



**Professor Emerita Gill Hague**  
**Professor of Violence Against Women Studies**  
**Centre for Gender and Violence Research, Bristol**

**Building activism and services against  
domestic violence: A story of transformation**





***Gender and Violence Research Centre,  
University of Bristol***

**Initiated 1989 / 1990 as DVRG**

**National, international, local studies on  
VAW: to feed into policy and practice**

**Works alongside Women's Aid, RCCs etc**

**Wide-ranging teaching, training**

**Attempts to give voice to women survivors  
and their children**

**Works in activist frame whenever possible**

**Robust research for social change**

**"Gill Hague's marvellous book maps a critical period of feminist struggles in the UK, capturing their diversity, vision, passion, creativity and energy. The message of this book is that history matters. If we are to defend the gains that have been made and build on those gains in future struggles for women's liberation and wider social justice, we must know what came before us. A must-read."**

*Pragna Patel, Southall Black Sisters*

**"She was in the room when it happened. Gill Hague, feminist activist pioneer and scholar, details the Women's Liberation Movements and the Violence Against Women Movements from then until now."**

*Rebecca Emerson Dobash, University of Manchester*

Acclaimed activist and scholar Gill Hague recounts the inspiring story of the domestic violence movement in the UK and beyond from the 1960s onwards in this captivating book.

Memories, poems and interviews with activists, practitioners and abuse survivors shed new light on a period of immense change, shaped by a generation of feminist pioneers.

From the women's liberation movement until now, this book showcases the campaigning zeal with which policies, services and awareness-raising on gendered violence in the UK and across the world were built, including for Black and minority women. This fascinating history will inform and inspire new ways forward within the domestic violence movement.

Gill Hague is Professor Emerita of Violence Against Women Studies at the University of Bristol and has been an activist, practitioner and researcher on violence against women nationally and internationally since the early 1970s.

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History and Memories of the Domestic Violence Movement Gill Hague

# HISTORY AND MEMORIES OF THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MOVEMENT

*We've Come Further  
Than You Think*

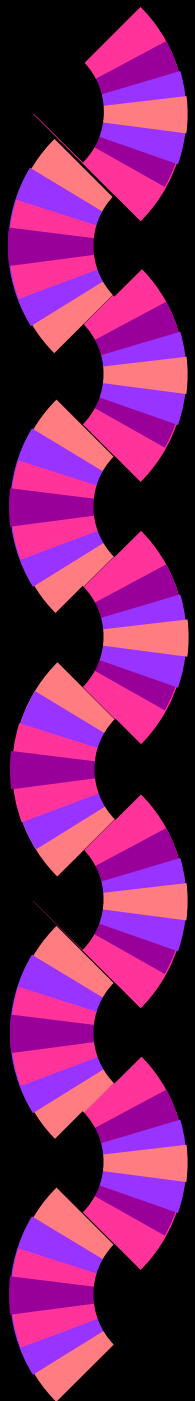
GILL HAGUE





***GLOBAL CATASTROPHE  
of VAWG inc DVA***

**BUT since early 1970s  
accompanied by a  
TRANSFORMATIVE  
STRUGGLE  
by activists and  
professionals**



▶ **“The great mobilisation of women began with a vision, supported by action. The vision was of a world transformed”**

▶ **Rebecca E. & Russell Dobash, 1992**



**BEFORE THERE WAS NOTHING:  
THEN**

**WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS BURST  
INTO BEING FROM 1970s  
DIRECT ACTION, CAMPAIGNING  
IN MANY COUNTRIES  
PASSIONATE DAYS OF ZEAL AND  
CHANGE  
MAKING IT UP FROM START....**



## *The transforming struggle*

**a) Empowering social movements across the world**

**b) Domestic violence activists  
IN ALL COUNTRIES (even  
where it is hardest)**



# ***SOME PRINCIPLES OF INSPIRING RESPONSES***

- Strengthening / empowerment of survivors of domestic violence**
- Transformation of lives of those abused**
- Culturally specific, culturally sensitive, take on diversity**
- Self-determination, belief and support for survivors**
- Holding perpetrators accountable, challenging gender power relations**





## ***RECAP from the early 70s on***

- ▶ **Heady passion, fire of a movement**
- ▶ **Shelters / refuges often the first initiatives**
- ▶ **Huge challenge at a time when before there was nothing**
- ▶ **Very fabric of sexual relations between men and women challenged**
- ▶ **More or less, first time ever. Building something new**
- ▶ **Radical policies and practices in shelters**



# ***DIVERSE VOICES / INDEPENDENT BLACK WOMEN'S MOVEMENT***

- ▶ **SOME WOMEN'S MOVEMENT PROJECTS SEEMED OBLIVIOUS IN UK AND OTHER COUNTRIES e.g. US**
- ▶ **SOME DID BEST TO COMBAT RACISM AND OTHER TYPES OF OPPRESSION.**
- ▶ **SPECIALIST PROJECTS FOR BMER WOMEN, e.g.**
- ▶ **SOUTHALL BLACK SISTERS, IMANI**
- ▶ **DIFFERENT CULTURAL FRAMEWORKS, COUNTRIES, DIFF STRUGGLES**
- ▶ **MORE RECENTLY: 'NEW' STRUGGLES e.g. 'HONOUR' BASED VIOLENCE, FGM**



