

UNESCO's Academy of Young Women 2017

Newsletter

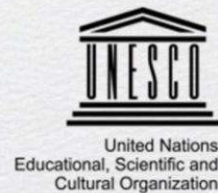
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2017

UNESCO'S ACADEMY
OF YOUNG WOMEN

**The Fight Against
xenophobia
extremism and
aggression**

Bucharest Romania
2017 August 23 / 29

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Comisia Națională a României
pentru UNESCO

Romanian National Commission
for UNESCO

CARMEN EMANUELA POPA
#againstviolence

Interview with Adina Rențea
Media Coordinator
UNESCO's Academy of Young Women 2017



Q: As the Media Coordinator for UNESCO's Academy of Young Women 2017, could you tell us more about your previous collaborations with the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO?

A: My first time working with the Commission was in 2016, when the Romanian National Commission for UNESCO, together with the European Federation of UNESCO Clubs, Centres and Associations, organised various events at Art Safari, the biggest annual contemporary art exhibition in Romania. These centred around the celebration of 60 years since Romania joined UNESCO, and included a debate with the Romanian Minister of Education and various UNESCO Paris officials.

Q: What is the media and visibility strategy for this project?

A: Firstly, this pilot-project has been approved by UNESCO Paris, which makes us all the more determined to create a professional and consistent media image. The Academy will gather young participants from over 10 countries in Europe and Asia, which makes it a truly global occasion. Moreover, we have the support of the Youth Centre of the City of Bucharest and the Romanian Cultural Institute, two very prestigious organisations here in Romania. In addition to this, the product of the Academy will be a journal which we aim to circulate both locally and internationally, including at the UNESCO General Conference in Paris in November 2017 and the European branches of the Romanian Cultural Institute.

Q: How is the Academy of Young Women different from other similar projects?

A: The projects offers a new perspective and new solutions to the problem of gender equality, by sharing ideas for development based on universal respect for all human rights, whether economic, social, cultural, political or civil. Its main goal is eliminating xenophobia, extremism and aggression of any kind.

Module #1: Attitudes against Extremism and Violence



THE FACILITATOR

Andreea Buzec is a project manager and consultant for the Partners Foundation for Local Development. As a trainer for the NGO, which has delivered over 700 trainings in 50 countries on 5 continents, she has designed and led multiple workshops on discrimination and hate speech, human rights, activism, advocacy and coalition building. With her ample experience in acceptance and cooperation strategies, she will introduce participants to effective mechanisms through which we can encourage and assume pro-active attitudes for a more non-violent, gender-equal society.



THE MODULE

Attitudes against Extremism and Violence will focus on ways to create and encourage pro-active attitudes and behaviours when it comes to all types of extremism and violence. This module will explore different means to create partnerships and solidarity networks, starting with the education of children and young people to take action in such circumstances. The course will also emphasize the importance of diversity and human cohesion.



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How are extremism and violence connected to gender issues?



“VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN”

It is common to hear the phrase “*violence against women*”, but what does the expression entail? Renzetti and Bergen, in *Violence Against Women*¹, focus on 5 types of aggressive manifestations, from rape and physical assaults, to marital violence, the fear of having an “unsafe conduct” in public places, stalking, and workplace harassment.



But what is the common denominator of these different types of violence? It is not the infliction of physical pain, as harassment can be verbal and stalking can occur despite a lack of physical contact between the stalker and the victim. The answer comes when we perceive violence as a social rather than material problem. As Renzetti and Bergen explain, it has only been within the past 30 years that violence against women has been recognized as a social problem.¹ This has not been a consequence of gender-based violence being a new issue; indeed, female aggression has been going on for centuries. Researchers’ new approach shifted the spotlight from blaming women for their experiences to questioning how society’s gender norms influence the high rate of violence directed at women.

¹ Claire M Renzetti and Raquel Kennedy Bergen, *Violence Against Women* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

FROM VIOLENCE TO EXTREME VIOLENCE

Sussan Tahmasebi, a women's rights and civil society activist, co-founder of the International Civil Society Action Network, believes that violence against women and extremism are intrinsically linked.² In this view, countering and preventing violent extremism should be a top priority for international community since extremists distort religion, for example, to justify violence in their quest to gain and maintain political power or access to resources.

Extremists specifically and strategically target women and their efforts to ensure equality and rights, accusing them of having a Western-imposed agenda or furthering the injustices of the Western colonial rulers. For example, it was observed that Libyan extremists focused their attention and violence on women, arguing that women appearing in public places such as coffee shops were against traditional values and beliefs.



Many disregard such attitudes as belonging to non-European societies and the past; indeed, Western countries have legally and socially distanced themselves from such discriminatory behaviour against women. However, as Tomova observes, such traditionalist and violence-legitimising views can also be seen among ethnic minorities such as Roma populations throughout Europe.³ They are often culturally and socially separated from the majority due to faulty integration strategies, and thus continue to follow aggressive practices towards women, such as forced child marriage, domestic abuse and violence, and preventing women from having access to education.

²Sussan Tahmasebi, "Violence Against Women And Extremism Are Intrinsically Linked: Overlooking This Puts Rights At Risk", *Opendemocracy*, 2017, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/sussan-tahmasebi/violence-against-women-extremism>.

³ Ilona Ivanova Tomova, *The Gypsies: In The Transition Period* (Sofia: International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, 1995).



