

**The Community Engagement Continuum:**  
Outreach, Mobilization, Organizing  
and Accountability to Address Violence against  
Women in Asian and Pacific Islander  
Communities

REPORT BY  
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## About the Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence

The Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence (formerly, Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence) is a national resource center and a network of organizations committed to sharing resources; developing and promoting Pan-Asian and culturally-specific community models of prevention and intervention; conducting and disseminating research; and influencing public policy. The API Institute's focus on organizing and advocacy within and across Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities is informed by a gender-based analysis of the cultural roots of violence against women.

In order to create sustainable solutions to ending violence in the lives of women and children, we must focus on approaches that are grounded in our communities. As advocates we also have a responsibility to break the silence around community complicity. The API Institute promotes community organizing as a philosophy and a strategy for gender equity and social justice. It is committed to building the capacity of Asian and Pacific Islander community-based-organizations to engage in such work.

In 2002 the API Institute took its commitment to community organizing a step further by hiring a Community Development Coordinator. As part of the community development plan the Coordinator began a series of phone conversations with different organizations that were already engaged in community organizing work around gender violence. When asked, "What is the most important role that the Institute could play?" the answers were almost always, "To create a national network of community organizers and to document and disseminate strategies that domestic violence organizations are utilizing at the grass roots level." As a result, two things came about: we established a community organizing working group and we prepared this report. *Innovative Strategies to Address Domestic Violence in Asian & Pacific Islander Communities: Emerging Themes, Models and Interventions* was the first report to research innovative strategies in API communities. We hope this report will serve as a tool for supporting Asian and Pacific Islander domestic violence programs engaged in community organizing work in the U.S.

### AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## About the Author

**Mimi Kim** has worked for 15 years as an anti-violence advocate in Asian communities. She is a steering committee member of the Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence and a member of the Community Organizing Working Group. Mimi is also a founding member of Incite! Women of Color against Violence where she has been working collectively with women of color nationally and internationally to create community-based solutions to violence. Her political work extends to the Korea Solidarity Committee, an Oakland-based organization promoting issues of social justice in the Korean peninsula. Mimi continues her domestic violence advocacy as the Executive Director of Creative Interventions, a resource center supporting community-based interventions to domestic violence currently established in Oakland by a seed grant from the *Echoing Green Fellowship*. She is also a program consultant for Shimtuh: Korean Domestic Violence Program, an Oakland-based organization which she co-founded in 2000 and whose work is featured in this report. When she really needs to make some noise, she drums with Jamaesori, a Korean women's drumming (pung'mul) group.

## About the Community Organizing Working Group of the Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence

*The Community Organizing Working Group* of the API Institute was established in 2003 to identify key community organizing issues and needs among Asian and Pacific Islander communities. Its members are:

- Emma Catague, Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center in Seattle, WA;
- Joon Choi, New Visions in Ann Arbor, MI;
- Quynh Dang, Refugee and Immigrant Safety and Empowerment Program (RISE) of the Department of Public Health, State of Massachusetts in Boston, MA;
- Mimi Kim, Creative Interventions in Oakland, CA; Steering Committee member of the API Institute
- Leni Marin, Family Violence Prevention Fund in San Francisco, CA; Steering Committee member of the API Institute;
- Gita Mehrotra, Asian Women's Shelter in San Francisco, CA;
- Purvi Shah, Sakhi for South Asian Women in New York, NY;
- Proshat Shekarloo, Community Development Program Coordinator of the Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence in San Francisco, CA;
- Kabzuag Vaj, Freedom, Inc. in Madison, WI;
- Sujata Warrier, New York Office on Violence against Women in New York, NY; a board member of Manavi in New Brunswick, N.J.; and a Steering Committee member of the API Institute;
- Mieko Yoshihama, New Visions in Ann Arbor, MI, Associate Professor at the University of Michigan, School of Social Work, and a Steering Committee member of the API Institute.

Organizations are listed for identification purposes only.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The Community Engagement Continuum

We have conceptualized the *Community Engagement Continuum* in order to categorize a range of community based approaches in the anti-violence movement and to clarify the goals of engagement. The four points on the continuum – *community outreach and education*, *community mobilization*, *community organizing*, and *community accountability* – are defined by the level to which the strategies used lead to increases in the community’s capacity to transform relations of power. The continuum model encourages a more strategic approach to any level of community engagement work and offers tools towards realistic step-by-step implementation.

1. *Community Outreach and Education* raises community awareness about the issue of violence against women and children and anti-violence resources;
2. *Community Mobilization* aims for active community participation and engagement supporting the anti-violence organization or addressing the problem of violence against women and children;
3. *Community Organizing* involves longer-term strategies meant to increase sustained community-based capacity to address violence against women and children. It is further divided into *community organizing (general)* and *community organizing (among those most affected)*; and
4. *Community Accountability* develops the capacity of community members to support survivors and hold abusers accountable for their violence.

## Documentation of Innovative API Community Engagement Strategies

Innovative community-based strategies among seven Asian and Pacific Islander (API) anti-violence programs are documented in detail.

- **The Door Knocking Campaign of *Stand Against Violence Effectively Program (S.A.V.E.)*, of the *Cambodian Association of America*** (Cambodian; Long Beach, CA), describes a unique community outreach strategy for an isolated and geographically confined urban population of Cambodians.
- **The Community Needs Assessment of *Shimtuh*, a program of the *Korean Community Center of the East Bay*** (Korean; Oakland, CA) illustrates how a funder-mandated needs assessment activity was used to mobilize various sectors of the community to take ownership in the establishment of a community-based domestic violence program.
- **The Natural Helper Program of *Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center*** (Pan-Asian; Seattle, WA) and its involvement with the Samoan Parenting Group of the *Samoan*

*Christian Congregational Church* (Samoan; Seattle, WA) offers an example of how an anti-violence program with a community organizing agenda can increase the capacity of community-based institutions to effectively address domestic violence within their constituencies.

- **Youth Empowerment as Domestic Violence Reduction of *Freedom, Inc.*** (Hmong; Madison, WI) demonstrates how the connection between intimate forms of violence and larger societal structures of power invites youth organized around racial profiling and deportation to take accountability for violence within their family and intimate relationships.
- **Public Shaming/Naming of *Sakhi for South Asian Women*** (South Asian; New York, NY) gives a rare example of organized public disclosure and shaming of an abuser in order to push accountability to the level of community-wide awareness and responsibility.
- **Breaking the Silence Project of *Raksha*** (South Asian; Atlanta, GA) describes the formulation of a campaign to highlight the prevalence of child sexual abuse and to encourage the community to engage in greater engagement and responsibility around this hidden and private issue.
- **Pacific Islander Men's Program by *Sharon Spencer*** (Pacific Islander; North Shore, Oahu, HI) presents community-based efforts to engage Pacific Islander men to take responsibility for their violence through comparisons with the destructive legacy of colonization and the need for community restoration.

## Community Engagement: Key Issues and Themes

- 1) Setting *community engagement priorities* encourage anti-violence programs to examine the goals of and target populations for sound community-based strategies.
- 2) The theme of *sustainability* arises in the challenges of formulating community-based strategies requiring long-term planning and investment of resources.
- 3) An issue related to sustainability is the challenge for social service programs to *integrate and support ongoing, strategic community-engagement activities*.
- 4) *Intergenerational community organizing* emerges as a promising approach to address violence against women and children particularly within communities characterized by extended family structures.
- 5) Increased levels of community engagement can require thoughtful consideration of *confidentiality* practices and policies in order to allow for flexibility without compromising this important principle.
- 6) Innovative approaches to *safety* for survivors of violence and for program staff and volunteers are responses to community-based strategies which require engagement within homes and community spaces where violence occurs.



- 7) The identification of and nurturing of *leadership* qualities among organizers and the development of these qualities among those community members being engaged are important to increasing community capacity to address violence against women and children.
- 8) The level and nature of *engagement with or challenges to larger state systems* such as child welfare and the criminal legal system are considerations for programs working towards more effective community involvement in addressing intimate and family violence.
- 9) Strategies for effective *multi-issue organizing* within programs usually confined to domestic violence or gender-based violence is another issue area raised in these documented examples of community-based strategies.
- 10) Drawing parallels between *destructive histories of colonization and the erosive effects of domestic violence* can serve as a deepening of culturally competent approaches to abuser accountability and positive transformation of male identities.

## Recommendations

- 1) Support training on community engagement and organizing for anti-violence programs.
- 2) Support community engagement and organizing among those most affected by intimate and family violence.
- 3) Support leadership development especially among those most affected by intimate and family violence.
- 4) Promote intergenerational community engagement and organizing.
- 5) Promote multi-issue and cross-community engagement and organizing.
- 6) Explore creative ways to push the boundaries of confidentiality and safety towards the promotion of greater community participation.
- 7) Promote community accountability and intervention strategies.
- 8) Support the development of culturally meaningful, engaging, and transformative anti-violence work.
- 9) Create program structures supporting sustained community engagement and organizing.
- 10) Promote long-term funding to support innovative community engagement strategies.



# INTRODUCTION

## Background

Community-based strategies have gained prominence throughout social service, social justice, and other non-profit sectors. In the anti-violence field, a rising appeal for the return or advance to greater engagement with communities has countered the trend towards increasing professionalization and service-provision orientation. Despite the growing acceptance of the value of community-based work, the realities of what this actually entails remain ambiguous.

While the very concept of *community* may evoke singular feelings of hope or despair, the reality of our communities is complex and fragmented. Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities in the U.S. are embodied in high-rise public housing units and sprawling suburbs, corner groceries and rural farm lands, Christian churches, Buddhist temples, and Muslim mosques. Our attempts to engage the community are not surprisingly as diverse as these places and spaces in which we live and work. And as practitioners, advocates, leaders, and activists, our own relationships to the communities within which we struggle are equally varied.

Many API anti-violence programs and advocates have emerged from individual and collective efforts to address violence against women and children or intimate and family violence<sup>1</sup> within API communities. The creation of alternative community-based anti-violence institutions, the bridging of API communities with mainstream social service and state systems, and the organizing of community members to support institutional responses have required significant engagement with multiple sectors of the API community, supportive and resistant, to ensure community connection with these institutions.

The struggle to address violence against women and children within a context of displaced and dispersed immigrant and refugee communities, increasingly threatened immigrant rights, shifting and conflicting cultural values, and poverty present particular challenges

*While the very concept of community may evoke singular feelings of hope or despair, the reality of our communities is complex and fragmented.*

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "violence against women," "violence against women and children," "gender-based violence," "domestic violence," and "intimate and family violence" are used intermittently and interchangeably throughout the text. The use of varying terminology is meant to broadly include the various types of work in which anti-violence programs and advocates are engaged.

often resulting in creative and innovative strategies for community engagement. The documentation of some of these strategies and lessons relevant to those working in the fields of violence against women and community organizing are the subjects of this report.

## Purpose of This Report

This report<sup>2</sup> is the second one on innovative API anti-violence strategies sponsored by the Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence<sup>3</sup>. Its purpose is to:

- 1) Frame a continuum for anti-violence advocates and programs to conceptualize community engagement activities;
- 2) Document innovative community engagement strategies addressing violence against women and children in API communities;
- 3) Bridge the gap between the fields of gender-based violence and other intimate forms of violence and community organizing;
- 4) Identify particular challenges encountered in community engagement work in API communities and in broader anti-violence work;
- 5) Analyze the impact of community engagement strategies in addressing violence against women and children in API communities;
- 6) Identify areas for further inquiry; and
- 7) Forge new directions in policy and practice to advance the positive impact of community-based strategies in addressing gender-based violence and other intimate forms of violence.

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<sup>2</sup> This report is based on discussions of the API Institute's Community Organizing Working Group, San Francisco, June 2003; the Peer-to-Peer Project meeting of Asian Women's Shelter, co-sponsored by the API Institute, San Francisco, September 2003; and interviews conducted by Mimi Kim and Proshat Shekarloo.

<sup>3</sup> For the first report, see Mimi Kim, *Innovative Strategies to Address Domestic Violence in Asian and Pacific Islander Communities: Examining Themes, Models, and Interventions* (San Francisco: Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence, 2002).

## Organization of this Report

*Section 1: Historical Background: Community Organizing and the Anti-Violence Movement.* The next section offers a brief history of the field of community organizing and the relationship between this sector of the social justice movement and the anti-violence movement. Because of the historic separation of these two fields particularly in the U.S. and the relative unfamiliarity of those working within the anti-violence movement with community organizing concepts, this section includes both an analysis of this rift and reasons why API anti-violence programs lead the way towards the integration of community organizing and anti-violence work.

*Section 2: The Community Engagement Continuum: Outreach, Mobilization, Organizing and Accountability.* An introduction to a continuum approach to understanding community engagement strategies follows. The categories reflect an increasing level of community engagement, expected community participation, and anticipated level of increased community-based capacity to address and end intimate and family violence.

*Section 3: Introducing API Innovative Community Engagement Strategies.* This section begins with a brief introduction to the seven API community-based strategies and programs documented in this report.

*Section 4: Community Outreach and Education: Definitions and Documented Examples* describes the definitions and characteristics of community outreach and education, followed by documented API examples.

*Section 5: Community Mobilization: Definitions and Documented Examples.* This section describes the definitions and characteristics of community mobilization, followed by documented API examples.

*Section 6: Community Organizing (General): Definitions and Documented Examples.* This section describes the definitions and characteristics of community organizing (general), followed by a documented API example.

*Section 7: Community Organizing (Among Those Most Affected): Definitions and Documented Examples.* This section describes the definitions and characteristics of a variation on community organizing, i.e., among those most affected, followed by a documented API example.

*Section 8: Community Accountability: Definitions and Documented Examples.* This section describes the definitions and characteristics of community accountability, followed by documented API examples.

*Section 9: Community Engagement: Key Issues and Themes.* This section introduces key issues and themes emerging from an exploration of the history of community organizing, its relevance to the anti-violence movement, and the experiences of documented API anti-violence strategies.

*Section 10: Recommendations.* The report ends with recommendations for practices and policies to advance the positive impact of community engagement work in addressing violence against women and children in API and other communities.

