Ending Violence Against Women and Children
Special Final FAWCO Issue

Security Council
UN Adopts New Resolution
Women’s Participation, Leadership Crucial to Peace Process

Are You Progressive?
A new spin on an old idea

Global Gender Inequality
UN Women strike a cord

Exclusive
Women, War and Peace
An In-Depth Look into the Five-Part Series

What is your club doing to participate in the 16 Days Campaign? Tell us about it and your club could win a screening of Women, War and Peace. Full details inside.
Happy Birthday, United Nations!
The UN celebrated its 68th anniversary and they seem to be aging very well.

Modern Day Slavery:
What’s in Your Cart? Some key things to remember when holiday shopping this year.

Modern Day Slavery:
Women, War & Peace is a bold five-part series that challenges conventional thought on war.

Feature Article:
What’s in Your Cart? Some key things to remember when holiday shopping this year.

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Feature Article:
A Walk in Their Shoes is a heartfelt and empowering account of Therese Hartwell’s journey in Bosnia.

Inside this Issue

Though women’s status across the world has improved over the last few decades, we’re still largely second-class citizens in comparison to men.

UN Women / Ogilvy & Mather, Dubai, United Arab Emirates / Creative: Christopher Hunt, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Hello and Welcome!

So glad that you are dropping by! This magazine has been a dream in the making for quite a few years and I am so happy to be able to share an exclusive sneak-peak with the faithful FAWCO Task Force followers!

For those of you who have been following the issues that the Task Force has been focusing on, you know that my goal has always been to give you concrete information about the issues pertaining to violence against women and children, but I have also strived to give you tangible things to do to get involved. And that, my dear friends, is the premise behind this magazine.

EVAWAC Quarterly is a first of a kind, full fledged magazine that deals with all issues of human rights for women and children. Ensuring that women have the right to live a life free from violence, oppression, poverty, humiliation and degradation is crucial. But, I also want to make sure that we do not forget about future generations.

We are shaping the minds and lives of the future and, now more than ever, this fact could not be more crucial. As women, we need to stand together, show support and be present. As mothers and mentors, we need to encourage strength, compassion and individuality; promote equality and demand justice.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of EVAWAC Quarterly as there is a lot of information to share. I hope you enjoy it!
Inequality?

Women make less money, have more difficulty accessing education and affordable health care and face much more violence than our male counterparts.

Human Rights are Women’s Rights

At the 68th UN General Assembly

By Erica Higbie, UN-Rep. NY

The 68th General Assembly began its 2013-14 session in New York with renewed commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They also began discussions on the MDGs successor: The Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Efforts have been underway to collect input for these discussions; utilizing social media, online surveys, regional meetings, thematic consultations, youth summits, civil society input and more. Human Rights has been the area of greatest concern from all corners of the globe. Dominant themes within the human rights recommendations include environmental sustainability, peace and security, violence and gender equality.

UN Women is pushing hard for gender considerations across all aspects of the Post 215 Framework. Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the new Executive Director for UN Women have called for a review of the 12 critical areas for Women’s Rights as established by the Beijing Platform.

The goal is to get gender equality at the top of the global agenda. “Central to this (Post 2015) universal normative framework is the recognition that the achievement of gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment is relevant in every part of the world; it is everyone’s responsibility; and it pertains to every policy area.”

FAWCO’s Board and network of clubs has recently streamlined and renewed its commitment to Women and Girls issues; Human Rights, Education, Health and Environment. The UN Team will be working hard and global reinvigoration of United Nations and to keep you informed on this timely and global human rights debate.
Google It?

UN Women’s Inequality Campaign
Written by Tonya Teichert, Chair of Ending Violence Against Women & Children Task Force
Excerpts sourced from “UN Women ad series reveals widespread sexism” from their website

Can you remember what life was like before Google came along? When we actually had to, dare I say it, pick up a book and actually look for what we needed? Nowadays, in the technological times that we live in, Google is our go-to for all things information. We Google directions, restaurants, books, recipes, reviews, movies. Essentially, we can Google just about everything - even how to discriminate against women!

Usually, when Googling something, having those nice little “suggestions” come in very handy. They help us find what we are looking for and, sometimes, introduce us to something new. But what happens when the suggestions are not so positive?

A striking new UN Women campaign makes use of actual Google search result suggestions to bring attention to the sexist attitudes still held around the world. The series of ads, developed as a creative idea for UN Women by McCann Ogilvy & Mather Dubai, use genuine Google searches to reveal the widespread prevalence of sexism and discrimination against women. Based on searches dated 9 March, 2013 the ads expose negative sentiments ranging from stereotyping as well as outright denial of women’s rights.

