

CANADIAN NETWORK OF WOMEN'S SHELTERS & TRANSITION HOUSES

What is the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses?

Drawn together by a shared vision to end violence against women, the provincial/territorial organizations representing women's shelters began giving shape to the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses in 2009. The Network was incorporated and became a charitable organization in November 2012.

We represent a unified voice that works to make violence against women a priority. By collaborating with our members and their affiliate shelters, the Network is uniquely positioned to bring about lasting and significant change.

We provide a vital space for collaboration and social innovation on the issue of violence against women and more specifically the role of shelters. We collaborate, educate, and innovate to end violence against women, working to make Canada a world leader in the eradication of gender-based violence.

Our Beliefs

The 12 current members of the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses have more than 350 individual member shelters. Together, we are guided by our shared beliefs:

- We believe that governments and societies are responsible for ensuring women's human rights.
- We believe that violence violates women's human rights and equality.
- We believe that the women's shelter movement plays a critical leadership role in the provincial/territorial, national, and global effort to end violence against women and their children.

Letter from ED

Welcome to our 2nd newsletter. It is our intention to produce the Newsletter on a quarterly basis, with the summer issue having an international focus. Our hope is that it will allow us to broaden our perspective, be motivated by what is happening and be in solidarity with our sisters from around the world. 2015 marks the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Network is contributing to the VAW section in Canada's NGO report. The [Global Network of Women's Shelters](#) is planning to host a 3rd World conference of shelters in the Netherlands in November, 2015. Future issues of the Newsletter will bring you the information as it becomes available. Hoping that we can all appreciate the final days of summer.

Lise Martin



Canadian Network of Women's
Shelters & Transition Houses
Réseau canadien des maisons
d'hébergement pour femmes

Table of Contents

United Nations.....	2-3
<i>Safe Cities Global Initiative</i>	2
<i>Beijing + 20</i>	3
Global News.....	2
<i>Street Harassment</i>	2
<i>Impunity</i>	2
<i>Womanifesto</i>	3
<i>Nigerian Girls</i>	3
<i>Campaigns</i>	4

Safe Cities Global Initiative

In 2010, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women started the [Safe Cities Global Initiative](#) to stop sexual harassment and sexual violence in public places. Recognizing that women and girls are living in fear of harassment and assault all around the world, cities in numerous countries are committing to concrete action to change this reality. This plan consists of two international programs: “Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls” and “Safe and Sustainable Cities for All”.

In response to these programs, many cities have conducted surveys and studies on the level of street harassment and public sexual violence that women and girls face. There is overwhelming evidence that women and girls face a horrifying large amount of violence and fear in public environments in cities all over the world. Although most cities who have committed to these programs are from countries that have been labeled as “developing”, Winnipeg was the first Canadian city to join the United Nations Safe Cities Global Initiative in 2013.

Global News

Street Harassment: A Global Issue

Street harassment is a form of violence against women faced by women all over the world. Whether it is being objectified and sexualized while walking in public or being targeted by unwanted contact and sexual comments, street harassment is never acceptable. Although street harassment is not uniquely misogynistic as targets also include queer and trans men and people, indigenous people, people of colour, people with disabilities, and poor people, women are victims of this violence at a disproportionately high level and usually in a non-consensually sexual way. Despite how prevalent this problem is, there is little effective action being taken by formal institutions to stop this violence.

Feminist organizations across the world are combating street harassment at the local, national, and global levels. [Hollaback!](#) is an international organization which has as its mission to empower targets of street harassment through conversation, developing solidarity, and learning personal defense against this violence. Through the mediums of workshops, skill trainings, story-sharing, and policy change, Hollaback! works to prevent street harassment as well as to create methods of responding and fighting back. Having started in New York City in 2005, this organization has spread across the world with numerous initiatives aimed at combating street harassment and empowering women. Many of these campaigns are found in cities across Canada.

