

**Gender, Local Governance and
Violence Prevention:
Learning from International Good Practice to
Develop a Victorian Model**

Background Paper

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Introduction

The issue of violence and specifically, interpersonal violence has recently been assessed by the World Health Organisation as a worldwide public health priority given its incidence and prevalence throughout the world. It is clear that there are few nations, communities or individuals untouched by the effects of violence.

Communities are struggling to understand and solve the problems of violence. Cities are growing larger, more diverse and often more disconnected. Rural and urban communities are also struggling to offset the negative effects of a globalised economy, environmental degradation, economic and human rights violations, fear and war. Within this global context, many violence prevention practitioners are looking to local sites of intervention as a way to reconnect and rebuild social capital in order to address the violence within their own communities.

Traditional crime prevention approaches have often focused on a law and order/criminal justice approach, largely understanding violence as a crime committed by an individual acting outside the social norms. Additionally, many types of crime and violence have not been recognized in mainstream crime and violence prevention approaches. For instance, violence within the home has traditionally been relegated to the private or domestic sphere and considered 'outside' of public or political concern. Together with the World Health Organisation, many international bodies have begun to recognize the value of understanding interpersonal violence as inextricably connected to the social, political and economic structures in which individuals live and that any successful violence prevention initiatives must address these structural factors as the key to solutions.

Gender equality has become recognized as a structural determinant of women's experiences of violence and safety in our communities. Women's private experiences of violence are inextricably linked to their ability to participate fully in the public world. Men, as both victims and perpetrators of violence, are also subject to the often violent constructions of masculinity throughout cultures. Integrated approaches to the interconnected issues of gender and violence prevention at a local level are being identified as essential to addressing the violence within our homes, workplaces, streets and communities.

This paper documents and analyses some of the current international good practices in integrated violence prevention, gender and local governance approaches and initiatives. Section 1 examines the issues involved and looks at some current international policy and theory. Section 2 considers some features of good practice and provides case-study examples of past, current and emerging practice in the area, locally, nationally and internationally. Finally, Section 3 draws out some of the Victorian policy environments and opportunities for integrated work in this area. It is hoped this paper will serve as a starting point and resource for further discussion and work in this area by communities, local governments, community agencies, academics and violence prevention practitioners.

Abbreviations & Acronyms

ADHSS - Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (US)
ALG – Association of London Governments
CAFSU – Women and Urban Safety Action Committee
CPIPP – Crime Prevention Initiative Partnership Program
CPTED – Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
CVSFP – Cowichan Valley Safer Futures Program
CVPI – Comprehensive Violence Prevention Initiative
DFVWG – Darebin Family Violence Working Group
DHS – Department of Human Services (Victoria)
DOI – Department of Infrastructure (Victoria)
DOJ – Department of Justice (Victoria)
DV – Domestic Violence
DVC – Department of Victorian Communities (Victoria)
ED – Executive Director
EFH – Environments for Health
FV – Family Violence
FVPPF - Family Violence Prevention Fund
GA – Gender Analysis
GLA – Greater London Authority
G, VP & LG – Gender, Violence Prevention and Local Government
ICIWF – Information Centre of the Independent Women’s Forum (Russia)
IVO – Intervention Order
LDVS – London Domestic Violence Strategy
LG – Local Government
LHC – Liverpool Healthy Cities
METRAC – Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children
MOJ – Ministry of Justice (New Zealand)
MPHP – Municipal Public Health Plan
NGO – Non Government Organisation
NR – Neighbourhood Renewal
OWP – Office of Women’s Policy (Victoria)
SCC – Safer Communities Council
SPPI – Service for the Promotion of Equality Policies between women and men
SSC – Statewide Steering Committee
SSH – Safer Streets and Homes
TSCC – Toronto Safe City Committee
TSI – Torres Strait Islander
UN – United Nations
UNDAW – United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women
VAW – Violence Against Women
VLGA – Victorian Local Government Association
VPI – Violence Prevention Initiative
WHO - World Health Organisation
WICI – Women in Cities International
WPILGC – Women’s Participation in Local Government Coalition
WSS – Women’s Safety Strategy

Section 1: **Violence prevention, Local Governance and Gender: the basis for effective action**

In 2002, the World Health Organisation (WHO), in its landmark *World Report on Violence and Health*, declared violence prevention as a public health priority in a world where 'no country or community is untouched by violence', and where 'images and accounts of violence pervade the media; it is on our streets, in our homes, schools, workplaces, institutions' (WHO 2002: 1). In the foreword to the WHO report, human-rights campaigner Nelson Mandela noted that the twentieth century had been marked by a scale of violence and mass destruction (aided by technology) never before witnessed in human history. Mandela then highlighted the issue of 'private' or 'everyday' violence as integral to our understanding of violence on a 'public' or 'institutional' scale:

'Less visible, but even more widespread, is the legacy of day-to-day, individual suffering. It is the pain of children who are abused by people who should protect them, women injured or humiliated by violent partners, elderly persons mistreated by their caregivers, youths who are bullied by other youths, and people of all ages who inflict violence on themselves.' (WHO 2002: foreword)

The ensuing 2004 report *Preventing Violence: A guide to implementing the recommendations of the World Report on Violence and Health* denoted interpersonal violence as an issue of significant concern:

'violence between individuals and small groups of individuals including child maltreatment, youth violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence and elder abuse...take(ing) place in the home, on the streets and in other public settings, in the workplace, and in institutions such as schools, hospitals and residential care facilities.' (WHO 2004: vii)

The report also discussed the manifold social, economic and human costs associated with interpersonal violence. It is evident that interpersonal violence affects the health of individuals and the social capital of communities, states and nations. The WHO research also articulates how approaches and interventions are needed at all levels of government including multi-sectoral policy and planning at national, state and municipal levels (WHO 2004:6). Violence prevention planning, policy and interventions at the local level has been cited by a range of violence and crime prevention practitioners and researchers as an integral part of any effective approach; the proximity of local government to the community level is seen as a significant asset.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION: THE PROBLEM

The WHO report located its own multi-disciplinary public health approach as one of a range of approaches to violence prevention, alongside criminal justice and human rights approaches.

Hitherto, violence has often been seen as an 'inevitable part of the human condition – a fact of life to respond to, rather than to prevent' (WHO 2002:1) and the challenge of public health practice currently is to raise awareness of the social, environmental and behavioural determinants of violence. An awareness of these determinants allows a focus on preventing and addressing the root causes of violence, a process which can be extremely confronting and challenging for individuals, professionals and communities involved:

'Many people have difficulty confronting it in their professional lives because it raises uncomfortable questions about their personal lives. Talking about violence means touching upon complex matters of morality, ideology and culture. There is often

resistance at official as well as personal levels to open discussion of the topic.' (WHO 2002: 1)

Defining Violence

The WHO defines violence as:

'The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.' (WHO 2002: 4)

This definition encompasses a wide range of acts (both physical and non-physical) that affect the well-being of individuals, families and communities.

Definitions of violence vary amongst states and nations and according to the application of legal and non-legal definitions in varying circumstances. Such variations in definitions thus influences the data collected and accordingly, the official statistics used to represent incidences of violence often inaccurately represent reality and, it is widely agreed, under-report the incidence and prevalence of violent acts.

Understanding the causes of violence

It is widely accepted that there is no single root-cause for why violence occurs and that instead:

'it is an extremely complex phenomenon that has its roots in the interaction of many factors – biological, social, cultural, economic and political.' (WHO 2002: 9)

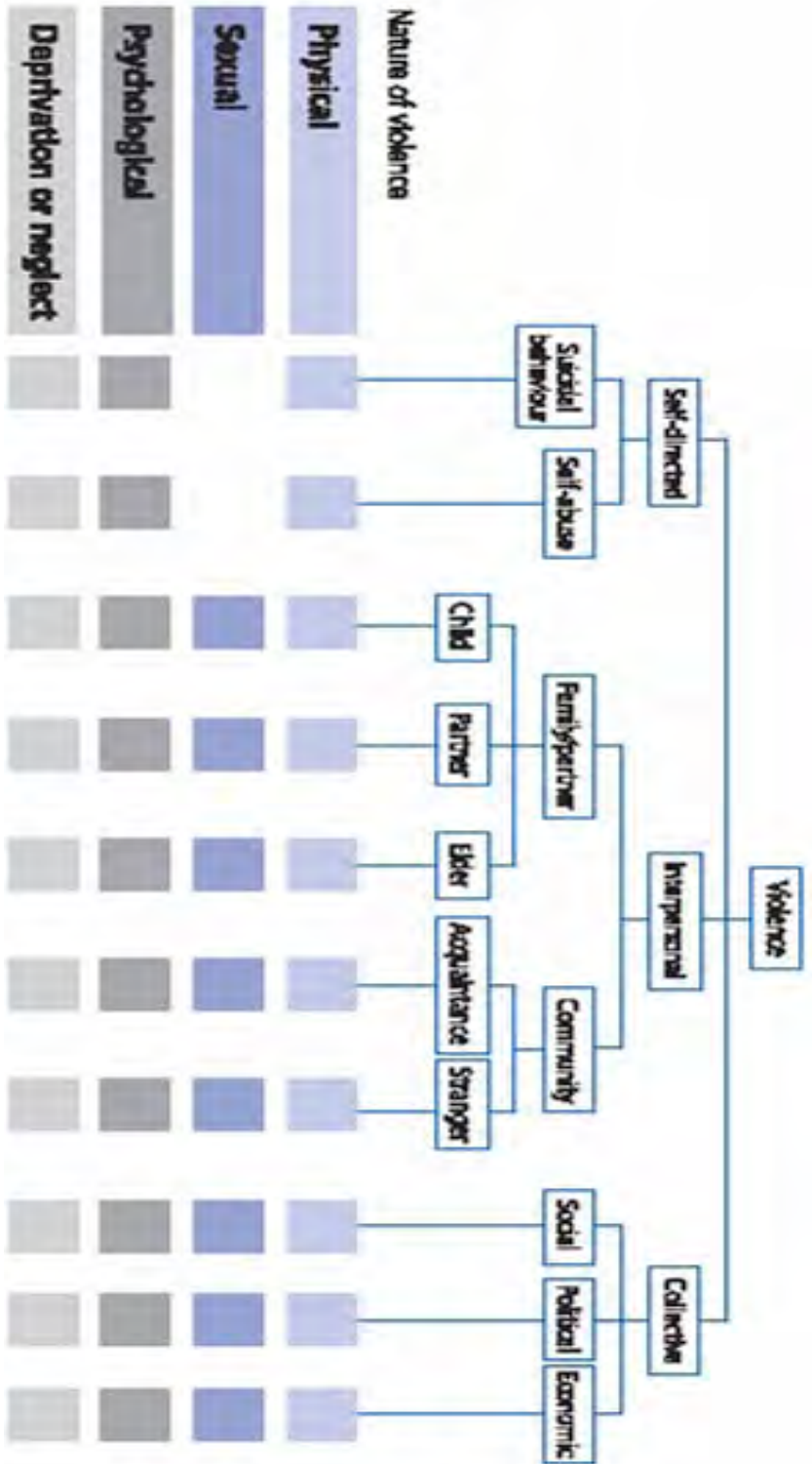


Figure 1: an ecological model for understanding violence used in WHO report 2002 (FVFP)

