



# Together We Can

Towards Collective Change...

## **Your participation in 'We Can' will help:**

- Strengthen the movement and transform the lives of millions of women in the region
- Change values, attitudes and behaviours that discriminate against women and girls
- Demand action by governments, communities and individuals to end all violence against women

# Together We Can

Today, one in every two women in South Asia lives with violence in their everyday lives. But as people and communities do we or can we visualise an equal and violence-free world?

Do we consider it to be at all possible? As we see around us, We Can!

We share with you images of communities, institutions and groups that have become collective Change Makers in the campaign.

'We Can' is a six-year, six-country South Asia campaign to challenge and change deeply entrenched societal attitudes and practices that endorse discrimination and violence.

Launched in 2004, it has mobilised 2.7 million Change Makers in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

'We Can' campaign has triggered change by reaching out to ordinary men and women who are creating a mass movement to transform existing power relations and reducing social acceptance towards violence against women. Much more is happening on the ground...

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**By 2011, the campaign will reach and influence 50 million men and women across South Asia to oppose violence against women.**

**The South Asia Campaign to End All Forms of Violence Against Women or 'We Can' is an on-going active campaign in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and Pakistan and Afghanistan. The campaign aims to change deeply entrenched gender-biased societal attitudes and practices that endorse gender discrimination and violence.**



**Together We Can**

The campaign's model of change involves mobilising large numbers of people and organisations (Change Makers) to take a public stand and oppose violence against women through large-scale public awareness programmes and empathy for the issue. Thus the focus is on encouraging critical thinking and engagement of people. The emphasis is on people and personal change.

**The campaign strongly promotes a positive message that violence is neither acceptable nor inevitable, and that ordinary women and men have the capacity to end it. The campaign, thus only provides the stimulus and encouragement to people to change and make their world a more just and equal place.**

**For example, in Bangladesh, the Trade Union Centre, consisting of garment factory and construction workers have joined the campaign raising the slogan of "Equal Relationships with Equal Wages". The campaign is thus reaching out and making a difference through the involvement of more than 2.7 million people.**

## **Radio is fast emerging as a popular medium disseminating campaign messages and connecting Change Makers.**

Thanks to 'We Can' a popular programme on Radio Nepal, 'We Can Listeners' Clubs have been formed and many people have signed up as Change Makers.

In the cities of Jodhpur and Udaipur, India, "Khamosh nahi rahna hai", a radio show on campaign issues has been initiated with an outreach of 12 districts and a target audience of more than 1,50,000 Change Makers.

Today, the campaign is using the support of the air waves and radio is emerging as a potent vehicle of change.



On Air

# Uniform Support



## **The campaign has initiated a dialogue with the Police departments and has received overwhelming support in this regard.**

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In Tamil Nadu, India, 700 Sub-Inspectors took the campaign pledge. A 'We Can – Police Initiative' has been set up. Police mobile vans are used to disseminate campaign messages and the women police invite people to join the campaign.

A local police station in Pakistan, now observes Human Rights Day. Due to the efforts of a police Change Maker, the department has even set up a separate Women's Reporting Centre for the first time.

After associating with 'We Can', the Police Department of Sindhudurg, Maharashtra, India, has taken pro-active initiatives, like ensuring safe working conditions for women police staff and employing women caretakers. It has received a tremendous response within the organization.

**Across the region, such pro-active changes are rapidly taking place within the police departments, thus making them friendly, gender sensitive and accessible.**

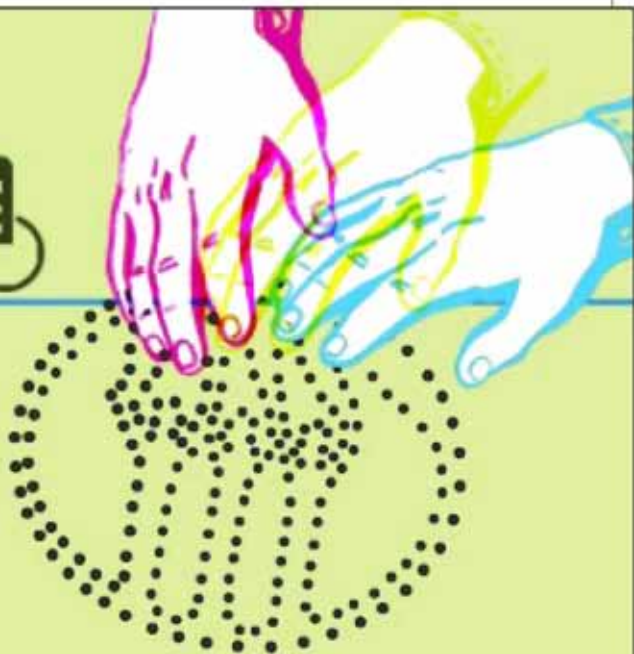
## Disabled groups have become active partners in the campaign, expressing solidarity on issues like women's mobility.

An association of disabled people in Orissa, India, is part of the campaign alliance and is supporting the movement in their area. The group has made targeted interventions in cases regarding discontinuing girl's education, their mobility and freedom of expression.

