

Celebrating
IWD 2021

HIGH
SCHOOLS KIT



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UN
WOMEN 
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WELCOME

A MESSAGE FROM UN WOMEN AUSTRALIA'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thank you for taking time to learn more about International Women's Day! In 2021, UN Women's global International Women's Day theme is "Women in Leadership". It celebrates the outstanding efforts by women and girls around the world to shape equal opportunities for everyone. International Women's Day also highlights how important it is for women and girls to have equal seats around decision making tables in every part of life – from business to politics, from sports to communities.

COVID-19 has been hard on everyone but it has been particularly challenging for women and girls. Women have lost more jobs and wages during the pandemic, and safety has become an increasing concern. UN Women Australia is working hard to get us back on track towards achieving an equal world where everyone, no matter their gender, has the same opportunities to become leaders, get an education and follow their dreams.

We are so thankful you have decided to join our campaign for gender equality. As you dive into this year's International Women's Day schools kit, my hope is that some of the stories we share, and the questions and activities you tackle, prompt you to consider steps you might choose to take to advance equality, for everyone. Thank you for your support of and interest in the work of UN Women.

Janelle Weissman
Executive Director, UN Women Australia

ABOUT UN WOMEN

UN Women Australia exists to raise funds for and awareness of UN Women's work to end violence against women, promote economic empowerment, advance women in leadership, and ensure women's participation in peace processes to accelerate gender equality worldwide.

UN Women is the United Nations agency for women's empowerment and gender equality, delivering programs and transforming policy to enable a brighter future for women and girls in more than 100 countries worldwide.

ABOUT IWD

International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated around the world on March 8. IWD has been celebrated in various forms across the world since the early 1900s, beginning with a strike in New York, honouring the garment workers of America in 1908. It shifted to more international actions and today has grown into a global celebration of achievements of women, and an opportunity to shine a light on the progress still to be made to achieve full gender equality.



2021 MARKS THE 10 YEAR COUNTDOWN TO THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL (SDG) OF GENDER EQUALITY – SDG #5 – BY 2030.



THEME: WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Women leaders are making a difference, every day. From bringing different experiences, perspectives and skills to the table, to carrying out effective COVID-19 responses, women make invaluable contributions to the highest levels of decisions-making, policies and laws that work better for all. There is still a lot of work to do to create a level playing field where women and men are equally represented as leaders. The case to pick up the pace of change is clear when we look at the numbers.

LOCALLY:

Only 1 woman

Of Australia's 30 prime ministers since Federation, only one has been a woman, reflecting the under-representation of women in federal ministerial positions more generally.¹

50/50 goal

Only 30.46% of parliamentarians are women. In Australia, we need to accelerate closing the gender gap to achieve the 50/50 goal – where women and men are equally represented in parliament.

AND WORLDWIDE:

Less than 7%

Less than 7% of the world is led by a woman. This means that only 12 out of 193 UN member states had a woman in their highest position of executive power.²

1 in 4 seats

Additionally, only 1 in 4 Parliamentary seats worldwide are held by women.³

Starting in 2021, the world will herald a ten-year count down to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2030. Importantly, this includes SDG #5, the goal focused on achieving gender equality across the globe. UN Women is working with local partners and communities to improve educational pathways for women and girls, to use technology and financial training, to ensure that more girls become future leaders in their communities.

Women bear the brunt of problems ranging from poverty to climate change, but they also possess assets and talents to solve them.

A smiling woman with short dark hair, wearing an orange shirt, is holding a large basket of green grapes. She is standing under a corrugated metal roof, with lush green trees and other people visible in the background. The scene is bright and sunny.

WOMEN LEADING EVERY DAY

Around the world, women are still underrepresented in decision-making in every aspect of social, political and economic life. Sometimes this is a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes or gender stereotypes. Unequal access to education or health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women all contribute to women's limited representation as leaders.

When we harness the assets and talents of women and make seats around decision-making tables, women's contributions are significant, and take into consideration the needs and concerns of whole communities to deliver innovative policy and business solutions, creating better outcomes for everyone.

IN HER WORDS: “WE WANT TO EMPOWER OUR MARKET VENDORS TO BE CLIMATE RESILIENT”

VARANISESE MAISAMOA



In February 2016, Tropical Cyclone Winston devastated Fiji, showing the heightened vulnerability of people living in the Pacific Islands, where climate change has led to a series of increasingly severe cyclones in recent years. Farms were decimated and markets, like the Rakiraki Market and accommodation centre for rural women, were destroyed, leaving many market vendors (three quarters of whom are women) without an income.

