

#YoungVoicesOfChange



**Opinions and suggestions of
adolescent girls and young women**
in the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean U-Report survey



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Adolescent girls and young women: #YoungVoicesOfChange. Opinions and suggestions of adolescent girls and young women in the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean U-Report survey

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This document is presented as a contribution to the debate on important issues affecting adolescents and is intended to help UNICEF broaden and deepen the range of consultations in which the organization is involved.

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#YoungVoicesOfChange

Opinions and suggestions of adolescent girls and young women in the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean U-Report survey



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Introduction

In the framework of the summit between the European Union and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (EU-CELAC summit) in July 2023, the European Union and the UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean are joining forces to give voice and visibility to adolescents and youth in both regions.

To this end, through the U-Report platform, we conducted a survey to enable the participation of adolescents and youth, to find out their opinions on the issues most relevant to them, and to consider their proposals for action.



This summary report highlights the specific visions and needs of adolescent girls and young women on issues related to digital, social and environmental transformation. It complements the general report with the results of the **#YoungVoicesOfChange** U-Report survey.

Through their answers, we will discover how the lack of access to digital technologies affects different areas of their development and participation, along with their suggestions for improving access to technology. The results will show us how highly adolescent girls and young women prioritize the social agenda in terms of education, health, employment and tackling poverty. We will also identify the areas where they have observed gender discrimination and the importance they attach to creating safe environments that are free from violence and discrimination. Through hearing from adolescent girls and young women, we will determine the main environmental problems facing their communities and the priority environmental conservation actions they suggest. Finally, we will find out whether they feel political leaders listen to them and take their needs into account.

#YoungVoicesOfChange U-Report

Survey period. The consultation took place from 30 March to 19 April in Latin America and the Caribbean and until 23 April 2023 in the European Union.

Participant profile. A total of 20,679 people aged 12 to 30 in 60 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union participated¹.

Objective: To gather the opinions and perceptions of adolescents and youth on the three central themes of the EU-CELAC summit: digital, social and environmental transformation, so that their voices are amplified and heard, and their suggestions are considered in decision-making spaces.

Methodology

The U-Report virtual platform collected information using seven questions: (1) What issues do you think governments should urgently address? (2) In your community, have you observed gender discrimination in any of the following situations? (3) For you, what is the main consequence of not having access to digital technologies or having limited access? (4) What are the actions that should be prioritized to improve access to and use of digital technology? (5) What is the main problem related to the environment in your community? (6) What action should be prioritized to conserve the environment? (7) Do you think political leaders listen to youth and

take their needs into account? An open-ended question was also included².

Data processing. The data were processed using the statistical software Stata, which involved creating variables based on gender, area of residence, age group, region and subregion of Latin America and the Caribbean.

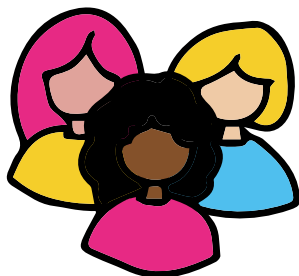
Analysis. The analysis was based on the distribution of responses to each question. The denominator used to calculate the percentages was the number of valid responses for each group or subgroup analysed.



¹ The survey took into account the participation of Georgia (1 response) and Norway (20 responses), which are not part of the European Union.

² Due to time constraints, the results of the open-ended question will be presented in a later report.

Profiles of adolescent girls and young women participating in the survey

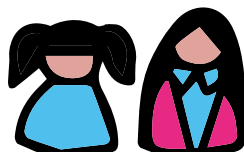


Women	12,196
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By area of residence*

Rural	3,496
Urban	6,767
Total	10,263



By age

12-19	7,335
20-24	3,402
25-30	1,459
Total	12,196



By subregion of Latin America and the Caribbean**

Caribbean	4,118
Central America–Mexico	1,674
South America	5,433
Total	11,225

Notes

* Totals by area of residence and subregion of Latin America and the Caribbean are different because some participants did not select these categories in their responses.

** Totals by subregion of Latin America and the Caribbean do not include participants from Europe.



Key findings

1 Findings related to digital transformation

Main consequences of the lack of access to digital technologies

Two out of three adolescent girls and young women surveyed think that the lack of or limited access to digital technologies hinders their opportunities to learn, educate themselves and obtain information.

Actions that should be prioritized to improve access to and use of digital technology

Almost four out of 10 adolescent girls and young women consulted want to see more investments in digital infrastructure and equipment, as they consider digital opportunities an essential part of their development.

2 Findings related to social transformation and gender equality

Main issues that governments should address urgently

The adolescent girls and young women surveyed prioritize the social agenda, identifying health, education, employment and overcoming poverty as areas requiring the government's urgent attention.

68 per cent of women say that violence and safety is the most urgent issue that governments should address.

