



Violence against Women and Girls

**Movement Building in
the Global South:**

Report from a Global
Consultation with
Activists

 *Raising Voices*

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Raising Voices warmly thanks the many consultants and colleagues who contributed to this report: Amy Bank, Margarita Quintanilla, Stephanie Willman Bordat, Saida Kouzzi, Houda Benmbarek, Nay El Rahi, Anubha Singh, Josefina Oraa, Sophie Namy, Yassin Ally Sunuku, Maimuna Kanyamala, Nada Mustafa Ali, Masooma Ali, Sharifa Abdulaziz, Natsnet Ghebrebrhan, Rabha Elis Bandas Bilal, Generose Nzeyimana, Jimmy Mategeko and Samia El Hashmi.

And to all the activists across the world whose ideas and experiences fill these pages – we thank you and honor your energy and commitment to preventing violence against women and girls.

Background

In the last decade there have been great strides made globally in the response to violence against women and girls (VAWG). What began as the domain of feminist and women's organisations working to respond and in some cases prevent VAWG has grown to a significant number of actors working across the spectrum of prevention and response.

Despite this promising upsurge of activity, there remain considerable challenges on multiple fronts including a lack of shared analysis, solidarity and collective action -- all of which are critical to creating a larger movement that stretches beyond individual actors and initiatives.

Activists are driving social change and are the best hope we have for preventing VAWG. However, they are often working in isolation. The important work of bringing these activists together, leveraging the common objective, creating a learning space and cultivating synergy could transform the isolation into strength. It could give rise to a powerful and cohesive foundation for movement building.

In response to this gap in collective action and lack of cohesive dialogue, Raising Voices is leading an exploratory learning and planning process for movement building around violence against women in the Global South. Through this process, Raising Voices seeks to understand the current dynamics in the field, the challenges activists face, the individual and organisational strengths that could be further leveraged and to hear the voices of activists working on VAWG across the regions.

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Rationale

Raising Voices has been interested and actively working on movement building in the Horn, East and Southern Africa for many years primarily through technical support to violence prevention organizations and the GBV Prevention Network.

Three funders (Foundation for Just Society, Novo Foundation, An Anonymous Donor) also interested in movement building, asked Raising Voices to lead a learning process with activists in the Global South. The intent and objective of this process is open and will emerge from activists themselves. If there is genuine interest, general agreement on core needs and commitment to engage, then Raising Voices, in collaboration with key activists, will design a five-year strategy for building momentum to prevent VAWG in the Global South.

The purpose of this report is to present and summarise findings from this global consultation conducted with activists, organisations and other stakeholders working on issues around VAWG prevention to gain an understanding on: the status of existing movements, activists' or organisations' interest in connecting with others, strengthening solidarity and connection between activist groups to work towards increasing activism within the Global South to prevent VAWG.

Methods

In order to develop a comprehensive consultation process, Raising Voices undertook an extensive mapping exercise, administered an online global survey and conducted a series of in-depth interviews.

A. Process of Development

Reaching out

At the outset, prior to data collection, Raising Voices undertook a thorough process of review and exploration of existing initiatives to not only learn from past experiences, but to also understand what added value a new initiative could bring. Numerous in-person

and virtual meetings with key individuals leading and participating in movement building efforts were conducted. This included speaking with others undertaking similar movement building learning processes (such as *Move to End Violence*), those working in movement building strategy (such as the Movement Strategy Center), as well as broad conversations

with practitioners in the Global South. Many generously offered to share not only anecdotes, but also data collection tools such as interview guides and surveys, which were helpful in sparking ideas in our initial data collection tool design.

Identifying Consultants

Identifying appropriate consultants was a critical component of a successful data collection process. Finding individuals appropriate for the role proved difficult in some regions. Raising Voices looked for consultants with the following qualities: *deep knowledge and experience working on VAWG in their respective region; commitment to women's rights and VAWG; skilled at relationship building; having established positive relationships with other activists in their respective region; an understanding of movement building; and ability to operate in English and regional languages.* It was also very important that consultants were seen as bridge builders and not strongly associated with INGOs or even some national NGOs.

Finding consultants with all of the necessary qualities was an arduous process; some consultants were identified effortlessly through word of mouth recommendations and discussions with friends of Raising Voices. In other regions, we had more difficulty finding the right individuals. To find the appropriate consultants, we posted a job description on various job boards including Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI), Association for Women in Development (AWID) and on Raising Voice's job board. We received 71 applications and interviewed ten finalists. In total, Raising Voices worked with six consultants in South America, Mesoamerica, North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Data collection from the Pacific Islands, sub-Saharan Africa and globally was conducted by Raising Voices staff.

B. Data Collection Tool Design and Collection

The data collection tool design was a complex process that took considerably more time than planned. Three key tools were designed including a mapping template, a global online survey, and an in-depth interview guide. These tools were designed with the goal of both gaining a broad view of the VAWG prevention and response landscape across the Global South, as well as depth of understanding of the work and views of individual activists.

Data collection tools designed include:

- 1. Mapping template:** A mapping template was designed to collect information from activists about the work of other individuals and organizations. Existing contacts were asked to create a list of at least twenty activists and allies. The mapping template included fields that not only described the demographics of an organization or individual (such as name, location, and contact information) but also helped us to understand the type of work done. The mapping template was a key tool in helping us to understand the landscape of VAWG prevention and activism and how it differs in various countries and regions. Contact information collected via the mapping template was used to disseminate the survey to as many activists as possible and gain a better understanding of the landscape of different regions. A total of 23 templates were collected with a total of 1235 contacts. There is considerably more representation from Meso America and South America, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.

- 2. Online global survey:** Survey design was a lengthy process that included numerous drafts and iterations due to extensive field testing with activists in different regions. It was challenging to develop a tool that spoke to activists across the Global South and to try to satisfy the very many areas of interest that emerged from the different regions. Friends and colleagues of Raising Voices were an indispensable resource during survey development and assisted with survey translations as well as pre-testing and commenting on numerous drafts of the survey. The online survey gathered specific information around organisational details, the state of movement building and the struggles of VAWG prevention and activism.

The survey was conducted using Survey Monkey in multiple languages – English, Arabic, Spanish, French and Kiswahili. Survey translation was an unexpectedly long and sometimes difficult process. Raising Voices had to identify and hire translators who both understood the basic tenets of movement building and the important nuances of language when discussing VAWG. Additionally, barriers such as dialect variations and the use of different scripts posed a challenge in survey translation and analysis.

The survey consists of 41 closed-ended and open-ended questions, with the majority of them being multiple choice. The survey was disseminated via email using contact information collected from mapping templates, as well as through various listservs such as SVRI, AWID, Femnet, and others.

Survey response rates were lower than expected, with 204 respondents beginning the survey, and 180 completing the survey. This may be due to various factors including the length of the survey, internet access and language barriers.

- 3. In-depth interview guide:** The in-depth interview guide contained similar questions to the online global survey, but with the aim of collecting richer data and anecdotes than is possible through a survey, as well as fleshing out key questions. The aim of the interviews was to more deeply understand the challenges and experiences of activists and explored questions such as:

What do you hunger for as an activist?

What does movement building mean to you?

What are the biggest opportunities and challenges in movement building?

What would be needed by activists to build and participate in a Global South movement on VAW?

Similar to the online survey, the in-depth interview guide was pre-tested by peers working in VAWG. Where necessary, interviews were conducted and transcribed in regional languages and later translated into English.

Interviewees were identified through snow ball sampling including the mapping templates, recommendations and through word of mouth. The vast majority of conversations were conducted over Skype, with a small number being conducted in person. The length of each interview varied between 45 minutes to an hour and a half. Sixty-eight interviews in total were conducted across the Global South with a variety of activists working in incredibly diverse settings and sharing with us their wide array of experiences.

Results

Often, initiatives are pre-determined by funders or organizations with limited consultation, involvement or active participation of those they are trying to reach. In this case, Raising Voices has been interested and actively working on movement building in the Horn, East and Southern Africa for many years.

Broadly four themes emerged from the analysis of the online survey and in-depth interviews:

- A. Description of respondent and organisational profile;
- B. Respondents' conceptualisation of 'movement building' and notions of 'feminism' and perceptions of the state of movement building (local, national, regional) around VAWG;
- C. Respondents' perceptions of the state and perceived value of movement building around VAWG in the Global South; and
- D. Aspirations and hopes of activists working in VAWG prevention including their perspectives on strengthening the movement in the Global South.

A. Respondent and Organisational Profile

Prior to elaborating on the other themes, an illustration of respondents and organisations profiles have been provided for contextual information.

