Chapter 17

Silent Silhouettes: A Living Reminder of the Urgent Action Needed to End Gender-based Violence in Trinidad and Tobago

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17.1 Gender-based Violence: A Public Health Priority

Public health has long been regarded as the exclusive domain of health experts to its detriment. However, this capitalist-inspired separation of parts from their whole has rendered efforts in managing public health crises largely ineffective. In the developing world, the widespread absence of dynamic and responsive health care models that incorporate perspectives from across sectors results in the poor distribution of responsibility for health promotion. In Trinidad and Tobago, the disparities in income, the prohibitive cost of private health care, the over-burdened public health care systems, and rising health bills are all critical incentives for an increased interest and investment in public health initiatives. As the editors of this book frame the conversation of this collection (Chap. 1), borrowing from the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986) and WHO guidelines, health promotion extends beyond the health sector and toward assuring the “healthy lifestyles and well-being” of individuals. This human-centered approach is grounded in the understanding that multi-sectoral involvement is instrumental to the promotion and attainment of national (and global) optimal health.

Locally, while the current health minister has prioritized the need for “healthy living,” health promotion is still largely concentrated on the reduction of the national rates of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) (Paul 2016). Given this focus, the minister’s main priority has been NCD reduction through the development of the National Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (2017–2021) and other programmatic interventions, such as the ban of sugary beverages in schools and the implementation of a Diabetes Wellness Centre (Doughty 2018). Women’s health has also been acknowledged as a priority through the implementation of a Directorate of Women’s Health in 2015, as well as

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sustaining the consistent 12-year downward trend in infant and maternal mortality rates, resulting in a 20% reduction (UNICEF 2018). Yet, a concerted effort has not been made to secure the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls, who are made more vulnerable to risky sexual behavior and sexually transmitted infections in violent intimate-partner relationships (Hess et al. 2012). Instead, policy documents such as the Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy and Gender Policy have remained in draft for years, despite the increasing necessity for their implementation. With over 8500 reports of domestic abuse being made by women between 2010 and 2015 in Trinidad and Tobago, comprehensive, systemic reform is urgently needed to reduce the incidents of domestic violence. These policy deficits amidst other forms of state inaction, ultimately reflect the difference in perceived urgency between the two areas of public health—NCDs versus Gender-Based and Sexual Violence (GBSV).

For both women and girls, GBSV poses a demonstrably significant public health risk that cannot be underestimated. As of 2017, interpersonal violence was the seventh leading cause of death in Trinidad and Tobago, above HIV/AIDS as the tenth (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation 2017). When considering the leading causes of premature death, interpersonal violence raises to ranking as the fourth leading cause. Other concerning causes are neonatal disorders (fifth), HIV/AIDS (seventh), and self-harm (tenth) (Institute of Health and Metrics Evaluation 2017). Each of these leading causes of death bears a macabre story of the gendered vulnerabilities of women and girls, masked by its co-morbidity with NCDs and other health complications. With interpersonal violence being positively correlated to many negative health consequences—including the development of neonatal disorders (Bailey 2010), contraction of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and engagement in self-harm (Boyle et al. 2006)—its ranking as a leading cause of death listed among other diseases that it is often correlated with requires immediate attention and action. Additionally, the specific vulnerability of women, girls, and sexual minorities to gender-based violence and the full gamut of health risks that are associated with it necessitates the development of gender-sensitive health policies, such as the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Gender policies and interagency protocols that are jointly designed, standardized, and implemented, including a minimum standard of care for those affected by gender-based violence.

