



16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

A FAITH AND COMMUNITY- BASED TOOLKIT

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Foreword

Josephine Hicks, Vice President, International Program Operations

"Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being? I will, with God's help." This portion of the Baptismal Covenant reflects a driving principle behind all of Episcopal Relief & Development's work. In everything we do, we seek to respect the dignity of every human being. Respecting the dignity of every human being includes eliminating barriers to growth and development. For women and children, those barriers can include unequal access to economic resources and decision-making. Worse, women and children too often suffer from violence. Violence has a devastating impact not only on the women who are direct victims of violence, but also one for families and communities. It also contributes to cycles of poverty. By contrast, preventing violence, promoting equal access to economic opportunities and decision-making, and cultivating women as leaders helps women thrive and become productive contributors to their communities and economies. This toolkit will help you and your congregation learn more about these important issues and Episcopal Relief & Development's transformative work in this area.

Tammi Mott, Vice President, Episcopal Church Programs

At Episcopal Relief & Development, we and our partners around the world share a vision for the work we do. It is a vision of community where all people – regardless of age, sex, gender or gender identity – live together in abundant dignity, trust, hope and love. This vision springs from our faith in the goodness of creation and our belief that every being is created equally in God's image. This vision is sustained by our deep commitment to our work. As demonstrated throughout the stories and resource links in this toolkit, both hope-filled and transformational in helping women and girls to rise-up empowered and resilient. Be it for 16 or 365 days, I invite you to join with us and our global partners as we journey toward this vision. I lift up to you this toolkit and the opportunities it provides to learn more, pray more and do more, so that, by our working, together gender-based violence may truly be no more.

The Rev. Pascual Torres, co-founder and Executive Director, Siempre Unidos

"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28). Siempre Unidos is a faith-based organization committed to the eradication of gender-based violence (GBV) and all other forms of violence and discrimination. We welcome the initiative launched by Episcopal Relief & Development, 16 Days of Activism against GBV, by sharing stories, reflecting together, praying and acting. For those who accept the invitation, the agency provides a toolbox kit for the journey that will empower each participant to give an effective response and, to step firmly into the fight to eradicate a form of violence so subtle that it masks itself as culturally correct, socially accepted, harmless and sometimes even funny. The material in this toolkit reflects its roots and connection with the Baptismal Covenant of the Episcopal Church as it is written in its Book of Common Prayer: "Will you persevere in resisting evil... Will you seek to serve Christ in all persons... Will you strive for justice... and respect the dignity of every human being?" it asks. And the people respond, "I will with God's help. Amen."

Trigger warning

This toolkit includes resources, factual accounts and narratives around themes of physical and sexual violence and other forms of gender-based discrimination. This content may be difficult for some. We encourage you always to care for your safety and well-being.

Introduction

Chiseche Salome Mibenge, Director, Gender Initiatives

Episcopal Relief & Development's work with local community members, faith leaders and other partners globally focuses on attaining gender equity, balancing structures of power in societies and encouraging shared decision-making in household and other roles. The organization helps ensure that women's rights are recognized and protected, working with partners to define specific actions to address discrimination, gender-based violence (GBV) and other forms of abuse in their context.



Liberian youth advocate for safe schools at a soccer tournament.

Partners bring impressive innovation and energy to promoting women's rights. For example, in a rural community in Liberia, young female athletes gathered for a soccer tournament. They wore their team colors proudly, and they had two goals: to win the game and to raise awareness of youth-led activism to eliminate violence against girls in Liberia's schools.

The players had undergone hours of coaching as well as years of training and learning about the rights of women and the realities of GBV. Their training was facilitated by the Episcopal Church of Liberia-Relief & Development (ECL-RD), the humanitarian arm of Liberia's Episcopal Church and a long-term partner of Episcopal Relief & Development. Episcopal Relief & Development works with ECL-RD and its networks to encourage and train faith leaders to speak out against violence and to change cultural norms in their communities that create an environment that enables violence. Uniting for change at the soccer tournament, a focal point for fun and for raising awareness, was just one activity Christian and Muslim youth leaders in Liberia carried out across 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (the 16 Days of Activism).

The Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University in New Jersey started the 16 Days of Activism in 1991 to amplify feminist voices and bridge women's movements globally in order to secure women's rights. The campaign runs each year from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) until December 10 (World Human Rights Day). These dates were chosen specifically to reinforce the message and global understanding that GBV is a violation of human rights. Each year, millions of people unite across the globe during these days to raise awareness and initiate discussions in their communities, challenge discriminatory attitudes and fight for a world free of violence against women and girls.

Annually, Episcopal Relief & Development's partners in countries such as Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, Liberia, Brazil and Honduras to mobilize community activists at local

and national levels to engage in 16 Days of Activism. Liberian youth faith leaders sponsored by ECL-RD have protested against violence using theater, music, and soccer; sex workers in Honduras, accompanied by The Episcopal Church's health ministry, marched through a red-light district and raised awareness about the right to live free from violence; and women in the [Anglican Diocese of Muyinga](#), Burundi, marched with the bishop, and used drama, dance, song and dialogue to raise awareness of GBV and promote women's empowerment.

