

## Suggestions for Actions and Solidarity in 2007

by Shelley Anderson

- Order more copies of this action pack and give them to girls in your school, youth group or worship community. Talk with youth leaders about encouraging a discussion on the violence girls face in their daily lives and how to support girls in overcoming this violence.
- Listen to girls about their experiences at school. Is there bullying at school? Do girls feel safe to move and speak out about what is important to them at school? Talk with teachers and youth leaders about ways to create a safe and empowering environment for girls.
- Make a special effort to reach girls: talk with Girl Scouts/Guides or other girls' groups about how war and peace affect girls. Share an action with them like writing a letter to a government official. Check out already existing training programs for young women peacemakers, such as the World
- Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts' Create Peace Worldwide Initiative.
- Help start a girls peace club after school. Show a film or invite a young woman activist to speak in order to start a discussion on how girls can create peace.
- Help a local peace group to organize a meeting to introduce their work to girls.
- Encourage your school and community libraries to display on May 24 books by and about girls' lives, and especially about risks girls have taken to build peace.
- Organize a peace camp for girls. Invite girls from different communities in your town, or from different countries. Teach peace—good communication skills, mediation, assertiveness training for girls.
- Educate others about the work of young women peacemakers. Speak out at school and clubs about the need for young women peacemakers to connect and exchange ideas and experiences.
- Issue a statement, press release or letter to the media, and to the editor of your favorite newspaper or magazine, to mark May 24, International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament.
- Call for more attention to what girls and young women are doing for peace, and how conflict affects girls and young women.
- Hold a song, poster or essay competition with prizes for the best song, poster or essay that highlights the work of young women peacemakers.

- Promote peace education within schools. Invite speakers from different sides of issues into schools to talk to each other in front of students. Make sure issues such as peace and dialogue are in the curriculum, from kindergarten to university.
- Sponsor an essay contest for girls to express their ideas about creating peace.
- Organize a peace club after school, where young women can come together and talk.
- Organize a special worship service for young women peacemakers; take a collection and send it to a young women's peace group.
- Hold a gathering at your home to write legislators on topics like ratifying the nuclear test ban treaty; or the transfer of military funds to meet human needs; or providing more funding to stop violence against women; or whatever is necessary for your community.
- Invite local women's organizations together to speak on how young women can contribute to building a culture of peace, and how women's organizations can support young women's peace initiatives.
- Organize a youth celebration for peace on May 24; invite young women speakers from peace organizations like the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, or a local solidarity group.
- Educate young women peacemakers on UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Distribute copies of the Resolution (which can be downloaded from [www.peacewomen.org](http://www.peacewomen.org)) during meetings and public events.
- Twin with a women's peace group or a youth peace group in another country. Exchange emails and letters; learn about what is important to young women about peace in your respective countries.
- Fundraise to invite a speaker or speakers from the group to come to your country in order to raise public awareness.
- Invite women veterans with a peace perspective to speak about their experiences at local schools. Insist that school officials always include a speaker on peace whenever military recruiters visit, so students can get an objective and fair perspective on the reality of military life. Hand out leaflets such as *Do You Know Enough to Enlist?* or *Make Our Schools Military-Free Zones* from American Friends Service Committee's Youth and Militarism Program, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102, USA. Web: [www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org)

- Contact organizations working to reintegrate girl ex-combatants into society and see how you can help.
- Photocopy newspaper articles about the situation of young women in conflict situations and pass them around your classroom; or post articles on websites about women in conflict situations.
- Translate and reprint articles from this pack (please credit the pack and don't forget to send us a copy!) to educate others about the issues.
- Encourage groups to include ending violence in their agendas and events, and to increase their support for young women working for peace.
- Inform your networks (your school, youth organization, place of worship, or work place about May 24 and possible solidarity actions for young women peace activists.
- Organize a public panel, demonstration, or film showing on May 24, to highlight young women's work for peace. Invite young women leaders from different ethnic and religious groups in your community to speak.
- Organize a discussion group on ways to support women working for peace in conflict situations.
- Invite women from all sides of a conflict in your community to come together in order to explore ways to reduce tensions within the community or neighborhood.
- Write letters of support to the groups profiled in the annual pack to express your solidarity for their work.
- Create a website about what young women are doing for peace and justice in your community.
- Support the United Nations 'Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World' (2001-2010). Contact IFOR for more information.
- Invite members of your community to write and submit poems which reflect how violence against young women during conflict has affected their lives as well as the lives of close friends and relatives. Ask your local newspaper to publish some of these poems and/or ask a local bookstore to hold a poetry reading which features these poems and their authors. Hold a silent candle light vigil at the end of the readings in memory of all women and girls who have lost their lives to war.
- Hold a festival with other groups or women business owners in your town to celebrate young women and a culture of peace. Include music, dance and theater

performances as well as information booths to create awareness of women's role in creating peace.

- Ask stores, libraries, city government buildings, local radio stations, etc., to declare themselves violence-free spaces on March 8 (International Women's Day), May 24 or November 25-December 10 (International Days of Action against Violence Against Women). Activities might include giving young women an opportunity to talk about solutions to tensions within the community, or about international security, which they might not normally have the opportunity to do.
- Ride public transportation on May 24 and distribute information to young women about local peace groups. Include telephone numbers for peace organizations and organizations that work to empower women and girls.
- Plan a photo exhibit or music festival with local artists that highlight the work of grassroots young women peace activists.
- Sexual exploitation of women and girls always accompanies armed conflict. Help women who have been trafficked by contacting anti-trafficking groups within your own country, or by making contact with migrant or foreign women's groups within your country.
- Support legislation for emergency housing and services for women fleeing violent situations. Make sure there are foreign language-speakers among service providers, and information on emergency shelters for women in different languages.