LET'S TALK ABOUT

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

BUILDING AWARENESS AND SOLIDARITY
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A GIRL UP, PEER-LED CURRICULUM

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Thank you note

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Peace Foundation – Africa
Population Council – Guatemala
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UNFPA – Dominican Republic
NOTE FOR GIRL UP CLUB MEMBERS

This material is for you. We’ve made it with love and care, and in some way, you and your steps, laughs, worries, fears, and joys have been present when we prepared this material. We hope that when you use it, you know that we’re there with you, next to all of you, because we will be thinking of you, even from faraway places.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is not an easy subject to talk about. However, it is essential to create safe spaces to confront this reality because GBV occurs in every region, country, and culture, regardless of a person’s socio-economic status, income, race, or ethnicity. It is one of the most widespread violations of human rights around the world. Gender-based violence harms the health, dignity, security, and autonomy of the people impacted by it. Yet it remains concealed in a culture of silence.

It’s not easy to know where to begin when starting a conversation about GBV because life for you, for us, and for young women can be very hard, and no topic seems less or more important than the other. We also understand that not everyone reading this guide will identify as young women or cisgender. We want to highlight that although this work was written by cisgender women who envisioned the activities being completed by girls globally, we also hope that it will be useful and helpful for trans womxn and girls, for gender non-conforming, a-gender, gender queer, and/or gender fluid siblings, and for the boys and young men in Clubs and communities around us.

Sexuality, appearance, the body, and social media are all common and sometimes challenging areas of life that we must face daily. Sometimes, without knowing it, these topics can involve violence against women. That’s why we want you to question, analyze, and reflect, so that we can find better ways to inhabit the world and build a better life for ourselves, for other women and for other people.

We hope the tools we developed are useful to you. Surely, the creativity of each one of you will make each activity better than what we originally prepared. Here, we value knowledge, experiences, and each of your reflections together with other members of your Club to accomplish
learning and come up with new ideas. In these sessions, you will get to write, dance, draw, laugh, and connect with each other.

Sharing and talking about these topics with other girls of your own age is a very important step forward. Just that, on its own is a great experience. You will learn together, ask questions to each other, support each other, grow together, and you will never forget that there are others with whom you can be stronger, resist, and fight alongside. That is why we want to accompany you from afar and share this bit of hope to change our lives, to back each other up, and learn new things.

This curriculum will be used by teenagers and young women around the world, each with their own experience, environment, and language. Perhaps, in time, in another part of the world, you'll meet and recognize each other. We leave you with this material, made from our own experiences, learnings, fears, and paths, so that together you can find ways to put it into practice as you see fit in your life. Above all, we want this material to unite you and make you realize how valuable and strong you already are and can be.

We hope you enjoy this journey and that you find others to share it with along the way!
This is a guideline to make it easier for you to navigate and use this curriculum. This curriculum has been divided into three main sections: Structures of Oppression, Mechanisms of Oppression, and Daily Resistances. The creators recommend following the order of sessions from 1 to 11 because there is a logic to the flow and connection of sections. However, you can also choose to explore the material differently as you like.

The Structures of Oppression section includes a chapter on the theoretical base of the construction and experience of inequality. There are three sessions total on intersectionality, gender, and gender-based violence, as well as practical activities to go deeper into understanding these issues through your body and experiences.

The Mechanisms of Oppression section has two chapters on ways that oppression is expressed over our bodies and on how we relate with ourselves, with others, and our environment. Each chapter has sessions that explore how gender-based violence is expressed, lived and reproduced, as well as experiential activities on those topics.

Finally, the Daily Resistances section includes a chapter on actions you can take to care for yourself and others too, in the areas of self-defense and cyber security. The final session on a life plan wraps up the curriculum, making final connections between activities completed throughout this study guide.

Each session has objectives, instructions for each topic, and an activity with easy-to-follow steps, materials required, approximate time for each session and activity, and prompts that can support you in facilitating conversations with Club members. Each session has key concepts that you can look for in the glossary at the end of the curriculum, and additional concepts that are important to review or keep in mind during the session have been included in the text as well. You can find them throughout the curriculum in this format:

When you see this icon, pay attention to ideas for prompt questions to facilitate and guide the conversation you are having with Club members.

This icon denotes key words for the session that are important to review (you can find in the glossary as well). Not all the key concepts of the session are to be found in the text of the session, but they are available in the glossary.
This icon shows the materials you will need in the session so that you can prepare in advance if necessary.

At the end of every activity, you may find two additional boxes: one for variations of the activity depending on the context or needs of the group; and another one for reasonable adjustments if there are Club members with disabilities, because it is important that all Club members are recognized and have access to the same opportunities and information.

This icon will help you make variations to some activity components.

This icon represents the reasonable adjustments that can be made for people living with disabilities.

Make sure to plan ahead for each session, and note that each has a different length. If your Club decides to have a shorter session than what is suggested in the guide, you will find suggestions on where to pause and wrap up, so that you can start there again the next time you meet up as a Club. This will look like this:

When you see this icon it’s because we suggest stopping the session here if you’re not able to do the full session on the same day. Come back with fresh and connected ideas for the next time you meet up as a Club and review the follow-on activities to do during the week and the additional resources provided.

At the end of each session, there are six sections you can play close attention to in-between Club meetings:

1) **Follow-on activities**: suggested activities to do on your own to reflect deeper on what you learned during the session

2) **Life plan**: suggested writing prompts so you can plan for your life, specifically on the aspects that were covered in the session, that will connect in the final session of the curriculum

3) **What’s next? Action Plan**: suggested actions you can take to put into practice the knowledge and reflections you have acquired with people outside your Club, without a breach of confidentiality

4) **Learning From others**: information about women in history that have lived experiences and accomplishments related to the topics covered in the session, with an invitation to find local examples of people like them
5) **Mapping and list of allies:** throughout the curriculum, there will be invitations to develop a list and mapping of allied people and institutions, meaning they could help you in moments of crisis or provide information or services that you may need. This resource can help you right now or in the future, so you can update it and share with others outside of the Club. You can identify it with this icon:

6) **Additional Resources:** links for videos, readings and other materials that you can check out if you want to learn more about the topics covered in the session

The environment you have created as a Club is and should continue to be a safe space for everyone. There may be steps you can all take to build and sustain collective care practices. Before starting with the curriculum, review any care agreements you have as a Club, and add any other ideas you can think of to make it a safer space. Here are some suggested agreements:

1. We are not here to judge. We do not judge nor advise others.
2. We can all speak up, but no one is forced to do so.
3. It is everyone’s time, let’s try not to hoard it.
4. We listen to each other with attention, care, and empathy.
5. Confidentiality is important and respectful. At the same time, if anything is shared that is a trigger for you – or if you have disclosed self-harm or abuse – Girl Up has prepared a resource list for organizations that specialize in supporting survivors of GBV and encourages you to reach out.

Talking and learning about gender-based violence can be difficult, and it can bring up or trigger intense emotions. We have included trigger warnings in activities that could surface difficult emotions so that you can be conscious of this and be ready to accompany and sustain each other.

**Trigger warnings** will be marked like this in case there are Club members that wish to hold off participating in a particular activity, or get ready in some way or another to dive into it. We included ideas for emotional containment, as well as grounding exercises that can support you and Club members in taking care of yourselves and each other, before or after talking about specific topics.

**Emotional Containment Tools**

Unfortunately, no matter where you are in the world, societies have been built in such a way that there are few safe spaces for women, members from the LGTBIQ+ community, and for girls and adolescents as well. Throughout the curriculum, we will be working on different topics on how this world and its violence has been built, so some sessions may
be a bit intense and the emotions that will arise may be complex or accompanied by painful memories. You are together now and have been building this safe space as a Club, and we hope that, with the learnings and experiences of these sessions, this safe space can be strengthened.

The sessions are designed so that you can find new ways to interact with yourself, with other people, and with your environment. The questions are written to help you question some traditional learnings that have been imposed and reflect on how we can transform this world so that we have more safe spaces and more experiences of pleasure and well-being. Lorena Cabnal, healer, feminist, and community defender, originally from the Xinca-Mayan people of Guatemala, reminds us that although we can be constantly outraged by all the violence and oppression against us, the diversity of forms of healing of women and diverse people in the world is powerful. There is no one way to do it, but rather a diversity of healing paths. We heal by telling our stories of violence in safe places, among women and people we trust, without judging ourselves and without bearing blame. We value our voice, experiences, and history that passes through our bodies. We heal when we recover our voice, we reconnect with our body, and we re-signify our history.

As we mentioned, throughout the sessions, we have identified moments where emotions may arise that require more time to process and marked them with trigger warnings. We invite you to take short breaks to breathe and ask each other how you feel. Try to have tissue paper on hand and water to drink. Hydrate your body to help you cleanse what is no longer good for you. It is okay to feel uncomfortable, angry, hurt, or sad when recalling or sharing certain experiences. Take a moment for those emotions to come up, allow yourself to feel them and let them flow. It is also okay to cry, yell, and express yourself in different ways. However, if you notice that someone in the group is having difficulty continuing with the activities, here are some tips that you can follow to support and reassure them.

✔️ Remember the collective care agreements that you have been building as a Club, and always strive for empathy, attention, respect, and non-judgmental listening. Also remember that you have committed to confidentiality, meaning that what is shared among Club members, stays in your Club. We are not here to advise anyone or solve their problems, but we can offer a safe space to share and validate their emotions and feelings.

✔️ If someone needs to take a moment to tell their story, give them the space to do so, without rushing or interrupting them, even though the time for other activities may be shorter. Listen to them with interest, appreciation, and courage for deciding to share their story with you right now. If you are meeting in person, it is important to maintain eye contact to validate and make them feel confident and secure. If deemed appropriate and pertinent, offering physical comfort
such as holding their hand, giving them hug, or a pat on the shoulder can also support the person that is sharing.

Try to avoid comments such as “it’s not that bad,” “that has already happened to others,” “don’t cry about that anymore,” and other phrases that invalidate the person’s emotions, make them feel guilty, or revictimize them. It is important to validate their emotions, and reaffirm that what they are feeling is normal in situations of violence. What this person experienced is not alright, but their response and their emotions are valid and normal in this situation. Starting to name it is an important step to begin to heal.

Sharing our stories in a group is valuable not only for those who share, but also for the people who listen, in order to recognize that we share similar experiences, that we have felt similarly in other situations, and therefore, we are not alone. So, when they are done sharing their story, thank them for their time and trust in sharing with you.

If someone is having trouble breathing, controlling crying, or they are experiencing excessive sweating, remind them that they can take a break from the activity, or leave for the day. Ask them what they need for support and if they want company. Have someone from the group accompany them and do breathing exercises (we share some ideas below) before joining the rest of the group, if they wish to do so.

At the end of the session, take a moment to talk about how you feel after what happened and in what other ways you can continue to accompany each other. Throughout the curriculum, you will work on a list of institutions and allies. You can ask the person who shared their story if they want to approach someone on that list for another type of accompaniment and if they want or need company for that process. Respect their decision.

Here are some exercises that you can do as a group or individually when experiencing intense emotions. Try to be hydrated before doing any of these.

**Conscious breathing**

Try to have both feet on the ground, whether you want to sit or stand. Maintain a straight and relaxed posture. Close your eyes gently. Inhale and feel air enter through your nose. Acknowledge its fresh sensation and how it is reaching your lungs. Notice how your chest and belly inflate. Pause and hold. Exhale and feel your belly and chest deflate. Repeat several times. You can count to 7 while you inhale, count to 4 as you pause, and exhale counting to 7 again.
When you feel that you are more relaxed, you can direct your breath to places in your body that you feel are still tense or where you feel any pain. Inhaling, imagine you are directing air to that region of your body, and when you exhale, feel how that relaxes that part of your body, even a little. Repeat this as many times as you consider necessary. At the end, take one last deep breath and when you feel ready you can open your eyes.

