

## Together for Girls Contribution to IAP Call for Evidence: March 31, 2017

Together for Girls (TfG) is a global public-private partnership of UN, US and Canadian Government and private partners working together to end violence against children (VAC), with a particular focus on sexual violence against girls. TfG works across three pillars of action: (1) nationally representative Violence Against Children Surveys (VACS); (2) Nationally-led multi-sectoral VAC prevention and response; (3) Global advocacy and awareness-raising.

The VACS, led by CDC through the TfG partnership, collect nationally-representative data on emotional, physical and sexual violence against girls and boys, including prevalence data on violence before age 18 (among 18-14 year olds) and 12-month incidence data (among 13-17 year olds), as well as on the circumstances and perpetrators of violence, reporting and service use, and health and well-being outcomes. Previous to the VACS there was limited data on VAC in most countries, and where it existed it was often not nationally representative, not comparable across countries, or limited in scope and inclusiveness (e.g. only represented older adolescents, only included females). To date 10 countries have launched VACS findings<sup>1</sup>, with 12 more in planning, process or analyses.<sup>2</sup> Data from new VACS emerged from four countries in 2015 and 2016: Malawi, Nigeria, Zambia, and Laos; and currently six of VACS datasets are available for public use: Swaziland, Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi, Haiti, and Cambodia.

With growing coverage, for the first time VACS provide a baseline for rates of violence in childhood within and across countries, along with nuance on variations among genders and age groups, making **the VACS an effective baseline against which to monitor violence-related SDG progress and create accountability frameworks**. VACS data directly contributes to multiple SDG targets, including: 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 16.1.3, 16.2.1, 16.2.3, and 16.3.1; to achieving SDG 17.18.1; and contributes to other relevant indicators under multiple Goals including 1, 2, and 5. The VACS represents the first comprehensive national data on VAC that **features adolescents prominently in data collection, analysis and indicators**, including: types of sexual violence; violence among younger adolescents (13-15), as well as comprehensive data on violence in adolescence overall; perpetration data; and reporting and service seeking (see Annex for graphs with detailed data; Graph 1).

Data from the VACS provides a detailed understanding of how violence is experienced and impacts the lives of boys and girls across adolescence and young adulthood. In most countries between 20-38% of females and 9-21% of males report at least one instance of childhood sexual violence, though there are national/regional variations (Graph 2, 3). Over half of all VACS respondents report physical violence in childhood (Graph 4). Violence starts early, with most girls who experienced sexual violence reporting that it first occurred at age 15 or earlier (Graph 5), and many that a dating/romantic partner was the perpetrator (Graph 6). In many countries approximately 30% of girls who experienced physically forced or pressured sex in childhood reported a resulting pregnancy (Graph 7). These data illustrate the relationship of VAC and gender-based violence as it evolves through adolescence; and the importance of understanding violence in adolescence to contribute to monitoring and tracking progress against the SDGs. Progress can be measured against this baseline, and due to the established methods and national leadership of the process the survey is positioned to lead into broader violence surveillance and accountability systems (Chiang et al, 2016), with the end result that at global, national and regional levels, countries can track long-term progress with comparable data. The VACS demonstrates our ability to engage adolescents, including young adolescents, in this process in a way that is rigorous and inclusive; and enhances the targeting and tailoring of response efforts in a way that emphasizes amplification of adolescent voices and leadership in survey and surveillance data.

The TfG partnership process, in which a task force of government and civil society representatives oversee the VACS and planning and implementation of response strategies, results in expanded multi-sectoral capacity on violence, child protection and gender, and unprecedented mobilization and support for action to end VAC across health, justice, social welfare and other sectors. The success of the model is featured in the INSPIRE package of seven strategies to end VAC, and is illustrated by Tanzania, which conducted the VACS in 2009. Following the launch of its VACS report in 2011, the government implemented a 1-year, costed multi-sectoral plan that bridged to a 3-year National Plan of Action to Prevent and Respond to VAC. The plan focussed on scale-up of district-level child protection systems and investments in capacity development, and included accountability mechanisms for tracking progress and expenditures against the plan. Achievements include expansion of child protection teams to 47 local government authority areas; reaching 700,000 children; 1,151 workers trained in 498 health facilities; training of police, social welfare, magistrates; and national hotlines and campaigns. In 2016 Tanzania completed and evaluated the plan, linking to the launch of a new combined National Plan of Action to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Women and Children in Tanzania, expansion to new regions in 2017 and 2018 and commitment to further reduce violence through work as a Global Partnership to End Violence Pathfinder Country.