“When we came across these ads, they show just how far we still have to go to achieve gender equality. They are a wake-up call, and we hope that the message will travel far,” adds Karim Shuhaibar, copy writer.

For UN Women, the searches confirm the urgent need to continue making the case for women’s rights, empowerment and equality, a cause the organization is pursuing around the world. UN Women’s Inequality Campaign.

Women make less money, have more difficulty accessing education and affordable health care and face much more violence than our male counterparts.

Happy Birthday United Nations!!

On October 24th marked the 68th birthday of the United Nations! Since 1948 United Nations Day has been celebrated. In 1971, the General Assembly recommended that the day be observed by Member States as a public holiday.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the annual celebration offers a chance to recognize the invaluable contributions of the Organization to peace and common progress. It was with the ratification of the UN Charter that the UN officially came into being. You can read the full story here and read Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s message here.

The UNSC Adopts New Resolution

The UNSC has adopted a new resolution that is urging women’s full inclusion in peace processes. On October 18, 2013 the UN Security Council (UNSC) demonstrated renewed determination to put women’s leadership at the center of all efforts to resolve conflict and promote peace. By unanimous vote, the Council adopted a resolution that sets in place stronger measures to enable women to participate in conflict resolution and recovery, and puts the onus on the Security Council, the United Nations, regional organizations and Member States to dismantle the barriers, create the space, and provide seats at the table for women. UNSC Resolution 2122 puts in place a roadmap for a more systematic approach to the implementation of commitments on women, peace and security.

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and the need to prevent it. In peacekeeping contexts, there is a marked increase in the number of practical actions and directives guiding military and police components to address women’s security. This includes deployment of gender advisers and experts to UN mediation teams or in post-conflict planning.

International Commissions of Inquiry now routinely include gender crimes investigators, as seen in those established most recently in the context of Côte D’Ivoire, Libya, North Korea and Syria. Historic appointments of women leaders to senior peace negotiators, as seen in those international commissions guiding military and police components in post-conflict planning.

The relatively low status of women in many societies and their lack of economic and cultural power may help to explain why issues of water access and sanitation do not enjoy the global profile that they deserve. Women have often suffered disproportionately from the push to privatize water in the developing world. In many cases however they have also been at the forefront of successfully fighting back and developing workable, public approaches to meeting their communities’ water and sanitation needs. It is time that international decision makers recognized that women as experts must be at the heart of developing and delivering solutions to the global water crisis.

By empowering women to be leaders, we can help put them at the table.

Femicide Bill Becomes Law

On October 11, 2013, the Italian Senate made a bold move when they approved a law on femicide. The measure, aimed at preventing crime, punishing perpetrators and protecting women, already passed in the Chamber of Depu-

Women & Water: Imbalance of rights, power & equality

As we get ready to begin another Target Program, we need to really come together to help find solutions. We know the questions and causes. As we continue to see, women and children are more affected by natural disasters, wars, conflicts and famine. The global water crisis is no exception. As we saw with the Water Target Program, there are no easy answers.

The grim reality of the global water crisis is that it disproportionately impacts on women. Primarily, it is women who manage water in the household; it is women who tend to crops, and it is women who have the main responsibility for raising children. Lack of access to water substantially increases the burden of their responsibilities.

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Highlight on AWC Hamburg

Kara W of AWC Hamburg talks about its Free the Girls Charity Event: “Hamburg Lends a Hand!” So grab your bras and get ready!

Submitted by Kara Wahn, AWC Hamburg

FAWCO has many committees and sub-committees, one of which serves to prevent violence against women and children. While reading the most recent newsletter, I saw that the Ending Violence against Women and Children Task Force was sending out information about Free the Girls. “What is Free the Girls?” you may ask.

This organization collects new and gently used bras to donate to women in Mozambique who have been rescued from lives of sex trafficking and violence. These women have the opportunity to get back on their feet by selling second-hand clothing. Now, bras may seem like an odd choice, but take a moment and open your underwear drawer: Go ahead!

See how full it is with bras you probably might have worn once in two years? We buy things, wear them twice, never return them, and hoard them until we have no choice but to throw them out. Let’s put them to use rather than making them garbage!

In January, I will put together a final donation location and dessert evening for our members. I plan on also giving a small presentation about FAWCO’s EVAWAC committee and free the girls and how our members can help lend a hand, regardless of how much free time and money they have on their hands!

Here’s how to start: You’ll notice the event in November for a books and DVD’s exchange. Send any bras you may have to this event or contact me, Kara at karawahn@gmail.com, for information or to set up a drop off. Talk to friends and neighbors about any they may have to contribute! Lastly, educate yourself about Free the Girls to learn more about this fantastic organization and what you can do to help. Keep a lookout in your inbox and in Currents for the final donation and tally of how much we have gathered in January. We need women like you, our members, to help other women who are less fortunate! Free the Girls!

