



PERSPECTIVES ON PREVENTION

ISSUE NO. 10, APRIL 2009

THIS ISSUE'S THEME

MOVEMENT BUILDING AROUND GBV PREVENTION:

LOOKING WITHIN MOVEMENTS WORK TO TRANSFORM SOCIETIES. MOVEMENT BUILDING MEANS MOVING AWAY FROM THINKING JUST ABOUT SPECIFIC GBV PREVENTION PROJECTS TOWARD LONGER TERM SOCIAL CHANGE WITH A WIDE ACTIVIST BASE.

This issue discusses building a GBV prevention movement in the region. It presents different perspectives from renowned activists and practitioners around feminist movement building and presents practical processes for organizations to start discussion and self reflection among staff about building a violence against women prevention movement.

NEXT ISSUE'S THEME

MOVEMENT BUILDING AROUND GBV PREVENTION: STRUCTURES FOR AN EFFECTIVE MOVEMENT

The next issue will continue the discussion of movement building, focusing on strengthening our analysis of GBV prevention work and the feminist values within our organizations. The issue will examine the differences between centralized power systems and alternate leadership and power systems. In addition, processes will be suggested for organizations interested in strengthening and democratizing their power and leadership structures. Interested in contributing an article or perspective? Contact us at info@preventgbvafrica.org.

TAKE ACTION!

GET MOVING! BUILDING A GENDER BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION MOVEMENT IN THE HORN, EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Is there a movement to prevent GBV in the Horn, East and Southern Africa? What would a GBV prevention movement look like in the region? In November 2008, thirty Network members met in Cape Town after the AWID 'The Power of Movements' Forum to discuss those questions. Participants agreed that, to build a real movement for women's equality in the Horn, East and Southern Africa, we need to bring together our existing yet often isolated efforts into a strong, activist GBV prevention movement. This meeting, and our own reflections at the Network office inspired a new initiative: **Get Moving!** Building a GBV Prevention Movement. Throughout 2009, the Network will focus on movement building, provide practical materials for individuals and organizations to reflect, grow and connect with the aim of strengthening our GBV prevention movement in the region.

The **Get Moving!** Process explores:

WHO ARE WE?

What does our membership look like? Are we an inclusive movement? Are men part of the movement? Are we reaching out to women of all economic backgrounds and ages? Do we partner with other movements e.g. people living with HIV&AIDS, LGBTI?

DO WE HAVE A COLLECTIVE VISION?

Current work on violence is often not proactive, but responds to specific instances of abuse, or is based on individual activist goals. Is this sufficient? Will it create the wide-scale social change necessary for meaningful GBV prevention? How can we collectively define the broader political goal we all are trying to achieve, and how can we build on our strengths to contribute collectively toward that goal?

HOW CAN WE PRACTICALLY GROW A MOVEMENT?

How can we go beyond the usual boundaries and create new collective actions, build solidarity with each other and the communities

in which we are trying to create change? What would this look like in reality?

NEXT STEPS

Members participating in the Cape Town meeting clearly called for and committed to working toward building a GBV prevention movement in the region. Yet how do we practically begin this work? The GBV Prevention Network is responding to this challenge with a year long theme: **Get Moving!** Building a GBV Prevention Movement. The Network commits to starting, supporting, suggesting and inspiring processes for members interested in building a GBV prevention movement. This requires commitment, openness, courage and time, yet is essential if we are to take GBV prevention to a new level in the region.

The themes of this year's newsletters will focus on aspects of movement building. In the first issue, we will work to foster self-reflection at individual and organizational levels about where we each fit within the movement and the power dynamics in our own lives. In the second issue, we will focus on strengthening our analysis of GBV prevention work and the feminist values within our organizations. In the last issue, we will focus on reaching out to others to raise consciousness about use and misuse of power and its relationship to GBV.



