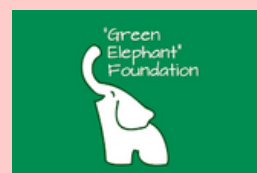


WOMAN

Working On Mastering Adult Nonviolence

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STUDY VISIT TO POLAND

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Study Visit to Poland Feb. 2022

I participated in a 3-day training in Poland that was centred around stereotyping women but also LGBTIQ+ communities and other marginalised groups.

After having done some basic awareness raising exercises on 'Tolerance' and 'Discrimination' we discussed how discrimination affects our and other people's lives and what we can do about it. For example, we talked about refugee women who are a victim of gender based violence due to tribal conflict in their home country and have escaped to a European country. Many assumed European countries uphold Human Rights, but to their disappointment they're faced with discrimination due to their background, the colour of skin, etc. (i.e. intersectional discrimination). In such circumstances, all agreed that a Safe Space, a social network of people with the same background, and access to the legal system is of primary importance.

In another exercise we analysed stereotyping of women through fairy tales, art, etc. and if and how these affect us in our daily lives. Apart from the well known general depiction of a white, slim, long haired, kind, young woman who has not much purpose in life other than marrying a rich, young man with a high status, and one who is mostly pre-occupied with domestic work and taking care of her babies, other interesting subliminal messages were explored: a woman being kissed by a man without her consent as for example can be seen in Snow white and in The Sleeping Beauty. 'Beauty and the Beast' seems to be portraying the Stockholm Syndrome where a woman falls in love with her captor. Another important factor when talking about stereotyping in art, movies, fairy tales, etc. is that the producers or painters are almost always white men. In fact, female artists (painters, authors) in recent history were forced to use male names in order for their work to be taken seriously. This reminds me of migrants with a non-Western background using Western names in their CV's to make sure their job applications are taken into consideration.

We discussed some gender equality gaps and struggles in the different countries and policy measures taken to close those gaps. In Spain and Italy for example it is mandatory for employers to develop a Gender Equality Action Plan to close the big gap of male-female employment. When it comes to gender based violence, Spain has a victim-centred approach, which means that the first action is to detain the partner of the woman, so he stays in prison overnight until the judge makes a decision.

In the UK a Health Action Plan is developed specifically for women which gives them free medical services such as breast cancer screening. In Poland conservatism is increasing and many legislation to protect women's- and LGBTIQ+'s human rights are reversed. In The Netherlands women are champion in parttime working which is, among other things, said to be withholding them in occupying higher positions. When it comes to women's Human Rights it is mostly migrant women who are structurally subjected to exclusion and power abuse in the Netherlands. This is reflected for example in their high unemployment rate, despite having the same educational level and skills.

Progress in women's Human Rights is not obtained easily and when there is, there is no guarantee these rights will be upheld. It remains necessary that civil society documents and monitors the implementation of Human Rights to create a gender balanced future.

