The struggle for equality
A toolkit for the feminist fight!
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**How everything started**

The idea of the activity “The struggle for equality continues: Mapping the road to gender equality in youth organisations” was born in summer-autumn 2018 during conversations at IUSY Secretariat. We had been brainstorming on what activity we wanted to bring to our members, what would support their work in making their youth organisations more gender equal and how we could go even further and share the result (the toolkit) with other member and partner organisations.

We wanted to expand and strengthen the reach of gender equality tools and practices to provide space for young people and youth organisations to set goals that go further than gender parity and to develop tools that will allow their organisations and the youth sector to achieve true gender equality.

With the activity and with the toolkit we want to further challenge and empower young people to assume even more active roles in working towards achieving a truly inclusive culture in their organisations and parties and reinforce our efforts in combating exclusion, discrimination and violence. Without this transformation, we cannot imagine inclusive and democratic youth organisations. This represents our next step in reaching beyond the policies and mechanisms for ensuring gender parity, to work on establishing an environment in which young people of all genders work together in a respectful and sensitive atmosphere, enabling each of them to give their best contribution to the shared goals and aspirations of the organisation.

It was very motivating and inspiring to witness the strong interest and devotion of the participants during the activity that took place in October 2019 in Berlin. 20 participants from different organisations and countries came together to share their experiences and to explore the issues in their own organisations and in the movement. Furthermore, they started the creation of this toolkit which will support youth organisations and young people in their everyday work; when they organise an event or coordinate a project or simply have a meeting with their mother party. For the next two months, participants worked on the topics that are the chapters of this toolkit. All the sub-topics and the content was developed by the participants during the activity and developed further by working in smaller groups. And now this toolkit is here for all of us, another milestone in our contribution to the struggle. We hope it will help you and your organisations in your activities and enrich your knowledge and expertise on the topics presented here. We hope that after reading this toolkit you will integrate many proposals and strategies in your own organisation.
Structure of the toolkit

This toolkit supports practical thinking and acting on how to make our organisations more gender equal. It can be used by organisations as well as by individuals with different levels of skills and expertise. Our aim is to raise awareness about the topics included in the toolkit and make our organisations inclusive and safe for everyone. We hope this toolkit will be a living and growing document and will involve more and more organisations, groups and activists in collaborating and in the struggle for more equal organisations and a more equal world.

Part 1 discusses concepts such as discrimination based on gender, gender mainstreaming and antifeminism as well as offering practical tools on how to counter antifeminism. In this part, you will also find information about how to create visibility on genders and how to incorporate a gender perspective in our organisations and policies. The last part presents guidelines on event organisation that welcomes and supports people of all genders.

Part 2 focuses on how to increase gender empowerment at all levels of the political field and within our organisations. This part discusses the three concepts: empowerment, participation and representation. The chapter also introduces examples and practices and shares strategies on how to increase participation and representation within organisations.

Part 3 outlines several strategies that organisations can adopt to ensure that the inclusion of women* is also anti-capitalist. In this part, you will learn more about different views on feminism. The writers provide a list of solutions from societal and organisational levels and share their view of a world that is feminist and anti-capitalist.
**Part 4** presents the reader with the concept of intersectionality and its historical background as well as intersectionality in practice. In the end of this chapter, you will find general solutions for an intersectional perspective in our organisations and beyond.

**Part 5** discusses oppression beyond the genderbinary. According to the authors of this chapter, many organisations have developed useful tools to empower women*, including quotas, safe spaces or spokespeople for women* don’t have the knowledge or capacity to actively include lesbian, inter, non-binary and trans persons in their political work. You will learn about queer feminism as well as finding practical implementation and examples.

**Part 6** focuses on how to fight gender-based and sexualised violence within organisations and beyond. The chapter presents the problem, theoretical background as well as the practical examples and their implementation in our organisations.

Gender equality in organisations is a big challenge and we see it in our everyday work. We strongly believe that we are in an era when all youth organisations need to be engaged with tools and methods to shift to a more equal and diverse organisational culture. We hope this toolkit will motivate and inspire you to transform your organisation, your surroundings and to make the world safer, more peaceful and more just for everyone.
Visions for a Gender Perspective on Everything

Part 1
1. **Discrimination based on gender affects every aspect of our society.**

Our societies are structured around power imbalances which are themselves structured around the axes of gender, class, race and ability. Even though our organisations fight these oppressive structures, we are not free of internalised discriminatory behaviours.

Gender discrimination is at the core of our society and for many minorities, it cumulates and increases discriminations based on class, sexual orientation, and skin colour. Therefore, it is necessary to address those issues as a whole system of arbitrary discriminations meant to justify said power imbalances.

2. **Theoretical Background:**

**Where does inequality come from and what can we do about it?**

2.1 **Focus on the current situation**

Inequalities are part of a wider domination system of patriarchy. The same way discriminations are cumulative and self-enhancing, privileges too are accumulated.

As a result of this system, the benefits of societal privilege tend to accumulate in the hands of white, cis-gendered, able-bodied, heterosexual men, whereas the stereotypes associated with deviation from this “norm” have been internalised both by those benefiting from these stereotypes, and those suffering from them.

Current research suggests that gender roles and the patriarchal system from which they result originated thousands of years ago as a consequence of the emergence of plough agriculture in certain parts of the world, changing the roles of men and women* in labour.

Not only do these stereotypes enable men to justify these power imbalances as natural – even though research overwhelmingly points at the cultural roots of power structures – but they are so deeply rooted in society that they make women* and minorities internalise, repeat, accept and spread those stereotypes too, often unwillingly.

2.2 **What is Gender Mainstreaming?**

Gender mainstreaming is an approach to policy-making that considers both women*’s and men’s interests and concerns. The concept of gender mainstreaming was first introduced at the 1985 Nairobi World Conference on Women. It was established as a strategy in international gender equality policy through the Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the 1995 Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, and subsequently adopted as a tool to promote gender equality at all levels. In 1998, the Council of Europe defined gender mainstreaming as:

“The (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.”

It is used to designate the practice of including a gender equality perspective in all policy-making processes. It is important for our left-leaning organisations to use gender mainstreaming in all policy-making processes, whether they are economic, environmental or societal in order to produce coherent proposals for a system change.

2.3 **What is Antifeminism?**

Antifeminism is the opposition to some or all forms of feminism. It has existed since the birth of feminism and while its forms, actors and justifications evolved over time, it has consistently opposed struggles for gender equality. While it used to fight against equality of right (making men and women* equal in regard to the law) it is now fighting against equality of facts (making
men and women* equal factually in regards to other forms of discriminations [eg. economic discrimination, public space use discrimination, political representation or space in the public debate].

It can now mainly be seen in far-right conservative parties all across the Western world, not only protesting against current feminist actions and claims like calling out sexual aggressors worldwide or demanding equal pay, but also actively protesting and lobbying against reproductive rights and questioning women*’s general place in society to tie them to the gender stereotypes they grew up with.

Those right-wing extremists are very often linked to the darkest parts of the political spectrum, with neo-Nazis and fascists who truly believe in a “natural” hierarchy of genders and race like those seen in Poland with PiS who demanded abortion be banned, or like the “Manif pour Tous” protests in France where neo-Nazis marched to demand marriage equality and medically assisted procreation be banned.

3. Practices/Tools

An antisexist practice is therefore needed to counter antifeminism and gendered belief systems inside and outside of our organisations. This section presents some starting points. Feel free to adapt and experiment! Making mistakes helps us grow as activists and organisations, we just have to make sure that we apologise and do better in the future. To achieve that end, a good documentation and evaluation of our measures is key. Create spaces for feedback and take the time to document for further reference.

3.1. Taking a gender perspective and countering antifeminism internally.

In order to tackle sexism in our own organisations, there are different measures we can take. The practices shared here can give you ideas on how to start and continue implementing a gender perspective in your organisation.

3.1.1. Creating Visibility and Starting a Conversation

The first challenge is to create visibility for the issues surrounding gender equality inside your own organisation. While many activists are able to criticise the overt sexism of conservatives, they often are blind to the sexist behaviour and excluding structures reproduced in their own organisation. A first step could therefore be to make the invisible visible by gathering numbers on the representation of all genders in your organisation and making them available to everyone. For example you can present them at a general assembly.

EXAMPE

The Free Association of Students’ Unions in Germany (FZS) conducts a survey of delegates’ social background during every board meeting. The survey asks delegates about their gender identity, economic and educational background, nationality, and mental and physical health. Some of the results (not all, as information might be linked back to individuals) are presented to the board at the end of the meeting. The presentation gives a good overview about the people who are able to attend board meetings and are therefore able to participate in policy making. The survey is continuously evaluated and reworked.
Another way to draw attention to sexist dynamics in your organisations is to **track speaking time by gender** during discussions.

**EXEMPLARY**

FZS’s anti-discrimination order states that the elected anti-discrimination representatives have the task of tracking the speaking time of the groups represented on the balanced speakers’ lists during board meetings. They provide a report of their analysis after the board meeting which is attached to the report of the executive committee.

As this example shows, it is always helpful to have at least one person responsible for coordinating your efforts to make your organisation more equitable. The decision about whether this position is voluntary, elected and/or paid should be made taking into consideration the resources of your organisation and existing internal structures.

Involving people with diverse backgrounds into drafting a **Code of Conduct** for your organisation is also beneficial for starting a discussion and creating visibility for the needs of your members.

**EXEMPLARY**

During the revision process of the European Students’ Union’s (ESU) Code of Conduct, the women’s and queer meeting were asked for their input and ideas. This lead also to a sharing of materials and best practices from different member organisations.

Heightening the visibility of gender issues in your organisation can be done very easily by alerting people to the possibility and benefits of stating pronouns in introduction rounds. This challenges the notion that pronouns are something that is “obvious” because of the perceived gender of a person and opens up space for reflection and discussion. Another straightforward way would be to **provide information materials, books and stickers on the subject of gender** during your events which people can peruse and take home.

To further the discussion of gender issues in your organisations it might be useful to **regularly have workshops on the topic during your meetings**. The challenge is to take knowledge differences into account when selecting the content of the sessions, as there might be people who have never thought about gender issues at all while others already have extensive knowledge. One way to deal with this situation is to invite the “gender experts” in your organisation to prepare and facilitate the workshops. A side effect of this approach is showing appreciation for their work and providing them a platform to talk about the issues which are important to them. Of course you will not be able to reach every sceptic in your organisation with this offer, but it will make people think about gender issues and show that the topic is important to you.

**EXEMPLARY**

In FZS it is mandatory to have a workshop on anti-discrimination at every board meeting. This is facilitated by the anti-discrimination representatives. The executive committee supports them in organising the session. In ESU an internal motion was passed which mandates one session on gender issues at every board meeting and European Students’ Convention. They are organised by the Equality Coordinator of the organisation.

If you are already providing learning opportunities for your members by organising workshops and seminars, you should consider **incorporating the topic of gender (in)equality into your education program**. This can be done by organising workshops and seminars which focus exclusively on these issues, but also taking a gender perspective in every seminar programme. When designing a programme, look also for experts who are discussing the main topic of your seminar through the lens of gender. Moreover, keep
the gender balance of the speakers you invite for workshops and seminars in mind.

It is also vital to check if your statutes and structures are creating barriers for the participation of women* and marginalised groups. For ideas and practical implementation, see «Women*'s Empowerment, Participation and Representation» as well as «Gender Equality is not binary! Queer-feminist toolkit».

