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'Women' has become a topic like 'economic development' with the result that women get left out of everything else.

WOMEN CAN BE SURVIVORS VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS

At the meeting, some participants were asked to make presentations on their work. These presentations, and the discussion that followed, served as a catalyst to broaden each person's understanding of what constitutes violence against women and to deal with the issues and donor priorities.

On the first day, participants explored a series of frameworks for analyzing the current state of activism and progress on eliminating violence against women. The afternoon session included presentations on: young women in the US criminal justice system, the silencing of sexuality in India, the consequences of armed conflict for women in Darfur/Sudan, and various forms of violence against black women in the United States from the Civil Rights Movement to the present.

The development of a more complex understanding of violence against women continued on the second day. Participants explored the roles that the state and civil society can play in the development of violence. The case studies came from every continent, but common themes emerged from this global perspective. Participants learned that the state and civil society participate in violence against women across cultures. The common themes can help inform the work against violence to understand strategies to combat it.

On the third day, the conference focused on the discussion of strategies for confronting violence in its various forms. Select participants described their innovative strategies mentioning challenges as well as successes. Following this, donors made presentations about the power dynamics inherent in the system for funding NGOs and activist organizations. The Building Alliances conference closed on the fourth day with some of the main themes and topics of discussions of the previous days.

Eighteen people contributed to the discussions, each bringing to the table their own viewpoint and experience. From the ideas of these eighteen, four key themes emerged that characterize the work on gender-based violence, including successful strategies as well as pitfalls. Each of these four themes falls under the umbrella of Funding and Power -- is the subject of this paper, which also proposes how these new understandings could influence the work that is done in the future on issues related to violence against women.

Given this context, CREA convened a meeting to bring together activists, who have based their work on the understanding that women are victims, survivors and perpetrators and have used innovative strategies to deal with prevention and service around the world. Few of the participants defined their work as solely focused on gender-based violence, while some others challenged the usage of

It's strange how your response to the question of whether you think a woman has the right to choose to become a sex worker or not determines whether you are a feminist or not.

to bring together activists, from around the world, who have based their work on the understanding that women are victims, survivors and perpetrators of violence against women and have used innovative strategies to deal with prevention and service. This meeting of eighteen women from across the society organizations, from eleven countries focused on participants, with a particular focus on migrant and sex workers. The main question is how to deal with the emerging issues and challenges in the world of violence against women.

The four roles that the state and civil society can play in the development of violence. The case studies came from every continent, but common themes emerged from this global perspective. Participants learned that the state and civil society participate in violence against women across cultures. The common themes can help inform the work against violence to understand strategies to combat it.

BUILDING ALLIANCES GLOBALLY TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The international movement now stands at crossroads. Countries worldwide are now dealing with the challenges of globalization, market forces, trafficking of persons- that have a range of consequences on the daily lives of women. The themes are Feminism, Partnerships, Priorities & Strategies, and Funding & Power. It explores each of those themes through the discussions that took place, and sets out an agenda for action and development.

The Global Dialogue Series

BUILDING ALLIANCES GLOBALLY
TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

5 - 9 July, 2004
The Bellagio Study and Conference Centre
Bellagio, Italy

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Feminism, partnerships, conservatism, fragmentation, power, activism, connections, money, language...

Stringing words together, trying to work out nuances of the many understandings and complexities. This dialogue continues to weave together many decades of conversations by feminist travelers who have helped push limits and break boundaries.

We wish to thank Lydia Alpizar who worked on the agenda with us, Victoria Collis and Sohaila Abdulali for editorial support, Radhika Chandiramani for her comments on the report, and Sherna Dastur for design. Many thanks to The Rockefeller Foundation and The Bellagio Study and Conference Center for supporting and hosting this dialogue.

The Global Dialogue Series
Working Paper 1

BUILDING ALLIANCES FOR GLOBALIZING WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS: THE GLOBAL DIALOGUE SERIES

Building Alliances for Globalizing Women's Human Rights is a CREA initiative. Four global dialogues on select women's human rights themes form part of this initiative. These dialogues are being organized by bringing together activists from around the world, especially those from the global South. This initiative is founded on the understanding that if social movements connect globally, share strategies and learn from each other, a more just, peaceful and tolerant world is possible. The Building Alliances Initiative is being led by CREA along with partner organizations based in the global South.

The four dialogues are:

Building Alliances Globally To End Violence Against Women. This dialogue focused on how issues of violence against women intersect with gender, sexuality and human rights.

Strengthening Spaces: Women's Human Rights in Social Movements. This dialogue will focus on how diverse movements engage with women's human rights and how movements can strategize to affirm women's human rights.

Between the Sheets and on the Streets: Sexuality and Human Rights. This dialogue will focus on the issues, challenges and strategies of working on issues of sexuality and human rights.

Listening to Each Other: An Intergenerational Feminist Dialogue. This dialogue will attempt to bridge the gaps that exist between different generations of feminists working on women's human rights issues.

PREFACE

This working paper is based on the proceedings of an international four-day dialogue entitled "Building Alliances Globally To End Violence Against Women", convened by Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA), held at the Bellagio Study and Conference Center, Italy in July 2004. This dialogue was part of a larger CREA initiative: Building Alliances for Global Organizing on Women's Human Rights.

CREA convened this dialogue on issues of violence against women to bring together activists, from around the world, who have based their work on the understanding that women can be victims, survivors and perpetrators of violence and have used innovative strategies to deal with prevention and service. This dialogue between eighteen women from civil society organizations, from eleven countries across five continents, with a particular focus on experiences from the global South, is an attempt to collectively explore the emerging issues and challenges in the work on violence against women.

This working paper focuses on the five fundamental themes for development that emerged during the course of the dialogue – each of which represents a significant challenge for those working on issues of violence against women and for the feminist and women's movements in general. The themes are Feminism and the Violence Against Women Movement; Global Perspectives; Partnerships; Priorities and Strategies; and Funding and Power. This report explores each of these themes through the dialogue that took place, and sets out an agenda for action and development.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, violence against women has gained a fragile foothold in the global policy agenda, especially as a health and human rights issue. This recognition has come as a result of over two decades of activism by women's groups all over the world to draw attention to violence against women. Around the world women have joined hands to provide shelters, lobby for law reform and challenge the attitudes and beliefs that underlie violence against women.

However, the international women's movement now stands at crossroads. Countries worldwide are now dealing with diverse conflicting forces of globalization, the resurgence of fundamentalisms, increasing militarism, the impact of market forces, and the trafficking of persons, that have a range of consequences on the daily lives of millions of women, making them more vulnerable.

In a highly globalized world, anti-violence activists have had to redesign their interventions in order to begin the difficult task of conceptualizing and implementing viable and sustainable interventions that go beyond saving individual women one at a time. It has become imperative that partners within this movement ask some hard questions of themselves: how to overcome the infighting and differences of opinion; how to globalize the issue of violence against women in much the same way that transnational companies are able to get their voice heard all over the world; how to find the correct balance between providing services and doing prevention work; and, most important, where does the role of women lie – as victims, as survivors, or as perpetrators.

The critical challenge facing the violence against women movement is to develop and broaden the understanding of strategies and interventions that effectively address their issues in diverse conditions and situations. One of the biggest barriers in this context is the absence of a broad-based understanding of the intersections within the field, with activists focusing on one form of violence against women rather than examining the whole canvas. Different key constituencies; whether they be policymakers, donors, women's rights advocates, non-government organizations and health providers; continue to articulate different, even conflicting, perspectives on this issue, thereby inhibiting the understanding of the gamut of the forms, causes and strategies to address violence.

