

# Strategy Refresh

2021-2024

### The Whole Picture

## Our strategy to end domestic abuse, for good

<b>Strategic</b>
<b>Priorities</b>

#### **Whole Person**

## Whole Family

### **Whole Community**

### **Whole Society**

Priorities

Seeing and responding to the whole person, not addressing a series of issues

Adult victims, survivors, those who harm, individuals connected to the victim/perpetrator including extended family

All communities of geography, identity and online spaces

The general public and those who influence them: the media, politicians, employers, key opinion formers and commentators



Act before someone harms or is harmed

People are treated as just that – people, and not issues. The complexity of domestic abuse and links to other adverse experiences are understood.<sup>4</sup>

Protective factors are put in place for those at risk of abusing or being abused – people and services sufficiently understand domestic abuse and what makes it more or less likely to happen. Communities<sup>5</sup> of geography, identity and online spaces are equipped to identify and act on early risk factors and warning signs of abusive situations.

Gender stereotypes are challenged and deconstructed – particularly those of masculinity – supporting boys and men to break these norms. Societal shifts see a reduction in the motivation and opportunity for different types of power to be abused.



Identify and stop harmful behaviours

Harmful behaviour is addressed by proactively identifying all motivating factors and consequences, such as other violence, abuse and criminality. Individuals who abuse any family member are appropriately assessed for the risk they pose to all family members – and themselves.

Community members know they are more than passive bystanders – there is low tolerance and high urgency about identifying and holding to account those who abuse.



Increase safety for all those at risk

The protection offered to people means proactively checking that all risks posed have been addressed, not just the initial presenting issue.

The safety and wellbeing of all non-abusive family members – physical, mental and emotional – is defended from those who pose a risk to them.

Communities of geography, identity, online spaces and employers/ businesses understand the risks posed by those who abuse and their role in protecting the safety and wellbeing of those at risk.



Support people to live the lives they want after harm occurs

People are responded to as people, not an issue or series of issues. Both crisis and longer-term responses to people who have experienced abuse are sensitive to their possible vulnerability to future adverse experiences.

When an immediate experience of abuse is over, all family members' safety and wellbeing – physical, mental and emotional – are (re) built. People are supported to live the lives they want, drawing strength from each other.

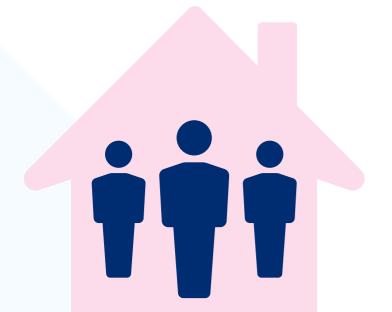
People who speak about their experience of abuse are believed. Communities and society validate their experience and support their process of creating safety, wellbeing and resilience so they can live the lives they want. The voices, strengths and needs of survivors are paramount, and survivors draw further strength from one another.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Such as child abuse, child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, sexual violence, trauma, mental ill health, 10 substance use, or economic disadvantage

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Individuals might form an identifiable community; we work on the basis that within that community will also be arange of views, backgrounds and experiences.

## **Summary**

The period since we first published *The Whole Picture*, in November 2018, has been one of significant progress in attitudes to and action on domestic abuse in the UK, though this has been very uneven both geographically and in terms of who is able to access help. The last three years have also involved major challenges. In this short update to our strategy, we address these issues.



## In summary our expectations for the next three years are to:

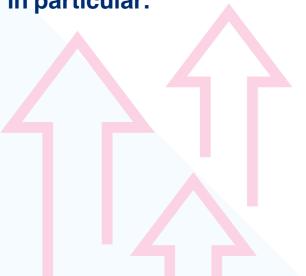
- Keep innovating and developing evidence around prevention and earlier intervention
- Continue to build on our work to bring in the voices and experiences of men and boys
- Continue and expand our work with young people
- Consistently focus on holding those who use abuse accountable for their actions
- Apply whole family best practice at a local and systemic level
- Continue to seek more energetic and impactful engagement from parts of central Governments and big public sector agencies specifically health and education