Free the Girls

Donate a Bra, Empower a Woman

Free The Girls is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides job opportunities for survivors of sex trafficking. They collect gently used bras and donate them to the women as starting inventory for their own business selling the bras.

Why Bras?

The women they work with were sold into prostitution, often as children. Bras provide a GREAT INCOME as second-hand clothing is a profitable market in many countries around the world. A SAFE ENVIRONMENT providing an opportunity for these women to work with other women. FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE as most of the women were sold into prostitution as children, only 8-10 years old, having their youth and their lives stolen from them, they missed out on going to school and getting an education. Selling bras gives them the flexibility to work around their education. SUSTAINABLE MODEL Once a program has been started with a safe house, it is designed to sustain itself.

MINIMAL EFFECT ON LOCAL MARKETS There is no doubt that second-hand clothing had an effect on local production of clothing in Africa in the past.

To learn more about Free the Girls, visit their website.

To organize your very own Bra Drive, go here for more details. MAKE SURE TO LET US KNOW!
STOP Before you Shop!

What’s in your cart?

We are a nation of responsible people. Right? We know to drink responsibly. We know to act responsibly. So why is the message about buying responsibly not louder? Are we that blinded by consumerism that we never stop to think about the products we spend money on? What is really behind the things that we buy?

Do you realize that the things we purchase, no matter how small, can have a significant impact on the Modern Day Slave Trade? Would you still buy that favorite handbag, coffee or mobile phone if you knew the human cost to make it? Are you ready to ask yourself what is really behind the things that we buy?

As we approach the holiday season, now is the time to start thinking about these questions and making an impact on the modern day slave trade by buying responsibly. But what does that mean?

Recently there have been quite a number of reports about factories collapsing, or burning to the ground, that were full of people! This is nothing new. It has been happening for decades, perhaps longer. But because of people like you (the ones who want to see change) we are seeing that we can hold those who are responsible accountable. Sadly, we will never know the true number of lives lost in these cases, as majority of them were undocumented or enslaved workers. When is the point that we say enough is enough?!

First, it means educating ourselves about the human cost of producing goods. Some of the smaller, everyday products we find at local markets or grocers may have been produced by women and children and men who have been forced to work in inhumane conditions. They are subjected to little or no pay, physical and verbal abuse (or both) and, in some cases, sexual violence. They are forced to work long hours without a break, no fresh air or food in some rather extreme conditions both inside and out. You can find them in all industries, from textiles to farms, from food processing plants to jewelry to electronics. This list goes on . . .

So, what can you do as a consumer? Learn about safe practices and find out which companies are doing business ethically and which ones are not. If you have a favorite brand that you like to buy, see how they measure up. Not sure where to start? That’s okay; we have a list to get you started.

Here is a short list of some good resources to start. This is not a complete list by any means, but it can get you going in the right direction.
The NotForSale Campaign, an organization that was co-founded by David Batstone, author of the book "Not for Sale," are doing tremendous work with the modern day slavery victims and survivors. Another item to note is that the NFS-Campaign does not only help you find out what’s behind your barcode, but they step up and dig in with international projects that put people to work, significantly decrease the risks for potential new victims, and help to provide communities with a sense of economic empowerment. Here are a couple of the NFS sustainability projects:

The Home Soup Project in the Netherlands, takes women who have been sexually exploited and provides them with professional culinary training so that they are empowered economically and morally. While you cannot purchase their soup online, you can buy it in various stores in the Netherlands (which you can always ship as gifts for the holidays) The “NFS Soup” was created to be a tool in the fight against human trafficking. Cleverly named "This Soup Is Not For Sale" comes in four unique flavors based on recipes inspired by the women training at the NFS soup kitchen in Amsterdam; Pumpkin Ginger, Cream of Mushroom, Beef Goulash, and Tomato Beet.

Rebbl Tonic REBBL was created to be the world’s finest organic, ethically-sourced, therapeutic strength herbal tonic. Their mission is to provide an easy, delicious way to experience the amazing health benefits of tonic herbs that supports a unique business model with direct impact in the fight to end global human trafficking. The natural treasures of the Amazon are truly invaluable, yet this region's inhabitants are living at the margins of the global economy. Today's supply chains must be rebuilt to create opportunities where there are none. They have partnered with NFS to address the root cause of slavery in the Peruvian Amazon: economic vulnerability. The belief is that when you have a positive “impact sourcing” it will generate cycles of empowerment: Their plan is to use this model to create jobs and grow social economies in other regions of the world where labor exploitation thrives. What can get better than that, helping the body, the environment and making an impact on human slavery. The Rebbl Tonic’s can be purchased in select stores in California and they ship within the US. Hopefully international orders will be available soon!

