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GRADUATE WOMEN INTERNATIONAL

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Toolkit

25 NOVEMBER - 10 DECEMBER 2019



Empowering women and girls through lifelong education for leadership, decision-making and peace. GWI, formerly IFUW, is in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1947 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

Graduate Women International
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"In today's world, it must be acknowledged how detrimental Gender-Based Violence is to all women and girls worldwide in every aspect of their life, whether it be at work, at home or beyond. We cannot go any longer tolerating the attitudes that lead to this sort of violence. We must call out the perpetrators and support the victims in every necessary way".

Terry Oudraad, President, Graduate Women International



Foreword

The aim of this Graduate Women International (GWI) 16 Days of Activism toolkit is to **raise awareness about and advocate for the elimination** of all forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in public and private spheres through a united global voice. GWI remains acutely concerned about the frequency of GBV incidents. We encourage you to see yourself as an agent of change towards the elimination of GBV, locally and globally. GBV severely jeopardises the safety, dignity, human rights, and the emotional and physical well-being of the millions of women and girls who experience it - urgent steps are needed. **Your commitment is critical to support the extraordinary women and girls around the world who are fighting back against GBV every day.** This interactive toolkit includes powerful and easy-to-use resources so that GWI members and followers can participate in this international movement for the elimination of GBV. We urge you to widely share this toolkit as a guide to eliminate GBV. **Together we can end GBV!**



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What is GBV?

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) defines **GBV** as "**violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects disproportionately**" (1). More generally, GBV is any act of violence that results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty. GBV disproportionately affects women and girls in areas such as **domestic violence, sexual harassment/assault, child marriage, sexual abuse, human trafficking, and female genital mutilation (FGM)**.



1 in 3

women experiences sexual violence in their lifetime. (2)

GBV is a fundamental human rights violation. It affects women and girls worldwide in every sphere of their life, whether it is work, at home or in other social domains. It crosscuts nationality, culture, race, sexual orientation, and religion. During humanitarian situations, women and girls are at a heightened risk of violence, abuse, and exploitation. Today, GBV also takes form in online spaces where women and girls worldwide are attacked, harassed, abused and are victims of cyber bullying. Shockingly, in many cultures, **violence against women and girls (VAWG)** is accepted as a social norm.

GBV is also a major obstacle to the fulfilment of women and girls' human rights and to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

.....

"Sexual violence against women and girls is the most brutal form of physical and psychological harm that can be perpetrated against its victims and holds the victim, her family, her community in its sinister thrall. We must do all we can to organise, protest and hold the international community accountable for the elimination of this most pernicious form of violence and support the women and girls who are its victims".

**Geeta Desai, Immediate Past President
Graduate Women International**

GBV addressed on a Global Scale

Women's rights emerged from the accumulation of international conventions over time. The fight has not been easy. Below is the story of the origins of how the issue of GBV has come to be recognised and protected by the international community for women and girls worldwide.

1979

CEDAW

1993

**Declaration on the
Elimination of Violence
Against Women**

1995

**Beijing Declaration and
Platform for Action**

Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

In 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted CEDAW, often described as an international Bill of Rights for women. Most importantly, CEDAW legally binds governments to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women occurring within the family, the workplace or in any other area of social life. CEDAW also aims to achieve sustainable equality so that women can enjoy their rights in practice. For oversight, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, a body of 23 independent experts, continuously monitors the implementation of CEDAW by States.

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women

During the United Nations 1993 World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna), the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women came into being. It was the first international instrument that solely addressed VAWG, presenting GBV as a structural and universal issue. The Declaration also called for the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on VAWG. It specified that the measures to end VAWG should target the structures, contexts, and the social and cultural patterns that constitute the root causes of this type of violence.

