



GBV PREVENTION NETWORK EXCHANGE VISITS

2008



EXCHANGE visit

The GBV Prevention Network provided member organizations with an exciting opportunity to reach out across national borders and visit a member organization of their choice within the Horn, East and Southern Africa. The Network received 30 applications and the leadership committee selected the three most compelling requests.

GOALS OF THE EXCHANGE

- Enable Network members learn from innovative GBV prevention programming outside their own countries.
- Facilitate members to connect with other activists.
- Encourage members to reflect on how to enhance their own GBV prevention programs.

Three individuals representing their organizations were selected for the exchange visit; they visited three Network member organizations of their choice;

- Peter Lwanga Mayanja of Center for Domestic Violence Prevention in Uganda visited Men for Gender Equality Now in Kenya.
- Hedwick Afandi of Coalition on Violence against Women in Kenya visited Forum for Activists against Torture.
- Josia Helmut of White Ribbon Campaign in Namibia visited Sonke Gender Justice Network in South Africa.

THE CENTER FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION MEETS MEN FOR GENDER EQUALITY NOW

CENTER FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP) is a local civil society organization committed to preventing violence against women. It has worked at the grassroots in poor communities since 2000 and has considerable experience and expertise particularly in community mobilization. CEDOVIP's work has been highlighted as a good practice in several national fora and international publications.

MEN FOR GENDER EQUALITY NOW

Men for Gender Equality Now (MEGEN) is a Kenyan network of men working to end gender based violence and the spread of HIV and AIDS through prevention, service provision to survivors and awareness creation focusing on the role of men as agents of change. MEGEN strives to empower communities to understand the roles they play in preventing violence thereafter developing interventions in ending violence at family and community level during the community activities, sensitization seminars and workshops.

KEY ACTIVITIES OF THE VISIT

The main activity during this exchange was the Men's Traveling Conference (MTC) an annual awareness creation and advocacy activity coordinated by MEGEN. Activities included in the exchange were:

- A public event involving the flagging off of the MTC buses, and speeches by key personalities denouncing gender based violence
- Advocacy meetings with District Police Leaders
- Public events with skits, songs and poetry highlighting the consequences of violence against women and men's role in violence prevention



LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EXCHANGE

1. STRATEGIC AND INTENSE INVESTMENT IN MALE ACTIVISTS.

Bringing men on board is a process that requires significant time and energy, it includes a carefully designed process of recruitment, self assessment processes including couples nights, meetings at the constituency levels, and feedback meetings. This process can ensure male activities do not cause more harm than good in GBV prevention and response.



2. MALE ACTIVISTS NEED EMOTIONAL SUPPORT.

It is essential to reinforcing male activist's energies as they often face heavy criticism and in some cases stigma from the community which may cause them to give up if not supported.



"Thanks to the GBV Prevention Network for giving me the opportunity of sharing but most of all learning from MEGEN in Kenya. The visit widened my understanding and skills of engaging fellow men in preventing GBV. Thanks to MEGEN for the work they do and for the warm welcome they extended to me. Am looking forward to having MEGEN the Uganda Chapter" *Peter Lwanga Mayanja, CEDOVIP*



3. CREATIVE PROGRAMMING.

Effective male involvement in GBV prevention and response can include:

- Rapid response; facilitating access to medical and legal services for survivors (including attending court sessions) as well as referring survivors to temporary shelters. Men's traveling conference and training; travel to remote areas, holding awareness raising sessions with men and women by challenging unequal power relations between men and women and society's perceptions of masculinities. Use of participatory theater and dialogues very vital
- Media and public awareness campaigns
- Community artists to design and craft messages to fit community's everyday life

4. CAUTIOUS ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MEDIA.

Media can 'make or break' a GBV program and deeply affect attitudes. Especially where men are addressing issues of GBV as the context is often changed by reported to be more about violence against men. , Thus, building relationships with the media and strengthening their skills to cover GBV sensitively is important.

5. ENSURE COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP.

GBV initiatives need to ensure community ownership drawing male activists from the communities themselves. This creates more sustainable GBV prevention as activists are rooted and vested in their own communities.



**COALITION ON VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN MEETS
FORUM FOR ACTIVISTS
AGAINST TORTURE**

COALITION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The Coalition on Violence against Women - Kenya, COVAW (K), is a national women's human rights non-governmental organization. COVAW works to promote and advance women human rights through working towards a society free from all forms of violence against women. Since inception, COVAW (K) has continued to be instrumental in Kenya by positioning violence against women as a crime and a human rights violation in the public domain. . COVAW (K) is currently addressing the root causes of violence against women by focusing on the maxim "breaking the cycle of violence against women".

FORUM FOR ACTIVISTS AGAINST TORTURE

FACT is a non-profit human rights organization that addresses the issues of torture and organized violence. In order to achieve this goal the organization provides services like medical care, psychosocial care and legal services. FACT Rwanda provides a unique treatment plan for each survivor, which lasts until the patient is no longer in need. FACT also conducts awareness raising activities at community level on the consequences of violence and torture, and is involved in advocacy efforts at national level.