## SECTION 1: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND THE ANTI-VIOLENCE MOVEMENT

In the U.S., community organizing has a long and colorful history rooted in the immigrant settlement movement of the late 1800s. Neighborhood-based organizing activities associated with Saul Alinsky in Chicago beginning in the 1960s, are commonly considered to define organizing in the field and in the literature. In recent years, organizations and movements arising from the struggles of people of color, immigrant communities, and the women's movement have articulated positions and strategies that are greater in scope: engaging in consciousness raising and analyzing the intersectionality of problems<sup>4</sup>.

### The Anti-Violence Movement and the Community Organizing Sector

The women's movement of the 1970s that gave rise to institutions such as domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers is occasionally cited in the literature documenting the history of community organizing<sup>5</sup>. Today, the world of community organizers and the activities and literature aimed towards this sector mostly excludes those efforts focused on violence against women. Anti-violence organizations are primarily viewed by the community organizing field as a part of the social service sector, a distinct, and for many, mutually exclusive area of activity.

*The social service orientation of the anti-violence movement has limited the amount of energy and focus paid to community-based strategies.*

The anti-violence movement has also been largely removed from the debates and developments regarding community organizing theories and practices. Lack of familiarity with the overall field of community organizing is one reason why the community-based strategies of anti-violence organizations continue to be vaguely articulated and rather undeveloped as compared to the strategies practiced in the field of community organizing<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> For a history of community organizing highlighting more recent experiences within communities of color, see Gary Delgado, *Beyond the Politics of Place: New Directions in Community Organizing in the 1990's* (Oakland, CA: Applied Research Center, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Rinku Sen, *Stir It Up* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Anti-violence literature directly addressing community organizing remains rare. For exceptions, see Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center, *Organizing with Passion: Domestic Violence Organizing Strategies* (Seattle, WA: Author, 2001); Close to Home, *Mobilizing Family, Friends & Neighbors to*

## The Anti-Violence Movement: Social Services versus Community Engagement

The social service orientation of the current anti-violence movement has also limited the amount of energy and focus paid to community-based strategies. Individualized and confidential intervention approaches within anti-violence service organizations restrict their ability to engage communities in concrete actions or interventions unless a particular event, often tragic or lethal, becomes public knowledge<sup>7</sup>. The crisis-oriented focus of domestic violence and sexual assault services also prevents many organizations from planning, implementing, and sustaining community-based strategies which require a deliberate and long-term approach.

Community engagement has been generally limited to community education, outreach, and media campaigns. While these are positive and powerful strategies to shift institutions and attitudes towards the recognition of violence against women as a common and unacceptable social problem, they have not necessarily led to the increased capacity for community-based violence intervention or prevention. Many communities of color remain ravaged by violence against women and children but fall outside of awareness campaigns and accessible, appropriate anti-violence resources. Systems change work resulting in significant institutional and legislative transformations has remained the terrain of professional policy advocates and legal experts.

*An immigrant woman who cannot speak English, relies emotionally and materially upon her family and community for support, or fears deportation, must question whether standard domestic violence remedies increase her safety even if they are offered in her own language.*

The messages and remedies for those who come into contact with the current system of interventions are insufficient and can be disempowering and sometimes endangering.<sup>8</sup> Women seeking help are likely to receive shelter referrals, suggestions to call 911, or

*Prevent Domestic Violence* (Dorchester, MA: Author, 2003); Shamita Das Dasgupta, *Organizing Communities to Challenge Violence Against Women* (Duluth, MN: Praxis International, 2002); P. Catlin Fullwood, *Preventing Family Violence: Community Engagement Makes the Difference* (San Francisco, CA: Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2002); and Kelly Mitchell-Clark and Angela Autry, *Preventing Family Violence: Lessons from the Community Engagement Initiative* (San Francisco: Family Violence Prevention Fund with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Many community actions around specific cases of domestic violence surround highly publicized homicides where confidentiality or victim self-determination over intervention choices are no longer issues.

<sup>8</sup> Ms. Foundation for Women, *Safety & Justice For All: Examining the Relationship Between the Women's Anti-Violence Movement and the Criminal Legal System* (New York: Author, 2002).



restraining order information. An immigrant woman who cannot speak English, relies emotionally and materially upon her family and community for support, or fears deportation, must question whether such remedies increase her safety even if they are offered in her own language.

There is growing discomfort amongst advocates and activists about intervention approaches which so exclusively rely upon shelter services and criminal legal solutions, the very remedies championed by the anti-violence movement over the past twenty years<sup>9</sup>. The call for a shift to community-based strategies and intervention options particularly appropriate to communities of color is in response to concerns over increasingly institutionalized approaches<sup>10</sup>. The recent spate of funding guidelines, conference themes, and national working groups prioritizing community-based responses, community organizing, and community accountability are a reflection of this trend.

Communities of color have been leading the way to greater community involvement over solutions to intimate and family violence. These attempts have been largely unheralded and matter-of-fact. Community-based social justice organizations not primarily associated with violence against women issues have also recognized interpersonal violence as a priority issue and have forged innovative community organizing strategies towards addressing intimate and family violence<sup>11</sup>. More deliberate and strategically crafted community engagement approaches have been created by API anti-violence programs, pushing against the edges of anti-violence practice and theory.

## API Anti-Violence Organizations and Community Engagement Strategies

Anti-violence programs and organizations targeting API communities, a development starting in the 1980's, has resulted in an array of community-based anti-violence strategies as

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<sup>9</sup> Ms. Foundation for Women, *Op cit.*

<sup>10</sup> Incite! Women of Color Against Violence has taken national leadership in calling for community accountability in addressing violence against women, particularly in communities of color.

<sup>11</sup> Sista to Sista, a community-based organization among African-American and Latina young women in Brooklyn, NY has formed a Girl's Safety Zone where violence against girls and women is addressed in street theater and collective self-defense training. Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice, a community-based organization primarily organizing African-American and Latinos living in public housing in Bronx, NY is creating a Human Rights Zone for intervention and prevention of violence against women and girls, queer community members, and preventing police violence.

much by necessity as by design. The simple act of gathering a group of community members to discuss domestic violence in the Samoan community can take a rather sophisticated set of organizing skills ranging from messaging to outreach to leadership development. Establishing a domestic violence advocacy program in the Korean community requires the development of community capacity, leadership and sustainable community-based resources which takes diverse skills and significant community mobilization. Asking South Asian community members to consider how they can stop child sexual abuse committed within their very homes, neighborhoods, temples, and mosques requires complex and layered strategies with long-term organizational commitment. These are among the community-based strategies documented and explored in this report.

## SECTION 2: THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONTINUUM: OUTREACH, MOBILIZATION, ORGANIZING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Community engagement can be defined as “bringing together the talents, resources, and skills of people in the community in order to increase their collective power and work for social change”<sup>12</sup>. In addition, it mobilizes the

*This report conceptualizes a continuum approach to community engagement based upon the level to which the strategies they employ lead to increases in the community’s capacity to transform relations of power and sustain these changes.*

community’s political will for change. To further our understanding of the distinctions between and differing purposes for certain community-based strategies, we have conceptualized the Community Engagement Continuum in order to categorize a range of community based approaches in the anti-violence movement and to clarify the extent of the changes they aim for. The four points on the continuum are: community outreach and education, community mobilization, community organizing, and community accountability. They are defined by the level to which the strategies they employ lead to increases in the community’s capacity to transform relations of power and sustain these changes.

The *community engagement continuum* conceptualized in this report<sup>13</sup> categorizes community-based strategies as the following:

- 1) *Community Outreach and Education* raises community awareness about the issue of violence against women and children and anti-violence resources;
- 2) *Community Mobilization* aims for active community participation and engagement supporting the anti-violence organization or addressing the problem of violence against women and children;

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<sup>12</sup> Catlin Fullwood, *Preventing Family Violence: Community Engagement Makes the Difference*, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Community organizing terminology and strategic models are not singularly recognized or agreed upon within the field community organizing. This model adopts some of concepts and language common within the community organizing sector and modifies them into a continuum.

3) *Community Organizing* involves longer-term strategies meant to increase sustained community-based capacity to address violence against women and children which is further divided into *community organizing (general)* and *community organizing (among those most affected)*; and

4) *Community Accountability* involves developing the capacity of community members to support survivors and hold abusers accountable for their violence.

## Strategic Benefits of a Continuum Approach to Community Engagement

The *community* is a large and ever-shifting entity. A narrowing of who we think the community is, what we plan to do, and what we hope to achieve can make the challenge of community engagement more manageable and our efforts more effective.

*Placing community accountability at the end of the community engagement continuum encourages us to imagine a community which takes responsibility for holding abusers accountable, for supporting survivor safety and healing, and for creating practices and institutions which prevent further violence.*

Many anti-violence programs now engaging with their geographic, ethnic or other identified communities share common tendencies to decrease community engagement with growing establishment or institutionalization of service delivery, to respond to community requests rather than to plan and develop long-term engagement strategies, and to view all forms of community engagement as a single, uniform activity<sup>14</sup>.

Conceptualizing community engagement as categories can help us clarify targeted sectors of the community, desired outcomes and goals, timelines, and useful strategies in a field of activity often

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<sup>14</sup> Programs addressing violence against women which emphasize community organizing approaches include: Freedom, Inc. (Hmong; Madison, WI), Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Safety Center (Pan-Asian; Seattle, WA), New Visions: Alliance to End Violence in Asian/Asian American Communities (Pan-Asian, Ann Arbor, MI) and Sakhi for South Asian Women (South Asian; New York, NY), most of which are featured in this report. Other anti-violence programs not specifically addressing Asian and Pacific Islander communities include Connect (multi-racial; New York, NY), Communities Against Rape and Assault (multi-racial; Seattle, WA), Generation FIVE (multi-racial; San Francisco, CA), and Close to Home (multi-racial; Dorchester, MA).

confusing and overwhelming. Positioning these categories into a continuum<sup>15</sup> signifying greater levels of community involvement and increased capacity enables us to view individual community engagement activities as steps within a more strategic overall plan.

## Moving along the Continuum

The continuum model encourages a more strategic approach to any level of community engagement work. It promotes the long-term vision of ambitious community-based strategy goals and offers tools to conceptualize realistic step-by-step implementation.

Activities at the beginning level of engagement may phase into a strategy eventually leading to higher levels of community involvement. If an organization views the neighborhood high school as a site for changing young people's attitudes towards gendered power relationships and homophobia and as a space for skills building towards students holding peer offenders accountable, then an otherwise one-time presentation to a classroom could become the first of many steps towards this long-term goal.

If a program identifies community elders as a barrier to healthy community responses to domestic violence but also as key influential figures within the community, then a long-term engagement strategy may shift program resources towards this important constituency. Activities could begin with outreach in order to identify potential allies within this sector of the population. Further steps may engage these allies in activities which they identify as being of importance and interest. Through the building of trust and a positive working relationship, this sub-group could eventually organize to influence the domestic violence attitudes of their peers and shift their position from condoning domestic violence to challenging it.

Placing community accountability at the end of the community engagement continuum encourages us to imagine a community which takes responsibility for holding abusers accountable, for supporting survivor safety and healing, and for creating practices and institutions which prevent further violence. It challenges us to aim our activities towards the community-wide transformation of the very attitudes and conditions responsible for violence in the first place.

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<sup>15</sup> The continuum model is a conceptual tool delineating activities aimed at increasing levels of community involvement and capacity. It is not meant to imply increasing value of one level of engagement in comparison to another.

## Applying the Continuum: Assessing Capacity

The continuum can also help programs assess issues of capacity both in terms of program resources and community readiness. It offers a tool for determining levels of community engagement to match the program's capacity in the short-term and long-term.

In order to assess whether a community engagement goal can be achieved, the program may look both at their community's readiness to participate in anti-violence activities and strategies and at its own internal capacity to organize or coordinate these efforts. Program capacity may include such factors as availability of staff or volunteers, the amount of other resources necessary to make this engagement effective, the level of positive relationship-building between program personnel and the targeted sector of the community, and the history of community engagement with this sector. Community readiness and program capacity are linked in that readiness can be influenced by prior community engagement, and the level of program capacity necessary to reach certain goals is determined in part by the community's readiness to act.

An example of community engagement in the face of a domestic violence homicide illustrates the way that the continuum can be applied. A program goal may be the mobilization of the local faith community to publicly denounce this homicide. The program may then assess the willingness of local faith leaders to follow through with this act. It will also need to look at its own capacity to coordinate such an effort given the perceived readiness of the faith community.

If the program has never met with these leaders to discuss their views on domestic violence, then it may find that this goal is unrealistic. If local faith leaders show some willingness to act but require a level of organizing and coordination which the program cannot sustain, this may be equally unrealistic. In the short run, the shift of mobilization efforts towards a sector of the community more prepared to support these goals may be more effective and timely.

This gap between community engagement goals, community readiness, and past community engagement activities could alert the program of the need to construct a long-term plan to make mobilization of faith leaders a possibility in the future. Mobilization of faith community leaders may not be realistic in the short-term. Community education and outreach to this sector may be an ambitious yet more viable goal. The program may then decide to focus on the creation of an adequate outreach plan, assessment of its capacity to follow through with this outreach plan, and formulation of the steps necessary to build program capacity towards effective implementation.

## SECTION 3: INTRODUCING API INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

With the number of formal API anti-violence programs now reaching 70 and API advocates numbering well over 300<sup>16</sup>, the task of choosing a few programs or persons to highlight for this report is challenging.

The few examples documented are representative of the many API programs and advocates carrying out courageous and creative work each day. These highlighted strategies all push community engagement strategies in unique and innovative directions. While they are not necessarily replicable or appropriate in all of our organizations or communities, their successes and limitations serve as useful lessons in moving our work towards more effective and engaging ways of ending violence against women and children.

The seven innovative community engagement strategies highlighted in this report include the following:

- **The Door Knocking Campaign of *Stand Against Violence Effectively Program (S.A.V.E.)*, a program of the *Cambodian Association of America*** (Cambodian; Long Beach, CA), describes a unique community outreach strategy for an isolated and geographically confined urban population of Cambodians in Long Beach, CA.
- **The Community Needs Assessment of *Shimtu*, a program of the *Korean Community Center of the East Bay*** (Korean; Oakland, CA) illustrates how a funder-mandated needs assessment activity can be used to mobilize various sectors of the community to take ownership in the establishment of a community-based domestic violence program.
- **The Natural Helper Program of *Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center*** (Pan-Asian; Seattle, WA) and its involvement with the Samoan Parenting Group of the *Samoan Christian Congregational Church* (Samoan; Seattle, WA) offers an example of how an anti-violence program with a community organizing agenda can increase the capacity of community-based institutions to effectively address domestic violence within their constituencies.

