

GBV PREVENTION NETWORK

PERSPECTIVES ON PREVENTION

TAKE ACTION!

This Issue's Theme

CROSSING BORDERS, PUSHING BOUNDARIES

As organizations that are working toward the prevention of GBV, we are all working on issues that touch the core of individual's and society's beliefs and values. Sometimes we feel challenged and wonder if, and how, other organizations and individuals cope with the issues we regularly have to deal with.

It is important for us to reach out beyond our organizational and geographical borders to share experiences and learn from different approaches and prevention efforts as well as to connect with other colleagues for inspiration, support and solidarity. In this issue we focus on networking as one way of crossing our own boundaries and learning from global Networks. We also reflect on the experiences of a Network exchange program and describe an opportunity to participate in another upcoming Network exchange.

Next Issue's Theme

COMMUNITY ACTIVISM FOR THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

In line with the regional 16 Days of Activism Campaign for 2008, our next issue will focus on community activism for the prevention of sexual violence. We will explore the power of grassroots movements for the prevention of sexual violence. All members are welcome to share experiences and approaches – write to us!

Member's News

Want to know what our colleagues in the region are doing? Which new programs and publications are just off the press? Which new energized sisters and brothers have joined the GBV prevention efforts? And what is going on with our membership? Read this section and catch up with the current news!

Happy Anniversary FEMNET!

2008 marks twenty years since the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) was formed. For the last ten years, FEMNET has participated and engaged in the annual session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women held in New York. Furthermore, FEMNET organizes and facilitates the African Women's Caucus (AWC). At the regional level, FEMNET has been working consistently with the African Union (AU) and its specialized mechanisms to advocate for gender-responsive policies and their implementation. Congratulations – we salute you!

Gender Forums, KEFEADO

Kenya Female Advisory Organization (KEFEADO) has been holding monthly Gender Forums in Kisumu since 30th April 2008 with the support of the Heinrich Boll Foundation. The forum brings together civil society representatives and individuals working in Nyanza to discuss GBV prevention strategies. In addition, KEFEADO recently hosted a meeting of ten organizations based in Kisumu to brainstorm on the formation of the Western Kenya Human Rights House Network. The organizations are currently working on concept papers for submission to Human Rights House Foundation.

Supporting School Girls, MVP

Millennium Villages Project (MVP) has introduced a new reproductive health project for adolescent girls

PARTICIPATE IN THE NETWORK'S EXCHANGE PROGRAM

In line with this issue's theme of learning beyond our borders, the Network is offering a new exchange opportunity to Network members. We are encouraging members to cross their national borders and reach out to other members within our Network in the Horn, East and Southern Africa for learning and exchange.

This exciting opportunity will enable members to share their work with others, learn from innovative GBV programming outside our own countries, connect with other activists, and reflect on how to enhance our own GBV programs.

Is there an organization that you have interacted with, feel inspired by, or read about that you would like to learn more from? Would you like to connect more with other members within the Network and share your own experiences with another organization?

If the answer is yes, you are welcome to apply for an opportunity to participate in an exchange visit. Interested applicants should visit the Network website (www.preventgbvafrica.org), download the application forms from the home page, complete and send the forms back to info@preventgbvafrica.org by 20th September 2008

Exchange visits will include roundtrip airfare, accommodation and expenses for at least two network members to visit another member organization of their choice for up to four days. Selection of successful applicants will be carried out in collaboration with the Network's Leadership Committee based on pre-established criteria (see website for more details).

Member organizations that host these exchanges will be voluntarily selected by applicants who admire their work and are eager to interact

and learn from them. The Network Office will work with selected applicants to plan an enriching and full program during their visit, which may include community field visits, discussions, presentations and other visits to organizations working on GBV in the same town or city.

Members will also use one day of the exchange program to reach out to different Network members within the same town or city through a half-day meeting, sharing their GBV programs, experiences, challenges and reflecting on lessons to enhance prevention programming in the region.

After the visit, participants will be required to document their experiences which will be shared with the rest of the Network members to further foster learning beyond our borders. The opportunity is open to all network members - Apply now!

LINKING INNOVATIVE NETWORKS PREVENTING GBV ACROSS CONTINENTS

In June 2008 the GBV Prevention Network participated in an exchange with networks and community-based programmes for GBV in Nicaragua. Supported by PATH, Yassin Ally from Kivulini Women's Rights Organization, and Jean Kemitare from the Network's coordinating office at Raising Voices, linked up with Margarita Quintinila and Haryoli Souza of Intercambios, a Latin American network, to visit organizations in Nicaragua.

