



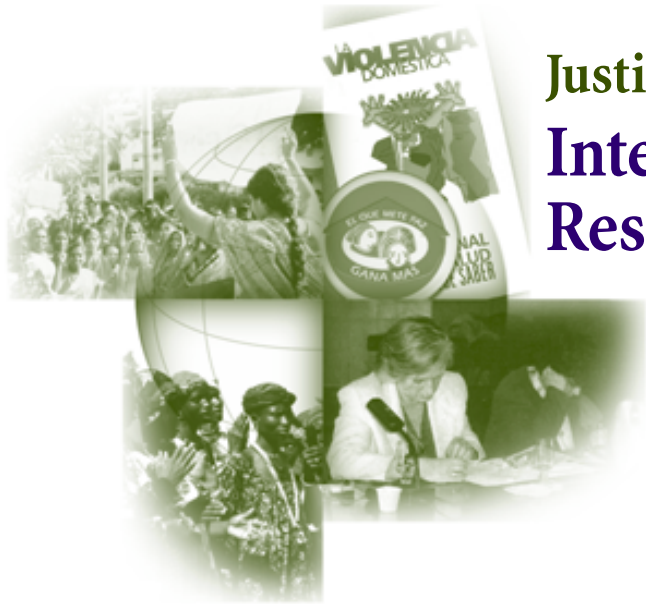
**Justice, Change, and
Human Rights:**

International Research and Responses to Domestic Violence

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Preface

In 1995, the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) began working in partnership to manage the “Promoting Women in Development” (PROWID) grants program, funded by the Office of Women in Development at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). PROWID was a four-year grants program that sought to improve the lives of women in developing countries and economies in transition by promoting development based on practical insights gained from field-tested interventions. PROWID grants supported 45 different activities implemented by partner organizations in over 30 countries, including action-oriented policy research, pilot interventions, and advocacy that contributed to economic and social development with women’s full participation.

PROWID projects were grouped into three broad crosscutting themes including economic growth and development; governance, civil society, and women’s leadership; and domestic violence against women. Additionally, a small number of projects were focused specifically on female genital cutting (FGC) and on the challenges and transformations for women in post-conflict transitions.

This paper is one of several analytical documents synthesizing the findings across PROWID projects and their implications within the various theme areas. Recognizing that such themes overlap in their contributions to development, PROWID project staff worked in consultation with the partner teams in the field to identify key lessons derived from their project experiences and formulate recommendations for improving the design and practice of development. An overarching “best practices” synthesis paper concludes the set of documents, placing PROWID findings within a framework of development envisioned as the progressive realization of human rights and structuring the full range of recommendations as a final programmatic contribution to the theory and practice of women in development.

All of the PROWID synthesis papers are available upon request from ICRW and CEDPA, and can also be found on-line at the web site of either organization. To visit the ICRW web site, go to <http://www.icrw.org>, click on “PROWID,” scroll down to “Publications,” and look for the *PROWID Synthesis Papers* section. To visit the CEDPA web site, go to <http://www.cedpa.org> and follow the PROWID Publications link. *Reports-in-Brief* providing summaries of each project supported by PROWID are also available from ICRW and CEDPA by request and on-line.



Acknowledgments

This document would not have been possible without the contributions of our project partners who individually and institutionally are active participants in the global struggle to eliminate violence against women. We are grateful to:

R.C. Ahuja, *International Clinical Epidemiologists Network (INCLEN)*

Shrikant Bangdiwala, *INCLEN*

S.S. Bhambol, *INCLEN*

Anjali Dave, *Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)*

V.S. Elizabeth, *National Law School, University of India*

Leticia Isita Epsejel, *Instituto Mexicano de Investigación de Familia y Población (IMIFAP)*

Gillian Fawcett, *IMIFAP*

Gabrielle Fitchett-Akimova, *Women, Law and Development International (WLDI)*

Mónica Gamboa, *IMIFAP*

Stanimira Hadjimitova, *the Gender Project for Bulgaria Foundation*

Wanda Hunter, *INCLEN*

Dipty Jain, *INCLEN*

Surinder Jaswal, *TISS*

L. Jeyaseelan, *INCLEN*

Rachel Johnson, *Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (MAHR)*

Shuba Kumar, *INCLEN*

M. Lakshman, *INCLEN*

M.K. Mitra, *INCLEN*

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Veena Poonacha, *SNDT Women's University*

Sandhya Rao, *Hengasara Hakkina Sangha*

Oksana Rodianova, *WLDI*

Laura Sadowski, *INCLEN*

Gopika Solanki, *TISS*

Saradha Suresh, *INCLEN*

Genoveva Tisheva, *Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation*

Leela Visaria, *Gujarat Institute of Development Studies*

We are deeply indebted to the work of these partners, the staff in each of their institutions, and the communities in which they worked. Their efforts have expanded understanding of the multi-faceted nature of domestic violence and highlighted areas of action crucial for expanding and strengthening responses to the problem.

The authors benefited greatly from the careful and incisive comments received on numerous drafts of the paper. In particular we wish to acknowledge Elizabeth Schrader, Lori Heise, Geeta Rao Gupta, Anju Malhotra, and Richard Strickland. The dedicated editorial support by Charlotte Feldman-Jacobs and the excellent lay-out and design work by Manu Badlani was critical to the final shaping of the document. We also wish to extend our gratitude to the larger PROWID team, including Carolyn Knapp and Anuradha Rajan, for their assistance throughout the process of drafting this paper. In particular, we deeply thank Miriam Escobar for her emotional and administrative support.

Executive Summary



Although domestic violence¹ has long been perceived to be a private matter within the four walls of the home, as a result of feminist advocacy within the arenas of human rights and development, social responsibility for the crime of domestic violence is slowly being recognized in many parts of the world. In many communities, tremendous effort is now being undertaken to gradually transform social systems designed to protect the entitlements of a few into systems that guarantee the human rights of all. These efforts make increasingly clear the links between human rights and the goals of development more broadly. Women's human rights advocates stress, for example, that unless women are free from the threat of violence, they are unable to realize their other rights, and thus unable to participate in the process or benefits of development. For this reason, fundamental changes in institutions and deeply embedded social and cultural beliefs must occur in order to more effectively realize women's human rights.

In the eleven PROWID projects focused upon domestic violence, efforts to implement and explore these changes were supported and documented. In addition, these projects have contributed further to an understanding of domestic violence prevalence and the factors associated with it, and reaffirmed some of the emerging principles regarding appropriate responses to domestic violence. Three research and intervention projects were facilitated by non-governmental organizations in Russia, Bulgaria and Mexico, and eight research studies were undertaken in India.

As a whole these diverse projects generated some common conclusions regarding the

problem of domestic violence. In India, domestic violence was found to be pervasive among all women but varying in volume and frequency across class, age, and education level. Further, inequalities existing in the household, as represented by education and employment gaps between husbands and wives, were linked to domestic violence. The impact of domestic violence upon the survival of the household economy was found to be significant as well.

