Understanding attitudes and behaviours towards domestic violence in Iraq:

WORKING TOWARDS PREVENTION
Background
Limited existing research on GBV prevention and the drivers of behaviours is limited.

Limited data on psychological drivers.

Limited in-depth understanding of social norms and gender norms around IPV.

Context:

1,32 M persons at risk of GBV

77% of incidents are linked to domestic violence.

75% of which are women or girls.

In 2022: incidents recorded show an increase by 237% compared to Q1 2021 (GBVIMS).

Children are directly and indirectly affected by GBV.

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Objectives

- Strong community-based GBV programmes have been established in Iraq though gaps still exist to adequately respond to the needs of women and girls

- Evidence gap in the drivers of GBV to enable contextualized and appropriate prevention programming in complex areas in Iraq

Goal of the research:

- To assess community perceptions of GBV response services and the perceived barriers which prevent survivors from seeking support, accessing services or reporting.
- To assess the behavioural determinants of GBV – specifically domestic violence in Iraq – with an aim to capture both drivers and barriers to leverage existing knowledge of what enables acceptance of domestic violence as well as barriers to services.
- To adapt Communities Care, a participatory, evidence-based, community-based approach to primary prevention of GBV
Community
- IDP: 34%
- Returnee: 33%
- Host Community: 33%

Gender
- Male: 51%
- Female: 49%

Age
- 16-17: 17%
- 18-59: 83%

Ethnicity
- Arab: 48%
- Kurdish: 35%
- Turkmen: 14%
- Assyrian: 2%

Religion
- Muslim Sunni: 72%
- Muslim Shia: 10%
- Christian: 2%
- Yazidi: 16%

Employment
- Employed: 61%
- Unemployed: 21%
- Student: 18%

Community
- IDP: 50%
- Returnee: 33%
- Host Community: 50%

Gender
- Male: 48%
- Female: 52%

Age
- 16-17: 17%
- 18-59: 83%

Ethnicity
- Kurdish: 100%

Religion
- Muslim Sunni: 49%
- Christian: 1%
- Yazidi: 50%

Employment
- Employed: 61%
- Unemployed: 14%
- Student: 18%
Methodology & Key Findings
Mixed methods research was conducted in Ninewa and Duhok with IDPs, returnees and host communities

- Literature review and consultations with key stakeholders in the GBV sector in Kurdistan Region of Iraq and Federal Iraq.
- Quantitative – Survey with 827 IDPs, Returnees and Host Communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governorate</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>IDP</td>
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<td>Duhok</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>161</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ninewa</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>414</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>335</td>
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</tbody>
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- Qualitative – Focus group Discussions, In Depth Interviews, and Key Informant Interviews with IDPs, Returnees and Host Communities.

Limitations included operational challenges and respondent responsiveness
Gender, Age, Displacement Status

Psychological Drivers

- Agency of women and girls
- Emotional Wellbeing and living in hardship
- Decision making power
- Interpersonal skills

Self-Efficacy

- Knowledge of different types of domestic violence and identification of perpetrators
- Past experiences of domestic violence and the acceptability of violence while growing up
- Personal beliefs and attitudes towards the use of violence being a part of normal life, acceptable and justified, and condoned by religion
- Traditional and cultural values concerning family honor, reputation, morality, and rules of behavior

Limited Rationality

- Intent
- Action

Domestic Violence

Environmental Drivers

- Trusted sources of information about domestic violence
- Portrait of domestic violence in the community and in mass and social media
- Trust in UNICEF website

Communication Environment

- Access to technology and the internet as a potential solution to domestic violence, and as a threat to the safety of women and girls
- Potential solutions to end domestic violence
- Opinion trends about domestic violence

Emerging Alternatives

Sociological Drivers

- Reference networks and circles of influence for survivors and perpetrators
- Ineffective norms and perceived acceptability of violence and gender equality by the community
- Social pressure, stigma, and sanctions

Social Influence

- Gender roles and notions of femininity
- Power holding and influence in the household

Community Dynamics

- Police, Religious and community leaders, camp leaders and coordinators
- Legal framework

Governing Entities

- Poverty and lack of employment
- Safety of women and girls in their communities and online

Structural Factors

- Socialisation process, Gender ideologies, Power dynamics, Family roles and relationships, moral norms (honor and family reputation)

Meta Norms
Findings from the research positions physical violence or abuse at the lower end of acceptance, and acts which manifest as control or restriction on female autonomy, at the higher end of acceptance.

- 77% of respondents classify physical acts such as hitting with a fist, object or kicking when committed from husband to wife, as violence.
- 71% identify using emotional abuse, such as humiliation or shame as domestic violence.
- The belief that ‘children and teenagers’ performance at school will be negatively affected’ as a result of domestic violence is shared by 67% of respondents.
Findings from the research indicated that patriarchal and traditional norms and power dynamics in families support, sustain, and justify the use of violence against women and girls.

55% of respondents agree that it is okay for a husband to tightly control what his wife or daughter wears, where she goes and who she sees.

Fear of social stigma is a huge barrier for survivors to talk about domestic violence and seek support.

47% agreed that a women or a girl’s reputation would be damaged if she reports domestic violence occurring within the home to the authorities.
• 28% of men felt that women/girls should forgive husbands and fathers who are more violent in the current economic situation, compared to only 23% of women.

• General perception that women and girls are not entirely safe in their communities persists which in turn acts a justification for domestic violence under the guise of protection.

“There are many reasons such as drinking, drugs, and poverty. These cause violence to occur. For example, a man comes home, and he is drunk. He will use violence against women.”

“I, myself, became very afraid of going out by myself because I am sure I will be sexually abused. These stories and cases make us very afraid of men in general, because no matter what the woman wears, she will still be sexually abused and exploited. We have developed phobia from men. I can never trust men!”

FDG Male Duhok Host Community

FDG Adolescent Girl Ninewa Returnee
Gender roles and norms, power dynamics and norms related to tradition shape individual beliefs and are fundamentally and causally linked as drivers of violence against women and girls.

- While physical violence and emotional abuse are considered relatively unacceptable, controlling and restricting women and girls' autonomy, access to resources and services is permissible, particularly if used to ‘discipline’ or punish for not adhering to their assigned roles and responsibilities or society’s norms.

- Perpetration of domestic violence against women and girls is not only vertical or horizontal between family members, but also manifests diagonally, cutting across families and relationships.

- Knowledge and awareness of the negative consequence of violence within the family is high amongst respondents - Adolescents are acutely aware of the harmful effects.

- Accessing GBV response services is associated with degrees of risk to a survivors own and their family’s reputation and potential safety which presents a significant barrier for survivors who may need support.

Men and women face radically different change journeys. This reflects not only the differing existing attitudes towards violence, but also what is “at stake” for men and women.
Recommendations & Next Steps for Addressing Drivers of GBV
### Strengthen
- survivor-centred GBV services
- women’s organisations and networks to strengthen and sustain quality response services for women and girls

### Explore and address
- issues of trust and reputation in the community
- interpersonal communication skills

### Engage
- religious leaders and community leaders
- Male and female at family level
- Youth

### Leverage
- creative approaches to raise awareness
- technology and online spaces
What is next for Communities Care?

Formative Research on the Drivers of Domestic Violence

Toolkit Adaptation and Translation

WE ARE HERE

CC Implementation
Questions?