The exchange lasted five days and was packed with visits to both large and small networks and organizations in an effort to learn from their activism and approaches. At every organization or network visited, sessions were jointly facilitated and included presentations, discussions, group work, assessment of communication materials, and showing of films all about GBV prevention and networking. We also had fun dancing, playing lots of games and exploring new foods!

In the sessions, participants reflected on the similarities and differences of communities' perceptions and

in Sauri cluster, Yala division of Siaya District, Kenya. The training is accompanied by distribution of sanitary towels to all girls of reproductive age on a monthly basis. So far the project is reaching 2,370 girls every month from 31 primary schools in the project area.

GBV Tracking in IDP Camps, SOMWA

Somali Media Women Association (SOMWA) is a local NGO for women journalists based in Baidoa, Somalia. SOMWA has embarked on a program to record incidents of GBV especially in internally displaced people's camps, slums and agro-pastoralist communities to help survivors seek justice.

Land Rights and Domestic Violence Report, URDT

The Uganda Rural Development and Training Programme (URDT) has just concluded a study on domestic violence and land rights in Kibaale District,

experiences of GBV and drew lessons regarding prevention and response to GBV. Despite being continents apart, Intercambios and the GBV Prevention Network members recognized that women's lower status and imbalance of power between women and men was a similarity found in both contexts and lies at the root of violence against women. Although due to differences in socio-economic, and cultural contexts, approaches to GBV prevention and response are somewhat different, there were many similarities.

Uganda. They found that women remain in violent marriages to secure their access to land. They have also found that cohabitation, which is not a legally recognised union in Uganda, has led to increased property grabbing, land disputes and domestic violence. You can access the report on our website at www.preventgbvafrica.org

We Can Campaign and Civic Education, WAFNET

Women Action Forum for Networking (WAFNET) in Kenya has formed an alliance with KEFEADO and will be piloting the "We Can" Campaign in the two divisions of Kisumu and Nyando districts in Nyanza. Starting in August 2008, WAFNET will be part of the Civic Education phase two in Kenya called "URAIA" which is a Swahili word meaning citizenship. WAFNET's focus will be on violence against women, and sexual abuse of women and girls during the period of post election violence.

The Women against Violence Network (Red de Mujeres contra la Violencia), a national Network in Nicaragua, noted that having politicized agendas for networks was vital for creating vibrancy and sustainability of networks. This means to foster within members a shared belief about women, violence and human rights. They described how these shared beliefs build solidarity and cohesion within their Network – a key ingredient for their longevity at 16 years and still going strong! They also recognized the role of political changes in Nicaragua during the late seventies and eighties that contributed to social reorganization and thus vibrant social movements.

Much was learned from Intercambios, a regional network in Latin America as well. Intercambios brings together people and organizations in Latin America to strengthen GBV prevention and response in the region with a strategic focus on research, policy advocacy, strengthening health services and communication for social change.

Members discussed the role and impact of regional networks on the ground and debated the working modalities of such networks. Exchange visit participants are working on a short publication to share more about their experiences and how lessons learned in Latin America can further enrich our prevention work in the Horn, East and Southern Africa. Please look out for this in the coming months.

SIHA NETWORK: STRATEGIC INITIATIVE FOR WOMEN IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

The SIHA Network was founded in 1995 by a collection of women's organizations with the goal of strengthening their capacity to advocate for social change and gender equality in the Horn of Africa. The network brings together civil society organizations from Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia and Somaliland and works specifically on eliminating violence against women, promoting human rights, and enhancing women's political participation.

It is important for SIHA to use a networking approach to the promotion of women's rights because so many actors are involved in the socio-political and economic realities of women. By connecting as organizations throughout the Horn of Africa, they can have a larger impact in many aspects of women's lives in the region. For example, establishing women's community centers in IDP camps requires the support of social, legal, health, and economic organizations to provide women with all the services that are needed.

Networking has also allowed SIHA to strengthen their political voice and achieve greater influence in campaigning and lobbying governments. SIHA rejects the isolated approach to women's issues and engages organizations and individuals to promote gender equality by challenging the power relations system that puts women at risk of violence.

