



L'Association Internationale de Sociologie/  
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and



**Public contribution to crime prevention and raising awareness of  
criminal justice:  
Lessons learned from women's initiatives around the globe**

This report<sup>1</sup> is prepared by Criminologists Without Borders, a scientific collaboration between criminologists and criminal justice practitioners around the world, and the International Sociological Association, both non-governmental organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC. The report primarily summarizes recent research published in scholarly books and scientific journals. The research selected for the current report is in line with the theme for Workshop 4, "Public contribution to crime prevention and raising awareness of criminal justice: Experiences and lessons learned", and focuses on the lessons learned from women's initiatives. The report is prefaced by a summary of what is known and unknown in this area, as well as recommendations. Research excerpts are then featured from the major world regions.

**Knowns**

- Women-led initiatives in crime prevention and awareness of criminal justice are varied and include advocacy to criminalize, prevent or reduce gender-based violence; access to justice and transitional justice initiatives; programs to monitor gender mainstreaming in criminal justice; the inclusion of women in policing and the judiciary; and local and cyberspace safety initiatives.
- Women-led initiatives have historically been at the forefront of the global movement to combat gender-based violence. Research suggests that the involvement of civil society is key in obtaining effective legal and social responses to gender-based violence.

**Unknowns**

- The genesis, development and evaluation of women-led initiatives overall in crime prevention and criminal justice is under-researched.

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<sup>1</sup> This report was drafted by Rosemary Barberet, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York USA for the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Doha, Qatar April 12-19, 2015.

## Recommendations

- Consideration of “public contributions to crime prevention and raising awareness of criminal justice” should include the efforts of civil society activists to raise awareness of harmful acts which merit the attention of the criminal justice system.
- Consideration of “public contributions to crime prevention and raising awareness of criminal justice” should also encompass public contributions to diversify criminal justice professions with an eye to creating more representative and legitimate criminal justice systems. Strategies to incorporate greater numbers of women in criminal justice professions may offer best practice for the incorporation of other underrepresented social groups.
- States should ensure that grassroots interventions by civil society organizations receive the funding, research and evaluation they deserve, and thus aid in their contribution to global best practice in crime prevention and criminal justice.

## Global/General

Barberet, R. (2014). *Women, Crime and Criminal Justice: A Global Enquiry*. London: Routledge. International law and global women’s activism go hand in hand to spur reforms related to women, crime and justice.... There is enormous variation in the goals and activities of organizations that work to end violence against women, improve the treatment of women offenders and prisoners and advance and promote women criminal justice professionals. ...Many grassroots organizations around the world are in need of research support in program design and evaluation. More research needs to be done on the effectiveness of organizations as well as the strategies they employ.

Dimond, J.P., Dye, M., LaRose, D. & Bruckman, A.S. (2013). Hollaback!: The role of collective storytelling online in a social movement organization. *Proceedings of the 2013 conference on Computer supported cooperative work*. Pp. 477-490.

...our empirical investigation of women who have shared stories on Hollaback [<http://www.ihollaback.org/>] has shown that it makes a great deal of difference, both to individuals struggling to understand their own experiences and to the collection of those individuals together... Specifically, sharing stories online with the Hollaback community helped to shift the way that people thought about and responded to street harassment. Telling and sharing stories on a networked public provides a different way of performing traditional core framing tasks typically done by social movement organizations and those in positions of power. Because the stories are crowd-sourced, people who experience harassment in public are helping to define what street harassment is and what to do about it.

Htun, M. & Weldon, S.L. (2012). The civic origins of progressive policy change: Combating violence against women in global perspective, 1975-2005. *American Political Science Review*, 106, 548-569. Using an original dataset of social movements and VAW policies in 70 countries over four decades, we show that feminist mobilization in civil society—not intra-legislative political phenomena such as leftist parties or women in government or economic factors like national wealth—accounts for variation in policy development. In addition, we demonstrate that autonomous movements produce an enduring impact on VAW policy through the institutionalization of feminist ideas in international norms...

Flood, M. (2015). Current practices to preventing sexual and intimate partner violence. In Johnson, H., Fisher, B.S. & Jaquier, V. (Eds.) (2015) *Critical Issues on Violence Against Women: International Perspectives*. London: Routledge. Pp. 209-220.

