



Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls in Tanzania

A Policy Brief to Support Decision Makers

Violence against women (VAW) is one of the most pervasive human rights violations in the world, affecting at least 1 in 3 women globally with reported cases in Africa being particularly high.¹ According to the 2016 Tanzania Demographic Health Survey, 44% of women age 15-49 have ever experienced physical violence and/or sexual violence, with sexual violence mostly perpetrated by persons known to the woman.² However, *learning from research and programming shows that violence is preventable*. With a strong commitment from policy makers, explicit policy and legislation and collaboration with the women's movement, women can live free from violence. Success depends on dedicated leadership and foresight from policy makers.



learning from research and programming shows that violence is preventable.

This policy brief is intended to support policy makers in effectively preventing VAW. First, we provide a brief overview of relevant policy commitments and evidence of successful programming. Next, we review the specific context in Tanzania, highlighting gaps to address and strengths to build on. Finally, we conclude with several urgent actions that are necessary for meeting our national commitments to address violence against women.

I. Preventing VAW in Africa³

Scope and Relevance of the Issue

In Africa, physical violence against women is particularly high, with nearly half of the countries reporting a prevalence of over 40%. The most common form of VAW is intimate partner violence (IPV) by a current or former partner with Sub-Saharan Africa at a 33% prevalence rate of lifetime physical/sexual violence.¹

The violence that women face presents a major barrier to the realisation of full and equal rights and has severe emotional, physical, sexual, and economic consequences. VAW also has a large financial toll on societies overall, as women who experience violence are unable to fully participate in their places of work, communities, and families. While many factors may exacerbate violence (such as poverty and alcohol use), **gender inequality is the root cause of violence against women**, as reflected in the definition in Box 1.

Box 1. Definition of VAW

Violence against women “is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.”
United Nations Declaration of the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women.

1 W.H.O. (2021). Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018. World Health Organization. [https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/violence-prevention/vaw_report_executive-summary_web_09032021_oleksandr-\(1\).pdf?sfvrsn=8ee5f68b_5](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/violence-prevention/vaw_report_executive-summary_web_09032021_oleksandr-(1).pdf?sfvrsn=8ee5f68b_5)
2 Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MoHCDGEC), Ministry of Health (MoH), National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Office of the Chief Government Statistician (OCGS), and ICF. 2016. Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey and Malaria Indicator Survey (TDHS-MIS) 2015-16. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Available at: <https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR321/FR321.pdf>
3 Content from Part I of this brief is from: *Preventing Violence against Women: A Primer for African Women's Organizations (2019)*, by Raising Voices and the African Women's Development Fund, available at: https://raisingvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Raising_Voices_Primer_English.pdf

Existing Frameworks and Commitments to Prevent VAW

Over the past two decades there has been **extraordinary growth in international, regional and national efforts** to address VAW in Africa. By linking to these important frameworks, policy makers can enhance their leadership, credibility and impact.

International Commitments

Through Sustainable Development Goal 5—which is aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls—the UN set a new global framework for progress in eliminating VAW. In addition, bi-lateral organisations, private foundations, and international resourcing initiatives have scaled up investments in programmes and research aimed at VAW prevention

Regional Commitments

Across Africa, there has been a rise in the implementation of regional policy commitments to ending VAW. This is exemplified by the **Maputo Protocol**, which expands definitions of VAW to include economic violence and recognises violence in the family, at work, in the community and in conflict

