March - May 2016

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

25 November to 10 December 2016
A meaningful International Women’s Day to all!

As the world celebrates International Women’s Day today, we hope to inspire you with photos and stories of our Safe Cities Campaign during 2016’s 16 Days of Activism. This does not at all aim to do justice to ALL of the events and activities that took place around the federation, but we hope that through this, you will take time to visit each of the countries’ websites and social media pages to get to know more.

Last November 25 to 10th December, we joined the world in celebrating the 25th anniversary of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. Through the Safe Cities for Women Campaign, ActionAid highlighted the issue of violence against women in public spaces and women’s rights to the city during this eventful 16 days.

FREEDOM TO MOVE REPORT

To kickstart the 16-day period, ActionAid’s Tax Power and Safe Cities Campaigns jointly launched the “Freedom to Move” report (http://www.actionaid.org/publications/freedom-move) that speaks of the need for gender responsive public transport and how this can be funded by governments. It highlighted cases from Bangladesh, Brazil and Nigeria and was popularized through an animated video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bd-fwv7Fk8) and a blog http://www.actionaid.org/bangladesh/2016/11/who-should-get-money-wealthy-companies-or-women-trying-make-their-cities-safe-vio

SAFE CITIES STORIES

One day, one story, one country. For every day of the sixteen days, ActionAid countries participating in the campaign brought to the fore iconic stories that the federation promoted. You can see the stories here: http://www.actionaid.org/zimbabwe/2016/11/woman-speaks-out-gender-responsive-public-service

TWEETATHON

#HadItUpToHere

A #hadituptohere Tweetathon was successfully launched during the 16days reaching more than 3million people via 1600 tweets! #hadituptohere was also trending in Dublin and Lagos!

POLL

ActionAid also launched a poll about the experience of harassment suffered by women in UK, Brazil, Thailand and India. Many countries used the results of this poll to highlight the need to promote safe cities for women during 16 Days of Activism.
CAMBODIA

ActionAid Cambodia and their partners engaged more than 1,500 residents of Phnom Penh with their face to face campaign activities. Their Facebook activity during the 16 Days reached over 32,000 people.

They did this via trainings, creatively putting campaign stickers in fortune cookies, decorating tuktuks and motorbikes with bumper stickers, boat racers during the annual Water Festival dressed in Safe Cities shirts, declaring venues (i.e. KTV bars, beer gardens) as harassment-free, engaging the support of LGBTQi activists, and participating in the Human Rights Day mobilisation.

Online activities were also of course initiated to further amplify the activities on the ground. One significant online initiative was ActionAid Cambodia’s response to the horrific case of rape and attempted murder of a 14 year old Cambodian girl.

Read Cambodia’s Full report Here: Full report - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1exiLY4hyvnlOsCPUjpLFWZF9eJrAcRFxzhxuPcHNUM/edit

ZIMBABWE

The events around 16 Days of Activism in Zimbabwe can be summed up in this video. Please click the link! https://youtu.be/oJI9oDn9FbM

The theme for 16 DOA was “From Peace in the World to Peace in the Home; Make Education Safe for All,” ActionAid Zimbabwe saw this as a time to galvanize action to end violence against women and girls in public spaces and hence they initiated community drama and “Taking Radio to the People” to provide a platform for communities to speak out on violence against women and girls in public spaces, suggest solutions and ways the community can work with stakeholders to stop Gender Based Violence (GBV). Star FM Presenter Tariro popularly known as Mai Judah took lead in moderating the discussions.

AA Zimbabwe also ran a campaign on social media sharing solidarity messages and information on 16DOA and GBV. A blog by Rumbidzai Mugadza was also hugely popularised in Zimbabwe and internationally. Read the blog here http://www.actionaid.org/zimbabwe/2016/12/what-16-days-activism-against-gender-based-violence-means-young-woman

AUSTRALIA

ActionAid Australian used the opportunity of the 16 Days of Activism to launch their grassroots network in Australia.

Every day for 16 days they shared stories of incredible women activists from both Australia and across the Federation. They invited supporters to share these stories and pledge to campaign for women’s rights in 2017 and received over 1,000 pledges from Australian supporters.

During the 16 Days information sessions were held in both Melbourne and Sydney. Catherine Gatundu joined ActionAid Australia in Sydney and told the inspirational story of ‘Women to Kilimanjaro’. Following these information sessions, they also formed local groups of volunteers who will expand campaigning capacity within Australia.
**LIBERIA**

With support from ActionAid Liberia, a public awareness against Gender Based Violence in Commemoration of the 16DOA of Activism on Friday November 25th was conducted. Members of the Safe Cities Women Forums, Activista members, local comedian and musician, including young people mobilized from across Peace Island, Congo Town and Rehab communities participated during the outreach campaign. Others were the Hair Dresser Union, Money Exchange Union and Motorcyclists Union.

