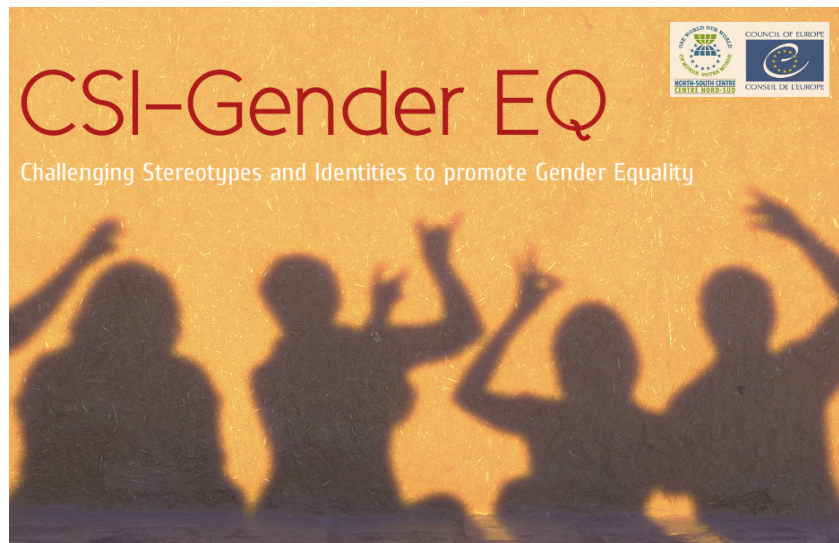


North-South Centre of the Council of Europe

## Training Course Challenging Stereotypes and Identities to promote Gender Equality



*Training on Strengthening the Capacities of Youth to combat gender bias for the empowerment of women*

In the framework of the 4<sup>th</sup> Mediterranean University on Youth and Global Citizenship  
1-8 May 2016, Hammamet, Tunisia

### Concept Note

#### 1. The North-South Centre of the Council of Europe (NSC-CoE)

The North-South Centre (NSC) is a functional instrument in the implementation of the Policy of the Council of Europe (CoE) towards neighbouring regions. The NSC's activities are so designed in complementarity with action plans or established bilateral programs in this context, in particular within the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnerships 2015-2017 with Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.<sup>1</sup>

The overall objective of the NSC is that civil society, in particular youth and women, is empowered through intercultural dialogue and global education to play an active role in Member States and in Neighbouring Regions.

Through its activities, the NSC seeks to contribute to the empowerment of women by promoting active citizenship, combatting violence and improving gender equality in the region.

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<sup>1</sup> To know more about the CoE policy towards neighbouring regions: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/programmes/southern-neighbourhood>

In this context, the Centre will organise a capacity-building activity for youth activists and actors to raise awareness on a key issue affecting women in the Mediterranean regions: sexist stereotyping, and in doing this provide them with methods and tools to take action within education and Media.

The training is in line with the CoE [Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017](#) and aims to contribute to achieving the Strategy's first specific objective: Combating Gender Stereotypes and Sexism.

## 2. The Mediterranean University on Youth and Global Citizenship (MedUni)

The Mediterranean University on Youth and Global Citizenship (MedUni) is one of the flagship events of the Euro-Arab and Mediterranean [Youth Co-operation Programme](#) of the NSC. It is also the youngest university of the Network of Universities on Youth and Global Citizenship<sup>2</sup> facilitated by the NSC in partnership with other relevant stakeholders from Europe and Southern Mediterranean regions.

The MedUni is organised in co-operation with the National Youth Observatory of Tunisia and in partnership with the League of Arab States, the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, the EU-CoE youth partnership, the European Youth Forum, the Italian National Youth Forum, the Catalan National Youth Council and other youth organisations, and with the support of the Tunisian Ministry of Women's Affairs, Family and Children.

The MedUni responds to the objective of the NSC's Youth Co-operation Programme, which is to provide training and capacity building for young people and youth organisations while facilitating their participation in decision and policy-making in the framework of quadrilogue initiatives<sup>3</sup>.

The MedUni was conceived as an open space where different organisations bring their own activities in a common framework facilitated by the NSC. All in all, the MedUni is a space where democratic and global citizenship competences can be developed in a demand-driven environment responding to the need of young people. The core aim of the MedUni is to support youth organisations and activists with a view to improving their capacity to become fully-fledged actors of governance in Europe and Southern Mediterranean regions. In parallel, mobilising quadrilogue actors contributes to the political mainstreaming of youth related issues, increasing youth participation. It also promotes coordination and increased synergies between relevant partners, bolstering the regional dimension to stimulate north-south and south-south cooperation.