22 per cent of the adolescent girls and young women surveyed demand greater government action on gender-based violence and 20 per cent of them demand action on discrimination, equity and diversity.

Nearly seven out of 10 adolescent girls and young women surveyed have observed gender discrimination in different areas.

Gender Discrimination

31 per cent of adolescent girls and young women surveyed said gender discrimination is common in access to job opportunities and 15 per cent in family and community decisions.

3 Findings related to environmental transformation

Main problems associated with the environment in the communities

Three out of 10 adolescent girls and young women surveyed say that air and water pollution is the main environmental problem in their communities, while for two out of 10, mainly in urban areas, garbage is the main problem.

Actions that should be prioritized to conserve the environment

The adolescent girls and young women surveyed consider environmental education (25 per cent) and policies and laws that promote sustainable communities (23 per cent) to be the highest-priority actions for environmental conservation.

4 Findings related to youth participation

Youth perceptions of whether political leaders listen to them and take their needs into account

The vast majority of adolescent girls and young women surveyed (87 per cent) think that political leaders should listen to them more and take better account of their needs.

"Having access to the internet and good devices is very important to me, so that I can prepare for getting my dream job."

17-year-old girl, Haiti

"I need to have a good internet connection so I can do my homework and study a lot more, because the internet has the latest information."

15-year-old girl, Argentina



"For me, it's important to have a cell phone or computer that lets me connect to the internet and continue researching and learning so I can get a better job."

18-year-old woman, Costa Rica

Findings related to digital transformation

Main consequences of the lack of access to digital technologies

Two out of three adolescent girls and young women surveyed consider that not having access to digital technologies or having limited access hinders their opportunities to learn, educate themselves and obtain information.

Fewer opportunities to learn and educate myself

48%

Fewer opportunities to be informed

18%

Fewer opportunities to participate in decisions that affect me and my country

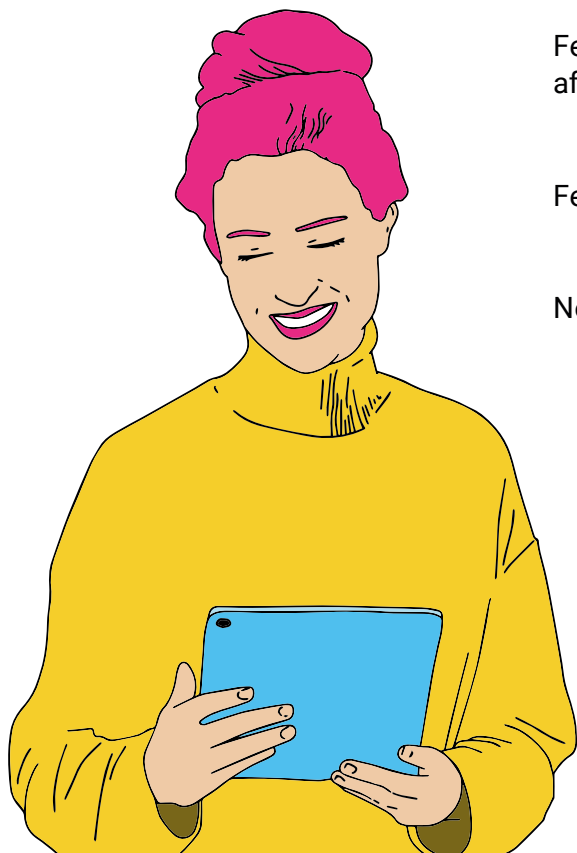
15%

Fewer opportunities to find a decent job

11%

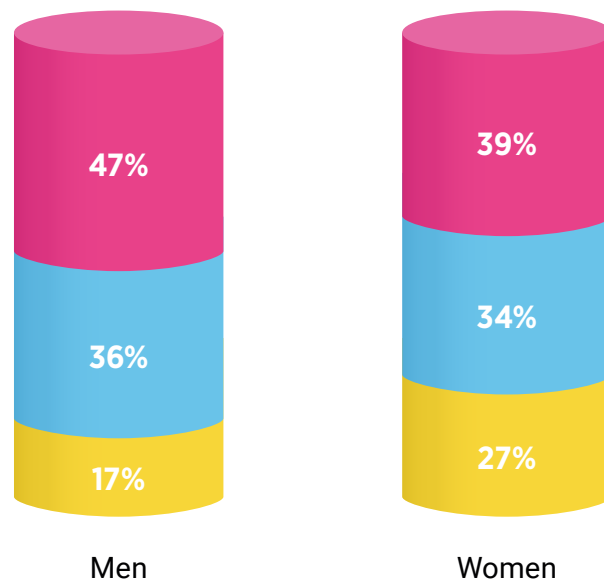
No negative consequences

8%



Actions that should be prioritized to improve access to and use of digital technologies

Nearly four out of 10 adolescent girls and young women surveyed call for more investment in digital opportunities, such as infrastructure and equipment, which they see as essential for their development.



