

Coalition Chronicles

A newsletter of
End Domestic Abuse WI
Volume 32 Issue 3

Violence Against Women: A Global Reality

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*From the Director,
Patti Seger*

The Long View

When I try to fully understand something, I often find myself seeking the longest possible view of a problem.

I metaphorically get up on a balcony to observe the problem as a whole. This edition of the Coalition Chronicles takes the long view of gender-based violence, examining its global impact and the intersecting issues that support and perpetuate violence.

Earlier this year, the World Health Organization reported that 35% (1 in 3) women in the world will experience domestic or sexual violence in their lifetime. As we take the long view of global violence against women, and then focus on violence here in the US, we can gain a different perspective of domestic and sexual violence. When we broaden our lens to include the culture and climate surrounding individual acts of domestic and sexual violence, we see more clearly the intersecting structures of poverty, historical and present day trauma, racism, genderism, ethnocentrism and more. This feels overwhelming and insurmountable. But, understanding what supports the violence gives us a place to start unraveling and dismantling these structures.

For when we get up on the balcony, taking in the long view, and see peace and justice rather than violence and suffering, it will truly be worth our efforts.

"Let no one be discouraged by the belief there is nothing one person can do against the enormous array of the world's ills, misery, ignorance, and violence. Few will have the greatness to bend history, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events." -Robert F. Kennedy



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patti Seger".

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION REPORT HIGHLIGHTS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AS A 'GLOBAL HEALTH PROBLEM OF EPIDEMIC PROPORTIONS'

Physical or sexual violence is a public health problem that affects more than one third of all women globally, according to a new report released by the World Health Organization (WHO) in partnership with the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and the South African Medical Research Council.



The report, *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*, represents the first systematic study of global data on the prevalence of violence against women – both by partners and non-partners. Some 35% of all women will experience either intimate partner or non-partner violence. The study finds that intimate partner violence is the most common type of violence against women, affecting 30% of women worldwide.

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All information on this page taken from the World Health Organization, "WHO report highlights violence against women as a 'global health problem of epidemic proportions'." Last modified June 20, 2013. Accessed October 25, 2013.

[http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2013/violence against women 20130620/en/](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2013/violence%20against%20women%2020130620/en/).

Click [HERE](#) to read the entire June 20, 2013 WHO News Release.

KEY HEALTH IMPACTS

- Death and injury
- Depression
- Alcohol use problems
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Unwanted pregnancy and abortion
- Low birth-weight babies

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN¹ PREVALENCE RATES

- Africa – 45.6%
- Americas – 36.1%
- Eastern Mediterranean – 36.4%²
- Europe – 27.2%
- South-East Asia – 40.2%
- Western Pacific – 27.9%
- High income countries – 32.7%

¹ Combined intimate partner and non-partner sexual violence or both among all women of 15 years or older

² No data were available for non-partner sexual violence in this region.

Editor's Note: While violence against women around the globe may vary as it reflects local norms, laws, and environmental factors, there is a pervasive commonality: poverty. Globally, women are the majority of those living in poverty, which both creates and perpetuates violence. Amnesty International has explored this issue in its report, The Gender Trap: Women, Violence and Poverty, excerpted below.

THE GENDER TRAP WOMEN, VIOLENCE AND POVERTY

Most of the people living in poverty in the world are women – more than 70 per cent, according to UN estimates. Why is it that more than two thirds of the world's poor are women, although women are only half of the world's population?



Poverty, for women, is both a consequence and a cause of violence. Women who suffer physical, sexual or psychological violence lose income and their productive capacity is impaired. Violence against women also impoverishes their families, communities and societies. On the other hand, poverty makes it harder for women to find avenues of escape from an abusive relationship. While economic independence does not shield women from violence, access to economic resources can enhance women's capacity to make meaningful choices. A woman who is economically dependent on her partner may see no viable way of supporting herself and her children. A girl who becomes pregnant as a result of a rape may find herself excluded from school, reducing her prospects of finding work and securing an independent future.