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<sup>16</sup> Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence estimates (February 2005).

- **Youth Empowerment as Domestic Violence Reduction of *Freedom, Inc.*** (Hmong; Madison, WI) demonstrates how the connection between intimate forms of violence and larger societal structures of power invites youth organized around racial profiling and deportation to take responsibility for violence within their family and intimate relationships.
- **Public Shaming/Naming of *Sakhi for South Asian Women*** (South Asian; New York, NY) gives a rare example of organized public disclosure and shaming of an abuser in order to push accountability to the level of community-wide awareness and responsibility.
- **Breaking the Silence Project of *Raksha*** (South Asian; Atlanta, GA) describes the formulation of a campaign to highlight the prevalence of child sexual abuse and to encourage the community to engage in greater engagement and accountability around this hidden and private issue.
- **Pacific Islander Men’s Program by *Sharon Spencer*** (Pacific Islander; North Shore, Oahu, HI) presents the efforts of a Maori woman now living in Hawaii to create a community-based program engaging Pacific Islander men to take accountability for their violence through comparison with the destructive legacy of colonization and the need for community restoration.

Other innovative strategies are highlighted briefly at the end of each section to offer additional useful examples.



## **SECTION 4: COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION: DEFINITION AND DOCUMENTED EXAMPLES**

### **STRATEGY 1: COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

*Bringing awareness of the issues of violence against women and children and anti-violence program services to community members*

#### **Community Outreach and Education Defined**

Virtually all anti-violence programs engage in some form of community outreach. At the very least, they attempt to let community members know that a program addressing intimate and family violence is available even if this is through social service providers, teachers, or other professionals not necessarily from the community but likely to come in contact with the target community. Many ethnic-specific or identity-specific programs go further to provide opportunities for community education directly to community members.

*What:* Bringing awareness of issues of violence against women and children and anti-violence program services to community members

*Who Targeted:* Individual community members including but not necessarily those directly impacted by intimate and family violence; community organizations or institutions; service providers; faith community leaders; civic or business organizations; media audience

*Where:* On the streets; in homes; in classrooms; in grocery stores; at community events; in religious institutions; in civic institutions; at social service programs for the community; in the ethnic or identity-specific media

*How:* Door-knocking; community education presentations; co-sponsoring of events; tabling at events like health fairs, campus events, ethnic pride events; surveys; promotional materials like brochures, balloons, totebags, grocery bags, magnets, whistles; media coverage through ethnic or identity-specific press, radio, television

*Timeline:* Can be one-time; as regularly as event is scheduled such as weekly, monthly, annually; short-term campaign

*Goals:* 1) Educate the community to recognize and acknowledge the problem of intimate and family violence; 2) Educate the community to shift attitudes and values from those tolerating or promoting intimate and family violence to those opposing violence; 3) Let community members, in particular survivors of violence, know about the availability of services; 4) Learn more about the community's attitudes and needs to inform effective community engagement practices

## Innovative API Community Outreach Strategies

### **Door-Knocking Campaign by *Stand Against Violence Effectively Program (S.A.V.E.)* (a program of the Cambodian Association of America) (Cambodian; Long Beach, CA)**

*Why:* The Cambodian Association of America is a multi-service organization in Long Beach, CA. Domestic violence advocates recognized that many in their community are afraid to gather publicly, especially to talk about a social problem like domestic violence. While the Cambodian community gathers at the temple, the temple leaders in Long Beach will only allow religious activities. The only way to reach women and children experiencing domestic violence seemed to be to go right to their homes.

*Where:* The Cambodian community in Long Beach is geographically located in a small, dense neighborhood. Many families live in the same surrounding units and those living in apartments often cluster in the same building. The agency is also located right in this area. This makes door-knocking geographically easier.

*How:* Since the Cambodian Association addresses many issues, the women advocates in S.A.V.E., its domestic violence program, were able to go to homes to discuss a range of programs, particularly health-related ones. They worked in pairs often with a staff person from another program such as smoking cessation. Domestic violence was then mentioned as one of the program components but was not highlighted. Business cards did not name the domestic violence program but only the parent agency, CAA. The advocate's first name and work phone number, however, were available on the card. If abuse was suspected or apparent judging by the response of the woman, man or other family member, special care was made to pass on information or to open opportunities for the woman to make further contact with advocates.

*How Much and How Often:* Door-knocking outreach became the main method of letting the community know about the program and thus a major program activity. Through repeated visits, particularly if violence or abuse was suspected, the advocates eventually found ways to get their message and availability across to the woman.

*How Does It Fit:* Door-knocking allowed the program to reach women in their homes and made them aware of services they could access. Some women eventually made their way to the agency or were able to call. From there they could come to the agency by using the excuse that they were going to it for other, unrelated services. They could then meet the advocate individually, connect to other needed resources, or attend a survivor support group. S.A.V.E. also has a batterer's treatment component for men.

*How Connected to Other Systems:* S.A.V.E. works quite closely with law enforcement and child welfare. Some men have been arrested for domestic violence and referred to the batterer treatment program housed at the Cambodian Association of America. Some families have also been reported to child welfare for child abuse. The staff has developed a close working relationship with case workers in the child welfare system to ensure appropriate services and reduce the numbers of Cambodian children removed from the home.

*Funding:* The door-knocking outreach was supported by state refugee funding through the Office of Refugee Resettlement. Sadly, this funding has been cut, and most of the workers have been laid off. The current domestic violence funding is for Cal-Works clients, putting the door-knocking approach outside of allowable activities. The batterer's program is still funded.

*Why Innovative:* While door-knocking is a common technique in community organizing work, it has rarely been used as an outreach strategy for those working in the fields of domestic violence or sexual assault. A service provision orientation and concerns for the safety of advocates are among the reasons why. Door-knocking and the repeated return to homes for visits allowed for thorough and meaningful community outreach, the building of relationships of trust, and access to even the most isolated women.

Key Issues:

*How Safe:* Entering the home where violence could be occurring sounds like a risky venture. The women working at S.A.V.E. report that they have never been harmed nor felt endangered. Going in pairs, disguising their real work, and avoiding homes which were known to be highly dangerous are all part of the workers' safety plan.

Further Questions: What else can we do to ensure worker safety? Should these perceived safety risks stop us from trying similar practices? Do we need to re-evaluate the way we look at safety? How did this approach affect the safety of battered women in these homes? How do we know?

*How Sustainable:* The geographic density of the Cambodian community in Long Beach and lack of other effective methods of outreach make this form of outreach particularly appropriate. Despite the geographic clustering of homes, door-knocking as a regular outreach method is still a labor intensive, physically strenuous activity. Workers reported several visits per day on a daily basis. Furthermore, being labor intensive requires a larger number of workers for effective outreach. As noted above, this program is no longer funded because new domestic violence funding is confined to recruitment of public assistance clients.

Further Questions: Is consistent and repeated door-knocking sustainable or is it too exhausting for workers? How can it be made sustainable? Can this type of method be used if the community is more geographically dispersed? Are other API communities more culturally averse to this method of outreach? Does this method of outreach require a higher number of workers than other methods? Is this method adaptable to other means, e.g., posting notices in laundry rooms, meeting in areas commonly visited by women, etc.?

## **Other Innovative API Community Outreach Strategies**

### **Grocery Bag Campaign by the Alliance Against Asian Domestic Violence (AAADV) (Pan-Asian; San Francisco, CA)**

The AAADV, a collaborative organization in San Francisco predominantly made up of Chinese domestic violence and related service providers created a campaign to produce grocery bags with anti-domestic violence messages and referral numbers in Chinese and Vietnamese. Women could receive these messages without arousing suspicion from abusive partners because they were put on ordinary grocery bags. Chinese and Vietnamese grocery stores willingly distributed these bags in part because they were given to them free of charge.

### **Blue-Collar Workplace Outreach by Narika (South Asian; Berkeley, CA)**

Narika was contacted by a small business owner concerned about domestic violence affecting her South Asian women employees. In response, Narika held an informal lunch time meeting with these workers to discuss domestic violence and the services Narika provides. Because of the success of this gathering in bringing education and awareness and breaking isolation, Narika continued this project and contacted other workplaces where South Asian women were employed. Employers were so pleased with the idea that some of them requested similar outreach to their other (e.g., Latina) employees.

## SECTION 5: COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION: DEFINITION AND DOCUMENTED EXAMPLES

### STRATEGY 2: COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

*Bringing community members and/or organizations together to participate in an action or set of actions addressing violence against women and children or supporting the anti-violence program*

#### Community Mobilization Defined

Mobilization requires a greater participation of community members than community outreach or education even if this participation involves a one-time event or protest. It stops short of organizing in that the formation of new institutional spaces or the transformation of existing institutional spaces towards community capacity to engage in further sustained anti-violence activities is not necessarily an expected outcome.

*What:* Bringing community members and/or organizations together to participate in an action or set of actions addressing violence against women and children or supporting the anti-violence program

*Who Targeted:* Individual community members including but not necessarily targeting those directly impacted by intimate violence; community organizations or institutions; service providers; faith community leaders; civic or business organizations; media audience

*Where:* On the streets; in homes; in classrooms; in grocery stores; at community events; in religious or spiritual institutions; in civic institutions; at social services serving the community; at fundraisers; in the ethnic and other identify-specific media

*How:* Community surveys; focus groups; community gatherings; conferences; fundraising; petitioning; lobbying for legislation; sponsoring projects; planning protests and/or campaigns

*Timeline:* Generally time-limited leading to an event or series of events, a campaign, an action or set of actions, or a narrowly defined outcome

*Goals:* 1) Mobilize community members to move beyond awareness to active participation in addressing violence or supporting the anti-violence program; 2) Create community ownership of the issue of gender violence or the anti-violence program; 3) Gain greater public recognition of the issue of gender violence or the anti-violence program; 4) Gather greater resources and base of power to accomplish a task, reach a goal, pass legislation, or win a campaign with a positive impact on intimate or family violence or the anti-violence program

## Innovative API Community Mobilization Strategies

### Community Needs Assessment by *Shimtuh* (a program of Korean Community Center of the East Bay) (Korean; Oakland, CA)

*Why:* Shimtuh was started as a collaborative program between Asian Women’s Shelter in San Francisco, the Korean Community Center of the East Bay (KCCEB), a multiservice agency serving the Korean community, and the Korean American Coalition to End Domestic Abuse (KACEDA), a Bay Area community group of Korean women engaged in community education about domestic violence. The initial state grant required a community needs assessment as the first activity of the program. The needs assessment allowed an opportunity for greater community outreach and involvement.

*Where:* The Korean community in the San Francisco Bay Area is relatively dispersed. The gathering of community members happens either at Korean businesses, particularly the main grocery store in Oakland, or in churches which are many and scattered throughout the Bay Area. It also gathers its information from Korean-language media sources, most significantly daily newspapers and to a lesser extent, radio and television because of limited airing.

*How:* Since Shimtuh was required to create a needs assessment report, it used this as an opportunity to outreach to the community and “create a buzz” about the upcoming domestic violence program. A survey was created to determine the major sources for Korean information, estimate domestic violence frequency, and measure popular support for a community-based domestic violence program. Since the church, the largest grocery store, and the newspaper media were already known as the greatest organizing resources in the Korean community (later confirmed by the results of the survey), these were all targeted for community outreach through survey distribution. The newspapers were contacted as co-sponsors of this community campaign. Reporters were enthusiastic about this “new” issue and placed the survey on the front page of the paper. Several churches and a Buddhist temple were targeted for survey distribution during their services. The grocery store parking lot became a survey distribution center with the grocery store owner generously contributing gift incentives to the nearly 300 shoppers who answered the survey.

*How Much and How Often:* The community needs assessment was a time-limited campaign and did not incorporate a long-term follow-up plan. The whole process took approximately 6 months culminating in a well-attended community-event with accompanying media coverage. Over 300 individuals completed the survey; 6 focus groups offered their input on the extent of the problem, the barriers, and needed resources; and several individuals who are survivors of violence as adults or children answered extensive questions regarding the impact of violence on their lives. Over 40 community members participated in the creation, distribution, and analysis of the survey.

*How Does It Fit:* The community survey campaign turned out to be a successful kick-off for the start of Shimtuh’s program. Community publicity was extensive; the needs assessment allowed for community mobilization; and the program was perceived as a community-inspired and owned venture. The survey results continue to be useful for community education, fundraising and documentation. The survey was

later successfully adopted by Stand Against Violence Effectively Program (S.A.V.E.), a program of the Cambodian Association of America, which is featured in the community outreach section of this report.

*How Connected to Other Systems:* One section of the survey measured knowledge of other domestic violence resources including those targeting Asian communities. As expected, the Korean community was largely unfamiliar with resources, thereby confirming the need for a Korean-specific program. Shimtuh has developed into a comprehensive community-based advocacy program which works with state systems but maintains a rather informal relationship with them. It has strong ties, however, with other API domestic violence organizations in the Bay Area and has developed a particularly strong sister relationship with the Berkeley-based South Asian organization, Narika.

*Funding:* Shimtuh has enjoyed the support of the California Department of Health Services from its inception in 2000 until present. This funding was crafted to reach “under-represented” communities and was structured as a collaborative between a stable, existing domestic violence organization and a community partner not previously providing domestic violence services. Asian Women’s Shelter has continued its commitment to supporting the long-term sustainability of this program by including Shimtuh in other collaborative funding opportunities.

*Why Innovative:* The needs assessment as a community outreach and engagement tool took advantage of a program requirement and a process which could otherwise be conceived of as narrow and task-oriented. All aspects from survey design to distribution to reporting were created with the intention of maximizing community involvement. Using the needs assessment to increase community ownership and involvement pushes this strategy beyond outreach towards mobilization.

Key Issues:

*Sustaining Long-Term Engagement:* While this community engagement strategy was strong at the onset of the program, the institutionalization of a service-based organization has led to a constant need to re-think and renew community outreach and organizing strategies. Once the community recognizes that a resource exists, it can easily become less engaged in its involvement, viewing the program as an established referral resource with an imagined funding stream from government sources. Likewise, as a service-based, crisis oriented organization becomes institutionalized, it can lose its focus and energy to drive community-based strategies beyond its own program walls and confine its community engagement to a more passive community education component. Shimtuh has actively sustained its community engagement activities through continuous evaluation of community-based efforts. The program has shifted its community engagement goals from education to organizing so that all activities are planned and implemented towards long-term community capacity-building.