Forms and contexts of violence

It is evident there are many different types of violence and many types of violence overlap when we try to classify them. WHO cites interpersonal, self-directed and collective violence as useful categories in which to consider the different forms and contexts of violence and their connections in order to analyse possible interventions to effect *violence prevention*. The forms and types of violence between each category often overlap, (eg. sexual violence may be used within both interpersonal and collective violence). The focus of this report will be on interpersonal violence whilst still acknowledging all forms of violence as intrinsically related.

Figure 2: Typology of violence used in WHO report (2002: 13) – see next page



Violence Prevention models

WHO cites good violence prevention planning as fundamentally considering:

1. Promoting the primary prevention of interpersonal violence through investing in strategies aimed at children, parents, communities, changing cultural norms, reducing income inequality and improving the criminal justice and social welfare systems
2. Promoting social and gender equality and equity to prevent violence through policy reform and review, gender mainstreaming
3. Strengthening support and care services for victims and involving community stakeholders in the review and design of these services. (WHO 2004)

It is thus evident that good violence prevention strategies engage the whole community and do not focus on individual interventions at the expense of analysing the structural context of violence and of individual's lives. In the example of sexual assault, good violence prevention strategies challenge the existing status quo in relation to gender violence and gender relations and critique violence prevention strategies which do not challenge these contexts of gender violence.

Researchers have argued that:

'A concern with intimate partner violence, and its resistance to prevention, leads...to propose a theory of primary prevention that begins with the recognition that sexual assault cannot be prevented by focusing on individual pathology in certain men, or the "risky" behaviour of certain women. According to these theorists, since sexual violence is rarely the risk of aberrant behaviour, but often normalized under particular social conditions, it can only be prevented if models of "ethical sexuality" replace current configurations of gender and sexuality...from this perspective, prevention work must "challenge those cultural norms that normalize intimate sexual violence as a "natural" or "exaggerated" expression of innate male sexuality.' (ACSSA 2003: 12)

A Model of Social Change as Applied to Violence Prevention

Stages of Individual Change	Phases of Community Mobilization
Stage 1 Pre-contemplation: an individual is unaware of the issue/problem and its consequences for his/her life	Phase 1 Community Assessment: gather information on attitudes and beliefs about violence and start building relationships with community members and professional sectors
Stage 2 Contemplation: an individual begins to wonder if the issue/problem relates to their life	Phase 2 Raising Awareness: increase awareness about violence, including why it happens and its negative consequences for women, men, families and the community
Stage 3 Preparation for Action: an individual gets more information and develops an intention to act	Phase 3 Building Networks: encouraging and supporting community members and professional sectors to change practices. Building networks to strengthen individual and group efforts
Stage 4 Action: an individual begins to try new and different ways of thinking and behaving	Phase 4 Integrating Action: making actions against violence part of everyday life in the community and integrated into institutional policies and practices
Stage 5 Maintenance: an individual recognizes the benefits of the behaviour change and maintains it	Phase 5 Consolidating Efforts: strengthening preventative actions and activities to ensure their sustainability, continued growth and progress.

Figure 3: Models of Social Change (UNDAW - adapted from Prochaska et al. 1992 'Stages of Change Theory')

LOCAL GOVERNANCE: THE SETTING

Imagining an integrated gender, violence prevention and local governance program requires an understanding of both issues of local governance and government. Firstly, it is essential for women to be involved in the governance process where women have traditionally been under-represented – ‘the right to play a role in the construction of one’s country, city and community, a right which is closely linked to the very concept of democracy itself’ (Renau 2004: 5). It is also vital ‘to channel women’s (and other social groups’) experience into policy formulation’ (Renau 2004: 32), as a way to include their daily, lived experiences such as violence and fear of violence into the political arena. Secondly, it is at the local level and via local government that violence prevention policies and interventions may be best enacted, with municipal governments facilitating the coordination of local initiatives, supporting community initiatives and taking a whole of government/ place management approach in contributing to violence prevention.

Existing responses and services for violence against women are often ‘siloeed’ or ‘ghettoed’ into services which are overburdened, under-resourced and not connected or coordinated to one another. Local government can take a leading role in providing leadership in ‘resourcing’, ‘mainstreaming’ and ‘coordinating’ violence prevention strategies across the spectrum of government services, drawing upon the experience and wisdom of these existing services. It can become a central point for representing the priority of eradicating violence against women in our communities. UN Habitat argues that local government is a key player in strategies to fight violence against women and of the need to make connections between women’s experience of private and public violence in violence prevention strategies:

‘whether it be in the private or public arena, for example, in the street, office, shops, bus or underground station, women are the main victims of sexual harassment and assault. This means that in large cities, most women restrict their movements or activities because they feel unsafe. We have already seen how this feeling acts as a way of socially controlling women’s activities...one of the ways in which women can reclaim their city in order to gain full benefit from its resources and move around freely whatever the hours is to actively go about changing their environment together with municipal authorities and other community institutions and groups’ (Smaoun 2000: 35)

The WHO Violence Prevention report acknowledges that the practical work of programme implementation will most frequently be the responsibility of municipalities (2004:43). It also reviews finding completed by governments around the world that suggest that:

‘rates of interpersonal violence can be significantly reduced through well-planned and multi-sectoral strategies that tackle multiple causes, using frameworks such as the public health approach...and are cautious about the extent to which expenditures on policy and corrections will reduce rates of crime and victimization, particularly because of the costs to achieve minimal returns.’(2004:6)

A public health approach employed in local government planning practice seeks to understand:

- Who are the victims and perpetrators of violence?
- What are the causes of different types of violence?
- How do the different types of violence vary from context to context?
- How can we use this knowledge to reduce the frequency with which people use violence against one another? (WHO 2004)

It insists on an analysis of the community and societal contexts which may encourage or influence the likelihood of violence, eg. gender inequality and social disadvantage. Complementary approaches such as Moser and McIlwaine (Moser 2004:8) argue that experiences of violence depend on such elements as gender, age, ethnicity and race which need to be located in the situation-specific nature of people’s experience of violence within a broader structural context.

GENDER: AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT FOR EFFECTIVE VIOLENCE PREVENTION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime has noted how at the international level over the past decade, the need for gender to be taken into account at all policy levels has been clearly articulated – a process referred to as gender mainstreaming. (Shaw 2004:3)

It has also been noted that there has been increased attention at an international level on linking the process of gender mainstreaming, local governance and women's safety. Essentially, this refers to 'strategies and policies which work to create safer environments for women, often through direct partnerships between local organizations and municipal government.' (Shaw 2004:5) In this context, gender mainstreaming does mean using a gendered analysis of violence and related issues and seeking to implement it into all areas of policy development across government. What it does not mean is subsuming or replacing the work of specialised, existing services such as women's services and community agencies who work in the area of violence prevention. Rather it would seek to facilitate the knowledge and expertise transfer of these services to inform mainstream policy initiatives in local government; to make the business of violence prevention everybody's business.

Early developments in the area of gendered crime and violence prevention focused on the 'provision of front line services and the prevention of street and stranger violence in public space, using tools such as safety walks, and situational crime prevention approaches...including environmental changes through urban planning, housing design, transport design and scheduling, as well as increasing local authority support to front-line services for women.' (Shaw 2004: 6)

Shaw also notes that at an international body policy level, there is a renewed emphasis on governance issues as a process of gender mainstreaming; 'on increasing the role of women in local decision-making and implanting gender concerns at all levels of crime prevention and urban governance.' (2004:6). This process aims to ensure the provision of women's safety, and, violence against women initiatives across all government portfolios, rather than the 'ghettoisation' of this as a 'women's services problem' or as a 'criminal justice' issue.

Gender Mainstreaming and Violence

What benefits might result, in terms of the effectiveness of violence prevention, from using a gender mainstreaming approach?

- *Uncovering hidden violence*: We know that women are overwhelmingly the victims rather than the perpetrators of gendered violence and are affected as victims of violence in the whole community as a significant proportion of all violent crime (e.g. domestic violence accounts for over a quarter of all violent crime reported to the police each year in London alone) (GLA 2001). Men are also the victims of gendered violence, again most often perpetrated by men; an analysis of masculinity and power as a structural issue intersecting with other factors such as poverty and racism contributing to violence is essential.
- *Making cities safer for the most vulnerable makes it safer for everyone*. Community safety is one of the strongest prerequisites for a strong community. (DVC 2005: 3) UN Habitat argues that, 'the cities of tomorrow cannot be developed harmoniously if they are unable to respond to the needs and aspirations of half their inhabitants' (Smaoun 2000: iii) making it imperative that women feel safe and free of fear in order to participate and contribute fully in community life. Analysing the ways in which less powerful individuals

and groups in the community experience violence and fear differently is integral to designing more accurate interventions.