A higher percentage of women than men said it was more important to prioritize safe use of the internet and mechanisms to protect children.

- Connection infrastructure and access to equipment
- Education in the use of technology to mothers, fathers, teachers, students and young people in general
- Safe use of the internet and mechanisms to protect children

*"I think the most important issue is **education**. If we're better prepared, a lot of doors will open for us to grow socially and economically. I hope for quality education, which starts with having trained and up-to-date teaching staff."*

16-year-old girl, Peru

*"**Gender-based violence** has always been around, but women shouldn't have to worry about going out on the street and being free. That should be a thing of the past. That's why governments must offer us safe spaces and a country in which we can live in peace."*

17-year-old girl, Colombia

*"I think **employment** should be more accessible and better paid and that day-care centres should be offered to families who can't afford them. Also make work more attractive to young mothers who don't have support."*

19-year-old woman, Jamaica



Findings related to social transformation and gender equality

Main issues that governments should urgently address

The adolescent girls and young women surveyed prioritize the social agenda, identifying education, health, employment and overcoming poverty as areas requiring the government's urgent attention.

Sixty-eight per cent of women say that violence and safety is the most urgent issue that governments should address.

Twenty-two per cent of the adolescent girls and young women surveyed demand greater government action on gender-based violence and 20 per cent of them demand action on discrimination, equity and diversity.

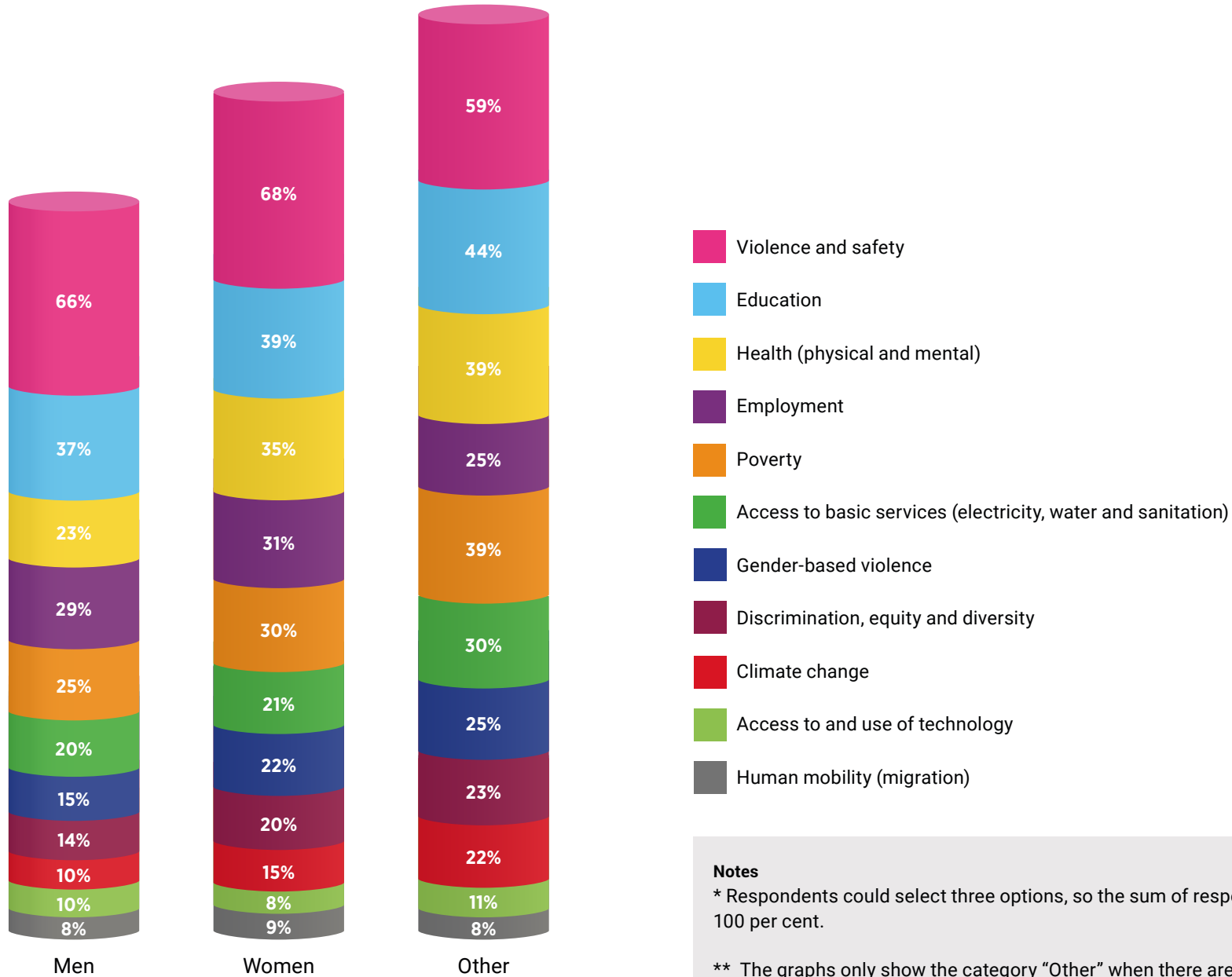
The greatest differences between genders were observed in the areas of health (physical and mental), gender-based violence, discrimination, equity and diversity, and poverty, where women were 12, seven, six and five percentage points respectively above those reported by men.

