

## **Is domestic violence worse in the U.S. or in other countries?**

According to a recent study conducted by the Commonwealth Fund, almost four million women are physically abused each year in the United States. Statistics are no less grim abroad: From country to country, between 20 and 50 percent of women have experienced physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner or family member, according to a new report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The study defines violence against women and girls to include: sex-selective abortions, female infanticide, female genital mutilation, dating and courtship violence, domestic violence, dowry abuse and murders, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, and the homicide or forced suicide of widows for economic reasons.

But, despite the prevalence of domestic violence, the report finds that only 44 countries have adopted specific legislation to address it. The UNICEF study, called "Domestic Violence Against Women and Girls," finds that abuse is present in every country, "cutting across boundaries of culture, class, education, income, ethnicity and age." The study calls violence against women "one of the most pervasive of human rights violations, denying women and girls equality, security, dignity, self-worth, and their right to enjoy fundamental freedoms."

All over the globe, concerned individuals and community leaders are taking steps to end domestic violence. Examples of emerging efforts around the globe include:

- In India, the Jagori Group organizes women in the poorest section of Delhi into a Single Women's Group, named to counter the negative stereotypes of single women and to challenge marriage as their only option. The group gives members an opportunity to discuss and look for solutions to violence, sexual abuse, police harassment, forced caste marriages, desertions and dowry demands. Members of the Single Women's Group confront men who abuse their wives, using peer pressure and shame to change behavior.
- In Ireland, activists have developed a Women's Rights Are Human Rights Bus Project, a traveling education and awareness initiative. The bus travels throughout the country, serving as a public information and education center; workshops and public events are held in each town the bus visits, educating the people as to why domestic violence is a human rights abuse.
- In South Africa, women's rights and health advocates are working with the newly formed state government to craft violence against women prevention messages that will be woven into a popular television program watched by millions throughout the nation, called "Soul City."

For an extensive list of global anti-violence statistics and resources [visit the V-Day website](#).