Further Questions: How do programs once institutionalized maintain active community outreach and organizing? How do service-based programs balance quality service provision with the energy and creativity which innovative community engagement requires?

## Other Innovative Community Mobilization Strategies

### **Queer Community Outreach by Queer Asian Women’s Services (QAWS) of Asian Women’s Shelter (AWS) (Pan-Asian; San Francisco, CA)**

Knowledge of ambivalent attitudes regarding intimate partner violence within the queer community, the low number of calls from queer survivors, reluctance to use shelter services, and their heightened concerns around confidentiality led staff to recognize the need for community engagement in the queer community. Community assessments of attitudes around intimate partner violence, dynamics specific to the queer community, community resources, and specific needs appropriate for this group were all considered the next level of research needed in order to provide appropriate resources. Gathering such assessments required a style of engagement which was comfortable to the community and could generate a level of trust, evoking honest and thoughtful responses. QAWS workers, mostly queer-identified staff and volunteers at AWS, developed focus groups based on affinity groups generally organized by ethnicity which were already established within the Asian lesbian community in the San Francisco Bay Area. Since the affinity groups were already meeting on a regular basis, this engagement approach took advantage of that. The trust-building and intimacy already created within these spaces offered the opportunity for greater honesty and deeper levels of discussion. These focus groups confirmed the need for different engagement approaches and service options for API queer communities, establishing greater levels of ownership and commitment to addressing intimate partner violence.

## Other Innovative Community Mobilization Programs

### **New Visions: Alliance to End Violence in Asian/Asian American Communities (Pan-Asian; Ann Arbor, MI)**

New Visions is a grassroots organization whose mission is to inspire and support sustainable community action for ending violence against women in Asian communities of Southeast Michigan. Affiliated currently with the University of Michigan’s School of Social Work, New Visions is a partnership of local Asian communities and state and local domestic violence programs. By focusing on community organizing, New Visions’ goals are to challenge community norms and attitudes that contribute to domestic violence; to promote non-violent alternatives; and to develop and implement community-generated strategies to end domestic violence. The results of its assessments in local Korean and South Asian communities and amongst domestic violence programs clearly indicate how community mobilization/organizing is critical to socio-culturally relevant prevention.



## SECTION 6: COMMUNITY ORGANIZING: DEFINITION AND DOCUMENTED EXAMPLES

### STRATEGY 3(A): COMMUNITY ORGANIZING (GENERAL)

*Building long-term sustainable community-based institutional capacity to address violence against women and children and shift gendered and other oppressive relationships of power*

#### Community Organizing (General) Defined

Community organizing is widely used to denote a diverse range of community engagement strategies. Those associated with the field of community organizing use it to describe activities falling under a narrower set of criteria. The general public, including those in the anti-violence field, tend to use this term more broadly. In this section, general criteria for community organizing strategies are described. In the following section, a narrower set of criteria with an emphasis on those who are most impacted by violence is offered.

*What:* Building long-term sustainable community-based institutional capacity to address violence against women and children and shift oppressive gender and other relationships

*Who Targeted:* Leaders within community-based institutions and organizations; faith community leaders; newly identified leaders within the community; newly formed groups of community members

*Where:* On the streets; in neighborhoods; in community institutions; in community organizations; in faith communities; in new collective community spaces

*How:* Bringing resources to assist existing institutions/groups, developing new institutions and/or collective groups to create new sustainable community-based capacity to address violence against women and children; bringing resources to existing groups or creating new community spaces which transform power relations within the community and in relation to other institutions of power

*Timeline:* Long-term collaborative relationship or until the newly established community capacity is functioning relatively independent of the organizer or organizing group

*Goals:* 1) Build new and/or increased community-based long-term capacity to address violence against women and children; 2) Establish new and independent community institutions to address gender and other forms of intimate violence; 3) Forge relationships among individuals and within and among groups to form a cohesive unit of power and common points of analysis from which to build a new base of power; 4) Define and achieve winnable goals to build collective strength and shift relations of power; 5) Permanently shift institutions of power towards the interests of the community-based group

## Innovative API Community Organizing (General) Strategies

### **The Natural Helper Program of *Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center* (API Safety Center) (Pan-Asian; Seattle, WA) and the Samoan Parenting Group of the *Samoan Christian Congregational Church* (Samoan; Seattle, WA)**

*Why:* API Safety Center was established specifically as an organizing rather than a service-oriented domestic violence program targeting API communities in Seattle. API Safety Center staff view their role as community organizers identifying community leaders, training them to work around issues of violence, and offering support and resources to help them effectively address gender and other forms of intimate violence within their communities or among their constituencies. The organization developed a Natural Helper program<sup>17</sup>, adopting comfortable and familiar terminology to identify community leaders with API constituencies.

*Where:* The staff of API Safety Center's Natural Helper program are long-time organizers in Seattle. Their organizing agenda ensured that the staff was out on the streets, in churches, labor unions, community events, and other spaces where community leaders and members gather.

*How:* Seattle is home to diverse API communities. The Samoan community, identified as a target community, largely organizes around the church. Emma Catague, the organizing staff of API Safety Center, through her long-time familiarity with various communities began to meet with a church leader, Mrs. Sa'au, a health practitioner and the wife of the minister of an activist church within the Samoan community, the Samoan Christian Congregational Church. As a minister's wife, Mrs. Sa'au knew of congregation members likely involved in domestic violence relationships, but she was not sure how to handle the issue. She joined the Natural Helper program and became trained on the issues of intimate and family violence. Through this program, she and API Safety Center staff identified a program design which might work within the context of the Samoan church. Knowing that the congregation would not willingly meet around the issue of domestic violence, they came up with the idea of parenting groups with dinner and a children's program offered to make busy Samoan parents more likely to attend.

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<sup>17</sup> For more information on the Natural Helper program, see Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center. *Organizing with Passion: Domestic Violence Organizing Strategies*. (Seattle, WA: Author, 2001).

The church minister, Mr. Sa'au, also became interested in participating, and both minister and minister's wife served as leaders of the weekly group. The general topic of better family communication led to opportunities to introduce domestic violence and child abuse as topics relevant to the group. The group was initially well-attended due to the "incentives" and sponsorship by their trusted clergy. But its long-term success was due to Mr. and Mrs. Sa'au's leadership and willingness to openly discuss their own personal struggles with issues of power and control with group members. With trust-building and the domestic violence curriculum, stories relating personal incidents and dynamics of domestic violence began to emerge from within the group. Children of participants were offered a parallel curriculum in an adjoining room and often joined their parents in discussions of family violence. This group offered not only education on domestic violence for Samoan families but, more importantly, provided a safe space for direct intervention and opportunities for practicing non-violent alternatives. Members reported transformed relationships within their families with patterns of abuse ending or greatly reduced.

*How Much and How Often:* The API Center organizing staff, Emma Catague, fostered the relationship with Mrs. Sa'au over a period of 3 years. Once Mrs. Sa'au completed the Natural Helper program, a plan for the Samoan Parenting Group was established. API Safety Center staff followed with specific training and curriculum for the parenting group. The group was to continue for 13 weeks, but members asked for it to continue for 3 years. The group finally ended due to insufficient funding.

*How Does It Fit:* API Safety Center's organizing priorities are reflected in its choice of staff, the expected role of staff as community organizers, the design of programs such as Natural Helpers for organizing activities, and the selection of other components such as the parenting program to complement its organizing agenda. While the leadership of Mrs. Sa'au and the Samoan Christian Congregational Church is a particularly successful organizing project, it is just one of many examples of the API Safety Center.

*How Connected to Other Systems:* API Safety Center's organizing activities prioritizes connection towards grassroots communities rather than towards state systems. API Safety Center is a member of a strong collaborative of API programs in the Seattle area including multi-service centers, ethnic specific agencies, anti-violence programs and an API batterer intervention program which all provide support and complementary services and programming.

*Funding:* The Samoan Parenting Group was supported through the King County Drug and Alcohol Substance Abuse Services. Despite demand for its continuation, the group stopped after 3 years of funding ended.

*Why Innovative:* The Natural Helper program and the resulting parenting program in the Samoan community are both innovative examples of successful community organizing and organizational partnership. The API Safety Center is unique in its exclusive concentration on organizing as opposed to services. This focus has ensured the hiring of skilled organizing staff and a program structure geared towards organizing activities. The result has been the training of already existing or newly developed leaders to address intimate and family violence within the communities and constituencies to which they already have access. It has further offered resources to ensure that the leaders are supported to provide

appropriate programming so that they can organize within their own communities to increase their capacity to address violence.

Key Issues:

*Funding and Sustainability:* While API Safety Center staff and other resources have created increased community capacity to address violence, the eventual limitation of funding has not ensured ongoing sustainability. Because the targeted API communities are already facing multiple issues including lack of access to education, incarceration, substance abuse, poverty, homelessness, and unemployment, community resources are scant. Sustainability of any single program with so many competing issues and few resources is a problem.

Further Questions: How can community organizing projects be sustained long-term or be designed to make long-term sustainability more likely?

*Services versus Organizing:* The API Safety Center prioritized organizing over services. The staff acknowledges that crisis intervention and the demand for services cannot be completely avoided in any work involving violence against women. As with organizations prioritizing services, these demands can compete with the work of organizing or other forms of community engagement. While the Center faces a rather unusual situation of unintended service provision interrupting organizing work, this is simply another version of the same problem many organizations which are service-oriented face. API Safety Center also enjoys a strong collaborative relationship within the Seattle area with other API agencies providing service components, allowing them to focus on organizing with referrals to other agencies when individual services are needed. The services versus organizing balance remains a key issue in anti-violence work even among organizations structured to address organizing only.

Further Questions: Can service agencies adopt organizing priorities to the level of the API Safety Center while maintaining their service component? Are there other models for supporting organizing activities – separate components within a single agency – regional collaboration with diversified activities (social services vs. organizing) among agencies?

## **SECTION 7: COMMUNITY ORGANIZING (AMONG THOSE MOST AFFECTED): DEFINITION AND DOCUMENTED EXAMPLES**

### **STRATEGY 3(B): COMMUNITY ORGANIZING (AMONG THOSE MOST AFFECTED)**

*Building collective power among those most affected by the problem to challenge and change the conditions of their own oppression*

### **Community Organizing (Among Those Most Affected) Defined**

This view of community organizing is offered as a separate model for community organizing although it has many similarities with the general community organizing model. The difference is its focus on organizing among “those most affected by the problem.” While anti-violence advocates and activists have long argued that “violence against women affects us all,” the creation of strategies taking into account the ways in which some segments of the community are *differently* affected can more narrowly define priority sectors of the community and types of strategies most appropriate for these sectors.

This view of community organizing deliberately prioritizes and involves those most affected by intimate and family violence. The organizing strategy explicitly takes into account that those involved in the organizing activities are not simply community members interested in the issue of violence against women but are directly amongst the most affected by violence.

Determining who or what sector of the community is “most affected” in situations of intimate and family violence raises interesting questions about organizing strategies. Survivors of violence are clearly those “most affected” by violence. Others would include their family and close social networks. Others may insist that perpetrators of violence be included among those “most affected” by violence. Sectors of the API community most impacted by community violence including gang violence, poverty, lack of access to education and jobs, and targeting by the criminal justice and child welfare systems could also be considered the “most affected” by intimate and family violence because of the general context of violence and the lack of access to resources. Considering those “most affected” by violence may make those of us

who have argued for the universal impact of intimate and family violence uncomfortable. However, such discussions could also help API programs determine creative new priorities for community engagement. The literature at times names community organizing which explicitly focuses on those “most affected by the problem” as “grassroots” or makes clear that this characteristic defines any legitimate community organizing strategy<sup>18</sup>. This distinction can be and has been used to discount certain “organizing” efforts as less meaningful or having less real impact if they do not meet these criteria. However, making the target of organizing explicit can also serve as a useful tool for those of us involved in organizing to consider alternate and perhaps more effective ways to use our time and resources.

*What:* Building collective power among those most affected by the problem to challenge and change the conditions of their own oppression<sup>19</sup>

*Who Targeted:* Those most affected by intimate and family violence including women and children survivors of violence; family, friends, and social networks impacted by intimate and family violence; sectors of API communities most impacted by community violence including gang violence, poverty, targeting by criminal justice and child welfare systems, etc.

*Where:* On the streets; in neighborhoods; in community institutions; in community organizations; in workplaces; in faith communities; in new collective community spaces

*How:* Building positive collective identity and new bases of power; developing skills, confidence, and leadership among those most affected by the problem; creating organizational spaces which nurture collective identity, power and leadership; identifying and systematically challenging and making demands of powerful institutions symbolizing and embodying sources of the problem; building greater collective power through the successful (and failed) experiences of challenging institutions; building coalition with other collective forces towards the achievement of strengthening power in order to achieve short-term and long-term goals

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<sup>18</sup> Organizing literature does not offer terms which capture the distinction of organizing among those “most affected” as well as the tone and intent of this phrase. “Grassroots” is found in some literature but this did not appear sufficiently different from other strategies which may not as precisely organize those “most affected.”

<sup>19</sup> Adapted from Maria Kong and Pamela Chiang, *Fighting Fire With Fire: Lessons from the Laotian Organizing Project’s First Campaign* (Oakland, CA: Laotian Organizing Project & Asian Pacific Environmental Network, 2001) and Rinku Sen, *Stir It Up* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2003).

*Timeline:* Long-haul<sup>20</sup> meaning a long, long time or until goals are met

*Goals:* 1) Building collective power among those most affected by the problem; 2) Bringing about long-term solutions through short-term gains and long-term strategies; 3) Transforming the dynamics of power towards shared decision-making, equal resources, and equal value among all community members.

