Dignity, Integrity & an end to Gender-based Violence in the world of work
(based on ILO Working Paper No. 3/2011)

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Summary

1. What is gender-based violence in the world of work and why we should tackle it?
2. Risk factors for victims/perpetrators
3. Trends and challenges in research
4. World of work-related strategies
1. “Gender-based violence”

- 1993 UN Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women: “Any act [resulting in] physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty [in public or private].”
  - physical, sexual, psychological family violence
  - dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation
  - physical, sexual, psychological violence in community/work/school/elsewhere (such as rape, sexual abuse/harassment and intimidation)
  - trafficking of women and forced prostitution
  - State-perpetuated or condoned physical, sexual, psychological violence

- 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women/Beijing Platform for Action:
  - forced sterilization and forced abortion
  - coercive or forced contraceptive use
  - female infanticide and prenatal sex selection
  - women’s human rights violations in armed conflict (such as murder, systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy)

- Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2003/45:
  - Economic exploitation
“World of work” link

- Work = “any physical or mental activity to produce/accomplish something”
  - Paid
  - Unpaid
    - Productive work: subsistence agriculture or family business
    - Reproductive work
      - in home (fuel/water collection, food preparation, child/eldercare, cleaning)
      - in community (attending birth, maintaining community property)
  - “World of work” also captures paid work outside “public sphere”
    - Domestic work (see Working Paper No.2/2010)
    - Street selling, home-based artisanal or piecework
    - Tele-working or mobile office
    - Where mobility for women doesn’t allow public sphere presence
    - Transportation to and from factory or office
Gender-based violence both reflects and reinforces women’s unequal status (a symptom and a cause)

It is exceptionally dehumanizing, pervasive and oppressive

No other form of sex discrimination violates so many articles of 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (Art. 1)
- “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person” (Art. 3)
- “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” (Art. 5)

It stalls equitable and just development
- lower accumulation rates of social and human capital
- contributes to “the generation of other forms of violence both now and in the future” (World Bank, 2005)
Economic efficiency – the business case

- **Indirect costs**
  - victims’ decreased functionality, quality of work
  - negative climate (lower staff motivation, commitment and loyalty to enterprise, less openness to innovation and knowledge-building)
  - Tarnished public image

- **Direct financial costs**
  - victims’ absenteeism (illness, accidents, disability and even death)
  - higher turnover, recruitment and retention costs
  - destruction of workplace property
  - high litigation and settlement costs and rising insurance premiums

- UK: domestic violence costs economy £2.7 billion (lost wages, lower productivity, sick pay). Indirect + direct costs = £23 billion annually.
- US: Novartis 2010 lawsuit (sexual harassment, etc.) $3.36 million in damages + $250
2. Risk factors for victims: women

- Reinforced by sex-segregated workplaces
  - horizontally (across operational layers of company/org)
  - vertically (up and down the hierarchy)
  - men predominate in better-paying, higher status jobs and hold more supervisory positions
- Most women concentrated in lower-paying, lower status jobs with little decision-making power
- Women over-represented in atypical/precarious jobs
- Lack both individual and collective bargaining power
- Dominate high-risk occupations and groups
High-risk groups

- **Child labourers** (218 million girls and boys), most vulnerable to violence

- **Forced and bonded labourers** (12.3 million women and men, girls and boys)

- **Migrant workers** (women are half or more but 98% of sex-trafficked victims)
  - Often in isolated and invisible “women’s work” with higher violence risk

- **Domestic workers** (predominately female)
  - Often informal work and isolated from families and support systems
  - Psychological, physical violence including sexual harassment, abuse, rape

- **Health services workers** (women = 80% to 90%)
  - 8x more likely than manufacture workers for physical violence threat
  - Co-workers=psychological abuse. Patients and their families=physical abuse

- **Sex workers** (great majority are female)
  - High violence risk (clients, controllers, police, partners, community)
  - High HIV–infection risk (rape, weak negotiation ability to use condoms)
Age and sex are strong risk factors for European Union employees’ exposure to gender-based violence

Bullying and harassment

Unwanted sexual attention

Fourth European Working Conditions Survey, 2007
Risk factors for victims: men

- Dominate in some vulnerable jobs
  - nightshifts in small stores
  - law enforcement/armed forces
- Males in subordinate positions in relation to others in male-dominated workplaces or contexts
  - boy labourers
  - male prisoners
  - the military
  - forced participants in armed conflict militia groups
- Men tend to experience slightly higher levels of physical violence in workplaces
  - some more likely to “meet aggression with aggression”?
Using a “men and masculinities” perspective to engage men in stopping violence perpetration

- Useful for revealing men’s vulnerability as victims
- How disproportionate perpetration rates driven by gender roles and expectations about “masculinity”
  - enormous pressure as breadwinner
  - risky behaviors (alcohol/drug use, multiple sex partners)
  - “power-oriented masculinities” (ethnocentrism, rejection of other cultures, inflexible and rigid to change)
  - “dominant and violent military masculinities” in conflict zones (extreme forms of oppression of women and girls)
3. Some research trends/challenges

• Uneven coverage: of informal economy, rural areas, for Africa

• Little on interplay of domestic and work-related violence
  • ex: how contraceptive protection denial—a form of sexual violence—or female genital mutilation impact women’s access to paid work

• Much on ways women workers vulnerable – less on what empowers

• Little research by employers’ organizations or on “change agents”

• Incidence/prevalence data gathering not systematic in/across nations
  • Even less concerning the world of work
  • Lack of global monitoring mechanism to measure prevention efforts

• World of work
  • ILO programs address such violence within the Organization’s mandate
  • A broader research agenda in academia on such violence from a decent work perspective would be useful
4. World of work-related strategies

- Governments: legislation, institutional frameworks

- Workplaces: unique contexts to address violence
  - workers and management confront common challenges
  - to address these, dialogue and collective bargaining help produce efficient services and products – while ensuring respect for workers’ human rights
  - discussions on GBV can result in well-designed company human resources policies & collective bargaining agreements that are legally enforceable
  - Commitment of trade unions and management is key
  - Difficult to recreate such conditions outside workplaces
Governments should develop gender equality indicators that adequately capture violence against women in the workplace
- regularly compile and publish these with sex-disaggregated data
- set up systems to measure and monitor progress toward targets

Strategies where ILO can play a role
- help build capacity of labour statisticians and improve labour market information systems for better sex-disaggregated data including on workplace gender-based violence
- develop and disseminate more tools
- undertake more research to prevent and eliminate such violence
- use collective bargaining for integrating gender in labour market and macroeconomic policies...
- ...including addressing sexual violence and harassment
2009 ILC consensus on promoting gender equality

- **Employment**
  - Women’s empowerment through economic empowerment
  - Reduce precarious work with labour market regulation/active measures with gender perspective
  - Enforce anti-discrimination labour market policies

- **Social protection**
  - Address women and men’s specific occupational safety and health needs
  - More research on different impacts of workplace risks for women and men

- **Social dialogue and tripartism**
  - Include women in social dialogue
  - Create or strengthen tripartite bodies – with gender training for members
  - Collective bargaining: tool for gender equality and to address gender-based violence

- **Principles and rights**
  - Promote gender equality through international labour standards
  - Implement legal frameworks on equitable opportunity and treatment...
  - ...and enforce by gender-sensitive labour administrations, inspectorates, courts
Based on *Gender-based violence in the world of work: Overview and selected annotated bibliography* by A. Cruz and S. Klinger, GENDER Working Paper No.3/2011

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