

## Gender and Intersectionality analysis of youth civic participation at local level

### Slovak case

#### Introduction

This analysis was conducted as part of the Global Districts project.

The project targets young people who are less engaged in global challenges and come from socially and geographically marginalized backgrounds, aiming to foster their inclusion as active agents of change in society.

Through informal education and civic participation initiatives, the project promotes community activation by connecting local and global perspectives. It highlights how global challenges—such as poverty, climate change, and gender discrimination—impact society and how local communities can contribute to positive change.

With a strong focus on intersectionality and gender equality, the project seeks to lay the groundwork for policy proposals and innovation in collaboration with institutional actors at local, national, and European levels.

This report provides an in-depth analysis as part of Activity 3.1.1, focusing on gender and intersectionality in youth civic participation at the local level, with a specific emphasis on Slovakia. This study explores the unique experiences of girls and young women engaging in civic life.

Applying an intersectional approach, the analysis considers multiple and overlapping barriers faced by young people, such as gender, ethnicity, socio-economic and educational backgrounds, and rural-urban disparities. By identifying inequalities rooted in gender and intersectionality, the study seeks to increase understanding and foster inclusive, effective strategies for civic participation.

The research integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive perspective. It includes a presentation of data specific to Slovakia, using trends, statistics, and key figures to contextualize the findings. Additionally, two focus groups were conducted to gather qualitative insights: one with young girls and women from diverse backgrounds across Slovakia and another with representatives from youth-focused organizations and youth workers. The focus group discussions included a total of 15 participants, comprising 7 youth workers and 8 young women. The selection of these participants was intentional to ensure a diverse range of perspectives on the obstacles to participation. The youth workers provided insights based on their institutional experiences and structural challenges, while the young women contributed firsthand accounts of the barriers, they face in engaging with various opportunities. This combination of voices allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing participation and helped identify potential solutions to address these challenges. These discussions offered invaluable perspectives on the lived experiences of young women and the

challenges encountered by organizations working to support their participation.

This report aims to guide the design of project activities (Objective 1) that promote greater involvement of young people, particularly girls and young women, by addressing intersectional barriers and creating pathways for active civic engagement.

The findings emphasize the need for targeted measures, policies, and strategies to enhance the visibility, empowerment, and participation of girls and young women in civic life. The report highlights measures that can be adopted at local, regional, and national levels to create more inclusive environments for youth participation.

By presenting data and trends specific to Slovakia alongside insights from focus groups and expert input, this report seeks to advance evidence-based solutions to foster civic participation among young women. Through this effort, the project aims to contribute to a more equitable and participatory society.

## The intersection between democracy and civic participation of Slovak youth

While young Slovaks overwhelmingly value democracy as the best political system and support their country's integration into the EU and NATO, a stark disconnect exists between these ideals and their participation in civic and political life. Although 84% endorse

democracy and express a commitment to its principles, only 35% feel confident in their ability to influence political decisions, and 79% believe politicians disregard their concerns. This mismatch highlights the barriers preventing young people from translating their democratic ideals into active engagement. Limited civic education, self-reported as insufficient by a significant portion of respondents, contributes to this gap by leaving youth without the knowledge or skills needed to participate effectively. These findings emphasize the urgent need for systemic reforms that not only enhance civic education but also create meaningful opportunities for young Slovaks to engage in the democratic process, bridging the divide between their support for democracy and their capacity to act within it.

## Trends in youth civic participation in Slovakia

The analysis of youth civic and political participation in Slovakia from 2017 to 2023 provides valuable insights into the evolving engagement patterns of young people aged 15–29. This comprehensive research, derived from surveys conducted across several years, highlights the challenges young Slovaks face in engaging with civic and political life, while also pointing to the opportunities for fostering greater involvement.

A crucial finding from the study is the persistently low level of civic education among Slovak youth. When respondents were asked to self-assess their knowledge of civic education in 2023, only 13% rated

their understanding as excellent, while 32% considered it commendable. The majority, 38%, described their knowledge as merely satisfactory, and 17% rated it as insufficient or poor. The average self-assessment score was mediocre, pointing to systemic shortcomings in the education system's ability to provide young people with critical civic competencies. This lack of foundational knowledge undermines their confidence and ability to actively participate in civic and political activities.