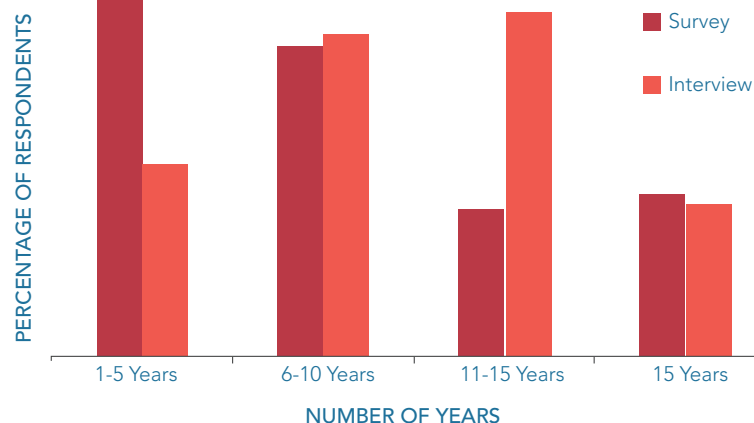
A range of actors – feminist organizations, faith-based groups, academic institutions, bi-laterals, international NGOs, community-based organizations, faith-based organisations, funders and government agencies – from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), South East Asia, South Asia, the Pacific Islands, sub-Saharan Africa and South and Meso America participated in completing the survey and the interviews.

Of a total of 180 completed online survey responses, more than half (56.4%) of the responses were from sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 15% from Meso and South America, 13% from USA/ Europe and Australia and the remainder between the Middle East and

North Africa, South East and South Asia. In terms of age distribution, a majority of the respondents were between the age groups 31-39 years (30%) and close to 72% of respondents identified as female.

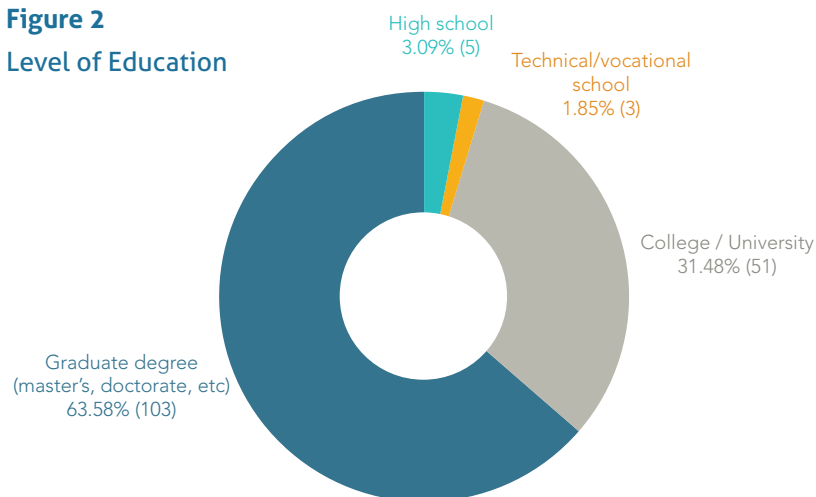
In the online survey, close to 90.5% of respondents identified themselves as activists and a little more than 3/4th of respondents as feminists (78.4%). Of the respondents who considered themselves to be activists, almost 40% responded as having worked on VAWG issues for 1-5 years and 30% for 6-10 years. Whereas in the interviews, a majority of the respondents had been working on VAWG issues for more than ten years with some respondents indicating that they had been working on other issues elsewhere before working on VAWG (please see Figure 1). However, in terms of the demographic profile of respondents participating in this consultation, it appears that younger respondents were more comfortable using an online platform for responding to surveys, whereas a special effort was made in the interviews to reach out to both younger and older and more experienced activists.

Figure 1:
Number of Years
Working on VAWG



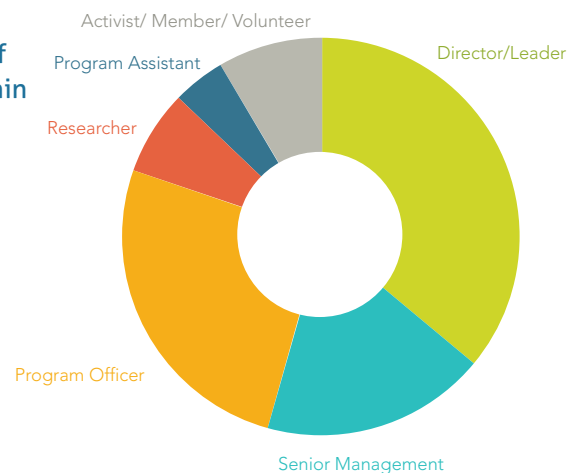
In terms of formal education, most respondents (64%) who identified as activists have a graduate degree (either at the Masters or PhD level) and approximately 31.5% have a College or university degree (see Figure 2). This was surprising and illustrates the bias in the voices that get heard in global processes. While we strove to engage activists with less formal education, those who were identified by consultants, through the mapping and who responded to the request of the online survey were more educated.

Figure 2
Level of Education



In the online survey, respondents primarily worked either for an international, national or local organisation mostly in the capacity of leadership positions (i.e. director/senior management or program officer) (see Figure 3). For the interviews, respondents worked in leadership positions in international and national organisations, as well as academic institutions and there was representation from local grassroots NGOs, as well. There were also some respondents who worked in organisations that focus on VAWG in a voluntary capacity, with other jobs to pay their bills. The capacity of most of the organisations were between 5-25 people.

Figure 3
Positions/Titles of Respondents within Organisations



In the online survey, close to 90.5% of respondents identified themselves as activists and a little more than 3/4th of respondents as feminists (78.4%). Of the respondents who considered themselves to be activists, almost 40% responded as having worked on VAWG issues for 1-5 years and 30% for 6-10 years.

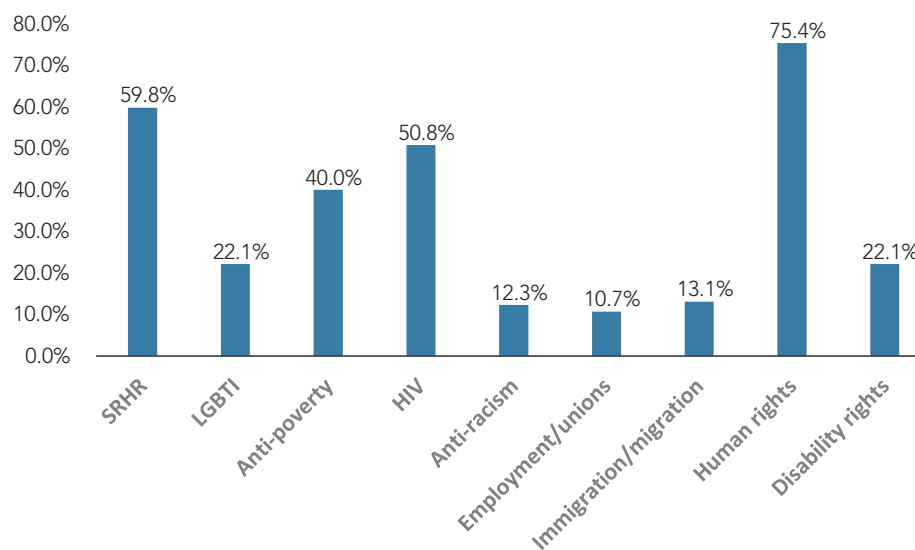
Only 12% of respondents mentioned that VAWG is their organisation's main area of focus, whereas most (87.5%) respondents were of the opinion that VAWG is a prominent feature, but not the only area of focus. This is illustrated by examples of organisations that are working broadly around other issues such as alleviation of poverty or gender equality (e.g., an organisation that works with men and boys to promote equality and advancing women's rights agenda so that men and boys are part of the solution) or post-conflict violence where VAWG is a part of their remit, or organisations working on legal and human rights issues related to women.

Within VAWG, more than half of the respondents (57.3%) report working for organisations that focus on the issue (VAWG) in general. Some respondents also report focus on issues around sexual violence (34%), child abuse (21%) and intimate partner violence (21%)

In terms of organisations' approach to tackling VAWG, from the interviews, it appears that respondents from sub-Saharan Africa and some international organisations were focused on tackling VAWG from a prevention perspective (i.e. having an impact on policies, community mobilisation, training and capacity building, mass media campaigns, etc.). Respondents from the Middle East and North Africa region, South Asia and South America seem more response-oriented, such as having a focus on provision of legal services, counselling services or the provision of shelters.

A majority of respondents (86.5%) worked for organisations which were part of networks, coalitions or movement building initiatives for VAWG. A large number of respondents were also active in other movements, such as the sexual and reproductive movement or anti-poverty movements or human rights movements, as depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4
Participation in
Other Networks and
Coalitions



B. Respondents' thoughts on movement building and feminism

I. Conceptualising movement building and feminism

In order to further understand respondents' perceptions on the strength of movements around VAWG, their conceptualisation of the terms 'movement building' and 'feminism' were explored.

