



Kvinna till Kvinna



#Femdefenders from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia and Sweden present:

YOUNG WOMEN'S PEACE CHARTER

The Young Women's Peace Charter aims to build commitment and understanding of the challenges and obstacles faced by young women in conflict affected countries, as well as in other societies. It includes recommendations addressed to different stakeholders at national and international level.

With the Young Women's Peace Charter, 140 young women from six different countries are promoting and developing the debate on women human rights and peacebuilding from their perspec-

tive. The Charter was developed as part of the Young Women's Peace Academy (YWPA). YWPA is a training programme run by The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation for young women from South Caucasus, the Balkans and Sweden.

The Academy's aim has been to increase young women's leadership, advocacy and communication skills and to strengthen their capacity to influence policy-makers towards positive change at a local and international level. The Academy has offered an opportunity for young women to be empowered to play an active role in their communities.

In addition, a mentorship program within the framework of the Academy,

has ensured support and guidance for the participants throughout the process of designing and implementing their own projects. The activities have taken place throughout 2015.

The charter includes recommendations on women's political empowerment and participation, men's violence against women, young women's health and rights, sexual violence in war and conflict, and young women's economic empowerment.

The Young Women's Peace Charter was completed by the Young Women's Peace Academy participants in a cross-regional meeting in Istanbul, September 21-24, 2015.

WE WANT TO ...



SPREAD FEMINISM WORLDWIDE!

▶ Spread the importance and value of feminism for whole societies as a way of eliminating patriarchal structures and to make people realize that promotion of feminism is the promotion of equality.

▶ Spread the importance of women's contribution to society.

▶ Include the concept of gender equality in formal education curriculums for young women and men, as a way of breaking down stereotypes and transforming ideas of femininity and masculinity.

▶ Include young women in the feminist movement.

▶ Value women more! Women are still valued less than men all around the world. Sadly in some societies sex selective abortions are common because baby girls are not wanted and valued as much as baby boys.



ELIMINATE PATRIARCHAL STRUCTURES!

▶ Many women suffer from double or multiple discrimination. Women face different forms of discrimination based on age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religion or other beliefs, social and economic status and many other forms of discrimination in addition to those listed here. We must understand that women are not a homogenous group, they are affected in different ways by discrimination.

▶ The patriarchal structures and escalation of conflicts around the world affect women refugees extremely hard. Women refugees are left isolated in conflict zones and refugee camps where they are particularly vulnerable. The particular needs of women refugees must be understood and taken in to consideration.

▶ Eliminate the male-dominated peace and security norm! We call for a culture

of peace where human security is prioritized. We want a shift from militarization to humanization.

▶ Countries not affected by war and conflict have to shift focus from military action to peacekeeping operations. It is every country's responsibility to not provide and export arms and weapons to support war.



SECURE THE SAFETY FOR: FEMINISTS, WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS AND HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS!

▶ Women who work for sustainable peace and tackle unpopular issues (e.g. abortion rights, women human rights, gender equality) live under constant threat. It is important to ensure the security and safety of feminists, human

rights defenders and women peacebuilders.

▶ Lack of security and safety leaves an open space for a nationalistic and hostile atmosphere which leads to shrinking space for feminists, human rights

defenders and women peace builders. The international community as well as national governments need to provide better support to activists so they can continue their important work!



WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Women who are not aware of their rights have fewer opportunities to participate in the political and social life, and in decision-making.

Women's rights are not prioritized in politics because of the lack of women in political decision-making positions. On top of that, all too often women engaged in politics are not taken seriously. For example, gender quotas are not being implemented and women's full participation in politics is not ensured. Women not only need to participate at all levels, they need to have meaningful influence over decisions.

The UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security has not been implemented and in peace negotiations women represent fewer than 8 percent of the participants.

Recommendations

- Educate young women and create an environment where they can feel confident and free to participate actively. Improve women's access to justice and increase women's participation through education, leadership training and skills building.
- Ensure access to education for young women, especially in rural areas. Allocate resources to scholarships for young women with limited opportunities.
- Introduce affirmative action in the form of quota systems in parliaments and political institutions to ensure women's meaningful participation in political and decision making processes.
- Ensure the implementation of quotas so that equal representation for men and women in political and decision making bodies becomes a reality.
- It is every country's responsibility to ensure that UNSC Resolution 1325 is implemented and that all peace negotiations include women representatives, by providing mechanisms for action.



MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The implementation of laws regarding domestic violence, for example rape and sexual violence within marriage or relationships has been inadequate. In many societies rape in marriage is not even defined in the law as an offence. Actions of the state institutions responsible are not synchronized and collaboration is insufficient.

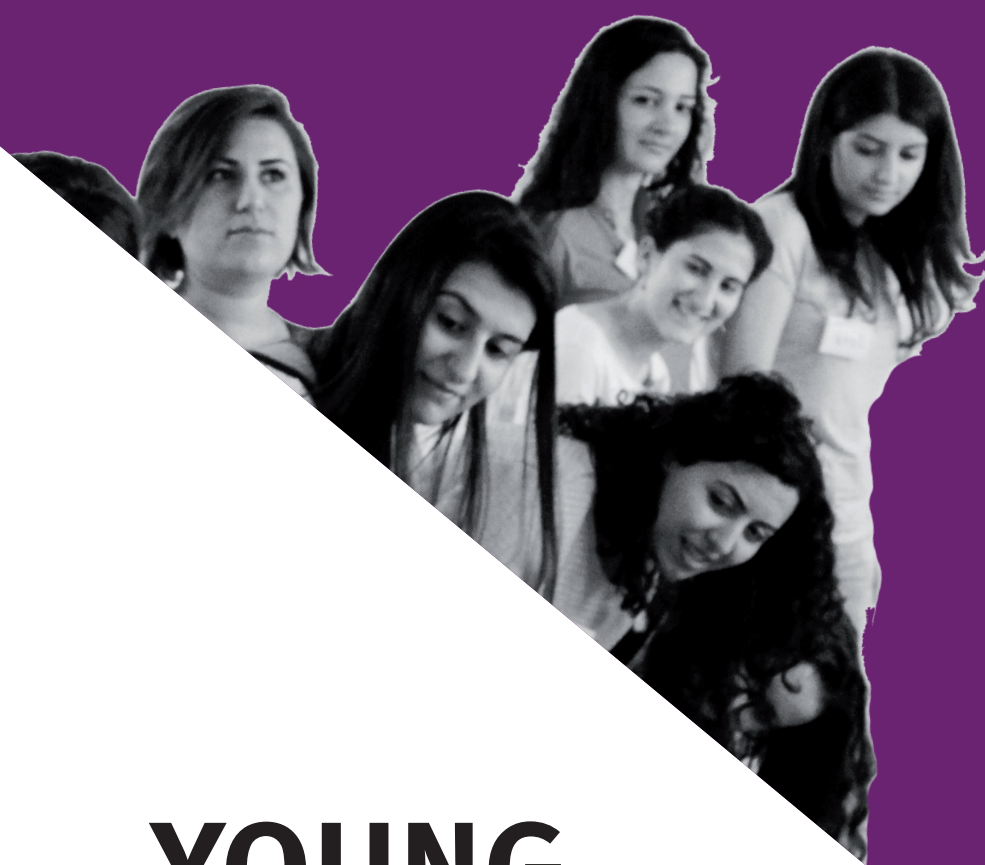
One problem is the lack of protection of women during and after reporting domestic violence. Domestic violence is often considered to be a private family issue and even police officers, who are supposed to protect victims of violence, often do not encourage victims to report it. Lack of safe spaces for women after reporting domestic violence often leads to continuation of the violence. This is largely due to their economic dependence and to weak legislation, for example giving custody of children to the husband, women are often left in an unbearable situation which affects both their physical and mental health.

Women's lack of rights when it comes to owning property and inheritance is another example of how the safety of women suffering from domestic violence is not ensured. By giving men the right to property, custody of children and the right to return back home, the issue of safety is completely neglected.

Women in all societies are subjected to sexual harassment, sexual abuse and sexual violence. Men's objectification and exploitation of women leads to women being subject to sexual harassment, sexual violence and organized crime such as human trafficking of women for sexual exploitation.

