG evidence informed the design of EU/UN Euro500m Spotlight initiative and WW-VAWG staff ‘trained’ UN Women country desk staff from 22 African countries. “*WW-VAWG evidence fills a profound ‘evidence gap’ on interventions that we can use to design new programmes and on which to base expansion plans*”, said Kalliopi Mingeirou, Chief, Ending Violence Against Women, UN Women
- Feeding into GIZ funding priorities and upscaling in southern Africa for VAWG prevention.
- Informed the DFID-funded £18m stand-alone prevention and response programme in Malawi.
- Evidence used to inform the UN Trust Fund’s own meta-evaluation, synthesis review, and Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and therefore likely to inform the next generation of grants awarded to civil society organizations, particularly small and grassroots organizations, as well as the UNTF’s own project design and evaluation design.

3.4 BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES

Behavioural changes cover more durable changes in the way that policy actors behave (act or relate to others) as a consequence of formal and informal changes in discourse, process and content.

Examples include:

- South Africa government paid for representatives of 40 NGOs from all provinces, both those working on prevention and the victims of violence, to attend the 2020 SVRI conference.
- Establishment of a Practitioners’ Network

3.5 IMPACT AND SCALE-UP

- UNDP adapted the Rwanda Indashyikirwa approach¹⁴ for interventions in Lebanon, Moldova and Uganda as part of their global project Ending Gender-based Violence and Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (2018-2020).
- UNDP is scaling up the CETA (Zambia) and Indashyikirwa (Rwanda) interventions in Moldova and Lebanon, respectively. Each pilot has a budget of approximately \$300,000.00.
- The United Nations Trust Fund have committed US\$0.5M to scaling up the What Works intervention in two districts of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.
- The UK government has committed to investing a further £67.5M in VAWG prevention in the next phase of what works programming
- Anglo American contracting International Alert to implement programme to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse in mine compound in South Africa (based on the What Works Living with Dignity project in Tajikistan)¹⁵.
- VSO Nepal led consortium with International Alert has been selected as the finalist for funding from DFID’s IPSSJ programme. The two-year project, to be implemented in the Terai and Far Western districts of Nepal, is based on a family-centred approach to changing social norms and improving community police relationships in order to reduce GBV.
- VSO Nepal (VSO) is part of a consortium implementing the DFID-funded £3.4mil for the *Strengthening Access To Holistic, Gender Responsive, and Accountable Justice In Nepal (SAHAJ)* programme scaling up Sammanit Jeevan.

¹⁴ <https://www.whatworks.co.za/global-programme-projects/care-international-rwanda>

¹⁵ <https://www.whatworks.co.za/global-programme-projects/international-alert-tajikistan>

- GIZ 8million Euro to UNFPA Eastern and Southern Africa requirement to work with WW
- BSR, Bangladesh has been granted funding to adapt and roll out the HERrespect intervention in India.
- In Pakistan, the additional stature given to Right To Play through WWs has enabled its work to become more diverse. They have added two new programmes in Karachi, and 2 more in Islamabad. They have a collaboration with a Sindh education foundation which has provided an opportunity to train teachers in positive child development. UNICEF has also contracted them to train 500 teachers in KPK Province.
- Both HTAC and Ujamaa have successfully leveraged additional resources building on their WW-VAWG works and support from Technical Advisors and the WW-VAWG Secretariat.
- The COMBAT intervention in Ghana has been awarded funding by Oxfam UK to scale up the intervention and are in the final stages of receiving additional funding from the African Women's Development Fund.
- Equal Access Nepal secured a \$100,000 grant from the World Bank and SVRI for further research to support refinement of their intervention approach.
- The six year (2017-2023), DFID-funded 'Strengthening Access to Justice and VAWG Prevention' programme drew on WW-VAWG evidence in its design and planning.

4 WHAT DID THE PROGRAMME DO TO OPTIMISE IMPACT?

The growing bank of literature on how evidence informs policy and practices instructs us that positive outcomes can be achieved for a number of reasons including because of the strength of the evidence; because of the changing context or as a result of purposeful contributions of the programmes working to make the change.

In this section, we describe and analyse the contribution of the programme's approach to research uptake to the changes witnessed.

4.1 FROM QUALITY RESEARCH TO RESEARCH UPTAKE

We explore in what ways the programme's strategic approach to research uptake contributed to the positive outcomes witnessed, by examining each of the four dimensions of uptake (research uptake capacity; research uptake strategy; engagement and strategic communication) processes in turn.

4.1.1 RESEARCH UPTAKE CAPACITY

What RU capacity building activities were undertaken across WW-VAWG?

C1 developed an explicit Capacity Building Strategy in 2014, which included specific ambitions around strengthening and supporting research uptake cross the community of researchers and implementers. This was overseen by the SAMRC secretariat. It included practical mechanisms such as dedicated Technical Advisors (TAs) who were budgeted to provide dedicated support to specific projects for up to 20 days per year for the first three years and were managed by the Capacity Development Manager. In reality, this shifted a lot in response to needs and most projects received additional TA support, largely drawn from the Secretariat's technical team, ranging from an additional 5 to 60 days. Support also went beyond the third year in some cases.

The approach to capacity building and its results and lessons learned was published in a in Development in Practice journal article (Willan et al, 2019)¹⁶ on the approach and results of their capacity building which recommended that effective capacity development requires: meaningful commitment; an organic process driven by the needs of the global South; recognising the importance of soft-skills; acknowledging what is achievable within resource constraints and a commitment to women's rights and gender equality. The programme approached capacity strengthening for RU in a range of different ways that are compliant with best practice in the field. This included tailored support by Technical Advisors who were assigned to specific C1 projects over the first three years; meaningful inclusion of researchers in high profile engagement events¹⁷; and bespoke capacity development sessions that responded to demand from C1 projects e.g. workshop on research skills and analysis, developing key messages and RU outputs in Tajikistan; sessions on writing blogs in Rwanda; and training in developing messages in Bangladesh. The inclusion of early-career and southern academics as authors in journal articles provided another important and highly valued way of strengthening capacity across the programme, and is likely to have a 'long tail' into the future.

The programme established and facilitated a WW-VAWG 'Community of Practice' (CoP) early on to discuss all and any issues including research uptake, with organised e-forums and webinars hosted by the secretariat. Participation was sluggish and demand very weak and were not continued. This is not surprising or unprecedented. The community was drawn from very different worlds of research and implementation/activism; not everyone knew each other and did not in the early stages have any obligation or social commitment to each other or the programme (beyond contractual commitments); all were very busy and it is likely that they were unaware of what they could learn from the community. The programme adapted and found other ways of supporting the community. As relationships developed e.g. through grantees and researchers getting to know each other at the ASMs, the 'long tail' of these early investments became visible, with grantees contacting each other independently for assistance and support; grantees pledging to meet together after WW-VAWG ends (C1 Nepal) and collaborative ventures being discussed 'offline'.

