



Voices Against Violence: Community-Based Interventions for VAWC Prevention

Dorren D. Arenque¹, Ruel S. Arenque²

¹Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Philippines

²Camarines Norte State College, Philippines

Abstract

The study investigated the demographic characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of Anti-VAWC community champions, while also evaluating the efficacy of interventions executed in Ragay, Camarines Sur. The study detailed the respondents' demographic attributes, assessed their knowledge, attitudes, and practices concerning violence against women and children (VAWC), identified current interventions, analyzed the correlations among demographic profiles, KAP, and the intervention types, and ultimately suggested enhanced, gender-responsive programs.

The research utilized a descriptive-correlational design, incorporating a mixed-methods methodology. Quantitative data was obtained via structured survey questionnaires, which were distributed to a purposive sample of Anti-VAWC advocates - barangay officials, VAWC desk officers, law enforcement personnel, educators, and social workers. Qualitative data were collected through open-ended responses and subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis. The results indicated that the majority of respondents were female, belonged to the productive age bracket, and possessed a college education.

Knowledge regarding Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) was assessed at a high to very high level, and attitudes were notably positive, indicating a robust awareness of gender issues and a dedication to safeguarding survivors. Practices demonstrated a certain degree of consistency, particularly in the areas of awareness campaigns, collaborative endeavors, and record maintenance; however, monitoring and follow-up protocols were identified as areas requiring improvement. Community-driven interventions were viewed as beneficial, particularly in fostering awareness and engagement, whereas monitoring systems demonstrated moderate efficacy. Statistical analyses revealed a significant relationship between demographic factors and knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP). Additionally, a strong positive connection was found between KAP and the specific interventions used.

Based on the Social Ecological Model, the study concluded that both individual skills and institutional structures influence how well interventions work. A sustainable, community-based approach was suggested to improve monitoring, strengthen referral systems, and enhance gender-sensitive Anti-VAWC programs.

Keywords: *Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC), community-based interventions, knowledge attitudes and practices (KAP), gender-based violence, Social Ecological Model, Philippines*

Introduction

Violence against women and their children (VAWC) remains a significant human rights and public health concern. Despite the implementation of Republic Act No. 9262, the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004 in the Philippines, occurrences of intimate partner violence, psychological abuse, economic abuse, and child maltreatment continue to be reported in various communities. Although legal structures are essential, successful prevention and intervention require sustained, community-based engagement that transcends formal judicial procedures.

Mirroring the situation in many rural municipalities, Ragay, Camarines Sur, relies on barangay-level structures, including VAWC Desk Officers, Women and Children Protection Desks (WCPD), the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO), health units, and school-based advocates. The efficacy of these interventions is significantly influenced by the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of both community advocates and institutional actors.

This study, based on the Social Ecological Model (Heise, 1998; CDC, 2022) and Social Learning Theory, suggests that Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) is affected by various ecological levels. These levels include individual beliefs, relationships with others, and community norms, as well



as larger institutional and societal structures. Hence, prevention strategies should be multi-sectoral, gender responsive, and community driven.

Given the persistent issues of preventing and addressing VAWC on the ground, this study aims to produce empirical response evidence for successful community-based intervention in Ragay, Camarines Sur. This study specifically aims to assess the demographic characteristics and the Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices (KAP) of Anti-VAWC advocates. It will also examine how these factors affect the interventions used in their barangays and institutions. By combining quantitative data with qualitative information, the research seeks to identify institutional strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. This will help to strengthen gender-responsive systems. Ultimately, the goal is to develop a sustainable, community-led Anti-VAWC framework. This framework will support referral systems, advocacy strategies, and participatory governance at the local level. Therefore, this will contribute to greater social justice, gender equality, and the empowerment of communities.

Methodology

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational design with a mixed-methods approach among 102 Anti-VAWC advocates who were purposively selected, including barangay officials, law enforcement personnel, educators, and social workers. Data were collected quantitatively using a self-made survey questionnaire, validated using a Likert scale with five sections: (1) demographic profile (2) Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) (3) Attitudes Toward VAWC (4) Practices in Anti VAWC Intervention and (5) Nature of Community Based Interventions. A pilot test was conducted with a minimum of 30 participants, succeeded by the computation of Cronbach's alpha to evaluate internal consistency. Qualitative data were gathered via focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) to gain a more comprehensive understanding of institutional coordination, referral mechanisms, implementation challenges, and sustainability practices. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze quantitative data in order to assess levels of knowledge, attitudes, and practices. The relationships among demographic variables, KAP scores, and the type of interventions were analyzed using inferential statistics, like Pearson's r or Spearman's ρ correlation analysis. The qualitative data from the interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed and thematically analyzed to identify recurrent themes of barriers between institutions, strengths in coordination, and possible avenues for improvement as a system. To improve validity and credibility of findings, including comparing quantitative