Varanise Maisamoa was one of these women.

TODAY, WITH THE HELP OF UN WOMEN’S MARKETS FOR CHANGE PROJECT, VARANISESE HAS NOT ONLY GOT BACK ON HER FEET, SHE HAS ALSO BECOME A STRONG LEADER IN HER COMMUNITY. THIS IS HER STORY.



“For most of us women market vendors, we focus only on coming to the market to make money. But what if there is a cyclone or flooding that makes it impossible for us to be in the market?”

When I joined the Rakiraki Market back in 2007, I noticed the struggle that women market vendors were enduring day to day. Their security was not protected, there was a continuous disruption of the water supply, and there was no proper lighting. I realised that they had been in this situation for 15, 20 years or more, and nobody had ever listened to their plea.

I decided to form a women’s group to help us raise our issues as one voice. From then, I started knocking on doors and raising the issues that these women had been trying to resolve for years. That’s how, in 2015, I met two women in the market from UN Women’s Markets for Change project.

After attending the leadership and financial literacy workshops, forums and trainings organised by UN Women, I took up the initiative to form the Rakiraki Market Vendors Association in 2016. After Cyclone Winston, it was important to include everybody in market decision-making. We want to empower our market vendors to be climate resilient.

We have been empowered by UN Women’s Markets for Change project. Now it is our time, as women market vendors, to support economic growth for our villages, community and country.”

UN Women’s Markets for Change project has been made possible through generous support from the Australian Aid program.



DEMONSTRATING STRONG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE PANDEMIC⁴

From Germany to New Zealand and Denmark to Iceland, women leaders have shown clarity, empathy, and strong communication in their decisions and policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her Excellency Vjosa Osmani, the first woman assembly president of Kosovo, is among the many women leaders praised for their leadership during the crisis.

A former professor and mother of two girls, Osmani is an outspoken advocate for women's representation in politics. "When women participate in high-ranking political and state level [positions], they contribute to more balanced, gender-sensitive, environmentally considerate and forward-looking policies," she says.

During the pandemic, women in Kosovo have faced high levels of vulnerability. Like many countries, Kosovo has seen a rise in domestic violence cases since lockdown measures were introduced. "I am consistently raising my voice about the pandemic's gender dimensions, sharing relevant facts and information, while closely monitoring all government actions," says Osmani.

Working to protect vulnerable populations from threats related to the COVID-19 crisis, she has joined the UN Women Kosovo campaign against domestic violence and has worked closely with UNICEF on issues related to children's health and families' wellbeing.

"A limited number of women hold leadership positions globally and the same applies to Kosovo. Social productivity cannot be reached while people are marginalized, discriminated and face gender-based barriers," she shares, adding that both men and women need to contribute to efforts that put more women in decision-making positions.

CHIEF KACHINDAMOTO'S LIFE MISSION TO END CHILD MARRIAGE IN MALAWI

In Malawi, only 45 per cent of girls stay in school past the 8th grade. With one in every two girls married before the age of 18, child marriage and pregnancy remain the main causes for this high dropout rate. Child marriage has devastating impacts on the rights of the child, from her right to an adequate education, to her right to sexual and reproductive health. Girls who have left school have few opportunities to earn a living, which leaves them exposed to various forms of gender-based violence.

Chief Theresa Kachindamoto has annulled 3,500 child marriages in the central region of Malawi and has helped girls to complete their education, often by subsidizing their schooling. Working with UN Women, the government, civil society and traditional leaders, Chief Kachindamoto contributed to the February 2017 adoption of a constitutional amendment raising the minimum age of marriage from 15 to 18 years. These achievements are against all odds—as the first woman leader in her village and in a village where child marriage is deeply embedded in cultural practice, Chief Kachindamoto's fight for cultural change has required determination, leadership and persistence.



WATCH:

[Meet Chief Theresa Kachindamoto, the first woman leader of her village in Malawi.](#)

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



PRESS CONFERENCE

AIM: To engage students on gender equality in the context of the pandemic, and build communication skills. Ultimately, this is about encouraging students to engage with each other's opinions productively.