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"Not until the half of our population represented by women and girls can live free from fear, violence and everyday insecurity, can we truly say we live in a fair and equal world".⁽³⁾

Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary General

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: a key global policy framework on advancing gender equality

One of the most notable advances in women's rights was the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 which produced the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) adopted by 189 States with a commitment to combating VAWG. The BPfA established the 12 critical areas for achieving women's empowerment. The BPfA emphasised the universal nature of VAWG. It also considered the fear of violence to be a permanent constraint on the mobility of women, limiting their access to resources and basic activities. In addition, the BPfA acknowledged further barriers faced by women due to such factors as race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, etc. (4). In 2020, the international community will mark the 25th anniversary of BPfA. Events celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Beijing conference are underway with 2020 promising to be an exciting milestone.

12 critical areas of concern:

- Women and poverty
- Education and training of women
- Women and health
- Violence against women
- Women and armed conflict
- Women and the economy
- Women in power and decision-making
- Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women
- Human rights of women
- Women and the media
- Women and the environment
- The Girl-Child

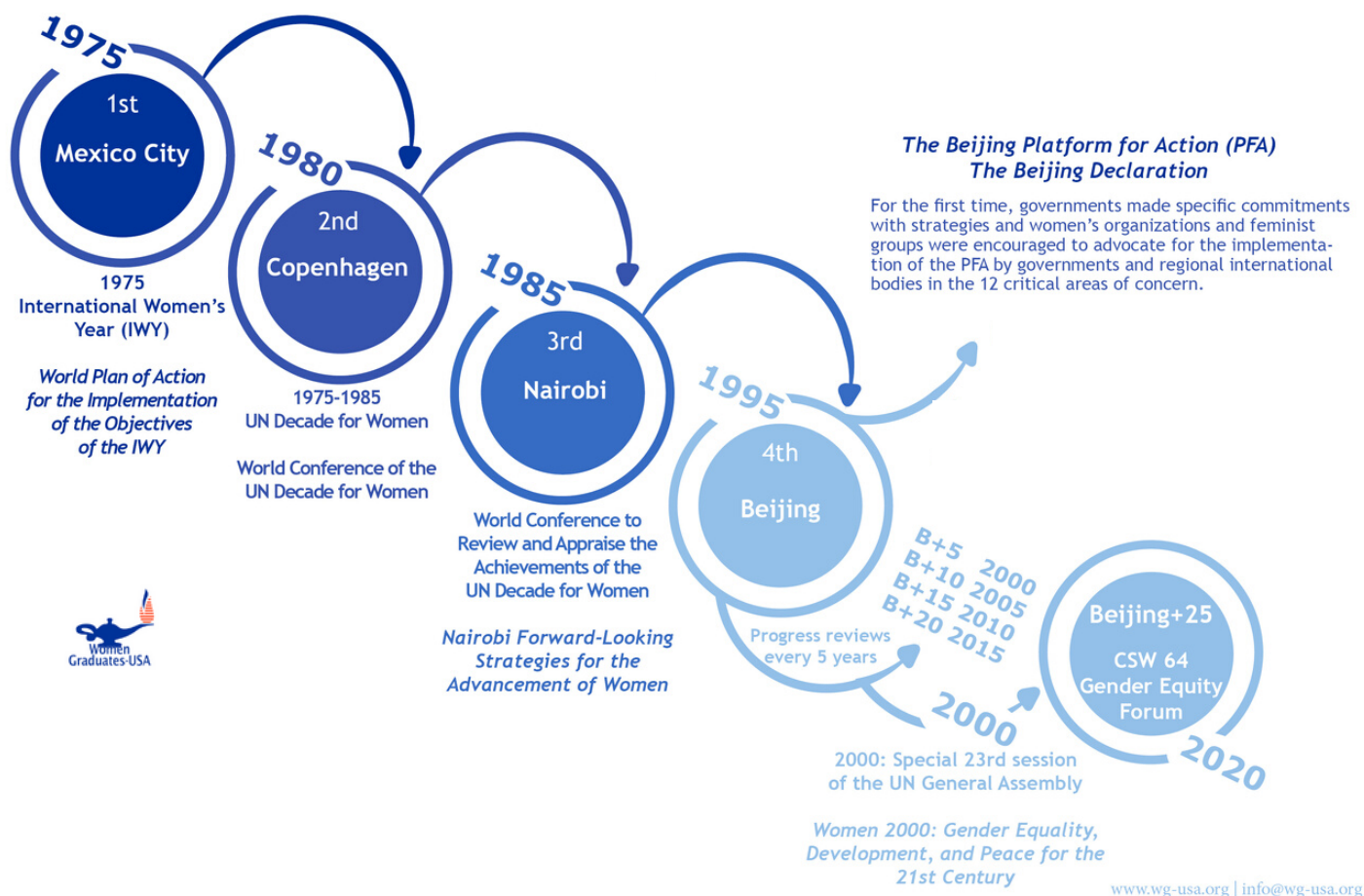
Prior to BPfA, the previous three World Conferences on Women facilitated the discussions about VAWG and GBV. For instance, the First World Conference on Women in 1975 in Mexico discussed the implementation of CEDAW as a critical step in advancing women's issues. Likewise, the most significant outcome of the 1980 Second World Conference on Women in Copenhagen was the official signing of CEDAW by delegates at the opening ceremony. Finally, the 1985 Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi marked a turning point in the silence around VAWG by creating roundtable discussions on issues such as female genital mutilation (FGM).

