

Evidence Digest

Issue 20 Summer 2019

Latest evidence

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

POLITICAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Political violence targeting women is increasing (June 2019).

Data from a new global database collated by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) reveals that there were twice as many incidents of political violence targeting women during the first quarter of 2019 than the same period in 2018.

The research tracks violence against female politicians and activists since

1997. It includes data on wartime sexual violence, attacks on female civilians and crackdowns on female-led protests.

Political violence varies by region. Globally, attempted assassinations and repression by state forces account for almost half (47%) of violence targeting women and are most widespread in the Middle East. Sexual violence makes up only one-third (34%) of all violence targeting women globally but is the leading type of violence in Africa (42%).

Researchers note that the recent spike in political violence may be sparked by a backlash against women's increasing presence in politics.

BYSTANDER APPROACHES

Systematic Review of Bystander Interventions for the Prevention of Sexual Violence (June 2019).

This systematic review finds there has been an increase in rigorous evaluations of bystander interventions since 2014, mostly in North America.

A third of studies (32%) analyse bystander behaviour post-intervention, with most finding beneficial outcomes in terms of attitudes and behaviours.

Training approaches, particularly presentation, discussion, and the use of active learning, are the most frequently used approaches. The review finds empirical support for the effectiveness of two programs: Bringing in the Bystander and The Men's Program

There is limited evidence beyond college campuses. Although bystander interventions are being replicated with school-age populations, community, and military, these remain rare and not well evaluated.

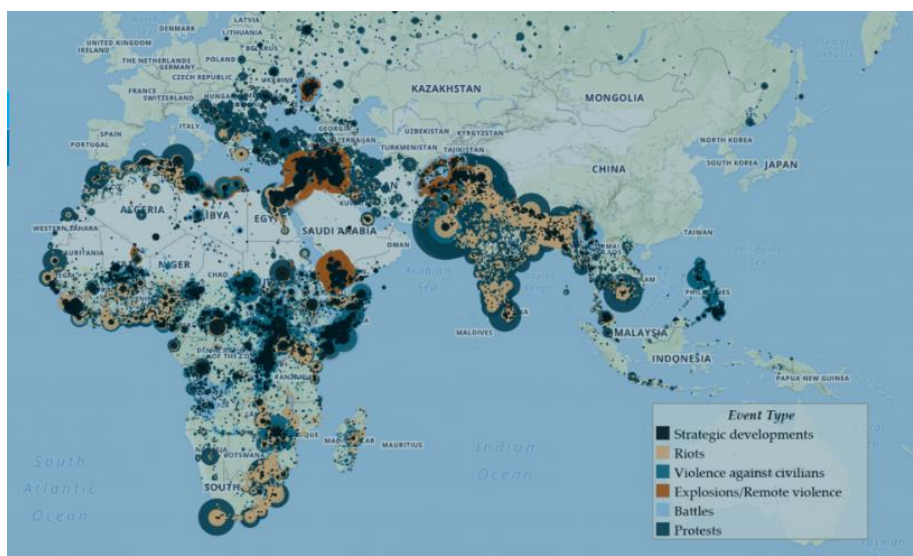


Image: Data from Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), July 2019

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SOCIAL NORMS

Changing Social Norms: The Importance of “Organised Diffusion” for Scaling Up Community Health Promotion and Women Empowerment Interventions (February 2019). This study looks at the potential of “organised diffusion” - the sharing of knowledge encouraged by practitioners and led by programme participants – for norm change.

It analyses quantitative evidence from three case studies: Community Empowerment Program in Mali, Change Starts at Home in Nepal (DFID-funded), and Voices for Change in Nigeria (DFID-funded).

The three community-based interventions demonstrate the potential to empower participants to share their new knowledge with others in their networks, eventually changing existing social norms, including around controversial issues such as intimate partner violence, female genital cutting and gender equality.

The authors conclude that interventions can achieve greater and more diffuse change by helping participants engage others in transformative conversations.

On the CUSP: The Politics and Prospects of Scaling Social Norms Change Programming (April 2019). This paper shares lessons on scaling social norms change initiatives to prevent VAWG from the Community for Understanding Scale Up (CUSP), including GREAT, IMAGE, SASA!, Stepping Stones, and Tostan.

Lessons for implementing at scale include investing in longer-term programming, prioritising community accountability and design, and funding feminist organisations. Experiences from CUSP also confirm the importance of critically questioning whether Governments and markets are well placed to lead scale-up around sensitive issues like power, violence, and equality.