3rd Mediterranean University on Youth and Global Citizenship (Hammamet, Tunisia)

<sup>2</sup> [The Network](#), created in 2011, includes in addition of MedUni, the University on Youth and Development (Spain); the African University on Youth and Development (Cape Verde and Kenya).

<sup>3</sup> The "quadrilogue" is a unique North-South Centre concept coined to explain a partnership which brings together representatives of governments, national parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society.



Every year the MedUni integrates in its programme the annual topic of the Network of Universities on Youth and Global Citizenship. In 2016 (1-8 May), the Mediterranean University on Youth and Global Citizenship will celebrate its 4th edition, under the annual overarching theme connecting all Universities: "[Connecting identities](#)".

For 16 years now, inspired by the principles of Ubuntu<sup>4</sup>, the different universities have offered a space where young people and youth workers from all over the world come together as part of a global youth movement that works against exclusion and discrimination and for inclusion and diversity. This year's theme would allow us to reflect on how youth organisations and youth work can accompany young people in such sensitive and meaningful processes of identity construction that ultimately define them as citizens and global citizens.

### 3. The training – Background and Justification

Gender stereotyping represents a serious obstacle to the achievement of real gender equality and feeds into gender discrimination. Gender stereotypes are preconceived ideas whereby males and females are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their sex. Sex stereotyping can limit the development of the natural talents and abilities of individuals. Stereotypes about women both result from and are the cause of deeply engrained attitudes, values, norms and prejudices against women. They are used to justify and maintain the historical relations of power of men over women as well as sexist attitudes which are holding back the advancement of women. Thus, stereotypes become dangerous and contribute to domination and discrimination. In its preamble, the Convention of the CoE on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence ([Convention of Istanbul](#)) admit the structural nature of violence against women that is both the cause and consequence of gender discrimination, thus obstructing the full development of women.

However, if violence against women, gender inequality and discriminatory practices trace their origins back to sexist stereotypes, these are part of a long socialisation process. It is therefore possible to deconstruct them in order to prevent them. Challenging gender stereotypes can bring individuals not only to combat them but also to question their own identity. Indeed, if in their negative hillside, stereotypes produce prejudices and tensions, in their positive hillside, they can allow a reflection on social identity<sup>5</sup>: *"the constructive functions of stereotype can be perceived only when we give up considering it in a static way in its shape and its motionless contents"*.<sup>6</sup>

Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 2014 asserted that *"a girl has the means to forge ahead in life. It is not only a mother, but also it is not only a sister, but also but also it is not only a wife. She has to have an identity"*. The gender bias and stereotypes have survived throughout the centuries and is perpetuated from generation to generation; they are the most powerful vector of the patriarchal systems. Women cannot only be identified according to their strictly "feminine" characteristic. The deconstruction of gender bias and stereotypes is essential to enable a woman to reflect on the construction of identity and identities that define her.

This reflection will raise the question of otherness, both in the individual peculiarity and in social determinism. Combatting sexist stereotypes is achieved by rejecting the binary and hierarchized aspect of gender, recognising the existing heterogeneity among women, acknowledging their singularity and through seeking the 'I' among the 'we'.

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<sup>4</sup> To know more about the principles of Ubuntu, read the [Concept note](#) of the joint theme 2016.

<sup>5</sup> In reference to the [Factsheet Combating gender stereotypes and sexism in and through education](#)

<sup>6</sup> Christiane Villain-Gandossi, [« La genèse des stéréotypes dans le jeu de l'identité/altérité nord-Sud »](#), Revue Hermès n°30, 2001 (in French).



To enable women to define themselves based on other standards and fully *play* their roles as 'actors of change'<sup>7</sup> in Mediterranean, it is also important to confront stereotypes of 'occidental woman' to 'Arab woman' present both in Europe and Southern Mediterranean.

In all these respects, media and education are the main vectors of such a change. They can alter attitudes and eliminate stereotypes on both an individual and an institutional level. Women can also face discrimination on multiple grounds; in this regard the intercultural dialogue can be a relevant frame to combat different types of discrimination, as well.

#### 4. The training at a glance

The training activity will be organised in the framework of the 4<sup>th</sup> MedUni. In parallel, other activities will be organised by partners such as the National Youth Observatory of Tunisia, the League of Arab States, Anna Lindh Foundation, the Italian National Youth Council and the Catalan National Youth Council.

#### Objectives and Expected Results

The overall objective is to equip young activists and educators with tools and methods that allow them to enhance gender equality and to promote a positive and non-stereotyped image of woman both in Europe and Southern Mediterranean through education and intercultural dialogue.