## **Innovative API Community Organizing (Among Those Most Affected) Strategies**

### **Youth Empowerment as Domestic Violence Reduction by Freedom, Inc. (Hmong; Madison, WI)**

*Why:* The founder of Freedom, Inc., Kabzuag Vaj, a community organizer, used her leadership and trusted relationship among the youth in her own Hmong community to gather them together to help themselves. Kabzuag understood very well the issues of her community and knew that only through building alternative community spaces could the identification of issues and movement towards collective solutions emerge. She saw women and youth as victims of family violence, racism including daily targeting by the police, displacement through war and refugee experience, and dire poverty as critically linked issues. Her approach to addressing family violence and gender-based violence was to empower youth to identify their own issues and in the building of positive community identity and power, gain the capacity to confront interpersonal violence among themselves, at home, and in their community.

*Where:* Freedom, Inc. is located in the heart of the Hmong community in the Southside of Madison, WI, an area mostly populated by people of color in this predominantly white college city.

*How:* The youth of Freedom, Inc. gathered together to form a collective group. They discussed problems at home, police harassment, racism from the larger community, alienation from school, poverty, and other issues commonly shared by them. Their frank discussions within a safe, supportive setting allowed them to understand how individual problems are embedded in structural oppressions based on race, class, and gender.

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<sup>20</sup> For an inspiring account of organizing for the "long haul" by a leading organizer in the U.S., see Myles Horton, *The Long Haul: An Autobiography* (New York, NY: Teacher's College Press, 1998).

The youth recognized that together they could begin to tackle larger problems by narrowing down the issues they would address. Through a collective process, the co-gender group identified police harassment and the deportation of arrested and incarcerated Hmong youth as priority issues. They considered concrete steps which could improve their ability to tackle this problem both immediately and long-term. Immediate steps were educational trainings and skill-building on exercising legal rights when stopped by the police.

A more long-term strategy with greater impact on the issue of police harassment was their identification of a campaign against the Loitering Ordinance previously adopted by the Madison City Council and up for review for its continuation. The youth collected over 100 testimonies by Southeast Asian youth documenting the use of racial profiling among Madison police. They brought the documentation to the City Council meeting and convinced City Council members to rescind the Ordinance because it targeted poor youth of color.

Through working collectively on an issue they had identified as having a great impact on themselves personally and on the community, the Hmong youth gained a sense of greater power over their own lives and a sense of responsibility towards each other, their families, and their community. The process of creating a positive collective identity, democratic decision-making, and strategic organizing around a common issue created the conditions for these youth to take responsibility for the issue of intimate partner violence. An overall analysis of oppression which integrates gender oppression and interpersonal violence within a broader context of systems oppression also provided a framework for understanding and action. As a result, youth felt empowered to address issues of violence at home with their parents and family members. Incidents of dating violence are also handled directly within the group. For example, abuse of power or violence within dating relationships may be addressed by re-enactments or skits featuring similar incidents or patterns of abuse, providing creative yet direct exposure of abuse as well as opportunities for collective feedback and peer accountability. As a result, at the time of publication of this report, five young men have come forward to identify their own patterns of abuse and ask for help in changing their attitudes and behaviors.

*How Much and How Often:* Once deportation was identified as the priority issue, various tactics were chosen to address this ranging from political education on their rights when encountered by the police to immigration law. A campaign to take on the City Council's Loitering Ordinance was identified. While this campaign has a narrower focus and time-limited elements, the building of collective identity, a collective base of power, and a supportive organizational structure are long-term goals.

*How Does It Fit:* Gender equity is viewed as the core of building a positive collective body and challenging oppression. Freedom, Inc. also has an adult women's component which offers advocacy for women who are survivors of domestic violence. The long-term strategy is to integrate an intergenerational model of addressing community violence and interpersonal violence.

*How Connected to Other Systems:* Freedom, Inc. directly confronts and challenges the criminal justice system's racially biased practices, and policies which are harmful to Southeast Asian youth and community members.



*Why Innovative:* Freedom, Inc. is unique in its approach through the empowerment of youth, the prioritizing of youth-determined issues, and understanding the necessary relationship between youth empowerment and preventing gender violence. While an organization taking on police brutality and deportation will not necessarily incorporate gender equity and violence against women as issues of equal priority, Freedom, Inc. understands these as necessary to its overall mission, activities, and goals. The organizing approach and the integration of these values are innovative both in the world of community organizing and within the field of anti-violence. The concrete success of Freedom, Inc.'s youth component makes this program an important and unique model for anti-violence organizing.

Key Issues:

*Prioritizing Those Most Affected:* Freedom, Inc.'s constituency is affected by multiple layers of community and interpersonal violence. The organizing of Hmong youth to create a positive ethnic/racial/gender identity and to solidify their base of power positively shifted the power relations within the Hmong community and in relation to the broader community. The centrality of gender equity within this organizing ensured that those most affected by gender-based violence, girls and women, were prioritized within the context of multi-issue, mixed-gender organizing.

Further Questions: How do we define those “most affected” when communities are significantly diverse in terms of class, ethnicity, region of origin? How do we define those “most affected” when looking at our communities through the lens of their relationship to interpersonal violence – survivors, offenders, bystanders, faith leaders, service providers, community institutions? How do we make these priorities and shift program and movement-wide resources towards these sectors of the community?

*Leadership Development and Replicability:* Anti-violence service organizations regularly train staff on the fundamental issues of intimate and family violence, resource and recourse options, legal interventions, etc. available to survivors. Training and skills-building on community engagement and organizing have largely remained the domain of the community organizing sector. The leadership of Freedom, Inc.'s Kabzuag Vaj is unique, given her familiarity with domestic violence advocacy and her orientation towards organizing. Because she is also indigenous to the Hmong community in Madison, she is deeply knowledgeable of the histories, culture, and socio-political context of her constituency and has developed trust with many in her community. Freedom, Inc.'s organizing agenda also ensures that young people develop as new leaders through their involvement in organizing activities.

Further Questions: How can anti-violence programs incorporate organizers and organizing training within a service provision structure? How can individual programs and the larger anti-violence movement support a shift towards an organizing approach without compromising the immediate needs of survivors? Does successful community organizing based upon those “most affected” by the problem rely upon the existence of a natural, committed leader and organizer internal to the community which she is organizing? How can these deeply rooted values, vision,

and skills be identified and developed by someone outside of the community? How can leaders inside of the community be identified and their leadership skills developed?

*From Community Organizing to Community Accountability:* Freedom, Inc.'s example demonstrates the potential of organizing to provide the conditions for accountability around issues of interpersonal violence and gender oppression. The integration of interpersonal violence and gender oppression within a broader social justice analysis and the expectation and practice that all forms of violence and oppression will be addressed within the group provide a powerful context for accountability.

Further Questions: What are the current barriers to community accountability within organizing which prevent challenges to abuse and oppression internal to the organization and community? What are the conditions that can push more organizing towards internal accountability?

## SECTION 8: COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY: DEFINITION AND DOCUMENTED EXAMPLES

### STRATEGY 4: COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY

*Building community capacity to support survivors and hold perpetrators accountable*

#### Community Accountability Defined

Community accountability is at the innovative edges of community engagement work. This concept has gained prominence in recent years as critiques of the anti-violence movement's over-reliance on criminal legal interventions have grown<sup>21</sup>. Community accountability refers to the ability of communities to intervene directly when violence occurs, so acts of violence are stopped not only by the police but by community members and institutions. It relies upon the responsibility and capacity of the community to confront abusers and provide a process for abuser accountability which can include reparations to their victims, monitoring future abuse, and long-term measures that prevent violence.

Such community-based intervention strategies also falling under the categories of "alternatives to the criminal legal system," "restorative justice," or "transformative justice" approaches have received more publicity than resources. The fact remains that very few community accountability strategies outside of the criminal legal system exist in the U.S.

There are several reasons. Anti-violence agencies are reluctant to actually recommend such strategies, except in concept only, because actual implementation challenges many of the underlying principles and practices of the field. The guaranteed confidentiality of those seeking support has made it difficult if not impossible to confront or reveal the identity of abusers in any public way. Survivor-centered services have come to mean that anti-violence programs will not address abusers (even if desired by the survivor), leaving intervention to the criminal legal system. Safety concerns for survivors using services, staff, and volunteers have prohibited contact with abusers. Advocates have also warned community or family

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<sup>21</sup> Ms. Foundation for Women, *Safety & Justice For All: Examining the Relationship Between the Women's Anti-Violence Movement and the Criminal Legal System* (New York: Author, 2002).

members from confronting or engaging the abuser for reasons of safety including the possibility of increased endangerment to the survivor. The lack of conclusive evidence regarding the long-term impact on survivor safety and recurrence of violence of such acts as public shaming contribute to resistance to recommend these actions.

Anti-violence programs considering community accountability measures have had to examine more critically their role in relation to abusers and those who have more frequently been called bystanders – referring not literally to bystanders or witnesses but people who are family, friends, co-workers, etc., who may know about or be present when abuse has occurred.

In relation to abusers, some API programs have adopted batterer intervention or treatment programs either internally or in external collaborations with other agencies. These programs are designed for greater language accessibility or cultural relevance and usually involve abusers already in the criminal legal system. Innovative examples of batterer intervention models engaging abusers are documented below. Restorative justice models discussed in the literature have been rarely applied in the U.S. in cases of family violence and have not been tried in API communities in the U.S.<sup>22</sup>

The role of the “bystander” has received attention in the consideration of community accountability approaches. The “bystander,” referring to family, friends and community members related to and/or impacted by a situation of intimate and family violence, is seen as playing an important role in effective violence intervention. In API communities where extended non-abusive family and community leaders can play an especially powerful role in the more collectively defined lives of women, strategies that engage bystanders can be critical to community-based interventions. Strategies targeting bystanders is another trend in the move to find community accountability solutions.

*What:* Building community capacity to support survivors and hold abusers accountable

*Who Targeted:* Collective groups of community members including non-abusive families and social networks of survivors and/or abusers; community organizations and institutions; anti-violence programs; state criminal justice systems creating alternative justice structures

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<sup>22</sup> For discussions on restorative justice and its use in family violence intervention, see Loretta Frederick and Kristine C. Lizdas, *The Role of Restorative Justice in the Battered Women’s Movement* (Minneapolis: Battered Women’s Justice Project, 2003) and Heather Strang and John Braithwaite, eds., *Restorative Justice and Family Violence* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

*Where:* Within intimate community spaces or social networks; in homes; on the streets; in groups and organizations; in mental health centers; in alternative criminal legal systems such as restorative justice; in batterer intervention programs

*How:* Direct intervention and confrontation of abuse and with abusers; public naming; public shaming rituals or demonstrations; creation of structures and systems for survivor support and abuser accountability (short-term and long-term); creation of structures and systems for abuser reparation and transformation

*Timeline:* One-time confrontations; long-term accountability processes involving individual perpetrators (and survivors) including monitoring and follow-up; long-term creation of systems of structures within organizations and communities

*Goals:* 1) Create greater community capacity to directly intervene in and prevent violence; 2) Create community-wide norms and institutions supporting direct intervention and prevention of intimate and family violence; 3) Shift shame, blame, and responsibility for ending violence from individual survivors to perpetrators; 4) Strengthen the roles, expectations, and skills for bystanders to intervene directly in and prevent further violence; 5) Create more accessible, effective and just interventions by reducing the reliance on criminal justice and other state and social service systems to intervene in violence; 6) Increase the potential to transform individuals, families, social networks, and communities from violence towards collective respect and responsibility

## **Innovative API Community Accountability Strategies**

### **Shaming/Naming Ritual of Sakhi for South Asian Women (South Asian; New York, NY)**

*Why:* Sakhi is one of the few domestic violence organizations with a prioritized organizing focus. Public demonstrations by staff, volunteers, community supporters, and survivors open to public view are

common practice within Sakhi. Outing of abusers is less common. Naming rituals or shaming rituals<sup>23</sup> publicly exposing and, at times, humiliating men who have violated women may be a strategy used in India as well as other South Asian countries. In the U.S., this strategy has been used much less frequently. The staff of Sakhi, inspired by these examples in their home countries, viewed public shaming as a culturally meaningful and powerful tactic to use in the U.S.

A New York City case of a man burning his wife became well-publicized throughout the South Asian community. The woman, escaping death, but suffering from 3<sup>rd</sup>-degree burns sought refuge with Sakhi who found her safe housing and offered her community support. She wanted her story known to the public and felt that her husband deserved a community show of outrage along with the criminal justice consequences he was facing. This public strategy was particularly important since he and his family had been mobilizing community members against her. Sakhi would not have pushed for this public demonstration without the consent and blessing of the survivor. The survivor did not wish to be present at the event but felt that this community act would be supportive in its public demonstration that she, too, had community members on her side.

*Where:* Sakhi serves the metropolitan New York area, home to much of New York City's diverse South Asian community, where this action occurred.

*How:* Sakhi organized their many volunteers and community supporters to march at the suburban home of the abuser, distribute flyers documenting his crime to the neighbors, and shouting their outrage at this act of violence. They researched the legal requirements, contacted the local police about their planned demonstration, contacted the media, and delivered their protest as planned. Neighbors were shocked at the news but supported the demonstrators. Publicity of the crime was widespread not only in the South Asian community but throughout the mainstream press.

*How Much and How Long:* The decision to follow-through with the public shaming of Mr. Mohsin was rather spontaneous. The survivor's advocate discussed this possibility with her, and she immediately agreed. Organizing the event took a matter of weeks with immediate community support and

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<sup>23</sup> The term "public shaming" was used to describe this specific event and these types of tactics at the time of this public demonstration against Mr. Mohsin in 1997. Since then, Sakhi has shifted its terminology from "public shaming" to "public naming" to detract focus from the possible connotation of punishment or vengeance towards that of public exposure.

mobilization. While the media publicity extended beyond the event itself, this was planned as a one-time event with longer lasting media and publicity implications.

*How Does It Fit:* Because Sakhi is an organizing agency, its mobilization towards protest and demonstration and its organizing approach towards survivors allowed for an immediate implementation of this type of public naming event. Sakhi's public demonstration was followed by continued public presence by stacking the courtroom during the criminal trial with the survivor's supporters.

In addition, this protest is seen as part of a strategy of service delivery and support to the survivor with whom Sakhi continues to work 8 years later. The public demonstration of support and outrage was accompanied by continued support of ongoing needs raised by the survivor. It is important to note that Sakhi has not, however, continued public shaming or naming practices although it has continued its protest and demonstration approach. Sakhi has also shifted its terminology from public shaming to public naming in order to shift emphasis from shaming the abuser to that of exposing a private act to the public sphere.