Conceptualising movement building. As demonstrated below, there is not one uniform understanding of movement building across the Global South, but instead a plethora of different ideas of how movements are built and sustained, who participates in movements and what value they hold. Some words and phrases that featured prominently in the general discourse around the concept of movement building have been illustrated by the word cloud below:

Having a **shared vision and a shared set of principles** were important, as demonstrated by this quote:

"movement building is creating a shared space that different organisations, or people can come together to share values, a vision and objectives. In an ideal world it would be very organized – but it doesn't really need to be so formal or structured" Lebanon

Some respondents mentioned that movement building is a **process, not a situation**. Specifically, three respondents indicated that movement building is an organised and focused process for gathering individuals and organisations as activists for challenging specific issues they consider important to establish. Furthermore, it should emerge at a grassroots level from local actors, but function beyond the local context with national and regional support. However there was recognition that the power of the movement remains with the capacity to be grounded at the local level. According to a respondent from India:

"Movements form around where there seems to be a problem of entitlement that is shared and people rally around that to get those things over a period of time. A sort of critical mass for issues that effect a larger community of people. Not very simple—multiple components and sectors can be involved in movement building". India



The concepts of **collective action, cooperation and unified efforts** around a certain common vision with an actionable framework for change, and a society that is more just and equal, resonated with a third of the participants. Related to this, one respondent mentioned collective action with a common vision that brings people together, as illustrated by this quote,

"It [movement building] is a group of people who share a common vision and who share an overall framework of how to do things collectively. It is collective action for a common goal". Thailand

However, another respondent mentioned how movements cut across sectors, have multiple layers and are composed of a mix of public workers, philanthropists and academics. Related to this point, another respondent working for a NGO in Haiti discussed the idea of movement building as the education of people within a community (the community might not be one specific geographic community, but instead people who are connected and moving forward together in one direction);

"A movement is when without being conscious of it everyone is engaged and moving forward together" Haiti

Another respondent referred to the idea that movement building creates a collective consciousness and gives the oppressed and active agents tools for critical thinking and consequent action. Related to this was a mention by one of the respondents around coordination among civil society groups to pressure the State.

At least ten respondents from different regions discussed the concept of coalescing around a common cause or the idea of diversity for common good. For example, the women's rights movement, human rights movement and historical events such as war can all galvanise people into action, as indicated by a respondent from Vietnam. She noted its:

"100 years of struggle against its Chinese Conquerors, against the French, then the US. They lived with the aftermath of the Vietnam War and then the 30 years of embargo imposed by the US. Vietnam fought against imperialism, war...There was mass organization across the country leading the fight for Vietnam's survival and independence. Part of the mass organization was a women's union." Vietnam

Some respondents also mentioned that difficulties exist within the VAWG prevention and response community that need to be overcome in order for a global movement to exist.

"...It [movement building] means breaking those barriers down—it must involve a community of thought and practice and has to be able to address issues jointly. It is about reaching consensus and also sometimes putting issues you deem to be the biggest priority off to the periphery; it is about putting the larger cause above your own individual causes." Fiji

Similarly another respondent from MENA referring to the women's rights movements discussed the notion of women and men having the same opportunities and are brought together around a common cause. This involves building and mobilising women to spread feminist values of equality and a commitment to sharing resources.

On the one hand, six respondents discussed the need **for structure and that movements need to be organised and built and transformed into NGOs or political parties**, as illustrated by this quote from a respondent working at an NGO focused on legal issues for women:

"For spontaneous movements to be sustained and last in time, need a place, an objective, an action plan and money. But a movement that is created needs to be structured and have a legal existence. Only this way can it be an interlocutor" Algeria

Related to this, respondents also spoke about actions for regular sharing of information, plans and progress of activities along with the need for a specific agenda with action items to achieve aims. However, there was also acknowledgement that it takes passion to form a strong movement and a combination of robust organisational structure, adequate resources, proper communication, along with passion is needed for a strong movement.

Thus, from the data, many respondents appear to be saying that movement building is **the development of networks rather than an organic, conceptual linkage and solidarity across regions and activists.**

However, on the other hand, there was mention particularly from respondents in sub-Saharan Africa that movements have **to be organic and created within civil society** and not with an agenda pre-conceived by NGOs.

Raising Voices asked activists to discuss their understandings of movement building to gain a better sense of how it is conceptualized in different regions. As demonstrated above, there seems to exist a spectrum of conceptualizations within and across each region of the Global South. This is likely due to divergent histories and context within each region. While some activists held very strong particular beliefs about what movement building looks like, who participates in a movement, and how movements are formed, others had more loosely formed opinions about the concept. In moving forward with Global South movement building in the future, it is important that activists can come further discuss and flesh out the key components of movement building.

Conceptualising feminism. Some words and phrases that featured prominently in the general discourse around the concept of feminism illustrated by this word cloud:



Most respondents in the interviews referred to feminism as **equality between individuals** and that it is about equal rights for women in the social, cultural, political and economic spheres. Thus, there was general consensus that the objective of feminism is making sure that there is an equal and just society and that apart from feminists being committed to the achievement of equality and justice, it also means resisting (on a daily basis)

"all the normalized acts of sexism, racism, classism and the list of -isms goes on!" Lebanon

There was also mention that there should not have to be a term "feminism" as equality in every sense is a right that should be a given for all men and women.

Twenty respondents used the term **"power" and "visions of power"** in their various descriptions when alluding to feminism; that power is continuous and dynamic and grows as one shares it and is also not individual and yet not external to individuals either as illustrated by this quote:

"Feminism has to do with visions of power; looking at power not as something finite, but something that grows as you share it. Power is not individual and yet not external to ourselves either. It grows collectively when you help someone else be strong; for example mothers do it every day. Feminism incorporates a vision of the world in which those power relationships between women and men are shared in that way that makes both stronger. A world with feminism is a much more nurturing and power-sharing model of the world." Independent consultant, Global

A few indicated that feminism is a theory that challenges existing **power imbalances** between men and women, as well as the patriarchal structures that are linked in order to achieve gender justice. References were also made to how feminism is about understanding women's position and the historical oppressions they have been subject to resulting in power dynamics that place them in an inferior position. A couple of young women also discussed how

violence against women is reinforced by values and habits from the culture of patriarchy that raises the issue of the dominant masculine ideology that dominate since the existence of social classifications.

At least fifteen respondents referred to feminism as a **political stance** that **views equal opportunities and rights for women and men**. A respondent working for an alliance of NGOs that engages men and boys to promote gender inequalities mentioned that feminist movement refers to

"...the political commitment to alter inequalities between men and women, but also to address power imbalances between people (not just men and women), hence strive for a new social order of social justice". Nicaragua

Some respondents particularly from the MENA region and the South Asian region referred to feminism as a theory that calls for equality between the sexes, politically, economically and socially and that as a political movement it aims to support women and their preoccupations, and to eliminate discrimination between the sexes from which women suffer on the basis of gender.

A couple of respondents described the **religious connotations underpinning a patriarchal society** that contributes to gender inequalities. According to a respondent from Algeria, violence against women is often based on religious and conservative ideas and traditions that have little to do with equal relationships or laws as illustrated by this quote "...

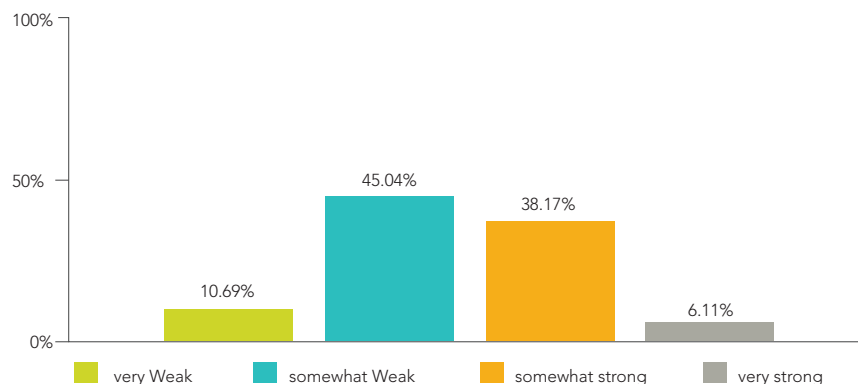
Violence is the expression of the patriarchal society, where men are considered the head of family, supreme, exercising authority and controlling women. In Muslim societies women's liberty is considered a source of dishonour and hence violence expresses itself. We have to train the imams in the mosque to not preach violence against women and preach equality. We also have to integrate this into school programs, on the radio. Otherwise no matter what the changes in the law, social relations don't change, men still consider themselves as head of household." Algeria

There were a few respondents who spoke of the restrictive theoretical frameworks that different schools of feminism adopt and that there is a need for a movement for a **more equal and just society, not just equality between men and women**. In South East Asia in particular, a couple of respondents mentioned how feminism is not particularly a term used to describe issues around VAWG, but a term that is considered radical or naive and that 'women's rights' is more appropriate for this context. This is similar to some respondents from South America and sub-Saharan Africa who mentioned that recognising women's perspective in terms of gender relations and that it is essential that women are the **subjects or protagonists of their own lives exhibiting a strong sense of agency in their lives**.

II. Analysis of local, national and regional movements around VAWG

When asked in the online survey to describe the state of the VAWG movement in respondent's respective regions (not the Global South movement on VAWG) using a 4-point Likert scale (very weak, somewhat weak, somewhat strong and very strong), most respondents reported it being somewhat weak (45.1%) as shown in the Figure 5 below:

Figure 5
Perceived Strength of
Regional Movements



"Feminism has to do with visions of power; looking at power not as something finite, but something that grows as you share it. Power is not individual and yet not external to ourselves either. It grows collectively when you help someone else be strong; for example mothers do it every day".

