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PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN – LINKING RESEARCH AND POLICY



UNESCO Workshop
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Office of the Director-General
Gender Equality Division
Jane Freedman

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WORKSHOP
PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN – LINKING RESEARCH AND POLICY
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2pm – 5.15pm

Opening

The workshop opened with a speech by Ms Saniye Gülser Corat, Director of the Division for Gender Equality, Office of the Director-General, on behalf of the Director-General.

Ms Corat spoke about the universal nature of violence against women, and named some statistics about its prevalence (one in every three women in the world has experienced sexual, physical, emotional or other abuse in her lifetime – Family Prevention Fund; domestic violence is the major cause of death and disability among women aged 16-44 – Council of Europe; up to 70% of women reported physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner – WHO; up to 40% of women’s first sexual experience was forced – WHO).

She acknowledged the work done by governments, UN agencies, NGO’s and women’s groups to address the problem, leading to the establishment of international and national legal and policy frameworks. She then asked the important question – with these frameworks in place, why does violence against women persist? She answered this question by saying that it persists because of fundamental gender inequalities in all societies, social norms that devalue women and the key to ending violence against women is to change those norms. This will take political will and funding but also research that is targeted so that policy makers can create and implement targeted and effective long term strategies to combat violence.

She went on to talk about the work that UNESCO has done in the area of violence against women, making gender equality one of its two global priorities, and focusing its efforts on capacity building for research, training and advocacy in the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence. UNESCO has also put in place programmes targeting the active involvement of men in violence prevention strategies, as UNESCO believes that involving men and boys as active agents of change is the key to effective violence prevention. UNESCO hopes to make an impact by providing new knowledge on the causes of violence and empowering men and women to reduce and finally eliminate violence against women.

She then spoke briefly about the history of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, declared by the UN in 1999, but marked on November 25th by women’s groups since 1981. This was in commemoration of the assassination in 1960 of the 3 Mirabal sisters – political activists in the Dominican Republic, at the order of Dominican ruler Rafael Trujillo.

Finally she spoke about the goals of the workshop- to open a dialogue between researchers and policy makers in order to find new ways forward to challenge and change underlying gender constructions that lead to violence against women; the presentation of new and innovative research; recommendations on the translation of research into effective policy; the difficulties in the implementation of policy and how research can contribute to overcoming these difficulties; to explore positive models of successful and effective links between policy and research; and finally to strengthen a network between the research and policy communities in the area of violence against women so that the dialogue can continue in the future.

Presentation of Professor Carol Hagemann-White

Professor Carol Hagemann-White is a professor of gender studies and educational theory at the University of Osnabrück, Germany. Her presentation was titled “Research on gender based violence against women – work done, work emerging and work needed – a view from my perspective”. She started by identifying the historical stages in practice research into addressing violence against women between 1976 – 2002. These were:

1. Stage 1 - Naming it as violence and providing services and advocacy
2. Stage 2 – A call on the state and professions to respond effectively
3. Stage 3 – Coherent and sustained policy, requiring a collaboration between the state and the voluntary sector

She identified the transition in Europe between stages 2 and 3 as the 1997 Austrian law, transitioning to a comprehensive policy of reframing the “domestic incident”, moving to “confronting perpetrators”, which became a model for surrounding countries and led to a new level of multi-agency cooperation.

Research in this period was formative, process driven research into new model projects and also about raising awareness. Overall support services (police, social work) were evaluated with an identification of improvements needed. She spoke also about research into local and regional networks, in particular a 6 year study in Germany on evaluating intervention projects (early 1990's). The aim of this research was to develop an integrated response.

In the early 2000's the research network Co-ordination Action on Human Rights Violations (CAHRV) was formed; a multidisciplinary network of around 100 researchers from 24 countries working on interpersonal violence from a gender perspective. Its research focuses on 4 sub-networks:

SN 1: survey existing quantitative data, inspect instruments, and design integrated data analysis

SN 2: develop shared methodological framework for new comparative research

SN 3: create research synopsis to assist in evaluating interventions and measures

SN 4: map research and build web-based information resource

Findings:

Professor Hagemann-White spoke of two main findings emerging – that there are multiple patterns and differences in types of violence, which is difficult to transform into coherent policy; and that while the perception of human rights is indivisible, the perception of what is violence differs greatly.

