

# White Ribbon Australia International Conference



Sydney, Australia, 13 – 15 May 2013  
Doltone House, Darling Island Wharf, Pyrmont

**A report by Ann Skamp, Anglican Church of Australia**

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## GLOBAL TO LOCAL

### Preventing Men's violence against Women – Research, Policy and Practice in One Space

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'We are here because we want to bring this violence to an end. We are saying "yes" to good, respectful relationships. What we are doing is working together to create a better world for women, men and children.'

*Dr Michael Kaufman, co-founder, White Ribbon Campaign*

'The term violence against women means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.'

*United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of  
Violence against Women*

'Men's violence against women is the paramount expression of gender inequality: men's violence is linked to gender inequality and men's violence is shaped by gender inequality. Gender inequality is the problem and gender equality is the solution.'

*Michael Flood, Senior Lecturer in Sociology, University of Wollongong*

'The most vulnerable person in the world today is the girl child.'

*Renee Imbesi, Manager, VicHealth's Preventing Violence Against Women*

*From the Agreed Conclusions of the 57<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (2013):*

'Mobilize communities and institutions to address and change attitudes, behaviours and practices that perpetuate and condone gender stereotypes and all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, by engaging with women's and youth organizations, national machineries for the advancement of women, national human rights institutions where they exist, schools, educational and media institutions and others directly working with women and girls, men and boys and with individuals at all levels of society and in all settings, religious and community leaders and elders, teachers and parents.

*Section B. Addressing structural and underlying causes and risk factors so as to prevent violence against women and girls, part (mm)*

## **Introduction**

I greatly appreciate the financial support of the [Anglican Board of Mission - Australia](#) which enabled my attendance at the White Ribbon Australia International Conference.

While the issue of ending men's violence against women was the focus of the Conference and is the focus of this Report, ending men's violence against girls and boys is also to be understood and encompassed in the information, strategy focus and goal of creating a future free of men's violence as set out in the report below.

## **It is a men's issue**

Violence exists in societies in which men's power and men's domination are fundamental and where violence has become an acceptable tool to maintain that power and domination. Often long-standing permission has been given to continue such a paradigm by designating men's violence against women as 'private' and 'personal' matters and an accepted behaviour for a man to prove he is a real man to himself, his family, his community.

Men's violence against women is a men's issue. Women, however, have been, and still are, the significant voices raising awareness of the issue of men's violence against women and girls. Real and lasting change will only happen when men act and speak to the issue, and not understand their role as 'assisting women' to bring about the necessary change.

Replacing the term 'violence against women' (VAW) to 'men's violence against women' (MVAW) emphasises where the changes need to happen to free our societies of this form of violence – changes which will need to be led by men through the engagement of men and boys.

## **Engaging men and boys is key**

Working with men and boys to eliminate men's violence against women is recognised as essential in the work being done to eliminate violence. Some important aspects to successfully engaging men and boys include:

- self-challenging men to be the best they can possibly be as partners, brothers, sons, fathers
- taking the message out to as many men as possible, making it mainstream in our communities
- encouraging nurturing fatherhood
- starting young
- customising the message and the method of delivery. Programmes can be simple, e.g., having boys involved in programmes at daycare centres
- making it personal: “What do you want for your children, your grandchildren?”
- ensuring programmes are culturally specific
- emphasising the rewards: respectful relationships are more rewarding relationships
- having men talking to men, including high profile figures, on the consequences of violent relationships at all levels: personal, legal, heritage handed down to children
- including knowledge about the importance of knowing and setting boundaries and modelling respectful relationships
- working with women in delivering the message.

Programmes need to:

- be accountable to women and women’s organisations
- challenge inequality and the abuse of power, but also navigate men’s fear
- include diverse ages and settings
- describe the violence as a choice some men make, and not to be excused by alcohol, drugs
- use positive images and positive messages of men speaking out for change
- use language responsibly
- reach out to men as a challenge to be a better man
- create broad partnerships across our societies and communities to speak with a united voice
- be understood as a catalyst for change, not the change itself
- create a place of safety by including humour, inclusiveness, etc.

The **‘bystander approach’** has become the basis of most current anti-violence programmes, especially the White Ribbon Campaign. This approach challenges the ‘this is not my problem’ or ‘this is none of my business’ attitude. It moves beyond the ‘victim approach’ to what is the responsibility of bystanders, either as individuals or groups – the ‘everybody else’.

