

Evidence Digest

Issue 11 March 2017

Latest evidence

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

EDUCATION AND VIOLENCE

The effect of keeping girls in schools on rates of sexual violence in East/Southern Africa

(Feb 2017) The benefits of keeping girls in school are increasingly well-known, with potential benefits including increased economic empowerment, delayed marriage and childbirth, improved mental health, and reduced risk of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). However, empirical evidence on the relationship between education and SGBV is largely observational.

This study uses quasi-experimental methods to explore the links between educational attainment in adolescence on young women's lifetime experience of sexual violence in Malawi and Uganda. It uses the introduction of Universal (i.e. free) Primary Education as a benchmark for tracking impact.

In Uganda, the findings show a 9% decrease in lifetime sexual violence as a result of one additional year spent in primary school; however, in Malawi, no decrease was observed. These protective effects were found for experiences of sexual violence over the lifetime in Uganda, but not sexual violence over the past 12 months.

While other positive impacts were identified in both cases, this finding underscores the importance of understanding context when developing violence prevention programs.

Review of the Gender Equity in Schools (GEMS) programme in Jharkhand

(Dec 2016) The GEMS programme is a school-based curriculum for children age 12-14 years, to discuss and critically reflect on the issues related to inequitable gender norms and violence. The ICRW evaluation team interviewed more than 3,000 boys and girls from the 80 schools in India where GEMS is being implemented, as well as surveying students from intervention and comparison schools.

The evaluation finds the GEMS approach to have had a significant overall impact, including: a positive shift in attitudes around gender and violence; a decline in students' support of corporal punishment; and a decline in acceptance of peer violence. Students in GEMS schools were more likely to recognise violence when they saw it, and felt more comfortable intervening and speaking out.

However, program implementation was not without challenges. It required confronting deeply rooted norms, as well as confronting resistance from parents, teachers and in some schools from students. The report also notes operational issues that future programming might seek to address.

Source: 'Towards Gender Equality: The GEMS journey thus far'



Latest evidence

LINKS WITH VAC

Coordinating violence against women (VAW) and violence against children (VAC) programming (Feb 2017)

While VAW and VAC have traditionally been considered separately, this report identifies four key areas of issue intersection: overlapping risk factors (unemployment, poverty, social isolation); the presence of social norms that condone violence; co-occurrence of intimate partner violence and child maltreatment in the same family (with implications for intergenerational transmission of violence); and similar health outcomes.

This paper examines six studies published between 2013 and 2016, covering programmes in South Africa, Uganda, Liberia and Thailand. While conclusions are tentative due to a lack of research, the review highlights opportunities for establishing greater coherence between VAW and VAC programmes, especially in community-based programmes with parents.

TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Systematic review of trafficking and sexual exploitation in armed conflicts (Dec 2016)

This review examines 29 papers on trafficking and sexual exploitation in 12 conflict-affected settings across Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Findings confirm the increased prevalence of various forms of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in conflict-affected settings, primarily occurring as early or forced marriage, forced combatant sexual exploitation, and sexual slavery. The authors also note the need to strengthen the evidence base on individual forms of abuse, and to clarify terminology used for these forms in order to encourage more consistent and comprehensive analysis.

SEX WORKERS

Impact of microsavings intervention on reducing violence against female sex workers in Mongolia (Oct 2016)

This randomised control trial (RCT) looks at the impact of a combined microsavings and HIV prevention programme (intervention group), compared to HIV-prevention alone (a control group). Eligible women included commercial sex workers over the age of 18 who reported having unprotected sex with a paying partner in the past 90 days. The study finds that physical and sexual violence went down in both groups. However, there was no greater decrease in the intervention group, suggesting that microsavings participation did not significantly impact women's risk of experiencing violence during sex work.

ECONOMIC VIOLENCE

Study on economic coercion and partner violence in Vietnam (Dec 2016)

This paper looks at survey responses from 533 married women aged 18 to 50 to compare the drivers of economic coercion with those for more commonly measured forms of intimate partner violence (IPV). The study highlights how widespread this form of violence is, with 28% of respondents having experienced economic coercion. Of the women who reported some form of economic coercion or IPV, 52% reported co-occurring economic coercion and IPV. The study concludes that future research should focus on what drives men to engage in economic coercion.

HUMANITARIAN SERVICES FOR SGBV SURVIVORS

Reaching Refugee Survivors of Gender-Based Violence: Evaluation of a Mobile Approach to Service Delivery in Lebanon (Oct 2017)

International Rescue Committee (IRC) has been implementing an innovative mobile approach to prevent and respond to SGBV in the

Akkar district of Lebanon. This mobile approach aims to reach non-camp based Syrian refugee women living in Lebanese communities with SGBV case management and psychosocial support services.

