



**WE** ● ● ● ● ● ●  
**PROJECT**

PROMOTING WORK-BASED EQUALITY FOR LGBT+Q+ YOUTH

# FIELD REPORT 2021



## Authors in alphabetical order:

Mario Bajkusa  
Sladana Baros  
Helmut Beichler  
Viktorija Cucic  
Melanie Giwiser  
Alejandro Gil-Salmeron  
Igor Grabovac  
Matej Horvat  
Laura Llop-Medina  
Lovro Markovic  
Daragh McDermott  
Jelena Perak  
Daniel Schoenherr  
Radhika Seiler-Ramadas  
Lee Smith  
Chase Staras  
Milos Stojiljkovic-Rolovic  
Masa Tunic



This project is funded by the European Union (REC-RDIS-DISC-AG-2019) under the number 881910. The content of this document represents the views of the authors only and it is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission or any other body of the EU. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



*The **WE-Project** consortium would like to express gratitude to all the participants who donated their time to this project, especially the young lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*, intersex, asexual and queer people who continued to impress us with their strength and commitment for a better world.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

• EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	4
• INTRODUCTION .....	10
• METHODOLOGY – QUALITATIVE STUDY .....	11
• DATA COLLECTION .....	12
• DATA ANALYSIS .....	13
• REPORTING OF RESULTS .....	14
• METHODOLOGY –QUANTITATIVE STUDY .....	14
• DATA COLLECTION AND QUESTIONNAIRE .....	14
• DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING OF RESULTS .....	15
• ETHICAL CONSIDERATION .....	15
• AUSTRIA .....	16
◦ Approach .....	16
◦ Qualitative results .....	16
◦ Quantitative results .....	30
• CROATIA .....	38
◦ Approach .....	38
◦ Qualitative results .....	38
◦ Quantitative results .....	51
• SERBIA .....	58
◦ Approach .....	58
◦ Qualitative results .....	58
◦ Quantitative results .....	70
• SLOVAKIA .....	80
◦ Approach .....	80
◦ Qualitative results .....	80
◦ Quantitative results .....	90
• SPAIN .....	104
◦ Approach .....	104
◦ Qualitative results .....	104
◦ Quantitative results .....	111
• THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN & NORTHERN IRELAND .....	117
◦ Approach .....	117
◦ Qualitative results .....	117
◦ Quantitative results .....	126
• Conclusions .....	132
• References .....	134

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Promoting Work-Based Equality for LGBT+Q+ Youth – WE-Project aims to empower sexual orientation and gender identity minority youth who are often faced with discrimination and stigmatization during the precarious time of transitioning from the education system into the labour market. By implementing an approach that will aim at increasing the knowledge of LGBT+Q+ youth, increasing the visibility of this issue with the professional groups that work closely with them as well as public administration and policy makers, it is the overall aim of the WE-project to create safe and discrimination free workplaces throughout Europe. The Work Package 2: “Knowledge Building” aimed to evaluate the current extent of the issue in the six countries represented in the consortium (Austria, Croatia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain and the United Kingdom). In order to achieve this, this project deliverable reports on both the qualitative and quantitative results that the consortium members conducted.

In order to explore and contextualise experiences of discrimination, one-to-one interviews were conducted with LGBT+Q+ young people with the aim of gaining clarity and first-hand information on the nature and background of these experiences. Focus group discussions with stakeholders representing various key governmental and non-governmental organisations were additionally held to enhance understandings of barriers and facilitators to engaging and supporting LGBT+Q+ youth in employment. Furthermore, we aimed to obtain a direct perspective on what and how things could change from the employment sector and/or beyond, in order to consistently address and ultimately end employment-discrimination among sexual and gender minority young people.

Moreover, to get information on the extent of experienced discrimination as well as other mediating factors and to better describe the structural situations in which LGBT+Q+ youth works and lives, we conducted an online-based questionnaire in six participating countries. The anonymous questionnaire was open for 5 months (November 2020 - March 2021) and was distributed through social media channels of the WE-Project as well as through various stakeholders. Data was analysed per country in order to create a more comprehensive picture for each of the participating countries together with the qualitative data for this field report.

Our findings are summarised as follows:

## **LGBT+Q+ Youth report:**

Five overarching themes emerged from the analysis of our youth interviews, namely:

- Factors and experiences of discrimination influencing work-life
- Experiences of workplace discrimination
- Barriers to resolving workplace discrimination
- Facilitators to overcome workplace discrimination, and
- Inclusive strategies

# FACTORS AND EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION INFLUENCING WORK-LIFE

LGBT+Q+ youth participants of our project reported experiencing various forms of systemic discrimination arising from having to conform to societal expectations. Cis-hetero gender norms were found to be prevalent across the countries to varying degrees, and negative stereotypical aspects of LGBT+Q+ people commonly stood out in their description of people's understanding of LGBT+Q+. The setting or environment in which they lived was reported to play a major role in maintaining LGBT+Q+ discrimination. There were differences in rural and urban environments in terms of how comfortable they felt about being and/or outing their sexual or gender identity. While living in bigger cities were reported to facilitate coming out, living in a rural setting reinforced them to 'stay in the closet'. Traditional cultures and religious faiths that are often related to conservative ideologies were reported to be the general causal factors of discriminatory attitudes towards LGBT+Q+ people.

The education system was felt to sustain discrimination, as LGBT+Q+ topics were seldom if ever tackled in most participating countries. As such, a general low-level awareness of LGBT+Q+ issues and of LGBT+Q+ discrimination in itself was observed. Many participants reported enduring negative school experiences of physical and verbal attacks, which had a negative effect on the mental health and have contributed to some suicidal ideation. Conversely, most reported coping with their environment through self-discrimination or hiding their true selves in social mimicry, acquiring feelings of insecurity and low levels of self-esteem in the process. This was also mirrored in the quantitative part of the survey where high levels of verbal (between 70-80%), physical (between 30-50%) and abuse over social media (50-60%) were reported during school in our participants.

## EXPERIENCES OF WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

While all participants reported experiencing explicit discrimination in the workplace through verbal insults, derogatory comments and bullying that were felt to be degrading, frightful, and at times dehumanising (eg. "what are you?"), cis-gendered participants were likely to report less overt discrimination such as benevolent discrimination or 'harmless' jokes. Participants highlighted the implicit discrimination felt through various social and official snags such as having to conform to gendered uniforms, wearing gender-specific nametags, going through administrative hurdles with regard to document changes, or having to be excluded from social settings (eg. family picnics). More threatening forms, such as experiencing pervasive taboo on LGBT+Q+ issues, or being fired for inexplicable reasons were also mentioned.

Participants felt that the struggles they faced on a regular basis created stress, anxiety, and even paranoia about the impact of their identity on their employment. They felt shame as a consequence of how they were treated and sensed through these experiences, that there was more reason to be less overt about their identity in the working environment.

Levels of experienced discrimination in the quantitative arm of the study varied across individual countries but on average 1 in 3 participants reported experiencing discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity at the workplace.



# BARRIERS TO RESOLVING WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

The absence of workplace support was largely felt among all participants. Participants on the whole pointed out that managers lacked accountability to take instances of discrimination seriously, and to accordingly penalise these acts. Some felt that they were greatly discouraged to report discrimination through cornering or blackmailing, such that they feared for the security of their job.

Participants gave the general impression that their conformist attitude to society at large, the general tolerance to discrimination, and the mind-set of the workplace environment in particular resulted in a 'go with the flow' attitude, and lack of clear reaction towards instances of discrimination that they may have experienced. The underreporting of discrimination was acutely felt. On the one hand, there was a general lack of knowledge on regulations against discrimination. On the other, some conveyed a sense of distrust in the legal system, which they felt was not in favour of acting upon and/or penalising instances of discrimination among LGBT+Q+ people, if at all reported.

Participants reported that there was widespread ignorance in the workplace of the issues involved in transitioning, such as the administrative and structural hurdles (eg. toilet visits, disrespecting pronouns) that non-binary employees had to undergo on a regular basis. The lack of possibilities to give feedback or the lack of an LGBT+Q+ mentor or trustee was commonly mentioned.

Worrying and striking result of the survey was the high levels of non-reporting discrimination in all the consortium countries. These ranged from 73% at its lower end in the UK to 98% in Croatia on the higher end. This suggests a lot of work is needed to increase the visibility of experienced discrimination at workplaces to really assess the scope of this issue.

# FACILITATORS TO OVERCOME WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

Participants felt that people of sexual and gender minority should be recognised and accepted as normal citizens, and that they should be able to participate as members of their community in their own identity. In order for this to happen they mentioned the need for policy and legal action on LGBT+Q+ discrimination through companies, as well as through a change in political will on the protection of LGBT+Q+ rights.

Participants emphasised the importance of workplace support in order to tackle discrimination. They felt that there was a need for clear written policies welcoming employees regardless of sexual orientation or gender, and that these should be applied in all matters, from meetings to workshops, and from reporting discrimination to taking action. That coming out was essential in order to feel comfortable in the workplace, and that open communication was necessary to facilitate coming out was also mentioned. Participants underscored the role of managers or superiors in promoting an inclusive workplace environment for sexual and gender minorities, and stressed the importance of their exemplary involvement in ensuring their protection.

Further reported facilitators to overcoming discrimination were the importance of ensuring a diverse staff community, providing staff training on diversity issues, and staff participation in LGBT pride events.

On average only 30% of participants in the questionnaire reported being aware of specific measures on anti-discrimination or promotion of diversity or knowing where they can report instances of discrimination at the workplace. These results suggest that there is a need to improve visibility of the measures and expand on them and the ways in which they are implemented and communicated to the workers.

## INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES

Further inclusive strategies were suggested as long-term goals in sustaining mutually respectful relationships within safe and progressive environments. Consistent throughout participating countries was the strong impression that education is the basis for eliminating discrimination, and a key force that could change the awareness level of LGBT+Q+ realities. Among the ideas mentioned was the need to educate young LGBT+Q+ youth first in order to help them understand their own sexual and gender identity on a deeper level. Participants also felt that it was important to train youth on how to access employment, to educate and instruct young LGBT+Q+ people on rights and anti-discrimination laws, as well as how to report discrimination in a timely manner.

Inclusive infrastructure and understanding identity were seen as important in creating a stress-free environment for young LGBT+Q+ people. Gender neutral toilets, safe/friendly/neutral nametags, safe and inclusive work spaces, and placing rainbow flags were some suggestions. Others that were seen as important were enabling diversity rankings for various companies or governmental organisations, and drawing out clear and understandable workplace contracts. These contracts should affirm the intolerance of discrimination of any kind, and that appropriate action would be carried out in case discrimination has taken place.



Participants made the following suggestions to help LGBT+Q+ youth integrate better in society, as well as to help society to integrate LGBT+Q+ people into the system:

- Implementing more youth centres for LGBT+Q+ individuals to ensure safety and protection
- Free access to therapy addressing discrimination or domestic violence.
- LGBT+Q+ organisations and companies could join forces to offer help in finding inclusive jobs, communication training or counselling.
- Companies could be more specific about their discrimination policies and how they are implemented.
- Subtle and regular information through the media portraying rainbow families, through posters or advertisements.
- LGBT+Q+ quotas within organisations.
- Acceptance of same sex partnerships, where this has not yet been implemented.



# STAKEHOLDER REPORT

Stakeholder participants across the six countries stressed the importance of the government's role in protecting LGBT+Q+ youth against discrimination, but that there was an absence or a lack of compliance to this. One state posed a barrier to accepting LGBT+Q+ people, and anti-LGBT+Q+ was seen as a tool to gain political points for those that supported the traditional family, rather than gender equality or equality in itself. One participant mentioned that there was an absence of an effective link between the state's anti-discriminatory laws and its implementation in contextual instances, due to society's poor understanding of what constituted LGBT+Q+ discrimination. Another participant highlighted that there was little to no knowledge about anti-discrimination policies in school, an absence of anti-discrimination or legal protection afforded in employment, and a lack of evaluation of the situation for young LGBT+Q+ people on this. Participants generally stated that due to these circumstances, there was an underreporting of discrimination at the workplace.

From the point of view of the educational system, there was a general agreement that the lack of knowledge and awareness among teachers must first be addressed. Participants found it important to take homophobic and transphobic behaviour seriously, to challenge discriminatory language and to not avoid confrontation or downplaying these as minor incidents. The need to proactively implement anti-discrimination policies, safe and inclusive policies and environments for LGBT+Q+ students was emphasised. Besides the need for LGBT+Q+ education in school, participants suggested that career guidance should be provided for young people entering the labour market, as discrimination and fear were felt to be central in various stages of the recruitment process. It was suggested that LGBT+Q+ professionals should provide first-hand experience and lead by example.

Furthermore, compulsory diversity training should be afforded for key people, including doctors and teachers, who are role models for education, health and mental care. Within employment, targeted mentoring, anti-discrimination training for staff, as well as education to sensitise the wider community on LGBT+Q+ realities were seen as crucial to build into the sector. In particular, raising awareness on trans issues, actively resisting stereotypes and prejudices against trans people, and standing against discrimination of non-binary people were seen as important further steps to be taken.

Various participants felt that transgender and non-binary people not only had the added challenges of effecting name changes in official documents, but that they were often part of a vulnerable and marginalised group that faced high unemployment due to various factors such as bullying in school and subsequent early drop-out rates, or visible physical differences and the resulting hesitancy to hire. Participants also mentioned the need to consider LGBT+Q+ youth who were dealing with multiple marginalisation due to their ethnic background or health conditions.

Overall, participants observed that the degree of openness with one's sexual or gender identity was high for those from a highly qualified workforce, and lower for those who had lower education, who were long term unemployed individuals, or who had freelance or temporary jobs.

Participants also stressed the importance of funding, and one participant pointed out that projects related to the LGBT+Q+ population were usually rejected by funding schemes from his state. The repercussions of this are that legal, psychological and other supportive assistance cannot be afforded to them. Consequently, the state would not be achieving its moral obligations to its community. Another participant criticised that in times of economic crises and instability, state initiatives focusing on anti-discrimination were typically cut back, to the detriment of the LGBT+Q+ youth population.

## INTRODUCTION

Discrimination and stigmatization are highly prevalent within the EU despite societal advancements and an increase in visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people [1]. Workplace based discrimination is especially problematic as heteronormative working environments intensify the social marginalization of LGBTIQ workers [2]. Health research shows that workplace discrimination and stigmatization is associated with higher levels of chronic stress leading to poorer mental and physical health outcomes, as well as productivity loss and absenteeism [3]. However, workplaces also provide an opportunity to educate workers and promote diversity and inclusion. This is especially relevant for younger LGBT+Q+ people entering the workforce, as research shows that bullying and victimisation are a particularly prevalent issue for this group of people starting in schools and continuing into employment, making them especially vulnerable to various unwanted phenomena that often happen at the workplace [4].

This report is a part of the WE-Project: Promoting Workplace Equality for LGBT+Q+ Youth, which has received funding from the European Commission within the REC-RDIS-DISC-AG-2019 – Call for proposals to promote the effective implementation of the principle of non-discrimination. The overall aim of the WE-Project is to create an online learning platform for LGBT+Q+ young people entering the workforce as well as to increase the awareness of various stakeholders and professional groups who are in contact with young LGBT+Q+ people.

The project consortium consists of institutions representing five countries (Austria, Croatia, United Kingdom, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain) each having various levels of legal protection provided for LGBT+Q+ people in general, hence demonstrating the high variability throughout the EU. This is also seen in public opinions on LGBT+Q+ rights, for example: 56% of respondents see homosexuality as a danger to society in Serbia [5], and in Croatia only 37% of respondents are ready to accept a homosexual person or couple as a neighbour [6]. On the other side of the spectrum, opinion polls show relative high support for equality in Austria, Spain and the UK. However, these data are in conflict with reports from the LGBT+Q+ persons and various non-governmental organizations that still report high levels of discrimination and victimisation in each of the aforementioned member states. Also seen in the consortium countries is a discrepancy between reported experienced discrimination or violence, and the number of reported cases. This possibly stems from their distrust of authorities or previous experiences of institutional discrimination, resulting in high levels of anticipated stigma.

Regardless of the legislation, the consortium countries indicate highly prevalent levels of reported discrimination and violence experienced at the workplace: 61% in Croatia [7], 60% in Austria [8], 46% in Serbia [9], 41% in Slovakia [9], and 31% in Spain [10]. Research indicates that victims of earlier school-age bullying are more often characterised by sub-assertive behavioural characteristics that enable on-going stigmatization and marginalization in the workplace. Young workers, especially those who identify as LGBT+Q+, tend to be more susceptible to discriminatory behaviour. This has to do with various factors such as hierarchy, the insecurity to speak out when entering the workforce due to the fear of losing their job, establishing financial independence, and being unaware of legal regulations that were established to protect them from violence [2].

It has been stated in the literature that young minority workers suffer the most social pressure in working environments [2, 11]. Moreover, research also suggests that young workers who experience problems at the workplace are less likely to ask for help or to report issues they faced, and young LGBT+Q+ people even less so [12]. This is because young workers are not as well informed about their rights. In addition, many young people are unaware of or actively disregard the structural determinants of their discrimination and marginalization. This causes them to internalize their experiences and try to cope independently with them. This problem is also observed by various professionals who work with young LGBT+Q+ workers, as they often feel ill-equipped to understand and tackle the cultural and structural barriers that these young people face. With almost 6 million people aged 15-24 who are unemployed and a further 33 million who are economically inactive in the EU, the European Commission has stated that the period of entry into the labour market and finding steady employment for young workers is a top priority [13]. However, little is known about specific actions taken to ensure the transition from the education system into the labour force. The WE Project aims to fill this knowledge gap by focusing on individual experiences of young people during the transition process and gather advice from stakeholders who are in close contact to LGBT+Q+ young people entering the workplace.

## METHODOLOGY – QUALITATIVE STUDY

The qualitative component of the WE Project comprised a set of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with LGBT+Q+ youth and stakeholders in each of the six partner countries. The in-depth one-to-one interviews were conducted with sexual and gender minority persons between 15 and 26 years of age who had any experience in working environments (either through internships, volunteering or paid employment). The focus group discussions were held with stakeholders that had experience in issues concerning LGBT+Q+ people, and comprised experts from government and statutory bodies as well as non-governmental organisations (NGO). These included policymakers, lawyers and legal experts, educators, activists, social workers, psychologists, human resources staff and representatives from diversity organisations. There was one youth focus group that was additionally conducted in Austria as a response to an enthusiasm to participate in a co-operative exchange of views on the subject. The participants' key data are presented in the appendices at the end of each national report.



# DATA COLLECTION

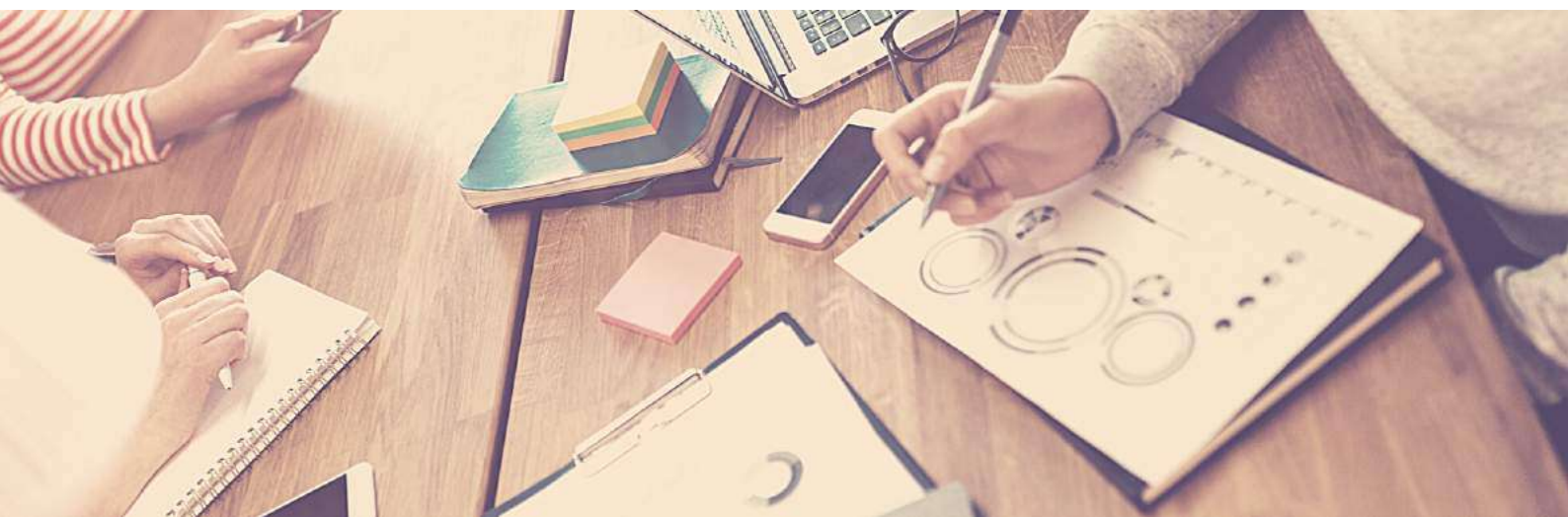
Participants in all the member countries were contacted through various sources including non-governmental organisations, private sectors and self-help groups. The co-ordinating team helped in the dissemination of information on the purpose and goals of the study through the WE Project's social media accounts in Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Tik Tok and ResearchGate. Information was also spread by word of mouth in order to initiate the process of recruitment as soon as the project officially started.

A total of 93 participants took part in the interviews and discussions. As for the youth participants, some countries had more non-binary identifying participants, while some had more gay and lesbian interviewees for reasons that were often beyond the recruitment strategy. Austria had a large response, while most of the other members had greater difficulty recruiting due to factors such as time constraints from the participants, securing anonymity, as well as the different degrees of COVID-19 measures that were in place.

Member countries agreed that online interviews had to be done in most cases where social distancing measures were not possible for interviews that were held in physical presence. Various online interview tools were used in order to facilitate the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. All interviews lasted from 30 to 75 minutes, and the focus group discussions lasted up to 90 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded by the online platforms, or were audiotaped in the case of physical interviews.

The interview guide for the youth participants was developed through a collaborative process and was based on the following questions:

- 1. How do you perceive discrimination generally/at your workplace, and how are you addressing this discrimination?**
- 2. What are the obstacles that prevent you from addressing discrimination, and the facilitators that would help to address it?**
- 3. How can people be more inclusive of LGBT+Q+ individuals in the workplace setting?**



The Focus Group discussion guide was based on the following questions:

1. What difficulties do young people with a different sexual orientation and gender identity face today in Austria when transitioning from school to work and in the first few years afterwards?

*Further questions for discussion:*

- *Are there individual groups within SOGI that are more at risk of being disadvantaged?*

2. How can young LGBT+Q+s be better supported and protected from discrimination during the transition from school to work and afterwards?

- *individually*
- *personal environment (family, friends, social media, etc.)*
- *organizations and institutions (companies, schools, advisory institutions, etc.)*
- *social (politics, legislature)*

## DATA ANALYSIS

All interviews were carried out by the members of the consortium countries in their respective national language. The interviews were then transcribed manually, or with the help of transcription tools. The transcriptions were quality checked internally before being analysed with the help of Atlas.ti. (Scientific Software, Berlin; version 8) or Dedoose 8.3.45.

The transcripts were analysed for meaning units and encoded following the approach detailed by Saldaña [14]. In other words, the texts were broken down into shorter fragments that could be labelled in one or a few words that were relevant to the research context. The process of deriving the codes was agreed upon collaboratively, but the coding system was done individually on a country-by-country basis. The codes were then grouped into categories and overarching themes that were cooperatively developed among the qualitative analysts from the member countries. These themes were then discussed in each individual country report, and respectively exemplified with quotes.

The five main themes that arose from the analysis were:

- Factors and experiences of discrimination influencing work-life
- Experiences of workplace discrimination
- Barriers to resolving workplace discrimination
- Facilitators to overcome workplace discrimination, and
- Inclusive strategies

Some of these aspects had overlapping data between themes, especially with regards to facilitators to overcome workplace discrimination and inclusive strategies. This overlap is however clarified in the summary of the report.

# REPORTING OF RESULTS

The results of the analyses were reported in each of the qualitative country reports written by the national teams in their respective native language. These were then translated and quality checked by every team together with RSR, whose native language is English. These reports were then structured in a consistent form agreed upon by all members, were summarised by RSR and presented in the summary section.

## METHODOLOGY – QUANTITATIVE STUDY

The quantitative part of the report was an exploratory cross-sectional study for which an online based questionnaire was used. The link to the questionnaire was distributed via social media channels of the WE-project and was accessible for 5 months (November 2020-March 2021). The Austrian, Croatian, Serbian, Slovakian and Spanish questionnaire links were hosted by the SocSci-Survey platform and the UK by the Anglia Ruskin University's internal platform. Platforms were GDPR compliant and all collected data was anonymized and no personal or identifiable data, including IP-addresses or emails were collected. The link was open for participants 15-26 years old who identified as a sexual orientation or a gender identity minority that had some experiences in working environments

## DATA COLLECTION AND QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire comprised a total of 140 items and used a "skip-logic" pattern, this improved the accessibility and usability of the questionnaire as the participants would be automatically guided through the survey based on the previous responses given which reduced the amount of scrolling or reading the questions that would not apply to a specific participant. On average, the questionnaire took about 15 min to finish. The questionnaire was translated and back-translated in order to ensure reliability for those scales that were not available in all languages within the consortium. Where possible the consortium used scales and validated questionnaires that were available in multiple languages. The items included questions on various socio-demographic information needed to describe the sample (age, level of education, urban or rural residence, income, etc) as well as experiences on violence and bullying in school and experiences with discrimination and aggressions at the workplace. Finally, some questions on internalized homonegativity and transnegativity and perceived social support as potential moderators were asked as well as questions on experienced health issues and health behavior.

# DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING OF RESULTS

Data was downloaded from the individual platforms and checked for issues. All questionnaires that were less than 70% filled or had missing values in the items concerning discrimination at the workplace were excluded from further analysis. Also participants who declared that they were older than 26 or younger than 15 years were excluded from analysis.

For the purposes of this field report, descriptive statistics have been done for variables associated with experienced discrimination and reporting of discrimination at the workplace together with socio-demographic data of the sample. In order to create a more comprehensive report for each country, all data were analysed per country and not pooled. All data has been coded using a predetermined codebook and was analyzed using SPSS v 24.0.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

All participants provided a signed informed consent form as well as their verbal consent prior to participating in the sessions. Participants were coded by participant number and national EU coding abbreviation, and employment references were generalised to secure anonymity. The audio files and transcription data were erased by second and third parties, and kept locked and/or password secured by the respective study teams. For the online questionnaire the participants were provided with informed consent before entering the survey platform and indicated online that they have read the information and that they wished to participate. Information on the local study coordinator was available throughout the questionnaire and the participants were able to contact the study teams at any point if they had any concerns or questions. The participants were free to stop and not continue with their participation at any point without any repercussions or needing to give a reason in both the qualitative and the quantitative parts. The Ethics Committee of the Medical University of Vienna approved of the overall study, and each individual consortium member obtained additional approval from their designated ethical review board or institutions.





# AUSTRIA



## APPROACH

The qualitative study on promoting work-based equality for LGBT+Q+ youth was carried out from October 2020 to February 2021, and comprised in depth interviews of youth, all of whom had paid or voluntary work experience. A focus group with some of these youth participants took place in December 2020. A further stakeholder focus group was conducted in November 2020 with participants from various governmental and non-governmental organisations working with LGBT+Q+/diverse individuals, labour rights and issues of anti-discrimination. Downloaded anonymised quantitative data were screened for inconsistencies and coded based on a predetermined codebook. For the purposes of this field report, a subset of variables was created from the main questionnaire to provide a more comprehensive overview of the situations that young LGBTIQ people face at their workplaces in Austria. Overall, data from 91 Austrian participants were included in the analysis.

## QUALITATIVE RESULTS

A total of 23 participants were recruited, sixteen of whom were youth between 19 to 26 years of age (M\_age = 22 years), who took part in the individual in-depth interviews. Six of these youth additionally participated in a focus group discussion. Seven participants between 19 and 53 years (M\_age = 43 years) took part in the stakeholder focus group discussion. Participant details are provided in Tables 1 and 2\_AT, found in the appendix.

## LGBT+Q+ YOUTH FINDINGS

In the in-depth interviews five main themes were generated, namely factors of discrimination influencing work life, experiences of discrimination in the workplace, barriers to resolving workplace discrimination, facilitators to overcome workplace discrimination, and inclusive strategies.

# FACTORS AND EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION INFLUENCING WORK LIFE

**Societal expectations** had a great influence on participants who felt that they were living up to gender norms and stereotypes, making it difficult for them to understand their own identity, or to express it in a way that they felt safe or comfortable about themselves:

- *I didn't know I was straight, that was in the beginning when I still lived in the country, somehow, so I just didn't think it because I just didn't know it any other way. It was like ok, I'm a man and I have to like women, that's just the way it was, it never occurred to me that it could be any different (AT\_YP\_9)*
- *I always had romantic and sexual relationships with men, but back then, for me to be more desirable you have to be more feminine...so that was kind of the....only thing I was thinking about... I didn't see any other options, but then, I never felt comfortable with it really (AT\_YP\_6)*

Although participants felt that there was an underlying sense of connection between strict tradition or religious faith and being misunderstood or unaccepted as an LGBT+Q+ individual, it was noteworthy that there were some who found experiences that opposed this:

- *Because he's a religious man, and of course being gay is not ok for him. He was like...very mad in the beginning....I sort of failed in school at that time because it was really....pressurising. But through time he decided to ignore it, of course he didn't forget about it, but yeah. But now, after getting my first job, and moving out, he was like feeling proud of me (AT\_YP\_4)*
- *there is also Christianity that is very open towards queer people, and who make them part of their religious views and beliefs (AT\_YP\_1)*

Many participants were afraid of expressing their identity due to the potential discrimination they faced because of that. Some participants expressed their fear of **being alone or left out by family or society**, while others did not feel the need to share their identity if it was a subject of ridicule:

- *Maybe you really don't know who to turn to, because if it's a five-man company and I don't know if the supervisor would have something against me if he knew I was gay, then it's difficult to report it. Otherwise it's just the general fear of being ostracised (AT\_YP\_9)*
- *I prefer to have a family at all, so that I am seen as I am. That's important to me, I have to - I have to somehow accept that they call me Sara, and just see me as I'm not actually, rather than losing them (AUT\_YP\_14)*

Participants have reported feeling uncomfortable or betrayed after having realised they had **come out against their own will**, as they felt that their privacy was violated:

- *we all have the sessions on moodle or online. And then there is always my old name there...and it's...like I don't for example feel...if it's just where a lot of people are in lectures where I don't have to really participate actively, then I would for example rather not ask a question because I don't want them to read my name that's not my name (AT\_YP\_6)*

Participants related experiences when they were **explicitly insulted, threatened, harassed or bullied**, for presenting as their LGBT+Q+ identity:

- *it was probably the last night of high school, because we were celebrating, and then someone I don't know just called me...'go away you fucking Lesbian'(AT\_YP\_11)*
- *At school, three of them held me down and tried to dunk my head in the toilet and things like that (AT\_YP\_10)*
- *I had a boy in my class who told me that he would (seriously) shoot a homosexual person if he met one (AT\_YP\_13)*

## EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Participants of all LGBT+Q+ identities experienced various kinds of explicit and implicit discrimination in the workplace that left them shocked, betrayed or frustrated. Some of the **verbal attacks** they experienced were degrading, frightful and at times dehumanising:

- *I was at [company], and there I was in the [...] department where there were only men, and the first greeting was "Hello faggot, how are you doing?" That was just a great start where I thought to myself, finally, so now finally at work and finally away from the shit, and in the end ... just the opposite, even worse than in school (AT\_YP\_10)*
- *At that time, my customers often looked at me in confusion because my name tag said something that didn't correspond to my name. And then there were questions like: well, what are you actually? (AT\_YP\_12)*
- *there were words like "combat lesbians" and words like that that just struck me. And then I sit next to them at lunch and listen to them and it's just very unpleasant (AT\_YP\_5)*

Participants described **discrimination through behaviour**, when relating experiences of being treated unfairly or unsympathetically by their employers or colleagues who did not accept their LGBT+Q+ identity, or were not willing to work with them:

- *they decided to keep my colleague and let me go, so this is kind of not logical, because I was more involved in the project than he was ....he first told me that 'it's because of Corona, we're going to have to let you go'. But I was like...wait a second...it's not because of Corona.... And he started 'yeah, don't take it personally, but....he (the person who recommended him to the boss) didn't give us the right picture of you '(AT\_YP\_4)*
- *In any case, the name, that is, that people don't accept that or that people are very degrading because of that, that they don't talk to me or something; I find it very interesting, that I have experienced very little discrimination in relation to sexuality, but I have experienced much more discrimination there (with my Name).... I was always told that it's because of that that they don't want to work with me (AT\_YP\_14)*

Participants felt that they had to spend a great deal of effort to stand up for their preferences in terms of using their preferred pronoun, name or company uniforms:

- *one conflict happened when I was discussing with my boss that I don't want the term Frau on my nametag. It was like why? That's just on there...don't be so...( AT\_YP\_1)*
- *I said right from the start that I would like shirts for the new uniforms, and it was a bit of a discussion point. Because why should I wear shirts as a woman? Why should I get normal polo shirts when there are gender-specific clothes here? (AT\_YP\_12)*

## BARRIERS TO RESOLVING WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

Participants highlighted the notion that **LGBT+Q+ unfriendly jobs** exist, usually these are jobs for the government, the military, big companies or jobs with hierarchy and power, such as in the medical setting. These characteristics in themselves seemed like barriers to seek entry:

- *but if you go to law enforcement, or I don't know something else, I think you have to be aware... very much, that there is a lot of discrimination. For example, I mean, I can only imagine homophobia, transphobia in the police force...for example, it's probably...? Yeah...conservative jobs, so...( AT\_YP\_6)*
- *it also probably applies to the military, or a big company, where you're never at the top. Like when you start feeling powerful. First you're a student, then you're an assistant doctor. You have people above you. Then you become a specialist, and you still have people above you. And then again, there's a head. And you know, you're always kind of belittled. So yeah, hierarchy (is problematic) (AT\_YP\_12)*



Participants mentioned that a **lack of workplace support** was often felt through poor communication via the absence of feedback possibilities, having no mentor to turn to, the widespread ignorance of problems during transitioning or simply having to stick to heteronormative 'rules'. Through these inherent challenges, participants were afraid of not being accepted or not being able to handle negative reactions, and hence experienced difficulties coming out:

- *I didn't actually know what to do honestly, because there was no feedback round... there was no talk there was no person to go to, about this (addressing harassment) (AT\_YP\_8)*
- *If they had let it pass without any argument, then it might not have been such a big drama. I still had to argue about it every day for a fortnight. That was absolutely not necessary. It's also about making the employee feel good. It doesn't matter whether it's a man's shirt or a woman's blouse. It doesn't matter at all (AT\_YP\_12)*
- *I was able to work well before, days before, and then comes this outing and then the person might not want to work with me anymore. Or maybe I don't want to work with them any more. Then I just have a discomfort and then the cooperation just doesn't work. I only come out when I feel it doesn't matter at all to the person (PT4)*

