



**Institute of
Domestic Violence,
Religion & Migration**

Impact Report 2025-2026

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Foreword

The Institute of Domestic Violence, Religion & Migration (IDVRM) was established to address a persistent gap and bias in domestic violence and conflict-related sexual violence research and practice: the lack of culturally and theologically informed responses considering the distinct experiences of religious, migrant and ethnic minority communities in the UK, international migration and humanitarian contexts. Too often, responses have overlooked the significance of religious beliefs, cultural socialisation and displacement experiences, while community-based organisations and those with lived experience have remained underrepresented in research, programme design and high-level standards setting.

We were founded on the belief that more effective and equitable responses can only be achieved by working alongside communities, recognising the value of local knowledge and bringing together diverse forms of experience and expertise within the UK and between different regions of the world. Our work combines independent research, consultancy, programme delivery and knowledge exchange in an effort to bridge the worlds of academia, practice and policy. Through these activities, we seek not only to generate evidence but also to ensure that evidence is translated into meaningful impact for communities.

As a values-led social enterprise, we are equally committed to how we work as to what we achieve. We believe that ethical partnerships, fair employment, trauma-informed practice and responsible stewardship are essential foundations for creating sustainable social impact. We therefore strive to model decolonial and ethical principles of equality, inclusion, accountability and cultural sensitivity both internally and through our externally facing work.

This report presents the dynamic impact of our work through four interconnected dimensions of value that together define our organisational mission and objectives. We recognise that societal and systemic impact is rarely linear or measurable through a single set of indicators and needs longer periods to be evaluated. Hence, our impact assessment captures both emerging impacts and mature outcomes by combining quantitative indicators with qualitative evidence, such as case studies and personal testimonies from partners, collaborators, volunteers and associates. We hope that combined they can help to reflect our evolving value added to the world.



Dr Romina Istratii
Founding Executive Director

At IDVRM we believe that meaningful change happens by bringing together different forms of knowledge, expertise and lived experience.

Our first year has centred on building relationships across the UK's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) sector to better understand where we can contribute and create meaningful value. These conversations have reinforced the importance of greater collaboration between researchers, practitioners, local authorities, community organisations and policymakers, recognising that lasting change depends on stronger partnerships and shared learning across the sector.

At IDVRM, we see our role as helping to bridge these gaps. By translating research into practical tools, specialist training and collaborative initiatives, while ensuring that frontline experiences and community knowledge shape research and promote more inclusive policies, we aim to strengthen responses to domestic abuse for victims and survivors from diverse cultural, faith and migration backgrounds. Equally important is our commitment to supporting the community-based and 'by and for' organisations that are often leading this work with limited recognition and resources. Their expertise, trusted relationships and lived understanding are essential to creating more equitable and effective responses.

This report reflects the foundations we have laid down during our first year. It highlights not only the work we have delivered, but also the partnerships we have built and the lessons we have learned. I hope it demonstrates our commitment to strengthening the VAWG sector through collaboration, shared learning and evidence-informed practice, while continuing to amplify the voices of the communities at the heart of our mission.



Mayra Teck Ascurra
Non-Executive Director for Development and VAWG Lead

What impact means to us

At the Institute of Domestic Violence, Religion & Migration (IDVRM), impact is not measured solely by the number of projects delivered, publications produced or people reached. We understand impact as the lasting positive change created for individuals, communities, organisations and systems through research, partnership, knowledge exchange and capacity strengthening.

Our primary mission is to diversify responses to domestic violence and abuse (DVA), conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and other forms of gender-based violence (GBV) while subverting cognitive and structural inequalities in GBV research that continue to marginalise the expertise and lived experience of non-Western, indigenous, religious, migrant and ethnic minority communities. We believe that more equitable and effective responses can only be achieved by recognising communities and community-based organisations as equal partners in generating knowledge and designing solutions, rather than simply as beneficiaries or delivery partners in interventions. It also requires addressing funding and structural inequalities to promote community-led research leadership and capacity strengthening.

As a values-led Community Interest Company, we are equally committed to how we create impact as to what we achieve. Our work is grounded in ethical practice and Do-No-Harm principles, trust-based partnerships, community-centred co-creation, cultural sensitivity, epistemic humility, responsible stewardship and a commitment to ensuring that research is beneficial in real-time to communities and translates into meaningful improvements in professional practice and community wellbeing.

We have developed and monitor our work against an internal impact framework that reflects our mission and organisational values. Rather than focusing solely on financial performance or programme outputs, the framework places emphasis on four interconnected dimensions of value that together capture the breadth of our contribution to society (Figure 1).

The four dimensions are mutually reinforcing. Cultural value strengthens understanding, knowledge exchange and local research leadership and responses to DVA/GBV; externally facing social value improves cross-sectoral partnerships and integration, professional practice and sectoral standards; internal social value ensures that our organisational culture reflects the same principles of equity, wellbeing and inclusion that we promote externally; and economic value enables the long-term sustainability required to continue generating positive impact for communities, practitioners and organisations. These four dimensions provide a holistic understanding of our impact and guide how we plan, monitor and evaluate our work.

Figure 1: IDVRM's Four Impact Dimensions



Our definition of sustainability

At IDVRM, sustainability extends beyond financial resilience. We define sustainability as the contextualisation of domestic violence and gender-based violence programmes within community realities, cultural contexts and worldviews in order to:

- promote alignment with survivor and community lived experiences, priorities and aspirations;
- overcome epistemic inequalities and reduce dependency on externally driven models of knowledge and funding; and
- achieve integrated, locally owned and sustainable responses that continue to generate benefit beyond the lifetime of individual projects.

For us, sustainable impact is achieved when knowledge, programme leadership and research-based resources become embedded within communities and organisations, enabling them to continue strengthening responses independently over time.

1. Cultural value

Cultural value lies at the heart of IDVRM's mission. We work to ensure that responses to domestic violence and abuse (DVA) and other interconnected forms of gender-based violence (GBV) are not only evidence-based, but also culturally responsive, faith-informed and locally grounded. Across our research, public engagement and commercial activities, we seek to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and the lived realities of diverse religious, ethnic minority and migrant communities whose experiences are often overlooked within mainstream research, practice and standards-setting to achieve more effective responses to GBV.

Rather than treating cultural and religious beliefs, values and institutions as barriers to effective responses, we recognise them as part of people's worldviews and as essential contexts for understanding experiences of GBV and help-seeking and for (co)creating and (co)delivering effective prevention and response interventions. By combining rigorous research with co-creation, open dialogue and two-way knowledge exchange, we help practitioners, organisations and decision-makers develop more nuanced and effective approaches that reflect the diversity of the communities they serve.

Ultimately, we work to strengthen organisations' capacity to engage across cultural, linguistic and religious contexts, amplify locally generated expertise and create opportunities for communities to shape research, programme and policy design aligned with our decolonial ethos as reflected in the [Project dIdI/ĠAĠA Model®](#) and our [Core Values](#). In doing so, we contribute to more inclusive systems that value diverse forms of knowledge and expertise and challenge assumptions that have historically marginalised minority voices and experiences.

Our assessment of the cultural value that IDVRM generated during 2025–2026 was guided by four key questions:

- **How did we raise awareness of the cultural and religious dimensions of DVA and other interconnected forms of GBV?**
- **How did we strengthen local leadership and indigenous expertise in DVA/GBV prevention and responses?**
- **How did we build culturally responsive professional practice?**
- **How did our research outputs continue to generate cultural value at community level?**

These are addressed below relying on a combination of evidence, recognising that cultural value can encompass outcomes not easily captured through a single metric or impact indicator.

