

# Regional Workshop on Planning and Implementation of Prevalence Surveys on Violence against Women

16-19 July 2019  
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

## Workshop report

### 1. Welcome Remarks

The regional workshop was opened by high-level representatives from the government, donors, and UN in Tanzania to mark the significance of the workshop as a collective effort by relevant partners to address violence against women (VAW) in Tanzania and the East and Southern Africa region at large. The Government of Tanzania, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) in Tanzania, the Embassy of Ireland in Tanzania, and UN Women and WHO in Tanzania reaffirmed their commitment in generating reliable and quality data on VAW to understand its magnitude, causes and consequences in order to inform policies and programmes to address this human rights violation effectively.

UN Women highlighted critical opportunities to build synergies across VAW-related efforts such as the *Spotlight Initiative to End Violence against Women and Girls* funded by the EU, UN Women's Global Flagship Programme *Making Every Woman and Girl Count*, the Global UN Women-WHO Joint Programme *Strengthening Methodologies and Measurement and Building National Capacities for VAW Data* (Global Joint Programme on VAW Data) funded by DFID, and UNFPA's *kNOwVAWdata* Initiative. These initiatives have a strong component to advance gender statistics including VAW data to inform the work on ending violence against women and girls.

### 2. Introduction

Participants shared their expectations for the workshop, which included:

- Deepening understanding of gender-based violence (GBV)- and VAW- related concepts and definitions,
- Enhancing knowledge on conducting surveys to measure VAW,
- Understanding global methodological, ethical and safety standards for VAW surveys,
- Understanding differences between specialized standalone surveys and module-based surveys,
- Understanding VAW through prevalence data and administrative data,
- Budgeting surveys,
- Gaining understanding about qualitative studies on VAW,
- Acquiring tools and resource materials related to VAW surveys,
- Engaging and coordinating relevant actors/stakeholders in survey processes,
- Strategizing results dissemination for data use to inform policy and programming,
- Sharing experiences and lessons learned, and
- Planning a way forward after the workshop.

### 3. Concepts and definitions on VAW

GBV and VAW concepts and definitions, including the different forms and types of VAW, were discussed.

Points of discussion included:

- Some violence acts are sometimes categorized under different forms of violence. For example, sexual harassment and intimidation are sometimes categorized as sexual violence and other times as psychological violence. Controlling of economic resources is sometimes categorized as economic violence and other times as psychological violence. A question was posed regarding how to accurately capture and categorize such violence acts in a survey. It was discussed that survey/research teams need to define what acts of violence are covered under what types and forms of violence when designing the survey and questionnaire and doing the analysis, in line with globally agreed definitions. Statistical definitions of sexual harassment as well as psychological and economic violence are still to be agreed at global level, but work is underway.
- There are two SDG indicators explicitly related to VAW under target 5.2 (on intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence). Other indicators under target 11.7 (on physical and sexual harassment) and targets 16.1 and 16.2 (on homicide, trafficking, sexual violence in childhood and others) are related to violence and call for disaggregation by sex. This calls for Member States to produce reliable and high-quality data on VAW prevalence in order to effectively report on SDG indicators.
- Participants asked a question on collecting data on violence against children (under the age of 15 years old). There are different ethical issues and specific protocols and legal implications to interview girls below 15. However, surveys often ask a question retrospectively about women's experience of sexual violence in childhood.
- Another point raised was around measuring violence that may not be perceived as violence by survivors. It was clarified that standard questionnaires ask about specific acts, to minimize subjective perceptions of what is violence and what is not.

The workshop also highlighted differences between prevalence data, administrative data, and costing data. It is of critical importance to understand their differences in order to understand and report VAW accurately.

Prevalence data was highlighted to be different from administrative data collected from police stations, courts, health centers, or shelters. Prevalence data refers to the proportion of the population (being measured) that is affected by the problem, in this case proportion of women exposed to violence, during a specified period. They are helpful to understand the magnitude of a problem in a given population in a given time. The data collected at police stations or courts represent cases or incidents and provide information about service use, they do not indicate prevalence. Administrative data cannot be used to report on the magnitude of the issue. Prevalence data is collected through population-based surveys, while administrative data is gathered routinely from service providers or agencies responding to VAW. Increasing VAW incidents reported to police does not mean increasing VAW; this could be due to more awareness, or more available and better services.

