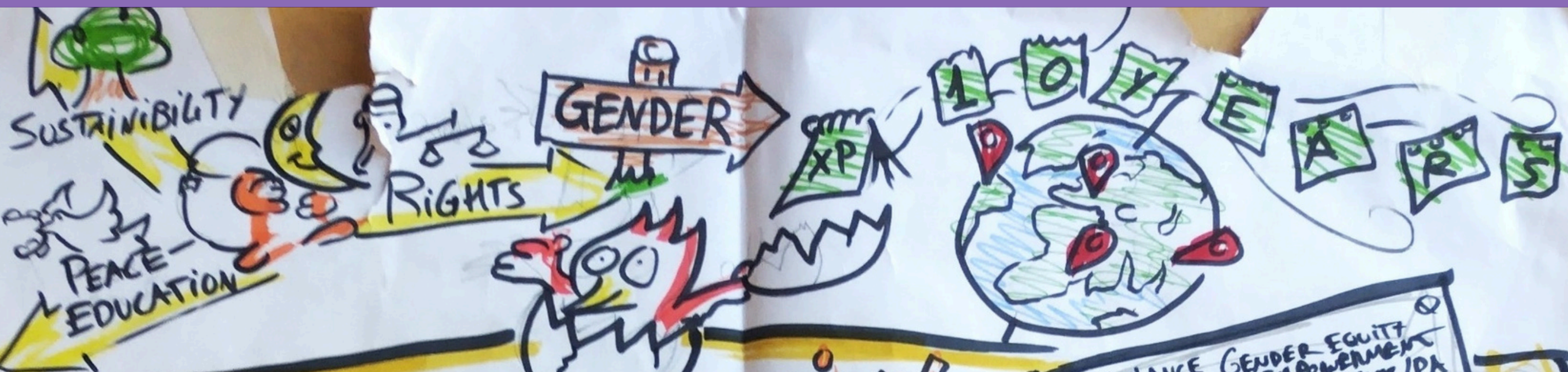# PHOENIX

Youth Work for Gender Awareness in the Euro-Mediterranean Context

ITC 3: METHODOLOGICAL CURRICULA ON GENDER

PHOENIX

INDEX

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

PROJECT SUMMARY

PHOENIX is a KA2 - Capacity building in the field of youth, implemented with the support of Erasmus+ program.

The project **aims** to enhance gender equity and young women empowerment by providing youth workers, peer educators, local organizations and international NGOs, in EU and Mediterranean countries, with new tools and methods, training modules and pedagogical approaches to raise youth awareness on gender-sensitive issues, both within the local communities and at international level.

Therefore, the project answers to the specific objective of the call: anti-discrimination and gender equality.

The work plan is designed to reach logically and efficiently the project objectives and to deliver the expected outcomes and results. The work plan includes the following working packages (WP):

- WP 1: project management and coordination
- WP 2: research – needs assessment
- WP 3: mobility preparation and implementation
- WP 4: organization of workshops
- WP 5: communication and dissemination.

The consortium members are LUNARIA – Italy, JORDAN YOUTH INNOVATION FORUM – Jordan, AGDZ VOLUNTEERS WITHOUT BORDERS – Morocco and OTRA ESCUELA – Spain.

BACKGROUND

Lunaria launched in 2012 a **long-term strategy** aimed to promote gender equality through youth work, within a European and worldwide perspective.

The actors, target groups and beneficiaries of the process were and are young people, youth-social workers, local organizations and NGOs.

This work has brought the organization to explore different sensitive issues within the big umbrella of "gender", as for example, gender-based stereotypes, gender role models, gender-based discrimination, hate speech towards individuals and LGBTQIA+ communities, gender-based violence and women empowerment.

Within this strategy, we have already implemented different projects in cooperation with European organizations (as youth exchanges and training courses within the KA1 of Erasmus+ program) and Partner countries' organizations (as capacity building in the field of youth within the KA2 of Erasmus+ program).

More specifically about the previous KA2s, below some references of the projects already implemented:

- **2014-2015 JAMBO Young Women Empowerment to Improve Quality of Youth Work and Volunteering in EU and Partner Countries:** aimed to empower youth and social workers from eastern Africa and Europe, by providing them with new tools to favor women's participation in short-term local and international voluntary service projects.
- **2015-2016 PANDORA'S BOX Young Women, Community Development through EU and LA Cooperation:** aimed to follow up the work already started with Jambo, further developing, in European and Latin American countries, the action and the methodologies already applied in the field of gender equality.
- **2017–2018 STAGED! Struggling Against Gender-based Discrimination through Youth Work in EU and Asia:** aimed to follow up the work started in Jambo and Pandora and aimed to enhance gender equity and young women empowerment in European and South-Eastern Asian countries, by developing new tools and methods to favor young women's participation and empowerment.
- **2018 – 2020 GAGA Global Action for Gender Awareness:** aimed to enhance gender equity and young women's empowerment by providing youth workers, peer educators, local organizations and international NGOs, in European and Partner countries, with new methods, training schemes and pedagogical approaches to raise awareness on gender-sensitive issues.

OBJECTIVES

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The project aims to enhance gender equity and young women's empowerment by providing youth workers, peer educators, local organizations and international NGOs, in EU and Mediterranean countries, with new tools and methods, training modules and pedagogical approaches to raise youth awareness on gender-sensitive issues, both within the local communities and at international level.

More specifically, the project aims to promote non-formal learning activities, to support the development of youth work in third countries, to foster the testing and launching of schemes and programs of non-formal learning mobility in the Euro-Mediterranean context.

In order to meet the above mentioned goal, the project foresees to implement the following specific objectives:

- **SO1:** to raise awareness on gender-sensitive topics and on the importance of sharing equal rights and opportunities, for every human being, in European and Mediterranean countries
- **SO2:** to exchange good practices in the field of gender equity and women empowerment, among civil society organizations
- **SO3:** to develop youth work methods and tools for the socio-professional development of youth workers and facilitators, in order to further develop their skills and competences for the promotion of gender equity
- **SO4:** to develop, test and launch a pedagogical approach, training schemes and non-formal learning mobility experiences in order to boost the participating organizations' expertise within the gender framework
- **SO5:** to enhance the active involvement of young people with fewer opportunities and groups at risk of exclusion, with a specific attention to young women, fostering their active participation in society.

WORK PLAN

The work plan is designed to reach the project objectives logically and efficiently and to deliver the expected outcomes and results.

WP 1: PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION: aims to guarantee the correct development and implementation of the activities as well as the economic efficiency of their planning and management. It includes two partner meetings: Kick off meeting and Evaluation meeting in person and various other online partners' meetings.

WP 2: RESEARCH – NEEDS ASSESSMENT: aims to provide a detailed diagnostic of the situation in the participant countries, for what concerns the challenges faced and the needs of youth workers and organizations in terms of methods, tools and pedagogical approaches to raise gender awareness among young people. It includes two phases: the "Youth worker and organization meetings" to hand out the questionnaires to local organizations and youth workers and the "Study phase: diagnostic re-elaboration", where the data and information gathered were elaborated.

WP 3: MOBILITY PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION: aims to share the gender perspective and the existing non-formal education tools used in the different countries, setting the ground for a common understanding; to build the standardized questionnaire to detect the youth workers and associations needs in the local backgrounds; to design a first draft of the pedagogical approach for activities to raise youth awareness on gender-sensitive topics; to create, develop and test a set of new tools and workshops for the upcoming activities; to finalize the design of the synthetic pedagogical approach to be applied in projects and activities aimed to enhance gender equity; to run the final assessment of the tools and workshops tested in the previous steps, finalizing the methodological curricula on gender. It includes three main activities: the ITC 1: Working methods and diagnostic, the ITC 2: Pedagogical package for youth work, the ITC 3: Evaluation and methods assessment.

WP 4: ORGANIZATION OF WORKSHOPS: aims to raise awareness among local youth workers, peer educators and young people on gender-sensitive topics (overall objective); to train local youth workers and educators with tools and methods on gender sensitive topics, to afterwards facilitate workshops targeted to young people (Local Trainings); to test and assess the tools and methods created during the second training, contemporarily raising awareness among young people on gender-sensitive topics and therefore creating new opportunities for gender equity (Local Workshops).
It includes two main activities: the Local Trainings targeted to youth workers and educators and the Local Workshops targeted to young people.

WP 5: COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION: aims to ensure ongoing visibility at different levels of project concept, objectives, activities and results; to involve local, regional associations and youth groups in local project activities; to promote and disseminate the shared pedagogical approach for gender equity in the participating countries; to disseminate the methodological curricula on gender to further enhance grassroots and international actions; to create new synergies and cooperation with local organizations and communities to implement activities, initiatives and projects to raise gender awareness.
It includes two main activities: the Standard dissemination plan for 21 months and the Follow up, additional measures for dissemination for the remaining 3 months.

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

The project foresees a combination of **international activities** (3 training courses) to develop non-formal learning methods, new forms of practical training schemes and tools for the socio-professional development of youth workers and trainers and **capacity building activities**. These consist in meetings with youth workers and organizations for the needs assessment and in the implementation of Local Trainings (targeted to youth workers and educators) and workshops (targeted to young people). The capacity building activities are conceived to strengthen the impact of the raising awareness action on gender at local and regional levels.

The diagnostic is meant to gather a consistent number of stakeholders to detect the needs of youth workers and organizations in terms of methods, tools and pedagogical approaches for raising youth awareness on gender-sensitive issues.

Therefore, the pedagogical approach and the workshops to be designed afterwards, are aimed to answer the identified needs.

Moreover, the local activities aim to contribute to the raise awareness among local youth workers, peer educators and young people on gender-sensitive topics, to train local educators with tools and methods for gender sensitization, enabling them to afterwards facilitate workshops targeted to young people, and to test and assess the tools and methods created during the second training for a final upgrade.

PROJECT STRUCTURE

KICK OFF MEETING - ITALY: FEBRUARY 2024

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSE 1 -
ITALY: MAY 2024

RESEARCH – NEEDS ASSESSMENT - ALL: JULY 2024 - OCTOBER 2024

Diagnostic: youth workers and organizations meetings - all: July 2024 - August 2024
Study Phase: diagnostic re-elaboration - all: September 2024 - October 2024

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSE 2 -
MOROCCO: NOVEMBER 2024

ORGANIZATION OF WORKSHOPS - ALL: JANUARY 2025 - AUGUST 2025

Local Trainings - all: February 2025 - March 2025
Local raising awareness workshops - all: June 3025 - July 2025

INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COURSE 3 -
SPAIN: SEPTEMBER 2025

COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION - ALL: JANUARY 2024 -
DECEMBER 2025

Follow up and dissemination: November 2025 - December 2025

EVALUATION MEETING - MOROCCO: DECEMBER
2025

TARGET GROUPS

The project has foreseen the knowledge development of **young people** and **young women** coming from backgrounds with fewer opportunities, who have not finalized the study cycle or have abandoned school at an early age.

It was achieved boosting their **participation** in local and international activities where they learned youth work techniques and increased their understanding of gender issues.

Moreover, it was also achieved by strengthening their **skills and competences**, both from a methodological point of view and from the thematic point of view.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

In the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals, the UN sets a great emphasis on the need to empower women and girls for democratic societies, governance, and inclusive sustainable development. However, despite significant progresses in the last decade, gender inequality is still a reality and women, and minority groups face a combination of multiple discrimination, in Europe and worldwide. The Human Rights Watch, World Report 2017 shows how girls and women are still facing restrictive social norms, constitute the majority of the world's poorest and are the group at higher risk of HIV/AIDS and STDs. Role models, stereotypes and prejudices rooted in the cultural behaves and norms lead to early pregnancy, early marriage, machismo, domestic, psychological, sexual and gender-based violence, often most of the cases going un-reported. A consistent number of women is still not financially independent, have scarce access to remunerated labor market and are paid less than men, remaining in a subordinated role in the family and community. Women are under-represented in governments and decision-making bodies even when specific quota are set. Intersectionality is quite wide-spread and in some countries the LGBTQIA+ community faces restrictive laws and persecution.

The widespread pandemic in 2020 consistently contributed to strengthening the gap and the discriminating events, within families, communities and working places.

The above mentioned KA2 project "GAGA Global Action for Gender Awareness" implemented between 2018 and 2020, included a research report, based on the outcomes of the questionnaires collected in all the participating countries for the diagnostic run in 2019. Questionnaires were gathered in Europe, East Africa, Latin America and South-eastern Asia. Thanks to this action it was possible to run the first youth work needs assessment, for what concerns methods and tools to promote gender equality, in the different geographical areas. The research report is the result of the analysis of the 738 valid questionnaires delivered in 10 countries (in four continents). These data show that the topics on which the most information is needed are LGBTQIA+ issues and Gender Role Models. Regarding the accessibility to information on gender issues, the 68% of respondents stated it is not too difficult to find general information in their environment, but there is still a big lack of information on the subject in their own native language and of tools to tackle the subject with young people. Among the main challenges faced: gender-based stereotypes, leading to discrimination and violence in some cases, gender pay gap and inequalities inside the labor market for men and women, discrimination towards minorities and hate speech.

All these elements show the urgency to further invest in women empowerment and gender equity, identifying and redressing power imbalances and enhancing their autonomy to better manage their own lives. Moreover, there is the need for more updated information after Covid-19, able to measure the real impact of pandemic on the life of the most vulnerable groups. Thus, it is important to get an updated picture of the needs, in terms of youth work techniques and approaches, to tackle the gender' subjects, raising awareness and taking action among young people and local communities.

CONSORTIUM

LUNARIA - Italy
https://www.lunaria.org/

JORDAN YOUTH INNOVATION FORUM
https://jyif.org/

AGDZ VOLUNTEERS ORGANIZATION
https://agdzvolunteers.com/

OTRA ESCUELA
https://madrid.otraescuela.org/

CHAPTER II – DIAGNOSTIC

INTRODUCTION ON THE DIAGNOSTIC

For what concerns the diagnostic and the needs analysis, run between July and October 2024, the project lead to the implementation of two specific deliverables within the Work Package 2, Research – Needs Assessment, led by the partner association Otra Escuela: the **D2.1 Synthetic Country Reports** (sensitive) and the **D2.2 Synthetic Diagnostic Reports** (public).

The reports are the result of the desk (**D2.1 Synthetic Country Reports**) and of the field (**D2.2 Synthetic Diagnostic Reports**) research, designed with the support of researchers and youth workers from Italy, Jordan, Morocco and Spain. The information were processed, fine-tuned and standardized, leading to the finalization of the current documents.

More specifically, the **D2.2 Synthetic Diagnostic Reports** was a quantitative and qualitative synthetic report in English showing the needs, in terms of youth work methods and tools to promote gender equality in the participating countries. The information contained in this report, come from the re-elaboration of the data/information extracted from the questionnaire for the diagnostic targeted to youth workers and educators and from the questionnaire for the diagnostic targeted to young people.

The Handbook includes the main outcomes of this research.

TOOLS AND TIMELINE

These are the steps that have lead to the diagnostic finalization, and the tools used.

STANDARDIZED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE DIAGNOSTIC: aimed to detect the youth workers and associations needs in the participating realities. During the international training course held in Italy in May 2024, the consortium chose to create two questionnaires, one targeted to youth workers/educators and one to young people. This, with the purpose to gather different perspectives towards gender-sensitive issues and to combine the youth and educators' experiences for a more structured, solid, and effective diagnostic.

RESEARCH – NEEDS ASSESSMENT: the questionnaires were used during the WP2: Research – Needs Assessment, taking place between July and October 2024. During July and August 2024, the questionnaires were handed out in presence and online by the participants of the first training course, who were trained for an efficient management of the diagnostic tools, using non-formal education and participatory methods.

DESK RESEARCH REPORT: between July and August 2024, the researchers of the consortium worked on the desk research, gathering relevant information to better contextualize the countries' situation and the gender framework in specific areas: laws and institutions, education, civil society, religion, and local area backgrounds. Then, the reports became part of the **D2.1 Synthetic Country Reports** a sensitive document (internal/not public) containing some interesting and useful insights to better contextualize the outcomes of the diagnostic reports.

DIAGNOSTIC RE-ELABORATION: in September and October 2024, it followed the diagnostic re-elaboration, where the data and information gathered have been processed and elaborated, becoming part of the deliverable **D2.2 Synthetic Diagnostic Reports**, showing the situation and needs, in terms of topics, approaches, methods and tools to promote gender equity. The two deliverables are very important project milestones for the **International Training Course 2: Pedagogical package for youth work** (November 2024 Morocco). Here, they were used as the starting point to design the first draft of the pedagogical approach for activities to raise youth awareness on gender-sensitive topics and to create, develop and test a set of new tools and workshops for the upcoming activities, the Local Trainings and Workshops part of the WP4: Organization of Workshops (to be held between January and August 2025). In this perspective, the new workshops and the synthetic pedagogical approach designed, were specifically created to address the identified needs highlighted during the research and, for this reason, they are integral part of the bottom-up approach proposed all along the project and tailor made on the local backgrounds' needs.

TARGET GROUPS RESEARCH

The diagnostic has been structured as a useful tool for a variety of different stakeholders and target groups. Moreover, apart from being used for the creation of the pedagogical approach and the new workshops on gender, it can be further used in the European and Mediterranean regions to better contextualize the needs of educators and young people and to tailor-made activities on gender, in the different contexts.

Youth and social workers, peer educators, facilitators, and educators at large, involved in the educational activities targeted to young people.
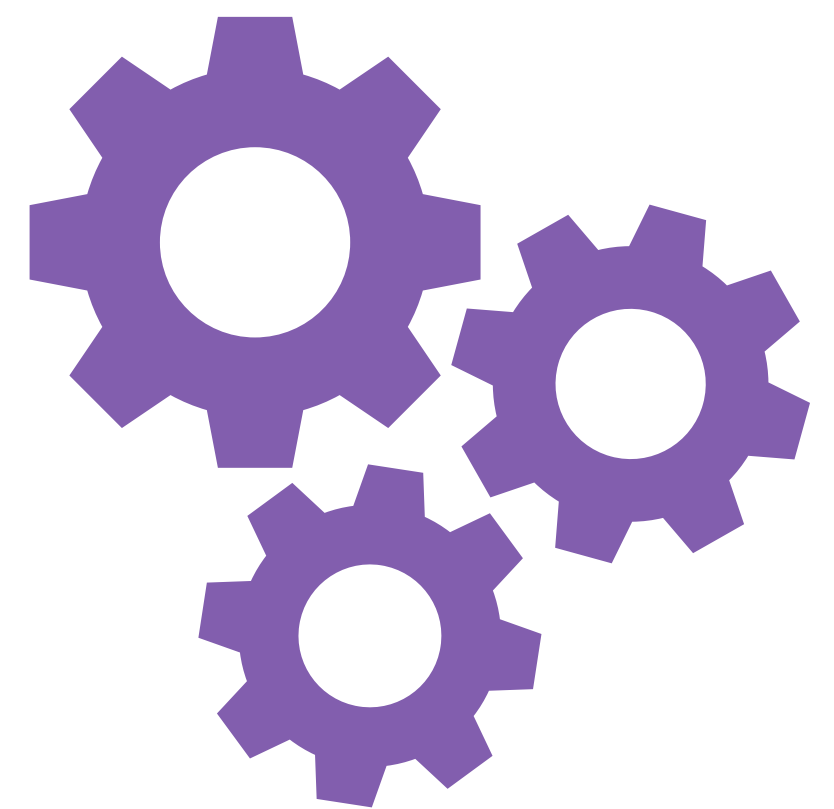
At large, their organizations, youth centers, other new associations and NGOs interested in further developing the gender raising awareness action among young people.

FIGURES

The present analysis aims to provide a detailed diagnostic of the situation in the participant countries (Italy, Jordan, Morocco and Spain) regarding the challenges faced by the youth workers and the organizations, as well as their needs in terms of methods, tools and pedagogical approaches.

The research design was twofold: on the one hand, it aimed to identify the above mentioned elements by delivering questionnaires to youth workers, and on the other hand, it aimed to enhance the results by checking the opinion of young people, who were the target group of the youth workers.

Therefore, the survey covered the perspectives of **224 youth workers** and **341 youngsters** (as distributed below), making it relevant to the project's objectives.

Number of respondents

| COUNTRY	NO. OF YOUTH WORKERS	NO. OF YOUNG PEOPLE
Italy	45	66
Jordan	51	55
Morocco	67	158
Spain	61	62
Total	**224**	**341**

Given that the research mainly focused on youth workers, the analysis will first focus on them, providing a comprehensive interpretation, followed by several comparisons with the answers received from the young people.

YOUTH WORKERS' PERSPECTIVE ON GENDER ISSUES AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The youth workers' respondent profile – a brief analysis

The study included 224 respondents from four countries, as presented above: 45 from Italy, 51 from Jordan, 67 from Morocco, and 61 from Spain. The survey sample is well-distributed across these countries, which may suggest a diverse representation of youth workers' perspectives and experiences across different cultural and socio-political contexts. The balance in respondent numbers also allows for meaningful cross-national comparisons.

Age of respondents (total) - absolute numbers
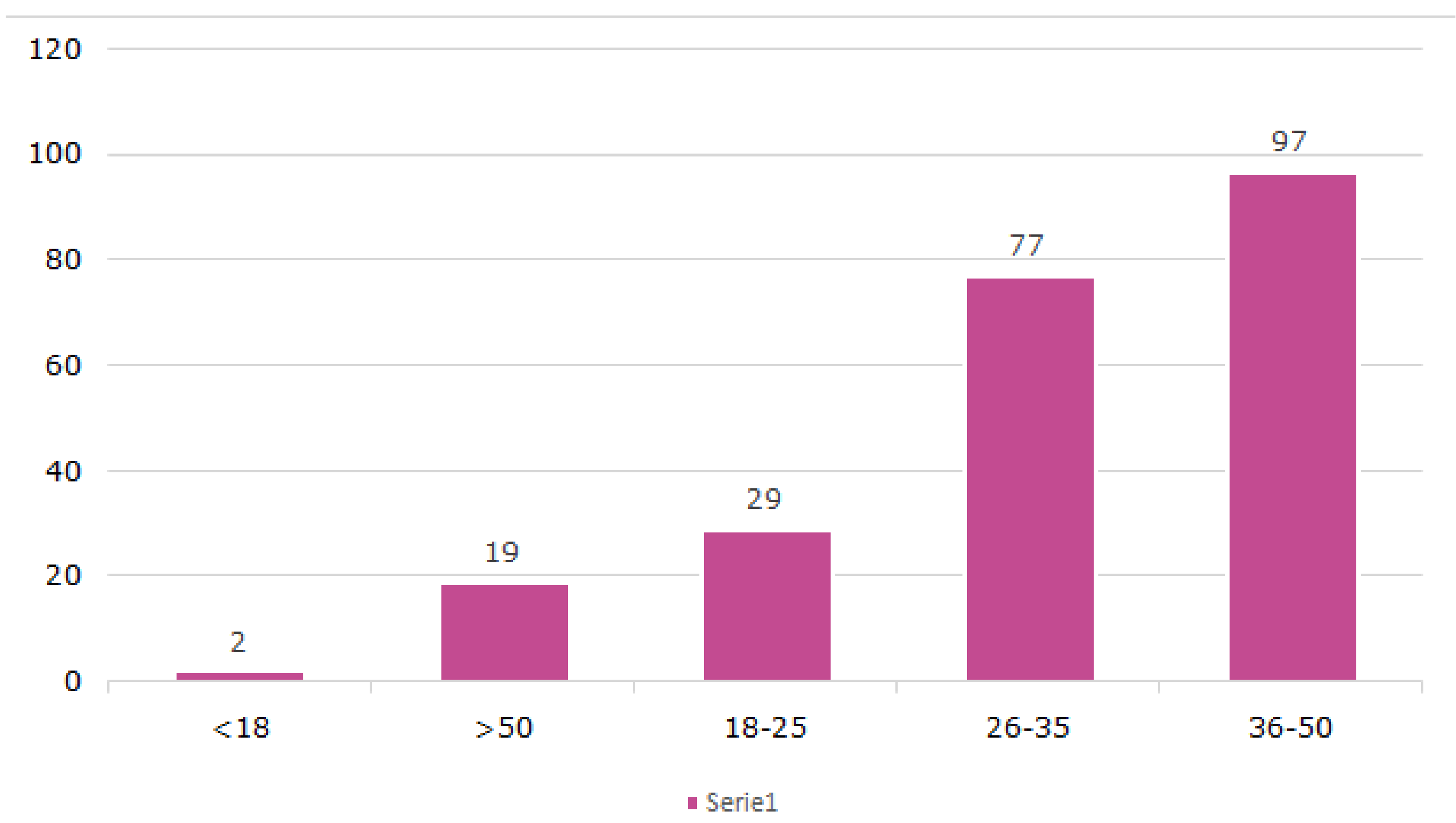
In terms of age, the chart suggests that middle-aged adults (26-50 years) represent the majority of respondents, with much lower participation from both younger (<18) and older (>50) age groups. This distribution reflects the nature of the survey's subject, targeting interests, responsibilities, or needs that are most pertinent to people between 26 and 50.

Gender of respondents

- 4% Open (self-determined)
- 34% Male
- 62% Female
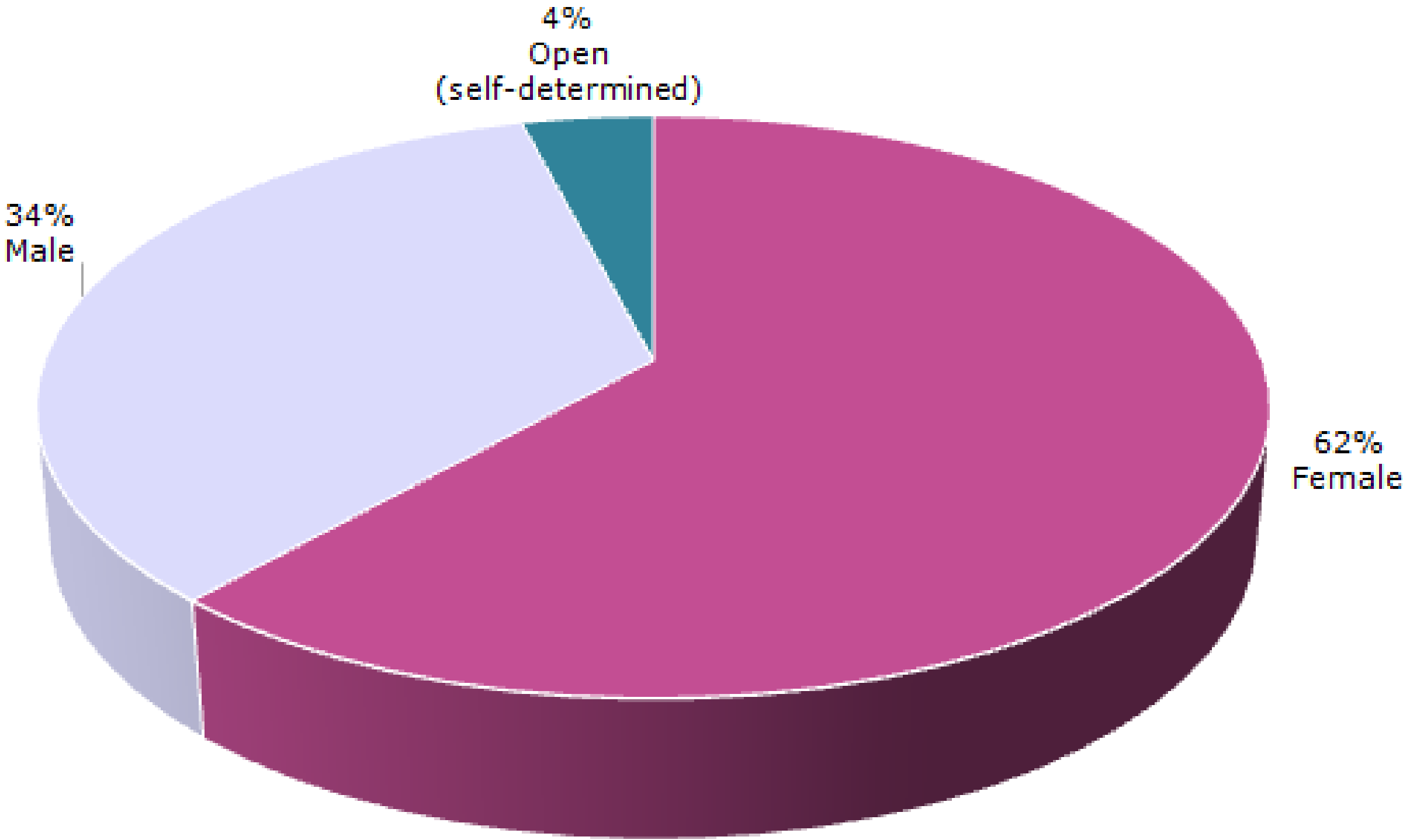
Years of experience in the youth field

- 22% 6 - 10 years
- 24% < 3 years
- 24% 3 - 5 years
- 12% 11 - 15 years
- 18% > 15 years
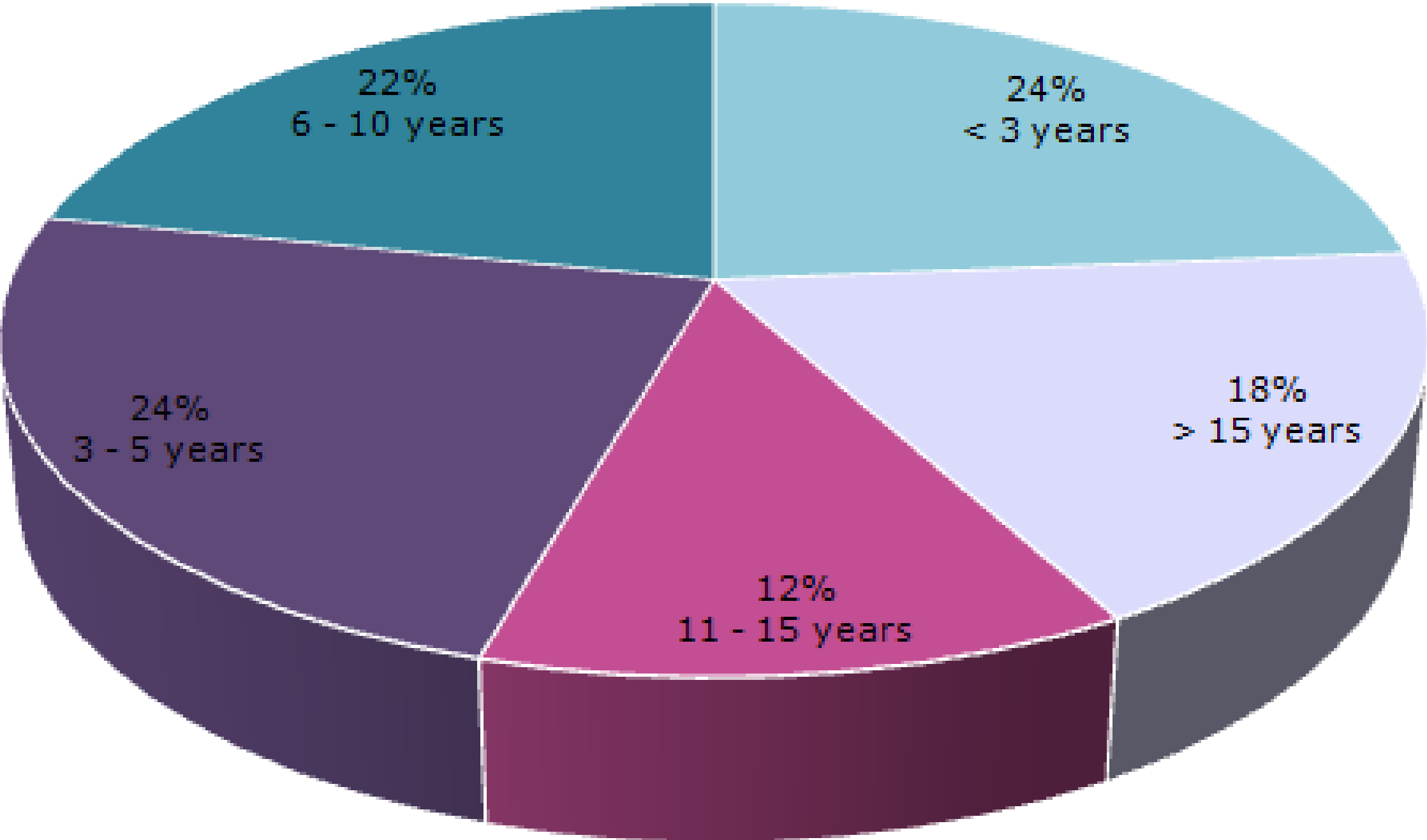
The gender and experience of the youth workers involved in the study highlight its representativity, given the fact that they cover all significant segments. Therefore, we can analyse the various perspectives and provide an insightful needs analysis for Phoenix project.

