

FINDING HUMANITY

A PODCAST SHARING TRUE STORIES OF COURAGE AND PURPOSE

FINDING HUMANITY PODCAST EDUCATION TOOLKITS

Season 3: Stuck in Transit

EPISODE 8

Coerced: Addressing the Hidden Forms of Domestic Violence | Ryan Hart

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Our goal is to share our insights, research, policy analysis and key findings with hopes to inspire continued engagement and learning around the podcast episodes and the substantial content and topics unearthed in each episode.

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Toolkit author: **Karolina Mendecka**, Policy and Research Lead, Humanity Lab Foundation
With support from: **Ayesha Amin**, Policy and Research Associate, Humanity Lab Foundation
Under direction of: **Hazami Barmada**, Founder & CEO, Humanity Lab Foundation

About the Finding Humanity Podcast | Season 3: How does one get out of a vicious cycle of violence, hatred, or oppression? In Season 3 of Finding Humanity, we bring you stories of people trapped in environments where danger and trauma are hard to escape — and where often, self-identity is eradicated. In each episode, we meet humans who are stuck in transit and follow their unique journeys in search of justice and freedom. [Learn More](#)

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EPISODE INFORMATION

Main topics in Episode: Domestic violence, Gender based violence, Femicide

Short Description of Episode: Victims of coercive control might not recognize their experience as domestic abuse. In the case of Ryan Hart, his mother was left with no choice but to stay with his father — who portrayed himself as a well-respected family man in their community. Ryan says that it was their father's gendered view of the world which ultimately led him to murder his daughter and wife of 25 years. According to the World Health Organization, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men worldwide experience some type of abuse. And with the COVID-19 lockdown, reported numbers of intimate partner violence rose significantly. In this episode, we'll unpack domestic violence and its manifestations. We learn about coercive control and emotional abuse and why it's extremely difficult to escape a manipulative partner. On the show, we share the unspeakable tragedy that befell the Hart family and how we can better advocate for domestic abuse victims and survivors.

Quick Facts & Data

Domestic violence:

- Worldwide, 1 in 3 women have experienced physical or sexual violence — mostly by an intimate partner. When accounting for sexual harassment, this figure is even higher. [1]
- Worldwide, almost 3 in 5 women killed were killed by their partners or family in 2017. [1]
- Almost three quarters of the world's countries have outlawed domestic violence. [1]
- An average of 137 women across the world are killed by a partner or family member every day, according to new data released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. [2]
- More than half of the 87,000 women killed in 2017 were reported as dying at the hands of those closest to them. [2]

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- Approximately 30,000 women were killed by an intimate partner and another 20,000 by a relative. [2]
- Slightly more than 1 in 3 women have experienced violence at the hands of a partner or family member. [3]
- Nearly 40% of women who are murdered die at the hands of their partners.
- 90% of rape victims are women. [3]
- 80% of adult victims know their rapist and over 90% of youth victims know theirs. [3]
- Many women feel that violence against wives is justified in some cases. Ethiopia, India, Bhutan, Samoa, and Laos are just some countries where over half of women feel as such. [3]
- Over 90% of offenders never see justice. [3]
- Gender-based violence is incredibly expensive. The costs of healthcare, psychosocial counseling, legal services, and lost wages from time spent recovering total in the trillions of dollars every year. This is comparable to the total amount of military spending by all countries each year. [3]

[1] Facts, UN Women, [link](#)

[2] Global study, UN, [link](#)

[3] GBV and Domestic Violence, Friends of UNFPA, [link](#)

Topical Background Information & Context

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic abuse, also called "domestic violence" or "intimate partner violence", can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or wound someone. Domestic abuse can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. It can occur within a range of relationships including couples who are

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married, living together or dating. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels.

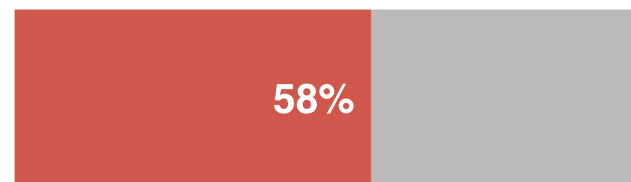
Anyone can be a victim of domestic violence, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, faith or class. Victims of domestic abuse may also include a child or other relative, or any other household member.

Domestic abuse is typically manifested as a pattern of abusive behavior toward an intimate partner in a dating or family relationship, where the abuser exerts power and control over the victim.

More than half of women killed were victims of relatives or partners

Estimated breakdown of female homicides globally, 2017

Killed by a partner or family member: 50,000



Other female homicides: 37,000

Source: UNODC 2018

BBC

Domestic abuse can be mental, physical, economic or sexual in nature. Incidents are rarely isolated, and usually escalate in frequency and severity. Domestic abuse may culminate in serious physical injury or death.

HISTORY

Many societies didn't recognize domestic violence as wrong for most of human history. Some interpretations of Jewish, Islamic, and Christian religions have given the husband purview to discipline his wife in more or less the same manner as he might discipline and control any of his other properties, including servants, slaves, and animals. Some of these faiths' holy texts even gave instructions on the manner of wife beating, such as avoiding direct blows to the face or making sure not to cause lasting injury.

Often, abused wives were believed to have provoked the violence of their husbands—and this belief threads through hundreds of years of literature on domestic violence, infecting nearly everything written about spousal abuse prior to the 1960s and '70s. On those very rare occasions when a case of private violence did make it to a courtroom, the rulings tended to side in favor of the man so long as the wife's injuries were not permanent. There are still more than a dozen countries where violence against one's spouse or family member is

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perfectly legal—which is to say that no specific laws against domestic violence have been written. These include Egypt, Haiti, Latvia, Uzbekistan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, among others. Russia decriminalized any domestic violence that doesn't result in bodily injury in 2017.