Episcopal Relief & Development has published a toolkit for the 16 Days of Activism. The toolkit's objectives are:

- to encourage all its networks to join in this global effort;
- to raise awareness of GBV and the work being done to address it; and
- to amplify the voices and prayers of all working together for gender equity and the empowerment of the most vulnerable women in their communities, such as women with disabilities, and incarcerated women.

Gender-Based Violence

Gender based violence (GBV) is violence directed against people because of their sex, gender, gender identity and expression, or is violence that disproportionately affects people of a particular gender. Intimate-partner violence is the most pervasive form of GBV worldwide; almost one-third (30 percent) of women who have been in a relationship report experiencing some form of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner in their lifetime.¹ GBV reinforces stereotypes and inequalities in society, and it disproportionately affects women and girls.

The subordination of women's rights all over the world is sustained by harmful social, cultural and religious attitudes and practices and, in some cases, is encoded in law and policy. GBV occurs in various forms such as domestic violence, sexual assault, forced sterilization, child marriage, revenge porn and cyber-stalking. It commonly is categorized into five central inter-related forms:

- Physical violence
- Psychological violence
- Sexual violence
- Socio-economic violence
- Spiritual violence

Spiritual abuse is described as coercion and control of one individual by another in a faith context that can occur within faith communities. This abuse may include: misuse of Scripture or the pulpit to control behavior; excusing violent behavior; requiring submission to abuse; and reinforcing male privilege, for example by suggesting that the abuser has a divine position or that victims' endurance of abuse is Christ-like.²

¹ <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

² Restored: A Handbook for Female Christian Survivors of Domestic Abuse (2019)
www.restoredrelationships.org

On November 25, 2013, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, the former presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church, the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, stated:

*Our churches must accept responsibility for our own part in perpetuating oppressive attitudes towards women. In penitence and faith, we must move forward in such a way that our churches truly become a living witness to our belief that both women and men are made in the image of God.*³

As Christians, we believe that God created all humans equally, in God's image, and that all are worthy of dignity, adequate resources and to be in loving, liberating and life-giving relationship with God, one another and God's creation. Our Scriptures, Jesus' Way of Love and our Baptismal Covenant call us to love one another and to seek and serve Christ in all persons. GBV, however, continues to be an obstacle to that vision for equality, development and peace. The promise of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) – to leave no one behind – also cannot be fulfilled without putting an end to GBV.

Faith leaders have a unique position of trust and influence at both the individual and community levels to claim and nurture this vision, acting as catalytic agents of change. Ultimately, change must occur within our own hearts, homes and communities to be lasting and effective. These are all areas in which faith leaders are actively engaged.

The Toolkit

The Episcopal Church General Convention has passed various resolutions calling for a faith-based response to gender-based violence (GBV). In 2012, the Church resolved *that parishes and dioceses be encouraged to participate in annual awareness campaigns about gender violence*; and, in 2015, it noted that it *deeply regretted the lack of progress in stemming the global pandemic of violence against women* and requested that its clergy and congregations *speak out to transform the unjust silence of society in the face of this widespread practice of violence*.⁴ This toolkit provides a framework for users to join a global faith-based movement against GBV, to pray, act and learn together.

Episcopal Relief & Development's work engages community and faith leaders to take action and speak out against violence around the world. Our programs play a pivotal role in creating interfaith networks in many countries that provide tools, skills and support for leaders to challenge the attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate injustice and discrimination. This toolkit draws heavily from the learnings from this work.

The toolkit is a set of resources specifically to help guide people of faith through the 16 Days of Activism and beyond, to a 365-day commitment to restoring dignity to individuals, families and communities everywhere. The toolkit will remain accessible as a usable and valuable resource all year round.

³ <https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/pressreleases/presiding-bishops-sermon-opening-16-days-against-gender-violence/>

⁴ Written statement submitted by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry at the 63rd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (2019)

We encourage users with a social media account such as Twitter to share Scripture and facts and to pray for all those facing GVB as well as those actively engaged in ministries to combat it. The toolkit contains resources for faith and community-based action. Users also can share how they are using these resources @EpiscopalRelief #16DaysofActivism

A Faith and Community-Based Toolkit

This toolkit inspires prolonged reflection rooted in faith. It provides users with Scripture that can reinforce our belief in the inherent and equal dignity of all God's children as made in God's image, and it centers responses to survivors of GBV in our faith.

All of the reflections and actions contained within the toolkit can be completed alone. However, groups, such as youth and women's ministries, and collective prayer groups, are encouraged to consider using them as a group.

An Evidence-Based Toolkit

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, in his statement to the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, spoke about the disproportionate suffering of women: women of color; women of African descent; indigenous women; women with disabilities; women experiencing discrimination for their ethnicity, race, caste, descent, language, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity/expression; migrant, refugee, internally displaced, undocumented or stateless women; enslaved, trafficked or incarcerated women; rural women; women experiencing poverty; unemployed women; women whose work is considered immoral, illegal or unacceptable; older and aging women; widows; and women who are heads of households.

