



*Project Monma is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to show that violence and discrimination is a global problem and is not confined to certain countries, religions or cultures and is therefore everybody's problem. Violence and discrimination by men towards women around the world is severely underreported, therefore under acknowledged.*

## **OUR STORY**

Founded by Johanna Higgs, PhD researcher and activist, Project Monma is currently working on a number of income generation, education and research projects around the world to help women and girls affected by violence and discrimination. One of our major goals is to raise awareness about the endemic levels of violence and discrimination against women and girls globally through activism, research and the media.

## **OUR GOAL**

Through our awareness raising events and research projects we hope we can continuously encourage people around the world to recognize that violence and discrimination against women and girls is a global problem and encourage them to be part of the movement for change in their own homes and communities.

## **HOW WE RAISE AWARENESS**

One of the ways in which Project Monma aspires to help women and girls overcome poverty and discrimination is through supporting small collectives of women who are working together to make local handicrafts. We are currently selling beautiful handmade paper jewellery made by women in Uganda and the Congo which are currently displayed on Project Monma's website for sale. Each piece of jewellery (necklaces, earrings and bracelets) is given a name in the Acholi language with universal meanings such as independence, hope and strength giving each item a particular story in regards to the obstacles women around the world face. We are also currently working with a small women's collective in Cauca, Colombia, a region that has been heavily hit by the long running armed conflict. There have been a number of cases of women who have disappeared and girls who have suffered torture and sexual violence. There have been cases of armed men entering the homes of farmers in the region and raping the women and girls. We have a range of beautiful handmade jewellery as well as a selection of

handmade beaded and woolen bags. These handicrafts can be the focus when hosting a bead party to raise funds while at the same time raising awareness of discrimination and poverty facing women throughout the developing world.

We have also conducted a number of short term research projects in different parts of the world including one on honour killings, in Iraq Kurdistan and more recently how the presence of ISIS has affected women. We have cycled across Zimbabwe to raise awareness of the limitations placed on women's movement, both domestically and internationally, conducted projects on human trafficking in both Argentina and Madagascar, spoken with Sahrawi refugee women in refugee camps in southern Algeria, met with women in the Maldives to discuss how democracy has affected women, travelled through Lebanon and Turkey speaking with Syrian women about their experiences of violence. Our goal is to use the findings of these research projects by publishing articles, giving talks and raising attention through the media. We have given talks in Dubai, Sweden, Bahrain, Latvia, South Africa and the United Kingdom highlighting the pertinent issue of violence against women.

## **OUR PUBLICATIONS, PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

In addition, to publishing theme-based reports on different aspects of the struggle women world-wide face, Project Monma also produces a half-yearly, peer-reviewed academic journal through its research centre, The International Journal for Intersectional Feminist Studies (IJFS). It aims to publish research, reports, and literature reviews relating to intersectional feminist theory and/or relevant to issues of gender broadly (the way that gender is represented, codified, consumed, or challenged within certain contexts, for example). IJFS is designed to be an interdisciplinary journal, and we encourage young scholars and students within all relevant disciplines to submit their work for publication. Project Monma also delivers presentations at universities to discuss with students their concerns on violence and discrimination against women.

Project Monma also regularly publishes articles related to our work on the United Nations website Pass Blue and is a regular contributor to the Huffington Post where we report on the findings from our research projects. We have also featured in a number of newspapers, radio shows and news channels in Australia, South Africa and Latvia.

Project Monma is currently overseeing a range of long term research projects in India, Tunisia as well as conducting a survey on male perspectives on violence against women project.

## **HOW IS VIOLENCE COMMITTED AGAINST WOMEN?**

Violence against women takes many forms – physical, sexual, psychological, and economic. These forms of violence are interrelated and affect women from before birth to old age. Some types of violence, such as trafficking, cross national boundaries. Women who experience violence suffer a range of health problems and their ability to participate in public life is diminished. Families and communities are also harmed across generations which reinforce other violence prevalent in society. Sexual violence occurs when a woman is forced to engage in sex without her consent, and attempted or completed sex acts with a woman who is ill, disabled, under pressure or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Other forms of violence include:

- Discrimination based on religion, race or disability
- Conflict- related sexual violence (women have been raped in every war as retaliation, as damage to another man's property, and as a message to the enemy)
- Forced and early marriages
- Dowry murder
- Acid-throwing
- Honour Killings
- Female genital mutilation
- Trafficking ( including the use of women's bodies to carry drugs)
- Intimate partner violence, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse

Violence against women has serious health/economic consequences:

- Death
- Physical injuries
- Unintended pregnancies, induced abortions

- Sexually transmitted infections, including HIV
- Depression, post-traumatic stress disorder
- Harmful use of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol

## **ADVOCACY AND ITS CHALLENGES**

“According to the World Health Organisation in 2013, 70 per cent of women experience violence in their lifetime and 1 in 3 women will experience physical/ sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in her life.”<sup>1</sup>

This demonstrates the importance of advocacy because gender-based violence is a form of discrimination against women and is a fundamental violation of the right to life, liberty and security of person. Advocacy to end violence against women is closely linked with the elimination of discrimination, which in turn, is necessary to achieve full equality between men and women. In regards to sexual violence, an obstacle is that of stigma since a woman's story and survival of sexual violence remains an issue of deep shame for the individual, her family and sometimes her community.

Another challenge is that advocates working at the system level must always keep the practical needs of victims in mind when changing policies and system. Those who advocate for the human rights of women may be at risk of the very human rights violations they are attempting to remedy. Women human rights defenders may experience gender-based discrimination, prejudice, public repudiation, threats of and actual violence against them.

## **WHY OUR WORK IS IMPORTANT**

It is important to fight against these forms of violence so that women and girls, particularly in the developing world, live their lives without fear of physical, verbal and sexual violence. Project Monma's work is crucial in gathering support to replace the fear in the lives of these woman and girls with empowerment, motivation, inspiration and strength. We hope for your support in these projects so a difference is not only made but continued.

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, London School of Hygiene and

