



## Programming to Prevent Violence Against Women: PRACTICE BRIEF

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# Learning from Practice: Approaches to Capture and Apply Practice-Based Knowledge

## OVERVIEW

Practice-based knowledge (PBK) is currently under-used and under-valued in violence prevention programming and in building the global evidence base. This is in part due to biases of knowledge in the field that create a hierarchy of knowledge - prioritising quantitative research methods above other methods of data collection and types of knowledge creation. This is also due to the fact that PBK is not often formally documented or verified, nor synthesised and applied on a larger scale by practitioners themselves.

This brief provides reflections and practical tips for practitioners and activists (e.g. field staff, volunteer and community workers at the frontline of programme implementation, social change agents and movement builders) on how to collect, document, analyse, share and apply practice-based knowledge to programming to prevent violence against women and their children (VAW/C). It complements the Prevention Collaborative's position paper *Elevating Practice Based Knowledge to Improve Prevention Programming*.<sup>2</sup>

To develop this brief, we reviewed a range of materials and tools and conducted informal consultations with practitioners in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and America. Our review and interviews highlighted that improving systems to elevate PBK is new territory for many organisations or is often buried in other processes (e.g. formal M&E frameworks) — often as a result of limited funding and time. This brief is intended as a starting point for dialogue. The Prevention Collaborative aims to engage with partners to gather more examples, tools and processes on how to capture and apply PBK to support organisational learning and more effective programming to prevent violence against women and their children (VAW/C).

## KEY ISSUES

- What are the key principles of building an inclusive and effective system to learn from practice?
- Which tools and processes can be used to document, analyse and synthesise PBK?
- How can learning from PBK be applied in practice?
- How can we build learning organisations and how donors can support this?

“ Practice-Based Knowledge is the cumulative knowledge and learning acquired by practitioners through designing and implementing programmes in different contexts — including insights gained from observations, conversations, direct experiences and monitoring. <sup>1</sup> ”



## KEY PRINCIPLES: DEVELOPING AN INCLUSIVE, EFFECTIVE PRACTICE-BASED KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

### 1. Strengthen your organisational learning culture:

A learning culture values different forms of knowledge and sees every person as a knowledge producer. It integrates routinised deep learning cycles across programme management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and uses ongoing feedback loops to respond to the needs of programme participants. It requires an organisational spirit of curiosity and critical thinking and does not hold onto outdated practices merely because “this is how we do things”. It allows practitioners to see where their contribution fits within the bigger picture.

**2. Keep it simple and build on what exists:** If organisations try to do too much all at once, busy practitioners can be overwhelmed with demanding schedules and may resist changes, even positive ones. Documentation processes should build on what already exists and use modes of learning available in the context. Developing a learning culture takes time and financial resources- so it is best to start small, and prioritise one or two areas to focus on first. It is also important to include time and budget for developing PBK systems to improve programming and learning in funding proposals.

**3. Integrate practitioners as key stakeholders at all stages:** Practitioners are key to generating and applying PBK. They should be included as active stakeholders throughout the collection, synthesis, dissemination

and application of PBK. This ensures ownership of the knowledge creation process, and results in PBK that is useful for practitioners working to ensure programmes have positive impact.

**4. Address unequal power dynamics using an intersectional feminist lens:** Effective PBK systems must consider the power dynamics that shape how knowledge is created and shared — including those based on gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and (dis)ability — as well as the position (seniority, title, function) of individuals within organisations and within their local and global context. It is important to challenge existing knowledge hierarchies and extractive forms of data collection driven from the Global North.<sup>3</sup> Applying transformative feminist approaches allows practitioners and organisations to create multi-way flows of knowledge that benefit everyone.

**5. Build a foundation of trust at all levels:** Relationships of trust are critical – between programme participants and practitioners, then extending up to funders. Practitioners at different levels need to feel comfortable and safe to share what works and does not work both within and beyond their organisations, including with programme funders. Open communication is also important in order to avoid particular individuals becoming default “knowledge experts” and excluding the voices of others.

