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A BIT OF HISTORY

YouAct was founded in 2004 to strengthen and unify the voices of European youth advocating for the realisation of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

YouAct as a pan-European youth network is a significant one. Since the European region provides a broader scope of opportunities for young people to be involved in policy development and decision making. This gives the organisation and its members a platform to build from and ensures meaningful youth participation.

Nationally, members continue to experience different levels of opportunity for participation. Therefore, YouAct aims to ensure a high level of youth participation in decision making on SRHR across Europe as a region and within the Council of Europe countries.

VISION AND MISSION

YouAct, the European Youth Network on Sexual and Reproductive Rights is an independent non-governmental organisation that aims to empower young people to advocate for their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights by joining forces in Europe to make our voices heard.

We believe that active and meaningful youth participation is essential in creating a world, where:
- Sexuality is accepted as a positive aspect of life and where the SRHR of young people are realized;
- Young people have access to accurate information and youth-friendly services and can decide freely and responsibly about all aspects of their sexuality and reproductive lives.

Sexual and reproductive rights are universal human rights and essential for better health and well-being. They ensure dignity, respect, equality, and integrity. Sexual and reproductive rights should apply to young people as much as they apply to adults. YouAct believes that it is essential for young people to be aware of the full scope of their rights and entitlements.
In the Spring of 2018, YouAct welcomed its new Coordinator, Adriana Pereira, who began working head on and immersed herself fully into the network of vibrant young advocates. Welcoming a new member of the family also meant saying goodbye to Ana Rizescu, the former Coordinator who supported the Steering Committee and Adriana throughout the handover period.

The European Youth Network on Sexual and Reproductive Rights would like to thank Ana Rizescu for all her hard work and dedication the past years. Ana Rizescu has been an inspiration for many and will continue to be as she steps onto a new path in advocacy work.

Throughout the year 2018 we have shared lessons learnt from previous projects, advocated for comprehensive sexuality education, campaigned for youth and women’s rights and networked all across the regions. We have also implemented projects on gender-based violence and European-level advocacy. Additionally, we have strengthened our internal processes and updated our procedures to maximise the network’s efficiency.

The end of the year was marked by the Annual General Meeting (AGM), where we finalised many of the efforts to introduce organisational changes and planned for the year ahead.

As we continue to grow, we remain committed to being the voice of young people to advocate for better SRHR in Europe. We are thankful to all those whom we met on our journey and we are looking forward to building new successful alliances.
A new year for YouAct started with exciting opportunities to share the experiences and key findings from various projects.

GLOBAL CONSENSUS ON MEANINGFUL ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

As part of the Partnership for Maternal, Neonatal, and Child Health (PMNCH), YouAct endorsed the Global Census on Meaningful Adolescent and Youth Engagement in order to formalise the approach of engaging young people in operations and projects in a meaningful way. The Census had 180 endorsements from governments, donors, and organizations. In 2019, we hope to continue this work in collaboration with IYAFP (International Youth Alliance on Family Planning) to build momentum and a work plan to celebrate organizations that uphold their endorsement.

Read the Census Statement: https://www.who.int/pmnch/mye-statement.pdf

THE UNECE REGIONAL FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

From the 28th of February to the 2nd of March, Anja Pedersen participated in the UN ECE Regional Forum of Sustainable Development (RFSD) in Geneva.

As the representative of YouAct, Anja was honored to deliver the opening statement on behalf of civil society. This gave an opportunity to push both youth and SRHR as important issues in the opening, while giving great visibility to YouAct as an organisation. The opening statement can be seen in full on our Youtube channel.
**ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS**

**SHE DECIDES CAMPAIGN TO REPEAL THE 8TH**

As part of the continuous support to Repeal the 8th Amendment, on the 2nd of March, YouAct stood with the women of Ireland, who fought for their right to decide what to do with their bodies.

YouAct endorsed the mission statement of the SheDecides initiative, which states that “when She Decides, the world is better, stronger, safer.” We therefore raised our voices in support of Irish women’s ongoing fight for the right to decide; to decide to reject oppressive and draconian social mores and legislation, to decide what to do with their bodies, and finally, in May, to decide to Repeal the 8th Amendment. See the photos on our blog.

**BUSTING ABORTION STIGMA WITH INROADS**

In March, YouAct member Camila Ochoa Mendoza took part in the Inroads Global Gathering in Zagreb.

