

Arab Youth supporting gender equality and cultural heritage

UNESCO regional training, Beirut, 15-18 Nov. 2017

Background Information

1. Rationale

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 Project¹ 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 indicators² 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.

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

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

The Beirut workshop aims at strengthening regional youth coalitions and alliances, leveraging existing resources³ and support to further advancing equality in the field of cultural heritage protection and promotion; while raising awareness on the importance to equally support young women and men's roles to participate in and contribute to culture. This initiative also seeks to build the capacities of youth NGOs across the Arab region, especially those working on cultural heritage, in gender mainstreaming and advocating for women empowerment and participation (especially young women) in public and political life.

On the other hand, and in the context of rising tensions and extreme violence facing young women and men in the Arab region, young people are exploring the power of culture and arts to resist, preserve and rebuild their societies and their diverse identities. In this regard, UNESCO's recent regional conference on "Cultural heritage and identity: an Arab youth perspective"⁴ (Carthage, Tunisia, March 2017) collected experiences, good practices and lessons learnt of youth leadership and engagement in promoting diverse forms of threatened cultural heritage artefacts in conflict-affected contexts. A set of 10 operational recommendations include : an improved education and training to cultural heritage for youth organizations and stakeholders; new models of youth-led and gender-sensitive social and private entrepreneurs ; advocacy for cultural and artistic public policies that further protect artists ; facilitate their works especially in the public space ; increase dialogue and collaboration between institutions and civil society organizations ; support youth-led initiatives and innovations. Thus, the Beirut Workshop will build on those outputs and review progress made so far.

2. Aims and format of the training workshop

A 4-day training workshop starting on Wednesday 15 November and ending on Saturday 18 November 2017 will be organized by UNESCO and held at UNESCO Beirut office and Coral Beach Hotel- Bir Hassan.

The workshop will:

- Raise-awareness amongst leading Arab youth on the importance of gender to culture and the existing instruments to advance equality, challenge stereotypes and the prevailing conception of tasks, functions and roles attributed to young women and men when it comes to cultural heritage protection and promotion.

- Develop the strategic planning capacities, evidence-based knowledge, communication skills and effective commitment of partner youth organizations working on cultural heritage promotion in order to further mainstream gender within their projects and actions

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

⁴ http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/how_young_people_rebuild_arab_cultural_heritage_and_identity/

- 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 the Collective for Research and Training on Development-Action (CRTD.A), which is a non-governmental organization registered in 2003 and based in Beirut (Lebanon). CRTD.A seeks to contribute to citizenship, social justice and gender equality in Lebanon and across the Arab countries, including numerous projects in collaboration with partners in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia. <http://crt-da.org.lb/>

The workshop will articulate advanced lectures, group and individual working sessions as well as field visits.

Arabic is the language of the workshop. English translation will be provided.

3. Selection of Participants

A group of up to 30 participants (half of which will be young women) will be selected based on their current and recent experiences in the field of cultural heritage promotion in the Arab region.

- 1) A participant will be up to 32 years old.
- 2) A NGO can submit one candidate by filling the application form
- 3) An affiliation to a national NET-MED Youth network would be a strong asset.

Interested candidates are encouraged to apply by sending the application form to: m.el-zoghbi@unesco.org by **Tuesday 10 October 2017.**

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