**Independent Consultant,
Global**

In **Mexico**, there is a large feminist national movement and VAWG in its many manifestations is a strong focus. The movement has many different national and local networks –not all explicitly feminist– as well as academic and monitoring institutions. There is coordination between Civil Society (CS) organizations and government, but CS orgs don't have formal decision-making power in these Councils. Violence prevention work is done mostly by CS organizations, but funding is severely lacking. For economic reasons, many long time activists have begun to work in government institutions. The Mesoamerican Women Human Rights Defenders Initiative was mentioned as developing a strong regional presence.

El Salvador's movement is complex, with many initiatives but not very cohesive overall. Increased generalized violence has taken a toll. The Mesoamerican Women Human Rights Defenders Initiative, with a strong presence in El Salvador, is an important regional movement focusing on protecting women's rights activists and promoting solidarity across issues.



In countries such as **Cuba, Brazil, Colombia** and **Bolivia**, there was mention of a regional movement particularly around sexual and reproductive health rights, but not particularly around VAWG.

In **Haiti**, there appears to be a weak or moderately cohesive national movement, founded upon a convergence of beliefs in equality and women's rights that are shared by a number of women (e.g., in traditional Haitian religion and spirituality there are spaces for women). However, the movement remains quite exclusive and should be opened up to other groups, and is also primarily responsive in its actions rather than preventive, in part because there is a weak shared understanding of the root causes of VAWG.

In **Nicaragua**, there is a broad-based and diverse movement, with organizational structures not as strong as they once were. The Women's Network against Violence, networks of shelters and services providers, and the Movement against Sexual Abuse are national initiatives that focus on VAWG, with recognition that VAWG is a struggle of the entire women's movement. There are also several strong local networks. In recent years, coordination regionally with movements in the rest of Central America has become more difficult as violence and repression in various countries has increased and demanded activists' attention.

The **Middle East and North African regions (MENA)** were characterised by the perception of multiple local organisations and networks competing for funding and less national level; there is a regional movement or coalition that is useful for sharing ideas, but is less effective for advocacy work because it is a weak movement.



In **Tunisia**, there appears to be a women's movement with participation from a number of Tunisian women's associations and was founded after the revolution due to political violence inflicted against women. The movement, however, had a broader remit to also include other forms of violence.

In **Lebanon**, there is mention of a burgeoning local movement on VAWG that mostly consists of activists and specialised individuals and some media institutions/people, but not NGOs. The opinion here is that most NGOs are passive and not in direct contact with people outside of the professional sector working on VAWG. Thus, the movement still needs work and there is a need to expand the scope of the movement to involve volunteers and civil society individuals who are keen to join.

In **Morocco**, there is a local network of fifteen associations working as a coalition in the Khemisset province. In addition, the Association 'des Jeunes Avocats de Khemisset' works with a network that advocates for specific VAWG laws at the national level. At the regional Maghreb/ North Africa level, the Association participated in a VAWG movement in Tunisia organised by Mobilising for Rights Associates (MRA) in collaboration with other Tunisian and Moroccan NGOs.

In **Libya** there was acknowledgement of the presence of many local women's and child protection associations that had national level involvement as well. For example, the association, 'Voice of Libyan Women' led a campaign, "Nour against domestic violence against women".

The campaign (not movement) at the national level was focused on raising awareness on violence against women at home. Furthermore, politically in Libya, when the revolution began women played an important role in the fight for their rights and were hence responsible for the creation of a number of local NGOs.

The region of **sub-Saharan Africa** is characterised by the perception of strong movements predominantly at the local grassroots level which appeared to be loose networks, and with unstructured movements at the national or regional level.

According to respondents, in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** there appears to be no movement and there seems to be different actors that are not united in their efforts.

According to respondents, among the southern African countries, **Malawi** has a strong national movement that started as local movements. This movement includes actors at the district and community levels and they work closely with the Police and Malawi Defense Force, along with including men in this movement.

According to respondents, the other countries (**South Africa, Botswana and Namibia**) appear to demonstrate a less cohesive approach in their local and national movements with issues such as in-fighting, competition for resources and general fragmentation hindering advancement.



In countries of eastern Africa, **Uganda**, for instance, the respondents acknowledged that movements were in the nascent stages. There have been attempts to bring together like-minded people working on issues (e.g., Femnet, GBV Prevention Network) but would not use the term a movement.

In **Tanzania**, there appears to be several networks that exist in their own sectors (e.g., NGOs, UN organisations, legal services, etc). Each sector has tried to engage the government individually, but “there is no existing coalition to reach out across sectors and engage the government with a unified voice.”

In **Kenya**, the respondent mentioned the existence of a movements both at the local and national levels, however these movements appear to be without structure.

Interview respondents in **Asia Pacific region**, described a highly active women's rights movement (not specifically around VAWG) at a number of levels, engaging local organisations and international NGOs, with the national level appearing fragmented by cultural/ethnicity issues or geography.

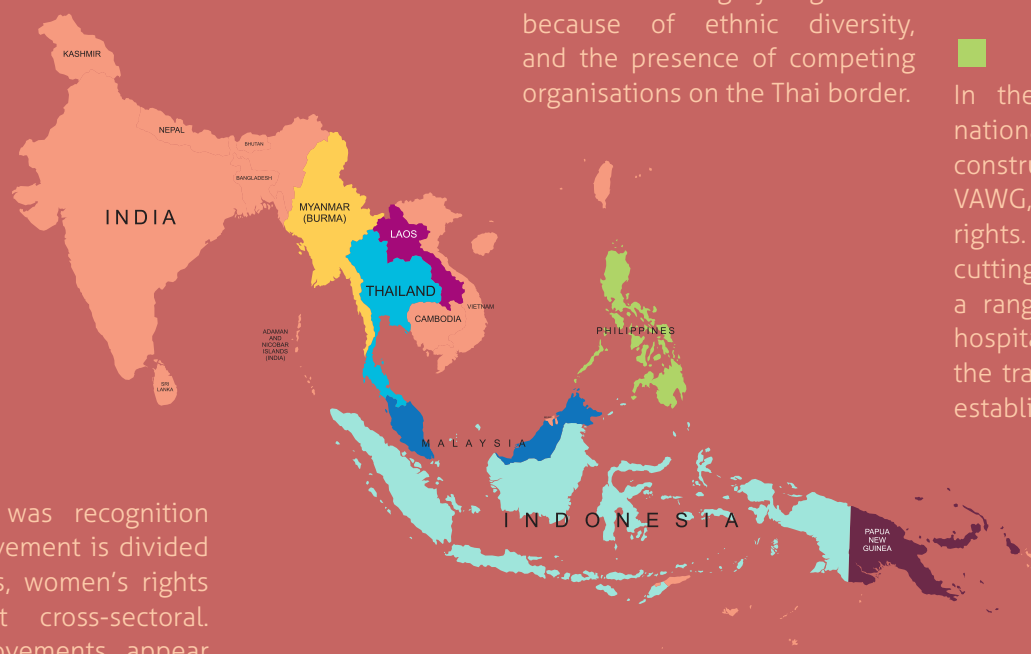
In **Myanmar** for instance, there are a number of local women's forums, that are associated with INGOs and UN agencies, but the national movement underlying these initiatives appears exclusive and highly fragmented because of ethnic diversity, and the presence of competing organisations on the Thai border.

In the **Philippines**, the local and national movements appear to not be constructed on the basis of combating VAWG, but rather promoting women's rights. Many perceive VAW as a cross-cutting issue that is manifested across a range of local initiatives such as hospital-based centres for women, the training of women's police or the establishment of courts for family law.

In **Malaysia**, there was recognition that the national movement is divided by sector (e.g., NGOs, women's rights groups) hence not cross-sectoral. In addition, the movements appear to be issue oriented (e.g. migration, reproductive rights)

In **Laos** no respondents identified a local or national movement around VAWG. In **Thailand**, the movement is moderately strong in its focus on women's rights but unable to extend its activities beyond the borders of Thailand, in part because of the weakness of civil society organisations in this region.

In **Indonesia** and **Papua New Guinea**, there appears to be no local movement, but possibly a national and regional movement around the issues of sexual discrimination. Recognition of the need for more grassroots movements around VAWG.



Based on interview responses, it appears that the **South Asian and South and Meso American regions** were characterised by the perceived presence of relatively strong movements at all three levels – the local, national and regional level – as shown in the maps below.



In **Nepal**, historically, there appears to be strong local and autonomous movements that gradually became NGO-led. Respondent was not too aware of regional movements other than SANGAT which is a movement building organisation at the South Asia level.

In **India**, respondents presented a picture of a strong cohesive national movement that shared a clear understanding of principles and objectives around VAWG. For instance on what constitutes abuse (e.g. forced marriage, sexual assault). However, the movement is somewhat exclusive (important gap in the participation of older versus younger women) and there is little consensus on what needs to be done to move forward. For instance there remain important differences of opinion on whether and how to engage men in the process, or whether to develop grassroots activism or national level advocacy work.

In **Bangladesh**, there appears to be a strong national movement, which has been effective in passing laws protecting women (against, for example, acid attacks), but is a largely passive and reactionary force, rather than a pro-active one, which has experienced difficulties in sustaining its work. There appears to be acknowledgement of the campaigns such as 'One Billion Rising' and international forums like the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), were like regional movements, but that such movements are fragmented, lack a common platform, and are mostly platform for 'selling' one's organization or programming for national organisations.

