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APPLICATION FORM

## FEMINIST LAB 2018

### “WE SHOULD ALL BE FEMINISTS”

*Do you agree with this quote from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie? Do you feel the world needs more feminism and powerful feminists? Then you might be the right candidate for the Feminist Lab of the Vrouwenraad!*

During a three-day process, we want to bring young feminists (18 to 30 years old) together to share ideas and experiences, to have conversations, and to reflect on feminism and women’s rights. We will create a participatory space of learning where you can grow and gain confidence in yourself as a feminist. We want to build a stronger movement in Flanders and Brussels that can make changes towards a feminist world. The Feminist Lab is a ‘safe space’ where all voices are equally important and should be heard: everyone’s an expert in their own right. We want to build bridges between feminists so we can stand united in our diversity and use this time together to learn how to do so.

You can find a more detailed description below.

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## IS THE FEMINIST LAB FOR YOU?

- Do you want to share your own experience with feminism and activism with others?
- Are you interested in strengthening your knowledge and skills on advocating for women's rights, gender equality and online/cyber violence?
- Are you keen to find out what other feminists in Flanders and Brussels are doing against gender inequality, and how you can work together?
- Are you keen to engage in a highly participatory learning process?

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## THE CRITERIA

- Are you a feminist (self-identified) woman between 18 and 30 years old?
- Do you have experience with feminism, gender equality, and/or cyber violence?
- Do you currently live in Flanders or Brussels?
- Do you have a good level of English (understanding, speaking)?
- Do you want to create a change in society and develop your skills and network to do so?

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## PRACTICAL

- When? From Friday 14 September 13h until Sunday 16 September 16h.
- Where?
  - . Workshops at Vrouwenraad, Middaglijstraat 10, 1210 Brussels
  - . Accommodation at Van Gogh Hostel, Dwarsstraat 8, 1210 Brussels
  - . Special needs can be accommodated for.
- Participation and accommodation is free, but participants are expected to travel to Brussels at their own expense.
- To apply, please complete the application form here: <https://goo.gl/forms/WFN4WmSp5AjSIPhK2>
- **Deadline for applications: 23 July at 17.00**

*The Feminist Lab is a space of diversity. We highly encourage and welcome young (self-identified) women of colour, (self-identified) women from different convictions, with a migration background, different sexual orientations, with a disability, from marginalized groups to apply.*

Kindly forward this invitation to women in your network whom you think will benefit from this experience.

## THE VROUWENRAAD: WHO ARE WE AND WHY DO WE ORGANISE THIS SUMMER SCHOOL?

### ABOUT US

The 'Vrouwenraad' (or the Dutch-speaking Council of Women of Belgium) is an umbrella organisation aiming at equal opportunities for all women and men, regardless of their age, origin, colour of skin, conviction, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, health status, civil state/way of living, taking into account mutual differences. We are a feminist organization: 'Beslist Feminist' is our baseline.

Our main goal is to achieve a gender balance in a multicultural society. Women and men should have equal power and opportunity to shape society and their own life. We strive towards a society based on gender equality, solidarity, non-discrimination, peace, and sustainability. We study, from a gender perspective, the connection with other grounds of discrimination.

### WHY DO WE ORGANIZE A FEMINIST LAB FOR YOUNG FEMINISTS?

The Vrouwenraad draws upon years of experience in defending women's rights and advocating for gender equality in society. We aim to unite feminists from all ages and levels of experience, and have a connection to the 'traditional' women's movement. With this Feminist Lab we want to connect with young emerging feminist voices to build bridges and build new powerful links within the women's movement and activism.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE FEMINIST LAB 2018 OF THE VROUWENRAAD

### BACKGROUND

On the one hand, feminism is gaining momentum. Stars like Beyoncé and Emma Watson are creating feminist awareness with a wide audience. The #MeToo and #BalanceTonPorc movement sent out a clear message: (young) women are fed up with the attacks on their bodies and lives. Voices that were previously ignored or not heard are claiming their space: women of colour, the LGBTI+ community, women wearing a hijab, women with a disability...

On the other hand, we are witnessing a backlash against women's rights with the rise of conservative values and right-wing nationalist politics. Women's rights are being challenged or reversed, and further gains are stopped because "equality has been achieved in Europe." Also, women's rights are used as a weapon to defend "our" Western values, and promote racism and xenophobia against migrants and refugees.

