



METHODOLOGICAL GUIDE

TO RESEARCH BELIEF SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL NORMS
THAT SUSTAIN VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

ENOUGH

TOGETHER WE CAN END VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



OXFAM

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I INTRODUCTION

This *Methodological guide to research on belief systems and gender norms that sustain violence against women and girls* draws a simple road map of the **steps involved in the research process**. It aims to help grassroots groups and organizations carry out research on the belief systems and social norms that legitimize all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Why do we need research on belief systems and social norms to eliminate VAWG?

One of Oxfam's key tenets for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls is the need to use all possible means to bring about changes in the beliefs, behaviours and social norms that perpetuate VAWG. Globally, Oxfam and its partner organizations are working to transform the **social norms and beliefs** that sustain VAWG, promote a model of masculinity based on violence and control, lay the blame for any violence they experience on women themselves, and justify gender inequality. For all these reasons, since 2016 Oxfam in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has stepped up its work to promote and support initiatives to **transform social norms and beliefs**, both through programme activities and the regional campaign *Enough! Together We Can End Violence Against Women and Girls*.

I. BREAKING THE MOULD: CHANGING BELIEF SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL NORMS TO ELIMINATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

The aim: ending violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread and prevalent human rights violations in the world. Eliminating VAWG requires, among other things, changing the social beliefs and norms that have arisen out of a racist and male-dominated culture. For some years now, Oxfam LAC has been doing significant work to eliminate all forms of violence, supporting the agendas of feminist, youth and women's organizations. There is still an essential need today to continue to raise awareness of the violence experienced by thousands of women and girls in Latin America.

In 2012, Oxfam published *Ending Violence Against Women* (Raab, 2012⁰), which provided a comprehensive overview and proposals for the elimination of all forms of VAWG, defined as:

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

(Raab, 2012: 5)

Despite the progress made on legislation to combat VAWG in the LAC region in recent years, it is still a major problem, since legislation is not accompanied by sufficient funding or policies consistent with the laws that have been approved. Oxfam LAC therefore remains committed to understanding, raising awareness of and speaking out against all forms of VAWG.

Breaking the Mould: A study on belief systems and social norms and their links to VAWG in the LAC region

Within the framework of the *Enough! Together We Can End Violence Against Women and Girls* campaign, there arose a need to gain an understanding of the prevalence of belief systems and social norms among young people to identify which beliefs and norms should be targeted by the campaign. A study was therefore carried out in the eight LAC countries¹ participating in the campaign, to identify and understand the social belief systems of adolescents and young women and men that perpetuate and normalize VAWG. The study was published in 2018, *Breaking the Mould: Changing Belief Systems and Gender Norms to Eliminate Violence Against Women*.²

But what exactly are belief systems and social norms? What role do they play in reproducing and legitimizing VAWG? Before embarking on research for *Breaking the Mould*, the researchers and partner organizations involved in the campaign held detailed discussions to identify the most powerful concepts for understanding the **research topic**. Discussions were based on the prevalence of belief systems and social norms that reproduce violence, and how these have been addressed in the Latin American context.

There is a link between belief systems and social norms, and between the beliefs and behaviours that sustain such belief systems and social norms and the reproduction of violence against women and girls.

Following a review of a number of studies, including Villa (2009) and Castoriadis (in Miranda, 2014), expert female staff from Oxfam LAC concluded that the concept of **social belief systems** includes the elements that determine social norms (reference groups and behaviours), but also encompasses **context and culture**, whereby certain institutions work to construct frameworks that act as a regulators of what ought to be thought, believed and done. These are the concepts shaping the *Breaking the Mould* research and which should be taken as a conceptual guide for carrying out a study of this nature:

SOCIAL NORM	A pattern of behaviour influenced by a desire to conform to the social expectations of a particular reference group.
DESCRIPTIVE NORM	Refers to common or typical behaviour – what it is believed people do. For example: “Women sometimes play hard to get, they say NO when they really mean YES.”
INJUNCTIVE NORM	Refers to expected behaviour – what everyone should do. For example: “All women should be mothers.”
REFERENCE GROUP	A social group whose opinions are important for the person deciding how to behave.
SOCIAL BELIEF SYSTEMS	Regulate what people say and guide actions, determining feelings and desires as well as ways of thinking. Their creation and social application are influenced by powerful institutions in society.

Source: *Breaking The Mould* (Oxfam, 2018: 48)

The *Breaking the Mould* research argues that the concepts of *belief systems* and *social norms* are deeply rooted in the patriarchal system that produces, reproduces and sustains VAWG. This is why transforming such belief systems and social norms is hugely important for eliminating all forms of VAWG. And this is why we need to understand how these belief systems and norms are created, how they are reproduced, and how we can eradicate them.

Understanding the **sociocultural mechanisms we want to influence** will enable us to put positive belief systems and social norms in place and establish dialogues at different levels (community, national, regional and international) with relevant actors.

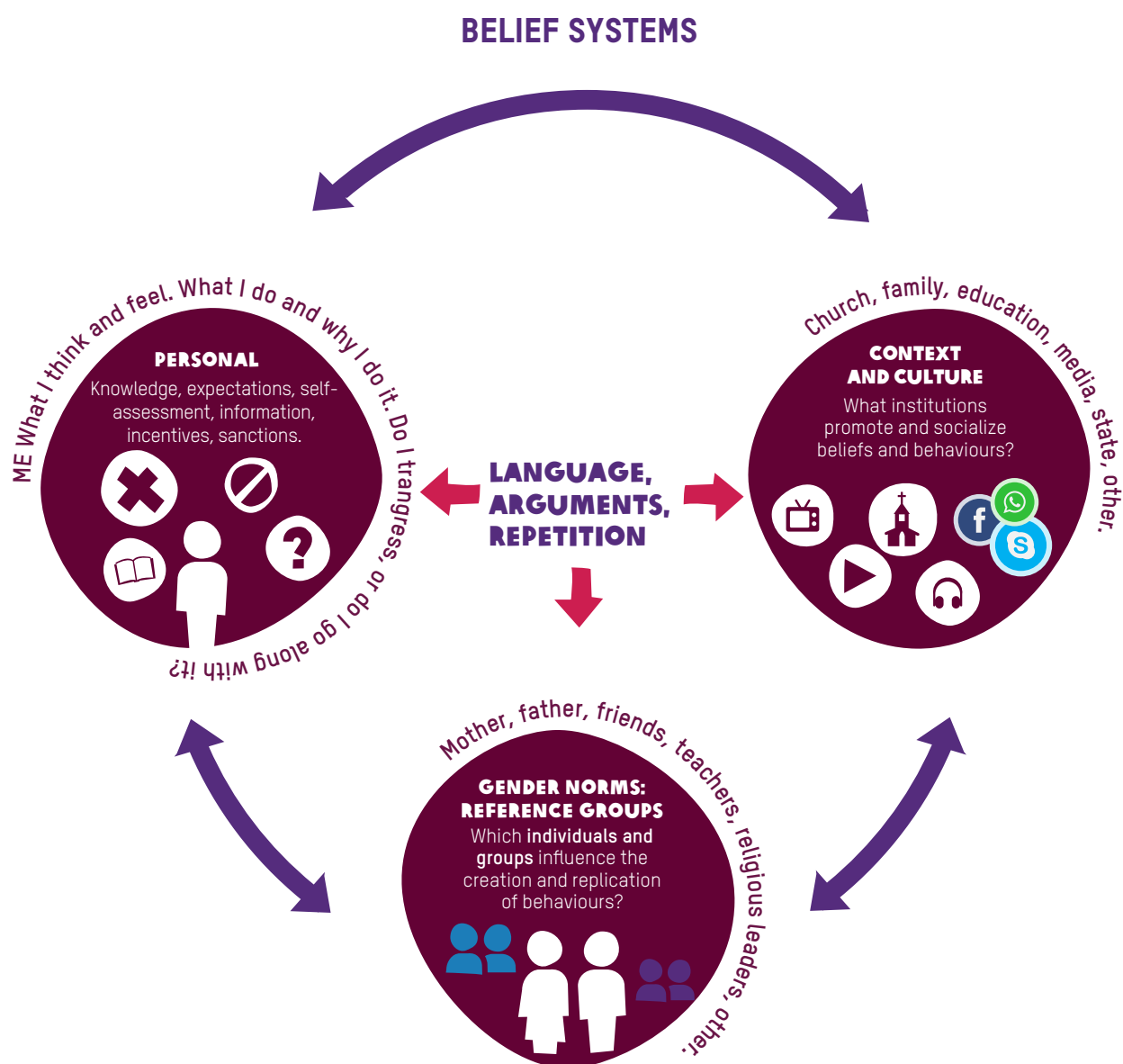


Figure 1. The conceptual framework of *Breaking the Mould* (Ruiz and Garrido, 2018: 14)

II. WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR? HOW SHOULD IT BE USED?

The aim of this guide

This guide aims to systematize the lessons from the *Breaking the Mould* research so that other organizations wishing to replicate the study in their own context have some of the tools needed to do so. The guide therefore includes procedural details of social research, together with lessons learned and recommendations from the people involved in the study.







Who is this guide for?

