Victimization Survey for the SDGs

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1. Giving Voice to Victims

- Victimization surveys are crime diagnostic tools that give voice to victims and witnesses of crime.

(UNODC, “National approaches to public participation in strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice”, Working paper prepared by the Secretariat, Thirteenth UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice,A/CONF.222/9. 2015.para.59.)

2. Aim of the Victimization Survey

- The aim of the Survey is to account for types of crime that are often underreported by police-recorded statistics, such as violence against children, rape and domestic violence.

- Victimization data and statistics are crucial for setting up specific targets and objectives for more effective crime prevention and justice systems.

(UNODC, "National approaches to public participation in strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice", Working paper prepared by the Secretariat, Thirteenth UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, A/CONF.222/9. 2015.para.59.)

3-1. Message for policy makers

(UNODC, MANUAL ON VICTIMIZATION SURVEYS, 2010)

- Crime is no longer seen as a problem in isolation, and policy-makers, researchers and service providers now view crime as relational to other social and economic conditions. As such, statistics that relate only to the criminal justice system can provide a partial and incomplete picture of crime in society.

- As crime can have a significant economic and social impact, governments invest heavily in the prevention of criminal activity and promote personal and community safety, including community confidence in law and order.

3-2. Message for policy makers

- A sound evidence base is essential in the development of crime prevention policy and programmes aimed at preventing or reducing crime, improving community safety and reducing fear of crime in communities.

- This evidence base can also be used to assess the effectiveness of crime prevention programmes by government.

3-3. Message for policy makers

- National crime victimization surveys provide a valuable source of information to policy makers and can be used to understand the level and nature of both personal and household crime, as well as people's perceptions of safety in the community and their confidence in law enforcement agencies.

- Both actual and perceived risks of crime can be indicators of community well-being.

3-4. Message for policy makers

- Surveys can cover a range of incidences and experiences not all of which may be actual crimes according to the law, or as recognized by criminal justice agencies as being within their area of responsibility.

- Administrative sources, such as the statistics obtained from the police or courts, will only measure incidents which are brought to the attention of the authorities and which are subject to their influence.

- Hence, a victimization survey can identify experiences which would not normally be identified through those administrative sources.

3-5. Message for policy makers

- Depending on the budget availability a range of questions can be answered from a victimization survey such as:

- What are the characteristics of victims and perpetrators?
- What are the risks of becoming a victim?
- Have perceptions of safety changed over time?
- How much crime is reported to authorities and if it is not, why not?
- Are crime prevention policies working?
- Is there a relationship between fear of crime and actual levels of crime?
- What is the impact on vulnerable groups in the community such as migrants, indigenous people, the elderly or those with a mental illness?

4-1. An important criminal policy information source, BUT

(Kauko Aromaa , Victimisation surveys – what are they good for?, TEMIDA Jun 2012: 91)

- Why such a useful instrument has been hard to gain recognition as one of the central and necessary criminal policy information sources?

- The victimization survey requires an extra budget* and a new specialised production body** as such data are not available on a routine basis similar to how administrative crime statistics are created as a side product of everyday authority activity.

4-2. An important criminal policy information source, BUT

- If victimisation surveys are to be implemented more broadly and systematically, and on a routine basis, this may also require the emergence of a new category of skilled analysts*** in government bodies, whether statistics authorities or others responsible for crime data production.

- It takes special training ****to make the best of victimisation surveys, and such training is often not readily available.

4-3. An important criminal policy information source, BUT

- In many countries, criminal policy issues have not yet become high priority issues, and therefore it is not very important to improve the relevant knowledge basis rapidly. Awareness of the value of the victimisation survey***** approach continues to be low among the strategic decision-makers who should be providing the required resources.

- This may have a link to the development of democratic institutions since crime policy issues gain in importance in "**democratic**" debate.

5. Sustainable Development Goals

"Ban Ki-moon: sustainable development goals leave no one behind"

(UN secretary general hails 'people's agenda' as member states finally assent to targets lauded for poverty pledge despite skepticism about implementation. The Guardian, October 3, 2015)

The commitment to 'leave no one behind' has been a key feature of all the discussions on the post-2015 agenda and the SDGs.

6-1. Victim survey & SDG Indicators

- The indicators should cover the specific groups of the population and other disaggregation elements as specified in the targets.