Results and Discussion

Quantitative Findings

The subsequent table elucidates the study's findings concerning community-based Anti-VAWC interventions within Ragay, Camarines Sur.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Anti-VAWC Advocates in Ragay, Camarines Sur (n = 102)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Age</i>	26–35	34	33.33%
	36–45	38	37.25%
	46–55	16	15.69%
	56–65	12	11.76%
	66+	2	1.96%
<i>Sex</i>	Female	82	80.39%
	Male	18	17.65%
	Prefer not to say	2	1.96%
<i>Civil Status</i>	Married	66	64.71%
	Single	22	21.57%
	Others	14	13.72%
<i>Educational Attainment</i>	College	60	58.82%
	High School	20	19.61%
	Master's Degree	16	15.69%
	Doctorate	4	3.92%
	Others	2	1.96%



Table 2. Level of Knowledge on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) Among Respondents

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
RA 9262 coverage	4.52	Very High Knowledge
BPO issuance	4.18	High Knowledge
Psychological violence	4.21	High Knowledge
Economic abuse	4.15	High Knowledge
First response protocol	4.27	Very High Knowledge
OVERALL MEAN	4.27	Very High Knowledge

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Very High Knowledge, 3.50 – 4.49 – High Knowledge, 2.50 – 3.49 – Moderate Knowledge, 1.50 – 2.49 – Low Knowledge, 1.00 – 1.49 – Very Low Knowledge

Table 3. Attitudes of Respondents Toward Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC)

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Reporting cases	4.68	Strongly Agree
Gender norms contribute to VAWC	4.55	Strongly Agree
Survivor protection	4.74	Strongly Agree
Leadership responsibility	4.61	Strongly Agree
Training effectiveness	4.58	Strongly Agree
Inter-agency coordination	4.63	Strongly Agree
Community awareness	4.66	Strongly Agree
OVERALL MEAN	4.64	Strongly Agree

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Strongly Agree, 3.50 – 4.49 – Agree, 2.50 – 3.49 – Neutral, 1.50 – 2.49 – Disagree, 1.00 – 1.49 – Strongly Disagree

Table 4. Practices of Anti-VAWC Advocates in the Implementation of Community-Based Interventions

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Awareness campaigns	4.41	Often
Coordination with agencies	4.32	Often
Case documentation	4.45	Often–Always
Training participation	4.28	Often
Referral protocol compliance	4.47	Often–Always
Monitoring and follow-up	3.76	Sometimes–Often
OVERALL MEAN	4.28	Often

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Always, 3.50 – 4.49 – Often, 2.50 – 3.49 – Sometimes, 1.50 – 2.49 – Rarely, 1.00 – 1.49 – Never

Table 5. Perceived Effectiveness of Community-Based Anti-VAWC Interventions in Ragay, Camarines Sur

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Awareness campaigns	4.53	Very Effective
Referral systems	4.21	Effective
Case documentation	4.26	Effective
Inter-agency coordination	4.33	Effective
Monitoring & evaluation	3.89	Moderately Effective
Community participation	4.38	Effective
OVERALL MEAN	4.27	Effective

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 – Very Effective, 3.50 – 4.49 – Effective, 2.50 – 3.49 – Moderately Effective, 1.50 – 2.49 – Slightly Effective, 1.00 – 1.49 – Not Effective

Table 6. Test of Relationship Between Demographic Profile, KAP, and Nature of Interventions (n = 102)

Variables	Test Used	Computed Value (r)	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Demographic Profile & Knowledge	Pearson r	0.32	0.003	Reject H_0	Significant Relationship
Demographic Profile & Attitudes	Pearson r	0.28	0.007	Reject H_0	Significant Relationship
Demographic Profile & Practices	Pearson r	0.35	0.002	Reject H_0	Significant Relationship
Knowledge & Practices	Pearson r	0.61	0.000	Reject H_0	Strong Significant Relationship



<i>Attitudes & Practices</i>	Pearson r	0.58	0.000	Reject H ₀	Strong Significant Relationship
<i>KAP & Nature of Interventions</i>	Pearson r	0.64	0.000	Reject H ₀	Strong Significant Relationship

Legend: $p < 0.05$ = Significant

The results indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between demographic profile, knowledge, attitudes, practices (KAP), and the nature of community-based Anti-VAWC interventions. The findings show that demographic variables such as age, sex, and educational attainment have a moderate but significant influence on the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of Anti-VAWC advocates. This suggests that individual characteristics contribute to variations in how advocates understand and implement VAWC-related programs.