DIFFERENCES: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE V GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV):

The terms gender-based violence, domestic violence, and violence against women convey similar concepts and are often used interchangeably. However, there are important distinctions between them and their implications for policymakers, care providers, and survivors.

Breaking down these differences is important for understanding how survivors experience violence in day-to-day life and they can be reached with sensitive care and support.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

The United Nations' definition of GBV is, "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women...whether occurring in public or private life." Gender-based violence is a somewhat more inclusive term than violence against women. GBV could include violence against men, provided the violence stems from a man's gender identity or presentation.

Gender-based violence could also apply to violence experienced by gender non-conforming people. It is important to recognize violence against gender non-conforming people because their voices and access to care may be marginalized because of their gender identity. Further, conceptions of gender vary greatly around the world such that the man-woman binary present in Western society simply does not always fit other cultures. It is imperative that Western agents acting in delicate global settings recognize and are tolerant of these difference so they can adequately address issues of gender-based violence.

Violence Against Women (VAW)

Violence against women is more specific than gender-based violence in that it only applies to people who identify or present as women. Women experience the vast majority of gender-based violence, so that extent, gender-based violence and violence against women

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overlap. Violence against women can be used in place of GBV when specifically trying to reach women with resources or when trying to emphasize that women are the group most harmed by GBV in terms of scale. Violence against women is also a more accessible term than gender-based violence for many people. Advocates for ending GBV may choose to use the term violence against women to generate awareness of the issue.

Domestic Violence (sometimes known as interpersonal or family violence)

Domestic violence, in many countries, describes violence that takes place between intimate partners. Both men and women can be perpetrators or victims under a domestic violence framework. Domestic violence is broader than partner violence however, and encompasses violence toward others sharing a living space, including children, siblings, or grandparents.

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Intimate partner violence specifically describes violence that occurs between people in sexual or romantic relationships. IPV is more exclusive than domestic violence, but it differs from gender-based violence in that IPV can occur between partners of the same gender identity, such as in gay or lesbian relationships. Same-sex couples may already experience oppression because of intolerant views towards them, but victims of violence within same-sex relationships may be especially disadvantaged by such intolerance.

Violence looks different in each situation. Each type of violence can be experienced in isolation, or, as is more often the case, simultaneously. All forms of violence are harmful and carry dangerous consequences for victims.

Sexual Violence

The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes sexual violence as, “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.” Sexual violence is prevalent everywhere.

Physical Violence

The WHO defines physical violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that

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either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.”

Psychological Violence (also called emotional or mental violence)

Psychological violence is any harmful behavior that isn't physical, such as verbal abuse, intimidation, manipulation, degradation, and humiliation. Stalking, economic abuse where one partner controls the other's income or access to necessary expenses, and isolation from friends or family are some psychologically abusive behaviors. Psychological abuse often happens over a period of time in which the victim may lose their sense of individuality, dignity, or self-worth potentially resulting in dependency on a partner for feelings of self-worth, or otherwise creating an environment where the victim lives in fear. Victims of psychological violence may develop anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts or behaviors, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Psychological violence can be difficult or impossible for outsiders to see, but that does not mean it is less harmful or not real. It almost always accompanies sexual and physical violence.

INTERNATIONAL LAW ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is recognized in international law as a violation of human rights. Although early international treaties only provided protection against domestic violence implicitly, in the 1990's **domestic violence began to receive more explicit attention with the passage of the General Comment No. 19 by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (1992) and the Declaration of Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993).**

Recommendation 19 by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women specifically addressed domestic violence as a form of discrimination against women, stating:

Family violence is one of the most insidious forms of violence against women. It is prevalent in all societies. Within family relationships women of all ages are subjected to violence of all kinds, including battering, rape, other forms of sexual assault, mental and other forms of violence, which are perpetuated by traditional attitudes. Lack of economic independence forces many women to stay in violent relationships. The abrogation of their family responsibilities by men can be a form of violence, and

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coercion. These forms of violence put women's health at risk and impair their ability to participate in family life and public life on a basis of equality

The past two decades have also seen numerous resolutions from the UN General Assembly on violence against women, including one that specifically addressed domestic violence.

In addition to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the 1993 Vienna Declaration on Human Rights and the 1995 Declaration of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing specified actions to protect women from discrimination and violence. Similarly, a 1993 UN General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women called on governments to condemn such violence and to refrain from using customs, traditions or religious beliefs to avoid their obligations to end it. These agreements serve as the framework for the mandate of the UN special rapporteur on violence against women.

In 2003, African governments adopted a protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in which they committed themselves to end discrimination and violence against women. The protocol came into force in November 2005 after ratification by 15 states.

The UN special rapporteur and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) serve as two of the main avenues through which issues of gender violence can be addressed internationally. CEDAW encourages states to report on the extent, causes and effects of violence, and on the measures they have taken to counter it. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can submit supplementary reports. The system has had some successes and faced many challenges.

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing & Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Treaty, better known as the "Istanbul Convention", is a benchmark to combat violence against women. The treaty defines violence against women as a human right violation and aims to eliminate all form of violence against women and protect women's human rights. It is based on the understanding that violence against women is a form of

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gender-based violence, committed against women because of the simple fact they are women. For the first time a treaty obliges the member states to address all forms of violence and to take actions to prevent violence against women, protect the victims and prosecute the perpetrators.

The Convention aims to create a legal framework at pan-European level to protect women against all forms of violence, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence. The Convention includes a wide range of measures, varying from awareness-raising and data collection to legal actions to condemn different criminal forms of violence; it aims for a zero-tolerance approach against violence against women and domestic violence. Furthermore, it provides possibilities for the implementation of a wide range of policies between national and governmental bodies involved in prevention, protection, and prosecution.