- Sustainable Development Goal indicators should be disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location, or other characteristics, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

(Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, 17 December 2015, E/CN.3/2016/2. para.26)

6-2. Victim survey & SDGs Indicators

- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

- 5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner, in the last 12 months, by form of violence and by age group
- 5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner, in the last 12 months, by age group and place of occurrence

6-3. Victim survey & SDGs Indicators

- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

- 16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by age group and sex
- 16.1.2* Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population (disaggregated by age group, sex and cause)
- 16.1.3 Percentage of the population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months
- 16.1.4* Proportion of people that feel safe walking alone around the area they live

6-4. Victim survey & SDGs Indicators

- 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

- 16.2.1 Percentage of children aged 1-17 who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month
- 16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age group and form of exploitation
- 16.2.3* Percentage of young women and men aged 18-24 who experienced sexual violence by age 18

6-5. Victim survey & SDGs Indicators

- 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

- 16.3.1* Percentage of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms (also called crime reporting rate)
- 16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a percentage of overall prison population

6-6. Victim survey & SDGs Indicators

- 16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms

- 16.5.1* Percentage of persons who had at least one contact with a public official, who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by these public officials, in the previous 12 months, disaggregated by age group, sex, region and population group

6-7. Victim survey & SDGs Indicators

- 16.a Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime

- 16.a.1* Percentage of victims who report physical and/or sexual crime to law enforcement agencies in the previous 12 months, disaggregated by age group, sex, region and population group

6-8. Victim survey & SDGs Indicators

- 16.b Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development

- 16.b.1 Percentage of the population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law, disaggregated by age group and sex

7-1. Limitations of victimization surveys

(UNODC, MANUAL ON VICTIMIZATION SURVEYS, 2010)

- Counts of victims identified through surveys may not appear in official police statistics, as the crime may not be reported and/or recorded by police, therefore victimization estimates produced from surveys are likely to be higher than data sourced from police records.

- Due to certain methodological constraints, crime victimization surveys cannot provide a definitive measure of the total number of illegal acts that occur in society.

7-2. Limitations of victimization surveys

- Aside from the issue of under-reporting of crime experienced by victims to interviewers, victim surveys can only identify criminal incidents where there is an identifiable victim.

- Crimes sometimes perceived to be 'victimless', such as drug offences or acts forbidden by the law but carried out by agreement between the 'offender' and 'victim' (such as, for example, sex with a minor or the payment of a bribe) may not be captured where the respondent does not consider that they have been the victim of a crime.

- Whereas some crime victimization surveys accept the respondent's view as to whether an incident was a crime, others may use the assessment of the interviewer based on answers to a set of questions about the occurrence of particular incidents.

7-3. Limitations of victimization surveys

- Victim surveys deal with incidents which may not necessarily match the legal definition of crime. And data on victimization is not the same as data on recorded crime.

- Although data from crime victim surveys are likely to elicit better disclosure of criminal incidents than data from police records, they can also be subject to ※undercounting as some victims may be reluctant to disclose information, particularly for incidents of a sensitive nature, such as sexual assault.

※ *Examples of emotional reaction of respondents in the VAW survey*

(Lessons from the pilot study of the International Violence Against Women Survey . MANUAL ON VICTIMIZATION SURVEYS, 2010)

- Tears in her eyes
- Very ashamed, fear, crying, tightening hands
- Nervousness and started to talk fast and aloud about her experience
- Surprised that I was going to ask about such private things
- Blushed and got nervous; it often comes back to her in nightmares and she feels afraid

※ *Examples of emotional reaction of respondents in the VAW survey*

- Made sure a few times that the interview is anonymous
- Very angry recalling the incident I was asking about
- Furious that she had been helpless; loud voice
- Became irritated, started to shout
- Embarrassment, shame.
- Trembling voice, anxiety

※ *Examples of emotional reaction of respondents in the VAW survey*

- Stated with tears in the eyes that she was sorry for her children. All her dreams were completely destroyed
- She sobbed when remembering her mother had beaten her and placed her in a foster house.
- Crying, biting her fingernails, very nervous reaction
- Talking about humiliation and hopelessness
- Irritation, agitation and anger. She had pain on her face
- Ashamed that she had to talk about it. She felt guilty and though that her husband could have got irritated

7-4. Limitations of victimization surveys

- Some criminal incidents are more difficult to measure as often they rely on a person realizing they have been a victim of crime. For example, personal fraud is aimed at deceiving people and a victim may never discover a fraud that was perpetrated against them, or they may discover the fraud long after it took place.

- The accuracy of statistics is influenced by the ability of people to recall past victimizations. The longer the elapsed time period, the less likely it is that an incident will be recalled accurately.