This also moves the focus from individual men or groups of men being seen as ‘those’ who are the cause and perpetrators of violence against women to whole societies and communities addressing and taking responsibility for what is happening. Although women can also be bystanders, men have a greater responsibility to respond.

The power of this strategy is in the conversation that can be initiated by the bystander and bring a change in the until-then accepted norm of a group or a community.

The **role of leadership**, particularly male leadership, is vital in eliminating violence. Creating a future free of men’s violence against women is a responsibility and expectation of leadership at

all levels. When male leaders stand up and demand change, then change happens. Leaders have a personal responsibility to construct a culture with values that lead us to this new paradigm. This will involve changing structures, systems and priorities of organisations and building leadership that reflects this new way of being together and will necessarily include specific leadership training to be able to realise a future without violence.

## **A whole-of-community response is required**

Boys are not born to be violent men and most men are not violent. However, most men are still silent about other men's violent behaviour. When we live in societies and communities where at least 40 per cent of women experience violence in some form in their life, we realise that whole-of-community attitudes and the way we raise our children need to be challenged and changed.

Social and cultural norms have set up 'lenses' through which men and women interact and can maintain the broader gender inequality context in which we live. Victims and perpetrators exist in all our communities and are people we know, live and work with. However, communities can bring effective change when they honestly recognise what is happening in their own community, identify what needs to be changed, and bring about that change at all levels.

Intimate partner violence is the most common form of men's violence against women. A major influence on our community attitudes is the way in which this violence is often portrayed by the media. Stories tend to focus on the incident but not the causes, and perpetuate the concept of 'stranger danger' when most incidents arise from 'partner' or 'domestic' violence.

Research into community attitudes shows that there is an undeniable link between gender inequality and men's violence against women. By recognising and addressing those attitudes and patterns which stand in the way of achieving gender equality we will be able to build gender equality and reduce men's violence in both public and private spaces in our communities.

## **Foundational causes of violence can be addressed**

Dr Michael Kaufman, a co-founder of White Ribbon in Canada in 1989, nominated seven factors which cause violence in our societies, our institutions, our local communities and our homes. By taking these seven factors as a working model we can determine what we need to do to address these causes and end the violence:

### **1. Patriarchal power**

Creating communities where gender equality is the norm will have the greatest influence in the task of ending men's violence against women.

### **2. Privilege and entitlement**

The often unconsciously assumed and instituted privilege and entitlement of men in our societies and communities can be challenged by men and be lastingly addressed where gender equality is advanced.

### **3. Permission**

Entrenched gender roles, often affirmed through traditions and culture, can be challenged by encouraging people to speak out and deconstruct stereotypes which continue the generational cycle of violence.

### **4. Paradox of manhood**

Positive understandings of what it means to be a 'man' and how 'power' is understood in respectful relationships need to be encouraged and as integral in raising boys to be good men.

### **5. Pressure cooking**

Men's violence against women often results from 'bottled-up' feelings erupting. We can address this by validating men and boys about their feelings and equip them to recognise and appropriately express emotions as a normal part of being human.

### **6. Psychic armour**

As part of redefining concepts of 'manhood', encouraging the care of children as the role of both men and women can assist men to develop empathy in their relationships. Promoting examples of what it means to be equal parents will help transform the idea of what is fatherhood.

### **7. Past experiences**

Men's past experiences in families where examples of disrespectful and unequal relationships were modelled need to be challenged.

## **Preventing men's violence is a political priority**

Dr Jackson Katz highlighted how linguistically controlled discussion of men's violence against women is characteristic in cultures where men's violence against women occurs, e.g., if all the shootings in the USA had been by women and girls, the consequent discourse would undoubtedly have been about gender-perpetrated violence.

He advocated that our current use of language be challenged to help us recognise that:

- domestic and sexual violence are not women's issues
- dominant societal systems are kept stable by accepted use of language (e.g., 'gender' = 'women'), and need to be replaced by gender-neutral usage and understanding
- terms such as 'violence against women' make the role of men in the violence silent and invisible and place the emphasis on women, and need to be replaced by the term 'men's violence against women'.

