

THE HARD JOB OF BEING WOMEN

Women Alphabet: Awareness and Change – this is the title of one of the numerous women-focused conferences hosted by Collegio Nuovo this year. The main speaker was Gianni Rufini, current General Director of Amnesty International Italy and renowned international expert of humanitarian emergencies and interventions. The aim of this event was to provide a general picture of the current status of women’s human rights around the world and to raise awareness towards the lack of equality that still afflicts our world today.

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Despite the fact that I am a Political Science student and the human rights issue has been deeply holding my interest in the past few years, the reason why I decided to write about this conference is that it openly handles a theme, that of women’s rights, that may appear to be far from our everyday life as European students enrolled in institutions promoting women’s education, but it indeed affects women in our country, in our continent, in our world and I believe that, being part of humanity, we have a moral obligation to get informed and engage in promoting human rights and equality.

I recognize I am a lucky girl and studying at Collegio Nuovo gave me some unique opportunities to grow as a person, to experience life and to discover the world. I first met Gianni as lecturer of a course on humanitarian emergencies that I attended at the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI) and I had been impressed by the passion and strength this man employs in his life mission. When the college gave me the opportunity to invite him as speaker at one of the conferences that it organizes, I realized how powerful each one of us can be in sharing and spreading information and knowledge. And that’s why I want to report here some parts of the speech he gave.

“Being women is a hard job”, Gianni said. This is a reality but there some key elements that can lead to development, education being on top of all. The obstacles to women’s education derive from

discriminations and prejudices often deep-rooted in various cultures around the world, with two thirds of the 875 million adult illiterates being women.

Education is the foundation of *awareness* to which follows the *change*, throughout human rights learning and the renegotiation of women's and men's spaces and powers within societies.

Indeed, one of the widespread problems is that in some countries women do not know that they have rights and that they must demand their implementation, and therefore they often suffer and accept violence and abuses considering them "normal".

In some countries and areas of the world, women made a huge progress in the last 30 years and acquired a good level of education and awareness, leading to a rebalance between the two sexes. This caused the renegotiation of the relationship between women and men and the reorganization of entire societies in a more equal way. Education, again, is the only mean to reach this stage of awareness and approach an even higher degree of equality.

We, lucky women and men, all need to engage, work towards the acquisition of full awareness and, starting from our everyday life, devote our energies and strengths to this cause.

The two sexes together, and only together, can really change things.

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