

Equality in practice for young people: What is the state of play & why is it key for youth organisations to be involved?

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND



european
youth forum

EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM

WHO ARE WE?

The **largest platform of youth organisations in Europe**: National Youth Councils (NYCs) & International Youth Non-governmental Organisations (INGYOs). → **More than 100 Members all over Europe.**

WHAT DO WE DO?

Advocating for the rights and interests of young people: from employment and social rights to participation and sustainable development → tackling age based & multiple discrimination fits right within our mandate.



AGEISM, DISCRIMINATION & YOUTH

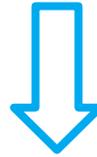
- Age has attracted less attention in equality legislation compared to other grounds → no **legal protection against age-based discrimination beyond employment at EU level.**
- **Youth as a transition stage** between childhood and adulthood, where we face **specific challenges** (education, employment, housing, political participation, etc.) and **need specific protection.**

So in which context do young people face discrimination?
Here are some examples.

KEY CHALLENGES

PARTICIPATION

*“young people are **too young, immature or apathetic** to be able to participate in democratic processes and decisions that affect their lives”*



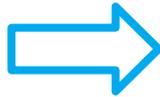
Consistent underrepresentation → 18 widely accepted as voting age, but rarely aligned with candidacy age. Some numbers:

- Under 30s are just **over 2% of the world's MPs**.
- **More than 30% of the world's single and lower houses of parliament & 76% of upper houses have no MPs under 30.**
- An average of **3-9 year waiting time** between being able to vote and being able to run.

These are discriminatory attitudes, based on the arbitrary assumption that young people do not possess the necessary competences to actively participate in political processes.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRANSITIONS

*“young people are **less experienced** and should be ready to do whatever it takes get a foot in the labour market”*



Discriminatory practices have evolved over time - some examples:

- **‘youth minimum wages’:** young people being paid less due to being young → no clear positive impact on youth employment rate.
- **Unpaid internships:** discriminatory towards those who do not have the means to support themselves.
- **‘any job is better than no job’ culture** → race to the bottom & young people seen as cheap labour.



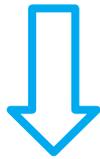
EMPLOYMENT AND TRANSITIONS

Youth precariousness in the labour market is **exacerbated by discriminatory legislation** on social safety nets:

- Several EU Member States still require to have paid contributions for a minimum amount of time before being able to access **unemployment benefits** → short term and precarious contracts makes it difficult for them to receive benefits that would ensure them a life out of poverty.
- Some EU Member States still foresee age minimums in order to access **minimum income schemes**, de facto penalising young people.

