

Evidence Digest

Issue 17 November 2018

Latest evidence

Here is a selection of the latest evidence on violence against women and girls (VAWG):

COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

Community-based Interventions to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls in Haiti (August 2018). This report documents the lessons learned from two community mobilisation interventions in Haiti, namely the SASA! Programme by Raising Voices and the Power to Girls programme by Beyond Borders.

The report notes the importance of striking a balance between retaining the essential characteristics of the original intervention, while ensuring it is contextualised and culturally relevant.

Focusing the programme on the needs of the community can improve sustainability as local communities embrace, accept, and own it. A collaborative, participatory process has the potential to be more effective.

Other recommendations include utilising existing programmes, working with local organisations, and investing in national staff capacity. Importantly, support and referral services should be in place for when survivors of VAWG come forward.

Although impact evaluations can inform replicability, scale-up, and sustainability, it is important that impact and effectiveness are first measured through process and less rigorous evaluations. Monitoring and evaluation processes should take a participatory and gender approach.

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

The Costs of Sex-based Harassment to Businesses: An In-depth look at the Workplace

(August 2018) The International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) conducted a literature review and a series of interviews with HR professionals, union representatives, insurance brokers, legal experts and academics, to develop a framework for understanding the costs and pathways through which sexual harassment affects firms and the economy.

To reduce the incidence and costs of sexual harassment, ICRW note that companies need to better understand and address aspects of their corporate cultures that support and perpetuate it.

ICRW have found that sexual harassment is least common in companies and workplaces where there is more diverse leadership in terms of both gender and racial composition – the ‘diversity dividend’.

To reduce sex-based harassment, companies therefore need to take steps to reduce power imbalances so that women and other marginalised groups face fewer barriers to advancement.



Latest evidence

VIOLENCE IN ADOLESCENCE

High Rates of Sexual Violence Experienced by Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGWY) in Kenya and Zambia

– Using cross-sectional surveys with women aged 15-24, researchers examined experiences of sexual violence and associated sexual and mental health among in Kenya and Zambia.

Sexual violence from intimate partners in the last year was reported by 19% of AGYW respondents in Kenya and 22% in Zambia, meanwhile sexual violence from non-partners was reported by 21% in Kenya and 17% in Zambia.

Violence from non-partners was associated with increased risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and increased levels of anxiety and depression.

Researchers concluded that strengthening sexual violence prevention programmes, increasing sexual violence screening, and expanding the provision of post-violence care are needed to reduce intimate and non-partner violence and the effects of violence on AGYW.

Preventing Violence against Refugee Adolescent Girls: Findings from a Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) in Ethiopia

(August 2018)
This study looks at the effectiveness of a life skills and safe spaces programme to reduce adolescent girls' experiences of interpersonal violence – one of the first to rigorously evaluate an intervention to reduce GBV and support empowerment of adolescent girls in a humanitarian setting.

The Creating Opportunities through Mentorship, Parental Involvement, and Safe Spaces (COMPASS) was a DFID-funded adolescent life skills and safe spaces programme for Sudanese and South Sudanese girls aged 13–19 years residing in refugee camps in Ethiopia.

Although the study found no evidence that COMPASS reduced girls' exposure to sexual violence within the 12-month timeframe measured, there were improvements in attitudes around rites of passage and identified social supports.

Further research and programmatic adaptations with longer timelines are needed to understand how best to prevent violence towards adolescents in humanitarian contexts.

COERCIVE CONTROL

The Links between Exposure to Violence in Childhood and Gender Norms and Men's Likelihood to use Coercive Control in Marriage

(September 2018). Using a probability sample of 570 married men aged 18-34 years from the Bangladesh survey of the 2011 Multi-Country Study of Men and Violence, researchers examined the extent to which exposure to violence in childhood and community-level gender norms influenced men's attitudes towards gender equality and the use of controlling behaviour.

The main conclusion drawn was that the existence of equitable gender community norms encourages men to have more gender-equitable attitudes and discourages the use of controlling behaviour.

The results suggest that interventions to change community gender norms may be successful in reducing coercive control of women in

marriage. Childhood exposure to violence was found not to be associated with the use of controlling behaviour later in life.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Measuring changes in women's empowerment and its relationship to intimate partner violence

(August 2018). This study illustrates some of the methodological complexities in studying the relationship between women's empowerment and intimate partner violence.

One of the key learnings is that women's empowerment has the potential to both increase and decrease the risk of IPV, even in the same setting, depending on which specific forms of empowerment are considered.

Qualitative research with both men and women in such settings can shed light on the social dynamics that make men perceive some of women's empowerment as provocative and others as benign and advantageous to them and their families generally. This is not to suggest that women's empowerment interventions that can trigger negative responses should be avoided, but rather that they should be combined with simultaneous interventions with men to offset the potential for a male backlash.

Such interventions could include working with small groups of men and boys to encourage them to re-examine patriarchal constructs of masculinity and recognise that women's empowerment serves their own interests, and to identify desirable, non-violent male role models within their community and in the media.