The projects also examined the state of community responses to domestic violence and generated additional knowledge about ways in which institutions and informal networks might better address the issue. Existing domestic violence laws and procedures were found to be poorly enforced in all contexts studied. The lack of training and understanding of domestic violence on the part of police, lawyers, judges, health care givers, and service providers was found to be partly responsible for this ineffectiveness of institutions in responding to domestic violence. On the other hand, joint training and partnerships such as between lawyers and crisis counselors show the potential of increasing the quality of services. However, as most programs and services have very little systematic documentation or assessment of their own work, it remains difficult to fully evaluate the effectiveness of any service provided. In addition, many community programs and institutional efforts to support women victimized by domestic violence remain inhibited by specific cultural norms and social structures which prevent women from escaping violence in their lives. One project explored strategies for transforming norms about domestic violence. In an effort to combat both of these

¹ Any act of physical, sexual or psychological abuse, or the threat of such abuse, inflicted against a woman by a person intimately connected to her through marriage, family relation or acquaintanceship.

problems, the coordination of community responses and the improvement of communication and documentation between programs and sectors was seen to be an essential direction for improving both the national and local level response to the problem.

After synthesizing project reports and conclusions, PROWID staff have distilled the following general recommendations and next steps for further action in addressing domestic violence:

- Incorporate domestic violence sensitization and training into government, health care, police, and legal organizations.
- Coordinate the activities of different sectors (e.g., health, police, judicial, social services, community institutions) responding to the multiple aspects of domestic violence and center each sector's intervention around the needs of the victim.
- Strengthen women's economic opportunities in order to improve their options and negotiating power outside of and within the marital home.
- Acknowledge the role of informal and local community networks as a crucial site for supporting women.
- Devise and implement programs for batterers.
- Increase public awareness of domestic violence and human rights through education and the media.
- Integrate survivors of domestic violence into program planning and evaluation in order to ensure accessibility and effectiveness.
- Focus more research and intervention activities on men and constructions of masculinity.
- Prioritize the use of qualitative research methods as an essential means of understanding and responding to the problem of violence against women.

“

I knocked at the door, and introduced myself to a lady who was washing dishes. She said she has two children—elder one is a boy, 19 years old, but he is mentally retarded and behaves like a 5-year-old child... Her daughter is 16 years old and even she is mentally retarded, for her also she has to do all the work. She says her husband [of 20 years] is her own uncle and due to that both her children are like this. She was not interested in this marriage but her parents forced her... He had the habit of taking alcohol daily. Whenever he came home he used to beat her. Later she came to know that he had the bad habit of gambling. He used to take even small things from home, sell it and gamble. Due to that they had fights daily, he used to beat her with whatever he gets in hand. She says she used to bleed when he hits. Days went on, she was beaten daily, and sometime she was beaten in such a way that she was not able to do her household work. She never used to tell him anything, as she had the fear that he would leave her and go away and she would be left alone with her children. Later she found out that he was having affairs and taking cocaine; when she questioned him about this, she was beaten. Since then she does not ask him anything; she does her work, looks after her children, and makes herself busy. She says she has never experienced happiness in her life and feels that she won't get it in the future.

”

—From case notes of Ms. B. Shakila, INCLIN fieldworker, India.

The Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas writes that suffering, as a modality, is... pure undergoing, a blow against freedom, an "impassé of life and being." It is unambiguously evil and absurd. The search for meaning in suffering has allowed humans to rationalize suffering as penance for sin, as a means to an end, as the price of reason, or as the path of martyrs and saints...whence the very least one can say about suffering is that in its own phenomenality, it is useless, 'for nothing'. (Levinas: 1986: 157-158 as quoted in Scheper-Hughes 1992: 528-529)

Introduction



Domestic violence¹ perpetrated by partners and close family members on women has long been a matter of silent suffering within the four walls of the home. Despite the awareness others may have of a woman's ongoing experience of abuse, the phenomenon of domestic violence against women has been identified primarily as a private concern. From this perspective, violence is seen to be a matter of individual responsibility, and the woman is perceived to be the one responsible for either adjusting more adequately to the situation as dictated by cultural norms or developing an acceptable method of suffering silently. This basic understanding of domestic violence as a personal issue has limited the extent to which legal resolution to the problem has been actively pursued. In most societies, domestic violence against women has typically not been perceived as a crime. However, as a result of feminist advocacy within the arenas of human rights and development, social responsibility for domestic violence is slowly being acknowledged in most parts of the world. This paper seeks to reinforce this shift by articulating the importance of domestic violence within both a human rights framework and a development framework.

Domestic Violence and Human Rights

Although suffering is clearly part of the human condition, it is the belief of human rights advocates that preventable or unnecessary suffering is not acceptable in a civilized world. Underlying a human rights framework is the radical notion that human beings—that is, any and all human beings—are entitled to lives without what is thought to be preventable suffering. However, transforming social systems designed to protect such entitlements for a few

to a system that guarantees such entitlements to all is an enormous undertaking. It requires a tremendous shift of social consciousness and political will to understand not only the necessity of universalized entitlements, but the universalized responsibility of individuals, communities, and states to ensure these basic rights.

In several international conventions and accords, there has now been explicit acknowledgment of the state's responsibility for human rights violations by private actors in both the public and private spheres. The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) establishes international standards for guaranteeing equality between women and men within the family as well as between the family and the state. The essence of this convention, as with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is respect for human dignity and respect for the human capacity to make responsible choices. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna brought together women's non-governmental activists with UN and human rights leaders. Together they agreed to further insist that state and local biases in the implementation of CEDAW, due to so-called religious and cultural interpretations or reservations, be eliminated. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993, and the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995 later helped to further crystallize the doctrine that women's rights are human rights. In particular, these accords reinforce CEDAW principles which establish that states be held responsible for failing to demonstrate "due diligence" in averting or punishing violence against women that occurs either in the public

¹ Any act of physical, sexual or psychological abuse, or the threat of such abuse, inflicted against a woman by a person intimately connected to her through marriage, family relation or acquaintanceship.

or the private sphere. As a result, these conventions and agreements have created a space in which once private issues like domestic violence can now be understood as human rights violations of public concern. In this way, the growing use and widespread application of human rights discourse itself has begun to dissolve the public-private divide and has provided a moral momentum for direct response by national governments and non-governmental sectors. With the help of these and other multi-lateral treaties and frameworks, women's human rights advocates have now asserted that women must claim a right to be free from violence rather than enduring, ignoring or justifying this suffering any longer and that neighbors, institutions, and states have a duty to respond.