Participants mentioned how problematic it was for others to **address their pronouns** or their new name, and that some of the biggest hurdles were administrative or structural in nature:

- *because I applied there...out and proud got into the first application form and was already confronted in the application either the male or the female box to apply (AT\_YP\_7)*
- *they told me that it could take up to three months, after submitting the papers and everything... and then before you still need from a therapist or something...that...they say....ok you need to get the name changed...but yeah like, they won't change it back probably. So all in all it's a very long process (AT\_YP\_6)*



# FACILITATORS TO OVERCOME WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

Participants felt that **education**, specifically general LGBT+Q+ awareness, hearing LGBT+Q+ stories or having queer content incorporated in the education system was necessary in order to break down discrimination. They raised the need to normalise LGBT+Q+ experiences, and provide information about human sexuality as more than just cis-heterosexuality:

- *But just understanding that this yeah even just binary and sexuality is also new...so one doesn't really fully understand the human experience and the human sexuality if you put it as just straight or gay. Because there's so much more...and also gender wise, there's so much more than just man or woman. Yeah I think that's also why we would need theories to kind of make people understand that...and history (AT\_YP\_6)*
- *For example in lectures, have your example person be trans...whatever...and to also topic it, but not in a scared, evil way...but in a matter of fact way (AT\_YP\_7)*
- *I would just say „diversity training“, „diversity skills“. It's about all minorities, in the end, it's about fostering respect. All of these attitudes come from home and your environment. And if you don't have an LGBTIQ+ person in your circle of friends and family then you don't have anywhere to learn this from. Those people probably don't know what it's like, have never heard what it's like. But they should definitely be trained in this. (AT\_YP\_8)*

Some participants voiced that society is **more open now** than it ever was. The use of terms like heteroflexible as well as acknowledging and legalising same sex marriage/partnerships are indications that it is quite ok to be different:

- *And now I think it is starting to be a bit more open. Terms like heteroflexible, and things like that (AT\_YP\_6)*
- *And when my colleagues were talking about this at the visiting hours, it was very straight forward, like "yeah his husband is coming today to visit", and it was very ok, fine, no one really said anything, so that was a very good sign (AT\_YP\_8)*

Most participants felt the need to provide courses or **staff training** on LGBT+Q+, to encourage LGBT+Q+ individuals to be open, and to cater to people that were willing to learn more about other sexualities and genders:

- *The first step would probably be some kind of seminar...being politically correct, just respect would be a start. And somehow educate people...who are working forty years that their world view should not be the same as forty years ago.....because I had always found it bad making these remarks to patients and patients where I thought...these people have no choice but to trust you as a doctor (AT\_YP\_11)*

- *engaging people, bringing them together. In hospitals its tougher, it's all divided into units and wards and ambulances and so on, it would be good to have once a week, once a month a good discussion about diversity in the workplace. In hierarchical places you'd have to have like a scheduled seminar. And just encouraging people to be open about it, I would encourage people to be open about it (AT\_YP\_8)*

Participants often mentioned the desire for more **open-minded communication** at the workplace. Respecting boundaries, giving value to LGBT+Q+ colleagues for who they are, publicising acts of discrimination and minding one's use of language to inculcate inclusivity were some factors that were highlighted:

- *a public notice somewhere stating what you can do as a person who has been discriminated against, and then there is a list of everything that you can turn to here and there. It simply has to be considered normal in a company and in life in general, which it is, and that's exactly why it should be addressed and talked about and not somehow made taboo. One should not hide from this topic but talk about it just like everything else (AT\_YP\_9)*
- *There is also active attention paid to the fact that...language is inclusive...so there is a real attempt to say something, for example, about gender...not to make assumptions about people....so it is really very open, even in the culture of conversation, that everyone can contribute and...even if someone notices something that they really say it (AT\_YP\_11)*
- *I would definitely make joint team meetings possibly with workshops above all.... because somehow keeping a team together is also somehow possible and these topics and addressing them somehow try to create understanding for each other (AT\_YP\_5)*



Participants felt that **workplace support** was important in terms of having greater understanding and flexibility from the employer, the willingness for colleagues to be objective and to learn, as well as to be approachable despite experience or seniority. They felt that the company should make it clear that everyone is welcome and that there is a contact point or anonymous mailbox where people can report discrimination, create jobs dedicated to diversity, or to have LGBT+Q+ people in leading roles:

- *I think I would talk to them one on one first and ask "what can I do to make you feel comfortable so that I respect your pronouns and what kind of name would you like me to use (for you) (AT\_YP\_13)*
- *Just making it clear from the beginning that everybody is welcome in the company, and also - I think everybody knows that there are discrimination bodies for women who feel discriminated against because now, I don't know, they don't get a job because they are still in a childbearing age and maybe they could have a child. Everyone knows that's discrimination and where to go. I don't know if many in the LGBT community would know where to go (AT\_YP\_9)*

Some participants felt that being open and **coming out** was something important in order to feel comfortable with the others, to feel respected as well as to normalise being LGBT+Q+:

- *The easiest way is probably for people who don't conform to the heteronormative norm to live openly, even if this is dangerous in some cases, because then these people who have their narrow-minded discriminatory view of the world see that there are people who are so....that it's no longer something that can be seen on television... That one is really real... (AT\_YP\_3)*

Participants noted that there is a **lack of LGBT+Q+ representation in the media**, and that if it did appear, it would not only help LGBT+Q+ individuals to feel more connected to society, but would also normalise queerness:

- *in books, in shows, in television, in terms...in whatever....ahmmm....a child might...they don't see themselves anywhere...they might think there's something wrong (AT\_YP\_6)*
- *I feel like you can connect to people a lot easier over film. And it's also a safe distance where you can get to know the characters of people and their struggles. So I think film is a very...has a lot of potential changing (AT\_YP\_7)*



# INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES

Participants emphasised that they felt more comfortable or welcomed when the workplace had gender neutral toilets, the employer took time to understand their employees' feelings about factors such as identity and pronoun preferences, and if their colleagues could understand or accept them for their sexuality.

- *more single toilets...because then there's no issue of it's not safe, or anything...and yeah I mean recently there's more...toilets which say...toilet with... urinal, and toilet without urinal ...which...yeah, I think it's a start ... (AT\_YP\_6)*
- *asking for names and pronouns would be amazing. Also, just having lists where you find alternative methods to check that everybody is there...and to ...yeah...get in contact with people beforehand (AT\_YP\_7)*

Several ideas and impressions were raised by participants on what made or could make a company LGBT+Q+ friendly, clearly emphasising the need to provide safe and inclusive workplaces where they would be supported for their identity. These suggestions included simply putting up rainbow signs, participating in Pride parades, or doing diversity rankings. They also felt that focussing on the goals of the company regardless of your origin or diversity was central to building on values of acceptance.

- *I think it very much depends on the workplace, and I think most people would choose their workplace knowing that they're safe. Unless they want to go in a specific job or in a career where it's better to be not open (AT\_YP\_6)*
- *So at the airport, in graphic design, these are all companies that are a bit more advanced than other companies, to put it that way. For example, they go to Pride with their own floats, the railways also do that, I think. Some companies are a bit more advanced than others and I think most of the people I know work in such companies (AT\_YP\_9)*

Participants generally felt that they were not sufficiently aware of their rights, and that these should be made clear and understandable in policies and workplace contracts, especially when it came to reliably acting on discrimination.

- *yeah, like in bullet points....those are your rights, that's how it works, and that's who you can contact if it's not enforced, and you feel like you're discriminated against (AT\_YP\_1)*
- *think it does help...to have it written down black and white somewhere...gives you confidence....and I think that's the main step in interaction with other people is to have confidence (AT\_YP\_7)*

# YOUTH FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Participants were asked to talk about their personal experiences of discrimination, the kinds of discrimination they felt were present, as well as which subgroup of LGBT+Q+ individuals they felt were most at risk of discrimination. They were invited to discuss how LGBT+Q+ youth could be better supported during their transitioning into the workforce and how society could help. They were also asked to highlight any differences they felt between our context and that from other countries, and the kind of information that should be made available on an informational platform that would empower LGBT+Q+ youth in workplaces.

As many of their personal experiences of discrimination had already been described in the interviews with overlapping results, new information to the following categories is reported in detail:

## LGBT+Q+ MOST AT RISK OF DISCRIMINATION

Participants felt that those who are gender fluid suffer most discrimination as they are often faced with having to make a decision of what gender they belong to. Individuals who had little or no family or social support were not familiar with self-esteem or confidence in their own identity. It was also pointed out that those who are dependent on financial support through a secure job may be prepared to endure more discrimination at the expense of their personal freedom.

- *non-binary people and intersex people, I can imagine that it's a kind of 'decide for yourself what are you now', that a dehumanisation takes place (AT\_YP\_6)*
- *if you are dependent on a job and even if you are treated badly, that you can't give up because otherwise you can't support yourself financially (AT\_YP\_6)*

## SUPPORTING LGBT+Q+ YOUTH IN THEIR TRANSITIONING TO THE WORKFORCE

Participants suggested the following ideas to help youth towards transitioning into the workforce:

- Having an overview of queer theory, and all about sexualities and gender identities, in order to know when one is being discriminated.
- More youth centres where help or refuge could be sought if LGBT+Q+ individuals did not feel safe at home.
- More free access to therapy addressing discrimination or domestic violence.
- LGBT+Q+ organisations and companies could join forces to offer help in finding inclusive jobs, communication training or counselling.
- Companies could be more specific about their discrimination policies and how they are implemented.
- Subtle and regular information through the media portraying rainbow families, through posters or advertisements.
- LGBT+Q+ quotas within organisations.

## MEASURES USED IN OTHER COUNTRIES THAT COULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN AUSTRIA

Participants raised the suggestion of implementing LGBT+Q+ education in school as a good way of helping young people affirm their identity, especially in settings where religion (such as Catholicism) is a large influence. Being given the choice of how you want to be addressed when registering to study is another easily implementable idea.

- *in Scotland, for example, topics are addressed in school that are not only biological, but that LGBT history is also discussed (AT\_YP\_15)*
- *in Ireland, you can choose your own gender and your form of address; at the university in Vienna, I have my 'Ms.' registered, which I'll probably have until I stop studying, because they don't offer an alternative from of address (AT\_YP\_1)*

## IDEAS FOR AN INFORMATIONAL PLATFORM TO HELP EMPOWER LGBT+Q+ YOUTH IN THE WORKPLACE

Participants offered the following suggestions to have on an informational platform, such as a web platform:

- 1.The importance of knowing the nature of discrimination, and at what point one should be reporting this as discrimination or when to take legal action. Tips and links to legal support should also be given in black and white.
- 2.Direct contextual examples of discrimination such as 'Lou, 19 has experienced ..... ' could be stated on the platform, so people have the chance to identify with them.
- 3.Short, diverse and concise information or visuals on LGBT+Q+ that one can read, understand and absorb quickly to educate oneself.

## STAKEHOLDER FINDINGS

The stakeholder discussion focused on two topics, namely: identifying existing barriers and problems that young LGBT+Q+ people face in Austria when entering the workforce, and developing ideas for anti-discrimination measures that could support young LGBT+Q+ employees during their school-to-work-transition. Several barriers for young LGBT+Q+ people in the labour market, at the workplace as well as earlier in the education system were addressed and discussed among the experts.

# LGBT+Q+ DISCRIMINATION IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM/SCHOOLS: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Stakeholder participants felt that young LGBT+Q+ people, particularly gay male youth, seemed to experience an increase in verbal harassment, homophobic slurs as well as aggression in the last five years in school. It was felt that discrimination in schools stemmed primarily from peers and classmates, but was enabled by teachers failing to address homophobia and transphobia seriously. In terms of addressing transphobia, the main problem identified by several participants was the lack of knowledge and awareness among teachers. Discrimination and bullying LGBT+Q+ kids in school often tended to be overlooked, ignored or downplayed as 'minor incidents' by teachers. This seemed to be especially true when it came to discrimination based on sexual orientation and not as much for gender identity. There was low interest in general among teachers to take part in diversity seminars or trainings:

- *"In my experience, teachers actually often don't know how to react. And the second argument is that when homophobic things happen in class, I hear from them: "I can't skip the lesson and send everyone home when something happens". And this is a very unequal treatment because, for example, sexism or anti-Semitic remarks in class are being commented on and acted upon, but if homophobic and transphobic remarks happen, teachers suddenly don't know how to comment and act? (AT\_FG\_6)*

Stakeholders felt the need to proactively implement anti-discrimination policies and other activities that create safe and inclusive school environments for LGBT+Q+ students. It was suggested that these measures should challenge discriminatory language as well as behaviour, and should focus on educating teachers as well as peers on topics of sexual orientation as well as gender identity.

More generally, participants agreed that the principle of non-discrimination and respectful interaction should be taught in age-appropriate school workshops:

- *And I think for school it is a topic of theory and practice: can I utilize the knowledge, and how can I implement it in the classroom? What do I do with it in my lessons, (...) what do I need this for, what kind of subject is it? (...) For many (teacher) colleagues this is a practical question, that is my impression also in many other areas, it has to be practical, it has to be feasible - think about it during the workshop and take the time to think about it and reflect in further training courses, unfortunately that is rarely the case. (AT\_FG\_2)*



# BARRIERS AND STRATEGIES TO TACKLE DISCRIMINATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

All experts agreed that young LGBT+Q+ people faced bigger challenges and obstacles when looking for a job, hence prolonging their entry into the labour market. Discrimination and the fear of discrimination were felt to play a central role at different stages of the recruitment process. This was agreed to be especially true for young trans people. It was noted that transgender people experienced unemployment at higher rates compared to the general population based on a higher rate of their being discriminated when applying for jobs. Participants mentioned that for young trans people, applying for jobs or vocational trainings with their birth name posed a great challenge and burden, due to their legally not being able to change their name and sex in official documents.

On the other hand, one participant noted the growing self-confidence among young people of different sexual orientations (gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer) in being open early on when applying for a job. Higher-educated young people were observed to be more open and confident, whereas lower-qualified workers or long-term-unemployed individuals tended to hide their sexual orientation out of their fear of being discriminated. Education and social class distinctions also lead some young LGBT+Q+s to experience more discrimination and/or the inability to disclose their sexual orientation and gender identity at their workplace. Temporary jobs or freelance work could lead to more pressure not to disclose the sexual orientation/gender identity because of a greater fear of job loss:

- *What I, or what I have to emphasize especially on the subject of "applications", you have to bear in mind that as a transgender person you are forced to reveal a very personal detail, very intimate information about yourself to a company that you do not know, to people who you do not know and probably never will get to know, because the chances that you will succeed as a transgender person in an application process is lower than if you were not trans. The entire application process is a big problem area for transgender people. (AT\_FG\_4)*

One expert suggested to look out for leading companies in conservative or more traditional industries and recruit them for LGBT+Q+ projects and diversity measures to create a signalling effect for other companies within their field. Because gaining access to the labour market in terms of getting a job is more difficult and often discriminatory for trans people, some experts discussed implementing a legal right to get old certificates re-issued with the correct name and gender. Another idea was to establish anonymous job applications more broadly. Blind recruitment strategies could combat hiring discrimination or reduce some discriminatory hiring barriers facing applicants from minority and other disadvantaged groups such as LGBT+Q+ people by shifting the focus towards skills and qualifications. Finally, one participant emphasized the importance of stronger networking between LGBT+Q+ organizations and other advocacy and interest groups such as unions:

- *Exactly then, employee networks, where sympathizers can also participate, are of course such a lever to somehow make this topic visible in the company, but to also offer a certain point of contact. (AT\_FG\_7)*

# LGBT+Q+ WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI- DISCRIMINATION STRATEGIES

Most experts agreed that discrimination and harassment of LGBT+Q+ people in the workplace is still an ongoing and widespread problem, and that older forms of discrimination (e.g. lower wages, lower chances for advancement, bullying at the workplace) still persevere while newer forms such as “microaggressions” are on the rise. One expert identified the lack of knowledge about trans issues in most companies and among most employees as the main source of transphobia and discrimination, because it usually led to stereotypes and prejudices which would then lead to discriminatory behaviour:

- *I mean, one thing that has emerged in our study of how LGBTIQs are doing in the workplace, is that the main type of discrimination is a social/interpersonal discrimination, which is very much in this interpersonal area and which is very elusive legally.” (AT\_FG\_7) (AT\_FG\_7)*

Another problem identified was the growing international mobility among younger LGBT+Q+ people. Moving to regions and countries that are less tolerant of or open towards LGBT+Q+ people, and that do not have anti-discrimination laws implemented, may cause further problems for them. The last obstacle that was identified was a tendency among companies to not focus on or even cut back upon diversity programs and initiatives focusing on anti-discrimination in times of an economic crisis and instability.

Stakeholders suggested the establishment of LGBT+Q+ employee networks to support gender and sexual minorities and run training programs to inform employees. These networks could function as an internal forum for employees at all levels in the organization. These “rainbow groups” can make LGBT+Q+ topics and employees more visible within the company, but they could also provide confidential support on any issues that especially younger LGBT+Q+ employees are sometimes too afraid or scared to address on their own. Other suggestions included diversity training for all employees and managerial staff, raising awareness about trans issues and actively resisting stereotypes and prejudices against trans people, as well as continuously and authentically standing against discrimination of any kind by the management. Most experts agreed that these trainings should be compulsory for people in key functions:

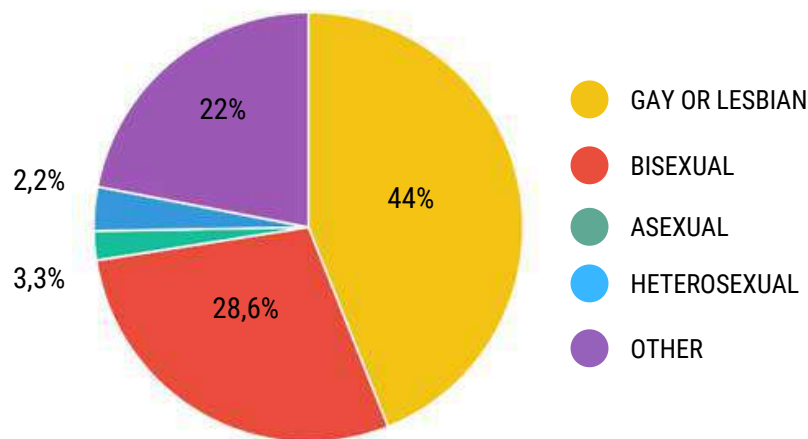
- *Start at school, but it is also a truth that a lot of people do not register for wonderfully designed workshops, which then do not take place because only 5 out of a potential 300 people register. (AT\_FG\_7)*
- *Yes, although, if I may briefly take it up, I sometimes consider voluntariness to be overrated, so it is clear to me that such workshops are sometimes difficult when there are people there who are extremely opposed, but I think, for example for executives or for people who will teach and pose a multiplier because they will have an impact on so many other people, I think that something like this could also be introduced as mandatory. (AT\_FG\_2)*

# QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

## SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA

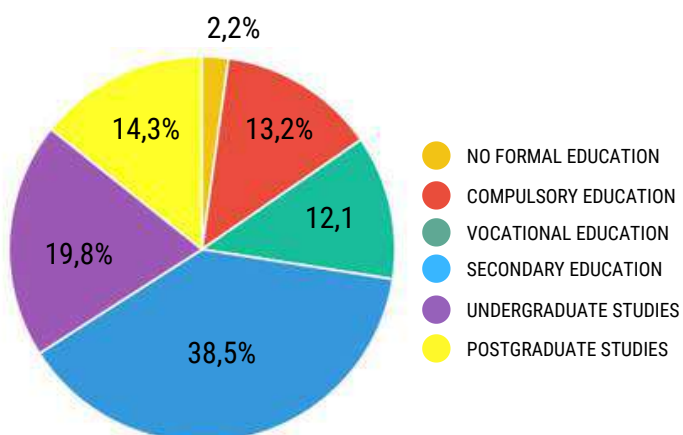
Participants were between 15 and 26 years old and had a mean age of 21.77 (SD=3.06). Most participants live in big urban cities (62.6%). Overall the majority of participants were male (42.9%) and 33% of participants declared that their gender identity does not correspond to the assigned gender at birth. Most participants (44%) declared their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian.

### PARTICIPANT'S SEXUAL ORIENTATION

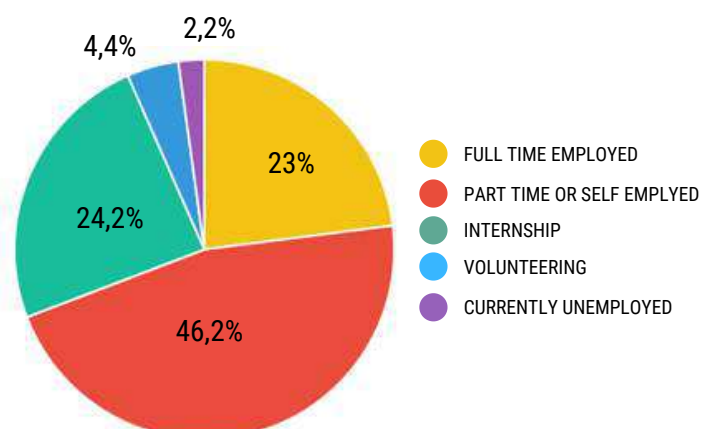


Most participants had completed a secondary level education (38.5%) and were part-time employed or self-employed (46.2%) and were working for the same employer on average for 14.52 months (SD=11.97), active mostly in social and health services (20%) and the service industry (18.9%). Furthermore the participants were mostly employed or working in smaller institutions or companies (up to 20 employees) with 40.5%.

### PARTICIPANT'S EDUCATION LEVEL



### CURRENT WORKING EXPERIENCE

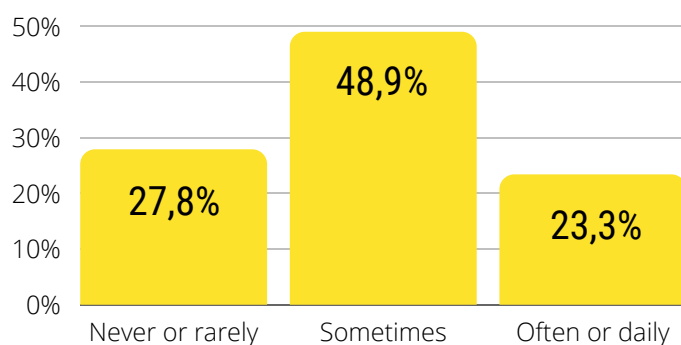


Most participants also declared they received payment for their work, however most were also receiving additional money from their parents or family (41.8%) and 20% of participants indicated they can hardly or cannot at all cover their expenses with their income.

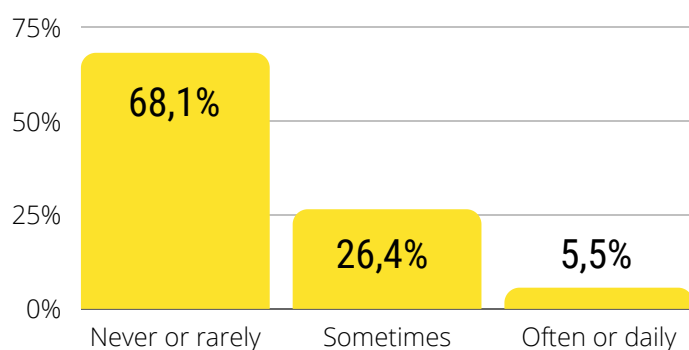
## EXPERIENCES OF ABUSE OR MOBBING IN SCHOOL

Almost half of Austrian participants reported being sometimes verbally abused in school (48.9%), and 23.3% reported experiencing daily verbal abuse while at school. Physical abuse was reported somewhat lower, with 26.4% reporting physical abuse sometimes and 5.5% daily. In terms of bullying and abuse over social media, 27% of Austrian participants reported sometimes and 5.6% daily experiences of abuse.

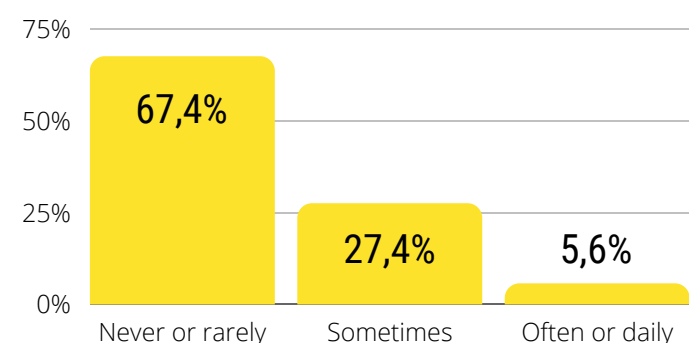
### EXPERIENCES OF VERBAL ABUSE IN SCHOOL



### EXPERIENCES OF PHYSICAL ABUSE IN SCHOOL



### EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSE IN SCHOOL





## EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION AT THE WORKPLACE

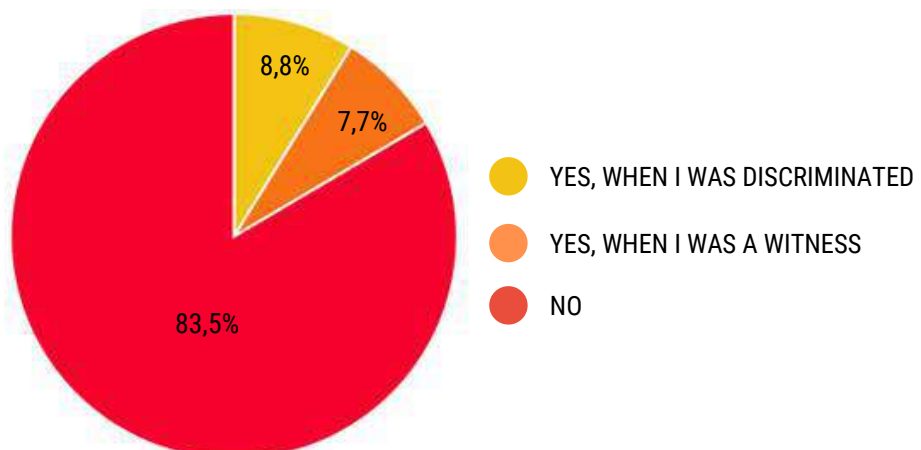
Regarding openness about their sexual orientation or gender identity at the workplace, average score chosen was 5.5 out of 10



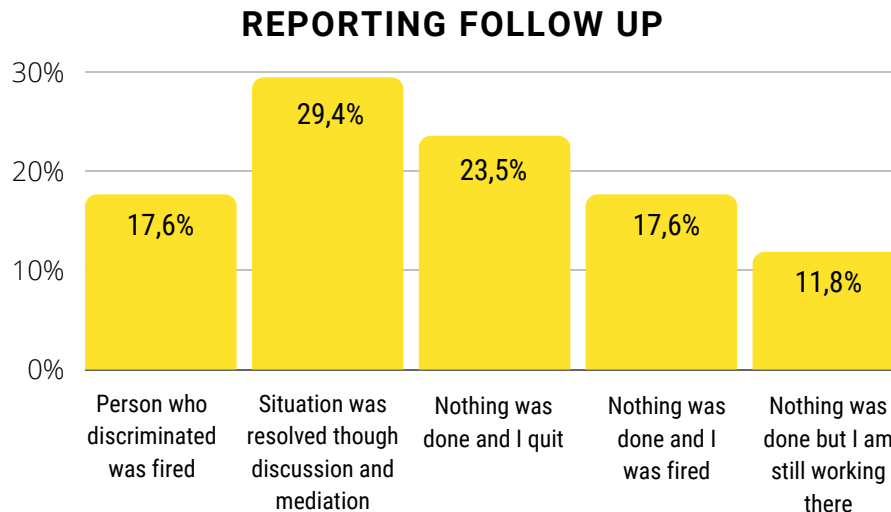
Within the Austrian sample of participants 34.1% declared that they had experienced discrimination at the workplace and 30.8% also declared they had witnessed instances of discrimination at work. Unfortunately, a large majority (83.5%) of participants did not report discrimination they experienced or witnessed.



### REPORTING OF DISCRIMINATION



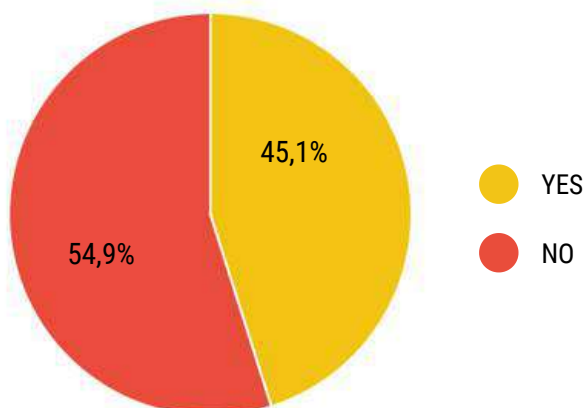
If the discrimination instances were reported, in the majority of cases an attempt was made to resolve the matter through open discussion and mediation in 29.4% of cases. Unfortunately, in 17.6% of cases the person who was discriminated left their work as nothing was done after reporting and in 11.8% of cases although nothing was followed up the person who experienced or witnessed discrimination is still at the same workplace.



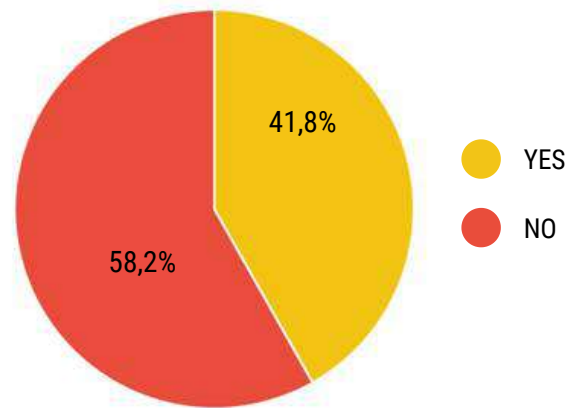
## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MECHANISMS AT THE WORKPLACE

Less than a half of the Austrian participants knew to whom they could report instances of discrimination at their workplace or were aware of any anti-discrimination or discrimination prevention measures at their workplace (45.1% and 41.8%, respectively).

### DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO REPORT DISCRIMINATION?



### ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MEASURES AT WORK



In terms of what anti-discrimination or discrimination prevention measures the minority of participants were aware of at their workplace, mostly (37.8%) reported knowing about "guidelines on sexual orientation or gender identity at the workplace" followed by "written company agreements on discrimination prevention and diversity promotion" in 18.9% of cases.