The national statistics are further compounded by a lack of public awareness and education to successfully empower vulnerable groups to take control of their health. Without the mandatory application of Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) at primary- and secondary-level institutions, as well as making similar curricula accessible to out-of-school youth, young people remain particularly vulnerable to the effects of misinformation about their sexual and reproductive health. Facilitating youth learning of medically accurate and age-appropriate sex education can offer young people knowledge about how to navigate their own sexual and reproductive health, which can reduce rates of gender-based violence and risky sexual behaviors and improve overall sexual and reproductive health (IPPF 2016). Holistic approaches also include the education of adults, including parents and primary caregivers, through facilities such as public health clinics and community centers, which can

aid in filling knowledge gaps and can potentially increase health-seeking practices that can be shared and encouraged within households. Finding progressive and creative ways to educate the population and raise awareness about the effects of gendered vulnerabilities is critical to the success of efforts to bolster the national public health profile. Art, then, becomes a natural ally in this project, with a capacity to inspire deep, introspective insight about ourselves, humanity and our planet. It is a catalyst for personal growth, transformation and overall well-being.

17.2 The Organization

WOMANTRA is a linguistic blend of the words “woman” and “mantra.” This original portmanteau, which carries deep symbolism, is the brainchild of Trinidadian multimedia artist Michelle Isava. In 2008, Isava was featured at the launch of the public art project “Galvanize” based in Port of Spain, where she performed a ritual of the same name. The performance, grounded in the affirmation of sacred femininity, saw the artist in a stooping position, meditatively drawing seven concentric circles around herself—a number that bears significance in nearly all major religions—propelled by the mantra “*the hole is whole*” blaring from a loudspeaker, much like the adhan or Muslim call to prayer. The embodied message of this performance, which centered the power and completeness of “the feminine,” resonated deeply with the project of WOMANTRA, which took shape 3 years later as an intimate celebration of the International Women’s Day centenary.

Not unlike the defining consciousness-raising circles of the 1970s, WOMANTRA comprised a small group of young and older women gathered together in an old-fashioned Woodbrook house to share stories, poetry, music, and tantric belly dancing. As the event drew to a close, the commitment was made to stay connected, share photos of the event for our memory banks, and support each other’s art and advocacy. In our favor, the WOMANTRA event of 2011 aligned with the burgeoning popularity of the world’s most formidable social media site: Facebook. At the point in time when our own nugget of history was being made by a small collective of feminists in Trinidad, history was also being made at a global scale, with Facebook poised to revolutionize the reach and impact of activism everywhere. WOMANTRA began its journey as an online feminist collective through Facebook, with its first members being the women that attended our inaugural event on that fated day—and the rest, as we say, is *herstory*.

As a product of its time and engaged on- and off-line nurturing, WOMANTRA emerged as one of the leading cyber feminist platforms in the Caribbean region, giving voice and much-needed connectivity to an emerging diaspora of social justice activists. By 2014, WOMANTRA began transitioning from the virtual to the “real” world by building on the strength of its online following, and became a registered non-profit as part of a strategic effort to be recognized as a legitimate player in the civil society arena. One of WOMANTRA’s first programmatic initiatives was the launch of its originally designed “Sistah2Sistah” mentorship program, designed

to address the needs of adolescent girls, including sexuality education. Now, 6 years later in 2020, WOMANTRA has successfully designed a number of campaigns, workshops, and public interventions that address the gendered, social, and health vulnerabilities of women, girls, and sexual minorities, including gender-based and sexual discrimination and violence. More specifically, our current partnerships with local authorities for the design of gender-based violence protocols for first-response agencies has given us a promising pathway to improve service delivery to victims by health care professionals and the police.

According to integrative medicine practitioner, Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen,¹ the creative and healing process arise from a single source. She describes art and healing as a wordless trust of the same mystery, which acts as the foundation of our work and its integrity. As a leader within the new generation of Caribbean feminists, WOMANTRA's commitment to building youth- and queer-led feminist leadership has always had art at its center as a way to translate complex ideas, mobilize communities, and ultimately transform culture.

