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COMMON PROBLEMS, UNIVERSAL CAUSES, SHARED SOLUTIONS

*Overview:
Making the Connection
between Violence and
Development*



One in a series of six
briefing papers produced
by the Violence and
Development Project.

*The Violence and Development Project is a collaboration between
the National Association of Social Workers, the Council on Social Work Education,
the Benton Foundation and the U.S. Agency for International Development.*

**OFFICE OF PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS**

THE GLOBAL COST OF VIOLENCE

COMMON PROBLEMS, UNIVERSAL CAUSES, SHARED SOLUTIONS

Overview: *Making the Connection between Violence and Development*

From the Los Angeles teen whose friend is shot dead to the New York City executive who is mugged on a street corner, from the infant in Bombay who suffers from hunger to the poor farmer fleeing civil war in Rwanda, violence affects millions of people worldwide.

With the evolution of sophisticated communications and transportation technologies, the world has become smaller and more interdependent. The global village—once just an abstract idea—is now a reality. Just as technology crosses borders, so too does violence and related problems of concern to social workers, such as poverty and unemployment; illegal drug use, production, and trafficking; discrimination; and oppression of women and children. Increasingly, leaders and citizens are coming to understand that these problems are best solved not by America in isolation, but rather by a world community working together. Social workers have a key role to play in this evolving effort.

The Violence and Development Project, a collaboration between the National Association of Social Workers, the Council on Social Work Edu-

cation, and the Benton Foundation, aims to educate social work professionals about the parallel conditions of violence in the United States and less economically developed countries. To this end, the project, with the help of funding from the United States Agency for International Development has prepared a series of six papers focusing on violence as a global affliction and sustainable human development as a global antidote.

In this series, we will address the following questions:

- What is the interrelationship between violence and related problems in the U.S. and less developed nations?
- What do social workers know about these problems, and what is the role of social workers in solving the global problem of violence?
- What can we learn from past and current international development efforts of the U.S. government and non-governmental development agencies?

This paper provides an overview of the connections between violence and development. The remaining papers in this series will focus on violence in re-

lationship to five subthemes: substance abuse, women and children, ethnicity, poverty, and trauma.

Key Concepts

Sustainable human development. The term development may be defined as “meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to fulfill their aspirations for a better life.” According to this broad definition, development focuses on fostering economic opportunity, equity, human rights, dignity, democracy, peace, and spiritual and emotional well-being.¹

Social workers will readily understand this concept, for it is what they strive to do everyday in their work with individuals, families, communities and organizations. In this series, however, we will be examining development from a national and international perspective.

Beginning in the late 1980s, a new consensus emerged within the international development community about how to best achieve long-lasting, positive change within poor countries. The agreed-upon strategy, known as sustainable human development, is based on these underlying principles:

- Meeting basic human needs for food, clean water, shelter, health care and education.
- Expanding economic opportunities for people, especially the poor, to increase their productivity and earning capacity in ways that are environmentally, economically and socially viable over the long-term.
- Protecting the environment by managing natural resources in ways that take into account the needs of current and future generations.
- Promoting democratic participation, especially by poor women and men, in economic and political decisions that affect their lives.
- Encouraging adherence to internationally recognized human rights standards.²

Global North/Global South. The term global North refers to the world's industrialized, wealthy countries, while the term global South refers to the world's poor nations. These terms are merely descriptive, as the split between rich and poor nations does not fall along strict geographic lines.

According to per capita gross national product figures from the World Bank, there are 24 high-income coun-

The International Development Community

The United States, through the federal office called the Agency for International Development, spent slightly less than one percent of the annual national budget, or \$14 billion, on foreign assistance in 1994. Of this money, 15 percent, or \$2.1 billion, went to fund projects to help people in poor countries better their lives. Other monies went toward military and security aid; food, exports, and other economic aid; and emergency humanitarian assistance.³

tries, with 15% of the world's people, including the United States, Switzerland and Japan. Sixty-three countries, containing 29% of the population make up the middle-income category, which includes the Philippines, Romania, and Iran. The low-income sector, with a total of 45 countries and 56% of the world's population, includes Guatemala, Somalia, and Bangladesh.⁵

Violence. Violence may be broadly defined as an act or situation that harms

In addition to federal funds, there are several hundred U.S.-based charitable international development organizations, called private voluntary organizations (PVOs) or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These organizations receive an estimated \$4.5 billion a year from individuals and businesses that goes to support relief and development efforts in the poorest nations of the world. Some of the better known of these organizations are Save the Children, CARE, Oxfam and the American Red Cross.⁴

the health and/or well being of oneself or others. Violence includes both direct attacks on a person's physical and psychological integrity, and destructive acts that do not involve a direct relationship between victims and the institution or person responsible for the harm.⁶

One of the goals of this project is to expand the common perception of violence to include such problems as racism, sexism, poverty, and hunger.