HOUSING

*“young students and workers **cannot be trusted as tenants**”*

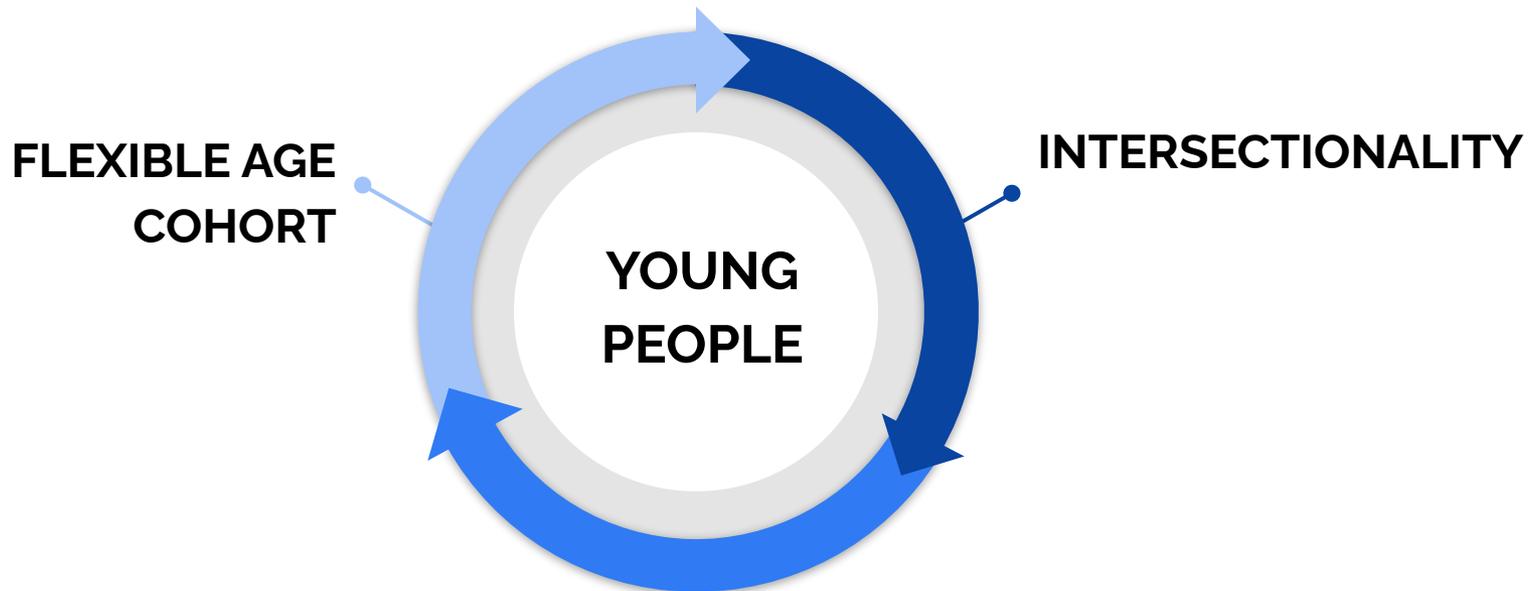


- Prejudices, rising prices in the housing market and increased difficulties in accessing stable employment → **young people cannot afford to buy or pay rent, and can't live independently.**
- Over-reliance on **“stay at home” policies.**



