

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:

Making it happen in LA

Policy Summit: March 12, 2008



Soroptimist
International
of Los
Angeles

Leadership

The programmatic content and financial leadership for this effort derive from is a working partnership of Los Angeles area clubs of five international women's service organizations that are part of an international program for women called Project Five-0, (Soroptimist International, Zonta, Business and Professional Women International, American Association of University Women, International Council of Women) and the Southern California Chapter of UNIFEM.

Zonta
International

The partner group will invite business and business organizations, not for profit organizations and groups, government agencies, community groups, men's service organizations, and others to work as collaborators with us on the development of the content for the event and to ensure that the event attracts those who are accountable to the population of affected women and who have the authority to drive needed change in what is available and accessible to the affected population in the Los Angeles area. The partner group will work to establish the priorities for the way forward with the workshop participants.

Business and
Professional
Women,
International

All partners and collaborators will receive, and be asked to review, an electronic copy of the 2006 United Nations Secretary General's *In-depth study of all forms of violence against women*.

American
Association
of University
Women

Policy Summit Goal

Use the findings and recommendations of the 2006 United Nations Secretary General's Report on Violence against Women and the findings and recommendations of reports dealing with this problem in the Los Angeles area to identify opportunities for improvement in the resource deployment in place to prevent, detect, prosecute, repress and assist the victim survivors of violence against women In the Los Angeles area.

International
Council of
Women

Approach

In the first quarter of 2008, to mount a one day policy summit to:

- present the findings and recommendations of the 2006 United Nations Secretary General's *In-depth study of all forms of violence against women*;
- compare the global findings to the nature and extent of this problem in the greater Los Angeles area;
- identify the resources that are currently available, accessible and focused in the Los Angeles area to address violence against women;
- compare what is available, accessible and focused in the Los Angeles area to what is recommended in the United Nations report;
- compare the human rights framework suggested by the Secretary General to the framework in place in the Los Angeles Area;
- develop prioritized recommendations and commitments for action over the next nine to 12 months to address important limitations discovered (framework, policies, systems, programs, political, public or financial support) in those resources that are currently in place, accessible and focused to prevent, intervene into and prosecute this violence, deal with its consequences, and assist its victim survivors.

UNIFEM

If surplus funds are available from the event, we will organize project(s) to implement the priority improvements developed.

Fact Sheet

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Policy Summit Content and Format

Content: Content will include:

- Violence against women and its origins, causes, risk factors, and forms;
- personal health and social, public and private economic and behavioral consequences;
- knowledge base;
- sector responsibilities;
- promising practices;
- priorities for the way forward; and
- next step recommendations of the Secretary General will be compared to what is in place and accessible in the Los Angeles area in order that recommendations for local improvements in policy, systems and procedures can be developed, presented and pursued.

Format: Each registrant will be asked to provide an e-mail address where they can receive a copy of the 2006 United Nations Secretary General's *In-depth study of all forms of violence against women* and related documents.

Components will include:

- A morning plenary session will include a presentation of an overview of the UN report and a presentation on the area system(s) accountable to address violence against women in Los Angeles;
- Morning workshops will each examine an aspect, chosen from the UN report and the recommendations flowing from a survey of potential collaborators, of the violence against women phenomenon;
- Luncheon keynote addresses violence against women as a human rights issue, political will as a driver of change, and the involvement of men and women as individuals and in groups in changing the content of public values related to violence against women;
- Morning workshops will reconvene in the afternoon to compare what is available and accessible in this area to the findings and recommendations the United Nations report and from other sources, and to develop three recommendations for important local improvements.
- The penultimate session is an opportunity for each workshop to present, through a selected spokesperson, their single most important recommendation to a "listening panel" of elected officials and the leadership of the public and private entities with the authority to, or a commitment or interest in, intervening in the problem of violence against women. The material presented to the listening panel will constitute the major priorities for the way forward legacy project over the next nine to 12 months.
- The day will close with the opportunity for participants to commit to involvement in groups carrying out the priority way forward legacy project work over the next nine to 12 months.

Participants

Anticipated maximum size: 300

Anticipated Composition: Participants who can contribute to the knowledge base for this issue and develop prioritized recommendations for the improvement of the system to prevent, intervene, and prosecute these offences and to assist the survivors.

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The Problem: Violence against Women

Overview

Waste is an issue in private business, public business and in the management of assets at the macro economic level. Organized performance management frameworks enable organizations to assure the accomplishment of organizational strategy and to control and avoid effectiveness and efficiency losses attributable to waste. This goal requires a deliberate effort to develop the problem-solving skills of all workers involved in the production of value for the service or product consumer.