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"For the first time, the strategic objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action can be linked to a time-bound framework - that of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development. Let's work together to turn the goal of gender equality into a reality by 2030". ⁽⁵⁾

Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Roadmap to Beijing+25



16 Days of Activism Against GBV

The 16 Days of Activism campaign was initiated in 1991 by the Centre for Women's Global Leadership. Over 6,000 organisations worldwide are now involved with this international campaign (6).

In addition, UN Women have been contributing to this campaign through its recurring movement **"Orange the World"**. The "Orange the World" movement aims to brighten women and girls' futures by eradicating GBV in the workplace, at home and beyond. In effect, the colour orange conveys dynamism and vibrancy which symbolise a positive future without VAWG. To commemorate the color orange, buildings and landmarks light up in and are decorated in orange to capture people's attention globally.

This year's theme **"Orange the World: Generation Equality Stands Against Rape"** aims to mark the 25th anniversary of the BPfA and portrays rape as a universal issue by exploring the issue of consent and the long-lasting effects of rape in armed conflict.

GBV AND THE SUSTAINABLE GOALS (SDGS) IN FOCUS



Women aged 25 to 34-years-old are 25% more likely to live in extreme poverty than men and boys of the same age **(7)**. In effect, women in their child-bearing ages are more susceptible to GBV. Women and girls who are victims of GBV are therefore less likely to have access to educational and employment opportunities, forcing them into precariousness and poverty.

Ending violence against women will contribute to much more than one may think: it can be a critical step towards ending world hunger. Research has shown that unequal power relations in households which leads to incidents of GBV make women more vulnerable to food insecurity. In fact, in 2018, women had a 10% higher risk of being exposed to food insecurity than men **(8)**.



Acts of VAWG are as common as cancer and cause more deaths than malaria and traffic accidents combined **(9)**. Physical injuries are some of the more visible and deadly consequences of GBV. But the long-term mental health consequences are often invisible and left untreated. Eradicating GBV will positively contribute towards the achievement of SDG3.

Unfortunately, GBV is a direct barrier to girls' education. When girls are not subjected to GBV in school, other forms of GBV outside of schools cause girls severe emotional trauma and affect their feelings of security in their education environment. As a result, this can lead to a direct drop in their attendance. Access to quality education must be considered a fundamental human right and eliminating all forms of GBV will positively contribute to the value of education for women and girls.



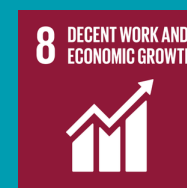
Today, 1 in 3 women experiences sexual violence in their lifetime **(10)**. This number alone speaks for itself. Eliminating GBV should be a priority with policymakers and within local communities, given that it is one of the most pervasive human rights violations in the world today. Ending GBV demonstrates respect for all women and girls and gives them dignity. This will inevitably generate and more importantly, will sustain gender equality.

Women and girls in rural areas often carry the burden of fetching water daily. This leaves them susceptible to higher risks of GBV, such as rape, sexual assault and trafficking, because they take long journeys, possibly in the dark, to collect water.