- *Diversity and Socio-economic strength*: A strong argument can be made that addressing socio-economic inequalities are a prerequisite for social and economic progress (DVC 2005)

If we accept that violence is a feature of a society characterized by oppression and inequality which are perpetuated throughout its institutions and structures, it is important to consider that individuals will have multiple identities 'where a person's race, for example, will meet his or her class, age, or any other component of the person's identity.' (Mullaly 2002) Some critical social theorists have noted thus we must take into account these *intersections*, and indeed violence prevention strategies must recognize that:

'no attempt is made to formulate an overarching (or totalizing) theory of oppression because one theory cannot possibly account for the many forms and sources of oppression, their dynamics and impacts, their interactions and internalizations, their subjective and objective aspects, and so on' (Mullaly 2002: 17)

Gender as an analytical concept in the formulation of violence prevention strategies is, however, an important point from which to look at the intersections of multiple inequalities that perpetuate violence in our communities, given the incidence and prevalence of violence against women evident in communities throughout the world.

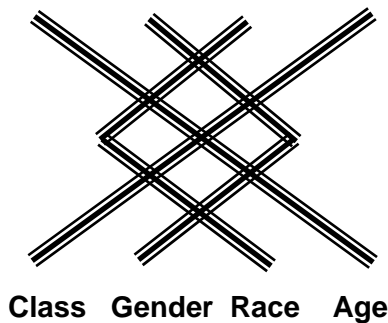


Figure 4: Intersectional Model of Oppression (Mullaly 2002: 151)

Making private violence a public issue

In order to assess and respond to both the public and private violence in our communities, we must be able to assess and analyse, honestly, the types, forms and contexts of violence that individuals and communities deal with, including analysing the *gendered* aspects of violence. The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime has noted that:

'Crime prevention was for a long time a field of policy which was un-gendered, and subsequently can be described primarily as gender neutral. The different impacts and experience of crime by men and women were ignored and most prevention policy was concerned with traditional forms of street or household crime, ignoring violence in the home... The response to street and strange violence against women has often been in the form of advice to women on the avoidance of dangerous situations. This has been criticized, both for the unwillingness to tackle the systemic causes of violence against women, and the lack of attention to the higher incidence of violence from partners or acquaintances.' (Shaw 2002: 5)

There is also a nexus between the 'private' and 'public' violence that women experience. Researchers have argued that:

'women's fear of crime is in reality fear of sexual danger'...there are many connections and parallels between the private and public spheres. Gender issues run through both of them, fear is common to both, and sexual violence is the crime which characterises both public and private spheres.' (Edwards 2002: 6)

Gendered violence prevention strategies in the community involve an analysis of the social, political, cultural and historical-specific nature of violence and the ways in which violence against women and men is situated in a structural context. Decades of research, practice and activism from the grass-roots level to the United Nations and World Health Organisation level tell us that acts of gendered violence are rarely the result of a pathologically deranged individual, but rather exist within, and are perpetuated by, the structures of the existing social order.

A recent discussion paper, *Good Practices in Combating and Eliminating Violence Against Women* by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) explains:

'The intersection of male dominance with race, ethnicity, age, caste, religion, culture, language, sexual orientation, immigrant and refugee status and disability – frequently termed "intersectionality" and referring to multiple identities that might intersect within a given circumstance and context – operates at many levels in relation to violence against women.' (UNDAW 2005:11)

Theorists on violence against women have suggested viewing the multiple forms of abuse against women as occurring along a continuum. The use of a continuum as an analytical tool is useful in that it *connects* varying forms of violence against women as inter-related and directly related to the social, structural context of gender inequality (Kelly 1988). The United Nations Urban Management Program concurs that:

'The legal, economic and social dependency of women has historically placed them in a subordinate position and made them especially vulnerable to male aggression...violence against women must be seen as a continuum and should not be attributed to pathological causes...the socio-cultural context into which violence falls and its use bring out the existing links between masculinity and violence. Violence was, and is, an instrument of power and a means of maintaining a status quo that favours men and boys.' (Smaoun 2005:5)

Thus, various forms of abuse such as trafficking in women, domestic violence, sexual assault and, sexual harassment are seen as *related* forms of violence against women, rather than as random acts by individuals acting *against* or *contrary* to the social norms.

Incidence and prevalence of violence against women

It is evident that acts of violence against women occur in both our public and private spaces. Research has shown repeatedly that the bulk of violence experienced by women often occurs within their homes and within 'private or domestic spheres' and/or by someone they know or are related to (Smaoun 2005: iii). Shaw cites statistics from the WHO report on Violence and Health (WHO 2002):

- In 48 population-based surveys from around the world, 10-69% of women reported being physically assaulted by an intimate male partner at some point in their lives. In large national studies the range is 10-34%
- Most victims of physical aggression are subjected to multiple acts of violence over extended periods of time.

- Physical violence in intimate relationships is often accompanied by psychological abuse, and in a third to over half of cases by sexual violence.
- Partner violence also accounts for a significant number of deaths among women. Studies from a range of countries show that 40-70% of female murder victims were killed by their husband or boyfriend, often during an on-going abusive relationship. (Shaw 2004:10)

Masculinity/s & Gender Violence

In defining violence against women as intrinsically informed by the socio-cultural constructions of gender and power relations, we can also examine the role of the construction of masculinity/s in understanding these correlations

If we accept that work in violence prevention must target the environments in which such violence occurs we must analyse how particular cultural definitions of masculinity translate into acts of violence against women. As Shaw argues:

'Studying masculinities also includes examining relationships between men/boys, rather than just between men and women, examining men's experiences of being violent, how notions of masculinity affect the social control of males as they grow up, how it directs them towards, or away from, risk-taking behaviours, delinquency, offending or victimization.' (Shaw 2002: 7-8)

Shaw also cites UNICEF work which argues that:

'strictly speaking 'gender violence' includes violence which men experience because of their own gender roles and relationships, associated with higher homicide rates, suicide rates, and involvement in professions associated with aggression, violence and physical risk.' (2002:2)

Given the context of limited resources with which most violence prevention programs run, Shaw also strongly argues that the gendering of crime prevention is not, however, about taking precious resources away from the victim/survivors of gender violence (women):

'What it does not mean is the abandoning of strategies and programmes directed at the prevention of violence against women or the promotion of women's safety, or necessary abolition of women's safety committees. It does not mean a continuation of arguments about the extent of women's violence against men.' (Shaw 2003:8)

Good models of violence prevention work and women

Women in Cities International (WICI) argue that cities where women are safe are cities where the whole community is safer. As an international exchange network looking at the issue of violence in women's personal lives and in public spaces they recognize that 'Violence towards women, including their fear of crime, prevents their full participation in community life'. (Whitzman et al., 2004:4)

They work to promote and exchange ideas internationally about ways in which violence and the risk of violence against women can be reduced, in private and public spaces, by creating safer environments (social, physical and institutional) for women and girls. Such aims and initiatives may be achieved by promoting their participation in community life, by pursuing partnerships

between local community organizations and local governments and by involving the full diversity of women and girls in local decision-making processes. (Whitzman et al., 2004:5)

Good practices in women's safety projects from across the world were submitted for their Women's Safety Awards (2004) and featured some common themes:

- Some degree of partnership between local authorities, community organizations, professional organizations and in some cases businesses and/or academic researchers.
- Partnerships often led to a broadened knowledge base as well as possibilities for sustainable programs
- A combination of personal counselling and empowerment approaches with public advocacy and education
- A nuanced understanding of the reality of violence against women as largely occurring within private spaces yet effecting women's participation in public spaces and public life.
- Innovative and community-specific approaches to the active participation of women.

Other good practices also featured:

- A train the trainer approach to ensure sustainability and effective 'scarce' resource utilization
- Development of safe spaces as part of community mobilization campaigns
- Development of new materials on healthy relationships
- A Social Marketing approach
- Emphasis on spiritual, as well as physical and emotional healing
- Excellent evaluation mechanisms (Whitzman et al., 2004:6)

Section 2: International Good Practices

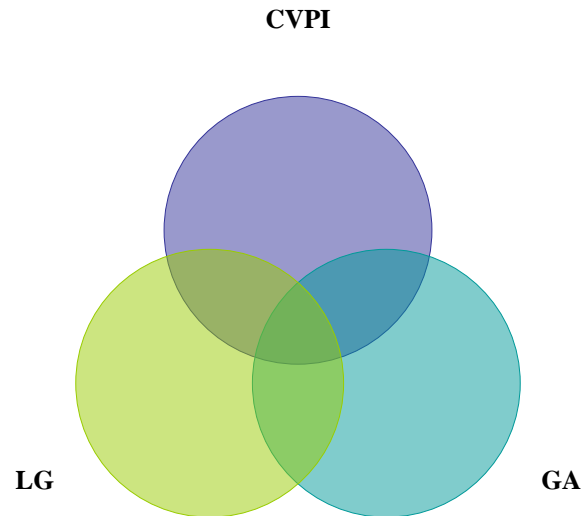


Figure 5: 'Where good practice may lie'

CVPI = comprehensive violence prevention initiative

LG = local government takes lead, with community involvement in decision-making

GA = gender analysis, including violence against women principles

Good practices that neatly articulate the intersections between the issues of gender, local governance and violence prevention appear to occur infrequently internationally, and indeed, within Australia. The junctures of these three theoretical and practical disciplines currently create an imperfect and inexact discourse; an evolving discourse in progress.

The 'good practices' that are cited in this research paper often exhibit features of good practice in one or two of the areas but may be lacking in the third area. For example, gender mainstreaming and violence prevention initiatives may feature strongly, but perhaps feature not so strongly in the third category, local governance. This may be true for any or all re-orderings of the categories in this example. The utopian vision would be the integration of all the components as outlined in Figure 5 above.

