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Ending violence against women and achieving MDG3

A think piece by Christine Bradley[1]

Violence against women is a barrier to the achievement not only of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3, but of all the MDGs. Lack of data and agreed methods and standards for measuring its various forms prevented the inclusion of an indicator of violence against women for the MDG3 target. Although there has now been considerable progress in the development of tools and techniques, there is still a need for much greater investment in measurement of violence against women, and in documenting the monetary and non-monetary costs of violence. Similarly, while the evidence base has grown on good and promising practices for interventions, more rigorous evaluations are needed to demonstrate what works.

Progress on the MDG3 indicators for educational parity and women's employment could be accelerated by adding a focus on violence against women. Sexual harassment in workplaces and in the informal sector is a major barrier to women's economic empowerment which has not yet been systematically addressed in the Pacific Island region, although there are examples of successful strategies elsewhere. Likewise, there has been little utilization in the region of proven strategies to make education safer for girls. The paper concludes with some suggestions for ODE's proposed gender evaluation around MDG3.

Violence against women

'The term "violence against women" means 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 in private life.'

'Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women…Violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.'

Source: *UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women,* 1993[2]

[1] This think piece has been commissioned by the Office of Development Effectiveness, however the views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author only.

[2] http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm

Violence against women and women's empowerment

There can be no question that violence against women is inextricably linked with women's empowerment. In fact, it is the most obvious manifestation of women's lack of empowerment and has the most direct and damaging impact, not only on women's life options, but on their sense of self. 'The essence of male violence 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 them. The use of brute force by men makes women *feel* inferior'.[3]

Where male violence against women is prevalent, fear of it leads women to accept the status quo of male control (by fathers, brothers, husbands) as the price of their protection from other males. This pressure acts even on women without direct experience of it, since they know from what they see around them that it *could* happen to them. This is not to say that women are simply passive victims. Most are courageous survivors. Many adapt by taking what steps they can to minimize their risks and others continue to challenge male authority regardless of the risks. But if you have ever lived with fear yourself, you will know how draining it is, and how disempowering, and how liberating and empowering it is when you no longer have to fear.

Violence against women – the missing MDG indicator

Freedom from violence is fundamental not only to women's empowerment, but also to all the MDGs.[4] Therefore it is at first sight surprising that the indicators for the MDG3 Target of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment relate only to equality in education, women's employment in the non-agricultural sector, and women's representation in national parliaments. The reason for this relates to the difficulties of finding ways of objectively measuring violence against women that are feasible for all the United Nations member states and can reasonably be repeated at regular intervals to track progress.

Case reports are the easiest data to get but are misleading, because they are affected by the level of service provision, going up or down according to expansion or contraction or quality changes in the service, usually funding related. They are also affected by the 'paradox of violence against women', that success in addressing the issue results in a rise in the statistics, not a decline, at least for some time. What is really needed is national prevalence data – the proportion of women who have ever experienced the particular form of violence being measured – and incidence data – the proportion of women who have experienced that particular form of violence during the last 12 months.

It is incidence data which are the most useful for tracking change. But both prevalence data and incidence data are derived from population-based surveys, which must be large enough to be representative of the whole country, and also illuminate differences between the most significant population sectors, such as rural and urban, or major ethnic groups. Such studies are very expensive to carry out, and if not done sensitively, tend to result in misleadingly low rates of disclosure and produce 'findings' that have limited value for advocacy and programme development.

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[3] **C** Bradley, *Why Male Violence Against Women is a Development Issue: Reflections from Papua New Guinea*, In Davies M. (ed), *Women and Violence: Realities and Responses Worldwide*. London, Zed Press, 1994

[4] World Health Organization, *Addressing violence against women and achieving the Millennium Development Goals* (MDG), 2005. http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2005/WHO_FCH_GWH_05.1.pdf

For findings to be comparable between nations as well as across time, it is important that all studies use the same criteria and methods, such as definitions of the various forms of violence, age groupings, modes of interviewing, and so on. The sensitive nature of the topic also requires high standards of training and ethical methods to protect both respondents and interviewers from suffering any form of harm as result of participating in the survey.

At the time when the MDGs were being developed, the methods for measuring violence against women at national level were simply not well enough developed to allow an indicator on violence against women to be included**.** In 2005, the UN Millennium Project Task Force on Gender Equality included ending violence against women as one of seven strategic priorities for achieving MDG3, and recommended using the incidence rate of physical intimate partner violence among women aged 15-49 as the indicator of progress**.**[5] However, this has not been added to the official list of MDG indicators**.**[6] Some countries chose to customize their MDG3 target by adding an indicator on violence against women, but dropped it for lack of data.[7]

Further detailed work on the development of indicators to measure various forms of violence against women was done by a UN Expert Group in 2007,[8] and is being continued by the UN Statistical Commission.[9] Indicators are now being developed not only for prevalence and incidence, but also for social tolerance, for the level of state response, institutional engagement, process, victim protection, prevention and training**.**[10]

Measurement of violence against women is proceeding surely but slowly. The methods used by WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence have become accepted best practice for national population-based studies of intimate partner violence. Research guidelines and standards have been developed.[11] Since the first WHO report on ten countries in 2005,[12] the number of countries using the method has tripled, including four Pacific Island countries. Involvement in such surveys has proved to be an empowering experience for both respondents and interviewers. They have also stimulated a great increase in public debate.[13] Inclusion of some questions on violence against women in demographic and health surveys is resulting in the collection of data from more countries, but the less rigorous method may result in some under-reporting.