This guide contains a research proposal aimed at:

- civil society organizations and activists wishing to compile primary data for designing advocacy campaigns to combat VAWG;
- social researchers looking for greater insights into the methodological issues to be taken into account when conducting a study of this type;
- grassroots / people's organizations and youth groups.

How should the guide be used?

This methodological guide will enable the design and development of research on the prevalence of belief systems and social norms, adapted to each particular context but based on *Breaking the Mould*. The guide provides tested tools that were used in that study. It is divided into different sections:

	LESSONS LEARNED	Lessons learned from the <i>Breaking the Mould</i> research and provided as guidance or tips
	RECOMMENDATIONS	Recommendations and ideas for carrying out the research
	STEPS	Detailed steps for applying specific methods
	EXAMPLES FROM BREAKING THE MOULD	Practical examples from the <i>Breaking the Mould</i> study
	TOOLS	Research tools: templates and questionnaires created specifically for the <i>Breaking the Mould</i> research
	EXERCISES	Suggested exercises for working on specific issues

III. THE RESEARCH TEAM: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE RESEARCH PROCESS

One of the key issues when undertaking research is to put together a technical team with the right skills for the job. This section provides a detailed breakdown of the **roles and responsibilities** of all the members of the team, in order to facilitate commissioning of research on the prevalence of belief systems and social norms that sustain VAWG.

The research should be led by a professional with extensive experience and knowledge of social research. Moreover, those in charge of coordinating the research, carrying out fieldwork and preparing the report should be knowledgeable on the issue and have experience in social research.

The Commissioning Manager:

- Is responsible for technical management of the research
- Is responsible for defining the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the study
- Verifies the suitability of the research methodology applied
- Puts together a suitably qualified technical team
- Prepares a theoretical and conceptual framework
- Provides guidance to the author(s) regarding report content and structure
- Ensures deadlines are met
- Ensures coordination for sign-off
- Organizes external peer review
- Guarantees quality of the final product and sign-off
- Provides ethical oversight during the research process



- The research team was coordinated by Oxfam LAC staff, but a mixed team was put together. Different institutions took part in the research: Oxfam, an academic organisation (CLACSO), external consultants, and regional feminist organisations and youth groups.
- The Oxfam team worked together with the different actors to design research tools, prepare and apply such tools, review and analyse data, disseminate the report, etc.
- The team carrying out the research had prior knowledge and experience in the study of VAWG, as well as studies on media consumption and youth.
- The whole research process for Breaking the Mould was made possible thanks to the cooperation of a large number of professionals from a number of organisations and countries in the region.
- The strength of Breaking the Mould lies in the fact that it encompasses different perspectives and approaches to tackling VAWG, and not solely those of Oxfam.
- Moreover, feedback from feminist organisations and youth groups was obtained every step of the way in the Breaking the Mould research process.

One of the critical tasks of the research lead, as well as the coordinators in the field and those undertaking data collection, is to keep in mind ethical considerations during the research process. Therefore, Oxfam advocates that all research be carried out in accordance with the **three principles of research ethics**, namely:



- **Respect:** the research team must recognise the capacity and right of all persons to make their own decisions and be treated with dignity.
- **Benefits:** the key objective of the research team must be to improve the lives of the participants, as well as to protect their physical, mental and social well-being.
- **Justice:** the research team must ensure that the benefits for participants are, at a minimum, equal to the risks.

Source: Adapted from *Undertaking Research with Ethics* (Dua and Raworth, 2012)

Staff coordinating fieldwork are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the research team, irrespective of who signs the contract, enjoys a minimum guaranteed standard in working conditions
- Managing workload and ensuring that deadlines are met
- Preparing **research tools** (scripts, questionnaires, etc.) and adapting tools as required during the research process
- Explaining any technical issues related to research tools to the fieldwork team
- Ensuring adequate storage of data (databases, documents, etc.)
- Ensuring that ethical standards are met during fieldwork

The fieldwork team is responsible for:

- Carrying out the fieldwork (interviews, focal groups, surveys, etc.)
- Proper storage of data
- Ensuring that ethical standards are met during fieldwork
- Including youth in fieldwork teams and sign-off

SKILLS AND PROFILE OF RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS

- Able to use mobile phones, computers and/or tablets for applying simple data collection software
- Have the skills and knowledge required for managing data processing, using the online repository, using databases, spreadsheets, etc.
- Have the necessary writing skills
- Have good communication skills for working with the study group, the team and other persons involved in the research
- Able and willing to work as a team
- Have a profile which is suited to the context (gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religion, etc.)
- Have the vernacular linguistic skills required for the research

Source: Adapted from *Doing research with enumerators* (Croome and Mager, 2018)

For further information on working with enumerators, please refer to the guide *Doing research with enumerators* (Croome and Mager, 2018)

Report authors:

- Develop the theoretical and conceptual framework
- Prepare the **desk review**
- Analyse data using the **theoretical framework**
- Propose the explanatory model
- Write the report

Other actors involved in the process:

- Persons responsible for **sign-off/approval**
- Experts to carry out a **peer review**
- Editing, translation and layout professionals



IV. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

BELIEF SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL NORMS T

STAGE	STEP
STAGE 1. DEVELOPING TORS FOR THE RESEARCH	1. Context and rationale for the research
	2. Identification of the target audience and use of results
	3. Research questions
	4. Research objectives
	5. Integration of a gender perspective and intersectional analysis
	6. Design of the research strategy
STAGE 2. DATA COLLECTION	7. Desk review (analysis of secondary data)
	8. Preparation of data collection tools
	9. Fieldwork: data collection
STAGE 3. PREPARING THE REPORT	10. Data analysis
	11. Development of an explanatory model for the results
	12. Writing the report
	13. Validating the report (peer review and sign-off/ approval)
	14. Publishing the report
STAGE 4. DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS	15. Media launch
	16. Uptake by organisations

FOR CARRYING OUT RESEARCH ON THE FACTORS THAT SUSTAIN AND/OR PROMOTE VAWG

OBJECTIVE	TOOLS	OXFAM GUIDES
Explain what the research is about and why it is a relevant issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ToRs of the <i>Breaking the Mould</i> study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Writing Terms of Reference for Research</i> • <i>Integrating Gender in Research Planning</i> • <i>Planning Survey Research</i>
Identify the target audience for the research and specify how the results will be used.		
Develop the questions that will guide the research.		
Determine the objective of the research in a concise manner, together with 3–6 secondary objectives.		
Specify integration of the gender and intersectional perspective in the research.		
Develop a methodological design (i.e. select methods and techniques to be used).		
Review background and available data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review of <i>Breaking the Mould</i> (Chapter 1) • Survey questionnaire from <i>Breaking the Mould</i> • Interview templates from <i>Breaking the Mould</i> • Script for focus groups from <i>Breaking the Mould</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Doing Research with Enumerators</i> • <i>Mobile Survey Toolkit</i> • <i>Conducting Focus Groups</i> • <i>Conducting Interviews</i> • <i>Researching Human Interest Stories</i> • <i>Responsible Data Management</i>
Define and prepare data collection tools.		
Plan and carry out fieldwork.		
Analyse quantitative and qualitative data to obtain results.		
Propose a model that makes it possible to organize the results and answer the research question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mirror model: <i>Breaking the Mould</i> (Chapter 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Creating Killer Facts and Graphics</i> • <i>Writing for Impact: Lessons from Journalism</i>
Prepare an informative report.		
Validate and fine-tune the report through the critical assessment of peers and other actors.		
Edit, translate and format the report.		
Launch and disseminate the campaign through the media.		
Monitor subsequent use of research results.		

What follows is a proposal on the **STAGES AND STEPS FOR CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH**, using examples from the research carried out for *Breaking the Mould*. This will enable any organisation to replicate research on the prevalence of belief systems and social norms and their links to VAWG.

STAGE 1 | Developing ToRs for the research

STEP ONE

Context and rationale for the research

STEP TWO

Study audience and use of results

STEP THREE

Setting the objectives of the research

STEP FOUR

Preparing the research questions

STEP FIVE

Ensuring a gender perspective in research

How do we start research on the prevalence of belief systems and social norms with regard to VAWG? First of all, we have to be aware that the clarity of the Terms of Reference (ToRs) provided to the researchers will be key to the quality of the study. In Stage 1, there are a number of steps to follow to develop the ToRs for the study.



For more detailed information on developing ToRs for research, read the Oxfam guide *Writing Terms of Reference for Research* (Raworth, 2019)

STEP 1 | Context and rationale for the research

The first step of any research project is to **describe the study's context**, providing a brief explanation of what the study is about and why it is of interest. For this, you should:

- establish links between the research project and Oxfam programmes and campaigns
- include background: similar, complementary research carried out previously in a different or similar context to your own

Once the context of the research has been determined, the rationale for carrying out the research must be explained, by answering the following questions: *Is the research relevant for social change? Why is it relevant to carry it out now? What gaps will the study cover?* The overarching question is: **What do we want to achieve with this project?**

THE AIM OF *BREAKING THE MOULD*

Breaking the Mould was carried out with the aim of identifying the main **harmful belief systems and social norms** prevalent among youth in order to prepare key campaign messages for the eight countries in the region where the *Enough!* campaign is ongoing.