Raising awareness through public engagement

An important aspect of IDVRM's cultural value lies in making research accessible to wider audiences and promoting greater understanding of the cultural, religious and migration-related dimensions of DVA and GBV. Public engagement forms a central part of our theory of change, enabling research evidence to reach those responsible for designing policy, delivering services and shaping public understanding.

During the reporting period, we published and produced **52 public engagement** outputs that include our 'Evidence Bits' impact series, blog articles, podcasts, policy commentaries and Centre publications. Together, these outputs translated research findings from diverse communities, contexts and societies into accessible formats designed to reach audiences beyond academia and support evidence-informed discussion on culturally and faith-sensitive responses to GBV in the UK and internationally. We also delivered a workshop for the VAWG sector in the UK that further enabled us to share our cumulative evidence and expertise and build better knowledge-sharing pathways with frontline organisations.

Our digital presence demonstrates the growing reach of this work. By July 2026, our website had received over **19,000 page views** from users across **149 countries**, while our LinkedIn and YouTube channels further extended the visibility of our research. Across all digital platforms, we recorded more than **22,000 documented content views** and engaged over **12,000 users, subscribers and followers**.

In addition, our website recorded 57,847 user interactions, while LinkedIn content generated 92,465 impressions and 2,139 reactions, indicating sustained visibility and engagement with our research, publications and public engagement activities.

Table 1: Public Engagement Reach 2025-2026

Public Engagement Output	Number	Details
Events organised/delivered	1	Workshop with VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) organisations in the UK
Evidence Bits on impact issues	17	Short evidence summaries highlighting key research findings and impact-related issues

Policy commentaries	1	Policy-focused commentary translating research insights for wider audiences
Centre publications	2	Research and engagement publications produced by our Centres
Blog series	24	Public-facing blog articles and commentary pieces
Podcasts	7	Podcast episodes sharing research findings and engaging wider audiences
Total public engagement outputs	52	Total number of public engagement outputs delivered during 2025–2026

** data as of July 13, 2026*

Table 2. Digital Content Views Across Platforms (2025–2026)

Channel / Metric	Number
Website total views	19,115
LinkedIn page views	2,783
YouTube total views	600
Total views and page visits	22,498

** data as of July 13, 2026*

Table 3. Audience Reach Across Digital Channels (2025–2026)

Channel / Audience	Number
Website users	9,308
Newsletter subscribers	239
LinkedIn followers	2,783
YouTube total views	3,270
Total users and subscribers across different social media	12,817

** data as of July 13, 2026*

Table 4. Platform Engagement Metrics (2025–2026)

Channel / Metric	Number
Website engagement events	57,847
LinkedIn impressions	92,465
LinkedIn reactions	2,139

** data as of July 13, 2026*

Table 5: Top Website Users by Country, 2025-2026

Rank	Country	Website Users	% of Total Users
1	Singapore	2,608	28.05
2	China	2,247	24.17
3	United States	1,176	12.65
4	United Kingdom	1,039	11.18
5	Pakistan	563	6.06
6	Ethiopia	275	2.96
7	Germany	249	2.68
8	Nigeria	161	1.73
9	Netherlands	160	1.72
10	Ireland	143	1.54

** data as of July 13, 2026*

As Table 5 demonstrates, our website reached audiences across both high-income countries in Europe and North America and lower- and middle-income countries in Asia and Africa, reflecting IDVRM's commitment to generating knowledge that is internationally relevant and culturally inclusive.

Strong engagement from countries including the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany, alongside China, Pakistan, Ethiopia and Nigeria, suggests that our work resonates across diverse cultural, religious and socio-economic contexts and contributes to a more equitable global evidence base on domestic violence and gender-based violence. As one of our principal contexts of work, the United Kingdom ranked among the four top countries generating the highest website traffic.

Strengthening culturally responsive professional capability

Drawing on the [Project dIdI/ᐃᐃᐃᐃ Model®](#), we developed eight specialist training programmes to translate our research- and practice-based cross-cultural and inter-faith expertise into practical tools for practitioners, community organisations and decision-makers working in DVA and GBV responses and humanitarian and migration programming (Table 6). In doing so, we sought to address a persistent gap in professional development by equipping organisations with the knowledge and practical skills needed to deliver more culturally responsive, faith-informed and contextually grounded services., while feeling equipped to challenge harmful norms, attitudes and practices with contextual nuance.

Table 6: Training Catalogue Released in 2025-2026

Training Course	Focus
Ethical, Safeguarding and Power Considerations in Gender-Based Violence Research	Equips researchers, practitioners and organisations to design and conduct ethically robust, self-reflexive and trust-based GBV research in partnership with communities.
Localisation and Contextualisation in GBV Programme Design and Delivery	Strengthens participants' ability to move beyond localisation rhetoric by embedding contextual knowledge, local leadership, regional expertise, and cultural and religious resources throughout the programme cycle.
Linguistic, Cultural and Religious Awareness in Development and Humanitarian Programmes	Builds capacity to engage ethically and effectively in multilingual, multi-religious and culturally complex environments when delivering development and humanitarian programmes.
Cultural and Religious Sensitivity in VAWG and Domestic Violence Services in Migration Contexts	Supports the delivery of survivor-centred, culturally responsive and faith-informed services for migrant, refugee and ethnic minority communities.

Research Translation and Evidence Communication for Impact	Develops skills to translate research findings, frontline evidence and organisational learning into accessible outputs for decision-makers, funders and policy audiences.
Survivor-Centred MHPSS: Adapting Interventions to Diverse Linguistic, Cultural and Faith Contexts	A three-day training for mental health and psychosocial support practitioners on designing culturally grounded, spiritually sensitive and survivor-centred interventions in contexts affected by conflict and sexual violence.
Engaging Religious Actors in VAWG/GBV Responses	Introduces practical approaches for working with faith leaders and clergy, integrating safeguarding, counselling, legal and theological perspectives to strengthen GBV responses.
Safeguarding in Gender-Based Violence Programme Delivery	Strengthens organisational capacity to translate safeguarding principles and compliance standards into practical, culturally responsive GBV programme systems.

See full description on our website: <https://idvrm.org/training/>

Unlike standard training delivery in the sectors we work with, our trainings are co-designed with each client to reflect their organisational priorities, regional context and the cultural, linguistic and faith dynamics of the communities they serve. This co-creation-based approach ensures that the contents are relevant to the training participants and achieve the highest level of contextualisation that we aim to promote through IDVRM's work.

During the three months following the publication of our training catalogue, IDVRM received seven expressions of interest from VAWG organisations, UN agencies and individual practitioners, resulting in two client partnerships. One training has already been delivered and evaluated, while another is currently being co-developed with the client, demonstrating rising demand for culturally responsive, faith-informed and contextualised training approaches and content. Notably, trainings are offered at discounted rates for indigenous, non-profit organisations in line with IDVRM's commitment to address epistemic and funding inequalities in DVA/GBV research and responses.

Below we present a case study on our training on cultural and religious sensitivity in UK violence against women and girls (VAWG) responses piloted for Juno Women's Aid. Part of the training delivery cost was supported with a grant from DreamFund awarded to support IDVRM's early-stage development and the launch of core activities.

Case Study: IDVRM training piloted for Juno Women's Aid supported by a DreamFund grant

During this reporting period, IDVRM piloted its specialist training Cultural and Religious Sensitivity in VAWG and Domestic Violence Services in Migration Contexts in partnership with Juno Women's Aid. As one of several activities supported through an unrestricted DreamFund grant, the pilot translated the research and practice expertise developed through the **Project dIdI/ᄡᄡᄡ Model®** into practical capacity building for frontline VAWG professionals.