For more information contact A. Monim Elgak, Regional Program Coordinator info@sihanet.org or visit www.sihanet.org

MASVAW- MEN'S ACTION FOR STOPPING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

MASVAW is a campaign of male activists from several existing NGOs in the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal. These men have decided to bring about a change within themselves and in other males to remove gender injustice. It is a movement comprised of 175 individuals and 100 organizations who have committed to increase the visibility of violence against women and facilitate the process of challenging attitudes and beliefs surrounding the social and cultural acceptance of gender based violence.

As the campaign progressed, it became clear that MASVAW needed to help boys and men understand how they benefit from sharing power with girls and women. Helping them understand the value of balanced power relationships has been key to getting them to support the campaign in the long term.

The movement encourages men to examine their own beliefs that contribute to power imbalances and apply principles of equality in their daily lives and relationships. The path to gender equality has not been easy for the men involved and many face social stigma as a result of their involvement with MASVAW. However, the strength of the network allows members to find support among themselves and inspiration to continue the struggle to eliminate violence against women.

Looking ahead, MASVAW is seeking ways to connect its learning and work to the global movement on engaging men to stop violence against women. They are also looking to expand the campaign and collaborate with similar networks for a larger impact.

For more information contact Satish Kumar Singh at satish@chsj.org or visit www.chsj.org

(CREATING IMPACT THROUGH NETWORKING)

Networks are popping up all the time, most of us belong to several – but do we ever stop to question the what and why of networking? Do we ask ourselves: What a 'real' network is? What the role of members in creating a 'real' network is? These issues, among others, were reflected upon in December 2007 when the GBV Prevention Network Focal NGOs and Leadership Committee met to plan and strategize the Network's direction for 2008. While reflecting on these questions many more questions come to mind: What is a network? Why should we be part of a network? What is our role in the networks we are part of? What makes a good network?

Networking is one of the ways we can reach out across our organizational and geographical borders to learn from different approaches to GBV prevention programming. We can network with individuals or with organizations and institutions. Over the past two decades networking has become an increasingly important part of activism and movement building.

Networks have been defined as structures that link organizations who share a common interest on a specific issue or a general set of values (Perkin and Court, 2005). However, networks are not only restricted to structure, they may also be a group of individuals or organizations that voluntarily exchange information or undertake joint activities to achieve a particular goal (Starkey, 1992). Networks may have regular physical face-to-face interaction of members or they may be virtual networks where the internet and other ICT tools are used for interaction and sharing.

TYPES OF NETWORKS

Various network types are in existence depending on the way members relate to each other; each has advantages and disadvantages and what might be appropriate for one network may not work for another, depending on their aims and vision. Paul Starkey in his book *Networking for Development* identifies various network models as illustrated here.

Model 1 represents organizations working in isolation without any networking; in model two information dissemination is done by the secretariat with no communication back from the members. Model three represents a reciprocal relationship where members receive information from the secretariat but also send information to the secretariat. In model four, the secretariat facilitates member's joint activities and interaction with each other, while model five represents a highly decentralized structure with thematic groupings sharing information with each other and partners. Model six represents a structure where members share and interact with each other without a central coordinating body.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD NETWORK?

The benefit that members derive from belonging to a particular network predetermines if that network is 'good'. Christine Butegwa of Akina Mama wa Afrika explains that "A good network is one that adds value to your professional and personal life. Professionally, you may gain knowledge and skills, conduct advocacy and pull resources together. On a personal level, you should be able to build social support networks."

There are common features that successful networks share. It is important for networks to have a set of non-negotiable values and principles that bind members together and will guide all other network processes (Just Associates, 2005). Networks bring a diverse range of individuals and people together for a common purpose, this contributes to its strength. In addition, a shared belief system and vision brings coherence and meaning to a network.

Networks should have clear objectives that a cross-section of members subscribe to; these may be periodically revised depending on their relevance and impact. It is important to recognize that networks are dynamic and therefore, it is important for members to periodically reflect on their purpose in order to re-strategize on their general vision (Starkey 1992).

Due to the high demand on time and other resources, it is necessary to have individuals or organizations devote time to coordination and management of the network's activities and communication. The secretariat or coordinating office is the body that regularly interacts with network members to internalize their changing ideas and realities (Starkey 1992). Members should consider whether the secretariat will play a leadership role or only service the members (Just Associates 2005).

In order to facilitate continuous sharing and learning, the network membership should have linkages with other organizations, institutions and networks. Emphasis should be on linkages within the network to facilitate sharing, and learning to avoid duplication.

