



A LIFE OF ITS OWN

An Assessment of the 16 Days of
Activism Against Gender-Based
Violence Campaign



RUTGERS
School of Arts and Sciences



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Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign

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*An Assessment of the
16 Days of Activism
Against Gender-Based
Violence Campaign*

Developed and written
by Dr. Cosette Thompson



Commissioned by the
Center for Women's Global Leadership
at the School of Arts & Sciences
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

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FORWARD

Krishanti Dharmaraj, CWGL Executive Director

The Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) was fortunate to commission this external assessment of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign (16 Days) as it approached its 25th anniversary in 2016. This assessment is a testimony to the vision of those who initiated the campaign as a framework to bring awareness to violence against women globally and serves as a reminder that our work is yet to be completed.

A key finding from this report revealed 16 Days' shortcomings on its use of a human rights framework, a cornerstone of CWGL's work. As its global coordinator we take this finding to heart. We must continue in our efforts to reclaim that violence against women is a human rights issue and hold violators accountable. We recognize that during the past 25 years, the campaign had a life of its own and has been embraced by many at local, national, regional and international levels. With the support and input of stakeholders, CWGL is committed to transition 'from Awareness to Eradication' of gender-based violence for the next phase of 16 Days. This strategy aligns with CWGL's programmatic goal to amplify feminist leadership to transform civil society and institutions and structures.

For making the next phase possible with this assessment, I offer my sincere thanks to Dr. Cosette Thompson, CWGL's staff, those who gave their time and input to interview, and those who have taken part in 16 Days around the world. I look forward to our continued journey together toward the eradication of gender-based violence.

Sincerely,



Krishanti Dharmaraj
Executive Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2016 marks the 25th anniversary of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign (16 Days). Its initiators –the Center for Women’s Global Leadership (CWGL) and participants in its first Women’s Global Leadership Institute – have been recognized for their exceptional leadership and expertise. Between the 1993 UN World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna) and the 2001 World Conference on Racism (Durban) 16 Days contributed to the recognition of women’s rights as human rights and capitalized on the gains and opportunities of UN-centered strategizing by civil society.

During the first decade of this century, 16 Days became a global effort thanks to the thousands of grassroots organizations that claimed full ownership of it, the growing participation of national and international NGOs (INGOs), governments, and UN agencies, and the development of electronic communications. In many cases the origins of this now second-generation campaign have long been forgotten, and it is now characterized by a remarkable diversification of themes, messages, tactics, activities and partnerships. The ever-growing use of social media has expanded its reach and opportunities for community mobilization. 16 Days often reached its highest level of visibility, penetration, and impact in countries and regions where grassroots women’s organizations, I/NGOs from a wide variety of sectors, governments and UN agencies have been able to work in partnership.



The main trends highlighted in this report are:

- The increasing engagement of stakeholders outside the women's movement, such as faith-based organizations, unions and businesses.
- The increasing contribution of INGOs and transnational networks.
- The increasing support and/or participation of governments (in partnership with civil society and/or UN initiatives) paired with a growing concern about the co-opting of messages and the focus on symbolic actions and commitments.
- A prevalence of awareness-raising activities, often disconnected from a human rights framework or agenda.
- An increasing reliance on social media activism.
- The questioning of the effectiveness of 16 Days due to challenges such as the lack of coordination, innovation, funding, or evidence of impact.

A review of the evolution of 16 Days, and an analysis of its current characteristics and challenges, led us to make the following recommendations concerning the future role of the Global Center :

- Integrate the Campaign into a broader program on gender-based violence.
- Innovate and strategize, in collaboration with its civil society partners, to redefine the best potential contribution and impact of 16 Days.
- Reclaim its leadership role and prioritize direct engagement with key stakeholders.
- Promote the relevance and role of 16 Days in the US context.
- Develop the Campaign Team support and technical capacity.

METHODOLOGY

This evaluation's purpose is to establish what could be learned from the successes and challenges that have characterized the evolution and implementation of 16 Days globally, while outlining potential new directions and strategies.

This evaluation is informed by data-gathered through:

- Desk research:
The CWGL Website, database (2009-2015), and social media analytics.
Online research to identify key campaign participants from selected list of countries, INGOs engagement and media coverage.
- Research through CWGL archives.
- Electronic questionnaire to survey approximately 60 participating organizations.
- Interviews with CWGL staff.
- Interviews (in person, or via phone/Skype) of 32 stakeholders including former Campaign Coordinators, INGO representatives, and activists in Australia, Congo (DRC), Egypt, Fiji, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Uganda, and Zimbabwe (see full list of interviews in Appendix II).
- Site visit to South Africa during the 2015 16 Days Campaign.
Observed or participated in Cape Town events
Interviewed an additional 12 stakeholders in Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Interviewees were selected based on suggestions from the current Campaign Coordinator, geographical representation, and by using a snowball sampling method.

16 DAYS CAMPAIGN

Origins, Evolution and Current Scope

THE ORIGINS AND CONTEXT OF THE CAMPAIGN:

During and after the UN Decade for Women (1975-1985), several gatherings and developments signaled the global expansion of women's movements, the understanding of feminism as central to human rights and the emergence of regional and international feminist discussions and strategies around the issue of violence against women (VAW). During the 1980s, interest in the human rights framework grew among feminists looking for ways to hold governments accountable for the plight of women.

One of the first and strongest condemnations of the split between women's rights and human rights came from Cuban-American scholar Riane Eisler, who stated in 1987 that it had traditionally served as:

"a hidden but effective obstacle to fundamental systems change by preventing the application of the same standards to all human relations. [...] As a result, the human rights movement and the women's rights movement have remained generally segregated, with severely deleterious consequences for the human rights of both women and men!"

Two years later, Charlotte Bunch, who had recently founded CWGL at Rutgers University, and was its first

Executive Director, wrote her originative article *"Women's Rights as Human Rights: Toward a Re-vision of Human Rights."* It called for a "transformation of the human rights concept from a feminist perspective, so that it will take greater account of women's lives."²

Niamh Reilly, who served as the first coordinator of 16 Days Campaign between 1991 and 1995, later wrote:

*"The surge in transnational feminist organizing sparked by the UN Decade for Women extended throughout the nineties [...] In the late eighties there was a growing recognition within and across women's movements that violence against women was a universal phenomenon that affected women in every region [...] it emerged as a pivotal unifying issue that galvanized a far-reaching cosmopolitan feminist project."*³

This emerging cross-cultural feminist human rights movement linked local activism and international advocacy around a shared experience of gender-based violence, and provided the context for CWGL's first three-year focus, which was organized around the theme of "Women, Violence, and Human Rights."



THE MAIN PHASES OF THE CAMPAIGN

1991-92: The beginnings

CWGL's first Women's Global Leadership Institute (WGLI) gathered in June 1991 with participants from 21 countries who "explored gender violence in all its dimensions with a major focus on developing strategies for change." This led to the idea of organizing a campaign with goals "to build more awareness of gender violence globally, create consciousness of it as a human rights violation, and facilitate greater networking."⁴ The decision to create a campaign running from November 25 (declared International Day against VAW in Latin America) until December 10 (International Human Rights Day) was meant to affirm the link between women's rights and human rights. This 16-day period also included December 1, World AIDS Day, and December 6 marking the anniversary of the 1989 Montreal massacre of 14 women for being "feminists." 1991 was also the year that solidarity vigils were held in memory of the 71 schoolgirls who were raped and the 19 others who died in Kenya in an extreme manifestation of gender violence.

In 1991, CWGL partnered with the International Women's Tribune Centre and the World YWCA to organize a global petition drive that included the following appeal:

"We, the undersigned, call upon the 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights to comprehensively address women's human rights at every level of its proceedings. We demand that gender violence, a universal phenomenon which takes many forms across culture, race, and class, be recognized as a violation of human rights requiring immediate action."



Domestically, CWGL coordinated 18 different co-sponsored events featuring representatives of local groups, national NGOs, unions, Native American women, among others. The New York event that launched 16 Days in North America on November 26 was also the official launch of the 1991 petition drive.

In 1992, the central theme of the Campaign remained “Violence Against Women Violates Human Rights,” and a core activity continued to be the collection of petition signatures.

Participation, with 14 countries contributing to the first International Calendar of Campaign Activities, and an additional 9 countries informing CWGL of planned activities.

One third of those countries were represented at the first WGLI.

The 1992 campaign also included CWGL and the International Women’s Tribune center calling for international hearings and increased documentation of violations of women’s rights. The first such hearing kicked off that year’s campaign.

1993 – 2001: The UN World Conferences Context

Petitions calling on the UN World Conference on Human Rights to address violations of women’s human rights were circulated as part of a Global Campaign for Women’s Human Rights initiated by CWGL and its partners. The petitions, translated in 24 languages by local activists, gathered a total of 175,000 signatures from 115 countries. 16 Days played a key role in galvanizing energy in demonstrating through this grassroots process, the relevance of transnational advocacy to domestic struggles. It became an engine and a reflection of the emerging efforts to seek accountability and redress for all forms of gender-based violence by using a human rights framework.

Between 1993 and 1995, 16 Days continued to reinforce the links between women’s experiences and concerns, and the claiming of rights through UN forums and mechanisms. The 1994 theme, “Awareness, Accountability, Action: Violence Against Women Violates Human Rights,” was a call to continue to raise awareness on female human rights abuse, especially in reference to the new UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (adopted in December 1993); the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (adopted in April 1994), and to the need to highlight the positive outcomes from the recent Cairo World Conference on Population and Development.

The Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women was at the core of the 1995 campaign whose slogan was “Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing: Bringing Women’s Human Rights Home. Advocacy suggestions included:

“meetings with government representatives to ask for a National Plan of Action to implement the Beijing Platform, especially as it relates to violence against women; to discuss how they intend to include gender in their reports to UN treaty bodies; and to request that they invite the new Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women on a field visit as a sign of their commitment to eradicate violence.”⁵

By the end of 1995, organizations in 61 countries had reported to CWGL about their activities. Mobilizing and inspiring through shared knowledge, without a prescriptive model of change, likely allowed 16 Days to gain cross-cultural momentum and, as many noted, a life of its own. Although the overarching themes continued to change annually, the main objectives of the post-Beijing phase were meant to capitalize on the gains and opportunities resulting from three years of UN-centered strategizing.

In 1999, for instance, CWGL suggested a triple advocacy focus: follow up on governments’ commitments in Beijing, lobby to ratify CEDAW or remove reservations, and calls for the official recognition of November 25 as International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. This call, initiated by the March 8 UN Inter-Agency Conference on Violence Against Women, was endorsed by the UN General Assembly on December 17, one week after the end of the 16 Days Campaign.

In the late 1990s, 16 Days benefited from new information and communication technologies. For example, in 1996 Area

Mujeres ALAI (Agencia Latinoamericana de Informacion) created a website to spread information about 16 Days in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Women’s Health Network of that same region coordinated several lobbying and educational activities. WILDAF played a comparable role in Africa, and in Europe, the Violence-Free Cities Campaign used 16 Days to frame some of its events.