Gender of their target group
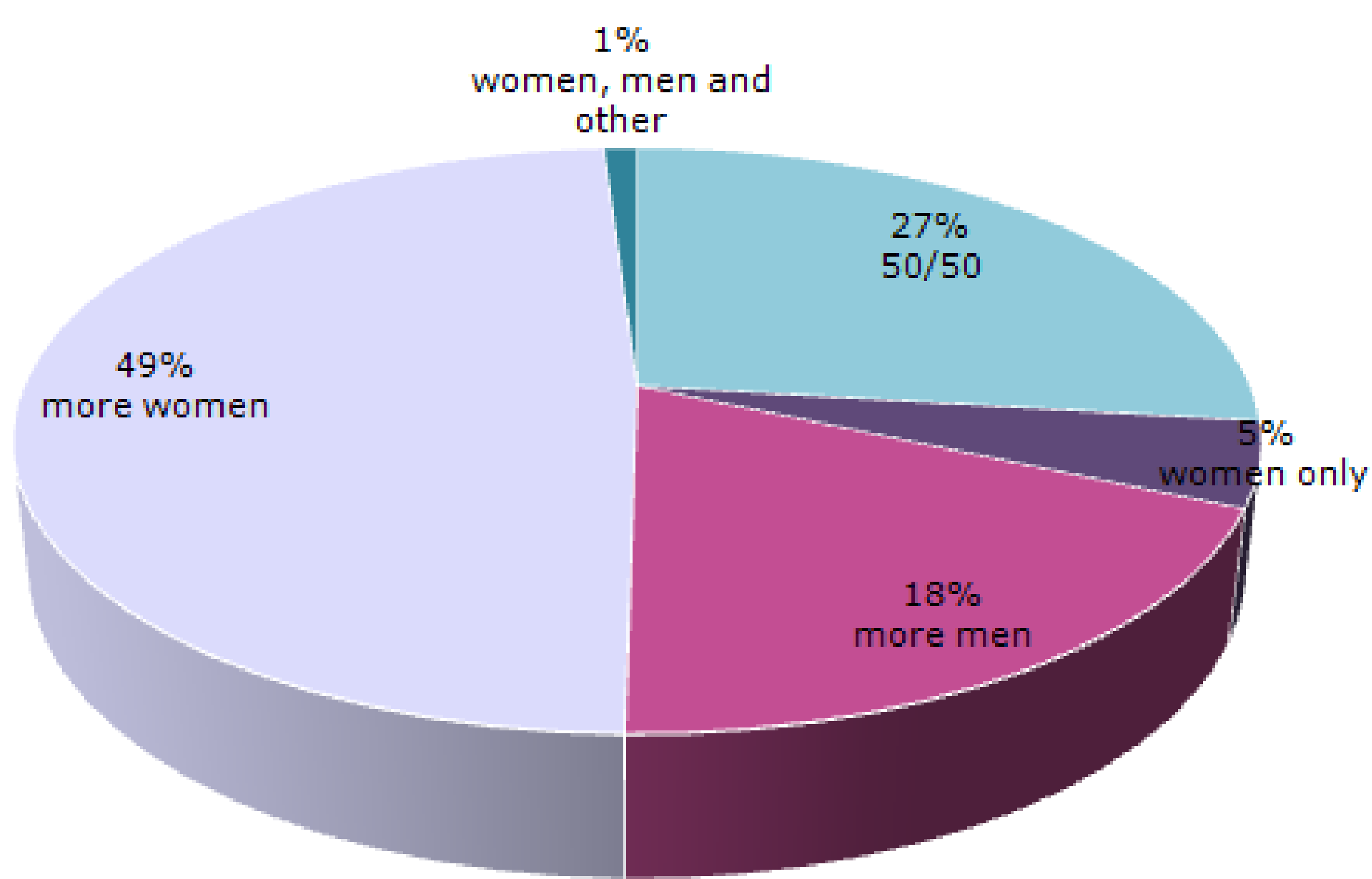
Most of the youth workers have women as beneficiaries, but 18% of respondents work with men or with diverse groups (1%). This proves the potential of the project outputs to be used in various contexts, hence its wide dissemination.

Youth workers' challenges in their daily work

Severity of issues youth workers are facing
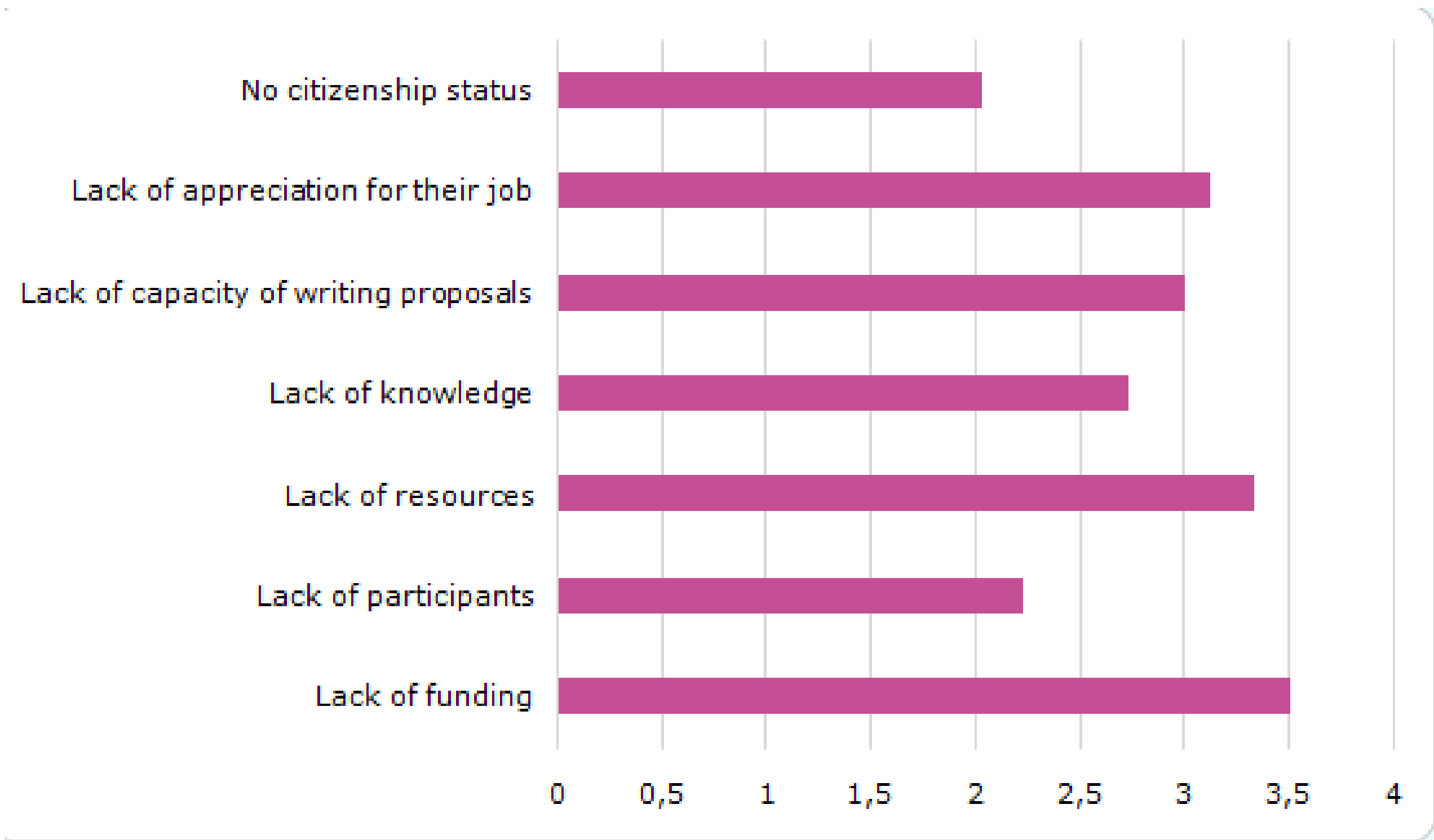
The mean value (average) of their rating related to several relevant aspects was calculated to briefly identify youth workers' daily work issues.

As noted above, the biggest struggle is the **lack of funding**, which scored 3,5 out of 5, making it the most significant obstacle in all the contexts analyzed.

Obviously, this goes hand in hand with the **lack of resources** that comes second and the lack of capacity for writing grant proposals.

For sure, human resources, financial resources or time can all affect youth work's quality and efficiency.

Moreover, the **lack of appreciation** for the job as a youth worker leads to frustration and a lower impact on society.

The study also highlighted the **lack of knowledge** that we aim to address with the new tools and the pedagogical approach to be designed.

Degree of interest of young people various topics

Legend: ■ Not interested   ■ Somehow interested   ■ Interested   ■ Very interested
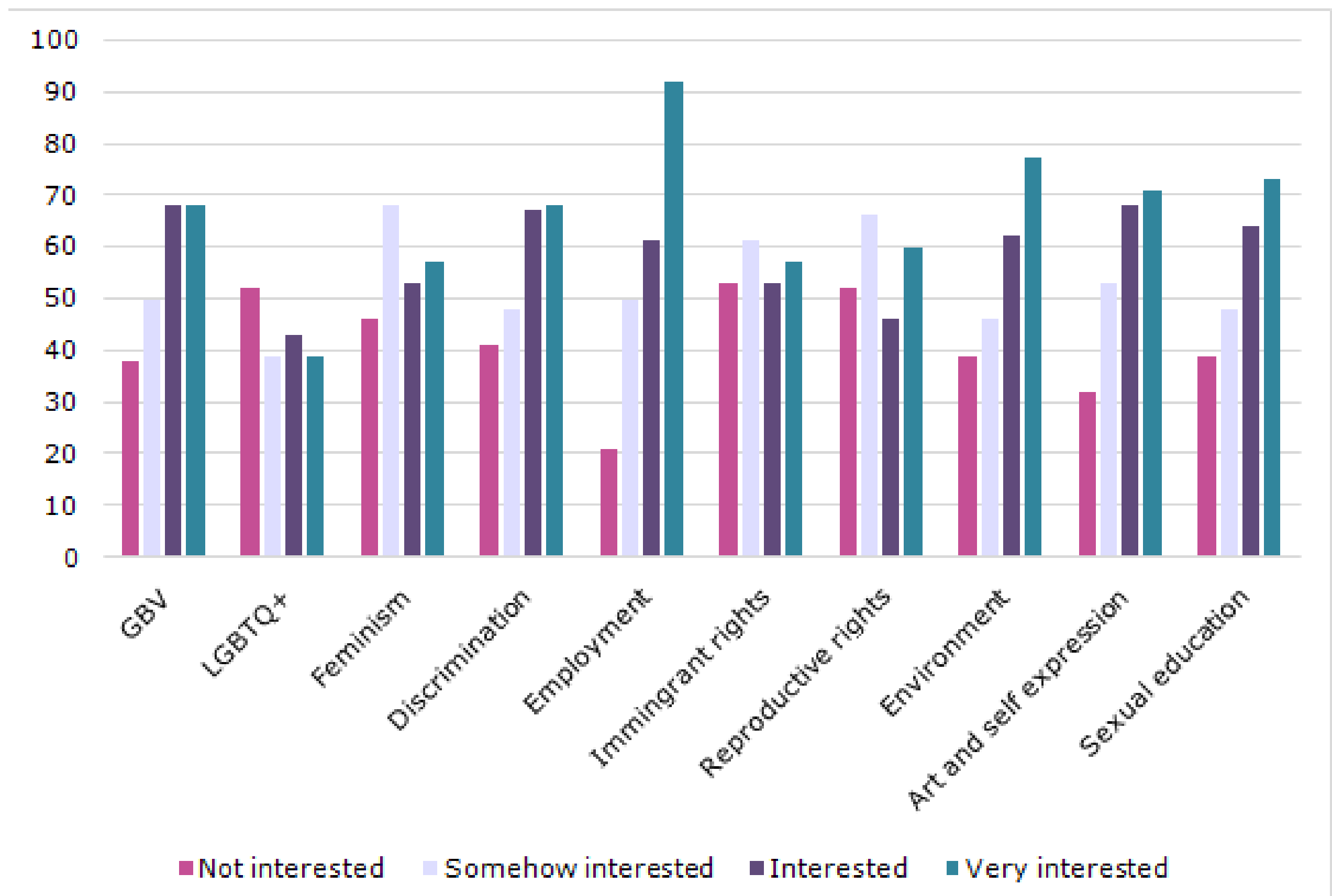
Several things stood out when it comes to the **topics of interest** for the young people our respondents work with. According to the results above, we can distinguish the high-interest topics in the youth workers' perception: employment, environment and sexual education.

- **Employment:** has the highest "Very interested" responses, making it the most popular among young people. This strong interest likely reflects a high demand for job-related skills and opportunities, showing employment as a top priority.
- **Environment:** another topic with significant "Very interested" responses, indicating widespread concern about environmental issues among young people. This aligns with global trends of youth activism in climate change and environmental sustainability.
- **Sexual Education:** there is considerable interest in sexual education, with high counts in both the "Interested" and "Very interested" categories. This reflects the importance placed on awareness and education regarding sexuality, relationships, and health.

The topics of moderate interest were gender-based violence and discrimination, feminism and reproductive rights, and art and self-expression. Critical social issues resonate across different contexts, and young people appear invested in addressing these areas.

Feminism may have different levels of appeal depending on cultural or personal perspectives, but it remains a relevant area of interest.

While not as strongly emphasized as topics like employment or GBV, there is still considerable interest in creative expression, indicating a need for platforms and opportunities that foster creativity and identity exploration.

The youth workers identified LGBTQIA+ issues and immigrant rights as lower-interest topics for their target groups. This reflects cultural variations in acceptance and engagement (in the case of LGBTQIA+ issues) and the fact that immigrant rights are more relevant to specific subgroups or locations. However, tailoring programs to the specific needs and comfort levels of each region might improve engagement with these topics.

Confidence in addressing various topics
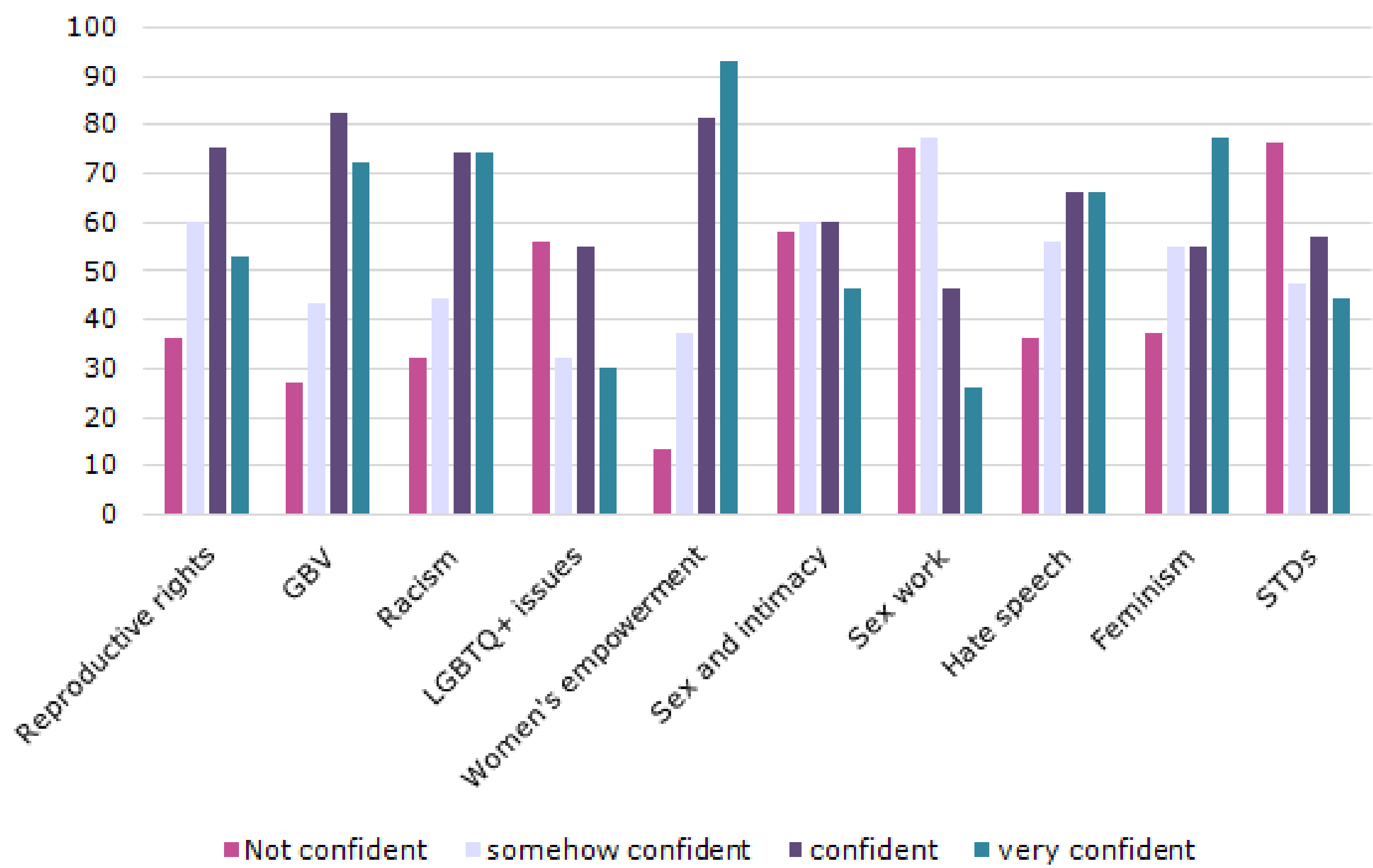
This is also highlighted by the level of confidence in addressing the topics. By briefly analyzing the chart above, we can see a high variation in the answers.
Youth workers feel most confident discussing Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Racism and Women's Empowerment, with a majority expressing confidence or high confidence, likely reflecting the emphasis on these issues in training and public discourse.

Topics like Reproductive Rights, Hate Speech and Feminism see moderate confidence, with most youth workers feeling somewhat or fully confident but with fewer feeling very confident. These areas are generally approachable, though some workers still feel hesitation.

LGBTQIA+ Issues, Sex and Intimacy, and Sex Work are areas where youth workers often feel less confident. There's a significant proportion of "not confident" responses, suggesting these topics may be more challenging due to social sensitivities, lack of training, or personal discomfort.

Youth workers' needs for career development
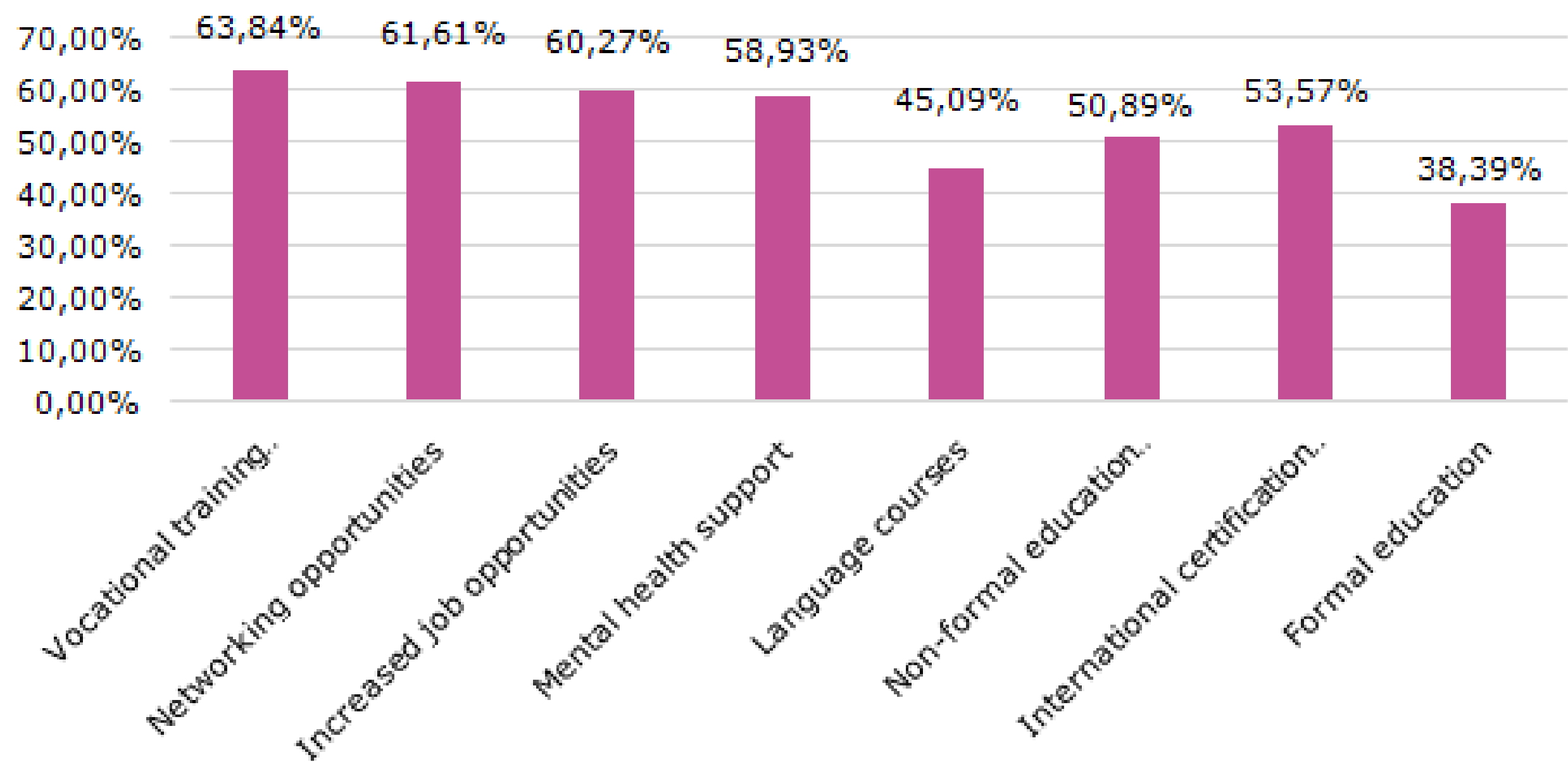
When asked about the need for career development, the youth workers showed a significant interest in vocational **training programs** and **networking opportunities**. This suggests a high demand for practical skills that can be directly applied to career roles, on the one hand and the fact that they value professional connections to advance their careers, possibly for support, mentorship, or collaboration, on the other hand.

The need for **job opportunities** was very close to these choices, reflecting the insufficient employment options in the field.

Mental health support came right after, pointing to a recognition of the challenges faced in youth work and a need for resources to maintain well-being.

More than half of the respondents opted for **international certification** of youth work and **non-formal education programs**, due to a diverse or multicultural work environment where alternative education methods could be advantageous. The international certification could consequently improve job mobility or professional standing internationally, as well as the **language courses**.

Only 90 respondents out of 224 find formal education necessary, making it the lowest priority among listed needs, possibly because youth work may emphasize practical experience and skills over a traditional degree.

A brief overview on the challenges' youth workers are facing in addressing gender issues with young people

Looking at the qualitative data provided by the study, youth workers face many challenges in addressing gender issues with young people. These challenges are deeply influenced by cultural norms, generational views, and socio-political influences.

The **cultural and societal norms** were the most frequently invoked reasons. Many young people grow up in environments with entrenched gender roles and patriarchal values, which create resistance to discussing gender equity. According to the respondents, a patriarchal society leads some youth to view women's empowerment efforts as threatening. Similarly, addressing these topics can provoke conflict due to cultural and religious sensitivities. The fear of losing tradition, the local customs, the religious norms were quite often mentioned as challenges in addressing the topic. Moreover, the role of the family is crucial in this respect and the lack of role models was mentioned for several times.

Linked to this are the **gender stereotypes and misinformation**. Persistent stereotypes, such as the idea that women are unsuited for leadership, contribute to resistance among young people. These biases are particularly strong in regions where traditional gender roles are deeply ingrained in the family and societal structures.

Polarization and radicalization are also significant challenges. Youth workers report an environment where opinions on gender are highly polarized. For example, in Spain, there is an ideological split between feminist and denialist perspectives, making integrative discussions difficult.

Hate speech and reactionary ideologies further complicate efforts to promote balanced views on gender issues.

Peer pressure and social influence were also mentioned for several times and it is widely accepted that young people may hesitate in expressing their views due to fear of judgement and peer rejection. This is compounded by the influence of social media, which often spreads gendered misinformation or reinforces negative stereotypes, making open dialogues challenging.

Lack of knowledge and awareness are also significant factors that prevent addressing the project's topic. Limited access to information on gender issues and a lack of educational resources lead to confusion and misinformation. This educational gap is evident across regions, with youth sometimes having only social media as their primary information source, which can perpetuate biases and misunderstandings. The lack of intersectional approaches, lack of formal trainings and a lack of representation were also highlighted by the respondents.

This is also linked with a **resistance to change and denialism**: there is a notable resistance to discussing gender issues among youth who feel that gender equality has already been achieved or view such discussions as redundant. In parts of Europe, for example, neo-fascist ideologies fuel denialist attitudes, dismissing gender-based inequality and reinforcing stereotypes. In other realities, gender issues are perceived as taboo, therefore, the subject is off the table by default.

The **lack of support** for the youth workers is also a significant challenge. As seen above, they often lack adequate resources or institutional support, especially in regions where government or family attitudes towards gender topics are conservative. This lack of support limits opportunities for safe, consistent, and well-informed discussions with young people, which leads us to another major challenge: **safety concerns and the need for safe spaces**. Engaging youth in sensitive discussions on gender requires safe spaces, which are often unavailable. This is critical in regions where the topic is stigmatised or where youth face social retaliation for expressing gender-related views.