Yet any effort to claim, protect or help realize a single right affects other outcomes as well. Violence against women in the form of physical assault, harassment, emotional abuse, sexual assault, deprivation of resources, destruction of property, torture or confinement clearly violate women's rights to be free from violence. In addition, it prevents and inhibits women's ability to realize other human rights. For example, a woman cannot exercise her rights to livelihood, education, mobility, health or participation in governance, if she is prevented from leaving her home under threat of violence or death. A woman cannot fulfill her right to choose whether, when or how often she will have children, if she is routinely denied the opportunity to consent to sexual relations, or to choose whether and whom she marries. For these reasons, concerted efforts are now being made to address violence against women as a fundamental human rights issue. Yet for most women throughout the world living with deeply embedded traditions that silence them and circumscribe their options, neither individuals nor institutions are enabled to fulfill or protect this most basic right. Many legal and community institutions simply have no capacity or political will to ensure the protection of women from violence. Further, in most cases, long-standing cultural beliefs and traditions as well as the social and economic arrangements that spring from them, habitually deny, sanction, and even

promote violent practices against women. Thus, a framework that makes clear the links between rights and the institutional arrangements capable of promoting and protecting those rights is essential.

Violence and Development

Recognizing domestic violence as a development concern is particularly important for addressing the social, cultural, and economic arrangements that inhibit or support the realization of human rights. As development practice has moved from the primary pursuit of economic growth to a wider concern for linking economic growth to indicators of social justice and individual well-being, increased awareness of the significant impacts of domestic violence on development is critical. For example, the links between violence and development indicators—such as those of economic growth, improvements in public health, stability, poverty alleviation, and access to education—are important to explore as these may impact the realization of wider development objectives and the understanding and commitment with which violence is addressed. There are currently three identifiable approaches to violence as a development issue wherein violence is variously viewed as a cost undermining development outcomes, an obstacle to participation in development, or a blatant contradiction to development goals (P. Sen 1998).

Violence costs development. The first is an efficiency argument: violence against women depletes resources and its impact is measured in terms of costs and inefficiency. For example, in recent work by the Inter-American Development Bank, macro-economic research identified some of the consequences of violence in terms of direct costs (medical, criminal justice system, social services) and perceived non-monetary costs (such as increased homicide, suicide, alcohol/drug abuse, depressive disorders) (Morrison and Biehl 1999). Also examined were larger economic consequences (loss of productivity, decreased investment) and social impacts (intergenerational transmission of violence, reduced quality of life, reduced participation in democratic processes) (Morrison and Orlando

1997; Buvinic 1998). International public health research focusing upon the impact of violence against women on health and fertility outcomes and its contribution to the cost of the public health burden also plays a profound role in contemporary development research (Heise 1994; Ellsberg 1997). In particular, this research has contributed significantly to the areas of population and family planning policy, maternal/child health discussions, and the literature on children's education (Ellsberg 1997).

Violence obstructs participation. In addition to being a cost, violence against women is also seen as an obstacle to women's ability to participate in development. As women's participation in development programs and planning is a central objective of the current agenda for women in development, this is a significant concern relevant to both research and intervention activity. As Heise (1995) and Sen (1998) have both established, violence may inhibit women's ability to engage effectively in development programs. For example, violence is now established as an influential factor inhibiting the access of girls to education in both South Africa and Jamaica (Chisholm and Malange 1999; Kurz and Johnson-Welch 1994).

Similarly, research also shows that in some circumstances a woman's participation in activities outside of the home may precipitate bouts of violence at home. For example, recent studies of micro-credit activities in India and Bangladesh indicate that women's increased access to credit upsets the traditional divisions of labor in the home; some women, therefore, feel obliged to give away money and/or control over it to their partners (Kabeer 1998; Schuler, Hashemi, and Bada 1998). Several projects undertaken by ICRW (Rao Gupta and Weiss 1998) have highlighted the fact that violence or the threat of violence often hinders women's ability to use contraception, to answer personal interview questions directly or honestly, or to leave the house long enough to participate in

community projects. Without a means of addressing violence and its impact upon women's everyday freedoms, the success of development efforts and the accuracy of research is compromised.

Violence contradicts development goals. In addition to participation in programs, the very existence of violence against women contradicts the goals of development more broadly. The UNDP defines development as the "enlargement of choices," and the improvement of women's individual agency is essential to this. Violence fundamentally prevents women from accessing or experiencing the benefits of development, by inhibiting their ability to act and move freely. In effect, violence against women may be seen as the ultimate contributor to a profound lack of choices open to women and girls (A. Sen 1999). Current UNIFEM-funded advocacy campaigns oriented toward raising awareness and focusing on the prevention of violence operate largely to confront this particular concern (Heyzer 1998).²

All three of these approaches to violence as a development issue play a valuable role in furthering an understanding of domestic violence, expanding awareness and community responsibility for violence, and, thus, improving opportunities to realize women's human rights. As economic, social, and cultural rights have become more carefully articulated and documented,³ links between development practice and human rights advocacy are increasingly clear. Violence against women provides an important entry point into this linkage. Further investigation into violence as a development issue demands a continued consideration of the ways in which the existence of violence both intrudes upon what may be seen to be traditional development objectives, and forces a further expansion of the development paradigm itself. In the process of attempting to understand and address the problem of domestic violence, researchers and advocates are beginning to articulate the importance of uniting human

² UNIFEM Advocacy campaigns in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific concentrate on changing attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate violence; motivating governments to develop and/or change policies and legislation, and practices to prevent violence against women and girls; strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations to effectively advocate for and implement violence prevention programs (see <http://www.unifem.undp.org/campaign/violence/regional.htm>)

³ As articulated in the 1987 Limburg Principles on the Implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the 1997 Maastricht Guidelines on Violations of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in *Human Rights Quarterly* 20 1998: 691-704).

rights advocacy with development practice.

This synthesis report is a contribution to the larger dialogue about the expansion of the development paradigm. The report first asserts the significance of violence as a primary deterrent to women's agency and the realization of a woman's own human rights; and second, insists, with other human rights advocates, that, in fact, economic and social development and the realization of human rights must occur simultaneously. Further, this paper supports the view of development as a changing paradigm wherein human rights are not to be seen as *part* or a subset of a larger social and economic development process. Rather, development is to be *the*

realization of human rights (Whelan 1998; Human Rights Council of Australia 1995; Buhl 1997; A. Sen 1999). Human rights, therefore, should be the framework guiding development practices, research, interventions, and policy rather than merely being promoted, protected or linked to ongoing development programs (Whelan 1998).

The research synthesized herein will make evident, for example, that efforts by development activists and human rights advocates to help realize women's right to safety from violence and the right to bodily integrity, depends upon implementing massive multi-dimensional changes in families, communities, and states. Without the economic and social resources to choose circumstances that are free of violence, and to claim all of the rights obstructed by violence, women are unable to realize their fundamental human rights. This awareness of the wide-ranging impact of violence against women as a complex web of rights violations is still not widely incorporated into mainstream policy and development discussions, however, and is only beginning to enter the realm of national-level priority in most contexts. A framework that overtly links development activities to the realization of rights is essential.