- Surveys are also subject to sampling and non-sampling errors. Sample surveys can produce estimates for a population of interest, but these are still estimates and may be different from the true count which would be produced if the whole population was surveyed.

- The wording or structure of screener questions may also influence responses. The accuracy of survey estimates is also influenced by the response rate.

7-5. Limitations of victimization surveys

- It is important that those commissioning a survey understand both the strengths of the survey method, in supplementing administrative sources and providing greater detail on victim experience, and also their limitations.

(UNODC, MANUAL ON VICTIMIZATION SURVEYS, 2010, para.34.)

8-1. The strength & Weakness of NCVS

- Instituted in 1972 as the National Crime Survey (NCS), the NCVS is designed to capture and count discrete criminal events from the victim's perspective in a given (6-month) period.

- The objective is to produce a nationally representative description of the amount and type of criminal victimization in the United States each year, including incidents not reported to the police.

8-2. The strength & Weakness of NCVS

- The NCVS collects detailed information on each victimization reported by respondents and enables Bureau of Justice Statistics to generate estimates of victimization for the population as a whole, as well as for segments of the population such as women, the elderly, members of various racial groups, city dwellers, and others

- The survey was renamed following a major redesign in 1992 that enhanced screening questions and improved estimates of difficult to measure victimizations such as rape, sexual assault and violence by nonstrangers.

- The NCVS produces estimates of seven major types of crime:
  rape, sexual assault, robbery, assault (aggravated and simple), burglary, theft and motor vehicle theft.

8-3. The strength & Weakness of NCVS

- Self-report interviews for the NCVS are conducted by the Census Bureau for BJS at a national stratified sample of addresses drawn from each decennial census.

- The interview has two components;
  a screening questionnaire and an incident report form.

- The screening questionnaire contains a number of questions that ascertain whether the respondent was a victim of a measured offense during the previous 6 months.

- For every incident uncovered in the screening questionnaire, an incident report form is filled, obtaining a broad range of information about the circumstances, offender and consequences to the victim. On average, interviews are conducted with about 80,000 residents of 45,000 households each 6 months.

8-4. The strength & Weakness of NCVS

- Major challenges in data collection involve helping respondents recall that an event occurred;
- report event types that may not be perceived as a crime (such as violence by an intimate partner or theft by a family member);
- place the event in the correct time period;
- provide detailed information about what happened during the event

8-5. The strength & Weakness of NCVS

- The current NCVS uses both in-person interviews, conducted via CAPI, and telephone interviews conducted by field interviewers. CAPI was introduced into the NCVS in 2006, while CATI was discontinued in 2007.

- The NCVS uses a stratified national sample of household addresses, and residents 12 years of age or older are interviewed a total of seven times over a 3-year period at 6-month intervals.

- The first contact with a household is usually in person using CAPI, with all persons present interviewed when possible. Subsequent interviews are conducted primarily by telephone although in-person interviews are available if a respondent prefers.

8-6. The strength & Weakness of NCVS

- Cost considerations pose a critical challenge to the NCVS. Funding for the NCVS consumes a significant portion of BJS's annual appropriations, with difficult implications for implementation and expansion of other core data collection activities.

- Moreover, over the last two decades, the effectiveness of the survey has been undermined by increasing survey costs and declining budgets.

- Lack of funding has also led to increasingly serious effects on the survey itself, including an inability to expand and to improve the survey effort, inability to fully use collected data, and marked decrements in specificity that threaten the survey's ability to measure the extent, characteristics, and consequences of criminal victimization.

8-7. The strength & Weakness of NCVS

- In 2008, the BJS, as part of its Redesign Research program for the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) explored survey methods that would lower the cost per case for completed NCVS interviews while minimizing the impact on standard errors.

- The resulting study, entitled the Survey of Crime Victimization (SCV), was designed to field test traditionally lower cost, self-administered survey modes, in combination with incentives, as complements to the interviewer-based data collection methods in the NCVS.

- The mixed-mode design allowed for an evaluation of self-administered survey methods, specifically inbound computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) and Web, which have the potential to increase survey participation while maintaining affordable costs and quality.

