

3. Mobilising against gender inequality and gender-based violence

3.1 Gender in youth work: perspectives and challenges

How can gender play a role in youth work? What are the benefits of working with gender?

Where there are people, there are gender issues and the potential for gender-based violence. This implies that when young people work, organise, socialise and educate together, gendered dimensions of youth work are ever-present and must be taken seriously. This chapter examines the roles gender may play in youth work, the importance of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in youth work, projects and organisations, and, finally, examines different expressions of gender based violence in youth contexts. This chapter concludes by presenting some practical ways to mobilise against gender-based violence. We hope that the pragmatic approach of this chapter will encourage you to take specific actions in your work. With this pragmatic dimension, however, comes a strong emphasis on reflection: working with gender and issues of identity, power and safety in groups of young people is a sensitive and demanding task. This chapter contains a strong ‘training for trainers’ element as it considers the kinds of reflections on experience, competences and ethics that all people who work with youth should engage with.

Youth work often aims to increase the participation of young people in society, or to support young people with a certain interest, objective or hobby. Most youth organisations and networks in Europe have formal and informal practices of democracy, which are based in a commitment to the equal treatment of individuals. To involve gender equality in this work is therefore not a huge logical leap. Organisations or projects that specifically work on human rights, citizenship, active participation, minority youth, intercultural learning, anti-racism or anti-discrimination - to name just a few work areas – are intrinsically involved.

Despite this, it is worth asking how often gender is an explicit topic in youth work, training and organisation, for a number of reasons. Gender issues may be considered the work of specialised organisations. People may maintain that there are no gender issues to deal with. For some, gender conjures up images of feminism and ‘yesterday’s politics’. Given that gender is often equated with women’s issues, it is often the case that it is dealt with in special girls’ groups. And sometimes you may even hear that ‘there are more important things to be dealt with.’ This is a lost opportunity. Young people can instigate change by taking charge of change and by changing themselves. While many gendered patterns of inequality persist in our societies, youth work is

known to be willing to challenge old structures and to break new ground, and many young people are engaged in different kinds of projects related to gender equality. While there are also youth organisations whose work is solely devoted to this issue, recognising and tackling problems and discrimination that happen in one's own context is a challenge no credible youth organisation should avoid.

3.1.1 Gender in youth work practices

What different ways of working with gender exist? What does it mean to work, for example, with girls or boys groups?

Returning to the question of implicit and explicit work on gender in youth work, you may be aware of, or involved in, areas of youth work that consider gender as integral to their practice. Below are some areas where gender issues are central to youth work practice:

Gender as a human rights issue

Many youth organisations work on human rights. Gender equality is an integral part of human rights, and therefore this work is fundamental to human rights work or human rights education. This relationship implies that human rights workers or educators should be knowledgeable about gender issues and gender in-equality, and have the competencies to address them. Conversely, working on gender issues with young people is also an important approach for preventing human rights violations and for strengthening human rights education.

Preventative work

In a world of multiple priorities, preventative work often has difficulties in proving its importance because other pressing issues and problems that manifest themselves attract more attention. Nevertheless, youth work and activism are central to preventative educational work in many ways. In Europe, anti-racism education and conflict and violence prevention work have proven that much can be gained through recognising potential problems and addressing them before they become out of control. Working preventively with gender issues may puzzle some people because prevention involves addressing issues before they become problems. As a youth trainer working with a gender equality project in Sweden described: "When we started the girls group and the boys group at the school, many teachers questioned the need for it. They seemed to question the need to address issues of violence when no-one had been hurt." However as working with young people on these issues develops, many of these questions are answered. Specific issues may surface, and more generally, the fact that gendered ideas and stereotypes are so ingrained in society implies that

For further discussion about gender and human rights, see "Compass, a manual on human rights education with young people", p 354, (<http://www.coe.int/compass>)

all of us carry them to some extent. A key idea in preventative work is that knowledge can bring action. Knowing that discrimination and violence based on gender take place invites everyone to be an agent of change. Preventative work, in many social and cultural climates, is forced to argue a case for its necessity and effectiveness. When gender does not seem to be a pressing issue, and where preventative work has difficulty in producing measurable results, it is crucial to base programmes on good research and background material, and to argue that since results may take years to chart, programmes require follow-up and comparisons with similar environments without preventive work.

