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This manual was developed by the Counselling Line for Women and Girls with the support of Hedayah and the European Union as part of an initiative to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism in Albania.

Civic Engagement Training Manual

YOUTH AND WOMEN IN FOCUS



Civic Engagement Training Manual

Youth and Women in Focus



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Preface

This training manual aims to put a spotlight on citizen engagement, with an emphasis on youth and women. It is a good set of theoretical and practical instruments, and it is also useful for those who are new to the citizen engagement concept. It might also serve as a reference tool for those with experience in citizen engagement projects. Its long term goal is to contribute to the reduction of the gap between governments and citizens, as well as to allow public servants and politicians to reconnect with citizens' needs, priorities, and values. This is best achieved if each of the different contexts, policies, or programs development processes is considered. It requires a unique approach and appropriately adapted tools to address the specific needs.

Engaging citizens in a meaningful way firstly requires an understanding of the philosophy and vision of citizen engagement. It calls for planning, preparation, and sometimes, institutional capacity building. It can demand a shift in organizational or departmental cultural conceptions of what citizens can bring to a policy process.

This training manual could serve as a starting point to think about these issues and a reference guide for those who wish to deepen their understanding and practice of citizen engagement. It can be used in many different ways, based on specific needs and interests. For example, you may start by doing the exercises first, and then read the conceptual texts – or vice versa. If you already have enough knowledge on the theoretical concepts, you may wish to start immediately with setting up your own specific learning objectives, then jumping to the action portion. Or perhaps, you simply wish to see or read some more inspirational examples of civic engagement efforts.

Module 1. Definitions and concepts of civic engagement

The Constitution of the Republic of Albania sanctions the principles of the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. One of these rights is that of collective organization, for any lawful purpose that guarantees the individual active participation in society¹. Establishing this right ensures that individuals participate in decision-making processes at all levels. Public participation in decision-making is an essential element of any transparent, accountable, and democratic political system.

1.1 What is Citizen Engagement?

Civic engagement is individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. It can take many forms, ranging from individual voluntarism, to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can also include a wide range of efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem, or interact with the institutions of representative democracy. Civic engagement encompasses a range of specific activities such as working in a community service for vulnerable people, serving in a neighborhood association, writing an open letter to a government institution, or just simply voting.

Citizen engagement is premised on the belief that people should have and want to have their voice heard in the decisions that affect their lives. This is what a democratic governmental system should offer to its citizens, which is the belief in freedom and equality between people, in which power is either held by representatives or directly by the people themselves. In other words, democracy means that the power is in the hands of the people; the exercise of that power is either exercised by representatives who are elected (through an electoral system) or directly by the people (through referendums). In recent years there has been a growing disquiet with the current practice of democracy, which tends to mainly focus much more on the ‘representatives’ exercise of power. While it may be claimed that voting and consultation processes achieve a well-functioning democracy, it is clear that citizens are

¹ Human Rights and Basic Freedoms” http://www.pp.gov.al/web/kushtetuta_2016_1082.pdf

becoming increasingly frustrated with these democratic mechanisms. They feel that their voices are not being heard and that decisions made by elites do not necessarily reflect their values.

On the other hand, citizen engagement provides a vision for a way forward – a way of reinvigorating current democratic practices and institutions, bringing meaning to people’s participation, and fostering a two-way dialogue between citizens and governments. However, it is important to emphasize that this should not be seen as a mechanism to appease individual people’s desires, but to actually bring about a more just society where governments’ choices and decisions are closer to the needs of the population. In this framework, citizen engagement does not entail the replacement of representative democracy, but rather deepening it by narrowing the gap between governments and the public they serve, as well as to improve the legitimacy and sustainability of decisions. Ideally, citizen engagement “requires governments to share in agenda-setting and to ensure that policy proposals generated jointly will be taken into account in reaching a final decision.”²

In other words, civic engagement refers to the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others, or to help shape the community’s future.

Citizens are understood as the ultimate client of government, development institutions’, and private sector interventions in a country. Citizens can act as individuals or organize themselves in associations and groups such as community-based groups, women’s groups, minorities or ethnic groups, etc. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) can represent citizens and can include organizations outside the public or the for-profit sector, such as: nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), charitable or faith-based organizations, foundations, academia, associations, policy development and research institutes, trade unions, and social movements. In this context, the term ‘citizen’ is not used in a legal sense, but is understood in the broad sense of referring to all people in a society or country in an inclusive and nondiscriminatory way.

Citizen engagement is defined as the two-way interaction between citizens and governments (or the private sector) within the scope of interventions – such as policy dialogue, programs, projects, advisory services, and analytics – that give citizens a voice in decision-making with the objective of improving the intermediate and final development outcomes of the intervention. The spectrum of citizen engagement includes consultation, collaboration and

² MacKinnon, Mary Pat. 2003. Citizens’ Dialogue on Canada’s Future: A 21st Century Social Contract. Presentation to the Canadian Centre for Management Development, Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, September 26, 2003.

participation, and empowerment.³ **Access to information is a necessary enabling condition,** but it typically implies a one-way interaction only. Information sharing and awareness-raising activities alone, therefore, do not meet the definition of citizen engagement. Closing the feedback loop (i.e. a two-way interaction providing a tangible response to citizen feedback), using their input to facilitate improved development outcomes, and justifying the cost of engaging with them is required to meet citizens' expectations for change created by their engagement.

Therefore, civic engagement is individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. In that conceptual frame, individuals take an active role in the life of their communities. There are a variety of components to that. First, it is being aware of the issues that your community is confronting – but also being able to step back and analyze the dynamics and structures that have created that issue. What goes along with that is a sense of empathy and understanding that you need in order to be able to empathize with the conditions of people who might be different from you. Second, it is defining expertise more broadly so that we look at situations from multiple perspectives.

1.2 What is Community Engagement?

Community engagement can be defined as the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity/boundaries, special interest, or similar situations in order to address issues affecting their well-being. It is an important instrument for bringing about environmental and behavioral changes that will improve the health of the community and its members. It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices.

Community engagement is also about involving the community in decision-making processes, which is critical in the successful development of acceptable policies, programs, and interventions – including the decisions by the government to commit funding to the various community-based projects and engagement practices. Community engagement is increasingly acknowledged as a valuable process, not only for ensuring that communities and their members can participate in decisions that affect them at a level that meets their expectations,

³ 'STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR MAINSTREAMING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN WORLD BANK GROUP OPERATIONS', World Bank, pg.8.

but also to strengthen and enhance the relationship between communities and governments. Community engagement can take many forms, and partners can include organized groups, agencies, institutions, or individual collaborators that may be engaged in health promotion, research, or policymaking. Community engagement can also be seen as a continuum of community involvement starting with needs identification and analysis to develop program responses, to then address those identified needs or gaps, and eventually being part of monitoring the outcomes of the various programs and interventions that have been implemented.

Group Discussions & Exercises

- **Questions?? - Reflections!!!**

- In your opinion, how could individuals, communities, and societies benefit from citizen engagement and participation?
- What can you do as an active citizen to improve the life of your community?

- **Video - What is Civic Engagement?**

Civic Engagement happens when someone takes action to better their community and encourages others to do it, too. Learn more about the basics of Civic Engagement and how you can engage in your community as a civic leader!

This film was produced by the Presidential Precinct with support from the University of Virginia's Bicentennial. A special thanks to Next Day Animations.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6bNwmrBPXI>

- **Video - The three essential ingredients for active citizenship | Eric Liu | TEDxChristchurch**

Eric Liu defines **power** as "the ability to make others do as you would have them do", and says we need to understand it – even if it makes us uncomfortable. **Imagination**, on the other hand, is "the ability to see things as they are not" – another critical element of co-creating the kind of society we want to live in. But power plus imagination can be dangerous without the third essential ingredient for pro-social citizenship: **character**. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vr4qtTcU4n8>

*Eric Liu is the founder of Citizen University, directs the Aspen Institute's Citizenship & American Identity Program, and was recently appointed by President Obama to the Board of the Corporation for National and Community Service. His books include the national bestsellers *The Gardens of Democracy* and *The True Patriot*, both co-authored with Nick Hanauer. He also served as a White House speechwriter for President Bill Clinton and later as the President's deputy domestic policy adviser.*

- **Group discussions** take place after the videos, with the aim to put forward the individual perspective of this concept and the ways in which it can be understood and applied better into our society.

Module 2. Current context of civic engagement in Albania

2.1. Civic engagement and participation in Albania

Civic engagement includes a number of different dimensions and aspects, with different individuals and groups emphasizing different aspects of the concept. This encompasses a broad spectrum of activities that can include both paid as well as unpaid volunteer roles.