Civic participation rates further illustrate this issue. In the past year, 55% of youth reported participating in at least one civic activity, such as volunteering, supporting social or political campaigns, or engaging in online discussions. However, 45% of respondents did not engage in any form of participation. Among the most common activities, 23% of young people participated in volunteer efforts, 20% shared articles or videos related to social or political topics online, and 18% attended charity events with social or political themes. Other activities, like wearing symbols to support causes (13%), visiting websites of political parties (13%) or NGOs (12%), and boycotting products for ethical reasons (10%), were less common. More direct political engagement, such as attending public protests (8%) or influencing political decisions (3%), remained limited.

When these findings are compared to data from 2017 to 2023, a decline in participation becomes evident. The proportion of young people actively engaged in civic and political life has steadily decreased, exacerbated by external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The

pandemic not only disrupted opportunities for face-to-face interaction and civic education but also isolated many young people from the networks and platforms that encourage engagement. As a result, youth were left with fewer experiences, skills, and resources to participate meaningfully in public life.

Volunteering, a key indicator of civic engagement, also experienced shifts. In 2023, 21% of youth occasionally participated in volunteer activities, while 5% engaged regularly. However, a significant majority (60%) reported no experience with volunteering, either currently or in the past. These figures represent a slight decline compared to previous years, reflecting broader disengagement trends.

A critical aspect of civic and political participation is understanding who initiates these activities. The research found that 53% of youth cited their own initiative as the primary driver of their engagement, while 22% credited friends and 6% family members. Institutional actors, such as political parties (5%) or NGOs (6%), played a smaller role in mobilizing youth. These patterns remained relatively stable between 2017 and 2023, emphasizing the importance of self-motivation in driving participation.

To address these findings, the research suggests several reforms. Lowering the voting age to 16 could empower more young people to engage in democratic processes earlier. Establishing youth quotas in decision-making bodies might ensure their representation and amplify their voices. Strengthening the role of youth organizations, improving

civic education in schools, and creating platforms for dialogue between politicians and youth were also identified as critical steps. Additionally, efforts to provide physical and digital spaces for young people to discuss political issues could foster greater engagement.

The quantitative analysis shows that while Slovak youth are fundamentally supportive of democracy and eager to contribute to public life, systemic barriers hinder their participation. Gaps in education, limited opportunities for meaningful involvement, and the lingering effects of the pandemic have all contributed to a decline in civic and political engagement. Addressing these issues requires targeted reforms to empower young people, bridge the gap between their aspirations and actions, and ensure they play an active role in shaping Slovakia's future. The research underscores the urgent need for a concerted effort by educational institutions, policymakers, and civil society to foster a more participatory and inclusive democracy for the next generation.

## Engaging young women in civic participation

### Voices and perspectives

The civic participation of young girls and women is an issue that resonates deeply within the Slovak context, where historical gender norms, socio-economic divides, and regional disparities continue to shape the public and private lives of young women. Civic participation



refers to the involvement of citizens in various activities aimed at influencing decisions that affect their communities, including voting, volunteering, community organization, advocacy, and leadership. While both young women and men are expected to engage in civic life, young women in Slovakia often face specific challenges that hinder their full participation, both in formal and informal spaces. Despite the progressive strides made in gender equality in recent decades, young girls and women continue to encounter barriers shaped by entrenched social norms, limited resources, and institutional neglect.

In Slovakia, as in many other post-socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, gender roles remain deeply influenced by historical structures that value men's involvement in public life and the economy, while relegating women to domestic spheres. This imbalance is particularly evident in rural regions, where traditional family structures and gender expectations remain dominant. In these areas, young girls are often expected to take on household responsibilities, limiting their access to educational and professional opportunities, as well as their ability to participate in civic and leadership activities. However, the challenges facing young women in Slovakia are not solely due to rural-urban divides or socio-economic factors; they are also shaped by wider cultural and political contexts, which often fail to recognize the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, class, and geography.

The findings from the focus groups with young girls and women in Slovakia reveal a complex web of challenges that must be addressed to



foster greater participation in civic life. These include the underrepresentation of young women in leadership positions, the lack of mentorship, gender-specific discrimination in educational and community settings, and the compounded effects of socio-economic disadvantage, rural isolation, and ethnic marginalization. At the same time, the discussions also illuminate examples of good practices that have successfully engaged young women in civic activities, including peer mentoring, community-based initiatives, and school programs that foster leadership and civic responsibility. The lessons learned from these experiences provide a valuable framework for developing policies and strategies that can better support young women's participation in civic life, not just in Slovakia but across Central and Eastern Europe.