Growth and sustainability of a network depends on the member's willingness and enthusiasm to voluntarily share, interact and work towards the network's objectives. This enthusiasm may be nurtured by ensuring that member's views and experiences are considered and represented in the networks strategies and activities (Starkey 1992). Ideally 'good networks' are those that are able to balance concrete values with flexible objectives, network coordination and management with decentralized participation and regular monitoring.

While summarizing a Just Associates Session in the 2005 AWID Forum, Lisa VeneKlasen pointed out that, "groups are strongest and richest when members are diverse and recognize – even celebrate – differences...we need to find spaces to negotiate opposing political perspectives and identify the minimum standards or values that bind us...only then can we have arguments and agree to disagree on some issues."

Johanna Kehler of AIDS Legal Network concludes that "A good network is one where there is participation, ownership, diversity and active member organizations that do not have to be prompted by the secretariat."

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF NETWORKING

The benefits of networking for civil society organizations according to Paul Starkey (1992) may be summarized as follows:

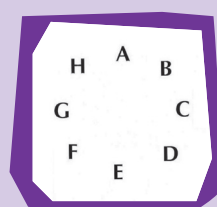
- Exchange of information, skills, knowledge, experiences and materials
- Less duplication of activities
- Linking a diverse range of people to share
- Development of a critical mass for advocacy
- Solidarity and support for people addressing similar issues

We should note that the benefits also contribute to some of the hardships faced while networking. Paul Starkey and the Just Associates session in the 2005 AWID Forum outline network challenges as:

- The diversity of membership can bring about group dynamics and power games leading to domination of some voices/members over others.

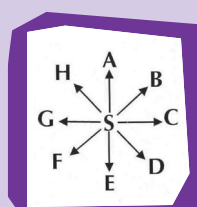
ILLUSTRATIONS OF NETWORK TYPES

Model 1



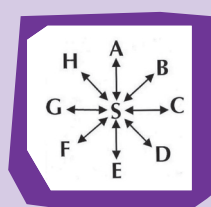
No networking

Model 2



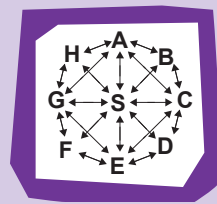
Secretariat to members

Model 3



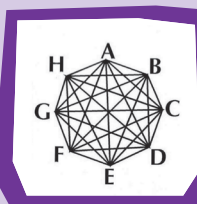
Members and secretariat vice versa

Model 4



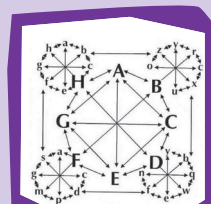
Members interacting with secretariat and each other

Model 5



Networks with networks

Model 6



Members to each other

NATIONAL NETWORK TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE - USA

What began in 1990 as a coalition to inform public policy related to domestic violence has become an organization that serves as a leading voice for domestic violence issues in the USA. The National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) has a variety of projects that address the causes and consequences of domestic violence through cross-sector collaborations at the state and national level.

NNEDV has found that collaborating with larger organizations provides an opportunity for increased funding and social and political influence. NNEDV

helps strengthen the work of other domestic violence coalitions in the country by assessing program needs and developing appropriate training and technical assistance plans. By sharing their expertise, experience, and resources with other domestic violence organizations, they improve the capacity of sister organizations to prevent and respond to domestic violence.

A significant aspect of NNEDV's work addresses domestic violence public policy issues that affect the work of many GBV organizations. For example, the

Family Violence Prevention and Services Acts support the crisis lines, shelters, and counseling services provided by local domestic violence organizations. The work of NNEDV ensures that the act provides the resources and support structures to allow these organizations to function. Networking is necessary for NNEDV to achieve its objectives because they rely on the experiences and knowledge of local organizations to inform their public policy work. For more information contact Cindy Southworth at cs@nnedv.org or visit www.nnedv.org



ty 2008

INTERCAMBIOS ALLIANCE – LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The Intercambios Alliance brings together people and organizations working throughout Latin America and the Caribbean to respond to GBV using a public health and human rights-based approach. The mission of these collaborating NGOs, agencies, and governments is to improve health sector capacities to respond to GBV. By increasing knowledge of causes, prevalence, and effective interventions of VAW and advocating for improved public policies in the region, the network provides an excellent example of how diverse organizations can unite around a common cause.