The programme designed and delivered dedicated capacity development workshops around the Annual Scientific Meetings (Dubai 2016, South Africa 2017, Kathmandu 2018) where C1 implementers and researchers were funded to attend, and C2 and C3 invited to take part. Topics covered included research uptake as well as research methods and in 2017, 50 partners and 20 technical staff were brought together in South Africa for two days to focus exclusively on research uptake. The event was well run and effectively managed with an agenda that had been designed with the participants themselves.. Grantees were involved in the design and execution of sessions; a peer-exchange approach was used; the outputs were practical and designed with an eye on being useful to grantees and the workshop was scored highly by participants in the evaluation survey.

The results of investing in capacity development approaches

The positive results is evident in the growing confidence of researchers and implementers in the ASMs, and their increasingly visible role in the sessions; in the review of CD support provided by C1 which showed increased confidence in research uptake, second only to project reporting (self reported

¹⁶ A study on capacity development in the "What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women" programme; Samantha Willan, Alice Kerr-Wilson, Anna Parke & Andrew Gibbs Development in Practice, Volume 29, 2019 - Issue 6

¹⁷ For example, C2 researchers from South Sudan were involved as key players in 16 Days of Activism workshops held in London December 2017 (with support given to strengthen presentation/writing skills ahead of the event) and researchers funded to attend SVRI conference in Rio de Janeiro September 2019

by participants); and in the increased number of dissemination outputs e.g. blogs, media interviews produced by the researchers and implementers.¹⁸

Yet despite the robust approach taken to strengthening capacity across the programme, especially in C1, and the positive results witnessed around both research and research uptake, there is a limit to how the programme itself can push for change. It is a research programme with ambitions to influence policy, but not an advocacy programme that is informed by evidence. Speaking of the impressive visibility and performance of the programme at the 2019 SVRI conference, Marcus Goldstein, Lead Economist, Africa Gender Innovation Lab and Chief Economists Office World Bank, said the programme “presented to the hilt at SVRI and did a fantastic job, but uptake takes an activism approach. They don’t have the infrastructure for that.”

4.1.2 RESEARCH UPTAKE STRATEGY

What RU Strategies?

In 2016 C1, with inputs from with C2 and 3 developed an *overall* Research Uptake Strategy to guide efforts to see research implemented into policy, investment and better programming practices. Each of the separately contracted components generated a RU strategy which reflected the contexts in which they were working, their institutional capacities and experience of uptake, and – to a limited extent - the nature of the research they were undertaking. This strategy was operationalised at the component-specific level through individual RU strategies (including at project level for every C1 WW-VAWG project). As the programme progressed, the RU &E strategy was implemented as a phased approach that aligned the research uptake and communication activities to the different stages of the What Works research process. This resulted in development and/or refinement of project level RU plans; a Theory of Change for research uptake, which clearly identified assumptions under which the programme could achieve its outcome objectives; a targeted stakeholder audience matrix; and several communication and media plans over the course of the programme that were tailored for different contexts to context specific needs, planned RU and communications activities and “opportunistic” RU and responsive to emerging RU opportunities.

Communication activities

The programme’s uptake performance was impressive, but this was not because of the strategy. Best practice research uptake is strategic and intentional¹⁹ and enshrined in a strategy that acts as a ‘living document’. This means that the strategy is regularly reviewed and owned; is informed by regular reflections of monitoring information that helps to make sense of what progress is being made against stated objectives, and what opportunities are arising; and evolves to take note of changes in external context. The programme demonstrated some elements of this best practice. The strategy conformed to the guidelines issued by DFID for research uptake; it recruited an RU Manager to coordinate the work from inside the secretariat after the strategy was approved; and it dedicated resources to implementing the strategy.

The strategy allowed the programme to have regular conversations across the three consortia that reflected on progress made; to identify opportunities for influence; and to a certain extent to agree priorities for future engagement. In practice, the more meaningful and strategic conversations happened within each consortium and drew on individuals’ vast tacit knowledge of the sector, gaps in knowledge that they could fill; opportunities they could respond to and agendas that they could drive

¹⁸ From evaluation report 10th February

¹⁹ Reference DFID background paper on Research Communications for DFID Research Strategy 2008

using WW-VAWG programme evidence. This resulted in some impressive opportunistic ‘wins’ e.g. South Africa (**Section 5.2**) and some impressively designed ‘campaigns e.g. South Sudan (**Section 5.1**)

The Global Strategy struggled with the same challenges of all global strategies created at the beginning of a research programme that has no knowledge of its findings - targeting ‘the whole world’ with generic stakeholder groups, statements of principle and intention (not unreasonable as findings were far from known); and a cluster of communication approaches that were proposed for internal and external audiences. The strategy was a *requirement of funding* and was used as a guide rather than a ‘living document’ for the work on influencing. There was little connection between the country RU strategy/plans and the global strategy.

This is not to say that the programme was not both strategic and intentional around influencing: the positive outcomes are testament to this fact. The programme optimised the advantages of its unique and smart architecture, specifically comprised of global VAWG experts located in established organisations that are recognised as leaders in the field; a DFID VAWG Help Desk that provided a trusted ‘short cut’ to the heart of DFID policymaking (and in a position to understand explicit and latent demand for evidence); TA providing tailored support to C1 researchers and implementers through SDD; and specialist media consultants (Ladbury Associates) with experience and expertise in communicating within the sector. The experts brought together by the programme became ‘vectors of uptake’ as they took on consultancy and advisory positions and used WW-VAWG experiences and evidence to inform the design of new programmes e.g. in Uganda and £18m prevention and response programme in Malawi.

More rigorous and nuanced reflection and reporting of progress against the strategy, as identified by best practice (Tsui et al)²⁰ e.g. as part of regular monitoring against the logframe output for research uptake, would have helped to catalyse conversations around influence opportunities, gaps, and who across the consortium was best placed to engage with what stakeholder groups around what topics. The outcome of such conversations might have generated a clearer articulation of how the programme prioritised influencing opportunities – both to the donor and across the programme to some who felt constrained and without a clear mandate to speak publicly.

4.1.3 ENGAGEMENT

Audiences Targeting

The programme did not engage with all of the audiences identified in its original global RU strategy, nor did they monitor against these stakeholder groups. There was less engagement with the academic community than expected, given the ground-breaking methods being used and the interest in these approaches. This audience wasn’t prioritised in the RU strategy.

Once again, the programme’s architecture gave it an advantage in reaching and engaging with important audiences. The VAWG Help Desk, which was created in 2013 and managed by SDD with partners IDS, Action Aid, Womankind, and IRC, provided a direct and effective mechanism to include WW-VAWG evidence in answers to technical questions from DFID offices. It also provided the opportunity to map the changing demand for evidence coming from the offices.

