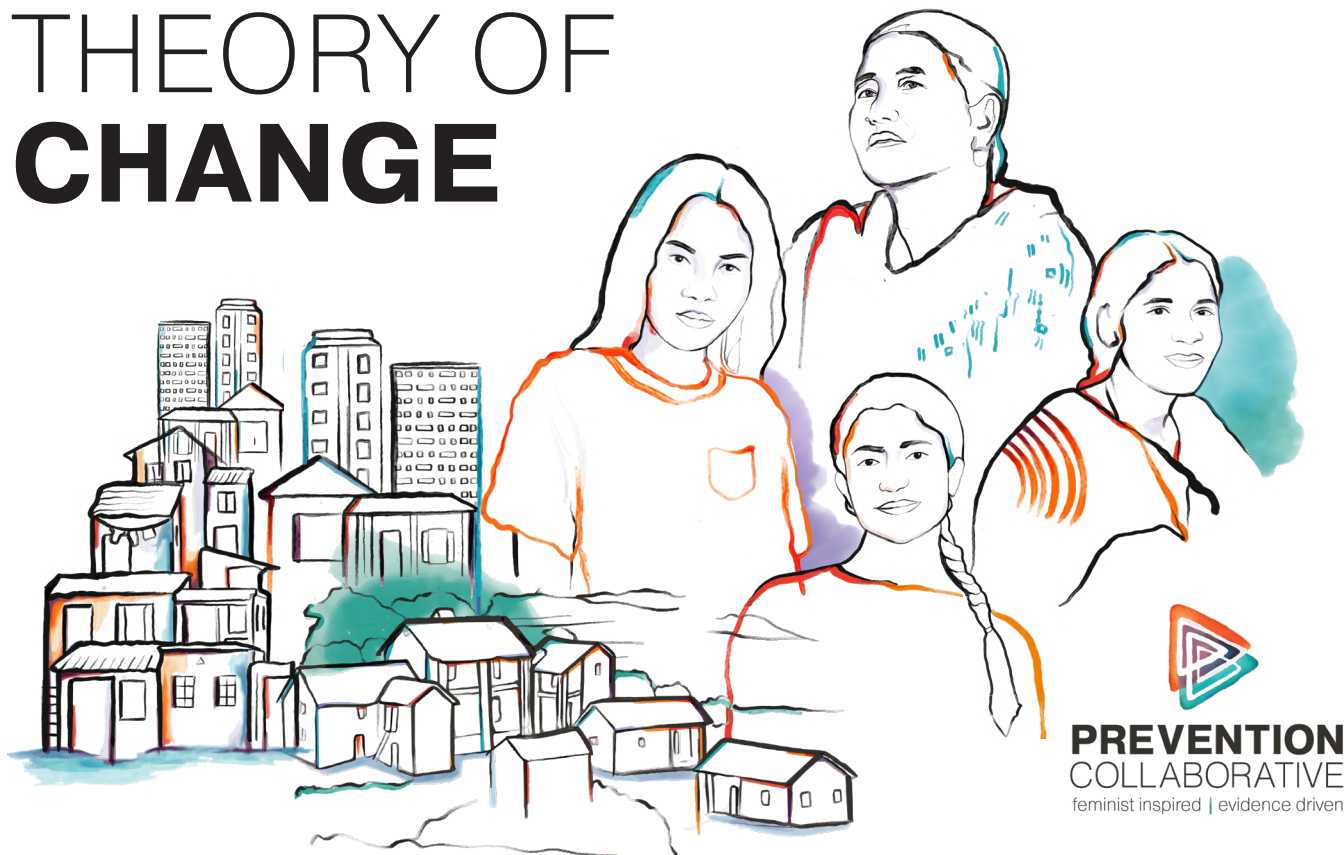


THEORY OF CHANGE



Research shows that violence against women and their children (VAW/C) can be prevented using innovative strategies that combine feminist principles and evidence-informed practice. Yet these strategies remain largely unfamiliar to many of the groups and activists best positioned to act on them. Instead, vital information and know-how remain siloed, while the current donor practices keep organisations trapped in short-term project cycles. This quashes innovation and undermines effective social change.

