



World YWCA
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European Young Women Advocating for Human Rights and Equality

Report of the study session held by
The European YWCAs

In co-operation with the
European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe

European Youth Centre Strasbourg
5-12 May 2013



Youth – Jeunesse

This report gives an account of various aspects of the study session. It has been produced by and is the responsibility of the educational team of the study session. It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to the preparatory team composed of Irina Rodygina, Noemi Helfenstein, Marcia Banasko (course director), Nina Meiling, and Juli Dugdale and to our educational advisor Tatev Margaryan. We would like to thank the Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation - Council of Europe, Mara Georgescu, Educational Advisor of the EYCS and the Secretariat, particularly Nina Kapoor and the staff of the European Youth Centre Strasbourg for their support and their service. The European YWCAs Committee and Michelle Higelin, World YWCA Deputy General Secretary – Focal point for Europe for their vision and support. Finally we thank the participants. These young European women who brought their creativity, motivation, love, sisterhood, skills and knowledge to the study session.

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1. Executive Summary

The following report describes the European YWCAs study session: a human rights study session themed - *European Young Women Advocating for Human Rights and Equality*. The session took place from the 5-12 May, 2013 at the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg, France. In total 35 young women from 21 countries participated in the study session. The programme for this study session was developed during a two days preparatory meeting in the European Youth Centre, Strasbourg in April 2013 by a preparatory team of four European young women- Irina Rodygina, Noemi Helfenstein, Marcia Banasko (course director), Nina Meiling and Juli Dugdale, World YWCA Global Manager for Young Women's Leadership, assisted by Tatev Margaryan, Educational Advisor appointed by Council of Europe.

The week long session was insightfully structured to focus on the role of young women in their respective communities as leaders and advocates for change in the field of human rights.

The week began with a group of young women, strangers to each other and many of whom were new to the perspectives of human rights situations in each other's countries. Through the week, however, participants eliminated these barriers by understanding various legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms for the preservation of human rights. With the execution of various team building exercises, social interaction and discussions involving opinions and experiences, the young women grew closer to the study session objectives.

The European YWCAs Study Session programme had clear objectives to focus on gender equality with an in-depth analysis of gender itself, understanding women's human rights, designing advocacy campaigns, and implementing a human rights-based approach through campaigns, workshops or project proposals. Experts like Ms. Borislava Daskalova, Trainer and Researcher, Gender Research Institute at the Balkan Centre for Regional Development, brought a fresh eye opening outlook on the cultural influence of gender, women and the role of gender stereotyping towards the violation of woman's rights.

After a visit to Council of Europe during which participants learnt more about the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, participants were inspired to write project proposals for their respective regions.

During the study session the Head of the European Youth Foundation Mr. Jean-Claude Lazaro shared the work of the Foundation and the opportunities it offered. The European Youth Foundation (EYF) was established in 1972 by the Council of Europe as an effective means of financial support for European youth activities. The proposals for the different grants are available to youth organisations keeping in line with the Council of Europe's youth policies and work.

The study session enabled every participant to contribute towards the design of such proposals. The young women used their knowledge of human rights and the training they had been exposed to in the first 3 days of the week to try and generate a project directly or indirectly addressing violations of human rights.

The outcome of the exercise brought out some phenomenal ideas for projects covering areas such as child trafficking, teenage and young mothers support and centres for survivors of violence, to name a few. The study session made use of the e-learning

platform facilitated by the Council of Europe where all the material presented during the sessions, presentations and various other helpful documents are available to all participants including an online proposal form for candidates to directly upload their projects plans.

Other areas of the session's programme included training on social media, how to improve presentation skills, skills on networking and structures of networking and advocacy tools, among others. As a creative activity the participants put together a patchwork 'Human Rights Quilt' which will be framed and displayed in the European Youth Centre, Strasbourg. Each participant had a piece of fabric on which to write a human rights message, a small team then sown the quilt to together, creating a colourful display of powerful messages.

An unexpected outcome to the entire study session was an organised one billion rising flash mob which the participants planned and developed themselves. The One Billion Rising is a campaign and global action to end violence against women and girls. The young women broke out into a spontaneous dance in the Cathedral Square of Strasbourg drawing attention from a large gathering of people who curiously watched as flyers on the objective of the dance and a message to end violence in all forms against women were distributed.

The 35 participants found in each other friendships for life, sisterhood and took a journey together in finding their inner leaders. Through the activities, free spaces to share personal stories and opportunities of working towards common goals, the study session became a network of amazing women who have collectively desired to become true agents of change through human rights.

2. Main Outcomes

Firstly, the young women now have a deeper understanding of human rights and human rights mechanisms. Through presentations they effectively demonstrated their new gained knowledge and how they would use this knowledge to improve human rights in their own communities by engaging in advocacy. It was evident through evaluations at the beginning of the study session and then again at the end that there had been a positive shift in perceptions on gender, and particularly the role of women within society and the fulfilment of women's human rights.

The participants developed strong networks among each other and gained confidence throughout the study session. The week began with a group of young women, strangers to each other and many of whom were new to the perspectives of human rights situations in each other's countries. Through the week, however, participants eliminated these barriers by understanding various legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms for the preservation of human rights.

One key outcome was the development of phenomenal ideas for projects by the participants covering areas such as child trafficking, teenage and young mothers support and centres for survivors of violence, to name a few. As an organisation the European YWCAs was able to develop cooperation with the Council of Europe and build a positive relationship.

An unexpected outcome was a one billion rising flash mob dance organised by the participants. The One Billion Rising is a campaign and global action to end violence against women and girls. The young women broke out into a spontaneous dance in the Cathedral Square of Strasbourg inviting attention to a large gathering of people who curiously watched as flyers on the objective of the dance and a message to end violence in all forms against women were distributed. This in itself was a small campaign, which the participants themselves implemented and increased people's awareness about violence against women. The Flash mob can be viewed at this link https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=82XCNGZCx8c

The European YWCAs Study Session programme had clear objectives to focus on gender equality with an in depth analysis of gender itself, understanding women's human rights, designing advocacy campaigns, and implementing a human rights based approach through project proposals. The main learning points for participants centred on these objectives as set out in the European YWCAs Study Session programme proposal. Experts like Ms. Daskalova, brought a fresh, eye opening outlook on the cultural influence of gender and the socio-political foundations, gender-based violence, women and the role of gender stereotyping towards the violation of women's rights.

The study session enabled every participant to contribute towards the design of project proposals, starting from generating ideas, project design and implementation to monitoring and evaluation of projects. The young women used their knowledge of the human rights and the training they had been exposed to in the first few days of the week to try and generate a project directly or indirectly addressing violations of human rights. Since the study session participants have applied for two follow up projects with [Youth in Action](#).

Other areas of the study session programme included training on social media training, how to improve presentations skills, skills on networking and structures of networking,

advocacy tools, among others. The participants wrote blogs which can be found at these links <http://womenleadingchange.wordpress.com/?s=study+session+2013> and <http://www.ywcagb.org.uk/archives/888>

The results contribute to the Youth Department's priority focus on human rights education with young people as the participants have a firm understanding of human rights and are equipped to work from a human rights based approach in designing advocacy and programme strategies. With its specific focus on young women, the session addressed ways to combat gender discrimination and gender based violence, engaging young women in identifying how these issues are experienced in Europe and their own context, and developing regional advocacy and programmatic strategies focused on longer term prevention. Overall, the study session aimed to promote stronger youth cooperation among YWCAs, as one of the largest platforms for young women in the region to exercise leadership and active citizenship.

The Council of Europe seeks to promote respect for the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Through this initiative, European YWCAs seek to build young women's leadership to support the realisation of human rights in their countries and region, and to understand legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms for the protection of human rights in the region. Through the participation of 35 young women from 21 different countries this study session has fostered a greater European cooperation by promoting and exercising intercultural dialogue. Through the YWCA movement, which operates in 27 member states of the Council of Europe, this study session has resulted in building networks and increased understanding among culturally and linguistically diverse countries.