²⁰ Monitoring and evaluation of policy influence and advocacy, Josephine Tsui, Simon Hearn, and John Young, ODI Working Paper 285, 2014

Opportunistic and Demand Driven Engagement

The programme has displayed a healthy approach to responding to demands as they arise, even if they fall outside of their official remit, and this has brought about positive results. For example, Drs Kristin Dunkle and Lori Heise responded positively to the Rwanda Permanent Secretary's request for training to a range of Government officials on how to interpret prevalence data in 2017, and this was delivered. The downside of this opportunistic approach is that it appeared at times that the programme was doing 'too much' and spreading itself too thinly. This is always a balance and a tricky one to get right in a complex and multi-dimensional programme such as this. The presence of clear and strategic criteria for engagement would have helped DFID to be reassured including, for example, to be convinced that the right priorities were being pursued vs superficial 'scattergun' approach.

Inevitably, some opportunities to walk through 'open doors' were not taken up. Sometimes this appeared to be because of lack of capacity, or failure to recognise the opportunities at the time, or bad timing. For example, HTAC were seen to miss key opportunities in Afghanistan by not pushing to get into the Ministry of Education reform of the national curriculum.²¹

The programme was astute around the timing of many known dissemination events, which maximised exposure and visibility to their findings. For example, the report on the cash transfers study in northeast Syria was aligned to the 2019 annual workshop for the cash workstream of the Grand Bargain policy process, with IRC presenting at the workshop and feeding into recommendations. As a result, recommendations from the research were taken forward into the workshop report, which will inform the workplan and priorities for the 2020 Grand Bargain discussions on cash. The team worked with partners in-country to identify key information to release research, prioritise stakeholders to target, identify the format most appropriate for the target audience, and translate findings into different formats to maximise the impact of the communication effort in promoting change or inspiring action.

Engaging Through WW-VAWG Brokers

The programme was extremely strategic and purposeful in the use of the programme's IAB. The board was made up of an independent chair and up to six international experts and *ex officio* members, including one member from the lead Supplier for each component, one from DFID, and others representing potential funders. The role of the IAB was to advise the Management Committee on direction of the programme, to provide technical advice on design and delivery of components, to identify opportunities and strategies for synthesis and uptake across components, and to provide a challenge. It also served a Quality Assurance function. The secretariat leveraged the global reputation of the IAB and their networks to support RU efforts throughout the uptake journey. Examples include the joint WW-VAWG, WHO, and UN Women pre-conference workshop at the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Forum, and the WB hosting a half-day of introductions to sector desks in and engagement of IAB members in reviewing WW-VAWG products and chairing programme led events at global fora.

DFID was similarly active and influential as broker, champion, advocate, and facilitator for the work across both DFID and HMG more broadly. *"I wish we had their SRO in charge of our programme to open the same doors and make influential introductions to our work"* said the Director of a similarly-sized research programme.

²¹ KAI with Julienne

Not all programme actors felt ‘freedom to act’ and this, it was felt, resulted in missed influence and engagement opportunities. There is a balance to be struck between orchestrating and managing engagement and influencing work outside of the relatively straightforward project level (national and regional within national borders).

4.1.4 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Investing in Strategic Communication

Early investments were made in setting up mechanisms for communicating the programme and its findings. This included the website, social media platforms, a quarterly newsletter and mechanisms for contributing to the VAWG Helpdesk. The overall branding of the programme’s communication outputs was consistent and high quality. All materials clearly belonged to a ‘family’ of products that could easily be recognised, and this helped to support the visibility and reputation of the programme.

Producing ‘fit for audience’ public materials

WW-VAWG public materials, especially the Evidence Briefs and Evidence Reviews form the bedrock of the programme’s ‘last mile’ communications efforts, both in support of face-to-face engagement and reaching audiences remotely. The materials did become more streamlined in design, and consistent in tone and style, as the programme progressed. The common structure and design allow the materials to be clearly recognised as part of the WW-VAWG programme repository wherever they are found. They are tightly written, use graphics and infographics appropriately, and include quotes to both strengthen and personalise quantitative evidence. Negative/null findings are well explained and contextualised where relevant, with some analysis as to why those findings may have remained the same. Summaries of findings are clear but could benefit from the inclusion of key statistics from the research project to avoid the slide into generic statements. The briefs did not always state which specific target audience they were being written for (though we recognise this is tricky because often they are being written for a number of different stakeholders), and the titles were not particularly catchy. But they have often been cited as ‘incredibly useful’ for key stakeholders. Some of the products do not maintain an emphasis on the key points they intend to communicate and stop short of answering the ‘so what?’ question.

To be effective, it is essential they speak to policy priorities and speak in the language of policy and practice audiences where these are the target audience. The documents’ implications and recommendations sections tended to be somewhat superficial with many generalisable statements that might not be of practical help to their intended audience. More could have been done to pull out the implications (as well as recommendations where these are clear and have evidence to support them) for policymakers and practitioners.

Intense collaboration between DFID and IAB and the WW-VAWG programme partners for final synthesis products succeeded in addressing any earlier concerns about quality and rigour. As a result, they have been very well received: “*The final flagship products are really rigorous and impressive and I’m very confident about sharing them*” (DFID KAI)²².

Using and maximising media

The programme’s approach to using media was pragmatic and effective. They included skills training on media and social media/blog writing, etc. as part of the capacity support for C1 researchers and

²² KAI Emily Esplen January 23rd 2020

implementers, and provided additional mentoring and support for those who went on to write blogs for publication on the website. The programme's work in Tajikistan was covered by The Guardian Development Pages whose Editor, Liz Ford, visited Tajikistan and published articles on the programme and its findings on the site. This secured a large audience and a high public profile that had ripples in the countries whose work was covered.

Ladbury Associates, part of the WW-VAWG Secretariat charged with the communications and media work from its base in the UK, made smart choices about maximising coverage, through targeting news agencies, for example. This resulted in pick-up in multiple countries (including a global audience of more than 2.8m readers being reached with only 12 syndicated articles published 2018) and gaining substantial, irregular coverage in high profile media such as The Telegraph²³ and Huffington Post²⁴. There was good media management of potential reputational risks, such as the early closure of the project in Palestine and the clumsy framing of violence statistics, published in The Guardian and The Mail, that evoked immediate and volatile responses from the community who felt they had been misrepresented²⁵.

There was some media coverage at country level, but it is worth acknowledging that the way the media reports VAWG often reflects societal views on the subject in the country of publication, and 'fair' coverage (i.e., that which does not sensationalise the subject and make the situation worse for women) is hard to get.

What Works Website

The What Works website²⁶ acts as an essential repository of all the outputs from the programme. It provides an overview of the programme ambitions, structure, and organisation, as well as updates on latest news of findings and media coverage from around the world. The site provides access to both 'public-facing' products such as newsletters, press releases and blog posts, as well as academic products that are open access. The website curates and highlights content and conversations from the WW-VAWG social media platforms (Twitter and Facebook). Traffic to the site has grown over time but is not as high as we should expect from a flagship programme of this nature (peak number of visits 11,794 visits, with 6,079 unique users October 2019). Providing contact details for each project and for the key stakeholders involved in the programme are helpful for those who want to explore the project further.

