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Gender-Based Violence

A Violation of Human Rights

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Democracy, Human Rights and Gender Equality

A Violation of Human Rights

Gender-based violence is a universal problem. It exists in all countries, religions and social classes. It is a pervasive violation of human rights and a major obstacle to the achievement of gender equality and sustainable democratic development.

Sweden's Policy for Global Development, as well as Sida's Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality, emphasise the need to take action against gender-based violence (GBV). In September 2008, Sida launched the Action Plan for Sida's Work Against Gender-Based Violence 2008–2010. The overall objective is to contribute to a reduction of gender-based violence in Sida's partner countries and regions where humanitarian assistance is provided, however it also sets out intermediary measures around prevention, legal action and service and care for victims/survivors of GBV.

Sida recognises that GBV is also perpetrated against men and boys. Efforts have been made to incorporate a discussion of men and boys both as potential partners against violence and as victims/survivors of GBV.

This brochure takes Sida's Action Plan as a departure point and aims to provide good examples in an effort towards eliminating gender-based violence, drawing on published case studies and interviews divided into legal and policy measures, prevention and service and care. The brochure, prepared by Sida's Gender Equality Team, Department for Empowerment, also includes references to key international, regional and national human rights instruments as well as GBV resources.

WHAT IS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE?

Women and girls comprise by far the majority of the victims of gender-based violence. An estimated one-third of all women and girls have been exposed to rape or physical violence of some kind at least once during their lifetimes. According to a WHO study in 2002, men perpetrate 90–95% of all violent acts. It is clear that when talking about gender-based violence it is above all men's violence against women and girls that is the subject.

DEFINITIONS

There is no internationally accepted definition for gender-based violence as such.

CEDAW defines gender-based violence as "violence that is directed towards a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately". The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women uses the term 'gender-based violence' as part of the definition of 'violence against women'.

UNIFEM states that "gender-based violence can be defined as: violence involving men and women, in which the female is usually the victim and which arises from unequal power relationships between men and women".

Sida has developed a definition, relevant to Swedish development cooperation:

Any harm or suffering that is perpetrated against a woman or girl, man or boy and that has negative impact on the physical, sexual or psychological health, development or identity of the person who is the victim. The cause of the violence is founded on gender-based power inequalities and gender-based discrimination.

Boys and men can become vulnerable to gender-based violence, for example in conflicts, due to rape or through trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation. Men and boys who do not conform to prescribed norms around gender and sexuality are also at risk.

Sida's Action Plan pays special attention to combating the following forms of gender-based violence:

1. Gender-based violence due to harmful traditional or customary practices, especially female genital mutilation and violence in the name of honour
2. Violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people
3. Sexual abuse in conflict and post-conflict situations
4. Domestic violence

It should also be noted that various kinds of gender-based violence are often closely interlinked with one another.

Gender-based violence takes on many forms other than those mentioned above. These include, for example: The specific murder of women and girls – femicide and female infanticide, all kinds of non-consensual sexual acts and sexual violence, rape, sexual assault and harassment, prostitution and trafficking for sexual and other purposes, forced sterilisation and forced abortions. Other forms are harmful traditional practices such as forced and/or child marriage, selective abortion due to male child preference, non-consenting male circumcision, dowry crimes, bride-price abuse and widow inheritance.

Case studies

LEGAL AND POLICY MEASURES

Legal, policy and other regulatory frameworks provide the foundation from which initiatives concerning gender-based violence must operate. As such, laws and policies at international, national and local levels must provide an enabling environment.

Dialogue around GBV in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is a fragile state whose governance system has been surrounded by uncertainty for some time. Consequently, Sida has focused on working with CSOs rather than the Zimbabwean government. Channelling its energies and funds through CSOs, Sida engages them in dialogue, establishes links and encourages dialogue between them, and supports them in their involvement in public dialogue. In this way partnerships are created as opposed to a donor-recipient model. Musasa – a Matabeleland-based women's shelter and domestic violence advocacy CSO – has been supported by Sida since 2001.

Musasa were able to provide direct care services for domestic violence survivors, but could not supply the legal support also needed by their clients. This could, on the other hand, be provided by the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association.