An active civic engagement can be realized through various forms, such as:

- Civil Society Organizations
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Associations
- Faith-based organizations
- Movements for representation (For example, “Movement for the protection of the Theatre’)
- Networks and coalitions
- Voluntary organizations
- Community groups

The legal basis for the above-mentioned civic engagement plethora in Albania is set up around the following legal framework:

- The Law no. 8788, dated 07/05/2001 “For Non-Profit Organizations”.⁴
- The Law 45/2016 “On Voluntarism”.⁵
- The Law 119/2014 “On the right to information’.⁶
- The Law 146/ 2014 “On Notification and Public Consultation”.⁷

⁴ <http://qbz.gov.al/eli/ligj/2001/05/07/8788>,

⁵ <http://qbz.gov.al/eli/ligj/2016/04/28/45>

⁶ <https://www.mb.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Ligj-119-2014-Per-te-Drejten-e-Informimit.pdf>

⁷ https://mb.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Ligji_per_Njoftimin_dhe_Konsultimin_Publik-1.pdf

- The Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 828, date 07.10.2015 on “Approval of Rules on Creation and Administration of Electronic Register for Notification and Public Consultation”.⁸

The National Strategy of the Albanian Government for Development and Integration (2015–2021) states that the vision of the government is “to create an enabling environment for a strong and consolidated civil society that contributes to the development of society and the country together with a media independent and free⁹”.

Furthermore, the National Strategy identifies three strategic objectives in the field of civil society:

- i. Creating a legal environment and financial conditions to support the sustainability of civil society organizations.
- ii. Strengthening and institutionalizing cooperation with civil society and public institutions, in order to establish a partnership based on the will, mutual trust and understanding of common interests.
- iii. Promoting civil society organizations, in line with national priorities and EU recommendations, including volunteering and civic participation.

The Agency for the Support of Civil Society is the main public mechanism at the national level for distribution of public funds to CSOs, aiming to support their institutional development and project ideas as per identified priorities, as well as to co-fund EU projects¹⁰.

In 2016, the National Council for Civil Society was established – a collegial consultative body aiming to guarantee institutional collaboration between the state and CSOs, in support of good governance, participatory democracy, and increase of transparency through meaningful participation and involvement of civil society in this process. During 2018, the performance of

⁸ <http://www.konsultimipublik.gov.al>.

⁹ STRATEGJIA KOMBËTARE PËR ZHVILLIM DHE INTEGRIM, 2015 2020
http://www.mbrojtja.gov.al/images/PDF/strategji2016/SKZHI_FINAL_QBZ.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.amshc.gov.al/>

the National Council for Civil Society was poor, especially in addressing key priorities of CSOs with regard to enabling environment and participation in policy-making processes.¹¹

There are nearly 11,430 CSOs registered at Tirana District Court, and according to the Institute of Statistics, nearly 2,300 of them are active all over Albania. This data shows that there is an active environment for the CSO sector to flourish¹².

Good cooperation between a service-oriented mindset as well as an active, critical, and constructive civil society is an essential element of pluralistic democracy – which enables citizens to freely organize interest groups and participate in the policy cycle in addition to the decision-making processes of their country in an orderly and transparent manner.

Examples of civil society organizations are: nonprofit organizations, whose missions may focus on civic education, organizations whose missions are related to the development of democracy and governance, advocacy organizations representing vulnerable groups in society (such as women's organizations, people with disabilities, national minorities, the protection of children's rights, etc.), organizations that provide various services (such as counseling services for abused women, or for the poor, the elderly, etc.), as well as any other organization that operates in accordance with the legislation in force for NGOs.¹³

The initial guideline for a government enabling policies for the development of civil society was approved by the decision of the Council of Ministers no. 459, dated 27.5.2015, and published in the Official Gazette no. 94 of 2015. The approval of the guide was preceded by extensive consultations with representatives of the CSOs, as well as with the donor community. Likewise, the Assembly of Albania on 24.12.2014 adopted a Resolution on recognizing and strengthening the role of civil society as an act that strongly supports all steps taken by the government and civil society.

Pursuant to the Manual of Public Participation in the Decision-Making Process of the Assembly, approved on 11.11.2014, the Assembly has established bridges of cooperation with civil society and interest groups. However, regardless of its development, the civil society sector as a dynamic sector faces a series of consecutive challenges that brings into focus continuous needs.

¹¹Monitoring Matrix on Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development Country Report for Albania 2018, Partners Albania;

¹² <http://www.instat.gov.al/>

¹³ MANUAL OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING PROCESS OF ASSEMBLY, "Approved by the Bureau of the Assembly with Decision no. 17, Dated 11.11.2014 " [ht, tp://parlament.al/Files/Informacione/manuali_i_azhornuar_21298_1.pdf](http://parlament.al/Files/Informacione/manuali_i_azhornuar_21298_1.pdf)

The sublegal acts of the law “On volunteerism” are not drafted yet. Those sublegal acts should have to address procedures such as the registration of volunteers, support for the volunteering centers, establishment of state-funding schemes, creation of instruments to collect data on voluntarism activity in the country, and the ethical code on voluntarism. This delay is placing difficulty on CSOs with regard to the involvement of volunteers in their projects and initiatives.

According to CSOs, the most challenging issues for organizations and their activities are: (1) **Lack of funding**, (2) **Legal and fiscal framework for CSOs**¹⁴, (3) **Lack of cooperation with local/central government and noninvolvement in policy making**, and (4) **Lack of mechanisms/inability to participate in tenders for the delivery of public services**.¹⁵

2.2. Youth civic engagement in Albania

Youth engagement recognizes young people’s right to participate in decisions that impact them directly and indirectly, and acknowledges the energy, skills, and strengths that they bring to their communities and to society in general. It characterizes young people as valued stakeholders in creating effective and inclusive policies, programs, and environments.

Albania has one of the youngest populations in Europe. The 2011 Population and Housing Census recorded 2.8 million residents in Albania. The number of youth aged 15-29 amounted to 704,000 – **representing just over one quarter (25.2 percent) of the total population**.¹⁶ This means that there is a vibrant generation of youth with huge potential that could contribute to the overall socio-economical and cultural development of the country.

¹⁴ There is an ongoing legal initiative to change the legal framework of the Non-Governmental Organisations, which for the moment has been postponed, due to the delays imposed by Covid 19 Pandemic. Fiscal framework challenge refers to the payment of Value Added Tax (VAT) by CSOs for projects funded through the IPA funds of the European Union (EU). Although VAT reimbursement of these funds is a government obligation under the implementation of the agreement with the EU, there is still no official confirmation on VAT reimbursement for IPA scheme projects implemented by CSOs.

¹⁵ Assessment Report “CAPACITY AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN ALBANIA”, Tirana, 2019, Partners Albania for Change and Development. <https://resourcecentre.al/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Need-Assessment-Report-2019.pdf>

¹⁶ http://www.instat.gov.al/media/1583/youth_in_albania_challenges_in_changing_times.pdf

On the other hand, young people have their own expectations and experiences about youth civic engagement. Today's Albanian youth is drifting from civil and political activities, which indicates that they want to follow their ambitions and dreams elsewhere in western countries. Among many other push factors that contribute to this withdrawal of the youth, some of the reasons for this are the lack of a youth-centered decision-making mechanism, in addition to youth issues remaining unaddressed. Despite the approval of the new law "On Youth" in November 2019, there has not been much work done on implementing it¹⁷.

The non functioning of the mechanism that is provisioned in this law, negatively influences the decision-making processes that directly or indirectly affect the lives of youth. And, this is the essence of a democratic system, implemented by all state structures at the central and local level. Young people, as one of the specific big groups in our society, have the right to participate in the decisions that belong to them – so their participation should be seen as necessary. However, unfortunately, in most cases young people in our country are faced with the fact that decisions that directly affect their lives are made without consulting or considering them, thus excluding their opinions.

10 Ways to Keep Youth Engagement Authentic

1. The opportunities are meaningful, not just made up work.
2. Youth have access to decision-makers in official settings.
3. Enough time is allocated for youth to learn the issues and complete projects.
4. Adult-driven initiatives or groups try to maintain a ratio of four to six adults to every young person.
5. Youth-driven initiatives try to maintain a ratio of four to eight youth to every adult.
6. Training and skill-building are part of all projects.
7. Training and skill-building match the opportunities youth will tackle.
8. Opportunities are connected as a system; youth can move easily from one to another.
9. Any opportunity balances learning, work and fun.
10. Adults want youth at the table because they add value, not because it will be good for them¹⁸.

¹⁷ LIGJ Nr. 75/2019 PËR RININË, <http://qbz.gov.al/eli/ligj/2019/11/04/75>.

¹⁸ "Authentic Youth Civic Engagement- A Guide for Municipal Leaders" <https://4-h.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/authentic-youth-engagement-gid-jul101.pdf>.

- **Some examples of youth movements that made a difference in Albania through the years:**
 - **The Student Movement of December 1990** is the only political action of Albanians in their well-known history, which carried out changes in political systems (the collapse of the bunker regime in Europe) peacefully. It is the most pro-European political action since the National Renaissance. This Movement legitimized the right to political pluralism in Albania, changed the rules of the political game, and delegitimized the communist system.¹⁹
 - **Student protests of December 2018 in Albania** are a series of street protests, demonstrations, and online activities held by public university students in December 2018 to oppose high tuition fees. Students across Albania rallied against the Albanian government's moves to make university education even more expensive by introducing new exam fees. The fee comes at the top of dramatically increased university fees, which have failed to bring any improvement in public education.²⁰
 - **“Fundjavë Ndryshe” Foundation**, Albania’s largest social initiative, is there for every family in need to identify their necessities and find solutions to pull them out of poverty. Every weekend “Fundjavë Ndryshe” organizes different charitable activities in which volunteers and staff of the organization distribute food aids, clothing, and material supplies to families in need across the country. During these activities, “Fundjavë Ndryshe” has helped thousands of families, children, and elders in extreme poverty.²¹

¹⁹ Bardhyl Ukcama, "December '90, I Remember...", New York, USA.

