GENDER VIOLENCE
A DEVELOPMENT AND
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

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Violence against Women: An Obstacle to Development

Human development is a process of enlarging people’s choices. The most critical of these wide-ranging choices are to live long and healthy life, to be educated and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. Additional choices include political freedom, guaranteed human rights and personal self-respect. Development enables people to have these choices.


The United Nations Decade for Women helped bring attention to the critical importance of women’s activities to economic and social development. However, after fifteen years of efforts to integrate women into development, women are still only marginal beneficiaries of development programs and policy goals. Various

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studies show that women remain in a disadvantaged position in employment, education, health, and government. There is no major field of activity and no country in which women have obtained equality with men (Sivard, 1985: 5).

In spite of the slow process of change, women working in the international development community have been successful in identifying issues critical for women's development that had not traditionally been understood as central to the development process. One such area is gender violence. Violence against women has previously been seen, if at all, as a private matter, a cultural and family issue, or at best, pertinent to social welfare policies. Among those concerned with the general position of women, gender violence has been addressed within the framework of promoting peace, and increasingly, as part of the human rights agenda. These approaches underscore the multiple aspects of such violence but they in no way exhaust our understanding of the problem. There are still large gaps in our knowledge concerning the dimensions and effects of gender violence on the development process itself. Lack of statistical data is one of several problems in documenting the issue. We have reached a point where it is critical to understand how violence as a form of control affects women's participation in the development process.

The emergence of violence as a crucial issue for Third World women's development has occurred organically, arising from grassroots women's endeavors, and has not been dictated by outside authorities or international agencies. For example, UNIFEM funded projects from various regions of the world increasingly identify violence as a priority concern, and/or as a problem that limits women's participation in or capacity to benefit from development projects. Women have taken leadership in making violence against women visible, and in addressing its causes, manifestations, and remedies. From the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers, to the Asia and Pacific Women, Law and Development Network, to the Trinidad Rape Crisis Centre, and the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, women's leadership in the developing world is struggling to include issues of violence against women on national agendas, and to demonstrate the ways in which violence blocks development. They confirm that gender violence, whether in its most brutal or more subtle forms, is a constant in women's lives. In Latin America, ISIS International has identified 156 women's projects dealing with various aspects of violence against women (ISIS: 1990). In this region women's movements have institutionalized November 25 as a day to denounce and "call for action against" female focused violence. In other parts of the world similar initiatives have also been taken.

In a 1988 global survey of women's groups in developing countries, MATCH International, a Canadian NGO devoted to issues of women and development for two decades, found that violence against women was the most frequent concern raised. Women's groups identified the impact of such violence on development in concrete terms, leading MATCH to conclude:

Violent acts against women, the world over, attack their dignity as human beings and leave them vulnerable and fearful. Conditioned to undervalue their skills and abilities and paralyzed by real fears of violence and retribution, women are marginalized in society and forced out of the decision making processes which shape and determine the development of their communities. Violence against women is not limited to any one country. The acts range from battering, incest, assault, and rape worldwide to female circumcision in Africa, dowry deaths in India, and militarization in the Philippines. Along this continuum one must also include the limited employment opportunities for women, the lack of access to education, women's social isolation and the sexual harassment that women experience daily. The manifestations of violence against women simply alter their forms according to the social, economic and historical realities in which they occur (MATCH News, 1990).

MATCH has since launched a program on violence against women in relation to development as one of its top priorities.

THE EXTENT OF THE VIOLENCE

Violence against women is no: a problem that affects only the poor or only women in the Third World. Yet, even among industrialized countries, few have embarked on empirical studies that provide a solid base from which to map the true dimensions of the problem. In the developing world, with very few exceptions like Papua New Guinea, statistics are even more scant. When available, statistics powerfully document and make visible the per-
vasiveness and extent of violence against women globally.

Official statistics and survey data in the United States, for example, dramatically convey the endemic nature of gender violence. A rape occurs somewhere in the United States every 6 minutes. Domestic battery is the single most significant cause of injury to women, more than car accidents, rapes and muggings combined. Yet a 1985 FBI report estimates that wife assault is under-reported by a factor of at least ten to one. Researchers produce chilling numbers: Roy indicates that violence occurs at least once in two-thirds of all marriages; Strauss, Gelles, and Steinmetz reveal that one in eight couples admitted there had been an act of violence between them which could cause serious injury; in a study at a Connecticut hospital, Stark and Fitchcraft report that battery accounted for 25 percent of suicide attempts by women. Three different studies show that significant numbers of women are battered even when pregnant. Police report that between 40 and 60 percent of the calls they receive, especially on the night shift, are domestic disputes.

