

Evaluating interventions to end VAW: Challenges and opportunities

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- What are the challenges for evaluating efforts to end VAW?
- Innovative approaches
- Lessons learned and recommendations



The Evaluation Gap on VAW

- World Bank review of best practices on found a lack of evidence on effectiveness of interventions in all sectors – (Bott, Morrison, Ellsberg, 2004)
- Review of 237 interventions in health sector, 11 met criteria for evidence based research methods (Wathen & Macmillan, 2003)
- In 2004, US Prevention Services Task Force released updated recommendations for routine screening concluded evidence is lacking on effectiveness of screening women in primary care.



Main purpose of Impact Evaluation

- Did change occur in the desired direction?
- Can the change be attributed to the intervention?



“Impact evaluation aims to measure the difference between what happened with the program and what would have happened without it.”

(Center for Global Development, 2006)



Methodological challenges in current evaluation research

- Weakness in design
- Analysis and interpretation of data
- Use of evidence for policy



Design issues

- Most studies measure outcomes or process (i.e. increase in screening or detection, increased reporting) and very few measure impact
- Lack of control groups, small sample sizes
- Evaluation conducted at end of intervention - no baseline data or ongoing monitoring



Challenges (cont.)

- Short follow up periods
- Tend to measure change in individuals, not at community or society level
- Hard to tease out contribution of different strategies



- Lack of instruments for comparable data collection
- Analysis and interpretation – lack of rigorous statistical methods (regression, control for confounders)
- Lack of consensus on indicators (what is success?)



Why is evaluation research so scarce?

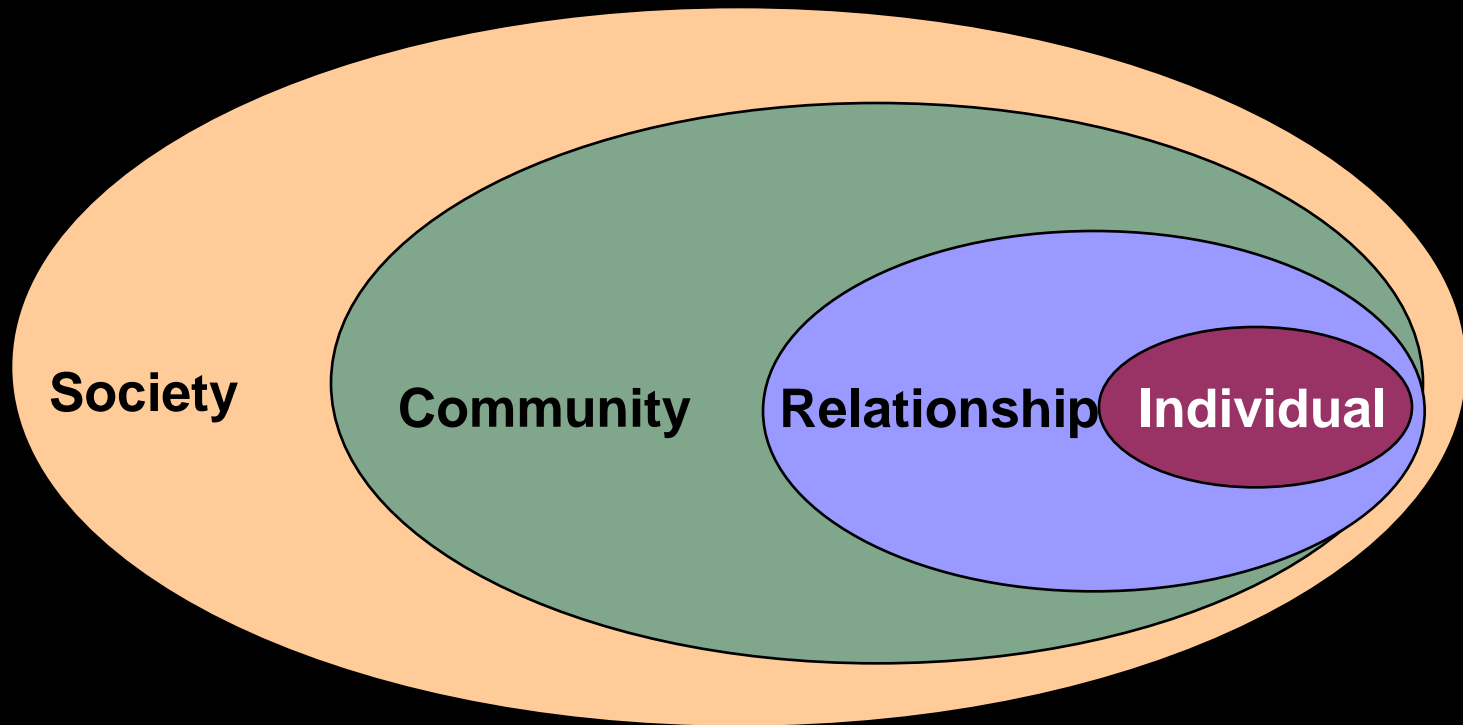
- Program implementers have little incentive to carry out impact evaluations:
 - Often donor driven – goals may be at odds with perceived program priorities (may even affect funding)
 - Impact evaluations tend to be more costly, complex design, require more technical knowledge than outcome evaluations
 - Usually involve outside evaluators, does not create capacity
 - Programs typically do not receive adequate resources to conduct impact evaluations



