GRADUATE WOMEN INTERNATIONAL TOOLKIT

ELIMINATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE THROUGH WOMEN-LED STRATEGIC ADVOCACY FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence
25 November - 10 December 2020
"Gender-based violence is crosscutting with no boundaries for nation, culture, community, race, sexual orientation or religion".

Louise McLeod, Vice President Advocacy and Education, Graduate Women International

Foreword

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) (16 Days of Activism) is an international annual campaign. It commences on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and concludes on 10 December, Human Rights Day, indicating that violence against women is the most pervasive breach of human rights worldwide. This campaign is motivated by the 6 December 1989 tragic anti-feminist massacre that took place at the École Polytechnique University Montreal, an event that is representative of the wider societal violence against women and girls (VAWG) concern. The movement gained its foothold in 1991 from activists at the inaugural Women’s Global Leadership Institute and continues to be used each year as a global organizing strategy by individuals, institutions and organisations to call for the prevention and elimination of all forms of VAWG. Over 6,000 organisations worldwide are now involved with this international campaign.

Alongside the 16 Days Campaign is the recurring "Orange the World" movement that aims to brighten women and girls' futures by eradicating GBV in all spheres of public and private life. In effect, the colour orange conveys dynamism and vibrancy that symbolise a positive future without VAWG. To increase the campaign impact, buildings and landmarks globally are lit up and decorated in orange. The 2020 global theme is “Orange the World: fund, respond, prevent, collect!”

Click HERE to learn more about significant Days of Observance relating to the 16 Days of Activism
The aim of this GWI 16 Days of Activism toolkit is to raise awareness about and advocate for the elimination of all forms of GBV in public and private spheres through a united, global voice and to guide you along your path to strategic advocacy against GBV.

GBV is not an emerging issue for GWI. However, the sudden and severe increase of GBV occurrences in the context of the current global COVID-19 pandemic is raising it to an unprecedented level of emergency.

In every single GWI member lies a powerful advocate and agent of change. In every GWI member lies a powerful advocate. Now more than ever, each must see herself as an advocate for the elimination of GBV, locally and globally. GBV jeopardises the safety, dignity, human rights, and the emotional and physical wellbeing 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 impactful and easy-to-use resources. GWI members and followers can participate in this international movement by creating their own strategic advocacy plan, tailored to the context and needs of their local and national communities.

We urge you to widely share this toolkit as a guide to eliminate GBV. Together we can end GBV!

Click HERE to learn about GWI resolutions addressing GBV

Click HERE to learn about how GBV is addressed on a global scale
Current situation: The shadow pandemic of GBV in the context of COVID-19

Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic are disturbing reports about the rise of GBV against women and girls. Since the beginning of the crisis, GWI has expressed concerns about the probable and pervasive gendered impacts of the pandemic. Globally, more than 243 million women and girls aged 15-49 have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the last 12 months. Now, COVID-19 is exacerbating the problem.

Emerging data from helplines and shelters across the world show more and more clearly every day that GBV and particularly domestic violence has intensified worldwide with the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, GBV, as pervasive of an issue as it is, remains widely under-reported. According to UN Women, less than 40% of women who experience violence report these crimes or seek help. Concerningly, the current situation makes reporting more difficult, as GBV victims have limited access to helpline and contacts with the police, justice and social services, who are usually at the forefront of GBV response. These disruptions also fuel impunity for the perpetrators, even more so when one in four countries have no laws protecting women and girls from GBV and domestic violence.
GWI’s front line response to the shadow pandemic of GBV

GWI published on 25 March 2020 an outreach statement to all GWI National Federations and Associations (NFAs) warning of the shadow pandemic of GBV during COVID-19. This statement emphasised GWI’s focus on efforts against the proclivity of GBV against women and girls worldwide as a by-product of COVID-19. The statement, tailored to each NFA reported current findings on the acute impacts of the COVID-19 on GBV in their specific country. The timing of these statements provided members, partners, friends and colleagues with information to identify COVID-19, GBV-specific risks in their communities and how to take actions to mitigate those risks. Click on the country names below to access each NFA letter.

