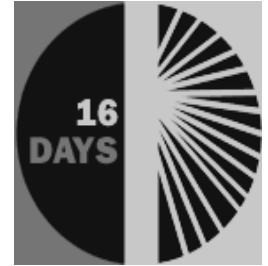


16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence November 25 - December 10, 2007



Suggested Actions: 16 Ideas for 16 Days

These 16 suggested actions for 16 Days of Activism can be adapted and used for different themes. Please refer to the 16 Days bibliography for background resources as you consult this document for activity ideas. Please inform the Center for Women’s Global Leadership (CWGL) of which actions you found particularly useful and provide examples of activities that were especially effective in your campaign. Write to us with any suggested activities and please report your activities and send your materials to CWGL for inclusion in the 2007 International Calendar of Activities and the archives. Thank you!

1. Educate yourself	2. Spread the word	3. Organize an event or activity	4. Engage with the media
5. Join a network or listserve	6. Celebrate women human rights defenders	7. Lobby your government	8. Invite men to participate in 16 Days events and activities
9. Volunteer with an anti-VAW organization	10. Advocate for women’s human rights at the UN	11. Highlight the intersection of VAW with other key issues	12. Share knowledge across disciplines
13. Conduct an impact assessment or evaluation of your work	14. Celebrate progress made and milestones achieved	15. Engage in Solidarity Work	16. Commemorate international dates

1

Educate Yourself

Awareness is a critical component in ending violence against women. Many acts of violence and discrimination are perpetuated by societal norms and behaviors that remain unchallenged. In order to overcome stereotypes and taboos it is important to gain knowledge about one's rights and how one can access those rights. Many women remain in cycles of violence because they have not been empowered with the tools and knowledge to break out of these cycles, often they do not even know that they have a right to live free from violence and discrimination. Some ways in which you can build knowledge are:

- Talk to a community based organization that works to prevent VAW.
- Access information available for free on the internet and in resource centers
- Approach your local government and request information on national laws that exist to protect you from acts of violence and discrimination
- Talk to your family, friends and colleagues who may have more information on the issue

2

Spread the Word

The movement to end violence against women has grown and flourished in the past decade. It is important for all persons to share this knowledge and information with others. Some ways of spreading the word include:

- Share information and discuss views with your family members, friends and colleagues
- Host or run an awareness raising workshop in your community
- Direct others towards free resources on how they can better protect themselves from acts of violence and discrimination and how they can play a role to prevent these acts from being perpetrated and accepted
- Challenge viewpoints and stereotypes of others who may accept acts of violence against women as societal norms or as a way of life
- Offer facts and information from a gender sensitive perspective to fill in gaps where these ideas do not usually permeate

3

Organize an Event or Activity

If you have been active in the 16 Days Campaign previously, then you might consider hosting an event or activity this year. When planning this activity you could consider the following:

- Reach out and collaborate with other organizations or networks in your community
- Host an international event where you invite activists from around your country, region or the world to participate with you in this event
- Open the event to the public so that more people are able to gain knowledge and awareness of why it is important to challenge and end all forms of violence and discrimination against women
- Invite the media to attend and give coverage to your event

4

Engage with the Media

Print, radio, television and virtual media sources continue to play a major role in shaping opinions and in communicating issues of importance to audiences. It is important for activists to engage with the media both as a target and also as a conduit for carrying campaigning messages and knowledge about women's human rights. Some ways you can actively engage with and help shape media coverage on violence against women include:

- Write opinion pieces in your local newspaper on incidents of violence that have occurred or on state policies and procedures that have a direct impact on the prevalence of violence against women (Note: if you face any risk of threats or harassment you can write in anonymously or use fictional names). It is also as important to write in critique of bad policies and reactions as well as to write in support of good measures and best practices.
- If you host an event during the 16 Days, invite the media to cover this event to highlight your work and why ending violence against women is important.
- If you are aware of media outlets that are particularly favorable to covering women's issues, you can approach them with the idea of running a special series on the 16 Days. You can also see if they were willing to do a special program on one of the significant dates, such as International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women, World AIDS Day, International Women Human Rights Defenders Day or Human Rights Day.
- If you are aware of media outlets that are biased in their approach to violence against women, write and encourage them to take on a more gender-sensitive approach.
- Target mainstream news sources that cover local, national and global news as well as media outlets that are not strong on communicating about women's rights and those popular culture media outlets that are listened to by youth.