According to CWGL’s records, the first UN agencies to create their own versions of 16 Days were UNIFEM in South America and UNICEF in South Asia. UNIFEM continued at the global level to promote 16 Days after Beijing and especially during the 1998 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The year of the UN World Conference on Racism (2001) marked the end of the use of world conferences to frame calls for action. The theme for the next two years – Racism and Sexism – was selected to encourage organizations to focus on the implementation and enforcement of the commitments made by governments in Durban, and on the intersection of gender and race in relation to VAW.



2002-2009: A Global Campaign

Several factors contributed to the significant and steady growth of 16 Days during this decade:

- The increase of NGO websites allowed for its expansion in new geographical areas and for enhanced exchanges of information and ideas.
- The cumulative reach of Women's Global Leadership Institutes – nine of them took place between 1991 and 2002 – meant that 205 women leaders from 82 countries representing a wide range of organizations could influence and promote the messages and strategies of 16 Days.
- An ever-increasing number of regional and international NGOs participated directly or gave it the support and visibility that would accelerate the pace of its expansion.
- 16 Days benefited from expanded media coverage due in part to its "institutionalized" anniversary dates and track record.

I. The following available data (using CWGL sources exclusively) illustrates the worldwide progression of its reach:

	2000	2003	2006	2009
# OF COUNTRIES (territories not incl.)	108	130	149	165
# OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS	>800	>1000	>1700	<3000

"An NGO global campaign entitled '16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence against women' has been held every year since 1991...involving different levels and sectors of Government, parts of the UN system and international and local NGOs.. [...] The Campaign exemplifies government involvement in a campaign initiated by civil society, as well as effective and creative use of information and communications technologies."

A review of the International Calendar of Campaign Activities for that timeframe reveals a number of trends:

- The geographical distribution of participating organizations shifted significantly; most notable was that 24% of the countries reporting campaign activities in 2000 were in the Latin America/Caribbean region, compared with 17% in Africa. In 2009, these percentages were, respectively, 18 and 27%.
- While its themes continued to change almost annually, the overall campaign strategy remained strongly focused on calls to seize strategic opportunities to encourage governments to honor previous commitments and translate them into legislation, policies, and practices that would reduce gender-based violence at the local and national level.

- ***In 2004-2005, participants were “encouraged to plan events that emphasize the impact violence has on women’s physical, reproductive, sexual, emotional and social health, and especially the intersection of violence against women and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.” They organized activities related to the proposed theme in half of the countries included in CWGL’s international calendar. Compared to other years and themes, this was a remarkable rate of involvement.***

- The variety of participating entities expanded significantly, especially outside the realm of women’s organizations, encompassing increasing numbers of human rights and humanitarian organizations, government agencies (from local to national), academic or faith-based institutions, and businesses.
- The collaboration with UNIFEM and other UN agencies (UNFPA, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF) strengthened, and by 2009 a total of 38 countries reported some form of partnership with them during the 16 Days Campaign period.
- The expansion of media coverage, online activism, and multi sector collaborations at the national level enhanced the reach and visibility of major awareness-raising or advocacy initiatives. The contribution of civil society was acknowledged by the UN Secretary-General in his landmark “In-depth Study on all Forms of Violence Against Women” (2006)



2010 – 2015: Overview

In 2009, the Founding Director, Charlotte Bunch, left CWGL and was replaced by Radhika Balakrishnan, an economist and international human rights expert. This leadership transition resulted in new directions and priorities for 16 Days:

- **GBV and Militarism:** CWGL adopted a multi-year theme that would explore new intersections and priorities, while reflecting the leadership role of CWGL and shaping a consultation process focused more on strategies than theme selection. Since 2010, the central theme of the campaign has linked gender-based violence with militarism.
- **Social Media:** In order to increase visibility and reach of the 16 Days, CWGL strategically and successfully prioritized the use of social media through Facebook, Flickr, Tumblr, WordPress, Twitter and YouTube. In this context, effective partnerships have been built with, among others:
 - Stardoll, to bring the campaign to the more than 130 million users of its online media site (2010-2012).
 - UN Say No Unite Campaign, to participate in its Tweetathon (2013).
 - Domestic and international NGOs, to invite them to join CWGL's Teach-ins (tweetable lectures on gender-based violence organized in 2014 and 2015) by using the hashtags #16Days and #GBVTeachin.
- **Documentation:** CWGL put more emphasis on the need to document the reach and implementation of its campaign. Since 2009, a new database has allowed the Center to better track participating organizations and the types of activities they engage in. Additionally, the use of Google Alerts now provides some information about the media coverage that 16 Days is getting in different parts of the world. Since 2010, brief annual analytical reports (available on the website) outline statistical data and trends.

II. Key quantitative data available for that period is summarized in the following chart:

Year	RECORDED # OF PARTICIPATING ENTITIES	# OF COUNTRIES & TERRITORIES TO DATE	# OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS TO DATE	# OF WEBSITE VISITS DURING CAMPAIGN	# OF CAMPAIGN FACEBOOK PAGE FANS
2010	522	170	>3,700	38,000	14,000
2011	479	172	4,114	44,000	18,000
2012	748	183	5,167	47,000	46,000
2013	728	183	5,179	28,884	53,674
2014	742	183	5,478	27,582*	61,594
2015	600	186**	N/A	17,274	62,342

*Does not include number of action kits requests (not available for that year)

** A Google search identified an additional 15 countries where 16 Days activities took place (albeit without any record of contacts with CWGL).

Militarism and GBV Theme: Selection and planning process

After reports of increasing assaults against women in Pakistan and reflecting on militarism as a root cause of such violence, Executive Director Radhika Balakrishnan felt that CWGL should explore these linkages. An Advisory Committee was set up to formulate a strategy and a questionnaire was sent for feedback (47% of respondents expressed interest). In March 2010, CWGL held a 16 Days Round-Table Discussion at the 54th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) that outcome led to the announcement of the 2010 theme: "Structures of Violence: Defining the Intersections of Militarism and Violence Against Women." In June 2011, CWGL hosted a "Strategic Conversation on Militarism and Violence Against Women" attended by 30 feminist activists, academics and experts from around the world. By the end of that year, 30% of the 276 organizations who informed CWGL of their participation had organized activities related to the theme. Others continued to focus mostly on domestic violence and violence against girls. Based on the response of this theme, five core issues were identified:

- Political violence against women.
- Proliferation of small arms and their role in domestic violence.
- Sexual violence during and post-conflict.
- Role of state actors as perpetrators.
- Roles of women, peace and human rights movements in challenging the links between militarism and violence against women.

These became priority areas for the next four years under the banner, "From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World." In 2013, these issues were at the core of a joint statement submitted to the 57th session of the CSW on behalf of 167 partners of 16 Days. They called on UN Member States to "strengthen the rule of law and capacities of civilian and military justice systems to address GBV, to recognize that a culture of militarism promotes and reinforces a culture of violence, to ratify and implement the Arms Trade Treaty and to invest in programs and projects that promote human security."⁸ In 2015 the theme remained, but with a focus on the relationship between militarism and the right to education.

**Stakeholders
Create a
Community
Relevant
Campaign**

Starting in 2011, CWGL attempted to track the type and geographical distribution of 16 Days activities. This data was organized under four types of initiatives: community mobilization, GBV education based on information sharing and coalition building, policy advocacy and awareness raising through media and art. In 2014, three-quarters of actions/events focused on six main areas, depending on what was most relevant in a given community:

- Gender-based violence (as a broad focus)
- Domestic violence
- Sexual violence
- Children/girls
- Harmful practices
- Women human rights defenders

Participation

The banner years, in terms of significant increases under several of the measurable indicators included in the above chart seem to have been 2012 and 2013. The number of times that the Take Action Kit was accessed online jumped from approximately 11,300 in 2011 to 60,705 in 2013. Thanks in part to the partnership with Stardoll, the kit was translated into 37 languages in 2012 (see case study In Focus: The Stardoll Project).

Our research and interviews indicate that:

- Many grassroots organizations obtain their information on 16 Days from regional or international NGOs, as well as from UN or governmental sources that promote the campaign online or simply provide a link to it.
- Many have designed their own version of 16 Days, adapted it to local priorities and, after many years of participation, no longer need the resources or support of a coordinating entity.
- Based on anecdotal evidence, it seems that a large percentage of newer NGOs are not aware of 16 Days' origins.

The number of entities involved in 16 Days since its launch is likely significantly higher than the number recorded by CWGL and can be estimated as exceeding 6,000. The likelihood that CWGL's statistics underestimate the actual reach can be explained as follows:

- The campaign is "owned" and promoted globally by organizations that are not aware of CWGL, or simply do not communicate with or report to them.
- Reported campaign activities are initiated at the regional or national level by coalitions, networks and coordinating committees that include a large number of entities not captured by CWGL's current data gathering methods.
- The number of INGOs and international networks/coalitions known to have promoted or participated in 16 Days reaches at least 200. Many represent hundreds of partners and affiliates.
- Language preferences or barriers limit the number of grassroots organizations able or willing to communicate with CWGL.

IN FOCUS: THE STARDOLL PROJECT (2010-2012)

In 2010, CWGL's Executive Director Radhika Balakrishnan started discussing with Stardoll the feasibility of a joint project. The Sweden-based company was then the world's largest online entertainment and social networking site for teen girls (age 9-17). Balakrishnan felt that there was potential for significant engagement of a new worldwide audience, especially given the opportunity to interact directly with the girls, and to provide information about local resources and options for activism. The November 2010 press release announcing the launch of CWGL's Global Awareness Campaign on Stardoll stated that:

"in support of the 16 Days Campaign, Stardoll established an area on its site where members were introduced to the Campaign, could visit the 16 Days Facebook page and sign a Peace Pledge [...] Stardoll members can also be part of ongoing Q&A sessions with several high profile, global leaders to provide the girls with an avenue to discuss issues around violence, abuse and forming healthy relationships."

Three leaders interacted directly with the teen girls: Radhika Balakrishnan (CWGL); Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, General Secretary of the World YWCA (originally from Zimbabwe), and Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, founding member of FemLINKPACIFIC in Fiji. In 2011, the Campaign was actually featured for four weeks during which, according to CWGL, "its staff was able to virtually communicate with Stardoll members to encourage them to think critically about the ways in which violence shapes their lives and the world, and how they can be change agents in their own communities."