STEP 2 | Study audience and use of results

It is important to determine who the intended audience for the research is and to briefly explain how the results will be used. This means that time must be set aside to reflect on the AUDIENCE (who for?) and the USES (what for?) of the research. Provide a space for reflection and, taking into account all you have read and discussed, define the audience and possible uses of your research. Here are a few pointers and examples from the research for *Breaking the Mould*:

QUESTIONS FOR THE RESEARCH AUDIENCE

- Who will read the results of the research?
- What will the research outputs look like?
- How will the research outputs be used?

AUDIENCES FOR *BREAKING THE MOULD*

PRIMARY AUDIENCE: opinion leaders, journalists and media.

SECONDARY AUDIENCE: key international organisations, women's and feminist organisations working on the campaign; donors, decision-makers, civil society, activists, researchers and institutions with an interest in belief systems and social norms that perpetuate violence against women; other international bodies.

***YOUNG PERSONS:** in the report, they are designated as an important target audience to be reached by other products of the public campaign developed as a result of the research.



QUESTIONS FOR IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE USES OF RESEARCH:

- Will the results be published directly?
- Will they be used to set the context in a broader report?
- What types of research products are required (reports, presentations, other materials)?

USES OF *BREAKING THE MOULD*

Breaking the Mould was a multi-country research process, which produced multiple products for different audiences. Some examples are: a global report, *Breaking the Mould*, published in Spanish and subsequently translated into English; and eight national reports, one for each of the countries taking part in the research. The report was planned to be easy to read, non-academic and well-researched, highlighting human stories, personal testimonies and paradigmatic cases.



STEP 3 | Setting the objectives of the research

Setting clear objectives is key to designing a quality research process. Very often, too many objectives are set with the hope of obtaining lots of information on a variety of subjects.

However, if you have too many objectives, the research may become too widespread and it will be difficult to obtain conclusive results on the more specific and pressing issues. Some of the questions that will help you set your objectives are: ***What is the research for? Why do we need this information?***

1. Determine the overarching objective of the research in a concise manner by answering the question: **What do you expect to achieve with this information?**
2. Set **3–6 secondary objectives** deriving from the key objective to help you break down the process and properly organise research activities.
3. Translate **each objective into a research task.**
4. Ensure that your objectives are operational by answering the question: **Have you set concise, specific, clear and well-defined objectives?**
5. Ask somebody with detailed knowledge on the issue to **read and critically assess the objectives.**

Source: Adapted from *Writing Terms of Reference for Research* (Raworth, 2019)

OBJECTIVES OF THE *BREAKING THE MOULD* RESEARCH

OVERARCHING OBJECTIVE

To identify and understand the beliefs and social norms of adolescents and young women and men in Latin America and the Caribbean, and their links to violence against women of different identities.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Use key data from the region to document the belief systems and social norms of adolescents and young women and men that serve to shape and legitimise violence against women.
- Provide the necessary input to guide the content, narrative, key messages and strategies of campaigns at country and regional level with the aim of changing such belief systems.



STEP 4 | Preparing the research questions

The research questions are derived from the objectives, and as such are the key questions you want the research to answer. Keep the following in mind:

- Focus on a small number of research questions
- Don't set questions that cannot actually be answered
- The questions can be listed using a similar order to that of the report itself

QUESTIONS USED IN THE RESEARCH FOR *BREAKING THE MOULD*:



- Relativas a los **imaginarios sociales**: *¿Cómo viven, perciben y piensan hombres y mujeres adolescentes y jóvenes de 15 a 25 años las violencias contra las mujeres? ¿Cuáles son los imaginarios sociales y normas sociales que prevalecen en esta población?*
- Relativas a los **actores**: *¿Qué actores tienen un rol fundamental en la construcción y reproducción de los imaginarios sociales que operan en adolescentes y jóvenes? ¿Cuánto influyen las iglesias, las familias, las escuelas y los medios en la construcción de dichos imaginarios sociales?*
- Influencia sobre los **medios de comunicación/plataformas digitales**: *¿qué tipo de mensajes sobre VCMN reciben? ¿qué mensajes les motiva a actuar? ¿Quién les influye (celebridades, sus familias, otros jóvenes, otros “influencers” en la sociedad? ¿Cuáles son las principales características del consumo cultural de estos jóvenes? ¿Qué medios de comunicación/plataformas digitales consumen? ¿Cuales les influyen más?*

STEP 5 | Ensuring a gender perspective in research

Oxfam recommends integrating a gender approach in all research. When writing the ToRs for your research, think about how the research and the resulting report will take gender justice issues and women’s rights into account. You will also need to consider how the proposed research focuses on the power relations between women and men and the impact that structural gender inequalities have on their lives.

Remember that gender is a cross-cutting issue, and as such must be taken into account in all stages of the research, from design to analysis, and during fieldwork.



For further information, read the Oxfam guide *Integrating Gender in Research Planning* (Parvez, Jayasinghe and Zaaroura, 2019)

WHY IS *BREAKING THE MOULD* AN EXAMPLE OF RESEARCH WITH A GENDER FOCUS?



- The research addresses power relations between women and men from the perspective of belief systems and social norms on violence and how those norms affect models of femininity and masculinity that in turn fuel discrimination and inequality against women and girls, resulting in or causing the structural violence they endure.
- The research frames VAWG as a violation of rights, specifically the right of women and girls to live their lives free from violence (Belém do Pará).
- The study includes intersectional analysis to explore how these social norms feed stereotypes and belief systems that affect not only gender inequality, but also other types of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, etc.

STEP 6 | Creating a methodological strategy and setting the groundwork for the research process

Having designed the study and established research objectives, you must now create a methodological strategy – i.e. you need to answer the question: *How will I achieve my research objectives?*

For this, you need to design a research plan and decide on the social research methods you will use. This guide explains how to use the five **research methods** applied in *Breaking the Mould*: desk review, survey, focal groups, interviews and human interest stories.



STAGE 2 | Data collection

You must now start your data collection. One of the most important elements is to collect your **data** in a responsible manner. You need to ensure that the following rights are upheld:

RIGHT TO BE INVOLVED / HEARD

To ensure that the rights of vulnerable populations are upheld, it is important that they are represented in the sample.

RIGHT TO DIGNITY AND RESPECT

Respecting the personal dignity of participants throughout all stages of the data life cycle is critical. Contextual issues must be taken into account during data collection. The research must be planned in such a way that participants do not shoulder excessive burdens.

RIGHT TO CONFIDENTIALITY

The right to confidentiality must be ensured during data processing. This requires privacy for participants during data collection, and secure data storage by research staff during the entire process.

RIGHT NOT TO BE SUBJECTED TO RISK(S)

No non-essential information will be collected, or information that might put participants at risk. Steps must be taken to ensure that the data collection or communication will have no negative physical, psychological or political impact on participants.

RIGHT TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

Participants have the right to receive information about the research in order to freely decide on their participation – i.e. we must work on the basis of **informed consent**.

Source: Adapted from the guide *Responsible Data at Oxfam* (Oxfam, 2017)

What is *informed consent*?

It is recommended that you hand over a printed copy and read the document together with the interviewee before collecting data. Once the interviewee has understood it, he/she should sign. The **informed consent** form covers:

- What is the study about?
- Who is carrying out the study?
- Why is the study important?
- How will the results be used?
- In what way will it help the participant? Why was the participant chosen?
- Promise of confidentiality
- Full contact details for research team
- Complaints mechanism

EXAMPLE OF INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR *BREAKING THE MOULD*

I, _____, of legal age,
residing at _____ in (country)
_____, with identity document
number, _____,

DECLARE:

That I hereby expressly and freely **AUTHORIZE** Oxfam to collect, reproduce and publicly communicate my name, story, voice and personal image through any means, including video, digital networks and the internet.

Oxfam and its affiliates may use my voice, my story, my name and my image, through the above means, in the framework of the projects it carries out, especially relating to women's rights, and for the promotion and dissemination thereof. Oxfam undertakes that it will not use my image, name or voice in any way as may cause harm to my personal dignity.

Signed in _____, on _____ 2019



METHOD 1 | Desk review (analysis of secondary data)

The **desk review** stage (or analysis of secondary data) involves **compiling, organizing and summarizing available information** to gain an understanding of the local context, as well as identifying knowledge gaps and describing the challenges involved in addressing the issues to be covered by the research. The steps in the desk review are: review of existing literature, analysis of secondary data, and preparation of a list of references.

STEPS FOR CARRYING OUT A DESK REVIEW



STEP 1 | Review of existing literature

This involves finding relevant information in existing *literature* (books, journal articles, reports, etc.) on the research topic.

RECOMMENDATION 1. CARRY OUT YOUR SEARCH ON THE BASIS OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

- What are the debates involving the issue?
- Who is involved in the debates?
- What are the unanswered questions?
- What will you contribute to the debate by answering your research questions?
- What institutions/organizations are already working on this issue?

RECOMMENDATION 2. BREAK THE ISSUE DOWN INTO SEVERAL THEMES, AND SET PRIORITIES.

RECOMMENDATION 3. CARRY OUT A CRITICAL REVIEW OF DOCUMENTATION: read available documents critically, noting the quality and trustworthiness of the sources.

RECOMMENDATION 4. ALWAYS REFER BACK TO YOUR RESEARCH QUESTIONS: read and organize the documentation in terms of relevance to your topic and any secondary themes.