3. Final Conclusions and Recommendations

Even though the participants had very different levels of previous knowledge and experience with the topic and had high expectations towards the programme, the final evaluation showed that a large majority of participants felt happy and very satisfied with the study session. Through the evaluation it was evident that the participants felt that they had reached fully or the majority of the aims and objectives and that they were happy with their own contributions. Their fears did not prove justified and their hopes were fulfilled.

The work of young women's presentations on the human rights situation in their respective countries, feed into the World YWCA International Leadership Institute which took place 23 – 28 May, 2013. A total 52 young women champions from 37 countries from around the world gathered in Bangkok, Thailand to discuss, debate and define a global strategy for the Future Young Women Want articulating specific goals, values, barriers and challenges faced globally by young women in the context of the Post- Millennium Development Goals agenda. In this regard the study session participants contributed to *the Future Young Women Want*- global report. It is important to note that five of the study session participants took part in the World YWCA International Leadership Institute, in Bangkok, Thailand. *The Future Young Women Want: A Global Call to Act* report outlines and articulates specific goals, values, barriers and challenges faced globally by young women in the context of the Post- Millennium Development Goals agenda (Post-2015) (The report can be viewed on this link: <http://www.worldywca.org/Resources/YWCA-Publications/The-Future-Young-Women-Want-Report>).

Overall, the study session aims and objectives were met to a great degree, to ensure a critical mass of young women from European YWCAs are empowered, mobilised and engaged in strategic actions to advance human rights and gender equality at all levels and to build capacity of YWCAs in Europe in working from a human rights-based approach in designing advocacy and programmes. These aims have been met as the participants have been trained in all of the areas: advocacy, human-rights based approach, implementing projects and gender equality. The participants are committed to replicating their learnings with other young women in their country upon return home and several have already done presentations and written blogs.

To conclude the preparation of the activity was very sufficient and as a result proved to be very effective as the study session ran smoothly without any major problems. This is in part thanks to the staff of the European Youth Centre, Strasbourg and the Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, Youth Department of the Council of Europe whom were extremely professional and efficient in all their tasks.

4. Follow up Actions

In terms of follow up to the study session, European YWCAs believe that participants on return home shall use their new skills and knowledge to train other young women involved in YWCAs on human rights. We also hope that participants will use the learning's from the session to deliver new projects, events or seminars that advance human rights in their country, and play a more active role in monitoring implementation of their government's human rights commitments. The European YWCAs now have a communication platform through the Council of Europe e-learning platform to keep participants connected so that they can support each other in implementing local projects, and continue to build a cross-regional European network of young women human rights champions.

European YWCAs will draw on the pool of trained young women to identify candidates for representation at European and global level for opportunities such as the European Women's Lobby Annual Forum, the European Youth Forum General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and Commission on the Status of Women. We would also look to identify members of future study session preparatory teams from among the participants.

The European YWCAs are also in the process of developing a four- year strategy for young women's leadership in Europe, so we are considering the outcomes of the study session and particularly the projects being proposed by young women to advance human rights in the region in developing the strategy and key actions.

A study session Facebook page has been set up for the participants to stay connected as well as the Council of Europe E-learning platform. There have been various blogs and articles published on the World YWCA website (www.worldywca.org) and blog page (<http://womenleadingchange.wordpress.com/>).

Erica Lewis, a World YWCA resource person who attended part of the study session is currently doing her PhD on young women leadership and conducted interviews with participants, this will directly feed into her thesis and will be officially published.

During the week the participants put together a patchwork 'Human Rights Quilt', each participant had a small square fabric on which to write a message about human rights and then all the pieces were sown together as one. The Human Rights Quilt will be framed and displayed in the European Youth Centre, Strasbourg.



Participants working on the Human Rights Quilt.

5. Introduction

From the 5th-12th of May, 2013 the European YWCAs held a human rights study session themed *European Young Women Advocating for Human Rights and Equality*. The session took place at the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg, France. In total 35 young women from 21 countries participated in the study session.

The overall aims and objectives of the study session were as follows:

Aims:

- To ensure a critical mass of young women from European YWCAs are empowered, mobilized and engaged in strategic actions to advance human rights and gender equality at all levels
- To build capacity of YWCAs in Europe in working from a human rights-based approach in designing advocacy and programmes

Objectives:

- Participants will deepen their understanding key mechanisms for advancing women's human rights and gender equality at European and global levels
- Participants will have the opportunity to exchange experiences of human rights violations and discrimination across countries in Europe and explore possible responses
- Participants will develop their knowledge of the principles of working from a human rights based approach in designing advocacy and programming strategies
- Participants will be equipped with skills to plan, monitor and evaluate projects upon their return home and replicate learnings with other young women in their country
- Participants will establish a support network with other young women engaged in the YWCA movement in Europe and identify ways of sustaining communication and contact through social media.

Background to the theme

The vision of the European YWCAs is of a fully inclusive world where justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom and care for the environment are promoted and sustained through women's leadership, with a special focus on young women. As part of the global YWCA movement, YWCAs in Europe are working to ensure young women are able to claim their rights as empowered leaders, decision makers and change agents responding to the issues affecting their lives and communities. One of our specific goals over the next four years is to ensure that the social, economic, cultural, civic and political rights of women, young women and girls are promoted and protected through advocacy, programmes and services. This study session was designed to advance this goal, and ensure a critical mass of young women involved in European YWCAs are empowered, mobilized and engaged in advancing human rights at national and regional levels.

The YWCA has a long history of engagement in advancing the human rights of women and girls and gender equality at the country, regional and global level. We were instrumental in lobbying for the establishment of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in 1947, and have been active in the Commission's annual efforts to strengthen human rights protection and gender equality. YWCAs in Great Britain, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland were among the delegates at this year's Commission. A number of YWCAs in Europe, including Belarus, are also actively involved in NGO shadow reporting as part of the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women and Girls (CEDAW) and the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review mechanisms. European YWCAs are keen to strengthen the awareness of young women from member associations of these opportunities for engagement, as well as the European Convention on Human Rights and European Social Charter as key instruments for holding governments accountable for ensuring equality between women and men and protecting women's human rights. The organisation is also in the process of institutionalising a human rights-based approach at all levels of the movement, and sees the study session as a valuable opportunity to strengthen young women's capacity in this area.

To this end the study session provided the opportune training to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding of European YWCA young women, to advance human rights. A preparatory intergenerational team of young women and women met to develop and design the study session programme. The team ensured the agenda was relevant and tailored to the needs of the target group. An intercultural learning process was built into the programme design through the sharing of human rights situation in countries where participants come from – this enabled all participants to understand both the commonalities and differences among young women's experiences of discrimination, violence and other human rights abuses in Europe.

Main Contents of the Study Session

In the context of the theme *European Young Women Advocating for Human Rights*, the main contents of the study session centered concretely around human rights in their complexity, from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to Conventions that safeguard rights – ICCPR, ICESCR, ECHR, CEDAW and the role of NGOs and the opportunities for engagement with human rights mechanisms. Through the various presentations participants discussed the human rights situation facing women and girls across Europe with a focus on violence, discrimination and sexual and reproductive health rights. Furthermore, women's rights as human rights were discussed in depth with a clear focus on gender equality and the socio-political foundations of gender based violence.

Over the course of the study session participants discussed these issues in depth and developed projects to address various human rights injustices and discrimination including child trafficking and violence against women. Participants also had the opportunity to discuss the work of the Council of Europe in various ways. Ms. Tina Mulcahy, Acting Head of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe and Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Strasbourg, participated briefly in the study session by providing a great link and oversight of the work of the Youth Department of Council of Europe.

