

Pocket Friendly Edition

RISE UP



Guide for Young Women's
Transformative Leadership

**2020 Pocket Friendly
Edition of the World
YWCA Rise Up!
Guide to Young Women's
Transformative Leadership**

This is a Pocket Friendly April 2020 Edition of the 2018 World YWCA's Global Rise Up! Guide for Young Women's Transformative Leadership.

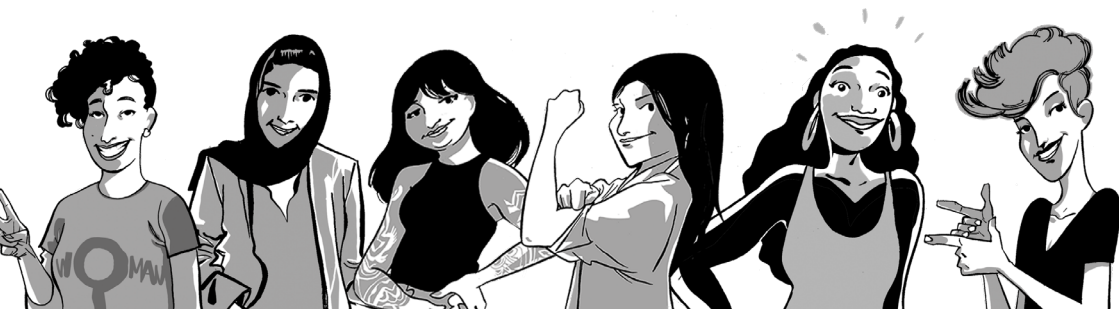
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The original 2018 guide was inspired by the young women of Solomon Islands whose ground breaking work to reach communities of young women who had previously had no opportunity to 'Rise Up'. The original guide would not have been possible without the ideas and contributions from the Young Women's Peer Review group including: Vanessa, Daniela, Sophia, Sushila, Nirmala, Clarine, Naomi, Esther, Natalie, Kiri and Erica.

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I didn't even know that I had rights. To be bold and transformative, you have to be included, respected, skilled, involved, connected... you always have to be like 'I can do it'. If they can do it, why not me?

Clarine, Solomon Islands



Welcome!

The 2020 Pocket Friendly Edition of the World YWCA Rise Up! Guide to Young Women's Transformative Leadership is meant to be useful for young women¹ everywhere so that they can own their personal transformation and the impact they have on the lives around them. The Pocket Friendly Edition was created with feedback from young women and allies as a more reader-friendly tool, easier to carry, and encompassing all the essential elements of the original Guide published in 2018. Whether you are an active YWCA member, someone who is interested in joining the movement, or are interested in transformative leadership for your own organization or personal journey, welcome!

Background

In 2010, young women at the YWCA Solomon Islands created The Rise Up! Young Women's Leadership Programme with support from the Fiji Women's Rights Movement. Rise Up! was specifically designed to harness the leadership potential of the most marginalised and disadvantaged young women in the region, including those living in urban settlements and rural areas. Since then, YWCA Solomon Islands and 9 national YWCAs in the Asia Pacific region, along with many local YWCA Member Associations, have been hard at work and collaborating with the World YWCA to develop and grow Rise Up! into a regional and global programme grounded in local realities, that supports young women in all their diversity to rise up and discover their leadership potential.

Rise Up! includes a combination of participatory training, mentoring and practical leadership experiences for young women. During the programme, participants learn leadership skills, and discuss social issues affecting young women in their communities and how to deal with those issues. Participants also learn basic advocacy skills and then, in small groups, plan and deliver a community level advocacy project with the support of a mentor.

Unique to the Rise Up! model is the inclusion of religious, cultural and traditional perspectives that enable women's empowerment and leadership. Thanks to the YWCA Solomon Islands and young women in Asia and the Pacific, the RiseUp! model has been scaled up and further developed to take the model global. It's a leadership training model designed by young women for young women.

¹ YWCA Young Women are 18-30 years old, but Global Rise Up! Guide can be adapted for girls and women of all ages.

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An Introduction to Young Women's Transformative Leadership

YWCA's around the world develop the transformative leadership and collective power of young women to achieve justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom and care for the environment.

This Global Guide is a tool to share and strengthen good practices in leadership training for transformative change. At the core of this leadership journey is a young woman's ability to know and claim her human rights at home and in her community, while contributing to strengthen the movement of young women and girls within her country and beyond.

YWCA Young Women's Transformative Leadership builds upon the existing knowledge, creativity, and capacity of YWCA young women to become leaders for positive social, economic and environmental change. It celebrates the processes by which together young women explore their strengths, educate themselves, identify as decision makers, and have the confidence, knowledge, information, skills, and support to understand and manage power imbalances, challenge injustices, hold powerful people to account and make positive change in their lives.

For more than 160 years YWCAs around the world have shone a light on the powers and capabilities of women, young women and girls. Championing their human rights is at the core of what we do. Advocating for the rights of all is our global agenda whereby young women, through their leadership, transform power structures to create justice, gender equality and a world without violence and war.

This guide aims to provide a self-determined approach for young women to develop leadership skills, awareness of their strengths, knowledge of their rights and opportunities for action.



Outline of the Pocket Friendly Edition of the Rise Up! Guide

- 1 A theoretical base examines what we mean by transformative leadership and includes the YWCA Young Women's Transformative Leadership Journey which incorporates Human Rights, Safe Spaces and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as building blocks for transformative leadership.
- 2 A knowledge base offers Topics for Discussion which can be used to inform activities and discussions, and shape what it means to be a transformative leader (13 topics include: Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM); Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR); Menstruation; Early and Unintended Pregnancy; Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (LGBTQI+); HIV and AIDS; Sex Trafficking; Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG); Peace, Security and Gender Equality; Climate Change and Gender Equality; Economic Justice and Gender Equality; Bullying and Cyber Bullying; Faith and Feminism). Each topic includes related Human Rights, SDGs and Guiding Questions.
- 3 An action base provides some participatory activities, in addition to a series of Notes for Facilitators to ensure trainers have guidance and encouragement to create locally relevant sessions. The Pocket Friendly Edition of the Guide can be used on its own or combined with pre-existing local leadership activities. Also, do not forget that additional content can be found in the original Guide and if you wish to use inspirational stories from the success of RiseUp!, please contact World YWCA.



How to Use the Pocket Friendly Edition of the Rise Up! Guide

Firstly, look through the whole Guide so that you know the different sections and have a clear idea of what you might like to use in your trainings and advocacy. This Guide brings together the concepts of Safe Spaces, Human Rights, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a solid base upon which to build young women's leadership. The Transformative Leadership Journey can help identify the stages of learning and action that shape trainings, information sessions, engagement with decision makers and advocacy work, and sharing leadership with others.

Secondly, deepening everyone's understanding of Human Rights is important, so take some time to read and think about A Human Rights-Based Approach to Leadership and the additional information provided on human rights conventions and agreements (see Appendix: What are Human Rights). Knowing and talking about how rights relate to our lives and the lives of others helps develop a common understanding of human rights and supports transformative leadership skills that address injustices, promote personal growth and work towards more equitable social, economic and environmental progress.

Thirdly, when you feel comfortable with the theoretical part of the Guide, look through the **Topics for Discussion**. Each of these issues was identified by young women in the YWCA movement as relevant to their leadership. Each relates directly to our human rights and is structured so that you can apply a Human Rights-Based Approach to discussing an issue and planning local, national or international actions and advocacy. In order to ensure that

trainings are relevant, have the young women participants identify the topics that affect their lives.

To create a leadership training (either one session, one day or an extended training):

- Identify young women who can benefit and are interested in leadership training (include young women who are directly affected by the Topics of Discussion).
- Work with them to identify relevant Topics for Discussion and to structure the training (the amount of time they can spend at each session; number of sessions; when to meet; convenient and safe location, etc.)
- Use the **Topics for Discussion** with the related Human Rights, Guiding Questions to shape the training.
- Review the **Transformative Leadership Journey** and identify activities and discussions for each step.
- Review the **Human Rights-Based Approach to Leadership** so you can guide human rights based discussions with key questions.
- Choose a Leadership and/or Human Rights related Activity.
- Create an **activity to discuss** the Topic for Discussion by referring to the **Techniques for Creating Dynamic Workshops**.

YWCA Young Women's Transformative Leadership Journey

How can young women exercise leadership within Safe Spaces to advance their Human Rights and to help contribute to the SDGs? This Young Women's Transformative Leadership Journey describes different steps, from knowing oneself to claiming rights, that can help young women understand, share, and act together for a better world:



Transformative Leadership Journey : Phase 1

Know yourself



Young women becoming leaders includes a recognition of the diversity of leadership qualities. A leadership journey starts with knowing yourself. Building self-awareness and confidence sets a foundation for young women to explore and make choices throughout their lives. Each young woman deserves a safe empowering space where she can voice her ideas and opinions, celebrate her unique character and discover herself as a leader. YWCAs empower young women to recognise their own strength, worth, and power.

Transformative leadership includes understanding and addressing the root causes that create inequalities, disempowerment, and young women's lack of enjoyment of their human rights. Empowerment comes from knowing one is entitled to claim human rights and having the skills and support to do so.

Transformational engagement happens when YWCAs work with young women and girls. In recognizing their strengths and capacities YWCAs provide opportunities for them to demonstrate and develop their leadership skills so that their voices are heard and they take their rightful place as decision makers at home, in their community or on the global stage.

Remember, particular groups of young women are more vulnerable to human rights violations than others (young women living with HIV, living with a disability, living in rural areas, who are poor, out-of-school, orphans, from ethnic and religious minorities, who are sex workers, and LGBTQI+, etc.) and so it is particularly important to reach out to these more marginalized young women and include them in every stage of the transformative leadership journey.



Transformative Leadership Journey : Phase 2

Know your rights in your reality

Knowing and claiming human rights is one of the most powerful actions that young women can take to shape their lives. Young women are best qualified to identify and find solutions to the challenges they face. They have the right to make decisions about their bodies, their lives, and their futures. Transformative leadership is rooted in understanding human rights and using that knowledge to act for sustainable change.



The following questions are key to using human rights as a tool for understanding and resolving the challenges that young women face. Asking these questions creates opportunities for young women to identify their rights and to have a clear idea of what is wrong, what has to be done, and who is responsible.

- **What is the problem and Who is being left behind?** What is happening in my home or community that seems unfair or not right? Which young women and girls are more likely to have their human rights ignored or violated?
- **Why is this happening? What makes it difficult for young women to enjoy their rights?** Are there cultural practices and traditions that are discriminatory? Are there laws which treat young women unfairly? Does society expect less of young women or demand that they fulfill strict gender roles? Why is there discrimination against young women?
- **Who has the responsibility to do something about the problem?** Who are the local decision makers, powerful people, government officials, or service providers who should act? These people have a duty to respond to and fulfill human rights, for example in education, health, or law enforcement.
- **What needs to be done? What can young women do and what do they need to do it?** Young women can use national laws and human rights conventions to better understand their rights and know what can be expected of government. They can use their leadership skills to organize and mobilize efforts to engage decision makers in resolving a problem. Young women can also observe and monitor progress and change. It is important to remember that in order to seek change in their lives and communities, young women will need support, partners, and safe spaces.

Transformative Leadership Journey : Phase 3

Strengthen your leadership in a social movement

Strengthening leadership within a social movement means creating a sense of unity and shared purpose among young women. With information, support and encouragement, young women can identify problems, recognize their human rights, reach out to form strategic partnerships, organize solutions, and advocate for change. In this context, a social movement may include other young women, young people, and adults who are interested in working together for change and are aware of the importance of encouraging young women's leadership. Also, within a supportive group, young women have the opportunity to learn from others, as they can be mentored by peers or elders.



YWCA leadership does not conform to a narrow definition, such as one person speaking and deciding for others. YWCA leadership comes in many shapes and sizes, many voices and even silences. Leadership within a social movement encompasses self-confidence, knowledge, having the support of others and looking out for others. Within a social movement leadership helps create a common cause and shared action plans. Young women may lead with peers or have the opportunity to share leadership space with women of all ages. Young women may raise their voice alone or be one voice among many. Young women leaders may hold positions of authority and decision making in an organization, speak on behalf of many in national or international events, or confidently voice their opinion at the family table.

Whether a young woman decides to act individually or within a movement, it is important to ensure an enabling environment that supports different leadership choices. No matter what form her leadership takes, young women will benefit from support. Social movements, friends and peers, like-minded groups, and networks of civil society organizations can all play a role in fostering young women's leadership. Social movements need to be Safe Spaces for young women. Issues of trust, acceptance of diversity, and privacy are essential elements to supporting young women in their analysis of human rights in order to help them move from knowledge of rights to action for rights.

Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.

SDG TARGET 5.5



Transformative Leadership Journey : Phase 4

Advocate and act together

A young woman must decide for herself the issues she feels comfortable championing. Within her social movement she can then create safe spaces for dialogue and constructive conversations. Using a human rights lens in leadership helps ask the questions that uncover what human rights are at stake; who is most at risk of harm; who has to do something about it; and what they and young women need to take action. Knowing your rights includes being aware of the responsibilities of those people in your family, community and country who must respect, protect and fulfill your human rights and the rights of others.



It is important to shape actions and advocacy around what can be expected of government, service providers, and even parents and religious leaders. Actions and advocacy that focus on improving collaboration with people responsible for upholding human rights can have the most sustainable effect. Identifying and engaging people in power and those responsible for upholding human rights is something that young women can do together and by partnering with other concerned individuals and groups. Young women can also connect with other YWCAs in their country or region to share experiences and learn from their successful advocacy efforts.



At times, you may find your rights ignored or not respected. There is not always a fair outcome when a law or a rule is broken. That is why deciding what to do when you are treated unfairly can be very difficult. You may decide that you do not always want to assert, or declare your rights, and that is fine. In some situations, it may even be unsafe to assert your rights. However, it is important to know what your rights are. When you know your rights, you can decide when, how and if you want to speak up about them.

YWCA of Canada Rights Guide (www.ywcarightsguide.ca)

Transformative Leadership Journey : Phase 5

Share your leadership

Leadership is not a finite quality, rather it grows and can be shared without leaving the original leader with less. In the YWCA, leadership is expansive and inclusive.

Sharing leadership is frequently intergenerational. Older experienced women encourage young women by providing opportunities to meet decision makers, share advice, listen to their ideas, let them make decisions, and teach life and professional skills. Young women can teach older women new skills and activism, so that they too can stand up for themselves and have a voice. Also, empowered and informed young women can share their leadership with their peers and reach out to marginalized young women who may not have had the same opportunities to experience leadership. Often inter-generational leadership sharing starts with the creation of a Safe Space where young women, in all their diversity, can meet and learn from and with one another. On an institutional level, all YWCAs are mandated to ensure that 25% of decision making positions are filled by young women under 30 years of age. This is important, as sharing leadership does not always come naturally and therefore must be a required practice and actively monitored.

The goal of this leadership journey is to ensure that all young women feel prepared to voice their opinions and take action for issues that are important in their lives, while feeling supported and safe. Leadership is a continuum that has a beginning but no set end.



Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed it's the only thing that ever has.

*Margaret Mead -
cultural anthropologist*



The Power of Young Women's Transformative Leadership

This Rise Up! Guide identifies and explores the building blocks of transformative leadership.

Firstly, shared and inter-generational leadership styles qualify leadership and identify the characteristics and values of transformational leadership.

Secondly, knowing and claiming Human Rights informs and defines the change that comes from applying transformative leadership.

Thirdly, Safe Spaces both within and outside of YWCAs are the opportunities where transformative leadership is supported and practiced. And lastly, the Sustainable Development Goals offer a framework within which transformational leadership can make sustainable change from the local to the global level.

The YWCA has a history, since 1884, of women leaders at the center of critical analysis and institutional changes in communities, countries and in global institutions. Within the YWCA, transformative leadership is a life long journey grounded in ensuring that every woman, young woman and girl knows and claims her rights. Transformative leadership derives from an understanding that we have to address the root causes and the underlying factors that create inequalities, disempowerment and young women's lack of enjoyment of their human rights.

It is a notion of leadership that encourages intentional engagement that is rooted in human rights.