However, Poland has begun withdrawal from the Convention. It is argued that while domestic violence should be prevented, the treaty was an attempt to promote “gender ideology” because it defines gender as a “social construct” (rather than a biological one). The ruling party called the convention a “feminist invention that is meant to justify gay ideology” and declared that “you don’t need a convention to [know that] you cannot beat a woman; you can just read the gospel”.

Aspects of the Istanbul Convention have aroused similar criticism in other parts of Central and Eastern Europe. Among the countries that have signed but not ratified the treaty are Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Ukraine, as well as the United Kingdom. Russia and Azerbaijan are the only Council of Europe member states not even to have signed the convention.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A PRIVATE MATTER?

The patriarchal mindset that dismisses violence against women as a “private matter” between intimate partners perpetrates an enduring damage to the economy and society. Growing scientific research, using domestic violence data from around the world, establishes that violence against women, which happens within the private sphere of the family, inflicts economic costs to households, businesses and the overall economy.

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The economic possibilities for women are inextricably tied with the consequences of violence and, in particular, violence within the home. A critical path by which violence impacts the economic opportunities and capabilities is through its insidious impact on the physical and mental health of women. Women experiencing domestic violence are more likely to have a chronic health condition. They also suffer from poorer mental health – depression, anxiety and the underlying trauma affects women, at both physical and psychological levels. Thus, violence induces a vicious cycle whereby it adversely affects both women’s labour force participation and education or skill development, and influences economic empowerment and the status of women in the society, which, in turn, exacerbates violence.

There is a trade-off that the patriarchal mindset is oblivious to – the longer the issue of violence against women is dismissed as a private matter, the bigger the hole in the economy. Consequently, this trade-off leads to a fundamental contradiction in economic policy, where ignoring the issue of violence against women for cost-cutting measures only lead to a bigger loss to the economy that can weaken, and even neutralise, the effectiveness of government welfare policies. In fact, if one looks at the notion of “fiscal space” through a gendered lens, the sustainability of the fiscal space would very much depend on minimising the loss due to violence against women.

BARRIERS TO WOMEN LEAVING

Danger and fear

One of the most important reasons women don’t leave is because it can be incredibly dangerous. The fear that women feel is very real – **there is a huge rise in the likelihood of violence after separation.** 41% (37 of 91) of women killed by a male partner/former partner in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2018 had separated or taken steps to separate from them. Eleven of these 37 women were killed within the first month of separation and 24 were killed within the first year (Femicide Census, 2020).

Isolation

Domestic abuse often relies on isolating the victim: the perpetrator works to weaken her connections with family and friends, making it extremely difficult to seek support. Perpetrators will often try and reduce a woman’s contact with the outside world to prevent

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her from recognising that his behaviour is abusive and wrong. Isolation leads women to become extremely dependent on their controlling partner.

Shame, embarrassment or denial

Perpetrators are often well respected or liked in their communities because they are charming and manipulative. This prevents people recognising the abuse and isolates the woman further. The perpetrator often minimises, denies or blames the abuse on the victim. Victims may be ashamed or make excuses to themselves and others to cover up the abuse.

Trauma and low confidence

Imagine being told every day that you're worthless and the impact that this has on your self-esteem. Victims have very limited freedom to make decisions in an abusive relationship, they are often traumatised, regularly told 'you couldn't manage on your own, you need me'. Fear is constant and they live in a world of everyday terror.

Practical reasons

Abusers often control every aspect of their victim's life – making it impossible to have a job or financial independence. By controlling access to money women are left unable to support themselves or their children. They may fear having their children taken away or, if she has an insecure immigration status, may fear being deported. The support isn't there when they need it.

Asking for help is not easy. Misunderstandings about domestic abuse often prevents professionals from knowing what to do, how to talk about it or where to direct women disclosing abuse.

ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS: why is it so hard to “just leave”

Not surprisingly, lack of material resources, such as not having a job or having limited income, is a strong factor. Lack of support – and even blame – from family, friends and professionals can add to the sense of helplessness caused by the abuse.

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Then there is often the constant fear, based in reality, that abuse and stalking will continue or escalate after leaving. The risk of homicide, for example, increases for a period of time after a woman leaves her abusive partner.

The psychological reasons women stay are naturally less visible, making it hard for many to understand and sympathize with victims. Willoughby illustrates themes commonly found in our review: abusers switching from extreme kindness to being a monster; the victim feeling compassion when the abuser apologizes; the victim holding on to hope the abuser will change; and the abuser destroying the confidence of the victim.

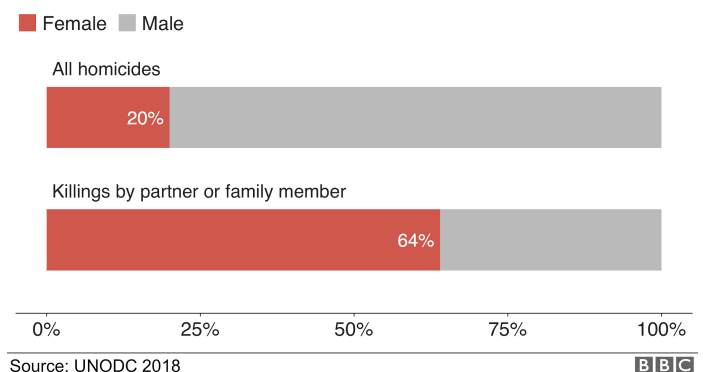
Leaving is often a complex process with several stages: minimizing the abuse and trying to help the abuser; coming to see the relationship as abusive and losing hope the relationship will get better; and, finally, focusing on one's own needs for safety and sanity and fighting to overcome external obstacles.