Following this, as part of the study session participants visited the Council of Europe and met with the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Justice and Human Dignity Directorate, DG I – Human Rights and Rule of Law. The participants had meeting and tour of the Council, with Raluca Popa, Project Advisor from the Directorate General I. During the meeting Ms. Popa shared

the work of the Division for Gender Equality and Women in promoting gender mainstreaming in government policies and the landmark Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (known as the Istanbul convention, 2011). Ms. Popa highlighted the necessity of NGOs such as YWCAs to utilise the Istanbul convention as an advocacy tool, stating “The Istanbul convention is the first convention to officially recognise domestic violence as a human rights violation. This is a historical document that can change lives, we must put pressure on governments to ratify and domestically implement the convention.”

The Head of the European Youth Foundation Mr. Jean-Claude Lazaro was invited into the study session and discussed opportunities for funding and grants, as well as ideas for projects. He shared the work of the Foundation and the opportunities it offers.

During a social media session we discussed the Council of Europe’s Online No Hate Speech Movement as an effective social media campaign and promoted it, encouraging participants to get involved.

Profile of Participants

The organisation successfully recruited 35 participants representing 21 countries across Europe. Participants were young women under 30 years of age, who are active members of YWCAs and YWCA-YMCA joint associations in Europe. The participants met the full criteria of the applicant process; we had 2 participants from non-European countries (India and South Africa); however these participants are currently doing internships in Switzerland at the World YWCA.

The participants met the following criteria:

- Age 18-30 years
- Actively involved in a local or national YWCA or partner organization
- Able to work in English or Russian
- Demonstrated leadership potential
- Ability to share learning’s from the study session with a broader group of young women upon their return home
- Interested in advancing human rights in a network with other young women in Europe
- Motivated to prepare and contribute fully to the study session.

All of the participants came from different YWCA associations, and demonstrated an active involvement within their local branch – either as a volunteer or as an employee. In that sense the group was homogenic, but everyone contributed with their different languages, cultures, views, opinions, experiences and knowledge. Together we created a dynamic and exciting environment of sharing, discussing and reflecting. (See appendix for full list of participants).

6. Programme Content

The comprehensive European YWCAs study session programme focused on gender equality, understanding women's human rights, designing advocacy campaigns, programmes and implementing a human rights based approach. Strasbourg being the heart of the Council of Europe and the European Human Rights Court provided an opportune moment for engagement during the study session. (The full programme schedule can be viewed in the appendix).

The week began with an informal welcome evening for all participants; this was an opportunity for the participants to get acquainted with one another and begin to feel more comfortable. Several ice breakers were conducted along with some small team building exercises to create a safe space whereby the participants felt more comfortable thus creating a good atmosphere for the rest of the week.

As a Christian based organisation each day began with a 30 minute session on human rights from a theological perspective. Each session was led by a participant and engaged participants in new ways of thinking through feminist theology.

Throughout the week, group work enabled participants to work across cultures and learn from each other, as well as build friendships and networks across YWCAs in Europe. Intercultural evenings and social events during the study session also provided informal opportunities for strengthening intercultural understanding. During the session, participants had an opportunity to identify ways of forming a lasting network across Europe among participants using social media.

At the end of each day, reflection groups were held with a member of the prep team leading within the five different groups. This was the space for evaluation of the day and sessions, also a safe space to disclose any frustrations or areas of improvement for the study session. The objectives of the reflection groups were: to provide participants with the opportunity to reflect on their training and learning experience in the course and to consolidate that learning, to take the temperature of the group and to receive feedback from participants concerning their experience of the course.

Day One

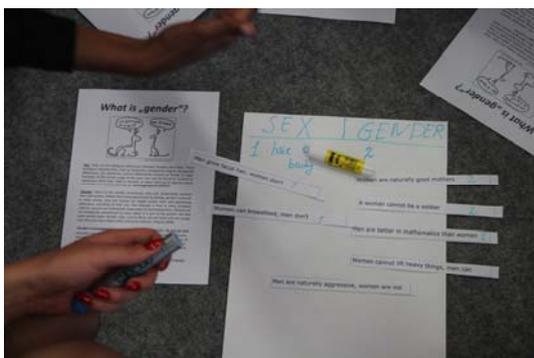
The first day of the study session consisted of establishing ground rules, setting expectations, discussing aims and objectives, team building and a brief introduction to human rights. Firstly, participants enjoyed a tour of the European Youth Centre and became aware of the various facilities for use including the computer suite, lounge area and kitchen. Ms. Tina Mulcahy, Acting Head of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe and Executive Director of the European Youth Centre Strasbourg, participated briefly on the first day by providing a great link and oversight of the work of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.

The team building exercise during the day enabled the participants to work well together for the whole week and created an atmosphere where every participant felt at ease and safe. The exercises ensured that participants reflected about the role they tend to take in a group and about their communication style.

The main discussions which took place during the first day were around human rights and the impact of circumstances which infringe upon human rights. The participants were shown a DVD- KNOW YOUR RIGHTS-*the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) produced by Youth for Human Rights International with support from the Australian Government, AusAID. The DVD lists all the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and presents them in an interesting and provocative way that engages the participants and challenges them to think deeply about the meaning of human rights and their universality. Following, the DVD participants then took part in an exercise *Take a Step Forward*, from *Compass - A manual on Human Rights Education with young people* (2002). This exercise worked extremely well in conjunction with the DVD; in this activity participants experience what it is like to be someone else in their society. The issues addressed include: Social inequality being often a source of discrimination and exclusion and also empathy and its limits. It challenges the participants to think about the concept that we are all equal, but some are more equal than others. (See appendix for UDHR hand-out).

This proved to be an excellent exercise as the participants truly reflected upon this and shared their frustration and challenges they faced as their characters. It prompted the participants to think about why they could not move off the line and others could, this also gave way to a discussion on the root causes of people not being able to enjoy their human rights and also how the participants can assist in ensuring everyone in their communities enjoy their human rights and how duty bearers are accountable in upholding human rights.

Another key session of the day was on Gender, this was an important topic that ran through the whole week: women and women's rights and gender. It was thus important to introduce the concept of gender in the very beginning of the study session to be able later on to build a common understanding of gender and gender concepts. Our key aims and objectives were for participants to familiarise themselves with the concept of gender and define and distinguish sex and gender, also participants became aware of how we all "do" gender every day and started to critically reflect on how gender roles and gender stereotypes influence their thinking and opinions. Participants realised how gender and gender roles have an impact on women's human rights and access to these rights. (See appendix 8.4 for hand-outs).



The day ended with an inter-cultural evening of music, food and humours being hosted whereby the participants were put into mixed country pairs and had to present each other's country. The participants each brought traditional food and drink to share from their native countries and wore traditional clothes.

