



WhatWorks

TO PREVENT VIOLENCE

A Global Programme To Prevent  
Violence Against Women and Girls



UKaid

from the British people



# Changing social norms to prevent VAWG: What works and where do we go from here?

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# UK's What Works to Prevent Violence Programme

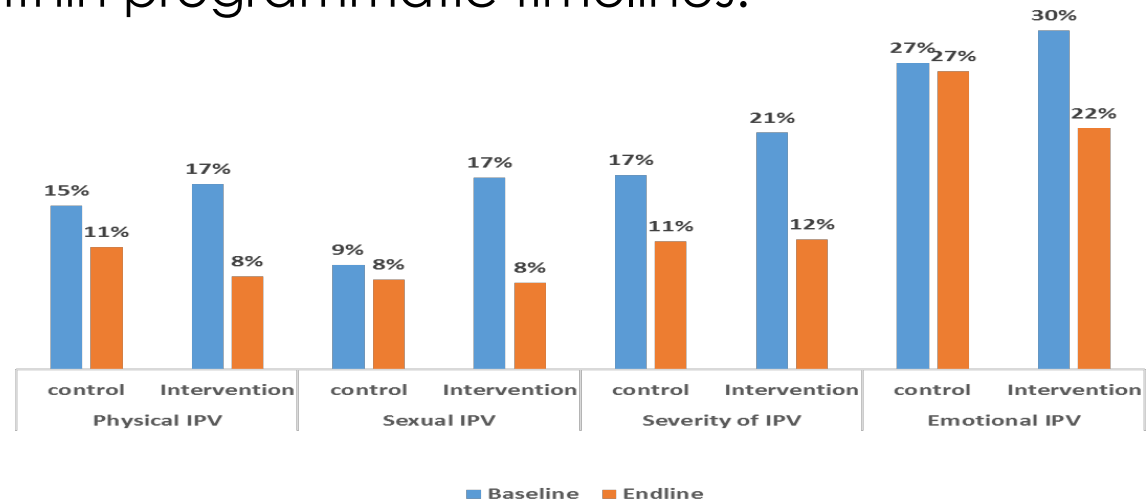
- Rigorous research on prevalence, patterns & drivers of VAWG & effective approaches to prevent it across 16 countries in Africa & Asia.
- 5 evaluations of community activist approaches to change norms by diffusing new ideas on gender & VAWG through communities – in DRC, Ghana, Rwanda, South Africa & Nepal.
  - Provided direct training & support to community members to lead norm change activities.
  - Other common elements included engaging & equipping religious/ community leaders & state actors; and supporting survivors.



# What did we find?

- Social norm change interventions can achieve significant reductions in IPV within programmatic timelines.

In Ghana, women's experience of physical & sexual IPV fell by 50% & 55% respectively



- Some projects positively affected precursors to VAWG, but this did not translate into reduced IPV within the project timeframe.
- Couples work showed promise but was hard to get diffusion of benefits to wider population – need greater intensity/ duration?

# What do we now know? Reasons for optimism

- Community activist approaches to change norms can achieve **significant reductions in VAWG** – up to or over 50% - within programme cycles. Doesn't have to take generations.
- They can impact on an **entire population**.
- They are **cost effective**: WW research found well-established norm change interventions were the most cost-effective approach to prevent VAWG.
- Increasingly **we know how**...the key ingredients of success.
- Powerful for making the **investment case** for norm change work. But this work is hard to do well & we need to learn from what hasn't worked & use this to refine the field...

# Community activism approaches to change norms – what works (and what doesn't)?

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## 1. Duration, coverage, intensity

- Hard to demonstrate population-level impact in less than 3-5 yrs.
- Works best where coverage and exposure is high.
- Light-touch interventions not effective.

## 2. 'Essential elements' of effective approaches

- Interpersonal communication, skills-building and structured participatory approaches that enabled critical reflection, with support for survivors.

## 3. Context & population

- E.g. in SA very high levels of poverty hampered retention and delivery. Less effective for the most violent men whose behavior is less influenced by mainstream norms?
- In Rwanda, formal nature of society may have curtailed opportunities for informal engagement, impacting diffusion.

## 4. Selection, training and supervision of community activists

- Successful interventions had longer training (2-3 weeks) & on-going support, including manuals and materials.

# Some future challenges for the field...

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## Scaling up – how to:

- **Adapt & scale** promising approaches without compromising impact, sustainability or ethics?
- **Maintain intensity** at scale, knowing this is key to success?
- Identify, train & support a **skilled workforce**?
- Take the essential elements & use these to **adapt large-scale sector programmes** to optimise their impact on violence prevention e.g. education, social protection?

## Innovation:

- What different combinations, intensities or duration might work to reduce the remaining violence and move us **closer to zero**?
- Do impacts **endure** over time?
- How to adapt proven VAWG prevention interventions for contexts of **conflict and humanitarian crisis**? Or the most vulnerable population groups?

And **leveraging the evidence we have** to shore up political support, funding and momentum around norm change efforts!