An in-depth analysis of the challenges faced by youth workers

STEREOTYPICAL EXPECTATIONS
DIVISION OF LABOR
PATRIARCHAL STRUCTURES
LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES

FAMILY PRESSURE

PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS
EMPHASIS ON MARRIAGE
EMPHASIS ON FAMILY HONOUR
SOCIAL CONTROL AND COMFORMITY

OPEN DISCUSSION OF GENDER ISSUES
FEMALE SEXUALITY

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ADVOCACY
FEMALE INDIPENDENCE

CULTURAL TABOOS

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

INTERPRETATION OF RELIGIOUS TEXTS
GENDER SEGREGATION
RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM
LIMITATION ON WOMEN'S ROLES

CULTURAL AND SOCIETAL NORMS IMPACTING GENDER ISSUES & WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

VICTIM-BLAMING
SILENCE AND SECRECY

SOCIAL ISOLATION
FEAR OF REPORTING ABUSE

SHAME AND STIGMA

RESTRICTIVE LAWS AND POLICIES

DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION
LIMITED LEGAL PROTECTION
LACK OF ENFORCEMENT
INEQUITABLE ACCESS TO JUSTICE

GENDER STEREOTYPES IN MEDIA
IMPLICIT BIAS
MICROAGGRESSIONS
UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES

FEAR OF LOOOSING TRADITION

PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE
RESISTANCE TO CHANGE
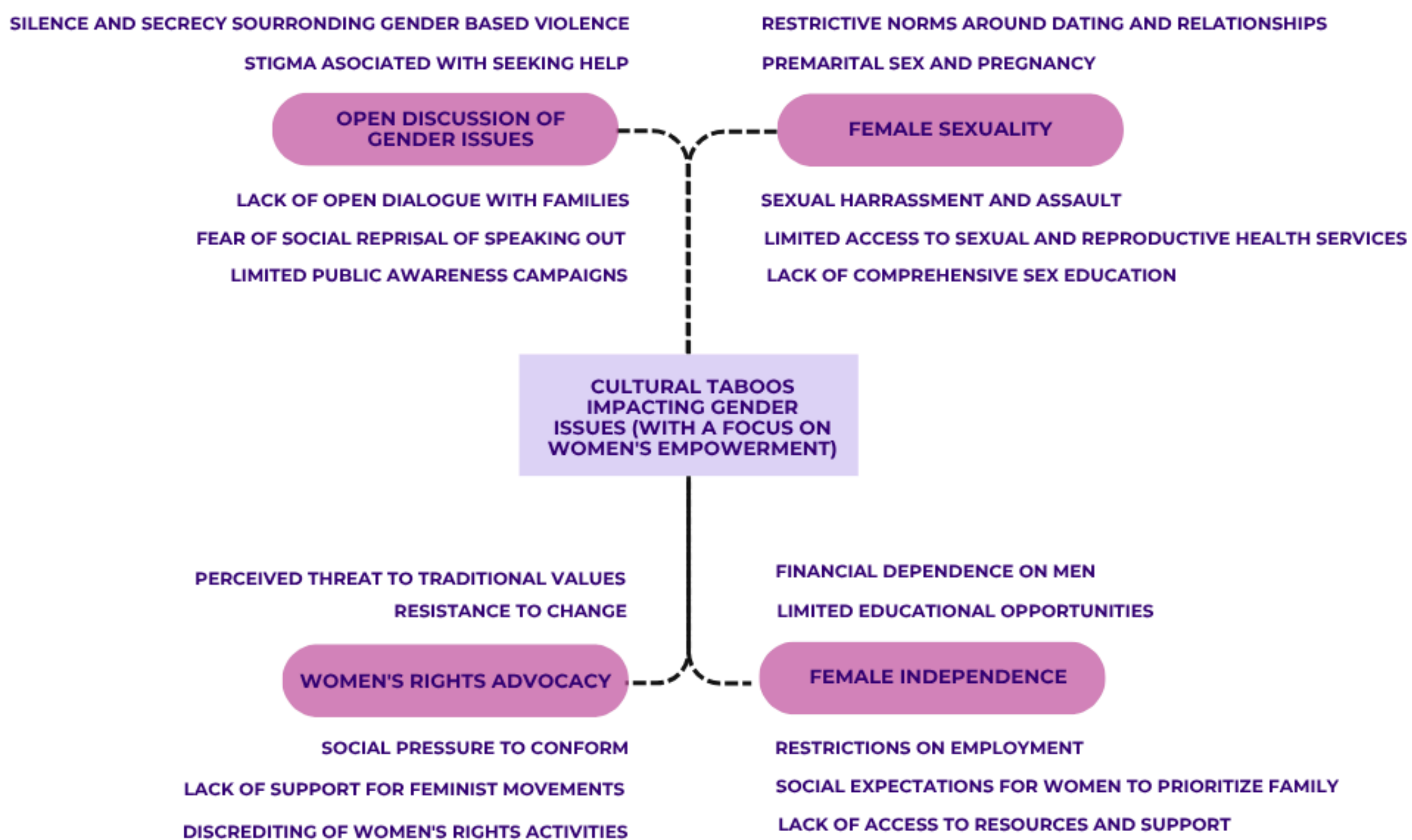FEAR OF WESTERNIZATION
CULTURAL IDENTIY

The cultural and social norms – causes and reflections on youth work

An in-depth analysis of cultural and social norms was needed to better understand the causes of these challenges and facilitate the identification of suitable issues to address in the training course and toolkit to be designed. As a youth worker, understanding these aspects is essential for effectively supporting young people, particularly when helping them navigate social expectations, gender roles, and issues around empowerment.

As highlighted in the mind map above, there are plenty of roots of the cultural and social norms impacting the way in which youngsters perceive gender. By addressing them, youth workers could make a real difference towards a more balanced approach.

When it comes to **traditional gender roles**, youth workers frequently come across young people who are dealing with the pressure to fit into established gender norms based on **stereotypical expectations**. In this respect, they can provide alternative narratives and encourage young people to explore identities that might not conform to these norms, by having a thorough awareness of these forces. However, this issue is directly linked to the **division of labor and patriarchal structures.** Youth workers who are aware of how gender roles affect family duties and job choices can help young men and women adopt more egalitarian perspectives, encouraging equality and shared responsibility.

SILENCE AND SECRECY SOURRONDING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

STIGMA ASOCIATED WITH SEEKING HELP

RESTRICTIVE NORMS AROUND DATING AND RELATIONSHIPS

PREMARITAL SEX AND PREGNANCY

OPEN DISCUSSION OF GENDER ISSUES

FEMALE SEXUALITY

LACK OF OPEN DIALOGUE WITH FAMILIES

FEAR OF SOCIAL REPRISAL OF SPEAKING OUT

LIMITED PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

SEXUAL HARRASSMENT AND ASSAULT

LIMITED ACCESS TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES

LACK OF COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION

CULTURAL TABOOS IMPACTING GENDER ISSUES (WITH A FOCUS ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT)

PERCEIVED THREAT TO TRADITIONAL VALUES

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

FINANCIAL DEPENDENCE ON MEN

LIMITED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ADVOCACY

FEMALE INDEPENDENCE

SOCIAL PRESSURE TO CONFORM

LACK OF SUPPORT FOR FEMINIST MOVEMENTS

DISCREDITING OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVITIES

RESTRICTIONS ON EMPLOYMENT

SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS FOR WOMEN TO PRIORITIZE FAMILY

LACK OF ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Cultural taboos are frequently delicate topics to address, especially in heterogeneous groups. Therefore, it is essential to examine their causes in detail. Of course, the leading cause is the need for **open discussion on gender issues**, which emphasises the utility of projects like Phoenix.

There is a cultural reluctance to address issues like domestic violence, harassment, and abuse. The lack of open conversation perpetuates a cycle of silence, leaving many victims isolated and unsupported. Cultural stigmas discourage women and members of the LGBTQIA+ community from **seeking help**, fearing judgment or social repercussions. This can lead to untreated trauma and prevent them from accessing resources for recovery.

The **lack of open dialogue with families** was very often mentioned in the answers of both youth workers and young people. This highlights, on one hand, the essential role of families in society and, on the other hand, the urgent need to involve them in the entire process. The lack of dialogue can prevent young women or members of the LGBTQIA+ community from understanding their rights or feeling comfortable addressing gender-based discrimination.

Limited public awareness campaigns and the **fear of social reprisal for speaking out** also have a significant impact on limiting progress toward breaking taboos around gender-based violence, minorities and women's rights.

Female sexuality and the broad gender spectrum are also relevant when speaking about taboos. The **restrictive norms around dating and relationships** usually lead to unrealistic expectations, and they can limit the freedom to make decisions about their own lives. Societies with **strict norms around premarital sex** may stigmatize women who do not conform, leading to social exclusion or harsh consequences, especially in cases of pregnancy.

Sexual harassment and assault as taboo topics can lead to victim-blaming and discourage the oppressed from seeking justice. However, one of the main causes of these issues is the **lack of comprehensive sex education**. Whether it is in-existent, insufficient or biased, it restricts young people's knowledge of their bodies and health, leading to risky behaviors and difficulties in handling sexual or reproductive health concerns.

Women's rights advocacy is another chapter directly linked to cultural taboos. Women's rights activism can often be viewed as a challenge to existing cultural norms, resulting in societal resistance.

Resistance to change is sometimes the trigger for opposing gender equality/equity initiatives, especially if such changes are perceived as conflicting with tradition.
The **lack of support for feminist movements** and the **discrediting of women's rights activists** can also significantly impact gaining a more inclusive, equitable society.

Female independence is a cultural taboo in certain societies and has severe consequences for achieving gender equity. **Financial dependence on men, limited educational opportunities**, and **employment restrictions** constrain women to conform to traditional roles. In many cultures, women are **socially expected to prioritize family**. Hence, they need to prioritize family responsibilities over personal goals, which can prevent them from pursuing higher education or professional opportunities. This also happens in social enclaves, such as the situation described by one of the youth workers from Italy: *"We recently had an incident where girls were not allowed to choose how to spend their free day and were not allowed to express themselves freely. This was shocking."*

Shame and stigma, family pressure and religious beliefs

Going back to the cultural and societal norms impacting gender issues and women's empowerment, it is essential to highlight the role of **shame and stigma** in preventing a more inclusive and equitable society. **Victim blaming** is a frequent phenomenon towards people who face gender-based violence, deterring them from seeking help and leading to **fear of reporting abuse. Silence and secrecy** enforced by the societal pressure around gender issues also perpetuate discrimination: the ones who challenge norms risk becoming **socially isolated**.

Obviously, the **family** plays an essential role. It is the primary socialization agent for the early learning of gender roles and for reinforcing norms. The family is also crucial in influencing beliefs and attitudes through their transmission related to cultural and societal values on gender. Moreover, they are the ones who determine access to education and, very often, career choices. Therefore, they can be a source of support or restriction. As custodians of tradition, families sometimes perpetuate cultural practices that may uphold or challenge gender inequality. Fear of dishonor was mentioned quite often in the answers of the Moroccan and Jordanian youth workers regarding the challenges of addressing gender issues with the youngsters and was placed under the "sensitive topics" label: *"One of the challenges is addressing sensitive topics like honor, which can deeply influence young people's perspectives on gender issues and women's empowerment, often making open dialogue difficult."*

Nonetheless, the role of the families is also of providing emotional and psychological support, which can be essential for individuals navigating gender-related challenges, such as discrimination or identity struggles.

The **religious beliefs** go hand in hand with family pressure regarding gender issues. Gender roles are sometimes justified using religious teachings, which can be selectively interpreted to limit women's rights and discredit LGBTQIA+ members. Religion contributes to the integration in the community. Therefore, non-conforming with its rules leads to being ostracized and banished, affecting the entire well-being and image of the individual and the entire family. Many of the comments given by the Moroccan respondents addressed religion as an important factor in addressing gender issues: *"This topic [gender issues and women's empowerment] is against religion and aims at sedition."*
"This topic [gender issues and women's empowerment] is against religion and far from the Moroccan society."

Restrictive laws and policies have a dramatic impact on gaining gender equity. **Discriminatory legislation** leads to structural discrimination, explicitly or implicitly discriminating against women and LGBTQIA+ members. For example, article 489 of the Penal Code of Morocco criminalizes "lewd or unnatural acts with an individual of the same sex". Hence, same-sex sexual activity is illegal in Morocco and can be punished with three years imprisonment and a fine of 1.200 Dirhams. This obviously shuts the door for any conversation about this topic, justifying the reluctance we also identified in our respondents' answers. However, not officially criminalizing homosexuality does not necessarily mean that gender equity is easy to gain. For instance, in Jordan, as of 2013, the newly revised Penal Code makes honor killings, as a legal justification for murder, illegal. But for society, honor is still a fundamental issue and this has, as mentioned above, a detrimental effect on addressing the gender topic with youngsters. Moreover, they feel threatened and they fear losing their integrity if they openly discuss it: *"Challenges in addressing gender issues with young people include cultural resistance, limited resources, and safety concerns."*

The fear of losing tradition, stereotypes and prejudices
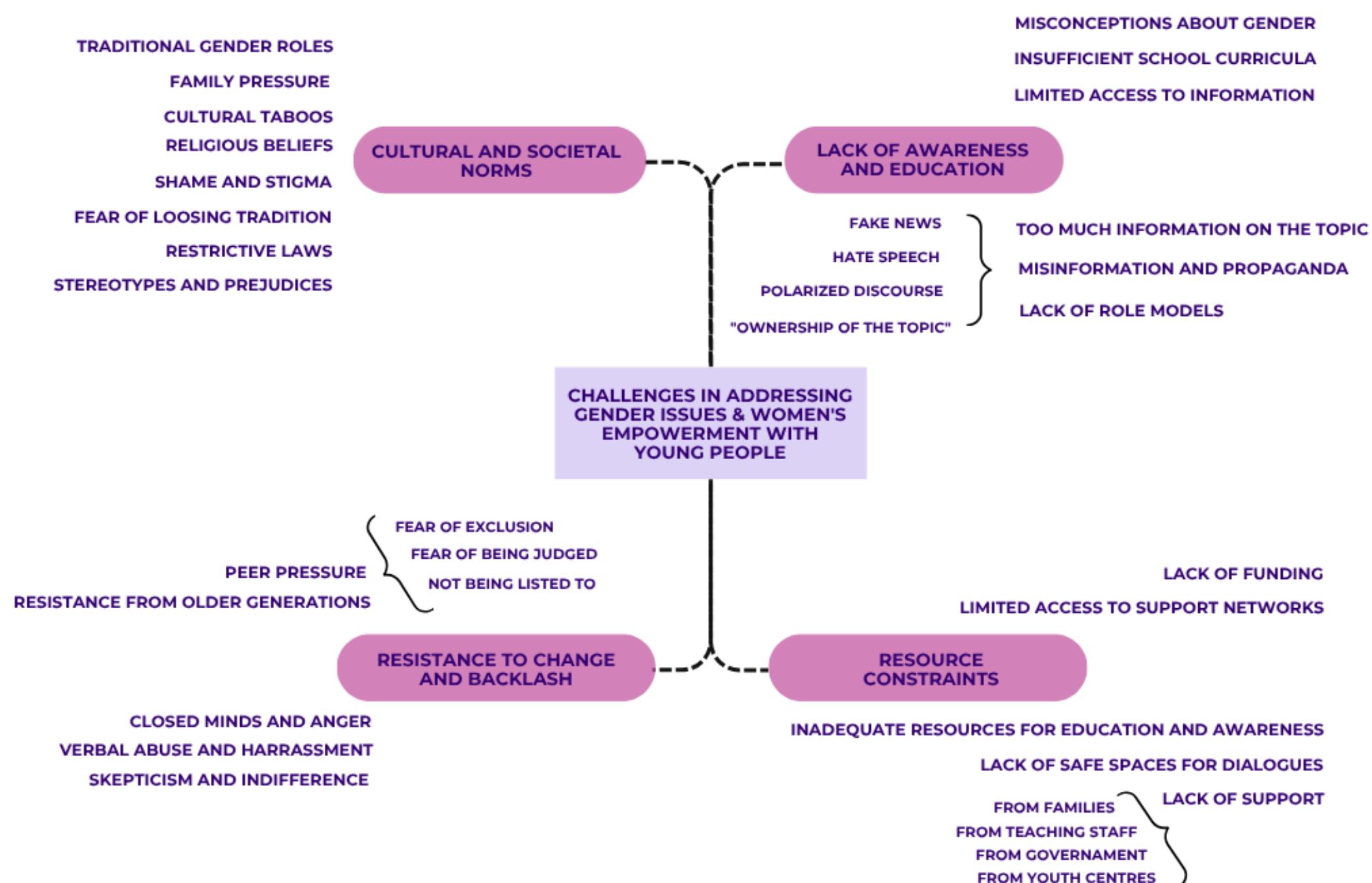
All of the above factors are directly linked with the **resistance to change** and the **fear of westernization**. Efforts toward gender equity may be seen as importing "foreign" values, which could be interpreted as a threat to preserving cultural identity and community integrity.

Stereotypes and prejudices were amongst the most invoked reasons for which youngsters have challenges in speaking about gender and women's empowerment. Whether they are being reinforced by media, by families or by society in general, deconstructing stereotypes is a must for a more equitable living in a globalized world. As a youth worker from Jordan stated: *"Addressing gender issues and women's empowerment with young people often involves overcoming deeply ingrained cultural stereotypes and misinformation."*

Going back to analyzing the root causes, **resistance to change and backlash** are also caused by **peer pressure**. Whether it is related to the fear of being judged, the fear of exclusion or simply not being listened to, youngsters are being influenced by their friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. One of the respondents phrased it very well: *"A significant challenge is tackling the impact of peer pressure, which can hinder young people's willingness to discuss and embrace gender issues and women's empowerment due to fear of judgment or exclusion."*

As mentioned before, **resistance** is another important factor, whether it comes directly from youngsters or from older generations. They may react with skepticism, anger, or verbal abuse, making it harder for others to engage in progressive conversations. Unfortunately, resistance affects moral and the effectiveness of intervention. In this respect, creating intergenerational dialogue becomes essential but highly challenging. Resistance is also connected to the other root cause, **lack of awareness and education**, which is the main area of intervention for the Phoenix project. In most realities, there are **insufficient school curricula**, therefore, gender topics are inadequately covered in schools.

This contributes to the distribution of **misconceptions about gender**, leading to confusion and stereotypes.

"The biggest difficulty when addressing these issues with a young target group is the confusion that sometimes arises over the binary question. The argument usually goes between the biological, the 'natural' and the cultural. So even when you try to talk about women and women's empowerment, what happens is that it all shifts to 'biological woman' and 'biological man', not moving away from binarism and not trying to open up reflection to the possibility that that binary idea of gender is constructed by society itself and can therefore change." (YW, Spain)

However, it seems that sometimes youngsters from Spain deal with the opposite situation when the topic is too present in the public discourse, failing to catch their attention. Moreover, "assigning the gender issue" to NGOs only somehow isolates the topic instead of giving it a sense of ownership for everyone: *"Part of the young population has adopted many hate speeches and is negatively reactive. Another part is saturated with theoretical information on the matter, and is tired of working on these topics. Furthermore, in public secondary schools, sometimes it is not valued that these topics are worked on in the subjects. Still, there is a tendency to trust external organizations and encourage teachers to only dedicate themselves to working on their own subject."*

Another threat is linked to the fake feeling of having the problems solved. In this respect, a youth worker from Italy mentions: *[A challenge is] "The belief that everything has already been done and that gender equality has already been reached in society."*

Misinformation and propaganda were also frequently mentioned during our research, highlighting the crucial role of the media in constructing and deconstructing myths, stereotypes, and discriminatory behaviors. Fake news, hate speech, and polarized discourse complicate efforts to present factual, unbiased information. Many testimonials focused on these aspects: *[One of the challenges is] "consumption of content on networks with contradictory messages where they talk about empowerment but show a woman subjected to patriarchy both in audiovisual content and in marketing, etc. Identification of the young group with this content."* (YW, Spain)
"Often, the only context in which young people have heard about the topic is in social media. The topic is not discussed at school, in the family, in informal relationships, so organizations have the task of playing an informative and educational role, and often this is tiring." (YW, Italy)
[One of the challenges is] "polarization of discourse, which prevents the integration of different positions, dialogue." (YW, Spain)

"There is a multitude of preconceived ideas and prejudices that are difficult to verbalize out loud, but that exist and are greatly reinforced by the bombardment of sexist videos and images of sexual violence and extreme violence that they receive through the networks."

The **lack of role models** is also very relevant to our project. Visible leaders championing gender equality leave young people without inspiration or guidance. As mentioned by a youth worker from Jordan: *"A major challenge is addressing the lack of representation and role models, which can make it difficult for young people to see the relevance of gender issues and women's empowerment in their own lives."*

Therefore, due to the fact that misinformation hampers efforts to build trust and credibility, youth workers must invest additional time and effort in awareness campaigns, creating educational resources, and debunking myths.

Resource constraints were also mentioned quite often, especially those related to **funding**. Other constraints included **limited access to support networks** and **inadequate resources for education and awareness**. Although the project cannot tackle the lack of funding, it can definitely strengthen the bonds between the partners addressing the gender issue and designing and developing efficient tools for gender education and awareness.

The **lack of safe spaces for dialogue** is a crucial issue, since in many realities youngsters cannot openly discuss and question concepts they have been taken/given for granted. One of the Spanish youth workers mentioned: *"Since our organization does not deal directly with gender issues and women empowerment, one of the issues would be to create a sharing space that can allow the free expression of thoughts and opinions on this issue, also directly linking it to the main issues we deal with, such as migration, labor and active citizenship."*

Moreover, given the current legislation, the Moroccan youth workers highlighted the need of protection for the people who would like to tackle the topic: *"The topic must be opened in a safe environment, and the participants must be protected."*
[These are] *"topics that need a safe environment for dialogue to avoid any conflict".*
*"Urgent topics only need a safe environment for dialogue and expression."*

Youth workers often **lack the institutional and community support** needed to address gender issues. Sometimes, the support depends on politics: *"[There is] continuous questioning due to lack of training and lack of support and resources depending on the party that governs the Administration for which you work."* (YW from Spain)
The affirmation above is also justified by the credit youth workers give to various stakeholders in addressing the gender issue.

Important stakeholders in addressing gender issues and women's empowerment

Important and very important stakeholders in addressing gender issues and women's empowerment in youth workers' opinion (%)
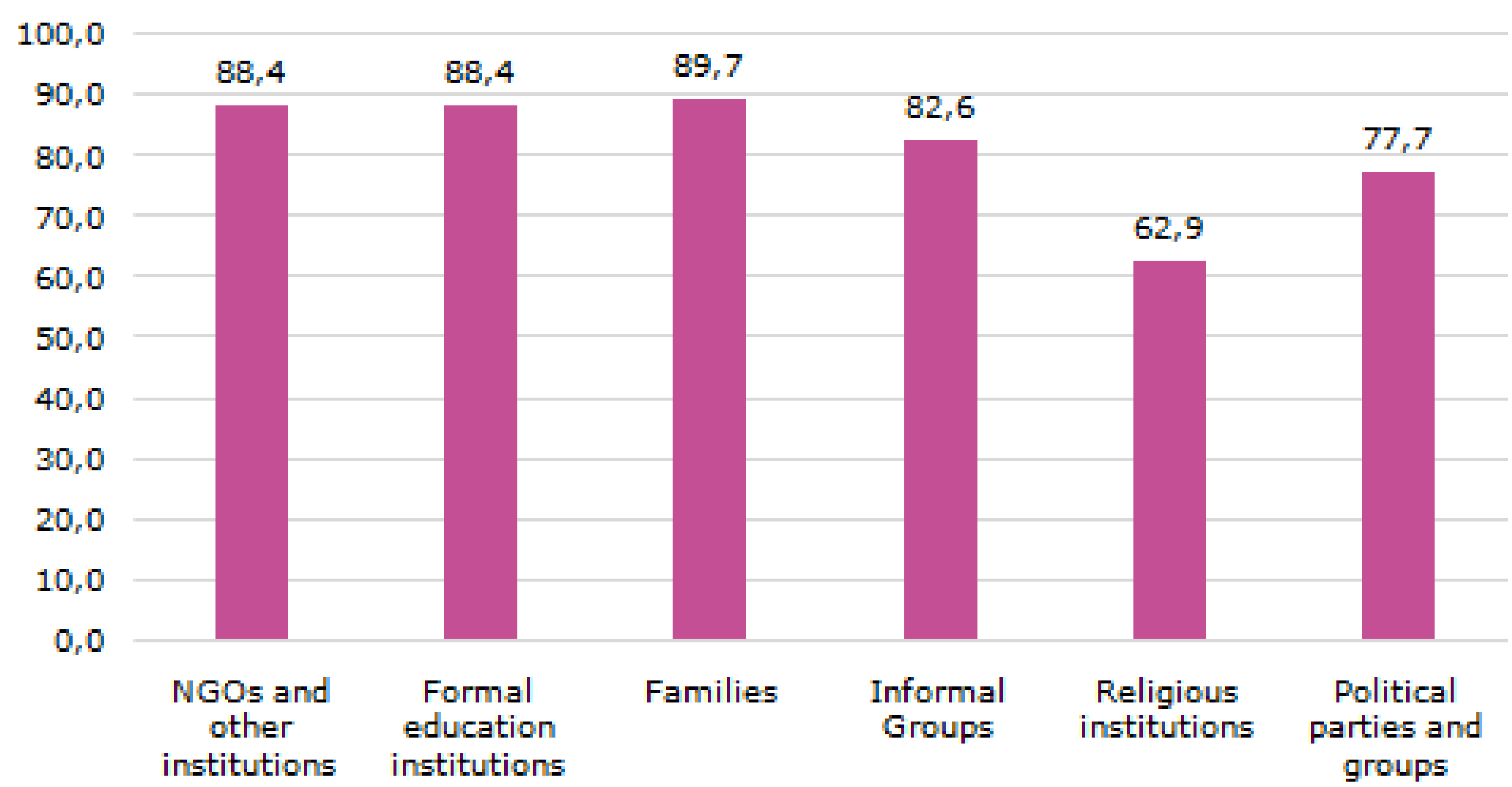
As seen in the charts above, 88,7% of the respondents considered families to be important and very important in dealing with gender issues, closely followed by formal education institutions and NGOs. Religious institutions are considered important and very important for 62,9% of the participants in the survey, with a higher percent from Morocco (76,1%) and Jordan (70,6%), highlighting the essential role they play in the society.

Tools and activities needed to tackle gender issues and women's empowerment

No. of choices
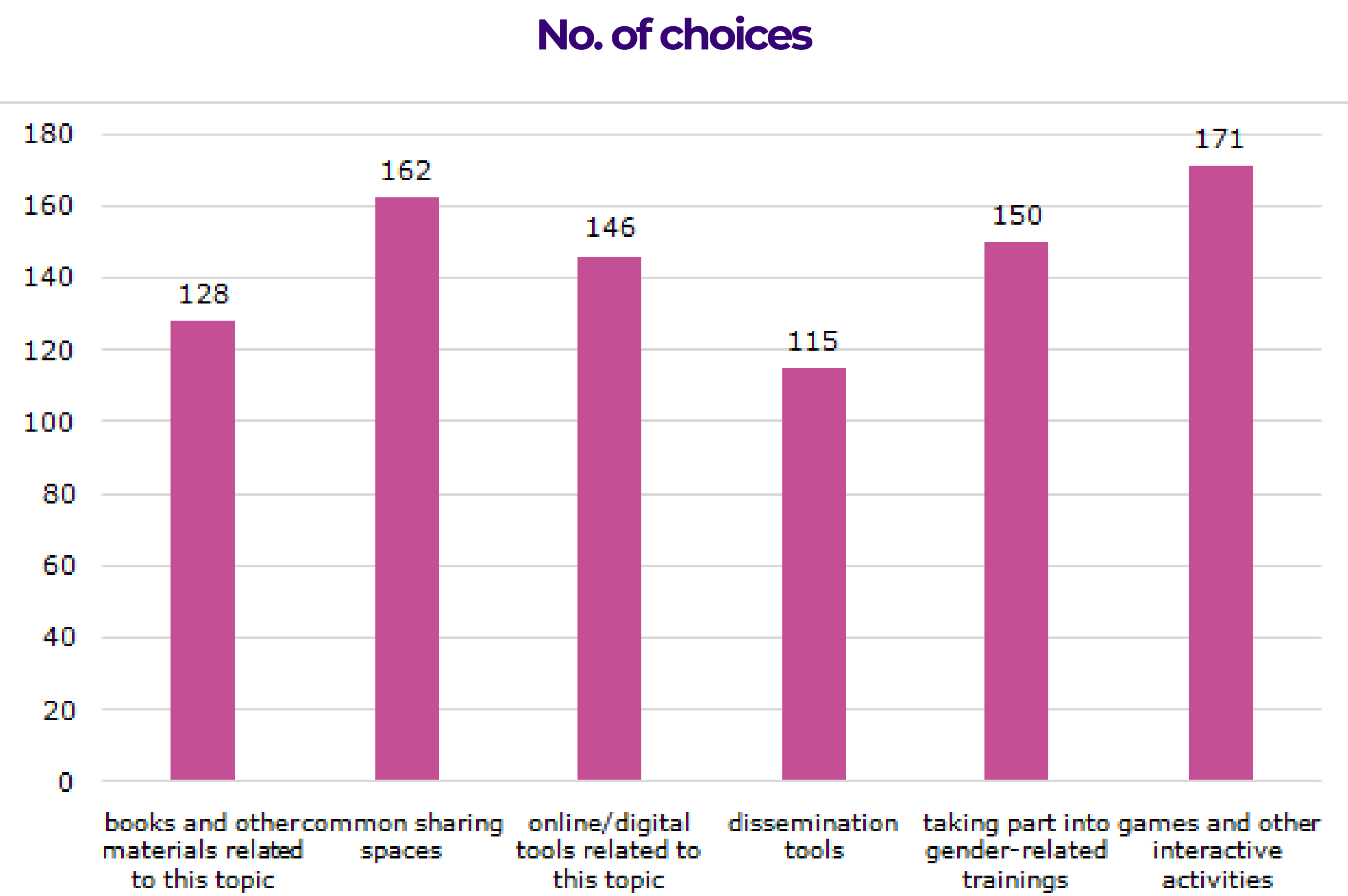
When it comes to tools needed to address gender issues and women's empowerment, youth workers mainly opted for games and other interactive activities (76,34%), underlying the need for new tools in the field of non-formal education and proving once again the relevance of Phoenix project.
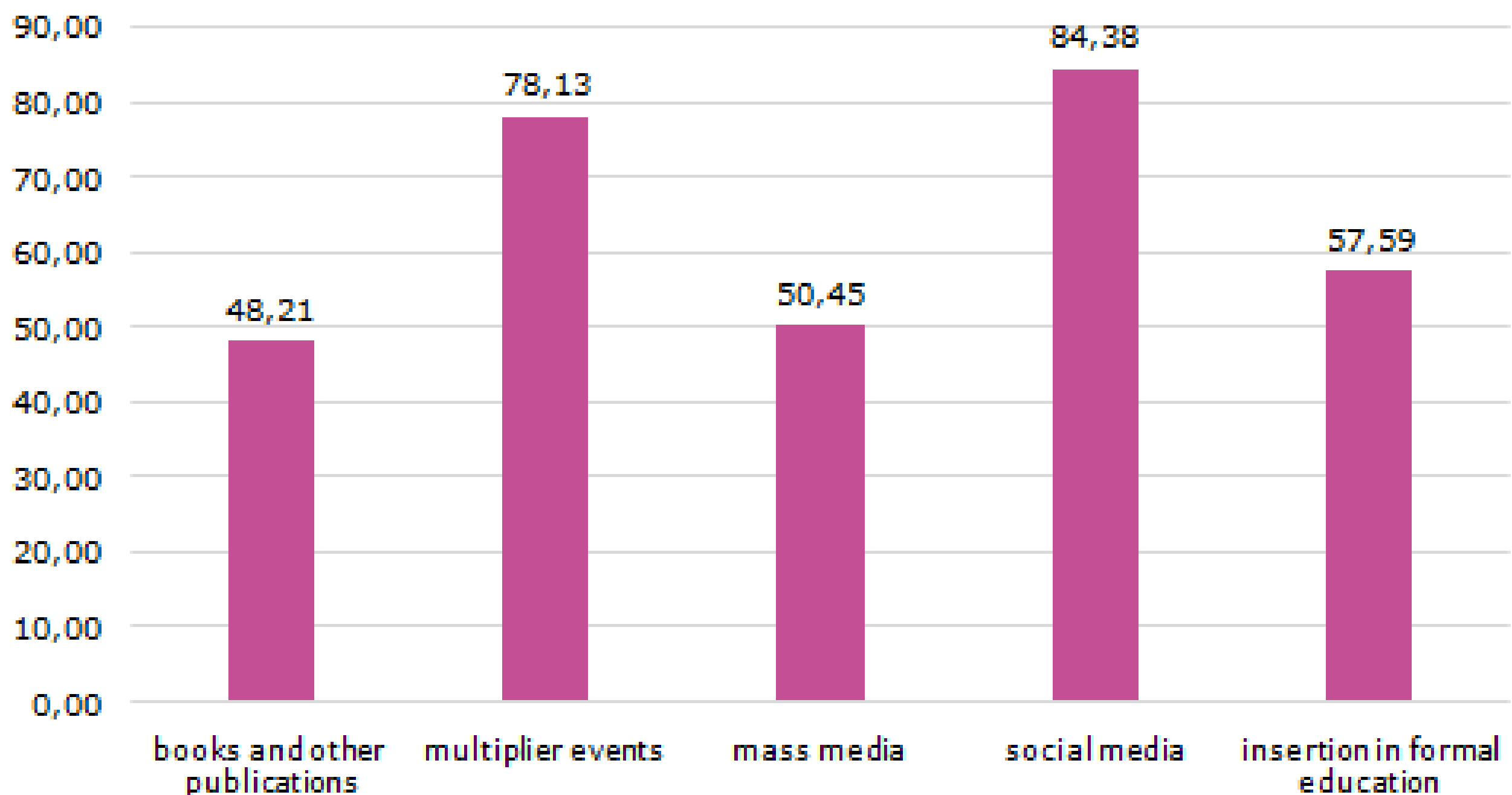
The common global spaces to share best practices and successful experiences chosen by 72,32% of the youth workers, show the urgent need for networking, solidarity and collaboration while having a sense of belonging to a bigger entity sharing the same goals. The fact that Phoenix is a KA2 – Capacity building in the field of youth – responds to this particular need, aiming to enhance gender equity and young women's empowerment in EU and Mediterranean countries.