*How Connected to Other Systems:* Sakhi's orientation is much more focused on community-based institutions than on state or mainstream social service systems. Because Sakhi also has a strong advocacy component, it does maintain relations with the criminal justice system and referral agencies. Sakhi carried out this public campaign while the abuser was facing criminal charges for attempted murder, of which he was convicted. Sakhi supported the conviction.

*Funding:* Sakhi is funded by a number of private and public foundations. Significant support through individual donations and community contributions solicited at special events is an important part of Sakhi's community organizing approach. Because of Sakhi's community focus, the organization has consistently engaged the community to invest in the work of ending violence against women through active involvement and monetary contributions.

*Why Innovative:* While public naming or shaming are utilized as acts of outrage in South Asia, this has not been practiced in the U.S. The factors which make programs reluctant to engage in community accountability strategies, generally include concerns over confidentiality, safety, and fears of legal action against a program engaging in this practice points to the important example of any program able to overcome these significant barriers. In terms of confidentiality, Sakhi's orientation towards public demonstration and survivor organizing made the sacredness of confidentiality less of a barrier. The principle of confidentiality was maintained by engaging in this public action only after gaining the survivor's consent and by changing her name for public purposes.

The issue of safety remains a fundamental concern. In this case, safety was less threatened in part due to the huge amount of community support including actual bodies present at the demonstration as well as the presence of the criminal justice system. Sakhi staff claim to have had no serious concern over legal issues, as well. Their experience in public demonstrations made them aware of the legal requirements. And their social justice and public orientation made threats of lawsuits and other forms of backlash

simply one of the risks of organizing. The organization weighed the risks and, in this case, felt it was more critical to act than to be silent.

Key Issues:

*Shaming/Naming as a Community Accountability Tactic:* The fact that Sakhi has not recently repeated the shaming or naming strategy calls into question the viability of and effectiveness of this strategy. In this case, the willingness of the survivor to support this strategy and the dramatic and shocking nature of the violence, led few to sympathize (at least publicly) with the abuser's act. Had his crimes been less sensational, community support for Sakhi and the survivor may have been significantly reduced and may have made this shaming ritual a less obvious community-based strategy.

Further Questions: Does this successful use of public naming or shaming suggest the consideration for more common use of this strategy? Since public demonstration almost always causes a backlash of sympathy for the abuser, when is this an acceptable cost? Will it cause further harm to the survivor? When is it more harmful for the individual survivor or for the movement in general? In what cases is public naming an acceptable practice? What are the goals of public naming or public shaming? Are these goals met by this approach or are they better served by putting resources towards a different method?

*Confidentiality:* While few organizations including Sakhi would have been willing to use this approach if the survivor did not agree, API programs have noted that there has been resistance even in the case of homicide when family members have requested no publicity.

Further Questions: Is the request for confidentiality ever surpassed by the community's need for community accountability or at least for the public shift of shame from the survivor to the abuser? What if the request is from the family and not from the victim as in the case of homicide? How can programs adopt more flexible and open confidentiality practices and policies so that the possibility of offering survivors opportunities for a public platform can be expanded rather than an assumed violation of confidentiality?

### **Breaking the Silence Project of Raksha (South Asian; Atlanta, GA)**

*Why:* Raksha was started as a volunteer-led organization serving the diverse South Asian communities in the Atlanta area. Although it began as a multi-service organization, it focused on domestic violence as a priority issue at its formation and is primarily known for working on violence against women issues. Raksha has a long-established community mobilization and organizing focus while also providing comprehensive services for survivors of violence. It has an active volunteer component which recruits and involves community members from various sectors and classes of the South Asian community. The staff is often recruited from among the volunteers thereby ensuring a continued commitment to the importance of community volunteer involvement.



Raksha has been a leader in innovative strategies and innovative ways to conceptualize the many and multiple forms of violence against women. While domestic violence has become an increasingly identified area of concern within South Asian communities in the U.S., the issue of child sexual abuse has been much more hidden.

The prevalence of child sexual abuse among children and adults who have suffered abuse as children within the client caseload at Raksha and experiences of child sexual abuse among its staff and volunteers raised concerns regarding the silence still surrounding this issue. It also pointed to the ways in which a predominantly social service model discourages disclosure of sexual and domestic violence even among staff and volunteers in order to maintain professional boundaries.

Recent explorations about the problem of child sexual abuse in the South Asian community have sparked public attention. The courageous documentary *The Children We Sacrifice* by Grace Poore<sup>24</sup> and Mira Nair's film, *Monsoon Wedding*<sup>25</sup>, have provoked discussions about the prevalence of, and responses to, child sexual abuse.

Raksha, long concerned with the issue of child sexual abuse and providing services and referrals to those presenting as survivors of child sexual abuse, decided to create a community-wide campaign on this issue, named Breaking the Silence Project. This project is envisioned as one bringing public attention to the issue of child sexual abuse and breaking down barriers between survivors, bystanders, and social service agencies. It also seeks to shift intervention responses to the level of community and social networks, in the home and community spaces.

*Where:* Raksha represents the diverse and dispersed South Asian community in the greater Atlanta area.

*How:* The Breaking the Silence Project is conceived of as a multi-layered and long-term strategic community organizing campaign with the goals of increasing awareness and promoting community accountability among South Asians around the issue of child sexual abuse.

The coordinator of the project is working together with Raksha staff, peer support volunteers, and community volunteers with experience as activists and organizers to construct a Project Committee to

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<sup>24</sup> Grace Poore, *The Children We Sacrifice*. (SHaKTI Productions, 2001)

<sup>25</sup> Mira Nair, *Monsoon Wedding* (Video International, Ltd., 2001)

create a long-term strategy towards community accountability. The long-term strategy, as envisioned at the onset of the Project in April 2003, began with the organizing of community teams, primarily made up of South Asian social service and other professionals. These teams have been trained on issues of child sexual abuse, relevance to the South Asian community, and possible community responses generally to the issue of child sexual abuse and, specifically, when it is occurring within one's social or familial network. In particular, the role of the bystander and community-wide training of more effective bystander strategies to prevent and intervene in child sexual abuse is a priority in this campaign.

While the goals of the project are firmly in place, the pathway to the goals is being evaluated and reformulated as the project continues.

*How Much and How Long:* The community-wide scope of the project is ambitious. The language, culture, religious, national, class or caste diversity of the South Asian community is challenging and requires a thoughtful recruitment and leadership development process. The impact of public discussion about child sexual abuse among such a broad group of community members cannot be underestimated.

*How Does It Fit:* Because child sexual abuse has been such a hidden issue within the South Asian community and has not been the focus for Raksha in the past, the initiation of a major campaign model seemed appropriate as an effective way to force public attention, begin community-wide discussions, and ensure that Raksha commits sufficient time and resources. The community campaign approach makes good use of the strong volunteer and community support structure already available among Raksha's resources.

In addition, this community accountability approach to child sexual abuse has pushed Raksha to re-vision its own accountability to survivors and the community by recognizing the very personal impact of violence upon its own members. Thus, Raksha takes into account the personal experiences of survivors and bystanders within the organizing team in envisioning realistic and effective organizational and community-based responses.

*How Connected to Systems:* Raksha's choice of a community accountability model takes into consideration its own and the community's ambivalence towards child welfare and criminal justice systems. Understanding system engagement as crisis responses of the last resort, Raksha wanted to attempt an approach which maximizes community capacity to prevent and intervene effectively in child

sexual abuse at early stages and in ways which would minimize the traumatic impact on the child and family.

*Funding:* The Breaking the Silence Project is funded through the Ms. Foundation's recent community accountability initiative.

*Why Innovative:* Addressing child sexual abuse through community accountability is a relatively new approach. Even within the broader anti-violence movement, child sexual abuse has received less attention than domestic violence, and community accountability approaches for intimate and family violence issues remain uncharted territory<sup>26</sup>. The program is also innovative in its community campaign model which mobilizes large numbers of community members to be involved in a collective long-term, intensive process. The depth of understanding, the collective strength of a broad community coalition, and long-term commitment which are outcome goals of this project are unique.

Key Issues:

*Community Accountability:* Community accountability is a new and challenging field of inquiry. As the project continues, examples of successful interventions and factors making these interventions possible will lend valuable information towards questions of community accountability critical to the social justice movement. In particular, within API immigrant communities, the inter-dependent, intertwining complexities of familial and community relations form challenges to and opportunities for community accountability.

*Further Questions:* How do community accountability strategies negotiate relationships of economic and other forms of dependence of family and community members upon those who are also abusers? How do community accountability strategies take advantage of these same dynamics of interdependence and intimacy to construct meaningful interventions within these community spaces? How do abusive victim-blaming dynamics from community members shift into protective ones?

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<sup>26</sup> Generation FIVE, a San-Francisco based multiracial organization with a goal to end child sexual abuse in 5 generations has been a leader in using community organizing and transformative justice approaches to addressing and ending child sexual abuse.

What do concrete interventions or systems of interventions look like? Do they prevent child sexual abuse (or other forms of family violence) in the long-term? Could retaliation or the fear of retaliation further isolate survivors or bring them greater harm? What factors make for successful community accountability in the area of intimate and family violence? Why do certain strategies fail and how can we learn from them?

*Systems Engagement:* Because child sexual abuse is under mandatory reporting guidelines throughout the U.S., child welfare and criminal justice systems are more automatically engaged than in domestic violence among adults. The continuing relationship with child welfare and criminal justice systems and their implications for community-based interventions is a key issue.

Further Questions: How do programs implementing community accountability models negotiate their relationships with state systems particularly in relation to mandatory reporting of child abuse? Since family and community members are not mandated reporters in most states, do interventions carried out by intimate networks increase access to services and safety for victims of violence, serve to prevent appropriate help, or to protect the abuser?

*Confronting intimate violence and multi-issue approaches.* Although child sexual abuse and domestic violence are closely interlinked issues, often occurring within the same families, the anti-violence movement has divided these and other forms of intimate violence. Raksha, in explicitly and significantly addressing child sexual abuse within a predominantly domestic violence-identified program has taken on a unique challenge.

Further Questions: How can the integration of child sexual abuse work strengthen both the analysis and response to other related forms of intimate violence?

*Bridging the gap between us and them: survivors and their role in anti-violence work.* While the anti-violence movement has started and continues to be, in some cases, survivor initiated and survivor led, professionalization and the predominance of a social service model has significantly shifted survivors and members of their intimate social networks to the role of clients rather than organizers or leaders of the movement. The Breaking the Silence Project was generated, in part, by staff and volunteers who identify as survivors or bystanders of child sexual abuse. The Project incorporated these deep and personal experiences within its organizing design including the understanding of the prevalence of child sexual abuse, the continued shame of naming this issue, and the challenges of interdependent familial and social networks.

Further Questions: How does anti-violence work concretely implement survivor-centered or survivor-led organizing and/or services? How can respectful and effective relationships between survivors and bystanders be incorporated into community engagement (and services) work?

### **Pacific Islander Men's Program by Sharon Spencer (Pacific Islander; North Shore, Oahu, HI)**

*Why:* Sharon Spencer is a long-time community leader. She credits her strong women ancestors among the Maori in New Zealand for her grounding in values of feminine strength, familial respect, sacredness of land and water, and the vital importance of ancestral roots. As a Maori experiencing the destruction of her community in New Zealand, she also relates to the Hawaiian colonial legacy which has similarly destroyed the land, water, language, culture, values, and people.

Sharon has acted as advocate, counselor, and community leader on issues of violence against women and children. She has also worked professionally as an advocate for women and children and is currently working with children in a social service program. Through her experience, she has come to understand much of male violence among Pacific Islanders as the result of colonization and continued racism and sought a way to directly work with violent men to restore the positive cultural values they had lost.

*When:* When Sharon decided to work with men, she had received a handful of calls and contacts from men willing to work on their pattern of domestic violence. Although formal organizational support was minimal, this coincidence of requests compelled her to begin a program addressing male violence from her understanding of the cultural context and her knowledge of the needs of women and children facing violence.

*Where:* Sharon is a Maori woman from New Zealand living in Oahu, Hawaii. She works with the diverse Pacific Islander community including indigenous Hawaiians and immigrants from neighboring Hawaiian islands and other Pacific Island nations, primarily Samoa and Tonga.

*How:* The men's curriculum is rooted in an assumption that re-connection of colonized men with a cultural heritage grounds their individual, personal lives in a land- and ancestral-based legacy which can give them a sense of meaning eroded by racism and colonization. Maori cultural elements of male power, family relational values, concepts of female power including the value of reproduction, preservation of land and water, and respect for ancestral traditions can all be interpreted to support gender equity and safety for women and children. Sharon's deep understanding of Maori culture and its powerful elements of restoration and female power and her storytelling tradition supplies much of the curriculum for the men's group. Her understanding of Hawaiian, Tongan, and Samoan cultures and languages and her ability to weave these into her stories and messages make the curriculum more meaningful for men from these diverse Pacific Islander cultures.

Sharon also uses an educational approach rich in metaphors and the use of physical experiences which allow the messages to be incorporated at a deep, visceral level. Through her relationship with community resources, she has organized the local taro farmer to lend his plots for men to experience the process of tilling the soil and nurturing the growth of deeply rooted taro. She has organized the local ukulele maker to hold classes for the men to craft instruments from rough wood. She takes the men to restore the eroded seacoast by hauling and packing dirt where the soil has washed into the sea, comparing this erosion to their destruction of their families and communities.

Through her patient yet powerful commitment, she has continued to recruit individual men into her program so that they have an opportunity to transform from destructive to productive family and community members. Through her success, she has gained a reputation in the community as someone they can send their Hawaiian, Tongan and Samoan sons, brothers, husbands, fathers, and nephews to for the restoration of positive values and roles so that they can be an asset to their communities.

*How Much and How Long:* Sharon has developed a 16-week curriculum for abusive men in Pacific Islander communities.

*How Does It Fit:* Sharon's sense of commitment has inspired her to create programs without organizational support and funding. She has organized her own community resources to forge a program which fits her vision of violence prevention and the transformation of male violence. In her professional life, she continues to work with women's groups and has created a curriculum for children growing up in abusive and violent households.

*How Connected to Systems:* The Pacific Islander communities in Hawaii have a high rate of incarceration and involvement in the child welfare system<sup>27</sup>. Sharon, through her advocacy work, has a long and positive relationship with workers in the child welfare and criminal justice systems, many of whom applaud the work she has done in their communities. Through these relationships, she has been able to advocate for women who would otherwise lose their children and has been informally supported in her work with men.