We founded the Prevention Collaborative to realise an alternative vision—a violence prevention ecosystem where evidence and activism are equally valued, ideas and insights circulate freely, and practitioners have the knowledge, skills, and support they need to build a safer world where women and children can thrive. Our specific organisational focus is to strengthen the field's collective ability to stop violence before it starts and to advocate for the donor policies and structural changes that will sustain this work into the future.

OUR THEORY OF **CHANGE**

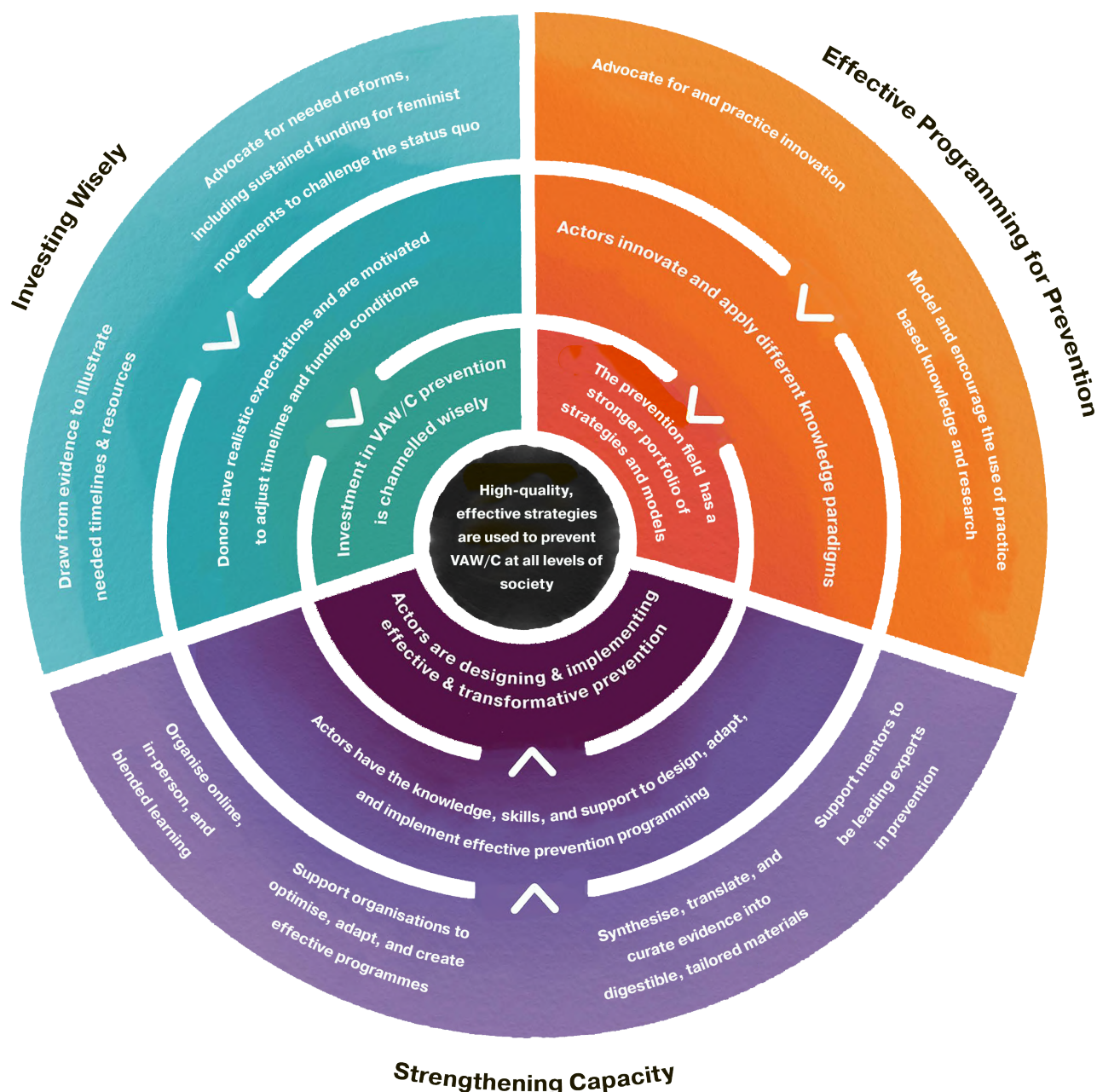
We believe that in addition to meeting the needs of survivors, anti-violence efforts must seek to prevent violence and reduce the prevalence of violence at the community level. This requires active collaboration to ensure that high-quality, effective strategies to prevent VAW/C are in place at all levels of society. For us, high-quality and effective strategies are those that are grounded in feminist analysis, tailored to context, informed by research-based evidence and practice-based knowledge, and centred on women's and children's experiences.

