

# Good Practices Africa UNiTE



Photo Credit: Nebila Abdulmelik/FEMNET

The following showcase some of the good practices that have emerged from the Africa UNiTE Campaign that have tremendous potential for replication and up-scaling in other countries or contexts. Innovative and creative approaches have been used across the continent; from the flagship Kilimanjaro Climb, Ride On Speak Out Motorcycle ride, the creation of games, hosting of film festivals, engaging a broad range of stakeholders including youth, the security apparatus, men and boys, religious and cultural leaders, private sector and political parties. National ownership of the Campaign has been witnessed in many countries, with Kenya and Cameroon highlighted.

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The UN Secretary General launched the Global UNiTE Campaign to End Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) on 25 February 2008 in response to a call from feminist and women rights organizations from all parts of the world for collective and sustainable efforts to eliminate the human scourge of violence. The regional component, 'Africa UNiTE' was launched on 30 January 2010 during the African Union Summit. The Africa UNiTE Campaign provides a platform for coordinated, strategic and enhanced visibility, advocacy and programming to address VAWG in Africa. The campaign is an inter-UN Agency initiative bringing together about 14 UN organisations to work along the AU and African countries and civil society to undertake coordinated actions to End Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG). It is coordinated at all levels by UN Women and UNFPA, and receives strategic guidance and support from the Regional Steering Committee co-chaired by UNECA, Africa Union Commission, UNFPA and UN Women. Its overall objective is **“to raise public awareness and increase political will and resources for preventing and responding to Violence against Women and girls in all parts of Africa.”** Thus, the Campaign mobilizes a wide range of actors: governments, civil society, women’s organizations, young people, the private sector, community and Faith Based Organizations, the media and the entire UN system to join forces in supporting governments to address this pandemic.

*“We must UNiTE.*

*Violence against women [and girls] must not be tolerated, in any form, in any context, in any circumstance by any political leader or by any government.*

*There can be NO exception, NO excuse, and NO delay.”*

*-UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon*



## “Climb Up, Speak Out” Kilimanjaro Climb

“We will light a candle on top of Mount Kilimanjaro which will shine beyond our borders, giving hope where there is despair, love where there is hate, and dignity where before there was only humiliation.”

-Julius Nyerere



Photo Credit: Nebila Abdulmelik/FEMNET

Perhaps the single most powerful good practice, the “Climb Up, Speak Out” Mount Kilimanjaro Climb was a high-level advocacy event that took place in 2012 meant to raise continent wide and global awareness on ending gender based violence by proclaiming the message from the peak of the highest mountain in Africa. It coincided deliberately and strategically with International Women’s Day on March 8th.

Flagged off by H.E Jakaya Kikwete, President of Tanzania accompanied by Mr. John Hendra, the Assistant Secretary General and UN Women Deputy Executive Director and other dignitaries, over 70 climbers embarked on a life-changing trek up the 5,895m mountain to ‘Climb Up & Speak Out’ against Violence against Women & Girls. The climbers consisted of men, women and youth from 36 African nations who were members of various UN Agencies, civil society, government, celebrities, religious leaders, activists and athletes.

The highest peak on the African continent was reached by some on 8th March deliberately in time for International Women’s Day. At the peak, the ‘Roof of Africa’, powerful messages and experiences, as well as commitments by respective governments were highlighted, presenting a united African voice speaking out against all forms of violence. Nyerere’s prophetic words of lighting a candle from the top of Mount Kilimanjaro that would shine beyond the borders rang true.

Although few made it to the highest peak of Mt. Kilimanjaro, all came down with plenty of stories and lessons learnt. Some were limping, a couple had to be brought down on a stretcher but all took away a valuable lesson from the climb. Just as the climb up the highest free-standing mountain on earth was difficult, treacherous, rugged, challenging, excruciating at times, so will be the struggle against VAWG. However, with faith, unity, persistence, determination, a positive mindset and preparation, the summit can be reached, and the goal of eradicating such forms of violence can also be achieved.