Sida was instrumental in linking the two organisations, resulting in an integrated approach to counteract domestic violence in Matabeleland. Supported by Sida, Musasa also linked up with other women's organisations to campaign for a Domestic Violence Act, which was subsequently passed in 2006.

Sida provided financial and technical support to the campaigning organisations.

Lessons learned: Establishing twoway, consultative relationships with potential partners from the onset of cooperation has meant that Sida learns from CSOs, while encouraging them to lobby around GBV in their countries. Linking relevant CSOs and encouraging coordination between them has meant that coherence in services has improved significantly and that organisations are able to increase the impact of their campaigns by working together.

Supporting the development of policies against gender-based violence in post-conflict Sudan

In 2005 the new Government of South Sudan established a Department of Gender. Norwegian People's Aid, NPA, was asked to provide technical assistance and advice on the process.

The Department of Gender was supported by NPA in order to fund, plan and implement a workshop with key decision-makers in South Sudan. The aim was to create space for discussion around gender issues and the establishment of priorities.

State ministers from Khartoum and from the districts of Southern Sudan, as well as civil society leaders and counterparts from other Ministries were invited to a workshop. The participants agreed, after a week's discussions, that violence against women requires urgent attention. The workshop resulted in a document – produced by ministers within the Department of Gender – which formed the basis of the governments draft policy on gender equality issues.

Lessons learned: Humanitarian organisations can play a significant role in facilitating dialogue that results in country-owned strategies for gender equality and against GBV. For sustainability, organisations providing support for policy-making should establish and encourage good working relationships with and between government offices and local NGO:s and CSO:s. This helps ensure that the issue of gender-based violence remains on agendas.

SERVICES AND CARE

Gender-based violence requires a multi-sectoral response. Victims of gender-based violence need services and care: medical care, psychological counselling and assistance in seeking justice. Capacity building of health, psychosocial, legal and education sector professionals is essential.

Addressing GBV in a reproductive and sexual health programme in Venezuela

While gender-based violence is endemic in Venezuela, few organisations address the problem – with family planning organisations viewing it as outside their remit. The Asociación Civil de Planificación Familiar* (PLAFAM) is consequently setting an important precedent in its holistic approach to meeting the needs of women who have suffered violence. PLAFAM adopted three strategies for activities in their sexual and reproductive health clinics:

- 1) increasing clinic staff awareness of violence and developing their skills to identify, assess, counsel, and appropriately refer violence victims;
- 2) developing and procuring materials for clients on violence against women and sources of support; and
- 3) collaborating with existing alliances that are involved in advocacy against violence.

When the strategy was adopted a series of workshops were held for all staff, and through these the need for a holistic strategy for survivors was identified.

An integrated strategy has since been rolled out – with care of possible violence victims beginning at check in. The receptionist describes PLAFAM's services, including those related to violence. If necessary a counsellor then takes the client to a private office where the client is screened to assess his or her level of exposure to violence, using a simple, standardised tool designed to identify emotional, physical and sexual violence, including in childhood. Partly because of this process, the prevalence of GBV detection has increased from 7 percent to 38 percent of new clients. Staff at PLAFAM clinics supplement these interventions with accessible printed information on violence against women, placed in bathrooms, waiting and consulting rooms. Making information readily available for GBV survivors on where they can go or who they can call in cases of emergency is a first step in encouraging them to attend these clinics or go to shelters.

Lessons learned: The success of the PLAFAM clinics demonstrate that responses to GBV can and should be integrated into sectoral services such as healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services. Establishing clear referral systems so survivors can receive counselling, legal support and care was essential to providing a coherent service. Screening all new clients for violence and establishing a sensitive protocol and standardised assessment tool meant that the clinic could identify – and respond directly to or refer – more survivors than before.

* PLAFAM is the International Planned Parenthood Federation/Western Hemisphere Region (IPPF/WHR) affiliate in Venezuela

PREVENTION

Only treating the symptoms will not diminish gender-based violence, which makes the work of prevention particularly important. Addressing GBV requires a holistic approach to prevention, grounded in the principles of gender equality. Prevention requires changes in attitudes and behaviour, particularly by men and boys, who are the most common perpetrators of violence.