Other feminists are documenting and sharing their experiences of sexual public harassment through poetry, blogs, and articles, such as [“An open letter to all my male friends”](#) by Estelle Tang. Local and international groups, including [student organizations](#), [city-focused organizing groups](#) around the world are

Summer 2014

tackling this issue through public protesting, urging lawmakers, and actively creating safer spaces for women and girls. Feminists all over the world recognize that street harassment is a misogynistic, violent, and global problem that women and girls face and are building strong international and local communities to empower women and girls and to end street harassment.

A Global Pattern of Impunity

Women across the world are not seeing justice in how their abusers and attackers are dealt with by judicial systems. Rapists, abusers, and murderers are not getting the punishment they deserve. Official systems are broken, failing to serve true justice, leaving women in increasingly more dangerous situations, and creating a culture of impunity for violence against women.

A UK report estimates that [“that between 75 and 95 per cent of rape crimes are never reported to the police.”](#) Canada has a similar statistic with an estimated [90% of sexual assaults not reported](#). It is estimated that only [30% of domestic violence is reported](#) in Canada. Comparable numbers are found worldwide. A smaller percentage of violence against women cases reach court and an even smaller number lead to the offender being sentenced.

A culture of impunity discourages women from reporting violence because when offenders are not charged, women are left in more vulnerable situations. This pattern needs to change so that women have the ability to use judicial systems to escape violent situations. [The International Campaign to Stop Rape and Gender Violence in Conflict](#) is one project working to change this culture in countries around the world, by placing international pressure on governments.

Beijing +20

A number of groups are collaborating to produce a shadow report in anticipation of the March 2015 Commission on the Status of Women meeting which will mark the 20th anniversary of the fourth United Nations women's conference, often referred to as the Beijing Conference. "The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was created at this conference, and "assert clearly that women's rights are human rights and that there are particular obstacles faced by women and girls in attaining their human rights... Every five years, member states are asked to report voluntarily to the United Nations on the progress that they have made towards achieving the goals set out in the Beijing Declaration and platform for Action. Civil society may also submit shadow reports." [FAFIA]

There is much more work to be done for all countries to fulfill all of the commitments outlined in this document. [UN Women](#) is spotlighting women's voices in preparation for the March 2015 Commission meeting through the sharing of writings and campaigns led by powerful women who are making change across the world. The CNWSTH is contributing to the Canadian shadow report for Beijing + 20, as one of the authors of the Violence against Women section. Coordinated by the [Making Women Count Project](#) of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, The report will document the state of progress of gender equality in Canada since 2009.

Indian Women's Movement Creates a Womanifesto

A freedom movement for women has caught fire in India. Women across India have demanded an end to the generations-deep violence and suppression faced by hundreds of millions of Indian women and girls. In anticipation of the country's general election, held last spring, women's rights activists called on elected officials to commit the resources and political will for change and developed a Womanifesto. The Womanifesto was backed by over 50 leading women's rights activists in India and campaign group [avaaz.org](#). Leaders in the women's movement wanted to get across the following message; 'If you are going to ask for votes on the basis of gender, then you must commit to something concrete'. This is definitely food for thought as we head towards the federal election in Canada in 2015.

The [Womanifesto](#) consisted of a six-point plan, critical to the freedom and safety, equality and flourishing of India's women and girls and asked for concrete action on the following:

1. *Educate for Equality*
2. *Make Laws Count*
3. *Put Women in Power*
4. *Police for the People*
5. *Swift, Certain Justice*
6. *Economic Flourishing*

Kidnapped Nigerian Girls

On the night of April 14, 2014, 329 women and girls were kidnapped from Government Secondary School in Chibok, Nigeria, by Boko Haram, an extremist terrorist group. More than 90 women and girls has been abducted from neighbouring villages since the initial abduction. The Boko Haram are selling these girls into forced marriages, sexual assaulting and killing them, and attempting to use them as leverage for the release of their imprisoned members. As of July 15th, 2014, 116 women and children have escaped, but 251 women and girls are still missing.

