

Evidence Digest

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Latest evidence

PREVENTION

Lancet special edition on Violence against Women and Girls (November 2014): This special edition focuses on the **importance of prevention**. It includes five papers on:

- Evidence base for interventions
- Role of the health sector in care and prevention
- Conceptual shift from work with men and boys to social norm changes and reduction in gender inequities
- Practical lessons
- Call for action, with recommendations and indicators to track progress.

In its **Call for Action**, the Lancet calls for leaders and policymakers to commit to five key actions:

- Show leadership
- Create equality – develop and enforce laws, implement policies and strengthen capacities of institutions
- Change norms – invest in violence prevention
- Strengthen the role of the health sector
- Invest in research and programming

ROLE OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS

Prevention is Possible: The role of women's rights organisations in ending violence against women and girls in Ethiopia, Ghana and Zambia (November 2014): The report examines three different programmes implemented by Womankind's partners: Siiqqee (Ethiopia), Window

of Hope Foundation (Ghana), and Women for Change (Zambia). It is based on qualitative research in two communities targeted by each programme in each country. The report finds that in all three contexts, there is evidence that the programmes have contributed to shifts in knowledge and attitudes, behaviours and wider social norms on gender roles and violence. The research also found that in all three countries, the partner women's rights organisations brought vital knowledge and understanding of the communities and how to engage with traditional leaders, bridged the gap between women and formal decision-making structures, supported self-led change, and recognised the importance of women's empowerment.



COMBATs, Ghana
(Photo: Womankind)

Latest evidence

CONFLICT & HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

[Are we listening? Acting on our commitments to women and girls affected by the Syrian conflict](#) (September 2014). Drawing on interactions with thousands of women and girls affected by the Syria crisis, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) has published a report shedding light on the challenges facing displaced women and girls, including violence and harassment; it comes with a [video](#).

[From protection to empowerment: investing in girls' life skills](#) (October 2014). This IRC policy brief for the European Week of Action for Girls provides models and best practices of programs that move from protection to empowerment by investing in girls' life skills in humanitarian settings.

[Lighting the way](#) (October 2014). This IRC research brief looks at the role of handheld solar lamps in improving women's and girls' perceptions of safety in two camps for internally displaced people in Haiti. Although 95% of women used the lamps once a day, women did not report an improved sense of safety as a result of the lamps, suggesting that handheld solar lamps alone cannot effectively address the complex root causes of VAWG.

(Photo below: 'The maps you drew on me, failed to show me the way' – an acid violence survivor, photo by Salina Wilson)



["Those terrible weeks in their camp"](#) (October 2014) is based on interviews by Human Rights Watch with witnesses and victims of Boko Haram, including girls who escaped the April 2014 abduction from Chibok secondary school. It highlights a failure to provide effective support and mental health and medical care after captivity, ensure access to safe schools, or investigate and prosecute those responsible for violence against women and girls in northeast Nigeria.

["The power these men have over us"](#) (September 2014) is a Human Rights Watch report focusing on sexual exploitation and abuse of Somali women and girls by African Union forces. It is based on interviews with 21 women and girls who described being raped or sexually exploited by Ugandan or Burundian military personnel serving with the AU force.

[Gender-based Violence \(GBV\) in the Central African Republic](#) (September 2014). This article by IRC in the Humanitarian Exchange highlights the importance of using a multipronged approach to GBV prevention in emergencies, with mainstreaming alongside investment in specialised GBV programmes. Working with women's grassroots organisations in emergencies is also vital.

HEALTH RESPONSE

[Access to emergency contraception and safe abortion services for survivors of rape](#) (September 2014). This Population Council study examines how pregnancy prevention and management services feature within post-rape care services in sub-Saharan Africa. It finds gaps and inconsistencies across most national guidelines, which contribute to a violation of survivors' rights and of good medical practice as outlined in international protocols.