*Funding:* Sharon does not receive any funding or organizational resources for her men's program. Her own work and the community resources she has organized to support the program are voluntary. A local grassroots organization, Na Pua Aloha, has provided some parallel domestic violence programming and support for her work with men.

*Why Innovative:* Sharon's understanding of domestic violence is deeply rooted in her connection with her Maori culture and the history of colonization common to her New Zealand home, the Hawai'iian people, and other Pacific Islanders. The men's curriculum addresses violence, male privilege, and the values of respect for women and family through the lens of their shared history of colonization and the positive

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<sup>27</sup> V. Pualani Enos, Learning from the Experiences of Battered Immigrant, Refugee and Indigenous Women Involved with Child Protective Services to Inform a Dialogue among Domestic Violence Activists and Advocates (San Francisco, CA: Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence, 2003).

culturally-based vision of respect and restoration. This is not a standard men's curriculum with added cultural elements. Rather, deep cultural values and historical, political context underlie the causal assumptions for violence and the seeds of transformation.

Key Issues:

*Natural Leaders:* Sharon envisioned this program from the depths of her cultural heritage, personal experience, and her unique understanding of Pacific Islander cultures.

Further Questions: Can a program with similar characteristics be replicated under the leadership of someone without a similar community identity, experience, and perspective on culture and history of colonization?

*Funding and Sustainability:* Natural leaders like Sharon continue to provide volunteer programming and un-ending community services regardless of organizational support or funding.

Further Questions: How sustainable is this model for individuals such as Sharon? How could resources be funneled to natural leaders? How can organizational support and funding support these programs without burdening their leaders with grant requirements and administrative responsibilities which detract from their ability to continue innovative work?

*Culture, Colonialism, and Community Accountability:* The issues of culture, racism, and colonialism have been controversial in anti-violence work. The tendency to romanticize pre-colonial cultures as non-violent and non-patriarchal has been criticized as overly-simplistic and blatantly untrue. The comparison of domestic violence to the effects of racism and colonization has similarly been criticized as missing the complexity of gender-based oppression.

Further Questions: Is this use of culture, racism, and colonial legacies such as that incorporated in Sharon's program useful in ending men's violence? Does it need to be shifted or made more complex? Does it give men too many excuses? Does it serve as a comfortable way of understanding male violence without challenging the ways in which it has benefited men? How do we understand the differential impact of these histories of oppression on women? How do we use this understanding to reformulate post-colonial identities and roles of men?

If we understand the use of culture, racism, and colonial legacies as a positive and transformative way to address male violence, is this replicable to other API communities? If so, what elements are common? Will an attempt to force a fit lead to culturally inappropriate and ineffective programs?

## Other Innovative Community Accountability Strategies

### Ke Ala Lokahi (Hawai'ian; Hilo, HI)

This program, Ke Ala Lokahi (A Pathway to Harmony), a project of Turning Point for Families in Hilo, HI, is a demonstration project designed by Val Kalei Kanuha, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The project serves native Hawai'ian male batterers and battered women, and includes a curriculum grounded in Hawai'ian cultural values and traditions, with the historical experience of colonization as the centerpiece. The batterer's curriculum draws connections between the "natural order of balance" inherent to Native Hawai'ian cosmology and how both the history of colonization and the batterer's violence towards women, children, the family, and community destroys Hawai'ian beliefs and practices. It also promotes the reconstruction of cultural meaning and one's positive role in the family and community to the restoration of individual and collective health and integrity. A parallel curriculum with an emphasis on empowerment accompanies the women survivor's group. The curriculum and evaluation findings will be available to the public in the Fall of 2005.

### Cultural Context Model of the Institute for Family Services, Inc. (Multiracial; Somerset, NJ)

Rhea Almeida, a South Asian woman from Guyana, founded this innovative family therapy program<sup>28</sup>. Rhea began her program as a batterer's intervention group and gradually lent her understanding of the primacy of the abuse of power and control based upon racism, sexism, and homophobia to an integrated group and family system of therapy and accountability. All clients regardless of presenting issues attend a series of sessions revealing systems of oppression and their internalization of it on the levels of identity, attitudes, and behaviors. Among the many goals of the group process is the creation of a strong internal community with the structure and skills to hold members accountable for abusive behaviors. Community volunteers and graduates of the program are invited to participate as sponsors, offering positive community role models and peer assistance in the process of accountability and transformation to healthier attitudes and behavior.

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<sup>28</sup> For more information on the Cultural Context Model, see Rhea V. Almeida and Ken Dolan-Delvecchio, "Addressing Culture in Batterer's Intervention: The Asian Indian community as an Illustrative Example," *Violence Against Women*, 5, no. 6 (June 1999) and Rhea V. Almeida and Jacqueline Hudak, "The Cultural Context Model," in *Programs for Men Who Batter*, ed. Etiony Aldarando and Fernando Mederos (Kingston, NJ: Civic Research Institute, 2003).



## SECTION 9: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: KEY ISSUES AND THEMES

### Community Engagement Priorities: Who Are We Organizing? To Do What?

This report (Section 3) offers a framework for community engagement characterized by a continuum of four categories of activity: 1) *Community Outreach and Education*; 2) *Community Mobilization*; 3) *Community Organizing*; and 4) *Community Accountability*. Each continuum category reflects an increasing level of community engagement, expected community participation, and anticipated level of increased community-based capacity to address intimate and family violence.

Further inquiry into the characteristics of each category of community engagement requires more careful questioning of who or what sectors of the community we are engaging, with what kinds of activities, for how long, and towards what goals.

This continuum approach to community engagement provides a way to question the underlying assumptions about who organizes and whom we are organizing. The role of survivors, bystanders, and those we consider “most affected by intimate violence” feature prominently into engagement strategies which fall at the community organizing and accountability end of the continuum.

*Shimtuh* (Korean; Oakland, CA) has re-evaluated its community engagement component by shifting its goals from community education to organizing in order to ensure that all activities focus on increasing community capacity to address domestic violence.

*Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center* (Pan-Asian; Seattle, WA) adopts a community organizing strategy which strengthens the capacity of already identified leaders to address violence against women within their communities.

*Central to the organizing approach adopted by Freedom, Inc. is the development of those most affected by these forms of violence as leaders in challenging and changing the conditions of their own oppression.*

*Freedom, Inc.* (Hmong; Madison, WI) and its youth organizing project works with Hmong youth to form a new positive identity and collective base of power in which to challenge systems of oppression and violence, from the level of interpersonal and family violence within their own membership to that perpetrated by oppressive state systems.

Central to the organizing approach adopted by *Freedom, Inc.* is the development of those most affected by these forms of violence as leaders in challenging and changing the conditions of their own oppression.

The organizing activities of *Sakhi* (South Asian; New York, NY) invites South Asian survivors of domestic violence to bring forward their stories, faces and voices to challenge their communities to take the issue of violence against women seriously.

*Raksha's* (South Asian; Atlanta, GA), Breaking the Silence Project, was initiated in part out of the acknowledgement of survivors of child sexual abuse among staff and volunteers that a social service approach limited to domestic violence provides little space to bring forward personal experiences of child sexual abuse. Further, the critical role of bystanders, i.e., members within the survivor's own social network, to address and confront intimate violence has become a primary focus of this community accountability campaign.

## **Sustainability: Prioritizing, Maintaining, and Sustaining Community Engagement**

Sustainability is a key issue with regard to community engagement. How do anti-violence programs with a traditional focus on social services and crisis intervention maintain community engagement activities requiring labor and time-intensive relationship-building and long-term organizing strategies?

*Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center* (Pan-Asian; Seattle, WA), *Sakhi* (South Asian; New York, NY), and *Freedom, Inc.* (Hmong; Madison, WI) offer examples of programs prioritizing community engagement over service models. Staff resources, program activities, and participation of community members including clients reflect these organizing priorities.

The need for sustainable funding for community engagement and organizing activities in anti-violence work is sadly demonstrated by the fact that two of the seven featured program components are no longer funded and that a third program is run on a completely volunteer basis. The lack of adequate resources is an issue for all social justice and human services work.

*How do anti-violence programs with a traditional focus on social services and crisis intervention maintain community engagement activities requiring labor and time-intensive relationship-building and long-term organizing strategies?*

However, community engagement requires the long-term commitment of organizers and organizing institutions in order to build trust and follow through on long-term strategies. Consistent funding is particularly necessary for sustained involvement within financially strapped and, in some cases, economically devastated communities as many leaders including paid advocates and organizers have multiple demands from families and communities and are often personally facing financial struggles.

## **Balancing Social Services and Community Engagement**

Related to the issue of sustainability is how programs committed to providing individualized services and advocacy to survivors of domestic violence can develop program structures which keep community engagement priorities intact without compromising the advocacy needs of individual survivors. The needs assessment process of *Shimtu* (Korean; Oakland, CA) illustrates how a social service and advocacy program can mobilize the community to participate in the creation of a community-based program. It

also presents the challenges of maintaining community engagement after a service-based program is established.

*Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center* (Pan-Asian; Seattle, WA) has been able to maintain its organizing priority in part due to the availability of API domestic violence services and the strong collaboration between domestic violence programs within the Seattle area.

*Sakhi* (South Asian; New York, NY) has maintained an organizing priority but has also developed a strong services and advocacy component, in part possible by the strong integration of community-based funding strategies within their vision of community participation. *Sakhi* has shifted staffing to include a full-time outreach worker ensuring sustained community engagement.

## Intergenerational Community Organizing

Domestic violence affects all generations within the family and the community. Yet, anti-violence programs rarely provide an integrated intergenerational approach to family violence. How do we integrate our work with children to include parents, bring together youth and the elderly, and provide a framework to community engagement which challenges our tendency to see domestic violence as an adult problem requiring adult solutions, making children and youth an afterthought?

*Structured integration of intergenerational engagement offers regular opportunities to intercept and re-negotiate hierarchical family and generational patterns which often contribute to family violence.*

The parenting work of *Samoan Christian Congregational Church* (Samoan; Seattle, WA) together with the *Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center* (Pan-Asian; Seattle, WA) and the youth organizing of *Freedom, Inc.*, (Hmong; Madison, WI) give examples of creative intergenerational

community engagement approaches to family violence. Their structured integration of intergenerational engagement offers regular opportunities to intercept and re-negotiate hierarchical family and generational patterns which often contribute to family violence.

## The Boundaries of Confidentiality: The Bridging of Private and Public

Any form of community engagement is an inherently public activity. Anti-violence programs have been successful in publicizing domestic violence and other forms of intimate violence thereby lifting them out of the traditionally private sphere. Community education, media campaigns, and the pushing of legislation and policies affecting intimate violence have created significant transformation in community attitudes, institutions and public policies.

Activities more associated with community organizing such as campaigns against institutional targets, leadership development, and the creation of collective power among those most affected by the problem are much less common among anti-violence organizations. Much of the anti-violence movement's reluctance to organize campaigns championing the cause of particular survivors in the community or

targeting particular perpetrators is because confidentiality has been such a cornerstone of domestic violence services and advocacy work. When the identities of individual women or men have been publicized, it is usually after a homicide or sensationalized event in which confidentiality has already been broken.

Much of what is categorized as community organizing also rests upon building collective power among those most affected by the social issue. Gathering together those who identify as survivors beyond a support group and into an action group

has not been common practice among the predominantly social service sector of the anti-violence movement. *Sakhi's* (South Asian; New York, NY) organizing approach to anti-violence work challenges assumptions of confidentiality by creating public venues for survivors to bring their issues, faces, and voices to

*Much of the anti-violence movement's reluctance to organize campaigns championing the cause of particular survivors in the community or targeting particular perpetrators is because confidentiality has been such a cornerstone of domestic violence services and advocacy work.*

confront the South Asian community. This has transformed attitudes not only about domestic violence but about the role of survivors within the community and within the domestic violence movement. *Sakhi* also moves beyond privacy and confidentiality towards public exposure of individual perpetrators as documented in this report.

## Pushing the Edges of Safety: Engaging Violence When and Where It Happens

Community engagement which enters the very homes and spaces where violence occurs is another practice generally avoided or even prohibited by domestic violence programs. Staff and volunteers rarely enter violent or potentially violent homes due to safety concerns.

The *Stand Against Violence Effectively Program's* (S.A.V.E.) (Cambodian; Long Beach, CA) door-knocking outreach strategy demonstrates the potential of this approach to create broad accessibility and to reach the most isolated survivors of family violence. Some of their innovative tactics regarding worker and survivor safety are documented in this report.

The call for community accountability strategies has become increasingly common within the anti-violence movement. The implementation of such strategies has continued to be an exceptionally rare occurrence. Engagement with perpetrators which edges into what may be viewed as community accountability, public exposure of abuse and violence, public shaming or naming, and other forms of direct confrontation of perpetrators push the boundaries of safety that are strongly held by anti-violence programs and advocates.

Protocols related to survivor confidentiality and self-determination as well as concerns of survivor endangerment further constrains engagement with, and public exposure of, perpetrators. The latter consideration often presumes the unwillingness of survivors to choose program options engaging perpetrators to take responsibility, especially if such forms of engagement are confrontative or public.

Additionally, concerns over worker safety prevent many programs from seriously considering community accountability options.

The potential of retaliation or increased endangerment are serious risks. Research shows the possibility of increased lethality when the power and control of abusers are threatened. Attempts by anti-violence advocates to shift blame and responsibility from victims/survivors to abusers can likewise lead to increased community-based hostility towards survivors and their allies. The realities of community backlash and support for perpetrators viewed as unfairly targeted reveal deep patriarchal and victim-blaming undercurrents within all of our communities of which anti-violence advocates and activists are all too aware.

*Raksha's* (South Asian; Atlanta, GA) campaign to address child sexual abuse by encouraging bystanders to directly confront attitudes and behaviors which tolerate, promote, or perpetrate child sexual abuse pushes community engagement towards community accountability.

*Sakhi's* (South Asian; New York, NY) public protest at the home of a perpetrator of wife burning negotiates not only traditional confidentiality protocols but risks potential legal challenges, community backlash, and survivor and worker endangerment.