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5 C Grown, G R Gupta, and A Kes, *Taking action: Achieving gender equality and empowering women*. UN Millenium Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, London: Earthscan, 2005, p128.

6 http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Indicators/OfficialList.htm

7 UNDP, *Unlocking progress: MDG acceleration on the road to 2015*, 2010, p58-9 http://nordicdk.bim.undp.org/assets/Andre-rapporter/PDF/UnlockingProgressMAF-Lessons-from-PilotCountriesSeptember-2010.pdf

8 United Nations Expert Group Meeting, *Indicators to measure violence against women*, 2007. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/IndicatorsVAW/IndicatorsVAW_EGM_report.pdf

9 United Nations Statistical Commission, *Report on Statistical Indicators on Violence Against Women*, 2010. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/IssuesFocus/Report-of-the-Meeting-of-the-Friends-of-the-Chair-February-2010.pdf?Open&DS=E/CN.3/2009/13&Lang=E

10 UN Human Rights Council, *Indicators on Violence Against Women and the State Response*, Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, 2010. http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/rapporteur/annual.htm

11 WHO and PATH, *Researching Violence Against Women: A practical guide for researchers and activists,* 2005. http://www.path.org/files/GBV_rvaw_complete.pdf

12 World Health Organization, *WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women, Summary Report,* 2005 http://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/summary_report/en/index.html

13 UNFPA, *Swimming Against the Tide. Lessons Learned from Field Research on Violence Against Women in the Solomon Islands and Kiribati,* 2010. http://210.7.20.137/Publications/Talk_Gender/Swimming_Against_the_tide.pdf

Robust data on violence against women are the fuel for advocacy and for action. The absence of violence against women from the list of MDG3 indicators due to a lack of data has been a missed opportunity for raising the profile of the issue and catalyzing more concerted action. As well, it has undermined achievement on the three core indicators. Recent progress on measuring violence against women has been substantial, but much greater investments in this area would bring significant multiplier effects that are much needed.

Growth of the field

The field of ending violence against women has expanded, morphed and refined itself to a remarkable degree since its early days of international recognition with the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW) in 1993. In 1979, when the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was endorsed by the UN General Assembly, the significance of violence against women was so little regarded that no mention of it was made in this seminal document. It took fourteen years for this extraordinary oversight to be rectified through DEVAW, as a supplement to CEDAW. Many cultures also have a blind spot about violence against women, either because it is covered up by victims and ignored by society, or because it is so visible and common that it is seen as normal and therefore not a problem.

Since its human rights based beginnings, the understanding of the complexities and implications of violence against women as a human phenomenon has widened and deepened, encompassing the dimensions of public health, economic development, labour migration, aid effectiveness and efficiency, democratic governance, AIDS prevention, crisis management, and peace and security. At the same time, a conceptual shift redefined violence against women as gender based violence. This has value for some purposes in that it allows violence against homosexuals and transgendered people to fit into the paradigm. On the other hand, it can deflect the focus away from the affected majority (women and girls) and cause confusion and resistance among people who are unclear what the English term 'gender' means or who associate it with Western feminism.

Eliminating violence against women – whose job is it anyway?

From the beginning, non-governmental organizations have been far more active than governments. States' duties of 'due diligence' in eliminating violence against women are quite comprehensive and clear. All state parties to CEDAW must promote and respect the human rights of women and exercise due diligence:

(a) To prevent, investigate and punish acts of all forms of violence against women, whether in the home, the workplace, the community or society, in custody or in situations of armed conflict.

(b) To take all measures to empower women and strengthen their economic independence and to protect and promote the full enjoyment of all rights and fundamental freedoms.

(c) To condemn violence against women and not invoke custom, tradition or practices in the name of religion or culture to avoid their obligations to eliminate such violence.

(d) To intensify efforts to develop and utilize legislative, education, social and other measures aimed at the prevention of violence, including the dissemination of information, legal literacy campaigns and the training of legal and health personnel. [14]

As well, there is now a move to hold states responsible for making reparations to victims in some circumstances.[15]

Pressure on states to do their share has steadily increased with the Beijing World Conference and Platform for Action (1995), the UN Secretary General's 2006 report on violence against women[16] and subsequent annual reports and General Assembly resolutions on intensification of efforts,[17] the formation of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force[18] and now the Secretary General's UNiTE to End Violence Against Women Campaign 2008-2015,[19] which aims to hold governments accountable.

There has also been a welcome increase of activism in the private sector, with more companies prepared to exercise corporate responsibility through contributing to programmes to end violence against women. A notable example is the former UNIFEM Trust Fund for Eliminating Violence Against Women in the context of HIV and AIDS, established through donations from Johnson and Johnson. At national and local levels too, public private partnerships for improving service provision, such as free hotlines and SMS messaging provided free by phone companies, have become increasingly common.