The **Pacific Islands** were characterized by a perception of strong national and regional movements with clear leaders such as the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre and the Secretariat of the Pacific community.



■ A once prevalent national movement in the **Solomon Islands** is regaining strength. What was a burgeoning movement in the 1990s was weakened by civil unrest in the late 90s and early 2000s.

■ In **Fiji**, the national and regional movements were described as being very strong. Much of the focus of the movement has been enacting legislation to better protect women's rights. The Pacific Network on VAW has brought the issue out in the forefront and contributed to legislative work on the issue.

In summary, most respondents appear to be of the opinion that there is movement building around VAWG either at the local, national or regional level, but it is somewhat weak and siloed in its approach. Hence, there appears to not be one single platform or network for VAWG that is collaborative across regions. There also seem to be some discrepancy around understanding of 'movement building'. Despite respondents providing their perspectives on 'what they consider a movement' there appear to be a few instances when regional campaigns (e.g., One Billion Rising) or forums (e.g., the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)) were also considered to be movements.

Furthermore, the strength or presence of these VAWG movements (i.e. whether it is local, national or regional) seems to vary by region and context. For instance, as described above it appears that in the South Asian and South and Meso-America region there is the perceived presence of relatively strong movements at all three levels -- the local, national and regional level. Whereas, the MENA region is characterised by multiple local organisations and networks competing for funding, less national level movements and a relatively weak regional movement. Interview respondents in Asia Pacific region, described a highly active women's rights movement at all levels (not specifically around VAWG), engaging local organisations and

international NGOs, with the national level appearing fragmented by cultural/ethnicity issues or geography. Finally, the region of sub-Saharan Africa is characterised by the perception of strong coalitions, but not necessarily movements, predominantly at the local grassroots level that seem to be loose networks with unstructured movements at the national or regional level.

The wide discrepancy in the strength of movements in different regions is important to take into consideration when thinking about Global South movement building. There is a need for foundational regional work that takes into account the very unique contexts and politics of individual regions and countries. For example, interview data indicates that the regional and national strength of movements and conversation around what constitutes a movement are very different, for example, in Latin America, than in sub-Saharan Africa. The formation of movements in each region has been highly influenced by unique histories and contexts as well country and region specific issues such as language barriers, technology and political hostilities. Before an effort to build a unified movement across regions can exist, it may be important to strengthen the foundations of movement building work in regions with looser and less well-defined movements.

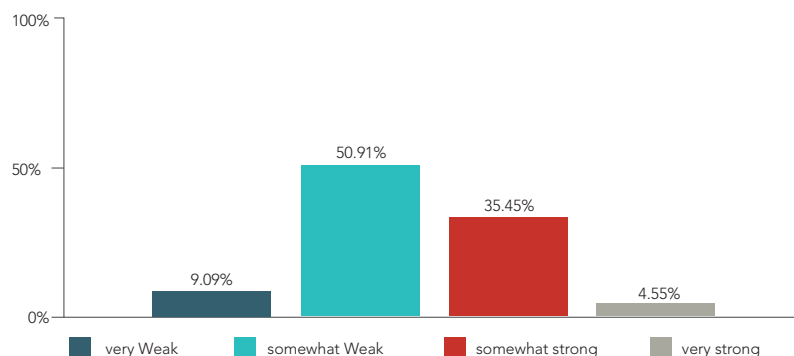
C. Respondents' perceptions on the current state and perceived value of movement building around VAWG in the Global South

This section below presents results from the online survey and interviews on how respondents view Global South movement building around VAWG.

I. Perceptions around the current state of the Global South VAWG movement

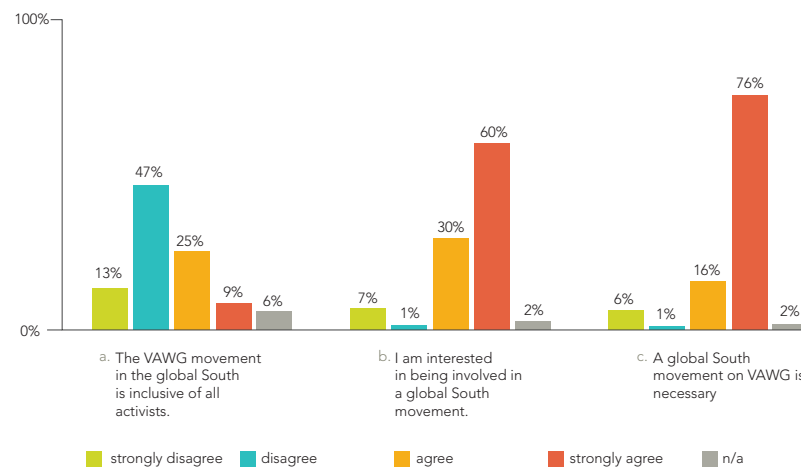
In the online survey, almost 75% of respondents believed that there was a movement to end VAWG in the Global South. However, more than half of respondents said that the movement is somewhat weak, as indicated in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6
Perceived Strength of Global South Movement on VAWG



Furthermore, a majority of respondents disagreed with the statement that the VAWG movement in the Global South is inclusive of all activists. Whilst almost 60% report being interested in being involved in such a Global South movement and majority believe that the Global South movement on VAWG is necessary, as depicted in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7
Inclusivity, Interest and Necessity of Global South Movement on VAWG



This partially mirrored the distribution of responses from the qualitative interviews. Of the sixty-eight interviews, almost half (n=32) responded yes to the question on whether a Global South movement to end VAWG exists, a third (n=20) responded no, four were unsure and eight skipped the question altogether.

However, most respondents appeared unsure when asked about the strength of a Global South movement. The general perception was that even if there is a movement, it is relatively weak, incipient and fragmented. Furthermore, there was acknowledgement that the Global South movement should not be considered as one movement, but a network or series of independent networks loosely held together. In addition, there appears to be variation in the understanding of the term 'Global South movement'; many were referring to 'regional movements' or 'networks' instead of a Global South movement suggesting that the concept of Global South movement was not grasped by all respondents.

In terms of breakdown of opinion by region, there was consensus among respondents working at the **global headquarters for NGOs** that a Global South movement does not exist. The impression appeared to be the presence of global initiatives that create a sense of collective effort at the global level, but the agenda setters, funders and drivers of these initiatives tend to be institutions based primarily in the Global North (as in many countries of the Global South, governments do not see VAWG as a priority issue for national development). A couple of respondents mentioned that donors tend to focus primarily on the production of evidence and on results, which results in work that is more technical and mechanical, with a focus on individual-level violence. As a consequence, in many places, movement and coalition building initiatives do not receive attention in the VAWG field, since they do not produce quantitative evidence and results. Furthermore, civil society become "implementers" and focus on meeting donors' reporting and monitoring requirements. This appears to be partly for the reason that civil society members do not have sufficient resources, space, and time (and to some extent, capacity) to come collectively to build movements. Thus, there may be

south-to-south exchange in which people from one region exchange information with other regions, but this is not necessarily a sustained effort. Hence, it appears to be more of a loosely connected network of institutions or individuals and less of a cohesive movement or movements.

There was also mention of women's rights organisations that rally and collaborate on a global scale, but that the VAWG movement has not been resourced well enough. Smaller initiatives appear to have disappeared due to lack of funding. This is possibly because there is always competition for funding. Local NGOs have to compete with international NGOs and local government agencies for funding. Thus, movement building around VAWG needs funds in order to sustain any meaningful effort that is pertinent and relevant to people participating in the movement. It is also important to work with other groups (outside of women's rights organisations) to strengthen collaborations. In addition, it is important that activists and civil society view this movement as something that not only involves women, but that multiple actors should be involved.

A couple of respondents from these NGOs also indicated that there might be a weak Global South movement ("*contours of a movement*" quoting a respondent), but recognised that there is no formal structure and no active coalition, and only a common struggle that pulls people together. The feeling was that the movement is not as strong as it could be for reasons such as civil society members not having sufficient resources, space, time and possibly capacity for developing a shared vision, strategy and approach. In addition, funding priorities have resulted in a segmentation of the movement (e.g., focus on female genital mutilation versus VAWG, as prioritised by the funder).

A majority of respondents in **Central and South America** responded positively to the question of whether there is a Global South movement.

At the same, there is a sense that the international movement is somewhat disperse because of a lack of opportunities for networking and coordination among countries and continents. Many mentioned that the movement is not always inclusive, with some well-known leaders traveling in international circles where agendas are set, but these don't always respond to local needs. It is often difficult for local activists to participate, as funding to the region has shrunk and there are language barriers for activists who don't speak English. Some perceived Asian and African networks to be more consolidated, with more inter-regional meetings and platforms for exchange of ideas and experiences.

Most of the **South Asian** respondents did not think there was a strong Global South movement, but mentioned the presence of a number of regional movements (e.g., the Pan-Asian or Pan-African movements). But these movements were loose and not connected across the Global South. Hence, there seems to be solidarity of mission, but no common movement.