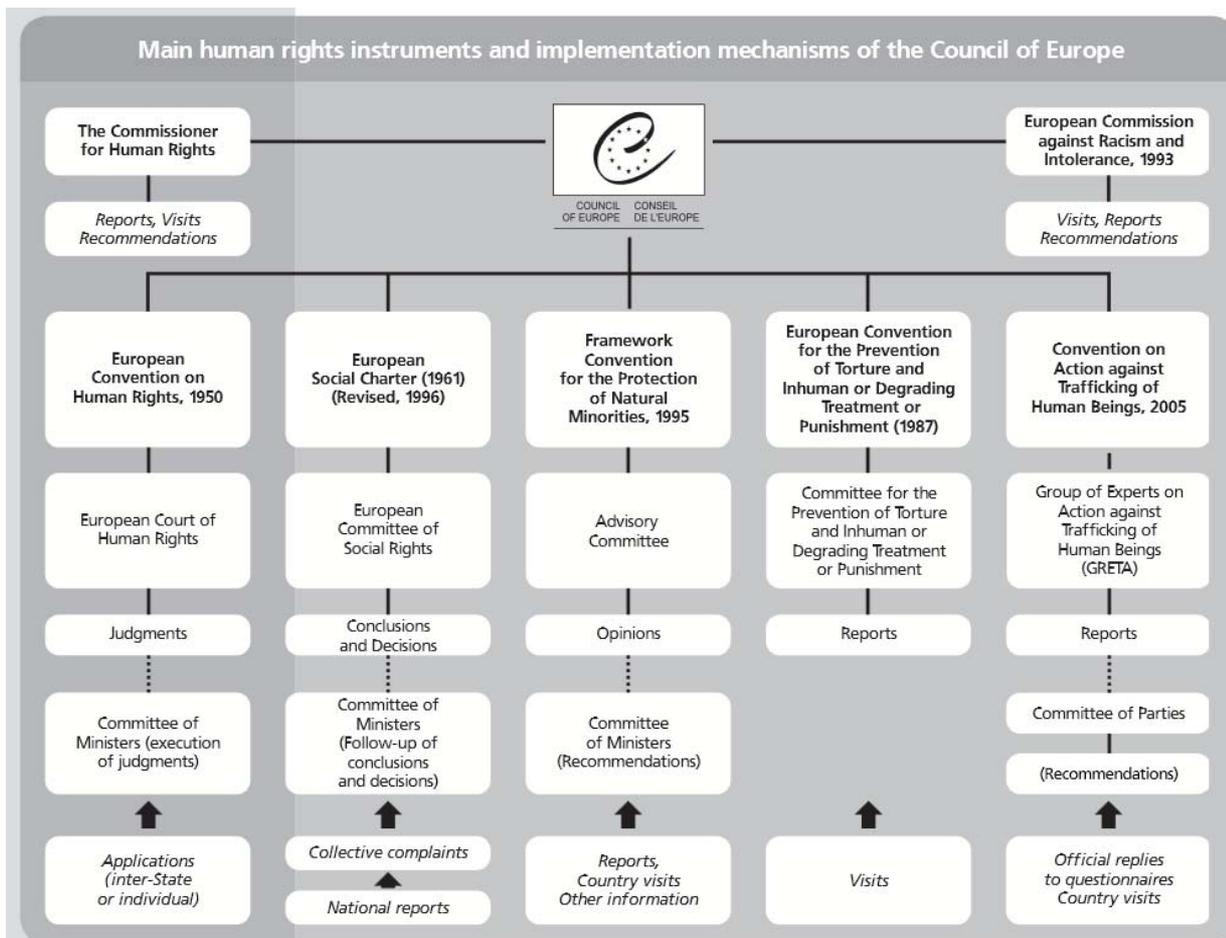
Day Two

The participants had a meeting and tour of the Council of Europe main building, with Raluca Popa, Project Advisor from the Directorate General I. During the meeting Ms Popa shared the work of the Division for Gender Equality and Women in promoting gender mainstreaming in government policies and the landmark Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (known as the Istanbul convention, 2011).

Prior to this in the morning, participants engaged in two sessions, one around leadership in relation to human rights and secondly a session on international and regional human rights mechanisms.

The main discussions that took place during this day were around various topics as it proved to be a very fruitful day filled with inspiring and engaging concepts and ideas. The leadership in relation to human rights raised some interesting reflections. Exploring leadership is critical to becoming an advocate in human rights. Most young women participating were selected because they are leaders yet may have not had the opportunity to think about their leadership style, journey and role they play in their community. Therefore this exercise enabled them to really take time to connect their own personal attitude to the advocacy actions that they take in relation to personal reflection on human rights and their role in being an agent of change.

Introducing international and regional human rights mechanisms gave the participants a strong understanding of human rights mechanisms when having the meeting at the Palais de l'Europe (Palace of Europe), as they were prepared with many questions. Each participant was given a hand-out with a comprehensive list of international and regional human rights mechanisms (See Appendix). During this session, the role of NGOs and opportunities for engagement within human rights mechanisms was identified and concrete examples of World YWCA advocacy at the UN Commission on the Status of Women and the Human Rights Council were presented.



Example of Hand-out sourced from Compass - A manual on Human Rights Education with young people (2012).

Participants were then given a free afternoon this day to familiarise themselves with Strasbourg and do some sight-seeing as the study session was going to be an intensive week and due to national French holidays this was their only opportunity.

Day Three

This day was led by external expert Borislava Daskalova, trainer and researcher, Gender Research Institute at the Balkan Centre for Regional Development, Ms. Daskalova has extensive expertise and knowledge of women's rights and gender. She provided in-depth analysis and information on the history of women's rights; the socio-cultural foundations of gender-based violence as well as the human rights based approach.

Ms. Daskalova delivered the following sessions:

- Women's rights as human rights seminar
- Socio-cultural foundations of gender-based violence workshop
- Understanding the human rights based approach seminar.

Discussions took place unpacking the concept that women's rights are an essential component of universal human rights. They reflect the fact that men and women have very different experiences - and the fact that women and girls often face gender-based discrimination that puts them at increased risk of poverty, violence, ill health and a poor education. International women's rights work encompasses a range of human rights as they relate to the equity needs of women, working at once to advance new rights and

opportunities for all women and to combat the abuses of specific groups of women and girls.

Ms. Daskalova delivered a shocking and mind-provoking presentation on the socio-cultural foundations of gender based violence. This presentation challenged the participants to think about social norms in the context of human rights and also how women are portrayed in the media. Ms. Daskalova provided a feminist perspective starting from the concept that history itself is 'HIS'-story and is therefore mostly the story of men's lives from a male perspective and is therefore biased. Conclusions were drawn that gender is a human invention, like language, kinship, religion, and technology; like them, gender organises human social life in culturally patterned ways (See appendix for hand-out).

Participants went on to address sexism, prejudice, and discrimination and thus how these actions and attitudes impact human rights. To assist in developing solutions to these issues participants engaged in an understanding human rights seminar, to fully deepen their ideas of best practice when addressing issues such as sexism or discrimination.

The day ended with a more practical session. Therefore, a more active and creative activity was developed whereby the participants created an advocacy action for human rights within small groups. Each group had 40 minutes to develop and create an advocacy campaign they were given various scenarios to work from and then had to present their campaign. The results were amazing and the campaigns were excellent for example here is poster on domestic violence calling on people to intervene and help victims of domestic violence. The following day consisted of more concepts and strategies of advocacy. The action developed during this session served the participants as an example and they could then think back on it and reflect what was effective and what they would approve.



Other groups developed a theatre drama based on HIV and AIDS awareness, another group created a short video clip based on domestic violence and lastly the fourth group created an advocacy campaign on child trafficking (See appendix 8.5).

Day Four

This day was led mainly by Tatev Margaryan, Council of Europe educational advisor for our study session. Ms. Margaryan presented effective advocacy strategies and sustaining communications-networking. Ms. Margaryan presented networks as groups of legally independent organisations or subsidiary business units that use various methods of coordinating and controlling their interaction in order to appear like a larger entity.

Three main types of network organisation are typically seen:

- (1) Internal: where a large organisation has separate units/bodies, acting as departments and (national/regional/local) centers,
- (2) Hierarchical and stable: where a centralised unit delegates some work to other network member bodies/organizations, and
- (3) flat and dynamic where a network integrator is only coordinating and all national/regional/local units are autonomously delivering their work in achieving the network's aims.

Networking is the exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; *specifically*: the cultivation of productive relationships for empowerment.

In other words: networking is creating a group of acquaintances and associates and keeping it active through regular communication for mutual benefit. Networking is based on the question "How can I help?" and not with "What can I get?"

Ms. Margaryan explained the various benefits of networking such as:

1. Shared knowledge

Being a part of a network and sharing ideas leads to shared knowledge. There is usually more than one way of accomplishing a goal and receiving feedback and discussing other points of view really expands your knowledge base and allows you to see things from a broader perspective. As an individual it is unlikely that you will have the depth of knowledge and experience as that of a group, but collectively the power can be staggering.