The violence women face helps keep them poor, and it is poor women who are most exposed to violence. Many women living in slums experience violence and insecurity on a daily basis both in their homes and in the streets. Women in low-paid jobs in the informal sector often

work in deplorable conditions. Migrant women workers face exploitation and violence from employers or criminal networks when they seek better economic opportunities abroad.

Discrimination and violence against women often go hand in hand, resulting in the denial of women's rights to health, education, shelter and food. Poverty in turn puts women and girls at risk of further abuse and violence, closing the vicious circle.

Discrimination undermines the human rights of many different groups in society, including Indigenous People, ethnic, racial, religious or linguistic minorities, and migrants. Within these groups, women face double discrimination – both as group members and as women. In addition, particular groups of women are especially prone to be targeted for violence, including minority, Indigenous and refugee women, destitute women, women in institutions or in detention, girls, women with disabilities, older women and women in situations of armed conflict.

Poverty is more than lack of income. It is also lack of security, lack of voice, lack of choice. The voices of women who live in poverty are rarely heard. Poverty manifests itself in different ways and affects people and countries differently. Some groups are hit harder than others, both in developed and developing countries. Women experience the effects of poverty in particular ways because of their roles in society, the community and the family.

Amnesty International, "Amnesty International USA." Last modified November 25, 2009. Accessed October 27, 2013. <http://www.amnestyusa.org/research/reports/the-gender-trap-women-violence-and-poverty>.

Click [HERE](#) to read the full article from *Amnesty International*.

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Women's voices must be heard. Their contributions must be recognized and encouraged. The active participation of those affected is a critical part of any strategy to overcome poverty.

In the discussion below, Futures Without Violence focuses on the link between the well-being of women and children in communities, noting that the best outcomes for children anywhere in the world result from integrating services and supports for children with those of the families and communities in which they live. The following excerpts are taken from a draft of the full article, which will be available in 2014.

BUILDING PROMISING FUTURES: GUIDELINES FOR ENHANCING RESPONSE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROGRAMS TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH

*Eleanor Lyon, Ph.D., Julia Perilla, Ph.D., and Anne Menard
for Futures Without Violence*

Current literature from the United States and a number of other countries throughout the world suggests that the best outcomes for children (*i.e.* significantly less custodial interference, less maltreatment, less physical, sexual, and verbal abuse)¹ result from approaches that integrate attention to children's safety and well-being into services and supports provided to the families and communities in which children live. UNICEF² clearly indicates that women's rights and children's rights are interrelated as they pertain to their mutual well-being. Moreover, well-established models of holistic, integrated services are in place and operating successfully in many parts of the world and in some immigrant³ communities of color and Native communities in the United States. Unfortunately, only a few of these culturally-specific programs appear in the current literature and thus their work is not widely acknowledged or disseminated.

About Women and Children

Data from the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children (which reviewed existing studies on the topic from throughout the world) was used by UNICEF to create a list of six basic needs that children have to be better protected from the deleterious effects of violence in their homes: (a) a safe and secure home environment; (b) adults who will listen to them, believe them, and shelter them; (c) a sense of routine and normalcy; (d) support services that meet their needs; (e) learning that domestic violence is wrong and being trained

¹ (Hamby *et al.*, 2010)

² UNICEF (2013)

³ Perilla, J. L., Serrata, J. V., Weinberg, J., & Lippy, C. A. (2012). Integrating women's voices and theory: A comprehensive domestic violence intervention for Latinas. *Women & Therapy*, 35:1-2, 93-105.

about non-violent ways of resolving conflict; and (f) adults who will speak out and break the silence.⁴ U.S. researchers have compiled similar lists of sources of resilience⁵.

We know that in addition to violence in the home, many children in this and many other countries are also exposed to street violence, drugs, gangs, bullying in school and neighborhood, extreme poverty, lack of basic needs, and many other conditions that can prevent them from realizing their right to a childhood free from violence and fear.⁶ We are also aware that when children are not able to obtain these basic needs, their mother is also affected.