Drawing directly from the transcripts and following the research guidelines, the findings are divided into motivations, barriers, systemic factors, and potential strategies, with particular attention to the voices of participants.

## Motivators for participation

The participants shared various factors motivating their civic engagement, which often combined personal, social, and aspirational dimensions. A recurring theme was the desire to see their contributions make tangible impacts on their communities. As one participant put it, *"It motivates me when I see that my efforts have a real impact and that I'm part of something improving our city."* This sense of purpose,

coupled with the potential for change, was a strong driver of their involvement. Another participant added, *"Even if I don't see immediate results, just the idea that what I do might lead to something meaningful is enough to keep me going."*

The social aspect of civic engagement also played a significant role. Many participants emphasized the value of being part of a community of like-minded peers who shared similar goals. This environment not only fostered collaboration but also helped participants feel supported. *"The community aspect keeps me going—it's about giving back what I've received and being part of something bigger than myself,"* shared one participant, highlighting the reciprocal nature of civic work.

Personal growth and development were additional motivators. Leadership opportunities allowed participants to develop skills, gain confidence, and advocate for the interests of others. One participant mentioned that their role as a youth parliament leader was not just about representation but about ensuring genuine dialogue with policymakers: *"It's not enough to be heard; something needs to change as a result of what we say."*

## Obstacles to participation

Despite their enthusiasm, participants faced several systemic and social barriers that hindered their ability to fully engage in civic activities.



These barriers were often compounded by their age, gender, and other intersectional factors.

The lack of flexibility in schools emerged as a significant barrier, particularly for students balancing their education with civic commitments. Participants shared instances where schools actively resisted their engagement. One participant recounted, *"My school didn't want to let me attend civic events, even though it was something for the public good. I had to escalate the issue to regional authorities to resolve it."* This institutional resistance not only discouraged participation but also added bureaucratic hurdles.

Participants also highlighted the pervasive sexism they encountered in civic spaces. Young women frequently felt their opinions were dismissed or undervalued, particularly by older, male-dominated audiences. As one participant shared, *"Sometimes, it feels like people don't take my opinions seriously because I'm young and a girl."* Another added that in mixed-gender settings, men were often assumed to be in charge, even when the women were the designated leaders: *"During a camp I organized, parents automatically approached my male colleagues with concerns, ignoring the fact that I was the head organizer."*

The focus groups underscored how systemic factors shape the civic engagement landscape for girls and young women. Parental attitudes, shaped by traditional gender roles, were a recurring theme. Some participants shared that their families viewed civic engagement as a

distraction from more "practical" pursuits like academics. *"My parents would often question why I was spending time on these activities instead of focusing on school,"* one participant noted, reflecting the broader societal undervaluation of civic work.

Cultural expectations also played a role, particularly in smaller towns. Participants from these areas felt that societal norms limited their visibility and leadership opportunities. *"In my town, it's hard for young women to find role models in leadership roles—it's as if these opportunities aren't meant for us,"* one participant shared, highlighting the interplay of geography and gender.

In addition, Slovakia, like many countries in Central and Eastern Europe, has a legacy of patriarchal traditions and socialist-era gender norms that continue to influence the civic and political participation of young girls and women. Despite the country's formal commitment to gender equality and the adoption of various legal frameworks aimed at reducing gender discrimination, Slovakia still faces significant challenges in terms of gender parity, especially in rural and less-developed regions. This is particularly evident in the underrepresentation of women in political offices, leadership positions, and decision-making bodies.

The Slovak political landscape has historically been dominated by men, with very few women holding positions of power in government, local politics, and civil society organizations. For instance, although women in

Slovakia are well represented in educational institutions, their participation in political decision-making, entrepreneurship, and leadership roles remains limited. According to reports by the European Commission, while women in Slovakia are equally or more educated than men in many sectors, they are still underrepresented in leadership roles. This gender gap is exacerbated by the persistence of societal beliefs that women's primary role should be in the home, which impacts their participation in public life.