My heart stopped beating; I was nauseous. I had a headache; a heartache. It was painful. And this is exactly how it is for women who are violated. To feel even a little bit of this really makes us understand that this cannot go on. Survivors must speak up and speak out. I was raped, and as a result I am today HIV positive. [African governments] must feel what we feel. They must get in touch with their citizenry so that they truly understand.

***Maphoka Ramokoatsi, Lesotho is a campaigner on and survivor of violence against women***

There is a reason for Mt. Kilimanjaro. It is a great symbol of power. If we can bring people together for a common cause like this, test their endurance and strength, and they survive, then they can survive and overcome much more. It takes strong, courageous, committed people to conquer Mt. Kilimanjaro. This is the same for the campaign to end VAWG. One needs to be well-prepared and resilient. It will be a big battle, just as climbing Kilimanjaro is. It will take much endurance to overcome the scourge of GBV.



***Redwaan Hendricks is with UN Women in South Africa and was one of the organizers of the Mt. Kilimanjaro Climb.***

The rugged and treacherous terrain, from the gate to where I stopped is an indication of our fight. It will not be smooth, it will in fact be very rugged. It will be very difficult but we need stamina to keep climbing. And the successes along the way, just as the flowers and the greenery will provide motivation to keep going. The fight ahead to end VAW is not an easy one, but with determination and inspiration, we will surely do it!

***Janet Konah Momoh, Sierra Leone***



....every battle will be like Kilimanjaro—it will be long and tiring, and we will at times be at breaking point, but we must never turn back. We must keep at it till we reach the summit.

***Jeremy Lissouba, Congo-Brazzaville***

## Solidarity Events

While the Kilimanjaro Climb was taking place, solidarity actions and events took place simultaneously across the continent. Cameroon and Burundi organized similar climbs to the highest mountains in their respective countries. The Africa UNiTE Kenya Chapter organized a walk in Nairobi while Ethiopia organized a 5k Women's Run in Addis Ababa. South Africa organized a bunjee jump for the fearless and adrenaline loving souls. Several events also took place at the foot of the mountain, including community marches and public forums for survivors.



The Network Against Female Genital Mutilation (NAFGEM) organized a community march and celebration in Siha District, Tanzania to commemorate International Women's Day. Approximately 500 people ranging from 3 to 83, including school children, former circumcisers, activists, government officials, and well-wishers were in attendance.

Students presented pictorial and written expressions of what they consider VAWG to be. VAWG was depicted as mothers being beaten by their fathers; the inequality of workload between men and women, girls and boys; early marriage, FGM, unwanted sexual advances, being infected with HIV and being denied an education.

Women who were former circumcisers were also present to show their solidarity with bringing an end to the practice of FGM. Most had begun small-scale businesses which include arts and crafts to sustain themselves.



Women’s groups and students performed skits, sang songs, recited poetry, and made statements urging an end to all forms of discrimination and VAW/G. The message came out loud and clear: “Let’s UNiTE to bring an end to VAW/G!”



The timely engagement of civil society organizations (CSOs) including FEMNET, WILDAF, COVAW, Urgent Action Fund-Africa and a number of National NGOs (LHRC, NAFGEM) and coalitions such as SOAWR facilitated the mobilization of local populations, youths and survivors, the documentation of various activities, ensured media coverage and facilitated financial support for the Youth Forum.

This ground-breaking, historic and momentous Mt. Kilimanjaro Climb Initiative has generated incredible energy and momentum in support of the campaign around Africa. It mobilized and secured country, organizational and individual commitments from 74 Climbers, to take action to end violence against women and girls in their respective spheres. The climb generated continental momentum around the campaign through solidarity and parallel events across the continent. It enhanced awareness and visibility of gender based violence, strengthened partnerships with diverse stakeholders from governments to the private sector, youth, traditional and community leaders, CSOs, among others. The climbers are now ambassadors of the Campaign in their respective countries.

