

December 2019



What Works

TO PREVENT VIOLENCE

LATEST EVIDENCE

After six years of rigorous implementation and evaluation, the global What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls programme is drawing to a close.

The programme has produced a wealth of resources (peer reviewed publications, reports and briefs) which can be found on the website at www.whatworks.co.za. We will be publishing one more newsletter in March 2020 to coincide with a series of end line events and to launch the programme's two flagship synthesis reports. Please continue to stay updated on our work, and schedule of events, via the *What Works* website and social media channels.

What Works II will also be launching in mid-2020.

This £67.5m seven-year programme will work across Africa, Asia and the Middle East and North Africa to:

- Systematically design, implement and rigorously evaluate a range of approaches to scaling up violence prevention efforts, translating proof-of-concept evidence into robust, large-scale programmes;
- Design, pilot and test new theory-driven violence prevention approaches (innovation);
- Strengthen long-term capability to deliver cutting-edge violence prevention programmes; and
- Use evidence to influence a more effective global response to end VAWG.

For further details on the procurement, please register for the DFID portal at: <https://dfid.proactisportal.com/Account/Login> (reference PROJ10068)

Conceptions and experiences of emotional intimate partner violence in Rwanda and South Africa
Erin Stern, Andrew Gibbs, Samantha Willan, Kristin Dunkle, Rachel Jewkes

Emotional intimate partner violence (IPV) is extremely common and has significant health and social consequences, yet typically receives much less attention in research and programming than physical and sexual IPV. This paper draws on qualitative evaluation data from two IPV prevention programmes in Rwanda and South Africa, conducted as part of *What Works*. In both settings, women described similar types of emotional IPV - public humiliation, control of mobility, control of access to housing and silencing. The specific acts of violence manifested in different ways, depending on local norms and social structures of relationships, but were underpinned by similar patterns of gender inequalities. The authors recommend that future research and prevention programming include a greater focus on understanding the context-specific manifestations of emotional IPV. Read the full peer review journal article [here](#).



Photo: What Works

The What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls Programme (WW) is a flagship programme from the UK Department for International Development, which has invested an unprecedented £25 million over five years to the prevention of violence against women and girls. It has supported primary prevention efforts across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East that seek to understand and address the underlying causes of violence, and to stop it from occurring. To learn more about WW visit our website www.whatworks.co.za or contact us at whatworks@mrc.ac.za

LATEST EVIDENCE

Community activism approaches to shift harmful gender attitudes, roles and social norms

Rachel Jewkes, Erin Stern, Leane Ramsoomar

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is driven in part by gender attitudes, norms on gender inequality and the acceptability of violence, which are socially reproduced and shared. Women's rights organizations across the global south have been at the forefront of challenging these. Early evaluations of work they have championed has shown that sufficiently equipped community volunteers, guided in a long-term structured programme, can enable widespread discussion of new ideas on gender and VAWG and ultimately achieve changes in harmful attitudes and norms across communities. This *What Works* evidence review unveils new evidence on the effect of these interventions in a range of settings – from rural areas and small towns of the Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ghana, Rwanda, Nepal, to urban informal settlements in South Africa. Rigorous evaluations have shown the potential for preventing VAWG through multi-year, intensive change interventions with well-trained and supported community action teams, that purposefully engage both women and men to effect change. Read the full evidence review [here](#).

Associations between alcohol, poor mental health and Intimate Partner Violence: What Works Evidence Review

Globally, activists and researchers have pointed to the contribution of harmful alcohol and substance use conditions to the occurrence and severity of intimate partner violence (IPV). To date, there has been limited evidence about whether interventions to prevent harmful alcohol use and treat common mental health problems have an impact on IPV outcomes, and whether gender-transformative interventions that seek to prevent IPV can reduce harmful alcohol use and improve mental health. *What Works* has generated new evidence on these associations from evaluations of VAWG prevention interventions in a range of settings in the global South, including peri-urban Zambia, rural Rwanda and Ghana, and urban informal settlements in South Africa, with promising findings for VAWG prevention. Read the full evidence review [here](#).