There has been criticism from various feminist groups across the world about how the situation is being dealt with. There was a delay of 3 weeks before Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathon spoke publicly about the situation. Although claiming that the government is doing everything in their power to find these kidnapped girls, he also blamed their families for not providing enough information to the police. He has also not met with the families of the girls who were abducted, which is highly unusual in these situations. Malala Yousafzai, an outspoken Pakistani activist has urged President Goodluck Jonathon to meet with the families and to increase efforts to "[bring back our girls now, and alive.](#)" The Nigerian military also failed to reinforce the school despite a four hour advance notice of the attack.

None of the women and girls have been rescued by government or official forces but rather all who have escaped the Boko Haram have done so on their own. Even after escaping, the government continues to fail these girls by not providing them with the proper methods of healing from this trauma. Nigerians are consistently forced to protect themselves and their families as the government continues to fail to do so during the insurgency in Nigeria. As innocent lives, especially those of women and girls, are severely threatened and lost, activists in Nigeria and across the world continue to push for the safe return of these girls and stand in solidarity with their families.

SUMMER 2014

Campaigns around the World

Albania

As part of the global [“Orange your world in 16 days”](#) initiative by UN Women, Albanian artists have produced an anthem against domestic violence, titled [“Bring The Sun!”](#) Written by Pandi Laço, Adrian Hill, and Egon Musilu, this song and accompanying music video calls for men and boys to join the movement to end the violence against women and girls.

India

Indian engineers, led by Manisha Mohan, developed an [electric anti-rape bra](#) as a defense system against sexual assault. Created in response to the increasing levels of violence against women in India, Manisha states that this bra, called Society Harnessing Equipment (SHE), will be entering the market very soon. Capable of causing severe burns, SHE is activated by pressure sensors and will also alert the police automatically through the use of a built-in GPS.

United States of America

[#GirlsLikeUs](#) is a social media campaign started by Janet Mock, an outspoken activist for the rights of trans people, especially trans women of colour. Janet Mock created [#girlslikeus](#) as an online space for trans women of all races, ages, and socioeconomic standings “to live visibly and connect in sisterhood and solidarity”. In a culture where transmisogyny is rampant even in feminist spheres, [#girlslikeus](#) creates a space of safety, support, healing, and empowerment for trans women.

International

[#YesAllWomen](#) is a social media campaign that started as a response to the [#NotAllMen](#) campaign. The [#NotAllMen](#) campaign was created in protest of discussion surrounding the misogynistic murders of young girls in California in May of 2014, stating that not all men are misogynistic and violent. The [#YesAllWomen](#) campaign was then formed to create spaces for women to share their stories of assault, harassment, and fear as a common experience among women across the world. In an effort to raise awareness of everyday misogyny and the silent terror women and girls live in, [#YesAllWomen](#) quickly became a hashtag used across Twitter, Facebook, and many other social media networks by women eager to share their stories. Unfortunately, despite the importance of the issue that this campaign brings to light, the creator of this hashtag has since deleted her online presence due to severe and constant rape and death threats and for her own safety, asks that she remains anonymous at this time.

[The International Campaign to Stop Rape and Gender Violence in Conflict](#) held is a call for political leadership and action on rape in times of war in countries around the world. The Global Summit occurred from June 10 – 13, 2014 in London, UK with guests from around the world. With an immediate focus on Burma, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya, this campaign organizes and promotes action to end rape in conflict through the pillars of Prevent, Protect, and Prosecute.



This e-Newsletter is produced by the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses, a coalition of 12 provincial and territorial shelter networks representing over 350 shelters across Canada. The network works as a unified voice to collaborate, educate, and innovate for systemic change that ends violence against women, making Canada a model for safety in the world.

Visit our website <http://www.endvaw.ca> and find us at [facebook.com/endvawnetwork](https://www.facebook.com/endvawnetwork)