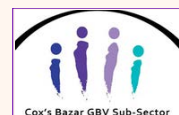


UNITE! INVEST TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM 2023

COX'S BAZAR, BANGLADESH

GBV Sub-Sector & GiHA Working Group



In Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, the vibrant commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence in 2023 showcased a colorful launch at the Cultural Center on November 23rd and continued at the Rohingya Refugee Response Camps on November 26th. Led by GBV Sub Sector and Co-led by GiHA WG, the engaging activities received support from various humanitarian response partners, including the Government of Bangladesh, UN Agencies, INGOs/NGOs, Women's Rights Organizations, and individual activists.



1.15 million
People in Need



757,150
Targeted



\$ 24.2 million
Required



Intimate Partner
Violence



Forced/early
marriage



Denial of
resources



Sexual
violence



“1 out of 5 refugee women living amid humanitarian crisis have experienced sexual violence.”

- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2014

**“Break the Silence,
End the Violence.”**

**“Respect the dignity of
Women and Girls.”**



Throughout the campaign period, spanning from the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women to Human Rights Day, the initiative emphasized the urgent need to UNITE and invest in preventing violence against women and girls. Using orange as a symbol of hope for a violence-free future, over 500 advocacy activities, from dialogues, workshops, and speeches to sports, music, and drama, resonated with the global call to unite and invest in this crucial cause. The campaign employed diverse advocacy materials, cultural expressions, art displays, human chain parades, and creative showcases of women refugees' craftwork, all serving as powerful mediums to spread the message of preventing violence against women and girls, fostering a united effort in Cox's Bazar and the Rohingya Refugee Camps.

“Freedom from Violence for Women and Girls in all diversity.”

Together We Stand, UNiTE to Protect Women & Girls



IRC Country Director of Bangladesh, Hasina Rahman, reaffirmed a dedicated commitment to supporting IRC's team in their endeavors to end GBV and promote gender equity and equality. The extensive range of activities included participation in the preparation and launch of the 16 Days of Activism with the Sub Sector team, hosting an advocacy forum with government bodies, donors, and organizations focused on breaking barriers and understanding protection and gender realities in Cox's Bazar. The initiatives further extended to various engagements from World AIDS Day quizzes on GBV, HIV, and SRH to discussions on the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. These efforts encompassed mapping referral pathways, distributing key holders with GBV hotline numbers, promoting self-care activities, art expression sessions, men's engagement in discussions, henna creativity, and advocacy at the field level. IRC's involvement in events such as the Women's Path to Empowerment celebration on Begum Rokeya Day and Human Rights Day showcased their ongoing dedication to gender empowerment and rights advocacy.

CARE Bangladesh engaged in a comprehensive series of events during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, collaborating with GBVSS & GiHA working groups at Cox's Bazar Cultural Center.

The initiatives spanned a vibrant array of activities like TomTom painting, a lunching rally, art campaigns, informative displays, and a fair showcasing Rohingya women's skills. Across camps and communities, over 2900 participants, including girls, boys, women, men, Persons with Disabilities, and Gender Diverse individuals, actively joined. The focus remained on advocating for a world free from fear for women, emphasizing the need for investment in preventative measures and addressing women's unique needs. CARE's CLIMB project facilitated discussions among local youth, emphasizing the global campaign's significance.

They distributed dignity kits for GBV risk mitigation, engaged in reproductive health dissemination, and organized solidarity events within CARE and across programs. The overarching message emphasized promoting gender equality and inclusion, ensuring no one is left behind, and fostering environments free from violence, harassment, and discrimination. Participants highlighted the importance of women's rights, safety, and well-being, reinforcing the collective commitment to combatting harmful norms and creating safer spaces for all.