Violence occurs at many levels...



...and therefore must be addressed at many levels



Social change is complex

“If we understand VAW as a manifestation of women’s low status and lack of power in relationships, then it is the context of women’s lives that we aim to influence, rather than responding to specific forms of violence... changing the core dynamics within relationship as well as in the broader community.”

(Michau, 2007)



Different interventions need different methods

- Policy and legal reforms
- Improvement of services and support for survivors of violence (police, health services, judicial system)
- Mass media campaigns and interpersonal communications



Different contexts and types of violence require different methods

- Armed conflict
- FGM
- Femicide
- Honor violence
- Child marriage
- VAW and HIV
- VAW and economic empowerment



Consideration of respondent and interviewer safety must be a priority



Innovative approaches to evaluation research on VAW

- Randomized control studies (Image, Stepping Stones)
- Development of instruments to measure gender norms and power relations (GEM scale and Sexual Power in Relationships)
- Use of mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative)



Image Program in South Africa

Microfinancing and training on violence, together with community mobilization activities reduced domestic violence by 50% in intervention group over 2 years



Participatory evaluation methods may also be appropriate



The road followed (time lines)



The Woman's House

It's important but difficult for some to get to.

Sometimes your family supports you. You feel relieved when you can rely on family for help.

The Family

The health center

They listen to you here and give good advice

The church is important. They give advice, they visit us; if a man kicks his wife out they will give her shelter and food until she resolves her situation.

Good Friends

This is someone you can really trust.

Rosita

The Christian Community

Neighbors

Sometimes they help. Other times they fan the flames.

"The judge told me, 'I'm sorry but I never get involved in family fights.' That man could have me killed."

The police told me, "If you keep nagging I am going to throw you in jail too."

The Polic

The Judg



Lessons learned

- Urgent need to improve the quantity and quality of impact evaluation
- Develop a strategic research agenda – what are priority topics ?
- Develop rigorous methods and comparable instruments for measuring outcomes and impact
- Strengthen internal monitoring and evaluation systems and build into project design



Strengthen local research capacity



It is not feasible or necessary to carry out impact evaluations in all programs

IE are best targeted to programs that are new or expanding and for which effectiveness has not been established.

(Evaluation Gap Working Group, 2006)



Knowledge from impact evaluations is a global public good

- Knowledge has wider benefits and may be generalized to other programs
- Costs should be born by the broader community, not just the implementing partner
- Requires significant investment over a prolonged period

