

The China Anti-Domestic Violence Network
An evaluation of social impacts

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Commissioned by NOVIB

March 2006

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1. Background: Fighting Domestic Violence in China

Before 1995, the term “domestic violence” was virtually unknown in China. Traditional Confucian values subordinated women to men and there was no particular stigma attached to “wife-beating.” The ideology of state socialism preached that with the Old Society overthrown, New China should be a place of harmony, so social issues such as violence against women were taboo subjects. The 1995 UN Women’s Conference changed all that, opening the eyes of both non-governmental activists and the All China Women’s Federation to the fact that this was not a private family matter but a violation women’s rights. In the years following the Women’s Conference, some first steps were taken by ACWF, academics and non-governmental organizations to study and begin raising awareness about DV in China.

By 1999, a critical mass had formed of both interested Chinese feminists and international donors. A consortium including NOVIB, Ford Foundation, SIDA, and the Human Rights Center of Oslo University made an initial, three-year grant to the China Law Society for a project called. “Domestic Violence in China: Research, Intervention, Prevention.” The project included a number of experimental interventions, research, training and awareness-raising. It also sought to build a national anti-DV network.

In May 2003, the donor consortium made a second three-year grant in support of the China anti-Domestic Violence Network (DVN, also known as the “Network for Combating Domestic Violence in China”). Its goals were to build on the experiences of the initial project by expanding the DVN’s membership, providing support for anti-DV work in the provinces, providing gender training to government officials, promoting legislation, working with the media, and carrying out research.

The Second Phase of work is now nearly complete. The DVN is making plans for its future work, and the donors are considering what type and scale of support to provide. It is therefore a good time to assess the project’s social impacts. This evaluation was carried out by a team of two, one hired by the donors and one hired by DVN, and was supported by the DVN Secretariat. (Brief CVs of consultants are attached as Appendix h.)

2. Executive Summary

The anti-Domestic Violence Network (DVN) is a vital force in the fight to end violence against women in China. It has made extremely effective use of the media to raise public awareness, has written or contributed to legislation, and has promoted a Multi-Agency Cooperation Intervention Model (MACIM) to mobilize the full range of government agencies in the fight against domestic violence. These have without question improved the lives of countless victims of DV. Furthermore, these outcomes would not have been possible without a network structure to perform key central support and coordination functions.

Impacts on Beneficiary/Stakeholder Groups

The number and variety of services and support for **victims** of DV have increased dramatically during Phase Two of the Network. Both inside and outside of pilot project areas, victims now have much greater access than before to hotlines, support groups, shelters, legal aid and anti-DV work stations. In many areas, the rate and effectiveness of intervention in DV cases has improved due to greater awareness and coordination among relevant enforcement agencies. In some of the pilot intervention areas, the number of DV cases has begun to decline.

Trainees have come to see DV as a social problem and a crime, not just as a private issue to be kept within a family. The more intensive participatory gender training has left a deep impression on both partner organization staff and on Network members, and is recognized as a vital support to efforts to transform institutions. Participation in DVN activities has also been an empowering and intellectually rewarding experience for **individual Network members**.

The **government** has been influenced in two ways. First, the Multi-Agency Cooperative Intervention Model has taken hold more deeply in the areas in which it was piloted in Phase One, and has begun to spread beyond those areas, changing the everyday procedures of a whole range of institutions from the village to the provincial level. Second, legislation has been passed affirming the criminality of DV and the government's responsibility to stop it. Legislation has served to reinforce MACIM, especially when it clearly specifies the obligations of different government agencies *via a vis* DV, giving them a clear mandate. In most cases, however, DV-related laws still require detailed regulations to guide enforcement.

Raising awareness and educating people about DV through **the media** has been one of the DVN's signal accomplishments in both the First and Second Phases. Successful media work creates a groundswell of public attention that pressures government agencies to act against DV, creating the conditions for legislative reform and MACIM.

The Network has developed a supportive and influential relationship to **ACWF**, its

most important partner. At the national level, the Rights and Interests Department of ACWF has worked closely with DVN in developing legislation. At the provincial level and below, WFs are the most important members of the DVN, and they are the agency that coordinates the MACIM. Local WFs credit their recognition that fighting DV is their (and the government's) obligation to DVN.

Overall, the DVN has exercised a remarkable degree of influence with the government and ACWF, changing legislation, institutions and practices in ways that have direct and positive impacts on victims of domestic violence.

The Network: Functions, Strengths, Governance

The DVN has undergone continuous growth and development since its initiation as a set of separate projects linked only by a Management Committee made up of project leaders. During this time, the successes of the Network's different activities have proved the many advantages of the network approach: mobilization of diverse groups, efficient use of resources, effective communication, enhanced credibility, and collective solidarity.

The Network's evolution as an organization has been impressive, and DVN has shown a dedication to the highest ideals of professional, democratic and participatory NGO management. Despite challenges along the way, DVN has now put into place a democratic governance structure that effectively separates decision making from day-to-day management. The shift of some leaders of subprojects to serve on the Board of Directors has, however, hampered the performance of the projects. The major goal of expanding the Network's coverage outside of Beijing has been achieved, and non-Beijing members are able to participate in network discussions and planning. The biggest challenges to governance have been guaranteeing a high level of transparency and effective internal and external communication, but this is understandable given the size and diversity of the Network.

Recommendations

Priority Strategic Approaches

Advocacy. There should be a shift from writing laws to advocacy. A campaign approach to promote enforcement of anti-DV provisions in the Marriage Law and Law For Protection of the Rights of Women could combine the Network's legal expertise and strength in media work and focus them on reaching some concrete goals.

Beyond pilots. MACIM is now being implemented, and has a life of its own even in some areas outside the demonstration sites. DVN can shift away from intensive funding of specific pilot sites and continue supporting the spread of MACIM.

Mainstreaming. Successful awareness and legislation work over the past six years have laid the ground work and begun to generate a “market” for fighting DV, but DVN needs to do more on two fronts. First, anti-DV education needs to be integrated into the formal education system and training systems of government agencies, as well as medical schools. Second, to create greater legitimacy and generate more resources for fighting DV, it needs to be more closely linked to official ideology (e.g. “Harmonious Society”) and major government initiatives.

Network Functions

Strengthening the network (as opposed to establishing new subprojects) should continue to be a high priority. The Secretariat, web site, Materials Center, Training, and Media should be more explicitly recognized as core Network functions, and not treated as subprojects.

Member services should be upgraded, with a focus on facilitating exchange among members and providing them with technical and training support.

External communication, including English-language communications and donor management, also needs improvement

Improved indicators and systems for **monitoring and evaluation** should be put in place Network-wide.

DVN should also re-think its knowledge-generation and knowledge-sharing processes explore more interactive and bottom-up means of internal **learning**.

Donors

The return on investment in this project has been remarkably high, and the disappearance of DVN due to lack of donor support would seriously hamper the fight against DV in China. Continued donor support for the DVN is therefore strongly recommended.

Based on the recommendations above for strengthening core Network functions, donors should provide more resources for personnel carrying out Network coordination, communications and member services.

3. Objectives and Methodology

The mandate for the evaluation came directly from the terms of reference provided by the donors:

The main objectives of this evaluation are to help both funding agencies and project implementers to fully understand social impacts the project has brought about to the society, particularly in terms of attitude change, behavior change and change of gender role in the society regarding domestic violence against women. To be more specific, the evaluation will reveal to what extent, impacts are made to:

** The family/professional life, interpersonal relations, attitude and behaviors of the beneficiaries/trainees*

** External and internal stakeholder of the network including government, women's federation, public media, group and individual network members;*

** The way how (sic) the Network functions as a national centre for anti domestic violence in China, positive experiences and lessons learnt. (Evaluation TOR, appendix b.)*

Based on these broad objectives, we formulated a more detailed set of research questions. The format of project reports from the DVN has always followed the structure of the project proposals and budgets, with brief sections on each of the sub-projects' activities and outcomes. In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the evaluation is designed to focus instead on the impacts on different target groups, and to shed light on the effectiveness of the DVN as a Network, not just a collection of sub-projects.

Research questions were grouped into two main categories:

1. A set of specific questions about impacts on each of the different target/beneficiary groups.
2. A set of specific questions about the organizational governance, functions and effectiveness of the Network.

Additional questions were later added, to understand the operation of subprojects and get stakeholders views on how the Network might develop in the future. For the full list of research questions, see Appendix c.

Challenges of Evaluating DVN

Because domestic violence is generally a covert activity, collecting reliable data and trying to measure the effectiveness of prevention or enforcement is inherently challenging. For ethical as well as practical reasons, we did not have direct access to victims of domestic violence. Cases of DV that are never reported are invisible to the researcher, as are cases that are reported as something other than domestic violence. Indeed, DVN recognized early on that the fact that domestic violence remained socially and legally invisible in China was perhaps the most important obstacle to its

elimination. One of the major goals (and achievements) of the DVN is to end this invisibility, to make domestic violence a recognized, public problem. But this raises another methodological issue: How are we to assess a change in the frequency of reported cases? In a society in which every instance of domestic violence was reported, an increase in cases would indicate an increase in violence. But in China, an increase in cases may on the contrary indicate that women who otherwise would have suffered in silence have become aware of their rights and are instead taking action to protect themselves. On the other hand, once the issue is widely recognized, continued increases in reporting cannot forever be seen as a positive sign.

In addition to the methodological issue of how to measure illicit activity, there is another challenge in evaluating the effectiveness and impact of the DVN. Indicators of impact should be specified at the beginning of a project, to serve as verifiable means for measuring outcomes once the project is completed. Ideally these should be quantitative and easily measurable, e.g. change in birth weight or mortality rate or literacy in a specified target population over a specified time period. And some baseline data should be already available or should be collected as part of the project. In the case of the DVN, however, no set of indicators was specified in advance, (nor was this required by the donors) and although a public attitude survey that could serve as a baseline was carried out, there has been no follow up survey. In addition, the changes the project seeks to make are generally not easily measurable using simple quantitative units. (For instance, what single indicator could measure something like “network effectiveness?”)

The distinction between correlation and causation presented another challenge. Using a conventional, quantitative set of indicators, it is often difficult to be sure that one thing caused another, as opposed to simply being associated with it for some other reason. There is a danger of assuming that because, for instance, anti-domestic violence legislation was introduced following the start of the DVN, it must mean that the DVN was responsible for that outcome. On the other hand, an assessment that only included cases in which causation could be proved would leave out many instances in which DVN may have been an important contributing factor.

Finally, the sheer size of the Network and scope of its activities also presented practical challenges in carrying out the evaluation. The DVN membership is almost nation-wide, there are nine sub-projects (if the Network Management and Board of Directors are counted as sub-projects), and it was also necessary to interview donors, partners and others working on domestic violence in China. And all of this was to be carried out by two evaluators, each contracted for a total of 15 days work.

The Evaluation Methodology

Despite all of these challenges, we feel that we were able to design and implement a reasonably thorough and reliable evaluation of the China DVN’s social impacts. The

challenges mentioned above are not unique to the DVN project evaluation: they are the realities of attempting to assess programs addressing complex social problems. After agreeing on the research questions and carrying out an initial document review, we developed a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators for each of the research questions in consultation with DVN. We also charted our interview subjects against the research questions, to make sure would have multiple data sources to answer each question. By having multiple data sources for each question, we hoped to increase the reliability of our findings. We also hoped to move beyond one-to-one cause and effect equations and get a better understanding of the more subtle relationships and forms of influence used by DVN in fighting domestic violence. And we were very fortunate to have the full cooperation of the DVN itself throughout the evaluation process. They provided input into the research plan, helped arrange interviews, and gave us access to documentary materials for review. They also assisted in collecting a great deal of quantitative data, allowing us to focus more on qualitative questions during the interviews. The full list of research questions, interview subjects, and quantitative and qualitative indicators constituted our Research Plan, which is attached as Appendix c. Based on this plan, we conducted interviews with a total of 57 people. (see Appendix d.) Interviews took the form of focus group sessions and individual, semi-structured discussions in person and on the telephone. We used a standardized data collection form that included: time, date, location, interviewer, subject, which research question was being addressed, and which sub-project and evaluation question the interview (focus group) was relevant to. This format allowed us to easily manage data so that, for instance, all the notes and responses from many different interviews and focus groups relevant to evaluation question 1e (“What have been the changes in attitude, behavior of media?”) could be cut and pasted from the interview notes and grouped together for analysis. At the same time, it was flexible enough to allow a free-flowing discussion with interview subjects, and to accommodate new or unexpected topics. An example of a completed interview form is attached as Appendix e.

Shortcomings and Limitations

The evaluation would have benefited considerably from a longer time frame and more resources for data collection. DVN project sites outside of Beijing and DVN members outside of Beijing are not as well represented as they should be in our findings. Even more important, there are several valuable sources of information on DVN being prepared but not yet finalized at the time of this writing, including a questionnaire given to DVN members by researchers at Qinghua University, a Strategic Plan for the next phase of DVN’s work, a review and analysis of the Multi-Agency Cooperation Intervention Model and an internal evaluation of the Network. All of these should be completed within the next few months, and will provide information that will be essential for assessing the Network’s impacts and thinking about its future.

4. Findings

Social Impacts

4a. Changes in family life, interpersonal relations, attitudes and behavior of beneficiaries.

As mentioned earlier, it would be deceptive to use a change in the number of reports of DV alone as an indicator of either positive or negative changes in the lives of victims. For instance, in one project area the number of cases of DV has gone down, (Interview 4) whereas other areas reported large increases in calls to hotlines, (QII) but these are not necessarily conflicting results. The former is an area that has seen intensive awareness-raising and other interventions over the past five years, whereas the increase in calls to the hotline came immediately after a set of high-profile anti-DV billboards were put up in new areas.

In fact, this seems to reflect the general status of anti-DV work in China six years after the start of the DVN. In the country as a whole, the challenge is still one of raising awareness, and there is ample evidence of increased media attention and sensitivity to DV issues as a result of DVN action. One concrete way that this translates into benefits for victims of DV is that abusers have become aware for the first time that DV is a crime, and in two cases, former wife beaters stated that this realization led them to stop. (Int.22, int.4)

In the pilot intervention sites, (as well as one province that has adopted the Multi-Agency Cooperative Intervention Model {MICAM} under the influence of, but without funding from DVN), the impacts are not restricted to increases in awareness. They have advanced farther along several lines:

1. Victims have increased access to help. For example:
 - Sixteen training workshops for battered women have been carried out by DVN, providing 2,107 battered women with services such as shelter and legal aid. (QII)
 - A number of victim support groups have been set up in both urban and rural pilot areas. (QII)
 - In Hebei Province, 4 cities and 21 counties have built new shelters in the past three years. (Int. 20)
 - In Yanqing County, fifteen anti-DV work stations have been set up in towns and villages. (Int. 21)
 - DV hotlines have been established and publicized in major cities and project areas.

2. The rate or effectiveness of intervention is improved. For example:

- In all pilot (subproject) areas, the greater recognition that DV is a crime has sensitized staff in relevant agencies (including police, neighborhood committees, People’s Procuratorate, courts, WF, hospitals), and this has brought about a greater responsiveness and willingness to intervene in cases of DV. Several mentioned taking a more proactive, preventive approach instead of waiting for the victim to come forward. (Int. 4, 5, 16, 20, 21, 22)
 - In the urban community pilot project, the intervention rate increased from 50% to 100% and the rate of successful resolution (i.e. no further violence) has increased to 98%. (Int. 22)
3. Institutions are becoming more gender sensitive in their treatment of DV cases. For example:
- In Hebei Province, there are specific procedures through which battered women who kill their abusers can get special consideration and reduced sentences. (Int. 20)
 - In Hebei, 24 cities and counties have been required to set up special facilities in their courts to address the special circumstances of DV cases. (Int. 20)
 - In rural Changsha, a local WF official testified in 18 DV cases, and convinced the judge or prosecutor to take actions favorable to the victim. (Int. 4)
4. The number of reported cases has begun to decline, seemingly because of an actual reduction in DV rather than a failure to report. For example:
- In the urban pilot intervention site, officials reported that the number of DV cases has fallen as a result of the project (Int. 22)
 - In the two areas of Changsha that collected data on DV cases, the numbers fell from 2003 to 2004. (Int. 11)
 - In one rural area, local officials said that the number of cases of DV has fallen since 2003. (Int. 4)

4b. Changes in professional life, interpersonal relations, attitudes and behavior of trainees

Gender training (carried out by the Beijing and Tianjin Gender and Development Group) has been recognized by all as a key component of the DVN since the inception of the project’s first phase in 2000. One trainer who has been involved since the earliest days noted that the training changed the attitudes and behavior even of some people who had worked on women’s issues for years, and who initially didn’t think they needed participatory gender training. (Int. 10) In Phase Two, gender training continued, with an emphasis on moving beyond DVN members and project staff to provide training to partner organizations such as police, neighborhood committees, People’s Procuratorate, courts, media, local Women’s Federations, and hospitals.

