



SDDirect at the **SVRI Forum** **2026**



Social Development Direct (SDDirect) works for equal rights, social justice and an end to GBV around the world. We are a feminist organisation, with a long history and passion for working for women's rights, GBV prevention and gender equality. As a social enterprise consultancy, we offer the best quality advice, evidence and programme delivery to our partners and clients to help them make distinctive and lasting contributions to a more equal and safer world.

Our multi-disciplinary team work to provide a range of services including strategic technical guidance, demand led technical helpdesks, and specialist research, reviews and evaluations. Our expertise spans development and humanitarian contexts and includes GBV (including GBViE and TFGBV), Safeguarding, Inclusive Governance, Climate Justice, and MERL - with gender equality and social inclusion at the heart of everything we do.

Read more about SDDirect's work on:

[GBV](#)[Inclusive Governance](#)[Safeguarding](#)[Disability Inclusion](#)[Climate justice](#)[MEL](#)[Contact](#)[LinkedIn](#)[Website](#)

Spotlight on Our Work

LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS



What Works II

SDDirect is part of the implementation consortium for the UK government-funded *What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls: Impact at Scale* initiative, led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and comprising Raising Voices, Breakthrough, Samya and CARE International UK. We support women-led organisations and their partners to innovate and identify pathways for scaling proven approaches, while providing capacity strengthening, cross-project learning and advocacy support to maximise impact.

[Read more about Works II here](#)



Southeast Asia GBV Prevention Platform

SDDirect is the GBV Technical Partner on the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)-funded GBV Prevention Platform, which strengthens locally led efforts to prevent GBV in Southeast Asia through evidence-based advocacy, capacity strengthening and evidence generation. Led by a regionally staffed Secretariat and supported by Cowater International, the Platform convenes diverse stakeholders to share learning, strengthen evidence and advance action on GBV prevention.

[Explore the Prevention Platform](#)

HELPDESKS



DFAT Equity Hub

SDDirect is the Helpdesk and knowledge translation partner for DFAT's Equity Hub, working alongside Alinea International and the Nossal Institute. The Equity Hub provides streamlined, high-quality advice to help position Australia as a thought leader and partner of choice on gender equality, disability equity and social inclusion (GEDSI). The Helpdesk delivers technical oversight of rapid response queries and supports deeper, intersectional engagement through a roster of experienced and emerging GEDSI advisers. The Hub also provides longer term advisory services, research and learning to strengthen outcomes across DFAT investments. Contact: tasking@eqhub.com.au.

[Explore the DFAT Equity Hub](#)



What Works II Ending VAWC Helpdesk

As part of the What Works II initiative, SDDirect runs a research and advice service, the Ending Violence against Women and Children (VAWC) Helpdesk, for the UK Government. The Helpdesk aims to improve policy, practice and investment in preventing and responding to violence against women and children. To get in touch, please contact enquiry@VAWCHelpdesk.org.uk.

[Explore the VAWC Helpdesk](#)



GBV in Emergencies (GBViE) Technical Support Hub (TSH)

Managed by SDDirect for UNICEF, the GBViE TSH was a confidential, on-demand technical support to humanitarian actors worldwide, with a focus on women-led organisations. It combined rapid response with deeper coaching and high-quality knowledge products, helping teams translate global best practice into safe, contextualised action. It responded to 500+ requests. SDDirect is fundraising for the Hub. If you would like to support it, email: enquiries@GBViEHelpdesk.org.uk.

[Explore the GBV Technical Support Hub](#)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA)



Since 2021, SDDirect has provided technical leadership and advisory support to UNFPA Syria and its implementing partner, ICDA, to design, adapt, implement, and evaluate the Change Makers project in Aleppo, Syria. The project is an adaptation of the evidence-based Indashyikirwa intimate partner violence (IPV) prevention model and combines a couples' curriculum, opinion leader engagement, and community activism to address harmful social norms and prevent gender-based violence, particularly IPV and early marriage.

SDDirect's support has spanned the full programme cycle, including development of the pilot's Theory of Change and monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) framework; adaptation of intervention materials to the Syrian context; implementation support; and design and oversight of the evaluation.