## National Ownership

One of the objectives of the UNiTE Campaign is to ensure stakeholders at the national level own efforts to end all forms of VAWG. National ownership facilitates political will, mobilization of resources as well as strategic partners and facilitates synergies between the various actors. Additionally, the Campaign seeks to mobilize a wide range of actors to join forces to address this pandemic.

### Africa UNiTE Kenya Chapter (AUKe)



*The Africa UNiTE Kenya Chapter (AUKe) is a very good example of effective national ownership at play, where a range of dynamic actors have come together to localize the campaign and collectively fight the vice of violence.*

The Chapter began as a gathering of like-minded institutions working on bringing an end to all forms of sexual and gender based violence in preparation of the Mount Kilimanjaro Climb. The Kenya Chapter's Ambassador, Ann Njogu was one of the few climbers of Kilimanjaro in March 2012 who was flagged off by the President of Kenya and made it to the peak of the 'Roof of Africa'. Following this success for Kenya, AUKe was formalized and officially launched in the lead up to the Kenyan elections. This proved strategic and instrumental as the Chapter was able to engage and secure commitment from political parties fielding candidates to stand for non-violence. This was especially crucial considering the widespread violence that followed the previous elections in 2007 and was still fresh and deeply embedded in the Kenyan psyche. Led by the Minister of Justice and Gender, political party leaders committed to violence free elections in 2013 as well as a violence free post election period. The campaign launch brought together a broad cross section of society;

survivors, citizens, practitioners, religious and cultural leaders, male champions, civil society activists, youth and the media from across the country.

The Africa UNiTE Kenya Chapter is co-convened by two vibrant civil society organizations who are at the forefront of fighting sexual and gender based violence in Kenya; CREAM (Centre for Rights Education and Awareness) and GVRC (Gender Violence Recovery Centre). While CREAM provides legal assistance to survivors, GVRC provides medical and psychosocial attention. The Chapter is supported by the UN Joint Program on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (JPGWE) which brings together a number of relevant UN Agencies and is coordinated by UN Women. The government is also engaged in this chapter, mainly through the Teachers Service Commission and the Police. The Kenya Chapter is also quite notable for the number of men and organizations working with men to end violence including MEGEN (Men for Gender Equality Now), MenKen (Men Engage Kenya Network), the Masculinity Institute and FEMNET's Men to Men program who actively participate in the Chapter.

Members of the Africa UNiTE Kenya Chapter have initiated and facilitated innovative programs such as SGBV Hotlines; the Million Fathers Campaign that aims at mobilizing a mass number of fathers towards a life free of violence and of dignity for their daughters; public interest litigation; advocating for the enactment of policies and bills such as the Protection Against Domestic Violence; use of online mediums such as online petitions to mobilize for action among others. The Chapter continues to evolve, with capacity building sessions for its members and is now guided by a constitution and work plan.



*The 1 Million Fathers Campaign engages with men in their roles as fathers, brothers, husbands and friends to end gender-based violence. Over 500 men present at the launch lined up to sign the pledge, taking responsibility for protecting women from violence, and for mentoring and educating their peers. From left to right: then Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development Dr. James Nyikal; UN Kenya Resident Coordinator Mr. Aeneas Chuma; Dr. Sam Thenya, CEO of the Nairobi Women's Hospital and founder of the GVRC; and Wangechi Grace, the then Executive Director of GVRC and co-convenor of the Africa UNiTE Kenya Chapter. Mr. Chuma and Dr. Thenya were the first to sign the pledge, calling on fellow men present to follow suit. Credit: Christian Mulumba*

## Africa UNiTE in Cameroon

Cameroon has played an active role in the launch and implementation of the Africa UNiTE campaign and has accelerated efforts towards ending gender based violence as a result.