3.1.2. Incorporating a gender perspective in our policies

As youth socialists, we must be aware of the inequalities still existing between genders and we have to know how to deal with them. Therefore it is essential to incorporate a gender perspective in all our policies, as it constitutes a cross-sectional issue that affects every field of our lives.

In order to incorporate the gender perspective properly, we cannot only take into account our ideas inside the organisation. We should also cooperate with other organisations specialised in the field to work on policies and determine political goals.

EXAMPLE

FZS has a partnership with the alliance for sexual self-determination (Bündnis für sexuelle Selbstbestimmung) which fights for the right to abortion in Germany.

In case of policy papers, we should take care to incorporate women* and Female, Lesbian, Intersexual, Non-Binary Transgender (FLINT) people in drafting processes in a meaningful way. This approach ensures that their perspectives are taken seriously and taken into practice properly, not leaving anyone behind.

Finally, with the same objective, it is important to write all policy papers in an inclusive language whenever the language has gendered words. This should be done, not only with policy papers, but with all kinds of papers or communications developed by the organisation, both internally and externally, because otherwise some people could feel excluded from the organisation.

3.1.3. Guidelines on event organising

This section provides ideas on how we can support people of all genders to feel welcome and comfortable during our events. For keeping accessibility in mind while organising an event, see the chapter on Intersectionality.

While many people cope well with the density of new input and new faces during events, some might find it overwhelming. Therefore, when looking for a suitable venue for an event, take into consideration to how provide separate rooms of retreat for FLINT and all genders. Inform the participants where the rooms are located by indicating it in the event reader, mentioning it at the beginning of the event and hanging up signs.

If you are pre-printing name tags for your event, give people the opportunity to state their preferred pronouns during registration and incorporate this information. Don’t make it a requirement as people might feel forced to come out about their gender identity in a situation in which they are not comfortable to do so.
When you have decided as an organisation what kind of behaviour you expect in personal interactions and during discussions in plenary meetings, it is very important to make the Code of Conduct highly visible at your events. This can be done by presenting it at the beginning of meetings and workshops, handing out printed copies and/or hanging up posters. There are three main reasons why this is good practice:

- New people who enter your organisation and participate in your events are made aware immediately of what kind of behaviour is not tolerated.
- Those affected by transgressive behaviour feel more empowered to point it out and report.
- Even though there are always people who will roll their eyes and think that Code of Conducts are unnecessary, it is a good starting point for discussions between your members about power imbalances and transgressive behaviour in your organisation and in personal interactions. Also, there is no harm in being confronted with statements like “only yes means yes” regularly.

As people might be hesitant to report breaches of the Code of Conduct to the organisers or trusted persons due to fear of retaliation, it is very important to provide opportunities for anonymous reporting.

You should also consider having a trust team during your event. You can read more on this topic in the section “How to fight gender-based and sexualised violence within our own organisation and beyond”.

Also take accessibility into account when organising an event. For example, it is far easier for activists with children to attend if you provide childcare on site or provide funding to pay for a babysitter.

FZS’s anti-discrimination representatives present the Code of Conduct at the beginning of every Board Meeting and answer questions if something is not clear. The Code of Conduct is printed on a poster which is hung up close to the chairing team, so it is highly visible for all delegates. The anti-discrimination representatives act as trusted persons during the Board Meetings and coordinate the trust team for the event. They are also responsible for providing an opportunity for anonymous reporting during the Board Meeting.

Also consider if the time frame of the event might prevent people who are working and/or have children from attending. You will find more information on accessibility in the chapter “Intersectionality.”

### 3.1.4. Countering sexism internally: How do we involve cis-men and how do we deal with problematic behaviour?

This is probably the most difficult question we have faced during our lives; what can we do about cis-men and how to deal with them? We always have this question present and it is even harder for FLINT people. We think we have found some answers to the question.

First of all, we think it is very important to give visibility to care work that is constantly linked to women* and emotional work, also done by women* and FLINT people. It is important to give them the visibility they deserve, which could be done by assigning the same speaking time to men and FLINT people so that they all are represented at the same levels in meetings and assemblies. It is also very important for the visibility to happen in order not to face discrimination or underrepresentation. By giving them the same speaking time, they could explain how they deal
with this emotional and care work so that everyone else could realise the extra-work and the difficulties of being a FLINT person.

**Men reflection meetings** could also be helpful in order to raise awareness among cis-men on how the patriarchy is affecting their daily behaviours and how can feminism help them be themselves, and therefore, happier.

**EXAMPLE**

In the European Students’ Union, there is an ally-ship meeting parallel to the women*'s meeting. In FZS, there is a men’s plenary and a queer plenary parallel to the women*'s plenary.

We have thought about the importance of the new activists in our organisations learning about the feminist movement and gender studies, so a good idea could be a short training for them when they join the organisations so that they understand the importance of the issue from the beginning of their activism.

Last, but not least, we think that it is important not to tolerate power plays within the organisation that could affect the personal and political development of FLINT people. With that purpose, we suggest as punishments for people who display this kind of behaviour, taking away the right to vote and speak in meetings and assemblies in the case of oppressive behaviours, and, in extreme cases, the exclusion from the organisation.

### 3.2. Taking a gender perspective and countering antifeminism externally

We not only have to deal with countering antifeminism internally, but also externally, where we face the threat of extreme right movements which are trying to dismiss the efforts of the feminist movement by publishing fake news in the media.

In order to counter this, we have different solutions to address this issue, all of which are based on raising awareness among people who are not that involved in social movements.

For that, it is important to produce information materials, not only to raise awareness, but also to share ideas on how to lead the fight. With these materials, campaigns could be built up for our youth organisations and for our mother parties. These campaigns could be based on stickers and flyers to distribute on the streets. In order to reach young people, it would be a good idea to produce also social media materials, including videos and visuals.

A good idea for street campaigns would be a series of short but impactful messages, such as ‘my body doesn’t want your opinion’ or ‘the length of my shirt doesn’t tell you I want’. This kind of messages are very impactful on young men especially and could make them aware of what kind of behaviours and thoughts are sexist and harmful for women* or FLINT people.

**EXAMPLE**

JSM (Youth Socialists of Madrid) produced a video version of a famous Spanish song to call for the feminist strike of March 8th in 2018, with more than 16 thousand views on YouTube. That year (we can assume that it was not just because of the video), the demonstration was attended by millions of people in the city of Madrid, and more than 5 million people in Spain took strike action.

Organisations can also encourage their local groups to organise events on gender issues during a joint campaign period, to heighten awareness in their communities.

**EXAMPLE**

FZS’s campaign “gesellschaft macht geschlecht” (rough translation “society power gender”) ran in 2019 for the 13th time. FZS provides local student unions with information material and ideas for events as well as a main topic. In 2019 the topic was “What feminism do we want?”. 
Women*’s Empowerment, Participation and Representation

Part 2
1. Introduction

In this chapter we would like to focus on how to increase gender empowerment at all levels of the political field and within our organisations. We live in a world that is not equal. This is not an opinion, it is fact. Patriarchy, women*'s subordination to men, is still very much present in our societies and is stopping women* from reaching their fullest potential. Lack of female participation is a consequence of the patriarchal structures that are holding them back. Women*'s hesitance and difficulty with engaging in politics can be explained by it being a male-dominated domain and not adapted for female participation but also by other responsibilities that are put on women* in our societies such as taking care of the household, while in some countries also having to work part or full time as an additional burden. The system of patriarchy is deeply rooted within our societies and unfortunately is often reproduced in our organisations. In this toolkit we would like to focus on how to increase gender empowerment and participation at all levels of the political field and especially in our youth organisations. With this toolkit we hope to provide strategies of use to prepare our organisations to finally practice what we teach.

2. Representation

Representation is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as “A person or group of persons that speaks, acts or is present for someone else.” Representation can be a tool to increase the influence of power for marginalised groups. Although women* represent half of the world’s population, they are still underrepresented in politics. The majority of presidents or prime ministers, MP’s, party leaders and board members in the world are men. Only 24.3 per cent of all national parliamentarians were women* as of February 2019, a slow increase from 11.3 per cent in 1995. UN data shows that as of June 2019, 11 women* are serving as Head of State and 12 are serving as Head of Government. Wide variations remain in the average percentages of women* parliamentarians in each region. Data from February 2019 says, that these were (single, lower and upper houses combined): Nordic countries, 42.5 per cent; Americas, 30.6 per cent; Europe including Nordic countries, 28.6 per cent; Europe excluding Nordic countries, 27.2 per cent; sub-Saharan Africa, 23.9 per cent; Asia, 19.8 percent; Arab States, 19 per cent; and the Pacific, 16.3 per cent.

As political youth organisations we should focus on political representation and the ways to gain influence for women*, queers and minorities in the cis-heterosexual society of our countries. Nevertheless, as a product of the societies we live in we need to do the same in our member organisations. There are different theoretical approaches to the concept of representation. In this toolkit we’ll use the concept from Hannah Fenichel Pitkin, “Representing here means acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them.”

But there’s a downside to this concept; we all know Margaret Thatcher or Angela Merkel. Both of them are conservative. Both of them were ruling and shaping their countries. And both of them are female. But they didn’t implement feminist policies while they were in power. And even though there are of course some female role models like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez or Jacinda Ardern, who stand for feminist policies, the existence of female role models can just be one contributing part of a broader feminist agenda and representation.

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1 Inter-Parliamentary Union. “Women in national parliaments,” as of 1 February 2019.

2 UN Women calculation based on information provided by Permanent Missions to the United Nations. Some leaders hold positions of both head of government and head of state. Only elected Heads of State have been taken into account.

3 Inter-Parliamentary Union. “Women in national parliaments,” as of 1 February 2019.
2.1 A modern criticism to (most of) the concept(s) of representation

As we can see there are a lot of downsides to representation and some criticism which appears unshakeable. The topics of queer visibility and diversity especially are often forgotten in the binary field of representation. Even though society and we as youth organisations could – although with much effort – achieve better representation of women*, we tend to disregard queer or intersectional approaches to representation. We have to acknowledge that “acting for broad representation” faces a huge problem when it’s not about acting either for men or women* but for people who are trans* or inter for example, who face discrimination in their everyday life that the “acting for-representatives” will never face in their life.

The idea of representation is burdened by the problem of an assumed identity - both between the representative and the represented, but also within the group of those to be represented. As a result, the process of representation can be selective in relation to the multitude of needs and interests of individuals. Representation procedures therefore tend to assert male and binary particular interests rather than realise universality and equality.

When we talk about representation we should keep in mind that most of the concepts are seen from a binary point of view. We have to be critical towards approaches of representation which are just qualitative but as well towards some which are just quantitative or descriptive. Through a good mixture of them and by considering and leaving space for queer-feminist theories we can find a solution that meets our requirements for a more equal society.

2.2 Examples of good representation in our countries and IUSY member organisations

Within our IUSY member organisations we found some good examples of how to tackle the problem of women’s* underrepresentation. Strategies mentioned below are not meant to be just copy-pasted, but need to be tailored to each IUSY member organisation’s structure.

2.3 Strategies for increased representation

2.3.1 Introducing quota system

Quotas are explicit requirements on the minimum number of women* who must hold political positions. Gender quotas have been used since the late 1970s by a few political parties in a small number of advanced industrial democracies such as Norway or Germany. Some of our member organisations are also using gender quotas as a way to create better representation for women*.

