

Fact Sheet on Gender Based Violence and Disability

The Australian Disability and Development Consortium (ADDC) has been collaborating with its members and partners to ensure the voices of people affected by gender based violence (GBV) are heard.

Recently the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Honourable Kevin Rudd MP spoke about his commitment to ending violence against women. He affirmed the need for discussion and action when stating “**Gender based violence is not just a challenge for women; it is a challenge for me**”¹

ADDC is supporting the White Ribbon Day campaign as **disability markedly increases the risk of gender based violence**.² We request your support to be involved.

‘By ending violence against women, we not only improve women’s ability to fully participate in family and community life without fear, we also give them the chance to contribute socially and economically to their countries’ development,’

– The Hon. Kevin Rudd MP¹¹

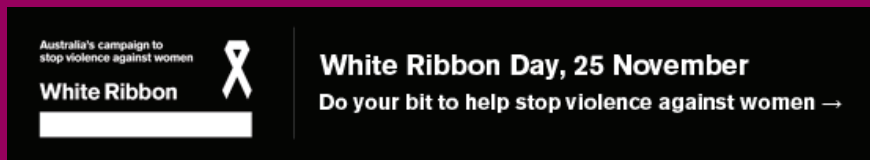
Did you know that?....

- Women with disabilities often face double discrimination on the grounds of both their gender and their impairment(s) and hence represent one of the most marginalised groups in society.
- Violence against women is an urgent issue in both wealthier and developing countries. However, gender based violence, which ranges from low level domestic violence to some of the most horrific abuses within the human family, are perceived to be more prominent in developing countries where there is less access to support services and understanding of the issue.³
- Gender discrimination in a disability context indicates that women and girls with disabilities are often at greater risk of abuse and violence, injury and neglect.⁴
- Violence against women can be a significant cause of preventable impairments in the first place. In addition to causing injury, violence increases women’s long-term risk of several health conditions, including physical disability.⁵
- According to a recent study, violence and abuses against women with disabilities are often hidden, and there remains deep-seated stigma and shame connected to both sexuality and disability.⁶
- Disability markedly increases the risk of gender based violence.⁷
- Women with disabilities are disadvantaged compared with their peers without disabilities, and that challenges such as poverty, GBV, and barriers to adequate sexual and reproductive health care experienced in conjunction with disability are magnified for women with disabilities.

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Meet Usha and her daughter Gurupria. Usha used to be blind. Her husband responded to her impairment by physically and emotionally abusing her. However, with help, Usha has overcome both her blindness and her abuser.



Fact Sheet on Gender Based Violence and Disability... Cont'd

- Women with disabilities face multiple disadvantages as a result of the interplay of gender, disability and developing world status.⁸
- Women with disabilities also experience adverse physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health outcomes at a higher rate.⁹
- Women with disabilities who have experienced GBV are at increased risk of experiencing high levels of stigma, discrimination and other rights violations including in relation to reproductive rights and sexual health.¹⁰



FOOTNOTES

- 1 Hon. Kevin Rudd MP. Transcript of remarks at APEC Women and the Economy Summit, September 16th 2011.
- 2 BARETT, K.A., O'DAY, B., ROCHE, A. & CARLSON, B.L. (2009). Intimate partner violence, health status, and health care access among women with disabilities. *Women's Health Issues*, 19, 94-100.
- 3 One World, 2011.
- 4 Paragraph (q) of the preamble to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- 5 Ellsberg, M. & Heise, L. (2005). *Researching Violence against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists*. Geneva, Switzerland and Seattle, Washington: WHO and PATH.
http://www.path.org/files/GBV_rvaw_complete.pdf
- 6 Kvam, M. & Braathen, S. (2006). *Violence and Abuse against Women with Disabilities in Malawi*.
- 7 BARETT, K.A., O'DAY, B., ROCHE, A., & CARLSON, B.L. (2009). Intimate partner violence, health status, and health care access among women with disabilities. *Women's Health Issues*, 19, 94-100.
- 8 UNESCAP (1995): *Hidden Sisters. Women with Disabilities in the Asia Pacific Region*. Social Development Division. Bangkok; RAO, I. (2005). *Equity to women with disabilities in India*. CBR Network. Bangalore.
- 9 WALJI, F. (2009). Including women with disabilities in gender and disability policy: reflection on experiences in the Asia-Pacific Region. *Journal for Disability and International Development*. Bensheim.
- 10 ASTBURY, J. (2003). *Whose honour, whose shame? Gender based violence, rights and health*. In L. Bennett & L. Manderson (eds) Curzon Press, Sydney; ASTBURY, J. (2009). 'Overview of the key issues'. In J. Fisher, J. Astbury, M. Cabral & S. Saxena (eds). *Mental health aspects of women's reproductive health: A global review of the literature*. Geneva, WHO Press, World Health Organization and United Nations Population Fund.
- 11 Hon. K. Rudd MP. 'Australia and the United States – committed to stopping violence against women in the Pacific.' November 3rd 2011.