²⁰ [https://sq.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protesta_studentore_n%C3%AB_Shqip%C3%ABri_\(2018\)](https://sq.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protesta_studentore_n%C3%AB_Shqip%C3%ABri_(2018))

²¹ <https://fundjavendryshe.org/what-we-do/>

Group Discussions & Exercises

- **Questions???** - **Reflections!!!**

- How do you see youth engagement within your institution/organization?
- Is the youth perceived as worthy of engagement or are they just perceived as a generation that brings more trouble than good?
- Do you think youth are able to solve their own issues or do they need help from adults?
- In your opinion, how do you think youth can contribute to a better community/society?

- Video - **Youth engagement in politics indifferent or just different?** | Jacob Helliwell | TEDxYouth@Victoria

After having heard a politician claim that youth no longer care about politics, Jacob became concerned. His experience has been the opposite. While it is true that youth are less likely to vote and are less likely to be members of political parties, Jacob takes the unorthodox view that youth are not indifferent; their engagement is just different. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdDFLzyk94k>

- Video - **Restoring Youth Civic Engagement** | Noah Tesfaye | TEDxLAHS

Noah is extremely passionate about politics and constitutional law. He believes that our education system is failing to teach students the true importance of civics. Watch Noah's talk and learn about how and what steps we as a society can take to help reinvigorate productive political activism amongst young people. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqrHkM_6dsM

- **Group discussions** take place after the videos, with the aim to put forward the individual perspective of this concept and the ways in which it can be understood and applied better into our society.

Module 3. Benefits of civic engagement

There are numerous positive outcomes associated with civic engagement. These outcomes are related to the citizen as an individual actor, such as educational and social competencies, and to society, such as an active citizenry that includes participation in the political process and supports their communities through volunteering or political activism.

Civic engagement is one of the basic foundations of a democratic society. There are two related – but often competing – components to a democracy. One is individual liberty, and the other is the public good. The way to effectively find a balance between these two components is for people to take an active role in shaping their communities.

3.1. Civic engagement benefits for youth

“Youth civic engagement is critical to our democracy. Young people benefit personally by participating and communities need their voices and their energies to address problems. The future of our democracy depends on each new generation developing the skills, values and habits of participation.”²²

According to a new study by the Wake Forest School of Medicine, youth civic engagement in the form of volunteering, voting, as well as protesting and activism is associated with higher educational attainment and income levels in adulthood. The study not only established that demonstrating is good for young people, it also found that this is true regardless of other key factors influencing future success, such as early academic performance and parental education levels²³.

“Engaging in civic life is worthwhile for many reasons. It can build community, fulfill social needs, change policies, and ensure a healthy democracy. Our study suggests that civic

²² Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), Executive Summary, http://www.civicyouth.org/wpcontent/uploads/2011/11/CIRCLE_cluster_exec2010.pdf

²³ [Impacts of Adolescent and Young Adult Civic Engagement on Health and Socioeconomic Status in Adulthood](#). Published in the journal *Child Development*, measured the long-term implications through analysis of a [national longitudinal study](#) of more than 10,000 young people from a wide variety of ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds.

engagement is also generally good for the people involved.” *Parissa J. Ballard, Assistant Professor of Family and Community Medicine at Wake Forest School of Medicine.*

The study also found that there is a possibility that civic engagement might have “an influence on the formative experience, with a role in shaping educational attainment and income provides a promising avenue for interventions meant to promote socioeconomic status and reduce disparities”²⁴. Another finding was that civic engagement benefited young people even in socio-economic aspects.

Researchers found also that activities like voting and volunteering had the same educational and income benefits as activism, as well as added health benefits, including fewer symptoms of depression and a lower risk for negative health behaviors. By actively working to address community challenges, kids and teens are creating change within themselves. While they may see the impact as solely external, they too are benefiting.²⁵

This leads to the new perspective of investing in programs that help youth better understand social issues affecting their lives as well as their role in solving them. By preparing youth – including at-risk and marginalized youth – to feel empowered over their circumstances and futures, we set them up to write a new narrative for themselves and their peers, shatter expectations for youth in their communities, and lead by example for the kids who look up to them.

Education is a major field of intervention; through the enhancement of education curricula in primary and secondary schools, including participation in extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, and arts, youngsters can share common interests and hobbies and can be engaged in social life – thus, keeping them far from crime and illegal activities. In order to simultaneously raise the quality of education and enhance social skills, social and debate clubs should be established in high schools.²⁶

3.2 Civic engagement benefits for women

“We believe that a nation’s progress depends on the progress of women; that the strength of democracy depends on the inclusion of women ... that the richness of civil society

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ <https://www.iyfnet.org/blog/youth-civic-engagement-has-lasting-benefits>

²⁶ Monitoring report of Political, Social, Economic Participation of Youth-Albania, Partners Albania for Change and Development, 2018.

depends on the full participation of women; that human rights are women's rights; and women's rights are human rights." Hillary Rodham Clinton, Vital Voices of the Americas, October 1998.

Achieving gender equality and reducing gender-based as well as domestic violence are clearly emphasized as priorities and key directions for development in a set of national documents and programs.

In recent years, Albania has taken important steps in establishing institutional mechanisms, drafting relevant policies or even joining various regional or international commitments that address gender issues. The institutional mechanism of referral in relation to gender equality, gender-based violence and domestic violence extends at the national and local levels.

However, according to the Gender Equality Index for the Republic of Albania 2020, the situation of gender equality needs to be improved, especially in²⁷:

- **In the field of money**, the score of 59.6 stems from a particularly **unfavorable situation** in the sub-field of financial resources, where **income inequalities and profits** between women and men are measured²⁸.
- **In the field of knowledge**, the score of 55.6 shows a **large gender gap in both of these subfields: achievements and participation**, as well as division of labor. Although there are more educated women than men in Albania, they occupy a relatively smaller place compared to EU levels and national objectives. The division by areas of education is still apparent, with female students pursuing higher education focusing on education, health and well being, and humanities and arts – while there are very few male students studying in these areas.
- **The field of power** marks 60.9 and ranks the Republic of Albania in 6th place compared to the rest of the countries that report on the Gender Equality Index. This high result comes from the high representation of women in political and economic power. **On the other hand, the social power of women, i.e. representation in the bodies of the**

²⁷ Gender Equality Index as an instrument of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) to measure gender inequalities in the EU European (EU) in line with the context of EU policies. The Gender Equality Index measures gender equality in six essential areas: work, money, knowledge, time, power, health, and two other areas: the intertwining of inequalities and violence, based on specific conceptual frameworks

²⁸ The Gender Equality Index measures gender equality on a bias scale of 1 (complete inequality) to 100 (full equality).

organizing boards of scientific research, funding, media and major sports, lags behind the progress in political and economic power.²⁹

Civic engagement fails to foster democratic representation when women face barriers, as mentioned above, specifically in the field of power. Another factor to take into consideration while analyzing the situation of women in our country is the fact that there is a high representation of women in political and economic power, although this does not mean a priori it would bring substantial results/achievements regarding this issue.

However, **women are a vital and integral part of building strong communities**, and equal participation of women in elective office or other representations in politics and economic power, is crucial to a fair and equitable democracy. **By running for office, women shape laws, policies, and decision-making in ways that reflect their interests and needs, as well as those of their families and communities.**

The struggle for women's rights is often presented as a struggle between tradition (often conservative and patriarchal traditions) and modernity. Benefits of women's civic engagement are numerous. Ultimately, in a democratic system, civic engagement is one way to ensure the direct input of citizens in the decision-making process, and women (as the largest vulnerable group in society) must engage in civic life in order to benefit from it.

Group Discussions & Exercises

- **Questions???** - **Reflections!!!**
 - In your opinion, what are ways in which young people could benefit from community engagement?
 - Do you think adults know better than young people when it comes to the best approach towards the challenges of life?
 - Why is it important to have equal representation of women in decision-making processes in all levels of governance?
 - How do you perceive a world led only by men?

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http://www.instat.gov.al/media/6657/gender_equality_index_for_the_republic_of_albania_2020_alb.pdf

- Video - **Unpacking "Civic Engagement"**

This animated video defines the term "civic engagement," discusses its relevance to success in college and beyond, and challenges individuals to become more engaged in their communities - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-sPZlCpxfY>

- Video - **New models for civic engagement:** Ben Warner at TEDxJacksonville
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpCzlniPZDU&t=37s>

Despite our technological advancements, we live in a time where we are increasingly disconnected from one another. Ben Warner believes that, if you don't like it, you should quit talking about it and change it. Join Ben and learn how your community gets to decide what matters most.

- **Group discussions** take place after the videos, with the aim to put forward the individual perspective of this concept and the ways in which it can be understood and applied better into our society.
- Participants will be asked to draw their answers to the following questions: 1. What is the present state or condition of youth/women in your community/country? 2. What changes do you want to see happen among youth/women in your community/country (the desired state or situation)?