There must be more efforts made to ensure that women are protected in traditionally male-dominated professions, like the renewable energy sector, from incidents of GBV. Today, women hold only 20-24 percent of jobs in the renewable energy sector **(11)**. To end the stigmatisation and stereotypes of what women and girls should do, we need to invest in both boys and girls' education to shift these concepts.

With many GBV incidents happening in the workplace, women may be limited in their career prospects. Subsequently, this contributes to the fact that young women are more than twice likely to be unemployed than young men **(12)**. Eradicating GBV would enable more women to feel safe working in professional environments, especially in male-dominated fields, and lead to strategic economic growth.



Less than a third of the world's research positions are held by women **(13)**. However, it must be acknowledged that diverse workforces benefit innovation-driven economies like the global technology market. Eliminating GBV in the workforce will always pay off.

GBV is both a cause and consequence of inequalities. In many countries, VAWG is considered a social norm. It influences power relations within the family, workplaces, and beyond. When women and girls in these cultures break away from the established norm, people may turn to violence as a form of punishment. In order to eradicate GBV, governments will need to focus on transforming cultural norms that sustain levels of inequality between men and women.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Achieving SDG11 by building sustainable cities and communities includes ensuring that all women and girls can live and roam freely and safely in cities and other public spaces, without any threat of GBV.

We know that producing and consuming in unsustainable ways inevitably destroys the environment. Rural areas can be the most affected by the harmful impacts of the environments as well as urban area where the rise of mass consumption has caused high levels of pollution. This means that most women and girls worldwide are affected by the effects of mass production and consumption. We are now at a crucial turning point where everyone needs to be involved in ensuring sustainable livelihoods for all. If GBV was eliminated, it would empower more women to become involved in decision-making processes to develop responsible ways of consumption and production.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE ACTION



Education will facilitate climate change policy and action. Allowing women and girls the opportunity to educate themselves will inevitably inform them on the devastating effects that the environment has been and will continue to be exposed to. The more people, especially women and girls, that are educated about this issue and included in the decision-making process, the more it can lead to quicker solutions. By eradicating GBV, it creates a space for women and girls to develop this knowledge and pursue a career in finding sustainable ways to ensure the future of the environment.

The field of science is a path that has been traditionally dominated by men. However, to ensure the protection of oceans and aquatic life, it will now require everyone's efforts. In this context, there has been a growing need for more scientists which could, indeed, be facilitated by ensuring all forms of GBV and discrimination against women and girls will not occur in these fields, during their studies or throughout their professional career. This will inevitably bring more female scientists into this field.

14 LIFE BELOW WATER



15 LIFE ON LAND



After natural disasters and human-caused harm, ecosystems are destroyed. These damaged ecosystems are left exposed to food insecurity and increased violence, such as GBV, in the scarcity of resources. If there was more funding towards these humanitarian disasters, the risk of violence would only decrease. All women and girls would feel protected.

Women are underrepresented in institutions of global, regional and national governance. They have been denied the power to shape these institutions, which in turn contributes to a perpetuation of gender bias. As a result, VAWG is committed on a greater scale. All women should be entitled to fair and effective access to justice and essential services under SDG16.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



GBV is incorporated in all 17 SDGs. In this regard, it will require every stakeholders' contribution, from governments, institutions, civil society and local communities, and further collaboration to implement the 2030 Agenda. Nevertheless, meeting the 2030 Agenda will not be achieved without ending all forms of GBV.

16 Facts About GBV

1 in 3



women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. ⁽¹⁶⁾

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In Latin America and the Caribbean, **90%** of detected victims of human trafficking are women and girls. ⁽¹⁷⁾

.....



FGM is mostly carried out on young girls between infancy and **the age of 15**. ⁽¹⁸⁾

Half of all sexual assaults are committed against girls younger than **16 years of age**. ⁽¹⁹⁾

.....

1,000,000,000

More than **a billion** women do not have legal protection from intimate partner sexual violence. ⁽²⁰⁾

.....

