



Eswatini Violence Against Children and Youth Survey **Priority Indicator Report** 2022



Survey implementation and report preparation was done in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini

Deputy Prime Minister Office

Department of Social Welfare

PRIORITY INDICATOR REPORT
FROM THE
ESWATINI VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND YOUTH SURVEY 2022

ESWATINI VACS 2022 COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS

Ministry of Health, Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini
Central Statistical Office, Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini
The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)
The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Atlanta, GA, USA
The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Mbabane, Eswatini
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KEY SUMMARY POINTS

- Violence against children and youth is common in Eswatini: about one out of four females and nearly one out of three males ages 13-24 years experienced any type of violence in their lifetime.
- About one out of twelve females 13-24-years-old experienced lifetime sexual violence. Among 18-24-year-old females who experienced lifetime sexual violence, the perpetrator of the first incident of sexual violence was often known to the victim: common perpetrators were a family member and a current or former partner.
- Among females 13-24-years-old who experienced sexual violence, nearly two-thirds told someone, only half knew where to seek professional services, and only one-quarter sought out professional services. Of those who sought professional services, the majority received them.
- Whereas sexual violence was more commonly experienced among females, physical violence disproportionately affected males. Nearly 3 in 20 males and 1 in 20 females aged 18-24 experienced physical violence before the age of 18. Experience of physical violence by a peer was about five times more common in males than in their female counterparts.
- Both females and males experienced similar rates of emotional violence. Nearly 1 in 10 females and males experienced emotional violence by a parent, adult relative or other adult caregiver, an intimate partner, or a childhood peer.
- Females had significantly higher HIV prevalence than males: 6.6% of females ages 13-24 years were living with HIV, compared to 3.3% of males. Despite tremendous progress towards HIV epidemic control in Eswatini, significant disparities in vulnerability to HIV acquisition persist for adolescent girls and young women.
- Youth in Eswatini exhibited sexual behaviors and other risk factors that may increase their vulnerability to HIV. These include orphan status, infrequent condom use, early pregnancy and engagement in transactional sex for young women and having multiple sexual partners for young men.

BACKGROUND

The Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys (VACS) use a standard methodology to measure the prevalence, nature, and consequences of physical, emotional, and sexual violence against children and youth. They enhance countries' capacity to design, implement, and evaluate violence prevention programs and build successful child protection systems.

OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the 2022 Eswatini VACS were to:

- Estimate the national prevalence of physical, emotional and sexual violence perpetrated against children and youth;
- Estimate the prevalence of HIV among adolescents and young adults in order to better understand the association between violence and HIV;
- Identify risk and protective factors for physical, emotional and sexual violence against children to inform stakeholders and guide prevention efforts;
- Identify the health and social consequences associated with violence against children;
- Assess the knowledge and utilization of medical, psychosocial, legal, and protective services available for children and youth who have experienced sexual, emotional and physical violence; and
- Identify areas for further research.

The goal was to make recommendations towards an action plan by relevant ministries in Eswatini, international and national development partners, and non-governmental organizations. The VACS data can be used for developing, improving, and enhancing prevention and response strategies to address violence against children and youth as part of a larger, comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to child protection.

METHODS

The 2022 Eswatini VACS was a nationally representative household survey that used a multi-stage sampling approach to randomly select Enumeration Areas (EAs), households, and males and females 13-24 years of age for participation. It included a short questionnaire for an adult in the household to build rapport with the family and to determine current socioeconomics of the household. The respondent questionnaire for 13-24-year-olds included questions assessing demographics; socioeconomic status; parent relationships; education; general connectedness to family, friends, and community; marital status and relationships; sexual behavior and practices; transactional sex; pregnancy; HIV/AIDS service history; experiences of physical, emotional, and sexual violence; health problems associated with exposure to violence; and utilization of services for violence.

The 2022 Eswatini VACS oversampled females in each of the four regions in the country and aggregated DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe) areas within each region. The final country report will include data disaggregated at the regional and DREAMS level. The 2022 Eswatini VACS also included rapid HIV testing for youth participants who consented for rapid blood tests, with an option for HIV self-testing for participants who declined rapid testing.

