ADVOCACY

CLUB CHALLENGE
Advocacy is a critical tool for building change. When advocating for change you are helping to create social, political, and economic change in your community, country, and globally.

We have all witnessed an unprecedented global change in our day-to-day lives due to COVID-19. It is important for everyone to raise our voice to support the most vulnerable in our communities. Advocacy can look like having a video call with your Club members to discuss the ways COVID-19 is affecting your community, raising awareness by creating a social media campaign, or asking decision-makers to make a policy change.

Girls and women are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing service in healthcare, as essential workers, and caretaking in their homes and communities. We also know that girls and women are disproportionately affected by the social, political, and economic impact of COVID-19.

That’s why it’s important that girls and women are engaged in advocacy on local and global levels. Girls and women, who can, must be represented in advocacy to push for equal legislation, and stand in the gaps for marginalized communities.

We are challenging you and your Club members to advocate and share your work with us on social media using #GirlUpTakesAction and tagging @GirlUp (Twitter) and @GirlUpCampaign (IG).

Join us to develop your advocacy skills, empower your community around you, and take your activism to the next level.

Head to Clubs.GirlUp.org/Advocacy to complete the challenge.

Together we are stronger. When you participate in advocacy challenges your impact is two-fold. Not only are you helping to advance gender equality globally, but you are also tackling inequality where you are.

We want you to advance the global movement for gender equality by taking a critical look at the issues that your community is facing during the global pandemic and then setting your advocacy skills into action.
LEARN ABOUT THE ISSUE

Economic and social inequalities between men and women lead to gender-based violence (GBV), and during times of crisis these inequalities are exacerbated. Frontline workers combating gender-based violence have seen an increase in women and girls needing their services.[1]

- Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a human rights violation, a universal issue, with great impact on victims/survivors, their families, and communities.

- Globally, 243 million girls and women aged 15-49 have been subjected to sexual and/or physical violence perpetrated by an intimate partner in the previous 12 months. This number is likely to increase as security, health, and money worries heighten tensions and strains are accentuated by cramped and confined living conditions.

- Almost 18 percent of girls and women aged 15 to 49 years who have ever been in a relationship have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the previous 12 months. During a woman’s lifetime, the figure rises to 30 percent.

- More than a third of women who are intentionally killed are killed by a current or former intimate partner.

- Girls and women experience violence by a partner in a variety of contexts – in times of peace or conflict, or in the wake of conflict – and in diverse spheres: the family, the community, and broader society.

- Rapid advances in technology provide another avenue for cyberviolence against girls and women. Available data show that less than 40 percent of the women who experience cyberviolence seek help of any sort.

- Among those who do, most look to family and friends. Less than 10 percent of those women seeking help seek help from the police.

TAKE ACTION

Now that you have learned about the ways in which gender-based violence is related to COVID-19, it’s time to take action.

Globally, advocacy looks different from community to community and country to country. You can educate your peers, raise awareness in your community, and advocate to elected officials. Select what works best for your Club or take your own approach. Whatever you decide, keep us updated and submit your activity report.
GETTING STARTED

Below are steps to get you and your Club started on this Advocacy Challenge:

EDUCATE YOUR CLUB

- Do your research on what policy change is needed at your local or national level.
- Organize a meeting to educate your peers about the intersection between GBV and COVID-19 or discuss one of the other issue areas connected to the pandemic (read more below).
- Check out Girl Up’s slide deck to talk about the myths and facts of GBV.

ADVOCATE

- Advocate by calling or writing an elected official or decision maker in your community.
- Use our call script and email template to help guide you in reaching out.

RAISE AWARENESS

- Raise awareness by building your own social media campaign with your Club and get all of your members involved.
- Include # and tag Girl Up in your posts.

CHALLENGE CHECKLIST

☐ EDUCATE YOUR CLUB ON THE ISSUES
☐ ADVOCATE TO DECISION MAKERS
☐ RAISE AWARENESS ONLINE AND IN YOUR COMMUNITY
☐ SUBMIT YOUR ACTIVITY REPORT
CALL TO ACTION

Before you call your decision-maker, practice delivering your facts and asking for the policy change you’d like to see, also known as your call to action. Use the information below to make your call script complete:

**Facts:** Emerging data shows that since the outbreak of COVID-19, gender-based violence (GBV), and particularly domestic violence, has intensified. [1]

- In France, reports of domestic violence have increased by 30% since the lockdown on March 17.
- In Argentina, emergency calls for domestic violence cases have increased by 25% since lockdown on March 20.
- In Cyprus and Singapore, helplines have registered an increase of 30% and 33% respectively.
- Increased cases of domestic violence and demand for emergency shelter have also been reported in Canada, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

**Solution:** Allocate additional resources and include evidence-based measures to address violence against girls and women in COVID-19 National Response Plans. This includes: [1]

- **Services to address violence against girls and women**, including increased resources to support shelters, hotlines, and online counselling. These essential services should be expanded and adapted to the context of the crisis to ensure all survivors can access support;

- **Psychosocial support for girls and women**, affected by the outbreak, gender-based violence survivors, frontline health workers, and other frontline social support staff must be prioritized; and

- **A strong message from law enforcement that impunity will not be tolerated.** Police and Justice actors must ensure that incidents of GBV are given high priority and care must be taken to address the manifestations of violence emerging in the context of COVID-19.