There are various approaches to preventative work in relation to gender. Preventative work should not be understood only negatively, in terms of stopping something from happening, but also positively, as spaced and experiences that allow reflection and personal development.

Compensatory pedagogy

Compensatory pedagogy in gender equality work means focusing specifically on behaviour that is traditionally discouraged by gender stereotypes and assumptions. It aims to give everyone the possibility to develop different kinds of behaviours holistically. For example, both boys and girls are subject to many pressurising messages about sex, intimacy and sexual behaviour. Kruse ⁽¹⁾ points out that a holistic picture of a person means the possibility for both autonomy and intimacy. According to Kruse, the general aim for work with girls is to develop autonomy, and for work with boys to develop intimacy. The general aims of compensatory pedagogy can be explained as follows:

- to offer girls and boys the same possibilities for personal development, happiness and challenges;
- to provide a learning environment where girls and boys can broaden their experiences without being limited by traditional gender roles;
- to support girls and boys, - through increased self awareness – to choose their own future according to their own wish and interests;
- to contribute to the development of positive sexual identities. ⁽²⁾

Work with single sex groups

Single sex groups are a good example of compensatory pedagogy, and have emerged as a way to invite girls and boys to reflect among themselves on what it means to be a girl/young woman or a boy/young man. It works in single-sex arrangements to provide the possibility for comfort, intimacy and a freedom from assumptions and images which may pressurise or distract. These groups help bridge the gap between societal expectations and self-actualisation. A well functioning girls' or boys' group can also provide members with a feeling of belonging, with tools to deal with problems and conflicts that arise in everyday life, and with increased self-awareness.

- However, a girls' group or a boys' group is not just a group of girls and boys. Planned educational programmes are important, and it is essential that youth leaders know the shared aims of the group they are working with and can select and adapt methods accordingly. Working with groups of girls/young women may have very different emphases than working with boys/young men. However similar questions about identity, roles and relationships may occur, and, thus, exercises and facilitative methods can often be used with minor adaptation.

Reflection

What does leading a single sex group involve? The following guidelines provide the basis for reflection.

- Make sure you know your own reasons and motivations for being involved. This is especially important if the validity of the work is questioned, or if you become unsure about your own involvement.
- Make sure you have reflected on your own beliefs and assumptions concerning gender. A good leader does not try to be perfect, but instead demonstrates their own ongoing reflection. This is important because you are likely to become a role model because of your position.
- Accept that working with gender issues requires competences. These competences include considering issues of gender, identity and power in society, being at ease with potentially difficult topics - such as sexuality – that may arise, and the ability to facilitate groups and implement youth activities. Working with gender requires training, and those interested, as well as their organisations, should regard this as an important responsibility.
- Ensure that there are guidelines for participation in the group and support for you for dealing with what is disclosed in the group. For example, participants should know that you need to act upon reports of abuse or violence that are illegal and harmful.
- Realise the limits of this kind of work. A girls or boys group is not a therapy group, and the most you can do is advise somebody on specialised support if they feel they need it.
- Emphasise, even in single sex groups, that women and men have much in common. Talking about the 'opposite sex' may reinforce stereotypes of opposing natures and behaviours.

Setting up a group:

- A girls'/boys' group can be organised as project group within wider projects, organisations, clubs or networks. A set period allows people to enter out of curiosity within a clear time frame, and provides a sense of momentum. A common framework involves a meeting time of 1-2 hours a week for approximately 10 weeks.
- A girls'/boys' group should not be too big. If it consists of 8-12 people it will allow for confidence building and personal exchange.
- In a youth club there could also be a group as a constant feature or permanent time of the week.
- You can also choose to have an open group with new members coming from time to time, although methods and approaches would have to be adjusted to this lack of continuity.