Photo by Barbara Burton



Posters at a Women's Center near Nagpur, India

Studies on Domestic Violence: The PROWID Project



The International Center for Research on Women has just completed a four-year grants program, Promoting Women in Development (PROWID), addressing women's economic growth and development, women's political participation and rights, and violence against women. Eleven of these projects focused on domestic abuse (see box on page 13): eight research studies in India documented the prevalence, trends, and responses to domestic violence; and three studies in Mexico, Bulgaria, and Russia were designed to address social norms, raise public awareness, and to increase the capacity of different professionals to address the issue.

Although the synthesizing of the studies contributed to the preceding discussion about development and human rights, only two of the studies (HHS and MAHR) were designed with an explicit

human rights framework. Two of the other studies (IMIFAP and the TISS Special Cell study) had implicit human rights concerns woven into the fieldwork and analysis. None of the projects sought to explicate violence as a development concern within their design. However, both the GIDS and INCLLEN studies found, through the course of their surveys, the close interaction between development objectives and domestic violence in the field. In particular, the INCLLEN survey has attempted to estimate the financial costs of domestic violence at the household level in one site of their study. All projects demonstrate a presumption, however, that domestic violence violates a woman's fundamental human rights.

This paper offers a synthesis of the above PROWID project activity on and around domestic violence and provides a summary of key findings, lessons learned, recommendations for

future research, and an analysis of these findings in relation to a framework which links development and human rights.

Photo by Nisha Varia



Participants at the International Conference on Domestic Violence held in Lucknow, India, February 2000

PROWID Projects on Domestic Violence

An Analysis of Primary Survey Data From Gujarat, India

Leela Visaria, Gujarat Institute of Development Studies (GIDS), Ahmedabad

This household study presents a picture of domestic violence as reported by 346 married women in rural Gujarat. Through both quantitative and qualitative methods, this project explores the magnitude and correlates of violence; forms and reasons given for violence; and women's options for support.

An Analysis of Hospital Records in Thane District, Maharashtra, India

Surinder Jaswal, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai (hereafter, TISS Hospital Study)

This study examines the records of hospitals and community health outposts in Thane District. The project studies current practice for identifying and recording abuse in medical records, estimates the percentage of cases due to domestic violence, and probes health providers' and women's perceptions of how violence cases are acknowledged and treated in health facilities.

An Analysis of Records of Special Cell for Women and Children Located in the Police Commissioner's Office in Mumbai, India

Anjali Dave and Gopika Solanki, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai (hereafter, TISS Special Cell Study)

This study analyzes the records of Mumbai's Special Cell, which is a collaboration between the police and the Tata Institute of Social Science. The project also addresses the importance and effect of language in recording investigations of domestic violence cases.

An Analysis of Records of NGOs in Bangalore, India

Sandhya Rao, Hengasara Hakkina Sangha (HHS), Bangalore

Using the records of non-governmental organizations in Bangalore, this study explores domestic violence as a human rights issue. Included in the sample are a feminist organization which has worked on violence issues for the last twenty years and a shelter which was established in the 1920s.

An Analysis of Court Records in Bangalore District

V.S. Elizabeth, National Law School University of India (NLS), Bangalore

This study examines the records of a family court in Bangalore, three district level courts, and the High Court. The project examines cases to understand the judicial interpretation of existing laws that have an impact on domestic violence and to identify the gaps in investigative procedures that result in non-conviction.

A Population-Based Survey of Domestic Violence

International Clinical Epidemiologists Network (INCLEN)

This multi-site study, conducted by local researchers in seven sites in India (Lucknow, Bhopal, Delhi, Nagpur, Chennai, Vellore, and Thiruvananthapuram), documents the magnitude of violence, risk and protective factors, and health and economic outcomes. The methodology addresses ethical, safety, and training issues involving survey respondents and interviewers.

Responses to Domestic Violence in the States of Gujarat and Karnataka, India

Divya Pandey and Veena Poonachana, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai

This study examines state, collaborative, NGO, and community-based initiatives addressing domestic violence in Gujarat and Karnataka.

Responses to Domestic Violence in the States of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, India

Nishi Mitra, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai (hereafter, TISS Response Study)

This study examines state, collaborative, NGO, and community-based initiatives addressing domestic violence in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

Changing Community Norms on Partner Abuse: A Project in Iztacalco, Mexico

Gillian Fawcett and Leticia Isita Epsejel, Instituto Mexicano de Investigación de Familia y Población (IMIFAP)

This project challenges community norms that perpetuate violence through a public awareness campaign. Through a series of workshops, the program has created a group of local women who could counsel abused women and help them to identify support systems.

Elimination of Violence through Research and Education: Promoting Women's Human Rights in Bulgaria

Genoveva Tisheva, Robin Phillips, and Stanimira Hadjimitova, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (MAHR), the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (BGRF), the Gender Project for Bulgaria Foundation (GPBF)

This project conducts and disseminates research on sexual harassment and domestic violence in Bulgaria. It also launches a public education campaign on violence against women as a human rights abuse.

The Russian Women Lawyers' Advocacy Project: Improving Knowledge and Services for Survivors of Violence Against Women

Gabrielle Fitchett-Akimova, Women, Law and Development International (WLDI)

In this project, lawyers and crisis center counselors form teams to strengthen the capacity of crisis centers. Through a series of joint workshops, lawyers learn more about the dynamics of domestic violence and counselors increase their knowledge about how to effectively use the legal system.

Filling in the Picture: Key Findings



Though the eleven projects on domestic violence conducted in four countries addressed different dimensions of the problem as discussed above, the studies did reveal significant commonalities.

Taken as a whole, the studies have contributed to our understanding of prevalence and factors associated with violence, extended our knowledge of gaps and problems in existing methods of responding, and reaffirmed some of the emerging principles regarding preventing and intervening in domestic violence, such as the need for a coordinated community response.

- **Domestic violence is pervasive among all women but varies in volume across class, age, and education level.**

The INCLLEN study and the Gujarat Institute of Development Studies (GIDS) research document the pervasiveness of domestic violence in India among all women regardless of age, education level, class, length of marriage, and family living arrangement. For example, in INCLLEN's multi-site study of 9,938 rural, urban slum, and urban non-slum households, 40 percent of the women reported experiencing at least one form of physical abuse and, of these, 65 percent reported severe physical abuse, including being kicked, hit or beaten. Fifty percent of the women experiencing severe physical abuse reported being beaten three or more times during their marriage and at least once during pregnancy. Furthermore, these rates were consistent across the different regions of India. The GIDS findings in rural Gujarat, India, indicated that across all caste and education lines, 66 percent of women reported physical

and psychological abuse. In the INCLLEN study 43 percent reported psychological abuse.⁴

Though prevalent among all groups of women, the extent of abuse may differ across correlates. For example, in the INCLLEN study, women from lower socio-economic groups and those who had less social support (in the form of neighbors, friends, and supportive family members) were more likely to report physical abuse. Women living in urban slums reported the highest prevalence of physical violence as well as the highest incidence for the majority of psychologically abusive behaviors studied. Education may also play a role: in the GIDS study, 60 percent of women with no schooling reported that they were physically assaulted in comparison to 10 percent of women with secondary schooling or higher. A similar pattern emerged from the INCLLEN data indicating a significant drop of reported physical or psychological violence among women with more than ten years of education. In both studies, the reported violence did not decline incrementally with each added year of schooling, but was most apparent after women had attained relatively high levels of education.