It is evident that what constitutes a 'good practice' is contested and may vary in different societies and contexts around the world, depending, upon other things: 'family forms, living arrangements and livelihoods and the capacities of the State across and within societies.' (UNDAW 2005:7)

Definitions of good practices

Current definitions of good practices in these areas do not always reach common agreement and none of the features listed below intersect perfectly. The *Women's Safety Awards 2004* organised by Women in Cities International argues that:

'although very diverse, women's safety initiatives commonly focus on prevention strategies and policies which aim to reduce violence and the risk of violence against women, including women's fear of crime, in public and private spaces...by creating safer environments (social, physical and institutional) for women and girls, by promoting their participation in community life, by pursuing partnerships between local community organizations and local governments and by involving the full diversity of women and girls in local decision-making processes.' (Whitzman et al., 2004:5)

Some other common features of good practice found across the literature (UNDAW 2005, Shaw 2004, GLA 2001) are:

1. Identification of violence issues including a gender analysis, a recognition and commitment to reducing violence against women and women's fear of crime across both private and public space (and seeing a relationship between the two spheres).
2. Community-based – using a community as expert model which includes a recognition of women and communities as experts in identifying problems, knowing resources and finding solutions to problems - but needing the commitment and resources of local and other tiers of government to achieve this. Overall community and government responsibility assumed for the problems and solutions.
3. Partnerships with local community organisations, working with already existing organisations with expertise in these areas.
4. Local government taking leadership and providing coordination and acting as a model – a whole of government approach. The training, education and commitment of government employees across all sectors and tiers in issues of violence against women and violence prevention initiatives – the process of gender mainstreaming. Multi-sectoral involvement, e.g. police, judicial system, education, health, urban planners.
5. The empowerment of girls and women in all spheres (gender equality) central to the elimination of violence including training in and for decision-making forums.
6. The recognition of structural sources of oppression, poverty, racism, sexism, economic exploitation, state oppression crucial to violence prevention initiative design. A recognition of the intersecting nature of people's identities and oppression (e.g. gender, ethnicity, socio-economic situation tying into the social determinants of their health).
7. Institutions such as local government taking a lead in marking out the issue and setting standards in policy and practice. Local government often identified in the literature as the best site for violence prevention interventions
8. A planned, coordinated and adaptable strategy: using community's assessments. Long-term sustainability of projects including funding, evaluation, monitoring and feedback from perspective of victim/survivors.

Useful categories of analysis in ‘good practices’:

The ‘good practices’ listed in this report employ several categories of analysis. Some analytical categories occurred because they are what have been already identified as good practice, and some new categories of analysis emerged because of their evident value in the evolution of the initiative. Examples will often overlap with features from either some or all of the analytical categories explained below.

1. *Comprehensive Violence Prevention Initiatives, involving community-government partnerships in local government (may or may not include a gendered analysis in its current form!)*
 - Initiatives that use either/and public health, criminal justice, human rights, multi-agency approaches to intervene or prevent violence. Would ideally include a gender-based violence and women’s safety analysis as a given in the planning, design and implementation of any such initiative.
 - Until recently have often been developed ‘top down’ rather than bottom-up from the community level – now, ideally, more involved with horizontal, inter-sectoral or multi-agency work (Malos & Edleson in Shaw 2004: 6)
 - Could be linked inextricably with gender mainstreaming in violence prevention initiatives and infused throughout community/local government partnerships working on violence prevention
2. *Local government takes lead:*
 - ‘City councils...have a major role to play in opening up the decision-making process to women and can facilitate their participation by making the whole public consultation procedure more accessible...they are also key players in implementing prevention strategies to fight against the lack of security for women in urban areas. They are thereby in a position to channel the action and energy of those in local associations and city networks...’ (Smaoun 2005:35)
 - local governments aware and active according to women’s needs, across its entire services and programs – gender mainstreaming.
 - on increasing the role of women in local decision-making and implanting gender concerns at all levels of crime prevention and urban governance (Shaw 2004:6).
3. *Gender analysis*
 - Principles in practice which afford a structural analysis of gender violence, linking it to the particular socio-historic and cultural conditions of the community
 - ‘The linkages between the causes and consequences of all forms of violence against women need to be further highlighted...One useful tool in this respect is the conceptualization of violence against women as a continuum across a number of dimensions – this makes it possible to both highlight the links and connections between the forms of violence against women, whilst allowing for variations in contexts and cultural meanings’ (UNDAW 2005:6)
 - ‘A greater understanding of the tight links between violence in the home and violence outside the home, through an understanding of women’s feelings of insecurity.’ (Smaoun 2005:41)
4. *Community partnerships and involvement in all phases of analysis, design, implementation, evaluation and management of initiatives*
 - Considering the community the ‘expert’ – their strengths, resources and knowledge of what works best in their own community. Respecting community, women and women’s services as sources and assets of expertise in the matter of violence against women. As UN Habitat argues: ‘living with this feeling (of insecurity due to violence) each day makes women sensitive to various aspects of urban life which may contribute to their insecurity, or reassure them. This daily experience makes them infinitely qualified to detect problems and offer solutions.’ (Smaoun 2005: 35)

Australia-New Zealand

Liverpool, NSW The Safe Women Project

http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/swp/swp.nsf/pages/swp_intro

An action group called Liverpool Healthy Cities (LHC) - a group who were interested in the urban environment; the ways our town and cities are built and managed and the services and facilities available - met with women who were concerned there were places where they felt 'unsafe' in the city. Subsequently, workers from the LHC group and South Western Women's Health Service met with other services and residents and formed the Safe Women Liverpool Project.

A number of initiatives and ongoing partnerships addressing women's safety and fear of crime have evolved out of this project. Whilst the project targeted women's safety in public places, it noted the incidence and prevalence of violence against women in the home and its connection with women, insecurity and fear, resulting in their reduced ability to participate in public or community activities. A phone-in was conducted for women who lived or worked in Liverpool and a number of recommendations were made. A safety audit was conducted. Local government and non-government organizations (NGOs) met to work on the women's recommendations. Educational campaign was launched about women's rights to safety, free of harassment and violence. Public transport was targeted, particularly Liverpool Station, and initiatives to improve women's safety in this area were implemented. Links between women's public safety and their private experiences of violence, crime and fear of crime were raised but not specifically addressed in this project. The project and committee is currently in a transitional phase.

Features of Initiative	CVPI	LG	GA	CI
Public Safety as an issue identified by women and community groups.	✓		✓	✓
Phone-in for women in the community to voice their concerns and perceptions of safety issues	✓		✓	✓
Public responsibility for gender-based sexual harassment and violence promoted and supported by local government via public education and awareness raising campaigns	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local government policy development – promoting the safety of women	✓	✓	✓	✓
Safety Audit of public spaces conducted	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development of education programs and campaigns, e.g. Women's self-defence classes and anti-violence projects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Working across sectors in local government and NGOs on planning processes to improve safety for women	✓	✓	✓	
Video on women's safety in public places produced	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transport planners and designers worked to encompass the recommendations made by women about their safety concerns, e.g. car parks, waiting areas at train stations.	✓	✓	✓	✓

City of Darebin, Melbourne, Victoria
The Darebin Family Violence Working Group (DFVWG)

http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/Files/darebin_family_violence_working_group_background_paper.pdf

In 2002, the City of Darebin instigated a family violence (FV) project involving key stake holders in the municipality. The project evolved as a response to issues identified in the Darebin Community Safety Plan and by family support workers and the Darebin Domestic Violence workers.

Council staff were engaged in a survey of their views and experiences of the issue throughout the course of their council work. The Working Group was then formed including representatives from relevant organizations such as the Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander (TSI) and ethnic community, local council, community health and DV network services, Victoria Police, women’s refuges, welfare, housing and support services and State and Federal Government child protection, education and Centrelink services and a university.

The objectives of the DFVWG were to assemble local knowledge and to identify and monitor FV issues in Darebin, to facilitate liaison and partnerships between government and non-government agencies and networks.

Concentrating on the issue of Family Violence as an area of concern and responsibility for Darebin Council has succeeded in placing the issue of ‘private’ violence against women firmly on the agenda of council business. Council staff have been surveyed across all the areas on the issue, signaling a council commitment to mainstreaming the issue of gender violence as a ‘whole of council’ concern. Future work in training staff, policy and program development in the wider area of violence against women, gendered planning, and research may be possible; a total gender mainstreaming approach to complement the current “facilitation” and “support” of Family Violence services may be desirable. Council has already begun to identify how a gendered analysis in regards to Family Violence may fit within several of their policies and planning areas such as Safety, Drug & Alcohol, Public Health and Poverty.

Features of Initiative	CVPI	LG	GA	CI
Family Violence forum attended by 100+ police & support workers	✓	✓	✓	✓
FV Practice Issues forum – network for local police, support and legal workers established	✓	✓	✓	✓
Darebin Safety Card produced with information for people who experience FV	✓	✓	✓	✓
12 information sessions on IVOs & local media coverage of Family Violence Coordination Unit	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consultation/survey of council staff on FV	✓	✓	✓	
Relationship building between support, court & police systems in municipality	✓	✓	✓	
Advice to other councils on the process of establishing partnerships to tackle FV	✓	✓	✓	
Facilitating of local knowledge, identifying, monitoring and planning of FV initiatives	✓	✓	✓	✓

New Zealand

Safer Communities: Action Plan to Reduce Community Violence & Sexual Violence

<http://www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/reports/2004/action-plan-community-sexual-violence/action-plan.pdf>

In June 2004 the New Zealand Ministry of Justice (MOJ) published its *Action Plan to reduce Community and Sexual Violence*, in the context of its Crime Reduction Strategy. The Action Plan targets four areas: attitudes to violence, alcohol-related violence, violence in public places and sexual violence. The Action Plan eventuated as a process of extensive 'consultation with a range of central and local government agencies, non-government agencies and the community including the Safer Community Council (SCC) network and the Iwi and Pacific peoples' SCC network.' (MOJ 2004:7) The Action Plan directly identifies local government and communities as primary sites of violence prevention interventions, although acknowledges that the interventions must be coordinated throughout tiers of government and must be multi-sectoral.

The Action Plan's strategy is to document and compare existing initiatives to the range of good practices identified by research literature, thus exposing gaps in the current initiatives. It acknowledges that current initiatives are usually piecemeal, uncoordinated and need to be integrated (MOJ 2004:38-39). The action strategies include setting up coordinating committees and interagency steering groups across the four targeted areas, in order to research, plan, coordinate and evaluate the interventions. The coordinating committees are to be comprised of multi-sectoral and agency representatives including areas such as education, health, justice, police and Pacific Islander officials.