## PBK TOOLS AND PROCESSES

The following sections outline a number of steps, questions, case studies and tools that can assist organisations and practitioners in documenting, analysing, synthesising, sharing and applying PBK.

### 1. DOCUMENTING PBK

Collecting PBK is not a technocratic exercise. It is about democratising organisational patterns of knowledge production to enable a learning culture, feedback loops and more effective programming. This requires seeing knowledge creation as an ongoing participatory process and not just as an end product.

#### Engage and understand power dynamics

Organisations need to consider how power dynamics influence their knowledge creation, learning cycles, programmes and practices. Often, power is only seen as one person or group having control over others. But thinking about different ways that power is expressed can be useful for organisations and practitioners: Who has ‘power over’ others and what is the impact of this?

Power can also be positive, referring to the ‘power to’ bring about desired change in our lives or others. ‘Power within’ is the sense of self-identity, confidence and awareness needed to act and create change. ‘Power with’ refers to the synergies which emerge through partnerships and collaboration with others, or through collective action and alliance building. It is harmful to capture PBK through means that uncritically maintain oppressive practices.

### POWER: KEY QUESTIONS

- Where does power operate?
- Where does power come from?
- What does power look like?
- How is power expressed?
- How does power work?



### RESOURCES AND TOOLS

- [All About Power \(CREA\)](#)<sup>4</sup>

This tool can assist organisations to explore different forms of power and how they operate.

- [The Master’s House \(Just Associates\)](#)<sup>5</sup>

This tool uses the image of a ‘master’s house’ to illustrate how patriarchy needs to be unlearned by both men and women. It offers a number of concrete activities to help practitioners to do this.

- [The Power Cube \(Gaventa\)](#)<sup>6</sup>

This is a resource for understanding different types of power relations in efforts to bring about social change.



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Spaces of practice can also reinforce patriarchy... wonderful cultural traditions have been destroyed by patriarchy and knowledge has become corrupted and distorted. We need to avoid uncritical passing on of community wisdom... Practice needs to be interrogated and critiqued so we know why we do things... Or else, corrupted practices can emerge and be passed on.

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(Interview with woman practitioner, Africa region)

### Create enabling spaces

Speaking openly about what is not working or acknowledging what is not known can be difficult and sometimes risky. It is important for leaders to support and create spaces to reflect on organisational culture and power dynamics and how these may facilitate or constrain staff and results.

Organisations can work to surface hidden (tacit) knowledge to look at what is / is not working. People are often more willing to express their true feelings in informal settings — such as over tea — rather than in a formal meeting. Allies can facilitate open discussions around challenges, failures and lessons learned.

Opportunities for practitioners to share anonymous feedback, such as a ‘suggestions’ box can be useful. In workshop settings, the use of interactive, small group and anonymous exercises can also be effective.

### Build staff capacity

Build the capacity of staff to employ creative, appropriate and simple methods of data collection that surface concrete practitioner insights. These may include qualitative or participatory research tools as well as less structured methods such as journaling and storytelling. Involve field staff in the process of developing tools that fit the context and consider pre-testing programme components such as workshops and curriculum materials.

Non-prescriptive approaches such as social vignettes, practitioner interviews, journaling, storytelling and programme observations can allow unexpected process/outcome data that challenge initial programme assumptions. Three approaches are highlighted in this brief: Using ICT for feminist storytelling, Outcome Harvesting and Photovoice.



### RESOURCES AND TOOLS

- [Strategies for Building an Organisation with a Soul](#) (Chigudu and Chigudu)<sup>7</sup>
- [Five Tips for Creating Safe Spaces](#) (Women Win)<sup>8</sup>
- [Interactive Learning Toolkit on how to be a Good Facilitator](#) (CARE)<sup>9</sup>

### BUILDING ENABLING SPACES: KEY QUESTIONS

- What are people’s fears about admitting what they don’t know or what isn’t working?
- Do we have informal meeting areas that encourage spontaneous conversations?
- Can people chat about their work or do they feel they have to work alone at their desks?
- How can practitioners be incentivised to engage and share?



