

Program Name: White Ribbon Campaign, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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Key Words: (1) General public (males); (2) all ages; (3) racially diverse; (4) community and school settings; (5) environmental change approach

Population served This program serves males of all ages.

Medium used to convey message

Each year, program staff urge men and boys to wear a white ribbon as a personal pledge never to commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women. They are encouraged to wear the ribbon for 1 or 2 weeks in commemoration of the International Day for the Eradication of Violence Against Women. (In Canada they wear ribbons from November 25 until December 6, Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.) This campaign occurs on several college campuses in the United States at different times of year.

Goals, objectives, and desired outcomes

Volunteers encourage reflection and discussion, which leads to personal and collective action among male participants. Throughout the year, they encourage men to take part in the following activities:

- _ conduct educational work in schools, workplaces, and communities
- _ support local women's groups
- _ raise money for the program's international educational efforts

Program staff distribute education and action kits to schools, maintain a web site, and speak out on issues of public policy. They encourage male speakers to talk in schools, workplaces, and places of worship about the problem of violence. Some local groups organize events around Father's Day to talk about positive roles for men and about the importance of men being care givers and nurturers. Some groups organize Valentine's Day dances to spread a message about building healthy relationships.

Theoretical/scientific basis for the approach

This program is not based on any scientific approach. However, it utilizes basic concepts of environmental change, such as gaining support from a large percentage of the community.

Level of evaluation Staff refer to statistical data from the Canadian government to assess change in sexually violent behavior.

Staff capacity The program has a board of directors with representatives from across Canada. Board members are elected once a year by an annual general meeting. Day-to-day leadership is provided by an executive committee and other volunteer committees that deal with finances, fundraising, publicity, outreach, and policy.

The White Ribbon Campaign

(Begun in Canada and currently implemented in various countries around the world including Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Nicaragua and Peru)

Begun in Canada in 1991, the White Ribbon Campaign seeks to mobilize the voice of men and boys who, by wearing or displaying a white ribbon in public, pledge never to commit, condone, nor remain silent about violence against women, and it is a call on governments and other institutions controlled by men to seriously address the issue. White Ribbon's basic philosophy is that while not all men are responsible for committing violence against women, all men and boys must take responsibility for helping end it. It is non-partisan and attempts to include men from across the social and political spectrum. It works with women's organizations and urges men to listen to the

voices and concerns of women; it conducts public awareness campaigns and involves high-profile men in speaking out against the violence; it provides resources for work in schools. The are currently or have been WRC activities or use of the WRC symbol in at least thirty-five countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Nicaragua and Peru.

The initiative is run in a very decentralized manner, making it difficult to gather data regarding the variety of activities that are being implemented in each country. There are very few actual White Ribbon Campaign sites; rather there are lots of NGOs, governments, institutions, and corporations who organize activities related to the campaign at various times during the year.

The Campaign in Brazil, however, seems to have followed a different model and has greater ties to the organization's main office in Canada. White Ribbon Campaign is currently working on a 3 year cooperation project to help strengthen the work of the White Ribbon Campaign in Brazil. Through this initiative, White Ribbon will be working collaboratively with partners in Brazil to address gender equality and equity in several important areas – schools and youth organizations, the workplace, fatherhood and families, and the community in general.

Some of the activities planned in Brazil include:

- Adapting activities from White Ribbon's Youth Education and Action Kit together with Programa H's Working with Young Men series to create a new Brazilian youth education resource to be used in schools and community organizations;
- Working with Unions and Industries to promote greater gender equality and equity in the workplace through an exchange of knowledge and skills between Canadian and Brazilian organizations; and
- Developing educational and awareness raising materials and campaigns to encourage fathers to take on a greater role in child care within the family.

This initiative also aims at strengthening the work of the Brazilian White Ribbon Campaign so that it will serve as a hub for organizations in the region who are interested in carrying out White Ribbon Campaigns.

Sources

Personal communication with Humberto Carolo, White Ribbon Campaign (Canada)

<http://www.whiteribbon.ca>

<http://www.lacobranco.org.br>

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