Are the obstacles to leaving different for women married to highly respected, prominent men – the star quarterback, the well-regarded army captain, the beloved minister? Research is sparse on this topic. The closest are a review of case studies and a survey of those married to police officers. Both show that, in addition to the obstacles described earlier, these partners are often reluctant to report the abuse for two reasons. First is the fear of ruining their partner's career. The second reason for staying silent is fear of not being believed.

Responses by the public and professionals can make it more difficult for victims to leave. For example, in one study the public viewed an assault against an intimate partner as less serious than an assault against a stranger, even when the same level of force was used. **And while public acceptance of domestic abuse has decreased over time, blaming victims for their abuse still exists and is tied to sexist views, such as the belief that**

Women are much more likely to be killed by someone close to them

Estimated gender breakdown of homicide victims, 2017



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discrimination against women is no longer a problem and men and women have equal opportunities.

Even professionals are not immune from such attitudes. In various settings, such as health care, marital therapy and family court, professionals often fail to ask about abuse. Or, if they hear of the abuse, they blame victims for triggering it or don't believe them. Professionals often insist on corroboration from official reports without giving any credence to victim reports. Yet fear and shame hold victims back. Less than half of domestic abuse survivors make reports to the police or health care workers.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE US

The Office of Violence Against Women has an entire budget of just under \$489 million at present. To give a frame of reference, the entire annual budget for the Department of Justice, which oversees the Office of Violence Against Women, is currently \$28 billion.

But victims receive the message to stay in other ways, too. It's visible when the court system puts them on the defensive, asks them to face a person who might have tried to kill them, a person they know only too well might kill them for real next time. It's visible in court rulings that give violent perpetrators a mere slap on the wrist, a fine, maybe. A few days in jail after a brutal assault. It's visible when law enforcement treats domestic violence as a nuisance, a "domestic dispute," rather than the criminal act that it is.

It wasn't until 1984 that Congress finally passed a law that would help women and children who are victims of abuse; it was called the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, and it helped fund shelters and other resources for victims. Stalking wasn't identified as a crime until the early 1990s and still today is often not seen for the threat it truly is—not by law enforcement, abusers, or even by the victims actually being stalked, despite the fact that three-quarters of intimate-partner femicide victims in America have been stalked beforehand by partners or ex-partners. A national hotline for victims of domestic violence was not established in this country until 1996.

That part of the post-Simpson national conversation is slowly being addressed today in Native American, immigrant, and underprivileged communities on a larger scale than ever

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before, thanks in part to the second major event that changed how America treats domestic violence: the Violence Against Women Act. VAWA put intimate partner violence before lawmakers who had, until then, seen it as a private family matter, a problem for women rather than the criminal-justice system. It had first been introduced to Congress by then-Senator Joe Biden in 1990, but the bill didn't pass until the fall of 1994, just months after O. J.'s arrest. (A jury acquitted O.J. of his wife's murder in October 1995, a year after the bill's passage.)

Finally, for the first time ever, cities and towns all across the country could get federal funding to address domestic violence in their communities. These funds allowed for targeted trainings of first responders, the creation of advocacy positions, shelters, transitional housing, batterer-intervention classes, and legal training; VAWA funds meant victims no longer had to pay for their own rape kits, and if an abused partner was evicted because of events related to her abuse, she could now receive compensation and assistance; victims with disabilities could find support, as could those in need of legal aid.

VAWA requires reauthorization every five years. The 2013 reauthorization was delayed because many Republican senators and representatives didn't want the bill to specifically mention same-sex partners, Native Americans living on reservations, or undocumented immigrants who were battered and trying to apply for temporary visas. After heated debates in both the House and Senate, the reauthorization finally passed.



[source](#)

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Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious, preventable public health problem that affects millions of Americans. The term “intimate partner violence” describes physical violence, sexual violence, stalking, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy. CDC’s research and programs work to understand the problem of intimate partner violence and prevent it before it begins.

Data from CDC’s National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) indicate:

- About 1 in 4 women and nearly 1 in 10 men have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime and reported some form of IPV-related impact.
- Over 43 million women and 38 million men have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

IPV starts early and continues throughout the lifespan. When IPV occurs in adolescence, it is called teen dating violence (TDV). TDV affects millions of U.S. teens each year.

About 11 million women and 5 million men who reported experiencing contact sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime said that they first experienced these forms of violence before the age of 18.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN EUROPE

Domestic violence remains all too widespread in Europe. **One in four people know a friend or family member who has experienced it, and one in five know a perpetrator.** An EU survey finds that over one in five women who have been in a relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or ex-partner, while homicide data shows that in many countries, over half of all female murder victims are killed by a partner or relative. Many people feel unable to report abuse.

The EU has taken action to ensure that victims of domestic violence across the EU have the support they need to seek help and rebuild their lives. Since 2015, the Victims' Rights law has required all EU countries to provide access to shelters, information, an individual assessment

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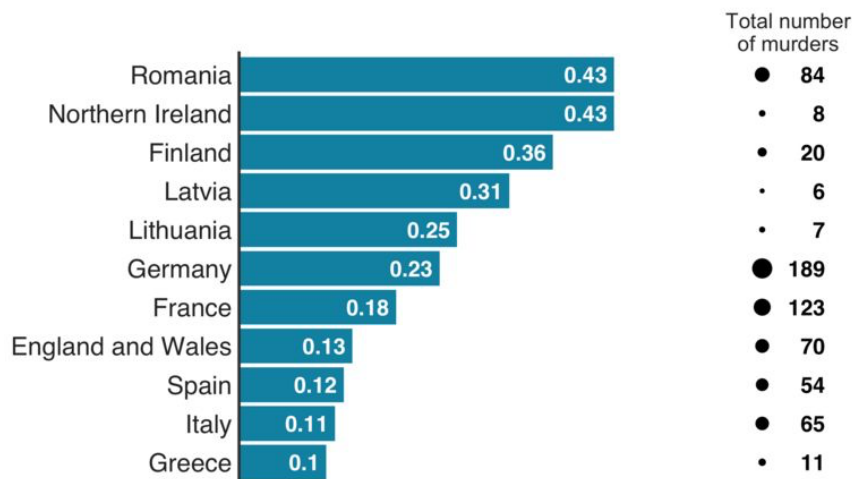
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and special protection during any criminal proceedings. The Protection Order law means that orders issued in one EU country are recognised quickly in all the others. In 2017, the EU launched a campaign to inform people about where to get help and fund grassroots projects like those running in Greece, Italy, Portugal and the UK to sensitise police officers.