More than 15 frontline staff took part in the training, exploring how cultural identities, religious beliefs and migration experiences shape survivors' experiences of abuse, help-seeking and recovery for specific served communities of South Asian, East African and Eastern European origin.

A defining feature of the training was its integration of cultural and religious dimensions into domestic abuse practice. Rather than treating culture or faith as peripheral considerations, the programme explored how cultural norms, religious beliefs, migration and structural inequalities intersect to shape survivors' experiences of abuse, help-seeking and recovery. A key focus was building practitioners' confidence to engage with clients religious and cultural background, beliefs and normative expectations thoughtfully, recognising faith as a potential source of strength and resilience, while also understanding how religious discourse can be misused to justify abuse or discourage survivors from seeking support. One participant reported that *"the content defining the crossover between culture and religion and the relevant language" was particularly valuable, while another commented: "Learning more about religion as a good thing for some women was also new to me as I think we as workers tend to just see it as a means to control women."*

The training also demonstrated the value of IDVRM's interdisciplinary expertise. Drawing on anthropology, religious and cultural studies, migration and conflict studies, alongside frontline domestic abuse practice, the programme provided practitioners with conceptual frameworks rarely included in mainstream VAWG training. Participants particularly valued learning about underrepresented communities, including Eastern European communities often missed from conversations on diversity, and how their experiences of domestic abuse interface with regional histories, as well as specialist topics such as spiritual abuse and spiritual trauma. In the words of a participant:

"I gained an overall knowledge around religion, culture and belief. Learning more about Eastern European countries was very useful as I have not seen this covered elsewhere."

A third distinguishing feature was the programme's participatory facilitation and delivery model. Rather than delivering a standardised training package, IDVRM adopted a collaborative co-creation model, working closely with Juno Women's Aid to identify organisational priorities, existing knowledge gaps and the specific needs of the communities they support. This ensured that the programme responded directly to frontline practice challenges, making the learning immediately relevant and applicable to participants' day-to-day work. The training combined specialist presentations with facilitated discussion, reflective questions and case-based learning that enabled participants to critically examine assumptions and apply learning to a realistic scenario from their frontline service provision. The facilitation itself was consistently highlighted as a key strength. Participants described "the content [as] relevant and the facilitators outstanding." Another participant praised the facilitator's ability to create an inclusive learning environment, commenting that she was "patient, able to pick up on cues and facilitate the discussion."

For Juno Women's Aid, the training strengthened organisational capability to deliver more culturally and faith-responsive support:

"This training has been an invaluable opportunity for our team to strengthen our understanding of the complex intersections between culture, faith and domestic abuse. The collaborative, tailored approach ensured the content was directly relevant to our practice, leaving staff feeling more informed and confident in delivering culturally and faith-responsive support to survivors."

The pilot training's evaluation overall demonstrates IDVRM's distinctive approach to capacity building in domestic abuse services provision through a co-created, organisation-specific training model. Through a collaborative design process, training is adapted to each organisation's priorities, needs and the communities it supports. This enables organisations to address specific gaps in practitioner knowledge while benefiting from IDVRM's international and interdisciplinary expertise, integrated cultural and religious analysis and highly experienced and participatory facilitation approach.

Strengthening culturally responsive professional capability

Beyond strengthening individual practitioners, IDVRM also sought to strengthen the long-term capacity of indigenous organisations to lead research and secure international funding independently. During 2025–2026, we co-created seven research proposals involving a total of 15 indigenous organisations and their wider networks. Bids developed have involved the UK, Ethiopia, Spain, Nigeria, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Moldova and Ukraine. Ethiopia, Spain, Nigeria, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Moldova and Ukraine.

Although the large majority of these proposals were not funded and several are pending (see Section 4), the co-creation-based bid development process itself generated significant value for our collaborators, many of whom had not yet engaged in international bid development being local or regional indigenous organisations. As the testimonials below highlight, our partners gained practical experience in international consortium building, theory of change development, proposal writing and research design—skills that strengthened their confidence and ability to apply for international funding independently and participate as equal partners in international research projects, rather than solely as delivery organisations.

This reflects IDVRM's commitment – encompassed in the Project dIdI/ᠳᠠᠳᠠ Model® – to promoting local research leadership, capacity sharing and equitable, trust-based partnerships-building. Where organisations approach us to develop projects together, we often insist that they take the lead with project design to develop the capacity to develop bids, with us contributing technical expertise and extensive writing guidance. We believe that we cannot truly shift to a culturally sensitive, faith-informed and deeply contextualised model for responding to GBV in diverse contexts if we do not contribute to community-based, indigenous leadership so that projects are embedded in local realities, priorities and understandings.

Partner testimonial

Working with the Institute of Domestic Violence, Religion & Migration has been much more than a proposal development process. It has been a genuine partnership based on mutual respect, trust and a shared commitment to strengthening locally led research and action.

As the founder of the Women's Crisis Center Gulrukhsor in Tajikistan, I have extensive experience in delivering services, leading advocacy and conducting research on gender-based violence. However, developing competitive international research proposals requires a different set of skills and strategic thinking. Throughout our collaboration, the IDVRM team generously shared not only their technical expertise in proposal development but also their approach to co-creation. Rather than positioning themselves as external experts, they ensured that our local knowledge, priorities and lived experience remained at the centre of the process.

For organisations like ours, localisation should mean much more than transferring resources. It should create space for local organisations to shape research agendas, influence decision-making and lead knowledge production based on the realities of our communities. Our collaboration with IDVRM has demonstrated what this looks like in practice.

I sincerely hope this partnership will continue. Beyond the proposals themselves, it has built lasting institutional capacity, strengthened our confidence as local leaders and created a foundation for future collaborative research that is both academically rigorous and deeply rooted in community experience.

—Dr Gulbakhor Makhkamova, Founder and Chair of the Board, Women's Crisis Center Gulrukhsor, Tajikistan

Partner testimonial

We at Aksum University would like to express our sincere appreciation for the invaluable support Dr Romina Istratii and colleagues at IDVRM have provided. Through your guidance, we have gained practical experience in international consortium building, theory of change development, proposal writing and research design. These experiences have strengthened our capacity to secure research funding and engage as equal partners in international research collaborations.

One example of this collaboration was the jointly developed proposal for the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) 2025–2026 call entitled "Connections between CRSV and GBV in Tigrayan Universities and Pathways for CRSV Recovery and GBV Prevention." While unsuccessful during this round, the project reflected IDVRM's strong commitment to strengthening Aksum University's research capacity through knowledge-sharing and partnership.

Thank you once again for your continued support and encouragement. We truly value our collaboration and look forward to working together on many more successful initiatives in the future.

—Dr Berihu Tekluu, Director of Research, Publication, Ethics and Dissemination Directorate, Aksum University

Translating research-based creative outputs into social and cultural value at community level

IDVRM's approach to cultural value extends beyond professional development and partnership building. We also seek to maximise the long-term value of research by transforming it into creative resources that communities can continue using independently long after funded projects have concluded. We believe that creative media—including film, podcasts and other forms of public communication—can make research more accessible to diverse audiences, stimulate reflection on complex social issues and support community-led learning in ways that traditional academic outputs often cannot.

Having emerged as an independent spinout enterprise from the university-based Project dIdI/ደልደል®, during its first year of existence, IDVRM continued to promote the uptake and use of research-based resources developed through the first phase of the project by organisations responding to DVA and GBV. Rather than remaining static project products, these outputs have served as living educational and community awareness-raising resources and have been adapted and used by practitioners, community organisations, educators and faith leaders on the ground and across different contexts.

