

The HRSI HERALD

Human RightS Initiative

January/February



Annual production of The Vagina Monologues at CEU

HRSI invited the CEU community for the 8th performance of Eve Ensler’s award-winning play “The Vagina Monologues”, staged in the Auditorium on February 25/26. Based on interviews with more than 200 women, the piece celebrates women’s sexuality and strength with humor and grace and raises awareness about the issue of violence against women and efforts to end it.

Through the event, and through selling dozens of vagina cupcakes, HRSI raised around 295 000 HUF. All proceeds are donated to *Let’s Help Refugees Together*, a grassroots organization that develops specific activities for refugee women and girls.



Cast | Hair, Zsofia Suba | The Flood, Marja Green | The Vagina Workshop, Freyja Jonudottir Barkardottir | Vagina Happy Fact, Hanna Manoilenko | They Beat The Girl Out Of My Boy... Or So They Tried, Simona Gamonte, Zsofia Suba, Moniek van den Boogaard, Hanna Manoilenko, Laura Marie | Because He Liked To Look At It, Joanne Wood | Not-So-Happy Fact, Tamara Stupalova | My Angry Vagina, Giavana Margo | My Vagina Was My Village, Moniek van den Boogard | My Short Skirt, Danielle Breslin, Sydney Sheedy | The Little Coochi Snorcher That Could, Simona Gamonte | Reclaiming Cunt | Giavana Margo | Six-Year Old Girl, Tamara Stupalova, Marja Green | The Woman Who Loved To Make Vaginas Happy, Andrina Hargrave | I Was There In The Room, Lauren Apple | My Revolution Begins In The Body, Ursula Sanchez | Rise Dance Disrupt, Nilofer Khan Habibullah | Narrator, Tamara Stupalova.



About V-Day

V-Day is a global activist movement to stop violence against women and girls that raises funds and awareness through benefit productions of “The Vagina Monologues” and other artistic works. V-Day is a catalyst that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. V-Day generates broader attention for the fight to stop violence against women and girls, including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM) and sex slavery.

Fundraising Workshop As part of HRSI's Capacity Building Program, on March 5 a one-day workshop about fundraising for NGOs was organized. It was open for 20 CEU students interested in learning about practical fundraising methods as well as people already working for civil society organizations and wishing to boost their fundraising potential.

The workshop was led by Agnes Doka, a communications consultant with 20 years of experience in public relations and capacity building. She has worked as a trainer, election observer and press officer of international missions in 20 elections in the Balkans, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.



LGBT History Month On the occasion of LGBT History Month in February, *Háttér Society* and *Labrisz Lesbian Association* in cooperation with *Human Rights Initiative* invited the CEU community to two evenings of movies and discussion. On February 2 and February 3, there were screenings of the documentaries “Rainbow Song”, “LGBT Monuments” and “Elderly Finnish LGBT”, each followed by discussions with Bill Schiller, a Swedish LGBT activist from the civic organization *International Lesbian and Gay Cultural Network*.



Exhibition/Panel Discussion: “Azerbaijan - Doubling Down on Repression”

Azerbaijan, Europe's oil-rich “strategic partner,” has taken a great leap backwards in its already dire human rights record. With almost a hundred political prisoners – nearly twice as many as in Russia – the country has emerged as the region's worst jailer of dissident voices.

Prague-based NGO *People in Need* launched an exhibition highlighting ten cases of people who have been imprisoned for exercising their fundamental civil and political rights and standing up for democratic values. Among them there are human rights defenders, journalists, and political activists. Two CEU alumni, Ilgar Mammadov and Rashadat Akhundov, were among those who ended up in prison for exercising their fundamental civil and political rights. However, recently we found out that Rashadat Akhundov was released.

From February 8 to February 15, *Human Rights Initiative* hosted the exhibition at CEU. The stories of political prisoners in Azerbaijan were displayed in the Octagon and Laptop Area of Nador 9.

Opening the exhibition, *HRSI* organized a panel discussion with Necmin Kamilsoy, civic activist and Emin Huseynov, human rights defender, who shared their perspective on the possible ways of democracy and human rights development in Azerbaijan.

Menstruation campaign:

Menstruation and Health | Menstrual hygienic products and Environment

With its monthly Menstrual Hygiene Day campaigns, HRSI is addressing menstruation from a human rights perspective by bringing different dimensions of this subject to the CEU community's attention. The focus of the third teaser campaign in January was menstruation and health. It looked into the functions of menstruation as well as causes and consequences of irregularities that might occur. The fourth teaser campaign, launched in February, drew the attention to the impact of different menstrual hygienic products on the environment and to alternatives to tampons and pads.

