

CONFERENCE: CHALLENGES IN THE INTERVENTION AND RESEARCH ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

*Summarized
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In Hanoi, The Consultation of Investment in Health Promotion (CIHP) organized a conference to share research results “Challenges in the intervention and research on family violence”. The conference was in the framework of project “Model incorporating gender violence prevention based on health facilities and the community” did in Cửa Lò town, Nghệ An province in the four years 2006-2009 with funding of Ford Foundation and technical assistance of Academy of American Education Development (AED).

The goals of the research are: to understand the current state of sex-violence and other related issues such as knowledge, perception, attitudes, treatment ways; to identify points of success and existed limitations to help edit and design interventions; to provide data, evidence during the management project process, feedback on the activities of the project, provide evidence about impact and meaning of the project with the related objects.

I. Intervention model to raise right for women affected by family violence

With four times of survey, 207 deep interviews with 169 people, the result of the research project presented at the conference was the first challenges and lessons in the intervention to improve right for women affected by family violence. This testing intervention model carried out with the participation of four major factors: the community, support systems, families and women with domestic violence.

The impacts of community and support systems showed in some aspects: recognize that family violence is not a private but a common problem of society; understand that family violence is an unacceptable misconduct; understand that root causes of family violence is the concept of unequal gender; identify different options for women with domestic violence; establish and operate support systems, consultation-levels; understand the rights and responsibilities of the support systems in cases of family violence; implement intervention in cases of family violence more timely, systematically and effectively. The impacts of family and personal

resources of women showed in some aspects: understand family violence is wrong; and never accept family violence situation; understand that the root causes is unequal gender concept, identify behaviors and levels of family violence which they are facing up with; recognize the rights of women, improve the ability to negotiate and control anger.

The impacts of the decision making process of violated women showed in some aspects: provide multiple selections through communication and consultation with safe, short and long term plan, look for support from outside and have awareness of divorce is not bad things; be supported by interventions on the scene through the support of systems at all levels, be supported with medical treatments; be consulted in psychology, law to improve the analysis-situation ability, analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the selection and have opportunity to participate in forums, conferences and general activities of the group of women affected by family violence.

Through four practical years of combining research and interventions simultaneously, the project team confirmed that there were five levels to demonstrate the reality and the conversion of awareness and behavior of those women affected by family violence. *At level 1*, before the intervention, they fully accepted and normalized family violence; they didn't see the different options, they only endured and had the quiet solution. Thus, the consequence was these women who were not safe then violence was continuously grown, and they were blamed and unsupported.

At the second level, during the process of being interfered, the affected women overlooked different options, but they didn't analyze the harm and benefit, their actions often followed the general trends and the social pressure without questioning why; they did not make the questions about the right to support, the responsibility and effective working of support systems. At this level, women were still not safe, violence continued and they became increasingly resistant orange.

At the third level, they saw the different options, analyzed the benefit and harm but they did not dare, no strong enough, or were not supported to implement the desired solution. They still acted as general trends, endured social pressure although they were not satisfied. They did not make the questions about the rights to support, the responsibility and effective working of support systems. Thus, in the long run, the women were still not safe, they were not supported even they got support for the agreement in general trends.

At the level 4, the conversion was expressed more clearly. They saw the different options, analyzed the harm and benefit, even dared to implement solution but the results might not be as expected. They also thought about responsibility and effectiveness of support systems but had not seen their right to be supported. Consequences behind this conversion level were the affected women did not have a long-term safety, but they had received little more support. They might or not be supported by the community. When this level and implementation solutions occurred but not bring the desired results, the third level could recur.

After the process of intervention, although not completely achieved level 5, but from the site of overlooking the various options, analyzing the harm and benefit, having solutions for themselves, having the expected results, knowing about the responsibilities and effective working of the support systems to ask for support right, the affected women had been safe in immediate and long term, violence was reduced then toward termination,. They received support with the constructive cooperation of the people caused violence.

