

potentially effective the controls. There are various controls that can be introduced at the manufacturing phase (safety standards for guns and bullets, identification standards to support tracing, safety standards to reduce inappropriate use, prohibitions on certain weapons for certain purposes). It would also be possible to track the number of guns being made and to establish standards (i.e. types of guns allowed for manufacturing). In general, interventions on the supply of firearms are considered to be more easily effected than interventions on demand (e.g. education, counselling)

Information Collection and Dissemination:

The public health approach begins by defining the problem through data collection and surveillance, identifying causes and risk factors, developing and testing interventions through evaluative research, and implementing measures for preventative effectiveness.

There is a need for data regarding firearm deaths, injuries, circumstances, types of firearms involved, ownership (i.e. in some societies, as disparities increase, firearm ownership tends to increase among richer people) and that data must be made widely available.

In addition to data on ownership, there must be more injury surveillance and this information must also be made readily available to governments and NGOs.

Information is available at different levels. For example, in Uganda there is little information regarding firearm injuries - few showed up at local hospitals. It was only after studies were done at the community level that it was learned that an alarming proportion of fatalities were firearm related. In Turkey there is restricted access to many sources of information. In addition, many incidents are classified as 'accidental' and not investigated further. Multiple information sources are required to get a complete picture in many countries where "official sources" are limited or unreliable. The UN study revealed significant anomalies among various data sources. In Canada there are differences for example between the homicides with guns reported through the Uniform Crime Statistics and the Emergency codes collected for mortality and morbidity.

Information and a scientific base (i.e. surveillance) are essential for neutrality in the development and evaluation of solutions

Information about the sources of firearms and production levels is incomplete but necessary for tracking the problem

Coalition-building is also important for data collection (by providing "natural laboratories") and obtaining funding. As evidenced by the results of the UN study, "official information" is not necessarily the only source of data.

Networking:

It was emphasised that to achieve change, we must build data and build coalitions (information and strategy are both critical)

It was made clear that public support and mobilisation are critical.

Grass-roots support and the mobilisation of NGOs is critical for any strategy.

Mobilization of victims is essential and strategies should involve survivors.

While many arguments are made regarding the economic value of the arms industries, strategies must also consider the economic costs of victimisation (e.g. Dr. Ted Miller assessed the economic costs of