

Evidence Digest

Issue 14 January 2018

Latest evidence

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

ADOLESCENCE AND VAWG

[Preventing VAWG victimisation in adolescent girls](#) (November 2017)

This systematic review of reviews synthesises evidence on the impact of interventions to prevent violence against adolescent girls and young women aged 10–24 years. It finds that violence against adolescent girls is understudied, with most research looking only at the impact on one form of violence. Interventions that show promise in addressing violence amongst adolescent girls include community engagement, skill-building to enhance voice/agency, and social-network expansion.

The findings highlight the need for future interventions to target poly-victimization (experiencing different types of violence), compare impacts across adolescence, and include a focus on groups of adolescents that may be more vulnerable to violence, such as urban, out-of-school, married, and displaced and conflict-affected girls.

[Ending violence in childhood](#)

(October 2017) This report from the Know Violence in Childhood Initiative documents the nature and scale of different forms of violence experienced by children. In 2015, 3 in 4 children worldwide had experienced some form of violence. Adolescent girls were found to be most at risk of

sexual violence, with an estimated 18 million adolescent girls aged 15–19 who had ever experienced sexual abuse and 55 million adolescent girls in the same age-group who had experienced physical violence since age 15.

Three main approaches are proposed to prevent childhood violence: enhance capacities of caregivers and children; eliminate the root causes of violence; and embed violence prevention in institutions and services.

Selected research papers from the Know Violence working group are also available in a [special issue](#) of the Journal of Psychology, Health and Medicine

CHILD MARRIAGE

[Drivers of child marriage in sub-Saharan Africa](#) (September 2017)

This report presents synthesis findings of child marriage research across four countries (Kenya, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia). It finds that in contrast to South Asia, in sub-Saharan Africa sexual relations, unplanned pregnancy, and school dropout often precede child marriage and most girls in the study contexts had greater autonomy in partner choice selection. The research also highlights the greater risk of VAWG for girls affected by child marriage.

Photo credit: Sam Underwood for IRC, 2017



Latest evidence

It suggests that improving gender equitable norms and providing more opportunities for education and employment for girls are likely to improve child marriage outcomes. Comprehensive sexuality education and youth-friendly reproductive health services can also help reduce early pregnancy, another contributing factor to child marriage in the region.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Predictors of interpersonal violence in households in humanitarian settings (November 2017) This first known systematic review of predictors of household violence in humanitarian settings was undertaken through the Transforming Households: Reducing Incidents of Violence in Emergencies - **THRIVE project**.

It draws attention to factors associated with violence against both women (VAW) and children (VAC). Risk factors include conflict exposure, alcohol and drug use, income/economic status, mental health/coping strategies, and limited social support.

The findings suggest that programmers and policy makers should address the shared predictors for VAC and VAW to interrupt the cycle of violence across the life course. Integrated violence prevention and response strategies should be implemented.

Further research, especially longitudinal research and experimental designs, is also recommended to better understand the predictors and the effectiveness of programmes to address these.

ECONOMIC DRIVERS OF VAW

The cost of marital violence in the Arab region (October 2017) This study presents an economic model to measure the costs of intimate partner violence in the Arab region. The suggested model includes estimating household costs associated with violence, community level costs of service provision, and costs related to women's loss of productivity in the labour market.

The study recommends that more awareness is needed of the importance of costing studies on VAW, with a particular focus on marital violence. It also suggests that Arab states should invest in a survey on marital violence and its economic impacts or enhance capacity of national statistics offices to integrate violence questions into surveys to better supporting costing estimates.

MODERN SLAVERY

Links between human trafficking, sexual violence and terrorism (October 2017) This study used academic and grey literature as well as other open source material to explore the overlaps between human trafficking, sexual violence and terrorism.

Key findings include the plethora of benefits that modern slavery presents to terrorist groups by attracting, retaining, mobilising and rewarding fighters and the clear links between terrorists, criminals, and traffickers. While terrorists seem to commit sexual violence for ideological reasons, ransom payments and trafficking indicate that this may also be an important source of revenue.

A key gap identified by the report is the unexplored links between domestic abuse and the overlap with

terrorism, with several of the Islamic State associated attackers in Europe and the United States having a history of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Recommendations include broader interpretations of the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the Terrorism Act of 2006 and the creation of an International Legal Task Force to gather evidence on sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism.