The network also found that in formulating how to protect from violence it is important to remember that “risk factors” cannot be turned inversely into “protective factors”. It is necessary to describe environments that protect against violence and environments that protect against further harm.

A network multi-country review showed that some states have invested in research-based evaluations, but that continuity is lacking and that very few have inspection procedures and publish reports.

In 2002, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers made a recommendation to member states on violence against women, with an emphasis on research and data collection for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating any legal reform or intervention into violence against women.

Professor Hagemann-White then spoke about research undertaken after 2005 into policies following the Council of Europe recommendation. What has emerged is that while the protection of human rights requires laws, these can fail for a number of reasons. Legal, policing, health care systems etc will differ from state to state so that there is no “one model fits all”, but that it is crucial that regular evaluations based on reliable data be carried out.

A part of this evaluation has to be on what is an “outcome”, and more work needs to be done on defining this (eg. is the only acceptable outcome that she leaves, or are there other acceptable outcomes?)

Since 2005 the monitoring document has been circulated 3 times, with data coming from 40 out of 47 countries. The fourth analytical report has showed that more policy-makers today understand the need for a comprehensive and prolonged effort and that there has been a significant increase in number and scope of National Action Plans since 2005.

Emerging issues in research:

1. How to make intervention and protection more effective
2. Serious and consistent monitoring: how can institutions learn to do their jobs well?
3. Understanding perpetration, developing broad-based prevention
4. Understanding how women become victims: how to translate universal rights into the vernacular

Recent research has taken the results of systematic reviews in different bodies of research and identified overarching “main factors” relevant to different forms of violence. This has shown that while the weight and influence for each factor and the interplay between them differs by form of violence, together they describe a

set of common roots of violence resulting from structural inequalities of gender, generation and sexual orientation.

She then briefly demonstrated the multi-level interactive model, that works to show the probability of what makes it likely that individuals will use certain forms of violence and that certain factors together are more likely to lead to perpetration.

Professor Hagemann-White concluded by outlining what she sees as the needs for effective policy and research in the future. She says that we need to understand factors that are conducive to specific forms of violence, and to use those commonalities to develop a prevention framework. It needs to be accepted that different methods of intervention need to be used. Finally, she said that there are still significant gaps in research that need to be filled.

Presentation by Madame Christelle Hamel

Mme Hamel is a sociologist in the demography field and works at the Institut national d'études démographiques (INED). INED is a public research institute, and her work there specialises in migrant minorities, HIV/AIDS, rape and forced marriage. Her presentation was about 2 data collection surveys on violence against women ("VAW").

The first survey was the first ever national survey in France on VAW, conducted by Maryse Jaspard at INED, called ENVEFF (L'Enquête nationale sur les violences envers les femmes en France). It was a response to a call at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 for national surveys to be carried out in order to measure VAW.

7000 women between the ages of 18 and 59 were surveyed about violence experienced in the previous 12 months in all areas of their lives (home, work, school, in public). The aim was to look at the behaviour that led to the desire to dominate. The types of violence were not named, but were identified through the description of acts, events, doings and words.

As well as asking about violence in the previous 12 months, the survey also aimed to measure violence that occurred in childhood and since. This was important, as it is difficult to gather data about violence in childhood from minors without parental consent. By asking people to report their experiences with violence from childhood to the current day, an insight into violence over the life span could be given.

The results showed that violence is not a random occurrence (e.g. in 2000 – 50,000 women reported that they had been subjected to violence). It also showed that a lot of abuse occurs within the family.

Because it analysed violence in different spheres of life and was from a methodological standpoint, the results could be used to target the stakeholders to take specific action. This allowed for awareness building by public authorities in the form of a television campaign, and the training of judges, police and social workers. It was also the first time many women had spoken about the violence in their lives.

