

INTRODUCTION

All regions of the Commonwealth share a common problem: violence against women and children. This violence, which takes various forms - physical, sexual, psychological - although sometimes perpetuated by strangers, is far more frequently inflicted by those with whom women and children should have their most trusting relationships - members of their family, be they husbands, lovers, fathers, brothers, uncles or grandfathers. Research into the causes of this violence, research which is relatively new and which stems, in the main from Britain, the United States, Australia and New Zealand, indicates that much remains to be understood about the nature, causes, extent and treatment of this violence. Research reveals that a major problem exists, but studies are too imprecise to answer important questions such as who is most at risk and how resources can be allocated most effectively. Information with respect to treatment programmes remains fragmentary. Certain types of intervention appears to be effective, but yet more data is required.

Primarily, the solution to the problems of both domestic violence and child sexual assault has been seen in terms of legal intervention. Here, the role of the police has been regarded as crucial, it being the only agency offering a combination of the coercive power of the state and accusability. Indeed, in many countries the only service available to battered women, for example, twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, apart from hospital accidental units is the police. Moreover, unlike other social services, the police force offers an emergency telephone system and comprehensive geographical coverage.

Although the role of the police is critical, research which exists suggests that police response to domestic violence and child sexual assault is often inadequate. The reasons for this are various. First, the police underestimate the incidence of these abuses. Second, police are reluctant to intervene in what they are led to regard as "domestic problems". This can be for various reasons: out of respect for the privacy of the family, because of a mistaken vision of marital rights, because they believe the victim has "provoked" the violence, because they do not foresee a successful prosecution and, finally, because the police prefer to treat domestic crimes differently from crimes in other contexts, responding by mediation rather than law enforcement.

There is no doubt that the police role in the management of domestic violence and child sexual assault is ambiguous and the task very difficult. Much of the ambiguity and difficulty arises from conflicts within the rest of society and the entire legal system which all combine to underestimate and trivialise the abuses, removing them from the preview of the criminal system, relegating them to a ragbag of "social problems".

Ultimately, these ambiguities and difficulties will be removed only when all societies totally condemn wife and child abuse. In the short run, however, police management can be improved with adequate and new legal powers of entry, arrest and bail and well defined police policies which provide the individual operational officer with clear protocols to govern his or her response to the issue.

Police response will not, however, ever be adequate in the absence of proper training. Although domestic assault and child sexual abuse makes up a large proportion of police work and although the work is unpleasant, difficult, sometimes dangerous and always stressful for officers, very few jurisdictions

provide specific and adequate training to equip them for this task. It was in the light of this that the Women and Development Programme (WDP) of the Commonwealth Secretariat which mandated by Commonwealth Ministers for Women's Affairs at their meetings in 1985 and 1987, views violence against women as a priority area for action, in June 1988 called together senior police officers - in the main, Commissioners of Police and Senior Assistant Commissioners - from sixteen Commonwealth countries, representing the four regions of the Commonwealth to address the question of police training on violence against woman and child sexual abuse.

This Manual represents a compilation of the deliberations of the Workshop, it being the hope of WDP that it will assist police forces throughout the Commonwealth in their training programmes and techniques.

How to Use the Manual

The Manual addresses the six issues discussed at the meeting and is thus divided into the following sections:-

1. Police attitudes and sensitisation
2. Perspectives on offender profiling
3. Evidence and investigation techniques
4. Medical and forensic evidence procedures
5. Liaison with non-police organisations and referral agencies
6. Statistics, data collection and case management.

Each section summarises the discussions of the Police Training Workshop on the particular issue. Some issues were discussed following a specific presentation on the issue and where this is the case, the presentation has been included. Some, on the other hand, were discussed generally. The discussion of each issue raised specific recommendations, while a series of general recommendations, which participants felt were of paramount importance in the training of all and any police force in the Commonwealth, emerged during the course of the workshop. The general and specific recommendations appear as "Guidelines" in the Manual. The "Guidelines", however, do not claim to be exhaustive and are to be viewed in the context of each particular jurisdiction. The Manual, further, includes training modules used in police training in Great Britain and Canada. These have been included, not as models, but rather as examples of approaches to training that particular jurisdictions may wish to consider in the preparation of their own country and culture specific training packages. The Manual also includes in Appendix 1 two background papers which discuss the role of the police in domestic crime and finally, in Appendix 2 a number of country reports which highlight the fact that each Commonwealth jurisdiction, although showing the same problems of wife abuse and child sexual assault, have differing concerns and constraints.