Taking part in gender-related training courses (66,96%) and having access to more online/digital tools related to the topic (65,18%) show the need to gain more information in an interactive way, with books falling in the last place, being chosen by 57,14% of the respondents.

A little over half of the respondents mentioned the need for dissemination tools. Taking a closer look at their preferences, it is clear that social media wins in terms of efficiency, with 84,38% of them making this a priority. Social media is followed by multiplier events (festivals, conferences, seminars, cultural events, meetings etc.), showing once more the need for networking and face-to-face interaction for a greater impact.

Youth workers preferring certain dissemination tools

Percent of youth workers preferring certain dissemination tools

Bar chart showing percent of youth workers preferring certain dissemination tools: books and other publications 48,21; multiplier events 78,13; mass media 50,45; social media 84,38; insertion in formal education 57,59.

Another relevant aspect is related to the insertion of the project results in formal education, making it easier to reach the target group through a more "official" channel that is less contested by families and peers due to its authority.

Traditional media, books, and other publications are no longer efficient for youngsters, who are more inclined to spend time online or participate in must-see events.

In conclusion, from the youth workers' perspective, addressing gender issues requires tackling deeply ingrained cultural norms, overcoming resistance, and addressing resource gaps. To be effective, youth workers need the training to navigate sensitive topics, community engagement strategies to bridge the generational divide, institutional support, funding for programs and tools to counter misinformation and inclusive spaces for dialogue.

These challenges underscore the need for holistic and sustained efforts to address gender issues and empower young people, making the Phoenix project extremely relevant to this matter.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE ON GENDER ISSUES AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

As mentioned in the beginning, the present analysis also includes the opinions of young people on gender issues and women's empowerment because they are the target group of youth workers and educators. This is an efficient way to double-check the relevance of the results and the future tools to be created.

## The youngsters' respondent profile – a brief analysis

Three hundred forty-one respondents filled out the questionnaire, which was divided by country as follows: 66 individuals from Italy, 55 individuals from Jordan, 158 individuals from Morocco, accounting for the majority segment of the chart, 62 individuals from Spain. Cross tabs will address the imbalance in the number so that the results can be extended to all the project partners.

Age of respondents
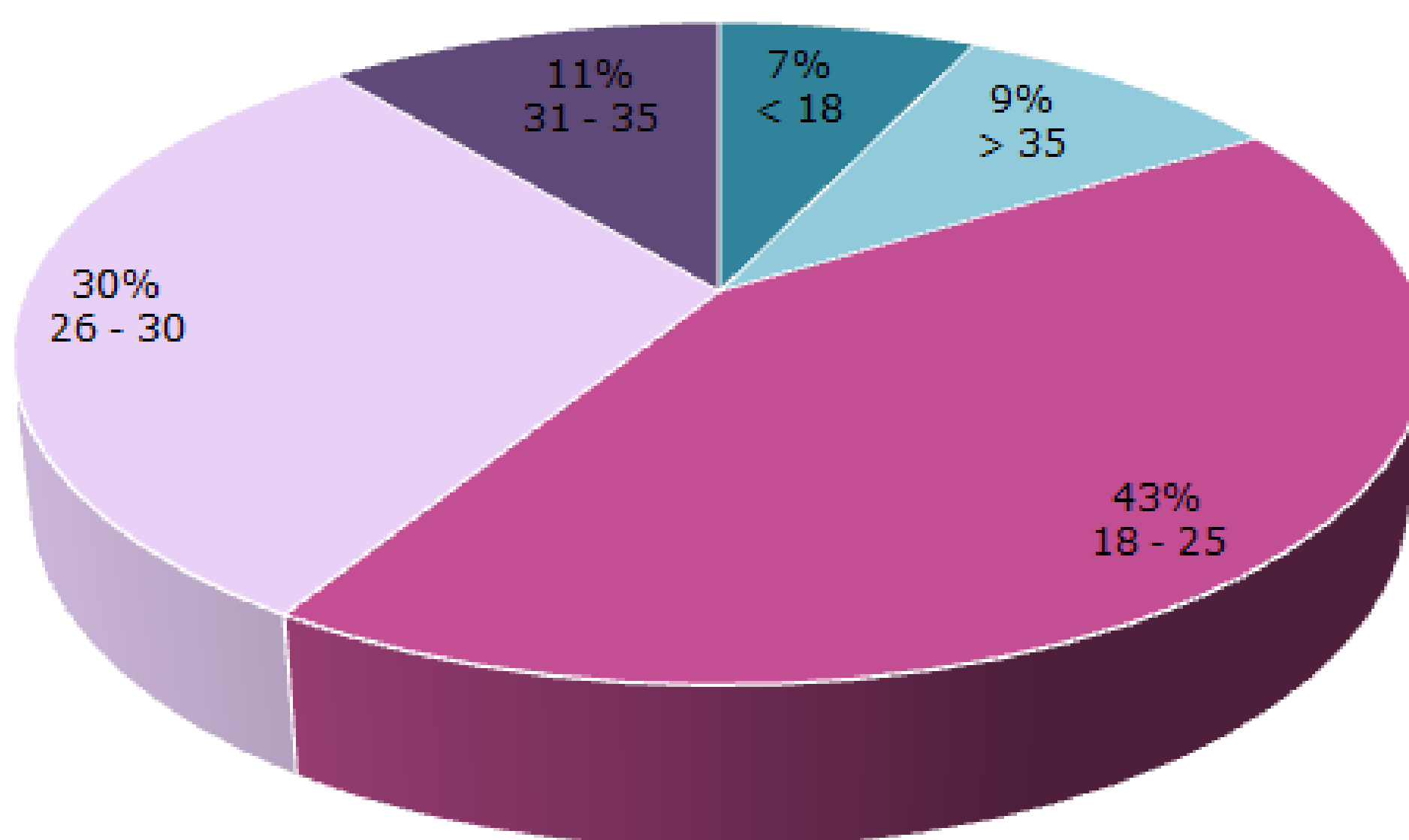
Regarding their age, the largest group of respondents (43%) fall under the 18-25 years old category. This is typical as this age group is often the most active in gender discussions, advocacy, and participation in youth-focused programs. The second-largest group, 26-30 years old, represents the young adults who usually show interest in the main subjects that affect them. The other categories, 31-35 years old (11%), over 35 years old (9%) represent the categories that make the transition to adulthood, while the under aged (7%) are less present in the study.

Gender of respondents

3%
Open
(seld fetermined)

37%
Male

60%
Female
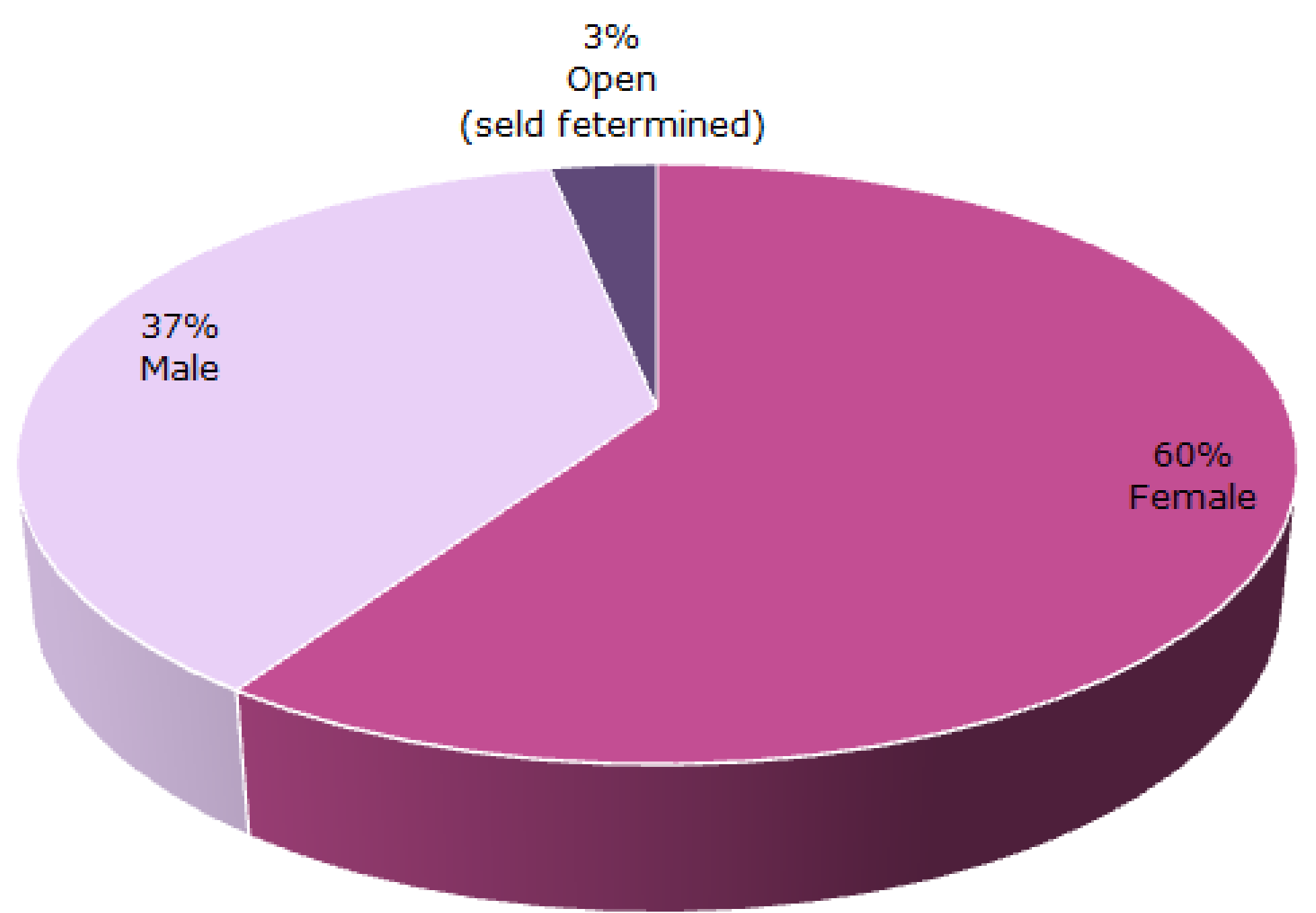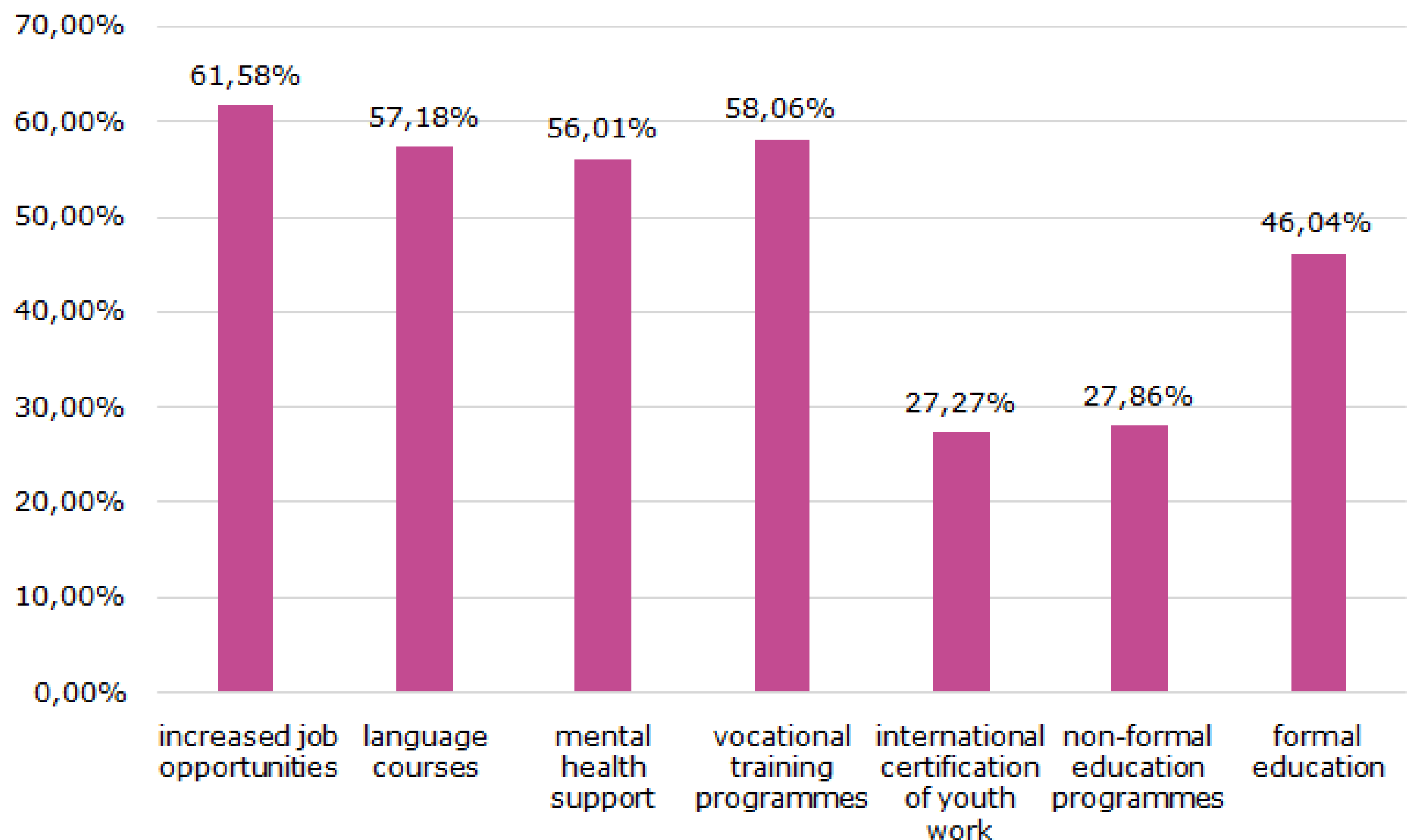
Gender-wise, 60% of the respondents are female, 37% of them are male, and 3% are non-conforming. This distribution ensures representativity for Phoenix project since it focuses on the 18-30 years group, the main target group of youth workers.

Young people and their needs

Young people's needs for career development

Asked about their needs for career development, young people seem to favor opportunities directly tied to employability, including job openings, vocational skills, and certifications.

In this respect, 61,58% of the respondents chose the need for increased job opportunities, indicating that young people prioritize access to jobs as the key to career growth. Almost all societies struggle with high rates of young people's unemployment rate. Therefore, this answer underlines the need for a better insertion of youngsters into the labor market.

Consequently, practical skills through vocational training are highly valued (58,06%), highlighting a preference for work-ready capabilities over theoretical knowledge.

However, the high demand for language skills (57,18%) suggests that young people view language proficiency as critical, perhaps for accessing international markets or improving communication in diverse workplaces.

Over 56% of the respondents opted for mental health support, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of mental health in maintaining productivity and career longevity in a society prone to burnout.

Formal education was still among the choice of 46,04% of youngsters, showing its importance for recognition in the job market but marking a shift towards more hands-on learning. Non-formal education programs were less favored than the other options, perhaps because they were perceived as less "official", with a lower benefit for their careers or relevance. This highlights a severe need for better communication from the NGOs regarding the benefits of such programs in order to enhance the credibility and impact of non-formal education.

Young people's interest in gender issues and women's empowerment

Asked to mark their interest on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 means not interested at all and 5 means highly interested) regarding the topic of the project, the youngsters provided very diverse answers, which initially took us by surprise.

Percentage of young people's interest in the general topic
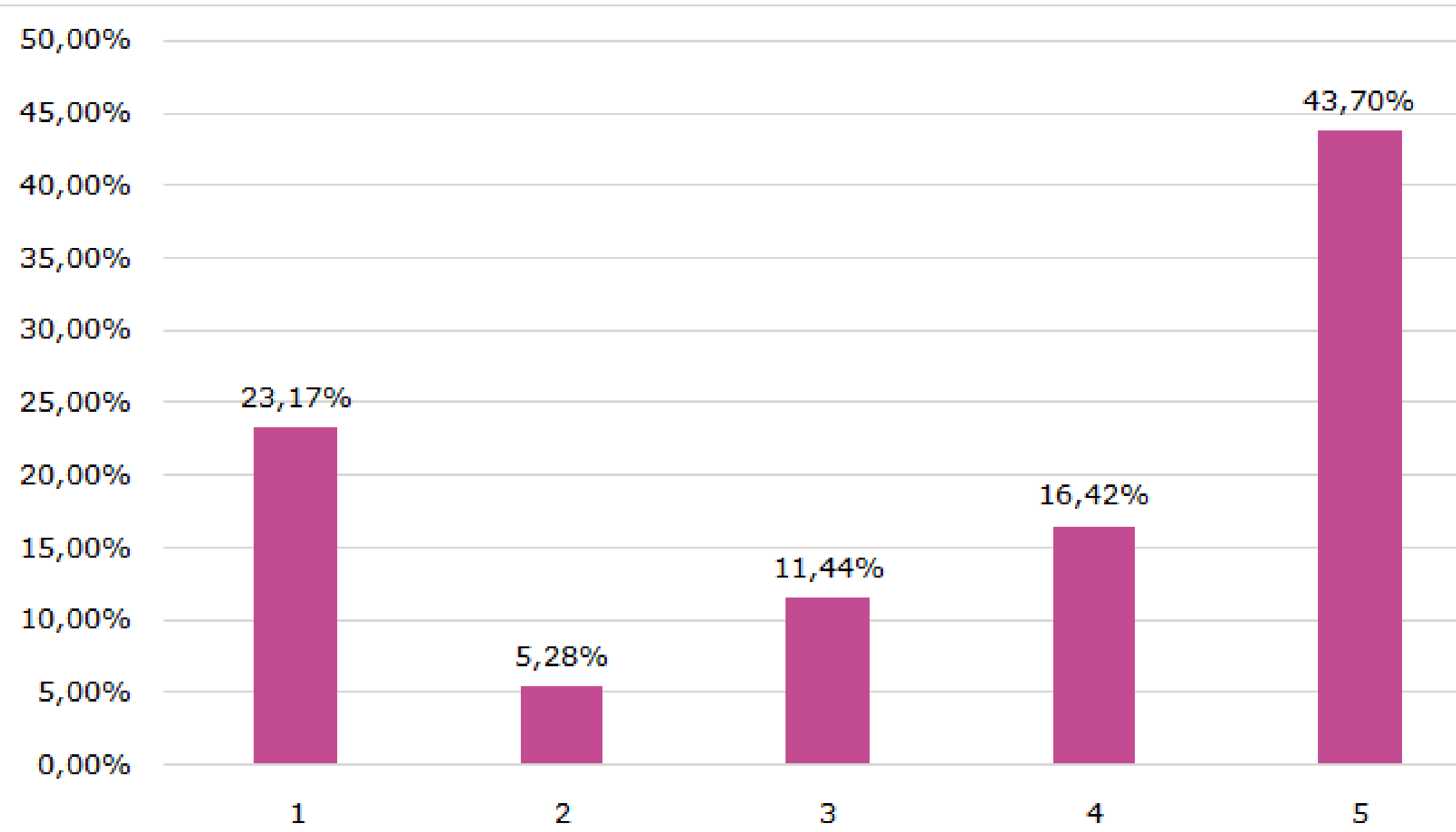
Although more than 60% of the respondents were interested and very interested in the topic, a significant number of youngsters (79 persons) showed no interest at all. Taking a closer look at the results and going deeper into the analysis, we identified the fact that most of the respondents who showed no interest came from Morocco (76), which makes total sense given the political climate and the attitude of the society related to this topic. Having more respondents from Morocco than from the other partners also contributed to the imbalance of answers, therefore we decided to analyze further results having the country of origin as one of the criteria.

Young people's interest in the project's topic (individual choices)

COUNTRY	1	2	3	4	5
Italy	1	1	3	22	38
Jordan	1	6	9	9	30
Morocco	76	7	18	19	37
Spain	1	4	8	5	43

Interested and very interested youngsters in the projects' topic (percent)

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	PERCENT
Italy	92,3%
Jordan	70,9%
Morocco	35,7%
Spain	78,7%

Consequently, if we extract the youngsters who chose 4 and 5 (interested and very interested), the situation looks like described in the table above, making the topic relevant for 3 of the 4 partners.

Confident and very confident young people in addressing gender-related topics

SUBTOPIC	Italy	Jordan	Morocco	Spain
GBV and prevention	90,80%	54,50%	31,80%	85,20%
LGBTIQ+ issues	72,30%	N/A	13,40%	80,30%
Feminism	83,10%	47,30%	18,50%	77,00%
Immigrant rights	81,50%	58,20%	34,40%	83,60%
Reproductive rights	83,10%	47,30%	25,50%	80,30%
Environmental issues	89,20%	50,90%	43,90%	78,70%
Art and self expression	70,80%	58,20%	40,10%	75,40%
Sexual education (intimacy, affection, etc.)	83,10%	49,10%	36,30%	83,60%
Stereotypes and prejudices	86,20%	56,40%	28,70%	93,40%
Employment/self employment	70,80%	61,80%	44,60%	73,80%
Hate speech (online/offline)	56,90%	N/A	37,60%	60,70%

In order to analyze the familiarity of several subtopics for the young people, they were asked to rate how confident they feel if/when speaking about them. In the table above, we chose to present the percentage of respondents who proved to be confident or very confident in addressing the issues. As shown, across most topics, young people in Italy and Spain report higher levels of confidence compared to Jordan and Morocco. Spain demonstrates particularly high confidence on topics like stereotypes and prejudices (93,4%) and immigrant rights (83,6%). This is also justified by the profile of the partner organization, Otra Escuela, which works on mediation, social and community communication with a significant focus on migrant rights.

Italy shows a similar trend, with high confidence in discussing GBV and prevention (90,8%), feminism (83,1%), and reproductive rights (83,1%).

Moroccan youth consistently report the lowest confidence across almost all topics, LGBTQIA+ issues scored only 13,4%, feminism at 18,5% and reproductive rights at 25,5%. Exceptions include employment/self-employment (44,6%) and environmental issues (43,9%), which are still relatively low compared to other countries. Young people in Jordan show moderate confidence, with employment/self-employment (61,8%) and stereotypes and prejudices (56,4%) among the highest-scoring topics. However, confidence significantly drops on issues like feminism (47,3%) and reproductive rights (47,3%).

Making a brief topic-specific analysis, it is evident that gender-based violence (GBV) and prevention were subject to a more active dialogue in Italy (90,8%) and Spain (85,2%), while Jordan (54,5%) and Morocco (31,8%) trail behind. This indicates potential cultural or systemic barriers to openly discussing GBV.

Confidence varies significantly when it comes to LGBTQIA+ issues, with Spain (80,3%) and Italy (72,3%) showing strong confidence, likely due to progressive societal attitudes and Morocco (13,4%) and Jordan (N/A) reflecting socio-cultural and legal restrictions on LGBTQIA+ discourse.

A similar situation is also present when discussing feminism, with Spain and Italy scoring over 75%, proving the prominence of feminist movements in these countries, and Jordan (47,3%) and Morocco (18,5%) suggesting that feminism might face resistance due to cultural norms.

Reproductive rights and sexual education generate confidence in 83,10% of youngsters from Italy, 80,3% from Spain, 47,30% of youngsters from Jordan, and 25,50% from Morocco, reflecting possible cultural sensitivities around discussing intimate topics.

Environmental issues, employment, and self-employment received the highest average scores among the four countries, indicating a universal concern about economic opportunities and the need for environmental protection and care.
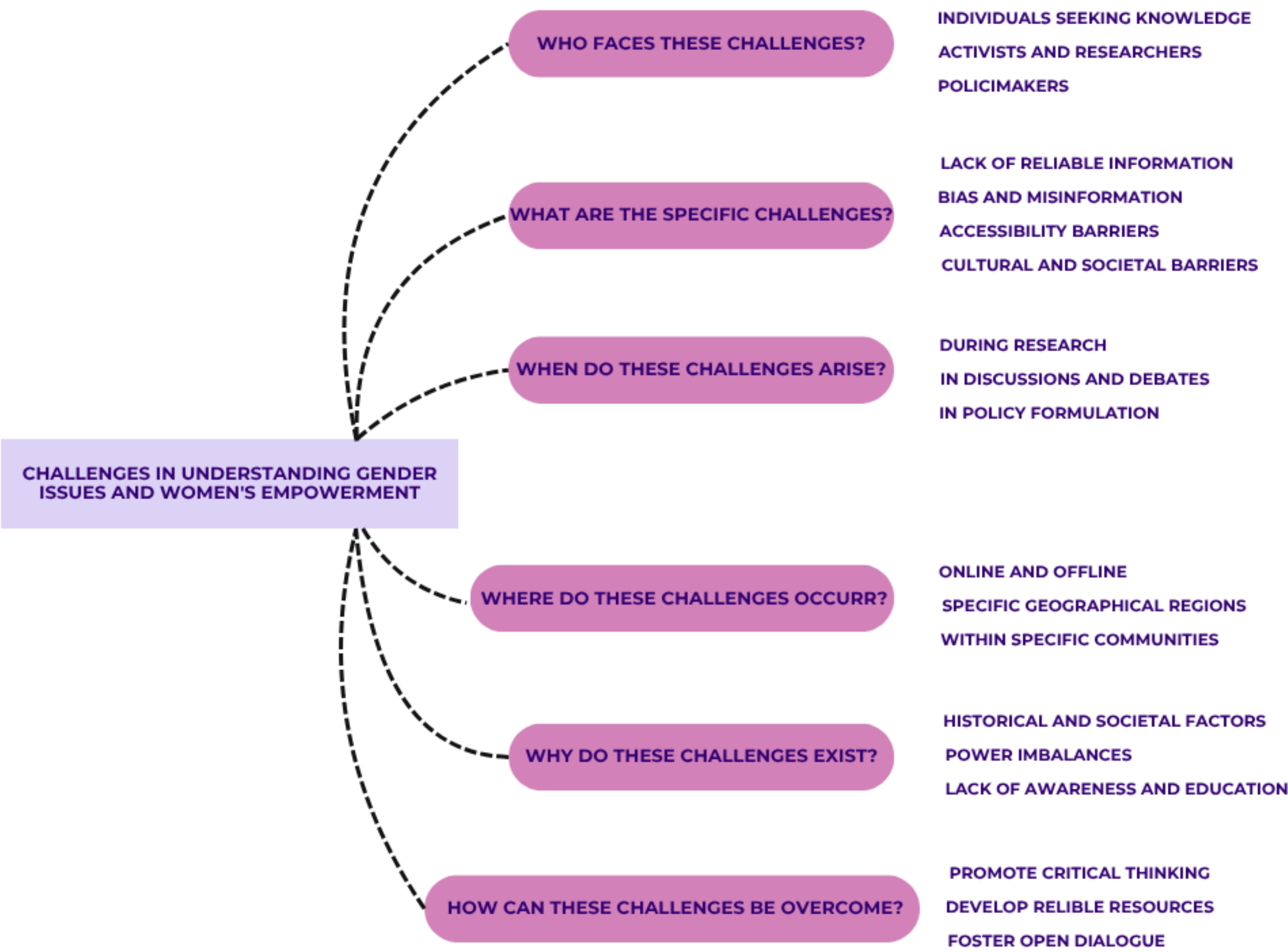
An interesting result refers to stereotypes and prejudices. While 93,4% of youngsters from Spain feel confident in addressing them, just 28,7% from Morocco do, indicating a need for broader awareness initiatives.

Hate speech (online and offline) scored less among all countries surveyed, showing that even in progressive contexts, hate speech is a difficult topic to address.

Challenges young people face while trying to understand gender issues and women's empowerment

Corroborating the results with the confidence youth workers have in addressing related topics, we can conclude that there is a good knowledge of their target groups. However, there is a clear need for improving knowledge and tools related to sensitive issues on both sides while using an intercultural pedagogical approach.

In order to be able to design it better, we aimed to identify the challenges young people face while trying to understand gender issues and women's empowerment. The results are synthesized in the mind map below and they coincide significantly with the ones the youth workers face.

CHALLENGES IN UNDERSTANDING GENDER ISSUES AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

WHO FACES THESE CHALLENGES?
INDIVIDUALS SEEKING KNOWLEDGE
ACTIVISTS AND RESEARCHERS
POLICIMAKERS

WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC CHALLENGES?
LACK OF RELIABLE INFORMATION
BIAS AND MISINFORMATION
ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS
CULTURAL AND SOCIETAL BARRIERS

WHEN DO THESE CHALLENGES ARISE?
DURING RESEARCH
IN DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATES
IN POLICY FORMULATION

WHERE DO THESE CHALLENGES OCCURR?
ONLINE AND OFFLINE
SPECIFIC GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS
WITHIN SPECIFIC COMMUNITIES

WHY DO THESE CHALLENGES EXIST?
HISTORICAL AND SOCIETAL FACTORS
POWER IMBALANCES
LACK OF AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

HOW CAN THESE CHALLENGES BE OVERCOME?
PROMOTE CRITICAL THINKING
DEVELOP RELIBLE RESOURCES
FOSTER OPEN DIALOGUE

This time, the challenges were clustered around four different pillars: information access and quality, social and cultural barriers, personal limitations, and lack of support.