This priority indicator report includes descriptive outcomes on prevalence of violence and HIV, focusing mainly on 1) lifetime experiences of violence among 13-24-year-olds and 2) childhood experiences of violence (prior to age 18) of young adults ages 18-24 years. The analyses were weighted to account for survey design.

RESULTS

In total, 1,402 males (response rate=84.9%) in 69 randomly selected EAs and 6,318 females (response rate= 90.1%) in 284 EAs were interviewed. Additionally, among 1,344 eligible males and 5,896 eligible females, 1,089 males (81.0% of all eligible) and 5,134 females (87.1% of all eligible) completed rapid testing for HIV. The tables and figures below show national data highlights. Table footnotes and definitions are available in the section following the tables.

Section 1. Lifetime violence among youth 13-24 years of age

FIGURE 1

Lifetime Violence Among Female and Male 13-24-Year-Olds in Eswatini

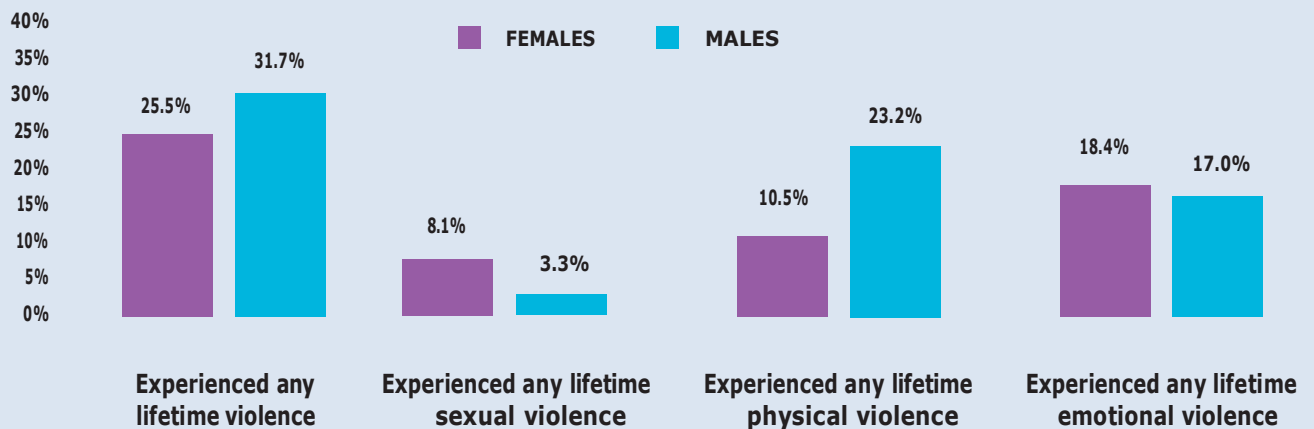


TABLE 1

Lifetime Violence Among 13-24-Year-Olds in Eswatini

	FEMALES		MALES	
	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²
Experienced any lifetime violence ³	6318	25.5 (23.3 – 27.7)	1402	31.7 (26.3 – 37.1)
Experienced any lifetime sexual violence ⁴	6316	8.1 (7.0 – 9.2)	1402	3.3 (2.0 – 4.5)
Experienced any lifetime physical violence ⁵	6318	10.5 (9.2 – 11.8)	1402	23.2 (18.4 – 28.0)
Experienced any lifetime emotional violence ⁶	6318	18.4 (16.6 – 20.2)	1402	17.0 (13.4 – 20.5)

FIGURE 2

Disclosure, Service-seeking, and Receipt of Services among 13-24-Year-Olds Who Experienced Lifetime Sexual Violence



TABLE 2

Disclosure, Service-seeking, and Receipt of Services among 13-24-Year-Olds Who Experienced Lifetime Sexual Violence⁴

	FEMALES		MALES	
	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²
Told someone about an experience of sexual violence	487	66.3 (60.9 - 71.7)	40	48.4 (32.6 - 64.1)
Knew of a place to seek help about an experience of sexual violence	485	50.5 (45.2 - 55.8)	40	59.3 (39.6 - 79.0)
Sought professional services ⁷ for any incident of sexual violence	484	25.7 (20.8 - 30.6)	40	**
Received professional services ⁷ for any incident of sexual violence	484	23.1 (18.3 - 27.8)	40	**