In 9 campaign march against violence against women during AWID Forum, 15th November, 2008

Each issue will be accompanied by a '**Get Moving!** Kit' Each Kit will provide tools you and your organization can use for building a GBV prevention movement. The Kits will include seminar guides for organizations to conduct staff sessions, suggested readings, and other exciting games and exercises. The year-long process outlined in the **Get Moving!** Kits is designed so that committed organizations and individuals can start the process of transforming their lives and their work—together build something bigger than any of our organizations can achieve alone. We hope this process will provide a foundation for building a GBV prevention movement in the region.

In addition, the Network's Coordinating Office is committed to providing extra support to organizations that are keenly interested in following through with this process. While the **Get Moving!** Kits are available for all member organizations, the Network is inviting those organizations who would like additional support and collaboration in this process to be in touch with us. We will work closely with approximately 10 member organizations throughout this year. The engagement will include:

- a face to face meeting among the 10 organizations to build peer support, solidarity and further strategize on strengthening the GBV prevention movement;
- a separate, private space on the Network website for these 10 organizations to share and support each other and,
- additional tools and opportunities for movement building.

If your organization is interested in being a part of building a GBV prevention movement please write to info@preventgbvafrica.org for more information and support.

MEMBER NEWS!

WANT TO KNOW WHAT OUR COLLEAGUES IN THE REGION ARE DOING? WHICH NEW PROGRAMS AND PUBLICATIONS ARE HOT OFF THE PRESS? WHICH NEW ENERGIZED SISTERS AND BROTHERS HAVE JOINED THE GBV PREVENTION EFFORT? AND WHAT'S GOING ON NEW WITH OUR MEMBERSHIP? READ THIS SECTION AND CATCH UP WITH THE CURRENT NEWS!

A DV BY-LAW IN KAMPALA, CENTER FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION (CEDOVIP)

CEDOVIP implemented a program in Kawempe Division, Kampala District, Uganda, mobilizing communities to prevent domestic violence. The program's activities invoked community activism that culminated into the City Council endorsing the Kawempe Division By-Law on domestic violence. This by-law is the first of its kind in Uganda and observes that 'every person shall observe the right to live in a household that is free from domestic violence and shall report or cause to be reported to the relevant Local Council or Person of Authority any person or group of persons whom s/he sees, is aware of or omitting to do an act that in his/her view leads or led to domestic violence'. The by-law is very important for the promotion and protection of women's rights. Congratulations to Kawempe and CEDOVIP!

STRATEGIC PLANNING AT FRIENDLY HAVEN NAMIBIA

At the end of 2008, Friendly Haven reflected and drew plans on how to become a more sustainable organization. The agreed plans include: setting up a satellite office for counseling, advocacy and awareness plans on gender based violence, developing a 'buddy' system for women who have been involved in the legal process to help other women, starting income generating activities for the shelter, setting up a resource center and initiating a supportive network of shelters in Namibia to expand awareness of GBV and engage in collective advocacy against it. All the best Friendly Haven.

SEXUAL HEALTH IN KISUMU, KENYA FEMALE ADVISORY ORGANIZATION (KEFEADO)

In partnership with Center of Adolescents, Africa Woman, Child Features, and Young Women Leadership Institute, KEFEADO conducted a baseline survey on sexual health and reproductive rights for Western Kenya Region. In addition KEFEADO is moving to

phase two of the Gender Development Project this project involves working with high schools to build girls and boys self esteem, career guidance and HIV&AIDS awareness.

UGANDA WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

On the 5th of March members of the Uganda Women's Movement participated in a march with women, men and young people of all walks of life. They marched to the parliamentary building where they engaged with the speaker of parliament on the delay of pending gender bills including the domestic violence bill, the domestic relations bill and the sexual offences bill. In addition they lit a candle that will keep burning until the pending gender bills are presented in parliament and held a vigil to mourn the women that have died in the past year as a result of domestic violence. Various women's rights organizations spear headed this effort including but not limited to: UWONET, FIDA, CEDOVIP, Akina Mama wa Afrika, ACFODE, FOWODE, members of the Uganda Feminist Forum and Raising Voices.