BuyResponsibly is an organization whose mission is to raise consumers’ awareness on the fact that the products that we buy everyday may be made by people who have been trafficked, enslaved and forced or exploited into labor. They believe that by demanding more social guarantees from retailers that we, as consumers and human beings, have the power to end modern day slavery. Their motto: “ask your retailer about the products you buy and eliminate trafficking from your shopping cart” They have a number of resources and tools help you get educated, find responsible food producers, hold a BuyResponsibly event and even sample letters that you can provide to local retailers. Check out their website here.
Women, War & Peace is a bold and gripping five-part PBS television series challenging the conventional wisdom that war and peace are men’s domains.

The vast majority of today’s conflicts are not fought by nation states and their armies, but rather by informal entities: gangs and warlords using small arms and improvised weapons. The series, which premiered in October 2011 on PBS, reveals how the post-Cold War proliferation of small arms has changed the landscape of war, with women becoming primary targets and suffering unprecedented casualties. Yet they are simultaneously emerging as necessary partners in brokering lasting peace and as leaders in forging new international laws governing conflict. With depth and complexity, Women, War & Peace spotlights the stories of women in conflict zones from Bosnia to Afghanistan and Colombia to Liberia, placing women at the center of an urgent dialogue about conflict and security, and reframing our understanding of modern warfare.

Featuring narrators Matt Damon, Tilda Swinton, Geena Davis and Alfre Woodard, Women, War & Peace is the most comprehensive global media initiative ever mounted on the roles of women in war and peace. The series will present its ground-breaking message across the globe by utilizing all forms of media, including U.S. and international primetime television, radio, print, web, and worldwide community screenings, and will be accompanied by an educational and outreach initiative designed to advance international accountability in regard to women and security. Women, War & Peace is a co-production of THIRTEEN and Fork Films.

The five episodes in the series

Came to Testify is the moving story of how a group of 16 women who had been imprisoned and raped by Serb-led forces in the Bosnian town of Foca broke history’s great silence – and stepped forward to take the witness stand in an international court of law. Their remarkable courage resulted in a triumphant verdict that led to new international laws about sexual
violence in war. At the time of the original air-
ing, Bosnia was once again in the headlines with the capture of Bos-
nian Serb wartime gen-
eral Radko Mladic, the woman's rights advocate for the first time since then, on condition that we keep their identities hidden for their protec-
tion. “Witness 99,” who was held at gunpoint for a month with dozens of other women in a sports hall in the center of town remembers: “We were treated like animals. But that was the goal: to kill a woman’s dign-
ity.” Their remarkable courage resulted in a triumphant verdict that led to new international laws about sexual vio-
en in war. Returning to Bosnia 16 years after the end of the conflict, I Came to Testify also explores the chasm be-
tween this seismic legal tion. “Witness 99,” who is risking their protec-
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ab Salbi, Founder of Women for Women International; globalization expert Moses Naim; and Cynthia Enloe of Clark University, among others.

Throughout the series, narration is performed by some unexpected voices and there are interviews with most of the most fascinating and empowered people who are working to end violence against women in all forms give their perspective on what can be done to eradicate these forms of violence.

“What if we looked at war through a woman’s eyes?”

“What if we looked at war through a woman’s eyes? What if we looked beyond familiar images of male soldiers and ammunition and saw women—emerging as witnesses, courageous survivors, peace activists, political negotiators, advocates for justice, and heads of state?”

To honor the October anniversary of the landmark UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, this is the absolute perfect film series to screen during your 16 Days Campaign and openly discuss women’s leadership. Due to the fact that there are too many conflict regions and civil unrests around the world, this issue demands our full attention now, for it has gone unattended for far too long. One of the best things about this series, in my opinion, is that it poses some basic questions that can be a wonderful starting ground for in-depth and honest dialogue about the role of women in peace and conflict and about the role of women in leadership.

If you are in the US, you can view full episodes of the entire series on-line at Women, War & Peace or you can purchase the complete series DVD set. If you are outside of the US and have access to ordering in the States, I would recommend that you start your order now as PBS is selling the entire series for a discounted price of $39.99 with free two-day shipping (in the US). Or, if your club is super creative, you have the chance to win a screening for your 16 Days Campaign event!

Some important licensing information you need to know, especially if you are in GERMANY, AUSTRIA, SWITZERLAND, LIECHTENSTEIN, LUXEMBOURG, PROVINCE OF BOZEN FOR THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF SOUTHERN TIROL, THE PROVINCE OF EUPEN IN BELGIUM or the PROVINCE OF NORTHSCHLESWIG IN DENMARK.

