

Evidence Digest

Issue 19 May 2019

Latest evidence

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

VIOLENCE IN PREGNANCY

[Interventions for Addressing Domestic Violence in Pregnancy](#) (April 2019). This systematic review identifies a knowledge gap in interventions aimed at addressing domestic violence against pregnant women in low and middle income countries. Only five studies met the inclusion criteria: two randomised trials and three non-randomised trials in India, Peru, South Africa (x2), and Kenya.

Most interventions were delivered in health care settings and short

durations – ranging from a one-time session lasting 20 minutes to four weekly sessions, each lasting up to 120 minutes.

All interventions provided services tailored to each woman's individual needs and circumstances, based around the concept of empowerment. Effective strategies involved assisting women to disclose experiences of abuse, identify available resources and helping her find a potential solution.

The authors provide a Theory of Change to help understand the context in which interventions can reduce domestic violence in pregnancy, as well as guide the design of future research and development of practice guidelines.

SOCIAL NORMS

[Social Norms and Beliefs about GBV Scale: a Measure for GBV Prevention Programmes](#) (March 2019). This new scale was designed to measure changes in harmful social norms and personal beliefs about GBV in low resource and complex humanitarian settings. It was tested in targeted areas of Somalia and South Sudan using a psychometric evaluation.

Participants are asked to identify influential others in their lives and communities whose opinions matter to them, before being asked about social norms on three sub-scales: 'response to sexual violence', 'protecting family honour' and 'husband's rights to use violence'. For example, "*How many of these people whose opinion matters most to you ... blame women/girls when they are raped?*" The Scale also looks at personal beliefs for the same issues on sexual violence and GBV.

Psychometric testing revealed that the scale was a valid and reliable measure of personal beliefs and injunctive social norms. It has potential to be used in other humanitarian emergencies and low-resource settings, although further testing is recommended.

Image: Pixabay (2019)



Latest evidence

Effectiveness of the Communities Care Programme in Somalia

(March 2019). This evaluation assessed the impact of Communities Care - a community-based programme for preventing and responding to sexual violence against girls and women in conflict-affected and humanitarian settings.

The study was conducted in Mogadishu, Somalia, using a social norms measure developed specifically for the programme (described above).

Compared with control districts, residents in the intervention district had significantly greater improvements in social norms around responses to sexual violence, protecting family honour, and husband's right to use violence.

Intervention residents also had a significantly greater increase in confidence in provision of GBV services. However, there were no significant differences in personal beliefs on the norms between control and intervention areas.

The results suggest that the Communities Care model has potential to change harmful social norms associated with GBV in complex humanitarian settings. It can also increase confidence in GBV service provision.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Findings from a Microfinance Plus Programme in South Africa

(March 2019). This study looks at the associations between women's economic and social empowerment and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) from the Intervention with Microfinance and Gender Equity (IMAGE) longitudinal study in rural South Africa.

IMAGE is a microfinance plus programme, combining a poverty-focused microfinance initiative with a 10-session participatory curriculum of gender and HIV education.

While the study supports findings from other settings that improvements in women's economic conditions can be protective against physical and sexual IPV, associations between certain indicators of women's economic situation, empowerment, and IPV were inconsistent. The authors recommend considering how different forms of empowerment have varying associations with different types of IPV (physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse).

Results demonstrate the need for more microfinance plus programmes, as well as work with both men and couples in economic interventions for IPV prevention to ensure sustained impacts.

Prevalence and Health Outcomes of Domestic Violence in Arab Countries

(March 2019). Meta-analysis of data from 10 Arab countries reveals high levels of IPV among women seeking healthcare. Results are based on 29 studies with a total of 19,101 participants.

Prevalence estimates reveal that 73% of women have been exposed to any type of IPV in their lifetime, with estimates of 50% for emotional/psychological IPV, 36% for physical IPV, and 22% for sexual IPV.

Exposure to IPV and family violence is associated with increased odds of adverse health outcomes, including depression (odds ratio (O.R) of 3.3), sleep problems (O.R 3.2), abortion (O.R 3.5), pain (O.R 2.6) and hypertension (O.R 1.6).

As IPV is associated with poor health outcomes, it should be noted that prevalence levels may be higher amongst women seeking healthcare. Further research is recommended to help inform the development of healthcare interventions and policies to reduce domestic violence in the region.