#### **4. VAW prevalence survey methodologies: specialized/dedicated and module-based surveys**

At the workshop, participants discussed about advantages and drawbacks of specialized stand-alone surveys versus module-based surveys. Specialized surveys are those specifically designed to gather detailed information and insights into VAW, for example surveys using the WHO multi-country study methodology. Module-based surveys are those that include a set of questions or a short module on VAW in large-scale surveys designed to generate information on broader issues, for example the domestic violence module integrated in the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS).

Specialized surveys, if conducted properly, provide the best source of data for estimating the prevalence of VAW and detailed analysis of information (such as on risk and protective factors and consequences).

They also facilitate the highest ethical and safety standards consideration. They furthermore allow to gather more focused attention on the results by policy makers and to engage a broader group of stakeholders, which can help in the uptake and use of data for policy and programming. However, they can be costly, and require specific technical expertise. Module-based surveys, on the other hand, can provide an inexpensive way to obtain reasonable statistics on VAW and monitor trends if these are implemented regularly. But they cannot accommodate the broad range of questions needed to study VAW in all its complexity. The breadth and depth of questions are limited, thereby yielding less information.

Through the extensive discussion, participants understood that selection of methods to study VAW will depend on varied factors including availability of financial and technical resources, political will, and sufficient services for violence survivors.

## **5. Ethical and safety considerations for VAW prevalence surveys**

Participants were reminded of the importance of observing ethical and safety measures, in line with WHO recommendations, when conducting the survey on VAW, to avoid causing harm to the interviewers and the respondents, including putting them at higher risk of violence. Quality of the data also depends heavily on how the ethical and safety standards are observed. There is a need to prepare an ethical and safety protocol which should be approved by the competent authority in the country.

In group work, participants discussed potential risks faced by women when participating in VAW surveys. Points raised included: social stigma on victimization, inadequate assurance of safety and confidentiality, trauma, and inadequate support. The workshop stressed the critical importance of observing the ethical and safety standards throughout the entire survey process; investing resources and time in training interviewers; and ensuring there are referral services available for women participating in the surveys.

Another group discussion focused on potential risks faced by interviewers/researchers. Participants brainstormed issues including intimidation, unwelcoming gestures and tensions from community members, emotional trauma and burn-out. Recommended strategies to deal with these risks include proper planning, adequate training for field workers, sensitization of communities, working with key actors in the implementation of the survey, and ensuring availability of support and services to the field workers.

## **6. Stakeholder engagement**

VAW data cannot be generated without a vision to use the data for addressing the problem. It is unethical to collect data to understand the prevalence, magnitude, and severity of violence faced by women, without commitment and efforts to tackle this violation of women's human rights. The work on VAW data collection, analysis, and dissemination must go beyond the survey stage. It specifically calls for collaboration, coordination, communication, and cooperation amongst all key relevant partners and stakeholders to get involved in the survey process right from the beginning. Additionally, engaging different partners especially women's rights groups is a built-in mechanism to hold the survey process in line with the ethical and safety measures. In the workshop, participants were divided into groups and given different scenarios on stakeholder engagement at the survey planning stage. Participants were tasked to examine roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders such as national statistics offices, national women's machineries, civil society groups, development partners, and academic institutions; their relationships and dynamics; and effective approaches for collaboration and coordination to ensure the production of high-quality data as well as effective use of data.

## **7. Survey planning and implementation**

The workshop discussed the relevance of developing a sound survey protocol with very clear objectives for the survey and an outline of all steps required and roles and responsibilities of all parties involved. The elements and sections of the standard WHO survey questionnaire were discussed and the main considerations for adaptation of the questionnaire (including translation) to respond to the objectives of the survey in each context/country, keeping a balance between adhering to original globally agreed questions for quality and cross-country comparability purposes and having a survey that responds to the specific needs of each country were addressed. The relevance of obtaining informed consent from women interviewed and strategies of obtaining this consent were also discussed. The relevance of training interviewers was stressed repeatedly throughout the workshop, as well as the need to establish mechanisms for quality control.

