

SPEAKING OUT AND LOUD - YOUNG PEOPLE IN ADVOCACY

YOUTH CASE STUDY: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ARGENTINA



SUMMARY

Amnesty International Argentina youth activists are actively involved in the protection and promotion of sexual and reproductive rights in their country, and are taking their concerns and suggestions to the local, regional and international level by defending and promoting their rights at Intergovernmental Organisations (IGOs).



DESCRIPTION

It's My Body (2016–2020) is a project delivered by Amnesty Argentina, Peru and Chile to raise awareness about young people's sexual and reproductive rights and empower young people to access information on sexuality, sexual and reproductive rights and health services. It also enables young people to participate and influence political decisions that affect these rights. In this project young people play an important role in holding their local and national authorities accountable for their actions with regards to sexual and reproductive rights. In 2017, a young activist was selected by the National Board to represent Amnesty Argentina at the Universal Periodic Review (a process in which the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States are reviewed) at the United Nations, and in 2018 a second young activist represented young people at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). In the lead up, youth activists met with local authorities such as ministers and ambassadors, facilitated workshops, met with other human rights organisations and made a detailed analysis of the current situation of sexual and reproductive rights in Argentina. At the Inter-American Commission the youth activist gave a speech about the violations of sexual and reproductive rights of girls and women in Argentina, and highlighted the importance of

sexual education in order for them to make free and informed decision about their bodies.

“It was a really positive experience to represent Amnesty Argentina at the Universal Periodic Review at the United Nations. The achievements from the conference were very positive. It was great to hear other states speaking out about their concerns with Argentina's sexual and reproductive rights issues” – Jose Sola (youth activist)

OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen young people's knowledge about their sexual and reproductive rights through youth-led workshops and participatory approaches, and enable them to claim and defend their rights.
- Provide young people with knowledge about legal frameworks such as the International Human Rights Protection System.
- Strengthen young human rights defenders' advocacy skills such as: accessing public information, reaching out to local and national authorities and carrying out a meeting with relevant actors.
- Influence intergovernmental organisations to make recommendations to the Argentinean State to introduce

and implement public policies regarding sexual and reproductive rights.

IMPACT

- Twelve states made human rights recommendations to Argentina in the UN Universal Periodic Review, especially concerning early pregnancy, sexual education and abortion, generating international pressure on the country. For instance, Canada recommended that Argentina enact pending legislation which would provide fulsome reproductive health services including comprehensive sexuality education and access to safe and legal abortion.
- Active participation of young people in international meetings in which they shared their perspectives on issues that matter to their rights.
- Achieved media coverage on national television and in national and international newspapers.
- Contributed to shining a light on sexual and reproductive rights in relation to young people for the Inter-American Human Rights Commission.
- In 2018, the lower house of Argentina's congress approved a bill that would legalise abortion in the first 14 weeks of pregnancy. However, when the Bill was debated at the Senate it was rejected. Despite this setback, sexual and reproductive rights and youth participation are now part of the public agenda and are no longer seen as taboo.

TIPS AND TRICKS

- *Train young people to develop alternative narratives* Encourage them to think how to respond to counter narratives and build their key messages.
- *Encourage young people to participate at all levels!* Open spaces for young people to be part of all the phases of a campaign. It will contribute towards strengthening their commitment.
- *Offer capacity building on advocacy for youth leaders!* This will strengthen the understanding of structures and mechanisms to be able to lobby and push for policy changes.
- *Set a clear timeline and objectives!* Young people have many commitments, this helps them organise their time better.



“Amnesty International’s advocacy programme helped me understand that we are part of a community that has great influence in the world, and that as young human right defenders we count with the necessary skills to make ourselves heard. Having that voice helps us understand that we are real agents of change and that it is our responsibility to take lead on the issues that surround us.” –

Florencia Manolakis (youth activist)

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Julia Roitman, an Amnesty Argentina youth activist who was a youth representative at the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights shared – “It was a very moving experience for me because I saw my everyday activism become materialised. I could finally see how all the small actions I take throughout the year, could create a new reality. Participating in this thematic hearing made me feel more confident as an activist and realise all the tools and skills I have. Allowing young people to participate in advocacy boosts their commitment with the movement and gives them something to work towards.” Julia continued her journey with Amnesty Argentina and was elected as National Board member.

STAKEHOLDERS

- *Operasjon Dagsverk (ODW)* provides the financial support to the It’s My Body Project.
- *Amnesty International Argentina.*
- *Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Genero (ELA), and Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir* are local Argentinian NGOs who participated in the IACHR thematic hearing alongside Amnesty International Argentina.

INFORMATION

- Read more about Amnesty Argentina’s youth in advocacy programme here:
 - <https://amnistia.org.ar/audiencia-en-la-cidh-el-aborto-legal-es-un-imperativo-de-derechos-humanos/>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-pnYsFh08A&t=195s>
 - <http://cosecharoja.org/un-examen-para-los-derechos-humanos-en-argentina/>
- Contact Amnesty International Argentina for more information: snovillofunes@amnistia.org.ar

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