[1]
AN INTERSECTIONAL LOOK

COVID-19 has disrupted the lives of almost half of the world’s population. When reading about the following issues, think about how the advancement for gender equality directly connects:

**EDUCATION**

The closure of schools is necessary for the protection of children, families, and communities and will help to flatten the curve so that the peak infection rate stays manageable.

However, it presents a major disruption in education and the routine to which children are accustomed. In many cases, children who depend on the school lunch program will face food insecurity.

They also become more vulnerable to violence in their homes and communities which can go undetected due to no contact. School closures also have a disproportionate burden on girls and women who traditionally are expected to undertake a role as caregivers.

**FOOD SECURITY**

In countries that depend on food imports, there are fears of closing borders and markets and the inability to access food.

This concern is exacerbated for people experiencing poverty and in rural communities, especially girls and women, who do not have easy access to city centers and major grocery stores and markets.

This leads to people with the means purchasing large quantities of goods which limits availability for those with lower incomes who are not able to do the same and are likely to face shortages when they attempt to replenish their food supplies.

**HEALTHCARE**

All countries expect a massive strain on their public health systems due to the spread of the virus, and this can lead to decreased maternal health and increased infant mortality rates.

There is often lack of access to healthcare services and medical supplies in rural communities. The elderly, people with disabilities, and people with compromised or suppressed immune systems are at high risk and may not have live-in support systems.

Frontline health workers have had to put themselves in harm’s way to save lives, and some have lost their own lives as a result. In many countries, women account for up to 70% of the health workforce, and have therefore been disproportionality affected.
ADDITIONAL CALLS TO ACTION

Looking to advocate on more issues? Use the information below to make your call script or email complete:

EDUCATION
Issue: Children are now being asked to continue their education from home. However, not all children have access to the internet.
Facts:
- Fast, reliable internet service has become essential for everything from getting news to accessing your education.
- Roughly half of the world’s population has internet access.
Solution: Narrow the digital divide by expanding free internet access to online educational platforms and material and enable children to participate in virtual and disability-accessible classroom sessions where available.

FOOD SECURITY
Issue: Experts say the pandemic will unleash a food security crisis not seen since the Great Recession. As we learned during the 2008-09 Great Recession, governments – with the support of financial institutions, the United Nations, and others – can mitigate the risk of global food shortages and high prices.
Facts:
- Before the coronavirus outbreak, food insecurity was already a severe problem. More than 820 million people – one in every nine – do not have enough to eat.
- Of these, 113 million are coping with hunger so severe that it poses an immediate threat to life and livelihoods.
Solution: Increase — or introduce — food stamps and subsidies, both in quantity for those already receiving them and in expansion of access to include those who become more vulnerable due to current circumstances.

HEALTHCARE
Issue: The surge in COVID-19 cases is straining even the most advanced and best resourced health systems to the breaking point, including those at the front line in violence response.[2]
Facts:
- In some countries, COVID-19 infections among female health workers are twice that of their male counterparts. Governments should ensure that all care-sector professionals, and healthcare and long-term care workers in particular, have adequate protection against transmission. Also, a global crisis requires a global response.
- Now more than ever, governments need to unite behind a strong WHO – sharing knowledge, strategy, technical resources and financial investment to defeat the global threat we all face.

**Solution:** Add your voice to our join statement calling for unified support of WHO by asking your decision-makers to support funding for WHO or other front line organizations like the UNFPA.

