

Evidence Digest

Issue 08 March 2016

Latest evidence

Here is a selection of the latest evidence on violence against women and girls (VAWG), released in the last few months:

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Age and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) (Dec 2015) Physical or sexual violence begins on average 3.5 years after women enter their first marriage or partnership (typically at 18.6yrs), according to a new study by the UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti and East Stroudsburg University. Researchers analysed population-based data from Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) in 30 low- and middle-income countries. The study identified a small window for prevention in

childhood and adolescence – before adolescent boys and girls enter their first romantic relationship – when prevention programmes are at their most effective.

VAWG & SEXUALITY EDUCATION

'We want to learn about good love': Sexuality education and violence against women and girls (Nov 2015) Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) – including learning about gender, relationships, gender-based violence (GBV), sex and sexuality – can be seen not only as part of a quality education but also as part of a holistic approach to ending VAWG, according to a new study by SDDirect and Plan UK. Drawing on global evidence on CSE interventions

and primary and secondary qualitative research in Cambodia and Uganda, the report presents a working theory of change. It reviews evidence of linkages and highlights key challenges to effective delivery of CSE around four *key pathways to change*. Recommendations include the need for CSE to be gender-transformative; to address social and gender norms which underpin VAWG; better linkages between CSE and VAWG prevention programming; to strengthen VAWG response mechanisms in and around schools; and to improve the evidence base on what works to shift social norms and prevent VAWG by including VAWG-specific indicators within CSE M&E frameworks.



“We Want to Learn About Good Love”
Research on CSE and VAWG
(Source: Plan UK/SDDirect, 2015)

Latest evidence

CONFLICT-RELATED VIOLENCE **“No shame in justice”:** **addressing stigma against** **survivors** (December 2015)

The stigma attached to sexual violence is hindering the ability to bring perpetrators to justice, according to a new World Vision report. Based on over 400 interviews with survivors and community members in Uganda and DRC, the study explores the links between stigma and justice. It recommends taking a survivor-centred approach, for example, ensuring that legal reform and training on investigation and documentation are accompanied by legal literacy work in communities. It also highlights the need to recognise and respond to the full range of impacts of sexual violence on survivors and their families, including for children born of rape.

Impact of militarism on violence **against women in the Gaza strip**

(Oct 2015) Almost 40% of women experienced at least one act of domestic violence since the end of the Israeli military operation ‘Protective Edge’ in 2014, according to a study by the Institute of Development Studies, ActionAid and Alianza por la Solidaridad. Based on interviews and focus groups with 497 people and a survey of 440 women, the research found increased levels of physical and verbal intimate partner violence, which were exacerbated by men’s heightened stress and depression as a result of the deteriorating economic situation, hostilities and displacement.

CHILDREN’S EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE

Potential for interventions to **prevent VAWG to reduce** **children’s exposure to violence**

(Dec 2015) This article looks at the impact on children’s exposure to violence of SASA! – a community mobilisation approach to prevent VAWG and HIV developed by Raising Voices in Kampala, Uganda.

Based primarily on 82 in-depth interviews, the authors identified three key ways that SASA! impacts on children’s experience of violence:

- Reduced children’s exposure to (witnessing of) IPV by 64%;
- Improved parenting and discipline practices among couples who experienced reduced IPV; and
- Increase in people intervening to prevent violence against children.

HIV AND VIOLENCE

“Violence. Enough already”: **a global participatory survey among** **women living with HIV**

(December 2015) Nearly 9 out of 10 (89%) respondents experienced or feared violence, either before, since and/or because of their HIV diagnosis, according to a new study of 945 women living with HIV from 94 countries. The research was based on participatory, user-led mixed-methods and included an optional survey component on GBV. Respondents reported increased levels of gender-based violence, including in healthcare settings, after their HIV diagnosis and across the life-cycle.

GBV INTERVENTIONS IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

Evaluation of the humanitarian **system’s response to GBV** **within the context of the Syrian** **crisis**

(Oct 2015) This real-time evaluation studies the humanitarian community’s implementation of inter-agency guidelines to prevent and respond to GBV in the areas of the Syria crisis. The evaluation was supported by a Steering Committee comprised of UNFPA, UNHCR and UNICEF, along with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the International Medical Corps, and was conducted from June to July 2015 in Lebanon, Jordan, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and Northern Syria.