Engaging men in the elimination of female genital mutilation in Kenya

In many areas female genital mutilation, FGM, is considered an essential part of preparing girls for marriage. Unequal gender relations mean that while these practices are undertaken by female family members, men play an important role in sustaining them. A change in attitudes is essential, but projects aimed at achieving this need time, careful planning and sensitivity.

An example of good practice around involving men in the elimination of FGM can be found in the work of the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health, a Kenyan organisation, in partnership with FORWARD and Maendeleo Ya Wanaake Organisation, a grassroots women's organisation. The aim of the project was to mobilise men in the campaign against FGM in two districts in Kenya – Gucha (Kisii) and Tharaka Nithi – between 1998 and 2000.

The cornerstone of this project was qualitative research conducted in the two Kenyan districts to determine the role of men's attitudes and behaviour in encouraging or discouraging FGM, and across a range of age-groups. It was found that men were willing to be involved in FGM elimination but that they wanted more information on the effects of the practice.

Based on these research findings, an intervention strategy was implemented which included:

- 1) training and involving men in designing and implementing the campaign against FGM;
- 2) developing and producing culturally sensitive campaign materials;
- 3) conducting a workshop for experience sharing jointly with other local organisations working to eliminate FGM.

At the end of the workshop men drew up action plans for their participation in community FGM elimination interventions. This way they were able to acquire skills to make them effective advocates and agents of change within the community. Men are now effectively mobilising other men in the campaign, in addition to publicly supporting and taking part in 'alternative rites of passage' ceremonies which mark the transition of girls into adulthood without genital mutilation.

Lessons learned: One key challenge of this project was its short life span of two years only which was tied to the funding it received. While short term results were achieved, it was difficult to assess the longer term outcomes and actual reduction of the practice of FGM in the regions – including attitude change.

Measuring attitude change needs to be integral to GBV programmes because an understanding of attitudes will help feed into the design of more effective interventions.

Framework and Resources

LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

International

The *UN Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, CEDAW, defines what constitutes discrimination and sets an agenda for national action to end it. CEDAW was adopted in 1979.

The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing 1995, resulted in a *Platform for Action*, where one identified strategic area of action is the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

Promoting equality between women and men is one of eight *Millennium Development Goals*, adopted in 2000.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 includes (1) equal participation of women in all peace and security initiatives, (2) protection of the rights of women and girls and (3) mainstreaming of gender issues in the context of armed conflict, peace building and reconstruction processes. *Resolution 1820* condemns the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence in conflict situations, stating that rape is a war crime, a crime against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide. *Resolution 1888* complements *Resolution 1820* and calls among other things for the appointment of a special representative to lead efforts to end conflict-related sexual violence against women and children. *Resolution 1889* reaffirms the provisions of *Resolution 1325*.

Regional

The Inter-American Convention states measures for the prevention, punishment and eradication of violence against women, the “*Convention of Belem do Pará*”.

The Protocol to the *African Charter on human and people’s rights* has adopted binding instruments prohibiting violence against women.

Sweden and Sida’s commitment

Sweden’s Policy for Global Development, adopted by Parliament in 2003, emphasises the need to take action against gender-based violence.

Gender equality and women’s role in development is one of three thematic priorities for the Swedish development cooperation. This implies that gender equality, including GBV and women’s security, should be intensified in planning processes, implementation and lifted in dialogue.

Sida's *Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality* (2005) highlights gender-based violence, stating that "Sida will address the specific needs of women and men, girls and boys [in conflict situations] – for example by strengthening women's participation in peace processes and by promoting changes to societal norms and gender-based violence".

The *Action Plan for Sida's Work Against Gender- Based Violence 2008–2010* was adopted in 2008. It defines GBV, summarises existing legal and policy framework, and gives entry points in development cooperation to combat GBV. The Action Plan also states goals and activities during the period 2008–2010.

The *Swedish Action Plan for implementation of UNSCR 1325* (2009–2012) integrate resolution 1820 in its activities.

EXAMPLES OF INTERNET RESOURCES

Amnesty International

- www.amnesty.org/en/campaigns/stop-violenceagainst-women

Amnesty International's webpage includes reports on domestic and sexual violence against women in several countries.

