

# Faith and Equality: A Communications Toolkit for Advancing Women's Rights in West and Central Africa

A comprehensive guide for faith leaders and advocates to effectively communicate and promote women's rights, gender equality, and social justice.

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A Communications Toolkit for Advancing Women's Rights in West and Central Africa

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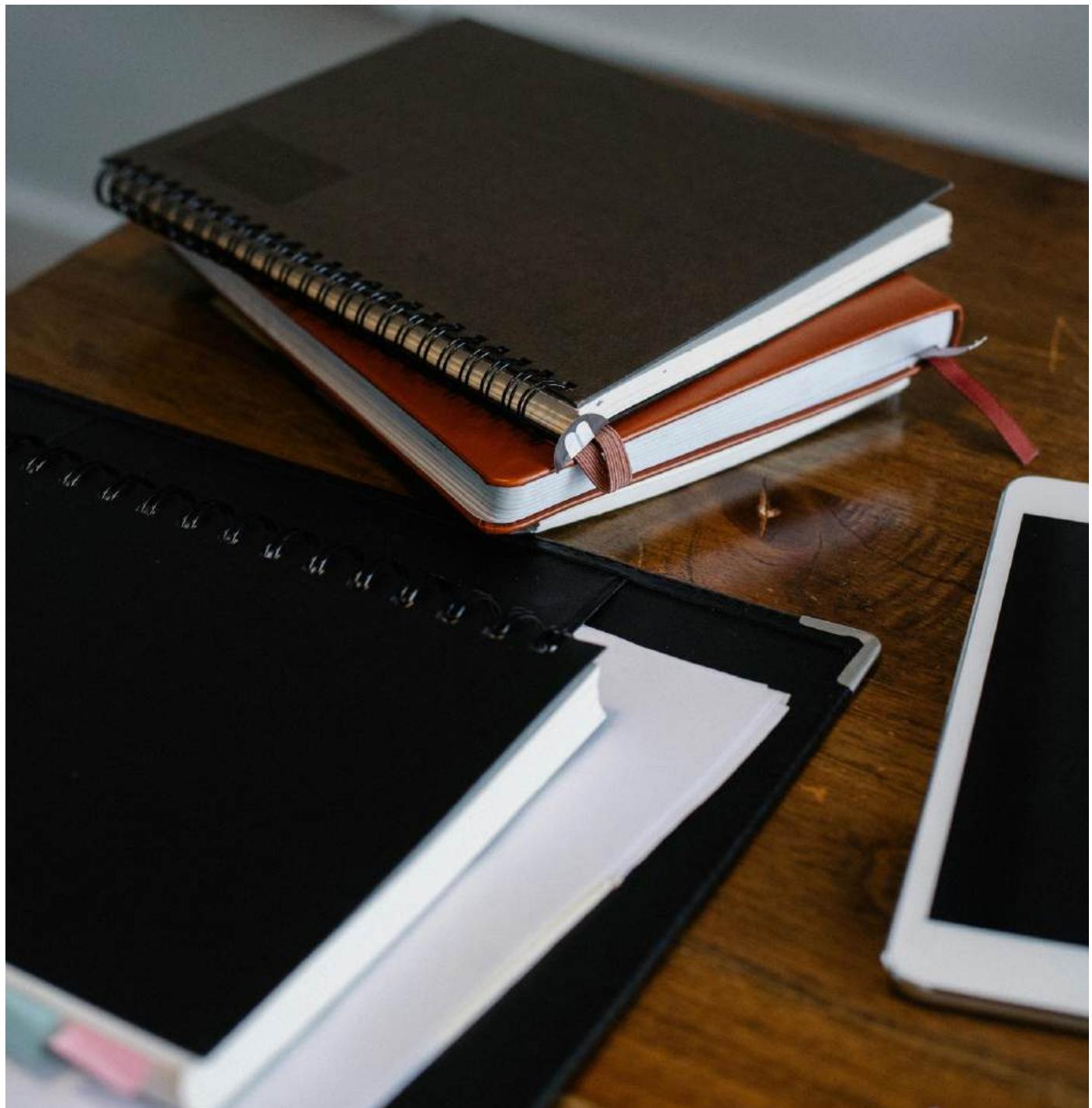
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# Chapter 1

## Overview of the Toolkit



*“Language is not just a means of communication, it is a means of perception, a window into our souls. And just as the windows of our homes frame the world outside, so too do the words we choose frame the world within us.”* Orhan Pamuk

## BACKGROUND

Women and girls have always suffered from patriarchal interpretations of almost all religions and their sacred texts. This has resulted in male domination and entrenched ignorance about women’s rights. Religious interpretations have been invoked as grounds for inequality regardless of what conventions and international laws countries sign up to. Most family-related issues have a faith dimension in many parts of the world, including marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance. The confusion between cultural heritage, social traditions, and religious precepts adds to the complexity of handling this important intersection between religions and human rights<sup>1</sup>. There also exists an ideological divide between faith groups and human rights activists on some sexual and reproductive health matters which adds to the tensions. Faith to Action through their Gender Justice and Women’s Rights Programmes – Advancing Gender Equality, Ending Harmful Practices – is playing a huge role in educating to change perceptions, attitudes, and eventually, behaviour. Faith actors have a role to play, and women’s and girls’ rights have much to gain in this regard.

## OVERVIEW OF THE TOOLKIT

Faith leaders, communities, and organisations play a significant role in shaping societal norms and values and have the potential to be powerful agents of education and advocacy for women’s rights. Religious leaders and faith communities have the moral authority and a responsibility to work together in ecumenical and multifaith collaboration to promote and advocate for women’s rights.

Communication and language are often a reflection of the attitudes, behaviours, and norms within a society<sup>2</sup>. Language plays a major role in portraying a religion, as do religious customs, symbols, and rites. However, for religion to survive across generations, it has to be communicated<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, communicated religion shapes people’s attitudes about what is ‘normal’ and acceptable. Women play an active role in society, yet – all too

often – we use language that ignores or minimises their contribution. Many a time the words used, ‘invisibilise’ women and nullify their experience and lived reality. Words matter in shaping our worldview. For example, the dominance of masculine words for general references can reflect assumptions about gender roles and influence readers<sup>4</sup>.

*“Language is not simply a reporting device for experience but a defining framework for it.”*

Benjamin Lee Whorf<sup>5</sup>

This toolkit aims to guide religious leaders, faith communities, and advocacy groups in communicating about women’s rights and the elimination of harmful practices within faith settings, aligning gender equality principles with spiritual teachings.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/faith-for-rights/faith4rights-toolkit>

<sup>2</sup> <https://news.stanford.edu/stories/2019/08/the-power-of-language-how-words-shape-people-culture>

<sup>3</sup> [https://hrmars.com/papers\\_submitted/8198/the-relationship-between-language-and-religion.pdf](https://hrmars.com/papers_submitted/8198/the-relationship-between-language-and-religion.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/toolkits-guides/gender-sensitive-communication/overview?language\\_content\\_entity=en](https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/toolkits-guides/gender-sensitive-communication/overview?language_content_entity=en)

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Lee Whorf, (1956) Language Thought and Reality

## WHAT THIS TOOLKIT IS NOT FOR?

This toolkit is not about “women’s empowerment” nor is it just for women or programmes for women only. It is meant to remind everyone, men included, especially within faith spaces, that women have inalienable and basic rights and that language and communication can help to shape and reshape attitudes and behaviour.

This communications toolkit does not claim to solve gender inequalities, which is a long-term goal. The tools and ideas shared here are general because every context is different, and approaches need to be adapted according to the local context.

## WHO IS THE TOOLKIT FOR?

This document is designed primarily for gender justice advocates working in faith spaces, faith-based NGO’s, faith organisations, and communities working to further women’s rights to enable them to improve the design and implementation of their communications and advocacy plans.

## PURPOSE OF THE TOOLKIT

- This toolkit provides guidelines for the use of gender-sensitive language in speaking and writing to advance women’s rights in faith settings. The toolkit also references the previous resources and work that Faith to Action Network has developed through its consultations with women’s rights in Christianity and Islamic communities under the Faith Actors for Justice programme.
- It also serves to equip advocates for women’s rights in faith settings, with tools and examples of effective ways to communicate women’s rights issues buttressed by sacred text references, using multi-channels.
- The exercises and tools provided within the toolkit and as annexes at the end, will help to clarify messaging so that it is unambiguous, clearly articulates the key issues, why they matter, and what action is needed.

## WHEN CAN IT BE USED?

This toolkit can be used for written communications and campaigns such as social and other media campaigns, press releases, podcasts, articles, blogs, media reports, photos, and videos, but also for oral interventions such as panel discussions, community conversations, town hall meetings, intergenerational dialogues, flyers, pamphlets, and religious bulletins.

### UNIVERSAL RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES

**Christians** believe human beings are created in the likeness of God, which demands a concern for the dignity and inherent rights of women and girls. The cornerstone of Christian belief is in the example of the life of Jesus Christ, who demonstrated high regard for the inviolable dignity of women, respected them, and entrusted them with his mission. Living Christian faith warrants ending all forms of violence against women and girls and upholding all their rights.

**Islam** values very highly the equality between women and men. According to the Quran, God does not love fasad, violence, and one of God’s names is peace, promoting a society that values respect and cooperation and does not tolerate any forms of violence against women. “The Believers men and women are protectors of one another: they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil” (Quran: 9/71).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.endvawnow.org/uploads/browser/files/Restoring%20Dignity%20-%20A%20Toolkit%20for%20Religious%20Communities%20to%20End%20Violence%20Against%20Women.pdf>

# GENDER SENSITIVE LANGUAGE

## What is Gender Sensitive Language?

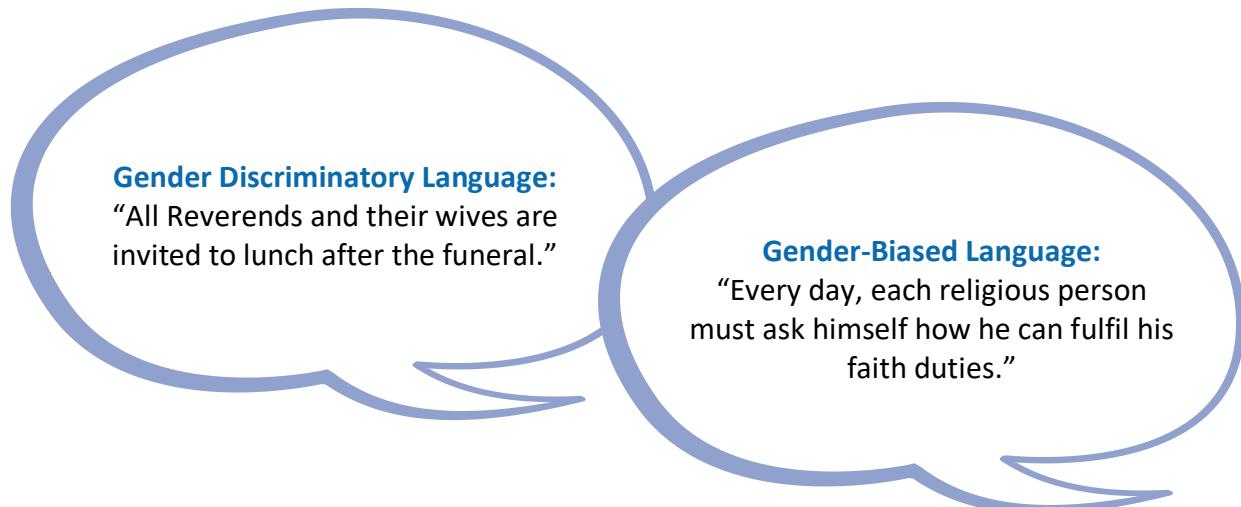
According to the European Institute for Gender Equality, gender-sensitive language is 'gender equality made manifest through language.' Gender equality is therefore attained when all persons 'are addressed through language as persons of equal value, dignity, integrity and respect.'<sup>7</sup>

## Why use Gender-Sensitive Language?

At the root of gender injustice and harmful practices is gender inequality. In order to tackle gender inequality effectively, we must assess the way we communicate.

Using gender-sensitive language can:

- Make it easier to see important differences between the needs of women and men;
- Challenge unconscious assumptions people have about gender roles in society;
- Lay the foundation for greater gender equality throughout society;
- Raise awareness of how language affects our behaviour;
- Make people more comfortable with expressing themselves and behaving in ways that were once not considered 'typical' of their gender<sup>8</sup>.



## KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE TOOLKIT

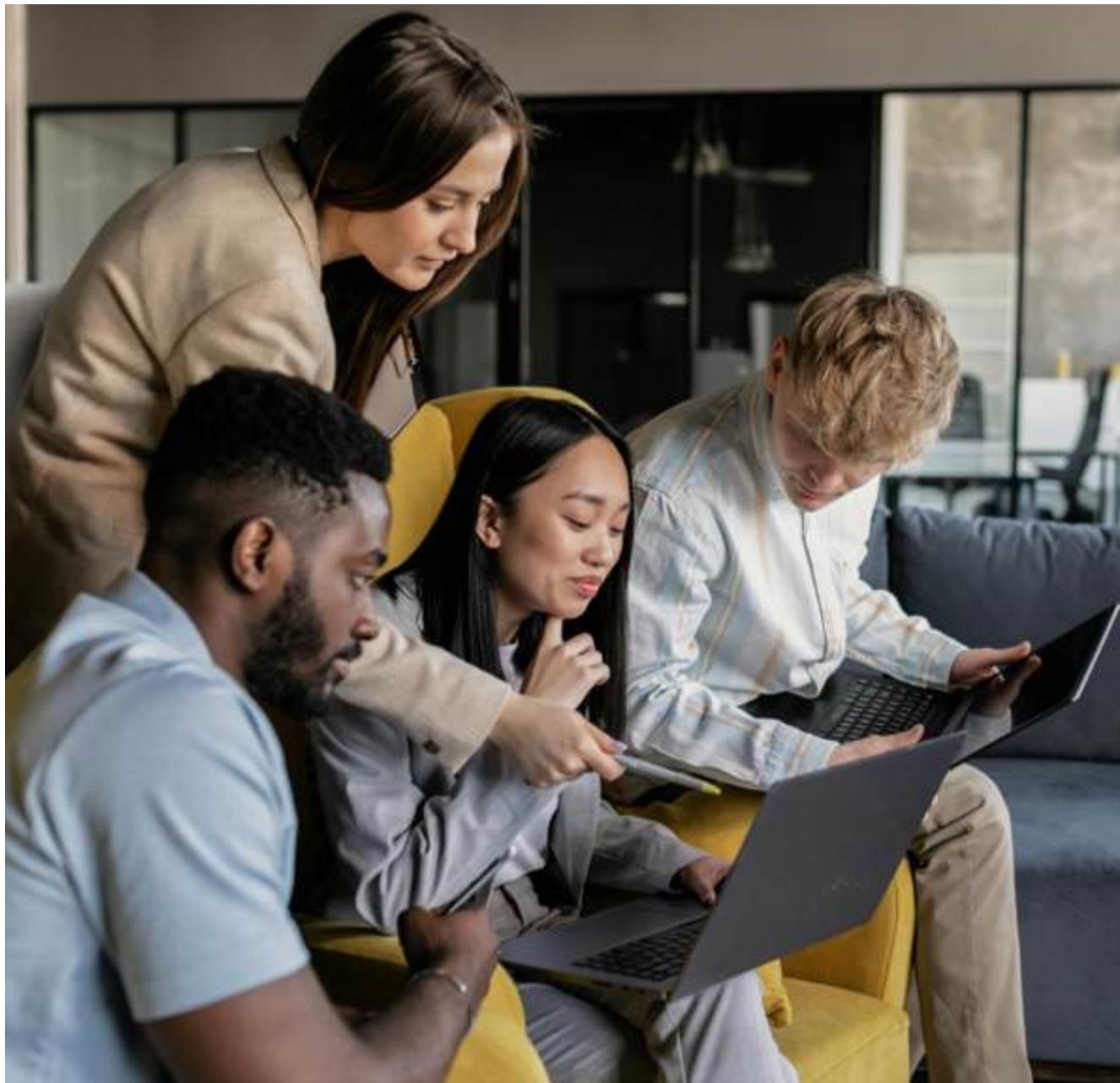
- **Raise Awareness:** Enhance understanding of women's rights within faith contexts.
- **Engage Communities:** Foster dialogue within religious communities about gender equality.
- **Support Advocacy:** Provide tools to support advocacy for women's rights in faith settings.
- **Align Faith and Gender Justice:** Demonstrate how religious teachings can support women's rights and coordinate concerted effort towards eliminating harmful practices..
- Provide practical tools and provide useful checklists and examples for users.

<sup>7</sup> [https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/toolkits-guides/gender-sensitive-communication/first-steps-towards-more-inclusive-language/terms-you-need-know?language\\_content\\_entity=en](https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/toolkits-guides/gender-sensitive-communication/first-steps-towards-more-inclusive-language/terms-you-need-know?language_content_entity=en)

<sup>8</sup> [https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/20193925\\_mh0119609enn\\_pdf.pdf](https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/20193925_mh0119609enn_pdf.pdf) Toolkit on Gender-sensitive Communication

# Chapter 2

## Gender Transformative Communication



*“It is not just women who are paying an enormous price for this cultural and religious prejudice. We all suffer when women and girls are abused and their needs are neglected. By denying them security and opportunity, we embed unfairness in our societies and fail to make the most of the talents of half the population.”*

—The Global Elders (2009)

## GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNICATION

Gender transformative communication is an approach that seeks to challenge and change harmful gender norms, roles, and power imbalances in society. It goes beyond simply raising awareness of gender inequalities to actively promoting behaviour and social changes that lead to gender equality. This form of communication encourages critical reflection on existing gender dynamics and works to empower marginalized genders, especially women and girls.

## KEY FEATURES OF GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNICATION

### 1. Challenging Stereotypes

It addresses and breaks down traditional gender roles and stereotypes that limit opportunities and reinforce inequality. For example, it challenges ideas such as women being confined to caregiving roles and men being expected to be dominant or unemotional. In written communications as well as in audio visual materials, it is important to be mindful of subliminal messages or stereotypes such as women as victims or as mothers only<sup>9</sup>.

EXAMPLE: Assuming that only women struggle with body image, the minister prayed:

“Help her to know how beautiful she is!” and for the man, he prayed: “Help him to be strong and courageous.”

EXAMPLE: “The chairmen – mmhh I beg your pardon; the chairpersons of all committees are to meet with the head of programmes after the service.”

### 4. Focus on Power Relations

It addresses underlying power imbalances between genders. Gender transformative communication encourages dialogue around power dynamics within families, workplaces, communities, and society to promote more equitable relations.

EXAMPLE:



### 5. Encouraging Critical Reflection

It fosters discussions that lead individuals and communities to critically examine and question their own beliefs, attitudes, and practices around gender. By reflecting on these, people can begin to change their behaviours and promote gender justice.

EXAMPLE: *The new minister, Rev Charlie Smith, was given the position at the local church because of the very good resume that they received. When they discovered that in fact, Charlie was short for Charlotte, the congregation was quick to readvertise the post!*

EXAMPLE: “We will be running leadership training for all women and men who hold any position of leadership in the church.”

### 3. Engaging Both Genders

Gender transformative communication engages men and boys alongside women and girls. It encourages them to question traditional norms, reflect on their roles in upholding gender inequalities, and become allies in promoting gender equality.

<sup>9</sup> Liraz Margalit, ‘Men Systemize. Women Empathize’ *Psychology Today*. Accessed 27 November 2020

## 6. Long-term Social Change

Unlike campaigns that might seek immediate changes in knowledge or attitudes, gender transformative communication is focused on long-term shifts in social norms and behaviours. It aims to create lasting, systemic change in how gender roles are understood and practiced.

**EXAMPLE:** *The stories we tell each other and ourselves may serve us well in our lives and communities, or they may not. Stories often contain underlying assumptions about power in society—communicating who has power and who does not. Narratives reinforce stereotypes about groups of people and the assumptions embedded within narratives undergird social policies and practices. Changing the narrative in faith spaces will eventually change the rhetoric, then attitudes and behaviour.*

## KEY PRINCIPLES FOR INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE USE<sup>10</sup>



2. Recognise and challenge stereotypes.



3. Be inclusive and avoid omission and making others invisible.



1. Be respectful and avoid trivialisation and subordination.

## EXAMPLES OF GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNICATION

- **Media Campaigns:** Television, radio, and social media campaigns that challenge harmful gender stereotypes or showcase positive role models for men and women. See [Annex 1](#), Sample Social Media Plan.
- **Community Dialogues:** Facilitated discussions within communities that encourage people to question and transform traditional gender roles. This is very popular and effective within religious circles. See [Annex 2](#), [Annex 3](#), Contextual Studies.
- **Educational Programmes:** Schools or workplace programmes that teach both men and women about gender equality and encourage shared responsibilities, such as equal division of household labour.
- **Faith-Based Approaches:** Integrating gender-transformative principles into faith settings, where religious leaders advocate for gender justice by drawing on sacred texts and moral teachings. See [Annex 2](#) and [Annex 3](#), Contextual Studies; [Annex 4](#) and [Annex 5](#), Lists of Sacred Texts from the Bible and Quran.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNICATION

- **Fosters Equality:** By promoting equitable roles for all genders, it helps reduce discrimination, violence, and inequality.
- **Empowers Marginalized Groups:** Gender transformative communication empowers women, girls, and non-binary individuals to assert their rights and capabilities.
- **Improves Community Well-Being:** Communities that practice gender equality are more likely to experience greater social cohesion, economic development, and improved health outcomes.

In summary, gender transformative communication is a powerful tool for fostering deeper, systemic changes in societal gender norms, empowering all genders, and driving long-term equality through focused advocacy messaging.

<sup>10</sup> [https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/20193925\\_mh019609enn\\_pdf.pdf](https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/20193925_mh019609enn_pdf.pdf)

# Chapter 3

## Messaging for Gender Justice and to End Harmful Practices



*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. (Ephesians 4:29)*

*"And speak to people kindly." (Quran 2:83)  
"And listen to what is said with attention, and follow the best of it." (Quran 39:18)*

## MESSAGING

Messaging is the backbone of any communication and advocacy effort. It determines how effectively change agents/faith champions can inform, inspire, and mobilize their audience to support a cause. Key messages are basically the messages you want your targeted audiences to see or hear. There are a lot of ways you can communicate about the same thing. In developing the key messages for your communications plan, you need to know what issues are important to your key audiences and how you want to influence them. See [Annex 1](#), Sample Social Media Plan.

