



Women Exchange, July, 2012

In July, WEDA women group led by Ma Ni Ni Wan conducted two community visits called "Women Exchange". The purpose is to give Burmese Migrant Women information about **gender and domestic violence**. This WEDA women group has been trying to make Burmese Migrant women to be increasingly aware of this topic throughout the community.

BANG SAK (15/07/ 2012) and THONKAMIN (05/07/2012)

Topic: The aim of this session was to talk about gender and domestic violence.

Introduction: Firstly, WEDA staff socialized with the group of women, introduced themselves and explained the main purpose of this training and the activities of FED

Discussion: WEDA staff communicated the background of the topic to the group of women, and asked them questions.

Activities: session 1: about Gender issues:



- The trainer created 2 groups: group (N. 1) is to draw male and groups (N.2) was to draw female.
- First, they were asked to draw their bodies on a paper.
- Then, the trainer gave them questions to write down on the paper. These questions were: How do men and women see themselves? Are women considered as weak and unable to get a good education? Are men too patriarchal? Can men do anything they want to? Each participant had to present what they wrote on their papers. The trainer continued to discuss the difference between sex and gender.

Answers from the Group 1 (to present their answers):



Men can love women, they are happy to fall in love. They are happy to hang out in groups, to drink. They like to do hard and difficult work. They like to play music (the guitar...).

They don't break their promises. They are persistent, strong-willed. They are not as talkative as women.

They like to use drugs (medicines, weed,...). They are brave.

They are interested in finding and having sex with a woman.

Answers from the Group 2nd (to present their answers):



From the drawings: Women have a womb (to bear a child), breast (to breast feed their children)

They are similar to men in their facial physical features (eyes, nose, and mouth).

They should have long hair.

Women have to have to be patient with men in general. They have to be polite. They can't lead a family.

They can't go outside alone. They like to be beautiful, pretty, they like to wear make-up.

Women are intelligent.

They love men. They are as brave as men. They want to show that they are as open-minded as men..

They have no shame.

They are in good health.

- The trainer separated the participants into 4 groups and gave them questions to discuss:

Have women`s clothing style, hair style, and lifestyle in general, evolved today?

After each group's discussion, they had to present their answers in front of all the other participants. The trainer continued to ask about sex and gender to know how much the participants understood.

Answers:

Group 1:

Now they can have nice dresses and nobody cares if they wear shorts. Contrary to before, now, women know that men should not be violent, so they defend themselves. They are stronger. The kitchen is no longer only for women now. Female discrimination becomes less frequent.

Group 2:

Women have more opportunity to become educated. Today, woman and man are equal. Both men and women can go to the hairdresser's, they can if they want to. Women can take care of stuffs outside of the house. Now women are much more aware of their human rights and education opportunities.

Group 3:

Before, women had long hair with their natural color, whereas now most of the girls have short colored hair. Before, men had long hair and now they get short haircuts.

Before, women mostly took care of the kitchen but now they do less inside and more outside (work outside of the house).

Group 4:

Today, men and women are equal.

They can copy the songs from other countries. They can easily copy the high technology from other countries.

Group-5:

Before, women wore only one earring, but now they wear many earrings (they have more than three holes).

Today, women start to gamble a lot.

Before, only men got bamboo tattoos, whereas today women get tattoos as well.

Activities: 2 about Domestic violence



Question: What is the traditional functioning in a couple?

Answers:

Men are leaders. All men can do anything they want,

Women have to follow men, they can't complain. Women have less knowledge than men.

Women are dependent on men, they are not independent.

Question: what are the bad consequences of this functioning?

Answers:

Women are forced to behave according to the stereotype: they do what men want them to do.

Women are less confident than men. Women take part less.

Question: What can we do to improve the situation / to improve women's lives?

Answers:

Help each woman. If a woman has problem, we can leave her in a safe place and take the information for her. We can make her aware of her rights. No discrimination race or on wealth.

Women should be able to express their feelings among the women's community. / With their husband.

Question: What can be considered as "violence"?



Answer:

A woman beaten by her husband's hand or cut with a knife, Women should not be raped, the use of bad language (swear word), problems within the family, Men have power.

Explanation by the trainer: 3 kinds of violence:



- Psychological violence (use of swear words, false accusations, quick judgments, threats, refusal to let a woman contact her family, make the other unhappy, moral harassment)
- Physical violence (beating, kicking, strangling, throwing an object to the woman, hitting with a broom)
- Sexual violence (the husband forces the wife to have sex with him, threatens her to become a prostitute,.....)

Conclusion: The women express their feeling about physical or sexual violence. One of the women was forced to have sex with her husband because she had to work and she was too tired. Her husband was physically violent towards her. She still has lots of problems with her husband all the time.

The trainer invectives:

When there's violence in the family, women have to face the problems and thus, they can't take good care of the kids, especially for education.

On the contrary, when you don't have domestic violence, women can improve their children's lives, they feel more self-confident; they can do lots of things (religion, work, social activities....).

The participants should talk to their neighbors about the workshop. The aim is to reduce domestic violence and women should help other women who are in danger.



One woman Daw Khin Mar Thun expresses: Today, all the women who attended the training have many capacities and so, they can continue to lead other women. If they have opportunism, women have to be united together, in an active way. Women should stick together, be united, in the community.



Another woman Ma Nyo Pur expresses: the women who are discriminated because of gender should be help.