

Tackling Violence against Women: A worldwide approach



Published by WOMANKIND Worldwide
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UK Registered Charity No. 328206

Cover photograph: Women from WOMANKIND partner organisation DEMUS march through Lima on an 'End Violence against Women' demonstration.

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Acknowledgements

WOMANKIND Worldwide would like to thank all those who contributed to this report, in particular our partner organisations whose inspirational work makes this publication possible.

Special thanks to those whose testimonies we've quoted, who will help others tackle violence against women around the world.

‘Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human-rights violation. And it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development, and peace.’

KOFI ANNAN

Foreword

Efforts to tackle violence against women have evolved over the years and there is now increased visibility of the problem and greater knowledge and awareness of its causes and consequences. But huge challenges remain. The scale of this global phenomenon is enormous, but the level of investment in suitable interventions and the political will to tackle the problem remains low compared with responses to other human-rights violations.

Aside from the devastating impact on the lives of women and their families and communities, the pandemic threatens to undermine efforts to bring about sustainable development. In this report WOMANKIND Worldwide draws on examples and lessons learned, with its international partners, that can help women – and men – across the world put into practice various strategies to tackle violence against women (VAW) effectively – and to illustrate the urgent need for violence against women to be tackled as part of a broader human-rights and social-justice agenda.

Sue Turrell
Executive Director

PARTNERSHIPS WORLDWIDE

WOMANKIND works in partnership with women's organisations around the world. We do not have offices in developing countries, nor do we seek to impose a one-size-fits-all model of development onto our partner organisations; rather we fund and support them to find solutions to the problems they face in their communities. We also run a programme of work in the UK with a focus on promoting the inclusion of work on violence against women and girls as a key part of young people's education. We facilitate learning between partners and across programmes – and harness this learning to strengthen our work and its impact. We also support our partners to lobby and advocate for change at all levels, from the local council up to the UN decision-making body. Our policy work is informed by the reality of the challenges ordinary women face in their day-to-day lives. The organisations we support vary greatly in size, capacity and the contexts in which they work, but what we all share is a firm commitment to ending discrimination against women and a belief that women, when given the opportunity, can be a powerful force for change.

Introduction

The impact of violence against women is now well documented. It denies women their most basic human rights, such as the right to health, and is a major threat to the social and economic development of communities and whole countries. In development terms, it directly endangers the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals related to gender equality and women's empowerment, poverty reduction, infant and maternal health and mortality, educational attainment and combating HIV and AIDS.

But despite recognition within the development community of the urgent need to tackle violence against women, millions of women around the world continue to suffer violence in the home and in the community, with devastating physical, emotional and psychological effects.¹

Advocates for women's rights have campaigned hard over the years to bring the issue of violence against women to the world's attention. As a result of their efforts, a number of States have taken significant steps at the national level towards the eradication of violence against women. However, these steps have primarily focused on improving laws relating to violence against women. Far less has been done to enforce legislation and to tackle the underlying causes of the problem — the imbalance of power between women and men and the way in which gender roles are articulated at all levels of society.

Little has been done to tackle the underlying causes — the imbalance of power between women and men

WOMANKIND'S approach

WOMANKIND (WK) works in partnership with organisations around the world to tackle violence against women through a range of initiatives and interventions — from prevention work in schools in the UK to integrated community responses challenging the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) in Ethiopia.

Our work recognises that violence is a universal phenomenon, but that women in general and some distinct groups of women may be

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN — THE FACTS

There is an urgent need for more accurate data and statistics about the scope and prevalence of violence against women — to support meaningful and targeted responses. This is mainly as a result of under-reporting, under-estimation of the scale of the problem and a lack of commitment to addressing the issue in a comprehensive way. But the statistics that are available still paint a devastating picture of the harmful effects of violence against women:

- ▶ Violence is as serious a cause of death and incapacity among women of reproductive age as cancer — and a greater cause of ill-health than traffic accidents and malaria combined.
- ▶ Approximately one in five women becomes a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime.
- ▶ More than 130 million girls and women alive today have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM), mainly in Africa and some Middle Eastern countries², and two million girls a year are at risk of mutilation.
- ▶ Rape in South Africa has reached epidemic proportions — women's groups estimate that a woman is raped every 26 seconds and a child every 15 minutes.
- ▶ The economic cost of violence against women is considerable — a 2003 report by the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that the costs of intimate partner violence in the United States alone exceed US\$5.8 billion per year.

Source: www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/facts_figures.php

particularly vulnerable to violence, such as women living in poverty, widows, indigenous women, disabled women, women in detention, women in situations of armed conflict and women living in rural or remote communities.

Our focus is on tackling violence against women, since we recognise that, while men and boys may be the target of gender-based violence and women may also be the perpetrators of gender-based violence, *women constitute the vast majority of people experiencing gender-based violence and men the majority of perpetrators*. However, our work is also based on an understanding that women and men must work together and involve the wider community in order to bring about lasting change in the attitudes and behaviours which perpetuate all forms of gender-based violence.

The principles and standards set out in international human-rights instruments, in particular the UN Convention for the Elimination of

Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) provide a global framework for this work that cuts across cultural, religious and national limitations. In this report, you will read about some of the strategies WOMANKIND Worldwide and its partner organisations have used to tackle violence against women, within a broader framework of challenging inequality and unequal power relations between women and men.

We highlight the challenges and opportunities posed by the multiple strategies WOMANKIND and its partners are employing to tackle different forms of violence against women in a range of contexts.

Using a rights lens

As an organisation working to promote women's rights and gender equality, in addition to fighting poverty, WOMANKIND is particularly interested in the intersection between violence against women and other women's human rights.

In our experience, a rights-based analysis can help to provide an understanding of the often complex linkages between women's experience of violence and the denial of their social, economic, political and legal rights. By highlighting the indivisibility and interconnected nature of the full spectrum of women's human rights as set out in international human-rights treaties, we are able to look at all the factors impacting on women's lives and to respond accordingly.

For example, many of WOMANKIND's programmes to tackle violence against women are complemented by work to challenge women's exclusion from public life — and increase their participation in decision-making processes at all levels. This has been shown to decrease their vulnerability to violence by helping them find support and solutions to the problem, such as legal protection, counselling and advice. More broadly, it also helps women to challenge existing power structures, and enables them to have more of a say in the laws, policies, institutions and structures which govern their lives. Women's ability to live lives free of violence may also be constrained by the denial of their economic rights in the same way that lack of economic empowerment may make them more susceptible to

Women and men must work together and involve the wider community in order to bring about lasting change in the attitudes and behaviours which perpetuate all forms of gender-based violence.

violence. Thus, a number of our partners working to tackle VAW are also implementing women's economic-empowerment programmes, using these as an entry point to wider community-outreach work. Where they lack the capacity to implement these programmes, they work closely with other organisations that have this as their focus to ensure the women have access to a range of services.

In Ethiopia, for example, the **Kembatta Women's Self-Help Centre**³ complements its services for women affected by FGM and early and forced marriage by providing vocational training and credit and income-generating schemes to enable women to become economically self-sufficient. Their work also focuses on environmental restoration and land productivity to promote sustainable livelihoods.

A rights lens is also helpful when addressing the intersection between HIV and AIDS and VAW. HIV and AIDS has worsened the context in which the social and economic marginalisation of women – and the assertion of some dominant forms of masculinity – combine to make women increasingly subject to oppressive social structures and violence, yet this dimension of the pandemic is often ignored.

International human-rights instruments, such as CEDAW and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights contain useful provisions which are relevant to the protection of women's rights in the context of preventing and responding to HIV and AIDS, such as ending discrimination against women in the field of health care and eliminating harmful stereotypes and practices, which may compound women's vulnerability to HIV infection.

The **Musasa project in Zimbabwe**⁴ works to better understand the link between violence against women and HIV and AIDS and to respond with appropriate services. By encouraging organisations working on HIV and AIDS to adopt a gendered analysis to their work – understanding the different realities of women and men, how these impact on the work and how any challenges might be addressed – the project workers are promoting an understanding of the linkage between HIV and AIDS and VAW.

Musasa has developed HIV and gender-based violence policies for



This Djibouti woman, who used to carry out female genital mutilation, now educates people about the dangers.

GIACOMO PIROZZI/PANOS PICTURES

LEGAL INSTRUMENTS AND FRAMEWORKS

Violence against women is a violation of their fundamental human rights, including their right to life, to health and to live lives free from sexual and physical abuse and psychological violence.

Governments obligations to prevent and tackle violence against women are set out in a number of international human-rights instruments — in particular the UN

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the **UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women**,

which defines violence against women as:

‘Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life’

— and regional instruments, such as the

Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women, also known as the Convention of Belem do Para.

In fact, it is possible to find provisions of human-rights law that relate to violence against women in all of the basic UN human-rights treaties. For example, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that ‘no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment’.

In addition, governments have made commitments to tackling violence against women at international summits and conferences, such as the 4th UN World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. The outcomes document from this conference, the Beijing Platform for Action, outlines concrete steps that governments must take to end the problem of violence.

- ▶ UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/e1cedaw.htm
- ▶ UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women
[www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/A.RES.48.104.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/A.RES.48.104.En?Opendocument)
- ▶ Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women
www.oas.org/cim/English/Convention%20Violence%20Against%20Women.htm
- ▶ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
www.hrweb.org/legal/cpr.html
- ▶ Beijing Platform for Action
www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/
- ▶ Millennium Development Goals
www.un.org/millenniumgoals/
- ▶ Millennium Declaration
www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm

So, there is no shortage of standards and obligations committing governments and other actors to take action — the problem is their failure to implement these commitments!

groups like Zimbabwe's four million-strong Apostolic Church, which tend to be closed and male-dominated and, therefore, harder to reach. While HIV and AIDS health and protection issues are easily understood, Musasa ensures that this is underpinned by strong messages about a woman's right to live free from violence and sexual abuse.

Education and prevention

Public awareness-raising campaigns and education initiatives in schools are increasingly being used to challenge the stereotypical perceptions of male and female sexuality and status that underlie gender-specific discrimination and violence. It is clear, however, that most interventions still have a focus on responding to the effects of violence against women, rather than tackling its root causes. A number of WOMANKIND'S partners have chosen to adopt a more holistic approach to tackling VAW.

'Musasa ensures that HIV and AIDS health and protection issues are underpinned by strong messages about a woman's right to live free from violence and sexual abuse'

In Zimbabwe, the Musasa project began by offering shelter, counselling and legal services to survivors of domestic violence, but soon realised that it needed to combine this work with awareness-raising and prevention initiatives to bring about lasting change.

To date, much of its prevention work has focused on young people in tertiary education. This has involved training young women and men to act as peer educators who, in turn, can educate their peers to resolve conflict in relationships in non-violent ways.

The organisation is now working with the Ministry of Education to introduce discussion of domestic and gender-based violence into the school curriculum to reach primary- and secondary-school children and young people. Musasa is working to ensure that a

gendered understanding of violence and domestic violence remains a core part of all training materials and delivery.

In the UK, WOMANKIND's *Challenging Violence, Changing Lives* programme for secondary-school students and their teachers has developed a number of tools to raise awareness and transform the attitudes of young people to stop violence against women, including lesson plans, a Stop Sexual Bullying campaign and an interactive website called *Respect4Us*.⁵ But getting prevention work on the education agenda has proved an uphill struggle — in the UK there is a perception that we have 'done' gender equality; other equalities issues such as disability and sexual orientation are now seen as more pressing.

WOMANKIND has also joined forces with a number of other UK women's rights organisations to demand that the government devise and implement an integrated, cross-departmental VAW strategy. **The End Violence against Women Coalition Campaign (EVAWCC)**,⁶ which was launched in November 2005, calls for a comprehensive and integrated approach to tackling VAW — and greater awareness-raising of the true levels and impact of violence against women on individuals, families and communities.

Working with men and boys

WOMANKIND'S experience shows how vital it is that, when tackling violence against women, work is firmly rooted in women's experiences — and in building the capacity of women. But men and boys are also key actors in efforts to tackle the problem. Beyond the issue of direct physical or emotional violence, men must 'speak out' against violence — and women and men have to work together to challenge existing definitions of masculinity that provide the foundation for violence.

In the UK, WOMANKIND's schools work has benefited enormously from the input, experience and support of Michael Kaufman, one of the originators of the Canadian White Ribbon Campaign⁷ which has become a global expression of support for women living with men's violence.