Source: Adapted from the Oxfam guide *Reviewing the Existing Literature* (Raworth, 2019)

STEP 2 | Analysis of secondary data

Once a detailed literature review has been carried out, you must analyse the **secondary data** – i.e. all publicly available data (surveys, census data, legislation, etc.) to identify trends, gaps and future challenges.

STEP 3 | Save the information by creating a reference list

As you find relevant information, bibliographical references must be systematically kept using databases, specialized software, etc. Any suitable tool which allows you to systematize and reference your sources can be used.

Breaking the Mould carried out a desk review that involved analyzing and documenting Major trends in violence against women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean: a culture of impunity (see Chapter 1 of the report). This stage included a systematic and critical review of:

1. **legislative breakthroughs:** including an analysis of legislation and national plans to address violence against women;
2. **implementation gaps:** a critical analysis of the barriers for compliance with legislation based on secondary data;
3. **persistence of VAWG:** a compilation of available data on VAWG, including femicide rates by country.

METHOD 2 | Survey

Using a survey for the research will enable you to collect accurate and quantifiable information on a specific issue and population. Surveys are carried out on the basis of questionnaires, which allow obtaining structured and standardized replies that can subsequently be analysed statistically. Survey research can be expensive and time-consuming but, if properly designed and with a carefully selected sample, it can provide valuable data. The survey process consists of four steps:



1. Sampling

In most cases, conducting a survey of all the people in the population you are interested in is not feasible. The usual practice is therefore to select a representative subset of the whole population. This process is known as **sampling** and involves the following:

- a. **Determine the population you want to study** (e.g. young persons, women's organisations) in your research. This is your population of interest or UNIVERSE.
- b. **Identify the sampling frame:** This means finding the most comprehensive list that can be obtained of the sampling units in the population of interest (a census, list of registered students, list of association members, etc.) The sampling frame (list) must be as accurate and complete as possible.
- c. **Select the sample:** The sample is a subset of units selected from the sampling frame using probability or non-probability sampling techniques. Random (probability) samples are almost always preferable for allowing conclusions to be drawn about the whole population, since they reduce the risk of the evaluator introducing biases in the sample and allow the computation of confidence intervals and statistical significance, which is not possible in non-probability samples.
 - **Probability sampling techniques** include: random selection of units from the sample frame and dividing the population into groups (e.g. men and women, levels of wealth) followed by random sampling of units within each of these groups.
 - **Non-probability sampling techniques** include: convenience sampling, snowball sampling and purposeful sampling.


SURVEY SAMPLE FOR *BREAKING THE MOULD*



The sample for *Breaking the Mould* comprised **women and men aged 15–25 years**, of which 51 percent were aged 15–19 and 49 percent were aged 20–25. Of the total sample, 55 percent were women, 44 percent were men, and 1 percent were transgender men and women and others (as specified personally by the respondent). It is important to note that 87 percent said they lived in urban areas, 70 percent classed themselves as of medium social standing, and 78 percent were students. Of these, 37 percent were secondary school students and 50 percent university students. The sample was divided into two age groups (young persons aged 15–19 and 20–25), and according to gender. Division of the sample by age and gender and comparisons among countries have been key for highlighting specific issues and evidencing which particular beliefs and social norms are more prominent in a particular country and among a particular group (whether by age or gender).

2. Questionnaire design

Before making a start on preparation of the questionnaire, you must first choose how you will carry out the survey, as this will, to a large extent, determine its design. There are four ways you can deliver your survey questionnaire: face-to-face, by telephone, by post or online. Deciding which one to use will depend on the context.



In *Breaking the Mould*, 4,731 survey questionnaires were delivered in eight countries: Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua. At least 400 surveys were taken online, but in Bolivia and Cuba they were delivered face-to-face, with Nicaragua using both approaches. The online option included mailing using WhatsApp, Facebook and Messenger.

Prepare the **questionnaire** as follows:

- a. **Make a list of all the topics you want to collect information on**
- b. **Consult existing questionnaires prepared on similar issues**
- c. **Write the questionnaire taking the following points into account:**
 - Think of the language and characteristics of the study group when preparing the questions.
 - Use open-ended questions only if you want more in-depth information on a particular topic.
 - It is better to use questions with pre-defined answers: yes/no, multiple choice...
 - Make sure the wording is clear (verb tenses are correct, words are easy to understand...).
 - Use photographs or other images if this helps to understand the question.
 - Design a questionnaire that is easy to understand for any survey taker.
 - Do not prepare questionnaires that take more than an hour to deliver or fill in.
 - Use flexible units of measurement, especially for questions involving periods of time, payments or quantities.
 - Create 'skip' options (e.g. if respondent did not attend primary school, don't ask questions relating to secondary education).


HERE ARE SOME OF THE QUESTIONS FROM THE *BREAKING THE MOULD* QUESTIONNAIRE, WHICH COULD BE USED AS EXAMPLES WHEN PREPARING A NEW SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE:



The answers you provide are confidential and anonymous and will be used only for the purpose of implementing programmes linked to women and youth issues.

1. Do you think women's status in (country) is better, the same or worse than that of men in relation to: (tick a maximum of three)
 - Salaries
 - Opportunities for employment
 - Access to education
 - Possibility of balancing work/family time
 - Access to and use of public spaces
 - Ability to freely express their sexuality with persons of the same or opposite sex
 - Freedom to leave their partner
 - Decision on whether to have children
2. State your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements (from 1 to 4, where 1 is totally in disagreement and 4 is totally in agreement)
 - Secondary and university education is more important for men than for women
 - In the event of redundancy, it is better that the man keeps his employment
 - It is better for the men to provide financial income and for women to look after the family
 - Men and women should have the same responsibility for household tasks
 - It is not normal for people born with male genitals to dress as women
 - Transsexuals have the same rights as any other person
 - I would have no problem in having a transsexual as a friend
 - Homosexuals should not show their sexual orientation in public
 - Most women need men to protect them
 - It is normal for a man to call out a compliment or wolf-whistle at a woman/girl on the street
 - Violence against women is a result of inequalities between men and women

- d. **Pilot test the questionnaire:** Once the questionnaire has been prepared, you should test it on a small number of respondents who are not in the survey sample but are part of the population of interest. You can also validate the questionnaire with experts and young activists. This will ensure that the questions are understandable and that the structure and length of the questionnaire are appropriate.



You can review and use the questionnaire developed for *Breaking the Mould*. We recommend that you revise the questions and adapt the questionnaire to the context of your particular research.

3. Data compilation

It is now time to begin collecting your data. However, before going to the field you should perhaps seek permission from the local authorities (e.g. public bodies, indigenous leaders). Once in the field, remember to:

- Collect the data from participants in a structured and systematic manner.
- Assign a number and code to unequivocally identify each questionnaire collected.
- Take into account interviewee reactions possibly occasioned by the survey taker's gender.
- Take notes for consideration during subsequent results analysis.
- Supervise appropriate storage of data.

DATA COMPILATION FOR *BREAKING THE MOULD*



One of the keys to success in a multi-country research exercise such as *Breaking the Mould* was the network set up to obtain the relevant information. In order to collect information in the different countries, Oxfam LAC worked together with the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), a leading international non-government organization (NGO) in the region.

CLACSO played a very important role in the research for *Breaking the Mould*, with responsibility for data collection in several of the countries involved. CLACSO has local teams in a number of countries in the region, and they carried out the data collection.

Cooperation with local teams was crucial for collecting data at a local level, given that the staff comprising the teams know the local context and have ongoing relations of trust both with local fieldwork teams and with key actors in the region.

The lesson from the research process from *Breaking the Mould* is that, whenever possible, use local research teams, as they will be aware of social dynamics and know the local language in each context.

FROM TRADITIONAL RESEARCH TO RESEARCH USING MOBILE PHONE



Digitalization of data collection processes, using mobile phones or tablets, provides an opportunity to improve both the process and the accuracy of outputs. Some recommendations on the use of mobile devices are:

- Review the guide *Mobile Survey Toolkit* (Tomkys and Eldon, 2016).
- Ensure that the persons carrying out the data collection are familiar with the use of mobile devices.
- Read up on the tools available for mobile phone surveys: Mobenzi, Sprocker and SurveyCTO.

METHOD 3 | Focus groups

Focus groups are a method for collecting qualitative information on the attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions of individuals within a group setting. This method facilitates ownership of the topic being studied, with the group facilitator asking non-leading questions.

ORGANISING AND CONDUCTING A FOCUS GROUP



1. Prior considerations

- Select 8–12 participants using sampling criteria.
- The key sampling criteria to be applied: participants must have characteristics in common (e.g. rural youth), but the group should not be totally homogenous.
- Avoid including social scientists or experts: they have a prior set opinion!
- Prepare a facilitator script.
- Select a venue where participants can feel comfortable.
- Appoint an experienced facilitator matched to the characteristics of the group.
- Assign a person to help the facilitator prepare the focus group: recording device, preparation of the technical report, note-taking, etc.