Module 4. Application of civic engagement

4.1. Trends of civic engagement

As mentioned in the previous modules, civic engagement can take many forms, ranging from individual voluntarism, to organizational involvement, to electoral participation. It can include a wide range of efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem, or interact with the institutions of representative democracy.

Currently, civic engagement is an essential theme in civil dialogues as social researchers/analysts and policy-makers search for more democratic and collective ways to send messages to the government. Within that regard, the Civil Society sector and the private sector have a crucial role to play in the policy-making processes of the state.

In recent years, civic engagement has seen a decline, as it is a very challenging task for the public, since it requires time and resources – which the average individual in a modern society might feel conflicts with his/her own personal interests.

Reasons for the decline in civic engagement can include **voter apathy** from frequent elections, as well as the type of political system, as “proportional representation tends to attract more voters than [...] majoritarian systems³⁰”. Furthermore, **a lack of trust in political institutions, anti-governmental populism, long-term weakening of political parties, and segmentation of the population** are also potential causes of the decline in civic engagement (“Decline in Civic Participation”)

To tackle these issues, greater engagement of citizens, clients, consumers and communities around the world is becoming a feature of many governments as well as both public and private organizations. Policy-makers across the world are coming to the understanding that the active engagement and participation of communities and citizens in the policy-making process, as well as establishing suitable institutional arrangements for securing dialogue with communities, are key to effective policy-making and, consequently, to achieve the internationally agreed-upon development goals.

³⁰ [The Importance of Civic Engagement](http://www.nidemocracy.org/en/publications/the-importance-of-civic-engagement/), Leigh Crossett, Nonviolent Initiative for Democracy, <http://www.nidemocracy.org/en/publications/the-importance-of-civic-engagement/>

Since civic and community engagement covers a broad range of activities, some model activities undertaken by government practitioners include:

- **Reaching out to/informing the community of policy directions of the government.**
- **Consulting the community as part of a process to develop government policy, or build community awareness and understanding.**
- **Involving the community through a range of mechanisms to ensure that issues and concerns are understood and considered as part of the decision-making process.**
- **Collaborating with the community by developing partnerships to formulate options and provide recommendations.**
- **Shared leadership/empowering the community to make decisions and to implement and manage change.**

4.2. Application of civic engagement in practice

Civic engagement in Albania is usually influenced by several factors, including traditions and beliefs, civil society organizations and nonprofit organizations, different perspectives of communities, the government's 'attitudes and behaviors', the international donors community and international organizations operating in our country, integration processes towards EU, and other pressing security, social, economical, cultural, and educational concerns.

One of the fundamental human rights sanctioned in international and national law is **the right to organize collectively**, for any legitimate purpose, which **guarantees the individual active participation in society**. The proper enforcement of this right, ensures that individuals participate in decision-making processes at all levels. [Public participation in decision-making is an essential element of any transparent, accountable, and democratic political system.](#)

The OECD offers a more comprehensive classification of civic participation by referring to the nature and direction of the relationship between government and citizens as follows:³¹

1. **Information** - a one-way relationship in which the government only produces and provides information to its citizens.
2. **Consultation** - a two-way relationship in which citizens can provide 'feedback' to the government by contributing their views and opinions.

³¹ OECD, 'Citizens as Partners: Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-Making', 2001.

3. **Active participation** - a relationship based on co-government, in which citizens engage in the decision-making process.

In the OECD Handbook here are several elements explained which support a framework for **active citizen participation** that should be taken in consideration, as follows:³²

- **If legislation and referenda initiated by citizens are applicable:** Constitutions or laws can grant citizens the right to propose legislation or to initiate non-binding referenda.
- **If policies on active participation are an option:** Government resolutions may set the aim to create and advance possibilities for active citizen participation.
- **Government can help the development of active participation** using a number of activities aimed to: collect good practices, raise awareness, and develop guidelines for engaging with citizens.

❖ **Some examples of the different forms of citizens' engagement platforms in Albania:**

- **"Shqipëria që duam"** is an open platform for communication and interaction, which is used in real time on issues of current political and governance to discuss with the user important reforms and measures, enabling his/her impact on governance policies in each sector, or on the progress of the work of each ministry and state institution. This platform is a practical instrument of co-government with every ordinary person who wants to be part of the effort for the prosperity of Albania³³.
- **The Center for Openness and Dialogue** comes as a result of the initiative of Prime Minister Edi Rama. The objective was simple: to transform a part of the headquarters of the Council of Ministers into a space for the service of citizens, and to convey the message of openness, transparency and transformation³⁴.

³² Ibid.

³³ "Shqipëria që duam" www.Shqiperiaqeduam.al.

³⁴ <http://cod.al/>

Group Discussions & Exercises

- **Questions???** - **Reflections!!!**

- In order to improve your neighborhood or community, what do you think is necessary to actively engage in?
- Have you had cases in which you were engaged in a certain cause? If yes, how did it result? What was achieved?
- Do you think that the local government 'listens' to their people when it comes to their needs?
- Do you vote? Why?

- Video - **Civic Engagement 101** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBrmwYdp6gU>

The Multnomah Bar Foundation (MBF) is a nonprofit whose mission is to increase the public's understanding of the legal system, to promote civic education, public participation and respect for the law, to improve the quality and administration of the legal system, and to support programs and projects related to the MBF's purpose. <http://mbabar.org/Foundation/>

- Video - **Shifting Power: Public engagement & participation in the 21st century** | Jeremy Heimans | TEDxGateway https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Qa4RN_D7Hs

In his talk, Jeremy Heimans talks about how the world is changing and accepting the new power shift from old to new.

- **Group discussions** take place after the videos, with the aim to put forward the individual perspective of this concept and the ways in which it can be understood and applied better into our society.

Module 5. Interpersonal conflict resolution among youth

There is a growing consensus among researchers that youth and especially students, need to be prepared and enabled with knowledge of human cultures so that they understand the diversity that characterizes human society. They also need to be imparted with intellectual and practical skills that enhance their inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, teamwork and problem solving. The ethical dimension of civic engagement allows the students to carry their personal and social responsibilities with resolve³⁵.

But, on the other hand, a marginalized and unemployed youth is a desperate youth that can easily lose faith in their country's future. A non-inclusive socio-economic policy will put aside, and will not meet the needs of the youth, who probably will lose hope, and they will lose the sense of belonging.

How can a young man or woman feel himself/herself civically engaged while he/she lacks the basics of a prosperous life which is a decent work meeting her/his needs? How can young people be seen active in youth organizations when they have been the victim of a suffocating socio-economic system?

Fostering social cohesion and trust through an inclusive and participatory peace building process during and after a transition or conflict is a challenging but necessary task. Many key stakeholders remain on the margins or excluded from the process. In particular, the potential contribution and inclusion of young people to effective peace building has received little attention and support. **Yet young people's leadership and roles in preventing and resolving conflict, violence and extremism are rich resources essential to achieving sustainable peace.** Young people are valuable innovators and agents of change, and their contributions should be actively supported, solicited and regarded as essential to building peaceful communities and supporting democratic governance and transition. Moreover, young people's participation

³⁵ Arab Youth : Civic Engagement & Economic Participation, UNESCO Regional Bureau - Beirut, 2011.

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Beirut/pdf/YCE%20_EN.pdf

promotes civic engagement and active citizenship. **Promoting the participation of young people in peace building requires multiple approaches**³⁶.

In order to effectively deal with the interpersonal conflict resolutions among our youth, we need to empower them with knowledge and skills first, to understand conflict and find ways to effective resolutions and second, promote social justice, active tolerance and responsible citizenship in communities experiencing conflict and violence.

5.1 Understanding the nature of conflict among youth

Conflict is an inevitable part of life and occurs naturally during our daily activities. We usually tend to attach negative feelings and emotions to the conflict, but there are different alternatives to which we can approach it.

There will always be differences of opinions or disagreements between individuals and/or groups. **Conflict is a basic part of the human experience and can influence our actions or decisions in one way or another.** It should not be viewed as an action that always results in negative outcomes, but instead as **an opportunity for learning and growth that may lead to positive outcomes.**³⁷

Youth seems to be driven quickly towards conflict situations, but understanding the nature and reasons behind the conflict amongst youth allows practitioners and leaders to manage it more effectively and can provide a path to accomplishing positive outcomes.

But what does Interpersonal Conflict mean? This level of conflict occurs when **two individuals have differing goals or approaches in their relationship.** Each individual has their own type of personality, and because of this, there will always be differences in choices and opinions. **Compromise is necessary** for managing this type of conflict, and can eventually help lead to

³⁶ Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding, United Nations Interagency Network on Youth Development, 2014, https://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Guiding-Principles_EN.pdf

³⁷ LEADERSHIP GUIDE TO CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, FADI SMILEY, <https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/pubhhmp6615/chapter/leadership-guide-to-conflict-and-conflict-management/>

personal growth and developing relationships with others. If interpersonal conflict is not addressed, it can become destructive to the point where a mediator (leader) may be needed.³⁸

In order to better understand **the causes of interpersonal conflict among youth**, we must identify potential sources, the roots of the conflict, and factors that contribute to its escalation.

SOURCES OF CONFLICT AMONG YOUTH

RESOURCES →→→ Money, time, land, labor, and material things.