Rural areas in Slovakia, in particular, are characterized by traditional family structures and gendered expectations that continue to influence the lives of young girls and women. Rural communities, where economic and social opportunities are more limited, often place significant pressure on young women to prioritize domestic roles over education and community involvement. This gendered division of labor restricts their mobility, access to resources, and opportunities to engage in activities outside the home, including civic participation.

The gender-specific barriers to civic participation, as discussed in the focus groups, are pervasive and deeply rooted in the Slovak social fabric. These barriers manifest in various forms, including societal expectations, cultural norms, and institutional practices that consistently favor male participation over female participation. As young girls and women navigate these spaces, they often face pressure to conform to traditional gender roles that discourage public involvement and leadership.

In the focus groups, several participants shared their frustration with the lack of recognition and opportunities afforded to young women in both educational and community settings.

Young woman described how, even in school settings, she found it difficult to be heard. *"Whenever I tried to take part in anything that required a leadership role, people would say, 'You're a girl, you should be quiet.' It was like I was invisible."* This comment highlights how societal expectations of female behavior, such as being quiet, submissive, and supportive, are ingrained in both family and educational contexts, limiting young women's ability to assert themselves in leadership positions.

In addition, when young women are active and engaged in various spheres, there is often a prevailing fear of sexism that can hinder their progress. This fear may manifest in different ways, such as the fear of being judged based on their gender or facing discriminatory treatment in both personal and professional environments. These challenges can create a barrier to their full participation and success, even as they strive to assert themselves and make meaningful contributions.

These experiences reflect a larger pattern in Slovak society where public life—politics, business, and community decision-making—are often seen as male-dominated domains. The public-private divide, deeply rooted in Slovak culture, relegates women to the private sphere of the home while positioning men as the primary actors in civic and political life. This

gendered division of labor serves as a significant barrier to women's full participation in decision-making processes and leadership roles.

## Good practices

Findings from the focus group with young women highlight the significant challenges they face in civic participation. While they initially express enthusiasm for engagement, their involvement often declines over time due to the difficulty of balancing multiple responsibilities. A second focus group with youth workers provided additional insights, emphasizing the need for sustained support systems and inclusive structures to encourage long-term participation.

Another critical barrier discussed by the respondents was the gendered nature of leadership roles in civic participation. Several respondents mentioned that, while young women may begin civic activities with high levels of enthusiasm, fewer of them assume leadership positions as the activities progress. One respondent noted, *"At the start, more girls are involved, but fewer of them complete the programs or stay engaged in leadership roles over time."* This observation highlights the structural and societal obstacles that prevent young women from taking on leadership roles. These barriers are not simply a matter of personal choice but reflect deep-rooted societal norms that associate leadership with men, thus encouraging women to take on more passive, supportive roles.





This issue is compounded by the fact that, even when young women do take on leadership positions, their authority is often undermined by male participants or adults in the space. As another respondent shared, *“Even when women were in charge, men were assumed to be the leaders in mixed-gender settings.”* This points to the deeply entrenched gender biases that persist in both youth and adult-led spaces. These biases not only undermine young women’s authority but also erode their confidence in their ability to lead, creating a cycle of disempowerment that ultimately discourages them from seeking leadership opportunities in the future. This phenomenon is not unique to Slovakia but reflects a broader global trend where young women face obstacles to leadership due to deeply ingrained gendered expectations and prejudices.

Additionally, the respondents mentioned that young women often feel that roles involving public speaking and advocacy—key components of civic engagement—are seen as “boy’s domains.” One respondent explained, *“Girls feel that things like public speaking and advocating for their opinions are seen as boy’s domains.”* This perception, where leadership, public discourse, and decision-making are considered masculine traits, discourages young women from participating in these vital areas of civic engagement. This stereotype reduces the visibility and contributions of young women, further reinforcing the idea that women’s voices and ideas are less valued in the public sphere. As a result, young women are less likely to take the initiative in public spaces, further marginalizing their voices in civic life.



The issue of gendered expectations is compounded by socio-cultural pressures, especially in rural areas. Respondents observed that young women in rural regions face additional challenges due to traditional family structures and societal norms that restrict their engagement in civic activities. As one respondent stated, *“Girls often feel trapped by the expectations to follow traditional paths. They see few examples of women stepping outside these roles.”* This comment reflects how the intersection of gender and geography creates unique barriers for rural young women. These women are often expected to prioritize domestic responsibilities over public involvement, and their opportunities to participate in civic life are severely limited. In such environments, young women face the dual pressures of gendered expectations and the lack of accessible opportunities for engagement, making it difficult for them to envision themselves in leadership roles or public spaces.