HOW CAN WE GROUND OUR GBV PREVENTION WORK IN FEMINIST PRINCIPLES?

ANNE GATHUMBI, PROGRAMME OFFICER, LAW AND HEALTH INITIATIVE, OPEN SOCIETY INITIATIVE FOR EAST AFRICA

GBV is perpetuated and sustained by patriarchal systems and structures that legitimize male dominance—the result of which is an imbalance in power relations between men and women. Relationships between men and women become oppressive, exploitative and place women in positions of subordination. Addressing GBV therefore requires understanding the forces that sustain patriarchy in order to analyze them and strategize around dismantling them. This is where an appreciation of feminist principles becomes crucial as they offer ideological clarity to feminist activists and feminist organizations in defining what the problem is.

While attempts have been made at defining GBV as a personal or private issue, understanding the feminist framework enables us to define it as a political issue that requires political solutions. In defining the personal as political and the private as public we are able to engage in collective as well as individual organizing and build movements to prevent gender based violence. By so doing, we are able to frame GBV as a violation of rights and demand accountability and an end to those violations. Using the rights framework enables us to appreciate the universality and indivisibility of rights and as a result we are able to affirm that everyone is equal before the law and has a right to be free from all forms of violence.



HOW CAN WE BUILD BROAD-BASED SUPPORT FOR A GBV PREVENTION MOVEMENT?

SHANAAZ MATHEWS, SENIOR RESEARCHER, GENDER & HEALTH RESEARCH UNIT, MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL OF SA

Building support for a GBV movement using intersectionality as its basis suggests that we have to start rethinking how we approach movement-building. Intersectionality as a way of thinking proposes that as women we are not a homogenous group and factors such as race, age, religion, socio-economic class etc all combine to contribute to our experiences. Integrating intersectionality in movement building proposes that we have to adopt a method that values a “bottom-up” approach. This implies that we need to include the voices of the women—not just organizations who represent them—and all initiatives should be informed by the experiences and views of women from communities. We therefore have the difficult challenge of changing the way we conceptualize movement building. As a priority, we should be promoting the notion that diverse groups of women on the ground inform issues and agenda’s raised at regional level in order to build a strong movement. It is therefore imperative that the marginalized groups of women are not only included in our strategies to effect change but that they are included as partners in building a strong movement.

MOVEMENT BUILDING FOR GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

¹ As GBV prevention activists, the foundation of our work is transforming power in society particularly between women and men. Every day, we challenge attitudes and practices that place one group of people above another. We analyze the way resources are controlled and distributed. We analyze systems of unequal power relations in our families, our neighborhoods and our communities. We challenge issues that are deeply embedded within our societies, and become so engrained—the social change process is slow. Sometimes we even feel isolated in activism—like we are the only ones out there who see what we see. So, the question: What will it take to make our individual and organizational work into a movement to prevent GBV in the region?

WHAT IS A GBV PREVENTION MOVEMENT?

Broadly, movements have been defined as ‘an organized set of constituents pursuing a common political agenda of change through collective action.’ A political agenda requires a political analysis—this means recognizing the linkages between what happens in our daily lives to larger power structures. For example, a political analysis of GBV “recognizes violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men...and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men.”³

Movements then consist of large informal or formal groups of people and/or organizations that question and resist injustice in society and seek to undo set social structures, creating social transformation towards equality. A GBV prevention movement would therefore be an organized set of individuals and organizations working to challenge and transform power relations between men and women in society, ultimately preventing GBV. A GBV prevention movement would be based on feminist values and ideologies of gender equality, social and economic equality, human rights based tolerance, inclusion, peace and non-violence.⁴



Community match against violence in Lira District, Uganda.

A GBV prevention movement would—like most movements—be characterized by:

- a clear political agenda (based on an analysis of power and wealth distribution, oppression, and injustice among groups),
- a common analysis of violence
- and a sharing of common vision and goals.

In other words, a GBV prevention movement would require a shared analysis of the power imbalance between women and men as the root cause of the problem. Movements are usually composed of the individuals or groups who stand to benefit more from change; the GBV prevention movement would therefore include mainly women, but partner with all who share the same value system and vision—male, female, young or old—to create momentum for change.