5

Join a Network or Listserve

If you are not part of a network or organization often it can be hard to think of ways to engage with the 16 Days and more generally with the issue of violence against women. Activism can occur in any space by any person who is willing to take on the issue, to gain knowledge and information and to communicate and share that information with others. It is however useful to join a network or a listserv in order to remain aware of what is going on in your own surroundings as well as in national and international settings and to network with likeminded individuals. Some ways in which you can look into joining a listserv or network include:

- Research what groups are active in your local area and if they have a newsletter you can subscribe to.
- Become a local member of an organization that has chapters and that campaigns to end violence against women
- Attend local events and speak to those who organize and participate in such events.

- You can join the 16 Days listserve today by emailing us at cwgl@igc.org and requesting to be added.

6 Celebrate Women Human Rights Defenders

There are countless men and women who have dedicated their lives to defending women's human rights who face a great deal of risk during their activities. Some women's human rights defenders are defenders by profession, they work in organizations or in a field that is dedicated to seeking social justice. Others become defenders based on their own personal experiences or by witnessing the experiences of those who live around them. During this 16 Days pay tribute to local women human rights defenders by:

- Profiling their work and achievements
- Joining international campaigning efforts to protect WHRDs from violence and intimidation
- Holding a vigil to commemorate those who have been lost in their struggle
- Inviting them to speak at your local events or at your university
- Offering a space where they can publish stories of their experiences
- Referencing their work and building on their accomplishments
- Holding an event in your community to recognize their work
- Having a photo exhibition to remember those defenders who have lost their lives working to eradicate violence against women
- Sponsoring an award for women's rights grassroots activists and/or try to lobby the local government or a local university to take this initiative on board.

7 Lobby Your Government

Holding states accountable for eliminating all forms of violence against women is crucial. While international pressure is useful, it is equally important for there to be a strong domestic lobby that demands the state to respond to the needs of women and to their obligations to respect, protect and fulfill women's human rights. Governments are complex structures and have many different actors that can be targeted in campaigns. Most often the heads of state seem to be the likely targets, but it is also good to consider other actors who are more accessible to you such as your local government representative, your local embassy human rights officer or even respected community members and leaders. When lobbying your government here are some things to keep in mind:

- Ensure that your means of communication is the most effective way of attracting your target audience's attention consider a variety of options including writing letters, organizing protests, circulating a petition or having a public event.
- If you have access to fora such as intergovernmental meetings, work in coalition with local women's groups and with survivors of violence to ensure that lobbying remains representative of the needs on the ground.
- In addition to suggesting policy change, offer a roadmap of how that policy change can be implemented by governments.

- Remind states that they are bound by international human rights law to ensure that all persons are able to enjoy their fundamental human rights which includes the right to live free from violence and discrimination.
- If your country is not a state party to significant human rights conventions and covenants, such as the Convention for the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its optional protocols, the Convention against Torture (CAT), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), The Convention for the Rights of the Child (CRC) or the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), then lobby for the adoption and ratification of these treaties without reservations.