If you purchase the DVD set, and would like to host a screening, you can announce all films EXCEPT Pray the Devil Back to Hell. Due to licensing restrictions, this film is unable to be shown in a public setting or officially announced.

If you want to know if your region is restricted or would like to know how you can show this film, contact me.
Do You Have Your Take Action Kit?

Time is getting closer. If you still haven’t gotten your 16 Days 2013 Take Action Kit you can get it here. And, to get you started, here are a few suggestions they recommend.

Join the International Campaign to Stop Rape & Gender Violence: Become part of the first ever global collaboration between women Nobel Peace Laureates, international advocacy organizations, groups and individuals working at the international, regional and community levels to end sexual violence in conflict. Call for urgent and bold political leadership to prevent rape in conflict, to protect civilians and rape survivors, and to demand justice for all. Visit Stop Rape in Conflict to see how you can get involved.

Advocate: The UN Security Council has passed resolutions (1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, and 2106) related to women, peace and security, and governments must make commitments to implement them. Advocate for women’s participation in decision making at all levels on peace and security issues. Encourage policy makers to make addressing the crime of sexual violence in conflict a priority, and to support local, national, and international prevention, protection, and justice mechanisms. More information is available through the Global Network of Women Peacebuilders: http://www.gnw.org

Support an Organization: Connect with local and international women’s organizations working in conflict areas or with displaced and refugee communities and provide financial and/or moral support for their advocacy and survivor support work. If you have access to financial resources, consider hosting a fundraiser for an organization that has a proven track record of working with survivors of sexual violence.

Men & Boys: Men and boys who believe in gender equality are important allies in activism to end gender-based violence in conflict. Invite men and boys you know to attend a 16 Days event with you and ask them to share their ideas about how to involve their peers in ending violence. For more ideas, visit the White Ribbon Campaign, the MenEngage Alliance or the Man Up Campaign.

Spread the Word: Invite the media to report on your activities and ask them to raise the issue of conflict-related sexual violence in their reporting. Give members of the media the guidance to report on violations with sensitivity and that do not further traumatize or endanger survivors. Use your social media sites to share information about opportunities to take action.

A Few Facts on Sexual Violence During and After Conflict

Source: “Facts on Gender-Based Violence” from 16 Days Campaign

- Reports on rape during conflict detail profound brutality towards women and girls, including serious beatings, mutilation or removal of the genitals, rape with sharp objects, and gunshot to the genitals.

- Due to systematic and exceptionally violent gang rapes, doctors in the Democratic Republic of Congo now classify vaginal destruction as a war crime.

- Thousands of Congolese girls and women suffer from vaginal fistula and tissue tears in the vagina, bladder and rectum after surviving brutal rapes in which guns, branches and broken bottles were used to violate them.

- In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is believed that around 200,000 women and girls have been raped since 1998.

- Estimates of the total number of women subjected to sexual violence during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the 1990s vary from 14,000 to 50,000.

Enduring Violence Against Women & Children Task Force invites member clubs to stand up against violence and work to eradicate it. The resolutions are just a beginning, and much work remains to be done.

Well behaved women seldom make history  
Laurel Thatcher Ulrich
What are you planning?

So, what are your club’s plans for a 16 Days event? Not sure where to start? Need a bit of inspiration? Never fear, The Party Girl is here! A short list of some creative ideas to get you thinking outside of the box for your next event.

Get Progressive! With Dinner . . .

One of the most important things that we can do to solve problems is to TALK! Creating situations where honest and open dialogue can take place. Well, what better way to do that than with food and drink? Here are a couple of ideas that you can use to have an engaging and educational time.

Hosting a dinner party fundraiser is always a good and safe option right? BUT, let’s get edgy and take a “normal” dinner party to a whole new level by adding a bit of a twist to it. Let’s get Progressive!

Hosting a Progressive Dinner Party is totally worth the effort and can be a great tool to engage people. Plus, it’s just F.U.N. If you are not familiar with the concept let me explain. First, you have to decide how many courses are part of your menu (cocktails, appetizer, salad, main, desert, cheese, wine, etc..). Once you have determined your courses, you get a different person for each course. Now, here is where it gets really fun. You send out your invitations for dinner to start at the location of the first course. When your guests arrive, they are then given a second invitation to their next location for the second course, and so on until the dinner is over. So, other than those planning the event, no one else will know where they have to go to for the next course.

This is a great method in educating people without overwhelming them (or boring them because face it, we have ALL been to at least one those parties). It is also a good tool because you can liken their “not knowing” where the next course will be to women and children not knowing where their next meal will come from. Or what their future holds.

As an alternative, you could get your local restaurants involved in the cause and pick different locations based on the same criteria. The good part about this option is that you are getting the community involved (which can be a great tool as a fundraiser as the restaurants will help you advertise plus it is good PR for them) and there are NO DISHES!!