More importantly, the results reveal a strong positive relationship between knowledge and practices ($r = 0.61$), as well as between attitudes and practices ($r = 0.58$). This suggests that those who support the cause, and who have more knowledge and positive views about VAWC, are more likely to use effective implementation strategies. Furthermore, the strong link ($r = 0.64$) between overall KAP and the type of interventions indicates that KAP is a key factor in determining the quality and success of community-based interventions.

The findings support the Social Ecological Model which suggest that individual factors, such as knowledge and attitudes, significantly influence behaviors and practices within a community. Furthermore, the results align with Jewkes et al.'s research, which highlights the importance of improving knowledge and changing attitudes to encourage behavioral change and reduce violence.

These findings also support the World Health Organization's view that to stop violence, you need to understand the problem and put what you've learned into practice all the time. The strong relationship observed between knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) and the intervention's effectiveness suggests a direct impact of capacity-building efforts on program results. The significant correlations uncovered in this research carry several important implications. The authors first highlight the need for Anti-VAWC campaigners to participate in targeted capacity-building initiatives. These programs should be designed to improve their knowledge, attitudes, and practical skills.

Training programs should, therefore, employ a comprehensive approach that integrates legal comprehension, gender sensitivity training, and practical case management skills. Furthermore, the impact of demographic variables indicates that interventions must be contextually tailored, considering the backgrounds and attributes of the advocates involved. Customized training and support structures may be essential to mitigate disparities within particular groups.

The strong relationship between knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) and how well interventions work highlights the importance of ongoing professional development and institutional support. Therefore, improving KAP is likely to enhance the effectiveness of Anti-VAWC programs, especially in areas like monitoring, referral systems, and community involvement.

Ultimately, the study's results emphasize the necessity of integrated, multi-tiered strategies for VAWC prevention. Strengthening individual capabilities must be coupled with fortifying institutional frameworks and fostering community participation to ensure enduring results.

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative results of this investigation, drawn from the unstructured feedback provided by Anti-VAWC campaigners concerning community-based programs in Ragay, Camarines Sur, are presented subsequently. These findings serve to deepen the understanding of the participants' lived experiences, the challenges they faced, and their suggested improvements, thereby complementing the quantitative data. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and commonalities in the responses we received.

The subsequent examples serve to clarify the research findings by illustrating the identified themes. The investigation revealed five key thematic areas: (1) challenges faced during the implementation phase, (2) factors that contribute to the reduction of violence against women and children (VAWC), (3) inadequacies within referral systems, (4) the need for improved support and training initiatives, and (5) suggestions for maximizing the effectiveness of interventions.

Table 7. Thematic Analysis of the Study

Theme	Codes (Key Ideas)	Description	Sample Verbatim Response
Challenges in Implementation	Underreporting, fear, stigma, lack of awareness, limited resources	Barriers that hinder reporting and effective intervention	"Victims are afraid to report because they depend on the abuser."
Strengthening Factors	Training, coordination, awareness campaigns, leadership support	Elements that improve effectiveness of interventions	"Continuous training helps us handle cases better."
Referral System Gaps	Delayed response, unclear procedures, weak coordination	Issues affecting efficiency of case handling	"Sometimes referrals take time because agencies are not well-coordinated."
Need for Support and Training	Counseling skills, legal knowledge, funding, tools	Capacity and resource needs of advocates	"We need more training on counseling and proper handling of victims."
Recommendations for Improvement	Monitoring systems, technology use, stronger partnerships	Suggested strategies for sustainability and improvement	"There should be a system to track cases and follow-ups."