Find the posters and more information at:

<https://hrsi.ceu.edu/news/2016-01-21/menstruation-and-health-teaser-campaign-iii>

<https://hrsi.ceu.edu/news/2016-03-01/tampons-pads-cups-and-environment-teaser-campaign-iv>

Clothing Donation Drive for *Let's Knitwork!*

Between February 10 and February 21, HRSI organized a donation drive for *Let's Knitwork!* The collected donations were used for the *Let's Knitwork!* Charity Swap and Auction on February 27, the proceeds of which were offered to a brand new kindergarten in Beregszasz (Ukraine) for the purpose of equipping and sprucing up its garden and playground.



Tampons, pads, cups and Environment Teaser campaign IV

What is the connection between pads, tampons and environment?

A. There is no connection
B. The pads and tampons have a negative effect on the environment
C. The pads and tampons have a positive effect on the environment

B is the correct answer: Disposable feminine hygiene (tampon and pad) products are coming under scrutiny as alarming statistics point to how they significantly contribute to landfill volume, as well as pollution. It's estimated that approximately 20 billion pads, tampons and applicators are being sent to North American landfills monthly. For example, on an individual level, each of the approximately 75 million menstruating people in North America will throw away 122 to 150kg of disposable menstrual products (or 16,000 disposable pads or tampons) in their lifetime. These products require hundreds of years to biodegrade, particularly if wrapped in the plastic bag commonly provided for this purpose as part of their packaging. In fact, every piece of plastic ever made, still exists to this day.

Of what are the tampons and pads primarily made of?

A. Do not know
B. Cotton
C. Pads and tampons are made primarily of bleached craft pulp or viscose rayon.

C is the correct answer: Disposable pads and tampons are made primarily of bleached craft pulp or viscose rayon, the origin of which is wood cellulose from trees. Imagine what kind of processing is required to turn solid wood into the fluffy fibers found in disposable pads. In a nutshell, a lengthy series of powerful chemical baths. The rayon and pulp are further processed with a variety of bleaching agents to render them white (although not more absorbent), and then treated with another host of chemicals to enhance absorbency or add scent.

Are there any alternatives?

A. There are no alternatives
B. Menstrual cup
C. Handmade pads and organic pads

B and C are the correct answers: The menstrual cup is made from soft medical grade silicone, is latex-free and contains no dyes, BPA, toxins or bleaches. It's also great for people with sensitive skin. Tampons can cause dryness and leave fibres behind. Moreover, the menstrual cup is cheaper because regardless of the flow, you only need one cup, and it lasts for years and years, making it the most economical sanitary product you can try. The biodegradable pads and organic pads are also comfortable, chemical free and eco-friendly alternative to disposable pads and tampons. However, they are less sustainable and more expensive over time than a menstrual cup.

Alongside being environment friendly, the menstrual cup has other several advantages in comparison with pads and tampons. However, the menstrual cup remains invisible and it is not accessible everywhere. It is not advertised so often and there is still kind of mystery surrounding it. If you are interested in finding out more about the menstrual cup, then come to our Reasonable Menstrual Cup Workshop on March 09, at pan, room 2022, Management Building.

Find out more at: <https://hrsi.ceu.edu/news/2016-03-01/tampons-pads-cups-and-environment-teaser-campaign-iv>

Menstruation and Health. Teaser campaign III

Did you know that a biological process like menstruation has a serious impact on the health of those of you who are experiencing it every month? Follow the arrow-questions and find all necessary answers!

What can menstruation tell about your health?

Positive

- Your menstrual cycle is distinctive to you. Your cycle affects your health and well-being. In this regard, it is important to know as much as possible about the way your menstruation can influence (positively or negatively) your health. Here are some of the most essential health benefits of your period.
- You can know when your hormones are in or out of balance.
- You can learn about your bones, thyroid, and metabolic wellness.
- You can identify your best days for sexual arousal and enjoyment.
- You can leverage improved energy for your exercise and fitness routine.
- You can make informed decisions about your reproductive life.
- You can maintain your emotional well-being.

Negative

- Your menstrual period provides a "monthly update" about your hormonal, reproductive, thyroid, and metabolic functioning. This is because every month your period is the result of a coordinated discussion between your brain and your ovaries.
- The hypothalamus and pituitary glands are two of the areas that direct this conversation. They are also closely connected to the adrenal glands, the thyroid, and the digestive system along these same pathways. When one system is disrupted, then the other systems may suffer. Changes to your period, or having irregular periods, are usually the first indication of a disrupted signal along the pathway, with implications that can be felt throughout your entire body. For example, your hormonal balance, bone health, thyroid function, healthy weight maintenance and adrenal function can be affected.

How can you track your period in order to ensure yourself of its regularity?

Technology is on your side! There are at least 6 Period Tracking Apps available for free that can inform you about your period.

1. Clue
2. Period Tracker Free
3. Period Diary
4. P-Tracker aka Period Tracker
5. P-Log aka Period Log
6. Glow

This poster does not aim to portray people who experience periods in vain, and inability or to label them, but it rather aims to provide you with information about certain aspects of menstruation that are not so well known and discussed. Find more information at: <https://hrsi.ceu.edu/news/2016-01-21/menstruation-and-health-teaser-campaign-iii>

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