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Indicators to measure violence against women

Introduction

Indicators essential aid to public policy development

Time to 'mainstream' Violence Against Women into indicators on violent crime and Millennium Development Goals, as well as developing a specific field

Definitions

UN definition

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

Indicators

Why indicators?

- Key link between policy and statistics
- To simplify complex information
- To assess if there is progress

Criteria for selection

- Unambiguous and easy to interpret
- Enable an assessment of progress or not
- Capable of support by reliable quantitative data
- Neither so many as to confuse, nor so few as to mislead

Types of indicators

Outcome

- Extent
- Severity

Process

- Monitoring stages of policy development

Outcome indicators: issues to decide

1- One or more?

Single indicator OR additional indicators that separately specify different forms of VAW?

2- Which forms of violence to name?

Prevalence or incidents?

3- Is prevalence or number of incidents the best way to measure gravity of intimate partner violence?



Single or several indicators?

- A single indicator OR separate indicators for each major type of violence: intimate partner violence, rape, other sexual assault, stalking, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, trafficking, dowry deaths, honour-related crimes?
- Simplicity of single indicator is a strength.
- But differentiation of forms of violence is needed for targeted policy evaluation and development.
- Recommend: Overarching single indicator, but with sub-indicators for separate forms of violence.

How to measure?

- Population sample survey
 - Not official (e.g. police) records, since most women do not report
 - Substantial development of methodology recently
- Include all present
 - Survey design to catch those not in domestic households
 - Include migrants, not only citizens
- Some forms hard to measure, may need other methods
 - E.g. trafficking

Intimate partner violence: Prevalence or incidents?

- Intimate partner violence
- Partner on partner domestic violence
- Prevalence: rate (%) of violence against women in the female population
- Incidents: number of incidents of violence against women per unit (e.g. 100, or 1,000) of female population

Intimate partner violence: incidents and gender (UK)

	Women	Men	% against women	Ratio: Women : men
Victims	657,000	356,000	65%	1.8
Average number incidents per victim	20	7		3.9
Total incidents	12.9 million	2.5 million	84%	5.2

Gender implications of different measures

- Prevalence is the least gender asymmetrical indicator
- Number of incidents more gender asymmetrical than prevalence
 - a- domestic violence prevalence: 4% women, 2% men
 - b- average no. incidents of dv.: women 20, men 7
 - c- incidents dv: 12.9 million against women, 2.4m men
 - d- DV one incident: 28% women, 47% men
- Injuries more gender asymmetrical than no. of incidents, since women more likely to be injured than men in each.
 - Minor force, 49% women 36% men sustain physical injury
 - Severe force, 77% women 56% men sustain physical injury

Number of incidents of intimate partner violence

Advantages

Does not produce spurious gender symmetry when men are asked the same questions – increasingly the case
Easier to mainstream into adjacent policy fields which routinely use number of incidents - essential for funding

Disadvantages

Not in common use in VAW community which prefers to focus on the underlying ‘course of conduct’
Conflict Tactics Scale is ambiguous on incidents

Recommend:

Use incidents; or both

Conclusions

- Violence against women a global phenomenon recognised by the UN
- Development of international standards to measure the extent and severity
- Outcome measures need surveys, not only official statistics
- Process measures can monitor policy development