17.3 Silent Silhouettes

17.3.1 *Putting Knowledge into Action*

One of the greatest achievements of the feminist and women's movements globally is the successful reframing of domestic violence as a public health issue. Once viewed as a private, family issue—and in the Trinbagonian vernacular as “man and woman business”—domestic and intimate partner violence is now rightfully recognized internationally as a public health priority, in urgent need of attention, action, and resources from the international community (Chibber and Krishnan 2011; Krantz 2005). Another important piece in the evolution of our understanding about how violence against women functions is its pervasiveness and global applicability, constituting a wider system of violence with key indicators and outcomes known as gender-based violence. Yet, even with this reckoning, gender-based violence remains a global epidemic (Sprechmann 2014; WHO 2013), with regional violence rates in many countries surpassing the global average (Le Franc et al. 2008).

A regional study on interpersonal violence revealed that more than 50% of Trinbagonian women and girls aged 15–30 reported experiencing physical violence (53%), being sexually coerced (54%), or exposed to other types of violence (65%) as initiated by strangers, acquaintances, or in intimate partner relationships (Le Franc et al. 2008). These alarming statistics illuminate the stark level of gender inequalities that expose women to the most pernicious effects of the violent attitudes that form part of a continuum of traditional, culturally sanctioned, and harmful gender-based practices. In the 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 7%

¹ http://journeyofhearts.org/kirstimd/create_grief.htm

of women aged 15–49 believed that “wife-beating” was justifiable in at least one of five instances identified, the most common being “when she neglects the children.” This research, which focused primarily on attitudes toward violence, established a co-relation between women’s educational achievement, social status, and wealth to their ability to reject harmful ideas about spousal abuse (Pemberton and Joseph 2018).

It can be extrapolated from the above findings that there are complex intersections of physical and psychological implications for gender-based violence and that a multifaceted approach is needed to develop a robust national response. Any such strategic response should include gender-aware approaches that challenge traditional gender roles and unpack harmful stereotypes; are sensitive to socio-economic conditions and perceived class, as well as gender-based violence’s differential impact on various populations; and garner the psycho-social support needed for survivors still living in violent situations. Further, while the state may sponsor a domestic violence hotline or provide the infrastructure to house battered women, collaborations must also be cultivated with the advocates who do the lion’s share of the heavy lifting to increase sensitivity around victim support; provide nuanced situation analyses; use human rights mechanisms to inform policy making and reform; and provide services and education that are not accessible by the average citizen and are even less so by those with marginalized identities, including people living with HIV, people living with disabilities, and LGBT+ people.

In the developing world, the shared experience of insufficient funding and state support for civil society actors poses significant challenges to those who typically work on-the-ground to provide critical services for victim support but are themselves in need of institutional, capacity, and financial strengthening (Delisle et al. 2005). These constraints are exacerbated by a lack of human resources, since many organizations cannot afford full-time staff or to pay for the expertise of external consultants when needed. Added to this is the strain that workers experience when engaging in psychologically and emotionally demanding work, often leading to burnout that remains unaddressed due to insufficient or nonexistent de-briefing mechanisms (Chen and Gorski 2015; Craiovan 2015) and which ultimately compromises their capacity to continue serving others without causing harm to themselves. This environment effectively reduces non-profit actors’ ability to provide sustained care for survivors, in spite of the expertise and sophisticated solutions they often bring to the table. Despite these truths, the incremental changes that are achieved through the commitment of dedicated individuals to fill the gaps of state-led interventions contribute to a cumulative impact that is essential to changing the lives of those most affected by gender-based violence.

Developing countries—particularly Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like Trinidad and Tobago—either do not have the capacity to or infrequently collect the specific data required by international agencies for generating analyses on the health profile of the region (Caribbean Development Bank 2016; Nicholls 2015). Data on SIDS is even further compromised by the geographic classification of the region, which includes Central and South American countries, irrespective of their distinct demographic differences from the Caribbean subregion. This lack of available data has a significant impact on the (sub)region’s capacity to implement evidence-driven

decision making at the state level, particularly in specialized areas that rely on indicators that are standardized at the global level. Instead, local researchers, including civil society actors, rely on key insights derived from myriad secondary data sets that offer an overall view of the situation, requiring sustained efforts and innovative data collection techniques. These sources can include hospital records, police and judicial reports and statistics, or newspaper articles. In other circumstances, recognizing the value of anecdotal data can be a sufficient motivator for engaging change work. The fact that the average woman has either experienced, witnessed, or knows someone who is a survivor of gender-based violence gives weight to the grounded epistemology of *who feels it knows it*.

For WOMANTRA, the challenge was to create a campaign that bridged the fictive gap between evidence and ethos, with the specific aim of raising awareness around gender-based violence in a way that was compassionate and moving. With the majority of interventions focused on survivors, the “Silent Silhouettes” campaign commemorates an obvious but often overlooked group of women—those who have been made to pay the ultimate price of their lives to gender-based violence. As a practical component of the installation, being able to accurately reflect the number of femicides annually is a key feature of the campaign’s credibility and impact. But on a more personal level, the WOMANTRA team’s capacity to intimately engage with the brutal violence meted out to these women and to create something meaningful in the midst of such tragedy is at the core of the campaign’s ability to honor their memory.

In the early stages of developing the campaign, we asked ourselves a series of questions, which ultimately guided our continued commitment to the intervention: *How do we remember the women who are gone? What actions can we take that respect the wishes and needs of families who are left to grieve? What can we do for all of the women confronted with these stories every day in the newspaper and in our communities?* Through brainstorming and exploring these questions, Silent Silhouettes became the most resonant answer as it offered a cathartic space to learn, heal, and remember together in the symbolic presence of the women and girls lost.

17.3.2 Project Description

Silent Silhouettes is closely patterned after the U.S.-based Silent Witness ([n.d.](#)) campaign, initiated by a coalition of artists, writers, and women’s rights organizers in Minnesota following the murder of 27 women. This original installation was intended to commemorate the women whose lives ended violently at the hands of a husband, ex-husband, partner, or family member and to promote an end to domestic violence through community-based exhibits and performance in 50 states across the United States and 23 countries globally.

Much like the Silent Witness, the Silent Silhouette is a free-standing, life-sized wooden figure, each with a fastened breastplate bearing some details of the woman or girl whose memory it honors. As part of the project's original design, the silhouettes are each painted black and cut to a size that generally reflects the victims' ages, using a generic female form for the categories of girl child, adolescent, and adult female (see Fig. 17.1). Typically displayed in a well-trafficked or public area, the silhouettes represent the undeniable loss of life, which is both unsettling and relatable, stimulating onlookers to stop, read, and share personal stories about domestic abuse and to remember the victims.

In preparation for the installation, team members are briefed on what to expect, since the audience (particularly women who enter the space) are likely to ask questions not only about the women and girls represented in the installation but also about resources for victims—inquiries that are often framed for the benefit of a friend or someone else they know. Other women more openly share their experiences with violence and require the attention of capable persons who can listen compassionately and without judgement. Within this context, all volunteer “voices” that accompany the installation assist with telling the victims' stories and with distributing relevant literature from partner organizations and service providers that offer viewers information about how to identify toxic patterns or unhealthy relationships and how to access various health services, including STI screening and counseling.

Fig. 17.1 The Silent Silhouettes displayed at the She Look Fah Dat: A #LifeinLeggings Discussion, hosted by WOMANTRA and I am One on Human Rights Day 2016

17.3.3 Approach

In the Trinidad landscape, Silent Silhouettes has become a feature of the local “16 days of activism” activities. To ensure that the installation accurately reflects the incidents of femicide, WOMANTRA collaborates with the Crime and Problem Analysis (CAPA) branch of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, which is responsible for the dissemination of official statistics on crime. Traditionally, the installation is first featured on November 25, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women as well as the first day of the “16 days of activism.” Given the specificity of this campaign, data is requested outside the generic calendar year for all femicide-related murder from November 25 of the previous to the current year. This creates a tricky timeframe between the issuing of a formal request for statistics, the receipt of those statistics, and the accurate reflection of those statistics in the installation. Through trial and error, WOMANTRA worked out that if the request is received by CAPA in the first week of November, it takes approximately 2–3 weeks to receive a response, leaving only a few days (give or take) in which the team has to monitor the media closely, in the event of any additional murders of women or girls that need to be recorded and included in the installation.

