



## 16 Day of Activism against Gender Based Violence

UN Women Malawi

"FROM PEACE IN THE WORLD TO PEACE IN THE HOME: LET'S MAKE EDUCATION SAFE FOR ALL"

The 16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence is an international campaign that was launched in 1991 by the Center for Women's Global Leadership. The campaign starts on November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to December 10th, International Human Rights Day. The global theme for 2015 is **"From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Make Education Safe for All!"** this was adopted by Malawi. This theme recognizes the dire situation for millions of boys and girls, men and women whose universal right to education is impacted due to violence, discrimination and lack of resources. UN Women Malawi

in collaboration with other agencies organised 3 main events for the 16 days.

### Art Exhibition

As a follow up from the 2013 and 2014 art exhibitions, the United Nations family, the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social welfare along with the Irish Agencies in Malawi, as a follow up from previous years' art exhibitions organized another multi-disciplinary art exhibition on 'Freedom from Violence against Women and Girls' with a specific focus on violence in school in order to create a united effort through images and art to raise awareness around violence



**"It's not a question of keeping girls in school, it's about keeping girls safe in schools"**

**– Mia Seppo,  
UN Resident Coordinator**



against women and children and to inspire the general public to promote behavior change and break cultural barriers.

Art work depicting violence against women and girls was submitted by various artists and was selected to be shown at the exhibition. In addition, two photo stories on the different forms of violence faced by boys and girls in school were on display. The photo stories were developed by the Tsabango Secondary School Drama Club, which was also a way to raise awareness among students on the issues concerning gender equality and violence against women and children.

The Irish NGOs (Concern Worldwide, Goal, Trócaire, Self Help Africa and Action Aid) in collaboration with the Irish Embassy and the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence



Former UNW Representative Alice Shackelford and Paul Brandt with artist Nixon Malambo

integrated the UN Women HeforShe campaign by showcasing stories from 16 men who stood up and took action against gender inequality and violence against women in their villages. This was done through a photographic exhibition and a video documentary. All of the stories represented courage, perseverance and determination to make a change in a world where women are unable to enjoy their rights, simply because they are women.

Two of the sixteen HeForShe local champions, Lenason and Boniface inspired the public by sharing their stories to a captivated audience at the Bingu International Conference Centre. This year the Art Exhibition was incorporated into the National Gender Conference (NGC) on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2015; a platform for strategizing on the current and pivotal gender development concerns.

The Irish Ambassador Áine Hearn opened the event commending the strong collaboration between the Irish NGOs, the UN family and the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare. Ambassador Hearn read out a special message from President of Ireland and HeforShe Champion under Impact 10x10x10.

Following the ambassador, speeches were also given by the Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Hon Patricia Kaliati; the UN Resident Coordinator Mia Seppo and the Country Director or Trocaire. The speeches highlighted the importance of access to quality education and the need to ensure the obstacles the girl child faces are adequately addressed. The event ended with a cocktail reception where guests were free to view all different artwork that was displayed and were able to interact with the artists.

Exhibition at the National Library



The remaining art work from the UN exhibition and the two photo stories are now displayed at the National Library and a local art gallery called "La Galleria" where it is intended to remain until January. As a way to raise awareness among youth, information on violence against women and children and a helpline/resources for support were also included in the display. As the exhibition generated a lot of curiosity from the youth at the library, a box where people could anonymously share their comments, suggestions and stories was added.

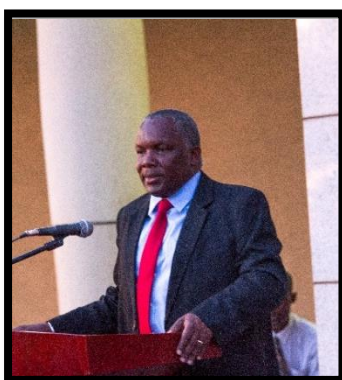
## Lighting of the Parliament Building



Press Conference outside the Parliament Building

The UN held a press conference and a ceremonious lighting of the Parliament Building in the capital, Lilongwe. The building was lit in purple lights to raise awareness of the campaign. These lights stayed on throughout the 16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence. The Parliament was chosen for the light up to serve as

a constant reminder to the Members of Parliament to play their role in ensuring safe and quality education for all. The Right Honorable Speaker of Parliament Richard Msowoya was guest of honor at the ceremony. In his remarks, Hon. Msowoya stated that government is still committed to the fight against early marriages, inequality and safe education for all.