The first pillar, **information access and quality**, was constantly mentioned during the research. Both youth workers and young people have difficulty in finding unbiased and comprehensive sources. Paradoxically, there is an overabundance of information online, but it mainly leads to confusion and misinformation. Moreover, there is a lack of localized or contextual data specific to certain regions or demographics.

The two quotes below underline these issues: *"One of the key challenges I face in learning more about gender issues and women's empowerment is the availability of accurate and unbiased information. Often, resources are either limited or filtered through cultural and societal biases, making it difficult to find comprehensive and objective data."*

"While information is available, it is not always easy to find trustworthy sources, especially those that provide in-depth analysis or perspectives from diverse regions and cultures. This makes it difficult to gain a well-rounded understanding of the complexities surrounding these topics."

The complexity of gender concepts can prevent many youth workers from addressing the topic with their target groups. The terminology and the evolving understanding of gender can be highly intimidating to educators who are expected to know all about it and confusing for young people. Gender is increasingly viewed as a spectrum rather than a binary concept. This can be confusing for young individuals, particularly those just starting to explore their identities. The traditional dichotomy of male and female is frequently firmly embedded, and discussing gender fluidity, non-binary identities, and transgender concerns necessitates clarity, patience, and suitable terminology. Moreover, there are many terms and concepts related to gender (e.g., cisgender, gender queer, gender fluid, pronouns) that young people may not fully grasp or may find overwhelming: *"Every time I go to a conference on feminism I get bombarded with a lot of names and concepts that I do not know. Even if I am looking them up, sometimes I do not find results or I do not really find what they were talking about. So yes, I find it hard to start from scratch to understand the feminist movement. Therefore, I find that I cannot fully know what concerns gender discrimination (I will always miss something, even if I may have it under my nose) and women's empowerment (of which we hear little about anyway)."* (Young woman, Italy)

The **social and cultural barriers** highlight societal stereotypes, patriarchal systems, and a lack of open discussion spaces. Most of the subtopics have been already analyzed because they were also identified as challenges for the youth workers. However, it is essential to underline the specific barriers that are: the religious and political obstacles, generational gaps in understanding gender topics and issues like misogyny, queer phobia and cultural resistance to change. Especially the Moroccan respondents mentioned the fact that by only discussing these topics you will get stigmatized by society.

Another element worth mentioning is **echo chambers**, which occur when individuals are exposed only to views and perspectives that align with their pre-existing beliefs. These echo chambers limit critical thinking and openness to diverse viewpoints. Echo chambers can be particularly prevalent among young people engaging with gender issues due to their reliance on social media, peer groups, and algorithm-driven platforms. This aspect is also underlined by the youngsters' sources of information of choice.

Preferred information sources

Preferred information sources on gender issues and women's empowerment (percentage)
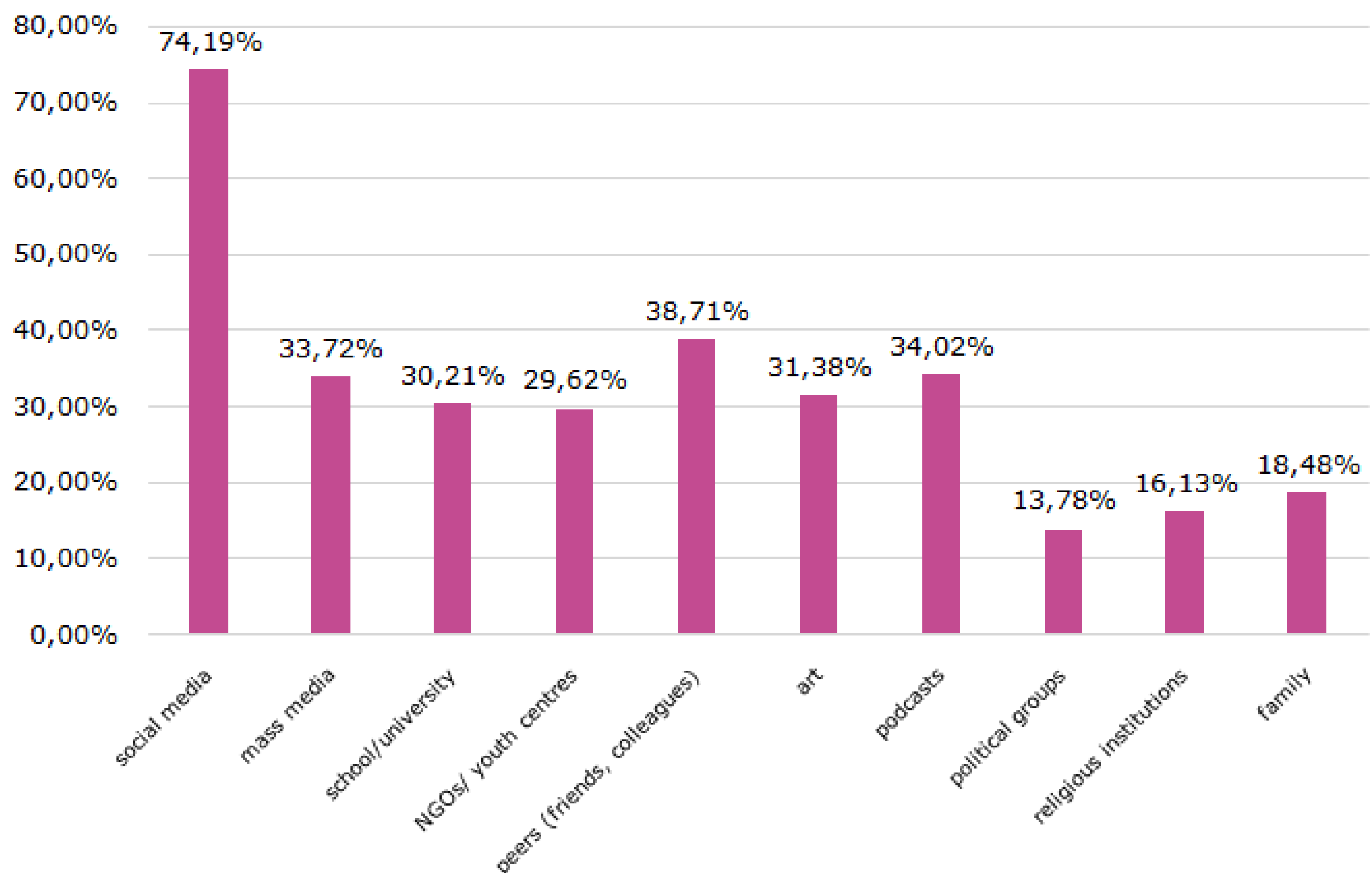
The data reveals that social media is the dominant source of information on gender issues and women's empowerment, with 74,19% of respondents favoring it. Its accessibility and widespread reach make it the primary platform for young people to engage with gender-related content. However, this reliance also makes it susceptible to echo chambers and misinformation, which can limit critical thinking. Similarly, informal conversations with peers (38,71%) play a significant role in shaping opinions, highlighting the importance of interpersonal dialogue. Yet, peer-based discussions can perpetuate biases if not grounded in reliable information.

Traditional and educational sources like schools/universities (30,21%), mass media (33,72%), and NGOs/youth centers (29,62%) are moderately utilized. Schools and universities provide structured knowledge, while NGOs and youth centers are recognized for their expertise and activism. Despite their potential for delivering accurate and in-depth content, these sources are often overshadowed by the immediacy and convenience of digital platforms. Additionally, creative mediums like art (31,38%) and newer platforms such as podcasts (34,02%) are emerging as engaging alternatives for storytelling and awareness, offering opportunities for growth in their influence.

On the other hand, more traditional or conservative sources, such as religious institutions (16,13%) and family (18,48%), are the least preferred, reflecting a disconnect between these institutions and the current discourse on gender.

Their lower relevance may stem from perceptions of outdated or restrictive views on gender issues. The overall trends suggest that while social media and peers dominate, there is significant potential to strengthen underutilized resources, particularly NGOs, art, and podcasts, to provide a more balanced and inclusive understanding of gender issues.

Going back to the challenges, **personal limitations** refer to personal bias, lack of life experience, and fear of discovering personal relevance to gender issues. However, it implies economic and time limitations, further preventing deeper engagement with the topic: *"My challenges in learning about gender and empowerment are mainly the lack of support networks in this new culture and prejudices, both here and in my community of origin complicate everything. Economic and job instability is another factor that limits my time and access to educational and activism spaces. Discrimination due to my administrative status makes everything more difficult, so finding and participating in safe and empowering spaces is difficult for me."*
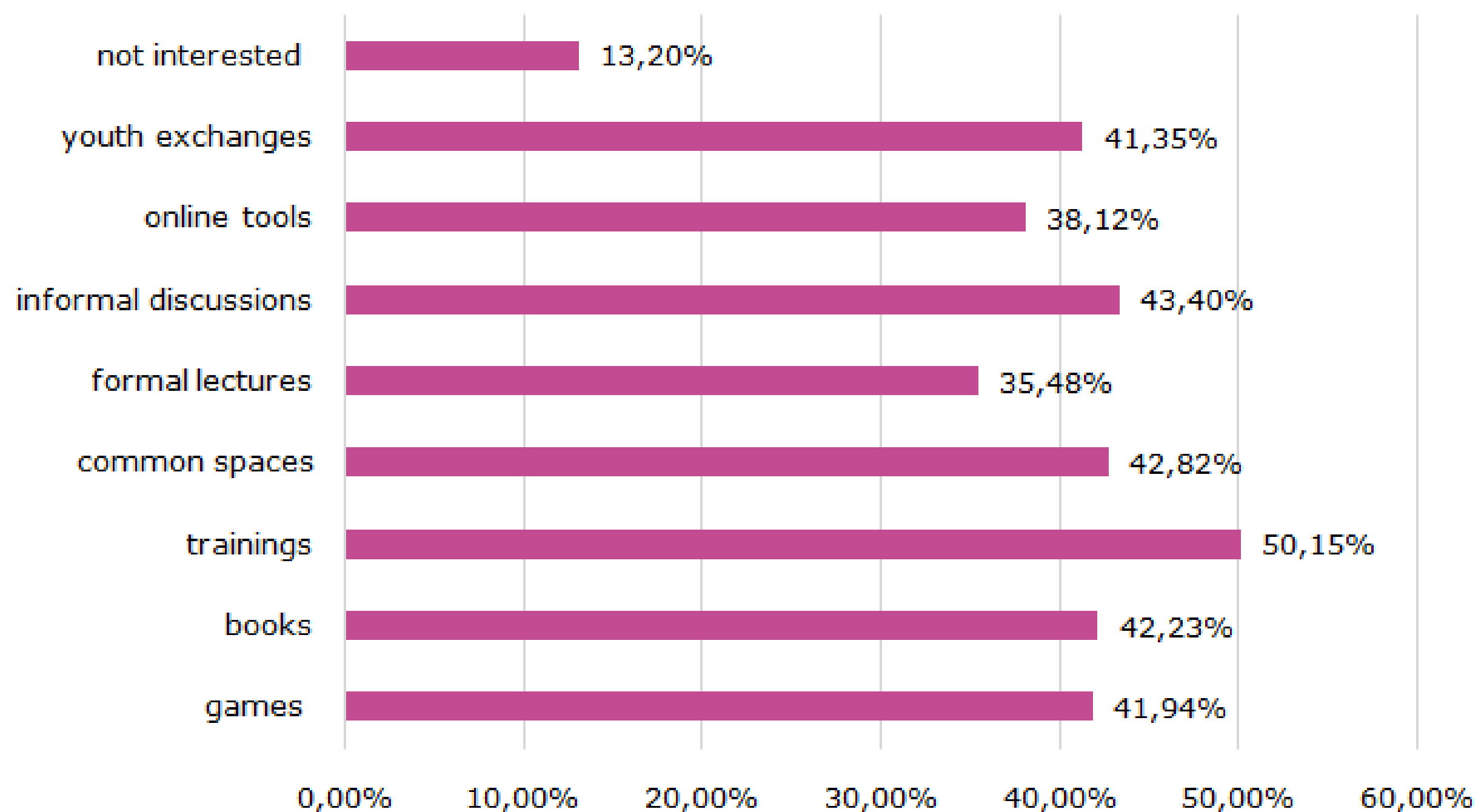
It is impossible to treat these pillars separately since all of the challenges are intertwined. **Lack of support** refers to the difficulty of finding safe spaces for discussions, the lack of communication with experts or informed individuals, and the general social disinterest in addressing this issue. The quote from a young Moroccan best shows the link between religion, society, the **need for safe space**, and the personal threat felt when tackling gender: *"To address such topics and discuss them in a conservative area like Morocco is somehow sensitive and in most cases considered as a taboo due to our collective point of view about gender roles distribution and religious instructions. In my case, as a rural woman, I find it very difficult to open a mundane discussion about feminism or gender-biased topics because if I do so, I will be regarded as a rebellious woman who revolts against the common rules and is even hated by most of them. This made me become very selective with the type of people I open a discussion with on such topics."*

The complexity of the challenges can also be seen in the mind map at page 39, which answers the main research questions we have encountered along the way.

Fostering open dialogue, promoting critical thinking and developing reliable resources are crucial for a better understanding of the gender issue and for a more equitable society. In this respect, youth workers need to find the most suitable way of delivering information and awareness.

Preferred ways of learning

Preferred ways of learning about gender (percentage)

Category	Percentage
not interested	13,20%
youth exchanges	41,35%
online tools	38,12%
informal discussions	43,40%
formal lectures	35,48%
common spaces	42,82%
trainings	50,15%
books	42,23%
games	41,94%

According to the chart above, **trainings** emerge as the most popular choice, with 50.15% of respondents favoring this method. This preference highlights young people's interest in engaging, interactive, and structured formats where they can actively participate, share experiences, and gain practical knowledge. Such workshops or seminars provide a focused approach to complex topics, making them particularly appealing.

Other popular methods include **informal discussions** (43,40%), **common spaces** (42,82%), **books** (42,23%), and **games** (41,94%). These results indicate that young people value flexible, interactive, and diverse learning environments. Informal discussions and common spaces suggest a preference for peer-to-peer learning and open dialogue, fostering deeper understanding in casual and inclusive settings. Books remain relevant, demonstrating an appetite for traditional, self-paced learning, while games' popularity emphasizes the effectiveness of gamification in making learning fun and engaging.

Interestingly, **online tools** (38,12%) and **formal lectures** (35,48%) are less favored, with online tools showing moderate popularity despite the widespread use of technology by young people. This may indicate that while digital platforms are accessible, they may lack the interactivity or depth offered by other methods. Formal lectures, on the other hand, are less appealing, possibly due to their rigid and one-directional approach, which contrasts with the collaborative and experiential methods preferred by this audience.
Lastly, only 13,20% of respondents identified as "not interested," showing that the majority of young people are keen to learn about gender issues and women empowerment. This reflects a strong awareness and willingness among youth to engage with these topics. However, the findings underscore the importance of using varied and dynamic approaches, such as trainings, games, and discussions, to ensure maximum engagement and impact when addressing these critical issues with younger audiences.

CONCLUSION

The challenges surrounding gender issues and women empowerment are deeply woven into the experiences of young people, yet they also represent areas of tremendous potential for growth and change. For youth workers, these challenges are not merely obstacles - they are opportunities to inspire, educate, and empower a generation to redefine norms and create a more equitable society. The findings of this study underline the **critical role youth workers play** in shaping perspectives, fostering dialogue, and building skills that equip young people to tackle these issues with confidence and empathy.

One of the most striking aspects of working with young people is their openness to learning and their willingness to challenge the status quo. Yet, **addressing gender issues requires more than just awareness, it demands active engagement through inclusive, dynamic methods**. Youth workers must create environments where discussions about gender and empowerment are not only safe but also stimulating. This could mean using interactive tools like games or informal conversations that resonate deeply with young people, making abstract concepts relatable and personal. By using them, youth workers can help young people unlearn biases, explore the meaning of equity, and see themselves as part of the solution.

Equally important is **nurturing young people's capacity to lead change in their communities**. As they grapple with issues of gender inequality, many youth - especially women and girls - face structural barriers that can feel overwhelming. Here, the role of youth workers becomes pivotal in providing mentorship and advocacy, ensuring that young people, regardless of gender, feel seen, heard, and valued. By equipping them with knowledge, practical skills, and the confidence to take action, youth workers empower them not only to envision a better world but to actively contribute to its creation.

Perhaps the most transformative element of this journey is the opportunity to **challenge societal norms and re-imagine what gender equality looks like**. Youth workers stand at the crossroads of tradition and innovation, able to guide young people through complex cultural landscapes while fostering a new vision for empowerment. This involves tackling difficult questions about power, identity, and inclusion but also celebrating progress and resilience. It is about helping young people see that every conversation, every small action, contributes to a larger movement for change.

Phoenix project proves to be a great opportunity to address in an interactive and efficient way topics such as – gender in a multicultural context, gender stereotypes and prejudices, women's empowerment and leadership, tackling gender-based violence, LGBTQIA+ inclusion and rights, gender representation, healthy relationships and consent, legal rights and advocacy and many others.

By focusing on cultural sensitivity and inclusivity, the project can ensure its tools are relevant, effective, and impactful in diverse settings.

CHAPTER III – PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

During the International Training Course in Spain, aimed to finalize the design of the synthetic pedagogical approach to be applied in projects and activities focused on gender equity and to run the final assessment of the workshops tested in the previous steps, the pedagogical approach was revised and the workshops were fine-tuned.

As for what concerns the pedagogical approach, the previous draft version was created during the training course in Morocco, with a bottom-up perspective, and thanks to the support of the international group of participants and of facilitators. The backbone of the first draft was created using participatory methodologies: starting from a collective brainstorming, then creating a collective mind map, clustering it in macro-areas, and having a following work in different groups to provide valuable content to each area. As result of the work done, the approach was divided into the following sections:

- Basic ground and contents
- Environment and target group
- Facilitator role and communication
- Methodology and tools.

The pedagogical approach was then applied and experimented during the Tools Testing (including Local Trainings targeted to educators and Local Workshops targeted to young people, implemented in all the participant countries from January to August 2025).

The last step for its finalization was held during the ITC in Spain: here, capitalizing the major insights gathered through the Tools Testing's reports and thanks to the feedback and contribution of the international group, it was decided to re-organize the macro-areas of the pedagogical approach as follows:

- **Ethical pillars:** incorporates the previous section "Basic ground and contents", adding extra elements worked out with the international group
- **Intercultural lens:** proposes a new section to tailor-make the approach from both the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) and European perspectives, offering useful insights and food for thought on how to tackle gender and how to facilitate gender-related activities
- **Learning strategies:** incorporates the previous section "Methodology and tools", adding extra elements worked out with the international group
- **Facilitator role:** adds extra elements worked out with the international group during a specific session focused on the role of facilitator in both contexts, offering useful food for thought for what concerns team work and the skills and competences required
- **Group management:** incorporates elements from the previous version of the pedagogical approach (from different sub-sections), adding extra elements worked out by the international group.

WHAT

The pedagogical approach aims to set the **principles** and the **modus operandi** when delivering activities focused on gender in European and MENA countries.

The pedagogical approach is therefore meant to offer **guidelines and inputs** to youth workers and educators involved in the facilitation of the new workshops created and, at large, of activities focused on gender-sensitive issues.
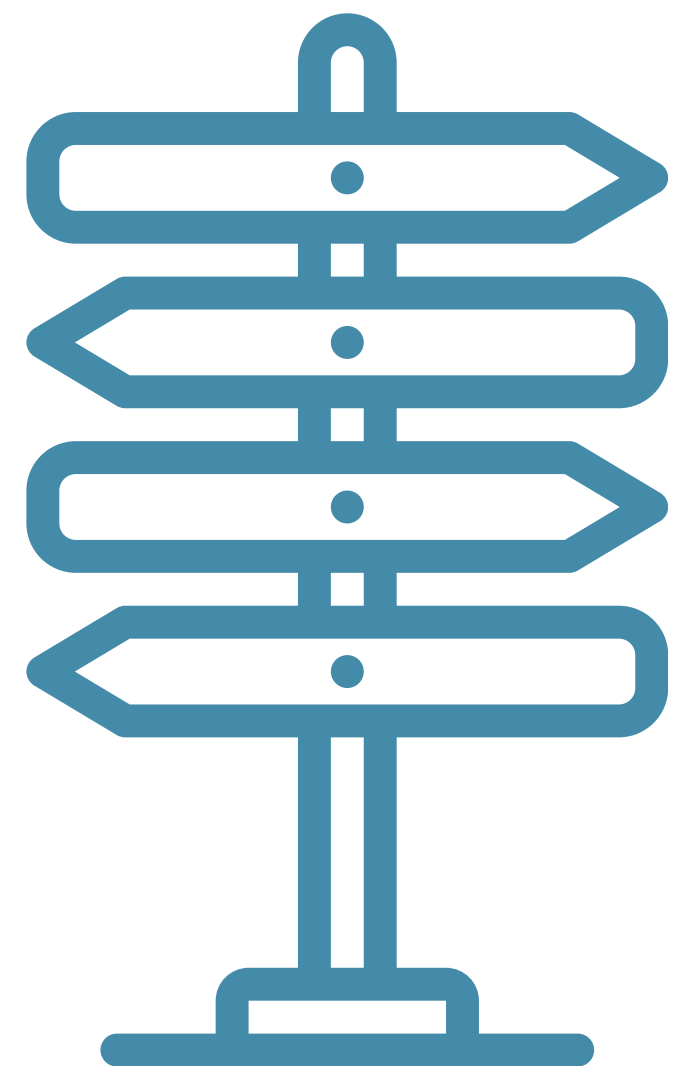
ETHICAL PILLARS

The element part of this section has been discussed within the international group, who highlighted the crucial role played by ethics and values in the work with young people in different contexts around gender and other sensitive topics. This is even more relevant where the educators' own identities (gender, cultural, sexual, national, religious, etc.) might be questioned, theorized, and discussed.

The intention of the current pedagogical approach is to be aware of how learners participate and are involved in ethically and politically coherent directions, including the spaces and venues where the activities are carried out, the support of social movements, good practices, and uplifting other initiatives all along the one proposed.

The values and principles below are seen as intuitive, almost invisible but driving forces that act as a compass for the work, sustaining values of cooperation and care in the face of those of competition and power over.

AWARENESS AND RESPECT: facilitators, youth workers and educators at large need to be aware that there are different ways for one to express themselves, and different values learners are bringing to the experience/process. It is therefore crucial to leave the proper space, time, and setting for that and to constantly create a suitable and welcoming environment based on the respect of the others' feelings and emotions. At the same time, in every learning experience, it is a must to apply critical lenses when we look at our own values and at the values of others assuming them to be a universal truth. In order to not leave space for misunderstanding, disrespectful practices and judgmental approaches, intercultural learning has to be constantly promoted as an important asset in the learning approach.

NON-JUDGMENTAL ATTITUDES: the ethical approach should always be open-minded and respectful while encountering other human beings. It is important to avoid judgmental approaches even though it might be one of the first automatic reactions because it is rooted in the human being's inner, less conscious structure. It is crucial to leave the proper space for acknowledgment, active listening, being ready for fruitful confrontations, and going beyond individual perspectives and parameters. Also, it is essential to actively counter systemic and epistemic injustices by addressing biases and stereotypes that can permeate the learning environment, ensuring an inclusive experience for everyone.

EMPATHY: in every learning experience, learners have to be actively encouraged to put themselves "in other people's shoes", even though it is not an automatic process, and if the other points of view, ways of acting, and behaviors might seem confusing and not be immediately recognized and understood. Integrating the diversity of needs, rhythms, and identities of the group into the methodologies and tools applied is crucial. Offering support, sharing humanity, confidentiality and reflecting on their own biases, assumptions, and the potential impact educators' attitudes may have on the learning environment. In this perspective, time and patience play an active role in the process, allowing a permanent self-questioning and readiness in not giving anything for granted.

HORIZONTALITY: it is considered one of the main pillars and grounding elements to promote participation and active involvement all along the process. Learners usually are not feeling confident when a top-down approach is promoted (even though sometimes, this is what they are used to) because it discourages the engagement and the desire to participate (remaining with the feeling of not being listened to and being forced to do something).

This might weaken the feeling of being meaningfully able to contribute to the process. For this reason it is needed to promote an approach that is not merely a knowledge-transmission process, but a collective construction of knowledge through shared experience, reflection, theory, and contextualization. Transparency, truth-telling, setting the ground of consent, voluntary participation and non-manipulation are key in the process. Moreover, ethically, it has to promote "open-access for all", where everyone is given the same space and opportunity to express, learn, and actively contribute to the process.

INCLUSION VS PARTICIPATION: the concept of "inclusion", even though over used in a huge variety of learning contexts, is sometimes tricky since it opens the floor to the questions, "who includes whom?" and "according to what criteria, parameters, and authority?". For these reasons, the current approach suggests overcoming the concept of "inclusion" and proposing the one of "active participation". In this way, facilitators and learners move from a position of "power above" to a position of "involvement for all". Solidarity in learning is the key, recognizing interconnectedness and interdependence, the power of vulnerability and relational care for the others, the self, the collective, and the spaces shared and inhabited. Fairly sharing responsibilities between individuals (educators and learners) to ensure the potential participation of all with empathy and understanding.

SKILLS AND COMPETENCES: it is crucial all along the learning experience to create the space where individuals and the group are able to develop skills and competences. This is in order to create the fertile ground and the proper setting for sharing, understanding, collectively building the cognitive and emotional knowledge, and at the same time personal-development. The learning experience should be impactful and meaningful, and for that purpose, it is important to support learners in a process where they are not only developing soft skills and cross-cultural competences, but where they also acquire awareness of their progress and development. Therefore the educative action has to include specific moments allowing the recognition, analysis, and acknowledgment of what has been learned, boosting the "learning to learn" process. This action is crucial also in the perspective of the upcoming transmission of the learning, which generates a long-lasting impact and a cascade mechanism.

FLEXIBILITY AND CURIOSITY: in the learning experience, it is crucial to constantly enhance autonomy in learning, by allowing for personalized learning paths and adapting them to the direct experiences and needs, in itself showing a direct application of the ethical principle of justice and participation. The educational programs, therefore, should not be rigid and unchangeable. They have to be built on the project's specific objectives, then reshaped on the expectations, specificities, and needs of learners, and then, permanently monitored, being ready to revise, adjust, and modify the process and tools based on what has been detected.
Curiosity has to be always encouraged, emphasizing learning by doing and learning by playing, nurturing constant interest for experimenting and discovering, and promoting an approach where no one pretends to have the "final and correct" answer. It contributes to building the endeavor of understanding the other through questions, highlighting the emphatic nature of the process and the intercultural lens through which the learning spaces are designed.

POWER MECHANISMS: as mentioned above, whatever top-down approach is used, it always has to be discouraged, instilling a power mechanism between facilitators and learners and between the learners themselves. In an efficient and fruitful learning process, learners should never be put to the point of justifying themselves because of their backgrounds, origins, genders, status, beliefs. On the contrary, neutrality has to be promoted as a core value, welcoming all the different points of view and experiences.
At the same time, and even though the constant horizontally has to be promoted, the facilitator has to be ethically aware that there is an inner power dynamic inside whatever learning process is promoted. This is due to the role assigned (or that the others assign to the facilitator), the capacity to influence, to charismatically guide individuals and groups, and to have their own voice/opinions listened to. Therefore, facilitators have to be consciously aware of this ethical responsibility and act properly, trying always to keep a fair, balanced, honest, and transparent approach in front of the learners and of the group.

CONFLICTS: sometimes it can happen that different ethics and values might collide or crash when meeting each other. This is the moment for "disruptive dissidence" considered as a positive dimension that leads to the re-configuration of the learning setting. This "movement" has to be taken as an ethical opportunity for learning, as conflicts also have to be considered as opportunities for learning, even though it is crucial to find the proper strategy, setting, and tools to work them out properly in order to move forward. In this perspective, discomfort should not be denied but embraced, not shying away from differences of opinions and identities in order to maintain a falsity of "comfort", which can simultaneously create feelings or experiences of invisibility or discrimination, thus identifying the tools to positively navigate conflicts.

INTERCULTURAL LENS

In general, facilitating non-formal education activities in culturally diverse and socially sensitive environments requires not only technical expertise but also a high degree of empathy, cultural awareness and communication skills. There are several key tips that may help educators and facilitators to navigate these dynamics effectively and to maximize participant engagement, learning outcomes, and educational goals initially set. Keeping these tips in mind can contribute to preserving the educational action's effectiveness, respecting participants' beliefs and comfort levels, avoiding unnecessary controversies, and maintaining a productive learning environment. These guidelines are particularly crucial in a variety of different settings and with a variety of groups: both in conservative communities, multi-tribal settings, and religiously homogeneous areas and also when working with gender-mixed groups and more vulnerable groups at high risk of discrimination. In any case, we warmly advise facilitators to keep a high level of flexibility, responsiveness and culturally responsive practices to maintain a productive dialogue and achieve the learning objectives without compromising cultural sensitivity. These are key elements to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect, to allow greater participants' engagement and to ensure that the content is both accessible and relevant to the audience.

More specifically, and based on the projects' experiences, the cultural specificities have been deeply discussed within the consortium and also with the actors involved (educators, youth workers, and participants of the international training courses). It has always been highlighted how the "intercultural lens" is crucial in general and even more so when dealing with such a sensitive subject as gender. For this reason, it was chosen to dedicate one full chapter of the pedagogical approach to extensively tackle it. For educators and facilitators when delivering the newly created workshops in their local backgrounds and communities, it can offer a crucial angle in reading and proposing the activities, showing how to tailor-make the activities and tools proposed to the local specificities and needs, keeping an integral respect and fairness. Moreover, this chapter can offer the readers an open and 360° view of what concerns the huge heterogeneity of situations and needs when tackling gender issues in the four countries, preserving the huge value of the intercultural learning perspective. From the sections below we can in fact see and understand that the "lens we apply to gender and gender-sensitive issues" may vary a lot: what is a priority in one context is not in another, and what is an important subject in one background is a taboo in another.