UNICEF indicates that “the well-being of women and children is heavily determined by what happens in the private spheres of their lives: within their families, households and communities.”⁷ Thus, it is logical that in countries outside the United States, strategies to address and prevent negative child outcomes are closely tied to plans and policies for increasing the well being of the mothers. Unfortunately, this has not been the case in this country until quite recently.

In the United States, efforts to jointly address violence against women and children have not been considered widely and, in some instances, the two advocacy groups have been regarded as opposing camps in competition with one another for funding and relevance. The “silos” thus created have, in most cases, prevented our field from engaging in more integrated efforts to ensure that mothers and children receive responses that honor their connections to one another (*e.g.* [ensuring] children’s well-being that can also deeply impact the mother’s safety and well being).

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⁴ (UNICEF, 2006)

⁵ (See Gewirtz & Edelson, 2007)

⁶ UNICEF (2009)

⁷ UNICEF (2009) (p.21).



SIX (6) BASIC NEEDS

- 1 A safe and secure home environment
- 2 Adults who will listen to them, believe them, and shelter them
- 3 A sense of routine and normalcy
- 4 Support services that meet their needs
- 5 Learning that domestic violence is wrong and being trained about non-violent ways of resolving conflict
- 6 Adults who will speak out and break the silence

Editor's Note: When we were planning this issue of the Chronicles, the following stories from India caught our attention. Read about the PINK GANG (below) and SAVE OUR SISTERS (next page).

WEAR A PINK SARI AND CARRY A BIG STICK THE WOMEN'S GANGS OF INDIA

India is witnessing a rise of vigilante groups, the most sensational of which is the *gulabi*, or pink gang, operating in the Bundelkhand district of the Uttar Pradesh state, one of the poorest districts of India. Some gangs have started what Indian journalists describe as a "mini-revolution" on behalf of women.

The founder of the *gulabis* is the fearless Sampat Pal Devi, 40, who was married off at the age of 12 to an ice-cream vendor and had the first of her five children at 15. The *gulabis*, whose members say they are a "gang for justice," started in 2006 as a sisterhood of sorts that looked out for victims of domestic abuse, a problem the United Nations estimates affects two in three married Indian women. Named after their hot-pink sari uniforms, the gang paid visits to abusive husbands and demanded they stop the beatings.

Pal's group now has more than 20,000 members, and the number is growing. What's the context for this phenomenon? The Indian press often points to a host of ills plaguing modern India, such as honor killings, dowries, child marriages, and female feticide. These account for female despondency but not for the gangs as an outlet for it. In the past, many Indian women would have taken these pressures out on themselves, through self-immolation or hanging, for example. As women have gained political power, through initiatives like the affirmative-action bill, dispossessed rural women have realized that they can instead respond boldly and collectively to abuse.

Why aren't they turning to political activism as opposed to vigilantism? To begin with, the gangs offer more immediate benefits than politics does. Another reason is that female politicians rising to power from the lower castes have been dismal role models. These politicians have the potential to inspire poor women more than dynastic leaders like Sonia Gandhi, but they have disappointed the women they claim to represent by being as corrupt and criminal as the male politicians they despise. The silver lining here is that while Indian democracy is too weak to deliver on the gender equality that is inscribed in its constitution, it is strong enough not to crush movements like the pink gang.

Fontanella-Khan, Amana. "Wear a Pink Sari and Carry a Big Stick: The women's gangs of India." Slate, sec. DoubleX: What Women Really Think about News, Politics, and Culture, July 19, 2010. (Accessed October 27, 2013). (c) 2013, Slate, reprinted with permission

Click [HERE](#) to read the full article.