There was widespread agreement that gender training had helped change trainees' basic views of DV by dispelling three misconceptions:

1. The traditional view that "wife beating" is normal and even justified in some situations.
2. The view that DV is a private matter, no one's business but the husband and wife.
3. The belief that even if it's not just a family matter, DV is not something that the trainees him or herself has an obligation to address. (Int. 4, 5, 16, 20, 21, 22)

But in addition to participatory gender training - which requires three days, small groups of trainees and a sophisticated methodology - a second type of training has become more common during Phase Two. This training tends to be done in a lecture style, (one interviewee called it a more "Chinese style") uses less time, and can cover a larger audience than participatory training, and it focuses more specifically on Domestic Violence. This "anti-DV training" has been much more practical for scaling up to a wider variety of audiences and larger numbers of trainees. For example, as part of the medical intervention pilot project, 2500 staff have received pre-job anti-DV training. (Int. 16)

An interviewee from the Training sub-project complained that the other subprojects often called the GAD group for participatory gender training when what they really wanted was anti-DV training. She said that the more truly participatory training in Phase One had a very deep effect on trainees, seeming to imply that the anti-DV training does not. (Int. 10)

The sustainability of training, or rather the sustainability of pilot project efforts without continuous training, was a concern for some interviewees. Interviewees from pilot projects were concerned that when staff of participating government agencies who had received training rotated to other positions (as is standard practice in Chinese government) their replacements would revert to old ways of thinking and behaving. Asked whether training might be continued, but paid for by the agencies whose staff are being trained, an interviewee from the Training subproject pointed out that the training is not demand-driven but is part of a process of convincing agencies to be more responsive to DV, and because of this is not something the DVN could ever hope to ask compensation for. For the same reason, she said that training could not be mainstreamed into the regular training systems of these agencies, adding that participatory gender training is also extremely difficult to learn and this would make TOT a challenge in these agencies. On the other hand, a WF official from Hebei Province said that anti-DV training there is demand-driven. This is because Hebei has regulations that require specific action on DV from various departments, so they actually request training from the WF and see it as helping them carry out their mandate.

4c. Changes in professional life, family life, attitude, behavior of Network members.

All individual network members acknowledged increased understanding and awareness of DV due to participation in the network. For instance, one member had previously thought of DV as “less important than other forms of VAW,” but has learned that “all forms of VAW are interrelated and reinforce each other.” (Int. 10) Another said that she had initially assumed that all victims of DV were poor rural women, until the web site started receiving emails from women like herself: urban, educated, middle class. (Int. 3)

Membership in the Network also brought a sense of belonging. One interviewee talked of how much she has enjoyed the collegiality of working with colleagues on a common goal, and of how supportive her husband and son have been to her work. Her son helped her download materials on DV from the internet, telling her at one point after looking through case materials, “In the future, I’ll never ever beat my wife!” (Int. 17) Another said that although she feels somewhat cut off from society in her everyday work, participation in the network has given her a chance to reconnect with and contribute to society. (Int. 12)

4d. Changes in attitude, behavior (e.g. enforcement or response to DV) of government organizations.

DVN’s influence on government departments and agencies must be considered one of the signature accomplishments of the Network. This has been accomplished through legislative advocacy and through promotion of the MACIM.

The Multi-Agency Cooperation Intervention Model in Action

Adoption of the MACIM, along with training for staff of all relevant departments, has radically changed the way that government addresses the issue of DV in the pilot project areas. At all levels, the WF is playing a new coordinating role, and several interviewees commented on both the novelty and effectiveness of cooperation among agencies. In Hebei province, for example, the WF Rights and Interests Dept has a DV Group at each administrative level (province, city, county) that provides coordination on DV issues and training for the other departments at that level: procuratorate, courts, police, health, etc. At the provincial level, WF covers costs of training for other groups; at lower levels it is being integrated into the regular professional training systems of other departments. (e.g. police officers, judges, etc.) (Int. 20)

Significantly, the new coordination and response mechanisms brought by the MACIM are not *ad hoc* or dependent on project funding, but constitute reforms of the rules and structures of everyday operations. New mechanisms for coordination and for fighting

DV, include:

- In the rural pilot project, the top levels of the county government required participation in a work conference on DV from more than 20 government and non-government (GONGO) agencies including the county government office, disability association, radio station, etc. (Int. 21)
- Since 2003, the city of Changsha has established a regular “Joint Working Meeting for Women and Children’s Right Protection” that brings together Party and government units including police, judiciary, Party discipline committee, civil affairs department, labor bureau, cultural affairs department, personnel department, and more. (Int. 5)
- Anti-DV work has also been incorporated into Changsha government’s annual performance appraisal practice. Two points will be given to those governmental units that have committed resources to achieve “zero-DV.” Anti-DV work has also been incorporated into local government’s main working document, “Strive for a Peace and Harmonious Changsha”. (Int. 5)
- An official from the People’s Procuratorate in Yanqing county found that MACIM has led to a new sharing of responsibility for addressing DV among units. She noted that the role of the Procuratorate has been broadened to include advising victims on how to get help from other agencies.
- The People’s Court in the county has invited and trained WF cadres to be jurors. This in turn has broaden the Court’s perspective in reviewing DV cases and insured that WF’s views are taken into account in DV cases. (Int. 21)
- In the People’s Court in You An Men District, there have been changes in court procedures both before and after a case is brought to court. In the past, they said “no suit, no court involvement.” They now have dedicated staff to discuss DV cases with people even before there’s a formal suit, and advise the parties on which course of legal action is appropriate. And when a case is tried, judges (having had DV training) are better prepared to adjudicate, and take into account the complexities of DV cases. (For instance, they used to think that if there’s a divorce case and DV is an element in it, then once the couple is divorced, there is no longer a DV issue. They now see that “it’s not that simple.” (Int. 22)
- In 2004, the first “Domestic Violence Collegial Court” in Hebei province was established in the Yuhua district of Shi Jiazhuang city. In 2003, the Yuhua district WF had carried out a series of campaigns entitled, “Fighting Domestic Violence, Saving Rights and Interests,” including a “Zero Domestic Violence Community.” Predicated on two successful collaborations, one on the establishment of the first community refuge for DV victims in Hebei province and the other on a domestic violence lawsuit requesting psychological damage compensation, (the first such case won by the plaintiff) the Yuhua district WF and People’s Court jointly established the “Domestic Violence Collegial Court” in January, 2004, to handle all domestic violence cases subject to their jurisdiction. (QII)

- Police in You An Men now recognize it as a legal issue and not a private family affair, and intervene more proactively in DV cases. They have a more standardized response to DV cases, and report them to other relevant units. They claim this, along with clearer roles for different agencies, makes all departments more effective in their responses. (Int. 22)
- In 2004, Fengtai Health Bureau made anti-DV work a regular part of hospitals' duties. Each hospital has a designated supervisor to lead anti-DV training and intake of cases, and DV intake and assessment is accepted as part of standard medical procedure. Tying hospital leaders have moved one step further by recognizing DV training as its staff's medical continuing professional education. (Int. 16)

One important indicator that government is taking the fight against DV seriously is the dedication of budgetary resources to support anti-DV work. There are a number of examples of this in recent years:

- A single district government in Changsha now commits an additional RMB 450,000 for anti-DV coordination and work in sixty villages; and has budgeted RMB 2 million per year for establishment of sixty village and neighborhood facilities to provide parental education, family planning, family mediation and DV education. (Int. 11)
- The Department of Women's Rights and Interests of the provincial ACWF of Hebei, (an organization affiliated to the Network) and those of a number of cities and counties in the province, obtained over 1.5 million RMB from the government to fund domestic violence work.
- In 2004, the city government of Xiaogan allocated 50,000 RMB and an office of 300m² to anti-DV initiatives.

Influencing Legislation

Thanks in large part to advocacy by the Network and DVN members, the state has come to revise, adopt and implement new policies and programs to specifically address the issue of domestic violence.

At the National Level

One product of the DVN's first phase was a proposed draft on Law on Prevention and Control of Domestic Violence, which was completed in early 2003. The draft was submitted to the Proposal Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress (NPC), but unfortunately did not appear on the schedule of laws for consideration in the following year's NPC. DVN may continue to promote consideration of the draft law in the future, but there is some debate among members about whether the focus of efforts should be to promote a specific DV Law or to "mainstream" DV into other laws.

Instead of passing a new Law on Prevention and Control of Domestic Violence, the NPC chose to revise the Law For Protection of the Rights of Women. Three DVN members served on the revision committee, and due to their efforts, the revised Law (like the revised Marriage Law several years earlier) includes clauses explicitly prohibiting domestic violence. It passed last year, and comes into effect in 2006.

A number of interviewees felt that although there have been some successes in influencing legislation, the focus of future work should be more on **enforcement** of existing laws.

Provincial, Municipal and City levels

DVN has contributed direct assistance and advice (including providing content, editorial and revision suggestions) to the enactment of the following provincial regulations on the prevention and control of domestic violence:

- On July 25th, 2003, the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Hubei province has passed *Resolutions on Preventing and Curbing Domestic Violence*
- On July 22nd, 2004, the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Hebei province has passed *Regulations on Preventing and Stopping Domestic Violence*.
- On May, 28th, 2005, *Regulations on Preventing and Stopping Domestic Violence of Liaoning Province* were adopted at the Nineteen Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth People's Congress of Liaoning Province.
- On September 28th, 2005, *Regulations on Preventing and Curbing Domestic Violence* of Hainan Province was adopted at the Nineteenth Session of the Third People's Congress of Hainan Province.