**EXAMPLE**

**SERBIA** In Serbia the women**’s quota is 30% and it is a temporary solution. In 2016, after the last elections, women* represent 34% of parliament. That means that the number of women* in parliament (and all other levels) is slowly increasing. The number of female ministers has increased as well, currently there are five female ministers. Although the majority of ministers are men a positive development is that the position of president of the National Assembly is held by a woman* and the Prime Minister is a LGBTQ woman*.

**EXAMPLE**

**ITALY** In Italy the women**’s quota is also 30%. In Italy women* have reached 40% of representation in the Council of Administration. 30% of parliamentarians are women* and a third of ministers are too. In city administration only one mayor in every seven is a woman*. In Italy no woman* has ever held the office of Prime Minister nor Finance Minister yet.
2.3.2 Gender Parity when preparing lists for election and formation of boards

Parity mechanisms do not treat women* as a minority group (opposite as quotas), but removes structural and cultural barriers that prevent women* from leadership positions, destroys gender stereotypes and changes election systems, which are less likely to favour women*.

**EXAMPLE**

**SLOVENIA** The candidates list of the Social Democrats (SD) for European elections 2019 not only used the zipper system of placement of female and male candidates, where the first candidate was a woman*, but also parity (50%-50%). So 4 out of 8 candidates on the list were women*. They also wanted to address the problem of ageism so one of the female candidates was less than 32 years old and one of the candidates was above the age of 55.

2.3.3 Female presence in all activities and events organised by organisation

The same applies to gender-based panels in which both women* and men are virtually equally represented. Both quotas and gender parity are used to generate representation; to help women* especially to be part of the political discourse – no matter whether it’s in the government, in the parliament, in the economy or in our own member organisations.

**EXAMPLE**

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION** The No Women No Panel Campaign initiated by Commissioner Mariya Gabriel has been supported and reiterated by several of her colleagues from the European Commission. She committed to ensuring that at least one other woman* is part of panels she is invited to speak at.

2.3.4 Leadership positions are distributed equally

**EXAMPLE**

**CANADA** Status of Women Canada works to advance equality for women* by focusing its efforts in three priority areas: increasing women*’s economic security and prosperity; encouraging women*’s leadership and democratic participation; and ending gender-based violence. Status of Women Canada also plays a leadership role in the government-wide implementation of Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+). The Canadian government has the same number of male and female ministers, other minorities are also equally represented. The same concept of distribution of leadership positions can and should be applied in our member organisations.

2.3.5 Gender-equal delegations when representing organisation at international and national events

IUSY observes that the majority of delegations of its member organisations are male. That includes presidents, vice-presidents, secretary-generals etc. Events organised by IUSY usually do not have 50% of woman* participants. We would like to encourage all of our member organisations to achieve our goal of at least 50%-50% representation at our national and international events.

The most important conclusion, however, is this: We have to talk more about female representation in our organisations. We have to question if we are for example planning a panel discussion but didn’t invite female speakers. We have to be aware of the lack of representation of some social groups and we will implement the different means to generate representation. We have to be open to criticism, we have to listen to the people who don’t feel represented but believe in

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6 https://www.canada.ca/en.html
3. Involvement/Participation

Women* often feel discouraged or are prevented from being involved in political forums. Obligations at home and in society is one reason for this. Another, is that our political institutions are not adapted for female presence nor do they promote it, despite multiple international accords and agendas from transnational and national assemblies. This can also be seen within left organisations. A dominant male presence on the boards, meetings being held during time for picking-up of children, men not paying attention to their non-male comrades, male members endorsing only male candidates, women* being ridiculed or not listened to during meetings are all factors that prevent involvement. “Domination techniques” are frequently used to suppress non-male participants during meetings and events. Women* have to work harder than men to be recognised and appreciated. To overcome this issue we have to anchor the work on inclusion from the top, starting with ourselves. We need to view it as a strategic issue and not a temporary project. The IUSY Global Manifesto, which all member organisations stand behind clearly states that gender equality and the fight against patriarchy is one of our main goals to achieve a socialist and just world. If we do not start internally all our investment will be in vain and we risk being perceived as not credible.

3.1 Strategies for increased involvement/participation

3.1.2 Being critical of your own organisation

Start talking about how participation looks in your own organisation. Be critical! What does your external/internal communication look like? What kind of people are highlighted? Who is spokesperson for the organisation? Count, chart and research! Gender equality and diversity is not just a feeling, it is also facts which can be measured in different ways. Remember it is not about getting equality right on the first try or to the exact percentage but about understanding what patterns exist within the organisation and working to change them.

3.1.3 Involving women* by excluding men

In most societies women* have limited spaces to meet, and public spaces are often largely inhabited by men. This is also reflected in our organisations. Since men have easier access to politics they are often overrepresented in the field and our youth organisations are no exception. Even during activities with a high female presence male participants tend to dominate and take up most of the space. This kind of behaviour manifests in different ways e.g. men talking more than female participants or talking for a longer duration of time, mansplaining, encouraging and referring to each other, not listening to their female comrades. These kind of environments create a sense of exclusiveness and subordination, making others taking a step back and therefore not having a chance to participate on their own terms. There are different ways of dealing with this problem from how we conduct our meetings to holding closed meetings for females, trans and non-binary members only.
SSU (Swedish Socialdemocratic Youth League)
Implementation of regular closed meeting can ensure that members who do not identify as men get a chance to organise, engage, express themselves and develop their political skills without men disturbing the process. Many regional districts in SSU also have women*’s networks organising activities by women* for women* as a complement to the regular organisation activities. Meetings of a women*’s network do not always have to be exclusive but by letting females set the agenda we also let them take up more space leading to increased empowerment. It is common for the women*’s network to meet before congress and annual meeting to write proposals and resolutions together and to practice debating on stage thus increasing self-confidence while also practicing sisterhood, making sure to encourage each other despite not always sharing political opinions.

3.1.4 Involving meetings - everyone can participate
Have a speakers list. If only men have been talking it might be a good idea to involve a women* into the conversation/debate. Take time! Men love to talk. Make sure someone is tracking time during meetings so men don’t take up more speaking time from anyone else. Chart! How many women* have been talking vs men? Domination techniques also called master suppression techniques are strategies of social manipulation men use to suppress women*. The term was coined by Berit Ås who in the 1970’s identified five expressions of domination techniques: making invisible, ridiculing, withholding information, double punishment and blaming and shaming. As a female politician and Norway’s first female party leader, she saw how the other male politicians were inattentive when she spoke, took decisions at informal meetings where she wasn’t invited and, in other ways, excluded her from influence. Berit Ås described domination techniques as “methods employed to obtain or maintain negative power over other people, or ways to assert oneself by oppressing other individuals.” These methods are used both intentionally and unintentionally by men to gain power and suppress non-males. When we become aware of these techniques and call them out they lose some of their power. By constantly creating awareness and working against them we can create more inclusive organisations. If a female comrade keeps being ignored and spoken over it is everyone’s responsibility to make them visible and address the situation.

Representation is not enough. We can have female representation in our organisations without actually involving women* in the organisational and political work. For example letting women* be responsible for “softer” political questions such as animal rights while men become spokespeople for “heavier matters” such as economics and justice etc. Or letting female members be in charge of more organisational and practical work while men are in charge of the political work once again reinforcing the idea that women* don’t do politics. These kinds of measures require active gender mainstreaming work. Power and privilege is not distributed equally across class, gender, race, ethnicity, age or sexual orientation. Responsibility is thus on the organisation to encourage women* to take a more active and involving role while encouraging men to take a step back and let go of some of their power and privileges.

4. Empowerment
There is established and growing evidence that women*’s leadership in political decision-making processes improves not only the women* involved but also the political process. Women* demonstrate political leadership by working across party lines through parliamentary women*’s caucuses - even in the most politically combative environ-

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8 UN WOMEN. In Brief: Women’s Leadership and Political Participation
ments - and by championing issues of gender equality, such as, parental leave and childcare, pensions, gender-equality laws, electoral reform and the elimination of gender-based violence. Yet women are grossly underrepresented in political leadership while they constitute more than half of the population and play a critical role in the development of any country. Governments should implement policies, schemes and programmes as ways to attain women’s development and socio-economic empowerment. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) define the term women’s empowerment as:

- Acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and the ways in which these relations may be changed. Developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one’s ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one’s life.

- Gaining the ability to generate choices and exercise bargaining power.

- Developing the ability to organise and influence the direction of social change, to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

According to this definition of women’s empowerment representation on its own isn’t enough. Gender quota bills and parity are useful tools for increasing women’s representation but they do not guarantee significant political impact on their own if the current patriarchal structures and policies remain the same. Women have for a long time been denied access to the political arena and have a lot of catching up to do to their male counterparts. Thus, in order to address this inequality between men and women in politics and positions in decision-making at all levels, it is suggested that governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming women’s empowerment perspectives in all policies and programmes. For example gender mainstreaming has been the official strategy of the Swedish government since 1994 aiming to integrate gender equality work into all operations and not merely treat it as a separate track. Gender equality has thus been identified as an overarching perspective that all policy areas have been instructed to promote. Gender mainstreaming is not a goal in itself but an approach for promoting gender equality.

Mainstreaming ensures that a gender perspective is included in all activities in the organisation.

4.1 Strategies for increased empowerment

4.1.1 Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming aims to implement a gender perspective on all activities in an organisation. Gender mainstreaming does not refer to a single method but rather a multitude of methods as a general strategy for structuring organisations’ gender equality work. All member organisations should have a central function that works strategically to increase empowerment and gender equality issues that can ensure gender mainstreaming is implemented throughout all functions and activities.

4.1.2 Create a Mentorship programme

Implementing a mentorship programme can be an effective concept for inspiring and encouraging female involvement and leadership thus empowering female members. A mentorship programme could be implemented on all levels of the organisation from local, regional to national level.

4.1.3 Awareness trainings and education

Since some of the most progressive movements remain fortresses of patriarchal structures, intensive awareness training is needed in order to implement all the strategies mentioned above and to operationalise gender mainstreaming principles into the regular organisational work. Raising awareness and empowerment is about influencing the balance of power in favour of women by ensuring equal participation of women in all decision-making spheres, but also by striving to change mentalities. Raising awareness on women’s rights, women’s labour rights, organising leadership trainings, capacity building for female activists, training of trainers, formation of female networks, etc. are all tools for increased empowerment. Awareness training for men is equally as important to change mentalities and structures. Remember, feminism is not achieved by reading the most books but by practice.

Women* and workers of the world unite!

There is no such thing as a single issue struggle because we do not live single issue lives!

Audre Lorde
Feminism and anti-capitalism

Part 3
1. Introduction

Socialism and social democracy originated and developed in response to the problems associated with a capitalist economic system. As long as socialism as an ideology has existed, socialists have worked to mitigate the harmful excesses of capitalism and the free market economy, and even overthrow capitalism entirely. Both socialism and social democracy are broad terms, encompassing a large number of different perspectives on, and ideas about how exactly, to tackle these issues, and which issues should or should not be problematised.