GBV Technical Support to UNICEF South Sudan Women-Led Organisation Partners

Since 2024, SDDirect has provided supplementary technical assistance to six UNICEF South Sudan women-led organisation (WLO) partners. Support has focused on three priorities: (1) strengthening the feminist leadership capacities of Executive Directors and Programme Managers; (2) adapting and contextualising an adolescent girls' life skills curriculum and related training and technical support; and (3) contextualising the Caring for Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse Training Package alongside delivering capacity-strengthening initiatives, including training of trainers for GBV and Child Protection actors. This work complements UNICEF's broader support to partners on GBV prevention and response in emergencies.



Building Technical Capacity for VAWG Prevention and Influencing (BTC)

The Building Technical Capacity for VAWG Prevention and Influencing (BTC) curriculum was co-created by SDDirect and three community-based women's rights organisations (WROs) in Malawi to strengthen WROs' technical capacity, expanding their focus from VAWG response to include prevention and influencing. The curriculum has now been rolled out with nine WROs in Malawi and Zimbabwe, and has facilitated applicable learning and critical reflection for participants.

[Explore the BTC programme](#)

MONITORING, EVALUATION, RESEARCH AND LEARNING



AI Murunah+

AI Murunah is a component of PHENOMENAL, FCDO's flagship regional climate change programme in the Middle East and North Africa. Alongside supporting the design and rollout of four gender-transformative pilots (AI Murunah+), SDDirect, in partnership with Social Dynamics Research Group, is leading the project impact evaluation, assessing the extent to which the pilots contributed to shifting harmful gender attitudes, norms and behaviours (including intimate partner violence) that impact women's participation in climate-smart agri-businesses. SDDirect have taken a learning partnership approach to this evaluation, working closely with MENA based partners to ensure findings are actionable and contextually grounded.

[Read more about the AI Murunah+ evaluation here](#)



Research Informed Solutions for Early and Unintended Pregnancies (RISE UP)

Early and unintended pregnancy remains a significant public health and development challenge in Malawi, despite decades of funding. Through the Embassy of Ireland-funded RISE UP programme, SDDirect and [WOLREC](#) undertook youth-led research into the root social, economic and policy drivers of early and unintended pregnancy. The findings have informed the design of a holistic programme and influencing strategy, which aims to prevent and respond to early and unintended pregnancy.

SAFEGUARDING



Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub (RSH)

SDDirect is the technical and delivery lead of the Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub (RSH), working in consortium with Cowater and Terre des hommes. RSH is a programme funded by the UK government (FCDO) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) that has been running since 2019. RSH aims to support civil society organisations to strengthen their safeguarding policy and practice against Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH) and other harms. RSH supports organisations working in both the humanitarian and development sectors and is driven by the needs of smaller national and local organisations.

[Visit the Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub](#)



Survivor Support Fund (SSF)

The Survivor Support Fund (SSF) is an innovative GBV response model that SDDirect first piloted in Malawi and has since integrated across multiple holistic GBV and PSEAH programmes. To date, the SSF has supported more than 3,600 survivors of violence and abuse by providing skilled accompaniment and flexible financial assistance, enabling survivors to access services, seek support, and report incidents where they choose to do so. A defining feature of the SSF is its delivery through equitable partnerships between SDDirect and women's rights organisations (WROs), combining the technical expertise, local knowledge, and complementary influence of both partners to provide survivor-centred support while addressing the systemic inequalities that constrain survivors' agency and access to justice. SDDirect has tailored a technical assistance approach for WROs engaged in the SSF model.

[Explore the S2S programme](#), an initiative that included the SSF

CLIMATE AND GBV



GEDSI–Climate Nexus Research (DFAT supported)

SDDirect, with ARROW and Edge Effect, is conducting [intersectional, practice-based research](#) with eight locally led CSOs in Fiji and the Philippines working at the intersection of GEDSI and climate action. The research partners include organisations of persons with disabilities, women's rights organisations, LGBTQIA+ organisations and youth groups. Using participatory action research, CSOs are leading the research and engaging external stakeholders. The study aims to generate evidence on strengthening locally led, inclusive GEDSI-climate action, with movement building and collective action integrated across all research questions.



Deepening engagement in the GBV– climate nexus through our Helpdesks

Through the What Works VAWC Helpdesk, SDDirect produced the flagship report [Gender Based Violence: Overcoming an unseen barrier to effective climate action](#), launched at COP29, as well as research on [GBV against climate change activists](#). As GEDSI and MEL lead on the UK-funded [Climate, Environment and Nature \(CLEAN\) Helpdesk](#), SDDirect is also collaborating with the VAWC Helpdesk to produce forthcoming how-to guidance on addressing GBV within climate and environmental initiatives.