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SAVE OUR SISTERS

A print campaign was recently launched by “**Save Our Sisters**,” an anti-sex trafficking initiative. The campaign shows recreated scenes from old hand-painted images of Indian goddesses, in which makeup has been used so that models (goddesses) appear bruised and wounded. Some of the statistics shared in the campaign:

- Today, more than **68%** of women in India are victims of domestic violence.
- **100 million** Indians, largely women and girls, are said to be involved in trafficking.
- Last year alone, **244,270** crimes against women were reported in the country.[†]

[†] Jha, Rega. BuzzFeed, "India's Incredibly Powerful 'Abused Goddesses' Campaign Condemns Domestic Violence." Last modified September 5, 2013. Accessed October 27, 2013.

Click [HERE](#) to read the full article and see the **ABUSED GODDESSES** campaign images.

Click [HERE](#) to read more about “**Save Our Sisters**.”

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Human Trafficking - Modern Slaves Hidden in Plain Sight *Morgan Young, Immigration and Poverty Law Attorney*

Human trafficking knows no boundaries. Victims of both sex and labor exploitation come from all corners of the globe, all ethnicities, religions, sexual orientations and classes. The one thing that every victim has in common is vulnerability. Traffickers are highly skilled at detecting vulnerability and exploiting it.

Victims are trafficked across country's borders, across state lines, within a town, or even a block or house. Traffickers use abusive tactics to maintain power and control over victims, and victims live within a climate of fear that prevents them from leaving.

Groups such as the Polaris Project monitor trafficking activity and state-by-state policy initiatives to protect victims. State report cards are routinely updated to reflect legislative changes.

Click [HERE](#) to view Wisconsin's report card.

Cultural Trauma Emigrates With Survivors

Robin Dalton, RISE Immigration/Family Law Attorney

Violence against women is a global epidemic, which cuts across all continents and income levels as seen in the 2013 WHO Report. The Gender Trap shows how violence against women is both a result of and contributes directly to disproportionately high levels of poverty and lack of security for women. This vulnerability is enhanced when emigrants leave their countries of origin whether by choice, necessity, or force. Even if the immediate trauma occurred in or was due to conditions in the home country, cultural borders and historic trauma often travel alongside immigrants and refugees across physical borders.

Cultural borders often connote a more powerful barrier than any physical border could. Culture is more than music, cooking and dress. Culture covers our personal and family values, emotional responses, beliefs in hierarchy and power, understanding of childcare and childrearing, conceptions of time, personal and extended space, gender dynamics and more. Access and confidence in law enforcement often varies among cultures and subcultures. It is difficult to maintain one's shared culture while navigating the dominant culture; balancing between the two can mean isolation from both mainstream and shared cultures.

Cultural borders can mean that one cannot rely on their country of origin (for those who have a country of origin) for protection, but the implications may be deeper and more complex. Many women suffering violence may not be able to rely on family for support, especially those for whom the perpetrator is family – for example when threats of honor killing, female genital mutilation, forced marriages, *etc.* are part of her cultural landscape. Compounding such risk factors, diasporic communities may share and help to enforce accepted, or even celebrated, practices of violence against women who have traveled great distances to escape these dangers. For many women and girls, help-seeking creates the greatest actual threat to safety.

National Human Trafficking Resource Center

Call **1-888-373-7888** or text **BeFree** (233733).

The National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC), a national, toll-free hotline, can answer calls and texts from anywhere in the country, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year.

NHTRC is a program of Polaris Project, a non-profit, non-governmental organization working exclusively on the issue of human trafficking. You can contact NHTRC to:

- Report a tip
- Connect with anti-trafficking services in your area
- Request training, technical assistance, information or specific anti-trafficking resources

Cultural fears may reflect imminent danger, but they also encompass historical trauma. This trauma is deeply rooted in one's being. Survivors with varied cultural backgrounds may have long suffered adverse effects, including accepted violence against women that has endured generations. Historical trauma is a response to traumatic events such as domestic violence and sexual assault, genocide, slavery, terrorism, abuse by religious leaders and political leaders, and war. Historical trauma is pervasive and transfers across generations, so it becomes increasingly difficult to identify and overcome.

