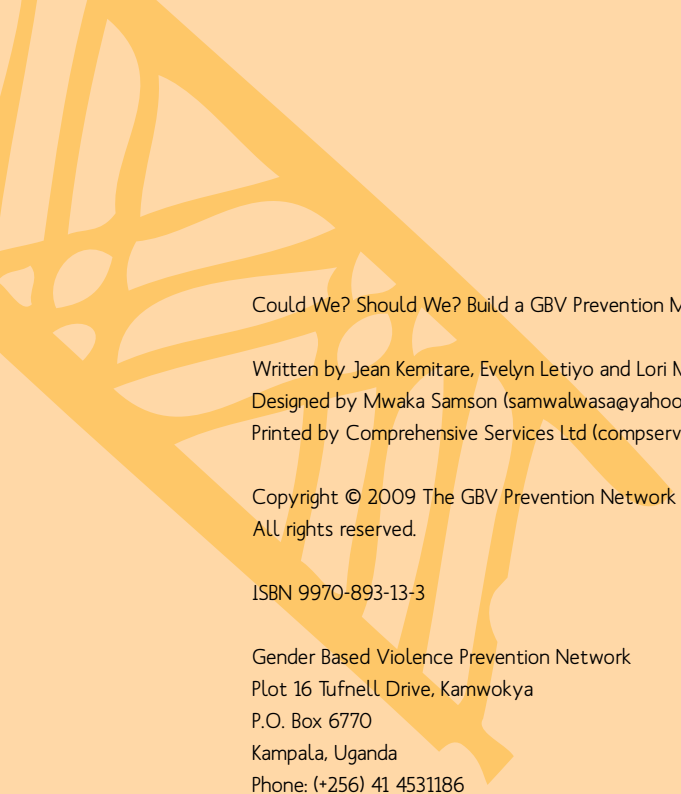


COULD WE?

SHOULD WE?

**BUILD A GBV PREVENTION
MOVEMENT**





Could We? Should We? Build a GBV Prevention Movement

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A large, stylized yellow fish silhouette is positioned on the left side of the page, facing right. The fish has a rounded body, a small dorsal fin, and a large, curved tail. The text "SETTING THE CONTEXT" is centered within the fish's body. The background is a solid, vibrant orange color.

SETTING THE CONTEXT



The Gender Based Violence Prevention Network brings together over 260 organizations and individuals across the Horn, East and Southern Africa.

In November 2008, members of the GBV Prevention Network met in Cape Town and discussed the development of a GBV prevention movement and the importance of having a feminist approach to GBV prevention. Members deliberated on the possibility of building such a movement, what it would be like, and who would be in it. The idea of a GBV prevention movement received tremendous support and the GBV Prevention Network was tasked to focus our energies on movement building this year.



**BEGINNING
THE DIALOGUE:
WHAT IS A
MOVEMENT?**

**A MOVEMENT IS
“AN ORGANIZED SET OF
CONSTITUENTS PURSUING
A COMMON POLITICAL
AGENDA OF CHANGE
THROUGH COLLECTIVE
ACTION.”**

Srilatha Batliwala

WHY DO MOVEMENTS EXIST?

Movements exist to push for a long-term transformative agenda. They are driven by a politicized group of people undertaking a wide variety of activities aimed at challenging the status quo with regard to power distribution between or among groups in a society.


Historically, movements have emerged from different social, political and economic spheres. Among these are movements to promote peace, gender equality, environmental preservation, human rights, civil rights, etc.

All movements rest on the springboard of ideologies that shape their fundamental principles and political agenda.

A movement is a struggle for justice.



**WHO MAKES A
MOVEMENT?**



Movement constituents may be individuals, groups and/or organizations, working together strategically to challenge and change distribution and use of power between or among different groups.

Membership within a movement mainly consists of politicized individuals or groups who are affected by a problem directly although people who identify with the problem by proxy can play an instrumental part. Movement structures have some level of both informal and formal organizing and strive on leadership at both these levels.