The Alliance grew out of the experiences of NGOs working on GBV and health having realized that provision of services was insufficient in creating lasting social change. By combining efforts, the organizations were able to strengthen their health service capacities, publicize best practices, and create new tools.

Forming an alliance has been especially helpful in achieving goals of public policy advocacy. With the resources and capacities of different organizations throughout Latin America, Intercambios has proposed several activities to better enforce the current policies related to violence prevention and ensure that new policies benefit survivors rather than confound their situation due to inadequate or inappropriate implementation.

The Intercambios Alliance attributes its success in working as a network to patience, regular meetings with members, accountability for realizing plans, and communicating with members through short, strategic messages. By utilizing these effective networking strategies, Intercambios has strengthened the Latin American social movement to prevent and eliminate gender based violence. For more information contact the Coordinator, Margarita Quintanilla at mquintanilla@path.org or visit www.alianzintercambios.org

THE WAVE NETWORK – EUROPE

The WAVE Network, Women Against Violence Europe, was established in 1995 to act as an information and service office for members and anyone else seeking resources about domestic violence and violence against women. WAVE is the only European network focusing solely on the elimination of domestic violence.

With 78 member organizations in 43 European countries, WAVE works hard to keep the network strong by maintaining contact with all member organizations. Each country has one or more Focal Point organizations that are responsible for the dissemination and collection of information. The WAVE office provides the Focal Points with relevant information which is then disseminated to members throughout the country and the Focal Points report to the WAVE office about current developments in their respective countries.

The WAVE database is an important source of networking with its service information for 4000 women's support organizations and institutions. The database is especially designed for women affected by domestic violence, but it has also become a valuable resource for practitioners, researchers, and policy makers throughout the region.

WAVE achieves its objective of improving the capacity of member organizations through training workshops, written handbooks, manuals, and toolkits to improve the quality standards in service delivery. The network also helps strengthen the organizational and lobbying capacity of women's organizations, allows the analysis and dissemination of information on European trends in violence against women, and supports the institutional development of the sector as a whole. For more information contact: Alina Zachar at office@wave-network.org or visit www.wave-network.org

- Diversity of cultures and ways of life for networks that work across continents
- Identity issues where the secretariat may be seen as an NGO and even compete with members for funding to become direct implementers. It may also be difficult to decide if the network should take leadership and initiate activities or just serve the members
- High overhead costs e.g. high phone and internet costs that are required for effective coordination
- M&E is more difficult for networks as it is difficult to quantify the value of the network to its members

These challenges can be creatively managed to bring out the advantages of networking. Christine Butegwa adds that "we should use diversity to our advantage because it is both the hardest and most rewarding component of networking. The more beneficial and successful networks strive to be inclusive and ensure participation."

WHAT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY?

Networks are essential for advocacy work and social change; because networks offer vital linkages, alliances and communication which helps to tap the power of numbers to advance members voices and agendas. Yet how much are we involved in our networks? Do we proactively reach out to know what is happening within them? Do we contribute ideas to shape and strengthen the networks? Are we open to learning and sharing? Do we devote our time and effort to the networks we belong to? Do we know the values and objectives of our networks? Are the objectives and values of the networks to which we subscribe matched to our own personal and/or organizational values and objectives?

As GBV prevention activists and practitioners we may need to be more creative in working together across organizational and geographical borders to prevent GBV in our communities. Reaching out to individuals and organizations outside our boundaries helps us to, share information, successes, and challenges. This helps us to design and implement stronger GBV prevention programs for our organizations, and more generally for the region.

What is each one of us going to do for increased activism in the GBV Prevention Network? There are many ways to get involved and be active members. If one of the key aims of the Network is to foster increased activism in the regions on GBV prevention, we each must ask ourselves and our organizations how we are using our voices, skills and energy to contribute to a strong and vibrant GBV prevention movement in our region.

LOOKING FORWAYS OF GETTING MORE INVOLVED IN THE GBV PREVENTION NETWORK? TRY A FEW OF THESE:

- Regularly update the Network Office with your news and events so other members can become aware of them.
- Suggest a theme or offer to write a newsletter article to share your ideas and experiences.
- Send your publications (documented experiences of GBV program implementation, promising program approaches, updates of program implementation, evaluation reports, research reports, training manuals, communication materials, etc) to be shared with other members via the website at www.preventgbv africa.org
- Be active members or take up a leadership position of one of the Network Thematic Working Groups.
- Get actively involved in the Network's campaigns including the annual 16 Days of Activism Campaign.
- Contribute your perspectives and ideas for making the GBV Prevention Network stronger – get involved in strategizing and shaping the Network.
- Publicize the GBV Prevention Network within other networks and associations you belong to.
- Be an ambassador for the GBV Prevention Network at meetings and forums, talk about the Network, why and how to get involved.
- Become a resource person for Speakers Events.
- Organize and connect with other Network members in your area or country.
- Participate in Network events like trainings and meetings.
- Suggest other ways you and others can get involved, the possibilities are endless!