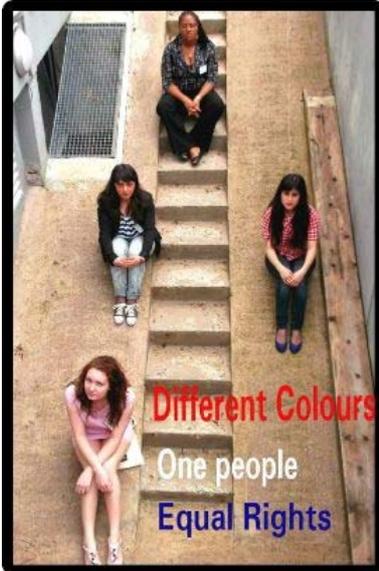
2. Opportunities

Networking always results in the creation of opportunities. However, you cannot know when or where they may materialize, which is why it is important to be an action taker, ready to seize on a beneficial opportunity when it does come along.

3. Connections and visibility

People within a network of friends will have connections with many other people they have encountered in their own lives. When someone they know has a need and can benefit from products and services offered by someone within the network, that person will likely get the call. The opposite is also true. You need a service provider and have no one that you know and trust, receiving a recommendation from within your network can be both timely and comforting. Being visible and getting noticed and recognised is a big benefit of networking. Ms. Margaryan also presented the skills and competences that are necessary for the successful networking.

During this day social media training was also delivered, participants were shown the potential impact that social media as a tool for change and various examples were given such as the role of Facebook and Twitter during the Arab Spring and how people were able to disseminate information quickly with great impact. Participants were given the opportunity to create twitter accounts, received photography training and also creative blog writing training. As part of the photography training the participants had to develop a human rights campaign poster. The participants developed their human rights messages, posed for photos and then edited the photos using online software. Below is a poster developed by one group (See appendix for more information).



During the session we also discussed the Council of Europe's Online NO Hate Speech Campaign as an effective social media campaign and promoted it, encouraging participants to get involved (nohatespeechmovement.org).

In evening the participants had free time and dinner in the Strasbourg city centre. During this time, the participants did a flash mob to raise awareness about violence against women. The participants had been practising throughout the week and learning the One Billion Dance Moves, which they organised themselves. The One Billion Rising is a campaign and global action to end violence against women and girls (campaign can be viewed on this link: <http://www.vday.org/node/2849>). The young women broke out into a spontaneous dance in the Cathedral Square of Strasbourg drawing attention from a large gathering of people who curiously watched as flyers on the objective of the dance and a message to end violence in all forms against women were distributed. This in itself was a small campaign to increase people's awareness about violence against women, which the participants themselves implemented. (See Appendix 8.3)

Day Five

The fifth day was very much all about project design, implementation and management. This was the time for participants to really begin to put all what they had learnt and the ideas that they had discussed into a project based on human rights and to address a human rights issue close to their heart and their environment/community.

Every learning process has to be followed with concrete action that will make a real impact in the environment of the participants. Training multipliers is a very challenging process in which the accomplishment of learning outcomes is known only once the future multipliers

would have had the chance to plan and organise activities within their own youth work. Development of project proposals by participants is one way how to ensure that the contents discussed and learned throughout the study session will be channelled into practical activities at national, European and global level. After conceptual preparation participants were asked to develop idea for future project.

During these sessions which ran the entire day, participants conducted detailed analysis of their project ideas, including SWOT analysis and a critique of the evaluation and monitoring processes.

The Head of the European Youth Foundation Mr. Jean-Claude Lazaro was invited into the study session on this day and discussed opportunities for funding and grants, as well as ideas for projects. He shared the work of the Foundation and the opportunities it offers.

Day Six

The final day of the study session consisted mainly of presentations of the various projects the participants had developed and they were given feedback on the design, implementation and evaluation process they had created. Prior to the presentations the participants received a brief on presentation skills and how to really sell your idea.

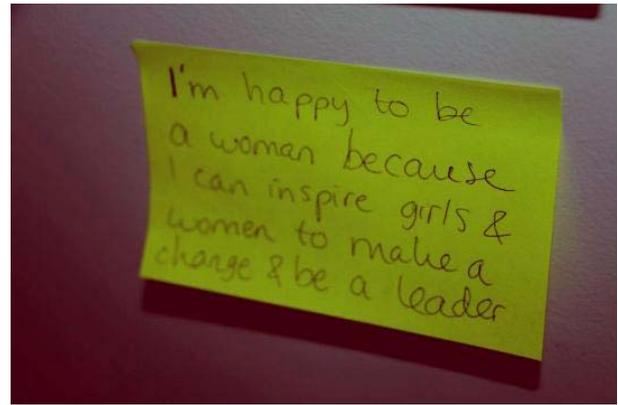
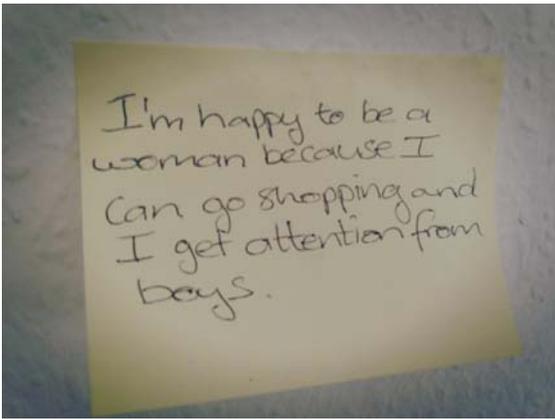
As this was the final day, we conducted a session on next steps and continued engagement. One of the main outcomes and methods for engagement is the Council of Europe online e-learning platform, of which all the study session participants are now members as we have an online group within the platform.

Lastly, the evaluation of the entire study session was conducted at the end of the day through both non-formal and formal evaluation methodology, including small group reflections everyday which was facilitated by the prep team members. The main results show that the participants felt that the main objectives of the session were achieved and feel empowered to exercise their learning on return home. Some participants felt that it was intense at times, with a fully packed programme however though challenging at times they have developed a comprehensive understanding of human rights and human rights mechanisms.

On the first day of the study session participants engaged in a small exercise whereby they wrote on post-it notes the following: I am happy to be a woman because.... (They then wrote why they are happy to be a woman). We then repeated the exercise on the last day of the study session; as a result it was clear to see the participant's change of attitude in relation to gender. For example, on the first day one participant wrote I am happy to be a woman because I can go shopping and I get attention from boys and then this same participant wrote I am happy to be a woman because I am strong and know my human rights. This acted as an informal tool for measuring the outcomes of the study session.

Post-it Note A. (start of study session)

Post-it Note B. (end of study session)



Furthermore, the 35 participants found in each other friendships for life, sisterhood and took a journey together in finding their inner leaders. Through the activities, free spaces to share personal stories and opportunities of working towards common goals, the study session became a network of amazing young women who have collectively desired to become true agents of change for human rights.

8. Appendices

8.1 Daily Programme

Sunday, 5th May 2013

Arrival of participants
19:00 Dinner
21:00 Welcome evening

Monday, 6th May 2013

08.45-9.00 Tour of Strasbourg European Youth Centre
09:30-11.00 Opening with introduction to the study session,
Introduction of aims & objectives of the study session / expectations & programme
11:00-11.30 Break
11:30-13.00 Team building activity
13:00-14.30 Lunch
14:30-16.00 Introduction to human rights
16:00-16.30 Break
16:30-18.00 discussing gender
18:00-18.30 Reflection groups
19:00-20.00 Dinner
21:00 Intercultural evening

Tuesday, 7th May 2013

08.45-09.15 Theological perspectives on human rights
09.30-11.00 I have a leadership dream session
11:00-11.30 Break
11.30-13.00 International and regional human rights mechanism
13:00-14.30 Lunch break
14:30-16.00 Council of Europe Visit
16:00-19.00 FREE AFTERNOON
19.00-20.00 Dinner
20.30-21.00 Reflection groups