The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) collaborated with IRC to assess the extent to which it is able to meet the safety and support needs of refugee women and girls, and meet international standards to guarantee safety of survivors and quality of services. Findings indicate that mobile service delivery contributed to improved wellbeing of Syrian refugee women and girls, including:

- building social networks and cohesion;
- increasing access to social and emotional support;
- improving communication skills and coping mechanisms;
- breaking down barriers between Syrian and Lebanese communities; and
- helping women and girls regain a sense of self.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Making transitional justice work for women in DRC, Uganda and Kenya (Aug 2016)

These three country reports examine transitional justice in relation to women's rights and responses to SGBV in conflict and post-conflict contexts. Using qualitative research conducted in DRC, northern Uganda and Kenya, the reports examine the efficacy of transitional justice efforts and, in doing so, identify women's priorities for justice, their experiences when seeking justice, and obstacles in justice processes.

Recommendations include more holistic, gender-sensitive and coordinated traditional justice mechanisms which include vulnerable women in their design.

Policy and news

UNESCO and UN Women have launched a new **Global Guidance on addressing School Related Gender Based Violence**, which aims to provide a comprehensive, one-stop resource for governments, policy-makers, teachers, practitioners and civil society. UNESCO also released a Global Education Monitoring (GEM) policy paper **Let's decide how to monitor school-related violence** which suggests three ways to establish globally comparable measures of school-related violence.

In October, the World Bank launched a **Task Force on Gender Based Violence** to strengthen the institution's response through its projects to issues involving sexual exploitation and abuse. The Task Force is composed of external experts and a small group of World Bank employees, and will be operational for nine months.

On 7th February, the Russian parliament passed a **legal amendment** that weakens protections against domestic violence. The amendments decriminalise 'mild' first offences of family violence, with only violence resulting in serious injuries remaining criminalised. The law will apply to violence against any family member, including women and children.

The Trump administration has **reintroduced the Mexico City policy**, or 'global gag rule', which stops aid organisations receiving US funding from performing or promoting abortion, and in which **critics fear Trump has gone further than his Republican predecessors**. One impact of the policy is likely to be an increase in marriage amongst pregnant teenage girls, thereby increasing their risk of violence at the hands of often much older husbands.

A **baseline FGM/C research report** commissioned by ActionAid and conducted by the Orchid Project has been published. The report will inform a Comic Relief funded project (2015-2018) in Somaliland, 'Empowering communities to collectively abandon FGM/C' (full report can be found **here**).

The World Future Council, with support from UN Women, released a **good practice collection on protecting refugee women and girls from violence**, which aims to document and provide accessible information on good practices in protecting refugee women and girls from violence throughout their journey and in destination countries; facilitate experience sharing between key actors and stakeholders; and encourage learning and dialogue across regions, cultures and communities.

In November 2016, the Cabinet of Bangladesh stated that it would pass the **Child Marriage Restraint Act** during Parliament's winter session. The Act, the language of which was approved in September 2014, is said to include a special provision allowing child marriage in 'special cases'. Critics are concerned that the Act will increase young brides' exposure to violence, limit their economic independence, and increase the risk of early pregnancy.

CARE have developed **good programming guidelines on gender and shelter**, which include practical ways to mitigate sexual exploitation and abuse and gender-based violence through humanitarian shelter programming.

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:

- VAWG and disability
- Impact of FGM legislation
- VAWG and domestic violence in Russia
- Criminalising rape and sexual assault victims
- Women's rights organisations and VAWG

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 **Tajikistan**, The "Zindagii Shoista" (['Living With Dignity'](#) project), led by International Alert in partnership with Cesvi, combines behaviour/social norm change and economic empowerment approach to address violence against women and girls.

The project conducted formative research in four target villages in Tajikistan (two in Penjikent and two in Jomi district) in November and December 2015. The research report summarizing the findings of the formative research phase identifies four practices in Tajikistan that can lead to violence:

1. Arranged marriage, including early marriage;
2. Young women's lack of physical and social mobility and access to economic opportunities and communication opportunities, through being denied autonomy,

unless permitted by husband or elder family members;

3. Social norms that regard the use of sexual and gender-based violence as acceptable against this subgroup of young wives and daughters-in-law;
4. Social/ community control over young women and men via, gossip, stigma and shaming