As Wisconsin becomes richer in diversity it is important to keep in mind that each of us has a unique history, and while we cannot know what experiences others have had, we can continue to strive for better cultural competency. Some local organizations have done this by addressing accessibility issues for immigrant and refugee survivors of abuse. Some shifts in practice and awareness might encompass: ensuring language access; understanding that community and family ties are limited or nonexistent, and that immigration status (or lack of status) often means immigrant women survivors cannot tap essential community or public benefits that would facilitate stability and empowerment. Beyond public resources, lack of immigration status often translates into inability for survivors to apply for work or a driver's license. Fortunately there are some options available to survivors under immigration law to address some of these barriers. (See page 12.) ([Return to front page](#))

Ploua's Story

This story was shared by the Family Center, in Wisconsin Rapids, with Ploua's permission.

Ploua is 37 year-old Hmong woman. She is married with six children, ranging in age from seven months to sixteen years. Ploua had been coming to the Family Center for a few years mainly for donations and for help with reading documents.

Ploua is the first wife of her husband. Three years after she married her husband, he married another woman. The woman became his second wife and moved in next door to Ploua's house. Ploua's husband would rotate back and forth between the two houses. Her husband is abusive toward her, verbally, physically, financially and emotionally. He is controlling and refuses to let her go places by herself.

Ploua started coming to a Hmong women's support group last fall. Her husband allowed her to come because she told him it was an important meeting regarding Christmas presents. With the other women in the group, she was open about her life, and she was able to relate to a lot of them. She was able to express her feelings and struggles. The other women, victims themselves, encouraged her to defend herself and to get a job.

With the help of a Hmong advocate at the Family Center, Ploua was able to obtain WI FoodShare benefits and to find a job. Ploua also started attending "English Night" where she learned how to read and write in English. Ploua no longer lives next door to her husband and his new wife. She is now working full time and attending English class in the evening.

Ploua still has struggles with her husband and he still comes over. However, because she is no longer dependent on him, her life is a little less stressful. She continues to see the Hmong advocate and attend support group.

Hmong Domestic Violence Helpline

1-877-740-4292

**Muaj kev pab 24 teev tshua lub sij hawm
(Hmong Speaking)**

CONSIDERING HISTORICAL TRAUMA

Colleen Cox, Education Coordinator

The use of the term *Historical Trauma* has become fairly commonplace today. Related terms, *Intergenerational Trauma* and *Cultural Trauma* have also entered the popular lexicon and sometimes they are all used interchangeably – an internet search of any of these terms will yield an abundance of hits. Information about these group trauma responses has proliferated because it strongly resonates for many individuals and communities.

Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart is credited with the initial research and development of the theory of the Lakota (Teton Sioux) historical trauma response, defined as a constellation of features associated with massive group trauma – a cumulative wounding – across generations, such as that of the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre and the removal of children to federal boarding schools.⁸

This research and writing extends back to at least the 1980s, and she suggested that understanding the trauma response of the Lakota Sioux might provide insight into the experiences of other oppressed populations. Two areas of inference were noted in particular: 1) the importance of considering the traumatic histories of oppressed people and the impact history has on presenting problems, health statistics and other psychosocial conditions; and 2) the need to attend to cultural definitions of relationships and their meaning as well as cultural definitions of bereavement.⁹

The use of the word *bereavement* in the context of unresolved historical trauma is striking; the connection to ancestral suffering and death can be so strong that one feels psychically and emotionally dead and unworthy of living.¹⁰

In this initial research Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart likened the historical trauma response of Native Americans to that of Jewish Holocaust survivors; more recently clear parallels were drawn to name the historical trauma response within African American communities that have survived the legacy of slavery and present day racist violence perpetrated against them.¹¹ Whether we focus on the US or any other country, we will encounter histories of violence and oppression that have been perpetrated against racial or ethnic groups, or cultural groups who share other aspects of identity such as religion, age, sexual orientation or disability.