The following chart lays out three tiers of violence. These tiers form an intractable cycle, each feeding upon the other.

Structural

Avoidable deprivations built into the structure of society based on norms and traditions that subjugate one group in favor of another (poverty, hunger)

Institutional

Harmful acts by organizations and institutions (oppression, unequal treatment under the law, police brutality, torture)

Official forms of violence (state repression, war and invasion)

Personal

Interpersonal acts of violence against persons or property (rape, murder, muggings)

Harmful acts against self (alcohol, drug abuse, suicide)

Acts by organized groups or mobs (hate crimes, looting, rioting)⁷

These social ills grow out of institutions, governments, and economic structures that encourage the domination of certain groups of people over other groups, perpetuating unequal access to wealth and other resources. Inequities, which may be based on class, race, gender, or ethnicity, are often enforced through the use of violence by police forces, government troops or their proxies, foreign powers, and other forms of sanctioned militarism.

Threats to personal security and social stability come from several sources. Among them: social and economic systems (deprivation, lack of access, oppression); the state (repression, torture, police brutality or inaction); other states (colonization, war); other groups of people (civil war, ethnic conflict, discrimination, hate crimes); and individuals or gangs (homicide, muggings). Violence may be directed against specific groups such as women (rape, domestic violence, lack of access to better education or jobs); children (child abuse, neglect); and ethnic populations (genocide, hate crimes, discrimination), or against the self (suicide, substance abuse).

Among the underlying principles of the Violence and Development Project is that long-term solutions to violence must include permanent changes in structural and institutional systems that give rise to deprivation and oppression and create a world of haves and have-nots.

In Today's World, Inequities Abound

Although four billion of the earth's five and a half-billion people live in the global South, they share in only one-fifth

of the world's wealth.⁸ One person in four in the global South is unable to satisfy such basic needs as adequate nutrition, safe and sufficient drinking water, clean air to breathe, proper sanitation, and access to health care and elementary education.⁹

Development efforts to address social problems are also needed here at home. Although we are the richest, most powerful of nations, poverty and inequity stubbornly persist. For all our resources, we rank 21st among 140 countries in infant mortality rate.¹⁰ Despite our system of free public education through the secondary level, fifty percent of adults who took part in a nationwide literacy survey scored in the lowest two levels of proficiency, placing them in an at-risk category for low earnings and limited choices for employment.¹¹ This underscores the point that wealth is not necessarily synonymous with development progress.

The common perception of the global South is one of destitution and despair. Yet, since 1960 development assistance has helped reduce infant mortality rates in developing countries by 50 percent, increase life expectancy from 46 years to 63 years, and increase primary school enrollment from 48 percent to 78 percent.¹² In some cases, development achievements in poor countries have surpassed those of richer nations. Immunization rates of children is one such example. In Mexico, 90% of children under five are immunized.¹³ In Baltimore, Maryland the rate is below 50%.¹⁴

U.S. social workers can learn a great deal from people in the global South who have successfully established programs to improve social and economic development in their com-

munities, and who understand the need for bettering social institutions as well as individuals.

Violence and Development: Making the Connection

Violence and poverty obstruct the development of human capital—the term used by economists to describe a nation's collective ideas, labor, knowledge and problem-solving skills. Nations find it difficult or impossible to take care of their own—let alone compete in the international marketplace—when they are burdened with widespread hunger, unemployment, or war. The famine in Somalia that gripped the world's attention in 1992 was the direct result of civil war. The conflict prevented people from planting their crops—food on which they depended to survive.

Wars continue to be fought around the world, eating up precious resources that could be used for human development. In 1993, countries in the global South spent as much on military power as the poorest two billion people on earth earned in total income.¹⁵ And the United States spent \$291 billion on military expenditures in 1993—seven times that of Japan, the country with the next largest military budget.¹⁶ In wealthy countries too, military spending drains resources from social programs, widening the disparities between rich and poor.¹⁷

Reducing Violence Through Sustainable Human Development

Examples of successful development projects abound, demonstrating that progress can be made when there is a commitment to developing human potential and the leadership to carry out

that commitment. Some projects have been initiated by governments serious about alleviating social problems; others have been spearheaded by a single individual with a driving vision.

The Grameen Bank, founded by economics professor Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh two decades ago, is an example of a cost-effective development initiative that has changed the world. Since it was established, Grameen Bank has loaned over \$1 billion to two million people, creating jobs and supporting small businesses. Nearly half the borrowers have lifted themselves out of poverty.

