

Eliminating Violence against Women: Pursuing national & regional efforts

A guide for NGO study and action



“Violence against women persists in all regions of the world as a pervasive violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality.” (UN Division for the Advancement of Women)

NGOs have a role to play in ensuring sustained and effective implementation of State obligations to end all forms of violence against women.

Introduction

Following the publication of the *UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Women* (October 2006), the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly passed the resolution, *Intensification Of Efforts To Eliminate All Forms Of Violence Against Women*, later adopted as GA resolution 61/143. It urges governments to take action to eliminate all forms of violence against women in a manner that is systematic, comprehensive and sustained.

Item 7 of the resolution outlines areas of policy and action to guide governments in these efforts. This booklet is based on these areas. It is prepared for the use of NGOs. Please share it with other NGOs and work together to become familiar with decisions made by your government representative at the United Nations and to review actions your government has taken to implement the resolution.

The booklet is to be used flexibly:

- You need not discuss all the topics or follow the order in which they appear.
- Choose the topic you consider most relevant to the status of women in your area.

'Review the situation' asks questions for you to consider what government or other institutions are already doing or what they have done – not what they should do. 'Consider NGO action' asks questions for you to consider as possible actions by your NGO. The information you gather through your discussions and investigation can be the basis for your decisions on priority actions and advocacy to further the work of eliminating violence against women.

The booklet is prepared by Anita Wenden, with assistance from Clare Nolan, Leslie Wright and Ricki Kantrowitz, in collaboration with members of the subcommittee on Violence against Women of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, NY. The Committee is always pleased to hear of your grassroots efforts and success. Send information through your own NGO representative or directly to the NGO CSW NY via email to ngo_csw_ny@hotmail.com.

Ratification of the *Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW)*

Review the situation

- 1) Has your country ratified CEDAW and its Optional Protocol?
- 2) What reservations did your country record with the United Nations about implementing this resolution?
- 3) If not ratified, what plans exist to move the government toward ratification?

Consider NGO action

- 1) Do NGOs participate in your government's CEDAW reporting?
- 2) How can your NGO further contribute to the ratification of CEDAW, or to the government report to CEDAW?

National & local government laws & policies

Review the situation

- 1) Which laws, regulations and policies in your country discriminate directly against women?
- 2) Are there other laws, regulations and policies which impact or result in discrimination against women?
What are they?
- 3) Do laws, regulations and policies of other legal systems in your society (e.g. religious) discriminate against women?
If yes, what are they and what is their source?
- 4) What plans has your government proposed to amend or abolish discriminatory laws, regulations, and/or policies?

Consider NGO action

- 1) What actions have NGOs in your area taken to amend or abolish discriminatory laws, regulations, and/or policies?
- 2) How can your NGO work toward promoting these changes in laws, regulations and policies that discriminate against women?

Education and training

Review the situation

- 1) Which social and economic policies guarantee women full and equal access to all levels of quality education and training? Which policies would inhibit equal access?
- 2) Which of the programs developed to implement these policies seek to benefit poor and marginalized women, e.g. women belonging to minority groups, indigenous women, migrant women, women living in underdeveloped, rural or remote communities, women with disabilities, elderly women, widows, women without citizenship?
- 3) To what extent are programs targeted to the needs of poor and marginalized women free of charge? easily accessible? staffed by competent professionals ?

Consider NGO action

- 1) What best practices have NGOs developed to promote gender equality and access to education and training at all levels?
- 2) What actions have they taken to advocate that government address these educational needs?
- 3) How can your NGO further promote and advocate for gender equality and access to education and training?

Social Services

Review the situation

- 1) Do social and economic policies and practices ensure women full and equal access to all social services?
- 2) Which governmental programs developed to implement these policies seek to benefit poor and marginalized women, e.g. women belonging to minority groups, indigenous women, migrant women, women living in underdeveloped, rural or remote communities, women with disabilities, elderly women, widows, women without citizenship?
- 3) To what extent are programs targeted to the needs of poor and marginalized women free of charge? easily accessible? staffed by competent professionals?

Consider NGO action

- 1) What programs have NGOs developed to provide social services for all women?
- 2) What actions have they taken to advocate that government provide such programs?
- 3) How can your NGO contribute to ensuring gender equality and access to all social services?

Health

Review the situation

- 1) What measures has your government developed to promote equal access for women to public health services, preventive health care, services that focus on health consequences of violence, e.g. domestic violence against women, trafficking?
- 2) Which of these measures have directly targeted the needs of poor and marginalized women?
- 3) Are programs developed to meet these needs free of charge? easily accessible? staffed by competent health professionals?

Consider NGO action

- 1) What programs have NGOs developed for health outreach to poor and marginalized women? to those suffering from domestic violence? to those illegally trafficked? to those suffering from other forms of physical and mental violence or oppression?
- 2) What actions have they taken to advocate that government address these needs?
- 3) How can your NGO promote access to and gender equality in health services for all women?

Homelessness - Adequate Housing

Review the situation

- 1) How do the government's social and economic policies address ways of reducing the increasing rate of homelessness among women and mothers; how do they provide for adequate housing?
- 2) Which of these policies directly targets the needs of poor and marginalized women?
- 3) What other policies should government consider to provide adequate housing for women who are living in violent conditions, to protect them from further abuse?

Consider NGO action

- 1) What programs have NGOs developed to address the need for adequate housing for the homeless, poor and otherwise marginalized women?
- 2) What actions have they taken to advocate that government address these needs?
- 3) How can your NGO further address the need for adequate housing? the problem of homelessness?

Property Ownership

Review the situation

- 1) How do the government's social and economic policies guarantee women full and equal rights to own land and property?
- 2) How are poor and otherwise marginalized women ensured protection of their legal rights to property?

Consider NGO action

- 1) What programs have NGOs developed either to support or advocate for efforts to provide women full and equal rights to own land and property?
- 2) How can your NGO further contribute to ensuring that all women have full and equal rights to own land and property?

Punishing perpetrators of Violence against Women

Review the situation

- 1) What legal procedures exist to prosecute perpetrators of violence against women? Are they enforced?
- 2) Are other culturally based norms used to punish those who inflict violence on women? If so, what are they?
- 3) What legal procedures exist to ensure women equal protection under the law? What about equal access to justice? Are these laws enforced?

Consider NGO action

- 1) What programs have NGOs developed either to support or advocate for efforts to provide women equal protection under the law? What about equal access to justice?
- 2) How can your NGO further help provide women equal protection under the law, and/or equal access to justice?

Education on gender equality & human rights for men, women, boys & girls: Awareness raising campaigns

Review the situation

- 1) Have public campaigns been organized to promote awareness and disseminate information about:
 - women's rights in general and the responsibility to protect them?
 - women's right to exercise control and decide freely on matters related to sexuality, including the need to protect themselves from HIV infection and to ensure their sexual and reproductive health?
 - ways to change attitudes and traditions that foster, justify or tolerate violence against women?

Consider NGO action

- 1) What educational programs have NGOs developed to promote awareness about gender equality and human rights?
- 2) What actions have they taken to advocate that government engage in raising such awareness?
- 3) How can your NGO further contribute to raising awareness about gender equality and human rights?

Education on gender equality & human rights for men, women, boys & girls: Role of men and boys

Review the situation

- 1) Are men and boys encouraged to oppose violence against women?
- 2) Are men and boys encouraged to oppose violence against women through public campaigns?
- 3) Have educational curricula been changed to create a balanced perspective on gender? If so, how?
- 4) Have educational materials been changed to be gender sensitive? If so, how?

Consider NGO action

- 1) What educational programs have NGOs developed to encourage boys to speak out in opposition to violence against women?
- 2) What activities have they developed to advocate that government develop such programs?
- 3) What can your NGO do to support these activities?

Education on gender equality & human rights for men, women, boys & girls: role of educational institutions

Review the situation

- 1) Have women's rights been integrated into the curricula of formal and informal programs of education, especially in early childhood education?
- 2) Have gender sensitive teaching materials and classroom practices been developed? How are they used?

- 3) Have strategies for identifying and eliminating attitudes that foster, justify, or tolerate violence against women been integrated into curricula in formal and informal programs of education?

Consider NGO action

- 1) Have NGOs developed educational programs that integrate women's rights in educational curricula, teaching materials and classroom practices?
- 2) What activities have they developed to advocate the government to develop and/or adopt such programs?
- 3) How has your NGO contributed to these activities? What else might it do?

Education on gender equality & human rights for men, women, boys & girls: Training of professional groups

Review the situation

For which professional groups have programs been put in place to provide training and capacity building on gender equality and women's rights, e.g. teachers, health workers, law enforcement personnel, military personnel, social workers, the judiciary, community leaders and the media?

Consider NGO action

- 1) What educational programs have NGOs developed for training and capacity building for professional groups?
- 2) What activities have they developed to advocate government to develop such programs?
- 3) How has your NGO contributed to these activities? What else might it do?

Addressing cultural sources of violence against women

Review the situation

- 1) List the social norms, social practices and traditional customs that directly or indirectly promote some form of violence against women.