She was invited to present YouAct’s work on stigma busting through the ‘Speak My Language’ Project: two toolkits that explain abortion stigma with a focus on Eastern Europe and show how storytelling can be an empowering and effective tool to bust stigma. If there’s one thing we’re taking with us from the Gathering - it’s the importance of cultivating an inclusive and intersectional movement, particularly when it comes to abortion rights.

For a full report on the Inroads gathering, read Camila’s blog on youact.org.
YOUTH AGAINST ONLINE DISCRIMINATION STUDY SESSION

From the 19th to the 23rd of March, Anja Pedersen represented YouAct at the study session “Youth Against Online Discrimination”, which took place at the European Youth Centers in Strasbourg. The study session was organised by Youth Sexual Awareness for Europe (YSAFE) in partnership with the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex Youth and Student Organisation (IGLYO) and the Digital Leadership Institute (DLI) with support of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. The study session had the purpose of enabling young people to understand intersectionality and identify and address discrimination online.

For more information, read the full blog by Anja Pedersen on youact.org.

A SOUTH-SOUTH INTERSECTIONAL DIALOGUE ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

In the beginning of June 2018, 22 feminists, including YouAct member Anamaria Suciu, met in Kuala Lumpur to have a cross-regional south-south feminist intersectional dialogue on sexual and reproductive justice in the context of the sustainable development agenda. YouAct was invited to bring a youth perspective from Europe, a donor-region where North-South dichotomy persists regarding issues related to sexual and reproductive justice. Read Anamaria Suciu’s blog on youact.org.
ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

YOUACT AT THE INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE - 2018

YouAct had a strong presence at the 2018 International AIDS Conference, with six of its members attending the event: Anamaria Suciu, Belgium; Ana Mosiashvili, Georgia; Martin Karadzhov, UK; Laura Honders, Netherlands, Anja Pedersen, Denmark and Serkan Kasapoglu, Turkey. They actively participated in shaping the pre-conferences, in networking zones and in the Global Village space. YouAct with CHOICE was leading the session on Unite4CSE Recommendations for CSE Policy Change in Poland, Romania, Cyprus, Georgia and The Netherlands by Young Citizens. The ECA Youth Alliance, including YouAct hosted a session on The Youth Power Strategy: Advocacy for SRHR in Europe and Central Asia.

ADVOCATING FOR GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING, QUALITY EDUCATION, AND GENDER EQUALITY

On the last week of September, DSW (The German Foundation for World Population), Dance4Life, and CHOICE for youth and sexuality hosted a youth meet up with the members of the European Parliament, policy advisors, and assistants from the political groups in Brussels. The aim was to create space for a diverse group of youth advocates, and activists to bring forward the pressing issues connected to the Sustainable Development Goals in our countries: Ethiopia, Uganda, Nepal, Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania, the Netherlands, and Georgia.

The three SDGs that we focused on where goals 3, 4, and 5. Good health and well-being, Quality Education, and Gender equality respectively.

YouAct Coordinator, Adriana Pereira, was invited to make a speech on behalf of Youth in Europe and address the importance of access to contraceptives for young people. Adriana’s speech and the blog about the event are available on youact.org.

For more information about the Contraception Atlas Initiative please visit: www.contraceptioninfo.eu/

THE UNECE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON ICPD+25

Adriana Pereira, the Coordinator of YouAct made an intervention during the UNECE Regional Conference on ICPD+25, on the importance of meaningfully engaging everyone in expanding already existing SRH services to uphold people’s SRHR. Read the full text on youact.org.

16TH INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON POPULATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Accelerating Progress on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights - 25 Years after Cairo was held in Berlin/Germany on October 23-24, 2018. Almost 25 years after the Cairo Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) has been released, the 16th International Dialogue on Population and Sustainable Development provides an opportunity to discuss how to move the ICPD agenda forward. YouAct Coordinator, Adriana Pereira, and former Coordinator, Ana Rizescu, attended the conference.
In November 2018, three youth advocates from YouAct; Anuki Mosiashvili, Sophie Beria, and Eimear Sparks attended the annual EuroNGOs Conference in Ghent, Belgium. They facilitated the youth-led pre-conference, in frame of which a CSE workshop was organized. On the final day of the Conference, Sophie took part in the panel on youth CSE advocacy during which she talked about the #Unite4CSE campaign among other things. During the closing ceremony, that was led by Eimear, Anuki and Sophie presented a youth message board, thus amplifying the voices of young advocates who could not attend the conference. Read more about the event in the conference report.

