



# A multiple streams approach to assessing the political priority of ending childhood sexual violence: A case study of eSwatini

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## Introduction

- Addressing CSV is considered a low priority for global organizations and governments.<sup>1-3</sup>
- eSwatini presents a rare and compelling example of national prioritization of CSV to effectively reduce the national prevalence.
- However, limited qualitative research has sought to connect the reduction of CSV in eSwatini with its respective policy and social environments.

## Research Objectives

- Investigate policies, programs, and initiatives in eSwatini that targeted a reduction in CSV
- Identify facilitators and barriers to the reduction of CSV in eSwatini from national-level stakeholders' perceptions

There were significant reductions in pressured or physically forced sex at girls' first sexual experience in Eswatini



Eswatini VACS 2007 and 2022

Together for girls

togetherforgirls.org/eswatini

## Methods

- Employed a case study approach, using Kindgon's multiple streams of policy agenda setting model<sup>4</sup>

### Problem Stream

The state of politics and public opinion  
Indicators or data demonstrating severity  
Urgency or magnitude of attention to the problem  
Focusing events

### Policy Stream

Potential solutions to the problem  
Alternatives to addressing current national problems  
Policy entrepreneurs

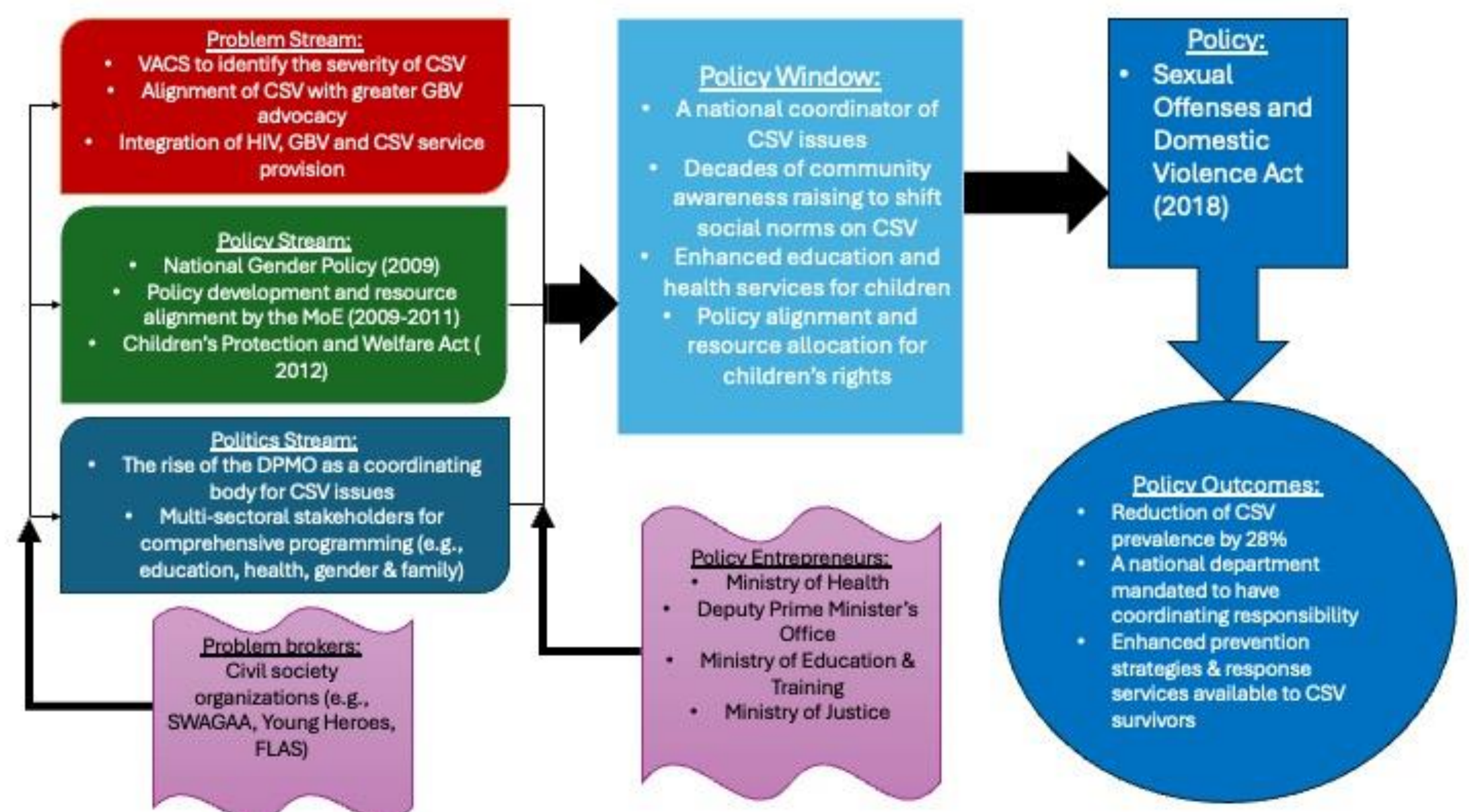
### Politics Stream

Political influences, cycles and systems-level changes around the policy problem  
Process of negotiation  
Interpretation of the problem

- Use of a directed content analysis of key documents (n=68) for study timeline from 2007 to 2022
- Framework analysis to identify facilitators and barriers to implementing policy and programming from key informant interviews (n=11).<sup>5</sup>

## Results

The eSwatini case demonstrates how agenda-setting for childhood sexual violence (CSV) can emerge, grow, and gain political prioritization through the convergence of multiple streams:



## Key Take-Aways

- Data played a catalytic role as both a diagnostic tool and an advocacy instrument** to conceptualize the problem of CSV within existing HIV and GBV advocacy and programming.
- Policy development was enabled by a **strong civil society ecosystem, which helped translate global frameworks and donor mandates** into policies relevant to local realities
- Institutional leadership from the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO)** proved critical in scaling and coordinating CSV interventions through alignment with health, education, and justice sectors.
- These **three streams merged to create a policy window for the passage of the Sexual Offenses and Domestic Violence Act (2018)** after decades of advocacy, which is seen as vital to eSwatini's national CSV prevalence reduction

## Conclusions

The eSwatini case highlights:

- the importance of multisectoral engagement with one national office serving as the coordinator between groups,
- community-driven advocacy with civil society as "problem brokers"
- national CSV prevalence data to ignite political prioritization.

## Implications for Public Health

- This study illustrates **the value of multiple rounds of VACS** as tools for diagnosis, prioritization, and accountability in the prevention of CSV.
- Findings from this study may **inform the implementation of VACS in other contexts including HICs**, like the US.
- Lessons learned from eSwatini may offer **valuable insights for strengthening CSV prevention and response systems** globally, particularly through evidence-based programming and cross-sectoral collaboration among actors in the national government.

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## Contact



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