Because of their age and gender, young women can face multiple forms of discrimination and violence, including physical and sexual violence, being denied an education, being forced to marry, vulnerability to HIV infection, working in the informal sector, or being denied services that help them make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health. Being young and being a woman is something to celebrate and it is through strengthening young women's confidence and leadership, and their place in social movements, that they can challenge deeply rooted gender and age discrimination and power imbalances that limit their options and opportunities.



Leadership is often presented as something done by heroic leaders, usually men, and the leadership work of women, young women and girls has historically been and continues to be overlooked. YWCAs teach and practice shared and intergenerational leadership which means ensuring that our organizational culture and ways of working adapt to the changes and challenges each new generation faces. Learning shared leadership requires moving beyond the idea of leadership as a quality of individuals and to learn to practice leadership as a collective and learning process. YWCAs aim to grow leader-full organizations, rather than to replace one set of leaders with another.

Transformative leadership involves self realization and growth, working with others (in age, religion, race, gender, etc), support from peers and elders, and opportunities to engage in decision making. It also includes understanding and practicing shared and inter-generational leadership.

Transformative leadership is a long term investment at both the personal and institutional level. The transformative leadership of young women is also a crucial contribution to the implementation and success of the SDGs. Young women able to critically assess challenges to their human rights and able to organize and advocate for social, economic and environmental change, are part of the global effort to ensure that development leaves no one behind.

Young women are diverse in so many ways, and yet they often share qualities that support their leadership, such as: confidence, awareness of her value and rights, communication skills to connect with others, bravery to champion a cause, compassion to understand others, and intelligence to question and understand a problem. Gaining these qualities and others are an important part of a transformative leadership journey.

How can we recognize shared and intergenerational leadership in our movement ?

- ✔ Creation of Safe Spaces for respectful and empowering dialogue at the local, national and global levels
- ✔ Genuine and inclusive engagement based on active and meaningful participation
- ✔ Recognition of who has power and access to opportunities and ensuring that these are shared
- ✔ Engagement in intergenerational dialogues on important issues
- ✔ Inclusive decision making proces

The SDGs and Young Women's Leadership in Action



Gender Equality

- End all forms of **discrimination** against all women and girls everywhere.
- Eliminate all forms of **violence against all women and girls** in the public and private spheres, including **trafficking** and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as **child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation**.
- Recognize and value **unpaid care and domestic work** through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of **shared responsibility within the household** and the family as nationally appropriate.
- Ensure women's **full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership** at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.
- Ensure **universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights** as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.
- Undertake reforms to give women **equal rights to economic resources**, as well as access to **ownership and control over land** and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.
- Enhance the **use of enabling technology**, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.
- Adopt and strengthen **sound policies and enforceable legislation** for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.



A Human Rights-Based Approach to Young Women's Transformative Leadership

Adopting a **Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)** to leadership, advocacy, and movement building, strengthens young women's leadership on an individual and institutional level. In order to harness the power of human rights for the benefit of young women, it is necessary to understand human rights principles and how they can be applied to everyday issues. Human rights are universal and that means that they apply equally to everyone.

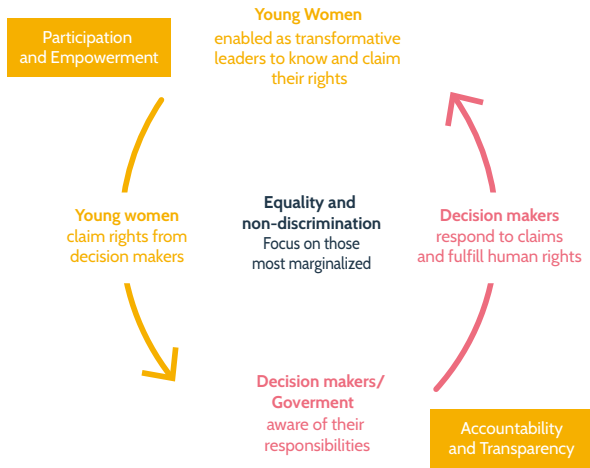
Using a HRBA is about putting into action key human rights principles

Non-Discrimination, Participation and Accountability Putting **Non-Discrimination** into practice means making sure everyone is treated fairly and equally. Transformative leaders can recognize when someone's rights are being threatened and are aware that some young women are at a higher risk of being ignored or disadvantaged. This means that government services, projects, programs and policies must serve members of society who are often left behind, marginalized, silenced and ignored. Each country or community may have different marginalized people and often, young women are among the most discriminated.

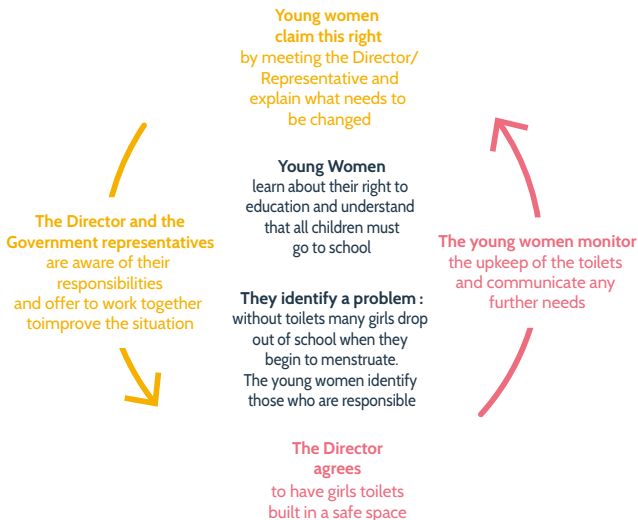
Participation allows people, especially those who are often left out of decision-making, an opportunity to be engaged in community decisions and to contribute to positive change in their lives and the lives of others. In order to ensure that participation creates human rights affirming change, it must be active and meaningful. Participation does not mean just sitting and listening, nor does it mean just helping out. For young women leaders, active participation means that they are helping shape the discussion of an issue, looking for solutions to a problem, planning how to improve a situation, taking action, and then checking if change has happened. Participation challenges power imbalances and redistributes decision making among a more diverse group.

Accountability is being held responsible for a task, job, program, or upholding a law. Accountability for human rights means that certain people (for example government representatives and service providers) must respect, protect and fulfill human rights. Putting accountability into action involves **young women** knowing and demanding their rights, and those responsible taking action to improve a situation.

Commonly marginalized young women include: young women and girls living with disabilities, LGBTQI+, out-of-school girls, ethnic minority groups, sex workers, indigenous young women, internally displaced women and children, refugees, asylum seekers, migrant workers, and many others.



Here is what putting these human rights principles into action can look like:



Safe Spaces For Young Women's Leadership











From emergency shelters for survivors of violence, to safe spaces for young women to discuss harmful traditional practices and cultural taboos, to support groups for women living with HIV, and inclusive and accessible spaces for women with disabilities, YWCAs are synonymous with Safe Spaces. But what do we mean by Safe Spaces and how can you ensure that you create Safe Spaces for women, young women and girls? The World YWCA's publication **YWCA Safe Spaces for Women and Girls: A Global Model for Change** (2013)³ offers proven strategies and case studies for creating, promoting and expanding safe spaces.

Training sessions and discussion groups offer spaces where young women can talk about taboo subjects without fear or judgment and can build their awareness of international and national commitments that affect their lives. In Safe Spaces, young women are encouraged to reflect on their own and other's experiences, share ideas and information, and plan transformative actions.

Safe Spaces can also help create opportunities for young women to engage in direct dialogue with government representatives, policy makers and other decision makers. YWCA transformative leadership trainings can build relationships between young women and local and national decision makers, which fosters accountability and can help connect local or national policies and programs to the lived experiences of young women.

Defining Elements of a YWCA Safe Space

-  **Accessible and Safe Location**
-  **Leadership and Participation**
-  **Accurate and Reliable Information**
-  **Building Trust**
-  **Holistic Approaches**
-  **Intergenerational Cooperation**
-  **Dignity and Respect**
-  **Partnership and Accountability**

³ You can request a copy of *YWCA Safe Spaces for Women and Girls: A Global Model for Change (2013)* from the World Office or find it on line <http://www.worldywca.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/World-YWCA-Safe-Spaces-Model.pdf>

Notes for Facilitators

Why Young Women-only Workshops are Important⁴

The World YWCA urges you to create young women-only Safe Spaces for young women to explore their leadership and a wide range of topics, many of which are intensely personal and some even considered taboo. A young women-only space offers an atmosphere of common concern and prioritizes young women's opinions and experiences.

Attention...

Establishing women-only groups may attract negative attention and you may confront these common **sexist attitudes** or hear these **untrue comments**:

- It is sexist because boys are excluded.
- Increasing women's skills and knowledge makes them dissatisfied and can even break up the family.
- Young women need to deal with reality and having them in a single sex groups does not force them to do so.
- Boys have problems and also need groups.
- As we already have equal opportunity and equal pay no more change is needed.

There are **very good reasons** for conducting women-only groups and well documented evidence and research to back them up:

- **Women are discriminated against in every sphere of their lives including employment, health, education and recreation.**
- **Socialization for females and males is different. The outcome of this is that women often lack self confidence, self-esteem and life management skills.**
- **Women are taught to defer to men in all situations including discussion groups and education programs. Women behave differently in single sex groups than they do in mixed groups.**
- **In mixed groups men control the conversation. In women-only groups, women have all of the time and space available, including the opportunity to take on leadership functions, which are usually denied to them in mixed groups.**

Young women-only groups can benefit from the experience of older women who can assist as topic experts or mentors. Their presence however must be in support of young women, and they should not dominate discussions or decisions.

⁴YWCA Australia, *Greater Expectations: A Source Book for Working with Girls and Young Women* (1984)

Notes for Facilitators

Creating Safe Spaces

(from the YWCA of India)

- Most people define their 'world' in different ways. It is in the private spaces of family in homes, bedrooms and kitchens. These intimate spaces should offer love, care, and support, as well as nurture the full potential of every person. Yet too often, these private spaces are where young people, and especially women and girls experience domestic violence, sexual abuse or neglect. The notion of being safe speaks to the enjoyment of universal human rights and being free from stigma and discrimination.
- The YWCA Safe Space Hub provides a place where young people, especially girls can openly share their experiences and challenges, access information, develop more awareness of their rights and build their capacity to claim these rights as empowered leaders, decision makers and change agents. Safe space also creates opportunity for young people and girls to have friends. These relationships enable them to discuss challenges and opt for solutions. Having friends to talk to is something that many of us take for granted, however, we often don't realize how important it is for our lives.
- Having a safe space for discussion also helps build awareness about issues, bust myths, discuss common concerns, allows people to talk freely without being discriminated or excluded for their identity and views and overcome issues of stigma and fear which can be addressed during the workshops once a safe space is ensured.
- The facilitator has a great deal of responsibility in ensuring such a space is created by providing an open, yet non aggressive safe environment where the participants are ensured that the information they will share will be protected and private within the circle.
- That what has been shared will be used for empowering each other without discrimination and prejudice and preventing stereotypes that block opinions of others.
- The facilitator must also ensure that each person has the right to their opinion, without the need for everyone to accept it in its entirety, and that they can share their views without being condemned or judged.
- Thus, the creation of safe spaces for young people is the least expensive intervention technique that can be used, but the most significant way to make positive contributions in the lives of everyone, especially for the advantage and empowerment of women and girls.

Notes for Facilitators

Topics for Discussion

The **Topics for Discussion** offer information on life challenges that many young women face as they develop from girls into women. Young women in the YWCA movement have identified these issues as fundamental to the wellbeing, safety, and development of young women. Each topic includes:

- background information
- relevant facts
- related human rights and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- human rights-based questions that promote taking action

This information is provided to help young women explore these challenges in a way that helps them better understand themselves and their role in their family, community, and country. These are not easy topics; some are taboo and others can be deeply frightening or painful to discuss. The main objective is to encourage young women to examine these problems from within a **Safe Space** where they can openly share with and support one another. Through a better understanding of their rights, they can eventually work towards taking **Action for Change** that can challenge discrimination and eliminate inequality. The Topics for Discussion help young women know that they have an active role to play in resolving problems and at the same time they can strengthen their leadership skills and position themselves as leaders in their communities.

As a Facilitator, you are the guide who makes sure young women's understanding of gender equality and human rights issues is deepened. Your role is to invite everyone to deepen their knowledge of the issues and challenges that young women face in their lives.

You will need to read and be comfortable talking about the selected topics. Read through the topic and make sure you find answers to any questions you may have before running a workshop. **Inviting an expert** in the topic area can be very useful, to ensure that a high quality of information is shared with young women. Remember, as a facilitator you have the responsibility to ensure that the information to be shared is evidence-based and non-discriminatory. You can add any relevant information that may be missing from the participants' analysis, and **correct any biases or stereotypes** that may arise.

The selected **topics** and the **Guiding Questions** are meant to be used together in order to keep conversations on track and to ensure that key information on a subject is shared and understood in a way that helps **young women learn about their rights, question power imbalances, and plan to take action**. Then it is up to the Young Women to decide what to do with that new knowledge. It is important to create safe space within which young women can explore the questions, share their opinions, and create their own positive **Action for Change**.

Notes for Facilitators

Techniques for Creating Dynamic Workshops⁵

(Source: It's All One Curriculum)

By using different methods of facilitating and working with groups, you can reach a wider range of participants and keep everyone engaged and learning. Here are some ideas to keep your sessions creative and dynamic:

Ice Breakers and Energizers

These short activities keep things fun and positive. They can help create a group identity and sense of belonging as well as keeping participants engaged and focused. **i.e. Be creative and make up your own energizers or ask the young women if they know of any fun games.**

Discussion Triggers

These activities introduce issues and encourage raising questions for participants to explore. They are most useful at the beginning of a session. Examples include: brainstorming, agree/disagree exercises, case studies, questions and statements to create dialogue, presenting a problem. **i.e. You can introduce the topic and then have everyone brainstorm and call out all the words that they associate with the topic (write these on a flipchart so everyone can see). Or, you could tell a true story (case study) or use illustrated stories related to the topic or have the young women share stories they know (remembering that privacy must be respected) in order to start a discussion.**

Creative Play

These activities keep participants motivated and encourage new thoughts and ideas. There are also some participants who learn best through games, art projects, role-playing, drama, poetry, and songs. **i.e. You could ask the participants to act out the human rights related to a topic, or have the young women write and present songs or poetry about positive leadership qualities.**

Group Discussions

This gives participants a chance to express themselves and to be heard and listen to others. They also have the chance to expand ideas and knowledge while strengthening their thinking skills. Some examples are informal dialogue and debates.

i.e. You can use large group discussions at the beginning and end of the workshop to ensure that everyone has a common understanding of the topic and when you need to correct any misinformation. Debates, after most of the topic information has been covered, can also be a fun way for young women to see many sides of an argument. (Remember that not everyone is comfortable sharing in a large group).

Notes for Facilitators

Participatory Reflection and Analysis

Dividing the participants into small groups helps them learn to work together, share their particular experiences and collaborate to solve problems. **i.e. Ask the young women to reflect on their own experiences of a topic and to share and compare within a small group. Small groups are also excellent for identifying what needs to change in a community and planning Action for Change.**

Personal Reflections

These activities help participants examine and learn from their own experiences and helps foster self-awareness that may encourage new attitudes and behaviours. Some examples are guided memories, values clarification and creative art projects. **i.e. After discussing a topic you can ask young women to think about their own lives, reflect on when one of their rights or someone else's was not respected. Then have them imagine how they would act differently now that they are aware of their rights. (Remember that some people may not want to share their personal reflections and will want to keep them private).**

There is no one way to generate understanding, confidence and leadership; but this Rise Up! Guide can help you explore the Topics for Discussion in a way that uncovers human rights and fosters action for positive change. An Outline for Planning a Workshop and an Outline for a Topic-Specific Workshop are included here to assist the Facilitators and young women in deepening everyone's knowledge of transformative leadership and human rights.

An Outline for Planning a Workshop

- **Visit** the community to meet with community gate-keepers (local, traditional and religious leaders, and parents) who can support and encourage young women's participation.
- **Meet** with young women participants and choose the specific topics to be discussed.

It's a good idea to choose a variety of methods to encourage wide and active participation during the workshop.