Ex: Your sister takes your clothes without asking.

INFORMATION →→→ Not having sufficient and/or the same information, different ways of perceiving information, and attributing different levels of importance to the same information.

Ex: Arguing over rumors started by other people.

EMOTIONAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS →→→ "Bad Day" reactions or mental/psychological conditions may affect actions and attitudes.

Ex: Jared's girlfriend just dumped him and he yells at his mom when she asks how school was.

VALUES →→→ Culture, beliefs, or religion.

Ex: A student makes fun of another student at school for fasting.

RELATIONSHIPS & ROLES →→→ Friends, family, couples, co-workers, neighbours, etc. Conflict can arise when people don't fulfil how others see their role.

Ex: Sophia is jealous that her best friend Nicole is going to the movies with another friend and didn't invite her.

POWER & STRUCTURE →→→ Who has access to power and/or resources, and who has the authority to make decisions. May relate to issues of justice.

Ex: A student is upset that his/her side of the story is not being heard when in trouble for getting in an argument with a teacher³⁹.

³⁸ Conflict Resolution Resource Guide, A GUIDE FOR RESIDENTIAL CARE PROVIDERS TO RESPOND TO CONFLICT USING RESTORATIVE APPROACHES, 2017. <http://www.oacas.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/The-Conflict-Resolution-Resource-Guide.pdf>

Conflict can occur along three dimensions: cognitive (what someone perceives), emotional (how someone feels), and behavioral (the action someone takes).⁴⁰

In situations of conflict, there is a tendency from those involved (and even practitioners or others that might be near it) to see the conflict from the perspective of someone who wins over someone who loses. This damages the relations between parties involved in the conflict and promotes a win-lose behaviour.

The desire to win is an instinctive part of human nature. In a conflict situation, this desire to win often includes an attempt to dominate the other person – sometimes through the use of force, which can create resentment and fear in others. Conversely, when a person feels that they are not likely to win, they may try to avoid the conflict by withdrawing. Children who ‘win’ using this approach may develop a pattern of dominating and bullying others to get what they want. Children who tend to give in or avoid conflict may lack confidence⁴¹. Professionals working with youth should watch for signs of potential dominating behaviour or withdrawal behaviour. Instead of being seen as a win-lose competition, **conflict can be seen as an opportunity to build healthier and more respectful relationships through understanding the perspectives of others.**

5.2 Communication as an important tool for effective resolutions

Communication is an important part of all kinds of human relationships. Research shows that youth who have supportive relationships with parents, teachers, and friends are less likely to be either victims or perpetrators of violence. In addition, researchers have found that parents, teachers, mentors, neighbors, and other caring adults can affect positive change in the lives of young people through role modeling and intervention programs specifically focused on conflict resolution skills and empathy development⁴².

³⁹ Kids Matter. (2013a). About conflict resolution. Retrieved from <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/families/aboutfriendship/resolving-conflict/resolving-conflict-how-children-can-learn-resolve>

⁴⁰ Mayer, B. (2000). *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution: A Practitioner’s Guide*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

⁴¹ Kids Matter. (2013a). About conflict resolution. Retrieved from <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/families/aboutfriendship/resolving-conflict/resolving-conflict-how-children-can-learn-resolve>.

⁴² *Increasing Empathy and Conflict Resolution Skills through Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Training in Latino Adults and Youth*, Published by Johns Hopkins University Press DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/cpr.2017.0032>

Collaboratively engaging young people and their communities in learning strategies for peacefully navigating conflict is an important step toward building healthy relationships and preventing youth delinquency and interpersonal violence on all levels.⁴³

In order to have effective communication skills, which will set the basis for an effective resolution towards conflict situations, young people should have as many listening skills as they do speaking skills. One of the factors that contribute to the escalation of conflict is that youth are not able to express themselves through sufficient communication.

According to HelpGuide, the ability to successfully manage and resolve conflict depends on four key skills⁴⁴. Together, these four skills form a fifth skill that is greater than the sum of its parts: the ability to take conflict in stride and resolve differences in ways that build trust and confidence.⁴⁵

- **Conflict Resolution Skill 1: Quickly relieve stress**

The capacity to remain relaxed and focused in tense situations is a vital aspect of conflict resolution. If you do not know how to stay centered and in control of yourself, you may become emotionally overwhelmed in challenging situations. The best way to rapidly and reliably relieve stress is through the senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. But each person responds differently to sensory input, so you should find things that are soothing to you.

- **Conflict Resolution Skill 2: Recognize and manage your emotions.**

Emotional awareness is the key to understanding yourself and others. If you don't know how you feel or why you feel that way, you won't be able to communicate effectively or smooth over disagreements. Although knowing your own feelings may seem simple, many people ignore or try to sedate strong emotions like anger, sadness, and fear. But your ability to handle conflict depends on being connected to these feelings. If you are afraid of strong emotions, or if you insist on finding solutions that are strictly rational, your ability to face and resolve differences will be impaired.

- **Conflict Resolution Skill 3: Improve your nonverbal communication skills**

The most important information exchanged during conflicts and arguments is often communicated nonverbally. Nonverbal communication includes eye contact, facial expression,

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ HelpGuide is a nonprofit mental health and wellness website. Our mission is to provide empowering, evidence-based information that you can use to help yourself and your loved ones.

⁴⁵ Conflict Resolution Skills, <https://www.edcc.edu/counseling/documents/Conflict.pdf>.

tone of voice, posture, touch, and gestures. When you're in the middle of a conflict, paying close attention to the other person's nonverbal signals may help you to figure out what the other person is really saying, to respond in a way that builds trust, and to identify the root of the problem. Simply nonverbal signals such as a calm tone of voice, a reassuring touch, or a concerned facial expression can go a long way toward defusing a heated exchange.

- **Conflict Resolution Skill 4: Use humor and play to deal with challenges**

You can avoid many confrontations and resolve arguments and disagreements by communicating in a playful or humorous way. Humor can help you say things that might otherwise be difficult to express without creating a dispute. However, it is important that you laugh *with* the other person, not *at* them. When humor and play are used to reduce tension and anger, reframe problems, and put the situation into perspective, the conflict can actually become an opportunity for greater connection and intimacy.

Group Discussions & Exercises

- **Questions???** - Reflections!!!

- Please think of the last conflict situation you were involved in. What would you have done differently to overcome it?
- Why do you think that youth are more driven to conflict situations?
- What kind of programs can help the youth to effectively manage conflicts?
- How does the social environment influence the way the youth see and engage in conflict?
-

- **Video - CONFLICT RESOLUTION** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EABFilCZJy8>

Life can be frustrating. You're not always going to get along with your friends and family, and they won't always get along with you. And anger and frustration are natural human emotions, so there's no way you can avoid feeling them. But there are ways to disagree without being disagreeable – and in this BrainPOP movie on conflict resolution, Tim and Moby will tell you all about them! First, you'll find out why it's a good idea to take a deep breath and collect yourself before you respond to a situation you're not thrilled about. You'll discover different ways to compromise, and how placing yourself in another person's shoes can change a potential screaming match into a friendly discussion. Why risk alienating your friends and hurting people's feelings, when you can settle your differences fairly?

- **Video - Conflict to Resolution in 4 Steps**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arFGdviw_ys

We all have times we disagree with others and they disagree with us, but we can solve that problem and come up with a solution in four simple steps:

1. Just Stop.
2. Watch Your Words.
3. Listen Up.
4. Solve The Problem.

- **Group discussions** take place after the videos, with the aim to put forward the individual perspective of this concept and the ways in which it can be understood and applied better into our society.

Module 6. The role of women in conflict resolution and civic engagement in the community

“We can no longer afford to minimize or ignore the contributions of women and girls to all stages of conflict resolution, peace-making, peace-building, peacekeeping and reconstruction processes. Sustainable peace will not be achieved without the full and equal participation of women and men.” **“There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women” - Kofi Annan**

In the 1960s and 1970s, Western feminists argued that “the personal is political”, and began to popularize the notion that violence in the family was not acceptable and required legal and policy attention. Midway through the UN’s International Decade for Women (1976-85), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted.⁴⁶ Today’s array of ‘women-specific instruments’, the most important of which is CEDAW, is the result of a long struggle by women’s rights activists and feminist lawyers.⁴⁷ Putting the theory into practice is much more difficult.

Sustainable peace and conflict resolution requires including women in all segments of society as politically viable citizens. Women’s participation in resolving and preventing conflict is not an optional, but rather an essential ingredient of peace building.

In recent decades, international recognition and acceptance of women’s inclusion in peace building activities has increased globally, bolstered by the development of a policy framework on women, peace, and security that began with the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000.⁴⁸

Traditionally, women are characterized as maternal, nurturing, and gentle – whereas men are seen as having a propensity for violence and belligerence. Women talk about their problems; men solve conflict physically, requiring an outlet for their “natural” aggression. When female-

⁴⁶ In Albania it was approved with the Law dated 11.05.1994.