3.2 Gender mainstreaming in youth training and youth projects

- *Why is it important to mainstream gender into youth work?*
- As was pointed out in the introduction, this resource has been developed in response to an

observation that gender is regarded as an issue that has been ‘solved’ when it hasn’t been; it is also the case that gender is not regularly included (on the agenda) in youth work, or if it is, that it is insufficiently integrated and developed within a youth training context. For example, have you ever heard a youth worker, leader or trainer speaking about, or being asked about, their competences for working with gender? Non-discrimination and equality regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, class and beliefs is a fundamental basis for participatory work; however, each of these areas needs its own specific approaches. This is where ‘gender mainstreaming’ is relevant: Gender mainstreaming does not mean simply counting numbers of young women and young men to ensure equal numbers, nor does it demand having special activities for these groups, although these can be part of it (see 3.1.1). This section explores gender mainstreaming and how it can benefit a youth organisation or network.

3.2.1 Gender mainstreaming

What does gender mainstreaming mean?

Gender mainstreaming involves incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all policies and activities of an organisation. According to the United Nations’ Economic and Social Council,

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

This can also be simplified as the idea of ‘gender glasses’, namely routinely adopting a perspective in youth activities, projects or training that examines the nature of the opportunities provided for comfortable and meaningful participation.

Wearing ‘gender glasses’ could mean examining any of the following issues:

Decision-making

Who are in the decision-making structures of the organisation?

Are both men and women actively involved in decision making?¹⁶

¹⁶ For example a new database, launched by the European Commission, on women and men in decision-making confirms that women are still far from taking an equal part in the decision-making process generally, but their position is better in some countries and in some sectors.

Source: http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/women_men_stats/index_en.htm

- Do structures or dominant attitudes need to be changed to promote equal participation for women and men?

- Does the decision taken affect women and men differently?

• *Activities*

- Who are the different target groups of our activities?

- How do we address them?

- Does the nature of the activity allow for equal participation for girls and boys? Are there any factors to be taken into account?

- Are we ready to address gender as an important issue in our society, whether we believe it is an issue in our organisation or not?

• *Attitudes and language*

- How are women and men referred to? Do we reflect on the ways we represent images of gender roles? Is there verbal harassment within the organisation?

- Do we refer to an unknown participant or youth worker as 'he' or 'she', or do we use inclusive language ('she or he', 'he or she') or avoid personal pronouns?

- Do task roles tend to be automatically distributed according to traditional notions of gender roles?

• *Approach and Analysis*

- What assumptions and ideas guide your organisation's treatment of gender and in-/equality?

- Have you considered how social relationships concerning gender and power may influence your organisation?

• **3.2.2 Gender mainstreaming and gender equality**

- *What is the relationship between mainstreaming and policy?*

- It is important to consider gender mainstreaming as a complement, rather than substitute for 'traditional' gender equality policies. They are two different strategies to reach the same goal.

- The main difference between mainstreaming and specific gender equality policies is the actors involved and the policies that are chosen to be addressed. Equality policies address specific problems resulting from gender inequality, and this policy is then implemented on a national or organisational level. A common European example of this is laws designed to protect equal opportunities for employment.

- The starting point for mainstreaming, however, is when a policy already exists. Mainstreaming involves putting on the glasses that examine the ways in which the policy is working or not working, and the ways in which the goals of the policy can be enhanced through re-

organisation and change. Mainstreaming sees the policy as a specific implement in a larger context.

Mainstreaming is a fundamental strategy - it may take some time before it is implemented, but it has a potential for a sustainable change. 'Traditional' forms of equality policy can have more rapid results, but they are usually limited to specific policy areas. Gender mainstreaming builds upon knowledge and lessons learnt from former experiences with equality policies. However, mainstreaming cannot function optimally within the legal and institutional frameworks of 'traditional' equality policy, nor can it be as direct and specific as gender equality policies. Mainstreaming and specific equality policies are not only dual and complementary strategies; they work hand in hand with each other.

3.2.3 Guidelines and instruments for gender mainstreaming.

What can I do practically to mainstream gender?