The structure of the website is clear, and it is helpful that a visitor can search by country or by project, and can easily find evidence associated with it. The Evidence Hub clearly catalogues the available evidence and materials in a format that makes it easy and includes a wide range of resources: peer-reviewed journal articles, evidence reviews, reports, presentations, project resources, evidence briefs, videos, stories of change, VAWG Prevention Curricula, and evidence in infographics, among others. However, it would be helpful to have an explanation about the different types of evidence provided. For example, what is the difference between 'Evidence Reviews' and 'Evidence Briefs'? Equally, more information about the links between the three components would help users to understand the complementarities across the programmes and the contribution of each component. When clicking on individual projects/countries, it is not always immediately clear which part of the programme they fit into.

²³ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/women-and-girls/now-feel-safe-uk-funded-project-reduces-domestic-violence-50/>

²⁴ http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/emma-fulu/gender-equality-empowerment_b_15205774.html

²⁵ Early findings of male violence reported by the [the 'One Man Can – Preventing Men's Use of Violence in Southern Africa'](#) project was misrepresented and published.

²⁶ <https://www.whatworks.co.za/>

The programme's presence on its digital platforms (Facebook and Twitter) were slow to start but gathered pace and confidence in publishing content. The digital work is managed by Ladbury Associates (who also oversee the media work) who reported to the Secretariat in SAMRC. The Twitter account (at time of writing) followed 499 accounts and was followed by 2,858 accounts. The account largely follows best practice principles, providing links and URLs for almost 74% of its content, but there has been limited strategic use of followers with only 2.5% of viable followers being mentioned in What Works tweets. This may partially explain the low engagement figures that have emerged, with few comments and conversations being seen on this platform. So, while the account regularly posts content, organic engagement with other accounts remains low. The account has a global audience, the majority of whom are located in the UK (690 accounts) followed by USA (231), Kenya (213), South Africa (147), and Nigeria (100). The account makes use of keywords and hashtags, and mentions other followers and stakeholders they are targeting. Hashtags and key words align with trends in VAWG and show an effort to engage in broader VAWG related topics and events. There has also been an effort to engage news agencies, such as SABC news in South Africa, but not enough use of strategic tools such as Twitter lists, which are powerful and good value for money, and under-use of WW-VAWG partners' digital profiles to amplify the messages and kickstart the global conversation. There was nervousness about DFID 'playing fast and loose on how they're claiming impact' from within the programme that may have influenced the low-key approach they took in managing the @WhatWorksVAWG twitter account.

A diversity of communication products

The programme produced an impressive diversity of products and was creative in the ways it packaged and communicated the findings. These included podcasts e.g. on the costs of violence (featured on Radio Miraya in April 2019²⁷) and innovative packaging of research, including an exhibition of cartoons and graphic interpretations to aid anonymity and sensitivity in the communication of the South Sudan research. This was part of a roadshow that accompanied a series of launches of the study, including supporting outreach at a Commission on the Status of Women CSW event, and was shared extensively on social media. The series was lauded for depicting and communicating sensitive issues and the illustrator was nominated for an award for the artwork. Lively infographics were generated and used extensively on social media to explain the costings work. The programme produced a series of high-quality videos that were shown at events where the programme could not send people (for example, Tajikistan and Afghanistan projects were shared at CSW 62), and as alternative ways of packaging and publishing interventions for those who didn't have formal methods papers (such as VSO Nepal, Tearfund DRC, and HTAC Afghanistan). There were some good examples of building demand for evidence, including a 2.5 day workshop with civil society in South Sudan on how to use evidence as part of advocacy.

Challenges identified include how to frame technical research appropriately for non-technical audiences without over simplification or dilution of complexity. This was an issue at both project and programme levels – both for the programme as a whole and for specific projects within components. A second challenge was around packaging, i.e., how to satisfy policy audiences, who often want evidence that comes from their own context, when there are not WW-VAWG programmes in every country.

²⁷ <https://audioboom.com/posts/7231565-counting-the-costs-of-violence-against-women-and-girls>

4.2 EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH UPTAKE AT COUNTRY-LEVEL

Below we present some specific examples of RU at a country level, including in South Sudan, Ghana and South Africa.

4.2.1 FOCUS ON SOUTH SUDAN

What did the programme do?

Component 2 effectively managed and staged a series of high-level events over a fortnight in November/December 2017 based on the 'No Safe Place Report'²⁸ under the theme 'Ending a Lifetime of Violence'. The campaign included a set of key events in three countries, and the activities, venues, and audience for dissemination of evidence were selected strategically. First, the report was launched at a Washington D.C. event on 29th November 2017. Dr Mary Ellsberg, the founding Director of the GWI, presented the study, and welcoming remarks were given by Thomas J LeBlanc, President of George Washington University. The event was attended by 120 researchers, policy-makers, donors, and practitioners, and IRC CEO David Miliband gave the keynote speech. First US Ambassador to South Sudan, Susan Page, and South Sudan activists, Valentino Achak Deng and Jehan Deng, sat on a discussion panel, alongside two representatives from the Component 2 consortium. The event was live streamed²⁹ to more than 800 people. The team held meetings with key members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and USAID. The study was presented at the launch of the Gender Action for Peace and Security shadow report of the UK National Action Plan on Security Council Resolution 1325, and presentations were also made at the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women³⁰ in New York in March 2018, as well as during the UK Mission side event.

The report was launched in London the following week on 5th December. Lord Bates, Minister of State at DFID, made the keynote speech, in which he described the study as "ground-breaking" and reaffirmed DFID's commitment to funding research into what works to prevent GBV. The event was attended by over 70 academics, practitioners, and UK government staff. It was chaired by journalist Jane Merrick, and included DFID's Chief Research Advisor Charlotte Watts, South Sudan women's rights campaigner and activist Pamela Lomoro, and two representatives from the Component 2 consortium on the panel. An additional learning event was hosted by DFID in London on 8th December 2017 bringing together staff from DFID, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), and the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

The following July, international staff travelled to South Sudan to collaborate with IRC and CARE's field staff on a week of in-country dissemination activities.

What was the outcome (visible change)?

Following the report there was:

- **Increased demand for evidence including** Chris Trott, UK Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan and Head of Joint FCO/ DFID Sudan Unit, asked to be sent the full reports in advance of his participation in the South Sudan peace talks in Addis Ababa. And Lord Bates

²⁸ <http://gbvresponders.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/What-Works-South-Sudan-Full-Report.pdf>

²⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/GlobalWomensInstitute/videos/1306459856149655/>

³⁰ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>

called on the Commonwealth Summit to use what he called “innovative and cutting edge” evidence in their response.