⁴⁷ CULTURES, CONVENTIONS, AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN: EXAMINING THE CONVENTION FOR SAFEGUARDING INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE, AND THE DECLARATION ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/SHS/pdf/Cultures_Conventions_HR_Women.pdf

⁴⁸ Albania adopted its own National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security in 2018

perpetrated violence does occur, it is treated as unnatural or aberrant. This binary notion of gender is reinforced through socio-cultural stereotyping.⁴⁹

Regardless of the validity of this notion, the underlying assumptions are widely endorsed. Clearly, if women are better at making and sustaining peace, their involvement in post-conflict leadership is indispensable. The participation of women in reconciliation efforts is required; however, a properly gendered perspective of the contribution of women is very complex.

“In the modern world, women’s empowerment is not merely a goal, but a cornerstone of democratic growth. This is because women raise issues that others overlook, devote energy to projects that others ignore, reach out to constituencies that others neglect, and help societies move forward together.” —Madeleine Albright

Women are often excluded from public decision-making, leadership, and educational opportunities in many communities around the world, as is the case of Albania in certain aspects⁵⁰. This is an important fact that should bring into focus the need to create special programs to empower women in order to use their gifts in the tasks of conflict resolutions and to be more engaged in the civic life of their communities and broader in the public life.

Society functions through its social structures that often set up some people as superior to others based on sex, race, class, ethnic and religious grounds, etc. – and especially the sexist belief that women’s lives are less valuable than men’s lives, leading to violence against women. When women engage in peace building, they often challenge these sexist beliefs along with other structures that discriminate against people.⁵¹

Nevertheless, how does gender affect the way a conflict is dealt with? Based on the social roles given to men and women, they approach conflicts differently. Women often don’t engage directly in using violence in a conflict, because that is considered as ‘men’s behavior’ which is often linked with their masculinity. These attributed characteristics given to women in many cultures, like being nurturing, compassionate, or ‘motherly’ may make it easier for women to learn and demonstrate conflict-resolution skills.

⁴⁹ THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION, Rebecca Joy Norlander, <https://www.saybrook.edu/unbound/role-women-conflict-resolution/>

⁵⁰ See point 3.2 of this training manual.

⁵¹ Lisa Schirch, “Women in Peacebuilding Resource & Training Manual” <https://emu.edu/cjp/star/docs/women-in-peacebuilding-pt1.pdf>

But women are not “naturally” peaceful. They have played a variety of roles throughout history that support war and other forms of violence, from warriors to supportive wives and mothers calling men to the battlefield. However, **their gender identities allow them to take part in forms of peace building that men cannot.** In addition, some women have found it advantageous to draw on skills, assets, and capacities that are available to them in oppressive patriarchal systems and harness them for productive use in peace building.⁵²

Women Building Capacity

- **Conducting conflict prevention & early warning work;**
- **Promoting gender-sensitive social and economic development;**
- **Training and education in peace building skills for women;**
- **Advocating to increase the number of women employed in government, business, and other organizations;**
- **Conducting gender-sensitivity seminars to raise awareness about all forms of violence against women;**

With the increasing empowerment of women over the last decades, there has also been more acceptance and understanding of the importance of including women in all areas of society. Empowerment enhances women’s sense of self-worth, their decision-making capacity at all levels in all spheres of life, and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a just society.

Communities that use all the talents, experience, and wisdom of both men and women are better able to meet all of their members’ needs. If women are excluded from participating in community decisions and leadership, or are so busy with household responsibilities that they do not have time to go to community meetings, then the talents, experiences, and wisdom of half of the population will not contribute to community life.⁵³

Women play important roles in the process of peacebuilding, first and foremost as activists and advocates for peace. Moreover, women wage conflict nonviolently by pursuing democracy and

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

human rights. They also contribute to reducing direct violence as peacekeepers and relief aid workers. Additionally, women work to transform relationships as mediators, trauma healing counselors, and policymakers. Lastly, women contribute to building the capacity of their communities and nations to prevent violent conflict by acting as educators and participants in the development process.

Group Discussions & Exercises

- **Questions???** - **Reflections!!!**

- How are women's skills of conflict resolution contributing to safer communities?
- Do you believe that women could contribute equally as men to security issues?
- Why do we believe the stereotypes? Do they make our lives better? Or do they make it more difficult for us to contribute to our communities?
- In your opinion, what differences could bring at your city, if the mayor would be a woman?

- Video - **Women's Role in Conflict Prevention**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFWAY8qdSbM>

In this video, Sharon Bhagwan Rolls (Executive Director of FemlinkPacific & Chair GPPAC Board) talks about the importance of women participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

- Video - **Women at the negotiating table - the missing piece in peacebuilding** | Manal Omar | TEDxSanDiego https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ps1eiGL_6Y

With violent extremism on the rise, and trust in governments on the decline, Manal Omar believes that it's time for the peacebuilding community to change its approach to conflict resolution by inviting women, with their full sexuality intact, to take a seat at the negotiating table, where currently less than 10% of negotiators are women.

- **Group discussions** take place after the videos, with the aim to put forward the individual perspective of this concept and the ways in which it can be understood and applied better into our society.

Module 7. Leadership skills for youth and women

Since 1995, there has been a formal international consensus on the need for empowering women, reached at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, reflected in the Beijing Platform for Action.⁵⁴ This Platform for Action emphasizes that women share common concerns that can be addressed only by working together and in partnership with men towards the common goal of gender equality around the world. It respects and values the full diversity of women's situations and conditions, and recognizes that some women face particular barriers to their empowerment.⁵⁵

For most of us, the term 'leadership' evokes energy, determination, and power used to achieve some worthy goal. An individual is considered a leader if he/she convinces others to do his/her bidding; however, we know from experience that many individuals who are in positions of authority – fathers, bosses, landowners, and professionals, for example – are not leaders. On the other hand, many of us have come across individuals who are not in any observable position of authority though we feel they are leaders because of the way they can influence their environment.⁵⁶

Very often, the opinion, ideas, or even grievances of youth and women are left unsaid or unheard, even when they are present during discussions and decision-making. In community settings, employee gatherings, or family encounters, especially women may participate but still be invisible. There are, of course, a variety of cultural, historical, and personal reasons for this. Some women have a natural gift for making their thoughts known, their perspectives considered, and their ideas undertaken. We can learn from these women, picking and choosing the attributes to which we ourselves aspire. There are also some very good models of young leaders that inspire their community, their country, or even the whole world.

Thus, what are leadership skills? Leadership skills are skills you use when organizing other people to reach a shared goal. Whether you're in a management position or leading a project,

⁵⁴ *"The Platform for Action is an agenda for women's empowerment. It aims at removing all the obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. This means that the principle of shared power and responsibility should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities"*.

⁵⁵ "Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women," Covenant for the New Millennium: The Beijing Declaration & Platform for Action (Beijing, September 4-15, 1995), Santa Rosa, California: Free Hand Books, 1996, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁶ Leading to Choices "A Leadership Training Handbook for Women", 2001, accessible at https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Leading%20to%20Choices%20Handbook_English.pdf

leadership skills require you to motivate others to complete a series of tasks, often according to a schedule. Leadership is not just one skill, but rather a combination of several different skills working together.

Effective leaders are essential to any organization, state or non-state. They can help build strong teams within a business and ensure projects, initiatives, or other work functions are performed successfully. Because the skills of a leader involve multiple interpersonal and communication skills, anyone can exercise and refine their leadership abilities. Good leaders increase employee engagement, support a positive environment, and help remove obstacles for their team. Good leadership is also contagious, inspiring colleagues to apply positive leadership traits in their own work.

Leadership is:

Gender-Inclusive: Ideally, men and women become partners in defining, working for, and achieving goals that benefit all.

Communicative: Everyone has something to contribute, and every instance of contribution becomes an instance of leadership.

Purposeful: To define and elaborate a purpose is to engage in a learning process. At the same time, it is engaging in exercising power.

Democratic and Egalitarian: In a communicative, participatory society, participants respect and value each other as whole human beings.

Means-Sensitive: “The ends do not justify the means” is a well-known principle of ethical behaviour across the world. This principle means that ethical people do not use unethical means to achieve goals regardless of their importance or immediacy⁵⁷.

Some examples of skills that make a strong leader include:

⁵⁷ Ibid.

- Patience
- Empathy
- Active listening
- Reliability
- Dependability
- Creativity
- Positivity
- Effective feedback
- Timely communication
- Team building
- Flexibility
- Risk-taking
- Ability to teach and mentor

❖ **One Woman Can Make a Difference**

- **Asma Khader: Human Rights Advocate**

Asma Khader is an attorney, human rights advocate, and former president of the Jordanian Women’s Union. She has spearheaded campaigns to eliminate honor crimes and violence against women and girls in Jordan.

“I am not sure whether I am a leader, but I know that becoming one means that you perceive the urgent need to address a problem—that you feel the need to fill a space by initiating activities, campaigns, and programs to focus on specific issues. If people in your community truly believe that you are fulfilling a need, then they will support you, bestowing upon you the position of leadership. When people trust you, they will look to you to help them reach their own goals. About twenty years ago, a frightened and grief-stricken young woman came to my office requesting my help. She recounted how her husband had murdered their fifteen-year old daughter who was pregnant as the result of a rape. He was sentenced to only six months in jail, claiming that he killed the girl to vindicate the family’s honor. Yet this woman, determined to honor her daughter’s memory, revealed the truth to me— that her husband was in fact the rapist, and that she suspected him of murdering their daughter because the pregnancy had begun to show. The court readily believed her husband and did not bother to investigate the crime. Although this woman came to my office only once and then disappeared, thanks to her, I learned a great deal about how women and girls suffer due to specific laws. I realized that I could not be an effective lawyer if I did not do my best to change laws that cover up and even sanction crimes against women. This woman challenged me to address a problem that I could not ignore—crimes of honor. And so it happened that I became one of the leaders in the campaign to eradicate honor crimes. Yet I think that this woman who trusted me, who was brave enough to visit my office and inform me about this reality, she was the leader. She overcame her own fears to expose her husband’s crime and seek my assistance. People like her challenge us to examine issues that we had not previously considered. We must follow such people and try to serve.”

