DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN PHILADELPHIA

...Searching for Solutions

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Immigrants Residing in Philadelphia*

- In 1990, 28.4% of Pennsylvania’s immigrant population resided in Philadelphia.
- Philadelphia had the 14th largest immigrant population in the country among the nation's cities, more than 100,000, or 6.8%.
- During the past decade, the Asian population increased by 57.1% and the Hispanic Population increased by 44.5%

*1990 & 2000 Census Data
Philadelphia Immigrant Populations Top Ten Countries FY'91-'98*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>9,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>3,962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>China **</td>
<td>3,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>3,341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>1,965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>1,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>799</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1990 Census Data  ** includes Hong Kong and Taiwan

Immigrant women may be at a higher risk of becoming battered than US-born women due to:

- Cultural acceptances of DV
- Limited legal assistance and/or social services
- Limited interpretive or translation assistance services
- Distrust of the U.S. legal system
Project Objectives

- Review & critically analyze national, state & local policies regarding DV to ascertain support for immigrant clients;
- Identify extent to which DV agencies utilize and/or enforce national & local legislation;
- Develop database of zip codes from DV reported data in Philadelphia immigrant communities with plan to do GIS mapping;
- Develop evidence-based training, services & avenues for funding.

Expected Results

- Completed policy analysis of federal, state & local legislation - are there special provisions for immigrant women?
- Identification of local agencies' use & enforcement of laws on the books.
- Development of a database from DV reported data in selected communities.
- Completed recommendations for training, placement of services & possible funding based on evidence gathered.
Project Procedures

1) **Policy analysis:** Review and critically analyze national, state, and local policies regarding DV to ascertain support for immigrant clients

2) **DV Agency interviews:** Identify the extent to which DV agencies utilize/enforce national & local legislation

3) **Database development:** Develop a database of zip codes from DV-reported data in Philadelphia immigrant communities - for GIS mapping

These National DV Policies were Analyzed:

- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) 1994
- Violence Against Women Office
- Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)
- Immigration Marriage Fraud Act (IMFA) 1990
- Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA)
- Violence Against Women Act of 2000 (VAWA)
- Personal Responsibility & Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, a.k.a. Welfare Reform Act (WRA)
- Family Violence Option (FVO)
- Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA)
RESULTS

1) Policy Analysis

Within the last decade, numerous legislation has been passed addressing immigrant women victims. However, it is unclear the extent to which U.S. policy specifically addresses immigrant women and DV issues.

- There are no Pennsylvania policies which address immigrant women DV victims.
- There are no Philadelphia policies which address immigrant women DV victims.
- National policies specify provisions that entitle battered immigrant women to legal, social and economic support.
2) DV Agency Interviews

**Immigrants Served by Philadelphia DV Agencies (2001-2002)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DV Agency</th>
<th>% Immigrants served</th>
<th>Total served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women in Transition</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congreso</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Against Abuse</td>
<td>no data available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOAR</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran Settlement House</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) Database Development

- Database development did not occur - due to the lack of project data collected and limited resources provided by most agencies.

- However, we can still provide recommendations based on obstacles encountered...
## Obstacles Encountered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Client</th>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Level of discomfort</td>
<td>• Distrust in the legal system</td>
<td>• Compliance from agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Limited/non-bilingual staff</td>
<td>• Financial obstacles</td>
<td>• Determining specific data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Limited funding</td>
<td>• Lack of transportation</td>
<td>• Access to staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Access to client records</td>
<td>• State and local policies</td>
<td>• Confidentiality issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Religious and cultural beliefs</td>
<td>• Data collection issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Child custody</td>
<td>• Staff turnover</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Project Conclusions

- **Agencies providing DV services have very limited staff & depend on volunteers;**
- **Major priority for agencies was confidentially & protection of clients - often precluded demographic information;**
- **Local government does not have policies that address this issue;**
- **As “guardian of women’s health in Phila., our office must more effectively target funding and services to meet needs of at risk clients.”**
RECOMMENDATIONS

DV Agency Recommendations

Provide additional training: advise paid and volunteer staff of all current immigrant policies and support services

Empower clients: educate women about legal rights and civil liberties via culturally sensitive information and programs

Lobby/inform local government officials: as lobbyist, inform politicians and the public about DV issues

Increase collaboration: encourage effective coordination, consistent data collection, and record keeping among agencies

Encourage follow up: track victim’s progress; noting services and legal counsel provided by other agencies
Philadelphia Public Health Department Recommendations

Develop and implement training programs: The department could address the numerous races/ethnicities via a series of culturally sensitive and diverse programs or written materials.

Lobby government entities: The City could play a major role in recommending funding for expansion or implementation of new DV victim programs.

We still have much to do!