# ***LATER TRANSFORMING DEVELOPMENTS***

- ▶ **INTER-AGENCY (and CRIMINAL JUSTICE)**
- ▶ **COORDINATED COMMUNITY RESPONSES**
- ▶ **SENSATIONAL PIONEERS:**
  - ▶ **DULUTH**
  - ▶ **LONDON, ONT**



*In almost all countries: Beginning to take it seriously: activists/ some services*

- **OUTREACH AND SUPPORT PROJECTS**
- **COUNSELLING**
- **EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN SCHOOLS**
- **VAW TRAINING / GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE**
- **PERPETRATORS PROGRAMMES**
- **AWARENESS RAISING**
- **STRATEGIES ACROSS LOCALITIES**

**ALL OF THESE LINKED TO ACTIVISM, ALL HAVE POTENTIAL: IF USED IN TRANSFORMATIVE WAYS**



# *Global instruments*

**Of some use to make change (limited)**

**Fought for and implemented by  
DEDICATED, OFTEN UNSUNG  
activists in the Global bodies and others**

**CEDAW**

**Declaration on Elimination of Violence  
against Women**

**Global Goals**

**Istanbul Convention**

**Conventions rape/sexual violence in war**



***IMPORTANCE OF***  
**LEGAL APPROACHES**

**CAMPAIGNS**

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**  
**RESEARCH**

**The need for**  
**TRANSFORMATORY**  
**RESEARCH**



# ***WOMEN'S ACTIVIST INSPIRING RESPONSES ACROSS WORLD***

**In all countries across the world to different extents, by no means just in the West**

- e.g. Powerful activist movements in India**

**Different approaches, Shelters can be regarded as Western**

**BUT World Conference of Shelters, Global Network of Women's Shelters**

**Trans-national projects avoiding dominance from the West**



**A MOMENT TO REMEMBER,  
CELEBRATE, LEARN FROM  
THE WOMEN'S ACTIVIST  
MOVEMENTS**

**WITHOUT THEM, THE DV SECTOR  
WOULD NOT BE WHERE IT IS  
TODAY**

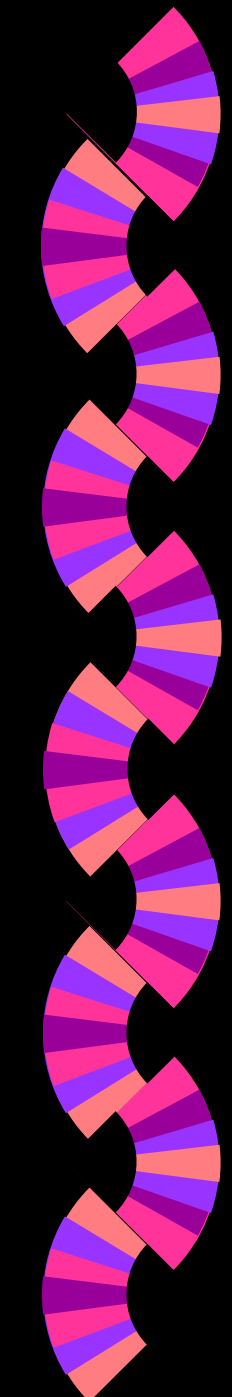




**A great privilege to have played  
a part in this**

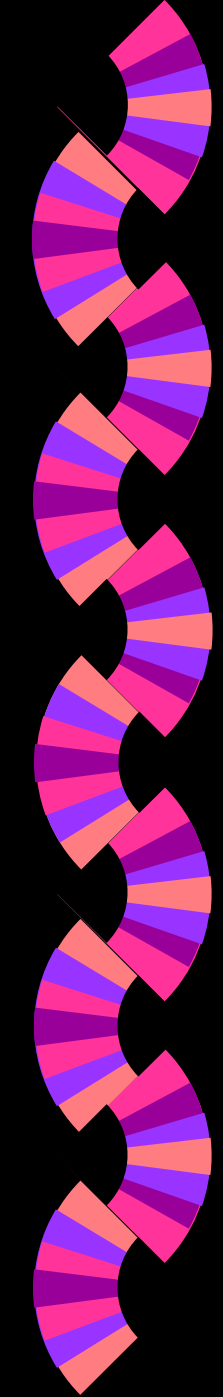
**Unprecedented  
Historically unique and  
Un-repeatable period of**

**research / policy / service  
development**



**DV services, research, policies have now moved from the margins towards the mainstream. The change is underway**

**WE ARE WALKING NOW ON NEW HISTORICAL GROUND AND THE GROUND WE WALK ON HAS BEEN FORGED BY ACTIVISTS AND WOMEN'S PROJECTS**



*Building resistance to violence  
against women. Thanks Liz Kelly:*

- ▶ **DV work like making a beautiful tapestry**
- ▶ **Each thread is someone like you making a difference, weaving together with others**
- ▶ **Together we build it**
- ▶ **You cannot undo it again, it will knot up**
- ▶ **The only way for the tapestry is to get bigger**

