**A14** Activity: **HEROINES AND HEROES**

*Themes* : gender, discrimination and intolerance

*Objectives:*

* to reflect on why there are different perspectives on historical events
* to develop skills of critical analysis
* to foster curiosity, open-mindedness and a sense of justice

*Materials*: paper and pens ( one blue, one red per participant) ; flipchart paper and markers

*Instructions:*

1. Give the students five minutes to think about the question :”who are your heroines or heroes?”. These can be any type from national heroes/ heroines to heroes/heroines from comic books, films, pop stars, sport celebrities.
2. Hand out the paper and pens and ask each student to draw two columns. In the first column they should write, using the red pen, the names of three or four heroines and a short description of who they are and what they did. Underneath they should write key words to describe the characteristics they associate with heroines in general.
3. Repeat the process, using the blue pen, for three or four heroes. Write the information on the second column.
4. Ask the students to get into small groups to share their choices of heroines and heroes. Ask the group to choose four most worthy heroines and four heroes.
5. Write the names of each group in two columns on the flipchart. Add the key words that describe the characteristics.
6. Discuss the list of characteristics and the use of heroines and heroes as role models and the extent to which they are gender stereotypes.
7. Ask the students to choose two people they admire, without telling them that they should choose one female and one male.

*Debriefing and evaluation:*

Review the activity and ask them what they have learnt about heroes and heroines.

Talk about stereotypes and how they influence our perceptions and actions.

* What kind of people are heroines and heroes? ( ordinary or kings)
* What were the differences and similarities between the two lists of characteristics?
* What do the heroines /heroes stand for? Are the values the same for both or there are differences?
* Ask them to count whether there are more men than women or more women than men on their lists. Does this have any significance?
* What do people understand by the word „ stereotype’? How true are these ? Are stereotypes always negative?
* Do they or the society have general stereotypes and expectations of men and women?
* In what way does gender stereotyping deny people their human rights?
* Stereotyped expectations often act as barriers to both men and women and limit their choices and options. What gender-related barriers have they experienced at home, school or anywhere else?
* What can we do about these barriers? Can they identify strategies to break away from cultural norms and values related to masculinity and femininity?

*Tips:*

Introduce the meanings of the words: „ heroines” and „ heroes” carefully. Don’t forget to underline that heroines/heroes are role models.

At point 5 , you should accept all contributions from the small groups and write everything on the flip chart. If someone suggests terms like „ masculine” or „ feminine” , you should accept them and return to them in the debriefing and discuss the meanings.

*Information:*

A “stereotype” is an oversimplified, generalized and often unconscious preconception about people or ideas that may lead to prejudice and discrimination. It is a generalization in which characteristics possessed by a part of the group are extended to the group as a whole.

Do not confound sex with gender. Sex refers to the biological dif­ferences between men and women.

Gender refers to the socially given attributes, roles, activities, responsibilities and needs connected with being men (masculine) and women (feminine) in a given society at a given time, and as a member of a specific community within that society.

Source: Compass- Manual for human rights education with young people-Council of Europe