Regional representatives of the DVN have contributed directly to the passage and enactment of local regulations on the prevention and control of domestic violence in the following regions:

- On September 27th, 2003, the Standing Committee of the Tenth People's Congress of Shanxi Province has adopted at its Sixth Session *Resolutions of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Shanxi Province on Preventing and Curbing Domestic Violence*. They took effect on September 28th, 2003.
- On February 20th, 2004, the Tenth People's Congress of Anhui Province has discussed and adopted *Resolutions of the Anhui Province on Preventing and Curbing Domestic Violence* at its Eighth Session.
- On September 2nd, 2005, the Standing Committee of the Xi'an Municipality passed *Regulations of Xi'an on Preventing and Curbing Domestic Violence*.

Regional members of the DVN have also prepared or served as a resource for the promulgation of relevant policy papers and opinions in several instances:

- In April, 2004, the Langfang City Committee of Political and Legislative Affairs of the CPC Central Committee of Hebei Province forwarded *Propositions Regarding the Prevention and Extermination of Domestic Violence* issued by the five legal institutions including the Intermediate People's Court of Langfang City.
- Earlier 2004, the WF of Ningxia Province and the provincial Public Security Bureau issued *Suggestions about How to Thoroughly Implement the "Resolutions of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Ningxia Province on Preventing and Curbing Domestic Violence."*
- On April 28th, 2004, the provincial WF and Public Security Bureau of Henan province issued *Notice Regarding the Preventing and Curbing of Domestic Violence.*

The influence of DVN in Hebei Province has been especially strong. Although this is not a province that has received financial support as part of DVN, Hebei's WF was the first non-Beijing institutional member of the Network, and have taken full advantage of their close proximity to Beijing. Since 2000, Hebei WF staff have attended DVN meetings and training over 100 people/times. They have also brought officials for meetings and training, including the head of the Legal Work Committee of the Hebei Provincial People's Congress, and head of the Law Institute of Yuhua District, Shijiazhuang City.

The result of this relationship is one of the strongest provincial legislative frameworks in China for combating DV. Initially, Hebei WF planned to submit a "resolution," a statement of general principles like those that had been promulgated earlier in Hunan. After participating in DVN training and discussions, they decided instead to propose "regulations," which carry much more specific instruction on the responsibilities of related government agencies for implementation. As a result, Hebei is developing a MACIM as impressive as those in DVN-funded pilot areas such as Liaoning and Changsha. An interesting indication of how effective the Hebei initiative has been is the strong demand for DV training by the WF from other provincial agencies. Unlike pilot sites, where training is an effort to change attitudes and secure cooperation, in Hebei it is seen by these agencies as a practical way to learn how to carry out their legislative mandate. At the provincial level it is carried out by the WF, but lower down it is being mainstreamed into the training systems of other agencies.

Recognition by state and civil society

In the Fifth and Sixth country reports submitted by the Chinese government to the United Nations on the implementation of CEDAW, the Network projects and one of

its publications, a training manual to enhance public security workers' response to domestic violence, are cited as proof of state initiatives against domestic violence in China. This is ironic, since DVN is a *non*-governmental organization, but it reflects the Chinese government's recognition of the Network's role. The country report on the implementation of the Beijing Action Platform (1995) submitted by the Chinese government, also singles out the DVN as an important player in preventing VAW.

Civil society has recognized the value of anti-DV work done by local governments working with DVN. Twenty local governments were nominated for the national "Creative Chinese Local Government Award," in December 2003. The DVN rural pilot project in Yanqing County was a nominee, and the Qianxi County WF, an affiliated organization of the DVN, also won the honor. This award is founded and administered by non-governmental research institutes, the first of its kind in the realm of awards for governments from civil society in China.

(Information in this section adapted from QII, int. and discussions with DVN office.)

Medical Intervention Model

Tieying Hospital, site of the medical intervention demonstration during Phase One, has shared its experiences with a number of other hospitals during Phase Two. This has spread a new model of hospital management that incorporates DV assessment and DV training for medical professionals. It has also built a network of hospitals that are DV-sensitive and can continue learning from each other. And these networked hospitals have begun to reach out into communities, rather unexpectedly. Interviewees also noted a new challenge: increasing demands from partners and trainees for therapy-focused and specialized medical training that is beyond DVN's competence. (Int.16)

4e. Changes in attitude, behavior of media.

As stated earlier, one of the biggest obstacles to fighting DV in China is its invisibility, the fact that it is not acknowledged as a public, legal problem. Raising awareness is therefore a key element of anti-DV work. Phase One of DVN saw some important breakthroughs, such as the television drama *Don't Talk To Strangers*, which was written with assistance from DVN and helped make "domestic violence" a familiar term to the general public. But despite such early successes, there continued to be a strong need for media work in Phase Two. DVN's efforts to influence the Chinese media take two forms. First, there is a specific media subproject, implemented by Media Watch. Second, the media at different levels have been drawn into anti-DV work or reported on DVN activities at the urging of WF and local governments.

Exhaustive statistics on the total number of media reports were not available, but the following should give some idea of the impacts that DVN efforts have achieved:

- On the International Day Against Violence Against Women in 2004, several news media and programs focused on the issue of domestic violence, including “Heavy Wings” broadcast on CCTV’s *Documentary* and a public interview organized and published in the *Beijing Morning News*;
- The public counseling against domestic violence provided at the launch event of the Network’s book series was reported by 15 media including the Xinhua News Net, *Beijing Youth* and *Legal Evening Daily*;
- *China Women* published a regular “fighting domestic violence” column;
- The feature program, “Blowing Away DV,” was broadcast by Jinzhou TV station;
- An educational film on domestic violence was aired on the channel of Ningxiang TV;
- Liuyang TV station and *Liuyang Daily* devoted feature programs and reports on the issue of domestic violence;
- The Rural Intervention project of the Network participated in the production of several educational programs on DV in collaboration with both TV and radios. (DVN estimates that these programs reached 70% of the total populations of Yanqing county.)
- During the NPC and CPPCC meetings in 2005, three mostly watched channel programs of the CCTV (the Economic Channel’s “Two Conferences,” News Channel’s “News Meeting Room” and the Comprehensive Channel’s “Tell It Like It Is”) produced and broadcast programs focused on the issue of domestic violence.
- Since 2000, the Urban Intervention Project has been reported on and interviewed by 361 newspaper articles and 228 television programs.
- Since 2000, the Rural Intervention Project has been interviewed more than 60 times by the media.

A Resource for the Media

DVN achieved nationwide influence during Phase One by providing information and training to the scriptwriters for the popular TV drama series, *Don’t Talk To Strangers*. The Network’s media team and Network members continued to play the role of advisor and co-producer of a variety of programs during Phase Two:

- The Network participated in a joint production on a nationally broadcast domestic violence educational program with “Half the Sky” of CCTV. Many volunteers, batterers and battered women in both urban and rural areas have participated in the production and its promotion.
- On the 8th and 15th of 2004, the “Green Apple, Red Apple” of Central Education Television broadcast two programs, one named “V Day: Say No to Violence” and the other “Learning about the Female Body Again.” Both

programs discussed the play, *the Vagina Monologues*, and the significance of fighting domestic and sexual violence.

- On November 25, 2005, the director of the Network, the head of the Medical project at Tieying Hospital and chief personnel of the Urban project were interviewed on Beijing Radio's news program, "Focus Point."
- CCTV's "Tell It Like It Is" devoted an entire program on December 1st, 2005, to domestic violence. The program invited the then board director and program director of the urban community project to participate as a guest. Within five days after the broadcast, the program became a domestic violence hotline receiving more than 30 calls from 14 different provinces across the country. The callers included victims, batterers and their relatives. The program forwarded these calls to the relevant Network members both in and outside Beijing.
- At the end of January of 2004, the director and the standing assistant director of the Network were interviewed by the Beijing Today column of the Beijing Youth English paper. During the interview, they talked briefly about the status of domestic violence in China as well as some practical obstacles to the task of domestic violence intervention.
- In November, 2004, the provincial WF of Jilin, also a Network organization, did a report to sum about domestic violence issues discovered across the province during that year, stressing the importance of education and multi-agency cooperation in the public campaign to prevent and curb DV. Accordingly, the ACWF facilitated the publication of numerous articles on domestic violence education across a variety of widely circulated newspapers within the province, such as *City Evening*, *New Culture*, *East Asia Finance and Trade* and *Xiang Bao*. These educational efforts encouraged many women victims to seek public help. With the help of both the local media and ACWF, many women received aid.

In terms of *China Women's* reports on domestic violence, negative representations focusing on portraying women victims' weaknesses have been replaced by more and more positive representations showing women victims' active attempts to resist violence and seek help. Most reports have quit using discriminatory language, both explicit and implicit, in their descriptions of the victims. (Thesis research by a Network member)

Covering DVN

In addition to reporting about DV and efforts to stop it, the media have also reported specifically about the DVN and its projects:

Radio and television: People's Central Radio, Inner Mongolia People's Radio, Xinhua News Agency (including its general news, special news, feature program and Music and Video Entertainment Department), *Half of the Sky*, *Today's Perspective*,

Social Research, China Demographics, Life and Documentary of the CCTV, Law Time of Beijing Television; German Television;

Journals & Magazines: *China Women, Girl Friend, Life, News Weekly, Democracy and Law Special Edition;*

Newspapers: *China Women, People's Daily, China Daily, the Politics Committee Paper, Beijing Law Daily, Prosecutor Daily, Jiefang Daily, Beijing Morning Post, Beijing Daily, Beijing Evening News, China Youth, Beijing Youth, Worker's Daily, Health Time, The Beijing News, South Weekend, Family Weekend Edition, Yanzhao Metropolitan Paper, Housewife, Legal Service Time, Modern Professional Care, Dahe Bao, North Xin Bao.*

- On December 5th, 2004, the Network and the publisher of the project's book series, The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Press, held a book series launch event at a bookstore in Wangfujing shopping district. One of the DVN Image Ambassadors, Wang Tong, attended the event, and counseling on DV was made available to participants. The event was reported by more than ten print and internet media, such as *China Women, The Beijing News, Beijing Youth, Beijing Evening Post, Beijing Entertainment Bulletin, Law Evening, Xinhua Net* and Southeast Net.
- The Urban, Rural and Medical project sites are reported by the media numerous times, becoming major domestic violence news sources for the media.
- East Tieying Hospital and You An'men regions have also acquired a good reputation. During the Second Phase of the project, these sites were also interviewed by a variety of media from different perspectives, such as the feature program of Xinhua News Agency, the Life column of CCTV, Law Time of Beijing TV, *Law Daily, Jiefang Daily, Beijing Morning Post, Beijing Daily, Beijing Evening News, Beijing Youth, Health Time, The Beijing News* and so on.
- From May 2004 to April 2005, a special column on DV initiated and run by the Media sub-project continued in *China Women* and *Prosecutor Daily*, providing more information on DV through case analyses, introduction of relevant laws, and of newest research and action results. Between November 25 to December 9, 2004, a period dedicated to the U.N. 16-Day Campaign against Gender Violence, *China Women* added a column to introduce the campaign, using a great number of news reports, picture reports and feature interviews to promote a media campaign.
- Of the fifteen legal cases assisted by the Legal Aid sub-project of the Network, six cases have been reported both briefly and in detail by television, radio and print media. The "Screen, You and Me" program of Beijing TV devoted one individual session, called "Violence in the Encircled City," to discuss on particular case.

4f. Changes in attitude, behavior of Women's Federation.

National Level

Successful engagement with the All China Women's Federation has been key to achieving DVN's goals. Despite two decades of reforms, the state is still the most powerful force in Chinese society, and influencing state agencies is the biggest challenge for NGOs in China, whether local or international. Although technically considered a "mass organization," the ACWF is a GONGO: its budget and strategic direction both come from the government and its structure - from national to provincial to municipal to county levels - mirrors those of other state departments. And ACWF is often thought of as a weak shadow of other agencies, a passive propagandizer with no real power. DVN has adopted the role of ally and assistant to ACWF: inviting WF leaders to speak at DVN gatherings, providing training for WF staff, and giving WF a key coordinating role in the MACIM. At the same time, DVN has maintained its independence, and its research and interventions have gone far beyond the *status quo* of ACWF work on DV. In this way, DVN has been able to support more progressive provincial WF organizations while exerting a subtle pressure by example on ACWF nationally. As one interviewee put it, "The Women's Federation was a bit smug before, as if they were the only organization representing women's interests. The Network didn't criticize them, but it did give them some competition." (int. 12)

Interviewees from the ACWF voiced strong support for DVN's work and role in assisting the WF at different levels. The department of Women's Rights and Interests of the National ACWF has worked especially closely with DVN, inviting them to provide gender training for ACWF staff and cooperating on legislative issues. The Department also facilitated the broadcast of public service advertisements on domestic violence at prime time of the CCTV's film channel, in joint efforts with the Network. (QII) One ACWF suggested that because of its ties to researchers in a variety of institutions and fields, DVN could serve as a "think tank" for ACWF. (int. 23)

Provincial and local levels

DVN has promoted the idea that DV is a social problem, not a private family matter, and therefore the business of the government. This formulation puts WF into the role of advocate, insuring that different government agencies really live up to their responsibilities on behalf of victims of DV. The MACIM is an institutionalization of this new role for ACWF, and has led local WFs to be more proactive and effective in working with other agencies. (int. 5) This model has been implemented not only in the subproject areas (Beijing Urban and Rural Community subprojects, plus three provincial sites) but by provincial WF members of the DVN on their own initiative.

Twenty-four provincial WF branches have become institutional members of DVN. In

addition to the Hebei province case discussed earlier, the WF in Yanbian Korean Autonomous Region in Jilin Province has developed joint programs with the local Peoples Procuratorate for the identification and verification of DV-related injuries. The local WF Rights and Interests Department has a special unit for accepting and processing applications from DV victims, who then see the “injury department” at the local Procuratorate for formal examination and identification of injuries. This department has authority to provide a certificate of verification for the victim’s use in court. (QII)

Growing Gender Perspective

These provincial WF network members have received gender training from the Network, but have also incorporated a gender perspective into the training they provide. Some examples include:

- January 2004, the provincial WF of Hainan conducted a workshop on “Domestic Violence Intervention and Gender Awareness” at Haikou, in joint efforts with the Network. More than 170 people, mostly police officers, prosecutors, judges, and ACWF headpersons, attended the training.
- In mid April, 2004, the provincial WF of Jilin conducted a workshop on “Domestic Violence Intervention and Gender Awareness” at Changchun, in joint efforts with the Network. More than 60 people, mostly police officers, prosecutors, judges, and WF senior staff attended the training
- In July 2004, the first professional training workshop oriented to the WF staff leaders working on women’s rights issues was conducted in the Yinchuan Hui Autonomous Region. This was also the first training program in the region addressing gender awareness and the jury system. About 60 WF rights staff from different cities, counties and prefectures of the region participated in the workshop, 40% of who are Hui minorities.
- In Septembers 2005, the WF coordination team on women’s rights and interests of Hebei province carried out two sessions of a training program to promote and help the implementation of the *Regulations on Preventing and Control Domestic Violence of Hebei Province* among the local WF leadership. Over 400 provincial and local senior WF officials attended.
- In September 2005, the city WF and intermediate court of the City of Chifeng of the Autonomous Region of Inner Mongolia conducted professional legal training on gender and DV for 32 invited jurists. (QII)

Conclusions: Impacts on Stakeholder Groups

Despite the inherent challenges of measuring domestic violence, there is ample evidence from written records and interviews with stakeholders to confirm the impacts of the Second Phase of the DVN project. Changes were observed in the attitudes and behavior of individuals as well as the policies and practices of

institutions, representing the whole range of stakeholders in the issue of domestic violence:

The number and variety of services and support for **victims** of DV have increased dramatically during Phase Two of the Network. Both inside and outside of pilot project areas, victims now have much greater access than before to hotlines, support groups, shelters, legal aid and anti-DV work stations. In many areas, the rate and effectiveness of intervention in DV cases has improved due to greater awareness and coordination among relevant enforcement agencies. In some of the pilot intervention areas, the number of DV cases has begun to decline. And the broader public knowledge that DV is a crime, and not a “private matter” may be affecting abusers’ behavior, as well as empowering more and more victims to come forward.

Trainees have come to see DV as a social problem and a crime, not just as a private issue to be kept within a family. The more intensive participatory gender training has left a deep impression on both partner organization staff and on Network members, and is recognized as a vital support to efforts to transform institutions. Participation in DVN activities has also been an empowering and intellectually rewarding experience for **individual Network members**.

The **government** has been influenced in two ways. First, the Multi-Agency Cooperation Intervention Model has taken hold more deeply in the areas in which it was piloted in Phase One, and has begun to spread beyond those pilot areas. Instead of a temporary accommodation of the Women’s Federation in return for project funding, the changes taking place are permanent improvements in the everyday procedures of a whole range of institutions from the village to the provincial level. Second, legislation has been passed (nationally, in the revised Marriage Law, as well as at provincial and municipal levels) affirming the criminality of DV and the government’s responsibility to stop it. Legislation has served to reinforce MACIM, especially when it clearly specifies the obligations of different government agencies *via a vis* DV, giving them a clear mandate. In most cases, however, DV-related laws still require detailed regulations to guide enforcement.

