



V-Day Europe

Briefing Pack 2005

V-Day Europe

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1: Eve Ensler's Open letter

Dear Vagina Warriors,

Because of your efforts V-Day, and the spirit, energy and movement to end violence against women and girls, has spread wildly around the world. Last year there were 2300 events, celebrations, in over 1100 cities, villages and towns. From Delhi to Detroit women took back their bodies and their lives. I was lucky to be in Mumbai where I witnessed the extraordinary humor of a brilliant Indian cast performing "The Vagina Monologues" for hundreds and raising money for a local shelter. I was there in Tulsa, Oklahoma performing for 2500 Native Americans so that women there would be safe and free. I was there when 7000 people from all over the world marched on Juarez, Mexico and insisted that there be justice for the hundreds of disappeared women and safety for the living.

We have had huge victories. Our Agnes Pareiyo*, was elected Deputy Mayor of Narok, Kenya. V-Day Europe was born**. A young girl from the Anti-Rape Dolphin program in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya successfully fought off her rapist. A teenager bought "The Vagina Monologues" to her high school and the community stood behind her. Women made vagina cookies for their benefit in Cairo, Egypt. The list goes on and on.

Each one of these individual victories has begun to break through the wall of denial, shame, and secrecy that surrounds the seeming inevitability and acceptability of violence against women.

Unfortunately the violence continues. Whether it's the rise of sexual assault against women soldiers in the U.S. military or rapes by football players on college campuses or the continued lack of security and support for women in Afghanistan and the terrible situation of women in Sudan; or the rampant escalation of sex trafficking of girls around the world. The epidemic goes on.

This year we must go further. We must show how central, how impacting, how contagious, how devastating this violence is to everything and everyone. We must transform our activism into real political power and vision. We must help vagina warriors become vagina leaders. This is the year we must see what we see, know what we know, say what we have to say.

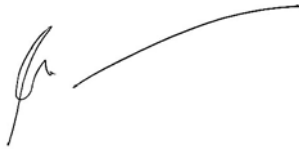
This is the year when we build a huge movement by collecting names for a database. This is the year where we bring V- Day to the smallest villages, into the places of most resistance and need, into our homes if necessary. This is the year where we stand, through our Spotlight, with the women of Iraq who have lost more freedom than they have gained as a consequence of the U.S. war and subsequent occupation. In Iraq where the incidents of rape and abduction by organised gangs has increased fear of sexual violence deterring women from returning to work or seeking employment and families from permitting their daughters to go to school.

This is the year where we end violence against women. Remember, I promised it would happen in 2005? We have a lot of work to do.

I am so proud of the huge victory of our V is for Vote Campaign in the U.S. As we know this may be the most crucial election of our lifetimes. Forty-four states and the District of Columbia have V-Posses. Through this campaign we have begun to reframe ending violence against women as a central political issue. We have found our voices. We are making ourselves heard.

V-Day is an outrageous, global, personal, anarchic unstoppable movement. There are thousands, if not millions of us. We are everywhere. We have humor, intensity, sorrow, grace, and perseverance. We are having an impact.

Go further. Work harder. Believe deeper. Be bolder. Speak louder.
We will win.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eve Ensler', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Eve Ensler

V-Day Artistic Director and Founder, Playwright, Performer, & Activist

* Agnes: Visionary behind the V-Day Safe House for the Girls

** V-Day Europe: a collaboration between four European countries and funded by the European Commission will enable women activists throughout Europe to network and share ideas.

2 : Presentation of the V-Day Movement

2.1. What is V-Day?

V-Day is a global movement born out of Eve Ensler's award winning play *The Vagina Monologues*. Based on intimate interviews with over 200 women of all ages and backgrounds, *The Vagina Monologues* transforms the shame and the secrecy surrounding the vagina into a funny, sexy and moving experience.

Just as the word 'vagina' is taboo, so is violence against women. As Eve Ensler, toured the play in America in the mid-90's, hundreds of women told her stories of violence and abuse. The experience had unlocked their voices. So the V-Day project was created to facilitate the empowerment of women in all communities by inviting them to stage their own performance of *The Vagina Monologues* between 1st February (before Valentine's Day) and 8th March (International Women's Day). Local groups such as students, women's groups, religious groups, political groups, disabled women and black women raise awareness and empower women in their own communities through their performances. All proceeds from these V-Day performances are donated to local charities, chosen by the organisers that work with female survivors of violence.

The V-Day movement serves two main purposes:

- **To raise funds for local communities and organisations working on the issue of violence against women.**
 - The focus of the V-Day campaigns is always to fundraise and give the proceeds to local charities that work with women and on the problem of violence against women. This means that people volunteer for these projects so that all the money can go to charities.
 - 10% of proceeds from these local performances also go to a common cause, the V-Day Spotlight. Last year the focus was on the disappearances and murder of women in Juarez, Mexico. In 2005, the Spotlight is on Women in Iraq (supported organization: OWFI: Organisation for Women's Freedom in Iraq).
- **To raise awareness of the campaign to prevent and end violence against women.** The stigma and taboo that surrounds violence against women often marginalises and excludes them. The campaign aims to break the silence and empower women to find their voice and tell their story.

The V-Day movement does have an impact on the lives of women who have survived sexual violence, domestic abuse and incest by increasing their accessibility to relevant services to them, demonstrating that they are not isolated and educating a community about the existence of such crimes.

2.2 Why is V-Day necessary?

SOME SIGNIFICANT FACTS:

- For European women aged 16-44, violence in the home is the primary cause of injury and death, more lethal than road accidents and cancer. Between 25% and 50% of women are victims of this violence.
Rapport Henrion, 2001
- 5 women die every month in France as a result of domestic violence.
Bulletin de la Commission Femmes, Amnesty International, n. 07.03.2003
- One woman in five is subjected to sexual assault at some stage. The age of the victims varies from two months to 90 years.
Report on Violence against Women, Council of Europe, March 2000
- Approximately 500,000 women are annually trafficked into Western Europe.
International Organisation for Migration, 1998
- Female Genital Mutilation is performed amongst immigrant communities in Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.
UN 2002

(for more statistics, please see at the end of this document)

THE CAMPAIGN:

'In order for the human race to continue, women must be safe and empowered.'
(Eve Ensler 2002)

'V-Day is a tool to get the message across and reach the general community.'
(Newham Asian Women's Project).

Violence against women is a major contributing factor in preventing women's equality and equal rights. For women to achieve equality in employment, health, education and many other areas, it is vital that women feel safe and not threatened by or subjected to violence.

The Vagina Monologues is about celebrating the female body and female sexuality. The celebration of women and their bodies as an approach to raise awareness and to mobilise and find new allies has proven hugely successful. V-Day raises awareness and funds for local service providers to continue the campaign against violence against women.

2.3 The structure of the V-Day movement:

V-Day Central:

- Charitable organisation attached to the V-Day movement based in the USA. V-Day Central **administers the V-Day movement via the Internet.**
- Provides the **annually updated script and Organiser's Kit** with relevant information about staging a performance of TVM1.
- Provides V-Day Europe with information about sign-ups and organised events in and around Europe.

V-Day Europe office:

- Actively promote V-Day at the European level
- Create networks of European partners
- Support national promoters in Europe
- Create and update the V-Day Europe website
- Write bi-monthly newsletters for the European network
- Political Lobbying
- Answer individual queries
- Coordinate meetings with national promoters

National Promoters:

- Actively promote V-Day within their country
- Create networks of: beneficiary charities; women's organisations; policy-makers; other relevant organisations and agencies.
- Political Lobbying
- Support local V-Day organisers in their country to hold successful V-Day events through:
 - Keeping in contact with all the organisers via Internet or telephone.
 - Dealing with specific queries
 - Encouraging partnerships within local areas
 - If possible offering training opportunities for local organisers
 - Coordinating a meeting for local organisers to share ideas and resources
 - If possible attend local performances
 - Collecting cheques and memorabilia to send to the US

The role of the National Promoter is to ensure that people are not overwhelmed and disheartened by rules, requirements and information. The National Promoter is also responsible for providing the materials to organisers in the appropriate language and in an accessible form. The National Promoter needs to be the main point of contact for organisers who have queries about their production and need help and advice.

1 As a National Promoter and as V-Day organiser, you will need to read the kit quite carefully because it contains a lot of very important information about the commercial production, the V-Spot, the college and worldwide campaigns and detailed tools and information for participants and organisers. The kit changes every year so it is a useful document to check all the current events and campaigns. The Organiser's Kit is available on the worldwide website (www.vday.org) for people to access after they have signed up.

V-Day organisers

- Organise a V-Day event/ benefit performance of *The Vagina Monologues* within their local community or university/college
- Organise side-events/activities to raise awareness on the issue of violence against women.
- Raise money for local organisations and for the V-Day Spotlight through their benefit performance of *The Vagina Monologues*
- Put the focus on the issue of violence against women and involve the local community.
- Give visibility to women's organisations working with victims/ survivors of violence. Give them the opportunity to present their work.

3 : V-Day Europe

3.1 History of V-Day Europe network

With the support of the European Commission (Daphne Programme), partners in four countries (France, Germany, Luxembourg and the UK) have joined forces to spread V-Day's message and to support V-Day event organisers in Europe in three languages. This movement was launched in November 2003. The national partners help local groups such as students, women's groups, religious groups to join the V-Day campaign and organise benefit performances of *The Vagina Monologues*.

On 14th March 2004 the first ever western European transnational and multilingual V-Day benefit performance of *The Vagina Monologues* took place in Luxembourg.

In 2005 the European Commission renewed its financial support allowing us to expand our network into other European countries: the Czech Republic, Italy, Lithuania, Finland and Iceland.

V-Day Europe will be celebrated in Brussels, the capital of the European Union with a two day workshop and a special benefit performance of *The Vagina Monologues*, a fantastic opportunity to strengthen the Network and meet new potential partners from diverse countries in Europe and beyond.

In the UK

The first V-Day in the UK on Valentines Day 1999, which was also the first V-Day in Europe and the second in the world, raised £360,000 for National and international charities. It was performed by a celebrity cast, including Kate Winslet, Gillian Anderson, Cate Blanchett, Sophie Dahl, Melanie Griffith, Joely Richardson and Meera Syal, making front page news in 10 newspapers.

Since then, ever increasing numbers of local V-Days have been organised in all parts of the UK in different communities and colleges. Highlights included the V-Day Gala at the Royal Albert Hall, the first ever V-Day with an entire cast of women with disabilities and a performance at the Labour Party conference in 2002 as well as bilingual performances in Wales.

To celebrate International Women's Day, V-Day hosted a sell-out performance of *The Vagina Monologues* with politicians, peers and celebrities. The performance was also translated into sign language. At the end of the evening V-Day presented the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Caroline Flint, with five demands stipulating certain changes that the government need to make in order to prioritise the issue of violence against women in accordance with its position as a human rights violation. These five demands included a national violence against women strategy and an education and public awareness campaign.

In the aftermath of the event V-Day also attended a debate at the House of Lords about the status of women in society. The demands were re-presented to Baroness Patricia Scotland, Minister for Women at this debate. In the UK over seventy local performances took place, including the first performance in Northern Ireland, a performance in Tagalog for the Filipino community, and a V-Day with a cast of deaf women in sign language.

In Germany

V-Day Berlin 2002

In 2002, a gala celebrity performance of The Vagina Monologues took place at ARENA in Berlin.

Other sell-out V-Days took place in Lübeck, Frankfurt and Idar-Oberstein.

In 2004, V-Days took place at universities and in theatres across Germany, including Frankfurt am Main, Trier, Bremen, Saarbrücken.

Awareness Raising Campaign: „Vergewaltigung kommt nicht in die Tüte“

In 2001, V-Day organised the Stop Rape Contest and called on women worldwide to develop innovative action plans against rape. 60 finalists were invited in February 2001 for the contest finale at the Madison Square Garden in New York City.

Two German women, Karin Heisecke and Silke Pillinger, had a simple, but unusual idea: in order to reach the widest possible audience in Germany, they wanted to work with bakeries and use the paper bags that bread and pastries are commonly sold in as a medium to break the silence around the taboo of sexual violence against women and show the reality of rape through facts and figures, under the slogan “Rape – no way!” (the German expression is a word play, as it means literally translated “Rape doesn’t go in the bag”). For instance, it is often not well known that the perpetrators, in most of the rape cases, come from the direct social environment of the victim and that only 10 to 15% of all rapes are reported to the police. This information were printed on bread paper bags and then literally brought on the (breakfast) table. Moreover, one side of the paper bag was used to give the number of a service provider for victims and to advertise for a range of side events.

„Vergewaltigung kommt nicht in die Tüte“ was selected as one of the three best action plans by an international jury and its implementation was financed by V-Day. The idea of Germany inspired the jury because the simple and at the same time extensive (and cheap) approach.

The implementation of the campaign, enabled by the V-Day financing, took place from the end of September 2001 to the end of November 2001 in Saarbrücken, and Karin Heisecke, with ProFamilia, the Frauennotruf, and the women’s representative of the city Saarbrücken, let this idea become reality: 330,000 paper bags were printed and distributed in 30 bakeries of the city. The campaign was a great success and has since then been implemented in many other cities through independent financing.

France:

V-Day- Paris 2004

V-Day Paris also celebrated International Women’s Day 2004 with a sold out celebrity gala performance of The Vagina Monologues at the Theatre de Paris (1150 seats) with high profile women from France: Among others Eve Ruggieri, Catherine Ceylac, Michèle Fitoussi, Marie-Laure Augry, Christine Janin, Véronique Jannot, Zouzou, Rachida Brakni, Léa Drucker, Souad Amidou, Nicole Croisille, Firmine Richard, Gabrielle Lazure, Chantal Ladessou, etc.

It honoured as “Vagina Warrior” Doctor Pierre Foldès. This French surgeon urologist has developed a revolutionary technique that allows to reconstitute the clitoris of women who have undergone genital cutting. Until now, he has operated on about 60 women for free. He has decided to share his technique with his colleagues by publishing a protocol of this intervention.

In Luxembourg

V-Month in March 2004 in Esch sur Alzette:

V-Day Luxembourg was in 2004 part of a big range of events dedicated to women during March, among others two exhibitions called “Being a woman in 2004 in Esch” and “Women of the World”, a Lady-Fest Concert, a conference on the new law on domestic violence, a workshop on self defense, etc.

The women’s month activities and V-Day were supported by Luxembourg’s minister for the promotion of women, Marie José Jacobs.

On 14 March, a multilingual benefit performance of The Vagina Monologues brought together over 30 women from Luxembourg and abroad to celebrate V-Day.

3.2 Objectives of the V-Day Europe Project

Project objectives:

- To raise awareness of violence towards women and young people
- To create and facilitate a sustainable European network that can develop common strategies
- To transfer best practice from existing V-Day networks to new networks
- To institutionalise the V-Day initiative in Europe:
- To increase the promotion of cultural initiatives, namely benefit performances of *'The Vagina Monologues'* in European countries:
- To create a transnational, multidisciplinary network in Europe to pilot a transnational event.
- To produce online information and a manual to be made available as a resource.

4: Guidelines to run a V-Day campaign

The V-Day movement aims to reach as many people as possible with the message that violence against women is unacceptable.

4.1 Creative campaigns

There are numerous methods to promote V-Day: National Promoters and V-Day organisers can initiate a range of creative methods to promote the V-Day movement and encourage more V-Day registrations and publicise awareness around the campaign.

Political Lobbying:

It is important to mobilise support at a National level, contacting politicians and policy makers to make them aware of events and involving them if possible. This can be achieved through writing letters or phoning them directly to ask if they would be interested in participating. However, it is also a good idea to have a website link on as many different sites as possible and write to organisations to ask if future events or general information about V-Day can appear in their newsletter or if you can distribute leaflets at an event they are holding.

Raising awareness of charities:

To raise awareness of local charities working to end violence against women and children the V-Day events used a variety of mediums. Posters were designed which named their beneficiary charities, charities wrote paragraphs within the programme and many had representatives from their charities speak during the evening. At the end of performances of *The Vagina Monologues*, the Vagina Warriors are invited to join the actors on stage. The reasons why they have been chosen as warriors and Eve Ensler's letter are both read out to the audience.

Making it pertinent:

In order to raise awareness of the occurrence of violence against women within their local communities, V-Day events can include local statistics within their programmes and within the performance of *The Vagina Monologues*. These statistics can be provided by the V-Day Europe office and local beneficiary charities. Watching local women publicly announce these statistics has a powerful impact on the audience.

Stop Rape:

Part of the **V-Day** campaign is to promote 'Rape Free Zones' through the 'Stop Rape contest'. This contest invites women to devise and submit action plans for stopping rape in their communities. The winning strategy is then awarded a grant so that they can implement their ideas. The strategies to stop rape can be unconventional, funny, serious, artistic but most of all, they are to be effective, inexpensive to implement, and non-violent. (www.vday.org)

Merchandise:

The V-Day campaign can be promoted through the design and sale of merchandise. Local organisers will often have merchandise specific to their performance. However, merchandise is costly and cannot guarantee a profit.

Encouraging V-Day performances:

V-Day performances can be encouraged in many different ways:

- Contacting local service providers that specifically target marginalised women and young people with information about V-Day and forthcoming events
- Placing regular information and website links in newsletters that deal with the issue of violence against women
- Attending festivals, fairs and other key events to have a stall with information and merchandise
- Creating contacts and networks of groups and individuals who can work together on an event
- Making contact with journalists or local paper that agrees to cover your event.
- Refugee communities: An estimated 50% of women who are seeking asylum in the UK are fleeing from rape and are often isolated from anyone who would be able to empathise with their situation. Mobilising a group of refugee women to stage such an event will facilitate the creation of a community and network of support between them as well as publicising services which exist for them. We are also researching the issue of trafficking and how V-Day Europe can address this.

It is important throughout the year to establish and maintain contact with key organisations. This includes those working in the violence against women sector, corporate companies, trade unions, universities and colleges (amongst others).

4.2 Vulnerable groups

This is also vital to involve discriminated and vulnerable groups in V-Day activities

- **Teenagers** are more at risk of a violent relationship than any other age group, with 1 in 5 young men and 1 in 10 young women believing that abuse or violence against women is acceptable (2). In response to this statistic V-Day in the UK involved further education colleges in their V-Day 2003.
- **Disabled women** are also vulnerable to abuse in their homes and in 2003 there was the first ever V-Day performance by an all disabled cast. This performance featured 40 women of all abilities performing *The Vagina Monologues* ending with them teaching the audience how to sign 'vagina' in British Sign Language, an extremely poignant moment of dialogue. This performance was in British Sign Language, captioned and audio described.

2 Mandy Burton et al, Young People's Attitudes to Violence, Sex and Relationships (Edinburgh: Zero Tolerance Charitable Trust, 1998)

- **Migrant women:** It is very important to encourage marginalised groups to become involved in V-Day performances to spread the message and raise awareness to all groups and communities of women.

4.3 Publicity and press

Try to create and use as much imaginative material or literature as possible. By approaching designers and printers you can often get discounted prices or free materials.

In the UK Marie Claire and V-Day worked in partnership during the 2002 campaign. In every issue running up to V-Day 2002, Marie Claire ran a major editorial feature linked to the campaign. A unique editorial package was devised by Marie Claire and produced in conjunction with the sponsor's marketing objectives.

This example demonstrates that bringing V-Day to a community can happen in many different ways, and although the ultimate aim is to raise funds for women's organisations, in Europe, at the moment, it is still important to "spread the word", to get the positive, empowering message of *The Vagina Monologues* to as many people as possible and encourage them to support the movement, which will in the long term lead to sustained and increased support for local women's groups.

5: Useful Information

5.1 Statistics about violence against women

'The term "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberties whether occurring in public or private spheres.'

The Forth World Conference on Women, Beijing. Platform for Action 1995 (Paragraph 113)

It is important to bear in mind that statistics reporting the prevalence of violence against women, be it internationally, nationally or at the local level, tend to be greatly understated. This is often due to the low levels of reporting of cases of violence to authorities and women's reluctance to mention incidents in surveys.

I/ Male domestic violence

- **Various statistics show that a woman is more likely to be attacked and beaten, even killed, by her partner or former partner than by any other person. Depending on the European country concerned, from 20% to more than 50% of women are victims of domestic violence.**
Report on Violence against Women, Council of Europe, March 2000
- **At least 1 in 5 women in the EU experience violence by their intimate male partner. 95% of all acts of violence take place within the home.**
Unveiling the Hidden Data on Domestic Violence in the EU, European Women's Lobby, 1999
- **In France, it is estimated that about 70,000 teenage girls from 10 to 18 years old are potentially threatened by forced marriages within their community.**
GAMS, research in 7 regions of France.
- **6 women die every month in France as a result of domestic violence.**
Interview of French minister for equality and Parity, Nicole Ameline, "Violence envers les femmes, il faut lutter ensemble", in: le Bulletin de la Commission Femmes, Amnesty International, n. 07.03.2003 (cited in : Irish report on Violence against women , EWL 2004)
- **2 women in the United Kingdom die every week at the hands of partners or ex-partners.**
Womankind Newsletter, Spring/Summer 2003 (Cited in: Irish report on Violence against women, EWL 2004)
- **For European women aged 16-44, violence in the home is the primary cause of injury and death, more lethal than road accidents and cancer. Between 25% and 50% of women are victims of this violence.**

In Portugal 52.8% of women say that they have been violently treated by their husbands or partners.

In Germany almost 300 women a year - or three women every four days - are killed by men with whom they used to live.

In Britain one woman dies in similar circumstances every three days.

In Spain it is one every four days.

In France six women die this way every month: 33% of them are knifed, 33% shot, 20% strangled and 10% beaten.

Ignacio Ramonet in: Le Monde Diplomatique, quoting the Henrion report, Ministry of Health, Paris, February 2001

II/ Sexual violence

- **One woman in five is subjected to sexual assault at some stage and, unfortunately, the age of the victims varies from two months to 90 years. The figures tell of increasing numbers of assault against very young girls. 98% of aggressors are male, and 50% are married or living in a de facto marriage or as a couple. Furthermore, 70% of rapes are premeditated and only 3% of aggressors are mentally unbalanced. One might also note the growing phenomenon of multiple rape.**
Report on Violence against Women, Council of Europe, March 2000
- **8.9% of French women experience rape or attempted rape, 2.8% before the age of 18.**
National Survey 2000
- **14.5% of women in Germany have suffered sexual violence at the hands of a friend or relative.**
EWL Study, 1999
- **10% of Hungarian women reported rape within domestic violence.**
"Representative study of violence in the family", Olga Toth; 1999, cited in Rape the Forgotten Issue?" A European research and Network Project, Liz Kelly, Linda Reagan, Daphne Project: JA1.1999/DAP/161/WC (cited in: Irish report on Violence against women EWL 2004)
- **Female Genital Mutilation is performed amongst immigrant communities in Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom**
UN 2002

III/ Sex industry: Prostitution, trafficking and pornography

- **Approximately 500,000 women are annually trafficked into Western Europe.**
International Organisation for Migration, Michael Specter, "Traffickers' New Cargo: Naive Slavic Women," New York Times, 11 January 1998
- **[...] some [prostitutes] are beaten, tortured or even killed if they do not bring back their earnings and reimburse their debt. Some women have even been sent to "training camps" in Italy, where they must accept 50-60**

clients per day. Finally, pressure may also be exerted with regard to the young woman's family.

Report on Violence against Women, Council of Europe, March 2000

- **Some 200 million people are online worldwide, and studies place pornography at between 20 and 30 per cent of all Internet traffic. 70 per cent of Internet pornography traffic occurs during the 9-5 working day.**

"Millions of men log on to adult sex sites every day..." Decca Aitkenhead; Article in The Observer; UK; 30/3/2003 (Cited in: Irish report on Violence against women, EWL 2004)

5.2 Useful links for more information on violence against women

International

- ❖ **Amnesty International Campaign to Stop Violence Against Women:**
<http://web.amnesty.org/actforwomen/index-eng>
On March the 8th 2004, Amnesty International launched a two-year campaign to stop violence against women. Amnesty International is calling on all governments as well as private actors, institutions and individuals to take immediate steps to put an end to violence against women and to redress the suffering it causes.
- ❖ **Coalition Against Trafficking in Women:**
<http://www.catwinternational.org/>
The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) is a non-governmental organisation that promotes women's human rights. It works internationally to combat sexual exploitation in all its forms.
- ❖ **Equality Now:**
<http://www.equalitynow.org/>
Equality Now was founded in 1992 to work for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women around the world. Working with national human rights organisations and individual activists, Equality Now documents violence and discrimination against women and adds an international action overlay to support their efforts to advance equality rights and defend individual women who are suffering abuse.
- ❖ **International Planned Parenthood Federation**
<http://www.ippf.org/>
IPPF is the world's largest voluntary organisation working to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights in over 180 countries. IPPF fights to reduce maternal deaths, help young people protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies and HIV/AIDS and provides family planning services in areas of need. Ensuring that women and girls live free from all forms of violence is crucial to ensure their sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- ❖ **Stop Violence Against Women:**
http://www.stopvaw.org/Stop_Violence_Against_Women.html

The Stop Violence Against Women website (STOPVAW) is a forum for information, advocacy and change. STOPVAW was developed with support from and in consultation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Open Society Institute's Network Women's Program. This site addresses violence against women as one of the most pervasive human rights abuses.

❖ **UNFPA:**

<http://www.unfpa.org/gender/violence.htm>

The Website has got a section on violence against women, including an interactive population center on violence against girls and women.

<http://www.unfpa.org/intercenter/violence/>

❖ **UNIFEM:**

http://www.unifem.org/index.php?f_page_pid=24

UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies that promote women's human rights, political participation and economic security. Its key tool to end violence against women is the UNIFEM Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women

(http://www.unifem.org/index.php?f_page_pid=57 ;

http://www.unifem.org/filesconfirmed/2/283_at_a_glance_trust_fund.pdf)

❖ **UN Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women, its causes and consequences**

<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/7/b/women/>

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights in resolution 1994/45, adopted on 4 March 1994, decided to appoint a Special Rapporteur on violence against women, including its causes and consequences. The current rapporteur is Dr. Yakin Ertürk (Turkey)

❖ **White Ribbon Campaign:**

<http://www.whiteribbon.com/>

The WRC is the largest effort in the world of men working to end men's violence against women. It relies on volunteer support and financial contributions from individuals and organisations.

European White Ribbon Campaign: <http://www.euowrc.org/>

❖ **World Health Organisation**

http://www.who.int/health_topics/gender_based_violence/en/

This page provides links to descriptions of activities, reports, news and events, as well as contacts and cooperating partners in the various WHO programmes and offices working on this topic. Also shown are links to related web sites and topics.

Europe

❖ **Daphne II - EU programme to combat violence against children, young people and women**

http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/funding/daphne/funding_daphne_en.htm

The Daphne II programme runs from 2004 until 2008 with a budget of EUR 50 million. It aims at supporting organisations that develop measures and actions to prevent or to combat all types of violence against children, young people and women and to protect the victims and groups at-risk.

❖ **European Campaign to end Violence Against Women:**

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equ_opp/violence_en.html

In response to the 1997 European Parliament resolution on the need to establish a European Union wide campaign for zero tolerance of violence against women, the European Commission has been conducting in 1999/2000 a European campaign to raise awareness on violence against women. The campaign was intended to promote increased awareness among European citizens of violence against women, with particular emphasis on domestic violence.

❖ **European Women's Lobby :**

www.womenlobby.org

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) is the largest coordinating body of national and European non-governmental women's organisations in the European Union, with over 3000 member associations in the 15 Member States. The EWL's goal is to achieve equality of women and men in Europe and to serve as a link between political decision-makers and women's organisations at EU level.

EWL Policy Action Centre on Violence Against Women :

<http://www.womenlobby.org/Document.asp?DocID=46&tod=17045>

In 1997, the first ever European Policy Action Centre on Violence Against Women was established to provide a forum for women's NGOs to enable them to take a leadership role in engaging policy and decision-makers to take responsibility for violence against women.

❖ **Women Against Violence in Europe :**

<http://www.wave-network.org/>

WAVE is a network of European women's non-governmental organisations working in the field of combating violence against women and children (women's refuges, counselling centers, SOS hotlines/helplines, organisations focusing on prevention and training, etc.). Currently the network focuses specifically on violence in the family and in intimate relationships.

European Info Centre on Violence Against Women:

http://www.wave-network.org/Main_frame_IC.html

The Info Centre is part of the WAVE Network which is Europe's largest association of women's NGOs combating violence against women.

❖ **Rape Crisis Network Europe**

<http://www.rcne.com/>

The aim of the Rape Crisis Network Europe is to support members and survivors through: counselling legal and support services in over 30 countries, providing an Europe-wide data collection and research, providing training for volunteers, workers and professionals, influencing curriculum development through educators and policymakers, lobbying for change in legal provisions, service standards, funding and resources and international linking for action through support and pressure

❖ **IPPF European Network**

www.ippfen.org

The IPPF European Network (IPPF EN) is one of six regions of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), the world's largest voluntary organisation in the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights, founded in Bombay in 1952. The IPPF European Network has Member Associations in 39 countries and is active in several more throughout Europe and Central Asia.

6: V-Day Stories ...

One question:

WHAT IS YOUR BEST V-DAY STORY / EXPERIENCE ?

And very nice answers...

“Just the enormous fun and challenge that my fellow actresses and I had putting on our show, which went incredibly smoothly, considering we were six women – many of whom had never acted before or not since they were at school. I plucked my cast from friends, whom I could see in specific roles and magically, they mostly all accepted and excelled. I cannot speak highly enough of them all. We found the experience liberating, embarrassing, terrifying, exhilarating, amusing and highly satisfying! I guess the best surprise was Hilary, frightfully British and stiff upper lip, who (when our fearless Australian actress went down with bronchitis before the show) gingerly asked whether she could perform ‘Reclaiming Cunt’. Hilary was stunning – hilarious in fact, and all the more so because she is the last person one would expect to revel in that particular monologue!”

Jane Dubuisson, British, France, 55

“All of it, especially seeing the diversity of the people in the theatre and their positive reaction to the V-Day message. The audience ranged from theatre people to people who worked for NGO’s, those who worked for the local government, women from a local refuges and sex workers who use the service provided by one of the organisations we gave money to. We received very little acknowledgement at the beginning as V-Day is basically unknown in Spain, however, after the play we received a great amount of recognition and interest for next year.”

Annemarie Elsom, British, Spain, 25

“My favorite story about our production of the Vagina Monologues takes place during the actual performance, when ‘Memory of her face’ was being performed. The girl who was reciting the piece had it memorized, but as she got going into it her lines came slower and slower and all of a sudden, she just stopped and had a tear running down her face. It was then, at that exact moment that I knew our production had been successful, for if not anyone else but her, she was touched and moved – this girl got the message, she understood about the horrors of what was taking place to women. It was a magical moment. Everyone in the room, both fellow cast members and people in the audience knew what was going on, and everyone felt the connection to the horror. I myself was sitting with the script in my lap ready, for a time like this to give prompts to the actors if need be, but I just sat and watched her. I knew that she needed a minute for this to sink in and that she needed to compose herself. Finally, with the help of another girl who was also reciting Memory of her Face, she came together and finished the piece. After the performance, she came to me and said how sorry she felt that she had let me down by her onstage breakdown. I gave her a hug and we both cried. I told her that it wasn’t her fault at all, and I’m so glad that she did that, and that she understood what we were doing here, why we were performing, what our mission was. I was so touched by her honesty that night. Yes some of these monologues performed were hilarious and had me crying with laughter, but none like this touched me as much as this to realize the power of reaching people and just seeing them understand the core mission behind V-Day.”

Victoria Schwarzl, Canadian, UK, 18

“It is difficult to choose. Could be Roma women V-Day 2002 , from Skopje Macedonia – Roma caravan performance, or Zagreb performance of actors and politicians in 2001, with the final “fire dance” of young women anarchists....

Here is:

V-Day Sarajevo and Mostar 2003

Aim of the V-Day Sarajevo 2003 was to challenge and change the notion of borders/boundaries in the region, effected by war and post-war situation. New borders/boundries and new political circumstances were not barriers for women who dared to present Vagina monologues in their languages and they brought “sparkle” into the often too demanding and tiresome work of the activists.

V-Day Sarajevo 2003 brought together activism and art, memories and singing, vision and celebration of women’s bodies. It helped strengthening women’s solidarity and support and sent a strong political message: women cooperate !

The performance of “The Vagina Monologues” in different Slavic languages enabled women across regional borders to understand each other through the universal language of their bodies and experience. And 400 activists and refugees in audience had the night to remember.

While Sarajevo hosted known actors, Mostar’s performance gathered young actors of different ethnicities and brought together the whole community.

Workshop with Eve Ensler – on viewing world without violence, made the participants more aware of the need to struggle against violence.

Mostar V-Day team since 2003 had several V-Days all over Bosnia and Herzegovina (in red V-van !)

Rada Boric, Croatian, Finland, 53

“After the last show we did of ‘The Vagina Monologues’, everyone, audience, cast and crew, gathered in the bar downstairs. I felt overwhelmed and proud as a whole room of people buzzed with talk of vaginas, women, feminism and the problems about violence against women. I achieved what I set out to do, to get people talking about it. Its was amazing.”

Elizabeth Sellers, British, UK, 22

“Difficult.. hmm.. they are so many!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! We have done 3 V-Day events in Iceland, advertising campaigns etc... It is just wonderful to be part of such a powerful movement.”

Pórey Vilhjálmisdóttir, Icelandic, Iceland, 32

“Watching Eve Ensler on stage at the Icelandic Opera”

Hildur Sverrisdóttir, Icelandic, Iceland, 26

“The first V-Day Here in Iceland when it all started and you could feel that great V-day spirit.”

Bjorn Ingi Hilmarsson, Icelandic, Iceland, 39

“I personally find every V-day so inspiring and strong and every time something amazing happens. The strongest experience though was probably during our first V-day Event, when a woman told her story of her abuse and the empathy it created among the 500 people audience who silently bowed their heads and cried or mummified. Another

thing is when, during our 2nd V-day we involved men into the program by having a group of them sitting scattered in the audience and standing up one at a time saying one phrase each about how the V-world looks a like when we've ended the violence against women and girls. It was so powerful and beautiful and the men were so moved by participating. Another strong experience is the young girl's choir who performed at our last V-day. It was an absolute heart moving performance and such a strong reminder of how young and innocent so many of the girls are when abuse starts, f.ex. the victims of the female genital mutilation we talked about before their appearance on stage."

Hlín Helga Guðlaugsdóttir, Icelandic, Iceland, 32

"The first V-day we organised I will never forget. It was such a great experience. They all are but to start it and see it happen was a wonderful feeling. Lot of emotions came to me, happiness, power, sadness, love, anger, hope..... a rainbow of emotions. And the most beautiful thing was that I was not the only one who felt this. Everybody that I talked to did (except my grandmother. She felt that the vagina word was said to often ☺)."

Ingibjörg Stefánsdóttir, Icelandic, Iceland, 32

"It was an incredibly enlightening experience to be involved in our own production. It created a tremendous bond of friendship between six very different types of women, who normally would never have broken down the barriers the way we did and shared some very intimate, moving, funny and deep moments together. Thank you, Eve Ensler. We also managed to affect others in a very positive way and get the point across. People were made aware of how we Vaginas feel about life! For me personally, it was a very liberating experience, as I am was a sexually-abused child and I found it very therapeutic to be the "Angry Vagina" and let it out on stage! I feel liberated somewhat of my pain."

Lavinia Samuel, British, Monaco, 54

"I don't have anything as "inspirational" as I often read on the V-Day website, or from other organizers. My relationship with the local women's charities and organizations has been personally uplifting. The performances themselves have been special in the bond that it creates among the cast: a deep and electric emotion, which carries the performance and ultimately the audience. We have played both times to a 500+ strong public of mixed western cultures. The Germans are still unsure about this theme – many in total denial that this is a "German" issue and the monologues open many eyes. Awareness here is just beginning...."

Tracey Grey, British, Germany, 33

"There were many, my best experience is sharing the enthusiasm with all the participants of the event, surprising moments of connection to audience and their reactions after performance.

If should be more concrete, I would mention for example a reaction of one young man after V-Day, as he said: "After this experience I not afraid of women activists anymore." And more..."

Petra Steinerová, Czech, Czech Republic, 28

"At many places, Face off many problems like, to accused breaking up uses and customs. Argument with cops. Many cases opened. Some newspapers title like: This woman is immoral. Somebody have to pound down those women. But it is important to establish the word "vagina" which is taboo. Make the people who are living in the

Southern part of Turkey watch "The Vagina Monologues". To discuss orgasm with people who don't know what orgasm is?"

Almula Merter, Turkish, Turkey

"The public awareness created by active PR, V-Day becoming a concept in Helsinki and even in Finland (25 different media covered in some form the event with a total circulation of almost 4 million when the population of Finland is 5,2 million).

Discussion of sexual roles at the V-Day round table was also enlightening and seemed to awake new thoughts in the audience.

The willingness of people to volunteer was also impressive, as well as the fact that at some point the production is no longer merely in the hands the producers or the director but starts to live the life of its own. A brilliant learning process on an individual level."

Camilla Lehtinen, Finnish, Finland, 32

"The best experience is when the idea becomes reality, when you receive the reaction and support from different people, when the performance gets real, when everybody likes it, when the press is full of reports, when you discover new friends all around the world, – when you make an effort to stop violence against women and girls."

Dovile Rukaite, Lithuanian, Lithuania, 31

Friendship: The great majority of the participants did not know each others as we decided to get involved. The rehearsals became a "free space" where the girls could express themselves through our work on the play. The participants have become friends and we have learned a lot about and from each others.

Organization: Our V-Day event encompasses the play and a series of events (a film projection, an exhibition, debates...) meaning that a good organization was required. As the V-Day organizer in my university, I dealt with the different aspects of the setting up from getting the funds, to renting a venue, to advertising... I also directed the play. Having different roles to play in the organization, I got a global view of the amount of work required to ensure the success of such an event. I have learned a lot about administration and communication.

V-Day was in many respects a challenge but the result was very positive and the key word is LEARNING. "

Emeline Jouve, French, France, 22

"While helping my friends to organize a performance of the Vagina Monologues in Totnes, UK, and filming the show, I was happy to be involved in this local project. Two of my friends and our arts management lecturer performed, and all three had very different roles. My friend from Lithuania, Vilma, dressed up in a beautiful, princess like, rose colored dress down to her knees, with her loose blond hair looked like a sweet girl, telling of her first experiences at the women's workshops and realization of her sexuality. Amber, a very energetic theatre student had a role of a self-confident, experienced strong sexy woman, and was reading a part of the play with all the various sounds of orgasms. She wore a very sexy sleek black outfit, mostly consisting of tight underwear, and long high-heeled black shoes. Sat on a chair, she moved and moaned, and screamed, and shouted, and laughed in all different ways. Her curly long black hair swinging along with her moves was enlivening her wild role even more. Our lecturer, a woman in her late thirties, was reading a part of the Monologues about giving a birth. It was a quieter, a more concentrated part of the performance, with more seriousness... All three performers conveyed an idea of a woman in different stages of her life in a very persuasive, interesting manner. It was nice to see that the auditorium, half of it - men,

was attentively watching and listening. After the performance, there was a colorful, exotic show of belly-dancing, culminating in a huge, crazy dance with the audience participation. All in all, a superb evening and an unforgettable experience!"

Sigita Barniskytė, Lithuanian, Lithuania, 26

"Letter From Juárez
by Mariana Katarova

Esther Chavez holds the weeping girl in her arms and chants the words, as if to convince herself that they are true: "It's really wonderful, my dear girl. You are alive. You could've been one of them." Esther looks over the girl's shoulder toward the row of pink crosses placed on the edge of a ditch, where eight raped and mutilated bodies of young girls, the same age as Rosaisela, the girl in Esther's arms, were dumped by their killers in 2001.

Rosaisela Lascano is only 16. She was attacked and raped on December 30 by a man who left her for dead in the desert. But she survived. Now she is pregnant with the baby from the rape. There, in the middle of a rubbish dump, once a cotton field, where the last windowless boxes of the maquiladoras meet open desert, Rosaisela whispers her story. Like thousands of others, she came from the poverty of the south to look for a better life in Ciudad Juárez with its 380 maquilas (US- and European-owned plants, using Mexico's cheap labor and paying young women less than \$5 a day) built along the US border. Ciudad Juárez, a city of 1.3 million, lies just across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas.

The man dragged Rosaisela by her hair, while hitting her all over her body. Then he raped her and left her for dead among the old tires and broken bottles. She crawled home many hours later, fearful for her life, avoiding people and houses. Her parents took her to the police the next day. The police were barely interested. The only one who offered to help Rosaisela was Esther Chavez—a beautiful, ever energetic and always elegant 70-year-old woman who established Casa Amiga about ten years ago as the first and only crisis center in Juárez to provide help to the victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence.