Although the Action Plan's commitment is to work multi-sectorally and in partnership with community, it seems to have a strong emphasis on a criminal justice system and crime prevention approach to violence prevention. This is exemplified in its analyses of 'crime' that do not make a link to structural or gendered analyses, i.e. poverty reduction, gender inequality, racism. The focus is often largely on legislative amendments, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) and offender programs. Groups requiring particular consideration are listed as 'children, young people and Maori' (MOJ 2004:28) and do not identify or discuss women's experiences as among these who are significantly affected by violence and fear of violent crime, thus needing particular consideration.

Features of Initiative	CVPI	LG	GA	CI
Research into effective interventions and approaches for violence reduction	✓	✓	Limited	✓
A stocktake of policy initiatives across government & non-government sectors contributing to violence reduction	✓	✓	Limited	✓
Identification of gaps in policies and initiatives	✓	✓	Limited	✓
Actions identified to address the gaps and to increase the overall effectiveness of violence reduction efforts	✓	✓	Limited	✓
Designing a coordinated framework and approach to violence prevention across government and sectors	✓	✓	Limited	✓
Identification of and action plan for local government and community partnerships as essential to design and delivery of interventions	✓	✓	Limited	✓

North America

City of Montreal, Canada, Femmes et Ville (Women in Cities committee) & Comité d'action femmes et sécurité urbaine (CAFSU – Women and urban safety action committee).

http://www.femmesetvilles.org/pdf-general/cafsu_fiches_en.pdf

In response to women citizens in the late 1980s in Montreal asking elected city and local officials to take into account women's experiences of safety in the urban centre and in urban development activities, the City of Montreal created the 'Women in Cities' committee and subsequently CAFSU. A commitment from the City of Montreal to 'mainstreaming' and incorporating women's safety across the municipal areas was realized in its actions from the beginning; working in partnership with women's groups and community agencies to encourage women to audit, plan, design and change public spaces from the point of view of women and women's safety, in conjunction with city and local authorities. The city also supported women's safety to become incorporated and thus change its crime prevention and transport programs.

Throughout the 1990s and beyond, CAFSU work 'aimed at improving women's safety and sense of safety'...and carried out numerous education, awareness, and advocacy, research and intervention activities. Famous examples of successful interventions in Montreal are the *Between Stops Services* (relating to women passengers alighting in between bus stops, closer to their homes at night) and the design and renovation of Montreal's subway system according to women's safety principles.

They have characterized their main approach to women's safety as 'Safety through Autonomy and Freedom' rather than 'Safety through Dependence and Restrictions', expounding how such an approach 'hinges above all on women's strengths and capacities, their empowerment, the development of their self-esteem, mobility and autonomy, in the context of a collective process...and that the role of organizational representatives is to support, listen and accompany women as they move towards autonomy' (Michaud 2001-02: No. 4) City of Montreal actions included partnerships with local businesses, community agencies, citizens, women's groups, local and regional authorities, researchers, health, social and crime prevention services and all levels of government.

Features of Initiative	CVPI	LG	GA	CI
Activities with women including women's safety audits and self-defence classes	✓	✓	✓	✓
Activities with men including 'Men say No' project	✓	✓	✓	✓
Activities with the general public including school, workplace awareness raising and training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community mobilization including developing a sense of shared responsibility for women's safety with business, citizens, government via poster campaigns	✓	✓	✓	✓
Safety Planning and design for public spaces including publications and handbooks	✓	✓	✓	✓
Research and institutional policies including audits of government policies relating to women and safety	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sharing and promoting best practices, local & global	✓	✓	✓	✓
City of Montreal support for CAFSU network	✓	✓	✓	✓

Toronto, Canada

Toronto Safe City Committee & METRAC

www.femmesetvilles.org/seminar/english/pres_en/whitz_pres_en.htm

www.metrac.org

The Toronto Safe City Committee (TSCC) was a citizen-based advisory group to Toronto's municipal government; their aims and objectives were to prevent violence against women and other vulnerable groups. The TSCC originated through partnerships between feminist and progressive local politicians, bureaucrats and grassroots activists in response to episodes of serial rapist activity. Together with organizations like METRAC (Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children), TSCC advised and educated 'police, politicians, urban planners, architects and citizens alike on how spaces can be made safer.' (Whitzman 2002: 1) METRAC also has a role in acting as a catalyst for change and in an educational and advocacy capacity to community and government for solutions on violence against women and children. They also designed and used the first 'Women's Safety Audit' program.

The TSCC's approach may be characterized as one of 'community as expert' approach to identifying problems, resources and solutions to violence. They began training the Council's planning department in issues of safety for women in public spaces through workshops. Arising from the workshops were guidelines which then became part of policy in the review of all new development programs.

TSCC broadened its work to look at how the city's resources could be best used in supporting and coordinating the efforts of neighbourhood-based, multicultural and other community-based organizations; an annual funding program originated for violence prevention initiatives within these existing community agencies.

TSCC is described as being involved in social planning in its broadest sense with facilitating 'space for women to come together, discuss their concerns and plan action.' (Whitzman 2002) Issues of violence and safety are understood as linked to broader issues such as poverty, affordable housing and mental illness when considering solutions or initiatives. An emphasis is on the process of governments truly asking and consulting (and enabling through resources) citizens and grassroots organizations to look at their concerns, strategies and facilitation of solutions.

Features of Initiative	CVPI	LG	GA	CI
Citizen-based safety committee working on violence against women funded by local government	✓	✓	✓	✓
Educating police, politicians, planners and local council employees on VAW and safety issues	✓	✓	✓	✓
Broad social planning – provision of space for women and community groups to identify and plan safety issues	✓	✓	✓	✓
Funding available to support local groups' VAW initiatives	✓	✓	✓	✓
Looking at structural and root causes of violence	✓	✓	✓	✓
Successful advocacy for all future planning issues to consider safety/VAW issues – as part of policy	✓	✓	✓	✓

Cowichan Valley, British Columbia
Cowichan Valley Safer Futures Program (CVSFP)

www.saferfutures.org

Over the last seven years, the CVSFP has operated as a community development and research program which ‘focuses on creating social, physical and institutional environments in small rural and/or isolated communities that promote women’s personal safety and participation in community life.’ (Whitzman, C, et al., 2004: 19) CVSFP has working at the community level and with women and children and other marginalized communities to research issues of personal security and to develop tools to realize their objectives of creating, maintaining and improving community environments. Initiatives undertaken include community safety audits, development of policies and guidelines with local governments including within their community plans, development guidelines and zoning by-laws, education and training for citizens, planners, developers, community organizations and local government on the issues, consulting projects on designing public spaces and information sharing through local to international networks.

They have developed and published a number of tools including safety audit guides, planning checklists for government and resource books and fact sheets on women and community safety. Areas for local governments to consider identified in the Women’s Safety checklist include: public awareness and commitment (of and to the issues), partnerships, human relations, community planning, public transportation, social development programs, policing and emergency services and interdepartmental liaison and coordination. The resource book explores the process of ‘Working Together for Change’ – a guide to how local governments, women and community organizations can work through the processes of creating partnerships, defining and developing the initiatives, community consultation and involvement, developing the plan, and then Implementing Institutional Change – from the plan to action phase.

Features of Initiative	CVPI	LG	GA	CI
Community Development & Research at the local level to identify and plan safety/violence initiatives.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Guidelines on personal security issues developed with/for inclusion in local government policies.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Creation, publication and sharing of resources and tools for use in working with local government on integrating violence prevention work.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education and training of local government officials, citizens and professional groups including planners and architects.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Partnerships with local government, women’s groups and community agencies	✓	✓	✓	✓
Physical design changes in municipality after safety audits	✓	✓	✓	✓

Europe

The London Domestic Violence Strategy (LDVS), London, United Kingdom

http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/dom_violence/strategy.jsp

In the foreword to the LDVS, the Mayor of London articulates a vision for London where the issue of domestic violence is accepted as a crime, rather than a private responsibility for women to cope with alone, and where it is the responsibility of the state and the wider community to hold violent and abusive men accountable and to provide effective protection for abused women and children. The LDVS is a comprehensive outline of how local government will financially, politically and materially support all relevant agencies, statutory and voluntary, to coordinate and implement strategies to realize a reduction and finally, the elimination of the issue of domestic violence. The vision is for a coordinated and more effective, less piece-meal approach, to domestic violence service provision, advocacy and research. It also has the commitment from the Association of London Government (ALG).

The LDVS sets out detailed steps, analysis and work-plan focusing on four aims:

- Increasing safe choices for women and children experiencing DV
- Holding individual abusers accountable for their behaviour as a deterrent for them and to potential abusers
- Actions which challenge social tolerance of domestic violence including exposing stereotypes and myths
- Providing children and young people with knowledge and skills to build relationships based on respect, shared power and non-violence

The strategy's recommendations were created by a six month consultation process with women experiencing DV, service providers and practitioners, and domestic violence research projects, evaluations and strategic documents.

The strategy targets each and all of the municipal agencies and outlines strategies and targets for each of these services. It acknowledges its limits to effect change at a national level but includes mayoral commitment to lobby at this level. The LDVS has an Expert Advisory Group to the Mayor and ALG set-up to explore issues such as the relationship between DV and the different areas of GLA responsibility such as culture, transport, spatial and economic development and to consider issues such as integration with sustainable development, health and equalities. It also provides four possible models for the local domestic violence to choose from to use to coordinate most appropriate and coordinated advocacy services for women across the array of policies and practices. The second edition of the LDVS has just been published in November 2005.