A study done in Kansas City showed that the police had already been called at least five times in the two years preceding fifty percent of all homicides by a spouse. In Cleveland, Ohio, during a nine-month period, police received approximately 15,000 domestic violence calls, but reports were filed for only 700 of them and arrests were made in just 460 cases. (According to sources from the National Center on Women and Family Law)

Statistics from other industrialized countries are equally disconcerting. Reports from France indicate that 95 percent of all victims of violence are women, 51 percent of these at the hands of their husbands. In Denmark, 25 percent of women cite violence as the reason for divorce, and a 1984 study of urban victimization in seven major Canadian cities found that 90 percent of victims were women. One in four women in Canada can expect to be sexually assaulted at some point in their lives, one half of these before the age of seventeen (MacLeod, 1990:12).

While there are fewer studies in the Third World, the pattern of gender violence there bears a remarkable similarity to that of advanced industrialized societies. Its manifestations may be culturally specific, but gender specific violence cuts across national boundaries, ideologies, classes, races and ethnic groups. A Mexican NGO estimates that domestic violence is present in at least 70 percent of Mexican families, but most cases go unreported. The Mexican Federation of Women Trade Unions reports that 95 percent of women workers are victims of sexual harassment, and complains that the impunity of these crimes limits women’s participation in the work force.

The Servicio Nacional de la Mujer in Chile has chosen the prevention of intra-family violence as one of their priorities; according to a survey in Santiago, 80 percent of women acknowledged being victims of violence in their homes. A national survey on domestic violence undertaken by the Papua New Guinea Law Reform Commission showed that in some areas of the country as many as 65 percent of wives had experienced marital violence and that 61 percent of people killed in 1981 were women, the majority by their spouses. Over two thirds of Korean women are beaten regularly by their husbands, while in Nicaragua 44 percent of men admit to having beaten their wives or girlfriends regularly; and a Thai report found at least 50 percent of all married women beaten regularly.

In a study of child prostitution in Cochabamba, Bolivia, 79 percent of the girls said they became prostitutes because of economic need when they ran away from violent homes where they were victims of incest and rape by male relatives. Another study published by the Indian government shows that crimes against women are “an increasing trend in the last decade,” while the rate of conviction has declined. Meanwhile, the female suicide rate in that country doubled during the period from 1987 to 1988. A newspaper survey in Pakistan revealed that 99 percent of housewives and 77 percent of working women were beaten by their husbands and listed the following types of violence committed against women: murder over land disputes, blinded by husbands frustrated on some issue, kicked to death, burnt in anger, abducted, sold, sexually harassed, raped (AWRAN Report, 1985). Other reports cited in a United Nations document also found a high incidence of family violence in countries as different as Bangladesh, Colombia, Kenya, Kuwait, Nigeria, Vanuatu, and Uganda (UN, 1989:20).

Violence against women not only maims and debilitates. Femicide kills women on a large scale from pre-birth throughout
life. Amartya Sen has pointed out the deadly cost of social and economic inequalities between men and women by analyzing the sex ratio (of females to males) in the less developed countries (LDCs). Whereas there are 106 women per 100 men in Europe and North America, there are only 97 women per 100 men in the LDCs as a whole. In some areas, noticeably Asia, and especially India and China, when one applies the sex ratio of Africa (1.02), which comes closer to that of Europe and North America (1.05), the equation yields chilling results. Given the number of men in those two countries, there should be about 30 million more women in India, and 38 million more in China. These missing females disappeared through gender violence ranging from female feticide to selective malnourishment and starvation of girls, neglect of health problems, dowry deaths and various other forms of violence. Sen reminds us that “since mortality and survival are not independent of care and neglect, and are influenced by social action and public policy,” development strategies clearly must take more account of women’s needs in this area (Sen, 1990:124).

