FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON INTERSECTING VIOLENCE

25 JAN 2018: WEBINAR
CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Sophie Namy
Growing evidence highlights high prevalence of ‘overlapping’ violence against women & children, as well as shared risk factors (Alessandra Guedes & al., 2016)

And Yet...
There are very few conceptual models that help us understand how & why VAW & VAC overlap
**INTERSECTIONS STUDY**

- **Quantitative**
  - To what extent does IPV-VAC co-occur in our communities?

- **Qualitative**
  - How & why does intersecting IPV-VAC manifest?

- **Aspirational**
  - What positive dynamics do family members aspire toward?

*Catherine Carlson (University of Alabama) co-PI, Partnership between Raising Voices, Columbia University and Makerere University; Funding from SVRI*
METHODS

- 16 FGDs & 20 IDIs with girls, boys, mothers & fathers (Kampala)
- Participatory techniques (illustrated vignettes) & ‘task-focused’ exercises
- Ethical protocols for researching VAC & VAW closely followed; child protection partner; redirect to positive at the end

n=55 adults & 51 children aged 10 to 15 (data collection Dec 2015)
Patriarchal family structures normalise many forms of violence, to maintain power, enforce norms & express masculinity.

Sometimes it is right [to shout at your wife], because there are times a wife behaves like a young child at home. If you are not tough with her, she might fail to understand. There are things that she does, and you feel that you have to shout at her to put a stop to it... You scare her a little bit... It is appropriate. (mother-IDI)

There are some men who fight with their wives because they are naturally like that. He always wants to fight and he wants to show his authority and power at home. He is so quarrelsome... that man is naturally quarrelsome. (mother-FGD).

KEY LEARNING 1: PATRIARCHY IS A CROSS CUTTING RISK FOR VAW & VAC
KEY LEARNING 2: FOUR PATHWAYS TO IPV-VAC INTERSECTIONS

*Based on disclosure data*
Mothers and children experience psychological effects from witnessing husband/father’s violence perpetration.

When the father turned to the children, the mother cried so much . . . because here [earlier] she had endured the pain from his beating, because she knew that the children were safe. But when he turned to the children, she even put her hands on the head and wailed aloud . . . She was not crying because he had beaten her, but because he was beating her children. (mother-FGD)
Once the children hear your husband shouting at you, they will also start despising you. Like a child can even start telling you that ‘I will report you to Daddy.’ Do you get that? That means that the child despises you, and thinks that you are a nobody who is always shouted at or beaten. (mother-IDI)
Sometimes their mother annoys you. You grab and hold her [in a way that causes pain], and when your child . . . notices she runs to hold you or the mother while at the same time crying, and because of anger you end up kicking that child as well. But it comes out of high anger. The children will always take their mother’s side, because they spend more time together. Generally, it is because of anger that children also are affected by our fights. (father-FGD)
If I am the mother, at times I might have had misunderstandings with the father. By the time [the child] comes back home, I am already angry over what the father has done to me . . . instead of comforting the child, you just start to beat the child, because of the other anger that you still have. (mother-FGD)
• **Patriarchy** sanctions specific roles, responsibilities and hierarchies within the family (privileging adult men) and normalizes violence to enforce norms and express masculinity

• Perpetuates a **vicious cycle**:  
  o More violence in the home  
  o Becomes learned/appropriate behavior (transfer to next generation)  
  o Increases likelihood that one form of violence will trigger the other (4 patterns)
Once we know the cause, we have the solution...

Findings underscore the need to address patriarchal norms & structures within the family. Provides a conceptual basis to extend this feminist paradigm—commonly applied to VAW prevention—to VAC & integrated prevention programs.

Supported by other recent research:
“These findings ... have important implications for violence prevention strategies. [They] suggest that gender inequitable social norms and attitudes, and the normalisation of violence, must be overcome to properly address the cycle of abuse in families. ..
(Emma Fulu et al., 2017)
When designing, implementing & evaluating programs:

1. Holistic engagement (community, family, women-girls-men-boys) that aims for *structural* change

2. Consider intersections-specific patterns in program materials and M&E tools

3. Take care not to infantilize women; distinguish between expectations for agency, power, & relationships at different life phases

4. Situate mothers use of VAC (and attunement/attachment) within a gendered context; e.g., go beyond individual, ‘incident’-level analysis – recognize cycling of violence.

5. Be bold! Take risks & experiment ...
Thank You!
Questions?
Stay in Touch

www.svri.org
www.raisingvoices.org
www.unisa.edu.au

svri@mrc.ac.za
sophie@raisingvoices.org
Fiona.Buchanan@unisa.edu.au

@TheSVRI
@RV_VAC
@UniversitySA