FIGURE 3

Disclosure, Service-seeking, and Receipt of Services among 13-24-Year-Olds Who Experienced Lifetime Physical Violence

- Told someone about an experience of sexual violence
- Knew of a place to seek help about an experience of sexual violence
- Sought professional services for any incident of sexual violence
- Received professional services for any incident of sexual violence

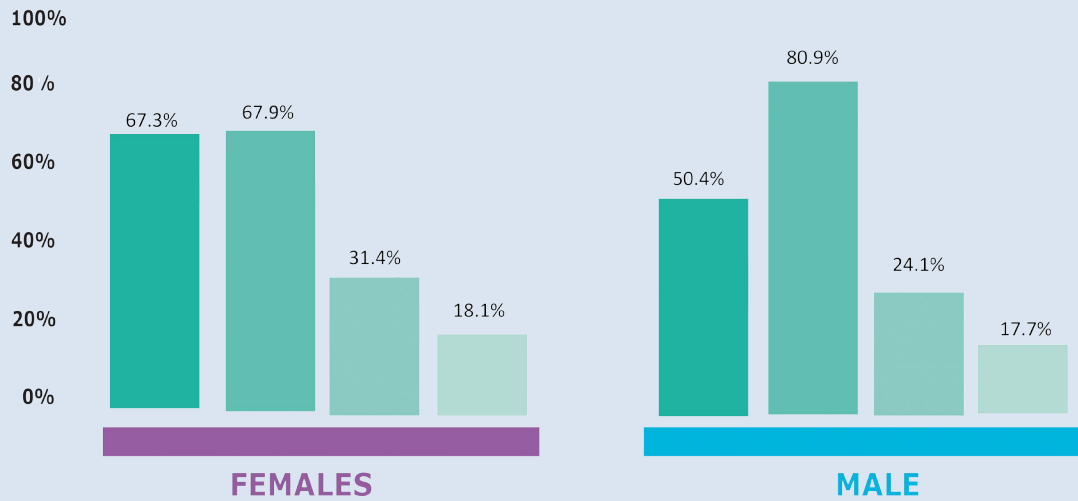


TABLE 3

Disclosure, Service-seeking, and Receipt of Services among 13-24-Year-Olds Who Experienced Lifetime Physical Violence⁵

	FEMALES		MALES	
	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²
Told someone about an experience of physical violence	661	67.3 (62.6 - 71.9)	322	50.4 (40.3 - 60.6)
Knew of a place to seek help about an experience of physical violence	656	67.9 (62.5 - 73.4)	322	80.9 (74.3 - 87.5)
Sought professional services ⁷ for any incident of physical violence	656	31.4 (26.7 - 36.2)	321	24.1 (17.4 - 30.8)
Received professional services ⁷ for any incident of physical violence	656	18.1 (14.6 - 21.6)	321	17.7 (11.6 - 23.8)

Section 2. Childhood violence among 18–24-year-olds prior to age 18

TABLE 4
Childhood⁸ Violence among
18-24-Year-Olds

	FEMALES (N=3191) % (95% CI) ²	MALES (N= 733) % (95% CI) ²
Experienced any violence in childhood ⁹	15.8 (14.0 - 17.5)	21.0 (15.8 - 26.2)

TABLE 5
Childhood⁸ Sexual Violence⁴
among 18-24-Year-Olds

	FEMALES		MALES	
	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²
Experienced any sexual violence in childhood	3189	5.5 (4.5 - 6.5)	733	2.1 (0.7 - 3.4)*
Unwanted sexual touching in childhood	3182	2.7 (1.9 - 3.4)	730	0.9 (0.2 - 1.6)*
Attempted forced sex in childhood	3187	2.8 (2.0 - 3.6)	732	**
Pressured/coerced sex in childhood	3180	0.9 (0.5 - 1.2)	730	**
Physically forced sex in childhood	3182	1.8 (1.3 - 2.3)	729	**

TABLE 6
Prevalence of Coerced, Pressured, or Physically
Forced Sex at First Sexual Experience among
18-24-Year-Olds

