



In beautiful Vancouver, B.C. June 3-7, Global Rights for Women will join thousands of human rights activists from around the world to discuss power - the force that drives women's inequality and every form of violence against them.

The conversation will happen in the context of Women Deliver, the world's largest conference on the health, well-being and human rights of women and girls. The theme of the conference is Power, Progress and Change. Created first as a one-time conference by a fierce human rights leader, Jill Sheffield, who believed that women's sexual and reproductive health are human rights, Women Deliver began in London in 2007. Jill went on to found a full-fledged NGO by the same name; now the conference happens every three years. The strength we will find in numbers this year in Vancouver could not be more important as women around the world face relentless attacks on their reproductive health and freedom.

Many sessions throughout the week-long gathering will be dedicated to violence against women and girls. We are grateful for this focus as it reflects the deep connection between women's health and violent control over their lives. In our work at Global Rights for Women, we know that one of the greatest risks to women's health is violence. We know that victims of intimate partner violence rarely avoid rape, which often results in unwanted pregnancy. We know that for women and girls who live in violent subjugation, often their priority is not a healthy pregnancy; it is no pregnancy at all.

Gloria Steinem says "power can be taken but not given." True. Today, individual women and girls rise up to take power from a patriarchy that continues to grasp at control over their bodies and lives. But individual women cannot take back that power on their own. They must have the support of the community in claiming their rights. At Women Deliver I am honored to present on a panel on exactly this issue. The panel, Communities in Action to End Violence against Women and Girls is hosted by UN Women. We will discuss the obligation and unique role of legal and community systems to intervene and disrupt the power imbalance long perpetuated by the patriarchy. Every day at Global Rights for Women, we work toward this goal - changing beliefs and systems to promote women and girls human rights.

This spring, our mission comes alive as we work with partners in Morocco and Moldova. Read more about this work here in our newsletter and thank you for your continued support of Global Rights for Women!

To participate on-line in the conversations of Women Deliver, you can visit [wd2019.org](http://wd2019.org).

From,

Cheryl Thomas

# WHAT'S NEW AT GLOBAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN

## Global Rights for Women in Morocco

Global Rights for Women continues our exciting partnership with Mobilising for Rights Associates (MRA) based in Rabat, Morocco. MRA is an international non-profit women's rights organization that works in Morocco, Tunisia and Libya. MRA ("woman" in Arabic) collaborates with local women's rights activists and associations to contribute to changes in laws, structures, relationships and cultural norms to promote women's full enjoyment of their human rights. We are always honored to work with MRA's leaders, Stephanie Willman Bordat and Saida Kouzzi, towards our common vision of equality and freedom from violence for women and girls.



In May, GRW staff, Cheryl Thomas and Melissa Scaia, along with Global Rights for Women expert Lori Flohaug, partnered with MRA to train advocates and public sector officials in Marrakesh, Morocco. The training focused on an improved legal and community system response to violence against women, and enhancing the skills of advocates to track and monitor the state response to violence against women. This training was a follow-up to a previous workshop that GRW conducted with MRA in 2015, when we worked with advocates from rural communities to develop protocols for monitoring the state response to violence against women.

The situation for victims of violence in Morocco is dire, with widespread impunity for violent men. After more than a decade of advocacy by Moroccan women's rights organizations, the Moroccan parliament adopted a law on the Elimination of Violence against Women. The law went into effect in September 2018. The law criminalizes certain forms of violence against women, creating a protective order for victims in criminal cases. However, the law is primarily characterized by its many shortcomings. Most significant is the lack of a civil order for protection. In addition, the framework for providing protection for victims lacks funding and any role for NGOs and victim advocates.

The goal of MRA and its local partners is to document and track the implementation of this new law, paying close attention to whether the law truly serves to promote victim safety and offender accountability. Global Rights for Women is grateful to MRA for its exceptional leadership!

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## Expanding our community: April gathering in Washington, D.C.

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Since 2018, Global Rights for Women has been working to expand our presence in Washington, D.C. as it remains to be the important hub for policy and decision making, funding, and colleagues in the field of international women's rights. Our outreach has included a successful gathering in April of 2018, the establishment of a D.C. Working Group to strengthen local efforts, and targeted, in-person meetings with lawmakers. During last month's event, CEO, Cheryl Thomas presented on our current work, and Global Rights for Women's goals.



We were thrilled to welcome audience members who represented human rights groups, regional agencies, nonprofits, and young professionals, all sharing a passion for advancing women's rights. Following the presentation was an engaging conversation on the next steps for expanding our work in the region.

Looking ahead, GRW will continue to build on momentum with our Washington D.C. supporters. Our D.C. Working Group continues to plan GRW-hosted events and grow meaningful relationships on the organization's behalf. We are grateful for the overwhelming support and enthusiasm we have received since this planning has started.

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## How come she's always so mad at me now?

Graham Barnes is Global Rights for Women's Legal Reform & Resource Specialist. He also co-facilitates Men's Nonviolence Classes with Duluth, Minnesota's Domestic Abuse Intervention Program. Most participants are ordered by the court to attend these classes as a condition of probation after a domestic assault. These men complete a program of 27 weekly classes that are 90 minutes long.

Sometimes the men in our class seem to be really trying to stop being abusive: "Jim" is a great example: "I'm asking "Tracey" what she wants when we start to argue about money. I'm listening and compromising and agreeing and then she says "How do I know if you're just filling me up with BS because you've got some rich b\*\*\* on the side and you want to take off with her next weekend when you say you're doing that course? I don't trust your lying a\*\*." Jim is frustrated. "I want to do the right thing but, I can't get ahead here! Other times it's all good and Tracey loves the new me."

We're grateful for these examples because we can take the problem back to the class and ask questions to explore underlying beliefs. Jim and others often struggle with how their "new behavior" is experienced. Partners and family are more accustomed to someone who controls, lies and manipulates to achieve what they want. Jim has been trained to believe (as many of us have) that he is entitled to be 'the man of the house', the person who holds authority and power. Jim has acted on that belief for many years. Often, partners and family are pleased to see change to non-violent behavior, but they also deeply mistrust the different man they see before them. They wonder when the man they used to know is going to reappear if things get difficult. It's predictable that family members push back and test the new behavior. This is especially true if it feels safer to share thoughts honestly now that the "new Jim" is showing that he'll listen, compromise and agree.

In the Men's Nonviolence Class, we encourage men to understand that reaction from family members. We discuss how they might seek support for nonviolent change outside of their relationship – from friends, counselors, programs, and mentors which can take the weight off partners and family. Men who are making major changes in behavior like this can be discouraged by reactions from family and need to find other sources of support. Victims of abuse may carry a lot of anger and resentment that has had no easy outlet, and perpetrators need to understand that and find compassion, especially if they want relationships to survive and thrive.

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## Observing a Batterers Intervention Program

In February, I had the opportunity to observe a 'Men's Group' facilitated by my colleague, Melissa Scaia, Director of International Training for Global Rights for Women. Minnesota courts often order violent offenders to attend 'Men's Groups' or Batterers Intervention Programs with the goal of examining and changing their violent behavior.

Most of the men who participated in the group live in rural locations where they don't have easy access to an in-person group. Participants were required to join online by computers rather than phones, to ensure that they were as engaged as possible and so they could see the other participants. Each participant could be viewed by everyone this way – an important component of the dynamics of a successful Men's Group.

As the Administrative Associate at Global Rights for Women, my role varies day-to-day including event planning, communications, travel preparation and other duties. I joined GRW because of my passion for international human rights and my personal alignment with GRW's mission of ending violence against women and girls in a way that involves the participation and direction from local, grassroots organizations. I love that each day I come into work, my job allows for this work to be done, and is instrumental to carrying out our mission. I see the pictures, hear the stories from the international travel and work of GRW, but sometimes the distance of my day to day duties to the work we do as an organization gets lost along the way. Joining in on this session with Melissa reminded me why I am proud to work for a nonprofit organization centered on women's rights and justice.

What I noticed most observing the men in the group were their deeply ingrained ideas about gender roles within relationships that seemed so core to their belief systems. One member of the group had been arrested for putting a tracking device on his ex-girlfriend's car. He felt it was his right as the former-boyfriend of this woman to have access to information about her including her whereabouts at all times. He felt that because they were once in a relationship, the control he had over her within that relationship carried on after they separated. Another man could not accept the idea that his current girlfriend could be an equal to him; he had grown up learning from his parents that a woman is not as smart, reasonable, or able to make decisions as well as a man. It was his duty to her in the relationship, he believed, to make all decisions for them as a couple because of his ability as a man to think less emotionally and more practically.

Viewing these men discussing their beliefs, which were so core to their views of gender roles and relationships, I wondered how it could even be possible to make a change in their thought processes. But after the session, Melissa told me she received an email from the quietest member of the group, a man who always had trouble engaging. He described his long battle with abuse as a child and how he had learned while growing up that being a man meant bottling up your emotions and putting on an armor of masculinity. This contributed to his actions of physically abusing women, which placed him in his current situation– being on probation for committing a violent crime. Hearing this helped me understand

the work Melissa, Graham Barnes, GRW's Legal Resource and Training Specialist, and many others who facilitate men's groups do. These beliefs about gender roles are ingrained on all of us from birth, and are continuously reaffirmed as we grow up within a patriarchy. But actively working to dismantle this thought system produces results and furthers the fight to change beliefs about gender roles and the use of violence against women as a control mechanism.

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## Putting People Before Politics

Global Rights for Women Director of International Training, Melissa Scaia, was featured in the Hibbing Daily Tribune congratulating Congressman Pete Stauber for being one of few Republicans in the United States House of Representatives to vote in favor of the Violence Against Women Act.

Melissa's letter:

Recently, 157 Republicans and one Democrat from Minnesota, Rep Colin Peterson, voted against the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The law renewal needed to address a major loophole— adding non-live-in boyfriends/girlfriends to the list of domestic abusers banned from owning guns. The new law would also bar those convicted of misdemeanor stalking and domestic violence from possessing guns as well. The current law already included a ban on guns for family members, spouses and live-in boyfriend/girlfriends convicted for felonies. The data is solid. Access to a gun by a domestic abuser increases the risk of homicide by 500 percent (yes, that is not a typo - 500 percent).

Kudos to Congressman Pete Stauber for being one of few Republicans who put the safety of domestic violence victims first. There should be nothing partisan or political about ending the scourge of domestic violence and sexual assault, which one in three women experiences. The NRA strongly opposed this bill and stated that a vote in favor of it would be reflected in the NRA "rating" that they give to House members. Where is the NRA's concern about the U.S.'s rating of domestic violence homicide? On average in the U.S., three women are killed every day in the U.S. by a husband/boyfriend. Join me in thanking Congressman Pete Stauber for caring more about the "rate" of domestic violence affecting our community than his NRA rating. It is possible to support the second amendment AND victims of domestic violence. The NRA could join forces with local advocates to work towards ending domestic violence. In the meantime, if you do not beat, stalk or maim your wife/husband or boyfriend/girlfriend, you have nothing to worry about.

Melissa Scaia  
Chisholm

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If you are interested in getting involved with our D.C. efforts, please connect with Sara at [smowchan@grwomen.org](mailto:smowchan@grwomen.org).



## UPCOMING EVENTS

July 14th 2019  
Loring Park

**TWIN CITIES  
WORLD REFUGEE DAY**

DANCE FOOD SINGING ART EDUCATION CULTURE

[tcworldrefugeeday.org](http://tcworldrefugeeday.org)

Global Rights for Women is excited to be involved with this year's Twin Cities World Refugee Day! To learn more, visit the TC World Refugee Day website!