As domestic violence is a sensitive, highly stigmatized issue, it is generally assumed that the results of household surveys are better sources for estimates of prevalence than institutional records (such as of police and hospitals). While these sources may be more thorough, they still understate the problem because of under-reporting by abused women. It is well known that many women are afraid or ashamed to discuss violent relationships despite precautionary violence-

⁴ In the INCLLEN study psychological violence was defined as being belittled, insulted, threatened, abandoned, and unfaithfulness. The GIDS study had no explicit definition.

sensitive methods of confidentiality and safety taken by interviewers. This presents researchers with two dilemmas: how to accurately represent the prevalence of violence, and how to interpret trends of abuse among diverse groups of women. The second question is highly political and controversial – for example, the results above demonstrate a higher incidence of physical abuse among less educated, poor women. Do these results demonstrate a vulnerability of this group of women that should be addressed with specific services, or does it show the effect of a systematically greater stigma for educated and middle-class women to disclose violence? And does control over greater resources allow some women to address violence through more private means that allow them to avoid reliance on more stigmatized public services which other groups of women cannot avoid? While these issues cannot be immediately resolved, all groups of women reported high levels of abuse and this in itself demands attention despite any relative differences.

● **Inequalities in the household, as represented by education and employment gaps between husbands and wives, are linked with domestic violence.**

In the INCLEN data, the differences in age, education, and employment between husband and wife were statistically tested for relationships with physical and psychological violence. While these variables have been studied in isolation in past research, the difference between partners' status has been explored less extensively. Age gaps between husband and wife were found to be associated with psychological violence, and an employment gap was also found to be associated with physical and psychological violence. In particular, the association with abuse was strongest when a woman reported higher educational or employment status than her husband.⁵ These results suggest further exploration is needed into the specific context of gender roles and control over women's behavior. Does the disruption of traditional gender roles actually induce violence? Is this temporary violence associated with transitions or a resistance to women in positions of power?

● **Domestic violence has a significant impact on the survival of the household economy.**

At the Nagpur site of the INCLEN study, researchers collected information on missed days of paid work, missed days of household work, and health care costs attributed directly to episodes of injury-causing violence. On average, women lost 6.88 days of paid work and 6.87 days of household work. Furthermore, they reported that their husband would miss work for an average of 9.84 days and leave home for 7.58 days after a violent incident. The average cost of a violent incident resulting in injury was Rs. 984 in lost wages and approximately Rs. 2000 when including health costs. This staggering amount is often 50-75 percent of a poor household's monthly income.

● **Informal services and networks are a critical component of a community's response.**

Several of the studies documented that among women experiencing abuse, relatively few accessed formal services such as medical help, police assistance, or counseling and shelter services. For example the INCLEN survey revealed that less than one percent of the women reported seeking any type of assistance. Those that came forward often did so only after abuse had escalated to a point of severe, life-threatening violence (as seen in the GIDS and HHS studies). A common feature found cross-culturally is the abused woman's perceived and real isolation, and her perception of having no options. If and when women reach out, they first seek the support of close family and friends (seen in IMIFAP, INCLEN, HHS, and GIDS); this is sometimes referred to as the "site of first response." Therefore, if family and friends are better informed about the complexities of domestic violence, the rights of women to be free of violence, and the services and options available for women experiencing violence, then these networks have the potential to create an environment in which domestic violence is not sanctioned by fear, silence, ignorance, or complacency.⁶

⁵ See also Jejeebhoy 1998

⁶ These findings are corroborated elsewhere; see, for example, Schrader 1996.

An important instance of this was the IMIFAP project in Mexico. This project challenged the norms compounding women's isolation and sought to encourage supportive responses by family and friends to women living in violent relationships. Through a series of workshops and an awareness campaign, the project promoted a perception of abuse as a community issue that is everyone's responsibility rather than a private problem. The workshops enabled a group of local women to shift their conceptualization of the issue, and to intervene with concern, crisis intervention skills, and referrals to legal and social services when they suspect that a woman is in a violent relationship. The importance and effectiveness of informal networks was emphasized in other projects as well. For example, the SNTD study on state and NGO responses in India highlighted the Mahila Samakhya Programme. This widely lauded initiative facilitates the formation of local women's collectives to address a range of issues from economic and political power to literacy and natural resource management. These groups give women a shared space to discuss problems in their life, to support each other, to work together to improve their opportunities and status, and to organize against domestic violence. Local NGOs documented in the TISS response study also supported similar efforts through the formation of community watches, encouragement of active intervention of neighbors during fights, protests against villages known for harassing daughters-in-law, and special community welcomes for young brides. By these different strategies, individual women find collective strength to resist institutionalized norms.

- **Existing domestic violence laws and procedures are not adequately enforced and offenders are often not prosecuted.**

While statutes against domestic violence exist in some contexts, there is great difficulty in enforcing the laws or prosecuting offenders. Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code has offered Indian police and prosecutors a new tool with which to address what is termed "torture" and "cruelty" in marriage.⁷ However, in both the

TISS and the SNTD response studies, a narrow interpretation of the law and resistance by police inhibited effective enforcement of this important section of the penal code.

The TISS Special Cell Study provides additional insights into the difficulties with law enforcement by examining links between the language used in recording Section 498A cases and the official response of police to domestic violence. An important discovery was that the way in which women's complaints are recorded can either normalize or criminalize abusive behavior. For example, the documentation of a woman's own account of violence and mental cruelty is often detailed and emotional. Yet in the vast majority of cases analyzed, the records do not apply the legal definitions of cruelty to the narratives provided by women. However, in cases where the woman's voice has been echoed in the statements by male members of her household, such as the father -in-law and brothers from the natal family, the case records validate her experience. This often helps to give credibility to the offense as a crime and increase the likelihood that the courts will prosecute the crime. Unfortunately, it is apparent that it is primarily the documentation of male voices that legitimizes a woman's claims of violation.

"All Women Police Stations" in India, designed to create a more comfortable and accessible environment for women to register complaints, also appear to be unable to address the issue effectively. The studies note that this is due in part to constraints facing female police officers, such as extremely poor working conditions, disrespect from colleagues, few promotion opportunities, and low salary. In addition, they point to a widespread lack of training, resources, and standardized procedures throughout the police system to handle domestic violence cases properly.