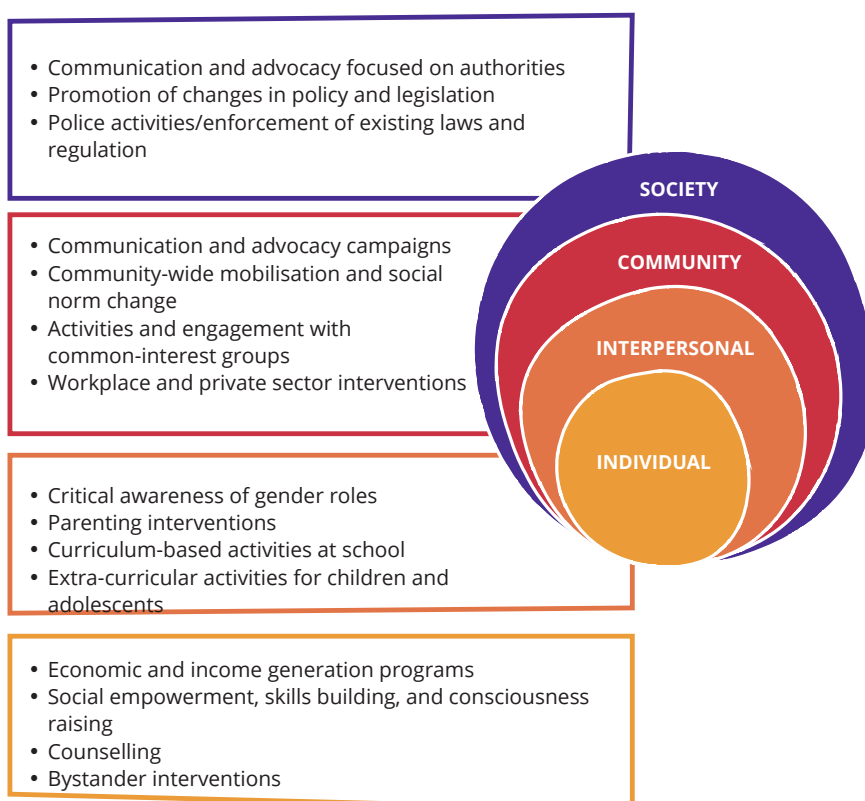
National Commitments

Due to increased activism and funding, many countries have formalised their responsibility to prevent VAW in national policies and legislation. As of 2017, 53% of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have explicit laws against domestic violence. These national commitments further evidence the important role of policy-makers as agents of change

Types of VAW Prevention Programming

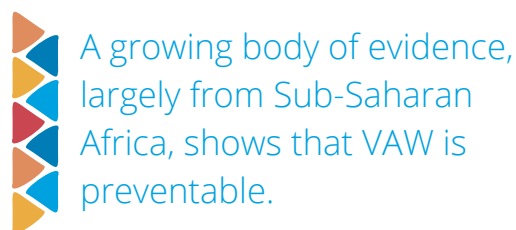
VAW programming includes a variety of prevention and response efforts. Prevention efforts transform the root causes that lead to VAW in the first place. Response efforts secure services, resources, and support for VAW survivors. Both prevention and response interventions are essential for eliminating violence against women.

VAW prevention programming can be carried out at different levels--individual, interpersonal, community and society (figure 1). **This 'socio-ecological' model recognises the critical contribution of policy and legislation change for VAW prevention.**



Evidence of Programme Impact

A growing body of evidence, largely from Sub-Saharan Africa, shows that VAW is preventable. Rigorous research demonstrates that prevention is possible within a relatively short period of time (i.e., a few years) when there is sufficient investment in **financial and human resources**, and, ideally, **leadership from national women's organisations**.

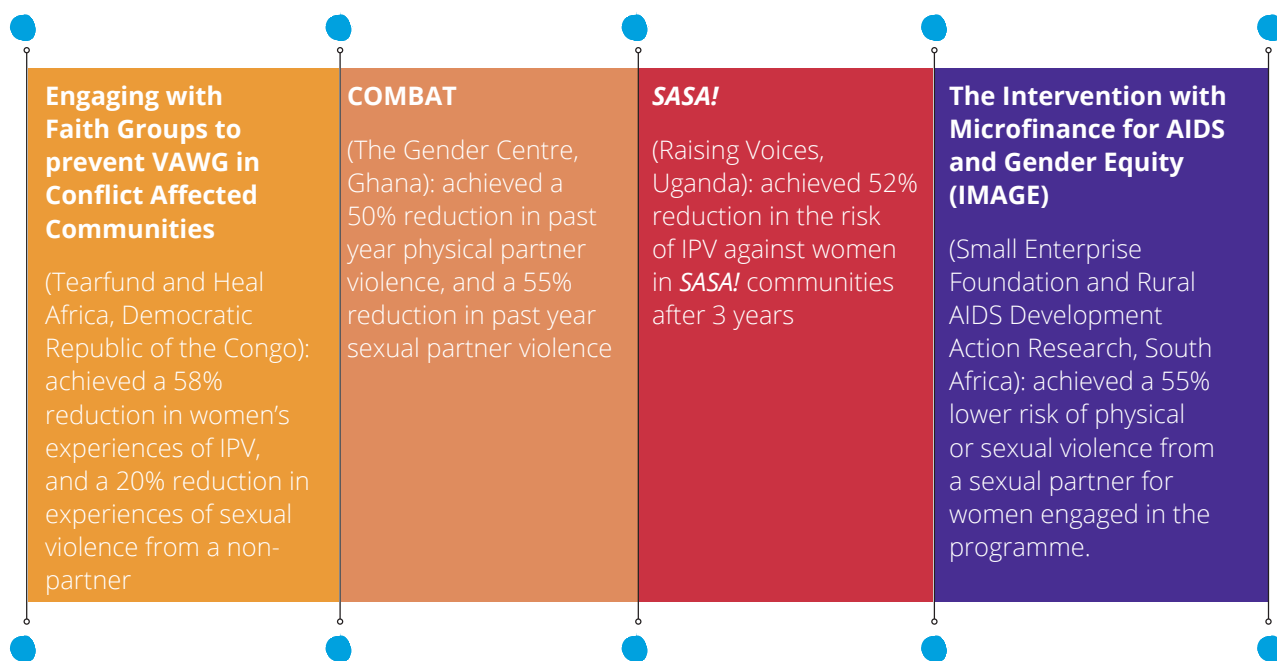


Studies also highlight which specific approaches are most impactful. Some initiatives are ineffective on their own, such as awareness-raising and training. However, programmes that combine multiple strategies have proven to be highly effective in preventing violence—for instance combining awareness raising with skill-building and community mobilisation.