Systems and structures that oppress women based on their gender and other intersecting and marginalized identities can dramatically heighten vulnerability to GBV, the presiding bishop noted.

In response, the toolkit includes facts about violence experienced by some of the most vulnerable women globally. It provides sobering facts about GBV to raise awareness of the extent to which it occurs globally. It also highlights responses and preventative measures led primarily by faith communities. The toolkit contains resources for faith-based action that are supported by evidence of impact and/or are recognized as best practice.

We have divided the toolkit into 16 Actions, parallel to the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, but we encourage the user to regard the toolkit as a living document that can be referred to and utilized for all 365 days of the year.

ACTION 1: PRAY TOGETHER

Faith

Dear God, creator of the heavens and the earth, we pray for all who have gathered globally to observe the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women.

Help us to see one another through eyes enlightened by understanding and compassion.

Release us from prejudice so that we can receive the stories of our sisters and brothers with respect and attention.

Open our ears to the cries of a suffering world and the healing melodies of peace.

Empower us to be instruments in bringing about your justice, peace and equality everywhere.⁵



A young girl in Sri Lanka is seen praying.

Fact Sheet

- The United Nations recognized violence against women as a human-rights violation in 1993 when it adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.
- Globally, an estimated 35 percent of women have experienced physical, sexual or psychological abuse.⁶
- Women physically or sexually abused by their partners report higher rates of a several important health problems. For example, they are 16 percent more likely to have a low-birth-weight baby and almost twice as likely to experience depression compared to women who have not experienced partner violence.⁷

Reflection and Action

Join in prayer at the start of 16 Days of Activism.

The United Nations has organized four world conferences on women. Each produced a political declaration.

The Fourth World Conference took place in Beijing in 1995. The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action is a key global-policy document that sets strategic objectives and actions for the advancement of women and the achievement of gender equality. In preparation for that conference, members of the Anglican Mothers' Union and Episcopal churches met frequently to identify their priorities.

During the conference, the women's consultation included a daily noonday prayer – an important pause amid long days of negotiation and debate about ecumenical women's priorities

⁵ Beijing Noonday Prayer [updated for Episcopal Relief & Development toolkit]

⁶https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85239/9789241564625_eng.pdf;jsessionid=9C0A487649A2AE2B08FAFBE400AEF2C0?sequence=1

⁷ https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85239/9789241564625_eng.pdf?sequence=1

for gender equality. Twenty-five years after the conference, women around the world continue to use this communal prayer, adapted to their circumstances. The prayer above is an adaptation of that prayer. We invite you to coordinate a noontime prayer with members of your faith community.

The presiding bishop's delegation to the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women facilitated an online study group – Beijing +25: Celebrating the Blessing, Realizing the Dream – to review the Beijing Platform for Action and publish blogs about the 12 areas of concern the platform raised. Read the blogs [here](#).

Read more about The Episcopal Church's continued advocacy for women's rights in the [Episcopal News Service](#).

ACTION 2: MAKE A COMMITMENT

Faith

Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2

Fact Sheet

- Four women a day in the US are killed by their partner.⁸
- In the US, White women earn only \$0.79 for every \$1 earned by a White man, Black women \$0.62 and Hispanic or Latino women \$0.54.⁹
- 67 percent of the transgender community reported negative workplace outcomes such as being fired or forced to resign, not being hired or being denied a promotion while in the workforce.¹⁰

Reflection and Action

Bearing one another's burdens requires that faith communities respond to gender-based violence (GBV) and other forms of gender discrimination and hold themselves accountable to survivors. Commit your faith community to fulfilling the spirit and actions of the global campaign. You can adapt and adopt the pledge below and post it on your website or on social media.

We proclaim with one voice that violence against women exists in our communities and is morally, spiritually and universally intolerable. We recognize the damage that gender-based violence and other forms of gender injustice do to women, girls and society as a whole.

We acknowledge that our sacred texts, traditions and values too often have been misused to perpetuate and condone abuse. We draw upon our healing texts and practices to help make our families and societies whole.

As people of faith, we believe in the inherent dignity and divinity intrinsic to each person and are called to uphold it by Matthew 25:40: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

We hereby commit ourselves to learn and take action surrounding gender-based violence by engaging in the global campaign, 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, and we will continue to learn and take action after its conclusion.

⁸ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mind-games/201909/the-number-women-murdered-partner-is-rising>

⁹ <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2020/03/24/482141/quick-facts-gender-wage-gap/>

¹⁰ <https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/usts/USTS-Full-Report-Dec17.pdf>

ACTION 3: DIALOGUE ON GIRLS' EDUCATION

Faith

Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.

Proverbs 31:25

Fact Sheet



A FAMA Card depicting gender bias in girls' access to education.