- **Policy influencing,³¹ including:** inclusion in a speech by Sir Mark Lowcock (UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) to the UN Security Council, and a House of Commons response. The study was referenced in both houses of UK parliament, and by politicians from all three major UK political parties.
- **Influencing discourse, including:** The DFID Minister Harriett Baldwin referred to the study in response to a question in the House of Commons, and the Global Women's Institute presented preliminary findings at the SVRI forum in September 2017.
- **Procedural changes:** possible incorporation of WW-VAWG research findings and learning into the Gender Based Violence Area of Responsibility's forthcoming GBV Minimum Standards, which is intended to provide the humanitarian field with a set of inter-agency standards that can be applied to core areas of humanitarian VAWG programming.

Andrew Long, Counsellor, International Development, UK Mission to the EU (formerly head of Social Development profession at DFID) said the study was: *“One of the best examples of co-created research I've seen that was tailored to meet the needs of DFID as a specific policy audience. I haven't seen the ground shake and move but you don't expect that at this stage. What we did see is that they were listening and they tailored the research to be meaningful to us in a very practical and immediate way.”*

The C3 study on economic costs, led by the University of Galway's partner organisation Tango Consult, was used as one of the basic reference documents in the Anti GBV Bill. The Bill is the product of a report of a comprehensive review study by the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare (MoGCSW) in collaboration with the, Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and Judiciary of South Sudan (JOSS). Its preparation was announced by the Minister in the C3 dissemination meeting in April 2019 and was finalized in December 2019. It has not yet been enacted, as the government has been otherwise engaged in efforts to reach agreement on forming a new government. The new government and Cabinet was appointed on 12th March 2020 with the new Ministers appointed for both the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare and Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. The New Minister of Justice is former Deputy Chief Justice who was former Deputy Justice and has good understanding of the importance of get the Anti-GBV Bill enacted. *“There is optimism that there will be movement on the Bill next few months”* says Peter Edopu, Executive Director of Tango Consult, who has provided inputs to the drafting of the bill and has been involved in organising local stakeholder consultations.

Analysis of the visible outcomes

Reasons for visibility and uptake include rigorous quality control of the research outputs including extensive review process involving programme specialists and academics from within the C2 consortium, the South Sudan Technical Advisory Group, and the WW-VAWG IAB.

Impact of research context

The study was ‘the first of its kind’ to take place in a fragile and complex setting. Its positive reception can be partly explained because of the complexity and fragility of the context in which the project managed to gather data, and because of the quality and utility of the results. And it breaks new ground

³¹ This broad heading includes changes in the content of policies including strategy papers, legislation and budgets as well as uptake in policy statements/advisory notes that inform policy debates

“As the first stand-alone VAWG population-based survey in an active conflict context, there is no question about the value of the study to the field”, says Diana Arango, Senior GBV and gender specialist at the World Bank. A number of those involved in the data collection noted that “The quality was of a very high standard and the lead researchers refused to compromise on this” (Interview conducted in January 2020). Interviews with IRC staff in-country highlight that, at least in part, success was down to the amount of time devoted to working with the data collectors, ensuring they were equipped with the tools and right approach to work on VAWG. C2 used a survey, and then qualitative methods, which allowed not just for prevalence data to emerge, but also a clear understanding of the ‘why’ of VAWG, in each context. The data - 2725 quantitative interviews, 18 individual qualitative interviews, 29 FGDs, and 30 KIIs - have been cleaned, anonymised and made available in open data repositories .

The study was communicated to the development community in South Sudan during a week-long series of events organised by IRC and CARE in July 2018. The **community working in South Sudan is close-knit**, and whilst turnover is rapid, the key decision-makers are based in Juba, and are in close contact with each other. The series of workshops included one that was hosted by DFID, which was well attended and reached more than half of the target audience based in the country in a short period of time.

Politically Savvy Implementation Organisations

Organisations involved in the research in the country, including government representatives at both local and national levels, received a 1GB flash drive containing all the findings and recommendations, which they were encouraged to use in their own programming. The organisations involved in the launch (IRC, GWI, CARE) are all ‘policy savvy’ institutions, with ‘missions to influence’ and corresponding established procedures that invest heavily and early in the research cycle to engage with policymakers and practitioners. They used their institutional contacts and bases in the USA to target influential policy targets and to get big names to act as messengers and champions for the report e.g. Miliband made the keynote speech at the launch of the ‘No Safe Place’ report; Lord Bates, Minister of State at the Department for International Development made the keynote speech at the launch of ‘No Safe Place’ in London; Chris Trott, UK Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan and Head of DFID/FCO Sudan Unit chaired the internal WW-DFID learning event etc.

The study was **presented in multiple venues**, including:

- The GBV Sub-Cluster in South Sudan
- Key members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
- Large number of diverse conferences and workshops including SVRI (2017);
- Informal discussions with the US Ambassador to South Sudan on how to implement the recommendations;
- Presentation to International Population Conference;
- Launch of the Gender Action for Peace and Security shadow report;
- Presentation to Protracted Conflict, Aid and Development conference in London;
- UK Embassy Roundtable in Copenhagen and (
- Shared at a World Bank event entitled ‘No Safe Space: Gender and Violence in Conflict Affected Humanitarian Settings’ - attended by a diverse audience including local and international NGOs;
- In various CSW sessions hosted by the GAGE Consortium and Irish Aid;
- DFID Humanitarian Advisors professional development conference in Sept 2018;

- A one-day workshop at USAID on how to better measure SEA in relief and development contexts.
- A capacity development workshop was conducted in Juba with over 30 participants from women's rights organisations, NGOs, INGOs, donor and UN agencies, and representatives from the South Sudan Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare. The briefing was also sent to the US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley, with a focus on adolescent girls in South Sudan.

Where they hosted their own events, the programme **kept costs down** by using consortium partners' existing infrastructure and saving on venue hire and transport. The programme effectively targeted high-level stakeholders and used a wide range of strategic tools to generate visibility and traction with their work.

They produced a **range of different outputs that had been tailored for different audiences**, including a summary report and policy brief and innovative cartoons and a series of manuals and toolkits to provide academic and practitioner communities with detailed guidance on how to conduct and disseminate safe and ethical research, monitoring, and evaluation on GBV in refugee and conflict-affected settings, including the Gender-Based Violence Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation with Refugee and Conflict-Affected Populations Manual and the Research to Action Toolkit. The teams did rigorous pre-testing with practitioners to make sure that the outputs responded to the interests and major concerns of this audience, and were tailored to be 'fit for purpose'. This was followed by active dissemination through practitioner networks.

Strategic use of media, including digital platforms, and being responsive to media opportunities (facilitated by dedicated time given to the project by the host organisations' media departments). The London event was tweeted by the UK Parliamentary Group for Sudan and South Sudan,³² with a link to the report, which gained traction in a number of high profile media outlets throughout 2018.

4.2.2 FOCUS ON SOUTH AFRICA

What did the programme do?