Wednesday, 8th May 2013

08.45-09.15 Theological perspectives on human rights
09:30-11.00 Women's rights as human rights
11:00-11.30 Break
11:30-13.00 Socio-cultural foundations of gender based violence
13:00-14.30 Lunch
14:30-16.00 Understanding the human rights based approach
16:00-16.30 Break
16:30-18.00 Advocating for human rights in action
18:00-18.30 Reflection groups
19:00-20.00 Dinner
21:00 Human rights karaoke

Thursday, 9th May 2013

08.45-09.15 Theological perspectives on human rights
09:30-11.00 Effective advocacy strategies
11:00-11.30 Break

11:30-13.00 sustaining communications and networking
13:00-14.30 Lunch
14:30-16.00 Social media training
16:00-18.30 FREE AFTERNOON
18.30-19.00 Flash mob in City Centre
19:00-21.00 Dinner in City Centre

Friday, 10th May 2013

08.45-09.15 Theological perspectives on human rights
09:30-11.00 Project management and design
11:00-11.30 Break
11:30-13.00 Project management and design (continued)
13:00-14.30 Lunch
14:30-16.00 Fundraising and project proposal form
16:00-16.30 Break
16:30-18.00 Theory in practice - group work designing project
18:00-18.30 Briefing on presentation skills
18:30-19.00 Reflection groups
19:00-20.00 Dinner and free time onwards

Saturday 11th May 2013

08.45-09.15 Theological perspectives on human rights
09:30-11.00 Presentation of projects
11:00-11.30 Break
11:30-13.00 Presentation of projects (continued)
13:00-14.30 Lunch
14:30-16.00 What next? - Discussion on continued engagement
16:00-16.30 Break
16:30-18.00 Non-formal evaluation and reflection of the week
18:00-19.00 Formal evaluation
19:00-20.00 Dinner
20.30 Celebration and closing

Sunday 12th May 2013

Departure of participants - safe travel home

Appendix 8.2 - Participants List

Albania

Name: Krist Petraj Zicishti

Name: Eliana Tahiri

Armenia

Name: Zhenni MATSHKALYAN

Name: Eliza Abovyan

Belgium

Name: Sareh Jalilian

Belarus

Name: Lada Buza

Czech Republic

Name: Karla Hostasova

Estonia

Name: Kristel Kongas

Finland

Name: Senja Kortelainen

Greece

Name: Garufallia Dragoumani

Sweden

Name: Sofia Lindman

Name: Joan Sediq

Switzerland

Name: Noemi Helfenstein

Name: Marcia Banasko

Name: Juli Dugdale

South Africa

Name: Kgothatso Elisa Mokoena

Ukraine

Name: Iryna Rodygina

Name: Iuliia Torchynska

Name: Victoria Chekan

Name: Tetiana Iakovenko

United Kingdom

Name: Laurie Gayle

Name: Pauline Mosoke

Georgia

Name: Nana Berekasiivili

Name: Magda Kikalishvili

Iceland

Name: Anna Bergljot Boedvarsdottir

Name: Hulda Gudlaugsdottir

Ireland

Name: Lauren Shaw

India

Name: Ramya Kudekallu

Netherlands

Name: Nina Meiling

Poland

Name: Dominika Kupniewska

Name: Emilia Mojita

Romania

Name: Mihaela Mazilu

Name: Daniela Mazilu

Appendix 8.3 - List of references and useful resources

The Council of Europe Youth site: www.coe.int/youth

- Call for trainings
- Reports of all youth sector's activities
- How you and others can be active for youth policy
- Links to everything else

Compass site: www.coe.int/compass

- Download the Human Rights training manual in different languages
- Gender Matters - Gender Based violence
- Composito - Human Rights education for children
- Education pack - activities for youth work
- Domino - activities for campaigning
- Living Library - methodology for dialogue and learning.

T-kits of the EU-Council of Europe partnership: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/T_kits

- Training kits with background info and exercises
- Practical tips and ideas
- Easy to read
- Topics like: Project management, running a youth organisation, inter-cultural learning, and volunteering, Fundraising, social inclusion and Euro-Mediterranean cooperation

European Youth Foundation: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation>

European Commission- Council of Europe Youth Partnership: <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/>

- Youth policy information 38
- Common definitions, Country profiles etc...
- Knowledge centre and research on youth policy
- Global youth cooperation
- Links...

EU Platform for sharing of project results: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/eve/

- Examples of thousands of projects financed by the EU
 - Results, Project examples etc. for inspiration
- EU Youth Page: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.htm
- Explanations on the EU funding programme Youth in Action
 - Publications

EU SALTO centre: Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within the European YOUTH programme: <http://www.salto-youth.net/>

Training opportunities: <http://www.salto-youth.net/tools/training/find-a-training/>

- Calendar for international training opportunities for youth workers on diverse topics

Toolkits: <http://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/find-a-tool/>

- Ideas for games

- Activities
- Methodologies

Publications: <http://www.salto-youth.net/tools/publications/>

- Free download of manuals to topics like: Cultural Diversity, European-Mediterranean cooperation, Youth Participation, Evaluation etc.

United Nations Organization: <http://www.un.org/>

- Conventions and Resolution useful for lobbying and advocacy

World YWCA: <http://www.worldywca.org/>

- News
- Publications
- Toolkits
- Priorities
- Activities of YWCA around the world
- “Power to change”-Fund

YWCA Publications: <http://www.worldywca.org/Resources/YWCA-Publications>

- Manual with workshop ideas, games etc. “Empowering young women to lead change”
- Manual/Reports for working on AIDS/HIV
- Manual on work with women and bible stories
- Manual on the YWCA History
 - [The Future that Young Women Want: A Global Call to Act Report](#)

And: <http://www.worldywca.org/Resources/Resources-by-Theme>

- Manuals, Statistics, Reports to download on topics like HIV, Violence against Women, Peace with Justice, Economic Empowerment, Young Women, Leadership etc.
<http://www.worldywca.org/Resources/Resources-by-Theme/Leadership-Toolkit>
- Standards for good management

Links to Articles, Blogs and Videos published on the Study Session:

Articles:

<http://www.worldywca.org/YWCA-News/World-YWCA-and-Member-Associations-News/European-Young-Women-Advocating-for-Human-Rights-and-Equality>

<http://www.worldywca.org/YWCA-News/World-YWCA-and-Member-Associations-News/The-European-Study-Session-2013-concludes>

<http://www.worldywca.org/YWCA-News/World-YWCA-and-Member-Associations-News/Human-Rights-Education-and-Women-s-Leadership>

Blogs:

<http://womenleadingchange.wordpress.com/?s=study+session+2013>

<http://www.ywcagb.org.uk/archives/888>.

Flash mob Video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82XCNGZCx8c>

Campaign Video: (Participant Group Work on Trafficking)

https://www.dropbox.com/s/u7t3ayt3kwegqx2/IMG_4885.MOV

European YWCAs Young Women's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanYwcaYoungWomensSummit>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/YWCA-European-Young-Women/108578115846677?fref=ts>

Appendix 8.4 Selection of study session Handouts

Compass

http://eycb.coe.int/compass/en/chapter_6/print_6_3.html



Appendices > The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 16.

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17.

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20.

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21.

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22.

Article 2.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4.

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5.

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6.

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7.

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8.

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10.

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11.

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23.

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24.

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25.

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26.

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27.

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

Article 12.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13.

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14.

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15.

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28.

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29.

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30.

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.



What is „gender“?



(www.genderqueer.org.au)

‘Sex’ refers to the biological differences between females and males. These biological characteristics, such as hormones, reproductive organs and genetic differences, are commonly used to differentiate humans as female or male. Examples of the correct usage of the term ‘sex’ may be found on customs or application forms (sex: male or female), or when referring to statistics which are divided into female and male as ‘sexdisaggregated statistics’.