TABLE 1 (AT): LGBT+Q+ YOUTH INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Participant Code	SOGI (LGBTIQA+)	Age	Current occupation	Previous/current work experience	Most significant experience of discrimination (personal)	Most significant experience of discrimination (workplace)	Ideas for inclusivity in workplace / breaking down discrimination in the workplace
AT_YP_1	A	22	Student	Summer jobs / part-time jobs at a pet store, university youth organization and many other odd jobs	Being bullied in school by homophobes and not taken notice of by teacher	Boss having difficulty accepting that interviewee does not want binary gender title written on nametag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LGBT+Q+ representation in the media</li> <li>LGBT+Q+ rights in a few pages of simple language with bullet points</li> <li>Open communication and conscious speech</li> <li>Addressing by chosen name/ pronouns</li> </ul>
AT_YP_2	B	19	Student	Voluntary work at a pet shelter	none	None, but trans friend was harassed by their co-worker for being different	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diversity discussions</li> <li>Gender neutral toilets</li> <li>Open communication and problem-solving</li> </ul>
AT_YP_3	G	19	Student	Summer jobs / part-time jobs at a supermarket and pet store	Discomfort of stares and disapproving comments when being openly affectionate to partner	Sexual life being questioned by a co-worker in a way that made him uncomfortable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open communication</li> <li>Being open about one's own SOGI</li> <li>Adding a SOGI-friendly label to the company</li> </ul>
AT_YP_4	G	19	Student	Part-time / Temporary jobs at a phone company and a bakery	When father realized that he was gay, it was a hurtful and stressful process to go through	Was unfairly fired despite completing all his tasks at work and being better than other co-workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have rights and consequences of discrimination explicitly written in work contract</li> </ul>
AT_YP_5	L	26	Social worker	Migrant shelter, care home for mentally ill, emergency quarters for homeless women	Having to listen to unpleasant statements about lesbians from people around her when she was not outed.	Having been insulted aggressively for being a lesbian and for not returning sexual interest to a male individual in the workplace setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To have an LGBT+Q+ spokesperson in the work setting whom one can talk to about problems,</li> <li>organizing awareness workshops for employees</li> </ul>
AT_YP_6	T	24	Student	Part-time jobs, summer jobs at a bakery, restaurant and babysitting service	Discriminated for being biracial and female-presenting	Unfairly blamed by boss that the kid they* babysat was not interacting with them*, when the issue was with the parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowing LGBT rights at the workplace</li> <li>Having safe spaces</li> <li>Gender-neutral bathrooms</li> <li>Shorten the administrative process eg. For name changes</li> <li>Increase LGBT+Q+ representation in the media</li> <li>Introduce feminist/queer theory in workshops</li> </ul>
AT_YP_7	T	26	Health care worker	Full-time job	When they* openly presented their* non-binary gender during a class-exchange program	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LGBT+Q+ rights being written down in black and white</li> <li>Hasten administrative processes regarding name changes</li> </ul>

					and was later faced with people avoiding them* throughout the rest of their* stay.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising awareness of transitioning process</li> </ul>
AT_YP_8	G	26	Health care worker	Full-time job	Direct question about sexual preferences	Insensitively mocking about imagined sexual appetite, albeit as a joke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educating staff through workshops and discussions</li> <li>Creating guidelines for further education regardless of seniority</li> <li>Using media such as posters to disseminate LGBT+Q+ realities</li> </ul>
AT_YP_9	G	24	Student	Various part-time jobs (writing, healthcare centre)	No specific experiences of discrimination	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make it clear to prospective employees that the company is LGBT+Q+ friendly</li> <li>Highlight to LGBT+Q+ employees that the Chamber of Workers and Employees represents the workers well</li> <li>Strengthen LGBT+Q+ community to be outspoken and out</li> <li>Highlight good experiences of LGBT+Q+ people, not just the bad ones.</li> </ul>
AT_YP_10	G	20	Student	Electronic shop, healthcare centre	Three school bullies tried to dunk his head in a toilet among other nasty things	Co-workers did not want to work with him because of his sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employer should have zero tolerance to discrimination</li> <li>This should be fixed in the employees' collective agreement</li> <li>Staff should be offered courses on recognizing and dealing with discrimination</li> </ul>
AT_YP_11	L	21	Student	Volunteer youth groups, samaritans	Being called a fucking lesbian by a passer-by	Hearing a senior colleague making a homophobic insult directly at an individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An anonymous feedback system</li> <li>Improve conversational culture and language used about LGBT+Q+ people</li> <li>Compulsory continuous educational seminars</li> </ul>
AT_YP_12	T	22	Student	Electronic company, military, healthcare centre	Stared at by someone and asked what they* are	Referred to by a customer as 'something' that doesn't know what she wanted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have an open door policy accepting LGBT+Q+ people, and support them through their journey during employment</li> <li>Do not stick to specific heteronormative dress code</li> <li>Advertise LGBT+Q+ employees through posters and flyers about the company</li> </ul>
AT_YP_13	T	21	Restaurant service staff	Postman, clown, warehouse worker, social worker, dancer and restaurant staff	When a classmate told him that he would shoot a homosexual if he met one.	Colleague was shocked and confused when they* had a boyfriend, and not a girlfriend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being able to be open about one's gender with the boss and colleagues</li> </ul>



							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify pronouns and how one would like to be called, and state consequences if other staff do not respect that</li> <li>• State man / woman /</li> <li>• diverse in job applications</li> <li>• State that company is LGBT+Q+ friendly</li> </ul>
AT_YP_14	I	20	Student	Internships at healthcare centre	Never having come out to family for fear of being rejected	Colleagues insisting on addressing interviewee by the name assigned at birth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offering courses for awareness of LGBT+Q+ facts</li> <li>• Having a specific name badge without red/blue colour coding</li> </ul>
AT_YP_15	G	22	Marketing Freelancer	Bartender, marketing freelancer	Being confronted with snide remarks albeit jokes such as 'those LGBT+Q+ whatever things'	Not being considered for employment because of sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show interest in LGBT+Q+ recognition, such as Pride parade, by putting up rainbow flags</li> <li>• Have an internal LGBT+Q+ network</li> <li>• Provide coaching for companies to help them evolve into more diversity inclusive settings</li> <li>• Mark Pride Day as a holiday</li> <li>• Hierarchy should be absent in interpersonal staff communications</li> </ul>
AT_YP_16	G	21	Student	Internship at a law firm, volunteer at a social organization, part-time work at a business	Nothing specific	Nothing specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicitly state that they promote diversity</li> <li>• Have an LGBT+Q+ contact person</li> <li>• Hang pride flags</li> <li>• Implement specific plan of action against discrimination of LGBT+Q+ people in national legislature</li> </ul>

TABLE 2 (AT): STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Participant Code	Age	Current occupation	Obstacles that prevent seeking legal help	Ideas for inclusivity in workplace / breaking down discrimination in the workplace
AT_FG_1	45	Ombudsperson for Equal Treatment	Younger people face many more obstacles and tend to have less chances of successfully taking legal actions against discrimination. This leads to them losing trust in a system that is conceived to help them.	
AT_FG_2	45	College of Education in Vienna		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Age-appropriate in-school-workshops to raise awareness towards sexual orientation and gender identities among children and young adults in school.</li> </ul>
AT_FG_3	19	Youth Labour Union		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building networks between labor unions and LBGTIQ organizations.</li> </ul>
AT_FG_4	53	Association for Transgender people		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising awareness and information in companies on trans people and trans issues, but furthermore also evaluating and revising all business processes that are only tailored to 2 gender categories.</li> <li></li> <li>Raise awareness and information especially among people in power: management, superiors, works councils, doctors.</li> </ul>
AT_FG_5	45	Medical University of Vienna Gender Mainstreaming		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish anonymous job applications, or employ blind recruitment strategies.</li> </ul>
AT_FG_6	50	Viennese Antidiscrimination Unit for Lesbian, Gay and Transgender Issues	LBGTIQ experience different forms of "microaggressions" against them on a regular basis, which makes it common and which leads to a higher tolerance level against reporting and taking legal actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anti-discrimination laws and measures being implemented on a political level often lead to companies applying those measures as well.</li> </ul>
AT_FG_7	49	Department of Women and Families, Vienna Chamber of Commerce	Common, everyday personal discrimination often times doesn't lead to people seeking legal actions, because they a) do not know that this type is behaviour is also discrimination (legally) and/or b) they do not believe that they can change this behaviour through legal actions (resignation) and/or c) they are afraid of more severe consequences (job loss, isolation).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising awareness and information / education of works councils in companies on the topics of LBGTIQ and discrimination.</li> </ul>

# CROATIA



## APPROACH

On November 5th, 2020 the call for participation in interviews and focus groups was published on the website of Forum for Freedom in Education. We received 19 applications out of which eight did not respond to our proposal on the interview date, and three of them were minors who withdrew from the study after we asked for parental consent. In the end, eight interviews were conducted between mid-November and mid-December 2020. All interviewees gave their consent orally at the beginning of the interview. Out of 19 applicants only two of them responded positively to our call for participation in a focus group for youth, which was held on December 15th, 2020. The invitation for the stakeholder focus groups was sent to 13 individuals from academia, human rights, LGBT+Q+ and youth organisations, public institutions, and unions. Seven individuals responded positively to our invitation and participated in two focus groups in December 2020. Downloaded anonymised quantitative data were screened for inconsistencies and coded based on a predetermined codebook. For the purposes of this field report a subset of variables was created from the main questionnaire to provide a more comprehensive overview of the situations that young LGBT+Q+ people face at their workplaces in Croatia. Overall, data from 62 Croatian participants were included in the analysis.

## QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The average age of young LGBT+Q+ persons participating in this research was 24.3 years. Participants were of different educational and employment backgrounds, and coming from different settings (rural, small town and urban). Stakeholder groups comprised state institution representatives, experts from the academia and non-governmental organisations dealing with youth, LGBT+Q+ issues and human rights. The participant demographics are presented in Tables 1 and 2. In this report, key categories are presented with direct quotations from the interviews and focus groups.

# LGBT+Q+ YOUTH FINDINGS

## FACTORS OF DISCRIMINATION

In the analysis we identified 21 aspects of discrimination which were grouped into seven categories: societal influence of discrimination, an educational system that does not recognize LGBT+Q+ topics, the organisational culture not being sensitive to discrimination, self-discrimination, systemic and/or global problems, low awareness and other factors.

The most commonly found aspects of **societal influence** on discrimination were stereotypes:

- *...and someone will see that I am gesticulating a lot with my hands, I have a tone of voice that seems feminine to someone, (...), I wear clothes from Zara (...) And then same thing is with the LGBT population that they will almost never ask directly. However, they already have some attitudes and some stereotypes most often, as they categorize you. (HR-YP-5)*

Young people mentioned differences in being employed in urban and rural areas, in that smaller communities were more likely environments where discrimination was pervasive, while urban settings gave greater opportunities to find employers who took care of their employees. The same was said for different regions of the country. The perception is that the eastern and southern parts of the country are less aware of discrimination while in the west and in the north the situation could be described as a little bit better. Generally speaking, the situation in the workplace is just a reflection of the situation in society, where people are not aware of discrimination and its consequences:

- *But when I was looking for a job in Karlovac or Duga Resa, there was definitely a lot of discrimination. Many people are afraid of being let go, for the reason that discrimination is still not treated. It needs to be normalized in smaller areas such as Karlovac or Duga Resa. (HR-YP-2)*

With reference to the **educational system**, participants consistently mentioned that LGBT+Q+ people are not visible or even present in the educational curriculum. This has led to personal struggles in accepting their identity as something normal, which could be a very challenging situation for a developing young person. It was observed that young people were not prepared for the working environment especially with regards to interpersonal relations and workers' rights:

- *It was not clear to me and in general in my environment, in primary school everyone went to a party and those things and there was no talk at all, and I did not know at all that something like that existed, that I could fall in love with a woman, not just man. (HR-YP-1)*

As far as the **organisational culture** was concerned, young people noted that employers were not aware of discrimination or, when it happened, they avoided tackling the core of the issue. It was also observed that incidents of discrimination depended on the size of the organisation, type of business sector or, in the case of university studies, the type of faculty they attended. One interviewee noted that discrimination was a little less likely to occur in an organisation with LGBT+Q+ persons being in the management.

On the topic of **self-discrimination**, it was found that young LGBT+Q+ people were sometimes forsaking their identity in order to avoid provoking reactions because of the rigid working environment, to blend into the working environment, or because of the fear of endangering their financial situation:

- *I mean, you're more of trying to somehow preserve your existence, if nothing else. (HR-YP-3)*

Some interviewees mentioned the influence of **systemic and / or global problems**: from the lack of systemic support to young LGBT+Q+ people, institutions not willing to provide support to the position that capitalism encourages discrimination with its tendency for simplification and unification:

- *Yes, that's one risk they probably don't want to take. Capitalism loves standardization, predictability. The less diversity there is the easier it is to predict what the consumer will choose. (HR-YP-8)*

Participants mentioned that there was **low awareness** among the general public, and that they were not aware of discrimination especially with regards to the rights of transsexual and non-binary persons. They pointed out that transsexual, intersexual, and non-binary persons are the **most vulnerable** in general, especially when it comes to their position in the labour market:

- *I think transgender people are discriminated against more than gay people in general. Because even today, (...), binary and transgender people are not recognized in the LGBT community either. Some people don't recognize them as being part of that community and so marginalize themselves in society, you understand? (HR-YP-2)*
- *I think it's a bigger problem for transgender people. I was reading an article that was recently in Jutarnji (national newspaper), a transgender man who lost his job because of his gender identity. (HR-YP-7)*





# EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION

There were four forms of discrimination which were mentioned by participants: harassment, attacks, exclusion, and different types of comments.

Participants identified following types of **harassment**: misgendering, bullying/teasing, and dissemination of intimate or personal information:

- *I was most annoyed when my friends, who seemed to be ok with it, deliberately started misgendering because why not make a person think about how they are going to kill themselves? And they literally told me to kill myself, but it had nothing to do with work or anything like that. I think that discrimination comes into play with me getting that job at all because at first they didn't want to take me at all but said that if I don't get that job, you'll get that one at the fort (another place / another one). (HR-YP-4)*

Participants mentioned verbal **attacks**, physical violence and comments regarding the usage of toilets:

- *Now at that point, for a while I heard all sorts of such quite discriminatory messages from some people, but then at first it was hard to take a stand right away. I mostly avoided or would verbalize something else or open up some other topics. (HR-YP-5)*

Participants also mentioned that **comments and gossips** were commonplace, especially regarding one's clothing:

- *As much as in a way, all people know how to joke, but it can hurt other people a lot. (HR-YP-1)*
- *And then... I don't know... with each other, one will comment something to the other, and then somewhere else someone will comment with a third person. Of course we come here,... I don't know...for example if you meet someone outside the workplace, outside in a group of people, that's the first thing they will say the next day, because that's exactly what is currently happening. (HR-YP-5)*
- *...some incidental type comments like why you dress like a man (...) otherwise I shave my head (...) I just wear a hairstyle like that, I dress in menswear, I just feel more comfortable that way. There are only such comments... of the type that it is not exactly suitable clothing for a female person. (HR-YP-7)*

Participants talked about exclusion in social and familial settings. They spoke about family issues with acceptance, different types of exclusion either in the social, school or work environments, or being silent about their sexual and gender identity at the university:

- *I don't think my father will ever accept, and I cannot expect people from work to be able to accept it immediately. (HR-YP-4)*
- *But for example, a larger circle of friends in college, I'm not quite too open yet because I know there are colleagues who aren't very open people and I've heard that somehow, they can comment on things. (HR-YP-1)*

## BARRIERS TO BREAKING DOWN DISCRIMINATION

The analysis identified five barriers to breaking down discrimination: barriers on a personal level, religious influence in society, distrust in the system to protect from discrimination, mild public reaction and the tendency to normalize discrimination.

The barriers on a **personal level** which were mentioned by participants were family influence or lack of family support, a narrow or rigid mindset in the workplace, a lack of defiance of LGBT+Q+ people, and a "go with the flow" attitude which gave advantage to the surrounding factors rather than one's personal wellbeing:

- *Yes, it all starts with civil disobedience and I think that the defiance in people is being killed today. They just want to survive and agree to less and less. As if they were a broken spirit. It's hard to fight for human rights when you're economically vulnerable. When you are exhausted from work, it is difficult to get aggressive or passionate. These are all (requiring) some higher levels of consciousness for which you need to relax, for which you need to be able to clearly think (HR-YP-8)*

When participants spoke about the **distrust in the system**, they predominantly mentioned distrust in the legal system, which should rightfully be applying anti-discrimination laws into reality and effectively resolving cases of anti-discrimination:

- *It went to the newspapers, but you know how it is in Croatia with the reporting of cases, and this has been dragging on in the courts for years. Unfortunately, in fact, regardless of whether it is an LGBT case or the case of parents who want to share custody of their children, no matter what the case, they are always dragged through the courts for years and there is no real benefit from it. (HR-YP-7)*
- *But I think that in our country, some big shit happens and then the State Attorney's Office turns it into... 'spreading and calling for violence and hatred according to the Criminal Code', then of course it fails and people see that people are not convicted for such things. If something like this happens to you at work then you have the right to initiate some kind of private labour dispute that will supposedly be over quickly, but you know that it will last at least 3 years. (HR-YP-3)*

Participants mentioned that there was a **lack of unambiguous reaction**. The public reaction or, to be precise, a lack thereof is another barrier in the fight against discrimination as mentioned by young LGBT+Q+ people. Here the analysis identified three topics: a lack of clear and direct reaction from decision makers on cases of discrimination or ambiguous reactions to messages. Interviewees also emphasized the indifference of political parties influencing this topic.

- *And then as soon as it's not talked about, in a way I think it's tacitly being like "yeah, we can talk shit about them". Even politicians don't comment, so we can continue (talking shit). (HR-YP-1)*

Interviewees mentioned two additional factors that are seen as obstacles in breaking down discrimination, namely **religious influence** and the perception that **discrimination is being normalised**.

- *We as a nation are mostly Catholics, when I say most then 90% Catholics. And also Orthodox and Muslims, but it doesn't matter that much. (...) But you understand we are just there somewhere like Poland; we are also a Catholic state. So it's just ... it's something that people raise their children to look at gay people in a different light, that it's something unnatural. But I think that in general the situation has improved a bit, that young people have a much better perception when it comes to LGBT people. (HR-YP-7)*
- *...as far as raising some awareness I don't know. Maybe to say in general... that maybe people have accepted some forms of behaviour that are inherently unacceptable. However, since they meet them every day, they may have just accepted them as a necessary evil. (HR-YP-5)*
- *Maybe that nurse who works at that doctor's office learned that he talks to everyone like that, so it's nothing wrong. And then if someone asks her if she experiences discrimination in the workplace, (there is) the probability that she will say it's small because it's something to which she is accustomed; but this... one may point out that these behaviours are not okay, that these attitudes may hurt someone. (HR-YP-5)*



# FACILITATORS TO BREAK DOWN DISCRIMINATION

Four areas were identified as key to breaking down discrimination, namely: policy and legal actions, personal involvement, awareness raising activities and activism.

**Policy and legal actions** imply direct actions by employers in the sense of setting clear diversity and inclusion policies and, generally speaking, assuming greater responsibility in protecting their employees. Regarding state actions, young people expressed the need for better and more precise legislation, more legal actions against perpetrators or a more efficient system for protection from discrimination in a broader sense.

Young people also pointed out the need for **personal involvement** in a way that they should be true to themselves. They encouraged coming out and general personal involvement against discrimination.

**Awareness raising activities** were also mentioned as important for breaking down discrimination. This category includes consistent effort in breaking down stereotypes particularly among working colleagues; working with companies to raise awareness on the necessity to make the working environment inclusive; and a call to the media to avoid any vague or unclear messages, and to adopt a clear stance on discrimination.

The last category was **activism**, or more precisely the call for participation in both public actions and digital activism.



# INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES

Participants proposed six strategies for making the working environment more inclusive, namely: awareness raising activities, inclusive education, a network of support, actions on a personal level, and legal actions.

Participants described **awareness raising activities** as those comprised placing substantial accent on the employee's competences and capabilities, and not on their sexual and/or gender identity. Further, they stressed the need to co-operate with media outlets to give suitable attention to discrimination cases or to raise awareness on the need for equality in workplaces. There were also concrete proposals such as anti-stereotype training, and training on interpersonal relations in workplaces. Interviewees also felt that more public role models and/or coming out would raise more awareness about equality in the Croatian society. In all of this, Pride events are perceived as contributing to raising awareness.

Interviewees repeatedly mentioned the need to incorporate **inclusive education** for people with regards to sexual and gender identity and about LGBT+Q+ people. School curricula should be changed or updated to raise the visibility of LGBT+Q+ people in the educational system, but also to talk about sexual and gender identity with students. Participants felt that students should - at an early age - be able to see that their sexual or gender identity, which they are discovering, is not something odd or deviant. One participant proposed concrete actions at university level, which comprised building a network of alumni students who would mentor students on interpersonal relations at workplaces and how to deal with different forms of discrimination.

A third category that was raised was the provision of a **network of support**. It was felt that this support should be psychological, legal or any other aspects that were needed by young LGBT+Q+ people. Participants proposed establishing a special support phone line for young LGBT+Q+ people.

The LGBT+Q+ participants recommended more **action on a personal level**. They felt that the courage to stand up for oneself, as well as to have family support and acceptance was generally important in everyday life, but particularly so in professional life.

The most important **legal action** seen by young people is the legal framework, which precisely identifies and mentions LGB, transsexual and non-binary people as those who can be targets of discrimination.



# STAKEHOLDER FINDINGS

## FACTORS OF DISCRIMINATION

Stakeholders participating in the WE project's focus groups identified eight factors of discrimination influencing the working life of young LGBT+Q+ people, namely: a poor legal framework, societal influence, organisational culture, special factors, self-discrimination, systemic problems, issues with education and low awareness.

The current **legal framework** has been identified as one of the key hurdles to preventing discrimination as there are numerous issues which makes it **poor** and ambiguous. The legal framework does not mention LGBT+Q+ people directly, and thus does not provide implementing institutions with clear and precise instructions on how discrimination cases should proceed. This is one of the reasons why some stakeholders say that the current system of protection is not working properly. This leads us to another issue that, due to the low rates of reporting, the Croatian legal system has a modest level of legal practice in the field of workplace discrimination.

- *Thus, what can be said to be characteristic of the field of work, specifically from the discriminatory basis for gay people is that, in practice, legal protection does not work as it should, and the legislative framework is not developed in this regard to either specifically protect this (LGBT) group, or the individual. Neither does the law recognize that group of persons (LGBT) as a particularly vulnerable group in the field of work, which, in our opinion, is an omission, because in that way discrimination actually slinks under the radar, and complaints, due to distrust in the system, do not come to us, so we cannot develop our own judicial practice. (HR-FG-1)*

Beyond what was mentioned, stakeholders also pointed out that the legal framework was not developed in a participatory manner with all relevant stakeholders. This led to one of the stakeholders expressing the question as to whether the Croatian anti-discriminatory legal framework is genuine, as the impression is that policies are introduced pro forma, mostly just to fulfil international obligations.

- *This is actually a problem because, structurally speaking, from the point of view of the system, the system did not organize anything because it believes that protection should be provided to these persons, but... it should have had to organize it. (...) Thus, it is imposed on the system practically from the outside as something that is a foreign body of the system. Our whole system.... our Government is not aware, so it actually wants to educate and help a certain group of citizens to exercise their rights equally, but it is done in a way to achieve a certain interest. But that interest does not include protection of those rights. And that's the problem. (HR-FG-1)*

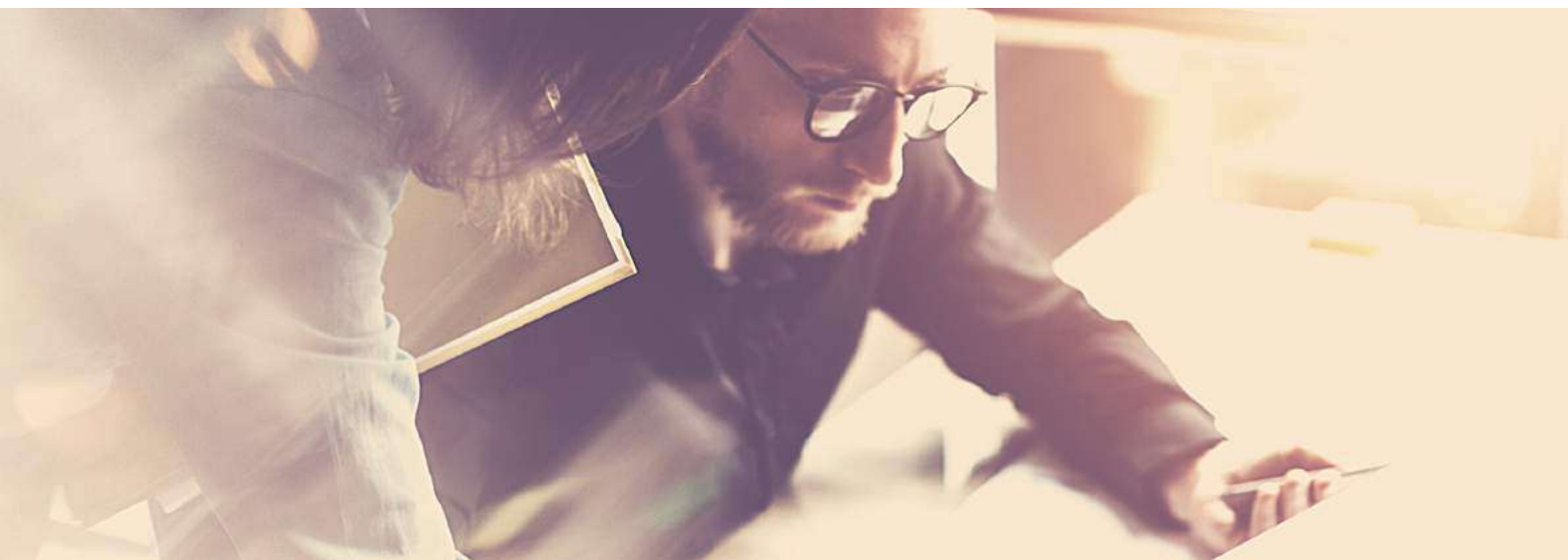
Stakeholders also pointed out the effect of **societal influence**, in that the situation in the workplace is just a reflection of the situation in society where there is a low level of awareness about discrimination and where stereotypes are still a predominant approach to sexual and gender groups. Participants expressed that some professional associations, unions and media do not have clear and precise policies about reactions to discrimination, nor do they sufficiently emphasize the issue of discrimination in society or in workplaces.

- *And the professional organisations fail to note this... the medical chamber, the medical society, psychotherapeutic associations, psychotherapeutic schools, the Croatian Psychological Society. So, there are no clear guidelines as there are by the American Psychological Organization, the British Psychological Society, the German Psychological Society, where they clearly distance themselves from what is quasi-science: what is private belief, and what is the professional stance based on scientific research. (HR-FG-6)*

It was pointed out during the focus groups that, generally speaking, there is a poor **organisational culture** with regards to acting on discrimination, and that employers are not aware of their role in discrimination prevention nor are they familiar with the corresponding legislative framework. For these reasons, employers sometimes do not tackle the core of the issue when it happens, but rather just solve them rapidly and superficially.

Once again, the **vulnerability of transgender and non-binary persons** was emphasized, and that among sexual and gender groups, transgender and non-binary persons are the most vulnerable both on the level of the legal framework and on the level of company policies.

- *We now have a whole set of people who ... so most LGBs can choose whether to work for an employer. But when it comes to trans, intersex and non-binary people, the situation is a little different because it's a matter of documents and it's a matter of that whole person's appearance, expressions that are rejected in the beginning.... and unfortunately, this has not been addressed... and in that sense it is something to insist on in terms of the legal framework. (HR-FG-4)*



Stakeholders also pointed out that young LGBT+Q+ people **self-discriminate** when they are exposed to workplace situations where they forsake their identity in order not to provoke reactions from colleagues, or because of the general situation at work, due to their financial situation or just to blend in with their working environment.

- *And then I listened a little through our work with young people that they, say in Rijeka, a lot of young people who come to study or are simply from Rijeka and study, a very large percentage of them work. (...) but I've noticed that let's say they think they're out, but they're not out at work. For example, although these may be some short-term student jobs, some may turn out to be longer-term over time, but what I realized is that a lot of them are out with their friends, but they will not go out at work, they will not make it known at work. They want nothing to do with any sexual orientation or gender identity because well, it seems to me, that they are, that's at least my opinion, in my view, I seem to be quite intimidated like that in the adult world. So when they're among their peers or online they're far more relaxed, but when they're in the adult world, in the world of authority, in a world where they have a minor role, let's say, they're pretty intimidated when it comes to outsiders, when it comes to anything related with LGBT topics. And if they can't get out then they can't even claim any rights and they are smaller than a poppy seed. (HR-FG-7)*

As for the **systemic problems**, stakeholders mentioned the lack of systemic support to young LGBT+Q+ people in their transition to workplaces and the lack of institutional support for organisations that would help young LGBT+Q+ people.

- *And we can't get in Croatia, not only us as an organization, but LGBT organisations in general or any association, can't get approval from the Ministry of Education to educate children on most topics that are not related to say, ecology. So all this that helps, as far as we know, towards some democratisation of society, you can't get permission for. Which is pretty sad. (HR-FG-7)*

It was mentioned participants in the focus groups highlighted **issues with education**, that the fact that LGBT+Q+ people are hardly visible in education is considered as one of the factors of discrimination. To this it was added that education in general does not prepare young individuals for the working environment, as it does not provide one with comprehensive and cross-curriculum competencies.

Alongside a general **low awareness** on discrimination, stakeholders specially emphasized the unawareness on the rights of transgender, intersex and non-binary persons.

It should be noted as one stakeholder pointed out, that young LGBT+Q+ people are subject to a two-level discrimination. Firstly, there is discrimination on the level of age, as in these days young people are a vulnerable group especially when it comes to entering work. Secondly, there is discrimination based on their sexual or gender identity.

# BARRIERS TO BREAKING DOWN DISCRIMINATION

Stakeholders' responses to the question about the barriers to breaking down discrimination were grouped into three categories: distrust in the system, lack of public reaction to the discrimination cases and religious influence in the society.

Due to the already described issues with the Croatian anti-discrimination framework, stakeholders identified **distrust in the system** as one of the key barriers in the prevention of discrimination. Due to long and unclear procedures and the fear of second victimization during the process, people are not reporting cases of discrimination. Also, the lack of systemic data contributes to the overall distrust.

Participants felt that there was a **lack of effective public reaction**. Mild and ambiguous reactions and messages about cases of discrimination in public spaces, especially from politicians and political parties, were felt to contribute to the poor overall situation of anti-discriminatory action in Croatian society.

The overall **influence of religion** in society (for example education) is identified as one of the barriers in prevention and breaking down discrimination in society and, consequently, in the workplace.

- *I say this both because of the research and because of all these young people who come to us with their experiences on Instagram and who are frustrated that only religious education is teaching about LGBTIQ people in school, from the fact that these topics are mentioned sporadically depending on the personal interests of those people which are now in some positions.... and that it is very, it can be rough and inappropriate. So, it is a very, very deep structural problem. (HR-FG-4)*

# FACILITATORS TO BREAK DOWN DISCRIMINATION

In the discussion on facilitators to break down discrimination, stakeholders mostly focused on legal and policy actions. The whole legal framework needs to be better and more precise, with concrete steps made in its implementation. The state should provide help to employers to implement the framework and develop their best practices. Furthermore, companies and employers also need to have clearly stated, visible and implemented diversity and inclusion policies.

- *I think the legal framework. If we talk about formal (obstacles) that should be better emphasised they should be, in general, the regulations, the laws governing employment. First of all, I think that techniques intended to treat conversion...or conversion therapy...should be legally prohibited. It is somewhere ethically determined that this should not be done and that sexual orientation... that gender identity is the right of every person, including minors. Therefore, (individuals have) the right to self-determination. But since there are no legal provisions, there is always a grey area of problems where some experts and then parents can act according to their beliefs. (HR-FG-6)*

# INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES

Stakeholders mentioned that changes in education, awareness raising activities, legal and policy level actions, as well as support were necessary in order to allow for LGBT+Q+ youth inclusivity in the workforce.

## **Changes in Education.**

Discussing changes in education, stakeholders pointed out the need to educate the population about sexual and gender identity and about LGBT+Q+ people for which the curriculum needs to be updated or changed. Generally, LGBT+Q+ people and issues should have a certain level of visibility in education. Additionally, stakeholders pointed out the need to educate young people about workers' rights.

## **Awareness Raising.**

In the context of awareness raising activities, participants mentioned the need to promote organisational culture in companies and institutions that give accent to competencies and capabilities rather than to sexual and/or gender identity of an employee. Anti-stereotype trainings could be a starting point towards that culture.

## **Legal Level Actions.**

Regarding the legal framework, stakeholders emphasized the need for more reporting of discrimination cases in order to build legal practice in this field, but they also called for more participatory and open decision-making in this field.

## **Policy Level Actions.**

Stakeholders expressed the need for the synergy between different policy areas as well as some concrete actions toward companies and employers in the form of benefits for developed and implemented diversity and inclusive policies.

## **Support.**

Speaking about policy actions, there was a call for a systemic and comprehensive support network for young LGBT+Q+ people and young people in general. The first step in building this support network could be a dedicated phone support line for young LGBT+Q+ people.

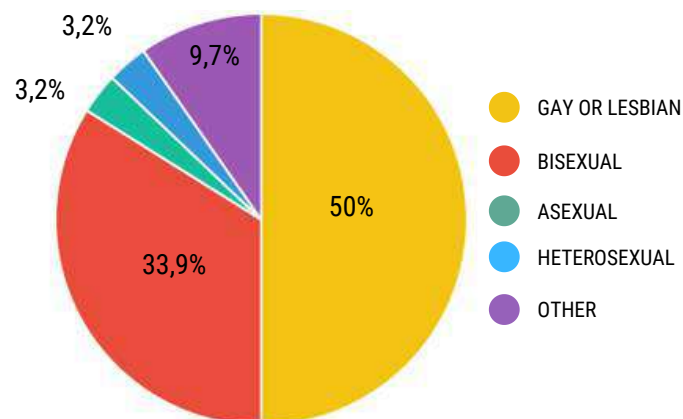


# QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

## SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA

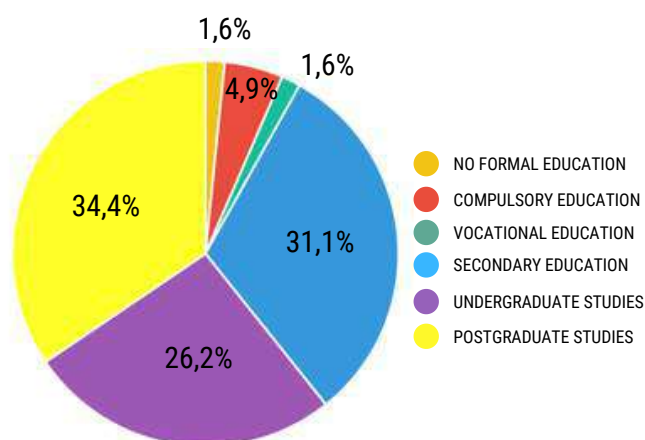
Participants were between 15 and 26 years old and had a mean age of 22.03 (SD=3.19). Most participants live in rural areas or smaller towns (49.2%). Overall the majority of participants were male (48.4%) and 8.1% of participants declared that their gender identity does not correspond to the assigned gender at birth. Most participants (50%) declared their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian.

### PARTICIPANT'S SEXUAL ORIENTATION

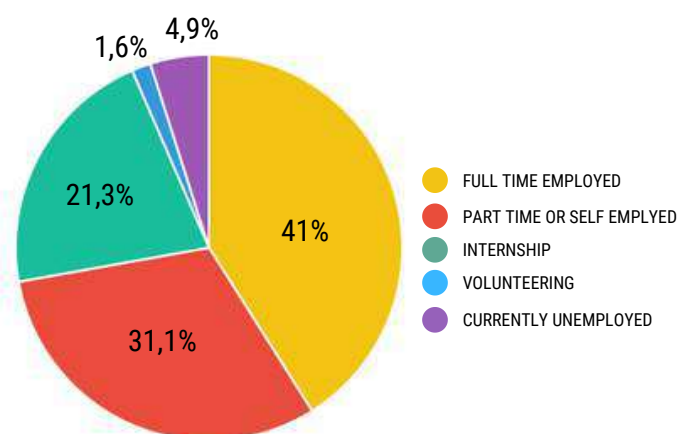


Most participants had completed a tertiary level education (34.4%) and were full time employed (41%) and were working for the same employer on average for 12.89 months (SD=14.17), active mostly in culture and recreational sector (20%) and education (14.2%). Furthermore the participants were mostly employed or working in smaller institutions or companies (up to 20 employees) with 51%.

### PARTICIPANT'S EDUCATION LEVEL



### CURRENT WORKING EXPERIENCE

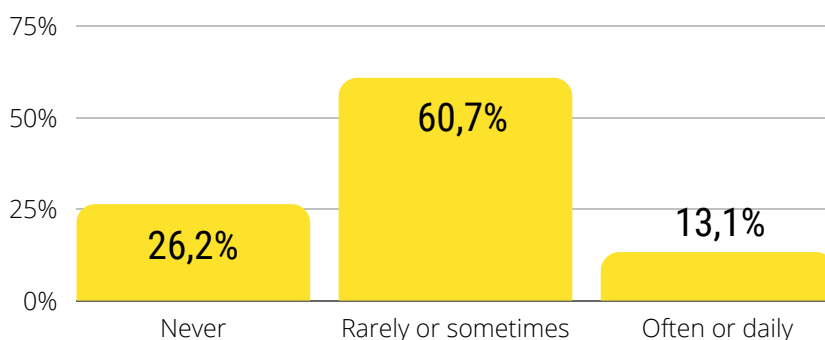


Most participants also declared they received payment for their work to which they are fully dependent on and do not receive any extra financial help from their families or parents (50.8%) and 10% of participants indicated they can hardly or cannot at all cover their expenses with their income.

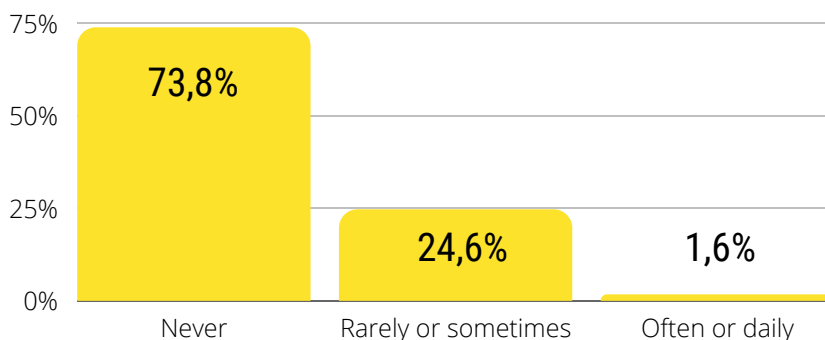
## EXPERIENCES OF ABUSE OR MOBBING IN SCHOOL

Two thirds of Croatian participants reported being sometimes verbally abused in school (60.7%) and 13.1% reported experiencing daily verbal abuse while at school. Physical abuse was reported somewhat lower, with 24.6% reporting physical abuse sometimes and 1.6% daily. In terms of bullying and abuse over social media, 44.3% of Croatian participants reported sometimes and 1.6% daily experiences of abuse.