Although adaption is critical, the paper emphasises maintaining core values, structures, and change processes of successful programmes – critical for ensuring safe, ethical, and responsible scale-up.

Due to the complexities of social norm change, the authors also recommend diversifying evaluation methods beyond Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) to help guide adaptation and scale-up.

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

An Online Healthy Relationship Tool and Safety Decision Aid (I-DECIDE) (June 2019). A RCT of the I-DECIDE tool in Australia found no impact for women experiencing intimate partner violence, although qualitative research showed that some women found I-DECIDE to be a helpful source of support.

There was no statistically significant effect on self-efficacy, depression, and fear between women who received either the intervention or the control website.

The authors conclude that the intervention was not effective and recommend further development and tailoring of digital interventions.

More research is needed on digital technologies in violence against women (June 2019). This commentary in the Lancet emphasises the need for more research to evaluate the effectiveness of web-based technology to prevent violence against women, particularly in low- and middle-income countries



Image: Pixaby

Policy and news

In May, DFID and the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund brought together over 50 diverse actors for a three-day [Wilton Park event to build a shared agenda on prevention of violence against women and girls](#), focused on IPV and non-partner sexual violence.

The first-ever [international conference on ending Sexual and Gender Based Violence \(SGBV\) in Humanitarian crises](#) was held in Oslo in May. States, UN agencies, NGOs and others came together to share lessons and make commitments. Over US\$364 million was committed by 21 donors for 2019 and beyond, including \$226 million for 2019 alone.

At the Oslo conference, the International Rescue Committee and the humanitarian think tank VOICE released a new report [Where's the Money?](#) which highlights that two thirds of funding request for GBV in emergencies are unfunded. Only 0.12% of the \$41.5 billion allocated for humanitarian response went to GBV in the three years 2016-2018.

In June, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted a new [Convention and Recommendation to combat violence and harassment in the workplace](#). The new standard aims to protect workers and employees, irrespective of their contractual status, and includes persons in training, interns and apprentices, workers whose employment has been terminated, volunteers, job seekers and job applicants.

Members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) – 29 donor countries and the EU - have adopted the [first international instrument to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment in the aid sector](#). Although not legally binding, the instrument represents a strong political commitment and a comprehensive set of recommendations.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has developed a [School-based Violence Prevention: A Practical Handbook](#), with contributions from UNESCO and UNICEF. The handbook outlines important steps that school officials and education authorities can take to implement an evidence-based, whole-school approach to violence prevention.

[RESPECT](#), a new framework to help scale up strategies to prevent violence against women, was launched by WHO, UN Women and eleven other partners. Each letter of RESPECT stands for one of seven evidence-informed strategies. This action-oriented framework aims to help policymakers to design, plan, implement, monitor and evaluate interventions and programmes.

In July, the UK Prime Minister announced a new Policy and Evidence Centre on Modern Slavery and Human Rights, to be led by the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law. The [Modern Slavery Centre](#) will focus on four key areas: (1) preventing modern slavery; (2) transparency in supply chains; (3) understanding survivor needs and enhancing victim support; and (4) the effectiveness of legal enforcement measures.

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:

- Safeguarding factsheet on support to survivors
- National multisectoral GBV response plans
- Justice sector reform
- Serious and organised crime and VAWG
- Factsheets on GBV in Africa region

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.

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DFID-Funded Research

What Works to Prevent VAWG?

DFID’s global research programme has produced the following **evidence briefs and academic articles**:

Cost and Cost-effectiveness of a Parenting Programme to Prevent Violence against Adolescents in South Africa

An RCT of ‘Parenting for Lifelong Health: Sinovuyo Teen’ calculated the cost per family enrolled in this parenting programme as US\$504. An estimated 73 incidents of physical and emotional abuse were prevented among the 270 families during 2015-16. The study calculates the total cost per incident averted was US\$1837, with an estimated lifetime saving of US\$2724 per case.

If implemented at scale, the cost per incident is calculated to decrease to approximately US\$972. This What Works study concludes that parenting programmes are a cost-effective approach to prevent the abuse of adolescents by their caregivers in low-resource settings.

“Change Really Does Need to Start from Home”: Impact of an IPV Prevention Strategy among Married Couples in Nepal

This qualitative study explores the impact of a 9-month social and behaviour change communication intervention involving a radio drama, radio listening and discussion groups, and broader community engagement.