Technology student Shamiso, pictured at a WOMANKIND workshop on ending violence against women: 'I am now going to go back to my family and friends and educate them about violence against women. You have to be confident, you have to stand your ground.'

WOMANKIND has adopted and adapted the campaign for use in schools in England and Wales, with the biggest shift being away from the Canadian focus on men speaking out about men's violence against women to a UK focus on men and women speaking about all forms of violence against women.

This means WOMANKIND can address women as perpetrators of violence against other women – from areas such as forced marriage to sexual bullying and name-calling. It has also ensured – from WOMANKIND'S perspective as a women's rights organisation – that we are not handing over responsibility for violence against women to men to solve, which could reinforce stereotypes that portray women as victims. Rather we see the issue as one to be tackled jointly.

This is a view shared by WOMANKIND'S partners. In **India, the Irula Tribal Women's Welfare Society (ITWWS)**⁸ works with Irula communities in Chennai who are at the bottom rung of the caste system, to tackle violence against women and increase their participation in *panchayats*, the lowest level of local government structures. ITWWS recognises that the prevailing patriarchal social system in India is largely to blame for domestic violence in the community – and is also one of the biggest obstacles to women's participation in politics.

For this reason, ITWWS has made counselling sessions and gender-training programmes for men an integral part of its programme – men are provided with the space to discuss the problems and pressures they face and to help them change their behaviour and approach to relationships. The impact of the work can be measured by the reduction in the levels of violence towards women: increasingly, men are encouraging their wives to participate in community groups and local politics, and attitudes towards girl children have improved.

Integrated community approaches

Many of the programmes WOMANKIND supports function on multiple levels and with a range of different actors. Co-ordination between these different actors is extremely important and there are

SOUTH AFRICA — GENDER ADVOCACY PROJECT

The Gender Advocacy Project (GAP) in South Africa⁹ has established a Domestic Violence Task Team as part of its work to tackle domestic violence in the Saldanha Bay municipality of the Western Cape.

When the project was established in 2004, its first campaign posters were torn down overnight; such was the sensitivity surrounding this issue in the community. But in just two years, the project team has built strong relationships with government departments — and service providers including schools, health-care workers and the police, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and community members — to improve services and treatment for survivors of domestic violence.

A key achievement has been the establishment of a Protocol detailing the quality and scope of services that survivors of domestic violence should be able to access throughout the process of reporting cases of domestic violence. This was drafted jointly by a range of service providers, and members of four community initiatives providing support to survivors.

The reluctance of health workers to report or testify in domestic-violence cases remains a key challenge. Many have experienced violent relationships themselves and are fearful of visiting the home of a woman who is experiencing violence in case her partner finds out; now that GAP is working to support them individually, hopefully they are more confident about carrying out this work.

a number of examples of 'best practice' in this area, but it is clear that much more needs to be done to improve 'joined-up' thinking between different stakeholders if interventions to tackle violence against women are to succeed.

Culturally appropriate responses

Given that power relations which subordinate women may manifest themselves in very different ways depending on the context, it is clear that a one-size-fits-all approach to tackling VAW is unlikely to succeed.

This is a particularly important factor to consider when tackling violence against women in conflict or post-conflict situations, where the influence of different dimensions of gender, class and ethnic discrimination and their intersection may be even more complex. Other factors such as the historical context of the conflict, the complicity of State and non-State Actors in acts of violence and

A one-size-fits-all approach to tackling violence against women won't work

PERU'S VIOLENT LEGACY

Peru's violent internal conflict lasted from 1980 to 2000 and caused around 70 000 deaths — according to estimates by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission established in 2001 to examine atrocities committed during the conflict.

The human-rights abuses included massacres, forced disappearances and high levels of violence against women, committed by all parties involved in the conflict, including the rebel groups Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) — and, to a lesser extent, Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) — and the military, police, state security forces and civilian defence-committees of Peru.

The report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission states that racism, social exclusion and inequality, including gender inequality, were at the root of the conflict — most of the victims came from ethnic groups and sectors in society that had been sidelined and discriminated against for centuries.