	FEMALES (N=2269) % (95% CI) ²	MALES (N= 464) % (95% CI) ²
First sexual intercourse was coerced, pressured, or forced, among those who had sexual intercourse before age 18	7.2 (5.6 - 8.8)	0.7 (0.1 - 1.4)*

TABLE 7

Perpetrators of First Incident of Sexual Violence⁴ among 18-24-Year-Olds Who Experienced Childhood⁸ Sexual Violence

	FEMALES (N=168) % (95% CI) ²	MALES (N= 11) % (95% CI) ²
Family member	36.2 (28.0 - 44.4)	**
Current or Previous Spouse/Boyfriend/ Girlfriend or Romantic Partner	20.5 (13.8 - 27.2)	**
Stranger	14.6 (8.8 - 20.3)	**
Neighbor	14.5 (8.1 - 21.0)	**
Classmate/Schoolmate or Friend	7.8 (3.3 - 12.2)	85.6 (65.6 - 100.0)
Other ¹⁰	14.7 (8.7 - 20.8)	<0.1%***

Percentages may sum to >100% because some victims may have experienced multiple first instances of different forms of sexual violence (unwanted sexual touching, attempted forced sex, forced sex, and pressured sex).

TABLE 8

Consequences of Childhood⁸ Sexual Violence⁴ among 18-24-Year-Olds

	FEMALES	MALES
	n ¹ % (95% CI) ²	n ¹ % (95% CI) ²
Missed school due to sexual violence, among people who experienced childhood sexual violence	168 13.0 (6.7 - 19.3)	12 <0.1%***
Became pregnant as a result of forced or pressured sex among those who experienced childhood sexual violence	81 10.9 (4.0 - 17.9)*	NA NA

TABLE 9

Childhood⁸ Physical Violence⁵ among 18-24-Year-Olds

	FEMALES	MALES
	n ¹ % (95% CI) ²	n ¹ % (95% CI) ²
Experienced any physical violence in childhood	3191 5.1 (3.9 - 6.2)	733 14.3 (10.1 - 18.5)
Childhood physical violence by a parent, adult caregiver, or other adult relative	3185 2.9 (2.1 - 3.8)	732 5.6 (3.1 - 8.1)
Childhood physical violence by an adult in the community/ neighborhood	3191 0.5 (0.2 - 0.8)*	731 2.2 (0.8 - 3.7)*
Childhood physical violence by an intimate partner ¹¹	2726 1.1 (0.6 - 1.5)	564 **
Childhood physical violence by a peer	3189 1.8 (1.2 - 2.3)	724 10.7 (7.1 - 14.4)

TABLE 10
Witnessed Physical Violence⁵ in
Childhood⁸ among 18-24-Year-Olds

	FEMALES		MALES	
	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²
Witnessed physical violence at home in childhood	3190	8.8 (7.4 - 10.1)	733	14.6 (10.3 - 18.9)
Witnessed physical violence outside the home in childhood	3175	13.8 (12.0 - 15.6)	732	21.9 (17.3 - 26.5)

TABLE 11
Consequences of Physical Violence⁵
among 18-24-Year-Olds

	FEMALES		MALES	
	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²
Missed school due to physical violence, among those who experienced physical violence	162	15.4 (9.0 - 21.7)	106	6.4 (1.9 - 10.9)*

TABLE 12
Childhood⁸ Emotional Violence⁶
among 18-24-Year-Olds

	FEMALES		MALES	
	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²
Experienced any childhood emotional violence	3191	9.8 (8.4 - 11.2)	733	9.9 (6.0 - 13.7)
Experienced any childhood emotional violence by a parent, adult caregiver, or other adult relative ¹²	3180	2.7 (1.9 - 3.5)	730	2.0 (0.9 - 3.1)
Experienced any childhood emotional violence by an intimate partner ^{11,13}	2722	1.8 (1.2 - 2.4)	564	1.5 (0.6 - 2.5)*
Experienced any childhood emotional violence by a peer ¹⁴	3178	7.2 (5.9 - 8.4)	726	8.1 (4.8 - 11.4)