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AT INTERNATIONAL FORA

Within the context of the United Nations Decade for Women, many have begun to recognize the problem of violence against women. At all three World Conferences on Women, Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), and Nairobi (1985), and at the parallel non-governmental fora, women’s advocates raised the issue of gender violence and demanded special attention to the constraints it places on women’s full participation in society. The official documents produced at these events are powerful indictments of the discrimination that women face in all countries, regions and cultures, and provide a useful foundation for a different understanding of sex-related violence. They establish the concerns of the international community, and acknowledge the responsibility of governments and all members of society for its eradication. They constitute the building blocks for framing new strategies and policies to address these issues.

One of the most significant UN documents addressing gender violence in relation to development goals is the "Forward Looking Strategies" paper produced at the 1985 Nairobi World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. It includes resolution 253 which calls for the elaboration of preventive policies and the institutionalization of assistance to women victims of the various forms of violence experienced in everyday life in all societies. It acknowledges that “women are beaten, mutilated, burned, sexually abused and raped,” and that such violence is “a major obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of the Decade and should be given special attention.” Other sections of this document (e.g. 76, 245, 271, 288) insist on special training for law enforcement officials who deal with women victims of violent crimes; urge legislation to end the degradation of women through sex related crimes; stress the priority of promoting female human rights, specifically in relation to issues of violence against women; insist on favoring a preventive approach that include institutionalized economic and other forms of assistance, and suggest the establishment of national agencies to deal with the question of domestic violence. In addition to assisting victims of gender violence in the family and in society generally, paragraph 288 demands that:

Governments should undertake to increase public awareness of violence against women as a societal problem, establish policies and legislative measures to ascertain its causes and prevent and eliminate such violence, in particular by suppressing degrading images and representations of women in society, and finally encourage the development of educational and re-educational measures for offenders (ibid).

Other UN divisions, like the thirty-second session of the Economic and Social Council Commission on the Status of Women, also address the issue; the report of the Secretary General stated that violence against women, defined as "physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse within the family, rape and sexual assault; sexual harassment and trafficking in women; involuntary prostitution; and pornography" all share a common denominator—"the use of coercion to make women do things against their will." (p.p.)
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND VIOLENCE: A CONTRADICTION

When speaking of development, this paper relies on the approach recently adopted by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) known as the Human Development Report (HDR), published in 1990. Reassessing the different approaches that marked the three previous United Nations Development Decades, this document questions the ability of statistical indicators like growth and national income to measure development adequately. Rather, it suggests the need to focus on other aspects of development that provide more accurate and realistic indicators of human development: nutrition and health services, access to knowledge, secure livelihoods, decent working conditions, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure time, and participation in the economic, cultural, and political activities of their communities. From this perspective, the goal of development is to create an environment which enables people to enjoy long, healthy, and creative lives.

Despite three decades of significant progress towards human development in the Third World, particularly in relation to life expectancy, education, and health, one has to examine cautiously the results from a cross-cultural gender perspective. Nowhere do females enjoy the same standards as males, and in some areas gaps have widened so considerably that one must question whether development attempts are intrinsically gendered to the disadvantage of females. As the HDR states:

In most societies, women fare less well than men. As children they have less access to education and sometimes to food and health care. As adults they receive less education and training, work longer hours for lower incomes, and have few property rights or none. (UN, 1990:31.)

Discrimination against females extends to every aspect of life. If women are fed less, have poorer health and less education than males, and their contribution to society's production and reproduction is underestimated, it is no wonder that wide gender gaps between males and females persist in human development indicators. Looking at development from a human-centered gender perspective requires that development studies focus on women as a demographic category and that development indicators be recorded according to gender. In order for women to benefit from the development process, a fundamental emphasis must be placed on increasing women's self-confidence as well as their ability to participate in all aspects of society. Violence against women is in direct contradiction to securing human-centered development goals. It disrupts women's lives and denies them options. It erodes women's confidence and sense of self-esteem at every level, physically and psychologically. It destroys women's health, denies their human rights, and hinders their full participation in society. Where domestic violence keeps a woman from participating in a development project, or fear of sexual assault prevents her from taking a job, or force is used to deprive her of earnings, development does not occur.