Likewise, feminism has developed into a broad movement that includes many different perspectives on how to combat the oppression of women* and achieve gender equality or equity. From a feminist perspective, people of all genders are essentially equal in worth, but are not treated equally or fairly in society. Feminists perceive the oppression of women* as rooted in patriarchy, that is, a societal structure built around the dominance of a specific kind of aggressive masculinity. This means that although individual men can display behaviours that are oppressive to women*, in the grand scheme of things, the oppression stems not from individuals, but from a power structure that is limiting to people of all genders, and not only women*.

As movements struggling against oppressive systems, socialism and feminism have gone hand in hand for most of their history. Particularly with the emergence of the term “intersectionality”, that is, the idea that people experience different types of oppression that all impact on each other, the connection between feminism and socialism has become all the more apparent. Capitalism, as an economic system that is inherently based on inequality, is oppressive to women*, and the dominant patriarchy upholds capitalism. Therefore, fighting for gender equality without fighting capitalism, which thrives on inequality, is pointless. The same goes for fighting for a more equitable economic system without dismantling existing inequality on the basis of gender, sexuality, race, ability, and others.

In recent decades, some have chosen to accept a compromise between the capitalist free market system and socialism, by accepting the inequality inherent to capitalism and trying to reform the system’s worst, most harmful excesses. From a gender equality perspective, this is unacceptable. On the other hand, some forms of anti-capitalism that see class as a structural problem also have the tendency to take other forms of inequality less seriously, believing that all inequalities will magically be solved if only class inequality is eliminated. This way of thinking is called “class reductionism”, as it reduces all complex forms of struggle to class struggle. We believe that true gender equality cannot be achieved as long as other forms of oppression are not also dismantled. Consequently, this document will outline some of the issues with forms of feminism that are not anti-capitalist and propose several solutions on different levels. We hope to inspire our organisations to implement an anti-capitalist feminist perspective in their functioning.

2. Modern feminism: the fourth wave

Feminism as a movement is generally thought to have gone through several phases or waves. The different waves of feminism had different focal points and goals. The first wave, in the early 20th century, was focused on women*’s suffrage. The second, starting in the 1960s, campaigned for the liberation of women* and abolishing legal and social inequalities between men and women*. The third wave, originating in the 1990s, was defined by increasing focus on diversity and individual experiences, as a response to the fact that the second wave was seen as too white, too middle-class and too straight. The latest form of feminism, starting around 2013, has been called the “fourth wave” of feminism. In comparison to the third wave, this wave can be characterised...
by increasing individualism, more fragmentation (different forms of feminism, many smaller organisations fighting for equality in different ways), the prevalence of social media (see ‘social media feminism’ below), the mainstreaming of the theory of intersectionality and increased focus on diversity, and a big focus on sexual violence. Much of the feeling associated with the fourth wave of feminism is the idea that certain attitudes towards gender are extremely outdated and don’t belong in the 21st century.

Although intersectionality has become more mainstream within feminist thought and activism, the intersection of gender and class is not always given sufficient attention, and it sometimes takes a back seat compared to the intersections of other forms of oppression. Furthermore, the increased individuality of the fourth wave generally hampers the understanding of class as a structural problem, making it an individual issue instead.

The following are different types of feminism which fall under the broader definition of fourth wave feminism:

2.1 Neoliberal feminism/Capitalist feminism: the most dominant form of feminism in the fourth wave.

Today we see a kind of feminism that is contaminated and even driven by capitalism. Capitalist feminism has a very strong focus on superficial individual empowerment over collective empowerment and ignores or even obfuscates societal power structures. In this way, it proposes superficial solutions to sexism that target individuals, both victims and oppressors, not systems. For example, capitalist feminism views firing sexist individuals or hiring more female CEOs as sufficiently comprehensive. Capitalist feminism also has a tendency to use people’s struggle against oppression for profit by selecting feminist figureheads that are inoffensive to the dominant power structure as “leaders” of the women’s movement.

2.2 H&M feminism: a form of neoliberal feminism that links ideology to personal expression, that is: you are a good feminist if you sufficiently express your feminist identity through consumption.

What we call “H&M feminism” is inherently consumerist, linking consumption to identity. H&M feminism is promoted by corporations such as, but not exclusively, H&M. These corporations convince people that by buying an object, such as an item of clothing, with a feminist slogan, they are expressing feminism in a desirable way, even though these items of clothing were most likely produced through the exploitation of women in third world countries. H&M feminism is a prime example of the use of people’s struggle to generate material profit.

2.3 Social media feminism: a twofold concept: on one hand, it is a tool of expressing feminism, on the other, it is also a lens through which feminist activism is viewed.

Social media feminism can be seen as a new form of activism. It involves the spreading of information on social media, enabling this information to reach a large audience. Because of the nature of social media, this form of activism can lead to the formation of siloed bubbles. In addition, because social media is a capitalist creation, it incentivises people to feel as though they are influencing real change, when in fact, much of their activity does not influence reality, leading to “slacktivism”. On the other hand, we also see that greater social media engagement can lead people to participate in offline activism as well. The aesthetic of being an activist is attractive to post on social media, which is inherently individualistic, but this also allows access to more information for a larger group of people. Some of the possibilities of social media give activists a tool that they have never had access to before. This type of feminism can be accommodated to suit socialist feminist goals.
2.4 Socialist feminism: unlike the forms of feminism mentioned above, socialist feminism requires class analysis.

A poor woman* has far fewer possibilities to overcome patriarchal oppression than a rich woman* does. Socialist feminism also views labour as more than traditional paid work, recognising the nuances in the gender pay gap and advocating for better compensation for labour that currently is seen as “not real work”, such as childcare or volunteer work. Socialist feminism views capitalism itself as oppressive and incorporates a gender perspective in class struggle. Ultimately, from a socialist feminist perspective, there can be no true gender equality under capitalism, because capitalism is a social order based on inequality, oppression, and exploitation.

3. Solutions

The challenges faced by the fourth wave of feminism are linked to social and cultural power structures. For many issues brought up by feminists today, the main solutions are cultural. This means that they will not be resolved overnight, but instead require years and probably even generations of work to change people’s minds and attitudes. In other words: we’re in this for the long haul. The following proposed solutions are not exhaustive, but they attempt to address the problems that we perceive in a more global way. They are divided into two sections: societal, which includes goals that we as organisations may be able to influence, but not achieve single-handedly, and organisational, which outlines a number of measures that our organisations can take to be more effective in fighting gender inequality internally and externally.

3.1 Societal level

- We need to rethink our (capitalist) conception of labour. Currently, labour is valued by productivity. “Unproductive” labour, i.e. labour which generates less capital, is paid less and given less status in society. These kinds of labour (such as voluntary work, house-keeping, etc.) are fields where women* are more represented; therefore the undervaluing of these fields contributes to gender inequality. To combat this, we need to start thinking about policies that allow us to move past our current conception of labour into a stage where an individual’s value is not measured by productivity.

- The spread and normalisation of ideas begins with education. Education is one of the main spheres that influence the socialisation of individuals and groups and contributes to the transformation of values. It is not enough to unlearn sexist ideas at a later age, it is also important to raise new generations with the best possible tools to undo sexist power structures. It follows that it is necessary to implement a perspective on gender and capital in all levels of education. Gender inequality, sexual harassment and consent, and feminism as a whole should be an inherent part of the curriculum for all ages.

3.2 Organisational level

- Organisations should regularly organise activities to discuss and challenge gender stereotypes.

- We should follow gender neutrality as a principle. In society, people of different genders are not treated equally. Within our organisations, we strive towards equal and fair treatment within our organisations by avoiding gender segregation. Gender segregation should be made possible when necessary (for example with safe spaces), but it should not be the standard.

- Organisations should create safe spaces where possible. At every event there should be the possibility for people to isolate themselves from a (perceived) unsafe situation.
• We recommend every that organisation implements trust teams/people (gender balanced). These trust teams should be trained and held to the highest standard of integrity.

• We need to take financial gender imbalance into consideration. Our organisations’ budgeting process should take a gender perspective into account. Our budgets need to give extra space to make our activities gender inclusive. This can be done by providing, for example, menstrual products, condoms, and dental dams at activities where these might be necessary.

• We recommend that organisations do not use unethically produced goodies/merch. Taking into account that there can never be fully ethical consumption under capitalism, because there is always exploitation somewhere along the road leading to consumption, we must still try our best to be as ethical as we can under the situation we live in. For example, clothing made for the organisation should be sweatshop-proof. We recommend the creation of an international database to share information about more ethical producers of our merch.

• IUSY should take a proactive approach to educating organisations to be more critical of various expressions of feminism. Many of our organisations’ members do not see any problem with pro-capitalist feminism, and some of our organisations do not have the tools needed to educate these members. We recommend that IUSY organise yearly seminars to provide these member organisations with the tools they are missing. We also recommend that IUSY ask member organisations to spread information within their organisations at activities.

• We recommend creating working groups/networks dedicated to the (anti-capitalist) feminist cause. Many socialist and social democratic parties have women’s networks in some form, but some of these networks are passive, not activism-focused, or even altogether inactive. We need to stimulate these networks’ activity to ensure that they can really make the political impact we need.

• It is important to demonstrate the fairness/justice of socialist feminism over capitalist feminism. We need to inform people that there is an inherent contradiction between capitalism and gender equality. This can be done through information campaigns that use data to demonstrate the link between economic equality and gender equality. We need to stimulate actions and campaigns that call attention to the aforementioned contradiction between feminism and capitalism.

• Our organisations must be intersectional. We must combat the distortion of facts that claims that “identity politics” is harmful to class struggle and the goals of socialism. Too often, these claims are linked to racism, sexism, and homophobia and transphobia, for which there can be no place in our organisations. Instead, we need to promote the narrative that all struggles, including class and identity, are interlinked and must be resolved with a nuanced anti-capitalist solution.
Intersectionality

Part 4
1. **Intersectionality:**
the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect, especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups.

For many decades, mainstream feminism has been based on the cultural and historical experiences of middle- and upper-class heterosexual Western white women*. Consequently, issues of race, class, sexuality, and ability (to mention a few) were mostly ignored and the experiences of entire groups of women* overlooked. The need for a more inclusive feminism was strongly felt by many. During the 1970s, black feminist scholars and activists, a number of whom were also part of the LGBTQI+ community, developed a theoretical framework to broaden feminism’s definition and scope. Throughout the final decades of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, women* of colour published many ground-breaking works that helped to highlight the interlocking systems that define women*’s lives. These works are the basis of what we now know as intersectionality.

The term itself was coined thirty years ago in the U.S.A. by lawyer Kimberlé Crenshaw as a way to help explain the oppression of African-American women*. In the 1991 article “Mapping the Margins”, she explained how people who are “both women* and people of color” are marginalized by “discourses that are shaped to respond to one identity or the other,” rather than both. The crucial idea introduced by intersectionality, on the contrary, is that there is no single experience of being female, but rather the experience of being a woman* intersects with other aspects of each woman*’s own identity putting each individual in a different place on the privilege spectrum. Consequently, is not possible to identify a single way in which women* experience systematic oppression in their lives. Instead, each woman* (or more generally each member of a social minority/ oppressed group) has a different experience of oppression insofar as multiple aspects of their identity can be subjected to different kinds of oppression. Notably, this leads to an overlap of kinds of oppression and to a composite experience of discrimination which ends up being something greater than the mere sums of the single kinds of discrimination faced.

