

GRANT NUMBER GG2098538

Violence Against Women Advocates in Nepal - A Training Initiative

In addition to training community members, this global grant will address these Peace Area of Focus goals:

- Enhancing the capacity of individuals and communities to transform conflict and build peace.**
 - Providing services that help integrate vulnerable populations into society.**
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Background on the Intersection of Violence Against Women and Peace

Violence against women and girls is the most pervasive human rights violation on earth. It occurs in all countries, across all races, and takes multiple forms. The United Nations defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

This violence has devastating consequences on the survivor, all those close to her, her community, and ultimately her nation. Violence against women fuels global crises such as drug and alcohol abuse, suicide, infant mortality, and poverty. Economically, the cost is staggering: 5.5 percent of the global economy or 4.7 trillion dollars per year. The primary challenge facing the twenty-first century is to eliminate violence against women and remove the barriers to the development of their strength, creativity and voice.

Global Repercussions

By removing the barrier of violence and empowering half of the world’s population, we will see major changes in how countries confront problems such as HIV/AIDS, climate change, economic reform, and access to education.

Violence against women leads us to:

- Family: Child Mortality. Lost Wages. Missed school. Cycle of abuse. Trauma.
- Community: Alcohol and drug abuse. Extreme poverty. Homelessness.
- Nation: Low GDP. Violent Crime. Drug & alcohol epidemics.
- World: Terrorism. War. HIV crisis.

The safety of women should be as central to the discussion of world security as power, democracy, religion, culture, resources and economic growth. Countries that are more gender-equal are less likely to go to war, use force during conflicts, or to be involved in violent international crises. In order for countries to become more gender-equal we need to

address the violence and exploitation of women that occurs all across the globe, and at all levels of society. Without the elimination of violence, women will not be able to gain greater equity in family law, give true consent in marriage, or even universally be allowed their own citizenship.

Economic Repercussions

If society would effectively eliminate violence against women, the equivalent costs could be dedicated to development purposes. When it comes to violence against women, the resulting loss of GDP exceeds the cost of prevention and intervention.

Specific Examples:

- In Uganda implementing the Domestic Violence Act of 2010 for both prevention and response cost more than US\$ 8 million over three years. The cost of addressing the violence after it occurred exceeded an estimated US\$30 million in a single year.
- In India, studies show that women lose an average of at least five paid work days for each incident of intimate partner violence. 25 percent less of her monthly wages each time an incident of violence happens -- affecting her family and dependents.
- Women who are exposed to intimate partner violence are employed in higher numbers in casual and part-time work, and their earnings are 60 per cent lower, compared to women who do not experience such violence.

Violence against women and girls brings huge economic costs to any society. It drains resources from the health care system, social services and counselling - including child and welfare support, the justice system, and employers and private sector are also affected in lost productivity and potential, and it undermines poverty reduction with lost wages.

Violence against women is a clear barrier to sustainable development. This has been acknowledged in the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. For the first time, violence against women and girls is included as a target area under Goal 5 on gender equality. Goal 5 affirms that violence against women is a barrier to gender equality, women's empowerment and overall sustainable development, as well as to the achievement of all the the other Sustainable Development Goals.

Peace Area of Focus Goal: Enhancing the capacity of individuals and communities to transform conflict and build peace.

Research shows that violence against women has a correlation to conflict, and this grant has the power to change the environment that led to conflict in Nepal. Nepal only recently emerged from civil war and is still rebuilding the structures of a peaceful society. The civil war in Nepal from 1996-2006 claimed the lives of 17,000 people and displaced an estimated

100,000 more. As the country rebuilds from the war, the women's rights movement in Nepal is seeking long term, societal change that includes many gender-related improvements. Some of the first government actions in post-conflict Nepal included the Gender Equality Act of 2006, and the 2007 Interim Constitution of Nepal that prohibited physical, mental or any other form of violence against women. The Interim Government passed and amended 56 discriminatory provisions from various laws and policies, passed a Human Trafficking Act, and initiated a Nepal Peace Trust Fund to help fulfill these commitments made in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. However, while the new Constitution provides protections for women, the Government has not implemented its provisions. The status of women in Nepal remains very poor in terms of health, education, income, decision-making, and access to policy-making.

While Nepal may have some strides in terms of women's and other human rights on paper, it is how they are implemented that will prevent Nepal from slipping back into armed conflict. It is widely noted that there have not been discernable and quantifiable to the overall improvement in girls' and women's lives across the country. In order to place women and girls at the heart of all efforts related to peacebuilding, it is vital to end the rampant violence that prevents their participation. This is the only way towards sustainable peace.

Violence not only has negative consequences for women but also their families, the community and the country at large. It has tremendous costs, from greater health care and legal expenses and losses in productivity, impacting national budgets and overall development. Ending violence against women and girls will be a benefit to all people in Nepal.

Peace Area of Focus Goal: Providing services that help integrate vulnerable populations into society.

By using the relationship between violence in a country and how women are treated, there is a connection between how women in a country are treated and violence, peace, and security. The elimination of violence is a key factor of integrating the vulnerable population in question - women and girls - into society.

The Every Woman organization looked at 50 countries to assess if there is a relationship between violence in a country and how women are treated. Countries were selected based on the Early Warning Project which is a model used to predict the likelihood that mass violence or a genocide will occur in a country in the near future. It has successfully predicted events in the past, such as the Rohingya Genocide. One-hundred and sixty-two Countries are ranked based on a multitude of factors, including GDP, human rights commitments, infant mortality, and ethnic rifts in the population. When evaluating the 25 countries most likely to have an event of mass violence in the near future, and the 25 least likely, relationships with

gender equity and girls' education were found. The higher the gender equity in a country, the less at risk they were. The greater the literacy gap between males and females, the greater the risk of genocide and mass conflict.

The gender equity of a country is determined by political empowerment, economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, and access to health and survival rates. How is this connected to violence against women and girls? When there is a lack of economic opportunity, rates of domestic violence in a community are greater. A lack of economic opportunity can also be an indicator of economic violence towards women. The survival rates of women and girls and healthcare access are an indicator of passive violence against women and girls. Education is a protective factor against violence. Furthermore, oftentimes girls do not attend school due to trafficking, early marriage, child labor, and other forms of violence. The literacy gap between males and females matters because education is one of the earliest investments a country can make in girls, showing that girls are valued, worthy of investment, worthy of protection, and seen as more than a commodity.

A comparison of gender equity between countries that currently are experiencing conflict and those who are not concluded that there is a statistically significant difference, with countries with conflict having lower gender equity scores. The Democratic Republic of Congo is the country with the highest risk of genocide or mass conflict—30.9 percent in the next year. As of 2011, 64.1 percent of women in the Democratic Republic of Congo had experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner during their lifetime. This is in contrast to Denmark, the country least likely to have an incidence of mass violence, 0.1 percent risk, where 22 percent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner.

Sources:

[Sex and World Peace](#)

[Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women](#), UN General Assembly, 1993

[Conflict and Violence Assessment Paper](#), Copenhagen Consensus Center, 2014

[The Early Warning Project](#)

[2018 Global Gender Gap Report](#), World Economic Forum

[Women's Economic Empowerment and Domestic Violence](#), Oxfam

[Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls: What Does the Evidence Say?](#), The Lancet
[End VAW Now](#)