Advocacy refers to strategies of primary prevention which go beyond community engagement towards collective mobilization, fostering and sustaining groups, networks, and social movements dedicated to the prevention of intimate partner violence. Collective advocacy by women's movements and feminism formed the foundations of contemporary service and policy responses to intimate partner violence.

Advocacy remains a key strategy of primary prevention. In various countries, women's groups and networks, campaigns and events such as Take Back the Night, V-Day and Slutwalk play a critical role in raising community awareness of intimate partner and sexual violence, undermining violence-supportive social norms, and fostering cultures of respect, consent and gender equality.

Mertus, J. (2008). When adding women matters: Women's participation in the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. *Seton Hall Law Review*, 38, 1297-1326.

With the ICTY success as their guide, women now demand that they be included in international justice mechanisms at all levels of decision-making and operations, that gender expertise be better integrated throughout international institutions, and that international bodies take allegations of rape and sexual violence in war seriously as grave violations of international law and not merely as by-products of war...The involvement of women in the ICTY provides important lessons for other current and future international tribunals. An international criminal court functions better when women are included in all roles and at all levels.

Spees, P. (2003). Women's advocacy in the creation of the International Criminal Court: Changing the landscapes of justice and power. *Signs*, 28, 1233-1254.

... despite the major role played by women's groups in the ICC negotiations, the predominant voices in the ongoing debates and news items about the Court are men. Occasionally in mainstream circles mention is made of the inclusion of rape and other crimes of sexual and gender violence, but the dominant discourse about the Court paints a picture of a remote, elite institution associated with the laws of war that will try and punish individuals who break the rules of war. As ever, the conjured images of those taking part in this new justice system, as defendants, prosecutors, and judges, are men... These images, however, stand in stark contrast to the reality of the provisions of the Rome Statute and the underlying advocacy of civil society generally and women in particular. Feminist critiques and theories of justice and power underlay the Women's Caucus's advocacy for broader conceptualizations of justice, a more empowered role for victims, mandates relating to the placement of women and gender experts throughout all organs of the Court, and, not least, the insistence on the independence of the Court from traditional power structures.

Wald, P.M. (2011). Women on international courts: Some lessons learned. *International Criminal Law Review*, 11, 401-408.

Women judges can and should be both women and judges. International criminal law is a field in which women stand front and centre in multiple ways. Not only are they the principal victims of the displacements inevitably associated with combat and military campaigns, but they also suffer most often from crimes, including rape, sexual crimes, and forced labour, that enemy forces perpetrate against hapless civilians. Women judges may well have a special sensitivity to the degradation suffered by victims of such crimes.

Shaw, M. (2013). How do we evaluate the safety of women? In Whitzman, C., Legacy, C., Andrew, C., Klodawsky, F., Shaw, M. and Viswanath, K. (Eds.) (2013). *Building inclusive cities: Women's safety and the right to the city*. London: Routledge.

Generally, however, individual NGOs have rarely had the resources or capacity to replicate across different cultures and countries, to scale up projects or to set up controlled experiments. To some extent, projects have also been developed in isolation from other fields. There has been relatively little cross-fertilization of knowledge in relation to evaluation, for example, between the community safety field in general and women's safety. Finally, as there is a strong emphasis on women's right to be heard and to be included in governance issues, many projects have purposefully used participatory and qualitative methodologies and eschewed scientific approaches.

Whitzman, C., Shaw, M., Andrew, C. & Travers, K. (2009). The effectiveness of women's safety audits. *Security Journal*, 22, 205-218.

This paper discusses a methodological tool – the women's safety audit – initially developed in Canada, but which has been adapted and used in many regions of the world. The women's safety audit allows participants to identify safe and unsafe spaces and recommend how the unsafe spaces can be improved. In doing so, the women's safety audit privileges the experience of women living in a neighbourhood as 'experts' in their own field. Based on interviews with six organizations in Europe, Africa and Asia and on an analysis of written sources, the paper examines some of the applications, outcomes and challenges of this methodology. The findings suggest that the audit is adaptable to local contexts, can be effective for bringing about environment changes, empowering women and alerting the public and authorities to the shared responsibility for ensuring the safety of women.