Including intersectionality in our perspective means then, **to be aware that we can all be oppressed and privileged, to various degrees and at the same time.** Therefore, it means **to acknowledge the responsibility that comes with this privilege** so as not to overpower people that are being oppressed by it, but rather to use the power we have to uplift people according to their needs and guidelines. Ultimately, being an intersectional feminist entails fighting for the equality of all women*, even those who face different barriers to our own.
2. Intersectionality in practice

The root cause of every form of discrimination is privilege. Privileges are unearned advantages that some people have by virtue of their group membership. Discrimination happens when privileged people try to defend their advantages. We can distinguish three different forms of oppression which can be present in our political organisation: direct, structural or institutionalised, and cultural.

**Direct oppression** targets individuals and disadvantages them by virtue of their belonging to a certain social group (e.g. a certain ethnic group, the LGBTIQ+ community...). It is carried out by individual(s) on individual(s). This kind of discrimination can be indirect when the perpetrator does not openly, or intentionally, target the person but acts in such a way that the effects of their actions are nevertheless discriminatory.

**Institutionalised or structural oppression**, by contrast, is based on the very way that our society is organised. It occurs when the system itself is built in a way that unfairly disadvantages and mistreats certain groups of people. It is then acted by a system against certain social groups.

**Cultural oppression** is a kind of discrimination that hides behind culture or religion but it is actually politically motivated to uphold power relations. Cultural discrimination can be especially hard to tackle as culture is often seen as untouchable and above criticism.

It must be clear that discrimination takes place in society because some groups benefit from it. If we want to work against discrimination and oppression, we need to **recognise our own privileges in order to start levelling the playing field for everyone**.

So how to overcome privilege and include everyone in our fight for a better society?

**2.1 Queers**
please see the toolkit chapter on queer feminism.

**2.2 P.O.C. (People of Colour)**

We should be aware that both direct and institutionalised racism are present in most of our societies, if not within our organisation. However indirect and internalised forms of racism may also exist within the organisation. In these cases, we must acknowledge and actively fight it.

None of the authors of this piece are people of colour so we cannot give as much depth as is possibly needed and cannot speak from our own experience, we can only write the experiences of others with whom we have discussed the subject and what we see happening to others; so only second-hand experience. Because of this we would urge you not only to read this piece but also to talk to people of colour in your organisation, ask them what they think needs to improve and, if they want to give them, ask for suggestions on how to improve. When doing this please be mindful not to place the burden of improvement on them, it is still your responsibility to be an inclusive organisation. What we can tell you are many things you probably already know but we would like to repeat here.

First thing you can do is try to get more POC involved in your organisation. Do this by showing that you are an ally, help fight the problems they face. Very often POC are underrepresented in our organisations. That is a shame because their voices deserve to be heard just as much as others, so help amplify it.

Second, is very basic but very important, do not make racist jokes. This is never okay. As the board of an organisation make sure to call out any member who does make racist jokes. If they do not stop, consider taking further steps.

10 Oppressive thoughts can also be internalised. This happens when an individual or a group holds oppressive thoughts against other groups or even a group they belong to at an unconscious level, resulting in oppressive behaviour.
Third is consider having a POC safe space at events that last longer than a day. Talk to different POC in your organisation to ask if they feel they would benefit from having one. If you see that someone is reluctant to admit that they would like to have a safe space, try to have one but do not force anyone to use it.

2.3 Disabled people

Disabilities can be divided into two groups: mental (e.g. learning disabilities, mental health) and physical disabilities (mobility issues, hearing and visual impairments, chronic pain and fatigue and many other disabilities). It is important to notice that disabilities can be both visible and invisible and that physical and mental disabilities might often go together. In order to make an organisation more accessible there are several things needed, please note that some of these suggestions may seem somewhat big for organisations where there are no active members with these disabilities, however we do recommend doing what you can to make these changes. For many people it is important that they can see that they can participate in the activities hosted by an organisation before they will become active or even before they will become a member.

Disabled people make up 20 to 25% of the population and are often not represented in politics at all. Political youth organisations can be a great place to start for better representation. In many organisations there are different kinds of inaccessibility issues that need to be addressed; think of wheelchair accessibility but also of how to deal with mental health issues. Some people might also not be comfortable with speaking about their disability or with anyone noticing that their behaviour is any different, so remember that it is important to make the accommodations for these people, even when they may not visibly use it.

There might also be other people who, despite not telling anyone in advance, may use these accommodations. When hosting an activity, make sure that it is wheelchair accessible. This means as accessible as possible, but at least accessible enough for people to be able to participate in the activity without needing to be lifted out of their chairs or anything like that. If any of the events you are hosting may not be accessible to people with physical disabilities (like sports events) make sure that there are options for these people to be a part of the activity too, always discuss their needs with them and find a solution together.

For people with poor eyesight (and wheelchairs users too) it is important that any paths (like an aisle in between rows of chairs, or a hallway) are kept clear of any mess on the floor because it might cause them to trip and fall (or people in wheelchairs might not be able to access certain places). For these people it is also important that you advertise your events online as they often have special equipment that will read any text out loud to them. Note that this only works on written text, not on an image. Therefore, if you post information about an event on Facebook and you put it in a banner, make sure it is written down somewhere in the description as well. For any bigger events it can be very useful to have anything spoken translated into sign language by an interpreter. At smaller events you could use a PowerPoint presentation that is descriptive of what is being said (so that it works almost like subtitles).

People with learning disabilities might find this last option useful as well, as long as you are mindful that slides don’t become too full or that there are no words used that are too complicated. If it is hard to plan in advance what needs to be said, you could hook a laptop up to a beamer and type along with what is being said. For people with learning disabilities it is also important to be mindful when using big, complicated words and language, this can be a reason for them not to join a conversation or activity. For people with mental illness it can often be difficult to be in a big space with many people, as this can cause overstimulation. For these people it is often very
useful to have a quiet space. This can be much like a safe space and just be a room with some chairs, this can be useful for people with chronic pain and/or fatigue too. For this last category it is again, very important that you discuss their needs with them.

For people with gastrointestinal issues, it is important to have enough toilets. You should also listen to their dietary needs, as they can often have trigger foods that can cause great discomfort. Do not judge these people for using the disabled toilets, in this sense, they are disabled. For any activity where people need to register in advance, make sure to ask if there are any special needs or dietary restrictions, this way you can tackle many problems in advance.

Ultimately, make sure not to put the burden of arranging the right accessibility on the disabled person. Have them tell you their needs in registration, if you need more clarity, contact them but do not make people make their own arrangements. It is your event, and thus your responsibility to make sure everyone can participate.

2.4 Different education level

This aspect might vary greatly from country to country. Generally speaking, people who belong to a less educated class can find it difficult to enter the political debate in our organisation or to even enter the organisation. They might feel discouraged because of their lower educational level. The organisation should make it clear that, although we as individuals are very different there is no differentiation based on somebody’s disadvantages.

We have to understand that in every country, and even within a country and its regions, educational levels and methods differ broadly. In order to help every member to feel included and accepted we have to confront bias and acknowledge that even if we do not possess the same attainments there is no difference between us. However, we are ever-evolving and have the ability to learn. We could make study groups or helping sessions if the person(s) wishes to do so. It is important to lay down that any kind of humiliating behaviour is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. Everybody should be provided the same opportunities regardless of their educational background. We should aim to create a comfortable environment for every member and make sure that nobody feels discouraged to speak up because of certain things.

When making a presentation or preparing written documents we should be careful of language barriers, not only because some people might not be able to really understand certain words and expressions but also because there might be members with reading and comprehension difficulties. It is important to act according to the needs of the members. If they do not feel comfortable taking part in study groups or helping sessions, then we shouldn’t force them to do so. On the other hand, if they ask for such programmes then we should do everything in our power to make them happen.

2.5 Class and income levels

Political activity is expensive. For example tickets to travel to an activity’s destination, time taken from work, overnight accommodation if the activities last several days, etc. Some of us are part of more fortunate political organisations that have enough money to cover these costs, but many are not.

This might lead to a situation where people with a low-income level are left out of political activism because they are not able to afford it. It is therefore important to always consider the cost of political activity and try and make it as accessible as possible, whenever organising one yourself. Have it in a place that is not too expensive to reach, for instance, and try and make it as flexible as possible so that people who are full time workers can still take part. If you are not the one organising the activity and your organisation does not provide any money, or not enough, to cov-
er the participation of all members, think about starting a solidarity fund (we are socialist, we love solidarity!): those members of the organisation who have a higher income level could share the participation cost of those who cannot afford it and would otherwise miss out the activity, for example. Another way to help cover the cost for those who cannot afford it might be self-funding activities: you can make and sell flags, stickers, pins with political messages, for instance, and use the money raised to start a solidarity fund.

Moreover, it is important to organise and announce the most expensive activities (e.g. summer camps) and their cost well in advance. In this way, those who might need to put money aside for it or work a little extra to raise it will have the time to organise to do so. Also, the working members will have enough notice to ask for time off work.

Finally keep in mind that the lower income level of someone might not be visible to you. Therefore it is important to always try and be as inclusive as possible, adopting the aforementioned measures and all the others that come to mind, even if you do not see or know about anyone in your organisation needing it, they actually might do!

### 2.6 Religion

Discrimination based on religion is still present and mainly influenced by the mass media and political leaders and their opinions. They see Christianity as the only legitimate religion and they make it so that people who live in primarily Christian countries and have less knowledge about other religions, start hating and discriminating against non-Christians. It is important to recognise that we live in a very diverse society meaning that there are several different religious groups. Even inside the organisation there might be people who don’t follow the same religion and people who don’t follow any at all. We need to respect that everybody has the right to religious freedom, and we should support the most discriminated-against religious groups in our political agenda (unsolicited support is not exactly support). The organisation and its members under no circumstances should force anything on other members. Respect is the basis of peace, which also includes providing people with everything they need (e.g. breaks and silent spaces for prayer, meditation or reflection, taking their dietary customs into consideration when organising different events). We should also learn from each other and seek a deeper understanding on different religions thus facilitating communication and work inside the organisation. Understanding how each religion works and throwing religious bias away could make a comfortable environment for the members. In case of existent discrimination in the organisation, we have to stand up and make it clear that no injustice is tolerated against any religious group. We should recognise that diversity can improve the team and work moral.

Every member has the right to religious expression - even in their clothing choices. Women* under no circumstances should be shamed for covering or not covering themselves if they decide to do so. The choice is theirs and not a single person can make any remark on anybody’s attire.

### 2.7 Ethnicity

While racism discriminates people based on the colour of their skin, ethnic oppression stems from the negative stereotyping of certain ethnic groups that do not necessarily belong to the POC community. Oftentimes our political organisations are dominated by one ethnic group, despite different ethnic groups existing within the local social structure. This leads to political organisations with a narrow perspective. Firstly, in order to avoid ethnic oppression, we should be aware of the ethnic stereotypes present in our society and actively fight them. Thus, for example, when establishing a political agenda try to engage local ethnic communities in the debate (even if no member of your organisation belongs to them) so that you will be able to avoid false assumptions about them and include, at the same
time, their perspectives into your agenda. Moreover, study and be aware of the story of your own country and that of the ethnic groups present in your society. What are the power relations between them? Is there a history of colonial oppression? Once again you will need to first be aware of your own privilege in order to better include ethnic minorities in your organisation.