Through the GBViE Technical Support Hub, SDDirect has produced reports on [the linkages between climate change and gender-based violence](#) for actors working in humanitarian settings and [prevention and response to gender-based violence in settings affected by natural disasters](#). The Hub has also published [learning briefs](#) and [reports](#) focused on GBV and climate justice in the Asia-Pacific region.

SDDirect and partner events

Key events led by SDDirect

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

[Contact Alice Kerr-Wilson](#)

Monday 5 October | 09:00-12:00

Venue: Ballroom A

Workshop 5 - Meeting the moment: Ethical and effective adaptation for VAWG prevention scale in challenging times

Facilitated by Alice Kerr-Wilson and partner organisations

An interactive workshop bringing together decades of experience from five global organisations to explore the art and science of adapting VAWG programmes. Designed for practitioners, researchers and funders, the session will share core principles of successful adaptation, practical frameworks and common challenges, alongside strategies to address them.

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

[Contact Tina Musuya](#)

Monday 5 October | 14:00-17:00

Venue: Ballroom A

Workshop 18 - From practice-based learning to action: Feminist praxis in the face of backlash

Facilitated by Tina Musuya and partner organisations

In a context of global backlash, shrinking civic space and deep funding cuts, feminist organisations are turning to practice-based learning and knowledge (PBL/K) as a powerful tool for resistance, reorganisation and survival. This workshop will explore how PBL/K can protect space, shift narratives, and build solidarity. Through collective reflection, storytelling, and group dialogue, participants will examine how feminist knowledge practices are sustaining movements and shaping new partnerships in crisis.

PARALLEL SESSION 1

[Contact Alice Kerr-Wilson](#)

Tuesday 6 October | 11:00-12:30

Venue: Ballroom A

1.2. Understanding pathways to scale in VAWG prevention: Lessons from across the UK-funded "What Works to Prevent VAWG - Impact at Scale" initiative

Chaired by Alice Kerr-Wilson

Featuring examples from Pakistan, India, Malawi, Uganda and the wider What Works initiative, these parallel sessions examine what it takes to scale effective violence prevention interventions and embed them within systems for sustainable impact.

SDDirect and partner events

Key events led by SDDirect

POSTER SESSION A

Tuesday 6 October | 13:00-14:00

Venue: Poster Area

- **Evidence of the interlinkages between GBV and household resilience to climate shocks** (Speaker: [Alix Clark](#))
- **Making the case for addressing GBV through climate and environmental action** (Speaker: [Naomi Clugston](#))

PARALLEL SESSION 3

[Contact Amanda](#)

[Contact Lusungu](#)

Tuesday 6 October | 17:00-18:30

Venue: Lotus 1 - 4

3.5 Disability, violence, and the right to be heard | *Coping mechanisms, social support and disbelief: The complex drivers that increase risks of violence against women with disabilities in Lilongwe, Malawi*

Speakers: [Amanda Bangura](#), [Lusungu Kalanga](#), Bonface Massah

PARALLEL SESSION 3

[Contact Anna Gawn](#)

Tuesday 6 October | 17:00-18:30

Venue: Lotus 7

3.7 Accountable to survivors: Safeguarding in practice | *Measuring 'what works' in Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH): Practice-based indicator bank to support learning on the effectiveness of PSEAH measures*

Speaker: Anna Gawn

SDDirect and partner events

Key events led by SDDirect

PARTICIPANT DRIVEN EVENTS

[Contact Anna Gawn](#)

Tuesday 6 October | 19:30-21:30

Venue: Lotus 1 - 4

Bridging GBV and PSEAH: Reimagining how we prevent SEAH

Chaired by Anna Gawn (RSH Technical Director) and Liz Pender (Global PSEAH Coordinator from UNFPA)

This participant-driven session will explore practical and tested approaches to SEAH prevention across a diverse set of contexts, sectors and operational environments – many of which are drawn from effective GBV prevention methods and practices. The session will share emerging findings and expertise from a panel of subject matter experts, evidence mapping and country co-design processes in Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Central African Republic and Ukraine.