Consequences and costs

Expansion of activity on ending violence against women has been spurred by the emergence of solid evidence of the costs and consequences of violence against women in developing countries. Eight such studies of intimate partner violence reveal a range of costs at the level of the individual (survivors, their children, perpetrators), the family and community, and the wider society.[20] Four types of costs can be distinguished: monetary, non-monetary, economic multiplier effects and social multiplier effects.[21]

Monetary costs refer to the costs of goods and services used for preventing violence, treating and supporting victims, and apprehending, prosecuting and rehabilitating perpetrators. For example, the cost of providing health services for intimate partner violence in Jamaica was estimated in 1993 at US$454,000 annually, and for all intimate partner violence services in Colombia, the 2004 estimate for one year was US$73.7 million.[22] In Brazil, direct medical costs due to violence against women take up 0.4 per cent of the total annual health budget of the country.[23]

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[14] See Article 4 of DEVAW, and UN Commission on Human Rights, *The Due Diligence Standard as a Tool for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.* Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, 2006. http://daccess-ddny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G06/103/50/PDF/G0610350.pdf?OpenElement

[15] UN Human Rights Council, *Reparations for women subjected to violence*. Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, 2010. http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G10/131/09/PDF/G1013109.pdf?OpenElement

[16] UN Secretary General, *In-depth study on all forms of violence against women,* 2006, A/61/122/Add.1 http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-work-ga.htm

[17] http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/index.htm

[18] http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/taskforces/tf_vaw.htm

[19] http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/about.shtml

[20] International Center for Research on Women, *Estimating the Costs and Impacts of Intimate Partner Violence in Developing Countries: A Methodological Resource Guide,* 2009. http://www.icrw.org/files/publications/Estimating-the-Costs-and-Impacts-of-Intimate-Partner-Violence-in-Developing-Countries-A-Methodological-Resource-Guide.pdf

[21] C Grown, R G Gupta, & A Kes, *Taking action: Achieving gender equality and empowering women*. UN Millennium Task Force on Education and Gender Equality. London: Earthscan, 2005, p114-115 http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/Gender-complete.pdf

[22] International Center for Research on Women, 2009, op. cit., p7-8.

[23] Ibid

Non-monetary costs include mental and physical suffering, illness and death. A World Bank study in 1994 estimated that rape and intimate partner violence accounted for five per cent of healthy years of life lost to women aged 15-44 years in developing countries, more than the healthy years lost due to cancer.[24] The links between intimate partner violence and many indicators of poor maternal and reproductive health outcomes for both mother and infant have been well documented,[25] as has the increased risk of HIV.[26]

Economic multiplier effects include increased absenteeism, decreased labour market participation, reduced productivity, lower earnings, investment and savings, and lower intergenerational productivity. Productivity losses due to violence against women have been estimated at 1.2 per cent of GDP in Brazil and seven per cent in Fiji.[27] Women's aggregate earnings are estimated to be lower by US$1.56 billion in Chile and US$29.5 million in Nicaragua due to intimate partner violence.[28] In Uganda, women lose around eleven days of paid work a year due to violence.[29]

Often, men who assault their partners control them by sabotaging their educational and job training and employment opportunities. For safety reasons, women who choose to leave violent relationships may also have to leave their jobs and forego financial support for their children. Inevitably, they face increased economic hardship, often leading to an intergenerational cycle of poverty.

Social multiplier effects include the impact of violence on interpersonal relations and quality of life, including for affected children. For example, children of abused mothers are likely to do less well at school: in a Nicaraguan study, 63 per cent of children of female victims of violence had to repeat a school year and left school an average of four years earlier than other children.[30] Children who witness the abuse of their mother are also at increased risk of depression, and are more likely to be abused or become abusers in adult life. Thus the effects of violence against women in this generation are perpetuated into the next, and beyond.

Data such as the above are immensely valuable for motivating governments and other stakeholders to increase their efforts to eliminate violence against women. The evidence base still remains patchy, however, and this is an area of research which needs considerable strengthening, building on the groundwork recently done by the International Center for Research on Women.[31]

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[24] L Heise, J Pitinguy & A Germain, Violence Against Women, the Hidden Health Burden. World Bank Discussion Paper No. 255, 1994, p17.

[25] L Heise, M Ellsberg & M Gottemoeller, *Ending Violence Against Women,* Population Report, Series L, No; 11, Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1999.

[26] World Health Organization and UNAIDS, *Addressing violence against women and HIV/AIDS, What works?*, 2010, p6. http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241599863_eng.pdf

[27] UN Women website, http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/301-consequences-and-costs-.html

[28] International Center for Research on Women, op cit. 2009, p8

[29] UN Women website, http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/301-consequences-and-costs-.html

[30] Cited in Grown et al, op. cit. p115.

[31] International Center for Research on Women, op.cit., 2009,

The development of good practices

The identification of international good or promising practices continues to be hampered by the dearth of well-designed impact evaluations, and the diversity of cultural and socio-economic contexts which limit comparability and replicability. However, some generic aspects of good practices can be extracted, such as; clear policies and laws which make violence illegal; strong enforcement mechanisms; well-trained personnel; the involvement of multiple sectors; close collaboration between local women's groups, civil society organizations, academics and professionals; involvement of victims/survivors, and demonstration of a political commitment to ending violence against women.[32] Other factors are the creation of system-wide change, the involvement of men and boys, and early intervention for all forms of prevention.