Taking up these challenges is central in addressing men's violence against women in societies and is not to be considered as something additional to what we do. For example, sexual assault safety awareness programmes run by many colleges and universities are seen as a public

safety issue for women but when not accompanied by programmes targeted at men to eliminate such violence they simply are compliant with the current situation. When we lift the status and respect for women and girls the whole society benefits.

## **Eliminating violence will reduce costs**

Evidenced-based research has shown that men's violence against women and children results in significant costs to communities. It therefore needs to be quantified in rigorous economic terms. In particular, societies which experience men's violence against women carry notable health and financial costs, all of which begin to reduce notably, even for small reductions in incidents of men's violence.

### **1. Health impacts of men's violence against women**

Although there are many health impacts on women, the major burden of men's violence against women is on mental health.

The World Health Organization's 'World Report on Violence and Health' identified the following factors as causes of violence in communities and which need to be addressed if health costs associated with men's violence against women are to be reduced:

- gender inequality is the norm
- unequal power relationships
- rigid norms to gender stereotypes.

The Report also nominated key actions to reduce the cost of violence as:

- the promotion of equal and respectful relationships between men and women
- recognising that all men have a role in perpetuating or stopping men's violence against women.

Statistical evidence around men's violence against women has so far focused on women, e.g., 40 per cent of women in Australia have experienced some form of men's violence since the age of 15. In some societies it is higher than 70 per cent. However, it is now recognised that there is little, if any, statistical information concerning the percentage of men who are violent, even though it is understood that the majority of men are not violent.

### **2. Economic costs of men's violence against women**

The costs include:

- direct or tangible costs, e.g., provision of responsive services, facilities
- indirect or intangible costs
- opportunity costs, e.g., workplace participation
- pain, suffering, disability, premature mortality
- health
- production-related, e.g., absenteeism
- consumption-related, e.g., replacing damaged goods
- second generation effects
- transfer costs.

United Nations agencies have estimated that the economic costs associated with men's violence against women are between 1.5 and 2.0 per cent of the gross national product (GNP) of a society and is borne by the whole of the society: governments, non-government organisations and other societal groups. The scale of the costs related to all forms of men's violence - including physical, sexual, rape, psychological, economic, and trafficking - has a serious and significant impact and cannot be considered a discretionary budget item. In particular, the costs in emerging societies and communities is considerable, often effecting the capacity and ability to work outside the home and the growing cost associated with the need for services.

## **The Church has a role to play**

As global citizens, the worldwide presence of the Anglican Communion in communities around the world provides opportunities and a responsibility to be in partnership with others to create a future free of men's violence against women. More importantly, being co-creators of this future is God's call on us.

Already a significant number of Anglican communities are involved in awareness raising and provision of services and programmes to eliminate violence in families and local communities. The leadership of the Communion, both through the Primates' Meeting and the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), has endorsed this commitment to eliminating and preventing men's violence against women. Awareness-raising of the issue has also been significant through the efforts of the Communion's Networks, the Anglican Alliance, and many Anglican agencies across the Communion.

The White Ribbon Conference highlighted areas of work which are to be continued and has presented some future challenges for the Anglican Communion around the areas of promoting equal, respectful relationships, leadership, gender equality and partnerships with others in our wider communities.

### **Equal and respectful relationships**

- Providing faith communities that are safe places for girls and women.
- Promoting and modelling safe, equal, respectful relationships between women, men girls and boys.
- Expanding programmes for men and boys in our churches, schools, and other groups.
- Recognising ways in which the Church fails to create communities of safe, equal and respectful relationships.

### **Leadership**

- Fulfilling commitments to include gender-based violence awareness as part of theological courses.
- Developing theological understandings and resources focused on equal and respectful relationships.
- Providing leadership training focused on building an institutional culture that does not tolerate men's violence against women in any form.

## **Gender Equality**

- Addressing and challenging attitudes that contribute to the continuance of men's violence against women.
- Understanding the integral place gender equality plays in the elimination of violence.
- Providing resources and ways to create faith communities which speak to gender equality as part of the faith we witness to.

## **Partnerships**

- Working with community groups to address the foundational factors which contribute to men's violence against women.
- Challenging those aspects of our societies which contribute to men's violence against women.
- Recognising, advocating for and participating in the changes needed to create a world which is safe for girls and women.

