

Population Council work on SGBV in Latin America and the Caribbean

Kate Wilson, MPH

Population Council

African Regional Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

Network Partners' Meeting

February 8-10, 2011

Lusaka, Zambia

Overview

- Context of SGBV in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Research and programmatic priorities
- Council strategies
 - Examples from Mexico, Guatemala, Brazil
- Lessons learned
- Next steps

Regional context

- Very diverse region of one half billion people
- 50% of the population in Brazil and Mexico
- About 30% are Afro-Caribbean and 10% indigenous
- Highest wealth disparities in the world
 - Carlos Slim is one of the richest men in world while 33% of people live in poverty and 12% in extreme poverty
- Violence, especially SGBV is common
- Increased regional, national, community-based responses using human rights and gender perspectives
- Ongoing need for evidence-base practices

Context of violence

- Historical trajectory of violence against women, indigenous and rural poor since European conquest
 - *La Malinche*, indigenous martyr and mistress to Cortez
 - US-sponsored right wing dictatorships and death squads suppressed leftist/indigenous/populist movements (1970-90, ongoing)
 - Mexican “drug wars” have killed more than 27,000 people since 2006, rise in civilian deaths
 - Trafficking of women and girls, rapes, femicides
 - Restrictive abortion laws even in cases of rape
 - Patriarchal social norms (*machismo, marianismo*) persist but changing

Existing evidence on SV

- Intimate partner violence is the most common SV, often occurs with physical violence
 - Population-based surveys found 5-47% of women reported ever experiencing forced sex by a partner (Montaño *et al.*, 2007)
 - WHO Multi-country study (Brazil, Peru) found 6-23% of women aged 15-49 reported forced sex by partner in past year
- SV by non-partner also problem but less documented
 - *Forced sexual debut*: A Nicaragua survey found 26% of women reporting sexual abuse before age 19 (Olsson *et al.*, 2006)
 - *Migration violence*: A Mexico-Guatemala border study found 70% of female migrants reporting experiencing violence, 60% of which was SV (Montaño *et al.*, 2007)
 - *Violence in conflict*: vast majority of rapes during armed conflict are committed by paramilitaries/police
- SV against men and boys not well documented but indicate high levels of forced sexual debut or child sexual abuse (5-54%)

Risk/protective factors and consequences

- Good evidence on multi-level risk factors, and multi-dimensional consequences, e.g.
 - Gender norms, Catholic values
 - Government impunity/state-sponsored violence
 - Community-level support (lack of) to get help/denounce
 - Relationship factors, e.g. male jealousy (Haiti, Mexico studies)
 - Individual, e.g. age, marginalization, self-blame
 - Immediate health consequences well studied but less known about long term individual and societal costs of SGBV

Policy and programmatic responses

- First region where all countries ratified CEDAW; Brazil is model
- Most have ratified the *Convention of Belem do Para* (1994) the only treaty explicitly aimed to prevent, punish, and eradicate violence against women
- Most countries have national policies to combat gender discrimination and violence and some have oversight mechanisms
- Growth of prevention initiatives that build SGBV prevention into youth/girl empowerment and human rights promotion
- Survivor responses concentrated in urban centers and focused on immediate health/legal needs; health and justice sector is mixed to weak

Highlights from Council projects in LAC

- Cross-cutting strategies to address causes and consequences of gender inequality to prevent violence, HIV, and unwanted pregnancy
 - from documenting problem to evaluating innovative programs
- Building social assets and skills
- Community-based using local resources and knowledge with national/regional support
- Cascading leadership/peer-education models
- Focus on vulnerable girls and youth

Guatemala Safe Spaces Program

- *Abriendo Oportunidades* (“Creating Opportunities”) for poor indigenous girls aged 8 – 18 years (< 2,000)
- Community-based leadership and social infrastructure for most vulnerable girls
 - Two mentors (aged 15-18) per site lead girls’ clubs, support by local adults/NGOs (19 active, 55 trained)
- National network to link girls club, share lessons
- Health, financial literacy, gender equality
- Platform to training leaders and girls as “social change agents” to prevent SGBV (UN Trust Fund award 2009)

Interim results

Established safe spaces and support structures for girls (e.g. NGOs) at community-level

Leaders

- Increase in education levels: 93% leaders achieved educational goals and 75% found paid work in career area at 6 months

Girls

- Increased knowledge/skills in content areas
- Increased self-confidence, expanded social networks
- More positive views about girls' abilities by families and communities
- Results of SGBV prevention strategy forthcoming