The National Association of Physically Disabled, Nepal, has been an active member of the 'We Can' alliance since 2005.

Some of the communication materials have also been translated in Braille.

This group has challenged and broken every stereotype and have now become crucial campaign partners.



**Enabling Solidarity**

# The Change Curriculum



## **The school, as an institution, has become a platform for dialogue and change in the community.**

More than a 1000 schools in Bangladesh have special permission from the government to make the campaign a part of the school curriculum. The school children and teachers have mobilised Change Makers in their school which has taken the campaign to the community.

In a small school of Nosera village, Rajasthan, India, the attendance of girl students was rapidly decreasing. Brought to notice by a young Change Maker, the school committee decided to act upon it immediately. Together with the village panchayat, they have addressed the security concerns of the girl students in the village. Further they have initiated a regular dialogue with the parents on issues like gender based violence, gender stereotypes and social practices that need to be addressed.

## **Municipal Corporations are lending support to the campaign and looking within to start a dialogue on violence against women.**

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Due to the active efforts of a Change Maker Councillor in Pakistan, the representation of women in different municipal committees has increased.

In Bangladesh, 500 union councils and 20 municipal corporations are involved in the campaign.

The municipal corporation in Sawantwadi, Maharashtra, India, not only hosted a state level Change Maker event recently but also is a part of the campaign initiative in the many schools run by the corporation.

Across the region, many municipal councillors have pledged support and now are pro-actively involved with the campaign in their own wards.



## Change Within



# Keeping the Faith

## The religious space, critical to the societies across the region, too have emerged as active platforms for campaigning.

A maulana Change Maker in Muzzaffarabad, Pakistan, invited women to sing verses in the local mosque. He began the session by encouraging his daughter to sing verses from the Quran.

A priest in Karur, Tamil Nadu, India, discusses campaign messages with people gathered in the temple after performing the daily rituals.

In a mosque in Islamfath village, Sri Lanka, a maulana regularly engages in a dialogue with the members of the community on issues like girls dropping out of school, their early marriages and restricted mobility.

Today, these Change Makers have initiated change in spaces that were once considered barred for any dialogue and social change.

**Besides the usual array of television spots and public announcements, innovative programming has made the television a pervasive Change Maker across million homes in the region.**

In Pakistan, a music video “Apna Faisla” has been produced to generate awareness on honour killing and create space for a dialogue on the issue.

A prime time television serial on domestic violence titled 'Moner Janala' (Window of the Mind) has been aired nationally on ATN Bangla in Bangladesh.

These efforts have helped the campaign immensely in making entertaining yet effective interventions and initiate change.



# Prime time Change



Having been a part of the campaign, some of us realised the importance of collective action!



What if I also make my bank a point of awareness building? That way we can all work together! We Can!!



So we put up some of the materials within the bank. People noticed!!



And soon we got talking! People raised their concerns, doubts and their opinions too!



And now our bank too is an active Change Maker! Together we seek to take the campaign forward!

# High Interests

The Bahawalpur branch of Habib Bank, Pakistan, has become an active institutional Change Maker in its own way. Beginning with small measures like providing separate seating area for its female clients, it has started appointing woman staff as well. Recently, a workshop on gender sensitisation was also conducted for the staff members.

Today, the bank is making every effort to be accessible to women, thus rising in popularity and attracting an unprecedented female clientele.

# Healing Change Makers

In Bangladesh, Nursing Institutes from 10 districts are involved in the campaign officially. These institutes regularly conduct seminars and workshops for their students and also engage in dialogues on violence against women with their patients and the community.

In Tamil Nadu, India, Siddha doctors are functioning as a forum of Change Makers. Three times a week, they spend around three to four hours in the villages and disseminate campaign messages.

**Across the region, some Health Care givers spend a few hours everyday with the community, talking about the campaign.**



# Reversing Traditions



## **In many communities, age old customs and traditions are being reversed and new practices are becoming Change Makers in their own rights.**

In Balarampur, Uttar Pradesh, India, it was an age old custom for young boys to beat up a girl doll in order to ward off evil spirits. Some young Change Makers dared to change this.

Instead of beating up the age old icon, they now started placing it on a swing of garlands and treating it to sweets.

In Pakistan, influenced by a Change Maker also a tribal leader, the local tribal dispute resolution body, the jirga decided to never resolve any disputes pertaining to women without their representation. This is such a landmark step as jirga traditionally only consist of male elders.

Such daring acts of challenging the customs have met tremendous resistance initially but have now been accepted and adopted by the communities.

## **Today, lawyers and judges have extended support and action beyond the court premises**

In Pakistan, a practising lawyer not only provides free legal aid to women but is also working with the criminal justice system to highlight the discrimination faced by women.

In Diu, India, lawyers and judges have come out as pro-active Change Makers in the community. In a dynamic step forward, they have come together to lend support for the campaign through the organisations of the District Legal Services. Together the organisations of the District Legal Services Authority and Bar Association are now voicing their support through rallies, interactive sessions and on going dialogues with the community. This has not only strengthened the campaign but also made the institution more accessible for the community.



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