The qualitative data clarifies the contextual factors that shape the implementation of Anti-VAWC initiatives in Ragay, Camarines Sur. A significant challenge that emerged is the underreporting of VAWC incidents, primarily stemming from victims' fear, societal stigma, and economic reliance on their abusers. This situation underscores the entrenched socio-cultural obstacles that impede the reporting of violence. These observations align with the World Health Organization's findings, which recognize underreporting as a persistent global issue in combating violence against women, especially within community environments characterized by social pressures and economic limitations. The study also highlights the importance of capacity-building and inter-agency coordination as key factors that strengthen VAWC prevention efforts. Respondents emphasized that continuous training enhances their competence and confidence in handling cases. This supports the findings of Jewkes et al., who assert that effective violence prevention requires sustained engagement, skills development, and collaboration across sectors. The presence of strong coordination mechanisms among barangay officials, law enforcement, and social services contributes significantly to the effectiveness of interventions.

Despite these benefits, the investigation reveals notable weaknesses in referral systems, particularly regarding delayed response times, unclear procedures, and inconsistent inter-agency cooperation. These identified flaws imply inherent structural inefficiencies that may hinder the timely delivery of services to those in need. The United Nations emphasizes the crucial role of a coordinated, survivor-centered referral system in ensuring that victims receive immediate and appropriate assistance. Problems with this system could reduce trust in institutions and discourage people from reporting issues.

Another important observation concerns the need for additional support and specialized training, specifically in counseling, legal procedures, and trauma-informed care. Although the participants demonstrated sufficient basic understanding, a distinct requirement for more advanced skills was evident, enabling them to effectively manage the intricate needs of survivors. Moreover, constraints in resources, including financial support, educational materials, and technological instruments, were recognized as impediments to successful execution. Therefore, improving institutional capacity requires not only training programs but also strategic investments in resources and infrastructure.

Participants provided practical recommendations for improving Anti-VAWC initiatives, particularly emphasizing the necessity of establishing monitoring and evaluation frameworks, incorporating technology-based reporting mechanisms, and strengthening collaborative partnerships among stakeholders. These suggestions highlight the importance of both long-term sustainability and systemic improvements. Monitoring is crucial, as existing research highlights the importance of tracking case outcomes. This helps ensure consistent care and the effectiveness of programs. From a theoretical perspective, the findings strongly support the Social Ecological Model, which explains that violence is influenced by multiple interacting factors at the individual, interpersonal, community, and institutional levels. For instance, underreporting reflects individual and interpersonal factors such as fear and dependency, while referral system gaps represent institutional-level challenges. This multi-level interaction suggests that effective VAWC prevention requires comprehensive and integrated interventions.

The qualitative results carry important implications for both policy and practical application. Initially, mitigating underreporting necessitates the enhancement of community awareness initiatives and survivor-focused support structures designed to cultivate trust and diminish stigma. Furthermore,



refining referral systems demands the establishment of standardized protocols and more robust inter-agency coordination strategies to guarantee prompt and effective service provision.

Furthermore, the augmentation of Anti-VAWC advocates' capabilities necessitates ongoing professional development initiatives, specifically focusing on counseling techniques, case management strategies, and trauma-informed care principles. Furthermore, Local Government Units (LGUs) are obligated to dedicate resources towards the development of strong monitoring and evaluation frameworks, integrating digital technologies to facilitate the tracking of case progression and the assessment of intervention effectiveness. The sustained success of Anti-VAWC programs, in the final analysis, hinges on fostering community engagement and collaboration across various sectors.

The qualitative data suggests that, despite the functional nature and robust advocacy surrounding community-based Anti-VAWC interventions in Ragay, Camarines Sur, substantial systemic obstacles persist. These challenges, specifically concerning reporting mechanisms, coordination among stakeholders, and the allocation of resources, constitute considerable impediments. Consequently, a comprehensive, multi-tiered strategy designed to address these issues is essential for improving the efficacy, responsiveness, and long-term viability of Anti-VAWC initiatives.

Proposed Intervention Framework

TITLE: Project SAFE: Strengthening Anti-VAWC Framework for Empowerment

Overview

The suggested intervention strategy aims to improve the effectiveness, long-term viability, and flexibility of community-based Anti-VAWC programs within Ragay, Camarines Sur. Grounded in the Social Ecological Model, this approach employs an Input–Process–Output (IPO) framework. Consequently, this structure facilitates a comprehensive, multi-tiered methodology for addressing VAWC.