Depressive symptoms among women in Raqqa Governorate, Syria: associations with intimate partner violence, food insecurity, and perceived needs ***Kathryn Falb, Alexandra Blackwell, Julianne Stennes, M. Hussein, Jeannie Annan***

As part of *What Works*, the International Rescue Committee conducted an evaluation of a cash assistance programme in Raqqa Governorate, Syria, targeted toward vulnerable households. Raqqa has recently been affected by overlapping conflicts related to the Syrian Civil war and occupation by ISIS, resulting in widespread displacement and disruption of economic livelihoods. However, little information is currently available about mental health needs and risk factors for depression among these women. This study sought to examine potential risk factors for depressive symptoms

among married women living in northern Syria, and its associations with intimate partner violence. Study findings point to the need to address the mental health needs of women in conflict-affected areas of Syria. One-third of those women surveyed had experienced IPV, the most common form of IPV was emotional IPV, followed by sexual IPV and physical IPV. Programming to address risk factors for depression, including IPV and other factors associated with daily stressors such as food insecurity and deprivation of basic needs, may be effective in reducing depression in this population. Read the full peer review journal article [here](#).

Research to Action Toolkit: VAWG in Conflict and Humanitarian Settings

In order to bridge the gap between research and action, the Global Women's Institute (GWI) has developed this new toolkit to support non-academic stakeholders to understand and interpret the data gathered through population-based research on VAWG and to create a process for moving from evidence to implementing action. The Research to Action tool provides a step-by-step process for practitioners and policymakers to better understand and utilise data generated by VAWG research activities. Access the toolkit [here](#).

What works to prevent violence against women and girls in conflict and humanitarian crisis: Synthesis Brief

Over the last six years, *What Works* has been conducting research to expand the international community's knowledge around VAWG and the effectiveness of programmes that seek to prevent and respond to this violence. This new brief synthesises the key results of *What Works* studies as well as other findings from contemporaneous research efforts published since 2015. It aims to provide an up-to-date resource for practitioners, policymakers and researchers on the state of evidence on VAWG in conflict and humanitarian settings and makes recommendations for VAWG policy, programming, and future research priorities. Read the full synthesis brief [here](#).

Impact assessment: Rural Response System (RRS) intervention to prevent violence against women and girls in four districts, Central Region of Ghana

This brief presents the evaluation findings of the RRS community mobilisation and social norms change intervention in Ghana, tested under the *What Works* programme. The intervention led to reductions in women's experiences of IPV, including a 55% reduction in sexual partner violence and 50% reduction in physical partner violence. There were also reductions in male partner controlling behaviour and depression among women. The brief concludes that social norm change interventions can be effective in reducing VAWG within programmatic timeframes, but this requires working with the whole community. Read the full evidence brief [here](#).

LATEST EVIDENCE

Effectiveness of a multilevel intervention to reduce violence and increase condom use in intimate partnerships among female sex workers: Cluster randomised controlled trial in Karnataka, India

Prakash Javalkar, Lucy Platt, Ravi Prakasa, Tara S Beattie, Martine Collumbien, Mitzy Gafos, Satyanarayana Ramanaik, Calum Davey, Rachel Jewkes, Charlotte Watts, Parinita Bhattacharjee, Raghavendra Thalinja, Kavitha DL, Shajy Isac, Lori Heise

Samvedana Plus is a multilevel intervention from *What Works* which worked with sex workers, their intimate partners and communities to reduce intimate partner violence (IPV) and to increase condom use within intimate relationships of sex workers in Northern Karnataka, India. Results showed that while the intervention did not have any effect on the reduction of sexual and/or physical IPV or increased condom use, it decreased acceptance of IPV, increased knowledge of self-protection strategies and increased sex worker solidarity. The study notes the methodological challenges around evaluating an intervention with a highly marginalised population, which may have weakened the ability of the trial to measure effectiveness. Further research is needed to develop more accurate and appropriate ways of measuring IPV among sex workers. Read the full peer review journal article [here](#).