- **Greta Tintin Eleonora Ernman Thunberg**⁵⁸

Born 3 January 2003, Greta Thunberg is a Swedish [environmental activist](#) who has gained international recognition for promoting the view that humanity is facing an existential crisis arising from [climate change](#). Thunberg is known for her youth and her straightforward speaking manner, both in public and to political leaders and assemblies, in which she criticizes world leaders for their failure to take sufficient action to address the [climate crisis](#).

Thunberg's activism started after convincing her parents to adopt several [lifestyle choices](#) to reduce their own [carbon footprint](#). In August 2018, at age 15, she started spending her school days outside the [Swedish parliament](#) to call for stronger [action on climate change](#) by holding up a sign reading Skolstrejk för klimatet ([School strike for climate](#)). Soon, other students engaged in similar protests in their own communities. Together, they organized a [school climate strike](#) movement under the name 'Fridays for Future'. After Thunberg addressed the [2018 United Nations Climate Change Conference](#), student strikes took place every week somewhere in the world. In 2019, there were multiple coordinated multi-city protests involving over a million students each.^[6] To avoid flying, Thunberg sailed to North America where she attended the [2019 UN Climate Action Summit](#). Her speech there, in which she exclaimed "how dare you", was widely taken up by the press and incorporated into music.

Her sudden rise to world fame has made her both a leader and a target for critics. Her influence on the world stage has been described by [The Guardian](#) and other newspapers as the "Greta effect". She has received [numerous honors and awards](#) including: [honorary Fellowship of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society](#); Time magazine's [100 most influential people](#) and the youngest [Time Person of the Year](#); inclusion in the [Forbes list of The World's 100 Most Powerful Women](#) (2019) and two consecutive nominations for the [Nobel Peace Prize](#) (2019 and 2020).

⁵⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greta_Thunberg.

Group Discussions & Exercises

- **Questions???** - **Reflections!!!**

- What characteristics do you think a female leader should have? Do you have any preferences among them?
- In your opinion, why don't we see many young leaders at the highest managerial job positions? Is work experience a good criterion or is it just a barrier for youth leaders?
- How do social constructs of society contribute to the stigmatization of youth and women as leaders?

- **Video-Youth Leadership: Empowering the future** | Ali Redha Z. Damji | TEDxPristinePrivateSchool <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-onbsdmrss>

Aliredha Damji, the youth leader of Pristine gives us the recipe that helped him transform from a bully, as he calls himself, to a compassionate youth leader. Like a true leader, no ones left behind in his recipe: ALL are LEADERS.

Aliredha Damji sees leadership as an avenue for self-discovery and expression. From years of hands-on experience in various roles as a student leader, Ali ensures that there is a role for everyone. And this role, if played right, **helps young people take initiative, find confidence and follow their passion.** Ali's idea of being a good leader is guiding and polishing new ones - and his efforts reflect his passion.

- **Video - How youth can change the world** | Esther van Duin | TEDxYouth@Maastricht <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdM-J9Os9D8>

With the first talk of the day, Esther immediately gripped the audience with her powerful and personal talk about organizing a youth parliament and ensuring that all the voices in our society are heard. Her talk was both inspirational and energizing.

Esther van Duin is a Youth Representative of UNESCO. She finished her Bachelor Arts & Cultures at Maastricht University and as of September 2015 she will be a student International Development studies. She focuses upon cultural diversity, heritage and education. Esther speaks to thousands of young people concerning these topics, and is very involved with current affairs and policy change. A young student passionately representing our generation, Esther strives to use her voice to stand up and make a change!

- **Video - The Science of Women's Leadership** | Alexis Kanda-Olmstead | TEDxCSU, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVzHBWolGEw>

Why are there so few women leaders? Weaving together scientific research and personal narrative, Alexis Kanda-Olmstead explains why women may be reluctant to take on leadership roles and what

we - women and men - can do to disrupt the powerful internal forces that undermine women's leadership aspirations and confidence. Alexis Kanda-Olmstead leads talent and diversity initiatives at Colorado State University for the Division of University Advancement. Throughout her twenty-year career in higher education, Alexis has worked to help students, faculty, and staff actualize their potential as leaders through self-knowledge, personal empowerment, and service. As a student and practitioner of women's development, social justice, and organizational psychology, Alexis believes that with grace and humor we can create positive change that benefits everyone.

Alexis is a blogger on women's issues and the founder of AKO Collective, a women's leadership development company based in Northern Colorado. This talk was given at a TEDx event using the TED conference format but independently organized by a local community.

- **Group discussions** take place after the videos, with the aim to put forward the individual perspective of this concept and the ways in which it can be understood and applied better into our society.

Conclusions

Well-functioning democracies require people to engage and participate in the different aspects and activities of public life. Through engagement and participation, individuals influence and determine the political choices that impact everyone's lives and wellbeing. Civic engagement and participation are necessary conditions for effective governance, while, at the same time, good quality of governance, through different institutional settings, can enhance citizens' participation⁵⁹.

In that context, civic engagement is individual and collective actions, designed to identify and address issues of public concern. This means that the higher level of active and engaged citizens is, the better would be the performance of the local and central governmental bodies and improved the services towards them.

And engaging in civic life is beneficial for a number of reasons such as it can properly address and fulfil economic and social needs, propose new or change old policies, and is also generally good for the people involved with it. It can give a sense of purpose and belonging, as well as care not only for the individuals in need, but also for the communities.

In particular civic engagement among youth and women groups, which are considered some of the largest groups of the society, have a crucial importance for their wellbeing. For that reason, this training manual focuses more on these groups, aiming at raising the awareness and the capacities of those participating in the training.

A marginalized and unemployed youth is a desperate youth that can easily lose faith in their country's future. Fostering social cohesion and trust through an inclusive and participatory approach is a necessary legal obligation and task for the governing bodies. On the other hand, youth have their own responsibilities towards getting knowledgeable, skilful, active and engaged in the public life.

One way for women and youth to engage in civic life is through taking the leadership in decision-making processes. There are plenty of good models out there, from which we can learn a lot.

⁵⁹ WELL-BEING IN REGIONS-Civic engagement and governance, OECD Regions at a Glance 2016, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/reg_glance-2016-14-en.pdf?expires=1595008992&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=92E8D8A32450863FBC2461CF24E43C3C.

Annex

*The activities/exercises are retrieved from the “PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP PROGRAM’ Handbook for facilitators; developed within the project Youth for Change: Building the resilience of Serbian youth through engagement, leadership and development of their cognitive and social-emotional skills Belgrade, Serbia 2020.

- **ACTIVITY 1: Introducing the theme - A Pebble Story (15 min)**

Instruction: PP presentation, slide 2

Start the workshop by saying I have decided to tell you a story today... When you get the participants’ attention, ask them to listen carefully, and ask those who maybe already know the story not to reveal it to others.

Say the following:

Many years ago, in a small Indian village, a farmer had the misfortune of owing a large sum of money to a moneylender. The moneylender, who was old and ugly, fancied the farmer's beautiful daughter. So, he proposed a bargain. He said he would forgo the farmer's debt if he could marry his daughter. Both the farmer and his daughter were horrified by the proposal. So, the cunning moneylender suggested that they let Providence decide the matter.

He told them that he would put a black pebble and a white pebble into an empty money bag. Then the girl would have to pick one pebble from the bag.

- 1. If she picked the black pebble, she would become his wife and her father's debt would be forgiven.*
- 2. If she picked the white pebble, she need not marry him and her father's debt would still be forgiven.*
- 3. But if she refused to pick a pebble, her father would be thrown into jail.*

They were standing on a pebble strewn path in the farmer's field. As they talked, the moneylender bent over to pick up two pebbles. As he picked them up, the sharp-eyed girl noticed that he had picked up two black pebbles and put them into the bag. He then asked the girl to pick a pebble from the bag. What would you do in her place? What would you advise her to do?

The participants will probably suggest the next three options:

- 1. The girl should refuse the bargain.*
- 2. The girl should show that there were two black pebbles in the bag and expose the moneylender as a cheat (in this case both the girl and her father could be in danger by exposing the moneylender in front of other people).*
- 3. The girl should pick the black pebble and sacrifice herself for the sake of her father.*

Discussion (5 min): Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of all solutions provided by the students. Do not tell them that their solutions are false, but rather express interest in every creative solution and try to lead students into reevaluating their solutions. They will probably start to talk about “greater and lesser evil”, but the goal is to encourage them to think in the direction of gaining and avoiding any negative consequences.