The most successful approaches engage both women and men to critically reflect on gender inequality and power. Research demonstrates this holistic approach is more effective than initiatives targeting specific groups (such as “men only” or “women only” programming).

Examples of Successful Programmes

There are several evidence-based programmes across Africa that have already been effective in reducing VAW. These include:



By supporting programmes that replicate or adapt evidenced-based models, policy makers can maximise the likelihood of achieving real impact and transformation.

II. Current landscape in Tanzania



a. Scope of the issue: Prevalence, risks and implications

Violence against women is a daily reality for most women in Tanzania; 40 % of women aged 15-49 years have ever experienced physical violence while 17 % have ever experienced sexual violence. Half of all ever-married women have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) with physical abuse as the most common form at 39%, followed by emotional violence at 36% and sexual violence at 14%.² Further, at least 7.9 million women and girls in Tanzania are estimated to have undergone FGM.⁴



VAW costs the Tanzania government about USD 6.5 billion (or 7% of its national GDP) to manage violence against women and girls.

The negative impact of VAW is not only limited to profound human costs (negative physical and emotional impact on women, children and families), it also has economic costs. VAW costs the Tanzania government about USD 6.5 billion (or 7% of its national GDP) to manage violence against women and girls.⁵ Due to the prevalence and far ranging negative impacts of VAW, preventing VAW should be a central development goal and key to achieving other development outcomes for women and girls, their families, communities and the nation.



b. Strengths to build on

The government of Tanzania has made some significant efforts to address VAW, some examples include:

- The development of National Plan of Action to End Violence against Women and Children 2017/18-2021/22. The plan aims to reduce violence against women by 50%.
- The establishment of NPA's VAWC Protection Committee to strengthen the multi-sectoral protection and response system.
- Establishment of Police Gender and Children Development Desks (PGCDs). As of 2019, about 420 PGCDs were established countrywide.
- Establishment of 12 One Stop Centres (OSCs) in health care facilities since 2013.
- Establishment of a Gender Desk within the Director of Public Prosecutions directorate and the Commission of Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG).
- Enactment of key laws which address women's priorities, such as the HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Act, 2008; the Law of the Child Act, 2009; the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2010; the Human DNA Regulation Act, 2009; and, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, 2008.
- Initiation of the Police Form number three (PF 3) to include section of sexual assault.



3 Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (2016) National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Girls in Tanzania 2017/18-2021/22. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/tanzania/media/496/file/tanzania-2016-NPA-VAWC.pdf>

4 National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Girls in Tanzania 2017/18-2021/22 (2016)

Gaps to Address

Despite the notable improvements, there are still several challenges in addressing VAW in Tanzania, as follows:

- Lack of political will to amend insufficient laws such as the Law of Marriage Act, 1971; and the Customary Law Declaration Order, 1963; and insufficient budgets for operationalising the laws and policies evidenced in insufficient referral mechanisms for VAW cases despite some recent reforms such as PGCDs and OSCs.
- No specific and comprehensive legal framework on VAW.
- Lack of coordination among service providers, women's rights and civil society organisations.
- No public funding to WROs/ NGOs despite their significant contributions toward the National Plan of Action to End Violence against Women and Children.
- The digital gender divide limits women's accessibility to support services

III. Recommended Actions



Political will and coordination: strengthening laws and policies

- Enactment of Domestic Violence Act and the establishment of family court.
- Amend the Law of Marriage, 1971 and the Customary Law of Inheritance, 1963.
- Domestication of all key women rights international instruments which requires, among other things, amending all laws which contradict women's rights and Tanzania's obligations.
- Harmonisation of all policy and legal framework on VAW and key women's rights priorities.



Collaboration with the Women's Movement

- Ensure that the women's movement has a seat at the table in national level decision-making for VAW in Tanzania.
- Support NGOs that implement VAW prevention programming, conduct advocacy and provide legal assistance for cases outside the criminal system
- Strengthening NGO'S and grassroots activists to understand the policies and laws which support VAW prevention in communities



As a decision-maker in Tanzania, you have a tremendous opportunity to take actions that address violence against women in our country. We look forward to supporting your leadership, collaboration and action. For more information, reach out to Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) at wildaftanzania@gmail.com.