Respondents from the **MENA region** seem to be evenly distributed in their responses. There was recognition that a movement does exist, but is nuanced and needs to be contextualised. In addition respondents felt that political realities, ethnic and religious make-up and socio-demographics differ between countries and regions are different hence a strong Global South movement is not easy and context is critical.

In **sub-Saharan Africa**, there seems to be general acknowledgement of a Global South movement, even if it is weak and fragmented. There appear to be pockets of movements on country specific issues, but these efforts do not appear to be sustained and again there was mention that it needs to be contextualised.

There was also mention of women's rights organisations that rally and collaborate on a global scale, but that the VAWG movement has not been resourced well enough. Smaller initiatives appear to have disappeared due to lack of funding.

In the **Asian Pacific and Pacific Islands regions**, respondents do not consider there to be a Global South movement, but networks of solidarity groups present in countries such as Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, but not particularly around VAWG. However, what exists is a structure for collaboration between members of networks through conferences, meetings and online groups.

Overall, it is clear that no singular Global South movement that activists can confidently point to exists. For respondents who do believe that there is an effort that resembles a global movement, it was described more as a common struggle across regions rather than a structured, unified movement. At this time, it seems that different regions' movements and coalitions are focused on specific VAWG issues that are particularly relevant to their contexts based on region specific issues and socio-political climates. Additionally, many regions are still in the early stages of building strong and cohesive movements. This finding suggests that it may be premature to begin work on a Global South movement. Instead, we should focus attention on engaging with regional movement building efforts.

II. Perceived value of movement to end VAWG in the Global South and factors needed to sustain a movement

Despite perceiving the Global South movement as relatively weak and fragmented, there was consensus between respondents across the regions in favour of a Global South movement against VAWG. There was acknowledgement that notwithstanding differing socio-political contexts and cultural differences, there is strength in coming together, for purposes of cross-learning and joint advocacy for influencing laws and policies of national governments around VAWG. Apart from building a Global South movement, there was mention by a couple of respondents on the need for collaboration between institutions and initiatives in the Global North and Global

South. This is partly because there is an existing power relationship between the Global North and South, due to a gap in resources. Hence, even though it is important to create a Global South identity, collaboration would help avoid competition between the Global North and Global South and avoid an imbalance in power relations leading to productive dialogue and movement building.

A few respondents acknowledged the issue of patriarchy that has been left out of the discussion of women's rights movements. They felt that movements need to not only engage men and boys, but there is a need to analyse why over the years globally, regionally and nationally, laws that speak against gender discrimination have been ratified. Related to this, a respondent from the MENA region spoke of VAWG issues stemming from similar constructions of gender and power relations and compared it to a wave of extreme right wing notions that emerge from different religious understandings of gender and power. Hence, it appears that everybody faces the same extremism that goes against gender equality and a common movement will help articulate and fight this together.

There was mention that a Global South movement would help in terms of the exchange of ideas, resources, tools and knowledge sharing between organisations in order to address common challenges. Some respondents mentioned that the drivers of VAWG are similar across countries of the Global South. Hence, a common platform can accommodate all these voices and can be useful as a tool for strategic advocacy on specific VAWG issues.

Additionally, there was mention that the network of associations focusing on women's rights need clear structure and concrete objectives. Related to this, the activists from different countries of the Global South need to work together and make their voices and priorities heard for facilitating their collective experience sharing and learning.

Given an overall interest for a Global South movement, a number of factors were identified to be crucial in supporting activists in building or participating in a movement:

- **Leadership development and inclusion of young women.** There was widespread acknowledgement by respondents that the focus of a Global South movement should be on increasing the capacity of leaders and members and institutions in order to sustain energy and build momentum. Apart from charismatic leaders, there is also a need to support people working on these issues voluntarily. Even though a number of people possibly work on these issues for personal reasons, they need to feel appreciated and supported in order to avoid abuse of power. Furthermore, a sort of unique leadership is needed to bring together a movement with leaders who have influence, as well as can inspire and help people collaborate. Essentially, leading the process while facilitating it. In addition, there is a need for leadership that encourages multi-generational organising, thus it is essential to groom and build leadership of younger women.
- **Shared analysis.** A number of respondents mentioned that it is important to identify organisations and networks that work on building alliances in order to create a common agenda and space for communication and dialogue. Also felt that it was necessary to have a platform for exchange of ideas, shared learnings and challenges, recognising both the possibilities and limits of technologies. Furthermore, they felt that it was essential to scope out organisations working on VAWG in the respective countries and to build a network by mapping out who would like to be a part of this initiative. This could then be narrowed down to particular factors affecting VAWG in a specific country. There was also a recommendation to develop strategies that are 'outside the box' and to draw learnings from other sectors and movements outside of VAWG and women's movements, such as human rights work or LGBT movements and to apply it to VAWG movement building.
- **Skills development.** The data also shows that building skills and reinforcing capacity for those activists working in communities on VAWG issues was important. In addition, skill-building of activists working in movements ought to include the honing of technical skills like strategy and situation analysis of the community along with the reinforcement of capacities, such as administrative skills, financial management and communication skills. Also, skills development around how to: document change, practice iterative learning to learn from errors, have a deeper understanding of the concept of movement building and contextualise findings were considered essential. Also mentioned as important for non-English speakers to learn English language skills in order to be able to participate in activities, conferences and networking events. Hence apart from leadership development, it was also necessary to focus on organisational development. It is also essential to build capacity of younger women to sustain the movement in the longer term, as they are the ones moving the agenda forward.
- **Strategic communication.** Respondents felt that it was important to be able to share and communicate best practices between countries and regions to be able to provide support both from a response perspective (to organisations working on response with survivors) to prevention. Also, there was a suggestion to hone communication skills to discuss issues with people in an open way and to convince people that are not persuaded on the issue of VAWG. Finally, it is essential to strengthen communications capacity among organisations that are working at the grassroots or local level.

- **Use of technology.** Some respondents felt that often grassroots organisations lack information and communications technology (ICT). Due to this technology gap, local groups are excluded from movement building activities. Hence there is a need for better access to the internet and online forums.
- **Removal of siloes in work streams.** A few respondents indicated that due to allocation of resources and funding patterns, work streams tends to be project-based (e.g., sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, intimate partner violence) whereas activism is not. This in turn leaves less time for activism. Hence, important to move away from vertical siloes to horizontal movements cutting across issues. In addition, data shows that respondents felt that sometimes what is lacking is a vision for a wider movement that goes beyond any one project or program.
- **Reducing competition.** Instead of regions competing for resources, a few respondents felt that it is important to increase collaboration between regions and nationally in order to strengthen solidarity.
- **Recognizing language barriers:** Some respondents recognized that language barriers have the potential to prevent some activists from participating in movement building activities. While speakers of commonly spoken regional languages are easily included, speakers of less common local languages may find it more difficult to be involved.
- **Clear definition of goals around preventing VAWG** and a forum for people to come together. In addition, respondents felt that a Global South movement needs to have a bottom-up approach and cannot be top-down driven by organisational needs. There does need to be more consensus around the definition of movement building and what it entails.
- **Planning and budget allocation.** There is a need for advanced preparation, so that the budget and resources can be allocated for coalition or movement building activities as suggested by a few respondents.
- **Regular self-care.** There were a few respondents who felt that it was essential to focus on looking after themselves, especially having access to counselling or therapy to discharge some of the emotional/psychological burden of dealing with hard-hitting issues around violence on a day-to-day basis.

Activists brought up very relevant areas of perceived weaknesses that are crucial to address in national, regional and global movement building efforts and VAWG work in general. Some of these weaknesses such as skills development, leadership building and reduced competition are all critical to building and strengthening sustainable and effective movements.

D. Personal ruminations of activists

I. Aspirations of activists working on VAWG movement building

The following section provides a narrative from the perspectives of activists in order to better understand their aspirations and hopes related to their work around VAWG movement building. As data from the online survey showed, respondents had predominantly positive impressions of their work around VAWG, citing feelings such as being energised, engaged, inspired and connected regularly. Related to this is a sense that despite the work being emotionally draining and exhausting, there is a sense of accomplishment and hope, as illustrated by this quote:

It [VAWG work] is very tiring and very heart wrenching. It is the smile you see on people that you helped, when you see an abused woman in a relationship and once you have helped them through that darkness that keeps you going.....If you see a child who was abused, left alone, maybe with HIV and you take them through counselling and school and they grow up well and you see you had a part—the satisfaction of help somebody getting out of a difficult situation keeps me going. Botswana

A number of respondents emphasised their desire to see transformative change in women where stereotypical assumptions around gender roles are challenged and women take on a leadership roles. Associated with this was the hope expressed by a few respondents around equality and public understanding of the true value of gender equality; that men and women are seen to be complete equals, as illustrated by this quote:

"I think for me if I reach a point in my life where I can see women and men wake up and recognize that apart from biological differences in everything else they are equal...every morning I wake up and tell myself if I am going to talk to a certain person to put that issue of women and men at the centre of their work and see them as equals.... If people could recognize patriarchy still exists the way it did 100 years ago and take action against it I would be very happy." Uganda

Furthermore, an idea advocated by a third of respondents was related to the inclusion of men and boys in the movement against VAWG both regionally and in a Global South effort. This is because there tends to be backlash from men, in the form of resistance to tackling VAWG, instead of cooperation and potentially increased risk of further violence against women and girls. Hence there is a need for men to come in as allies to better understand the issues around approaches to tackling VAWG. However, there were a couple of respondents who raised questions regarding the male engagement discourse. This was due to the apparent lack of a collective thinking process on feminism in the region and agreements among international agencies, movements or networks that are very fragmented and vulnerable to donors' strategic directions. The male engagement debate is global, but local practitioners are caught up in global politics and appear to not have resources or capacities to understand the debate from the local context. This creates conceptual confusion and misunderstandings.