2.8 Size

Size can be a cause of oppression too. In a lot of media there is still fatphobia, in society you also see a lot of discrimination towards people who look “too skinny”. These people often face many comments on their body. Make sure not to make any comments on people’s size. This also includes comments about what they eat or telling people to go work out. People know if their weight is unhealthy and if it is, it is only their responsibility to do something about it. They often are working on the issue and it can be a real struggle for them, don’t try to discuss something this personal with anyone.

2.9 Physical deformity

A physical deformity can take many different shapes, it can be large birthmarks in unusual places or it can be missing limbs, etc. The main kind of discrimination these people face is constantly being stared at by strangers. They also have hardly any representation, not only in politics but also in mainstream media. This means people can often feel very alone in their struggles. It is important that you do not comment on these things or look at or treat these people any differently, unless these people come to you to discuss any special needs they may have. If they do have special needs, it is of course important to listen to them and help them in any way you can. When taking pictures of events you should make sure not to treat these people any differently than others (unless of course they asked to be left out of pictures or otherwise), make sure you don’t over focus on them, it can make someone feel like a freak, but under-focussing can make it feel like their presence is something that needs to be hidden.
3. **General Solutions**

3.1 **Take representation into consideration**

(e.g. when making posters for political campaigns keep in mind that there are different skin colours, sizes and disabilities, etc.). Try to think as diversely as possible because representation means a lot to each and every person within or outside the organisation. Seeing a person being represented on a poster might encourage others with the same circumstances (skin colour/disability etc.) in taking a step towards being a part of a community such as a political organisation.

3.2 **Safe(r) spaces**

Safe(r) spaces are separate rooms created for individuals who feel marginalised (e.g. members of the LGBTI+bt or FLINT [Female, Lesbian, Inter, Non-Binary, trans] community) to come together and talk with others who have similar problems, difficulties and circumstances. As mentioned above, safe spaces can also mean space for prayer, meditation and reflection and space for those who don’t feel comfortable doing certain things (e.g. eating) in front of others. To sum up, safe spaces exist to provide a safe, non-discriminative space, where people can relax and feel at ease, talk about and share their personal problems and express themselves freely. These kinds of rooms are extremely important in order to ensure every member’s mental and in some cases physical safety. These spaces might need a type of a coordinator to ensure that only the people in question (women* and minorities) can enter. The function and basic rules of the safe spaces need to be laid down to prevent any kind of misunderstanding or misuse.

3.3 **Never define a person by one characteristic** (physical deformities, skin colour, size, religion, gender identity, etc.).

Nobody is only a colour, a body part or a size, there is so much more to a person which should be recognised and cherished. Making negative remarks regarding said particularities is utterly unacceptable and should not be tolerated.

3.4 **Mind your language**

Micro-aggressions are a substantial part of oppression. They are the tiny, thoughtless, offensive things that people with privilege say to other people who do not have the same privilege, usually without the intention to offend or harm (they might even be meant as compliments or jokes), but end up doing so. Keep this in mind when you speak, and gently pull your mates up if they use this kind of language. Subtle shifts around how we discuss those around us add up to fewer discriminatory attitudes in the long run. Moreover, if someone around you points out that your action was a micro-aggression do not get defensive and offended, listen to them.
3.5 Take the time to listen and make the space for others.

Make an active effort to listen to voices different to your own. Go to panel discussions, meet organisations and watch documentaries. If you can’t find physical avenues to hear from underprivileged communities where you live, social media is a treasure trove of wonderful humans to learn from, follow and engage with. Also, keep in mind that listening can also mean stepping back. As much as you can in real life, make the space for other people to speak up about their experiences. Advocating for others’ issues doesn’t mean speaking for them.

3.6 Most importantly, reflect on your own privileges

We, as individuals, might possess certain privileges that other people do not. It is important that we recognise the “power” we have and use it in a way that’s beneficial for other members of the organisation or our community. Also it is important to remember that, at the end of the day, it is not up to other underprivileged people to educate you on their subcultures or experiences, so study and read as much as you can about other communities and people with a different background from your own!

3.7 Keep your mind open!

There might be forms of oppression you (and we) did not think about. Always be open and listen to people telling their stories of discrimination and how they are being oppressed without getting defensive.
Androgyny

What most people think the gender spectrum is

What the gender spectrum actually is
Gender Equality is not binary!
Queer-feminist approach

Part 5
1. Oppression beyond the gender binary

Nowadays, it’s widely known that feminism is needed to empower women* who are oppressed by patriarchal societies. Often, identities beyond the gender binary norms are overlooked by mainstream feminism and no attention is drawn to the specific problems and fights non-binary people face. What is often forgotten is that not only women* suffer under the patriarchal system but also people of a wide variety of gender identities that are also marginalised but cannot find a political home in a lot of organisations and feminist groups.

Many socialist organisations that developed useful tools to empower women*, including quotas, safe spaces or spokespeople for women* don’t have the knowledge or concept to actively include lesbian, inter, non-binary and trans persons in their political work.

E.g.: In an organisation, a safe space for women* is created to provide retreat during parties. A trans woman* is denied access to this room as she doesn’t fall into the narrow definition of “women*’s space” the organisation uses. Therefore, she is left without a safe space.

However, the very reason safe spaces are created is to provide a refuge from the issues created by patriarchy or other forms of marginalisation. Using “women*” as a term to define people who need safety in patriarchal structures excludes people who are often affected by multiple forms of oppression (like queerphobia or transmisogyny).

2. Way out of gender binary / heterosexual matrix

The gender binary describes a set of beliefs that conclude that there are only two genders (identities), based on two biological sexes (completely omitting intersex persons). It comes in different flavours as both conservatives and second-wave feminists subscribe to this worldview. Their conclusions vary though – conservative views don’t include gender-non-conforming individuals while radical feminist ideologies do. However, they never question the gender essentialism (XX = woman*, XY = man).

Third wave feminism and poststructuralist theory started to showcase that the whole idea of gender is, in fact, socially constructed. The social understanding and gendered expectations placed on women*, lesbians, inter, non-binary and trans people can be explained with the heterosexual matrix, a term coined by Judith Butler. She describes a social norm where the genetics and biological sex apparently inform the gender performance and desire of an individual.

A baby is born and is assigned female at birth. According to heterosexual matrix, the following expectations form – this baby is a girl and is going to grow up to be a woman*, fulfil a feminine gender role with gendered interests (care work, cooking...), perform and dress according to her assigned gender and eventually, she is going to experience heterosexual desire and have relationships and connections to men.

Any person that deviates from this norm is sanctioned. Whether an individual decides to not behave according to the gender role assigned to them, defines their gender outside of their assigned one or even the gender binary as a whole, or desires individuals of the same or similar genders – the patriarchal society and its worldview doesn’t have space for feminist & queer lived realities.
### 3. **FLINT as a term**

FLINT is an abbreviation created by autonomous queer-feminist groups to actively include lesbian, inter, non-binary and trans individuals, originating in German-speaking communities. It takes into consideration not only “women*” in a narrow sense of the word but attempts to overcome the binary differentiation between men and women* and take people affected by heteronormative patriarchal oppression into account. Fortunately, the letters easily transfer into English. Let’s take a closer look and break the individual letters in FLINT down.

**Breaking down the letters:**

**F (female)**
F includes everyone who defines themselves as a woman*. It mostly overlaps with the way many organisations define their “women*’s spaces”. Every woman* who feels safe in female-exclusive rooms and meetings is welcome and should feel safe in spaces defined as FLINT as well.

**L (lesbian)**
For some, the need for the “L” in the FLINT acronym isn’t obvious at the first glance. Some might say that FLINT should refer to gender identities only and the word “lesbian” describes someone’s sexuality. However, a look at the history of the lesbian community shows us why explicit inclusion of lesbians in spaces (and acronyms) is necessary. The fight for lesbian visibility in a world that makes women* and non-binary people in general, but also their love for each other, invisible is ongoing. Many lesbians also don’t necessarily or fully identify with “femaleness” or being women* as their lived experience and socialisation make them feel alienated from cisgender heteronormative spaces.

**I (inter)**
All inter people share the experience of their bodies not conforming to one of the dyadic (XY-male; XX-female) sexes. But other than this inter realities can cover a wide variety of experiences. Some inter people are subjected to unnecessary operations after they’re born – this constitutes massive violence against people who can’t yet decide how they want to live their lives and can be hugely traumatising as adults as their bodies have been mutilated to conform to binary stereotypes. Some find out later in life that their bodies are not in line with medicalised norms. Some identify as women* or men, others are non-binary and some describe themselves as “inter” or “diverse”. Every single one of these realities should be included by the “I” in FLINT.

**N (non-binary)**
Non-Binary people don’t or can’t identify themselves with one of the “two binary genders”. They may express a wide variety of identities, identifying in part with being male and/or female, a compound of different gender identities or they have an identity that is separate from the binary gender spectrum completely. Gender identity isn’t a female-male axis but rather a more diverse spectrum (see graphic p.38). Some non-binary people might identify as trans as their understanding of themselves and their gender has changed over their lifetime but many non-binary people don’t subscribe to this notion, instead feeling that they’ve been defying the gender binary their whole lives and there is no story of a transition or difference which is inherent to the definition of trans.

**T (trans)**
Trans is an umbrella term for people whose identity differs from the one they were assigned at birth. Both dyadic and inter people can identify as trans. Some people may understand trans as “being born in the wrong body” but many trans people don’t see it the same way. Most trans people experience dysphoria, a feeling of alienation and/or distress related to their gender but this is not necessarily body-related. On the contrary, many trans people experience social dysphoria, a distress caused by the society or even their friends and family projecting the gender roles of their assigned gender on them. This type of dysphoria gets alleviated by accepting trans people as they are and believing what they tell us. When in FLINT rooms, it is important to remember that coming out is a difficult and often dangerous process for transgender people. They often come to FLINT rooms seeking solidarity at a time when people present may still read them as “men”. When you see a person that looks like a dyadic cis man to you in a FLINT room do not react adversely immediately. Rather take a moment and think about the fact that they themselves know best if they belong in those safe spaces. When a cis woman enters a FLINT room, she will never be asked if she belongs. All the other letters in FLINT should feel the same way when they seek a safe and inclusive space.
4. Practical implementation & examples

Now that we have talked about the term FLINT, gender identities beyond a binary norm and the struggles that FLINT people face constantly in everyday life, it is time to come up with ideas and solutions for how to create an organisation that supports all FLINT people in the fight against the patriarchal norms of society.

4.1 Safe(r) spaces

Safe spaces benefit inhabitants by directly addressing their specific needs, which often go unseen and unheard in daily life. We often use the term safe_r space to highlight that unfortunately, no space can be 100% free of (internalised) systems of oppressions of outside society.

FLINT specific safe spaces often cause a feeling of confusion and a lack of understanding in cis men, as they are strictly excluded from them. FLINT people have to defend themselves, fight for themselves and validate themselves day in and day out. They face psychological and physical violence, sexual harassment or worse. Even in left youth organisations the struggle is felt. It is often not visible to men, simply because they never experience the discrimination and constant fight for visibility.

Left youth organisations are not immune to internalised sexism and gender-based violence. In fact it happens all the time. It is often simply ignored. FLINT people find themselves in an emotional and personal dilemma on many levels. Speaking the truth is often indirectly sanctioned or not seen as important. Socialist youth organisations not only have to acknowledge these issues but must also actively fight against them and constantly reflect on their stance on sexualised and gender-based violence.