Section 3. HIV, sexual risk behaviors, and other risk factors among 13-24-year-olds

TABLE 13
Percent HIV Positive by Lifetime Experiences of Violence among 13-24-Year-Olds

	FEMALES (N=6118) % (95% CI) ²	MALES (N= 1342) % (95% CI) ²
Overall HIV positive¹⁵	6.6 (5.8 - 7.4)	3.3 (2.4 - 4.2)
HIV status and lifetime sexual violence⁴ (SV)		
HIV positive, among those who experienced SV	9.3 (6.5 - 12.1)	**
HIV positive, among those who never experienced SV	6.4 (5.6 - 7.2)	3.4 (2.5 - 4.2)
HIV status and lifetime physical violence⁵ (PV)		
HIV positive, among those who experienced PV	8.6 (6.0 - 11.2)	2.6 (0.9 - 4.3)*
HIV positive, among those who never experienced PV	6.4 (5.6 - 7.2)	3.5 (2.5 - 4.6)
HIV status and lifetime emotional violence⁶ (EV)		
HIV positive, among those who experienced EV	7.2 (5.5 - 9.0)	4.8 (2.3 - 7.4)
HIV positive, among those who never experienced EV	6.5 (5.6 - 7.3)	3.0 (2.1 - 3.9)

TABLE 14
Sexual Risk Behaviors and Other Risk Factors for HIV among 18-24-Year-Olds

	FEMALES		MALES	
	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²	n ¹	% (95% CI) ²
Early sexual debut¹⁶	3158	4.8 (3.8 - 5.7)	720	11.5 (8.8 - 14.2)
Orphan status¹⁷	3027	33.6 (31.3 - 35.8)	705	32.3 (28.0 - 36.7)
Child marriage¹⁸	3185	1.3 (0.8 - 1.8)	733	<0.1%***
Early pregnancy¹⁹	2289	15.1 (13.3 - 16.9)	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
Transactional sex²⁰	2286	7.0 (5.6 - 8.4)	397	3.7 (0.7 - 6.6)*
Multiple sexual partners in the past 12 months²¹	2107	7.5 (6.1 - 8.8)	397	30.6 (23.6 - 37.5)
Infrequent condom use in the past 12 months^{21,22}	2087	45.5 (42.7 - 57.3)	395	46.3 (39.8 - 52.9)

TABLE FOOTNOTES AND DEFINITIONS

* Unstable estimate (relative standard error [RSE] is > 30% and ≤50%), result should be interpreted with caution. RSE is calculated by dividing the standard error of the estimate by the estimate itself, then multiplying that result by 100. RSE is expressed as a percent of the estimate.

** Unstable estimate with RSE > 50%, therefore estimates are suppressed.

*** When the prevalence of an indicator is zero percent (0.0%), those results as are denoted as <0.1% and should be interpreted with caution. It cannot be assumed that the prevalence of the item in the entire population is an absolute zero.

¹ n denotes the overall denominator and includes all individuals of the age group and sex with a valid response such as 'yes' or 'no.'

² 95% confidence interval: indicates the interval within which the true population parameter is expected to fall 95% of the time.

³ **Any lifetime violence** includes having experienced any sexual, physical, or emotional violence at any age (0-24)

⁴ **Sexual violence** includes having experienced one or more of the following: 1) unwanted sexual touching; 2) attempted forced sex; 3) pressured or coerced sex; 4) physically forced sex.

⁵ **Physical violence** includes a 'yes' response to one or more of the following from any of the following perpetrator types – parent, adult caregiver, or other adult relative, adult in the community/neighborhood, intimate partner, or peers: 1) slapping, pushing, shoving, shaking, or intentionally throwing something to hurt; 2) punching, kicking, whipping, or beating with an object; 3) choking, smothering, tried to drown, or burned intentionally; 4) using or threatening with a knife, gun or other weapon.