Right Honourable Speaker of Parliament, Mr. Richard Msowoya

Former UN Women Representative Alice Shackelford also expressed that "Malawi is still young on the issues of gender and ending violence against women and children, but we believe that the fight will bear great fruits. Gender inequality is one of the most persistent human rights violations of our time and despite many years of promoting equality among men and women, this act continues to manifest in many ways around Malawi. However, we believe that a great step has been taken hence the appointment of H.E Prof, A.P Mutharika as the Global



Former UN Women Representative, Alice Shackelford

Champion for the HeForShe campaign. We believe that the world has already recognized that Malawi is indeed progressing in the fight against child marriages and gender violence."

Among the speakers was also the Chief Director from the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Dr. E. Kainja. Other notable figures at the lighting ceremony included UN Resident Representative Mia Seppo, Irish Ambassador Aines Hearn, Minister of Youth Sports and Culture Hon. Grace Chiumia, Chairperson of the PWC Hon. Jesse Kabwila MP and Hon. Juliana Lunguzi.



Chief Director of the MoGCDWS, Dr. E. Kainja





## Panel Discussion



The UN Family in conjunction with the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare organized a Public Debate at Crossroads Hotel in Lilongwe.

The public debate involved a panel of six experts who came together to discuss the issues of safety and violence in schools in line with this year's 16 Days of Activism Theme 'From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Make Education Safe for All!'.

Among the Panelists were Mr. Trevor Hamela (Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare), Grace Kafulatira (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology ), Ida Kamoto (Headmistress - Lilongwe Girls Secondary School), Marumbo Munthali (Teacher – Tsabango Secondary School), Loveness Thole (Ujamaa Pamodzi) and Takondwa Kaliwo (Girls Empowerment Network (GENET)).

The aim of the public debate was to engage the public in the 16

Days of Activism campaign and raise awareness on issues of violence in schools. The Panelists focused the discussion on different issues pertaining to Violence in Schools and the laws in place to protect Malawi's children from violence. The public audience also took part in the discussion by texting in their views and asking the panel questions. Over a hundred messages came in from the public, including youth to share their experiences and ask for action.

***"Gender Based violence is rampant in Malawi because of our national policies on how we run critical areas such as education. Our policies are good on paper but practically our constitution does not fully support them. We need Malawians to change the way we view the girl child, we should see the potential in her, her rights and responsibilities especially those who fail to change their mindset as it is a distractor to child development."***

***– Man, Machinga.***

Some of the views of the public highlighted abuse of freedom of dressing by girls, an issue which they believe puts them at risk of abuse. In line with this, some were of the opinion that poverty is a contributing factor to violence as

many girls cannot afford to sustain themselves, and as a result, they are taken advantage of in return for financial favors. Other issues such as child marriages, fees hike by government and lack of confidence by survivors of violence to speak out about their challenges were brought to the table.

## Youth Peace Parade

As part of the 2015, 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence commemorations UN Women partnered with Action Aid, Theatre for a Change, Youth Activista Network and Timveni in a youth peace parade under the theme "From Peace at Home to Peace in the Streets, Let's make Public spaces and Education Safe for All". In Malawi women and children face cruel and humiliating forms of violence including rape, child marriage, incest, defilement and cyber bullying. This has short and long-term consequences on children and women's physical, mental, economic and reproductive health status.