In previous years, police statistics were further cross-referenced with media reports of domestic-violence-related murders. The intention behind engaging with news media was to deliberately depart from relying solely on statistical data, which can bear little impact against the powerful effect of national desensitization. With the constant flood of loss and death covered in stories of murders, kidnappings, and disappearances, citizens are no longer moved by *just* numbers. Also, considering the massive death toll—generally staying above 400 murders per annum (Crime Statistics 2019; Trinidad and Tobago Police Service 2019)—the seemingly “meager” number of 20-something femicides is often met with indifference. By focusing on capturing the humanness of the victims, as opposed to bluntly stating the cause-of-death descriptions provided by the police (like stabbed, shot, or beaten), we were able to construct a humanizing narrative of each woman and girl, including where she lived, whether children and a grieving family were left behind, and her relationship to her killer.

Another benefit of this approach was that it served as a verification process for official data, given the state of police underreporting. According to Trinidad and Tobago’s recently completed National Prevalence Study on domestic violence (Pemberton and Joseph 2018), a shockingly low 5% of women affected by intimate partner violence disclose these incidents to the police. Within this context, the media may serve as a more reliable source of data for domestic-violence reporting than the police. This may be especially true for instances in which definitions of domestic violence or gender-based violence are not equivalent. Fortunately, given the parameters of this project, data sets provided by the police when compared with media reporting were closely aligned on each occasion. There are, at times, other related incidents that the media is able to cover that are not reflected in the police data,

which can impact the project's goal of painting a full picture of the problem of gender-based violence and its impact on the local population.

Our dual methodology, for example, allows us to include Trinidadian women who live in foreign countries, as well as members of our growing migrant population. In November 2018, for example, our installation included femicide victim Jenny Koonoolai-Jagdeo, a Trinidadian woman whose murder made headline news after she was tragically killed by her Trinidad-born ex-boyfriend in Florida. In the same month, another woman of Trinidadian parentage, Erica Renaud, was killed by her Trinidadian partner in their Brooklyn home. The fact that these murders happened outside the jurisdiction of our local borders didn't make their stories any less worthy of our observance, and so they too were memorialized.

17.3.4 Process

The simple design of Silent Silhouettes required only a few materials, including plywood, nails, and paint, as well as the human labor needed for construction. Given WOMANTRA's non-profit status, the small team of volunteers that produce the installation each year find creative ways to raise the capital needed through donations or in-kind contributions. Throughout the project's lifespan, WOMANTRA has received support from various donors, including the University of the West Indies' Student Guild, UNIFEM, and the United Nations Population Fund. In the years when funding was not available, the more traditional tactics of penning sponsorship letters to community hardware stores and requesting free shuttle services for the silhouettes by transport companies located in and around event locations proved to be an effective alternative. Despite the added elbow grease needed for this door-to-door approach, the value of the contributions made by community-based suppliers should not be underestimated. Not only is it an effective way to avoid accruing large capital costs, but it also results in developing meaningful relationships with community members, who can take ownership of the project and become invested in its outcome through an organic engagement.

The second phase—construction of the silhouettes—required equal amounts of physical and emotional labor. The process of creating a life-sized template for the silhouette design invariably meant needing to draw the outline of a human figure onto tracing paper, much like the chalk outline drawn around murder victims. This exercise, which in many ways mimicked a re-enactment of what police officers might do upon finding a murder victim's body, compelled those who participated in this activity to confront the deaths of these women and girls in a visceral way. Art has always been a powerful excavation tool for the artist, used to process one's own experiences and attempt to make sense of them. Similarly, for a project like Silent Silhouettes, even though volunteers may not approach the work consciously looking to or expecting to be moved emotionally, the process often raises complex feelings for participants and brings them to the surface. In a country where gender-based violence has touched almost the entire population, the repetition of drawing,

sawing, and painting each silhouette the dark color of mourning becomes its own ritual in memory that is connected to a *herstory* that goes way beyond the activity itself.