Common themes of group oppression, displacement and loss underlie a host of social problems including sexual and domestic abuse. Whether a survivor of abuse has immigrated or was born in the US, historical, cultural or intergenerational trauma may be inextricably linked with the immediate concerns that bring her to seek help. ([Return to Front Page](#))

⁸ Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Maria. *Wakiksuyapi: Carrying the Historical Trauma of the Lakota. Disaster and Traumatic Stress Research and Intervention*. Edited by Michael J. Zakour. page 245. New Orleans, LA: Tulane University, 2000. http://discoveringourstory.wisdomoftheelders.org/ht_and_grief/Wakiksuyapi-HT.pdf (Accessed October 31, 2013).

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 263.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 247.

¹¹ Explore the website of Dr. Joy Degruy. <http://joydegruy.com/resources-2/post-traumatic-slave-syndrome/>

VAWA 2013: Promising News for Immigrants

Enhanced Immigration Protections in VAWA 2013 include...

- Stalking is added to the list of crimes covered by U Visas
- Battered immigrants (including U Visa and VAWA Self Petitioning applicants) are exempted from “public charge” inadmissibility bar
- “Age out” protection ensuring children of U Visa applicants will not be denied status simply due to long processing times
- Waivers available to VAWA Self Petitioners with invalid marriages where the abusive spouse committed bigamy unbeknownst to the abused spouse
- Protections for foreign fiancées or fiancés have been added to ensure that violent criminal histories of U.S. citizens are disclosed
- The Prison Rape Elimination Act has been extended to all immigration detention facilities under the authority of the Departments of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security



Click [HERE](#) for a full list of new provisions.

Comparing Forms of Immigration Relief for Immigrant Victims of Crime

The **National Immigrant Women’s Advocacy Project** at the American University Washington College of Law provides a chart that outlines various forms of immigration relief available to immigrant crime victims including domestic violence, sexual assault and trafficking victims.

Using the outline you can locate each of the following categories:

- U Nonimmigrant Status – “U Visa”
- T Nonimmigrant Status – “T Visa”
- VAWA Self-Petition and Waivers
- Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS)
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

Click [HERE](#) to link to the complete chart, *Comparing Forms of Immigration Relief for Immigrant Victims of Crime*.

You can then find guidance, based on the categories, regarding each of the following questions, qualifications or requirements:

- Does it provide employment authorization and how long is the processing time?
- Are there protections against deportation and how early do they start?
- What is the process? What are the processing times?
- Can the survivors apply for family members? Children? What are qualifying crimes?
- How to show cooperation with law enforcement?
- When is there a requirement to prove the applicant’s good moral character?
- What is meant by the extreme hardship requirement for T Visa applicants?
- Are the caps to the number of applications approved each year?
- Are inadmissibility waivers “perdones” available?
- How does this affect an application for permanent residency? ([Return to Front Page](#))

ONE BILLION RISING

Need to be inspired? Want to dance? Want to organize a flash mob? ONE BILLION RISING (OBR) on February 14, 2013, was a big success. Here is the announcement for OBR 2014:

**ONE IN THREE WOMEN ON THE PLANET WILL
BE RAPED OR BEATEN IN HER LIFETIME.**

THAT IS ONE BILLION WOMEN.

**IN 2013, ONE BILLION WOMEN AND MEN
SHOOK THE EARTH THROUGH DANCE TO END
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS.**

**THIS YEAR, ON 14 FEBRUARY 2014, WE ARE
CALLING ON WOMEN AND MEN EVERYWHERE
TO HARNESS THE POWER AND IMAGINATION
TO RISE FOR JUSTICE.**

**IMAGINE, ONE BILLION WOMEN RELEASING
THEIR STORIES, DANCING AND SPEAKING OUT
AT THE PLACES WHERE THEY NEED JUSTICE,
WHERE THEY NEED AN END TO VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS.**

JOIN US!

Click [HERE](#) to check out ONE BILLION RISING FOR JUSTICE for information about events, news, and blog posts.



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Please support our ongoing work
 to end abuse of girls and women.
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THANK YOU!



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