COSTING VAWG

[Costs of violence against women and children](#): A study by Oxford University's Center for the Study of African Economies finds that societal violence, especially violence against women and children, is a much bigger problem than civil war. It calculates a total cost of violence against women and children at around US\$8 trillion, with:

- Female homicide at around US\$105 billion
- Non-fatal intimate partner assault at US\$4,423 billion
- Sexual violence at US\$67 billion
- Child abuse at US\$3,594 billion
- Child sexual violence at US\$37 billion

The paper highlights the lack of evidence on the costs of violence, particularly in low-income countries. It notes that these figures are likely to be conservative estimates, partly due to underreporting of violence, but also lack of data on the economic, welfare, and psychological costs of violence.

ACID VIOLENCE

[Burning Injustice: A rights advocacy manual for lawyers, activists and survivors on acid violence in India](#) (November 2014). This manual published by Human Rights Law Network aims to create awareness around the legal, social, economic and medical ramifications of acid violence in India. Survivor testimonies throughout the manual illustrate the full range of alienation, apathy, and physical trauma that survivors experience.

DFID-Funded Research

DFID VAWG programme mapping

A recent [report](#) by Oxford Policy Management (OPM) analysed the overall number, breadth and depth of DFID programmes on VAWG in 2014 compared with a previous mapping exercise in 2012, and found:

- Since 2012, DFID has significantly scaled up its VAWG programming; with an **estimated 63% increase in the number of DFID supported programmes**.
- A total of 103 programmes, including 10 new programmes focused solely on tackling VAWG, and 54 new programmes with a VAWG component.
- A significant increase in the financial investment and size of VAWG programmes: for VAWG-focused programmes alone DFID had a **563% budget increase**.
- Better balance of programming across DFID's portfolio, focusing more on **preventing violence as well providing support to survivors**.
- A much greater focus (40% increase) on **shifting harmful social norms in programming**.
- **Six-fold increase in number of humanitarian assistance programmes** that include VAWG prevention or response.

The report also demonstrates areas where DFID can do more, including continuing to increase the focus on women and girls' empowerment and **strengthening efforts to support capacity-building of grassroots women's organisations**. More can also be done to address VAWG through programmes focusing on **maternal and reproductive health; cash transfer and nutrition; and girls' education**. There are a number of activities already underway which address these areas.

What Works to Prevent Violence?

DFID's flagship global research programme to prevent violence against women and girls has officially launched the new website www.whatworks.co.za featuring the What Works brochure, video and summary documents.

The What Works programme recently announced **18 projects that it will be supporting through its research and innovation funds**. The projects cover 16 countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Articles on the grantees and programme have recently appeared in: [The Conversation](#), [City Metric](#), [DFID](#), [Huffington Post](#), [Imperica](#), and [The Commentator](#).

Evaluation of the Madhya Pradesh Safe Cities Initiative

The Initiative, led by DFID-India and the Government of Madhya Pradesh, is designed to reduce the prevalence of both intimate partner violence (IPV) and violence and harassment against women and girls in public spaces across 250 urban slums.

The impact evaluation is a randomised control trial, designed to capture not only any effects of the Safe Cities Initiative overall, but also any effects of individual interventions or combinations of interventions. The baseline, which has just been completed, used a mix of methods, including a household survey, focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

Prevalent norms which blame women for the violence they experience and dictate silence by women who have experienced violence, coupled with a strongly expressed desire by women to protect the reputation of their slums and the image of people who live there, appear to have led to significant underreporting by women in the household survey.

This is in contrast to an apparent openness among men and boys in terms of admitting to perpetrating violence or harassment against women, with **perpetration figures higher than 60% for younger men and boys aged 15-25 years in some locations**.

Baseline data highlighted a **strong relationship between alcohol consumption and violence**, with more than half of women who had recently experienced IPV saying their husband had been drunk at the time. However, the survey also pointed to the importance of other factors such as dissatisfaction by husbands and in-laws in the amount of dowry a woman had brought to the marriage and women's own exposure to violent behaviour as children.

Further information will be available in mid-2016. For additional information now, please contact the evaluation Team Leader, [Sally Neville](#).



Policy and news

The second **MenEngage Global Symposium** was held in New Delhi, India from November 10-13 2014. A key outcome was a shared commitment, known as the **Delhi Declaration and Call to Action**, with a clear set of ten statements and affirmations. The Declaration acknowledges gender equality as an essential component of human rights which must be reflected in the post-2015 Development Agenda and urges the full inclusion of men and boys in the struggle to achieve gender justice.

