

Assessing the effectiveness of the Together to End Violence Against Women programme in reducing intimate partner violence

Gender-based violence is widespread in Tanzania: 44 percent of married women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from partners. To date, research on intimate partner violence has been limited, especially on the effectiveness of prevention efforts that target structural drivers of this type of violence in low- and middle-income countries.

To address this gap, World Education, Inc./Bantwana (WEI/Bantwana) implemented the “Together to End Violence Against Women” (TEVAW) programme. TEVAW aims to improve gender equitable attitudes and decrease tolerance of intimate partner violence among men and women in northern Tanzania.¹

THE INTERVENTION

Researchers and staff from Boston University’s Center for Global Health and Development and WEI/Bantwana conducted a randomised controlled trial to measure the preliminary effectiveness of TEVAW. Nine villages in Karatu District were randomly assigned to one of three study groups (two intervention groups and one comparison group), each comprising 150 women and their co-resident male partners. A total of 450 couples participated in the study. Women in all three groups participated

in savings and lending groups that aimed to increase their economic independence as well as strengthen support networks through savings and credit activities. Women also received training in business skills, financial literacy, and HIV and violence prevention.

In the first intervention group, male partners participated in male peer group workshops exploring gender norms, power dynamics, violence prevention and HIV prevention. In the second intervention group, men participated in male peer groups and community leaders participated in community dialogues that covered similar topics to the male peer groups. In the comparison group, male partners received no intervention.

Data was collected from women and men in all groups through surveys and in-depth interviews, which were conducted before and after the intervention. The survey questions measured gender-equitable attitudes, attitudes towards and experience of intimate partner violence, and experience of childhood trauma. In addition, 50 community leaders were interviewed at the start and end of the intervention.

EVALUATION OF TEVAW’S EFFECTIVENESS Before the intervention

The baseline study² found that:

GRANT DETAILS

PROJECT: A mixed methods study to test the effectiveness of Together to End Violence Against Women: A programme to reduce intimate partner violence through interpersonal and community-level interventions

ORGANISATION: World Education, Inc./Bantwana and Boston University Center for Global Health and Development

PROJECT LOCATION: Karatu District, Tanzania



- Intimate partner violence is widespread and normative. Both men and women in this study had inequitable attitudes regarding gender norms, but in some cases women were more likely than men to agree with or accept gender-inequitable beliefs.



- There are high rates of intimate partner violence: 78 percent of women in the study had experienced some form of violence and 69 percent had experienced violence in the past three months.
- Many women endure intimate partner violence for years.
- Intimate partner violence is significantly associated with younger men and women, and lower educational levels and food shortages among women.
- Intimate partner violence is also significantly associated with men's multiple sex partners, experience of childhood trauma and alcohol use.

Interviews with key community leaders confirmed that intimate partner violence is socially accepted and common in Karatu District. Contributing factors include alcohol use by men and women, economic inequality in couples, multiple sex partners and lack of education. Women often do not report violence because of difficulties reporting to the police, self-blame, stigma and the normative nature of violence in relationships. When they do report violence, their family and community pressure them to reconcile with their partners.

After the intervention

A total of 363 of the 450 couples who participated in TEVAW completed the endline survey. Results³ indicate positive changes in attitudes and lower reporting of violence in the previous three months by both men and women in the intervention groups

compared to those in the comparison group. Specifically, compared to the comparison group:

- Men in the intervention groups were significantly less likely to report that a husband is justified in beating his wife.

KEY FINDINGS

The prevalence of violence decreased and couples identified positive changes in their relationships, such as improved communication and greater equity in making decisions.

- Men in intervention group 2 were less likely to report that they had perpetrated physical violence against their partners in the past three months.
- Men in intervention groups 1 and 2 were more likely to report perpetrating economic violence against their wives in the past three months.
- Women in intervention groups 1 and 2 were less likely to report physical and sexual violence in the previous three months. In contrast, greater proportions of women in the comparison group reported higher levels of physical, emotional and economic violence in the previous three months.
- Women in intervention group 1 were 46 percent less likely to report any form of violence and women in

intervention group 2 were 41 percent less likely to report emotional abuse in the previous three months.

A total of 53 men and 53 women in intervention groups 1 and 2 completed open-ended questions at the end of the survey. Their responses indicated a reduction in violence and positive changes in their relationships, including improved communication and greater equity in making decisions.

A PROMISING START

Intimate partner violence is widespread and normative in Karatu District, Tanzania. Male peer groups and community dialogues appear promising in reducing men's physical, sexual and emotional violence against women by targeting attitudes, behaviours and social norms, and increasing awareness among men and in communities about the negative consequences of intimate partner violence. While this pilot study demonstrated trends in a positive direction, further research is needed to detect statistically significant changes in attitudes and behaviour.

THE STUDY'S VALUE

- Community leaders and study participants requested that the interventions be continued and expanded.
- This research can be used to inform the Tanzanian government's draft five-year National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children.
- WEI/Bantwana and Boston University have developed guidelines for facilitators, including a guide on community dialogues on gender-based violence and one on male peer groups.

¹World Education, Inc./Bantwana & Boston University. 2017. *What can be done to prevent intimate partner violence?* Available: http://www.svri.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2017-05-16/TEVAW_RESEARCH_BRIEF_2%20%281%29.pdf [2017, May 30].

²Messersmith, L.J., Halim, N., Kawemama, P., Steven, E. & Reich, N. 2016. A mixed methods study to test the preliminary effect of World Education's Together to End Violence Against Women (TEVAW), a program to address intimate partner violence in northern Tanzania: Baseline report. Available: <http://www.svri.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2016-08-22/TEVAW%20Baseline%20Report%20final.pdf> [2017, May 26].

³Messersmith, L.J., Halim, N., Kawemama, P., Steven, E. & Reich, N. 2017. A mixed methods study to test the preliminary effect of World Education's Together to End Violence Against Women (TEVAW), a program to address intimate partner violence in northern Tanzania: Final report. Available: http://www.svri.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2017-05-15/WEI-B-U-SVRI_TEVAW%20Endline%20Report_FINAL_4.12.17%20%288%29.pdf [2017, May 26].

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