

Joint event of the Embassy of Canada and the Swiss Development Cooperation on the occasion of the 16 days against violence against women

“Violence against Women and Girls is violence against society”

Date	6 December 2016
Time	5.30 – 8 p.m.
Location	Generationenhaus City of Berne, near Train Station

On the occasion of the 16 days against violence against women, the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and the Canadian Embassy are inviting academics, NGOs and government officials and interested individuals to a public event. A special thematic focus will lie on the role of men and boys in the prevention of violence against women. A recently published report on SDC’s work on sexual and gender-based violence will be presented.

The event will be followed by a reception.

Programme

18.00h	Opening Remarks	Jennifer MacIntyre, Ambassador of Canada (tbc) Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Deputy
18.15h	Key Note	UN-Women Representative Geneva Office (tbc)
18.30h	Panel Discussion	Prof. Lana Wells, University of Calgary Aziza Aziz – Programme Officer DRC (tbc) Endrit Uligaj vom Männerzentrum ZDB in Shkodra Andreas Borter, Director Swiss Institute of Masculinities & Gender Issues (SIMG) (tbc)
	Moderator	Gender Focal Point SDC
19.30h	Q & A	
20.00h	Reception	

1) Q. Prof. Wells/Lana, you are working with the Government of Alberta on a project focusing on engaging men and boys in violence prevention. Why is it so important to focus on the work with men and boys in this field? (5 minutes)

Good evening everyone, it is an honour and privilege to be here with you tonight.

For decades, the majority of government responses and interventions have been focused on women as victims and men as perpetrators. While this narrative has put in place an important crisis response model (that includes a justice response, women's shelter/housing, victims rights groups, etc.), in my opinion, it has many short-comings – I think we have not leveraged the opportunity to include men and boys as violence *preventers*. I believe it is time for governments and NGO's to turn their attention to a new narrative – one that engages men and boys as partners, allies, leaders, violence disrupters and stakeholders. Why?

1. Well, the majority of perpetrators of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, and sexual violence are men.
2. While such violence may not be part of many men's routine behaviour, men's complicity is widespread.
3. We also know that men and boys have greater access to resources, opportunities and institutions. As a result, men and boys shape and send powerful messages about relationships, violence, and power in our society.
4. We also know that the social construction of male identities and masculinity play a crucial role in violence and stopping violence.
5. AND, Research confirms that ending domestic violence requires the engagement of boys and men as allies, advocates, role models, partners, change agents, leaders, bystanders and violence disrupters (Crooks, Goodall, Hughes, Jaffe, & Baker, 2007; DeKeseredy, 1988; DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1995; DeKeseredy, Schwartz, & Alvi, 2000; Flood, 2011; Groth, 2001; Katz, 1995; Kaufman, 2001).

And this is the focus of my project at the University of Calgary – called Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence. Our purpose is to work with and inform governments, community-based organizations, and communities to advance primary prevention efforts to stop violence against women. Primary prevention means *stopping violence before it starts*, which means our focus is on the underlying drivers of violence against women – working across whole populations to address attitudes, practices and power differentials.

I believe that policy, legislation and funding are key levers for social change. Therefore much of our focus is building the capacity of governments to make evidence informed decisions in this subject area. And we believe engaging **non-violent** men and boys in violence prevention is a key strategy to stop violence against women.

So in Alberta, we did five things to advance this area:

- 1) In 2011 we partnered with the Government of Alberta to develop their Family Violence Prevention Framework and identified “engaging men and boys in violence prevention as a top priority.” This was the first time in their violence prevention policy documents that men and boys were included.
- 2) In 2014, we partnered again with the Government to develop an Action Plan to engage men and boys in violence prevention and advance gender equality.
- 3) To develop this plan, between 2014 – 2015 we conducted international research on evidence based practices to engage men and boys, we interviewed key local community leaders and policy makers and conducted a comprehensive e-scan on programs and initiatives throughout Alberta so we could understand the infrastructure within the province.
- 4) In late 2015, we submitted the Action Plan to the Government of Alberta with 12 recommendations (with six quick wins).
- 5) And in 2016, we worked closely with community and government to submit a case and recommendations to the Government on how they could advance Positive Fatherhood as a key prevention of violence against women strategy.

So just that we are all clear, when I am talking about engaging men and boys in violence prevention I mean:

- Recruiting and involving men and boys as allies and activists who align themselves with the goals of feminism and women’s equality and make a concrete contribution to preventing or ending VAW.
- Teaching and empowering non-violent men to intervene in or disrupt violent behaviour against women or precursors to such violence.
- Teaching and empowering non-violent men to shift social norms about gender inequality, violent masculinities, and the acceptability of VAW.
- Teaching individual males healthy relationship skills to prevent them from becoming perpetrators.

2) Round: Prof. Wells/Lana, from your research and work – I know you just reviewed 101 government endorsed violence prevention plans from the Global North, what are your findings? Where do you see patterns on what we should do to engage men and boys in violence prevention? (5 minutes)

We have many interesting findings – but the three I would like to raise here tonight are the following. The first is, **the majority of government plans reinforce the gender narrative: men are perpetrators and women are victims.** What this is really saying is that men are problematic and women need to be protected. Which reinforces patriarchy and the approach does not challenge underlying problems of unequal patriarchal power relations and it’s relationship to violence. Which leads many to number two: a **Programs for Problems model.** We have problem, let’s design a program, and let’s work with individuals – and this issue needs governments committed to dismantling systems and institutions, culture and norms that reinforce violence against women. It

is not just about individual change. Let me give you an example of what I mean. Within the 101 government endorsed violence prevention plans reviewed, we found 30 campaigns directed to men and boys - 28 of these campaigns were directed to change individuals – yet we know awareness does not equal behavioral change – however, **Awareness and Action** can equal behavior change – meaning we need to take an ecological approach and have a multi prong strategy that works at all levels (individual, family, community, systems, institutions, policy). **Lastly** efforts to engage men and boys as leaders, partners, change agents, and active bystanders in domestic violence reduction and prevention initiatives are limited. Governments in the Global North rarely address the current and potential roles of men and boys in *prevention* efforts (42 plans out of 101) and efforts to engage men and boys in violence prevention are few, under-evaluated and diffuse (Minerson et al., 2013; Wells et al., 2013).

What do I think we should do?

- 1) We need to develop comprehensive strategies within our violence prevention plans that engage and support men as victims as perpetrators and as violence preventors.
- 2) Governments need to revisit their theory of change – we need to make the implicit -explicit, very few currently talk about patriarchy and its implications (it is not good for men or women) or homophobia, or intersectionality or gender inequality– actually, many plans are gender neutral and they need to become gender transformative.
- 3) We know the majority of men do NOT go to violence prevention programs – so I think we need to better leverage settings – where men and boys naturally congregate to infuse the messaging and skills throughout which we are going to be testing a model in Alberta to do this.
- 4) I think an easy place to start for most governments and activists is leveraging Fatherhood – supporting positive fatherhood is a key prevention strategy.
- 5) Lastly, we need more funding to conduct research and evaluation cause there is very little evidence to draw on.