There are **650 million** women and girls in the world today who were married before the age of 18. ⁽²¹⁾

Less than a third of 53 countries have laws stating that 18 is the minimum age of marriage for women and men, with no exceptions. ⁽²²⁾

.....

37 countries exempt rape perpetrators from prosecution if they are married to or subsequently marry the victim. ⁽²³⁾

.....



Of 53 countries, **68%** of them lack rape laws based on the principle of consent. ⁽²⁴⁾

In the European Union (EU),

1 in 20

women is raped. ⁽²⁵⁾

.....



One in ten women

in the EU have experienced unwanted sexually explicit messages or inappropriate advances on social media since the age of 15. ⁽²⁶⁾

.....

At least, **200 million** women and girls have been subjected to FGM, in the 30 countries where it is concentrated. ⁽²⁷⁾

.....

Globally, **38%** of murders of women are committed by a male intimate partner. ⁽²⁸⁾

.....

About 55% to 95%

of women survivors of GBV do not disclose information or seek any type of services. ⁽²⁹⁾

.....

Every hour

a girl or woman is trafficked in Nepal. ⁽³⁰⁾

.....

3 in 4



human trafficking female victims have been subjected to sexual exploitation. ⁽³¹⁾

16 Advocacy Ideas to Fight against GBV



#1 Listen and respond to girls' experiences of violence; create a focus group to discuss impactful solutions.

#2 Bullying cannot be swept under the rug. Work with parents to expose school bullies to officials.

#3 Speak out about violence in the home; often the roots. Inform the police if you witness or expect violence.

#4 Connect community leaders as champions to eliminate GBV in their communities. Their influence is key critical.

#5 Engage boys and young men as agents of change Set up a local discussion group to engage boys and male teachers .

#6 Create initiatives such as hiring buses or forming walk groups for girls so their journey to school is safe.

#7 Mobilise youth to end harmful practices such as child marriage. This can prevent barriers to education for young girls.

#8 Bring parents together for discussions on how GBV interrupts girls' education and increases domestic and sexual violence.

#9 Challenge rape culture by informing people on the issue of consent. Promote a "no means no" culture.

16 Advocacy Ideas to Fight against GBV



#10 Volunteer your time in rural communities to inform girls on GBV and how they can report issues.

#11 Establish a community group to embolden girls to speak out if they witness or experience GBV.

#12 Spread the word about GBV! Post on your social media GBV harmful affects and encourage girls to speak out.

#13 Start petitions directed to your government calling for the collection and publication of VAWG data.

#14 Set up workshops in your world of work that offer safe spaces for women to speak about work place harassment.

#15 Collect funds for awareness campaigns to eliminate practices like FGM that restrict women and girls.

#16 Fundraise for your organisation programmes then influence regional and national laws for real change.



Together with these ideas and many more, we can eliminate GBV worldwide! So take a stand and join us in the fight against GBV!

Resolution 1/2016:

Bullying and Cyberbullying in Schools

Raise public awareness on the detrimental effect of bullying and cyber-bullying, uphold the legal remedies already in place and advocate for such policies where there are none. Advocate for educational institutions to establish programmes which train educators and counsellors to recognise bullying and cyber-bullying and address the issue by integrating appropriate training into their core curriculum and ongoing professional development. Encourage institutions to provide educational programmes for parents and guardians to teach anti-bullying strategies.

Resolution 6/2016:

Preventing FGM

Urge governments to pass laws forbidding all forms of FGM. Encourage the enactment of legislation making FGM illegal with the effect that anyone found involved in aiding, abetting, perpetrating this practice will be punished in a court of law.

Resolution 7/2016:

Human Trafficking

Advocate for the review and implementation of existing national legislation on human trafficking of women and children. Use the GWI standing committees and its consultative status at the United Nations to urge international organisations and NFAs to consider this resolution to eradicate human trafficking especially with regards to women and children. Organise talks, discussions and workshops pertaining to the trafficking of women and girls and formulate suggestions as how to eradicate the problem.