Cleaning ourselves and taking energy from the earth

You can stand up, or you can also do this exercise sitting down if you live with a disability or if you are in a wheelchair. Run your hands over your head, symbolically removing any negative thoughts that you no longer want. Rub and shake your hands to get rid of those negative thoughts. With your right hand, pretend to remove a long glove from your left arm that covers you from the shoulders to your fingers, shake your hands to get rid of any sensation of pain or discomfort that you do not want to carry anymore. Repeat with your other arm. Breathe deeply and calmly throughout the exercise. Picture how you are cleansing your body of everything that bothers you. Run your hands over your chest and belly, shake them to get rid of everything that bothers you. Do not miss any part of your body to cleanse. Cleanse both your legs, from your hips, all the way to your toes.

When you are down at your feet, once you have symbolically removed everything you do not want, breathe deeply and with your hands, take energy from the earth. Inhale deeply and lift your arms up around your body. Bring your hands above your head and bring your palms together feeling recharged. Slowly lower your hands, putting them together in gratitude over your chest. You can lower your hands back to the ground and take more energy if you wish.

Rooting ourselves

Sit comfortably and place the soles of your feet firmly on the ground, with your arms relaxed over your lap. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Imagine that in the center of your stomach there is a tree whose branches grow over your chest and spread through your arms. It is a lush and strong tree. Feel the trunk go down your legs, and the roots growing towards your toes and into the ground. Take a deep breath and feel the connection that exists between you and the earth. Visualize how the roots descend into the darkness of the earth, charging you with the healing energy of Mother Earth, an energy that nourishes and revitalizes. Breathe again and imagine how in that deep darkness you also connect with the roots of the trees of your peers. Even if you are not gathered in the same place, you can recognize that they are there with you. Mentally, thank the company of your peers, and the energy of the Earth that nourishes you all. Breathe deeply and return to your center, to the here and now. Take a couple more breaths and when you feel ready you can open your eyes.
Energy balls

Join the palms of your hands and rub them until they generate heat. When you feel the heat, place your hands like a bowl and open them little by little, imagining that you have a small ball between them. Continue feeling the warmth between your hands and how that ball grows in size little by little. Hold that energy between your two hands, then bring them in front of your chest and slowly place your palms on your chest, as if you wanted to put that energy inside yourself. Feel that healing warmth enter you. You can close your eyes, feel your body, and place your hands anywhere else you feel you need it. Remember to breathe slowly and calmly while doing this exercise.

In our body and together with others, we have the ability to heal and re-energize because, although our bodies have experienced different types of violence and oppression, it is also in our body that vital energy, resistance, rebellion, joy, and pleasure exists. As we have mentioned before, the fact that you are meeting, listening, and working on these issues is in itself a transgressive and revolutionary act. In a world where girls and adolescents are silenced, listen to each other when you break silence, and recognize the value of your own voices and knowledge.
SECTION 1

STRUCTURES OF OPPRESSION
CHAPTER 1

THE CONSTRUCTION AND EXPERIENCE OF INEQUALITY
Introduction to the Chapter

Society is organized and classified in an unequal way. In this classification, there are groups of people with more privilege than others. This means that not only are we different from one person to another, but also, frequently, we are unequal from one person to another.

In society, we can be classified as child, adult, urban, schooled, healthy, white, mestizo, heterosexual, lesbian, and so on. We can belong to two or more of these classifications or feel like they represent part of who we are, meaning that you can be a healthy, white girl, or lesbian, mestizo, and poor. That is why this classification not only refers to differences but also inequalities, because inequalities accumulate, as well as privileges. The combination of multiple identities produces different scenarios for each individual, and many of these can be unfair and painful. This mechanism is what we refer to as the overlap of inequalities.

Society teaches us how to be women and men, and influences how we feel we must perform, look, speak, or behave to be socially accepted and what spaces we can occupy. However, this isn’t that simple. Sometimes, these differences enclose inequalities among men and women, and different forms of gender-based violence.
Chapter Objectives

- Recognize our own privileges and inequalities
- Recognize the privileges and inequalities in other people
- Understand how inequality is built and sustained
- Understand how men and women are social constructs
- Understand how we learn to use space and move in it
- Understand that gender is a social construct
- Identify different forms of gender-based violence
INTERSECTIONALITY AND THE OVERLAP OF INEQUALITIES

Estimated Time of the Session: 1 hour 35 minutes

Session Objectives

• Understanding the meaning of the overlap of inequalities
• Identify the overlap of inequalities in your own context
• Position yourself around the overlap of inequalities

Key Words:

• Discrimination
• Emancipation
• Ethnic Origin
• Geographic Origin
• Inequality
• Intersectionality
• Overlap
• Privilege

Introduction to the Session

The experiences of privilege and inequality can always be felt in our bodies. The body receives the advantages of privileges or the injustices of inequalities. Recognizing our oppressions and our privileges will help us understand how the world works and will allow us to imagine new ways of harmoniously inhabiting the space we share with others.

Clarification:

Some authors use the word “intersectionality” to refer to what we call “overlap.” It is possible that you find both words in this curriculum.
Table of Inequalities

Estimated Time of Activity: 25 minutes

Materials:

• Inequity Table
• Pen or pencil

Instructions:

In the following table you will find a column on the left side with different identities people have and can be discriminated against because of, and at the top row, a list of possible places where you can experience discrimination based on these identities. Individually, write a check mark (✓) in the cells of the column that correspond to your experience of being discriminated against in a particular place for one of your identities. You can have more than one check mark in every row if you have experienced discrimination in more than one place.

* For printable version of activity, click “Go to Activity” and download the resource. To view printable version of all activities, click “See All Activities”.

When you finish, break into small groups or teams of three and answer the following questions:

• Is there a table that is identical to another one?
• Why are they similar or different from one another?
What is the Intersectionality of Inequalities?

Materials:
- Separate workspaces for each group
- Journal or notebook
- Pen or pencil

This activity may bring painful experiences or intense emotions related to discrimination and inequality. If necessary, review the section on Emotional Support in the “How to Use This Guide” section. At the end of this activity, a breath and/or emotional containment exercise is also included.

Estimated Time of Activity: 20 Minutes

Instructions:

Create two groups and discuss the following questions based on the following metaphor. Afterwards, share as a Club.

Let’s imagine a house with a tile roof. Let’s focus on that roof.

Each tile represents a place of inequality. The lines in bold are where one tile overlaps with another, meaning where one inequality overlaps with another. Inequalities are based on different forms of discrimination.

For someone, experiencing racism can overlap with experiencing discrimination because of some disability, and in turn those two tiles overlap with experiencing discrimination due to their age.

Below, in the second row of tiles, another person experiences discrimination because of their place of origin which overlaps with discrimination based on their sexual identity and their gender.

These are just some examples. For each person, experiencing the different overlaps of inequality can create a combination of unique “tiles,” and it’s important to know that if I experience some inequality, it is possible for other people that I know or may not know, to experience them in the context of their life. There are multiple possible overlaps.

- In your words, what is the overlap of inequalities or intersectionality?
- How does the overlap of inequalities affect you personally?
- Can you mention a person who has less privileges than you? How do you treat this person?
After this activity, take a few minutes to take deep breaths and collectively. Shake your body. And if you deem it necessary, review the emotional containment exercises at the beginning of the guide.

Reasonable Adjustments:

A volunteer in the group can describe the images and read the questions out loud if needed.

If you need to take a break, this is a good place to pause. To wrap up, list your individual and group reflections on what you’ve learned so far. Review the additional resources included at the end of this session.

The Perfect Place

Estimated Time of Activity: 30 Minutes

Materials:

• Wide space to be able to walk and where everyone can fit making a line

This activity may bring painful experiences or intense emotions related to discrimination and inequality. If necessary, review the section on Emotional Support in the “How to Use This Guide.” At the end of this activity, a breath and/or emotional containment exercise is also included.

Instructions:

Before starting, each Club member will take two minutes to imagine what their Perfect Place would be like. It can be a town, city, or outdoors space. Imagine what it should have, the colors and smells you’d like there to be, the way people behave and live. Now, form a line, one person next to the other. In front of you, imagine you can see this Perfect Place.
After imagining the Perfect Place, have a volunteer read the following statements out loud. If the statement is true for you, you will step forward towards that Perfect Place. If the statement is false for you, you will step backwards.

If the space isn’t large enough, you can take small steps.

1. It is common to hear from others that I am pretty.
2. I always feel safe on my way home, no matter what time of the day.
3. I’ve never feared being excluded by my family because of my sexual orientation.
4. I’ve never felt excluded because of my economic condition.
5. I know how to read and write.
6. My skin color has never been a topic of conversation with my friends.
7. I go out on vacations at least once a year.
8. I eat three or more times a day.
9. I buy new clothes at least twice a year.
10. I go to school.
11. I can enter different businesses without fear of someone asking me to leave.
12. I do not worry about buying food for my family. That’s already worked out.
13. I have the support of my family when I have new ideas.
14. I have my birth certificate in order.
15. I’ve never been embarrassed by my last name.
17. I can always go into public spaces without any problems.
18. My way of speaking has never been a reason for mockery or joke.
19. I speak another language in addition to my mother tongue.
20. I’ve never been in a public space where the only person with my ethnic origin is me.
21. I can move through the city or access public transportation without any problem.
22. I can dedicate myself exclusively to studying and playing.
23. I can express my religious or spiritual views freely.
24. I have travelled by plane because I decided it, or my family did.
25. I’ve never been nervous when I go through migration control at an airport or a border.
26. If I cross paths with a stranger at night, I am not scared.
27. I have Internet access.
28. I’m always up to date with the latest technological advances.
29. I live in a nice place where I feel safe.
30. I am not afraid of the police.

After reading all the statements, stay in the spot where you ended up, and from there, reflect on the following. The volunteer who read the statements can read the questions out loud. The rest can answer out loud voluntarily.
• Was everyone able to give 30 steps forward?
• What does the answer for question 1 mean to you?
• Was there a statement you hadn’t ever thought about?
• Why did you sometimes step forward or backward?
• Is there such a thing as The Perfect Place?

After this activity, take a few minutes to take deep breaths individually and collectively. Shake your body. And if you deem it necessary, review the emotional containment exercises at the beginning of the guide.

Variations:

After imagining the Perfect Place, in a piece of paper with a pen or pencil, you will make a mark every time the statement is true for you, if false don’t write anything down. At the end of the statements, everyone counts the marks that they were able to get and answer the questions as a Club.

Pursue Justice, Imagine Emancipation

Estimated Time of Activity: 15 Minutes

Materials:

• Extract from the Zapatista Manifesto

Instructions:

The Zapatistas are an autonomous Mexican organization that defends the right to work, to own land, have shelter, food, health, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace for the indigenous peoples and for all people in general. Their acronym is EZLN for the meaning in Spanish for Zapatista Army of National Liberation and they cover the territory of Chiapas, México.

Next, you will read an extract from the Zapatista Manifesto:

To the Mexican people:
To the peoples and governments of the world:
Brothers and Sisters:
The flower of the words shall not die. The hidden face who pronounced
it can die today, but the words came from the depths of history and earth and cannot be plucked by power’s pride.

(...)  
Our fight is over hunger, and the bad government who feeds the stomachs of our children with lead and paper.  
Our fight is for a decent roof, and the bad government that destroys our homes and history.  
Our fight is for knowledge, and the bad government who delivers ignorance and contempt.  
Our fight is over land, and the bad government who offers cemeteries.  

Our fight is for fair and decent work, and the bad government who buys and sells bodies and shame.  
Our fight is for life, and the bad government that offers death as a future.  
Our fight is for the respect of our right to govern and to govern ourselves, and the bad government who imposes the law of the few to the many.  
Our fight is over freedom of thought and movement, and the bad government who puts jails and graves.  
Our fight is for justice and the bad government who is filled with criminals and murderers.  
Our fight is over our history, and the bad government who proposes to forget it.  
Our fight is for our homeland, and the bad government who dreams with a foreign flag and tongue.  
Our fight is for peace, and the bad government who announces war and destruction.

(...)  
Brothers and sisters of other races and other tongues, of other colors and same heart, you’ve protected our light and in it you lit your fire.  
The strong one came to blow it out with its strong puff, but our light has grown into other fires. The rich man dreams of turning off that first light. It is useless for there are many and they are all first.

(...)  
We are murdered for working, for living. There is no place for us in this world of power. We will be murdered for fighting, but only like this shall we create a world where we can all fit and where we all live without dying for what is spoken.

They want to take away the land so that our steps won’t have ground.  
They want to take history away so that our words die in oblivion. They don’t want us indigenous. They want us dead.  
For the strong one our silence was his desire. In silence we died, without words we ceased to exist. We fight to speak against forgetting, against death, in favor of memory and life. We fight in fear of dying that death of omission.  
Speaking in your indigenous heart, is the homeland who is still worthy and with memory.  
(January 1st, 2015) #Yamecanse
Reflection Questions to Discuss as a Club

• According to their Manifesto, do Zapatistas only fight for a specific cause?
• Why do you think they fight for all the different causes expressed in the Manifesto?
• How can we contribute to the Zapatistas fight?

Closing of the Session

Estimated Time: 5 Minutes

Everyone in the group will share their reflections, feelings, and what they have learned.

Follow-On Activity

Make a list of trustworthy people and places that offer services in health, justice, orientation, and/or offer emotional accompaniment that you already know and that you consider safe spaces for young people. In the list of people, you can include people close to you, like your mom or your sister as well as teachers, Club leaders, health professionals, therapists or others. Expand the list as you work through the sessions and new ideas or needs come up. Verify that they are safe spaces where they respect your preferences and priorities. You will work with this throughout the curriculum and you can call it Mapping a List of Allies. The objective is to identify those spaces or people you can approach in case you suffer discrimination or violence because of how you identify yourself whether by skin color, place of origin, gender, or ethnicity. We will identify with the following icon the activities where we recommend you to do this.

What’s Next? Action Plan:

Do Activity 3 with your group of friends in which you each imagine your Perfect Place. Use the same dynamic with the statements and answer the same questions.

Life Plan:

Go back to Activity 2 and think about the person you thought of when answering the question: *Can you mention a person who has less privileges than you? How do you treat this person?*

Now think and write, what can you do to make the inequality between you two smaller? What are some of the issues that you are passionate about and want to know more about, advocate, and fight for?
Learning from Others

Commandant Romana

You will learn about a strong Zapatista woman and her multifaceted fight for justice.

Commandant Ramona was a Tzotzil indigenous woman and a highly recognized commander in the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) of Chiapas, México. She fought for the Zapatistas’ rights and for the rights of women in her community regarding access to health, education, and fair wage for the craft and artistic work they did.

In 1993, Commandant Ramona and the Major Ana María consulted widely with the indigenous Zapatista communities (clandestine at that moment) about the exploitation of women and following this, created the Revolutionary Law of Women. On March 8 of that same year, this law was approved within the Zapatista territory. Its purpose is to guarantee sexual and reproductive rights, and education, political, and labor of women rights. At that moment in history, it was an irreverent and innovative act and continues to be an example for the rest of the world.

During the Zapatista uprising, she oversaw directing from a strategic point of view until the capture of San Cristóbal de las Casas on January 1, 1994.

She is an example of struggle, rebellion, simplicity, love, and conviction, given that indigenous women are strongly discriminated against, not only because they are women, but also because of their ethnic origin and their socio-economic situation and are denied political participation next to men.

She died on January 6, 2006 in San Cristóbal de las Casas, México.

Try to find out about a local woman that has been involved in struggles that are intersectional in your neighborhood, community, or country.
CHAPTER 1: SESSION 2

INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS

Estimated Time of the Session: 1 hour 10 minutes

Session Objectives

• Recognize each other and learn what will be covered
• Recognize the learnings we have about being a man or a woman
• Reflect on how men and womxn aren’t just different but unequal

Key Words:

• Discrimination
• Equity
• Gender
• Hetero designation
• Inequality
• Machismo
• Pronoun
• Sex
• Stereotype
• Stigma

Materials:

• Pencil
• Crayons or markers
• Poster paper

Introduction to the Session

For starters, each participant will share their name and pronouns to the rest of the Club members. If participants are unfamiliar with the word ‘pronoun’ (being mindful of English as a second language for some participants), please explain that pronouns in English are how we
describe our gender. Traditionally people might use he/his/him or she/hers/her, however they/theirs/them or zi/zir/zirs or others are welcomed in the space. We want to address people the way they identify and make that a priority. After introducing themselves, they will take a ball and throw it to another participant saying their name. Repeat this dynamic several times, until everyone in the group has had a chance to participate.

**Variation:**

Instead of using a ball you can use a knotted handkerchief, an apple, orange, or a small toy. If the session is virtual, use the dynamic of naming the person you are passing the turn to.

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**How Are We Made Into Women Or Men?**

**Estimated Time of Activity:** 45 minutes

**Materials:**

- Paper or notebook
- Flip chart paper or poster paper
- Crayons or markers
- Pencil

**Instructions:**

For this activity you must create smaller work groups with 5 to 7 participants in each. Ask each group to draw a human silhouette in their flip chart paper. Ask one group to write “woman” at the top of their silhouette and ask the other group to write “man” on theirs. If there are more than two groups, do the same with the others. Each team will answer each question on the silhouette, by drawing or writing key words in specific areas of the body. You can give participants about 3 minutes to answer each of the following questions:

1. What have you learned from your family, from society, and the media about the ideal physical characteristics for the person in your drawing?
2. What have you learned about the ideal personality or emotional characteristics that the person in your drawing should have?
3. What have you learned are the types of jobs and work that the person in your drawing can generally do?
4. Based on what you have learned, generally, what things can the person in your drawing do to have fun?
5. Based on what you have learned, generally, what spaces, public or private, does the person in your drawing occupy?

Afterwards, each small group will share their drawing with the rest of the group and the elements written on it.

**Reflection Questions to Discuss as a Club**

1. How did you reach these conclusions?
2. Did you have any disagreements on what to write or draw?
3. If you showed the drawing of a “man” to someone who identifies as one, do you think he would feel represented? In the same manner, would someone who identifies as a woman feel represented with the drawing of a “woman” and its characteristics?
4. Reflect on where you learned these characteristics from, who taught them to you and how. For example, you can discuss what color is the silhouettes' skin, the shape of the body, the length of its hair, if there were genitals drawn or mentioned and if all the drawings reflect the same body type for example.
5. Reflect on the spaces that each person can occupy according to each drawing, which of these are public or private, and the reasons why these are mostly occupied by one or the other. You can explore the key concept Hetero Designation.

**Hetero Designation:**

This concept is made up of two words: “hetero” and “designated.” The first, “hetero,” comes from another concept: heterosexuality. Heterosexuality is the classification of people into either men or women, which among many other things, assumes that people only feel sexual or romantic attraction to people of the opposite sex. The other word is “designated,” which means destined, reserved or fixed. When we put these two words together and form “hetero designated,” we mean that some activities, places, colors, behaviors, names, and clothes, among other things, are created exclusively for men or exclusively for women. This makes the separation and difference between men and women visible, and forces sustained maintenance of that separation.

**Note for the Facilitator:**

You can use these questions to prompt conversations around the drawings and what came out of it. If Club members are silent or hesitant to share, try to rephrase the questions or use other questions to try to
dig deeper. For example, in question 4 we included some lines to go deeper into reflecting on the use of colors for the skin or eyes, of what the ideal body type should be, and you could talk about how we all have different body shapes and sizes, hair type and color, but that still the messages around “ideal body” have been taught to us as something we should aspire to and look for in others.

Variations:

The drawings can be made on a board, on a cement floor using chalk, on a notebook or piece of paper, or on the ground using a stick. If the session is virtual, divide the group into smaller virtual rooms and have them draw their silhouette individually and have them discuss it or they can draw it as a group using a shared digital board or shared Google Sheet or Google Doc that is editable by all participants who are joining the virtual meeting.

Reasonable Adjustments:

If there are people with blindness, deafness, or any disabilities related to their motor skills in the group, make sure to ask what makes them more comfortable in terms of participating, listen to their ideas and suggestions, and assign someone from the group to draw or write their ideas.

Differences Vs. Inequalities

Estimated Time of Activity: 15 minutes

Materials:

• Notebook or journal
•Pen or pencil

Instructions:

Write in your notebook or journal, and if you feel comfortable, share with the rest of the group answers to the following questions:

• How do these characteristics that society demands of men and women make us live differently? Are these differences always good?
• Are we treated unequally based on those differences?
• Are they really differences or are they inequalities?
• Think about how differences talk about unlikeness of variation, while inequality refers to difference of opportunities, status or access.
• Do you think that what we learned as virtues of being a woman or being a man sometimes don’t allow us to do what we desire? What is your opinion on this?

Variations:

You can develop the activity without a journal, having each member share their reflections on the questions.

Reasonable Adjustments:

If there is a person with blindness, deafness or with a motor skills disability in the group, make sure to listen to their ideas and opinions, however they feel more comfortable sharing.

Closing of the Session

Estimated Time: 5 minutes

Everyone in the group will share their reflections, feelings and what they have learned.

Follow-On Activities

Go back to your notebook throughout the week and add things you have reflected upon about what you learned today. Before the next session, take some time to write what your favorite physical traits and personality characteristics you like about yourself. Then write what types of jobs you see yourself doing in the future as well as what things you like to do to have fun. Finally write about the spaces, public or private, that you would like to occupy, even if they are mostly occupied by men. For example: “I want to be president of the country,” “I want to have my own editorial,” or “I want to go out and play soccer in the neighborhood’s field more often even though I haven’t seen many girls or women playing.”

To continue exploring the use of space, you can do this activity on your own: Where are the women and where are the men?

Choose a place you would like to analyze. It can be a house, a church, a school, a neighborhood, or any other place you can think of. Make a map of the place you chose and draw all its components. For example, if it’s a house, draw the kitchen, the rooms, the yard, etc. Or if you want to make a map of the neighborhood or the town, draw the stores, market,
park, school, the houses, and sports fields. Then, using a specific color or shape, draw the places where you can find women, and in a different color or shape, the places you can find men. You can also draw with different colors the spaces where girls are and where boys are. If there is a space or place where there are more women or more men, make note of that as well. The idea is to see how the space is distributed.

Reflect and write in your notebook:

• What happens in each of these spaces?
• In what spaces is there violence?
• What spaces are more appreciated than others?
• Do you think there is a relationship between the value of each space and whether they are occupied by men or women?
• Which spaces can you not go into?

* For printable version of activity, click “Go to Activity” and download the resource. To view printable version of all activities, click “See All Activities”. 
Today you’ll learn about **Gabriela Mistral**, to learn how women can occupy important decision-making positions, travel around the world and write. Gabriela was born in Vicuña, Chile, in Latin America in 1889, and died in 1957 in New York, in the US. Her birth name was Lucila de María Godoy Alcayaga. She was born into a family of limited resources and managed to study to become a teacher.

She was an important thinker in the field of education, a poet, and a writer. She was asked by the Mexican government to create the foundation of the country’s educational system. She was a consul in New York and in Los Angeles of the United States of America, consul in Veracruz, Mexico and general consul in Brazil.

Her most recognized works are *Desolation*, *Logging*, and *Winery*. She received the Nobel Prize in Literature, the Serra Prize of the Americas, the National Prize in Literature of Chile and a PhD honoris causa by the Mills College of Oakland, California.

For next week: Find a local example of a woman that is occupying or has occupied diverse spaces in your society and find out more about her trajectory.

Read one of her poems: [Tiny Feet](#)

Now try to find out about a local woman that has published and/or occupied important political positions and how they got to do this.

**What’s Next? Action Plan:**

If you have sisters, female cousins, or girlfriends outside your Girl Up Club, try to share with them some of the things you learned in the session on how society dictates what a woman or a man can and should do, and use the story of Gabriela Mistral as an example to talk about the importance of women who write, publish, and occupy important decision-making spaces or the map you drew. Share with people you feel comfortable sharing with.
Mapping and List of Allies:

If you’ve suffered discrimination or exclusion because of your gender, for example being denied access to some health service or getting less pay for your job, look for institutions that can help you to feel supported and guide you towards what legal routes you can access.

Additional Video Resources:

- “Origin of Gender”
  2018 Short Illustrated video (9 min) created by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), an American public broadcaster and television program distributor.