### RESOURCES AND TOOLS

- The [ICTs for Feminist Movement Building Activist Toolkit](#)<sup>10</sup> offers practical tips and tools for storytelling by women and using social media in VAW work.



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One challenge is that the people who hold embodied knowledge may be less literate and may not be as comfortable to express it, especially in writing. Mentoring practitioners to speak up in big international spaces is about capacitating their voice and not about telling them what to say... to surface the already present knowledge... and help them to practice with their peers in practical ways around tone, voice and choice of words.

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(Interview with woman practitioner, Africa region)

## PBK IN ACTION

Outcome Harvesting<sup>11</sup> offers an alternative tool to many traditional evaluation approaches. It entails looking at an observed “outcome” — often a change in a range of specific behaviours — and then involving those who influenced that change to work backwards to identify which factors contributed to it.

**Voices4Change**<sup>12</sup> in Nigeria identify this as an effective way to understand the social norm changes taking place among key influencers and to measure complex behaviours such as perpetration of violence. This approach also encourages us to look at potential unintended positive or negative changes resulting from an intervention.

### Identify what you want to know and why

This requires addressing practitioners’ fears around the potential risks of admitting what is not known or what is not currently working. It is important to create space for individuals and organisations to reflect honestly on what happened, what surprised or concerned them.

### Observation and post-action reflection

Plan structured time and space for practitioners to observe and reflect on intended and unintended consequences of practice. This can include debriefing sessions with programme participants to reflect on what worked, what did not work and lessons learned. Safety and trust are critical to ensure that real challenges are discussed and understood. Work together to document and determine actions needed. This builds in routinised feedback loops.

## DEVELOPING A LEARNING MINDSET

- What do we already know?
- What don’t we know?
- What do we know is not working?
- What do we want to know? Why?
- What and who are the sources of our current knowledge? Should these change?
- Who are the end users of this knowledge and how do they intend to use it?



## RESOURCES AND TOOLS

- ‘Four Steps of Action Learning: Planning, Action, Reflection, Learning’ p 163 in [The Barefoot Guide 2: Learning Practices in Organisations and Social Change](#)<sup>13</sup>

## REFLECT ON WHAT HAPPENED:

### KEY QUESTIONS

- Did everything happen as expected?
- What was unexpected?
- What did not happen?
- What still puzzles you?
- Is there anything that concerns you?



## Assess and document existing programme and learning processes

It is critical to start with an assessment of how and what individuals within organisations and movements have already learned. Practitioners and activists already possess practical knowledge and skills gained through hands-on action in the communities and contexts where they work.

This may include experiences such as facilitating community dialogues and training sessions, responding to logistical and practical challenges, resolving disagreements and misunderstandings, and dealing with individual or group backlash.

Finding simple ways to document this is key - for example, writing notes in a notebook or journal or recording voice memos on a smartphone. It is also important to collect data directly from programme participants through informal and formal approaches.

Those collecting data should be close to the frontline, familiar with the context, trained in appropriate methods and perceived as trustworthy by programme participants.

## EXISTING LEARNING PROCESSES: KEY QUESTIONS

- How has learning been done to date?
- Has it been / can it be documented?
- What historical, social and organisational factors have shaped this learning?
- Should these learning processes be built on or disrupted?



## RESOURCES AND TOOLS

- [The Barefoot Guide 2](#): Learning Practices in Organisations and Social Change: Mapping your Practice (p 17);<sup>14</sup> Five Elements of a Developmental Approach (p19)
- [Time to Talk](#) (Terres Des Hommes)<sup>15</sup>: A toolkit and shared campaign to make sure that children and their voices are included in gathering data on programmes about or designed to benefit them.

## 2. ANALYSING AND SYNTHESISING PBK

A number of promising systems and approaches are emerging to analyse and synthesise learning from practice at a programme, organisational and field level.