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<sup>1</sup> Swaziland (girls only), Tanzania, Kenya, Haiti, Cambodia, Malawi, Nigeria, Laos, Zimbabwe, Zambia

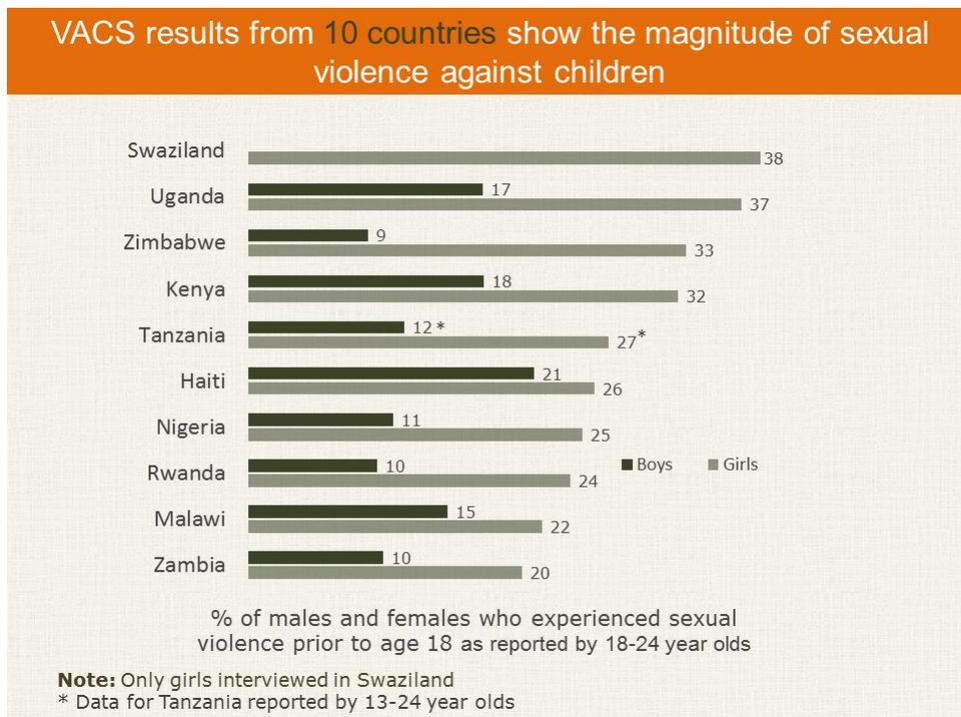
<sup>2</sup> Botswana, Rwanda, Uganda, China, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia, Mozambique, Cote d'Ivoire, Namibia, Lesotho, Moldova

Annex 1: VACS Data Graphs

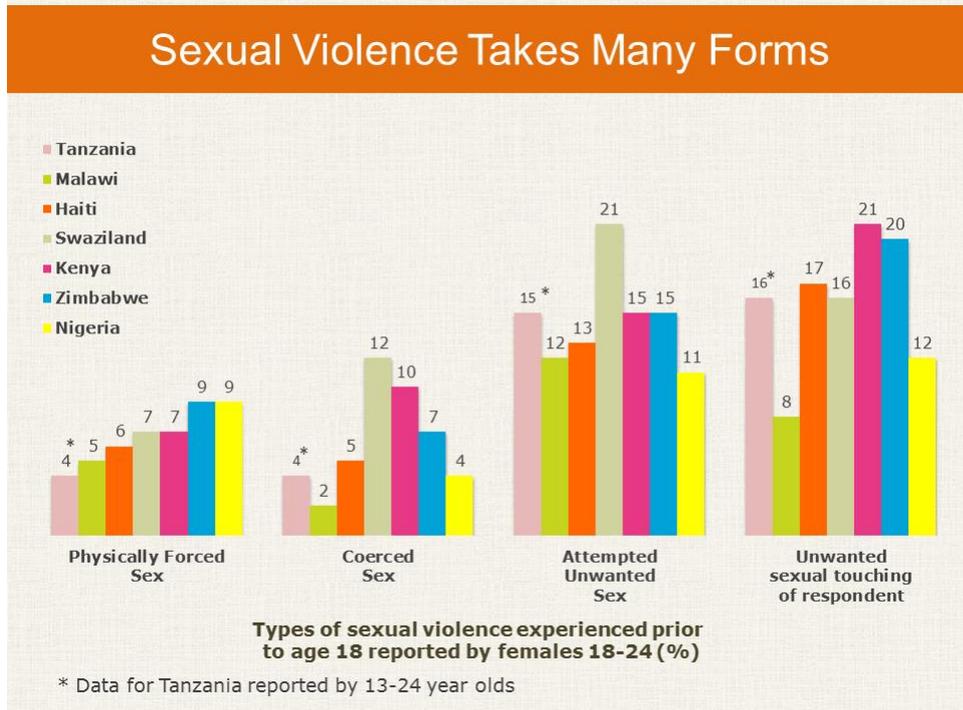
Graph 1: Rates of reporting, service seeking and service use among sexual violence survivors before age 18



