Measuring violence against women
Challenges, tools and methods

Henriette Jansen, UNFPA APRO, Bangkok
Kristin Diemer, University of Melbourne
Cathy Vaughan, University of Melbourne

Session 1
Introduction
• Introductions and expectations
• Objectives
• Pretest
INTRODUCTIONS

• Introduce yourself and share
  – Your name
  – Where you work
  – One key expectation for the workshop

• Questions to get to know the group
• Training/knowledge on gender issues
• Training/knowledge on violence against women
• Experience conducting surveys
• Experience conducting surveys on violence against women
OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

• Understand concepts around violence against women/gender-based violence

• Understand how and why data collection on VAW through surveys is different from most other surveys, in particular understand and apply ethical and safety measures to mitigate risks around data collection on VAW through surveys

• Be able to critically look at the meaning and use of VAW data (e.g. understand challenges of prevalence indicators for measuring change; gender bias, etc.)
PRE-TEST
What does kNOwVAWdata do?

- Technical support to national violence against women prevalence studies
- Development, implementation and roll out of kNOwVAWdata course curriculum on violence against women data collection
- Formation of a network of violence against women data professionals for peer support and mentoring
- Knowledge capture and sharing
- Sustainable way to understand how many women experience violence, in which ways, and where; and the ability to monitor SDG 5
“The kNOwVAWdata course aims to build capacity in Asia and the Pacific so measurement of violence against women is rigorous, ethical, safe and effective in contributing to social change.”
DON’T HESITATE TO REACH OUT!

asiapacific.unfpa.org/knowvawdata

knowvawdata@unfpa.org

@kNOwVAWdata

kNOwVAWdata
We are grateful to our sponsors, partners and collaborators:
Session 2

kNOwVAWdata

Concepts of Gender and Violence
Sex and gender
• **Sex** refers to the biological differences between men and women. They are generally permanent and universal.

• **Gender** refers to the norms, roles and social relations between men and women. It is socially constructed and varies from society to society. Gender roles can be changed.

• **Gender identity**

• **Sexual orientation**
Sex or gender?

1.

Many reports on labour statistics present their data in a [...] - disaggregated way.
Sex or gender?

2.

When completing visa application forms, you have to check a box to indicate your [...] ; marking whether you are a man or a woman.
Sex or gender?

3.

More women are secretary and more men are in the police force. This has to do with their [...] roles in society.
4. There are many “missing girls” in parts of Asia; there are more boys than girls – there is [...] imbalance due to for example selective abortion.
The problem selective abortion is due to the higher value that parents give to boys. This is a result of [...] inequality.
Sex or gender?

6.

Many women breastfeed their babies. The fact that women can breastfeed is a [...]-linked characteristic.
Sex or gender?

7.
In some societies women cannot inherit land. This is a [...] -related issue.
How well did you do? 😊
Terminology:
What is Violence against Women?
Recap of violence against women across the life course

- Older age
- Pre birth
- Infancy
- Childhood
- Reproductive age
- Adolescence

Adapted from Watts and Zimmerman 2002; Shane and Ellsberg 2002
What is violence against women?

“any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life".

(United Nations, 1993)
Types of violence against women

- (Intimate) partner abuse
- Sexual abuse of girls
- Rape, including marital rape
- Dowry related violence
- Female genital mutilation
- Trafficking in women
- Forced prostitution
- Sexual harassment at the workplace
- Child marriage / early marriage
- Violence condoned or carried out by the state (i.e. rape in war)

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1993
Violence against Women

For example:
- Corporal punishment of girl by teacher
- Random interpersonal violence (not related to being a woman)

Gender-based violence

For example:
- Rape by strangers
- Female genital mutilation
- Sexual harassment in workplace

Intimate partner violence against women

For example:
- Sexual abuse of women and girls in the family

Domestic violence

For example:
- Child abuse
- Elder abuse against men

For example:
- Rape of boys
- Violence against LGBTI
Intimate partner violence:

• behavior by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours.”

(United Nations, 2014)
Concept of “intimate partner”

**Definition:** A person with whom a woman maintains, or has had, an intimate relationship, whether formally (marriage), through a cohabitating relationship, or by regular or steady dating. (UN 2014)

**In practice:** current and former husbands, cohabiting partners, fiancés, dating partners etc, whether or not there is or has been a sexual relationship; who can be considered ‘partner’ differs per country.
Common types of partner violence

- Physical violence
- Sexual violence
- Psychological violence
- Economical violence

How to define these types of violence?
Examples of acts of physical violence

- Slapping
- Shaking
- Beating with fist or object
- Strangulation
- Burning
- Kicking
- Threats with knife or gun
Examples of acts of sexual violence

- Forced sexual intercourse
- Coerced sex through threats or intimidation
- Forcing unwanted sexual acts
- Forcing sex in front of others
- Forcing sex with others
Examples of emotional abuse and controlling behaviours

• Emotional abuse:
  – Constant belittling, humiliating
  – Deliberately scaring or intimidating
  – Verbal aggression
  – Threats of violence

• Controlling behaviour
  – Isolation from others
  – Excessive jealousy
  – Monitoring whereabouts and social interactions
  – Control her activities, access to health care, work
Examples of economic abuse

- With-holding funds
- Spending family funds
- Denying participation in financial decision-making
- Deliberately not contributing financially to the family
- Controlling a person's access to employment, etc.
Typical for intimate partner violence:

• Usually a combination of different types of violence, assaultive and coercive behaviours
• Happening systematic, recurrent over time (‘course of conduct’)
• Globally, one-third to one-half of all physically abused women also report sexual violence
• Almost all physically abused women also experience severe emotional abuse
Intimate partner violence: a product of gender subordination

Issues associated with societies with high levels of domestic violence/partner violence:

- norms of male entitlement/ownership of women
- male control of wealth in the family
- notions of masculinity tied to male dominance/honor
- male control of decision making
Cultural differences in the meaning of partner violence:

- In large parts of the developing world, wife beating is seen as a form of “correction” or chastisement
- Beating is acceptable as long as it is for “just cause”
- In some cultures not acceptable for married women to say they want sex
- Acceptability depends on who does what to whom, for what reason
Ecological model for intimate partner violence (IPV)

Societal → Community → Relationship → Individual

Example: Risk factors identified for experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by a husband in past 12 months in Viet Nam

**Society – Community – Relationship – Individual level**

**REGION**
- Red River Delta
- Central Highlands
- Southeast

**RELATIONSHIP**
- Women contributing more than husband
- Having children
- Low assets index

**HE**
- Husband’s young age
- Drinking alcohol
- Fighting with other men
- Extramarital relationships
- Husband’s mother abused
- Husband abused as a child

**SHE**
- Less than higher education
- Sexual violence by others
- First sex forced/coerced
- Mother beaten

Example: Risk factors identified for experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by a husband in past 12 months in Viet Nam.
Sexual violence

• “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting.”

(United Nations, 2016)
Sexual violence (by non-partners)

- Forced you into sexual intercourse when you did not want to, for example by threatening you, holding you down, or putting you in a situation where you could not say no.
- Forced you to have sex when you were too drunk or drugged to refuse.
- Attempted but NOT succeed to force you into sexual intercourse when you did not want to, for example by holding you down or putting you in a situation where you could not say no.
- Touched you sexually against your will. This includes for example touching of breasts or private parts.
- Made you touch their private parts against your will.
• Discuss at your table some of the differences between sexual violence by partners and by people who are not partners.
Session 3

Good practices in ethical and safe survey research on violence against women
Example (country X)

• 2006 VAW survey measuring 11 types of VAW: physical, psychological, rape, forced abortion, forced prostitution, other sexual violence, neglect, forced labour, prevented to work, other economic violence, human trafficking…

• Findings: 3% of women victimized
Issues with this survey

• Questions in survey on another topic
• Use of the word ‘violence’ in the questions
• Women not interviewed in private
• Interviewers were both male and female
• Interviewers were not trained to deal with sensitive issues (safety, confidentiality, support)
A paradigm shift is needed!

- Current ‘players’ often do not realize it is not ‘business as usual’ due to sensitivity of the topic
- Surveys pose safety risks for participants
- Low disclosure-rates underestimate the problem
- Consequences for planning and study design, interviewer training, field processes
Silence and stigma

About half of the women had talked about partner violence for the first time during the interview.

“One of the reasons why I do not share my problems with others is because if he finds out that I’ve been talking about him, he’ll beat me up again.”

(Woman interviewed in Solomon Islands)
Group work

**Group 1.** What are risks for women to participate in violence against women surveys?
List ways to keep them safe and to provide support.

**Group 2.** What are risks for field workers/ researchers to participate in violence against women studies? List some strategies to deal with this.
Putting women’s safety first in violence research

1. Safety of respondents and research team
2. Studies need to be methodologically sound
3. Confidentiality for safety and data quality
4. Selection and training of team members
5. Actions to reducing distress to respondents
6. Possibilities of referral, support mechanisms
7. Proper interpretation and use of study results
8. Violence questions in other surveys
1. Safety of respondents and research team

- Interviews only in a private setting, participant should feel free to reschedule or relocate
- Use a safe name: frame the study not in terms of violence (but further information should be given as part of consent procedure)
- Train interviewers to handle interruptions (e.g. dummy questions, rescheduling)
- Logistics and budget planning should consider safety
2. Studies need to be methodologically sound

- Ethically it is unacceptable to conduct a poorly designed study that cannot address the aims
- Practically too: too low estimates can be used to question the importance of violence
- Avoid loaded terms as abuse, rape, violence
3. Confidentiality for safety and data quality

- No interviewers working in their own community
- Handling of names, informed consent *not* signed by respondent
- Handling of photographs
Publicity
Confidentiality and safety also has implications for sampling!

- Sample size: should results in safely collected and quality data
- Clusters not too close
- Households density not too high (e.g. 1 in 10 urban; 1 in 4 rural)
- Need to take into account training capacity, number of skilled interviewers and team size
- Cluster preferable to be finished in one day
- Workload for interviewers often max 50-100 pp
We met with an angry man who did not want us to interview his wife. We made a plan with the respondent to hide. We met at the sport complex. We finished the interview because the husband did not find us. This is a difficult way to do the work, but we always managed to finish every interview.”

Jansen H.A.F.M. Swimming against the tide. Lessons Learned from Field Research on Violence Against Women in the Solomon Islands and Kiribati. 2010 UNFPA

4. Selection and training of team members

- Sex (only female!), skill, attitude and training of interviewer – recruit more than needed
- In-depth (3-week) training should include introduction on gender and violence
- Training as opportunity for research staff to come to terms with own experiences
- Role of interviewers: Not counselling, not trying to "save" respondents
- Addressing emotional needs of team members
5. Actions to reducing distress to respondents

- Ask all questions in supportive and non-judgemental manner
- Train interviewers to deal with distress
- Train when and how to terminate interview (if woman does not want to continue or if continuing would be detrimental)
- All interviews should end in a positive manner
“When I encounter a case of abuse, sometimes I feel tense and end up stopping the interview to invite the woman to take some water, give her a tissue and at the same time take a sip of water myself to restore my own psychological balance”.

Quantitative interviewer, Viet Nam
6. Possibilities of referral, support mechanisms

• If possible meet prior to field work with potential providers of support
• Develop information sheet and offer to all respondents – either small enough to be hidden or include a range of other services
• Where few resources exist, consider having a trained counsellor or women's advocate accompany the teams
7. Proper interpretation and use of study results

• Research findings should be fed into ongoing advocacy, policy-making and intervention activities

• Involve stakeholders, advocacy and service groups etc from the beginning as part of research team or advisory committee.

• Researchers need to be proactive in ensuring that research findings are interpreted appropriately by public and media
8. Violence questions in other surveys

• Be aware of the challenges of ensuring data quality and ensuring respondent safety
• It makes sense only of research team is willing and able to address basic ethical and methodological guidelines.
Minimum conditions for using a short module

- Measures to protect safety of respondents and interviewers
- Crisis intervention and referrals to specialized services for respondents who need this
- Special training and emotional support and follow-up for interviewers
"Somehow it made me feel good, because it was something that I had never told anyone before. Now I’ve told someone".

--Respondent, Brazil
Interviewing: an exchange of gifts

• Burden and responsibility for having received the untold stories

• Interviewing as an exchange of gifts: involves your heart and emotional response
Interviewer training in Cambodia
Goals of interviewer training

- To increase sensitivity of participants to gender and violence issues;
- Opportunity for team to come to terms with own experiences
- Address emotional needs of team members
- Role of interviewers: Not counselling, not trying to "save" respondents
- To understand the goals of the study/module;
- To learn skills for interviewing, taking into account safety and ethical guidelines;
- To become familiar with the questionnaire / module (and protocol)
Example of training schedule

Week 1
• Sensitization to concepts of gender and violence
• Presentations from advocacy groups/NGOs
• Exposure to support options for women living with violence
• Aim and overview of the study questionnaire
• Interviewing techniques and safety measures
Week 2

• Detailed question by question explanation of questionnaire

• Role-plays on approaching the household and using the complete questionnaire, practice how to respond if interview interrupted or if respondent becomes distressed and other difficult situations
Week 3

• Sampling procedures, including repeated visits to reduce non-response

• Pilot testing of questionnaire/module and all field procedures, including logistics, safety measures, supervisory procedures, debriefing and feedback sessions

• Final adjustments to questionnaire and field procedures
Interviewer training

Use multiple training techniques:
• Group work, brainstorming, presentations, discussion, role plays, games, energizers, film, demonstration, involving others (‘victims’, psychologists/ counsellors)
Exercise – Imagine....
We did not think that such severe forms of violence existed in the community, but we found out that even the killing, raping, everything came out. That was a big surprise for us.”

*Interviewer Cambodia*
Interviewer training: Informed consent

- Informed consent as a process (rather than a formality) during the interview
- Confidentiality of study
- General purpose of study
- Some topics may be difficult to discuss
- Respondent may skip any question or stop the interview at any point
- [Signature of interviewer]
Interviewer training:  
Supporting women reporting violence

• Responding to women becoming distressed
  – Take time to talk with kindness and sensitivity
  – Be patient and composed
  – Sympathetic comments, such as “I know this is difficult”
  – Offer tissue
  – Offer to take a break or finish interview later
Interviewer training:
Supporting women reporting violence

• Handling interruptions
  – Explore ways to obtain privacy
  – Re-schedule remaining section of interview
  – Turn to “dummy” questions
Interviewer training: Supporting women reporting violence

• Only terminate the interview:
  – if woman states that she does not want to continue
  – If you feel that it would be highly detrimental to continue
Interviewer training in Kazakhstan
Support plan for respondents

Group work:
Discuss who in your country will need to be involved to set up a support plan?
Who will be the most likely service providers to give support?
Support for interviewers

• Debriefing sessions with supervisors

• Talk to supervisor or other members of the team

• Ask for counseling
Support for interviewers – give them breaks / time off if needed

Peru
Evidence of importance of training: Special training vs professional interviewers (Serbia, 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Inexperienced, 3 week training</th>
<th>Professional, 1 day training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response rate</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure rate</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent satisfaction – with violence</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent satisfaction – without violence</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“My husband slaps me, has sex with me against my will and I have to conform. Before being interviewed I didn't really think about this. I thought this is only natural. This is the way a husband behaves.”

Woman interviewed in Bangladesh
“... I hardly could pull myself together not to cry. I wanted to get out of the house as soon as possible and cry out loud.... I hardly made it to the car; as soon as I told my whole team they all burst out in tears. The most painful thing for me was not being able to do anything. At the end I thought that this very research is about hope, and I have done my part.”

(interviewer in Turkey)
“Maybe I was mediating by listening to her for half an hour, and it was worth the world when at the end she thanks me and tells me she felt worthy.”

Interviewer in Turkey
“Before doing this work we did not know we have the same rights as men. Now we voice our problems. In the past we whipped our children to teach them. Now we know there are limits.”

Interviewer in Solomon Islands
“As government statistician with lots of experience in many surveys I was convinced this would fail. But to my surprise it was very successful. This was due to the way the interviewers were well trained... The training was very different from other training, also very long....”

Government statistician in Kiribati
“I felt empowered listening to women’s stories…of hardship and violence… Their tears run, and mine run too, and their voices break. But I felt overjoyed seeing women’s faces brighten with relief from sharing the burden of violence and abuse.”

Interviewer Mongolia, 2017
Session 4

Understanding prevalence – data literacy
Sources for data on VAW

• Records from police, courts, hospital, etc

• Population based surveys:
  • Dedicated specialized surveys
  • National crime victimization surveys
  • Demographic and reproductive health surveys
  • Short module added to other surveys
To whom do women talk about physical partner violence?

- **Bangladesh prov**
  - no-one: 60%
  - family: 30%
  - friends, neighbours: 10%
  - services, authorities: 0%

- **Bangladesh Cap**
  - no-one: 60%
  - family: 30%
  - friends, neighbours: 10%
  - services, authorities: 0%

- **Thailand prov**
  - no-one: 60%
  - family: 30%
  - friends, neighbours: 10%
  - services, authorities: 0%

- **Thailand Cap**
  - no-one: 60%
  - family: 30%
  - friends, neighbours: 10%
  - services, authorities: 0%

- **Samoa**
  - no-one: 60%
  - family: 30%
  - friends, neighbours: 10%
  - services, authorities: 0%

- **Japan Yokohama**
  - no-one: 60%
  - family: 30%
  - friends, neighbours: 10%
  - services, authorities: 0%
Admin data on VAW – how well does it represent prevalence in a population? *Traditional representation* [static]

Source: Henriette Jansen
Admin data on VAW – how well does it represent prevalence in a population? Proposed representation

[static]

Source: Henriette Jansen
Why surveys?

