



## 2017 UPDATES TO THE CORE QUESTIONNAIRE

### WHAT ARE THE VACS?

The Violence Against Children Surveys (VACS) are nationally representative household surveys of sexual, physical and emotional violence among children and young adults ages 13 to 24 years. At the global level, they are led by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as part of the Together for Girls (TfG) partnership. At the national level, the implementation of the VACS is led by national governments, with technical assistance from CDC, and support from other TfG partners.

### WHY UPDATE THE VACS?

The original core questionnaire was finalized in 2013, building on experience implementing the VACS in five countries. Given the ground-breaking and innovative nature of this work, in 2015-2016 TfG partners came together in an inclusive process to ensure ongoing learning and better alignment with other important global efforts.

### THE REVIEW INCLUDED:

- Internal and external expert consultation on measurement of violence against children and violence against women and girls to ensure greater harmonization between the two fields.
- Regular coordination and input from all TfG partners.
- Commissioned review of other violence-related surveys, modules and measures, with recommendations for improved measurement and alignment.
- Cognitive testing in Colombia of new questions and concepts in 2016.
- Develop and test improved questions on sexual exploitation/transactional sex across different survey tools, including the VACS.
- Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and accompanying monitoring framework.
- Alignment with the technical package INSPIRE<sup>1</sup>: Seven Strategies to Prevent Violence Against Children and its accompanying monitoring framework.

This process was finalized in 2017 and the updated core questionnaire continues to represent a “gold standard” in measuring violence against children, adolescents and young adults, while increasing comparability with violence measures in other surveys and ensuring the VACS contributes toward both national- and global-level monitoring of progress on violence prevention and response.

## WHAT'S NEW?

### REGION-SPECIFIC QUESTIONNAIRES

Region-specific core questionnaire tools were developed for Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, allowing for specificity of measurement as geographic coverage of the VACS increases.

### UPDATED HIV MODULE

Starting with the VACS in Botswana in 2016, the module on HIV was updated to reflect the current best practices on measures around HIV. The VACS in Botswana and others funded by PEPFAR now also include rapid HIV testing, which will greatly improve our understanding of the links between violence and HIV.

<sup>1</sup> [www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/inspire/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/inspire/en/)

## UPDATED MEASURES

Measure	Details
<b>SDG alignment</b>	The updated questionnaire will contribute to measurement of SDG Targets 5.2 (elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls), 5.3 (eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation), 16.1 (reducing all violence related to death rates), and 16.2 (end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children).
<b>Intimate partner violence (IPV)</b>	Broader range of experiences with physical violence included, to capture more experiences and improve consistency; new partner-specific questions on sexual violence, based on evidence from the field of violence against women. Additionally, the questionnaire prompts national adaptation of questions on type of relationship, to capture partnerships in more holistic, context-specific way.
<b>Information communication technology</b>	Online sexual exploitation, abuse and bullying questions updated/included to align with new INSPIRE indicators; emotional violence questions include an online dimension.
<b>Violent discipline</b>	Slapped, pushed, shoved and spanked added to questionnaire to allow inclusion of wider range of acts of physical violence.
<b>Sexual exploitation/ transactional sex</b>	Updated questions to better measure exchange of sexual activities for goods, services, money, etc.
<b>Exposure to IPV</b>	Questions updated to better capture respondent knowing if violence takes place in the home but not witnessing it.
<b>Marriage and cohabitation</b>	Updated to better capture informal unions by measuring age at first union (including marriage and cohabitation).
<b>Comparability</b>	Gender norms/attitudes questions updated and violent discipline attitude measures added to align with UNICEF's MICS measures.
<b>Substance abuse</b>	Updated measures capture drug use, in addition to alcohol.
<b>Service-seeking</b>	Schools were added to the list of options for countries to include in questions on service seeking and access.

## NEW MODULES FOR LATIN AMERICA

**WEAPON CARRYING:** Eight new questions were added to the Latin America version of the VACS core questionnaire, focused on weapon carrying and use.

**MIGRATION:** Eleven questions were added to the Latin America version of the questionnaire on participants' experiences moving abroad and within their home country, including reasons for migration.

**COMMUNITY/GANG VIOLENCE:** Questions were added throughout the Latin America version of the core questionnaire to better understand how often reported perpetrators of emotional, physical and sexual violence were also engaged in community violence. For safety reasons, questions on respondents' engagement in community violence were not included.

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To break the cycle of violence.