Maria Jose Alcala

Conseillère, Ending violence against Women, Fonds de développement des Nations Unis pour la femme

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Maria Jose Alcala

Advisor on Ending Violence Against Women at UNIFEM.

Maria Jose Alcala is currently Sr. Advisor on Ending Violence Against Women at UNIFEM. Her tasks include providing overall strategic direction and technical assistance, and oversight of the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, established by the General Assembly. She was previously Senior Technical Advisor on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Technical Support Division. Her 18 years of international development work include both UN and non-governmental organizations and have focused on poverty and development, human rights, gender equality/women’s empowerment, sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, adolescents and youth. Her expertise covers policy-oriented advocacy, strategy development and programme design. During her work with NGOs in the 1990s, she played a key role in mobilizing a global advocacy coalition and developing the key consensus documents on negotiation language that influenced the final agreements at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. She was also involved in helping to place maternal mortality as a women’s rights and public health priority, particularly in Latin America. Born in Argentina and a national of Spain, Ms. Alcalá holds a Master’s Degree in International Affairs (International Political Economy) from Columbia University.

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Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls: Generating the Evidence through Impact Evaluation

María Jose Alcala, Senior Advisor, Ending Violence against Women Section, UNIFEM Workshop 4, Evaluation Methods ICPC, Montreal, Canada 8 December 2009
Global Safe Cities Programme

- Sexual harassment/rape in public spaces = universal
  - Accepted as ‘normal’ part of women’s life in cities
  - Lack of policy attention (laws, responses, etc)
  - Fear/insecurity/limits mobility
  - Restrictions on full participation in public life – citizenship (political, economic, social, cultural)

  Hidden costs to women/girls, families, communities, development

- Draws on pioneer work (women’s networks, Toronto)

- **Aim**: develop + prove a model for worldwide upscaling demonstrating how VAW prevalence can be reduced

- 1st rigorous cross-regional evaluation/select cities (impact)
Programme Premise from an Evaluation Perspective

‘value added’ on issues of universal relevance:
- VAW = pervasive human rights violation
- Safe Cities for Women = ½ population, high levels of fear/insecurity, context of global urbanization

⇒ global knowledge base
- limited evidence-base, documentation + evaluation to date
- less so in prevention (high-impact + cost-effective strategy)

⇒ right timing - global policy momentum
- policy commitments, donor trends (MDG 3)
- Secretary-General’s End VAW Campaign (2015)
- Trends: emphasis on evaluation + evidence-based programming
Evaluation, Power of Knowledge

⇒ Strategic investment in evaluation
   ...with public safety benefits for all community members
   ...with potential benefits for overall VAW prevention
   (continuum of private to public spaces)

⇒ Generate and disseminate proven knowledge on `what works/what’s effective’ to...

• sustain political will on violence prevention
• garner and increase resource allocations
• guide cost-effective, high-impact investments
• increase investments in VAW prevention at large
• inspire increased investments in evaluation for gender equality (including impact evaluations)
• strengthen accountability (if it works, harder to say ‘no’)