

What the I-VAWA Will Do: Change Social Norms to End Violence Against Women and Girls

The I-VAWA focuses on reducing women’s vulnerability to violence by changing social norms that condone and/or encourage violence against women and girls. Emphasis is placed on supporting organizing efforts, community interventions, and mass media social change campaigns that focus on changing norms; engaging non-violent men and boys as allies in ending violence; and increasing efforts to prevent violence by teaching youth how to develop mutually respectful and nonviolent relationships.

Key Statistics

- According to a recent survey in Egypt, 69 percent of women believe that a man is justified in beating his wife if she disobeys him; 70 percent believe he has this right if she refuses him sex.ⁱ
- 71 percent of South African girls report having experienced sex against their will.ⁱⁱ
- A study in South Africa found that 27 percent of adolescent girls and 32 percent of adolescent boys felt that “forcing sex with someone you know is never sexual violence.”ⁱⁱⁱ
- 102 countries have no law against domestic violence.^{iv}

Model Programs

Men as Partners (MAP) – South Africa

MAP was created to respond to South Africa’s high rate of HIV infection and incidence of rape, recognizing that male attitudes toward gender play a major role in men’s risky sexual behaviors and impact the health of both genders. Rather than perceiving men as the problem, the MAP program views men as equally capable of promoting HIV/AIDS awareness and of taking a stand against GBV in their communities.

MAP includes a wide range of prevention activities, including training and technical assistance, workshops, community awareness events, media advocacy and efforts to support gender- and HIV-related policies and practice. Through a network that includes national NGOs, government departments, schools and universities, trade unions and the National Defense Force, the MAP program reaches thousands of men in eight of South Africa’s nine provinces. The program influences participants’ attitudes toward sexual and domestic violence, with 59 percent of men who completed the program disagreeing that “sometimes when a woman says ‘no’ to sex, she doesn’t really mean it,” compared with 43 percent prior to the program.^v

Stepping Stones – Africa

Stepping Stones is a workshop series that aims to build stronger and more gender-equitable relationships in order to prevent HIV and violence. The series is composed of 13 three-hour sessions and three peer group meetings.^{vi} Originally developed in 1995 for small, rural communities in Uganda, the program has been adapted to 17 settings and implemented in 40 countries.^{vii} Stepping Stones has been shown to be effective in changing young men’s sexual practices and perpetration of violence, with participants evaluated in one cluster randomized controlled trial reporting lower levels of severe intimate partner violence both one year and two years after the workshop. Participants were also likely to report fewer sexual partners, and less likely to report alcohol abuse or illicit drug use both one year and two years after completing the program.^{viii}

Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication – South Africa

In a country where domestic violence is described as “endemic,” Soul City integrates social education into entertainment, using prime-time television drama, radio drama, and print media to reach more than 16 million South Africans.^{ix} This format allows viewers to identify with the main characters, who serve as role models, helping to effect social change on multiple levels – the individual, the community, and the socio-political environment.^x Soul City’s fourth series addressed gender-based violence, including domestic violence and sexual harassment, and HIV/AIDS through a 13-episode prime-time television drama, a 45-episode radio drama in nine languages, and three informational booklets with a nationwide distribution of 1 million copies each. The series was particularly popular with young people, with 79 percent of 16-24 year olds having watched Soul City television.^{xi}

Exposure to Soul City media was shown to both increase knowledge of specific resources and to reshape attitudes. The programs advertised a help line for victims of violence; while 16 percent of respondents who had no access to Soul City had heard of the helpline elsewhere, 61 percent of those who had encountered Soul City’s television and radio programming and had seen written materials knew of the help line. Exposure to the programs also led to an 18 percent increase in respondents disagreeing that “domestic violence is a private affair,” and 93 percent of those who had seen and heard all Soul City programming agreed that “no woman ever deserves to be beaten,” compared with 86 percent of those with no exposure.