Policy and news

DFID hosted an [international safeguarding summit](#) to tackle sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in the aid sector on 18 October, which committed to deliver four long term changes to how the aid sector operates:

- **ensure support** for survivors, victims and whistle-blowers; enhance accountability and transparency; strengthen reporting; and tackle impunity
- **incentivise cultural change** through strong leadership, organisational accountability and better human resource processes
- **adopt global standards** and ensure they are met or exceeded
- **strengthen organisational capacity and capability** across the international aid sector to meet these standards

For further information, see DFID's Outcome Summary Document: [Putting People First: Tackling Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment in the Aid Sector](#).

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has launched its first [Institutional Framework for Addressing GBV in Crises](#) (GBViC). The framework aims to foster a more coherent approach to addressing GBV in IOM's crisis operations.

A new [UN Human Rights Council report on Myanmar](#) has concluded that rape and other forms of sexual violence against Rohingya women and girls were perpetrated on a massive scale in Rakhine, Kachin and Shan States since 2011.

The United Nations and the Government of Bangladesh have signed a [Framework of Cooperation Agreement](#) to enhance efforts to address conflict-related sexual violence against the Rohingya population forcibly displaced from Myanmar to Bangladesh.

Findings from a new multi-country study on the [drivers of violence against children](#) reveal the complex and often interrelated underlying causes of violence affecting children. Produced by UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti with its academic partner, the University of Edinburgh, the report looks at the national evidence from Italy, Viet Nam, Peru and Zimbabwe to understand how violence happens and what can be done to prevent it.

Christian Aid has published a resource for staff involved in [GBV Programming in Contexts affected by Violence and Conflict](#). Based on case studies from DRC, Colombia, Myanmar, Nicaragua and Zimbabwe, the paper offers recommendations for programming and policy.

KnowVAW have shared [lessons learned from the implementation of a Violence against Women Survey in Palau](#), an island country in the western Pacific Ocean. The Guide is full of practical advice on undertaking surveys and measuring VAW data.

VAWG Helpdesk Round-up

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

- Violence against widows
- Digital harassment of female leaders
- Cyber Violence against Women and Girls
- VAWG in Tunisia
- Safeguarding risks for the higher education and skills sector
- Multiple, co-occurring forms of VAWG and VAC
- VAWG and gender in the Sahel

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

Laura Martineau-Searle and Dr Erika Fraser (SDDirect)

DFID-Funded Research

What Works to prevent VAWG?

The What Works Annual Scientific Meeting was held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 29-31 October. Researchers, practitioners, donors and policymakers came together to share emerging findings.

Findings from countries across Africa and Asia show that intimate partner violence (IPV) is the most prevalent form of VAWG, including in active conflict and acute crises, and that it has wide ranging social and economic impacts.

The findings also show that IPV is preventable, with a number of interventions showing reductions in violent behaviour.

The meeting was preceded by a day with programme implementers, and researchers reflecting on their capacity development experience over the life of the programme and to build on their involvement in the programme to continue the work they are doing.

Here is an update on some of the research funded under DFID's flagship

global What Works [research programme](#):

[Preventing Violence among and against Children in School in Hyderabad, Pakistan \(Sept 2018\)](#)

This brief shares the latest findings from a cluster randomised control trial of a play-based transformative programme in schools, implemented by Right To Play Pakistan (RTP) worked with Aga Khan University.

There were significant reductions in peer violence perpetration and victimisation reported by boys and girls, and between the intervention and the control arm. For example, peer victimisation decreased by 33% in boys and 59% in girls.

In addition, there were significant decreases in the use of physical punishment at home and at school, as well as reductions in domestic violence. The results reinforce the importance of working in multiple spheres (home/school/community) to target wider social norms that reinforce gender inequalities and encourage the use of violence.

[Working with Families to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls in Tajikistan \(Sept 2018\)](#)

Zindagii Shoista ('Living with Dignity') is an innovative social and economic intervention which aims to address the overlapping issues of poverty, patriarchy and violence through a family focus.

Implemented by International Alert and partners, the intervention targeted 80 families. It involved a 10-weekly course of group and individual social empowerment sessions followed by 10 weeks of skills training and follow-up mentoring from local mediators.

Zindagii Shoista has led to violence against women almost halving, with the percentage of women reporting physical, emotional or sexual violence in the last 12 months falling from 64% to 34%. The percentage of men who said they were violent fell from 47% to 5%.

There was also a significant decrease in depression rates among participants, which nearly halved in women and more than halved in men. Women's earnings increased 4-fold and there was a 10-fold increase in the proportion of women with any savings. In addition, levels of food insecurity decreased.

The findings support global evidence on the potential of combining social norm change and economic empowerment to prevent VAWG.

Flags with participants' best research uptake moments – a participatory exercise as part of What Work's Capacity Development meeting in Nepal, October 2018 [Photo credit: Rebecca Ladbury]

