

## **Analysis of innovative methods in human rights education**

### The project overview

This analysis sums up the project Learning efficient gender mainstreaming in Kosovo, supported by the Ministry of foreign affairs, the Transition program.

During the project, the organizers conducted two workcamps in Kosovo with 27 and 31 participants. First workcamp took place in the beginning of June 2023 in the Rugova mountains. Here, the students of law, psychology, sociology and political science took part in workshops focusing on gender and gender mainstreaming, discrimination in general, gender discrimination in particular, PR and media work and case study. For the concluding part of the workcamp the students were presented with a simulated case on gender violence, where they were divided into groups to prepare argumentation for the case, a press release and a strategic plan of the follow-up campaign. The purpose of this activity was firstly to use practically the knowledge acquired during the workcamp, and also to use multidisciplinary approach when addressing gender issues. The students appreciated the different aspects that every team member brought to the table due to their specialization.

The final part of the workcamp had the students work on strategic conception on gender issue of their own choice. Divided into six different groups the students picked a topic and prepared analysis of the issue and a strategy on mainstreaming of such topic.

During the follow-up workcamp, some of the students returned as mentors for a new set of students, who have not yet taken part in the project. The students have been divided into six groups, where they were to work out the strategic conceptions to a more in-depth documents. After introductory presentations, the students had time to work in their groups on the topic of the strategy, the analysis of the issue, the objectives of the strategy and the means to acquire their goal. Throughout the work on the strategies, the groups presented their drafts of each part and received feedback from the experts of CRP/K and PPO. The final conception strategies included inputs of all the team members in relevance to their specialization as well as the information acquired during both workcamps and the resolved notes from the experts.

The workcamps used innovative teaching methods, specifically modified moot court and mentoring, so as to bring out the most of the complex issue of human rights and gender mainstreaming. In the following part, this analysis explores more on these and more innovative teaching methods in human rights education.

## Innovative methods in human rights education

The knowledge of law turns out to not be sufficient on its own anymore in a quickly developing and globalized society. The law is not and never was an isolated phenomenon, as it interferes closely with lives of individuals and societal groups. We can see in many cases that the development of the society and its non-written laws change the law via court rulings and amendments on already existing laws. In such environment it is impossible to ignore these aspects coming into cases, that the upcoming generation of lawyers is going to deal with professionally. That is why the education in law and specifically human rights has to evolve and change as well.

In order to reflect the current findings in humanities, the project aimed to demonstrate innovative teaching methods in the area of human rights, specifically in gender mainstreaming. The innovative teaching methods have been developed and consulted with the Department of legal skills of the Faculty of Law, Charles' University in Prague.

The innovative methods used in this project aimed on training individual skills of the students participating in the project, that can help them improve their future work as lawyers and human rights advocates or activists, as well as on helping them take into consideration not just the law but also the psychology of human individuals, the societal relations and norms and the political environment. Secondary goal of the project was to introduce multidisciplinary to human rights advocacy and activism. Current campaigns on improvement in rights of various group (LGBT+, seniors, women, immigrants, people of color) show that multidisciplinary approach helps with awareness-raising and therefore can create higher pressure on the law makers via the well-informed public. Should the Kosovar society improve in its human rights protection, the multidisciplinary approach is a needed attribute of such improvement.

## Interaction

The presentations for both workcamps were prepared in a way to not only educate, but to also interact with the participants. Each talk had tasks as well as discussion points – these attributes contributed to the participants' engagement and direction of the whole workcamp.

The participants were also encouraged to discuss with the experts outside the classes. During the first inforamory meeting the experts engaged in discussions with the participants in smaller groups and discussed the issues the participants themselves find most pressing. Throughout the informal talks the issue the participants found as the gravest in today's Kosovar society was racism and femicide. These issues were further on well incorporated into modified moot court (see below).

Due to the interactive character of the lectures, the attention and engagement of the students was higher than with pure frontal presentation.

### Modified moot court

During the first workcamp, the main activity was a modified moot court. The moot court was based on a fictional case of gender violence, which was inspired by cases that were brought to the European Court of Human Rights before. For the modified moot court, the participants have been divided into four groups, where each study field of the participants has been represented. Each group therefore consisted of law students, psychology students, sociology students and political sciences students.

The groups were to firstly formulate arguments in favor of the complainant to be presented before the court. As the case was supposed to serve as an example case to change either current legislation or the practice in similar cases, the groups were also obliged to prepare a plan of campaign surrounding the case. Finally, they were to present a press release on the case, that is in line with the presented argumentation and the campaign plan.

The students proved high knowledge of their respective fields, as the arguments presented by each of the group took into knowledge law and current psychological and sociological findings in domestic violence cases, and political sciences were well to round the aspects into understandable and comprehensible set of arguments. Furthermore, the students were able to use everything they learned during the lectures, as the campaigns were well planned, with reasonable beginning and end and well stated object of the campaign. The students also presented high understanding of the power of the media, as their press releases were highly professional, including reasonably emotional aspect as well as factual statements that would be appealing to general public and lawmakers as well.

Each student within their respective group was able to contribute by their input from their respective field. The multidisciplinary approach seemed to help the participants improve their view on human rights protection in wider sense.

### Strategic conception

The aim of the strategic conception was to let the students find their own cause and work on it while utilizing the knowledge obtained during the workcamp. The knowledge included not only information from the lectures, but also from the discussions with the experts and fellow participants. Furthermore, they utilized every note they were given during the moot court presentations. The students were teamed in six different groups, again with each study field represented within the group.

The students were able to formulate the topic of their strategic conceptions as well as to illustrate the background of the issue. All the groups chose pressing issues regarding gender rights protection, focusing on parental rights, domestic violence and femicide in specific and property rights. In a short time, they were able to outline the campaign and its goals so as to make sense and to be worked into a thorough plan, which they did during the second workcamp.

## Mentoring

For the second workcamp, part of the participants came back and part was new students who haven't had experience with such project. The "senior" students were to be the mentors of the new students, transferring what they have learned during the first workcamp and what they have experienced. The intent to the mentoring program was to prove that mentoring can be sufficient in transferring obtained knowledge and skills, therefore more than the actual participants of one workcamp or workshop can benefit from the program.

The mentoring program proved to be successful, as the outcomes of the reworked conception strategies were highly professional and showed deep understanding and involvement of both senior and junior participants of the workcamp.

## Other innovative methods in human rights education

Above mentioned methods are not the only ones relevant to human rights education. As Mgr. Zuzana Vanýsková from the Department of legal skills informed the participants during the talk, there are other ways to improve the education of young lawyers and human rights specialists. The Faculty of Law presented their Street law program, which includes students teaching law at high schools in an innovative and engaging way. Furthermore, the faculty organizes different internships at different institutions, including courts, law firms, ministries and others. There are modules on legal representation, legal argumentation, legal writing or cyber security.

## Conclusion

The innovative methods in human rights education prove to be a quickly developing and important part of bringing up new generation of human rights activists. The methods presented within the project proved to be engaging and effective. Above all, mentoring proves to be a way to educate more individuals with less resources.

The educators present during both workcamps have already incorporated some of the methods into their teaching, and they receive appreciation from the students as well as the university leadership.

The innovative methods in human rights education shall play an important role in creating and developing a society, where human rights are widely understood, supported and protected, and as such should be accessed.