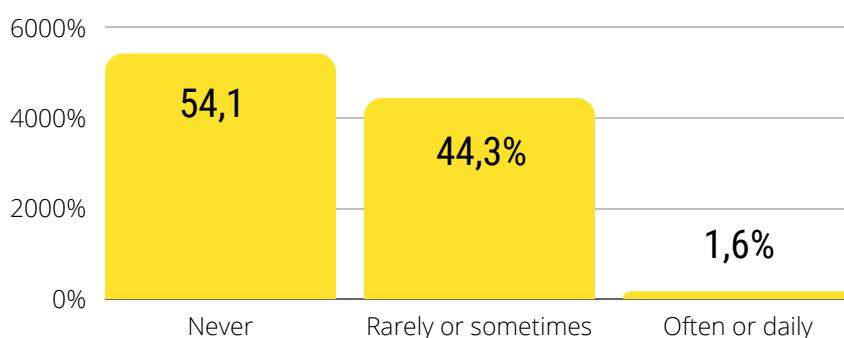
### EXPERIENCES OF VERBAL ABUSE IN SCHOOL



### EXPERIENCES OF PHYSICAL ABUSE IN SCHOOL



### EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSE IN SCHOOL

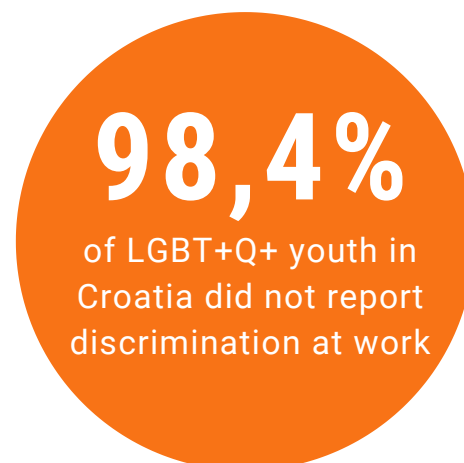


## EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION AT THE WORKPLACE

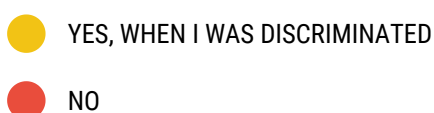
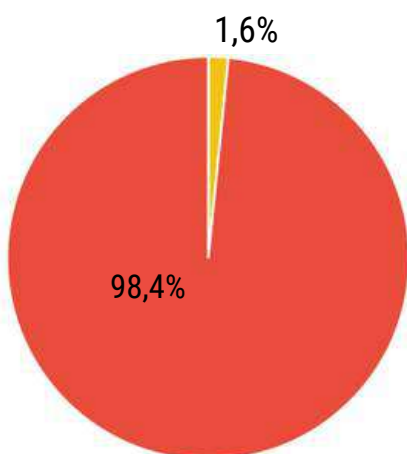
Regarding openness about their sexual orientation or gender identity at the workplace, average score chosen was 4.8 out of 10.



Within the Croatian sample of participants 16.1% declared that they had experienced discrimination at the workplace and 16.7% also declared they had witnessed instances of discrimination at work. Unfortunately a large majority (98.4%) of participants did not report discrimination they experienced or witnessed.



### REPORTING OF DISCRIMINATION

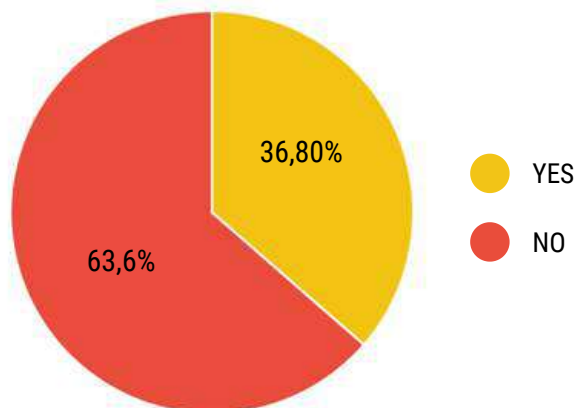


Worryingly, only one participant in the Croatian sample of participants declared that they have reported or tried to report an instance of discrimination they themselves experienced. In that one case the study participant reported that there was a follow up and that the matter was resolved through mediation.

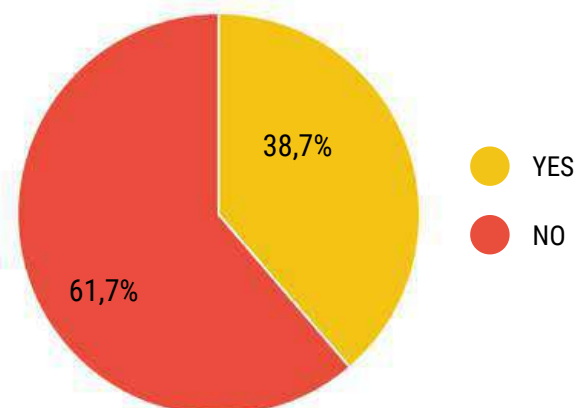
## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MECHANISMS AT THE WORKPLACE

Overall, 36.4% of Croatian participants knew to whom they can report instances of discrimination at their workplace and 38.7% were aware of any anti-discrimination or discrimination prevention measures at their workplace.

### DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO REPORT DISCRIMINATION?



### DO YOU KNOW OF ANY ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MEASURES?



In terms of what anti-discrimination or discrimination prevention measures the minority of participants were aware of at their workplace, mostly (48.0%) reported knowing about "written company agreements on discrimination prevention and diversity promotion" followed by "there is a designated person for mobbing prevention" in 44.0% of cases.

TABLE 1 (HR): LGBT+Q+ YOUTH INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Participant Code	SEXUAL AND/OR GENDER IDENTITY (LGBTIQA+)	Age	Current occupation	Previous/current work experience	Most significant experience of discrimination (personal)	Most significant experience of discrimination (workplace)	Ideas for inclusivity in workplace / breaking down discrimination in the workplace
HR-YP-1	B	20	student	mostly part time jobs (seasonal jobs)	Issues with family acceptance Jokes about sexual and/or gender identity	Being silent about sexual and/or gender identity in the university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special phone line for young people on sexual and/or gender identity topics</li> <li>• More media attention</li> <li>• Family acceptance</li> <li>• Having pride event annually</li> <li>• More courage</li> <li>• Provide support to young people</li> <li>• Talk about sexual and/or gender identity in schools</li> </ul>
HR-YP-2	L	26	employee		none reported	none reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More public role models / coming-outs</li> <li>• More accent on help/protection of transgender and non-binary people</li> <li>• Give more importance on person's competence not on sexual and/or gender identity</li> <li>• Education people, give people information</li> <li>• Work on acceptance/normalization</li> </ul>
HR-YP-3	G	27	student/employee	mostly part time jobs and volunteering	none reported	Verbal comments and attacks Colleagues reacting on his sexual and/or gender identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce topics about LGBT in schools</li> <li>• More public role models / coming out of celebrities</li> <li>• Work on acceptance/normalization</li> </ul>
HR-YP-4	T	23	unemployed	mostly part time jobs (seasonal jobs)	issues with family acceptance	Verbal attacks Different comments Misgendering/wrong usage of pronouns Comments about toilet usage Bullying and teasing	non proposed



						Dissemination of intimate/personal information	
HR-YP-5	G	25	employee		none reported	Exclusion on the workplace Verbal attacks Different comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate people about sexual and/or gender identity</li> <li>• More sexual and/or gender identity topics in education</li> <li>• Anti-stereotype trainings</li> <li>• Training on interpersonal relations</li> <li>• Group of alumni students having training for university students on working environment</li> </ul>
HR-YP-6	G	26	student	volunteering/students jobs	issues with family acceptance	exclusion from social events/groups physical violence verbal attacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More courage (personal level)</li> </ul>
HR-YP-7	L	22	employee		none reported	comments about clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate people about sexual and/or gender identity</li> <li>• Update curriculum to include lgbt topics</li> <li>• Talk about sexual and/or gender identity in schools</li> </ul>
HR-YP-8	G	26	student	volunteering/students jobs	none reported	none reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More accent on competences rather on sexual and/or gender identity</li> </ul>

TABLE 2 (HR): STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Participant Code	Age	Current occupation	Obstacles that prevent seeking legal help	Ideas for inclusivity in workplace / breaking down discrimination in the workplace
HR-FG-01	N/A	expert advisor	Legal framework lacking precision (LGBT people usually not mentioned) Distrust in legal system in general Distrust in protection system within company Fear of significant public exposure if one reports discrimination Fear of second victimization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and training</li> <li>• Encourage reporting of discrimination</li> <li>• Diversity charters</li> </ul>
HR-FG-02	N/A	head of programme and development	Policy documents in the field of work target only one vulnerable group (Roma people); young people not addressed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits for employers</li> <li>• Encourage reporting of discrimination</li> <li>• Use all legal tools to fight discrimination</li> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Not look at person through sexual and/or gender identity but through competences</li> </ul>
HR-FG-03	N/A	coordinator		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide all needed support to young people</li> <li>• Encourage people to report</li> </ul>
HR-FG-04	N/A	executive director	Legal framework lacking precision (trans and non-binary people not mentioned) People are in general fear of violence in the street; this fear is reflected also in fear of institutions Young people are not aware of sexual and/or gender identity topics for their rights in society; no appropriate topics in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social clubs</li> <li>• Gay-straight alliances clubs in schools and university</li> <li>• Provide support</li> <li>• Awareness raising campaigns</li> <li>• More reporting of discriminations</li> <li>• Empowerment</li> </ul>
HR-FG-05	N/A	secretary general	Employers are not aware of their legal obligations in this field Unions do not recognize this issues as the issue which concerns their members	
HR-FG-06	N/A	psychologist	State does not react on hate speech in appropriate way which can be obstacle in seeking legal help Distrust in legal system Legal documents are not clear and precise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone line to support young LGBT people</li> <li>• Introduction of civic education, partnership education, health education</li> </ul>
HR-FG-07	N/A	head of programme	Lack of strategic policy documents Pro forma acceptance of international agreements and documents LGBT people are not clearly recognized as vulnerable group in documents Support to victims of discrimination rest mainly on civil society organisations Pro forma participatory policy and decision making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaigns run by state institutions</li> <li>• Training of state officials and clerks, especially policy officers</li> </ul>

# SERBIA



## APPROACH

The study included young LGBT+Q+ people aged 16-26 (N=8), who had work experience or are currently working. They were recruited in cooperation with two organizations. Stakeholders were recruited so that they represented decision-makers, employers and institutions/organizations working with young people and/or LGBT+Q+ people. Due to the epidemiological situation related to COVID19, in-depth interviews and FGD were conducted online via Zoom. All participants provided signed informed consent form by email as well as oral consent at the beginning of each interview. The interviews lasted about 75 minutes each, and the FGD about 90 minutes. Downloaded anonymised data were screened for inconsistencies and coded based on a predetermined codebook. For the purposes of this field report a subset of variables was created from the main questionnaire to provide a more comprehensive overview of the situations that young LGBT+Q+ people face at their workplaces in Serbia. Overall, data from 50 Serbian participants were included in the analysis.

## QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The average age of the participants was 23.4 (ranging from 20 to 26). Most of the participants were from the region of Belgrade (5), then from the region of Vojvodina (2) and the region of Sumadija and Western Serbia (1). At the time of the interview, two people lived in the countryside and the others in the city. Most were employed in the Belgrade region, 1 in the Vojvodina region, and 1 in region Sumadija and Western Serbia. Detailed participant demographics are provided in Tables 1 & 2\_RS in the Appendix.

# LGBT+Q+ YOUTH FINDINGS

## FACTORS OF DISCRIMINATION

### *SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS*

Participants especially recognised the existence of negative perceptions of the LGBT+Q+ population in society. According to them, society sees them as different, as those who do not fit into the heterosexual norm, are a threat to the institution of the family, and even as sick. This leads to a different treatment of members of the LGBT+Q+ population, for which most cite negative experiences from school as an example. While in school, respondents felt that other students distanced themselves from them or verbally harassed them, and in some cases, they also suffered physical violence (in the school itself or outside of school).

Participants generally believed that one of the basic markers of the difference between the LGBT+Q+ population and others is appearance. That is, that others recognised them as LGBT+Q+ people based on their physical appearance. They believed that other people regarded feminized men and transgender people as the most conspicuous in appearance. In addition, respondents believed that society has stereotypical notions of what an LGBT+Q+ person looks like:

- *I think what often happens is that many people equate queer culture with piercings, tattoos, dyed hair, and that some people who are perhaps more traditional are so extremely separated by it, and because all opinion is formed based on that. (RS\_YP\_6)*

According to the respondents, discrimination in the sense of verbal and even physical violence, can occur based on the appearance of LGBT+Q+ people in public places, especially if the appearance is accompanied by certain gestures that indicate intimacy (holding hands, for example).

They pointed out that a special factor contributing to discrimination in different contexts is the socialization of LGBT+Q+ people through family and school, where conformism was mainly emphasised. One respondent explicitly stated:

- *My parents brought me up for example: don't resent, don't react, let go, shut up, cool down, don't do worse than it can be and so on... (RS\_YP\_8)*



## INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

Participants felt that the awareness of negative attitudes from society towards LGBT+Q+ people lead to internationalized homonegativity and the understanding that all discriminatory actions and insults are in fact deserved and taken for granted. One respondent stated that he thought about suicide during the process of accepting his identity. Being aware of negative attitudes from their environment, prompted respondents to apply various strategies to reduce the risk of discrimination or hostility. These included hiding their LGBT+Q+ identity through social mimicry and / or silence, selecting people to share their identity, being resistant, or not hiding their identity. It was reported that one person could use multiple strategies, depending on the environment itself. Participants noted that when it came to the occupational environment, the most common strategies they used were hiding and selection. However, participants stated that not all LGBT+Q+ people were equally able to use strategies to reduce the risk of discrimination. Respondents pointed out that transgender persons, especially in the process of transition, were exposed to forced disclosure of their identity in all situations where it is necessary to go through bureaucratic procedures, which include the presentation of personal documents. Depending on the context in which this occurred, LGBT+Q+ people were more or less exposed to discrimination.

Participants stated that if LGBT+Q+ people had knowledge and information on the existing discrimination laws and the necessary steps for action, this would greatly influence the elimination of discrimination. In addition to being informed, they felt that how much people were ready to react was also important. They felt that those who accepted their identity to a greater extent and showed a certain resistance to external pressures were more ready to react. Participants stated that when looking for jobs, one of the strategies to avoid discrimination in the workplace was to select jobs and employers who were known to have supportive attitudes towards the LGBT+Q+ population. One respondent pointed out the irony of this attitude:

- ... On one hand, we have managers and companies and employees who do not see why they would protect someone from discrimination, and we do not see that we can expect the company not to discriminate against us. It all comes down to "People, people, this company did not discriminate against me, 'let's all go work there.'" (RS\_YP\_3)

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

The existential needs of some respondents were not particularly emphasised, as they still had some family support (specific, financial or optional in case of need). However, one respondent pointed out that the general situation is that not only LGBT+Q+ people accept less favourable working conditions and discrimination, but also members of the heterosexual population, given their personal existential needs and employment or job change opportunities:

- Because the problem is that an ordinary worker who is not even LGBT, (or) I mean, did not come out, has so many problems and discrimination and threats and everything, literally, at work, that we can't get to deal with specific (LGBT) rights)... (RS\_YP\_2)



## STRUCTURAL FACTORS

Most respondents were aware that there are certain norms that prohibit discrimination on any personal basis, including SOGI. However, not everyone was equally informed about these norms, and some could not name the law regulating the prohibition of discrimination. What was common to all respondents was distrust in the application of regulations. That is, they believed that laws, strategies and other documents were certainly well written, but that they were poorly applied in practice:

- *Precisely because of that (no discrimination at work is reported). Because there is no implementation (of the law). Because it is thought that the procedure is complicated, that I will spend a lot of time, and I will not gain anything, and that nothing will change. (RS\_YP\_6)*

What additionally discouraged respondents from reporting discrimination and advocating their rights was previous negative experiences at school, as well as with certain institutions of the system, such as health care institutions or representatives of public order. During his transition, our trans man was denied the services of a gynaecologist, that is, he had to approach the service provider several times and insist that he was received, in order to receive the service. Also, two persons (bi / pansexual woman and transgender man) reported that the police refused to react in accordance with their powers and in accordance with the needs of them as citizens only because of their SOGI identity. This non-reaction was accompanied by negative comments:

- *I had situations where I personally called the police, because I experienced physical violence because of what I am, that the police came and laughed at me. They had asked me "Why didn't you kill yourself when it was so hard for you and you say that your pain has reached that limit, why didn't you?" (RS\_YP\_5)*

After calling the police, where the girl explained that she could not enter the apartment and worry that something had happened to another person who was locked in the apartment and did not open the door, the police asked what the two of them were. When they heard that they were in a partnership, the police stated that it was certainly a "lesbian" quarrel and that there was no need to intervene. In light of these negative examples of police action, several respondents stressed the importance of having an LGBT+Q+ liaison officer at the Ministry of Interior and regional police administrations. They saw this as an important step, following the example of which other state services should be organised. In addition to officers, they recognized the importance of the institutions of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, as well as various associations dealing with the protection of the rights of LGBT+Q+ persons.

# EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Respondents reported different experiences of work-related discrimination. Some respondents did not have such situations in their lives, but they were aware that they could happen and cited specific examples from their specific work contexts. Their opinions on the extent to which there was discrimination against the LGBT+Q+ population in the workplace differed. One of the reasons, according to the respondents, was that they generally did not reveal their identity in the workplace, and there were hence no triggers for discrimination based on SOGI.

If they had experienced discrimination in the workplace on the basis of SOGI, it was common that it was preceded by the disclosure of their SOGI identity. Various forms of discrimination in the workplace were given as examples, either from personal experiences or those from the lives of people they knew or had heard about. They mentioned getting fired on the basis of SOGI, their inability to get the expected promotion (promotion in the workplace), their transfer to positions that required lower qualifications and were less paid, verbal harassment (making inappropriate jokes and homophobic attitudes), creating social distance, ie. isolation (avoiding communication with the person), and in some cases sexual (verbal) harassment (inappropriate comments, suggestions and allusions, very intimate and insolent questions):

- *For example, a colleague who worked in a hotel in the center (city name). They just found out, I don't know how they found out, because he didn't come out to anyone that he was a gay man, and there was pressure at work from other colleagues. It happened that he no longer worked at the reception but worked in the office, office work, he only scheduled catering, although the boy spoke 5-6 languages, so he was downgraded. (RS\_YP\_1)*

Participants felt that job interviews were a risky time for discrimination to happen. Most participants felt that they should not talk about their SOGI identity when interviewing for a job. However, some stated that there were situations where such a choice did not exist. These were experienced by transgender people. One transgender person had the experience of not being employed in a "gay friendly" cafe because of his gender identity:

- *He (the employer) said "No, I still don't want to hire you", but I was like "why?". He said, "Because you are a transgender person." While he is gay and the cafe is gay friendly (RS\_YP\_5)*

Even when they did not have to reveal their SOGI, employment discrimination occurred:

- *I have one friend who didn't get a job as a secretary because she looks too queer. Because they need someone more feminine. First of all, because male clients are important to them. (RS\_YP\_6)*

Some participants also mentioned very positive experiences with certain employers, besides in private and international companies, and in non-governmental sectors. There was an example mentioned of the police administration, where a transgender person, who was employed in the police administration, went through the entire transition process without any problems at work. This was possible due to the fact that this person worked in the sector of liaison officers that dealt with the LGBT+Q+ population, and that colleagues there were sufficiently sensitive and open.

## BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TO BREAK DOWN DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Participants stated that one of the problems resulting in the lack of reaction to discrimination or its tolerance was that many had accepted the normality of discrimination. Some said that they had lost hope, and some stated that they simply believed that they deserved it:

- *...(we) accepted that reality as such and most people, unfortunately, accepted these discriminations as our everyday life... Very few people will go and say that they were discriminated against, that it was difficult to find a job, that they got fired because they are LGBT, or they assume that they got fired because they are LGBT or that they have not been accepted at all because of it or that they have experienced discrimination at work from colleagues or from the employers. Simply, most people today perceive it as something normal and do not report such things. (RS\_YP\_4)*

Participants also pointed out that the majority did not have enough trust in the implementation of regulations, which affected the silence on discrimination. In addition to mistrust, fear was especially recognised as a motive for keeping silent about the problem, namely the fear of losing a job, the fear of spreading information about one's SOGI identity and the consequences of its discovery. Additionally, participants recognised that the majority did not have enough knowledge about the regulations, procedures or opportunities they had in front of them in case they were discriminated against.

Some participants recognised the existence of a power struggle in relation to the discriminated person as a special factor or precondition for discrimination. In this regard, there were their superiors and the employer within the workplace. They noted that not everyone was equally exposed to discrimination in the workplace. Furthermore, they observed that there were jobs where discrimination against SOGI was not present, and that discrimination increased as other factors were present, such as the level of education and competitiveness of the position:

- *I believe things are getting better. I hear about gay friends getting a job, that their bosses know or it even happens that one of my friends is looking for a job in a company where one of the managers is gay. On that side, the situation is somewhat better, but I think that the lower the level of education is, the greater the discrimination. Basically, the more replaceable you are, the easier it is to discriminate against you. If the job is, say, cleaning a building, there are thousands of people waiting to clean that building for money, and it will be much easier to discriminate against you than to be one of 50 people who knows how to make a website. (RS\_YP\_3)*

Participants pointed out that existing attitudes towards the LGBT+Q+ population in the work environment were acting both as obstacles as well as facilitators to prevent discrimination. Respondents highlighted this by giving examples from personal experiences. They explained that colleagues may generally have negative attitudes towards the LGBT+Q+ community, which facilitated discrimination, or have fully supportive or indifferent ones, thereby preventing discrimination. Negative attitudes and hostile environments were felt as obstacles to preventing discrimination in the workplace. In such environments where co-workers expressed homophobic attitudes, and where employers themselves did not have adequate understanding of people with different sexual or gender orientations, LGBT+Q+ employees had a greater need to hide their identity, as well as a greater fear of revealing it:

- *Mostly that (verbal harassment) is more through that talk in the office. When a person or a famous person who is gay or lesbian is mentioned, or if something like that happens, then there are comments in the sense of "see this gay, fagot" or "trance". In conversation, some pejorative expressions are used, and people use them as something fun and funny. It just turns me off and I no longer feel safe to say something about myself or whatever... I wasn't so free to come out to everyone. (RS\_YP\_4)*

However, participants mentioned that there are work environments that were also supportive of LGBT+Q+ identity. Two levels of support were distinguished: by associates and by employers. Some respondents mentioned their experiences of being accepted by co-workers but experiencing inconvenience from employers:

- *In one restaurant, where I worked for a long time, everyone knew (about his gender identity) except the manager and everyone accepted it and it was OK... I worked for a while in that place (chef of kitchen) and then we (the manager and him) met to make a menu and I further explained to him then at that moment related to me going on hormones soon and a little bit about that, that he, while we were putting together the menu, at that moment, where I thought I was accepted and that everything was OK at last.... where he literally came in with the sentence "and what do you have in your pants", those words and the words "do you like men or women, what do your genitals look like" where I said that I don't want to talk about it and after a while I just gave up on that (resigned). (RS\_YP\_5)*

Participants however also mentioned examples of employers who had a supportive attitude. In these cases, employers may have had a) a personally supportive attitude, which the LGBT+Q+ collective further respected, b) a business-like attitude in the form of a formal business policy, either as part of an employee contract, or through a policy of supporting LGBT+Q+ activism, or as part of a procedure to agree on their rights. In either case the associates did not show any homophobic attitudes if they had them.

As a facilitator to eliminate discrimination in the workplace, respondents felt that the personal attitude of each LGBT+Q+ person played an important role. Namely, if a person was insecure and timid because of his LGBT+Q+ identity, he could expect more negative reactions. However, if a person was self-aware, if he had accepted his identity and did not show fear in relation to the environment through the willingness to express his views, this could have a positive effect on the environment in the sense that they were better accepted:

- *This is a bit specific for trans\* people. People know about gay people, they don't know about trans\* people... That is why I say to position his identity as the most normal thing in the world, because people, when they do not know, then rely on their environment, and react in the way the environment reacts. And if you are the only environment at that moment, then you have the main say. (RS\_YP\_3)*

## INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES

The basic inclusive strategies that the respondents identified were related to raising knowledge and awareness of both employees and employers, as well as the wider community through education, workshops, and trainings. They believed that people have a lot of prejudices for the simple reason that they do not know anyone from the LGBT+Q+ population or at least are not aware of them. They believed that one of the strategies should be to provide opportunities through interactive education to meet LGBT+Q+ people.

Respondents believed that LGBT+Q+ youth also needed education, especially in the field of law, and that discrimination and regulations against that existed. They needed knowledge on the procedures related to reporting discrimination, as well as of bodies they could contact. One respondent pointed out that young people in particular should be educated about professional code or ethics - how they should behave in the business world, what professionalism means, what a job interview means and how to behave, as well as dress codes in the business world. In addition, they felt that employers and employees should undergo training on professional behaviour in the workplace, which would have the effect of reducing discrimination (as unprofessional behaviour).

Some respondents also believed that a more consistent application of the law or more severe sanctions for violations of legal provisions related to discrimination on the grounds of personal characteristics should be implemented. Some respondents thought that it was necessary to further adopt new laws that would improve the position of the LGBT+Q+ population, especially for transgender people.



# STAKEHOLDER FINDINGS

## DIFFICULTIES FACED BY LGBT+Q+ YOUTH

Although each of the stakeholders gave their insights into the areas of discrimination faced by youth and/or LGBT+Q+ people, they were not particularly familiar with the specific problems that young LGBT+Q+ faced in the field of labour and employment. Everyone agreed that discrimination exists and occurs on various grounds within social relationships, at work and in the process of employment. They found it problematic for all populations that discrimination is widely seen and that often no distinction is made between discrimination and some forms of violence:

- *There is no way to explain to them (LGBT people) that not everyone can carry out discrimination. Discrimination can be perpetrated by a person who has that power, who's in a certain position; whether it is an employer, or an employee of an institution. A friend can't, or someone who doesn't want to hang out with you, he didn't discriminate against you... It's a big problem to explain to them exactly what discrimination is and all those, let's say, legal remedies, etc. (RS\_FG\_1)*

Like young LGBT+Q+, participants mainly agreed that discrimination is on the one hand, expected and practically normalized and tolerated, and on the other hand that everyone is aware it is unacceptable:

- *So, in my opinion, discrimination is still understood here as an acceptable behaviour. (RS\_FG\_3)*

Most participants agreed that the mental health of young people, namely their internalized homonegativity, difficulty accepting themselves, their personal insecurity, or feelings of shame because of their SOGI, were the main factors that prevented them from looking for a job, or reporting discrimination. Some participants pointed out that the formation of such negative attitudes towards oneself and one's mental health was influenced by the (non) existence of family support. As one participant pointed out, young people expected to be discriminated against in the workplace, and some of them did not opt for further education in the direction of some occupations where they expected to be discriminated against or where they would not have service users because of their SOGI.

Remarks were especially made regarding the attitudes of co-workers in the work environment in which (young) LGBT+Q+ entered. According to one participant, LGBT+Q+ people sometimes did not know how to position themselves when looking for a job: whether to come out in a job interview with the risk of not getting the job, or not to disclose their SOGI, with the risk of finding out later and then losing their job. Most participants agreed that a small number of cases of discrimination against (young) LGBT+Q+ people in the workplace occur due to the hiding of their SOGI in the workplace, as well as due to the low employment level of this population:

- *We have a small number of complaints submitted on the basis of personal characteristics of sexual orientation, or gender identity in the field of work and employment, but this is again the root of the problem that LGBT people, in most cases, do not reveal their sexual orientation when hiring, because based on every experience, they are sure that it will be an insurmountable problem. (RS\_FG\_3)*
- *I think that it is most often (the case) that (they) decide to assess each situation, that the context is important to them and somehow overall they decide not to share their status, or to do so (coming out) with their immediate colleagues. (RS\_FG\_5)*

One of the reasons for not reporting discrimination too can be their fearing the consequences of reporting:

- *Any exposure of a person, exposure of private life in terms of sexual orientation in the workplace is not only for the purpose of resolving a controversial event, but also affects the whole life after that. Because the circle of people is expanding, which actually intrudes into the intimacy of the family and thus endangers that person in the long run. So, it is not just about resolving that one, perhaps only, and perhaps not only situation of violence, but what that person will do next. Even if everything ends well, what will he do with all that later. (RS\_FG\_4)*

## FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS TO PREVENTING DISCRIMINATION

As was found from the interviews with the young LGBT+Q+ people, stakeholders recognised similar barriers or facilitators to prevent discrimination in the workplace. The legal regulations were seen as quite good and comprehensive. In addition to stating the Labour Law, which prohibits discrimination against contracted employees (for a definite or indefinite period of time), there was mention of the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination, which prohibits discrimination in any form of employment (including volunteering, internships, etc.). Also, some talked about the laws that are still waiting to be adopted, such as the Law on same-sex partnerships, which is all seen as a regulation that provides a better position for the LGBT+Q+ community in society, and thus their protection against discrimination. Laws that are more related to improving the position of trans\* persons were not mentioned by the participants. However, like young LGBT+Q+ people, participants felt that the implementation of the law was inadequate and that there was room for improvement:

- *There are laws, we can write it, but obviously we can't apply it. (RS\_FG\_6)*

Some participants pointed out that there were work environments positively oriented toward LGBT+Q+, namely through positive business policies that prohibited any discrimination and violence at work, that is, where respect for diversity was promoted:

- *In the company where I work, one of the first things we get on boarding, meaning the first work day of the employee, is the topic of misogyny and homophobia. So, every employee as soon as he enters the company first hears about that...(RS\_FG\_4)*

However, such policies were mostly related to companies of international character, while they were not present in domestic companies. Like LGBT+Q+ young people, some FGD participants recognised certain sectors in which it was acceptable to be a member of the LGBT+Q+ population, and some in which it was not. Tourism, fashion industry, cosmetics and beautification, design and creative occupations, and to a certain extent IT, were claimed to be sectors that are seen as LGBT+Q+ friendly. The police, military, education and construction are seen as particularly averse to LGBT+Q+ people, despite the existence of two positive examples of trans\* people in the police.

## RISK GROUPS

According to the participants, it was difficult to determine who was actually at a particular risk of discrimination in the workplace. There was a general disagreement, except for those who have more stigmatising traits and are more discriminated against (Roma LGBT+Q+, HIV positive LGBT+Q+, etc.). Some pointed out that trans\* people were the most vulnerable, some believed that lesbians were more discriminated against than gay men, and some felt that gay men were more discriminated against than lesbians. The differences and arguments given for such assessments were essentially contextual, and it could be concluded that depending on the context, such as the working environment, different members of the LGBT+Q+ population would be discriminated against to varying degrees, if they cannot hide their SOGI and thus avoid the risk of discrimination. One participant also drew attention to those persons who could not successfully hide their LGBT+Q+ identity, and considered them particularly vulnerable, primarily because of their "voluntary" absence from the labour market:

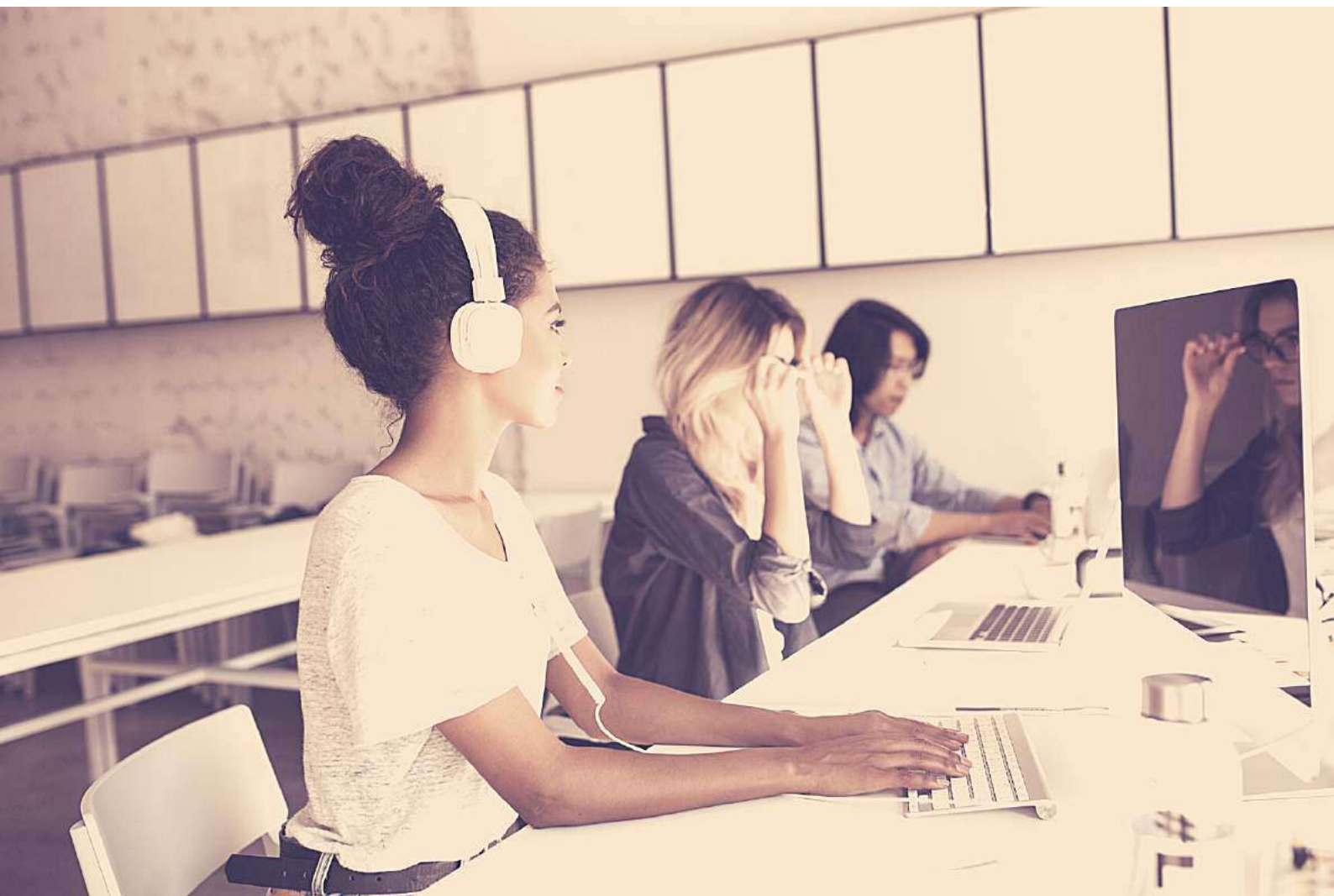
- *What is also problematic, according to our research and in working with clients, is that for a good part of LGBT people, let's say, visual presentation indicates that they belong to the LGBT population, and they do not enter the labour market at all. Because they believe that if they go out and are in the work team, it is 8 hours a day spent with the same people, that they are more likely to find out about their sexual orientation or gender identity. (RS\_FG\_1)*

## MECHANISMS OR STRATEGIES FOR ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Participants agreed that there is a need to create more applicable mechanisms to respect and implement the existing legal regulations. Most participants believed that training is needed for both employers and employees, as well as young LGBT+Q+ people, in order to prevent discrimination and reporting it. Further, the need to introduce anti-discrimination policies and procedures in businesses, as well as to empower LGBT+Q+ people in their acceptance of themselves and overcoming internalized homonegativity were mentioned. Some participants particularly favoured offline access, i.e. the direct contact with participants, as most effective. Additionally, what participants recognised was the need to introduce legal procedures in the workplace that will prevent discrimination, sensitising the wider community in order to reduce prejudice towards LGBT+Q+ people, media promotion of the importance of preventing discrimination, as well as more research in the field of practice related to anti-discrimination policies in the workplace.