Strategies and policies

A policy document contains (a) statements of principle in regard to gender equality (b) specific regulations if any, and how these will be monitored and (c) how gender equality should be safeguarded.

The drafting of strategies and policies to promote gender equality can prove to be an important process in itself, even before the strategy or policy is implemented. This is because the strategies and policies of an organisation or club should be based on a shared analysis of the situation, and how it can be changed. In participatory environments, such processes and documents need to be dynamic, and open to consultation and revision. A strategy document can contain points of action to be taken to promote gender equality. These action points could include the development of awareness raising events, policies for the election of board and committee members, and a review of the activities and resources used and produced by the organisation. It is important that any such strategy be periodically evaluated.

Awareness-raising

Awareness-raising can take many forms, but aims to address people's attitudes and knowledge. Although sexism, discrimination and gender-based violence cannot be addressed by knowledge alone, accurate and relevant information, and the possibility to engage with a range of perspective on these issues is very important. While opponents of gender mainstreaming often suggest that 'awareness-raising' creates problems from nowhere, women may not realise that what is happening to them is discrimination if they are used to being treated in a discriminatory manner. Similarly, men may feel uncomfortable with dominant masculine norms and wonder if something is wrong with them. To start to talk about gender roles can help people to move out of restrictive roles and to define who they are for themselves. Raising awareness about violence and discrimination can mobilise people

- to take action. This includes organisations and politicians. Campaigns, projects, training courses, demonstrations, special committees or other instruments can be tools for awareness-raising.
- *Sex quotas*
- Proactively ensuring balanced ratios between men and women is a practice based on a belief that gender equality is best achieved through a proactive approach where certain regulations are needed to promote equal treatment. It can mean that a board of an organisation could contain maximum 60% of either men or women. It could mean that participants for an activity are selected according to a 50-50 ratio of the sexes.
- *Integration*
- Integrating gender equality awareness to all actions, activities and policies of an organisation is central to the philosophy of mainstreaming. It implies that instead of having a special committee responsible for initiating and monitoring gender issues, this is seen as the responsibility of all committees. The responsibility to safeguard equality would vanish because it is dealt with in a specific committee.

Reflection

Checklist for implementing gender mainstreaming ⁽³⁾

- Adequate research: Do you have information on the situation in your organisation? Do you have gender-specific statistics on members, members of the board, delegates to important events, and organisational responsibilities?
- Legitimation: Is gender equality on the agenda of your organisation's governing bodies?
- Strategy-building: Have you developed a strategy for your work? Will it include courses, workshops or seminars? Is there a need for specific policies?
- Transversal implementation: Do the organisation's plan, budget and evaluation have a gender equality perspective? Is gender awareness an issue for all staff and board members and integrated into activities?

3.2.4 Gender mainstreaming in training

- *As a trainer, what can I do? How does gender mainstreaming effect training?*
- Any kind of training course or learning activity can apply a gender mainstreaming approach, whatever the subject is. As a leader, or participant, you can be observant of patterns of behaviour among men and women and address them. By your own actions and attitude you can create an awareness of the fact that men and women are equal in value and to challenge assumptions and norms by being conscious, for example, of the language you use, examples you choose, and the role models you refer to. As a youth leader you have an important role to play in the promotion of gender equality. Knowledge and awareness of this issue is vital for the execution of democratic leadership.

Gender is a transversal issue in training; thus, any kind of session can have an explicit focus on gender. For example: How does an outreach campaign involve or reach both boys and girls? What is the gender dimension of an intercultural youth project? How should a trainer involved in Euro-Mediterranean youth work address gender issues? What role does gender play in an anti-racist campaign? How do you apply a gender analysis to conflict transformation? This kind of approach makes the gender dimension visible without having to limit it to a session on 'gender'. Of course, there is always a gender dimension to activities, but ignoring it in the planning and implementation of these activities may leave out part of your target group, reinforce stereotypes or just simply miss an opportunity to address a central aspect of human rights and participation.