- Movements have structure. Often, they use networks and organizations to push their goals. What structure will the GBV prevention movement need?
- Movements have leaders. Usually, leadership develops among the membership. Which members will become leaders in the GBV prevention movement?
- Movements organize collective, strategic activities over the long term. They work together to protest, lobby and advocate for change. How will we organize collective action?

WHY DO WE NEED A GBV PREVENTION MOVEMENT?

Quite simply, movements make things move. Movements create social change in a way that is greater than the sum of their parts. One activist

or organization could not have done this in South Africa—it took a movement. The power imbalance between men and women that causes GBV is entrenched in our society. A movement to change things requires diverse actors who recognize the injustice of violence against women at public or professional level, community level – within our own families and peers.

HOW DO WE BUILD A GBV PREVENTION MOVEMENT?

Raise critical awareness. An effective GBV prevention movement involves massive critical consciousness-raising in the region – within our communities, where we work with our communities beyond informal networks to spark personal thinking and action. Of the state, talk about the process in which

to behave in a way that is different to their society. Specifically, to explore how we are constrained by particular beliefs, values and attitudes on class, sex, ethnicity, race and those belief systems cause violence in society, and pave the way for understanding can then come from members to take action.

Build a mass base. We need to come together and build a foundation of organizations committed to violence-free communities. We need support and be part of a movement that alone cannot make a movement. We require diverse membership. We need of personalization from its members willing to speak out at high level. We not analyze our own person in our communities, the movement to create change. Grassroots like groups of market women

GLOSSARY

1. FEMINISM

Is the belief that women should have equal political, social, sexual, intellectual and economic rights to men.⁵

2. PATRIARCHY

A system of structures and institutions created to sustain and recreate male supremacy and female subordination.

3. MOVEMENT

A large informal or formal group of people and/or organizations focused on specific political or social issues, and working towards social change.

4. ACTIVISM

Intentional action to bring about social change.

5. POLITICIZATION

Politicization is a process individuals go through that brings them to ‘critical consciousness’ (achieving an in-depth understanding of the world). It involves individual reflection on all forms of domination including patriarchy. A political analysis involves recognizing that what happens in our personal lives is deeply influenced by larger power structures.

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have to see GBV prevention as their own issue and be passionate enough to drive change. Although it is not necessary to have very large numbers to be considered as a movement, it is necessary to be united, have a shared political agenda and take collective action.

Articulate a clear political agenda. We need to form a clear and common agenda, using bottom up processes for sustainability. This agenda should build from the consciousness raising discussions, personal reflections and critical analysis among our mass base. It should identify the root cause of violence, the power imbalance between women and men as an injustice and commit to struggle against this injustice in all forms.

Learn from action: We need to adapt to the context we are in, and change as it changes. Our strategies need to fit our contexts, and we need to re-analyze and discuss and learn from our successes and our challenges.

Create change at the formal and informal level:

We need to create change at policy and legislative levels as well as within our communities and the communities of other members. In addition to policy and legislative change, the movement should also create changes in attitudes and practices at the household and community levels regarding inequality and power relations between men and women.

Create shared models of leadership authority and decision making.

We need to live the alternative vision of power we are seeking. The GBV prevention movement should strive to build different forms of leadership and power structures from the patriarchal systems we are used to. We can share power, leadership, authority and decision making among movement members, and use bottom-up processes to set our agenda.

As the GBV Prevention Network, we owe it to our ourselves and ultimately to the girls and women living with violence to organize, mobilize, analyze and take action toward building a movement for the prevention of GBV in East and Southern Africa. Prevention of GBV requires nothing less than social transformation. It starts with us.