Women experience violence as a form of control that limits their ability to pursue options in almost every area of life from the home to the schools, workplaces, and most public spaces. Violence is used to control women's labor in both productive and reproductive capacities. For example, case studies of victims of domestic violence in Peru and of garment workers in the Mexican maquiladoras showed men beating their wives frequently to demand the income women had earned (Vasquez and Tamayo, 1989; Bruce, 1990). Indonesian female workers returning to their villages complain of their helplessness in the face of harassment and sexual abuse; quite often their wages are withheld for months, preventing possibility of escape or resistance. In the Philippines, women workers in export-oriented industries claim that male managers give female employees the choice of "lay down or lay off" (AWRAN Report, 1995).

FEMALE DEPENDENCY

The socially constructed dependency of women on men is key to understanding women's vulnerability to violence. This dependency is frequently economic, and results from various layers of sexist discrimination. First, much of women's work is unpaid labor at home and in the fields which is not valued by society, nor calculated as part of the Gross National Product — the productive work of a nation. Second, even in paid jobs, women work longer hours for lower pay, with fewer benefits and less security than men.
Female dependency extends to other areas as well, psychological, social and cultural. Women are trained to believe that their value is attached to the men in their lives — fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons. They are often socially ostracized if they displease or disobey these men. Women are socialized to associate their self-worth with the satisfaction of the needs and desires of others, and thus, are encouraged to blame themselves as inadequate or bad if men beat them. This socialization process is reinforced by cultures where a woman is constantly diminished, her sexuality commodified, her work and characteristics devalued, her identity shaped by an environment that reduces her to her most biological functions. Yet women are still blamed for “causing” or deserving the abuse of men toward them.

Women’s socio-economic and psychological dependency makes it difficult for them to leave situations of domestic violence or sexual harassment. Often in rural settings it is physically impossible; women literally have no place to go or the means to get away, and there are no services available to them. A Commonwealth Secretariat report on domestic violence cites the opinion of experts that a shelter or other safe refuge alternative is only possible in a city of at least 10,000 inhabitants.

But even in large urban settings, where it may be easier for women to leave abusive relationships, there is often nowhere to go as illustrated by the links between domestic violence and homelessness. A shelter for homeless women in Boston reports that about ninety percent of its occupants are victims of domestic violence (The New York Times, August 26, 1990), and New York City shelter workers note a similar trend. Australian sociologist, Robert Connell (1987:11) sees the lack of alternative housing as one of the reasons women stay in, or return to, violent marriages. Further, violence itself makes women become even more dependent. Studies from several countries find that the escalation of violence undermines women’s self-esteem and their capacity to take action diminishes.

**EFFECTS ON FAMILY AND CHILDREN**

Violence against women also affects the development and well being of children and families. A recent study on children of battered women in Canada reports post-traumatic stress, clinical dysfunction, and behavioral and emotional disorders in children from violent homes (Jaffe, Wolfe, and Wilson, 1990). Some argue that children’s socialization into accepting or committing violence starts at home when they witness their father beating the mother and sometimes abusing them as well.

It seems increasingly clear that the best way to reduce infant mortality is through the education of women (White House Task Force on Infant Mortality Report, cited in The New York Times, August 12, 1990; Buvicin and Yudelman, 1989). The UNDP Human Development Report underlines the high social dividend that comes with female literacy, as demonstrated by lower infant mortality rates, better family nutrition, reduced fertility and lower population growth. Other studies show a connection between women’s self-confidence and child mortality. Since the health and psychological well-being of children is connected to the future development of a country, the gender violence implicit in disproportionate female illiteracy is clearly contrary to development. Improving women’s self-confidence and education is therefore a crucial investment that may have long lasting effects on children and the future of a nation.

Gender violence also destroys families. The Law Reform Commission of Papua New Guinea study found that husbands, through their violence, were themselves negatively affected in the long run by losing the very basis of their patriarchal control: he may be injured or killed if his wife acts to defend herself, he fails to earn the love and respect of his wife and children, and he frequently loses his family altogether. In Papua New Guinea, as in many countries, battery is one of the main reasons women give for filing for divorce.

