The Role of Women’s Movements on Policies to End VAWG
A Cross Country Comparative Study

Presented by:
Dr. Mary Ellsberg and Dr. Shanaaz Mathews
Background

- Increased efforts to address VAWG over 20 years
- Efforts of researchers and women's rights activists to produce evidence
- Greatest predictors of progressive policies on VAWG is the existence of a strong autonomous women’s movements (Htun and Weldon 2013)
- As national governments and international donors are playing a larger role in addressing VAWG, there is a need to ensure continued support for women’s organizations globally
About the WEAVE Collective

The Women Engaged Against Violence Everywhere (WEAVE) Collective is forged out of a shared commitment to feminist movements that are addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG) and to uplift and weave together the crucial stories emerging from the margins.

Research Objective

To what extent and how do women’s movements contribute to policies on ending violence against women and girls?
LEGISLATION AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The goal of this Lusum Commission Working Group is to understand how social movements, particularly feminist movements, have contributed to ending violence against women and girls (EVAW).  

draft only

Intersections with youth and children’s movements, LGBTQI, and disability activism

OUTCOMES
- Effective laws
- Conventions
- Effective social, health, economic policies / programmes
- Positive social and gender norms
Methodology

- Using feminist and participatory methods, the research teams are documenting
  - historical trends and political milestones,
  - hard-won achievements through political campaigns and landmark court cases,
  - intersections with other social movements,
  - political backlash.
- Co-create knowledge through papers, new theories, documentaries, and art.
Nicaragua

Mobilization of Women through mass organizations
Sandinista Revolution

Growth of Feminist Movement
Nicaraguan Network of Women Against Violence

First prevalence study on IPV “Candies in Hell” spurs legislative reforms in 1995

In 2015, IPV decreased by 70% due to feminist organizing and multi-sectoral responses

Repression of students and women’s rights activists by Ortega regime
Over 300 protestors killed, 2000 wounded and 700 jailed for over one year

New wave of repression – 1,000 NGOs closed (130 WROs)
Most WHRD’s are in exile, with 20 incarcerated for over one year

Mary Ellsberg, with Nicaraguan HRDs lead this study
Women’s experiences of GBV was deliberately silenced during apartheid

Many feminists exit state (1999–2008)

Zuma Era – backlash against the advances made on gender (2009-2018)

Shukumisa and other coalitions formed short-term alliances that mobilized around issues such as the Sexual Offences Legislation (2007)

Shanaaz Mathews, Benita Moolman and Thelma Oppelt from the University of Cape Town lead this study

Women’s movements played a vital role in shaping democracy in South Africa

Building intersectional feminisms and solidarities across differences is increasingly significant to mitigate racial tension and mistrust in South Africa and the region.

Democracy 1994

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India

Explores women’s struggles against violence, and the policy engagement and contestation involving women’s movements and the state.

Protagonists represent multiple movements that hold different positions on the issues. Highlight tensions around ideologies, strategies, and identities and their impacts.

Visibility to the intersectionality of struggles. Challenging the notion of a singular “Indian women’s movement”.

When woven together, narratives reveal a landscape of privilege and exclusion that play out within women’s movements and influence their trajectory at the national and local level.

Kalyani-Menon Sen, an activist and researcher from Gender at Work, and Uma Chakravarti, a historian and filmmaker lead this study.
What have you gained from being part of a feminist movement?

- Support
- Rights Freedoms
- Solidarity
- Love
- Recognition
- Agency Voice
- Alternatives
- Safe space
- Dignity
- New ways of seeing, doing, being
- Isolation
- Stigma
- "Lawfare" criminalization, imprisonment
- Violence from family, community, state
"STRONG WOMEN'S COMING TOGETHER FROM OVER THE WORLD.
STRONG INDIGENOUS WOMEN COMING TOGETHER TO SHARE LEARNINGS AND SHARE WHAT WORKS TO PREVENT DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE!"

Shirleen Nampayinpa Campbell
Emerging Challenges

- Authoritarian backsliding and backlash against feminist movements.
- The shrinking of democratic spaces and the criminalization of activism.
- Women in the margins are frequently excluded from policy processes.
- The women’s movement have been increasingly squeezed out by other “experts” shaping policies with minimal grassroots consultation.
- As national action plans based on global instruments become generalized, many areas have been left behind.
What’s Next?

• Develop a paper for each country context

• Develop a fifth comparative paper to bring together all the findings from the four papers to include in the Lancet Commission

• Co-create artwork – bringing together feminist artist activists

• India team to create a documentary film

• Add more countries