



## VOC: VOICES OF CHANGE



Voices of Change (VOC):

Enhancing girls with migration background to cooperate in women policies in the European Consultative Body for Migrant Girls Civic Engagement

### ***Why are girls leading the global movement?***

Over the last decade, we have seen an explosion of girl representatives calling out for change and reform in various social aspects, such as Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani activist for equal education rights, Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg and American gun-control advocate Emma González. Age and gender are no longer excuses to exclude them from contributing in the social revolution. Girls' voices are becoming a sharp and staggering representation of the 21st century's pioneering transformation.

### **Embracing the Heritage of Sisterhood**

Standing on the shoulders of girls before them, young women inherit a more stable and legal and moral framework for them to bring changes to their communities.

From the starting point of the women's right movement in 1848, where Elizabeth Cady Stanton, together with her female friends, led the world's first Women's Rights Convention to petition for women's social, political and religious rights to women stepping on the world stage to defend their leadership when Eleanor Roosevelt took a leading role in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN after World War II, women from grassroots showed their consistent resistance and the unshakable willing to drive social changes, through which they successfully established a solid ground for women's movements at an international level and stand firmly to offer guidance for female activism from generation to generation.

### **Collective efforts for girls empowerment**

During this empowering journey, the calling for collective efforts from government and society have shown to be astonishingly effective. The values-based education, funded girls-centred events and community building led by governments and organizations across the world equip young women with full knowledge concerning those related issues and provide them a basic mind map to start engaging themselves in social activities and great opportunities to meet people who share similar ideas.

### **Girls' voices matter**

Girls are leading figures in advocating and manifesting the urge to end violence targeting women, which exploits them physically and psychologically through various forms such as the domestic violence, sexual assault, forced marriage and online abuse. They have first hand experience and a deep grasp of the problems that the communities are facing which are crucial in removing the roots of discrimination and injustice and creating a collective change. Facing systematic injustice towards people and the environment they care about, girls around the world show incredible strength, compassion and solidarity. Being encouraged by more and more role models, many young women try to embrace liberal values with limitless passion towards equality and sustainability and seize the chance to fill in the blanks of female leading roles in history under current challenging civil norms that still leave significant space for much deeper evolution.

### **New Era, New Pathway**

Entering the digital era, cyber-mobilisations and events in the physical environment are found to have strong mutual positive influence on each other, granting the foundation of a fresh form of social movements that goes beyond limitation of time and space and control of mainstream gatekeepers of social media. The fast growing online community, with its power to gather shared experience and cultivate solidarity, demonstrates great potential in empowering more and more young women in taking the first move to protest and protect with much more like-minded people around the world. Besides championing their voice on the streets, girls also expand their battle field onto the internet, through posting, tweeting and blogging to advance their agenda. Beginning with #MeToo movement, the hashtag movements spread across the globe like wildfire.

### **Embarking on a Journey of Self Discovery**

With more and more girls getting access to education, they form their own ideas on the current situations and future direction of collective challenges. They get more and more opportunities to use their intelligence to bring changes to people's lives by actively speaking out and putting persistent efforts. Through learning, negotiating, organizing events, and having their voice heard by the public strengthen

their inner confidence and compassion which fuel the motivation to carry on with their adventure. From gender justice to climate change, young women are reshaping the social landscape with action and determination.

*\*Article written by Instituto Ikigai*

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