Efforts to end the perpetration of violence on women can be envisioned, in a human rights framework, as focused action against the waste of the talent, health, social potential, economic potential, human capital formation, and rational contributions of those women, who, if they survive the violence, are victimized, stigmatized and suppressed by that violence. This waste of talent, rationality, and human productivity is no less pernicious than the waste of resources intended to deliver performance in public and private entities and in local and national economies.

This waste has a cumulative effect, harming the economic productivity, social and educational status, health, and mental health of families over many generations. This violence not only begets violence but also drives violence enabling behavior that, going forward impoverishes families, their communities and set the conditions for violence to beget more violence. These enabling behaviors include public corruption, impunity, and the reinforcement of violence as an acceptable way to solve problems or resolve disputes.

2006 United Nations Report on all Forms of Violence against Women

This study and its report were completed in response to United Nations resolution 58/185. The report defined violence against women as gender-based violence, which impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms under international law or under human rights conventions. Gender-based violence is defined as violence directed against a woman because she is a woman, or violence that impacts a woman disproportionately including acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty.

This violence against women occurs in public and private, custodial and conflict, in workplace and educational, and in sport settings. That it occurs in so many settings suggests that there is a level of acceptance of this behavior that results in perpetrators feeling that they can act with impunity.

There was little media coverage of the release of this report.

Important Concepts from the 2006 UN Report

***There is compelling evidence that violence against women is severe and pervasive throughout the world.** A more focused and strategic approach is needed from all actors, including governments, the international community and civil society.

***Violence against women is a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights.** The scope and extent of violence against women are a reflection of the degree and persistence of the gender discrimination that women face.

***All of humanity would benefit from an end to this violence.** The continued prevalence of violence against women is testimony to the fact that we have yet to tackle it with the necessary political commitment, visibility and resources.

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***The roots of violence against women lie in historically unequal power relations between men and women and pervasive discrimination against women in both the public and private spheres.** Patriarchal disparities of power, discriminatory cultural norms and economic inequalities serve to deny women's human rights and perpetuate violence.

***Specific causal factors for violence include the use of violence to resolve conflicts, doctrines of privacy and State inaction.** Individual or family behavior patterns, including histories of abuse, have also been correlated with an increased risk of violence.

***Violence against women is found in a wide range of settings, and universally in cultures, regions, countries, and societies.** It is the forms of violence against women, physical, sexual, psychological and economic, that are shaped by victim and perpetrator factors such as ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, disability, nationality and religion.

***There is an urgent need to strengthen the knowledge base to inform policy and strategy development.** Information is needed on various forms of violence against different groups of women based on data that has been disaggregated according to factors such as age and ethnicity.

***States (governments) have a duty to prevent acts of violence against women; to investigate such acts when they occur and prosecute and punish perpetrators; and to provide redress and relief to the victims.** There is no excuse for government inaction on this matter.

***When the government fails to hold the perpetrators of violence accountable, they encourage further abuses, and give tacit permission for male violence against women as acceptable or normal.** The results of such impunity include denial of justice to the individual victims and survivors, perpetuation and reinforcement of negative behavior and inequalities that affect other women, girls and families, public and private enterprise, and economic development.

***Best practice common principles include:** Appropriate planning and assessment, clear and unambiguous policies and laws; strong and reliable enforcement mechanisms; motivated and well-trained personnel; the involvement of multiple sectors; and close collaboration with local women's groups, civil society organizations, academics and professionals.

***Policy implementation characteristics include:** Clear time lines and benchmarks, transparent mechanisms for monitoring implementation, indicators of impact and evaluation, predictable and adequate funding streams, and integration of measures to tackle violence against women in programs in a variety of sectors.

***Characteristics of Next Steps include:**

***Tailored** interventions and strong institutional mechanisms are required to ensure action, coordination, monitoring and accountability.

***Urgent and concrete** measures are needed to secure gender equality and to protect women's human rights. Violence against women is both a cause and a consequence of discrimination against women and is a human rights issue.

***Leadership action** is critical at all levels of society, political subdivisions, all social and economic sectors business leaders, civil society organizations and community leaders to end violence against women.

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***Political will** that results in disclosure to the public of the facts of violence against women, changes in the content of public values, and sustainable actions to drive equitable access for women to education, economic opportunity and ownership, and in the commitment of sufficient financial and human resources to justice, health, housing and education, and to improving the access of affected people to effective preventive, legal, health and social services.

***Improvement in the knowledge base in this area** to inform policy and program decisions and investments to identify and sustain effective interventions to prevent and control violence against women.

***Informed investments** are needed to develop and sustain systems of appropriate and efficacious intervention and support for women who are victimized through the instrumental and casual use of violence. These investments are justified by the social, health and economic costs of allowing this violence to continue unabated.

***Men must be allowed and encouraged** to become a part of the solution to this human rights violation and source of economic, social and human underperformance.