‘Gender’ refers to the socially constructed roles and relationships between men and women. Rather than being determined by biology, gender is learned. In other words, men and women are taught certain roles and appropriate behaviours according to their sex. One example is how in many European cultures, women are traditionally responsible for food preparation. Women are not biologically predestined to cook, rather it is part of the gender role that most women learn. Gender roles, such as these, are not static and can change over time and vary widely within and across cultures. (Valasek 2008)

*“Gender is everywhere because when people interact socially, the way we view ourselves, our identities and our freedoms, our rights and possibilities all come into direct contact with how others see us and how they act in relation to us. At the same time it could be argued that **gender is nowhere** because the ways in which we see each other socially tend to be so naturalised that they appear to be normal and neutral.” (Tittley (Ed.) 2007)*



Do you have a word for “gender” in your language? Does your language distinguish between “sex” and “gender”?

International and Regional Human Rights Mechanisms

International and regional instruments and mechanisms is a sub-theme of human rights and provides information on international & regional instruments & mechanisms relevant to women and the women, peace and security agenda.

There are many international and regional human rights instruments and many different mechanisms established to protect and promote human rights. Many of these are relevant to conflict and post-conflict environments and to the women, peace and security agenda. Furthermore, countries that have emerged from conflict often seek to ensure that violations of human rights committed during conflict are addressed. In addition there is a pressure on new post-conflict governments to commit to international and regional human rights standards and to set up mechanisms and institutions at the national level to ensure that human rights are respected in the future.

A note on international human rights instruments:

- Legally binding and non-legally binding: declarations, adopted by bodies such as the United Nations General Assembly, are not legally binding; however conventions are legally binding instruments concluded under international law.
- Global and regional: global instruments allow any state in the world to be a party, and regional instruments are restricted to states in a particular region of the world.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are often referred to as the international bill of rights.

Examples of International Human Rights Mechanisms:

- **Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**
The Commission on the Status of Women (hereafter referred to as “CSW” or “the Commission”) is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women.
- **Human Rights Council**
The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them. It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. It meets at the UN Office at Geneva.

The Council is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UN General Assembly. The Human Rights Council replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

- **The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women (CEDAW)**
CEDAW is the body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. CEDAW Committee consists of 23 experts on women’s rights from around the world. Countries who have become party to the treaty (States parties) are obliged to submit regular reports to the Committee on how the rights of the Convention are implemented. During its sessions the Committee considers each State party report and addresses its concerns and recommendations to the State party in the form of concluding observations.

- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing The United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime
This Protocol is a protocol to the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. It is one of the three Palermo protocols, the others being the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms. The Protocol was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 and entered into force on 25 December 2003. As of June 2013 it has been ratified by 156 states.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is responsible for implementing the Protocol. It offers practical help to states with drafting laws, creating comprehensive national anti-trafficking strategies, and assisting with resources to implement them. In March 2009, UNODC launched the Blue Heart Campaign to fight human trafficking, to raise awareness, and to encourage involvement and inspire action. The Protocol commits of ratifying states to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, protecting and assisting victims of trafficking and promoting cooperation among states in order to meet those objectives.

Examples of Regional Human Rights Mechanisms

- Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence
This new landmark treaty of the Council of Europe opens the path for creating a legal framework at pan-European level to protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence. The Convention also establishes a specific monitoring mechanism in order to ensure effective implementation of its provisions by the Parties.

- European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
The European Convention for the Prevention of Torture was adopted in 1987 and entered into force in 1989 and was amended by Protocol 1 and 2. The Convention created the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, to monitor the treaty. By 2003, 44 members of the COE had ratified the treaty. Protocol No. 1, which entered into force in 2002, allows any non-COE member state to become a party to the Convention.

- Committee for the Prevention of Torture

The Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) monitors the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It is composed of independent, impartial experts who serve four-year terms and may be re-elected twice; there is one member per signatory state.

- European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance was set up in 1993 to fight racism (the belief that certain races are inferior), xenophobia (fear of foreigners), anti-Semitism (prejudice against Jews), and other forms of intolerance. The Commission has one member per COE member state. Members are appointed by governments, although they serve independently.

“Women`s rights as human rights - challenges and perspectives”

By Borislava Daskalova

1. Human Rights

Human rights are "commonly understood as inalienable fundamental rights to which a person is inherently entitled simply because she or he is a human being." Human rights are thus conceived as universal (applicable everywhere) and egalitarian (the same for everyone).

The doctrine of human rights in international practice, within international law, global and regional institutions, in the policies of states and in the activities of non-governmental organizations, has been a cornerstone of public policy around the world. *The idea of human rights* states, "if the public discourse of peacetime global society can be said to have a common moral language, it is that of human rights."

The universality of human rights emerged during the 20th century with the UN Declaration of Human rights on the belief that the basic values and principles underlying the concept of human rights are of a universal nature. These values and principles included the concept of individual liberty and freedoms, the belief in democracy and political rights, the acknowledgement of social and economic right.

2. Women's Rights as Human Rights

Women's rights are an essential component of universal human rights.

They reflect the fact that men and women have very different experiences - and the fact that women and girls often face gender-based discrimination that puts them at increased risk of poverty, violence, ill health and a poor education. International' women's rights work encompasses a range of human rights as they relate to the equity needs of women, working at once to advance new rights and opportunities for all women and to combat the abuses of specific groups of women and girls.

The Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is an international treaty ratified by most countries to enshrine a universal approach to women's rights.

Appendix 8.5 - Project Ideas (Outcomes)

Advocating for Women's rights in action – Scenarios Hand-out

Each group had 40 minutes to develop and create an advocacy campaign they were given various scenarios to work from and then had to present their campaign.

1. In your country are living many immigrants. Immigrant women especially are often largely excluded from public life. In addition there is a large group of illegal immigrants, women of this group are particularly afraid to turn to any state institution because they do not want to be discovered and sent back to their country of origin. A particular group of illegal immigrants are young women and girls who have been trafficked from other countries to work in your country as sex workers. They are afraid not only of the police and state institutions but also fear that their trafficker and his friends and network could find out if they turn to some institution for help. They are often living almost like prisoners. Many of these immigrant women suffer from violence, sexual, physical, psychological and economic violence every day. Your country has good laws in place protecting from all these kind of violence. There are also save houses where women, including illegal immigrants, can find help and support and legal assistance. However these women don't know what kinds of laws exist nor any of the social services and how to reach them. Many of them don't speak the language of your country.

You and your organizations want to change something about this situation. Being aware of all the described challenges how do you organize your advocacy campaign to inform these women about their rights and possibilities to reach for help?

2. You and your friends are angry about the amount of domestic violence perpetrated in your community. Although your country has very progressive laws protecting from domestic violence on paper, almost nothing of it is implemented in practice. Your neighbour for example has on numerous occasions complained to the local police about her husband's violence, but male officers in the police station simply told her that they do not get involved in "family issues".

You and your friends are frustrated by the local police response and the fact that domestic violence is not even prosecuted, although the law for it exists. You decide to start an advocacy campaign to change this. Who are you targeting and with which advocacy message in order to make pressure on the state and the police implementing the laws and appropriately tackling domestic violence?

3. You live in a rather poor area. Many people in your environment have little or no education. Men work hard, and women are staying at home, do housework and take care of the children. Many women do not work because their husbands don't want them to. In your society women are not supposed to access high school and thus because they cannot get the necessary education, they cannot find work with adequate salaries and jobs they desire. Women who still decide to continue school suffer from a lot of pressure from their husbands, family and society as a whole. The fact many women have very low education also makes it difficult for them to fight for their rights. These women don't know anything about 'human rights' and even less about women's human rights.

You work in the YWCA and you are decided to change the situation of these women. What does your advocacy campaign for helping these women look like?

4. Your government does not care about reproductive health of youth. In schools, universities and college there are no preventive lectures on reproductive health. It seems the government does not think about the future of the nation. Young people receive little education on these issues, they have an unhealthy lifestyle; they often change sexual partners, do not use contraceptives or protect themselves adequately from diseases. After a few years, the number of new infected people, diseases, unwanted pregnancies and abortions in your country has sharply increased. This is a serious problem for the health of the whole nation. One of the biggest challenges in your country is HIV and AIDS.