Planning a Workshop

As a Facilitator you can be creative in how you want to run a workshop. It is best (and good practice) to include young women who will be participating, in the structuring of the workshop. An inclusive and participatory process will help ensure that the topics are relevant to the young women and that the timing and structure of the workshop will fit their schedule.

- **Review** the specific Topic for Discussion and make sure you find answers to any questions you may have or that you think the young women will ask. Also, try to find local and national statistics, additional information regarding human rights and the local legal situation, and any culturally specific information that will help ground the workshop in local reality.
- **Be prepared** to provide information about accessing local services, for example for sexual and reproductive health, like HIV testing, access to contraceptives, counseling for survivors of violence, and other social

Notes for Facilitators

and legal services related to the Topic of Discussion.

- **Identify** any experts and activists (i.e. nurses, community mobilizers, local NGOs) in this topic who can support the workshop by providing an information session and/or sharing their experiences. (Experience working with young women is best).
- **Choose** Techniques for Creating Dynamic Workshops (in Notes for Facilitators) and decide which types of activities you will use to explore the topic. I.e. You could begin with brainstorming in a big group, then use role-playing to act out different human rights, and have small groups discuss the human rights-based questions leading to individual reflection to create a Plan of Action.
- **Find** a safe and accessible place to meet that is comfortable and private.
- **Collect** materials that you may need: flipchart and markers; paper and pens for everyone; and any other materials that will be specific to the activities you choose. Make photocopies of the required information (for the Human Rights and Leadership Activities) and make sure there are copies of the Workshop Evaluation for everyone.
- **Plan** for Follow-up after the workshop, to meet with the young women and discuss any Plans of Action they may have implemented or difficulties they may have faced. Refer to the « Transformative Leadership Journey's Advocate and Act Together » to help young women see their actions. You can also collect inspiring stories of leadership to share with others and the wider YWCA movement.

Outline for a Topic-specific Workshop

Each of the 13 Topics for Discussion offers information that can be used to expand young women's knowledge and confidence in support of their transformative leadership journey. As a Facilitator, your role is to promote the sharing of information and ideas, with the goal of young women knowing and understanding their rights in their reality. When creating a workshop, refer to the **Techniques for Creating Dynamic Workshops** (*Notes to Facilitators*) so that you can choose and create unique sessions that are based on the different parts of the Topic of Discussion. Also, keep the stages of the Transformative Leadership Journey in mind as you can refer to it for guidance.

You can use small group discussions, drama, story telling, games, or other methods to help participants reach a greater level of understanding. Then it is up to the young women to decide what to do with that new knowledge. It is important to allow the participants to explore their questions, share their opinions, and create their own positive Action for Change.

Notes for Facilitators

How you can create a Topic of Discussion workshop

Topic of Discussion:

Length of Workshop: This example includes 3 Sessions of approximately 4 hours each (this will vary depending on your planning and activity choices).

1st Session

Welcome

Take a moment to greet everyone and welcome them to the Transformative Leadership Workshop. Share any important practical information like the location of the toilets, when the group will break for snacks or lunch, and when you plan to finish for the day. Ask if there are any questions before you start.

Set Group Rules

Refer to the **Warm Up, Ice Breakers and Energizers in the Guide** to set the **Ground Rules** that will help ensure that all young women present will find it a Safe Space where they feel comfortable sharing and learning. Post the RULES where everyone can see them. The Group Rules should be reviewed at the start of every day.

Ice Breaker Activity

This will help everyone relax and get to know one another.

Introduce the Topic

Share some of the general information about the topic and how it relates to young women's lives and leadership. This is a good time to share some national or local facts or statistics if you have them. You may choose to introduce the topic through telling a story.

Did you Know section of the Topic of Discussion to start a group discussion. Use the information in the Topic for Discussion to guide you.

2nd Session

Explore the Topic

Use the Topic for Discussion as a guide. To help everyone better understand the Topic, you can prompt the young women to ask questions and share their ideas by asking **Why does this Happen** in their community from the Topic of Discussion. As a Facilitator choose some **Discussion Triggers** like Questions and Answers, Brainstorming in a big group, or other techniques. Sometimes it can help to have the young women discuss the issue in small groups and then come back together to share and brainstorm all their ideas. Record ideas on a flipchart so that everyone can see and you have a record of the ideas.

Expert Information Session (optional)

If possible, have a local expert share their experiences and information in a way that grounds the topic locally and welcomes questions from the young women.

Take a short break.

Introduce the related **Human Rights and SDGs** from the Topic for Discussion by using the Guide's **The SDGs and Young Women's Leadership in Action** and **A Human Rights-Based Approach to Young Women's Leadership** as background information to inform your activity. After a group discussion

Notes for Facilitators

then you can use **Creative Play** to help explore human rights and the SDGs through role playing or drama. To discuss **What are Her Rights** and the **SDGs**, you could have small groups act out what those rights and goals should look like in their communities.

3rd Session

To further understanding of a **Human Rights-Based Approach** to the Topic for Discussion, refer to the Transformative Leadership Journey **Knowing Your Rights in Your Reality** and use those human rights-related questions to guide a group discussion. This can support a discussion of the root causes of a problem and can help identify who can play a role in solving the problem and what needs to be done. If the group is large, divide the young women into smaller groups. They can think about their answers and then share their ideas with the larger group. You can also use Creative Play to act out the positive results of knowing one's rights and taking positive action for change.

Take a short break between activities. Encourage self reflection and create Plans of Action. Use an example to support the young women to create their own Plan of Action that states how they can make a difference to the Topic of Discussion. You will need to refer to Session 2's discussion that identified who is responsible and what needs to be done. Also, use the Transformative Leadership Journey's **Strengthen Your Leadership within a Social Movement and Advocate and Act Together** to help the young women identify who will support them in their actions, how they can support one another, and how they can position

themselves within a social movement to ensure that they act within safe spaces. This can also be done using Creative Play as the young women can imagine or «dream» what they would like to accomplish and then they can draw or write their ideas.

Closing Questions and Answers

Make sure to have time at the end of the workshop to answer any questions. Also remind the young women about the importance of keeping all discussions private in order to build a Safe Space for everyone.

Closing Evaluation

It is important to give the young women an opportunity to let you know how they felt about the workshop. Hand out the **Participant Evaluation Forms** to everyone and collect the filled forms. Thank all the young women and co-facilitators for their participation.

Remember... Take time after each workshop to debrief with your cofacilitators by reviewing evaluations, sharing experiences, discussing with the local expert, and analyzing what worked well and what can be improved.

Notes for Facilitators

Topics for Discussion

For each Topic for Discussions, refer back to the Young Women's Transformative Leadership Journey, which includes discussions and learning about an issue and its related human rights.

Through the Journey, work towards identifying partners and planning actions, which include people in positions of power and decision making, who have the responsibility to uphold the rights of young women.

- 1 Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM)
- 2 Early and Unintended Pregnancy
- 3 HIV and AIDS
- 4 Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)
- 5 Peace, Security and Gender Equality
- 6 Climate Justice and Gender Equality
- 7 Sex Trafficking
- 8 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG or Gender-Based Violence)
- 9 Economic Justice and Gender Equality
- 10 Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation (LGBTQI+)
- 11 Bullying and Cyberbullying
- 12 Menstruation
- 13 Faith, Feminism and Human Rights

1 Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM)

What is it and what can be done to stop it?

Millions of girls are forced into marriages before the age of 18 without giving their consent or having the choice to say 'No'. The negative effects of early marriage are felt throughout a girl's and woman's life. When a girl is forced to marry, her human rights are violated.

Child marriage is any formal or informal union where one or both of the individuals are under 18 years of age. Forced marriage occurs when one or both of the individuals have not agreed or consented to the marriage.

Is CEFM a problem in your community or in your country?

Where can you find local information about this harmful practice? National UN offices, international and local NGOs, Ministry for Children, etc.

What change do I want to see?

Can I be a leader on this topic?

Can I create or join a social movement?



Did you know

When a girl is married before she is 18 years old, she is more likely to:

- Drop out of school or be forced to leave school.
- Suffer sexual, physical, emotional, and/or financial violence in the home from the husband or other family members.
- Live away from her community, sometimes in a different community, city, province or region, which could lead to isolation, alienation, and depression.
- Have limited employment opportunities and less control over household money.
- Become pregnant at a young age, which puts her at greater risk of dying or becoming disabled due to dangerous pregnancy and birth complications (for example a high risk of fistula).
- Have a higher number of children over her lifetime, which puts her health and life at risk due to multiple pregnancies.
- Have less access to sexual and reproductive health information and services.
- Be more vulnerable to HIV transmission.

Who is most vulnerable to CEFM? The majority of girls married before 18 are poor, under-educated (they may have never gone to school; or they dropped out; or were forced to leave school), and live in rural areas. But that doesn't mean that girls in cities or from homes that have more resources are free from this threat. Also, girls in armed conflict, fragile countries, or in areas affected by a natural disaster or emergency are more vulnerable, as are girls living in communities where traditional customs relate virginity with 'family honor'.

It is important to investigate this problem in your community and country in order to

understand who is most vulnerable to child marriage (look at location, religion, age, in and out of school girls). Reaching out to girls who are at risk of early marriage gives you better information about the problem and offers the girls an opportunity to challenge this harmful practice. Young Women and girls can play a critical role in eliminating CEFM.

Why does it happen? There are many factors that contribute to a girl being a victim of child, early and forced marriage:

- This harmful practice is deeply rooted in social attitudes that position women and girls as less important, or less deserving of fair and equal treatment, compared to boys and men. This gender discrimination combines with age discrimination so that girls are particularly vulnerable to such abuse.
- Some parents think that marrying their daughter will keep her safe and ensure she does not become sexually active outside of marriage. This is a way to control a girl's sexuality. However, parents need to know that an early marriage can mean sexual violence and abuse that a girl has no control over.
- Some parents hope that the husband's family will provide better economic opportunities such as paying the girl's school fees and living in less poverty, or a chance to live in the city for those who come from rural areas.
- Some parents hope that marrying the girl will keep her in the home which they believe will keep her safe from the dangers

Child marriage violates girls' rights to health, education and opportunity. It exposes girls to violence throughout their lives, and traps them in a cycle of poverty

<http://www.girlsnotbrides.org/about-child-marriage>

of the men in their community and the outside world.

- In many communities the traditional role for girls and women to adopt is that of wife and mother. Girls are not supported to believe that they can achieve other life goals, like finding a job or starting a business. Once a girl is married the possibility of her getting a job or starting a business is less likely.
- Child marriages are more common in times of conflict, crises, or during a natural disaster. Insecurity makes parents worried about the safety of their daughters and they see marriage as a solution (even though it can place girls in dangerous and violent situations).
- When a family is poor they may choose to lessen their economic burden by marrying off their daughter to have one less mouth to feed. Also, when a bride price is paid the family may see this as an incentive. Often other economic priorities, for example her brother's education, will take precedence over a girl's welfare.
- Giving a child in marriage is also a way that some families resolve arguments, repay a debt, or create an alliance. The girl is treated as an object or commodity to be traded.

What are your rights? Here are some human rights that clearly explain that CEFM is wrong and against the rights of all girls and against international law:

- **The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** says that governments must, "take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children". So **what does that mean?** Early marriage puts the life of girls at risk and it is considered a harmful

practice that is carried out in the name of culture or tradition. Cultural and traditional practices that threaten a child's health and wellbeing must be stopped. Every child's Right to Health must be protected.

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) says, "no marriage shall be entered into without the free and full consent of the intending spouses". **What does that mean?** Firstly, everyone has the right to choose if, when and with whom they will marry. Secondly, only people over the age of 18 are legally able to give consent (agree to do something), so a girl must be at least 18 years old in order to agree to marry.
- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) states that women should have the same right as men to "freely choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent", and that the "betrothal and marriage of a child shall have no legal effect".
- In 2014 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution that says all States must "enact, enforce, and uphold laws and policies aimed at preventing and ending child, early, and forced marriage and protecting those at risk, and to ensure that marriage is entered into only with the informed, free and full consent of the intending spouses."⁵ **What does that mean?** The government (police, judges, health professionals, etc.) must act to put an end to child marriage by making sure laws are followed, girls are protected, and communities are informed of the dangers of early marriage.

⁵ UN General Assembly Resolution on Child Early and Forced Marriage, January 2015.
<http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/54c7a1254.pdf>



Sustainable Development Goals

SDGs 5 = Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Target 5.2 = Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. What does that mean? Your government has the responsibility to prevent child marriage and FGM (i.e. through information campaigns), protect girls from child marriage when it happens (i.e. police must free a girl from an illegal marriage and make sure she is safe from repercussions), and the police and courts must legally respond so that the perpetrator is punished.

Who can play a role in ending child, early and forced marriage?

- **Young women and Girls**, especially married girls, who are offered Safe Spaces to learn about their rights and gain self-confidence can be supported to seek support and/or protection to avoid, delay, or reverse forced marriage.
- **Police** have the duty to investigate cases of child marriage and the Courts must act to protect the rights of girls.
- **Local government representatives** must ensure that there are programs and financing to raise awareness about CEFM, eliminate CEFM, and protect the rights of girls.
- **Parents** must be educated on this issue and supported to respect the rights of their daughters and to act in their best interest (i.e. keeping girls in school).
- **Teachers** can help identify girls who are vulnerable to child marriage. They can also notify authorities when a girl leaves school and doesn't return.
- **Health care workers** can be trained to identify cases of child marriage and can counsel girls who are married and seeking reproductive health care.
- **Community leaders** can educate the local

population, identify vulnerable families, and act to delay or prevent child marriages and report the cases to the police and other concerned authorities.

- **Religious leaders** can educate the population, refuse to recognize child marriages and report the cases to the police and other concerned authorities.
- **Boys and men** can speak out against child marriage, denounce their peers for such marriages, and ensure that their own marriages are unions between equal partners.
- **Are there others?...**

Here are some further questions to guide an Action Plan:

What can be done in your community?

Who can you reach out to for more information and support?

How can you speak out and raise awareness in your community?

Is there someone or an organization that you can partner with to help end CEFM?

How can you make sure that people in positions of power, who have a responsibility to end CEFM, act and uphold the human rights of girls?

2 Early and Unintended Pregnancy

Why does it happen and what can be done to avoid unintended pregnancies ?

Girls can get pregnant and if they do not have family and community support and appropriate health care, they are vulnerable to disability and even death. Their health and lives are threatened by pregnancy and complications during birth. Pregnancy puts a girl's future wellbeing, earnings and chance to get a good job at risk. Early pregnancy has a high cost for her, her family and her community.

Is early and unintended pregnancy a problem in your community or in your country ?

Where can you find local information about this harmful practice ? Local health clinics, International and local NGOs, Ministry of Health, UN agencies like UNFPA and WHO.

What change do I want to see ?

Can I be a leader on this topic ?

Can I create or join a social movement ?



Did you know

that when a girl becomes pregnant before the age of 19, she is more likely to:

- Die from birth complications or the effects of unsafe abortions.
- Suffer health consequences because of obstructed labour, and a possible disability like fistula.
- Drop out of school or be forced to leave school, which makes it difficult to find a good job.
- Be more vulnerable to intimate partner violence
- Be at higher risk of suicide.
- Have a higher number of children over her lifetime, which puts her health and life at risk.

Who is most vulnerable to early pregnancies? Unintended pregnancies are more common among girls who are under-educated, poor and live in rural areas where access to sexual and reproductive information and contraceptives is lower. Girls who have been forced into marriage have a higher rate of early pregnancy as they have little ability to negotiate contraceptive use or when and if they will have sexual activity. Girls who are survivors of sexual violence may end up pregnant. Also, adolescents who decide to become sexually active but do not know about contraceptives or do not have access to contraceptives, are at risk of becoming pregnant.

It is important to investigate the problem of early pregnancies in the local and national context in order to understand who is most vulnerable to unintended pregnancies and how they can be supported to avoid pregnancy and deal with the consequences of becoming a mother while still a child.

Why does it happen? There are many

factors that contribute to an adolescent girl becoming pregnant against her will, before she wants to, and before she is physically ready:

- The practice of child, early, and forced marriage puts adolescent girls at high risk of pregnancy. Additionally there is an increased risk of violence and forced sex with early marriage, which results in higher rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV.
- Rape and high levels of coerced sex leave girls with no control over sexual activity and no way to avoid pregnancy.
- Social norms or ideas that narrow girls' life role to wife and mother and focus on fertility (that only by having babies does a girl become a woman), can create pressure to become pregnant and marry early.
- Other social norms that accept violence and male domination normalize sexual violence and support expectations of male fertility (that a man is considered a man by impregnating girls or women).
- Very low levels of knowledge about sex and family planning (lack of available information on sexual and reproductive health) place girls at a high risk of pregnancy, and keep them from protecting themselves from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.
- Many governments have laws which restrict access to sexual and reproductive health care so that adolescents cannot access it without their parents, guardian's or spouse's authorization (i.e. a married pregnant girl could not visit the doctor without her husband's permission)

What are your rights? Here are some human rights laws and recommendations that can protect young women and girls from unintended and early pregnancy:

- The **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** recognizes the right to the highest attainable standard of health and that adolescents have “evolving capacities” regarding their sexual and reproductive health, as they grow older. **So what does that mean?** As girls grow older and mature, they can and should make decisions for themselves, but they need information in order to make informed choices. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends removing all barriers to information and services about sexual and reproductive health, so that adolescents can understand their sexuality and protect themselves from pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.
- The **CRC** and other human rights bodies request that States remove barriers, which stop adolescents from receiving sexual and reproductive information and services, like third party and parental consent. **What does that mean?** A girl has the right to ask for family planning information, contraceptive advice, HIV testing, or other sexual and reproductive health services without the permission of her parents, guardians, or husband. She has the right to make her own decisions about her body.
- The **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)** says that no marriage shall be entered into without the free and full consent of the intending spouses. **What does that mean?** Firstly, everyone has the right to choose if, when and with whom they will marry and both people must be 18 years of age or older. Ending forced and early marriage can significantly reduce early and unintended pregnancy.

The **Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** emphasizes the importance of health information for adolescents that

includes, discussions on gender equality, gender-based violence, and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV. **What does that mean?** Talking about early pregnancy is not just about ensuring information and access to contraceptives, but it is often a result of sexual coercion, rape, and other forms of violence and pressure that girls and young women face. Gender discrimination and genderbased violence are widespread and disempower girls and young women.



Sustainable Development Goals

SDGs 5 = Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Target 5.2 = Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Target 5.6 = Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences. **What does that mean?** Your government has the responsibility to provide accessible sexual and reproductive information and a full range of contraceptives to prevent unintended pregnancies. Your government must also prevent child marriage and FGM (i.e. through information campaigns), protect girls from child marriage when it happens (i.e. police must free a girl from an illegal marriage and make sure she is safe from repercussions), and the police must legally respond so that the perpetrator is punished.

Who can play a role to ensuring that no girl suffers an early unintended pregnancy?

- **Girls** who are offered Safe Spaces to learn about their sexual and reproductive health and rights, have a better chance of avoiding unwanted pregnancies and keeping themselves sexually healthy and safe. Supporting girls' self-confidence and autonomy, and expanding personal networks can provide important information and support for autonomous decision-making.
- **Health care workers** must understand and fulfill their obligation to provide evidence-based information that includes all sexual and reproductive information and services that adolescents need to make informed decisions about their bodies and relationships, and to keep themselves healthy and safe from infections and unintended pregnancies.
- **Police** have the duty to investigate cases of violence and sexual violence against girls and also to investigate and ensure prosecution of child marriage.
- **Local government representatives** must ensure that there are programs and financing which support youth friendly health services, with special attention to girls' sexual and reproductive health needs in the context of early marriage and early pregnancy.
- **Parents** have an obligation to provide their children with the information that will help

them grow and keep them safe throughout their development, which includes sexual and reproductive information. If they are not able to do so, then at least they should not place any barriers to girls seeking sexual and reproductive health information and services.

- **Teachers**, where it is part of the curriculum, must provide adolescents with comprehensive (including all the necessary information) sexuality education to ensure that both girls and boys understand their bodies, the changes that puberty brings, and the knowledge of how to prevent pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV. This information should also include discussions on gender equality and non-discrimination.
- **Religious and community leaders** can speak out against sexual violence and rape. They can encourage parents to educate their children and ensure that young people have access to the sexual and reproductive information and services that will keep them safe. They can also refuse to recognize child marriage.
- **Boys and men** can speak out against violence that is often a cause of early pregnancies. They can denounce their peers for early marriages and ensure their own marriages are unions between equal adults. They can take responsibility for their sexual decisions and practice safe sex.
- **Are there others?.....**

Here are some further questions to guide an Action Plan:

What can be done in your community?

Who can you reach out to for more information and support?

How can you speak out and raise awareness in your community?

Is there someone or an organization that you

can partner with to help support girls to avoid unintended pregnancies?

How can you make sure that people in positions of power, who have a responsibility to prevent early pregnancies, act and uphold the human rights of girls?

3 How HIV Impacts the Lives of Young Women and Girls :

How can we stop the spread of HIV and stand up to discrimination and stigma ?

Thinking and talking about HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) is an important part of being healthy. HIV is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) and is primarily transmitted through unprotected sex (sex without a condom) or through blood (drug use through shared needles). HIV develops into the disease AIDS. There are medications that help HIV+ people live long and productive lives, but unfortunately there is no cure for AIDS. Whether you are HIV+ or not, the risk of HIV transmission affects sexual and reproductive health, decisions, and practices.

Is HIV a problem in your community or in your country? Where can you find local information about HIV, AIDS, testing, medication, and counseling?

Ministry of Health and local health clinics and hospitals, UNAIDS, International and local NGOs...

What change do I want to see?

Can I be a leader on this topic?

Can I create or join a social movement?



Did you know

- Girls and young women have a higher risk of HIV infection because of **gender-based violence** and other gender discriminatory acts and attitudes (i.e. child, early and forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)) that are harmful to their physical and emotional wellbeing and also keep them from seeking health services and testing.
- Sexual coercion (being pressured to have sex), abuse, exploitation, rape and trafficking causes girls to be more exposed to HIV and also results in many other health problems like depression, drug and alcohol abuse, and maternal mortality and suicide.
- Fear of stigma and discrimination is a major obstacle for seeking and receiving testing and health care. Some HIV+ girls and women fear violence or abandonment from family and partners, or that a lack of privacy with test results that will expose them to shame and ostracization in their community. Discrimination and stigma can also result in homelessness, loss a of job, or forced sterilization.
- Girls and young women take on a higher burden of care for family members who are HIV+ or sick with AIDS, often having to drop out of school in order to care for others.

Who is most vulnerable to HIV? Young women and girls are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection because of their lower social status due to gender inequality and the related high rates of violence and sexual violence that they suffer. Also girls and women from marginalized groups including indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees and displaced persons are more vulnerable to contracting HIV. Additionally sex workers and people who use injectable drugs, and transgender people have higher rates of infection. It is important to note that some countries or regions have higher HIV

rates (Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of transmission) but although that is the case, anyone who is sexually active and not practicing safe sex, is vulnerable to HIV transmission.

It is important to investigate HIV in the local and national context in order to understand who is most vulnerable to infection, stigma and discrimination, and how they can be involved in stopping the spread of HIV and ensuring quality care for all.

What are your rights? Here are some of the human rights found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that are related to living with HIV:

- The Right to Health and Life includes HIV prevention, treatment, care and support that is both available and accessible (i.e. provided for free or at low cost). The State is also responsible for preventing, treating, and controlling epidemic diseases.
- The Right to Privacy means that a person must give their consent to be tested and that any information related to their HIV status must be kept confidential.
- The Right to enjoy the benefits of scientific advances relates to access to medicines, specifically anti-retroviral drugs, which are essential for the wellbeing and healthy life of someone living with HIV.
- The Right to decide if, when and how many children to have is relevant to HIV+ women who are pregnant or may wish to become pregnant. This right protects women from forced sterilization and forced abortion.
- The Right to non-discrimination is of particular importance given the all too common mistreatment and discrimination of HIV+ people by health workers and other service providers, community members, work colleagues, and even family members.

Sustainable Development Goals



SDGs 3 = Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Target 3.3 = By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases.

SDGs 5 = Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Target 5.2 = Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Target 5.6 = Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development [ICPD] and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences. **What does that mean?** Your government has the responsibility to provide a full range of services that include preventing HIV (i.e. education, information and access to condoms), caring for HIV+ people (i.e. free and private testing, providing anti-retroviral medication) and ensuring that stigma and discrimination are not tolerated.

Who can play a role in preventing HIV transmission and putting an end to stigma and discrimination?



Who can play a role in preventing HIV transmission and putting an end to stigma and discrimination?

- **Young women and Girls**, who are HIV+ and also who do not have HIV, need Safe Spaces where they can learn about HIV, available care, and their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Such a space can support HIV+ girls and women of all ages to seek testing and treatment and strengthen their ability to challenge unfair and discriminatory attitudes and actions.
- **Health care workers'** first responsibility is to provide the full array of sexual and reproductive information and services to women, young women and girls in an unbiased manner, which protects their dignity and privacy. They must protect the privacy of all patients. They can also refer HIV+ people for counseling and social support.
- **Local government representatives** must ensure that there are programs and financing to provide holistic HIV care, which incorporates information campaigns for prevention, testing that reaches young women and girls, youth friendly counseling, access to medicines, and extended community support systems to protect the rights of women and girls.
- **The State** must ensure that there are no laws which criminalize or discriminate against people living with HIV, nor laws which criminalize high risk behaviors (i.e. sex work and same sex relations). Similarly any laws that require parental or spousal consent inhibit testing and treatment. Any such laws are a barrier to testing and HIV prevention and negatively affect the right to equality and non-discrimination. Testing must be made available to all.
- **Police** must not criminalize behavior based on HIV status. They also must respond to violence and threats of violence experienced by HIV+ people. Relatedly, harmful practices such as Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM), which area against the law, must be investigated.
- **Teachers** must provide sexual and reproductive health information that includes HIV prevention, treatment and care, and that is inclusive and evidence based.
- **Community and Religious leaders** can promote the dissemination of evidencebased sexual and reproductive information related to HIV to the local population and encourage social acceptance and care for those who are HIV+.
- **Boys and men** can assume the role of caregiver when their wives or family members are sick. They can also support their partners to be tested and to live positively with HIV. They can practice safe sex.
- **Are there others?...**

Here are some further questions to guide an Action Plan:

What can be done in your community?

particularly young women and girls?

Who can you reach out to for more information and support?

How can you make sure that people in positions of power, who have a responsibility to ensure HIV prevention, testing, treatment and care, focus on the particular concerns and realities of young women and girls?

Is there someone or an organization that you can partner with to support HIV+ women,

4 Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights :

What are they and how can I protect and exercise my rights ?

Your sexual and reproductive health is part of your overall health and wellbeing. The more information and knowledge you have about how your body grows and functions, the more able you are of maintaining your sexual and reproductive health. When you can decide when and with whom to have sex; if, when, and how often to have children; and how to protect yourself from unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections such as HIV, then you are exercising your sexual and reproductive rights.

Everyone has different SRHR needs. Young women have different needs from young men and face different obstacles in accessing their rights. Similarly, young people from rural communities, diverse religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and with different levels of education, have different levels of knowledge, needs, capacities and resources in terms of accessing their sexual and reproductive rights. It's important to also note that young women who are pregnant or mothers, young people who live with HIV, or who are sexually active or have experienced sexual and gender-based violence will have different needs. However, regardless of their background, all young people deserve to have their sexual and reproductive health rights realized!

A key aspect of sexual and reproductive health for young women is having access to health services that cater to the needs and realities of young women. Having somewhere to go for information on contraceptive methods, having access to HIV testing that is confidential, and seeking health care for pre and post-natal services without the fear of discrimination and stigma, are all essential elements of making sexual and reproductive rights a reality.

But information is not enough. Often, having sex is not by choice. Sexual abuse in the home or outside (in schools, churches, work places, prisons, refugee camps) forces young women and girls into having sex against their will and before they are ready. Unfortunately, young

women and girls are especially vulnerable to abuses such as child marriage, gender-based violence, and rape. Other factors that are connected to gender discrimination and that put young women's health at greater risk are: the practice of female genital mutilation; transactional sex in exchange for favours; sex trafficking; violence linked to pregnancy; and the lack of ability to negotiate condoms.

What change do I want to see ?

Can I be a leader on this topic ?

Can I create or join a social movement ?

Everyone has the right to understand and make their own decisions to keep their bodies healthy, their relationships pleasurable, and their lives protected. It is everyone's right as a human being to be treated with dignity and respect. Sexual and reproductive health and rights are a fundamental part of life and without them no young woman can enjoy the present or define her future.

Did you know

That anyone, especially women and girls, can have their health needs ignored.
Young women and girls at greater risk of human rights violations:

- Have a low level of education
- Live in a low income family
- Live with a disability
- Live in situations of conflict, natural disasters or displacement
- Live with HIV/AIDS
- Are migrants or refugees
- Do not conform to gender norms (are lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex or questioning).

In order to better understand how sexuality and sex is accepted or not in your community, you can ask these questions:

- Where can young women find information about sex and reproduction? Can a young woman (married or not married) go to a health clinic and ask for contraception of HIV testing without their parents' or husband's permission?
- How are same-sex couples treated in your community?
- How are people living with a disability treated, especially regarding their sexual desires and rights?
- How are people living with HIV or AIDS treated?
- When a woman or girl is raped, how is she treated by her family, community, or police?

It is important to investigate sexual and reproductive health and rights in your local and national context in order to understand who is most vulnerable to violations and how they can be active in defending and exercising their rights.

Adolescents and young girls who get pregnant tend to enter into the vicious cycle of poverty because early motherhood often compromises their educational attainment, economic potential and their social well-being.

www.astra.org.pl/pdf/publications/Webready_Factsheet.pdf

- **What are your rights?** Here are some sexual and reproductive rights from the Universal Declaration for Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Conference on Population and Development's (ICPD) Programme of Action that are key to young women's wellbeing:
- To have the highest attainable standard of sexual and reproductive health and to have access to sexual and reproductive health services **What does that mean?** You have the right to services, medicines and information that help you make informed decisions regarding your sexual and reproductive health.
- To seek, receive and impart information related to sexuality and sexuality education. **What does that mean?** You may look for information, get information and share information about sex and reproduction.
- To have bodily integrity. **What does that mean?** You can choose what you do with your body and no one has the right to touch or treat your body without your permission.
- To choose a partner and to be sexually active or not.
- To have consensual sexual relations and enter into marriage with free and full consent. **What does that mean?** You can choose who you marry and with whom you have sex. Both of you must be in agreement to do so and both must give their consent.
- To decide whether or not, and when, to have children (the number and spacing of children).
- To pursue a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life.

What is Consent? This is a very important concept because it relates closely to sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing. Consent means that a person has given permission or agreed to do something. Consent to sexual relations means that a person has agreed to have sex. A consensual marriage means that both people have agreed to marry. Consent cannot be forced or coerced, nor can it be given by someone who is younger than 18. Therefore, child marriage is not legal because consent cannot be given by an underage girl.

Sustainable Development Goals



SDGs 5 = Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Target 5.6 refers directly to international agreements that identify gender equality, non-discrimination and sexual and reproductive health and rights as essential to human development. **“Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences”.**

What does this mean? Your government, at the local and national level, must provide accessible, affordable, and acceptable SRHR services to all.

Who can play a role in ensuring that young women and girls can enjoy their sexual and reproductive rights?

- **Girls and Young Women** who are given Safe Spaces to learn and ask questions about their bodies and the choices they can make about their sexual and reproductive health and rights, can gain the self-confidence and knowledge that helps them stay healthy, happy and safe.
- **Families** can ensure that girls and young women are not forced into relationships/marriage; are supported to go to school beyond primary; are treated with dignity and equality within the home; and provided with support to seek sexual and reproductive information and services.
- **Health care workers** must provide the full range of contraception and other sexual and reproductive health treatments and services, such as HIV testing, within a youth-friendly environment that recognizes the unique needs of young women and girls. Health workers can also be trained to identify cases of domestic and other gender-based violence and can counsel young women and girls to ensure that they are supported with healthcare and other services.
- **Police and the Courts** have the duty to stop gender-based violence, such as child marriage or female genital mutilation, or any other form of discrimination. Police must investigate cases, ensure protection, and work with other law enforcement to make sure justice is served.
- **Local government representatives** must ensure that there are programs and financing to provide youth-friendly health services, especially sensitive to the sexual and reproductive health and needs of young women and girls.
- **Teachers** can commit to teach comprehensive sexuality education that ensures that all students have the information to make informed sexual and reproductive decisions. They can also identify girls who are vulnerable to violence and suspected cases of child marriage.
- **Religious and community leaders** can educate the local population on the importance of sexual and reproductive health. They can also speak out against any form of violence against women and girls, in particular child marriage and female genital mutilation. They can challenge religious teachings that undermine the equality of women and men.
- **Boys and men** can talk openly with their partners about safe sex and support their partners to seek information and services at health centers. They can also speak out against domestic and other violence, and the negative effects it has on young women's health.
- **Are there others?.....**

Here are some further questions to guide an Action Plan:

What can be done in your community to improve access to sexual and reproductive information and services?

Is there someone or an organization that you can partner with to help youngwomen and girls access the sexual and reproductive information they want?

Who can you reach out to for more information and support?

How can you make sure that people in positions of power, who have a responsibility to ensure that women, young women and girls have access to sexual and reproductive information and services, act and uphold the human rights of young women and girls?

5 Peace, Security and Gender Equality

How can we ensure safe, peaceful and equitable communities and countries ?

YWCA's support and help implement the **United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325**, which is about women, peace, and security. It has four main areas: prevention, participation, protection, and peace building and recovery. YWCAs around the world build young women's leadership, as part of the solution for peace, justice, equality and the respect of human rights. Young women and girls need safe spaces where they can learn about how to engage in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and help build a just and lasting peace. It is important that women, young women and girls in conflict and post-conflict countries, participate and have their voices heard in peace negotiations and post-conflict rebuilding and restitution. Young women's meaningful and active participation is key to lasting peace. Ending impunity and prosecuting those responsible for war crimes, so that women receive justice and future crimes are deterred, is as important as looking for means of reconciliation, reparations and a communal search for truth to build a sustainable peace. A truly sustainable peace will only be achieved where gender equality and justice prevail.

What change do I want to see?

Can I be a leader on this topic?

Can I create or join a social movement?



Who is most vulnerable in times of conflict and war?

- Women and children, especially young women and girls, elderly women, women living with disabilities.
- Women from linguistic, ethnic, religious minorities.

It is important to investigate conflicts in the local and national context in order to understand who is most vulnerable to human rights violations, and how they can be involved in sustaining peace and preventing conflict. You can ask some of these questions:

- What is the current level of participation of young women in sustaining peace and sustainable development efforts at the local,

national and regional levels?

- What challenges do young women face and how can their participation in these activities be better appreciated and enhanced?
- How can young women's participation help achieve sustainable peace and development at the local, national and regional levels?
- What further action is required from the United Nations, governments and other intergovernmental organizations and NGOs to grow the capacity of young women to serve as active agents of sustaining peace and sustainable development?

Women's participation and inclusion makes humanitarian assistance more effective, strengthens the protection efforts of our peacekeepers, contributes to the conclusion of peace talks and the achievement of sustainable peace, accelerates economic recovery, and helps counter violent extremism.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka - Executive Director UNWomen

What are your rights? Here are some international guiding principles and human rights that are related to creating and maintaining peace and security:

- **The UN Security Council's Resolution 1325** on women, peace and security, calls for women to participate in peace building, be better protected from human rights violations, and have access to justice and services to eliminate discrimination.⁶
- **The Geneva Convention and the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949)** states that women shall be protected against humiliating and degrading treatment, rape, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault.
- **Beijing Platform for Action** calls for integrating a gender perspective for resolving conflicts through an increase in the participation of women in conflict resolution, and in the protection of women living in

situations of armed conflict.

- There are 5 related **UN Security Council Resolutions, 1820 (2009), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), and 2282 (2016)** all of which further strengthen the argument for meaningful participation of women in peace building and a recognition of the violence women, young women, and girls experience in conflict. Some of the emphasised issues are: the recognition, prevention and punishment of sexual violence; women's active roles as leaders in peacemaking and conflict prevention; the need to end women's exclusion from peace-building and the lack of attention to women's needs in post-conflict recovery; and women's increased role in post-conflict reconstruction including judicial and security reforms.

⁶ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security>



Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 17 = Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. This goal includes targets on violence against children, sexual violence, and trafficking.

This goal also identifies how all actors “can advance sustainable development, human rights and collective peace and security in today’s complex and interconnected world... [recognizing that] sustainable peace could only be achieved when all segments of society are empowered and included”⁷

What does this mean? Your government, at the local and national level, must provide accessible, affordable, and acceptable SRHR services to all.

Who can play a role in ensuring the participation of women, young women and girls in preventing conflict and creating and maintaining peace?

- **Refugee, displaced and migrant women, young women and girls** can be supported to be involved so that they participate in and influence decisionmaking to prevent and resolve conflicts and to contribute to sustainable peace.
- **Governments** have the responsibility of ensuring equal participation of women in efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and the maintenance and promotion of peace.
- **International NGOs** in peace and reconstruction can ensure that they have an equal number of female participants in all aspects of their programming, from early assessments and problem identification to engaging in dialogue and implementing projects.
- **Local and religious leaders** can include women, young women and girls in any community-led discussions and decisionmaking regarding peace building, reconciliation, and reconstruction.
- **Are there others?...**

Here are some further questions to guide an Action Plan:

What are the negative effects of conflict in your community and who is most affected?

What can be done in your community to reduce or stop conflict?

Who can you reach out to for more information and support?

Is there someone or an organization that you can partner with to respond to peace building and conflict reduction?

How can you make sure that people in positions of power, who have a responsibility to ensure peace and avoid conflict, focus on the particular concerns and realities of young women and girls?

⁷ Website of the General Assembly of the UN : https://www.un.org/pga/71/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/2016/12/Sustainable-Peace-and-2030-Agenda_Concept-note_FINAL.pdf

6 Climate Justice and Gender Equality

What is it, what's happening and how can we respond to climate change ?

Climate change is understood as a significant difference in the usual weather patterns over an extended period of time. This can be felt on a local level (for example more or less rain leading to floods or drought) and at the global level (rising global temperatures or rising sea level). Changes in weather patterns generate unpredictable weather and environmental repercussions, which are often destructive and dangerous, especially for women, young women and girls. Gender inequality magnifies the consequences of climate change in both rich and poor countries. As women make up the majority of poor people, they have fewer resources to respond to the negative effects of climate change. The effects in the short-term, through natural disasters such as landslides, floods and hurricanes and in the long-term, through more gradual environmental destruction like rising sea level or deforestation, put the welfare and survival of women and their families at risk. These events impact many important areas of life including agriculture and food security ; biodiversity and ecosystems ; water resources ; human health ; and human settlements and migration patterns. Women's capacity to cope with these changes is limited by economic, political and social barriers.

(YWCA Envision 2030)

What change do I want to see ?

Can I be a leader on this topic ?

Can I create or join a social movement ?



Did you know

- Women are often the best informed about how to adapt and prepare for climate change because of their work in food production, food security, cooking and heating, clean water collection, family health, income generation and management of livestock and natural resources, but they are too often left out of local and national planning and programming.
- Too often when talking about climate change, women of all ages are only labeled as vulnerable and not seen to have relevant knowledge and expertise for leadership. Women are often excluded from decision-making processes and not listened to when planning climate responses and adaptations.
- When food becomes less available, harvests more unpredictable and food prices rise, there is a greater burden placed on women to ensure the health and survival of their families.
- When fuel sources (i.e. firewood) are more difficult to find, women and girls must travel further, which takes more of their time and also puts them at higher risk of harassment and sexual violence.
- When people are displaced from their homes because of climate change, women, young women and girls are all at greater risk of sexual violence, including child, early and forced marriage.

Who is most vulnerable to the effects of climate change? Poor and disempowered people living in rural areas, especially women and girls who rely on natural resources for their income and wellbeing, are the most vulnerable. Furthermore, indigenous women and women living in coastal areas, regions suffering drought, and on peripheral land that is vulnerable to landslides or flooding are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

It is important to investigate climate change in the local and national context in order to understand who is most vulnerable to these environmental effects, and how they can be involved in preventing, adapting and responding to climate change.

What are her Rights? Here are some international guiding principles and human rights that are related to addressing climate change:

- The **United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** and the most recent **Paris Convention (2016)** are global agreements between governments to commit to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases (like carbon dioxide) and keeping global temperatures below 2 degrees C.
- In the **Beijing Platform for Action**, one of the critical areas for action is Women and the Environment, which emphasizes the importance of women's active involvement in environmental decisionmaking at all levels, integrating women's concerns and perspectives in policies and programs and establishing ways to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

- The **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** ensures the right of indigenous communities to determine and develop strategies for the use of lands, territories and resources. **What does this mean?** Indigenous people, with their expertise and experience in natural resource management, have the right to make decisions about their land, related to responding and adapting to climate change.
- The **UN Declaration on the Right to Development** underlines the importance of popular participation in all areas of development in order to realize all human rights, and requires states to ensure the active participation of women. **What does this mean?** Women, young women and girls have the right to contribute to climate change discussions, assessments, the creation of programs and projects, and the implementation and assessment of such projects.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 13 = Recognizes that urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts is needed.

It has a target (13b) that specifically promotes mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries, including focusing on women, youth, local and marginalized communities. **What does that mean?** Governments must include young women in the development of programs and projects to lessen the impact of climate change and to better identify strategies for living with environmental insecurity.

Who can play a role in risk reduction and responding to climate change?

Everyone has a role to play in mitigating and responding to the effects of climate change. Civil society as individuals, groups and networks can coordinate actions to demand inclusive discussions to identify challenges and related solutions to the negative effects of climate change. Civil society can hold their governments accountable and challenge governments and private companies if they are responsible for environmental degradation. Governments both at the national and local levels have the responsibility to ensure:

- Inclusive consultations that consider and include rural women's experiences and expertise and indigenous women's knowledge and traditional practices, in plans and programs.
- Financial and other support for civil society networks collaborating on risk reduction, preparedness, response, and post-disaster work.

- Women have leadership positions that have an effect on national, local and community level responses to natural disasters and post-disaster response.
- Young women and girls can contribute to community planning and awareness raising

You can find more information on gender and climate change from the following web sites :

Women’s Environment and Development Organization:

www.wedo.org

Global Gender and Climate Alliance:

https://genderandenvironment.org/actors/the-global-gender-and-climate-alliance-ggca/

Gender and Disaster Network:

www.gdnonline.org

Here are some further questions to guide an Action Plan :

What are the negative effects of climate change in your community and who is most affected?

What can be done in your community?

Who can you reach out to for more information and support?

Is there someone or an organization that you can partner with to respond to climate challenges?

How can you make sure that people in positions of power, who have a responsibility to prepare for and respond to climate change, focus on the particular concerns and realities of young women and girls?



7 Sex Trafficking

What is it and what can be done to stop it?

Sex trafficking is a growing industry and an ever-increasing threat to young women and girls. Sex trafficking includes the recruitment, transport, sale or purchase of human beings for the purpose of prostitution, pornography, stripping, live sex shows, sex tourism, or forced marriage. The majority of victims of trafficking are girls and young women who have been tricked, deceived, intimidated or forced into sex work. People who traffic others are criminals who take advantage of desperate or uninformed people. Trafficking is a global problem that is closely linked with organized crime.

Did you know

that when a girl is trafficked she may:

- Suffer degrading and brutal treatment (rape, beatings, starvation, confinement)
- Be forced to take drugs
- Undergo forced abortions or sterilization
- Suffer unwanted or forced pregnancy
- Be forced into marriage
- Suffer threats of violence to herself and her family
- Attempt suicide
- Be threatened with exposure of her circumstances to her family
- Suffer health problems and injuries such as broken bones, bruises and burns
- Become addicted to alcohol or drugs
- Become infected with HIV and other sexually transmitted infections
- Suffer mental health problems because of psychological stress

What change do I want to see?

Can I be a leader on this topic?

Can I create or join a social movement?

Who is most vulnerable to sex trafficking?

The majority of victims of trafficking are women, young women and girls living in poverty. Children are also particularly targeted. Young women and girls who do not have a high level of education are more susceptible to trafficking.

Women and girls in armed conflict, fragile countries, or in areas affected by a natural disaster or an emergency are more vulnerable. Also those who are excluded from the mainstream cultural and social networks, or marginalized by society, are most vulnerable to trafficking. Wide spread gender inequality which places women of all ages at a disadvantage socially, politically and economically, creates vulnerability to trafficking.

What are her Rights? Here are some human rights instruments related to the prevention and punishment of sex trafficking:

- **The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000)** supplements the **United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime** and addresses human trafficking as a crime. It aims to prevent and combat trafficking in persons; to protect and assist victims of trafficking, and to promote cooperation among governments in order to meet these objectives.^{9,10}
- **The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** recognizes the bias against women as victims and identifies trafficking as a form of gender-based violence. CEDAW calls on all countries to take appropriate measures against all forms of trafficking

in and exploitation of women through prostitution.

- There are many human rights which relate to trafficking, some of which are: the Right not to be submitted to slavery, servitude, forced labour, or bonded labour; the Right not to be subjected to torture and/ or cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment; and the Right to be free from gendered violence. Of particular importance is the Right of children to special protection.
- The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** (Article 6) and the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (Article 35) refer directly to trafficking.

Sustainable Development Goals



SDG 16 = Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Target 16.2 = End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

What does this mean? Your government must protect all people from being trafficked and provide support and legal action for trafficked people, especially for children.

⁸<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/faqs.html>

⁹<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/index.html?ref=menuaside>

Who can play a role in stopping sex trafficking?

- **Girls and Young Women** who have a Safe Space where they can share their experiences, learn about the dangers of trafficking and how to avoid it, and can become empowered advocates for other girls in danger of trafficking. Young women need education, vocational and employment opportunities that can be provided by schools, training centers and other supportive government programs.
- **Governments and civil society** can support educational campaigns to raise awareness of possible victims and to call on the community to intervene if trafficking situations arise.
- **Teachers and Health care workers** can be trained to identify girls and young women at risk of trafficking.
- **Parents** can keep their girls in school and support their education. Parents must also ensure that their children are not directly sold into slavery. Also, young women who have been trafficked need to be accepted and taken care of by their families.
- **Religious and community leaders** can educate the population on the dangers of trafficking and the need to care for and not judge victims of trafficking.
- **Boys and men** can speak out against trafficking.
- **Are there others?...**

Here are some further questions to guide an Action Plan :

What can be done in your community?

Who can you reach out to for more information and support?

Is there someone an organization that you can partner with to help stop trafficking?

How can you make sure that people in positions of power, who have a responsibility to end trafficking, act and uphold the human rights of girls and young women?



8 Violence Against Women and Girls

What is it and what can be done to stop it?

What is VAWG? The United Nation's Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defines it as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. What does that mean? Violence against women and girls is an act of gender discrimination against women and girls because they are female. It creates harm and suffering that may be physical but can also be emotional from threats of violence or verbal abuse. This extreme form of gender discrimination is a result of the use of power and force to control women's lives and bodies. Violence can happen at home, work, school or in public places. Wherever it occurs, violence against women and girls is never ok; it is against women's dignity and human rights.

Did you know

that a young woman who experiences violence is more likely to:

- have unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions.
- have a higher risk of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infections.
- have a miscarriage, stillbirth, or low birth weight babies.
- suffer physical injuries that may include headaches, back pain, abdominal pain, limited mobility and poor overall health
- suffer mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, eating disorders, and higher rates of suicide.
- suffer isolation, inability to work, loss of wages, lack of participation in regular activities and limited ability to care for themselves and their children.
- and particularly for girls, violence can lead to increased smoking, drug and alcohol misuse

What change do I want to see?

Can I be a leader on this topic?

Can I create or join a social movement?

What types of actions are considered Violence Against Women and Girls?

There are many different forms that violence takes. Here are some examples:

- Early/forced/child marriage, female genital mutilation and other harmful traditional practices; physical (slapping, hitting, burning, beating, kicking), sexual (rape and forced sexual contact, forced sterilization) and psychological abuse (yelling, threatening, name-calling, insults); intimate partner or domestic violence; marital rape; isolation (being kept from seeing or talking to others or not allowed to go out); witchcraft and dowry abuse and murders; incest; child prostitution and pornography; economic violence (not allowed to have a job, no control over finances); dating violence (rape, acid throwing); sexual abuse and harassment in the workplace or at school; trafficking in women and girls; forced pregnancy; threats and abuse on social media...

Who is most vulnerable to Violence?

Any woman or girl at any age can become a victim of violence. However, women and girls who are more vulnerable to other human rights abuses have an even higher probability of experiencing violence in their lifetime:

- Having low education
- Living with a disability
- Living with HIV/AIDS
- Being forced to marry as a child or young woman
- Being a migrant or refugee
- Living in situations of conflict, natural disasters and displacement
- Exposure to violence between parents when young

- Not conforming to gender norms (lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, questioning) psychological abuse (yelling, threatening, name-calling, insults); It is important to investigate Violence Against Women and Girls in your local and national context in order to understand who is most vulnerable to violence. There are also specific forms of violence that may be more common in your community.

Why does it happen?

There are many factors that contribute to the widespread problem of violence against women and girls:

- Violence against women and girls is deeply rooted in social attitudes that position women and girls as less important or less deserving of fair and equal treatment compared to boys and men. Gender inequality and discrimination is a cause and a result of violence against women and girls. When women and girls do not have equal power in their communities or relationships, their risk of violence increases and their ability to find support to stop it is limited. At the same time violence against women and girls reinforces women's low status compared to men.
- In many communities there is widespread acceptance of violence. A culture of acceptance can justify or excuse violence. Gender inequality affects society's response to violence by ignoring or belittling the effects of violence on the lives of women and girls.
- There is a culture of silence around violence and abuse. Those suffering violence often will not tell anyone for fear of more violence or of being shamed and blamed. Silence is particularly common when children are in violent situations.
- There is a high level of impunity in cases

of violence. Even if there are national laws, these laws may be misunderstood or ignored and the result is that those who commit the crime of violence may never be punished.

- In situations of conflict and emergencies violence against women and girls rises. They may be separated from family, no longer have their social support network, and protective laws and customs will not be enforced. Also, violence in many forms, including rape, can be used as a weapon of war.
- Harmful practices, that are said to be cultural or traditional, ignore the rights of women and girls and are dangerous to their health and wellbeing (for example, child, early, and forced marriage and female genital mutilation).

What are your rights?

Here are some human rights that clearly explain that Violence Against Women and Girls is wrong and against international law:

- The Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women clarify that all States must, “ensure that private actors do not engage in discrimination against women and girls, including gender-based violence” and that governments must “prevent, investigate, punish and ensure redress” So **what does that mean?** Firstly, governments have a responsibility to prevent or stop violence from happening which includes transforming social or cultural ideas that disempower women and girls and perpetuate acceptance of violence. Governments also have to ensure that the police and courts respond to cases of violence by listening to women and girls, taking the cases seriously and finding and punishing those who have perpetrated the crime.
- Finally, those who have suffered violence have the right to appropriate and acceptable health care and to be compensated.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states that no one should be “subjected to torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”. **What does that mean?** No one is allowed to harm you and cause you pain, or treat and punish you in a way that your dignity and wellbeing is negatively affected. Women and girls, because of gender discrimination, are particularly vulnerable to such mistreatment.
- The Plan of Action that came out of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) commits States to “take full measures to eliminate all forms of exploitation, abuse, harassment and violence against women, adolescents, and children”. **What does that mean?** Violence against women and girls as a form of gender discrimination must be stopped in order for women and girls to enjoy their full range of human rights and to live free from fear.
- Other human rights that protect women and girls from violence are your: Right to Life, Right to Equality, Right to Health, and the Right to be free from Discrimination.
- Most countries have national laws to prevent violence against women and girls. It is important to identify local laws which criminalize violence, to understand to what extent these laws are implemented, and to discover if these laws support girls and women who suffer violence.



Sustainable Development Goals

SDGs 5 = Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Target 5.2 = Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. **What does that mean?** Your government has the responsibility to prevent child marriage and FGM (i.e. through information campaigns), protect girls from child marriage when it happens (i.e. police must free a girl from an illegal marriage and make sure she is safe from repercussions), and the police must legally respond so that the perpetrator is punished.

What does this mean? Your government must protect all people from being trafficked and provide support and legal action for trafficked people, especially for children.

Who can play a role in stopping sex trafficking?

- **Girls and Young Women** who are given Safe Spaces to learn about their rights and gain self-confidence can be supported to seek support, protection and justice.
- **Polices and the Courts** have the duty to stop gender-based violence when it is brought to their attention, to investigate cases, ensure protection, and work with other law enforcement to make sure justice is served.
- **Local government** representatives must ensure that there are programs and financing to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, especially the deeply rooted beliefs of gender inequality, which places women and girls at a disadvantage.
- **Families** must be educated on this issue and supported to respect the rights of women and girls and to ensure that home is a safe place for girls and women.
- **Teachers** can identify girls who are vulnerable to violence. They can also notify authorities when they suspect violence and abuse.
- **Health care workers** can be trained to identify cases of domestic and other gender-based violence and can counsel women and girls to ensure that they are supported with healthcare and other services.
- **Community leaders** can educate the local population and speak out against any forms of violence against women and girls.
- **Religious leaders** can educate the population and condemn all forms of violence against women and girls. They can also challenge any religious teachings that undermine the equality of women and men.
- **Boys and men** can educate the population and condemn all forms of violence against women and girls. They can also challenge any religious teachings that undermine the equality of women and men.
- **Are there others?...**

Here are some further questions to guide an Action Plan:

What can be done in your community?

Who can you reach out to for more information and support?

Is there someone or an organization that you can partner with to help end violence against

women and girls?

How can you make sure that people in positions of power, who have a responsibility to end gender-based violence, act and uphold the human rights of women and girls?

9 Economic Justice and Gender Equality

What is it and how can we combat economic injustice ?

Investing in young women's economic empowerment is crucial for gender equality, women's rights, poverty eradication and achieving an inclusive economic growth for all. However, in most labour markets, women and young women continue to participate on an unequal basis with men. Their skills are often unrecognized and undervalued.

When women do get a job, they are paid less than men. The wage gap (the difference between what a woman and a man get paid for the same or similar work) discriminates against women, and this discrimination is present in every country in the world. Added to the injustice of unequal pay are the unequal opportunities. In times of economic crisis, women are the first fired and the last hired, the first to see decreased wages and in addition, are often excluded from organized labour (i.e. labour unions, worker's groups).¹⁰

For the majority of women, young women and girls, sex and gender discrimination intersect with discrimination based on race (particularly indigenous women), religion, age, class, caste, physical ability, migration status, sexual orientation and gender identity, pushing many who are multiply marginalized into poverty.

Women are also marginalized by economic and digital divides, resulting in poverty and economic insecurity. Globalization means that jobs constantly move to where employers make the highest profits. When men migrate for work, women are often left behind without access to jobs, bank credit, health care and higher education. When women migrate for work they can find themselves in unsafe and abusive situations or financially unable to return to family. When families migrate together, women, young women and girls are at increased risk of violence, including sexual violence and trafficking. In times of economic uncertainty, when women lose economic autonomy and are more dependant on men, there are higher rates of partner violence and an increase in unsafe sex, putting the lives and futures of women, young women and girls at risk.

What change do I want to see ?

Can I be a leader on this topic ?

Can I create or join a social movement ?

¹⁰ UNAIDS Discussion Paper , *Impact of the global economic crisis on women, girls and gender equality, 2012*

In both formal and informal jobs, women of all ages remain unsupported before, during and after childbirth. They are the least privileged members of households yet remain the primary caregivers. Not only is house and care work invisible and unpaid, but women are expected to balance unpaid care work with long hours of paid work. In times of economic crisis cuts in government services increase the unpaid workload for women, young women and girls with negative effects in schooling rates, nutrition and health, stress, and available free time. Economic power structures benefit privileged men at the direct expense of billions of women, young women and girls who are considered “cheap labour”.

Millions of women work as domestic labourers in unsafe and insecure conditions and are particularly vulnerable to rights violations. Many are pushed into the informal economy, where lack of access to labour protections or decent work threatens safety and health. Where no decent paid work is available, sex work becomes an option, even though this places them at high risk of violence, unintended pregnancy, social stigma, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

The development of multinational companies operating in countries where labour costs are low, poses challenges for women, young women and girls. Weak labour laws leave them without access to information about their human rights and essential legal remedies. Weak governments and corruption worsen their situation. Too often, women, young women and girls have nowhere to turn, to demand justice and human rights protections.

Economic policy informed by and accountable to labour and human rights principles will provide the foundation from which women can break down barriers and realize their rights, including addressing inequities in caring duties in the home. It will also promote broadly shared growth. Rights-based labour and community organizing among women workers and their allies can shift power relationships, change working conditions and address barriers to full and equal participation in the labour market.

UNWomen CSW

Economic injustice is a global and local problem. It's important to investigate economic discrimination in the local and national context in order to understand who is most vulnerable to these human rights violations, and how they can be involved in challenging and changing economic inequalities. **You can ask some of these questions:**

- What jobs are available to women/young women/girls in your community? Are they different from the jobs that men/boys do? Are they paid differently?
- What domestic jobs are done by men/ boys and women/young women/girls? Who spends more time on domestic jobs? Why?
- What do men/boys do while women/ young women/girls are doing domestic jobs? Is it paid work, free time, leisure activities, social time? Is this fair?
- Are there government-funded services like child-care and care for the elderly or disabled,

which assist women in finding the time to look for and keep a paid job?

- Are there labour unions or organized groups of workers that include women in their leadership?
- If a young woman wants to study and get a good paying job, how do people in her community react? Her family? Teachers? Religious leaders and congregation?

What are your rights?

Here are some international guiding principles and human rights that are related to creating equal and fair economic situations between rich and poor nations and for all people: **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR Article 23 and 24)** states that:

- ✓ **Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.**
- ✓ **Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.**
- ✓ **Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration (pay) ensuring for him/herself and her/his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.**
- ✓ **Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his/her interests.**
- ✓ **Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.**

Also the human rights principles of participation and accountability are very important when considering workers' rights. For participation, everyone has the right to voice their opinions and negotiate fair working conditions. In terms of accountability, governments, multi-nationals and other companies must be held responsible for ensuring healthy safe working environments where earnings allow for a decent standard of living.



Sustainable Development Goals

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



SDG 8 = Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Target 8.5 = By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

Target 8.6 = By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.

Target 8.7 = Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.

What does this mean? Your government must invest in young people so they have the skills and knowledge that will help them get a job. Also, governments must protect people, especially children and other vulnerable groups, from harmful environments, dangerous work and forced labour. There must be equal pay between women and men.

SDGs 10 = Reduce inequality within and among countries.

SDGs 10.5 = Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations.

What does this mean? Global movement of money and international investing should not allow for unfair or one-sided gains that benefit rich countries and keep poorer countries poor.

Rights-based labour and community organizing among women workers and their allies can shift power relationships, change working conditions and address barriers to full and equal participation in the labour market.¹¹

¹¹ UN Women CSW <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/61/egm/solidarity%20center%20%20center%20for%20womens%20global%20leadership%20%20csw61%20egm%20background%20paper.pdf?vs=1733>

Who can play a role in uncovering economic injustices that put women, young women and girls at an economic disadvantage? Who can stand up for economic justice?

- **Labour unions and groups of workers** can coordinate their efforts to bring unfair practices to the attention of employers and the government supervisors responsible for employment. Such organizations must have women in their leadership.
- **Women and young women** in formal and informal jobs can seek the assistance of local organizations or international NGOs, which support workers' human rights.
- **Families** can discuss the sharing of domestic work and re-allocate tasks to create a more equitable home.
- **Government representatives** must supervise multi-nationals and national companies to ensure that workers are paid fairly, are not over-worked, and that there are safe and healthy conditions. They must also ensure that important services such as child-care are available in order to support women's employment.
- **Local, national and international companies** must ensure the basic rights of all workers and abide by international and national laws.
- **The United Nation's International Labour Organization (ILO)** can support countries to implement workers rights and can document human rights violations.
- **Boys and men** can assume their share of domestic work and can support the economic empowerment and autonomy of women in their families and community.
- **Are there others?...**

Here are some further questions to guide an Action Plan:

What are the negative effects of economic injustice and inequality in your community?

Who is most affected?

What can be done in your community to promote decent employment for young women?

Who can you reach out to for more information and support?

Is there someone or an organization that you can partner with to respond to the problems faced by women in their work?

How can you make sure that people in positions of power, who have a responsibility to ensure equal pay, safe working environments, and adequate training for young people, focus on the particular economic concerns and realities of young women?

10 Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation (LGBTQI+)

What is Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation and how can we stop discrimination and stigma?

When talking about gender identity and sexual orientation, it is important to remember that humanity is diverse and that each person is unique. There is also diversity in the way we love and are attracted to others, of a different sex, the same sex, or both. This variety of sexual desires has existed throughout history and in every country and culture of the world, even if many cultures and people do not accept this diversity as 'normal'. It is also important to know that sexual identity cannot be changed by religion, therapy, or medical treatment and that a person's sexual behavior or identity may change over their lifetime depending on different situations.¹² Widely held discrimination against LGBTQI+ people can make cruel and violent treatment seem acceptable. It never is.

If you, your friend, or a family member are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or questioning then much of what you will read here may be familiar. Some people however feel confused or embarrassed or even angry when talking about sexual and gender identities. This topic is sensitive for many people, so it is very important that the Facilitators ensure a Safe Space where young women feel protected from judgment and able to ask questions freely. It is also important to quickly identify discrimination and control any threatening or cruel behaviour.

Did you know ¹³

That a young woman who experiences violence is more likely to:

- Sexual Orientation = is your physical, romantic, or emotional attraction to other people.
- Gender Identity = is the deeply felt and experienced sense of your own gender. Transgender people do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.
- Intersex = are people born with sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, and chromosome patterns that do not fit the typical definition of female or male.

- Questioning = someone who is exploring their sexuality and/or gender and has not decided yet.

It is important to create Safe Spaces for people of all gender identities and sexual orientations and to understand that LGBTQI+ people are vulnerable to human rights abuses such as police brutality, work place discrimination (or not being given a job), school bullying, and social ostracization. In some countries, loving someone of the same sex is illegal, and in a few countries it is even punishable by death.

¹² *It's All One Curriculum, A Unified Approach to Sexuality, Gender, HIV, and Human Rights, 2009.*

¹³ *Born Free and Equal, OHCHR publication, 2012 <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/BornFreeAndEqualLowRes.pdf>*

What are your rights? Here are some of the human rights and obligations that support the wellbeing of LGBTQI+ people. Governments have the obligation under international law and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to:

- Protect individuals from violence.
- Prevent torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.
- Get rid of laws that criminalize homosexuality and cross-dressing.
- Prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Protect freedom of expression and association of LGBTQI+ people.

The human rights principles of **Equality and Non-Discrimination** defend the rights of LGBTQI+ people. The opening words of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** are:

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) protects the right to the highest attainable standards of health. As LGBTQI+ people face many forms of discrimination (denial of services, abuse and mistreatment) they are often denied sexual and reproductive health care and services.

Sustainable Development Goals



SDGs 3 = Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.

What does this mean? Everyone has the right to receive health care, especially sexual and reproductive care regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.

SDGs 5 = Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

SDGs 5.6 = Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development [ICPD] and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences. **What does that mean?** Your government has the responsibility to provide a full range of SRHR information and services regardless of a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, while ensuring that stigma and discrimination are not tolerated.

SDGs 16 = Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

SDGs 16.1 = Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere. **What does that mean?** Governments must recognize, confront and reduce all violence faced by LGBTQI+ people, including statesponsored violence. There must be laws against such violence and those laws must be upheld

.Who can play a role in preventing violence against LGBTQI+ people and putting an end to stigma and discrimination ?

- **LGBTQI+ women, young women and girls** and other youth organizations need Safe Spaces where they feel comfortable and supported to ask questions and receive information on the human rights of LGBTQI+ people. Such a space can support LGBTQI+ women of all ages to seek SRHR information and services and to strengthen their ability to challenge unfair and discriminatory attitudes and actions.
- **Local government representatives** must ensure that there are programs and financing of anti-discrimination and information campaigns for the prevention of stigma and violence against LGBTQI+ citizens.
- **The State** must ensure that there are no laws which criminalize or discriminate against LGBTQI+ people, nor laws which criminalize same sex behaviors (i.e. consensual sex between adults). The government also has the responsibility to ensure that any mistreatment, discrimination or violence against LGBTQI+ people, is taken seriously and dealt with in a court of law.
- **Police officers**, border guards and prison personnel should undergo training and awareness of LGBTQI+ issues in order to prevent abuse, and should be closely monitored to ensure they do not carry out cruel, degrading and inhuman behaviour, or torture.
- **Health care workers'** first responsibility is to provide the full array of sexual and reproductive information and services to LGBTQI+ women, young women and girls in an unbiased manner, which protects their dignity and privacy. They must protect the privacy of all patient.
- **Teachers** must be trained to understand LGBTQI+ issues for young people and to never allow bullying or mistreatment of a student because she/he is LGBTQI+.
- **Community and religious leaders** can encourage social acceptance and understanding of LGBTQI+ community members.
- **Boys and men** can speak out against homophobia and violent anti-LGBTQI+ practices such as corrective rape.
- **Are there others?...**

Here are some further questions to guide an Action Plan :

What can be done in your community to confront stigma and discrimination of LGBTQI+ people ?

Who can you reach out to for more information and support ?

Is there someone or an organization that you can partner with to support LGBTQI+ women, particularly young women and girls ?

How can you make sure that people in positions of power, who have a responsibility to ensure the safety, equal treatment and care of LGBTQI+ members of the community focus on the particular concerns and realities of LGBTQI+ women, young women and girls ?

11 Bullying and Cyber-Bullying

What is it, how to handle it and what can be done to stop it?

Bullying is a problem for young people everywhere in the world. A United Nations Agency for Children's (UNICEF) survey shows how bullying and harassment are a shared experience of young people from developed and developing countries. Being picked on for your height, gender, skin colour, religion, language, physical ability, refugee status, sexual orientation or any other characteristic, can destroy a person's self confidence and self worth and even has negative effects for their future. Bullying is so common that it can happen just about anywhere, especially with access to the internet and the popularity of social media.

Definition of Bullying¹⁴

"Bullying can be defined as intentional and aggressive behaviour occurring repeatedly against a victim where there is a real or perceived power imbalance, and where the victim feels vulnerable and powerless to defend himself or herself. The unwanted behaviour is hurtful: it can be physical, including hitting, kicking and the destruction of property; verbal, such as teasing, insulting and threatening; or relational, through the spreading of rumours and exclusion from a group."

Did you know

- Children who are bullied are more likely to be depressed, lonely or anxious, and to have low self-esteem.
- Bullying can negatively affect a young person's health, school performance, and personal relationships.
- Boys are more likely than girls to bully others; And girls are more likely to use psychological/relational forms of bullying.
- Children who are cyber-bullied are often bullied in person also.
- Adolescent girls are often at risk of cyberbullying associated with sexual abuse. Threats include the sharing of messages or images of a sexual nature (sexting), or the promotion of online intimidation and harassment (cyber-stalking), sometimes with the aim of obtaining sexual favours from victims or coercing them into performing sexual acts (sexual extortion).
- Children from poor families and out-of-school children experience higher rates of bullying.

What change do I want to see?

Can I be a leader on this topic?

Can I create or join a social movement?

¹⁴Secretary General's Report, *Protecting Children from Bullying*, 2016

It is important to investigate this problem in your community and country in order to understand who is most vulnerable to bullying (because of gender, religion, sexual orientation, poverty, refugee status, disability, etc.). Reaching out to young women and girls who are at risk of bullying can provide useful information about the problem and offers the girls an opportunity to challenge bullying by seeking help. Young Women and girls can play a critical role in eliminating bullying.

What are your rights?

Here are some human rights that protect young people from bullying:

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognizes children’s right to protection from all forms of violence, including physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. Bullying is a form of abuse.
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) protects all people from: violence; torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment; and prohibits any form of discrimination.
- In 2016 the United Nations Secretary General’s Report, Protecting Children from Bullying, calls on governments to: raise public awareness and mobilize support to prevent and address bullying; improve efforts to inform and assist children; create public policies and laws to secure children’s protection, including efforts to strengthen the capacity of schools in early detection and response; and support practices to repair harm and restore relationships.
- Prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Protect freedom of expression and association of LGBTQI+ people.

The human rights principles of **Equality and Non-Discrimination** defend the rights of LGBTQI+ people. The opening words of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** are:

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) protects the right to the highest attainable standards of health. As LGBTQI+ people face many forms of discrimination (denial of services, abuse and mistreatment) they are often denied sexual and reproductive health care and services.

Sustainable Development Goals

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



SDGs 4 = Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

What does this mean? Related to bullying, it highlights the importance of knowledge of human rights and the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence. It also shows how schools must be safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all. No bullying allowed!

SDGs 16 = Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

SDGs 16.2 = End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children. What does that mean? Everyone has the right to live free from fear and violence. Everyone has a right to go to school and learn in a supportive environment, and in order to learn we have to feel safe and accepted.

What can you do if you are being bullied?

(based on the YWCA of Canada's A Girl's Guide to Knowing Her Rights)¹⁸:

- Tell a trusted adult who can help you make a plan to be safe and stop the bullying.
- If the bully's behaviour is against the law (for example, they hit you or threaten you with violence) you could tell the police, who may charge them with assault.
- Set up a buddy system so you have support and you always have someone with you when you think the bully might be around.
- Depending on the situation, you could talk to the bully yourself. Tell them firmly that you want them to stop what they are doing, and then walk away.
- If you know someone who is being bullied, you can let that person know that you are there to help. Also you can invite them to sit with you or have lunch with you so they don't feel so alone.
- Never become a bully yourself, even in response to a bully. That just escalates the level of the bullying and could make the situation more dangerous...

What is different about Cyberbullying?

- Cyber-bullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and reach a person even when he or she is alone. It can happen any time of the day or night.
- Cyber-bullying messages and images can be posted anonymously and distributed quickly to a very wide audience. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source.
- Deleting inappropriate or harassing messages, texts, and pictures is extremely difficult after they have been posted or sent.

You have the right to be and feel safe wherever you are. If you are being bullied and don't feel safe, the best thing you can do is to ignore the bully. Try to find a group of people you can join and tell an adult you trust.

Who can play a role in ending bullying?

- **Girls and Young Women** who are offered Safe Spaces to talk about their experiences and to gain self-confidence. They can be supported to seek support and/or protection from bullying.
- **Teachers** must be trained to be aware of bullying in school. They can help identify those who are vulnerable to bullying. They can also notify superiors, parents and authorities when a student is being bullied.
- **Health care workers** can be trained to identify health problems that may be linked to the stress of being bullied. This can include self-harm or even attempted suicide.
- **Community leaders** can educate parents and children about bullying and make sure there are support services for young people.
- **Boys and men** can speak out against bullying, denouncing gender-based and sexually threatening bullying against girls and young women.
- **Police** have the duty to investigate cases of bullying if they pose a threat to the life and wellbeing of young people.
- **Local government representatives** must ensure that there are programs and financing to tackle bullying and protect the rights of girls and young women.
- **Governments** are responsible for developing anti-bullying initiatives which can include: information and awareness-raising campaigns to deepen understanding of bullying, the trauma it creates and its risks and consequences; the promotion of positive communication to strengthen values, concern for others and responsibility in preventing discrimination, promoting respect for human rights and strengthening safety in school and online; and informing children about how to protect themselves, how to cope with the distress abuse can cause, how to strengthen their ability to respond and how to avoid situations where their right to privacy, image, honour and reputation may be compromised. Both at school and online, children need guidance in developing their ability to make good decisions.
- **Are there others?...**

Here are some further questions to guide an Action Plan:

What can be done in your community?

Who can you reach out to for more information and support?

How can you speak out and raise awareness in your community?

Is there someone or an organization that you can partner with to help end bullying?

How can you make sure that people in positions of power, who have a responsibility to end bullying, act and uphold the human rights of girls?

12 Menstruation

Almost every woman will menstruate. At every moment, of every day, of every year, there are always hundreds of millions of women, young women and girls menstruating. A young woman's experience of menstruation has a lot to do with the country and culture she lives in. Some will celebrate it, some will feel ashamed, others may be ostracized or forced to hide from society. Too many young women and girls are never taught about menstruation. Menstruation is a part of life (even the source of life) and it's important to know why it happens and what it means to a girl's life.

What a Girl should Know...

- **Menstruation is part of growing up.**
- **Menstruation is normal for every woman, including the differently abled.**
- **Menstruation is not a women's issue but a universal issue – men need to know about it too!**
- **There are many myths and misconceptions around menstruation.**
- **Training Manual**

https://www.wsscc.org/resources/?_sft_category=menstrual-health

Something to think about

It seems strange [then] that water, sanitation and hygiene services ignore the needs of half the population that menstruate on an average for 3000 days over their lifetime with very real, practical needs as regards water and space for washing and cleaning the body, material for absorbing menstrual blood and facilities for proper disposal of used materials so that women can manage this biological function with safety and dignity.¹⁵

What change do I want to see ?

Can I be a leader on this topic ?

Can I create or join a social movement ?

¹⁵ <https://washdata.org>

What Word Do You Use?

One study showed 5000 different terms used to refer to menstruation from around the world.¹⁶

Menstruation

- = Period
- = That Time of the Month
- = The Curse
- = On the Rag
- = Mother Nature's Visit
- = The Mensus
- = Auntie's Visit
- = Chapudi
- = Women's Trouble
- = Lady Trouble ...

What are your rights? Here are some of the human rights related to menstruation:

- The World Conference on Human Rights reaffirmed that the human rights of women throughout the life cycle are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.
- The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) reaffirms women's reproductive rights and the right to development.
- Both the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) guarantee children's rights and uphold the principle of nondiscrimination on the grounds of gender.

What does that mean? Women and girls should not be disadvantaged because of a natural and biological fact of being female. Upholding their human rights is the responsibility of family, community, state and global governance. Menstruation is a part of reproduction and there are clear laws that protect reproductive health. The state must provide the infrastructure and services to ensure the health and dignity of women, young women and girls.

Something more to think about

Why is it that these various conventions and linked action plans, elaborate on women's sexual and reproductive rights but stop short of explicitly naming menstruation as one of the most stigmatized, silent and socially constructed silent curses that plague a third of the world's population throughout the developed and developing world?

<https://washdata.org>

¹⁶ <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/healthand-families/menstruation-study-finds-over-5000-slang-terms-for-period-a6905021.html>

Sustainable Development Goals



SDG 3 = Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.

Target 3.7 = By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programs.

SDG 6 = Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

Target 6.2 = By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

What does that mean? Schools, public buildings, and residential areas must have access to clean water and private latrines and washing areas which support women of all ages to use and wash sanitary products during menstruation.

Who can play a role in ensuring menstrual hygiene and putting an end to stigma and discrimination? :

- **Girls and Young Women** who are informed about menstruation and have access to affordable sanitary products can stay clean and healthy. They can also help other young girls understand menstruation so that no one is ashamed or embarrassed.
- **Teachers** must provide sexual and reproductive health information that includes menstruation. Information should be inclusive and evidence based. Teachers who can openly talk about menstruation can break the taboo around the issue and make it a normal part of school and learning.
- **Health care workers** can champion menstrual health and make it a normal issue to be spoken of (without whispering) at health check ups, in community health meetings, and with other health officials who have a responsibility for the population's health and wellbeing.
- **Parents** have a responsibility to ensure that their daughters are aware of menstruation, know how to keep themselves clean and healthy, and have the means to purchase or make sanitary products. Parents can help break taboos and stigma by also informing their sons about menstruation.

- **Boys and men** need to accept menstruation as a natural and positive part of a female's life. They can confront taboos and discrimination by supporting the women in their lives economically (making sure there is money for sanitary products) and with infrastructure (ensuring a private, clean and safe space is available for women).
- **Local government representatives** must ensure that menstrual health issues and solutions are discussed and financed (i.e. community latrines built with washing and privacy needs taken into consideration and support for local production of sanitary products).
- **The State** must fund menstrual health awareness campaigns as part of general health and the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women, young women and girls. The State needs to ensure that children are educated in school and out about menstruation and must finance latrine building and hygienic washing areas for women and girls.
- **Are there others ?...**

Here are some further questions to guide an Action Plan :

What can be done in your community ?

Who can you reach out to for more information and support ?

Is there someone or an organization that you can partner with to raise awareness about menstrual hygiene ?

How can you make sure that people in positions of power, who have a responsibility to ensure the health and wellbeing, focus on the particular issue of menstrual hygiene and the menstrual realities of women, young women and girls ?



13 Faith, Feminism and Human Rights

How To Define It And Live It?

Faith, feminism and human rights share a common foundation in social justice for all. As the words and actions of YWCAs around the world prove, the combination of faith and feminism in the service of human rights can create dynamic and positive opportunities for women, young women and girls.

Working towards gender equality by using Faith and Feminism to sustain social justice arguments further strengthens the human rights principles of equality and nondiscrimination, participation and empowerment, and accountability and transparency. Young women can use their feminist knowledge, spiritual beliefs and human rights training to define their social justice causes and actions.

Each of the terms has a particular strength to offer in the defense gender equality:

Faith can examine deeply rooted social structures, traditional beliefs and cultural teachings, thereby challenging a status quo which is unjust and discriminatory towards women.

Feminism relies on a strong history of collaboration among women, using the power of demonstrations, shared purpose and actions to challenge gendered injustices.

Human Rights offers legal guidance, an inclusive framework to examine a problem, and remedies for confronting institutional and individual discrimination by using international human rights agreements such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) or Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

an examine deeply rooted social structures, traditional beliefs and cultural teachings, thereby challenging a status quo which is unjust and discriminatory towards women.

YWCAs around the globe recognize and are inspired by Christian values that uphold the human rights of women of all ages. Values that praise the power of being informed and prepared to make responsible life choices; values that protect an individual's dignity by ensuring her right to quality education and health care; values that encourage all voices to be heard and values that uphold a justice system that treats everyone as equals. Key issues concerning young women

What change do I want to see?

Can I be a leader on this topic?

Can I create or join a social movement?

are addressed through these values of love, compassion, non-judgment, dignity and justice.

YWCA's use transformative leadership and faith, to listen, not just to those who share the same struggle, but to those who use alternative interpretations of religious texts to belittle women, to diminish opportunities for young women and girls, and to trample on their human rights. Young women leaders who take strength from their feminism, faith and knowledge of human rights, and who are supported by peers and mentors, can speak truth to power and challenge those who are afraid of progressive interpretations of faith, feminism and human rights. This is particularly true around the interconnected issues of religion, sexual and reproductive health and women's human rights.

The human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

What are your rights?

Here are some human rights related to the welfare and dignity of women of all ages that are often argued against as cultural issues by some religious and conservative leaders.

- **UDHR Article 16(3)** states that, "the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and State". **What does that mean?** This idea of family allows for the historical and present reality that families come in many shapes and sizes and there is a diversity of family forms (for example, grandparents may take care of grandchildren; single mother or single father homes; same sex parents with children, etc.). However, there are a group of countries that want to narrowly define families (a heterosexual union with children), and to place the rights of the family before the rights of individual family members. This could have the negative effect of hiding or ignoring human rights abuses that occur in the family (for example physical, emotional and economic violence; incest and child abuse; early and forced marriage; female genital mutilation; dowry violence, etc.).
- Many **sexual rights** defined and upheld by the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**, the **Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**, the **International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD PoA)**, and other human rights standards, are regularly challenged by conservative religious groups and states, for example: Comprehensive sexuality education; Early, forced and child marriage; Female genital mutilation; Gender-based violence; Criminalization or restrictions on abortion; Gender equality; Gender identities and sexual orientation; HIV prevention and care; Sexual rights of young people; Rights of sex workers; Rights of intersex people; Reproductive rights, and more.

Sustainable Development Goals

The SDGs are a global plan for People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships. What can faith-based organizations (FBOs) offer for the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs?

Faith-based organizations that champion the dignity of all people within a social justice framework can strengthen the connection between faith, feminism and human rights. A spiritual perspective can strengthen social justice arguments, for example the importance of focusing on those who are most marginalized and at risk of being left behind, can also be seen as a human rights perspective for non-discrimination and equality. FBOs can include a spiritual dimension and perspective, which is often missing in development initiatives that sometimes take a narrow economic and political view of human development. The SDGs are a complex interconnected plan to address the wellbeing of humanity; young women's spiritual beliefs and feminist practices are an important part of this global picture and can enrich both discussions and actions.

Stories of Feminist Faith Leaders for Human Rights:



The Story of The Daughters of Zelophehad: This is a story set in biblical times (when Moses was leading the Jewish people out of Egypt). There are five sisters who challenged discriminatory inheritance laws. Zelophehad was the father of these 5 sisters and there was no son. Traditional practices meant that the daughters had no right to the lands of their father, but instead of accepting this unfair treatment, the five sisters confronted the male leaders and pleaded their case. They successfully convinced Moses and the other male leaders that they should inherit the land.

The Story of Aisha, wife of the Prophet Mohammed: Aisha is an example of leadership and strength among Muslims, as she became a political and spiritual leader, a scholar, a mufti, and judge, in addition to being the Prophet's wife. As a role model for young Muslim women, Aisha embodies the combination of spirituality, activism and knowledge.

Here are some further questions to guide an Action Plan:

Are there any negative effects of religious teachings in your community?

Who can you reach out to for more information and support?

What can be done in your community to promote positive faith and feminist actions in support of women's human rights?

Is there someone an organization or a church, that you can partner with to respond to the inequalities that women and girls face?

Who is most affected by these teachings? Are women, young women and girls treated as equals to men and boys?

How can you make sure that people in positions of power, who have a responsibility to ensure gender equality, focus on the particular concerns and realities of young women?

Additional Resources

Resources from faith-based organisations

We Will Speak Out Coalition- A network of faith-based organizations advocating to end violence against women.

<https://www.wewillspekout.org/about>

Gender Justice Policy from the Lutheran World Federation

<https://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-lwf-gender-justice-policy>

Training Manuals

Empowering Young Women Leaders, World YWCA and UNFPA 2006

YWCA Safe Spaces for Women and Girls: A Global Model for Change, World YWCA 2013

Greater Expectations, YWCA of Australia

Girls' Space, YWCA of Canada : <https://ywcacanada.ca/what-we-do/build-leaders/>

It's All One Curriculum (in English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Bangla, and Arabic), Population Council 2009

<http://www.popcouncil.org/>

Sexual, Reproductive and Maternal Health Community Workshop Series,

CARE International in Papua New Guinea, 2016

JASS Building Women's Collective Power for Justice

(a Global Women-led Human Rights Network)

"We Rise is a resource for anyone who wants to change the world"

<https://justassociates.org/en/werise-movement-building-resource>

Caring for Gender Equality Manual, World Vision and Promundo 2015

<https://www.worldvision.org/wp-content/uploads/caring-for-equality-revised.pdf>

Human Rights Information

Amnesty International Human Rights Education,

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ACT77/053/2005/en>

Girl's Guide to Knowing Her Rights, YWCA of Canada

<https://ywcacanada.myhostpanel.net/data/documents/00000083.pdf>

Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to Programming, UNFPA and Harvard, 2010

<http://www.unfpa.org/resources/human-rights-based-approach-programming>

Glossary¹⁷

Accountability - refers to the obligation of those in authority or decision making positions, to fulfill their duties, to take responsibility for their actions, and explain and justify their actions to those affected. In a human rights context, accountability means being responsible to uphold specific human rights (respect, protect and fulfill), especially for the most marginalized populations. (OHCHR: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/WhoWillBeAccountable.pdf>)

Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) - is a global document created at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, in which UN Member States and civil society identified what was needed to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women. The BPfA is the commitment of the international community to the advancement of women and to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in all policies and programs at the national, regional and international levels.

CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women) - is also known as the International Bill of Rights for Women and was adopted by the UN in 1979. It is the second most ratified convention with 90% of countries having signed it. CEDAW defines sex-based discrimination and gender equality, and identifies State obligations to eliminate discrimination and achieve substantive equality. The Convention covers discriminatory laws, practices and customs.

CSW (Commission on the Status of Women) - is a UN commission that was established in 1946, and focuses on gender equality and the advancement of the status of women. The commission, along with thousands of women's organizations, meets annually to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and the advancement of women worldwide.

Economic Justice - is linked to social justice and includes moral principles that guide how an economic system functions. The ultimate goal is to have an economic system that creates equal opportunities for all people to have a dignified, productive and creative life while promoting sustainable economic development and well-being for all.

Empowerment (of women and girls) - The empowerment of women and girls concerns their gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building selfconfidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. (UNWomen glossary: <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=&hook=ALL&sortkey=&sortorder=&fullsearch=0&page=1>)

¹⁷This glossary was taken from the 2018 edition of the *Rise Up! Guide for Young Women's Transformative Leadership*

Gender - refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. In addition to the social characteristics and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, gender also refers to the relations between women and those between men. (UNWomen)

Gender Equality - This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. (UNWomen)

Gender Identity - refers to a person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of their gender, which may or may not correspond to the person's physical characteristics or their designated sex at birth. (UNWomen)

Gender Stereotypes - are simplistic generalizations about the gender characteristics, differences and roles of women and men.

Homophobia - is an irrational fear of, hatred or aversion towards lesbian, gay or bisexual people; transphobia denotes an irrational fear, hatred or aversion towards transgender people. (OHCHR FAQ on HRBA : <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FAQen.pdf>)

Human Rights - are universal legal guarantees that are inherent to being human, and protect individual and groups from actions that interfere with fundamental freedoms and human dignity. The concept of human rights acknowledges that every human being is entitled to enjoy her or his human rights without distinction as to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

HRBA (Human Rights-Based Approach) - is a framework and set of practical tools used to create development projects and programs that are based on international human rights standards, and aim to promote and protect human rights. HRBA analyzes inequalities that are the root of development problems and challenge discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress. (OHCHR FAQ on HRBA : <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FAQen.pdf>)

Intersex - An intersex person is born with sexual anatomy, reproductive organs, and/or chromosome patterns that do not fit the typical definition of male or female. This may be apparent at birth or become so later in life. An intersex person may identify as male or female or as neither. (UN Free and Equal Fact Sheet : https://www.unfe.org/system/unfe-7-UN_Fact_Sheets_v6_-_FAQ.pdf)

Leadership, Intergenerational - means recognizing, including and creating leadership opportunities for women of all ages. Women of all ages are seen as agents of change. Intergenerational leadership also recognizes that every issue that affects women has some age specific characteristics, and that the impact and their capacity to confront and overcome issues will vary. An intergenerational approach to leadership also includes succession planning for the long-term leadership of an organization and for long term social transformation.

Leadership, Shared – builds on collaboration, working together, sharing resources and expertise for a common goal. Shared leadership means an acceptance of and ability to give and receive critical feedback and also to engage in crucial conversations. Effective shared leadership is achieved through the experience of collective influence, which goes beyond positional power (i.e. hierarchies). Shared leadership also relies on clear guidelines, processes and commitments to ensure the full and meaningful participation of all.

Leadership, Transformative – comes from an understanding that we have to address the root causes and the underlying factors that create inequalities, disempowerment or women's lack of enjoyment of their human rights. It is a notion of leadership that is rooted in human rights and long term results.

LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer) – is an acronym which includes a diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations and used to describe people who form same-sex relationships and who exhibit non-binary gender identities. (UN Free and Equal Fact Sheet : https://www.unfe.org/system/unfe-7-UN_Fact_Sheets_v6_-_FAQ.pdf)

Mentoring – is a form of inter-generational support and solidarity and occurs when one woman encourages the professional or/and personal development of a younger woman, including creating opportunities for further professional and personal growth.

Participation – is a human right, and a fundamental principle in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in a Human Rights-Based Approach. From a HRBA participation must be free, active and meaningful, which ensures that all people, especially the most marginalized populations, can take part in decision-making, can take action and/or pressure government or other duty bearers to take action, and can monitor development initiatives. Participation is a key part of leadership and active citizenship. (UN HRBA Portal: <http://hrbaportal.org/>)

Peer education – is when a person who has equal standing with another in age, background, social status, and interests, teaches or trains others. Young people can often relate to their peers in ways that adults cannot, and can play an important role in adolescent development.

Sexual Orientation – refers to a person's physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction towards other people. Everyone has a sexual orientation; Some people are attracted to people of the same sex, or the opposite sex, or they are attracted to both. (UN Free and Equal Fact Sheet: https://www.unfe.org/system/unfe-7-UN_Fact_Sheets_v6_-_FAQ.pdf)

SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) – is a universal action plan with 17 goals which aims to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy equality, peace and prosperity. This global agenda was signed at the UN by all member states in 2015, and aims to tackle the challenges facing our world such as inequality, gender discrimination, climate change and conflict by 2030.

Transgender – is a term that describes a wide range of gender identities (transsexual people, cross-dressers, people who identify as third gender) and others whose appearance and characteristics are perceived as gender atypical. Trans-women identify as women but were classified as males when they were born. Trans-men identify as men but were classified female when they were born. (UN Free and Equal Fact Sheet : https://www.unfe.org/system/unfe-7-UN_Fact_Sheets_v6_-_FAQ.pdf)

Appendix : What are Human Rights?

Human rights are about equality, respect, freedom, dignity and justice. They are internationally agreed upon standards that reflect the basic needs of all people to live a life of dignity. Human rights are the protections that we all deserve because we are human beings. They are universal, which means they apply to everyone. It doesn't matter where you live, how old you are, what language you speak, if you have HIV or are living with a disability; everyone has the same rights. For example, everyone has the right to an education so every child must be able to go to school. Everyone can choose if and who they marry so no one should be forced into marriage. Everyone is free to participate in government and should have the education and opportunity to do so.

Human rights and fundamental freedoms allow us to develop fully and use our human qualities, our intelligence, our talents and our conscience and to satisfy our spiritual and other needs. They are based on humankind's increasing demand for a life in which the inherent dignity and worth of each human being are accorded respect and protection. Their denial is not only an individual and personal tragedy but also creates conditions of social and political unrest, sowing the seeds of violence and conflict within and between societies and nations.

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/ABCCchapter1en.pdf>

Everyone has the right to know, defend and exercise their rights. To make sure everyone can understand and claim their rights, they are written down as formal international Human Rights agreements. In 1948, the governments of the world came together at the United Nations and adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The International Bill of Human Rights, which includes the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), make the fulfillment of human rights not only the moral and correct thing to do, but a legal responsibility for governments to uphold. This means that if your rights have been violated you can complain, voice your opinion, and expect a response or solution to be provided from those responsible to respect, protect and fulfill your rights. However, we know that even though everyone has these rights, in reality, too many people's rights are not protected, respected or fulfilled by their governments and others.

You can read the UDHR in 500 different languages:

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/ABCChapter1en.pdf>

Here are the ICCPR and CESCR:

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

All human rights are inter-connected and equally important. The fulfillment of one human right depends on the fulfillment of other human rights. For example, if a girl is sick and there is no nurse or medicine available then her right to health is not being upheld. Because she is sick she may not be able to go to school, or if she does go, she may be too weak to concentrate on learning. When her right to health is not fulfilled then a girl's right to education is at risk too.

Finding out more about Human Rights

Citizen movements and governments have continued to identify and define human rights so that now we have many different Treaties, Conventions, Covenants and Agreements that help us better understand and defend our rights. Here are some that are useful in examining the rights of young women anywhere in the world.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (and General Recommendation 19 on Violence) is particularly important to young women's leadership as it defines and condemns gender discrimination in all its forms. In the hands of young women CEDAW is a powerful tool and can be used to ensure primary and secondary education for girls and further training for young women; to end child and forced marriage as well as sexual exploitation and trafficking; to challenge domestic violence and enforce laws in support of survivors of violence; to stop female genital mutilation; make sure young women have access to health care services so they can make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives; and to challenge deeply rooted gender discrimination in social and cultural beliefs and systems that keep young women from assuming leadership and decision making positions in their communities. It is important to know that the Convention affirms the reproductive rights of women and targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations.

Countries that have ratified the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice. They must also write national reports to show if and how they are fulfilling their obligations.

- Find CEDAW and related information:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CEDAW/Pages/CEDAWIndex.aspx>

- CEDAW General Recommendation 19 on Violence Against Women:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm>

- To see your country's reports made to the CEDAW and other Human Rights Committees:

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/MasterCalendar.aspx?Type=Session&Lang=En

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) explains the responsibilities of governments, parents, and communities to protect children from harm and create supportive and healthy environment for children's development into adulthood. For example, every child has the right to an identity and nationality and to go to school. Children are also protected from being forced into work, from being abused, neglected, trafficked or sexually exploited. As children grow and develop their capacities and responsibilities grow too.

For an explanation of the rights of all children :

http://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf

Another example is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which supports equal opportunities in education, work, and community involvement for anyone living with a disability while recognizing their legal capacity and the need for reasonable accommodations (help and assistance) towards their active engagement in all aspects of life. In addition to ensuring access to appropriate sexual and reproductive information and services the CRPD obliges governments to make sure that these human rights concerns are not ignored or left out of national plans and community services.

To find the CRPD and related information :

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/CRPDIndex.aspx>

Two very important global agreements are, like the SDGs, a promise that governments have made to their citizens. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (1994) and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) include the topics of violence against women and girls, sexual and reproductive health, harmful traditional practices, gender stereotypes, economic discrimination, and other important areas that deeply affect the lives of women, young women and girls.

The ICPD in particular states that adolescents and young women must have access to appropriate sexual and reproductive information and services if they are to fulfill their potential and lead active and meaningful lives. The Beijing Platform for Action clearly identifies the right of women to control their sexuality, including their sexual and reproductive health. They must be able to do this free from discrimination, coercion (being forced to do something) and the threat of violence, as these are major obstacles facing women and girls' decision-making abilities. The Platform for Action underlines the importance of women being in political positions of power and the obstacles many face to reach economic equality and wellbeing. Beijing also discusses the issue of women in the media and how sexist portrayals of women perpetuate negative stereotypes and how many programs create an acceptance of violence against women.

ICPD Programme of Action :

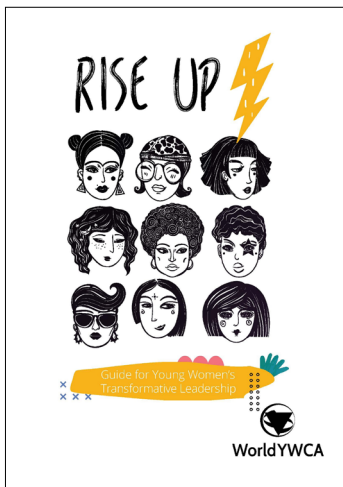
<https://www.unfpa.org/icpd#:~:text=The%20ICPD%20Programme%20of%20Action,of%20the%20global%20development%20agenda>

Beijing Platform for Action. From UN Women in pictures :

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/infocus/csw/feature-stories>

The YWCA of Canada has produced a great girl-friendly guide: A Girl's Guide to Knowing Her Rights : <https://ywcacanada.ca/>

Did you enjoy the Pocket Friendly Edition of the Rise Up! Guide for Young Women's Transformative Leadership? Want to consult and download the original 2018 edition of the Rise Up! Guide for Young Women's Transformative Leadership?



Use this link: https://www.worldywca.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Rise-UP-PDF_yellow.pdf

Want to know more about the World YWCA Rise Up! Young Women's Transformative Leadership programme? Interested in the work of the World YWCA? email: worldoffice@worldywca.org





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