Men and women are the same and should be treated the same

Human dignity should be accorded both females and males

Women's rights are human rights

Human dignity means equality and freedom

## WHO DO YOU ULTIMATELY WANT TO INFLUENCE?

Communications is designed to deliver key messages to a targeted audience, ultimately resulting in greater education of the stakeholders about the programme or issue. The targeted audience can be these stakeholders directly or anyone who can influence these stakeholders.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Who is your audience?

Who will ultimately **benefit** from the Faith Actors for Justice programmes?

What resources can you use to strengthen your messaging?

Who will implement the communication plan?

To create effective messaging strategies, it is important to **understand where and how your targeted audiences seek and receive information**. We need to go to where the people are with our messages. e.g. on social media, radio, tv, newspapers, blogs etc.

The message itself speaks to the what, and the channels used would speak to the how and where.

Let's begin by looking at how one crafts the message:

### 1. CLARITY AND FOCUS

Messaging helps articulate complex issues in a simple, focused way. Clear messaging ensures that the audience understands *the key issues, why they matter, and what action* is needed.

**EXAMPLE:** Gender equality benefits everyone: Gender equality promotes healthy relationships, inclusivity, improves mental and physical health, and benefits entire communities. Play your part in addressing and effectively dismantling barriers to women's access to decision making and equal, meaningful participation.

### 2. ENGAGEMENT AND PERSUASION

Well-crafted messages resonate with the audience's values, emotions, and concerns, making them more likely to engage. Advocacy relies on convincing people to support a cause, and persuasive messaging can shift attitudes and inspire action.

**EXAMPLE: “Empowering women strengthens families and communities: Together we can unlearn harmful practices.”**

### **3. CONSISTENCY**

Strong messaging ensures consistency across all platforms—whether in speeches, social media, or printed materials. This helps build a coherent and recognizable narrative, which reinforces the advocacy goals and prevents misunderstandings or confusion.

**EXAMPLE: God is a god of justice: Say yes to gender justice!**

**God hates violence: Say no to gender-based violence!**

### **4. MOBILIZING ACTION**

Advocacy depends on mobilizing people to take specific actions (e.g., signing petitions, attending events, lobbying policymakers). Effective messaging clearly communicates the desired action, making it easier for the audience to understand how they can contribute.

**EXAMPLE: “Inclusive theology promotes equality: Interpret religious texts and teachings in ways that promote gender equality.”**

### **5. FRAMING THE ISSUE**

Messaging helps frame the issue in a way that aligns with the audience’s worldview. By framing the advocacy issue positively and in terms that the audience can relate to, advocates can build broader support and reduce resistance.

**EXAMPLE: Men and boys are allies in achieving gender equality: Engaging men and boys (Youths) in gender equality efforts is crucial for creating sustainable change.**

### **6. BUILDING CREDIBILITY AND TRUST**

Messages that are thoughtful, accurate, and evidence-based help build credibility. This is critical in advocacy, as trust in the message and the messenger makes it more likely that the audience will support the cause.

**EXAMPLE: “Our church has been in existence for 300 years and 100 years ago women clergy were ordained. Since then, only 10% of the 450 women ordained have held positions of leadership in the church”**

### **7. ADDRESSING OPPOSITION**

Strategic messaging allows advocates to pre-empt or counter opposition. By anticipating resistance or misconceptions, messaging can address these concerns and provide arguments that refute the opposition’s narrative.

**EXAMPLE: “Our faith teaches love and respect for all: gender equality is a divine principle.”**

### **8. EMOTIONAL CONNECTION**

Effective advocacy messages tap into emotions, which are powerful motivators for change. By making the issue personal and connecting it to the audience’s feelings, advocacy messages can inspire empathy, outrage, or hope, all of which drive engagement.

**EXAMPLE: Every 1 in 2 women will experience gender-based violence in their lifetime.**

## STRUCTURING A WINNING MESSAGE

- I. **Values:** Begin your message by reminding your audience how the cause you're promoting helps them, allows them to show care or compassion, creates a fairer society, or allows them to work with others. Use sacred texts to support or communicate your claims. If human rights language is problematic in your context, use the language of human dignity, or use story telling of lived experiences.
- II. **Problem:** Identify the root causes of the issue you want to address.
- III. **Solution:** Show your audience how the situation can be resolved and how the resolution to the problem will yield positive results for the whole community and society in general.
- IV. **Call to Action and Testimonies:** What do you want people to do? Guide their thinking and help them to make the shift. Show and tell people what they need to do to achieve this.

## FRAMING WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN FAITH SETTINGS

- **Contextualize Rights with Faith:** Use religious texts and teachings to frame discussions on women's rights. This ensures alignment with faith-based values and reduces resistance.

### *Contextual Bible Study*

This Contextual Bible Study emphasizes the Bible's role in promoting social transformation, particularly in protecting and promoting women's rights, highlighting the profound impact of such protection.

- “Girls Can: Positioning the Girl Child to Influence History” The Daughters of Jelophehad (See [Annex 6](#), Contextual Bible Study)

- **Scripture Based Advocacy:** Esther is willing to risk everything to save her people, saying “I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish” (Esther 4:16, NIV). By using her influence with the king to advocate for the Jews, she puts her status as queen, and even her own life, on the line. See [Annex 7](#) for sacred text references you can use for scripture-based advocacy.
- **Culturally Sensitive Language:** Use language that resonates with the faith community, avoiding secular terminology that may alienate audiences, e.g. family planning may be considered to risqué but child spacing acceptable.

## ENGAGING RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Religious leaders are influential figures in communities. To engage them effectively:

- **Involve Leaders Early:** Engage religious leaders in conversations about women's rights, ensuring they are part of the process. See [Annex 4](#) and [Annex 5](#), Lists of Sacred Texts from the Bible and Quran; [Annex 8](#), Bible Verses to Counter Terror Texts.
- **Provide Theological Justifications:** Equip leaders with theological arguments that support gender equality and women's empowerment. See [Annex 4](#) and [Annex 5](#), Lists of Sacred Texts from the Bible and Quran; [Annex 8](#), Bible Verses to Counter Terror Texts; and [Annex 9](#), Prayers.
- **Create Safe Spaces:** Foster open, respectful spaces for leaders to discuss sensitive issues, such as women's participation, gender-based violence, harmful traditional practices, etc.

## KEY MESSAGES FOR COMMUNICATING WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN FAITH SPACES

These core messages can be adapted to different faith contexts:

- 1. Equality Before God:** Both women and men are created in the image of God and should therefore be treated equally.

"I will never deny any of you—male or female—the reward of your deeds. Both are *equal* in reward...."<sup>4</sup> (Quran 3:195)

"So God created human-beings in his own image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27)

- 2. Dignity and Respect:** Every person deserves dignity and respect, as emphasized in religious teachings.

"There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female – for you are all one in Christ." (Galatians 3:28)

"O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware." (Quran 49:13)

- 3. Leadership and Participation:** Women have the right to leadership and participation in faith-based decision-making processes.

God chose Deborah to lead as a prophet, judge, and even led the men into battle (Judges 4-5). She wasn't just a woman passing out advice, but a strong, wise, and obedient follower of God and,

notably, both a prophet and a judge.

"O mankind, indeed, We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another." (Quran 49:13)

- 4. Education and Empowerment:** Faith communities should encourage the education and empowerment of women and girls.

"**Each of you** should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If **anyone** speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If **anyone** serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ..." (1 Peter 4:10-11)

- 5. Eliminating Harmful Practices:** Religion should not be used to justify harmful practices such as child marriage, gender-based violence, or discrimination.

"*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.* I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)

"Never will I allow to be lost the work of any one among you, whether male or female; for you are of one another." (Quran 3, 195)

"What actions are most excellent? To gladden the heart of human beings, to feed the hungry, to help the afflicted, to lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful, and to remove the sufferings of the injured." -Prophet Muhammed (Bukhari)

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES TO COMBAT GENDER INJUSTICE AND END HARMFUL PRACTICES

Bringing about gender justice and ending harmful traditional practices in faith settings requires a strategic and sensitive approach that aligns with religious beliefs while promoting equality and dignity for all. Faith communities hold significant influence over cultural norms, making them essential partners for communicating change in the movement for gender justice within the Faith Actors for Justice programme, the over-arching message that should be communicated consistently through all communication plans and messaging using various channels should be that:



*"Gender justice means ensuring equal rights, opportunities, and dignity for all—regardless of gender or religious affiliation, whereas harmful traditional practices, such as child marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), violate the rights of women and girls, perpetuating cycles of inequality, violence, and poverty. Together, through education, we can create a world where traditions uplift and protect, rather than harm. By ending harmful practices and championing gender justice, we can build a future where every person can thrive."*

## STRATEGY 1: ENGAGE FAITH LEADERS AS ADVOCATES

Organize interactive sessions for religious leaders, clergy, and community members to discuss gender equality.

### a. Scriptural Reframing – Conversations with Religious Leaders and Laity

- **Use Sacred Texts to Promote Equality:** Reframe religious texts to emphasize the equal dignity and rights of men and women- highlight women in religious texts who played pivotal roles and show that harmful practices contradict the values of care and justice.

### CONTEXTUAL STUDY: "THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY"

Read the passages as small groups

#### Bible: John 8:1-11

8 <sup>1</sup> while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. <sup>2</sup> Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. <sup>3</sup> The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, <sup>4</sup> they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. <sup>5</sup> Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' <sup>6</sup> They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. <sup>7</sup> When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' <sup>8</sup> And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. <sup>[a]</sup> <sup>9</sup> When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. <sup>10</sup> Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' <sup>11</sup> She said, 'No one, sir.' <sup>[b]</sup> And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.' <sup>12</sup> <sup>[c]</sup>

#### Quran:

"O ye who believe! stand out firmly for God as witnesses to fair dealing and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to Piety: and fear God for God is well-acquainted with all that ye do." (Quran 5:8)

#### Discussion questions:

##### PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. What are some of the norms in my faith that may contribute to any form of abuse of women?
2. What is the basis of these norms?
3. How does this text influence women's rights in your religion?
4. How might this text influence a greater awareness of women's rights?
5. How do these norms impact on how we interact with others in our congregations?
6. What is the role of our faith/ religious norms in preventing GBV?
7. How might the negative norms be changed to support equity and equality?
8. What is my role as a faith actor in championing women's rights?

## GROUP DISCUSSION

9. What are the themes in this text?
10. Who are the main characters and what do we know about them?
11. Why was the woman made to stand before the crowd?
12. What did the scribes and Pharisees want to see happen to the woman? Was this a just punishment?
13. What does this story tell us about gender and the roles of women during Jesus' time?
14. Are there women like this woman in your community today? How are they treated?
15. How can the church better assist women who have been rejected by their communities?

- **Promote Faith-Based Models of Gender Justice: Community Conversations/ Dialogues:**

Show examples from religious history or teachings where equality, fairness, and dignity were upheld. Frame the conversation so that ending harmful practices is seen as a return to the true values of faith please.

## CONTEXTUAL STUDY

Read the text individually, then discuss the following questions within your small groups (there are other verse options available in [Annex 7](#).)

**Bible:** Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. 12 For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God." 1 Corinthians 11:11-12 (NIV)

**Quran:** The Islamic faith is clear on how men and women are seen in the eyes of God and that how they should receive equal punishment for wrongdoing. These texts in Qur'an that demonstrate man and woman equal: "The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication, - flog each of them with a hundred stripes ..." (Qur'an 24:2)

### Discussion questions:

1. What do you think this text is about?
2. What does this text mean to you?
3. Who are the characters in this story?
4. What do you think about their roles in this context?
5. What do you feel about the treatment of the woman in this text?
6. How does this text apply in your context? Within the faith community?
7. Do similar events occur in our faith communities? How do we handle them?
8. What could we do to remedy similar situations in our faith communities?

## Culturally Relevant Messaging

**Use Local Faith Symbols and Language:** Tailor messages using language, symbols, and religious stories that resonate with local faith communities. Communicating gender justice through familiar religious idioms makes the message more relatable and less likely to be viewed as foreign or adversarial.

## FAMILIAR RELIGIOUS IDIOMS

### 1. We are all created in the image of God" (Genesis 1:27)

**Message:** "Since we are all created in the image of God, male and female alike, any injustice or inequality is a denial of God's design. Gender justice honours the divine in every person."

**Application:** Use this idiom to challenge gender discrimination or practices that devalue women and girls.

### 2. "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:39)

**Message:** "Loving your neighbour as yourself includes treating all people, regardless of gender, with equal dignity and respect. Gender-based violence and discrimination are violations of this core commandment."

**Application:** Can be used to address issues like domestic violence or any form of gender inequality, connecting love with respect for the rights and dignity of women.

### 3. “God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34)

**Message:** “God shows no favouritism and calls us to do the same. In God’s eyes, men and women are equal, and we must work towards justice that reflects this divine truth.”

**Application:** Use this idiom to emphasize that gender justice aligns with God’s impartiality, challenging patriarchal systems that promote inequality.

### 4. “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Luke 6:31)

**Message:** “True justice demands that we treat all people, regardless of gender, with the fairness, love, and dignity we desire for ourselves. Gender equality is an expression of the Golden Rule.”

**Application:** This is effective in conversations about equal treatment in marriages, workplaces, and communities, calling for mutual respect.

### 5. “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves” (Proverbs 31:8-9)

**Message:** “God calls us to speak for the voiceless and to defend the rights of the oppressed. Gender justice means raising our voices for women and girls who face discrimination, abuse, and inequality.”

**Application:** Use this idiom to inspire advocacy for women’s rights, especially in contexts where women’s voices are silenced or marginalized.

### 6. “Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24)

**Message:** “True justice is not selective—it must flow to every part of society, including gender justice. When women and girls are treated unfairly, the stream of righteousness is blocked.”

**Application:** Use this idiom to call for continuous, active efforts in ensuring justice for women, emphasizing that gender justice is central to overall social righteousness.

- **Respect Religious Traditions:** Gender justice can be framed as enhancing, rather than undermining, religious and cultural traditions.

#### MESSAGE

This message can be adapted for Social Media / Radio/ Posters

*“Gender justice is not about changing or abandoning our faith and cultural values—it’s about fulfilling them. At the heart of our religious and cultural traditions are principles of dignity, respect, and love for all. When we promote gender justice, we honour these values by ensuring that every individual, regardless of gender, is treated with fairness and equality. Ending harmful practices like child marriage and gender-based violence is a reflection of our deepest commitment to protecting life, nurturing families, and promoting peace in our communities. Together, we can uphold the true essence of our beliefs while building a future where everyone can thrive in harmony with our faith and heritage.”*

**HASHTAGS:** #promotegenderjustice #dignityrespectlove4all #genderjustice=faith&culturalvalues

#### Workshops and Training

- **Gender Justice Workshops for Religious Leaders:** Conduct training sessions that educate faith leaders on gender justice and the impact of harmful practices. Provide them with theological resources and practical tools to discuss these issues in their sermons, teachings, and counselling.

#### WORKSHOP - FAITH-BASED REFLECTION ON RELIGIOUS TEXT METHODOLOGY

**Introduction:** Religion plays a key role in society with the potential to promote cohesion, solidarity and advance the course of different norms. Faith leaders are therefore key stakeholders in most societies and evidence suggests that faith-based actors across different religious groupings are regarded as the “most

influential social agents of change with regard to the abuse of women including GBV. However, in some settings, faith-based actors are also seen as enablers of the said abuse<sup>11</sup>.

A theological reflection of the social contexts portrayed in religious texts will help us to unpack the women's rights abuse prevalent in our faith communities. This also presents an opportunity for us to reflect on actions we could take to prevent and address these abuses.

- a. Introduction to the text;
- b. Individual reading of the relevant text;
- c. Group discussion of the text including:
- d. Summary of the main characters and reflection of their roles in the context;
- e. Identification of the women's right issue highlighted in the text.

#### **Individual Reflection Questions:**

- a. Are women's rights recognised in my faith community?
- b. What is the stance of my religion on women's rights?
- c. What is the role of my religion in gender justice efforts?
- d. What forms of gender injustice occur within my faith community?
- e. Do we discuss gender injustice within my faith community? Why or why not?
- f. How do we discuss gender injustice in my faith community? Do we have tailored sermons, messages and materials etc.?
- g. Who leads these discussions?

Sharing in plenary

Text

**Quran:** "The Believers, men and women, are protectors of one another: they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is exalted in power, Wise" (Quran 9:71)

**There is neither Jew nor Greek**, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:28-29)

#### **Group Discussion Questions about sacred text:**

- a. What do you think this text is about?
- b. What does this text mean to you?

For example, for the Christians, what does created in God's image mean?

- c. Are men and women equal in the eyes of God?
- d. Are men and women equal in my faith community?
- e. How does this text apply in your context? Within the faith community?
- f. What could we do to remedy the gender injustice in our faith communities?

## **STRATEGY 2: PUBLIC MESSAGING**

Use sermons, religious events, and public platforms to communicate messages about women's rights.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.kirkensnodhjelp.no/globalassets/programme-framework-2020-2030/gender-based-violence-gbv/fame-toolkit-final.pdf>

## Engage Faith Leaders as Advocates

- **Religious Teachings and Sermons:** Work with faith leaders to reinterpret religious texts and teachings in ways that promote gender justice. Encourage them to deliver sermons or talks that highlight how faith values like love, justice, and respect align with gender equality and the need to abandon harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child marriage.

### PROPOSED SERMON OUTLINES

Theme: “Created in God’s Image: Upholding the Dignity and Rights of Women in the Church”

#### 1. Introduction

- Opening Scripture: Genesis 1:27 – “So God created humankind in His image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.”
- Key Message: Both men and women are created in the image of God, with equal worth, dignity, and purpose. The church must reflect this equality by recognizing and promoting the rights of women.
- Purpose: To encourage the congregation to reflect on how the church can better uphold the rights and dignity of women, in alignment with God’s original design.

#### 2. The Biblical Foundation for Gender Equality

- Genesis 1:27: Both male and female were created in the image of God, affirming their equal value.
- Galatians 3:28: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” In Christ, all are equal, transcending gender or social status.
- Proverbs 31:10-31: The “Virtuous Woman” is depicted as wise, industrious, and strong, showing that women are to be empowered, respected, and honoured.
- Jesus’ Example: Jesus elevated the status of women, engaging with them, healing them, and including them in His ministry (e.g., Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan woman, and Martha and Mary).

**Key Point:** *The Bible promotes the dignity, respect, and equality of women and calls the church to do the same.*

#### 3. Addressing Misinterpretations of Scripture

- Ephesians 5:22-23: Often misused to justify the subordination of women, but when understood in context, it calls for mutual love and respect between men and women, modelling Christ’s sacrificial love for the church.
- 1 Corinthians 14:34-35: Sometimes interpreted to silence women in the church, but scholars suggest this was a contextual directive, not a universal mandate. Other scriptures affirm women as leaders (e.g., Priscilla, Phoebe Deberah).

**Key Point:** *The church must reject misinterpretations of scripture that perpetuate inequality and instead focus on the full biblical narrative of equality and justice.*

#### 4. Jesus’ Ministry: A Model of Empowering Women

- Jesus and Women:
  - a) The Woman at the Well (John 4:1-26): Jesus broke cultural norms by speaking to a Samaritan woman, affirming her dignity and commissioning her to spread the Gospel.
  - b) Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18): Jesus chose her to be the first witness of His resurrection, entrusting her with a message that would change the world.
  - c) Women Followers: Many women followed and supported Jesus’ ministry, showing that women had significant roles in the early church.

**Key Point:** *Jesus consistently affirmed women’s dignity, broke down gender barriers, and empowered women to lead in spreading the Gospel.*

#### 5. The Role of Women in the Early Church

- Phoebe (Romans 16:1-2): Described as a deacon and a leader in the early church.

- Priscilla (Acts 18:26): A teacher who, alongside her husband Aquila, instructed Apollos, a well-known preacher.
- Junia (Romans 16:7): Described by Paul as “outstanding among the apostles,” showing that women held significant leadership positions in the early church.

**Key Point:** *Women were leaders, teachers, and apostles in the early church. We must return to this model, where women fully participate in leadership and ministry.*

## 6. Addressing Injustices Against Women in the Church Today

- Gender Discrimination: Women in many churches are still marginalized, denied leadership roles, or undervalued.
- Gender-Based Violence: Some churches have failed to address or even condone domestic abuse and other forms of gender-based violence. This is an injustice that the church must confront.
- Silencing of Women: Many churches discourage women from speaking, preaching, or teaching, despite biblical examples of women leaders.

**Key Point:** *The church must repent for any complicity in gender injustice and actively work to promote equality, justice, and the empowerment of women.*

## 7. Practical Steps the Church Can Take to Promote Women’s Rights

- Encourage Women in Leadership: Actively support and appoint women in leadership roles within the church, including as pastors, elders, and deacons.
- Mentorship and Training: Create programs to mentor and train women in theological studies, leadership, and pastoral care.
- Support Women Facing Injustice: Establish support systems for women experiencing domestic violence or discrimination, including counselling, safe spaces, and advocacy.
- Promote Equal Participation: Ensure that women’s voices are heard in all church matters, from decision-making to preaching and teaching.

**Key Point:** *Promoting women’s rights in the church requires intentional action to create an inclusive, just, and equitable environment where women can fully participate.*

## 8. Call to Action

- Reflection: Ask the congregation to reflect on how they treat women in their own lives and within the church. Encourage them to consider whether their actions and beliefs align with God’s call for justice and equality.
- Challenge: Challenge the church to become a place where women are empowered, their gifts are used for the Kingdom, and they are treated with the dignity and respect that comes from being created in God’s image.

**Key Point:** *Gender justice is not only a social issue but a biblical mandate. As the body of Christ, the church must lead the way in promoting the rights and dignity of women.*

## 9. Closing Scripture and Prayer

- Closing Scripture: Micah 6:8 – “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”
- Prayer: Ask God to open the hearts of the congregation to embrace the fullness of His justice, equality, and love for all people, regardless of gender. Pray for wisdom and courage to uplift and protect the rights of women in the church and beyond.