Given this context, CREA convened this global dialogue to bring together activists and grant makers from around the world, who have based their work on the understanding that women can be victims, survivors and perpetrators and have used innovative strategies to deal with prevention and service issues related to violence against women. Few of the participants defined their work as solely focused on violence against women. Some others challenged the usage of the term 'gender-based violence' by organizations and individuals to talk about violence against women. They felt that the two terms were not interchangeable since the former would take into account violence faced by transgender and transsexual people. However, they felt that in reality very few organizations addressed issues of transgender and transsexual people. All participants agreed that they work on some aspects of violence against women, sexuality and human rights.

As part of this global dialogue, some participants were asked to make trigger presentations on their work. These presentations, and the discussions that followed, served as catalysts to broaden each person's understanding of what constitutes violence against women, strategies to deal with the issues, and donor priorities.

On the first day, participants explored a series of frameworks for analyzing the current state of activism and progress on ending violence against women. The afternoon session included presentations on: young women in the United States criminal justice system, the silencing of sexuality in India, the consequences of armed conflict for women in Darfur, Sudan, and violence against black women in the Civil Rights Movement to the present in the United States.

The development of a more complex understanding of violence against women continued on the second day. Presenters showed the roles that the state and civil society could play in the propagation of violence. The case studies came from seven different countries but common themes emerged. The case studies were:

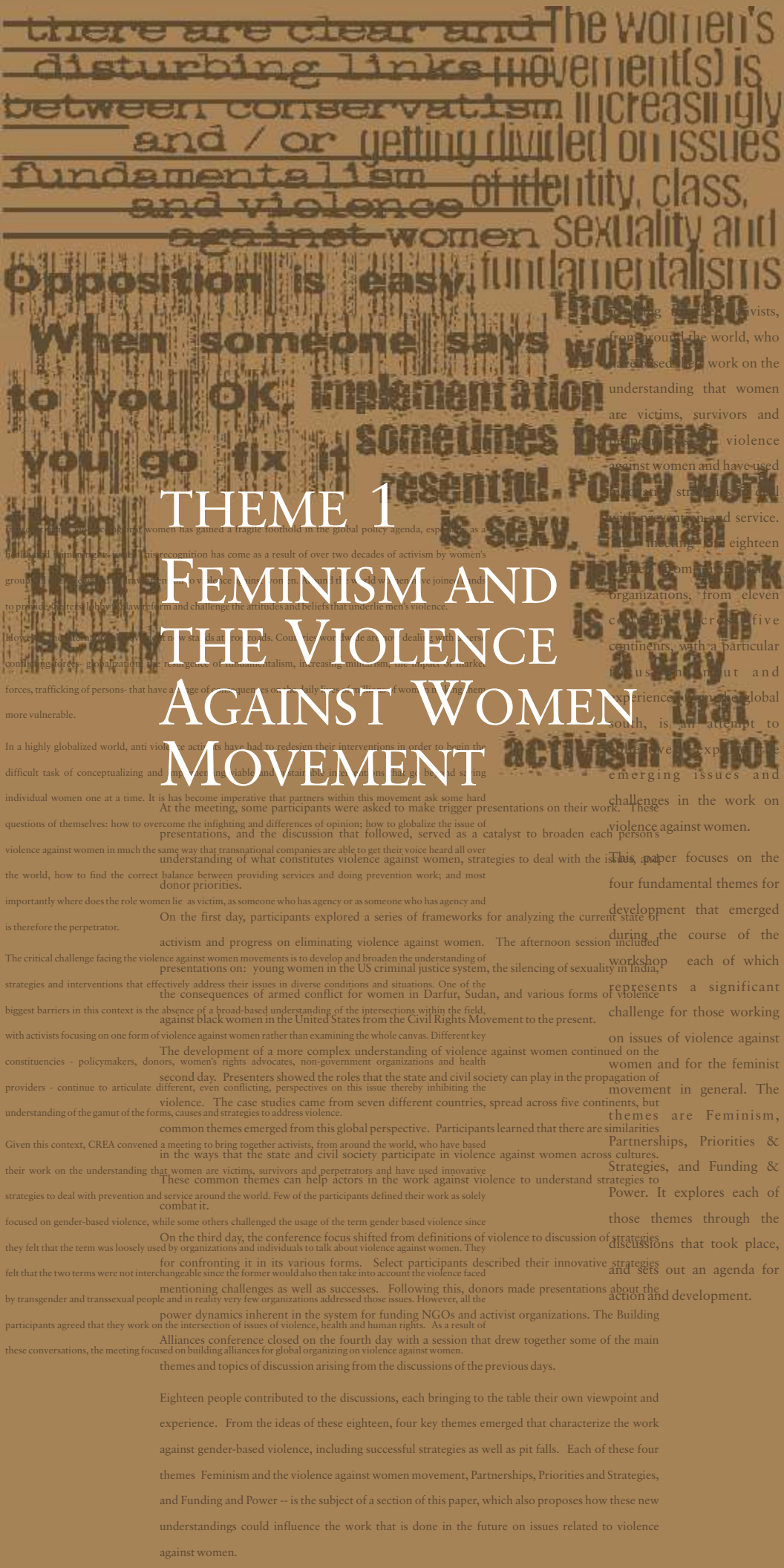
- societal repression against sexual minorities:
Argentina
- fundamentalisms and women:
India
- murdered women in Ciudad Juarez:
Mexico
- the impact of culture, society and religion:
Philippines
- trafficking and laws:
Poland
- violence and the criminal justice system:
South Africa
- fundamentalisms and representation:
The United States of America

Participants learned that there are similarities in the ways that the state and civil society participate in violence against women across cultures. These common themes can help actors understand strategies to combat violence.

On the third day, the dialogue focus shifted from definitions of violence to discussion of strategies for confronting it in its various forms. Select participants described their innovative strategies mentioning challenges as well as successes. Following this, donors made presentations about the power dynamics inherent in the system for funding NGOs and activist organizations. The Building Alliances dialogue closed on the fourth day with a session that drew together some of the main themes and topics of discussion arising from the discussions of the previous days.

Eighteen people contributed to the discussions, each bringing to the table her own viewpoint and experience. From the ideas of these eighteen, a common set of issues and five key themes emerged that characterize the work to end violence against women, including successful strategies as well as pitfalls. Each of these five themes – feminism and the violence against women movement; global perspectives; partnerships; priorities and strategies; and funding and power – is the subject of a section of this working paper. This paper also explores how new understandings could influence the work that is done in the future on issues related to violence against women.

THEME 1 FEMINISM AND THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN MOVEMENT



“Increasingly we want women to make the ‘right’ decisions.”

-Lisa Vetten, South Africa

A thorough, honest, and sometimes painful analysis of the current state of the global feminist movement was a main concern for the participants at this global dialogue. Their exploration of the history and workings of the feminist movement revealed its strengths and weaknesses in the work on violence against women.

The discussion of feminism centered around two key issues. First, how feminism has changed as it becomes increasingly accepted within mainstream thinking and policymaking. Second, how the feminist movement is responsible for the state of questioning and flux in which it currently finds itself.

The participants identified very strongly as activists working on issues of violence against women within the broader context of the feminist movement. However, they felt there are some fundamental issues about the current state of the feminist movement, which act as obstacles to their objectives in ending violence against women.

The debates that took place at Bellagio in July 2004 represent an important first step towards identifying and exploring themes within the wider movement that need to be addressed as a matter of priority. The perspectives offered were those of organizations working in the global South and the themes that emerged were:

ACTIVISM

For many participants, there is a troubling tension between the requirements and effectiveness of activism and professionalism as approaches to work on ending violence against

women. As Smita Pamar from CREA described it, “Those who work in implementation sometimes become resentful. Policy work is sexy, human rights work is sexy, in a way that activism is not.” Some suggested that activism in general has become increasingly professionalized and removed from the reality of violence and other issues that affect women daily, while others explored the idea that funding priorities compound the problem.