PARTICIPANT DRIVEN EVENTS

[Contact Naomi Clugston](#)

Wednesday 7 October | 07:00-09:00

Venue: Lotus 11

GBV and climate: How to break the silos and engage with climate funders (Closed event)

Hosted by The Womanity Foundation and SDDirect

This participatory session explores how to bridge the gap between the GBV and climate sectors, helping funders and practitioners identify opportunities, overcome barriers, and build effective cross-sector collaboration.

PLENARY II

[Contact Veronica Ahlenback](#)

Wednesday 7 October | 09:00-10:30

Venue: Plenary Hall

Taking proven programmes to scale: Lessons from the field | Five years of learning from Indashyikirwa in Syria: Designing, delivering and evaluating a violence prevention programme with couples, opinion leaders and community activists

Speaker: Huda Kaakeh, Veronica Ahlenback

Exploring five years of learning from the Change Makers programme in Syria, highlighting effective approaches to adapting and scaling violence prevention in conflict-affected contexts.

SDDirect and partner events

Key events led by SDDirect

POSTER SESSION B

Wednesday 7 October | 13:00-14:00

Venue: Poster Area

- **Diffusion and maintenance of an effective social and behavioral change intervention to prevent intimate partner violence and enhance gender-equitable norms in Nepal** (Speaker: [Gemma Ferguson](#))
- **Strengthening the capability of civil society to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment: Lessons from the Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub mentoring services** (Speaker: [Aftab Awan](#))

PARALLEL SESSION 8 – FIVE-MINUTE PRESENTATIONS (FMP)

[Contact Hanna Smit](#)

Thursday 8 October | 11:00-12:30

Venue: Ballroom C

FMP session 8.4 - A continuum of harm: Harmful practices, sexual violence and femicide across the life course | Strengthening care for child survivors of sexual abuse: Centering women- and refugee-led organizations in service delivery
Speaker: Hanna Smit

CLOSED EVENTS

[Contact Kate Bishop](#)

Friday 9 October | 09:00-13:00

GBV Funder Forum (Closed event)

Hosted by DFAT, ADB and SDDirect as the Secretariat for the GBV Funder Forum.

The event will bring together existing members and new members to digest the week at SVRI and look at future opportunities to work collaboratively to fund the GBV movement and ecosystem.

SDDirect and partner events

Key events led by our partners

Tuesday 6 October | 13:00-14:30

Venue: Ballroom C

From global evidence to local action: Asia knowledge exchange on GBV prevention

Hosted by DFAT and FCDO. Speaker: UN Joint Programme on GBV Prevention in Southeast Asia. Contacts: [Veronica Ahlenback](#) and [Gemma Ferguson](#).

This workshop brings together the Southeast Asia GBV Prevention Platform, What Works II, and civil society partners to explore how global and local evidence can be captured, adapted, and translated into accessible, context-relevant knowledge. Through practical group discussions and exercises, participants will share real examples of evidence application in practice, surface common challenges, and identify concrete opportunities for collaboration across research, practice and policy.

Tuesday 6 October | 19:30-21:30

Venue: Ballroom B

From Innovation to scaling of VAWG Prevention: Emerging evidence from What Works II

Hosted by International Rescue Committee for What Works II. Contact: [Lusungu Kalanga](#)

Through practice-based insights from 12 countries, the session will highlight innovations and pathways to scale, demonstrating how partners have successfully integrated VAWG prevention approaches into national systems and programming.

Thursday 8 October | 19:30-21:30

Venue: Ballroom B

Meeting the moment - A joint advocacy event

Hosted by What Works II, The Accelerator for GBV Prevention and Southeast Asia GBV Prevention Platform. Contacts: [Lusungu Kalanga](#) and [Gemma Ferguson](#).

A collaborative advocacy event addressing funding challenges in the GBV prevention field, showcasing aligned advocacy efforts and promoting sustained, flexible investment in women's rights organisations and prevention.

Friday 9 October | 13:30-15:00

Venue: Lotus 7

Connecting Research, Practice and Advocacy for GBV Prevention in Southeast Asia

Hosted by Southeast Asia GBV Prevention Platform. Contacts: [Veronica Ahlenback](#) and [Gemma Ferguson](#).

An interactive event featuring presentations, group discussions, and plenary exchanges to explore regional and global GBV priorities and identify practical opportunities for collaboration with funders, policymakers, and regional and multilateral bodies.



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