2. During the focus group

- The facilitator should introduce him/herself and the participants, explain the procedure and set some ground rules.
- The group agrees on the length of the session.
- Relevant authorizations for recording/filming are signed.
- The **facilitator script** is used to guide the discussion, starting with general questions and subsequently narrowing down to specific issues.
- The facilitator ensures that all participants have a chance to speak.
- End the group session, giving all participants a chance to express their opinion.
- The assistant takes notes to prepare a **brief report** on the focus group session, with information on participants and group dynamics.

3. After the focus group

- a. Prepare an **executive report**, including:
 - **fact sheet** with details of participants (total number, with social and demographic characteristics), venue, time and date, facilitator details;
 - **reflection** using a map of participants and analysis of verbal and non-verbal communication.
- b. **Prepare a transcript of the focus group**, clearly specifying when it is the facilitator speaking and when it is participants speaking.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS



- Use the technique of the 'unfinished story': recount a situation but stop before providing a solution and the group debates possible outcomes.
- Use the 'other person' technique: this is useful for asking opinions on issues of interest, while talking of complex or painful personal issues as if they happened to 'other people'.
- Use tools such as timelines, rankings, maps, photographs, etc. to facilitate conversation flow or use other examples.
- Bring up fewer topics but allow longer debates on them.
- Avoid using technical or academic language or jargon.
- Make sure that all participants feel part of the conversation (using eye contact, body language, etc.)
- Be assertive with any participants who break the rules.

FOCUS GROUPS IN *BREAKING THE MOULD*



Research for Breaking the Mould organized **47 focus groups with young persons aged 15–25**. The focus groups were conducted after the survey stage. These focus groups with young persons aimed to reach youth groups which were underrepresented in the survey (rural youth, indigenous youth, etc.) The focus groups had a heterogeneous make-up (youth differentiated by age, gender, class, ethnicity, territory, type of group, and political perspective). Each focus group comprised 10–15 young persons. The aims of the focus groups were to ascertain:

- the most prevalent belief systems and social norms linked to VAWG, how they are constructed and reinforced;
- willingness to act or refrain from acting in the face of violence against women, and in what situations;
- influential persons identified as potential role models to be used in the campaign;
- how actors/influential persons exert influence, and in what areas; the specific norms they have influence on, and why certain actors are considered more influential than others;
- whether violence is considered a private matter; how it is expressed and the reasons for this;
- work on identifying situations of violence.

The following facilitator script can be used as a tool for conducting focus groups

FOCUS GROUP DYNAMICS IN *BREAKING THE MOULD*



Introduction (15 minutes)

All participants briefly introduce themselves

The facilitator asks each participant to think of a situation providing the best possible example of VAWG. The group then chooses two or three of these examples.

In-depth discussion (30')

The facilitator states the result of the above quantitative stage and initiates the discussion on the selected examples. As a group, all participants make a list (on a flipchart or board) of 10 expressions they agree on as examples of VAWG of this type.

Reflection (10')

Provide space for reflection, asking participants why they think there are people who justify and carry out this type of violence. Does the group think there is potential for changing this way of thinking?

Review of consumption and aesthetics (30')

A role-play is proposed, with the facilitator setting the scene:

'An advertising company hires you to plan a campaign aimed at changing the attitudes that justify gender violence among young persons.' Who would you choose to be role models in your campaign (and why)? What do you think could be an effective slogan? What media would you choose to publicise the campaign through?



For further information on how to conduct a focus group, read the Oxfam guide *Conducting Focus Groups* (Walsh, 2019)

METHOD 4 | In-depth interview

In-depth interviews allow us to understand the motivations, attitudes and beliefs of individuals we participating in the interview pool/ research project. Some tips and lessons learned:

En la investigación *Rompiendo Moldes* se llevaron a cabo **49 entrevistas en profundidad** para complementar y profundizar los datos producidos en los grupos focales y la encuesta. ¿A quiénes se entrevistó en esa segunda fase? Se entrevistó a **especialistas en el tema, periodistas y algunos influencers** con el fin de que ayudasen a interpretar los datos recogidos en la primera fase y también para recoger su conocimiento experto.



PREPARING AND CONDUCTING AN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW



Prior to the interview

- Identify suitable persons to be interviewed. This is known as qualitative sampling.
- Use the 'snowball' technique to broaden your contact base: ask each person you interview to suggest other people you could talk to.
- Make sure you respect local norms and customs.
- Introduce yourself and openly explain what you hope to achieve from the interview.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREPARING AN IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW TEMPLATE



- Include a FACT SHEET showing: place, date and time of the interview, full name and social and demographic details of the interviewee.
- Brainstorm 5–7 important issues to create thematic blocks.
- Base your template on these thematic blocks.
- Prepare questions for each thematic block.
- Formulate open questions, so that the interviewee can talk at length on the issue.
- Carry out a pilot interview to test your template and adjust it afterwards.

During the interview

- Commence by explaining all the details of the research and assign sufficient time to discuss and sign the **informed consent** form.
- Choose a venue that is convenient and comfortable for the interviewee (let him/her choose!).
- Tell the interviewee how long the interview will be, and make sure you keep to the timing. Recommended length is 60–90 minutes.
- Use a voice recorder or mobile phone to record the conversation so you can concentrate on what the interviewee is saying.
- If it helps, take notes while you listen to capture the most relevant information.

After the interview

- Note the agreement reached regarding anonymity and names to be used.
- As soon as you leave, write up notes on all that occurred during the interview.
- Write up a clean version of any analytical notes taken as soon as possible.
- Transcribe the interview literally, clearly recording when interviewer/interviewee is talking.

➔ For further information on how to conduct an in-depth interview, read the Oxfam guide *Conducting Semi-structured Interviews* (Raworth et al., 2012)



The interview template used for *Breaking the Mould*, (see box) which can serve as an example and be adapted for use in other settings:



IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW TEMPLATE FOR *BREAKING THE MOULD*

A. About the Interviewee

1. Personal details (age, gender/sex, home address, occupation, family composition, any other details he/she may volunteer).
2. If the interviewee is not a young person but from one of the other groups suggested for interview, ask what organisation they come from and the experience or knowledge they have regarding the issue.
3. A first approach as to the nature of their involvement in the issue of violence against women. Do they consider it a problem? How are they affected by it? Opinion on the issue? Are they personally affected, or do they know of any cases? What action, if any, did they take?

B. Perceptions, concept and any memories of violence

1. Opinion regarding violence against women in their country.
2. Key impressions or memories when thinking of violence against women in their country.
3. What images (media, historical, artistic, etc.) most faithfully represent violence against women in their country, and also resistance against such violence?

C. Issues to be dealt with in greater detail

1. Delve deeper into issues such as racism, discrimination, social inequalities and territory in relation to violence against women.
2. Violence in schools and other institutions.
3. Status of young persons in relation to sexual orientation and gender identities, as well as disabilities.
4. Links between violence against women and ethnic violence.
5. Masculinities in relation to violence against women.
6. How models of state authority and religious fundamentalism act to perpetuate or counter violence against women.
7. What social norms and values contribute to violence against women and which ones could counter it.
8. What barriers to combating violence against women the interviewee can identify, focusing on those linked to sociocultural issues.
9. If they are already carrying out activity linked to these issues, ask what other processes or activities could be promoted with young people.
10. Alternatives to prevailing belief systems and social norms. What positive social belief systems should be promoted to combat violence against women?

D. Influencers and campaigns

1. Contents and form of the messages being received by young persons, and which of these have the greatest impact in terms of general violence content and violence against women in particular.
2. How do the adults relevant to these young persons (parents, teachers, guardians, trainers, others) behave? Do they perpetuate violence? Provide awareness-raising?
3. What channels/figures could have greater influence on young persons (media, celebrities) for raising awareness and preventing violence against women?
4. Do you know of any campaign or project that addressed the issue in your country? What did you think of it? What do you remember?
5. How would you plan and implement a campaign for preventing violence against women if you were responsible for it? (platforms, issues, content, format, images, actors, etc.)
6. If you had to suggest a role model for designing a campaign to combat violence against women, who would it be? Why?

METHOD 5 | Human interest stories

Human interest stories aim to highlight a specific issue from the perspective of an individual or group of persons. The power of such stories lies in their ability to bring issues to life, clearly showing the relationship between ‘macro’ policy questions and the ‘micro’ impacts they have on people’s lives. These stories help illustrate the complexity of political and socioeconomic realities because they combine factual and emotional content. A **human-interest story** must be based on three sources of information:

- **INFORMATION FROM RELEVANT ACTORS WHO DESIGN AND FOLLOW UP THE STORY**
- **DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH PRIOR TO INTERVIEWS**
- **PERSONAL STORY, AS TOLD THROUGH AN INTERVIEW**

Compiling quality material for writing a human-interest story requires:

- **Time:** Take time to introduce yourself, explain your objective, confirm that the person is willing to participate and carry out the interview.
- **Space:** Try and make the interviewee as comfortable as possible.
- **Authenticity:** Allow the interviewee to talk, even if their replies aren’t what you were expecting to hear. Behave naturally and make sure it is a conversation between equals.

Source: Adapted from *Researching Human Interest Stories* (Scott, 2019)



REMEMBER

- A human-interest story does not seek to simplify an issue or subject, but rather to provide a real-life perspective on that issue.
- Prepare your draft carefully and show it to the person whose story it tells. The story must be approved by the person as it is their personal testimony.
- Send a copy of the draft to someone representative of the audience group you are writing for and/or relevant local actors.