Community discussion on violence in Lira District

**QUITE SIMPLY, MOVEMENTS MAKE THINGS
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IT TOOK A MOVEMENT TO DO IT.**

**WONDERING WHERE TO START?
TRY THE **GET MOVING!** KIT
www.preventgbvafrica.org/getmoving**

6. CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

achieving an in-depth
understanding of the world
including the perception
and exposure of social and
political contradictions. It
also includes taking action
against the oppressive
elements in one's life that
are illuminated by that
understanding.

**WHY IS A MOVEMENT
NECESSARY TO TRULY
PREVENT GENDER
BASED VIOLENCE IN THE
REGION?**

**MZI NDUNA, LECTURER, DEPARTMENT
OF PSYCHOLOGY, SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, UNIVERSITY
OF THE WITWATERSRAND, SOUTH AFRICA**



**HOW IS BEING POLITICIZED
ESSENTIAL TO SUSTAIN
PERSONAL COMMITMENT
AND ACTION TO PREVENT
GBV?**



**NYARADZAI MUGARAGUMBO
GUMBONZVANDA,
SECRETARY GENERAL, YWCA**

Being politicized is essential for preventing violence because it starts with a personal commitment to joining and sustaining the struggle for life free of violence, a life where rights are enjoyed and a life where dignity is valued. Being politicized calls for strategic engagement in addressing the root causes of gender based violence, such issues as power distribution between men and women; economic empowerment, choice and options for women; patriarchy and how it defines masculinities from a position of domination.

Sustaining personal commitment also means taking practical actions of solidarity with those experiencing violence now and thus learning the approaches towards prevention. GBV prevention demands that we take personal and collective action to raise self awareness, deepen the knowledge around human rights, and call for re-socialization that affirms women's individuality, while calling for positive masculinities and male responsibility.

GBV prevention calls for understanding the intersectionality of violence with other issues such as HIV and AIDS, disability, class, livelihoods and age. It also calls for safe and inclusive spaces in which women and girls can access information especially around sexuality and rights, in full confidence. Politicizing prevention demands a constant engagement with the public institutions such as governments, local authorities and multi-lateral institutions to have comprehensive policies and laws that promote prevention; and with sufficient allocation of resources and political will and leadership that will ensure implementation. Lastly, personalizing commitment also means investing in community interventions which impact individuals at household levels.

**WHY IS IT ESSENTIAL
FOR US AS
INDIVIDUALS TO BE
POLITICIZED?**



**HOPE TURYASINGURA,
TECHNICAL ADVISOR, CENTER
FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
PREVENTION, UGANDA**

Being politicized means that one has become aware of power—socially, economically, and in other ways. It is essential for us as individuals to be politicized because the issues we are dealing with are political. One of the famous feminists in Uganda is always heard saying that “the personal is political”. Women's civil, political, socio-economic and cultural rights are not just individual matters or concerns but are political issues. This includes the right to safety, the right to choice, women's power in decision making, freedom of expression, and other issues. These are political issues, and for one to make a meaningful contribution, one must be political.

A politicized person objectively challenges the current status of things by asking questions as to why things are the way they are and what would happen if they were done differently. A politicized individual is empowered to confront forces that disagree with what society thinks is the norm; ‘contentious’ issues like homosexuality, abortion, prostitution etc. Personally, I know that it is because of my being politicized that I am able to challenge different sections of society; political, religious and cultural on issues like domestic violence, abortion, cohabitation and people's sexuality. I find myself doing this without fear or favor. An individual who is politicized can never have double standards because we are struggling against injustice.

A movement is necessary to form a united organized political shield in the fight against GBV. There is, still, a lack of adequate policies and laws that respond to GBV in the region. In countries where these are in place, such as South Africa, the implementation and monitoring of their effectiveness leaves much to be desired.

State driven and non-governmental prevention and intervention responses require funding. Concerted efforts of a movement are needed to back for adequate funding of these initiatives. A women's movement will advocate and lobby for support from other regional movements, represent the work of activists in the Southern African Development community (SADC), Economic Community of West African states (ECOWAS) and relevant New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) forums. Under the umbrella of a movement in the region, the patches of work that are going on in different corners will be supported and the spirit of the founders and staff of these organizations will be supported so that feminism as the basis of their work does not die. Without a strong movement that brings us together, we will continue to work in silos and make a snail's pace progress and very little impact.