While 22 per cent of women and 25 per cent of people grouped into the "Other" category expressed greater concern about gender-based violence, only 15 per cent of men reported it as a matter requiring urgent attention.

Likewise, the issue of discrimination, equity and diversity was more of a priority for women (20 per cent) and people grouped into the "Other" category (23 per cent) than for men (14 per cent).



³ The graphs only show the category "Other" when there are significant differences.



Notes

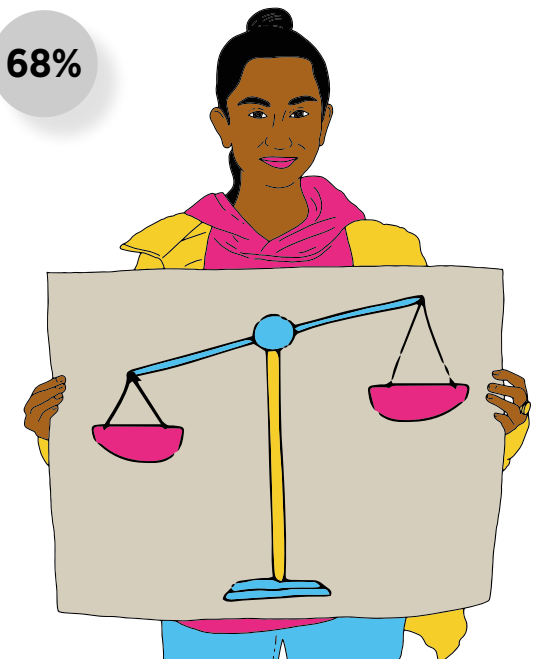
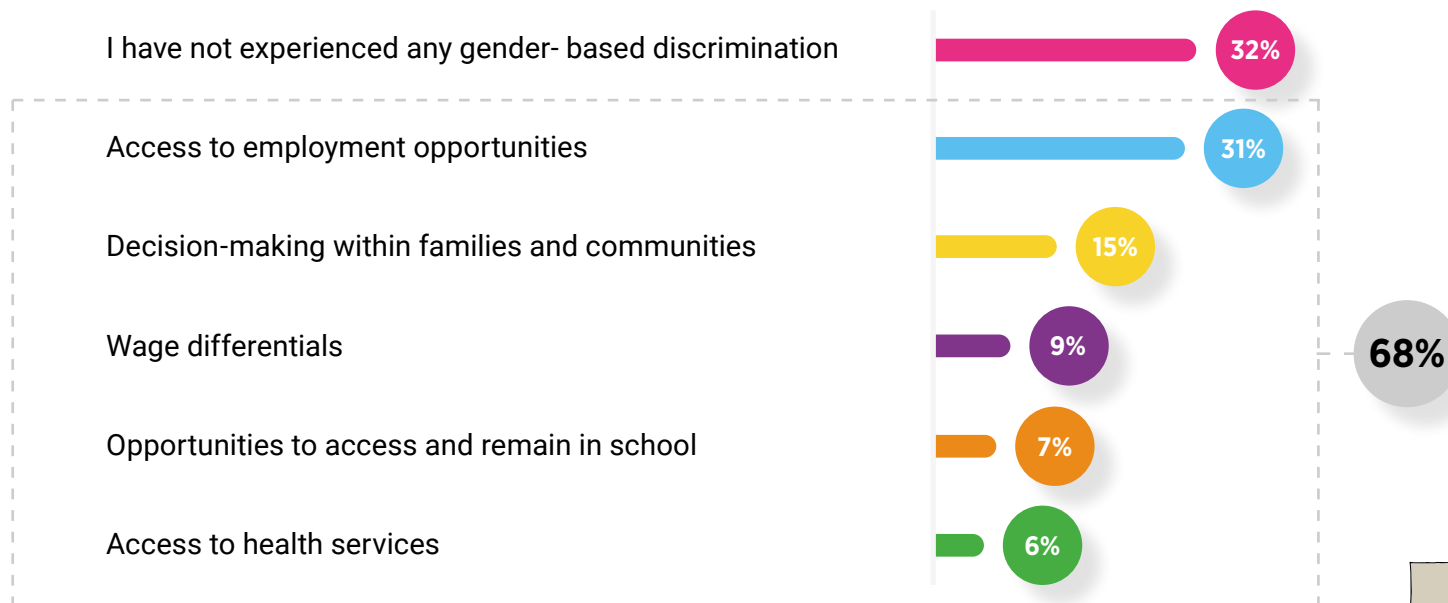
* Respondents could select three options, so the sum of responses does not give 100 per cent.