Ms Hamel said that the need now was to assess the efficacy of those campaigns and maybe even renew the survey.

She then went on to describe the more recent survey, Lifestyle and Security (ONDRP-INSEE). It surveyed 13,000 men and women aged between 18 and 75, in 5 successive studies (thus 60,000 participants in total). Such a broad sample is needed to get reliable statistics.

She had some critical observations:

- The definition of violence used was based on the one in the criminal code, which is limited
- It only looked at the last 24 months of the participant so no chance to get statistics of violence over the life cycle
- It looked only at 2 spheres – within the family and outside the family. This leaves gaps, for example, women at work
- There is no gender perspective
- The lack of detail meant that results are misleading eg. it shows that ¼ of the victims of violence were men, but without details on the type and severity of violence

Ms Hamel's recommendations were:

- Renew the ENVEFF study every 10 years, so that the criticisms above can be addressed, and have it administered by a research organisation, such as Ined, that regularly works from a gender perspective
- Demand that the institute for public statistics (Insee) include a sexual and gender-based violence perspective in all their statistics collection (health, employment etc)
- Gather judicial statistics on the type of violence suffered by both men and women
- Create an inter-disciplinary research centre, working with women's groups, with a mission of public policy evaluation and information dissemination (using the model of CRI-VIFF from Quebec)
- That the Ministry for Higher Education and Research make violence against women a priority across all of its work.

Presentation of Ms Mioko Saito

Ms Saito works in gender and education policy at the International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO (IIEP). She presented the data that emerged from an IIEP study on violence in primary schools in Southern and Eastern Africa.

Three Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) studies were done in the periods 1995-1998, 2000-2002, and 2007-2009. As a part of the study, the aspect of school climate (including violence, bullying and harassment) and the impact on student achievement was examined.

The limitations of the study for looking at violence in schools were:

- It was only one element of the study
- Data was collected on the “perceptions” of head teachers , so not a direct measure of violence
- There was no clear indication of whether it was gender-based violence
- The data was descriptive, with no examination of cause and effect.

Ms Saito then presented the data, which can be found in her power point.

The results showed:

- Sexual harassment between pupils, bullying, fighting, classroom disturbance, and pupils’ use of abusive language are very common and incidents seem to be increasing over time.
- Within countries, occurrence of school violence varied little. → challenge for identifying the cause.
- Across countries, patterns were mixed. → challenge for identifying the cause.
- Both boys and girls had lower achievement levels in schools with high occurrence of school violence. → challenge for identifying as ‘gender-based violence’

Specific policy suggestions were then formulated, in response to the results (see power point).

Presentation of Ms Gauri van Gulik

Ms van Gulik is a women’s rights researcher and advocate with Human Rights Watch (“HRW”). She outlined her presentation as looking at how they do research and how they link it to recommendations, the link between research and policies (with an example), and what happens afterwards i.e. research on implementation

She said that the purpose of HRW’s research is to come up with recommendations for policies. They always do localised research, specific to a certain context. They then use the research to advocate for policy change while also trying to bring together research from around the world.

She then gave a concrete example of how practical research led to policy change from work carried out in Iraqi Kurdistan on female genital mutilation (“FGM”). In this research, they looked at why people carry out FGM by talking to men and women. They also asked about the consequences of FGM on all age groups by talking to women about how it affected them as well as to medical practitioners.

They found that when asking people about why they do it, there was a lot of confusion such as “my mother did it”, “I’m forced”, “it’s the right thing to do”, “I’m legally obliged to do it”.

HRW then worked with these responses to formulate a multi-faceted action:

1. “I’m legally obliged” – they called for a legal ban on FGM

2. "It's a religious duty" – they worked with religious scholars, who agreed to put a fatwah on FGM
3. Took statements from respected community leaders to the contrary of these misunderstandings e.g. "it's not part of tradition", "traditions change", "it's a form of violence".

This approach was a change from the way HRW usually works, which is to say that it's against the law, so change the law. Instead they focussed on the consequences, health problems, marital problems and used these consequences in their advocacy. The result was a creative approach that remained clear about their legal obligations.