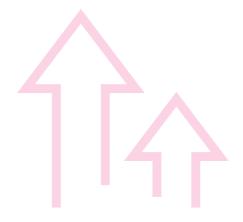
- 7 Increase the confidence of professionals and individual citizens to act, playing their appropriate role to end domestic abuse
- Put adult and child survivors of domestic abuse in the driving seat of making change
- **Ensure responses work for everyone**, using an equity
  approach where it's needed to
  overcome historic discrimination
- Develop a coalition which can operate credibly and with influence in spaces occupied by men and boys

## **Section 1:**

## Introduction

Our annual impact reports indicate we have come a long way since November 2018 when we published *The Whole Picture* as our organisational strategy. Colleagues consulted for this refresh process noted in particular:





- Growing the concept and understanding of authentic voice significantly, internally and externally, everywhere we work in depth in Scotland, England and Wales
- ✓ Our agile response and support to colleagues at the frontline during the Covid pandemic, connecting/ reconnecting valued colleagues and networks and securing emergency funding for the sector, and engaging directly with as many survivors as possible to hear their needs
- Creating important campaigns to support family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and employers to 'Reach In' for someone they were worried about, and driving the UK Government's Ask for ANI codeword
- Successful delivery of DA Matters; culture change for the police. Bringing victim/survivor and police together with achievable aims, recognising compassion fatigue in

- police officers and that we need to support them properly to do this work, though 2021 has shown how much change is still needed
- ✓ Building our 'Safe Young Lives' programme and work to 'Act Before Someone Harms or Is Harmed', developing both evidence and practice with regards to primary prevention of abuse
- Engaging increasingly with boys and men through our Men and Boys Voices programme, asking about their expectations, attitudes, worries and behaviours, and thinking about our role and the role of partnerships we could join or create, in bringing them into the conversation about abuse more fully and effectively
- The development and growth of work to identify and stop abusive behaviour and the individuals who perpetrate it
- Starting to develop our EEDI action plan and being transparent about the work we need to do
- Creation of the 'Incubator' function within the organisation, which is now our engine room for bringing together cross-organisational expertise in research, practice and authentic voice to explore new topics in a really open way

- ✓ Working in close collaboration with colleague organisations to secure concessions in the DA Act (England/ Wales), including the designation of children as victims, the addition of post-separation abuse including where the parties no longer live together, though we weren't able to secure amendments which would make the legislation inclusive of migrant women
- ✓ Our contribution to moving on the narrative from 'Why doesn't she leave?' to 'Why doesn't he stop?' Policy development, as well as funding change, is also happening in some places, through the Welsh Government, and pioneering PCC offices in London, West Mercia and South Wales
- ✓ Providing the evidence and best practice at local level of the benefits of working with the whole family, including all adult and child victims involved, and perpetrator(s), too. Local multi-agency infrastructure (Maracs, MASHs, commissioning processes) haven't caught up with this yet, but our Practice team is committed to developing the practical tools and approaches which will help local areas to make this progression

The world around us is both changed and unchanged in the last three years, and indicators show that in the UK as a whole, we've taken some steps forward on domestic abuse:

- ✓ New legislation in Scotland and for England/Wales, and rates of reporting to the police (as a percentage of experiences overall captured in the wider Crime Survey) continuing to rise, with increasing numbers of arrests and prosecutions for coercive and controlling behaviour offences, particularly in Scotland
- Domestic abuse perpetrator strategy published in Wales and upcoming from the Westminster Government
- ✓ The surge in the Black Lives Matter movement after the killing of George Floyd has prompted not only SafeLives but many organisations and individuals across the UK to reflect on whether they are doing enough in terms of active anti-racism

- ✓ Corporate interest in their workforce/ customers has risen during Covid, leading to improving and increasing policy and practice for both employees and people using banks, chemists, other frontline commercial services
- ✓ Public profile of domestic abuse has vastly increased; DA is less taboo, there is more awareness. Though there's still a long way to go, there is a better understanding of the non-physical elements. The tone and style of media reporting can be really bad, but the quantity of reporting has increased, giving the issue greater prominence including in less usual on and offline publications and broadcasts ■

- Many survivors (and the official inspectorate, HMICFRS) feel the police have made significant improvements in their identification and response to domestic abuse, though there is still a great deal to do; this improvement should be acting as a benchmark for many other statutory agencies
- ✓ The rise and rise of social media and other digital technologies can be both a positive and a new source of risks and concerns
- ✓ Links are being made in public reporting (though less so in policy, so far) between domestic abuse and the wider societal problems of violence against women and girls and marginalised groups