Basic Facts – Violence in Cameroon	
53%	Women who suffered physical abuse from 15 yrs of age*
53%	Women who face violence in marriage
19%	Women who face violence outside of marriage
Prevalence of SGBV	
64%	Yaoundé & Douala
59%	Southern Region
58%	Central Region
54%	Southwest Region
*2004 DHS Survey National strategy for the elimination of gender based violence, published by Ministry of Women Empowerment and Family (MINPROFF)	

While women and girls face some form of violence across the country, it is more pronounced in certain regions due to customary rituals in certain communities where practices such as breast ironing are perceived as rites of passage. This is the case in the Far North and South West Regions with the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) and in the Adamawa, North, Far North, East, North West and South West Regions with child, early and forced marriages, and forced prostitution in the forest, mining and industrial exploitation areas and major project sites.<sup>1</sup>

Cameroon has adopted legislative and institutional frameworks that complement regional and international instruments that protect and promote human rights and gender equality. The Africa UNiTE Campaign was therefore highly welcomed by the government as an added value that has garnered more momentum towards the government’s response on curbing gender based violence. A committee has been put in place to fast track the Family Code as well as a law on VAWG; a National Youth Day on ending VAWG was organized in 2013 and the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) has been leading campaigns and caravans to end VAWG in major regions across the country.

The chain of events and responses by the government of Cameroon from the launch of the UNiTE Campaign to date has made Cameroon one of the most successful countries that piloted the Campaign in Africa.

<sup>1</sup> National strategy for the elimination of gender based violence, published by the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF)

## Genesis of the Africa UNiTE Campaign in Cameroon



The introduction of the Africa UNiTE Campaign in Cameroon began with the Mt Febe Solidarity Climb on “Ending Political Violence Against Women and Girls,” that was held in March 2012 simultaneously with the Mount Kilimanjaro Climb. The Climb was organized by the Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace (CAMYOSFOP) in collaboration with the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) and with the support of the UN Women country office and Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF). The climb of the 1000m Mt Febe situated at the heart of Yaoundé, the political capital of Cameroon, brought together over 1000 people that climbed to the top of the mountain and made a commitment of ending political violence against women and girls. The messages during the climb reiterated the need for women to take leading roles in political parties and participate actively in politics so as to be able to shape their own destinies. The theme of ending political violence was aimed at putting women in the limelight of the Parliamentary and Municipal elections that were scheduled for 2013. While not directly attributable, Cameroon’s parliament witnessed an increase in female representation to 31% during the 2013 Senate and Parliamentary elections.

**“Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation and a crime against humanity.”**

Dr Chemuta Divine Banda,  
NCHRF Chairperson

The successful organization of the Mt Febe Climb set the stage for Cameroon to take the lead in launching the Africa UNiTE Campaign in Central Africa.

The launch of the Africa UNiTE campaign in Cameroon took place in December 2012 under the patronage of the Head of State. During the official launch, the second Mt Febe Climb was organized with the participation of over 6000 participants including the Minister of Women Empowerment and the Family, the Manager of the Africa UNiTE Campaign, the

Chairperson of NCHRF, UN Agencies in Cameroon and other stakeholders in the domain of violence against women and girls. During the launch, the government reiterated its commitment to the campaign against violence on women and girls and called on all actors to work together towards this end.

### Capitalizing on the Momentum of the Launch of the UNiTE Campaign

The launch of the Africa UNiTE campaign in Cameroon provided the gateway for national ownership through other activities by the government, the UN System and the youth. Activities carried out under the Cameroon Chapter included an essay competition on violence against girls with 20 secondary schools in Yaoundé, a series of awareness raising activities including educative talks, round table conferences, peace marches and a 1600m Mt Mpatpit hike to mobilize youths against violence on girls and women. Cultural and Traditional leaders have also been mobilizing communities and changing cultural norms and practices to address VAWGs.