The EU is also encouraging governments to ratify **the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating domestic violence**. To comply, countries must make all forms of domestic violence (and stalking) a criminal offence and provide immediate protection for those at risk, including children. They must also prosecute perpetrators and set up programmes to change their abusive behaviour. Countries can choose to apply the convention to both sexes.

Murders in Europe committed by a partner

Rate per 100,000 inhabitants in selected countries, 2017



Source: Eurostat

BBC

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN AFRICA

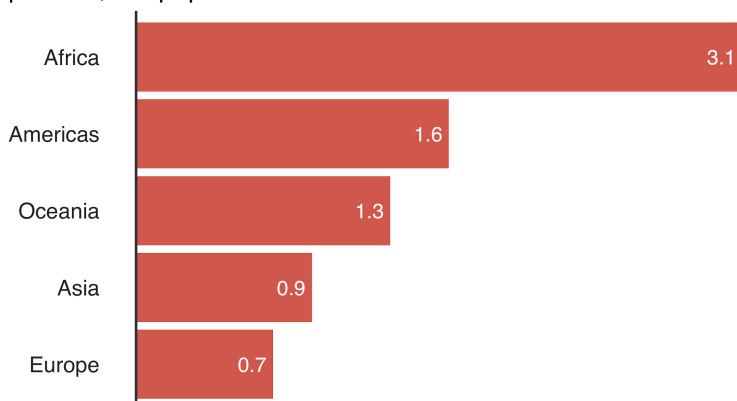
According to the latest statistics, 51% of African women report that being beaten by their husbands is justified if they either go out without permission, neglect the children, argue back, refuse to have sex, or burn the food. This is startling.

To be sure, the numbers reflect attitudes, not incidence. About one third of African women report to have experienced domestic violence (physical or sexual). But the attitudes are arguably even more pernicious. They shape behavior, reflect social norms toward conflict resolution, also outside the home, and could bear importantly on development and poverty reduction. They are also correlated with the incidence of violence. In assessing people's poverty status and well-being, a much more systematic discussion of the acceptance and incidence of domestic violence is called for.

In some ways, the news is good. The prevalence of both acceptance and incidence of domestic violence declined by about 10 percentage points between the first (2000-6) and second half (2007-2013) of the 2000s. But that can only be the beginning. At 51%, acceptance of domestic violence is still exceptionally high, and more than twice the average in the rest of the developing world. With 20% of women in North America reporting to have been affected by domestic violence, domestic violence also remains an issue worldwide.

Women in Africa are most at risk

Rate of women killed by partner or family member per 100,000 population



Source: UNODC 2018

BBC

Yet acceptance is not uniform across countries. It appears deeply ingrained in some societies (77% acceptance rates in Mali and Uganda); in others, only a minority consents (13% in Malawi, 21% in Mozambique). The link with a country's overall level of development (or household

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income within countries) is weak; acceptance rates are only 7.6 percentage points lower in upper middle and high income countries, controlling for other country traits. (See the Figure below, which shows that acceptance of domestic violence is greater among younger women, uneducated women, and women in resource-rich and fragile states.)

On the other hand, acceptance is 16 percentage points higher in resource rich countries. This once again underscores the stark human development penalty of being born in a resource rich country: life expectancy is 4.5 years lower; illiteracy rates are 3.1% higher, and female adults and children are 3.7 and 2.1% more likely to be undernourished respectively (controlling for other country and household traits).

Tolerance of domestic violence is also 9.2 percentage points higher among women in fragile states. Social norms toward domestic violence and political violence can and should not be seen in isolation. The cross country correlation coefficient with the incidence of casualties from political violence is 0.4.

What about the future? Unsurprisingly, the main distinguishing factor in acceptance of domestic violence is education, much more so than income, or even age. Highly-educated women are 31% less likely to be tolerant of domestic violence than women with no education, and women with secondary education are 16% less likely to be tolerant.

Education does, however, not automatically translate in a lower incidence of domestic violence. In fact, women with primary and secondary education are more likely to have experienced domestic violence than uneducated women, among whom incidence rates are (*ceteris paribus*) similar to rates among women with higher education, a puzzle which deserves further inquiry.

The understanding of poverty cannot be relegated to the monetary realm only. Furthermore, social norms that condone violence, also perpetuate it. With younger women still substantially more tolerant of domestic violence, a generational shift in mindset is, unfortunately, yet to come. Before the husband's beating stick no longer feels like butter, as a saying in Amharic would hold, a long way lies ahead.

THE RISK OF DEATH

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Domestic homicides have been called the most predictable and preventable of all homicides. The most common reasons why domestic violence ended in death were:

- the victim was separated from the person who killed her, or she was getting ready to separate from him
- the couple had a history of domestic violence
- the level of violence had been increasing
- the abuser had shown signs of obsessive behaviour, including stalking the victim
- the person who killed their spouse was depressed
- in the past, the abuser had threatened to kill the victim

Women who kill in response to domestic violence

Women are far more likely to be victims than perpetrators. However, **when women have been convicted of murder or manslaughter, in a significant number of cases the victim is a male partner or male family member and there is a history of domestic violence.**

Men can also be victims of intimate partner homicide. In recent years, about 4.9% of male murder victims were killed by an intimate partner. There is reason to believe that the motivation for female perpetrated crimes may be self-defense or retaliation, as the majority of women who use violence against their male partners are battered themselves.