(Susan Kinsey et al, Examination of Data Collection Methods for the National Crime Victimization Survey, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Department of Justice, 2013)

8-8. The strength & Weakness of NCVS :

Strengths and Weaknesses of Data Collection Modes - CAPI

- **Strengths**

- Amenable to longer interviews
- Allows use of visual aids
- Yields higher response rates
- Efficient in that CAPI interviewers can be cross-trained as telephone interviewers
- Helps build rapport for future interviews
- Interviewers available to provide clarification and guidance on questions and the interview

- **Weaknesses**

- Expensive
- Longer data collection periods needed
- Concerns about privacy/honest reporting if other household members are present during the interview

8-9. The strength & Weakness of NCVS :

Strengths and Weaknesses of Data Collection Modes-CATI

- Strengths

- Less expensive than CAPI
- Interviewers available to provide clarification and guidance on questions and the instrument

- Weaknesses

- Precludes use of visual aids
- More sensitive to interview length
- More partially completed interviews
- Lower response rates
- Concerns about privacy/honest reporting if other household members are present during the interview

8-10. The strength & Weakness of NCVS :

Strengths and Weaknesses of Data Collection Modes- Mail Self-administration

- Strengths

- Potentially yields more honest reporting on sensitive topics
- Less costly as no interview labor involved
- Concerns about internet privacy are not an issue

- Weaknesses

- Language and literacy problems can be difficult to overcome
- Survey length can be intimidating
- Skip instructions need to be straightforward
- Limited control over who completes survey
- Best suited in combination with other modes

8-11. The strength & Weakness of NCVS :

Strengths and Weaknesses of Data Collection Modes-Web self administration

- Strengths

- Potentially yields more honest reporting on sensitive topics
- Less costly as no interviewer labor involved
- Routing can be as complex as other computer-assisted modes
- Length of survey less apparent to respondent than mail

- Weaknesses

- Language and literacy problems can be difficult to overcome
- Limited control over who completes survey
- Best suited in combination with other modes
- Concerns about internet privacy

8-12. The strength & Weakness of NCVS

(Susan Kinsey et al, Examination of Data Collection Methods for the National Crime Victimization Survey, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Department of Justice, 2013)

- Recommendation : The mail survey mode was not found to be a viable option for the current NCVS given the length and complexity of the survey instruments and the detailed classification of crimes used by the survey. Additional research is recommended to assess the feasibility of a mail survey approach for other purposes.

8-13. The strength & Weakness of NCVS

- Recommendation : The Web survey was a promising addition to the complement of survey modes tested in the SCV. Similar to inbound CATI, the Web mode has the potential to increase survey participation by providing respondents with greater flexibility as to when and where they complete the survey.
- Moreover, it offers a less expensive means of collecting data, particularly when rapport has been established through previous interviewer-administered surveys.

9-1. NCVS and NVAWS

- In 1992, the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) was redesigned to better measure violence against women.

- National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) was fielded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institute of Justice to close gaps in research on violence against women.

9-2. NCVS and NVAWS

- The NVAWS, a one time telephone survey conducted from November 1995 through May 1996, was promote as a state-of-the-art survey designed to improve upon estimates of violence against women, including rape, physical assault, stalking as well as intimate partner rape, intimate physical assault and their combination.

- It was administered to a national sample of 8000 women and 8000 men drawn by random digit dialing.

9-3. NCVS and NVAWS

- Like the NCVS, the NVAWS interview was composed of a screening segment and an incident report. Incident report were completed only for the most recent incident committed by each unique perpetrator.

- Unlike the NCVS, the NVAWS screener asks about physical violence experienced as a child, and separately about physical violence experienced as an adult.

- Therefore the NVAWS generated lifetime and annual prevalence estimates, and annual incidence estimates.

- The NVAWS also estimated lifetime prevalence of rape and stalking victimizations

9-4. NCVS and NVAWS: Comparison of NCVS and NVAWS Methodologies

	NCVS	NVAWS
Purpose	• Measure the extent, and characteristics of a select set of serious violent and property offenses • Measure crimes not reported to police • Measure changes in the levels and rates of crime	• Produce lifetime and annual measures of violence against women • Provide a measure of stalking
Sampling frame	• National probability sample of addresses	• National probability random digit dial sample
Exclusions	• Institutionalized people • Homeless	• Institutionalized people • Homeless • Persons without telephones
Interview method	• Combination personal visit (40%), computer assisted telephone (30%) and paper and pencil telephone (30%)	• Computer aided telephone interviews (100%)

9-5. NCVS and NVAWS: Comparison of NCVS and NVAWS Methodologies

Frequency/sample size	• Ongoing/ 80,000 persons in 45,000 households each 6 months	• One time/ 8000 females and 8000 males
Methodological features	• Bounded interviews	• Unbounded interviews • Females respondents interviewed by female interviewers • Males interviewed by both males and female interviewers
Respondent age	• 12 years and older	• 18 years and older
Response rate	• 93% of eligible households • 89% of persons in interviewed households	• 72% of females; 69% of males (see text)
Crimes measured	• Rape • Sexual assault • Aggravated assault • Simple assault • Pocket picking/purse snatching • Household burglary • Theft • Motor vehicle theft	• Rape • Sexual assault • Physical assault • Stalking