At midline, couples reported positive changes in men’s individual behaviour, as well as improvements in relationships dynamics, which underpin IPV risks. Participants noted promising shifts in attitudes and behaviours, including decreases in perpetration of physical and sexual IPV.

At endline, couples reported sustained improvements in relationship dynamics and experiences of IPV and decreases in husband’s alcohol use. Findings support the need for multi-component interventions that engage couples.

Impact Evaluation of Economic and Social Empowerment Programme in Afghanistan

This evidence brief summarises the findings of an RCT of Women for Women International’s (WfWI) intensive 12-month social and economic empowerment programme (see diagram below for key components).

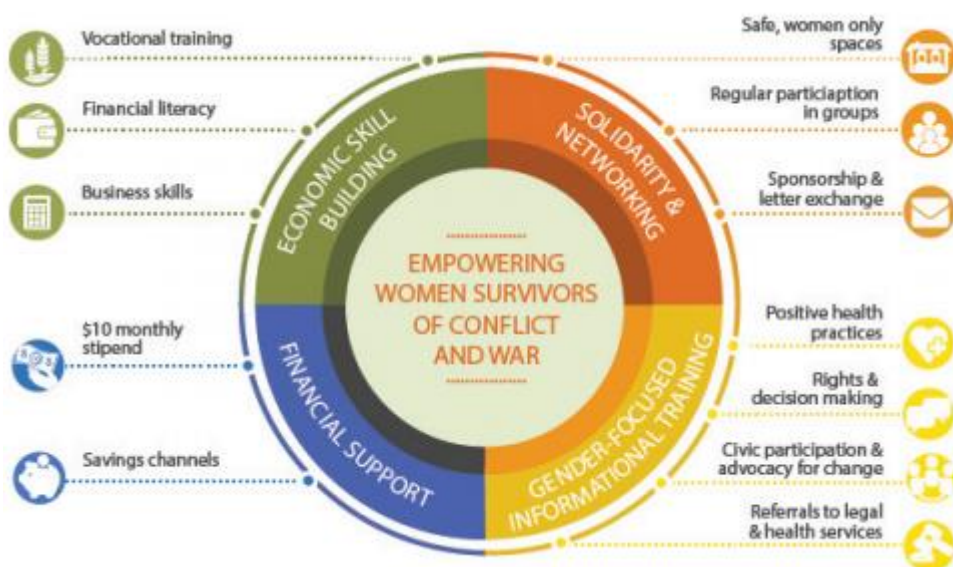
Women who had been through the WfWI intervention reported increased earnings and savings and less food insecurity. They also had more gender-equitable attitudes, increased participation in household decision-making and improved social networks and mobility outside the home.

However, married women’s experience of IPV did not change in the project timeframe, although there was evidence that the intervention reduced the risk of physical IPV for a sub-group of married women who are moderately food insecure.

The study revealed some promising results, within a context of deteriorating security and worsening gender norms in Afghanistan. Key lessons include intentionally programming for VAWG prevention, removing barriers to economic participation, engaging men and boys, addressing multiple forms of VAWG, and connecting survivors to services.

WfWI 12-Month Social and Economic Empowerment Training Programme Components

[Photo credit: What Works to Prevent VAWG]



Cash Transfers in Raqqa Governorate

(May 2019) Cash transfers are one of most widely used aid modalities in humanitarian emergencies. As part of the What Works programme, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) conducted a mixed-methods assessment of an emergency cash assistance programme in Raqqa Governorate in northeast Syria between March and August 2018.

The study found that cash is a widely accepted and preferred aid modality for women, helping them and their families. Household food insecurity reduced from baseline to endline.

The cash assistance also helped reduce reliance on negative coping. However, the study also observed increases in overall IPV for married women, with significant increases in sexual IPV and economic abuse, although without a control group it is difficult to attribute the increase to the cash transfer. It could be that women felt more inclined to disclose violence as they became more comfortable with the study team.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of ensuring that cash programming integrates a gender-sensitive analysis and transformative approach.

The research also confirms the importance of linking cash investments to VAWG response programmes and services.

For further resources, see the [Cash Learning Partnership](#) for studies on cash and voucher assistance in GBV prevention and response and the [Cash Transfer and IPV research collaborative](#) on integrating action on VAWG prevention into cash transfers.

Cash Transfers in Raqqa Governorate, Syria
[Photo credit: International Rescue Committee, Graphic Design by Narrative Design]