The programme was involved in the planning and organising of the National Gender-based Violence and Femicide Summit (GBVFS)³³ which was called by the South Africa President Cyril Ramaphosa in 2018, and WW-VAWG evidence informed the President's speech.³⁴ One of the resolutions from the summit was to establish a GBV and Femicide Council, which led the development of a National Strategic Plan³⁵ and this was drafted using WW-VAWG evidence to shape the prevention pillar.

The following year, the WW-VAWG Consortium Director led the drafting of the ZAR1.6 billion (£82 million) emergency fund, announced by the President in Parliament³⁶ on 18th September 2019, to fight GBV in the country. One of the priorities for the fund is the national roll out the VAWG prevention interventions to 44 out of 52 districts, which should include Stepping Stones-Creating Futures. A key informant interviewed by the IE Team, Dr Chandre Gould from the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), noted that *"there is an enormously important 'policy moment' happening in South*

³² <https://twitter.com/APPGSudans/status/938115014187208704>

³³ <https://www.gov.za/nationalgendersummit>

³⁴ <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/newsletters/address-president-cyril-ramaphosa-presidential-summit-gender-based-violence-and-femicide>

³⁵ <https://www.gov.za/documents/national-gender-based-violence-and-femicide-strategic-plan-draft-12-aug-2019-0000>

³⁶ <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/speeches/address-president-cyril-ramaphosa-joint-sitting-parliament-crisis-violence-south-africa%2C>

Africa currently. What Works are very present in the conversation and are driving it hard with evidence” (RUPR, March 2019).

The programme has managed to seize the moment, especially around accepting positions on task forces, technical groups, advisory committees and other standing instruments of government where policies get framed and the machinery of change begins. For example, Professor Jewkes, as a member of the technical team for the National Young Women and Adolescents Campaign, developed the ToC for the national campaign and drafted the plan related to GBV prevention. The campaign document referenced WW-VAWG Evidence Reviews 2 and 3.

What was the result?

The programme secretariat's base, in the SAMRC in Pretoria, plays a big role in its ability to influence. Those involved in the secretariat and the two projects have deep knowledge of both the political and development context for VAWG prevention in the country. Many of them have a solid track record of working in the sector in South Africa – and therefore know the community of practice that includes activists, policymakers and academics – and are ‘on the doorstep’ of those they are seeking to influence, so can respond quickly and efficiently to opportunities that present themselves.

Many of the team wear two hats: they are both academics and activists, and can therefore understand what is needed by actors on both sides in order to make progress. It has been pragmatic about having neither the time nor resources to change everything, and have prioritised opportunities that allow them to propose solutions that are context specific, home-grown, and evidence-based. They also have the resources and support of the secretariat. This ‘granular and practical’ approach has been extremely effective.

They recognised the challenges and limitations – as well as the upscaling potential – of working with government. In South Africa, of the majority of social welfare processes are provided by NGOs. Budgets are under enormous pressure and the economy has slowed to the point of recession. As such, the state is very unlikely to have new budget lines for AVWG prevention programmes, and creative ways will need to be found to both argue why and then identify how to integrate prevention interventions into mainstream programmes at their own expense. There is a ‘missing middle’ in government capacity to access, understand, and use evidence, and current mechanisms do not adequately recognise or resolve this issue.

The programme is very aware that change is rarely brought about by a single research study or an individual institution. It has been careful to work in concert with and in support of a broader coalition for change. They made full use of the progress being made across the country – by the SA Violence Prevention Forum (VPF) and civil society groups, for example – and used their role as ‘the providers of evidence’ to negotiate seats at important tables. *“We have helped others to understand and use the language of evidence”,* says Nwabisa Shai. *“We use the examples of the What Works programme to explain the idea of ‘an evidence base’ and we make that accessible to those who would not normally know what we were talking about”* (KAI).

The programme ‘behaved like advocates,’ with evidence replacing the usual campaigning messages. This included sending SAMRC and What Works colleagues to a big South Africa conference on GBV and femicide that clashed with the final WW-VAWG conference in Nepal, responding positively to a request for advice from the President who was himself responding to public anger over VAWG, and building relationships and working in concert with some of the members the VPF who generally oversee budgets on national GBV programming.

4.2.3 FOCUS ON GHANA

What did the programme do?

There were two projects carried out in Ghana. C1 was an evaluation of the COMBAT³⁷ project that was designed and implemented by the Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre³⁸ and evaluated by the University of Ghana School of Public Health³⁹.

A separate costings study was carried out as part of C3 with IPSOS MORI responsible for training, sampling and data collection and University of Ghana ISSER doing the QA and primary analysis of the work.

What was the result?

The Domestic Violence Coalition (DVC), an association made up of civil society representatives and individuals which includes member of the Ghanaian diaspora, was granted an in-person roundtable meeting with the President of the Republic of Ghana, Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, on the 2nd August 2019. Others at the meeting included high-ranking officials from the Ministry of Works, Ministry of Education, Bank of Ghana and the President's Gender advisor. A specific demand was made to increase funding and establish a minimum annual investment to the government's Domestic Violence Fund in a letter sent at the same time by the DVC, citing evidence from the C3 study. After the meeting, the Gender Advisor was designated to work with the Coalition to follow up on commitments made. In January, she got back in touch to say that a range of major private sector companies had pledged financial commitments for supporting GBV initiatives in the country. The DVC were arranging to meet to get clarity on the terms of this support, and to confirm how concrete were the commitments.

A seminar with the African Development Bank (ADB) was applauded for building the capacity of staff by providing new knowledge and perspective on integrating the macro impacts of VAWG into existing macro policy modelling. A senior economist of the ADB Macro Policy Unit said: *"The presentation by Dr Nata Duvvury was very timely as it came right before the Gender Global Summit (25-27 November 2019) held in Kigali."*

The C3 study has been used and cited in a nationwide survey and advocacy project led by EAA Media Productions called 'Schools, Sex, Safety,' which is run in partnership with UNFPA and other local partners. This project drew heavily on the WW-VAWG study to design their nationwide survey, and its findings will be woven into the media campaign and included in the Media Summit.

WW-VAWG studies are systematically used by members of the DVC and the quality of the evaluation work is highly regarded, being cited by some as giving the community of dedicated advocates and campaigners the evidence they were lacking to push for change. *"People are sceptical about qualitative work. people like numbers. With advocacy on COMBAT work I've been in the field and seen it; I've talked to people who have been positively affected by it. We now can put a value on it (because of the evaluation). We can say what is the value for money for prevention with confidence, and the media and policymakers, as well as ordinary people like that"* says Professor Akosua

³⁷ Tackling the Pervasive Social Issue of VAWG: Using Community-based Action Teams to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls <https://www.whatworks.co.za/global-programme-projects/gender-centre-ghana>

³⁸ <http://gendercentreghana.org>

³⁹ <http://publichealth.uq.edu.gh>

Darkwah, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Sociology, University of Ghana and member of the DVC.