**UNPACKING
'THE PERSONAL
IS POLITICAL'**

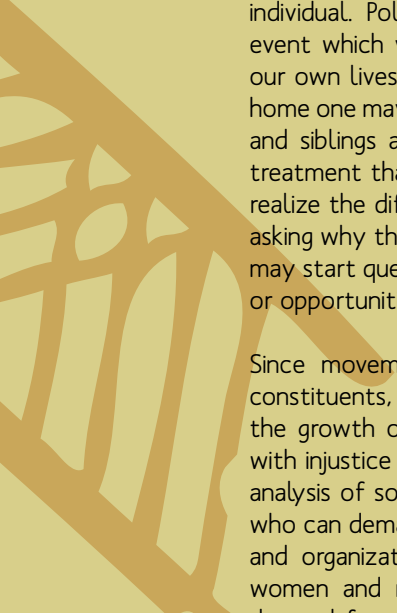
Effective feminist movements are based on 'political' goals with a critical mass of 'politicized members.' Politicization is a process individuals go through that brings them to 'critical consciousness'. It involves individual reflection on all forms of injustice, including patriarchy. Politicization involves awareness that reality is not the same for different groups of people; that injustice exists in many forms. It comes with the responsibility to change as individuals as well as change structures that perpetuate all forms of injustice. Politicization is a process that involves awareness of power, wealth distribution, oppression and injustice. It culminates in an individual's urge and compulsion to change systems and structures that perpetuate those injustices.

CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS: achieving an in-depth understanding of the world including the perception and exposure of social and political contradictions. It also includes taking action against the oppressive elements in one's life that are illuminated by that understanding.

PATRIARCHY: control by men of a disproportionately large share of power.



**HOW DOES ONE BECOME
POLITICIZED?**



The trigger for and process of politicization is different for every individual. Politicization is often triggered by an experience or event which vividly illustrates injustice or oppression - often in our own lives or the lives of those close to us. For example, at home one may look at the power dynamics between their parents and siblings and start to question the preferential and special treatment that men or boys receive. During education, one may realize the differences in the number of boys and girls and start asking why there are fewer girls than boys. At the workplace one may start questioning the disparities in positions of power, money or opportunities between women and men.

Since movements are built on the foundation of politicized constituents, fostering this process of politicization is critical for the growth of strong movements. If individual discontentment with injustice is nurtured deliberately, it can develop into a deep analysis of social issues and help build a critical mass of people who can demand for social change. To have a group of individuals and organizations who can question power relations between women and men and organize communities to challenge and demand for equal power is the essential first step in building a GBV prevention movement.



**HOT DEBATE:
IS THERE
A GBV
PREVENTION
MOVEMENT
IN THE HORN,
EAST AND
SOUTHERN
AFRICA?**

**SO WHERE DO WE STAND?
DO WE OR DO WE NOT HAVE
A MOVEMENT?**

WE DO HAVE THE BEGINNING OF A GBV PREVENTION MOVEMENT!

Key Arguments:

- The many efforts and organizations working on GBV in the region can be seen as building blocks of a movement and indicate potential that can be ignited to form a strong movement.
- Organizations provide various resources and support that can foster the growth of movements. In the early stages, the strength of a growing movement has a direct correlation with the organizations around it.
- The organizations and individuals in the network are currently mobilizing at different levels and this is a big component of movement building which can be strengthened.

WE DO NOT HAVE A GBV PREVENTION MOVEMENT!

Key Arguments:

- There are formal organizations addressing GBV prevention and response in the region but most of them are independent. We see fragmented efforts in the areas of legal reform, GBV service provision, advocacy, prevention and human rights promotion but these are not well coordinated. Where connections exist they are tenuous, not systematically planned and structured as those of movements.
- Although many organizations seem to be addressing women's issues and GBV they do not necessarily have a shared political analysis or goal. Compartmentalization may be inevitable even in movement structures but a movement should be driven by a similar analysis of GBV which is not the case in the region. Not all organizations in the region for example share an analysis of the cause of GBV which should be the first step towards a movement.
- Instead of an organized set of constituents working towards one transformative goal, what we have are projects and campaigns that are not deliberately organizing for long term sustainable change.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Do you see a GBV prevention movement in your country? In the region?