Now, that is what I call a win-win!

Book It!

This ain’t your ordinary book club

There is a plethora of books that you can use for a book event, and not just for a 16 Days Campaign. The list can be overwhelming so, instead of here are a few choices that you SHOULD pop into your bag, on your iPad, tablet or Kindle.

Buy the hard copies for your book club or, simply but them for Christmas gifts to enlighten others!

For those of you who have been following the Task Force, you already know about Paula Lucas and her amazing story. She has shared her heart-rending experience with us at conferences and trainings. She is truly a global advocate for domestic violence victims worldwide. Now, she bears even more of her soul in this inspiring account of her journey. When Paula Lucas, a Catholic farm girl raised in the agricultural heartland of California met an internationally known foreign photographer in San Francisco shortly after college, her life transformed. She spent fourteen years living and traveling overseas in Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. A dream comes true as an American expat, except she hid terrible secrets that almost cost the lives of her children and herself.

The night before she fled Dubai in April 1999, she made a covenant with God that she would help other American women and children being terrorized in foreign countries if
she successfully escaped the next day. She did. Seeking safety at her sister’s home in Portland, Oregon, she thought her nightmare would end. It didn’t. She was forced to flee once again. Homeless and on the run at forty with three little boys, they lived like gypsies along the California and Oregon coast hiding from the man that threatened, “I will hunt you down and slaughter you like animals no matter where you are in the world.” From victim to victor, Paula weaves you through her astonishing life journey for the first time since her escape almost fifteen years ago in this tell-all memoir.

Desert Flower is truly an account of an EXTRAmendy journey of a nomad. This story goes beyond tragic as it is one that shows how strong women can be. This book is an inspira-tional story of strength, courage and resilience and I rec-on-mend you go and get it now.

Waris Dirie’s memoir is a grip-ping tale of how, at the age of five, she was mutilated in the desert, a day that changed her life and her course forever. At thirteen, when she learned that her father was going to marry her off to a considerably older man to be his fourth wife, she had no other choice than to run away from her oppress-sive life in the African desert. She was illiterate and impov-erished, with nothing to her name but a tattered shawl. Traveling alone across the dangerous Somali desert to Mogadishu was only the first leg of a remarkable journey.

If you are more of a visual per-son you can also get an adaptation of the book and watch the movie. Waris is played by Liya Kebede, an international supermodel, actress and philanthropist. Born and raised in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Kebede has been on the cover of such illus-trious fashion magazines as Vogue, Harper’s Bazaar and Time’s. She was illiterate and impov-erished, with nothing to her name but a tattered shawl.

Let’s Talk FGM ..

A Culture of Pain

On December 20, 2012 the UN passed a resolution banning the practice of Female Genital Mu-tilation, a practice that affects about 100,140 million women and girls worldwide. Sadly, it is estimated that an additional three million girls are at risk of being subjected to the practice globally. This brutal practice is not just being performed in tents in the desert or far away lands. It can be happening to some-one living right next door to you.

The FGM resolution urges coun-tries to condemn all harmful practices that affect women and girls, in particular female genital mutilations, and to take all neces-sary measures, including en-for-cing legislation, awareness-raising and allocating sufficient resources to protect women and girls from this form of violence. It calls for special attention to protect and support women and girls who have been subjected to female genital mutilations, and those at risk, including refugee women and women migrants.

As we approach the one year anniversary of this landmark resolution, here are a few books and movies that you can use to educate and inspire an event for 16 Days and beyond.

One of the first to publish es-say on the subject, founding Presi-dent who became Fauziya’s friend and advocate during her horrifying six months behind bars. Layli enlisted help from Karen Musalo, an expert in refugee law and acting director of the American University International Human Rights Clinic. In addition to devoting her own con-siderable efforts to the case, Musalo assembled a team to fight with her on Fauziya’s behalf. Ultimately, in a landmark decision in immigra-tion history, Fauziya Kassindja was granted asylum on June 13, 1996.

Fauziya Kassindja had an idyllic childhood in Togo, West Afri-ca, sheltered from the tribal prac-tices of polygamy and genital dent of female genital mu-tilation. But all of that ended with her beloved father’s sudden death.

At age seventeen she was forced into an arranged marriage and told to prepare for kakia, the ritual also known as female genital mu-tilation. It is a ritual no woman can refuse. But Fauziya dared to try. This is her story told in her own words—of fleeing Africa just hours be-fore the ritual kakia was to take place, of seeking asylum in America only to be locked up in U.S. prisons, and of meeting Layli Miller Bashir, a law stu-dent who became Fauziya’s friend and advocate during her horrifying six months behind bars. Layli enlisted help from Karen Musalo, an expert in refugee law and acting director of the American University International Human Rights Clinic. In addition to devoting her own con-siderable efforts to the case, Musalo assembled a team to fight with her on Fauziya’s behalf. Ultimately, in a landmark decision in immigra-tion history, Fauziya Kassindja was granted asylum on June 13, 1996.