OPPOSITION

Related to the tension between activism and professionalism is a strong sense that feminism lost something as its leaders were invited into the establishment. As Lisa Vetten from the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, South Africa, stated, “Opposition is easy. When someone says to you – OK, you go fix it – then that’s scary.” Others advanced the idea that administrations had used funding of women’s organizations as a deliberate strategy to de-politicize the feminist movement.

SANITIZATION

A third key theme, closely linked to ideas raised about activism, is the concern that the women’s movement currently avoids dealing with a range of tough and divisive issues. Barbara Limanowska, a consultant on trafficking with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) / Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) / Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), puts it as “Why don’t we talk more about pornography, about prostitution? Is it too difficult for us because it is so important?” A key problem could be the gulf between the views of feminists, and of many other women on these subjects, the tension between activism and professionalism, and the subsuming of women’s agendas into a broader gender framework.

CONSERVATISM

For the group as a whole, there are clear and disturbing links between conservatism and/or fundamentalisms and violence against women. Many saw the increasing conservatism expressed by governments and their non-accountability as the reason for their work. They saw fundamentalisms as anti-

democratic, anti-secularist and anti-women and recognized that all fundamentalisms share a preoccupation with control of women, their bodies and their sexuality.

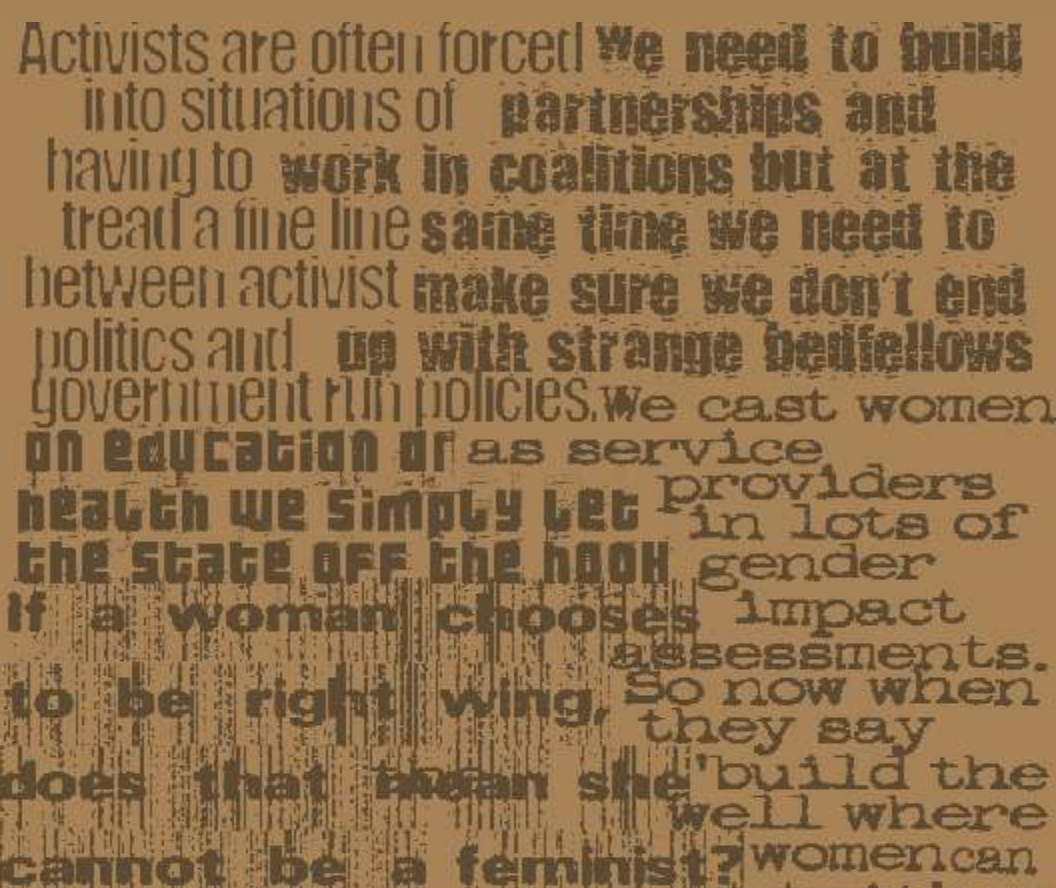
RESPONSIBILITY

There was some discussion of the women’s movement’s own responsibility for its current state of questioning and flux. Sunila Abeysekera from INFORM, Sri Lanka, raised the issue in the context of successive world summits on equality and rights: “In the 1980s it became important to us to be part of policymaking. We need to examine the politics we engage in. *We did this.*” Madhavi Kuckreja from Vanangana, India, further suggested that feminist activists increasingly congregate in safe places, including conferences, but are now less likely to be seen on the ground, as evinced by recent demonstrations in Gujarat, India.¹

FRAGMENTATION

The women’s movement is increasingly getting divided on issues of identity, class, sexuality and fundamentalisms. Some of the questions that arise are: is there an essential woman; where do issues of masculinity and femininity fit within the discourse; is the human rights framework the only recourse to addressing issues of violence against women; as feminists, what do we mean when we ask the state to define a criminal act and provide remedies; is it better to talk of legal and judicial reform rather than the feminist ideology of power and patriarchy? Sexuality continues to be an issue that fragments the movement with discussions centering only on violence and disease control and not much around issues of pleasure and identity. The questions posed are issues that people are grappling with and in many ways contribute to the divisions within the movement.

1. Reference to the genocide seen in Gujarat, India in 2002



THEME 2

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES, COMMON THEMES

“Using the language of human rights allows for collaboration, it acts as a bridge between movements.”

- Roslyn Satchel, United States of America

The discussions included examples of violence against women from seven different countries, spread across five continents. These examples ranged from a discussion of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and its impact on the families of the victims, to an analysis of the genocide and involvement of women in Gujarat, India. At the heart of the debate lay a series of reflections on language and meaning: its fluidity, manipulation, and power. In spite of the enormous variety of topics covered, nine unifying themes emerged strongly from the sessions.

1. HUMAN RIGHTS

Questions about the language of human rights and frameworks were keenly debated, as human rights often tends to be seen as a theoretical concept that is linked to governments and the United Nations. What is important to recognize is the distinction between the philosophy behind human rights frameworks, and the expertise linked specifically to working within United Nations and other official frameworks. Pramada Menon from CREA spoke about a situation where Indian participants in a workshop on sexuality had been unwilling to work within a human rights framework, equating it with the imposition of particular western values on their society. However, their skepticism melted away once they realized that working on human rights meant working on issues of justice, non-discrimination and equality which are human rights principles that underlie their own work. Therefore, to move the concept of human rights out of the theoretical realm and make it a more meaningful framework to work with, it is essential to show how human rights principles can be applied.

With an emphasis from a number of donors on the use of the human rights language, many women's rights activists use the language and framework of human rights approaches for 'extra teeth', or as a password to increased funding, and the ability to link to other activist movements. It is important that the human rights language and mechanisms of human rights approaches be used for the benefit of communities, for communicating principles in ways that people can understand, and developing custom built frameworks and training approaches.

2. FRAMEWORK ISSUES

Cultural, political or social frameworks that come up within the work done on violence against women very often result in the strait-jacketing of issues. Barbara Limanowska outlined a situation in South Eastern Europe where human trafficking has been set into a framework that is focused on issues of migration, prostitution, and organized crime. Even though it is clear that this framework will not lead to the end of trafficking, it enables donors and governments to look at the issue as one that requires the rescue of 'victims' rather than address the real issues of international borders, the flow of money into countries to stop trafficking and, most important, the agency of women which could lead them to choose prostitution as work. Governments, the European Union, and transnational organizations have all used the context of the post-conflict Balkans landscape to shape the issue in this way.