Raising awareness and educating people about DV through **the media** has been one of the DVN’s signal accomplishments in both the First and Second Phases. Although China’s top leaders are not elected by the public, there is a sense that the government should respond to public concerns. Successful media work creates a groundswell of public attention that pressures government agencies to act against DV, creating the conditions for legislative reform and MACIM.

The most important institutional partner of the DVN is the **All-China Women’s Federation**, and the Network has developed a supportive and influential relationship to ACWF. At the national level, the Rights and Interests Department of ACWF has worked closely with DVN in developing legislation. At the provincial level and below,

WFs are the most important members of the DVN, and they are the agency that coordinates the MACIM. Local WFs credit their recognition that fighting DV is their (and the government's) obligation to DVN.

Overall, the DVN has exercised a remarkable degree of influence with the government and ACWF, changing legislation, institutions and practices in ways that have direct and positive impacts on victims of domestic violence.

Network functions, governance, effectiveness

4g. Advantages/disadvantages of DVN operating as a Network, as opposed to a set of individually-funded and managed projects

There was wide agreement, even among those who were critical of some aspects of Network management or governance, that having a network to coordinate and provide central service functions has been vital to the success anti-DV work in recent years. The main features mentioned are:

1. Diversity. The Network brings together individuals and organizations from government, NGOs and academia, and from a wide variety of fields: law, medicine, media, social sciences, etc. DVN has also placed emphasis on including men in their network and training, which one interviewee saw as an important difference and advantage compared with other women-centered programs. (int. 14) This diversity leads to synergies, learning and new solutions that would not otherwise be possible. (int. 10) Diversity within DVN is what makes the MACIM possible. If it was seen as a purely ACWF-driven initiative, it would be much more difficult to get support from other agencies.

2. Information Sharing: Member to Member. One of the key functions of any network is information sharing among members, and because DVN has members from a variety of different types of organizations, this has been an especially fruitful area of added value. Provincial WFs seems especially enthusiastic about what they have learned from each other and from non-WF members of DVN. Changsha WF learned from the experience of Yunnan Reproductive health activists, (int. 5) and Hebei WF learned about the experience of Anhui Province, where battered women's shelters are managed by the Department of Civil Affairs. (int. 20)

3. Information from Outside In. The website and newsletter also provide news about best practices in fighting DV from around the world. No other single source serves this function (Int. 23) A local WF official involved in one of the subprojects said that DVN "spreading of new ideas is far more important than monetary support." (Int. 5)

4. Information From Inside Out. Because of strong network media team and strategy, local members have excellent channels for publicizing their work. (Int. 10)

5. Legitimacy. Although DVN is not registered as an NGO, membership in this national network has still been useful for individuals and organizations trying to establish partnerships, get outside cooperation, petition for permission to work on DV in other areas. (int10) A municipal WF cadre from outside of Beijing said that her organization gained credibility because its membership in the Network, and this enabled them to successfully apply for additional government funds. (int. 5)

6. Resource Sharing. Another advantage of the Network is the sharing of common coordination and service functions. The DVN Office, (including the management team, web site and resource center) training department and media team provide services all Network members need, but that would be far too costly for Network members to pay for individually. For example, the Yanqing and Urban neighbourhood subprojects collaborated closely with the Media subproject to arise social attention. (Int. 15)

7. Solidarity. One interviewee cited the annual conference as a “treasured” opportunity for mutual support from colleagues working on this issue. (int. 13) Others talked about how they look forward to meetings, and how working with this community has given them a sense of belonging and identity.

4h. Cost-effectiveness of the Network

Budgets for internationally-funded projects in China seem to fall into the broad categories of either “doing more with less” or “less with more.” DVN falls into the former category. Despite low salaries and budgets, the Network Board, Secretariat and members are deeply committed to their work and take pains to stretch resources. The leader of the Training subproject described with some discomfort the way that her group cut costs so that many more trainings, each one with many more trainees than originally planned, could be accommodated. The media subproject is “outsourced” to another NGO, which reduces overheads for the Secretariat. And there are many examples of volunteers supplementing the work of paid staff and of successful securing of matching funds from government for project activities. (See answer to 4d, also int. 23)

It seems as though throughout the life of the project, the cost of overheads has been between 20% and 25% of the total budget. (We did not get an exact figure because the category “project maintenance” used by DVN seems to include a number of other items.) Based on experience of other networks, this is not an unusually large amount. In fact, salaries of Secretariat staff seem well within the range of what other Chinese NGOs might pay, and well below the salary ranges of international NGOs working in China. Some interviewees expressed concern that it is difficult to find and keep well-qualified staff under these conditions.

4i. The Network's organizational structure

Core Structures and Functions

At present, the Network is governed by an elected Board of Directors, and day-to-day management and coordination is carried out by a Secretariat headed by a Coordinator. The Secretariat also houses the Resource Center (or Materials Center) and web site. Training and Media work are the two other key central functions of the Network. They are "outsourced," i.e. carried out by two independent groups, Media Watch and the Beijing/Tianjin Gender and Development Group, respectively. Subprojects such as the urban and rural community-based interventions have their own management, with supervision and support from the Network Secretariat.

Evolving Governance of the Network

There was a major change in the governance of the Network between Phase One and Phase Two. Phase One consisted of a set of sub-projects generally led by prominent figures in the Chinese women's movement or anti-DV community, written up as a single project by the China Law Society and coordinated by Chen Mingxia. The sub-projects were overseen by a Management Committee comprised mostly of the leaders of the sub-projects themselves. This arrangement was effective for internal coordination and for supporting implementation of subprojects, but did not constitute a national network. There were also some concerns that control of the project's resources and decision-making power were in the hands of a small group. (Int. 2)

The reorganization of the Network during Phase Two was probably in part a response to such concerns, and was also directly influenced by workshops on capacity building and organizational development (funded by the Ford Foundation) attended by Management Committee members. They decided that although not formally registered as an NGO the DVN should re-organize itself along the lines of a professionally-run non-profit civil society organization, and that the responsibilities for decision-making and day-to-day management of projects should be separated in order to prevent conflicts of interest. A Board of Directors was elected in place of the Management Committee, and authority for supervising the subprojects was placed in the hands of a Secretariat headed by a Coordinator. Because the new Network rules prohibited the Coordinator from serving on the Board or as leader of any of the subprojects, this change effectively established a separation of powers within the Network.

Although virtually all interviewees supported this move *in principle*, there was a range of opinions about the way it was carried out and the effects on operation of the Network:

- Many DVN members were very proud of the change, calling it a major step forward not only for DVN but for the development of a healthy non-governmental sector in China as a whole. According to some, DVN is the first group in China to take the step of separating decision-making and day-to-day management functions. More than one person noted that other Chinese NGOs have treated DVN's governance reforms as a model, and are either following or considering following the DVN example. (Int. 19, 15, 10)
- Some people voiced concerns that although a good idea in principle, the change had been done without adequate consideration of the impacts on subprojects. Many Board members were formerly leaders of subprojects, and all of them totally refused themselves from further management of those projects after joining the Board, leaving less experienced people in charge. One person said that a great deal of time and care was put into the process of selecting the Board, whereas there was little thought at all about management of the subprojects. At least some of those now responsible for subprojects feel unsupported and lack confidence in their own abilities to take those projects forward effectively.
- Several DVN members agreed with the change in principle, but felt that the decision to make this change was not made in a transparent way, and the new structure was put into place without sufficient consultation. One donor was informed of the change long after the fact, and was never clear about the motivation behind it until our interview. (When we explained it, this donor supported the idea but continued to stress the lack of prior consultation.)

Division of Labor

There were some questions about the division of labor under the new governance structure. One donor talked of Chen Mingxia having been “in charge” of the DVN before and Chen Benjian being “in charge” now, which is not the way that those two individuals understand their roles! This and several other misunderstandings point to the continuing need for clear communication with all stakeholders, internal and external, about the changing governance of the Network. But there also seem to be some areas where it is not a matter of *lack of communication* about the new division of labor. In some cases it seems the division of labor itself is no longer clear and there is a gap in authority/responsibility after the reorganization:

Communication with donors. This is a vital task in any NGO, and seems to be neglected at present. The change of Coordinator in 2005 and lack of English language capacity in the Secretariat exacerbate this problem. During the evaluation process, we at times received conflicting information from different people in the DVN office.

Supervision of subprojects. One interviewee expressed concern that the Secretariat is meant to be monitoring subprojects but has little actual authority over them, short of taking complaints to the Board.

All aspects of internal communication. There are continuing concerns about communication and coordination among subprojects, between subprojects and the Secretariat, and between non-Beijing network members and the Secretariat. These *do not* appear to be serious problems, but there is a sense that the Secretariat could be more proactive on this issue and that there are even more synergies possible for the Network if core functions can be improved.

Information Management

The web site and Resource Center (also called Documentation Center) have become the most authoritative sources of electronic and published information about DV in China.