David Kalal, who was at the time Content Director for Stardoll, noted that many girls active on the site told the company that they would like to interact on issues that they were interested in, such as bullying and animal rights. Parents also advocated for a site focused more on "social good," which led Stardoll to seek a corporate social responsibility project. Kalal stated "one of the largest campaigns in the world related to girls' interests was a natural match for a fast-growing site that had the capability of reaching its audience in many languages. As a result of this partnership, in 2011 and 2012 we had the highest web traffic of any teen site in the world."⁹

The following statistics illustrate the scope of the joint campaign:



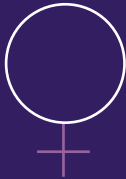
Page views on the CWGL site in 2010: **127,000**



Questions received in 2010: **10,100** from a total of 147 countries including 1,355 from Brazil alone (highest number from a single country) and 147 from Saudi Arabia



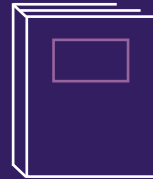
Unique page views (on Stardoll site) during the 2011 campaign: **847,927** mostly from Europe (45%), the United States (19%), Turkey (17%), and Brazil (16%)



224,213 girls participated in a "16 Days Quiz" contest (2011)



Campaign content (including the Take Action Kit) was made available in **28 languages**



213 publications posted articles about the Campaign during its initial year

The main indicators used to describe the impact of the Campaign were the ability to:

- Reach and engage a completely new constituency (girls between the ages of 9 and 17).
- Inform about the Campaign (through translations) in countries or regions where activities or media coverage had not, or rarely had been reported, such as China and the Middle East (Algeria, Bahrain, Kuwait, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates).
- Refer site visitors to local service providers working with victims of violence.

A CASE STUDY:

16 DAYS CAMPAIGN IN SOUTH AFRICA

Five main reasons led to South Africa as a case study outlining the characteristics of 16 Days:


- The scope and awareness of 16 Days, which has achieved a unique level of name recognition in part because of its long history in South Africa.
- The large number and range of entities whose participation has been documented by CWGL over the years (approximately 200 by 2014).
- The role of the government and of the UN in promoting 16 Days, and in shaping the public perception of its purpose and messages.
- The key contribution of civil society in coordinating it locally and shaping its impact, while providing important critical perspectives.
- The opportunity to reflect on the role of 16 Days in a country with high incidence of VAW.

BACKGROUND TO GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGN

According to varying sources, 16 Days started in South Africa sometime between 1993 and 1996. Three organizations, still involved, were identified as contributing to its launch:

- **Ilitha Labantu**, a social service and educational organization with a focus on addressing violence against women and children, based in Cape Town.
- **Masimanyane**, co-founded in 1995 in East London by a graduate of CWGL's Women's Global Leadership Institute.
- **People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA)**, the first organization to establish a shelter for abused women (1981) and to coordinate a national conference on violence against women (1995); POWA is a Johannesburg-based NGO that provides both services and opportunities for advocacy engagement.

Regional networks, such as the GBV Prevention Network and the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) network joined forces with influential domestic NGOs to participate actively in 16 Days. They focused on training of the media, CBOs capacity building and intersections between gender violence and HIV/AIDS. Since 2004, the GBV Prevention Network has annually issued regionally tailored advocacy kits focusing on themes that reflect how VAW affects its constituencies.



The 2005 16 Days Campaign, which included nationwide cyber dialogues organized by the South African government and Gender Links, led to a “checklist for change” that informed a follow-up planning conference in 2006. This historical gathering of 260 civil society and faith-based organizations, governments and UN agency representatives adopted the **Kopanong Declaration**¹⁰ which acknowledged that “the Sixteen Days of Activism Campaign needed to be sustained all year around” and committed all participants to a joint campaign for the elimination of violence against women. The following year, the South Africa 365 Day National Action Plan to End Gender Violence was launched by the National Convener of the 16 Days Campaign. Finally, after the Southern African Development Community (SADC) heads of state adopted a Protocol on Gender Development in 2008, 16 Days advocacy efforts started including calls for its implementation.

Since then, 16 Days has been struggling with discrepancies between commitments and promises, and the harsh reality of everyday violence. NGOs have used it to demand the creation of a National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and the resurrection of the National Council on Gender-Based Violence. In 2014, NGOs involved in this advocacy decided to form a multi-sector taskforce to coordinate civil society strategic efforts during 16 Days. In its press release issued on the first day of the 2015 campaign, Sonke Gender Justice, one of those key NGOs, deplored the “apathy of government stakeholders and the lack of political will to address GBV.” It stated that “as the UN Rapporteur on Violence Against Women visits the country next week, civil society will voice the lack of funding and indifference that we experience every day at the hands of government.” At the conclusion of her visit, the UN Rapporteur commented on the “deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes towards the role of women, which makes violence against women and children an almost accepted phenomenon.”

CURRENT PARTICIPATION:

The 2014 Western Cape Province Study surveyed women and men on their knowledge of and participation in 16 Days. Results showed that 83% of women and 80% of men had “seen or heard about the 16 Days Campaign in the past 12 months.”¹¹ The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), in charge of developing the campaign communications strategy and monitoring its reach, stated in 2012 that “the 16 Days awareness level is even higher than the State of the Nation address.” According to the GCIS Tracker Survey, “over the last 17 years, we have witnessed growth of the 16 Days Campaign, making it one of the most known government events in South Africa.”¹²

During the past few years, some of the key stakeholders targeted through the government's 16 Days Campaign have included civil society and faith-based organizations, traditional leaders, the media and sports fraternity structures. Meanwhile, civil society initiatives have targeted schools, shelters, police stations, prisons, factories, churches, refugee agencies, unions, media outlets and businesses.

CASE STUDY FINDINGS

Importance of the human rights framework

Most activists interviewed for this report stressed the unique opportunity offered by 16 Days to use a human rights framework that allows individuals and communities to:

- Understand and claim their rights.
- Address the root causes of GBV by linking the human rights conditions and violations that contribute to its prevalence.
- Promote a year-round rights-based approach to organizing.
- Demand that local, provincial and national governments implement and resource all laws and policies created to reduce GBV.
- Build their capacity to advocate against and prevent GBV.

Main benefits of 16 Days

NGO and community-based organizers and observers have highlighted the following benefits:

- **Speaking out:** A spokesperson for iThemba, a rape and trauma support center, best summarized this point by stating, "This campaign allows survivors of rape, incest, abuse and other forms of violence to speak out, to lend their support to the silent masses of women and children who suffer and to empower them with their stories of survival [...] This type of activism also helps de-stigmatize rape and sexual violence."¹³
- **Visibility:** 16 Days has been credited for its pragmatic approach, which provides a space to amplify messages and increase the visibility of ongoing work.
- **Outreach:** A two-week focus on GBV is helpful to reach organizations and agencies that do not normally work on this issue (churches, unions, etc.) and to educate new constituencies.
- **Networking:** For many campaign participants, 16 Days is an ideal opportunity to organize with partners and act in solidarity with a broader range of stakeholders.
- **Agency:** 16 Days allows women's organizations to talk about agency more than victimhood.
- **Media:** Forty percent of Google Alerts recorded by CWGL in 2015 are from South Africa. Most interviewed organizations stress that the increased media coverage of 16 Days gives them an opportunity to explain their ongoing work.

IN FOCUS: 16 DAYS MEDIA COVERAGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Three South African studies analyzed the media coverage of 16 Days:

- *Mirror on the Media: 16 Days of Activism Media Monitoring*¹⁴ (2005)
- *Getting the Best out of the Media: Analysis of Media Coverage of the 16 Days of no Violence Against Women and Children Campaign*¹⁵ (2006)
- *16 Days of Activism and Gender Stereotypes in Three isiZulu Newspapers*¹⁶ (2006)

Some key findings:

- GBV news coverage increases during the 16 Days.
- Major message carried in the media during the 2005 Campaign was that GBV is a crime.
- Women were portrayed as survivors, not just victims, reflecting the campaign emphasis on “speaking out”.
- Media still tends to marginalize GBV stories.
- News selected and language used in reporting still reinforces traditional gender stereotypes.
- Media is both part of the problem and part of the solution with coverage of GBV stories.

Learnings from media monitoring:

Responsibility of the media:

“During 16 Days of Activism, the tendency is to focus on violence in a somewhat decontextualized fashion. The media coverage of 16 Days and gender-based violence should link violence to its underlying cause, which is gender inequalities and power relations in which women and children are victims. Media coverage should explore contradictions between increasing official discourses and institutional set ups.”¹⁷

Role of government stakeholders:

“Despite the positive coverage generated from President Zuma’s launch of 16 Days of Activism [November 2014], the share of coverage remains below the awareness threshold. It is essential that all government stakeholders increase efforts to communicate on the government’s role to end violence against women [...] Promoting stories of women empowerment throughout the year and not on particular events is also key.”¹⁸

Importance of media activism:

“Gender and media activists have employed multiple strategies to use the media as an advocacy tool [...] They see the media, when used effectively and responsibly, as holding the potential for effecting social transformation. Media coverage of 16 Days has largely gravitated towards media activism over the years. This was initially instigated by gender activists, but journalists and media houses are increasingly feeling it is their duty to report on the campaign as a contribution towards ending the scourge.”¹⁹

**Civil Society Engagement:
Integrating 16 Days in program
work while assessing its impact in
overall South African context.**



SAARTJIE BAARTMAN CENTRE (CAPE TOWN)

Saartjie Baartman Centre is the first “one-stop” center for abused women and children in South Africa, offering shelter, counseling, legal and medical services. It provides GBV education and awareness raising in Western Cape, which has the highest number of domestic violence cases in the whole of South Africa. During 16 Days in 2015, the Centre hosted a one-day event co-sponsored by Embrace Dignity (a grassroots advocacy NGO addressing the root causes of prostitution), the Western Cape Network on Violence Against Women, and the South African Faith and Family Institute. When addressing the audience of approximately 100 women from the Cape Flats community, one of the organizers stressed that:

“16 Days is about connecting and changing the conversation, and an opportunity to teach about respect [...] The government of South Africa just announced on the news the campaign with the UN Women hashtag, but we can’t wait for the government to bring change – we are here to create that change.”

The Director said in interviews with the EWN news outlet: “While the campaign was of great importance, its impact is short-lived [...] What needs to really happen is the inclusion of lots of education, awareness and prevention work within the schooling system to educate young learners around how violence impacts their lives.”¹²⁰

MASIMANYANE WOMEN'S SUPPORT CENTRE (EAST LONDON)

Masimanyane is an equality grassroots organization working to end violence against women and girls. It operates 14 support centers that provide counseling, paralegal, health and shelter services. Its main objective is the enforcement of international norms and standards into the lived realities of VAW survivors. It was the first organization in the country to produce a CEDAW shadow report, and it continues to use this instrument to teach women about substantive equality, non-discrimination and state accountability.

Under the leadership of Lesley Ann Foster, its founder and director, the organization started participating in 16 Days in 1997, after she attended CWGL's Women's Global Leadership Institute. Lesley Ann Foster said,

*"We have all grown with 16 Days; using international instruments has improved and deepened our activism around VAW. We teach women that as rights holders they need to engage local authorities to make sure that they are held accountable. The links between the local and the global are essential."*²¹

Masimanyane hosted the UN Special Rapporteur when she visited East London in December 2015 and took advantage of the unique opportunity to organize a 16 Days event in connection with the Rapporteur's recent Femicide Watch Initiative, and the Support Center's intent to start tracking the killings of women in the Eastern Cape. However, Masimanyane's Director is concerned about what the campaign has become in South Africa:

"Although by now it is well entrenched in society (including through the arts), the framing language has changed, and it is not a political force any more. Neither the government nor the UN address the root causes of VAW, and their symbols caricature the Campaign; it needs to refocus on putting pressure on the state to protect women's rights. The issue of violence against women and girls has been depoliticized."²²

Funding challenges NGOs and smaller community-based organizations, repeatedly stress the difficulty of securing funding for their campaign activities, especially if GBV advocacy is not central to their ongoing program work. In South Africa, several foundations are withdrawing because civil society is perceived to be strong enough to raise funds domestically. In addition, funders are not seeing evidence of the return on their investments in regards to evidence that VAW advocacy is having a documented impact. Given that South Africa has only one women's fund (WHEAT, Women's Hope, Education and Training Trust), reliance on its relatively small grants has been a challenge in terms of the ability of smaller organizations to sustain their campaign activities.