Catalyzed by the combination of governments and other political agendas, and the nineteenth century romantic appeal of rescuing women, trafficking has risen to the top of the agenda in the Balkans. NGOs and activists are forced to compete for resources within the trafficking framework, resulting in unused resources available for work in other areas. Ironically, the competition for funds leads donors to believe trafficking must be escalating, leading them to focus their efforts even more closely in this area.

Lalaine Viado, a consultant on sexual and reproductive rights in the Philippines, presented a portrait of the strong family framework at the heart of Filipino culture, and analyzed its dramatic effects on women's rights. She also discussed the collusion between the forces of the Catholic Church and the

state in reinforcing this rigid set of norms. As well as being enshrined in Filipino law, psychological barriers to contraception and abortion remain strong, with women believing that a family composed of a man, woman, and children is the only framework for life. Therefore, the right to identify as a lesbian or a transgender person is impossible within that structure, and the ability to leave a violent partner is also severely compromised.

3. THINKING AND DOING

Legal recourse is used very often as a strategy to deal with issues of violence against women. While it is important to re-examine laws or create new ones, activists working on issues of violence against women run the risk of creating legislation that may end up having consequences that work against women.

Lisa Vetten described the use of legal frameworks to enshrine a body of human rights based legislation in post-apartheid South Africa. One key danger she identified was the possibility of a piece of legislation having unintended consequences, and becoming a tool that can be used against women. Current proposals to combat South Africa's high HIV/AIDS infection rate include a draft bill that would criminalize harmful sexual behaviors on the part of HIV positive individuals. Pregnant women are routinely screened for the virus, and many are already unwilling to disclose their HIV status for fear of violent retribution. Legislation of this kind could lead to criminal prosecution of women on charges of infecting their partners.

Lydia Alpizar of The Association of Women's Rights in Development (AWID) in Mexico talked about the situation in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua state on the United States of America/Mexico border, where around 400 young women have been murdered, and a further 400 have gone missing over the past decade. Among the failures of the Mexican state in dealing with this has been a serious disconnect in responsibility between federal and state authorities. For almost ten years, the federal authorities were able to distance themselves from the problem by assigning responsibility to state level institutions. Law enforcement authorities in Chihuahua have historically reacted with misogyny to the crimes. The failure of state mechanisms means the murders have become normalized, with the result that many instances of killings due to domestic

violence have aped the methods of the murders as a shield of impunity.

4. PLAYING THE GAME

Activists working on issues of violence against women are often forced into situations where they find themselves having to tread a fine line between activist politics and government policies.

For instance, one consequence of the collusion between the state and church in the Philippines to impose a particular set of societal norms is that women's groups and activists have had to learn to choose their language and nuancing of issues carefully in order to make any progress.

The controversial Reproductive Rights Bill currently being considered by the Congress in the Philippines is an important case in point. The proposed legislation would enshrine a series of basic sexual rights for Filipino women, and conservative forces have reacted by describing it as an 'abortion bill'. Activists, in order to protect the limited potential for progress the Bill represents, feel they are obliged to deny any connection between sexual rights and abortion as a matter of pragmatism.

5. MIRRORING HIERARCHIES

Alejandra Sarda of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission in Argentina provided an analysis of the situation faced by those individuals whose gender identity falls outside the rigid norms of a male and female world in Latin America. While the feminist movement has achieved much in terms of improved equality for women, it has been counter-productive for other groups, reinforcing their inability to find a place within the world as society has structured it along gender lines.

Many responses betray a basic need to mirror the rest of the world in order to find some kind of belonging. For example, the right to same-sex civil unions is an extremely strongly debated and supported issue, and hierarchies within the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender movements in Latin

America echo the patterns found in the heterosexual-centric world. Transgender individuals are often required to take care of parents in their old age, and are expected, and do, feel grateful for the small measure of acceptance into the traditional family structure this brings them.

Madhavi Kuckreja described the genocide in 2002 in Gujarat, a state in India, and the active roles played by women and minority groups within the Hindu community in abetting the violence unleashed on the Muslim community, especially the women. Looting, murder, and assault, and the driving out of Muslim people from their homes were all actions undertaken by these marginalized groups within Hindu culture, despite their own experiences of inequality and rights abuses.

6. VICTIMS AND VICTIMIZATION

One characteristic of the genocide in Gujarat was the deep confusion in India about who the victims were within the situation. Depending on who was doing the reporting, the figures of those affected in each community by the genocide kept altering. The identity of the perpetrators and the victims became interchangeable. Silence on the part of the authorities, combined with a conservative media, led many people to believe that it was only Hindus who were being murdered. Further, many NGOs found it difficult to become involved in the situation for fear of suffering from a political backlash as Hindu nationalism grew.

The unique history of South Africa has resulted in a situation where many are both victims and aggressors at the same time, perhaps most famously Winnie Mandela. This sets up a tension between two roles that are often seen as mutually exclusive, particularly when applied to women: those of the good victim and the evil aggressor.

It is hard for many to accept that these positions may reside simultaneously within the same human being, leading to problems of sentencing in cases where, for example, women kill their abusive partners. At the same time, this dialectic also sets up a situation where those who have not directly experienced a particular form of violence or human rights abuse may be prevented from speaking on the subject.

7. COMMODIFYING VICTIMS

Fundamentalisms (essentialist political or religious forces) and fundamentalist violence on women is on the rise throughout the world. The media, public and even the human rights community's responses to this violence either overlook women or sensationalize the harm done to them. Women get commodified as victims. What remains unexplored is the models of resistance offered by many women 'victims'.

Terry McGovern of the Women's Health and Human Rights Initiative, United States of America, introduced the idea of the power of victimhood. Victims of fundamentalist violence have often developed systemic power. They have been able to achieve some level of accountability from those directly responsible for the attacks or from those charged with their protection (police or quasi-governmental entities). All over the world, directly affected women have cast off the assigned role of 'pain and suffering' narrators and have assumed leadership in the struggle for accountability and human rights. Of course, there are differences in the strategies chosen and paths taken that are related to context, race, class, and privilege. Nonetheless some universal lessons exist and there is little analysis of such models or how these women were able to create opportunity out of profound tragedy.

8. LANGUAGE AND MEANING

Language and meaning, its appropriation, misuse, and power, was a theme that ran strongly throughout almost every discussion of the day. Powerful analysis of the appropriation of feminist language by fundamentalist forces across the world was discussed and Terry McGovern shared her analysis of this appropriation by President Bush in his justification for wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This led to a wider discussion about the skill conservatives display in using the language of protest and radicalism to their own ends.

In particular, there was a strong debate about the possible and actual unintended consequences of language sometimes used by activists with the best of intentions. Geetanjali Misra of CREA shared the example of NGO devised anti rape posters that use the rhetoric of conservatism, and the confusion and

misinformation that can arise when messages like "She wasn't even out after dark" are used. Lydia Alpizar added to this with an illustration of the Chihuahuan state's attempts to protect women against the risk of murder – using slogans about staying home, and 'appropriate' behaviors and clothing, as well as attempting to impose a curfew on women.

As Smita Pamar stated: "We have a fear of using language that will make us look moralistic. But actually we are trying to push the rhetoric of rights. Think about the 'right to life'. The radical right now uses women's rights language freely. But who owns language?"

9. SILENCING OF SEXUALITY

Sexuality as a site of oppression and violence is regulated for all people, but especially women, by the family, society as well as the State. Very often the expression of violence is sexualized with sexual imagery forming the basis of commonly used swear words in almost every language. Women are expected to behave in certain ways so as not to 'provoke' unwanted sexual advances and rape. Women are stigmatized for enjoying their sexuality and violence is often used as a mechanism to punish them for enjoying sexual pleasure.