Argentina
Australia
Austria
Bangladesh
Bolivia
Bulgaria
Burkina Faso
Canada
Cyprus
DRC
Egypt
El Salvador
Fiji

France
Ghana
Great Britain
Haiti
Hong Kong
Iceland
India
Ireland
Israel
Japan
Kenya
Korea
Lebanon

Lithuania
Mexico
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Pakistan
Panama
Paraguay
Russia
Rwanda
Scotland

Senegal
Sierra Leone
Singapore
Slovenia
Somalia
South Africa
Spain
Switzerland
Turkey
Uganda
USA
Zambia
Zimbabwe
It's time for action!
Get involved with GWI

You can make a difference at the local, national and international level by joining in the efforts of GWI and our NFAs:

- Advocate for women and girls’ right to live a life free of violence and fulfill their fundamental rights by joining forces with a GWI affiliate in your area. [Click HERE to learn more about our membership and join us.]
- Subscribe to the GWI Update newsletter: [Click HERE to subscribe to the Update newsletter.]
- Click on the icons to find and follow our social media pages.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many events marking the 16 Days of Activism 2020 are likely to be held online. Take this opportunity to participate in any online training or information session that might be of interest to you, inform yourself, and spread the word around you! Learn more [HERE].

Suggested Books and films for discussion

As the current pandemic temporarily prevents participation in and organisation of local events marking the 16 Days of Activism against GBV campaign, there are still so many creative ways available to raise awareness, spark discussions and bring people together in support of GBV survivors. Below is a short list of books and films exploring the topics of GBV and VAWG. We encourage you to watch and read the suggestions as a means to increase your awareness and knowledge on issues surrounding GBV. Alternatively, you can organize an online book club or film screening to stimulate a discussion in your NFA and community about the importance of safe access to education for girls around the world.

**Books**

- A Thousand Splendid Suns (Khaled Hosseini),
- Becoming Unbecoming (Una),
- Lucky (Alice Sebold),
- Some Men: Feminist Allies in the Movement to End Violence against Women (Michael A. Messner, Max A. Greenberg, Tal Peretz),
- Speak (Laurie Halse Anderson)
- The Color Purple (Alice Walker),
- The Handmaid’s Tale (Margaret Atwood),
- Before She Sleeps (Bina Shah)

**Films**

- Driving with Selvi,
- It’s a Girl,
- I was Worth 50 Sheep,
- Salma,
- The War Against Women,
- Killer’s Paradise,
- Daughters of Mother India
- He Named Me Malala,
- Nefarious: Merchant of Souls,
- Land, Gold and Women,
GWI 2020 Social Media Pack

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.

Click HERE or on the graphics below to download our full social media pack.

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GWI 2020 GBV Fact Sheets

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16 Facts about GBV

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GBV and the SDGs in Focus
GWI considers the need to put women and girls at the forefront of the response agenda and policies of governments and United Nations Member States to be most urgent.

The GWI recommendations are relevant given that approximately one in three women throughout the world will experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime, and that in over 50 countries, there is no legal protection for women against GBV. Women, otherwise capable of advancement, are defeated by GBV. They lose the opportunity and often hope.

As example, on the occasion of the 44th Session of the Human Rights Council held in June 2020 GWI, the Canadian Federation of University Women and Women Graduates-USA submitted a joint written statement voicing concerns about the GBV shadow pandemic in the context of COVID-19. The statement made strong recommendations to governments related to GBV such as encouraging the participation of the private sector and the media in the prevention of GBV and domestic violence and the opening of additional shelters.

Another recent example is the written statement to the Commission on the Status of Women 64th session. GWI, along with cosponsors, urge Member States to use the Beijing+25 benchmark as an opportunity to raise their level of ambition towards action on the realisation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The statement encourages the collaboration between State authorities and NGOs active in the range of GBV to provide shelters and support to women and girls and align with the Sustainable Development Goals.

"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".

Antonio Guterres, United Nations Secretary General
Without concrete steps toward global, concerted action, words are at risk of falling empty. This is why GWI created the Fall 2020 International Advocacy Webinar Series, “Putting the pieces together and raising women's voices through strategic advocacy in the changing world”. The series increased membership's knowledge of GWI's advocacy work and provided key resources and tools to build their own, grassroot strategic advocacy plan on key, current issues affecting women and girls globally: GBV and the challenges of remote learning.

The following pages provide the basic grounds to help you design your own Strategic Advocacy Plan for GBV. Whilst the 16 Days of Activism provides a global focus on the question of GBV, there is a vital need for year-round, multilevel efforts in order to fully eliminate GBV as a pervasive barrier to women's and girls' right to live lives free from violence. For more details on the GWI Strategic Advocacy Training for the elimination of GBV, we invite you to view the recording of the 12 November 2020 Webinar, “GWI in Action: How to Create a Strategic Advocacy Plan for GBV” on the GWI website (GWI Members Only).