Prior to the 2013 Cameroon National Youth Day celebrated on February 11, the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) and CAMYOSFOP in partnership with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education once more mobilized youth to take the lead in ending violence against the girl



child by organizing youth caravans in the localities of Babessi in the North West and Lagdo in the North of Cameroon. These localities were affected by floods in 2012 and were considered as breeding grounds for violence against the girl child, furthering incidences of school dropouts and early marriages due to aggravated poverty caused by the floods.

#### Some of the actions taken by government with regards to VAWG:

- β National strategy and action plan on violence against women;
- β Putting in place of a committee to support the fight against FGM;
- β Elaboration of a multi-sectoral platform on the fight against GBV;
- β Follow up of pilot centres in charge of handling cases of VAWG;
- β Vulgarization of the rights of women through socio-judicial clinics and listening sessions on victims of violence;
- β Education on family life and responsible parenthood;
- β Convergence and synergies with the work of the UN System;

## Engaging the Security Sector

The security sector, mandated with providing security for citizens, has been a critical stakeholder to get on board as an ally in the fight against sexual and gender based violence. This is especially the case as the government is the primary duty bearer when it comes to preventing violence, providing support to survivors and promoting access to justice. Engagement with the Security Sector has resulted in the establishment of a pan-African Center on the Role of the Security Sector to end VAWG in Kigali.



The security sector includes core actors such as the police, armed forces, paramilitary and intelligence services; oversight bodies including ministries of defence, internal and foreign affairs; judicial bodies including prisons, the judiciary, human rights commissions; and non-statutory forces such as political party militias and private security firms.

The Africa UNiTE Campaign engages with the security sector in order to strengthen the structures, policies and mechanisms that are in place to ensure that the security sector can be held accountable both in its policies and practices with regards to violence against women and girls. The campaign views the integration of gender perspectives and the full involvement of women's organizations as key to strengthen the security sector, nurture local ownership and participation, and increase effectiveness and accountability.

*"Every sector has its role to play and efforts need to be intensified to eradicate violence against women and girls. I am happy to see that Africa's security organs are at the frontline of the battle against gender based violence because it is unacceptable that one in every three women around the world has been beaten, sexually assaulted or abused. The ramifications of this kind of violence go beyond the individual concerned and therefore, issues of handling violence against women and girls should be an integral part of training of security and law enforcement."*

**Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda**

These were the words of President Paul Kagame during the launch of the Africa UNiTE Command Post Exercise at the Rwanda National Police Headquarters which brought together over 170 participants from three different security organs originating from 33 African nations in order to share and learn effective strategies to combat VAWG. Rwanda has been leading in convening security apparatus to discuss their role in bringing an end to the vice of VAWG since 2010 when the "First International Conference on the role of African Security Organs in ending Violence against Women and Girls" was held in Kigali. The Kigali Declaration that emerged outlines commitments along the three pillars of the UNiTE Campaign, namely; Prevention of violence, Provision of services for survivors and Promotion of access to justice. The Africa UNiTE Secretariat and regional focal persons have been involved in this process from the beginning which has facilitated the full alignment of commitments with the Campaign goals and pillars.

The ICGLR Heads of State Declaration on actions to address SGBV, focused on *Prevention, Ending Impunity and Providing Support to the Victims/Survivors of SGBV in the Great Lakes Region*, adopted by 11 Heads of State at a Special Session during the Summit that held in Kampala in December 2011 is also another important milestone in this regard. This resulted amongst others from high level advocacy by the UN/UN Women offices and the Campaign Secretariat and numerous civil society and women's rights organizations. A plan of action to implement the Declaration was developed with the Secretariat, followed by a strategic meeting of experts and ministers of Justice and Women's empowerment to roll out the action plans and strategize on promoting justice and ending impunity. The 'Zero Tolerance' campaign against sexual violence which was a commitment by Heads of State as part of the Kampala Declaration is being implemented and aligned with Campaign goals and pillars.