⁶ **Emotional violence** includes answering yes to one or more from the following perpetrator type - parent, adult caregiver, or other adult relative, intimate partners, or peers. Emotional violence **by a parent, adult caregiver**, or other adult relative includes 1) being told that you were not loved or did not deserve to be loved; 2) being told they wished you had never been born or were dead; and 3) being ridiculed or put down, for example, being told you were stupid or useless. Emotional violence **by intimate partner** includes: 1) being insulted, humiliated, or made fun of in front of others; 2) being kept from having own money; 3) kept you from seeing or talking to your family or friends; 4) kept track of you by demanding to know where you were and what you were doing; 5) made threats to physically harm you. Emotional violence **by peers** include: 1) made you get scared or felt really bad because they were calling you names, saying mean things to you, or saying they didn't want you around; 2) told lies or spread rumors about you, or tried to make others dislike you; 3) kept you out of things on purpose, excluded you from their group of friends, or completely ignored you.

⁷ Professional services include hospital/clinic, police station, social welfare or legal office, religious leader, or community leader.

⁸ **Childhood** includes experiences of violence prior to age 18 among 18-24-year-olds.

⁹ **Any childhood violence** includes experiences of sexual, physical, or emotional violence prior to age 18 among 18-24-year-olds.

¹⁰ Other includes teacher, police/security person, healthcare professional, employer, community/religious leader, political leader, traditional healer, and "other" category.

¹¹ Among those who have ever had an intimate partner (reported ever married, lived with someone as married, and/or ever having a romantic partner).

¹² **Emotional violence by a parent, caregiver, or other adult relative** includes: 1) being told that you were not loved or did not deserve to be loved; 2) being told they wished you had never been born or were dead; and 3) being ridiculed or put down, for example, being told you were stupid or useless.

¹³ **Emotional violence by an intimate partner** includes: 1) being insulted, humiliated, or made fun of in front of others; 2) being kept from having own money; 3) kept you from seeing or talking to your family or friends; 4) kept track of you by demanding to know where you were and what you were doing; 5) made threats to physically harm you.

¹⁴ **Emotional violence by a peer** includes: 1) made you get scared or felt really bad because they were calling you names, saying mean things to you, or saying they didn't want you around; 2) told lies or spread rumors about you, or tried to make others dislike you; 3) kept you out of things on purpose, excluded you from their group of friends, or completely ignored you

¹⁵ **HIV status** determined through HIV rapid test results or self-report of a prior positive HIV test. HIV rapid testing was only offered to 13–24-year-old participants who did not report a prior HIV positive result, using the national rapid HIV testing algorithm and country counseling guidelines.

¹⁶ Had first sex at or before age 15.

¹⁷ One or both parents died before age 18.

¹⁸ Married or cohabitated (living with a partner as if married) before age 18.

¹⁹ Became pregnant before age 18, among females who ever had sex.

²⁰ Ever engaged in transactional sex (includes receiving money, gifts, or other things that are important to the person in exchange for sex), among those who ever had sex.

²¹ Among those who have ever had sex.

²² Infrequent condom use: never or sometimes use of condom when had sex with partners other than spouse in the past 12 months

IMPLEMENTING INSTITUTIONS

The survey was led by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO) in partnership with Ministry of Health (MOH) and Central Statistical Office (CSO) and with technical support from ICAP at Columbia University and the United States (US) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and funding provided solely by the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Deputy Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Health, Central Statistical Office; ICAP at Columbia University in New York and Eswatini; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Eswatini; the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR); the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); Together for Girls.

PROCESS

Study Development & Implementation.

The survey development was led by the Project Implementation Task Team (PITT) under the guidance of a Core Leadership Group (CLG). The two groups consisted of multiple stakeholders that included various government ministries and departments, U.S. Government Agencies, UN Agencies, implementing partners, and civil society organizations. DPMO and ICAP coordinated all activities. Data collection was conducted by ICAP, with technical support from CDC. The survey was wholly funded by PEPFAR through CDC Eswatini.

Data Analysis & Dissemination.

CDC provided technical assistance for the quality control of data collection, data cleaning, statistical weighting of the data and analyses. The CLG and PITT are collaborating on writing and producing the final report. The CLG and PITT, including many of the partners listed above, are collaborating on the Data to Action workshop, official launch of the report, data dissemination, and follow-up action plan. This priority indicator report is intended to be used for preliminary planning and informing the development of the full Eswatini VACS report.



Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini



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