We are at a crossroads: to withstand the conservative forces and achieve a feminist world, the feminist movement needs to come together, and we must unite in our diversity. The Vrouwenraad sees the Feminist Lab as a platform to deepen the conversation, and to build capacity to build a feminist world.

### PROGRAMME

During three days, young feminists living in Flanders and Brussels share ideas and experiences on feminism and women's rights, reflect, and learn from each other. The following questions will guide the discussions:

- Why are you a feminist? How can feminism change the world?
- How can we build bridges and create unity in our diversity as a feminist movement?
- What does 'feminist action/activism' mean today and what shapes does it take on? What steps should we take to advance women's rights?
- What can be the role, the advantages, and the disadvantages of online platforms to engage in activism?
- What is online/cyber violence against women and girls? How can we fight it?

The programme uses participatory, interactive, creative, and emancipatory methodologies, guided by experienced facilitators. It is our intention to create an open and safe space where participants co-create their learning process, can share their experiences and knowledge, learn from each other, and gain new insights and skills. There will be no formal presentations or academic lectures. Although every effort is made to ensure this is a safe and supportive space, and we welcome emotions, it is not intended as a therapeutic space.

We will make every effort to ensure that the programme is as inclusive and accessible as possible and will work with participants to understand and accommodate any special needs.

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## OBJECTIVES

The Feminist Lab aims to achieve the following:

- The participants have a better insight and understanding of feminism and equal rights between women and men.
- The participants are empowered and inspired to engage/be active in feminism, (feminist) activism, and the women's rights movement.
- The participants feel connected to each other and to the broader women's movement.
- Creating a participatory and empowering space where meaningful conversations happen between young feminists.

## THE SELECTION PROCESS

There are only 30 places. The selection will be made by the Vrouwenraad based on the application forms and on the criteria above. The motivation and experience with feminism, gender equality and/or women's rights will be deciding factors.

We aim to inform all selected candidates by **14 August 2018**.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to provide feedback on applications to non-selected candidates.

***Do you need more convincing? Read what the participants of the AGORA, the feminist Summer School of the European Women's Lobby on which our Feminist Lab was modelled, had to say.***

*"It was inspiring to be part of such a knowledgeable and open group, peer learning is definitely one of the best ways of fostering our feminist movement."*  
AGORA 2016 participant

*"I found that not only did this experience strengthen my knowledge and skills to advocate for women's rights and gender equality in an official capacity, but also opened up a space to learn and grow from each other too."* AGORA 2017 participant

*"The summer school reminded me how powerful we can be when we join together in the name of one common purpose."* AGORA 2015 participant

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# APPLICATION FORM

Please answer the following questions here: <https://goo.gl/forms/WFN4WmSp5AjSIPhk2>

1. Personal information
  - Name and Surname
  - Date of Birth
  - City/town of residence
  - Email address
  - Telephone/cell phone number
  - Dietary requirements
2. Are you affiliated with one of the Vrouwenraad's members? If yes, please state which member.
3. Why are you a feminist? You can refer to relevant professional, academic or personal experience. (max. 300 words)
4. Why do you want to participate in the Feminist Lab? Please explain your motivation for applying and why this is relevant for you at this time. (max. 300 words)
5. Are there specific issues or skills that you would like to learn more about during the Feminist Lab? (max. 300 words)
6. How and where would you like to apply what you've learned at the Feminist Lab? (max. 300 words)
7. Do you have any experience or knowledge of intersectionality or multiple discrimination? If yes, please explain. (max. 300 words)
8. Do you have any experience or knowledge of online/cyber violence against women? If yes, please explain. (max. 300 words)
9. What is your level of English? Please note that the programme will be in English, so a level of understanding and communication in English is required.
10. How did you learn about the Feminist Lab?
11. Please note that we will invite a photographer and/or film maker to capture the Feminist Lab. The workshop and conversations won't be filmed, but please inform us if this makes you uncomfortable in any way. We can accommodate your needs. Would you be interested in sharing your experiences with the Feminist Lab in an interview or blog?
12. After the Feminist Lab, on 8 October from 18:30 to 19:30, we will organise a follow-up webinar with all participants. Are you available at that time?
13. Are there any other issues or questions you want to raise?