One of the most significant examples is the film *Tidar* ("Marriage"), a multilingual docudrama developed through [Project dIdI/ድልድል](#) based on previous long-term anthropological research on domestic violence, religious beliefs and clergy mediation and community responses in Ethiopia. Since the conclusion of the project, the film, which was made permanently accessible on [YouTube](#) for educational purposes, continued to be used independently in Ethiopia to facilitate community dialogue on domestic violence, encourage reflection on social norms, faith and gender relations and strengthen community awareness and prevention efforts.

The case study below illustrates how *Tidar* generated cultural value through its voluntary adoption and use by an indigenous Ethiopian organisation. It demonstrates how research-based creative outputs can support locally led social change beyond the lifetime of funded projects, amplifying value for money and funder investment. The case study also evidences the opportunity and need for further contextualisation and scaling out, pointing to the need for directed, sustainable funding. Overall, it bears witness to IDVRM's commitment to encouraging local leadership and initiatives so that GBV responses are community-driven and owned.

Case Study: Cultural Value in Action — *Tidar* Film Supporting Community Dialogue on Domestic Violence in Ethiopia

Tidar was developed from Dr Romina Istratii's long-term anthropological research on the relationship between domestic violence, faith and social norms in Ethiopia. The screenplay was written by Dr Istratii as part of Project dIdI/ድልድል, funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), which explored decolonial approaches to domestic violence responses and two-way knowledge exchange between Africa and Europe. The film was co-produced in Ethiopia and the UK by an all-Ethiopian production team, directed by Yidnekachew Shumete Desalegn and produced by Max Conil and Hermon Hailay.

Grounded in Ethiopian cultural contexts and lived experiences, *Tidar* was created as an accessible resource to raise awareness of domestic violence and encourage reflection on prevention and help-seeking. During the project's lifetime, the film achieved over 1,500 views on YouTube and reached over 170 people directly through screenings in Ethiopia and the UK. It was also nominated as a finalist for the 2024 Learning on Screen Awards.





Local adoption and community ownership

The impact of *Tidar* grew when it was adopted as a community awareness-raising tool by the Inclusive Humanitarian Organization (IHO), an Ethiopian indigenous organisation supporting people with disabilities and vulnerable groups. IHO discovered the film through the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Network in Ethiopia, which circulated it as an educational resource. By integrating *Tidar* into its community engagement and humanitarian activities, IHO demonstrated how a research-based creative work can become locally owned and adapted to address community priorities across different contexts.

Reaching communities through dialogue

IHO first screened *Tidar* for more than 30 married women and mothers, with participation from representatives of UNFPA, the PSEA Network in Ethiopia and the Women and Social Affairs Bureau at sub-district level.

The film was subsequently used in a two-day domestic violence prevention training programme held on 15–16 May, reaching more than 200 parents and teachers in Yirgalem and Aleta-Wondo towns in Ethiopia's Sidama National Regional State. In May 2026, IHO organised a further community screening and awareness session in Yirgalem Town, engaging an additional 70 women in discussions on domestic violence, gender equality, women's rights and community responsibility.

Beyond these community activities, IHO also integrated *Tidar* into humanitarian programming. In March 2026, the organisation facilitated a screening for more than 700 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Oromia living in the China, Bekelo and Woyinshet IDP sites in Debre Berhan Town. The screening was combined with awareness-raising sessions on the prevention of domestic violence and gender-based violence. Following the screening, IHO distributed dignity kits to vulnerable women and girls, ensuring that participants received not only information and opportunities for discussion but also practical support to meet immediate needs.

Across these documented activities, *Tidar* directly reached more than 1,000 community members, creating spaces for dialogue, reflection and learning among women, men, teachers, parents, religious leaders, humanitarian practitioners and internally displaced communities.

Impact through sharing lived experience, reflection and dialogue

The screenings enabled women to reflect on experiences of violence and barriers to seeking support, encouraged many male viewers to examine harmful behaviours and responsibilities within families, supported religious leaders and community influencers to (re)consider their role in preventing violence and enabled service providers and institutions to reflect on strengthening responses.

Many expressed frustration that violence against women continued within their communities, while some women shared personal experiences of abuse and divorce linked to domestic violence. During subsequent screenings, IHO facilitators observed continued reflection and subsequent attitudinal changes. Female participants described feeling encouraged by the actions of the main character, while some male participants acknowledged behaviours they recognised in themselves and reflected on the need for change. Participants called for further screenings, describing *Tidar* as an important awareness tool and a “wake-up call” for communities.

The screenings also demonstrated the importance of culturally sensitive facilitation and pointed to opportunities for further contextualisation to Ethiopia's diverse religious and cultural communities. During the IDP screening in Debre Berhan, some participants from the Muslim community expressed suspicion that the film might seek to promote the Christian faith as it portrayed the story of a Christian Orthodox victim, reflecting the original research context. Following respectful clarification that the film's purpose was to raise awareness about domestic violence with this faith community as a starting point, rather than promote any religion, many Muslim participants actively engaged in the discussion. It is notable that the original aim of Project dIdI was to replicate the research in Muslim communities of Ethiopia and develop a similar film, but this was not materialised due to the war that unfolded in 2020-2022.

The participants' feedback highlighted both the universal relevance of the film's message and the importance of sufficiently and properly contextualising awareness-raising resources to maximise participation across diverse religious communities. IHO and IDVRM are also currently exploring further funding opportunities to adapt the film to Muslim communities of Ethiopia.



Cultural value

Tidar demonstrates how creative works can generate lasting cultural value by transforming research into an accessible resource that communities can interpret, adapt and use according to their own priorities. Through IHO's engagement, a film developed through Ethiopian and UK collaboration became a locally owned tool for dialogue and mobilisation around domestic violence prevention in both community development and humanitarian settings.

The film has supported conversations on social norms, gender roles and collective responsibility while creating opportunities for women, men, religious leaders, teachers, service providers and humanitarian actors to reflect on their roles in preventing violence. Its continued adoption by IHO illustrates how culturally grounded storytelling can bridge academic research, creative practice and community action, generating new knowledge through implementation while strengthening locally led pathways towards social change.

Partner testimonials

*I sincerely appreciate the effort you and your team have invested in documenting this important work. Thank you for recognising IHO Ethiopia's contribution and for your continued partnership. It has been a privilege to use *Tidar* as a community engagement and awareness-raising tool. We look forward to continuing our collaboration to promote the prevention of domestic violence and strengthen community-led social change across Ethiopia.*

—Tsehaynew Ademe, Founder and Executive Director of IHO

The educational drama produced by the institute in three different languages has been an absolute game-changer, breaking down complex societal stigmas and starting vital conversations across diverse cultural divides. This creative outreach is seamlessly backed by essential religious support and teaching, which meets people exactly where they are, allowing faith to become a source of comfort rather than a barrier to safety.

—Dr Haile Gezae, Tigrigna Expert and Project dIdI collaborator

Credits: This case study was developed on the basis of regular reports submitted to IDVRM voluntarily by IHO.

2. Social value (external)

Throughout the year, we sought to share evidence and experience with organisations and service providers working on domestic violence and abuse (DVA) and interconnected forms of gender-based violence (GBV), improve practices to achieve positive social change on the ground and promote inclusive statutory responses to DVA and GBV and better bridging between sector practice, protocols and regulations with state-of-the-art evidence and lived experiences from the communities we work with.

Creating external social value is central to IDVRM's mission. We believe that research achieves its greatest impact when it informs professional practice, strengthens organisational expertise, supports evidence-informed and inclusive policy approaches and enables communities and practitioners to work together towards more equitable and culturally responsive responses to DVA/GBV. Our approach therefore places strong emphasis on partnership-building, two-way knowledge exchange and co-creation across research, regulatory standards and frontline practice.

