

Building Strong Movements
Druk-Youth Initiative of Sexual Advocacy (D-YISA)
rainboW-o-Men – Social Café
15th April, 2018



In continuation with the first sensitization program on 31st March, 2018, we had yet another amazing program with the same group of young people but six new friends (five of them being young men) joining us on 15th April, 2018. All of them except for one young woman are from medical background with most of them in first and second years studying at Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences (KGUMS) in Thimphu, Bhutan.

The meeting was sort of revision to the previous sensitization program with some new matters that we also discussed but more than that, it was all about strengthening the network amongst the young people to realize the significance of having a strong team. Before we embarked on the highlight of building strong movement, we went over some of the important subjects and issues such as gender and feminism, upon understanding them will predominantly contribute to the building of strong movement in the country. Although the new members had attended some

basic programs on sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR), they were quite new to the concept of feminism, gender equality vs. gender equity, and issue of abortion (in the country).

During the discussions of the aforementioned topics, the participants were made clear that the feminists do not think women are superior to men and instead believe in the equality of them. In line with that, it was shared that those who believe women are superior to men are called misandrist and misogynist is someone who believes men are superior to women. Also, it was communicated that gender equality and gender equity are not the same thing and that it is critical to have gender sensitized men as the advocates for the gender equality and equity. Moving onto the issue of abortion, three young men thought abortion was bad but they were clarified that ‘unsafe’ abortion is bad and ‘safe’ abortion is good without having to morally accept abortion but as a choice for women and girls. The abortion law in the country and neighboring countries was conveyed to the team and many of them had always thought that abortion was completely illegal in the country while the fact remains abortion being legal under certain conditions.



All of the participants have heard about Human Rights but upon making a brief presentation on it, they have broader perspective on it now; 30 articles of Human Rights was disseminated to the young people. Although there is no mention of sexual and reproductive rights in the list of human rights, the participants perfectly figured it out that they are nothing less than human rights. In Bhutan, there is some avenue created by the government to emphasize on the importance of sexual and reproductive health of the (young) people but there is silence when it comes to sexual and reproductive rights. There was also elimination of myth that reproductive rights are only related to women; the participants were informed that reproductive rights are for both men and women. However, SRHR is more concerned with women than men because of the mere fact that majority of the women gives birth and have to meet with unlimited reproductive needs and care in comparison to men.

Even though many of the participants are from the medical background, we had interesting discussions regarding sexual and reproductive related misconceptions. Just to name few - double bagging, side effects of I-Pill and birth control pills and sex during menstrual period; using two condoms at the same time during intercourse is very risky as there is friction and could burst. The participants cited some side effects of birth control pills and I-Pill such as weight gain, headache, and infertility etc. The case of infertility due to intake of I-Pills or birth control pills is a myth and was busted to the participants but it was certain that many of them could not buy the clarification very easily. Nevertheless, they will learn it with time as we hold many more sensitization programs and meetings like this.

A very important information was shared to the group on Adolescent Friendly Health Services (AFHS) by the government at the hospital whereby young people like them can visit anytime during working time regarding their sexual and reproductive health which will be confidential. Additionally, Health Information Service Center (HISC) is very similar to AFHS but not limited to adolescents/young people and toll free number is 202. They were unaware about both the health services.



Last but not the least, the most important topic of the meeting for the purpose of building strong movement was discussed. Theory of Change (ToC) was relatively a new subject to everyone in the group and they were introduced to the concept as an approach to having an effective and strong team. The simple definition that was shared to the young folks spells out as follows;-

‘Theory of Change lays out your assumptions as to how you will get from a problem to a series of outcomes that lead towards your goal’.

This set of young people were explained that the kind of activities that we carry out or intend to carry out will have outputs and further lead to outcomes which will determine whether our goal will be achieved or not. Theory of Change will pave pathway to the (positive) change that we want to see in the lives of the young people and in the society. As a team of young advocates, we have many objectives and perhaps, it will be difficult to choose a single goal right away. However, the young participants have agreed to work on the ToC after their examinations this summer. The young participants have decided that it is a crucial requirement that the group frame a ToC to track the progress of the social activities that we carry out and help build and strengthen the movement.



Overall, the feedback from the young participants was positive in the sense that the knowledge they received was very new and helpful as advocates for SRHR. Also, for information, the young people have also agreed to conduct a small study related to feminism, gender (equality and equity), third gender, women empowerment, SRHR including (safe) abortion in their college after the summer vacation. They will be supported to carry out this activity by D-YISA.