

## Arab Youth advocating for gender equality and women rights

UNESCO regional training, Beirut, 27-29 March 2018

### Concept Note

#### 1. Rationale

Violence against women and girls is a grave violation of human rights. Its impact ranges from immediate to long-term multiple physical, sexual and mental consequences for women and girls, including death. It negatively affects women's general well-being and prevents women from fully participating in society. Violence not only has negative consequences for women but also their families, the community and the country at large. It has tremendous costs, from greater health care and legal expenses to losses in productivity, impacting national budgets and overall development. At the global level, violence against women costs billions of dollars annually in direct and indirect costs.

In the Arab States, violence against women and girls remains one of the main obstacles to women and girls' active contribution to society. In the region, 37% of women have experienced a form of violence in their lifetime according to available data. However, there are indicators that the rate might be higher.

In the region, the subject of violence against women and girls is culturally sensitive. Negative stereotypes and social stigma pose a fundamental challenge for women in seeking protection or support. This entrenches impunity and leads to a general lack of statistical data which impedes the design of effective programming to combat the problem.

Legislations in the region often fall short from covering all forms of violence against women and they lack effective enforcement mechanisms in many cases. First response public servants including law enforcement and healthcare practitioners often lack the training required to deal with cases of violence against women. (UN WOMEN)

Gender inequality persists worldwide, depriving women and girls of their basic rights and opportunities. As indicated in the SDG #5, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will require more vigorous efforts, including legal frameworks, to counter deeply rooted gender-based discrimination that often results from patriarchal attitudes and related social norms. In this regard, gender equality is central to UNESCO's work, in all of its fields of competence -- to ensure girls' and women's equal access to quality education and skills development, science and technology, information and communication. UNESCO advocates for gender equality as a human right within the the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of

Human Rights (UDHR) 2018. As a milestone document in the global history of human rights, UDHR is infused with values and ideals drawn from the world over. Drafted by UN representatives from diverse cultural and technical backgrounds, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations.

The Networks of Mediterranean Youth Project (NET-MED Youth) is a joint UNESCO/EU Project, involving 10 countries (including Lebanon) of the Eastern and Western Mediterranean Sea Basins. The key aim is to create an enabling environment for young women and men to develop their competencies, exercise their rights and meaningfully engage as active citizens, particularly in decision-making relating to public policies.

Since its launch in 2014, the NET-MED Youth Project<sup>1</sup> has applied a two-pronged approach to gender mainstreaming, involving both gender specific activities based on specific indicators and gender mainstreaming in the implementation cycle. For instance, during the past three years, the Project has reinforced the capacities of over 4.000 young women and men from civil society organizations in the fields of youth policy analysis, gender-sensitive and rights-based strategic planning, media monitoring, advocacy and policy dialogue. Those efforts led to the revision or design of gender-sensitive national youth policies in 7 countries where partner young women are engaged in fruitful collaboration with national institutions and youth stakeholders. Despite progress made, several challenges are still facing equality between young women and men. Recent social indicators<sup>2</sup> and gender statistics reaffirms the rising exclusion of young women from the economic, political, cultural and social spheres. Unequal opportunities to share their creativity; 'glass ceiling' for young women to reach leadership positions or to participate in decision-making processes; persistence of dominant views on gender, negative stereotypes and limitations on freedom of expression based on gender; and sex-specific challenges related to accessing specialized and entrepreneurial training as well as financial resources constitute persistent barriers.

Recognizing those challenges, UNESCO made gender equality an important priority, including within its work on cultural heritage, creativity and cultural diversity. The equal participation, access and contribution to cultural life of young women and men are human rights as well as cultural rights, and an important dimension for guaranteeing freedom of expression for all.

The proposed activity emanates from the regional training workshop " Arab Youth supporting gender equality and cultural heritage" (Beirut, 15-18 Nov. 2017) strengthening regional youth coalitions and alliances, leveraging existing resources<sup>3</sup> and support to further advancing equality in the field of cultural heritage protection and promotion; while raising awareness on the

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<sup>1</sup> More on : <http://www.netmedyouth.org>

<sup>2</sup> UNDP HDR 2016 : <http://hdr.undp.org/fr/content/towards-gender-equality-arabmiddle-east-region>

<sup>3</sup> Download UNESCO Report on Gender Equality and Culture (2014) :  
<http://www.unesco.org/new/index.php?id=123719>

importance to equally support young women and men's roles to participate in and contribute to culture.

## 2. Aims and format of the training workshop

A 3 day training workshop starting on 27 March and ending on 29 March 2018 will be organized by UNESCO and held at Coral Beach Hotel- Bir Hassan (TBC).

The workshop will:

- Share good practices and lessons learnt from advocacy campaigns in preventing Gender Based Violence (GBV) and build capacity of youth advocates/ campaigners in this area
- Develop the strategic planning capacities, evidence-based knowledge, communication skills and effective commitment of partner youth organizations working on gender equality and women's rights to plan a GBV prevention campaign nationally and/or regionally.
- Reinforce North-South-South networking and exchange of practices between Arab and European Youth organizations in order to cross their experiences in the field of gender mainstreaming within cultural heritage promotion and protection.

The training team includes focal points and experts from UNESCO and ABAAD), which is a non-governmental organization in Beirut (Lebanon).

Arabic and English are the languages of the workshop.

Interested candidates are encouraged to apply by sending the application form to: [cj.donabedian@unesco.org](mailto:cj.donabedian@unesco.org), by **Monday 10 February 2018**.

The selection committee will not consider incomplete application and application received after the deadline. There is no fee for registration.