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Gendered syndemic of intimate partner violence, alcohol misuse, and HIV risk among peri-urban, heterosexual men in South Africa **Abigail Hatcher, Andrew Gibbs, Ruari-Santiago McBride, Dumisani Rebombo, Mzwakhe Khumalo, Nicola Christofides**

Men whose sexual behaviours place them at risk of HIV often exhibit a cluster of behaviours, including harmful alcohol use and violence against women. Called the Substance Abuse, Violence and AIDS (SAVA) syndemic, this intersecting set of issues among heterosexual men in sub-Saharan Africa is poorly understood. This *What Works* paper reveals the cross-sectional associations between men's use of alcohol, violence, and HIV risk behaviours. Research in an informal, peri-urban settlement near Johannesburg found that men reporting all three SAVA conditions (intimate partner violence, harmful alcohol use, inequitable gender views) had more than 12-fold greater odds of risky sex (for example; inconsistent condom use, one-night stands, transactional sex, sex with a sex worker). The authors find that gender norms predict violence, which in turn predict alcohol misuse, increasing IPV perpetration and risky sex among heterosexual men. Read the full peer review journal article [here](#).

Shifting and transforming gender-inequitable beliefs, behaviours and norms in intimate partnerships: the Indashyikirwa couples programme in Rwanda

Lyndsay McLean, Lori Heise & Erin Stern



Photo: Peter Caton, Care International

This *What Works* paper draws on qualitative research with heterosexual couples who participated in a couples programme in Rwanda called Indashyikirwa. After participating in the Indashyikirwa curriculum, couples reported a moderate, but significant, positive improvement in individual beliefs and behaviours that underpin IPV, as well as improved relationship skills. Men were increasingly engaged in domestic duties and women participated more in household decision-making. The study notes the methodological challenges around evaluating an intervention with a highly marginalised population, which may have weakened the ability of the trial to measure effectiveness.

Intimate partner violence in Nepal: Change Starts at Home study

This brief looks at the Change Starts at Home intervention in Nepal, which aimed to reduce IPV amongst married couples through a combination of radio programming, peer-group meetings, and organised community diffusion activities. Key findings included increased and improved couple communication, decreased frequency of conflicts between couples, and improved gender norms leading to a more equitable division of household labour. The study also reported reduced alcohol consumption for male partners. Although the quantitative survey found no statistically significant changes in physical and sexual IPV, the qualitative research found that participants reported reduced physical and sexual IPV. Read the full evidence brief [here](#).



Photo: Suraj Shakya, VSO

SPOTLIGHT ON

04-05 December 2019 | Regional Conference on Prevention of VAWG in Southern Africa - from evidence to action, Johannesburg, South Africa

The German Federal Ministry of Development and Economic Cooperation (BMZ) through its implementing agency Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) collaborated with *What Works* in hosting a regional conference on prevention of violence against women and girls in Southern Africa. Development Community (SADC) region including Governments and Parliamentarians, SADC Secretariat Gender Unit, INGOs, NGOs and researchers to come together and explore new evidence and learning on what works to prevent violence. Several exciting sessions debated the new evidence and built consensus around priorities for action to prevent VAWG in southern Africa. Discussions focused on how evidence can bridge the gap between legislation, policy and programming, while also reflecting on the important question of how to promote regional coalitions and partnerships. This was an opportunity to share the results from *What Works*. Our team was involved in co-conceptualising the conference and facilitating three sessions on: 1) Contextualization of prevention interventions: adaptation of interventions to different contexts and populations; 2) Economic empowerment combined with gender transformative approaches; and 3) Capacity development for practitioners: effective multi-stakeholder partnerships.



Photo: Rebecca Ladbury

27 November 2019 | Debating the future of global VAWG prevention: Violence is preventable, but what will it take? Webinar

CARE-hosted a webinar to look at the findings from *What Works* with two presentations from world-renowned experts on VAWG prevention; Professor Rachel Jewkes from South Africa Medical Research Council and Dr Mary Ellsberg from Global Women's Institute, George Washington University. The webinar was joined on the day by around 100 participants from at least 20 different countries to hear some of the key findings about what works in VAWG prevention and what the evidence now demonstrates.