TRENDS IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

During COVID-19 lockdowns, many women and girls have been isolated in unsafe environments where they are at heightened risk of experiencing intimate partner violence. Around one third of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner; and 18% have experienced such violence in the past 12 months. In the most extreme cases, violence against women is lethal: globally, an estimated 137 women are killed by their intimate partner or a family member every day.

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While female genital mutilation is becoming less common in some countries, at least 200 million girls and women alive today have been subjected to this specific form of violence across Africa and the Middle East where the practice is most prevalent.

In a sign that attitudes are changing, women's acceptance of being beaten by their partners decreased in almost 75% of countries with data over the past seven years. But laws to address domestic violence are not yet universally available, with only 153 countries having such laws. Gaps are largest in Northern Africa, Western Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where 43% and 35% of countries respectively have not passed such laws.

For people who are experiencing domestic violence, mandatory lockdowns to curb the spread of COVID-19 (the disease caused by the new coronavirus) have trapped them in their homes with their abusers, isolated from the people and the resources that could help them. The current crisis also makes it more difficult for victims to seek help. As medical facilities around the world scramble to respond to the coronavirus, health systems are becoming overloaded, making it more difficult for victims to get access to medical care or therapists.

For many women, even the fear of contracting the coronavirus is stopping them from seeking out medical care after experiencing physical abuse.

Many victims also feel that they can no longer seek refuge at their parents' home, for fear that they could expose their elderly parents to the virus. For some, travel restrictions may limit their ability to stay with loved ones. Women's shelters may also be overcrowded during this time or may close their doors if the risk of infection is deemed too high.

THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

There is increased risk of children becoming victims of abuse themselves

There is a common link between domestic violence and child abuse. Among victims of child abuse, 40 per cent report domestic violence in the home. One study in North America found that children who were exposed to violence in the home were 15 times more likely to be physically and/or sexually assaulted than the national average. This link has been confirmed

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around the world, with supporting studies from a range of countries including China, South Africa, Colombia, India, Egypt, the Philippines, and Mexico.

There is significant risk of ever-increasing harm to the child's physical, emotional and social development.

Infants and small children who are exposed to violence in the home experience so much added emotional stress that it can harm the development of their brains and impair cognitive and sensory growth. Behaviour changes can include excessive irritability, sleep problems, emotional distress, fear of being alone, immature behaviour, and problems with toilet training and language development. At an early age, a child's brain is becoming 'hard-wired' for later physical and emotional functioning. Exposure to domestic violence threatens that development. Personality and behavioural problems among children exposed to violence in the home can take the forms of psychosomatic illnesses, depression, suicidal tendencies, and bed-wetting. Later in life, these children are at greater risk for substance abuse, juvenile pregnancy and criminal behaviour than those raised in homes without violence.

There is a strong likelihood that this will become a continuing cycle of violence for the next generation.

The single best predictor of children becoming either perpetrators or victims of domestic violence later in life is whether or not they grow up in a home where there is domestic violence. Studies from various countries support the findings that rates of abuse are higher among women whose husbands were abused as children or who saw their mothers being abused. Children who grow up with violence in the home learn early and powerful lessons about the use of violence in interpersonal relationships to dominate others, and might even be encouraged in doing so.

Not all children fall into the trap of becoming victims or abusers. Many adults who grew up with violence in the home are actively opposed to violence of all kinds. There is reason to believe that children know that domestic violence is wrong and actively want it to stop. Many children who are present during acts of domestic violence try to help. One study showed that in 15 percent of the cases when children were present, they tried to prevent the violence,

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and 6 per cent tried to get outside help. Another 10 per cent actively tried to protect the victim or make the violence stop.

CONTRIBUTION OF MEDIA TO THE NORMALIZATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The media often sensationalises domestic violence against women and disproportionately covers female perpetrators of violence, a study into international reporting of violence against women has found. The report, published by Our Watch and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (Anrows), found there were widely established patterns of reporting in Australia and internationally that were overly simplistic, distorted and inadequate and increased the public's confusion. "Media reporting of the most salacious aspects of violence against women provides the public with a perspective that is provocative but not representative," said the report, Media Representations of Violence Against Women and Their Children.

The report said the media "frequently mirrors society's confusion and ambivalence about violence against women" and that they could play a role in dispelling myths and reinforcing information about the true nature and extent of the problem. Reporting on violence against women that challenged rather than reinforced cultural and social norms about gender was still the minority, the report said.

Sources:

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Domestic violence in Africa, World Bank Blog, [link](#)
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Istanbul Convention, Notes from Poland, [link](#)
Warning signs, Make it our business, [link](#)
Behind closed doors, UNICEF, [link](#)
Media distort domestic violence, the Guardian, [link](#)

FEMICIDE

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Femicide is generally understood to involve intentional murder of women because they are women, but broader definitions include any killings of women or girls. Femicide is usually perpetrated by men, but sometimes female family members may be involved. Femicide differs from male homicide in specific ways. For example, most cases of femicide are committed by partners or ex-partners, and involve ongoing abuse in the home, threats or intimidation, sexual violence or situations where women have less power or fewer resources than their partner.

