



## **REPRESENTATION IN STREAMPRENEUR**

Representation is a rather sensitive topic but as youth workers and teachers we have an obligation to address matters for the sake of the youth we are working with. One of the definitions that can be found when looking up the term “representation” is the following : “Representation is the description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way”. While I cannot claim to be especially knowledgeable in this topic as admittedly I have a lot of homework to do on it myself in order to become a fairer and more effective agent of social change in the profession I find myself in, I know that there is so much more to “representation”. The fairness, accuracy, diversity and inclusiveness of representation, can have such a massive effect on how we identify in the world we live in ; on whether or not we feel we belong or dare to dream of taking up a profession or position in various aspects of life. Lack of representation in many cases can cause opportunities that should be available to all become inaccessible.

Having said that, let's look at some statistics:

When looking into the field of STEM/STEAM/STREAM we discover that women are underrepresented. “Women make up only 28% of the workforce in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), and men vastly outnumber women majoring in most STEM fields in college. The gender gaps are particularly high in some of the fastest-growing and highest-paid jobs of the future, like computer science and engineering.” (<https://www.aauw.org/resources/research/the-stem-gap/>). Underrepresentation is not limited to women in the field, this extends to minorities like refugees and people of colour. “On average across EU+ countries in 2015, around 3 in 4 native-born students – but only 3 in 5 students with a migrant background attained the baseline level of proficiency in the three core PISA subjects: science, reading and mathematics.” (Access-to-education-europe-19.pdf). If there is underperformance in achieving the baseline, it is not a stretch to assume that there are even fewer with access to STEM opportunities.

A rather prominent influencer in the representations we see of people is the media. We are constantly inundated with information through various media outlets. These influences impact the way we situate ourselves and others in our communities. Youth are highly susceptible to many influences. As youth workers and teachers we can choose what content/sources we expose them to. The content we use should be diverse as we are engaging youth with many different backgrounds and world perspectives. We can use learning mediums and the media to our advantage to show the youth that differences do not make one less capable of achieving.

As STREAMpreneur is a combination of STREAM and entrepreneurship which are both fields lacking sufficient representation and diversity , we should be aware of the role we can play in addressing misrepresentation or lack of representation in order to make STREAM and entrepreneurship available to all. During our time with the youth we have the opportunity to show them the possibilities that can be explored in both arenas. The youth should be





encouraged to build their life skills through STREAM even if they decide not to pursue a career in the field of STEM or Entrepreneurship as these skills will strengthen their abilities to specialise in anything they choose in the future.

Finally, It is essential to remember that this is not a one size fits all model, so when working with youth, awareness of what we as youth workers and teachers embody, the learning mediums we choose, the content in these learning mediums and our youth group's dynamics should all be at the forefront of our minds so as to inform our choices intentionally.