NETWORK NEWS

FURTHERING CAPACITY FOR RESEARCH IN PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The Research and M&E Thematic Working Group of the GBV Prevention Network is pleased to announce a new initiative. In partnership with the International Center for Research on Women, in Washington, D.C., the group will embark on an initiative strengthening the capacity of member organizations to carry out research activities on GBV. The initiative will last for three years, and will provide financial resources and technical assistance to member organizations who would like to carry out some form of research that has practical relevance for the work of the organizations and to further advocacy.

RESEARCH AND M&E THEMATIC WORKING GROUP LEADER

We are glad to announce Dr. Nduku Kilonzo as the leader of the Research and M & E Thematic Working group of the GBV Prevention Network. Dr. Kilonzo is the Director of Liverpool VCT; Care & Treatment a Kenyan organization that provides technical assistance to the Government of Kenya and partners in strengthening responses to HIV prevention, care and treatment for HIV infected persons. Dr. Kilonzo is an accomplished practitioner and researcher and the group will benefit from her vast experience.

RECENT ADDITIONS TO WWW.PREVENTGBVAFRICA.ORG



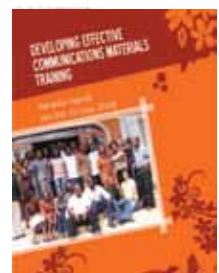
Our Strength is the Solution: 16 Days of Activism Regional 2008 Campaign: A report detailing the dynamic and exciting regional campaign successfully conducted by thirty Network member organizations.



Network's 2008 Exchange Program: A report compiling experiences and lessons from three Network members who visited three organizations of their choice in November and December.



Researching Violence against Women: A training manual for developing skills in conducting scientific research on violence against women.



Developing Effective Communication Materials Training, 2008, Raising Voices: A training workshop report providing skills for development of effective communication materials for the prevention of gender based violence.

CRITICAL INSIGHTS AND CONCERNS FOR BUILDING A VAW PREVENTION MOVEMENT IN EASTERN, SOUTHERN AND THE HORN OF AFRICA.

BY EVELYN LETIYO



Is it viable and relevant to invest in long term social change today? Do we have the time and energy it takes to work towards long term change with all the goals and activities that we already have in our organizations? Can there be a VAW prevention movement in the Eastern, Southern and the Horn of Africa? What would it take to build one? These are some questions I have been pondering about in my reflections about our work on VAW in this region.

It has been universally acclaimed that movements are powerful drivers of social change and there are numerous examples to validate this claim. Obama's victory in the US elections was a result of the change agenda pushed by the civil rights movement; South Africa's independence was forced among other things by the demands of the anti apartheid movement; in Latin America the indigenous movements greatly contributed to the increased participation of the indigenous communities in political spaces. As we think about these achievements it's important to recognize that the existence and success of movements has a direct relation with the clarity of their political agendas and analysis. In the case of the US, the civil rights movement had a clear analysis of how the injustice of the racial discrimination against African Americans was and how it manifested in all spheres of American life; political, academic, social, religious and otherwise. Their goal was also clear; to end this discrimination based on race.

The starting point for a prevention movement in this region should be a discourse to get a clear understanding and analysis of VAW, cause and how it can be prevented. This would not only help us define our ultimate goal as a movement but strategies of how we can collectively work towards it. The GBV Prevention Network can play a critical role in supporting a VAW prevention movement in the region. It could for example identify and creative strategies that can build and enhance our analysis of VAW and provide spaces to nurture this process. One way toward this could be strengthening knowledge and skills of members on a gender-based on feminist analysis and community organizing so that we begin to critically reflect on VAW, its cause and why its prevention involves organizing women and men to work together in groups to solve real problems in communities.