Thus, all this relevant information offers valuable food for thought for facilitators willing to raise awareness on gender in their own reality. Culture, tradition, religion, community, family, and education (just to mention some of the main pillars) impact the way we understand and tackle gender, and as educators we constantly have to pose ourselves the questions "what?", "why?" and "how?".

The sections below are divided by country and are synthetically answering four major questions:
- CONTEXT: what are the specificities of our culture/society to be taken into account when working on gender?
- TARGET GROUP(S): when we work on gender, what are the target groups we are used to work with and what are their specificities and needs?
- CONTENTS: what are the most relevant concepts related to gender we need to take into account within our context?
- DO'S AND do notS: when I facilitate activities on gender, what are the "Do's" and "do nots" to be taken into account?

ITALY

CONTEXT:

- Gender-based violence and high number of feminicides
- Migratory flows and entering gate of Europe
- Recent multicultural context with 1st and 2nd generation migrants
- Cultural backgrounds impacted by religion (Catholicism) and marked by Islamophobia
- Increase of fascist parties and movements leading to racism displays
- Increase of repressing actions and laws
- Funds cut and reduction for education (arts, culture ...) and health
- Inequality of income's distribution and gender pay gaps
- Rise of social movements (Ni una menos, Ultima generazione, movement in support of Palestine ...)
- Social centers and universities as active hubs for socialization and activism
- Solidarity, especially in rural areas and suburbs.

TARGET GROUP(S): multicultural context, including young people, university students, migrants, and the Roma community.

CONTENTS:

- Gender stereotypes
- Gender roles
- Women empowerment
- Access to reproductive health and rights
- Sexual and emotional education
- Consent culture
- Feminicide
- Patriarchy
- Queer and LGBTQIA+ rights
- Intersectional trans-feminism
- Decolonizing culture
- Awareness raising on specificities of different culture, beliefs, and socio-economic conditions.

DO'S:

- Promote horizontality
- Use clear and simple language
- Use inclusive language
- Be aware of cultural differences.

DON'TS:

- Do not impose your point of view
- Do not be judgmental and dis-respectful
- Do not use vertical approaches.

JORDAN

CONTEXT:

- Societies are different and sensitive when it comes to talking about gender and the different aspects that we can cover when talking about them
- Society is very conservative and very demanding as it shapes what's expected from each side
- In a more man-dominated country, it is needed to be very careful in opening it, as there are 3 different societies (rural, country side and city side) where each group has its own perspective on the women's and the men's roles
- Law is also usually dominated by the traditions of the tribes under the name of "tribal law", which greatly affects the perspective of how women/men are treated
- The actual legislation calls for women and men's equity and equality, although some of the laws still are controversial, like marriage, divorce, and child custody
- Regarding economics/education, women's participation is low, as it goes to 15-16% of the society, although they have more higher education.

TARGET GROUP(S): gender dynamics are influenced by strong cultural norms, legal gaps in personal status laws, low female labor force participation despite high education, and persistent gender-based violence especially in rural and refugee contexts. Addressing these challenges requires a culturally sensitive approach, strong legal reforms, economic empowerment opportunities, early education to challenge stereotypes, better protection services, inclusion of marginalized groups, and stronger data to guide policies.

CONTENTS:

- Legal framework and rights: usually with a differentiation between men and women where they impact equality
- Education vs employment gap: although women are highly educated (more women are graduating than men), this does not translate equally into employment
- Social norms and cultural expectations: the conservative traditions and societal expectations around gender roles can restrict women's autonomy and participation in public life
- The most relevant gender concepts include: the gap between women's high levels of education and their very low participation in the labor market; the influence of conservative social norms on women's roles in family and public life and the legal frameworks that affect issues like marriage; the small women's political participation; and the intersectional challenges, especially for refugee women.

DO'S:

- Keep presenting gender as binary at first: Jordanian culture is a conservative and modest culture, and the main perception of gender is limited to female and male
- Focus on the no-judgment space and equal-speaking opportunities: Jordanians tend to come from a judgemental culture
- Structure activities to be modest, including to avoid any discomfort of any participant.

DON'TS:

- Do not impose a western framework blindly
- Do not assume homogeneity: Jordan has urban vs rural, tribal, refugee, and generational differences. One approach won't fit all
- Do not overexpose sensitive issues: topics should be proposed on appropriate matters.

MOROCCO

CONTEXT:

- Religion, with Islam playing an important role
- Customs and traditions
- Legal vs social reality: laws and family code
- Urban vs rural gap: more openness in cities, more conservatism in rural areas
- Language and identities: Darija, Amazigh and French, depending on contexts
- Need to avoid academic jargon.

TARGET GROUP(S): young people, students, teachers and researchers, families and parents, NGO representatives, social media influencers, and decision makers.

CONTENTS:

- Impact of society on gender (education, health, ...)
- Family code
- Equality (conceived in the binary perspective of man vs woman)
- Cooperation between genders
- Education.

DO'S:

- Understand participants socio-cultural backgrounds in advance
- Be aware of regional differences and run a pre-workshop background analysis
- Pay attention to religious and cultural sensitivity
- Use contextualized and culturally relevant examples
- Approach sensitive topics with caution and clarity
- Create a safe space
- Trigger warning on the sensitivity of the topics, research on the subject.

DON'TS:

- Do not over-complicate terminology: simplify the terms used and avoid jargons
- Do not propose LGBTQIA+ subjects in specific regions and without consent from the participants and permission from the local representatives
- Do not force the people to accept the others' opinions.

SPAIN

CONTEXT:

- "Representative democracy": with a feeling of general disappointment towards democracy and institutions vs activism and social movements
- Civil war and dictatorship ended in 1975; still franquist values are promoted, and in the last century, there has been a lack of restorative process
- European, western, colonizer country
- Legally secular, with still a big impact of the Catholic religion on culture, values, and customs
- Entering gate of Europe for migrants: diversity and multiculturalism, racism and Islamophobia
- Public health, public education, and mandatory schooling recently impacted by austerity measures and privatization
- Body shaming, ageism, ableism, classism
- Polarized society with both big feminist movements and the rise of extreme right-wing and online fueled sexism among youngsters
- Big LGBTQIA+ community
- Legal abortion and legal same sex marriage, even though challenged by the right wing.

TARGET GROUP(S): young people, youth and adults from migrant communities, and vulnerable groups at risk of discrimination. The young people are normally sexually active and social media are very present and influential (phone addiction).
It is also important to have in mind the urban vs rural context: the term "sexilio" is used to describe the fact that many queer people feel they need to migrate to urban dimensions to be themselves. There is a huge gap in how each generation perceives gender issues. It is crucial to keep attention to diversity and to the different cultural contexts, to ableism, to ask for pronouns, and to always have an inclusive perspective.

CONTENTS:

- Sex and gender
- Youth & women's empowerment
- Reproductive health
- Emotional education
- Gender-based violence
- Sex work - human trafficking
- Social rights
- Feminism
- Gender-biased labor and career choice.

DO'S:

- Take cultural contexts into account when bringing up a topic in facilitation
- Create an appropriate, comfortable environment and atmosphere
- Take into account possible sensitivities within the group and communicate in advance (e.g., gender) the topics to be discussed
- Open up spaces for group reflection at the end
- Promote horizontality
- Use clear and simple language
- Use inclusive language
- Be aware of cultural differences.

DON'TS:

- Do not assume someone's gender
- Do not impose your opinion when facilitating
- Do not include too many activities for such a short time: less is more
- Do not jump from one activity to another in a disconnected manner.

LEARNING STRATEGIES

The learning strategy includes different paths and approaches to favor and to boost the learning process of individuals and groups. A learning strategy should imply a big variety of approaches, methods, techniques, and tools to support learners' development and acquisition of skills and competences.

Educators and facilitators, have to be well aware that "the perfect recipe does not exist" and neither does "the perfect learning strategy". What works well in one context and with a specific group of learners might not absolutely work in another context and with another group. Considering that, as already mentioned in different parts of this pedagogical approach, human beings are different, they come from different cultures and backgrounds, and they have different learning styles, specificities, and needs, and for an effective and holistic learning process, it is deeply recommended to forecast simultaneously different approaches within the learning strategy. These approaches need to be coherent and not contradictory and they have to be conceived to cover different aspects and needs all along the learning process, actively bringing on board all the actors .

The concepts of "emotional intelligence" and "collective intelligence" have to be considered a priority within the strategies proposed and they need to go hand in hand with the ethical principles and values set for the learning experience.

Heterogeneity and variety are also two important axes: in the learning process it is crucial not to bring theories and approaches representing only one side of the reality. Therefore, multiple voices and approaches representing different backgrounds, origins, genders, culture and beliefs have to be promoted and insured to guarantee an impactful and life-changing learning experience.

Another crucial concept is responsibility: the more complex the learning task is to achieve, the higher the reward is in terms of learning. It implies that learners take responsibility in the process, autonomously and as a part of a group. Responsibility gives motivation to act, and to overcome the difficulties encountered, it offers a meaningful purposes to be achieved, promoting personal engagement.

GROUP DIAGNOSTIC: the learning strategies proposed in this section, are mainly the ones related to the group and the fact of working together. In fact, the approaches, activities and tools proposed are considering the group and the individual relations between its members, as active instruments for the learning. The basic assumption is that we learn from each other's and from the dynamics we create as a whole. In the way facilitators and educators design the learning strategies and create the activities, it is crucial to start from the needs and the backgrounds of the learners and of the whole group. Those needs can be gathered through questionnaires, ad hoc questions, activities, and specific tools where learners can express their needs and expectations or simply by observing the group dynamics.

Then, the contents proposed have to be adapted to the learners, and also the activities should be shaped/modulated according to the target group's profiles and needs. For example, the introduction and use of "modern" tools (like ICT), are very useful. They allow a better connection with the young learners because they are closer to their reality and context. It is a way to speak the common language and to express consideration towards their needs and interests.

HOLISTIC LEARNING: each learner is the major protagonist of their own learning, since they involve themselves in the activity, experience it, and act and feel it. For this reason, each learner has their own learning experience and their own tailor-made learning process. It is important to remember that no one is neutral when entering into the activity, that each person brings their own background, culture, and identity(ies) and that all these elements are welcomed!

Moreover, all the learners have different pathways to learn and preferences. All the different ways, when combined, support each others. In that sense, the proposed strategies encompass a "socio-affective approach" by proposing activities that combine concrete experience, group discussion, concept theorization, and imagination. For the purpose, different channels of expression like visual, auditory, emotional, and kinesthetic can be proposed and used to stimulate the body and mind as a whole. The support of metaphors, images and symbols can also be used to further develop a concept and, to bring more perspectives and questions to consider. In conclusion, since all the learners are different, different approaches and styles in the activities are therefore needed. This contributes insuring a nice flow in the educational experience, in terms of rhythm and dynamics.

PLEASURE IN LEARNING: the concept of "pleasure" is central in the learning experience. When we talk about "pleasure", it means the pleasure learners might develop during their learnings. Therefore, not "learning with sufferance or pain" (in some contexts and settings learning is seen as something imposed in a top-down perspective, unpleasant, not funny, and not interactive), but on the contrary, in an interactive, stimulating, playful, and pleasant way. This leaves space for a better, more fruitful, and more complete learning experience on the cognitive, emotional, and relational levels.

The pleasure in learning can also be tackled from a playful perspective, which brings joy and fun to everything learners are doing. It allows the learners to tackle the subjects deeply and from a different angles directly involving themselves, their emotions and thoughts in the process. It is very functional also from the group dynamic's perspective: it helps to bond together in different ways, and to get pleasantly entertained, having the body, mind, and emotions inside the activity and with the group.

COMMON BACKGROUND: by learning how to work together, learners are provided with a common background, and it develops a common culture, which helps the process of co-creation, discussion, and interaction. This approach is built along the process using specific activities designed to work on the group dynamics, on the common definitions co-created (and then used along the process), and on the "rituals" chosen to perform together during the workshop and the informal time. We as a group (including facilitators and learners) re-create the "institutions", the roles and rules we want to follow as a group. Moreover, being part of a group offers the chance to stimulate creativity, energy and to enhance the learners' vision on specific subjects. It helps to consider different perspectives from the activity but also from the personal and cultural backgrounds of learners. In this perspective, it always has to be promoted diversity, interculturality and participation.

EMOTIONS: in terms of personal engagement, an efficient learning strategy always involves a work run at the emotional level. It helps learners to identify where the personal challenges arise and where the process is smooth. It favors the emergence of boundaries and helps to find equilibrium in the learning process. It requires time to digest and specific moments of introspection for the identification of the learning.

Emotions are very powerful because they can help human beings (and in this specific case, learners) to go deeper on some themes and experiences, but since they might have strong roots in the individual memory, it is crucial to keep a careful approach. Moreover, when some of the subjects tackled within the learning experiences are sensible, they require a specific, sensible methodology and attentive care. Thus, it is crucial in whatever learning experience to develop empathy in order to create an emotional commitment and change.

It has to be considered as a political action and involves ethics, values, and responsibility. Facilitators have to be aware and prepared, should make explicit trigger warnings to the group before delivering specific and highly sensitive activities that might touch individuals and the group, and should forecast a safe(r) space where they can rest and steam out in case of need.

CONFLICTS: learners have to cooperate with each others, stepping out of their comfort zones, and potentially being in some cases, in conflict with other perspectives, values, and opinions.

Working as a group might implies conflicts and power dynamics! The conflict is a natural process within the group dynamics, and it is important to consider it as an opportunity. Conflicts are the expressions of our differences, our diversity, and our different needs. For example, Bruce Wayne Tuckman, an American psychologist and educational researcher, talks about the "storming phase" in the group dynamics, where the group, in order to build its own identity, has to pass through the necessary expression of conflicts and "power dynamics". Since in every group and in life in general there are always power dynamics involved, the facilitators' and educators' efforts should go as much as possible in the direction of identifying, questioning and reacting to them. Using a metaphor, it is important and needed "to talk about the elephant in the room", not avoid it or pretend it does not exist. In this work, it is crucial to remember that there are no perfect solutions, and it is needed to embrace and play with all contradictions inside ourselves and inside the group. Moreover, it is important to create an environment where everyone can express their consent (group agreement, reflection groups, etc.). It is crucial to be clear on how to proceed if a participant does not feel well or is triggered by something. In this case, a silent space or a retreat corner has to be provided, and the facilitator's availability for listening, sharing and discussing always has to be underlined.

In conclusion, conflict offers a great opportunity for learning and for encountering the other human beings, setting the ground for a real intercultural exchange. Still, conflicts have to be properly worked out and accompanied: a proper conflict transformation strategy has to be forecast and has to go hand in hand with trust building within the group, honest communication, and active listening.

FACILITATOR: this figure plays a crucial role within the learning strategies proposed since the facilitator is accompanying individuals and groups all along the process. Even though a specific chapter is dedicated to the "facilitator role", there are meaningful elements to be shared also here.

It is important to be aware that, even though the facilitator has a precise role, it doesn't mean they cannot share anything during the activity. But it is crucial to make it wisely: naming the epistemological ground basement they are talking from, sharing the reference of their knowledge, quoting their sources with context, providing a bibliography, and giving space to discuss the theory presented (highlighting that some might be useful, inspiring tools for the reflection, but they do not offer "the final truth").

In any case, facilitators have to always be aware of the power they might have. At the same time, even though the facilitator is not always participating or present inside an activity, they need to remind themselves they always play a role, and they have to ensure the continuity and coherence in their way of acting and behaving. Coherence has to be promoted and embodied all along the process (but without forgetting the existence of contradictions!).

Moreover, it is crucial when facilitating a learning process to smoothly move from simple to complex, to reformulate in a clear way what has been said, and to give clear, short, and easy instructions. Body language and physical expressions play a crucial role in the communication and the facilitation. It complements verbal communication, and helps to express emotions and intentions. For this reason, it is crucial to remember that the greater part of the human communication passes through these channels, and that during the learning experience, it has to be ensured the proper spaces for that. The facilitator has to always be aware of their voice, tone, and modulation. Remembering that, most of the time, "less is more".

CLARITY: in every learning experience it is important to have, as a background, solid and well-grounded content to feed the proposed approach and strategy. It helps to avoid potential conflicts or frustration among the participants: the more facilitators and educators are clear since the beginning and all along the process, the better it is for the group and the less space is left for unfulfilled expectations or uncomfortable misunderstandings.

Before the project and when initiating the learning experience, it is important to share with the learners what they are going to do (frame, methodology, objectives), to explain from where the facilitator talks (context), and to ask for continuous feedback. In this way, a bottom-up approach is proposed, which is well recommended to ensure a fruitful learning experience. For the purpose, for example, different keywords about the specific proposed methodology can be presented, leaving space for the group to discuss them, to ease their understanding, and to be fully embarked in the process. In conclusion and more pragmatically, communication always has to be accessible (visual examples are welcome, explanations always have to be provided, and synthetic and concise task explanations are recommended), always considering the diversity and interculturality of the target group. Also, it might be useful to create and to propose a communication-tool box (pictogram, visual box) with simple drawings for people with special communication needs.

TOOLS VARIETY: the proposed strategies need to imply a great variety of tools. Activities can take the form of organized discussion, collective experimentation, and debriefing to analyze the different elements. In any case, learning by doing and collective intelligence should always be promoted, giving all the participants the opportunity to give and to receive from each other.

Art can be a powerful tool in this perspective since it is very inclusive and allows learners "to express what the words cannot express". It offers direct access to the subjectivity of each one. It gives voice to "the unvoiced", to the introvert and extrovert. It promotes participation, and redistribution of power and can be considered an international language, offering multiple interactions. More technically, within the artistic ones, there is a great variety of tools to be proposed, such as graphic or music tools, body awareness, storytelling, theater and role-play games (just to mention some).

In whatever case, the tools should never offer a "frontal approach" to situations, problems, and solutions, which, on the contrary, have to directly come from the group itself, in a bottom-up perspective. The facilitation has the role of canalize and easing the process, without influencing the contents and keeping a "dialectic color" of the process. As said by Paulo Freire, *"Each question is a new door to explore!"*

EVALUATION: it is among the main axes in the proposed learning strategies. We are not learning for the simple fact of having participated in or having experimented with something. Extra time for reflection, discussion, sharing, acknowledgment, and re-elaboration is needed to really understand what we have learned. The evaluation has to take place all along the process, in many different shapes and ways, and using different tools. There are many tools and ways to proceed: from the questionnaire at the end of the activity to gather feedback to the reflection groups realized at the end of every day to digest the learning experience and to point out what needs to be kept or modified. Debriefing sessions are extra tools for the ongoing evaluation, allowing learners to take a more objective distance and to observe, analyze and understand the major learning elements. Moreover, at the very end of any learning process, it is important to put in order the major elements and insights that appeared. Thus, the final evaluation is the moment of notifying ourselves and each other of the mistakes or the challenges faced in order to improve. Another way could be encouraging the self-evaluation or the peer evaluation in order to assess the learning objectives but also the individual desires. In any case, all feedback has to be shared as a beautiful learning gift!

FACILITATOR ROLE

In the current pedagogical approach, the facilitator is the person who accompanies the learning process.

INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: the term "facilitator" always acquires different meanings according to the different cultural perspectives and experiences of learners. Therefore, participants from a wide range of cultural and educational backgrounds and coming from different regions might have different understandings of the term and of the role of the person, as well as different expectations towards the facilitator and the facilitation process. Moreover, and at the same time, also facilitators can have a different understanding of their main role, and facilitators from different countries and from very different cultural perspectives might consider some specific aspects or others more relevant in their role. Thus, facilitators always need to put themselves in discussion, questioning their role and ways of working. Being ready to think about their roles "out of the box", from an intercultural perspective, and in relation with the other people (learners, participants, co-facilitators) they might encounter.

RESPONSIBILITY: the facilitator is responsible towards the participants, both for the topics and for the methodologies proposed. To facilitate whatever learning experience is a great opportunity which also implies a great responsibility, supporting the emotional discharge of learners, identifying tools and approaches suitable to the different learning styles and needs, and accompanying the process of individual development. For this reason, it is crucial to be well prepared, and to constantly study, read, and experience before proposing activities, tools, or subjects. Posture and body language also play an important role in the power dynamics, and facilitators need to be well aware of that. Moreover, the facilitator is responsible for pointing out possible triggers that might appear during the learning experience. Also in this perspective, the facilitator role and behavior have to be considered in terms of personal and collective responsibility, which stands not only during the workshops' time but all along the process.

NON-JUDGMENTAL APPROACH: when discussing sensitive topics, such as gender, relationships, or social norms, it is essential for facilitators to maintain a non-judgmental stance. Facilitators should guide discussions rather than dominate them and encourage multiple perspectives without imposing their own views. This helps to create an environment of open dialogue and mutual learning. The facilitator has to always keep attention to the intercultural learning perspective, having in mind that what might suits a specific reality doesn't in another. Being aware that sometimes, the different cultural icebergs of participants might collide and frictions arise. At the same time, let's remember that facilitators are also humans; they bring their cultural aspects, ethics, and values, and they have to keep the neutrality also when they might feel touched by different points of view, visions of the world, and behaviors, without being judgmental towards participants. Otherwise they won't feel safe, and also their learning process might be impacted.

POWER MECHANISM: power mechanisms have been previously mentioned in the section "ethical pillars", but it is still important to be back on the issue also in the section more linked to facilitation. Therefore, the facilitator has to be aware of the position of power they might have over learners and over the group. Thus, it is important to remember, when facilitating a learning experience, that we are never fully objective, since *"We embody a place of speech"*, as said by Djamila Ribeiro. Within this perspective, the facilitator has to disrupt power dynamics by connecting content, space, learning styles (tools/methods), and personal stories with the target group, maximizing their potential by changing how we "teach" (but we prefer the term "share knowledge") and learn from each other to be target group-centered. This means to actively contribute to the search for group consensus and to ensure the collective creation of knowledge from the bottom-up perspective, from the group outwards.

EMOTIONS, TRUST, AND SAFE(R) SPACE: facilitators should prioritize creating a safe(r), respectful, and welcoming space where participants feel comfortable expressing their emotions, ideas, and experiences. For this reason, since the beginning of the learning experience, it is important to create the proper setting and to jointly define clear ground rules for respectful dialogue, confidentiality and voluntary participation. Icebreaker activities and non-threatening introductions to the topics can ease participants into more meaningful discussions. Moreover, the facilitator has to remain emotionally grounded and empathetic: even more so, when working with topics such as gender, identity, or violence, which may bring up strong emotions in participants. Facilitators must be able to hold space for difficult emotions and support participants with care in order to ensure the activity is not only informative but also healing and empowering.

VULNERABILITY: often vulnerability in different parts of the world has been identified as a weak characteristic often connected with the more feminine aspects (therefore meant as a negative connotation). On the contrary, we do believe that it does not have to be considered a weak element. As it is not weak to be connected with our inner emotions, to admit that sometimes in our lives we are more fragile. To acknowledge that is a strength, which makes humans even stronger. Therefore, facilitators need to leave space for participants (and for themselves) to assume and experiment their vulnerability without pretending to be machines in the learning process, without avoiding or being afraid of making mistakes and always remembering to themselves and to participants they are human beings, a state that includes a big variety of characteristics, emotions and feelings.

HUMANITY: in the ethical and human absence of "neutrality", the facilitator has to be the change they want to see. The facilitator should not pretend to be an infallible machine and should not present themselves in such a way in front of the group. The facilitator has to act as an example in terms of ethics, values, and coherence proposed, while still not denying their human side at the same time. The facilitator has to remember they are "a person in construction" who does not have all the answers and the universal truth. On the contrary, their major role is to facilitate the learning process towards the collective construction of knowledge. In other words, the facilitator cannot propose to the group something the facilitator themselves won't be ready to do and has to be honest, eager to embrace mistakes, to create "brave spaces" and to have fun with the group (still in a learning-oriented perspective).

FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY: the facilitator has to be aware of the diversity of the target group they work with and of the different needs expressed. Therefore, it is important to be flexible, adaptable, and capable of anticipating possible scenarios. Which means: to be ready also for what is "unexpected", ensuring to have previously set the risk evaluation and the potential measures to mitigate it. In order to reach the shared and flexible "goal", facilitators should be willing to move the "goalposts". The structure and the agenda only exist as a base: the target group is the fertile soil that makes the program and the process grow and, for this reason, it is important to be ready for learner and group-oriented adaptation.

LISTENING AND ACTING: every group is unique, and facilitators must be able to read the room and adapt accordingly. Some participants may be more expressive, while others may be hesitant to share due to cultural or personal reasons. Thus, it is important to be prepared to shift the approach depending on the energy, engagement level, and needs of the group. It has to be allowed space for silence, reflection, and informal conversation if/when necessary. Therefore, the approach proposed by the facilitator, has to be fully "learner-centered", listening to the different specificities, taking into account and giving value to the different needs, and still having the ability to keep everyone on board and to permanently adapt the styles, approaches, and methodologies to the heterogeneity of the group.

CLARITY AND CONTEXTUALIZATION: in the beginning and all along the learning process, the facilitator has to clarify the frame, program, and objectives to the participants. The facilitator has to promote, in private and/or in plenary open clarification where needed, honest and open communication to avoid "elephants in the room" and to set the ground for horizontality.

Contextualized and culturally relevant examples are very useful for the sake of clarity and involvement of learners: the facilitator has to select examples, case studies, and stories that are culturally and contextually appropriate. They have to refer to local traditions, community experiences, or relevant figures: this increases relatability and encourages participants to draw connections between the contents and their own lives. Simplification of language and terminology is also crucial: sometimes it is useful to avoid academic jargons or overly technical terms that may confuse participants or distance them from the discussion. Technical concepts, especially those related to gender, according to the context and participants' profiles, have to be translated or rephrased in ways that reflect local idioms and frameworks. In conclusion, to encourage and promote clarity and transparency is effective to avoid misunderstandings and frustration, and to boost motivation and participation.

FEEDBACK MECHANISM: after each session or activity, facilitators should take time to encourage participants to reflect on what worked well and what could be improved. Gathering feedback from participants, either through discussion or anonymous tools, can provide valuable insights for ongoing improvement. The feedback mechanism should always be kept, since every learning experience is "never written on stones" but it needs to be built up on inputs and feedbacks from those involved in the process. In this perspective, for example, reflections groups (used to gather inputs from small groups at the end of every day in residential trainings and exchanges), are a powerful educational tool to promote horizontality among facilitators and participants, to encourage an active sharing and to gather useful insight that could be used to fine-tune the upcoming day (in terms of subjects to be talked about or methodologies to be proposed). In any case, facilitators should remain learners themselves open to growth and adaptation.

SKILLS AND COMPETENCES: in order to facilitate a learning experience involving heterogeneous groups and individuals with particular expectations, specificities and needs, a variety of skills and competences are required. Below are the major ones highlighted by the group involved in the third International Training Course held in Spain and divided by macro-groups:
- Intercultural competences, observation and active listening skills, adaptability and flexibility while involving learners coming from different backgrounds, cultures and life' experiences
- Empathic self-control skills and capacity to guide the group through different feelings and emotions
- Conflict mediation competences, being supportive and keeping kindness and patience, accompanying the learning process with "neutral guidance"
- Ability to create "non-judgmental spaces" and to promote "open-minded" attitudes, allowing everyone to feel comfortable in sharing and expressing
- Expertise in the subject and in the methodologies proposed, being competent in these frameworks and capable of relying on pertinent examples for better clarity and understanding
- Creativity and playfulness skills, constantly offering dynamics and various methods and approaches for a constant engagement of individuals and groups.

TEAM WORK AND CO-FACILITATION: below, the major elements highlighted by the group involved in the third International Training Course held in Spain and divided by macro-groups:
- When co-facilitating a learning experience, it is important to clarify the tasks within the team, to fairly and efficiently share responsibilities, and to support each other, taking and leaving to the others the proper space to act and interact. It is also important to be well aware that the dynamics inside the co-facilitators' team always have an impact on learners
- When creating a pool of facilitators, having a team with members coming from different cultural backgrounds is crucial in order to offer a more complete learning experience, to tackle the subject from different lenses and angles, and to propose tools suiting the different specificities. In the very beginning, to make a check-in before starting to work together, sharing the expectations, needs, and fears of each member of the team can be useful to jointly start and have everyone on board

- For efficient and pleasant work in a group, it is very important to boost the connection and cooperation within the team. Facilitators should not be focused only on their individual tasks but should keep an open view on all the processes. This also consists of keeping attention to the feelings and to the other people's emotions, always ensuring a ground where opinions are heard and respected. A fair and constant communication in the team is crucial, including active listening to each other's ideas and opinions, feeling free to talk about discomfort, and to embracing the frustration (where occurring)
- Time-keeping and time management, both when creating and preparing, and also when delivering and evaluating the activities, are very important. If the group feels that the timing is messy (too short or too long), interest, participation, and involvement are also impacted.

GROUP MANAGEMENT

The work developed in this section comes from different discussions focused on the key elements for group management and group dynamics to be taken into consideration as youth workers while working with intercultural groups. Several aspects appeared, related both to logistical aspects and also to group dynamics and specificity of participants. In any case, it was underlined that the facilitator is the key person that facilitates the group dynamics. The facilitator has to always set the main focus on the group, which is the central actor in the learning experience, rather than on the personal performances or objectives.

COMMON GOAL: it is fundamental, for the group cohesion and existence to set clear and common objective(s) to be achieved. Therefore, before the beginning of an action or of whatever training experience, the objectives of the project have to be shared with the group in order to be on the same page and to have everyone aware of what is going to be explored. Moreover, the objectives cannot arrive to the group in a top-down perspective, but in order to be sound and meaningful for all, it is important learners and the whole group embrace them, acknowledging the importance of a common path for their achievement. For this reason, apart from presenting the specific objectives, it is important to create the proper space for sharing, asking participants their needs and expectations towards the learning experience, and then, building common objectives, intersecting the ones of the project and the ones of the group. Then, while accompanying the group, it is crucial to adopt a gradual approach in the group creation and in the exploration of the topics. This can help to foster trust, participation, and participants' ownership of the process.

INTERCULTURALITY: intercultural learning is a crucial axis in the management of whatever group, since each individual is a universe resulting from the backgrounds where they were born and grew up, family relations, religion, beliefs, education system, enlarged network. A universe bringing different experiences, point of view, perspectives, ethical parameters, and values.
In group management, interculturality refers to the ability to recognize and respect diverse cultural perspectives within a team. It goes beyond simply acknowledging cultural differences; it involves actively fostering the collaboration, communication, and understanding across those differences. It means promoting participation for all the team members, navigating different communication styles, and encouraging mutual learning and appreciation of diversity. Interculturality strengthens group cohesion, creativity, and problem-solving by focusing on the richness of cultural diversity.