- “Gender Roles and Stereotypes”
  2018 Short illustrated video (2 min) created by Amaze.org (in English)

- “Expressing Myself. My way.”
  2016 Short illustrated video (3.5 min) created by Amaze.org (in English)

- “Range of Gender Identities”
  2016 Short illustrated video (3 min) created by Amaze.org (in English)
CHAPTER 1: SESSION 3

GENDER AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Estimated Time of the Session: 1 hour 45 minutes

Session Objectives

• Recognize that both sex and gender are social constructs
• Understand what gender-based violence is
• Identify different types of gender-based violence
• Recognize and name lived and exercised violence

Key Words:

• Gender
• Gender-based violence
• Gender discrimination
• Gender norms/roles
• Sex
• Stereotype
• Stigma

Introduction to the Session

In the previous session, we were able to explore some stereotypes that we have and/or know of around sex and gender. From your What’s Next? Action Plan from the last session, share and discuss reflections with others on how society dictates what a woman or a man can and should do. With your whole Club, share what comes to mind about the conversations you had with others – what surprised you, what reactions other people had, and if you learned anything new.
Write down anything you think is important about this collective conversation in your notebook or journal.

The traditional binary sex/gender system maintains inequality between men and women, under the idea that men and women are different and have different abilities, desires, roles, bodies, etc., which leads to inequalities and restrictions that can be made hidden. This binary sex/gender system furthermore does not leave space for the many individuals who do not feel comfortable or limited to one gender alone. For example, transgender individuals, gender non-conforming individuals, a-gender, gender fluid, or gender queer people have existed throughout history. However, the strict traditional binary sex/gender system has led to much violence committed against people who do not identify with and/or express themselves as the gender they were assigned at birth.

This division between men and women brings forward the unequal division of the spaces we use. This creates specific spaces for men and women, but also places where women are in real danger or spaces that are not designed for women’s needs. Women are seen as intruders or as minorities. This limits women’s experiences, violating the spaces in which they mobilize, such as public transportation, educational institutions, recreation spaces, housing, work, and political spaces. Basically, affecting women in both the public and private spheres.

Whose Rights Are the Most Important Rights?

Estimated Time of Activity: 45 minutes

Materials:

• Pencil
• Crayons or markers
• Poster paper

Instructions:
Divide the whole group into three smaller groups with equal number of participants, trying to include in each group members that normally don’t work together or you can also do this randomly. In your small groups, imagine you have been chosen as the committee to come up with a declaration of human rights with a gender-specific focus. Your
final declaration can only include the number of rights in your group, i.e. if your group has five members, your declaration will have only five rights. As a team, negotiate in order to decide what rights to prioritize. Write these rights down on a piece of poster paper and decorate or add any artistic components that you see fit. After 20 minutes, come back as a Club, and have every team place their declaration in a visible part of the room and present your declaration. Finally, as a Club, decide on seven gender-specific human rights to include in the final Club declaration.

For this activity, review the concepts of sex and gender. Remember the previous session’s discussion on how these two are social constructs and think about how you can come up with gender-specific human rights.

Sex: Biological characteristics (genetics, endocrine, and anatomical) used to make group categories on human beings, as members of a male or female population. Although these sets of biological characteristics are not mutually exclusive, in practice they are used to establish a differentiation of humans inside a polarized and binary system (UNESCO, 2016:19).

Gender: Refers to the attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationship between women and men, and girls and boys, as well as the relation between women and between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes (UNESCO & UN Women, 2016:10). Gender roles are often conditioned by the structures of the household, access to resources, specific impacts of the world’s economy, a situation of conflict or disaster, and other locally relevant factors such as ecological conditions. Just like gender, gender roles can be transformed over time, especially with the empowerment of women and the transformation of masculinities (UN Women, 2017).

Reflection Questions to Discuss as a Club

1. Why did you choose the rights you included in your declaration?
2. How did you negotiate what to include or leave out?
3. Did someone monopolize the conversation?
4. Why do you think there is a polarized binary system? What are some of its functions?

Variations: If the session is virtual, divide the whole group into three different chat rooms and work on the declaration of rights on a shared online document or digital board.
Reasonable Adjustments:

If there are people living with deafness or blindness, everyone in their small groups has to make sure that their inputs are included.

If the Club wants to take a break here and continue with the rest of this session at another time, this is a good place to stop. Just remember to do some of the closing exercises and reflections, and to check out the additional resources included at the end of this session, specifically Audre Lorde’s “The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action.”

Two Sides of the Same Coin

Estimated Time of Activity: 45 minutes

Materials:

- Blank index cards or small pieces of paper
- Pen or pencil

Remembering and sharing about the violence we’ve experienced can trigger some hard emotions. If necessary, review the section on Emotional Support in the “How to Use this Guide”.

Instructions:

The polarized gender/sex binary system is built in part to separate us, to place a divide between two supposedly opposite sides. Understanding gender as a diverse range of possibilities poses the understanding that gender-based violence also has multiple ways of expressing itself and that as members of society, we can also experience different forms of gender-based violence. Read the following definition of gender-based violence out loud or have it written somewhere visible in order to do the next activity.

Gender-Based Violence: Violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, against someone based on gender discrimination, gender role expectations and/or gender stereotypes, or based on the differential power status linked to gender. (UNESCO & UN Women, 2016:11). It is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between females and males.
The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries, and regions. Examples include sexual violence, like sexual exploitation/abuse and forced sexual work; domestic violence; human trafficking; forced/early marriage; harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation; honor killings; and widow inheritance. (UN Women, 2017). Notice that this definition does not say that GBV is only perpetrated against women and girls.

Ask each Club member to take an index card and write “I experienced gender-based violence when” at the top. Take some time to think about a time when you experienced gender-based violence. Try to remember the details of the situation, what happened, where you were, what time of the day it was, who you were with, what you saw or smelled, if you felt anything on a specific part of your body (i.e. a headache or sweaty hands) and any emotions that you can remember from that situation. Write down the experience with as much detail as possible. This card is for each Club member’s eyes only, no one else will read it, so feel free to write everything you think of on it. After 5 to 10 minutes of this, ask each person to turn the card around and to write “I exercised gender-based violence when” at the top of the card and to do a similar exercise, writing down a situation where they exercised GBV, including details of when it was, where, what happened, who was involved, and any other details in terms of emotions and physical sensations that they can remember. Write down as many details as possible. Take about 5 to 10 minutes for this as well.