# However, at the same time, efforts have stalled or been pushed back:

- ✓ Frontline services, both voluntary sector and statutory, are holding increasingly long waiting lists, greatly exaggerated in some cases by Covid. Specialist charities showed resilience and innovation during Covid but they are now reporting burnout and high staff sickness/turnover
- Most services are reporting that the severity, complexity, of abusive situations has increased

- ✓ Gender neutral commissioning, the preferencing of larger more generic organisations over smaller and more specialist, and other weaknesses in commissioning processes in England and Wales, have continued, with little adherence to the Government's National Statement of Expectations or the VAWG sector's 'Common Standards'
- Fiscal tightening is expected again because of Covid
- ✓ 'No Recourse to Public Funds' status is still a major block to being able to get support for those with insecure immigration status
- Adults and children were trapped behind locked doors for a year, with minimal recourse to their usual coping strategies and networks
- There are risks as well as benefits/ opportunities to digital technologies and online communities. Social media algorithms incentivise people to adopt increasingly extreme and oppositional positions, and there is significant grooming and radicalisation of young men going on online linked to misogynistic views (and, in some cases, action)

- ✓ The absence of health/mental health substantive involvement in DA response remains stark and deeply concerning
- ✓ Though legislation has been created, that doesn't automatically mean it will be implemented effectively for example on Female Genital Mutilation the rates of identifying and prosecuting remain extremely low. Legislative change needs substantial work once enacted

Now is the right time to have taken stock and refreshed our strategic intent. What follows maps closely to our original aspirations as set out in November 2018. It also takes on board our learning since that point, and how the world around us has changed, too, with new opportunities and risks emerging.

We want to continue to increase the emphasis we put on taking action before harm happens and intervening to identify and stop harmful behaviour. Doing this – continuing to push further upstream of the problem – will either require further growth (the organisation had a headcount of 74 staff members in 2018 when the strategy launched, and we are now at 93 at the time of writing) or require us to use different models of

delivery for longer-established parts of our work. We believe there is value in staying agile as an organisation, which can be harder as a charity gets bigger. We will therefore be considering the different methods through which we can achieve our goals. Annual operating plans for 2022/23 and onwards will reflect consideration of how our early work can best be sustained in a quality assured way, and how our newest work can be replicated and scaled as we continue to develop cutting edge research, and then the testing and iterating of new policy and practice.

The weighting of different parts of our work over the next few years is likely to look different in the four nations, and we want to be intentional in setting plans that properly reflect national context and our different role in Scotland, Wales, England, Northern Ireland, and any other jurisdiction where we are invited to operate.



## **Section 2:**

## **Frontline Capabilities**

The need for capabilities in frontline agencies (of all types – whether commercial, voluntary or public sector) remain broadly as published in our November 2018 document. We are not a membership organisation but value close relationships with frontline organisations of many types; something which we will continue to build on.



- ✓ Training; continuing with our core offer to specialists in the domestic abuse sector, and also helping to upskill agencies involved in DA response beyond the specialist DA sector including health and social care, Local Authorities, parts of the criminal (and civil) justice system beyond the police, children's social care, and influencing those who set the frameworks for their workforce development
- ✓ There are also opportunities to increasingly engage with groups connected to communities of geography or identity, such as those that are faith-related, or agriculture charities in rural communities. They might be the first point of disclosure and this could be an effective route to help, with the right support to those organisations
- Supporting frontline organisations with EEDI and AV

- ✓ Refreshing aspects of the risk-led model which have been largely static since we developed them with partners over a decade ago. This work will improve inclusivity aspects of the risk led model, and will have significant communications effort attached to it so colleagues understand any proposals for change we bring forward
- ✓ Our data/evidence/research and analysis will always be linked to practical recommendations, and we are investing in our team's ability to make the financial case as well as the human one. This will enable us to develop further, rigorous 'cost avoidance' and 'cost benefit' material which helps make the case for investment. We will also revisit our valued SpotLights series deep dives on 'hidden' groups reviewing what we have said previously and building on it
- Supporting frontline practitioner wellbeing and campaigning relentlessly for sufficient and sustainable frontline resources
- Increasing the links between responses to different types of violence, exploitation, abuse and family adversity