** The graphs only show the category "Other" when there are significant differences.

Situations of gender discrimination most frequently observed by adolescent girls and young women

Nearly seven out of 10 adolescent girls and young women surveyed have observed gender discrimination in different areas.

Thirty-one per cent of adolescent girls and young women surveyed said gender discrimination is common in access to job opportunities and 15 per cent in decision-making within families and communities.



"Imagine a government anywhere in the world that makes its citizens economically well off, eradicates poverty and all forms of violence, and even provides the best services. But without the right environmental conditions, how could we enjoy all these benefits?"

For decades, industrialization has negatively impacted our environment.
ACTION IS NEEDED NOW!"

20-year-old woman, Mexico



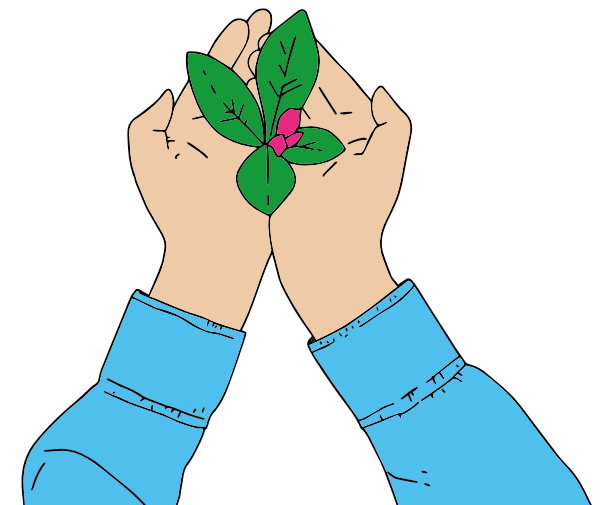
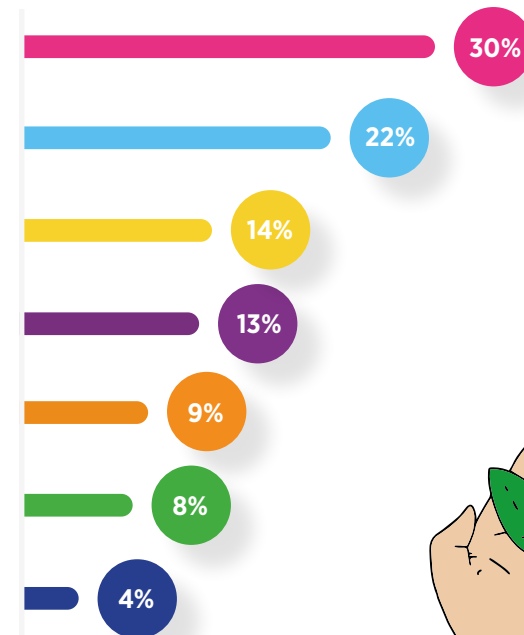
Findings related to environmental transformation

Main environmental problems in communities

Three out of 10 adolescent girls and young women surveyed say that air and water pollution is the main environmental problem in their communities, while for two out of 10, mainly in urban areas, garbage is the main problem.

Fourteen per cent of the women surveyed considered overexploitation of resources and loss of biodiversity to be the biggest environmental problem in their communities.