Moreover, if a case is actually investigated and taken to court, the NLS study identifies numerous barriers and stumbling blocks in prosecuting a domestic violence case successfully. For example, lack of admissible evidence and witnesses (sometimes due to careless or sloppy

⁷ Section 498a prohibits cruelty and mental torture to women within a marriage, and is particularly, though not exclusively, concerned with abuse as it is linked to dowry, an outlawed but still widely practiced tradition of payment in the form of money or valuables to the groom's family as part of the marriage agreement.

investigations by the police) to prove that domestic violence has occurred makes it difficult to prosecute the crime. In particular, researchers note that confessions made by the husband to the police, and “dying declarations”⁸ in an unsuitable format, are inadmissible in Indian courts. Furthermore, the overwhelming caseload burdening the Indian judicial system often means that it takes several years to have one’s case heard, precipitating compromise agreements or withdrawal of suits. The study also pointed to the limited and inconsistent understandings of domestic violence by judicial functionaries and how this impacts successful prosecution.

In its court research on domestic violence cases, the MAHR project in Bulgaria found that there was no statute that directly addressed domestic violence. As a result, the procedures for bringing a case under various criminal and family law statutes were clumsy, expensive, and ultimately inconsequential. The researchers also concluded that the number of cases brought to court vastly underrepresents the rates of violence in Bulgarian society.

● **The lack of training and understanding of domestic violence among police, lawyers, judges, health caregivers, and service providers is partly responsible for the ineffectiveness of institutions in responding to domestic violence.**

The projects uniformly found that complex understandings of the dynamics of domestic violence against women was limited among legal personnel and service providers. Several projects demonstrate that the importance given to this issue within public institutions was minimal. The HHS records study observed a gap between conventional notions of universal human rights about the rights of women in marriage and perceptions among service providers and women themselves.

The TISS hospital study of rural and urban health care facilities in the state of Maharashtra, India,



Photo by MAHR

A meeting of BGRF and GPBF members in Bulgaria

also showed a lack of awareness, sensitivity, and responsibility among health care professionals. Careful and systematic scrutiny of medico-legal cases (serious injuries which require the police to record details) at the urban municipal hospital showed that while 13.5 percent of cases listed violence directly as the cause of injury, an additional 38.8 percent were most likely due to domestic violence yet not recorded as such. By examining cases in which the medical diagnosis documented the occurrence of violence and sifting the data carefully for notes which suggested probable cases, the researchers hypothesized that an astonishing 81.8 percent of all female patients with preternatural or unusual causes of injury may have reported to primary health clinics as a result of domestic violence. Medical staff typically did not probe the cause of injury, document important information (such as the perpetrator or even the diagnosis of the injury), provide referrals, or monitor the case after discharge. Individual hospital staff members may be concerned for the safety of women, but there is currently no formal health care response to domestic violence in India. Since hospitals and clinics play such a significant role in providing immediate care and referrals to victims of domestic violence, this leaves a critical gap in developing a more effective response to the problem. Such a response might be evident in, for example, the development of domestic

⁸ A dying declaration is that final statement made by the dying victim of a crime in regard to her perpetrator or the circumstances of the crime. Unless it is properly witnessed and recorded, these statements are considered unacceptable as evidence. In addition, a woman may hesitate to identify her perpetrator in such a declaration for fear of bringing consequences to her family.

violence screening procedures or professional medical training on how to handle domestic violence cases.

Lawyers and crisis counselors were targeted by the WLDI project in Russia, which created a training exchange program on gender and domestic violence awareness. Both professional groups improved their skills and strengthened the quality of their collaboration. Lawyers attained skills in educational initiatives and psychological support, and crisis counselors gained valuable legal skills. Another positive outcome of the project is that the challenge of maintaining ongoing training of other lawyers and members of the legal system will now be facilitated by this group of committed Russian women lawyers who can become trainers within the system. This new network of interdisciplinary specialists has helped to strengthen Russian legal institutional capacity in efforts to combat domestic violence.

The MAHR project in Bulgaria worked similarly to link trainers with school teachers, lawyers, judges, journalists, social service professionals, and activists in order to help facilitate a more interdisciplinary and collaborative response to domestic violence and sexual harassment. Project facilitators found that an organized dialogue both across and within disciplines best generated awareness and cooperation. The MAHR project seminars and workshops provided an opportunity for prosecutors, lawyers, judges,

and activists to improve their own understanding of domestic violence, human rights, and the law. In addition, the experience of collaborating across professions served to catalyze further productive networking among professionals in search of improved response strategies.

● **Without consistent, systematic monitoring and evaluation, it is difficult to know whether any programs or services are effective in addressing domestic violence.**

The India response and record studies all found inadequate record-keeping as well as inconsistent attention given to domestic violence in hospitals and police stations. In addition to the lack of systematic documentation noted in hospitals, the HHS, SNDT, and TISS response studies also report a lack of consistent monitoring and documentation among family counseling centers and non-governmental service providers. One constraint noted was the lack of resources and time to track and record each case. Another concern mentioned by caseworkers was the safety of women when follow-up contact could put them at risk for further violence from a suspicious partner. However, even information on the types of cases and the response taken by the organization was often missing.

Without a standard method of documenting cases or monitoring their outcomes, it is difficult for organizations to adequately evaluate their own effectiveness or compare their cases with the work of other service providers. The MAHR research team in Bulgaria also noted that courts do not maintain records in a manner that allows for easy disaggregation of domestic violence data. Just getting access to the records was difficult for the Bulgarian team as well as for the NLS team in Bangalore, India.

● **The effectiveness of support mechanisms is strongly linked to specific cultural norms and social structures.**

All of the studies revealed that the responses to domestic violence are significantly influenced by socio-cultural norms dictating conceptions of



Photo by Nisha Varia

Dr. Shuba Kumar presents INCLen study results in Lucknow, India

marriage, duty, and gender roles. Despite the best intentions of many service providers and legal practitioners, these social expectations and systemic constraints prevent women from escaping violence in their lives.

For example, without affordable or culturally acceptable housing situations available for women to turn to outside of their marital home, it is difficult for service providers to offer help to women experiencing violence in their marriage. In India, the SNTD and TISS response studies, the HHS record study, and the GIDS prevalence study pointed repeatedly to the lack of options available for women outside of marriage as a serious obstacle for service providers. Similarly, there is evidence from both the response studies and the HHS record study that service providers themselves operate with certain stereotypes of battered women and attitudes about the duties of women. This constrains their ability to deliver services that help women find safety from violence. An emphasis on family reconciliation was also found to be the predominant approach among the majority of Indian service providers. This may be due to the lack of options available for women outside of marriage, or it may be due to the perception among some service providers and society in general that domestic violence emerges as a conflict between two people who can and must simply learn to resolve their difficulties. Preserving the integrity of the family unit is often seen as more important than protecting the safety and rights of abused women in many of the contexts studied.

The HHS study in India and the MAHR project in Bulgaria both sought to articulate an objection to this kind of approach on the grounds that it contravenes a larger commitment by the state to uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The MAHR project in Bulgaria noted that in spite of publicity and awareness, shelters and counseling centers regularly dealt with a lack of police cooperation and a misunderstanding of domestic violence by institutional personnel. The service providers thus continue to operate

without significant resources or widespread community support.