CLIMATE CHANGE

How VAWG Undermines Resilience to Climate Risks in Chad

(April 2019). This paper explores how VAWG affects survivors' livelihoods and health status, as well as their abilities to protect themselves from further risks. The research is based on qualitative data and analysis of the 2014-15 Chad Demographic and Health Survey, as part of DFID's BRACED (Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters) programme.

Climate risks in Chad include recurring droughts, extreme rainfall and floods, as well as other mutually reinforcing risks such as food shortages and rising food prices, political instability, and population displacement.

In Chad, the research finds that VAWG has multiple impacts on survivors' ability to secure their livelihoods and undermines resilience-building at the individual, household and community level.

Implications for development and humanitarian interventions include the need for gender-transformative approaches which tackle violence and build resilience to shocks and stresses exacerbated by climate change.

Policy and news

The UK has confirmed it will host an [international conference on sexual violence in conflict on November 18-20 2019](#). The event will focus on addressing the stigma of sexual violence and bringing perpetrators to justice.

The Fund to End Violence against Children has announced a large-scale data collection and research project. The US\$ 6.6 million ['Disrupting Harm' initiative](#) will research the online sexual exploitation of children in 14 countries in Africa and Southeast Asia.

£3 million of UK aid money has been awarded to the [National Crime Agency to tackle child sexual exploitation and abuse](#). The money will fight child sex tourism by investigating British paedophiles who travel to 'high risk destination countries' including the Philippines.

The International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) has developed a [definition of and framework for understanding technology-facilitated gender based violence](#). It includes a set of quantitative questions for use in interviews about tactics, relationships, incidence, gender and impact.

UNFPA has produced [guidelines to make GBV services more inclusive of and accessible to women and young persons with disabilities](#) and for targeting interventions to meet their disability-specific needs. These Guidelines are written for use by GBV and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) service providers and support staff at all levels.

In April 2019, the World Bank Group and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) awarded more than US\$1 million to 11 research institutions to design, implement and capture results from innovative GBV solutions. This year the [Development Marketplace Awards](#) will fund a media experiment to reduce intimate partner violence in Bangladesh and a model for measuring the impacts of preventing VAW in the workplace in Peru, amongst others.

A new briefing report by the Women's Refugee Commission and IRC on the [evidence on cash transfers in humanitarian contexts on GBV](#) finds that cash transfers have mixed results on the prevention and mitigation of and response to GBV. Positive outcomes are most likely when cash transfers are paired with complementary activities, such as gender discussion groups and psychosocial support delivered as part of programming to support refugees at risk of GBV and survivors.

The UN Secretary General has released annual reports on [Conflict-related Sexual Violence](#) and [Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#). The latter report contains updated information on measures to strengthen the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse, including prioritising the rights and dignity of victims, ending impunity, engaging with Member States, civil society and external partners and improving strategic communication for education and transparency.

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:

- Safe accommodation for women workers
- Evidence on the global roll back of women's rights and impact on safety/security
- Lessons on management of GBV shelters
- Effectiveness of digital platforms to reduce violence against women
- Safeguarding for girls' clubs
- VAWG review of MENA CSSF policy

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 flagship global research programme has produced the following evidence briefs:

VAWG and Education (March 2019): New evidence from What Works projects in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Kenya shows the potential of some school-based interventions to prevent multiple forms of violence – in school, at home and in the community – even in very challenging settings.

Rethinking relationships – from violence to equality in the Democratic Republic of Congo (March 2019): This study finds that community-based norm change and working with faith leaders show promise in reducing violence, with IPV halving over the 2-year intervention.

A family-centred intervention to prevent violence against women and girls in migrant communities of Baglung District, Nepal: This brief discusses potential ways to reduce women's vulnerability to VAWG within the family context in Nepal.

What Works has also produced a series of **academic articles and technical reports**:

Violence against Afghan women by husbands, mothers-in-law and siblings-in-law / siblings (February 2019): This study finds that mother-in-law and sibling-in-law/sibling physical violence is a key problem in Nepal, suggesting the need to target violence prevention at the domestic unit rather than just at women and their husbands.