Over the years the organization has pursued strategic partnerships, seeking to secure the sustainability of the project beyond financial contributions. In 2016, in one of our most recent collaborations, WOMANTRA partnered with the United Nations Population Fund to produce the Silent Silhouettes campaign. As the official coordinator of the agency's "Youth Advisory Group," consisting of young leaders from various groups around the country, we were able to facilitate their direct participation in all aspects of project development, including the design and promotion of a social media campaign as well as the construction of the silhouettes. One of our volunteers, from the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN-TT), shared a reflection on her experience:

The task was physically straining. Sawing and lifting heavy pieces of wood, and having my body slowly outlined with chalk, led me to reflect deeply on these Silent Silhouettes. The silence was deafening and emotionally jolting. Constructing these representations of lost lives transcended the physical experience and created a space to contemplate. It felt as though I could feel the pain of my sisters, young and old. I questioned worth and value and love, and what these women and girls must have gone through. Recreating these stories in this way undoubtedly led to a newer and more gravely empathetic outlook on domestic violence.

In the 2020 installation of Silent Silhouettes, we hope to partner with the Volunteer Center of Trinidad and Tobago, or other youth-centered groups, to continue facilitating and encouraging young people's participation in the campaign, which we consider to be a crucial aspect of the change work in which the idea and production of this installation is grounded (Fig. 17.2).

17.3.5 *Impact*

Similar to the Silent Witness campaign, Silent Silhouettes has incorporated performance art as part of its strategy to enhance the overall impact of the intervention, particularly on the audience's capacity to connect with the issue on a deeper level. Before WOMANTRA was given its name by artist Michelle Isava, we collaborated to produce the first Silent Silhouettes installation in 2008. In her performance entitled "The Intercession," Isava presents a dramatic body count of 18 murder victims, delivering dead flowers to each one of them as a symbol of the broken promises made by their loved ones. This performance was filmed in two locations and later made into a short film, which to our credit was selected the following year to be featured at the Trinidad & Tobago Film Festival. What began as an experimental project between friends more than a decade ago is now WOMANTRA's flagship campaign, born out of a need to unpack the shared experience of being a woman, which is far too often marred by violence.

Fig. 17.2 Silhouettes with chalk messages from participants in the solidarity action, ‘Orange Day: Remembrance for Victims of Gender-based Violence’ in January 2020 (Port of Spain, Trinidad)

Since then, the Silent Silhouettes have been displayed in various contexts across the country, among the most notable being the Commonwealth People’s Forum in 2009 and #SheLookFuhDat: A Life in Leggings Discussion in 2016—stretching over almost a decade of the campaign’s evolution and history. Local women’s rights and state-led organizations have also requested the inclusion of the installation at their own “16 days of activism” events, including at the annual gender-based violence fair led by the Gender and Child Affairs Division of the Office of the Prime Minister and the Equal Opportunity Commission. And so, while the mobility and reach of the installation has not significantly increased over the years, the Silent Silhouettes’ presence has been recognized at critical junctures in the movement to end gender-based violence.

Viewers’ reactions, however, remain the most powerful impact of the campaign. The imagery conjured by these shadowy figures, standing in formation like a small army, paradoxically lend strength and legitimacy to their shared experience. Despite the decision not to include the names of victims out of respect for their families, it’s always striking that passersby, particularly women, were able to recall details of the victims that were not included in the installation. In some instances, their information came from media reports, while for others their own relationship to the victim allowed them to fill in the gaps of their story. It became clear that the majority of women who viewed the installation were in tune with these deaths in a way that validated the space we were creating through Silent Silhouettes—a space for women to talk about their own experiences and those of other women, and to collectively debrief about the state of violence against women, for which we shared a deep concern. One experience that stood out to us over the years was watching a young man who said a silent prayer for the victims, touching each silhouette on its forehead.