Features of Initiative	CVPI	LG	GA	CI
Comprehensive strategy identifying issues, strategies and work-plan in relation to domestic violence and local government services.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategy, advocacy and lobbying commitments planned and funded by local government association and mayor	✓	✓	✓	✓
Identification of domestic violence as a crime and responsibility of (local) and central government	✓	✓	✓	✓
Commitment to work to support existing agencies and initiatives – recognizing women and community services as experts	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consultation with women and community services to inform design of strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aim to create consistent, quality responses across London and for agencies to work together in collaboration to address DV more effectively	✓	✓	✓	✓

Building a Safe City Together Petrovadosk, Russia

http://www.womenincities.org/english/sets_en/set_downloads_en.htm

<http://www.owl.ru/eng/women/org001/>

The Information Centre of the Independent Women's Forum (ICIWF) has worked with women's groups and organizations in Petrovadosk, Karelia province, Russia. A gendered perspective has been brought to crime and municipal planning by the approach of grassroots women who have worked to improve the safety of their homes and neighbourhoods. Initiatives have included the opening of a refuge for women and children victims of domestic violence, gender-based analysis of crime data, creation of women-led neighbourhood committees and closer relationships between neighbourhood women, women's groups, policy and municipal administration.

Crime prevention initiatives have included public housing residents participating in a competition, sponsored by the city administration, to design improvements for their common spaces. Thirteen neighbourhood committees were formed (2000 residents from five buildings and 400 neighbours); twelve of these were headed by women and organized to repair housing and improve public space. As a result of the formation of these neighbourhood committees, social capital, community mobilization and safety levels were increased. Techniques such as seminars and trainings were used in organizing and mobilizing community members. Training on planning and designing safety areas has been a feature as has the development of a range of programs, publications and development for work with stakeholders and local government in the area of safety, women's safety, crime prevention and community and allied crime prevention work. Some of these materials and trainings have been used across other regions of Russia.

Features of Initiative	CVPI	LG	GA	CI
Gendered analysis of crime statistics used to identify and problem-solve safety concerns	✓	✓	✓	✓
Neighbourhood committees, often organized by women, created to identify and solve crime, safety and public space concerns	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development of training on planning and designing safety areas and working together for focus groups and residents	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development of mechanisms for holding joint meetings of residents	✓	✓	✓	✓
Criteria design for Safety Audit developed	✓	✓	✓	✓
Safer city planning and design guidelines published	✓	✓	✓	✓

Spain

Service for the Promotion of Equality Policies between Women and Men, Provincial Council of Barcelona (SPPI – Disputació de Barcelona) & Urbal Network 12.

<http://www.diba.es/francescabonnemaison/en/sppidh/default.asp?estil=05>

http://www.diba.es/urbal12/PDFS/URBAL_OCTUBRE.pdf

The SPPI is a service of the Provincial Council of Barcelona that provides support and advice to the municipalities on local policies on equal opportunities for women and men. It also participates in international projects and networks including links with Urbal Network 12 based also at the Provincial Council of Barcelona. Urbal is a program organised around thematic networks designed to resolve the practical problems of local urban development. The Network 12 theme is 'Promoting the role of women in local decision-making bodies', an issue integral to any integrated violence prevention programs designed at and for the local level.

Planned, joint projects at the Council's Francesca Bonnemaison Centre include a research and documentation centre to provide access to municipal staff and researchers on equality and gender policies. The library will be accessible via the library's web page. The Centre also includes a library, reference centre, cultural centre and school for women. Equality and gender policies such as those developed by Urbal Network 12 will be available.

A recent strategy devised by Urbal 12 in Barcelona is the Women and City Network's 'Baseline Diagnosis' which itemized the structural obstacles working against equality for women and 'against their participation in gender-sensitive organization of cities' (Renau 2004: 4). Areas such as recognition of women's human rights, the right to full citizenship and political participation, strengthening rights at local level, priority tasks at local level including strategies for women as social planners in municipalities working on the priority of a whole-of-government response to ending gendered violence, women's participation in city-building and strategic planning with a gendered perspective, are outlined in the Barcelona Women and City Network's strategy.

Features of Initiative	CVPI	LG	GA	CI
Provincial council service set up to provide advice to municipalities on equality and gendered policies	✓	✓	✓	
Provincial council research and documentation centre promoting gender equality as part of an entire centre for women with library, school and cultural centre.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Service link on projects with Women and City (URBAL) Network 12 – the role of women in local decision making bodies	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategy devised by URBAL 12 – Women and City Network's Baseline Diagnosis - outlining structural obstacles and solutions to women's participation in local governance	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategy prioritizing women's participation in local governance, decision-making and planning as essential to the cessation of gender-based violence.	✓	✓	✓	✓

Africa

**KZN Network on Violence Against Women,
Ethekwini Municipality Safer Cities and Department for
Community Security and Liaison,
Durban, Sth Africa**

http://www.womenincities.org/english/sets_en/set_downloads_en.htm

A safety audit was conducted in the Kwa Makhutha area in September 2003 and the findings were compiled into a report which was presented to the community and a taskforce created, comprised of local agency service providers and community members. The safety audits is one component of a larger project (pending funding) in which final year law students set up and staff a legal desk providing free legal advice to community members, with the supervision from the Law Clinic, University of Natal.

Following on from the Women's Safety Audit, the partnership between KZN Network on Violence Against Women and Safer Cities would implement a project including education and training on gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS, a rural outreach program, lobbying and advocacy programs, networking and a skills audit and database. A toolkit will also be developed to ensure the project may be usable/transferable elsewhere.

The Women's Safety Audit would also prompt the following activities:

- Feasibility study with community including a needs workshop with community
- Meetings with stakeholders – exploring possibilities for the Women's Safety Audit and introducing a new partner, the Provincial Department of Safety and Security
- Identification of volunteers – through the workshop and meeting, community members identified to assist groups in using safety audit checklists in their areas to identify unsafe places

The safety audit is used as an initial tool for imagining and creating further interventions with community and local government on other violence against women issues. Women-owned construction companies are encouraged to tender for physical space improvements as identified in the safety audits.

Features of Initiative	CVPI	LG	GA	CI
Women's safety audit conducted	✓	✓	✓	✓
Law students setting up free legal desk for community members	✓		✓	✓
Recommendations of safety audit monitored by taskforce comprised of service providers and community members	✓		✓	✓
Safety audit assisting to create dialogue on other violence against women issues	✓	✓	✓	✓
Funding and partnerships with local government sought to develop a comprehensive VAW program	✓	✓	✓	✓

Raising Voices, Kampala, Uganda

http://www.womenincities.org/english/sets_en/set_downloads_en.htm
www.raisingvoices.org

The Raising Voices program is located in Kampala, Uganda, in an environment of densely populated slum areas. The initiative is run in conjunction with the Centre for Domestic Violence prevention and takes a whole-of-community approach to the issue of domestic violence involving men, women, families and communities as intrinsic to the process of social change. The program engages 'a broad cross-section of community members, including women and men at the grassroots, local institutions such as the police, social and health care services, media outlets, religious communities and local governments' (Whitzman et al.,2004: 20)

The activities are targeted at both men and women and aim for both individual and social change. Activities include public education via public meetings, public advertisements, seminars and the training of community leaders and facilitators. Over one-hundred community activists have now been trained and a Learning Centre has been established where resources and materials are provided to those learning about the approach. Training on the issue of domestic violence and its connection with gender inequality is also held with community institutions and workers (as listed above) in an effort for workers to understand violence against women as a personal and political phenomenon. The program has resulted in the issue of Domestic Violence being raised and consequently many sectors of the community have responded in ways that acknowledge its seriousness, in their lives and in their work. New by-laws and policies within local structures have improved, as have the responses of police, health-care sector and legal services to the issue of DV.

A Resource Guide and Training Package have been published which document the framework used and provide extensive strategy and activity suggestions. The program has been used throughout various parts of Africa and the rest of the world and an evaluation of the uses of the program has also been conducted in October 2005.

Features of Initiative	CVPI	LG	GA	CI
Whole of community approach to raising awareness of domestic violence	✓	✓	✓	✓
Training of community leaders/activists in culturally relevant community activities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Establishment of a Learning Centre for resource/training needs	✓	✓	✓	✓
Resource Guides produced on preventing Domestic Violence	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development of new by-laws and policies within local structures to deal with DV	✓	✓	✓	✓
Training across sectors – police, health-care, religious organizations, media, local government	✓	✓	✓	✓
Women trained as leaders in programs	✓	✓	✓	✓

Latin America

Defensa, Seguridad y Derechos de la mujer para la ciudadanía (Defence, Security and Women’s Rights to Citizenship), La Paz, Bolivia

http://www.womenincities.org/english/sets_en/set_downloads_en.htm

This community organization, under the leadership of activist Clotilde Marquez Cruz, is a women’s community network organizing to defend and improve the status, skills and safety of indigenous women in a municipality in La Paz, Bolivia. The women’s network is made up of indigenous women and other rural women in farming communities, who have traditionally been left out of decision-making forums, at a political and municipal level. The indigenous and rural population of Bolivia have historically had little rights and access to education. Education for indigenous people was only enacted in 1960 and for women it was not readily accessible until the 1970s.

As a result of Bolivia’s laws in the mid-1990s promoting women’s participation in governance, women have begun to access formal political decision-making forums however have lacked the education, skills or training in these areas. Information about rights, discrimination and family violence has also been scarce for Indigenous and rural women because of the lack of access to education and resources.

The women’s network has successfully worked to undertake projects providing women with information, resources and skills on their legal rights, on domestic violence and citizenship, literacy and support for women involved in local government. The activities have included a range of community development activities for women and their communities such as organization, mobilization, education and defence of women’s rights. It has worked specifically in the area of women’s safety from violence.

Features of Initiative	CVPI	LG	GA	CI
Formation of women’s network amongst Indigenous and rural women in Bolivia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Addressing and linking multiple issues within network such as domestic violence, women’s access to education and information and women’s participation in local governance	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grass-roots initiative, yet focusing on women’s access to formal decision-making forums as a key to their safety and rights	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community involvement in the conception of project, strategies to improve women’s status	✓	✓	✓	✓
Organising, education, mobilizing women involved in and affected by issue ensuring sustainability of project	✓	✓	✓	✓

Asia Pacific

Bantay Banay (Family-Community Watch), Cebu City, Philippines

http://www.synergos.org/bridgingleadership/casestudies/tessie_fernandez.pdf

<http://www.unhabitat.org/hd/hdv11n1/20.asp>

Arising from the Lihok-Pilipina Foundation which supported micro-credit initiatives for women in Cebu City in the early 1990s, the Executive Director noted how many women were failing in their repayments and often failing to attend credit meetings because of 'family trouble.' (Tuparan 2002) Upon further examination of what 'family trouble' meant, the ED trained staff in area meetings with women to find out exactly what 'family trouble' meant. Discussions with women across revealed the issue of domestic violence rampant throughout all regions. From these beginnings and as women began arriving on the Foundation's doorsteps seeking assistance to flee domestic violence, the foundation launched a Women's Support and Crisis Centre and also began a decade long program to tackle the problem of domestic violence in a comprehensive way.