● **Studies show that coordinated community responses are a key method of enacting change and responding to domestic violence at the local and national levels.**

Across all contexts, the projects that examined and assessed the provision of services for women and families experiencing domestic violence had parallel conclusions regarding the coordination of community responses. In keeping with the concern for improved communication and training, all projects advocate some form of a coordinated response that is generated collaboratively and integrates representatives of the criminal justice, social service, health care and media institutions.⁹ In addition to the projects specifically intended to create such collaboration in Bulgaria and Russia (MAHR and WLDI), India studies also found that efforts to link voluntary non-governmental initiatives with state services appeared to hold greater promise for success overall in their interventions. For example, the TISS and SNTD response studies noted the greater potential of family counseling cells that were situated within the police stations, and non-governmental organizations that worked closely with police and village elder councils or *panchayats*. The significance of police support in protecting women's safety and enforcing the laws, despite difficulties with police cooperation, could not be overlooked. When service providers were able to call on police to assist, they gained credibility in the eyes of reporting women and the community, generally improving their effectiveness.

Developing a cooperative link between differing agencies was found to create not only a more systematic and coordinated response to domestic violence, but a more flexible means of integrating diverse individuals and interests into the intervention process itself. Participation of community stakeholders such as representatives from government, law enforcement, educational

⁹ This notion of coordinating community response draws from the model developed in Duluth, Minnesota, and now implemented in various contexts throughout the world. In this model, women's needs are the highest priority and changes within institutions are promoted to better respond and address these needs. Further, institutions are encouraged to organize and collaborate in order to ensure that the entire gamut of a victim's needs are addressed by the community at large. See Little, Kristin: *Assessing Justice System Response to Violence against Women*, 1998, at www.vaw.umn.edu/Promise/pplaw.htm and the Duluth Model as articulated by the Advisory Council on Violence Against Women: *A Community Checklist: Important Steps to End Violence Against Women*, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo/speeches/checklist.htm

institutions, and religious leaders, including individual women experiencing violence, was found to be integral to all forms of intervention.

The IMIFAP project in Mexico is an excellent example of how integrating voices from the community helped to generate an effective and multi-dimensional campaign to prevent violence locally. IMIFAP showed that educating and training women in the community to think about domestic violence differently enabled them to break down the public/private divide and reach out to other women, and to protect daughters attempting to escape violent marriages. The use of community focus groups to design targeted publicity and awareness campaigns was an important demonstration of how a community might work together to become better informed and to shift awareness. MAHR

and education among different stakeholders and segments of the society. As briefly described above, MAHR devised a series of community round tables with government officials and women's activists, and held seminars for various stakeholders on human rights and domestic violence. In addition, MAHR designed and implemented a pilot high school curriculum on gender and domestic violence that raised awareness among a younger generation. Along with this they initiated widespread media coverage of all of these efforts to stimulate public dialogue and open discussion of the problem and the possible solutions. Together these proved to be very successful ways of raising national awareness, and generating a coordinated national effort to respond to domestic violence.

also demonstrated different strategies for raising national-level awareness of domestic violence through advocacy

The establishment of the India National Advisory Council as part of the USAID project in India is also an example of including and ensuring the ongoing support of diverse constituencies in efforts to prevent and intervene in domestic violence at a national level. By linking research with targeted forms of advocacy on the part of council members, the India research projects can more immediately influence policy and program planning.



IMIFAP brochure

Putting Findings into Action: Recommendations



PROWID project activities have provided an excellent opportunity to develop a new understanding of the complexities surrounding domestic violence as a development issue and to verify lessons learned from previous research and intervention activities. Below is a summary of recommendations for action.

In particular, PROWID research and pilot intervention programs have explored and documented what is necessary to facilitate social and institutional change. As a group, the PROWID projects generally have dealt with what will help communities and states better respond to the problem of domestic violence. The perspective gained by this work suggests that in order to fully address and ultimately eliminate the problem of domestic violence against women, comprehensive transformations must occur. Ranging from concrete legislative and structural changes to more abstract cultural and symbolic shifts, these reforms must take place at multiple sites simultaneously. Global advocacy efforts which have occurred since the emergence of the issue on the world stage at the Vienna Human Rights Conference in 1993 and since the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995 have indeed begun to catalyze state-level policy responses and increased reporting. However, change on the ground that is both cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary remains slow in coming. Empowering individuals and institutions to further these changes remains an important objective of PROWID project activity. How might such

change occur and what role might development research and intervention play in instigating such change?

Key Recommendations

- **Incorporate domestic violence sensitization and training into government, health care, police, and legal organizations.**

Studies in each site suggested that many public institutions (legal, medical, law enforcement, and media) must better train staff to understand the complexity of domestic violence, and to respond compassionately and effectively. This training should involve inter-disciplinary collaboration, gender-sensitivity, as well as ongoing updates on gender and violence issues. The projects demonstrate that women experiencing violence have multiple needs and that no single provider or profession is adequate to address them fully. Therefore, joint planning, referrals and cooperation between health, legal, and social services is essential for effective response.



Conference participants in Bulgaria

Photo by MAHR

Ultimately, it is apparent that shared training programs and the trading of information across disciplines and professional concerns helps to develop a more integrated response to domestic violence. In addition to the value of discipline-specific and inter-disciplinary training and updates on appropriate responses to domestic violence, all projects underlined the significance of gender awareness generally. It is clearly difficult to instill appropriately effective responses to domestic violence among institutions that have not traditionally had any sensitivity to gender. Thus, studies suggest that it is important to first ensure that gender-sensitivity is instilled.

- **Strengthen women's economic opportunities in order to improve their options and negotiating power outside of and within the marital home.**

Improve women's access to and control of income and assets, recognize her shared right to the family home and matrimonial property, and incorporate the principle of division of community property into divorce laws. Productive

assets and property are critical to strengthening the economic and social status of women, providing income opportunities and improved respect for women inside and outside of marriage and family. Without the ability to sustain themselves economically, women are forced to stay in abusive relationships and are not able to be free from violence.

- **Acknowledge the role of informal and local community networks as a crucial site for supporting women.**

Development projects that foster cooperation and networking between community leaders and women leaders, and that help to empower and educate women, also provide a collaborative network with which to support and intervene in cases of domestic violence. Programs that combine participatory and collaborative violence-sensitivity training serve to create an informal network of more conscious community members that is a valuable outcome already significant in preventing domestic violence.



Researchers after a National Indian Advisory Council meeting in Bangalore, India

Photo by Barbara Burton

- **Devise and implement programs for batterers.**

Programs designed for the batterer should be introduced in both the state and the voluntary sector. Apart from addressing male violence through the criminal justice system, it is imperative to design and implement programs that raise the gender sensitivity of men, explore norms of violent behavior, and provide therapeutic support as needed. In order to promote a holistic approach to prevention as well as intervention, the deficiency in programs designed for men needs to be addressed.