CONFLICT SETTINGS

Sexual violence against men and boys in the Syria crisis (December 2017) Qualitative research with 196 refugees found that sexual violence was far more common than previously thought and perpetrated by multiple parties during the Syria crisis.

Boys and men from the age of 10 up to 80 were targeted, with gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals at particular risk. Sexual violence against men and boys is perpetrated by both armed groups within Syria but also other Syrian refugees and men from the host community.

Barriers to service delivery include strong social stigmatisation against male survivors and LGBTI persons, absence of effective identification mechanisms and lack of awareness and dismissive attitudes among some humanitarian staff.

Recommendations include the need for stronger prevention strategies to address both sexual violence against men and boys and women and girls, better confidentiality arrangements, protection against reprisals, improved survivor care, and strengthened awareness among humanitarian agencies and staff.

Policy and news

The UK has launched its new [National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security](#), centred around seven strategic outcomes, including Gender-Based Violence. The NAP runs for five years until 2022.

WHO has released [Violence Info](#), a global platform for preventing violence. It collates scientific findings about the prevalence, consequences, causes and prevention of various forms of violence.

A new campaign called [Justice Now](#) was launched by UN Women and Justice Rapid Response. The campaign aims to end impunity for sexual and gender-based violence as international crimes.

UNICEF has launched a new campaign on violence against children and adolescents in familiar environments. This follows the publication of a new report called [A Familiar Face](#), which found that children experience violence across all stages of childhood, in diverse settings, and often at the hands of the trusted individuals.

WHO has published two new guides to strengthen health responses to VAWG survivors. The first manual focuses on [strengthening health systems to better respond to women survivors of violence](#). A second manual was also published to strengthen [clinical care for children and adolescents who have been sexually abused](#).

Somaliland [passed a historic law](#) in August to outlaw rape. Previously, a victim's family could force the survivor to marry their rapist; under the new law convicted rapists could face lengthy prison sentences.

UNFPA has launched a new free online course on [managing gender-based violence programmes in emergencies](#). The course is aimed at both GBV specialists and humanitarian or development practitioners.

PLOS Medicine has published a new collection on [Human Trafficking, Exploitation and Health](#) to examine this global crisis. The collection offers evidence and expert commentary to urge health professionals to treat trafficking as a global health determinant.

In October, the Government of Senegal hosted the [High-Level Meeting on Ending Child Marriage](#) attended by representatives from 26 countries across West and Central Africa as well as civil society. The meeting closed with commitments including setting up national action plans, committing financial resources and involving to end child marriage.

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:

- Child, early and forced marriage in emergencies
- Zambia VAWG mapping
- Costing of GBV services
- VAWG data trends in Africa
- VAWG in MENA and links to conflict, security and stability
- Beneficiary feedback
- Guidance on Gender-based Violence Programming in Humanitarian Emergencies (GBVIE)

Want to know more about how we can help you with research or advice?

VAWG Contact

Telephone
+44 (0) 0203 735 6922

Email
enquiries@VAWGHelpdesk.org.uk

Contributors

Dr Erika McAslan Fraser, Ann Kangas, Jenny Holden (SDDirect)

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](#):

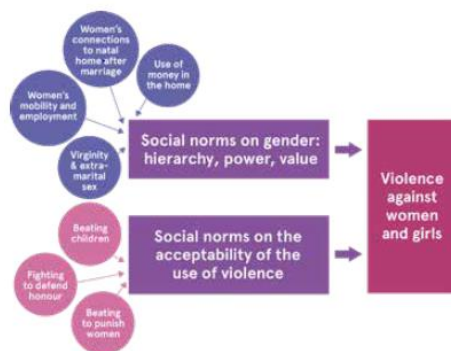
Component 1: What Works to Prevent Violence: A Global Programme.

[Evidence review on social norms and VAWG](#) (September 2017)

This evidence review provides an overview of social norms and VAWG, highlighting lessons learned from What Works around social norms on gender, the impact of norms on violence, links between norms and attitudes, and what works to shift norms.

The evidence brief presents findings from the DRC suggesting women's active participation in community groups may offer a protective factor against experiencing VAWG; evidence from programme baselines in Afghanistan and Pakistan highlighting the influence of social norms on violence; and evidence from South Africa and Tajikistan highlighting differences between individual attitudes and perceived community values.

Figure 1: Social norms and violence against women and girls



[What Works learning event](#)

(December 2017) As part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign, What Works hosted a public learning event in London. A recording of the event can be found [here](#) with links to the presentations available [here](#).