Types and prevalence of femicide

Intimate femicide

Femicide committed by a current or former husband or boyfriend is known as intimate femicide or intimate partner homicide. Preliminary findings of an ongoing study by WHO and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine show that more than 35% of all murders of women globally are reported to be committed by an intimate partner. In comparison, the same study estimates that only about 5% of all murders of men are committed by an intimate partner. Among all homicides of men and women, approximately 15% are reported to be committed by an intimate partner. These numbers are conservative, given the high amount of missing data, which is particularly concerning in non-industrialized countries. In addition to the ratio of women and men killed by their partner, evidence also shows that women killing their male intimate partners often act in self-defence following ongoing violence and intimidation. This corresponds with findings using national statistics from Canada that women are more likely to murder their partner while they are in the relationship, while men are more likely to kill an estranged partner and that women are more likely to kill their partner as a result of arguments or quarrels, while men are more likely to have a motivation of jealousy for killing. One group of women who might be at increased risk of intimate partner femicide are pregnant women, as an examination of police and medical examiner records in 11 US cities showed.

Not only is intimate partner femicide the most extreme consequence of intimate partner violence, it also has a strong and prolonged impact on women's surroundings. **For example, surviving children of women killed by their intimate partners experience long-lasting**

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effects, since they lose one parent to the murder, the other parent to jail, and often have to leave their parental home and adjust to a new environment in which they might be labelled as the child of the murderer. A recent study from the UK further highlighted that the partner is seldom the sole victim in cases of intimate partner femicide. Others who might also be killed include the couple's children; unrelated bystanders; people perceived as the victim's allies by the perpetrator, such as lawyers, relatives, neighbours or friends; and the victim's new partner.

Murders in the name of honour

'Honour'-related murders involve a girl or woman being killed by a male or female family member for an actual or assumed sexual or behavioural transgression, including adultery, sexual intercourse or pregnancy outside marriage – or even for being raped. Often the perpetrators see this femicide as a way to protect family reputation, to follow tradition or to adhere to wrongly interpreted religious demands. Murders in the name of 'honour' may also be used to cover up cases of incest, and there are reports of people using the 'honour defence' as a way to receive community and legal acceptance of a non- 'honour' murder.

Dowry-related femicide

Another form of murder of women linked to cultural practices is related to dowry. It occurs primarily in areas of the Indian subcontinent, and involves newly married women being killed by in-laws over conflicts related to dowry, such as bringing insufficient dowry to the family. The documented incidents of dowry-related deaths vary greatly. For example, in 2006 India's National Crime Records Bureau reported approximately 7600 dowry-related deaths, while other estimates put the annual figure at more than double that number. Some sources have estimated that as many as 25 000 newly married women are killed or maimed each year as a result of dowry-related violence.

Non-intimate femicide

Femicide committed by someone without an intimate relationship with the victim is known as non-intimate femicide, and femicide involving sexual aggression is sometimes referred to

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as sexual femicide. Such killings can be random, but there are disturbing examples of systematic murders of women, particularly in Latin America.

	For perpetrating femicide	For being a victim of femicide
Risk factors	Individual level	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment^a (3,4,11) • Gun ownership (especially in the USA but also in countries with high levels of gun violence, such as South Africa, and in conflict and post-conflict settings) (3,4,11,29) • Threats to kill with a weapon (3,11) • Forcing sexual intercourse on a partner (3,11) • Problematic alcohol use and illicit drug use^b (3,4) • Mental health problems^b (3,30) (especially for femicide-suicide, in which the male perpetrator kills himself after killing his female partner) (30) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy, and being abused during pregnancy^a (3,11,30). This association has been found primarily in the USA but studies from a few other countries have linked intimate partner violence with maternal mortality. For example, a study from Mozambique found that violence was the fourth highest cause of maternal death at one hospital; and as much as 16% of maternal mortality was attributable to intimate partner violence in Maharashtra, India.
	Family/relationship level	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior intimate partner abuse^a (particularly against the woman they killed) (3,11) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior abuse by the perpetrator^a (32), especially severe abuse which took place within the previous month, and when abuse was increasingly frequent^a • Presence of a child from a previous relationship (not the biological child of the perpetrator) (3,4,11) • Estrangement from the partner (3,11) • Leaving an abusive relationship (4,32)
	Societal/structural level	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender inequality, including low number of women in elected government^b (33) • Reductions in government social spending on areas such as health and education (i.e. government final consumption expenditure) (33) 	
Protective factors	Individual level	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University education (versus a high school education), including when unemployed but looking for work (11) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a separate domicile (3)
	Societal/structural level	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased numbers of police (34) • Legislation restricting access to firearms for perpetrators of intimate partner violence (34) • Mandated arrest for violation of restraining orders related to intimate partner violence (34) 	

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Proposed Discussion Questions

- Why do many countries see domestic violence as a “private, family affair”?
- Is domestic violence a taboo subject in your country?
- Do you know what coercive control is? Do you know anyone who has gone through it?
- Why do you think it is so hard for people to leave abusive situations? How can we provide more support to people who are trying to leave?
- Are there shelters in your country where victims can stay and seek refuge? Who runs them? Are they easy to find? If not, how can they be more accessible?
- What can be done at the local level to solve the issue of domestic and intimate-partner violence?
- What can we do to stop domestic violence in our community?