Criticism of government role

The South African Government started participating in 16 Days in 1998 and for many years established a welcome partnership with civil society. During the 2004 16 Days, then President Thabo Mbeki made the point that: *"it should be extended to include a programme of 365 days of action against gender-based violence."*

A 2014 Department of Women concept paper for 16 Days explained that:

*"Over the past 15 years, all partners, especially government, have generally been successful in raising awareness about the campaign. Every year, government, civil society organizations and the business sector worked together to broaden the impact of the campaign [...] The previous campaigns have had their successes, however they were victim centered and did not reach out to perpetrators as part of the solution [...] The campaign will be broadened to encompass a year-long integrated national plan of action to eliminate violence against women and children."*²³





In the eyes of the government, 2014 was the perfect year to rejuvenate 16 Days (under the slogan “Count me in: Together Moving a Non-Violent South Africa Forward”) since it marked “20 years of Freedom and Democracy in South Africa and 16 Years of the 16 Days Campaign!” As a result, the government also issued an 18-page Calendar of Activities. The year 2015 differed, with next to no coordination with civil society and few commitments kept. The government’s press release for the 16 Days launch announced the campaign as “an annual United Nations event.” The highlights were mostly symbolic activities in Johannesburg and Cape Town, sponsored by UN Women. In Cape Town, Parliament became the site of an “appalling display of sexism, exposing a total disregard for women and the 16 Days of Activism.”²⁴ An opposition leader in Parliament summarized her disappointment in these terms:

“The 16 Days Campaign as promoted by the current government is a big public relations effort that does not achieve anything sustainable. We need to move from campaign symbols to a 365 days approach. The government campaign should have more practical aims and initiate special projects, such as human rights awareness in schools, churches, etc.”²⁵

A number of NGO representatives voiced similar “disenchantment” over a campaign trend defined as the government co-opting a civil society initiative and watering down its essence by adopting a piecemeal approach. The Coordinator of the Women’s Rights Program of the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), which runs a very effective 16 Days Campaign through its “Take Back the Tech” initiative, summarized the feelings of many by saying:

“The 16 Days Campaign has been captured by the government in a very conservative way. It used to convene an annual meeting with NGOs to discuss themes and strategies; now there is an increasing disillusionment because the government is saying all the right things but in reality capturing the Campaign to serve its own political agenda. Instead of informing about the implementation of its commitments, it is performing them.”²⁶

In 2015, such criticisms led to a creative 16 Days of Discontent Campaign run online under the umbrella of the Shukumisa Campaign, consisting of 48 member organizations in South Africa working against sexual violence. According to their November 24th press release:

"[The campaign was to] issue a score card on a particular sector or government department each weekday of the campaign. This will examine what has (not) been done since the 16 Days in 2014. Because we have not made the progress we should, we are choosing to use these 16 days as a time to express our discontent with the current situation. We will also use this time as an opportunity to resurrect forgotten draft laws and policies and explore new possibilities for curbing violence against women."

The strongest note of skepticism, at the beginning of the "official" 2015 Campaign, came from blogger Gillian Schutte in a 16 Days post:

"Sixteen days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children is upon us again this year. As usual it will come and go, but very little will change for the majority of women and children in South Africa. The middle class will be a little more aware of the heinous gender-based violence statistics that haunt our country. A few expensive awareness-raising events will happen in economically marginalized communities and middle-class spaces. Women's resolve and hope will be raised again, but, as with most rights-based initiatives that are driven by the neoliberal government, the donor-funded NGO sector and the corporate sector, this will have little real impact on women living below the bread belt in South Africa."²⁷

Feminist perspectives

Many feminist activists involved in or knowledgeable about 16 Days, provided analyses that underscored the problematic approach and messages of the government. They seem especially disillusioned with a government that, in a crisis context, uses 16 Days to showcase its laws and achievements without following up on its commitments. Within the diverse, if not fragmented feminist movement, some are “fiercely in favor of developing our own responses to our own problems,” while recognizing the importance of international solidarity, a pillar of 16 Days. Emphasis put by both the government and some civil society stakeholders on using 16 Days to promote the engagement of men in order to achieve the eradication of violence against women remains controversial. As this movement gains momentum, many women fear that men will want to control the choice and framing of their initiatives; that the government’s discourse and focus on men as perpetrators or “protectors” will undermine women’s agency and that already limited resources may be diverted from women’s empowerment projects.

Campaign slogans and activities, as well as media coverage, which do not address the root causes of gender-based violence, is another criticism. In a CWGL 2014 campaign blog, feminist activist and former Member of Parliament Pregs Govender wrote:

“We need to interrogate the structural, systemic causes of women’s increasing vulnerability to gender-based violence and the institutionalized violence of poverty and inequality [...] This year’s campaign can be used to expose the connection between violence against women and the institutionalized violence of economic and religious fundamentalisms that perpetuate war, poverty and inequality.”

LESSONS LEARNED

Learning from the South African context can inform 16 Days priorities in four main areas:

- **Holding governments accountable:**
In cases where governments are both campaign partners and targets, 16 Days offers an annual opportunity to remind them of their obligations to address GBV in a strategic, consultative, coordinated and resourced manner. In South Africa, civil society stakeholders have also been encouraged to denounce commitments with *“no budget, no legal enforcement mechanisms, and no clear roadmap – in other words, no legitimacy and no chance at producing the change that we so desperately need.”*²⁸
 - **Localizing the campaign:**
Several grassroots initiatives (such as the Take Back the Tech²⁹ and the Shukumisa Campaigns) have been especially successful at “localizing” the messages, objectives and tactics of 16 Days. CWGL could highlight and publicize examples of strategies and activities that effectively promote local responses to local problems within a human rights framework.
 - **Broadening the diversity of stakeholders:**
Activists have stressed that awareness raising activities can be especially effective when promoted by organizations and institutions that do not specialize in GBV issues, and therefore have a better opportunity to educate new constituencies. CWGL could feature through its website, examples of successful outreach initiatives (for instance within business or faith-based communities) and seek new partnerships outside the women’s rights movement.
 - **Capacity-building:**
CWGL could highlight the experience of NGOs that have developed key expertise through their years of campaigning. Gender Links’ leadership³⁰, for instance, has clearly demonstrated the importance of media activism, as well as campaign planning and evaluation best practices, to enhance the effectiveness of 16 Days.
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FINDINGS AND TRENDS ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

The main findings from the review of the evolution and current phase of 16 Days, and from the South Africa case study can be summarized as follows:

- 16 Days has been effective in reaching the following objectives initially set by CWGL:
 - Raising awareness about GBV as a human rights issue at the local, national, regional and international levels.
 - Establishing a clear link between local and international work to end GBV.
 - Demonstrating the solidarity of civil society entities organizing against GBV.
- 16 Days is now a global campaign characterized by a remarkable diversification of themes, messages, tactics, activities and partnerships.
- Stakeholders claim full ownership of the 16 Days; they include:
 - Grassroots women's organizations mobilizing communities around prevalent forms of GBV.
 - International, regional and national NGOs from a variety of sectors (human rights, humanitarian, social justice, etc.)
 - Governments (local, provincial, national).
 - United Nations agencies adopting and adapting 16 Days under the umbrella of the UNiTE to End Violence Against Women Campaign (2008-2015).
- 16 Days has usually reached its highest level of visibility and impact in countries and regions where entities have been able to work in partnership.
- Participants and observers have expressed concerns over the confusion created by a multiplicity of symbols, messages and objectives.
- The effectiveness of 16 Days has been hampered by a lack of documentation and results assessment.
- The origins of this second generation campaign have been forgotten, but the use of unifying themes and commemorative dates continues to be its hallmark.

BEYOND CIVIL SOCIETY

The UN and 16 Days:

In 2008, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, launched his UNiTE to End Violence Against Women Campaign which “called on governments, civil society, women’s organizations, young people, the private sector, the media and the entire UN system to join forces in addressing the global pandemic of violence against women and girls [...] and set out five key outcomes to be achieved in all countries by 2015.”³¹

The following year the UN “launched Say NO-UNiTE to End Violence Against Women as a social mobilization platform [...] to showcase advocacy efforts by civil society, activists, governments and the UN system, through an interactive website and social media accounts.”³² Since then, UN Women has promoted 16 Days as part of this mobilization effort. In 2011, UN Women described its participation in the following terms:

“We promoted and worked with the 16 Days Campaign through Say NO – UNiTE [...] For the 16 Days of Activism, we engaged people through a menu of 16 actions that anyone could take, online or offline. ... UN Women regional, sub-regional and country offices also observed the 16 Days of Activism, often in partnership with national governments and civil society. From Peace at Home to Peace in the World was a popular theme. UN Women offices focused their efforts guided by a comprehensive 16 Steps Policy Agenda. Say NO also provided a platform to register actions taken during the 16 days. [Your] theme, action ideas are most useful as they give constituencies details about the issue and have suggestions of actions they can take [...] The campaign increased awareness and visibility of the issue: the Say NO website

received three times the monthly average of unique visitors and 100 new partners joined Say NO during the 16 Days. The #16Days was Tweeted more than 16,500 times, reaching an audience of more than 40,600,000 unique followers [...] The 16 Days of Activism Campaign was the most successful online campaign on Say NO this year, driving unparalleled web traffic and online media engagement within the month period.”