Why did the change happen?

There have been positive signs that both projects have been recognised as important, positive and robust and have stimulated demand for conversations based on the evidence and supported ongoing advocacy around e.g. domestic violence legislation.

Four specific challenges have been offered as explanations of the limited uptake and utilization of WW-VAWG evidence in Ghana. First, there is a ‘misalignment’ of evidence supply and evidence need (that limits uptake of the COMBAT evaluation evidence). There is no DFID VAWG/GBV sector programming, and so the findings from the COMBAT, though positive and compelling, are not tailored specifically to speak to their health and education sector programmes. Otherwise, the programme would need to target others working on relevant programming – such as the UNFPA with its focus on family planning, maternal health and sexual and gender-based violence – for uptake to happen.

DFID see potential in the C3 work on costings and would have liked to see more efforts by the programme to link the study to the scandal on sexual harassment that hit the national headlines in 2018⁴⁰. They recognise that such stakeholder engagement activities would probably have been outside of the scope and budget of the researchers. When asked, the national researchers said that they could not easily speak to this issue with authority with the research that had been undertaken. This apparent ‘mismatch’ is typical of the conundrum facing programmes of this type. It is only resolvable when there is sufficient time allowed for solid relationships to be built between researchers and those who want/ need evidence.

Second, there is a ‘missing middle’ at the heart of government that limits their capacity and appetite to understand and use evidence (in this and other sectors)⁴¹. DFID can support this: “The Gender Equality Working Group (co-chaired by DFID with the Canadians) has been discussing how to provide technical assistance to help the government to strengthen the capacity to work in this area, in order to help scale up.” The DFID office, and specific individuals within it, have played an active role in facilitating visibility and uptake of the findings in government. But 2020 is election year, and this brings additional challenges to following through on promises already made.

Third, an impediment to wider uptake via the media relates to the appetite and capacity of the media to report issues around VAWG. *“The reality is that more and more media – with crunched numbers, fewer skilled journalists and more interns – have the time (or will take the time) to read through the research findings and reports”* says experienced journalist and media trainer Esther Armah⁴². *“I would say that an impediment to the reporting of the What Works programme is its presentation. It is not media friendly, unwieldy, and just too long. It is sent in too academic a format – it needs to be broken down in a way a journalist in Ghana can engage the story easily and report it. Without that kind of change, you limit its reporting possibilities.”*

Fourth, the potential of Southern partners to use their position, reputation and leverage in the national ‘evidence ecosystem’ to influence policy, was sometimes fully acknowledged and used, but not in all cases. This was sometimes the result of contractual limitations, and was felt more keenly by some teams than others.

⁴⁰ KAI with DFID economic, social development and health advisors January 2020

⁴¹ KAI SDA DFID

⁴² KAI with Esther Armah, EAA Media Productions <https://www.earmah.com/>

5 LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The growing bank of literature on how evidence informs policy and practices instructs us that positive outcomes can be achieved for a number of reasons. This can be due to the strength of the evidence or the changing context, or can be a result of purposeful contributions of the programmes working to make the change. Within these seemingly simple categories, there are complexities. Effective communication of research findings is necessary, but alone is not sufficient for research uptake. Equally, policy and practice decisions can be influenced in the absence of robust evidence.

For example, strong evidence in South Sudan made immediate ripples, influenced discourse, built demand for evidence, and has contributed to influencing practice. But strong and positive evaluation evidence generated elsewhere did not have an equally receptive audience, despite what was often a similar tactical approach to engagement and building visibility. Equally, funding for replication happened in Kenya before WW-VAWG evidence had been published – and despite the RCT approach being unable to detect change⁴³. It is often difficult to determine the links between research and influencing activities and subsequent changes in policy. Policy change is highly complex, and is often ill-suited to ‘linear’ or ‘rational’ models. More commonly, policy processes are shaped by a multitude of interacting forces and actors – each with their own dynamic and interests. RU and policy influencing involves political and sometimes highly contested processes and policymakers may not accept claims that their decisions can be attributed to the influence of another actor. Even where the programme may have done ‘all the right things’ (targeting the right people, packaging and re-purposing evidence to suit the audience, engaging at the right time in the right place etc.), the desired outcome may not be reached for many different reasons. For example, in Pakistan where the evidence was compelling and the uptake activities were sound, Ministers keep changing. This made it difficult to get meaningful traction in policy discussions. In other examples, changes in political economy have sometimes made decisionmakers more receptive to hearing evidence. For example, because of the politicisation of VAWG in South Africa, the programme was able to engage more easily. And because of the rise of the #MeToo movement that triggered a global conversation, it could be argued that the media were more receptive to stories on VAWG prevention.

It is likely that the legacy of WW-VAWG will be more profound than current impact evidence suggests. The ‘long tail’ of innovative partnerships between researchers and implementing agencies, for example, which have started to show themselves in adapted procedures (such as VSO Nepal commissioning and using evidence more systematically in their programmes, researchers modifying their approach to designing RCTs to ‘better listen’ to implementers at the outset etc.), is likely to show visible returns at a later stage. Instances where demand for ‘more information’ or rhetorical pledges ‘to act’ look promising but may, or may not, bear fruit.

This thematic paper has brought together key evidence and learning from the WW-VAWG programme on RU, emerging from this are key lessons learnt and recommendations for the next phase of programming.

5.1 LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Research Uptake is more than a strategy: it is a ‘way of doing research’ that optimizes impact.**

⁴³ We note that a more mixed and qualitative method is needed to verify the findings as they do not reflect the experience of the implementers

- This should be ‘embedded in the DNA’ of those charged with managing the programme and enshrined in an RU Strategy that is a living document that is co-created by more than management, and is owned by all partners. An essential part of this is more rigorous and nuanced reflection and reporting of progress against the strategy (vs the Logframe only). This would have helped to catalyse conversations around influence opportunities, gaps, and the identification of who across the consortium was best placed to engage with which stakeholder groups around which topics. The outcome of such conversations might have generated a clearer articulation of how the programme prioritised influencing opportunities – both to the donor and across the programme to some who felt constrained and without a clear mandate to speak publicly.
- The established status and experience of those involved in delivering any programme are ‘reputational assets’ whose value is often underestimated. These advance the chances of uptake in the short lifespan of programmes.
- A clear understanding of RU and what is required to maximise impact is needed at the highest level from the outset. This is needed in order to set the vision and design the processes necessary to build both ownership and capacity to deliver across the programme. Everyone who works in the programme needs to be supported to share this overarching vision, and to own it. Supporting people to achieve capacity in this area costs money but will deliver returns in the programme’s overall impact.