Here is a selection of publications launched at or around the time of the MenEngage Global Symposium:

- **Men, Masculinities and Changing Power**- a MenEngage discussion paper
- **Masculinity, Intimate Partner Violence and Son Preference in India**- a UNFPA/ICRW study
- **Masculinities, conflict and peacebuilding: perspectives on men through a gender lens**- Saferworld report
- **Challenging Patriarchy: Unsettling Men and Masculinities**- IDS bulletin
- **Reconstructing masculinity?** – Qualitative evaluation of the Stepping Stones and Creating Futures interventions in South Africa

The **World Bank** group recently launched a new paper: **Interventions to prevent or reduce VAWG: A systematic review of reviews**. The review, conducted by the Global Women's Institute (GWI) at George Washington University, found that the global evidence base is heavily skewed towards the Global North. Over 70% of impact evaluations were conducted in just seven high-income countries. However, there is also a small but growing body of rigorously tested interventions of innovative primary prevention programmes in low- and middle-income settings, with promising results on VAWG reduction.

The World Bank Group, the Inter-American Development Bank and GWI have also produced a new **VAWG resource guide** for development practitioners on preventing and responding to violence against women and girls across a range of development projects.

China has drafted its first national law against domestic violence. The **new law** includes a definition of domestic violence and streamlines the process for obtaining restraining orders. However, the law does not yet extend to unmarried or divorced couples.

In September 2014, the Dutch and Danish governments launched the **Amplify Change fund** – a **£12m fund to support small, grassroots organisations** working on issues perceived to be contentious for political or religious reasons, including gender-based violence.



Working with young men in South Africa - Sonke Gender Justice (Photo: Lindsay Mgbor)

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VAWG HELPDESK: RECENT WORK

Measuring Change in GBV Interventions in Zimbabwe: Gender based violence (GBV) is a grave concern in Zimbabwe; with reports that 42% of women have experienced physical, emotional or sexual violence; or both, at some point in their life. DFID, with UNFPA, in Zimbabwe has funded eight Civil Society Organisations, who are working in 26 districts in eight provinces, using a range of diverse approaches including multi media campaigns, promotion of dialogues on gender issues, training in counselling and paralegal services and provision of legal services; as well as shelters and One Stop Centres. With a diverse range of activities underway, the challenge is for partners to measure change and report on results against programme targets that donors have committed to and the Government supports through its National Gender Based Violence Strategy (2012-2015).

The VAWG Helpdesk, with experts from SDDirect, Womankind and ActionAid, visited Zimbabwe this year to understand the programme and support partners to strengthen their own monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as design new tools. A stocktake of existing monitoring methods was undertaken and with these a raft of new simple methods introduced and launched with individual organisations. One example of these was using feedback from clients to develop a set of 'Promise Cards' that transform client feedback into positive provider actions. Feedback is discussed with service providers and core standards agreed. This can then be turned into a 'Promise card' that service providers agreed to abide by (see below). Such changes in the behaviour of service providers can make a real difference to clients' experiences. Client interviews can then be used to collect data and monitor behaviour change in service providers.

Promise Card for Service Providers: Promises that we can keep!

(Adapted from a tool originally developed by UNICEF in Zimbabwe to measure quality in child protection service provision)

We promise	Yes - All the time	Sometimes	No
Not be angry at or blame you			
Respect your culture, language and religion			
Provide you with regular updates on your case progress			
Assist you in receiving services from other organisations where needed, as quickly as possible			
Provide you with reimbursement for transport costs, if necessary			
Always see you in a private space			
Clearly explain next steps in the process			

VAWG Helpdesk Round-up

The VAWG Helpdesk is a research and advice service for DFID and other UK government staff. The query service has produced the following short reports and expert advice to DFID staff:

- Baseline data for the UK National Action Plan on women, peace and security
- VAWG prevalence and programming in Ghana
- Situation analysis of women and girls in Ghana
- Economic empowerment and VAWG – best practice

Over the last few months, the Helpdesk has also responded to requests from country offices for short-term country assignments to Ghana, Zimbabwe and the OPTs.

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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