

Evidence Digest

Issue 09 June 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 **Systematic review of intimate partner violence (IPV) during pregnancy and birth outcomes**

(March 2016) Potential causal associations have been found to exist between intimate partner violence, low birth weight and pre-term birth in a recent systematic review and random-effects meta-analysis. The review explores the effect of emotional/psychological violence on selected adverse birth outcomes. 19 of the reviewed studies met the inclusion criteria, with associations found between IPV and low birth weight and preterm birth that could be causal. No statistically significant association was found for intra-uterine growth restriction.

Landmark report: violence against women a 'hidden scourge' in Lao PDR

(March 2016) 1 in 7 women in Lao PDR have experienced physical or sexual violence from partners at least once in their lifetime finds a government and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) commissioned report,

which draws on nearly 3,000 interviews with women across the country. This landmark report further reveals that only 1 in 5 women who experienced violence turned to local authorities for help. Women who experienced violence are also four times more likely to consider suicide. 40% of their children have witnessed violence at least once, leading to associated behavioural problems. The report recommends that existing laws and policies are implemented and adequate resources made available to support these efforts.

The effect of conditional transfers on intimate partner violence **Evidence from northern Ecuador**

(March 2016) Cash, vouchers and food transfers targeted at women to

address poverty and food insecurity may also affect the prevalence of intimate partner violence, as illustrated in this recent study from northern Ecuador.

Using a randomised experimental design analysis, this study finds that transfers reduce controlling behaviour, moderate physical violence, and any physical or sexual violence by 6 to 7%.

The study finds that power dynamics between partners are a key factor determining impact, with evidence suggesting that overall reductions in IPV may be due to both improvements in women's bargaining power within the household and decreases in poverty-related stress and conflict.

Please be aware that the photo (to right) is used to illustrate a quote from the study and is not of a survivor.



Latest evidence

GBV INTERVENTIONS IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

Are we there yet? Progress and challenges in ensuring life-saving services and reducing risks to VAWG in emergencies

(March 2016) In October 2012 the International Rescue Committee (IRC) released a report, Lifesaving, Not Optional, which analysed the obstacles to effective responses to gender-based violence (GBV) in four different humanitarian crises: Haiti, Pakistan, the Horn of Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo. IRC found a systematic failure to prioritise GBV in emergency response.

In an effort to examine progress in the field since 2012, the latest report compares four additional emergencies – the **Central African Republic, South Sudan, Iraq, and the Ebola Virus Disease crisis in Sierra Leone**. Key findings include:

- Humanitarian leadership does not prioritise or hold actors accountable for action on GBV in emergency response.
- Donors and common funding pools do not consistently fund GBV in emergencies.
- GBV coordination continues to face capacity limitations, and local level advocacy is ineffective due to weak support at higher levels.
- Specialised GBV services are inadequate or absent in emergency response, and existing guidance on GBV risk reduction is not operationalised by all humanitarian sectors.
- GBV implementing agencies do not have the capacity to respond to the current levels of need.

CHILD MARRIAGE

A Girl No More: The Changing Norms of Child Marriage in Conflict

(March 2016) 9 of the top 10 countries with the highest rates of child marriage are fragile states, yet married girls are often 'invisible' in humanitarian programming.

How can child-marriage practices be reduced in humanitarian contexts? Qualitative research (focus groups and interviews) by the Women's Refugee Commission with internally displaced Ugandans, Congolese refugees in Uganda; Syrian refugees in Lebanon; and Somali refugees in Ethiopia found that one of the most effective means to mitigate the risks of child marriage during emergencies is to ensure that the basic needs of families are met.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

'Bad Blood': perceptions of children born of conflict-related sexual violence

(February 2016) Sexual violence is a key feature of the ongoing insurgency in northeast Nigeria, with large numbers of women and girls being abducted, forcibly married and impregnated as a result of rape perpetrated by fighters belonging to the group known globally as Boko Haram.

Research conducted in Borno by UNICEF and International Alert found that more needs to be done to help re-integrate women and girls returning from captivity. Focus groups and interviews with girls and women kidnapped by Boko Haram, as well as family members, community leaders, and service providers, found that women and girls face rejection and persecution upon their return to society.

Communities interviewed for the report described returnees as "Boko Haram wives" and "annoba" (epidemics), expressing fear they will try to radicalise others. The findings show an urgent need to put in place protection and support services for those returning home, and to reduce the stigma and violence against returnees by educating communities about what the women and girls have faced.

Members of an IRC-organised saving and loan association near Ouandago, Nana-Grébizi district, Central African Republic (2014)
(Source: International Rescue Committee)



Policy and news

In May 2016, the first-ever **World Humanitarian Summit** was held. The importance of improving prevention of and response to GBV in humanitarian settings is highlighted in the Secretary General's **Agenda for Humanity** – a framework to guide the WHS commitments process.

UN Women have recently updated and redesigned their **Global Database on Violence against Women**, which provides easy access to comprehensive and up-to-date information on actions undertaken by governments to address VAWG.

In April 2016, UNFPA, International Medical Corps and HREA launched a **multi-phase global learning programme** aimed at increasing the number of GBV specialists with the technical knowledge and skills needed to respond in emergencies.

A **new toolkit on faith, gender and sexuality** has been launched as part of a joint initiative with Sonke Gender Justice, the Wits Centre for Diversity Studies and the Institute of Development Studies.

In March 2016 the **Violence & Society UNESCO Centre** launched at Lancaster University. This centre aims to build research expertise on violence across five core themes: theory and concepts; measurement; types of violence; policy and interventions; and change.