- 2) Which of these affect women from minority groups, poor women and otherwise marginalized women?
- 3) Which of these norms, practices or customs are applied as a way to avoid obligations to eliminate all forms of violence against women?
- 4) What positive measures, if any, have been taken to address these discriminatory practices and social norms? Which group(s) of women are affected?

Consider NGO action

- 1) What programs have NGOs developed to replace norms, practices and traditional customs that promote violence against women?
- 2) What activities have they developed to advocate government to develop such programs?
- 3) How has your NGO contributed to these activities?

Women and girls in situations of armed conflict

Review the situation

How does the government protect women and girls in:

- situations of armed conflict?
- post conflict settings within the country?
- refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) settings within the country?

Consider NGO action

- 1) What programs have NGOs developed to protect women and girls in situations of armed conflict?
- 2) What actions have NGOs taken to advocate government to develop such programs?
- 3) How has your NGO contributed to these activities? What else might it do?

Integrating a gender perspective into government plans and programs

Review the situation

- 1) Is there a *national plan of action* to eliminate all forms of violence against women?
 - Which of the areas listed in this booklet are included in the plan of action?
 - What *other* areas relevant to eliminating violence against women are included?
- 2) What *institutional mechanisms* have been developed by the government to oversee, monitor and evaluate this plan of action? Have they been effective?
- 3) Which of the areas listed in this booklet are included in the *government's development plan*? Are poverty reduction strategies included? What *other* areas relevant to elimination of violence against women are included?

Consider NGO action

- 1) How do NGOs participate with the government in developing and evaluating the government's national plan of action? its development plan?
- 2) Do NGOs participate with institutional mechanisms to oversee the national plan? the development plan?
- 3) Is your NGO involved in developing and/or evaluating your government's national plan of action? its development plan? If so, how?

Allocation of resources

Review the situation

- 1) Does the government integrate gender into budget planning? To what extent and how?
- 2) Does the national budget
 - adequately finance gender equality?
 - allocate resources for gender empowerment?
 - direct resources of financial institutions and donor partners to funding for human rights and gender equality?
- 3) What human resources are allocated to implementing efforts that promote the eradication of violence against women?

Consider NGO action

- 1) How do NGOs collaborate on developing or advocating strategies for financing programs for gender equality and resource allocation toward the elimination of violence against women?
- 2) Is your NGO involved in developing and/or promoting such strategies? If so, how?

“Violence against women is the most atrocious manifestation of the systematic discrimination and inequality that women around the world continue to face. It endangers women’s lives, violates their rights, harms their families and communities, and poses an affront to humanity itself.”

José Antonio Ocampo, Former Under-Secretary-General for Economic & Social Affairs, New York, 27 November 2006



RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

United Nations:

Resolution A/RES/61/143: Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/>

Downloads in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish

The Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/SGstudyvaw.htm#more>

Downloads of the document and the Corrigendum in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish, and Russian

Downloads of the ***Executive Summary*** of the Secretary-General's in-depth study on violence against women, Background notes on "*Forms, consequences and costs of violence against women,*" "*Fighting violence against women: What works*" and "*Violence against women: Unmet needs, broken promises*" in English, French, and Spanish

Good practices in combating and eliminating violence against women, Expert Group Meeting, 2005

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw-gp-2005/index.html>

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw-gp-2005/documents.html>

Resource Papers, Papers by experts, Background Papers, Final Report

Violence against women: a statistical overview, challenges and gaps in data collection and methodology and approaches for overcoming them, Expert Group Meeting, 2005

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw-stat-2005/index.html>

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw-stat-2005/documents.html>

Resource Papers, Papers by experts, Background Papers, Final Report (in English and Spanish)

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW)

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>

Downloads in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish

World Health Organization:

WHO Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women, 2005

http://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/en/index.html

WHO World report on violence and health, 2002

http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/index.html Chapter 4: Violence by Intimate Partners, Chapter 6: Sexual Violence

Miscellaneous:

The Stop Violence Against Women Website: A project by Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights

<http://www.stopvaw.org/>

Information about Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, and Trafficking in Women, including: Training Materials, Advocacy Tools, International Law, NGO Resources, and Country Pages

Mairin Iwanka Raya: Indigenous Women Stand Against Violence

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/vaiwreport06.pdf>

A Companion Report to the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Women

Violence against Women: A New York City Response to the Secretary General's Study

http://www.zontanyc.org/VAWomen/UN_Secretary_General.doc

A report and guidelines for how to conduct similar meetings throughout the world. With additional resources. Produced by the Project 5-O coalition in New York.