Apart from men and boys, there was also a strong mention that there needs to be increased representation from young people (particularly younger women) in order to avoid the perception that this movement is for older people as shown in this quote:

"As an activist I really want to see men and women lead a life without any form of discrimination. I wish that women have the agency to tackle the issues strategically which creates barriers for their existence. More participation of younger women in the women's movement and for the movement itself to be more inclusive, where we see more participation of people from different sectors of the society". Nepal

A significant number of respondents spoke around the need for increased funding and resources, along with support for on-going training and reinforcement of technical and communication skills, as well as capacities to keep abreast of latest developments. There also appears to be recognition that predecessors working on the VAWG issues managed to garner resources and leapfrog ahead. However, there is the feeling that the momentum needs to be sustained and a need to ensure that activists have the right skills to harness this energy that recognises that power imbalances as the root cause of VAWG. From an advocacy perspective, some respondents spoke of increased resources for political advocacy in order to break through barriers for getting laws changed and policies implemented.

Enhanced linkages between different movements, between regions and sectors resonated with a few of the respondents. Therefore, strengthening alliances between people working on violence against children and violence against women and girls appears important as the root causes (i.e. balance of power) are the same. For example, just as teachers have a responsibility as do parents in exposing children to violence, same with men. Boys are socialised to become

perpetrators and girls to become victims. Thus, there needs to be a link between the two movements to make sure there is no violence of any kind. In addition, there were suggestions to increase regional and cross-national collaborations along with the exchange of ideas and linkages with the LGBT movement or the sexual and reproductive health movement.

Other aspirations included the need for evidence-based research to influence policies around VAWG. Or the creation of a safe environment for activists and human rights defenders to work, especially given growing environment of conservatism and a strong belief, commitment and conviction in the complex issues that are being tackled.

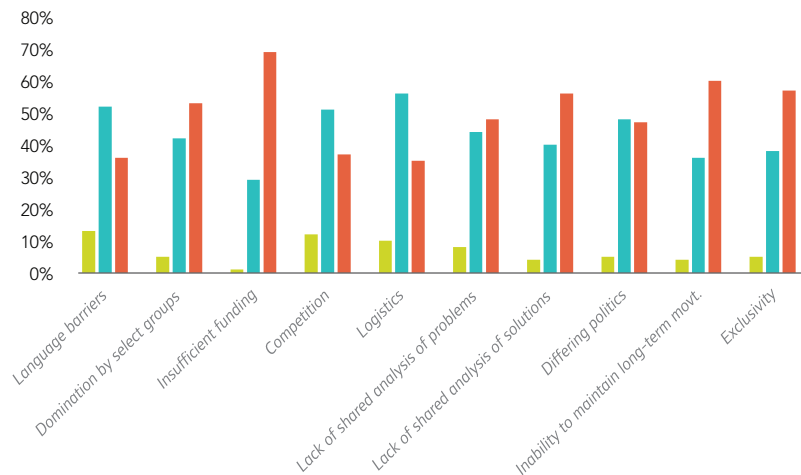
There was also recognition by a number of respondents of the need to look after one's self and maintain a strong work and life balance. This includes strengthening family ties, building community ties to improve the neighbourhood and carving out the time and space to look after self in order to sustain energy and hope to tackle this challenging work around VAWG movement building.

"My deepest fear in movement building is falling into the same mistakes of the past; we must keep an eye on inclusion and diversity within the movement". **Puerto Rico**

II. Fears of activists working on VAWG movement building

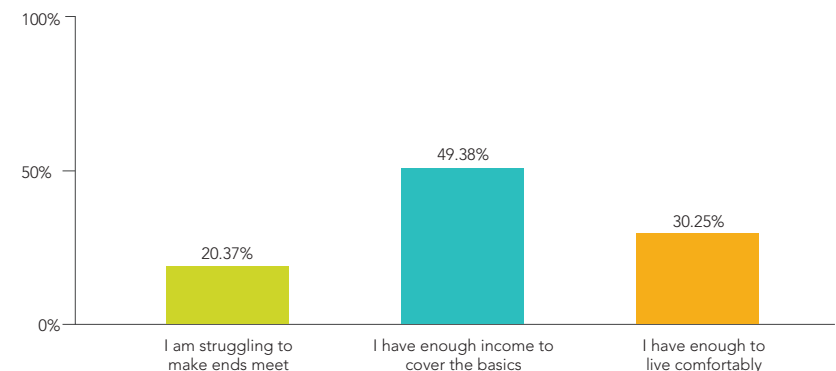
Despite having high aspirations and hopes around VAWG movement building, respondents did express their fears or what they considered to be risks or potential difficulties faced by the VAWG movement in the Global South. From the online survey, issues such as insufficient funding, inability to sustain a longer term movement, exclusivity of focus on one movement, domination by select group of organisations and individuals, lack of shared analysis of problem and solution were ranked as 'definitely a risk' by more than 50% of respondents (see Figure 8).

Figure 8
Risks in Global South
Movement Building



Even in the interviews, respondents mentioned insufficient funding as a big barrier to work around VAWG movement building. On the one hand, funding streams for women's projects and VAWG work are being compromised or diffused due to funding patterns or differences in priorities. This is discouraging and hampers progress in the movement. On the other hand, due to budgetary constraints, a number of activists working on these issues appear to survive on low salaries. In fact, results from the online survey shows that despite a majority of activists reporting high levels of education, almost 21% responded as struggling to make ends meet when asked about their personal financial situation and around 50% reported having enough income to cover their basics (see Figure 9). Hence there is a need to focus more on garnering resources and fundraising.

Figure 9
Personal Financial Situations
of Respondents



A number of respondents expressed concern around a Global South movements' focus and inability to meet its objectives. Hence they felt that it was important to work on an action plan and structure the movement in order to prevent it from 'getting hijacked' or be politically exploited. Related to this, was the worry around a lack of clarity on agreed objectives partly due to partners or collaborators having different visions or directions. Furthermore, if there is competition for resources and a lack of networking opportunities resulting in less cooperation there will be a dilution of efforts to build a movement.

A few respondents raised the issue of the Global South movement not having an inclusive or participatory approach as not all voices appear to be involved in the movement. They felt the need for getting more common people aboard who have similar experiences and understanding of VAWG issues. Their claim was that NGOs are gradually taking the lead on social justice movements and that individual organizations are starting to claim these spaces as their own. Thus, there is increasing competition for space and recognition of efforts, which compromises a collaborative and cohesive effort needed for a strong movement. Furthermore, people who work on these movements are specialised (i.e. are either gender specialists or violence experts) and there is a need for individuals (outside of paid activists) to participate and lead these movements as illustrated by the quote below:

"One concern is that we have in some way this social justice struggle that has been to some extent subject to be treated as a professional field that is a matter of specialist—e.g. gender specialists and violence experts are working based on financed projects. For me, this is a risk—'NGOisation' of the struggle. Of course, there is the necessity of people dedicated to this field to make a living. But it shouldn't be restricted to that. It should also include lay and ordinary people that don't work as a paid workers as activists—that contribute in their spare time etc...all people should participate. Not just paid activists". Nicaragua

There was mention of power dynamics that create hierarchies, alluding to a situation when leadership becomes the only source of power, where power and resources are not equitably shared resulting in the network separating itself from members. Thus, it is important to increase representation from individuals closer to the reality of women who have experienced violence and not just the usual suspects (i.e. decision makers). In addition, the dissemination of learnings and findings remains concentrated in the hands of a certain elite group of international organisations who then control messaging and communication, which needs to change. There was also a point made related to power dynamics created between the Global North and Global South which can create problems around priority setting and decision-making hence a need to be collaborative.

A couple of respondents from sub-Saharan Africa raised the issue of whether global efforts will undermine local efforts. Thus, concentrating on a global movement might not keep topics grounded in reality. There was also the expressed fear that a global movement would turn into a competitor for funds, hence taking away from the needs of local organisations as demonstrated by the following quote:

"[My deepest fear in movement building] is that it would be solely "global"; that there'd be a bunch of people who meet (virtually or in person) in a kind of impersonal way – we need to keep things grounded in reality, in local/regional realities. This is a common risk in global efforts. Another risk is that the global effort itself turns into a competitor for funds, taking away from the needs of the local organizations". Mexico

In addition, local needs sometime differ from international agendas and priorities, hence movements can only gain momentum with support from international bodies (but this is a double-edged sword as the two are not always aligned). As described from a respondent in Mexico, the issue of sexual violence in public spaces ('safe cities', etc.) was introduced in Mexico because it was on the international

agenda, with international agreements regarding security. This theme came north to Mexico from the southern part of Latin America (Argentina). However, it was integrated into programs in Mexico because the Mexico City government took it on as a priority.

