

INTRODUCING THE PREVENTION TRIAD

A TOOL FOR UNDERSTANDING WHAT WORKS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

OVERVIEW

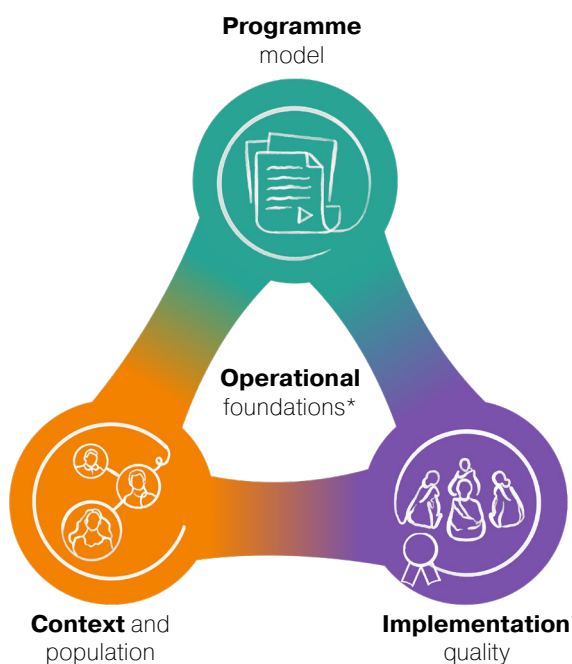
This brief introduces the Prevention Triad, a tool developed by the Prevention Collaborative, to encourage a more holistic understanding of what it takes to make violence against women and girls (VAWG) prevention programmes work. It provides a simple way to consider how multiple elements combine to determine the impact of different programme strategies. This brief considers how the Prevention Triad can be used to guide:

- 1. adapting evidence-based violence prevention programmes to new contexts and populations, and**
- 2. interpreting evaluation findings that suggest “no impact” or yield conflicting results for the same programme model in different settings.**

This is a useful tool for practitioners to consider when planning, modifying, and documenting reasons for altering an evidence-based model. Also, supports researchers and others to properly interpret findings from evaluations of similar programmes.



ELEMENTS OF THE PREVENTION TRIAD



The Prevention Triad includes three intersecting elements: the programme model, the quality of implementation, and the context and population in which it is implemented. Operational foundations and requirements are at the centre of the Prevention Triad.

*Operational foundations entails:

- ▶ Organisational Capacity
- ▶ Management Commitment
- ▶ Budget and Timeframe
- ▶ Trust and Community Linkages

PROGRAMME MODEL

This includes the components that make up the model. If a programme's logic is unclear or its key features do not actually contribute to mechanisms to reduce violence, the programme is unlikely to be successful, even if it is well implemented and appropriate for the context and population.

Traditionally, adaptations and evaluations of VAWG prevention programmes focus on whether the model works or not and give less attention to the two other, equally important components of the triad.

IN DETAIL

Includes the programme's theory of change, the various programme materials and activities (e.g., curricula, activism materials, and radio drama scripts), and the structure and phasing of activities (e.g., frequency, length, and sequencing of activities).

IMPLEMENTATION QUALITY

This includes the detailed planning and logistics for rolling out a programme and the support provided throughout this process.

Typically, less attention is given to implementation quality when assessing whether a programme works or not. Yet poor implementation can significantly undermine the effectiveness of a programme, even if the model is robust and adapted appropriately for a particular context and population.

IN DETAIL

Includes recruitment, selection, and qualifications of staff; training and ongoing support to field workers; recruitment and engagement of participants; and the actual location and timing of activities. It also includes how a team reacts and responds to any challenges that arise.

CONTEXT AND POPULATION

This includes the characteristics of the setting a programme is implemented in. As contexts are constantly in flux, this element anticipates factors that may not be planned but can significantly influence the success of interventions (e.g., responding to the COVID-19 pandemic). A programme model may be robust and implemented well, but if it is not appropriate for the context and population or if it is implemented amidst extremely challenging or rapidly evolving conditions, the programme's success can be significantly affected.

IN DETAIL

For instance: the prevalence and drivers of different types of VAWG; social norms underlying VAWG; and the presence of VAWG services, laws, and policies. Population considerations include the demographics of the participants, such as age, gender, ability, and socioeconomic status, and the availability or motivation of participants to engage with particular types of programmes.

AT THE CENTER: OPERATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

At the heart of the Prevention Triad are the basic operational foundations that are essential to the success of any violence prevention project. Despite the centrality of these factors to success, they tend to be neglected when considering the viability of designing a new prevention programme, adapting an existing model to a new context or population, or interpreting evaluation results.

IN DETAIL

Includes: organisational capacity and readiness, support from upper management, partnerships and community linkages, and appropriate budget and time frames to implement a particular programme.