Community accountability that narrows the “we” of a broader community to the more intimate level of “we” the membership demonstrates the potential transformative impact of community organizing which integrates an internal ethic and practice of accountability. The parenting program of *the Samoan Christian Congregational Church* (Samoan; Seattle, WA), and *Freedom, Inc.'s* (Hmong; Madison, WI)

*The realities of community backlash and support for perpetrators viewed as unfairly targeted reveal deep patriarchal and victim-blaming undercurrents within all of our communities.*

youth organizing have developed cultures of accountability encouraging direct confrontation of domestic and sexual violence perpetrated within their own membership or communities. The parenting program includes an internal accountability practice as a deliberate strategy to directly

address domestic violence within the less threatening context of parenting education. *Freedom, Inc.* incorporates an analysis of gender oppression and a regular practice of confronting oppressive dynamics with external systems and within their own membership.

## Indigenous Leaders and Leadership Development

Almost all the individuals highlighted in this report and a majority of advocates in API anti-violence programs are from the same ethnic community in which they work. This has not always been the case with regards to community organizing.<sup>29</sup>

Real and perceived characteristics of advocates and leaders can greatly impact their role and capacity to engage communities. Relationships of trust, public perception of one's long-term commitment to a community, and deep knowledge of the material conditions and cultural context of a community can expand a leader's capacity to mobilize community members to greater levels of engagement and potential transformation. When there are perceived commonalities of identity on the level of race, ethnicity, religion, class, education, gender, sexual identity or regional origin, stronger bonds are forged between leaders and their constituencies. Common bonds can strengthen the quality and extent of commitment of sectors of community to take ownership of issues and to lead towards collective action. These characteristics are often innate rather than replicable or trainable. Leadership development among community members and constituents can be an important part of community engagement work.

Sharon Spencer who initiated the *Pacific Islander Men's Program* (Pacific Islander; North Shore, Oahu, HI), Kabzuag Vaj who founded *Freedom, Inc.* (Hmong; Madison, WI) and Mr. and Mrs. Sa'au of the *Samoan Christian Congregational Church* (Samoan; Seattle, WA) are examples of leaders nurtured from within their own communities. Through their communities' historical and their own personal experience, they developed deep understanding of complex community issues and political dynamics.

For these individuals, this experience along with their commitment to community, respectful intimate and family relationships, and gender equity led to their leadership in the creation of culturally meaningful community-based programs dedicated to ending violence against women and children. *Freedom, Inc.* (Hmong; Madison, WI) demonstrates how a community organizing model which creates a positive and powerful community identity and space can nurture new leadership from within that community.

The Natural Helpers program of *Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center* (Pan-Asian; Seattle, WA) which develops the anti-violence skills and resources of existing leadership within the

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<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of the shift of community organizers from outsiders to those from within the community particularly within people of color organizations, see Gary Delgado, *Beyond the Politics of Place* (Oakland, CA: Chardon Press, 1997).

Samoan community shows how a program's commitment to leadership development enhances the capacity of such leaders.

## Relationship and Engagement with Systems

Another feature of API communities is a sense of alienation from systems generally associated with the anti-violence field in the U.S. Indeed, many API programs arose from the fact that so few within API communities willingly engaged with mainstream anti-violence hotlines, drop-in-centers, and shelters<sup>30</sup>. And those who did try were often turned away because of lack of language and cultural competence. The communities' relationships with state institutions such as the child welfare<sup>31</sup> and criminal legal systems remain at least as unfamiliar and distrustful.

The development of community accountability strategies can raise particularly challenging questions with regard to state systems. How is involvement with child welfare and criminal legal systems negotiated when the community plays a more active role in interventions and abuser accountability? *Raksha's* (South Asian; Atlanta, GA) Breaking the Silence Project encourages family and community members to directly confront attitudes tolerating, condoning, or encouraging child sexual abuse; and perpetrators of child sexual abuse.

*Stand against Violence Effectively Program (S.A.V.E.)* (Cambodian; Long Beach, CA) has coordinated relationships with systems, deliberately seeking closer relationships in order to improve child welfare's patterns of child removal from Cambodian homes and to recruit the high numbers of arrested domestic violence perpetrators into its batterer's intervention program.

*Freedom, Inc.* (Hmong; Madison, WI), on the other hand, uses the daily experience of racial profiling and its analysis of the police as potential perpetrators of state violence against the Hmong community in order to organize its youth towards collective action. Understanding and challenging this system of structural oppression is a vehicle for addressing and shifting the dynamics of family and intimate violence.

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<sup>30</sup> Kim, *Op cit.*

<sup>31</sup> Enos, *Op cit.*

## Multi-Issue Organizing and Anti-Violence Work

Programs addressing violence against women and girls have generally focused narrowly on issues of domestic violence or sexual assault, keeping other categories of interpersonal violence separated.

*Raksha* (South Asian; Atlanta, GA) has challenged this tendency in domestic violence organizations. Their Breaking the Silence Project not only takes on the taboo issue of child sexual abuse, but envisions a courageous community organizing and accountability approach to increase the community's capacity to protect its most vulnerable members.

*Freedom, Inc.* (Hmong; Madison, WI) begins with multi-issue organizing and connects it to violence against women and girls. By providing an alternative community space which prioritizes collective identity, collective power and leadership development, members are encouraged to identify their own issues and to develop, implement and learn from their own strategies. By advancing a broad framework of oppression and liberation which incorporates interpersonal issues and gender violence as well as larger issues of systemic oppression, members draw parallels between police harassment and dating violence, poverty and family violence.

## Culture, Racism, and Colonization: How Meaningful Is This to Our Work?

While cultural competence is now a commonly accepted term and value in social service and community organizing work, the contents and practices of culturally relevant work differ widely. *Sharon Spencer's* (Pacific Islander; North Shore, Oahu, HI) re-telling and reinterpretations of Pacific Islander stories, her use of physical metaphors found in nature for the impact of family violence, and her reclaiming of positive cultural identity from the devastating histories of colonization creates a men's curriculum rich in cultural meaning and potential transformative impact. Such use of the histories of cultural preservation and devastation, racism, and colonization common to many API communities could lead to community-wide transformations beyond the individual men served within her program. These commonalities could also cross cultures and bind diverse communities together in common goals of positive, respectful, collective, and equitable community norms. While such visions are hopeful and inspiring, controversy over the value of cultural interpretations open to romanticization, oversimplification, and in support of stereotypical gender and racial identities are all useful cautions.



## **SECTION 10: RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1) Support training on community engagement and organizing for anti-violence programs.**

Anti-violence programs can benefit greatly from innovations conducted by other anti-violence programs and traditional community organizing programs. Shared trainings among anti-violence programs and cross-trainings with community organizers are a necessary next step towards improving community engagement practices and strategies which could lead to greater community capacity to address and end violence against women and children.

### **2) Support community engagement and organizing among those affected by intimate and family violence.**

Although intimate and family violence affects us all, an assessment of those sectors of the community *most* affected by intimate and family violence can prioritize our activities and strategies towards those who are best placed to challenge the conditions and systems maintaining oppression, abuse and violence. Consideration of strategies engaging survivors of violence, their families and social networks, and segments of our communities devastated by poverty, mass arrest and incarceration, threatened immigrant and other civil rights, lack of jobs and education, and community-wide violence could more effectively increase collective community-based capacity towards deep, long-lasting social transformations.

### **3) Support leadership development especially among those most affected by intimate and family violence.**

Individualized social service approaches to intimate and family violence can limit the leadership development potential of anti-violence work. Innovations in organizing and leadership development among survivors, bystanders, and targeted sectors of the community most affected by intimate and community violence can create greater collective strength to transform community norms and relations of power.

### **4) Promote intergenerational community engagement and organizing.**

Given that family violence and intimate violence is intergenerational, community engagement approaches must adopt a more intergenerational model. The promotion of organizing and education among different generational sectors affected by violence and meaningful engagement and communication across generations can be a powerful approach to breaking the isolation and alienating power differentials among these groups. All generations have an important role to play in addressing and ending violence. Strategies which develop and integrate each generation's strongest assets can be an important process in developing healthier and more equitable community dynamics.

### **5) Promote multi-issue and cross-community engagement and organizing.**

The inter-linking of issues of intimate and family violence with broader political, social and economic systems of oppression can profoundly shift the ways in which we work to transform the conditions contributing to these various forms of violence. Multi-issue and cross-community organizing can also bring together diverse organizational and community partners for strategic collective action leading to greater social and political impact. Collaborations among ethnic-specific programs and pan-Asian or pan-immigrant programs can expand the resources of otherwise isolated agencies and communities.

**6) Explore creative ways to push the boundaries of confidentiality and safety towards the promotion of greater community participation.**

Current interpretations, practices, and policies of confidentiality and safety can deter from strategies which actually strengthen the principles which confidentiality and safety were developed to protect. Self-determination for survivors may be enhanced by more flexible confidentiality practices involving choices for survivors at various levels of involvement with anti-violence programs. Safety may be increased with innovative safety planning which allows for an expansion of the program's scope of work and locations of engagement.

**7) Promote community accountability and intervention strategies.**

The reliance on social service and state systems for intervention in domestic and sexual violence has detracted from the capacity of the community to create effective intervention solutions. Anti-violence programs must shift their focus to include the promotion of strategies which enhance the community's ability to intervene in violence at early stages of abuse.

**8) Support the development of culturally meaningful, engaging, and transformative anti-violence work.**

Culturally relevant anti-violence work can be rich, engaging, and ultimately transformative in ways which more standard anti-violence work with added language accessible and culturally relevant elements lack. Reclaiming cultural practices, stories, and identities in ways which support gender equity, non-violence, respectful family and community relations, and positive gender roles can carry powerful transformative potential for individuals and for entire communities. The development of this work within specific cultural and regional contexts and the sharing of these developments across communities should be supported.

**9) Create program structures supporting sustained community engagement and organizing work.**

The maintenance and sustaining of community engagement and organizing work within a program also addressing individual crisis intervention and advocacy is challenging. Program structures which can support both program components or creative and collaborative divisions of labor and programming among various organizations ensuring that both types of work can be sustained should be further explored and supported.

**10) Promote long-term funding of innovative community engagement strategies and programs.**

Community engagement work is a valuable and necessary part of addressing and ending intimate and family violence. The great diversity of communities requires both intensive community-specific work as well as opportunities for cross-community sharing. The tendencies for funding to be short-term, discouraging work focusing on a single ethnic or cultural community, and limited to community engagement work all prevent financially sustained, long-term strategies necessary for transformative community engagement. More funding sources must recognize what it takes to truly promote and develop the kinds of community engagement which leads to long-lasting change and provide adequate funding to sustain such projects.

## PROGRAMS FEATURED IN THIS REPORT

### **Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence | APIA Health Forum**

450 Sutter Street, Suite 600  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
(415) 954-9988 x315  
apidvinstitute@apiahf.org  
www.apiahf.org/apidvinstitute

### **Asian & Pacific Islander Women & Family Safety Center**

P.O. Box 14047  
Seattle, WA 98114  
(206) 467-9976 office

### **Asian Women's Shelter**

3543 18<sup>th</sup> St., #19  
San Francisco, CA 94110  
(415) 751-7110 office  
www.sfaws.org

### **Stand Against Violence Effectively Program (S.A.V.E.)**

Cambodian Association of America  
2390 Pacific Ave.  
Long Beach, CA 90806  
(562) 988-1863 office  
caa@cambodian.com  
www.caa562.netfirms.com/

### **Freedom, Inc.**

601 Bayview  
Madison, WI 53715  
(608) 661-4088 office  
refugeeproject@hotmail.com

### **Ke Ala Lokahi**

Turning Point for Families  
P.O. Box 612  
Hilo, HI 96721-0612  
(808) 935-0087 office  
www.turningpointforfamilies.org

### **Narika**

P.O. Box 14014  
Berkeley, CA 94712  
(510) 444-6068 office  
info@narika.org  
www.narika.org

### **New Visions: Alliance to End Violence in Asian/American Asian Communities**

University of Michigan  
School of Social Work  
1080 S. University Avenue  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109  
(734) 615-2106  
www.ssw.umich.edu/newVisions

### **Raksha**

P.O. Box 12337  
Atlanta, GA 30355  
(404) 876-0670 office  
raksha@mindspring.com  
www.raksha.org

### **Sakhi for South Asian Women**

P.O. Box 20208  
Greeley Square Station  
New York, NY, 10001  
(212) 714-9153 office  
sakhiny@aol.com  
www.sakhi.com

### **Sharon Spencer**

c/o Na Pua Aloha  
P.O. Box 628  
Hauula, HI 96717

### **Shimtuh**

Korean Community Center of the East Bay  
4390 Telegraph Ave., Suite A  
Oakland, CA 94609  
(510) 547-2360 office  
shimtuh@kcceb.org  
www.kcceb.org

## Other Community Engagement Resources:

### **Close to Home**

42 Charles St., Suite E  
Dorchester, MA 02122  
(617) 929-5151 office  
info@c2home.org  
www.c2home.org

### **Communities Against Rape and Abuse (CARA)**

801 23<sup>rd</sup> Ave. S., Suite G-1  
Seattle, WA 98144  
(206) 323-4113 office  
info@cara-seattle.org  
www.cara-seattle.org

### **Connect**

P.O. Box 20127 Greeley Square Station  
New York, NY 10001  
(212) 683-0015 office  
info@connectNYC.org

### **Generation FIVE**

(510) 251-8552  
info@generationFIVE.org  
www.generationFIVE.org

### **Incite! Women of Color Against Violence**

incite\_national@yahoo.com  
www.incite-national.org

### **Institute for Family Services**

3 Clyde Rd., Suite 101  
Somerset, NJ 08873  
(732) 873-1663 office  
WeCare4UIFS@aol.com  
www.instituteforfamilyservices.com

### **SHaKTI Productions**

www.shaktiproductions.net/isa\_wwis.html

### **Sista II Sista**

1497 Myrtle Ave., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Brooklyn, NY  
(718) 366-2450 office  
info@sistaiisista.org  
www.sistaiisista.org

### **Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice**

1372 Stratford Ave.  
Bronx, NY 10472  
(718) 328-5622 office  
ympj@yahoo.com

## Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence

500 12th St. #330, Oakland CA 94607

415-568-3315 | [www.api-gbv.org](http://www.api-gbv.org)

[info@api-gbv.org](mailto:info@api-gbv.org)

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