The Resource Center has the most complete collection of materials on the subject in China, including Hong Kong. It welcomes researchers to examine materials on site or borrow them, carries out searches and sends materials electronically, and publishes and mails out a newsletter.

Since it opened, the Resource Center has been visited by 4096 people, many of whom have borrowed books. The following table shows the growing number of users:

Year	Total
2000 (since July)	27
2001	230
2002	527
2003	737
2004	1030
2005	1545

The Center regularly sends electronic copies of materials to 42 non-Beijing organizations, and has also sent materials to 25 international scholars in 2005 alone.

The Center has published and mailed out 28 issues of the DVN Newsletter, with the following circulation:

Recipient	Beijing	Outside Beijing	Total
ACWF	14	67	81
University	21	27	48
Law Enforcement	9	11	20
Media	11	15	26
NGO	23	18	41
Individual	5	4	16
Other	29	11	33
Total	112	153	265

The newsletter in electronic form is emailed to 137 individual and 42 organizations located outside Beijing.

The Resource Center is not yet able to lend books to borrowers outside of Beijing, because of both postage cost and concern about materials not being returned. Between 5% and 10% of borrowed materials have not been returned, and this is a special concern since the Center has only one copy of many of its books. New purchases and acquisitions of non-Chinese books are limited by lack of funds. A woman who is using the Resource Center as a key source of materials for doctoral dissertation research abroad urged DVN to consider scanning entire books and making them available through the web site.

The DVN web site is an information source for DVN members, the media and the general public. It posts (and keeps an archive of) the DVN newsletter, announces upcoming activities and reports on those activities. For the general public, it serves as a form of alternative media, providing a feminist, gender perspective on DV. The web site also serves this function for members of the mainstream media. There is a special section called “the Speeded-Up Program of Domestic Violence,” that uses the typical internet FAQ format to provide journalists and others with a quick primer on the issue from a gender perspective. And the site is also a source of original news that mainstream media can use as a source. (int. 3) (An excellent analysis of the web site is attached as Appendix i.)

The principal drawback of the web site, referred to by many users and acknowledged by the web site manager, is its lack of interactivity. It is essentially a one-way stream of information, not a forum for the exchange of information. (int. 12, 18) In this respect, the essential power of the internet to build virtual communities is not being fully realized. Site managers cited costs and political sensitivity as reasons for not building bulletin boards, closed areas for internal network forums, or other interactive features into the site. (int. 3) An effort to establish a DV victim support group online, for example, has stalled because of lack of staff resources.

Expanding Beyond Beijing

A stated goal of the Second Phase of the DVN was to expand and strengthen its non-Beijing membership. Changes in the number and distribution of member organizations from outside of Beijing during Phase Two were as follows:

Non-Beijing DVN Members (organizations)

	2003	2006
Provincial	17	23
City, county, prefecture	34	22
Total non-Beijing	51	45

While the number of provincial-level organizational members (WFs) increased, the total number of non-Beijing Network members has actually declined. In Phase One, membership was loose and voluntary, with no obligations or formalities. In Phase Two, the Network sent out an announcement requiring members to formally register, and a number for groups chose not to, so the total number fell. At the same time, because the number of provincial WF members grew from 17 to 23, the total geographical coverage of the Network expanded.

One local-level WF officer said that the DVN “only allows provincial-level WFs to join,” and recommended that prefecture, city and county WFs be allowed as members. She pointed out that the interests of WF organizations at the provincial level and lower down do not always coincide. The Secretariat explained that lower level WFs *can* join the Network and many are members, but because of a shortage of funds DVN does not provide them with all of the support that provincial WFs (which are seen as key partners) receive. For instance, many provincial WF Rights and Interests Departments did not even have internet access before joining DVN, so the Network provided them with computers in order to allow them access to DVN’s online information and resources. This is not a service that the Network can afford to provide all non-Beijing organizations that join. (On the other hand, the fact that the local WF interviewee did not understand this issue again indicates a need for clearer internal communication about management and governance issues.)

There are signs that in addition to increasing the Network’s geographical coverage by adding new provincial WFs as members, DVN has also paid more attention to non-Beijing members than in the past. One member said that non-Beijing DVN members were very disappointed when the annual Network meeting in 2004 focused entirely on the work of the subprojects and on preparations for the Beijing Plus Ten meetings to be held in 2005. Many felt that exchange of experiences among all Network members was a more important function for such a meeting, and they stated this view at the time. In the 2005 annual meeting, this was rectified: non-Beijing members were involved in developing the agenda and well-represented in the program. (int. 2) They have also been involved in the recent Network strategic planning process. (int. 20) DVN has also carried out gender trainings in the provinces, both for local member organizations and - in cooperation with local members - for other government agencies. (QII)

A Learning Organization

One of the most promising findings was that DVN is truly a learning organization, capable of identifying problems and correcting them. Almost all of the negative comments about the Network governance referred to *past* problems:

- Lack of transparency in selecting Board members
- Failure to communicate management decisions to the membership

- Neglecting the needs or rights of non-Beijing members

These are all issues that have been specifically dealt with, and often the person making the criticism pointed this out. One interviewee had a long list of complaints about the way the Network was initially set up and managed, but when asked what DVN should do to improve it, said, “I think that it’s working very well *now*.” (int. 2)

At the same time, there is clearly still room for further improvements in sharing information about innovation and best practices within the Network. When asked for their recommendations for the future, several people recommended things that were already being done by other parts of the Network. (integrating anti-DV work into government staff evaluations, improving medical documentation of DV injuries for use in court, etc.) This indicates room not only for better internal communication on Network management issues, but for better internal learning on substantive anti-DV issues.

4j. Sustainability of Network activities without further support from current donors.

There seems little possibility at this time for the DVN to continue operating without further external support. Matching funds have been raised, and a considerable number volunteers have given their time, but these have almost all been tied to specific activities of demonstration projects or of DVN member organizations. (especially provincial WFs) The fact that many network member activities - work at pilot sites, research, etc - already receive some funding independent of the DVN grant is a very good sign, however, and it is encouraging to see that network members are not simply interested in the network as a conduit for financial support. What members see as most valuable are the core network functions carried out by the Secretariat, web site, resource center, media work, and participatory gender training, but it is not reasonable to expect members to pay for these services at this time.

As one Board member put it, the DVN has succeeded in creating a figurative “market” for its work. Network members, government and many in society as a whole now recognize both the need to stop DV and the importance of what DVN has to offer. But this has not yet translated into a literal market for DVN’s work, either in terms of private sector donations or the possibility of commercializing some services. The Network’s core functions will therefore continue to rely on donor funding for at least the next phase of work.

Conclusion: Network Functions, Governance, Effectiveness

The DVN has undergone continuous growth and development since its initiation as a set of separate projects linked only by a Management Committee made up of project leaders. During this time, the successes of the Network’s different activities have

proved the many advantages of the network approach: mobilization of diverse groups, efficient use of resources, effective communication, enhanced credibility, and collective solidarity. The Network's evolution as an organization has been impressive, and DVN has shown a dedication to the highest ideals of professional, democratic and participatory NGO management. The major goal of expanding the Network's coverage outside of Beijing has been achieved, and non-Beijing members are able to participate in network discussions and planning. The biggest challenges to governance have been guaranteeing a high level of transparency and effective internal and external communication, but this is understandable given the size and diversity of the Network, and the fact that DVN is at the leading edge of NGO governance in China and therefore has no easy "recipe" to follow.

5. Recommendations

Recommendations to DVN

First of all, it is important to note that these are suggestions of how to further improve an already excellent organization, rather than dire prescriptions that must be followed to resolve a crisis or avert disaster. I may also focus more on strategic questions, because of my own background working on social change and civil society in China. I am sure that Chan Yu, who has specific expertise in social work, will be able to provide more specific, substantive suggestions on programming issues.

Priority Strategic Approaches

The elements of DVN's approach that are most widely recognized as having been effective are working to raise awareness, demonstrating MACIM in different contexts and promoting anti-DV legislation. The next steps I would recommend in these key areas are:

Advocacy. Progress has been made in writing legislation, but enforcement lags behind. The next step should be to shift the focus from writing laws to advocacy. A campaign approach to promote enforcement of anti-DV provisions in the Marriage Law and Law For Protection of the Rights of Women could combine the Network's legal expertise and strength in media work and focus them on reaching some concrete goals.

Beyond pilots. MACIM is now being implemented, and has a life of its own even in some areas outside the demonstration sites. (e.g. Hebei, Tianjin) With a stronger member services function (see below), DVN can shift away from intensive funding of specific pilot sites and continue supporting the spread of MACIM in a very cost-effective way.

Mainstreaming. Successful awareness and legislation work over the past six years have laid the ground work and begun to generate a "market" for fighting DV, but DVN needs to do more on two fronts. First, anti-DV education needs to be integrated into the formal education system (elementary and secondary schools should be the priority, *not universities*) and training systems of government agencies, as well as medical schools. Second, to create greater legitimacy and generate more resources for fighting DV, it needs to be more closely linked to official ideology (e.g. "Harmonious Society") and major government initiatives.