Well behaved women seldom make history

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich
A Walk in Their Shoes

Therese Hartwell of AW Eastern Province, gives a moving and poignant reminder about loss, perseverance and hope, during and after war. She participated in the "March for Peace" sponsored by Women for Women International and shares her story with us.

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to find yourself in the middle of a war, trying to escape with your life? How would you react? How do you think the experience would affect you? In July 2012, I had the extraordinary opportunity to taste, on a very limited scale, such an experience. I had the honor of participating in the annual “March of Peace,” a 3-day, 120 km trek through Bosnia and Herzegovina to Srebrenica. This event is significant in that it commemorates those victims of the largest mass murder committed in Europe since World War II. In July 1995, more than 8,000 Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) men and boys in and around the town of Srebrenica in eastern Bosnia were killed over a several day span. The march follows the same route as the refugees took as they tried to escape the horror of the war. Over the years, this march, on this path, has attracted thousands of participants from all over the world. I was able to take part in the trek with a fund-raising team from Women for Women Graduates

“WfW Graduates

“They continue to live with a sense of hope and abundance despite their losses.”

Therese Hartwell (middle) with two graduates of the Women for Women program in Srebrenica. “It simply amazed all of us that as sad as they were and as much pain as they had suffered, these two women were still so strong and full of life. They were grateful for our visit.”

Written by Therese Hartwell, Executive Committee Chair of War & Peace Ending Violence Against Women & Children Task Force
Women International, an organization whose mission is to serve women survivors of war.

Having had the opportunity to live in Saudi Arabia for the last eight years and travelling extensively around the Middle East, Africa and Europe, I have had the chance to meet people from all over the world. I have been fortunate enough to experience the commonality among people despite differences in their origins. This has given me a strong desire to better understand the underpinnings of war as well as a passion to contribute to a more peaceful world. These two factors are what led me to participate in the March of Peace. The physical challenges of the march, while intimidating, were not insurmountable. Heat and humidity were one of the biggest obstacles as the temperature ranged from 35-40 degrees Celsius through most of the trek. I soon resorted to drenching myself in the water from the water trucks supplied along the way, with no regard to what I looked like as a result. Any sense of vanity went out the window—cooling down was all that mattered! While I also knew that the distance of the march would be challenging, I had not realized just how much of the terrain covered was hilly to mountainous. At one point, about mid-way through the second day of the trek, our guides pointed out that we had just walked over this beautiful mountain in the distance. That was an incredible moment that kept us moving forward!

With safety being first, Red Cross workers heavily patrolled the trek, attending to participants who suffered from blisters, heat exhaustion or other medical needs. There were no eating or bathroom facilities set up for us, which meant carrying your own food and simply finding a private spot to answer nature’s call. In the end, I felt lucky to come away with only a few minor blisters.

Women for Women International works with socially excluded women in eight countries where war and conflict have devastated lives and communities. Each woman they serve has her own story—some of loved ones murdered, and others of physical and emotional trauma. Most have endured a struggle for survival. Their one-year program helps these women learn job skills and receive business training so they can earn a living. Women become confident, independent and productive, embracing their importance in rebuilding their families, their communities and ultimately their nations. Interested in learning more about Women for Women International? Visit their website to find out how you can help support their programs.

Women for Women International

A Walk in Their Shoes, a Journey through Bosnia

Well behaved women seldom make history

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich
time of the massacre, he joined a group of 13 men and boys who tried to escape through the woods. Out of the group, only he and one other man survived. It took him over 70 days to reach safety as he tried to stay out of sight of the Serb forces, often losing his way. Sadly, Elvir’s father and brothers who did not flee “into the woods” were all murdered near Srebrenica. When he was finally reunited with his mother, she was so overcome by emotion that she fainted. Elvir told us that despite what he had experienced he had to go on with his life for his mother’s sake. She had already lost so much. Elvir’s story was so tragic that it was almost too hard to believe, but sadly it’s all too common of a story.

One of the most moving, and unexpected, aspects of the march was the tremendous support from local villagers who lined the route handing out coffee (a sign of friendship in Bosnia) and encouragement. Bosnian participants seemed especially appreciative that we, as foreigners with no direct connection to the country, had come to share their experience.