## Engaging Young People

*Young people, which make up about 70% of Africa's population, are critical actors in the Africa UNiTE Campaign, not simply due to their numbers but because of their energies, passion and commitment to shape a just, violence-free present and future. African Youths are using creative and innovative strategies and interventions for social mobilization and concrete action to prevent and respond to VAWG.*

Many young people have faced the brunt of violence firsthand. To date, in most parts of Africa, girls and young women – current and future leaders in various sectors, still suffer from a range of human rights violations including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), breast ironing, child, forced and early marriages, rape especially during conflicts and post conflict situations, incest, and are faced with other forms of sexual and gender based violence. In Cameroon for example, more than half of women have suffered physical abuse (53%) from the age of 15.<sup>2</sup> This situation is similar across the continent. It is for this reason that the youths were considered as a major target for the Africa UNiTE campaign. Youth actively participated in many of the ground breaking activities of the campaign.

### The Mt Kilimanjaro Climb and the Youth Leadership Forum

Young people were part and parcel of the momentous Mount Kilimanjaro Climb. The youth that went up to the top of the mountain not only committed themselves as Ambassadors to uphold the rights of women and girls but also to take action to end any sort of violence against women and girls in their respective lives and spheres of influence.

Prior to the climb, the Africa UNiTE



<sup>2</sup> National Strategy for the elimination of gender based violence, Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF)

secretariat in partnership with UNFPA and the Urgent Action Fund-Africa organized the first ever youth leadership forum on ending VAWG in Arusha which brought together dynamic young Africans from 40 countries. This forum mobilized young Africans to take the lead in existing and future initiatives of ending violence against women and girls in their countries. The major outcome of this gathering was a declaration that led to the creation of a premier **African Youth Network on Violence Against Women and Girls** that concretized strategic partnership with the youth and the Africa UNiTE Campaign with specific commitments to action. This critical mass of youth agreed to strengthen networking, advocacy, social mobilization, generate and share knowledge and take measures to monitor the Campaign in their various countries.

### **Setting up a Youth Network on ending VAWGs**

A year after the creation of the African Youth Network on Violence against women and girls, the pioneer founders and a few other inspired youths in the domain of VAWG met in Debrezeit, Ethiopia in December 2013 in a workshop on “*leveraging Africa’s innovation and energy to EAWGs,*” to concretize the implementation of the Arusha Declaration by formally setting up the **African Youth UNiTE Network on Violence Against Women and Girls** dubbed **AYUNet**.

The workshop also provided space for experience sharing on the accomplishments of the various youths one year after the Mt Kilimanjaro Climb. Some of these good practices shared included:

- β **Tunisia:** combating various vices on Albinos, who are highly discriminated;
- β **Kenya:** Declaration of the Youth Forum in Arusha was shared with Heads of State of the Great Lakes Region that pushed for a “*Zero Tolerance Campaign*”. Other actions included peer to peer training, use of celebrities as ambassadors, use of mobile phones for awareness raising through the bulk sms method to prompt thoughts on changing mindsets and behavior;
- β **Guinea:** naming and shaming, as well as social isolation of perpetrators of violence in schools/communities;
- β **Uganda:** creation of gender clubs in schools to facilitate understanding of their rights and responsibilities through sports, games, drama, arts and crafts;
- β **Tanzania:** utilizing various mediums (magazines, media interviews, features in UN Women articles and 16 Days of Activism) to increase the visibility and profile of VAWG and facilitate outreach, providing support to gender desks in six regions and a one-stop centre for VAW victims to ease the process of reporting cases to the police;
- β **Ghana & Equatorial Guinea:** use of sport as a tool to empower young girls and boys & facilitate awareness raising on VAWG;
- β **Zambia:** “I Care about Her” project calls on men to feel responsible for the well-being of the women in their lives, challenges notions of masculinity and power;
- β **Cameroon:** replication/localization of the Mt. Kilimanjaro climb on Mt. Febe, the highest point in Yaoundé. The event dubbed the Solidarity Climb on Political Violence against women and Girls in Cameroon ended up as a high profile and popular event. Spurred by this event Cameroon took the lead in the Central Africa Sub Region to host a national launch of the Africa UNiTE Campaign under the patronage of the Head of State.