CONFLICTS: as above mentioned, conflicts are part of the natural process within the group dynamics and life and it is important to consider them not as a challenge to be silenced because we are scared to work them out, but as an opportunity. In fact, when different individualities, ways of doing, habits, cultural backgrounds, and values are meeting, they might clash, and frictions might appear. Every human being brings their own cultural iceberg, and the upper or lower part might collide during the encounter. This should not be avoided, but a proper setting for trust, empathy, and exchange has to be created in the perspective of a constructive, non violent conflict transformation.
For this reason, for a group, to approach conflict in a positive way is an opportunity for learning, encountering, growing, and exchanging. The facilitator plays an important role in the process because they have to build this safe(r) space for sharing, accompanying learners and the whole group all along the process, mediating and supporting with attention to the different instances and with care.

EACH PERSON IS A UNIVERSE: the diversity of the group, of the different needs at stake, and of the personalities has to be taken into consideration as a starting point for the group management and when designing an educational program and the activities part of it. They have to be tailor-made to the different needs and specificities, permanently searching for an inner balance, which could bring on board all (e.g., humans have different personalities and learning styles: there are the more cognitive, pragmatic, theory oriented, kinetic, emotional, and visual just to mention some and to find a compromise among different styles and needs is not always easy). Still, the proper space it has to be created where participants can express different and specific needs and expectations, supporting the group building and management and the whole learning process.

OUTREACH TO THOSE WE do not REACH: facilitators should always consider who is more present and who is less present all along the learning process. It is always a must to reflect on how everyone can be welcomed on board and on how it is possible to reach those who are not usually and easily "reachable". The facilitator, for the good stake of group dynamics, always has to keep these reflections in mind. Reflecting on how to make the space more welcoming and attractive and, why not, also challenging the idea of space entirely. Also, reflecting on how to adjust the way the topic is tackled (do we always need jargon? when is the moment to simplify? what is the border between clarity and excessive simplification? what are the key words and/or the "reference codes" to be used?). And how the methodologies are structured (are they really participatory and bottom-up? are they too experimental or too classic?). Probably the "final answer" to these questions is never going to be found, and the perfect recipe does not exist. Still, it is crucial to have a permanent self-questioning approach, trying in every step of the learning experience to bring on board all the learners, and finding proactive strategies to bring in those who would have normally faced challenges to step in.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT: "Ask, do not assume!" is another important sentence to have in mind. It highlights the need to have prior communication with the learners, understanding the different needs, and then preparing a physical, methodological, and psychological space as adapted as possible. At the same time, it is important to remember that understanding the previous information/data of who is in the space doesn't automatically mean being able to know or cater to their needs. Of course, the more we know, and the more we can act accordingly, but still, it is important to reflect upon what we have seen and understood (verbally and non verbally) from the humans we are working with to afterwards create proper strategies and tools for effective support, ensuring a tailor-made intervention based on the specificities and peculiarities encountered. In fact, as already said (but we like to repeat this concept), every human is different, and what is efficient in terms of learning for someone does not work at all for someone else. For this reason, often educational programs are standardized, not adapted to the different learning specificities, and are not ensuring participation and equal opportunities for all to be inside the process.

ENVIRONMENT AND PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS: for the group dynamics, it is important to pay attention to the practical and physical arrangements, such as the hosting place where the activity takes place and, in the case of residential activity, where the participants live during the project. Therefore, a venue with the necessary logistic facilities is needed, taking into account the specific needs of the group and the ones for the activity implementation, such as a: big workshop room, outdoor space, kitchen, dining area, toilets and showers, and spaces for socialization. The identified place should have informal learning potential regarding a variety of spaces that can be used for activities, resting, and socializing, including natural light, open air, not great distances between the spaces for time management, contact with nature and animals, and offering different ambiences and possibilities for dynamism. Moreover, the venue should be easily reachable and accessible by public transport. At the same time, for ensuring a cohesive group dynamic that avoids dispersion, based on our experience, we suggest staying away from big touristic cities and opting for smaller realities, where it is possible to be more focused on the group itself, to build connections with the local community, and be in contact with nature. All these elements are in fact crucial for an efficient learning experience and for a proper acknowledgment of what we have learned (in terms of subjects, methods, emotions, and human relations).

CONTACT WITH NATURE: for the learning process and the group dynamics, it is also important to consider the potential of the outdoor spaces and outdoor activities that can be offered to the group to ensure dynamicity, different ambiences, and connection to the environment around. Nature is a powerful setting for learning, and even more so in today's society, where humans are more and more disconnected from nature and from natural elements and are involved in a permanent and hectic running mood. To slow down, regaining a more self-centered attitude in connection with natural elements, is crucial. It can help the learning process and interaction among participants. It helps to better get in touch with the inner self and emotions, to self-allow a proper time for thinking, to re-elaborate the learning experience, and to create connections with the other humans.

In this perspective, food and food consumption also play an important role. As a basic human need, food during the activity is fundamental to ensure the safety and protection of participants with specific dietary needs (and not only) and to create a safe(r) space where participants can interact. Indeed, local food and well balanced meals with km0 and seasonal ingredients contribute to creating moments where participants can connect and learn from each other in informal ways, from different ways of cooking, eating, and exploring interculturality.

SAFE(R) SPACES: a "safe space" cannot exist entirely as such for everyone in every moment and be understood universally.

In fact, each person might have a different understanding of what is safe or not (for some, "safe" can mean order or control over things that cannot be controlled or, on the other hand, for someone else necessary discomforts for growing or challenging a recognized or unrecognized status-quo, etc.). Therefore, the safe(r) space should be approached as a pathway of evermore friendlier spaces, openness, and flexibility, where diversity is shown by examples to be embraced. At the same time, safety should be guaranteed for all so that significant learning can happen, and discomfort should be more evenly distributed, accompanied, and reflected upon with conscious preparation and follow-up. This includes times to transit, specific activities for digesting and reflecting individually and collectively, use of music and different senses, de-rolling or de-tensing, different needs' listening, and moments for staying or switching between emotional states.

TAILORABLE SPACE: it is important to involve the group's identity and participation in the evolution of the space, making it "our space". It contributes to generating co-responsibility, ownership, and collective care by involving co-living shared tasks, using graphic facilitation and visual supports, repeat use of metaphors, patterns, and symbols. It can be done by identifying and decorating the areas with the work produced, inviting proposals of music, and creating a common language, signals, and semantics through the different senses. Let's remember (even more in the short-term residential activities) that the place where participants are hosted becomes somehow their own house for the period of the project. For this reason it is crucial to feel it, to develop a sense of belonging, to have the interest and possibility to make it personalized, and to feel well and protected. This is also part of the process of building the safe(r) spaces above mentioned, which are not simply linked to structural and physical aspects but to more inner and emotional ones. This is crucial in terms of exchange, interactions, and learning.

CHAPTER IV – NEW WORKSHOPS

During the International Training Course in Spain, aimed to finalize the design of the synthetic pedagogical approach to be applied in projects and activities focused on gender equity and to run the final assessment of the workshops tested in the previous steps, it was revised the pedagogical approach and fine-tuned the workshops.

For what concerns the workshops, the previous draft version was created during the training course in Morocco, with a bottom-up perspective, and thanks to the support of the international group of participants and facilitators. The workshops were created using participatory methodologies: the main insights of the field research (which took place in all the countries from July to October 2024) were shared and the most relevant subjects to be tackled were highlighted. Then, starting from these inputs, it was run a brainstorming to identify the six subjects linked to gender to be explored in the workshops and relevant for all the countries involved.

The six subjects identified were:
- Art and gender
- Gender-based violence
- Reproductive health and rights
- Social media and critical thinking
- Women migration in global south and north
- Youth political engagement.

After that, it followed a session we use to call "Training in Action": six smaller groups were created and participants, supported by facilitators, identified the specific objectives, created the workshop structure, designed the activities and identified the tools. Then, a second step consisting in the workshops testing was proposed: therefore, each team had the chance to deliver their own workshop as facilitators and to participate in the workshops proposed by the other teams. It followed the session about feedbacks to gather inputs and elements to be fine-tuned and modified, in order to arrive to the first draft version.

Afterwards, the workshops were tested during the Tools Testing (including Local Trainings targeted to educators and Local Workshops targeted to young people, implemented in all the participant countries from January to August 2025).

The last step for their finalization was held during the training course in Spain: here, capitalizing the major insights gathered from the Tools Testing reports and thanks to another round of workshops' testing and feedbacks collection, the workshops were finally upgraded and fine-tuned, arriving to the version presented in this publication.

ART AND GENDER

TITLE	ART AS A TOOL FOR GENDER ACTIVISM AND RESISTANCE
TARGET	Youth Workers and educators, 18+, promoting activities targeted to young people Young people, aged between 15 and 30 years old
AIM	To highlight the connections among art and gender and to share how art can be a powerful tool for activism
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	• To highlight how art is a tool for expression which can empower human beings and their political speech • To share a non hegemonic view when talking about artistic expressions
TOOLS' TYPE	Individual and group reflection, work in group for the collective artistic restitution
TIMING	120 minutes
MATERIALS	Post-it, color markers, flipcharts, A4 color papers, speakers
DESCRIPTION	**GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKSHOP:** the workshop is focused on the creation of new narratives through "our daily resistance" in gender issues. The basic assumption opening the workshop is that we believe that everyone has some kind of relationship with art either because we are art consumers or because we are art creators. Art, in some way, accompanies our daily lives. Throughout history we can find many examples of all kind of art or artists. Thus, the main question to explore during the workshop, is: *"How can we use art as a tool for expressing powerful messages tackling gender issues and creating new narratives?"* The workshop includes the following steps: **Step 1. Warm up energizer** - 10 minutes The facilitator welcomes participants and asks them to walk and move/dance in the space. Then, gives a set of instructions on how to move/dance. E.g.: move as if you are happy, sad, a monkey, a girl, a boy. The song played should fit the topics and be appropriate for the background of the group. **Step 2. Introductory discussion** - 20 minutes The facilitator asks participants to sit in a circle and asks them a set of questions to collectively define and explore the topics: • What is art for you? • How is art present in your daily life? • How gender can affect artistic expressions? Participants are left some time, after each question, to reflect upon and to share their ideas, contributions and point of views.

DESCRIPTION	**Step 3. Express and connect through art preferences** - 20 minutes The facilitator puts a dynamic song, and invites participants to move in the space following the music and to connect with the emotions felt and expressed in the song. Moreover, they are invited to think about the possible meanings of the lyrics. After the lyrics is over, the facilitator invites participants to draw on a piece of paper the type of art they are mostly passionate about. Then, participants are asked to show their drawings to each other and are invited to find who is passionate about the same or a very similar type of art. Once the groups are pre-created, they are briefly asked to share what type of art they represented in their drawings. After that, those participants who are still without group, are asked to join one of the bigger groups, according to their preference/connection with and following a balanced numerical distribution. These are going to be the groups for the following activity. We are aware that the groups' size might vary according to the total number of participants. Still, for a well functioning of the activity, we suggest to have no more than four groups, with approximately four/five participants each. **Step 4. Collective Creation** - 45 minutes The facilitator asks participants to work in groups and to create a collective restitution of the major outcomes appeared, using the type of art their group has chosen in the previous activity. The work in group and therefore the collective restitution should be focused on one of the two proposed subjects: • Impact of society on gender • Gender stereotypes. Groups are given some indication to guide their internal work: e.g. they can start with a brainstorm, they can discuss their perspective concerning the proposed subjects, they can choose how to share the outcomes of the discussion, they can think about the message they want to express, also they can take note of the major elements appeared during the process. To be more specific, offering a concrete example on how this step works: let's imagine that one of the group created choose theater, as form of art. Then, the group has to brainstorm on one of the two subjects (the one they consider more relevant for them) and to create a message they want to share or a collection of outcomes from their internal discussion, using theater or theatrical ways for the plenary restitution. **Step 5. Sharing and Closure** - 25 minutes Then, every group at a time, share the outcomes of their work, using the type of art they chose. After that, the facilitator calls for a last round of plenary, where the following questions are asked: • What did you feel all along the workshop? • What are the major learning you bring with you from the experience? A specific time is allocated to give participants the possibility to reflect and to answer the questions, sharing their feelings, ideas, reflections, and feedbacks towards the work done.
EXPANSION OF THE WORKSHOP	With more time at disposal for the workshop, we suggest to amplify/expand the following parts: • Add an explanatory introduction of the relationship between art and gender to set a common ground of knowledge and understanding which might enable all the group members to go in depth on the topic (e.g. male gaze, biased access to art fields …) • When every group is working on the collective creation and outcomes restitution, constantly underline that it has to be kept and well explained the connection with gender issues.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

OBSERVATIONS: it is needed enough space, both to be split into smaller groups and also to work in a big circle. We also suggest facilitators to provide chairs/pillows/tables to make the work space more comfortable for participants.

ADAPTATIONS:
The following elements are further suggested:
- Be ready to modify the time breakdown to better achieve concrete and meaningful results
- Consider to allocate more time to work on the final outcomes' restitution, since participants have the double demanding task to discuss and share about the chosen subject and to create an artistic restitution
- Dedicate some extra time in the beginning, after the step 2. has been implemented, to explain more in depth to the group the workshop's main ideas and what participants are invited to do in the upcoming step.
- Put only one subject to be discussed in the step 4. In fact, even though it might be inspiring to have groups discussing one or another, and it could leave participants more possibilities to explore both the "Impact of society on gender" and the "Gender stereotypes", there might be too many elements to be afterwards worked out in plenary. Therefore, it might be simpler (since the workshop already proposes different artistic tools) to be focused on one, and then launch a debriefing focused on the multiple understanding and interpretation of the same subject.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

TITLE	WHAT IS GBV?
TARGET	Youth Workers and educators, 18+, promoting activities targeted to young people Young people, aged between 15 and 30 years old
AIM	To raise awareness on gender-based violence and understand it through intersectional lenses
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	• To let participants defining what GBV is • To analyze the specific types of violence
TOOLS' TYPE	Moving debate, group discussions, creative presentations, debriefing
TIMING	160 minutes
MATERIALS	Flipcharts, colors, papers, markers, pens and anything that could be used for creative presentations, speaker for the music
DESCRIPTION	The workshop includes the following steps: **Step 1. Music and trigger warning** - 5 minutes For the very opening of the workshop, the facilitator puts some music to set a calm atmosphere. Then, the facilitator informs participants that they have to take into consideration the sensitivity of the topic. For this reason, it is important not to force anyone to share\do something they are uncomfortable with. Moreover, it is explicitly told that it is not necessary to share personal experiences. The facilitator also explains that there is a safe(r) place (a material space created for the purpose) where anyone can go in case they do not feel good/comfortable. There, there will be one of the facilitators taking care of. **Step 2. Moving Debate** - 35 minutes The facilitator explains the activity: three definitions of what GBV is are read out loud and participants have to position themselves in a line. On the extreme points of the line is written "more accurate" and in the other "less accurate". Therefore, after each definition is read, they have to express their opinion on its accuracy (thus, not only taking position on the line, but also commenting). After that, the facilitator puts the three definitions in three different parts of the room and participants have to stand up next to the definition they think is more accurate. The facilitator asks some extra questions like: • Why did you choose that specific definition? • What was missing in the other definitions? Another facilitator should take notes during the whole workshop and create a visual map based on what has been discussed and that is going to be shown in the last step.

DESCRIPTION	**Step 3. Pyramid of violence** - 20 minutes

Step 3. Pyramid of violence - 20 minutes
The facilitator shows the Pyramid of violence model and asks participants if they heard about it. It follows a synthetic presentation of the model, a discussion on the model itself, on the concepts shown on the pyramid, gathering feedbacks and comments from the group.

Step 4. Group Discussions - 45 minutes
The facilitator puts on the ground four papers with five different types of violence: physical\sexual, institutional\cultural, psychological, socio-economic, social stigma of judgment. Participants are encouraged to choose the type of violence they want to work on, keeping in mind that it is important to create equally distributed groups.
The facilitator informs the groups that they have 45 minutes at disposal: 20 minutes to define and discuss the type of violence within their group and share ideas, suggestions, strategies to prevent this violence and 25 minutes to find a way to present in plenary the outcomes of their discussion (in a creative or more standard presentation). The maximum duration of each presentation is 5 minutes. The facilitator hands out to each group a paper with guided questions to facilitate and stimulate the discussion.

Step 4. Presentation - 25 minutes
Each group presents their final work (discussions and comments are forecast at the end of all the presentations during the debriefing).

Step 5. Debriefing - 25 minutes
The facilitator takes a moment to propose to participants a silent breathing exercise. This part should last, approximately 5 minutes, but it is very important to transit from the previous work to the final debriefing. In fact, being the subject very sensitive, it is possible that also participants have felt touched or are overwhelmed. For this reason, it is important to have them steaming out, to re-focus on themselves to be ready to step in the last activity.
Then, the facilitator asks some questions to discuss the outcomes of the workshop:
- What did you observe in the presentation? (comments, connections, something to add …)
- To what extent these types of violence are relevant in your community?
- What could be done to contrast these forms of violence?

Step 6. Closure – 5 minutes
To close the workshop, the facilitator takes some extra minutes to propose a silent breathing moment with some music, as a background.

EXPANSION OF THE WORKSHOP

Having more time at disposal, we suggest to start the workshop with a couple of activities that could introduce the participants to key concepts such as, e.g.: gender and intersectionality and give some statistics about GBV.

Then, after the first step (where the different definitions are discussed) the pyramid of violence model could be used to further connect the first and the second step. For example, the facilitator can show and ask for other type of models like the Spiral, the Thermometer of violence. In this way the presentation will be even more complete and participatory.

If more time is available, we would suggest adding more time to the debriefing and specifically to the question "What could be done to contrast these forms of violence?". In fact, in every workshop is important to end with the feeling we can act and do something against a negative situation.

EXPANSION OF THE WORKSHOP	Otherwise, participants will remain simply with a bitter retro-taste and the feelings of sadness and frustration. This is even more valid when the subject is so delicate and the issue at the stake is so strong and multi-faceted as the one of violence. For this reason, it is crucial to work in depth the concept of "action": reflecting on what can we do to improve a specific situation, how we could support victims, how we could contribute to reduce the phenomenon.
FURTHER SUGGESTIONS	**OBSERVATIONS:** it is important to have an open space to run the workshop. In fact, due to the type of tools proposed and due to the sensitiveness of the subject, there must be enough space for the groups to discuss the topics not being too close to each others. For the safe(r) place, facilitators have to provide: pillows, water, tissues, chairs and anything that would make the participant feel at ease and cared. Facilitators have to prepare in advance all the papers with the definitions, types of violence, questions for the group discussion, questions for the debriefing, the flipchart for the map of key words. We suggest for visual reference to prepare also two pieces of papers with the words "MORE" and "LESS" for the moving debate. For the silent breathing exercise: it is a very important step to steam out from the activity where the groups were asked to discuss about different typologies of violence and to present the major outcomes of their work to join the final debriefing. In this way, participants could have the chance to relax a bit, to be more present and ready for the last part of the activity. **ADAPTATIONS:** regarding the conclusion, facilitators can add a specific moment to share data, images, terminology or some time for self-reflection. **TIPS:** when presenting the Pyramid of violence model we suggest facilitators to do it in a participatory way, bringing participants on board in the analysis and understanding. In fact, in the non-formal education setting, theories might be useful tools for learning but they never have to be presented in a top-down perspective, as the unique and the final truth. On the contrary, every time that a model is presented, it is crucial to introduce the "critical thinking perspective", emphasizing that a model could be an inspiring tool to understand reality, but there could be many other models and ways to. Moreover, considering that the subject is quite delicate, we suggest always to have a facilitators' team composed by, at least three persons. This can insure a bigger variety in styles, in the voices heard and might allow to proper and timely intervene if someone feels deeply touched and in need to leave the workshop for moment to rest or to steam-out.

HANDOUTS

DEFINITIONS FOR THE MOVING DEBATE

GBV ENTAILS ANY HARM INFLICTED ON A PERSON BECAUSE OF MALE-FEMALE POWER DYNAMIC WITHIN A SOCIETY

GBV REFERS TO ANY TYPE OF HARM THAT IS PERPETUATED AGAINST A PERSON OR A GROUP OF PEOPLE BECAUSE OF THEIR FACTUAL OR PERCEIVED SEX, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND\OR GENDER IDENTITY
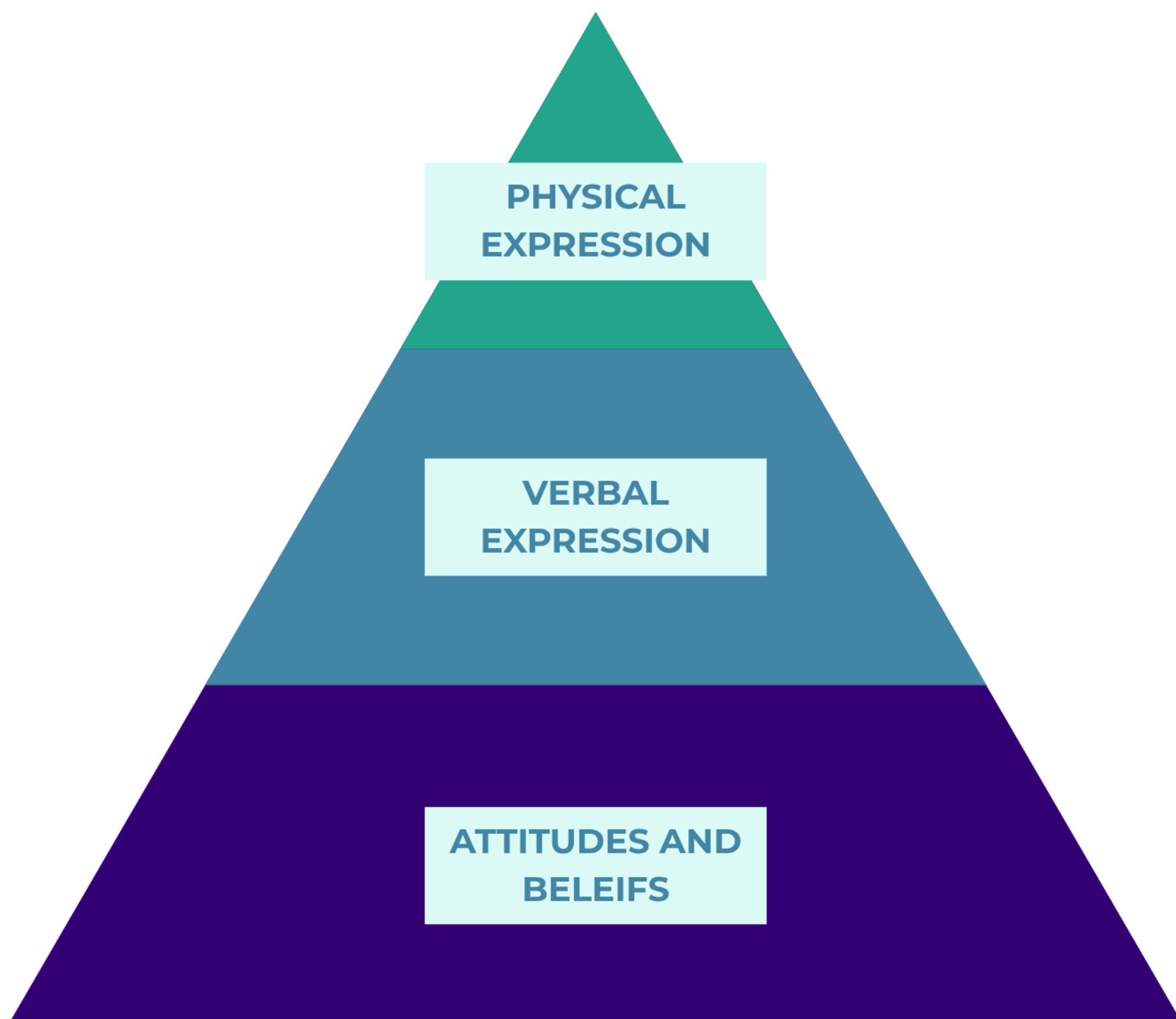
GBV IS A FORM OF HARM AFFECTING WOMEN WITHIN SPECIFIC CONTEXTS WHERE THE MEN ARE THE PERPETUATORS OF VIOLENCE

QUESTIONS FOR THE GROUP DISCUSSION

WHAT TYPE OF VIOLENCE IS THIS ONE?

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA, SUGGESTION, STRATEGY TO PREVENT THIS VIOLENCE?

PHYSICAL EXPRESSION

VERBAL EXPRESSION

ATTITUDES AND BELEIFS

PYRAMID OF VIOLENCE

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT MODELS OF THE PYRAMID OF VIOLENCE. EACH ONE IS CONCEIVED TO SHOW OR GIVE EMPHASIS TO DIFFERENT ELEMENTS.

THERE ARE MODELS CLUSTERING THE VIOLENCE IN MACRO AREAS (E.G.: PHYSICAL EXPRESSION, VERBAL EXPRESSION, ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS), OTHER SHOWING MORE TYPES OF VIOLENCE WITHIN THE SECTIONS OF THE PYRAMID (E.G.: HOMICIDE; RAPE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE; HARASSMENT, TREATS AND VERBAL ABUSE; CULTURAL MICRO-AGGRESSIONS; ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS).

ACTUALLY WE DO NOT CONSIDER A MODEL BETTER THAN ANOTHER AND NO ONE OFFERS THE "FINAL TRUTH".

THUS, IT DEPENDS VERY MUCH WHERE THE FACILITATOR WANTS TO PUT EMPHASIS OR HOW THE PRESENTATION WILL BE RUN. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FULL PYRAMID COULD BE EMPTY AND THROUGH A COLLECTIVE BRAINSTORMING PARTICIPANTS MIGHT POINT OUT DIFFERENT TYPOLOGIES OF VIOLENCE AND THEN, A FINAL, GROUP CLUSTERING IS DONE.

FOR THESE REASONS, WE ARE CHOOSING TO SHOW IN THIS HANDOUT A VERY GENERAL AND SIMPLE MODEL OF THE PYRAMID AND THEN, EACH FACILITATOR CAN CHOOSE HOW TO USE, TO ADAPT, OR IF TO SEARCH FOR OTHER MODELS (TO SPEAK ABOUT VIOLENCE, THERE IS NOT ONLY THE PYRAMID, BUT MANY OTHER MODELS).

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

TITLE	**THE BODY IS A TERRITORY**
TARGET	Youth Workers and educators, 18+, promoting activities targeted to young people Young people, aged between 15 and 30 years old
AIM	To increase awareness about reproductive health and rights
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	• To acknowledge the importance of body awareness • To tackle reproductive health awareness • To reflect upon needs' awareness (then, to open the discussion on reproductive rights)
TOOLS' TYPE	Body awareness activities, group discussion and artistic creation
TIMING	120 minutes
MATERIALS	Wool, post-it, markers, colors, music
DESCRIPTION	The workshop includes the following steps: **Step 1. Introduction** - 10 minutes The facilitator runs the presentation of the workshop, sharing that the concept of "Body is a Territory" comes from Indigenous woman in America Latina and Decolonial feminism. Taking in consideration the intercultural lenses and the heterogeneity of the group, the facilitator can also plan to share other theories, more relevant, pertinent and understandable for other settings/backgrounds. **Step 2. Body awareness around "siloueta colectiva"** - 30 minutes In the workshop room facilitators have already prepared in advance the "siloueta colectiva", which consist in the drawing of a big silhouette of human body on the floor. The silhouette should be gender neutral, big enough to host inside the different body parts different participants and can be drawn using a tiny rope, a scotch tape or removable chalk. Once participants are welcomed in the workshop, the facilitator invites them to start walking in the space and to keep the contact with their body. Participants are encouraged to make an imaginary journey through their body, starting from the feet, continuing to the legs, spine, necks, and head. Keeping attention to each part of their body and breathing. Then, the facilitator asks participants to choose/be focused on a specific part of their own body, to join this part of the body inside the siloueta and to take a pose (as a statue), representing their feeling in connection with this part of their body. When everyone has taken a position, the facilitator asks to keep it for some seconds, both feelings what their body and mind say and also having a look to the other' body positions. After that, participants are asked to be back in circle and the facilitator asks the following questions:

- Which part of your body are you most focused on?
- Which part of your body do you feel the least?
- In which part of your body do you feel most the pain?
- Which part of your body feels healthier?

When answering the questions, participants can choose if to use only their words or to put themselves inside the siloueta (in the body part most answering the question) and then, from this position, share their ideas and feelings. They can also chose not to enter at all inside the siloueta and to keep their thoughts personal, if they prefer not to share. In any case, facilitators while welcoming active participation, should still emphasizing the importance for intimacy, privacy and possibility to expose fully, till a certain degree or not at all.

When this step it is over, the facilitator can call for a couple of minutes of silence, asking participants to disconnect their mind, to reconnect with their body and breath. This is a very important transition to step out from the feelings, mood and thoughts of the previous activity and to be ready to step into the next one.

Step 3. Individual definition of reproductive health - 20 minutes
The facilitator invites participants to make a circle around the siloueta, and to close their eyes, breathing, and remaining in contact with their bodies. In the same time another facilitator puts on the siloueta, some sentences/quotes about the topic (the sentences/quotes are not included in the Handout since they might vary a lot according to the cultural/religious background of participants. For this reason, we invite facilitators to clearly assess the group specificities and profiles and choose them accordingly). After that, participants are invited to open their eyes, to read the sentences/quotes and to answer the question: "What reproductive health is for you?". Participants should have some time to reflect about the question and to provide their own answer and definition.

Step 4. Definition sharing in groups - 20 minutes
In the previous step, participants have received post-it to answer the question. The post-it were in different colors, with the purpose to afterwards divide them in smaller groups. Moreover, when the facilitator is handing out the post-it, needs to keep attention to the way participants are going to be divided in the smaller groups. In fact, they should be equally balanced in terms of size, it should be ensured also a fair involvement of different genders and profiles in each group.
Once the smaller groups are created, participants are invited to share their definition and to listen at the ones done by the other team members.

Step 5. Needs sharing and creative representation - 20 minutes
Then, extra time is allocated for the work in group and the task is to discuss the following questions: "Do you think you need something to improve your reproductive health?" and "Do you think you need something to improve your reproductive rights?"