Radhika Chandiramani of Talking about Reproductive and Sexual Health Issues (TARSHI), India, pointed out that in its focus on preventing and addressing pain and violation, the women's movement has quite forgotten that sexuality is about pleasure too and about the expression of personhood in diverse ways. "Without having the ability to say 'Yes', how can people be expected to say 'No'?" she asked. In the 70s and 80s, the women's movement in fighting domestic violence, made the 'private' public; but now, faced with troublesome questions of sexual and gender nonconformity, it prefers that some aspects of people's lives remain private. Research also takes a narrow heterosexist view of what constitutes violence.

Amongst groups that address issues of sexual and gender identity, an unfortunate trend set off by sexual identity politics is that of the hierarchy of horrors which claims, "My troubles are greater than yours," and some groups of people are consequently excluded from claiming rights.

In some situations 'Women' has become a the neat division between topic like being a child and 'economic development' being an adult with the result that women simply do not get left out of everything else.

We should take a look at some of the restorative fight for the sexual and reproductive rights of the child, indigenous peoples, We there is a danger that parents to work in partnership end up making with the community decisions for their children.

THEME 3 PARTNERSHIPS

however, the international movement now stands at crossroads. Some key priorities are now dealing with diverse conflicting forces- globalization, the resurgence of fundamentalism, increasing militarism, the impact of market forces, trafficking of persons- that have a range of consequences on the daily lives of millions of women making them more vulnerable.

In a highly globalized world, anti violence activists have had to re-examine the human rights framework to begin the difficult task of conceptualizing and implementing viable and sustainable interventions that go beyond saving individual women one at a time. It is has become imperative that partners within this movement ask some hard questions of themselves: how to overcome the infighting and provide examples of situations where the rhetoric and philosophy of the human rights lobby runs directly contrary to feminist thinking on the same subject, notably in areas where women's rights and the rights of children pull in opposite directions. The group was clear that activism on violence correct balance between providing services and doing prevention work; and most importantly where does the role women lie - as victim, as someone who has agency or as someone who has agency and is therefore the perpetrator.

The critical challenge facing the violence against women movements is to develop and broaden the understanding of strategies and interventions that effectively address their issues in diverse conditions and situations. One of the biggest barriers in this context is the absence of a broad-based understanding of the intersections within the field, with activists focusing on one form of violence against women rather than examining the whole canvas. Different key constituencies - policymakers, donors, women's rights advocates, non-government organizations and health providers - continue to articulate different, even conflicting, perspectives on this issue thereby inhibiting the understanding of the gamut of the forms, causes and strategies to address violence.

Given this context, CREA convened a meeting to bring together activists, from around the world, who have based their work on the understanding that women are victims, survivors and perpetrators and have used innovative strategies to deal with prevention and service around the world. Few of the participants defined their work as solely focused on gender-based violence, while some others challenged the usage of the term gender based violence since they felt that the term was loosely used by organizations and individuals to talk about violence against women. They felt that the two terms were not interchangeable since the former would also then take into account the violence faced by transgender and transsexual people and in reality very few organizations addressed those issues. However, all the participants agreed that they work on the intersection of issues of violence, health and human rights.

Strength in numbers? The second lens through which the Building Alliances conference considered the challenges raised by activists working on issues of violence against women is that the movement's traditional focus on gender-based violence has not been able to articulate its concerns with ideological and operational frameworks and language other than feminism were a key theme in many of the presentations and discussions.

The human rights approach to violence against women has been a useful framework to use in some regions, notably in Africa, Latin America and CEE, in particular, and systems of violence in particular. However, other potential partnerships for families working on issues of violence against women were also derided, including public health and economic arguments, the criminalization of violence, and also human rights and the role of communities in violence.

Human rights, women's rights, and central points about working in partnership with the human rights lobby is that it often around language and theory that can be used to access funding and attention for activism against violence against women. While in many participants believed that using the language of the human rights movement allows for collaboration, and in many circumstances acts as a useful bridge between activists from outside the field, and in many cases, the human rights approach can be used to access funding and attention for the human rights lobby.

For many in the group, using a human rights approach was seen as a game that activists must agree to play in order to secure funding and attention for the issues they are seeking to deal with. Some believed this is a game that feminists working in the gender-based violence field can play to their cause and project's advantage, and others added the idea that it is a necessary evil in contexts where using the human rights framework is more politically and culturally acceptable than speaking openly and directly about violence against women.

Language and motives. The flip side of the debate about feminists' adoption of human rights frameworks and language in their attempts to secure funding and attention for gender-based violence issues lies in the appropriation of feminist language and issues by others. Some participants believed that feminists have a fear of using any kind of language that might seem moralistic, while others pointed out that others, notably the radical right, use and adapt language from the women's movement freely, including, famously, the idea of the 'right to choose.' For some, developing the ability to use and adapt agendas as skillfully as other groups is a key issue for feminism in general and advocates working against violence against women in particular.

“We need to build partnerships but at the same time need to make sure we don’t end up with strange bedfellows.”

-Geetanjali Misra, India

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

A third lens through which the participants of the global dialogue considered the challenges facing activists working on issues of violence against women was that of the movement’s relationships with other advocacy groups. The issues and difficulties raised by working within ideological and operational frameworks and languages other than feminism were a key theme throughout many of the presentations and discussions at Bellagio. The discussion coalesced around a series of debates about the human rights movement and what some participants saw as the movement’s wholesale appropriation of feminist issues and violence against women in particular.

HUMAN RIGHTS, WOMEN’S RIGHTS

One of the central points about working in partnership with the human rights movement is a series of issues around language and the way this can be used to access resources and attention for activism against violence against women. While many participants agreed that using the language of the human rights movement allows for collaboration, and in many circumstances acts as a useful bridge between activists from both fields, rising levels of concern about the consequences of adopting the language and framework of the human rights movement also exist.

For many in the group, using a human rights approach was seen as a game that activists must agree to play in order to secure funding and attention for the issues they are seeking to deal with. Some believed this is a game that feminists working

in the violence against women field can play to their cause and project's advantage, and others added the idea that it is a necessary evil in contexts where using a human rights framework is more politically and culturally acceptable than speaking openly as a feminist.

However, there were also significant challenges to this idea within the group, many of whom provided examples of situations where the rhetoric and philosophy of the human rights movement runs directly contrary to feminist thinking on the same subject, notably in areas where women's rights and the rights of children pull in opposite directions. The group was clear that activism on violence against women has, and should continue to have, its fundamental roots in feminism, and that this is an important point to remember, and to reinforce in the future.

LANGUAGE AND MOTIVES

The flip side of the debate about feminists' adoption of human rights frameworks and language in their attempts to secure funding and attention for issues of violence against women is the appropriation of feminist language and issues by others. Some participants believed that feminists have a fear of using any kind of language that might seem moralistic, while pointing out that others, notably the radical right, use and adapt language from the women's movement freely, including, famously, the idea of the 'right to choose'. For some, developing the ability to use and adapt agendas as skillfully as other groups is a key issue for feminism in general and advocates working against violence against women in particular.

The group also had significant concerns about the wholesale appropriation of particular violence against women issues by other movements, and also by administrations and policy-makers. The group believed that this can and does cause situations where one problem receives funding and attention to the exclusion and detriment of other, equally pressing, but less 'glamorous' violence against women issues. Trafficking in South Eastern Europe was offered as an example by Barbara Limanowska, discussed earlier in the report.

While harnessing the support of others, including States, in the pursuit of a solution to a particular problem of violence against

women often seems attractive, participants were clear that this can lead to unintended consequences, when the agendas of partners dominate, often with consequences that disregard and violate women's rights, even as they are removed from violent situations. An example of this is the controversial Reproductive Rights Bill introduced in Philippines, discussed earlier in this report.

FRUITFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Working in partnership, particularly with the human rights movement, can cause uncertainty in the identities of actors working against violence against women. As mentioned earlier, the group identifies as activists working in the violence against women field, and, importantly and primarily, within the context of the broader feminist movement. Alliances with human rights activists or other groupings are therefore secondary – the focus is on the rights of women not to suffer violence, rather than human rights more broadly.