2. There are no silver bullets to achieve uptake, and much of it depends on context

- Purposeful engagement and uptake is most likely to deliver results where there is appetite and capacity to use evidence, a political will for change, robust evidence that meets users’ needs, and a strategic approach to communicating with those who can affect change. A strategy that is flexible enough to respond to opportunities when they emerge, will optimise impact.
- All programme actors (researchers, implementers, associates etc.) should be mandated and supported to pursue uptake activities in their own contexts. Their activities should be framed by the parameters and ambitions set in the RU strategy (which they will have helped to build and own) and underpinned by a set of evidence and messages that have been agreed by the programme. This optimises the reach and reputation of partners, many of whom will be established players in the sector with a wide and established constituency that is ready and primed to be influenced because they already know and trust the messenger.
- Tensions exist between approaches to engagement, including ‘shallow vs deep’, planned vs opportunistic, and centralised planning vs decentralised ‘let all flowers bloom’ approaches. These need to be managed throughout the evolution of the programme, and clear criteria and processes need to be designed and communicated across the programme to explain and endorse the choices.
- For many reasons – because of what they already know, their normative views, their profession, their contexts etc.– evidence does not influence all people the same way, at the same time, or to the same degree. Active monitoring of what research uptake activities are being carried out, and with what results, should be fed back into the programme with regular ‘sensemaking’ sessions to work out what is working and not working. Programme adaptations should be made on the basis of this collective analysis.
- Presence of many of ‘the right ingredients’ for uptake does not guarantee desired outcomes in terms policy improvements, increased investment etc., if the broader political context (e.g., donor priority country) is absent. “The region is not interesting for donors and there is very little the programme can do to influence that broader political context” (International Alert). There is also the assumption, in targeting governments, that they have the capacity for replication at scale. But this is often absent. There is a ‘missing middle’ in government where there is

appetite to engage, but limited capability to do so. This is beyond the remit of programmes such as WW-VAWG to tackle, unless it is mandated to do so.

3. Effective research uptake takes money, time and vision

- The most profound and valuable learning generated by complex and ambitious programmes (that has the highest potential to inform and influence) comes at the end of the programme, e.g., in the form of synthesis products. But ending the programme at the same time as their publication removes the opportunities to engage and influence around them. Programme design should take this into account, by ensuring funding is available for a minimum of nine months after publication to maximise uptake and impact, for example.
- RU needs to be adequately resourced to cover both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ activities (hosting events, networking activities etc., as well as capacity strengthening, peer exchanges, workshops and writeshops etc.). There are challenges in describing some activities that contribute to both research and RU objectives, such as initial stakeholder workshops, but these are not insurmountable and are essential for learning about the real costs of effective uptake that can inform future programme design.
- The job of ‘reading across’ the raft of different projects to identify thematic evidence and lessons learnt (how to do and communicate research in fragile and conflict settings that happened in all three components, approaches to working with specific groups such as men and adolescents, who is best to engage with which global debates with evidence that is emerging, etc.) needs to be done from the outset to maximise the lessons for others. This should complement, but go beyond, the identification of synthesis products. It is a complex process that needs to be assigned to someone ‘at the heart’ of the programme who is close to the delivery and has expertise to understand the relevance and resonance of findings as they emerge.
- Digital communication is an increasingly powerful tool to reach audiences that are not directly known and who cannot be easily mapped. It is important to engage them in conversation in a way that will build an appetite for evidence around VAWG prevention and potentially lead to attitude and discourse change. This can be VfM, but needs a dedicated set of skills and capacity to manage the activities.

4. The ‘easy bit’ of influencing the VAWG sector with robust evidence has been achieved

- To ensure prevention is scaled up, the next step is to make the case for prevention to be integrated into specific sectors, such as health, education, economics, and infrastructure. This requires different evidence that is more practitioner and implementation-focused and will require specific skills for understanding the needs of this community.
- There is evidence of increased appetite and capacity for doing more rigorous research in a systematic way within NGOs as a result of the WW-VAWG partnership. But there are structural impediments: “It’s not what we’re funded for. Donors have very little patience for funding more thorough research. They come to us for implementation and that is what they expect to see.”
- The WW-VAWG programme evidence has been sufficient to convince decision-makers that prevention is possible and desirable but not always to show them how to implement in different settings (i.e., implementation ‘how to’). For example, the Pakistan Ministry want to replicate ‘Right to Play’ in all schools, but could not do this without the economic costings information which came later than the initial positive results of the programme.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for WW-VAWG Phase Two:

- A clear understanding of RU and what is required to maximise impact is needed at the highest level from the outset. This is needed in order to set the vision and design the processes necessary to build both ownership and capacity to deliver across the programme. Everyone who works in the programme needs to be supported to share this overarching vision, and to own it. Supporting people to achieve capacity in this area costs money but will deliver returns in the programme's overall impact.
- RU needs to be adequately resourced to cover both 'hard' and 'soft' activities (hosting events, networking activities etc., as well as capacity strengthening, peer exchanges, workshop and writeshops etc.) There are challenges in describing some activities that contribute to both research and research uptake objectives e.g. initial stakeholder workshops, but these are not insurmountable and essential for learning about the real costs of effective uptake that can inform future programme design.
- Appoint a high-level RU Manager at the heart of the programme to lead and facilitate the processes and to maximise impact by all actors within it.
- Be more adventurous and confident with digital engagement in a way that melds conventional strategic engagement with digital conversations to reach the powerful campaigning and civil society movement that is pushing for change.

Recommendations for the field of RU:

- Working with the programme that is being evaluated to develop a suite of RU indicators that link to the broader Theory of Change and the RU Strategy will help to buy ownership and strengthen RU capacities across the programme. Helping to co-create practical systems for ongoing monitoring and 'sensemaking' that link to donor reporting will win more friends.
- Framing matters. 'Innovation' is sometimes a more palatable way of framing RU to a community of researchers, for whom it is often confused with more public and corporate communications.
- RU outcomes often come out of other processes, including networking, convenings such as the ASMs, joint presentations like those at SVRI, and working on cross-cutting thematic outputs such as synthesis papers. Monitoring processes should prompt reflections on these activities by those involved, and should seek to capture and report on any outcomes.
- Interim monitoring between Inception, MTR, and FE are invaluable in keeping the RU conversation alive. They act as a prompt for any outliers against plans (stakeholder groups that are being overlooked, as well as emerging 'windows of opportunities') and allow others to advocate early successes.

Recommendations for evaluators:

- Performance evaluations offer the opportunity to work with the programme as critical friends to evolve and strengthen both methods of doing RU and tracking and tracing the results as the programme develops. This provides a catalyst for 'sensemaking' of the monitoring information and for making course corrections from the outset.
- There is no silver bullet for monitoring RU. In many ways, the tools available are clunky and contested (especially by those being evaluated if they are new to the field of RU, and particularly if they have been required to produce an RU strategy with no provision for capacity support). A mentorship approach is the most practical way of making progress, beginning with an assessment of where the programmes are (in terms of capacity, appetite and enthusiasm for RU), and building a collaborative 'learning by doing' approach to partnership.

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