This section considers four questions that illustrate how IDVRM generated external social value during 2025–2026:

- **How did we strengthen integration across research, regulatory standards and frontline practice?**
- **How did we share knowledge and expertise with public services and regulatory bodies informing DVA and GBV responses?**
- **How did our expert contributions translate into inclusive policy approaches and broader social impact?**

Expanding our circle of partners and collaborators across different sectors

We believe that strong partnerships are essential for translating research into meaningful social impact. Hence, throughout our first year, we invested in building equitable collaborations across academia, civil society, indigenous organisations, faith-based organisations and public institutions to strengthen knowledge exchange, promote co-creation and support culturally responsive approaches to DVA and GBV.

Throughout our engagement, we confirmed and added 24 partners to our circle of close collaborators, who include universities, third sector organisations, local councils, indigenous women's organisations and faith-based institutions and seminaries.

These partners currently represent at least 12 countries (without factoring in their extended networks), with a majority being grounded in the UK and many working internationally or regionally. As mentioned in the previous section, we have already engaged many in co-developing bids together and co-creating projects that have helped the institute expand the reach of the [Project dIdI/ᐃᐃᐃᐃ Model®](#) and share its decolonial approach to partnerships-building, community-based co-creation and culturally embedded interventions.

What is notable is that we have intentionally promoted cross-sectoral integration in all the bids and projects we have co-developed or advised, identifying as partners or collaborators statutory services, faith institutions, women's organisations and research institutions or universities. We have taken the same approach in our public engagement, organising and delivering public engagement events that have sought to create spaces for knowledge sharing across regulatory bodies, practitioners and affected communities to promote more inclusive, culturally sensitive and faith informed responses to DVA and GBV.

Below we offer a short case study about IDVRM's first major event this year, a workshop that brought together community-based by and for' organisations working in VAWG to promote integration across research and practice and facilitate knowledge-sharing.

Case Study: Building Capacity, Influence, and Change Together: A Workshop for 'By and For' VAWG/DVA Organisations

A core part of IDVRM's mission is to act as a bridge between research and frontline practice by creating spaces for knowledge exchange, collaboration and shared learning. In March 2026, we hosted 'Building Capacity, Influence and Change Together: A Workshop for By and For Violence against Women and Girls and Domestic Violence and Abuse Organisations,' bringing together 17 organisations from across the sector, including 'by and for' organisations, specialist services and organisations working at the intersections of migration, faith and community advocacy.

The workshop created a space for practitioners to share experiences, identify common challenges and collectively explore how responses across the sector could be strengthened. These discussions highlighted shared priorities, including the need for greater cultural and faith responsiveness, stronger recognition of specialist 'by and for' expertise and increased collaboration across organisations.

The insights gathered were developed into an event report published through IDVRM's *Evidence Bits* impact series and shared with participating organisations and wider sector colleagues to support continued learning and dialogue. The findings were also directly communicated to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office, ensuring that frontline perspectives contribute to wider sector strategic discussions. Through this work, IDVRM actively contributed to strengthening connections between evidence, practice and sector standards, creating spaces where knowledge from communities and practitioners can inform more inclusive and effective responses to domestic violence and GBV.

Engaging with local councils and standard-setting bodies in knowledge sharing and project co-creation

IDVRM seeks to ensure that research informs not only academic debate but also the design, delivery and evaluation of public services and regulatory protocols and standards, such as around culturally sensitive safeguarding for DVA and GBV victims and survivors.

Throughout the year, we created opportunities to share evidence and analysis with policy and standard-setting bodies and stakeholders to encourage greater consideration of cultural, religious and community dimensions within DVA, VAWG and GBV high-level strategic directions in the UK and internationally. For example, we have been in close communication with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Office, sharing an evidence-based commentary we produced on the government's VAWG strategy released in December 2025 to suggest robust, inclusive approaches and enrichments to the strategy. Our team also attended high-level events to share expertise and inform best practice, as highlighted in the case study below.

Case Study: Contributing Evidence to UK Parliamentary Session on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

As part of our commitment to strengthening evidence-informed policy, IDVRM actively engaged with statutory and policy bodies to share research expertise and contribute to discussions on domestic violence and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

During a high-level panel event marking the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict at the Palace of Westminster, organised by The Advocacy Team, IDVRM's Executive Director, Dr Romina Istratii, contributed to the discussion with the UK Special Envoy on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Minister Chris Elmore. Drawing on her expertise as a member of the UK Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) Team of Experts and longstanding research on conflict-related sexual violence, she highlighted three priorities for strengthening future responses.



These included the importance of systematically evaluating lessons from previous PSVI deployments, increasing transparency in how countries and programmes are prioritised for support and promoting more integrated responses that combine survivor-centred services with greater accountability, community engagement and culturally and faith-informed approaches. Particular attention was drawn to the continuing conflict-related sexual violence crisis in Ethiopia, including Tigray, which had received comparatively limited attention in recent policy discussions.

This engagement illustrates IDVRM's commitment to bringing independent research, field experience and culturally informed perspectives into strategic discussions, helping to strengthen responses to conflict-related sexual violence through evidence-based engagement with decision-makers.

In parallel, we built relationships with local councils in the UK to make our work known and to explore synergies and ways for IDVRM to inform local council's approaches to engaging with migrant, ethnic minority and faith communities, including in VAWG responses, supporting integration across programmes and teams.

We also collaborated on important proposals for novel projects or directly applied to tenders to support relevant council work. For instance, we submitted a project on VAWG programme evaluation with a local city council and a bid to a second council for services responding to communal violence. Although no funding has been secured yet, IDVRM has offered advice, networks and links to experts and has remained open to building bridges between council programmes and the research community to promote robust programmes and evaluation approaches.

Improving sectoral practice and generating social impact through collaborative research and expert contributions

During the past year, IDVRM has contributed specialist expertise to collaborative research and consultancy projects commissioned by governments, UN agencies, universities and international organisations. Through these collaborations, we have sought not only to generate new evidence but also to ensure that emerging findings have informed professional practice, programme design and policy development in real time.

Our role has extended beyond research delivery to include the co-creation of training and guidance, the contextualisation of interventions to diverse cultural, religious and linguistic settings and the translation of research into practical tools for practitioners and decision-makers.

By working alongside implementing partners throughout the research process, we have helped ensure that evidence has informed decision-making while projects have remained ongoing, rather than only after publication. In this way, our contributions have supported more culturally responsive, ethically grounded and locally relevant approaches to DVA, GBV and safeguarding.

The following case study helps to illustrate how IDVRM's collaborative approach has strengthened organisational capacity, informed professional practice and contributed to positive social change through partnerships with universities, governments, UN agencies and international organisations in the context of research on sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA/H).

Case Study: IDVRM-University of Melbourne collaboration to deliver FCDO- and UN-funded project on Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEA/H) in Ethiopia's aid sector

In 2025, IDVRM was invited to contribute to an FCDO- and UN-funded project at the University of Melbourne led by Associate Professor Dr Jasmine Westendorf with the aim to investigate the barriers to reporting SEA/H among aid workers in Ethiopia. Despite over 20 years of efforts to prevent and ensure accountability for such actions, sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA/H) by aid workers continues to represent a persistent and complex challenge within the international aid sector. Evidence on barriers to reporting is patchy and plagued by gaps, even despite significant investment and effort from a range of relevant actors.

The project has sought to strengthen the evidence base on the barriers to reporting that stem from the multiple identities many nationally hired aid workers may hold as both recipients and deliverers of aid. In so doing, the study has sought to inform more effective, impactful and accountable programming approaches in humanitarian and development contexts in Ethiopia and beyond.