A memory that stands out strong for me is from the second day of the trek. The morning started out cool and crisp with the aroma of strong Bosnian coffee in the air. You could hear lovely, gentle music coming from the local mosque. We set off marching into the beautiful rolling hills of Bosnia, dotted with red-roofed houses, smoke curling up from a distant chimney. I remember looking at this idyllic setting and finding it so hard to believe that less than two decades earlier, dead bodies, stray bullets and remnants from detonated mines had lined this path; despite the frequent signs marking mass graves and potential hidden mines. How had this charming land come to be embroiled in such a heinous conflict? How had people who had lived together peacefully for generations turned on their neighbors so viciously? Are we all equally vulnerable to a sudden trigger that plays upon human frailties and causes fear and hate to lead us to atrocious acts? How can we prevent this from happening again and again? Unfortunately, I ended up with many more questions than answers.

As I continued to ponder these, and many other, questions, I had a fascinating experience one day that gave me a moment of insight into one of the ways in which atrocities in war can occur. A large number of the people who participate in this march are boys and men, many of them young. At the end of the first day, I noticed hundreds of men, shirtless, stripped to their shorts, showering in the water from the water trucks. Suddenly, I could feel this palpable sense of testosterone in the air. I even felt a surge of my own testosterone after just completing a rigorous physical endeavor. In that moment, I had a sense of the collective power of all that strength and how that surge in a hormone could lead to an intense endeavor like war. How this could cause people to do just about anything, even things that would normally be unthinkable. It was a sobering and frightening realization of the capacity for violence that lies within all of us.

With all of the different and intense experiences, undoubtedly, the most poignant moment came at the end of the trek. Exhausted and dirty, we took our final steps walking down the main road of the town, carrying the Women for Women banner to the cheers of onlookers and entered the cemetery where the remains of the victims of the massacre are buried.

Because victims of the genocide were tossed into mass graves, bodies (or parts of them) are still being discovered. Each year, at the end of the trek, there is a Commemorative Ceremony where they bury those bodies found. We were there to bury the remains of over 500 people. Suddenly, as we entered the cemetery, the reason for our participation in this challenge and the enormity of the tragedy we were memorializing became crystal clear.

The focus on surviving the trek, putting one foot in front of the other, was gone, and my contained feelings came pouring out. An endless line of narrow green coffins, the massive number of white gravestones, and the granite wall with a long list of names of people already buried. The women, young and old, mourning their lost men and trying to live with the aftermath, all washed away any sense of physical pain or discomfort from the trek and left only raw emotion. The tears finally flowed.

The heartache continued after the ceremony when our group visited two graduates of the Women for Women program in Srebrenica. Each of these women had lost their husbands and all three of their sons, and this day brought back all of their painful memories. One of the women had lost her husband to a heart attack and a son in a drowning accident before the war. She lost her other two sons during the massacre. The other woman’s husband and three sons were all killed during the genocide. Her husband left one day to find water and never returned. All three of her sons were taken away and killed in the massacre. It simply amazed all of us that after all that she suffered, these two women were still so strong and full of life. They were grateful for our visit. They continue to live with a sense of hope and abundance despite their losses. That is an inspiration to us all.

The final segment of our trip involved visiting Women for Women programs around the Sarajevo area to see firsthand the work they are doing. The highlight for me was the opportunity to meet the young woman who I was then sponsoring through Women for Women. My “sister” is almost exactly the same age as my daughter, and we felt an immediate connection. At the time of our meeting, her mother had recently died and was no longer around to protect her from an abusive brother. When this young woman called the police for help (very unusual for a woman to have the courage to do in Bosnia) and was hospitalized for her injuries, her father kicked her out of the house for involving the police! In her father’s view, my “sister” had dishonored the family by going outside for help rather than her brother having dishonored the family through his abuse. This meeting reminded me what a long way we still have to go in protecting women from violence.

What a life altering experience the March for Peace was for all of us who participated! One might think that I came away depressed and hopeless, but the truth is just the opposite. I took with me the inspiration of women who, like so many others, must carry on in the aftermath of war and the spirit, courage and resourcefulness that they exhibit in doing so. All too many of these conflicts are still going on.

But times are changing. More and more women are becoming agents of change in their communities and saying “No More.” Surely we as human beings can do better than this. Surely we are creative enough to find some method other than violence to resolve our conflicts. Surely we can find a way to replace fear and hatred with understanding and compassion. If we are to prosper as a world, surely we must.

Want to know more?

To read about the 2013 March for Peace and hear more about Elvir, Brita Fernandez Schmidt, executive director of Women for Women in the UK recount her experience here.

If you are interested in learning more about the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and/or the massacre in Srebrenica, the following books are informative and interesting:

- The End Game by David Rhode, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his work in uncovering the Srebrenica genocide.
- War Hospital by Shen Fink.