



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación
Bildungsinternationale

Education International Statement to mark

UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

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END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS NOW

Violence against women remains prevalent all over the world and affects all groups of women; it can be physical and/or sexual, as well as psychological; it occurs in public spaces, in the privacy of people's homes and online. Different forms and acts of violence against women both reflect and create gender inequalities at the personal, institutional and structural levels.

In most countries, teachers are living and working in social contexts permitting the use of violence against women to maintain male authority. Because of their key position working with children and young people, teachers are central to the process of transformation of attitudes to gender, which is critical in the prevention of violence against women and girls. As unions of teachers, it is incumbent on us to take the lead in preventing and addressing violence against women and girls in places of learning.

Violence against women and girls in schools and other educational settings hinders students' educational, psychological and social development. Students who experience violence at school are more likely to be socially isolated, depressed, frustrated and have low attachment to school. When violence occurs in schools it obstructs teaching, taints the working environment of teachers and affects students' quality of learning. Schools must be safe spaces for all, learners and teachers, if they are to fully fill their promise of truly being places where people learn and grow together.

EI strongly condemns violent attacks on students outside of school settings, such as the Taliban attack on Pakistani school girl and education and gender equality advocate, Malala Yousafzai.

EI continues to demand a strong commitment from education workers and communities in the prevention of violence against women and girls in educational settings by its inclusion in their working agendas. EI calls on teacher organisations to raise awareness of the scope of violence against girls and women, and to lobby for prevention measures to eliminate violence against women in unions, in the workplace and in the community.

In the 2011 EI Resolution on Education and the Elimination of Violence against Women, it was observed with concern that the serious effects of the current economic and social crises, made worse by recent international events, may displace the efforts being made to address and prevent the occurrence of violence against women.

EI advocates for States to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW - 1999) without reservation and to implement its General Recommendation No19 on violence against women, as well its Optional Protocol. States which have ratified CEDAW with reservations should withdraw those reservations with immediate effect; States that have ratified CEDAW without reservation but continually violate CEDAW should be held accountable for such violations; all States should closely monitor and evaluate the implementation of CEDAW.

EI further advocates for the full implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW) Agreed Conclusions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women (42nd Session) and



against the girl child (51st Session), and for the application, by all States, of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993).

EI welcomes the recommendations of the UN Expert Group Meeting on prevention of violence against women and girls (Bangkok, September 2012 - <http://go.ei-ie.org/xe64m>). The recommendations include the following integrated measures to be adopted by States, in order to prevent violence against women and girls in the field of education:

- ❖ Develop, implement and monitor compulsory education promoting human rights and gender equality, challenging gender stereotypes, discrimination and violence against women and girls, and building skills for equal and respectful relationships and for peaceful conflict resolution, at all levels of schooling, from kindergarten to the tertiary level and in non-school educational settings.
- ❖ Review teaching and learning materials to support the above, elaborating relevant curricula and materials in partnership with specialists on violence against women and girls, and ensuring that such education is gender-sensitive, comprehensive and fully-integrated and includes assessment and reporting measures.
- ❖ Provide for specialized training and resources for teaching and support staff to deliver the above curricula, implement gender-sensitive approaches to instruction through non-violent pedagogy, and support students who may disclose violence.
- ❖ Support schools, tertiary institutions and other educational settings to promote broader 'whole-school/institution cultures' of equality, non-violence and respect, through engagement of leadership, events and extracurricular activities, and involvement of the community, as well as through policy and practice reform such as instigating institution-wide bans on all violence – including corporal punishment – and protocols and procedures for responding to violence, discrimination, bullying and harassment, whether in the staff-room, the classroom or elsewhere on the school/institution grounds.
- ❖ Monitor and support girls' completion of secondary schooling which multiple studies suggest is strongly protective against domestic and sexual violence.

Additionally, EI calls on States to:

- ❖ Develop public awareness programmes on violence against women and girls, partnering governments with civil society organisations, trade unions, and corporates;
- ❖ Provide specialist training for health care workers and police forces on recognising and dealing with violence against women and girls, and to provide mechanisms for reporting.

On this 25 November 2012, UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Education International calls on governments to guarantee the provision of quality universal public services, in particular quality education and vocational training free of charge and with adequate facilities, qualified teachers, gender-sensitive relevant curricula, safe transportation, and sanitation. It is through these measures that girls and women will have the chance to not only achieve literacy, but to also be empowered to lead their lives free of the fear of violence.

For further information go to www.ei-ie.org:

- 2011 EI Congress Resolution on Gender Equality
- 2011 EI Resolution on Education and the Elimination of Violence Against Women
- 1998 EI Resolution on the Girl Child
- 1995 EI Policy Declaration on Women in Education and Teacher's Organisations
- 1995 EI Resolution on Violence against Women and Girls