The report, which focused on the health, WASH, and shelter sectors, reveals a significant gap between policy and humanitarian practice to protect women and girls in the response to the Syria crisis. It offers recommendations to improve coordination, leadership, and accountability of GBV interventions across the region.

Evaluation of implementation of 2005 IASC Guidelines for GBV interventions in humanitarian settings in the Syria Crisis response
(Source: UNFPA/UNHCR/IRC/UNICEF/IMC)



Policy and news

In December 2015, **China** passed the country's first **law against domestic violence**. The law prohibits any form of domestic violence, including psychological abuse. It covers married couples, as well as unmarried people who live together, but does not include same-sex relationships.

Gambia's parliament has passed a **bill banning female genital mutilation** (FGM). The new law sets strict penalties for anyone engaging in FGM: up to three years in prison or a fine of 50,000 dalasi (£900). If the act results in death, a person could face life imprisonment.

In January 2016, **Germany** announced plans to ratify and implement the **Istanbul Convention** – a pan-European convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Psychological and emotional abuse will now carry up to 5 years in prison, after the **UK Home Office** introduced a new **domestic abuse offence** of Controlling and Coercive Behaviour within the Serious Crime Act. The new **statutory guidance** explicitly criminalises patterns of coercive or controlling behaviour where they are perpetrated against an intimate partner or other family member.

DFID recently launched a new guidance note on **Shifting Social Norms to address Violence against Women and Girls**. The guidance note aims to provide practical advice, tips and examples to support DFID advisors and programme managers to address harmful social norms in the context of programming to prevent VAWG.

A new **Women and Peace Agreements Database** (PA-X Women) has launched, which lists all the peace agreements from 1990 to the present day that have provisions on **women, gender or sexual violence**. The database is an output from the **Political Settlements Research Programme** (funded by DFID and UNWomen).

The **World Health Organisation (WHO)** has developed a new toolkit to help countries respond to sexual violence: **Strengthening the medico-legal response to sexual violence**. The toolkit includes recommendations on conducting forensic medical examinations, documenting events and responses, conducting an initial investigation, and ethical standards.

The **World Bank** has launched a new **Gender Data Portal**. The portal provides a searchable database of the latest sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics, including data on prevalence of physical/sexual violence, social norms around intimate partner violence, FGM, and early marriage.

The **UK** launched its **annual report** to Parliament on its progress against the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, including on VAWG prevention. A **shadow report** was also published by **Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS)** – a civil society network.

VAWG Helpdesk Round-up

The query service has produced short reports and expert advice to DFID staff on the following topics:

- VAWG and women's political empowerment
- Intimate partner violence (IPV) in Egypt
- 11 gender factsheets for Middle East and North Africa region
- Social, economic and political rights and opportunities - for women inside Syria and for Syrian refugee women in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey
- Links between access to energy and VAWG
- Child and adult safeguarding

Want to know more about how we can help you with research or advice?

Send us an email or give us a call and we can discuss your request further.

VAWG Contact

Telephone
+44 (0) 0203 735 6922

Email
enquiries@VAWGHelpdesk.org.uk

Contributors

Erika McAslan Fraser and Lyndsay McLean (SDDirect); Priya Pillai (Karnataka Health Promotion Trust); Diana Trimiño Mora (International Rescue Committee); Deepta Chopra (Institute of Development Studies); Stacey Scriver (NUI Galway)

DFID-Funded Research

What Works to prevent VAWG?

Here is an overview of some of the research funded under the three components of DFID's flagship [global research programme](#):

Component 1: What Works to Prevent Violence: A Global Programme. In India, What Works is undertaking an evaluation with STRIVE and Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) of [Samvedana Plus](#) - an intervention to understand and address violence and HIV risks in the intimate partnerships of female sex workers. KHPT is implementing the programme with 800 female sex workers (FSWs) and their intimate partners, working with Chaitanya AIDS TadeGattuwa Mahila Sangha, a community-based organisation of FSWs in Karnataka, India.

The intervention provides individual and couple counselling to sex workers and their partners, strengthens sex worker collectives, and engages coordinated community response to shift social norms and prevent violence against women.

The evaluation will employ a cluster-randomised control trial design, including quantitative baseline, midline and endline assessments among FSWs, and baseline and endline assessments with their intimate partners; qualitative, longitudinal case studies with FSWs and their intimate partners; in-depth interviews with facilitators of the programme, and implementation and process monitoring.