In 2015, #16Days generated 183,000 tweets, reaching 344 million users. NGO participation increased, as did media pick up. According to Say NO-UNiTE staff, the added value of 16 Days is: *“to increase the visibility of advocacy work; to support ongoing domestic program work; to rally stakeholders around a specific theme and time period; to reach a much broader audience than the women’s movement, and to provide a platform to hold governments accountable.”*³³ Also in 2015, the Global Working Group to End School-Related Gender-Based Violence heavily promoted the Make Education Safe for All theme. The Working Group (co-hosted by the UN Girls’ Education Initiative and UNESCO) allowed 16 Days to reach key new constituencies by representing *“more than 30 of the leading international agencies, civil society organizations and institutions promoting girls’ education and gender equality.”* All five UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) field offices (Gaza, West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria) reported their awareness-raising activities to CWGL, and the Office of the Secretary-General Envoy on Youth publicized their focus on the right to education under the banner: *“From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Make Education Safe for All”.*

Governments

A number of governments publicly promote or support 16 Days in reference to CWGL's theme and objectives:

- Cayman Islands Their Minister for Education and Gender Affairs announced: *"As the Minister responsible for Gender Affairs, it is fitting to take the opportunity to reaffirm the Government's and the country's firm stance against gender violence during the 16 Days of Activism. For the past 22 years, the Center for Women's Global Leadership, which is dedicated to advocacy and coordination of work in support of ending violence against women at all levels, has led this global campaign. In the Cayman Islands, we are fortunate enough to not live in a country torn apart by war or violent civil unrest. However, this does not mean that there are not victims of GBV living among us who feel as though their homes are in fact not a sanctuary but a war zone. It is therefore appropriate for our local participation in this global campaign to focus on the message of creating peace in our homes. Every one of us has a role to play in eliminating GBV, yet we often consider it a private matter. During the 16 Days Campaign, I encourage you to think about how we all can be a part of the solution."*³⁴
- Sudan In the context of an upcoming Periodic Review, and in answer to a Human Rights Committee question about measures taken to combat violence against women in Darfur, the government of the Sudan provided as evidence that *"in 2005, seminars were held as part of the 16 Days Campaign to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women."*
- Kosovo In its 2013 Annual Progress Report on governmental activities against domestic violence, the Kosovo Ministry of Justice highlighted its participation in 16 Days, supported by the UK and US Embassies, as well as OSCE and UNDP.
- Cote d'Ivoire Governments use 16 Days media opportunities to announce new laws or policies. During the national campaign closing ceremony on December 9, 2015, the Cote d'Ivoire Minister of Solidarity, Family, and Women announced that *"GBV victims would no longer need to produce a medical certificate before filing a complaint."*
- South Sudan In other countries governments partner with UN agencies and INGOs that campaign. South Sudan had collaboration between the Department of Gender, the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan, and Women for Women.
- Gambia In The Gambia the Director of the Women Bureau, referred to the intersection of GBV and militarism in the Banjul press. Some governments have taken ownership of the campaign

Philippines	and redesigned it to suit their national priorities (see South Africa case study). A historical example is the government of the Philippines, which has participated in 16 Days since 2002. Background information from the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) credits CWGL and specifies that <i>“the first two years of the campaign focused on awareness raising on VAW, leading to the passage of two landmark legislations: the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act.”</i> ³⁵
Botswana	In 2015, Botswana collaborated with the United States Embassy based on the government’s acknowledgement of the need to address GBV in a school setting under the 16 Days theme Make Education Safe for All.
United States of America:	Some governments promote CWGL’s announcements and online materials outside their borders: the United States Mission to the United Nations distributes them to all NGOs they are liaising with because they feel that <i>“16 Days is an important campaign for them to promote.”</i> ³⁶
Australia	The Australian government publicizes CWGL’s campaign in the 14 Pacific Island States it supports through the Pacific Women Program. In some countries, such as South Africa and Australia, government-initiated or sponsored activities often take place at the local or regional/provincial level. There again - even if they collaborate - governments, UN agencies, and NGOs may be framing the campaign in very different, if not conflicting ways. The government of the Australian state of Victoria, for example, runs a 16 Days “Victoria Against Violence” campaign under the banner of the Say NO-UNiTE campaign. Meanwhile the Victorian Governance Association promoted CWGL’s theme and asked activists to demand that all municipal councilors support the goal of eliminating VAW in concrete ways.

The **GBV Prevention Network** (in 20 countries throughout Africa) developed a campaigning model, which invites political leaders to speak out against VAW, while demanding concrete action from them. A representative of the Network clarified that:

“as campaigning keeps growing in the region, governments start participating, creating their own themes and even holding forums with NGOs to coordinate

*the campaign (as in Malawi, Rwanda, and Tanzania). These governments use both CWGL and UN agencies and maintain good relationships with NGOs during the campaign.”*³⁷

16 Days also reaches governments through Intergovernmental Organizations such as the OSCE, the European Union, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the World Bank.

The increasing contribution of INGOs and transnational networks

At least 200 international NGOs/networks participating in 16 Days have a direct connection to CWGL or identify it as the source and/or global coordinator. Given the reach of these organizations through their websites and social media, it is legitimate to assume that millions of people have become aware of 16 Days through networks. INGOs that are not women's organizations have increased to 53% of 16 Days representation. This allows the campaign to provide influential international organizations the opportunity to focus on GBV issues that are not necessarily part of their core mission, and reach a wider range of new constituencies. The examples below illustrate the range and mobilization potential of such international entities.

ActionAid: When CWGL launched its theme "Let's Challenge Militarism and End Violence Against Women," ActionAid aligned its initiatives with it, and supported activities addressing other GBV-related issues, such as "the gender impact of violence and urbanization" (their report on this was released during the 2011 Campaign), sexual violence in refugee camps and violence against alleged witches (Ghana).

Amnesty International: In 2004 Amnesty International participated in 16 Days and followed the militarism theme for its first three years, and then focused its contribution on its priority of sexual and reproductive rights. The Campaign Coordinator stated:

"We don't want to overshadow the global theme by choosing our own, but we need to take into account its relevance and its level of priority in the countries where we are represented [...] also, we are not adding to the potential global impact of the theme if we have not conducted our own research in that area."³⁸

Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID): Represented in 163 countries, since 2012 AWID has used and promoted 16 Days through a tribute to women's rights leaders: *"An online photo exhibition featuring photographs and biographies is updated every year as part of the 16 Days Campaign [...]* In addition to paying homage to these incredible women, we seek to shed light on the plight of all Women Human Rights Defenders who have been assassinated or disappeared. We bring them all in our collective memory and carry their legacy of struggle as our torch in the feminists' and women's rights movements."³⁹
In 2014, AWID announced that it was *"working with Mama Cash and The Guardian to document what activists and organizations are doing to mark #16Days of Activism Against GBV."* Participants were encouraged to share actions, articles and pictures through The Guardian's Witness App.

Education International (EI): In 2015, EI *“encouraged all member organizations to get involved in this year’s 16 Days Campaign, thereby leading efforts to raise awareness about violence in and around schools and other educational settings.”*⁴⁰ This call for action had the potential to reach new audiences, given that EI describes itself as the world’s largest federation of unions, representing 30 million education employees in about 400 organizations, in 170 countries and territories.

FRIDA (Young Feminist Fund): As a funder of young activists, FRIDA encourages opportunities to leverage visibility and solidarity. Although not through direct grants, it has expressed support for 16 Days by promoting organizations that provide opportunities for engagement in 16 Days via social media, including AWID Young Feminist Wire, Take Back the Tech! and Open Democracy 50:50.

International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA): As a network of 250 civil society organizations working in over 90 countries, IANSA has been a supporter and partner of 16 Days since its GBV and militarism focus.

International Medical Corps (IMC): IMC has participated in 16 Days since 2010, when it hired its first Global Gender-Based Violence Advisor. IMC provides background information using resources from CWGL, UN Women and the GBV Prevention Network in Africa. Once 16 Days has ended, it collects stories from their country teams, features them online and produces annual internal reports. IMC promotes 16 Days in over 20 countries. Some of their most successful campaign projects have taken place in Libya, Lebanon and Chechnya (GBV training for the military in 2012).⁴¹

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC): Since getting involved with 16 Days in 2015, IFRC produces videos, primarily used internally to raise awareness among the 190 national societies. During 16 Days, IFRC hosted an international conference on sexual and gender-based violence, which followed the release of its first report, “Gender-Based Violence in Disasters.”

Promundo: *“A global leader in promoting gender justice and preventing violence by engaging men and boys in partnership with women and girls,”* Promundo was an active participant in the 2015 campaign and *“reached over 68,000 individuals on Twitter and thousands on Facebook as they [facilitated] conversations and exchanged ideas about the ways in which communities, individuals and institutions can help to change attitudes and end violence against women and girls at home and in school.”*⁴²

Soroptimist International (SI): With over 75,000 members in 130 countries and territories, SI contributed to the 2015 Campaign through daily online pieces on GBV affecting women in prison, girls (issues of early and forced marriage, and access to education), older women, women in conflict, internally displaced women and indigenous women.

World YWCA: As stated in a 25/11/2011 press release:

The World YWCA has endorsed the 16 Days of Activism Campaign since its inception as an international campaign originated from CWGL [...] The organization will also once again participate in the 16 Days Campaign run by Stardoll [...] Each year, YWCA associations worldwide also participate in the 16 Days Campaign through a wide array of actions." Since 2014, the World YWCA has been running its own 16 Days Campaign, "There is noXcuse for Violence Against Women." Member associations of the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches in over 120 countries have joined in this endeavor.

ACTIVISM TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

After reviewing the data collected, the following trends have been identified:

- Growing beyond women's rights constituencies.
- De-emphasizing the human rights framework.
- Relying on awareness-raising.
- Capitalizing on social media.
- Seeking innovation and resources.
- Assessing effectiveness and impact.

New global constituencies

Over the years 16 Days has reached a wide range of constituencies, including governments and INGOs. It has grown beyond its women's movement foundation and is now supported broadly, including by faith-based organizations, unions, businesses with corporate responsibility initiatives, media outlets, schools and academic institutions. This has been achieved through coalition-building initiatives at the grassroots level, targeted partnerships (especially with regional or international NGOs and UN agencies) and through increased traditional media coverage and social media.

Men's engagement with 16 Days is a reflection of this broader context. As illustrated by the South African example, some NGOs make it a priority, whereas others are critical of the approach. A key leader in this area is Dean Peacock, Executive Director of the Sonke Gender

Justice Network, Co-Chair of the Men Engage Network and member of the UN Secretary General Network of Men Leaders. In a 2013 interview with the New Internationalist, he stated:

“We exist in a country with very high levels of men’s violence against women [...] It is relatively recent that men have joined the conversation and activists movements. There was the assumption that all men benefited so much from patriarchy that no man could be committed to challenge it. But many men also pay a significant cost in a patriarchal society.”⁴⁴

16 Days events that had men engagement, include a 2011 “Men Say No” Blogathon, organized in India by the Youth Collective Community and UN Women, that reached over a million people via social media; a 2012 campaign in Albania organized by the NGO Refleksione, UN Women and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs under the banner Violence is a Crime! Act Now! A Real Man Never Hits a Woman; and a Red Elephant Foundation 2013 (India) 16 Days project featuring online articles by 16 men who denounced violence against women.

As part of the World Bank’s 16 Days Blogger Series, Verena Phipps (a social development specialist) contributed the following comments in a piece entitled “Why Men for Women: Engaging Men and Boys in Addressing Sexual and GBV in Conflict”:

“While the context of conflict and the climate of impunity that prevails create an enabling space for violations, perpetration of GBV is ultimately tied to pervasive norms and dynamics that exist prior to conflict that sanction and reinforce men’s dominance over women and girls. Numerous studies demonstrate that even after conflict ends, violence continues in the home, as men who have experienced high levels of trauma and displacement during conflict are often likely to use violence against women and children [...] In order to address the drivers of GBV, therefore, prevention and mitigation initiatives must tackle these entrenched dynamics and in particular should engage men and boys as critical partners in facilitating pathways for positive social change.”⁴⁵

Human Rights framework and agenda

A consensus exists that the main contribution of 16 Days has been its human rights framework, though few initiatives (outside of “specialized” I/ NGOs) promote this agenda. On the 16 Days website, CWGL defines this framework:⁴⁶

The human rights framework asserts that women are entitled to the protection, promotion, and fulfillment of their human rights as one half of humanity. It provides important language and tools to “define, analyze, and articulate women’s experiences of violation and to demand redress in ways already recognized by the international community. Abuses against women can no longer be relegated to the so-called private sphere, and accountability is demanded of States to uphold commitments to women’s human rights made in a number of treaties and international documents within the UN system [...] As a strategy, the human rights framework can be described in seven principles:

- Protection and promotion of human dignity.
- Universal nature of human rights.
- Equality and non-discrimination.
- Indivisibility of women’s rights.
- Interconnectedness of human rights principles and violations.
- Government accountability.
- Private responsibility.