**COSTS TO SOCIETY**

Violence against women deprives society of the full participation of women in all aspects of development. As Lori Heise states:

Female focused violence undermines widely held goals for economic and social development in the Third World. The development community has come to realize that problems such as high fertility, deforestation and hunger cannot be solved without
women's full participation. Yet women cannot lend their labor or creative ideas fully when they are burdened with the physical and psychological scars of violence. (Heise, 1989)

Many work hours are lost as a result of violence, not to speak of the costs of providing services to victims. In this case we should take into account the work time lost by the victim herself, plus the work time of police and others in the legal, medical, mental health and social services. It is almost impossible to quantify the total costs of the problem given the limited information available on the extent of such violence. Among the few estimates made, the Australian Committee on Violence calculated that the cost of refuge accommodation for victims of domestic violence for the year 1986-87 was $27.6 million, and in the province of Queensland alone, serious domestic assault cases cost about $108 million Australian dollars a year (Australian Institute of Criminology, 1990:13). However, the greatest cost is one of human misery:

Beyond such calculable costs lie the costs in human suffering, which are vast. The most significant long term effect and ultimate cost of wife battery, however, is the perpetration of the societal structure, confirmed by marital violence, that keeps women inferior and subordinate to men politically, economically and socially (UN, 1989:24)

Violence in an environment where public safety measures are inadequate and public transport unprotected, severely limits women's integration into the paid work force. Addressing this problem, a coalition of women's organizations in Bombay demanded the establishment of "ladies only carriages" in mass public transit after serious incidents of sexual harassment of women commuting to and from work. The Toronto Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) has raised awareness and affected public policy regarding the connections between transportation, safety, and women's participation in the work force. Based on an extensive survey of women's concerns about urban planning and design, they lobbied city government to improve lighting, signs, mass transit, and suggested new criteria and guidelines for all buildings in the city. These initiatives are a reminder of how women's freedom in public spaces is often restrained by the way it is designed.

Another example is the lack of adequate sanitation, water and garbage facilities. Frequently, women have to go to desolate places to satisfy basic sanitary needs—a very common experience for women living both in shanty towns and in rural areas—in such situations, they are especially vulnerable to violent crimes.

Violence against women is often a direct obstacle to women's participation in development projects. For example, in a Mexico project funded by the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM, instances of wife battering increased with women's sense of empowerment through their participation in it. The project found that men perceived the growing empowerment of women as a threat to their control, and the beatings could be explained as an attempt to reverse this process of empowerment the women experienced in order to drive them away from the project. Similarly, a revolving fund project of the Working Women's Forum in Madras almost collapsed when the most articulate and energetic participants stopped participating because they experienced increased incidents of domestic violence after they had joined. Faced with the same problems, the Association for the Development and Integration of Women (ADIM) in Lima succeeded in its work by initiating programs that combined income-generating schemes with legal aid to battered wives and women abandoned by their partners. (Buvinic and Yudofman, 1989:44)

Even when women continue their involvement in development projects, concern about the problems caused by violence often diverts their energy from pursuing other goals. Sometimes women miss meetings because of fear of beatings, physical disability due to battery, or because they are taking care of another battered woman or her children. Some women decline public visibility due to shame over their injuries since society's "blame the victim" attitude does not create an environment sympathetic to them. In groups that discuss these issues, time spent dealing with violence and the problems accompanying it is time away from other project goals.

Another long term affect of gender violence and the cultural atmosphere that demeans women by condoning such violence, is that it denies developing countries the full talents of their female citizens. Family control and violence encourage some of the best educated women to leave their countries, contributing to the brain
drain in the Third World, and the loss of highly skilled women who could contribute to the development process. Women who stay often must comply with the subordinate role that society assigns them and may be reluctant to be promoted to more visible positions for fear of upsetting their husbands. For example, with regard to Papua New Guinea:

Threats of violence control women’s minds as much as do acts of violence, making women act as their own jailers. This means that a woman makes her choices not on what she wants to do or believes is best, but on what she thinks her husband will allow her to do (Bradley, 1990:5).

HEALTH, AIDS AND VIOLENCE

Health is usually recognized as an important development issue. One of the clearest facts about gender violence is that it is detrimental to women's physical and mental health, including women's very survival. A 1989 report by the Surgeon General of the United States, C. Everett Koop, affirms that battered women are four to five times more likely than non-battered women to require psychiatric treatment, and more likely to commit suicide. He reports that each year some one million women in the United States are sufficiently injured to seek medical assistance at emergency rooms from injuries sustained through battering. These injuries include bruises, concussions, broken noses, teeth, ribs and limbs, throat injuries, lacerations and stab wounds, burns and bites. Injuries are caused by being struck by fists and blunt objects as well as knives, kicks, strangulations, being thrown down stairs and more. In view of the extensive evidence, Koop calls it “an overwhelming moral, economic, and public health burden that our society can no longer bear.” He demands a major response from: governments at the national, state, and community levels; legislators and city councils; police, prosecutors, judges and probation officers; health professions and educational institutions; the communications media; the church and clergy; non-governmental organizations; and international organizations “that must demonstrate a clear recognition of the problem and provide the necessary leadership to us all.” (Koop, 1989:5-6).