Module #2: Intercultural Education

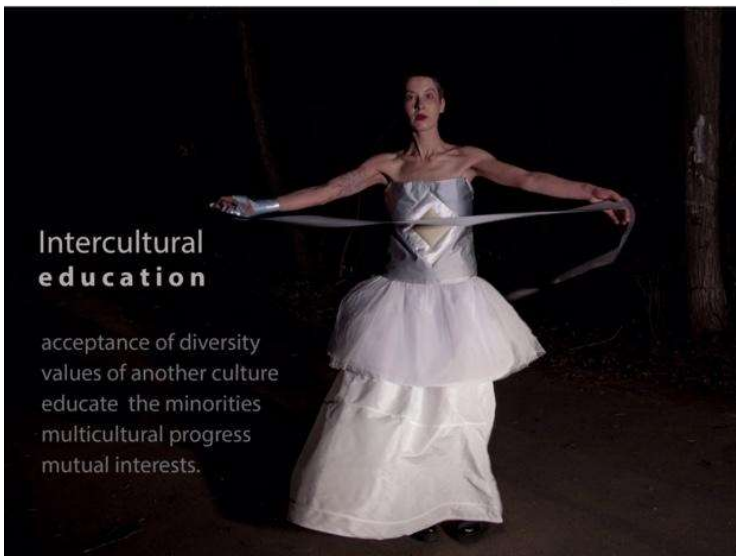
THE FACILITATOR

Rodica Precupețu is an independent expert in human rights, national minorities, interethnic and intercultural dialogue. She is a former advisor to the Romanian Government in the Interethnic Relations Department, where she led various tolerance-promoting projects such as Romania's participation in the UN Alliance of Civilizations .



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THE MODULE

Intercultural Education will focus on the idea that, although we find ourselves in an era of fast societal globalization, there are still obstacles and cultural gaps between many groups of people and, very often, differences that create conflict and even mass aggression. Considering that from 2015 Bucharest is a member of the network-project called *Intercultural*

Cities ran by the Council of Europe, this theme will be well debated and discussed by the young participants in the very heart of Romania's capital.



Interculturality in Education: A New Beginning?

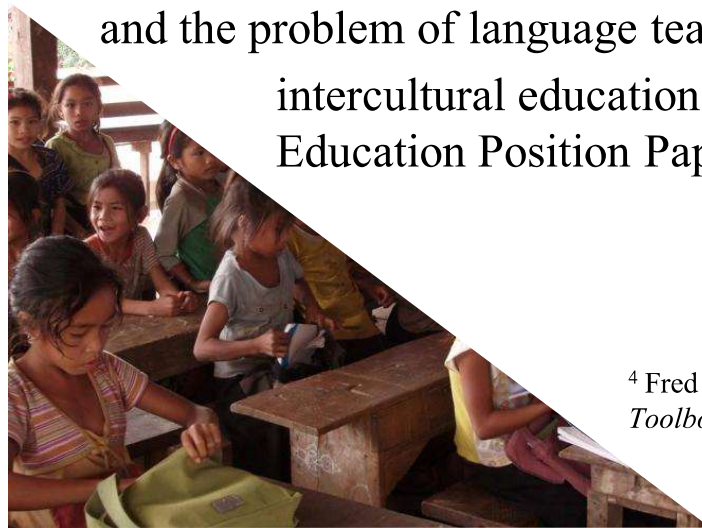
WHAT IS INTERCULTURALITY?

Although people have been transcending national, regional, linguistic and social borders since the beginning of time, the meaning of *interculturality* has yet to be pinned down definitively. “Intercultural” could denote interaction, context or the recognition of power relations. It can also signify intersectionality, that is, how different identities beyond race, ethnicity, gender and language can cross between populations and cultures.⁴

Above all else, there are two main points to keep in mind when engaging with intercultural studies: firstly, *interculturality is a point of view, not a given*; secondly, “*my intercultural*” might not imply the same as “*your intercultural*”.

EDUCATION AT THE CROSSROAD OF CULTURES

Intercultural education cannot be just a simple “add-on” to the regular curriculum. It needs to concern the learning environment as a whole as well as dimensions of the educational process such teacher training, languages of instruction and student interactions. The issue of languages of instruction and the problem of language teaching are crucial elements of effective intercultural education and have been described in the UNESCO Education Position Paper “Education in a Multilingual World”.⁵



⁴ Fred Dervin, *Interculturality In Education: A Theoretical And Methodological Toolbox* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

⁵ UNESCO, *UNESCO Guidelines On Intercultural Education* (Paris: UNESCO, 2006).

PRINCIPLES OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION



1. Respect the **cultural identity** of the learner through the provision of culturally appropriate and responsive quality education

- incorporate the learner's histories, knowledge and technologies, value systems and cultural aspirations
- develop respect for the learner's identity



2. Provide every learner with the cultural knowledge attitudes and skills necessary to achieve active and **full participation in society**

- eliminate all forms of discrimination in the educational system
 - provide equal opportunities for participation in the learning process



3. Foster respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations

- understand the necessity for international solidarity and cooperation
- respect different patterns of thinking

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Ana Georgescu, *editor*

Andreea Mane, *editor*

Iulia Bucur, *editor*

Carmen Emanuela Popa,
designer/ visual artist

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