Preventing Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls*: What’s Economics Got to Do with It?

Economic Insecurity can increase the likelihood of violence

- Higher unemployment rates are associated with higher rates of sexual violence.
- Living in a high poverty neighborhood increases the risk of being a victim of sexual violence.
- Women experiencing housing insecurity may be two to four times more likely to experience sexual violence.

Economic Security can prevent violence at all levels of society

- Societies where women have higher occupational and educational statuses have lower rates of sexual violence.
- Policies that reduce economic inequality, such as paid family leave and subsidized preschool, may indirectly decrease sexual violence.
- Emerging research finds that income building programs may reduce sexual violence prevalence in half.

*The term "girls and women" may include, but is not limited to, the following: trans girls and women; nonbinary, gender non-conforming, and gender queer youth and adults; girl-identified youth, and; cis-gender girls and women.

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### What can be done to strengthen economic security and prevent sexual violence?

Strengthening investments in the following areas may help prevent sexual violence at all levels of society:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income Building Programs</td>
<td>such as microfinance loans (e.g., Kiva) and other entrepreneurship programs.</td>
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<td>Living Wage Policies</td>
<td>that help ensure that a full-time worker can afford basic necessities (e.g., housing, childcare) for themselves and their family.</td>
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<td>Credit and Debt Management Programs</td>
<td>to address long-term barriers related to credit and debt issues.</td>
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<td>Housing Security</td>
<td>including rental assistance, shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing.</td>
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<td>Paid Family Leave</td>
<td>which may help reduce the gender pay gap in the long-run.</td>
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<td>Cash Assistance</td>
<td>for vulnerable populations, such as low-income pregnant parents.</td>
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*Sexual Violence (SV) is defined as sexual activity when consent is not obtained or freely given. Most information presented in this fact sheet pertain to non-IPV (intimate partner violence) sexual violence, though some source combine IPV and SV. See references for further information.

### References


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