# FINAL REMARKS OF THE SERBIAN QUALITATIVE RESULTS

While recruiting LGBTIQ+ youth, recruiters from two partner organizations reported that there was insufficient motivation of potential participants to participate in the interviews, especially those who had experienced discrimination in the workplace. These people were not yet ready to talk about their experiences. More interested in participating were those who are activists in LGBT+Q+ rights organizations, and who had a different perspective and approach to the problem of discrimination in the workplace, especially those who had no personal experiences of discrimination in this context. We tried to include a sufficient number of those who are not LGBT+Q+ activists in the sample, and in particular those who had personal experiences with discrimination at work. We had technical limitations due to the use of the online application for the interviews and FGD. An in-depth interview with one respondent was conducted on two occasions due to connection problems, and one FGD participant could not engage adequately (there were technical problems on his part), and withdrew after a short time. In that sense, 7 people started their participation in the FGD, but only 6 really participated. Also, due to the time limit of the FGD duration, certain themes were neither discussed in depth nor elaborated more comprehensively. However, for each of the conversation themes, a dominant perspective of participants was obtained (see Table 2).

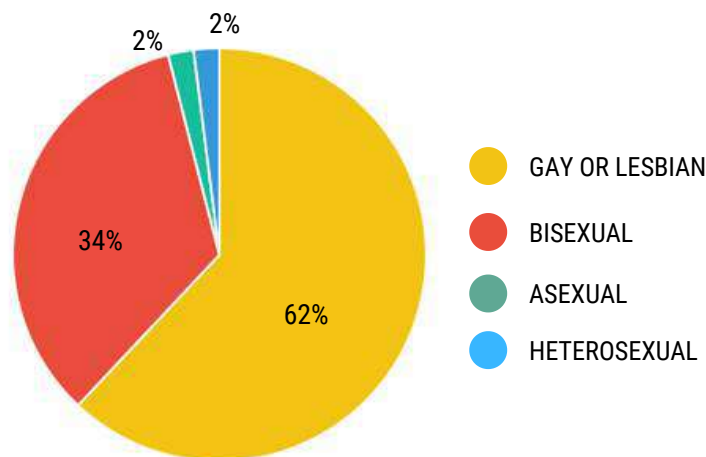


# QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

## SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA

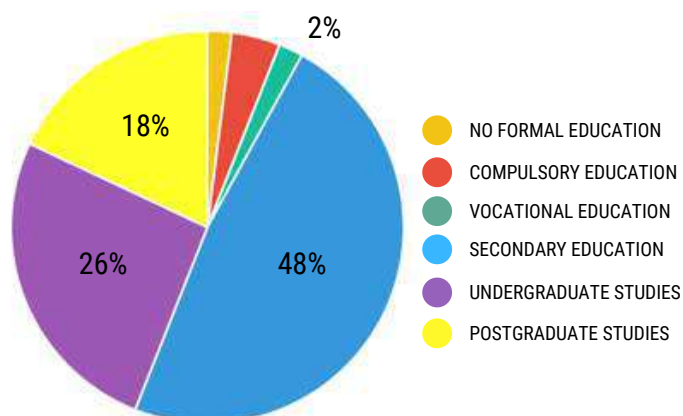
Participants were between 15 and 26 years old and had a mean age of 21.74 (SD=3.07). Most participants live in big urban cities (58%). Overall the majority of participants were male (52%) and 8% of participants declared that their gender identity does not correspond to the assigned gender at birth. Most participants (62%) declared their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian.

### PARTICIPANT'S SEXUAL ORIENTATION

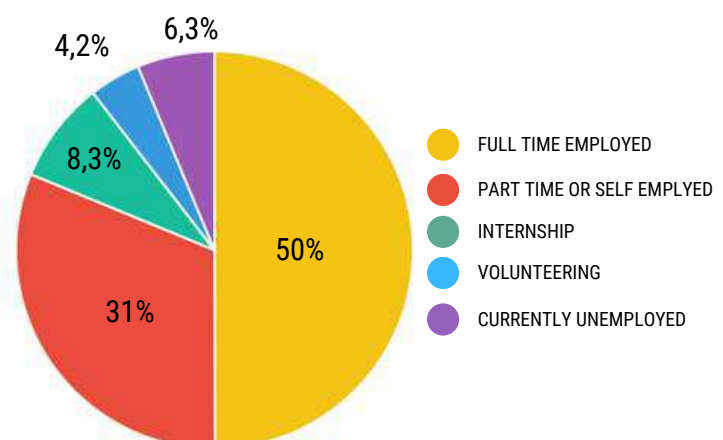


Most participants had completed a secondary level education (48.0%) and were full time employed (50%) and were working for the same employer on average for 13.48 months (SD=11.20), active mostly in the IT and telecommunication industry (10%) and retail (10%). Furthermore, 71.8% of the participants were mostly employed or working in smaller institutions or companies (up to 20 employees).

### PARTICIPANT'S EDUCATION LEVEL



### CURRENT WORKING EXPERIENCE



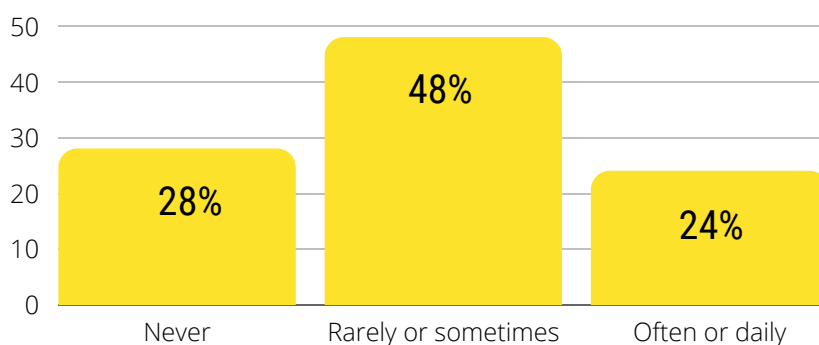
Most participants also declared they received payment for their work and were fully dependent on that income without receiving any additional financial help from parents or family (61.2%), and 47.9% of participants indicated they can hardly or cannot at all cover their expenses with their income.



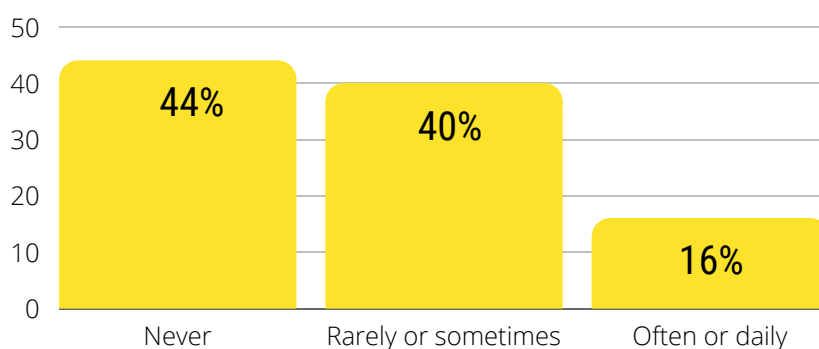
## EXPERIENCES OF ABUSE OR MOBBING IN SCHOOL

Almost half the Serbian participants reported being sometimes verbally abused in school (48%) and 24% reported experiencing daily verbal abuse while at school. Physical abuse was even higher, with 40% reporting physical abuse sometimes and 16% daily. In terms of bullying and abuse over social media, 46% of Serbian participants reported sometimes and 14% daily experiences of abuse.

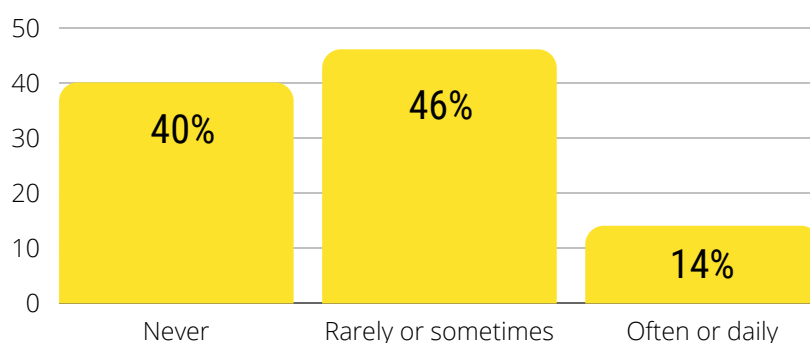
### EXPERIENCES OF VERBAL ABUSE IN SCHOOL



### EXPERIENCES OF PHYSICAL ABUSE IN SCHOOL



### EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSE IN SCHOOL



## EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION AT THE WORKPLACE

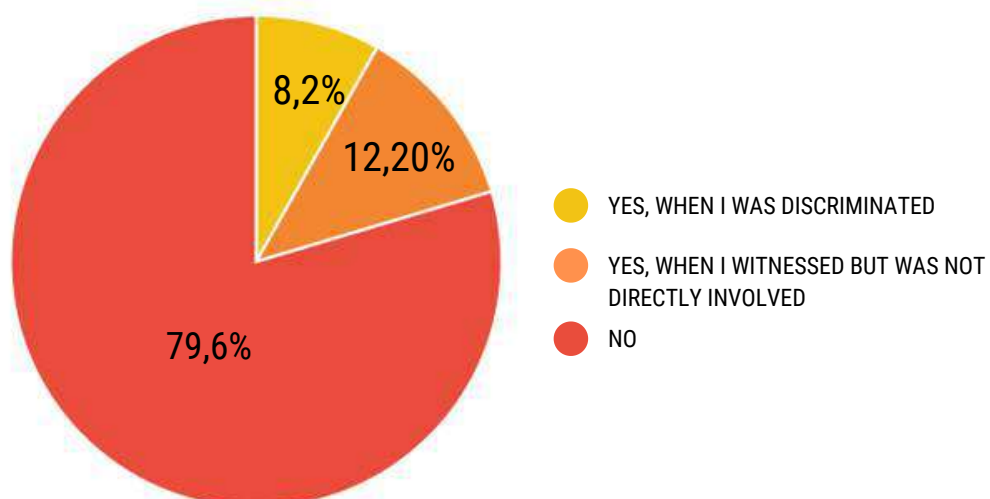
Regarding openness about their sexual orientation or gender identity at the workplace, average score chosen was 5.73 out of 10.



Within the Serbian sample of participants 38.8% declared that they had experienced discrimination at the workplace and 38.8% also declared they had witnessed instances of discrimination at work. Unfortunately a large majority (79.6%) of participants did not report discrimination they experienced or witnessed.

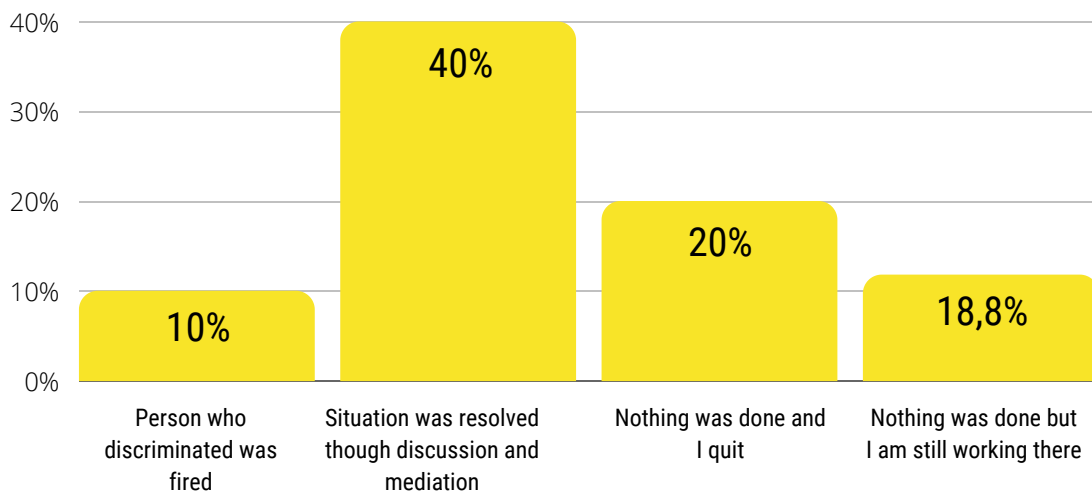


### REPORTING OF DISCRIMINATION



If the discrimination instances were reported in the majority of cases the matter was tried to be resolved through open discussion and mediation in 40% of cases. Unfortunately, in 11.8% of cases although nothing was followed up the person who experienced or witnessed discrimination is still at the same workplace.

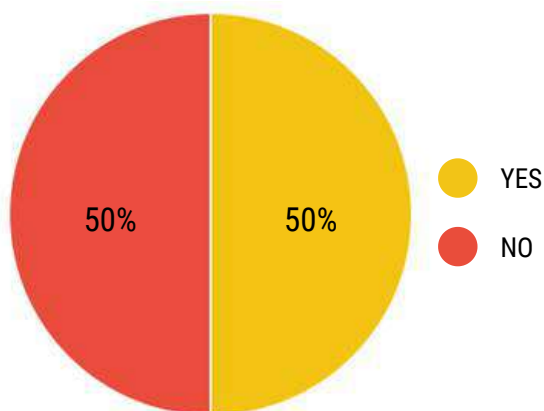
### REPORTING FOLLOW UP



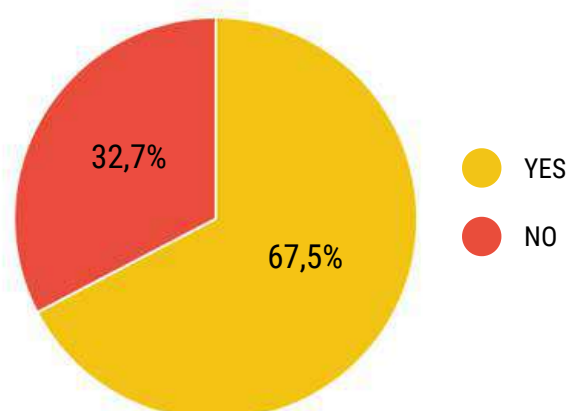
## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MECHANISMS AT THE WORKPLACE

Half of the Serbian participants knew whom they can report instances of discrimination at their workplace and one third were aware of any anti-discrimination or discrimination prevention measures at their workplace (50% and 32.7%, respectively).

### DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO REPORT DISCRIMINATION?



### DO YOU KNOW OF ANY ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MEASURES?



In terms of what anti-discrimination or discrimination prevention measures the minority of participants were aware of at their workplace, mostly (64.7%) reported knowing about "guidelines on sexual orientation or gender identity at the workplace" followed by "written company agreements on discrimination prevention and diversity promotion" in 52.9% of cases.

TABLE 1 (RS): LGBT+Q+ YOUTH INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Participant Code	SOGI (LGBTIQA+)	Age	Current occupation	Previous/current work experience	Most significant experience of discrimination (personal)	Most significant experience of discrimination (workplace)	Ideas for inclusivity in workplace / breaking down discrimination in the workplace
RS_YP_1	B (F)	23	Student, LGBT activist (full time)	Freelancer, barista	Based on confronting attitude (not SO related) Harassment by professor at Faculty	Other peoples' experience:  Gay person gets fired after complain on verbal harassment of coworkers  Gay person, after disclosing SO, gets transferred to lower rank and less paid position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>informing LGBTIQ+ on procedures in the case of discrimination at WP</li> <li>Field, offline, work with LGBTIQ youth</li> <li>"Story telling" model of education – offline / online</li> <li>Introducing the official policies at the WP related to antidiscrimination rules</li> <li>Addressing by chosen name/ pronouns as part of WP procedure/rules</li> <li>Education / trainings for stakeholders – with focus on Human Rights of all, including LGBT (to have wider platform)</li> <li>Inclusion of the topic in strategies and local plans of action</li> </ul>
RS_YP_2	B (M)	20	Secondary school student, salesman (full time)	operator	None discrimination experience.  Violence:  School bullying, based on the word spread by teacher on his SO, but also based on his ethnic identity (Roma)	Personal:  Not based on SOGI: denial of labor rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education, information sharing using different channels</li> <li>Introduction of internal rules / policies on discrimination prohibition at the WP</li> <li>Law enforcement</li> </ul>

					Non-personal experience: violence and attempt of rape of one lesbian, who came out openly.		
RS_YP_3	T (transwomen in process of transition)	25	Administrative worker (full time)	Web site developer (for German company, without contract)	None discrimination experience.  Violence: School bullying	Personal discomfort of stares from business contacts  Non-personal: Transwoman was refused for the job in café because her ID  Violence: G friend was bitten by costumer after work (physical violence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing sensitivity / educations for social/working environment</li> <li>open communication with institution</li> <li>additional position – communication officer for LGBT in different institutions</li> <li>Advocacy and lobbying for non-discriminatory practices at the WP</li> <li>Changing social attitudes regarding minorities</li> </ul>
RS_YP_4	B / pansexual (F)	24	Operator (full time)	Waitress	Public service denial (police refused to provide services after coming out)	Without personal experience  Non-personal experience: Transman get fired after coming out as trans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information sharing on procedures related to reporting and prosecuting discrimination; on LGBT+Q+ friendly WP</li> <li>Education for employers and for youth (promotion of youth education through network of LGBT NGOs)</li> </ul>
RS_YP_5	T (transman in process of transition)	26	Salesman (2 halftime jobs)	Restaurant / kitchen (full time jobs)	Institutional discrimination  Additional procedures (+ unnecessary demanding insight in personal, confidential information)	Get fired after coming out / entering in transition  Lower fees offering for the job (due to transition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rising awareness of stakeholders (judges etc) and youth on LGBTI rights and problems</li> <li>accelerating media coverage of the LGBT rights</li> <li>Law enforcement</li> </ul>



					Denial/refusal of healthcare services Denial / partial provision of police services (with verbal harassment) Violence: Physical violence Family violence	Deliberately wrong pronunciation of gender and personal name during job interview  Openly refused for the job because he is trans* (in gay friendly bar)  Sexual harassment / intimate questioning from employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening LGBT youth (self-esteem, self-confidence...) to react on acts of discrimination</li> </ul>
RS_YP_6	L	25	Student, internship (part time)	Architect	Violence:  Social distancing and verbal insults in primary school	As female (regardless SO) – being professionally disqualified by males	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education through personal experience (getting to know someone who is LGBT)</li> <li>To have and promote positive examples of discrimination complaint's outcome</li> <li>Training for secondary school youth in general on professional culture/code, rights etc.</li> <li>Education/training for employers and coworkers – on professional relations, manners</li> <li>Campaigns related to equality/sameness</li> </ul>
RS_YP_7	L	24	Student, marketing (full time)	Volunteering in human rights NGOs, internship, freelancing, operator	None	Homophobic working environment  Friend (L) – not getting promotion at WP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educations/workshops for employers, employees and youth on LGBT rights, regulation, procedures</li> <li>Introducing policies regarding non-discriminatory environment on the WP</li> </ul>

							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sharing online) on LGBT rights, anti-discrimination regulations and procedures</li> </ul>
RS_YP_8	L	20	Babysitting (full time, without contract)	Internship in printing, restaurant / kitchen	<p>Verbal harassment by some teachers</p> <p>Violence:</p> <p>After coming out being bullied in the school by peers (verbal and physical violence)</p>	<p>As female (regardless SO)</p> <p>Denial of professional education at workplace</p> <p>Get fired – due to SO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education/WS for youth in secondary school on gender equality, discrimination / procedures, LGBT rights, etc. topics.</li> </ul>

TABLE 2 (RS): STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Participant Code	Age	Current occupation	Obstacles that prevent seeking legal help	Ideas for inclusivity in workplace / breaking down discrimination in the workplace
RS_FG_1	44	Head of LGBT organization (LGBT activist)	Internalized homonegativity, self-acceptance Lack of knowledge on procedures, and what discrimination is Negative experience of the others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offline education for stakeholders (employers, employees), offline education – peer approach for LGBT</li> </ul>
RS_FG_2	40	Assistant professor at University of Belgrade		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal enforcement of introduction of anti-discriminatory procedures at workplace (like the one for mobbing) for all population</li> <li>• Education for LGBT and other vulnerable population</li> <li>• Peer approach, video materials...</li> <li>• Media promotion</li> <li>• Changing negative social attitudes / perception toward LGBT</li> <li>• Research related to anti-discrimination policies with broad live presentation of findings</li> </ul>
RS_FG_3	50	Officer in complaints department of Commissioner for the protection of equality	Not coming out at workplace to avoid discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education, changing negative social attitudes / perception related to LGBT</li> </ul>
RS_FG_4	42	HR in IT Company	Not willing to be publically exposed as LGBT during the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Introduction of anti-discrimination policies at company level</li> </ul>
RS_FG_5	39	Psychotherapist (private practice and for NGOs), ex HR, ex psychologist at social care center	Not coming out at workplace to avoid discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of dedicated person for discrimination at the company level (in private and public sector)</li> </ul>

RS_FG_6	48	Head of organization (ex transgenders' rights activist)	Mental health issues (internalized homo negativity, self-acceptance, self-awareness....	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law enforcement, Education</li> </ul>
RS_FG_7  <i>Technical problems prevented active participation....</i>		Officer at Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue	-	

# SLOVAKIA



## APPROACH

Data were collected from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with young LGBT+Q+ people (N = 7) and stakeholders (N = 5) respectively. These methods were adopted in order to facilitate a discursive assessment of the topics in which detailed description of these experiences and opinions could be collected and a richness of respondents' accounts could be explored. In-depth written interviews were conducted with LGBT+Q+ youth participants, each of whom were engaged in the labour market. The focus group discussion was done with stakeholders, who were individuals involved in providing support to LGBT+Q+ young people, such as an NGO worker involved in LGBT+Q+ rights activism, a civil servant working for a body responsible for supporting human rights, lawyers, as well as university teachers. Some of the stakeholders are active members of governmental committees on LGBT+Q+ rights. Downloaded anonymised data were screened for inconsistencies and coded based on a predetermined codebook. For the purposes of this field report a subset of variables was created from the main questionnaire to provide a more comprehensive overview of the situations that young LGBT+Q+ people face at their workplaces in Slovakia. Overall, data from 47 Slovakian participants were included in the analysis.

## QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Analysis of the accounts provided by the 7 LGBT+Q+ youth participants (M\_age = 23,28 years) and the stakeholders (M\_age = 42 years) are described below. Participant demographics are described in Tables 1 and 2 (SK) in the Appendix. Key themes are provided with examples of evidence in the form of verbatim quotations extracted from participant transcripts.



# LGBT+Q+ YOUTH FINDINGS

In the in-depth interviews, five main themes emerged, namely: factors of discrimination (influencing working life), experiences of discrimination in the workplace, barriers to breaking down discrimination in the workplace, facilitators to break down discrimination and inclusive strategies.

## FACTORS OF DISCRIMINATION INFLUENCING WORKING LIFE

Among the factors of discrimination that influenced working life, three categories of discrimination were identified, namely: personal experiences of discrimination, societal influence on discrimination and self-discrimination.

Among **personal experiences of discrimination**, young LGBT+Q+ recalled experiences of childhood and working-life prejudice:

- *In most cases, there was open discrimination at school. At work not so often and not openly. Most often in men's teams, but I've encountered disdain from women too. (SK\_YP\_3)*
- *I was rather discriminated against by some business partners - men from outside the company because I am a woman, so they often considered me an unequal partner in the first place, it often happens that men turn the style of communication to a more decent and less arrogant one when they find out I have a university degree. (SK\_YP\_7)*

The young LGBT+Q+ respondents highlighted the **societal influence on discrimination** as their existential fear influenced by religious, extremist and/or polarised views permeating society:

- *Rather, I am afraid of what is happening in general in society, the radicalization and polarization of society, whether by neo-Nazi groups or crazy Christians and people who make us the target and point of their own anger and frustration, or because they want to make quick and cheap political points in pointing out our existence and demonize us. (SK\_YP\_7)*
- *The biggest problem is probably the religion that spreads hatred and thus LGBT become inferior and discriminated against. (SK\_YP\_6)*

Respondents experienced **self-discrimination**, in that they were protective of their identity and did not want to come out, for fear of being confronted with negative comments:

- *No. And I don't even want to come out. (...) it's just my personal business and no one others. I see no reason why I should tell everyone about my orientation. I don't hide it but I don't see any reason to talk to anyone about my orientation. (SK\_YP\_3)*
- *If I knew that my colleagues are at a certain level and maturity, yes, but unfortunately this is not always the case. Otherwise, I think it's a private matter for everyone. (SK\_YP\_6)*

# EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Participants highlighted two main forms of workplace discrimination they experienced, namely verbal discrimination and behavioural discrimination.

Among experiences of **verbal discrimination**, respondents discussed instances of bullying, insults and negative remarks:

- *Many times, there have been silly allusions and ridicule towards LGBT. (SK\_YP\_6)*

As for **behavioural discrimination**, respondents felt that the undercurrents of LGBT taboo in their workplace environment forced them into closeting or being paranoid about themselves:

- *Managers are not able to fight against discrimination and not only in the army, it is TABOO thing in companies. In my current one, no one knows about me, maybe some suspect, but from conversations during social events, it would mean firing me by pressuring me to leave the company. (SK\_YP\_5)*
- *I've had bad premonitions (about being discriminated against while disclosing one's sexual orientation). (SK\_YP\_4)*

# BARRIERS TO BREAKING DOWN DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Among the factors found that influenced barriers to breaking down discrimination in the workplace, two categories were identified, namely: absence of workplace support and hostile workplace environment.

Respondents felt that there was a lack of training, role models, or consequences for those who discriminate, hence an **absence of workplace support** was highlighted:

- *Awareness, trainings, personal examples, holding accountable those who discriminate (speaking about what would help, what I miss in the workplace). (SK\_YP\_1)*

There was the general feeling of being in a **hostile workplace environment**, where one would be cornered or blackmailed, if one had the intention of reporting discrimination:

- *Emotionally I felt very bad, reporting was not possible, discrimination came secretly from the superiors and it was not possible to prove it with evidence, and no one wanted to testify for fear of being fired and being discriminated against. (SK\_YP\_5)*

# FACILITATORS TO BREAK DOWN DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Five categories were identified from the suggested facilitators that would break down discrimination in the workplace, namely: a change of perception in the politics and views of the church, open communication, workplace support, coming out, and education.

Respondents felt that a more productive climate to search for solutions to discrimination was necessary, and the society was in dire need of a **change of perception in the politics and views of the church**:

- *Social and interpersonal changes - on the part of state institutions and politicians or other public figures... they should create such social discourse that would not instinctively deal with fear and would not constantly look for an enemy instead of a productive searching for and implementation of solutions to the real problems of society. (SK\_YP\_7)*

Participants felt the need to have **open communication**, in order for LGBT+Q+ people to be recognised, participate and be accepted as normal citizens:

- *Official recognition of LGBTIQ people in society, our right to live together, inheritance, medical information, .... if we are not fully accepted people (meaning fully recognised by law), we will not be able to reduce discrimination. (SK\_YP\_5)*

Respondents felt that in order to garner **workplace support**, it was necessary for employers to create policies in writing, so as to make the first step towards building intolerance towards discrimination of LGBT+Q+ in the workplace:

- *Within managers - to create such standards that do not give room for discrimination or bullying, and if someone discriminates – then finding active solutions. (SK\_YP\_7)*
- *A prevention that is focused on the moral code of the employee and the employer; this should be signed upon entering the job and it should be repeated on a regular basis as health and safety instructions on the workplace; discrimination as a moral code should be defined by law. (SK\_YP\_5)*

The respondents felt that their process of **coming out** could be better facilitated by a more sincere curiosity among their co-workers about LGBTI people and their experiences:

- *Questions from co-workers (about speaking what would help to come out). (SK\_YP\_4)*

Among topics on **education**, respondents strongly felt the need to include LGBT+Q+ issues and facts within the educational curriculum:

- *LGBT must not be a taboo. This needs to be changed at least in the upbringing of children. And since there are many puritans and bigoted Catholics who would never admit that being gay is not like one has Ebola, I think it needs to be embedded in the school curriculum. But in such a way that children of a certain age would understand sexuality as a wide range. (SK\_YP\_2)*

## INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES

Two categories were derived from the inclusive strategies for LGBT+Q+ youth in the workplace that were reviewed, namely: acceptance of queer people and implementation of LGBT+Q+ rights. Respondents felt that in order for **acceptance of queer people** to happen, aspects such as same-sex partnerships, and employer responsibility for the rights of their employees was necessary to implement:

- *It is necessary to enact a statute in which same-sex partnerships could form a recognised union, and then, subsequently, it will be possible to develop this within employment. Unless the partnership is accepted, it will be difficult to make discrimination lessen or to disappear. People must allocate a person their rights. (SK\_YP\_2)*
- *All employers should issue a moral code in the workplace, by which they would be bound and which would guarantee everyone their rights and obligations (including) the right to report discrimination without any consequences for the notifier. This should be primarily in all state bodies. (SK\_YP\_5)*

As a necessary step towards acceptance of queer people, respondents stated a need for the **implementation of LGBT+Q+ rights**, in terms of officially recognising the LGBT+Q+ population as well as finding a way to help workplace victims prove any offences incurred:

- *Official recognition of LGBTIQ people in society, our right to cohabitation, to inherit, to medical information, .... if we are not fully accepted people (meaning fully recognised by law), we will fail to reduce discrimination. It will always be here, but if the state backs human rights and not plays on preferences (meaning political points), the society will be healthier. (SK\_YP\_5)*
- *I think it falls onto the leading manager's personal approach. The government should address and punish discrimination. And to find a way to help the discriminated person to prove that discrimination has taken place. (SK\_YP\_3)*

# STAKEHOLDER FINDINGS

Three main themes emerged from the analysis of the group discussions, namely: politics/political culture and religious views, education, and funding. Among them, we could see many of the factors that were already pointed out by the LGBT+Q+ youth respondents, such as personal experiences of discrimination, societal influence on discrimination, self-discrimination, absence of workplace support, hostile workplace environment, change of perception in the politics and views of the church, open communication, workplace support, coming out, education, acceptance of queer people, and the implementation of LGBT+Q+ rights.

Apart from what was said, the situation for many LGBT+Q+ people was also affected by their own living environment. Stakeholders further pointed out that there are differences in the perception of LGBT+Q+ people between state institutions and state-owned companies, and private owned (usually international) companies, with differences also between the regions and Bratislava. SK\_FG\_2 also suggested this being the main reason why many young LGBT+Q+ people moved to the capital city of Bratislava.

From the stance of **politics/political culture and religious views**, stakeholders emphasised that this is probably the biggest issue in Slovakia. The LGBT+Q+ minority is often seen as a tool to easily gain political points by being radical. SK\_FG\_1 mentioned that it is actually the state itself which poses barriers to accepting LGBT+Q+ people:

- *My first such experience where the state itself began to systematically decompose any support that was created here for this community or that tried to help this community, was when our institution, with the support of the Methodological and Pedagogical Centre, was to educate teachers in the Prešov region, teachers who work with children. This training was to be focused on how to help them if they experience bullying or cyberbullying due to their sexual orientation and, basically, our lecturers were called off standing there at the train station. The stop came from the state - the ministry, and quite quickly. So basically, even though if there are some organizations at the state level that try to do something in this area it's often their superior body that does not allow them to do so or they actually cancel these projects or programs." or "New legislative? We don't know about that. Rather, what we are seeing is an initiative that is already destructing the remnants of what we already have built up here. Especially at the level of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, when we see that they are changing who will get the funding..., when we see whole departments being closed or people being fired, analytical departments are closing down. (SK\_FG\_1)*
- *As was already mentioned, during the last election period (i.e., 2016-2020) there was this official-unofficial ban on addressing anything at all that has to do with the topic (i.e., LGBT). (SK\_FG\_3)*



Stakeholders also agreed that given today's political representation in the Parliament, political views that support the 'traditional family' instead of gender equality and equality in general are at the forefront of political discussions (SK\_FG\_2, SK\_FG\_5). This negative stance from the state results in a general distrust of state institutions by LGBT people:

- *They (i.e., LGBT) do not trust any state institutions at all, on the one hand, they also do not believe in court proceedings. They are afraid to testify in the court's proceedings and talk about their experience. They also don't trust us (i.e., the Centre for Human Rights). (SK\_FG\_1)*

This distrust is further connected to the process of litigation.....:

- *The issue of litigation is very important. Where there is no plaintiff, then there is no judge too. This exactly means that until we actually get these cases to the court, until they are successfully resolved, then the application of law will not improve so well. (SK\_FG\_5)*
- *We may have perfect laws in every aspect, but it's similar to corruption - you may have something that is forbidden, like the corruption, but simply when the social climate is set in a certain way in which no one even reports the corruption, then it's something very similar to (today's LGBT people situation). (SK\_FG\_2)*

...and also, with the low level of law enforcement:

- *of those cases that we were involved with, legal ones, as far as I know, none has come to a legally binding conclusion. (SK\_FG\_3)*

It was pointed out that even if there were several cases of discrimination before the courts, if the discriminated party was not successful, it had to pay the costs of legal representation before the courts:

- *there is lack of systematic legal representation (i.e. that would help the affected/discriminated people) and then there were some cases that were not successful and finally the client had to pay the costs of legal representation and they are high. (SK\_FG\_5)*

Participants highlighted that instances of discrimination were taking place in state institutions and state-owned companies, rather than them being role models for society. One participant mentioned that there were no programs on diversity and inclusion (SK\_FG\_1). The LGBT issues were also not a topic for trade unions too:

- *Discrimination takes place in state institutions, which is, alarming. And, for example, when it comes to employment, too, trade unions rarely and few have addressed the issue of gender equality, non-discrimination of LGBT people in collective bargaining... It's all just about some kindergartens, thirteenth and fourteen salaries, and that's it, but when it comes to equality, equal pay and equal access and non-discrimination, for example, there is still great amount of work to be done. (SK\_FG\_5)*

Another outcome of this situation is the underreporting of cases of discrimination among LGBT+Q+ people. As participants mentioned, this is connected with the issue of the fear of losing their job (SK\_FG\_1, SK\_FG\_3) as well as from stigma:

- *the issue with LGBT people is the coming out of the anonymity and coming out with your expression of identity ... that is sometimes very problematic ... So, going public and fighting for your rights is often very stigmatizing to these people. (SK\_FG\_5)*

One participant stated that if they would report it, they would be seen as problematic:

- *they will not claim their rights, they will not point out to those problems which are real precisely for the reasons that once they are labeled as problematic this would stick with them and it would be carried out with them in their region. (SK\_FG\_2)*

Stakeholders also stressed that the Committee for the Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersexual People at the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality has not had any meeting within the last year (SK\_FG\_1, SK\_FG\_3, SK\_FG\_5).