Puntos de Encuentro -- Nicaragua

Puntos’ mission is to help increase young people’s ability to take control of their lives and participate in all levels of society. The group is currently implementing the second phase of its multimedia strategy, ‘We’re Different, We’re Equal,’ promoting young people’s individual and collective empowerment. Main components of the campaign include *Sexto Sentido*, a socially-conscious soap opera broadcast weekly and *Sexto Sentido Radio*, a nightly youth call-in talk radio show that broadcasts live on six stations. Young people are encouraged to call in to the radio program to express their reactions to the soap opera, which portrays how abstract issues like human rights and gender issues play out in daily life. Puntos also coordinates with local media so that the same issues are discussed in the media, youth leadership training, and in Puntos’ magazine *La Bolentina*, the most widely circulated in the country. Puntos estimates that over half a million young people between 13 and 24 had seen *Sexto Sentido*. Those surveyed showed an increase in gender-equitable opinions and greater knowledge and utilization of resources for domestic violence. Compared with other types of intervention, Puntos is highly cost effective, with a cost of only \$0.60 per target viewer per season.^{xii}

Program H -- Rio de Janeiro

Program H (for *homens*, “men” in Portuguese) focuses on helping young men question traditional roles and promotes more equitable behaviors, which reduces the risk of HIV and partner violence. The program includes six months of interactive group education sessions led by adult men and a community-wide campaign, organized by young men, to protect against HIV infection. To evaluate the program’s success, researchers developed the “Gender-equitable Men (GEM) Scale,” which measures attitudes toward gender norms as they relate to HIV/AIDS prevention and partner violence. Initial surveys showed that those who agreed with inequitable norms were more likely to have elevated risk for HIV. Young men who participated in both the group education and were exposed to the community-wide campaign were likely to support more equitable norms, a change that was maintained at a one-year followup and that is associated with decreased risk for HIV.^{xiii}

i Interagency Gender Working Group of USAID. *Addressing Gender-Based Violence from the Reproductive Health/HIV Sector: A Literature Review and Analysis*. (pdf). May 2004.

ii Global AIDS Alliance. "Violence against Women and Children & HIV/AIDS." (pdf). Updated 9/26/2007.

iii *Ibid*.

iv *Ibid*.

v Peacock D., Levack A. (2004) The Men as Partners Program in South Africa: Reaching Men to End Gender-Based Violence and Promote Sexual and Reproductive Health. *International Journal of Men's Health*, 3:173-188.

vi Jewkes, et. Al. "Evaluation of Stepping Stones: A Gender Transformative HIV Prevention Intervention." Policy Brief. Pretoria. (<http://www.mrc.ac.za/policybriefs/steppingstones.pdf>, accessed 16 Jan 2008).

vii Duvvury, Nata. "Promising Practice: Results of a Randomized Control Testing of Stepping Stones Intervention." PowerPoint Presentation. November 8, 2008. (<http://igwg.org/eventstrain/promisingpractices.htm>, accessed 16 Jan 2008).

ix Usdin, et. al. "Achieving Social Change on Gender-Based Violence: A Report on the Impact Evaluation of Soul City's Fourth Series." *Social Science & Medicine*. 61: 2434-2445. (July 2005); www.soulcity.org.za

x *Ibid*.

xi Goldstein, Susan, Shereen Usdin, Esca Scheepers, Garth Japhet. "Communicating HIV and AIDS, What Works? A Report on Impact Evaluation of Soul City's Fourth Series." *Journal of Health Communication* 10:465-483, 2005.

xii Irela Solorzano, Julie Pulerwitz, Rodolfo Pena, Mary Ellsberg, Amy Bank. "Addressing Gender, Violence and HIV Through Communication for Social Change." PowerPoint Presentation November 8, 2007.

(<http://igwg.org/eventstrain/promisingpractices.htm>, accessed 16 Jan 2008).

xiii Pulerwitz J et al (2006). Promoting More Gender-Equitable Norms and Behaviors Among Young Men As an HIV/AIDS Prevention Strategy. Washington DC, Population Council (<http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/horizons/brgendernorms.pdf>, accessed 25 Feb 2008), 2.