Evidence-based intervention on prevention of violence against women and girls in rural Tajikistan

Zindagii Shoista
Living with Dignity
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www.whatworks.co.za

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The level of depression and suicidality is high among women and men.

The ‘Zindagii Shoista’ project baseline findings from August 2016:

- Around 60% of women experience sexual, physical, and emotional violence.
- Key drivers are unequitable gender norms, social pressure, poverty, food insecurity, mental health issues, alcohol, and substance abuse.
- The frequency of violence experience is extremely high in the age group of the 18-24 with each woman reporting having experienced violence in the past 12 months.
- The level of depression and suicidality is high among women and men.

*One third to half of all women in Tajikistan are regularly subjected to different types of violence by husband and in-laws (Amnesty International, 2009)
The Zindagii Shoista: Implementation cycle
Reduction of violence through improvement of communication, listening and reflection skills

Building knowledge on needs of individual family members, addressing questions of gender, relationships, family, violence and health

Building an understanding of Tajik women’s contribution to household economy

Strengthening financial management skills within households through better understanding of budgeting, spending and saving

Promoting harmonious family relationships through discussion and reflection

Livelihood strengthening component

Engagement of two family members from each target family with a special focus on young women

Improving household economies through assisting families in generating income from activities

10 sessions, once per week for 3 hours, each building on previous session. Joint sessions and separate sessions for young men, young women, old men, old women

10 sessions, once per week for 3 hours with the involvement of two family members.
Grants were distributed through inputs (such as construction materials for greenhouse, animals such a cow and hens, equipment and tools for bakery, sewing machines, etc.), not cash;

Target families were involved through cost-sharing approach;
Pre-intervention 9 months 15 months

Conducted in 4 villages with 80 families

236 participants (134 women and 102 men)
242 participants (153 women and 89 men)
246 participants (156 women and 93 men);

Qualitative ad quantitative methods were used, including survey, in-depth interviews, FGDs with women and men, FGDs with local facilitators throughout the three evaluation phases

*Researchers and numerators were selected and trained with consideration of the local context, sensitivity of the issue, culture and language
The research found statistically significant reduction of violence experience by half and perpetration nine fold.

All measures of having stronger and more equitable relationships in the family improved for women, including relationship with their husband and mother-in-law.
The research founded:
- The number of women reporting earnings quadrupled
- The number of women reporting savings increased 8 times

Essential improvement of mental health and reduction of suicidality among men and women
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IS PREVENTABLE!

Feasibility and effectiveness of the intervention makes it optimal for scale up within similar contexts.

Violence against women can be only tackled if holistic collaboration with the involvement of all stakeholders is in place.

Strong research based evaluation is crucial to track changes in norms and behaviour.
Testimonies of participants

“I wish this program was running back during the times when I used to live with my mother in law, maybe I and my husband would have not divorced”

Woman participant, 33 years old

“When I was asked to read or write something during the project sessions, I would be ashamed and upset. My husband started helping me. He started reading to me and now we read together. I also did not know how to sign, I did not even had a signature, maybe because I was never asked to sign something. Now, I have a signature. Me and my husband worked on different versions of signature for me and I have my own signature now”

Woman participant, 36 years old

“The sessions on violence were very interesting. Before, when my son would make a mistake, I would start shouting at him. Now I do it differently, I try to explain him my concerns and we discuss things together”.

Woman participant, 40 years old
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