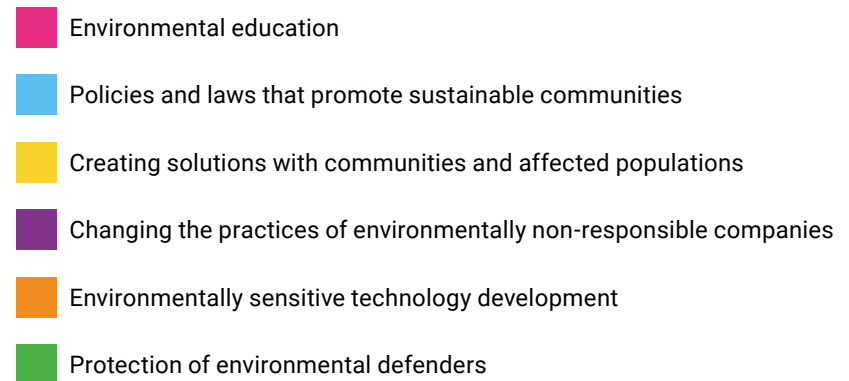
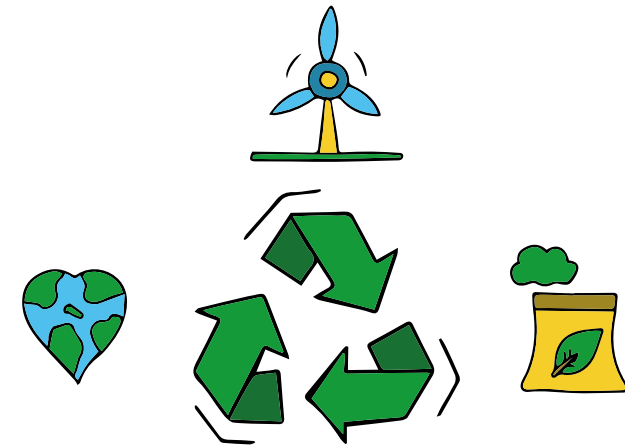
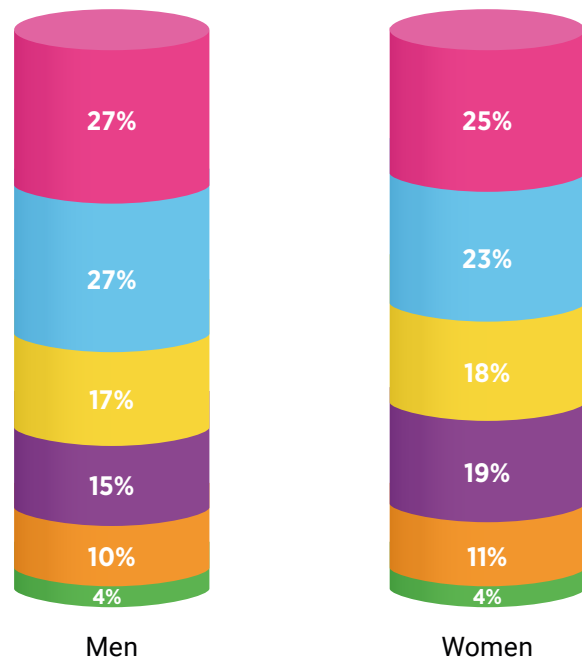
Air and water pollution (rivers, seas and water supply)	30%
Garbage	22%
Overexploitation of resources and loss of ecosystems	14%
Food insecurity (food shortages)	13%
Companies and consumers who are not committed to the environment	9%
Drought and water scarcity	8%
None of the options	4%