9-6. NCVS and NVAWS: Comparison of NCVS and NVAWS Methodologies

Types of estimates	• Annual incidence	• Annual incidence • Annual prevalence • Lifetime prevalence
Incidence estimate construction	• Individual incident reports filled for each incident. • Series incidents excluded from annual estimates	Annual incidence = annual prevalence times number of incidents reported

9-7. NCVS and NVAWS

- The NVAWS has provided a great deal of information about violence against women. The breadth of information about the characteristics and consequences of victimization, as well as its groundbreaking treatment of stalking are all valuable contributions to the field.

- A research in 1998 compared NVAWS estimates of the total annual number of rape and physical assault victimizations to those of the NCVS in their initial release of the NVAWS, finding that, "(t)he NVAW Survey estimates of annual physical assaults are greater than the NCVS estimates."

- It may produce higher estimates than those of the NCVS, but these estimates are largely the product of a few respondents estimating a large number of victimizations. Bigger estimates are not necessarily better estimates.

(Michael R. Rand&Callie Marie Rennison, Bigger is not Necessarily Better: An Analysis of Violence Against Women Estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey and the National Violence Against Women Survey, Journal of Quantitative Criminology, Vol. 21, No. 3, September 2005)

10-1. Recurring victimization

- If the process of multiplying the number of victims by an estimated number of incidents is a not a viable procedure for estimating the incidence of violence, what is a better procedure for producing an incidence estimate of victimization?

10-2. Recurring victimization

- BJS annual estimates exclude recurring victimization that occurs six or more times during the previous 6 months.

- Clearly this protocol produces an undercount. However, this undercount has minimal impact on the year-to-year changes in victimization because the percent of series incidents has remained stable over time even as victimization has declined.

- The counting protocol BJS uses for reports using aggregated data includes series victimizations counted as one incident each regardless of how many times the victim was victimized.

10-3. Recurring victimization

- If one considers such recurring victimization to be the measurable entity, it is not inappropriate to include series victimizations, counted as one each, to the overall estimates of victimization. The NCVS estimates that include series victimizations in this manner are therefore an improvement over total exclusion of series victimizations,

- What is needed, however, are analyses that can provide information about these recurring victimizations to shed light on the recurring aspect of the victimizations.

- A solution to the problem of measuring and quantifying recurring victimization has not yet been devised.

11-1. Measuring and Characterizing Violence Against Women

(M.P. Schwarz, "Methodological Issues in the Use of Survey Data for Measuring and Characterizing Violence Against Women", Violence Against Women, 6(8), 2000)

- How to ask a woman if she has been raped or sexually assaulted?

- One method is to empower the research participants by asking her about her experiences and then using the woman's own definition. Although it is empowering to the women who are victims, survivors and research participants, it is problematic for the empirical researcher who wishes to generalize research findings to a broader population.

- Are the women who are questioned using the idea of sexual assault in the same way as the readers and the women to whom you wish to generalize the findings?

11-2. Measuring and Characterizing Violence Against Women

- In a male-dominated society, the experiences or perspectives of men are often what are used to develop terms that are supposed to reflect the experiences of women. Historically, rape has often been defined as a crime where the woman fights to the point of death before being overcome.

- It was commonplace for states to have definitions that required proof of active victim resistance to maintain a charge of rape. Thus those findings of studies on police files were shocking that most victims did not use physical resistance as a tactic. Faced with superior force, they avoided death or injury by not resisting.

- Do resaerchers make of studies that define rape or sexual assault through victim behavior, including fighting? How do they compare to studies that define rape or sexual assault as events that took place when you didn't want to.

11-3. Measuring and Characterizing Violence Against Women

- Most studies limit the definition of rape to penile-vaginal intercourse, although a number include oral and anal rape and rape by instrumentation.

- The broader the definition, the more victimization is uncovered. If one study covers penile-vaginal intercourse and another covers non-consensual sexual activity, one would presume that the latter would uncover a greater incidence and prevalence rate.

- Then, question design becomes a scientific and a political process. Should one define violence against women as events limited to physical blows? Few studies in a domestic or intimate context have included questions about sexual violence

12. Conclusion

- **LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND !**

- **LEAVE NO VOICE UNHEARED !**

“ Victimization surveys are crime diagnostic tools that give voice to victims and witnesses of crime”

Thank you!