

# ADONIS.MUSATI. PROJECT

---

Present

The Trends of Intimate Partner violence among Refugee and Migrants

In South Africa

# What Is Intimate partner Violence (IPV)?

- Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors designed to establish control by a person who is, was, or wishes to be involved in an intimate or dating relationship with an adult or adolescent.
- Assaultive and coercive behaviors include physical assault, psychological or emotional abuse, sexual assault, progressive social isolation, stalking, deprivation, intimidation and threats
- Incidence of IPV among refugee/migrants in SA: IPV is difficult to measure because it often occurs in private and victims are often reluctant to report incidents
- ( United Nations, 2006; Yoshihama, 2008)

# Incidence of IPV among Refugee and Migrant : on their Journey to South Africa

- Refugee women are more affected by violence than any other population of women in the world and are at risk of rape or other forms of sexual violence.

• (Vulnerable Women's Project 2009).

# Dynamics of IPV in Refugees and Immigrants

## ❖ Contexts:

- Language barriers
- Immigration status
- Social, economic and cultural Isolation
- Difficulties accessing services

# language difficulties

- ❖ Absence or limited English proficiency skills is use by the perpetrator as a tool for power and control:
  - perpetrators who possess greater English language skills silence their victims by serving as the family's sole communicator in English.
  - The limitations of a victim's English language skills also serves as a barrier to obtaining services
  - The IPV perpetrators frequently use the Ignorance of legal rights of the victim to exercise power and control.

## Social, cultural and Economic Isolation

- ❖ In African culture ,IPV is recognized, but only as a family/private issue.
- The isolation experienced by immigrants and refugees battered women can be severe because they may be isolated both within their communities and within the South African culture.
- A number of factors affect isolation, including beliefs about the dominant roles of men, religious doctrines, cultural believe from their home country, shame and fear.
- Social and economic isolation: A victim may worry that, if she leaves her abuser, she will have no safe place to go, no means to take care of herself or children and will lose connection to her entire community, family.

## Immigration status: increase refugee woman's vulnerability to IPV and reduces their options

### ❖ Examples:

- Some IPV abusers use the threat of deportation as an effective control tactic because IPV victims lack accurate information about their legal resident status.
- Some Abusers use immigration status to threaten deportation and also to warn that the victim could be deported if the violence were disclosed.
- Victim of IPV are faced with difficulties of accessing the services of the DHA,
- Their inability of getting the required documents at the rights time aggravate their condition since their ability to access some of their rights depend greatly on their possession of the right papers.

# Essential Needs for IPV Refugees

- Documents
- Shelters for the victim and their children
- Education about justice system to help stop the violence and prevent future violence, and the direct provision of legal services or the referral to available, accessible legal service providers;
- Supportive, ongoing advocacy to help victims build additional life skills and to negotiate systems that might help them enhance safety and obtain needed services;
- Information about other services or assistance to meet victims' needs for housing food, economic resources, income generating skills and mental health counseling.



## Difficulties and Challenges

- Unfamiliarity with systems and legal rights: Victims may not understand their legal rights and may fear deportation if they challenge their partners
- Victims from cultural backgrounds where men have near-absolute power, may doubt that authorities would intervene on their behalf.
- Some victims are economically and financially dependent on their partners.
- It is difficult to convince victims that, they can be safe if they confront or leave their abusers:
- This means giving them full confidence that the program can: keep them safe from retaliation; provide food and shelter and meet other basic needs; ensure that they will not lose their children, and more.

# Difficulties and Challenges

- Lack of willingness or competence by some service providers: Some service providers—police, the court system, shelter, health care providers, may not be as sympathetic and accessible.
- Political and environmental context (violence): Anti-refugee sentiment is very high as a result, victims may be suspicious of outsiders and guarded in dealing with the outside world
- Accessing shelters, job and services is sometime hampered by the Anti-refugee resentment, lack of document and skills.
- Some survivors who have broken the silence or stepped out of the circle of abuse are faced with problems of poverty and children neglect.