But how can we implement safe spaces into the structure of our organisations? It doesn’t take a lot of resources to create a safe space – a room and some time are all it takes, so any organisation that is able to hold meetings is able to implement safe spaces and exclusive meetings as well. It can, however, be a challenge to convince activists of the need for these spaces and implement them in the understanding of our political work.

For example at events or parties: If there is a room that might not be needed for the party or event itself, an additional room can be easily made a FLINT exclusive safe space by putting a sign on the door and a schedule of people who oversee the room. The people who are in charge of the room can stay for one to two hours before another person takes over. They shouldn’t be overly drunk and should look out for the needs and wishes of the people who seek a safe space inside the room. A calm and quite atmosphere should create a different setting to the main party where people can relax and get some distance from whatever made them enter the space. It is recommended to offer books and magazines, pillows or blankets to ensure the feeling of comfort and safety.

On weekend trips organised by socialist youth organisations such as seminars or workshops it is mandatory to create a safe space such as a FLINT exclusive room that functions just as those at normal parties. At seminars that don’t allow for much privacy, it is essential for FLINT people to be able to recharge and connect with each other in case of harassment, sexist discussions or feeling uncomfortable/overwhelmed. What we want to highlight here is that these rooms don’t work without one or more people in charge of it and feeling responsible for whatever happens inside. In addition, an awareness team can manage the situation outside of safe spaces.
4.2 Closed FLINT and queer meetings

To ensure that FLINT and queer people can connect and organise themselves in our organisations, they need rooms of their own. There are numerous ways to do this, but a very effective way can be regular exclusive meetings for these groups.

These meetings are not here to make others feel excluded but to create a space of safety. It should work against the dynamics of male dominance in youth organisations that can lead to FLINT and queer people being afraid of speaking their minds and claiming room in discussions for themselves.

For example, closed FLINT and queer meetings can focus on sharing knowledge about the struggles of the specific communities but also on know-how that enables FLINT and queer people to achieve equal footing with cis men in male-dominated fields.

**EXAMPLE FROM PRACTICE**

In our organisation, themed meetings about socialist and left ideologies tend to be very male dominated and the male participants tend to take the room for themselves. The FLINT people present often don’t say much. This isn’t caused by a lack of knowledge but rather the fear that their knowledge is somehow less or incomplete. This idea is suggested by the fact that the leading political scientists we see in our everyday life through the media are overwhelmingly male. Through organising a FLINT-exclusive meeting on these topics FLINT people can share their knowledge with each other and experience an exchange without feeling like an impostor. The newly gained self-esteem and awareness of their own competence makes FLINT people more likely to share their point of view and bring their perspective into how we work with left ideologies as an organisation.

Other topics suitable for FLINT/queer exclusive meetings: Rhetoric, technological skills, car workshops (if the organisation uses one), Photoshop and video editing skills.
4.3 Awareness training

In order to implement all the strategies and concepts mentioned above it is necessary to provide awareness trainings for all activists in the organisations. It is okay for new activists not to have advanced knowledge of feminist and queer topics. It is however important to look after our FLINT and queer members and ensure that they don’t have to carry this burden and invest most of their resources into educating new members and coping with sexist/homophobic/transphobic statements.

It is fundamental that basic awareness trainings are fully incorporated in the organisational structure and all new activists get the know-how they need to engage in reflected socialist political work. The trainings should be held once or twice a year and if the need for one arises.

Some of the topics that should be covered include: The history of the feminist movement, the importance of an intersectional approach and FLINT inclusivity, power of definition (can be found in “How to fight sexualised violence” part of this toolkit), sexualised and gender-based violence, the need for exclusive spaces and toxic masculinity.

4.4 Strengthening solidarity in the organisation

There is no socialism without queer-feminism. It is important for the feminist FLINT and queer work in our organisations that there are closed meetings. At the same time the feminist work concerns all members and activists. Solidarity is key to progressive feminist work and activism. This means that the concepts and strategies are not constantly questioned or doubted. Instead they should be accepted and implemented into everyday life in youth organisations. Solidarity can be created in the awareness trainings and in regular conversations and exchanges.

In some organisations, the closed FLINT and/or queer groups also organise campaigns or events to make the wider public aware of their struggles and political demands. Many FLINT and queer people experience a double load because of this though – apart from making sure that they are invested, active and respected in their organisation as a whole (where they are often held to a double standard), they have to find the time and emotional energy to engage in queer-feminist activism.

In an organisation working with the principle of solidarity, cis male/heterosexual activists should feel that they should also contribute in these fights. However, this doesn’t mean that they take away the space from FLINT/queer people and take the stage, but rather they should contribute through organisational work and taking care of the more mundane tasks of political work.

4.5 FLINT spokesperson

The strategies and concepts of the feminist work are usually the responsibility of a women* spokesperson. As progressive socialist organisations should strive for the inclusion of as many people and lived realities as possible. Keeping in mind that this can’t just happen overnight, it is an ongoing process in which new struggles arise every day. Nevertheless, it is the only way to the equal and social world we are working and fighting for.

One strategy to create an inclusive organisation is to implement the concept of a FLINT spokesperson. (Again, keeping in mind that this is a long process that might need years to become reality) This means that every person who suffers from the structural oppression of the patriarchal system that we live in is, or should be, included in the feminist work and also be represented. One person can never combine every type of discrimination within themselves and they aren't obligated to. At the same time, this function helps shift the attention to lived realities of FLINT members in our organisations.
How to fight gender-based and sexualised violence
1. The problem

1.1 Introduction: How women* are affected by male* violence

Whether at home, on the streets or during war, gender-based violence is a human rights violation of pandemic proportions that takes place in public and private spaces.

- 1 in 3 women* experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, most frequently by an intimate partner.

- Globally, 7% of women* have been sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner.

- Only 52% of women* married or in a union freely make their own decisions about sexual relations, contraceptive use and health care.

- 1 in 2 women* killed worldwide were killed by their partners or family in 2012; while only 1 out of 20 men* were killed under similar circumstances.

- 71% of all human trafficking victims worldwide are women* and girls*, and 3 out of 4 of these women* and girls* are sexually exploited.

- Worldwide, almost 750 million women* and girls* alive today were married before their 18th birthday.

- 200 million women* and girls* have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM) 11

- Eighty-two per cent of women* parliamentarians reported having experienced some form of psychological violence while serving their terms. Nearly half of those surveyed (44 per cent) reported having received death, rape, assault or abduction threats towards them or their families. Sixty-five per cent had been subjected to sexist remarks, primarily by male colleagues in parliament and from opposing parties as well as their own.12

Resources by country: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/browse/genvio

1.2 Difficulty of stepping up

Stepping up or speaking out after suffering from gender-based or sexualised violence is often a difficult task for most women*. It takes courage, mainly because women* are held to a high standard after allegations of violence are raised and due to the possible consequences this action can have: many women* are threatened with having their careers ended and their lives and behaviour after an attack are scrutinised. Lastly, they are at times also held responsible for the violence they are victims of.

When an accusation is made, women* must prove everything that took place through an enormous amount of evidence, therefore side-lining the perpetrator and giving them “the benefit of the doubt”. They are also questioned about their behaviour and responses during the time of the attack, which unavoidably implies that they may have provoked the attack itself.

Further, cases that have the interest of the media, like the #MeToo movement, have overshadowed cases that take place on a daily basis. While visibility is necessary for the feminist movement in order to fight these attacks, we should not forget that there is at times a lack of conversation, overlooking those cases that do not make it to headlines because they do not involve famous people.

1.3 Systematic and structural inefficiencies

In this chapter we will briefly discuss how structural and systematic issues within youth organisations can lead to FLINT (female, lesbian, intersex, non-binary, trans)-people being exposed to structural and gender-based violence. As youth organisations are not a closed micro-cosmos, the patriarchal structures that influence society are also part of our organisations. They can be reflected in the structure, the means of participation and the ways of networking. To overcome the issues many youth organisations still face we will firstly outline were the roots of the issues can be found.

1.3.1 Lack of structure and institutionalised processes in organisations

Firstly, as mentioned before, patriarchy makes it difficult for people affected by violence to come forward. Society barely offers any solutions or safe ways to talk about incidents and experiences with violence. As every statement by the affected person is scrutinised and questioned over and over, the person reporting the incident can become discouraged and re-traumatized. And even after all the scrutiny and questioning, most of the time the perpetrator won’t be held accountable. This in return discourages any other person from stepping up - and obviously this carries over into our organisations as well. So, if there aren’t any set-in-place mechanisms, F*L*I*N*T*-people who come forward are faced with a lot of uncertainty: Will people believe me? What will happen? Will anything happen? Often, people faced with gender-based violence in youth organisations don’t know who to go to. If there is no designated responsibility for tackling issues like that then a person who wants to report anything must first play a guessing game of who to trust and who to turn to. This further discourages reporting on incidents which in turn makes the issue less visible.

1.3.2 Lack of action and the protection of men* over the safety of women*

Even if a person reports harassment and/or violence, there is no guarantee that anything will happen. A lot of the time people who experienced sexualised and gender-based violence in organisations are faced with their perpetrator everyday - and the organisation, while often concerned, won’t take any action. With a lack of protocols and planned out measures, taking action rarely happens or takes much longer. Furthermore, in society, men* and their feelings are often prioritised over believing women*'s stories. Questions about how the accusations could ruin a man*'s career are usually broadly discussed. This also influences youth organisations. F*L*I*N*T*-people are taught to think about their abuser’s career and life before they take the step of talking about it. This is especially the case if the perpetrator strives to have a political career. Youth organisations should be particularly aware of these patterns in society.
2. **Theoretical background**

2.1 Working definitions

First, we need to define what gender-based violence and sexualised violence are. In this toolkit gender-based violence is used as a kind of “umbrella term” while sexualised violence is a distinct form of violence. It most commonly occurs within gender-based violence, therefore these two categories are closely related.

Gender-based violence (GBV) or gendered violence, is the term used to denote harm inflicted upon individuals and groups that is connected to normative understandings of their gender. The terms “gender-based violence” (GBV) and “violence against women*” are often used interchangeably, since most gender-based violence is perpetrated by men against women*. GBV, however, includes violence against men, boys, and sexual minorities or those with gender-nonconforming identities. As such, violence against women* (VAW) is one type of GBV. Violence against the other groups mentioned is often rooted in the same gender inequalities and harmful gender norms.13

GBV takes many forms, including sexual, physical, and psychological abuse. It occurs in the home, on the streets, in schools, workplaces, farm fields, and refugee camps, during times of peace as well as in conflicts and crises. Intimate partner violence is one of the most common forms of GBV; it refers to behaviour by a current or previous partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours. Such violence both reflects and reinforces underlying gender-based inequalities.

Violence comes in many shapes and forms. It is not simply someone punching someone, but can be more subtle, more long term. Either way, it is damaging to the person experiencing it. In the following section, we will outline different forms of violence.

**Physical violence**
Any act which causes physical harm as a result of unlawful physical force. Physical violence can take the form of, among others, assault, deprivation of liberty and manslaughter.

**Sexualised violence**
Any sexual act performed on an individual without their consent. Sexual violence can take the form of rape or sexual assault, but it includes many other forms of violence and encompasses all forms of unwanted sexual contact. Sexualised violence is an overarching term used to describe any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality.