General Conclusions and Information from Other Sources

So, women are at risk for violence and men are at risk for perpetrating this violence, whether out of ignorance, culturally supported impunity, or acting out the examples of behavior or unequal power relationships seen in their homes and families.

Some groups of women suffer more than others because of some combination of factors that may include accident of birth, where they live and the values of the adults who surround them during their formative years. For example, on the reservation, American Indians annually experience seven sexual assaults per 1000 residents compared to three per 1000 among African-Americans and two per 1000 among whites. Other women, whom most would “never” think to be prey or conforming to violence, suffer in the same isolation as women who were raised vulnerable to violence precisely because they are not presumed to be a victim “type.”

A 2006 report from the United States Justice Department reflects that nationally, the reported incidences of domestic violence have fallen by more than half since 1993. Violent assaults, rapes, homicides and robberies against women dropped from around 10 per 1,000 women in 1993 to 4 per 1,000 women in 2004. There is lack of agreement on the causes for this decline in reported violence. The two-year study found that reported intimate partner violence represents nearly 25 percent of violent crime against women, and that women who were separated from their spouses or divorced reported the highest incidences of abuse.

A 2003 report on violence against women in California during the period 1992 to 1999 includes data on Intimate partner physical violence (IPPV) and general violence to women. Key findings include:

- In 1998 and 1999, nearly six percent of California women, or about 620,000 women per year, experienced violence or physical abuse by their intimate partners.
- In 1998 and 1999, IPPV occurred in more than 436,000 households per year in which children were also present, potentially exposing about 916,000 children to violence in the home each year.
- Nearly one in five women who went hungry some time in the past year because they did not have enough money to buy food was also an IPPV victim.
- During the eight-year period 1992-99, about 563 women per year were murdered.

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- Women were killed with firearms more often than any other type of weapon.
- Female-victim homicides declined by 40 percent between 1992 and 1999.
- Black women were more likely to be victims of homicide than women in any other race group.
- Hospitals billed charges of \$44.9 million per year from 1992-99 for in-patient treatment of violent injuries to women.
- Although firearms were not the most common cause of hospitalized violent injuries among women, they were the most expensive, with billed charges averaging \$12.2 million per year.

This report did not address trafficking, mutilation, forced marriage or slavery.

Year 2000 survey findings in the report *Women's Health: Findings from the California Women's Health Survey, 1997-2003* on the prevalence of Intimate Partner and Domestic Violence (IPP-DV) indicates that:

- A little over 40 percent of California women experienced IPP-DV in their lifetime.
- Approximately 12 percent of women reported sexual assault by an intimate partner in their lifetime.
- The four-year average IPP-DV prevalence estimate was 5.8 percent (95 percent confidence interval, 5.4-6.2 percent) (data not shown). Thus, on the average, approximately 608,100 California women 18 years of age and older experienced IPP-DV each year.
- Higher IPP-DV rates were seen among Black/African American (8.5 percent) and Hispanic (7.9 percent) women compared with White (5.0 percent) and Asian/Other (4.8 percent) women (Table 12-2).
- Younger women (18-24 years of age) (11.0 percent) and those who had been pregnant in the past five years (11.7 percent) or were living with children younger than 18 years of age (8.3 percent) had higher rates of IPP-DV than their counterparts.
- Level of education was inversely related with prevalence of IPP-DV. That is, women with lower education levels tended to report higher prevalence of IPP-DV than women with higher education.
- Additionally, respondents who had the following socioeconomic characteristics also had higher IPP-DV prevalence rates:
 - those enrolled in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program (16.8 percent);
 - women without health insurance coverage (10.4 percent);
 - women with lower annual household income (6.5 percent);
 - those with more than three people in the household (7.7 percent); and
 - unmarried women (7.8 percent).
- IPP-DV experience also appears to be associated with adverse health indicators. Respondents who indicated they were in excellent or good health had lower prevalence of IPP-DV (5.4 percent) than those in poor or fair health (8.0 percent). Respondents who said they felt overwhelmed in the previous 30 days very often or often had higher IPP-DV prevalence rates (16.3 percent) than those who did not report feeling overwhelmed (2.4 percent).
- Respondents who at first sexual intercourse were 17 years of age or younger had higher rates of IPP-DV (9.4 percent) than those who were older (3.5 percent).

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There was no mention of trafficking or female slavery, mutilation, or forced marriage in this report.

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4. "Intimate Partner Violence in the United States," Shannan Catalano, Statistician. United States Department of Justice-Office of Justice Programs-Bureau of Justice Statistics. December 28, 2006
5. "Violence against Women in California," 1992-99, Epidemiology and Prevention for Injury Control Branch, California Department of Health Services. 2003
6. Women's Health: Findings from the California Women's Health Survey, 1997-2003. California Department of Health Services

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