



Closing Event Report

Dialogue on Advancing Human Rights of Women and Girls:

Hopes for the Next 365 Days

Joint Closing Event — 16 Days of Activism Campaign 2021

9 December 2021 | Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh





Overview

2021 Theme

Orange the World: End Violence Against Women Now!

The 16 Days of Activism against GBV is an annual international campaign that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day. It was started by activists at the inaugural Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991, and 2021 marks the 30th anniversary of the Global 16 Days Campaign.

The Closing Event

9 December 2021

Long Beach Hotel, Cox's Bazar

To mark the closing, GiHAWG — through UN Women-Gender Hub's leadership — organized a high-level dialogue in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Women's Empowerment and Leadership Technical Working Group (WELTWG), GBV Sub-Sector, UNDP, UNHCR, UNFPA, and FAO.

The dialogue titled "Advancing Human Rights of Women and Girls: Hopes for the Next 365 Days" engaged HoSOG, Sector coordinators, women and men leaders from the Rohingya and host communities, as well as feminist leaders and gender advocates at the national level, with the goal of eliminating GBV at the humanitarian response level.

For security concerns, the voices of Rohingya refugees were presented in an audio format without revealing their identities.

The curtain-raiser was an interactive play, accompanied by a musical performance, portraying the discrimination faced by women. Echoing each other, 70 guests, leaders, and humanitarian workers shared their pledges against GBV.



Key Messages

The patriarchal system was discussed as one of the root causes of gender inequality. The sustained support to women's leadership and robust engagement of men and boys are critical for transformative outcomes.

The following messages were shared:

- 1 Collective measures to track the positive impact of gender-responsive programmes
- 2 Relevant, coherent, and cross-sectoral training to support women's leadership and rights
- 3 Empower women in leadership opportunities directly within the camp management architecture
- 4 Sustained commitment to gender-responsive funding
- 5 Prioritization of resource allocation for gender expertise
- 6 Engagement of men and boys to advance the human rights of women and girls and end GBV
- 7 Ensure that gender-responsive initiatives address physical, economic, political, and social empowerment
- 8 Strengthen partnerships on GBV sensitization to empower the Rohingya community to know their rights



Dialogue

Host and Rohingya communities



Sheuly Sharma — Executive Director, JNUS

Local women leaders are bullied for advocating for women's rights. Their families rarely support them. Such stigmas must be addressed, urged Sheuly.

Bipon Barua — Founder, CBO

Being a male leader who supports women's leadership, Barua encouraged men to rise and advocate for women's rights.

Audio Excerpts

Rohingya Woman leader 01: *In camps, girls cannot continue studying after a certain period. To end GBV, I want my community to be educated.*

Rohingya Woman leader 02: *Initially, I faced criticism, but once my community understood my motivation, the path became more accessible.*

Majhi: *Our women need education. Only an educated mother can raise an educated child. Rohingya men must be allies of women's empowerment.*



Dialogue

Women Leaders



Rokeya Kabir — Executive Director, BNPS

Rokeya Kabir drew attention to gender discrimination and power practices against women. Through her testimony, she shared how she dealt with the situation. Also, Rokeya discussed how religious stigma surrounds women and how women's responsibilities are gendered.

Violence against women and girls is a symptom. To eliminate the root cause, we must address the patriarchy.

Razia Sultana — Chairperson, RWWS

As a Rohingya woman leader, Razia Sultana faces numerous and enormous challenges. Before her speech, a documentary film trailer featuring Razia's story and leadership was shown.

Women's leadership poses unique challenges, especially when you work at the community level. You will be applauded, but no one will hold your hand. My patience and hope brought me this far.



Dialogue

Gender Advocates



Sheuli Hijra (Bandhu) — Gender-Diverse Population Advocate

Women face colossal discrimination, and so do transgender people. They often find themselves alone and ignored in public spaces. Organizations like Bandhu Social Welfare Society and UN Women-Gender Hub can help bring about positive change in society by promoting gender mainstreaming.

GBV against the transgender community is yet to be addressed in a constructive mechanism. The donor community should come forward.

Video Message Excerpt

Obaidul Islam Munna (American Red Cross) — Gender Advocate

Women are deprived in different ways because of the mindset, system, structure and ignorance under this patriarchal society. The question is, are we able to notice or address all of these diversified forms through one lens? We must examine our roles in ending violence against women and gender-based disparities. Let's commit to an enabling home, society and workplace for women for the next 365 days.



Dialogue

HoSOG



Flora Macula — HoSO, UN Women, Cox's Bazar

UN Women will continue to support women's agencies and women as agents of change. We will do this by supporting national and local women's rights organizations in Rohingya and host communities. The key is to change power relations.

Hrushikesh Harichandan — Head of Sub-Delegation, IFRC, Cox's Bazar

Stakeholders should prioritize actions for gender inclusion every day. It is necessary to systematically promote more women within the official structure by ensuring that they are safe at work.

Ssentamu Simon Kaddu — PHR Consultant, WHO, Cox's Bazar

As a result of the ISCG's GiHAWG guidance, project proposals are now peer-reviewed to determine whether the gender inclusion of the proposed projects is accurate. In addition, we could consider women doctors for GBV survivors. Even such a small step would have a positive impact.

Cultural Session



With flute and cajón accompaniment, Moushumi Mosharraf (CPI), Parveen Sultana Koli (ActionAid Bangladesh), and Tazreen Jahan (UNICEF) performed three narratives illustrating the resilience of women.

The curtain raiser of the event was a participatory play performed by women humanitarian workers. Guests were asked to tie black bandanas around their mouths. In response to the three stories, the guests stood up and threw their bandanas away. The guests stressed the importance of addressing the key messages.



The event also included feminist songs, poetry recitations, and musical performances.



Remarks

Opening Remarks

Sofia Canovas (GBV SS Coordinator), Flora Macula (HoSO, UN Women), Roselidah Raphael (HoSO, UNFPA), Tanzila Tasnim (MoWCA), Mohammad Shamsud Douza (Additional RRRC), and Arjun Jain (Principal Coordinator, ISCG) inaugurated the event with opening remarks.

Speakers discussed how COVID-19 exacerbated another pandemic, gender-based violence. Women in the camps deserve gratitude for standing up against domestic violence and protecting their communities at their own risk.

Positive changes are seen at the response level; working together could speed up them.

Closing Remarks

Ludger Kaup (GiZ) and Marco DeGaetano (HoSO, FAO) delivered closing remarks. Maria Teresa Dico-Young (Co-chair of GiHAWG) wrapped up the event.

Speakers hoped key messages discussed at the event would encourage humanitarian actors to embody gender perspectives into their project cycles.

To conclude, speakers reiterated that GBV is one of the symptoms of gender inequality. All actors need to respond beyond providing essential services. What is vital is to tackle the root causes of gender inequality, and all actors need to work together for a transformative outcome.



Documentation — Joint Closing Event | 16 Days of Activism 2021

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