ANITA GUERRERO, NICARAGUA

«What you don't talk about doesn't exist»

«What you don't talk about doesn't exist», says Anita Guerrero, a young lesbian aged 25 who four years ago decided to speak out about her sexual orientation and tackle discrimination with information, organization and active participation in all kind of activities to raise the profile of the LGBT community in Nicaragua. Telling her parents that she liked a woman was a big step in this process, a step that she took though it frightened her to do so, but which has been her motivation to keep reaffirming her identity and her rights. «My parents are no different from other parents, they also went through a process of not knowing what lesbian and sexual diversity meant; but they lived through it in another way, they wanted to know and opened their minds to understand», says Anita. It has also been a long process for her, not only to get her family's acceptance, but also because being a lesbian in Nicaragua is not easy. As she says: «I'm not afraid to walk hand-in-hand with my partner, but I am aware that there are places where I can't risk being verbally or physically abused for expressing my affection for a woman; some women have been submitted to sexual abuse as a way of putting them right. This type of violence means that we can't just walk quietly on the streets without feeling fear; it is frightening to think that you may not get home alive one day». But fear has not dented her desire to move forward; on the contrary, it has made her work with various organizations and take part in marches, demonstrations and workshops; she does this because she feels that is what she wants to do, and also «because one day I want to be a citizen with all the rights I deserve as an inhabitant of this world».



Figure 2. The story of Anita Guerrero – an example of a human interest story providing strength and legitimacy to the *Breaking the Mould* report. Source: Oxfam, 2018: 67)

STAGE 3 | Preparing the report

Data processing and analysis, and drawing conclusions, creating conceptual models, classifications, maps, etc., are at the heart of social research. It is important to assign sufficient time and care to this stage of the study.

STEP 1 | Data analysis

Data forms the core of any research, which means that this is the most sensitive part of the whole process. Whether you are analyzing **qualitative** or **quantitative data**, you need to carry out two processes:

1. Data entry:

Unless data was collected using electronic devices (mobile phones or tablets), data recorded on paper questionnaires will have to be translated into electronic format (database creation and transcription). The data entry process can be undertaken using any one of a range of software packages. Qualitative data can be entered using word processors and quantitative data can be processed using spreadsheets, but we recommend the use of specific programmes, such as **SPSS** (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for survey data and **Atlas Ti** for qualitative data. Remember that data must be stored securely and in an appropriately organized manner, given that all data is confidential and a valuable source of information that you may use again or share in the future.

2. Data analysis:

As the data must be critically examined to reach findings. If you have no experience in data analysis, it is recommended that you seek the assistance of an experienced expert to help in this respect.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Simple statistical techniques (percentages, average, mode, variance) can be used for simple analyses. Depending on the sample size, correlations and simple regression models can also be used, although such analyses are more technical and complex. Diagrams are then prepared using the statistical result to synthesize results, as graphics are a powerful tool to represent information and bring legitimacy to the research.

In *Breaking the Mould*, data was collected on an Excel database, to be subsequently processed using SPSS, a statistical programme used widely for social sciences. The programme has the capacity to process large amounts of survey data and allows cross-checking, calculation of frequencies, comparison of averages, cross tabulations, etc. There are other free open-code programmes for quantitative data analysis, one example being PSPP. The data processing involved a total of 4,731 surveys being entered into SPSS and coded. Responses were analyzed for each question, going through all the research questions and assessing possible cross-cutting issues that could be relevant for understanding the beliefs young persons have in relation to VAWG that can help identify social norms, channels through which such norms are transmitted, patterns for transformation of such norms, etc. One of the issues with most significance for report findings was the differentiated analysis of responses provided by men vs those provided by women.



This graph, prepared by the researchers who analyzed the data and wrote the *Breaking the Mould* report, is an example of the processing of data considered relevant for the research. The question seeks to identify the link that young people perceive between VAWG and gender inequality. The breakdown of data by country and gender makes it possible to compare data within the region by country as well as by gender. A bar chart provides large amounts of information in a reduced space, as the example shows:

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS PRODUCT OF GENDER INEQUALITIES

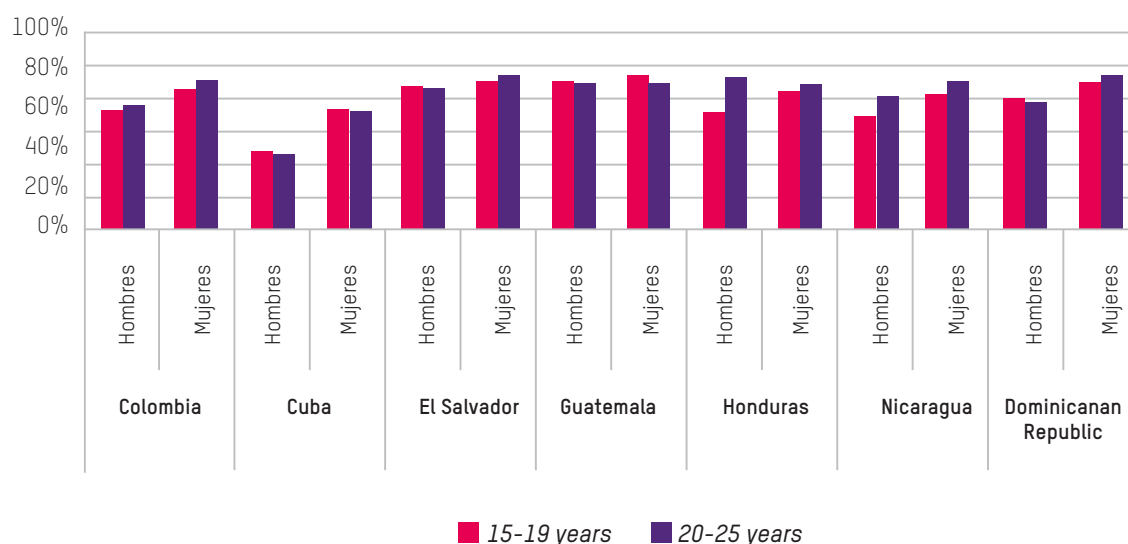


Figure 3. Graph from the report *Breaking the Mould* (Ruiz and Garrido, 2018: 78)

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Some people believe that qualitative research results in a succession of long paragraphs with lots of information and fragments of qualitative data (known as verbatim). However, the results of qualitative research can be summarized and represented with the help of tables and figures. The **tables** are not simply sets of numbers, but matrixes providing information in a summarized form. The **figures** allow us to express ideas and concepts and, more specifically, influence processes and relationships.

In the case of *Breaking the Mould*, qualitative data from interviews and focus groups served to create the explanatory model, carry out campaign work and, in the actual report, illustrate its points with different types of data. Throughout the report, several examples of personal stories were included to illustrate some of the issues that were evidenced with quantitative data and provide alternatives to negative belief systems and social norms.



EXAMPLES OF QUALITATIVE DATA INCLUDED IN THE REPORT:

For Jonathan, justice needs to be put into practice. His desire to work for human rights and his social commitment led him to study social communication at the UCA. «Language for me is a powerful tool with which to communicate the truth. It is up to us young people to break the status quo that traditionally imposes (sexist) roles on women and men and creates a culture of domination over women that is unfair», he says.

When he saw her dressed as a woman, her father threw her out of the house and never again had anything to do with her. «It was very hard. I didn't know anything about life, and it was only thanks to a transvestite who took me in that I did not have to sleep on the street. From there I grew up in a very violent world, with people from a bad environment. But they opened their doors for me, and for that I am eternally grateful to them».

STEP 2 | Structuring the findings into a model

The final stage before writing the report is **organizing the findings into a model or template**. This is a creative stage with a lot of thinking involved in how best to order and organise the data to evidence the various connections between concepts, with a view to building a complete picture of the issue researched. Now is the time to come up with **maps, classifications and models that can be linked to the research objectives and questions**.

Data collected during research is usually extremely varied, as it is sourced from the survey, interviews and focus groups. A thorough and creative job is therefore required to present the data in a way that can provide a reply to your research question(s). Although all of the data is important, it is necessary to analyze it critically in order to identify what will actually allow you to build a theory or model, and what simply provides secondary information or illustrates the concepts you wish to communicate.

MIRRORS: A POWERFUL METAPHOR TO EXPLAIN HOW BELIEF SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL NORMS WORK IN *BREAKING THE MOULD*



Having processed and analyzed all the data, researchers in *Breaking the Mould* identified a set of belief systems on VAWG that were clearly prevalent among young persons in the eight countries of the study. Moreover, they found that each belief system was in turn made up of a number of attitudes and behaviours. In order to structure the data in a meaningful way, they drew up the **metaphor of mirrors as a reflection of these belief systems and social norms**. This metaphor is hugely compelling to explain the idea that the belief systems and social norms are a reflection of society, and we see and recognize ourselves in it. Social science often uses metaphors as an aid in structuring and explaining research results.

Ranalyzing the data collected for *Breaking the Mould* realized that, in general terms, **the beliefs and attitudes shaping social norms on VAWG were negative**. Continuing with the mirrors metaphor, they decided to structure the systems into key beliefs, and concluded that **there were a number of systems falling into three categories**:

DISTORTING MIRRORS

are beliefs, attitudes and norms associated with direct control over women's bodies in relation to one of the strongest champions of hegemonic masculinity: male virility.

