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peace for the twenty-first century”

Statement submitted by Nor Luyce Mentoring Center for Youth, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being
circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council
resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Nor Luyce Mentoring Center for Youth is a nongovernmental organization (NGO) in Gyumri, Armenia focused on working with adolescent girls from orphanages and socially vulnerable families. The first of its kind in Gyumri, Nor Luyce provides an innovative and safe platform for adolescent girls from vulnerable backgrounds to boost self-esteem and resilience as well as to empower the girls to live self-sufficient lives, dream big, and achieve their career and personal goals.

Nor Luyce addresses poverty, gender equality and women empowerment through a multifaceted approach that consists of education, skills training, mentorship, and economic opportunities. In the organization education is essential since Nor Luyce's mission and vision align with Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education; Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality; and, Sustainable Development Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities. Under those goals, Nor Luyce embodies the principle aims of specific targets aligned with gender equality and reduced inequalities. Accordingly, education becomes not only a tool, but a transformative experience girls undergo with Nor Luyce. The correlation between gender equality, education, and employment is clear, as Nor Luyce is located in a region with high unemployment, 24.3 per cent. This number reflects Armenia's wider lack of women in the workforce, as women made up 53 per cent of the country's long-term unemployed population in 2020 (Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia). Nor Luyce aims to combat this issue through their three-phase mentoring program, skills workshops, and online meetings, utilizing various educational opportunities as a means of endowing adolescent girls with the necessary skills and confidence to navigate the changing world of work. The organization's focus on the linkage between education, gender equity, and economic opportunities ensures that women are not left behind when it comes to access to educational opportunities that incorporate hard and soft skills training with an emphasis on social-emotional learning.

Within Nor Luyce's three-phase mentoring program, the first phase is the mentoring phase. As the mentees, ages 13-16, are paired with a mentor, this phase enables the girls to focus on themselves and their emotional stability. Mentoring relationships are the first step and the core of Nor Luyce's mission that aim to create a safe space and provide emotional support for the girls to dream big and realize their full potential. Research shows that if a child is provided with any type of support at any period of her lifetime, she tends to be more emotionally stable than others who are never exposed to mentoring relationships. Moreover, the improvement of women's and girls' self-esteem and financial autonomy results in the reduction of the risk of them suffering from gender violence.

Once the girls are able to work towards increasing their self-esteem and managing their anxieties and fears, they can then begin to focus on their long-term career and academic goals. Phase two, the skill-building phase, encompasses formal and non-formal education and empowers girls to put their career goals into practice through workshops on resume building, technology use, interviewing, and various opportunities to network with people who work in a variety of careers. Countless studies have proven that education that promotes critical thinking and goal-setting leads to expanded economic opportunities. Also, research indicates that adolescents who receive life skills tend to exhibit positive self-esteem. Accordingly, this phase allows Nor Luyce to dispel gender stereotypes that induce the gender wage gap and concentration of women in lower-paying occupations. The process of combating these gender stereotypes and addressing the wage gap is carried out through inspiring young girls to explore different career paths and increase their self-efficacy, to help them realize their potential as active leaders in their local communities and on the global stage.

Our focus on women’s empowerment also enables the local community to become aware of how issues of gender stereotypes impact women’s career goals and outcomes. Women in Armenia are 11 per cent less likely than men to work in highly paid sectors, such as finance or manufacturing. Many factors influence a woman’s career choices, including the choice to raise children, family responsibilities, ideas of the gender binary that determines which careers a woman “should” pursue, and their access to skills training and educational opportunities. As more women are concentrated in lower-paying careers, this leads to the gender pay gap – as women in the workforce only earn 65 per cent of what men earn in similar careers.

Nor Luyce’s efforts to combat gender disparity culminates in the third phase of the program with the mentees pursuing higher education or vocational training with financial scholarships provided by Nor Luyce sponsors. The mentees put the skills and knowledge gained through the program in use, as they conduct volunteer work in the community and give presentations to other mentees in the organization.

Since Nor Luyce’s inception in 2009, Nor Luyce has supported the personal and career aspirations of 300 girls. Given Nor Luyce’s success in mobilizing financial planning resources, skills workshops, and college tours for their mentees, we advocate for public schools and Member States to do the same. While Nor Luyce has experienced success in working towards gender disparities within the workforce and higher educational institutions, civil society organizations cannot do this work alone without support from Member States. We encourage Member States to continually fund the work of civil society organizations that support women’s empowerment and gender equality in the workforce and in all facets of life. We also recommend that higher education institutions should work directly with private enterprises to understand the exact skills needed and incorporate those skills in technology training programs, while encouraging women to enter these fields.