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### ADVOCACY DEFINITIONS

**Key terms you will need to know**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>An activity by an individual or group that aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social institutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civic Participation</td>
<td>Any individual or group activity addressing issues of public concern. Citizens acting alone or together to protect public values or make a change or difference in the community are common types of civic engagement.</td>
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<td>Domestic Violence</td>
<td>Violence by an intimate partner and by other family members, wherever this violence takes place and in whatever form.</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>Access to learning and skills to enable upward socioeconomic mobility. [3]</td>
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<td>Exacerbated</td>
<td>To make worse, such as a problem, bad situation, or negative feeling.</td>
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<td>Food Security</td>
<td>Having physical, social, and economic access, at all times, to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life. [4]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender-Based Violence (GBV)</td>
<td>Refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships. It encompasses threats of violence and coercion. It can be physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual in nature, and can take the form of a denial of resources or access to services. It inflicts harm on women, girls, men and boys. [5]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender Equality</td>
<td>A principle and practice which means that all individuals have agency to make their own decisions and have equal access to rights and opportunities, regardless of their gender identity or expression.</td>
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<td>Global Crisis</td>
<td>A situation that affects all parts of the world by one or more very serious problems.</td>
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<td><strong>Healthcare</strong></td>
<td>The maintenance or improvement of health via the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, recovery, or cure of disease, illness, injury or other physical or mental impairments in people.</td>
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<td><strong>Intersectional Feminism</strong></td>
<td>Feminism that includes the diverse perspective of all races, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, sexualities, physical abilities, and more, where all voices are heard, valued, and protected.</td>
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<td><strong>Justice Actors</strong></td>
<td>Organized differently around the world, most criminal justice systems are made up of various actors that seek justice. Including but not limited to: Legislatures, Judges, Lawyers, Police Officers, Investigators, Parole Officers, and Mental Health Services.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Public Health</strong></td>
<td>The science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and improving quality of life through organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private, communities and individuals. [6]</td>
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<td><strong>Pandemic</strong></td>
<td>An epidemic of disease that has spread across a large region, for instance multiple continents or worldwide, affecting a substantial number of people.</td>
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<td><strong>Sustainable Development Goals</strong></td>
<td>A collection of 17 global goals designed to be a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.</td>
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<td><strong>World Health Organization</strong></td>
<td>A specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health.</td>
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**ADVOCACY RESOURCES**

**CALL SCRIPT**

1. Find the website of your decision-maker and look under 'contact me' for their phone number.

2. The front office will most likely answer the phone. Tell the personal assistant or clerk who answers the phone **[YOUR NAME],[YOUR SCHOOL/GIRL UP CLUB]** and that you would like to speak to **[INSERT DECISION_MAKER NAME]** to discuss **[TELL THEM WHAT ISSUE YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT]**.

3. Deliver your talking points:
   - **Explain the background of your issue.** Why is it important to you?
   - **Tell them what the problem is.** It is most impactful if you can use facts and data to backup your issue.
   - **Tell them what the solution is!** Deliver your call to action.

4. They may ask follow-up questions on the issue you are presenting. If they don’t have any questions right away, it’s all good! You can leave them your contact information if they have follow-up questions. If they ask a question you don’t know the answer to, tell them you will get back to them with the answer. Make sure to get the information and follow up.

5. Don’t forget to thank the decision-maker or clerk for his or her time before hanging up.

6. Finally...let us know how your call went! Share with us by filling out a report in the Girl Up Community.

**EMAIL TEMPLATE**

First, find the website of your decision-maker and look under 'contact me' for their email. Depending on the decision-maker they will either list their email or have an email form for you to fill out on their site.

Use the Sample Template on the next page to compose your email:
Dear Representative/Senator [NAME],

(In your first paragraph include personal information) During this global pandemic, gender equality is at risk. Global health crises put women and girls like me at a greater risk of gender-based violence, reduce access to reproductive health resources, and with increased work at home, can be forced to drop out of school or be pressured into child marriage. During this time, I have become very concerned about legislative impact on gender-based violence (GBV) during COVID-19.

(Include Facts) Research has shown that the globally, 243 million girls and women aged 15-49 have been subjected to sexual and/or physical violence perpetrated by intimate partner in the previous 12 months. The number is likely to increase as security, health, and money worries heighten tensions and strains are accentuated by cramped and confined living conditions.

(State what you are asking for) I ask that you allocate additional resources and include evidence-based measures to address violence against girls and women in COVID-19 National Response Plans. This includes providing:

- **Services to address violence against girls and women**, including increased resources to support shelters, hotlines, and online counselling. These essential services should be expanded and adapted to the context of the crisis to ensure all survivors can access support;

- **Psychosocial support for girls and women** affected by the outbreak, gender-based violence survivors, frontline health workers, and other frontline social support staff must be prioritized; and

- **A strong message from law enforcement that impunity will not be tolerated.** Police and Justice Actors must ensure that incidents of GBV are given high priority and care must be taken to address the manifestations of violence emerging in the context of COVID-19.

I believe that by addressing violence against girls and women during COVID-19 with our National Response Plan will impact the lives of girls and women across the country and ensure that those who need our support the most are still able to receive access.

Sincerely,

(Your First and Last Name)
References

Always give credit where credit is due!

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Cover Photo
Girl Up Elza Soares