- At least 207,459 children younger than 18, most of them girls, were married in the United States between 2000 and 2015.¹¹
- One in five women in college experiences sexual assault.¹² Students are at the highest risk of sexual assault in the first few months of their first and second semesters in college.¹³
- Women who identify as lesbian, bisexual or gay are more likely to experience sexual assault on college campuses than those who identify as heterosexual.¹⁴
- In Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe, constitutional prohibitions against gender discrimination were used effectively to challenge regulations that banned pregnant students from attending school.¹⁵

Reflection and Action

Episcopal Relief & Development's Violence Against Women and Girls program in Liberia, a partnership with the Episcopal Church Liberia Relief, convenes faith leaders for dialogue and reflection on religious, social and cultural practices and beliefs that can undermine or uplift women and girls' strength and dignity. A crucial tool for the facilitation of thoughtful and challenging reflections is the Fact, Association, Meaning and Action (FAMA) tool. FAMA is a behavior-change communication tool presented as a set of visual cards used to assist faith leaders, women, girls, boys and men in identifying and understanding various social phenomena that affect women and girls' freedoms. Most cards depict discrimination against girls to emphasize links between early socialization and subsequent abuses such as intimate-partner violence.

FAMA trainings foster a deepening engagement around socio-economic factors that inhibit the education of girls, such as early pregnancy and sexual abuse and harassment by teachers and

¹¹ https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/child-marriage-in-the-US-prevalence-impact_8-2020_ICRW.pdf

¹² <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ccsvsftr.pdf>
<https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ccsvsftr.pdf>

¹³ Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network. (2016). Campus Sexual Violence Statistics

¹⁴ <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ccsvsftr.pdf>

¹⁵ https://www.worldpolicycenter.org/sites/default/files/WORLD_Policy_Brief_Equal_Rights_For_Women_and_Girls_in_Constitutions_2015.pdf

peers. The FAMA Cards have led to scrutiny and challenges to long-held sentiments such as: "If you invest in a girl's education, she will simply be married off and your investment will be wasted."

Review the images of the FAMA cards themed "education for girls" and "sex for grades," found [here](#). Then engage your community in a dialogue in response to the questions the cards pose.

ACTION 4: FOSTER DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Faith

In the Church, too, we must avoid any implications in our teachings or behavior that men and boys are in any way superior to women and girls or entitled to dominate them. We know that the Bible was written in cultures where women were not equal. But Genesis is clear that, in our creation, [all genders] equally reflect God's image and so are worthy of equal dignity and respect (Gen. 1:27). The same equality is true in salvation, for "there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ" (Gal. 3:28).

[Archbishop](#) Thabo Cecil Makgoba, To the Laos – To the People of God (2013)

Fact Sheet

- The Dutch Reformed Church Botswana ordained its first female priest in Botswana in 2003.
- The Church of England appointed its first female bishop, the Rt. Rev. Libby Lane, in 2019.
- In 1988, the Rt. Rev. Barbara Harris became the first female bishop consecrated in the Anglican Communion.

Reflection and Action

Imagine a gathering of bishops. Imagine a convening of leading Episcopal school educators. Do you imagine an inclusive and diverse leadership?

The Beijing Platform states that representation of women in leadership is critical for development. Episcopal Relief & Development's programs invest in institutional change that supports transformative leadership positions for women to help change harmful attitudes about women's role in society. This is highlighted in the Mazi yi Moyo (Water is Life) program in Angola, a partnership with the Anglican Church of Angola.

This program delivered clean water and sanitation to thousands of Angolans through Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) solutions. It also accomplished another goal: elevating female leaders. Every community WASH committee contains an equal number of men and women. This has inspired the community to see women not only as beneficiaries of a development program but also as assets, specifically as decision makers and leaders in designing and delivering life-saving services.

Read more about the Mazi yi Moyo program in Episcopal Relief & Development's 2019 [annual report](#).

Read Tearfund's guidelines for integrating women's specific sanitation needs into WASH programs [here](#).

ACTION 5: DIALOGUE WITH THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION ON ENDING GBV

Faith

For just as a body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less part of the body.

1 Corinthians 12:12-15

Fact Sheet

- About 17 percent of Zambian girls aged 15 to 19 are married, compared to only 1 percent of boys of the same age group.¹⁶
- 32 percent of Kenyan young women aged 18 to 24 and 18 percent of their male counterparts reported experiencing sexual violence before age 18.¹⁷

Reflection and Action

Mandy Marshall, the director for gender justice for the Anglican Communion, is hosting a series of panel events and webinars to mark the 16 Days of Activism. Speakers will include the Most Rev. Thabo Cecil Makgoba, archbishop of Capetown and metropolitan of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. Series themes will include: addressing gender-based violence (GBV) around the communion; engaging men in ending GBV; advocacy and gender justice; and identifying the signs of GBV. Speakers represent organizations such as the International Anglican Youth Network and the Mother's Union. Register for events using the links below, and participate in the dialogue through Zoom and/or YouTube.

Registration Links:

1. GBV: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_jA6DgazzQWOxBJ5jvxA2Vw
2. Engaging men: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_bV7wVT1sTg6xMJ1BHy5neQ
3. Theology and prayer: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8lOdbaEbSX-9R-xVaLa4dQ
4. Advocacy: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_R79QF8TBS6WyZPm-44ncCw



Episcopal Relief and Development Partners in the Diocese of Aru, DRC, create a poster of GBV program strategies and interventions.