Baseline study findings show that overall 51% of FSWs face emotional, physical or sexual violence. 24% of these FSWs experience more severe forms of violence. These are typically FSWs older than 25 years, with sex work as their only source of

income, and who solicit for clients in public places.

They also include FSWs with more than three clients per week, alcohol consuming partners and both occasional and regular clients along with their intimate partner. Sex workers whose partners provide social support are less likely to face violence.

Component 2: What Works to Prevent VAWG in Conflict and Humanitarian Emergencies has published its first research report. [Responding to Typhoon Haiyan: women and girls left behind](#) uses the 2005 IASC *Guidelines for Gender-based Violence (GBV) Interventions in Humanitarian Settings* as a tool to assess how the humanitarian sector met the needs of women and girls in the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

This study specifically looks at how VAWG prevention and mitigation were carried out in the early phase of the emergency and investigates the effectiveness of deploying GBV experts to assist with mainstreaming VAWG prevention and response activities across the humanitarian response.

The report also links to the recently revised 2015 IASC *Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action* with recommendations for implementation, funding, and research. There is also a [policy brief](#), [Huffington Post article](#), and [blog](#).

Progress on other Component 2 research continues with a focus on the Kenya and South Sudan studies, where data collection will start in February and April respectively.

Samvedana Plus works with sex workers and their intimate partners to reduce violence in these relationships (Photo Credit: Priya Pillai, KHPT)



DFID-Funded Research



Cover image from Working Paper on 'Conceptualising Violence' published in Nov 2015
(Source: What Works to Prevent Violence: Economic and Social Costs of VAWG)

What Works to prevent VAWG? Component 3: Economic and Social Costs of VAWG launched their working paper series in December 2015 with the publication of the first working paper: **Conceptualising Violence: A holistic approach to understanding violence against women and girls.**

Dr. Nata Duvvury, Principal Investigator, presented on the costs of violence against women and girls at the Global Summit on Ending Violence Against Women in Istanbul, 9th - 10th of December 2015. The Summit, organised by UN Women in partnership with the Government of Turkey, was the penultimate event of the Beijing 20+ review in 2015 as well as the end of the 16 Days of Activism.

IDS Research on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Throughout the international 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (25 November-10 December 2015), IDS brought together work on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), gender, education and militarism from across the Institute – as well as the work of partners and friends around the world. There were features each day on the

Interactions website, including **SGBV Dialogues** to share insights from the Accountable Grant programme on engaging men and boys, collective action and addressing SGBV. This blog series was a space to engage with other activists, researchers, practitioners, and scholars working on the same issue and provided an opportunity to talk about SGBV and successes and challenges in addressing it.

COMPASS

The DFID-funded three-year project *Creating Opportunities Through Mentoring, Parenting and Safe Spaces* (**COMPASS**) aims to respond to violence against adolescent girls in humanitarian spaces. The COMPASS team in DRC put together a **research brief** describing lessons learned from using participatory methods and girl-driven research design within a rigorous impact evaluation of the International Rescue Committee's COMPASS programme. The brief demonstrates how research itself can be empowering for participants, thus contributing to wider programmatic goals as well as generating reliable data for program improvement.

COMPASS held two events in November 2015 at LSHTM and in DFID. These events were focused on the use of technology in data collection, specifically self-reporting using ACASI (Audio Computer Assisted Self-Interview) in refugee camps in Ethiopia. The Population Council gave a presentation on the extent to which the technology had to be tailored to meet the needs of this unique context. A member of the IRC Ethiopia team presented on the challenges associated with diverse and unwritten languages, low literacy and capacity levels and logistics.

Overall, the purpose of the event was to demonstrate that, if sufficient time and resources are dedicated to preparation and contextualization, ACASI is an extremely valuable tool for gathering data on sensitive and personal issues in an ethical and confidential way. A forthcoming paper will examine these issues in further detail.

The baseline data collection and initial analysis for the Ethiopia and DRC studies are complete. The baseline captured information on girls' attitudes towards gender and violence, experience of physical violence and emotional abuse, experience of sexual violence, abuse and exploitation, their confidence and ability to make decisions and their plans for the future. Initial analysis suggests alarmingly high levels of exposure to violence and sexual violence, even amongst very young girls. Further information and data about these findings will be shared over the next few months.