

Extending the 16 days campaign to 365 days

From a campaign to an action plan!

What

The 365 days of Action is a concept, first adopted in South Africa, to extend the 16 days campaign to a coordinated and comprehensive year-long response through the development of a National Action Plan to end Gender Violence. The plan serves as an important tool to strengthen efforts to end gender violence by holding governments, civil society and other stakeholders responsible for commitments they make. If monitored and implemented properly, a National Action Plan is envisaged as an opportunity to give new meaning to the 16 Days of Activism to end Gender Violence Campaign in that the campaign can become a time to take stock of progress and set new benchmarks, rather than to simply draw attention to the problem.

Why

The Sixteen Days of Activism campaign has gained momentum in Southern Africa and there are now high levels of awareness, as well as commitment by government, the private sector and civil society to ending gender violence. However, there are no immediate signs of this scourge abating with levels of gender violence remaining high in the region and South Africa ranking as having among the highest statistics of gender violence in the world. While ending gender violence is not an overnight miracle, best practice from around the world suggests that what is required is a concerted, multi-sector, multi-stakeholder action plan with concrete targets and measurable outputs.

The UN Secretary General's 2006 report on gender violence highlights the significance of:

- Comprehensive and coordinated National Action Plans driven by governments
- States should build and sustain strong multisectoral strategies, coordinated nationally and locally
- Work to end violence against women requires not only a clear demonstration of political commitment but also systematic and sustained action, backed by strong, dedicated and permanent institutional mechanisms.
- States should build on the work done by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), scale up and institutionalize it and share experiences with other countries

How

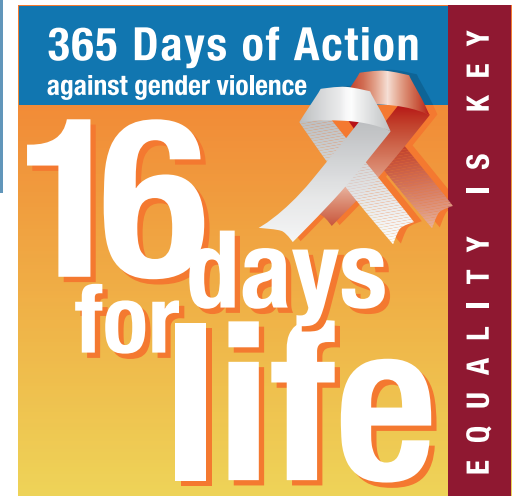
The 365 Days of Action concept took root in South Africa during nationwide consultations that took place during the 2005 Sixteen days campaign, including cyber dialogues hosted by the Government Communication and Information Services (GCIS) in collaboration with Gender Links in all provinces. The idea of a national action plan to end violence against women and children gained ground and was endorsed by the Deputy President in her closing speech of the campaign.

In May 2006 the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), UNICEF and Gender Links convened a multi stakeholder conference to draft a National Action Plan to end gender violence bringing together government departments, civil society, UN agencies, media and other stakeholders. Participants pledged their commitment through the signing of what is now known as the Kopanong Declaration. The National Action Plan is now being managed by a full time Programme Management Unit in the office of the NPA.

Replication

Building on the success of the South African process the concept was extended to three SADC countries: Namibia, Mauritius and Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe already had a plan in the form of a National Gender Based Violence Strategy document that includes a national action plan through a process began in 2001. So the aim will be to build upon and enrich the Zimbabwe process through the sharing of best practices.

Workshops were held in the three countries from July to October 2006. These built on the audit of progress made in ending gender violence undertaken by country chapters of the Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA) Network in 2004, and the "IT for advocacy" training that Gender Links (GL) and GEMSA undertook in nine countries



in the region in 2005. Participants in the 365 Days of Action to End Gender Violence workshop were empowered with skills to:

- Conduct an audit of government commitments towards ending gender violence and assess the extent to which these are being met;
- Identify a set of actions from the audit to be used as the basis for developing an action plan to end gender violence in their country;
- Use the 16 Days of Activism Campaign to leverage the idea of a national action plan to end gender violence;
- Take the action plan process forward through a national inter-sector and collaborative conference at which the plan is adopted.

Who

Key stakeholders in each country include:

- National, provincial and local government.
- The legislature, especially Portfolio committees on Justice
- The judiciary.
- Civil society- Unions, Non governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community Based Organisations (CBOs), Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) especially those who have mounted 16 day campaigns.
- The arts and sports community.
- Traditional leaders.
- The media.
- The private sector.
- UN agencies
- Donors.

Outputs

The key outputs for the workshops in each country included:

- A Draft Plan of Action to End Gender Violence.
- A Plan for using for the Sixteen Days of Activism to strengthen the Action Plan.
- A Strategy for adoption of the Action Plan.

The National Action Plans developed were guided by the SADC Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children which outlines five key areas in which measures must be adopted to address violence against women and children. These are:

- Legal
- Social, Economic, Cultural and Political
- Services
- Education, Training and Awareness
- Integrated Approaches and Budgetary Allocation

Outcomes

- *A coordinated inter-sectoral approach to addressing the levels of violence against women and children in Southern Africa and beyond:* Adopting a National Action Plan has the potential to ensure a more coordinated approach to addressing violence against women and children. It responds directly to oft-cited criticism that organisations within the gender violence sector operate in isolation from each other and as such a great deal of duplication takes place. The potential for meaningful coordination extends to projects and programmes undertaken by government departments and civil society.
- *Strengthened relationships between stakeholders working in the gender justice sector including between government and civil society structures:* This builds relationships that would not necessarily have been formed and creates an environment that encourages the exchange of information and supported the formation of partnerships.
- *Concretised, high-level, and visible political support for addressing gender violence:* While addressing gender violence has been firmly placed on the political agenda, sustained and visible efforts by governments to address the epidemic have not always been evident. So governments' in principle commitment to the National Action Plan is an important step forward in terms of being able to measure the impact of projects undertaken and supported by various government structures.
- *The potential to deepen the lobbying and advocacy and as such the impact of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign:* The development and publicising of national targets and indicators of success means that stakeholders will be able to hold both government and civil society organisations more accountable for the work they are undertaking. Agreement on a set of short, medium and long term priorities and targets will result in the campaign, in addition to raising awareness about violence against women and women, being a period in which we can take stock of the progress made and challenges experienced during the course of the year.

Next steps

In the next two years the plan is to replicate the process in the SADC region at the rate of at least four countries per year.

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