Regarding budgeting a specialized survey, the participants brainstormed budget items for consideration including:

- Planning workshops/meetings with key partners to define survey objectives, and roles and responsibilities of partners;
- Protocol development;
- Personnel expenses and capacity building;
- Questionnaire design and adaptation;
- Translation;
- Questionnaire testing;
- Logistical arrangement for data collection and field visits;
- Travels and per diem;
- Tablets and material preparation for data collection;
- Training interviewers and field workers;
- Data processing;
- Report preparation;
- Internal consultation meetings and coordination meetings;
- Launch of results;
- Dissemination and communication;
- Documentation of lessons learned; and
- Evaluation of the survey.

In implementing a survey, the disclosure of violence is likely to be affected by several factors including: rapport between the interviewer and interviewee, context in which the questions are asked (e.g. order of questions in the questionnaire, introduction to the questions), characteristics and skills of interviewers, social stigma attached to the subject, the presence of others in the room where the interview takes place, sex of the interviewer, nature of relationship between the respondent and the perpetrator, and the sample size (e.g. burn out of interviewer due to large sample size and few enumerators). Therefore, it is very critical that the survey strictly follows the ethical and safety measures, including thorough training for interviewers to conduct interviews appropriately in line with ethics and safety considerations.

Gender bias leads to a false impression that women and men experience violence the same way. However, surveys show that that assumption is wrong. The severity, frequency and consequences of violence on women is different from that on men. Therefore, there are methods for conducting studies/surveys specifically to understand VAW. The methods have not been validated for surveys on violence against men and boys.

Another important point discussed by the participants was around measuring violence against older women. It was recognized that in many countries data on VAW concerning women above 49 years of age are not available. Since older women may face different forms and types of violence, survey questionnaires and ethical and safety measures may be different from those used with women aged 15 to 49. Efforts are ongoing to develop standards to measure violence against older women.

## **8. Data for policy and programming**

To start off a conversation on how VAW data is used to inform policy and programming, two country examples were showcased. One looked at how Georgia used data from its national study to highlight prevalence of sexual harassment against women in public spaces including the workplace. Through popularizing survey findings, advocacy and communications, and high-level policy dialogues with policy makers and the private sector, the Parliament adopted a bill introducing definition of sexual harassment and its regulation in public spaces and workplace. In Cambodia, data on men's use of violence highlighted grave concerns over young men's participation in gang rape. This data called for better attention on prevention work at the national and sub-national levels. As a result, the second National Action Plan on Ending Violence against Women recognized the issue raised by the survey, and specifically stimulated directives to relevant stakeholders to address this issue through working with young men, young women, and their communities.

Contributions from the participants included:

- Data is powerful for amplifying unheard voices of women who experience violence, including those of most vulnerable and marginalized women. It tells rich stories of women and girls to communities and societies.
- Data is needed to convince and influence policy makers and key stakeholders to take action to better the life of women and girls, and ensure their human rights are promoted and protected. Data for advocacy and lobbying represents an opportunity for evidence-based planning: "if we don't count, you don't count". An example from Rwanda demonstrated that data on VAW highlighting the severity of the issue led to the development and expansion of one-stop centers in the country.
- Data is critical for advocacy particularly for mobilizing resources and calling for collective efforts to address VAW.
- Data and statistics provide a platform for dialogues, coordination, and collaboration across sectors to address the issue, for VAW data demonstrates the interconnectedness of sectoral issues.

The workshop touched upon data literacy so that data can be understood to inform policies and programmes and improve services for survivors. Data can be powerful in revealing the nature, depth, and width of the problem. Sometimes there is deliberate misrepresentation of data because certain people have an agenda that may not be supportive to the efforts to address VAW. VAW data is not generated out of vacuum, and data is not meaningful if they are not used. The work on VAW data collection, analysis, and dissemination must go beyond the survey stage. It has to encompass working with relevant partners and stakeholders to understand data and use them to inform initiatives to address VAW. Data should be easily accessible to users such as policy makers, and those who work to address VAW and gender inequality. It should be easy to use and understand. Various channels for communicating data should be employed for various audiences.

## **9. Documentation of lessons, debriefings, and evaluation of the survey**

Each survey conducted is unique, despite using similar methodologies. This is because each survey is conducted in a specific context/setting. Therefore, each survey process yields interesting and critical lessons learned. Conducting a VAW survey is not a merely technical/statistical exercise. But it is part and parcel of a broader movement to address VAW and to mobilize social change. This is why VAW specialized surveys are different from other surveys. As such, lessons learned for each step are critical in ensuring that the surveys are conducted appropriately in line with the globally agreed standards.

There is documentation of lessons learned from the Pacific and Viet Nam, where survey experience was documented in detail. This can help future surveys to draw experience from to avoid repeating missteps and assure quality.

## **10. WHO updates on VAW-related work**

WHO as a partner agency for the Global Joint Programme on VAW Data took the opportunity to provide updates on the agency's current work under the Joint Programme. They include:

- Global, regional and country VAW prevalence database and estimates,
- Development of standards for the measurement of VAW over 50, and
- Development of standards for the measurement of psychological intimate partner violence in VAW surveys.

WHO also shared the agency's work on (1) evidence-based tools for the health system response to VAW, (2) evaluation of one-stop centers, (3) GBV quality assurance assessment tool for humanitarian settings, and (4) studying interventions to address IPV delivered in antenatal care.

## **11. Participants' feedback**

The workshop received positive feedback from the participants. The overall rating for the workshop is 8 out of 10.

Participants positively highlighted:

- Content of the workshop,
- Clarification of concepts and technical terminologies for VAW surveys,
- Deep dive of technical and practical aspects of VAW surveys,
- Ethical and safety measures,
- Facilitation and training methods,
- Facilitators' practical experience,
- Cross country experience and knowledge sharing,
- Participatory nature of the workshop,
- Structured steps for planning, designing, implementing, and reporting VAW surveys, and
- Critical considerations for VAW surveys.

Regarding aspects for further improvement, participants suggested the following:

- Better time management for session delivery,
- More information, resources, materials, and case studies from the region,
- Inclusion of experts from the region in the facilitation team,
- Better understanding around measuring violence against women older than 50,
- Resource mobilization,

- Calculation of VAW indicators,
- Better understanding on sampling and sample design, and
- More time for country presentation.

## **12. Closing**

The workshop solicited more interest from participants around work related to VAW data. Due to specific focus and objectives of the workshop, there are various areas that the workshop did not cover. Participants raised interest in learning more about the following subjects:

- Qualitative research on VAW,
- Violence against women in politics,
- VAW costing studies,
- Sampling design for VAW quantitative research,
- Measurement and research on femicide or gender-related killings of women,
- Standardized methodologies for violence perception and gender roles surveys,
- Violence against women with disability, and
- Violence against men and boys.

The need to address intersectionality and the principle of leaving no one behind in data collection and research on VAW was also raised numerous times throughout the workshop. However, further guidance and documentation of good practices were identified as gaps to ensure we have a better understanding and knowledge of how different groups of women are experiencing discrimination and violence, in order to design better and more relevant policies and programmes for these groups.

Throughout the workshop, country teams shared with all participants the currently available data and surveys implemented in their country as well as plans for new surveys in the near future. Participants in country groups also worked on very draft country protocols that allowed them to articulate their learning through putting down key issues for consideration when planning, designing, and implementing a VAW specialized surveys in their countries. These country protocols can be initial platforms for relevant national partners to continue conversations on VAW. They can also be used as an advocacy and/or planning tool.

The Global Joint Programme on VAW Data informed the participants about its regional capacity development initiative for the East and Southern Africa Region. The Joint Programme seeks to sustain regional and national capacities to implementing VAW prevalence surveys, and to address the current over-reliance on external expertise. UN Women and WHO will work in close collaboration with selected regional and national organizations and/or consortia to develop a training programme, based on existing programmes from the WHO and the UNFPA kNOWVAW initiative, coupled with technical assistance to survey implementation. The capacity development effort will also seek to establish a network of experts on VAW data to provide the much needed technical assistance to governments and civil society during the entire process of preparing, implementing and disseminating the national VAW surveys.

UN Women, as the managing agent of the Global Joint Programme on VAW Data, acknowledged contributions of many individuals, offices, and partners in organizing and delivering this regional workshop, particularly:

- All participants especially from National Statistics Offices and National Women's Machineries for committed and active participation,
- UNFPA and WHO for partnering in co-delivering the workshop,

- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa for participation,
- UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office for facilitating the organization of the workshop,
- UN Women Country Offices in 9 countries in the East and Southern Africa Region for active engagement,
- UN Women Country Office in Tanzania for hosting the workshop and providing logistical and administrative support, and
- DFID for the financial support.