The Event was conducted on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2015 where a walk was conducted in the streets of Lilongwe Town from Wulian to Mbowe Park with a purpose of not only engaging the youth present but also the general public and street vendors who are usually



the perpetrators of sexual harassment in the streets. Following the big walk the youths gathered at Mbowe park where a second string of activities were undertaken where all the youth assembled and the Regional & Thematic Manager for Education and Youth Julie Juma of Action Aid Malawi made opening remarks addressing the youth and indicated *"that parents should be in the fore front to protect their children because if a child is not protected at home she will not see the value of protection."* The Deputy Mayor of Lilongwe Kwame Bandawe also delivered a speech highlighting that *"as the government we will make sure we make the public, education spaces safe for all the girls and children, we will make sure the girls are protected at all levels."*



The main objective of the parade was to sensitize the 238 youth present on their role in promoting peace in schools and public spaces by increasing women and girls skills, assertiveness and empowerment to fight gender based violence and encouraging men and boys to stand up as agents of change in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment through making a commitment by signing the HeforShe commitment pledge with a total of 121 signatures. Students and youth present where also entertained and sensitized on issues of gender based violence through music performances by HeforShe Champions Gwamba and KBG.

## Maria Sings Makeba

This year in occasion of 16 Days of Activism UNW supported the UNiTE Artist Advisory Group (UAAG) to host a concert in light of 16 Days of activism to raise awareness through art on speak out and join hand to eliminate violence against women and girls.

UN Women recognizes creative arts as one of the critically channel for social change. UN Women recognizes the importance of the arts in breaking barriers and promoting creative freedom to champion women's rights.

UAAG is an inclusive artistic body aimed to raise awareness around violence against women and girls through various activities, it is comprised of poets, dramatists, sculptures, painters, graphic designers, fashion designers, puppeteers, photographers, musicians and other arts. UAAG works with several actors in ending violence against women and girls through varied artistic fields during events that are held throughout the year. It aims not only to fulfil its duties in accordance with the aim of the UNiTE Campaign, but as Malawian citizens to take on duty and responsibility to engage with policy-makers, religious bodies, civil society members and the arts towards the prevention and response to violence and empowering women and girls through art.

In light of this UAAG performed a two hour concert, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2015, in commemoration of the 16 Days. An estimated 70 people attended from different walks of life. The show was also broadcasted on Zodiak Radio Station and



Students of Athens Secondary School Display Signed HeforShe Pledge Commitment Cards

Bubile Sichinga of Youth Activista Network also made her remarks encouraging girls to stand up against violence in schools and public spaces.

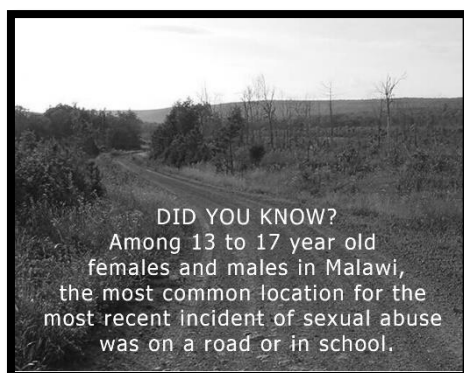


## Social Media

Zodiak Television Station with the aim of reaching mass audiences. Furthermore during the concert, the 'No Campaign' advocacy photographs were displayed around the stage to show solidarity to end violence against women and girls. Throughout the performance the Chair of UAAG, Maria Chidzanja Nkhoma made reference to ending violence against women and encouraged the audience to stand up and speak out against all forms of violence that women and girls are subject to.

The main objective of the concert was to use creative arts and music to speak out against every form of violence and highlight the fact that it is a public concern that affects all segments of society, challenge and influence change in individual and society-wide attitudes and behaviors that condone and tolerate VAW and build critical mass for change by bringing together people from different backgrounds to create opportunities to learn from one another's experience, networks and grow wider and more powerful movements.

In addition to these events, UN Women shared messages pertaining to the theme of the 16 days of activism on the UN Women Africa Twitter platform.



*"I think boys and girls would be happier if they work together, protect each other to know more about each other"*

*— 11 year old boy*