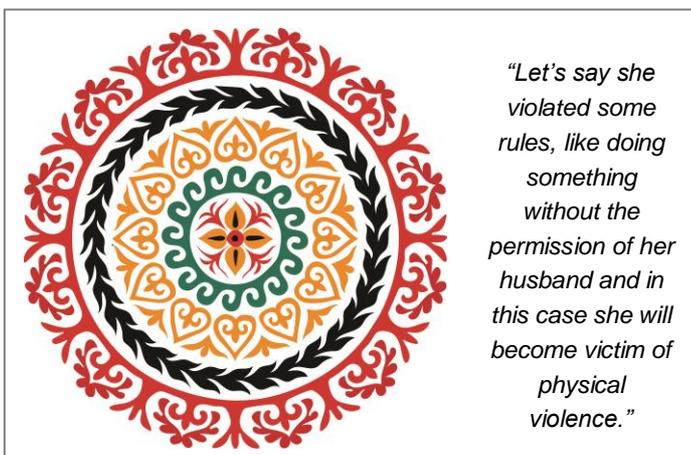
The full report is available here: ['Zindagii Shoista – Living with Dignity'](#)

In **Bangladesh**, [HERrespect](#), developed by Business for Social Responsibility (BSR), uses the workplace as a context for dialogue between men and women to tackle underlying issues that drive VAWG. It provides training to workers and factory managers in the ready-made garment factories to address issues around gender equality in the workplace. HERrespect is being piloted in four garment factories in Bangladesh. In 2017 the programs will be expanded to India, where a toolkit will be published to help factories understand the benefits and methodology of HERrespect.

The program aims to reduce violence against women and promote more gender equitable attitudes and relationships amongst women and men by: training middle management and female and male workers on gender awareness and interpersonal skills to prevent and address sexual harassment and intimate partner violence. To date, HERrespect has seen men and women challenging assumptions and beliefs about gender in the workplace and in the community more widely.

Component 2: Conflict and Crises.

In **South Sudan**, a household survey was conducted with approximately 1800 women and 500 men to understand national prevalence, patterns, and forms of VAWG. Data collection began in the study's three research sites of Juba town in May 2016. Following a suspension of the research between July and October due to renewed fighting between the government and opposition forces, the teams were able to complete data collection in December 2016. The research team is now analysing data and planning research products and launch events for mid-to-late 2017.



Source: Zindagii Shoista: Living With Dignity, report of the formative research phase



Source: HERrespect participants in Bangladesh. Photo credit: Leane Ramsoomar-Hariparsaad (PhD)

DFID-Funded Research

In **Kenya**, quantitative data collection in two refugee camps in Dadaab ended in November 2016 as planned. Over 400 women accessing IRC and CARE VAWG case management services in the camps were interviewed over a 9-month period and at different intervals throughout the case management cycle, in order to evaluate a case management model where tasks are delegated to refugee community workers. Qualitative data collection was completed in mid-February 2017. Plans are being developed for launch events for the final research reports in late 2017/early 2018.

Component 2 has been featured on the IRC's Women's Protection and Empowerment [podcast](#), *Giving space to talking about women and girls in humanitarian settings*, launched in January 2017. This episode provides an introduction on the global *What Works* programme, a snapshot of Component 2's progress to date, and exciting plans for year three of implementation.

COMPASS

DFID's COMPASS (Creating Opportunities through Mentoring, Parental Involvement and Safe Spaces) programme has published two academic articles over the last quarter.

The effect of gender norms on the association between violence and hope among girls in the DRC (Jan 2017) This study examines the relationship between gender norms, girls' increased risk of experiencing violence in humanitarian contexts,

and their levels of hope for the future. Using the Children's Hope Scale, the authors conduct an analysis of cross-sectional data from girls aged 10 to 14 in South Kivu, DRC, to assess the impact of different forms of violence on hope levels.

The study finds that girls age 10–14 are particularly vulnerable to violence, with nearly 1 in 4 girls reporting sexual violence victimization in the last 12 months. Experiences of violence are associated with lowered hope among these girls. Findings support the need for programming aimed at increasing the resilience of younger adolescent girls who have experienced sexual violence in humanitarian contexts. Exploring whether such programmes have the secondary impact of reducing stigma and improving hope amongst adolescent girls who experience sexual violence is recommended for future study.

Using Audio-Computer Assisted Self-Interview (ACASI) among adolescent girls in humanitarian settings (Jan 2017) ACASI is a method of data collection in which participants listen to pre-recorded questions through headphones and respond to questions by selecting their answers on a touch screen or keypad, and is seen as advantageous for gathering data on sensitive topics.

The paper explores the feasibility of using ACASI with adolescent girls in two humanitarian settings: communities in eastern DRC, and refugee camps along the Sudan-

Ethiopia border. Nearly 90% of girls in the DRC, and 75% in Ethiopia, felt the questions were easy to understand.

Level of education, but not age, was associated with understanding of the survey in both countries. Overall, the authors assess ACASI to be feasible and acceptable to participants and data collection teams in two diverse humanitarian settings.

Below is an example of the interface of ACASI screen for the girls' questionnaire



Source: Falb et al (2017) 'Implementation of Audio-Computer Assisted Self-Interview (ACASI) among adolescent girls in humanitarian settings: feasibility, acceptability, and lessons learned', *Conflict and Health* January 2017