The White Ribbon Campaign, as a decentralised campaign, is a suitable first resource for church communities to develop their own local response to creating a future free of men's violence against women and many provinces are already using these resources. Consideration could be given to developing a specific Anglican Communion White Ribbon Campaign based in local situations and with an emphasis on what we as a Communion wish to aim for and set as outcomes.

As with the wider communities in which we live, prevention and elimination of men's violence against women need to be mainstream – a whole-of-organisation cultural change where the focus must be on prevention and elimination through the realisation of gender equality. The extent to which we as the Church take seriously this challenge will determine to what extent we are prepared to be part of the Gospel work of eliminating men's violence against women and children alongside others in our communities and societies.

## **Resources and examples of best practice**

### **White Ribbon Campaign (WRC)**

The WRC was initiated by three Canadian men following the murder of 14 women students in Montreal in 1989. It now exists in more than 57 countries and is –

- a mainstream campaign
- a public education campaign
- a campaign to draw men into self-reflection and speak out against men's violence against women
- a decentralised campaign focussed on and accessible to local communities
- only one piece in the puzzle of creating a future free of violence against women.



Examples of national websites:

Brazil [www.lacobranco.org.br](http://www.lacobranco.org.br)

Canada [www.whiteribbon.ca](http://www.whiteribbon.ca)

Australia [www.whiteribbonday.org.au](http://www.whiteribbonday.org.au)

UK [www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk](http://www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk)

Chile [www.lazoblanco.cl](http://www.lazoblanco.cl)

Pakistan [www.whiteribbon.org.pk](http://www.whiteribbon.org.pk)

Ecuador <http://campanalazoblancoecuador.blogspot.ca>

Ireland <http://theotherhalf.ie/whiteribbon>

Aotearoa New Zealand [www.whiteribbon.org.nz](http://www.whiteribbon.org.nz)

Scotland [www.whiteribbonscotland.org.uk](http://www.whiteribbonscotland.org.uk)

Argentina & Uruguay [www.lazoblanco.org](http://www.lazoblanco.org)

Costa Rica [www.lazoblancocr.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.lazoblancocr.blogspot.co.uk)

**The United Nations' definition of 'violence against women** can be found at [www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm](http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm)

**The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022** - developed by the Australian Government together with all State and Territory Governments. See [www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children/national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children/national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children)

**A National Centre of Excellence to Reduce Violence Against Women** - established to focus on reducing domestic, family and sexual violence through collective action in research, policy and action. See <http://juliecollins.fahcsia.gov.au/node/290>

### **The Australian Football League (AFL)**

The AFL have developed a 'Respect and Responsibility' (R&R) Policy in following complaints from women who had experienced violence from players. The Policy is a commitment to addressing violence against women and to work towards creating safe, supportive and inclusive environments for women and girls across the football industry as well as the broader community. Its emphasis is on shifting attitudes – ensuring that people throughout the AFL are aware and have structures in place that recognise that violence against women and behaviour that harms or degrades women are never acceptable and are everyone's responsibility. See [www.afl.com.au/news/game-development/respect-and-responsibility](http://www.afl.com.au/news/game-development/respect-and-responsibility)

### **'Man Prayer' from the One Billion Rising campaign:**

<http://onebillionrising.org/blog/entry/menrise-watch-the-man-prayer>

### **Male Champions of Change**

In April 2010, Australian Human Rights Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick brought together some of Australia's most influential and diverse male CEOs and Chairpersons to form the Male Champions of Change group. The group aims to use their individual and collective influence and commitment to ensure the issue of women's representation in leadership is elevated on the national business agenda. See [www.humanrights.gov.au/male-champions-change](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/male-champions-change)

### **Domestic Violence Resource Centre, Victoria**

'Preventing violence, promoting respect' – the Centre in Victoria, Australia, provides support services, resources, training and publications in the area of family violence. See [www.dvrcv.org.au](http://www.dvrcv.org.au)

### **'No To Violence'**

Male Family Violence Prevention Association, a peak body of organisations and individuals working with men to end their violence and abuse against family members in Victoria, Australia. See <http://ntv.org.au>