## **Africa**

Medie, P.A. (2013). Fighting gender-based violence: The women's movement and the enforcement of rape law in Liberia. *African Affairs*, 112(448), 377-397.

This article argues that women's NGOs in Liberia have contributed to shaping both police perceptions and the organizational rules, and in doing so have made police more likely to forward rape cases to court. Although some of their initiatives remain concentrated in Monrovia and resource constraints prevent them from reaching a significant proportion of women in other areas, they have set an important precedent and ensured that more women have their cases proceed to trial. Although police response to rape remains deeply problematic, it is important to recognize the improvements that have been made, consider how these improvements have occurred, and use these lessons to think about how the implementation of rape and other gender-based violence policies can be furthered across the continent.

Tobin, A. (2012). Widows and community based transitional justice in post genocide Rwanda. *British Journal of Community Justice*, 10(1), 27-39.

The widows [interviewed] were supported by AVEGA, which was founded in 1995 by 50 widows of the genocide. The main objectives of AVEGA include: providing holistic support for widows and orphans of the genocide; promoting solidarity between members; remembering the victims of the genocide; and playing a role in the reconciliation of the country... Community-based projects fulfil some of AVEGA's key objectives: encouraging members to be self-reliant through capacity-building projects and promoting reconciliation. Providing the community with the space and opportunity to communicate, negotiate and make their own decisions are skills that are essential for a peaceful Rwanda. Such skills

also serve the purpose of creating new trust bonds and forming new relationships, which were destroyed during the genocide...The work of AVEGA would not typically be understood as a form of post-conflict community justice. However, the findings indicate that there is scope for such initiatives to be understood as an example of non-judicial community justice.

## Americas

Abraham, M. (2005). Domestic violence and the Indian diaspora in the United States. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 12(2-3), 427-451.

An important strategy has also been to use the media as an outreach tool. Sakhi gives interviews to the ethnic and mainstream media, publishes a newsletter ... and has made videos for presentation to various audiences. As one Sakhi coordinator told me: "I think part of the power of Sakhi's videos is in giving domestic violence a face that looks and sounds and talks like us. The women who speak in the videos come off as stronger for having named the abuse, yet representative of our mothers, sisters, daughters, selves. I noticed that using the videos has sometimes worked towards women identifying abuse much more easily and quickly, as when we did a volunteer training and after watching one of our videos, more than one woman in the group said she could relate from her personal experience. To me, this is the beginning of the community healing or recovery, recognizing that domestic violence is everywhere, that none of us is exempt from it and that we are a part of a community of women who have come through abuse and are not afraid to say so."

Olveira, ML Pereira. (2008). Refletindo sobre violência de gênero e mulheres negras: a experiência da ONG Maria Mulher – Porto Alegre – Brasil. Reflecting about gender violence and African American women: The experience of the NGO Maria Mulher – Brazil. *Athenea Digital: Revista de Pensamiento e Investigacion Social*, 14, 281-290.

The experience of the NGO Maria Mulher has considered racial discrimination in relation to African American women as a fact which empowers gender violence and causes damage to life and health.... The women showed intense emotional suffering due to discrimination and racism they have faced. In the group process new meanings for the violence were produced, transforming the personal narrative into a public report.

Rapp, L., Button, D.M., Fleury-Steiner, B. and Fleury-Steiner, R. (2010). The internet as a tool for Black feminist activism: Lessons from an online antirape protest *Feminist Criminology*, 5(3) 244–262.

As more low income citizens gain access to the web, it is expected that the Internet will become an ever more popular space for consciousness raising and social protest. Given the level of misinformation and distorted myths surrounding violence against women in general and regarding the rape of Black women in particular, an active Black feminist online community holds important possibilities. Indeed, with recent evidence of a shrinking "digital divide" (Martin & Robinson, 2007) and as access to more sophisticated Internet communications technologies become ever more available, opportunities for consciousness raising activities and protest only have the potential to grow.

Carrington, K. (2015). *Feminism and global justice*. London: Routledge.