The Foundation used its network of development workers, community organizers, legal affiliates, housing workers and private individuals to build a network and to build social awareness of the problem including the realization that economic power would never be fully realized for women who were suffering from violence and gender rights-abuse preventing them from fully participating in the community.

Data on the extent of violence against women was gathered via research in 33 villages and in hospitals and police stations. The results were presented to a forum of police, local government and community groups and were used to garnish support for a broader, community-based program – Bantay Banay. Over the next decade and under the principles of self-help and volunteerism, Bantay Banay groups engaged in community patrol, support to victims of violence and advocacy including access to legal assistance, counseling and medical check-ups. Civil society, police, local government, the church and health-services became involved gradually, as the aim of 'mainstreaming the issue of violence against women into the program of local government with corresponding budget, policy and logistical support' was pursued. Training each of these institutions represented specific challenges particularly in confronting the entrenched sexist and violent attitudes of public servants which allow the culture of domestic violence to flourish.

Features of Initiative	CVPI	LG	GA	CI
Identification of violence against women as an issue affecting women's well-being and livelihoods across all areas of their life (economic, health etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work with women to identify and analyse their needs and to respond to them	✓	✓	✓	✓
Creation of a cross-sectoral network to respond to violence against women (church, development workers, community)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education of police and local government in issues of violence against women	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lobbying for legal change, funding and medical services to support women fleeing violence	✓	✓	✓	✓
Creation of volunteer, community groups based in villages to act as a community patrol on issues of family violence	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mainstreaming the issue of violence against women across sectors of local government	✓	✓	✓	✓

Section 3: **Opportunities for adaptation of Good Practices in Victoria**

The Victorian context

The creation of violence prevention initiatives such as sexual assault crisis and support services, women's refuges, domestic violence outreach services, women's health services and associated law reform has burgeoned since the early 1970s. This was largely influenced by second-wave feminist analyses of the political nature of violence in women's private and public lives. The analysis recognized the effect of violence on women's health, and resulted in engagement with government and the 'associated mainstreaming' of services. But there was still the desire to maintain autonomy, specialization and a structural, feminist analysis of male violence:

'There is a very complex politics here, as women's organizations and feminists direct demands at the state, for more services or protection, while many are profoundly suspicious of the state and its implication in the reproduction of unequal gender relations....States have long resisted any responsibility for women's security from male violence...at the same time, state legislation and provision can make a profound difference to women's survival and choices' (Pettman: 9-10)

Violence prevention initiatives have generally been funded by state and federal governments in an ad-hoc or inconsistent manner, whilst local governments (whose funding is largely tied to state and federal grants) have not traditionally seen a role for themselves in the issue of interpersonal violence in the community.

Despite the disconnect of local government with the 'business' of violence against women and violence prevention initiatives, there is growing interest from both within Victorian community groups and women's services *and* from local government itself about the capacity for partnerships around these issues. At a local government level it has become increasingly apparent that service providers (e.g. police, transport workers, health services) are working with women, children and families who are affected by interpersonal violence *in* both their homes and communities. As discussed in Sections One and Two of this paper, it is also apparent internationally, that the local level can be an effective site of intervention. Victorian state and Federal government policies, with varying degrees of commitment, also point to this possibility for effective violence prevention and intervention work occurring at the local level. By using criminal justice, public health and community capacity-building and social capital frameworks, it is argued that healthy and prosperous individuals and nations can grow and that environments where safe communities exist are where individuals are safe and able to contribute to their full capacity.

For the past eighteen months, exploratory research in Victoria has been conducted by Dr. Carolyn Whitzman and associates at the University of Melbourne, including community and stakeholder consultation over these issues. This work has demonstrated that there is a willingness for local government, community and women's services to explore the practical methods of partnerships to address planning for ongoing projects addressing family and interpersonal violence and the connections between violence in the private and public spheres. This has culminated in a three year Australia Research Council (ARC) grant to work with four municipalities over the issue of violence in private and public spaces. The research project will seek to integrate the:

"Two very separate discourses in most local government effort addressing community safety and violence prevention (Koskela and Pain 2000, Whitzman 2002). The first is a 'crime prevention/community safety' set of programs and policies, drawing upon design and land use planning research (particularly 'crime prevention through environmental design' or CPTED research). These initiatives have a clear spatial focus, but one which

does not usually include an explicit gender or socio-economic difference perspective. The second is a 'violence prevention' set of programs and policies, dealing mostly with violence in the home, and drawing upon public health and social work research, which tends to more consciously address issues of gender, ethnicity, and cultural diversity, but which does not have a particularly spatial perspective." (Whitzman, ARC proposal)

The research project will assist four pilot municipalities to audit their policies and tools for crime and violence prevention, seeking possibly to integrate them eventually within one policy or planning framework. Practical tools, guides and workshops conducted by and with the municipalities and community stakeholders will form part of the outcomes and products of the research project; products which will hopefully be transferable as knowledge and training tools for use in other Victorian municipalities. It is also expected that workshops for municipal planners, employees and community services on using the 'how-to-manual' will transpire at the end of the three year project.

Policy tools in the Victorian context (at the commencement of the project)

The policy tools available for Victorian local government to use in integrating the concepts of gender and violence prevention are varied and are used differently within each municipality. There is a discussion apparent in policy documents that deal with the themes of good practice violence prevention initiatives and their characteristics. Characteristics discussed are:

- Integrated public health and crime prevention approaches
- Whole of government, multi-sectoral approach
- Interpersonal violence seen as connected to social, political and economic structures
- Social and gender equality critical to healthy communities
- Citizens actively changing their social, physical and institutional environments in partnership with municipal authorities
- Land-use planning interventions across public space areas such as housing, transport seen to affect the social environment
- Gendering of crime prevention
- Gender mainstreaming in local government sectors
- Local government as crucial site of violence prevention initiatives

Community Safety Plans and Municipal Public Health Plans (MPHP) are currently employed as the most common policy tool used by municipalities to audit, identify, assess and plan for issues such as gendered violence prevention. Other relevant state policies and projects exist to inform and locate the work of gendered violence prevention at a local level including *A Fairer Victoria*, *Melbourne 2030*, *Neighbourhood Renewal*, *Community Safety Indicators project* and federally, *Women's Safety Agenda*. Given that investigations into local government's relationship with gendered violence prevention initiative is an emerging area within Victoria, this section will attempt to overview some policies of possible relevance as well as some policy tools already being used at this point in time.

Some Victorian councils have begun to identify and initiate planning around the issues of gendered violence. Examples such as the City of Darebin (Merkes 2002), City of Whittlesea (Rudner 2006) and work emerging in the City of Yarra (2006) demonstrate some of the tools available to audit, assess and plan initiatives in the area of gendered violence and violence prevention. The City of Darebin's Family Violence response was initiated because it was identified as an issue in its community consultations for a Community Safety Plan. Similarly, Whittlesea's community-campus partnerships project emerged from community consultations where the issue of domestic violence was identified as a priority (Rudner 2006). Work emerging in the City of Yarra (2006) appears to use a partnership-approach to assemble a taskforce of community, government and business groups to assess and redress the issue of violence against

women. Previous Australian examples, such as the NSW Liverpool Council Project, initially arose from a public health group and perspective and then used urban and social planning tools to modify the built environment including targeting public transport and public spaces and women's use of and fears of these public spaces, using a gendered safety audit analysis (Lawlink NSW).

- **Local Community Safety Policies & Community Safety Plans**

<http://www.crimeprevention.vic.gov.au/CA256C7B00823407/page/Community+Safety-Local+Safety+Committees?OpenDocument&1=0-Community+Safety~&2=0-Local+Safety+Committees~&3=~>

The issues of safety, community safety and indeed gendered violence prevention at the local level are not consistently defined. A recent audit of Community Safety Plans and Indicators in Melbourne (Steinborner 2006) connects with Shaw's analysis of the approach to crime prevention and community safety as traditionally ungendered or gender-neutral (Shaw 2002:5). This audit of 31 metropolitan municipalities revealed that responsibility for the issue of community safety and associated planning often 'fell between the cracks', with uncertainty and variation at the municipal level about which department was responsible, e.g. building or planning or health and community services etc. There were also variations in whether a community safety plan addressed gender-related violence at all, whether it was a stand-alone tool or whether it was incorporated into an MPHP, and the length and sustainability of the projects undertaken.

A partnership approach between women's and community groups and local government could dramatically alter the effectiveness of community safety policies to address the issues as it could potentially reflect good practice as cited internationally by WICI where citizens actively changing their social, physical and institutional environments in partnership with municipal authorities (Whitzman 2004:4).

- **Environments for Health**

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/localgov/mphpfr/index.htm>

Municipal Public Health Plans (MPHP), auspiced by the new *Municipal Public Health Planning Framework: Environments for Health*, (DHS 2001) has marked a shift from a traditional, narrow understanding of health to an acceptance of the definition of a social model of health which identifies health as influenced by our built, social, economic and natural environments and acknowledges the environmental determinants affecting people's health – in the social, political, cultural, political and economic spheres. Several councils are identifying issues such as family violence and sexual assault as issues that can be planned for in their MPHPs as issues which affect the health of their local community members and communities and are noting that this is a new direction in their health-planning. Given the recent Vic Health report outlining the costs of and links between violence against women and their myriad of negative health outcomes, it is evident that any integration of G, VP & LG project issues could be linked to an MPHP.