These discussions helped participants to develop a clearer understanding of how working with others can help – and the consequences that can arise when it does not. This debate was a particularly complex one, requiring activists to weigh in the balance the relative merits of pragmatism and ideology, as well as to make fundamental judgments about the motives of others – and decisions on how far the movement can be prepared to compromise in order to achieve results.

Issues around partnerships can be controversial and hard to confront. Many working in the violence against women field will face conflicts between the broader picture and the vested interests of their own programs and projects. However, the violence against women movement must face these partnership concerns in order to better establish its priorities and identity.

THEME 4 PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

showed the roles that the state and civil society can play in the propagation of violence. The case studies came from seven different countries, spread across five continents, but common themes emerged from this global perspective. Participants learned that there are similarities in the ways that the state and civil society participate in violence against women across cultures. These common themes can help actors in the work against violence to understand strategies to combat it. However, the group also felt that a single focus on prevention, although it can lead to waves of activism through training and consciousness-raising, may also result in the movement concentrating more on the number of women who have taken part in programs, rather than the long term, real world outcomes in terms of ending violence against women. Other strategies too have their limitations; working with men is a contentious approach for the feminist movement, and of the main themes and topics of discussion arising from the discussions of the previous days. requires further definition and development, while negotiation of legislation tends to focus on

domestic violence to the exclusion of other violence issues. Eighteen people contributed to the discussions, each bringing to the table their own viewpoint and experience. From the ideas of these eighteen, four key themes emerged that characterize the work against gender-based violence, including integrity of the resulting organizations. The group agreed the situation engenders Partnerships, Priorities and Strategies, and Funding and Power -- is the subject of a section of this paper, which also proposes how these new understandings could influence the work that is done in the future on issues related to violence against women. Participants talked about a frequent feeling that feminists are engaged in preaching to the converted, and failing to reach out beyond that constituency. As another participant very aptly stated: "NGOs are increasingly valued for their professionalism, not for their ideology."

Conflicting priorities. Sometimes the movement against violence against women is challenged by the competing demands in women's lives. Some participants believed that the movement has allowed itself to be diverted from fundamental principles in the interests of short-term economic gains for women, with the result that women's rights are sidelined in favor of other ideologies. For example, the movement is challenged when considering appropriate responses to abortion of female fetuses for economic and cultural reasons. The situation is clearly both politically and morally charged, and entails a thorough examination of priorities.

The participants discussed how feminists have increasingly found themselves adopting the language and trappings of the human rights movement, as a way of accessing funding, and as a by-product of the overlap between human rights and women's rights issues. Delegates talked about the effects of feminism's gradual acceptance into some establishment roles, and particularly inclusion in national and transnational policymaking.

experiences are very different from situation to situation. In particular, the group pointed to the Millennium Development Goals as an example of a fast set of policies?

Just consider the Millennium Development Goals. Gender issues have been reduced to a measure of primary education and maternal mortality. And we do not resist this!

The group discussed feminism's waning of focus on issues such as reproductive health, abortion, and the struggle against the institutionalized violence of rape, sexual harassment, and domestic violence. The group also discussed the importance of the role of NGOs in the violence against women field, and among feminists in general, is both overdue and vital to the better functioning of the movement in the future. While delegates themselves often function in situations that require compromise, notably working within frameworks and languages other than feminism, the group believed that activists must revisit a body of core principles by which work in the violence against women field may operate in the future.

“Without having the ability to say ‘yes’ how can people be expected to say ‘no’.”

-Radhika Chandiramani, India

The fourth key theme identified by the Building Alliances dialogue was the importance and difficulty of setting priorities and determining strategies for the international movement on violence against women.

The discussion centered on identifying a number of strategies currently used by the movement to address violence against women, and assessing when and where these strategies are effective versus when they are limited.

In addition to the limitations, the group made a series of observations about how setting priorities for social policy sometimes has unintended consequences on women's lives that emerge in later years. There was a wide-ranging discussion about feminism's responsibility for this – and the steps the movement needs to take to ensure that these problems do not continue to arise.

STRATEGIES IN ACTION

Presenters introduced a range of strategies for building and mobilizing movements and constituencies that work to end violence against women.

STRATEGY 1: VANANGANA, UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA

Madhavi Kuckreja explained the strategy of using street theater that Vanangana, had used. Vanangana was started in Chitrakoot district of Uttar Pradesh, a state in North India, by Dalit and tribal women with a strong feminist perspective. Poverty and feudalism combine together in this area to generate conditions of extreme caste, class, and gender based

discrimination. Violence and exploitation – social and economic, public and domestic – are experienced in double measure by the women of this region, particularly by low caste and tribal women, who are at the bottom of the class, caste, and gender hierarchy.

Starting from a position where violence and power are extremely evident in society, a strategy was created that:

- Chose to confront, in public spaces, the murders of married women in their marital homes
- Street plays were performed in villages where there were recorded cases of murders of women
- Used the responses from the community to publicly discuss and condemn these murders

STRATEGY 2: THE HIV LAW PROJECT, NEW YORK ,USA

In the United States, Terry McGovern used a multi-pronged approach when the needs of women with HIV and AIDS were being neglected. The HIV Law Project, an organization that she founded, has been at the forefront of legal and advocacy services to low-income HIV-positive New Yorkers, particularly women and people of color.

Starting from a situation where AIDS was primarily seen as a disease affecting upper and middle-class white gay men and did not include a growing population of poor HIV positive women and men of color, a strategy was devised that:

- Led to a first class action against the federal government in 1990, challenging the Social Security Administration's denial of disability benefits as discriminatory to women and people of color, which the organization won
- Achieved a combination of service delivery and advocacy
- Provided targeted education to the infected women so that they could argue their own cases

STRATEGY 3: THE CAMPAIGN: STOP IMPUNITY, NOT ONE MORE DEAD, CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO

Lydia Alpizar explained this campaign in Mexico that was launched by a coalition of Mexican activists. Since 1993, over 280 women have been murdered in the Mexican/US border town of Ciudad Juarez. The list of women who have disappeared have continued to grow with little commitment from the city, national or international authorities to identify the murderers and end the killings.

Using a strategy based on the collective power of coalition working, and networks of expertise, the campaign:

- Changed the discourse around the killings from 'another woman killed' to 'Stop impunity', to 'no more women's human rights violations', to 'the State is responsible to have an effective intervention'
- Promoted the involvement of the Inter American Human Rights Commission
- Pushed for federal government involvement and for state and local government accountability

STRATEGY 4: CREA, NEW DELHI, INDIA

Pramada Menon's description of CREA's work demonstrated that women's human rights can be addressed in serious as well as fun ways. She highlighted strategies that ranged from conducting institutes on sexuality and human rights, implementing innovative thematic exchange programs to organizing film festivals, theater performances and internet chats on issues of violence against women, sexuality, gender and rights.

Working from a strategy of communicating with women using a wide range of initiatives the organization:

- Brought together a new and diverse set of actors to work on issues of sexuality, gender and human rights
- Highlighted the paucity of resources available in Hindi, a local language, for women working in community based organizations

- Is building a body of activism and advocacy on issues of sexuality, violence against women, gender and human rights

STRATEGY : WOMEN'S INITIATIVES OR GENDER JUSTICE, THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS

The Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice works at integrating a gender perspective into the workings of the International Criminal Court, the Optional Protocol to CEDAW and other mechanisms. Brigid Inder explained the strategies the organization uses in their work.