¹⁶ <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/news/zambia-fighting-gender-based-violence-fresh-cases-continue-emerge>

¹⁷ <https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2018/may/gender-based-violence-in-kenya>

ACTION 6: ENGAGE MEN AND BOYS

Faith

Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman.

1 Corinthians 11:11

Fact Sheet

- Men are more likely to perpetrate violence if they have low levels of education; a history of child maltreatment; exposure to domestic violence against their mothers; harmful use of alcohol; unequal gender norms, including attitudes accepting of violence; or a sense of entitlement over women.¹⁸
- One in 40 men in the US is a victim of rape or attempted rape during his lifetime.¹⁹
- In the US, 97 percent of domestic-abuse perpetrators are male.²⁰

Reflection and Action

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a societal crisis, and it is imperative that we engage women and girls, men and boys in combatting it so that our work is transformative. Engaging men and boys to transform harmful gender norms and unequal power dynamics is critical to achieving gender equality. For transformative, sustainable change to occur, men and boys must see themselves as partners in the process. Men and boys also benefit when harmful norms are challenged.

[St. John's](#) Episcopal Church in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, engages men and boys, women and girls in its ministry for gender equality and justice. Initiatives include a project advocating for equitable access to menstrual-hygiene products and a forum for men and boys to examine their responsibilities to end GBV and other forms of gender inequity. [Conversations for Men](#) regularly convenes for men and boys to discuss themes such as love, consent, authenticity, masculinity, empathy and alcohol.

We encourage you to review the image of the Faith, Association, Meaning Action card themed “economic violence,” found [here](#), and then engage your community in dialogue in response to the questions it poses.

Recommended Reading

“[A Father's Hope: An Equal World](#)” by Episcopal Relief & Development Senior Program Officer Ernest Cajuste
Promundo's “[The role of fathers in Parenting for gender equality](#)”
The World Council of Churches and the AIDS Initiative in Africa's “[Contextual Bible Study Manual on Transformative Masculinity](#)”

¹⁸ <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

¹⁹ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/2015data-brief508.pdf>

²⁰ <https://opdv.ny.gov/professionals/abusers/genderandipv.html>

ACTION 7: ENGAGE WITH THE EPISCOPAL PUBLIC POLICY NETWORK

Faith

Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

Isaiah 1:17

Fact Sheet

- 84 percent of Native-American and Alaskan-Native women have experienced violence, 56 percent have experienced sexual violence and, of that second group, more than 90 percent have experienced violence at the hands of a non-tribal member.²¹
- American-Indian and Alaska-Native women are 1.2 times as likely as non-Hispanic White only women to experience violence in their lifetimes and 1.7 times as likely to have experienced violence in the past year.²²

Reflection and Action

The Episcopal Public Policy Network (EPPN), run by the Office of Government Relations, is a grassroots network of Episcopalians across the country dedicated to carrying out the Baptismal Covenant call to strive for justice and peace through the active ministry of public-policy advocacy. EPPN supports efforts to stop violence against women and advocates for strengthening legislative protections for them. Its Spring 2019 action alert quoted the Rev. Bradley Hauff, missionary for Indigenous Ministries:

“The Violence Against Women Act is significant especially for Indigenous Native-American women, who experience, in proportion to the general US population, much higher rates of domestic abuse and violence, higher than any group. In particular, laws which have made it virtually impossible to prosecute non-Indigenous men in tribal courts for acts of violence such as rape and murder committed against Indigenous women, as well as child abuse and sex trafficking on reservations, have exacerbated this problem.”

EPPN's advocacy for just laws and policy is key to preventing gender-based violence (GBV) and ensuring government accountability to survivors.

EPPN invites Episcopalians to [show support](#) for the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019, which would, among other things, improve the response to violence against Indigenous women, including Alaska-Native tribes. EPPN also urges the passage of the [Safe from the Start Act](#). The Episcopal Church will continue advocating in support of this work into the new Congressional session beginning in 2021.

²¹ <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/249736.pdf>

²² <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/violence-against-american-indian-and-alaska-native-women-and-men>, note that Non-Hispanic White only represents people who identified themselves as both non-Hispanic and White, with no other race.

Recommended Reading

The [Executive Summary of Canada's "National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls"](#)

["Seeing the Face of God in Each Other: The Antiracism Training Manual of The Episcopal Church"](#)

ACTION 8: DIALOGUE ON HIV/AIDS AND DISCRIMINATION

Faith

do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

Isaiah 41:10

Fact Sheet

- People living with HIV/AIDS experience high levels of labor discrimination. The International Labor Organization reports that people with HIV/AIDS have an unemployment rate three times higher than national averages.²³
- Women living with HIV experience significantly higher rates of intimate-partner violence than women that do not have the virus.²⁴
- Specific groups of women are disproportionately affected by HIV. An analysis of studies measuring the pooled prevalence of HIV in 50 countries estimated that, globally, female sex workers are approximately 14 times more likely to be infected than other women of reproductive age.²⁵



Siempre Unidos counselors facilitate a support group in Honduras for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Reflection and Action

Every year on December 1, millions of people come together to commemorate World AIDS Day. It's an opportunity for people worldwide to advocate for the rights of people living with HIV and to memorialize those who have died from an AIDS-related illness. Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first international day for global health. Since then, awareness has grown about the links between vulnerability to gender-based violence (GVB) and HIV/AIDS.²⁶

Siempre Unidos is a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Honduras supported by Episcopal Relief & Development. Operating in Honduras since 1999, this organization focuses on clinical and community-based services, advocacy and outreach for people living with HIV and communities vulnerable to infection as a result of their marginalization, such as commercial sex workers, incarcerated populations and transgender youth. Siempre Unidos successfully reached UNAIDS 90-90-90 Campaign goals, with 91 percent of its patients maintaining suppressed viral loads.²⁷

²³ https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/01_PeoplelivingwithHIV.pdf

²⁴ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/hiv-and-aids/facts-and-figures>

²⁵ https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/01_PeoplelivingwithHIV.pdf

²⁶

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/INT_CEDAW_GEC_4726_E.pdf

²⁷ UNAIDS ambitious 90-90-90 campaign goals stated that: By 2020, 90 percent of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status. By 2020, 90 percent of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive

Concerning outreach, Siempre Unidos created a support group for those living with HIV/AIDS to support their medical and psychosocial needs better.

The incidence of GBV against people living with HIV/AIDS, sex workers and LGBTQ populations in Honduras is extreme, and Siempre Unidos' ministry is vital.

Read more about the work of [Siempre Unidos](#). Finally, you can join global activists commemorating World AIDS Day by wearing a red ribbon, the universal symbol of awareness and support for people living with HIV.

sustained antiretroviral therapy. By 2020, 90 percent of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression.

ACTION 9: DIALOGUE ON GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Faith

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28

Fact Sheet

- 28 percent of LGBTQIA+ students are bullied online because of their sexual orientations.²⁸
- Nearly one in five lesbian, gay or bisexual students has been physically forced to have sexual intercourse, more than three times the rate of their heterosexual peers.²⁹

Reflection and Action

As Christ followers, members of The Episcopal Church have a legacy of inclusion, aspiring to tell and exemplify God's love for every human being. Bishops, priests and deacons cooperate as leaders at all levels of our Church. Leadership is a gift from God and can be expressed by all people in our Church, regardless of gender, sexual identity or sexual orientation.

Globally, LGBTQ people face discrimination based solely on their identities. Our partners in [Brazil](#) and [Honduras](#), Serviço Anglicano de Diaconio e Desenvolvimento and Siloe, challenge hate crimes and other forms of discrimination against LGBTQ populations. Episcopal Relief & Development has maintained a [cooperative relationship](#) on LGBTQ issues with American Jewish World Service, one of the largest and most significant funders of and leaders in LGBTQ advocacy around the world.

Read about [All Saints](#) Episcopal Church in Beverly Hills and [St. Luke's](#) Episcopal Church in Long Beach, California, just two US congregations that minister to LGBTQ communities. All Saints writes that 48 percent of the homeless youth in Hollywood, California, are LGBTQ. In their lives, they've faced the worst kind of bigotry and discrimination. Watch the ECF Vital Practices [webinar](#) "Discipleship from the Margins" on the transformative power of transgender youth leadership in The Episcopal Church.

Recommended Reading

[Austen Hartke's](#) "Transforming: The Bible and the Lives of Transgender Christians" (2018)

²⁸ <https://www.cdc.gov/lgbthealth/youth.htm>

²⁹ <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.ss6509a1>

ACTION 10: DIALOGUE ON COVID-19 AND GENDER

Faith

COVID-19 has left us disoriented, uncertain and confused, afraid of what we know and anxious about what we do not know. Our old normal has been upended, and we hunger for its return.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's "Word to the Church: What Would Love Do?"



Mother's Union members conduct sensitization on COVID-19 prevention hygiene practices in the Ngozi Diocese (Burundi).

Fact Sheet

- Women and Children are 14 times more likely to die in disasters. During the 1991 Cyclone in Bangladesh, 90 percent of the 140,000 casualties were women and girls. During the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami in Banda Aceh, 77 percent of the 80,000 casualties were women and girls.³⁰
- LGBTQ people are disproportionately represented in the ranks of the poor, people experiencing homelessness and those without health care, meaning that they may be particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.³¹

Reflection and Action

Episcopal Relief & Development and its partners recognize the disproportionate impact the current COVID-19 pandemic is having on women in areas such as health, caretaking, unemployment, increasing poverty and domestic violence. We especially are attentive to the needs and priorities of our global programs working for women's empowerment and gender equity during this time. Program partners' continued commitment to commemorating the 16 Days of Activism speaks to their resilience and commitment to ending inequalities that subordinate women and exacerbate domestic violence and other forms of gender-based discrimination (GBV).

Globally, faith communities have shifted their disaster strategies to provide better support to victims of domestic abuse and other social and economic hardships exacerbated by the pandemic.

Faith-based organizations have created and applied valuable resources for communities confronted with the impact of social-distancing measures. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with these faith-based tools. Episcopal Relief & Development's [webinar](#) on COVID-19 recognizes and responds to mental health issues and family/partner violence as they relate to COVID-19 and provides suggestions for referrals for survivors. [Side by Side](#), a faith movement

³⁰ https://www.unisdr.org/files/48152_disasterandgenderstatistics.pdf

³¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/SexualOrientation/ImpactCOVID19LGBTpersons.pdf>, see also <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=26448&LangID=E>

for gender justice, has compiled a comprehensive list of tools and resources specifically related to gender, faith and COVID-19. You can find its list of COVID-19 resources [here](#).

ACTION 11: DIALOGUE ON COVID-19 AND GBV

Faith

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8

Fact Sheet

- Globally, as many as 38 percent of murders of women are committed by a male intimate partner.³²
- In the US, only five states explicitly list domestic-violence shelters, and thereby those who work in them, as essential in their guidance on COVID-19 responses.³³

Reflection and Action

Women and children's exposure to gender-based violence (GBV) usually increases during disasters and other crises. The International Federation of the Red Cross urges us to pay attention to GBV risks in disaster-management laws, policies and planning, and to assume GBV is taking place, even if no reliable data is available.³⁴

[Relief Web](#) notes in its policy brief on GBV and COVID-19 that, in light of the physical-distancing requirements and movement restrictions put in place across the world to curb the pandemic, women and girls face an increased risk of experiencing violence at the hands of family members, intimate partners or others living within their homes. In all emergency-affected settings, individuals known to the victims, not strangers, perpetrate most cases of GBV. Factors such as emotional stress, economic strain and shifting roles and responsibilities among family members often exacerbate the risk of experiencing household violence during times of crisis. With these risks combined with lockdowns and other movement restrictions, homes within the context of COVID-19 can become potential pressure cookers of GBV as drivers of violence increase while survivors and those at risk are more restricted than ever in their ability to seek safety or other necessary forms of support.

The Anglican Alliance and the Anglican Consultative Council published "[Domestic Abuse and COVID-19: How Churches Can Respond](#)" in response to escalating rates of domestic violence and calls to national helplines during the global health pandemic. The guidelines call upon the Church to follow the 4 Rs when responding to GBV: **recognize** that GBV is occurring; **respond** by

³² <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

³³ <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce>.

³⁴ <https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/principles-and-values/gender1/preventing-and-responding-to-gender-based-violence-gbv-in-disasters/>

saying, "I believe you"; **refer** the survivor to proper resources; and **record** what the survivor said. We encourage you to read the guidelines and consider which R your community can strengthen in its response to GBV.

Recommended Reading

“[Loving One Another](#): A Biblical Discussion Toolkit on Gender-Based Violence,” Anglican Service of Diakonia and Development (SADD) of the Anglican Church of Brazil, Global Partnerships Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church and Christian Aid Scotland

ACTION 12: DIALOGUE ON FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Faith

But she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug: I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die."

1 Kings 17:12

Fact Sheet

- Women around the world are responsible for 75 percent of all unpaid work.³⁵
- Between 1995 and 2015, the global female labor-force participation rate decreased from 52.4 percent to 49.6 percent. The corresponding figures for men are 79.9 percent and 76.1 percent, respectively. Worldwide, the chances for women to participate in the labor market remain almost 27 percentage points lower than those for men.³⁶



A Savings with Education group in Namibia meets in a circle for prayer and reflection.

Reflection and Action

In 2019, the Center for Women's Global Leadership dedicated its toolkit for the 16 Days of Activism to raising awareness of the International Labor Organization [Convention](#) on Violence and Harassment adopted that year. Violence and harassment in the world of work is a global phenomenon that disproportionately and uniquely affects women, prohibiting them from fully realizing their human rights. This abuse contributes to social and economic inequality, creates vulnerability and perpetuates exploitation and precarious working conditions for millions based on gender and other intersecting identities.

Gendered barriers to women's integration into the workplace combine with barriers to women's financial inclusion in accessing banking services and exacerbates the feminization of poverty. Data show that, when women have more financial earning power and the ability to decide how finances are managed, they bring positive economic change to the lives of their children, families and communities.

Episcopal Relief & Development's programs encourage women to participate in financial decisions and to earn an income so they can provide food and health care for their families, as well as educate their children. Women participate in Savings with Education (SWE) groups, which offer critical financial and business training as well as provide small-business loans to

³⁵ <https://16dayscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019-Global-16Days-Campaign-Guide-Final.pdf>

³⁶ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_457317.pdf

individuals and groups. SwE groups develop micro-insurance products, village banks and cooperatives for people without access to traditional financial markets and institutions.

Read about the [SwE](#) program in Angola to learn more about the impact it has on women's financial health and well-being and watch Josephine Hicks, Episcopal Relief & Development vice president for Episcopal Church Programs, speak about community empowerment and SwE [here](#).

ACTION 13: DIALOGUE ON HOUSING INSECURITY AND GENDER

Faith

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Matthew 25:35-40

Fact Sheet

- One of every four homeless women in the United States is homeless because of violence committed against her.
- More than 92 percent of homeless mothers have experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse during their lifetime.³⁷
- In many major cities around the country, domestic violence is cited as the top reason for homelessness among families with children.³⁸

Reflection and Action

Faith-based communities dedicated to serving survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) are located throughout the US. One such resource is [Thistle Farms](#), located in Tennessee. This Episcopal organization assists survivors of domestic violence through a two-year residential program that provides safe housing, a meaningful job and a support system of other survivors.

Our partner, The Anglican Church of Burundi (PEAB), refers women experiencing GBV to government-run safe houses for shelter and medical care, including psycho-social support. [PEAB](#) also engages and enrolls survivors of GBV in workshops on financial security. In 2019, it formed five savings groups, with approximately 25 members in each. Some group members are using their savings for group income-generating projects.

These opportunities for shelter and financial empowerment, coupled with the social networking and cohesion that group membership in savings and loans programs provides, builds the social and financial-support systems that can help prevent violence against women and children, as well as improve the lives of women already affected by such violence.

³⁷ <https://www.greendoors.org/facts/family-homelessness.php>

³⁸ <http://usmayors.org/pressreleases/uploads/2012/1219-report-HH.pdf>

ACTION 14: OBSERVE THURSDAYS IN BLACK WITH THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Faith

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Matthew 5:9

Fact Sheet

- People with intellectual disabilities – women and men – are the victims of sexual assault at more than seven times the rate for people without disabilities. That rate increases to about 12 times for women with intellectual disabilities.³⁹

Reflection and Action

The World Council of Churches (WCC) describes Thursdays in Black as a global movement for a world without rape and violence. The campaign is simple but profound: **Wear black on Thursdays** and show your respect for women who are resilient in the face of injustice and violence. The WCC invites us to share our Thursdays in Black photos on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, using hashtags #ThursdaysinBlack and #WCC! See the WCC video "Towards a World Without Violence" [here](#).

³⁹ <https://www.npr.org/2018/01/08/570224090/the-sexual-assault-epidemic-no-one-talks-about>

ACTION 15: EMBODY JUSTICE, MERCY AND COMPASSION

Faith

Thus says the Lord of hosts: Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another

Zechariah 7:9

Reflection and Action

As we approach the end of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), we want to share a narrative from our program partner, the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil. The Rev. Elineide Oliviera's account of responding to survivors of GBV embodies the biblical order to administer true justice, show mercy and compassion to the oppressed:

In 2011, with a growing number of cases of violence against women, the mayor of Ariquemes, Brazil, held a meeting with non-governmental agencies and local community leaders. During the discussion, the Rev. Hugo Armando Sanchez, parish priest and representative of the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil, described the need for a support house for women in situations of violence. He also explained the municipality's lack of funds to support such an institution. With the blessing of the attendees, the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil decided to create and run Casa Noeli dos Santos, led by Oliveira.

In 2019, Casa Noeli provided a safe space for 108 women and 70 children, including Ana (not her real name).

Ana's story is representative of the stories of many women who Oliveira and Casa Noeli have supported. Pressured by her father into an abusive marriage, Ana began the road to recovery after a brutal attack nearly took her life. With the help of friends, she spent four months at Casa Noeli receiving legal aid and mental-health counseling as well as critical medical and dental care.

Last year, close to 2,000 people participated in the community and school workshops, seminars, trainings and other programs developed by the staff at Casa Noeli. But for Oliveira and her team, the most important thing is not the number of women in the program but how these women's lives have changed. The program compassionately tends to the holistic needs and aspirations of each individual, whether physical, psychological, emotional, social or spiritual. The Casa Noeli staff is proud of the level of quality in what they offer.

On the day Ana departed, Oliveira and her team knew that the woman who entered four months earlier had healed and transformed her life. Ana's time at Casa Noeli gave her the safe and nurturing space to recognize her gifts and trust her voice and power more deeply. She has the autonomy and control over her life that others previously tried to take from her. Thanks to the staff of Casa Noeli, Ana started a new life and looks to the future with renewed hope and



Members of Rwesoro village's GBV Committee in Burundi use drama to depict and condemn GBV.

enthusiasm. Episcopal Relief & Development is proud to support Casa Noeli and other partners who are providing a safe space for women to heal and thrive.

Recommended Reading

“[The Handbook](#) for Female Christian Survivors of Domestic Abuse,” published by [Restored](#)

ACTION 16: HAVE A HAPPY HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Faith

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns.

Psalm 46:5

Fact Sheet

- The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is the most widely recognized and longest-running campaign for women's rights in the world.⁴⁰
- In 2015, #16Days generated 183,000 tweets, reaching 344 million users.⁴¹
- The United States Mission to the United Nations distributes Center for Women's Global Leadership's announcements and resources to all non-governmental organizations they engage with because “16 Days is an important campaign for them to promote.”⁴²

Reflection and Action

December 10 is International Human Rights Day. This year marks 25 years since the Beijing Conference on Women's Rights and the popularization of the phrase “Women's Rights are Human Rights.”

Reflect on your view of GBV at the beginning of 16 Days of Activism compared to what you know now about this issue. How will you continue the conversation around GBV after 16 Days of Activism is over?

⁴⁰ <https://16dayscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/16-Days-Campaign-Assessment.pdf>

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.