## Conclusion

Promoting women’s rights is a matter of honouring the image of God in every person. The church must stand as a beacon of justice, ensuring that women are given the opportunities to lead, serve, and flourish, in line with God’s vision of equality and dignity for all.

## SERMON OUTLINE: PROMOTING WOMEN'S RIGHTS BASED ON THE QUR'AN

**Theme: "Upholding Women's Dignity and Rights in Light of the Qur'an"**

### 1. Introduction

- Opening Qur'anic Verse: Surah An-Nisa 4:1 – “O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women.”
- **Key Message:** Both men and women are created from a single soul, establishing their equal worth, dignity, and importance in Islam. This equality should be reflected in how we treat and uphold the rights of women in our communities.
- **Purpose:** To affirm the rights of women in Islam and encourage the congregation to champion these rights as an expression of their faith.

### 2. Women's Equal Creation and Dignity in the Qur'an

- Surah An-Nisa 4:1: Both men and women are created from the same essence, underscoring their equality and shared humanity.
- Surah Al-Hujurat 49:13: “Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you.” Gender is not a measure of a person's worth—piety and righteousness are the true indicators of nobility in Islam.
- Surah An-Nahl 16:97: “Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while being a believer – We will surely cause them to live a good life.” This verse affirms that both men and women are equally rewarded by Allah for their righteousness.

**Key Point:** *The Qur'an teaches that men and women are equally valuable and capable of attaining spiritual and worldly success. Islam uplifts the status of women, granting them inherent dignity and rights.*

### 3. Misinterpretations and Correcting Gender Injustices

- Surah An-Nisa 4:34 (on family roles): Often misunderstood as a justification for male dominance, but the Qur'an emphasizes mutual respect, protection, and responsibility within the family. Islam promotes a balanced partnership, where each spouse has rights and duties.
- Surah Al-Baqarah 2:187: “They are your garments and you are their garments.” This verse highlights the reciprocal nature of the husband-wife relationship, based on mutual support, comfort, and protection.

**Key Point:** *Islam does not promote the oppression of women. Misinterpretations of certain verses must be corrected to ensure that women are treated justly and with the respect the Qur'an prescribes.*

### 4. The Rights of Women in Islam

- Right to Education: The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, “Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim.” (Hadith - Ibn Majah). This includes both men and women, showing that Islam encourages women to pursue education.
- Right to Own Property: Surah An-Nisa 4:7 – Women have the right to inherit and own property independently, a revolutionary concept that Islam introduced.
- Right to Work and Economic Independence: The example of Khadijah (RA), the Prophet's wife, who was a successful businesswoman, shows that women have the right to work and engage in business.
- Right to Marriage and Divorce: Surah An-Nisa 4:19 – “O you who have believed, it is not lawful for you to inherit women by compulsion.” Islam prohibits forced marriages and gives women the right to choose their spouse and seek divorce if necessary.

**Key Point:** *Islam granted women rights in education, inheritance, economic independence, and family life long before many other societies. These rights must be upheld and practiced in our communities today.*

## 5. The Example of Women in Early Islam

- Khadijah (RA): The first wife of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), a successful entrepreneur, and one of the first believers in Islam. Her partnership with the Prophet highlights the importance of mutual respect and support between spouses.
- Aisha (RA): One of the most knowledgeable companions of the Prophet (PBUH), who contributed significantly to Islamic jurisprudence, showing that women can be scholars and leaders in the community.
- Fatimah (RA): The daughter of the Prophet, known for her wisdom, piety, and strength, providing an example of women's central role in the spiritual and communal life of Islam.

**Key Point:** *The women of early Islam played crucial roles as leaders, scholars, and businesswomen, reflecting the empowerment that Islam offers to women.*

## 6. Addressing Contemporary Gender Injustices in the Muslim Community

- Gender-Based Violence: Islam strictly condemns violence against women. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, "The best of you are those who are best to their wives." (Hadith - Tirmidhi). Any form of abuse or violence against women contradicts Islamic teachings.
- Women's Participation in Society: Many Muslim communities still limit women's access to education, work, and leadership. This goes against the examples set by women in early Islamic history and the rights granted to them by the Qur'an.
- Forced Marriages and Denial of Inheritance: Practices like forced marriage and denying women their inheritance are cultural practices that contradict Islamic teachings. Islam grants women the right to choose their spouse and to inherit wealth just like men.

**Key Point:** *Gender-based violence, denial of rights, and forced marriage are injustices that go against the teachings of Islam. As Muslims, we must work to correct these wrongs and ensure women are treated with dignity and fairness.*

## 7. Practical Steps to Promote Women's Rights in the Muslim Community

- Educate the Community: Organize Islamic education programs that teach men and women about the rights of women as outlined in the Qur'an and Hadith.
- Empower Women in Leadership: Encourage women to take on leadership roles in the mosque and the community, drawing inspiration from early Islamic history.
- Support Women Facing Injustice: Provide support systems for women experiencing domestic violence, discrimination, or denial of their Islamic rights. This could include counselling, legal assistance, and safe spaces.
- Promote Equal Access to Education and Economic Opportunities: Ensure that women and girls in the community have access to education and job opportunities, in line with Islamic teachings on the importance of knowledge and independence.

**Key Point:** *It is the responsibility of the entire Muslim community to ensure that women's rights are respected and upheld, as commanded by Allah in the Qur'an.*

## 8. Call to Action

- Reflect on Our Treatment of Women: Ask the congregation to reflect on how they treat the women in their families and communities. Are they upholding the rights and dignity that Islam commands?
- Challenge Cultural Practices: Encourage the congregation to challenge cultural practices that contradict Islamic teachings on women's rights and work to align community practices with the values of the Qur'an.
- Work for Change: Call on the community to actively promote and support women's rights, education, and empowerment, as an expression of their faith and commitment to justice.

**Key Point:** *Promoting women's rights is not just a matter of justice, but an obligation for all Muslims. By upholding the dignity of women, we fulfil the true teachings of Islam.*

## 9. Closing Qur'anic Verse and Du'a

- Closing Qur'anic Verse: Surah At-Tawbah 9:71 – “The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those – Allah will have mercy upon them.”
- Du'a: Pray for the guidance and strength to uphold the rights of women in accordance with Islam. Ask Allah to help the community grow in understanding, compassion, and justice toward all, regardless of gender.

### Conclusion

Islam teaches that men and women are created equally in the sight of Allah and grants women numerous rights in education, family life, economic participation, and leadership. The Muslim community must work to promote and protect these rights, challenging any cultural practices that undermine them. Upholding women's rights is not just a social responsibility—it is an essential part of living in accordance with the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.

**Faith Leader Ambassadors/Champions:** Progressive religious leaders can be empowered to become ambassadors/champions for gender justice. Their voices carry credibility, and they can help shift the conversation and narrative by showing how gender equality aligns with faith.

### MESSAGES:

For use on print posters with pictures of the champions; billboards; social media posts; champions can also be recorded saying the statement in short video format for Reels, Tik-tok or Facebook/Instagram

*“We commit to learn to read and interpret scripture in ways that liberate women and men, exploring the language and images of God which we use, so that together, we allow God to re-shape how we see ourselves, others and the world we live in”*

*“We commit to be intentional in our use of every speaking opportunity to be a voice for gender transformation and in our preaching to promote gender equitable norms for we are all made in the image of God”*

*“Our faith teaches us to protect life and uphold dignity. FGM violates this sacred principle by inflicting harm on the innocent. Let us stand together to end this harmful practice and ensure the health and dignity of every girl.”*

### Hash Tags:

#StopTheCutSaveTheGirl  
#EndChildMarriage  
#GirlsNotBrides  
#StandAgainstGBV  
#MadeinGodsImage

### RADIO/ TV INTERVIEW

#### Potential Questions and Proposed Answers

1. The religious space is considered discriminatory against women. Do you agree with this premise?

**ANSWER:** For centuries our faith community has failed to live up to its ideal mandate of being a space that treats everyone fairly within a space that allows them to thrive and express all their God given talents.

2. There have been many instances of abuse reported in religious setting and it is believed that you sweep these cases under the carpet. What do you have to say about this?

**ANSWER:** Although believers thrive to live out the values of love, acceptance, morality etc. sometimes even our members who are part of society, do wrong and as you rightly say, there should be consequences to

wrong doing. We acknowledge that we have not been as adept as we should be at consequence management; however, we are determined to do better.

3. The paucity of women in leadership within your religious community is testament to the pervasive nature of patriarchy within the system. What measures are you taking to create a more equal and equitable community?

**ANSWER:** We are aware of the problem and we have put in place some affirmative gender policies that will ensure that we have women at every level of leadership. We know that we cannot legislate changes in attitudes, but we hope that the evidence of leadership ability and the changing face of leaders will eventually do that.

4. What programmes are you running that you believe will the attitudes and entrenched behaviour of not just your members but society at large?

**ANSWER:** We hold community conversations every month that look at where we are regarding gender transformation; we have introduced gender and harassment policies; we have contextual studies that focus on sections of our sacred texts that promote women's rights or those that denounce texts that have been used to keep women down-trodden.

### Interfaith Alliances for Gender Justice

- **Collaborative Statements:** These bring together faith leaders from different denominations or religious traditions to make joint statements or declarations against harmful practices like FGM or child marriage. Interfaith efforts can show unity on the issue and help to build broader community buy-in.

### ADAPTABLE STATEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

*This statement can be read at religious services, inter-religious events or other actions. It can be adapted with references to your own community or faith tradition.*

*Include appropriate prayers or scriptures, particularly those that support women's rights.*

Our faith celebrates life. It calls on us to treat one another as we would like to be treated—with respect, compassion, and kindness—however inequalities are abundant in our communities. Women and girls are often treated with far less respect, compassion, and kindness than they deserve. In our community and in communities around the world, violence is used to perpetuate power inequalities and violence against women. The terrifying physical, psychological and spiritual devastation that is a reality for too many of our sisters is an affront to our core values and beliefs. Violence against any member of the human family can never be justified.

And so today, we join together in one voice as women and men of faith, ready to speak out in solidarity with those who have been silenced; we must advocate for their right to live healthy and dignified lives. We must prevent the violence from persisting unaddressed.

Many of us are already actively engaged with ending poverty, caring for the sick, and resolving conflict. We know that transformation is possible with these problems, and therefore we know there is reason for hope that our efforts to eliminate violence against women can also effect change. We will remember and draw lessons from our community's long tradition of promoting peaceful and healthy relationships, as we continue to work together to promote justice and provide a safe environment for all.

*[This could be a good place to highlight examples of past or ongoing actions within your community.]*

We are not alone in speaking out for women's rights. Many religious communities and individual people of faith are committed to ensuring the holistic dignity of all women and girls, and our actions will be stronger and more effective if we join together. We are all affected by a culture of violence, and we can all respond by creating a multi-religious community that is safe and healthy for all—women, men, girls and boys. As a multi-religious front within our own community, we must speak out against violence against women and

girls in our sermons and religious instructions to ensure that the violence and suffering stops here and now. We resolve to make women's rights a reality in our communities and make violence against women and girls history, so that future generations of young women and young men can grow up in harmony, each recognising the innate value and worth in the other.

*Adapted from Religions For Peace Toolkit for Religious Communities to end Violence Against Women<sup>12</sup>*

### **Video Statements**

A recording of several religious leaders 'taking a stand' for women's rights or against gender based violence and other forms of abuse. Follow link for a sample: <https://www.saferspaces.org.za/blog/entry/take-a-stand-faith-leaders-pledge-to-address-root-causes-of-gbv>

Short videos have greater traction than written statements and are more liable to go viral.

- **Faith-Based Pledges or Commitments** – Religious leaders to publicly pledge to support gender justice and work to end harmful practices. The same can be done at congregational level with congregants.

### **PUBLIC PLEDGE FOR GENDER JUSTICE AND THE ELIMINATION OF HARMFUL PRACTICES**

We, the undersigned faith leaders recognize the inherent dignity, value, and rights of all individuals, regardless of their gender. We are committed to promoting gender justice and eradicating harmful practices that perpetuate inequality and violence.

As signatories to this pledge, we affirm the following principles:

- a. Equality and Inclusion: We commit to upholding and advocating for gender equality in all aspects of life, ensuring that women, men, girls, boys, and people of all gender identities are treated with dignity, fairness, and respect.
- b. Ending Gender-Based Violence: We pledge to take concrete action against all forms of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, child marriage, and human trafficking. We will work to protect victims, hold perpetrators accountable, and support healing and justice for survivors.
- c. Challenging Harmful Social Norms: We commit to identifying and confronting harmful social and cultural practices that reinforce gender discrimination. We will work to raise awareness and challenge harmful traditions, stereotypes, and attitudes that perpetuate inequality.
- d. Empowering Women and Girls: We pledge to support and advocate for the empowerment of women and girls by providing access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and leadership positions, fostering environments where they can thrive.
- e. Advocating for Legal and Policy Reforms: We commit to advocating for legal and policy changes that promote gender justice, including strengthening laws to protect against gender discrimination, ensuring equal pay for equal work, and safeguarding reproductive rights and health.
- f. Partnering for Change: We recognize that true change requires collaboration across all sectors of society, including governments, civil society, religious communities, and the private sector. We pledge to work in partnership with others to build a just and equitable society for all.

#### **Our Commitment:**

By signing this pledge, we commit to taking action to support gender justice in our communities, workplaces, and homes. We will challenge harmful practices, promote gender equality, and ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to live free from violence, discrimination, and injustice.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.endvawnow.org/uploads/browser/files/Restoring%20Dignity%20-%20A%20Toolkit%20for%20Religious%20Communities%20to%20End%20Violence%20Against%20Women.pdf>

Signed,

[Name/Organization]

[Date]

*This pledge can be tailored to fit different contexts, communities, or organizations.*

### Involve Men and Boys in the Conversation

- **Faith-Based Discussions on Masculinity:** Facilitate discussions on positive masculinity within faith settings, helping men and boys see the value of gender equality as a moral and faith-based obligation.

## TRANSFORMATIVE MASCULINITY

### 1. Opening Prayer /theological Reflection/ contextual study

Genesis 1:27 – “So God created man in His own image, male and female He created them.”

Galatians 3:28 – “There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

“The Believers, men and women, are protectors of one another: they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil: they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity, and obey Allah and His Messenger. On them will Allah pour His mercy: for Allah is exalted in power, Wise” (Quran 9:71)

### 2. Introduction to Transformative Masculinity

- Define transformative masculinity and how it differs from traditional or toxic masculinity. Explain that it encourages men to embody positive traits such as love, respect, empathy, and justice, aligning these values with faith principles.

**Example Definition:** “Transformative masculinity challenges harmful gender norms and encourages men to embrace more positive and equitable roles in their families, communities, and spiritual lives.”

Link this to the faith context, discussing sacred texts call for humility, servant leadership, and equality.

### 3. Theological Framework: Masculinity and Faith

- Use religious teachings to frame masculinity as a spiritual responsibility that emphasizes love, respect, and protection of the vulnerable.
- Discuss how traditional masculinity might conflict with these values and how transformative masculinity can align with them.

### 4. Small Group Discussions: Personal Experiences

- Personal understanding of masculinity: What does it mean to be a man in your faith tradition and culture?
- Experiences with harmful gender norms: How have societal or cultural definitions of masculinity caused harm to you or others (e.g., in families, communities)?
- Faith and masculinity: How has your faith shaped your view of manhood? How can your faith help them become better advocates for gender justice?

These discussions create space for self-reflection and personal connection to the topic.

### 5. Exploring Harmful Practices and Their Impact

- Facilitate a dialogue on how harmful expressions of masculinity (e.g., dominance, violence, or suppression of emotion) affect relationships, families, and communities.
- Discuss specific issues such as gender-based violence, domestic violence, or rigid gender roles.

*How can these practices be challenged within your faith?*

## 6. Scriptural Models of Positive Masculinity

Introduce examples of positive masculinity in sacred texts e.g. Jesus, Joseph- How do these inspire life today?

### Practical Application: Transforming Masculinity in Daily Life

- Families: Embrace equal partnership, engage emotionally, and reject harmful stereotypes.
- Communities: Stand against gender-based violence, mentor younger men, model respectful behaviour.
- Faith settings: Support gender justice initiatives, challenge harmful gender norms in their faith communities.
- Encourage them to think of specific actions they can take, such as participating in workshops, mentoring younger men, or becoming advocates for gender justice in their communities.

**Issue a call to action:** Challenge participants to be role models in their communities, embodying transformative masculinity and advocating for justice.

(Find more examples in [Annex 2](#) and [Annex 3](#))

### GLOBAL FAITH-BASED ADVOCACY DAYS

Use international observances like the International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM (February 6), International Women's Day (March 8), or International Day of the Girl (October 11) 16 Days of Activism etc.

- 16 Actions for 16 Days. See [Annex 10](#).

## STRATEGY 3: DIGITAL MEDIA

Utilize social media, podcasts, and webinars to reach a wider audience with messages about women's rights in faith settings.

### Faith-Based Media Campaigns

- Religious and Secular Radio and TV Programmes

### INTERVIEWING SURVIVORS, EXPERTS OR NGO'S ABOUT GENDER JUSTICE FROM A FAITH PERSPECTIVE FOR RADIO AND TV

#### Survivors:

#### Questions for women survivors of gender-based violence

1. I understand that you have experienced gender-based violence in a faith community. Thank you for being here to share your experiences today. How did it start?
  - a. What was the nature of the violence?
  - b. How long did it last?
  - c. How did you feel at the time?
2. What do you think is important for people to know?
3. How has this experience affected you?
4. What services/resources/people helped you in your recovery?
5. What made it difficult for you to come forward?
6. What would have made it easier for you to report this violence?
7. What suggestions do you have to make it safer for victim-survivors to come forward especially, in faith settings?
8. What would you tell other women who are going through a similar situation in their lives right now?
9. What do you feel needs to be done in your faith community to reduce and eliminate gender-based violence and to support survivors?

## Experts and Women's Rights Organizations

1. What is gender-based violence?
  - a. What are the different types of gender-based violence?
  - b. What are the most common types of gender-based violence?
  - c. Are men and women equally affected by gender-based violence? Please explain.
  - d. Are youth and adults equally affected by gender-based violence? Please explain.
  - e. How are other marginalized groups, including people living with disabilities, affected by gender-based violence?
2. Do you have statistics on the number of cases of gender-based violence in ... every year?
  - a. Are all cases of gender-based violence reported? If not, why not?
  - b. What are the risks for survivors who report or try to report cases of gender-based violence? Do you get many cases reported from faith settings?
  - c. What changes need to be made in to make it easier and safer for women to report gender-based violence?
3. What are the most common myths and misconceptions about GBV and abuse in faith settings?
  - a. What is your response to these myths and misconceptions?
4. What are organizations in this area doing to help and support survivors of gender-based violence?
5. What role can faith communities, friends, and families play, especially in the education of young boys?

- **Social Media Campaigns with Faith-Based Influencers**

### MESSAGES - SOCIAL MEDIA - POSTERS AND REELS.

### THESE CAN ALSO BE USED AS TAG LINES FOR TV/ RADIO INTERVIEWS

“All people are created in the image of God, with equal dignity and worth. Gender justice is a reflection of God’s love for humanity, and we must challenge harmful practices that deny this truth. #HumanRights #GenderEquality”

“Our Sacred texts call us to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8). Let us stand against all forms of violence, exploitation, and inequality that harm women and girls.” #JusticeForAll #FaithAndAction

“No one should live in fear. God commands us to protect the vulnerable.” #EndGBV #FaithAgainstViolence

“Empowering women and girls is not just a matter of justice, but it also honours the God-given potential within them.”

“Let us nurture equality by ensuring that women have equal access to education, healthcare, and leadership.” #WomenInLeadership #EmpowerHer

“Faith calls us to love our neighbours as ourselves. We must advocate for change that promotes the well-being of every individual.” #CulturalChange #DignityForAll

“True justice requires that men become allies in the fight for gender equality.” #FaithInAction

“As brothers, fathers, and sons, men must help break the cycles of violence and inequality.” #MenForEquality

“Religious leaders have a powerful voice that shapes communities and can end harmful practices.” #LeadersForChange

“Justice is at the heart of our faith.” #JusticeInFaith

“Gender justice is not just a human right; it is a moral imperative deeply rooted in faith! Let’s align human rights and religious values!” #FaithAndHumanRights #JusticeForWomen

“Silence in the face of injustice is complicity. Raise your voice to break harmful traditions!” #SpeakOut #BreakTheSilence

- **Encourage Women’s Leadership in Faith Communities**

**MESSAGES – FOR SOCIAL MEDIA;  
POSTERS – FOR USE WITH PICTURES OF AN INTERSECTION OF WOMEN**

“Women have a voice- let them pray, preach, teach, lead and read in faith settings”

“Every girl needs a role model she can identify with as her religious leader”

“Every girl deserves the right to education, safety, and a future free from harmful practices”

**Profile Women Leaders**

- *Name:*
- *Time in Leadership*
- *Achievements*
- *Challenges of being a woman in a patriarchal world/ woman in ministry*
- *Changes, Lessons, and New Challenges*
- *Wisdom for up and coming women leaders*
- *A challenge to the religious community*

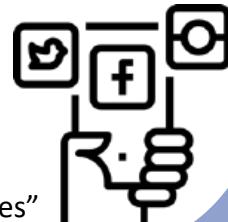
## ADVOCACY TOOLS

- **Fact Sheets:** Develop faith-based, contextual fact sheets on women’s rights that religious leaders and congregations can easily reference. See [Annex 11](#), 30 Basic Human Rights List; and [Annex 12](#), Women’s Rights And Their Protection.
- **Scripture Reference Guides:** Provide references to sacred texts that emphasize gender justice and equality. See [Annex 4](#) and [Annex 5](#), Lists of Sacred Texts from the Bible and Quran; [Annex 8](#), Bible Verses to Counter Terror Texts.
- **Prayers and Reflections/ Contextual Sacred Text Studies:** Create faith-aligned prayers or reflections that advocate for women’s rights and empowerment. See [Annex 2](#) and [Annex 3](#), Contextual Studies; [Annex 4](#) and [Annex 5](#), Lists of Sacred Texts from the Bible and Quran; [Annex 8](#), Bible Verses to Counter Terror Texts; and [Annex 9](#), Prayers.
- **Videos and Visuals:** Develop engaging videos or infographics that communicate key messages about gender equality in a faith-friendly manner. See [Annex 11](#), 30 Basic Human Rights List; and [Annex 12](#), Women’s Rights And Their Protection.