The community of Manta, an indigenous quechua-speaking community in Peru's highlands, was particularly affected by the violence — rape was systematic and widespread. The guilt, anger and frustration felt by women had no outlet because of the military occupation and the '**normalisation**' of the extraordinary violence.

displacement, and the impunity of the justice system all need to be taken into account when designing responses and interventions. As a result, countries emerging from conflict have seen the growth of a variety of locally specific, alternative and often informal approaches to tackling the legacy and ongoing incidence of violence.

WOMANKIND's partner in Peru, DEMUS (Estudio para la Defensa y los derechos de la Mujer)¹⁰ has become a pioneer in helping rape victims, through its recent pilot project in the remote Andean region of Manta. This project uses innovative and sensitive techniques to explore the causes and impact of sexual violence against women before, during and after the civil war.

In the rural indigenous community of Manta, there was no tradition or concept of counselling as it is understood in the North, so DEMUS organised knitting workshops for the women: on the one hand they made goods to sell and bring in an income — but it was also a pretext for getting the women together to talk and start coming to terms with the past.

Cultural norms and traditions are also an important consideration when tailoring interventions. In Afghanistan, strict societal codes are invoked in the name of tradition and religion to justify the denial of women's most basic human rights. Levels of violence against women are extremely high and more than 8 out of 10 acts of violence against women are committed by a male family member such as a husband, father-in-law, son or cousin.¹¹

In this context, WOMANKIND'S partner, the Afghan Women's Resource Centre (AWRC)¹² is working to overcome resistance to women's rights by integrating training on the role of human rights within Islam into their work. By exploring different teachings of the Koran, AWRC workers counter harmful interpretations – and demonstrate that the promotion of women's rights can be a positive force for change, rather than a concept that is at odds with Islam.

They also meet regularly with the principal decision-makers in the community, such as the district officers, elders and mullahs, to create trust and increase acceptance of their work. After initial resistance, this approach has started to yield results, and women and men have observed reduced levels of violence in the last year. Partners report that change has come about because women now feel more supported – and they enjoy increased levels of self-esteem and confidence, enabling them to speak out and report incidents of violence to the *shuras*¹³ for arbitration.

As these examples demonstrate, types of violence and responses to them may be regionally or culturally specific but, underlying these differences is a common cause – the perpetuation of women's subordination by men. So, sharing lessons and approaches that work with people across the world is extremely valuable.

The exchange of knowledge, learning and experience with our partners and other organisations, has enabled WOMANKIND to strengthen the impact of its policy work and programmes considerably. For example, in 2003, partners from Zimbabwe, Ghana and South Africa came to the UK to participate in an exchange with a focus on legislative responses to domestic violence. Their visit was timed to coincide with a UK-sector consultation on domestic-violence legislation as part of preparations for a national



AWRC's training for women and girls is proving to be a powerful force for change in Afghanistan.

The Afghan Women's Resource Centre demonstrates that promoting women's rights is a positive force for change – not a concept at odds with Islam

Domestic Violence Bill – for the UK sector it was an important opportunity to learn from the experiences of domestic-violence programmes in Africa.

Now, several years on, the Zimbabwean parliament has just passed a Domestic Violence Bill and a similar bill had its second reading in Ghana at the end of 2006 – thanks, in large part, to the continuous lobbying and pressure by women’s organisations in those countries.

Access to justice

Despite their obligations under international and national laws, States are still failing to protect women – many cases of violence continue to be widely tolerated and go unpunished by authorities. In many countries, the justice system merely perpetuates not only the systemic inequalities between women and men in wider society, but also inequalities with regard to class, ethnicity and race.

A groundbreaking study by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2006 found that violence against women is worse in Peru than in countries with lower economic development such as Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Namibia – and stated that a corrupt legal system was partly to blame, with just a tiny proportion of those men responsible for sexual violence being sentenced.¹⁴

Violence against women is worse in Peru than in poorer countries – and few of the perpetrators are sentenced

The failure of the justice system to bring perpetrators to justice prompted WOMANKIND’S partners in Peru and Bolivia to present cases at a series of national-level and regional tribunals, known as the Tribunal Nacional y Regional de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales. Organised by a group of women’s organisations, including WOMANKIND partners Coordinadora de la Mujer and DEMUS, the tribunals highlighted violations of women’s economic, social and cultural rights and explored whether such cases could be brought to trial.