EFH recognizes that local government has a major role to play in the promotion of good health, and detection and prevention of threats to good health. It uses the WHO definition of health as 'the state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity' (DHS 2001: 9) and acknowledges that previous approaches to health and disease have included strategies on prevention and utilizing health education messages targeting individual behavior change but that this is now recognized as not enough 'in addressing the health inequalities between the places that people live. It is recognized that social inequalities

influence health and social class and material circumstances both generate and maintain inequalities in health.’ (DHS 2001: 9)

The EFH outlines the process of council preparing an MPHP every three years which outlines the ways council can prevent and minimise public health risks and enable residents to achieve maximum well-being. It is advised that the MPHP must be incorporated into the municipal corporate plan and be integrated into all other council plans; a principle consistent with good practice on integrated violence prevention initiatives. EFH emphasizes the role of local government as best placed, in its proximity to the community, to take a lead in promoting integrated planning, community development and participation, promoting partnerships and advocacy of local needs, establishing structures for corporate cooperation and facilitating change. (DHS 2001:17) This is evidenced in international research which highlights the suitability of local government for this role (Smaoun 2005: 35)

- ***DVC indicators and Community Indicators project***

<http://www.communityindicators.net.au/>
[www.dvc.vic.gov.
au/spar.htm](http://www.dvc.vic.gov.au/spar.htm)

The Department of Victorian Communities (DVC) have recently developed a set of 14 indicators which have been used across all the 79 local government areas as part of a way to measure community strength. DVC has noted that community safety is a strong prerequisite for a strong community (DVC 2005: 3) and internationally it is observed that it is integral to plan to meet the needs of the city’s inhabitants by directly addressing women’s safety (Smaoun 2000:iii). The DVC survey addressed aspects such as community attitudes, participation and ability to get help when needed. Directly relevant to issues of gender and violence are the questions that elicited responses about feelings of safety walking down the street alone after dark, feeling valued by society, liking the community you live in, participation in decision making boards and committees, feeling there are opportunities to have a say on the issues that are important to you and ability to get help from friends, family and neighbours when needed as key indicators of community strength. An area not specifically described in this survey is women’s feelings/fears of safety inside their homes; instead a question is asked ‘do you feel safe on your street alone after dark?’ relating primarily to issues of public violence. Additionally, the results of these questions according to gender are also not available in the policy document.

Results of these responses have been mixed across all the LGAs with a ‘key finding...that community strength has a different character in the different LGAs across Victoria.’ (DVC 2005:31)The indicators are currently being developed along with other sets of community strength indicators in a three year project funded by Vic Health and in conjunction with Victoria University. It is envisioned at the end of the project that ‘Victoria should have a coordinated local area level data resource that will include some indicators that are comparable across all LGAs and others that describe issues of local interest.’ (DVC 2005:30)

- ***A Fairer Victoria including Family Violence reforms***

<http://www.vic.gov.au/VictoriaOnline?action=content&id=1760&pageName=Latest&pageTitle=Latest>

A Fairer Victoria policy direction correlates with Smaoun’s research internationally (2005:5) in highlighting the incidence and prevalence of violence against women as an example of a group whose disadvantage from violence is related to their wider situation of socio-cultural inequality. It also resonates with international good practice on violence against women in locating the issue as a whole-of-government, multi-sectoral responsibility to provide services for.

The reformed role of police services, courts, housing and counselling programs at the local level feature in the State Government's 2005 framework for addressing and recognizing 'people, groups and place overcome disadvantage' (AFV 4). It is hoped these reforms will impact on the accessibility of support and violence prevention services, if service funding is increased in proportion to the breadth of the reforms. Reporting of family violence incidents will increase, as will the granting of intervention orders which do not necessarily reflect an increase in the incidence or prevalence of violence, rather an increase in reported violence. However, the continuing role of Family Violence Networkers, as effective communicators and advocates for liaising, linking and training local services, is in doubt as part of the Family Violence reforms. The process of ensuring that specialist violence services remain in control of the provision of counseling, support and advocacy service provision rather than such services being simply tendered out to other mainstream services is also in question, due to the nature of the tender process. An ideal situation would allow specialist services to remain with the additional function of the training of mainstream services in the issues of gendered violence.

Fourteen major strategies set out 85 actions that the state will fund to tackle disadvantage over the next four years. Of most relevance is the family violence strategy that includes an acknowledgement of the current 'fragmented and inconsistent response to family violence in Victoria and outlines actions and reforms including:

- Improving the immediate response to FV incidents from increased funding to community statewide services and improving police response
- Expanding choice for housing and support in FV situations including emergency and short-term housing options for women and also options to encourage women and children to remain in the home with access to support workers
- New approach to dealing with the perpetrator including quicker access to IVOs by police to ban perpetrator from the home and to make emergency accommodation available for perpetrator to facilitate this.
- Provision of more counseling programs: for women and children and for men's behaviour change
- Speeding the justice process through specialist FV courts – training for court staff and specialised FV services at 3 magistrates' courts
- Establishing more Indigenous FV programs: including holistic services to encourage all parties to participate in programs, to address causes of FV and providing for special needs of children and healing needs of community. Other 'Time Out' services will provide ways for perpetrators to avoid violence.
- Designating a Minister to coordinate and implement FV programs across government.

- **Melbourne 2030**

<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/nrenpl.nsf/FID/-F2FD04FADE156B3ACA256D480003CEF9?OpenDocument>

The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime articulated how environmental planning and design of cities (housing, transport design and community services accessibility) are essential to women's safety initiatives (Shaw 2004:6). Associated key features appear in Melbourne 2030 planning framework:

- Safer design of public space - local government playing a key role in developing Growth Area Plans reviewing issues like connected and walkable streets, an a mix of housing types and land uses and neighbourhood centres as a focus for local services.
- Integration of community services with employment and transport – integration of public and private spaces including principles such as 'integration of housing, workplaces, shopping, recreation and community services ... creates a safe environment, stimulates interaction and provides a lively community focus'

- Focus on equitable housing planning to meet needs: Developing local housing strategies and policies considering well-located, affordable housing to meet the needs of lower-income groups. Building sustainable and equitable neighbourhoods by addressing issues of isolation for certain groups because of lack of facilities, infrastructure including public transport and services.

- **Neighbourhood Renewal**

<http://www.neighbourhoodrenewal.vic.gov.au/ooh/web/nrwsite.nsf>

Neighbourhood Renewal projects employ a whole-of-government, multi-sectoral framework which also encourages community to identify, plan and undertake solutions within their geographic/neighbourhood area, with the resource and facilities of government. It seeks to integrate social and design initiatives for mutual benefit. UN Habitat advisor, Smaoun, reminds us that for women to move around freely they must be able to actively go about changing their environment together with municipal authorities (Smaoun 2000:35).

The 15 NR projects undertaken so far do not seem to have a significant gender and violence prevention focus, although other projects which have contributed to community capacity building, safety, housing and environment, and women's education have undoubtedly contributed to women's safety in these communities. A strategy designed to bring together and stimulate the resources and ideas of residents, governments, local businesses and community groups to tackle the issues of disadvantage in their own community, its six objectives are:

1. increased community pride and participation
2. improved employment, learning and local economic activity
3. enhanced housing and environment
4. reduced crime and greater safety
5. better health and wellbeing
6. increased access to services and improved government responsiveness.

NR committees develop and implement action plans in areas related to the six objectives above relevant to their local community area. NR committees must have at least 40% residents as representatives and these representatives are provided with training in leadership, communication and teamwork and work with a project manager, community development workers and employment and learning coordinators.

- **Women's Safety Agenda – Elimination of Violence**

http://ofw.facs.gov.au/womens_safety_agenda/index.htm

Federal Government funding was renewed in 2005 to build on the *Partnerships Against Domestic Violence* project. Whilst some features of the policy meet good practice recommended for violence prevention planning through strategies aimed at children, parents, community, the criminal justice sector and research (WHO 2004), some features compromise good practice in other areas as 'women's/anti-violence services expert counseling service provision' (UNDAW 2005: 23) exemplified in the 24 hour helpline and Mensline. Mainstreaming service provision, optimally, also means mainstreaming feminist/rights-based frameworks of service provision. Key features of the continuing PADV project:

- Violence Against Women – Australia says No media/social marketing campaign with 24 hour helpline (run by non-women's or anti-violence specific services)
- Continued funding for the Australian Domestic Violence Clearinghouse and Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault (collection and dissemination of research)
- Pilot research projects on DV & SA
- Training for nurses in regional areas on issues
- Training for the criminal justice sector on issues
- Mensline – counseling provision for men seeking assistance

Conclusions and Next Steps

This report shows a growing interest in the intersections of gender, local governance, and violence prevention. Both international studies and local projects from around the world demonstrate how gendered violence prevention initiatives can take effective action in making communities safer. There is considerable state government support for the adoption of some of these strategies to the Victorian context.

A three year research project (2006-2008) at the University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, has been funded by the Australian Research Council, with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) as an industry partner. This research project will develop Australian local government policy that can take an integrated approach to violence prevention in both public and private space, using a gender mainstreaming process and a community-government partnership model. We will analyze current local government community safety policies in the light of international good practice on violence prevention, and work with four local government/agency partnerships in Victoria to develop and evaluate integrated violence prevention programs. Lessons from these case studies will inform training materials and workshops for local government officials, community agencies, urban planners and health professionals in the final phase of the project.

The advisory committee for the project is made up of representatives from VicHealth, Crime Prevention Victoria (Department of Justice), the Office for Women's Policy (Department of Victorian Communities), Victoria Police, the Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service, the YWCA, and the Victorian Local Governance Association. This group is well able to advise the project on priorities and resources, and also to disseminate the findings.

Gendered violence is inextricably connected to the surrounding cultural and structural conditions of gender inequality within particular communities, states and nations. Initiatives to address gender-based violence at a local level must necessarily therefore consider: governance - how women's voices are represented and heard, and the extent to which public policies reflect their experiences – and, government - the ways in which all tiers of government can best coordinate policies and actions across sectors to take responsibility for this issue. Combining the resources of local government together with the acknowledgment of men's responsibility and participation is of vital importance to find solutions to redress gender inequality as part the prevention and cessation of gendered violence. Space for women's leadership and mobilisation (as the majority of victim/survivors of gender-based violence) together with community agencies and community participation is also paramount to any such successful initiative.

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