... While some argue that Latina women's movements (such as the grandmothers and mothers of the disappeared, the daughters of Juarez, and so on) have reinforced traditional roles and stereotypes in their struggles, I argue that this was an effective strategy and that they continue to play active roles in the building of democratic states in Latin America... they have been effective in their diverse struggles,

with Latino machismo, military juntas, Catholicism, despotic rulers, leftist guerrillas, corrupt officials and drug cartels, acquiring funds for female only police stations, refuges for women experiencing domestic violence and support for women's legal organisations to support the victims of male violence.

## Asia

Zhang, L. (2009). Chinese women protesting domestic violence: The Beijing Conference, international donor agencies, and the making of a Chinese women's NGO. *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*, 9(2), 66-99.

The Beijing Conference created a wave of NGO-building among Chinese women activists. The popular women's NGOs arising in the wake of the Conference constituted fundamental organizational resources for the Domestic Violence Project. As the trailblazers of women's NGOs, these organizations pried open a critical institutional space for women's civil society organizing in China, which made the subsequent DV Project a political possibility. Through social service, advocacy, and discursive activism devoted particularly to the issue of domestic violence, these NGOs also marshaled considerable human and activist resources to the mobilization of the anti-domestic violence cause. Without the appearance of these women's NGOs and their feminist activism, which gradually moved the issue from the margins to the forefront of the Chinese women's movement, the Domestic Violence Project would not have been possible.

Magar, V. (2003). Empowerment approaches to gender-based violence: Women's courts in Delhi slums. *Women's Studies International Forum* 26, 6: 509-523.

Unlike other prevention strategies, the mahila panchayat empowerment strategy—through the aegis of the study NGO—addresses the individual needs of women while also implementing strategies for social change. National-level laws have inadequate exposure and have been unable to regulate policies enhancing women's rights. By publicly challenging women's subordination - and oppression, women become agents in developing a new understanding of gender-based violence—that physical and emotional abuse against women is unacceptable.

Huq, S. (2006). Sex workers' struggles in Bangladesh: Learning for the women's movement. *IDS Bulletin*, 37(5), 134-137.

The acceptance of sex workers' groups in national networks of women's organisations is a milestone in the history of the women's movement in Bangladesh. This article explores the lessons learnt by Bangladeshi women's organisations through their involvement in a campaign to support the rights of sex workers, and their struggles to defend themselves against illegal eviction threats from brothels. It suggests that these struggles gave a new – and more public – meaning to discussions on sexuality and sexual rights that had been taking place within the women's movement. The article focuses on the experiences of Naripokkho, a country-wide women's organisation, and the lessons that this organisation learnt through engagement in the struggle for sex workers' rights in Bangladesh.

Fluri, J.L. (2008). Feminist-nation building in Afghanistan: An examination of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). *Feminist Review*, 89, 34-54.

Negotiating within existing patriarchal structures also requires male supporters to act as advocates who, because of their gender, have (at times) more influence and, subsequently, a greater ability to counsel and convince men (and sometimes women within their kinship group) to support RAWA's political platforms. This is particularly significant when members attempt to negotiate with families because it

may be strategically more effective to achieve a particular goal, such as preventing a child marriage, allowing women to continue their education, domestic violence issues, or a woman's membership in RAWA.

## **Europe**

Núñez Puente, S. (2011). Activismo y colectivos en red: praxis feminista "online" y violencia de género. *Asparkia: Investigació feminista*, 22, (Ejemplar dedicado a: Ciberfeminisme: gènere i xarxa des de la pràctica feminista), 85-98.

Por tanto, los colectivos en red, y las propias redes como estrategia de comunicación y de obtención de poder en la sociedad civil, son las formas más expresivas de las articulaciones políticas contemporáneas de los movimientos sociales y propulsores, a su vez, de políticas sociales ciudadanas y de proyectos de agencia femenina, que en el caso de la praxis feminista española online, ha conseguido logros tan importantes y significativos como la aprobación de la Ley Orgánica de Medidas de Protección Integral contra la Violencia de Género.

[Therefore, internet networks, and the networks themselves as a strategy of communication and empowerment in civil society, are the most expressive forms of the contemporary politics of social movements and instigators, at the same time, of social policies and feminine projects which in the case of online feminist praxis in Spain, have garnered such important and significant achievements as the passage of Spain's Comprehensive Gender-Based Violence Organic Law.]