SVEN TORFINN/PANOS PICTURES



An office dealing with child abuse and violence against women at a police station in Mombasa. Most of the police officers are women, and they receive special training.

GHANA — NKYINKYIM PROJECT

In Ghana, the Nkyinkyim project¹⁵ has a strong focus on working with traditional and religious leaders — and engaging the whole community in its efforts to tackle the pervasive problem of domestic violence.

The project — developed in response to countrywide research indicating a high prevalence of domestic violence — has adopted a unique approach to the problem in rural areas where women’s access to services such as legal support and health care can be very limited. WOMANKIND’S partner organisations support the community to establish COMBATS or Community-Based Action Teams, which are responsible for raising awareness about the issue of domestic violence, as well as working with traditional and religious leaders to establish a system of locally appropriate sanctions, such as public ‘naming and shaming,’ against perpetrators.

The support provided by the COMBATS has helped to overcome women’s reluctance to report incidents to state agencies for fear of shaming their village. Their voluntary status also allows individual cases to be resolved without any cost implication for the woman. This approach has fostered a sense of ‘ownership’ of the project amongst the whole community that has resulted in not only the incidence of violence against women decreasing, but also a reduction in other types of intra-familial violence.

Most of the cases have involved incidences of violence against women, including forced sterilisation, rape and femicide.¹⁶ The tribunals have provided activists with a platform from which to demand an end to impunity — and their efforts have led to a number of rulings in favour of survivors of violence in national and regional courts.¹⁷

What is ‘culturally’ acceptable?

In many countries where WOMANKIND works, prevailing social, cultural and traditional norms often pose an additional barrier to the effective implementation of national and international laws aimed at tackling violence against women. ‘Culture’ is often used as a defence for the perpetuation of harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and early and forced marriages — women who reject these practices are accused of bringing dishonour to the family and community. They also lose their social and economic status in society, unless they follow what is seen as their socially prescribed role.

People use ‘Culture’ to defend harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation

WOMANKIND'S partners in East Africa — including organisations in Ethiopia, Somalia, Somaliland, Egypt, Kenya and Sudan — are tackling these deeply held beliefs through a combination of formal and informal education that teaches communities about the harmful effects of FGM, at the same time as providing vocational training and income-generating schemes to ensure that, in rejecting these traditions, women are not left destitute. Partners work hard to earn the trust of traditional and religious leaders — their support is crucial if the work is to be truly sustainable.

Media & campaigns

Campaigning remains one of the most effective ways of breaking the silence surrounding violence against women — and activists have developed a diverse and often innovative range of approaches for raising awareness of the issue of VAW and for bringing about changes in attitudes, policies and practices. The international *16 Days of Activism* campaign¹⁸ is an excellent example of the vibrancy of the women's movement and its determination to speak out against VAW and increase its visibility as an issue.

Increasingly too, it is not just the women who are speaking out. In Saldanha Bay in South Africa's Western Cape Province, the **Gender Advocacy Project's** soccer tournament has become an annual event aimed at raising men's awareness of the effects of domestic violence on women, children and the whole community. The event, which draws a big crowd of people, is attended by a variety of local male role models who speak out against domestic violence and challenge men attending the soccer matches to become advocates of non-violence.

Many organisations have also started to incorporate work with the media into their efforts to tackle violence against women, in recognition of its enormous influence on the way our '**gendered**' roles, characteristics and behaviour develop. **Rape Crisis Cape Town (RCCT)**¹⁹, another of WOMANKIND'S partners in South Africa, uses a '**Speak Out**' model to demystify the rape-reporting process — from police, to clinic, to court — and show the positive futures that rape survivors have been able to build for themselves, thus encouraging other women to report their experiences. RCCT



Rape Crisis Cape Town's 'Until the Violence Stops' campaign bus continues to travel across rural South Africa.

(pictured) has created **'Speak Out' guidelines for journalists** on factors to consider when interviewing a survivor of violence. This is already helping to counter media myths and stereotypes around rape in South Africa.