Framework Components

1. Inputs

- Demographic profile of advocates
- Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) levels
- Existing policies (RA 9262, LGU ordinances)
- Available resources (human, financial, technological)

2. Processes (Core Interventions)

A. Capacity Building Program

- Training on VAWC laws, counseling, and trauma-informed care
- Skills development in case management and documentation

B. Strengthened Referral System

- Standardized referral protocols
- Inter-agency coordination mechanisms
- Establishment of a centralized reporting system

C. Monitoring and Evaluation System

- Development of case tracking tools (manual or digital)
- Regular monitoring and reporting of case outcomes
- Feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement

D. Community Awareness and Advocacy

- Information campaigns and community forums
- Gender sensitivity training at the barangay level
- Youth and community engagement programs

3. Outputs/Outcomes

- Improved referral system efficiency
- Enhanced gender responsiveness of services
- Increased reporting and reduced stigma
- Strengthened community participation
- Sustainable Anti-VAWC programs



Table 8. Proposed Implementation Strategy

Component	Key Activities	Expected Output
Capacity Building	Conduct quarterly training	Skilled and competent advocates
Referral System	Develop protocols and coordination meetings	Efficient and timely case handling
Monitoring System	Implement tracking tools	Improved case follow-up
Awareness Campaign	Conduct community programs	Increased awareness and reporting

Sustainability Plan

For Project SAFE – Strengthening Anti-VAWC Framework for Empowerment – to make a real difference, several core components are absolutely necessary. Integrating the project into the structures already in place is the first step. Ongoing capacity building is also critical. Collaboration across different sectors is essential. A key step in this process involves including the program in the Local Government Unit's annual plans and financial resources. It guarantees steady financial backing for Anti-VAWC efforts, eliminating the unpredictability of short-term funding. Anti-VAWC advocates will continue to benefit from training and access to the latest resources. This ongoing support will enhance their skills in areas like case management, counseling, and providing gender-sensitive services.

Furthermore, strengthening connections among vital entities—local government, law enforcement, social services, educational institutions, and community organizations—will foster collaboration and a shared sense of responsibility.

In conclusion, although Anti-VAWC interventions in Ragay demonstrate overall efficacy, the fortification of monitoring systems, referral mechanisms, and capacity-building endeavors is crucial for enduring impact. The suggested Project SAFE framework offers a structured and practical model,

designed to rectify identified deficiencies and augment the overall effectiveness of community-based Anti-VAWC programs.

Conclusion

The study's results lead to the following conclusions:

1. Anti-VAWC advocates in Ragay demonstrate robust foundational competencies, as indicated by their high levels of knowledge and positive attitudes, thereby facilitating the effective execution of community-based interventions.
2. Knowledge and attitudes exert a significant influence on practices, thereby validating the study's conceptual framework, which posits that KAP is crucial in determining the quality of Anti-VAWC interventions.
3. Community-based programs often show positive results, especially in raising awareness and encouraging community involvement. This highlights the effectiveness of grassroots approaches in addressing violence against women and children (VAWC).
4. However, systemic deficiencies persist, notably in the realms of monitoring, evaluation, and referral processes, which subsequently undermine the enduring viability and long-term effectiveness of these interventions.
5. The prevention of VAWC necessitates a multi-tiered and integrated strategy, as the Social Ecological Model suggests, wherein individual capabilities, institutional resources, and community participation jointly shape the resultant outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and subsequent analysis, the following recommendations are put forth:

1. *For Local Government Units (LGUs):*
 - a. Establish consistent procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of VAWC cases, complete with tracking and reporting mechanisms.
 - b. Strengthen inter-agency coordination by implementing clear protocols and scheduling regular planning meetings.
 - c. Ensure that Anti-VAWC initiatives and services are adequately funded and resourced.
2. *For Anti-VAWC Advocates and Practitioners*
 - a. Engage in ongoing training, especially in areas like counseling, trauma-informed care, and case management.
 - b. Improve how you document and follow up, so survivors get consistent support.



- c. Run community awareness campaigns to tackle underreporting and the stigma surrounding these issues.
3. *For Educational Institutions*
 - a. Incorporate gender sensitivity and awareness of Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) into both curricular and extension programs.
 - b. Collaborate with local government units (LGUs) and civil society organizations to implement community outreach and training initiatives.
4. *For Policy Makers and Stakeholders*
 - a. Formulate policies that facilitate the digitalization of referral and monitoring systems.
 - b. Bolster collaborative frameworks across various sectors to ensure a unified approach when addressing cases of violence against women and children.
5. *For Future Researchers*
 - a. Conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of Anti-VAWC interventions.
 - b. Explore comparative studies across municipalities to identify best practices.
 - c. Investigate the role of technology-based interventions in improving reporting and monitoring systems.

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