It is any non-consensual sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwelcome sexual comments, advances or other acts of sexual harassment, or other act directed against a person’s sexuality usually using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting.14

**Psychological violence**
Any act which causes psychological harm to an individual. Psychological violence can take the form of, for example, coercion, defamation, verbal insult or harassment.

**Economic violence**
Any act or behaviour which causes economic harm to an individual. Economic violence can take the form of, for example, property damage, restricting access to financial resources, education or the labour market, or not complying with economic responsibilities, such as alimony.

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13 [https://www.vawresourceguide.org/terminology](https://www.vawresourceguide.org/terminology)

2.2 Feminist analysis of patriarchal structures and how it causes violence

2.2.1 Structure and system – the patriarchy

The concept of the patriarchy refers to the stratification of power and privilege along the lines of gender that can be observed by many objective measures and at many positions, including but not limited to: head of the family unit, leaders of social groups, boss in the workplace, and heads of government.

Feminist theorists have expanded the definition of patriarchal society to describe a systemic bias against women*. As second-wave feminists examined society during the 1960s, they did observe households headed by women* and female leaders. They were, of course, concerned with whether this was uncommon. More significant, however, was the way society perceived women* in power as an exception to a collectively held view of women*'s “role” in society. Rather than saying that individual men oppressed women*, most feminists saw that oppression of women* came from the underlying bias of a patriarchal society.

However, we cannot regard this as something of the past or as an isolated occurrence. A patriarchal society is nothing but the society we all know nowadays. Since the patriarchy is a structural and transversal system that affects everyone regardless of age, gender, race and social class, it cannot be dismissed as something from which one can escape.

That being said, patriarchal violence explains how a powerful individual holds control over others through different forms of violence. It describes violence that is connected to sexism and sexist thinking, to male domination.

2.2.2 Toxic masculinity

Toxic masculinity refers to a set of practices and behaviour in which we can find the following:

- Suppressing emotions or masking distress.
- Maintaining an appearance of hardness.
- Violence as an indicator of power.

In other words: Toxic masculinity is what can come of teaching boys that they can’t express emotion openly; that they have to be “tough all the time”; that anything other than that makes them “feminine” or weak.15

This way of socialising masculinity pushes boys, from their childhood, to accept and display gender-appropriate behaviours according to the ideal male code. If said ideal male code introduces negative connotations, such as the restriction of emotional expression and the pressure to conform to expectations of dominance and aggression, it may heighten the potential for boys to engage in general acts of violence including, but not limited to, bullying, assault, and/or physical and verbal aggression.16

2.3 Theoretical models to end patriarchal structures

Feminist discourse has created many models on how to overcome patriarchy and how to counterbalance the effects it has on everyday life. While we won’t be able to cover larger models of big societal change in this toolkit, we can offer three models that can be implemented in organisations. These models help to ensure the empowerment of FLINT-people so that they can step forward in case an incident occurs. But they also are a good way of preventing sexualised and gender-based violence.

2.3.1 Consent

Consent is defined as the act of willingly and verbally agreeing to engage in specific sexual conduct. The perception of the exact point at which a sexual interaction begins can be highly subjective, therefore, it’s better to ask too often rather than not at all. Even a slight touch can be experienced as a boundary crossing: it is better to ask! Boundary crossing and sexual violence can be (Re)traumatising - therefore it is important to communicate with partner(s) about every sexual act. By talking, both parties can learn how far the other(s) want(s) to go. In this concept “no” always means no, but also only “yes” means yes. Silence is not consent!

Consent can and should be enriching - namely through the knowledge of what the other person feels in the moment. It is a positive approach to sexuality and everything to do with it, instead of making assumptions and waiting for a no. Consent is for everybody and conveys a practical and trustful way of dealing with sexuality. It is about finding a respectful and dignified way of dealing with one another without overstepping boundaries.

Material, posters and much more: http://defma.blogsport.de/material/

2.3.2 Power of definition

The concept of the power of definition basically means that everybody’s boundaries are different, where one’s boundaries are can only be defined by the person themselves. For one person a slight touch can already be the crossing of a boundary where they might feel uncomfortable while another person defines the boundaries as starting with a kiss.

The power of definitions says that when dealing with sexual assault we shouldn’t assume the boundaries of the affected person. People who are e.g. part of the trust team shouldn’t set the boundaries of the person turning to them. Sentences like: “that isn’t that bad”, “it was just a kiss” have no place in a discussion about sexual assault.

Only the person the incident happened to can say if it was assault, if they felt like their boundaries were overstepped. Nobody else can be the judge of that.

2.4 Partiality

Impartiality is a principle of justice holding that decisions should be based on objective criteria. In cases of sexual assault and violence in organisations it is important to know that impartiality can never be the case. Yet still, it is often aimed for. Board members may play judge after “gathering evidence” and “listening to both sides”. Not only can invasive questions and disbelief re-traumatise the victim - it also puts a lot of pressure on the person who came forward in the first place.

The concept of partiality tries to invert the thought of neutral judging. It basically says that the organisation always sides with the victim rather than the perpetrator - in other words: guilty until proven otherwise. The person who comes forward is asked what the organisation needs to do in order for her*him*them* to feel safe again. Those wishes are accepted and implemented rather than starting a faux investigation on whether the person is telling “the truth”.


3. Practical examples and implementation

3.1 Organisations

The following examples are approaches implemented in some youth organisations already. All examples here are examples that work well for the organisations using them. They can serve as guidelines or ideas on how to implement anti-sexist tools in your own organisation.

3.1.1 Practical anti-sexism

To ensure that anti-sexism is lived and embedded in the organisation’s structure, consent, power of definition and partiality should be included in everything the organisation does.

How?
Here are some ways which can help implement the above mentioned models:

- **Awareness/sensitivity training at each event** e.g. video on what consent is, put up flyers in bathrooms (http://defma.blogspot.de/images/en_v2_3_p.pdf).

- **Sensitivity trainings for all people who carry responsibility**: People in positions of responsibility have to be trained in how to handle cases, how to intervene and how to ensure no sexist behaviour is accepted. This requires training and education on the models of consent and power of definition at the least.

- **Trainings for all activists twice a year**: If an organisation has the goal to live by the anti-sexist models of consent, partiality and power of definition, every member of the organisation must be familiar with the models. Therefore, sensitivity trainings or something similar are very useful. There should be room to explore and discuss the issues at hand.

- **Code of conduct at each meeting and event**: Another method is to implement a code of conduct at each meeting and event. This can happen by before starting a meeting, all of the attending members collecting “rules” for the meeting and within these rules anti-sexist models can be written down and called into everyone’s consciousness.

3.1.2 Safe spaces

At every bigger event there should be safe spaces FLINT-people can go to. This includes parties, weekend seminars, etc. The FLINT-specific safe space is exclusive, meaning no cis-men* can enter. Within the room there should always be a person who is responsible – a designated person who is in the room at all times – usually every one or two hours that changes. Ideally there are two or more people who are responsible. The room needs to be attended so that people who seek the safe space have someone to turn to.

Furthermore, there should be FLINT-specific safe spaces regardless of an event. Meaning, FLINT-people should have the opportunity to meet up and discuss topics among themselves. How these “FLINT-meetings” look is up to every organisation. Some examples we gathered are: reading of left ideology, self-care room, discussion about any topic, working on statements concerning political issues e.g. sex work, networking events just for women* etc.

This ensures that the ties between FLINT-people grow stronger and trust networks are being built – meaning that people are more likely to speak up or talk to someone about issues with GBV or sexism within the organisation.
3.1.3 Trust groups or teams

To ensure that members of the organisation know where to turn to in case anything happens regarding GBV, each organisation should have a trust team or trust groups. These can be led by women* that are in an official position or well-known members. They should feel responsible to ensure everyone is safe. But most importantly their existence should be communicated to all members: each member should know who the team or person is and there should be an easy way to reach them.

- Put up flyers with information about the team
- Tell new members about it
- Have trust team visit sub-groups regularly

3.1.4 Feminist structures and structural reforms

To ensure long term solutions, organisations must work on their structure to empower and include more women*/FLINTpeople.

- FLINT/women*s/Equality spokesperson must become compulsory on each level.
  This ensures feminism is always a part of the discussion as well as automatically installing trust teams within the organisation.

- Awareness team at every event.
  At each event there should be an awareness team. The team should be announced by hanging up posters with their contact details. The awareness team must not get drunk and must have an eye on the crowd and talk to people who seem to be alone or uncomfortable. In locations with dark corners etc. they also check up on areas that seem unsafe and secluded.

- Chat groups/channels with information.
  One easy way to ensure networking and building of feminist structures is to implement women*-only chat groups. They can either be a general group for all non-male* members to spread information, plan events etc., or even thematic chat groups on certain topics.

- Institutionalised structures
  Many organisations have some form of institutionalised structure for feminist work. This can be a national women's* committee, a local women's* group or FLINT-group, a feminist chapter of the organisation, etc. Structures like these ensure the empowerment of non-male* people to the extent where the implementation of anti-sexist structures and measurements becomes easier.

3.1.5 Guidelines on how to handle cases: ensuring partiality

To prevent non-action and confusion, organisations should work on guidelines on how to proceed in a case of sexualised or gender-based violence and harassment is reported. This should include formal steps that can be taken but also should include the concept of partiality. Meaning, it should be written down that the needs of the affected person come first in any case: that person is the one who can say what they need and want from the organisation.

One way of implementing guidelines like this:

- Worked on within safe space (FLINT-meetings).
- Carried into the whole organisation through discussions and information events.
- Voted on to be compulsory at an official board meeting or equivalent.
3.2 Society

3.2.1 Awareness campaigns, activism and education

Education on civic duty and values as well as the different forms that inequality and discrimination can take, without gender-based bias, will help transform society through this translation of the feminist message. Education on these values is needed to guarantee a free and equal future for generations to come, profusely rejecting gender roles that ultimately spark gender and sexualised violence.

However, education in schools will not end inequality by itself. Our organisations need to keep pushing awareness within our immediate societies through campaigns and activism. We must not stop at internationally recognised dates for this issue (like March 8 or November 23) but make it a part of our usual activity, embracing it as one part of the main characteristics that define our organisations.

Therefore, we must touch upon all topics related to gender-based and sexualised violence: from intimate partner violence and violence outside the partner relationship, to street, school, work and cyber harassment, female genital mutilation, child marriage, violence during armed conflicts and so on. Activism is a fundamental part of our organisations so we should not forget about those types of violence that do not take place in our immediate surroundings.

3.2.2 Push topic in mother party

Mother parties have to embrace feminism as one of the pillars of their own existence - there is no socialism without feminism. Every policy proposed and promoted by our mother parties should include a gender perspective. Parties should take part in demonstrations and collaborate with feminist associations and collectives towards the creation of policies and actions that will end inequality.

3.2.3 Push for legal reforms and actual change

Legal reforms are needed in order to ensure that inequality ceases to exist. Regarding gender-based and sexualised violence, reforms in the penal code are needed in order to differentiate these kinds of violence from other types of crimes, as the social grounds on which they stand (sexism and the patriarchy) are inherently different and induce special harm to women*. Special laws and specifically appointed judges and courts for this topic are needed, in order to guarantee that this scourge to progress and society is fought and eventually put to an end.
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