Now, ask Club members to work in pairs. They can choose who to work with or people can pair up as they finish writing their cards. Ask people to share whatever they feel comfortable sharing with their partner about what they wrote on their index cards or the process itself, taking turns to actively listen and share. Take between 10 to 15 minutes for this.

Reflection Questions to Discuss as a Club

When done talking in pairs, come back together as a Club, with all its members, and discuss how you felt about remembering these two sides of violence, of experiencing violence and exercising violence.

1. How did you feel about sharing your experiences? How did you feel when you listened to your partner talk about their lived experiences?
2. Why do you think it’s important to know about this? (It is important for us to be aware when we are exercising violence, to recognize it and to make conscious decisions and changes towards more respectful and equitable behaviors. Even though we are all capable of exercising violence, we are all also capable of deciding not to do
it and show or make it evident when it is happening around us).

3. What would you say is the difference between violence against women and gender-based violence? Why do you think it’s important to distinguish these two and how they are connected as well? Do you think GBV only happens to girls and women?

**Variations:**

If you have time, get creative with the index cards and make round ones or use different colors on each side. You can also write down the definitions of key concepts such as gender and GBV on posters or whiteboards to have them available on one of the walls. If the session is taking place virtually, have separate chat rooms for participants when they have to work in pairs, so that they have the privacy to talk about what each person wrote on their index card.

**Reasonable Adjustments:**

If there are people living with blindness, they can record what they feel comfortable with on their phones and chat about it with their partner. If there are people living with deafness, they can read each other’s index card if they both feel comfortable with this.

**Closing of the Session**

**Estimated Time: 10 minutes**

Recognizing that both sex and gender are social constructs offers the possibility of change, of building new ways in which we relate to each other and amongst ourselves. It can also lead to more acceptance and inclusion for individuals who live outside the traditional gender/sex binary and decreased violence perpetrated against members of the transgender, gender queer, and gender non-conforming communities. When we are able to recognize and name different types of violence, it can also open up options to resist and heal. As you probably wrote on your index cards or in other experiences you have lived, violence goes through our bodies. So, to close this session, and to support the idea that we can heal, individually and collectively, do this grounding exercise. In a circle, each Club member can take their index cards and symbolically place them over parts of the body where you remember or have felt violence, or if you feel like placing it there. With eyes closed and at their own rhythm, everyone takes three deep breaths. Now, put the index cards on the floor, and with your hands, rub your arms, your shoulders, back, belly, legs, and head, making movements from the inside to the outside or from the top to the bottom (i.e. from the shoulder towards the hand), as if you wanted to get rid of something that’s on your skin.
Remember to keep breathing throughout and, if you feel like exhaling strongly or making any other sound, feel free to do so.

**Follow-On Activities:**

For starters, write your own definition of gender-based violence, with the aspects that you consider are key for people to understand this. Put it in your own words and add any examples that you would use to illustrate how violence works.

**Life Plan:**

In continuation with the index cards’ exercise, keep reflecting on how it’s not always easy to recognize the different types of violence we have experienced and also the violence we have exercised over others, even if we care about them. The safe spaces to listen to each other without fear of judgement are very important, and these allow for deeper healing and stronger commitments to not reproduce violence and to break silence around it. Write down a commitment to yourself around breaking the silence of violence, about what types of violence you are not willing to endure or ignore, and the ways in which to commit to yourself in terms of healing and resisting.

**What’s Next? Action Plan:**

- Do you consider that it’s relevant to talk to other people about sex and gender and how these are social constructs?
- Do you think it’s important to talk about gender-based violence with other young people?
- What would you prioritize if you had to talk about this in a classroom or a workshop in your neighborhood or school with other young people?
- What tools would you use to communicate about these issues?

Write out a plan of how you would go about having conversations or collective reflections around these issues and if you are able to, organize a workshop, a virtual call, or a less formal space to put at least part of your What’s Next? Action Plan in practice. If you want to join forces with other members of your Club to do this, work collectively, and remember to submit a report in the Girl Up Community as well, to keep track of how the activity went to improve it in the future or share what was successful so that others can learn from your experience, too.
“There is no such thing as single-issue struggle because we don’t live single-issue lives.”

To close off this session, you will learn more about a woman that went beyond the gender role expected from her, as well as other expectations and stereotypes around her other identities. She also wrote about the importance of breaking silence.

A self-described “black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet,” Audre Lorde dedicated both her life and her creative talent to confronting and addressing injustices of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. Lorde was born in New York City to West Indian immigrant parents.

Lorde earned her BA from Hunter College and MLS from Columbia University. She was a librarian in the New York public schools throughout the 1960s. She had two children with her husband, Edward Rollins, a white, gay man, before they divorced in 1970. In 1972, Lorde met her long-time partner, Frances Clayton. She also began teaching as poet-in-residence at Tougaloo College. Her experiences with teaching and pedagogy—as well as her place as a Black, queer woman in white academia—went on to inform her life and work. Indeed, Lorde’s contributions to feminist theory, critical race studies, and queer theory intertwine her personal experiences with broader political aims. Lorde articulated early on the intersections of race, class, and gender in canonical essays such as “The Master’s Tools Will Not Dismantle the Master’s House.”

- Read more on Audre Lorde’s biography from the Poetry Foundation.
- Read Audre Lorde’s poem “Who Said It Was Simple.”

For next week: Find a local example of a woman that has lived beyond gender norms in your society and find out more about her trajectory.
Mapping a List of Allies:

If you’ve suffered any type of violence, like punches, harassment rape or others, look for institutions that can help you feel supported and guide you toward what legal routes you can access.

Additional Resources:

- “To be young, lesbian and Black in the 50’s” 1982 audio recording (54 min) of Audre Lorde reading her autobiographical book “Zami: A New Spelling of My Name” (in English)