Ms van Gulik then spoke about research on policy already in place, when they looked at the family protection law in Turkey. They chose Turkey because there has been incredible progress with their legal protection mechanisms, but the rates of violence against women remain high (42% of women report having suffered physical or sexual violence at some stage of their lives).

They followed women through the system – police, court and after court with a protection order, and identified flaws in each step. For example, a woman told how she had escaped the abuse on a Friday afternoon, went to police, who told her to go back to her husband. She then went to the family court who told her to come back after the weekend.

To address such problems encountered at first presentation to the system, rather than the usual recommendation of staff training, HRW worked with the Ministry to develop a new law that deals with the coordination of different departments in different ways – not just departments within the police, but also justice, housing, health etc.

Another gap in the law that was identified was a loophole whereby women who were divorced were not eligible for a protection order. This loophole was addressed as a result of the HRW research.

Through the process of gathering personal narratives, HRW could assist government to establish policies and practices that would directly impact and help women.

She then gave a further example of research into migrant women in Belgium who were refused entry into violence shelters because they lacked documents. This gap showed that it is not only government policy that can fail women, but even women's NGO's can let women fall through the cracks.

Presentation by Ms Liri Kopaçi-Di Michele

Ms Kopaçi-Di Michele is the head of the division in the Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs at the Council of Europe that has developed and is promoting the new Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

She began by condemning violence against women as a violation of human rights and noted that violence against women is still widespread at all levels of society in all Council of Europe states.

In 2011 the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers agreed to the international Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. The Convention opened for signatures in May 2011, and at the date of the workshop, 17 member states had signed. It is open for signature and ratification by non Council of Europe states.

When adopted, it will be the first legally binding European convention dealing with violence against women. It is wider in scope than any other international instrument, and aims for zero tolerance.

It also contains a whole new approach, requiring all relevant actors to weave a net of safety around the victim. It seeks to change gender inequality, which is essential, as VAW is rooted in gender inequality.

She went on to outline what the Convention adds to VAW prevention:

1. On signing, it legally binds a state to change their laws, allocate funds and take practical measures as outlined in the Convention. Preventing and combating VAW is no longer a matter of goodwill.
2. It creates new criminal offences such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage, stalking, forced abortion and forced sterilisation. This means that many states will have to introduce specific offences which did not exist before in their legal systems. It also deals with the protection of specific groups, such as migrant women and children.

In the process of drafting the Convention, the Council of Europe looked at many practices in many countries to determine which work at the national level. This in effect means the Convention is a collection of best practices.

The Convention identifies that data collection is essential. Research done by the Council of Europe has showed that government agencies such as police lack data collection systems that go beyond internal data. As such there is a lack of data that can inform policy analysis, and the data is not comparable across countries or across time.

Article 11 of the Convention obliges states to collect representative and comparable data and to implement evidence based policy making. It outlines the type of data collection that is required and highlights the need to support research in the field.

Presentation of Ms Somali Cerise

Ms Cerise is the Gender Project Coordinator at the OECD Development Centre. She began by telling Debjani's story. Debjani suffered sexual harassment at school, when she told her family they forced her out of school and into marriage. She suffered domestic violence in her marriage and had no control over how many children she had. She had limited rights in divorce/child custody and limited knowledge of the justice system. She had little knowledge of how to be economically independent and thus vulnerable to chronic poverty. This is a common story and highlights the links between different types of violence over a women's lifecycle. It also shows why prevention at an

early stage is critically important.

VAW is linked to women's increased vulnerability to poverty and poor education outcomes. Lack of sexual autonomy is linked to HIV. Domestic violence affects women's decision-making power in the family which has flow on implications for children's health and education outcomes.

A World Bank report showed that VAW is a key barrier to women's equal economic participation.