APPLYING THE PREVENTION TRIAD

ADAPTATION OF EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMES

The Prevention Triad is a useful tool for practitioners to consider when planning, modifying, and documenting reasons for altering an evidence-based model. Practitioners have tended to focus on adapting a particular model to a new cultural context, while paying less attention to the aspects of *implementation* that made the original programme work. When considering a specific model to select and adapt, practitioners should familiarise themselves with both the model *and* the implementation factors that underlined its original success. Sometimes, programme sponsors or groups like the Prevention Collaborative publish “*adaptation*” or “*fidelity*” briefs that identify aspects of a programme that are considered critical to its success and should be maintained through any adaptation. Practitioners can also glean insights on what it takes to implement a model effectively from programme manuals, published articles, and most usefully, discussions with the organisations that originally designed and implemented the programme. Careful adaptation of both the model *and* implementation quality influences the ability to maintain fidelity to an adapted programme.

Adaptation of any evidence-based model is also heavily influenced by contextual and population factors. Some adaptations are necessary to make a programme fit a particular context or intended participants, and this can be more important to success than following the original model exactly as prescribed. Adaptations should be informed by formative research, practice-based knowledge, and consultation with individuals and organisations who know the setting and the proposed participants well, through a sufficiently long inception phase. Pre-testing and piloting can also help assess and respond to contextual challenges and identify key differences between the anticipated participants and those for whom a programme was originally designed. When implementing a programme with a community that differs significantly from the original one, a new understanding of what may prove necessary for effective impact may emerge. Adequately considering a strategy’s fit to context and population generally requires both planned adaptations and mid-course adjustments to respond to new realities and insights as a programme unfolds. Diagram 1 includes some sample questions addressing each element of the Prevention Triad that practitioners and donors should consider prior to committing to adapt a particular programme model.



EVALUATION AND INTERPRETATION OF PROGRAMMES

The Prevention Triad is also a valuable tool that can support researchers and others to properly interpret findings from evaluations of similar programmes. When a programme is evaluated and shows no impact or even negative results, there is a tendency to attribute this to a failure of the model itself or, alternatively, to assume methodological problems with the evaluation. It is not uncommon to hear sweeping statements such as “X programme doesn’t work,” with little interrogation of whether the programme was implemented as intended. Such appraisals can have profound negative consequences for the organisations involved with developing or implementing the intervention and may cause a promising strategy to be abandoned prematurely.

Failure to detect an impact can be attributed to differences in the quality and intensity of implementation or the appropriateness of a programme for a particular context and population, yet these are rarely explored in the evaluations themselves or when assessing evaluation data. All three elements of the Prevention Triad have a critical impact on programme outcomes. The Prevention Triad encourages a

more holistic interpretation of evidence, which can help to generate a more realistic understanding of how and why programmes work (or do not work) to prevent VAWG.

In sum, considering the three elements of the Prevention Triad is essential to properly interpreting “what works” to prevent VAWG and to informing effective adaptation of evidence-based models.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER PRIOR TO SELECTING A SPECIFIC PREVENTION MODEL FOR ADAPTATION



Through what pathways and mechanisms is the original model understood to work?

These could include, for example, improving mental health, shifting gender-related attitudes and norms, reducing binge drinking, or encouraging others to intervene in violence.

Do similar factors drive violence in the new setting, and can similar pathways be activated?

For example, an intervention that depends on others overhearing abuse and intervening may not work in settings where homes are far apart or where people fear retaliation.



Does the new setting share a similar enough political and cultural reality that adaptation is a realistic proposition?

For example, differences in the setting of SASA! meant that the key elements that made SASA! successful in Uganda were not present in the adaptation of SASA! in Rwanda as part of the Indashyikirwa programme (as discussed further below), and indeed, the adaptation did not show similar positive results.

Who must be engaged for the approach to succeed? Is it likely that these or similar groups could be mobilised in the new setting?

For example, a recent project sought and received funding to implement a couples' intervention in Nepal, only to find that in the region of implementation, most men migrate for work and are away from home nine months of the year.



How were programme implementation staff recruited, trained, and supported?

Research has repeatedly shown that the quality and preparation of facilitators, field workers, and community activists greatly affect programme effectiveness¹.

Does the proposed project have adequate funding, staff, and time to achieve similar levels of engagement?

If not, the same outcome is unlikely to be achieved. Organisations are often under pressure to achieve positive results in shorter time frames and with less money, and they frequently must reduce the intensity of the programme, cutting sessions and reducing inception periods.

What was the frequency of key activities, and how often were participants and community members exposed to programme content?

Research has shown that violence prevention programmes need to be sufficiently intensive to meet desired objectives², and the ability to reach such intensity needs to be considered given the available budget and timeframe.

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1. Bartel, D. (2018). Training and mentoring community facilitators to lead critical reflection groups for preventing violence against women. The Prevention Collaborative. Accessed at: https://prevention-collaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Prevention-Collaborative_2018_Training-and-Mentoring-Facilitators.pdf

2. Jewkes, S., Willan, S., Heise, L., Washington, L., Shai, N., Kerr-Wilson, A., and Christofides, N. (2020). Effective design and implementation elements in interventions to prevent violence against women and girls. What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls Programme. Accessed at: <https://www.whatworks.co.za/documents/publications/377-effective-design-and-implementation-briefweb25-02-20/file>