### Internal Analysis

Within organisations, practitioners are key stakeholders in PBK analysis and determining the meaning and relevance of the data collected. Simple tools, such as staff workshops to interpret emerging findings, build practitioner capacity to collect relevant information and assist in data interpretation.

While PBK may have broader implications at a theoretical level, the tools of analysis should prioritise learning for programme implementation. Practitioners can participate in data analysis at 'pause' points for reflection throughout the monitoring and evaluation cycle. This enables practitioners to be part of triangulating various sources of knowledge whilst avoiding a knowledge hierarchy and can help to internally validate the conclusions being drawn. This also offers a peer review system of shared learning that builds ownership.

During triangulation, it is important for organisations to avoid negating certain voices, or placing more weight on the experiences of those in more powerful positions. Certain techniques and tools can help institutionalise a safer, positive organisational container for shared critical reflection. See the tools opposite for examples of how to surface forms of PBK in creative and inclusive ways.



One key thing is your underlying paradigm. We have been bred into a paradigm of academia as the only place where knowledge lies. Three parallel streams shaped my own change in thinking and my move from problematising to looking at what I did have: what are your strengths, appreciative inquiry and asset based approaches. This can help people understand that “the fact that I am surviving in this squalid squatter camp means that I have strengths and knowledge based on my embodied experience.”

(Interview with Woman practitioner, Africa region)



## RESOURCES AND TOOLS

- [Asset-based community development](#)<sup>16</sup> – Focuses on communities' assets, not on its needs and deficits, as a starting point.
- [Strengths-based models](#)<sup>17</sup> – Instead of looking at people's weaknesses in groups, organisations or families, this approach focuses on building on their strengths.
- [Appreciative inquiry](#)<sup>18</sup> – This mode of inquiry looks for the good and how to identify new possibilities.





## Synthesis

Data synthesis needs to be a multi-way dialogue rather than a top-down, one way presentation. This ensures it is an active and participatory process that engages representatives from many parts of the organisation. One danger identified in the synthesis process was a tendency to present 'thick' qualitative data back to practitioners only in 'thin' quantitative forms (e.g. pie charts). Retaining a qualitative approach in the presentation of data elicits a more open-ended discussion enabling unexpected new insights to surface.

Format is key when synthesising and sharing learning within and across organisations. Information should be packaged in bite-sized formats that other practitioners can easily connect to their own contexts.

It is rarely realistic for practitioners and activists to read detailed research reports or academic research papers. Short, synthesised briefs directed at practitioners are needed not just policy briefs.

Simple creative audio visuals, webinars or practical scenarios can also help to connect practitioners emotionally to their lived experiences. Seek to incentivise practitioners to be early adopters of new field insights.

**EXAMPLE:** A programme manager summarises interviews with 20 practitioners by saying that they use the word 'trust' 46 times. This only indicates that trust is important. It does not provide context-specific knowledge about how the word was used or what practitioners think should be done to build trust.

Instead, the manager can explain that the word 'trust' was used: 1) between practitioners, 2) at the community level, 3) between participants and practitioners; and include quotes and concrete examples from practitioners. Then managers and practitioners can work together to develop shared recommendations around how to build trust across many levels.



## RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Online portals with simple summaries, briefs and videos on practice can be useful, for example:

- [The Prevention Collaborative's Knowledge Platform<sup>19</sup>](#) – Practice resources including briefs, programme summaries, curricula, videos, tools and guidance.
- [Learning Hub for Practitioners on VAW/VAC<sup>20</sup>](#) with briefs and webinars – Joint Learning Initiative for Faith & Local Communities.
- [SASA! Video](#) (Raising Voices)<sup>21</sup>
- [Violence Prevention video](#) (CDC)<sup>22</sup>

## PBK IN ACTION

Six local women within a Christian denomination in Zambia were trained to use Photovoice and WhatsApp technology to take photos and tell stories about the social and religious norms they thought underpinned violence against women and children in their local communities and churches. In three sites over a five-month period, they used phones to collect 258 photos and oral voice notes sent in real time with monthly feedback from researchers via Whatsapp videos.