**...THERE'S MORE TO YOUTH
THAN AGE!**

YOUTH AS A DIVERSE GROUP



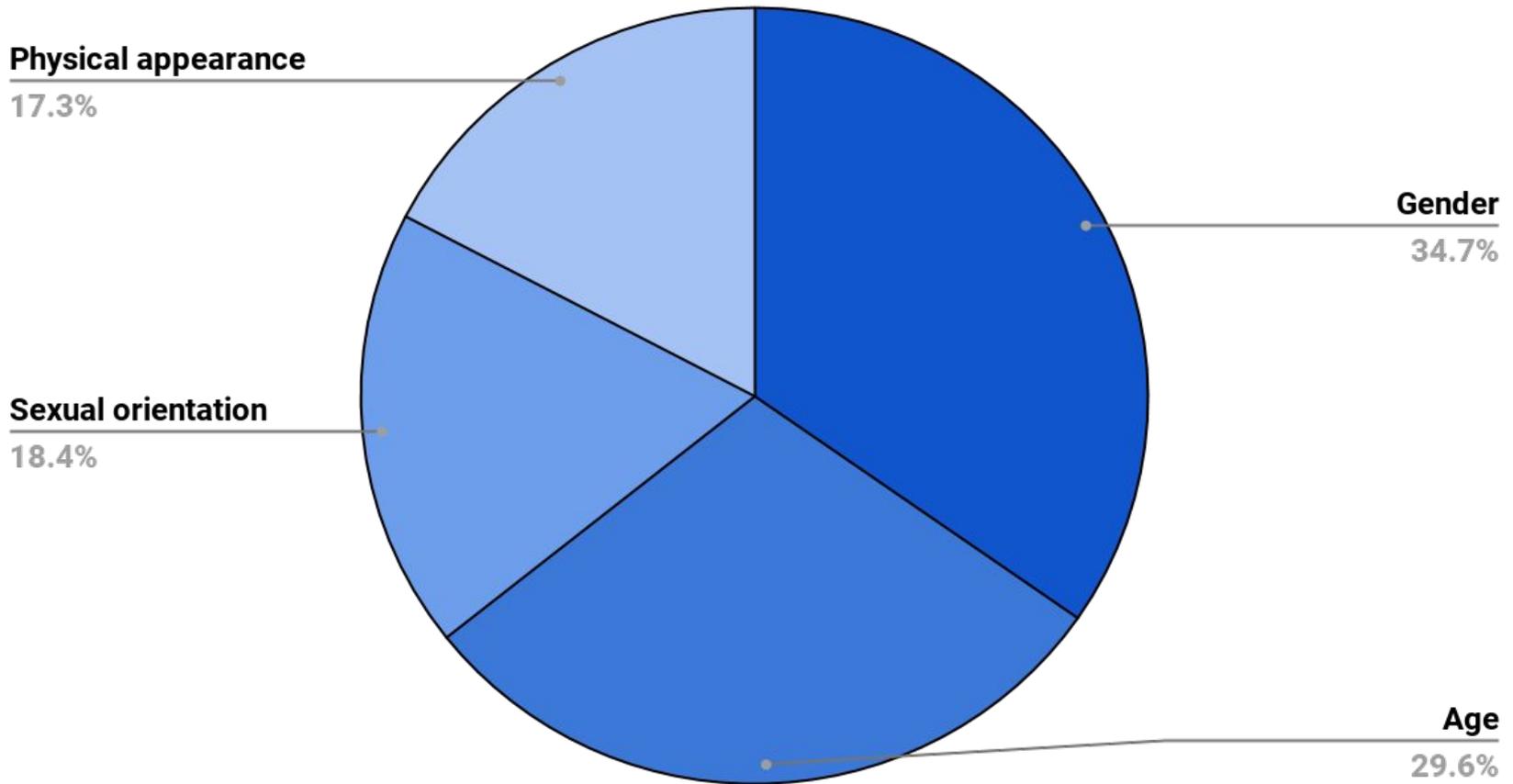
A flexible age cohort & intersectionality are what makes **young people a cross-cutting group**, and what, at times, makes it difficult for their rights to be recognised and protected.

- The peculiarities of youth as an age-group should not act as an obstacle but as an **incentive to protect young people & tackle age-based and multiple discrimination.**

MULTIPLE DISCRIMINATION

According to Youth Forum's [survey](#), **77% of young people felt discriminated against.**

Grounds for discrimination for young people



MULTIPLE DISCRIMINATION

44%

of young Jewish Europeans say they were a victim of at least 1 incident of **antisemitic harassment** in the 12 months before the survey.

53%

of those aged 15-17 and 46% of those aged 18-24 **felt discriminated against due to being LGBT**.

higher %

of young Roma aged 16-24 years, particularly women, who are NEETs, **compared to the rates for the majority population**.



ADDITIONAL FACTORS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- **Limited awareness** of rights, laws, and redress mechanisms.
- **Ageism from youth angle less known** - prejudices are more ingrained → less attention from institutions.
- **Lack of information/data** on situation of youth on the ground → particularly relevant for intersectionality aspect



HOW/WHY SHOULD YOUTH ORGANISATIONS BE INVOLVED?

HOW CAN YOUTH ORGANISATIONS HELP?

Youth organisations engage with & represent diverse groups of young people. They can:

- **gather evidence** on experience of discrimination
- ensure **greater rights awareness** & capacity building
- as youth rights advocates, they can **highlight youth specific issues** that otherwise wouldn't be visible.

WHY?

- **Discrimination is an increasing reality for young people** in Europe today (and could get worse due to impact of covid-19).
 - Ageism against youth, is less known. It is often based on **perceptions, attitudes & stereotypes towards young people** → it fuels discrimination on an **individual level & structural level**.
- **Discrimination at an early age can affect** young people's health, well-being, self-esteem and sense of belonging which are likely to adversely impact their **future**.
- Through the crucial involvement of youth organisations, we can make **institutions listen and change happen**.

THANK YOU