### **Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)**

A gender violence, bullying, and school violence prevention approach that encourages young men and women from all socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds to take on leadership roles in their schools and communities. The training is focused on a "bystander" model that empowers each student to take an active role in promoting a positive school climate. See [www.jacksonkatz.com/mvp.html](http://www.jacksonkatz.com/mvp.html)

### **10 Things Men Can Do To Prevent Gender Violence**

A downloadable poster. See [www.jacksonkatz.com/wmcd.html](http://www.jacksonkatz.com/wmcd.html)

### **Working Alongside People with Intellectual and Learning Disabilities (WWILD)**

Works with people with intellectual and learning disabilities that have experienced or at risk of experiencing sexual violence or have become a victim of crime. See [www.wwild.org.au](http://www.wwild.org.au)

### **National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey 2009**

A survey to establish a contemporary baseline upon which to improve our understanding of factors leading to the formation of community attitudes on violence against women which will help inform the design and implementation of future prevention interventions to address violence against women across our communities.

See [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Freedom-from-violence/National-Community-Attitudes-towards-Violence-Against-Women-Survey-2009.aspx](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Freedom-from-violence/National-Community-Attitudes-towards-Violence-Against-Women-Survey-2009.aspx)

### **More than ready: Bystander action to prevent violence against women**

A research project to provide a sound evidence base to develop further programs that encourage pro-social bystander action to address the determinants of violence against women. See [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Freedom-from-violence/Bystander-Research-Project.aspx](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Freedom-from-violence/Bystander-Research-Project.aspx)

### **Badilika Project: 'Men not violent not silent'**

The project works with male sexual offenders in prison to be human rights ambassadors, challenging other men and boys to take responsibility for the prevention and awareness of gender based violence.

See [www.aqcommunication.com/coastwomen/htmreports/Badilika2.html](http://www.aqcommunication.com/coastwomen/htmreports/Badilika2.html)

### **Diocese of Melbourne: Faith Leaders Project**

As part of the Faith Communities Council of Victoria, the Diocese of Melbourne has developed faith-based resources suitable for parishes.

See [www.melbourne.anglican.com.au/ServingCommunity/src/Pages/Prevention-of-Violence-Against-Women.aspx](http://www.melbourne.anglican.com.au/ServingCommunity/src/Pages/Prevention-of-Violence-Against-Women.aspx)

Further resources can be found by going to the heading 'Multifaith & Respectful Relationships' at [www.faithvictoria.org.au/resources](http://www.faithvictoria.org.au/resources)

### **'It Starts With You'**

'It starts with you. It stays with him.' is an internet-based social media campaign developed by White Ribbon Canada and Le Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions to inspire men to promote healthy, equal relationships with the boys in their lives.

[www.itstartswithyou.ca](http://www.itstartswithyou.ca)

### **XY**

XY is a website focused on men, masculinities, and gender politics. XY is a space for the exploration of issues of gender and sexuality, the daily issues of men's and women's lives, and practical discussion of personal and social change. See [www.xyonline.net](http://www.xyonline.net)

### **Resource list compiled by the Anglican Communion Office Women's Desk**

See [http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/resources/docs/gbv\\_resource\\_list.pdf](http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/resources/docs/gbv_resource_list.pdf) for a regularly updated list of resources to assist Anglicans responding to gender-based and domestic violence.

## **Authors and publications**

### **Dr Michael Flood**

Michael Flood is an Australian pro-feminist sociologist at the University of Wollongong. He is widely cited as an expert on issues of fatherhood and masculinity.

See [www.uow.edu.au/arts/ssmac/staff/UOW084229.html](http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/ssmac/staff/UOW084229.html)

### **Dr Jackson Katz**

Jackson Katz is internationally recognised for work in the fields of gender violence prevention education and critical media literacy. He is co-founder of the 'Mentors in Violence Prevention' (MVP) programme. See [www.jacksonkatz.com](http://www.jacksonkatz.com)

### **Dr Michael Kaufman**

Michael Kaufman is an educator, writer, and consultant, well-known for his innovative approaches to engaging men and boys in promoting gender equality and transforming their lives. He is the co-founder of the White Ribbon Campaign, the largest effort in the world of men working to end violence against women. See [www.michaelkaufman.com/books/](http://www.michaelkaufman.com/books/) and [www.michaelkaufman.com/articles/](http://www.michaelkaufman.com/articles/)

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