

# Gender and gun violence

## Guns kill and injure more men than women

- Over 90% of gun homicide victims are men.
- Of the 50,000 people who commit suicide with a gun every year, 88% are men.
- Although women and girls are not the majority of direct victims, they are affected by gun violence in a range of ways. Low status or lack of legal protection can make women more vulnerable, whether in war zones or peaceful nations. Every year, many thousands of women and girls are shot, traumatised, intimidated, enslaved, robbed and raped at gunpoint.

## A gun in the home does not protect women

- In the US, having a gun in the home increases the overall risk of someone in the household being murdered by 41% and for women the risk is tripled.
- A study in high-income countries found that where guns were more available, more women were killed.

## Guns make intimate partner violence lethal

- A US study found that when a gun is present in the house, the likelihood that intimate partner violence is lethal increases five-fold.
- When guns are used in intimate partner violence, it increases the chance of death by 12 times compared to other means of violence.
- In France, which has 30 guns per 100 people, 33% of women killed by their partners are shot. In the US, which has 96 guns per 100 people, this percentage rises to 66%.

## Gender stereotypes are socially constructed

- The link between men and arms is not a biological result of being a man. Men and women in most cultures are socialised to regard violence as an integral element of masculinity.
- A study in the US shows that half of 10-year old boys cannot distinguish toy guns from real ones, nor can they resist touching a gun if they find it by accident.
- Instituto ProMundo in Brazil has shown that working with men using educational activities and group discussions can promote non-violent behaviour and attitudes regarding sexuality, conflict and anger-management.
- It is inaccurate to identify women solely as victims and men as perpetrators of violence. Women are not just victims of guns: they are survivors, carers, activists; as well they also encourage the demand for guns, and are gun users themselves.
- Research in Brazil shows that women can support men's use of guns by hiding/ carrying guns or by regarding men who carry guns as attractive.

## Women as well as men need to be included in activism against gun violence

- Women have taken leadership roles in peacebuilding work, violence prevention and education about gun violence all over the world.
- Women in Brazil have been instrumental in pushing for tighter gun laws at the state and national level, and are now actively organising to pass a referendum that would ban gun sales throughout the country.
- Liberian women from all faiths and levels of society took part in a mass action for peace in 2003, gaining access to key meetings during the peace negotiations.
- Despite this, women are still underrepresented in decision-making processes. The Security Council's Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, which was five years old in October 2005, provides a platform for women's voices to be heard in war zones and the aftermath.