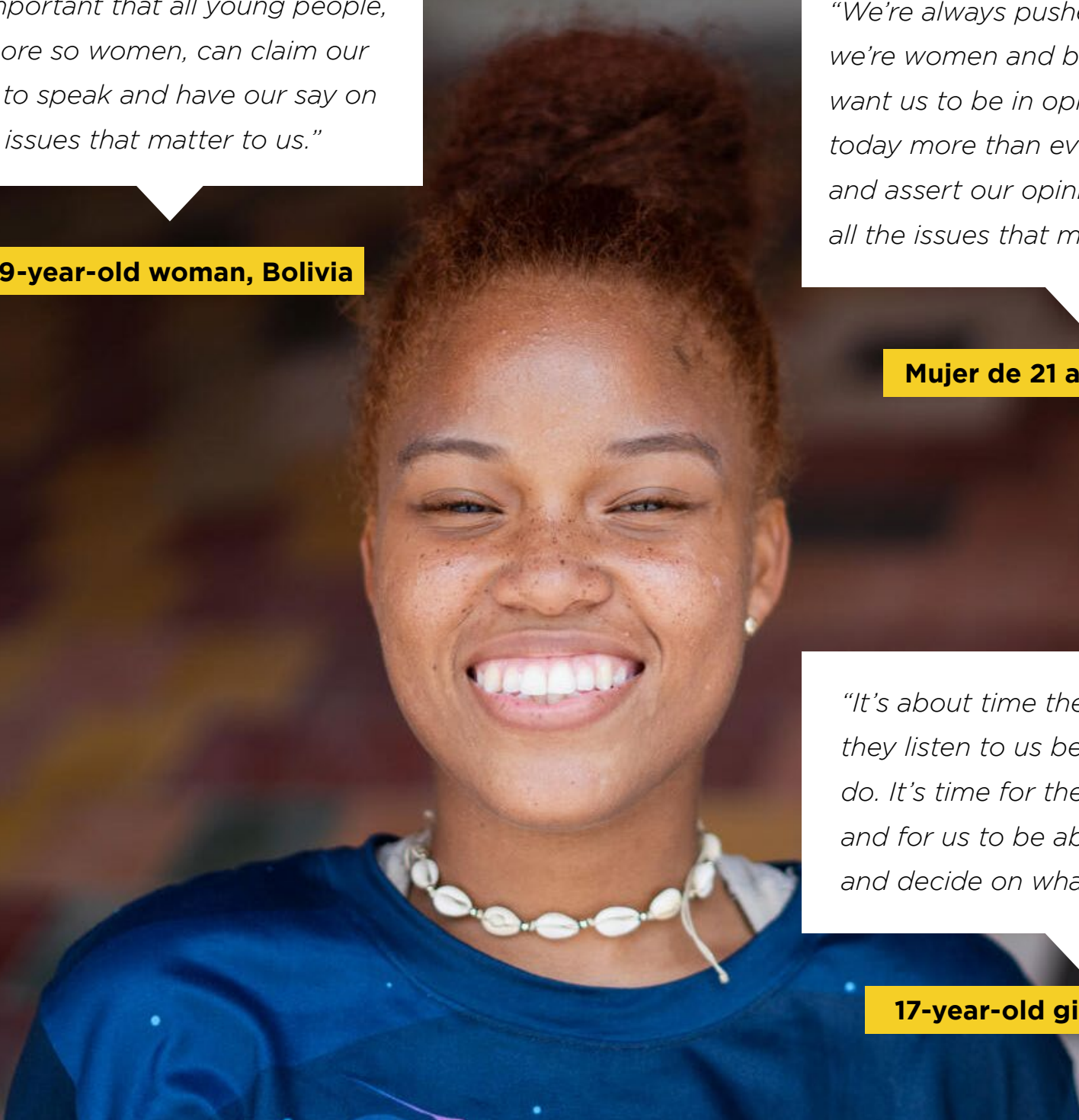


Priority actions for environmental conservation

The adolescent girls and young women surveyed consider environmental education (25 per cent) and policies and laws that promote sustainable communities (23 per cent) to be the highest-priority actions for environmental conservation.

A higher proportion of women than men identified changing practices in companies that are not environmentally responsible and creating solutions with communities and affected populations as priority environmental conservation measures.





"It's important that all young people, and more so women, can claim our space to speak and have our say on all the issues that matter to us."

19-year-old woman, Bolivia

"We're always pushed aside because we're women and because they don't want us to be in opinion spaces. But today more than ever we must unite and assert our opinions and views on all the issues that matter to us."

Mujer de 21 años, Jamaica

"It's about time they stop saying they listen to us because they never do. It's time for them to start acting and for us to be able to participate and decide on what's best for us."

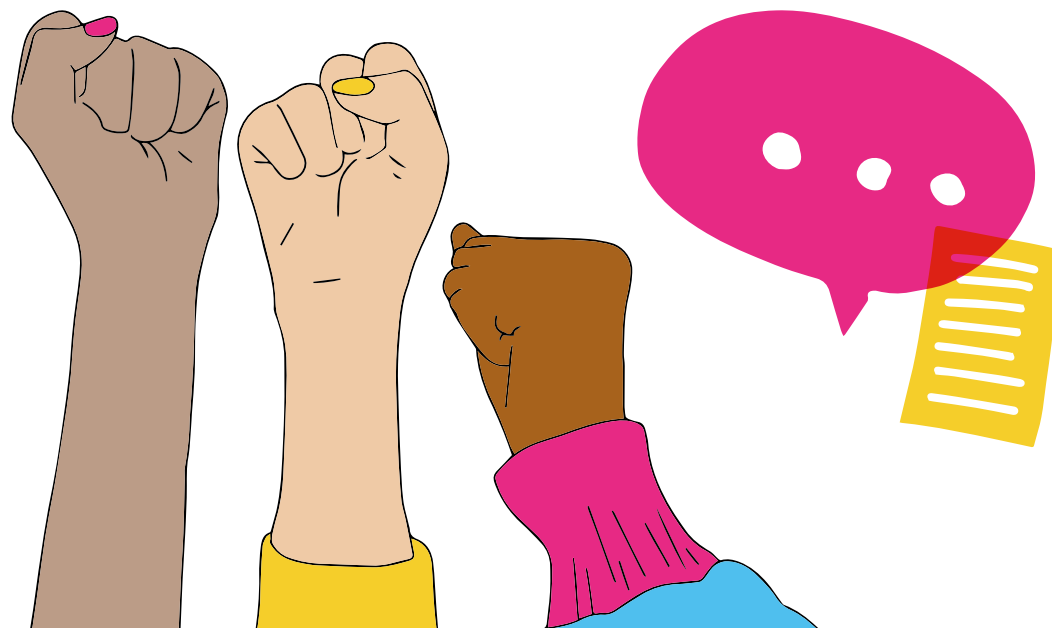
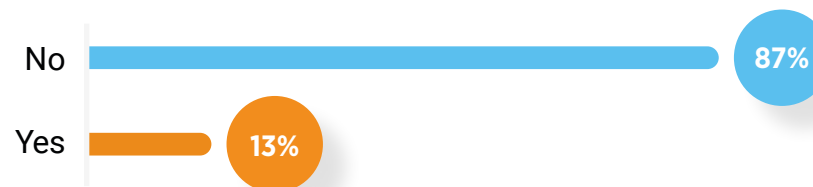
17-year-old girl, Guatemala

Findings related to youth participation

Youth perceptions around whether political leaders listen to them and take their needs into account

The vast majority of adolescent girls and young women surveyed (87 per cent) think that political leaders should listen to them more and take better account of their needs.