Here are sample advocacy messages addressing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child marriage, tailored for various platforms and audiences:

## 1. Social Media Posts

- **On FGM:** “Female Genital Mutilation has no health benefits. It violates the dignity and rights of women and girls. Let’s stand together to #EndFGM for a healthier, safer future. #StopFGMNow #HumanRights”
- **On Child Marriage:** “Every girl deserves to be a child, not a bride. Child marriage robs girls of their education, health, and future. Together, we can end this practice. #EndChildMarriage #GirlsNotBrides”



## 2. Public Service Announcements (PSAs)



- **On FGM:** “Female Genital Mutilation is not a cultural necessity—it’s a harmful tradition that causes lifelong physical and emotional harm. Protect our girls, protect their futures. Say no to FGM.”
- **On Child Marriage:** “When a girl is forced into marriage, she loses her childhood, her education, and her freedom. Let’s work together to protect girls’ rights to grow, learn, and thrive. End child marriage now.”

## 3. Speeches or Sermons

- **On FGM:** “Our faith calls us to protect the dignity and health of every human being. Female Genital Mutilation is a practice that causes untold suffering to women and girls. As people of conscience, we must unite to end this harmful practice and uphold the rights and dignity of every girl in our community.”
- **On Child Marriage:** “A child is a blessing, not a bride. Forced marriage strips children of their innocence and future. It’s our duty to ensure every girl has the chance to grow, learn, and lead without the threat of early marriage hanging over her. Let’s stand up for the rights of girls and put an end to child marriage.”



## 4. Billboard or Poster Messages



- **On FGM:** “FGM hurts. FGM harms. FGM must end. Protect our girls. Say no to Female Genital Mutilation!”
- **On Child Marriage:** “A girl’s place is in school, not in a marriage. Let’s stop child marriage today. Every girl deserves a future.”

## 5. Radio Campaign

- **On FGM:** “Female Genital Mutilation is a harmful tradition that puts millions of girls at risk. It causes pain, complications during childbirth, and even death. You can help stop it. Let’s protect our daughters and say no to FGM.”
- **On Child Marriage:** “When a child is married, she loses her chance to grow, to learn, and to become all she can be. Together, we can end child marriage and create a world where every girl can reach her full potential.”



## 6. Community Dialogue or Workshop Talking Points



- **On FGM:** “FGM is a violation of human rights. It has no place in a society that values the health and wellbeing of women and girls. By speaking out and educating others, we can end this harmful practice and ensure that our daughters are protected from harm.”
- **On Child Marriage:** “Child marriage is not just a tradition—it’s a violation of children’s rights. It denies girls the opportunity to go to school, exposes them to health risks, and perpetuates poverty. Together, we can educate our communities and end this cycle.”

## 7. Advocacy Flyers

- **On FGM:**
  - Title: “Stop the Cut, Save the Girl.”
  - Message: “FGM has no medical benefits, only risks. It’s time to protect the health and rights of girls and women. Stand with us in the fight to end Female Genital Mutilation.”
- **On Child Marriage:**
  - Title: “Her Childhood, Her Right”
  - Message: “Every girl deserves the right to education, health, and freedom. Child marriage is a barrier to that right. Let’s end child marriage now and give every girl a chance to dream and succeed.”



## 8. Religious Messaging



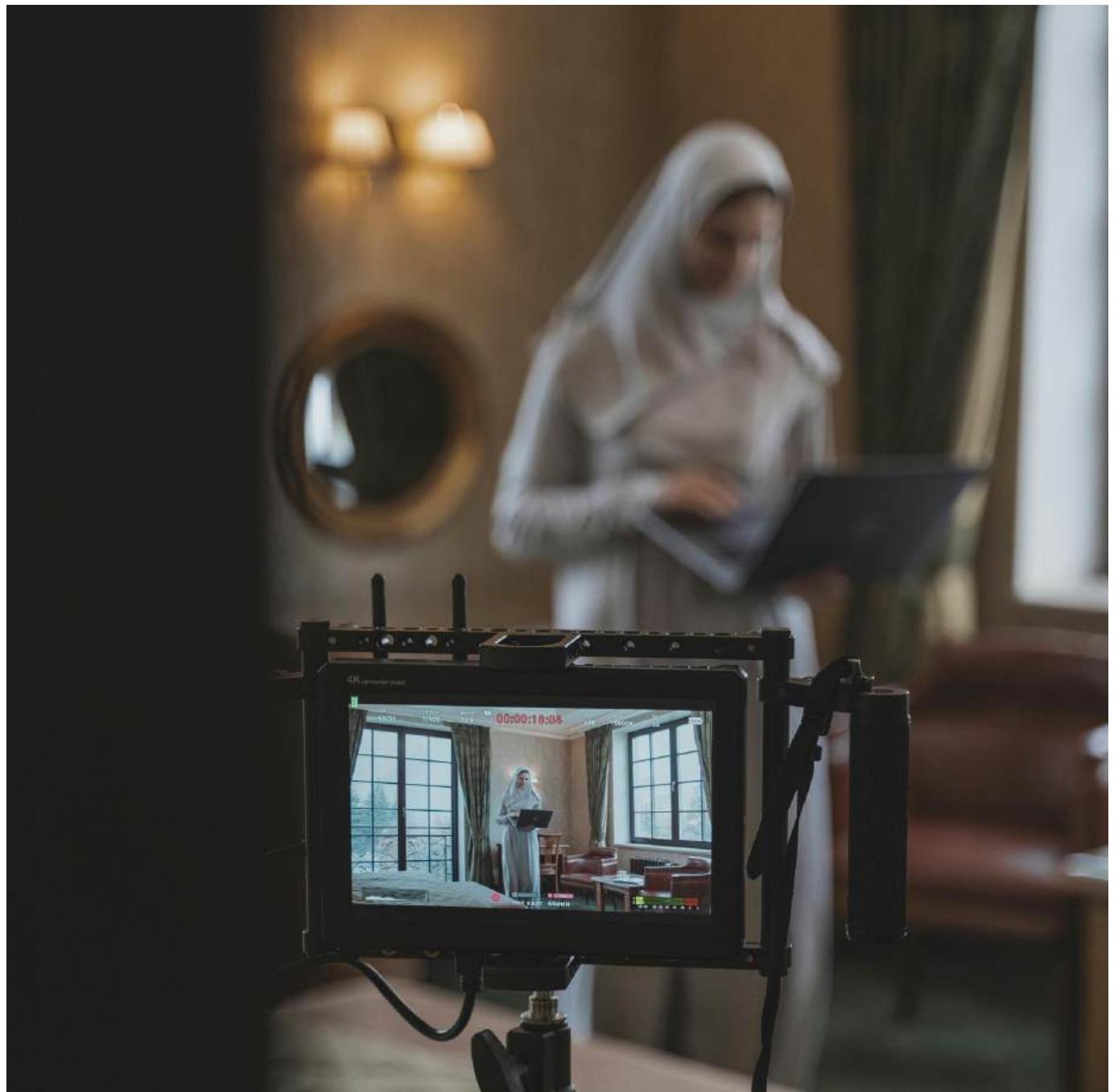
- **On FGM:** “Our faith teaches us to protect life and uphold dignity. FGM violates this sacred principle by inflicting harm on the innocent. Let us stand together to end this harmful practice and ensure the health and dignity of every girl.”
- **On Child Marriage:** “Marriage is a sacred covenant, but it should never involve a child. Every girl deserves the chance to grow, learn, and live free from the dangers of child marriage. Let us work within our communities to protect the future of our daughters.”

These messages can be adapted for various platforms, whether digital or physical, ensuring they resonate with the cultural, religious, and social contexts of the audience you are targeting.

*By combining these strategies, advocates can create a comprehensive communication plan (See [Annex 11](#)) that speaks to faith communities in ways that resonate with their values, ultimately fostering a culture of gender justice and ending harmful traditional practices.*

# Chapter 4

## Audio Visual Materials



## SOME GUIDANCE ON USING MULTI-MEDIA MESSAGING

When using audio-visual materials and multi-media messaging, we use the old adage that a picture is worth a thousand words. When using images, they should constitute the main part of the message. If we want to move people to agree with us, we should use images that portray our vision of how things should be, the future we want to see, or our solution, or call to action, or examples of past successes.

Focusing on the problem or the harms we are trying to solve can be useful if we want to mobilise a particular audience to action because it tends to elicit anger and frustration from them. We must be cautious with this as well, because too much focus on the harms may cause people to feel overwhelmed and demotivated by a problem that seems too big to solve.

**Example: *Campaigns promoting respect and equal treatment of women and girls tend to be phrased negatively, calling the audience to 'stop' or 'end' harm. Often these campaigns use imagery that depicts the harm or the harmful behaviour.<sup>13</sup>***

Faith Actors for Justice would be better served to use positively phrased language that expresses *the cause* they're fighting for in terms of what the situation *should be*, rather than what *they want to end*. Alternatively, imagery that helps the audience to understand who or what is causing the structural problems that leads to the violation of women's rights and allows violence against women and girls to continue and why, can be used<sup>14</sup>.



Using images with groups of 'ordinary people' representing a cross section of society all carrying different messages such as: 'human dignity for all', 'call out the abuse happening in religious spaces', etc. can act as social proof that a cross section of our target audience is affected by the issues we are advocating for. This can influence behaviour and attitudes when people can identify with individuals in the images used.

<sup>13</sup> [https://dq4n3bttxmr8c9.cloudfront.net/files/kdleeg/How\\_to\\_message\\_on\\_human\\_rights\\_2.pdf](https://dq4n3bttxmr8c9.cloudfront.net/files/kdleeg/How_to_message_on_human_rights_2.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> ibid

Below are infographics used by the Methodist Church of Southern Africa during a digital Freedom from Fear Campaign in 2020.

 The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

**FREEDOM from FEAR & VIOLENCE**

**STOP GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

**05 July: SAYING "NO" TO THE POWERS THAT BE.**  
Esther 1: 1 - 22; 2 Timothy 1: 6 - 11

**12 July: CUSTODIANS & PERPETRATORS OF INJUSTICE UNDER ONE ROOF.**  
Deuteronomy 22:25-27; 2 Samuel 13:1-23

**19 July: SILENCE IS CONSENT!**  
Isaiah 1:17; John 8:32; Ephesians 4:20-27

**26 July: MIND "YOUR" POWER!**  
Samuel 11:2-17 and 26-27; Matthew 20:26-28; John 8:1-

**02 August: THE SILENCED AND NAMELESS WOMEN!**  
Judges 19:9-30; Mark 5:25-35

**09 August: SOCIAL HOLINESS AND GBV**  
Matthew 5:13 - 16; James 2:14-26

**16 August: THE CHURCH AS A SAFE SPACE**  
Chronicles 20:9; Ezekiel 47:1-12

*A Christ-healed Africa for the Healing of Nations*

 The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

**FREEDOM from FEAR & VIOLENCE**

**STOP GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

**Silenced No More!**

**Do you need help with an abuse issue?  
Do you have unresolved allegations?**

The MCSA has the following tools for your use:

**The Harassment Policy:**  
Appendix 15 Laws and Discipline  
[www.methodist.org.za](http://www.methodist.org.za)

Contact your Circuit Superintendent to find out who serves on your Circuit Harassment Team.

**The Discipline Process:**  
Book of Order -L&D Chapter 11

If it is crime - e.g. assault, rape etc. criminal charges are to be laid with the Police.



*A Christ-healed Africa for the Healing of Nations*

 The Methodist Church of Southern Africa

**FREEDOM from FEAR & VIOLENCE**

**STOP GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

**The Methodist Church of Southern Africa Bishops and Leaders Speak out against Gender Based Violence**

Presiding Bishop: Rev N Purity Malinga



We as Methodist leaders come together in lament for the role we have played and continue to play in entrenching Gender Based Violence (GBV) in the church and ultimately in our communities.

We grieve that we have become numb to the overwhelming violence and femicide pervasive in our communities.

We confess that as leaders we have not done enough to rid our churches and communities of this destructive scourge; that we have turned a cursory ear to the cries of our mothers and sisters and have conveniently been blind to the evidence of abuse in our midst!

**God, have mercy on us! God, forgive us!**

*A Christ-healed Africa for the Healing of Nations*

### Short Videos/ Reels/ Tik-Toks

Campaign videos should be short and not run for longer than 2 minutes – some would consider shorter ones even more effective. This can be a combination of visuals and short, catchy wording.

## WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

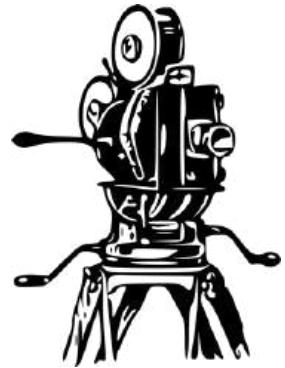
Working with the media to transmit women's rights messages requires strategic planning to ensure that the content reaches the right audience and resonates with them. Here are key steps to consider:

- 1. Understand Your Audience:** Target Demographics: Identify the groups that need to hear your message—whether it's the general public, policymakers, or specific communities, so that you can know what media spaces to find them in and tailor your message to their particular cultural and social realities using language and examples that resonate with their experiences.
- 2. Craft a Clear, Compelling Message:** Simplicity and clarity of the core message are an integral component to ensure that it is understood. Avoid jargon or overly technical terms. Choose a media that will enhance storytelling so that you can use real-life stories and personal narratives to highlight the impact of women's rights issues. Stories are more relatable and powerful in engaging emotions and empathy. See sample messages in Chapter 3.
- 3. Engage Diverse Media Platforms:**  
Use traditional media such as radio, tv and newspapers and find spaces on talk shows etc. Women's rights activists should also appear on talk shows and news segments. Use new media such as Social media platforms including Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, X and use tools such as blogs and podcasts as platforms for deeper discussions.
- 4. Build Relationships with Journalists and Influencers:** Provide media training for journalists with background on women's rights issues, offering them insights and framing suggestions on how to cover gender justice stories sensitively and accurately. Build partnerships with influencers, celebrities, or public figures who support women's rights, leveraging their platforms to amplify the message. Create and maintain, with updated information, Media Lists that you can leverage when you need events and issues covered.
- 5. Leverage Special Days and Events:** Capitalize on days such as International Women's Day (March 8), the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, and other relevant observances to increase media coverage. See [Annex 1](#), Sample Media Plan. Develop women's months within your faith communities and leverage these to educate and build awareness around women's issues. Organize events, panel discussions, and press conferences around key milestones or policy developments in women's rights, and remember to always include the faith angle.
- 6. Counteract Misinformation:** Be available to do interviews and write articles that counteract misinformation. Make sure that all the information you share is accurate and backed by credible sources. Be prepared with clear responses to opposition or misinformation from groups that may challenge women's rights messages.
- 7. Monitor and Evaluate Impact:** Media Monitoring – Track media coverage and social media engagement to measure the reach and effectiveness of your message and collect feedback from the audience to understand what resonates most and adjust future messages accordingly.



## MEDIA TRAINING FOR SPOKESPEOPLE

If your spokespeople have not been media-trained, consider engaging a professional media trainer to work with them prior to beginning the campaign. A media trainer can help your spokespeople in presentation skills, delivering the key messages in a targeted and concise manner, responding to challenging questions and situations, and working with reporters to ensure the messages are delivered.



## MEET WITH KEY INFLUENCERS

In the world we live in today, influencers with a large following on social media are a big deal and used to garner the support of key audiences in the community. It is important therefore, that as part of our communication strategies we meet with identified influencers including politicians and celebrities and get them to support our campaign and commit to using their platforms to market the messages and events.

The calibre of the influencer you choose must match the message you hope to communicate through them. For instance, a celebrity often photographed carrying alcoholic drinks may not be appropriate for a sobriety campaign.



# Chapter 5

## Practical Tools



## BEWARE OF YOUR OWN STEREOTYPES

Words that you use or write can be interpreted differently by various people. Language is not neutral. It is important to weigh the words used so that we do not appear to be biased, demeaning or discriminatory. For example, commonly used words such as “fatherland”, “mankind”, “spokesman”, “mother tongue”, etc. should be avoided and replaced by neutral language that could contribute to gender equality and minimize the unconscious acceptance of gender-inequality.

1. **Stereotypical Images:** Make sure that the images you choose to use in communication materials do not reinforce gender stereotypes. Include a wide mix of people in different environments.
2. **Invisibility or Omission:** Do not use ‘man’ or ‘he’ to refer to the experiences of all people. Make clear that you are referring to men and women by naming each.
3. **Subordination and Trivialisation:** Ensure that your language actively promotes gender equality by not trivialising or subordinating women. You should be aware of the word order of your phrases and make sure that you are not always putting the male version first.
4. **Avoid patronising or belittling women<sup>15</sup>** Specific language used in press releases, social media content, publications, and statements should be gender sensitive. Avoid words that reflect assumptions about values, gender roles and abilities of women and men. Word choice often reflects unconscious assumptions about values, gender roles, and the abilities of women and men.



<sup>15</sup> [https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/20193925\\_mh0119609enn\\_pdf.pdf](https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/20193925_mh0119609enn_pdf.pdf)

## INNOVATIVE MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

The CPB London Imagine Campaign is an example of an innovative gender equality print campaign that challenges stereotypes and assumptions about roles.



16

We in faith spaces can find inspiration from this and create our own posters that speak to and question religious bias. Imagine a bishop? Is it a man? Imagine an Imam? Is it a woman?

These campaigns can be contextualised and adapted to both digital and print media. The statements can inform podcast series and courageous conversations can be had around the various highlighted issues. See [Annex 1](#) and [Annex 10](#) for Sample Social Media Plans.

<sup>16</sup> <https://cpb-london.studiosixty-one.com/portfolio/international-womens-day-imagine/>

Some tools to help us as we navigate gender transformative communication within faith spaces to promote women's rights.

## CHECKLIST 1

QUESTIONS
Is there a balance of female and male contributors as interviewees, experts, or authors?
Do the messages, images and videos challenge negative gender stereotypes?
Do the images represent women as empowered decision makers and leaders?
Does the analysis take into consideration intersecting identities?
Does the publication or message embrace marginalized groups?
Is the messaging informed by lived, contextual realities?
Does the publication include men and others as allies in women's empowerment?

## CHECKLIST 2 - NEWS AND MEDIA ARTICLES

QUESTIONS
Are the experts knowledgeable regarding women's issues in discussions, activities, or events?
Is there a balance of female and male voices on the issue being covered?
Do the images or texts challenge negative gender stereotypes of women, men, and others?
Are the illustrations gender-inclusive?
Does the news article shed light on the issues that affect women differently to men?
Do the news articles reference harmful norms and traditions that disproportionately affect women?
Are positive developments represented in the article?
Does the discussion/event/activity involve and encourage men and boys to promote gender equality?

## CHECKLIST 3 – CHECKLIST FOR SOCIAL MEDIA (SM)

QUESTIONS
Does the SM post challenge gender norms, roles, and negative stereotypes?
Does the SM post provide stories of role models that have defied traditional gender roles?
Does the SM post actively feature women-related national/international events such as International Women's Day, and share links to women's organizations?
Is there a call to action that encourages commitment of the audience to progressive actions?
Do the images and videos depict real-life situations or characters, particularly female role models?
Does the SM post represent people in power?
Does the SM post flip notions of power?
Is the content effective to reach the target audience?
Does the broadcasting strategy consider access and control over social media platform usage and relevant timing?
Is the post adaptable to different social media platforms?

## ADAPTABLE STATEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO ADVOCATE FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

*This statement can be read at religious services, inter-religious events, or other actions.*

*It can be adapted with references to your own community or faith tradition.*

*Include appropriate prayers or scriptures, particularly those that support women's rights.*

Our faith celebrates life. It calls on us to treat one another as we would like to be treated—with respect, compassion, and kindness—however, inequalities are abundant in our communities. Women and girls are often treated with far less respect, compassion, and kindness than they deserve. In our community and in communities around the world, violence is used to perpetuate power inequalities and violence against women. The terrifying physical, psychological, and spiritual devastation that is a reality for too many of our sisters is an affront to our core values and beliefs. Violence against any member of the human family can never be justified.

And so today, we join together in one voice as women and men of faith, ready to speak out in solidarity with those who have been silenced; we must advocate for their right to live healthy and dignified lives. We must prevent the violence from persisting unaddressed.

Many of us are already actively engaged with ending poverty, caring for the sick, and resolving conflict. We know that transformation is possible with these problems, and therefore we know there is reason for hope that our efforts to eliminate violence against women can also effect change. We will remember and draw lessons from our community's long tradition of promoting peaceful and healthy relationships, as we continue to work together to promote justice and provide a safe environment for all.

*[This could be a good place to highlight examples of past, or ongoing, actions within your community.]*

We are not alone in speaking out for women's rights. Many religious communities and individual people of faith are committed to ensuring the holistic dignity of all women and girls, and our actions will be stronger and more effective if we join together. We are all affected by a culture of violence, and we can all respond by creating a multi-religious community that is safe and healthy for all—women, men, girls, and boys. As a multi-religious front within our own community, we must speak out against violence against women and girls in our sermons and religious instructions to ensure that the violence and suffering stops here and now. We resolve to make women's rights a reality in our communities and make violence against women and girls' history, so that future generations of young women and young men can grow up in harmony; each recognising the innate value and worth in the other.