[Children's experience of and perpetration of violence in Afghanistan](#) (November, 2017)

This baseline report and accompanying [policy brief](#) present findings from the evaluation of a peace education and prevention of violence intervention implemented by Help the Afghan Children (HTAC) in Jawzjan province, Afghanistan. The methodology included a survey of 770 students and 400 teachers in 11 schools where HTAC is implementing its peace education curriculum which aims to prevent violence perpetrated against and between children.

The report highlights high levels of corporate punishment with 44% of boys and 35% of girls respectively having experienced some form of punishment (including being hit with a stick, beaten or having their ears twisted) from teachers in the past month. Over a third of teachers (35%) reported using corporal punishment in the past month, with less experienced teachers and those with negative classroom and school behaviours more likely to use corporal punishment with students.

The report also found high rates of violence between children, with half of all boys (50%) and almost half of all girls (43%) reporting having

experienced peer violence in the previous month.

Children are more likely to perpetrate violence against other children if they have observed or experienced family violence or corporal punishment at school.

The report's findings highlight how school-based interventions to prevent peer violence must also target violence at the household and community levels in order to shift broader violence-supportive norms and practices.

Component 2: What Works to Prevent Violence: VAWG in conflict and humanitarian crises

['No Safe Place' VAWG in conflict affected areas of South Sudan](#)

(November 2017) Up to 65% of women and girls surveyed in a recent study in South Sudan reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime – double the global average. The most common form of violence reported was abuse within the home, committed by husbands or partners. In addition, up to 1 in 3 respondents (33%) had experienced sexual violence from a non-partner, with 60% experiencing it before the age of 19. This suggests the critical importance of programmes to meet the specific GBV-related needs of adolescent girls. The report emphasises the urgent necessity for humanitarian efforts to not only provide direct services for victims but also address the root causes of domestic and community-level violence to ensure prevention and empowerment efforts address attitudes that perpetuate GBV.

DFID-Funded Research

COMPASS

DFID's COMPASS (Creating Opportunities through Mentoring, Parental Involvement and Safe Spaces) programme has published the following report from its work with adolescent girls living in camps on the Sudan/Ethiopia border, conflict-affected communities in eastern DRC, and displaced populations in north-west Pakistan.

'A safe place to shine' creating opportunities and raising voices of adolescent girls in humanitarian settings (October 2017)

This report by the IRC and Columbia University shares learning from the implementation and evaluation of COMPASS across locations in Ethiopia, DRC and Pakistan.

The key findings highlight how adolescent girls living in humanitarian settings experience high levels of physical, emotional and sexual abuse

at the hands of their partners or family members. More than half surveyed in DRC (61%) and Ethiopia (52%) reported physical, sexual, or emotional violence in the past 12 months, with girls as young as 10 reporting to have experienced violence, overwhelmingly by people they know. In addition, around 1 in 5 girls across the three countries had experienced early marriage, or were living with a man as if married.

The findings demonstrate how gender inequality and rigid gender norms lead to high levels of acceptance of gender-based violence and low expectations for their future among adolescent girls.

The majority of girls in Ethiopia (71%) and DRC (81%) agreed that it is acceptable for a man to hit his wife in certain circumstances. In DRC, 95% of girls agreed that a woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together.

Adolescent girls and their parents had limited knowledge of professional services to help GBV survivors in all three countries. In Ethiopia, only 1 in 4 girls knew a place they could go to for help if they experienced sexual violence.

The evaluation found evidence of programme impact on girls' social networks and expectations for their futures. However, there is limited evidence of the impact of COMPASS on girls' safety outside the safe space, and the research found no evidence of impact on gender inequitable attitudes.

GAGE

The Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) research and evaluation programme has produced the following new evidence.

New report highlights lack of data on VAAG in Jordan (October, 2017)

This situation analysis brings together the limited evidence base regarding adolescent girls living in Jordan. The report highlights a significant gap in the evidence base on violence against adolescent girls (VAAG) in Jordan, with very little data is disaggregated by age. The lack of research on VAAG is compounded by norms around the unacceptability of women and girls discussing violence.

Image from IRC, 2017. Photo Credit: Meredith Hutchison



Girls play together in Tongo refugee camp. Helping girls to make friends was a key impact of COMPASS, and was often described by girls as a highlight of the programme.