The International Crisis Group

- www.crisisgroup.org
→ thematic issues → Gender and Conflict. Focus on this section of the ICR website is on the impact of conflict and unrest on the lives of women, including sexual violence.

IASC

- www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc

Inter-Agency Standing Committee, IASC, is a forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners with the aim to strengthen humanitarian action.

ICRC

- www.icrc.org/eng/women

The ICRC webpage has a special section on women and war which includes documentation on violence directed at women.

Joint Consortium on Gender Based Violence

- www.gbv.ie

The Consortium consists of a group of Irish human rights, humanitarian and development agencies and government departments. The site has a resource library useful to organizations and individuals addressing GBV.

Human Rights Watch

- www.hrw.org

The denial of the right to legal abortion, cases of violence ranging from spousal and child abuse to rape, incest and murders committed in the name of honor and other human rights abuses are covered on this website.

Human Rights First

- www.humanrightsfirst.org/discrimination

This website offers reports specifically on violence and discrimination against LGBT persons.

Men's Resources International

- www.mensresourcesinternational.org

This website focuses on men – and involving and engaging men as partners in supporting women and ending violence.

Peace Women

- www.peacewomen.org

This site provides information on resolution 1325 and the efforts to incorporate resolution 1325 into the work of the UN Security Council. It gives examples of the relevant articles of resolution 1325 regarding sexual and gender based violence.

Reliefweb

- www.reliefweb.int

The section Policy & Issues → Gender of Reliefweb contains documents regarding gender issues in humanitarian emergencies, on the protection of women and girls from violence in conflict and post conflict situations.

Reproductive Health Response in Conflict

- www.rhrc.org/resources

The RHRC Consortium's gender based violence initiative produces qualitative and quantitative research on GBV in conflict-affected countries in Asia, Europe, and Africa.

Sexual Violence Research Initiative

- www.svri.org

SVRI is an initiative of the Global Forum for Health Research. This site provides a wide range of information and reports on sexual violence.

UNFPA

- www.unfpa.org/gender/violence.htm

Case studies, statistics, videos, reports and other publications are available on this site regarding all kinds of gender discrimination and violence throughout a woman's life.

UNIFEM

- www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women

On this site UNIFEM offers information on gender based violence directed at women.

Womenwatch

- www.un.org/womenwatch

Women Watch provides information and resources on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women throughout the United Nations system.

WHO

- www.who.int/topics/gender_based_violence

This WHO site has a collection of information regarding gender based violence, domestic violence and women's health.



Many buildings in Liberia reveal, through graffiti, marks and drawings on their walls, evidence of the horrors and desperation of war such as gender-based violence.

HELPPDESKS FOR STAFF

Gender helpdesk

Sida has a helpdesk agreement with the university of Stockholm. They helpdesk provides gender analyses in the work on poverty strategies, policy documents, evaluation memoranda, action plans, etc. for Sida staff.

Contact details:

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Helpdesk in Peace and Security and Development

Sida also has a helpdesk agreement with Bradford University's Centre for International Co-operation and Security (CICS) and Saferworld. The helpdesk facilitates the promotion of peace and security and conflict sensitivity within development cooperation.

Contact details:

Contact person: Owen Green
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See also Sida's Inside network for more information on the helpdesks: inside/methods&networks/allhelpdesks

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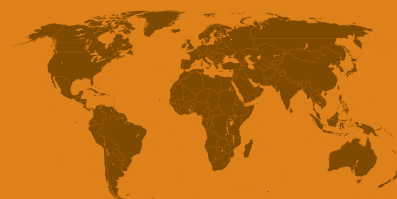


Sida works according to directives of the Swedish Parliament and Government to reduce poverty in the world, a task that requires cooperation and persistence. Through development cooperation, Sweden assists countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. Each country is responsible for its own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge, skills and expertise. This increases the world's prosperity.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

GLOBAL

This brochure takes the Action Plan for Sida's work against Gender-Based Violence as a departure point and aims to provide good examples in an effort towards eliminating gender-based violence, drawing on published case studies and interviews divided into legal and policy measures, prevention and service and care. The brochure, prepared by Sida's Gender Equality Team, Department for Empowerment, also includes references to key international, regional and national human rights instruments as well as GBV resources.



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