

IGWG Gender-Based Violence Task Force
The Second Plenary
November 6, 2008
At the International Student House, Washington, DC

This plenary meeting was organized by the Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG) Task Force on Gender-Based Violence, cochaired by Charlotte Feldman-Jacobs of PRB and Mary Ellsberg, formerly of PATH, with Monique Widyono of PATH. Like the first plenary meeting, its objective was to provide coordination among organizations working on gender-based violence (GBV) and guidance for USAID activities in this area. At the second plenary meeting, attended by more than 50 people, members of the Task Force offered updates on the work they have been doing on GBV-related topics, and followed with an open-format discussion.

Presentations

Leora Ward spoke about the American Refugee Committee (ARC)'s GBV Local Partnership Project, funded by PRM, which aims to give local organizations a needed voice at the table in conflict situations and humanitarian emergencies. Its approach is three pronged: improve technical and organizational capacity in local organizations, build on sustainable local GBV interventions, and strengthen networks to support activities and share resources in difficult environments. Utilizing a simple assessment tool in which each organization self-rates its abilities, ARC tailors its work to the specific needs of each local group and their situations. A one-year plan develops organizations' capacity and assists in small grants; this culminates in a follow-up assessment. After its pilot year, the program has found out that working with IDPs is much different than working in refugee settings, and is adapting accordingly. Currently, the project works in Liberia, Pakistan (with Afghan refugees), Rwanda (with Congolese refugees), Thailand (with Burmese refugees), South Sudan, and Uganda. Its launching website at www.gbvnetwork.org provides a global support network and forum on GBV prevention and response coordination.

Tanya Gunther from International Medical Corps (IMC) discussed IMC's Community-Based GBV Prevention and Management Initiative for Displaced Chechens and Other War-affected Populations. IMC has been operating in the Northern Caucasus since 2000 to improve health and support development. In 2007, IMC launched a comprehensive, community-based initiative in the region to raise awareness of GBV and monitor the health conditions of GBV survivors. Intimate partner violence, forced fiancée abductions, and rape are the three most prevalent forms of GBV in Chechnya, as noted in the project's baseline survey (Dec. 2008) with over 800 respondents, two thirds of whom were women. Although these conservative communities find it difficult to acknowledge GBV, IMC's project has yielded results, perhaps because this initiative builds on the group's previous work in the region. In the second year, the project aims to reach more men.

Kiersten Stewart from Family Violence Prevention Fund (FVPPF) presented on some of the FVPPF activities. For the last 30 years, they have been working on prevention and early intervention by engaging men/boys to prevent VAW both domestically and internationally. FVPPF and UNICEF partnered during the last World Cup to launch the Coaching Boys Into Men program, which harnesses the mentoring capacity of sports coaches to change harmful norms. The program explains that violence is bad for men too, using all local partners and working with

sports media and sports/coaching associations. The program plans to double efforts for the 2010 World Cup in Johannesburg and will soon launch a research-intensive parallel program with cricket coaches in India.

FVPPF, in partnership with Amnesty International USA and Women Thrive Worldwide, also continues to work for passage of I-VAWA, legislation that seeks to incorporate violence against women as a priority across U.S. foreign assistance programs. Because all legislation goes away with the introduction of each new Congress, the I-VAWA will need to be reintroduced.

Debbie Caro and Anne Eckman gave updates on the USAID-funded Health Policy Initiative (HPI). HPI has implemented a pilot project called Avances de Paz (Progress for Peace), which is a GBV prevention and response initiative at the municipal level in Bolivia, where national-level work on GBV is already strong. The program aims to build a bottom-up movement in four phases: (1) community learning and diagnosis, (2) joint analysis and participatory planning, (3) funding and implementation and finally, (4) community monitoring and evaluation. Working with 26 facilitators and several local child and reproductive health partners, the project has thus far targeted 4 municipalities spanning rural to urban. It found that often 15% of municipal budgets were allocated to gender initiatives, but translating that policy into action was a critical point—without knowing what specifically to do with the funds, most was later re-programmed. A set of methodological manuals is forthcoming: in Spanish in December 2008 and in English in February/March 2009.

Reena Borwanker presented on a new publication from the USAID-funded Africa's Health in 2010 project. The publication, titled "Gender-based Violence in sub-Saharan Africa: A Review of Demographic and Health Survey Findings and Their Use in National Planning," also looks at Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and national plans of action. In its review of those documents, the publication tries to evaluate whether and how/how much GBV is addressed. In PRSPs, gender violence is discussed only in the law enforcement sections, not in health sections. This report asks three questions: (1) Is GBV addressed in this country? (2) Is it a priority? (3) Is DHS data being used? Overall, there were findings of very high physical violence incidence and of a tendency to view GBV from a policy perspective not as cross-cutting, but rather as a free-standing issue. The report is now available in English; French and Portuguese versions; a synthesis document will be available soon.

Monique Widyono of PATH and **Mary Ellsberg** of ICRW spoke about a study funded by AusAID's Office of Development Effectiveness on current approaches to addressing violence against women and girls in five countries: East Timor, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu. The goal of the study was to contribute to the evidence base for effective violence against women interventions through a participatory assessment of what has been achieved to date in the region. The process included a range of innovative, participatory methods, including semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

Post-Presentation Discussion

Following the presentations, the group moved to an open discussion format.

Participants made note of a few program announcements:

- UNIFEM

- UNIFEM has a newly launched web portal for information on violence against women.
- The UN Secretary-General has launched a Campaign to End Violence Against Women.
- Men Can Stop Rape
 - Men Can Stop Rape, which works to promote healthy ideas of masculinity, may host a brown bag on new work they are doing with the U.S. military.
- MEASURE
 - The new MEASURE compendium of Monitoring and Evaluation indicators on violence against women and girls was released on November 25.

Participants also made note of the following event announcements:

- February 2009
 - International Conference on Gender-based Violence and Sexual and Reproductive Health
 - 3-4 days in Mumbai, India
- March/April 2009
 - International Symposium on Men
 - 4-5 days in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 - www.engagingmen2009.org

In other discussion and updates, a GBV-relevant article, called “An Acoustic Register, Tenacious Images, and Congolese Scenes of Rape and Repetition” appeared in *Cultural Anthropology* in May 2008. It provided a historical perspective on Congo by Nancy Rose Hunt. An overview is available at: <http://www.culanth.org/?q=node/143>.

Participants also discussed the topics of child survival/positive deviance and looking at lessons learned from violence-free relationships in violence-ridden situations. JHU/CCP’s Africa interventions (RH video vignettes, community role models) were brought up, as well as Men Engage, SASA!, and a WID video called *Through Our Eyes*.

Other GBV “hot spots” and “hot topics” that were mentioned, on which the Task Force may place more emphasis in the future, were Russia, Guatemala, and Mexico, and the relationship between GBV and alcohol. There was a PAHO panel on GBV and alcohol on December 4, and the Task Force may choose to pursue further activities on the topic. Mary Ellsberg will send information.

In addition, participants spoke about emerging data on violence against men, which may be problematic when pushed by Fathers’ Rights Movement. Those interested in the dimensions of that discussion were encouraged to look into Murray Strauss’s work on gender symmetry.

Next Steps

For future meetings, the group discussed the possibility of briefing according to working group topics (as established in the first plenary meeting), and of forming sub-committees, particularly on policy and sexual violence in conflict. The next IGWG meeting will be in the spring of 2009.