21-25 October 2019 | The SVRI Forum 2019 – Time Is Now, Cape Town, South Africa



Photo: Rebecca Ladbury

"Awareness-raising alone doesn't work, it has to be followed up by meaningful engagement", said Professor Rachel Jewkes at the opening plenary of #SVRIForum2019.... *"there is no short-term fix with these interventions to prevent #VAWG, they take a long time and they need to be rigorously tested".*

The *What Works* programme had a significant and influential presence at this year's Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) forum.

- the world's leading research conference on violence against women, which brings together researchers, policymakers, funders and practitioners to design solutions for ending VAWG. Results from 12 countries in Africa and Asia on what works (and doesn't) to prevent violence were unveiled at a packed high-level plenary session, which celebrated the rich body of evidence brought to the field. These results caught the attention of the South African media and overall, there were six interviews on national radio and TV; Professor Rachel Jewkes was interviewed live on SABC Radio and SABC TV evening news and more, Research Uptake Manager Dr Leane Ramsoomar was interviewed on Eye Witness News and eNCA together with other colleagues from the Medical Research Council in South Africa. Dr Nwabisa Shai and Dr Chandre Gould also wrote an opinion piece published on News24.

More recently, *What Works* gave an interview with the Gender-Based Violence Task Force under USAID's Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG). Also, UNDP wrote a blog that showcases how some of the interventions evaluated by WW have been scaled in other contexts.

01 October 2019 | Professor Rachel Jewkes, Director of the What Works programme met Meghan Markle during her royal tour of South Africa



Photo: What Works

The Duchess of Sussex visited Action Aid in Johannesburg on 1st October 2019 to join roundtable discussions on violence against women during her royal tour of South Africa. The discussion included ActionAid's director Nondumiso Nsibandwe, *What Works'* Director Rachel Jewkes of the SA Medical Research Council, Teddy Bear clinic's Elizabeth Steenkamp and Bafana Khumalo of Sonke Gender Justice.

SPOTLIGHT ON

The Duchess said empowering women and girls was important to her, telling reporters: "What's really key is to focus on the work that needs to be done but also how much incredible work is being done, and to be able to be here and support people who are really actively working to champion the right of women and girls."

NEWS

What Works interventions and research have been reported upon and amplified through influential media outlets. This section highlights some of those that have been published this quarter.

December 2019: Interagency Gender Working Group

"Prevention of Violence Is Possible": A Conversation With Rachel Jewkes About What We Have Learned From a Five-Year Research Program Addressing Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls

November 2019: What Works

What Works backs Generation Equality and the UN's theme for 2019 to stand against rape

November 2019: CNN

A post office worker was given three life sentences for raping and murdering a student. Now South African women are saying enough

November 2019: The Guardian

British Government takes global lead on violence against women and girls

October 2019: Daily Maverick

Study shows targeted interventions can reduce gender violence

October 2019: eNCA

Abuse of women and girls is rife in South Africa. But what's the reason behind it?

NEWS

October 2019: SABC News

Effective interventions to prevent gender-based violence: Prof Rachel Jewkes

October 2019: What Works

*Keep up with **What Works** at the 6th SVRI Forum in Cape Town*

October 2019: CNN

Visiting South Africa, a 'really powerful' experience for Meghan, Duchess of Sussex

UPCOMING EVENTS

What Works grantees and partners will be sharing findings at the following events:

08 March 2020 | What Works end line events

The *What Works* programme team, in collaboration with DFID, is planning a series of events in London to mark the end of the global programme in the run up to International Women's Day. These events will aim to build political momentum on addressing VAWG. Updates on the events will be posted on the *What Works* website as scheduling is confirmed. Please keep an eye out for the latest schedules.



Photo: Anisa Sabiri for The Guardian