- Supporting all facets of inter-agency multi-agency working
- Upskilling ourselves, survivors and practitioners in tech v abuse / digital tools
- Creating a world in which all practitioners feel more confident and equipped to talk to boys and men about abuse, and to engage with those who are using abusive behaviours
- ✓ Keep building public awareness of domestic abuse, keeping up momentum on Reach In, Your Best Friend, and the role of civil society and private citizens as first responders, changing the public conversation by equipping people with evidence and ideas for change

We will develop service commissioning specifications, impact/outcome measurement proposals and accompanying materials for a 'whole family' service, so commissioners of services, statutory agencies and specialist practitioners have a clear guide about the size and nature of provision suitable for their local populations, and what 'good' looks like. These materials will recognise the varying needs of different individuals and groups within communities,

relating to protected characteristics, geography and other factors

One example of how we perceive frontline capabilities could change and improve: There are real opportunities as Clinical Commissioning Groups reorganise into Integrated Care Services in England/Wales and the shift to the Trauma-informed framework in Scotland. Placing DA at the heart of health inequalities will change how services are working together and how local systems of LA, health and communities work together. This will include commissioning based on local voice/need/population health commissioning. The NHS could - at a systemic level not just in pockets of good practice - finally embrace the culture change that has started in the criminal justice system with regards to domestic abuse and linked issues. The new roles that are being commissioned into communities as part of this approach, from social prescribing to health coaches and community roles that will be working with DA victims, survivors and perpetrators, offer significant opportunities. Strategic, systemic change in the approach to linking health and DA would also engender simple practical improvement in e.g. health attendance / participation in Maracs

## **Section 3:**

## **Funding**

We will publish separate papers on sustainable funding for specialist domestic abuse response as a contribution to the Comprehensive Spending Review 2022/2025.

Those papers discuss clear evidence of significant costs to the state which could be avoided if there was an appropriate level of investment. Please note that at this point, we have only been able to generate calculations applicable to Wales and England, but we will continue to seek to influence public spending decisions in Scotland, too.



## Section 4:

# The Role for SafeLives

Strategy Priority 1: To 'Act before someone harms or is harmed'. From 2021 – 2024 we aim to:



- ✓ (Also SP4) Create momentum around children now being designated in law (in England and Wales) as victims of domestic abuse in their own right, and the implications this has for policy, practice and provision of services
- ✓ Continue to deliver the Safe Young Lives programme – with room to pursue what young people themselves say they need, increasing our social media presence and content to reach wider audiences and engage people, and driving policy change
- Consider the specific situation and needs of some children and young people – to include those in or leaving local authority care, children with Special Educational Needs and neurodiversity

- Start or continue relevant work under discussion with prospective sponsors/partners who run or fund youth engagement programmes
- ✓ Keep growing our understanding of what works to prevent abuse by building on phases 1-3 of Men & Boys Voices; recognising the renewed call for men to be involved in preventing violence against women and girls as well as the counter-movement (particularly online) to radicalise boys and young men into toxic attitudes and behaviours (see also SP2 − scope for a call to action for UK Govt men and boys strategy and possible income-generating partnerships)
- ✓ Continue to strengthen our evidence base with regards to ways in which the early onset of violence through abuse and neglect can lead to serious violence in other forms – if the right interventions and support aren't available
- Consider opportunities and partnerships that enable earlier and more holistic prevention; including within educational settings (primary / secondary mainstream, private education and Pupil



Referral Units), informal settings from youth centres to online spaces, and mental health settings, linking to other experiences and behaviours relevant to young people, and their coping strategies when faced with adversity

✓ Consider other opportunities for prevention work beyond the young people focus – moments of transition in people's lives that can create vulnerability but also be opportunities to act to stop harm before it occurs (pregnancy, retirement, illness, bereavement, increasing age, the move to more rural living)

## Strategic Priority 2: To 'Identify and stop harmful behaviour' we aim to:

- Continue to work with relevant partners to scale up and rollout models of perpetrator work for which we now have a sound evidence base, in England and Wales and also in Scotland, increasing understanding and building confidence
- ✓ Use the increased evidence base from Drive, Engage, perpetrator Insights and evidence from academics and colleague charities to inform funding decisions and best practice across the UK provide information and practice support to ensure local areas have the most comprehensive response possible to whole families and individual perpetrators of abuse
- Support police forces, the newly re-formed National Probation Service, and courts to take the next steps needed for culture change, including effectively policing