It is easy to identify the barriers to implementing intervention model for improving rights for women affected by family violence through the analysis of the level of awareness and conversion behavior just above. The barriers were: a heavy of inequality gender , unopened point with the violence of spirit and sex, safety had not been a priority in a number of solutions, the way "reconciliation " was not really effectively and the ability to access group of men was limited, etc

Summarizing the lessons about improving rights for women affected by family violence from models of intervention done in Cửa Lò town, the team confirmed: *increase women's rights must be associated with improving rights for both communities, for the support systems and the objects of men caused violence same; attach much importance to safe factors in interventions to improve rights; increasing does not mean that to increase the power of these people and limit the power of others; attend long term intervention in parallel with research; and improve choice and*

opportunities to make choices to improve the relationship of violence effectively.

II. About the impact of religion to concepts and the way to treat:

Researching at Thu Thủy ward, Cửa Lò town, where 49% of the population is Christian in total 5,000 people, the researchers discovered: *Family violence context of Christian community was not different from the non-Christian community* with features such as common family violence. Many cases lasted for many years at the serious level and variety of violent activities, including physical, mental and sexual; women must tolerate multiple types of violence, but the community generally recognizes only physical violence.

Influence of religion to the concept about family violence was taken evidences showed in 5 specific points by the researching team: 1) some of the doctrine on the role of wife and husband in the family is not fully understood enough to lead many men think it causes violence against wives is acceptable. 2) Community blames for wives to obey their husband but "forget" the thing that the husband must love his wife.

3) Christian is aware of "violence is a crime, but if the people caused violence confesses they will be considered a misdemeanor and be forgiven. Or if the wife has the misconduct her husband's violence is also considered misdemeanor. Accordingly, although men can understand "violence is not acceptable in any form they also rely on the confession in order to mitigate the severity of acts of violence and remove guilt for themselves. 4) Christian teacher and the religious dignitaries also influenced by the concept of gender

inequality cited the doctrine prism of gender inequality makes the parishioners have faith in the concept of this. 5) The Christian woman concept: The wife must learn to imitate St. Monica (always keep patience to hope to change their husband' violence). Even if the patient fast for some time that her husband does not change, then the wife is to accept fate as the Church never allow divorce.

The concept has led to the way community treat for family violence is to heighten

Mediation activities, which focused on advising women to continue to be long-suffering, tolerate or separated but not really concerned about the safety of women. Time separation does not consider the aspirations and ensuring safety for women that depend entirely on the decision of the priests. In addition, the team also confirmed there has not seen the differences in the intervention activities of the Religious Practice Staff as well as other local social organization, has not seen the deterrent, the necessary of religion on analyzing and solving family violence. Now the woman's attitude common is to keep silent, endure, evade, and escape. They are dominated by the thought: "if they reset or response, they're wrong, insolent, and they always find the priest to show the expectation to divorce.

Cited some of the content in Christian doctrine as the beneficial point for family violence prevention activities the team concludes: *The Christian rules related to marriage and family, the role of the wife and husband in the family are being misunderstood or not fully understood, the role of religion in resolving the situation of violence is not heightened. Since then, some*

recommendations is given: infiltrate dogmas teacher and member of Religious Practice Staff to the group of intervention to improve the knowledge, change their concepts and attitudes; review religion us data and philosophies to find out the beneficial commandments for the prevention of family violence to communicate with religious dignitaries and community, to encourage local religious leaders to actively intervene to group of men, uphold the safety of people affected by family violence during arbitration; the role of religion in resolving, supporting in violence cases and in propaganda activities on prevention of gender violence, uphold the responsibility to love their wife and children and the positive image of men in family and society.

III. About intervention activities in cases of sexual violence:

As mentioned above, in the Christian community and the non- Christian community in Cùr Lò town, a woman must endure multiple types of violence: physical, mental and sexual, but the community generally recognizes only physical violence. The next research results are shared at the conference focused on attitudes and the treatment for cases of sexual violence in localities implementing the project, highlighting the challenges and offering some suggests in the intervention of sexual violence...

With sexual violence cases are known in the course of project implementation, attitude and treatment are fairly diverse but generally still limited. With sexual abuse of children, attitudes of treatment are determined with the position of the court to sentence the people caused violence.

With cases of forced sex in marriage, or when the husband has sexual behavior roughest, pressure to have sex after beating, the treatment usually located through physical violence or not considered that it is "forced sex" and defense that "Men have a higher demand for women; women are responsible for husband's way. With cases of sexual harassment between members of the family, despite the recognition of this is unacceptable, but the attitude is still the most common doubts about the accuracy of the phenomenon, do not trust women's words, thereby evade to solve directly. In the case forced sex before marriage, and when women often do not dare speak out because of the fear of being condemned, the treatment is not to have intervention or if there is this is in the direction of natural settlement.