*Adapted from Religions For Peace Toolkit for Religious Communities to end Violence Against Women<sup>17</sup>*

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.endvawnow.org/uploads/browser/files/Restoring%20Dignity%20-%20A%20Toolkit%20for%20Religious%20Communities%20to%20End%20Violence%20Against%20Women.pdf>

## CHALLENGING GENDER STEREOTYPES

✗ GENDER BIASED	✓ GENDER SENSITIVE
Social Good Summit attendees and their wives are invited.	Social Good Summit attendees and their partners are invited.
John and Mary both have full-time jobs; he helps her with the housework.	John and Mary both have full-time jobs; they share the housework.
Research scientists often neglect their wives and children.	Research scientists often neglect their families.
The average construction worker is experiencing impacts on his health due to hazardous working conditions by the age of 35 years.	Recent research revealed that construction workers are experiencing impacts on their health due to hazardous working conditions by the age of 35 years.
The policy manual states that the Deputy Resident Representative attends every Project Appraisal Committee meeting at his Country Office.	The policy manual states that the Deputy Resident Representative attends every Project Appraisal Committee meeting at the Country Office.

## DEVELOPING YOUR MEDIA LIST

Before you can reach out to the media, you need to know which outlets (e.g., community newspapers, talk radio, etc.) and specific contacts (e.g., education reporters, editors, news directors, etc.) to reach out to. To do so, it is also important to learn the primary news sources your audiences rely on for facts and information and put these into a database with the names and other details of contact persons.

## DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Creating an innovative, gender equality campaign in religious spaces requires a thoughtful approach that respects religious traditions while promoting inclusivity and gender justice. Here are some key strategies to design an impactful campaign.

### Campaign Example Title:

- “Faith in Equality: A Journey Towards Gender Justice in Worship and Beyond”
- “Sacred Balance: Celebrating Gender Equality in Our Faith”

### 1. ENGAGE RELIGIOUS LEADERS AS CHAMPIONS

- **Training and Sensitization:** Organize workshops and dialogues with religious leaders to discuss gender equality from a faith-based perspective. Highlight scriptural interpretations that support gender justice.
- **Ambassadors for Change:** Identify and empower progressive religious leaders who can serve as ambassadors for gender equality within their communities, preaching and teaching messages of equality from the pulpit.

### 2. SCRIPTURAL REFRAMING

- **Contextual Theology:** Use religious texts and stories to promote the idea that gender equality aligns with core values of justice, love, and compassion found in many faiths.
- **Women in Sacred Texts:** Highlight stories of influential women in sacred texts, showing that women have always played a pivotal role in religious narratives. This could involve sermons, study guides, or educational material for congregants.

### 3. CREATE INCLUSIVE SPACES IN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

- **Women Leadership in Worship:** Advocate for women's inclusion in leadership roles within religious institutions, from leading prayers to serving on councils. Highlight faith communities where this is already happening.
- **Gender Audits:** Encourage religious spaces to undergo a “gender audit” to assess how inclusive their leadership structures, practices, and programmes are, with action plans to improve.

#### 4. INTERFAITH GENDER EQUALITY COALITIONS

- **Joint Statements:** Create interfaith coalitions that can release joint statements or manifestos advocating for gender equality. These coalitions can also organize joint services or events that promote inclusive teachings across faith traditions.
- **Shared Campaigns:** Launch multi-faith campaigns around specific issues, such as gender-based violence or women's leadership, creating a sense of unity among diverse faith communities.

#### 5. MEDIA AND DIGITAL CAMPAIGNS

- **Faith-Based Social Media**

**Influencers:** Partner with religious influencers on social media to share messages of gender equality, using their platforms to spread positive narratives that align with faith.

- **Storytelling Campaigns:** Collect and share stories of women and men who have challenged gender norms within their religious spaces, celebrating their successes through video documentaries, blogs, or podcasts.
- **Podcasts, Reels, Talk Shows, etc.**

#### 6. SYMBOLIC ACTIONS

- **Gender Equality Pledges:** Encourage religious leaders and congregations to take a public pledge committing to gender equality. This can be done during services or major religious holidays.
- **Visibility at Worship Sites:** Place visible symbols of gender equality within religious spaces—such as banners or artwork—that reflect the community's commitment to inclusion and equality.

#### 7. EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

- **Gender Equality Workshops:** Develop faith-based educational workshops for both men and women that address issues like patriarchy, toxic masculinity, and gender-based violence. Use religious teachings to frame these issues in a way that promotes healing and justice.
- **Youth Programmes:** Implement gender equality programmes within youth groups in religious communities, ensuring that the next generation grows up with a more inclusive understanding of gender roles within their faith.

#### 9. AMPLIFY WOMEN'S VOICES

- **Female Preachers and Speakers:** Organize guest sermons or events where women speak about gender equality from their faith perspectives. This can model women's leadership and normalize it within religious spaces.
- **Congregational Participation:** Encourage congregations to actively listen to the concerns and contributions of women, whether through open forums or after-service discussions.

#### 10. LINK RELIGIOUS MESSAGES TO SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS

- **Faith and Justice Advocacy:** Connect the religious call for gender equality to broader social justice issues like poverty, education, and health. This makes it clear that gender equality is not just a "women's issue" but a broader moral and justice issue.
- **Campaign for Legal Changes:** Use religious spaces as platforms to support policy and legal changes that advance gender equality, showing how faith communities can be powerful advocates for societal transformation.

#### 8. ENGAGE MEN AND BOYS

- **Men as Allies and Transformative**

**Masculinities:** Organize programmes that engage men and boys in conversations about gender equality, highlighting the importance of male allies in faith communities.

- **Faith-Based Gender Dialogues:** Host intergenerational gender dialogues within religious spaces, where men, women, and youth can discuss the importance of equal treatment and respect within the faith context.

#### 11. UTILIZE ART AND CULTURE

- **Art Exhibitions:** Host exhibitions that showcase art exploring gender equality from a religious perspective, combining sacred symbols with modern expressions of justice.

**Music and Dance:** Incorporate songs and dances that emphasize themes of equality and dignity for all, blending cultural and religious elements to communicate the message powerfully.

- **Use Drama and Short Skits:** to depict contextual issues affecting a community and the possible solutions.

This kind of campaign can create meaningful change by combining theological reflection, community engagement, and innovative media strategies.

## SOME COMMON COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES TO USE

### 1. The Media Isn't Interested

Make your message and issue compelling and use real life, local examples as well as pictures and graphics. Offer topic experts such as imams and other respected religious leaders as interviewees.

### 2. We Have No Budget to Create Materials

Ask local faith communities, NGOs with a community focus on gender and women's rights to sponsor your campaign. Approach tv and radio stations for sponsorship as well as local businesses.

### 3. People Aren't Paying Attention to the Materials and Messages

People's attention is pulled in many directions by competing priorities. Deliver compelling messages where people are most likely to give you their attention such as in church bulletins.

## SOME COMMUNICATION INDICATORS TO HEED

Some indicators to pay attention to; these may be revised or adapted as needed, depending on the local context:

- Portray men and women in diverse roles (leaders, experts, spokespersons, ordinary people)
- Ensure that it is not only women who are portrayed as vulnerable or victims
- Portray men and women in different contexts (family/work and rural/urban)
- Portray men and women not only in traditional ways
- Quote men and women as expert-source of info-opinion
- Where relevant, consider stories that feature women of diverse backgrounds
- Ensure a balance between stories featuring female-driven initiatives and partnerships and those featuring male-driven initiatives and partnerships
- Ensure diversity in messaging



## PRESS KITS

A press kit (or media kit) is a collection of promotional materials provided to the media to give them a comprehensive overview of a person, organization, event, or product. It is designed to make it easier for journalists and media outlets to access key information when writing stories or producing reports. Press kits can be distributed digitally or in physical format, depending on the needs of the campaign.

### Key Components of a Press Kit:

1. **Press Release:** A written announcement or news story that gives details about the event, product launch, or subject of the press kit. See [Annex 12](#) for Media Invitation Letter, Press Release, and Press Statement.

**2. Background Information:**

- **About the Organization/Person:** A brief bio or history of the organization or individual being featured, including their mission, vision, and notable achievements.
- **Fact Sheet:** Quick facts, key statistics, or an overview that can help the media understand the context at a glance.

**3. Media Assets:**

- **Images:** High-resolution images (logos, product photos, headshots) that can be used in articles or news pieces.
- **Videos:** Short videos or B-roll footage that can be embedded in news reports or social media posts.
- **Logos and Branding:** Logos in different formats (JPEG, PNG, vector) for use in media publications.

**4. Quotes or Testimonials:** Statements from key people (e.g., company executives, influencers, or clients) that the media can use in their reporting.

**5. Contact Information:** Clear contact details for the person or team managing press inquiries, such as a PR officer, marketing team, or publicist.

**6. Media Coverage or Press Clippings:** A selection of previous media articles or coverage (if applicable) to showcase how the organization or individual has been featured in the past.

**7. Event Information (if applicable):** If the press kit is for an event, include the agenda, venue details, special guest appearances, and any other logistics.



# Annex 1

## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN: KEY INTERNATIONAL DAYS

1. International Day for Women in Science (February 11)
2. World Day of Prayer (March 1)
3. International Women's Day (March 8)
4. International Day of the Girl Child (October 11)
5. 16 Days of Activism (November 25)

**Goal:** To raise awareness, inspire action, and engage faith-based communities in advocating for women's rights by linking key messages to internationally recognized days.

### 1. Pre-Campaign Phase (1-2 weeks before each event)

#### Objectives:

- Create anticipation for the upcoming day and build awareness around the themes.
- Engage the audience early to prime them for the upcoming content.

#### Content Suggestions:

- Teaser Posts:  
*"What does equality look like in God's eyes? Get ready to explore how faith and gender justice come together this (International Women's Day)!"*
- Save the Date/Countdown Posts:  
*"Mark your calendars! [#InternationalWomensDay] is coming up on March 8. Join us in celebrating women's dignity and equality through a faith lens."*  
Post a countdown graphic (10, 9, 8, 7 etc)
- Quiz or Poll:  
*"Do you know how gender equality impacts communities? Vote in our poll and learn more this [International Day]."*  
Use Instagram Stories or Twitter/X Polls.

### 2. Campaign Phase (On the Day of the Event)

#### Objectives:

- Maximize visibility and interaction on the event day.
- Engage faith communities with shareable and reflective content.

#### Suggestions:

##### a. Instagram & Facebook

- **Inspirational Quote Graphics:** e.g. "There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28) This #InternationalWomensDay, we celebrate God's call for equality and justice for all women." Include a picture of women from your community.
- **Prayer Posts:** *"On this #InternationalWomensDay, we offer this prayer for women around the world who face injustice and inequality. Let us pray for strength, peace, and justice."* Include a picture of people praying
- **Video Reflection:** Share a short video of one of your faith leaders/ champions/ reflecting on the importance of gender equality in religious teachings- title -e.g., *"How Faith Calls Us to Uphold Women's Rights."*

b. Twitter/X:

- Key Facts + Scripture-Based Tweets: e.g. “On #InternationalWomensDay, remember that God calls us to defend the vulnerable and seek justice (Isaiah 1:17). Let’s honour women’s dignity and equality today and every day.”
- **“Did you know that empowered women help build stronger communities? #FaithInAction #WomensRights”**

Include relevant hashtags and data where possible.

- Advocacy Threads: e.g., **“2 out of 3 women experience gender-based violence every day. What can we do as people of faith to end violence against women? #EndViolenceAgainstWomen #FaithForJustice.”**

c. Instagram Stories & Reels

“Women of Faith” Series:

- Short clips highlighting women leaders in the faith community or testimonies from women on how faith has empowered them to overcome challenges.
- **“Meet Mary Muriithi, a woman of faith who advocates for gender equality in her community.”** Do not allow these to be about “longsuffering” but to showcase courage and overcoming odds.
- Prayer Chain Story: Engage followers by inviting them to share their own prayers for women using Instagram Stories: e.g. **“Today we pray for justice, equality, and the empowerment of women everywhere. Share your own prayer and tag us! #PrayersForEquality”**

### 3. Post-Campaign Phase (1-3 Days After the Event)

**Objectives:**

- Sustain engagement and reflect on the day’s impact.
- Encourage long-term commitment to women’s rights issues.

**Suggestion:** Thank You Post

- **“Thank you for standing with us this #InternationalWomensDay! Let’s continue working together toward a world where all women are treated with dignity and respect.”**
- Post a collage of images from the day’s event or campaign.
- Impact Reflection: **“What did today’s #InternationalWomensDay teach you about faith and equality? Share your reflections below!”**
- Create a discussion post on Facebook or Instagram/ Commitment Call:  
**“Empowering women goes beyond just one day. Join us in continuing the journey to equality—sign up for more updates and ways to take action in your faith community.”** Click on the link below to access our website and more resources

**Suggested Hashtags:**

- #FaithForEquality
- #WomenOfFaith
- #JusticeForWomen
- #EmpowerWomen
- #EndViolenceAgainstWomen
- #FaithInAction
- #WomenInLeadership
- #GenderEquality

- Engage followers with questions and prayer invitations.
- Promote user-generated content: Encourage users to share their own reflections, prayers, and commitments with the hashtag #FaithForEquality.

- Tag relevant organizations or faith leaders to amplify messages (e.g., gender justice networks, church leaders, and activists).

DATE	EVENT	POST TYPE	PLATFORM
1 week before	International Women's Day	Teaser Post	Instagram/Facebook/WhatsApp
3 days before	International Women's Day	Quiz/ Poll	Twitter/X/Instagram Stories/WhatsApp/Telegram
March 8 (Actual Day)	International Women's Day	Inspirational Quote +Prayer+ Advocacy Threads/Hashtags+ Video Reflection	Facebook/Twitter/X/ Instagram/WhatsApp/Telegram
Day after event	Reflect on Impact/ Thank You Post	Engagement/Comments/Shares	Instagram/Twitter/Facebook
Monthly follow up	Keep up the movement and activity	Prayers/stories/ user generated content	All platforms

# Annex 2

## CONTEXTUAL STUDY: TRANSFORMATIVE MASCULINITY REBEKAH: A WOMAN WHO SHAPES MASCULINITY

Scripture reading: Genesis 27:1-29

### Introduction

In most instances, people overlook the role that women play in the shaping of the boy child or their influence on masculinity in general. It is often assumed that men “invent” themselves. However, the basic truth that is often missed is that women, particularly mothers, play a critical role in the upbringing of their children. In most instances, boys spend most of their early formative years with their mothers/women. It is, therefore, critical to acknowledge this role and to ensure that women utilise the space that is availed to them to introduce positive values in boys.

In the story of Isaac and Rebekah and their sons, Esau and Jacob, Rebekah demonstrates the influence that a mother can have over her son. She uses her agency (that is, capacity to act in her interest) to subvert culture. Although some may want to judge her harshly, her actions confirm the need to acknowledge the role of women in shaping masculinity.

Read Genesis 27: 1-29

This chapter will assist us to answer the question about the role of women in shaping masculinity.

### Summary

Isaac on his death bed called on his first born, Esau who was a hunter and asked him to go and hunt game for him, make the savoury stew that he (Isaac) liked and he would eat it and bless him. Rebekah, Isaac's wife, was listening as Esau was receiving these instructions from his father and rushed to give her own set of instructions to their second-born son, Jacob. She instructed him to take two of the best young goats from their flock and she would make her husband the savoury stew he loved, then Jacob would take it to his father who would eat it and bless him. Jacob answered that he was a smooth skinned man, whereas Esau was hairy man and his father would feel this and consider him a deceiver and curse rather than bless him. Rebekah, his mother answered “let your curse be on me... just listen and do as I say.” Jacob obeyed, got the two young goats and his mother made the stew his father loved. Then she found her elder son Esau's clothes and made Jacob wear them. Then she put the skins of the two young goats on the smooth parts of his hands and neck. Jacob then took the food to his father and when asked who he was, he claimed to be Esau. Isaac questioned how he had found the game so quickly and Jacob claimed God had given it to him. Isaac, still unsure, asked to feel him and felt the hairy hands and said- “the voice is Jacob's but the hands are the hands of Esau” and asked one final time- “Are you really my son Esau?” to which Jacob answered, “yes.” Isaac then asked for the food to be brought to him and he ate then he asked Jacob to kiss him and indeed he smelled like Esau and so he blessed him.

## Discussion

1. What are the themes in this text?
2. Who are the main characters and what do we know about them?
3. What does
  - a. Isaac say and do?
  - b. Rebekah say and do? An
  - c. Jacob say and do?

Important to note in this passage is how Rebekah influences the outcome of a situation which by right was male dominated and had nothing to do with her. She manipulated the outcome. She exercised her agency. The first born male child was always the recipient of the fathers' blessings and main portion of his inheritance. The second- born son was not as important. Rebekah loved her second son more than her first born and therefore meddled and was willing to live under a curse for his sake.

What type of woman was Rebekah? List three characteristics that make up her personality. Rebekah highlights how mothers in this world play a crucial role in the upbringing of the boy child. Their influence on the type of young man society ends up with is huge. Firstly, preferential treatment of one child over another skews treatment and makes the one grow up believing in his self-importance and with an expectation of obeisance from all the women who cross his path. Secondly, there needs to be a paradigm shift in how women treat and bring up both their boy and girl children. Are women, by the very nature of nurturing, propagating the same characteristics in men that they then bemoan?

4. Do we have men like Isaac in our communities today?
5. Do we have men like Jacob in our communities today?
6. List three practical steps you will undertake to contribute towards women and men shaping masculinity positively.

# Annex 3

## CONTEXTUAL STUDY: TRANSFORMATIVE MASCULINITY WHEN MALE HONOUR BECOMES DEADLY

**Scripture reading:** Genesis 34:1-31

### Summary

Dinah and her brothers' revenge (Genesis 34) Dinah, Jacobs's daughter by Leah, went to visit with the other young ladies in Canaan where the family had settled and caught the attention of Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite. Shechem took her and lay with her and violated her- he was strongly drawn to her and loved her. He wanted her for a wife and asked his father to go and negotiate with Jacob on his behalf and said he would be willing to pay anything for her. Jacob waited for his sons to return from the fields and told them what had happened. When the sons of Jacob came in from the fields and heard what had happened they were grieved and very angry because of the disgrace and dishonour Shechem had brought on their family by sleeping with their sister outside of marriage. The Canaanites' were willing to make amends by allowing their men to marry into Jacob's family and vice versa and Jacob's sons pretended to go along with this on condition that all the Canaanites men got circumcised. This they agreed to and on an agreed upon day all the men

were circumcised. Whilst they were still in pain, two of Jacob's sons, Levi and Simeon, took their swords and killed all the men in the city, including Shechem and his father Hamor and took their sister Dinah out of Shechem's house. They plundered the city because their sister had been defiled. Their father Jacob was not happy with their actions but they justified themselves saying "Should he have treated our sister like a harlot?"

### Discussion

1. What are the themes in this text?
2. Who are the characters and what do we know about them?
3. What does Shechem say and do?
4. What do Dinah's brothers say and do?

This story is very interesting in that it brings us into contact with male pride and sense of honour with regard to their (men's) immediate family. This is an ideal that most African men can identify with: protectiveness towards one's sisters and female relatives is ingrained in most men. Shechem's situation is also not new to the African context: most of us can recall several occasions in which 'damages' have had to be paid for the 'defilement' of a female relative or sibling. However, Dinah's voice and thoughts are conspicuous in their absence.

5. What do you find striking about Dinah in this passage?
6. How can we ensure that the sense of 'honour' that men have towards their sisters and female relatives extends to other females in our communities?
7. What can families, the church and communities do to promote men who treat every woman as they would their sister/aunt/mother, as well as empowered women who have a voice?

# Annex 4

## BIBLE VERSES THAT SUPPORT WOMEN'S RIGHTS

### 1. Galatians 3:28

*"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*

**Inspiration:** In this verse, we are reminded that in the eyes of God, we are all equal and unified. Our differences in gender, nationality, and social status do not diminish our worth in His sight. Embrace the unity and equality that comes from being children of God.

### 2. Proverbs 31:25

*"She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come."*

**Inspiration:** This verse celebrates the strength and resilience of women. It portrays a woman who is not defined by fear or uncertainty but instead faces the future with confidence and grace. Let this image inspire you to embrace your inner strength and face the unknown with courage.

### 3. 1 Peter 3:7

*"Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers."*

**Inspiration:** This verse highlights the importance of mutual respect and understanding in relationships. It emphasizes the need for husbands to treat their wives with care and respect, recognizing them as equal partners and co-heirs in God's blessings. Let this verse inspire a culture of love and respect within marriages, honoring the partnership between husband and wife.

### 4. Proverbs 31:26

*"She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue."*

**Inspiration:** This verse paints a picture of a woman of wisdom and grace, whose words carry weight and guidance. It emphasizes the power of a woman's voice in imparting knowledge and wisdom to others. Let this verse encourage you to speak with discernment and offer valuable insights to those around you, embodying the spirit of wisdom and grace.

### 5. Genesis 1:27

*"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."*

**Inspiration:** This verse affirms the inherent value and dignity of every individual, regardless of gender. It reminds us that both men and women are created in the image of God, reflecting His divine essence. Let this truth resonate in your heart, reaffirming your worth and identity as a beloved creation of God.

### 6. Proverbs 31:30

*"Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised."*

**Inspiration:** This verse emphasizes the value of inner qualities over external appearances. It praises a woman who reveres the Lord above all else, recognizing that true beauty lies in a heart devoted to God. Let this verse remind you to prioritize spiritual growth and character development, seeking praise from God rather than society's fleeting standards.

### **7. Galatians 3:26-29**

*"So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

**Inspiration:** This passage breaks down the barriers that divide us, emphasizing our unity as children of God. It proclaims that in Christ, distinctions based on ethnicity, social status, or gender are erased, and we are united in our faith. Let this truth unite and empower you, knowing that in God's eyes, we are all cherished and equal heirs of His promises.

### **8. Ephesians 5:25**

*"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."*

**Inspiration:** This verse sets a high standard for love and sacrifice within marriage. It calls husbands to emulate the sacrificial love of Christ in their relationships with their wives, demonstrating a selfless and unconditional devotion. Let this verse challenge and inspire husbands to love their wives with the same depth of love that Christ has shown to His church.

### **9. 1 Timothy 2:12**

*"I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet."*

**Inspiration:** This verse has been a topic of debate and interpretation over the years. While it may seem restrictive, it is essential to understand the cultural context and intended audience. It does not diminish the value or capabilities of women but rather reflects a specific instruction for a particular time. Let this verse prompt reflection on the roles and responsibilities assigned within the context it was written, respecting the diversity of interpretations and contexts.