Resolution 8/2016:

Child Marriage

Promote international agreements to forbid child marriage and raise awareness of girls' rights to education and a better future. Urge governments to implement legislation and practices to prevent child marriages and provide opportunities for all children, especially girls, to complete secondary education. Encourage the promotion of early education in human rights with a gender perspective. Advocate for the implementation of social programmes to raise awareness in communities against child marriage.

Resolution 7/2019:

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

This resolution states to end sexual harassment in the workplace, to create a safe environment for women by urging governments to implement national laws effectively, and to reach out to women and men starting from the grassroots level through educative seminars, workshops, and other forms of mass communication, including the media.

**Click [HERE](#) to
view the full
GWI Resolutions
Archive**



Important Days of Observance

25 November - International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

In 2000 that the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 54/134 (14) formally designating 25 November as International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This specific date was chosen to commemorate the brutal murders of the Mirabel sisters, three political activists from the Dominican Republic, by the country's leader in 1960. Since their death, "Las Mariposas" ('The Butterflies') have become symbols of feminist movements and their legacy continues to underscore the fight to end of GBV and for gender equality.

3 December - International Day of Persons with Disabilities

The annual observance of this day promotes the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development. All women and girls, regardless of their level of ability, have a fundamental right to quality education. However, girls with disabilities face unique challenges and obstacles on the quest for education, and this day is used to increase the awareness of their needs.

6 December - The Montréal Massacre

On this day in 1989, 30 years ago, 25-year-old Marc Lépine, armed with a rifle, walked into an engineering classroom at the École Polytechnique at the University of Montréal, ordered the male students to leave, and then shot the nine remaining female students, killing six of them before continuing his rampage. At the end of the horrific ordeal, fourteen women had been murdered and fourteen others were injured – including four men – before the gunman committed suicide. In his suicide note, which also included a list of 19 other feminist Quebec women he wished to kill, the gunman blamed feminists for ruining his life, claiming the female engineering students had no business being there because they were taking the place of men. Since then, the massacre has been defined as an anti-feminist attack representative of wider societal VAWG. It is the deadliest mass shooting in Canadian history.

9 December - International Anti-Corruption Day

Fighting corruption is a global concern because corruption is found in both rich and poor countries, but evidence shows that it disproportionately affects poorer people. Corruption contributes to poverty and is a principle factor driving fragile and unstable countries towards state failure. It also has serious consequences on women's and girls' fundamental rights, including their right to quality education. Governments, the private sector, NGOs, media and citizens around the world have joined forces to fight this crime. The United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime are at the forefront of these efforts.

10 December - Human Rights Day

This days marks the end of the 16 Days of Activism and celebrates the adoption of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (15) in 1948. This Declaration has allowed the creation of 60 various human rights instruments to set up an international standard of human rights. Indeed, it is a very fitting conclusion to this campaign as it reinforces commitments that will be made towards human rights across the world and thus its engagement towards fighting GBV and enabling education for all, particularly for young girls - GWI's fundamental message.

Social Media

GWI encourages you to use the below templates for social media posts. They have been especially designed by GWI to highlight its commitment to combating GBV. We will be particularly active on all 16 days with three posts per day on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram. We encourage you to do the same.

Hashtags to use: **#GWIagainstGBV #GenerationEquality #orangetheworld #16days**



**Click [HERE](#) to
download the
full GWI 16 Days
of Activism
Social Media Kit**



About GWI

GWI is a membership-based international NGO located in Geneva, Switzerland, with presence in some 60 countries with our NFAs and Independent Members. Founded in 1919, GWI is the leading girls' and women's global organisation advocating for women's rights, equality and empowerment through access to quality education and training up to the highest levels. GWI is in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 1947 and maintains official relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

GWI operates with a small yet dedicated staff consisting of an Executive Director, a Junior Office Administrator, and a host of committed interns and volunteers. Additionally, our work is only possible with the support of our tireless Board of Directors: Terry Oudraad, President, GWI; Vice Presidents Veena Bathe (Legal and Governance), Eileen Focke-Bakker (Membership), Glenda Hecksher (Marketing), Louise McLeod (Advocacy and Education), Basak Ovacik (Fundraising) and Treasurer, Katharina Strub.



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