The OECD Development Centre has developed the SIGI – Social Institutions Gender Index, which measures discriminatory social institutions. Discriminatory Social Institutions are defined as formal and informal laws, social norms and practices that shape or restrict the decisions, choices and behaviours of groups, communities and individuals. They impact negatively on women and girls and restrict their access to opportunities, resources and power. By looking at the framework of social institutions, the underlying power relations that are at the heart of gender inequality, which in turn is the underlying cause of VAW, can be examined.

To measure social institutions, the SIGI uses 5 variables:

1. Family Code
2. Physical Integrity
3. Son Preference
4. Civil Liberties
5. Ownership Rights

VAW sits in the Physical Integrity variable. The SIGI also looks at how the social institutions manifest at different levels: state, market, community and household. Ms Cerise demonstrated what they are trying to capture on each level (e.g. state – failure of laws that protect women from violence; market – sexual harassment in the workplace; community – community attitudes that condone VAW; household – domestic violence, marital rape). She also spoke about how these then identify negative development outcomes (e.g. domestic violence leading to reduced access to economic resources, VAW link to poor health outcomes).

She then presented a map showing the highest and lowest performers in respect to gender equality. (See SIGI website - <http://my.genderindex.org/> for the map). She then spoke about the challenge of obtaining sufficient and relevant data. The SIGI offers a way to understand how different dimensions of inequality affect what happens in women's lives. For example, countries with a higher incidence of early marriage have worse outcomes for primary school completion rates, for both the girls and their children. From this we can learn the lesson that when looking at policy interventions on girls' education, violence against women needs to be taken into account. Another example provided was the link between high levels of discriminatory social institutions and high maternal mortality rates. The data shows that violence against women and female genital mutilation lead to higher rates of complications or death during pregnancy and delivery.

Ms Cerise described how an understanding of how social institutions impact on gender equality in all areas can inform the allocation of donor resources and help design

effective policies. Policy interventions tackling gender inequality in health, employment and education need to address VAW as an underlying factor and it needs to be addressed at all levels - state, market, community and household.

She stated that there is a need for better data and greater coverage on the prevalence of VAW and community attitudes, and more documentation on what works to transform discriminatory social institutes.

She then identified policy areas that need to be addressed to prevent VAW:

- Strong legal frameworks, increasing the number of countries with comprehensive laws and sanctions, e.g. Rwanda's law on preventing VAW
- Awareness raising to transform community attitudes e.g. campaigns around the 16 days of violence
- Education to challenge gender roles/stereotypes e.g. Brazilian programme of gender and diversity in schools
- Services to support survivors e.g. DRC – mobile courts for sexual violence

Conclusion

The concluding session was moderated by Ms Jane Freedman, and as time was running out, she asked each speaker to briefly summarise their own conclusions and recommendations.

Ms Saito – the key to capacity building is finding a link between researchers and decision makers. From the start of the IIEP research project, they tried to involve the decision makers eg in each African country they identified who in each Ministry is responsible for the implementation of certain issues, and they liaised with those people. Professor Carol Hagemann-White – from a European perspective, there is a vast difference between countries as to how much policy makers respect researchers. There is a need for more dialogue, mutual respect. There is also a need for good practices to become standard practices.

Ms Hamel – in France, the link between researchers and policy makers is poor, and that causes a problem for planning for research. Data collection is expensive and this needs to be acknowledged. There needs to be an institution in charge of research on violence against women, as currently it relies on individuals or organizations and programmes disappear easily. Statistics need to be detailed eg. for rape, show how it happens but then also why women don't lodge complaints.

Ms van Gulik – policy makers need to learn from women's rights groups, as that is where the gap is most obvious. She also said that the ethics of data collection is important, raising the example of a women in a village who was asked 4 times to talk about being raped.

Ms Cerise – political will is a big part of the problem. In terms of research, it needs to be asked what drives the commitment of governments and follow from there.

Ms Kopaçi-Di Michele – the drafting of the Convention meant a lot of negotiation between countries about how it should work, the text changed in response to this. This Council of Europe sees the Convention as a good compromise and it is now up to individual countries to take it up as a framework and take the necessary steps to implement it.

Ms Freedman then thanked the speakers for attending and closed the proceedings.