You and your organisation feel that if the government doesn't do anything about it, you have to force the change. You want to change this situation through an advocacy campaign. How are you going to implement this?

5. You are living in a country in Eastern Europe (for example in Russia or Ukraine). The bad economic situation of your country doesn't allow young people to study and to get a decent job. Many young women after the obligatory school decide not to continue their studies because they do not see any perspectives. The government, in turn, takes care of the education of young people with nothing more than empty words. No social work is carried out with the children in school. At the same time, many agencies offer young girls employment abroad: Bright advertising, beautiful promises - all this attracts young women. Agencies offer immediate profit, decent living conditions, and high wages. But instead of getting a decent job with a higher salary girls fall into the trap of prostitution and are forced to work in brothels and to live in very poor conditions. They are forcibly held as prostitutes/sex workers for many years.

How can you and your organization influence this situation? Think of an effective advocacy campaign!

Results:

Scenario 1:

The group working on the issue of hidden domestic violence in immigrant families suggested to develop a campaign consisting of several levels:

- 1) A poster campaign under the slogan "look closer" in order to raise awareness of this issue within the community and encourage neighbours etc to denounce cases of abuse and domestic violence. Showing first a normal street/house scene and then zooming in. In the last picture appears a scene of domestic violence. The poster says: If you see something like this call this number: 0881 798 555
- 2) A street theatre in communities with distribution of information booklets etc.
- 3) Cooperation with companies producing tampons. The tampon is enrolled in a little flyer which says in different languages: "are you a victim of domestic violence? Sexual abuse? Etc. You can call here? Visit this website. Your information will be treated confidentially. This is safe."

Scenario 2:

Campaign on domestic violence

Problem: The police do not help the victims of domestic violence.

Aim: Prepare community to hear the voice of the victims and be ready to accept them. Understand and help them, so they will provide security to victims of domestic violence. Making victims feel that they can trust the community and don't feel fear.

Advocacy: Policy monitoring and public accountability.

Association of university researchers, social workers and NGOs, to produce an academic research which will conclude personal interviews with victims. If in our community church is strong we will ask their help and only if they condemn domestic violence.

Create a web page where the statistics will be found and victims could have support from social workers.

Send the results to government and public body (decision makers) and ask training programs for police and change the law, if needed.

Use of investigative journalism.

Create 2 posters. One for the police and one for the community.

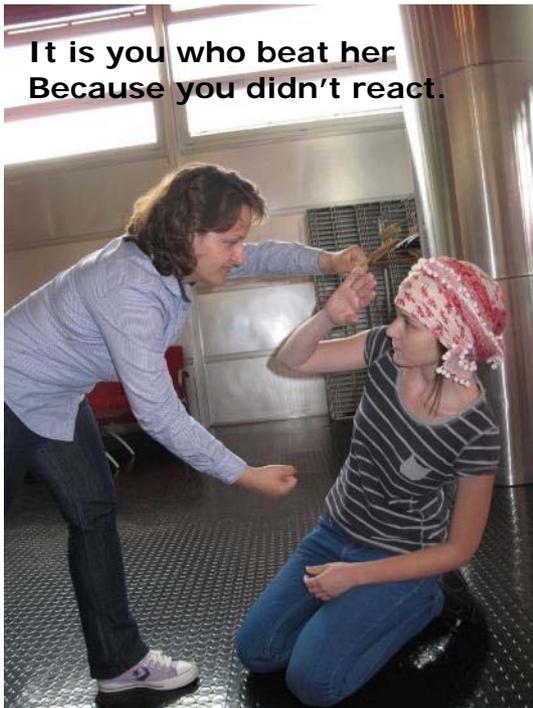
The first would have a police officer who hits a woman with the slogan "it's you who hurt her because you didn't react". We will make this poster, because police must be more sensitive on domestic violence.

The second poster would show a bruised woman with her baby. The slogan would be: "it's not her fault don't punish her". It would be addressed to the community to make them sensitive to the subject.

On both there would be written statistics of the academic research.

The posters would be everywhere, we would want people to realise that this issue is a reality.

Organise a festival, where we could show an Armenian film called "Butterfly". We would use the posters and the academic research to inform people, we will ask famous people to tell a few stories about domestic violence.



It is you who beat her
Because you didn't react.



Scenario 3: The group working on scenario 3 has developed a short movie that they would plan to broadcast widely during hours and on channels most watched by women in their communities. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10152843271055026&set=vb.654015025&type=2&theater>

Scenario 4: Group 4 invented a short drama piece that they would plan to show in schools as a means of initiating a discussion about HIV/aids and sexual and reproductive health. The drama shows the story of a girl who finds out that she's HIV positive and as a result of this is bullied by all her friends and family until finally somebody says "stop" and her mother, family and friends realize that the person has the right to love, dignity, friendship, education etc. The drama goes without words. Instead the main characters carry post-its identifying them as "classmates" or "friend" and in the end of the drama papers with statements like: "stop!" or "I am your mother, no matter what happens with you. I'll always love you"; "everybody has human rights".

Scenario 5: Campaign on trafficking

"Our aim was to increase awareness of young girls (high school students) about the risks of being exploited as sex worker and the issue of trafficking. We planned to organize a free concert starring a famous pop-star for students and show a short video produced by YWCA based on real stories of victims. Also we planned to disseminate leaflets created by YWCA."

Use concert as mean to get young girls interested. (Free entries).

As a second step the group mentioned the idea to start an advocacy campaign targeting possible employers encouraging them to employ young students and by this lower the risk that they will look for opportunities abroad.



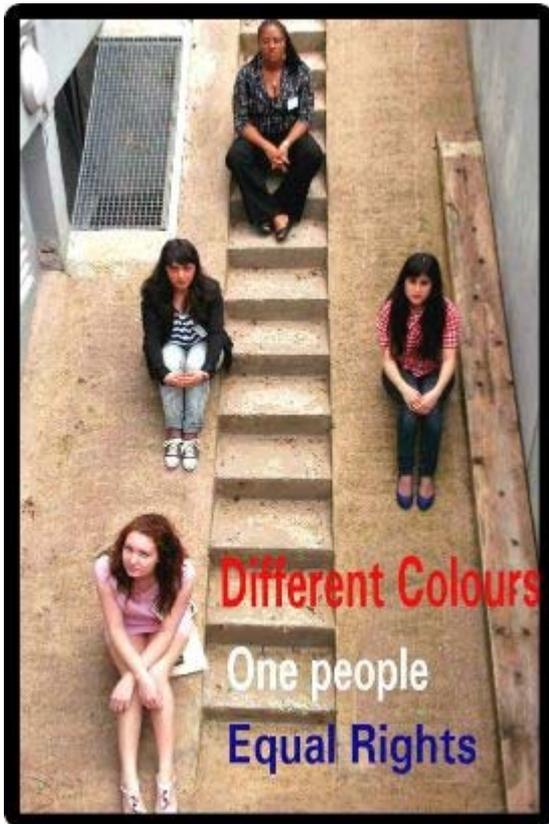
**Welcome to our
Concert!!!**

**Supported by YWCA -
The campaign against
trafficking**

https://www.dropbox.com/s/u7t3ayt3kweggx2/IMG_4885.MOV

Video file attached to the e-mail

Photography Training -Campaign Posters



This group focused on racial discrimination and hate crime. Their objective being to promote inclusion, equality, peace and human rights.



This group focused on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reflected on the diversity among us as human beings who are all born equal yet we are all uniquely different.



Caption for the poster: "You may not know them. But it does not mean they don't need your help"
This group focused on immigration and refugees reflecting on the European Convention on Human Rights and the Protection of Refugees: Limits and Opportunities.



Caption on the poster: "Don't treat people like insects".
This group reflected on discrimination within society.



This group focused on social injustice highlighting the discrimination against marginalised groups.