The framing of 16 Days is one of the main reasons why most major international human rights organizations have joined, many feminist activists are drawn to it and some funders have supported it as one of *“the cutting-edge human rights organizations working around the globe to advance women and girls’ rights.”*⁴⁷

The relevance of a human rights-based approach to campaigning is reflected in five main types of initiatives:

- Legal or know your rights trainings to help women survivors gain access to reporting and redress mechanisms, as well as services at the local level.
- Activities challenging harmful practices.
- Activities to support women human rights defenders.
- Advocacy in support of the implementation of local/national GBV legislation.
- Education around the root causes of gender-based violence.

At the advocacy level, one of the best examples of campaigning for the elimination and prevention of GBV through a rights-based and women-oriented approach, is outlined in a statement presented at the 57th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women by a group of five Chinese NGOs:⁴⁸

'During the international 16 Days of Activism in 2012, we collected opinions from about 6,000 women of various ages across the country, interviewed survivors of GBV, counselors, social workers, women's rights activists, lawyers, policemen, procurators, judges, decision-makers, lawmakers and perpetrators. We realized that there are still wide gaps between the goals set for eliminating and preventing GBV and efforts made to realize these goals. Hence, it is urgent for the state to make breakthroughs regarding the following aspects, with firm political will and practical, proactive actions (partial list):

- Implement international conventions and fulfill commitments to strengthen the state's obligation and responsibility to eliminate GBV and eradicate its root causes – gender discrimination and inequality – by reviewing all existing laws and policies with a gender perspective.
- Draw up comprehensive, feasible and effective laws and policies for preventing violence and create specific, enforceable and accountable regulations and measures to prevent GBV.
- Formulate a state action plan on the prevention and elimination of GBV.'

It is worth noting that in December 2015 China's legislature approved the country's first law against domestic violence.

Awareness-Raising vs. Advocacy

Since 2011, CWGL has tried to keep track of the types of participation of 16 Days organizations. These have been classified into four categories:

Community Mobilization (rallies, marches, public forums), **Information Sharing** (workshops, seminars, trainings, conferences), **Media and Art and Policy Advocacy**.

Over the years, advocacy initiatives have varied between 13 and 16 percent known activities, while mobilization initiatives have decreased from 55 to 30 percent. Because these statistics only relate to reported activities, they should be used cautiously as a trend indicator. From this data, it is safe to infer that a majority of initiatives are of an awareness-raising nature and, therefore, have informational rather than transformational objectives. Aside from the development of specialized GBV advocacy organizations and projects, two main reasons may have influenced a shift towards primarily awareness raising initiatives:

- An increasing focus on commemorative events, marking especially the first and last days of the campaign, may be driven by opportunities for media coverage and partnerships with UN agencies aiming to expand the reach and visibility of the campaign.
- The increasing role of participation through social media (blogs, teach-ins, uploaded pictures, etc.) has an immense value, but also the potential to shift the focus of campaigning away from the strategic pursuit of specific outcomes and asks.

Social Media

The influence of social media on campaigning is probably the most significant trend of the last few years. A major landmark for 16 Days was the launch in November 2009 of UNIFEM's global platform for advocacy and action, Say NO – UNiTE to End Violence Against Women. At a time of close collaboration between UNIFEM and CWGL, 16 Days activists were encouraged to share their initiatives globally on the www.saynotoviolence.org site.

In its 2015 Take Action Kit, CWGL notes:

“While social media for activism cannot be a replacement for on the ground movement building, social justice activism, or engagement with allies, it is a powerful way to inform, engage, and trigger widespread support for human rights principles. It is crucial that as the world shifts further into this technology age, activists use new mediums to bring the message of human rights instruments [...] Our goal is to create a powerful online conversation and presence that will bring awareness and momentum to the 16 Days Campaign and the fight against gender-based violence.”⁴⁹

In its 2013 analytical report, CWGL stressed that:

“Social media was a popular platform for information dissemination and solidarity building for the Global Coordinator and 16 Days participants worldwide. Survey respondents indicated that 47% followed CWGL during 16 Days through Facebook updates, and 33% did the same through Twitter. Twitter followers more than tripled during the 16 days, with thousands of retweets and favorites, and tens of thousands using the hashtag #16Days. The new Twitter, with 1,298 followers, and Facebook platforms helped connect thousands more participants with CWGL, and amplified the opportunity to share in-depth information, resources and updates. Using social media as a mobilizing online platform for advocacy also helped reach new individuals and organizations.”⁵⁰

The number of Twitter followers reached 2,468 in 2014 and 3,936 in 2016. The Urgent Action Fund Director of Learning emphasized the role of Twitter: *“its strength is the embedding of links that give people the opportunity to delve deeper into the issues. It is also essential to highlight individual stories (especially of marginalized women) that would not be covered in the mainstream media.”⁵¹*

Activist/campaigner, Ruby Johnson (Co-Director of FRIDA), gave the following example of Mexico: *“A lot of young activists who are frustrated with NGOs and feel that they can't deliver real change seek more informal, radical, and individual forms of activism. Social media is also a form of engagement that does not require resources.”⁵²*

Seeking innovation and resources

Some long-term 16 Days participants are questioning if they are following a familiar routine and whether their years of activism are making a difference. A 16 Days activist from the Democratic Republic of the Congo expressed her skepticism in these terms:

“The Campaign is very popular here but also becoming a routine; people look forward to a celebration, are interested in specific activities (sharing food, a play, etc.), instead of specific messages. This will not effect change and we need to figure out how to innovate. This could be a role for CWGL to generate new ideas for effective activities.”⁵³

A new generation of feminist activists is seeking innovation and opportunities to experiment with new ideas and tactics. The challenge in this is often linked to an issue of capacity-building and/or resources. Many activists feel that they could benefit from enhanced communication systems, strategy trainings and better access to sources of funding that would improve the creativity and effectiveness of their activities. A frequent comment from NGO and CBO stakeholders is that the type of campaign activities they conduct is often funding-driven (instead of strategy-driven), inadequate in the pursuit of new and creative tactics. AWID’s 2013 report *Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots* found that “there was considerable alignment between the top ten priorities [GBV being the first one] identified by women’s rights organizations and the top ten issues to which their donor funding was directed.”⁵⁴ At the grassroots level, it can be challenging to dedicate or raise funds for a one-time initiative, especially those that do not have a specific GBV program.



This being said, thanks to the reputation, collective power and “institutionalization” of 16 Days, some funders have provided resources for 16 Days initiatives, as shown in the following examples:

- **Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women (FLOW)**, a program of the Dutch Ministry for Foreign Trade and Development. A 2013 press statement mentioned that *“the Minister actively supports this campaign [...] Every day during the campaign new #NL16 tweets are released with specific examples of how the Netherlands supports it [...] For many FLOW grantees these 16 Days of Activism are a well-known event that they actively participate in.”*⁵⁵
- **The Avon Foundation**, which started a Speaking Out Against Domestic Violence program in 2004. In 2014, 31 of its grantees (through the Brazilian women’s fund Fundo ELAS) “jointly developed a strategy to use during 16 Days of Activism campaign” in Brazil.⁵⁶
- **Mama Cash**, aside from partnering with CWGL and promoting the campaign, Mama Cash has also funded active campaign participants such as Consorcio Oaxaca, in Mexico.
- **The African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF)** has given a high number of grants earmarked for 16 Days. A recent call for proposals⁵⁷ gives priority to projects that raise awareness using innovative and community driven activities about harmful traditional practices, provide a platform for women and girls to raise their voices on GBV and combat GBV in schools.
- **Calala Women’s Fund (Spain)** stated: *“An important initiative which Calala joined [2012-2014] is the international campaign of 16 Days of Activism. We organized a varied communication and fundraising campaign to support [...] the Mesoamerican Women Human Rights Defenders Initiative.”*⁵⁸
- **The Reconstruction Women’s Fund (Serbia)**, 2014-2016 strategic plan includes 16 Days as a priority funding area.
- **The WHEAT Women’s Fund in South Africa** (see South Africa Case Study).
- **Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa** has funded 16 Days proposals in the context of its 16 Days of Young Women’s Voices Campaign launched in 2010.

Assessing Effectiveness and Impact

Assessing effectiveness and impact has been identified as a key challenge by most activists and funders involved in this study. Due to the limited timeframe of 16 Days and the range of stakeholders and initiatives, among others, it is difficult for any single organization to claim demonstrable impact. A review of campaign activity reports or announcements shows that the main underlying issues are the absence of campaign objectives linking activities/interventions and outcomes, and the lack of monitoring and evaluation processes that might identify indicators of success. Organizations and individual activists have attempted, often informally, to capture ways in which 16 Days has made a difference and what constitutes success. In 2014, the NGO RAU posted the following statement by Everjoyce Win, a graduate of CWGL's first Leadership Institute:

"A lot can happen in 16 days. And it did! So we come to the end of this year's 16 Days of Activism against GBV. It has been an amazing two decades of organizing by women, and a few good men, all over the world [...] what started off as an idea, almost a pipe dream, with only 24 women, has grown to be one of the most well known global campaign. Who says the feminist movement is small, insignificant and the changes it has brought can't be "measured". If anybody had asked us on that bright summer day at Rutgers, what will success look like? How will you measure it? I don't think we would have been able to provide an answer, let alone imagine that this is what the 16 days campaign would achieve. Hear yea, monitoring and evaluation zealots. This is what success looks like!"⁵⁹



Most indicators of success or impact identified by 16 Days participants fall under the following:

The Campaign reflects the solidarity and collective power of a global mobilization around a global goal:

“Of course the links between any one individual’s activism and the end of child marriage – a form of gender-based violence and a human rights violation – is tenuous and fragmented. However, one person’s actions as part of a collective can have an impact.” (2y2w blog, 2013)

“The collective efforts, energy and commitment concentrated over a period of two weeks can contribute to lobbying successes and policy changes.”
(Saathi Executive Chair, Nepal)

“The current impact of the campaign should be assessed in terms of solidarity and visibility. While very embedded in local contexts, it creates a common language during a common period.”
(16 Days activist in Australia, Cambodia, and Mexico)

The campaign contributes to the strength and visibility of the women’s rights movement and amplifies its awareness-raising messages:

“The campaign has grown steadily and is owned by many. This is a good thing and the more allies the better. Research has shown that the presence of a strong women’s movement is the most important factor in changing policies around violence against women.”
(Edna Aquino, 2014)

“You can turn your social media platforms into amplifiers for non-violence and gender equality or into forums where people can publicly affirm their support for a world where women and girls no longer suffer violence or live in fear of it.”
(How to be an Activist: Your Role in 16-Days Global Campaign, 2y2w blog)

“Since 1998, the Coalition On Violence Against Women (COVAW) has locally spearheaded 16 Days. The campaign has been instrumental in placing violence against women in the public and political domain in Kenya.”
(AFRICANEWS, 2002)



The Campaign encourages activism through the voice of survivors:

16 Days is a campaign which takes place each year. The history of grassroots activism to eradicate violence against women and girls in the Extreme North Region of Cameroon is deeply linked to the campaign. For us it signifies an opportunity to reach out to people with the testimonies of victims of gender violence and inspire them to action.