The UNSG's 2006 Report presented an overview of promising practices in the fields of law, support services, and prevention which it urged states to implement.[33] Follow-up reports have emphasized the importance of national action plans, which over eighty countries have already created. Good practice handbooks have been developed on national action plans[34] and legislation.[35] A recent UN report on good practices in prevention includes human rights institutions, legislation, support services, awareness raising campaigns, education and training, and data gathering.[36]

A World Bank study of promising practices for preventing and responding to violence against women covers a broad range of interventions in justice, health, education, economic development, social services and public safety.[37] Seven cross-cutting lessons were also identified: employ a multi-sectoral approach; work at different levels (individual, community, institutional, laws/policies); create partnerships between government and non-government agencies; address norms, attitudes and beliefs at all levels of society; target young people; demonstrate the developmental impact of the violence (i.e. the costs and consequences); and build the knowledge base through rigorous evaluation.

Primary prevention – stopping the violence before it occurs – is a burgeoning field, since evidence is emerging that interventions to prevent violence or boost resiliency can be cheaper than the estimated costs of the violence itself.[38] A WHO study recommends taking a life-course perspective to help identify early risk factors, with a particular focus on younger age groups.[39] One innovative strategy has had success in preventing intimate partner violence and potential child abuse through intervening even

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[32] UN Secretary General, op.cit. 2006, p81

[33] Ibid, p83-100

[34] UN Women, *Good Practices in National Action Plans on Violence Against Women,* 2011. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/egm/nap2010/MF_FINAL_FINAL_23_May.pdf

[35] UN Division for the Advancement of Women, *Handbook and Supplement for Legislation on violence against women*, 2010. http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/handbook/Handbook%20for%20legislation%20on%20violence%20against%20women.pdf

[36] UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on good practices in preventing violence against women*, 2011. http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/17session/A-HRC-17-23.pdf

[37] S Bott, A Morrison, M Ellsberg, *Preventing and responding to gender-based violence in middle and low income countries: a global review and analysis.* World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3618, 2005. http://library1.nida.ac.th/worldbankf/fulltext/wps03618.pdf

[38] Institute of Medicine, Workshop on the Social and Economic Costs of Violence: The Value of Prevention, April 2011. http://www.iom.edu/Activities/Global/ViolenceForum/2011-APR-28.aspx
See also www.globalviolenceprevention@nas.edu

[39] World Health Organization, *Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women: Taking action and generating evidence,* 2010. http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241564007_eng.pdf

before birth, using antenatal support groups for couples incorporating positive fathering with mentoring.[40]

Men are the main perpetrators of violence against women and they have the power to change both their own behavior and the institutions and attitudes which sustain abuse of women. The evidence base of what works to engage men and boys in preventing violence against women is growing. A WHO evaluation of 15 interventions with men and boys found that eleven of them showed encouraging results, with group education, community mobilization and mass media campaigns being the most effective methods.[41] A global review of perpetrator programmes found some good practices, though results were mixed overall.[42] Initial results from a multi-country intervention by Instituto Promundo in Brazil, Chile, India and Rwanda are also promising.[43]

An overview of good practices on ending violence against women in the context of HIV and AIDS contains case studies of community engagement, service based approaches, programmes with sex workers, use of mass media, and work with men, with recommendations for national and international policy.[44] For humanitarian responses in situations of emergencies and conflict, good practices on ending violence against women have been developed relating to site planning, water and sanitation, food security, education, health and community services, and procedures for monitoring levels of protection.[45]

UN Women's Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence Against Women and Girls provides a broad scan of global strategies and resources on a range of topics. Some sections include information on promising practices and lessons learned.[46]

Progress in the Pacific Islands region

Every Pacific Island country rates ending violence against women as a high priority, with increasing recognition that violence against women is a national development issue to be addressed by national collaborative action.[47] Baseline data on violence against women have been collected in Samoa, Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu using the methodology of the WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women, with Fiji soon to follow.[48] The process of collecting these data was a powerful catalyst for transforming violence against women from a private family matter into a serious social, economic and human rights concern requiring governmental action.[49]

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[40] Tiwari A., 2011, "Innovative Prevention Interventions: Addressing IPV and potential child abuse at prenatal care." Institute of Medicine, Workshop on Preventing Violence against Women and Children, January 2011. http://www.iom.edu/Activities/Global/ViolenceForum/2011-JAN-27.aspx

[41] World Health Organization, 2007, *Engaging men and boys in changing gender-based inequity in health: evidence from programme interventions,* p19-20. http://www.who.int/gender/documents/Engaging_men_boys.pdf

[42] Rothman E., Butchart A. and Cerda M., 2003, *Intervening with Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence: A Global Perspective.* World Health Organisation. http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/resources/publications/en/intervening_full.pdf

[43] Instituto Promundo, http://www.promundo.org.br/en/ See also www.menengage.org

[44] World Health Organisation, 2010, *Addressing violence against women and HIV/AIDS. What works?* http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241599863_eng.pdf

[45] Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2005, *Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence in Humanitarian Settings,* http://ochanet.unocha.org/p/Documents/GBV%20Guidelines%20(English).pdf

[46] www.endvawnow.org

[47] Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2010, *Beijing +15, Review of progress in Implementing the Beijing Programme of Action in Pacific Islands countries and territories,* p59. http://www.spc.int/images/stories/publication/beijing_15-report.pdf