The AIDS crisis has cast unequal gender relations in a new light. In Africa, a continent where the AIDS epidemic has reached staggering numbers, women are experiencing the effects of male control in multiple and deadly ways. A report of the Health Ministry of Uganda reveals that there are twice as many cases of AIDS among girls between 15 and 19 years old as among boys of the same age group. These numbers reflect a common belief among adult sexually active men that they will have less possibilities of being exposed to the AIDS virus if they engage in sexual intercourse with younger women. In some areas where the control of women is reflected in traditional practices like female circumcision and infibulation of the clitoris, the risks of acquiring the disease have multiplied. Deeply entrenched attitudes and traditions around the world justify men’s easy access to women’s bodies and result in the transmission of the virus via rape, incest, and other forms of coerced sex. Thus although hard data proving the connection between AIDS and violence against women is not yet available, this is a research area that would expand our understanding of the deadly impact of AIDS on women.

UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

Explaining why gender violence is so endemic is a complex endeavor is best pursued here as it relates to the question of prevention. There are innumerable theories ranging from biological and genetic explanations, to those which attribute causation to alcohol and toxic substance-abuse, poverty, socialization, and even women themselves (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1987:12). While some of these theories may contain a grain of truth, none of them justify violent behavior and are better understood as co-factors that can concur with a violent situation. The major point here is to look at violence against women as learned behavior, which can be changed. Gender violence can be prevented or, at least, substantially reduced if the social and political will exists to make this happen. This discussion is not intended as an abstract investigation into the origins of violence against women, but as an effort to see how understanding gender violence helps to create preventive strategies that go beyond the social service response.

A Peruvian study by Vasquez and Tamayo (1990:106)
argues that causes of battery are many, including: unequal relations between men and women; the sexual hierarchy; domestic isolation of women with male figures as the final authority; early marriages before women have developed a sense of autonomy; the family as the sole institution that shapes women's identity; the representation of masculinity via the domination of women; poor communication in family conflicts; and, the privatization of conflict between men and women in a couple relationship. This suggests a number of important development objectives that might reduce such violence. Jane Connors describes the pervasiveness of violent behavior:

[as] best understood in the context of social structure, institutions and codes of conduct. In this context, the abuse of women can be seen as a naked display of male power the outcome of social relations in which women are kept in a position of inferiority to men, responsible to, and in need of protection by them (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1987:14)

The Papua New Guinea study agrees with Connors assertion and states:

the essence of male violence against women is the sense of inadequacy, of vulnerability, of helplessness, of weakness, and of sheer naked fear that men inspire in women when they threaten or use violence against women. The use of brute force by men makes women feel inferior (Bradley, ibid).

This suggests the crucial importance of building women's self confidence as a means of countering their vulnerability to violence.

**DIRECTIONS FOR POLICY**

The problem of violence against women is systemic and common to all societies. This paper specifically looks at strategies for combating violence against women as related to development planning in the Third World. There are several levels on which those concerned with the consequences of development for women can take action in addressing the connections between gender violence and development. The overall question is how to make use of limited resources to support projects that take into account and challenge the limitations and constraints that violence places on women's full participation in development activities? The answer lies in the catalytic role which a development agency or project can play at both the programmatic and non-programmatic levels. Central to this catalytic role is a commitment to highlighting the obstacles which gender violence places in the development path, and to identifying means of countering it in all phases of the project cycle: planning, implementation, documentation, evaluation and dissemination of results.