(16 Days: From Demystification to Denunciation, Open Democracy article, 2012)

The Campaign is effective because of the annual opportunity for increased media coverage:

“The strongest impact of the campaign is media mobilization. In Nepal, media coverage has increased considerably and it has also affected the year round coverage of issues. From our experience, one of the key objectives of the campaign is to make media more gender-sensitive. We work with them intensively during the campaign and it influences their coverage during the rest of the year.”

(Saathi Executive Chair, Nepal)

The campaign contents are not driven by explicit priorities: materials were not designed around an integrated, explicit impact strategy.

IN FOCUS: 16 DAYS CAMPAIGN ASSESSMENTS

From Campaign to Action: The 16 Days of Activism Campaign⁶⁰

In Tanzania (2010-2011) WILDAF studied “the extent to which the campaign has catalyzed activism and responses around the prevention of GBV.”

The key findings were:

- 16 Days generates a high level of involvement by partners and engages men.
- 16 Days contributes to improved awareness of and responses to GBV.
- Survivors’ access to services has increased as a ripple effect from 16 Days.
- Challenges to 16 Days are that it has been urban-centered, has had minimal cooperation from local government and is dependent on donor funding.
- Transparency in the planning and coordination process gives participating organizations a sense of ownership and avoids duplication of effort.

Lessons from Campaigns to End VAW: The Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre 16 Days Campaign in Ghana (2007)⁶¹

According to this case study included in a WOMANKIND report (2008), “the aim of the campaign was to break the silence around VAW in rural communities where no public awareness-raising activity on the issue had been carried out”. Thanks to a rigorous process of determining in advance clear campaign objectives and impact indicators, lessons learned were identified to inform future campaigns.

Some of the key findings were:

- The communities’ knowledge about VAW the Domestic Violence Act improved significantly.
- After the training, the women recognized that they have the right to say no to violence and to report it.
- Chiefs and opinion leaders recognized the negative consequences of VAW.
- The campaign achieved its objective of ‘breaking the silence’ and creating an environment conducive to change in the long term.

The GBV Prevention Network 16 Days of Activism Regional Campaign Annual Reports :⁶²

The 2014 Report, marking the 20th anniversary of the Campaign in Sub-Saharan Africa, notes that *“every year, the number of [participating] groups across the region grows – as does the commitment to making real change”*.

The main measurable outcomes of the 2014 Campaigns were:

- A record 117 member organizations participated within 14 countries.
- Close to 4 million people in the region spoke out against the “silent epidemic”, the regional theme for the year.

Campaign of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence (2004-2007): Evaluation Document of UNIFEM Andean Region⁶³

This is, to our knowledge, the most comprehensive evaluation to date.

Main findings were:

The aim of the campaign calls for a process of at least two generations: the worldwide campaign has completed a first generation (1991-2005) and is moving through its second and, in the case of our region, we can in fact see certain changes in social patterns that have structured undreamed-of legal frameworks and social discourse [...] The first regional impact was breaking violence out of the private realm.

The campaign is not technically designed or grounded in a macro-strategy: Three main components are missing:

- Communication goal for the planned period.
- Selection of target groups according to priority of impact.
- Impact tracking system.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence: a Report on the UNiTE Campaign in Kyrgyzstan (2012-2014)⁶⁴

Civil society in Kyrgyzstan has participated in the campaign through awareness-raising actions since 1998.

Concrete results were:

- Amendment of Article 155 of the Criminal Code criminalizing bride kidnapping.
- Amendment of the code increasing sentences for child abuse.
- Approximately 50,000 people were informed about the forms of GBV in the country.
- Capacity-building activities reached approximately 300 people.
- Youth participation was strengthened.

THE US CASE: NEITHER VISIBILITY NOR IMPACT

Since its start, 16 Days has had a decreasing number of participants in contact with CWGL. This might be due to the reliance on CWGL's website, the UNITE platform and social media. Although there has been a lack of data regarding domestic participation, some highlights are:

- There is less name recognition in the US, than in other parts of the world. There is also a relatively low level of media attention. 2015 Google Alerts received by CWGL showed news stories from local outlets, but little mainstream coverage of events or GBV related issues.
- CWGL has only been able to track the participation of approximately 60 campus settings. Among the most active outside Rutgers are City College of New York, Columbia University, Durham University, North Carolina State, the universities of Maryland, Missouri, Rochester, Vermont, and Western Illinois and Warren Wilson College. Overall, 16 Days is under represented in this setting.

Participating I/NGOs featured global issues or campaign initiatives, but rarely connected them to a domestic context. For example, the coalition formed in 2014 by the Center for Health and Gender Equity (with over 40 mostly international NGOs) has used 16 Days to mobilize in support of women and girls raped in conflict globally. In this case, both the 2014 White House Rally and 2015 Online Vigil were organized to protest US policies, namely barriers to safe abortion.

The issue of GBV in conflict was also addressed during the campaign by PAI (a reproductive health INGO) as an

opportunity to advocate for the implementation of the US National Action Plan developed in 2011, as a follow up to UN Resolution 1325.

- When anchored in the US context, 16 Days has focused mostly on domestic violence and sexual assault on campuses. Through their respective websites, the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the Media for Social Justice Center and the organization Stop Street Harassment, have promoted domestic activism through multiple awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives.
- On the government side, the U.S. State Department has been supportive of the 16 Days Campaign through events, press statements, blogs and co-sponsored activities around the globe. Strong encouragements to participate have been issued, among others, by the Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, the USAID Senior Coordinator of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, the U.S. Mission to the African Union and the U.S. Mission to the OSCE. In November 2015, a USAID Impact Blog was dedicated to the Make Education Safe for All theme.
- At the local government level, it is worth noting the example of the City of San Francisco, the first in the world to adopt a local ordinance reflecting the principles of CEDAW. On several occasions, it has passed resolutions on its participation in the 16 Days Campaign, and in 2012 November 25 was declared "International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls in the City and County of San Francisco."

RELEVANT THEORIES & REPORTS INFORMING NEXT STEPS

The campaign should be seen as a movement tributary, and as such closely integrated in the broader feminist mobilization to prevent and combat GBV. What has been shown, especially in a 2012 landmark study by Mala Htun and Laurel Weldon, is that:

“Feminist mobilization in civil society is what accounts for variation in policy development [...] Autonomous movements produce an enduring impact on VAW policy through the institutionalization of feminist ideas in international norms [...] The impact of global norms on domestic policy making is conditional on the presence of feminist movements, pointing to the importance of ongoing activism.”⁶⁵

The recent report on “VAW: Movement Building in the Global South” also makes the point that “activists driving social change are the best hope we have for preventing VAW.” In summarizing the factors needed to sustain a movement, the report⁶⁶ outlines lessons learned and recommendations that are fully relevant to a GBV campaign such as 16 Days:

- Increasing the capacity of leaders, members and institutions, in order to sustain energy and build momentum.
- Building alliances to create a common agenda and space for communication and dialogue.
- Providing a platform for exchange of ideas, shared learnings and challenges, recognizing both the possibilities and limits of technologies.
- Developing strategies that are ‘outside the box’ and drawing learnings from other sectors and movements outside of VAW and women’s movements.
- Focusing on organizational and skills development, including on how to document change and build the capacity of younger women.

A 2014 study on the effectiveness of intervention strategies to reduce VAW⁶⁷ concludes that community mobilization approaches are “promising” in low and middle-income countries:

“Community mobilization approaches are typically complex interventions that engage many stakeholders at different levels. They use many strategies, from group training to public events, and advocacy campaigns such as the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. The interventions often make use of social media [...] although there is no evidence that social communications alone can prevent violence, rigorous assessments have shown significant changes in knowledge and use of services, attitudes towards gender, and acceptance of VAW.”

While these studies confirm the importance for 16 Days to remain focused on a community mobilization approach, it is useful to examine the campaign through the lens of the “diffusion of innovations” theory. As emphasized in the first section of this report, when the Campaign started, it qualified as a visionary innovation. The diffusion model teaches us that the spreading of such innovations is a function, among others, of their “compatibility with existing values [in this case human rights principles], the simplicity and ease of use” [e.g. international calendar of landmark commemorations] and the availability of “experimentation opportunities and observable results.”

Les Robinson (creator of Enabling Change and proponent of the theory) stresses that:

“Reinvention is a key principle in the diffusion of innovation [...] a good way to achieve this is to make users into partners in a continuous process of redevelopment [...] media stories may spread information about new innovations but it is peer-peer conversations and networks that spread adoption [...] face-to-face communication becomes more influential over time, and mass media less influential.”⁶⁸

The premise behind the following recommendations are that the globalization and imprint of 16 Days, as well as the successes and contributions outlined in this report, amply justify the continuation of CWGL’s support and commitment of resources. Another premise is that, now that 16 Days has acquired a life of its own, it is at risk of losing momentum and effectiveness if participants stay engaged only for the sake of it, and are not energized by clear objectives, creative thinking and tangible outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. LEARNING & REINVENTING

1.1 Integrate the Campaign into the broader GBV program and focus on

1.1.a *A human rights framework and structural causes analysis:* as deplored by many stakeholders, governments involved in 16 Days and media covering it, usually do not address these, resulting in activists claiming or inheriting that responsibility. CWGL is already providing this focus in its campaign materials, but a GBV program would enhance its effectiveness, visibility and the consistency of its messages. It would allow a much-needed intersectionality approach to ensure inclusion of all identities and links to all forms of discrimination and resulting violence.

1.1.b *Benchmarks for the Sustainable Development Goal 5 and the implementation of UN Resolution 1325: 16 Days,* in this context, could include specific calls for action.

1.1.c *Alignment of issues and messages with the Agreed Conclusions of CSW 57 session on the Elimination and Prevention of VAW (2013).*

1.1.d *General Recommendation 19 advocacy* in support of the implementation of state obligations to address gender-based violence, while the CEDAW Committee updates GR 19 (2016).

1.1.e *Investment in advocacy impact research,* best achieved through partnerships with other organizations. It will be imperative to identify benchmarks to measure progress, as well as the strategic contribution of 16 Days to relevant program goals.