Oaxaca youth leadership program

- Council collaborates with Oaxacan NGO to evaluate *Movil.com* (“mobilizing communities”) indigenous young women and peers
- 12 Leaders are aged 18 -25 participate in monthly week-long trainings in sexual and reproductive rights (SRR), gender equality, and SGBV
- Work with mixed-sex “buddy groups” to do regular community-based awareness activities
- Baseline, midline, and final surveys and interviews with key groups

Movil.com *en accion*



Interim results

- Baseline found that leaders and “buddies” had good basic knowledge of project topics
- Most wanted gender equality but said their communities are still unequal and youth “ignored” by authority figures
- Most thought that violence against women and girls was a problem in their communities
 - Most had witnessed physical violence against a woman
 - About 25% had heard of a case of rape
- Midline results with leaders suggest significant improvements in knowledge of project context and leadership/management skills but all need reinforcing
 - variation in effectiveness of buddy teams

Program H (“Men”) in Brazil

- Instituto Promundo-led intervention to reduce HIV risk behaviors and prevent interpersonal violence by promoting equitable gender norms with men and boys
- Weekly workshops and social marketing on gender norms, HIV/stigma, violence with low-income men/boys in Rio de Janeiro (718 men aged 14 -25)
- Significant increases in gender equitable attitudes among men/boys, reductions in STI symptoms and risk behaviors after intervention
- Replication in several LAC countries, India, Tanzania

Media campaigns in Nicaragua

- Puntos de Encuentro-led a national communication strategy to raise awareness and change gender norms around violence against women
- Weekly soap opera *Sexto Sentido* (“Sixth Sense”) covered sexual health, gender roles, HIV risk; complementary radio shows and educational materials
- Evaluation among 4,800 youth aged 13-24 found that show had positive impact on attitudes about gender roles and violence compared to youth with less or no exposure to show

Lessons learned

- Prevention strategies that address gender norms/stereotypes are important for reducing SGBV
- Reinforcing messages with different approaches is key, e.g. small groups plus media campaigns
- Interventions should be community-based and driven, building existing structures and initiatives
- Strengthen multi-sector responses and integrated interventions for survivors
- More engagement with underserved groups-- men and boys, victims of conflict, migrants
- More impact evaluations to build evidence-base

Thank you



"Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public" — Cornel West

kwilson@popcouncil.org
weisiting@hotmail.com

Selected references

- Contreras, J. M.; Bott, S.; Guedes, A.; Dartnall, E. (2010) Sexual violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: A desk review.
- García-Moreno, C. et al. (2005). WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women: Initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women's Responses. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization.
- Ellsberg, M. (2005). "Sexual violence against women and girls: Recent findings from Latin America and the Caribbean". In: Jejeebhoy, S. J.; Shah, I.; Thapa, S. (Eds.). Sex without consent. Young people in developing countries. London, UK: Zed Books.
- Guedes, A.; Bott S.; Guezmes, A. et al. (2002b). "Gender-based violence, human rights and the health sector: Lessons from Latin America". Health and Human Rights Vol. 6. No. 1. Pp 177-194.
- Jewkes, R. (2002). "Intimate partner violence: Causes and prevention". The Lancet. Vol. 359. Pp. 1423-1429.
- Le Franc, E. et al. (2008). "Interpersonal violence in three Caribbean countries: Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago". Revista Panamericana de Salud Pública. Vol. 24. No. 6. Pp. 409-421
- Montaña, S. (2008). "¡Ni una más! El derecho a vivir una vida libre de violencia en América Latina y el Caribe. Reseña". (In)seguridad y violencia en América Latina: un reto para la democracia. F. Rojas Aravena y M. Mesa (coord.). Pensamiento Iberoamericano No. 2, 2a época. 2008/1. Madrid, España: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID) y Fundación Carolina.
- Olsson, A. et al. (2000). "Sexual abuse during childhood and adolescence among Nicaraguan men and women: A population- based anonymous survey". Child Abuse and Neglect. Vol. 24. No. 12. Pp. 1579-1589.
- Instituto Promundo (Brazil): <http://www.promundo.org.br/en/>
- Puntos de Encuentro (Nicaragua): <http://www.puntos.org.ni/english/>
- El Grupo de Estudios sobre La Mujer Rosario Castellano (Mexico): <http://gesmujer.org/>