Strategic Advocacy is about:

- Achieving specific outcomes, not just raising awareness of problems
- Developing strategies based on research and analysis rather than guesswork
- Choosing approaches and deploying resources where they will have the most impact

The foundation for a successful Strategic Advocacy Campaign is based on three guiding principles:

- Gathering Evidence
- Mobilising Resources
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
Step 1 - Analysing the Situation

- Clearly define the issue

- Assess the current status analyse and familiarize yourself with current laws and policies. What policies are in place to diminish the incidence or impact of GBV? For example, what is the country’s overall gender policy? How does your country rank on the United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) Gender Inequality Index?

Step 2 - Set Goals and Impactful Objectives

- Goal: Raise awareness about and advocate for the elimination of all forms of GBV in public and private spheres through a united global voice

- Look at attitudes, practices, and norms as you assess your objectives. What is the scale of GBV within your country?

Step 3 - State the socio economic political impacts on the issue in your community

Globally, The COVID-19 pandemic is far more than a health crisis: it is affecting societies and economies at their core. While the impact of the pandemic will vary from country to country, it will most likely increase poverty and inequalities at a global scale, making achievement of SDGs even more urgent (UNDP).
GBV is a major obstacle to the fulfilment of women and girls' human rights and to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Economic impacts of COVID-19 will be felt most egregiously by women and girls, particularly survivors of GBV, who may already be economically disadvantaged or economically dependent on their abusers. The risk of child, forced or early marriage may also increase as a coping strategy to financial and food insecurity. Furthermore, an increase in women’s economic autonomy may disrupt power dynamics within the household, potentially resulting in male backlash causing a repeat in the cycle. The global cost of GBV has been estimated at approximately US$1.5 trillion. That figure can only be rising as violence increases now, and continues in the aftermath of the pandemic (UNDP). And security, health, and money worries heighten tensions and strains accentuated by cramped and confined living conditions.

Step 4 - Identify your allies

There is a greater probability of success if you advocate along with other individuals and groups as this creates a unified request with greater impact on law and policy-makers. Allies are people or groups of people who have the same interests as you or the capacity to help you. Allies are essential because you can accomplish much more if there are people supporting you who believe in the cause and who may be willing to share resources and information in order to achieve a common goal.

Collaborate and form partnerships. Work in coalitions with groups whose philosophy and goals resonate with yours. Together, pooling staff and resources, all parties involved in the coalition should be better equipped to take on campaigns and work for change.
Step 5 - Develop your plan

Develop your recommendations

National response to COVID-19 must include:

- **A STRONG MESSAGE FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT THAT IMPUNITY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** Police and justice actors must ensure that incidents of GBV are given high priority and care must be taken to address the manifestations of increased violence against women.
- **PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT** for women and girls affected by the outbreak, GBV survivors, front line health workers and other front line social support staff must be prioritized.
- **SERVICES TO ADDRESS GBV.** This includes increased resources to support shelters, hotlines and online counselling. These essential services should be expanded and adapted to the crisis context to ensure survivors have access to support.

Identify your targets and influences: focus points

The main target audiences for advocacy work will usually be decision-makers and influencers: influencers are the secondary audience. These are the individuals or groups who have access to the decision-makers and who may be able to influence them.

- Influencers may become partners in the advocacy plan.
- When talking about your issue with someone you are trying to influence to join your cause, do allow space for argument. Being able to see issues from other perspectives only makes your advocacy stronger as you will better be able to handle opposition.
- Encourage speaking and listening in all its forms.

Identify focal points (influencers and targets):

- Government leaders and legislators: community, local, state/provincial, federal
- Other community organisations, health professionals, legal professionals
- Police and justice systems
- Social support systems
Develop your message
Since advocacy means openly supporting a certain viewpoint of a target group of people, the language you use should be specific to the cause and meaningful to everyone. Avoid the use of acronyms and short forms unless they are readily and universally understood.

Your language is meant to persuade entities to grant specific rights, make policy changes, provide money or create new laws for the good of your cause. You might want to change the way people look at the issue by creating a reliable and consistent messaging stream and in addition motivate community members and policy makers to get involved. Use language that is appropriate.

Step 6 - Use appropriate tools for your target audience

Use tools that are effective for your focal points:

- Emails
- Social media
- Print media, including articles
- Editorials
- Open letters
- Telephone calls
- Face-to-face meetings
- Town meetings
- Position papers
- Radio and TV
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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