Definite impact

While interventions and responses to violence against women are now wide-ranging and diverse, factual evidence to demonstrate the impact of these initiatives remains sparse: tackling violence against women requires changes in values, attitudes and behavioural norms, which can be difficult to quantify or measure over the short term.

Given that the long-term impact of interventions may not be perceptible within three to five years (the duration of most grants), many donors have been reluctant to fund this work in the past. It is, of course, understandable that donors want to see concrete outcomes as a result of their funding, but it is important that Northern-based NGOs like WOMANKIND play a role in advocating for improved funding structures to better support work to tackle violence against women.

Many organisations are also working to address the need to redefine and develop new and alternative evaluation methods. In Peru, our partners have developed a set of Minimum Standards on Violence Against Women, based on a combination of rights set out in national, regional and international legal instruments, to guide their work and to provide a baseline against which progress can be tracked. The monitoring and implementation of these standards is still at the pilot stage, but it is hoped they will prove extremely useful for monitoring at the local level.

WOMANKIND has also been devising ways of strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of campaign activities during the *16 Days of Activism*. In the past, we have provided small grants to African women's organisations to support their campaign activities during the annual campaign, but we have come to realise that many organisations working on VAW have a limited capacity to undertake monitoring and evaluation of the impact of these initiatives.

Types of violence may vary but there is a common cause — women's subordination by men

With this in mind, and based on recent research, WOMANKIND is now supporting work to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of '16 Days' campaign activities. Lessons learned from these activities will be disseminated in 2007 to increase activists' knowledge and understanding of just what makes a campaign to tackle violence against women successful.

Policy & influencing

The landmark recognition of violence against women as a human-rights abuse at the 1993 Vienna Conference on Human Rights²⁰ established unequivocally that States are responsible for the prevention of violence against women and for bringing perpetrators to justice – whether these acts are committed in the private or public arena. Subsequent international and regional declarations and texts have further elaborated the responsibility of States to develop policies and programmes aimed at eradicating violence against women and to provide adequate resources to achieve this aim, detailed on page 11.

States are responsible for the prevention of violence against women and for bringing perpetrators to justice

This work has provided women's human-rights activists with a series of standards against which to hold their governments to account – and challenge the policies and practices of a range of actors including the UN, regional development bodies and international financial institutions.

WOMANKIND and its partners seek to ensure the implementation of these standards in a number of ways. At the international level, we make use of a number of different UN mechanisms to lobby governments to fulfil their promises to eliminate violence against women. For example, in October 2005, WOMANKIND and partner organisations made a submission to the UN Secretary-General's Study on All Forms of Violence against Women, setting out key issues requiring the urgent attention of governments and calling for a global plan to tackle VAW.

We and our partners have used CEDAW Shadow reports as an opportunity to highlight government inaction as well as examples of best practice for combating and eliminating VAW²¹. And, in September 2005, we joined forces with other women’s organisations around the world to urge world leaders meeting at the World Summit to address the omission of VAW from the Millennium Development Goals, resulting in the expansion of MDG 3 on gender equality and women’s empowerment beyond its limited focus on primary education.

What lies ahead?

Given the scale and complex nature of violence against women, it is difficult to claim that an example of ‘best practice’ is universally applicable. But WOMANKIND’s experience suggests that the prevalence of violence against women can only be reduced through a combination of sustained, strategic and comprehensive measures to address both the short-term requirements of individual survivors, such as healthcare and bringing the perpetrators to justice, and the longer-term cultural and attitudinal changes required to challenge its acceptance.

Using a human-rights framework can help us to better understand and address the causes and consequences of the problem. It also acts as a reminder that VAW is a pandemic that threatens the fulfilment of government commitments in other areas of human rights and international development and, therefore, requires all development actors to play their part in finding a solution. This involves States and civil society working together with communities to find local solutions to VAW. It also requires political will and significant increases in the resources available to respond to the pandemic. Crucially, it demands that everyone listens to and supports the women’s organisations tackling this problem worldwide.

MARTIN ADLERY/PANOS PICTURES



Survivors of violence need counselling and healthcare. But to tackle the root causes, there must be changes in culture and attitudes.