Network Functions

Strengthening the network (as opposed to establishing new subprojects) should

continue to be a high priority. The Secretariat, web site, Materials Center, Training, and Media should be more explicitly recognized as core Network functions, and not treated as subprojects. Certain functions need to be upgraded, with a focus on external communications and member services.

Member services functions/tasks should include:

1. Assisting member organizations with strategic planning, training (via GAD group), media support (via Media Watch), fundraising, etc.
2. Publishing internal newsletter
3. Managing members intranet or bbs on web site
4. Monitor members' feedback on DVN management

With a strong member services available, the distinction between pilot intervention sites and other areas will decrease and eventually the three non-Beijing sites (Changsha, Liaoning, Hubei) can be weaned from separate funding.

External communications functions/tasks include:

1. Upgrading web site (more interactive features, English language site)
2. Insuring the quality of all English-language communications
3. Managing relations with donors, fundraising and reporting
4. Handling other non-DVN relationships (visitors, press)

Monitoring and evaluation. This could be considered a part of member services, since developing common indicators and monitoring systems would make future measurement of the network's impact much easier. One specific task that comes to mind is a repeat of the public opinion survey on DV carried out in Phase One, perhaps the only baseline data DVN has as a basis for measuring its impacts.

Learning. The focus of earlier research work was on academic, book-length publications and "theory." I recommend a re-think of knowledge-generation and knowledge-sharing processes in the Network. Some possibilities to consider: small grants to members for documentation, research or workshops; establishing "learning groups" around different themes and providing funds for meetings and space on the web site for internal discussions; DVN "matchmaking" and financial support for cross-visits between member organizations.

Time to Re-Examine "DV?"

Since 2000, the DVN has used the term "domestic violence," but has in fact focused exclusively on violence against wives. When I asked about this, a core network member could not recall when or how the decision was taken to use this particular definition. She assumed that the original intent was to fight Violence Against Women, but that in the late 1990s this was seen as too politically sensitive an issue in China. This may have been a convenient compromise, especially as a counterpoint to the

term “wife-beating,” but it’s an inconsistency that DVN now has the political space and maturity to address in an open manner. Another interviewee raised the issue of child abuse, and said that she had no response when someone wrote to the web site, “Why do you only care about what happens to women? I am beaten by both mother and father, but you have no help for me.” Another network member raised the issue of date rape, and another talked about workplace sexual harassment. I would suggest that the Network re-consider the question of whom they are trying to help.

Recommendations to the Donors

I strongly recommend continued donors support for the DVN. The return on investment in this project has been remarkably high, and the disappearance of DVN due to lack of donor support would seriously hamper the fight against DV in China.

Please also consider my recommendations to DVN, shown above. If possible, donors should consider the costs of effective network management, and provide more support for staff costs at the Secretariat. They will not be able to field team that can perform the functions needed by DVN using the current salaries.

As discussed earlier, I also recommend that the donors ask for English version (or summaries) of several important documents that will be generated by or about the Network in the next few weeks or months, including the new DVN Strategic Plan, the internal assessment, and the report summing up the lessons of the MACIM subprojects. I assume that the Strategic Plan will be outlined to you at the meeting on April 4, but the other documents should also be very valuable in assessing DVN’s work. This should NOT be a reason to delay the next round of funding, however, unless a small bridging grant can be made to cover running costs for the next few months.

Finally, I urge you to solicit the recommendations of Chan Yu, the other evaluator, whose final recommendations could not be included in this report due to time constraints.

Executive Summary

The anti-Domestic Violence Network (DVN) is a vital force in the fight to end violence against women in China. During the past three years, it has made extremely effective use of the media to raise public awareness, has written or contributed to legislation, and has promoted a Multi-Agency Cooperation Intervention Model (MACIM) to mobilize the full range of government agencies in the fight against domestic violence. These have without question improved the lives of countless victims of DV. Furthermore, these outcomes would not have been possible without a network structure to perform key central support and coordination functions.

Impacts on Beneficiary/Stakeholder Groups

The number and variety of services and support for **victims** of DV have increased dramatically during Phase Two of the Network. Both inside and outside of pilot project areas, victims now have much greater access than before to hotlines, support groups, shelters, legal aid and anti-DV work stations. In many areas, the rate and effectiveness of intervention in DV cases has improved due to greater awareness and coordination among relevant enforcement agencies. In some of the pilot intervention areas, the number of DV cases has begun to decline.

Trainees have come to see DV as a social problem and a crime, not just as a private issue to be kept within a family. The more intensive participatory gender training has left a deep impression on both partner organization staff and on Network members, and is recognized as a vital support to efforts to transform institutions. Participation in DVN activities has also been an empowering and intellectually rewarding experience for **individual Network members**.

The **government** has been influenced in two ways. First, the Multi-Agency Cooperative Intervention Model has taken hold more deeply in the areas in which it was piloted in Phase One, and has begun to spread beyond those areas, changing the everyday procedures of a whole range of institutions from the village to the provincial level. Second, legislation has been passed affirming the criminality of DV and the government's responsibility to stop it. Legislation has served to reinforce MACIM, especially when it clearly specifies the obligations of different government agencies *via a vis* DV, giving them a clear mandate. In most cases, however, DV-related laws still require detailed regulations to guide enforcement.

Raising awareness and educating people about DV through **the media** has been one of the DVN's signal accomplishments in both the First and Second Phases. Successful media work creates a groundswell of public attention that pressures government agencies to act against DV, creating the conditions for legislative reform and MACIM.

The Network has developed a supportive and influential relationship to **ACWF**, its most important partner. At the national level, the Rights and Interests Department of ACWF has worked closely with DVN in developing legislation. At the provincial level and

below, WFs are the most important members of the DVN, and they are the agency that coordinates the MACIM. Local WFs credit their recognition that fighting DV is their (and the government's) obligation to DVN.

Overall, the DVN has exercised a remarkable degree of influence with the government and ACWF, changing legislation, institutions and practices in ways that have direct and positive impacts on victims of domestic violence.

The Network: Functions, Strengths, Governance

The DVN has undergone continuous growth and development since its initiation as a set of separate projects linked only by a Management Committee made up of project leaders. During this time, the successes of the Network's different activities have proved the many advantages of the network approach: mobilization of diverse groups, efficient use of resources, effective communication, enhanced credibility, and collective solidarity.

The Network's evolution as an organization has been impressive, and DVN has shown a dedication to the highest ideals of professional, democratic and participatory NGO management. Despite challenges along the way, DVN has now put into place a democratic governance structure that effectively separates decision making from day-to-day management. The shift of some leaders of subprojects to serve on the Board of Directors has, however, hampered the performance of the projects. The major goal of expanding the Network's coverage outside of Beijing has been achieved, and non-Beijing members are able to participate in network discussions and planning. The biggest challenges to governance have been guaranteeing a high level of transparency and effective internal and external communication, but this is understandable given the size and diversity of the Network.

Recommendations

Priority Strategic Approaches

Advocacy. There should be a shift from writing laws to advocacy. A campaign approach to promote enforcement of anti-DV provisions in the Marriage Law and Law For Protection of the Rights of Women could combine the Network's legal expertise and strength in media work and focus them on reaching some concrete goals.

Beyond pilots. MACIM is now being implemented, and has a life of its own even in some areas outside the demonstration sites. DVN can shift away from intensive funding of specific pilot sites and continue supporting the spread of MACIM.

Mainstreaming. Successful awareness and legislation work over the past six years have laid the ground work and begun to generate a "market" for fighting DV, but DVN needs to do more on two fronts. First, anti-DV education needs to be integrated into the formal education system and training systems of government agencies, as well as medical schools. Second, to create greater legitimacy and generate more resources for fighting

DV, it needs to be more closely linked to official ideology (e.g. “Harmonious Society”) and major government initiatives.

Network Functions

Strengthening the network (as opposed to establishing new subprojects) should continue to be a high priority. The Secretariat, web site, Materials Center, Training, and Media should be more explicitly recognized as core Network functions, and not treated as subprojects.

Member services should be upgraded, with a focus on facilitating exchange among members and providing them with technical and training support.

External communication, including English-language communications and donor management, also needs improvement

Improved indicators and systems for **monitoring and evaluation** should be put in place Network-wide.

DVN should also re-think its knowledge-generation and knowledge-sharing processes explore more interactive and bottom-up means of internal **learning**.

Donors

The return on investment in this project has been remarkably high, and the disappearance of DVN due to lack of donor support would seriously hamper the fight against DV in China. Continued donor support for the DVN is therefore strongly recommended.

Based on the recommendations above for strengthening core Network functions, donors should provide more resources for personnel carrying out Network coordination, communications and member services.