So successful was Yunus' vision for the poor that his concept of "microenterprise" has been emulated by governments, community groups, and private organizations in Central and South America, Asia, Africa, and the U.S. By making small loans, (usually less than \$100), community-run lending programs enable poor people to boost their earning power, gain greater indepen-

dence, and better provide for themselves and their children. And with worldwide repayment rates of over 95 percent, such programs have proved that, with support, people can indeed overcome poverty.¹⁸

Implications for Social Workers

The future of the United States is intertwined with the futures of the nations of the global South. Social work support for human and economic development efforts around the world makes sense as an part of an overall program for addressing domestic concerns.

A few examples:

1. Global disparities in wealth contribute to political instability and wars, resulting in an influx of refugees and immigrants into the United States. Other nations' wars also affect us by limiting our trade partners' economic growth; by threatening the security of our own and our allies' borders; and by causing environmental degradation

that crosses national boundaries.

2. Poverty tempts farmers in the global South into drug production, while social workers combat the effects of drug use here at home.

3. Poverty and hunger give poor workers in the global South no choice but to accept jobs with extremely low wages and working standards, creating a flow of jobs out of the U.S. Meanwhile, social workers struggle with unemployment in the U.S., and increased prejudice and discrimination as a result of diminishing real incomes.

Social work's ethic of care requires there be no distinction between "our" poor and "their" poor. The social justice tradition of our profession provides a moral justification for working towards a time when all people share in the world's wealth. Providing the poor access to resources aimed at improving their health, education, and economic status enhances their capability to lead more fulfilling lives — with lasting implications for the future.

U.S. social workers are uniquely positioned to participate in the international effort to promote global security and development. They bring these capabilities to bear:

- Social workers know how to develop and implement successful interventions to social problems. They are trained to consider a problem at the individual, family, community, organizational and national levels. The future points toward a more comprehensive inclusion of an international perspective as well.
- Social workers understand the connection between a client's well-being and the political,

What You Can Do

Here are some ways in which you can help address problems related to violence and development:

- Learn more about nations of the global South and our relationship to them. Use resources provided in this paper as a start. Talk to people from the South who are here in the U.S. Join a study or travel group.
- Educate yourself about U.S. foreign aid by reading a variety of sources. Support foreign assistance aimed at sustainable human development.
- Learn about, support, and participate in international events such as the World Summit for Social Development and World Summit on Children.
- Join organizations committed to reducing gun violence.
- Learn about conflict resolution strategies as an alternative to violence.
- Teach your children and/or your young clients respect for people from other countries and cultures. Explain to them that physical aggression is not the smart way to solve problems and educate them about the consequences of violence.

social, and economic context within which he or she lives.

■ Social workers adhere to principles that mirror those of successful development. These include: addressing the basic unmet needs of people first; listening to people and helping them define their own needs; empowering people to make their own decisions; promoting leadership skills; and encouraging democratic participation.

■ Social workers have expertise in inner city development issues, of critical importance as the global South becomes increasingly urbanized.

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FURTHER RESOURCES

Alliance for a Global Community
1717 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Suite 801
Washington, DC 20036
202/667-8227

Publishes a newsletter called Connections ten times a year about the connections between the U.S. and developing countries.

InterAction American Council for Voluntary International Action
1717 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Suite 801
Washington, DC 20036
202/667-8227

An umbrella organization for several hundred international development agencies with programs throughout the world.

**International Activities Committee
National Association of Social Workers
Office of Peace and International Affairs**
750 First St. NE, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20002-4241
202/336-8388

The Brookings Institute
1775 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20036
202/797-6105

An organization engaged in research, education and publishing on important issues of foreign and domestic policy. Publishes the quarterly Brookings Review as well as a catalog of its other publications.

Global Exchange
2017 Mission St. #303
San Francisco, CA 94110
415/255-7296, 800/497-1994

Sponsors reality tours and study seminars to Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Publishes books on international issues.

REPORTS

United Nations Department of Public
Information

Room S-1040 United Nations
New York, NY 10017
212/963-4475

Publishes a series of issue papers on topics such as family, human rights and women related to world development from the U.N. World Summit for Social Development, held in March 1995.

Human Development Report, by the United Nations Development Program. Available from UNDP. 800/253-9646.

Hunger 1995: The Causes of Hunger, by Bread for the World. Available from them at 301/608-2400.

World Development Report, by the World Bank. Available from World Bank bookstore. 202/473-2941.

World Military and Social Expenditures, by Ruth Sivard. Available from World Priorities. 202/965-1661.

The State of the World's Children, by UNICEF. Available from the U.S. Committee for UNICEF, 212/686-5522.

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Resources

Social Workers and the Challenge of Violence Worldwide

NATIONAL TEACH-IN

Publications

We can send you multiple copies of the educational pieces in this organizing packet at no charge—for distribution before and during the teach-in.