Step 6. Intervene and enrich the collective body - 20 minutes
The facilitator is then inviting each group to think about two symbols or objects to add inside the siloueta to answer the previous questions (one symbol/object to answer the question "Do you think you need something to improve your reproductive health?" and one symbol/object to answer the question "Do you think you need something to improve your reproductive rights?"). When the symbols/objects are included in the siloueta, the group members have to choose in which specific position/body part to have them.
It follows in plenary the presentation of the different symbols/objects, where each group explains why they were chosen and why they were put in that specific body part of the siloueta. The facilitator closes the workshop thanking everyone for the participation and involvement and inviting participants to walk around the siloueta, taking an imaginary picture of the collective work done.

DESCRIPTION

EXPANSION OF THE WORKSHOP	**BEFORE:** we suggest the facilitator to run a pre-warm up (physical and expressive): it will help for the beginning of the step 2. where participants will be asked to be focused on different parts of their own body. Still, it is important that the energy of the pre-warm up won't be conflicting with the energy promoted and developed in the step 2., otherwise participants will be confused. **AFTER:** there is the possibility to further develop the last step of the workshop, to get more focused on the subject of the "rights". It can be done, allocating more time for the final debriefing and adding specific questions to reflect on the reproductive rights. Moreover, this could be helpful also in contexts where to be directly focus on "needs" could be triggering and would be way better to approach the issue starting from the "rights" and then to move on.
FURTHER SUGGESTIONS	**OBSERVATIONS:** the part of the "siloueta colectiva" where participants are asked to embody a part of their body as a statue, can be very personal and intimate. Also the questions asked right after can be very intimate and personal. For this reason, we suggest the facilitator to keep a great care to the creation of an intimate and protected space during the activity. A soft and welcoming atmosphere has to be created so that participants, even though exposed, can feel more at ease to share or not to share something personal, still feeling protected and cared of. **ADAPTATIONS:** during the workshop's testing, in several occasions participants felt emotionally connected, supported, a bit vulnerable at the beginning but healthier at the end of the process. Moreover, they appreciated the possibility to constantly move in the space. In the same time, most of them expressed the necessity to have more moments for the discussion and more space to express their opinions. For this reason it is important for the step 2. to have allocated the proper time. Moreover, the facilitator could also invite the group to reflect about "pain, pleasure, grief and desire". This could be a way to better link the activities (step 2. and step 3.). Another solution to reduce the exposure for the step 2. where participants are asked to answer the four questions, could be to invite them to walk around the space, to "clap" and gather with their neighbors (three persons maximum, to avoid the plenary in a big group) and to share with them their answer and their feelings/feedbacks/impressions. **TIPS:** in some contexts, the topic could be triggering. For this reason, there should be considered forms of adaptation like splitting the target group or changing the different sentences. Once again, if more time is available, it is suggested to be focused more on the concept of "rights" as a way to avoid slippery issues or hot topics. Moreover, considering that the subject is quite delicate, we suggest always to have a facilitators' team composed by, at least three persons. This can insure a bigger variety in styles, in the voices heard and might allow to proper and timely intervene if someone feels deeply touched and in need to leave the workshop for moment to rest or to steam-out.

BODY-TERRITORY

"BODY-TERRITORY" IS A DE-COLONIAL FEMINIST CONCEPT THAT UNITES THE IDEAS OF BODY AND TERRITORY AS A SPACE OF RESISTANCE AGAINST PATRIARCHAL, COLONIAL, AND CAPITALIST OPPRESSION.

THE BODY IS SEEN AS THE FIRST TERRITORY TO BE DEFENDED, AND FROM WHICH AUTONOMY AND FREEDOM CAN BE CLAIMED.

IT EMERGES FROM THE STRUGGLES OF INDIGENOUS FEMINIST COMMUNITIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND RECOGNIZES THAT VIOLENCE AGAINST THE BODY ALSO AFFECTS THE LAND AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT: THE CONCEPT WAS PROMOTED BY LORENA CABNAL, A MAYAN-INCA WOMAN, AS A POLITICAL SLOGAN AND A TOOL TO CONFRONT VARIOUS FORMS OF VIOLENCE. IT IS BASED ON THE WORLDVIEW OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, FOR WHOM THE BODY NOT ONLY INHABITS A TERRITORY, BUT IS ALSO PART OF THAT WHOLE BODY-TERRITORY. AS WE ARE NOT SEPARATE FROM THE NATURE/LIVING WORLD, BUT PART OF IT.

KEY ASPECTS OF THE CONCEPT:
- BODILY AUTONOMY: THE BODY IS THE WOMAN'S MOST INTIMATE AND PERSONAL SPACE, AND SHE HAS THE RIGHT TO BE RESPECTED AND CONTROLLED ONLY BY HERSELF
- RESISTANCE TO VIOLENCE: IT IS A WAY OF DENOUNCING AND RESISTING PATRIARCHY, COLONIALISM, RACISM, AND EXTRA ACTIONS THAT VIOLATE THE BODIES AND THE LAND
- CONNECTION TO THE LAND: IT RECOGNIZES THAT THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN'S BODIES IS INTRINSICALLY LINKED TO THE DEFENSE OF NATURAL TERRITORIES
- HOLISTIC VISION: THESE ARE NOT SEPARATE CATEGORIES, BUT DEEPLY CONNECTED CONCEPTS THAT SHAPE PEOPLE'S LIVES
- FOCUS ON EXPERIENCE AND COMMUNITY: IT VALUES ANCESTRAL MEMORY, HEALING, PLEASURE, JOY, SEXUAL FREEDOM, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTIVE ALTERNATIVES THROUGH MOVEMENT AND SENSITIVITY.

APPLICATIONS:
- SOCIAL STRUGGLES: IT IS A TOOL FOR THE DEFENSE OF WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE REVITALIZATION OF COMMUNITY PRACTICES
- SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL DIAGNOSIS: IT IS USED TO ANALYZE THE IMPACT OF BIOMETRIC SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGIES IN URBAN SPACE AND HOW THEY AFFECT FEMINIZED BODIES
- ECO-FEMINISM: THIS CONCEPT IS FUNDAMENTAL TO ECO-FEMINIST MOVEMENTS THAT CONNECT THE OPPRESSION AND EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN WITH THE EXPLOITATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE LAND.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CRITICAL THINKING

TITLE	IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON GENDER ROLES
TARGET	Youth Workers and educators, 18+, promoting activities targeted to young people Young people, aged between 15 and 30 years old
AIM	To sensitize and to reflect upon the impact of social media in the construction of gender roles
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	• To encourage openness and honesty, gathering diverse insights from the group • To clarify concepts, promoting awareness and solutions • To foster collaborative dialogue and exchange
TOOLS' TYPE	Self-reflection, group discussion, work in group for the reels creation
TIMING	180 minutes
MATERIALS	Computer, paper, post-it, pens, projector, smartphone
DESCRIPTION	The workshop includes the following steps: **Step 1. Introduction** - 5 minutes Some rock music is played as a background and two facilitators run a short simulation acting out, following one another, trying to metaphorically "escape the pressure of social media". **Step 2. Self-reflection based on some personal questions** - 20 minutes Participants find on the floor different flipcharts, each one with a question to encourage the personal reflection. Participants are asked to write the answers on a post-it and to put it on the flipcharts. The questions are based on the personal experience of the participants on social media. There is some soft music played as a background. At the end, participants are asked to go around the space, to read the different answers and go back in circle. **Step 3. Group discussion** - 30 minutes Participants are asked to sit in circle and the facilitator asks the following questions to stimulate the discussion: • Would anyone like to share their reflections, thoughts, or feelings from the activity? • What are the positive and negative effects of social media on marginalized gender groups? • What role do influencers play in shaping gender norms on social media? • How does the media affect children's development and understanding of gender roles? • How can we encourage the media to adopt more realistic and diverse representations of gender equality?

DESCRIPTION	**Step 4. Reels based on gender-related topics** - 60 minutes Participants are then divided in different groups, each one receiving a subject related to gender-sensitive issues. The subjects are: Gender discrimination on social media, Harassment, Impact of social media on mental health, Stereotypes. They have to work in group to create a short reel (two minutes maximum) on the subject. The common goals of the reels should be: • To raise awareness about the assigned subject in a creative and engaging way • To ensure that everyone in the group participates and is involved in the reel creation. **Step 5. Break** – 20 minutes A short break is planned to give facilitators time to edit the reels and to prepare them for the projection. Participants can use this time to relax, network, or informally exchange thoughts about the activity. **Step 6. Reels projection** – 15 minutes Participants are invited in plenary and the different reels are projected. **Step 7.Conclusion** – 30 minutes To conclude the workshop, the facilitator summarizes all the different steps and the major elements highlighted and discussed by participants during the workshop. The key insights and takeaways from each step are shared, ensuring that the main points and lessons learned are well captured. Participants are encouraged to share their reflections on the process and what they have learned throughout the discussion.
EXPANSION OF THE WORKSHOP	With more time a disposal, it could be interesting to better stimulate the self-reflection, to propose an introduction with a personal drawing of the participants' life on social media. Then, it can follow a thermo-line to show how much time each person spends on social media on a daily basis. This can be used as inspiring food for thoughts or to launch a discussion or in the conclusion to sum up the work done.
FURTHER SUGGESTIONS	**OBSERVATIONS:** we suggest, for the video creation, to prepare a visual presentation of social media terms, symbols, Emoji, to make faster and easier the understanding. **ADAPTATIONS:** we suggest to allocate more time for the video creation. Moreover, the final reflection needs to be focused on the importance to find solutions against the challenges faced. In that way participants will have the chance to actively contribute and to take action. Another important element refers to the group profile: in this workshop, the proposed subjects for the reels are "Gender discrimination on social media", "Harassment", "Impact of social media on mental health", "Stereotypes". It is automatic that, if we are working with a group for the first time, if the group is not yet sensitized on gender-subjects or is composed by members who have faced discrimination (e.g. because they faced harassment on social media), facilitators should propose a change in the subjects. Still proposing gender-related subjects but with a more gradual and softer approach. **TIPS FOR THE SELF-REFLECTION** • provide clear instructions • create a safe(r) environment • prepare in advance questions that fit with the target's profile.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS	**TIPS FOR THE GROUP DISCUSSION** • set ground rules for listening and respect • define key terms understandable for everyone • constantly encourage engagement and participation. **TIPS FOR THE CREATION OF REELS** • be sure you are properly equipped for the technical setup • be sure to have, at least, one of the facilitator skilled in the use of ICT and video editing.

HANDOUT

QUESTIONS FOR THE SELF-REFLECTION

HAVE YOU EVER RECEIVED COMMENTS BASED ON YOUR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE RATHER THAN ON WHAT YOU SHARED OR EXPRESSED ONLINE?

HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED GENDER STEREOTYPING IN ON-LINE INTERACTIONS?

HAS THIS AFFECTED YOUR EMOTIONAL OR MENTAL WELL-BEING?

HAVE SEXIST COMMENTS INFLUENCED THE WAY YOU EXPRESS YOURSELF OR INTERACT ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE YOUR CREDIBILITY OR OPINIONS WERE MINIMIZED BECAUSE OF YOUR GENDER ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

WOMEN MIGRATION IN GLOBAL SOUTH AND NORTH

TITLE	BORDER-LINES
TARGET	Youth Workers and educators, 18+, promoting activities targeted to young people Young people, aged between 15 and 30 years old
AIM	To embody and reflect upon different situations of migration for women in north and south contexts
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	- To have an embodied and immersive experience on the topic - To provide tools to address realities different from the one's own - To offer a holistic experience to imagine these realities with carefulness and respect - To reflect on migratory wounds and to create environments for reparation
TOOLS' TYPE	Positioning, group discussion, simulation, debriefing
TIMING	140 minutes
MATERIALS	Paper, some objects to represents the different spaces, markers, flipcharts, pens, post-it, colored papers, rope, speaker
DESCRIPTION	The workshop includes the following steps: **Step 1. Introduction** - 5 minutes The facilitator welcomes participants and shares a disclaimer, explaining that the workshop is focused on a sensitive topic. For this reason, participants are free to step out and leave the room to take a breath if in any moment, they feel the need. Then, the facilitator opens the workshop with a question for the whole group (about their expectations towards the session), and then, continues with few more insights about the actual, global context of women migration. **Step 2. Mapping the crossings** – 20 minutes The facilitator explains to the group that the space of the activity is divided in four cardinal points: north, south, west, east. Therefore, the facilitator asks participants to embody the map of their journeys and the journeys of their family. This, with the purpose to show how the geopolitical powers function and how our imaginaries might depend on privileges. Then, participants are asked to join the middle of the space and to position themselves according to the questions read out loud. Below the list of questions: - Where was your grandmother born? (specify that is the grandmother of the female branch of the family) - Where was your mother born? - Where did you born?

DESCRIPTION

- Did you know the territories of our lineage?
- Did they face internal or external migrations?
- How did you feel when you moved or not? (this final question is left open, to bridge the group to the next step).

Step 3. Crossing the borders - 40 minutes
The activity includes the following steps:
- **Starting point:** participants are asked to write down on a poster different motivations leading the women from the global south and north to migrate. Then, a short extra time is allocated in plenary to discuss the identified reasons pointed out
- **Transition:** after the plenary discussion is over, the facilitator informs the group that they are going to start a simulation of a migratory journey. For this reason, participants are asked to re-gain the inner focus, to step out from the previous discussion, to empty their mind and to breath in and out
- **Borderlines:** participants receive randomly "strong" (A) and "weak" (B) passports and they are going to be guided to a safe way/journey (participants with A passports) and to an insecure borderlines (participants with B passports). But this is an information they have not received yet
- **Airport control or migration office:** participants are asked to stand in line, and the line starts in front of the table for the control. During the control, the persons with A passport are allowed to enter while the ones with B passport have the entrance refused. Participants with B passports have to find a way (even though "illegal") to enter the rich country, while the entrance priority is given to those holding "A" passports.
- **Job searchers situations:** after the border's crossing, participants enter a space where facilitators have disposed pieces of paper representing jobs with higher "qualifications" (e.g.: doctor, researcher, professor), often unreachable positions for migrant women and jobs that are more reachable (e.g.: maid, caring works) and recurrent for migrant women in real life (often regardless of their real qualifications). According to the entrance time and the type of passport received, participants have to pick up a piece of paper representing the job they could have in the new country. Realistically, the most qualified jobs will be taken by the participants with the A passports, while the less qualified by those with the B.

Step 4. De-rolling – 10 minutes
Extra time for a proper de-rolling has to be allocated to allow participants to exit the migratory experience. For the purpose, the facilitator can ask them to be back in circle, to breath in and breath out, trying to relax the different parts of their body and to step out of the experience. This transition is crucial, otherwise or participants will feel confused in the upcoming reflection or still emotionally touched/impacted by the previous activity and not eager to contribute in the discussion.

Step 5. Reflection - 30 minutes
Participants are asked to sit back in circle and the facilitator welcomes them for the upcoming reflection time, guided by the following questions:
- What did you fee during the simulation?
- What do you think are the feelings of the women who have migrated in these conditions?
- What do you think about the context that creates the experimented inequalities?
- What do you think about the consequent job inequality?

Step 6. Migratory grief - 30 minutes
In this step, the idea is to share records with the voices and witnesses of migrant women, previously registered.

DESCRIPTION	Participants are kindly asked to listen and to keep attention to the different voices. In this case, facilitators should identify witnesses which are relevant and understandable for the participants' backgrounds of origin. In the same time, the witnesses shared should be various, offering a more complete and descriptive situation of women from different parts of the world and who passed through the migratory experience.

Then, the facilitator introduces the technique of Automagic Writing to have participants commenting their experience. The questions to be asked can be the following:
- What does migratory grief means to you?
- What can we do to support those living this situation?
- Do you think that hearing the witnesses of migrant women can be some kind of reparation or healing?
- What can we do to support the reparation or healing process?

Step 7. Closure - 5 minutes
The facilitator can choose to close the workshop with a poem to bring extra food for thought and a more magic atmosphere. |
| **EXPANSION OF THE WORKSHOP** | For the part related to "Migratory grief", having more time at disposal, it can be forecast an expansion. In this case, after the registered voices shared and before starting the process of the Automagic Writing, the facilitator can dedicate more time to the concept of "grief", introducing the following elements as extra food for thoughts:
- Border as an open wound
- Border as a place of resistance
- Border as a place of transformation.

Then, after the Automagic Writing, it can be forecast an extra round of discussion, where participants can share (if they feel to) some of their inner reflections linked to the subject and openly discuss the last question "What can we do to support the reparation or healing process?". This will contribute to close the workshop not with a feeling of sadness for the grief, but with a proactive feeling of action, instilling into participants the idea that is possible to take actions to support and accompany other human beings who have passed through the migratory experience. |
| **FURTHER SUGGESTIONS** | **OBSERVATIONS:** "Crossing the borders" can be a very strong and powerful activity. Participants are asked to wear the shoes of migrants crossing the borders, with different passports, rights and privileges. Therefore, they can be extremely touched by the simulation experience and facilitators have to keep a great care in facilitating all the steps. For example, even when they act (as part of the simulation) as persons reproducing some stereotypical, racists and xenophobic situations, they need to carefully observe the participants' reactions and tailor made their "acting" accordingly, avoiding to excessively impact the feelings and emotions.
Moreover, at the end of the simulation, it is very beneficial to propose the de-rolling session. This allows participants to release residual energies or emotions from the activity and to return to their own selves. In fact, if participants still feel emotionally connected to the character they portrayed or the situation they lived, the debriefing may not be very effective and it could lead to frustration and confusion. |

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

TIPS: facilitator needs to keep a great care in the design of the simulation spots representing a border to cross.

Moreover, it is very important to have someone from the staff as a support to accompany participants to navigate their own feelings. Considering that the subject is quite delicate, we suggest always to have a facilitators' team composed by at least three persons. This can insure a bigger variety in styles, in the voices heard and might allow to proper and timely intervene if someone feels deeply touched and in need to leave the workshop for moment to rest or to steam-out.

For participants coming from different realities, it is very important to make it clear how border-related concepts relate directly on gender roles and inequalities.

If the facilitator considers it useful for a better involvement of the group, it can be forecast a specific moment, after the simulation, where are presented studies on the subject of migratory flow with reliable data and presented policies who are effecting the general situation and context. In any case, we recommend the facilitator to keep the strong connection between gender and migration.

For the closure (step 7.): when the workshop was firstly designed, it was proposed a poem from Gloria Anzaldúa's "Borderlands". In the current publication we prefer not to directly suggest a specific poem, rather than encouraging the facilitator to identify a poem fitting with the cultural background and experience of participants.

AUTOMAGIC WRITING

THE "AUTOMAGIC WRITING" IS A TECHNIQUE, CREATED IN THE CHINESE FOLK TRADITION, AS "AUTOMATIC" OR "SPIRIT WRITING". IT IS AN INVITATION TO WRITE WITHOUT FILTERS/JUDGMENTS, AND ANY LANGUAGE USED IS WELCOMED. THE BASIC IDEA OF THE AUTOMAGIC WRITING IS THAT THERE IS NOT "RIGHT" OR "WRONG", AND THE SHARING SHOULD BE VOLUNTARY AND PRIVATE.

YOUTH POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

TITLE	**SPEAK UP**
TARGET	Youth Workers and educators, 18+, promoting activities targeted to young people Young people, aged between 15 and 30 years old
AIM	To promote political engagement of young people, also achieving gender representation
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	• To understand the importance of our participation in the community • To reflect upon youth political engagement • To promote actions for a stronger youth political engagement
TOOLS' TYPE	Brainstorming, role-play and group discussion
TIMING	120 minutes
MATERIALS	Flipcharts, post-its, markers, pens, one ball of wool, pencils
DESCRIPTION	The workshop includes the following steps: **Step 1. Ice breaking activity: Flower power** - 5 minutes The facilitator welcomes participants in the workshop and asks them to stand up and to make a circle. Then, when the facilitator says "power" participants have to answer "flowers", and the rhythm goes on increasing little by little. Then, the facilitator can introduce another word "flo", asking participants to answer "po". The activity goes on in that way till there is a common rhythm and the workshop is tuned. **Step 2. Ice breaking activity: ball of wool** - 10 minutes The facilitator introduces the topic of the workshop, youth political engagement and the upcoming task is explained: one of the participants starts first, has to block the string of a wool's ball to one of the fingers and pass it to another person, while mentioning the first impression that this person (the receiver) made, when they met for the first time. In this moment, the facilitator should emphasize honesty, but also respect and care towards the others. Then, the activity follows in that way, till the point that, little by little, a net which connects all the participants is created. Once every participant has thrown the ball to someone else and the network is created, the facilitator asks the group to observe and share their thoughts on the purpose of this introductory activity. **Step 3. Brainstorming** - 15 minutes The facilitator spreads five flipcharts around the space, each one with the following key-words: politics, engagement, gender, participation and power. Then, the facilitator asks participants to think about the concepts and to write on the flipcharts key-words or small sentences (they have to be written on post-its and then stuck on the flipchart they refer to).

DESCRIPTION

The facilitator reminds the group that the post-its will be available during the whole activity in case they want/need to observer the others' answers and/or get inspired by.

Step 4. Character's creation - 20 minutes
The group is divided in smaller groups of two people each. Each pair has to pick up from a basket a paper asking basic information about an assigned character (Reference 1). When we say "assigned" we mean that just the character's name is already written in the piece of paper. The pairs have some time allocated to discuss and fill in the characteristics of the received character.

Step 5. Step forward if… - 20 minutes
Once all the characters are sketched, participants are asked to form a line still remaining in their pair.

The facilitator asks each pair to embody the character they have created. Acting as the character and answering to the following statements as if they are their character. Then, the facilitator reads out loud a set of statements (Reference 2): after each statement, each pair has to answer by stepping forward in case the answer is yes, or remaining in the same place if the answer is no.

Then, the facilitator explains that a second step in the activity is forecast: this time, a set of questions (not statements) will be read out lout (Reference 3). After each question, each pair has to answer not by stepping forward or remaining on the same place, but by raising their hands in case of affirmative answer.

When all the questions are asked, the facilitator asks the pairs to reveal the main features of their character. Extra time for a proper de-rolling has to be allocated to allow participants to exit their character's shoes. For the purpose, the facilitator can ask them to be back in circle, to breath in and breath out, trying to relax the different parts of their body and to step out of the character. This transition is crucial otherwise or participants will feel confused in the upcoming group discussing (not understanding if they have to answer as themselves or as the character) or still emotionally touched/impacted by the previous activity and not eager to contribute in the discussion.

Step 6. Group discussion – 30 minutes
After the last step, now participants are asked to separate from the pairs and to create four groups. Each group receives one of the character created in the previous activity and has to take some time to discuss the character's profile and their needs for a stronger political participation within their community (Reference 4). Then, the facilitator asks the groups, taking into account the major elements appeared from the discussion, to define an action or a slogan to strengthen the political participation of their character within their community.

Step 7. Presentations and closure – 20 minutes
The different actions or slogans to strengthen the political participation of the characters within their community are presented in plenary.
The facilitator asks participants to be back on the step 3. and to the key-words created. Then, the following questions are asked:
- What is "political" for you?
- Taking into account the work done, and coming back to the concepts of politics, engagement, gender, participation and power, what should be done to promote youth political engagement?

Some time is left to participants to answer, express their point of view and ideas concerning the subject.

EXPANSION OF THE WORKSHOP	If time allows, it would be very useful and beneficial to show actual statistics on the workshop's subject. In this case, geographical relevance and participants' background is crucial. Therefore, facilitators should be well aware of the participants' profiles and origins in order to propose contextualized references and well-grounded information.
FURTHER SUGGESTIONS	**OBSERVATIONS:** it is very useful to have a space equipped with a wall, a whiteboard or something to hang flipcharts. Moreover, we suggest to have a big space to move around and for the "Step forward if…" activity. **TIPS:** for the activity "Step forward if…", we suggest facilitators to hand out to each pair only the name of the character. Then, its up to the pairs, following the guided template, to better define and imagine the different features of their characters. In fact, less information is provided by the facilitator and more the pairs have the chance to create their own character, with their own characteristics, setting the ground for the upcoming activity. Moreover, to have the process being more intimate, it could be possible to add some soft music as a background.

HANDOUTS

REFERENCE 1. CHARACTER' ELEMENTS TO DEFINE

AGE
GENDER/S
PROFESSION/JOB
NATIONALITY/CITIZENSHIP/S
PLACE OF BIRTH
RELATIVES
LANGUAGE/S
BELIEF SYSTEM/S
PHYSICAL TRAITS

REFERENCE 2. STATEMENTS

I CAN CHOOSE MY JOB
I FEEL SAFE WHEN I COME BACK HOME AT NIGHT
I CAN AFFORD A CAR
I CAN GO TO UNIVERSITY
I FEEL FREE TO EXPRESS MY SEXUAL ORIENTATION
I CAN CHOOSE WHO I CAN MARRY
MY OPINION HAS WEIGHT IN THE PUBLIC DECISIONS
I SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF THE PLACE WHERE I LIVE

HANDOUTS

REFERENCE 2. STATEMENTS

I AM NOT AFRAID OF THE POLICE

I CAN TRAVEL FREELY

I CHOOSE AT WHAT TIME I WAKE UP IN THE MORNING

I CAN CHOOSE WHAT I EAT AND MY DIET

I STARTED TO WORK BEFORE THE AGE OF 18

I DISCUSS ABOUT POLITICS WITH MY RELATIVES

I DO NOT FEEL STIGMATIZED BY MEDIA

I HAVE A BODY THAT ALLOWS ME TO MOVE TO ANY PLACE

I DO NOT GET ASKED ABOUT THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN I HAVE OR IF I PLAN TO HAVE THEM IN JOBS INTERVIEWS

REFERENCE 3. QUESTIONS

ARE YOU A MALE PERSON?

ARE YOU A FEMALE PERSON?

ARE YOU A NON-BINARY PERSON?

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CRITICIZED BECAUSE OF YOUR BODY?

DO YOU HAVE CHILDREN?

IS THE PLACE WHERE YOU LIVE FAR AWAY FROM THE PLACE YOU WERE BORN?

ARE YOU FINANCIALLY STABLE?

REFERENCE 3. QUESTIONS

ARE YOU BETWEEN THE AGE OF 15-25?

ARE YOU BETWEEN THE AGE OF 26-35?

ARE YOU BETWEEN THE AGE OF 36-45?

ARE YOU BETWEEN THE AGE OF 46-55?

ARE YOU OVER 55 YEARS OLD?

REFERENCE 4. GROUP DISCUSSION

BASED ON WHAT WE HAVE DONE AND OBSERVED, WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHARACTERS' CHARACTERISTICS?

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERS' NEEDS FOR A STRONGER POLITICAL PARTICIPATION WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITY?
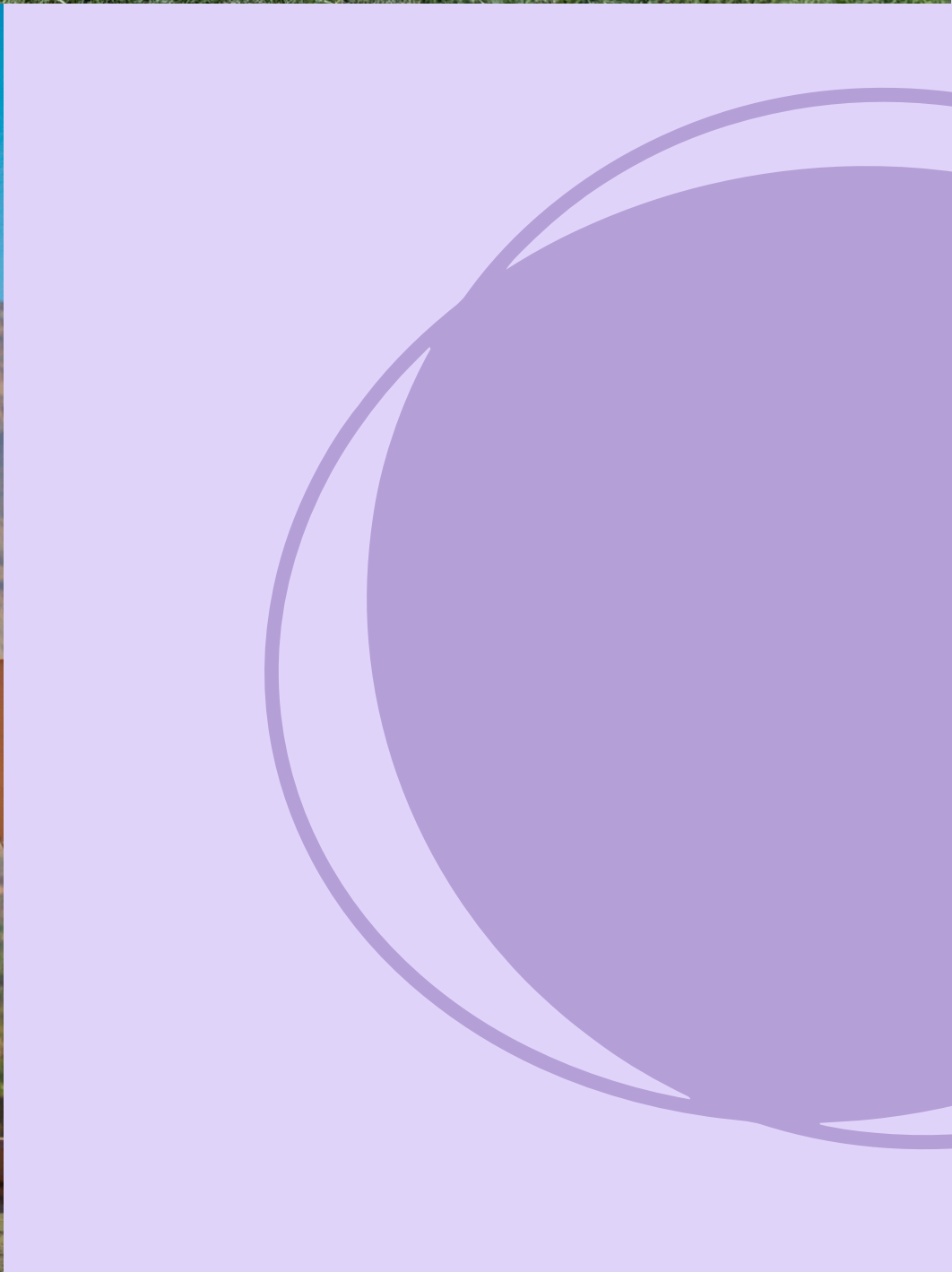
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