Campaign Toolkit
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Advocacy

What national and community leaders need to know about violence against women?

Child Marriage

Of the world’s 1.2 billion girls, 22 million are already married and hundreds of millions are at risk. More than 700 million women alive today were married before their 18th birthday. About 250 million were married before the age of 15. Child marriage affects boys as well but girls are disproportionately affected. In Nigeria and Mauritania, more than half of young women aged 15 to 19 years old are married to men who are 10 or more years older. Almost half of the child brides worldwide live in South Asia; 1 in 3 are in India. Child brides are denied childhood and have limited opportunities for education and employment. They are also more exposed to domestic violence and they are often unable to negotiate safer sexual practices, this exposes them to sexually transmitted diseases and early pregnancies. In 2015 the international community agreed to a new set of development goals which include the elimination of all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and FGM/C by the year 2030. (Unicef, 2014)

More info on: www.girlsnotbrides.org

Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) is a human right violation that affects women and girls worldwide. The exact number of women and girls who have been subjected to it is unknown however, it is estimated that at least 200 million women and girls have undergone FGM/C. Of these 200 million 44 million are girls below the age of 15. The elimination of such practice is a global concern that needs to be addressed. In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution that calls for the intensification of efforts to eradicate this practice and in 2015 the international community agreed to a new set of development goals which include the elimination of all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and FGM/C by the year 2030. (Unicef, 2016)

More info on: http://www.unfpa.org/female-genital-mutilation

Violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls is a grave violation of human rights. It has a great impact on the immediate and long-term physical and mental health of those affected. Sexual violence has a profound impact on women and girls subjected to violence but also for their families and their communities. Although a rising number of countries have developed laws against domestic and sexual violence, challenges remain when it comes to the implementation of these laws. Not enough is done to prevent violence and most of the times it goes unpunished. (UN Women, 2016)

More info on: https://www.wewillspeakout.org/
Refugees and Migrants

For the first time since the refugees and migrant crisis in Europe, women and children on the move outnumber adult men. UNHCR, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Women’s Refugee Commission observed that women and girls face particularly high risks of certain forms of violence, including sexual violence. Many of these women flee countries, like Afghanistan and Syria, where they were subject to persecution or gender-based violence. However, when they escape their countries, they continue to experience human rights violations. Amnesty International has denounced the sexual exploitation of Syrian refugees women in Lebanon. It is also observed that women who flee their countries without an adult male face higher risk and had little protection or access to justice. Cases of sexual violence committed by guards in reception/transit centers have also been reported.


Who are your constituencies?

You probably already have a list of your key constituencies in mind. However, it can still be very useful to map your stakeholders at the national or community level to understand who can help you out to achieve your goal. These are some constituencies that we have identified for you.

YWCA Movement

The entire YWCA movement is a great resource for your advocacy and outreach work. Do not hesitate to contact the YWCA members in your region to organize joint campaigns or events.

What you can do:

• Reach out to women networks and partner organizations, make sure they participate in the Week Without Violence.
• Publish an article on the Members Forum on the World YWCA website to promote your national or regional activities and call for collaborations.

Religious leaders

Involving religious leaders is extremely important, especially when working within communities where religious beliefs are deeply rooted in the fabric of the society. Religious leaders’ voices have the power to change minds and hearts. Moreover, their authority can persuade policy-makers. Faith communities have a duty and responsibility to protect their members from sexual violence or any other violent behavior. For this reason, persuading religious leaders to speak against gender-based violence should be a key element of your advocacy work and outreach.

What you can do:

• Ask them to send a letter to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, an MP or the Minister of Health.
• Suggest a sermon on violence against women and girls.
• Organize a vigil.

Medical associations

Working with national physicians organizations is key to put pressure on the Ministry of Health and more generally, the government. In 2010, the World Medical Association (WWA) adopted a resolution stating that the national medical associations should “Advocate for effective implementation of universal human rights”. This gives the YWCA members a great opportunity to get in touch with the national medical associations to inform them about the issues that women in the different community are facing, making sure that they listen from civil society working at the grassroot and have evidence-based information to put pressure on the government.

What you can do:

• Inform them about the week without violence campaign and invite them to raise awareness.
• Ask them to educate patients about the correct health protocols following violence, and inform them about the presence of the Safe Spaces.
• Invite them to give a talk in a Safe Space.

Parliamentarians

Working with elected representatives is an important way for us to ensure that the issue of violence against women is high up on the political agenda. Making the case for better national law on the protection of women can be an excellent way for skilled MPs to build their reputation and put the government under serious pressure to come up with a coherent stance or better law. In many parliaments, members are able to propose resolutions or motions to be adopted. These typically do not have legal weight but are nonetheless an important way to draw attention to a particular issue and demonstrate support for a certain course of action. Moreover, MPs are typically able to ask questions to the government, which have to be answered. This could be a great opportunity to open a discussion on a specific issue and involve the media to raise awareness.

What you can do:

• Research on MPs who have progressive stance on violence against women issues. Partner with other organizations that would like to push similar agendas to yours. Set a meeting with them MP.
• Inform the MP of the issues that women in your community are facing
• Suggest that the national legislation/implementation of the law should be strengthened; provide examples of other countries in the region where national legislation has made a difference.
• If you don’t succeed in setting a meeting with the MP, use the ‘letter to a Parliamentarian’ template and send a message to those MPs who have shown interest in violence against women issues. Make sure that the letter is signed by other organizations that have similar concerns to yours.

PLEASE NOTE: You can find a template letter to send to your MP at:
http://www.worldywca.org/week-without-violence-2016/
Red Cross/Red Crescent societies

The International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies adopted a multidimensional approach to identifying and addressing the specific vulnerabilities of women and girls in armed conflict and other situations of violence. The aim is to draw attention to the needs of those considered most vulnerable, including pregnant women, children, female-headed households and widows. Wherever possible, ICRC delegations work together across regions and cooperate closely with National Red Crosses to develop a better understanding and knowledge of the environment.

What you can do:

- Inform national red crosses about the week without violence campaign and invite them to raise awareness on social media;
- Inform national red crosses about the issues that women in your community are facing, especially if you are living in a fragile state.
- Explore possible opportunity of cooperation especially when it comes to SHRH.

Legal Associations

Legal association can be a useful audience to reach out to. They normally provide support to victims and help find ways so that communities can secure offenders to justice.

What you can do:

- Inform the legal associations in your community about the Week Without Violence.
- Invite them to an event and, ask them to give a speech on the challenges that prevent existing legislation from being implemented or new law from being adopted.

Other campaigns to end violence against women and girls you should support:

- #NoXcuses
- Thursdays in Black
  http://www.thursdaysinblack.com
- One Billion Rising
  http://www.onebillionrising.org
World YWCA
EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN