



Dear Friend,

I strongly believe that education is key to empowering women and giving girls the future they deserve. Having information about their rights and their bodies gives women and girls the power to make educated decisions that provide them with opportunities and choices throughout their lives. After reviewing [UNFPA's 2021 State of the World's Population report](#), I admittedly felt disheartened at the challenges women across the globe face when their bodily autonomy is violated. However, I am forever hopeful because I know the actions and results of our International Service Projects work to counteract these challenges. We have seen direct and tangible results that prove your work as a member and donor is making a difference for the better.



MY BODY IS MY OWN
CLAIMING THE RIGHT TO AUTONOMY AND SELF-DETERMINATION

Bodily autonomy is directly linked to women's ability to make decisions about their own healthcare. There is not enough measurement, but [existing data](#) shows that only 55% of girls and women are able to make their own decisions when it comes to their sexual and reproductive healthcare.

Violations of bodily autonomy can be seen in the form of forced and child marriage, female genital mutilation, marital rape and "marry your rapist" laws, honor killings and more. Even though this information can be upsetting to read, I am optimistic to know our mission here at Zonta actively fights to address these issues. Our International Service Projects utilize the influence of local [health providers and social norms and laws, all of which are important to make a sustainable impact.](#)

Together, we have the power to change the individual lives of women and girls around the world by combatting laws and societal norms that perpetuate any inequality women face. It is our duty to stay educated on vital topics surrounding the mission of Zonta. I am honored to speak about the work we have done thus far in our biennium and can already see a brighter future ahead for all women and girls.

Warm regards,

Sharon Langenbeck, Ph.D.
President



Let Us Learn Madagascar

After COVID-19 interrupted the learning of more than 7 million children in Madagascar last year, UNICEF worked closely with the Ministry of National Education, Technical and Professional Training (MNETPT) to provide every lower secondary school student with self-directed learning manuals for math, Malagasy and French.



[Read about how sisters Léonie and Melonie](#) were among the 434,000 students to benefit from these materials, made possible by our [partnership with UNICEF USA for the Let Us Learn Madagascar project.](#)

Adolescent Girls' Health and Protection in Peru

Through our initiative with UNICEF USA, Zonta International is responding to the health needs of adolescents—especially girls—in a timely manner and preventing violence in schools in Peru. We are supporting a better approach to mental health issues, protection from violence and pregnancy prevention. Headmasters and teachers have been trained to address these important issues, such as gender equality and intercultural sensitivity in healthcare, education and protection services.



To learn more, watch the video to the right.

Strengthening Response to GBV Survivors in Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste

Though the project Strengthening National Capacities of Health Sector in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Timor Leste to Deliver Survivor-Centered Response to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was envisioned prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the topic could not have been more relevant in 2020-2021 when countries across the globe, including in the Asia-Pacific, saw an exacerbation of pre-existing GBV and harmful practices. The measures deemed necessary to control the spread of COVID-19—such as restriction of movement, reduction in community interaction and closure of services—not only increased the risk of exposure to GBV for women and girls, but also limited their access to services and support.



More than
2 in 3 women in PNG have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence

To learn more, read the latest [project update](#).

Ending Child Marriage

We are protecting the rights of millions of vulnerable girls and putting an end to this global violation of human rights in 12 countries in Africa and Asia.

"I dream of becoming a midwife. I want to be there for the young mothers and their babies during childbirth. I feel they need someone at that point in their lives to assure them that their lives are not over. When they see how I overcame my situation to achieve my dreams, they will be inspired. I'm so much more confident now because I have learned about reproductive health, personal and menstrual hygiene and self-confidence. I am also very grateful for the help in facilitating my re-entry into school. I thought my life was over. I thought my education was over. Now I have a second chance." (Peace, 16 years old, Katejeli, Northern Region, Ghana)



To learn more about how we are working to end child marriage, [watch this recorded session](#) from the International Advocacy Committee's new five-part advocacy webinar series. This month, we facilitated a conversation about the successes and failures of the movement to end child marriage in an international, national and local context. And, members, learn how take action today with our [Ending Child Marriage Tools](#).

Donate

These projects are only possible with the generous support of our donors. Help Zonta International realize a better future for women and girls with a donation to the Zonta Foundation for Women's International Service Fund. Your gift, no matter the size, will make a difference.

Our Remarkable Women guests prove education is key



A LEADERSHIP SERIES BY
ZONTA INTERNATIONAL
**REMARKABLE WOMEN
POWERFUL STORIES**

Amelia Earhart Fellow, Mechanical Engineering Professor and now head of the US National Science Foundation
Click below to hear the story of Kendra Sharp

Globally renowned content curator, founder and CEO of consulting firm Emergent, powerful speaker and master questioner
Register below to hear Holly Ransom's story on 22 June at 5 PM CDT

[Remarkable Women Powerful Stories](#)

[Register](#)



Watch to see how members made a difference around the world this April. **Share Your Story** to be featured in May's video.

Firsts for Women

There have already been many inspiring "firsts" this May. Follow us on Instagram before 1 June to **read** and **watch** our next monthly recap of women making history.



Join Zonta International for our 65th Convention, 25-28 June 2022, in Hamburg, Germany.
zonta.org/Convention



www.zonta.org

Keep your network informed on how Zonta International is putting our mission to work by sharing this message to your social feeds.