May this verse encourage a deeper exploration of the cultural and historical nuances of biblical teachings. Let it spark conversations about equality, leadership, and the evolving understanding of gender roles, fostering a respectful dialogue that honors diverse perspectives and interpretations.

### **10. Colossians 3:19**

*"Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them."*

**Inspiration:** This verse emphasizes the importance of love and gentleness in marital relationships. It instructs husbands to treat their wives with kindness and compassion, avoiding harshness and cruelty. Let this verse serve as a reminder of the tender and nurturing love that should characterize marriages, fostering an atmosphere of care and understanding within the marital bond.

May this verse challenge husbands to examine their attitudes and actions towards their wives, guiding them to cultivate a relationship grounded in love and respect. Let it inspire husbands to be gentle and supportive partners, creating a home filled with love and harmony.

### **11. 1 Corinthians 11:11-12**

*"Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God."*

**Inspiration:** This passage beautifully illustrates the interconnectedness and interdependence between men and women. It highlights the mutual reliance and shared origin of both genders, emphasizing that we are all ultimately creations of God. Let this verse remind us of our unity and the equal value each gender brings to the world.

May this passage inspire a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect between men and women. Recognize the inherent connection and partnership that exists between the sexes, acknowledging the divine source from which we all stem.

#### **12. 1 Peter 3:3-4**

*"Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight."*

**Inspiration:** This verse challenges societal norms and expectations regarding beauty, emphasizing the value of inner qualities over external appearances. It encourages women to cultivate a spirit of humility, gentleness, and inner beauty that reflects God's perspective. Let this verse inspire you to focus on developing a character that shines with the radiance of God's love and grace.

#### **13. Proverbs 31:27-28**

*"She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her."*

**Inspiration:** This passage celebrates the dedication and industriousness of a woman in managing her household. It acknowledges her role in nurturing her family and the respect and appreciation she receives from her loved ones. Let this verse honor the hard work and commitment of women in their various roles, recognizing the value of their contributions to the well-being of their families.

#### **14. 1 Timothy 2:9-10**

*"I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God."*

**Inspiration:** This verse emphasizes the importance of modesty and humility in a woman's appearance. It redirects the focus from external adornments to the beauty that emanates from virtuous actions and a heart devoted to God. Let this reminder encourage women to cultivate a demeanor that reflects their faith and commitment to living out God's principles in all aspects of their lives.

#### **15. 1 Peter 3:1-2**

*"Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives."*

**Inspiration:** This verse speaks to the transformative power of a woman's character and conduct within marriage. It highlights the influence that a wife's behavior can have in softening hearts and leading others to faith through her example. Let this verse inspire wives to embody qualities of purity, reverence, and love that speak louder than words and draw others closer to God.

May this verse encourage wives to see their role in marriage as an opportunity to demonstrate God's love and grace. Let your actions and attitudes reflect the beauty of a heart surrendered to God, paving the way for reconciliation and spiritual growth within relationships.

## 16. 1 Corinthians 7:4

*"The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife."*

**Inspiration:** This verse speaks to the concept of mutual respect and consideration within marriage. It underscores the idea of shared ownership and mutual care in physical intimacy between husband and wife. Let this verse remind couples of the importance of honoring and valuing each other's bodies, fostering a relationship of mutual love, respect, and unity.

May this verse prompt a reflection on the sacrificial love and selflessness required in marital relationships. Let it guide couples to cherish and prioritize the well-being and desires of their spouse, creating a harmonious and intimate bond built on mutual trust and care.

## 17. Ephesians 5:33

*"However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."*

**Inspiration:** This verse encapsulates the essence of a healthy and thriving marriage. It highlights the importance of love and respect as foundational elements in a successful marital relationship. Let this verse challenge husbands to love their wives with the same care and devotion they show themselves, and encourage wives to honor and respect their husbands in a spirit of mutual love and understanding.

May this verse inspire couples to cultivate a culture of love and respect within their marriage. Let it be a guiding principle in interactions, conversations, and decisions, fostering a bond of unity, trust, and mutual admiration between spouses.

If you want to justify women's leadership in the church, you can turn to the Gospels, where Jesus travels with and accepts support from women (e.g., Luke 8:1-3). Or look to Romans 16, where Paul hails Phoebe, a deacon and benefactor, and Junia, "prominent among the apostles." If you believe in equality, you can appeal to 1 Corinthians 7:2-4, where Paul advocates mutuality in marriage, or Galatians 3:28, widely viewed as erasing differences altogether ("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").

# Annex 5

## MUSLIM SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES THAT SUPPORT WOMEN'S RIGHTS

A range of scriptural references can support women's rights, including their right to work and attain education (Qur'an 96:1-5), own earnings and finance, manage inheritance (Qur'an 4:7), property and land rights (Qur'an 4:29), retain the family name and protect female new-borns. Also, female role models – Muslim women leaders – who contributed to society across Islamic civilisations can serve as the reference point for faith-based gender justice advocacy. In fact, the first person to come to Islam was a woman<sup>18</sup>.

1. *And We bestowed dignity on the children of 'Ādam and provided them with rides on the land and in the sea, and provided them with a variety of good things and made them much superior to many of those whom We have created* (Suratul Isra Verse 70)
2. *Men, fear your Lord who created you from a single soul, and from it created its match, and spread many men and women from the two. Fear Allah in whose name you ask each other (for your rights), and fear (the violation of the rights of) the womb-relations. Surely, Allah is watchful over you.* (Suratul Nisaa Verse 1)
3. *(Indeed, women are sisters to men), meaning: they are peers and they are equal in rights and duties.* (Musnad Ahmed, Musnad Aisha bint Siqqid 16195 No 43/265)
4. *Mankind, We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into races and tribes, so that you may identify one another. Surely the noblest of you, in Allah's sight, is the one who is most pious of you. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.* (Suratul Hujirat Verse 13)
5. Men and women are equal in terms of legal duties and obligations, and there is no difference between them in terms of reward and punishment for obedience and disobedience. Almighty said:  
*So, their Lord answered their prayer: "I do not allow the labour of any worker from among you, male or female, to go to waste. You are similar to one another. So, those who emigrated, and were expelled from their homes, and were tortured in My way, and fought, and were killed, I shall certainly write off their evil deeds, and shall certainly admit them into gardens beneath which rivers flow, as a reward from Allah. It is Allah with Whom lies the beauty of the reward.*(12 Suratul Al Imran Verse 195)
6. Almighty said: *Whoever, male or female, does good deeds and is a believer, then such people shall enter Paradise, and they shall not be wronged in the least.*(13 Suratul Nisaa verse 124)
7. Also, a woman is as responsible as a man for the saying of the Most High:  
*The believers, male and female, are friends to each other. They bid virtue and forbid vice and establish Salāh and pay Zakāh and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those are the ones whom Allah will bless with mercy. Surely, Allah is Powerful, Wise.* (Suratul Tawba verse 71)

<sup>18</sup> WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN ISLAM: GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS ON PRACTICE AND THEOLOGY Editors: Askuri Ezra Chitando Muhammadiyah – Aisyiyah Faith to Actions Network, Al-Azhar University Universitas Aisyiyah Yogyakarta

8. Islam also emphasized the equality between men and women to acquire property and owning it:  
*“And do not covet that by which Allah has made some of you excel others; for the men there is a share of what they have earned, and for the women there is a share of what they have earned; and ask Allah of His Virtue. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing (Suratul Nisaa verse 32)*
9. Islam provided for the rights of women and men in inheritance:  
*“For men there is a share in what the parents and the nearest of kin have left. And for women there is a share in what the parents and the nearest of kin have left, be it small or large-a determined share. (Suratul Nisaa verse 7)*
10. In addition, the right of a woman is equal to the right of a man to seek knowledge. The Qur'anic verses and hadiths that call for seeking and obtaining knowledge in general include both men and women to an equal degree, indicating that women have the same right as men. He said (peace be upon him):  
*“Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim.” (Musnad Abi Ya'ala 4/96 No 4035)*

# Annex 6

## CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDY

### “GIRLS CAN: POSITIONING THE GIRL CHILD TO INFLUENCE HISTORY”

**Scripture Reading:** Numbers 27:1-11

#### Guiding Questions

Please read Numbers 27:1-11 and think of the questions that follow.

- What is the text about?
- Who are the main characters in the passage?
- Are girls/women from within your context allowed to inherit from their fathers/parents? If not, why not?
- Do we have girls in our communities who would summon the courage to address a gathering of (male) leaders and eloquently state their case? How are they viewed by: (i) other women? (ii) male authorities?
- What do we need to do in our homes, churches, and communities to ensure that we bring up girls/women who are as empowered as Zelophehad's daughters?

Comment on the attitude of Moses and the other male leaders in this story. What can we do in our families, churches and communities to have male leaders who are willing to challenge beliefs and practices that oppress girls and women today?

# Annex 7

## BIBLE TEXTS FOR CONTEXTUAL STUDY

### Bible Verses on the Equality of Men and Women / Power Relations

1. “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” Genesis 1:27 (NIV)
2. “To the woman he said, ‘I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.’” Genesis 3:16 (NIV)
3. “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28 (NIV)
4. “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Ephesians 5:21
5. “Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.” John 13:16
6. “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves.” Philippians 2:3
7. “For God does not show favouritism.” Romans 2:11
8. “If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself,’ you are doing right. But if you show favouritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.” James 2:8-9
9. “Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.” 1 Corinthians 11:11-12 (NIV)
10. “For God does not show favoritism.” Romans 2:11 (NIV)
11. “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.” Deuteronomy 10:17 (NIV)
12. “Now let the fear of the Lord be on you. Judge carefully, for with the Lord our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery.” 2 Chronicles 19:7 (NIV)
13. “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” Ephesians 5:22-27 (NIV)

14. "Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety." 1 Timothy 2: 8-15 (NIV)

## **Bible Verses against Negative / Toxic Masculinity and/or Respect for Women**

1. "To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." 1 Peter 5:1-3 (NIV)
2. "For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer." 1 Timothy 4: 4-5 (NIV)
3. ".... Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity." 1 Timothy 5:1-2 (NIV)
4. "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers." 1 Peter 3:7 (NIV)

# Annex 8

## RECOMMENDED BIBLE VERSES TO COUNTER TERROR TEXTS

1. **Genesis 1:26** – And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
2. **Genesis 1:27** – So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
3. **Genesis 5:1-2** – When God created humankind; he made them in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them “Humankind” when they were created.
4. **Galatians 3:28** – There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.
5. **Psalms 82:3** – Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.
6. **Isaiah 1:17** – Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.
7. **Micah 6:8** – 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.
8. **Colossians 3:11** – Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.
9. **Acts 10:34** – So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality.
10. **Amos 5:24** – But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
11. **Psalm 139:14** – I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful.

# Annex 9

## PRAYERS

### A Prayer for an End to Violence Against Women

Gracious and Loving God,

We come before You with hearts burdened by the pain and suffering caused by violence against women. We lament the injustice, the fear, and the harm inflicted on women and girls around the world. We lift our voices in prayer, seeking Your healing, Your justice, and Your peace.

We pray for women who live in fear, who are victims of physical, emotional, and sexual violence. Surround them with Your loving protection. Grant them courage, strength, and hope as they seek freedom and safety. May they know that they are Your beloved, created in Your image, worthy of respect and dignity.

Lord, we ask for healing for those who carry the wounds of violence. Heal their bodies, minds, and spirits. Comfort them in their pain, and guide them toward a path of wholeness. May they find the support they need from family, friends, and communities that value their worth.

We pray for an end to the systems and cultures that allow violence to continue. Transform the hearts of those who inflict harm, that they may turn away from violence and toward love and respect. Give us the courage to challenge the harmful norms, beliefs, and practices that perpetuate this injustice.

God of Justice, inspire leaders and policymakers to take action to protect women and girls. May laws be enacted and enforced that defend the rights of the vulnerable and hold perpetrators accountable. Let communities and nations work together to build societies where women are safe, valued, and free.

Empower us, Lord, to be agents of change. Open our eyes to the realities of violence in our midst, and help us to respond with compassion and courage. Teach us to speak out for those who cannot, to offer our hands and hearts in support, and to work tirelessly for a world where violence against women is no more.

In Your mercy, hear our prayer. Guide us toward Your kingdom of peace, justice, and love for all. Amen.

## A Prayer for Women's Rights

Gracious God,

We thank You for the gift of life and the unique strengths You have given to every woman. Today, we lift up to You the struggles and aspirations of women around the world. We pray for their rights to be upheld, their voices to be heard, and their contributions to be valued in every community, workplace, and home.

We pray for women who face injustice, discrimination, and inequality. Open the hearts of those in power to recognize and address these wrongs. Inspire policymakers, leaders, and institutions to protect the rights of women, ensuring equal access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

Guide us as a global community to dismantle the structures that perpetuate oppression and violence. Help us to recognize the inherent dignity of all women and to work toward a world where they are free to live without fear, oppression, or discrimination.

May we all become advocates for justice, lifting our voices in defence of women's rights. Give us the strength to work for change, and may Your love inspire us to create a more just and equal world.

Amen.

## A Prayer for Women's Empowerment

Loving Creator,

We praise You for the resilience, courage, and wisdom You have placed within women. We lift up all women who are working to better themselves, their families, and their communities. Strengthen them in their endeavours, and grant them the opportunities they need to thrive and succeed.

We pray for women who are seeking empowerment through education, leadership, and economic independence. Open doors for them and remove barriers that stand in their way. Let them find mentors, resources, and allies who will support their dreams and help them reach their full potential.

Lord, we ask that You inspire confidence in every woman, that she may see herself as You see her: strong, capable, and worthy of every opportunity. Equip her to lead with courage, wisdom, and grace. Empower her to make a difference in her community, to speak out against injustice, and to lift up others who are oppressed or marginalized.

Fill us with the resolve to stand beside women as they pursue empowerment. Teach us to honour and celebrate their gifts, and guide us to support them in tangible ways. May we work together to create a world where every woman can flourish and lead without limitation.

In Your name, we pray,

Amen.

# Annex 10

## SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN FOR THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

(November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to December 10 (Human Rights Day).

**Goal:** To raise awareness of gender-based violence (GBV), mobilize faith-based communities for action, and offer hope, support, and prayers for survivors of violence.

**Target Audience:** Faith communities, religious leaders, activists, and the general public who align with faith-based values.

### Key Messages:

- Gender-based violence is a violation of human dignity and goes against the principles of justice, love, and equality.
- Faith communities have a role in ending violence and offering support for survivors.
- Scripture and religious teachings call for the protection of the vulnerable and respect for all people.

**Pre-Campaign Phase:** (1-2 weeks before November 25)

**Objective:** Build awareness of the upcoming campaign and encourage engagement.

### Content Suggestions:

#### 1. Teaser Posts

- ***“Get ready for the 16 Days of Activism! Join us as we take a stand against gender-based violence and reflect on how our faith can guide us in ending violence.”*** Pair this with symbolic imagery like hands raised in solidarity; candles for peace, or whatever holds meaning in your context)

#### 2. Countdown Posts

- ***“Only 5 days until we kick off #16Days of Activism! Let’s raise our voices for justice and work toward ending violence against women.”*** Include a countdown graphic or GIF.
- Informational Posts: ***“Did you know? 1 in 3 women experience gender-based violence in their lifetime. Starting November 25, we’re joining the global movement to end this injustice. #16Days #EndGBV”***. You can also share a contextual fact graphic/video about the numbers in your particular context.

#### 3. Campaign Phase (November 25 - December 10)

**Objective:** Deliver daily content to raise awareness, engage faith communities, and offer practical steps for action.

**Day 1:** November 25 – International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

- ***“Today marks the beginning of #16Days of Activism. Let’s unite in prayer and action to end violence against women and girls. No more silence, no more violence.”*** Include a prayer graphic or short video with a faith leader offering prayer. This can include a definition of GBV and sacred text references.

**Day 2:** Focus on Faith and Gender-Based Violence

- ***“Gender-based violence goes against the teachings of love and justice found in our faith. Let’s reflect***

- **on how we can be advocates for change in our communities. #EndGBV #FaithForJustice**” You can share a poster with scriptures that call for justice e.g. Micah 6:8

#### Day 3: Facts and Statistics

- **“1 in 3 women worldwide experience violence in their lifetime. These are more than just numbers—they represent real people, real stories. #EndGBV”** You can share a graphic showing key global and local GBV statistics

#### Day 4: Survivor Stories (Anonymous Testimonies)

- **“Survivors of gender-based violence show incredible strength and resilience. Today, we share their stories to inspire hope and action. #SurvivorVoices”** Share an anonymous testimony or a story (with permission).

#### Day 5: How Faith Communities Can Help

- **“What can faith communities do to end gender-based violence? Here are 5 practical steps.”** Design a poster/infographic and include action items like: educating members, creating safe spaces, offering counselling, and advocating for policy changes.

#### Day 6: Prayer Chain (User Engagement)

- **“Let’s lift our voices in prayer for those affected by gender-based violence. Share your own prayer in the comments or tag us in your posts. #PrayersForJustice”** Ask followers to share their prayers for victims and survivors or even to write a name and say a prayer to make it more personal.

#### Day 7: Video Message from a Faith Leader

- **“Watch Sheik Moussalah speak about the role of faith in ending violence against women. #FaithForJustice #16Days”** share this as a short video on WhatsApp/ Instagram/Facebook Reel/ Instagram story

#### Day 8: Men as Allies

- **“Ending gender-based violence is not just a women’s issue—it’s a human issue. Men, we need you to stand as allies for justice and peace. #MenAgainstGBV”** share a video showcasing men speaking out against GBV

#### Day 9: The Impact of GBV on Families

- **“When women suffer, entire families suffer. Let’s break the cycle of violence and create safe homes for everyone. #EndViolence #16Days”** Include a post with a family-focused image plus data or quotes on the impact of GBV on the family.

#### Day 10: Advocacy and Legal Protection

- **“Faith communities can advocate for laws that protect women from violence. Let’s work together for stronger policies and enforcement. #EndGBV”** Share a list of organizations or resources advocating for stronger GBV laws.

#### Day 11: Resources for Survivors

- **“If you or someone you know is affected by gender-based violence, there is help. Here are resources that can provide support.”** Share a carousel post or infographic with local and national helplines, counselling services, and shelters etc.

#### Day 12: Reflection and Healing

- **“Take a moment to reflect: What can you do to help stop gender-based violence in your community? Small actions lead to big change. #16Days #EndGBV”** Post a reflective text or a picture that encourages reflection-nature-mountains/ocean/forests.

### Day 13: Women's Rights are Human Rights

- ***"Gender-based violence is a violation of human rights. Every person deserves to live free from fear and harm. #HumanRights #16Days"*** Share a bold graphic with key human rights principles.

### Day 14: Engaging Religious Leaders

- ***"Religious leaders have the power to shape attitudes and inspire change. Let's stand together in ending violence against women and girls. #FaithForJustice"*** Share a testimonial from a religious leader- it can be a poster/infographic or a short video clip.

### Day 15: Call to Action (Community-Based Activities)

- ***"Let's take action in our communities. Attend a local event, support a survivor, or organize a prayer vigil. Together, we can make a difference. #EndGBV #16Days"*** Share details of any local or online events happening, or invite followers to share their plans e.g. visiting a shelter; distributing pamphlets at a bus rank.

### Day 16: December 10 – Human Rights Day

- ***"Today, on #HumanRightsDay, we commit to continuing the fight for gender equality and justice beyond the 16 Days. Together, we can end gender-based violence. #EndGBV #HumanRights"***

## 4. Post-Campaign Phase (December 11 - 15)

**Objectives:** Reflect on campaign impact, thank supporters, and encourage long-term commitment.

- Thank You Post:

***"Thank you for joining us during #16Days of Activism. Together, we can continue to work for a world free from ... "Thank you for joining us during #16Days of Activism. Together, we can continue to work for a world free from gender-based violence."***

- Share a collage of images or graphics from the campaign.
- Survey or Poll:

***"How has the #16Days of Activism impacted your understanding of gender-based violence? Let us know in this quick survey!"*** Post a link to a Google Form or send it via WhatsApp.

- Long-Term Commitment Post:

***"The fight to end gender-based violence doesn't stop here. Let's continue to advocate for justice, support survivors, and create safe communities."*** Include website link, petitions or call to action

Possible Hashtags:

- #16Days
- #EndGBV
- #FaithForJustice
- #PrayersForJustice
- #HumanRights
- #StopViolence

## Engagement Strategies

- User-Generated Content: Invite followers to share their own reflections, prayers, and actions using a campaign hashtag (#FaithForJustice). Respond to as many posts as possible.
- Daily Call to Action: Encourage sharing, commenting, or engaging with each post through questions, polls, and prayer chains.
- Collaborations: Partner with and tag local faith leaders, churches, and women's organizations to amplify messages.

# Annex 11

## 30 BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS LIST | UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights is moral principles or norms that describe certain standards of human behaviour, and are regularly protected as legal rights in municipal and international law. Everyone born in this world have human rights that must be protected by the law. According to United Nations, there are 30 basic human rights that recognized around the world. So what are the 30 human rights according to Universal Declaration of Human Rights by United Nations?

Basic human rights recognized around the world declared by United Nations through Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These declaration held by United Nations General Assembly at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, France on 10 December 1948. Of the then 58 members of the United Nations, 48 voted in favor, none against, eight abstained, and two did not vote.

This declaration consists of 30 articles affirming an individual's rights. Those 30 articles currently known as 30 universal declaration of human rights or 30 basic human rights, including rights to life, rights to education, rights to organize and rights to treated fair among others things. The 30 universal human rights also cover up freedom of opinion, expression, thought and religion.

### 30 Basic Human Rights List

So what are the 30 basic human rights list? Here are full list of 30 human rights according to Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by United Nations, signed in Paris on 10 December 1948.

#### 1. All human beings are free and equal

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

#### 2. No discrimination

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs.

#### 3. Right to life

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

#### 4. No slavery

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

#### 5. No torture and inhuman treatment

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

#### 6. Same right to use law

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

#### 7. Equal before the law

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation and against any incitement to such discrimination.

#### **8. Right to treated fair by court**

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

#### **9. No unfair detainment**

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

#### **10. Right to trial**

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

#### **11. Innocent until proved guilty**

Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed.

#### **12. Right to privacy**

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

#### **13. Freedom to movement and residence**

Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

#### **14. Right to asylum**

Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

#### **15. Right to nationality**

Everyone has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

#### **16. Rights to marry and have family**

Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

#### **17. Right to own things**

Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

#### **18. Freedom of thought and religion**

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

## **19. Freedom of opinion and expression**

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

## **20. Right to assemble**

Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

## **21. Right to democracy**

Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

## **22. Right to social security**

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

## **23. Right to work**

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 has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

## **24. Right to rest and holiday**

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

## **25. Right of social service**

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children shall enjoy the same social protection.

## **26. Right to education**

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

## **27. Right of cultural and art**

Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

## **28. Freedom around the world**

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

## **29. Subject to law**

Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

## **30. Human rights can't be taken away**

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

So those are all Universal Declaration of Human Rights list by United Nations General Assembly. All universal human rights list above commonly known as 30 basic human rights that must be respected and protected by the law.

# Annex 12

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND THEIR PROTECTION SUMMARY OF CEDAW AND MAPUTO PROTOCOL, AND READING INSTRUCTIONS

### Handout: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

#### CEDAW IN BRIEF

The Convention includes, in a single legally binding instrument, provisions requiring the elimination of discrimination on the basis of sex in the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It covers the spectrum of human rights across the lifespan of women and girls, from education to employment to health, from political participation to family life, from issues such as trafficking to the situation of rural women, and from laws to policy measures. It identifies areas of discrimination that are of particular concern to women and girls and establishes the means to eliminate discrimination in these areas. The CEDAW process is a roadmap for transforming gender relations within countries, communities and families so that there is equality in real life.

CEDAW includes 30 articles which ratifying countries are obliged to undertake. Articles 1 to 4 outline the nature and scope of what countries commit to do to promote equal rights and end discrimination against women and girls. Articles 5 to 16 outline specific forms of discrimination that must be ended, such as discrimination in education and employment, health care, and political and public life. Articles 17 to 30 describe the processes through which CEDAW is implemented and how this is monitored, such as how countries are required to report on their progress every four years.

#### ARTICLES OF THE CONVENTION

##### ARTICLE 1

###### *Definition of Discrimination against Women and Girls*

Discrimination against women and girls means different treatment from men and boys that prevents them from enjoying their human rights. CEDAW explains that discrimination can take place in all areas of public and private life, including political, economic, civil, social, and cultural areas. An example of “direct discrimination” is when the laws of a country do not allow women to vote, go to school or own property. An example of “indirect discrimination” is when a job, such as police officer, has minimum height and/or weight criteria that many women may not be able to meet. ‘Substantive equality’ or ‘equality of results’ cannot be achieved when either direct or indirect discrimination exist.

##### ARTICLE 2

###### *Obligations to Eliminate Discrimination*

Countries that have ratified CEDAW are obligated to take action to end discrimination against women and girls in all its forms. This includes establishing laws and policies to protect women and girls against discrimination and abolishing all existing laws, policies, customs, and practices which are discriminatory. CEDAW also states that constitutions or other national laws must include the principle of equality of women and girls and men and boys.

## **ARTICLE 3**

### ***Appropriate Measures***

By ratifying CEDAW, countries must take all appropriate measures to guarantee that women and girls can enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms in every aspect of society, including in the political, economic, social, and cultural fields.

## **ARTICLE 4**

### ***Temporary Special Measures***

In fields where women and girls are disadvantaged by long-standing inequalities, countries should adopt temporary special measures to bring about substantive equality faster. An example of a temporary special measure could be setting quotas for women in politics. These are temporary measures used to accelerate progress towards gender equality and used only until gender equality is achieved. These measures are not considered discriminatory against men and boys and should last for as long as inequalities exist.

## **ARTICLE 5**

### ***Gender Stereotypes***

Countries must work to change harmful gender stereotypes about women and girls and men and boys that perpetuate discrimination and limit opportunities for women and girls to achieve their full potential. Such stereotypes may include a belief that women and girls should not play sports or that men and boys should not do household work. Countries must also ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the shared responsibility of both men and women in bringing up children.

## **ARTICLE 6**

### ***Trafficking and Exploitation of Prostitution***

Countries must end the exploitation of prostitution and trafficking in women and girls. Around the world, women and girls continue to be trafficked and exploited for low-paid work or sex.

## **ARTICLE 7**

### ***Political and Public Life***

Countries must eliminate discrimination against women and girls in political and public life. This includes equal rights to vote, to run for and hold public office, to participate in political parties and processes, and to participate in non-governmental organizations and political and public associations such as trade unions.

## **ARTICLE 8**

### ***Participation at International Level***

Countries must ensure that women and girls have equal rights to represent their country at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations, such as the United Nations.

## **ARTICLE 9**

### ***Nationality***

Countries must guarantee that women have equal rights with men to acquire, retain or change their nationality, and the nationality of their children. Countries must allow women to pass their nationality to their foreign spouses on an equal basis with men.

## **ARTICLE 10**

### ***Education***

Countries must end discrimination against women and girls and ensure equal rights in education. This includes equal access to education and vocational training at all levels. Women and girls must be provided with the same curricula, examinations, standards for teaching, access to scholarships, and equipment. Ending discrimination against women and girls in education includes the right to participate in sports and physical education and the right to access health education and family planning information. Countries should address factors that contribute to school drop-out for women and girls, and should help women and girls who have

left school early to return and complete their education. Lastly, countries should eliminate gender stereotypes and discrimination in schools, including by revising textbooks, curricula, and teaching methods.

## **ARTICLE 11**

### ***Employment***

Countries must eliminate discrimination against women in employment. This includes ensuring equal opportunities to choose one's profession and receive equal pay for work of equal value. Women should have equal access to healthy and safe working conditions and social security for retirement, unemployment, sickness and old age, and should not be discriminated against because they are married, pregnant, just had a child or are looking after children. Women should be provided with maternity leave and countries should encourage the provision of support to enable parents to combine work and family responsibilities. Special protection needs to be provided to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

## **ARTICLE 12**

### ***Health Care and Family Planning***

Countries must guarantee equal access to health care and ensure women and girls are not discriminated against in health care. Women and girls must have access to health care services for family planning. Countries should also provide appropriate, and where necessary, free services with regard to pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period. They should also be provided with adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

## **ARTICLE 13**

### ***Economic and Social Life***

Countries must eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas of economic and social life. Women and girls should be granted the same rights as men and boys to family benefits, bank loans, credit and mortgages, and should have equal opportunities to take part in sports and other cultural activities.

## **ARTICLE 14**

### ***Rural Women and Girls***

Countries must take account of the specific problems faced by and important role that rural women and girls play in the survival of their families. All the obligations in the Convention should be applied to rural women and girls, and countries should ensure that they benefit from rural development on an equal footing as men and boys. The particular needs of women and girls in rural communities must be met in relation to access to services, training, and employment opportunities and social equity schemes, and countries need to eliminate the discriminatory barriers against rural women and girls. This is a unique provision dedicated to rural women in an international treaty.

## **ARTICLE 15**

### ***Equality before the Law***

Countries must guarantee women and girls equality with men and boys before the law. This includes equal access to legal counsel, services, and resources. This includes that women (and girls when they reach a certain age in their country) should have the same rights as men and boys to speak for themselves in courts or tribunals, get a loan, rent and inherit property, or sign a contract. Countries must also guarantee the same rights to freedom of movement and choice of residence to women and men.

## **ARTICLE 16**

### ***Marriage and Family Life***

In terms of marriage and family relations, countries must ensure that women have equal rights as men in their choice of whom to marry and whether to marry, and any matters relating to the birth, adoption, and raising of children, such as the spacing and number of children. They also have the same rights and responsibilities within marriage and in the case of divorce. Women have the same personal rights as spouses, including with regard to choice of family name, profession and occupation and with respect to their property. The marriage

of a child has no legal effect and countries should take steps to set a minimum age for marriage. Additionally, all marriages must be registered.

## ARTICLES 17 TO 22

These articles detail how the CEDAW Committee works.

## ARTICLES 23 TO 30

These articles deal with the administration of CEDAW.

The source for this is available here: <https://iknowpolitics.org/sites/default/files/cedaw-for-youth.pdf>

The full version is available here:

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwijxJyv9KXxAhUJB8AKHcYmAQgQFjAAegQIAxAF&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ohchr.org%2Fdocuments%2Fprofessionalinterest%2Fcedaw.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3A2JsMaw\\_ePAP2hUw\\_DimO](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwijxJyv9KXxAhUJB8AKHcYmAQgQFjAAegQIAxAF&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ohchr.org%2Fdocuments%2Fprofessionalinterest%2Fcedaw.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3A2JsMaw_ePAP2hUw_DimO)

## HANDOUT: THE MAPUTO PROTOCOL AT A GLANCE

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, popularly known as the Maputo Protocol was adopted in 2003 and came into force in 2005. 41 countries have ratified it as at early 2018. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights oversees implementation of the Maputo Protocol.

### A Snapshot of the Protocol

The Maputo Protocol is elaborate in its protection of women and includes all categories of rights drafted from a women's rights perspective.

A snapshot of the Maputo Protocol is provided here under key themes:

#### Equality & non-discrimination

- Elimination of discrimination (article 2)
- Access to justice, including legal aid and the training of law enforcement officials (article 8)
- Political participation and decision-making (article 9)
- Education (article 12)

#### Protection against violence

- Bodily integrity and dignity, including sexual violence, trafficking of women and medical and scientific experimentation (article 3 & 4)
- Practices harmful to women, including female genital mutilation (article 5).
- Gender stereotypes (article 4(2)(c) & (d))
- Sexual harassment (article 12 & 13)
- Domestic violence (article 4(2)(a))
- Support to victims of violence, including health services and psychological counselling (article 5(c))

#### Rights relating to marriage

- Marriage and its effect on property relations, nationality, name (article 6(e) to (j))
- Minimum age of marriage (article 6(b))
- Registration of marriages (article 6(d))
- Protection of women in polygamous marriages (article 6(c))
- Protection of women during separation, divorce or annulment of marriage (article 7)
- Protection of children in the family (article 6(i))

## **Health and reproductive rights**

- Access to health services (article 14(2)(a))
- Reproductive health services, including the reduction of maternal mortality (article 14(1)(a) & (b))
- Provision for abortion (article 14(2)(c))
- HIV/AIDS (article 14(1)(d) & (e))
- Sex education (article 14(1)(g))

## **Economic, social and cultural rights**

- Economic and welfare rights (article 13)
- Right to food security (article 15)
- Right to adequate housing (article 16)
- Right to positive cultural context (article 17)
- Right to a healthy and sustainable environment (article 18)
- Right to sustainable development, including the right to property; access to land and credit (article 19)

## **Rights relating to peace**

- Women's participation in peace and conflict prevention and management (article 10(1)) and in all aspects of post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation (article 10(2)(e))
- Reduction of military expenditures in favour of social spending (article 10(3))

## **Protection of women in armed conflicts**

- Protection for asylum seekers, refugees, internally displaced women and the punishment of all violators of such protection (article 11(1) – (3)).
- Protection of children especially girls from participating directly in hostilities and prevents children from being recruited as soldiers (article 11(4))

## **Rights of specially protected women's groups**

- Widows, including inheritance rights (articles 20 & 21)
- Elderly women (article 22)
- Women with disabilities (article 23)
- Women in distress (article 24)

Maputo Protocol at a glance is available here:

[https://www.maputoprotocol.up.ac.za/images/files/documents/additional\\_documents/Maputo%20Protocol%20at%20a%20Glance.pdf](https://www.maputoprotocol.up.ac.za/images/files/documents/additional_documents/Maputo%20Protocol%20at%20a%20Glance.pdf)

A simplified version of the Maputo Protocol is available here:

[https://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/hr\\_protocoltotheafricancharteronhumanandpeople%20rights%20on%20the%20rights%20of%20women%20in%20africa%2003.pdf](https://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/hr_protocoltotheafricancharteronhumanandpeople%20rights%20on%20the%20rights%20of%20women%20in%20africa%2003.pdf)

The full version is available here:

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwisoOae9aXxAhUIBsAKHXpsB8QQFjABegQIAhAF&url=https%3A%2F%2Fau.int%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fdocuments%2F31520-doc-maputo\\_protocol\\_on\\_womens\\_rights\\_a\\_living\\_document\\_for\\_womens\\_human\\_rights\\_in\\_africa\\_submitted\\_by\\_the\\_women\\_gender\\_and\\_development\\_directorate\\_wgdd\\_of\\_the\\_african\\_union\\_commission.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3CQCSF27Dc3ALicFVQa-PQ](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwisoOae9aXxAhUIBsAKHXpsB8QQFjABegQIAhAF&url=https%3A%2F%2Fau.int%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fdocuments%2F31520-doc-maputo_protocol_on_womens_rights_a_living_document_for_womens_human_rights_in_africa_submitted_by_the_women_gender_and_development_directorate_wgdd_of_the_african_union_commission.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3CQCSF27Dc3ALicFVQa-PQ)

## **9 ways the Maputo Protocol has protected and promoted the rights of women and girls across Africa**

18 years ago, the Member States of the African Union adopted the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) to advance and safeguard the rights of women and girls across the continent. To date, 42 countries have signed and ratified the Maputo Protocol. Only 13 countries are yet to ratify for the Protocol to achieve universal ratification. Equality Now's resource illustrates how international and regional human rights frameworks have actually impacted the everyday lives of women and girls?

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwisoOae9aXxAhUIBsAKHXpsB8QQFjAOegQIExAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.equalitynow.org%2F9\\_ways\\_maputo\\_protocol&usg=AOvVaw0bIKPtGdUDtbUPkleuVHg8](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwisoOae9aXxAhUIBsAKHXpsB8QQFjAOegQIExAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.equalitynow.org%2F9_ways_maputo_protocol&usg=AOvVaw0bIKPtGdUDtbUPkleuVHg8)

# Annex 13

## SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN			
GOAL	OBJECTIVES	TARGET AUDIENCE	KEY MESSAGES
To promote awareness, understanding, and advocacy for women's rights within faith communities, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate faith community members about women's rights and gender equality.</li> <li>Encourage faith leaders to advocate for women's rights.</li> <li>Provide resources and support to women within faith communities.</li> <li>Create a network of faith communities committed to women's rights.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faith leaders and clergy.</li> <li>Congregation members of all ages.</li> <li>Women's groups within the faith community.</li> <li>Allied organizations and external partners.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women's rights are human rights are supported by faith teachings.</li> <li>Gender equality is a core value and a reflection of faith principles.</li> <li>Empowering women strengthens families and communities.</li> <li>Faith communities have a responsibility to advocate for and protect women's rights.</li> </ol>
STRATEGIES			
1. Education and Awareness	2. Advocacy and Support	3. Communication Channels	4. Partnerships and Collaborations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Workshops and Seminars:</b> Conduct regular workshops on women's rights, gender equality, and the role of faith in supporting these principles.</li> <li><b>Faith-Based Education Materials:</b> Develop and distribute pamphlets, brochures, and booklets that highlight the intersection of women's rights and faith teachings.</li> <li><b>Guest Speakers:</b> Invite women's rights activists, theologians, and gender equality advocates to speak at community events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Faith Leader Engagement:</b> Train and encourage faith leaders to preach about women's rights and to model gender equality within their communities.</li> <li><b>Support Groups:</b> Establish support groups for women to share experiences, access resources, and receive emotional support.</li> <li><b>Community Outreach:</b> Engage with broader community efforts and campaigns advocating for women's rights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Social Media:</b> Utilize platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to share stories, educational content, and upcoming events.</li> <li><b>Media Outlets:</b> TV and radio stations</li> <li><b>Newsletters and Bulletins:</b> Include articles and updates about women's rights initiatives in regular community newsletters and bulletins.</li> <li><b>Webinars and Online Discussions:</b> Host online discussions and webinars to reach a wider audience and facilitate interactive learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Interfaith Networks:</b> Collaborate with other faith communities to share resources, strategies, and support for women's rights initiatives.</li> <li><b>NGOs and Advocacy Groups:</b> Partner with organizations specializing in women's rights to provide expert knowledge and additional resources.</li> <li><b>Local Media:</b> Engage local media to cover events and initiatives, raising broader awareness and support.</li> </ul>
ACTION PLAN			
Month 1-3: Foundation	Month 4-6: Implementation	Month 7-12: Expansion and Evaluation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form a planning committee with diverse representation from the faith community.</li> <li>Conduct a needs assessment to understand the specific issues and barriers faced by women within the community.</li> <li>Develop educational materials and resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launch the communication plan with an inaugural event featuring key speakers.</li> <li>Start regular workshops and seminars.</li> <li>Begin social media campaigns and newsletter publications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand outreach efforts and establish support groups.</li> <li>Evaluate the effectiveness of the communication strategies through surveys and feedback sessions.</li> <li>Adjust the plan based on results.</li> </ul>	

# DEVELOPING A PLAN OF ACTION

Always keep copies of any press coverage, pictures, promotional materials, hand-outs from events or other materials. These will help in monitoring and evaluating, planning future events, and in fundraising and partnership building efforts.

## 1. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS – WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

This helps examine what is the current local, national or regional situation regarding violence against women. What challenges does your community face in ending violence against women?

## 2. OBJECTIVES- WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE?

Establish concrete objectives to guide your actions. What indicators will you use to measure success? How will you know you've met your objectives?

## 3. ACTIVITIES – HOW WILL YOU GET THERE?

What can be done to create awareness on women's rights in faith spaces and the various ways that these are violated? Brainstorm many different ideas and practical actions. Decide what actions are most feasible, and then create a timeline to begin carrying out your plan of action.

## 4. RESOURCES, COLLABORATION PARTNERSHIPS – WHAT DO YOU NEED?

Establish concrete objectives to guide your actions. What indicators will you use to measure success? How will you know you've met your objectives?

## 5. OBSTACLES/ CHALLENGES – WHAT MIGHT GET IN THE WAY?

Identify any obstacles or limiting factors that might prevent your plan of action from being successful. Make plans or strategies to counter these.

## 6. ACTION

Start the activities you have planned. Assign tasks to specific people.

## 7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Impacts and effects: What has happened as a result of the planned activities? Were the objectives met?

- **Alternatives:** Are there better ways of achieving the desired result? What difficulties or setbacks were encountered? How can these challenges be addressed in future activities?
- **Next steps:** Any follow up needed to build upon this activity? How do you keep all stakeholders engaged and active? Is there a feedback mechanism so that stakeholders can make suggestions and feed- back on what worked and what didn't.

# Annex 14

## SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS FOR PRESS AND MEDIA

### MEDIA INVITATION LETTER

(Organization's Letterhead)

(Date)

(Media Contact Name)

(Title)

(Media Outlet Name)

(Address)

(City, Country)

Dear (Media Contact Name)

#### **Invitation to Cover International Women's Day Celebration Event**

*“Celebrating Women of Faith: Empowering Communities, Inspiring Change”*

On behalf of (Organization's Name), it is my pleasure to invite you to join us as we celebrate International Women's Day on March 8, 2025 at (Event Location) from (Start Time) to (End Time). The theme of this year's event, “Celebrating Women of Faith: Empowering Communities, Inspiring Change”, will highlight the powerful role of women in faith communities and their contributions to building more just, equal, and compassionate societies.

International Women's Day is a global celebration of the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. At this event, we will focus on how faith intersects with gender equality, spotlighting the women who lead, inspire, and advocate for justice within their communities.

#### Event Highlights:

- Keynote Address: Delivered by (Title), (Name), (Organization/Position)
- Panel Discussion: Featuring women leaders from different faith traditions sharing their stories of leadership and advocacy
- Interactive Workshops: Focused on the role of faith in promoting women's rights and gender equality
- Special Performances: Including musical performances and spoken word highlighting women's empowerment
- Networking Opportunities: Meet faith-based leaders, activists, and advocates from across the community

We would be honoured to have (Media Outlet Name) cover this important event and help us amplify the voices of women who are leading positive change within their communities.

There will be opportunities for interviews with keynote speakers, panelists, and attendees.

#### Event Details:

- Date: March 8, (Year)
- Time: [Start Time] – (End Time)
- Venue: (Event Location), (Full Address)

- **RSVP:** Please confirm your attendance by (RSVP Deadline Date) to (Contact Person) at (Email Address) or (Phone Number).

We look forward to your presence at this meaningful celebration of women's achievements and their vital contributions to faith and community.

Thank you for your consideration, and we hope you will join us in making International Women's Day an inspiring and impactful occasion.

Sincerely,  
(Your Name)  
(Your Title)  
(Organization's Name)  
Phone: (Your Phone Number)  
Email: (Your Email Address)  
Website: (Your Website URL)

## SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

[Organization's Name] Kicks Off 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

Faith Communities United to End Violence Against Women and Girls

(City, Country), 20 November 2024 – In a powerful call to action, (Organization's Name) is joining the global movement to end gender-based violence (GBV) through the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, which will run from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to December 10 (Human Rights Day). Under the theme “Faith for Justice: Ending Violence Against Women and Girls”, the campaign aims to rally faith communities, religious leaders, and individuals in advocating for gender equality and an end to violence against women and girls.

Gender-based violence remains one of the most widespread violations of human rights across the globe, with 1 in 3 women experiencing physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. As a faith-based organization, (Organization's Name) believes that religious communities have a critical role to play in ending this injustice by promoting the values of love, equality, and human dignity.

“Our faith calls us to stand up for the vulnerable and oppressed,” said (Name), (Position), (Organization's Name). “The 16 Days of Activism is a time for us to unite, raise our voices, and take meaningful action to ensure that all women and girls can live free from fear, harm, and violence.”

### Key Campaign Events and Activities

Throughout the 16 Days, [Organization's Name] will host a series of online and in-person events, prayers, and discussions to raise awareness and mobilize action, including:

- November 25 – Campaign Launch & Prayer Vigil: A virtual interfaith prayer vigil to honour survivors of gender-based violence and pray for justice and healing.
- December 1 – Panel Discussion: A roundtable with religious leaders, activists, and survivors discussing the role of faith in addressing GBV and promoting gender justice.
- Daily Social Media Campaign: Sharing stories, prayers, facts, and action steps to encourage individuals and communities to get involved. Follow us on (add your social media handles) using the hashtag #FaithForJustice.

