



## APC Event: “Grassroots Organizing In The Era Of #MeToo”

*Grassroots Organizing in the Era of #MeToo” was in held in honor of International Women’s Day, March 8 and Women’s History Month of March. Along with PWH, the event was sponsored by the Alice Paul Center for Research on Gender, Sexuality, and Women; the Penn Women’s Center; the Ortnor Center on Violence and Abuse in Relationships; and the Latin American and Latino Studies Program.*

### Panelists

[Veronica Avila, Campaign Manager, Restaurants Opportunity Center \(ROC\) United](#)

[Verónica Gago, Professor, Instituto de Altos Estudios at the National University of San Martín in Argentina and member Ni Una Menos](#)

[Joanne N. Smith, Founder, and CEO of Girls for Gender Equity](#)

[Nadeen Spence, University of the West Indies, Women and Girls Rights Activist](#)

[I'm Glad I'm a Girl Foundation Ltd.](#)

[Deborah A. Thomas, R. Jean Brownlee Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Anthropology, \(moderator\)](#)

[LaShawn R. Jefferson, Deputy Director of Perry World House, \(introductory remarks\)](#)

### More information on organizations and works

[Executive Director’s blog series: “Ni Una Menos” \(Not One Less\) – Fulfilling the promise to end femicide for women and girls](#)

[Girls for Gender Equity \(GGE\)](#)

[Because Our Liberation Depends On It Video from GGE](#)

[Me too. Movement](#)

## Grassroots

- “Organizations or movements, people or society at a local level rather than at the center of major political activity. Local, or person-to-person.”<sup>1</sup>

## Gender based violence

- “Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person’s will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships. It encompasses threats of violence and coercion. It can be physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual in nature, and can take the form of a denial of resources or access to services.”<sup>2</sup>

## Gender equity

- “Gender equity refers to the fair treatment of women and men, irrespective of their gender. This is distinct from gender equality, which references equality of access to resources, goods, and opportunities. Gender equity can therefore mean starting from the recognition that women globally have fewer resources than men and should therefore be given proportionately more resources than men to reach gender equality.”<sup>3</sup>
- [Statistics on Violence Against Trans and Non-Binary People](#)<sup>4</sup>
- [Transgender Women Of Color Topic On Colorlines](#)
- [“Unerased: Counting Transgender Lives”. A comprehensive look at transgender murders since 2010.](#)

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 is a federal law that states:

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."<sup>5</sup>

## History of the me too. Movement

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<sup>1</sup> Park, C., & Allaby, M. grassroots. In A Dictionary of Environment and Conservation. : Oxford University Press,. Retrieved 29 May. 2019, from <https://www.oxfordreference-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780191826320.001.0001/acref-9780191826320-e-3458>.

<sup>2</sup> From UNHCR, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/sexual-and-gender-based-violence.html>

<sup>3</sup> Griffin, G. gender equity. In A Dictionary of Gender Studies. : Oxford University Press,. Retrieved 29 May. 2019, from <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191834837.001.0001/acref-9780191834837-e-156>.

<sup>4</sup> From National Resource Center on Domestic Violence <https://vawnet.org/sc/serving-trans-and-non-binary-survivors-domestic-and-sexual-violence/violence-against-trans-and>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/inclusion/title-ix-frequently-asked-questions#title>

The 'me too.' movement was founded in 2006 to help survivors of sexual violence, particularly Black women and girls, and other young women of color from low wealth communities, find pathways to healing. Our vision from the beginning was to address both the dearth in resources for survivors of sexual violence and to build a community of advocates, driven by survivors, who will be at the forefront of creating solutions to interrupt sexual violence in their communities.

In less than six months, because of the viral #metoo hashtag, a vital conversation about sexual violence has been thrust into the national dialogue. What started as local grassroots work has expanded to reach a global community of survivors from all walks of life and helped to de-stigmatize the act of surviving by highlighting the breadth and impact of a sexual violence worldwide.

Our work continues to focus on helping those who need it to find entry points for individual healing and galvanizing a broad base of survivors to disrupt the systems that allow for the global proliferation of sexual violence.

Our goal is also to reframe and expand the global conversation around sexual violence to speak to the needs of a broader spectrum of survivors. Young people, queer, trans, and disabled folks, Black women and girls, and all communities of color. We want perpetrators to be held accountable and we want strategies implemented to sustain long term, systemic change.

The 'me too' movement supports survivors of sexual violence and their allies by connecting survivors to resources, offering community organizing resources, pursuing a 'me too' policy platform, and gathering sexual violence researchers and research. 'Me Too' movement work is a blend of grassroots organizing to interrupt sexual violence and digital community building to connect survivors to resources.

As the 'me too' movement affirms empowerment through empathy and community-based action, the work is survivor-led and specific to the needs of different communities.

Tarana Burke began 'me too' with young Black women and girls from low wealth communities. She developed culturally-informed curriculum to discuss sexual violence within the Black community and in society at large. Similarly, the 'me too' movement seeks to support folks working within their communities to attend to the specific needs of their community/communities, i.e. supporting disabled trans survivors of color working to lead and craft events/toolkits/etc. with other disabled trans survivors. Together, we can uplift and support each other to strengthen a global movement to interrupt sexual violence.

- [Black Women's Activism And The Long History Behind #Metoo](#)
- [The #MeToo Moment: Art Inspired by the Reckoning](#)