In May 2016 WHO produced **new guidelines** aimed at supporting health workers to provide better care to girls and women living with female genital mutilation. Recommendations focus on preventing and treating obstetric complications; treatment for depression and anxiety disorders; attention to female sexual health; and the provision of information and education.

Timor-Leste's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security was approved in April 2016. The plan calls for actions to advance the participation and leadership of women in peacebuilding, and aims to ensure that women can live free from violence.

The Secretary-General's latest **report on conflict-related sexual violence** was published in April 2016, and highlights deepening concerns around the use of sexual violence by terrorist and violent extremist groups.

China's first law criminalising domestic violence came into effect in March 2016, and **Brazil and Columbia** have strengthened their domestic violence laws and adopted the UN protocol for investigating domestic related violent deaths.

In March 2016 the **UN and the League of Arab States signed an agreement** to strengthen collaboration on prevention of conflict-related sexual violence in the Arab region. The framework provides a platform to 'join and reinforce' efforts to build comprehensive responses in the security, justice and service sectors.

VAWG Helpdesk Round-up

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

- Cost of scaling up VAWG programming internationally
- Factsheets on VAWG and gender in Algeria and Bahrain
- VAWG analysis in Iraq
- Review of proposed support on VAWG to a girls education programme
- GBV evaluations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and neighbouring countries
- Trafficking prevalence data
- Interventions to prevent and respond to trafficking

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?

Here is an update on some of the research funded under the different components of DFID's flagship **global research programme**:

Component 1: What Works to Prevent Violence: A Global Programme. In Pakistan, What Works is undertaking a **randomised control trial of Right To Play**. The research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of a schools-based sports and play intervention in reducing violence among children and improving their mental health.

A cluster randomized controlled trial has been designed with two arms, with the intervention to be delivered over 24 months. A shorter, 6-month intervention is delivered after 24 months to control communities

The Right To Play intervention is curriculum based, with age-specific games provided by a trained coach, assisted by a volunteer trained junior

leader, offered in schools twice a week for 35-minutes each session

The games are each followed by a discussion which enables the children to connect, reflect and apply their learning to other areas of their lives. This develops critical thinking and life skills with the particular aim of strengthening resilience and reducing violence among children.

Forty schools have been randomly selected in Hyderabad, Sindh Province, Pakistan; involving 1,000 children (a minimum of 25 per school) aged 11 years. In each school, all students in Grade 6 are recruited to participate. They were surveyed at baseline, and will be surveyed 12 and 24 months after baseline.

A standard questionnaire was used, in Urdu and Sindhi. Data collection was performed by trained data collectors who read the questionnaire and learner self-administered data by themselves in class.

In the baseline, **over 50% of young people endorsed acts of peer perpetration and victimization** and identified negative gender role attitudes and high levels of corporal and family violence.

This research is expected to generate knowledge on the efficacy of an intervention in preventing violence among school children and strengthening their mental health. The study will extend our knowledge of interventions to prevent violence against children.

Photos from top left (clockwise): group photo with children after pre-testing; activity based focus group discussion; team photo after first planning meeting; 1st Right to Play visit to Thatta by Dr Rozina and team.
(Photo Credit: Right to Play / Aga Khan University)



DFID-Funded Research

What Works to Prevent VAWG?

Component 3: Economic and Social Costs of VAWG undertook training of field researchers and piloting of surveys in Pakistan, South Sudan and Ghana between early March and end of April 2016. Fieldworkers received in-depth gender training in addition to building their capacity to undertake surveys.

Gender experts in Ghana and Pakistan along with Principal Investigator, Nata Duvvury, led the training on gender-based violence to ensure that all fieldworkers had in-depth understanding of the ethical and safety guidelines critical for research on sensitive issues. In all three trainings, fieldworkers actively participated in providing on-the-ground solutions to various challenges that could emerge in the course of fieldwork.

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) Research

DFID's five-year flagship FGM/C research programme is being implemented by a consortium led by

the Population Council. Research has begun in seven focus countries: Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia and Sudan.

The evidence and policy questions have been categorised under four broad themes:

- (1) Building the picture: where, when and why is FGM/C practiced, and are these changing?
- (2) Abandonment interventions: What is working, where, and why?
- (3) What are the wider impacts of FGM/C?
- (4) Measurement – what are valid measures of change?

A portfolio of high quality research studies is being developed, including in-depth statistical analyses of recent DHS/MICS datasets, evidence reviews and synthesis documents, the development of an Online Compendium of FGM/C, and qualitative studies from focus countries. The research programme has also engaged in various communication and research uptake activities.

Social Protection and Violence

As part of a four-year DFID-funded programme on **The social and structural determinants of adolescent wellbeing in low and middle income countries**, UNICEF Innocenti is conducting research on key areas of adolescent vulnerability, such as exposure to violence and early marriage.

In May 2016, UNICEF Innocenti and Know Violence held an **expert roundtable on social protection and childhood violence**. The meeting explored the links between social protection and violence prevention. Innocenti research on the effect of conditional cash transfers on intimate partner violence is further discussed in the journal article based on research in northern Ecuador (see page 1) and in this **blog posting**.

This programme includes several research projects, several of which are generating findings on how to tackle VAWG:

Social protection - cash transfers

A multi-country research initiative to provide rigorous evidence on the impact of large-scale national cash transfer programmes.

Violence affecting children

Building research capacity to generate evidence on the drivers of violence affecting children and on the most effective interventions.

Family and parenting support

Gathering evidence to improve family and parenting support programmes and policies in the global context.

What Works to Prevent VAWG: Economic and Social Costs. Training in South Sudan

(Source: What Works to Prevent Violence: Economic and Social Costs of VAWG)