[48] Published studies are available on UNFPA Pacific's website, at http://210.7.20.137/Pages/Talk_Gender.html

[49] Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2011, *From Evidence to Action: Enhancing Data Collection and Legislative and Policy Response to Gender-based Violence in the Pacific*. Submission to the Australian Parliamentary Roundtable on Ending Gender-based Violence in the Asia-Pacific Region. Available from teab@spc.int or lindap@spc.int

No country has yet adopted a comprehensive approach to legislative reform on violence against women, though changes in both criminal and civil laws have been introduced in a number of countries relating to family violence and sexual assault. This represents a major achievement for advocacy considering that Pacific legislatures are almost exclusively male. Vanuatu's *Family Protection Act 2009* took eleven years to pass, and PNG activists are still trying to spur Parliamentary action on recommendations for domestic violence legislation made by PNG's Law Reform Commission in 1992.

An evaluation of violence against women interventions in Melanesia in 2008 found a number of promising practices in Fiji, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and PNG in the areas of prevention, access to justice, services for survivors, and multi-sectoral co-ordination.[50] In 2008, the UN launched 'Partners for Prevention' a three-year regional joint programme for Asia and the Pacific focused on primary prevention of gender-based violence through working with boys and men.[51] At a 2009 meeting in Cairns, Pacific Islands Forum Leaders committed themselves to taking action against sexual and gender based violence, and formed a Reference Group to guide direction.[52]

Current regional priorities are; to expand and improve data collection and utilisation, research the economic costs of violence against women, carry out integrated legislative reform, and implement the recommendations of the 11th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women 2010 for the development of national action plans, expansion of a comprehensive suite of justice and support services for survivors, setting up prevention activities which engage young people and men, and holding governments accountable for fulfilling their due diligence obligations.[53]

Strategies for accelerating progress on MDG3

Adding or strengthening a focus on violence against women can contribute to improved outcomes on the economic and education indicators for MDG3. These indicators are based on the assumption that women will be empowered by having more income of their own, and by having higher levels of education. But real life in a patriarchal world is not quite that simple. For individual women, progress on both these fronts can carry risks of further violence which act as a barrier to the goal of empowerment. Increased exposure to sexual harassment in workplaces and schools can be one consequence, as well the possibility of increased violence at home for women earning income.

Although having earning power may well strengthen women's bargaining position at home, it can also have the opposite effect.[54] The ecological model of factors affecting intimate partner violence identifies education and income as elements in the complex web of personal, relationship, economic and structural influences that can result in violence.[55] Husbands may react with increased aggression to what they perceive as a threat to their control over their wife, even to their masculinity and self-respect, when their wife has her own source of income, particularly if she is the higher earner, holds a responsible position, or is the sole breadwinner. In PNG, for example, it is very common to see women bank tellers, shop assistants and public servants with black eyes, which are understood as the husband's way of showing the world, and his wife, that he is still in charge.

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[50] AusAID Office of Development Effectiveness, 2008, *Violence Against Women in Melanesia and East Timor: Building on Global and Regional Promising Practices.* http://www.ode.ausaid.gov.au/publications/Documents/vaw_cs_full_report.pdf

[51] http://www.partners4prevention.org/

[52] Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, angelat@forumsec.org.fj

[53] Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2011, op cit., Appendix E.

[54] WHO, 2005, *Integrating Poverty and Gender into Health Programmes, Module on Gender-Based Violence.* p13. http://www.wpro.who.int/NR/rdonlyres/E517AAA7-E80B-4236-92A1-6EF28A6122B3/0/gender_based_violence.pdf

[55] Heise L, 1998, "Violence against women: an integrated, ecological framework." *Violence against women,* Vol 4(3):262-90.

Making workplaces safer

In the global north, where higher proportions of women have been in the workforce for decades, there has been solid progress on sexual harassment legislation, policy and procedures for prevention and response, though the process of complaint often remains harrowing for the victim. Prevalence levels for sexual harassment may be as high or higher than intimate partner violence. A recent German study, for example, found rates for sexual harassment four times greater than for physical or sexual violence from a current partner.[56]

States have been called on to conduct surveys on the nature of violence against women,[57] but the majority of the 68 population based studies mentioned in the UN Secretary General's 2008 report on violence against women are limited to intimate partner violence.[58] The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women surmises that if international research addressed the full range of violence against women, covering girlhood and womanhood and the contexts of employment and education, we might find that sexual harassment is the most common form of violence against women.[59]

In the global south, particularly in the Pacific Islands region, workplace sexual harassment has not yet received much attention. Only one Pacific Island country has conducted formal research on sexual harassment in the workplace.[60] In 2002, a study by the Fiji Women's Rights Movement interviewed 550 employed women privately in their own homes and found that 33 per cent had been sexually harassed at work, with 20 per cent overall having been harassed in the last twelve months. Most women experienced multiple incidents and 20 per cent claimed to have been harassed 'countless' times. Only six per cent had experienced a single incident, and for 14 per cent (one in six of all women interviewed) the harassment was ongoing. Incidence was higher among shift workers, women working in the public sector and those who were breadwinners for their household. Most women (77 per cent) did not report the harassment, and for those who did, the most frequent outcome was 'nothing'. Where action was taken it was predominantly a warning.