• Only source of data that allows you to find out magnitude of problem in the population
UNDERSTANDINGDATA
1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner.
Target 5.2.
Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

Indicators:

• **5.2.1. (“IPV”)** Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner, in the last 12 months, by form of violence and by age group.

• **5.2.2. (“SV”)** Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner, in the last 12 months, by age group and place of occurrence.
Prevalence of VAW: how many people experience it (%)?

Number of (ever-partnered) women subjected to (type of) violence

Total number of (ever-partnered) women

Two time periods:
- Lifetime: did it ever happen?
- Current: did it happen in the last 12 months?

Proportion or percentage of the population of interest
Incidents/frequency of VAW: How often does it happen (per person)?

Number of incidents (number of assaults per inhabitant) in a specific reference period

Two time periods:
- Lifetime: did it ever happen?
- Current: did it happen in the last 12 months?
HOW IS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN MEASURED?

Physical violence
- e.g. slapping, pushing, biting, hair pulling, kicking, throwing things, choking, burning, using or threatening to use a weapon such as a gun or knife

Sexual violence
- e.g. forced/coerced intercourse, intercourse out of fear, degrading or humiliating sex

Psychological violence
- e.g. prevented from seeing friends and/or family, insisting on knowing where she is at all times, verbal insults, making her feel scared or intimidated

5.2.1. Intimate partner violence
WOMEN WHO EXPERIENCE INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE, 2000 - 2019
UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Region
Key messages on prevalence

- Overall prevalence rates hide huge variations
- The variation shows us that violence is not inevitable
- Importance of understanding context and the story that the data tells for effective policy, prevention and response

Challenges:

- Countries without any data, most countries only one data point
- Issues with comparability
- Disaggregation, intersections with disability, poverty, etc.
- Limited capacity
- Prevalence data (surveys) will never capture the most severe
Exercise:. Explain this graph

Prevalence of physical violence by husband, among ever-married women, by age, Viet Nam 2010 (N=4561)
Cambodia DHS
Can we see a trend over time?

Data visualization example 2 (1)
CDHS: Physical and/or sexual partner violence

Data visualization example 2 (2)
CDHS: Ratio past 12 months as proportion of lifetime (physical and/or sexual) violence

Data visualization example 2 (3)
Examples of reporting on VAW
“There is evidence that violence against women is increasing in [country X]:

police reports on sexual violence increased by 155% between 2003 and 2007 and there have been an increasing number of violent deaths of women.”
Was the news correct?

“There is evidence that violence against women is increasing in [country X]:

police reports on sexual violence increased by 155% between 2003 and 2007 and there have been an increasing number of violent deaths of women.”
• **What is wrong?**

• Based on police reporting. Studies show very few women report to the police. Police could have been trained to improve reporting, there have been campaigns around domestic violence. More women reporting, particularly survivors of domestic violence
Example 2:

• “A man is killed every three weeks by an abusive partner. It says that as of August 10 this year 42 women had been killed and 82 men, “all killed violently, many by partners”.

[Aug 2016]

• What is wrong?

Gender bias

• Population based prevalence rates from surveys bias towards a symmetry in the rates women and men are perpetrators or victims of certain forms of domestic violence.

• Service based statistics tend to show that men commit almost all violence and overestimate women as victims of domestic violence.
## Domestic Violence: incidents and gender

\*(Crime Survey England and Wales)\*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Ratio: Women: men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victims</strong></td>
<td>657,000</td>
<td>356,000</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average number incidents per victim</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total incidents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prevalence and incidents

• Prevalence: use of ‘course of conduct’ might mean that a series of 20 incidents may count only as one crime, thereby underestimating the proportion of violent crime that is gender-based violence ➔

• thereby skewing the gender composition towards image of symmetry
Turn your data into a story:

• Simplify (but remain correct)!
• Add a human story to touch hearts (why should they care?)
• Tell a story that is made robust by data
• Educate the public about the evidence behind VAW
• Get public support (call for action!)
Other ways of communicating data: How to visualize amounts?
"When I first started working as a civil servant I experienced work harassment, including being touched on my breast and having men touch other parts of my body."

- Violence against women survivor, Kiribati

73% of women* in Kiribati have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lives, either by an intimate partner or by someone else.

*Women ages 15-49
Data source: Kiribati Family Health and Support Study 2010
"I lost three teeth that day. Luckily I did not lose the baby I was carrying."

- Survivor of violence against women, Tonga

In Tonga

8% of pregnant women* experienced physical violence (like kicking or beating) during a pregnancy

*Of women who have ever been pregnant and have ever been in an intimate partnership | Data source: National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Tonga 2009
Thank you!

photos © Henriette Jansen