It may rarely be necessary to have single-sex sessions on a training course as a strategy for inclusion, unless the subject matter and cultural context suggests that it would be more sensitive to do so. More generally the idea is to have a diversity of methods and activities and to make information inclusive so that both men and women feel included.

Reflection

Guiding questions that could be used in relation to gender mainstreaming and training:

- Is there a policy on gender balance in the training teams? How has this developed and how is it implemented? Is this policy applied to external guests such as lecturers or workshop leaders?
- Is gender a central aspect of discussion for the team in relation to their teamwork and their educational activities?
- Is gender balance a criterion for choosing participants? What are the reasons for this?
- Do methods and methodologies facilitate equal participation?
- Do sessions and approaches specifically address the issue of gender and equality? If not, why not?

Gender is a transversal aspect of every important focus in youth work training in Europe. Most obviously, gender could be an aspect of, or the focus of, a **human rights education training**. Discrimination and unequal treatment due to sex are breaches of human rights. Consequently, all human rights can be discussed in relation to gender. Trainers who are aware of this can, for example, introduce a gender perspective into a session through questions in an exercise debriefing. Similarly, gender awareness in **project planning** and **project management** training could encourage making an analysis of how the project and activities may apply and affect young women and men in the target group; an initial needs analysis for a project can also feature a gender aspect.

Since gender roles affect us in our personal lives you may want to put extra time into creating emotional safety in the group and make sure that there are common rules that the group agrees on. As trainers it is important that you share among yourselves your own ideas and feelings about the subject. It is also recommended that you know what triggers you to step out of your role, and how you should handle such situations.

3.2.5 Ethics and competence in gender training

What should I be aware of when training on gender and gender-based violence?

Ethical considerations belong in any training activity that brings people together, and these ethical considerations are heightened when issues of identity and power are present. A primary ethical consideration for trainers is sharing amongst themselves their own ideas and feelings, and being aware of how different issues trigger one's emotions and beliefs. Working on this awareness is the first step towards creating a safe group process. The following aspects are also important:

- Discretion: Issues of gender, identity and especially gender-based violence can be very private. Make sure you allow for security and privacy if there is a chance that people's own experiences may be engaged by a training course.
- Humour: Using humour is often a great way to take away tension or break a deadlock in a discussion. Using humour in discussing gender can be very effective. However, there are millions of jokes referring to gender that are sexist or discriminatory. Think through the humour you are using and how you will react to sexist jokes in relation to what you know about the group.
- Responsibility: It is important to recognise that general discussions and reflections may bring personal issues that are beyond the competence of a trainer or training course. For example, issues of gender-based violence are often regarded as criminal acts. You and your organisation need to have a policy on how you potentially report such issues to the police and/or to parents.

These ethical points raise a wider question about the kinds of competence educators and youth leaders need to develop. As chapter one discusses, our gendered identity and socialisation are powerful, and provide us with many common sense aspects of our sense of self and roles in society. How much people 'feel to be' their sex or what is expected of their sex is individual. But none of us escape the issue of sex and gender. Therefore, each of us has an experience and probably an opinion on a range of gender issues. We are all free to engage in debates or organise activities or write articles on the issue of gender. What we should know as youth workers and trainers, however, is that gender is a well-resourced, studied and researched competence area. In academic fields such as sociology, anthropology, human rights, biology and medicine specific or integrated fields of sex and gender analysis have emerged. Many universities have special institutes of gender studies. Feminist theory is a popular discourse and a research area. Local and international NGOs and institutions conduct in-depth studies on gender equality and gender-based violence. If you want to work seriously with the issue of gender you need to do some background research and know when to consult different expertise or experience. The fact that we are all gendered does not mean that gender is just a question of opinion.