INSTRUCTIONS: Divide the classroom into two groups. Each group must designate three students to be 'panellists', and one student to be the journalist. Once the roles are assigned, every member of the group is tasked with working together to develop 5 questions they would like to ask the student panellists – in the other group -- about gender equality, leadership and COVID-19. Invite each group to exchange questions with the other group to prepare their answers. Ask all students in each group to work together to come up with a plan to support their answers -- by conducting research, gathering facts and examples to support their answers. Once both groups are ready with their responses, they can role play two press conferences, in which group has a chance to interview the other, with the designated panellists and journalists. Depending on the panellists' answers, the journalists might include new questions.



DISCUSSION QUESTION

AIM: To get students thinking about the wider picture of gender equality and women's leadership.

INSTRUCTIONS: Seat students in a roundtable discussion formation to debate the importance of women's equal representation in political leadership. The teacher or a selected student will act as the moderator, and control debate. Each student will address the debate with an opening address and present statistics and facts about women's representation in politics, and the extent to which the students feel equal representation is important.

After hearing opening addresses, students will have the opportunity to get up and defend their proposal. The debate can be as detailed as you like!



LEADERSHIP-IN-A-BOX

AIM: Promote the students' critical thinking by analysing female leadership stories and discussing gender roles through images and colour.

INSTRUCTIONS: Ask students to gather female leadership stories that they identify in news, editorials, features, humour, advertising, sports, and entertainment, among other sources. At the end of each week, have students read as many of the stories as possible and choose at least one to discuss as a classroom. Discuss and compare the stories, and ask: how are women represented in the story? Do they know other women doing the same? Would they like to do that? What role do factors like gender or age play in people being accepted as leaders, or being recognised as leaders? Is that fair? If not, what can you do to change that? What is the language used in the article?

As a follow-up to the activity, you might ask students to design their own ads which challenge gender stereotypes.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

UN WOMEN AUSTRALIA IS CALLING ON STUDENTS, JUST LIKE YOU, TO PICK UP THE PACE OF PROGRESS TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY BY MAKING EVERY DAY COUNT. JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN TO PRIORITISE GENDER EQUALITY AT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY. HERE ARE SOME IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED!

1



HOST AN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENT IN YOUR CLASS OR SCHOOL

Help make the world safe and fair by hosting an event and raising money to support UN Women's work around the world. There are many different ways that you and your classmates can fundraise. Check out our [Fundraiser Pack](#) for ideas and [register as a fundraiser!](#)

2



ORGANISE A SCREENING OF UN WOMEN AUSTRALIA'S VIRTUAL IWD PROGRAM

If you would like to bring UN Women Australia's IWD speakers to your school or community then you can stream the event live on Friday 5 March or up to a week later.

Please contact tickets@unwomen.org.au if you require more information.

3



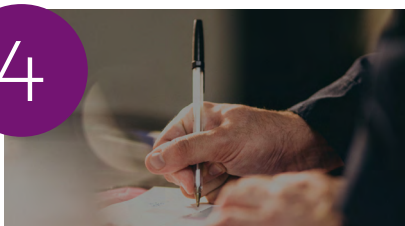
SELL PURPLE RIBBONS

Be a local leader by showing your support for International Women's Day – wear your purple ribbon with pride. Wearing a purple ribbon is a great way to demonstrate that you support gender equality to make the world safe and fair for everyone. You can help to spread the word by purchasing purple ribbons to sell or give away at your event, school or in your community.

Each ribbon sold supports UN Women's work, ensuring that everybody everywhere is treated fairly, is safe and has access to opportunities to lead and learn

[Head to our website to purchase](#) your purple ribbons!

4



TAKE THE HEFORSHE PLEDGE

Do you think that everyone should be treated fairly and be a leader, regardless of gender? Do you want to help make that happen? Then you are HeForShe. Join the community and [make the HeForShe commitment](#) today.

By fundraising for UN Women Australia this IWD, your donation supports women as leaders, entrepreneurs and agents of change in Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands through UN Women's Markets for Change project.



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REFERENCES **1** [https://www.apf.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/Quick_Guides/AustPM#:~:text=Australia%20has%20had%2029%20prime,office%20\(see%20Appendix%201\).](https://www.apf.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/Quick_Guides/AustPM#:~:text=Australia%20has%20had%2029%20prime,office%20(see%20Appendix%201).) **2** <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1058345/countries-with-women-highest-position-executive-power-since-1960/> **3** https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/GenderSnapshot_2020.pdf **4** <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/9/compilation-five-stories-of-womens-leadership>

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