- offences included in the (UK Govt) DA Act 2021 and robust offender management after or alongside prosecution
- Deliver training for family justice professionals in order to avoid collusion with abusive individuals
- ✓ Ensure there is support and funding to develop work focussed on young people who harm; including building the evidence base (and financial analysis) to stop harmful behaviour; to work with partners to pilot responses for young people who harm; and create awareness raising campaigns targeted at young people
- Better understand what bystanders to harmful behaviour and friends of those using harm think and feel, and whether/how they could be helped to safely take action
- ✓ Start or continue relevant work under discussion with prospective sponsors/partners who run/fund youth engagement programmes (eg Drive-MOPAC early intervention pilot for housing) or subject of Incubator development (links between youth violence and harmful relationship behaviour)

## Strategic Priority 3: To 'Increase the safety of all those at risk' we aim to:

- ✓ Learn from our work to date on responding holistically to families and the risks they face, continuing to encourage and facilitate systemic change across multiagency work at the local level which will deliver, operationally, a whole picture approach
- ✓ Support frontline services and influencing policy across all four UK nations with expert data and practice to effectively deliver the risk led approach through Dash/Idva-Idaa/Marac across the UK, including through research sprints, thematic practice deep dives, and building on findings from the review of the risk led model (see also Frontline Capabilities)
- Continue to apply, replicate and scale, across the UK (as applicable in each of the four nations), our evidence from the Beacon sites of what works to increase people's

- safety. This includes developing the right partnerships, funders and practice to test and adjust these interventions further for groups who were under-represented in our original pilot sites in terms of race, age, sexuality, disability, geographical context
- ✓ Ensure our training offer fits our aspirations for responses that apply to a whole family living with domestic abuse, with practitioners increasingly confident that they understand how different needs and responses fit together to create sustainable safety and improved wellbeing



- Ensure interventions and responses are developed and designed to meet the needs of everyone, taking an intersectional approach, and further developing our quality assurance processes and accreditation models to support this
- Some sectors, such as health. continue to lag behind in terms of their strategic, systemic identification of and response to abuse, though they have significant opportunities to identify and stop harm at an early stage. The health sector is a crucial example of this. Despite many energetic and passionate individual professionals, the system as a whole is not yet responsive to its responsibilities with regards to domestic abuse. We will act in close collaboration with our colleague organisations in the domestic abuse sector to try to change this, whether through the embedding of more specialist workers in health settings, or getting domestic abuse built into strategic planning and funding
- ✓ Linked to the point above given people's greater willingness to disclose abuse in health settings we will keep working to identify and break down the barriers which currently stop some victim/survivors from being able to speak out, whether because of discriminatory practice, concerns about language or immigration status, fears about disclosing sexuality, the risk of isolation or confidentiality concerns for older or more geographically isolated individuals. lack of access to online technologies, or any other reason

## Strategic Priority 4: To 'Support people to live the lives they want after harm happens' we aim to:

- ✓ Review and respond to the barriers and enablers for survivors in a wide range of communities and situations to live the life they want after harm happens, including the value of guided self-help and peer-led approaches
- Upskill agencies to understand how people may present after they've experienced abuse – so that a lack of understanding doesn't impact on survivors being able to live the lives they want. Understanding will include the ability to recognise and respond to trauma, and the tailoring of responses, including mental health responses, so those in distress aren't unnecessarily pathologised, those with protected characteristics are offered support that suits their particular requirements, and social prescribing is explored for the potential benefits it could bring
- Continue to apply, replicate and scale, across the UK (as applicable in each of the four nations), our evidence from the Beacon sites of what works to help people live the lives they want after abuse has happened. This includes developing the right partnerships and practice to test and adjust recovery and step-down interventions further for groups who were under-represented in our original pilot sites in terms of race, age, sexuality, disability, geographical context
- ✓ Deliver Years 2 and 3 of the NatWest Circle Fund, and gain a greater understanding of what impact it can have, sharing the learnings for wider change
- ✓ Continue to empower survivors to drive change, scale-up authentic voice approach everywhere, extending their role in co-creation, and learning lessons from all our work across the UK, including our Pioneers and our AV Panel in Scotland, supporting organisations/structures to embed their own AV systems
- ✓ Further develop our work on driving change in the family court, delivering our training for legal professionals and sharing the learning from our consultations