KEY ACTIVITIES OF THE VISIT

- Sessions with administrative and program staff to get full knowledge of FACT's strategies and activities
- Literature review
- Observation of FACT's projects

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EXCHANGE

Avoid addressing GBV as stand-alone issue. Mainstreaming conflict sensitive approaches to development in all violence and torture programming to avoid triggering or escalating conflict in households and communities as a result of GBV programs.

Engage youth. Investment in the youth for attitude change and creation of new community norms through the formation of human rights clubs in secondary schools is a useful strategy. Youth are often more open and progressive and can more easily adapt to change especially for issues like power relations and gender dynamics. Give basic support. It is important to reach out to survivors and perpetrators of violence providing counseling and social aid including food, transport, clothes, and medical care for sustainable rehabilitation of individuals, households and communities to effectively prevent violence from recurring.

Pay attention to staff needs and feelings. Debriefing sessions for staff involved in handling cases of GBV and other forms of torture, facilitated by an independent psycho-social expert can help to prevent staff burn out.

"I am especially grateful to the GBV Prevention Network for providing financial support that enabled the exchange visit. Gratitude too goes to FACT Rwanda for accepting my visit, I have learnt the importance of building good relationships with people / communities, respecting capacities of communities to identify their own concerns and making their own decisions based on their identified concerns leads to effective action needs that are planned well involving as many community members as possible"

HEDWICK AFANDI COALITION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, KENYA.



WHITE RIBBON
CAMPAIGN NAMIBIA
MEETS SONKE GENDER
JUSTICE NETWORK

WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN NAMIBIA

White Ribbon Campaign Namibia is a men's organization that is working to end men's violence against women and children through education, discussions and actions. It encourages men and boys to take responsibility for their violence and to involve them in care-giving through workshops and forums in their communities and workplace. White Ribbon Campaign Namibia works with boys and men on a number of different projects including a project around men in prison, the men's forums in six regions and the One Man Can campaign with fathers, teachers, coaches and pastors on GBV and HIV/AIDS. As a result of this visit the One Man Can program will be properly incorporated in all of White Ribbon Campaign Namibia's programs.

SONKE GENDER JUSTICE NETWORK

The Sonke Gender Justice Network of South Africa works with men, women, youth and children in Southern, East and Central Africa to: achieve gender equality, prevent GBV and reduce the spread of HIV and the impact of AIDS. The Network endeavors to create the change necessary for men, women, youth and children to enjoy equitable, healthy, and happy relationships. Such relationships help contribute to the development of just and democratic societies by challenging the gender roles and inequalities that contribute to the rapid spread of HIV and exacerbate the impact of AIDS. The organization understands that bringing about sustained change requires addressing the many forces shaping individual and community norms and practices including: traditions and cultures, government policies, laws and institutions, civil society organizations, the media, the family as well as the economic, political and social pressures that shape and reinforce those values.

"The GBV Prevention Network exchange visit opened up doors for its members to learn and to exchange skills and knowledge in various fields of work, this immensely contributes to strengthening of the members intervention programmes and strategies on GBV. United we stand!! Separated we fall!"

JOSIA HELMUT, WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN NAMIBIA.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF VISIT

- Sessions with program staff to get an in-depth understanding of the One Man Campaign
- Participation in a community based workshop on gender based violence in one of the densely populated areas in Johannesburg
- Public campaign including distribution of flyers and brochures on men's role in prevention of violence against women, in the streets of Johannesburg

tool for raising awareness to staff involved and community members i.e. murals. These stimulate dialogue and debate for staff painting, and community members who are usually onlookers.

New Technologies for Raising Awareness. Technological advances that create a whole new dimension to awareness creation and advocacy including the use of digital stories, printing and distributing flyers on the One Man Can Campaign to stimulate the creation of new notions of masculinity.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE EXCHANGE

Building Linkages Locally. Partner with CBOs on the ground as an entry point to the community and working with men in prevention of GBV, HIV infection and effects of AIDS. These CBOs usually know their communities better than any other stakeholders.

Art and Activism. The use of art as a strong

Replication. The One Man Campaign has a strong message that emphasizes everyone's role in prevention of Gender Based Violence in communities. The campaign provides for the education of men and boys and women's empowerment, recognizing that, there is no way that we can curb GBV, HIV/AIDS without engaging men in society. The One Man Can Campaign will be soon launched in Namibia.





CONCLUSION

Exchange visits provide an opportunity for activists to meet each other, share ideas, and learn first-hand how sister organizations are preventing GBV in their communities. This learning can result in the initiation of new program approaches, new solutions to old problems and, importantly new friendships between activists their organizations.

We hope that the exchange program inspires members to look beyond their organizations, their local areas, their national boundaries to see how others are meeting the challenges of preventing GBV in their communities and countries. Special thanks to host organizations that spared their time within a busy quarter to share with members through sharing are we able to effectively address GBV prevention in our region.



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