In order to facilitate the functioning of the **Africa Youth UNiTE Network on Violence Against Women and Girls (AYUNet)** governance guidelines, action and resource mobilization plans were drafted and adopted. With the formal creation of AYUNet, the youths once more embarked on popularizing the network and taking the lead on ending violence against women and girls on the continent.

AYUNet has been replicated in Cameroon through the creation of the “Boys-to-Boys” network on violence against women and girls by the Cameroon Youths and Students Forum for Peace. The network which covers the 10 regions of Cameroon will mobilise Cameroonian youths to stand against all sort of vices against women and girls. The network is presently spearheading the UN Secretary General Campaign on the “HeForShe” by mobilizing Cameroonian youth to join the Campaign.

## Creative Energies UNiTE

*Creativity and innovation have been part and parcel of the Africa UNiTE Campaign. Fashion, film, music and games have been used to reach out to a diverse and non-traditional audience and appeal to a wider range of people with a different medium.*



**MORABA**  
www.afroes.com

**Tradition and technology:**  
Combing the old and the new to tackle gender-based violence

In South Africa, UN Women Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Islands Regional Office (SARO) partnered with Afroes Transformational Foundation to develop the “Moraba” game to engage young people in a healthy dialogue about GBV, empower young survivors and create an environment where potential perpetrators are exposed to more positive gender attitudes. The pre and post-game evaluation conducted showed that substantial knowledge transfer and learning took place, and the game encouraged youth to take action on matters of GBV. Interaction during this game led to considerable change of mindset for most of the participants, in particular, more awareness on the harmful nature of rape, violence and stereotyping of others.

THE UNiTE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN  
**FILM FESTIVAL**  
“From the bedroom to the battlefield”  
6-10 December 2011  
Market Theatre, 56 Margaret Moringano Street  
Newtown, Johannesburg

“Violence against women and girls takes many forms and is widespread throughout the globe. It includes rape, domestic violence, harassment at work, abuse in schools, female genital mutilation and sexual violence in armed conflicts. Whether in developing or developed countries, the pervasiveness of this violence should shock us all. Violence - and in many cases the mere threat of it - is one of the most significant barriers to women's full equality.”  
UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 25 November 2011.



A film festival dubbed, ‘From the Bedroom to the Battlefield’ was hosted in South Africa and Ethiopia to coincide with the 16 Days of Activism in 2011. Films from across the continent and the world, with subject matter relevant to UNiTE goals were screened to a large and engaged audience. Local and international filmmakers, directors, gender activists, representatives from humanitarian and non-profit organisations were present to speak about their work. The film festival was

complemented by workshops and seminars which fostered substantive discussion and debate on a range of critical issues including; “misogyny and masculinity”, “children and pornography”, “rape and corrective rape”, “the youth and media” and “the role of NGO’s and civil society in ending violence”. The highly successful and inaugural Africa UNiTE Film Festival brought to the fore the various causes and consequences of violence, the resilience of survivors, the efforts of activists, advocates and governments in bringing an end to the vice as well as the critical role African youth can play in creating a generation that is violence-free.

The Parlotones are a South African multiplatinum selling rock band who joined the Africa UNiTE campaign and took part in the Mount Kilimanjaro Climb. The Parlotones are the biggest selling pop/alternative band who used their talents and their large audience to speak out against gender based violence. They developed a theme song, “Should we fight back” for the Campaign in Southern Africa and used their album *Journey through the Shadows* to highlight campaigns including the Africa UNiTE Campaign - and various social issues that have been in the shadows for far too long. *“It’s a serious social issue, and alarmingly, appears to be on the increase. We can take steps toward curing this problem. It’s obviously not something that can be solved overnight, or even in one generation, but small steps forward are better than nothing at all”* reiterated Parlotones guitarist Paul Hodgson.