**Education** on LGBT issues, or the lack of it, is another factor that affects general views on LGBT+Q+ issues. On the other hand, education in schools and at the workplace is also seen as a means of overcoming the stigma LGBT people face today. Stakeholders support ideas for a better general handling of education:

- *So, as far as our institution is concerned, it is very important to us that young people begin to learn how to think critically, not to be subject to various prejudices, misinformation (...) That's actually what we miss the most in the schools, but as I say, the basics are the teachers. (SK\_FG\_1)*

But this stakeholder also stressed that:

- *even if you go through teachers, you often have to go through parents too, because on some topics parents explicitly require their informed consent (SK\_FG\_1)*

As a related issue, some stakeholders also stated that LGBT+Q+ teachers are in a very delicate situation, which could interfere with visibility and acknowledging LGBT+Q+ people during education and the training of young people:

- *in the area of education, there were several teachers, I think that most of them are gay men, who are afraid the school management accidentally learns about their orientation, and it will change their approach to them (SK\_FG\_3)*

On the other hand, stakeholders strongly advise the implementation of specialized education in universities, especially in law faculties and the so-called clinics in which law students provide legal help to those who cannot afford the service of a professional graduated lawyer. As benefits, they stated that this type of education and help is independent of politics due to a high level of academic self-government and is also sustainable as usually subjects related to clinical education must be maintained for at least 4-5 years (SK\_FG\_2, SK\_FG\_4). One shortcoming in education is the issue of LGBT visibility in Slovakia. Both interviewees and stakeholders suggested that coming out by politicians and celebrities would help raise awareness and would help normalise the view of LGBT people in general. Also visibility in the media, in particular in series and movies would be of great importance.

Stakeholders regularly pointed out the issue of **funding**; this issue was not brought up by interviewees. However, funding of NGOs working in the area of LGBT rights protection bears such importance that we mention it here. For general concerns about funding, see also general notes of this report on p. 1. This concern was repeatedly mentioned by the stakeholders (SK\_FG\_2, SK\_FG\_5).

- *The act on funding, is no longer (besides others) aimed at gender equality, but aimed at the family. This means that gender and LGBT issues will be pushed to the background. (...) Finally, the scandal surrounding the Norwegian Funds, where NGOs that have long been involved in gender equality have been ranked high by the respective committees, yet the funding was approved to family and pro-Christian organizations instead, organizations which have a very strong connection even to the government, and thus to members of parliament). (SK\_FG\_5)*

Funding is available but at the moment, the only national funding is provided by the Ministry of Justice:

- *Actually, only the Ministry of Justice has its own scheme to support projects in human rights and the fight against extremism. (SK\_FG\_3)*

LGBT projects are usually rejected by other funding schemes with suggestions that it is the personal decision of respective people in charge:

- *However, that is also another problem that the support/funding depends, which is also a Slovak tragedy, on the specific people in charge at the ministries and at one time something will start, follow up and then the other time it will end. (SK\_FG\_3)*

As a result, the biggest LGBT NGO in Slovakia had to stop providing legal, psychological and other assistance via telephone and in person to the LGBT people in need (SK\_FG\_3), they are also unable to work in regions, give training or build a community centre:

- *Community centre, i.e. the places of the first contact for the community, where based on the problems the community centre would turn to psychological, legal or some other help, and would send the person to the relevant institutions. This would increase the visibility and so on. However, we still don't have this first step, it doesn't exist in our country. (SK\_FG\_3)*

The overall situation of LGBT people in Slovakia is grim, as the state is not achieving its moral obligations to its community. In other words, as one of the stakeholders succinctly pointed out:

- *From our point of view, the situation is very sad. (...) It is very sad to see that the state is not fulfilling, it is not fulfilling its basic human rights obligations to this community in the long run, and today we do not even have a strategy to support the development and protection of LGBTI community rights. (...) This community does not have a designated state-level representative who clearly dedicates support for it. (SK\_FG\_1)*

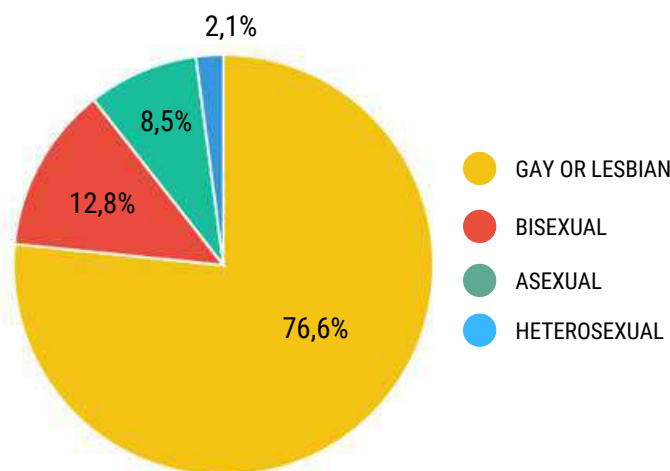


# QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

## SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA

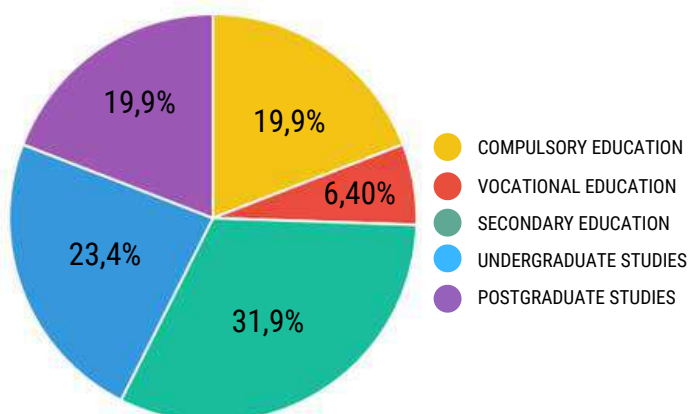
Participants were between 15 and 26 years old and had a mean age of 21.26 (SD=3.11). Most participants live in smaller cities (38.3%). Overall the majority of participants were male (55.3%) and 2.1% of participants declared that their gender identity does not correspond to the assigned gender at birth. Most participants (76.6%) declared their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian.

### PARTICIPANT'S SEXUAL ORIENTATION

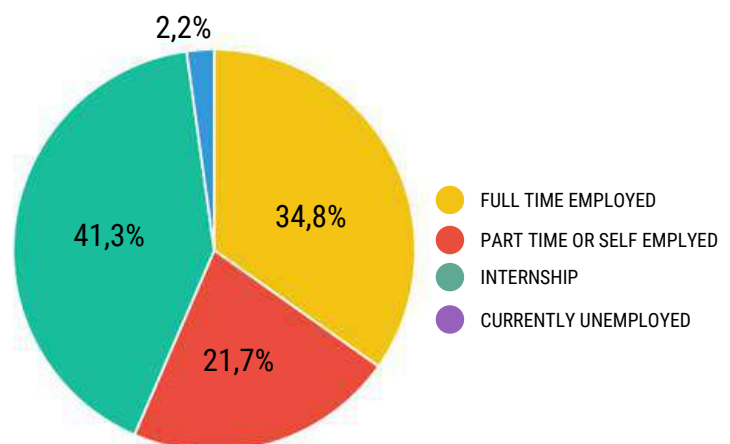


Most participants had completed a secondary level education (31.9%) and were mostly working as volunteers (41.3%) or full time employed (34.8%) and were working for the same employer on average for 15.72 months (SD=12.47), active mostly in retail (14.9%). Furthermore the participants were mostly (49.5%) employed or working in smaller institutions or companies (up to 20 employees).

### PARTICIPANT'S EDUCATION LEVEL



### CURRENT WORKING EXPERIENCE



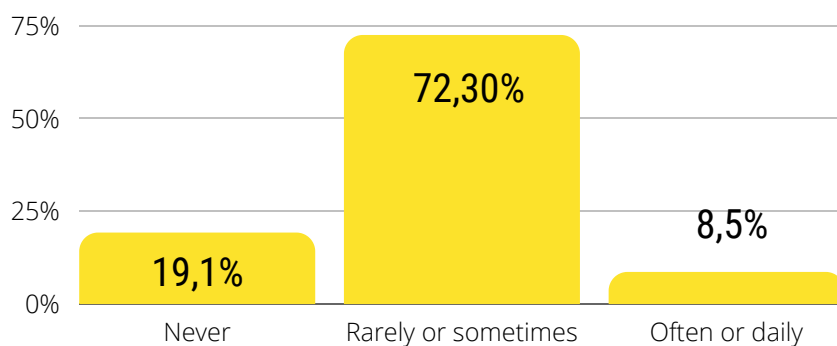
Most participants also declared that they received payment for their work and were fully dependent on this income and did not receive any additional financial help from their family or parents (46.8%), and 42.6% of participants indicated they can hardly cover their expenses with their income.



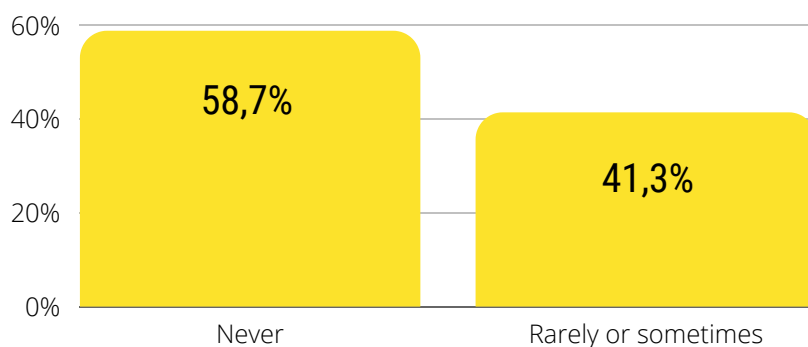
## EXPERIENCES OF ABUSE OR MOBBING IN SCHOOL

More than two thirds of Slovakian participants reported being sometimes verbally abused in school (72.3%), and 8.5% reported experiencing daily verbal abuse while at school. Physical abuse was reported somewhat lower, with 41.3% reporting physical abuse sometimes. In terms of bullying and abuse over social media, 63.8% of Slovakian participants reported experiencing abuse over social media.

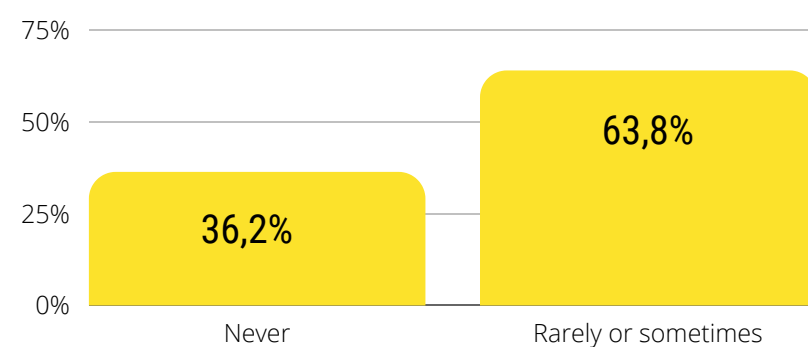
### EXPERIENCES OF VERBAL ABUSE IN SCHOOL



### EXPERIENCES OF PHYSICAL ABUSE IN SCHOOL



### EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSE IN SCHOOL



## EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION AT THE WORKPLACE

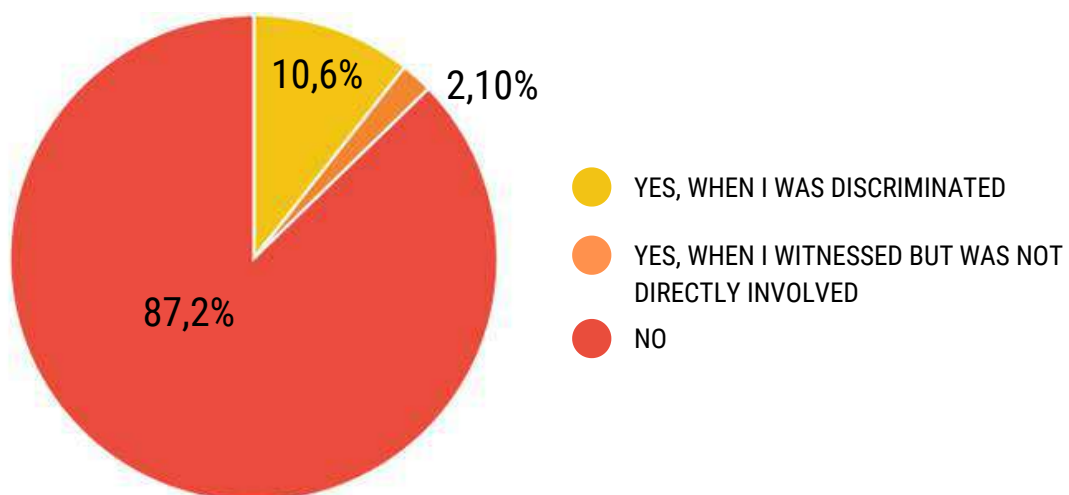
Regarding openness about their sexual orientation or gender identity at the workplace, average score chosen was 5.1 out of 10.



Within the Slovakian sample of participants 31.9% declared that they had experienced discrimination at the workplace and 6.4% also declared they had witnessed instances of discrimination at work. Unfortunately a large majority (93.6%) of participants did not report discrimination they experienced or witnessed.

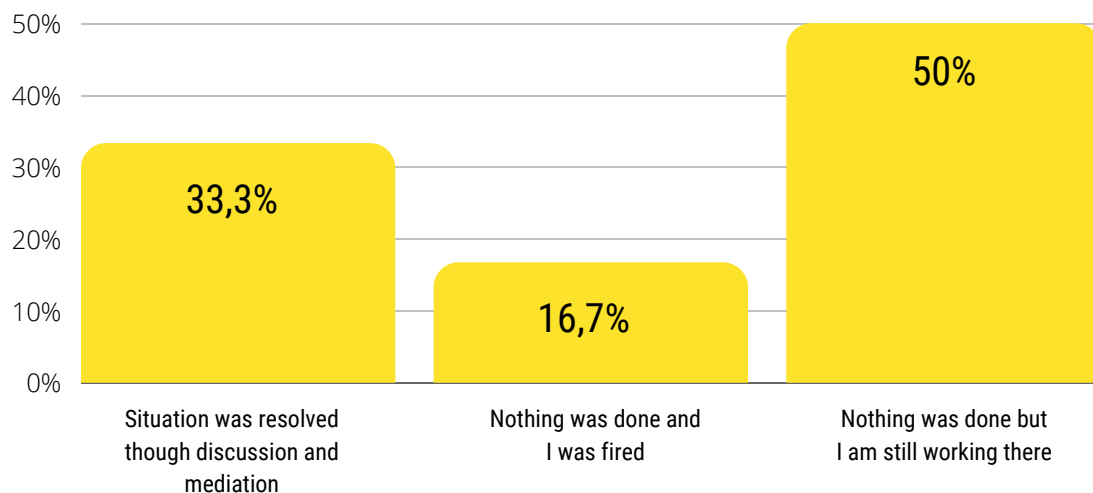


### REPORTING OF DISCRIMINATION



If the discrimination instances were reported, in the majority of cases an attempt was made to resolve the matter through open discussion and mediation in 40% of cases. Unfortunately, in 11.8% of cases although nothing was followed up the person who experienced or witnessed discrimination is still at the same workplace.

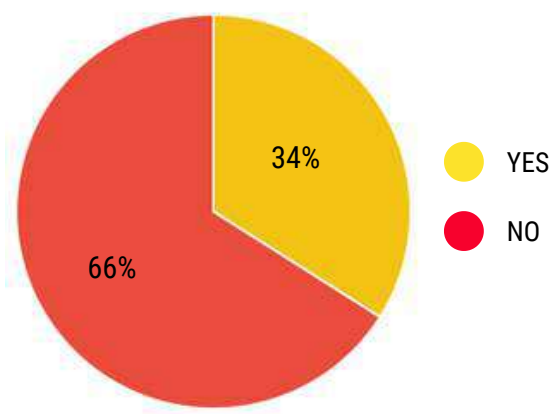
### REPORTING FOLLOW UP



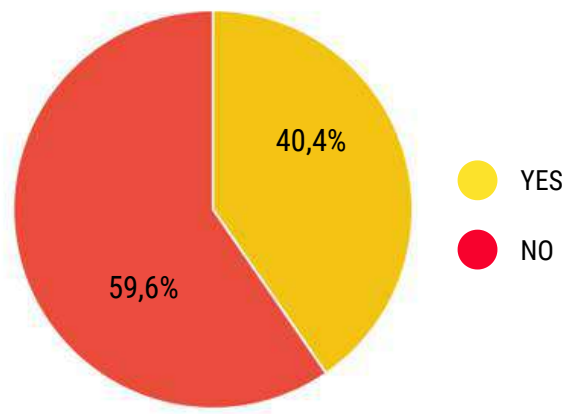
## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MECHANISMS AT THE WORKPLACE

Less than a half of the Slovakian participants knew whom they can report instances of discrimination at their workplace or were aware of any anti-discrimination or discrimination prevention measures at their workplace (34% and 40.4%, respectively).

### DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO REPORT DISCRIMINATION?



### DO YOU KNOW OF ANY ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MEASURES?



In terms of what anti-discrimination or discrimination prevention measures the minority of participants were aware of at their workplace, mostly (42.1%) reported knowing about "written company agreements on discrimination prevention and diversity promotion" followed by "company-wide seminars on mobbing and diversity" in 31.6% of cases.

TABLE 1 (SK): LGBT+Q+ YOUTH INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Participant Code	SOGI (LGBTIQA+)	Age	Current occupation	Previous/current work experience	Most significant experience of discrimination (personal)	Most significant experience of discrimination (workplace)	Ideas for inclusivity in workplace / breaking down discrimination in the workplace
SK_YP_1	G	18	permanent employment	Part-time jobs	Does not recall any significant cases of being discriminated against.	Does not recall any significant cases of being discriminated against.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enlightenment/education of the public.</li> <li>• Leading by personal example.</li> <li>• Trainings.</li> <li>• Holding the one who discriminates accountable including his/her sanctioning which should be disclosed to others.</li> </ul>
SK_YP_2	G	25	entrepreneur	permanent employment/part time jobs, summer jobs	Does not recall any significant cases of being discriminated against.	Does not recall any significant cases of being discriminated against.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal recognition of registered partnerships.</li> <li>• Legal recognition would lead to normalization of perceiving LGBT people in the work place.</li> <li>• Strengthening of laws and regulations on protecting LGBT.</li> <li>• Trainings on ethics/morality/diversity in the work place.</li> <li>• Alter the job position of the perpetrators or even fire them.</li> <li>• Education of children – a need for objective information provided by professionals; LGBT should not be seen as a taboo issue to discuss, this should be mandatory for every student so that the parents with religious views cannot forbid their children to attend the education on this matter.</li> </ul>
SK_YP_3	G	26	permanent employment	Summer jobs / part-time jobs in Slovakia and abroad	Open discrimination at school	At work, not an open type of discrimination, but he experienced disdain from co-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal approach from managers.</li> <li>• The government should provide help to those who are discriminated against.</li> </ul>

						workers of both genders, mainly from men, but from women also	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openly discuss the case of discrimination (with the people affected by it, but with HR departments and legal departments too) and hold the discriminator accountable.</li> </ul>
SK_YP_4	G	20	permanent employment	Part-time / Temporary jobs	Premonitions that things would go wrong if he would disclose his sexual orientation	Does not recall any significant cases of being discriminated against	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social acceptance in general.</li> <li>• Elimination/dissolving extremist political parties.</li> <li>• Open discussion with co-workers; they should be able to ask.</li> <li>• Codes of conduct and in cases of breaching the code – to hold the person accountable for his/her deeds.</li> </ul>
SK_YP_5	G	26	permanent employment	Permanent employment	Undisclosed	Discrimination that leads to changing jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the topic not taboo so that managers know they need to fight against discrimination.</li> <li>• Legal recognition of LGBT people (registered partnerships, inheritance, medical information).</li> <li>• Codes of conduct that would include the right to file every case of discrimination.</li> <li>• Codes of conduct should be accepted especially in state bodies/organisations.</li> <li>• Discussions with affected persons so that the one who discriminated would be aware of what s/he had done wrong.</li> <li>• Discussions within the whole company.</li> <li>• In the worst case scenario also firing the person.</li> <li>• Mandatory education/training on the matter of discrimination which should be regularly held.</li> </ul>



							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adhering to international commitments/obligations of the Slovak Republic.</li> </ul>
SK_YP_6	G	22	permanent employment	Volunteering in Slovakia and abroad	Ridicule and innuendo of LGBT	Ridicule and innuendo of LGBT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not paying attention to those who discriminate you – they will eventually lose their interest.</li> <li>• Religion should stop spreading their hate towards the LGBT minority.</li> <li>• Enacting a law against discrimination of LGBT persons.</li> <li>• Company's culture – supporting good working environment.</li> <li>• Labor unions should be active in this issue.</li> </ul>
SK_YP_7	L	26	permanent employment	Part-time / Temporary jobs / Summer jobs in Slovakia and abroad	Undisclosed	Not particularly because of affiliation as LGBT but rather gender discrimination; this reduced after they learnt about me having a university degree and also my boss changed the title of my position at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neo-Nazis and catholic radicals should stop making a target of LGBT people</li> <li>• despite being trained in matters of labor law.</li> <li>• State institutions and politicians, government, should lead an open communication that would include LGBT people as equals.</li> <li>• Managers at work should be responsible for adopting internal regulations/standards that would prevent discrimination and bossing/mobbing.</li> <li>• Education at high schools – as of now there is a lack of education on matters concerning civil society, students have no idea how the state works so they don't know who to address when they are discriminated against.</li> <li>• Education on civil society should be mandatory for all students, so the parents would not be able to opt out for education on Catholicism.</li> </ul>

							<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acting as a role model myself: if there are hints on discrimination I try to reach out to the person who committed it and try to talk to him/her and also I try to notify my superior.</li></ul>
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

TABLE 2 (SK): STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Participant Code	Age	Current occupation	Obstacles that prevent seeking legal help	Ideas for inclusivity in workplace / breaking down discrimination in the workplace	Other discussed issues
SK_FG_1	35	lawyer, Slovak National Centre for Human Rights	<p>Fear of losing one's job (Well, basically, they often don't want to lose their job, so even if we offer them solutions to their problems, they often reject it.)</p> <p>Distrust in state's institutions (They do not trust any state institutions at all, on the one hand, they also do not believe in court proceedings. They are afraid to testify in the court's proceedings and talk about their experience. They also don't trust us (the Center))</p> <p>Targeted programs on inclusion/diversity and systematic education on all levels (We think that the state should actually lead by example, not only in the context of public administration bodies, that is, individual ministries and state budgeted organizations, they all should have such programs. But, companies that are state-owned or by majority state-owned - the situation is alarming.)</p> <p>(The education ... awareness about LGBT community and their rights or gender equality, there are no programs on the subject. It often happens to us that when we <i>(as the Center)</i> explain this to teachers about what the education will be about, we send them some syllabi, they agree and a few days later they call us that they don't want any 'GDPR', 'gender' etc. they "throw" various abbreviations like these, they don't even know what they mean. I can say that very</p>	<p>Charter of Diversity, Campaign for Better Mondays (The Center is part of the Charter of Diversity, we try to be diverse in the workplace, however even though we have knowledge on the topic, even we, as the employer, do not have active policies that would actually support the employment of LGBT people in our Center)</p> <p>((To raise awareness) the Center along with NGO Pontis we started the campaign called 'For Better Mondays'.)</p> <p>Cooperation of the Center and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Today, I can say that, we are working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has received more than five recommendations in the Universal Periodic Review to adopt a national action plan to promote human rights in business, and the Center is actually trying to push into that action plan and commit the state to start implementing policies in its enterprises and directly managed companies to promote diversity, diversity in the workplace and thus the protection of vulnerable groups)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where does it work better?</li> <li>• (Mainly companies that are larger, which have good budgets, are often foreign companies that employ university-educated people and in larger cities.)</li> <li>• Community own companies</li> <li>• (When it comes to companies owned by a member of a community, on one hand, it really is a safe workplace and we can perceive it that way, on the other hand, then we cannot talk about diversity. So these are the different problems that arise there.)</li> <li>• State's faults</li> <li>• (As for the committee (on LGBT rights), I should say it is true that the committee is actually inoperable, we will not pretend that it works. In essence, the structures that the state is building are insufficient, and in essence, as the Director of the Center says today, this community does not have a clear state-level representative who is clearly dedicated to support it, who supports only LGBTI, develops it and protects it as its only competence. We can see that in the Commissioner for People with Disabilities, the Commissioner for Children or various other who have really been emerging like mushrooms after the rain lately (but not for the LGBT). And it is very sad to see that the state is not fulfilling, it is not fulfilling its basic human rights obligations to this community for a long time, and today we do not even have a strategy to support the development of protection of LGBTI rights)</li> <li>• (New legislative? We don't know about that. Rather, what we are seeing is an initiative that is already destructing the remnants of what we already have built up here. Especially at the level of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family, when we see that</li> </ul>

		<p>often I feel that the teachers who educate our children are subject to misinformation, prejudice and that it is very difficult to work with them. The children they would not be as problematic. (...) So, as far as our institution is concerned, it is very important to us that young people begin to learn how to think critically, not to be subject to various prejudices, misinformation (...) That's actually what we miss the most in the schools, but as I say, the basics are the teachers. Or even if you go through teachers, you often have to go through parents too, because on some topics parents explicitly require to for their informed consent).</p> <p>Barriers laid by the state's representatives (see column 6 – State's faults too) (My first such experience where the state itself began to systematically decompose any support that was created here for this community or that tried to help this community, was when our institution, with the support of the Methodological and Pedagogical Center, was to educate teachers in the Prešov region, teachers who work with children. This training was to be focused on how to help them if they experience bullying or cyberbullying due to their sexual orientation and basically our lecturers were called off standing there at the train station. The stop came from the state - the ministry, quite quickly. So basically even though if there are some organizations at the state level that try to do something in this area it's often their superior body that does not allow them to do so or they actually cancel these projects or programs.)</p>	<p>While enacting a new legislation – add due diligence and report on how the legislation will be beneficial to vulnerable groups or how it would affect them</p>	<p>they are changing who will get the funding..., when we see whole departments being closed or people being fired, analytical departments are closing down)</p>
--	--	---	---	--



SK_FG_2	40	university professor of law, member of Legislative Committee of the Government of Slovak Republic	<p>Underreporting (It's about social settings. We may have perfect laws in every aspect, but it's similar to corruption, that you may have something that is forbidden, like the corruption, but simply when the social climate is set in a certain way, so that basically no one even reports the corruption, then it's something very similar to (LGBT people's situation). Indeed, people seem to perceive those problems. Certainly, there is a difference between international and multinational corporations, where, as the predecessors said, they probably count on such possibilities, and the internal processes in those companies is probably that they take care of it. But in the case of the smaller and regional ones, there is undoubtedly the social climate and the social pressure that affected people will not claim their rights in courts.)</p>	<p>Clinical legal education (<i>not a citation, but these are the thoughts in general</i>: it is independent of politics due to high level of academic self-government; sustainable as usually subject related to clinical education must be maintained for at least 4-5 years) Visibility</p> <p>Coming out of politicians</p> <p>If there is any progress, it would have to be done from "down below" and not from the top of the political representation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Companies' culture</li> <li>• Regional differences</li> <li>• No news when it comes to any new legislation to come</li> </ul>
SK_FG_3	40	LGBT+Q+Q+ Activist, member of the Committee for the Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersexual Persons at the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality	<p>Low level of law enforcement (Of those cases that we were involved with, legal ones, as far as I know, none has come to a legally binding conclusion.)</p> <p>Fear of losing one's job (The stigma that would be with them, the stigma of the one who complains, this would go with them in their working life and then no one else would hire them.)</p> <p>(Lack of) visibility (It is clear that if there were more cases and more people complaining or dealing with the</p>	<p>Charter of Diversity</p> <p>More competences to selected bodies (Bodies, such as the Center, ombudsman, or labor inspectorates and so on, there is certainly place to strengthen their powers, because what do we want from the labor inspectorate, to train them if they have 5 clerks for several thousand employees in the Bratislava region)</p> <p>Community centers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regions and the size of the company matters</li> <li>• (The big difference is that between the sector, whether it's public or private employer, and then, of course, between the regions)</li> <li>• Particularly vulnerable group</li> <li>• ((Speaking of public sector, a bad situation is) in the area of education, where there were several teachers, I think that most of them are gay men, who are afraid the school management accidentally learns about their orientation, and it will change their approach to them)</li> <li>• Funding/money issue</li> <li>• ((for the first time) it was possible to apply for funds to address discrimination also for the area of LGBT people from the EU Funds (...). However, as soon as</li> </ul>



			<p>issue in some way, there would be more awareness on the subject.)</p> <p>The NGO has no capacity to train, no regional structures to raise awareness</p>	<p>(Community centers, i.e. the places of the first contact for the community, where based on the problems the community center would turn to psychological, legal or some other help, and would send the person to the relevant institutions. This would increase the visibility and so on. However, we still don't have this first step, it doesn't exist in our country)</p> <p>Companies owned by LGBT+Q+ (There are also smaller companies, such as those owned by people from the community, which are becoming more involved and visible during, for example, Pride and such events, in recent years in particular. There are such initiatives from the people of the community. LGBT people who are entrepreneurs or own small businesses or even medium-sized ones. So I see some progress there)</p> <p>Methodological aid of the NGO</p> <p>Legislation on registered partnership (Certainly the greatest impact, and this is demonstrated from everywhere based on results of research as well, is the legal recognition of same-sex couples and their families. And that is even in countries where it came under pressure from society, but also in countries where the society, as we say, was not ready. In both, it had the</p>	<p>the project ended, we actually had to close the In-Poradňa (counseling project of the NGO) by the Inakosť (biggest LGBT+Q+ NGO in Slovakia) and it doesn't work anymore)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ((Speaking about national funding) Actually only the Ministry of Justice has its own scheme to support projects in human rights and the fight against extremism. However, that is also another problem that the support/funding depends, which is also a Slovak tragedy, on the specific people in charge at the ministries and in one time something will start, follow up and then the other time it will end)</li> <li>• Committee for the Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersexual Persons at the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality has not had any meeting within last year</li> </ul>
--	--	--	---	--	--

				biggest impact and changed the attitude of public, then the public saw those people in real life and in a different light.)	
SK_FG_4	35	lawyer, university lecturer		Clinical legal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University environment</li> <li>• (not a citation, but these are the thoughts in general: many students who are out in university, come back to closet once they start their jobs; final theses, the topics could be altered due to “views” of superiors, therefore LGBT topics are not very common)</li> </ul>
SK_FG_5	60	lawyer, Member of the Committee for Gender Equality at the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality	<p>Litigation (The issue of litigation is very important. Where there is no plaintiff, then there is no judge too. This exactly means that until we actually get these cases to the court until they are successfully resolved, then the application of law will not improve so well.)</p> <p>(there is lack of systematic legal representation <i>(that would help the affected people)</i> and then there were some cases that were not successful and finally the client had to pay the costs of legal representation and they are high)</p> <p>Stigma (the issue with LGBT people is the coming out of the anonymity and coming out with your expression of identity ... that is sometimes very problematic ... So, going public and fighting for your rights is often very stigmatizing to these people)</p> <p>Lack of state support and lack of trade union's support (Discrimination takes place in state institutions, which is, alarming. And, for</p>	<p>Political views that supports 'traditional family' instead of gender equality and equality in general</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Better and more instructive web pages of respective institutions and better written annual reports <i>(not a citation, but these are the thoughts in general: they have to be more readable, and should state how exactly they handled discrimination practice – stating positively how to face discrimination and it was overcome)</i></p>	

		<p>example, when it comes to employment, too, trade unions rarely and few have addressed the issue of gender equality, non-discrimination of LGBT people in collective .... It's all just about some kindergartens, thirteenth and fourteen salaries, and that's it, but when it comes to equality, equal pay and equal access and non-discrimination, for example, there is still great amount of work to be done)</p> <p>Funding and political representation (After all, even the law on funding, is no longer <i>(besides others)</i> aimed at gender equality, but aimed at the family. This means that issue of gender and LGBT issues will be pushed to the background. (....) Finally, the scandal surrounding the Norwegian Funds, where NGOs that have long been involved in gender equality have been ranked high by the respective committee, yet the funding was approved to the family and pro-Christian organizations instead, organizations which have a very strong connection even to the government, and thus to members of parliament)</p>		
--	--	--	--	--

# SPAIN



## APPROACH

A qualitative approach was undertaken that involved one to one interviews with LGBT+Q+ people and focus groups with relevant stakeholders. Individual interviews were performed with LGBT+Q+ people from 22 to 26 years, all of whom had experience in the job market. A focus group discussion was conducted with relevant stakeholders specialized in labour rights, labour inclusion of LGBT+Q+ people and NGOs with a broad range of working experience with the LGBT+Q+ population. Interviews and the focus group discussion took place between December 2020 and February 2021. Separate topic guides were developed for LGBT+Q+ people and stakeholders regarding experiences of discrimination in the workplace as well as those that influenced working life, facilitators and barriers to breaking down discrimination in the workplace, and inclusive strategies in working environments. Each interview/focus group was undertaken by a local researcher with experience in conducting qualitative research in previous studies. All interviews were conducted online due to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Downloaded anonymised data were screened for inconsistencies and coded based on a predetermined codebook. For the purposes of this field report a subset of variables was created from the main questionnaire to provide a more comprehensive overview of the situations that young LGBT+Q+ people face at their workplaces in Spain. Overall, data from 88 Spanish participants were included in the analysis.