According to the authorities, some 370 young women have been found murdered since 1993, and a further seventy are still missing, although Mexican women's groups say the figure is over 400. Many victims were sexually assaulted, their bodies mutilated, strangled and dumped in the desert near Juárez. And not a single perpetrator has been brought to justice for these murders. Three federal police agents wearing dark sunglasses and looking uncomfortable are standing near the eight crosses. They say their bosses ordered them to guard the ditch because they're afraid the same killers may come back and dump another body there.

It is Valentine's Day and a big protest march, organized by Eve Ensler and the V-Day movement and supported by Amnesty International, has brought between 5,000 and 7,000 people from Ciudad Juárez and El Paso to march through the streets of Juárez. They are demanding an end to the murders of women and girls. We all meet on the Lerdo Bridge, which connects the two cities, chanting "Ni Una Más" (not one more), "No Están Solas" (you are not alone) and screaming "Justicia" (justice), while carrying black balloons and makeshift placards. For the past several years Ensler has called Valentine's Day "V-Day" and used her award-winning play *The Vagina Monologues* to organize actions, raise funds and create awareness of antiviolence causes around the world. Ensler believes that one person with a vision and the conviction to stop violence in her

community is enough. "We need to realize that the Earth is one body," she says, "and if we don't start seeing it as one body, we are all going to die. Because we are dependent on each part of this body to live. So when a woman in the south is beaten, I can't walk-my feet are being crushed. And when a woman in the north is raped, I can't think-my brain is being attacked."

So who is killing the poor young women and girls of Juárez? And why, after more than ten years, do the killings continue? Some of the murders are believed to be the work of serial killers or drug gangs, linked to the powerful Juárez drug cartel. Others link the murders to an organ-trafficking network. Still others say that the perpetrators come from among some 700 sex offenders who live in El Paso and often visit Juárez. Another theory is that a number of the mutilated bodies found in the desert bear the signs of snuff films, the type of violent porn films in which someone is really killed at the end. The inability of the local authorities to stop the murders has convinced many of possible police complicity in the crimes.

Oscar Maynez, a former chief of forensics for the Chihuahua state police, told me he quit two years ago when he found police planting evidence in one of the cases. In recent years, under increased public pressure, the authorities have been eager to show that the murders in Juárez have been solved. A series of arrests were made, but the murders continue. All the suspects detained by the police claim they were tortured to confess to the murders. "We all know that the state police work for the traffickers," said Maynez. "None of the people detained for the murders are responsible, in my opinion. The real murderers are people with no limits. I think they are a highly organized group with political connections and some connection to the police."

Juárez looks to me like the war zones I know-like Chechnya, Kosovo, Bosnia. There is the same casualization of violence, the same sense of despair, the same blurred line between right and wrong, the same wild packs of hungry street dogs roaming the city, the same sense of doom.

The maquilas are now moving out of Juárez, looking forward to even cheaper labor in China. In the meantime, under increased international pressure, President Vicente Fox has appointed two women to deal with the investigations and prosecutions in Juárez but has not yet given them funds, resources or trained staff. Mexican feminist Marcela Lagarde has invented a word for the situation in Juárez: femicide.

Somebody with resources, power and impunity continues to kill young poor girls in Juárez. "But now they know-the world is watching them," says Ensler, "and we will keep coming back."

Mariana Katzarova, a researcher on Russia for Amnesty International, has been involved with V-Day since 2001, when she brought it to her home country, Bulgaria.

Mariana Katzarova, Bulgarian, UK

“I thought I would

I was going to
I wanted to
write a poem
to express my feelings
my deep emotions
all of that
what was waving inside me
yesterday
the day after
but as it happened
I just couldn't
write a poem
just couldn't
words did not form anymore
there was just this
river of emotions
and this deep deep emptiness
yet silence
felt good

just wanted you
to know
how happy
I have been
working with you
sharing this all
with you
never felt anything like this
on a stage
never such feeling
of being there together
supporting, caring, loving
so as there was not three
but one person
one heartbeat
one soul

imagine
how something
so horrible (village, trans)
can be turned to
something so beautiful
as the whole thing was

it is very hard to let go
but that's the way it goes

thank you

for letting
me be me

luv'

This actor has also told me that doing this play has been a therapeutic experience for her. Another one of the three told me that this particular production (she was one of the actors last year as well) has been the most therapeutic work experience she's ever had. In addition to this, two people who saw our V-Day 2004 performance have e-mailed me and told me that our performance has changed their life. One of them was going through a really hard time in her life, but our show made her see humanity again.

It took the other member of the audience a year to go through the process, but now she can say that our show changed her life.

Our other V-Day 2005 producer just told me that our production has taught her how to treat people.

A 70-year-old woman came to talk to me on our V-Day on Sunday. She wanted to tell me her life story. (She had seen me on TV talking about the 72-year-old woman in "The Flood".) I asked her to record it (she doesn't live in Helsinki) and send it to me.

Finnish media found the V-Day (in Finnish V-päivä) concept this year. The radio channels were announcing that in Finland, today (March 6), we were celebrating an international V-Day against violence. I was interviewed on one of the national tv channels plus on three radio stations last week, and both of our main national newspapers (one in Finnish and the other one in Swedish) wrote about us. (In addition to other media.)

One of our three transsexual actors e-mailed me yesterday and told me that she was surprised to realise how important this production had been to her, subjectively. And she is very grateful that she was allowed to take part in our production.

Working with a transgender theme and actors has taught me a lot about transsexuality, transsexuals and the gender issue in general. And I've been able to talk about the TS issue on the media.

Being interviewed on TV made me realize that I could be me when I was interviewed. Because it was me that the radio stations and this TV channel wanted to interview. So I didn't need to use written Finnish when I was talking. I could talk like I naturally talk, I could be me, which was very therapeutic and liberating.

Last year I had to go onstage myself, because one of the actors left the production. I managed to forget about my looks (I'm overweight) when I went onstage, which was therapeutic.

All in all, doing these productions has changed my self-image, which is what good art does, I think.

Anna Kortesalmi, Finnish, Finland, 32