8

Invite Men to Participate in 16 Days Events and Activities

Realizing a world free from violence against women requires shifting the behaviors and attitudes that perpetrators hold toward the use and acceptance of violence against women. The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence focuses on highlighting the impact of male violence against women and how these acts can be eliminated. Reaching out to men and including them in campaigning activities and awareness raising is key to addressing the use of violence as a means of threatening, controlling or subordinating women. Developing a healthier masculinity that condemns violence, requires men to take active responsibility for ending it. Some ways you can reach out to engage men this 16 Days include:

- Take them to a 16 Days event or activity with you
- Talk to them about the issue. For example you can share testimony given by women who have suffered from violence, which is available in the publications and on the websites of organizations working to end VAW.
- Talk to men about how violence against women has impacted their life
- Encourage men to be pro-active and proud in renouncing acts of violence and pledging non-violence, and to join a men's movement that is anti-VAW
- Discuss the causes and perpetuating factors of men's violence against women, often deeply embedded in social and economic norms, policies and practices and expose how these can be overcome through a multi-level approach including positive action by men, women and states.

9

Volunteer With an Anti-VAW Organization

One of the best ways of learning more about the impact and consequences of violence against women as well as how to end it, is by engaging with organizations that work hands on with women who have experienced violence. A good way to start is to volunteer with a local organization working on VAW:

- Many organizations working on VAW welcome volunteers and are often flexible about work days and hours
- The best way to become a volunteer is to visit organizations in your community and inquire about volunteer opportunities. Larger organizations may advertise such positions on their website or in local newspapers.

- Hands on work with survivors of violence is rewarding and it is a useful way to learn about the challenges and commitment that goes into working to end VAW.
- If you already work with an anti-VAW organization, you may want to volunteer with an organization that has a different scope of work. For example, if you work with an organization that does international work you may consider volunteering for an event, fundraiser or outreach program with a local service providing organization.

10

Advocate for Women's Human Rights at the United Nations

If you belong to an organization or network that has access to the UN you could use this platform to advocate during this year's 16 Days of Activism. International meetings that take place at the UN present key opportunities to lobby high level decision makers and to bring states on board with initiatives to eradicate VAW. Some possible opportunities for advocacy at the UN include:

- The 2008 Commission on the Status of Women which will focus on "Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women." For more information see: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/critical.htm>.
- Submit reports of women's rights violations to the special procedures, especially the Office of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women its Causes and Consequences. For more information on how to submit complaints and urgent appeals see: <http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/rapporteur/complaints.htm>
- Participate in the Gender Equality Architecture Reform Campaign (GEAR). For more information on this campaign visit: <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/unadvocacy/gea.html>
- Submit shadow reports on violations of women's human rights to the CEDAW Committee. The 40th Session of the CEDAW Committee is scheduled for 14 January-1 February 2008 and the 41st Session is scheduled for 30 June-18 July 2008. For more information on these sessions and the countries that will be reporting visit: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

11

Highlight the Intersection of VAW with Other Key Issues

Violence against women has many causes and consequences. In order to be able to fully appreciate the depth of the impact caused by VAW, it is important to understand and highlight the intersection of VAW with other phenomenons and issues of concern, helping us to respond to acts of violence with a comprehensive and multidimensional course of action. Some key areas to consider focusing your advocacy include the intersections between:

- HIV/AIDS and violence against women. For more information, visit the Women Won't Wait Campaign at <http://www.womenwontwait.org>
- Conflict resolution and violence against women. For more information, see UN Resolution 1325 <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/sc/1325.html>

- The use of acts of violence against women during times of conflict. For more information, see the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict: <http://stoprapenow.org/>
- Provision of gender sensitive healthcare-such as safe childbirth-and violence against women. For more information on UNFPA's Safe Motherhood Campaign, visit: <http://www.unfpa.org/mothers/>
- Post-conflict reconstruction and violence against women. For more information, visit UNIFEM's portal on women, peace and security <http://www.womenwarpeace.org/issues/reconstruction/reconstruction.htm>
- Sustainable development/globalization and women. For more information, visit <http://www.realizingrights.org/>

12 Share Knowledge and Information Across Disciplines

Tackling violence against women with a multi-dimensional approach requires sharing information and designing plans of action that address the impact of VAW holistically. Some ways of sharing knowledge across disciplines include:

- Organize a panel of speakers that have diverse backgrounds and experiences in different disciplines to ensure a wider view of the issues is discussed.
- Invite a cross-section of specialists, civil society organizations, experts and practitioners when hosting meetings, conference and events.
- Including experts and practitioners from complimentary disciplines to join your delegation to attend conferences or country-based missions
- Collaborating with like minded organizations and joining up with campaigns that intersect with the elimination of violence against women such as:
 - Campaigns to address HIV/AIDS and promote access to medicines and contraception
 - Campaigns that address access to health care such as ensuring safe motherhood and reducing instances of maternal mortality
 - Campaigns that seek to end poverty and encourage an ethical model of development
 - Campaigns that promote education for women and girls
 - Campaigns that address debt relief and grass roots models of finance and entrepreneurship
- Include organizations who are working on social services and social justice issues in your mailing lists and discussion groups.
- Do outreach work with legal aid organizations, health care professionals, counseling services and other service providers and encourage them to integrate awareness and prevention work on VAW into their services.

13 Conduct an Impact Assessment of your Work

Impact assessments and evaluations of projects to eliminate violence against women are essential tools to determine whether your strategies are reaching goals and achieving the desired impact. You could consider:

- Conducting an impact assessment or a mid-term evaluation of a project to determine the progress made.
- Planning to have a full review of work that has been implemented prior to starting the next financial and project cycle; this allows you to make adjustments during the planning stage and also gives you an opportunity to reflect on your achievements
- If you have conducted an evaluation or impact assessment this year, share your achievements with other organizations and with CWGL. This ensures that others can learn from these findings
- If you have a good model for conducting evaluations and assessments on violence against women, share it with others.

14 Celebrate progress made and milestones achieved

Celebrating progress made in the struggle to eliminate violence against women is an important exercise in sustaining the momentum of the movement and in profiling the work of those activists who have been brave enough to front these efforts. Some ways you can celebrate progress made include:

- Hold an event at the anniversary of an important milestone
- Document and publish the work of activists and organizations that have battled against great odds to move forward in their fight to end violence against women
- Approach a newspaper or television station about featuring the achievements of the women's human rights movement in your community
- Organize a tribute festival to activists
- Organize a fundraiser for organizations working in your community to end violence against women.

15 Engage in Solidarity Work

Use the 16 Days of Activism to engage in solidarity work across your region and internationally. For many survivors of violence, international solidarity gives them a sense that they are not alone and that women's rights groups the world over stand by their side in the fight to end all form of violence against women. Solidarity work can take many forms:

- Link up with organizations that have letter writing campaigns or send post cards to women human rights defenders in celebration of their work and courage.

- Start your own local initiative by sending cards and messages of encouragement and strength to local organizations who offer services to women suffering from violence.
- Host an event where you bring survivors of violence together to share their testimonies and to network with each other
- Use each of the 16 days to highlight a different country where human rights violations of women have been exposed, whether conflict, post conflict or in a state of peace where forms of violence against women remain prevalent. Consider your own country as a possible candidate for one of the 16 days.

16 Commemorate international dates

The 16 Days Campaign is designed to highlight violence against women as a human rights violation and to build a bridge between women's rights movements and the human rights framework. In order to highlight this bridge, it is always encouraged that activists, organizations and networks participating in the 16 Days of Activism commemorate key international dates during the 16 day time period. See the document "Key Dates" for a full list of dates within the 16 days and a description of their significance.

- 25 November: International Day for the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women
- 29 November: International Women Human Rights Defenders Day
- 1 December: World AIDS Day
- 3 December: International Day of Disabled Persons
- 6 December: Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre
- 10 December: Human Rights Day

Groups are encouraged to organize events and activities that fall on these key dates and that highlight their significance vis a vis violence against women. Please also keep an eye out for our International Calendar of Events due to be posted by late October that provides information about events and activities around the world during the 16 Days of Activism. If you are planning events on these key dates or at any other time during the 16 Days, please let us know!

Center for Women's Global Leadership
 Rutgers University, 160 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8555 USA
 Phone (1-732) 932-8782, Fax: (1-732) 932-1180
 E-mail: cwgl@igc.org
<http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu>