



## The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, 25 November to 10 December 2016

### Reports of activities from around the Anglican Communion gathered by the International Anglican Women's Network

For more information and examples of Anglican and ecumenical activities during the 16 Days, see <http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/resources/the-16-days-of-activism.aspx>

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## Anglican Church of Southern Africa: Provincial Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union (MU) in 2012 took a resolution with its sister organisation the Anglican Women's Fellowship (AWF) to focus on Gender Based Violence.

On an annual basis, different dioceses participate in activities and programmes that respond to this call. These are in the form of marches, talks, and outreach programmes to women who are victims of sexual violence and abuse. This has grown also in some areas where the MU is working with other denominations and also work with Social

Services including Social Development, Police Services and the Education.



At the 2016 Provincial Council, the Thursdays in Black Campaign was also adopted as part of the engagement in this course. Petitions have been forwarded to the law enforcement agents and also to the Justice Department.



In 2015 and 2016, MU also participated in the workshops organised by Hope Africa for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA). Dioceses are engaged in training their members on the manual "Church Resource Manual on Sexual and Gender - Based Violence: Contextual bible studies to transform our response to SGBV".

For the 16 days of Activism of 2016, almost all the dioceses in ACSA, including the ones outside South Africa, participated in the Global Moment facilitated by Mary Sumner House with the message "IT IS NOT OK".

This work will continue as long as there are women and children who are continuously abused in the communities we serve.

## Church of North India - Social Service Institutes Conducts Seminar on Self Defence Technique for Girls

For further information see: <http://ncci1914.com/2016/12/14/said-martial-arts-karate-boys-ncci-accompanies-member-churches-pilgrimage-promote-girls-women-rights-human-rights-16-days-activism-campaign>]



Mrs Neerja Prasad Sharing about importance of self defence

Girls who are out to explore the world and enter public life are faced with several challenges due to both external factors in the society, as well as internal factors such as attitudes, beliefs, awareness, and thinking. We were all frightened by the alarming statistics of violent crime against women. Since December 2012, series of Gang rape drew attention of the people after Nirbhaya Gang rape case. The self-esteem of the women became one of the key concerns.

To address these concerns, Church of North India Social Service Institute organized a seminar on empowering Girls through Self Defence Techniques on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The Seminar took place at Dorli School, Dorli Village. The objective of the Seminar was providing learning opportunities for girls to think, be aware of self and social realities, to make appropriate choices, take mature decisions and act upon them; in order to empower them to take responsibility of their own safety and wellness while dealing with the demands and challenges of everyday life.



Dr Kalpana Jadav, Director for Physical Education, Sports and Recreation Department, Hislop College, Nagpur giving on field coaching

Mrs Neerja Prasad, President of SWFCS, was the chief guest of the inaugural Seminar. Dr Kalpana Jadhav, Director for Physical Education, Sports and Recreation Department of Hislop College, Nagpur, was the speaker, and Mr Vaibhav, Mr Rahul and Ms Rekha were the trainers for Self Defence Techniques. The Seminar began in the presence of Mrs Aradhana Upadhyay, Director, CNISSI, Mr Shyam, Principal, staff and students of Dorli school.

Mrs Aradhana shared about the need and importance of self defence and the contents of the seminar, and mentioned that it's high time that girls need to react to such offences. Girls are often targeted as they are considered as easy prey. Through the Story Mrs Aradhana shared how by becoming strong in determination one can reply to the attacker if the girls are caught in difficult situation.

Mrs Neerja Prasad while talking to the girls mentioned that girls need to become strong. She explained how small things which she wears like dupatta, hair clips and ear rings acts as props for self defence. Mrs Neerja Prasad encouraged the girls to be strong not only physically but mentally also. Presence of minds indeed plays an important role in self defence Dr Kalpana Jadhav in her talk shared healthy communication with parents, types of abuse covering Physical, mental, and emotional, developing self esteem, and managing fear under pressure. She had also practically shared about few self defence techniques. The Team of Karate instructors had conducted the practical session by giving them demonstration, and teaching them various techniques for self defence. The girls were also made to practice the same.



Practical training on self defence techniques

Approximately 102 girls participated in seminar which has empowered the girls to learn and understand the concept of Self Defence. Mr David Yohans conducted the proceeding of the program and proposed vote of thanks.

### **A Seminar on Empowering Girls and Children in the Diocese of Nagpur**

A seminar to empower girls and children on self defence skills and gender justice was organized by the Social Service Institute of Church of North India – Nagpur Diocese with the All India Council of Christian Women in New Kurvez's High school in Nagpur on 9th December 2016.

The children in this school from the Dailts indigenous communities, and their parents are mainly domestic worker or laborers. Children in India face different forms of abuse. The Church of North India engages in ministry in empowering grassroots communities to promote safe homes, safe communities and safe schools for girls , and safe spaces for women and children along with sustainable development programs and activities.



During 16 Days of Activism Campaign Revd Priscilla Reuben – President of Women’s Fellowship of Karim Nagar Diocese of Church of South India in Andhra Pradesh took the initiative to organize a meeting for female church leaders in Kazipet Andhra Pradesh, with the theme of “Great is the company of Women who Bear the tidings” based on Psalm 68:11. The women during this meeting discussed the crucial role Christian women can play to empower communities and churches to end gender based violence in the home , church and society.



Revd Priscilla Reuben (right) with Women Church Leaders of Karim Nagar Diocese of Church of South India during women leaders meeting promoting 16 Days of Activism Campaign.



Revd Papiya Durairaj ordained from Diocese of Kolkata and lecturer of Bishop College is committed in promoting and empowering students and congregations about gender justice.

Being a New Testament Scholar Revd Papiya has engaged empowering her students to use hermeneutics to deconstruct patriarchal theology. During 16 Days of Activism Campaign, Revd Papiya was actively engaged in conducting Bible studies for Pastors to re-read the Bible from Gender Justice perspective and deconstruct patriarchal theology. She has also engaged in joint endeavours to conduct Bible studies to End Domestic Violence with Bengal Baptist Union, CNI and other churches in Kolkata. West Bengal state in India has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest record of Domestic Violence as per 2014 statistics.

### **Scottish Episcopal Church: Loving One Another – a biblical discussion toolkit on gender based violence**

Several years ago, the Episcopal Church in Brazil, Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brazil, decided it was time to confront Gender Based Violence (GBV). So the Anglican Service of Diakonia and Development (SADD), which advocates for the rights of vulnerable communities, mainly women affected by gender based violence, developed a course for use in Brazilian churches to tackle and prevent GBV.

It was named ***Prevention and Intervention Strategies: Gender related violence against women*** and proved very successful. It highlighted the important role of faith communities in addressing this problem, and emphasized that domestic violence is the most common form of GBV against women. So inspirational was this course that SADD were able to set up a safe house for women fleeing abusive partners – the ***Casa Noeli dos Santos*** – a house where women may find safety and respite.

SADD had partnered with Christian Aid, with financial support from the Scottish Episcopal Church. So two years ago, Christian Aid in Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church together decided to adapt the course for use in Scotland. I was privileged to work on this with Wendy Young, the Christian Aid Development Worker. Our Scottish course is ***Loving One Another***, and I'm delighted to say is on the [IAWN website](#).

We decided a shorter course would suit our purpose, selecting five key topics from the Brazilian original: What we mean by GBV; Who the victims are; Where we find perpetrators; Local secular supports; Ways for taking this forward.

We amended the legal and societal background to fit for Scotland, chose reflective litanies to set a welcoming, trusting scene and decided to use a contextual Bible study approach for the scriptural texts. Then we organised a pilot group to try out the material. It included men and women, lay and ordained. Afterwards, they evaluated their experience of participating in the course, giving invaluable insights and positive responses as Wendy and myself finalised the toolkit. Too many people in our congregations still think this is not an issue in their midst. This needs challenging – urgently! One participant commented on how good it was to have this discussed in a church setting - exploring Biblical passages from new angles was very refreshing.

Although the course has Anglican resources, any denomination should find it welcome and useful. The Scottish Side By Side Steering Group is trying to ensure that appropriate facilitators from several denominations can take this forward.

Adapting the Brazilian material was a great leap of faith on the part of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Let us seek to do more inter-country and inter-denominational work! If you have any questions about the course, or using it, please email me at [elaine.ging@gmail.com](mailto:elaine.ging@gmail.com).

## **Not just during the 16 Days: Wearing black every Thursday**

*Elaine Cameron, Scottish Episcopal Church*

Finding gloves to fit my very short fingers is never easy. Recently, I unexpectedly found a pair. 'Try them', encouraged the young sales assistant.

'Mmm - grey, would go with black on Thursdays,' I muttered. She looked at me, questioningly.

'I wear black on Thursdays – in support of women who have been abused,' I explained.

'Yes', she said, 'I see the badge on your collar'. I continued, 'It's a sign that we want an end to all violence against women; a world where women and girls may walk without fear of being abused, verbally or physically.'

She asked. 'Are you a campaigner?' I was rather taken aback – was I?

The **Thursdays in Black** campaign was actually started by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in the 1980s as a form of peaceful protest, especially against rape and violence in war. During the 1990s Balkan Wars, it helped bring about the '**Women in Black**' campaign, when women protested especially against the use of rape as a weapon of war. Since 2013, the WCC have been trying to revive **Thursdays in Black**, focusing on ways it can challenge attitudes that lead to rape and violence, and standing alongside the many women and girls who bear scars of violence not only in our own country, but all round the world: like my friend L in Syria; M in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and many others.

I am grateful that the WCC are doing this, because I strongly believe the churches need to speak more openly about this issue. For too long, we naively thought that such violence did not happen within church congregations. It is indeed sobering to learn that one in four women here in the UK face violence at some point in their lives.

At Evensong in September, I spoke about **Thursdays in Black**, but afterwards sensed some doubt that such a simple gesture could encourage healthier relationships between women and men. I am bold enough to believe that it can; that rape and violence against women is not only wrong, but can be ended. Christians believe that each of us, man or woman, is made in God's image. It follows that to hit or abuse anyone is therefore to abuse God. This is a justice issue.

It is about six months since I decided to be a **Thursdays in Black** supporter. The experience is beginning to take on the form of a small spiritual discipline, and open up unexpected challenges. The first challenges were the conversations with strangers, often in a shop - like the incident at the beginning of this piece. After the basics, how much do I say - am I opening up their pain, their knowledge of another's experience, or is this an innocent inquiry? In August, hesitating about the purchase of a black batwing top, I muttered to the saleswoman, 'It's just for Thursdays.' She stared at me, 'Only Thursdays?' I explained a little about **Thursdays in Black**. She was interested, asked questions, indicating that she would tell her aunt, a clergywoman.

And then there was the week when I forgot the day! Half way through the morning, I suddenly realized I was wearing a favourite navy sweater and green trousers, but it was Thursday! My immediate reaction was to go to change, but then I paused. Did it really matter? Who was going to see, apart from my husband? Then I reflected that most of those who are victims of violence have no choice in the matter. They are



usually very tightly controlled. But I was lucky enough to have choice. Changing into black was not only a sign of solidarity with them, but a mark of my own commitment. A small, but meaningful gesture.

Gender based violence is such a painful global issue harming women, children, and men, that we often feel there is nothing we can do about it. But anyone, man or woman, can wear black on Thursdays, keeping this issue in the forefront of people's minds – even a T-shirt can become a symbol of strength and courage!

### **Webinar for the 16 Days**

One of the initiatives hosted during the 16 Days was an online webinar hosted by the Anglican Alliance and the International Anglican Women's Network (IAWN). The webinar – a discussion about how churches worldwide are tackling gender-based violence and speaking out for gender justice – is now available to watch as a video at <http://view6.workcast.net/ControlUsher.aspx?cpak=9632269371672674&pak=9898783646446940> (free registration needed).

Chaired by the Revd Rachel Carnegie, the co-executive director of the Anglican Alliance, the webinar included a range of speakers from around the world.

Amongst the speakers was Peter Grant, the director of Restored, an international Christian alliance working to transform relationships and end violence against women, spoke about the “First Man Standing” project which engages men in conversations around gender-based violence and aims to redefine concepts of masculinity.

“As Christians, it is important to reflect on that model of masculinity given by the media and compare it to Jesus...”, he said. “One of my first pleas to all of us is to reinstate Jesus as our model of masculinity, rather than those that we see so often in our media.”

The deputy head of the Latin America and Caribbean division at Christian Aid, Mara Manzoni Luz, spoke about the link between gender-based violence and high levels of inequality.

The chairperson of Hope Africa, the Revd Canon Dr Vicentia Kgabe, Rector of the College of the Transfiguration in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, said that churches can play an “essential role” in providing a safe space for survivors of gender-based violence. “We need to equip our clergy with the necessary tools and knowledge for them to be in a better position to care,” she said.

The director for women in church and society at the Anglican Communion Office, the Revd Terrie Robinson, concluded the presentation by celebrating the work done by churches worldwide in tackling gender-based violence.

“We need to work to transform damaging behaviours and attitudes, in individuals, in communities and in leadership structures,” she said. “And we can do that transformative work better if we work together.”

## **A Safe House and the 16 Days Of Activism Campaign Against Gender Based Violence**



During the 16 Days of Activism Campaign against Gender Based Violence a variety of activities were organized across Burundi as part of the commitment of the Anglican Church of Burundi to raise awareness of GBV and end violence in all its forms. Many stories have been shared by beneficiaries as to how their lives had been transformed and their families no longer live with permanent conflict.

A safe house has been launched that will provide services related to counselling victims of violence and also be able to refer to other centres those needing more specialized help.

The Archbishop, the Most Revd Martin Blaise Nyaboho highlighted the main activities that the campaign has focused on - the mobilization of people to more commitment against gender based violence, good financial management in the family, the role of the police to end GBV, training, and sensitizing and equipping priests with skills to help their communities to understand and work towards the eradication of gender based violence.

The Mothers' Union Department of Buye Diocese organized a campaign day as part of the 16 Days of Activism to end violence against women and girls with hundreds of women and men joining a long procession.



The Bishop of Buye the Rt Revd Sixbert Macumi thanked the participants and expressed his great joy concerning steps already taken in the fight against GBV. “We feel so encouraged because people are more and more understanding why we have to fight for a society without GBV,” he said.

The Archbishop of Burundi, the Most Revd Martin Blaise Nyaboho who also attended the event, reaffirmed the commitment of the Church to stand for equal rights and dignity for all human beings. “Yes, the Anglican Church of Burundi has achieved a lot by way of eradicating gender based violence, but more still has to be done”, said the Archbishop.

Mrs Claudette Kigeme, the Provincial Mothers’ Union Coordinator said that she was pleased with the achievements of the Mothers’ Union departments in all the dioceses of the Province. As women and men have received training through the different programmes provided by MU and then been willing to share their knowledge with the rest of their community conditions for families have improved. Some stories were shared by beneficiaries as to how their lives had been transformed and their families no longer lived with permanent conflict.

In order to encourage and acknowledge such achievements bicycles were given to those who have made a particular impact in their community that will facilitate future activities.

### **Jordan: Report from Leila Diab**

The Episcopal Women's Committee (based in Jordan) in the Diocese of Jerusalem held its workshop on the subject of the 16 Days of Activism against Violence against Women on November 25, 2016 at the Church of the Redeemer in Amman. Around 40 young men and women between the ages 18 to 30 attended from the different



parishes in Jordan, as well as six teachers from Ahllyieh and Bishop Schools in Amman.

The workshop included a word of welcome by committee member Sana Rizk, followed by a meditation by Canon Faeq Haddad, rector of the Church of the Redeemer in Amman.

Canon Haddad's meditation specified the importance of gender equality,

women's rights in church, how Jesus Christ treated women, and how we need to follow His example.

Ms. Dima Karadscheh, an activist for gender equality, presented a session about women's rights, and her empowerment. She divided the participants into groups basing her program on "Violence Built on Gender on both Practice and Reality".

The subjects tackled were the following:

1. Characteristics of men and women
2. What professions should they each choose? And why?
3. The tree of Violence, causes and results...
4. CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Violence against Women) - a brief summary of its most important points.
5. Challenges facing Violence Against Women, built on Inequality.
6. Different kinds of violence - at home, society and country levels.



The second part of the workshop included a big concentration on social skills amongst the youth.

Dr Ayda Maayaa created a very interesting discussion amongst the youth about the importance of dialogue amongst people and the right language of communication which would eliminate violence and will present a picture with a clear image.

She also emphasized the importance of tolerance, self assertion, solid thinking and creativity. In addition to that discussions were focused on decision making, and the ability to accept each other and work together.

The workshop ended with special thanks to Bishop Suhail Dawany and his wife Shafeeqa for their wonderful support and understanding. Thanks to Canon Faeq Hadad for his meditation, for Mrs Dima Karadscheh and Dr Aida Maayaa, and finally for the wonderful women committee of the diocese for their endless efforts and concern for making a difference amongst women, and caring for the diocese, clergy and laity.

## 'With One Voice': Fiji Council of Churches documentary

A documentary film made on behalf of the Fiji Council of Churches, 'With One Voice: Churches against Violence against Women and Children', is now on-line.

Following a motion by the Most Reverend Dr Winston Halapua, Archbishop of the Anglican Diocese of Polynesia, the Fiji Council of Churches made a consensus decision in September 2016 to support the 16 Days of Activism and also the 'Break the Silence' Sunday initiative (marked on the Sunday immediately preceding November 25, the start of the 16 Days of Activism).

Archbishop Halapua has named the issue as a priority; "It is our business as Christians engaging in God's activity ... We have the House of Sarah and all the ordained ministers and we have all our committees and it is now in a curriculum from preschool, primary and secondary".



The Fiji Council of Churches' campaign includes a 43 minute documentary 'With One Voice: Churches against Violence against Women and Children', now on-line [here](#), and a 60-second commercial for television and cinema, [here](#), which features church leaders speaking out against gender-based-violence.

"It is important that we not only address the sin of gender-based violence and child abuse within our church community, but as faith leaders we speak with one voice in condemning it and calling for our communities and homes to be safe," said Fiji Council of Churches president Revd Dr Tevita Banivanua of the Methodist Church.

Fiji Council of Churches vice president Major Uraia Dravikula of the Salvation Army said, "The sad thing is many Christian men make excuses for their behavior. They say it

is their duty to do such things to women. They make the excuse that it comes from God for them to do those things. But that is false. Doctrinally it is not correct, Christ does not support those kinds of things. Christ elevates the status of women and children in the community and he comes up hard against those who have those kind of standards in the community especially those within the church dressed in sheep's clothing."



The documentary offers glimpses of the work that many churches are already doing or have started doing in their own faith communities. For example, Gender Specialist Ms Tupou Vere describes the genesis of the House of Sarah which has been established as a centre where women seeking urgent assistance or advice can go.

The House of Sarah runs awareness raising workshops in three languages and has formulated school curricula on building respectful behaviour.

The House of Sarah has also been instrumental in setting up the Christian Network Talanoa (CNT), a Fiji-based ecumenical network of organised women's units working on removing the culture of silence and shame around violence against women especially in faith-based settings. The network has assisted the Fiji Council of Churches campaign by producing liturgical resources.

The documentary film and commercial were produced by the Methodist Church in Fiji Department of Communications. The initiative was supported by UN Women.

### **Homily offered on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016 by Ann Glenesk of the Scottish Episcopal Church**

The Good Samaritan noticed the injured man and having done so directed and focused all his energies on him. He put aside his own needs until the man had recovered from his injuries. The Good Samaritan showed compassion and caring to his new neighbour.

Today we women and men come together in the presence of Jesus to demonstrate our awareness of the injuries sustained by women and girls here and across the world by modern-day robbers who appear in many guises.

We with women and men of all faiths and none gather together today – the day of the Elimination of Violence against women and girls to focus our thoughts and prayers on those whose lives are darkened, tainted, violated and destroyed by psychological, mental, sexual, physical and spiritual violence.

Those who suffer include those with disabilities, LGBTQI community, migrants, refugees, those in war torn countries and widows, some as young as 13 years.

In 2 Samuel 13:1-22 we read of the rape of Tamar by her brother Amnon – following which Tamar was discarded and shunned. A clergy woman from India writes in a report published by the Church of Scotland last year ‘The detestable part is when women and girls are raped during the evening or night, there are many who pose ridiculous questions as ‘What was she doing alone in the night? Why did she have to go out at that time? As though she deserved to be raped because of the crime of going out alone - often to merely access a toilet.’

In the UK approximately 90,000 women are raped each year and every week two women are murdered by their partner or ex partner. Many women and children seek sanctuary in refuges having been made homeless due to domestic abuse.

In John 10:10 Jesus says ‘The robber comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.’

Jesus came so that all women, men and children – all made in God’s image – would live life in fullness – all having the opportunity to live, without the scourge of violence.

While being aware of the many injuries incurred, we may be unable to emulate the Good Samaritan, by delivering direct care, however, we can with the help of God, deliver prayers, messages of hope, of determination, of resolve to the victims of violence that none of us will ignore their plight till violence ends and gender justice is achieved.

Gender Justice is a human rights issue and hope exists in the 193 countries who are members of the United Nations. The UN in 2015 set 17 Sustainable Development Goals – to end poverty and to build a better world by 2030. Goals include ending hunger, poverty – providing inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Goal 5 reads, ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’.

Targets within this goal include the elimination of all forms of violence in public and private spheres, human trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, child, early and forced marriage, and FGM.

Hope comes from many governmental and non-governmental organisations, charities and faith communities, and those providing safe spaces for women in refugee camps. Those providing compassion and care without thought of their own safety. The Mothers’ Union Literacy and Parenting programme. Christian Aid, 28 Too Many

working to end FGM, the Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance (TARA), Women's Aid, the White Ribbon Campaign, etc

While we remember the victims – not forgetting the 276 girls who were kidnapped in Chibok, Nigeria, by Boko Haram in 2014, many of whom are still unaccounted for – We also take hope and inspiration from the strength shown by the victims – the women and girls who turn their lives around, who go on to lobby and help others. Who refuse to allow violence to define them. Malala shot by the Taliban in 2012 for going to school – who now champions the cause for education for all children and many, many more.

Jesus showed us the way during his lifetime and we as his disciples in 2016 are called to continue the work as best we can, starting by sharing the experience of today with others. We like the Good Samaritan aim be good neighbours. Amen.