We look forward to further strengthening and growing the GBV Prevention Network – together!

16 Days of Activism 2008: "Our Strength is the Solution: Communities Can Prevent Sexual Violence"

The GBV Prevention Network is getting ready for another dynamic campaign around the 16 Days of Activism 2008, an initiative started by the Center for Women's Global Leadership. Every year from 25th November to 10th December the international violence against women campaign involves organizations, institutions and individuals around the world.

In the Horn, East and Southern Africa, the GBV Prevention Network coordinates a regional campaign involving 25 member organizations. You can get involved! We are busy preparing Action and Advocacy Kits which will be available to the 25 selected member organizations.



This year, the regional theme is "Our Strength is the Solution: Communities can Prevent Sexual Violence." Each of the collaborating organizations will receive an Action and Advocacy Kit that includes over 200 full color posters, 2000 purple ribbons and pledge cards, a press release, community organizing seminar guide, and quick chat ideas to facilitate dialogues with the community.

In addition, with the Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), the GBV Prevention Network will conduct a global SMS campaign during this period. Participating individuals will send and receive text messages with information, suggested actions, activism and updates of the regional campaign as it unfolds.

If you would like to participate in the regional SMS campaign please send your name, mobile number and country code to Jean at info@preventgbvafrica.org

If your organization is interested in collaborating with the Network during the campaign period and receiving the Action and Advocacy Kit, please visit the Network website at www.preventgbvafrica.org, download the form and send it to info@preventgbvafrica.org. The deadline for receiving applications is 20th August 2008.

RECENT ADDITIONS TO WWW.PREVENTGBVAFRICA.ORG

A teenager's guide to sexuality and reproductive health questions:

Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) has published a quick source of knowledge for the sexuality needs of adolescents and the youth. The

SOLIDARITY, INSPIRATION, ACTION: REFLECTIONS ON THE VALUE OF NETWORKS

BY CHRISTINE BUTEGWA

As the saying goes, "no wo/man is an island on her or his own." Strength is derived from working together with other like-minded people or organizations rather than as individuals. Whether you are a civil society organization working on service delivery or advocacy, networking helps us carry out activities and reach goals together, which individually, we cannot do.

The women's movement has used networking as an innovative tool to bring about transformative change in society at local, regional and international level. The most momentous milestones of the African women's movements, and indeed the women's movements around the world, were a result of the strategic use of networks. For example, the Vienna Conference in 1993 where women's rights were officially recognized as human rights, or the 1995 Beijing Conference which produced the ground-breaking Beijing Platform for Action, or in Africa, the coming into force of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the African Women's Rights Protocol), which broke all records for African human rights instruments.

Networking enables the women's movement to share information and expertise with each other, while working for a common goal/objective. With the funding challenges many women's organizations now face due to the declining funding for women's rights, networking has proved an effective tool that has enabled organizations to pool together their given resources and achieve results.

National and regional coalitions across Africa working to prevent gender-based violence (GBV) and promote the enhancement of legislation against GBV such as sexual violence laws, have been successful due to the division of labor and sharing of resources among like-minded groups. An example is the division of resources, information and tasks between civil society, parliamentarians and government officials that has successfully led to the enactment of sexual offences laws in countries like Kenya.

Networking is a vital way of linking the global to local and vice versa. Advocacy initiatives at local and national level are strengthened by creating linkages with international movements or coalitions. In the same way, international advocacy is strengthened by having its grounding in national realities.

Many effective regional networks are multi-stakeholder networks that provide a platform for synergy to be developed between CSOs, parliamentarians and government institutions. For example, the solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) is a continental coalition working for universal ratification, domestication and popularization of the African Women's Rights Protocol.



SOAWR has played a direct role in getting 24 African countries to ratify the protocol. This has been due in part to the networks SOAWR has created with other stakeholders in governments and parliaments, including the African Union Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) and the Pan-African Parliament.