The six women then came together to analyse the findings themselves with support from the external researchers. They created story- and photo-boards around key social norms and drivers such as interpretations of certain sacred text passages. These boards then formed an exhibition for a one-day conversation with the senior leaders of that denomination.

This creative method of data collection and analysis enabled illiterate, non-English-speaking, rural women to participate meaningfully in knowledge creation and analysis using role play and storytelling. The local and gendered meaning of visual symbols such as the chicken gizzard (representing male genitalia) and the calabash (used for an intimate partner ritual) were then interpreted by the women themselves.

This approach was pioneered by the Unit for Religion and Development Research in South Africa and funded by Episcopal Relief and Development. It offered unique insights to practitioners developing initiatives to work with faith leaders to address violence across Zambia- such as the role religion and culture play in fuelling secrecy within families and perpetuating or resisting intergenerational cycles of IPV.



## PBK IN ACTION

In its VAW work, Oxfam has developed tools for a feminist knowledge management system which synthesises and shares PBK across its organisation and builds 'networked knowledge' by using a digital platform to create collaborative virtual spaces. Here practitioners around the world in the sector can reflect, offer case studies, share resources and learnings from practice using informal methods, such as online blogs. This enables more peer learning to take place. A dedicated quality assurance team and easy-to-use IT system at Oxfam help to make sure this area is prioritised.

For example, one recent blog on the site by a practitioner from CARE International was entitled "[How do we get better at failure](#)".<sup>25</sup> The need to equip practitioners to influence how knowledge is managed and shared has shaped Oxfam's internal Monitoring, Evaluation Accountability and Learning strategy (MEAL) and their commitment to Adaptive Programming<sup>26</sup> approaches (such as [SAVI and LASER](#)) which emphasise programme flexibility and funder accountability.

### Sharing PBK across organisations

When synthesising and sharing PBK, key take-aways should be tailored to different audiences based on what is seen as useful for other organisations and the wider sector.

Sharing lessons across organisations as a part of a wider community of practice requires a level of generalisation. This requires prior agreement on the types of data and information to be collected which is relevant to understand VAW/C and the effectiveness of prevention approaches, as well as how to document challenges and lessons learned.

A number of organisations interviewed noted the need to move beyond merely a project-by-project analysis to also connect the findings to the wider, long-term, socio-political vision of the organisation and social justice change at large.

### EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATION

- Develop practice-driven learning collaborations between researchers and practitioners.
- Use networks between organisations to democratise and disseminate knowledge as a key tool for 'hands on' learning.
- Facilitate peer-to-peer learning exchanges at community level to exchange practice tips and lessons to support adaptation of interventions to each context.
- Develop specific time-bound learning initiatives between organisations.



### RESOURCES AND TOOLS

- [Community for Understanding Scale Up \(CUSP\)](#)<sup>23</sup> – Briefs and webinars on scaling up social norms change projects
- [Veto Violence Resources](#) (CDC)<sup>24</sup>





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### 3. APPLYING PBK

For PBK systems to become a reality, organisations must take practical steps to apply learning back into programmes — see examples opposite.

In due course, learning can also be shared with funders and other organisations in the field depending what is feasible based on human and financial resources.

Formal monitoring and evaluation processes form one avenue for feeding PBK back into programming. However, the motivation for programme evaluation needs to be clear from the outset. Many evaluations take place in a climate of fear and suspicion, driven by funder demands.

Practitioners need to understand and be involved in determining why the evaluation is being done, what outcomes it will assess and how the findings will be used. This will allow more freedom to be honest, invest in the process, and identify useful learnings. Evaluations need to be participatory and learning-centred to inspire practitioners to showcase their knowledge and keep improving.