Hem Matsi is an outspoken, dynamic fashion designer from Namibia who is a survivor of sexual and gender based violence and one of the climbers of Mount Kilimanjaro. Hem also serves as Namibia's representative to the United Nations Creative Artist Advisory Council. She dedicated her fashion design collection to making a statement against gender-based violence depicting different messages and scenarios of human trafficking, rape and child marriages.

The first ever Regional Creative Artist Advisory Council was launched by UN Women Southern Africa region to capitalize and harness the huge platform and following artists possess. Thirteen countries ranging from Botswana to Comoros are represented on the Council which seeks to:

- β Strengthen regional, sub-regional and national capacity, including non-traditional actors such as musicians, artists, film-makers, writers, poets, visual and performing artists to mobilize political commitment; support public awareness and social mobilization to prevent and end violence against women and girls at all levels
- β Encourage creative and nuanced ways of thinking, ideas, communications tools and explore new approaches for raising awareness on ending VAWG
- β Mobilize resource and partnerships for the Africa UNiTE Campaign
- β Encourage involvement of non-traditional partners who have a huge influence and following at all levels of society
- β Develop alternative and creative messaging using arts, to various audiences around ending violence against women
- β Support enhancement of media coverage that reflects positive progress on ending VAWG

## Private Sector/South Africa

*Although private sector is often critiqued for putting profits before people, Southern Africa has shown successful engagement with private sector partners who are making ending VAWG their business and proving themselves to be socially responsible corporates.*

Private sector businesses have been mobilized to provide financial and in-kind support towards the Africa UNiTE Campaign. The broadcaster MNET took up the advertising cost of \$25,000 and freely publicized the Africa UNiTE Kilimanjaro Climb over its six channels. Kenya Airways also provided discounted tickets for most of the climbers.

### “Ride On, Speak Out” Campaign

The [Ride On, Speak Out](#) was a very innovative initiative to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism and popularize the Africa UNiTE Campaign with a motorcycle ride covering over 8,000km across nine countries in Southern Africa. Private sector engagement, and in particular Harley Davidson Johannesburg, was a critical factor in ensuring the success of the initiative. Men were engaged as agents of change and along with media, served as partners for raising awareness to end violence against women and girls. The Ride consisted of 15 riders from the Private Sector, 2 back up crew team (Mechanic) and 2 videographers to capture the ride. Riders also kept a blog to share their experiences on the



road. The group rode across Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Swaziland and Lesotho stopping along the way to visit shelters for abused women, taking part in rallies and meeting with men's and women's groups. Twenty sponsors provided essentials such as a van to carry belongings and spare tires as well as funding for food, lodging and petrol. *Ride On Speak Out* challenged notions of masculinity, raised public awareness and engaged and trained a network of men to prevent violence against women and girls. It was inspired by and built upon the successful initiative, *Climb Up Speak Out* Mount Kilimanjaro Climb organized by the Africa UNiTE Campaign in March 2012.

Being part of the team to end violence against women and young girls is an emotional rush like no other. From the testimonials of survivors, to meeting and speaking with people at these shelters, it gives us riders the strength to carry the message. Not an easy campaign by any means, but it is one that every member of the team is committed to support.

One of the riders of the Ride On, Speak Out Campaign

We need millions of men as agents of change and we have many rivers and oceans to cross before we get there. We will cherish the unspeakable beauty of the landscapes, the camaraderie and the strong belief in our cause forever. We will think of and pray for the women who suffer in silence and we never lose hope that something positive will be done to improve their situation. It might take another 10 years or maybe even a whole generation for huge change, but it's a start.

Antonie de Jong, UN Women Director of Resource Mobilization & one of riders



Photo Credit: Shipyard Productions

Hopefully, this trip will give rise to many men joining our cause. In any event, we are confident to connect the men groups and bikers' associations we discovered in all nine countries we visited. They will reinforce each other and make sure the 16 days of activism will become 365 days of activism.

Frans Pieterse, one of Riders