UN Women orchestrated a diverse array of events engaging 467 stakeholders, strategically held across various camps. The activities spanned different days and locations, from a pivotal open dialogue on Gender-responsive Camp Governance held at the RRRC office involving 66 response leaders, to events at specific camps. Camp 1 West marked the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, inspiring community action through survivor stories. Camp 9 hosted the International Women Human Rights Defenders Day, emphasizing the critical role of women's rights defenders. At Camp 18, the International Day for Persons with Disabilities empowered individuals through thematic discussions and artistic expression. Camp 5 celebrated World Volunteer Day, fostering unity among volunteers. Camp 1 East linked HIV/AIDS awareness to GBV prevention on World AIDS Day, while Camp 4 focused on International Human Rights Observation, equipping the community with tools to champion human rights causes. Each camp-specific event amplified inclusivity, awareness, and community-driven action against gender-based violence.

ROHINGYA ADOLESCENT GIRLS, SCARVES WITH THE MESSAGE "EMPOWERED WOMEN, EMPOWER GENERATIONS," - CHESS PLAY AT CAMP 1E EVENT.



The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign, running from November 26th to December 10th, 2023, directed its efforts toward bolstering prevention measures.

Relief International has persistently conducted prevention activities targeting gender-based violence across Camp 8W, 17, 26, 27, and Nayapara RC since 2018, employing structured interventions such as SASA! Together, Male Role Model, Girl Shine, and Structured Psychosocial Support. Commencing at camp 26, the campaign's launch event, in collaboration with GBVSS and the Prevention Working Group, convened influential figures and community representatives from Camp 26, 27, and Nayapara RC, facilitating discussions on evidence-based prevention strategies' impact and implementation. Sessions like "Women Inspire Women" saw engagement from female leaders, activists, and LGBTQI participants, reflecting on community transformation and increased empowerment while resisting gender-based violence. The initiative also included diverse activities like discussions, art competitions, and awareness sessions held at Women and Girls Safe Spaces and Male Engagement Centres. The campaign concluded at Camp 8W with a closing event emphasizing the crucial role of prevention activities in combatting gender-based violence, stressing the need for sustained community involvement in program implementation and celebrations.

"Now, no one has anything negative to say about me playing football. Even the boys don't bother me. Instead, they support and encourage me, saying, 'Keep playing; you're really good. You can go far in the future'"
- proudly shared Liza Tripura, a player on the Sheikh Russel Sporting team



The "Kick for Change" event, orchestrated by **ActionAid Bangladesh** in collaboration with various organizations, stood as a testament to the transformative power of sports in challenging societal norms. Through football and Karate, Bangladeshi adolescents and young women defied stereotypes, exhibiting courage and talent while advocating for gender equality. Distinguished guests and representatives highlighted the importance of such initiatives in breaking barriers for girls in sports, emphasizing the broader impact of sports beyond the playing field. The event's resonating message echoes the necessity of creating safe spaces and fostering equality, envisioning a future where every girl and woman can flourish without fear.

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Supported by UNFPA, the GBVIE program of **Mukti Cox's Bazar** actively participated in the 16 Days of Activism across 35 Women Friendly Spaces in both Host and Rohingya community settings, hosting a series of impactful events. The initiative showcased inclusivity, such as the event **'We Deserve Equal Human Rights'** with the LGBTQ group, fostering mainstream integration. Additionally, 'Orange the World: Women's Rights and Equality' aimed to empower underprivileged ethnic groups by raising awareness about their rights and advocating for equality. Through engaging activities like art presentations, male-focused games, and discussions with Persons with Disabilities and their caregivers, the program successfully disseminated GBV prevention messages, fostered community involvement, and promoted a supportive, violence-free environment.



During the 16 Days of Activism, **Upoma Nari Kallyan Sangstha** engaged in impactful events across different dates. On December 5th, staff, volunteers, and women from various areas gathered to watch a movie depicting a girl's challenging life, highlighting the issues of torture and violence against women. December 9th saw a celebration at Upoma's office for Begum Rokeya Day, featuring painting, song, and dance competitions focused on Begum Rokeya's legacy. The next day, on December 10th, a human chain event advocating for women's rights and gender equality took place in P.M. Khali Union Parishad, attended by Union Parishad officials and BNPS staff.