- ✓ Increase attention to voice of the child where they have experienced harm in the home. Build our children and young people's authentic voice, in relation to Family Court / Justice, reflecting on the experiences and needs created or exaggerated by Covid, and recovery service provision. (See also SP1)
- ✓ Explore the need and potential for a 'bridging course': development of a training offer and/or further online materials to support communities and co-workers, survivors and others who aren't working in a professional DA capacity but would like to learn about DA and response

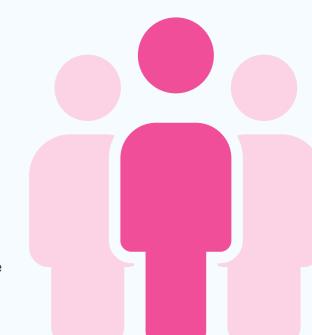
- ✓ We will ensure that SP4; life after harm, is being applied appropriately to those who use abuse/have used abuse, as well as to adult and child victim/survivors
- ✓ Ensure that for adult survivors, responses are inclusive of those who are less visible for example those adults who were child survivors of abuse, survivors of child to parent abuse, and those survivors who might be deemed 'able to cope' by reason of their financial or professional position

## Strategic Priority 5: To 'Remain an effective and sustainable organisation' we aim to:

## Operating model and organisational development – we will:

- ✓ Keep developing the 'how' of delivering our strategy, for example continuing to increase adoption of digital tech for good, tech v abuse approaches, and forging links with individuals and organisations who are credible and effective in (physical and online) spaces populated by boys and men
- ✓ Agree and deliver on goals for how we grow our authentic voice over the next three years – our Pioneer group, associate experts by experience, children and young people
- ✓ Develop appropriate plans to support individuals or groups of survivors who want to make change in their own local area. This fits with the broader context of 'Reach In' – through which so many more private

- citizens can be confident and motivated to play a role as first responders to abuse
- Continue to drive effective communications across and beyond SafeLives to make the case that everyone has a role to play in ending domestic abuse





#### EEDI – we will:

Continue to prioritise the development of active anti-racism in our organisation, as a part of our wider EEDI commitments, and apply this to our team (by which we mean staff, Trustees, associates and Pioneers), our partnerships, our delivery and our communications. This will involve both practical and cultural change, from our recruitment to our training materials. our restorative conversations when we encounter problems, to investment in all staff through the development and support they need to thrive in the organisation and fulfil our values and commitments

- ✓ Act on the findings from scoping work in spring/summer 2021 which examines how we can be the best ally to the smallest, most specialist domestic abuse and wider VAWG/safeguarding organisations

  ✓ Continue to review the outcomes from the annual EEDI action plan
  - publish annually

    Staff engagement, support,
    learning and development we will:

and develop based on results and

- ✓ Continue to invest in our core capabilities as an organisation, for example retaining our specialism in quantitative data, building up our expertise in national perpetrator data and financial evidence, making sure newly arriving team members have strong induction in the foundations of the organisation's work, to improve institutional memory
- ✓ Make sure staff are offered a variety of learning opportunities, including 'hands on' learning through visits or secondments (back) to the frontline so staff are close to frontline practice and challenges in domestic abuse response (including for perpetrators of abuse), safeguarding and mental health sectors

Continue to monitor staff engagement and satisfaction with annual staff survey and other measures, and act on the findings. Ensure staff are well equipped with learning opportunities to flourish in their role, and continue to develop and extend our pool of associates. Continue to support staff wellbeing including through clinical supervision

#### Infrastructure - we will:

- ✓ Implement income generation plans which look laterally at the opportunities for funding and 'in kind' benefits that would usually be unaffordable for us, or which can help us extend our reach
- ✓ Develop our digital platforms and services, including embedding our new website, reaching new audiences, seeing an increase in return visitors, and improvements in user journeys

- ✓ Build on learning from the Covid pandemic in terms of our better use of digital technology to do our work, develop our training offer, and support the same evolution in ways of working in our colleague organisations
- Encourage staff to take part in cross sector learning, so to the greatest extent possible as charities we 'solve the problem once' then learn from each other





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