About 500 people were reached on Friday through community outreach, a massive social Media engagement (Facebook and twitter) and the launch program.

On the 8th of December, 2016, the GRPS and Tax report was launched by AAL at the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. The report was officially launched by the Minister of Gender. Commitments were made by government officials, civil society and youth groups to support and contextualize findings from the report within their various sectors for actions.

**THAILAND**

AA Thailand worked with universities on a “Safe University Project” in order to raise awareness on sexual harassment and demand for safe university for women students. With the recent incident of a Thammasart University student being sexually-harassed in campus, Actionaid together with Thammasat University Student Council, co-organized a seminar “University and Its Role in Stopping Sexual Harassment” on 10th December. About 60 people participated in this seminar and the seminar received a lot of attention from the media (including Bangkok Post!).

AAT will continue to work with students in pushing universities to have better policies and protection for students.

Today, 8th March 2017, please join ActionAid Thailand as they formally launch their Safe Cities Campaign. Please follow them on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/SafeCitiesForWomen/. They will use #safecitiesbecause as a tag.

**NEPAL**

ActionAid Nepal partners and allies organized different activities to mark these days in collaboration with government stakeholder and other organization in their respective area. Safety Booth, Capacity Building training for driver and Conductor, Safety Audit, Interaction meeting with Government Stakeholder are some of the activities that has been carried out to amplify the Safe City issues. More than 8000 people were directly reached out to.

A National Women’s Conference was also held with more than 200 women from 40 districts participating who then came out with an 8-point declaration. This was handed over to National Planning Commission demanding that women’s role to localized Sustainable Development Goal is ensured.
ActionAid Senegal and the partners celebrated the 16 days of action on the 20th of November 2016 in the Djilor LRP. The theme was “For Peace to Home to Peace in the World: Safe Education for All”. More than 300 women mobilised from the 20 villages of Djilor and the LRP of Foundiougne and Niodior organized a march to fight against violence against women with messages illustrating the different types of violence they encounter. From the centre of the commune to the Prefect office, women walked in the sun, joined by other women along the way showing the commitment of women to end gender based violence. According to the women, violence is always taboo subject and thanks to ActionAid now they dare express in public to denounce violence.

The presentation of the memorandum was followed by the forum, which allowed women to discuss issues of violence and to see how violence against women (domestic and marital) also affects girls’ education and deprives the girl child of her right to education. The women representatives of the villages promised to continue the struggle so that issues of violence against women are finally resolved. The women sang songs to celebrate women and against all forms of violence to close the day.

All the claims were submitted in the form of a memorandum to the sub-prefect of Djilor. The local authority expressed his commitment to work with ActionAid to support the campaign. Media coverage was provided by community radio and local websites. Youth and Activista members aware to the importance to fight violence against women were present to support women in their struggle.

ActionAid Ireland organised a Walking Debate event on Thursday 1st December. The Walking Debate was used as an opportunity to launch the Safe Cities and Tax Justice report Freedom to Move. ActionAid Ireland also took part in the international Tweetathon, using it as a way to engage Irish campaigners who took part in a weeklong training on Safe Cities in August. ActionAid Ireland developed a tweetsheet and infographics that were shared with the rest of the federation as well as with campaigners, allies and celebrities in Ireland. The hashtag #HadItUpToHere trended in Dublin in the afternoon and evening, and ActionAid Ireland’s twitter handle had over 900 tweets, retweets and mentions on the day.
AA South Africa focused on creating awareness at train stations about ActionAid’s Freedom to Move report, and on finding out about women’s experience using public trains. Through these, they managed to again gain support from transport officials. Selina Khumalo (Specialist Transport at City of Johannesburg); Thabo Moyo (Member of a Johannesburg Taxi Association); and Theodora Borman (Bus Operations at City of Johannesburg) joined ActionAid to talk about the importance of safety on public transport. They also agreed to meet with AA in 2017 to take the campaign forward at a national level.

Activistas and Young Urban Women took a return train ride around Johannesburg. They talked to (87) passengers; did drama skits about sexual violence in different carriages; and gathered information about women’s access to public trains. Of the 51 women surveyed during the activity, 61% said they had witnessed violence or harassment against women while 49% said they had experienced violence or harassment using trains. Sixty-seven percent said that the service and safety had worsened and 49% said that more security is required on trains and at train stations.

AASA was also given a 30 minute time slot (with a well-known radio host) at Talk 702, a provincial radio station with more than 830 000 listeners! They also further amplified their actions via social media with tweets retweeted 30 times, gaining 24 likes and an impression exposure of 5000.

They also ran a fundraising campaign linked to Safe Cities using #HadItUpToHere. Each day they shared messages from people they work with, staff and celebrities about why they have #HadItUpToHere with violence against women and unsafe cities. These posts reached a total of 42 587 people on Facebook.

