

Youths in the Forefront of Gender Equality

The programme “A Sea of Words”, created by the European Institute of the Mediterranean in partnership with the Anna Lindh Foundation national networks, builds spaces to produce intercultural meetings between youths with the aim of promoting exchanges of experiences and ideas, identifying shared values in the region, and overcoming the stereotypes that divide us. Its objective is to provide youths with tools enabling them to play an outstanding role in the societies of the future and actively foster the values of diversity and coexistence in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The project encourages intercultural dialogue and exchange of knowledge by the describing the experiences and concerns of youths. Since 2008, each edition has addressed a different issue such as sustainable development, democracy and citizenship, gender equality, radicalisation, climate change, and the 2030 Agenda goals. The motto of the 2022 edition is: “Youths in the Forefront of Gender Equality”.

Every day there are more youths sharing the goal of gender equality, although we are still far from changing minds. The new generations, highly committed, get involved by transforming a reality that continues to permit forms of gender-based discrimination: sexist stereotypes, the pay gap, the difficulty of reaching political, economic and social responsibility, and especially gender-based violence. In 2022, we wanted our authors to feel free to write, based on their experiences or through fiction, about aspects related to their daily reality linked to overcoming these discriminations.

The short story is a tool that enables an introspective analysis that can express convictions, experiences and profound imaginaries. The literary message can contribute personal views, whether one’s own or those of the societies in which we live, while promoting the rights of women to fight against gender inequalities throughout the Euro-Mediterranean region.

With an extensive participation on the two shores of the Mediterranean, the international jury selected the stories of ten youths who came to Barcelona to share their experiences and desires in a series of workshops. Out of these ten awardees, Asad Gabi Rahji (Syria) received the first prize for “Stories Seeking Shelters”, a compilation of five micro-stories inspired by the author’s life in Syria, where gender inequality and honour play a key role. The second prize was for Tatiana Rakočević (Montenegro) for “Give Birth to Me”, and the third prize went to Amer K. Almassri (Palestine) for “One Does Not Equal One”.



Asad Gabi Rahdi (right), first winner of A Sea of Words contest 2022.