The general consensus of members seems to be that there are fragmented efforts in the region towards GBV prevention that require more connectivity and strategy to meaningfully build a movement. Members called for the need to refocus the analysis and understanding of GBV as a political struggle rather than a responsive, technical approach.

For the GBV Prevention Network there is opportunity and potential for working to create a deliberate forum for members to connect, grow and improve the work on GBV prevention.



**WHO IS OR SHOULD BE
IN THE GBV PREVENTION
MOVEMENT?**

**A MOVEMENT MUST BE BASED
ON PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSION
AND SHOULD HAVE ENTRY
POINTS FOR MARGINALIZED
COMMUNITIES LIKE YOUNG
PEOPLE OR LGBT.**

One of the questions that is often asked in movement building dialogues is that of membership and constituency. The GBV prevention movement is faced with the question of who is or who should be part of the movement. Currently the GBV Prevention Network has a largely professionalized membership, that is, members joining by virtue of their jobs and organizations. If the majority of these organizational members are working within politicized membership organizations then this can contribute to the strength of the movement. Yet are organizations politicized and activist-based? What could member organizations and the Network do to foster this? To bring in other activists who may not be staff of member organizations?

INTERSECTIONALITY AND INCLUSION

A movement for the prevention of VAW shares many values with other existing movements. How can we recognize the intersections of other social justice movements and use this for our own advantage as well as also adding our voice to their priorities? A movement must be based on principles of inclusion and should have entry points for marginalized communities like young people or LGBT. Inclusion of marginalized groups as well as majority groups, like men, are both opportunities and challenges that each movement must face. As movements require a wide and diverse activist base, these voices are needed within the movement so skillfully managing their involvement becomes key.

HOW CAN THE **GBV PREVENTION NETWORK** FOSTER A MOVEMENT IN THE REGION?

WE WILL GET MOVING!

In 2009, the GBV Prevention Network will turn toward movement building - which to us means fostering a politicized analysis of GBV among members, building skills, and creating solidarity among existing members, like-minded activists and other social movements to strengthen a transformative agenda and efforts for GBV prevention.

Practical ideas suggested by members and now incorporated into our 2009 plan include:

1. Use the numbers and structure of the GBV Prevention Network for the mobilization of a critical mass of constituents for a GBV prevention movement in the region by providing information, facilitating communication and exchange among members about movement building.

2. Create a process for member organizations designed to strengthen critical consciousness among the membership by facilitating personal reflection on a feminist approach to GBV prevention.
3. Foster close links among organizations through face-to-face meeting, e-discussions and exchange visits.
4. Facilitate leadership development among members so that they can become protagonists and champions the movement building process. Members could become movement building and supporting organizations, positions from which they can give the strategic support and direction to the movement.
5. Support members in framing GBV issues so that the packaging of our issues can become more provocative, challenging and effective particularly through the development of regional campaigns and actions.

**HAVE OTHER IDEAS?
WRITE TO US AT
INFO@PREVENTGBVAFRICA.ORG**



LET'S GET MOVING!

The success of many social struggles can be attributed to movements: the civil rights movement in the USA, the indigenous movement in Latin America, the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, etc. Movements provide spaces in which individuals and organizations can collectively work towards change. VAW prevention is a political struggle that requires movement-based organizing. As members and friends of the GBV Prevention Network, we can join our voices, our hearts and our hands together to transform power relations between women and men so that all women can live a life free of violence.

GET MOVING!

Share your thoughts and ideas - and hear what others have to say!

1. Do you consider yourself politicized? If so, how was your process of politicization triggered? If not, how could you deepen your analysis of injustice?
2. Would you consider yourself an activist? What does activism mean to you?
3. Do you consider yourself a feminist? What does feminism mean to you?
4. Why did you get involved in GBV prevention work?
5. How do you think we could build a GBV prevention movement in the region?

Talk with friends, colleagues, a trusted other, a mentor and the GBV Prevention Network.

Share your thoughts and experiences! Write to us at info@preventgbvafrica.org and connect with others at www.preventgbvafrica.org



www.preventgbvafrica.org