Reflection

The following points offer some suggestions for reflecting on working with gender and young people:

- Think through your own opinion and question it regularly
- Search for and study material on the issue of your interest, and for material that questions or contradicts your findings or your opinions. Gender is a much disputed area!
- Compare how gender norms may differ according to the context.
- Be aware of the gender equality legislation in your country, and of the international treaties and declarations that promote gender equality.
- Start talking to colleagues and friends about gender. What do they think of issues you have confronted?
- Observe how people around you speak of men, women and gender roles
- Observe your own behaviour towards baby boys and baby girls, teenage boys and teenage girls, and adult women and adult men; do you feel or behave differently? Why?
- Put on your gender glasses while reading your newspaper; how are people portrayed on photos and described in the text, who has been asked to comment, where do you see women in the paper and where do you see men?

Counteracting domination techniques

How do power relations manifest themselves? What strategies do people use to dominate others?

In training, and in organisational contexts, it is necessary to consider the ways in which power relationships and gender norms are maintained. To highlight and analyse how the relationship between the sexes can be linked to power, the Norwegian social psychologist Berit Ås developed an analysis of domination techniques which discuss the follow

1. Making invisible: If nobody listens to what you say, you can easily stop talking. Marginalising people can be done through individual actions, but also through an environment where it is difficult to make one's voice heard.
2. Ridiculing: Ridicule can be expressed in comments, insults and jokes, or in non-verbal communication that hints at the other's inadequacy. People may often play along with these dynamics to avoid being subject of ridicule.
3. Withholding information: Those who hold important information may exercise power and influence. If information is not shared evenly among people in the same position or situation, or if decisions are taken without involving everyone concerned, there is an inequality of power. It may be that important issues are discussed in informal groups, or that decisions are already taken informally when the official body meets.
4. Double punishment: Double punishment means that whatever you do it is wrong. A girl who is not involved in lots of discussions can be seen as passive, boring and avoiding responsibility. But on the other hand if she gets involved in everything she is said to be taking too much space. A boy who does not want to play football

- can be called a sissy. If he decides to join in the next day he might be teased for succumbing to group pressure.
- 5. Shame and guilt: Creating feelings of shame and guilt is a powerful tool of oppression. Among boys it may mean to make someone seem feminine or not manly enough. Families who exercise excessive control over their children's habits may encourage shame and guilt in their children for causing unrest in the family if they don't obey. Similarly, youth contexts may involve situations where people are shamed for not taking part, or sharing a joke, and so forth.
- 6. Objectification: We chiefly associate objectification with the kinds of sexualised images that circulate in popular media. However women and men can be objectified in organisational contexts, by being referred to solely according to their physical appearance, or by being included in something as a 'token' rather than on their merits.
- 7. Violence and the threat of violence: The fear of being subject to violence is a strong factor restricting people's behaviour and freedom of movement. For example, having to take a long route home in order to avoid violence, or not daring to go out at night due to potential violence, are everyday realities for a lot of young people.

3.3 Taking action against gender-based violence

This section discusses how to take action and mobilise against different kinds of gender-based violence.

The different ways in which you mobilise against gender-based violence depend on your target group and the specific objectives you have in mind. Do you aim to reach politicians in order to pressure them to design a legal framework to protect the victims of violence, or do you aim to train youth workers in raising awareness on this issue? In the first case the use of political lobbying may be the best way to mobilise, whereas in the second case a training event may be an appropriate method. Two possible ways of mobilising against gender-based violence are by setting up a project or organising a training course. Look at some of the exercises in the next chapter that will help you identify practical ways to mobilise against gender-based violence.

3.3.1 Identifying whether forms of gender-based violence are present in your organisation or group

How will I know if someone I'm working with is directly experiencing gender-based violence? Should I do something about it or not?

This is a type of preventive action you could take as a youth worker, because victims and survivors (people who have experienced gender-based violence directly) are potentially in

every group. Documenting incidents of gender-based violence in your organisation is crucial for collecting accurate information, and monitoring incidents of gender-based violence in your organisation (or incidents faced by members of your organisation) is crucial for developing a response to the victims and the perpetrators. However this may largely mean evaluating the climate in which people interact in your organisation.