Simic, O. (2009). What remains of Srebrenica? Motherhood, transitional justice and yearning for the truth. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 10 (4), 220-236.

The 'Mothers of Srebrenica' are an example of how women can reinvent their role in post-conflict society and become active agents of change. They have achieved astonishing results due to their persistent, peaceful and patient struggle to find out and spread the truth of what happened to their missing loved ones in Srebrenica in 1995. With very little education, no access to power and decision making bodies, the 'Mothers' enjoy respect and recognition by local and the international community... Although there are yet no answers for the contradictions posed by the 'Mothers'; (their conflicting roles of victims and agents and their rhetoric which demands a punitive justice as a condition for a feasible reconciliation), one thing is certain: these women are brave, strong and influential. They made men in the position of power to sit down, listen to them and recognize their existence, pain, determination and the threat to dominant power - certainly a transformative moment.

## **MENA**

Amir, M. (2014). Women speaking of national security: The case of Checkpoint Watch. *International Political Sociology*, 8, 363-378.

... this study examines a divergent case—the operation of an all-women Israeli organization called Machsom (Checkpoint) Watch. Established in 2001, Checkpoint Watch (CPW) is an organization of Israeli women opposing the Israeli occupation, who have realized the detrimental effects of checkpoints on the lives of West Bank Palestinians... The activists of Checkpoint Watch go to the checkpoints in teams of two to five women to witness, monitor and document the operation of the checkpoints. By analyzing the reporting praxis of CPW, this work claims that the organization's activists have managed to establish a place for themselves in the highly masculinized Israeli security discourse by accentuating their marginalization as women, rather than overcoming it. Analysis of this case will further reveal that

CPW members are attempting to influence security discourse not as individuals, as particular women, but as a group of women activists.

Strobl, S. (2010). Progressive or neo-traditional? Policewomen in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. *Feminist Formations*, 22(3), 51-74.

In hopes of better noticing policewomen in the Gulf countries and taking seriously the historical and cultural moment they occupy, this article proposes an alternative, culturally specific means of understanding contested gender policies around the deployment of policewomen in a postcolonial milieu. It explains and interprets the internal and external forces that account for the variety of ways in which policewomen are deployed in the region and what this means for the continuing contest among a continuum of forces, from neo-traditional to progressive. As such, hybridity is embraced and notions of full gender integration of the police as always and necessarily the goal of policing are interrogated in favor of culturally appropriate notions of complementarity and equity—important avenues for understanding the future trajectory of policewomen. Ultimately, policewomen in GCC countries are both progressive and neo-traditional.

### **Oceania**

Blagg, H. and Anthony, T. (2014). ‘If those old women catch you, you’re going to cop it’: Night patrols, indigenous women, and place based sovereignty in outback Australia. *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, 8(1), 103-124.

The role of women in these patrols provides valuable lessons for other postcolonial contexts. Such involvement demonstrates that Indigenous women in the Northern Territory...are actively engaged in running their communities and are bearers of sovereign power. This does not negate the fact that Indigenous women in the NT are amongst the most victimised section of Australian society. Rather it shifts the focus of attention away from solutions based solely on top down strategies, such as more arrest and incarceration of Indigenous men ...and points, instead, to building upon women’s capacities and developing partnerships with place-based Indigenous structures.

Murdolo, A. (2014). Safe homes for immigrant and refugee women: Narrating alternative histories of the women’s refuge movement in Australia. *Frontiers - A Journal of Women’s Studies*, 35(3), 126-153. Contrary to the documented history, immigrant and refugee feminists were important actors in the women’s refuge movement in Australia. Despite the many barriers they have changed mainstream refuge programs, as well as established migrant-specific services across Australian states that became integral to Australian feminist women’s refuge programs. Immigrant and refugee feminists around Australia have worked with, in, and against the mainstream women’s movement, making significant political changes for the benefit of all women, including immigrant and refugee women. Despite these women’s active and significant contribution to feminist activism, their stories have not been told in existing accounts of the women’s refuge movement.

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