Having said that, there is continued need for autonomous and safe spaces for women to network among themselves because that is how we re-charge, re-energize and re-invent the women's movement. Such as the kind of spaces provided for the Association for Women in Development (AWID) Forum, Feminist Dialogues, African Feminist Forum, and the African Women's Leadership Institute of Akina Mama wa Afrika. This is where we get the inspiration, and the feminist grounding to go out energized to make radical changes in other mixed networks.

Much progress has been made in GBV prevention but much more needs to be done to tell the communities, the nation and the world that enough is enough! Women will no longer accept this violation of their bodies and it is time for governments to step up their commitments! The noise should start from the grassroots, to the national level and international level. That is where networks that provide the local to global link will make a big difference in getting GBV to be acted upon and prevented.

The international attention brought on the rape and sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Dafur in Sudan are because of civil society networks that have linked up across the world and called for action. There is therefore need for existing GBV coalitions and networks to partner with lawyers and human rights movements to push for justice for GBV survivors. Such use of networks will move from GBV response to justice and accountability for GBV survivors and consequently to future prevention.

Similarly the GBV Prevention Network can include other stakeholders in the fight against GBV e.g., lawyers, media, human rights organizations, parliamentarians, donors, government officials, etc. It could play its role in linking local and national initiatives to what is happening at regional and international level, and at the same time infuse regional advocacy with experience gained at national level. The Network could continue exploring ways to serve as a platform for experience sharing and information sharing in the region because this is the added value that it brings to members.

Christine Butegwa is the Regional Coordinator, Africa Programmes, Akina Mama wa Afrika. Contact her at: christine@amwa-ea.org

End Notes

1. Kwesiga, J.B. (June 2008) 'Networks and Networking: Issues at Hand, Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Association (DENIVA), Kampala, Uganda.
2. Just Associates. (2005). Your Net My Work: Pitfalls and Lessons Learned from Coalitions, Alliances and Networks at Regional, National and International Levels. Just Associates Session at the 2005 AWID Forum, From Just Associates Website: <http://www.justassociates.org/articles.htm>
3. Perkin, E. & Court, J. (2005). Networks and policy processes in international development: A literature review. Overseas Development Institute,

Network News

GBV Prevention Network Satellite Meeting at AWID

Together with our Focal NGO in South Africa, Sonke Gender Justice Network, we are organizing a satellite meeting for Network members who will attend the AWID International Forum on Women's Rights and Development in November in Cape Town, South Africa. The meeting, on 18th and 19th November will allow members to reflect and strategize on strengthening the GBV prevention movement in the region and propose concrete steps for the Network for 2009 and 2010. If you are interested in attending the Network Satellite Meeting write to Jean at info@preventgbvafrica.org.

Developing Effective Communication Materials Workshop – Training Opportunity!

The Communication Materials Thematic Working Group is organizing a capacity building training for members in the development of communication materials for GBV prevention. Participants from this Working Group will have first priority for participation in the training it will be held the first week of October 2008. See the website (www.preventgbvafrica.org) for more details.

Website Redesign

In response to member calls, we are undertaking a major redesign of the Network website. The new website will be more simple to navigate, have more opportunities to engage each other, to highlight your work and to feature more information of relevance to the Network. We are still accepting new materials for the site, please send to info@preventgbvafrica.org. Watch out for the new website which will be launched during the 16 Days of Activism.

Regional Consultation on Sexual and Gender Based Violence

The Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD) and the GBV Prevention Network organized a two day meeting to discuss issues of compensation and protection for sexual and GBV survivors in Uganda. The goal of the consultative meeting was to build up a CSO position for the Pan African Conference on SGBV which took place in Nairobi, Kenya from July 21st-23rd. GBV Prevention Network member organizations participated from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

Civil Society Partnerships Programme. Working Paper 252. Retrieved July 21, 2008. Website <http://www.odi.org.uk/cssp>

4. Starkey, P. (1992). Networking for sustainable agriculture: Lessons from animal traction development. GK58. Retrieved July 21, 2008, from Animal Traction Development Website: <http://www.animaltraction.com/StarkeyPapers/Starkey-IIED-Gatekeeper-96.pdf>

The GBV Prevention Network aims to: provide member organizations with relevant information about and access to resources on violence prevention; build solidarity between organizations working on violence; strengthen capacity of members on critical issues and methodologies; and, advocate for increased interest and investment for preventing gender-based violence in the regions. The network is currently coordinated by Raising Voices and supported by HIVOS and PATH.



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