

Banner 1:**Violence against women and girls is the most widely occurring violation of human rights in the world today.**

2 out of every 5 women in Germany are victims of sexual or physical violence. 1 in 4 women are abused by their partner ((Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMSFJ) 21.09.2004).

Violence is primarily carried out by men in domestic households. Education, income and social status are not factors influencing the use of violence.

Back in 1976, women from various countries got together in Brussels to organise a forum to combat domestic violence. As a result, the women's action group "Frauenhaus – Frauen helfen Frauen" opened the first women's safe house in Berlin in November 1976. The model project was supported by both the *Land* government of Berlin and the Federal Government, and has been filled to capacity right from the outset.

As a next step and associated service, the women's refuge advisory centre was set up in 1979. In 1995, this provided the platform for the BIG initiative (see banner 4 for details).

Today there are 6 women's refuges in Berlin; of which one is an intercultural refuge, responding to the fact that female migrants and refugees are at particular risk from violence as a result of legal provisions applicable to foreigners.

In line with the Berlin model, women's refuges and also safe houses have been set up by various organisations at numerous locations.

Those who clout, get turfed out!

Chronology: 1976 International forum in Brussels, November: first women's refuge in Berlin opens
1979 September: second women's refuge in Berlin opens, women's refuge advisory centre opens
1982 Wild water self-help initiative
1989 Autonomous refuge for girls opens
1995 National pilot project BIG
1999 BIG opens first hotline
2003 Law on Protection Against Violence (*Gewaltschutzgesetz*)