#### Specific objectives:

- To analyse how gender stereotypes, sexism and discriminations affect identity construction both in individual and global dimension and in particular in a Euro-Arab context;
- To provide participants with tools and methods to deconstruct sexist stereotypes in Europe and Southern Mediterranean countries and to confront their views;
- To equip participants with tools promoting gender equality through education and social medias;
- To promote media literacy in order to encourage youth to be critical towards images in media and develop a realistic perception;
- To collect data and to share good practices in regard to combatting and preventing violence against women and sexist stereotypes and speech in Mediterranean regions;
- To reinforce inter and intra-regional co-operation in regard to combatting gender stereotypes and sexism.

#### Expected results:

- 20 young activists are trained in order to raise awareness about gender stereotypes and women identity construction both in Europe and Southern Mediterranean regions;
- 20 young activists are trained and equipped with tools to deconstruct stereotypes and promote gender equality through education and/or media;
- A compilation of resources is developed by participants in order to raise awareness on the topic;
- A minimum of 2 collaborative projects are planned among participants.

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<sup>7</sup> Women as actors of change is the premise of [the women's programme](#) of the North-South Centre and the theme developed by the training of trainers [Structured Participation of Young Women](#), organized by the NSC in September 2015 in the frame of the [University of Youth and Development](#)

## 5. Methodology

The final programme elements will be defined by the pedagogical team, taking into consideration the overall aim, specific objectives, expected results and the profile of participants.

The training methodology is based on a number of successful experiences in training youth workers and youth leaders, developed by the NSC. It is also based on the contribution and experiences of the Education and Training Division of the [CoE Youth Department](#) and the [CoE Gender Equality Unit](#).

The NSC, together with its partners, has developed and tested training methods and tools for this type of activities; it has also benefited from the knowledge of some of the best trainers and youth workers in the fields of Euro-Arab and Mediterranean youth co-operation and global democratic citizenship.

The team of experienced trainers from Europe and Southern and Eastern Mediterranean will be responsible to further design and implement the methodology of the course. In addition, invited guests and experts will provide proposals for reflection and share good practices.

The course will be also a mutual learning experience, where participants can compare their approaches and concerns in a process based on global education methodology.<sup>8</sup>

The course is a week-long programme using a variety of educational methods such as: thematic, methodological and political inputs and discussions, new technologies, guidelines and reference documents, simulation exercises, group dynamics, interactive role plays, examples of good practices, etc. The use of experiential methods and workshops will strengthen the practical and pedagogical side of the course.

The programme will tackle issues such as:

- Stereotypes, gender roles, gender and sexist stereotypes along with their means of diffusion;
- Discriminations and multiples discriminations;
- Images and representations of woman within media both in Europe and Southern Mediterranean;
- Links between gender stereotyping and cultural stereotyping;
- Prevention of violence against women ( inputs of the use of Istanbul Convention);
- The role of education and the media in the promotion of gender equality;
- Youth intercultural dialogue and Mediterranean Identities
- Raise awareness in the fight against gender stereotypes and sexism in social media (example of the [No Hate Speech Movement](#))

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<sup>8</sup> For more information about Global Education: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/GE/ge1\\_EN.asp?](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/GE/ge1_EN.asp?)

The pedagogical activities will be including on the Joint Programme:

	Sunday 1	Monday 2	Tuesday 3	Wednesday 4	Thursday 5	Friday 6	Saturday 7	Sunday 8	
8:00-9:00	A R R I V A L S	Breakfast							D E P A R T U R E S
9:00-10:30		PARTNERS' ACTIVITIES							
10:30- 11:00		Coffee Break							
11:00-13:00		Opening	PARTNERS' ACTIVITIES						
13:00-14:30		Lunch Break							
14:30-16:00		PARTNERS' ACTIVITIES							
16:00-16:30		Coffee Break							
16:30-18:00		PARTNERS' ACTIVITIES				Joint Session	PARTNERS' ACTIVITIES	Conclusions and closing	
18:00-18:30		Free time					Free time		
18:30-19:30		Dinner							
19:30-21:00									
21:00	Welcome Evening	Connecting Identities	Sharing Workshops	Free evening	Connecting Identities	Connecting Identities	Farewell evening		

## 6. Profile of participants

This training course will focus on the development of competencies of youth workers/activists involved in education and/or media in Europe and Southern Mediterranean with the purpose to prepare them to implement projects on gender equality and women right's.

The course is addressed to young people from Europe and Southern Mediterranean countries.

Participants should fulfil the following criteria:

- To be involved in a youth, media or women organisation and/or be active in education (school or university; formal or non-formal education) as representatives, volunteers, trainers and/or youth workers;
- Aged between 18-35 years old;
- To be involved in an organisation, project or initiative that aim to raise awareness on gender equality and/or women rights.

## 7. Working Languages

The different sessions of the training course will be in English. Candidates must be fluent in English and are requested to indicate their language level in the application form. Joint sessions with other activities, in the framework of the MedUni will be in English, Arabic and possibly French and interpretation will be assured.

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