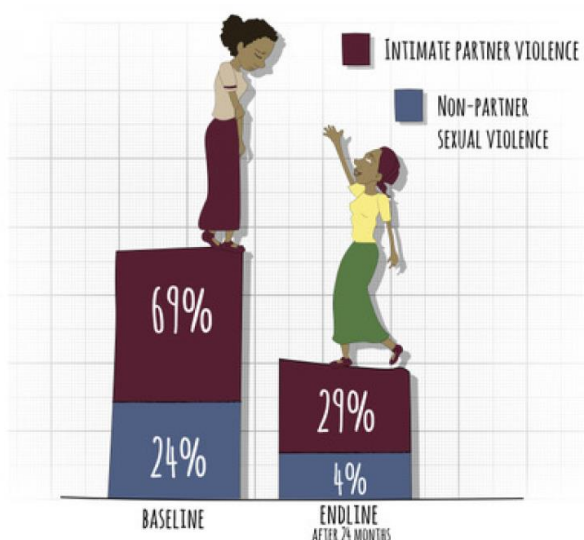
Indashyikiwa women's safe spaces: informal response for survivors of IPV within a Rwandan prevention programme (March 2019): This paper focuses on direct support to IPV survivors through 14 women's safe spaces. Women generally preferred the safe spaces over formal services for IPV disclosure and support. The spaces also improved women's well-being and economic empowerment, as well as the quality of and linkage to formal IPV response services.

Pathways from food insecurity to IPV perpetration among peri-urban men in South Africa (March 2019): This study with over 2,000 currently partnered men found that almost half (48%) had perpetrated IPV in the past year and more than half (61%) were food insecure. Food insecurity was associated with doubled odds of IPV.

Exploring young women's constructions of love and strategies to navigate violent relationships in South African informal settlements (February 2019): This paper explores young women's experiences and constructions of love-relationships and IPV. It finds that women's decisions to remain in or leave violent love-relationships are often fluid and depend on a range of factors, including family support and when women no longer felt loved or respected.

Economic and social costs of VAWG in Ghana (April 2019): New research from Ghana finds that nearly 64.8 million days are lost for all survivors of violence (equivalent to 216,000 employed women not working). Overall the economy loses working days equivalent to 4.5% of its female workforce annually due to VAWG. Taking into account only the time missed in paid work, households across Ghana lost nearly US\$286m annually in income due to VAWG in the last year.

A PROJECT ENGAGING
FAITH LEADERS AND
COMMUNITY MEMBERS
IN VAWG PREVENTION
IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED
DRC SEES VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN
REDUCE BY MORE THAN HALF.



[Photo credit: What Works to Prevent VAWG]

Economic and social costs of violence against women in South Sudan

(April 2019): This new report shows the heavy costs that VAWG imposes on wellbeing and economic productivity in fragile and developing contexts, and the need to invest urgently to scale up efforts to prevent violence. Based on surveys with individual women, households, and businesses, the research found that for the regions of South Sudan covered in the study:

- 8.5 million lost days of work per year - equivalent to 6% of total employed women working.
- 3 million days of care work missed, with impacts for families.
- US\$21.3 of out-of-pocket expenditure per survivor per year on services due to VAWG (in a country where 80% of the population lives on less than US\$1 a day).
- Business losses of 1.1% of total workforce annually – 28% of female employees missed 10 days work each in past year due to violence.

GENDER AND ADOLESCENCE: GLOBAL EVIDENCE (GAGE)

Programming to promote gender-equitable masculinities among adolescent boys

(December 2018) This rigorous review of 34 programmes in 22 low- and middle-income countries observes positive impacts on boys' and young men's knowledge about and attitudes to gender equality, norms

of masculinity and behaviours and practices related to these norms, including GBV. Impacts are greater in longer-term programmes or where boys participate more intensively, due to the deeply entrenched social norms which take time to tackle.

The most effective programmes have well-designed curriculums, positive messaging and good-quality facilitation. Programmes should build in time for boys to develop new attitudes, norms and behaviour, including opportunities for socialising and rapport-building in informal settings.

Although male-only spaces are important, programmes should also build in opportunities for mixed gender discussion to hear girls' perspectives and experiences.

Programmes should explore options for scaling up work in schools and with existing community-based youth initiatives. The review also recommends stronger efforts to include marginalised groups of boys, such as boys who migrate seasonally, boys with disabilities and sexual and gender minorities.



Key norms of masculinity that programmes with adolescent boys aimed to change
(Photo credit: GAGE – report by Rachel Marcus, 2018)