

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE

November 25 - December 10, 2004



For the Health of Women, For the Health of the World: No More Violence

The groundbreaking UN Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993, formally recognized violence against women as a human rights violation and called on governments and the United Nations to work toward its elimination. Since 1993, many significant gains have been made, including the increasing acknowledgment of gender-based violence as a major global public health issue. According to the World Health Organization, “the consequences of abuse are profound, extending beyond the health and happiness of individuals to affect the well-being of entire communities.” Beyond the immediate physical and emotional effects, it has been shown that violence increases women’s future risk of various psychological, emotional, behavioral and physical ailments, and negatively affects their ability to enjoy other human rights. Violence inhibits women from reaching their full potential as active members of their community, which impairs the well-being of society.

In 2005, the ten-year review of the UN Women’s Conference held in Beijing and the five-year review of the Millennium Summit, as well as preparations for the five-year review in 2006 of the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, present significant opportunities to highlight this intersection. **For this year’s 16 Days campaign, participants are encouraged to plan events that emphasize the impact violence has on women’s physical, reproductive, sexual, emotional and social health.**

Violence Against Women & HIV/AIDS:

The 2004 16 Days of Activism theme is also intended to highlight the intersection of violence against women and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Specific attention must be paid to the issue of gender-based violence in order to effectively deal with the current HIV/AIDS crisis. Currently, there is a growing body of research calling attention to the connection between violence against women and HIV/AIDS. Violence, and the fear of violence, hinders women’s ability to prevent transmission of the virus and compromises their access to a range of services, including testing and treatment. Women also often experience further violence once they are or are perceived to be infected.

A number of groups and initiatives are organizing around the issue of violence against women and HIV/AIDS, including the Global Coalition on Women and HIV/AIDS, the Amnesty International Stop Violence Against Women Campaign, the Global Campaign for Microbicides, and the 2004 UNAIDS World AIDS Campaign, as well as countless organizations at the grassroots level. When planning events for the 2004 16 Days Campaign, which includes World AIDS Day (December 1), participants might ask themselves: What are the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS in my community? What forms of violence do the women in my community face and how does this violence affect their ability to adequately deal with HIV/AIDS? What sort of research and activism is already happening around this issue and how can I get involved?

Look for more resources in the 2004 Take Action Kit, available in August!

Contact the Center for Women’s Global Leadership for a 2004 Take Action Kit!
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E-mail: cwgl@igc.org; Or to access the kit online, go to: <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html>