In PNG, no quantitative research has been done, but some anecdotal evidence emerged during research for AusAID's evaluation of violence against women interventions.[61] Although the topic was on intimate partner violence and sexual assault, focus group participants at a women's shelter in Port Moresby commented:

'Another common thing is that women are sexually abused at work. It's very very common in workplaces in PNG. It's happening everywhere these days, where the boss says "you must do this" or she'll lose her job.'

'Even a married woman has to do it, and she can't tell her husband, because if she does, he will bash her up very badly on the spot.'

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56 UN Human Rights Council, 2010, *Indicators on Violence Against Women and the State Response*. Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, p11 http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/rapporteur/annual.htm

57 General Assembly resolution 52/86.

58 UN Secretary General, 2008, *Intensification of efforts to end violence against women*. A/63/214 http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N08/449/55/PDF/N0844955.pdf?OpenElement

59 UN Human Rights Council, 2010, op. cit. p11.

60 Fiji Women's Rights Movement, 2002, "Report on Workplace Sexual Harassment in Fiji".

61 Field notes, for AusAID Office of Development Effectiveness evaluation of violence against women interventions in Melanesia and East Timor, 2008.

One woman revealed her own experience:

'I used to have a good boss for ten years, but the boss I got two years ago is from Kimb. He has tried to abuse me. He's a senior account manager and he says I will lose my position unless I suck him or have sex with him once a month. That pressure's been on me for all this time, and I couldn't be at work some of the time. I lost the baby I was pregnant with because of all this stress. I only have grade eight education so it's hard for me to get another job. I haven't told my husband about it, or even my best friend.'

Instances known to me personally range from a young women applying for a housemaid position at a major hotel being asked during the interview what colour panties she was wearing (a clear indication of what would follow if she accepted the job), through other incidents of varying severity, to a young secretary having to endure anal rape by her boss as the price of keeping her job. In typical incidents the victim is a young single woman and the offender is an older, more senior, married man. If these cases are reported or discovered, the matter is often not perceived as an abuse of authority but as 'an affair', for which the young woman is blamed and usually sacked.

Making workplaces safer may also mean taking action to protect female employees from abusive husbands who pursue them to the workplace. In PNG, this is a fairly common occurrence.[62] The usual response from a supervisor or manager is to tell the woman to 'sort it out outside', which gives the man the opportunity he wanted to further humiliate his wife by abusing her in public. If this behavior becomes a pattern, the woman may lose her job.

The tendency to blame women for the violence against them can also result in a denial of other rights. For example, in PNG female public servants injured by their husband's violence sometimes do not receive the paid leave to which they are entitled, on the grounds that they brought the problem on themselves by their behavior. This misinterpretation of the Public Service General Order which bars a person from receiving paid sick leave if they are deemed responsible for causing their own injury or illness demonstrates the pervasiveness of cultural support for wife-beating and the need for appropriate workplace based education.

It is the same attitude which motivates some hospital boards and administrators in PNG to impose high 'deterrent' fees for treating patients with domestic violence injuries, on the grounds that this will encourage women to behave better and avoid causing their husbands to beat them. As one hospital administrator (himself a doctor) explained: 'We view these cases like self-inflicted injuries. The women bring it on themselves. If their husbands beat them it's for a reason'.[63]

A domestic violence policy for workplaces would not only protect female employees while at work, but would also help challenge societal tolerance of violence against women. A good model has been developed by AusAID's PNG post for its own use.[64] It prohibits penalizing an employee whose work performance is affected by domestic violence, and allows time off work for medical treatments, court attendance and counselling for the victim and/or her children. There are procedures to ensure the safety of the affected person while at work, with strict confidentiality about personal information relating to residential address, phone contacts and duty travel, to minimize stalking.

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62 I have personally witnessed three such instances.

63 Personal communication.

64 AusAID PNG, 2009 March, *Domestic Violence in the Workplace Policy*.

Where an AIDS epidemic is a present or imminent threat, workplace programmes are a common strategy for reducing the spread of HIV and the impact of AIDS. These offer opportunities for making workplaces safer for women. One of the key principles of the International Labour Organisation's *Code of Practice on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work*[65] is gender equality, requiring the development of programmes and approaches that respond to the particular needs of female as well as male workers.

A gender-sensitive workplace programme educates all managers and employees (and, if possible, their families) on violence against women in the home, in the community and in the workplace as a driving force of the epidemic and one of the main HIV risk factors for women. It also involves setting up effective policies and user-friendly complaints procedures for workplace sexual harassment, and looking at other ways to reduce female staff's work-related exposure to violence, such as by providing door-to-door transport for shift workers, considering the location of lighting and toilets at job-sites, introducing codes of conduct that clarify acceptable boundaries around male-female workplace interactions (such as no closed-door private meetings), and so on.

The scope for making workplaces safer for women is enormous, and needs to involve the public and private sectors, as well as the not-for-profit sector and trade unions. The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women recommends that all states criminalise sexual harassment and stalking as serious offences, and that this be one indicator of a state's performance of due diligence.[66] This has not yet been done in any Pacific Island country.