Additional Reading & Follow up

Learn more about:

Our expert guests:

Ryan Hart:

- Luke and Ryan Hart for Coco Awareness, [link](#)
- Interview, The Independent, [link](#)
- Article on domestic violence & Ryan Hart, The Guardian, [link](#)

Patricia Evans:

- Book, The Verbally Abusive Relationship, [link](#)
- Podcast, Patricia Evans: Verbal Abuse Expert, [link](#)

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Episode Speaker Biographies

[Storyline Speaker Biography] RYAN HART | Award-Winning Domestic Abuse Advocate and Founder of Coercion and Control Awareness (CoCo Awareness)

On 19 July 2016, Claire and Charlotte Hart were murdered in broad daylight, by the family's father using a sawn-off shotgun. He then committed suicide. Luke and Ryan Hart, the two surviving sons, now share their story to raise awareness of the coercive and controlling behaviour their family suffered. They have released their book, *Remembered Forever*, and have trained thousands of police officers, NHS professionals, council staff and the general public in identifying, understanding and ending domestic abuse. They have also worked closely and frequently with the national media on domestic abuse reporting and are White Ribbon Ambassadors and Refuge Champions speaking out against male violence towards women and children. Twitter: [@cocoawareness](https://twitter.com/cocoawareness)

[Expert Biography] JOHN HAMEL | Forensic and Clinical Social Worker & Researcher

John Hamel, Ph.D., LCSW, has a Masters in Social Welfare from U.C.L.A., and a Ph.D. from the University of Central Lancashire, U.K., where he is currently a Research Fellow. He has interviewed and provided individual, couples and group counseling to hundreds of family violence perpetrators and victims since 1992, and is a court-approved provider of batterer intervention and parent programs in four San Francisco Bay Area counties. Dr. Hamel is the author of *Gender-Inclusive Treatment of Intimate Partner Abuse, 2nd Edition: Evidence-Based Approaches*, (Springer, 2014); co-editor with Tonia Nicholls, PhD, of *Family Interventions in Domestic Violence: A Handbook of Gender-Inclusive Theory and Treatment* (Springer, 2007); and editor of *Intimate Partner and Family Abuse: A Casebook of Gender Inclusive Therapy* (Springer, 2008.) He is Editor-in-Chief of *Partner Abuse*, a journal published quarterly by Springer Publishing, and has had dozens of his research articles published in various peer-reviewed scholarly journals, including: *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *Family Violence and Sexual Abuse Bulletin*, *International Journal of Men's Health*, *Journal of Aggression, Conflict, & Peace Research*, *Journal of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers*, *Journal of Child Custody*, *Journal of Criminological Research Policy, and Practice*, *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, *Journal of Family Violence*, *Partner Abuse*, *Research in Social Work Practice*, and *Violence and Victims*. Mr. Hamel regularly speaks at conferences on domestic violence, has provided education and clinical training on best practices to mental health professionals, victim advocates, social service organizations, law enforcement,

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attorneys and family court mediators, and has provided case consultation and expert witness testimony. He is a founding member of the Association of Domestic Violence Intervention Programs (ADVIP), an organization of mental health professionals and researchers dedicated to evidence-based practice (www.domesticviolenceintervention.net).

[Expert Biography] PATRICIA EVANS | Author and Founder of the Evans Interpersonal Communications Institute

Internationally recognized, Interpersonal Communications Specialist, Patricia Evans, is the bestselling author of five books, including *The Verbally Abusive Relationship*, *Verbal Abuse Survivors Speak Out*, *Controlling People*, *The Verbally Abusive Man: Can He Change?* and *Victory Over Verbal Abuse*. She has single-handedly brought the subject of verbal abuse to the forefront of American consciousness. Newsweek commended her first powerful book on the subject as “A groundbreaking new book.”

[Host Biography] Hazami Barmada | Activist, Founder & CEO, Humanity Lab Foundation; co-Executive Producer & Host, Finding Humanity Podcast

Hazami is a social entrepreneur, thought leader, and public affairs and social impact expert recognized by Forbes as an “inspirational agent of change.” She has consulted for many leading global brands including the United Nations, United Nations Foundation, Aspen Institute, and the Royal Court of the Sultanate of Oman. Among her posts at the United Nations, she served as the Coordinator for the United Nations Secretary General's World Humanitarian Summit, an Advisor to the first-ever United Nations Secretary-General's Youth Envoy, as a member of the United Nations SDG Strategy Hub for the launch of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Hazami has a Masters from Harvard University where she was an Edward S. Mason Fellow in Public Policy and Management. She studied social and public policy at Georgetown University and has a BA in Anthropology and Sociology. Twitter: @hazamibarmada @TheHumanityLab

PODCAST PRODUCTION ORGANIZATIONS & TEAM

Humanity Lab Foundation is a disruptive empathy-driven movement at the intersection of public policy and people power. As a collective of enablers, the Humanity Lab facilitates public engagement and social innovation to drive progress on human development and create an equitable and just world. Through a diverse portfolio of programs and initiatives, the Humanity Lab enhances global development systems by convening, connecting and collaborating with everyday people to solve

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complex challenges and drive social change. The Humanity Lab aims to: unlock human potential, break down barriers, provoke thought-leadership and knowledge sharing, facilitate partnerships, catalyze action, and democratize access to the power that shapes the world. The Humanity Lab has collaborated with a large array of partners including the Office of the President of the United Nations General Assembly, United Nations Office of Partnerships, United Nations, Qualcomm, The Elders, Warner Music, MTV and the Washington Diplomat.

Hueman Group Media ("HGM") is an award-winning podcast company for social change. HGM produces impactful and high-caliber podcasts for leading nonprofit organizations, purpose-driven companies and thought leaders, amplifying conversations around today's most important causes and issues — including gender inequality, climate change, racial injustice, and mental health. HGM podcasts cater to diverse, socially conscious, and deeply curious audiences. With the power of storytelling and expert-driven conversations, HGM activates listeners to take action and make a positive impact in their communities. HGM has worked with notable organizations including UN Women, The Elders, SAP, GoDaddy, CORE Response, and MIT Solve.

Podcast Production Team:

Ayesha Amin, Fact-Checking, Policy, Research
Maverick Aquino, Mixing, Editing, Music
Hazami Barmada, Co-Executive Producer & Host
Diana Galbraith, Assistant Producer & Research

Camille Laurente, Co-Executive Producer
Karolina Mendeka, Fact-Checking, Policy, Research
Fernanda Uriegas, Associate Producer

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