

Together we can and must end violence against women

by Mel Dunn
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As many of you know, two core things I publicly support coincide in the month of November: raising awareness for men's health by growing a moustache for Movember; and, standing up for the ending of violence against women for White Ribbon Day on 25 November. I have been a White Ribbon Ambassador since 2009.

The core difference between these two priorities for me is that I only wear a mo for 30 days; but I never stop focussing on the importance of ending violence against women. It is not a single day focus; it is a global and a local issue that needs men and women standing together to put an end to the most abhorrent manifestation of gender inequality.

This year my approach is to ask each of us to reflect on why White Ribbon is so important and how each of us can make a difference; and to fellow men, we have a fundamental role to play. We can model the right behaviour and we can stand courageous when we witness the wrong behaviour.

An important thing to remember is that just as not all men are bad, so too does not all violence manifest in the same way. Murder, assault, and sexual violence are all examples that are easily understood as wrong, but let's not ignore that inappropriate jokes, derogatory comments, controlling behaviour and verbal abuse are all acts of violence and are all unacceptable.

This is a local issue – it remains pervasive in Australia and the statistics are still unacceptable.

It is a global issue, that as we know manifests horrifically in many (if not all) of the countries each of us in development operate in.

We should be very proud to know that as individuals, through our companies, NGOs and through each donor we are contributing to many dimensions of improving the lives of women and girls in the work we do. Many of us, including through ANU and the Development Policy Centre, are specifically engaged in activities that cut to the issue of gender-based violence in all of its forms.

But there is so much more to do. It is wonderful that a cornerstone of the Australian aid program is empowering women and girls – enduring issues of gender-based violence must be addressed and eradicated for this to be fully realised.

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This November 25, and every day thereafter (and before!), please stand with me to do your bit about this issue. It simply starts with never committing, ignoring or condoning any form of violence against women and knowing that real men exist and will stand with you.

If you would like to know more about White Ribbon and how else you can support, take a look [here](#).

(P.S. When you do see ribbons for sale, show your support and wear it proudly as I do).

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Link: <https://devpolicy.org/together-we-can-and-must-end-violence-against-women-20141120/>