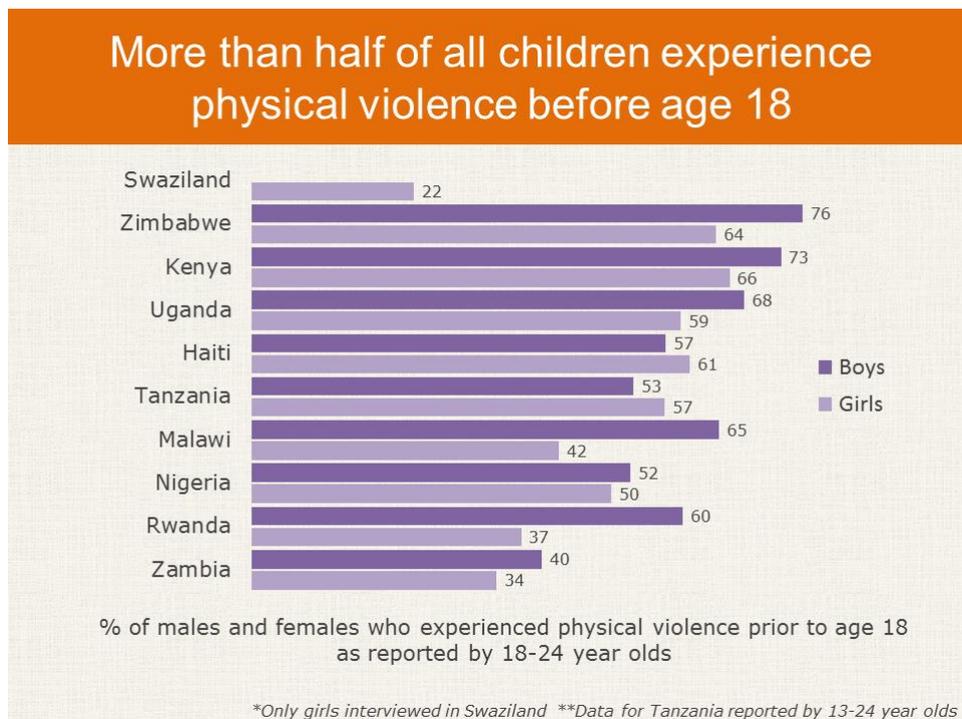
Graph 2: Sexual violence prevalence in childhood



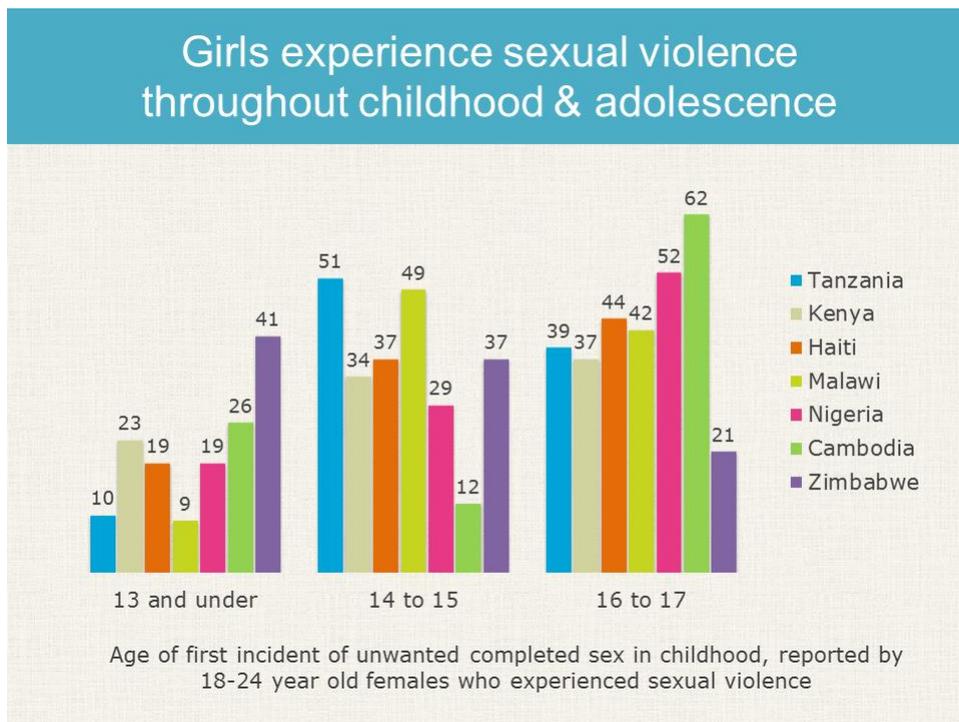
Graph 3: Sexual violence prevalence in childhood, by type of sexual violence