IDVRM's Founding Executive Director, Dr Romina Istratii, was identified as academic collaborator and social behavioural scientist specialised on Ethiopia, contributing research, linguistic, cultural and religious expertise and facilitating connections and collaboration with regional universities.

Albeit still on-going, the research findings have informed the development of a new training approach to promote contextualised, culturally-sensitive and faith-informed training for SEA/H staff in the humanitarian sector, changing practice in real time. The project has included the delivery of a co-creation training with Ethiopia-based PSEA trainers, which presented the research findings co-produced by the academic team and facilitated sessions to co-develop new material for achieving more contextualised training approaches adapted to Ethiopia's diverse regional realities.

The new training material developed is currently being piloted by Ethiopian PSEA trainers and will be evaluated for effectiveness to inform a more integrated, refined training approach that will be streamlined to member organisations in the PSEA Network training.

The project has already evidenced the importance of considering cultural and religious values and norms in understanding reporting behaviour and has pointed to the need for engaging better local religious traditions and institutions. It has resulted in a follow-up research project submitted to the PSEA Outreach Fund under the leadership of Ethiopian organisation EIFFDA and the PSEA Network, with Dr Istratii identified as expert contributor to guide the engagement of religious leaders and clergy in PSEA awareness-raising.



Delivery partner testimonial

It was very valuable engaging with Dr Romina Istratii, especially the insights into religious and cultural dynamics, so from my side the collaboration with IDVRM was essential.

—Lian Yong, Interagency Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Coordinator, UNOCHA/RCO Ethiopia

Co-creation workshop participant testimonial

The Ethiopia PSEA Network is currently co-creating its training package, and I recently participated in a co-creation workshop on staff barriers to reporting sexual misconduct. One of the most impactful sessions was the presentation of research on “Barriers to Reporting SEA/H Among Ethiopian Aid Workers” by Dr Jasmine Westendorf and Dr Romina Istratii.

As a safeguarding trainer, my key takeaway from this research is that effective PSEA training cannot be generic or purely procedural; it must reflect who the national staff really are.

The finding that training must address the multiple and overlapping identities of national staff deeply resonated with my experience. Staff are not only professionals; they are also community members, family members, faith holders, and often individuals directly affected by conflict. Expecting reporting decisions to be made solely through a “professional lens” overlooks the complex social, cultural, relational, and emotional risks that people navigate every day.

Equally powerful was the insight that training must actively engage with cultural and religious structures rather than avoid them. Culture and religion are not simply barriers; they shape norms around silence, forgiveness, evidence, and informal resolution. At the same time, they offer values that can be leveraged to promote dignity, justice, accountability, and protection.

This research challenges us to shift PSEA training from merely explaining policies to creating safe spaces for critical reflection spaces where participants can openly explore tensions between faith, culture, community expectations, and safeguarding principles. This shift is essential if reporting is to feel safe, realistic, and meaningful for national staff.

—Gelila Nemie Negasse, Humanitarian Protection and Safeguarding Expert

Credits: Testimonial shared on LinkedIn and included in the report with consent.

3. Social value (internal)

Throughout the year, we sought to create an organisational culture that reflects the same principles we promote through our external work. We recognise that meaningful social impact depends not only on what we do, but also on how we work with those who contribute to our mission. We therefore strive to create a trauma-sensitive, community-centred and flexible working environment that values wellbeing, promotes equitable opportunities, supports professional growth and fosters collaboration across geographical, disciplinary and cultural boundaries.

Our approach is guided by the understanding that people contribute most effectively when they feel respected, supported and able to participate in ways that recognise their individual circumstances, aspirations and capacities. Through the volunteer and work engagement opportunities we provide, we seek to build relationships based on trust, mutual learning and shared ownership, recognising that volunteers, consultants, paid associates and collaborators all bring valuable expertise and lived experience to the Institute.

This section considers four questions that helped us to evaluate how IDVRM generated internal social value during 2025–2026:

- **How did we promote wellbeing through a trauma-sensitive organisational culture?**
- **How did we promote equitable and non-exploitative volunteering and work engagement opportunities?**
- **How did we support professional development and leadership among our team?**

Promoting wellbeing through a person-centered and trauma-sensitive organisational culture

At IDVRM, we recognise that many members of our team and volunteer community balance professional responsibilities with caring commitments, employment, study and, in some cases, lived experiences of violence, conflict and displacement, statelessness or other personal challenges. We therefore seek to create a working culture that prioritises psychological safety, flexibility and genuine care towards each other.

Rather than expecting people to adapt to rigid organisational processes, we adapt our ways of working to individual circumstances wherever possible. Flexible volunteering arrangements, accessible online meetings and regular opportunities for informal 1-1 discussion help ensure that team members can contribute in ways that are practical and sustainable for them.

We also encourage openness about changing personal circumstances, viewing wellbeing as an essential component of meaningful participation rather than an individual responsibility.

For example, we'd rather postpone a volunteer position if personal circumstances change to give team members time to address life priorities instead of expecting them to deliver work when personal challenges clearly need to be prioritised. This approach was reflected during the reporting period when two Research Associates paused their volunteering commitments in response to changing personal and professional circumstances, with the opportunity to resume their engagement when appropriate and feasible for them. This also ensures that all roles are active and engaging at all times to minimise the risk of volunteers feeling demotivated, inactive or left behind.

Fostering equitable and non-exploitative volunteering and work engagement opportunities

IDVRM is committed to demonstrating and promoting an ethical model of volunteer engagement that prioritises learning, voluntary contribution and self-development over unpaid labour. Volunteer roles are designed as structured developmental opportunities rather than permanent positions or substitutes for paid employment.

Research Associate appointments are normally limited to one year and begin with a structured induction covering the Institute's Code of Practice, Research Ethics, Safeguarding, Data Protection and Management and Conflict of Interest policies. Each Research Associate co-creates an individual activity plan that reflects both organisational priorities and their own professional interests. Progress is reviewed collaboratively through regular 1-1 meetings with the Executive Director throughout the placement, allowing objectives to evolve in response to new opportunities, individual aspirations and a change of circumstances.

Volunteers are also offered opportunities to join (non-mandatory) community meetings designed to promote peer learning, a sense of belonging, solidarity and wellbeing across the Institute. Where possible, we seek to create pathways into paid consultancy, training delivery or leadership roles as expertise develops and to retain our volunteers after their roles cease.

During 2025–2026:

- 11/11 or 100% of volunteers and team members completed induction training.
- 11/11 or 100% were offered flexible volunteering arrangements adapted to their own life stages, priorities and work schedules.

- We achieved full retention, although two Research Associates (18%) chose to pause their volunteering by mutual agreement because of changing personal and professional circumstances. One later re-activated their role successfully.
- We facilitated accessible online collaboration across team members based in at least eight countries, including two community meetings to foster community-building and sense of belonging across borders.
- Two Research Associates (18%) progressed into leadership roles and/or paid work engagements as trainers or specialist experts.

Encouraging professional development, team leadership and public engagement for volunteers

Professional development is embedded within our organisational model. Rather than viewing volunteers, expert collaborators or other team members solely as contributors, we seek to support long-term professional growth for everyone through a combination of strategies that include: 1-1 mentoring, supporting fellowship applications and grant proposals, inviting them into collaborative or contracted research and providing access to leadership development opportunities and public engagement event opportunities as best we can.

Research Associates are encouraged to contribute to publications, project development, funding proposals, public engagement activities and Centre leadership according to their interests and expertise. As experience develops, volunteers may progress into new leadership, consultancy or paid work engagements within the Institute.

