



# The Equaliser News

In the last newsletter of the year, we brought you good news from Finland, where new legislation is being introduced to reduce the gender pay gap, and Sweden, where the country's first female prime minister has been elected, albeit for a short time. Meanwhile, in Hungary, several interesting studies have been published, one showing that a fifth of women in their thirties may not give birth at all and several campaigns have been launched, among others, one is raising funds to open a gynaecology clinic for homeless and poor women. The lead article shows how the internet became a dangerous place for women and girls, which is timely because 'the 16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence' started on 25 November.

**Thank you for reading our newsletter**, if you like it, you may share it with your friends and contacts too, so they can also subscribe [here!](#) We will be back next year, **therefore let us wish you all a wonderful holiday season and a Happy New Year!**

Upcoming International World Days in December you should be aware of:

- 25 November to 10 December: **16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence**. You can find out more about the events organized during the 16 Days of Action in Hungary on this website and on Facebook.
- 3 December: United Nations **International Day of Disabled Persons**
- 5 December: **International Volunteer Day**
- 10 December: **World Human Rights Day**
- 17 December: **International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers**

## International outlook on gender equality issues and developments

- [Babies have been banned from the House of Commons](#). After **Labour's Stella Creasy** took her three-month-old baby to a debate in **Westminster Hall** on Tuesday, she was told it was against the rules. Creasy argues that "**politics and parenting must go hand in hand**". Speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle said it was "**vitaly important that parents were fully involved in the work of the House**" and asked a committee of MPs to review the rules.
- [The Slovak government has officially apologised for the forced sterilisation of estimated thousands of Roma women](#) in the country during the communist era. In a statement, **the four-party coalition government condemned years of human rights violations and apologised to those affected**.
- [Sweden elected its first female Prime Minister, Magdalena Andersson](#), on 24 November. But less than 12 hours after her election, she resigned because her coalition partner, the Green Party, withdrew its support for her budget. [Sweden's first female prime minister has since been reappointed to the top job](#).
- [The Finnish government is planning a new law allowing workers to know their colleagues' salaries if they suspect that they are being discriminated against in order to close the gender pay gap between women and men](#). The proposal is criticised by both trade unions and employers: the former want even greater transparency and

the latter fear conflicts at work. **Finnish women earned 17.2 percent less than men in 2020**, according to a pay equality ranking by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

- For the second year running, a high school in the Italian city of Monza has held a campaign called **#Zucchingonna**, where [every student, regardless of gender, wears a skirt to school on one day of the school year](#). **"The skirt allows us to draw attention to two important issues: the sexualisation of the female body and the problems of toxic masculinity,"** said the students.
- **Is remote work not good for women's careers?** Since Covid-19, many workplaces have switched to remote or hybrid mode. However, some say that **employers tend to view workers who come in as more engaged and that this can give them an advantage in the promotion process. As women are more likely to choose remote work, this can put them at a disadvantage**. You can read more about this [here](#).
- **Peng Shuai**, one of China's best-known and most successful **tennis players**, has virtually disappeared since the 2nd of November. On that day, [she claimed that she had been forced to have sex by the country's former deputy premier](#), Chiang Gaoli. There are strong suspicions that **Peng Shuai's disappearance may be a way for the Chinese government to discourage others from making allegations of sexual abuse**.
- [According to a survey](#), **one out of every ten staff at government's gender equality department in Australia has experienced sexual harassment at work**. Disturbingly, **40 percent of the victims did not report the incident even though they work at the division responsible for enforcing gender equality laws** and of those who did file a report only 17 percent were satisfied with the way the case was handled. Following the survey, the department has announced that a new policy for addressing and preventing sexual harassment is being drafted.
- [On November 20th tens of thousands of Parisians took to the streets protesting against sexism and sexual violence against women](#). Groups fighting violence against women say that **at least 101 women were killed in the hands of their current or ex-partners during the ongoing year and over 220,000 women are physically or sexually abused by their partner every year**, according to a 2017 nationwide survey. Activists are urging the government to dedicate 1.1 billion Euros to the fight against domestic violence instead of the currently allocated amount of 360 million dollars.
- [A UN report](#) suggests that **child labour and child marriage is on the rise in Afghanistan in part owing to the growing poverty**. In the face of adversity, Afghan families are putting children to work or selling girls as young as 20 days to 17 years old. It is estimated that **28 percent of Afghan women aged between 15 to 49 were married before they had come of age**. Girls who marry before they turn 18 are less likely to remain in school and more likely to experience domestic violence, discrimination, abuse and poor mental health. UNICEF is looking to tackle the problem through educating families on the risks associated with child marriage, providing cash assistance to the vulnerable families.
- In a joint effort [the UN and the European Union provided gender-based violence services to some 650,000 women and girls through the Spotlight Initiative](#). Additionally, **880,000 men and boys were educated on positive masculinity, respectful family relations, and peaceful dispute resolution**. The Spotlight Initiative, which is the world's largest targeted effort to end all violence against women and girls, has helped 17 Latin American countries to incorporate femicide

into their penal codes. Read the full report on the organization's achievements [here](#).

- After a surge in domestic violence against women and femicide in Israel, the country's chair of ministerial committee on gender equality announced that \$50 million is allocated to the fight against this dreadful crime. **In 2019 a total of 17 femicides were recorded with 5 women being murdered by their partners. The number surged to a shocking 26 cases in 2020 of which 13 were committed by partners.** The Israeli government has also announced that it is working on a legislation that would recognise and act against cases in which finances are used as an abusive form of control. Read the full article [here](#).

## Gender equality in focus: Hungary

- **Krisztina Rozgonyi**, former president of the National Media and Communications Authority, [has been appointed to the Advisory Board of the Austrian Media Authority](#). **Krisztina is a core member of the Equaliser Foundation and we would like to congratulate her.**
- ["In order to protect the interests of women more effectively"](#), **Zita Gurmai**, a politician of MSZP submitted an amendment to the National Assembly to add new elements to the Criminal Code (Btk.). According to Zita Gurmai's amendment, anyone who **"incites violence or hatred against the female sex"** will be sentenced to 5 years in prison, and **anyone who knows about sexual violence against a child** and does not report it, to 3 years.
- After comparing the prices of **basic feminine hygiene products** in three countries, at the same drugstore chain, journalists found that DM's own-brand [tampons and sanitary pads are more than one and a half times more expensive in Hungary than in Austria and Germany](#). This is due to the record high Hungarian VAT rate of 27 percent, even though **menstrual poverty is a big problem in Hungary**, too.
- [Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem \(ELTE\)](#) prepared its first document towards enhancing the participation of women as researchers and lecturers in higher positions. They established the [Gender Equality Plan](#) that will help female counterparts tackle the glass ceiling. The university highlights that **the biggest concern regarding gender equality is the low number of women researchers and lecturers working in higher academic positions and that women tend to be employed more in lower prestige and low-paid jobs**. The document consists of many beneficial practices such as training, research, and special bodies for the sake of improvement.
- [The Women For Women Together Against Violence Association \(NANE\) and Ikea initiated research in Hungary on people's perceptions of domestic violence](#). The research found that **86 percent of people urged to deal with this issue more often and only 6 percent thought it was overrated**. According to those surveyed, **5-30 percent of people are likely to be affected by some type of domestic violence each year, whether psychological, physical, economic, or sexual**. In contrast, NANE data shows that the real number is much higher. Most of the citizens do not trust the legal system and the respondents think that only 3-5 percent of domestic abuse cases go to court, which corresponds to reality. There is one area where the results are still dismal, and that is victim-blaming: **40 percent of respondents believe that women accuse their partners of domestic violence out of revenge, even when nothing has happened**, and when asked whether a husband has the right to have sexual intercourse with his wife, 51 percent said yes.
- There has been a negative tendency in Hungary towards childbearing.

[According to recent research](#), **20 percent of women in their thirties today may never have children in their lifetime.** This is a significant change compared to previous decades and is also high by European standards. While less than 10 percent of women born between 1960 and 65 have never had a child in Hungary, the figure rises to 18 percent for women born in the 75s. As in the past, it is mostly women with a university degree who decide not to have children at all. It also seems that the two-child model is losing popularity and the proportion of one-child- and childless families has risen significantly.

- From November, the [Nők Egymásért Mozgalom \(NEM!\)](#) launched a **campaign** called “**Legyen látható**”, which focuses **on reproductive and care work such as housework and child-rearing**. These jobs are mostly done by women, in the privacy of the home, unpaid and often without recognition, without which our society would not function. [In this article](#), they criticise the Hungarian government's preference for the nuclear family model as a way of preventing the state from investing more in health and education, which they say leads to more invisible work for women and jeopardises women's careers.
- **Ildikó Enyedi** talks about how she lost one of her children, a very painful subject for her, in a video for **Partizán**. **She talks about the often routine humiliation of pregnant women in Hungarian hospitals.** You can watch the video [here](#).
- The **Budapest Bike Maffia** has started an **initiative in order to raise awareness about the lack of healthcare opportunities for homeless and poor women, and open a gynaecology clinic especially created for them.** They wanted to raise 9.8 million forints and they have achieved that goal very quickly. But you can still donate on their [Facebook page](#) if you want to.