UNFPA organized a Regional Youth Hackathon “Leave no one behind”, that took place in Istanbul, Turkey, During December 10-12. YouAct was represented by Sophie Beria and contributed ideas and practical skills on youth CSE advocacy, activism, and meaningful youth engagement. Watch the video about the hackathon on the UNFPA website.
Systematic Approaches for the Equality of Gender (SAFER) is a 2-year European funded project where the Association for the Prevention and Handling of the Violence in the Family (SPAVO) acts as a project coordinator with the support of Vilniaus University (Lithuania), Profexcel.Net Ltd (Ireland), Neophytos CH. Charalambous (Institute of Development) Ltd (Cyprus), CESIE (Italy), Grantxpert Consulting Ltd. (Cyprus), Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology (Greece), YouAct (United Kingdom) as partners.

The aim of the project is to educate children from a young age to build healthy relationships in order to prevent gender-based violence (GBV). The project aims at sensitizing and raising awareness of primary school teachers, students, parents and relevant stakeholders regarding GBV; and supplying teachers with relevant classroom material enabling them to discuss about GBV in their classroom, challenge existing gender stereotypes and ultimately preventing GBV.

YouAct’s role and added value is to provide and highlight youth perspective throughout the entirety of the project. In the consortium we are the only youth-led NGO working in the field of SRHR and GBV, which is crucial when working closely with children and teachers.

For more information about the project, you can visit its official website: https://gendersafer.eu/

This project has been funded with support by the European Union’s Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020). This publication (Communication) reflects the views only of the author. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.
EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY: CHAMPIONING SEXED IN EUROPE

YouAct together with CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality partnered up to collaborate on an advocacy project aiming to advance Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in Europe. This led to a two-phase project between 2017-2018, both supported and funded by Share-Net International. The results of both projects and the lessons learnt were disseminated online via a webinar that took place on the 23rd of January 2019.

Phase 1: Europe Unite for CSE Rights
“Capacity strengthening for national-level policy change: Europe Unite for CSE Rights!” was implemented in 2017, in partnership with CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality and national partners in five European countries. European youth advocates from Cyprus, Georgia, Poland, Romania and the Netherlands came together to set up an advocacy plan to bring attention to the need for CSE. Each country-team identified the key issues that needed to be addressed at the national level. Based on the results, opportunities to influence policy and develop policy recommendations were mapped. Local level activities were complemented with a social media campaign, including several infographics in English and national languages. The lessons learnt have been shared via a webinar in 2017.

Phase 2: Evidence-based Advocacy: Championing SexEd in Europe
In 2018, YouAct and CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality received a second grant to continue the project. We developed a framework for activities to be conducted and focused on key skill-building activities in order to successfully execute the project. With the support of local partners, youth consultations were held with young people (under 30 years old) in five European countries: Bulgaria, Georgia, Macedonia, the Netherlands, and Romania. They discussed the sexuality education provision in their country and developed messages for various target groups (parents, teachers, decision-makers, other young people etc.). These messages were taken further in a social media campaign, as well as in face-to-face meetings with ten Members of the European Parliament and two parliamentary assistants representing various political parties.

Both phases of this project have been financially supported by Share-Net International. For more information, visit our blogs on youact.org.
WEBINAR: EUROPE UNITE 4 CSE RIGHTS

In the beginning of 2018, YouAct and CHOICE for Youth & Sexuality organised a webinar to conclude our joint project “Europe Unite for CSE Rights”. The webinar created a space to share experiences and lessons learnt from the project. Around 20 people representing various countries and organisations attended.

During the webinar, youth advocates talked about their experiences, discussed the challenges they face while doing advocacy at national level, and analysed perspectives of continuous advocacy actions.

WEBINAR: ABORTION STORYTELLING IN EASTERN EUROPE FROM A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

On 7th February, YouAct and partner organizations from Georgia, Romania, and Poland organized a webinar, during which the youth advocates presented outcomes and lessons learnt of the “Speak My Language - Abortion Storytelling in Eastern Europe from a Youth Perspective” project.

Since abortion stigma remains as one of the top challenges in conservative and religious Eastern European countries, we explored new approaches and tools to combating it, such as storytelling.
MEMBERSHIP

In April, 2018, YouAct welcomed seven new members to its family:

Sophie Beria (Georgia); Bilge Eylem Dedeoğlu (Turkey); Laura Honders (The Netherlands); Panayiotis Elia (Cyprus); Hawa-İdil Karakow (Denmark); Serkan Kasapoglu (Turkey); Ariane Osman (UK).