- December 10 – Human Rights Day and Closing Ceremony: Reflecting on the campaign’s impact and committing to long-term action in the fight for women’s rights and gender equality.

### **Faith Communities as Agents of Change**

With faith leaders holding great influence in communities worldwide, this campaign underscores the responsibility of religious organizations to challenge harmful practices, advocate for justice, and create safe spaces for survivors of violence. (Organization’s Name) encourages faith leaders to use their platforms to preach against violence, support survivors, and promote gender equality as a reflection of divine justice.

“Scripture teaches us that all humans are created in the image of God, deserving of dignity and respect,” added (Name). “By working together, we can break the cycle of violence and create communities where women and girls can thrive.”

### **Call to Action**

(Organization’s Name) invites everyone—whether part of a faith community or not—to join the movement. Individuals are encouraged to:

- Speak up against gender-based violence in their families, workplaces, and places of worship.
- Pray for survivors of violence and for an end to the systems that perpetuate gender-based violence.
- Engage with the campaign on social media by sharing key messages, attending events, and using the hashtag #EndGBV and #FaithForJustice.
- Support local women’s shelters and organizations that provide services to survivors of violence.

### **About (Organization’s Name)**

(Insert brief description of your organization, its mission, and its work, particularly in gender justice and faith-based advocacy)

For more information on how to participate in the 16 Days of Activism and upcoming events, visit (Website) or follow us on (Social Media Handles).

### **Media Contact:**

(Name)

(Position)

(Organization’s Name)

Phone: (Phone Number)

Email: (Email Address)

Website: (Website URL)

### END

## SAMPLE PRESS STATEMENT

(Organization's Name)

(Date)

### Celebrating the Power and Potential of Girls on International Day of the Girl Empowering Girls for a Brighter, More Equal Future

(City, Country) – Today, on International Day of the Girl (October 11), (Organization's Name) joins the global community in recognizing the power, potential, and rights of girls around the world. This year's theme, "(Insert Theme)", highlights the importance of investing in girls' education, health, and safety to ensure that every girl can thrive and reach her full potential.

Around the world, millions of girls continue to face barriers to education, experience gender-based violence, and struggle with limited opportunities for economic and personal growth. Teenage pregnancy is at an all-time high and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation are still prevalent in our communities. As a faith-based organization, we believe that all girls are created with inherent dignity, and it is our collective responsibility to advocate for their rights, protection, and empowerment.

"On this day, we are reminded of the critical importance of creating environments where girls are safe, supported, and valued," said (Name), (Title) of (Organization's Name). "By empowering girls, we are investing in stronger, healthier communities and a brighter future for all."

#### Advocating for the Rights of Girls

[Organization's Name] is committed to:

- Promoting Education: We believe that education is a powerful tool for transforming the lives of girls. When girls are educated, they gain the knowledge and skills they need to make informed choices, break the cycle of poverty, and contribute meaningfully to society.
- Ending Gender-Based Violence: No girl should live in fear of violence. We call for stronger laws, policies, and community initiatives to end child marriage, sexual exploitation, and harmful practices that endanger the lives of girls.
- Fostering Leadership: We advocate for creating spaces where girls can lead, express themselves, and participate fully in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

#### Faith Communities' Role in Supporting Girls

Faith communities have a crucial role to play in empowering girls and advocating for their rights.

(Organization's Name) calls on religious leaders, families, and community members to stand with girls by promoting gender equality, challenging harmful traditions, and supporting girls' access to education and opportunities.

"Our faith teaches us that every child is a precious gift," added (Name). "On International Day of the Girl, let us commit to nurturing the gifts and talents of every girl so that they may grow into strong, empowered women who contribute to a more just and equitable world."

#### Call to Action

On this International Day of the Girl, (Organization's Name) invites communities, organizations, and individuals to:

- Support initiatives that promote girls' education and leadership.
- Speak out against harmful practices that hold girls back, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).
- Encourage girls to pursue their dreams and goals, recognizing their limitless potential.

As we celebrate the achievements and promise of girls worldwide, let us also acknowledge the work that remains to be done to ensure that every girl has the opportunity to live a life of dignity, free from violence and discrimination.

Together, we can create a world where girls can flourish and lead the way toward a more equal and just future.

About (Organization's Name)

(Insert a brief description of your organization, its mission, and its work in promoting the rights and empowerment of girls.)

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact:

Media Contact:

(Name)

(Title)

(Phone Number)

(Email Address)

(Website URL)

### END

# Annex 15

## DEFINITIONS\*

**Empowerment:** Concerns individuals gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, 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.

**Gender:** Refers to the social attributes for males and females that are learned in a given culture, and though deeply rooted in every culture, are changeable over time, and have wide variations both within and between cultures.

**Gender Balance:** The equal representation of men and women, for example in the composition of an organisation, a project team, or a decision-making body.

**Gender Equality:** The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. It is a goal that has been accepted by governments and international organizations is enshrined in international agreements and commitments.

**Gender Identity:** Each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with one's sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body and other expressions of gender, such as dress, speech, and mannerisms.

**Gender Mainstreaming:** The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated or exacerbated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

**Gender Neutrality:** It aims at neutralizing reference to gender in terms that describe people, or reference that imply giving predetermined roles to genders and sexes. It allows a language that is suitable for both male and female.

**Gender Stereotypes:** Simplistic generalizations or preconceptions about attributes or characteristics that are or ought to be possessed by, or the roles that are or should be performed by, women and men. Stereotypes can be positive or negative, but they rarely communicate accurate information about people. Gender stereotypes are particularly harmful when they limit women's and men's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives and life plans. Harmful stereotypes can be both hostile/negative (e.g., women are irrational) or seemingly benign (e.g., women are nurturing – it is frequently based on this stereotype that child-rearing responsibilities often fall exclusively on women).

\* The definitions given have been adapted from: UNESCO, 2012, UNESCO Publications: Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines; UN ECOSOC, 1997, Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997, A/52/3; UN OSAGI, 2001, Gender Mainstreaming: Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality; UN General Assembly, 1979, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; UNAIDS, 2011, Terminology Guidelines (Revised Version).

# Annex 16

## CASE STUDY: TAMAR CAMPAIGN

The Tamar Campaign was initiated by the Ujamaa Centre, a community development and research centre within the School of Religion and Theology in the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The campaign has a particular focus on sexual and domestic violence, and seeks to challenge churches to address it.

**The objectives of the campaign are:**

- To raise awareness on the prevalence, magnitude and consequences of sexual and domestic violence.
- To encourage churches to speak out against the abuse of women and children.
- To promote Bible studies and curricula on violence against women/children for use in theological institutions and churches.
- To build the capacity of churches to provide support and opportunities for healing for victims of sexual and domestic violence.
- To encourage churches to hold perpetrators accountable for their violence.
- To collaborate with churches on violence prevention, e.g., through programmes for men and youth.
- To strengthen churches' networking and collaboration with civil society organizations, health service providers, schools, the police, judiciary, local administration, media and other stakeholders in addressing sexual and domestic violence. (see,

[http://ujamaa.ukzn.ac.za/TAMAR\\_CAMPAIGN/campaigns\\_inside.aspx](http://ujamaa.ukzn.ac.za/TAMAR_CAMPAIGN/campaigns_inside.aspx)

**The Tamar Campaign is a powerful campaign that exposes the occurrence of violence within the Bible. The following questions are critical in promoting the Tamar Campaign:**

- In many instances, it is assumed that the Bible is so holy that it does not have stories of sexual and gender-based violence. However, the Tamar story is found in the Bible. What do you see as the significance of this fact?
- Have you heard preachers focusing on the Tamar story? If yes, what have been the key points/issues of emphasis?
- What do you see as the role of faith organisations in promoting campaigns such as the Tamar Campaign?
- What are you going to do in relation to the Tamar Campaign, or initiating a similar campaign?

# Annex 17

## EXAMPLE OF A FAITH COMMITMENT

We, faith-based and civil society actors working within the religious sector and seeking to promote women's rights gathered in ..... on..... express the deep conviction that our respective religions and beliefs share a common commitment to upholding the dignity and the equal worth of all human beings.

We are people of faith who have come together, inspired by the conviction that women and men are created equal. We represent organisations that are committed to promoting women's rights and to challenge all forces that seek to deny women their inherent dignity.

We bemoan the denial of women's rights in our communities. For example, 1 in every 3 women has been subjected to violence. Child marriages are rampant in our communities and every year and across the region more girls drop out of school than women. In many of our communities, women do not inherit from their parents, and where they do, they get much less than their male relatives.

We are all created in the image of God so human values and equal dignity are foundational in Christianity. Faith and rights can be and should be mutually reinforcing, symbiotic spheres. Individual and communal expression of religions or beliefs thrive and flourish in environments where human rights, based on the equal worth of all individuals, are protected. Similarly, human rights can benefit from deeply rooted ethical and spiritual foundations provided by religions or beliefs.

Because of this:

- We recognise the urgency and significance of women's rights within the faith context.
- We believe that our sacred texts give valuable insights into women's rights and that faith is well placed to champion women's rights in Africa and beyond.
- We pledge to support, promote and advocate for gender equality in our faith spaces, communities and countries. By securing and upholding African Women's rights, the faith community will deepen its contribution towards sustainable development in Africa
- We commit to identify practices, biblical interpretation and language use that discriminate against women and speak and act against them.
- Through multi-denominational collaboration, cooperation and partnership with ecumenical partners, we pledge to identify feasible actions in support of women's rights, leveraging faith institutions and platforms.

Mobilising a critical mass of faith based actors to advance women's rights in Africa will lead to internal transformation within our faith spaces which will effectively spill over into our communities, countries and regions.

We hereby undertake to act decisively to transform the current situation and promote women's rights. We owe it the women today and for future generations to have a world characterised by gender justice.

# Annex 18



## DEBUNKING MYTHS ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS, MUSLIM WOMEN, FEMINISM, AND ISLAMOPHOBIA IN EUROPE



europen  
network  
against  
racism

**This leaflet is part of a unique cooperation between the feminist and anti-racism movements in Europe on the project “Forgotten Women: the impact of Islamophobia on Muslim women”. Given the continued debates and misconceptions around both Muslim women and feminism and their societal impact, the European Network Against Racism is debunking some of the more common stereotypes about feminism and Muslim women in Europe in order to promote a shared understanding of equal treatment in a diverse society.**

This document focuses on Muslim women in Europe in order to better address the inter-sectional discrimination affecting Muslim women (gender, religion, race and class). It also looks at myths on feminists in general, which needs to be debunked, including in the anti-racism movement.

We believe that addressing these myths jointly will reinforce mutual trust and hope this will contribute to promoting more coalitions against those trying to pit groups against each other.

The stigmatisation of feminism and of people who identify as feminists is an example of the patriarchal social system (the patriarchy) trying to control and define concepts that threaten their privileged place in society. Reinforcing a negative connotation of the term “feminist” has a detrimental effect; it contributes to the misunderstanding of the movement, creates divisions (instead of unifying to achieve common goals) and makes individuals wary of calling themselves feminists. In its most basic sense, feminism is defined as the belief that women and men should be treated equally in a society.

Muslim women are no different than any other women: they face the same barriers and oppression. But these can be compounded by additional factors such as religion, nationality and/or ethnicity. As a result of Islamophobia, a specific form of racism that refers to acts of violence and discrimination against Muslims or those perceived as such, Muslim women are depicted in collective consciousness as oppressed or dangerous, submissive and complicit in the violence they endure. They are the subjects of studies and fantasies but never the narrators of their own story. These myths are deeply rooted in society, including in the feminist movement, and impact these women’s daily lives.

# *Myths and truths on Muslim women*

## **Myth #1**

### **Muslim women are oppressed and submissive**

**Muslim women, just as any other women, can be oppressed by the patriarchy. In fact, many Muslim women in Europe are empowered and leading active lives.**

Muslim women in Europe have to face the patriarchy both within and outside their communities – so why focus only on the first? To say there is an Islamic specificity regarding sexism, or that Muslim women are more oppressed than other women, is groundless. Just as any other religious, social or political frame, Islam can be used by men to impose a system of power that will preserve their privileges. Muslim women's emancipation should not be used as a smoke screen to divert attention from the overall patriarchal system that oppresses every woman and whose emancipation is far from being a given.

Many Muslim women in Europe feel empowered to play active roles in their societies. Unfortunately, not only are these role models rarely made visible, but obstacles preventing access to typical paths of emancipation, such as employment or education, are increasing.

## **Myth #2**

### **Muslim women are conservative**

**Muslim women are as diverse as women in general and as the rest of society. They are not a monolithic bloc.**

They can be highly educated or not, be from the working, middle or upper class, have a variety of life experiences, be socialist, centrist or liberal, etc. Ultimately, as in any other set of ideologies and values, they will have different interpretations of Islam, and have conservative views as much as liberal ones.

Most religions are lagging behind in ensuring an equal expression of men and women. But one cannot assume that Muslim women are "backward" because they value a lifestyle articulated around religious values and practices. This also implies that the only path to "modernity" would mean turning one's back on religious practice and spirituality. In fact, voices bringing a woman's perspective on religion are getting more attention and offering alternative narratives both within and outside their communities.

## Myth #3

### Muslim women are forced to wear the headscarf

Although some Muslim women are forced to wear the head-scarf or other religious clothes, others choose to wear the headscarf.

One can't systematically dismiss free choice just because one assumes that this choice is an internalisation of patriarchy. We can question how patriarchy made it possible for the headscarf to become a symbol of modesty for women, but we could equally question a lot of decisions made by women. The issue of choice is also important for feminists as each woman's agency and right to choose, but we also must see that choice happens within an overall system of patriarchy which oppresses women.

The pressure in Europe on Muslim women to unveil to "free" themselves is grounded in colonial roots and amounts to telling a woman her body is not hers and needs external approval to be "accepted" in public. At the end of the day, this alienates all women. Forcing women to wear the headscarf is just as violent as forcing them to remove it. In both cases, it ignores women's right to self-determination and only substitutes one form of alienation

by another. Whatever one may think about the headscarf's meaning, in no circumstances should it justify exclusion, discrimination and hate crime against a woman who wears the headscarf. Muslim women should be able to enjoy equal access to education, employment and goods and services regardless of how they dress. Preventing them from doing so in areas enabling emancipation, fulfilment and independence is actually counter-productive.

The headscarf here refers to a piece of clothing that Muslim women wear that covers the hair and head but leaves the face uncovered. The most common Arabic term used to describe it is 'hijab'. This is also the most common type of head covering worn by Muslim women in Europe.

## Myth #4

### Muslim women are uneducated and dependent

**Muslim women in Europe are enrolled in the school system just as anyone else and are in fact outperforming boys in schools and universities in some countries.**

In the United Kingdom, more young Muslim women have been gaining degrees at British universities than Muslim men, even though they have been under-represented for decades. So much for being uneducated.

The truth is uglier. Once on the job market, many Muslim women face intersectional discrimination, preventing them from accessing jobs in line with their actual skills and diplomas. Likewise, discrimination in education can result in Muslim women choosing a specific field of study by anticipating and thus internalising the discrimination process – for example choosing to study nursing when they can become a surgeon. In this case, it is racism and discrimination that prevent some Muslim women from being independent of someone else's income.

Some NGOs do impressive work to challenge misconceptions and stereotypes on Muslim women. Al Nisa for instance, in the Netherlands, shows that Muslim women in the Netherlands are strong and emancipated, and they are stepping to the fore more boldly than ever. They work in national politics (Wassila Hachchi), are the face of national media (Naeeda Aurangzeb), and hold prominent positions in the legal field (Famile Arslan). Using the Twitter hashtags #TraditionallySubmissive and #CanYouHearUsNow, Muslim women from different backgrounds in the United Kingdom and the United States went viral showcasing their achievements and success.

## Myth #5

### Muslim women

### employees wearing

### the headscarf

### cannot be neutral

**Wearing the headscarf or any specific religious garment doesn't have any effect on the ability of a woman to perform her tasks in a neutral way.**

Neutrality should be required for the tasks you perform as an employee, not for the clothes you wear.

Trying to remove unwanted visible differences in areas of society is not neutral. It is grounded in racial discrimination.

A recent decision by the Court of Justice of the European Union allows companies to prohibit religious signs in order to pursue a policy of neutrality under certain conditions. However, a rule which bans religious clothing is not neutral: it is biased against employees who hold a religious belief expressed through what they wear. In addition, whether or not you wear a headscarf, the way you dress says something about you.

Workplaces in Europe should be the reflection of an increasingly diverse Europe and not only open to those who fit white secular norms.

## Myth #6

### Muslim women

### are subject to

### domestic violence

**Sadly, many women in Europe experience domestic violence, including Muslim women.**

Almost 1 in 2 (42%) of all women in Europe have experienced a form of physical violence by a partner (current and/or previous) since the age of 15.<sup>19</sup> Violence against women happens everywhere in society (from the upper to the working classes, by the educated and non-educated, majority and minorities....). Muslim men are no more violent than any other men. Pointing fingers at men from minorities and wrongly inferring that Muslim men are inherently violent only shuts down any criticism of a systemic and structural patriarchy in our societies and silences non-Muslim victims' experiences of violence.

The truth is that Muslim women are also the main targets of Islamophobic crimes, especially if they wear a headscarf. Verbal and physical assaults combine sexist and racist insults or gestures. In most cases, the perpetrator is a man who doesn't know the victim. Spikes in attacks against Muslim women occur after terrorist attacks, grounded in a couple of decades of public narratives dehumanising, demonising and delegitimising the presence of these women in the public sphere.

<sup>19</sup> European Agency for Fundamental Rights, Violence against women: an EU-wide survey Main results, 2014.

# *Myths and truths on feminism*

## **Myth #1**

**Feminists are  
trying to be men.**

**Variation: Women  
are trying to “take  
the place” of men**

Women are in fact taking their rightful place in society, where they should be able to participate fully in all spheres and without discrimination.

Wanting to participate in the realm of public life that has for so long been blocked to women has nothing to do with striving to be male. Feminists want to see the dismantlement of the systemic discrimination and subjugation that kept most women uneducated and at home for many thousands of years. Feminists want women to participate fully in society as women and on equal terms with men.

## **Myth #2**

**How women dress  
says something  
about their  
competences and/  
or femininity**

One's appearance does not determine one's skills or worth.

To think that a woman wearing a suit or other clothing article associated with masculinity would make her more competent or worthy of respect is ridiculous. It is just as ridiculous to think that a woman wearing lipstick and high heels would be any less competent and worthy of respect. Ultimately, a woman choosing – by and for her own self – what she likes to wear and the image she wishes to project is her choice alone and should be respected as such. There is also no single way of being feminine or definition of what “feminine” means.

## **Myth #3**

**Feminists are “man-haters” or “misandrists”**

Feminists do not hate men, the “enemy is prejudice”.

Many disagree with those men who try to enforce patriarchal systems and those who would like to see women stripped of all agency and relegated to subservience.

Feminist men and women alike hate sexist and misogynist behaviours, not men.

## Myth #4

### Women and feminists are hysterical

This language is meant to belittle women and their concerns and paint them as irrational based on their anatomy.

Often women are told to “calm down” when speaking their mind. This is dismissive and is basically another way of saying “shut up”.

Looking at the etymology of the word hysterical can give some perspective. Hysteria derives from the Latin hystericus (meaning “of the womb”) and was considered a dysfunction that made women neurotic and drove them to insanity. It was said that it was not their fault and this “condition” was blamed on their anatomy. It is the reproductive organs – not the frustration of being forced to live life as a second-class, often invisible person – that drove women mad.

## Myth #5

### Women turn to feminism because they are: ugly, cannot find a partner, unloved, lesbian, etc.

Women turn to feminism because they are angry at injustice, fed up with having to justify taking their rightful place alongside men in society, and know that nothing will change unless they speak up.

This argument is a last resort, cheap-shot used to attack feminists when the attackers have no more ammunition (because the facts have disarmed them of their other faulty stereotypes). Basically what this myth says is that you, the feminist, are the problem – not the oppressive patriarchal system that you are challenging. Turning to personal attacks on one’s appearance, sexual orientation or marital status is small-minded, contemptible, irrelevant, and shows clearly the fear that perpetuates such a myth.

## Myth #6

### There is no longer any need for feminism, equality has been achieved

In fact, it is thanks to centuries of feminist struggle that women now have the right to vote, own property, and make their own sexual and reproductive health choices in many parts of the world. However, there is still work to be done.

Feminists across Europe (and across the globe) are currently facing a backlash against women's rights. There is a resurgence of traditional conservative values and religious fundamentalism that would like to see women's rights rolled back. Inequality and misogyny still hurt women, despite the progress made so far. While marital rape has finally been criminalised in the EU, the fact remains that in the EU one in three women has experienced some form of physical and/or sexual assault since the age of 15. And while we see a few women holding high political posts such as President and Prime Minister, the truth is that in Europe, on average, women's representation in national parliaments is less than 30%.

In fact, in Europe progress on gender equality has stagnated in the past decade, with official statistics from the European Institute for Gender Equality showing that women are only 53% of the way towards full equality with men. Why the lack of progress?

## Myth #7

### There is only one kind of feminism; feminism is monolithic

Just as women are diverse and face different forms of oppression, so the path to emancipation can't be the same for all women.

The understanding of intersectionality – recognising that multiple grounds of discrimination and oppression shape very different realities and that all have to be taken into account to fully liberate women – has grown out of the feminist movement over the past decades. Minorities' liberation movements dealing with race and class have opened discussions on the limitations of a mainstream feminism which has sometimes ignored the realities of racism faced by minority women. Similarly feminists have encouraged anti-racism and civil rights struggles to open up to the multiple discrimination faced by minority women, including in their own movements. Dialogue between mainstream feminist organisations and minority-led feminist organisations must be encouraged to include all experiences of womanhood and open a path to emancipation to every single woman.



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**The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) stands against racism and discrimination and advocates equality, solidarity and well-being for all in Europe. We connect local and national anti-racism NGOs throughout Europe and act as an interface between our member organisations and the European institutions. We voice the concerns of ethnic and religious minorities in European and national policy debates.**

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