In our interviews, organisational leadership was identified as critical to apply PBK back into programming and to develop a learning organisational culture. Practitioners highlighted that implementation and M&E processes were often funded and supervised, but that applying learning back into programmes was often unfunded and not championed by senior leadership. Managers need to take on roles as facilitators, designers and stewards by seeing their organisations as living systems.

#### PBK IN ACTION

VicHealth in Australia offers helpful guidelines for participatory learning-centred evaluations on VAWG prevention in the guide: [Preventing violence against women: Doing evaluation differently: A five step guide](#).<sup>27</sup> It advocates the following:

- Set up the right partnership conditions
- Create a culture for learning
- Engage intended users from the beginning
- Ensure capacity building for evaluation
- Commit to the approach

#### WAYS TO APPLY LEARNING FROM PBK

- Regular team learning reviews to identify 1) what’s working well, 2) what needs to be adjusted, 3) what is ineffective and should be stopped.
- Identifying how programme delivery can be adjusted such as by changing facilitators, conducting extra community dialogues or including new participants.
- Ongoing reviews of programme models and change pathways.
- Review of both individual and team practices in the light of data findings .
- Listening critically to participant feedback on practice.
- Action planning so teams can jointly decide on actions in response to feedback.



There is a history of extractive research that surfaces knowledge but does not complete the loop. It is presented internationally but does not go back into communities. Community members as co-presenters can bridge this gap by being part of the whole process, not just an initial stage. We underestimate people in communities — we see them just as victims or survivors. They get flattened and their many layers get lost.



(Interview with Woman practitioner, Africa region)



#### RESOURCES AND TOOLS

- [USAID’s Learning Lab](#) offers specific blogs and tools<sup>28</sup> to help organisations to develop a locally led collaborating, learning and adapting (CLA) framework.

#### 4. ESTABLISHING A LEARNING CYCLE

Learning and knowledge creation are not linear processes but are cyclical. Ideally, organisations should build an iterative learning cycle into their programme theory of change, making space for periodic reflection and adaptation through programme implementation. Organisations may follow different steps and processes in the learning cycle. However, there are a few key pitfalls to avoid:<sup>29</sup>

- Avoid moving directly from implementation to synthesising the learning.
- Avoid generalising or making judgements before you have established what happened.
- Take time to talk together to establish what actually happened during implementation, document this and then reflect together.
- Ensure that the voices of different practitioners and staff are heard, and that conclusions are not just drawn from the loudest voices. This may involve agreement that there are different perspectives on what happened.

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It all starts from programme design. Programmes that prioritise learning document their learning and collect baseline and endline data. They go to the next level. They don't just do evaluations and collect lessons learned, but they also embed this in the programme cycle in order to inform their programmes.

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(Interview with Woman practitioner, MENA region)



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#### HONEY AND MUMFORD'S LEARNING CYCLE<sup>30</sup>



## PBK IN ACTION

Raising Voices in Uganda places a practice/ learning/ influencing cycle at the centre of their violence prevention work. The learning phase includes two aspects: iterative learning and evaluation and knowledge integration.

1) **Iterative learning and evaluation** PBK is consolidated and documented, and quality, practice-based publications and materials are contributed to the field.

2) **Knowledge integration** includes 3 key components:

- Deepening Reflection by engaging staff through processes and retreats to promote integration of learning and study results.
- Learning Circles with staff development and skills building on cross cutting themes (e.g. feminist programming, mental health).
- Structural Support: platforms to enhance individual and organisational learning (learning plans, cloud-based server and file sharing, etc.).

**Key insights from the Raising Voices approach include:**

- Use a vision-based model tied to a political analysis of social justice.
- Think beyond just an individualised project-by-project approach.
- Build in PBK from the start and throughout the process, not just as an afterthought.
- Support critical reflection by all staff.

- Make learning a formal strategic objective.
- Ensure lessons learned feed into programme design and policy advocacy.
- Partner with selected research institutions and develop mutually beneficial processes and outputs.
- Build trust with funders and secure core funding that can be used for PBK systems.