The respondents also pointed out regional differences in how young women approach civic engagement. In urban areas, young women are more likely to engage in civic activities out of curiosity or social reasons. One respondent observed, *“In urban areas, girls engage in activities out of curiosity or social networking, but in rural areas, girls often engage because they feel they must escape limited options.”* This difference in motivations reflects how socio-economic factors and access to opportunities shape young women’s involvement. In urban areas, where there are more resources and greater freedom of movement, engagement is often driven by interest, social connections, or personal

development. In contrast, young women in rural areas are more likely to view civic participation as a necessary escape from the limited opportunities and societal expectations placed upon them. This contrast reveals that, while engagement is essential everywhere, the context in which young women engage can vary dramatically depending on their geographical and socio-economic circumstances.

Institutional barriers were also a key theme in the discussion, particularly the lack of support from schools for civic participation. One respondent shared their experience, saying, *“My school didn’t support my participation in civic events, even though it was for the public good. I had to fight for permission.”* This statement highlights a significant issue in Slovakia: schools often prioritize academic success over extracurricular engagement, which can stifle students’ broader development. While schools are meant to foster well-rounded development in students, they frequently fail to support or even actively discourage participation in civic activities. This resistance to civic engagement is especially problematic for young women, who may already be burdened with additional gendered expectations and responsibilities at home or within their communities.

In addition to institutional resistance, respondents discussed how gendered biases continue to affect leadership roles within these educational institutions. Even when young women hold leadership positions in civic activities, their authority is often overlooked or diminished by male peers or adults. One respondent noted, *“Even when*

women were in charge, men were assumed to be the leaders in mixed-gender settings.” This illustrates how gender biases persist even in youth-centered spaces, making it harder for young women to assert their leadership and claim authority in public settings. Such experiences reinforce the belief that leadership is a masculine trait and that women’s leadership is either invisible or undervalued.

A critical issue raised by the respondents was the generational shift in priorities, particularly as young women grow older and face increasing pressure from school, work, and family obligations. One respondent explained, “As they grow older, their priorities change—jobs or studies take precedence over voluntary activities.” This shift speaks to a broader structural issue where young people, especially young women, are often forced to choose between personal survival and public engagement. As academic demands increase and young women begin to take on greater responsibilities, such as part-time jobs or caregiving roles, their capacity to engage in unpaid civic activities decreases.

Moreover, these generational shifts are compounded by the increasing mental health challenges that many young women face. The societal pressures to succeed academically, balance work, and maintain family responsibilities create a perfect storm of stress that limits their ability to engage in civic activities. This is further exacerbated by the fact that young women, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds, often do not have access to the mental health resources or support systems necessary to cope with these pressures.

However, despite these barriers, the respondents also identified solutions to overcome these challenges. One of the key strategies discussed was the importance of mentorship and role models. As one respondent emphasized, *“When they see others like them leading, it makes them believe they can do it too.”* The power of representation is critical. When young women see others like them—whether in terms of gender, socio-economic background, or cultural context—taking on leadership roles, it inspires them to believe that such roles are within their reach. Having accessible role models can help challenge stereotypes, inspire confidence, and empower young women to take on leadership positions, thus breaking the cycle of underrepresentation and disengagement.

The focus group discussion revealed multiple barriers to civic engagement for young women in Slovakia, barriers that are deeply rooted in societal structures, gender norms, and institutional practices. These barriers—ranging from over-commitment and competing responsibilities to gendered biases and regional disparities—reflect the broader challenges young women face in trying to engage in public life. While the obstacles are significant, the discussion also highlighted strategies that can help overcome these barriers, such as providing mentorship, promoting female role models, and creating more inclusive and supportive institutional frameworks. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that involves not only individual efforts but also systemic changes at the institutional, community, and

societal levels. By fostering an environment that actively supports young women's civic participation, Slovakia can create a more equitable and inclusive space for all youth to engage, lead, and contribute to their communities. Through these efforts, young women will be empowered to overcome the barriers they face and fully participate in shaping their futures.