Several colleagues have already followed this pathway, with one Research Associate progressing to become Non-Executive (NE) Director, three becoming Centre co/leads and numerous taking on either more specialised voluntary roles or engaging in paid specialist work. Moreover, our NE Director was encouraged to apply to leadership development grants, securing an award in their first year as officeholder.

In the next few pages, we offer several professional development vignettes or trajectories, co-authored with the named team members.

Professional development vignette: Mayra Teck Ascurra

Mayra progressed from volunteer Research Associate to Non-Executive Director (VAWG and Development Lead) at IDVRM while continuing her role as a frontline Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) practitioner in a specialist 'by and for' organisation supporting migrant and minoritised survivors. She was engaged on a flexible 1 day/week arrangement to accommodate her formal employment, although time contributions often extended beyond this timeframe at Mayra's initiative. Her journey reflects IDVRM's commitment to recognising frontline knowledge and creating opportunities for practitioners to shape research, leadership and organisational development.

Mayra's testimonial

One of the things I value most about IDVRM is that it does not just recognise frontline expertise - it creates a platform where it can grow, influence and drive change. Working directly with migrant and minoritised victims and survivors in a specialist 'by and for' organisation has given me a deep understanding of both the realities people face and the wider challenges affecting the organisations that support them. I have seen first-hand the growing demand placed on community-based services, the importance of sustainable funding, and the value of genuine partnerships in strengthening support for survivors. Through my role at IDVRM, I have been able to take those frontline insights beyond day-to-day practice and bring them into research, strategic discussions, partnership building and organisational development.

Progressing into a leadership role has challenged me to think more strategically and creatively about how we engage with the VAWG sector, build meaningful collaborations and contribute to wider systemic change. Through this journey, I was able to secure a £2,500 Dream Fund grant from GirlDreamer, creating opportunities to further develop my leadership and strengthen my engagement with the sector. The accompanying leadership masterclass with other women of colour leaders provided a valuable space for learning, connection and reflection, reinforcing the importance of creating opportunities for diverse leaders to influence change.

The Institute has also given me opportunities I never imagined when I first joined as a Research Associate. From contributing to research and organisational development to becoming one of IDVRM's expert trainers, I have been able to translate my frontline experience into practical learning that strengthens the confidence and practice of other professionals. That combination of trust, mentorship and opportunity has been transformative for my own development and reflects the kind of leadership culture IDVRM seeks to build.

Professional development vignette: Fisayo Onaseso

Fisayo Onaseso is IDVRM's first Research Associate based in Nigeria. Fisayo completed one year in her role and was subsequently invited to co-lead one of IDVRM's Centres. Fisayo has since remained involved as honorary Research Associate, contributing regular research-based publications and expertise.

Fisayo's testimonial

I am a researcher with a strong interest in post-violence recovery, the intersections of domestic violence, religion, migration, gender and culture. My academic and professional work is driven by a commitment to producing research that informs policy and practice while amplifying the lived experiences of vulnerable communities. As a Research Associate and Centre Co-Lead at the Institute of Domestic Violence, Religion and Migration (IDVRM), I have contributed to research projects and evidence-based publications and I look forward to contributing to partnership development and initiatives aimed at addressing complex social issues through interdisciplinary collaboration.

My experience with IDVRM has been deeply rewarding and has added significant value to both my personal and professional growth. It has provided opportunities to work and network with passionate scholars and practitioners, strengthen my research and leadership skills and contribute to meaningful work with real world impact. The collaborative and supportive environment has broadened my perspective and reinforced my commitment to social justice and evidence-informed advocacy. I would recommend volunteering with IDVRM to anyone seeking a purposeful platform to develop professionally while making a meaningful contribution to addressing domestic violence, religion and migration-related challenges.

Professional development vignette: Olya K-Mehri

Olya started her engagement at IDVRM as honorary Research Associate but evolved to become IDVRM's in-house Policy Strategic Partnerships expert and Centre Lead for the Centre for Climate, Migration and Place, a new centre she initialised. Olya has since led on numerous Centre publications and has contributed expert pieces to IDVRM's platform, especially focused on co-creation and community engagement in evidence translation for decision-making.

Olya's testimonial

My involvement with IDVRM has significantly widened my thinking and strengthened my holistic systems-thinking approach to policy and research. Reflecting on my current work and exploring future avenues for the Institute, particularly around leading the Centre for Climate, Migration and Place, has pushed me to be far more intentional and intersectional in my external research, mapping and policy analysis.

Specifically, the focus on migration has driven me to engage with the topic much more broadly. This includes a research project analysing climate-induced migration with a specific focus on the Pacific Islands, where I am reviewing epistemological knowledge and concepts relating to ancestral time in indigenous wisdom. It has also expanded my work into internal mobility and social cohesion as migration debates take centre stage globally, particularly in the UK.

Crucially, this engagement has allowed me to embed reflexive practice deeply into my methodology. I now actively seek to bring a trauma-informed response to my projects, even in research areas where this has historically not been a priority. Beyond the academic and strategic alignment, what makes being a part of this Institute meaningful is the culture itself. Coming from slightly more rigid, process-driven environments, it gives me hope to be a part of something with people who do this vital work simply because they care so deeply about the mission. It is a rare, purpose-led space and I'm glad it exists.

Professional development vignette: Marley Markham

After completing his Master's degree in social Anthropology at SOAS University of London, focusing on decolonial approaches to violence and peacebuilding, Marley joined IDVRM as a voluntary communications officer and has since transitioned to Chief Editor. In his current role, Marley provides editorial oversight to all the Institute's communications as well as acting as a consultant trainer for sessions aimed at translating academic and strategic evidence into accessible and engaging copy.

Marley's testimonial

IDVRM has been the perfect organisation for me to combine my editorial capacities as a journalist with the ethnographic research and writing skills developed during my postgraduate degree into impact-led and human-centered work. Most important to me is the Institute's decolonial ethos; a value that aligns with my own approach as a writer and contributes towards an atmosphere of inclusivity and co-production.

4. Economic value

Generating economic value is a fundamental dimension of IDVRM's impact framework because long-term social impact depends upon financial sustainability. For IDVRM, economic value is not measured solely by income generated, but by the organisation's ability to convert financial resources into sustainable public benefit through employment, research, capacity strengthening and community impact.

As a newly established Community Interest Company operating without core funding, external start-up investment or an established organisational track record, our first-year priority was to build a resilient business model capable of sustaining and growing our public benefit activities over time.

Rather than relying on a single source of income, we pursued a diversified revenue. As a priority, we translated years of publicly funded research experience into specialist professional services capable of generating unrestricted income to sustain future impact. We first trademarked the Project dIdl Model® and translated our research expertise into eight specialist professional training programmes that generated our first commercial income. In parallel, we delivered commissioned consultancy and offered policy translation services, launching our *Evidence Bits* impact series for organisations. We also launched two public fundraising initiatives, while pursuing competitive grant funding and collaborating with universities on externally funded research projects. These achievements were realised without a salaried Founding Executive Director, who worked on a voluntary basis refusing pay throughout the reporting period, and with only limited unrestricted organisational funding. Initial organisational development was supported through personal start-up contributions from the Founding Executive Director (reflected in the percentage of total donations below), which enabled the CIC to establish its operations and begin generating independent income.

This approach has enabled IDVRM to establish multiple complementary income streams while remaining firmly aligned with its social mission. Income generated during the reporting period was reinvested directly into organisational development and programme delivery. Notably, some unrestricted income enabled the organisation to transition two long-standing volunteers into paid consultancy and training roles and to recruit a paid external trainer from our Team of Experts to contribute to training delivery. These investments demonstrate how unrestricted income can be converted directly into fair employment opportunities while strengthening the organisation's long-term capacity to deliver public benefit.