Do you think political leaders listen to youth and take their needs into account?





Conclusions

Digital transformation

Main consequences of the lack of access to digital technologies

- 1 Two out of three adolescent girls and young women surveyed consider that not having access to digital technologies or having limited access hinders their opportunities to learn, educate themselves and obtain information.

- Other consequences of women's lack of full access to technologies include limitations in participating in decisions that affect them and their countries (18 per cent) and fewer opportunities to find decent employment (11 per cent).

Actions that should be prioritized to improve access to and use of digital technologies

- 2 Nearly half of the adolescent girls and young women surveyed call for more investment in digital opportunities, such as infrastructure and connectivity equipment, which they see as essential for their development.

- The order of priority for women and men was the same. However, with a difference of 10 percentage points, women gave greater importance to the safe use of the internet and the mechanisms for protecting children, compared with men (27 per cent and 17 per cent respectively).

Social transformation and gender equality

Main issues that governments should urgently address

- 3 The adolescent girls and young women surveyed prioritize the social agenda, identifying education, health, employment and overcoming poverty as areas requiring the government's urgent attention.

- The greatest differences between genders were observed in the areas of health (physical and mental), gender-based violence, discrimination, equity and diversity, and poverty, where women were 12, seven, six and five percentage points respectively above those reported by men.

- 4 68 per cent of women say that violence and security is the most urgent issue that governments should address.

- Sixty-eight per cent of women identified violence and safety as the main issue that governments should urgently address, compared with 66 per cent of men and 59 per cent of people grouped into the "Other" category.

5 22 per cent of the adolescent girls and young women surveyed demand greater government action on gender-based violence and 20 per cent of them demand action on discrimination, equity and diversity.

- While 22 per cent of women and 25 per cent of people grouped in the “Other” category expressed greater concern about gender-based violence, only 15 per cent of men reported it as a matter requiring urgent attention by governments.
- Discrimination, equity and diversity was considered an issue requiring urgent attention by a higher proportion of women (20 per cent) and people grouped in the “Other” category (23 per cent) than by men (14 per cent).

6 Nearly seven out of 10 adolescent girls and young women surveyed have observed gender discrimination in different areas.

- Thirty-one per cent of the women surveyed had observed gender discrimination in access to employment opportunities, while 15 per cent had observed it in decision-making within families and communities..

Environmental transformation

Main problems associated with the environment in communities

7 Three out of 10 adolescent girls and young women surveyed say that air and water pollution is the main environmental problem in their communities, while for two out of 10, mainly in urban areas, garbage is the main problem.

- Fourteen per cent of the women surveyed considered overexploitation of resources and loss of biodiversity to be the biggest environmental problem in their communities.

Actions that should be prioritized to conserve the environment

8 The adolescent girls and young women surveyed consider environmental education (25 per cent) and policies and laws that promote sustainable communities (23 per cent) to be the highest-priority actions for environmental conservation.

- For a higher percentage of women than men, changing practices in companies that are not environmentally responsible ranked third (19 per cent and 15 per cent respectively), while creating solutions with communities and affected populations (18 per cent and 17 per cent respectively) came fourth.

Youth participation

9 The vast majority of adolescent girls and young women surveyed (87 per cent) think that political leaders should listen to them more and take better account of their needs.



About U-Report

U-Report is UNICEF's flagship digital platform that encourages participation and engages adolescents and youth in programmes, emergency response and advocacy. This messaging platform has more than 29 million U-Reporters and is active in 95 countries, growing at a rate of one participant every four seconds.

About U-Report data

U-Report is a key tool for sharing information, raising awareness and collecting quantifiable data on specific areas affecting adolescents, youth and communities, especially the most vulnerable populations.

- The responses received are analysed in real time, mapped and displayed on a public dashboard. U-Report data reflect information provided by respondents and are not statistically representative of young people worldwide or of any specific country or region.
- As a community, U-Report does not aim for statistical representativeness among its members and does not employ any sampling stratification. No post-stratification weighting was applied during the analysis of this survey.
- U-Report data, rather than a sole source of information in decision-making, can be used to complement more statistically sound data-collection methods.

UNICEF values the voices of young people and seeks to acknowledge their experiences and views. U-Report data are considered a reliable reflection of the information that respondents have provided on the platform.

For more information, visit www.ureport.in.



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