However, some of the members due to age-limitation and personal reasons left the network. We would like to thank them and wish success in future endeavors:

Laura Cooper Hall (UK); Hannah Kunzlik (UK); Rhode Jansen (The Netherlands); Liam Sutcliffe (UK); Kinga Wisniewska (Poland/UK); Luciana Grosu (Romania); Leah Murphy (Ireland); Kelsey Smith (UK).

We would also like to thank members who have already dedicated several years of membership in YouAct: Anamaria Suciu (Romania/Belgium) Anuki Mosiashvili (Georgia); Camila Ochoa Mendoza (The Netherlands/Spain); Eimear Sparks (Ireland); Frida Gunnarsson (Sweden); Martin Karadzhov (UK/Bulgaria); Gersi Gashi (Kosovo).

The network stands on its members - We are always grateful for their inspiration, dedication and hard work in 2018 and beyond. New members is what makes YouAct exciting and an ever changing organisation, while the other members continue to contribute their insights, share their experiences, support and mentor the newcomers. As a youth-led organisation, knowledge transfer among members remains a key element for our organisation’s sustainability. The 2018 Members have become more and more involved and engaged in various areas of YouAct which contribute to its core functioning and developing of new ideas.

VOLUNTEER TIME

YouAct is a membership-led and membership-driven organisation, meaning we are active volunteers. The work of YouAct’s members is absolutely crucial and vital to YouAct’s functioning, the amount of work varies from member to member and depending on project engagement. YouAct’s estimated volunteer time in 2018 amounts to be at least:

5,720 hours Equivalent to 3 full-time staff
Practical Guide: Speak My Language - Abortion Storytelling In Eastern Europe From A Youth Perspective

Find it at: Youact.org

Sexuality Education in 5 European Countries - Desk Research and Infographics

Find it at: youact.org

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

In 2018, YouAct has grown its social media and online presence in relation to both followers and engagements. Along with Facebook and Twitter, we used Youtube to share video content related to projects more frequently.

- 2036 engagements on our Facebook page, increase by 169.7% in comparison to 2017;
- 551 new Facebook likes;
- Total fans increased by 18.6% in comparison to 2017;
- Total posts on Facebook: 107;
- Sent 194 Tweets.
Money Received in 2018, YouAct

1st of August 2017 – 31st of July 2018
Total: £13,632.74

- Project Grants (£10,231.79 / 75.10%)
- Funds (£3102.17 / 22.70%)
- Donations (£298.78 / 2.20%)

Expenditures, YouAct

1st of August 2017 – 31st of July 2018
Total: £15448.38

- Coordinator & Consultant Fees (£12,103.98 / 78.4%)
- Registered Office (£1366.1 / 8.85%)
- Projects (£863.32 / 5.6%)
- Accounting Fees (£810 / 5.21%)
- Website Fees (£270.40 / 1.76%)
- Bank Fees (£24.72 / 0.12%)
- Stationary Fees (£9.79 / 0.06%)
In 2018, YouAct strengthened partnerships with various local, regional and international organisations. The successful collaboration with CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality has been enhanced within the Europe Unite for CSE Rights project series, supported by ShareNet. Following close collaboration with partners, a follow-up to the “Speak My Language - Abortion Storytelling in Eastern Europe from a Youth Perspective” project was implemented, with support from inroads.

Furthermore, YouAct thanks to all the local partners for their valuable contributions to the “Speak My Language” and Europe Unite for CSE Rights series projects:

ASTRA Youth - The Federation for Women and Family Planning (Poland); Cyprus Family Planning Association (Cyprus); Center for Youth Development - XXI (Georgia); Georgian Youth Development and Education Association (Georgia); Health Education and Research Association (H.E.R.A.) (North Macedonia); HERA - XXI (Georgia); International Institute for Youth Development PETRI - Sofia (Bulgaria); Real People, Real Vision (Georgia); The Association for Liberty and Equality of Gender (A.L.E.G.) (Romania); Women's International Network WIN (Georgia).

THANK YOU!

As we look forward to 2019, we reflect on our journey in 2018. 2019 is certain to be a period of growth and exploring new paths, yet we bravely face the future and we have you to thank for that. YouAct is nothing without its members, partners and donors. You keep the network strong, vibrant, and growing. For this, we say thank you! Thank you for believing in this network, for contributing your time and effort to strengthening the SRHR community, and for supporting us as we grow in service of our mission. We hope to see and hear more of you in 2019. We are committed to continuing our mission and journey so that we remain deserving of your support.
SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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2019