If there are issues that need to be aired in a group or organisation, effective intervention strategies that are aimed at potential perpetrators, potential victims and survivors need to be designed. It is important that you make this a highly participatory process, where youth group members are centrally involved. Youth work has the potential to really make a difference and in that respect the unique structure of your youth group should also be an object of critical scrutiny: do you offer a safe environment to your group members? Finally, as gender-based violence can in some cases involve criminal violence you need to know the limits of intervention, and when it is advisable to involve specialists from other NGOs, services or even the police.

3.3.2 Youth groups and work in broader coalitions

Do youth workers have a special responsibility to address issues of gender-based violence?

There is a clear need for youth workers to work on these issues in society, and to intervene when they are aware of or faced with gender-based violence. This can be considered both as *preventative* as well as *responsive* work. However, youth groups do not need to operate on their own. They can identify existing specific expertise from other organisations. They can participate in ongoing campaigns. This is particularly important when it comes to providing victims with appropriate support: alliances with organisations working in the fields of health and social protection allow you to point victims in the direction of gender-based violence to experts.

The kind of work youth groups can achieve will also depend on the social-political and legal context in your country: it defines the contours of how successfully you can implement your project or action. For example:

- Is there a widespread social and political acknowledgement that gender-based violence is an issue?
- Is there a law in your country that protects victims of gender-based violence and punishes perpetrators?
- Are these laws successfully applied? What are the enforcing mechanisms and who is collecting the data?

In many countries, regrettably, the perpetrators of some of the violence may be the police or state institutions, and thus they themselves are probably in charge of collecting data; this may deter victims from reporting. It is thus of utmost importance to familiarise yourself with the legal aspects of your nation state.

It is likely that young people's organisations and networks will aim to concentrate on more youth-specific activities, such as publicising a case in local or national media, organising a

- hearing for young people and inviting politicians, or organising seminars and projects.¹⁷
- A successful public awareness project is the Hungarian organisation NANE's *Silent Witness* project.¹⁸

Silent Witness Exhibition: NANE Women's Rights Association, Budapest, Hungary

In 1990, an ad hoc group of women artists and writers, upset about the growing number of women in Minnesota being murdered by their partners or acquaintances, joined together with several other women's organizations to form Arts Action Against Domestic Violence. They felt an urgency to do something that would speak out against the escalating domestic violence in their state, something that would commemorate the lives of the 26 women whose lives had been lost in 1990 as a result of domestic violence. After much brainstorming, they decided to create 26 free-standing, life-sized red wooden figures, each one bearing the name of a woman who once lived, worked, had neighbours, friends, family, children, and whose life ended violently at the hands of a husband, ex-husband, partner, or acquaintance. A twenty-seventh figure was added to represent those uncounted women whose murders went unsolved or were erroneously ruled 'accidental'. The organizers called the figures the 'Silent Witnesses'. (For more information, see www.silentwitness.net)

NANE Women's Rights Association launched its Silent Witness project six years ago based on the U.S. project. In 2002 NANE created an exhibition of 40 figures, which was roughly representative of the number of women murdered every year in domestic violence. The aim of the exhibition was also to attract media attention to the story and the issues surrounding it, as paying for advertisements or mass media campaigns is extremely expensive.

The project has lived up to NANE's expectations by bringing in a range of media which would have not been available otherwise: the Silent Witness March and Speak out on November 25, 2002 (on the eve of the International Day of the Elimination of Violence Against Women) was shown on all news programmes that evening, and every daily paper covered the event in the days that followed. Some even used the event to anchor deeper coverage in their following weekend issue.

Endnotes to Chapter 3

- (1) JämO. (2000) *XY XX JämOs handbok mot könsmobbing i skolan*. Stockholm: Jämställdhetsombudsmannen. (p.77).
- (2) Kruse, A-M. in JämO. (2000) in *XY XX JämOs handbok mot könsmobbing i skolan*. Stockholm: Jämställdhetsombudsmannen. (pp.77-82).
- (3) The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs. (2003). *Shortcuts to Gender Equality* (adapted).

• 17 For a more in-depth description of project methodology please consult the Project Management T-Kit available online at www.training-youth.net

• 18 More information can be found at www.nane.hu