- **Increase public awareness of domestic violence and human rights through education and the media.**

Prevention of domestic violence ultimately depends upon changing the norms of society regarding violence as a means of conflict resolution and regarding traditional attitudes about gender. To achieve this, the concept of gender and rights for women must be introduced into the curricula of schools, universities, professional colleges, and other training settings. Along with this, there must be recognition and commitment to the principle of free compulsory primary and secondary education for girls. Similarly, community mobilization around prevention awareness campaigns requires NGOs and advocates to work effectively with all forms

of media. These advocates should improve their skills and capacity in order to enter into dialogue with journalists and media personnel and heighten awareness of domestic violence.

As women develop consciousness of their rights through formal and informal education and human rights awareness initiatives, they are more likely to seek help in securing or preserving those rights. The PROWID violence studies do show that rights awareness is linked to help-seeking and help-provision. Human rights education and rights-based approaches to development programming need to be supported and developed further. This is important as a means of ensuring the accountability of states as signatories to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights treaties, and as a means of encouraging women to seek help and to gain confidence in their options.



For a Moral Community: Conclusion and Next Steps



“Suppose we imagine the moral community circumscribed by a circle. Individuals inside the circle are members of the moral community, individuals outside the circle are not. Those inside the circle, by virtue of their membership in the moral community, are entitled to a kind of consideration denied those outside. Of the former, but not the latter, we may say, ‘They are morally considerable’.

The boundaries of a moral community, of course, are flexible and often paradoxical. Animals, for example, are often excluded from most moral communities. ...Suffering, in short, is not a raw datum, a natural phenomenon we can identify and measure, but a social status that we extend or withhold. We extend or withhold it depending largely on whether the sufferer falls within our moral community....Wartime propaganda shows how easy and convenient it is to exclude the enemy from a nation’s moral community, just as other ages and communities find it possible to exclude the insane, the poor, women, minorities or children....We do not acknowledge the destruction of beings outside our moral community as suffering; we detach ourselves from their pain as if it were an incomprehensible behavior.” [Tom Regan as quoted in D. Morris, 1997:40.]

The most important task at hand for development practitioners eager to create an enabling environment for the realization of human rights is to help expand the boundary of what Morris, above, calls the “moral community”: the area within which members are validated as human beings deserving of moral consideration. By helping institutions and communities to further validate certain experiences as forms of suffering and injustice for anyone, mechanisms to protect and preserve the rights of all can begin to operate. How might researchers and develop-

ment programs alter perceptions of community in ways necessary to protect its members from domestic violence as one form of injustice? The following are proposed next steps in future project activity.

- **Integrate survivors of domestic violence into program planning and design to help ensure better community accessibility and effectiveness.**

The systematic attention and documentation of the voices and interests of domestic violence survivors can offer insights that help ensure that programs and policies are meeting their needs. Key stakeholders in any response program are the women survivors themselves. Efforts to listen to and document their voices are essential to improve the adequacy and effectiveness of services as well as in developing further insight into the issues surrounding violence in the home.

“The neighbors know but nobody would interfere in other people’s affairs. They stand around and watch. Sometimes, they do instigate fights between us, and tell my husband that I do not take care of the house. Even when he hits me, the neighbors do not come to rescue me. When I open the door of my house and come out, even then no one from the neighborhood comes to my rescue. My younger sister-in-law lives nearby. She sometimes tells me to go to my parents’ house to cool off. I do sometimes go but when I come back, we are back to where we were.”
[From Visaria, p. 23]

- **Focus more research and intervention activities on men and constructions of masculinity.**

A prominent gap revealed by much of the PROWID research and program activity thus far has to do with enlarging an understanding of violence itself. It appears that, as stated earlier, addressing violence has traditionally meant addressing victims of violence. However, knowledge about the perpetrators and perpetration of violence remains much too meager if adequate response and policy efforts toward prevention of violence are ever to be fully realized. Research which investigates the components of masculinity as it is constructed in different contexts and as it is linked to sanctioned expressions of violence is essential to improving an understanding of violent behavior, and efforts to prevent it. Activism accompanying this kind of research on and about males and masculinity has begun during the last decade in different parts of the world and needs to play an increasingly significant role in further efforts to eliminate violence.¹⁰

- **Support efforts to introduce and understand non-violent expressions of power and methods of resolving conflict.**

Efforts to reflect upon and eliminate the use of militarism and force to subdue enemies and resolve conflict must be supported on a global scale if nations, communities and individuals are going to effectively examine their own use of violence. It is important that the continuities between state violence, crime and forms of domestic violence already suggested by research findings be established. Some contemporary research on war and everyday state violence asserts, for example, that rather than isolated events and incidents, genocidal acts of war and intimate household violence are part of a continuum of violent expression that underlies

contemporary social life (Cuomo 1996). In order to eliminate violence of any kind, this continuum must be acknowledged and addressed.

- **Prioritize the use of diverse qualitative research methods as an essential means of understanding and responding to the problem of violence against women.**

A mix of qualitative and quantitative methods is essential for fully understanding domestic violence and designing appropriate prevention and intervention efforts. For example, ethnography¹¹, long an effective qualitative method employed within the social sciences, offers tremendous potential for better understanding the complex intricacies of domestic violence. In order to understand, for example, how men learn to be violent, how and when women learn that they are entitled to lives without violence, how socio-cultural norms about family and marriage might be transformed, what the longer term emotional, physical and social consequences of trauma are to a family and to a community, ethnographic methods must be utilized.

Responding to violence and preventing future violence clearly requires a very holistic approach. While intervention and research activities may occur in separate sectors, the complexity of problems particular to violence against women demands inter-disciplinary, multi-sectoral action occurring simultaneously. Structural and institutional changes are integrally tied to more abstract changes in beliefs about gender, family, and power. Further research to explain the origins and perpetuation of violence generally, and violence in particular instances—including the relation between domestic violence and social or state violence—is still needed before any wide-ranging interventions can actually prevent or change violent behaviors and practices.

¹⁰ See, for example, organized international coalitions and initiatives such as: The White Ribbon Campaign, Men against Sexism, Men against Violence and Men against Rape, which are instigating movements in different parts of the world. See, for example, <http://www.cs.utk.edu/~bartley/other/realMen.html> or <http://infoweb.magi.com/~mensnet/>.

¹¹ Ethnography may be characterized as research undertaken largely by cultural anthropologists and sociologists that requires that the researcher act as a participant-observer and interpretant of a community, a group or a way of life. This may include intensive and unstructured interviewing, examining and interpreting popular local texts and discourses, and carefully teasing out the ways in which people think about what they do.



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For more information on the projects discussed in this paper, the following Reports-in-Brief are available from ICRW or can be accessed on-line at www.icrw.org or www.cedpa.org:

- ▶ "Changing Community Norms on Partner Abuse: A Project in Iztacalco, Mexico." Instituto Mexicano de Investigación de Familia y Población (IMIFAP). 2000. A PROWID Report-in-Brief.
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