AUGMENTING MIRRORS

include beliefs that are also expressions of control, but in relation to romantic love and expressions of sexuality that leave no room for anything other than compulsory heterosexuality.

WORN MIRRORS

include beliefs that standardize certain forms of violence and entrenched ideas about which attributes make a good woman, which exploit women's bodies and how they use their time, and which are wholly incompatible with life.



Within these categories, **eight belief systems were created and the key beliefs for each summarized**. Quantitative data was then analyzed again to identify what profiles (age, gender, class) identified most closely with these beliefs/attitudes/categories. Thus, all the findings were integrated into the model. Here is one example summarising the model and the data to illustrate and support it. For the full analysis, see the *Breaking the Mould* report

DISTORTING MIRRORS



BELIEF SYSTEMS AND GENDER NORMS	BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOURS THAT SUSTAIN THEM	GROUPS WITH THE HIGHEST FIGURES, REGIONAL AVERAGE
1 Men should take advantage of all the opportunities that arise, women typically give grounds for this	A decent woman should not dress provocatively, nor walk alone on the streets late at night	Men 15-19 years: 72%
	If a woman gets drunk, then a man can have sexual relations with her, even if she is not conscious	Men 15-19 years: 40%
2 A real man must have sexual relations when he wants and with whoever he wants; not so for women	Women sometimes act hard to get for having sexual relations, saying NO when they really mean YES	Men 15-19 years: 65%
	It is common for a man who is drunk to beat or force a woman to have sexual relations	Men 15-19 years: 62%
	Men get angry if their partner does not want to have sexual relations. What they think their friends believe	Men 20-25 years: 69%
	Men can have sexual relations with whoever they want, women cannot. What they think their friends believe	Men and Women 20-25 years: 81%
	Men have greater sexual desire than women	Women and Men 15-19 years: 88%
3 Women's bodies should always be controlled, available and criticised	It is safer for women if a man accompanies them on the street. What they think their friends believe	Men 20-25 years: 87%
	It is normal for a man to compliment a woman on the street. What they think their friends believe	Women 20-25 years: 78%
	It is not appropriate for a woman to end an unwanted pregnancy	Men 15-19 years: 84%

Figure 4. Findings from the research in *Breaking the Mould* (Ruiz and Garrido, 2018: 54)

STEP 3 | Writing the report

This research aims to influence and impact specific groups, leading to changes in the knowledge and attitudes of previously determined audiences or target groups. This will not happen if we fail to communicate results in an effective manner. Oxfam therefore makes the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 1 | Use journalistic techniques when writing your report

- **Tell stories:** The report should focus on people and human stories. Remember that data and statistics should explain how these matters affect ordinary people's life.
- **Keep it as brief as possible:** Provide a short, simple explanation, with only the most relevant data, and look to tell the human story.
- **Use plain language to reach your target audience:** Use ordinary, everyday words that are not excessively technical, and avoid using jargon or acronyms.
- **Design your report for impact:** Include a clear and concise executive summary at the beginning, stating the key findings and main arguments.

RECOMMENDATION 2 | Use 'impactful' facts

'Impactful facts' are punchy, memorable, attention-grabbing statistics that get repeated. They are known as 'impactful' facts because they effectively kill off or destroy any opposing arguments.



- **Use big numbers:** use statistics showing the extent of the problem.
- **Put data side by side** to highlight the injustice and double standards of organizations and states (e.g. by comparing spending on education and on arms).
- **Use surprising statistics.**
- **Explain the data in a way that is easy to understand:** e.g. instead of '25%' use '1 out of every 4'

**MEN SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARISE,
WOMEN TYPICALLY GIVE GROUNDS FOR THIS.**

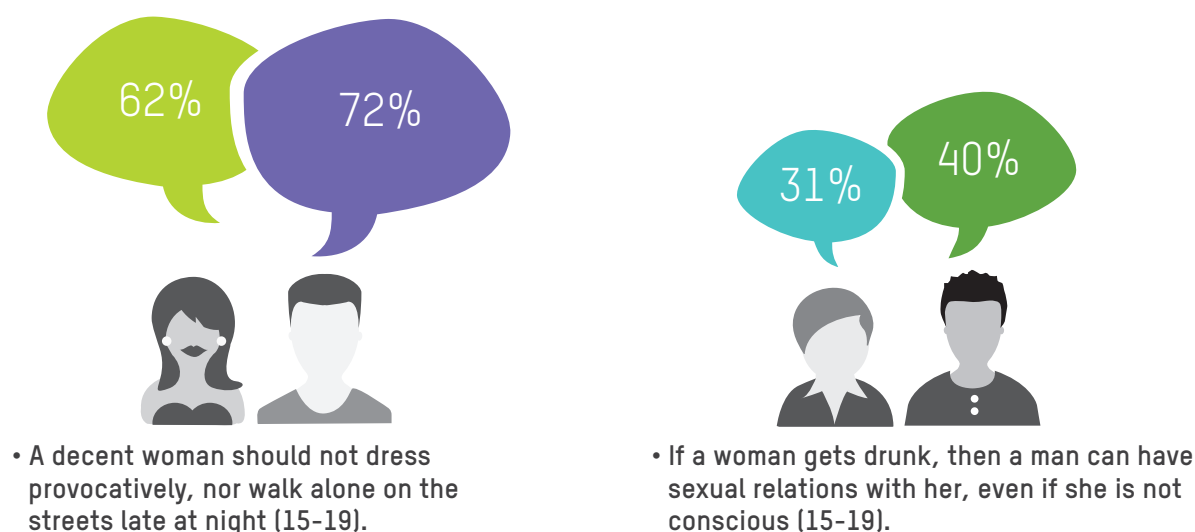


Figure 5. Example of killer facts in *Breaking the Mould* (Ruiz and Garrido, 2018: 54)

RECOMMENDATION 3 | Use graphics and infographics

Figures can speak louder than words, so use them – but with caution! Use infographics to illustrate contrasts in data, trends and projections for the future. Here is an example of an infographic used in *Breaking the Mould*, which graphically summarizes a set of relevant data (Ruiz and Garrido, 2018: 77).

POSITIVE BELIEFS EMERGING AMONG WOMEN AND MEN ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



VERIFY THE QUALITY OF YOUR REPORT USING THIS CHECKLIST



- ☒ I am totally certain of the data used in the report.
- ☒ The language used is not complex or excessively technical or academic.
- ☒ I haven't used words which imply approximation or are conditional (e.g. 'up to', 'could').
- ☒ Sources are fully referenced in the report
- ☒ Sources are reliable, respected and up to date
- ☒ An expert statistician has reviewed the results
- ☒ I have verified the impactful facts before using them, as data may have changed
- ☒ There are not too many impactful facts in a single document, only the most powerful
- ☒ The best impactful facts are included in the executive summary
- ☒ The research faithfully reflects the voices of the study group
- ☒ The report gives weight to all participants in the research process
- ☒ The results answer the research questions
- ☒ It identifies other results that contribute to the debate but were not initially included in the research assumptions or objectives

STEP 4 | Validation of the report

Sign-off process

The sign-off process is hugely important for providing legitimacy and rigour to any human rights-based research. By **sign-off** we mean getting local actors, allies and partner organizations who have contributed to the research and will make use of the resulting data to provide their approval. Oxfam firmly believes it is essential for local partners and grassroots organizations to review any report drafts and materials before publication. Why? Because reports written by consultants, university professionals or members of civil society could be prone to errors, such as:

- Introducing a **misunderstanding of the context** and distorting local realities, such as cultural concepts, legal issues in a particular country, etc.
- Using **problematic language**: language that cannot be understood because it is in a different dialect, using forms with negative connotations, etc.
- Introducing **biases** from the research team or the research process itself, such as gender bias, ethnocentric bias, etc.
- Committing **mistakes**: erroneous data, obsolete statistics, etc.

- Sign-off should preferably be carried out by at least two persons from a local organization: a partner organization and/or an organization that will use the results. Two sets of eyes are better than one!
- For very technical issues, such as VAWG or an analysis of belief systems, sign-off should preferably be done by an expert within the organization, or at least someone who is knowledgeable on the issue. If there is no one, get someone whose work you trust to do it.
- Plan the sign-off process well in advance: you should let the people who will be involved know so that they can plan the dates and the time they will need to do the work.
- Leave plenty of time for sign-off to be done properly. However, it should not be excessively drawn out, nor should too many people be involved in the review, as this could make it an overly -consuming process.



Mechanisms for *peer review*

A **peer review** is a tool used for critical assessment of scientific papers by experts who are not part of the research team. The aim is to assess the **quality, accuracy and scientific rigour** of the study. This is part of the critical, independent and unbiased assessment process for all research. Being subjected to *peer review* provides a space for debate within the organization and ensures the quality of the report.

PEER REVIEW OF *BREAKING THE MOULD*

Once the *Breaking the Mould* report was finished, the research team sent it to three organizations knowledgeable on the study issue and with ample critical capacity for reviewing the report: the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), RedLAC (Latin American and Caribbean Youth Network for Sexual Rights) and the feminist media platform LATFEM. Each of these organizations read the report and provided input, ensuring that the final published document included diverse perspectives and was accepted by the most relevant social groups in connection with the research issue.