## 5. THE ROLE OF FUNDERS

Funders play a key role in supporting the development of PBK systems. Organisations can engage with funders to illustrate the importance of PBK and PBK systems in technical and financial proposals or build relationships with funders to secure core, unrestricted funding which can be used to support PBK systems. Organisations can ask funders to collaborate with them in an exploratory 'proof of concept' phase to explicitly prioritise exploration and testing ideas alongside supporting risk taking in the interest of learning and improving the programme model/approach. This builds two-way trust.

Longer-term, collaborative partnerships hold greater potential for transformative change than the pressure of one-off, project-by-project fixed contracts which rarely last long enough to sustain impact and build deeper trust or allow space for honest reflection, collaboration and learning.

Funders are a key audience for learnings that emerge from evaluations and PBK systems, but it is vital that they step back from controlling the evaluation process or focusing only on what worked as planned.

Organisations need to focus on creative ways to share PBK with funders, especially those who may follow linear approaches. Bringing funders in early as concrete stakeholders, discussing the complexity of social change and the importance of risk-taking for innovative programming, are essential for longer term impact. Funders need to communicate to organisations that they understand that risk-taking and making mistakes are essential for learning and improving the effectiveness of programmes over the long term.

“ There is a financial component to knowledge creation and sharing. If you place fees on it, you restrict access only to those who have resources. There is a danger of curated spaces. We need open learning platforms and donors must support this. ”

**(Interview with Woman practitioner, Africa region)**



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## PBK IN ACTION

The DG Murray Trust (DGMT) is a South African funder that seeks to actively build networks across thematic areas and enable advocacy and learning from ‘below’. Tips from their experience include:

- Prioritising collaborative design strategies across organisations for social change.
- Working towards collective impact on themes like ending violence against children.
- Contributing to build hands-on learning of their practitioner organisations.
- Partnering with carefully selected researchers to document practical lessons.
- Connecting isolated practitioner voices through the free movement of knowledge.

- Ensuring periodic face-to-face interactions between members of a network.
- Avoiding rigid control and micromanagement from the top as this stifles innovation.
- Insisting that partners discuss the projects that fail as well as those that succeed.
- Building shared trust across networks to take joint risks for change.

Knowledge forms a key ‘fractal’ for social change for DGMT, enabling them to prioritise time and resources internally and externally and play a role in developing organisational learning cultures. DGMT has produced a ‘Hands on Learning’<sup>31</sup> brief series stressing the Importance of PBK and another Brief on Learning Networks<sup>32</sup> to explore the role of networks in knowledge democratisation.

## CONCLUSIONS

- PBK systems can elevate practitioner knowledge as a central part of expanding the evidence base on VAWG prevention.
- Developing these systems cannot only rely on practitioners who may have limited time and funding to document, analyse and apply PBK. The sector as a whole, and senior leaders and funders in particular, must understand and firmly prioritise generating and applying PBK as a core component of learning.
- This brief offers concrete tips and suggestions on how organisations of all sizes can document, analyse, share and apply PBK both within their organisations and also with others in the prevention sector.
- However, it is important that PBK is not merely seen as a new set of ‘boxes to tick’. At its core, a PBK system is about prioritising a cyclical, deep learning culture that challenges linear models of programming and requires flexible, adaptive models that respond to feedback.
- This requires a paradigm shift in how knowledge itself is viewed in relation to current hierarchies of power. This may threaten existing patterns of working which need transformation into models of shared power. Democratised ways of understanding knowledge that value everyone as a knowledge producer, especially those who are closest to the work, are essential.
- Organisations will need to create safe environments to enable practitioners to speak honestly both about what they know and do not know and what is working and not working.
- To have collective impact, organisations need to find ways to collaborate openly in a wider movement of learning for social change.
- The Prevention Collaborative seeks to engage partners in the violence prevention field in dialogue about the importance of Practice-Based Knowledge and how we can work to capture, apply and share it to support more effective programmes to prevent violence against women and their children.

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