

## YOUNG WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN CIVIL SOCIETY

Gender bias and traditional gender expectations limit young women's participation in civil society, but seeing other women in leadership roles serves as a source of inspiration and empowerment for them to get involved.



In 2023, 55% of youth in Slovakia reported participating in at least one civic activity, with men accounting for 55% and women 53%, reflecting a relatively balanced participation rate between genders.


## MAIN FINDINGS

Obstacles 

Young women in Slovakia face systemic barriers to civic participation, including gendered expectations, socio-economic challenges, and institutional resistance. Gender biases often limit their recognition and leadership opportunities. Societal norms and cultural expectations favor male participation, hindering young women's full engagement in public life, politics, and community decision-making processes. Addressing these barriers is crucial for greater inclusion.

Good local practices 

Successful strategies include mentorship programs with female leaders, peer support networks, and school-based initiatives that foster leadership and civic responsibility. Community projects create safe, engaging spaces for participation, while visible female role models encourage involvement. Local events tailored to young women's interests strengthen their sense of belonging and engagement.

Policy recommendations 

To overcome structural barriers, gender-sensitive policies must promote equal leadership opportunities. Strengthening civic education with practical skills training is essential. Providing financial support and mental health resources can help young women balance responsibilities. Platforms for dialogue between youth and policymakers should be established to amplify young women's voices and ensure they are reflected in decision-making.



THIS IS WHAT THE GIRLS SAY

*"I felt that my ideas didn't matter because I'm a woman. But when I saw other women doing things, leading projects, I thought that I could do it too."*



## Introduction

This study explores the barriers and opportunities for young women's civic participation in Slovakia. Data was gathered through surveys, two focus groups (one with young women and the other with youth workers), and secondary data from different research conducted in 2023. The aim was to identify challenges and effective strategies to enhance the involvement of young women in civic and public life.

## Obstacle

Young women face barriers such as school resistance to civic activities, gendered discrimination, and socio-economic challenges. Their opinions are often dismissed in male-dominated spaces, and financial constraints, especially in rural areas, limit their ability to participate. These systemic and social factors hinder their full civic engagement.

## Good local practices

Successful strategies for promoting civic participation among young women include mentorship programs, peer networks, and school-based initiatives fostering leadership. Community projects and visible female role models help create engaging spaces. Localized events and inclusive programs offer opportunities for active involvement and empowerment.

## Policy recommendations

Policies must focus on gender-sensitive approaches, ensuring equal leadership opportunities for young women. Strengthening civic education and practical training is crucial. Financial support and mental health resources should be provided to help young women balance responsibilities. Dialogue platforms with policymakers should be established to amplify their voices.



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