The financial figures presented below (Table 6) are provisional estimates derived from internal financial records and are subject to adjustment following preparation of the statutory annual accounts.

Table 6: Key Performance Indicators (Provisional Figures)

Indicator	Figure
Annual Income	*£10.6K
Percentage of donations	**37.8%
Number of research, tender or consultancy contracts secured	1
Number of direct grants secured	1
Number of trainings delivered	2
Number of policy translation services delivered	1
Number of total paying clients	4
Number of volunteers or Team of Experts members participating in paid consultancy, research or trainer roles	3
Number of secured grants or contracts leading to follow up grant applications	1

**Provisional figure based on internal records that will be validated and adjusted upon preparing statutory financial accounts.*

*** Provisional figure that includes direct donations and income from ticketed events collected via Charity Hive.*

Building a Sustainable Funding Pipeline

Alongside generating operational income, IDVRM invested considerable effort in developing a long-term funding pipeline (Table 7). During the reporting period, we submitted **28 grant, research and tender bids** across research and innovation, international development, social entrepreneurship, charitable foundations and consultancy opportunities.

Collectively, IDVRM developed proposals representing over **£10.9 million in collaborative funding opportunities**, of which approximately **£7.05 million would have been allocated to IDVRM** if awarded (Table 8). Although one direct grant and one collaborative research contract were secured during this reporting period, the scale of proposal development demonstrates IDVRM's capacity to identify opportunities, build competitive partnerships and mobilise evidence across a diverse funding landscape. In addition, four applications remain under assessment, making the success rate is provisional.

The process of bid development also generated important strategic value, strengthened capacity and resulted in new partnerships that are anticipated to foster collaborative projects in the future. Several applications resulted in new institutional partnerships, strengthened collaborative relationships with universities and local councils and created opportunities for follow-on funding bids that extend beyond the reporting period. We have also worked with a university consortium to develop a large collaborative grant proposal that will be submitted in 2027.

Table 7: Grant and Tender Applications Summary Table

Indicator	Figure
Number of total grants applied to as leads or named collaborators	28
Number of unsuccessful grant/tender applications	22
Number of pending grant/tender applications as leads or named collaborators	4
Number of successful grant/tender applications as leads or named collaborators	2

Number of grants/tenders under development as leads or named collaborators	1
Provisional success rate	7.14%

Table 8: Grant & Tender Value Summary Table (Provisional Figures))

Grant Status	Value
Total grant value (including collaborator budgets) of applied grants/tenders as leads or named collaborators	£10,924,267
Total grant value allocated to IDVRM of applied grants/tenders if awarded	£7,049,830
Total value of pending grants/tenders	£243,792
Total value of successful grants/tenders	£6,253.48 (inclusive of adjustments made after award)

Unlike organisations that depend primarily on grants, IDVRM has intentionally developed a model that converts research expertise into commercially viable services—including research and consultancy, professional training and evidence translation—that generate unrestricted income while advancing the Institute's social mission. This approach strengthens organisational resilience by reducing dependency on any single funding source and allows income generated through commercial activities to be reinvested directly into research, innovation and community benefit.

Investing Income Back into Mission

As a Community Interest Company, IDVRM reinvests all surplus generated through its activities into advancing its social mission. During the reporting period, every pound of unrestricted income was used to cover essential operational costs and strengthen the Institute's capacity to deliver public benefit. Income from training, fundraising and unrestricted grants enabled the organisation to:

- create two paid consultancy and/or trainer opportunities for IDVRM voluntary staff, including the Non-Executive Director and Communications Chief Editor;
- recruit one external trainer from our Team of Experts to contributed to paid training delivery, securing paid opportunities for them as an extension of our activity;
- strengthen organisational communications and governance capacity;
- continue delivering research, public engagement and policy translation activities;
- invest in the development of future training programmes and funding opportunities.

Throughout the reporting period, the Founding Executive Director worked on a full-time basis without remuneration, allowing any per diem income to be paid towards organisational resources to achieve sustainable operations and create employment for others. As the organisation has become more financially stable, the Executive Founding Director is currently transitioning onto a payroll employment arrangement.

Although operating income during the first reporting period remained modest, IDVRM has established the essential foundations for long-term sustainability: diversified revenue streams, commercially viable services, early grant success, strategic partnerships and a growing pipeline of future funding opportunities. These achievements position the Institute to scale its activities while remaining financially resilient and firmly aligned with its social mission.

Looking ahead

The first year of the Institute of Domestic Violence, Religion & Migration (IDVRM) has been a year of laying foundations. We have established a new social enterprise, built an international network of collaborators, translated years of research into professional services and practical resources, secured our first contracts and grants and begun demonstrating how culturally responsive, faith-informed and community-centred approaches can strengthen responses to domestic violence and abuse (DVA), gender-based violence (GBV) and related forms of violence.

The achievements presented in this report represent only the beginning of a longer journey. Many of the partnerships, research collaborations, training programmes and funding applications described will continue to mature over the coming years, deepening our impact across research and practice. We believe that meaningful systems change requires sustained relationships, continuous learning and long-term commitment.

We, therefore, remain committed to generating value across all four dimensions of our impact framework. We will continue to strengthen cultural value by promoting culturally and faith-informed approaches; external social value by building equitable partnerships and feeding evidence into strategic discussions and sectoral practice; internal social value by fostering a people-centred organisational culture; and economic value by building a financially sustainable organisation capable of reinvesting in long-term public benefit. We also recognise that impact is never static. As the Institute grows, we will continue refining our internal impact framework and indicators, learning from our partners, collaborators, clients and the communities we serve to improve how we understand, measure and communicate the value of our work.

Ultimately, our ambition is not simply to grow as an organisation, but to contribute to a world in which responses to DVA and GBV are more culturally resonant, ethically grounded and locally led. As outlined at the beginning of this report, we understand sustainability not merely as organisational survival or financial resilience, but as the creation of responses that are genuinely rooted in community realities, culturally informed worldviews and locally situated expertise. Such responses are more likely to be owned by communities, better aligned with survivors' lived experiences and priorities and, ultimately, more capable of generating lasting social change.

We extend our sincere gratitude to every volunteer, team member, consultant, donor, client, partner, funder and community collaborator who has contributed to this journey. This report reflects a collective endeavour and a shared belief that research, when undertaken ethically, collaboratively and with cultural humility, can become a catalyst for more equitable, effective and sustainable responses to violence.

Acknowledgements

IDVRM gratefully acknowledges the many colleagues, partners, volunteers, contributors and collaborators whose expertise, time and commitment have contributed to the work documented in this report. We extend particular thanks to Marley Markham, Chief Editor, for his dedicated contribution to the development, editing and presentation of this Impact. We also thank the organisations, practitioners, researchers, community partners and individuals who have contributed knowledge, expertise, testimonies, photographs and other materials to our work. Their contributions have helped us document and communicate the value created through IDVRM's activities during 2025–2026.

Important note on financial figures

All financial figures presented in this report are provisional and have been derived from internal bookkeeping and financial records for the 2025–2026 reporting period. They are presented to illustrate IDVRM's economic activity and development during its first year and should not be considered or relied upon as statutory accounts or audited financial statements. Final figures may differ following completion and approval of the organisation's statutory annual accounts.

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Suggested citation: IDVRM (2026) *IDVRM Impact Report 2025–2026*. Exeter: Institute of Domestic Violence, Religion & Migration (IDVRM) CIC.