The view that considers sexuality is a sensitive and privacy issue is the first challenge for the members of support systems to seek information and seek supports appropriately. The next challenges include: the fixed point about gender " who is ashamed when a husband blamed", women are responsible for keeping families face, they must coddle husband because women owned by men, and the limit in the provisions and guidelines of the law with the requirements to have clear evidence of violence.

To solve the above challenges and to overcome the limitations exist in attitudes and ways of handling the position of sexual violence cases, the team proposed four specific recommendations. First, open exchanges about sex: creating an enabling environment for people to share, discuss openly about sexual topics, change the perception that sex is bad, and be the

individual stories, clarifying the concept of "forced sex", "consensus" and "sexual harassment", etc ... Second, change the gender prejudice: changing the look of the value of women, help people and members of support systems know about sexual rights and sexual health of women and men; realize women can refuse sex when they don't want. Thirdly, heading towards working with men caused violence: encourage the participation of male members to the group support, attracting their participation in media activities and other activities of training skills project to work with the causes of violence. Fourthly, improving treatment guidelines and support position: editing process support and training for members of the system of concepts related to sexual violence, how to collect evidence and how to support.

IV. About ethical aspects in the intervention and research on family violence:

To ensure ethical criterions in researching family affected, including: the safety of an research-object and research team members are very important and this is oriented factors for all decisions in the project, ensuring confidentiality of information is essential to protect the safety of women and the quality of information, design of studies must be planned to minimize the stress caused by researching for participants, etc ... The team made six solutions.

Firstly, establish ethical principles from the beginning and included in guideline implementation research, guiding the implementation of support for violence. Secondly, always ask questions about ethics in all meetings feedback on research and intervention. Thirdly,

concretize "morality" with the determination of ethical issues in each particular situation, discuss with all members of the team and staff in local projects to be decided last. Fourthly, discuss ethical issues with violence. Fifthly, attention tracking support the research. Six is, seriously enhance research capacity through training on ethical principles for members of the team, talk to experts about ethical concerns, attention to the development of documentation specifically related to the content project

Research results showed that initially the project had created significant changes in perception of officials and people in the community about family violence issues. Intervention to prevent family violence was no longer an issue about personal privacy, but now it was considered a matter of concern of the government, the community and the health sector. However, because this is a complex issue, related to the point of gender inequality that existed in the subconscious of the community and society, so the next stage of the project, the team confirmed the need to concentrate on: 1) Improving the participation of departments and agencies concerned, especially the police force. Strengthen the participation of forces at local hamlets is also very important. 2) Increasing awareness of gender and gender equality for local officials, especially the value related to forms of various violence. 3) Developing specific guidance to help support systems to work more effectively with cases of violence and mental sexual violence. 4) Identifying specific strategies to strengthen the participation of men in the community, especially how to work effectively with

groups of men cause violence. 5) Strengthening the capacity of women in groups of being affected by family violence. 6) Continuing to promote activities of screening in health facilities.

The speeches and documents are provided at the conference:

1. Shortened research report "The impact of violence prevention programs in the Cửa Lò town, Nghệ An: the success and challenges. Manuscripts 2:
2. CIHP, Cửa Lò People's Committee, Ford Foundation "The *truly lives*". The project "model to integrate gender-based violence prevention in health facilities and communities. H.: Women, 2008. CIHP, UBND TX Cửa Lò
3. CIHP, Cửa Lò People's Committee, Ford Foundation. The *Process to support people affected by violence in the community*, the project "Model to integrate gender-based violence prevention in health facilities and communities. H.: Women, 2008.
4. Hoàng Tú Anh (CIHP): Considering the ethical aspects of research and intervention of family violence.
5. Nguyễn Quang Phương (Hanoi Medical University): The impact of religion to the concept and process location of family violence: observations and Re
6. Quách Thu Trang (CIHP): Intervention to improve rights for women affected by family violence in the context of Vietnam: challenges and lessons.
7. Vũ Song Hà (CIHP): Intervention in cases of sexual violence: some lessons.