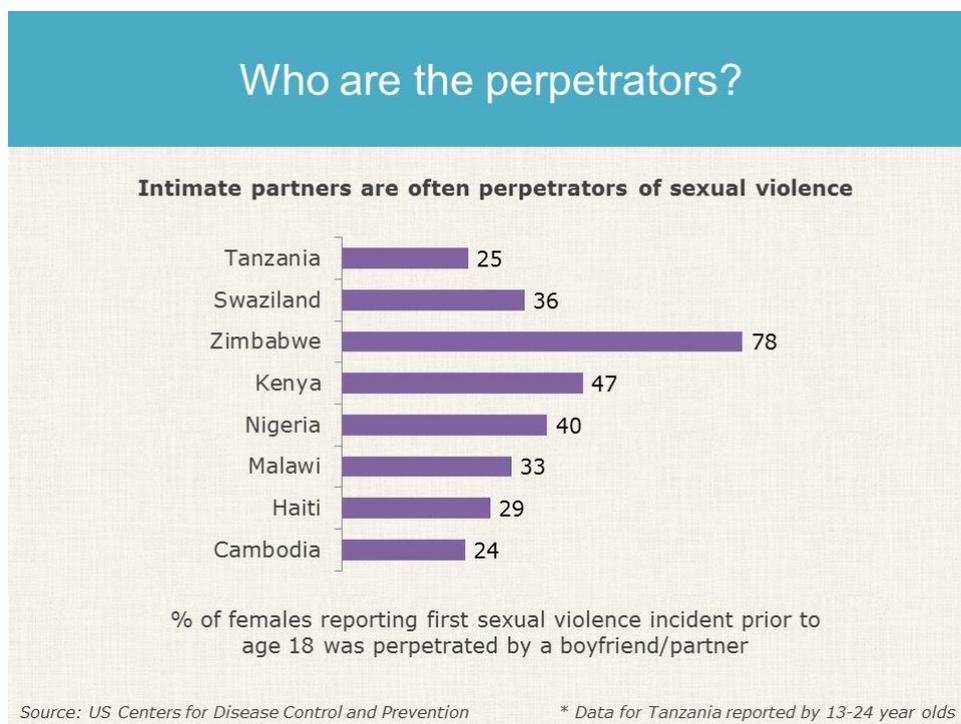
Graph 4: Childhood physical violence prevalence



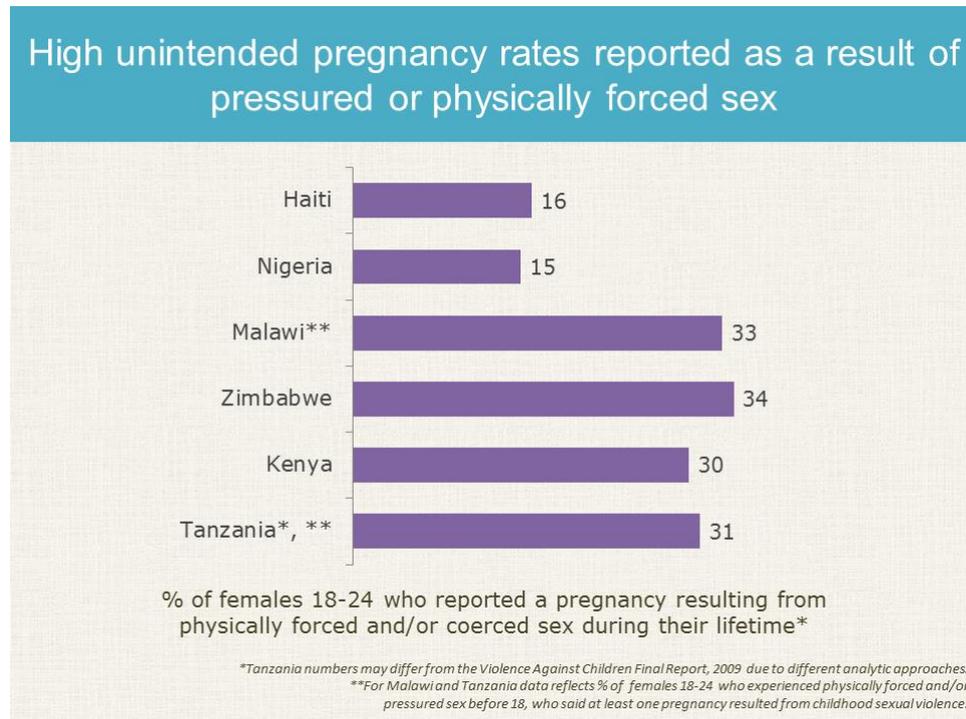
**Graph 5: Age of girls' first experience of sexual violence in childhood**



**Graph 6: Romantic partners as perpetrators of sexual violence against girls, as reported by 18-24 year old females**



**Graph 7: Percentage of females 18-24 reporting a pregnancy resulting from pressured or physically forced sex before age 18**



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