

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	Active Women Association (AWA)
PIC number:	945266941
Project name and acronym:	My body is my own - My body is my own

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	6		
Event name:	NATIONAL EVENT FOR CITIZENS (POLAND)		
Type:	Conference		
In situ/online:	[in-situ]		
Location:	Lubin, Poland		
Date(s):	25th and 26th March 2024		
Website(s) (if any):	https://aktywnekobiety.org.pl/konferencja-moje-cialo-moja-wlasnosc-body/		
Participants - 163 (in total)			
Female:	89		
Male:	61		
Non-binary:	0		
From country 1 [Poland]:	144		
From country 2 [Ukraine]:	6		
Total number of participants:	150	From total number of countries:	2
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>The main purposes of the conference were to involve high school students in an interactive debate on how contemporary media works in relation to sexual and reproductive rights and enable teachers to actively participate in an open debate about practices for better sexuality and relationships education for young people. The event engaged young people (16-19 years old) in a collective reflection about how the contemporary media influences information about contentious social issues, (i.e. human rights, women's rights, sexual and reproductive rights and most specifically the right to abortion) through different workshops and provided teachers with the space and guidance to actively participate in an open debate about practices for better sexuality and relationships education for young people that promotes sex positivity and a holistic approach to wellbeing among youth. The debate was effectively carried out as a round table, where each teacher was able to share, respond and comment. Throughout the event, awareness-raising activities were shared with young people and teachers,</p>			

enabling them to understand and promote sexual and reproductive rights as fundamental rights inside and outside the classroom.

During the two-day workshop conference held at a high school in Lubin, Poland, on March 25th and 26th, seven classes (teachers and students) took part in non-formal educational workshops, debates, brainstorming sessions and round tables. People from different backgrounds and experiences in the field of reproductive rights and the media gathered to lead and participate in the event and this guaranteed a multi-perspective learning and awareness-raising opportunity for students and their teachers. Also, the involvement of Ukrainian refugees was extremely enriching for the debate and event as a whole, fuelling discussions on participation and the state of sexual and reproductive rights in times of conflict. Their participation also enhanced and added innovative elements to current processes of integration.

The following guideline questions were used to lead young people through the debate surrounding media and sexual and reproductive rights:

- where can I find information and how can I read contemporary media discourse, with particular emphasis on social issues, i.e. human rights, abortion, women's rights;
- how do modern media forces make money?
- why is it "unprofitable" for the media to cover certain topics?
- what "electrifies" audiences the most?
- why do certain topics "click" better than others?
- roles in the media, i.e. who earns the most money?
- will AI replace journalists who are covering sensitive, contentious issues like sexual and reproductive rights?
- how should one write about difficult topics?
- where should one look for information on social issues?
- how can one fact check the information they consume in the media?
- why does it "not pay" to write reliably about women's rights?
- what can be done as an active citizen to positively influence media coverage?

One of the cultural media figures facilitating the debate was a journalist. She presented media related issues and their threat to sexual and reproductive rights, presenting and deconstructing mainstream narratives on sexual health topics. Her intervention also included LGBTQIA+ community perspectives and the ways in which members of this community are particularly targeted by the community. Educators also co-facilitated with journalists to create a collective definition of sexual and reproductive rights with students. The debates also covered the Polish 'black' movement, i.e. the movement for women's sexual rights, which was born in Poland almost ten years ago and still acts as a sentinel, shining light on political and non-political actors who threaten sexual rights. Together with the young participants, journalists and educators reflected on the importance of human rights defenders and how even in democratic societies it is important to understand that rights are precarious and to maintain a high level of attention in order not to lose rights that have been painstakingly won.

During the event students also had the opportunity to present and discuss case studies about the portrayal of women in the media, especially concerning their roles in society and the exploitation of their bodies and sexual rights in political and mediatic discourse. Young people were highly engaged and activated throughout the event and underlined that they do not have the opportunity to talk about sexual and reproductive rights in their educational curriculum, not even during the sexual education classes. In fact, the event also acted as a safe space in which they could openly discuss and ask questions about this taboo topic. Teachers also expressed relief about the possibility of receiving guidance and input in the sharing of better sexual education practices and were enriched with new sex positive, physical, mental, social methods and approaches regarding sexuality and relationships education. Meanwhile students stated how empowering it was to learn insert sexuality and sexual health into a human rights framework. They also reported how important it is to be engaged in civic and democratic processes in order to be ready to defend these fundamental human rights, from multiple perspectives and with participatory methods. Numerous brainstorming sessions showed that young people demanded systemic changes in Poland that would make women's rights and human rights, including sexual rights, more respected in the country's cultural, social and political context. The students were keenly interested in the "My Body is My Own" project and its progress, and asked to be informed about participation opportunities in similar initiatives. During the event they also learnt more about the CERV Programme and its positive impact on active citizenship among youth.



HISTORY OF CHANGES		