A few respondents in the interviews spoke of the challenge of sustaining a movement. The fear was that the VAWG movement will turn out to be a waste of time and money. This is especially the case if there is a change in leadership in organisations that are part of the movement or within funders, resulting in subsequent changes in priorities. Furthermore, if an organisation had more resources than others in the movement, there is a leadership imbalance that is created. All these are challenges that making it difficult to sustain a longer term movement.

"We all know that any form of movement has a 50/50 chance to grow into a institutional movement that loses touch with where it came from and the actual women who the movement was built for. Any time an organization has more resources than the rest there could become a leadership imbalance". South Africa

In addition, funding cuts to civil society organisations results in activists having to look at other organisations or ways to make money, hence making it hard to maintain enthusiasm and energy for movement resulting in an impact on sustainability. In addition, one respondent spoke of the issue of backlash around VAWG issues –

that at some point people appeared convinced that VAWG is an issue that must be tackled, but recently there seems to be an attitude that points to not appreciating the value of women.

There was also mention of the challenges associated with logistical constraints such as irrelevant discussions and long meetings that are time-consuming and are a barrier to productivity. Furthermore, grassroots organizations often lack technology capabilities. Due to this technology gap, local groups are often left out of the process. Hence, what is needed is person-to-person contact, but there are budget constraints. The other barrier is not everyone globally has the same English language capabilities, which can be an obstacle for smooth collaboration across the Global South.

Lack of a common language can be a barrier for sub-regional movement building. Unlike many parts of the world (where many sub-regions share common languages), there is no common language such as English in Asia and the Pacific. This disallows local practitioners to engage with regional collective initiatives. Laos

Finally, a number of respondents particularly from countries in sub-Saharan Africa spoke of the lack of male feminists that support VAWG work – hence there is a need to get men to not sabotage efforts around movement building around VAWG, especially as the majority of governments in the Global South are led by men.

III. Self-care practices and factors needed to sustain energy

When asked about the types of self-care routines that respondents practice in order to maintain their sense of well-being, yoga and meditation featured prominently in order to deal with stress, burn-out and exhaustion and to stay focused. Other forms of exercise were also practiced by some respondents. Additionally, spending time with friends and family, reading, taking time off and getting enough rest over weekends in order to recharge and reflect on work, eating healthy and spending time outdoors all ranked high. There were also some respondents who recognised that they have neglected their health and well-being at the cost of work and are keen to incorporate a balance into their work and life as illustrated by the following quotes:

"By taking time off on a regular basis (long weekends for example), daily exercising sometimes helps also". Egypt

"...this work is done at the expense of my health. I should learn how to take some time for myself. We take very little care of ourselves". Algeria

There was also mention of the need to have access to counselling/therapy to discharge some of the emotional/psychological burden of dealing with violence every day (this was suggested especially for those respondents dealing with responding to violence).

Provided below is a sample of representative quotes from respondents when asked the question on factors that help sustain their momentum for movement building around VAWG:

"When you see other people encouraged by what you are doing. It's not a matter of people having to fight for their right, it is a matter of allowing their own power grow." Haiti

"Use the support from family and to create an environment of support and love. Despite moments of tension and conflict and this helps create a different reality from what you see in families". Nicaragua

"Regular travel and learning about successful stories that can be a source of inspiration" Egypt

"I try to think in a positive manner and concentrate on the positive developments. I know that change happens gradually and small gains are bound to bring about tangible gains." Lebanon

"I think we have a commitment as women who are more privileged in terms of being able to highlight these challenges. We are seeing new forms of violence against women. All forms of development bring their way of discriminating against women. We are not seeing anything that has helped women to free themselves from subordination; the patriarchy is still present and that means we have to be on the alert. For example, sexual harassment is more widespread; human trafficking; the sale of girls. This means we do not have the right to get tired". Ecuador

"The complexity of the reality around me pushes me. I like what I do, I like the people I work with. My partner is a feminist, a defender. I like to feel part of a process and of a group of people who are working to make things better. The feeling of belonging".
El Salvador

"There is no answer for that. Sometimes I become very frustrated because of the growing violence and I think that frustration also fuels me. The negative energy becomes the catalyst for me".
Bangladesh

"I do a lot of reading around the issues pertaining to my work. My reading list is a mix of Articles, research findings and opinion pieces on current feminist issues. Networking also is a source of energy for me. To be able to connect to feminists across the regions and understand their work creates a kind of solidarity which keeps us energized. It feels good to know that there are other people struggling in similar ways as we are". Sri Lanka

"It is very tiring and very heart wrenching work. It is the smile you see on people that you helped, when you see an abused woman in a relationship and once you have helped them through that darkness that keeps you going. If you see a child who was abused, left alone, maybe with HIV and you take them through counselling and school and they grow up well and you see you had a part—the satisfaction of help somebody getting out of a difficult situation keeps me going". Botswana

"One of the things that I have had to do is just ensure that we create an organization that is exciting to work for and inviting to work for so when I wake up in the morning I get excited to go to work and to be with my team. The second is that having a team that functions so well—knowing that I am sharing leadership and knowing I am not carrying the whole load on my shoulders. There are people to help me and share the burden with me so if I need some time away I know the organization will still run just fine without me". Botswana

Conclusion

The global consultation that Raising Voices embarked on with activists from various regions worldwide, has resulted in rich, diverse and detailed data on their perceptions around movement building for VAWG. The purpose of the consultation was to take the temperature of existing local, national and regional movements; explore activists' interest in connecting with others, strengthen solidarity between activists and connections between groups and endeavour to increase activism within the Global South.

Overall, the general perception around movement building initiatives for VAWG is that it is fairly fragmented, incipient and somewhat weak. It lacks formal structure of an active coalition and it is only the common shared belief around speaking out against VAWG that brings people together as a collective.

In fact, despite showing a clear understanding of the term movement building, it seems that respondents are conceptualising movement building around VAWG more as 'networks' or a range of networks and coalitions within a region that share information with each other, such as having joint workshops or meetings.

In terms of a Global South movement around VAWG, there was recognition that VAWG movement building in the Global South as an initiative would be valuable and there is a need to continue to build on existing local, national and regional movements, as well as to push boundaries for what has been achieved so far. However, there was also acknowledgement for the challenges around implementation, as each region has its specific historical background, culture and socio-political dynamics. There also appears to be some differences in conceptualisations; in some regions, there was a clear understanding of Global South movement building, whereas in others there was a tendency to conflate movement building in the Global South with regional movements (i.e. Pan-American or Pan-African movements) or with regional campaigns.

Despite interest, enthusiasm and commitment for such a movement, there was recognition that it would be a difficult process to build meaningful synergies across regions in the short-term. Resources and funding issues, context-specific challenges, funder priorities, lack of common language across regions, lack of inclusion of activists working in the communities, power dynamics between academics and practitioners were all cited as challenges around a Global South movement. Respondents felt that VAWG can be the larger umbrella, but issues will differ from region to region and that a Global South movement should provide space to different regions to focus on their own specific issues. There was also mention of a Global South movement needing to come from the ground and cannot adopt a top-down approach driven by organisational needs. Hence at this time, it might be more feasible to strengthen regional movements. There was also an emphasis on the need to critically engage with men and boys as partners in the Global South movement and regional movements around VAWG, as well as support women's rights organisations and activists to come together to tackle VAWG.

Presented below is a list of recommendations provided by respondents, in no particular order to help think through the learning process for developing such a Global South movement. These recommendations are also relevant when thinking about how to strengthen national and regional movements.

- Explore power dynamics within organisations. There appear to be short-term plans and 'band-aid' solutions, hence a need for long-term vision. Also important to enhance and build on existing efforts in order to capitalize on regional context and complexities as well as established infrastructure.
- Increase inclusivity and acknowledge that movement building is not just about women's movement building, but it is about including people outside of 'traditional' activists. Need ways of connecting with the larger ecosystem (civil society, government, researchers) to include everyone in this conversation.

- Ensure that a potential movement is not dominated by the agenda of a few countries or organizations and that everyone has the same consideration and recognised as a member on an equal basis. Make sure there is democratisation of agenda setting and decision-making process by countries that are a part of a movement.
- Stay focused on tackling VAWG and garner experiences of NGOs currently integrated into the movement. Also important to not be influenced by donors.
- Understand cultural norms and political systems before global movements; understanding the specific context where partners are working including characteristics such as ethnicity, geographical location, before tackling international level movements.
- Link VAWG movement work with economic justice, regional politics and larger social justice analyses.
- Be prepared for considerable discord and tensions between groups and individuals.
- Use technology, online forums and learning labs to facilitate sharing of knowledge and learning between countries.
- Address language barriers and have better translations to allow real and meaningful dialogue and exchange.

In conclusion, there appears to be commitment, interest and cautious optimism in programming and work to strengthen a Global South VAW movement. At the same time, there are substantive conceptual and practical differences between regions that may make it difficult to move forward collectively at the outset. Most useful may be plotting out a long-term 20+ year vision with milestones relevant to the whole while also speaking to the regional specificities. Building movement will require long-term, sustained, strategic and iterative programming and investments.



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