

Input for the HR75 Youth Declaration  
Nor Luyce Mentoring Center for Youth NGO

Globally, the lack of women holding leadership positions within the workplace and the government persists. According to UN Women, only 26.5% of parliamentarians in single or lower houses across the world are women. This situation remains the same in Armenia, as only 22.7% of seats in parliament are held by women (unwomen.org). These sobering statistics are due, in part, to a lack of women possessing the necessary skills, educational attainment, and overall dearth of women role models and leadership mentoring networks. These numbers also reflect a dire need for governments, international policymakers, civil society organizations, and the UN to invest more funding and effort into creating equal access to employment and leadership roles for girls and women—which is laid forth in Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by crises, such as climate change, war, natural disasters. It is simple: more women in leadership positions results in better outcomes for women amidst the world's challenges. Access to leadership roles and leadership education is a human rights issue, as our global sustainable development is dependent on equal representation between men and women in governments and companies; however, in order for women to pursue leadership roles, young girls' emotional well-being and education must be prioritized and strengthened.

Nor Luyce Mentoring Center for Youth NGO is the first mentoring organization in Gyumri, Armenia working with adolescent girls from orphanages and socially vulnerable families to empower them to lead fulfilling lives. The girls are not only provided with a safe space to share their challenges and improve their emotional well-being, they are also provided with support which empowers them to bring social and economic changes both in their communities and throughout the country. Research demonstrates that children who receive psychological support and mentoring services exhibit increased self-esteem and self-efficacy. One component of increasing the presence of women within leadership and government roles starts with providing access to emotional support systems to young girls globally. Governments must increase funding to schools to include more school counselors, mentoring services, and career planning services. Additionally, the UN must recognize the significance of youth organizations that provide mentoring services and outlets for young women to learn soft and technical skills.

Non-governmental organizations, such as Nor Luyce, cannot do the crucial work they do without support from their government and other institutions, such as the United Nations. To best support women entering the workforce and gaining positions of influence, both inside and outside of governmental work, governmental bodies must intervene. The lack of women in positions of power is directly linked to a lack of support for these women as they embark on their journey to gain such positions. Providing more workshops and opportunities for women to develop skills the job market deems necessary provides a foundation for women to expand skills they likely already possess to some degree and utilize them in a professional capacity.

Governmental sponsoring of such programs would remove some of the burden that has been left to civil society organizations. Through such sponsorship, a nation's government would showcase their own commitment to expanding the opportunities available to women and ensure that the voices of women are heard.

Without women in positions of influence, the needs of female populations cannot be adequately addressed as work done by outsiders is not the same as work completed and informed by those legitimately impacted by and aware of the current policies. Governments and international organizations should take an active interest in providing spaces and opportunities for these women to provide recommendations on the best approaches to the crises which are disproportionately impacting them. Encouraging the development of hard and soft skills through sponsored workshops and mentorship programs results in positive outcomes that can have a major ripple effect—the work done by these empowered women now have the capacity to further empower more women bringing about positive social change to nations globally. Though non-governmental organizations can still make significant strides without support from states, state provided resources would greatly further their achievements.

Youth are given the enormous task to continue advancing human rights as they take on positions of power in the next several years and decades to come. Young people must show their dedication to the causes they most deeply care about—whatever that may be. Utilizing one's passion is a necessity in finding solutions to global problems. Simply using one's voice is a major first step towards equal rights that young people can take. Even without positions of power, youth can demand change and raise awareness even when they themselves may not be able to create the policy that will change lives. Committing oneself to professional development will give youth the training they need to use their passion in a professional setting when they are old enough to do so. Youth also have the opportunity to engage in peer mentoring thereby providing mutual support that elevates everyone involved. Through this collaborative effort, they can form strong connections and establish a robust network of emerging leaders who share a common passion for driving holistic change within their communities.

Furthermore, young individuals can also assert their demands upon governmental entities and other organizations to secure the necessary support for catalyzing change. By expressing their needs and aspirations, they demonstrate their determination and motivation for creating a positive future. This proactive approach not only empowers youth but also showcases their dedication to shaping a brighter tomorrow.