Realising this goal is at the centre of the Collaborative's organisational mission. As illustrated in our theory of change diagram, we seek three interrelated outcomes through which our activities nourish this vision:

- 01** Strengthened capacity of organisations and individuals
- 02** An expanded portfolio of effective programmes, strategies, and learning
- 03** Donor investment strategies that support effective prevention and sustained feminist movements

By pursuing these outcomes, we believe our organisational activities will help create a safer and more equitable world for women and their children.

THEORY OF CHANGE



ACROSS ALL OUR STREAMS OF WORK:

We engage with and promote Global South actors and organisations to be leaders in the VAW/C prevention field.

We break down silos in the violence prevention field, including between VAW and VAC; research-based evidence and practice-based knowledge; and policy and practice.

We approach our work from a feminist perspective with a long-term view of addressing power and driving structural change.

PATHWAY 01 STRENGTHENING CAPACITY

While there has been a recent growth in global evidence on what works to prevent VAW/C, this evidence does not always reach implementing organisations at the country or community levels. Conversely, the practice-based knowledge of local-level organisations is not reaching global prevention actors. This has led to a disconnect between global evidence, practice-based knowledge, and the design and implementation of programmes. Likewise, local civil society and women's rights organisations (WROs) are increasingly interested in prevention but require the organisational assets and capacity necessary for effective programming. This is intricately linked to limitations in current funding cycles and time frames, which lock Global South actors into short-term projects and undermine sustainability.

To address this gap, we work to strengthen the capacity of different actors in the VAW and VAC prevention ecosystem

using four interrelated strategies: synthesising, translating, and curating evidence for frontline practitioners; organising online, in-person, and blended trainings; supporting mentors to be leading experts in prevention; and mentoring organisations as they put new prevention knowledge into practice. This last strategy, known as accompaniment, pairs local organisations with trained prevention mentors—individuals from around the world who have deep knowledge of prevention and feminist practice. Prevention mentors work with learning partners over 12 to 24 months as staff internalise and apply new knowledge to their setting.

Collectively these four strategies can help equip those working to end violence with the skills, knowledge, and support necessary to implement prevention programming that reduces violence and is truly transformative.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS:

- ▶ Practitioners have the time and interest to participate in online, in-person, and blended courses.
- ▶ Organisations will value accompaniment and commit the time necessary to engage.
- ▶ We will be able to identify, train, and retain a cadre of individuals to serve as prevention mentors.

PATHWAY 02 AN EXPANDED ARRAY OF EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMES, STRATEGIES, AND LEARNING

Rigorously evaluating violence prevention strategies has been an important way to build evidence on what works to reduce VAW/C. However, expecting all programmes to be 'evidence-based' suppresses innovation and means that many new efforts are derivative of the few existing models that have been rigorously evaluated. A narrow focus on randomised, controlled trials also means that global programming and investment are not benefitting from the practice-based knowledge accumulated by organisations and practitioners through years of experience.

To keep the field vibrant and learning, we advocate for continued innovation. Where existing knowledge is insufficient to guide practice, we occasionally pursue our own efforts to design and evaluate novel strategies;

elsewhere, we identify gaps and encourage others to fill them.