Starting from the opportunity to be able to work on the International Criminal Court, building a strategy for gender justice includes:

- Capacity building of government delegations and mainstream human rights NGOs on their commitments to women
- Building of coalitions with social movements, including HIV/AIDS, trafficking and indigenous rights to further advance gender justice
- Acting as an ongoing watchdog of the International Criminal Court on gender issues

ASSESSING STRATEGIES

The current state of the feminist movement was a theme that recurred throughout the conference in a number of guises. The group talked of a sense that activism as a strategy is in decline. This was seen variously as feminists entering a period of reflection, or as stagnation and possible decline.

In assessing strategies, the participants spent time analyzing approaches that are used for combating violence against women: direct assistance; prevention; working with men; negotiation of legislation; and international advocacy. While each can be, and is, used to great effect by the movement, participants were able to define and explore significant limitations – and potentially significant problems – with each one.

Direct assistance was characterized as a palliative, rather than a cure, by the group, with possibly damaging implications – the de-politicization of the violence against women movement. While some in the group are involved in direct assistance programs with high levels of success in combating violence issues, participants felt it is important that work in the violence against women field is not confined to this area – and that work on strategy and policymaking should also be a focus. However it was also argued that direct service work could also be political in nature and should not be undervalued and always pitted as somehow being lower down the hierarchy in comparison to prevention or advocacy work.

The group also felt that a single focus on prevention can lead to waves of activism through training and consciousness raising programs. However, this may result in the mere counting of the number of women who have participated in these programs rather than measuring the actual impact. Other strategies too have their limitations; working with men is a contentious approach for the feminist movement, and requires further definition and development, while negotiation of legislation tends to focus on domestic violence to the exclusion of other vital issues.

CONFLICTING PRIORITIES

Sometimes the violence against women movement is challenged by the competing demands on women's lives. Some participants believed that the movement has allowed itself to be diverted from fundamental principles in the interests of short term economic gains for women, with the result that women's rights are sidelined in favor of other ideologies. For example, the movement is challenged when considering appropriate responses to abortion of female foetuses for economic and cultural reasons. The situation is clearly both politically and morally charged, and entails a thorough examination of priorities.

The participants discussed how feminists have increasingly found themselves adopting the language and trappings of the human rights movement, as a way of accessing funding, and as a by-product of the overlap between human rights and women's rights issues. Participants also talked about the effects

of feminism's gradual acceptance into some establishment roles, and particularly inclusion in national and transnational policymaking.

There was a debate about relationships between those who had been part of the movement for many years, and the aspirations and needs of younger feminists. Lydia Alpizar summed up the frustration felt by many when she said that for many young feminists, the rigidity of the movement and its methods means that their rights are not respected and their voices not heard. Others raised the idea that for many young activists, working within NGOs is increasingly identified as a 'profession'.

Many saw the subsuming of women's rights goals into human rights ideologies as a principal cause of the depoliticization of violence against women and other feminist movements. They felt the ground lost must be reclaimed as activists seek to move forward. In particular, the group pointed to the Millennium Development Goals as an example. It felt that the reduction of gender related issues to measures of access to primary education, and maternal mortality rates is symptomatic of the movement's failure to ensure that feminist principles are not eroded by other issues.

The group discussed feminism's avoidance of certain topics, notably around religion and gender issues. Sunila Abeysekera suggested the underlying reason for this was the difficulty of these subjects, and in particular the divisions they create within the movement, and in debate with other organizations, including the human rights and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender networks. Gita Sahgal of Amnesty International noted that it is increasingly difficult to be part of both the feminist and the social justice movements.

There was a discussion about the status and integrity of NGOs. Pramada Menon observed that there is a growing assumption that receiving funds implies that organizations are stooges of their donors. This theme was further developed by Gita Sahgal, who talked about the suspicion of NGOs common among left-wing groups and organizations, and Fahima Hashim from Salmah Women's Training and Documentation Center, Sudan, added a vivid illustration, describing the Sudanese government's control of NGO status, and the igno-

rance of donors as regards the integrity of the resulting organizations.

The group agreed that the situation engenders considerable concern for the future of feminism. Participants talked about a frequent feeling that feminists are engaged in preaching to the converted, and failing to reach out beyond that constituency. As Barbara Limanowska very aptly stated: "NGOs are increasingly valued for their professionalism, not for their ideology."

PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

The participants agreed that a thorough examination of priorities in the violence against women field, and among feminists in general, is both overdue and vital to the better functioning of the movement in the future. While the participants themselves often function in situations that require compromise, notably working within frameworks and languages other than feminism, the group believed that activists must revisit a body of core principles by which work in the violence against women field may operate in the future. Organizations also need to strengthen their ability to work on the intersections of gender, sexuality and human rights, to better address issues of violence against women.

We should not forget that some international financial institutions are now effectively running some states. We were taken in by the belief that getting women into funding institutions would lead to a difference in funding for women's projects. We as funders have power because of our decision-making role.

In my experience, the World Bank and UNDP have two ways of working. First they run projects on 'serious' issues like economic development. Second they cover 'other' issues which includes both women and children. The two kinds of project remain unconnected. Something gets inside funding institutions. We get inside.

THEME 5: FUNDING AND POWER

Power and feminism. Developing a more equal power balance between donors and those receiving resources to run programs clearly depends heavily on the three other themes set out in this paper.

First, the participants felt that activists working on violence against women will stand a better chance of gaining access to resources in future once conflicts and fragmentation within the wider feminist movement have been discussed, and resolved. At this point, activists will be in a position to benefit from the strides feminism has made towards placing more women at the heart of organizations like the World Bank, as well as government administrations.

Second, they also believed that it is important for activists working on issues of violence against women, and the feminist movement as a whole, to spend time considering the best way to work with other advocacy groups, and how far to adopt or adapt other frameworks and languages. Participants believed it is vital that activists do not allow the essentially feminist character of their work to be subsumed by the human rights lobby, or by any other set of interests. At the same time, it is often important for feminists to work with other groups in order to achieve important outcomes.

Related to the issue of how power is distributed in the relationship between donors and recipients of funds is a question about how feminists working within institutions handle the power this gives them to support issues like activism against gender-based violence. Some participants in the conference pointed out that while women do have considerable power within the philanthropic world, relatively small amounts of funding are currently made available for feminist projects.

“We need to make sure we consider the wider implications of the money we take.”

-Pramada Menon, India

The fifth key theme that emerged during the Building Alliances dialogue was a set of issues around funding, relationships between donors and activists, and power more generally. The group included both donors and those whose work depends on successful applications for resources, which produced a lively, honest, and rounded debate.

This lens for analysis of the advocacy movement on violence against women focuses on the internal workings of the movement, but also resonates with each of the other themes explored in this working paper. In particular, the group discussed feminism’s role in relationships between donors and recipients, as leaders of the movement have moved closer to centers of power.

POWER AND PRIORITIES

The group’s consideration of relationships between activists and donors was generally characterized by a discussion of power within relationships. Participants agreed that the position of foundations and other donors gives them potential for great power over NGOs and other funded organizations.

As Katherine Acey of Astraea Lesbian Fund for Justice, United States of America, put it: “We have power because of our decision making role. We are still learning how to tread lightly and clearly.” She identified an increasing tendency for work to become focused on single issues (for example, trafficking) and for these issues to go largely uncritiqued.

This in turn provides a strong incentive for those reliant on funding to focus their efforts on policy areas and problems

likely to attract resources, which can lead to significant distortions, and for donors to channel yet further funds into these areas, to the detriment of other issues.

The power of funding organizations was a cause for real concern for participants, who pointed out that some international financial institutions are effectively in a position whereby they run some States. Some respondents further pointed out that many States in the global South struggle to assert themselves and the rights of their populations in the context of dealing with transnational organizations like the World Trade Organization.

In addition, there was a general belief that many donors have two ways of working – focusing one set of programs on ‘serious’ issues such as economic development, and the other set on a secondary group, including women’s issues. There was also the question of how feminists working within these institutions actually handle the power of being donors and support issues like activism on issues of violence against women. Some participants pointed out that while women do have considerable power within the philanthropic world, relatively small amounts of funding are currently made available for feminist projects.