SHARING FINDINGS AND REFLECTION

In addition to the process of approval through sign-off and peer review, when the final version of the *Breaking the Mould* report was ready, regional reports and many of the results of the research had already been shared with Oxfam LAC partners and used in various campaign design workshops. In fact, the results were communicated at the 14th Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Congress (EFLAC) held in Montevideo (Uruguay) in November 2017. The documents available then were well-received by the relevant actors of a number of organizations, and suggestions were made that were incorporated into the final version of the report, in the section on recommendations and conclusions. Moreover, **national campaign design workshops** worked closely with local partners. The results of the national reports were presented in these workshops, thereby creating a feedback mechanism between the research and the campaign design workshops. These sharing platforms contributed hugely to making *Breaking the Mould* a rich and comprehensive report which included numerous perspectives and perceptions of the issue being studied.



88.451 Me Gusta

#oar #evolucionaporaNoViolencia

Ver los 3000 comentarios

2 minutos

STAGE 4 | Dissemination of results

STEP 1 | Media launch

After the final report has been validated by partner organizations and reviewed, it is time for its media launch. Appropriate management of release helps the report reach a wider audience, and it is therefore necessary to develop a **communication strategy**. A communication strategy covers what it is you want to communicate, who you want to communicate it to, and how you wish to do so. Communicating a report requires the research team and a team of communications professionals to work together.

What steps must be followed to launch the report?

1. Preparing a communication strategy requires having a clear aim in mind, to answer the question: **Why do we want the media to cover this report?**
 - In the case of *Breaking the Mould*, the aim was threefold: to put the issue on the political agenda; to ensure that the report was read by decision makers; and to drive public debate on the issue.
2. Once you are clear about your aim, you must select your target audience, by answering the question: **Who do we want to reach with this communication strategy?**
 - In the case of *Breaking the Mould*, the **primary audience** consisted of journalists, journalism and/or communications students, researchers, feminist and women's organizations, youth groups and activists. The **secondary audience** was young people (aged 18–21) active on social networks.
3. The most important part of the communication process is crafting **key messages**. To identify what those key messages are, you must work with the people who have carried out the research and who are familiar with the data to enable prioritization of such messages. **In the case of *Breaking the Mould*, the four key messages were as follows:**
 - Violence against women is a major problem in Latin America and the Caribbean.
 - Violence against women is very much a part of the lives of young persons.
 - Young persons still consider violence against women as 'normal'.
 - Social networks are a double-edged sword.
4. The communication strategy designs a series of activities to be carried out on a specific timeline and through targeted channels. **Activities** usually include a media plan (press releases, op-eds) and a social network plan (promotion on social networks, live tweeting...)
5. You also need to prepare the **materials** to be used for implementing the activities.
 - In the case of *Breaking the Mould* a large amount of material was prepared with the aim of reaching different audiences through different channels, both traditional and social networks. The following were prepared: a press release, an interactive webpage, internal blogs, share graphics, memes, short videos, report download page, etc.

Breaking the Mould was regionally released in Bogotá (Colombia) in 2018 with the aim of reaching a global audience. In the months following its release, it was locally presented in a large number of locations through the work of numerous spokespersons for the report. The combination of a suitable communication strategy and the fact that many actors took ownership of the report contributed to making *Breaking the Mould* one of the most widely disseminated and most read reports in Oxfam's history. Oxfam communication staff involved in the launch of the *Breaking the Mould* in LAC **highlight the following lessons** learned for the communication of similar reports in future (see box):

- Design **widespread media coverage** (to include all types of media).
- Provide a very precise definition of the **target audience** for the research results to facilitate appropriate messages and language.
- Take great care when **preparing the key messages**.
- **Work carefully on the language used**, depending on the literacy levels of the different audiences
- Prepare a **pre-release of the report**, sharing it under embargo.
- **Create alliances** with key media prior to release.
- Prepare **specific documents for journalists**.



FORUM WITH JOURNALISTS AND THE MEDIA

In 2017, Oxfam LAC organised the meeting *Transformative journalism: how to report and combat violence against women* in Bogotá (Colombia), which was attended by more than 20 journalists from Latin America and Spain. The meeting provided a platform for exchanging ideas on how to achieve an ethical, socially responsible and committed journalism for defending women's rights. The *Breaking the Mould* report was launched on a regional level in the context of that meeting.





Ejemplo de gráfico de campaña diseñado para difundirse en redes sociales. Fuente: Oxfam.

STEP 2 | Uptake of the report by partner organizations

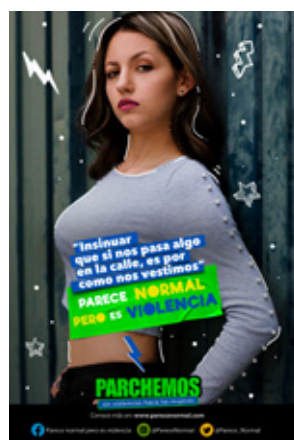
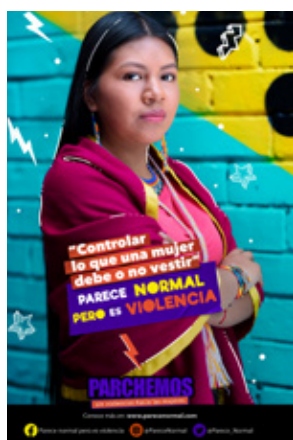
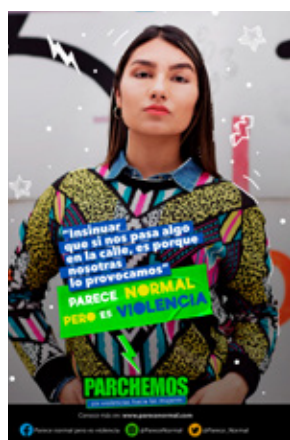
One of the keys to the success of *Breaking the Mould* was the uptake of the study by local partner organizations in all of the countries in which the research was carried out. As already highlighted in this guide, input from Oxfam LAC's partner organizations was important throughout the process. Below are a few examples of the participation and uptake by partner organizations.

EXAMPLE 1 | Lessons learned from Bolivia: Oxfam and Colectivo Rebeldía

Colectivo Rebeldía is a Bolivian feminist group which has been involved in fighting for women's rights for over 20 years, through advocacy, mobilization, capacity building and research. In their efforts to understand the links between social beliefs and VAWG, the group carried out a **participatory action study** with young people from El Alto, La Paz and Santa Cruz. The research involved a group of 30 young persons, who received training to become co-researchers rather than research subjects. According to the organization: *'We applied this methodology because it acts as a tool for empowering people taking part in it; the participants are not merely research subjects, but rather leading actors in the process. By contributing their own experiences and life stories, greater commitment to achieving change and constructing new agents for change is generated.'*

EXAMPLE 2 | Dissemination of the report by RedLAC

RedLAC (the Latin American and Caribbean Youth Network for Sexual Rights) was not only involved in the study review process as a leading actor, it was also one of the key organizations involved in disseminating the findings of *Breaking the Mould* by featuring them in context-specific messages that were shared through RedLAC's own communication channels. Here are some of the summary-images created with a view to dissemination on social networks such as Twitter:



GLOSSARY OF METHODOLOGICAL TERMS

Informed consent

The means through which people agree to provide information for a study or project, which states that they have been fully informed of the objectives of data collection and the manner in which such data will be used, in order that a decision on participation can be freely taken.

Data

The physical representation of information in a manner suitable for communication, interpretation and processing by manual or automatic means.

Qualitative data

Generally descriptive data, which is difficult to measure. This type of data is normally gathered using open-ended questions during an interview or focus group.

Quantitative data

Numerical data, usually obtained from surveys having questions with pre-defined or multiple choice answers, which is easy to measure.

Secondary data

Information and data prepared by other persons or institutions.

Desk review

Documentary review of existing literature and secondary data available on a specific issue.

Social research tool

A tool allowing fieldwork to be carried out through a specific research method (e.g. a survey questionnaire).

Conceptual framework

Details and discussion of the concepts to be used in the research.

Theoretical framework

Theoretical foundation that supports the analysis of the research, built on existing theories.

Participants

The preferred term for expanding the term 'data owner' in order to include any group, cooperative or other organization Oxfam works with to provide programme data.

Data enumerator

A person or organization collecting data on behalf of the person responsible for data processing.

Peer review

Review and critical analysis of a piece of research by other researchers or experts in order to validate the research.

Sign-off

Process for review and approval of the research by partner and beneficiary organizations.

Social research method

Set of actions and tools used to collect data for social research.

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I NOTES

- 1 The countries involved in the research and the Enough! campaign are: Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic and Bolivia. Oxfam Bolivia prepared its national report together with the organisation Coordinadora de la Mujer and other institutions in the country. In all other countries, the research was carried out together with CLACSO.
- 2 The full Breaking the Mould report is available at: <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/620524/rr-breaking-the%20-mould-250718-en.pdf>

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For further information on the issues raised in this paper please email msambade@oxfamintermon.org

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ENOUGH
TOGETHER WE CAN END VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