We also support innovation and effective prevention by critically reviewing emerging evidence and learning and sharing the insights most useful to practitioners. In doing so, we draw from different forms of knowledge, including research-based evidence and practice-based knowledge, and advocate that both be valued and used to inform violence prevention.

We contend that such efforts will help ensure that actors continue to innovate and embrace different knowledge paradigms and that the prevention field will be informed by a strong, expansive portfolio of programmes, strategies, and learning.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS:

- ▶ Researchers have the funding and skills they need to generate useful evidence on different prevention strategies and models.
- ▶ Existing organisations like the Sexual Violence Research Initiative will help to expand capacity, especially among Southern researchers.
- ▶ Groups like the Accelerator and Global Partnership to End Violence against Children will expand funding available for research, capacity strengthening, and programming on VAW/C prevention.

PATHWAY 03 INVESTMENT IS CHANNELLED WISELY

Donors are under increasing pressure to demonstrate results in order to justify continued investment in development. This pressure, together with other challenges in the aid environment, has pushed donors away from longer-term, transformational change towards short-term, easily measured outcomes for larger 'beneficiary' numbers. Short-term funding cycles undermine sustainability and can lead to unintended harms to women and children. Current funding seldom flows directly to smaller civil society organisations or WROs, limiting their ability to set and pursue their own agendas and find the space and time necessary to think strategically about violence prevention.

We document the consequences of current donor practice to provide evidence of the need for reform. We seek out examples of good and bad practice and advocate for the changes necessary to maximise the positive impact of current investments and minimise unintended harms.

We hope that through such efforts, donors will have more realistic expectations about 'what it takes' to reduce and prevent VAW/C and adapt their practices accordingly. This will lead to investment in VAW/C prevention being channelled wisely, in ways that maximise transformational and sustainable impact and avoid unintended harms.

KEY ASSUMPTIONS:

- ▶ Some donors will be persuaded by evidence that current practice leads to waste, suboptimal outcomes, and potential unintended harms.
- ▶ Those convinced will have the power to change practices within their own institutions.
- ▶ A vibrant women's movement exists to press for cultural and policy change to support violence prevention, and existing efforts to advocate for flexible funding to sustain WROs and feminist movements in the Global South are successful.

ACROSS ALL OUR STREAMS OF WORK

Through these three interconnected strands of work, our impact goal is that high-quality, effective strategies to prevent VAW/C are being used at all levels of society. For us, high-quality and effective strategies are those that are informed by both evidence-based research and practice-based knowledge, grounded in feminist analysis, tailored to context, and centred on women's and children's experiences. Central to achieving the goal are three foundational ways in which we approach our work.

We engage with and promote Global South actors and organisations to be leaders in the VAW/C prevention field.

A core part of our mission is to support South-South and South-North learning about how to prevent VAW/C. We are committed to working for and with organisations in the Global South, and promoting and using non-hierarchical and collaborative learning approaches to redress historical North-South power imbalances. We strive to promote equitable representation in global dialogues by supporting Global South actors and organisations to be leaders in the violence prevention field. We challenge our own bias and assumptions and strive to correct systemic injustices.

We break down silos in the violence prevention field, including between VAW and VAC; research-based evidence and practice-based knowledge; and policy and practice.

The violence prevention field operates in a number of silos that block meaningful and effective collaboration between actors working towards ending VAW/C. Central to our work is dismantling existing silos between different types of knowledge and expertise, including between VAW and VAC; research-based evidence and practice-based knowledge; and policy and practice. In doing so, our vision is that learning will circulate freely and true collaboration will be fostered among a dedicated community of practitioners, activists, and researchers.

We approach our work from a feminist perspective with a long-term view of addressing power and driving structural change.

The Prevention Collaborative is a feminist-inspired network. We consider patriarchal norms and gender inequalities to be fundamental drivers of VAW/C. We embrace intersectional feminism and recognise that preventing VAW/C must be aligned with movements for gender equality and all forms of social justice. We also recognise that achieving social justice and eliminating power inequalities takes time and long-term investment.