Violence against women is a pandemic that threatens human rights – and international development

References

1. Around the world, at least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or abused in some other way – most often by someone she knows, including by her husband or another male family member. UNFPA, *The State of World Population 2000: Ending Violence against Women & Girls*.
See www.unfpa.org/swp/2000/english/ch03.html
2. Bjälkander Owolabi, Evaluation of East Africa Programme, for WOMANKIND Worldwide, 2006.
3. See www.kmg.selfhelp.org for further information.
4. See www.womankind.org.uk/our-partners-zimbabwe.html for further information.
5. See www.womankind.org.uk/uk-schools.html
6. See www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk
7. A Canadian campaign devoted to educating men about the effects and consequences of violence against women. See www.whiteribbon.ca
8. See www.itwwsindia.org
9. See www.gender.co.za/
10. See www.demus.org.pe/
11. From the results of a survey conducted by UNIFEM between January 2003 and July 2005: *Uncounted & Discounted: A Secondary Data Research Project on Violence Against Women in Afghanistan*, May 2006.
www.afghanistan.unifem.org/PDF_Documents/Uncounted%20Discounted.pdf;
for more information about the situation of women's rights in Afghanistan see also WOMANKIND Worldwide's report 'Taking Stock: Afghan women and girls five years on', October 2006. The report is available in several languages at www.womankind.org.uk/takingstockdownloads.html
12. See www.womankind.org.uk/our-partners-afghanistan.html
13. Informal consultation forums active in discussing and seeking solutions to conflict at the family and local level.
14. WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women, Garcia-Moreno, C., H. Jansen, M. Ellsberg, L. Heise and C. Watts.
15. See www.womankind.org.uk/our-programme-ghana.html
16. Femicide is the mass killing of women because they are women: the word was coined in response to the murders of hundreds of women in the Mexican border city of Juarez: in 1993 women activists in Ciudad Juarez raised the alarm about increases in the number of unidentified women discovered raped, tortured and murdered on city outskirts.
17. For example, Karen Llontoy, a Peruvian woman won the right to have an abortion, despite being denied access to the procedure. The ruling was the first of its kind by the UN Human Rights Committee and was a great victory for DEMUS and its partners in Peru.
18. See www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html for further information.
19. See www.rapecrisis.org.za/
20. The World Conference on Human Rights was held in Vienna on 25 June 1993.
21. WOMANKIND produced a CEDAW Thematic Shadow Report on Violence against Women in the UK in 2003, written by P. Sen, C. Humphreys and L. Kelly. In 1998 our partner, Masimanyane Women's Support Centre, also produced an NGO shadow report to CEDAW with a focus on violence against women.

About us

WOMANKIND Worldwide is a UK charity dedicated to improving women's lives and promoting women's rights across the world.

We work in long-term partnerships with around 60 community groups in 15 developing countries. WOMANKIND listens to its partners and is guided by women themselves and what they want to change in their world.

We aim to provide our partners with new skills, knowledge, contacts and experience which enable them to become ever more effective and ambitious organisations for change.

WOMANKIND ensures careful evaluation of all projects, and shares what is learned with other partners and with policymakers. This means our grassroots projects are linked into the bigger picture and women's voices are heard by governments and international bodies.

WOMANKIND Worldwide has three strategic aims:

- 1 To advance women's wellbeing through increasing political and civil participation**
- 2 To reduce violence against women**
- 3 To inform and influence policy and practice at local, regional, national and international levels**

If you would like to find out more about WOMANKIND's work or support us in our efforts to tackle violence against women, go to our website at

www.womankind.org.uk



Violence against women is a global pandemic. It devastates the lives of women, their families, and their communities. It also threatens to undermine efforts to bring about sustainable development.

But all over the world women — and men — are combating what Kofi Annan calls ‘perhaps the most shameful human-rights violation.’ In *Tackling Violence against Women* WOMANKIND Worldwide shares the stories, struggles, and strategies of people in Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Ghana, Peru, India and the UK who have come together to stand up for the right of women not to live in fear.

WOMANKIND calls on governments, the UN and other international, regional and national decision-making bodies to:

- ▶ mobilise the additional commitment and resources that are urgently needed to tackle the causes and consequences of violence;
- ▶ establish and implement effective laws to protect women from all forms of violence; and
- ▶ invest in prevention as a long-term solution.



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