Recommendations

- Introduce regular education in schools on women human rights and gender equality, for both young women and men, to prevent violence against women.
- Raise awareness in the community through media as an important component of an effective prevention strategy.
- State institutions need to create and ensure a safe environment for women and young women suffering from domestic violence. Allocation of funding is needed (as well as proper regulations) for more shelters for women and children. Synchronizing social and legal institutions with regular monitoring of their work is needed, especially at a local level.
- Conduct trainings for the police and representatives of legal and social institutions so they can deal with domestic violence cases in the right way. Increase the number of female police officers and introduce women representatives through-out the legal system.
- All countries need to take their responsibility to prevent human trafficking of women for sexual exploitation.



YOUNG WOMEN'S HEALTH

Women's health care needs are not recognized and given appropriate attention and financing. Medical evidence and research is based on men and the male body. This affects women's opportunities to receive proper treatment. Some health issues affect women and men differently. Although the symptoms may be similar, the effects of the condition and the necessary care can differ significantly.

Demystification and validation of women's health and mental health are being ignored. Mental health remains taboo. For example, in many societies women suffering from post-natal depression after giving birth do not receive psychological support. Women suffering from stress and post-traumatic stress are not always taken seriously.

With regard to sexual and reproductive health, there is a lack of preventive health care in diseases affecting predominately women, for example regular checkups are often too expensive for young women.

Recommendations

- Women's health care needs are to be recognized and given appropriate attention and financing. Allocation of funding and resources is needed to ensure more research and more women researches in the field of young women's health.
- Include regular education in schools and educate young women and men in sexual and reproductive health and rights. It is important that every woman has access to knowledge related to the spectrum of women's health issues and all aspects of her body.
- Ensure affordable, timely and regular check-ups for young women.
- Provide comprehensive pre and post-natal support for women.
- Recognize stress and post-traumatic stress as health issues. Provide support and resources for women suffering from stress and post-traumatic stress.



SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN WAR AND CONFLICT

Rape is used as a strategic weapon during war and conflict. Rape causes deep psychological traumas which last a lifetime. There is a lack of justice and reparation for survivors of sexual violence and rape during war.

Even though rape and sexual violence in war and conflict is a war crime, perpetrators often escape punishment. Sexual exploitation by peacekeepers in war and conflict and in post-conflict areas also remains under-reported.

Recommendations

- Ensure implementation of legislation against rape in war and conflict so that perpetrators are punished for sexual violence during war.
- Rights of rape victims should be equal to those of war veterans in terms of access to health care, social welfare, etc.
- Ensure harmonization of laws to validate the process of rape victim identification with reference to UN Security Resolution's 1820 and 1325.
- Governments, NGOs and the media should focus on increasing awareness, knowledge and public opinion among women in order to break down prejudice and stigmatization surrounding survivors.
- Governments should allocate funds for the fulfillment of rights for survivors of sexual violence and rape during war.
- Work preventatively! Increase awareness and public opinion about the physical and psychological effects of sexual violence against women.
- Peacekeepers should be held accountable for their violation of women human rights in war and conflict and in post-conflict areas. End impunity of peacekeepers and ensure implementation of legislation against peacekeepers who have committed sexual violence and recognize it as a war crime or a post-war crime.



YOUNG WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Economic independence for young women is crucial for equal rights. Year by year we lose potential skilled labor and potential decision makers. Tradition and social norms often dictate the kind of education received. The main reason why women do not pursue higher education is the lack of financial support as well as lack of access to information. Gender stereotypes limit women's opportunities.

Women have, to a larger extent than men, the responsibility of taking care of children and the household

and young women are often expected to marry and to stay at home. Women do not have the same opportunities as men to develop entrepreneurship and their own businesses.

Women are also often discriminated against in the work market and their labor rights are being violated. They lose their jobs when they get pregnant or have to work under insecure working conditions. Another problem is the lack of women in male dominated professions.

Recommendations

- Monitor the implementation and respect of women's labor rights. Governments should develop new strategies for equal employment conditions and salaries for women and men.
- States should impose stricter penalties for employers who discriminate against women as well as creating safe environments to enable women to report irregularities in their labor rights without fear of losing their jobs.
- Include subsidies for women entrepreneurship in state budgets.
- Allocate funding for scholarships for women and young women to pursue education within traditionally male dominated professions. Introduce special quotas when creating annual scholarship budgets where a certain percentage would be reserved for woman from rural areas.