Pieces available are:

- Stop Violence, Promote Development newsletter
- Microenterprise piece
- *Overview Briefing Paper: Making the Connection Between Violence and Development*

There are five additional briefing papers on each of the violence-related subthemes covered in the videoconferences. They are also available at no cost. They are:

- *Substance Abuse: Ending the Global Drug Epidemic*
- *Violence Against Women and Their Children: Beyond A Family Affair*
- *Trauma: Survival is Victory*
- *Ethnicity: A Rich, Diverse World*
- *Poverty: Ensuring Enough For Everyone*

Attractive posters and fliers, complete with a photograph of Charles Kuralt, will be available in December for you to publicize the teach-in events on your campus or in your community.

Contact us today about ordering additional materials:

by phone: 800/638-8799 extension 273

by e-mail: viodevproj@aol.com

by fax: violence and development project
202/336-8311

by mail:

Violence and Development Project
NASW
750 First St. NE, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20002-4241

Audiovisual Resources

SELECTIONS AVAILABLE FROM CHURCH WORLD SERVICE at 219/264-3102. No charge except return postage. Call them for their complete catalogue.

The Business of Hunger (Maryknoll Media, 1984 28 minutes) More than a decade old, but still one of the best films on how agribusiness, poverty and hunger in the global South are related.

The Challenge to End World Hunger (Food First, 1987 20 minutes) People from the global South add their voices to experts in this examination of the causes of hunger and poverty.

Famine in Africa (Cable News Network, 1991 60 minutes) This film shows causes of hunger in Africa, as well as possible solutions.

How Much Is Enough? (Center for Defense Information, 1992 30 minutes) This video suggests that the U.S. is spending too much money on weapons, which in turn hurts our economy.

Refugee Women (United Nations High Commission on Refugees, 1980 40 minutes) Women and children compose the vast majority of the world's refugees. Women demonstrate tremendous strength under very difficult circumstances.

Shooting Back: Photography by Homeless Children (Washington Project for the Arts and Video Action Fund, 1990 30 minutes) Photographs by homeless children in Washington, D.C. A comprehensive look at life in the shelters through the eyes of children.

They Hold Up Half The Sky (*Cusack Productions for United Nations Development Fund for Women, 1987, 26 minutes*) Historically, women have been excluded from most development assistance. This piece highlights a few of the places where that wrong is being righted.

To Be a Woman: African Women's Response (*All Africa Conference of Churches Women's Desk, 1992, 40 minutes*) Stories of women in Ghana, Uganda and Zambia depict their struggle for social and economic survival as economic crises racks their countries.

With These Hands: How Women Feed Africa (*New Internationalist, 1986, 33 minutes*) Three African women tell in their own words of their struggle to feed their families, and how their efforts are often frustrated by lack of support from men, by big machines and by big companies.

3-4-1 (*UNICEF, 1990, 13 minutes*) Examines the causes of death for approximately 40,000 of the world's children who die each day from preventable diseases. Vaccinations for measles, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, and rehydration salts for diarrhea could save the lives of millions of children each year. Why aren't many governments responding?

SELECTIONS AVAILABLE FROM OXFAM AMERICA at 617/482-1211. No charge except return postage.

Shelter: Bangladesh (*Oxfam America, 1994, 13 minutes*) This video documents life-saving programs being implemented in Bangladesh. Shelters built by community groups will dramatically reduce the death toll from seasonal cyclones.

Ethiopia Project Visit (*Oxfam America, 1992, 8 minutes*) A concrete example of how simple technology has allowed farmers to double their crop yield and gain self-sufficiency.

Partnership Guatemala (*Oxfam America, 1991, 18 minutes*) This video gives an inside look at some community development projects in Guatemala. It also explores connections between poverty and militarism.

If The Mango Tree Could Speak (*Pat Goudvis, 1993 2 sections: El Salvador, 30 minutes. Guatemala, 28 minutes*) This video is a window into the lives of children effected by war in their countries. Movingly told in their own words.

AVAILABLE FROM WORLD NEIGHBORS at 800/242-6387

The Quiet Revolution (1994) A video about one of the world's first microenterprise programs: the Grameen Bank. The Grameen Bank, begun two decades ago by one man has loaned over 1 billion dollars to 2 million poor people. With a repayment rate of over 90%, 46% of the banks' borrowers no longer live in poverty.

AVAILABLE FROM WE DO THE WORK production company at 510/547-8484

Not in Our Town (30 minutes \$25.00 to purchase) A compelling true story of how the citizens of Billings, Montana came together and stopped a rash of violent hate crimes that were tormenting their community.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS WITH VIDEOS TO BORROW:

Save The Children, 203/221-4000
Maryknoll Missionaries, 914/941-7590

Reports and Newsletters

Alliance for a Global Community
1717 Massachusetts Ave. NW,
Suite 801
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202/667-8227

Publishes a newsletter called *Connections* ten times a year about the connections between the U.S. and developing countries.

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