1.2 Promote Innovations

1.2.a *Experiment with and encourage new partnerships, either campaign or program-based,* especially with entities outside the women's rights movement

1.2.b *Share theories and models of change used by experienced 16 Days activists*

1.2.c *Foster creative strategizing* through direct interactions between stakeholders for instance, at regional meetings/conferences; hosting occasional convenings (including with former Women's Global Leadership Institute graduates); organizing issue-specific webinars, and creating an online clearinghouse/learning center that would contribute to an ongoing practice of innovation and reflection.

1.2.d *Create an Innovators Campaign Award:* This event (and/or website feature) could occur at the end of each campaign theme cycle, and rotate regionally. It would be, among others, an ideal opportunity to showcase the numerous arts projects and artists that contribute to the awareness-raising power of the Campaign in many parts of the world.

2. COMBINING COORDINATION AND LEADERSHIP ROLES

2.1. Reaffirm the campaign vision through influential voices in promoting the campaign in several languages.

2.2. Select and use campaign themes strategically as a unifying banner.

2.3 Encourage organizations to conduct objectives and results-driven campaigns *by promoting successful campaigning models and best practices and creating a “commitment pledge”,* where organizations can commit to specific objectives, spelling out how they intend to contribute to the elimination of VAW in their community/area, or country.

2.4. Engage proactively with stakeholders *through working groups, national/regional focal points and site visits*

2.5 Enhance identity and visibility of the Campaign.

As more and more initiatives and campaigns (especially online) are developed around the world to work on the elimination of GBV, it will be crucial for CWGL to define and capitalize on what continues to make 16 Days unique. This includes considering social media strategy, branding that helps all stakeholders instantly and positively tie the 16 Days Campaign with CWGL and its mission, and promotion of all relevant dates within the 16 Days period, especially as many governments and civil society actors focus on the first and last day.

2.6 Affirm leadership role through key relationships, *such as UN agencies, INGOs and funders.*

3. PROMOTING THE RELEVANCE OF THE CAMPAIGN IN THE US

3.1 Advocacy opportunities

During the 16-days timeframe, calls for action or awareness-raising initiatives should be included in 16 Days, regarding the follow up to the US Working Group’s upcoming report on discrimination against women in law and practice (US mission took place in December 2015), especially regarding high rates of violence against Native-American women and the treatment of migrant women in detention; Ratification of CEDAW (with possible linking to the Cities for CEDAW initiatives); and Post-election accountability. These opportunities can be used to encourage civil society to challenge the U.S. government in a more targeted and consistent manner.

3.2. Human Rights Education initiative

Only a handful of high schools have reported 16 Days campaigning activities. However, and especially if it decides to continue the focus on the right to safe education, CWGL could partner with human rights education institutions/networks to launch a 16 Days High School Campaign.

3.3. Links to mobilization against sexual assaults on campus

CWGL could connect with ongoing online campaigns and seek their engagement in 16 Days, while promoting their mobilization efforts.

3.4. Media opportunity

In order to increase 16 Days' visibility in the US, CWGL could take advantage of its 25th anniversary and the post-election, to hold an event featuring White House and State Department officials, as well as Members of Congress, willing to make a public commitment to ending violence against women in the US and abroad.

4. BUILDING THE CAMPAIGN TEAM AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY

4.1 Increase Staffing

Since 16 Days is global, it is not realistic to expect that a single person can manage the whole project. Given also that many of the above recommendations will require more resources, we suggest gradually setting up a three-person Campaign Team to share duties/functions.

4.2 Improve data-gathering and analysis

Having to rely mostly on interns to maintain the database means that the quality of the data-gathering and data entry has been rather inconsistent. CWGL should:

4.2.a Review data-gathering needs and methods and also prioritize social media analytics, media monitoring and qualitative documentation (such as individual stories, interviews, case studies, etc.).

4.2.b Improve technical and software capabilities.

4.3. Improve 16 Days website

This should be an absolute priority given how essential the website is as a campaigning tool. The most pressing needs are regularly updated content, usability and appearance.

4.4. Prioritize blogging

This is a fairly labor-intensive, but very valuable initiative. In addition though, to publishing contributions on GBV-related issues, campaign staff should solicit blogs addressing campaigning successes and challenges.

Conclusion

Regardless of the path it chooses, CWGL should remember that, above all, its legacy is about leading with a strong vision and a light touch. It is about unifying and amplifying the voices of those who keep the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign alive around the globe.

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- ³⁷ Author's interview with Jean Kemitare of *Raising Voices* (Uganda), Coordinating Office of the GBV Prevention Network (January 15, 2016).
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- ³⁹ <http://www.awid.org/about-whrd-tribute>
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- ⁴⁷ Message from the Director of the Foundation for a Just Society (December 2013)
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- ⁵¹ Author's interview with Caitlin Stanton (Oakland, CA) dated January 11, 2016
- ⁵² Author's interview with Ruby Johnson (February 16, 2016)
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- ⁵⁴ Angelika Arutyunova and Cindy Clark, "Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots: The Status of Financing for Women's Rights organizing and Gender Equality" (Association for Women's Rights in Development, 2013), 116.
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- ⁶³ UNIFEM Evaluation Document (June 2008) prepared by Nidya Pesantez-Calle.
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- ⁶⁶ Violence Against Women and Girls (Raising Voices Report, 2015), 26.
- ⁶⁷ "Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls: What Does the Evidence Say?" in *The Lancet* (November 2014)
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http://www.enablingchange.com.au/Summary_Diffusion_Theory.pdf

APPENDIX I: ACRONYMS

CBO	Community based organization
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CWGL	Center for Women's Global Leadership
GBV	Gender-based violence
MENA	Middle East North Africa (region)
IGO	Inter-governmental organization
INGO	International non-governmental organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
(UN) GA	General Assembly
(UN) GR	General Recommendation
(UN) SG	Secretary General
VAW	Violence against women



APPENDIX II: INTERVIEWS LIST

CENTER FOR WOMEN'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Current Staff (meetings and interviews):

Radhika Balakrishnan, Faculty Director
Krishanti Dharmaraj, Executive Director
Zarin Hamid, Coordinator of GBV Program
(16 Days of Activism Campaign)
Lucy Vidal, Director of Operations

Former Staff:

Charlotte Bunch, Founder and Executive Director (1989-2009)
Roxanna Carrillo, Co-founder, and Coordinator of first
Women's Global Leadership Institute

16 Days Campaign Coordinators and Program Associates/Consultants:

Niamh Reilly (1991-1997)
Susana Fried (1990-2000)
Keely Swan (2008-2011)

INGOs REPRESENTATIVES (including funders):

Amnesty International:

Alice Dahle, Chair, AIUSA Women's Human Rights
Coordination Group
Tarah Demant, Senior Director, AIUSA Identity and
Discrimination Unit
Azmina Dhrodia, Campaign Coordinator (Gender, Sexuality,
and Identity Programme), AI's International Secretariat

Foundation for a Just Society:

Zaynab Nawaz, Program Officer

FRIDA (The Young Feminist Fund):

Ruby Johnson, Co-Director

Futures Without Violence:

Marsha Robertson, Director of Communications
Alexandra Arriaga, Consultant

Global Fund for Women:

Anna Tenuta, Campaigns and Communications Manager

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies:

Kaisa Laitila, Technical Support Officer, Gender and Diversity (Policy, Strategy and Knowledge Department)

International Medical Corps:

Micah Williams, Global Gender-Based Violence Advisor

Open Society Foundation:

Maryam Elahi, former Director, International Women's Program

Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights:

Caitlin Stanton, Director of Learning and Partnerships

**OTHER
INTERNATIONAL
STAKEHOLDERS**

Stardoll:

David Kalal, former Content Director

**UC Berkeley Human Rights Center, School of Law
(Sexual Violence Program)**

Kim Thuy Seelinger, Director

Julie Freccero, Associate Director (formerly with UNIFEM)

United Nations:

UN Women:

Urjasi Rudra, Advocacy and Programme Specialist

Anna Alaszewski, UNiTE Campaign Coordinator

Department of Peacekeeping:

Susan Allee, Principal Officer, Asia-Middle East Division

US Mission to the UN:

Peggy Kerry, NGO Liaison (Office of Press and Public Diplomacy)

**NGOs
REPRESENTATIVES**

Australia:

Annie Douglass, Health Promotion Team and 16 Days Coordinator, Women's Health in the North (WHIN, Melbourne)

Democratic Republic of the Congo:

Francine Nabintu, HEAL Africa (Goma)

Also Futures Without Violence Fellow (San Francisco)

Julienne Lusenge, President of SOFEPADI and Director/
Co-founder of the Fund for Congolese Women (FFC)

Egypt:

Intsar Saeed, Chair, Cairo Center for Development

Fiji:

Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls, Coordinator of FemLINKPACIFIC (Suva)
(Also Board President of Global Fund for Women)

Mexico:

Cristina Hardaga Fernandez, Just Associates Mesoamerica (Mexico City)

Morocco:

Fouzia Assouli, President, Federation Ligue des Droits des Femmes (Casablanca)
Fatima Outaleb, Union de l'Action Feminine

Nepal :

Bandana Rana, Strategic Director, SAATHI

Uganda:

Jean Kemitare, GBV Program Manager, Raising Voices (Kampala)

Zimbabwe:

Kuda Chitsike, Co-Founder and Director, Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU), Harare

**I/NGOS
RESPONSES
received through
written
questionnaires:**

Afghanistan:

Cooperation for Peace and Development

India:

Kirthi Jayakumar, Red Elephant Foundation

Lebanon:

ABAAD (Resource Center for Gender Equality, MENA Region), Beirut
Ghida Anani, Founder and Director

Netherlands:

Women Peacemakers Program, The Hague
Isabelle Geuskens, Executive Director

Zimbabwe:

Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association
Tendai Mutandwa

SOUTH AFRICA:

Amnesty International, Johannesburg
Mpilo Shange-Buthane, Executive Director

Association for Progressive Communications (APC)

Johannesburg
Jan Moolman, Senior Coordinator of the Women's Rights Programme

Business Against Crime (BAC) Western Cape, Cape Town
Shawn Koen, Project Manager

Democratic Alliance Women Network (DAWN), Cape Town
Denise Robinson, Member of Parliament and Shadow Minister of Women in the Presidency

Embrace Dignity, Cape Town
Jeremy Routledge, Co-Founder and Deputy Director
Soraya Mentoor

GenderLinks, Johannesburg
Nomthi Mankazana, Justice Officer
Sikhonzile Ndlovu, Media and Communications Manager

Masimanyane Women's Support Centre, East London
Lesley Ann Foster, Co-Founder and Executive Director

One in Nine Campaign, Johannesburg
Mpumi Mathabela, Campaign Coordinator

Sonke Gender Justice, Cape Town
Staff members of the Community Education and Mobilization (CEM) Unit:
Keegan Mark Lakay, Manager
Precilia Chuloi, Refugee Health and Rights Trainer
Dieu-Merci Matala, Intern

University of Cape Town Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health
Rita Stockhowe, Communications and Advocacy Officer

Women's Holistic and Support Program (WHASP), Cape Town
Taryn Nicholas, Founder

Women's Hope, Education and Training (WHEAT) Trust, Cape Town
Celeste Fortuin, former Grant Manager





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