Good Neighbors Bangladesh marked the 16 days of activism, reaching 631 individuals including women, girls, men, boys, and Persons with Disabilities across seven Camp-15 programs on December 5, 2023. The CIC office hosted diverse activities: art competitions, discussions on women's rights, empowerment, and child trafficking awareness. GNB led a rally, cultural displays, and informative stalls. These efforts shed light on gender-based violence, urging ongoing dedication for a violence-free world, emphasizing the need for continuous commitment beyond designated periods..



“AT THE BEGINNING, MY FAMILY DIDN'T ACCEPT THE IDEA OF ME PLAYING KARATE, BUT I INSISTED ON SHOWING MY SKILLS AND HAVE PROVEN THAT I CAN DO ANYTHING!”
 - HAPPY AKTER, A PARTICIPANT IN THE KARATE DISPLAY, SHARED HER EXPERIENCE



Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha orchestrated diverse programs in Cox's Bazar's camps (18, 16, & 25) and host areas (Cox's Bazar Sadar, Ukhiya, and Teknaf) for the 16 Days of Activism '2023, encompassing fairs, cultural events, film screenings, discussions, and activities promoting women's engagement. Celebrating International Human Rights Day on December 10th at Camp-16 CIC Conference Room, the focus was on engaging women leaders to combat gender-based violence and increase their capacity within the MPWC. BNPS facilitated community participation by arranging events at community venues while navigating political unrest for venue selection. Through these initiatives, women and girls in Cox's Bazar challenged gender norms, realizing their potential and learning about cinema hall risks, supported by Oxfam, UN Women, and IRC in BNPS's efforts.



Handicap International in Camp 24 observed the 16 Days of Activism through impactful initiatives targeting gender-based violence prevention and inclusivity. Activities included discussions with men and women on eliminating violence against women, inclusive art events for adolescents, and a recreational event for women. These events fostered dialogue on creating an inclusive society where equal access is ensured. Notably, an adolescent girl expressed her wish for brothers to support their sisters with disabilities in accessing education and activities. Awareness sessions highlighted the rights of persons with disabilities while a hand painting and signature campaign united participants in preventing gender-based violence. The campaign aimed to raise awareness and empower communities to take a stand against violence.

***“Whether I am a man or woman is not the issue
 – whether I am gender-sensitive is the issue.”***

— a Camp-in-Charge during the joint open dialogue event on 6 December 2023

Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) orchestrated an impactful 16-day activism campaign from November 25th to December 10th, 2023, across 11 camps and 3 host communities, aiming to raise awareness and foster empowerment among WLCC beneficiaries, self-help groups, activists, and community members. The events, inclusive of Pitha festivals, game competitions, discussions, and cultural celebrations, engaged participants of various demographics, including men, women, boys, girls, and persons with disabilities, totaling 1000 individuals from 10 WLCCs in Rohingya camps and hosts. The vibrant activities offered a reprieve, allowing participants, particularly women facing societal challenges, to enjoy cultural moments and build solidarity against prevalent issues like violence against women. Notably, GUK collaborated with camp management and NGOs/INGOs in several camps, culminating in a spirited closing event on December 10th at Ratna Palang and Sabrang hosts, where 300 attendees experienced stalls showcasing self-help group products, engaging discussions, and special activities for persons with disabilities, emphasizing the collective commitment to women's empowerment and societal change. The presence of Union Parishad members underscored the significance of addressing women's issues and fostering empowerment within these communities.



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Under the theme "Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women & Girls" with the color orange, the **BRAC-HCMP** protection sector launched the 16 days of activism from November 23rd to December 10th, encompassing diverse engagements across Rohingya and Host Community spaces. They organized rallies, stalls showcasing women's products, and activities at Women Friendly Spaces, Women and Girls Safe Spaces, and Women Markets, involving women, girls, men, and stakeholders. Art competitions, talent hunts, and rallies saw participation from humanitarian workers and the CIC, aiming to raise awareness and community involvement in preventing gender-based violence. Emphasizing disability inclusion, these initiatives fostered empowerment, hosting various activities while addressing stereotypes through sessions with Men Against Gender-Based Violence. Collaborative meetings focused on GBV risk mitigation, highlighting critical intersections of health, law, and community involvement. These efforts demonstrated a holistic approach, emphasizing inclusivity and collaboration for a safer, fairer society.