## QUALITATIVE RESULTS

A total of 14 participants were recruited, including 7 LGBT+Q+ people with an average age of 24 years, and 7 stakeholders with an average age of 34 years. The results presented below show an outline of the key themes that emerged from the interviews and the focus group, illustrated with example quotes and separated by LGBT+Q+ participants and stakeholders. Participant demographics and summarised responses are described in Tables 1 & 2 \_ES in the Appendix.

# LGBT+Q+ YOUTH FINDINGS

The emergent themes from the interviewed LGBT+Q+ youth include: experiences of discrimination in the workplace, experiences of discrimination outside the work environment that influence working life, barriers and facilitators to break down discrimination in the workplace and inclusive strategies in working environments.

## EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Generally participants described experiences of discrimination in the workplace reporting examples of hostility such as harassment and derogatory comments, as well as administrative hurdles in the case of trans people.

- *There were several comments "that if you faggot", "beware of this one who is a faggot", "don't bend in front of it", things like that, quite often..."The boss I told you before, I'm not going to say names obviously. But I did wonder that, if I hadn't considered continuing to work there even, even that it was my profession" (ES\_YP\_3)*
- *People crying because in the end they don't hire them, because they say they're called, for example, uh, Maria (female name), and at work if you don't call yourself Pepe (male name) you don't come in, and I've seen very complicated situations (ES\_YP\_7)*

Sometimes these experiences of discrimination occurred as jokes or comments that people perceived as something less harmful.

- *I've heard quite derogatory comments or maybe it wasn't derogatory, but they used the term to make it humorous (ES\_YP\_2)*

One of the participants reported experiences of benevolent discrimination, noting that his employer adopted a paternalistic attitude when he realised he is gay.

- *it's like he changed the way he was with me, before he was super border with me, he'd say, "Take this to this table, this, the other..." You couldn't ask him anything because he'd be a beast, but from there (when he knew) he changed drastically with me. I mean, he was super nice (ES\_YP\_1)*



# EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION OUTSIDE THE WORK ENVIRONMENT THAT INFLUENCE WORKING LIFE

In several cases people had experienced episodes of bullying or experiences of discrimination in their school-years that could have affected their attitude, causing insecurity when they began their working life.

- *They've already really put it in our heads that (they) won't accept us and we can be surprised many times but we're going about very carefully unfortunately (ES\_YP\_2)*
- *When I was in school, I did have quite a few older classmates, who sent photos through the Internet that I went out with my girlfriend on WhatsApp and started calling me everything (ES\_YP\_4)*

## BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TO BREAK DOWN DISCRIMINATION

Regarding **facilitators** to tackle discrimination in the workplace, participants considered it very important to establish codes of conduct in companies, provide training in sexual affective diversity and gender identity, raise awareness among the general population about gender identity and sexual orientation, and include publicity campaigns to increase societal knowledge about gender diversity. It was noted that information and awareness-raising should be offered from primary school stages.

- *... code of conduct of the company, and that the worker can be sanctioned (ES\_YP\_1)*
- *...you'd have to do educational courses, a little education and inclusion to open minds a little bit (ES\_YP\_3)*

The prominent barriers were those related to the low awareness of society at large and the limited information received on sexual affective diversity. Trans people also often find barriers when submitting their documentation to formalize their work contract.

- *You don't have straight friends who have come out of a nightclub and got beat up for going hand in hand with their partner. I don't know... So, of course, visibility is necessary, it is still very necessary. And I think that's the most important thing to make visible, sensitize, from education, from below (ES\_YP\_6)*
- *...when I had to give my ID to (name of company) I thought " Oh my God, I have to send something that's going to go crazy," you know? And they're going to say, "What is this? (ES\_YP\_7)*

# LABOUR SECTORS PERCEIVED AS HOSTILE OR FAVOURABLE

In the interviews emerged the issue of the labour sectors that young people consider more favourable and those who seem hostile to them. Participants perceived fashion, creativity and trade-related labour sectors as favourable, and banking, administration or construction as hostile. Sectors perceived as hostile were defined as cold work environments in which a heteronormative image must be offered and in which diversity must be hidden, while sectors considered favourable were defined as open, relaxed and more diverse in staff.

- *A clothing store or anywhere like this is pretty open...In a bank it also transmits a lot of insecurity that someone knows my sexual orientation. I see it as quite closed as well, and ensure that I study business (ES\_YP\_1)*
- *A trans woman from the association who was in the construction, trans woman, she said her name was, I don't know, I don't remember, but I'm going to tell you a name... I don't know, María, okay? Of course, María was discriminated against in her work, and in fact in the end by the pressure and everything had to go for unemployment and so on (ES\_YP\_7)*

# INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES IN WORKING ENVIRONMENTS.

Finally, with regard to inclusive strategies in work environments, the creation of safe and progressive environments which respect other people was highlighted.

- *At the company level, just as training is done on respect for the partner, work harassment, we should work within that field respect for the different colleagues whether from a collective of another is of disability, LGBTI... it should work (ES\_YP\_5)*
- *there should be more diversity and more visibility within companies... that are places where you can feel comfortable, since at the out point of entry give you that security whatever you are, lesbian, straight...(ES\_YP\_2)*

# STAKEHOLDER FINDINGS

Emergent themes from stakeholders include: difficulties LGBT+Q+ people are facing in transitioning from or integrating social and employment contexts, risk groups, other factors that may cause exclusion or discrimination, facilitators and barriers to break down discrimination, and mechanisms or strategies to support or protect against discrimination. The conversation continuously turned to the work problems faced by trans people. Gay men were generally considered to have less trouble finding and feeling safe in the workplace, although reference was also made to the fact that many people return to the closet when they hold positions of responsibility, lesbian women especially, and labels remain a constant obstacle.

## DIFFICULTIES FACED IN TRANSITIONING TO EMPLOYMENT

Some of the difficulties highlighted by focus group participants refer to the fear of landing in hostile work environments which would cause them to return to the closet and not feel free to be able to talk to their partners or employers. Sometimes this is conditioned by episodes of discrimination or harassment experienced in the past in school or social settings. It is also very complicated at times for trans people, as their documentation may not match their identity and they are forced to explain their reality.

- *Activists 100% and even in prominent positions of responsibility in associations, positions with a lot of visibility that come out in the media and, well, finish their college moment and their first job appears and right at that moment, he goes back to the closet. People with all the visibility of the world who have worked for the (LGBT+Q+) collective, the first time they appear at work the fears of being fired, not to ascend, well they go back to the closet again (ES\_FG\_6)*
- *If my ID does not match the person I am presenting, it is already going to be a barrier to hiring since you have to give a lot of explanations and the fact that a trans person has to be constantly giving that explanation of I have to leave the closet with a person I do not know. It violates a right to privacy that in the end is a, "I'm not going to the interview because they're not going to employ me because I'm trans" (ES\_FG\_1)*

## RISK GROUPS WITHIN LGBT+Q+

With regard to the risk groups within the LGBT+Q+ population, there was unanimity that trans people are the ones who encounter the most problems when accessing the labour market. Participants further highlighted very high unemployment rates in Spain. One of the problems underscored among trans people was early school drop-out and the bullying they often suffered.

- *simply the problems are different depending on the letters of the collective indeed the trans collective perhaps, well perhaps not, is the one that has the most difficulty finding work and unemployment rates speak... very high percentages of 85% unemployment of the trans collective (ES\_FG\_6)*
- *of course, I think that trans people, as well as non-binary people, queer, that we said at the beginning, have it more difficult because of that necessary visibility, not only the documentation but whether they are noted or not, that they cannot at best hide it... but of course, in a matter of intersex it is so unknown that even in a discussion group being as it is an acronym that should be included from the beginning, because we have not commented on it (ES\_FG\_7)*

## BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS TO BREAKING DOWN DISCRIMINATION

In reference to **barriers** to tackling discrimination, previous experiences that lead to a negative assessment of their inclusion possibilities and the labels that accompanied them during their working life emerged.

- *...those who have suffered previous experiences of discrimination that have had their own or have seen or have known other people or are testimonies such as that they take for granted that the environment is going to be hostile.. then there is already an assessment of the possibilities of access to the world of work by filtering those spaces to which I will not be able to belong or be because they will directly reject me, there are spaces that are not for me (ES\_FG\_2)*
- *Always say that label, he is professor of I do not know what position he has and as soon as it is known that he is gay he is already the "Gay of sociology, the gay of..." and in the end everything else is erased even in the workplace, I'm talking to you on a college scale" (ES\_FG\_7)*

They also mentioned other factors that may cause exclusion or discrimination such as gender, religious beliefs, social status or ethnicity.

- *against more discriminatory intersections accumulate more you will go down unfortunately, if you are male you can keep the average up and if you are woman low steps. If you're a white woman more or less, if you're a non-white but straight woman it's worth it, but if you add trans, lesbian, race, you're poor, you have functional diversity. In the end the discriminations are multiple and your social status is set aside and it's an impossibility to access work (ES\_FG\_1)*

Regarding **facilitators** to break down discrimination participants commented on some projects that are being carried out or are being initiated. It was highlighted that company's support and advice should be offered, those that are LGBTI friendly must be recognized with labels, and specific programmes should be carried out for the inclusion of trans people.

- *...the EMIDIS program is the program of companies for diversity and consists of companies that join this project, I do not know if you know it, voluntarily offer to be evaluated, to make a diagnosis of the level of diversity that is in their companies. We have recently published the report with some 15 companies in which we have already made interventions (ES\_FG\_5)*
- *In the university there is an advisory service and an employment agency, the employment service of the university that is "UVocupació" and within there is a university program that helps in the employment insertion of people with disabilities, there is no such thing as with the access of LGBTI people to the world of work and, perhaps, it would be important to have a specific program for trans people (ES\_FG\_7)*

## MECHANISMS OF SUPPORT

Participants agreed that training and awareness-raising for the employers and resilience building for the target population is a key strategy to promote the inclusion of the LGBTI collective, especially with respect to trans people. They also highlighted the need to make a multidisciplinary effort for labour inclusion and reserve public employment quotas for the trans collective in the same way that they do with other populations, such as neuro-diverse populations.

- *...In reality, the work goes both ways, raising awareness not only in terms of the ways of doing things in people who are going to receive people from the LGBT collective but also in raising awareness in the structures and reinforcing LGTB people if they have access to the world of work to reinforce that they are not the ones who have the handicap (ES\_FG\_2)*
- *we need these kinds of measures like a public employment quota for example, because there will be time later to compare that with a measure comparable to the one given to those of diverse capabilities, but we do need it (ES\_FG\_4)*

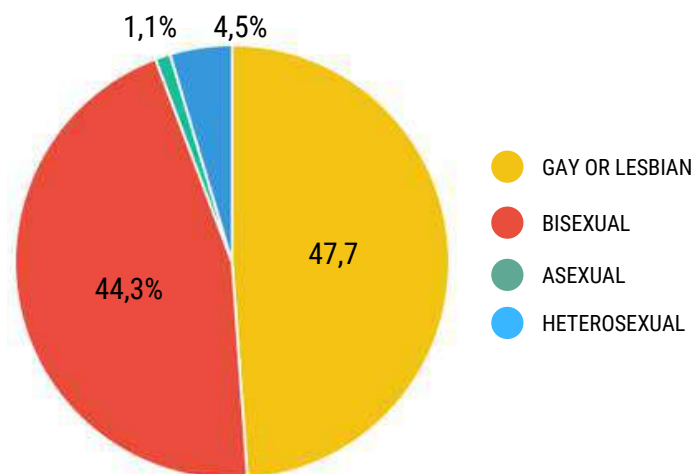


# QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

## SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA

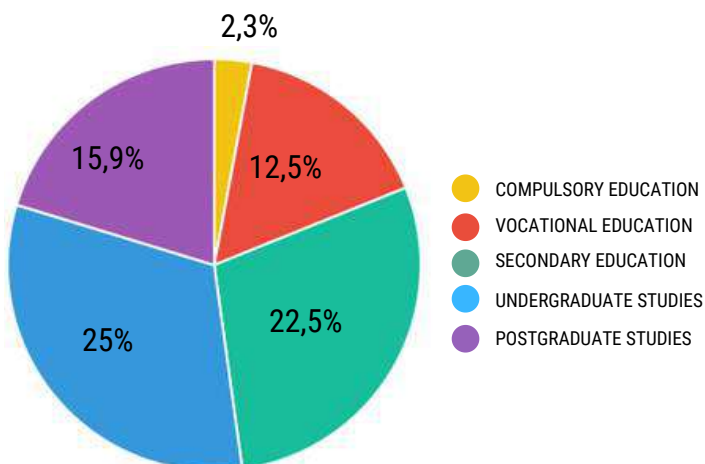
Participants were between 15 and 26 years old and had a mean age of 21.92 (SD=2.67). Most participants live in big urban cities (50%). Overall the majority of participants were male (46.6%) and 20.5% of participants declared that their gender identity does not correspond to the assigned gender at birth. Most participants (47.7%) declared their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian.

### PARTICIPANT'S SEXUAL ORIENTATION

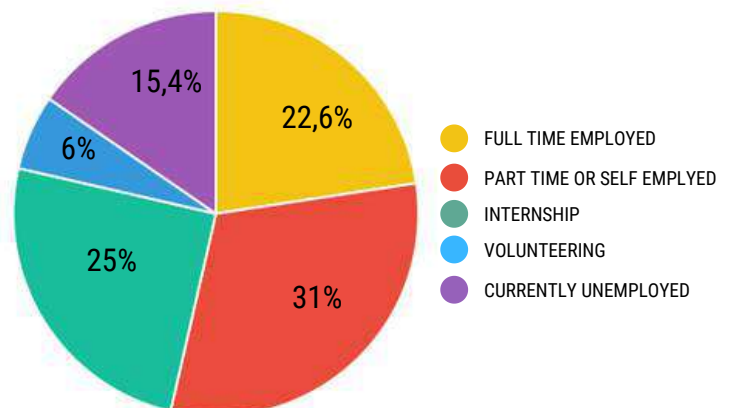


Most participants had completed undergraduate studies (25%) and were part-time employed or self-employed (31%) and were working for the same employer on average for 12.30 months (SD=13.16), active mostly in food and beverage industry (14.8%) and social and health services (12.5%). Furthermore, 64.8% of the participants were employed or working in smaller institutions or companies (up to 20 employees).

### PARTICIPANT'S EDUCATION LEVEL



### CURRENT WORKING EXPERIENCE

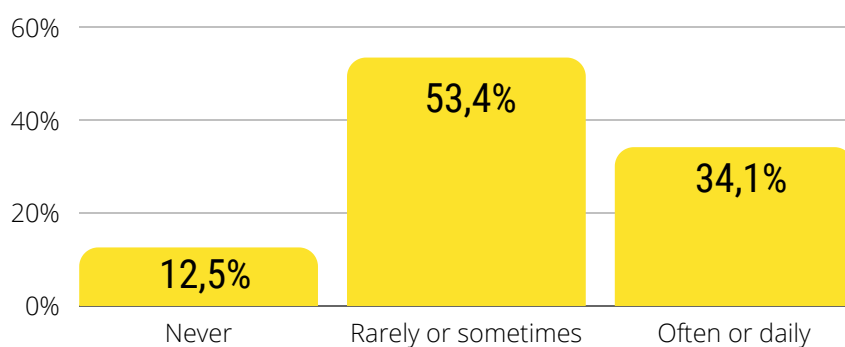


Most participants also declared that they received payment for their work on which they were also fully dependent and not receiving any additional financial help from family or parents (39.8%), and 47.7% of participants indicated they can hardly or cannot at all cover their expenses with their income.

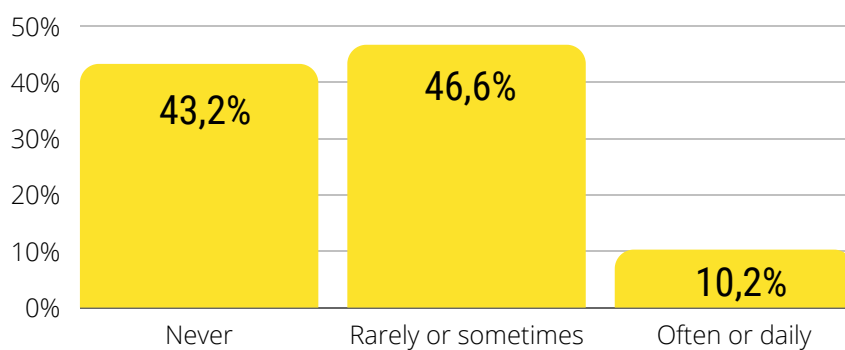
## EXPERIENCES OF ABUSE OR MOBBING IN SCHOOL

More than half of Spanish participants reported being sometimes verbally abused in school (53.4%) and 34.10% reported experiencing daily verbal abuse while at school. Physical abuse was reported somewhat lower, however still very prevalent, with 46.6% reporting physical abuse sometimes and 10.2% daily. In terms of bullying and abuse over social media, 48.9% of Spanish participants reported sometimes and 15.9% daily experiences of abuse.

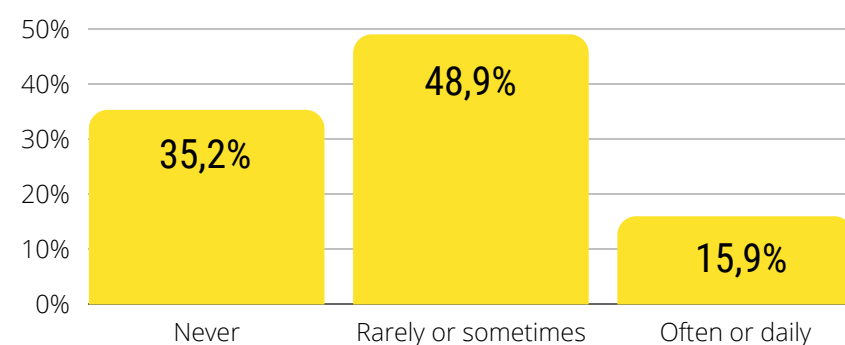
### EXPERIENCES OF VERBAL ABUSE IN SCHOOL



### EXPERIENCES OF PHYSICAL ABUSE IN SCHOOL



### EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSE IN SCHOOL



## EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION AT THE WORKPLACE

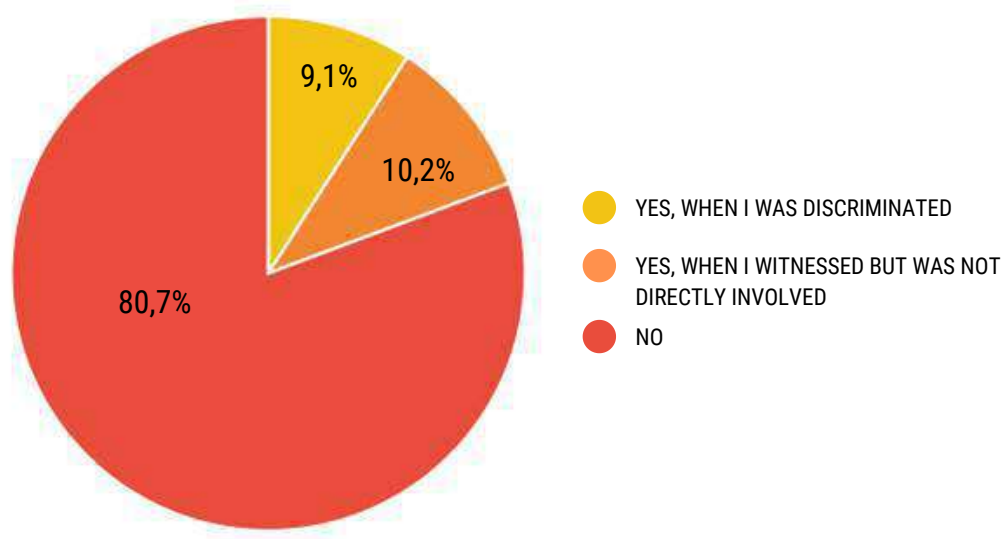
Regarding openness about their sexual orientation or gender identity at the workplace, average score chosen was 6.1 out of 10.



Within the Spanish sample of participants 37.5% declared that they had experienced discrimination at the workplace and 46.6% also declared they had witnessed instances of discrimination at work. Unfortunately a large majority (80.7%) of participants did not report discrimination they experienced or witnessed.

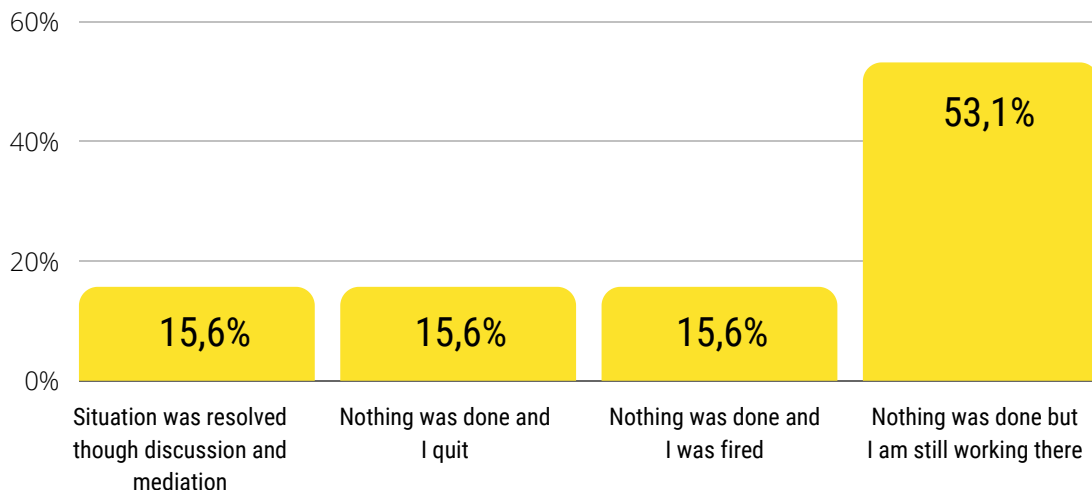


### REPORTING OF DISCRIMINATION



If the discrimination instances were reported in the majority of cases there was no follow up and the person who reported discrimination is still working in that environment (53.10%). Furthermore, in 15.6% there was no follow up and the person who reported discrimination was fired or decided to quit.

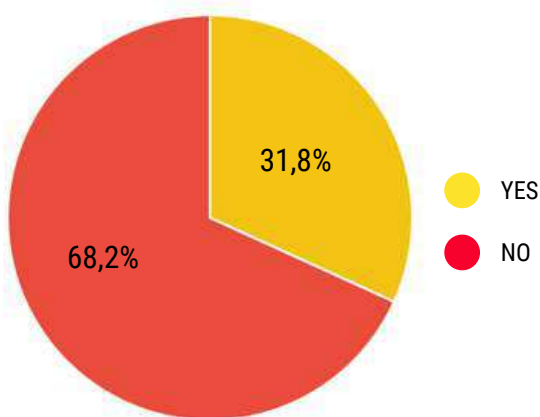
### REPORTING FOLLOW UP



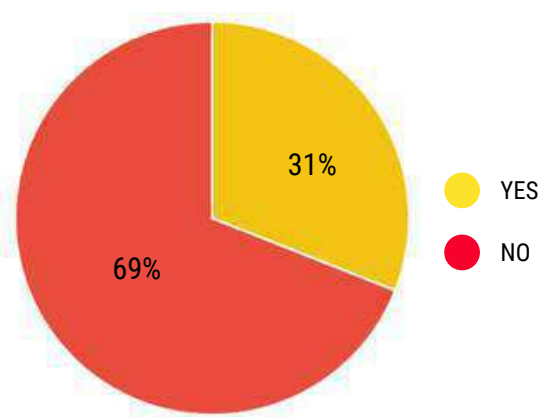
## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MECHANISMS AT THE WORKPLACE

Approximately one third of participants knew to whom they could report instances of discrimination at their workplace or were aware of any anti-discrimination or discrimination prevention measures at their workplace (31.8% and 31%, respectively).

### DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO REPORT DISCRIMINATION?



### DO YOU KNOW OF ANY ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MEASURES?



In terms of what anti-discrimination or discrimination prevention measures the minority of participants were aware of at their workplace, mostly (31.8%) reported knowing about "guidelines on sexual orientation or gender identity at the workplace" followed by "written company agreements on discrimination prevention and diversity promotion" in 18.2% of cases.

TABLE 1 (ES): LGBT+Q+ YOUTH INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Participant Code	SOGI (LGBTIQA+)	Age	Current occupation	Previous/current work experience	Most significant experience of discrimination (personal)	Most significant experience of discrimination (workplace)	Ideas for inclusivity in workplace / breaking down discrimination in the workplace
ES_YP_1	G	22	Unemployed	Summer jobs / part-time jobs	Insults of University teacher	Harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Code of Conduct for companies including sanctions</li> </ul>
ES_YP_2	L	23	Working full-time on clothes store			derogatory comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required courses on workplace for all employees</li> </ul>
ES_YP_3	G	26	Working full time in a restaurant	Hotels, Restaurants, and Cafes		Harassment, derogatory comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational courses (normalize different sexual orientation and gender identities)</li> </ul>
ES_YP_4	B	23	Student	Part-time / Temporary jobs	Bullying at school	None (hide their sexual orientation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection mechanisms in contracts</li> </ul>
ES_YP_5	B	26	Working full time		Heteronormative stereotypes (because of the way she dressed, culturally associated with masculinity)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational courses (normalize different sexual orientation and gender identities)</li> <li>• Educating about non-cis-het sexualities since childhood</li> </ul>
ES_YP_6	G	25	Working full-time		Homophobic comments at School	None (considers gay men not to suffer as much discrimination as others within the collective, considers gay people jokes to be harmless)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educating people from infancy in different sexual orientation and gender identities (will be tolerant adults).</li> <li>• Improve media visibility.</li> </ul>
ES_YP_6	T	24	Working Part-time	Summer jobs / part-time jobs	confusion regarding his documentation, which does not match his appearance and identity	Administrative hurdles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educating about non-cis-het sexualities since childhood</li> </ul>



TABLE 2 (ES): STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Participant Code	Age	Current occupation	Obstacles that prevent work insertion	Ideas for inclusivity in workplace / breaking down discrimination in the workplace
ES_FG_1	26	City Council (Valencia) Equality Technician	Documentation is not in line to their identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific lines of action for the insertion of the trans collective from the public administration</li> </ul>
ES_FG_2	27	Psychologist at "Orienta" (LGTBI Integral Office)	Previous experiences of discrimination (negative assessment of their possibilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance in access to labour market (individually for LGBTBI persons)</li> <li>• training in sexual and emotional diversity (organization level)</li> </ul>
ES_FG_3	30	Professor at the University of Valencia (specializing in labor rights of trans people)	Belonging to a risk group (Trans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal training in sexual and emotional diversity (persons who conducts the interview)</li> </ul>
ES_FG_4	30	Trans Topic Advisory Group Coordinator (LAMBDA)	Previous experiences of discrimination (negative assessment of their possibilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public employment quote (trans people)</li> </ul>
ES_FG_5	46	FELGTB Human Resources and labor Insertion LGBTBI people	Belonging to a risk group (Trans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory service (make a diagnosis of the company's level of diversity).</li> <li>• Follow up and support companies interested in incorporating trans people</li> </ul>
ES_FG_6	47	LGBTI People's Employment Insertion Coordinator	Belonging to a risk group (Trans) Back to the closet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support process from a multidisciplinary approach on several fronts (familiar, associations, social, legal)</li> </ul>
ES_FG_7	32	Diversity Technician at the University of Valencia	Labelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University program that helps in the employment insertion of LGBTBI people (especially focused on trans people)</li> </ul>

# THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN & NORTHERN IRELAND



## APPROACH

Data were collected through interview and focus group methods with young people (N = 9) and stakeholders (N = 5) respectively. These methods were adopted in order to facilitate an in-depth discursive assessment of the topics in which detailed descriptions of these experiences and opinions could be collected and where the richness of respondents' accounts could be explored. Individual interviews were held with LGBT+Q+ youth participants, each of whom were engaged in the labour market, and each of whom provided their own individual experiences of discrimination and accounts of how these were challenged or overcome as well as the impact of these experiences. The stakeholder focus group discussions comprised individuals involved in the provision of support for LGBT+Q+ young people, such as civil servants and charity sector workers for whom increasing employment for marginalized communities was a priority. Contributions were also elicited from policy analysts and equality and diversity training consultants providing expert advice to statutory and private employers in the UK. Downloaded anonymised data were screened for inconsistencies and coded based on a predetermined codebook. For the purposes of this field report a subset of variables was created from the main questionnaire to provide a more comprehensive overview of the situations that young LGBT+Q+ people face at their workplaces in The United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland. Overall, data from 86 UK participants were included in the analysis.

## QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Analysis of the accounts provided by the 9 LGBT+Q+ youth participants (M\_age = 22.5 years) and the stakeholder focus group discussion (M\_age = 40.4 years) are described below. Participant demographics are described in Tables 1 and 2\_UK in the Appendix. Key themes are provided with exemplar evidence in the form of verbatim quotations extracted from participant transcripts.

# LGBT+Q+ YOUTH FINDINGS

The emergent themes from the interview discussions can be characterised as: i) accounts of discrimination within the workplace and its sources; ii) the impact of experiencing or witnessing discrimination in the workplace on LGBT+Q+ youth; iii) identification of factors that promote or engender inclusive work environments, with the influential role of managers or superiors in promoting an inclusive or hostile work place environment for sexual and gender minorities being prominent across participants.

## EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

This theme comprises LGBT+Q+ youths' accounts of experiences of discrimination in the workplace and examples of the manifestation of episodes for both sexual and gender minority youth. In general, a clear dichotomy of experience emerged between the interviewees as to their own experiences of discrimination in the workplace. Interviewees that identified as cisgendered (i.e., their gender identity aligned with their sex as assigned at birth) sexual minorities (e.g., gay, lesbian, bisexual) recounted limited exposure to overt discrimination in the workplace, but have been subject to more subtle or implicit experiences, often characterised as occurring in jest or as a joke:

- *Um, so I personally haven't experienced, well. So, I guess like microaggressions and small amounts, like in my past jobs. (UK\_YP\_2)*
- *...it's in like a joking way, like people, there's certain members of staff that will call me a scissor sister. So referring to like how, like lesbians have sex... (UK\_YP\_7)*

Conversely, gender minority (e.g., trans/non-binary) respondents recounted more significant, overt and explicit workplace discrimination and that these were enacted by co-workers, managers and among those in service industries, by customers:

- *I had a group of customers at one table trying to figure out what I was. And in precise words, what is it? You know, what is it? You know, looking at me... I had an assistant manager who, despite knowing was very against using the, like even using my preferred name took him a long time, a long time. Despite the fact that he had known me previously. (UK\_YP\_1)*
- *The store owner would come in each week and tell me that it was unnatural, disgusting, that I'm a she-male and that I will never be a man I couldn't take it anymore. (UK\_YP\_6)*

Further, when recounting memorable experiences of discrimination in the workplace that impacted others, such as colleagues, participants' examples typically referred to incidents involving gender minority colleagues:

- *I've seen another colleague, who was non-binary. They told their manager in confidence about the situation, because whether it would crop up or not, they were like, I just wanted to let you know, just in case I want to be called my name or they/them and then it ended up getting spread across the, across the team. And then certain members of the team would kind of mimic...would basically say, "Oh, we don't care, we're gonna call... I'm gonna call them her/she... I don't really care, I'm not really gonna make an effort..." to the point where one colleague actually got a disciplinary for it. (UK\_YP\_3)*

## IMPACT OF EXPERIENCING DISCRIMINATION:

This theme centred around the impact of experiencing discrimination on LGBT+Q+ youth. For gender minority participants, these experiences were associated with feelings of anxiety and shame as a consequence of how they were treated. Participants also described concerns about the potential impact that their identity may have on their position (i.e., sustained employment) within the organisation:

- *It made me uncomfortable, unwelcome and in weird way dirty. Like I was having an out of body experience, I was constantly questioning myself. (UK\_YP\_6)*
- *...you're going...how's it, how are they going to react? You know, are they going to be okay with this? Am I gonna lose my job ...(UK\_YP\_1)*

Across both sexual and gender minority respondents, when considering their own identities and exposure to personal experiences of discrimination or those of others, participants described how such incidents influenced their subsequent behaviour and demeanour in the workplace, in particular highlighting how it lead them to alter the ways in which they presented to colleagues, managers and customers:

- *...So at [Workplace], I work nights. And there was a week where I had to do daytime shifts. So I, because of the people who work daytimes, I did take nail polish off, because then, I just couldn't be bothered. Not that I do, I don't care what people say. But I couldn't be bothered to have to listen to it and things like that. So I have done yeah, it has held me back sometimes. (UK\_YP\_4)*
- *...But then when you start somewhere new, you then kind of like, well, maybe I'll hold back a little bit, wait, and then make a decision of whether I want these people to know that, you know, just because you don't want to repeat the cycle and go through it all again. (UK\_YP\_3)*

Across interviews, participants described underlying concerns about how their sexual or gender identity would be treated by their employer or by colleagues. When considering how to tackle experiences of discrimination, concerns were raised as to how LGBT+Q+ youth may be treated in the future. In particular they felt that attempts to highlight their experiences may lead to their perception by others as difficult or challenging employees as a result of raising such concerns:

- *...the worry that LGBT+Q+ discrimination might not be taken super seriously if the workplace or the managers or whoever is in charge aren't super sort of well-versed and not like understanding of, of, of the community and of the kinds of discrimination that occurs. (UK\_YP\_2)*
- *People might think [you're] like being over involved like, or being over like, emotional or overreacting sort of thing. (UK\_YP\_5)*

## FACTORS TO PROMOTE EQUALITY AND INCLUSION:

Participants were asked to consider how workplaces can promote inclusion for LGBT+Q+ workers and what factors they consider personally important in promoting inclusive cultures. This theme includes LGBT+Q+ youth's own characterisations of what actions employers can take to provide supportive and inclusive environments. Notably, across participants, the role of managers or superiors was highlighted as a key factor for instantiating and maintaining an inclusive workplace environment:

- *So, I think it's just a case of making sure that people are aware when they are in management positions, that they will have to fight for these people. (UK\_YP\_1)*
- *Yeah, helps promote awareness, but also makes me feel safer. Knowing that if a colleague was like that to me, the managers wouldn't, like I know that know for a fact that the manager wouldn't stand for it. (UK\_YP\_4)*

Critically, it was also highlighted how poor managerial responsibility and accountability can detrimentally impact an employee's sense of belonging and their confidence in challenging discrimination, particularly if it involves superiors:

- *But there comes a point where it's just not worth your time to complain. If I set up a grievance against my manager, his manager is on his side, so what's the point?(UK\_YP\_3)*
- *...You shouldn't say that. But he's the manager so what can you do? (UK\_YP\_5)*



When asked to consider what features participants consider important in promoting an inclusive work environment, participants described the benefits of having a diverse staff community and the utility of employers requiring all employees to undertake diversity training as part of employee inductions or workplace training:

- *Because I work with like, a lot of like, the age range is very spread. And like, the races of people at work are very spread as well. So I've met a very mixed set of people, which I wouldn't normally meet on a day to day basis. Yeah. So encouraging that diversity to reduce discrimination? (UK\_YP\_9)*
- *...was, was well managed about everything was a HR's involvement, where they then created a training, we had a training platform where you had videos and quizzes and just you know, very simple but that's because of the job it was. They did actually then do a kind of identity one. So they did bring out a training program. And then there was like, a five-day deadline for every single colleague in the whole company to do it. (UK\_YP\_3)*

Participants also noted that overt representation of diversity in the workplace and participation in LGBT pride events helped to identify the organisations' commitment to equality and diversity. For gender minorities, the availability of gender-neutral uniform options, where uniforms are required, was highlighted:

- *...like celebrate LGBT human rights in public, put posters up with bright rainbow flags and things like that. Which is good. (UK\_YP\_4)*
- *I think it should be a choice in what uniform to wear, or have unisex, let people wear small badges where its safe and stuff, and just respect each other. (UK\_YP\_6)*

## STAKEHOLDER FINDINGS

Analysis of the discussion held with stakeholders highlighted themes characterised as: i) the role of experience, preparation and education for young people entering into the labour market; ii) the role of governmental policy and a lack of awareness of anti-discrimination protections; iii) dealing with multiple sources of disadvantage and; iv) strategies that can support young people's successful entry into the labour market.