The second strand of discussion around the donor community focused on a perceived need to revitalize the feminist movement and women’s issues. Katherine Acey discussed her organization's recent work on refocusing itself around three funding objectives: movement building, leadership development, and capacity building, including political education and analysis.

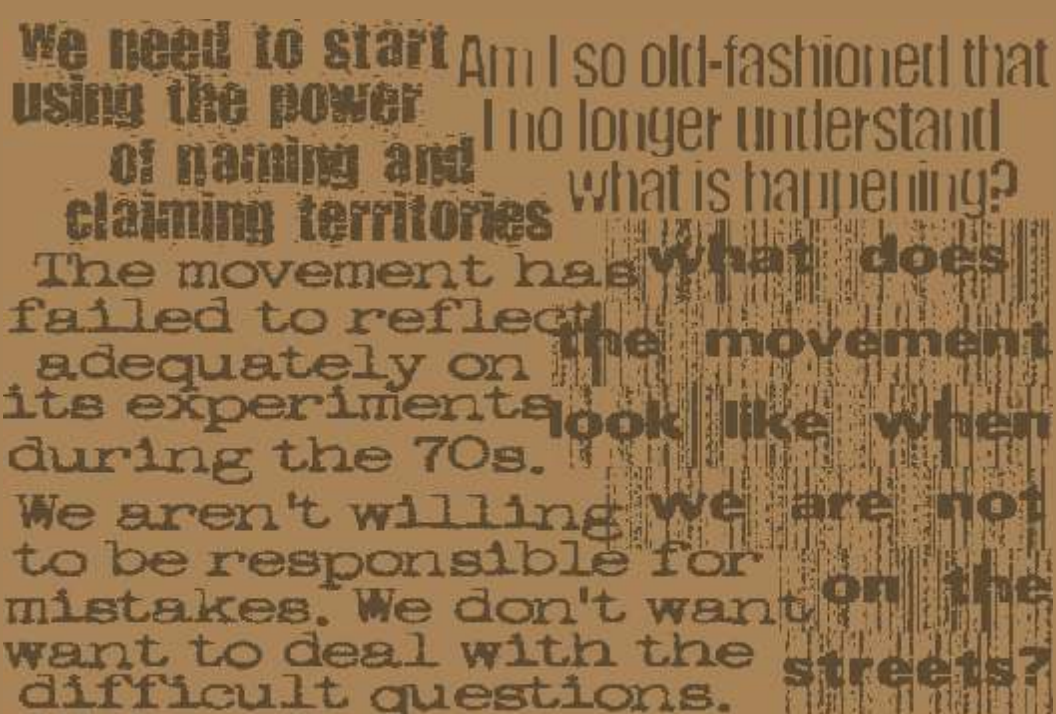
Gita Sahgal, Head of the Gender Unit, talked about Amnesty International's refocusing on women's issues by recent moves to require country administrations to work on issues of violence against women within their own country. Barbara Phillips, Program Officer at the Ford Foundation also shared the findings of a recent survey of women in the USA on their attitudes towards the women's movement. A majority believes that revitalization is important and overdue today. Of those, 92% cite tackling domestic violence and sexual assaults as the top priority for the women’s movement.

POWER AND FEMINISM

The participants felt that activists working on violence against women will stand a better chance of gaining access to resources in future once conflicts and fragmentation within the wider feminist movement have been discussed, and resolved. At this point, activists will be in a position to benefit from the strides feminism has made towards placing more women at the heart of organizations like the World Bank, as well as government administrations.

They also believed that it is important for activists working on issues of violence against women, and the feminist movement as a whole, to spend time considering the best way to work with other movements and advocacy groups, and how far to adopt or adapt other frameworks and languages. Participants believed it is vital that activists do not allow the feminist character of their work to be subsumed by the human rights lobby, or by any other set of interests.

It was considered essential that activists working on issues of violence against women, and the feminist movement as a whole, consider the broader implications of the decisions they take, and the priorities they set in their work. Participants could point to many examples of situations where certain actions, or the prioritization of a particular course of action or strategies, have resulted in unintended consequences arising further down the line.



MOVING ON

The fourth key theme that emerged during the Building Alliances conference was feminism and women's issues. Katherine Acey discussed her work with the Violence Against Women Foundation for Justice, recent work on refocusing itself around issues of violence against women within their own country. Barbara Philips also shared the top line outputs of a recent survey of women in the USA on their attitudes towards the women's movement. A majority believes that revitalization is important and overdue today. Of those, 92% cite tackling domestic violence and sexual assaults as the top priority for the movement. The group included both donors and those whose work depends on successful applications for resources, which produced a lively, honest, and rounded debate.

This lens for analysis of the advocacy movement on violence against women focuses on the internal workings of the movement, but also resonates with each of the other themes explored in this paper. In particular, the group discussed feminism's role in relationships between donors and recipients, as leaders of the movement have moved closer to centers of power.

Power and priorities. The group's consideration of relationships between activists and donors was generally characterized by a discussion of power within relationships. Participants agreed that the position of foundations and other donors gives them potential for great power over NGOs and other funded organizations.

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This in turn provides a strong incentive for those reliant on funding to focus their efforts on policy areas and problems likely to attract resources, which can lead to significant distortions, and for donors to channel yet further funds into these areas, to the detriment of other issues.

The power of funding organizations was a cause for real concern for participants, who pointed out that some international financial institutions are effectively in a position whereby they run some states. Some respondents further pointed out that many states in the global South struggle to assert themselves and the rights of their populations in the context of dealing with transnational organizations like the World Trade Organization.

In addition, there was a general belief that many donors have two ways of working – focusing one set of programs on 'serious' issues such as economic development, and the other set on a secondary group, including women's issues. There was also the question of how feminists working within these institutions actually handle the power of being donors and support issues like activism on issues of violence against women. Related to the issue of how power is distributed in the relationship between donors and recipients of funds is a question about how feminists working within institutions handle the power this gives them to support issues like activism against gender-based violence. Some participants in the conference pointed out that while women do have considerable power within the philanthropic world, relatively small amounts of funding are currently made available for feminist projects.

“It's strange how your response to the question of whether you think a woman has the right to choose to become a sex worker or not determines whether you are a feminist or not.”

- Barbara Limanowska, Poland

The Building Alliances dialogue did much to set out the problems and issues faced by those working in the violence against women movement, and by the wider feminist movement. There was lively debate and discussion, covering strategic problems and illustrations of these at work through individual projects. Recurrent issues that came up were:

- The question of relationships within the feminist movement, and in particular a sense of unease with the homogenous label of ‘feminist’
- The issue of the feminist movement working with other movements, notably human rights and child rights, and in particular questions of dealing with power balances
- The recurring problem of conflicting priorities in the field of gender justice
- The problems associated with working with donor organizations, and in particular feminism’s uneasy relationship with money and power

In order to strengthen global organizing and collaboration on issues of violence against women, these challenges must be recognized and grappled with, even if full resolution is impossible. Each of these challenges requires a significant investment of time and thought on the part of feminists, and particularly those involved in violence against women work. The questions are fundamental, and the answers that women across the world give to them will shape the future of the wider movement, as well as help or hinder progress towards ending violence against women.

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CREA is a not for profit organization based in New Delhi, India, founded in the year 2000, that aims at empowering women to articulate, demand and access their human rights by enhancing women's leadership and focusing on issues of sexuality, sexual and reproductive rights, violence against women, and women's human rights. CREA aims at creating networks for social change, strengthening civil society organizations and empowering individuals through leadership institutes, exchange programs and study tours, the creation and dissemination of public education material, and coordinating thematic advocacy campaigns.

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