AAB celebrated the 16 days of activism against violence against women through a number of campaigning activities in four major cities (Rangpur, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Narayanganj) of Bangladesh with a view to creating awareness and mobilizing people against sexual harassment of women and girls in public transportation. The campaign was done through a number of activities including train, bus and truck caravan, art competition for the slum adolescents, charity cricket and football matches for adolescent girl groups of the slums, interactive theatre, discussion session, cultural program, youth flash mob, rally and distribution of campaign materials containing relevant slogans and messages. Approximately 4408 people were reached through the event where 1678 were male and 2730 were female. 9 news articles were published in the local level daily newspapers focusing on the activities implemented under SHE CAN project.

The event Drew the attention of the public (including local government, students, teachers, journalists, civil society, NGOs and other professionals and practitioners) to stop sexual harassment of women and girls in public places.
AA Brazil partner, FASE Amazonia promoted a flashlight action in the City of Santarem, to call attention to the insecurity of women in cities due to lack or poor quality public lighting. Students, careworkers, and women leaders went to the streets with their flashlights in hand and walk through the dark streets of the city, demanding safe cities for women. They then proceeded to the Municipal Chamber where a public hearing was organized to discuss their demands. Among others, they are clamoring for a Women’s Police station that opens 24hs (currently it opens only from Monday to Friday 8hs to 14hs).

In São Paulo, UNAS, another AA Brazil partner, promoted a musical activity along with a round of debate over the issue of gender, to mark the 16 days of activism. The same discussion was held in all areas that the partner works, such as in schools and community centre. A major accomplishment was the election of two women from the community in the Municipal Women Council, which will enhance their voice in the dialogue with government.

In Rio de Janeiro, REDES, another local rights partner that works in Maré, launched the women house of Maré community, which has as objective to build professional and political capacity of women in the community. This house will organize different trainings and capacity building events on rights and gastronomy classes, which will bring more financial independency for those who attend the activities.

ActionAid UK's efforts during the 16 Days of Activism in 2016 culminated in DFID’s announcement of a GBP6million new funding to frontline organisations working to end Violence against Women.

Using the use the AAI theme ‘raising women’s voices’ across all of their activities, they shared Safe Cities activities on social media, and used the AAI hashtag to help generate traffic and noise.

Among their activities were:

- Volunteer Local Organisers created 8 speaker tour events across the UK with Jessica Njui visiting speaker from AAIK partner Africa Youth Trust, Nairobi.
- Supporter letter action to Secretary of State for International Development from three women leaders of WROs in Myanmar, Kenya and India.
- New international poll on women's experiences of violence and harassment, in partnership with Brazil, Thailand and India – covered by key mainstream paper.
- Guardian newspaper coverage with feminist columnist Laura Bates, 64 radio hits.
- Shared graphics of the poll on Twitter and Facebook, plus blogs.
- Parliamentary events in London and Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh - all 5 women Scottish Party leaders took part in a photo call for the campaign.
- Policy briefing profiling new case studies.
VIETNAM

NIGERIA

The Nigerian government forfeits US$2.9 billion every year through tax breaks to foreign companies.

Funding 600 buses needed in Abuja would cost only US$54m.
SHE CAN PROJECT

The SHE CAN Project supported the 16 Days of Activism via actions and events in 20 urban areas in Bangladesh, Myanmar, Kenya and Zimbabwe.

This project increased safety, mobility, access to justice and gender-responsive public services for 60,990 women and girls living in poverty and exclusion, who are vulnerable to violence against women and girls (VAWG).

During the year, and aligned with the 16 days of activism, the She Can project, among others, increased access to justice for survivors of violence by establishing a legal aid help desk at the Chitungwiza Magistrates’ Court in Zimbabwe, launching a sms platform in Mukuru, Kenya; and developing a mobile phone application on safe cities in Myanmar.

It has also helped empower over 35,000 women and girls across the four She Can countries to be aware of and claim their rights to safe cities; supported the establishment of 100 women and girls’ groups that meet regularly to tackle issues of Gender Based Violence (GBV); contributed to the establishment and strengthening of 10 new and existing Safe Cities networks and coalitions at local and national levels.

It has engaged 832 duty bearers in sensitization and training activities to advance the Gender Responsive Public Services (GRPS) agenda; facilitated 40 dialogue sessions between rights holders and duty bearers to address the structural causes of VAWG in public spaces; conducted over 40 public campaign events and disseminated ‘Safe Cities for Women’ messaging in over 52 media broadcasts; strengthened community VAWG referral mechanisms by building capacities of 512 Community Watch Group members in Bangladesh, over 200 paralegals in Myanmar, 156 volunteers in Zimbabwe and over 200 members of Women Action Groups, GBV working groups, girls and boys school clubs in Kenya;

There are more! Do get in touch with the above countries for more information.