After the discussion reveal the solution to students: The girl put her hand into the moneybag and drew out a pebble. Without looking at it, she fumbled and let it fall onto the pebble-strewn path where it immediately became lost among all the other pebbles.

“Oh, how clumsy of me,” she said. “But never mind, if you look into the bag for the one that is left, you will be able to tell which pebble I picked.”

Since the remaining pebble is black, it must be assumed that she had picked the white one. And since the moneylender dared not admit his dishonesty, the girl changed what seemed an impossible situation into an extremely advantageous one.

Ask the students what are their thoughts about the girl’s decision and what would be their conclusion based on the provided solution.

- **ACTIVITY 2: Educational part Problems and solutions (5 min)**

Instructions: (PP presentation, slides 3-5)

Tell the students the following:

So, you can already assume that the theme of this workshop is solving problems in a creative way. All of us can find ourselves involved in a problem that seems unsolvable, which makes us feel helpless and upset. Problem solving techniques help us to cope with troubles in a more

constructive way (check if they know the meaning of this word⁶⁰). There are multiple solutions for every problem, and our task is to create those that make us satisfied, and that do not harm other people.

There are two methods in which we can solve a problem, and we chose them depending on the circumstances and the type of the problem itself. Those methods are:

1. Logical (analytical) thinking – used when it is important to follow a logical path, guidelines, algorithm or steps defined in advance. One example can be solving a mathematical problem. Do you have any examples?

2. Lateral thinking – that is thinking “out of the box”. This way of thinking stimulates creativity and does not rely on rules defined in advance. We have already mentioned one example, can you think of one?

NOTE: Emphasize that both methods can be combined and that it is usually the most efficient way of problem solving.

After this discussion say the following: If you happen to find yourself in a “dead end street” and you feel unable to solve a problem on your own, you can use some of these tips:

1. Do not assume: Throughout our life, all of us have been doing things in a certain way, which take the shape of a round watermelon. We do not even think of doing them in some other way. We assume that they cannot be changed. But we should break away from such assumptions and look for new and better ways to do things. This will greatly improve our overall life. Grocery stores in Japan are very small and do not have enough storage space. The shop owners thought that the watermelons take up too much space, and that they cannot be sold until one farmer started growing them in cube-shaped molds. These watermelons were easier to store, and shop owners saved space in their shops (discuss and share examples).

2. Think out of the box: We should look at our problems from a different perspective to solve them. What does that mean? (Discuss and share examples)

⁶⁰ For example, you can tell students that being constructive means being a person that builds something (constructor) in order to find the best possible solution which would be useful for their personal growth, as well as for other people. The opposite of constructive is destructive. In that sense, there can be constructive and destructive communication, where in the constructive one we approach others in a positive manner and work on building relations based on benevolent communication, while in the destructive one we are pessimistic, prone to arguing and gossip. There are also constructive and destructive criticism. Constructive criticism is benevolent, and its goal is to help us make progress, and we usually receive it from close friends and family. On the other hand, destructive criticism has a goal of harming us and comes from a bad intention, usually from envious people and “haters”.

3. Question your habits: Forming habits after a thoughtful process is a positive thing, but most of us adopt them from others without even thinking about them. We should make an effort to question the way we have been doing things and improve our lives. Many neuro-scientists think that it is very useful to do every-day things in different ways, because that helps forming more brain connections, so that if some of them disappear, others can fill in their place. For example, we can change the hand with which we brush our teeth every day. What do you think about that? (discuss and share examples)

4. Look for another and a better way: When doing things, we should look for even better ways of doing them and we will find them.

5. Even the word 'Impossible' says "I am possible": There is nothing impossible in this world. If we decide to look for a solution to a particular problem which seems impossible, we can find it through our lateral thinking. Remember the tale of the farmer and his daughter and their situation that seemed hopeless. (discuss and share examples).

- **ACTIVITY 3: Communication and conflicts (10-15 min)**

Aims of the activity:

- To experience how quickly people tend to form in- and out-group biases
- To understand that we are often prone to an in-group and out-group bias
- To understand the importance of communication for conflict prevention
- To develop the idea about polarized “us vs. them” thinking

Instructions:

Ask the students to give you some of their books or notebooks. Place one table in the middle of the classroom. Place the (note)books randomly on the table. Divide students into two groups and tell each group to go to opposite sides of the classroom. Instruct one group that their mission is to stack all of the books on top of each other within two minutes; instruct the other group that their mission is to place all of the books on the one side of the table within two minutes (the instructions are on the cards in the Appendix A). Also, check if there are any students who have previous experience of this exercise from elsewhere. If there are, ask them to act as observers or to act ignorantly while participating (as they acted the first time they did it). Instruct both groups not to communicate with one another verbally as it could spoil the intent of the exercise. Ensure that the task is clear to both groups. Instruct all students not to communicate verbally with each other, not within their own groups and not with members of the second group, but non-verbal communication between group members can be allowed. When both groups are ready, give a signal to start. After two minutes, stop the exercise. You

should now clearly explain what the tasks of each group were. You can ask each group: Can you tell the other group what your mission was? Then, when the mission is clear, you can rhetorically ask each group if they completed their mission.

Theoretically, there are three possible outcomes: (1) both groups complete the task by stacking books on top of each other on the proper edge of the table; (2) one of the groups completes its task (all the books are either placed on the edge or are stacked up); or (3) both groups fail as neither completed the task (some books are placed on the edge and some books are stacked). The latter is the most likely outcome.

Discussion:

1. Who assumed that they had to compete with the other group? (This question can be complemented by voting/raising hands)
2. Did you have a feeling that the group you were randomly assigned to was “your team”, while the other group was “rival team”?
3. How long did it take you to start favoring your own team over the rival one?
4. How did it happen that both the groups were successful/unsuccessful (depending on the game outcome)?
5. Why did you / didn't you manage to achieve your goals?
6. How did you know that you should/should not collaborate?

Information for facilitators:

Depending on the game outcome, you should focus on the factors that led to that outcome. If, during the game, the groups realized that they could have achieved a common goal, focus the discussion on that aspect. If both the groups were unsuccessful, discuss the potential factors that could have led them to achieve the goal. Depending on the outcome, it is crucial to stress that understanding is a vital factor for achieving a common goal. The students should realize that if the groups understand one another, not any conflict should happen.

- **ACTIVITY 4: The letter exercise (10 min)**

Aims of the activity

- To improve perspective-taking skills
- To understand that other people might hold other perspectives that are just as valid as one's own perspective, even though one's own perspective might seem to be the most obvious one.

Instruction:

Give each student a piece of paper or the provided answer sheet to write their answers on (Appendix B). Divide students into groups of four and have them sit around a table or an empty space with one student at each side of the space/table. Place the square piece of paper with the letter 'E' (Appendix B) in the middle of the space/table. All students must be able to see the letter 'E' (although each student will see the 'E' from a different angle). Tell the students: In front of you, there is a piece of paper with something written on it. Now, please write down what you see; you can come up with more than one thing, write down as many things as you can think of. Keep your answers to yourself. For example, a student might be able to see the letter 'M', but a different student may see the letter 'W', another, the number '3', etc. Give the students around 1 minute to complete the task. Now that you have written down what you see, do not reveal it to your neighbors. Your peers, sitting on the other sides of the table, might have seen something else. Try to envision things from their perspective, then guess and write down what each of them could possibly see from their side of the table. Try to come up with as many things as possible for each person. Give the students 1-2 minutes to complete the task. You have all written down what you saw at first sight yourself, and you have also thought about what the others could see. Now it is time to check how good you are in guessing what other people may see. Reveal to your partners at the table what you have written down and explain why and how you saw what you saw. Compare your guesses about what you thought your peers saw with what they actually wrote down they saw. For each correct guess, you can give yourself a point.

Discussion:

1. How is it possible that we are looking at the same letter, but are seeing different things?
2. Is one particular perspective better than another is?
3. Think about some other situations when people take different perspectives when thinking about the same things.
4. How is that related to conflicts?

3

Answer sheet

I see:

The person on my right-hand side sees:

The person in front of me sees:

The person on my left-hand side sees:



- **ACTIVITY 5: Roles and conflict resolution (15 min)**

Aims of the activity

- To improve perspective-taking skills
- To understand the relationship between roles, identities, and perspectives • To understand how roles influence feelings and behavior
- To realize the role understanding perspective has in preventing conflict escalations
- To understand that other people might hold other perspectives that are just as valid as one's own perspective

Instruction:

Divide the students in two groups. Give one group the instruction sheet for role of parent; give another group the instruction sheet for role of child (Appendix C). Tell the students that they should enliven the roles that they got. Each group should choose one person to act the role in front of the class (i.e., two students, one from the parents and one from the children group should play the sketch). The actors should think of the creative ways to act their roles (give them 1-2 minutes to think of the arguments they are going to use). While they are acting, the others should watch and try to empathize with the role of their group.

Discussion:

- What roles are the people in? What is expected from them in regard to their roles?
- How does the child feel at the moment they enter the house? How would you feel?
- How does the child perceive the parent's behavior?
- How does the parent feel at first? How does the parent perceive the child? How does the parent feel afterwards?
- What could the child and the parent have done differently by taking each other's perspectives into account?
- Can this kind of situation happen elsewhere? Between friends? At work? Between groups of people?

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