1. **Action at multiple program levels:**
   
   **A. Awareness of the obstacles posed by gender violence**
   
   i) In the formulation and implementation phases of a project, an awareness of cultural specific forms of gender violence can help identify and overcome obstacles impeding women's participation. For example, the lack of safe transportation when women interact with unrelated males may require the identification of alternative means of travel which are viable in the local context. The reservation of "ladies only" carts in mass transit in Bombay, or obtaining the protection of the local khan for female health extension workers in Northern Pakistan represent such strategies.

   ii) Also at the formulation and implementation stages, sensitivity to situations where changes in women's status make them vulnerable to violence is essential. It is a cultural truism that change is threatening. Project activities might both seek to strengthen women's self-confidence and ability to defend themselves as well as reach out to men in the community, win their commitment to the change, and even change their expectations. Project activities have a responsibility to respond to incidents of violence that occur as a result of the process of empowerment. For example, at the United Nations Development Fund for Women's (UNIFEM) project in Tempoal, Mexico UNIFEM staff had to take time to work with husbands and community members when violence emerged as a result of project participants' changing roles.

   iii) In personnel selection for the implementation stage, awareness of violence as an obstacle should be an impor-
tant characteristic. Project management requires not just technical skill, but an awareness of the larger environment and how it must be altered to facilitate women’s full participation.

iv) Gender violence which obstructs development, as well as measures which reduce women’s vulnerability to violence need to be documented as they occur in the project cycle. It can be noted in periodic reporting, in staff monitoring visits, or in evaluations. The findings can be collected and analyzed as part of lessons learned from project experience.

B. The integration of statistics on gender violence into data collection, planning and training projects is central to the visibility and recognition of such violence as an obstacle to development.

C. Find sustainable ways of deterring gender violence. On a very direct level, projects can experiment with techniques or interventions which focus on, or deal with, violence. With respect to deterrence, projects which document the extent and severity of violence against women, or which test one or more education campaigns and seek to make violence unacceptable within a society, can serve as models that demonstrate the possibilities and benefits of such approaches. In a similar way, projects dealing with the consequences of violence (rape crisis centers, training of police, magistrates, hospital personnel, etc.) should be supported especially when they have some possibility of testing a new approach, or of influencing the government to initiate services and expand on tested approaches to addressing gender violence.

D. Increase the capacity of women to identify and combat violence. Projects which strengthen communication skills, raise women's awareness of possible actions, build management skills, teach self-defense, and strengthen women’s organizations at the same time contribute to enlarging the capacity of women to address gender specific violence.

2. Non-Programmatic Steps

The international development community, and particularly women’s agencies within that community, can undertake important changes which are not project related, and would not require additional expenditures beyond staff time. This involves making violence visible as a development issue in relation to many other themes. By disseminating reports of projects concerned with violence, women’s advocates within the development community can highlight the impact of violence on program activity.

Overall, development agencies and organizations addressing women in development must conduct their program and project work with an increased sensitivity to the issue of violence, and the ways in which development itself brings forth new forms of gendered violence. It is important to address gender violence as an aspect of many other development projects such as income generating schemes or housing plans and not just those specifically focused on violence against women. International development agencies such as the United Nations Development Program, UNIFEM, the World Health Organization, and the International Labour Organization, which are concerned with the issue of women in development, need to use their leverage and prestige as international agencies to expand the legitimacy and give voice to the groups working on these areas at the national or community level.

CONCLUSION

Attempts to integrate women into development are doomed to failure if they do not address the issue of violence against women. This paper has attempted to build the case for the international development community’s support of projects that address the various manifestations of gender violence as legitimate development projects. It maintains that projects that deal with violence towards women are building blocks for a more comprehensive, empowering, and therefore sustainable effort which will tap women’s full participation in the development process.

Countering violence against women is not only eliminates
an obstacle to the development of women but also actively addressing women's realization of their full potential. This quote from an interview with a popular education worker in Mexico illustrates the potential of this work:

Q. How do you address the issue of violence?

A. When women explore their social roles, if the issue of violence doesn't arise, the workshop methodology is not addressing the issues of gender. We ask women to choose which experience of violence they would like to explore of those they have mentioned—children dying of hunger, battering, economic hardships. They usually choose domestic violence as they already understand and confront the other kinds of violence. To confront economic violence, they sell food or demand government subsidies. But there are other aspects of violence that they can't even talk about in their family, with their neighbors or in their organization. These forbidden themes are the basis of work with gender. There is not much to discover about being poor. But as women look at what it means to be women (poor women), they gain the desire to live, learn to express themselves, they see how they are reproducing sexual roles in their children. They discover the causes of their oppression and are empowered to act. (Correo, August, 1990.)

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