NGO CSW YP EVENT

Youth Speak Out
A reading of the current state of the world and how it impacts youth, gender advocacy and the Generation Equality Forum marking Beijing +25

Thursday, 30 April
1:00-3:00PM EST

Registration link for event

Themes:
● A global discussion on what is happening for young people and gender equality in light of the emerging realities around COVID19
● How young people are navigating these challenges and finding opportunities?
● What does this mean for our grassroots organizing and meaningful engagement of young people in global advocacy for Beijing25 and Generation Equality?

Format:
● Guided discussion
● Interactive and engaging (how can we do this online with a large number - 430 participants registered as of 27 April. Possible breakout groups? Mentimeter? Polling?)

Purpose:
In light of the COVID19 crisis, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women was canceled in March 2020 and the Generation Equality Forum marking the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action in July has been postponed to 2021. In preparation for these two convenings, young people have been coordinating their input to feed into UN, civil society and Government processes. However, new realities have emerged on the ground that particularly impact women, young people and other minority groups:
● An increase in gender-based violence where victims are sheltering in place with their perpetrators in countries with Government “lockdowns”
● A shift in economic circumstances where women and youth, who comprise the majority of the informal sector, are more likely facing unemployment, underemployment, and loss of income due to the temporary closure of businesses and reduced hours.
● The majority of the world’s poor are women, so in terms of food security, they are at higher risk when people buy up large quantities of goods, limiting availability for those women and families with lower incomes.
● Women’s and maternal health, SRHR and access to feminine hygiene products have declined as health care workers and resources are all directed towards COVID19 measures.
● There has been a rise in the use of technology, innovation and online engagement at this time, which in many ways has benefited young people who have access to reliable information, however even further excludes those who do not.
In this context, many young people are facing tougher challenges as their families and livelihoods are negatively impacted, while others are offering acts of service, speaking up, challenging norms, collaborating, and building networks — young people are driving positive change in their communities, countries, and around the world.

In this session, you are invited to share your experiences and reality at this time, to lead to greater collective clarity on the changing situation of young people, women and minorities. You are also invited to consider how what we would have shared with our Governments, the United Nations and civil society, has shifted in light of this new reality, and how this will shape our advocacy efforts.

Where you have been successful in problem-solving with fellow young advocates, in your journey to build a gender equitable worldwide, or if there are questions that are arising for you in your work, please lend your voice and experience and join a dynamic conversation to tackle pressing challenges related to meaningful youth participation.

**Reflect and Speak:** Before joining our discussion, take some time to think about the pressing challenges related to meaningful youth participation in Beijing+25 and Generation Equality. What is the most significant challenge you can think of? Come prepared to share a one line problem statement that captures your views.

**Suggestion:** A series of YP online meetings in the lead up to Paris 2021, that takes on one Action Coalition theme:
1. Gender-Based Violence
2. Economic justice and rights
3. Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)
4. Feminist action for climate justice
5. Technology and innovation for Gender Equality
6. Feminist movements and leadership

**Agenda:**

- *Welcome and quick introduction of event conveners*
- *Icebreaker Exercise*
- *Overview presentation* of Generation Equality Forum and the Action Coalitions
- *Reading our reality:* What is working and what is not working? Addressing levels of COVID-19 and also what was there before the crisis. Sharing examples or experiences of how young people are leading, organizing, inspiring others at this time.
- *How does this emerging reality shape our advocacy* and meaningful participation with the UN and Governments at this time?
- *How do we want to move forward* as an online network over the coming year? What would be most helpful to your work over the coming year?
- *Conclusion*