# PREPARATION, EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE IN EMPLOYMENT FOR LGBT+Q+ YOUTH

A key theme emerging from stakeholders is their assessment of the lack of preparation and career guidance for LGBT+Q+ youth entering the labour market. Across all stakeholders there was a consensus that current secondary and further education systems in the United Kingdom were failing to prepare young people appropriately for entry into employment and how this can be significantly influenced by the location and demographic profile of the local community in which young people are located:

- *I think that a lot is about how just the pure postcode lottery of where you go to school and how well that school or town or local services are, how enlightened and forward thinking they are, and how much work they've done on some of these issues and understanding them. (UK\_FG\_1)*
- *I think there's the interaction in terms of, in a kind of economically disadvantaged rural areas like, you're less likely to have a choice as to which school you've gone to, and therefore, more likely to be in an unsupportive environment, there's less likely to be other services around and other youth services. (UK\_FG\_2)*

Within education settings, the lack of suitable career guidance, counselling and mentoring was a prominent factor presented by stakeholders:

- *So one of the key success factors for good social mobility is giving people at risk of poor social mobility, really good, really clear, evidence based information about how to progress into work. Good, quality careers advice, basically. (UK\_FG\_1)*
- *...if you're in a minority group, or if you have mixed education, or if you have suffered adverse childhood experiences that have held you back or your family are not supportive of you. You are, you're already the tide is against you, isn't it and to have that extra specialist support can only be a good thing, a necessity and necessity really, and you know, a lot of those first jobs, Saturday jobs or retail jobs or bar jobs, you know, entertainment and hospitality, those jobs that get you through until you decide what it is you want to do or where you want to go. (UK\_FG\_5)*

The opportunity during young people's formative teenage years to undertake casual employment and gain work experience was characterised as being particularly important in order to develop the required tacit 'soft' skills needed for professional life:

- *So even just stuff like the importance of being punctual the importance of, you know, being professional, what does that mean? Those kind of core skills. (UK\_FG\_3)*

# THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENTAL POLICY AND A LACK OF AWARENESS OF ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROTECTIONS

Respondents highlighted how, as a result of the British Government's austerity programmes, access to such opportunities by young people were limited as casual employment positions (e.g., working in a bar or a shop) which, historically were staffed by young people, were now occupied by an older and more permanent workforce, limiting young people's access to such opportunities:

- *I think it's the knock on effects of a decade of austerity is that more of the workforce in older age groups have been pushed into part time roles to remain in work and those part time roles, which would be what were those who was spending that that transition at the same time you can't get a weekend job because people who Need the weekend job to survive. (UK\_FG\_2)*
- *And so for example, it's only about 10 years ago, since we had the full connection service where each school would have had a local authority guidance advisor that worked with all young people who wanted to explore careers and further education, potentially higher education. (UK\_FG\_5)*

In considering the legal protections afforded to sexual and gender minority young people, it was further highlighted how young people are not appropriately appraised and made aware of the anti-discrimination and legal protections afforded in employment and how these legal protections are not provided during a person's formative years in education:

- *...as a young LGBT person entering the workforce how would you know what your rights are? How do you know about the Equality Act 2010? How would you know about You know what is legally okay for other people to do? (UK\_FG\_3)*
- *those rights are not upheld in school. they're very few other places where you're allowed to physically control people. But you are in school...schools should be upholding those rights in their own setting. However, my expectation would be that your rights would be better protected as you get to work than they ever have been at school. (UK\_FG\_1)*

# THE ROLE OF MULTIPLE MARGINALISATION

Participants also described the impact of multiple marginalisation attributable to multiple identities and how for sexual and gender minority youth from minority ethnic communities face increased challenges in achieving good employment opportunities:

- *It's like the negative version of the whole is more than the sum of the parts. Yeah, so the intersectionality is not just saying you get, you know, four minus points for being LGBTQ you get another four for being black you get another four for being female and then you add them all up and you score 12, it's worse than that because it's the pathway of the impact through the external the life chances, the isolation the risk factors and so on. (UK\_FG\_2)*
- *They're also affected by very many issues that stem from low social mobility and poverty and, you know, many NEET [not in employment education or training], young people multi-generational worthlessness and higher prevalence of teen parents and higher levels of crime but They are confident and secure in that community in that network. And it's all they've ever known. So when you have a young person trying to aspire to leave that area, or to do something different without that support, and permission, whether that's formal or informal permission from those that they love. And it's a very difficult thing. (UK\_FG\_5)*

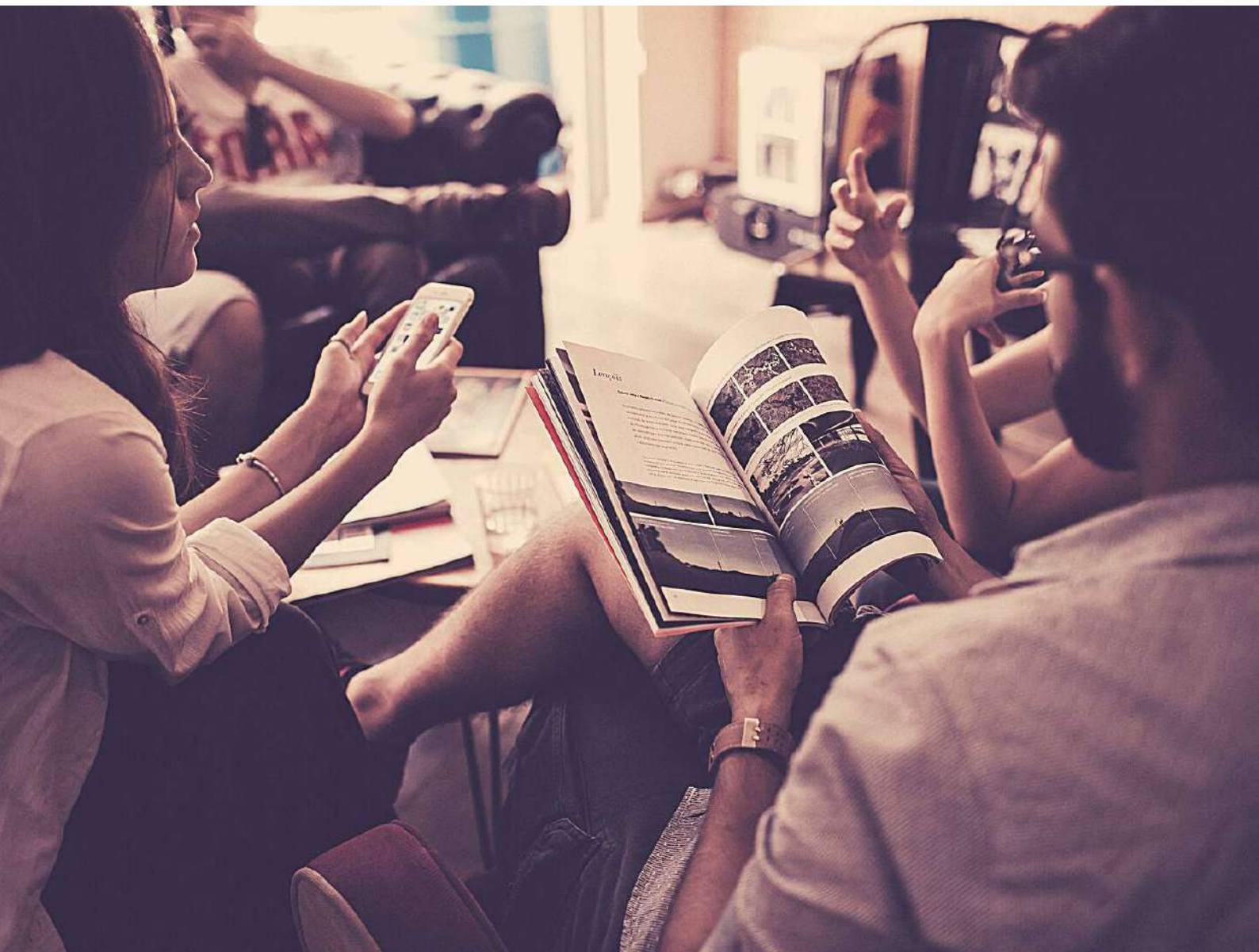
# STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT LGBTI YOUTH'S SUCCESSFUL ENTRY INTO THE LABOUR MARKET

Participants were asked to put forward their ideas for what strategies can be implemented to support sexual and gender minority young people's successful entry into employment and the labour market. Examples focussed on targeted mentoring and guidance during secondary education as well as opportunities for formative work experience during teenage years:

- *The bit of work I've just done is a project where mentors work with school age young people. And the success factors of this program, were about paying good attention to the diversity of the mentors and exposing young people to a range of mentors that maybe they that that challenges their, their own prejudice about what the workplace is like. So, you know, I didn't know that people like me worked at XYZ company. But also, that the mentors are exposed to a diverse range of young people. So, it was we also had findings around what mentors learned that they're given the opportunity to take that back into the workplace, and so that the workplace is challenged to become more diverse. (UK\_FG\_1)*
- *where you are working with a diverse mix of young people. So where you are meeting with other young people from other backgrounds with other experiences with other outlooks, values, beliefs, aspirations. (UK\_FG\_5)*

Consideration was also given to how employers should seek to promote their corporate values and present this image externally to encourage LGBTI young people to want to work with them:

- *Because there's also in the background, the fourth industrial revolution is happening now faster than we ever thought. And the meaning of work has changed for a lot of people. So when we talk about bringing our whole selves to work that's changed over the past decade, for sure. So I would say, being able to have that conversation with young people about picking the right fit for you, obviously, that again, based on choice, based on being able to pick, but even if there's a different variety of jobs that are available in a certain organization, going to pick an organization to apply, because they have a really good core value about fairness. They understand about teamwork and recognition, and that people are at their best when they're themselves. But you can start to understand what organizations or corporate organizations mean by these values, how much they trust that, how much they want to invest in people, stuff like that, invest in people even, you know, what are the marks we should be looking for? What are the organizations that are good enough for us to work for? I think that's also really important to talk about. (UK\_FG\_2)*



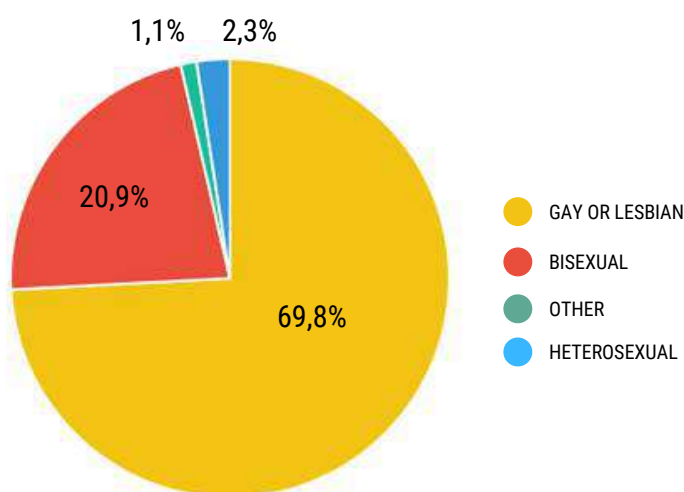


# QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

## SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC DATA

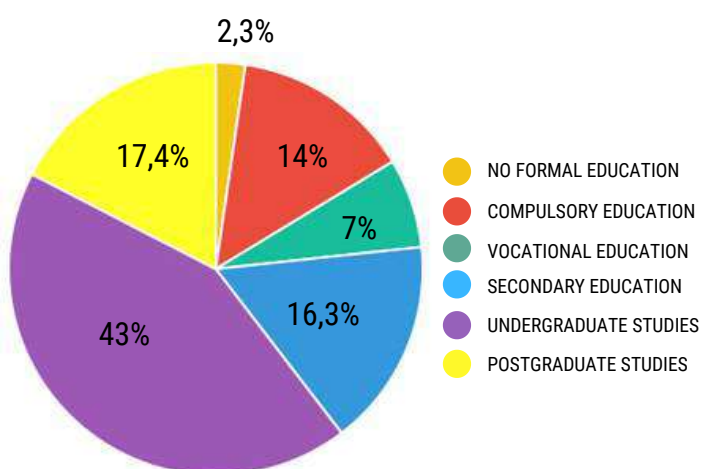
Participants were between 15 and 26 years old and had a mean age of 22.27 (SD=2.33). Most participants live in big urban cities (36%). Overall the majority of participants were female (64%) and 15% of participants declared that their gender identity does not correspond to the assigned gender at birth. Most participants (69%) declared their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian.

### PARTICIPANT'S SEXUAL ORIENTATION

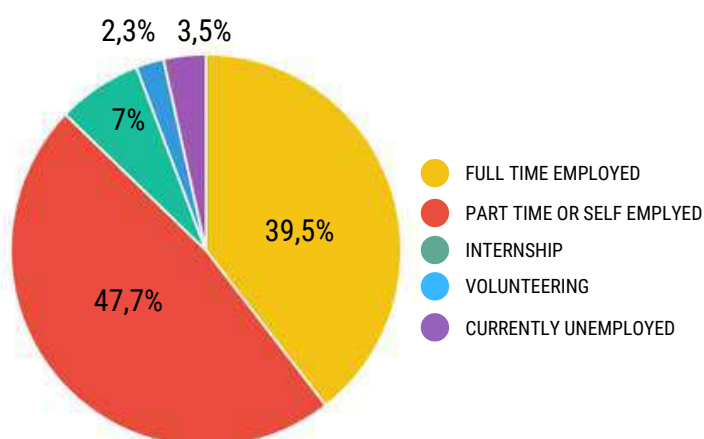


Most participants had completed a basic undergraduate degree education (43%), and were part-time employed or self-employed (47.7%) and were working for the same employer on average for 19.51 months (SD=15.95), active mostly in retail (29.1%) and in the food and beverages industry (14%). Furthermore the participants were mostly employed or working in middle-sized institutions or companies (up to 100 employees) and large companies (more than 100 employees) both with 33.8%.

### PARTICIPANT'S EDUCATION LEVEL



### CURRENT WORKING EXPERIENCE

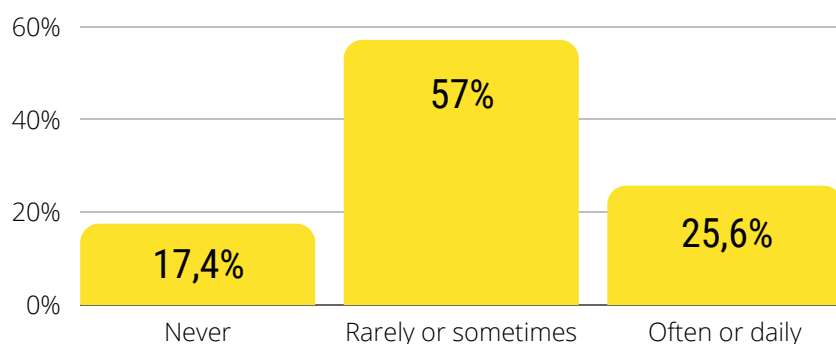


Most participants also declared that received payment for their work on which they are fully dependant and do not receive any additional financial support from their parents or family (76.7%), and 29% of participants indicated they can hardly or cannot at all cover their expenses with their income.

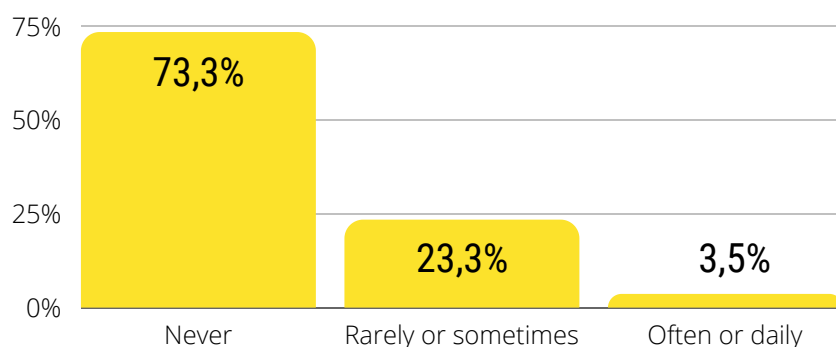
## EXPERIENCES OF ABUSE OR MOBBING IN SCHOOL

More than half of the UK participants reported being sometimes verbally abused in school (57%) and 25.6% reported experiencing daily verbal abuse while at school. Physical abuse was reported somewhat lower, with 23.3% reporting physical abuse sometimes and 3.5% daily. In terms of bullying and abuse over social media, 48.8% of UK participants reported sometimes and 14.0% daily experiences of abuse.

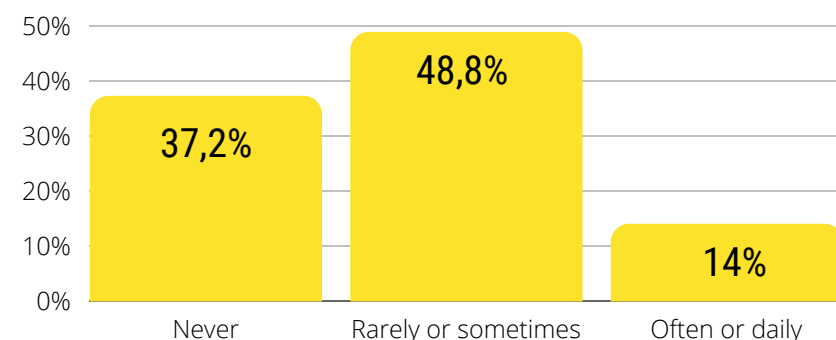
### EXPERIENCES OF VERBAL ABUSE IN SCHOOL



### EXPERIENCES OF PHYSICAL ABUSE IN SCHOOL



### EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ABUSE IN SCHOOL



## EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION AT THE WORKPLACE

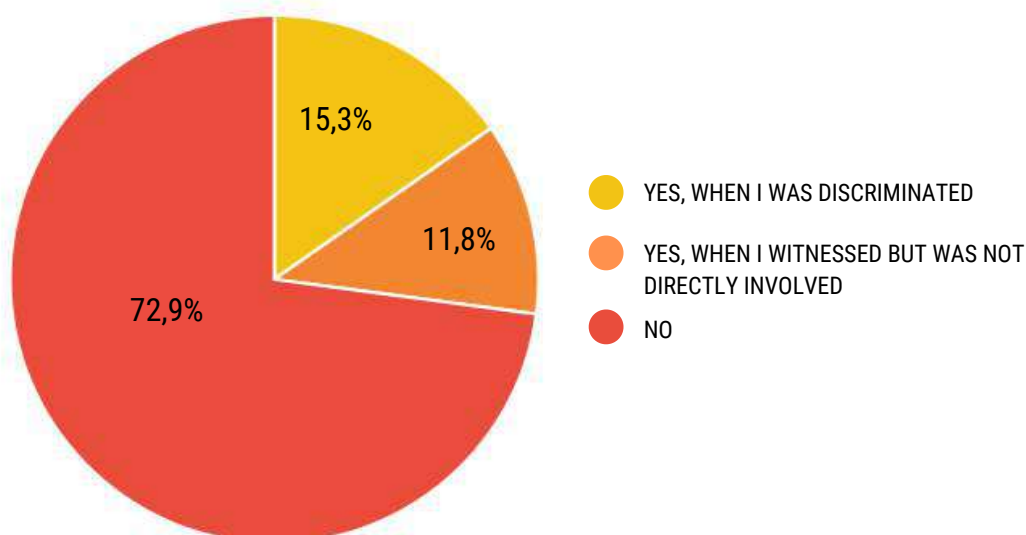
Regarding openness about their sexual orientation or gender identity at the workplace, average score chosen was 7.3 out of 10.



Within the UK sample of participants 27.1% declared that they had experienced discrimination at the workplace and 40% also declared that they had witnessed instances of discrimination at work. Unfortunately a large majority (72.9%) of participants did not report discrimination they experienced or witnessed.

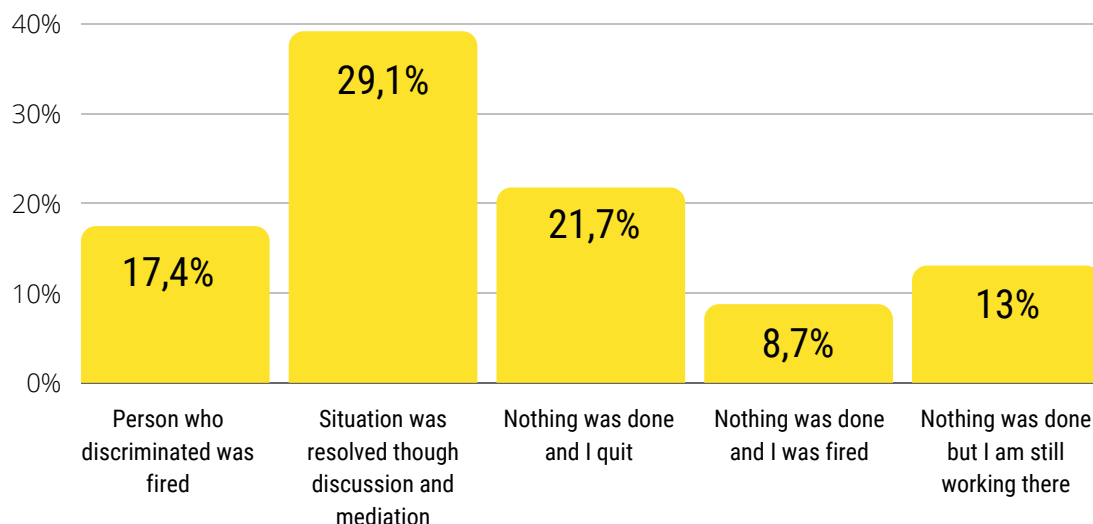


### REPORTING OF DISCRIMINATION



If the discrimination instances were reported in the majority of cases there was no follow up and the person who reported discrimination is still working in that environment (53.10%). Furthermore, in 15.6% there was no follow up and the person who reported discrimination was fired or decided to quit.

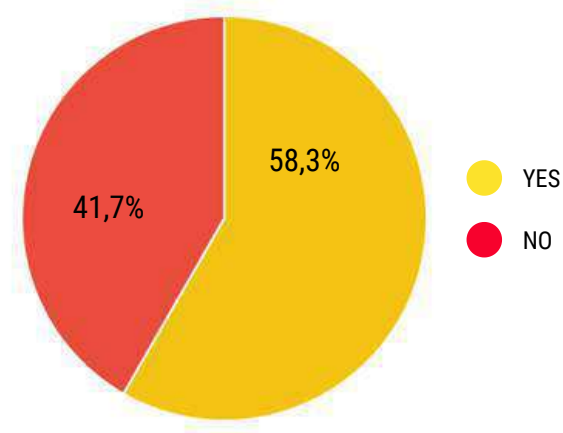
### REPORTING FOLLOW UP



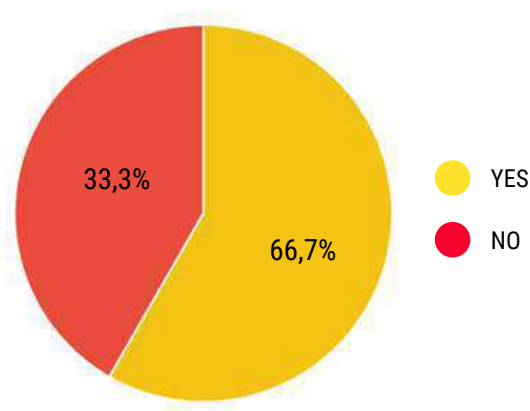
## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MECHANISMS AT THE WORKPLACE

More than a half of the UK participants knew to whom they could report instances of discrimination at their workplace or were aware of any anti-discrimination or discrimination prevention measures at their workplace (58.3% and 66.7%, respectively).

### DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO REPORT DISCRIMINATION?



### DO YOU KNOW OF ANY ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MEASURES?



In terms of what anti-discrimination or discrimination prevention measures the minority of participants were aware of at their workplace, mostly (62.8%) reported knowing about "guidelines on sexual orientation or gender identity at the workplace" followed by "written company agreements on discrimination prevention and diversity promotion" in 53.5% of cases.

**TABLE 1 (UK): LGBT+Q+ YOUTH INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS**

Participant Code	SOGI (LGBTIQA+)	Age	Current occupation	Previous/current work experience	Most significant experience of discrimination (personal)	Most significant experience of discrimination (workplace)	Ideas for inclusivity in workplace / breaking down discrimination in the workplace
UK_YP_1	Gay Trans man	21	Barista	Service industry roles	Misgendering by colleagues and customers	Supervisor that refused to use participant's chose name	• Gender neutral uniforms
UK_YP_2	Lesbian	24	Administrator	Sales assistant	Casual homophobic comments from colleagues		• Inclusive HR policy
UK_YP_3	Lesbian	24	Sales Assistant/ Mechanic	Mechanic	Bullying by manager because of being a lesbian	Experiencing workplace bullying	• More in-depth employee training and development on LGBTI communities
UK_YP_4	Gay man	-	Sales Assistant	Night Club attendant		Abuse from customers for their appearance	• Mandatory staff training
UK_YP_5	Lesbian Woman	21	Lifeguard	N/A	Casual homophobic comments from co-workers	Witness a trans co-worker be removed from a bathroom by a manager	• Exploration of diversity matters in team meetings/discussions
UK_YP_6	Gay trans man	21	Catering Assistant	Retail	Store owner engaging in transphobic behavior towards them	Reluctance to recognize or promote Pride	• Option to pick gender of uniforms
UK_YP_7	Bisexual woman	22	Mechanic	N/A	Casual homophobic comments from colleagues	Witnessing a coworker being bullied for their non-binary identity	• Increasing diversity among the staff base in the organisation
UK_YP_8	Trans woman	23	Nursery nurse	N/A	Being misgendered at work	Being expected to provide guidance on how gender diverse people should be treated	• Staff training and development
UK_YP_9	Pansexual woman	24	Restaurant Chef	catering	Casual homophobic comments	Stereotyping of LGBTI staff members	• Diversity of staff in the workplace



**TABLE 2 (UK): STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS**

Participant Code	Age	Current occupation	Obstacles that prevent work insertion	Ideas for inclusivity in workplace / breaking down discrimination in the workplace
UK_FG_1	53	Former Youth Charity CEO currently Youth Policy Researcher	Lack of comprehensive career guidance and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The delivery of well-structured career guidance and counselling</li> </ul>
UK_FG_2	41	Equality & Diversity Consultant and Trainer	Prevalence of gender and sexuality stereotyping in employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employers promoting their core values and ethos to prospective employees</li> </ul>
UK_FG_3	30	LGBTI Youth Charity CEO	Lack of employment opportunities in deprived communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment processes that promote diversity and inclusion</li> </ul>
UK_FG_4	34	LGBT Youth Charity Board Member	Lack of awareness of antidiscrimination protections and legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training on workplace protections and antidiscrimination legislation</li> </ul>
UK_FG_5	44	Children & Youth Local Government Civil Servant	Reduction of comprehensive youth services and support by Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and development for LGBTI youth in how to prepare and apply for job roles</li> </ul>

# CONCLUSIONS



From our qualitative findings, we have seen that the way in which society collectively ‘thinks’ and responds to people of sexual and gender minority is influenced by a complex mix of how ingrained crucial factors such as religious views, political distancing and the lack of education and awareness on LGBT+Q+ realities are within its fabric. There is diversity in this regard between member countries, where the LGBT+Q+ youth community in Serbia, Croatia and Slovakia feel ignorance and injustice more so than those in Austria, Spain or UK. Notwithstanding, there is an inherent will for young LGBT+Q+ people in all countries to conform to a society that barely recognizes them if at all. This is not because they feel that it is right to do so, but that they are left with little choice in environments where discrimination is normal, not well understood or brushed aside, in order to be accepted as part of this fabric. Marginalised groups within the LGBT+Q+ rainbow, such as non-binary and intersex people, as well as LGBT+Q+ of minority ethnic origin or those who are disabled or chronically ill have more at stake in terms of discrimination, risking the worst socially delineating obstacles to put up with. Even in countries where same sex partnerships or marriage is legalised, the media does not play an adequate role in portraying the normality of rainbow families or LGBT+Q+ people and relationships.

Discrimination in society and school are the drivers that sustain discrimination in the working world. Benevolent discrimination, confusion about nametags, male or female uniforms, and gender specific toilets are no doubt stress factors for young LGBT+Q+ people in Austria, Spain and UK, but in Slovakia, Serbia and Croatia, these issues are unfortunately privileged. There is fear of one’s identity being discovered, or blackmailing in case of reporting discrimination. Young people there have yet to be able to truly first come out into a society that forces LGBT+Q+ people into accepting what they in fact are not. Society is ignorant about this because of the lack of education there is on LGBT+Q+ realities. Young people need to discover their own sexuality and be able to identify themselves, but schools are largely not facilitating this or actively avoiding this. Furthermore, school does not adequately prepare young people for employment. Young LGBT+Q+ people across all countries are not aware of their rights, are in some situations oblivious to discrimination unless it is violence, and would not know how or where to report instances. True support from staff and people of managerial roles is essential in helping young LGBT+Q+ people feel included. These could come in various forms such as open communication, staff training on diversity and especially drawing clear written policies that are specific about measures against discrimination.

The questionnaire results showed the range of reported experiences on discrimination at the workplace within the 6 participating countries. All participants were between 15 and 26 years and the mean age between our countries ranged between 21 and 22 years. Most countries had somewhat more male participants (although all countries had a good balance between male and female identifying participants) with the UK reporting somewhat more female participants. Most participants in all participating countries completed secondary level of education and were working part time or were self-employed. All countries reported financial dependency of the participants as most countries reported around 20% of participants hardly or not being able to cover all the expenses with their income (highest in Serbia with 47.9% and Spain with 47.7%, lowest in Croatia with 10.2%). Most participants were also active in small companies or institutions up to 20 employees. Concerning experienced abuse in school, the results show a worryingly high prevalence of reported abuse in school, especially verbal and physical, which combined with high levels of reported discrimination at work, shows the cycle of victimisation and abuse that young LGBTIQ people face. Moreover, the relatively small working collectives and the financial precariousness may contribute to the results on workplace discrimination, especially in terms of reporting discrimination and follow up of the reporting. Overall, in most countries an average of 30% of participants reported discrimination (highest in Serbia with 38.8% and lowest in Croatia with 16.1%). Results for Croatia seem very low but may be explained by the overall lack of knowledge on what constitutes discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity at work, as well as on the low levels of openness about ones sexual orientation and gender identity at work (Croatia showing lowest levels with 4.8 compared to UK reporting highest levels with 7.3).

On average around 30% of participants in the representing countries knew who to report instances of discrimination and also an average of 30% were aware of various anti-discrimination measure that were implemented at their workplaces. However in light of these results, all of the countries reported problematically high levels of non-reporting of instances of discrimination that they themselves either experienced or witnessed (UK with the lowest non-reporting at 72.9% and Croatia highest with 98.4%). This may be due to a lack of follow-ups after reporting instances of discrimination and a lack of visibility of anti-discrimination and diversity promotion instruments, measures and policies implemented in companies.

Results overall show significant levels of discrimination that young LGBTIQ people face and show the lack of effective measures taken to prevent and combat discrimination at the workplace. Measures that will take into consideration the variety of gender and sexual expression, allow degrees of flexibility, and most importantly, focus on open dialogue with workers. The results of this report, as well as our previous two reports "Review of existing frameworks on international and national level regarding young LGBT labour rights and non-discrimination" and "Best practice examples" will be used to produce educational materials for the online learning platform of the project.

# REFERENCES

1. O'Flaherty, M., A long way to go for LGBTI equality, in EU-LGBTI II, E.U.A.f.F. Rights, Editor. 2020, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights: Publications office of the European Union, Luxembourg. p. 3-65.
2. EUROFOUND, Fourth European working conditions survey, ed. E.F.f.t.l.o. Living and W. Conditions. 2016: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.
3. Grabovac, I. and J. Mustajbegović, Healthy occupational culture for a worker-friendly workplace/Kultura zdravih organizacija–radna mjesta prijatelji radnika. Archives of Industrial Hygiene and Toxicology, 2015. 66(1): p. 1-8.
4. Ryan-Flood, R., Beyond recognition and redistribution: A case study of lesbian and gay workers in a local labour market in Britain. Gender Institute: London School of Economics, 2004.
5. Baros, S., et al., Stigma matters: HIV and HIV risk perception among men who have sex with men in Serbia; a qualitative study. Health, Risk & Society, 2018. 20(7-8): p. 342-357.
6. Gvozdanović, A., et al., Youth study Croatia 2018/2019. 2019: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e. V.
7. Juretić, J., I. Jakovčić, and L. Udruga, LGBTI ravnopravnost na radnom mjestu. Prostor rodne i medijske kulture K-zona Zagreb, 2017.
8. Schönherr, D. and M. Zadonella, Arbeitssituation von LSBTI-Personen in Österreich, SORA, Editor. 2017, Institute for Social Research and Consulting: Wien.
9. A., K. and Z. JJ, Celoslovensky LGBT Prieskum. Sprava o Vysledkoch. Inicitiva Inakost, 2017.
10. COGAM, Estudio 2013 sobre discriminacion por orientacion sexual y/o identidad de genero en Espana, FELGBT-COGAM, Editor. 2013: Federacion Estatal de Lesbians, Gais, Trans y Bisexuelles (FELGBT-COGAM)
11. Branch, S., J. Murray, and S. Ramsay, Workplace bullying. The Encyclopedia of Human Resource Management: Thematic Essays, 2012: p. 181-196.
12. EU-OSHA, Third European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER-3). 2019, Publications Office of the European Union Luxembourg.
13. EC, Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative, E. Union, Editor. 2019: The European Commission.
14. Saldaña, J., The coding manual for qualitative researchers. 2021: SAGE Publications Limited.