



Global Voices Information Sheet

Violence against women



Hundreds of people dance in front of Toronto City Hall on Valentine's Day, 2013, as part of the One Billion Rising global campaign against violence against women.

Background Info

- The United Nations defines violence against women as: “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts.”
- The UN World Health Organization says that violence against women is a “major public health problem and violation of women’s rights.”
- According to UNIFEM, one out of every three women in the world will experience violence — rape or assault — in her lifetime. With the current human population of 7 billion, that equals one billion women.
- Approximately 50 per cent of sexual assaults victims in the world are girls under the age of 16.
- In Canada, on any given day, more than 3,000 women are forced to live in emergency shelters because of violence at home from a parent or partner.
- A Statistics Canada study in 2008 found that 427,000 Canadian women had reported being sexually assaulted the previous year. The study also said that only 10 per cent of assaults are actually reported, so the real number of assaults is much higher.
- Approximately 800,000 people are victims of human trafficking every year. Seventy-nine per cent of them are women or girls trafficked for sexual exploitation.

Key terms

- **Disparate** — Things that are so different they cannot be compared.
- **Heinous** — A person or action that is utterly wicked.
- **Human trafficking** — The illegal buying and selling of human beings for sexual exploitation or forced labour.

Global Voices Elementary Resources

Note to Educators:

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. Activities are structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Extension and conclusion activities are included to challenge students and finally, encourage them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included.

Themes and Course Connections

- Themes: women's rights, human rights, values and ethics, education, global issues, local issues
- Course Connections: The Arts, Health and Physical Education, Language, Social Studies, History, Geography

Materials

- Global Voices column
- Computers with internet capabilities (optional)

Specific Expectations and Learning Goals

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in written and spoken language or other forms of expression.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express, and defend a position on an issue and explain how to put the ideas into action.

Creating an Environment for Learning

This week's Global Voices article sheds light on a harsh reality women face around the world. Violence against women is a serious and scary epidemic. As educators, we want to raise awareness of relevant issues so that our students may be knowledgeable citizens of the world and be a part of the systematic changes that will bring an end to great tragedies. Please find below a selection of ideas of how to engage students and help give them the context for larger conversations.

Create a safe space. Let your students know that it is natural to feel afraid, sad and unsure when they learn troubling news. It is easy to feel powerless when circumstances seem out of our control. Learning more about an issue like violence against women increases awareness. The more we know about an issue, the better equipped we will be when we feel empowered to create change. It is important to note that no one is an expert right from the start. Encourage students to take their time, ask questions and if something is upsetting to talk to a parent.

Promote community. Learning to care for one another through empathy, acts of kindness and more will help students feel connected to each other. Whether it is a small group of friends, a math class or a large neighbourhood, if we feel we belong we feel an investment in the health and well being of that community. That sense of responsibility will encourage caring for one another.

Stand together in solidarity. There have been a number of recent campaigns within the national and international development realm that emphasize the benefits to society when women are empowered and the power of women when they join and work together in solidarity. *Because I am a Girl*, *The Power of a Girl* and *Girls for a Change* are a few examples of what can be achieved when women are unified. Of course working towards ending violence against women needs to be addressed by men and women alike. Campaigns like the *Real Man* empower men to stand in solidarity with women.

Respect yourself and each other. We know it is important to respect each other, but to truly do that we need to respect ourselves too. Ensure students are comfortable with the person they are, have faith in their abilities and confidence in their actions. Students will then be better able to respect each other. The golden rule never expires; we should all treat others the way we want to be treated.

In addition to the above ideas, share these resources with your students to learn more.

Because I am a Girl www.becauseiamagirl.ca

Free The Children www.freethechildren.com

Girls for a Change www.girlsforachange.org

Kids Help Phone www.kidshelpphone.ca

One Billion Rising www.onebillionrising.org

The Power of a Girl www.freethechildren.com/get-involved/campaigns/the-power-of-a-girl/

Stephen Lewis Foundation www.stephenlewisfoundation.org

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women www.unwomen.org

We Day hub www.weday.com

Women's Aid's Real Man Campaign

www.womensaid.org.uk/page.asp?section=0001000100100016§ionTitle=Real+Man+Campaign