## **Are women and children safe in today's internet age?**

There have been many advantages of the internet that we experience in our daily lives. We have access to information, which allows us to increase our knowledge, stay educated, keep in touch with distant relatives and friends, and meet new people, among other things. Nonetheless, significant downsides such as **online violence, misinformation, and hate speech have emerged in these online places. How many of us have been the target of online harassment or abuse?** Unfortunately, [many people have experienced online harassment](#), among whom **women face more severe forms of online abuse and violence such as sexual harassment or stalking.**

[Gender-based violence](#) (GBV), also known as violence against women and girls (VAWG), is a **global epidemic that impacts one in every three women at some time in their life.** According to the World Health Organization, [30% of women worldwide are victims of physical and sexual abuse in intimate relationships](#), along with non-partner sexual assault, and romantic partners are responsible for up to 38% of all female homicides worldwide. **Violence against women can lead to long-term physical, mental, and emotional health problems, as well as death in the most extreme cases.**

Besides physical violence and abuse, women and girls are increasingly experiencing **online gender-based violence**, which takes different forms such as *online harassment, discrimination, trolling, violent threats, bullying, and the sharing of intimate and sexual photographs or pictures without consent.* **This form of violence and abuse produces a toxic online**

**atmosphere where women are shamed, intimidated, or degraded.** [According to a survey](#) commissioned by Amnesty and carried out by IPSOS in eight countries in 2017, **23% of women surveyed across all countries had experienced online abuse or harassment.** The report also found that **if you are a woman of a minority racial, ethnic, or religious group, a woman with a disability, or a lesbian, bisexual, or trans woman - or any combination of these, the situation is much worse.**

According to [Pew Research Center](#), roughly four-in-ten Americans have experienced online harassment. **While men are more likely to report having been physically threatened, women are more likely to report experiencing sexual harassment and stalking.** The poll also found that **women are more than twice as likely as men to say the most recent incidence was very or extremely distressing.** Overall, women are more likely to be outraged about online harassment than men and believe it is a crucial problem. Online harassment is also on the rise in Africa, with both high-profile and ordinary women being targeted. In 2020, [a survey by Pollicy](#), a feminist civic tech organization, found that **one in every three women had been the victim of online gender-based violence in Ethiopia, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda.** To avoid further abuse, 66 percent of the interviewed women reported banning attackers, 14.5 percent of women deactivated their social media accounts and 12.2 percent stopped using a digital service after experiencing online violence.

[Plan International](#) found that **not only women but also young girls are being harassed online.** A massive global study of 14,000 girls aged 15-25 in 22 countries (including Brazil, Benin, the United States, and India), along with a series of in-depth interviews, found that **the majority of online violence and abuse takes place on various platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram and mainly Facebook, where 39% claim to have been harassed.** The poll revealed that **one in every five girls (19%) has abandoned or significantly reduced their usage of a social media site after being harassed, and one in every ten (12%) has changed the way they express themselves.** It also demonstrates that even after being subjected to online violence or harassment, women are left to deal with the issues on their own, generating a significant impact on their future.

The continuity of violence has blurred the border between online and offline environments, allowing online violence to persist offline and vice versa. [According to a study](#) surveying 5,647 children in the United States, **victims of sexual cyber dating abuse were seven times more likely to have additionally experienced sexual coercion than were non-victims (55 vs. 8%), and perpetrators of sexual cyber dating abuse were more than 17 times more likely to have also perpetrated sexual coercion (34 vs. 2%) than were non-perpetrators.** Thus, online harassment may lead to a broader culture of violence in which violence is normalized and seen as unavoidable, hence allowed in both online and offline environments.

[Research](#) indicates that **online violence and abuse against women have increased during the Covid-19 pandemic.** [UNESCO's](#) latest findings also report **the growth of online attacks on female journalists, especially during the COVID-19.** They surveyed over 900 female journalists from 125 countries and found that roughly three-quarters of them had encountered online harassment. The report also suggests that **online violence against women journalists is correlated with increased violence offline.** Moreover, **Black, Indigenous, Jewish, and Arab female journalists experience the highest rates of online violence and its most severe consequences.** Hiba Morgan, an [Al Jazeera journalist](#) who has covered conflicts across Africa, said she often receives online threats (including sexual

violence threats) and insults due to her work and that intimidation also affects her self-esteem.

This article is timely because **November 25th marks the International Day to End Violence Against Women**, followed by the **16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence**, running until **Human Rights Day on December 10**. Ever since 2008, the United Nations calls for global actions to end gender-based violence with the theme "Orange the world: End violence against women now!" If you would like to get involved in the 16 Days of Activism in Hungary and contribute to helping, educating, and stopping gender-based violence, check out the upcoming events [on this page](#).

## Upcoming activities and events by Equaliser Foundation

- **NORDIC event:** Sponsored by and in cooperation with the Nordic Council of Ministers, Equaliser Foundation is organizing its 3rd educational, inspirational event. **At this event of the Family and Career series, we will be talking about the benefits of female participation in leadership and how family life and career can be balanced.** Date: **2 December 2021, 5 pm**. The event will be held online in English and in Hungarian, with simultaneous interpretation. The event is free, but registration is required. For more details please check out our [website](#) and you can register [here](#).



### Introducing the lead article's contributor

Katherine Wairimu Gikonyo is a student at International Business School (IBS) where she is studying Business Management in Marketing. She is a volunteer for the Equaliser foundation as she is an advocate of gender equality. Her previous professional experiences have been in International Hospitality Management in various hotels in Switzerland. Her primary interest is in marketing, branding, and entrepreneurship. She is passionate to help foundations and organizations such as the Red Cross that give back to those in need. She is creative, funny, and ambitious. She can be reached on [LinkedIn](#).

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