These types of engagements demonstrated that a wide audience of women, men, survivors, relatives, and others who came into contact with the installation had a unique opportunity to connect with the presence of the women and girls who are gone and to express what that loss meant for them.

17.3.6 Challenges

Despite the relatively low expenditures needed for the Silent Silhouettes project, producing the installation requires a significant effort, typically executed by a small team of volunteers. The coordination of this effort has not always been possible, given WOMANTRA's constraints as a small non-profit with no paid or full-time staff. Not unlike many of the organizations functioning within the civil society landscape, NGOs often juggle the management of multiple projects in tandem with paid work in order to sustain themselves and the services they provide to their constituencies. But given that necessity is the mother of invention, WOMANTRA was able to continue producing Silent Silhouettes in a way that was sustainable through the introduction of a poster campaign (see Fig. 17.3) that is shared on WOMANTRA's digital platforms. The execution of this alternative design requires much of the same groundwork, including research, collection of statistics, and preparation of select narratives, which are presented as a virtual compilation of stylized posters and

Fig. 17.3 Silent Silhouette poster campaign featured during the 16 days of activism on WOMANTRA's social media platforms

infographics. While it is difficult to measure the impact of these two variations against each other given the very different audiences and modes of engagement with the work, the continuity of the project in its attempt to honor the victims of femicide remains the organization's priority.

Another unique challenge was finding ways to maintain our commitment to keeping the focus on women and girl victims of gender-based violence while responding to men's concerns about inclusion. The reality that women and girls are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence—and more specifically are the overwhelming majority of domestic-violence-related murder victims—didn't seem to be the precipitating impetus for feedback by the majority of male viewers of the installation. As the 2018 National Women's Health Survey confirms, one in three women are affected by intimate partner violence, which is consistent with the global average. Between 2006 to 2011, male victims accounted for only 32.8% of homicides by an intimate partner or family member (Hosein 2018). Despite these statistics, each time the installation has been shown, men have inquired about their absence in the space, asking why there are no male deaths reflected in the installation. The fundamental issue created by this articulation is that it divests attention away from the women and girls being honored in that moment and whose lives were almost exclusively taken by men. It also illuminates a "bigger picture" question about why, in this space, men are inclined to focus on their own representation. We were again faced with a series of questions, including: *How can safe spaces for men be created such that these dialogues can take place? And on whom does this responsibility fall?* Finding ways to compassionately respond to these questions while remaining committed to the purpose of the work is complicated and nuanced. As a feminist organization, we triumph when we are able to continue engaging in advocacy around the rights and vulnerabilities of marginalized genders and against push-back that attempts to decenter or delegitimize those experiences.

17.4 Conclusion

The approach to managing public health has been evolving all over the world. The divergence away from focusing only on the aspects of public health that are addressed through the health sector, to incorporate intersectional health concerns, has required increased stakeholder engagement outside the traditional frameworks, including a recognition of the role of arts advocacy. With this shift, organizations that engage in health advocacy or provide services for key populations can highlight risk factors and other implications not typically addressed within the health care system. As stated in Chap. 21 of this volume, the impact of health promotion initiatives often produce a mixture of results, both wanted and unwanted, and so understanding the particular context and audience is critical to any results-based intervention. For WOMANTRA, this has meant raising awareness about the fatal effects of gender-based violence and the specific vulnerabilities of women and girls. By featuring the Silent Silhouettes in public spaces, viewers are able to viscerally

connect with victims and bear witness to the ultimate consequence of gender-based violence, which strikes a chord with so many onlookers, as it is filtered through the backdrop of shared experience.

When it comes to gender-based violence, a lot of emphasis is put on breaking the silence, but significantly less considered are the interconnected social and structural systems that keep women silent—some of which have been explored in this chapter. The Silent Silhouettes, though a small contribution, provide a solemn reminder to us all of the work still required to bring justice to these women and girls and the urgent need to end gender-based violence. May their memory live on.

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