Some of the demands women's movements have made for equal power and control of resources have been answered through mainstreaming and affirmative action policies and programs. It is true that gender programs have partially addressed our concerns but we still have a long way to go before we can fold our hands and say women's rights and priorities are respected. Gains from affirmative action though may make movement building efforts seem unnecessary. Taking cognizance of the strides we have made while realistically looking at the work that still lies ahead will provide impetus for approaches that move beyond just numbers. The GBV Prevention Network can help us look beyond these approaches by providing room for critical reflections. By asking us to think about questions like: what will it take to truly change the power imbalance between women and men or how can we move beyond the typical activities to truly effect social change? We could then strategically refocus demands towards more long term and transformative results.

For organizations whose operations are guided by strategic plans that are based on short term programs, suggestions toward long term movement building may be a huge challenge and perhaps even a burden. Coupled with this is the fact that there are limited spaces for organizations to meet and think about progressive social change. There is also the tendency for staff within some organizations to see themselves as technicians not activists; often investing more time and energies on short term organizational activities as opposed movement mobilizing work. It is critical to reorient technical quick fix approaches so that staff of organizations can recognize the importance of meaningful social change and integrate it into their work. Facilitating the process by which activists evolve analysis from the personal to become political is important to create the confidence for us to demand rights and resources and question the prejudice and taboos that prevent women living free of violence. This is a journey we may need to walk in building a VAW prevention movement and the network can be our partner in the process.

Movements are affected by both internal and external dynamics like repressive regimes, conflicts, religious fundamentalism and now the global financial crunch. All these may mean closed spaces for organizing, freedom of expression and fundraising. With 260 members in 16 in African countries operating in different socio-political contexts there may be huge challenges in taking the movement building process across the region as block and a backlash of fragmentation if focus is put on only the relatively "safer" countries. These differences may also manifest at the organizational and individual levels where there are varying levels of knowledge, skills, commitment and even resources. If as individuals we are at varying levels of analysis, getting us on the same page might require engagement in different groups. Recognizing that we are all at different places in our journey of becoming politicized, the Network could provide opportunities and processes that respect this diversity but bring us all together to cross fertilize, grow and learn from each other. Such a process is resource intensive and will require commitment from both the members and the network to be successful.

The discussion on a VAW prevention movement in the region is one way of creating a wave of activism that tackles VAW from its root. It is a process that is worth our efforts considering the magnitude of VAW. It would draw focus on the primary cause of VAW and consolidate prevention efforts. In building a VAW prevention movement we will create a critical mass of people to question the unequal status between men and women in society and how it is a cause of suffering for more than 50 percent of our population. We however should be open to the challenge that lies ahead of us. A challenge that may involve confronting our belief systems, questioning and changing our organizations and developing new goals and strategies of working...whatever it takes, it's worth it!

For more information contact, evelyn@raisingvoices.org

END NOTES

¹ This article is based on a presentation made by Evelyn Letiyo, Senior Program Officer, Raising Voices at the Network's meeting in November 2008. It was adapted with permission from Srilatha Batiwala, Civil Society Research Fellow, Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations, Harvard University and Scholar Associate AWID and Srilatha's Book Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements. The Association for Women's Rights in Development, 2008 ²Srilatha Batiwala, Women's Empowerment in South Asia - Concepts and Practices, FAO/ASPBE, 1992 Srilatha Batiwala, Changing Their World: Concepts and Practices of Women's Movements, The Association for Women's Rights in Development, 2008 ³United Nations, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (DEVAW), United Nations General Assembly Resolution 48/104, 20 December 1993. ⁴Srilatha Batiwala, Building Feminist Movements - Concepts and Pathways (2008), Presentation made during the CREA institute at Entebbe, Uganda <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism> ⁵Bell, D., & Klein, R., Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed. London: Zed Books, 1996. ⁶http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_consciousness

Perspectives on Prevention is a newsletter for activists and practitioners committed to preventing gender-based violence in the Horn, East and Southern Africa. It is the newsletter of the GBV Prevention Network. 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 prevention in the regions. The network is currently coordinated by Raising Voices and supported by HIVOS.

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Raising
Voices

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