Only Fiji has human rights legislation that makes sexual harassment a civil offence. Fiji's new employment relations legislation (effective as of 2009) makes sexual harassment in the workplace a ground for complaint but severely limits the responsibility of the State as an employer.[67] PNG's public service regulations contain provisions for complaints of sexual harassment, but procedures are intimidating and ineffective. The development of legislation and policies on sexual harassment, including for the informal sector, is one of the key actions called for under Critical Area F, Women and the Economy, in the Pacific Region's Beijing+15 Report.[68]

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65 International Labour Organisation, 2001, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/publication/wcms_113783.pdf

66 UN Human Rights Council, 2010, *Indicators on Violence Against Women and the State Response.* Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, p22. http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/rapporteur/annual.htm

67 Personal communication, Virisila Buadromo, Fiji Women's Rights Movement.

68 Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2010, *Beijing +15, Review of progress in Implementing the Beijing Programme of Action in Pacific Islands countries and territories, p59.* http://www.spc.int/images/stories/publication/beijing_15-report.pdf

Safety for women and the informal economy

In many developing economies, women predominate in the informal sector. Their 'workplaces' are their homes, gardens and the urban markets where they sell their goods. This is certainly true for the Pacific Islands, where women often face extreme difficulties, including physical and sexual violence, in accessing markets to earn their livelihood. They must often travel long distances with their loads, which in itself can be risky, particularly in areas where levels of public security are low. In order to try and sell as much as possible before returning they must often sleep overnight in the streets or in the market. Whilst in the market, women may be bullied by male supervisors extracting fees, or security guards demanding payment or sexual favours for protecting their space or goods, and sexually harassed or even abducted and raped by male opportunists under the influence of alcohol or marijuana.[69]

These conditions hold back women's economic empowerment, and social and economic development. Market women in the Pacific Islands are not organised, like their counterparts in Africa and Asia. UNIFEM Pacific's 'Partners Improving Markets 2009-2011' project in PNG, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji is the first initiative in the region to address this issue, by supporting the development of market women's organisations and their ability to dialogue with local governments to improve their conditions and protect their safety.

In Vanuatu, the Shefa provincial government has led the way by handing over management of rural markets to the women who sell in them, and the municipal government which manages the major market in the country, in Port Vila, is also adapting to include women's leadership. In PNG, the safe markets project is finding synergies with UNDP's 'Safe Cities Project' in Port Moresby, which has recognised the high levels of violence against women as a barrier to economic development in the city. Strategies to reduce violence against women include arrangements with a phone company for a free emergency hotline, and with security companies to transport endangered women and children to a safe place at no charge, as well as public-private partnerships for expanding the network of shelters and other services.

One ground-breaking strategy for reducing violence against women in the context of the informal sector is the IMAGE project of South Africa.[70] This project was designed to investigate whether microcredit and/or gender training for women (including violence against women components) could reduce levels of two indicators of women's risk of HIV infection – intimate partner violence and unprotected sex. Separate cohorts received small loans, a year-long participatory gender-training programme, or both. In a 24 month post-baseline assessment, the cohort which received both interventions did not reduce their rate of unprotected sex, but they did experience a very substantial reduction (55 per cent) in their experience of physical and sexual intimate partner violence.

The reduced level of intimate partner violence is significant in itself as a contribution to women's empowerment. It is also relevant to women's ability to control their earnings, which is as crucial as their ability to earn the income. One of the difficulties that many women face – and not only in microcredit schemes – is the danger that either their capital or their earnings may be taken from them by force by their husbands. The IMAGE model thus has double benefits for women.

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[69] Partners Improving Markets 2009-2011 project design document.

[70] WHO and UNAIDS, 2010, *Addressing violence against women and HIV/AIDS. What Works?* p16. http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241599863_eng.pdf

Making education safer

'Girls can get raped at high school, or at primary school, by the teachers. It's a common thing. Most of the teachers are men. They probably will call the girl in for some lessons or homework to do, and then the teacher starts playing a game now, like "If you do this for me, I can help you out in your subject or in your homework". And even if she refuses, the teacher can push himself on her.' These words from a participant in a focus group in PNG on violence against women[71] illustrate a common situation faced by girls in school.

There are no published studies on sexual violence or harassment against girls in schools in the Pacific Islands region, though anecdotal evidence and research elsewhere suggest that it is widespread.[72] In Ecuador, adolescent girls reporting sexual violence in school identified teachers as the perpetrator in 37 per cent of cases. In South Africa, 33 per cent of reported rapes of girls were committed by a teacher. Many girls changed schools or left school as a result of hostility after they reported the violence. In a study in Ethiopia, 23 per cent of girls reported experiencing sexual assault or rape on the way to or from school. In Zimbabwe, 50 per cent of girls reported being harassed on the way to school and 92 per cent reported being propositioned by older men.[73] In Latin America, studies in six countries uncovered high levels of sexual harassment of girls in schools.[74] In zones of conflict or post-conflict, harassment of girls in school is worse.[75]

The UN Millennium Task Force on Education and Gender Equality recommended improving school safety and infrastructure (through addressing harassment from male peers and teachers and constructing safe and private latrines) as one of four strategies known to be effective for increasing girls' enrolment in primary and secondary schools.[76] Employing more female teachers, building more rural schools and appointing female helpers to accompany girls while travelling to and from school have also been found to increase girls' enrolments in many countries.[77]

Adoption of a zero tolerance policy with procedures to support reporting by both student and staff victims (such as school-based counselling) are a necessary first step. A Safe Schools project that trained 185 supervisors and 221 in Malawi, along with 359 teachers and 80 students to recognize, prevent and respond to school-related gender-based violence increased recognition by teachers of sexual harassment from 30 per cent to 80 per cent.[78] Sexual and reproductive health, life skills and family life education curricula which address violence against women and encourage more equitable gender norms can be effective, if teachers are appropriately trained to address these issues. A 'whole school' approach is preferable.[79] A project in South Africa trained all teachers and school employees, including administration

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71 Field notes, for AusAID Office of Development Effectiveness evaluation of violence against women interventions in Melanesia and East Timor, 2008.

72 The three following studies are cited on UN Women's website at http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/301-consequences-and-costs-.html

73 Amnesty International Safe Schools website, factsheets at http://www.amnesty.org/en/key-facts/violence-against-girls

74 Ibid.

75 Amnesty International 2008, *Safe Schools – Every Girl's Right.* http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ACT77/001/2008/en/c3fb8b67-db24-11dc-b4a6-0fa73a85cd41/act770012008eng.pdf

76 UN Millennium Project Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, 2005, *Taking action: achieving gender equality and empowering women,* p47-8. http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/Gender-complete.pdf

77 Ibid

78 What Works for Women and Girls website, http://www.whatworksforwomen.org/chapters/21/sections/59/evidence

79 Bott S., Morrison A. and Ellsberg M. 2005 June, *Preventing and responding to gender-based violence in middle and low-income countries: a global review and analysis.* World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3618, p 44. http://library1.nida.ac.th/worldbankf/fulltext/wps03618.pdf

and cleaning staff, to understand the dangers of sexual harassment, which resulted in greatly increased vigilance by teachers and management, and a rise in teachers' confidence in teaching about the topic.[80]

Evaluating violence against women and MDG3

Violence against women and girls in workplaces and in schools clearly has a direct connection with the economic and education dimensions of women's empowerment and should be assessed when evaluating AusAID's contribution to the achievement of MDG3. An evaluation should also consider the broader context of efforts to eliminate violence against women in all its forms in each country programme, since multiple, simultaneous strategies are required and weakness in one aspect can impede progress in other aspects. Awareness raising about women's rights to live free from violence, for example, has limited value if there are no effective justice system mechanisms or support services to provide protection when women try to exercise their right. New laws are wasted if no-one knows about them, or if enforcement personnel are not trained to apply them in ways that respect women's needs.

An evaluation needs to ask whether AusAID's work is part of a holistic approach which covers the main domains of prevention, access to justice, support services for survivors, and multi-sectoral coordination.[81] Where there is a well-prepared national action plan, identification of gaps and opportunities is easier. Where there is no plan, supporting the development of one should be a priority. The balance between prevention and response, and the targeting of interventions, should be examined to ensure that men and young people of both sexes are being reached for primary prevention.

The evaluation should also consider the level of leadership, advocacy and ownership, and ask whether there are key gaps in the evidence base that are handicapping activism. Would a prevalence study of a certain form of violence, or of costs and consequences, help jump-start action? Should participatory research methods be used? Could synergies be generated by strengthening the capacity of the national statistical office to collect and use gender indicators, including of violence against women, which could feed into the work of the national planning and monitoring machinery?

More efforts need to be made to design interventions with clear objectives and prior baseline research so that evaluation of impacts as well as of outcomes can be made and findings can contribute to the knowledge base. Ownership and sustainability are crucial elements of effective interventions, which can be assessed even where impact evaluations are not available for specific interventions. What are the differences between interventions that have high local ownership and those that don't? What factors maximize co-operation and minimize antagonism between men and women on the issue? To what extent are lessons learned being shared, especially between similar initiatives?

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80 http://www.whatworksforwomen.org/chapters/21/sections/59/evidence

81 See AusAID Office of Development Effectiveness, 2007, *Violence against Women in Melanesia and East Timor: A review of international lessons.* http://www.ode.ausaid.gov.au/publications/Documents/VAW_review.pdf

AusAID Office of Development Effectiveness, 2008, Violence Against Women in Melanesia and East Timor: Building on global and regional promising approaches. http://www.ode.ausaid.gov.au/publications/Documents/vaw_cs_full_report.pdf
AusAID, 2009, *Responding to violence against women in Melanesia and East Timor, Australia's response to the ODE Report.* http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pubout.cfm?ID=7821_6079_155_5278_287

In-house considerations for AusAID country programmes are the extent to which violence against women approaches are embedded across sectors, guided by a strategic plan, and implemented by staff, advisors and managing contractors with the information and skills to do a good job. Are capacity building programmes and recruitment criteria needed? Do scoping, design, review and evaluation missions also include expertise on violence against women? Could knowledge management services be better utilised? Are project and funding timelines long enough to develop ownership and affect change in cultural norms? Is there an active 'community of practice' which links practitioners, activists, academics and researchers?

Finally, violence against women is both a symptom and a cause of gender inequality and discrimination. The more that a focus on ending violence against women can be integrated into a whole-of-society approach to gender equality and women's empowerment, the more effective both will be.

The author

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