## Policy recommendations

To foster greater civic engagement among young women in Slovakia, a multifaceted and systemic approach is essential. Enhancing civic education within schools stands as a crucial starting point. The current curriculum should be expanded to include practical components such as leadership training, critical thinking, public speaking, and opportunities for hands-on civic engagement. Incorporating real-life projects and collaborations with local communities will provide young women with both the skills and the confidence they need to participate actively in public life. Special emphasis should be placed on addressing gender-specific challenges within educational materials, ensuring that young women see themselves represented in leadership roles.

Mentorship programs should be developed to connect young women with experienced female leaders from various fields. These mentorship relationships can provide guidance, encouragement, and a tangible demonstration of what is possible, helping to break down traditional gender roles and societal expectations. Such programs should prioritize inclusivity, ensuring that young women from rural areas, marginalized

ethnic backgrounds, and low-income families have access to mentors who understand their unique challenges.

Policymakers must also address systemic barriers within institutions. Gender-sensitive policies should be implemented to promote equality in leadership roles within educational and community settings. This includes creating transparent processes for appointing youth leaders and ensuring that young women have an equal opportunity to hold these positions. Additionally, there should be efforts to combat gender biases through awareness campaigns and training programs for educators, community leaders, and local officials.

Improving mental health support is another critical step. Many young women face significant pressure balancing academic responsibilities, family obligations, and civic engagement. Providing accessible mental health resources, including counseling and support groups, can help alleviate these pressures and prevent burnout. Schools and community centers should collaborate with mental health professionals to create supportive environments where young women feel understood and empowered.

Financial assistance and resource allocation must be prioritized to ensure that socio-economic status does not become a barrier to participation. Offering scholarships, travel reimbursements, and stipends for young women involved in civic activities can help bridge the gap for those from less privileged backgrounds. Additionally, funding



should be directed toward community-based initiatives that engage young women, particularly in rural areas where opportunities for civic involvement are often limited.

Fostering collaboration between schools, local communities, and civic organizations is essential to creating an inclusive environment where young women feel empowered to contribute. Schools should partner with local NGOs and youth organizations to provide civic education programs and extracurricular activities that encourage active participation. These collaborations can also facilitate workshops and events that bring young women together, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose.

Lastly, encouraging dialogue between youth and policymakers is vital for bridging the disconnect many young people feel. Establishing youth councils or advisory boards within local governments can give young women a platform to voice their concerns and influence decision-making processes. Policymakers should actively seek input from these councils and demonstrate a genuine commitment to addressing the issues raised.

## Conclusion

Addressing the unique barriers faced by young women in Slovakia's civic life requires a comprehensive and sustained effort that goes beyond surface-level interventions. The challenges identified in this

study—ranging from entrenched gender norms and socio-economic disparities to institutional resistance and lack of support—underscore the need for targeted strategies that foster inclusivity and empowerment. Enhancing civic education is a fundamental step, equipping young women with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate public life. However, education alone is not enough. Mentorship programs, gender-sensitive policies, mental health support, and financial assistance are all critical components of a broader strategy to create an environment where young women can thrive.

The focus groups revealed that young women in Slovakia possess a strong desire to contribute to their communities, but they often encounter systemic barriers that undermine their efforts. By addressing these barriers and promoting inclusive policies, Slovakia can unlock the full potential of its young female population. This not only benefits the individuals involved but also strengthens the broader fabric of society. When young women are empowered to participate fully in civic life, they bring diverse perspectives and innovative solutions that enrich public discourse and contribute to more equitable and effective decision-making.

Furthermore, fostering collaboration between educational institutions, local communities, and policymakers is essential for creating a supportive ecosystem that encourages civic engagement. Dialogue between youth and decision-makers can help bridge the gap between policy and practice, ensuring that the voices of young women are heard



and valued. This report highlights the importance of systemic change, not just in addressing immediate barriers but in transforming the cultural and institutional landscape to support long-term, sustainable growth.

Ultimately, the goal is to create a Slovakia where young women are not just participants but leaders in civic life, shaping the future of their communities and the nation as a whole. By recognizing the intersectional nature of the challenges they face and implementing comprehensive, inclusive strategies, Slovakia can build a more equitable and participatory democracy. This is not only a matter of gender equality but a fundamental step toward creating a society that values and empowers all its citizens, ensuring a vibrant and inclusive future for generations to come.

The research was conducted by [The Youth Council of Slovakia](#) for [People in Peril](#) as part of the Global Districts project.

