

# Gender Equality

## What are the issues young people are facing?

**Ending discrimination**, and **achieving gender equality** is widely accepted as universal social goal for Europe. In line with the discussions at the first conference and the consultation responses, this paper focuses primarily on **discrimination towards girls and young women**.

In the consultation, young people were concerned about a range of things, including **unequal work opportunities**, discrimination within schools and **violence toward girls and women**. The perpetuation of **traditional gender roles** was a concern as it affected work and educational choices as well home life and parental roles.

Some young people, did not recognise gender equality as a priority issue. Working group reports identified it as a lack of recognition of inequality and discrimination in all of its forms. **Lack of recognition and awareness** was seen to be a key problem overall.

Discussion of trans, non-binary or other genders did not feature prominently within consultation responses, however those working groups who consulted specifically with young people of these genders highlighted issues with **access to gender reassignment**, the ability to **legally change your gender** and **demeaning attitudes and institutions**.

## What is young people's vision for the future?

Overall, young people wanted to build a society with strong public sentiment condemning all forms of discrimination. They hope for **gender equality** and an **end to gender based violence**, specifically violence towards girls and young women. To consultation participants achieving this means;

Increasing **recognition of discrimination** towards girls and young women.

- Raising awareness amongst boys and young men, and their role within it.
- Empowering girls and young women recognise and speak up against all forms of discrimination and violence towards them.
- Boys and young men taking public stands against discrimination and violence.

**Breaking down traditional gender roles** and stereotypes

- Ensuring students are fully enabled and encouraged to study any subject, regardless of gender
- Making it acceptable for women to enter any profession, and equalising labour market opportunities.

- Boys and young men taking greater responsibility within family life.

Enabling **girls and young women to feel safe from violence**. Ensuring institutions can be trusted to deal with discrimination and violence effectively, and that society does not tolerate it.

### **What solutions did young people propose in the consultation?**

Solutions suggested in the consultation were:

- **Educational programmes** - to enable girls and young women to recognise discrimination and be aware of their rights, promote equality, and prevent boys and young men perpetuating discrimination and violence.
- Measures to **prevent educational choices being limited by gender**.
- **Stronger, more effective legislation and legislative systems**. e.g. stronger laws against aggressors or preventing discrimination, better access to legal aid, and police and judiciary systems that take the issues more seriously.
- **Media and information campaigns** - to raise awareness of discrimination and abuse, and counteract sexist imagery in the media.
- Promotion of **parenting that does not encourage gender stereotypes**.
- **Equal pay and better access to labour market for women**, for instance by improving childcare, reforming maternity and paternity leave or providing better protection for pregnant women.
- **Improved support for girls and young women who experience violence**. e.g. reporting hotlines, domestic violence centres and refugees, self-defense classes or therapy programmes for perpetrators of violence.
- **Family therapy and support** to ensure fathers are active in families and single mothers are well supported.

## The Survey Data

### **How important is this issue to young people?**

This issue ranks high among the priorities, as rated by the young people. It has been measured by two separate items: item focusing on gender equality per se ranked first among priorities of the young people; and item focusing on marginalized communities ranked fifth as rated by young people.

### **What are the priorities for young people?**

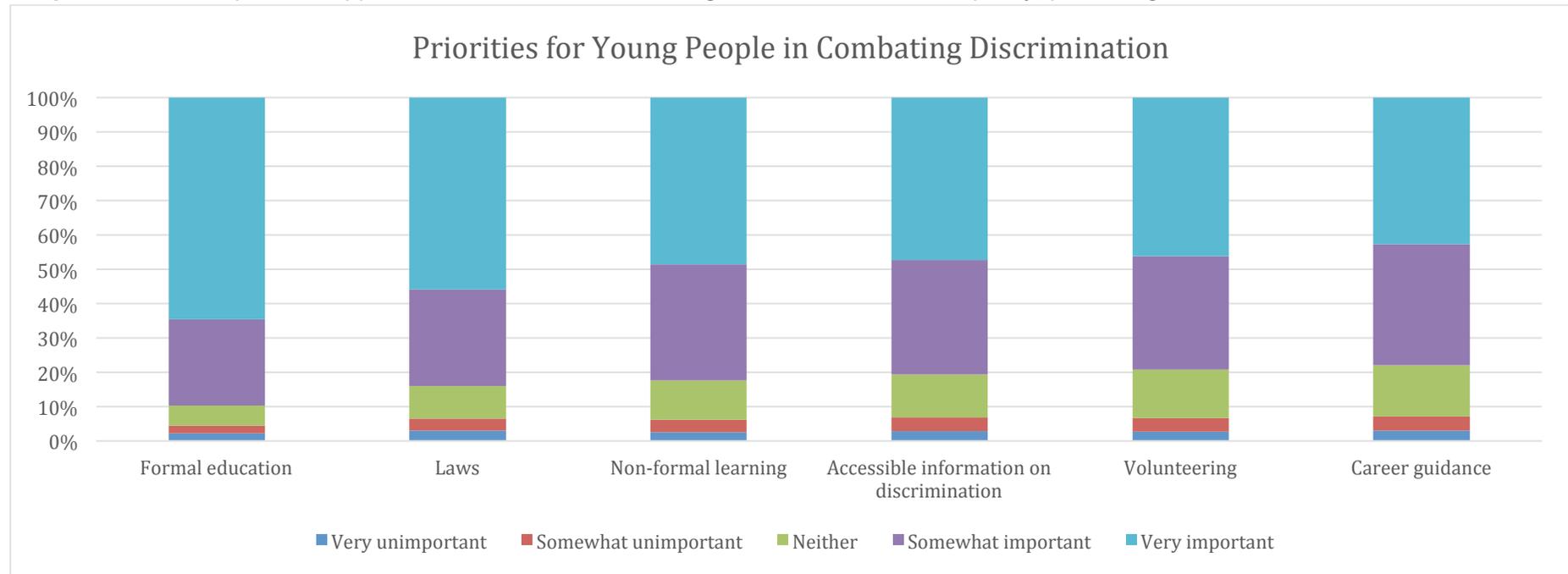
Inclusion has been one of the topics of the national consultations, namely focusing on young girls and women and generally on marginalized communities.<sup>1</sup> General analysis shown in the graph below suggests that the young people believe more stress should be put on the topic of gender equality mainly in schools, with law changes where appropriate, and an attention from the non-formal learning sector as well. At the same time, average scores are rather similar for all support mechanisms, which suggests that the young people would welcome a wide variety of support in this matter.

Detailed analysis in the graph below confirm the finding stated above, that the young people's preferences in this area are more towards a wider palette of support mechanisms, than towards any particular set; with a preference on schooling, support in laws, and non-formal learning.

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<sup>1</sup> The item read: „ How important do you think the following steps are in order to combat discrimination (e.g. to help the young girls and women to be able to fully participate in labour market, to enable marginalized groups to participate in community life, etc.)?”

**Graph:** The most important support mechanisms for overcoming discrimination and inequality; percentages.



**Where does this report come from?**

This report is based on responses to consultation question ‘*What would enable young girls and women to overcome discrimination and inequality?*’ and ‘*What can be done to enable young people from marginalized backgrounds to fully participate in society?*’. These questions were developed from harvesting tools submitted at the first conference.