Friendship organized a vibrant session engaging 125 participants, including beneficiaries and staff, for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. The day commenced with discussions on the significance of this activism, addressing root causes of GBV, and strategies for prevention. Activities involved beneficiaries creating crowns, sharing chocolates, and reflecting on positive aspects and improvement areas regarding violence against women and girls. The session culminated in a pledge against violence, fostering empowerment and unity, followed by snack distribution and a group picture. Valuable feedback highlighted the need for more awareness sessions for both genders, emphasizing breaking barriers, ending silence on GBV, and advocating for respect and prevention efforts from everyone.



"I WANT ALL BROTHERS TO TAKE THEIR SISTERS TO SCHOOLS AND PLAY ESPECIALLY WHOSE SISTERS ARE NOT ABLE TO GO TO SCHOOL AND PLAYGROUND DUE TO DISABILITIES."

- AN ADOLESCENT GIRL FROM CAMP 24

The Danish Refugee Council's GBV team marked the 16 Days of Activism from November 25 to December 10, 2023, engaging 949 participants from refugee and host communities (Female – 633, Male – 271, GDP – 45, PWD – 71). The initiative aimed to address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) comprehensively among various demographics, focusing on prevention, awareness, and empowerment. Key events included comprehensive training for humanitarian volunteers on GBV, a debate competition on women's empowerment through education and employment, a collaborative stakeholder meeting to enhance service coordination, and engaging sessions aimed at encouraging men and adolescents to support the fight against GBV by fostering respect, education, and understanding consent. These efforts aimed to create a safer, more equitable environment within the communities.



The Community Development Center (CODEC) in Cox's Bazar conducted impactful activities as part of the 16 Days Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) on November 30th. In collaboration with the UNICEF CP Project, an IPT show titled *"Agia jabe NUR KOLIMARA"* was organized at Camp-16, aiming to raise awareness about violence against women and strategies to address it. The show involved 12 participants from various backgrounds, targeting the empowerment of women and the eradication of domestic violence. A diverse audience of approximately 210 individuals, including children, men, women, community leaders, and NGO workers, witnessed the show. Post-show discussions focused on preventing gender-based violence, enhancing protection, combating domestic violence, and addressing issues like early and forced marriage. Notably, the discussions emphasized the creation of income-generating opportunities for women. Despite challenges in engaging women in GBV-related discussions, the activity effectively engaged diverse community members and proved instrumental in altering community perceptions regarding these issues.

The Organization for Poor Community Advancement (OPCA) actively participated in the 16 Days Activism against Gender-Based Violence, aiming to raise awareness and educate communities on this crucial issue. In Cox's Bazar District, various events were organized by OPCA, including an awareness discussion session on Gender-Based Violence and a pillow passing game involving adolescents with disabilities. These activities, held on December 7th, engaged women, adolescents, and caregivers to promote awareness and encourage seeking support against Gender-Based Violence. Additionally, an art competition focusing on education during the Covid-19 pandemic was organized for adolescent girls, fostering creativity and expression. The efforts aimed to break stigmas, embrace struggles, and pave the way for a more secure future, emphasizing the importance of investing in ending Gender-Based Violence.



Partners in Health & Development's commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence unfolded across three individual camps, marked by the presence of esteemed figures like the CIC, ACIC, and Site Management, along with PHD staff, community leaders, and beneficiaries, including Adolescents & their Caregivers. The event commenced with vibrant rallies graced by the honorable CIC, emphasizing the theme's significance. Engaging discussions ensued, addressing the impact and repercussions of gender-based violence, fostering an open forum for collective reflection and strategies to prevent such occurrences. Adolescents participated in an art competition centered on sensitive topics like Good touch-Bad touch and Domestic violence, observed and judged by PHD staff and the CIC. The engagement continued with a thought-provoking role play by PHD's community health workers on the detriments of child marriage, prompting participatory discussions within the audience to strategize against this form of violence within the community.



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