

## **Guiding principles of the 'We Can' campaign**

The 'We Can' campaign seeks to trigger a person-to-person chain reaction of change in attitudes and behaviour, on a scale sufficient to generate a mass social movement to end violence against women.

People change when they recognise something as their own problem, and feel both that another way is possible and that they themselves are capable of taking it. That process can be slow and complicated. Someone who has been through the same reflection and is making their own change can offer the best support and example along that path.

If enough individuals embark upon that change, and come together for mutual support and shared action, then a critical mass is attained that can influence and transform the institutions, communities and society of which they are a part. Policy and legislative reforms may be indirect outcomes of that process, and can often be complementary, but they are not a direct objective of 'We Can'.

The guiding principles of the 'We Can' campaign flow from this understanding, and are set out below.

### ***How change happens***

**Change is the responsibility of the individual.** Therefore:

- The campaign will draw attention to the violence that ordinary people experience, witness or commit.
- It will highlight violence against women as a public not a private matter.
- It will encourage women and men to think about their attitudes and behaviour.
- It will encourage people to find their own solutions and make their own choices.
- It will not prescribe how people should think or behave.
- It will invite people to become change makers<sup>1</sup>, rejecting violence in their own lives and encouraging others to do the same.

**Change is within the power of the individual.** Therefore:

- The campaign will focus on violence against women at a level that ordinary people have the capacity to influence.
- It will draw attention to the choices that ordinary people can make to accept or reject violence.
- It will offer encouragement to reject violence by presenting a common platform: 'We Can end all violence against women.'
- It will present women and men as agents of change, and not the former as powerless victims or the latter as all-powerful tyrants.

**Change is a social process.** Therefore:

- The campaign will seek to mobilise a diverse range of individuals, communities and institutions on a significant scale to undertake, promote and sustain change.

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<sup>1</sup> The campaign has defined a change maker as 'Any individual who pledges never to commit or tolerate violence against women in his/her own life and to talk to 10 more people around them to influence them to do the same.'

- Change makers will be encouraged to share their thinking and experience with others, seeking to trigger a 'chain reaction' by stimulating reflection and modelling change.
- They will be invited to network together in order to support one another, women facing violence and others seeking to end violence.
- A campaign alliance will provide a common platform and communication materials to support change over a minimum of five years, and preferably longer.

### ***Change makers***

- Both men and women from the widest possible cross-section of society will be invited to become change makers.
- Anyone can be a change maker: since the change is first and foremost internal, change makers are self-selecting. The only criterion is therefore a willingness to change.
- Being a change maker implies making a sincere public undertaking not to commit or tolerate violence and discrimination in one's own life, and to encourage at least 10 others to do the same.
- Change makers will be encouraged to identify the violence and discrimination in their own lives, attitudes and behaviour, accept their own responsibilities in relation to it, and find their own ways to address it.
- They will be invited to find their own ways to get other people thinking about violence against women.
- Change makers are encouraged to recognise that change can be stimulated but not forced. Their role is to stimulate thinking, promote alternatives to violence, personally role-model alternative behaviours, encourage others to share their views, and support women experiencing violence.
- They will be encouraged not to act on other's behalf or impose actions that deny women experiencing violence to find their own solutions and make their own choices.
- Change makers will receive support through alliance member organisations in the form of communication materials, public promotion of campaign messages, and opportunities for exchange and information sharing.
- Change makers will be encouraged through ongoing interaction to remain engaged with the campaign over time, in order to deepen their understanding and continue the process of change.
- The campaign will not impose, prescribe or advocate action by change makers, or dictate whom they should seek to convince of the campaign aims, or how.

### ***Communication***

- A phased communication strategy<sup>2</sup> will provide materials to support change makers in the progression from reflection to networking to preparation for action.
- Campaign materials will be designed to **stimulate recognition and critical thinking:**

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<sup>2</sup> The three-phase communication strategy is designed to support 1. raising awareness, 2. building networks and preparing for action, and 3. consolidating change.

- By presenting violence against women in ways that people can relate to in their daily lives.
- By drawing attention to 'everyday' forms of violence that are commonly disregarded but which occur most frequently.
- By highlighting violence against women as a public not a private matter.
- By inviting people to think, rather than judging and prescribing answers.
- Campaign materials will **promote a positive message that change is possible**:
  - By presenting ordinary women and men as capable of action to change their own circumstances.
  - By highlighting alternative courses of action and real-life examples of personal change.
  - By pointing up and challenging violent action and the attitudes that underpin it, rather than the individuals involved.
  - By avoiding violent or demeaning representations of women and men.

## ***Alliance***

- The campaign will be implemented by a loose, non-hierarchical and diverse alliance.
- Organisations, institutions and individuals wishing to join the alliance will need to demonstrate:
  - That they do not use or advocate the use of violence.
  - That they take a positive stand on gender equality.
  - That they are ready to engage with their own constituency on the issue of violence against women.
- Alliance members will sign up to the principles set out in this document as the basis for a common platform on ending violence against women.
- A single campaign identity will be communicated through common branding and messaging and a common mobilisation strategy.
- **The campaign will not be led by any one organisation or institution**:
  - Public representation will be kept separate from operational direction, with different individuals and organisations exercising the two functions.
  - A suitably skilled group will develop communication materials centrally and provide overall operational support and direction.
  - Each alliance member will be the public face of 'We Can' with its own constituency.
  - Individual alliance members will develop and implement their own plans for mobilising change makers within their respective target groups, guided by a framework plan at the national level.
  - Alliance members will come together periodically for common actions.
  - All alliance members will participate in a planned impact assessment process both to enhance their own understanding and to maintain the accountability of the campaign.
  - All public representation will project the campaign identity at least as prominently as organisational brands.