

Equal Futures Project – Policy Recommendations (Lithuania)

Lithuania

Introduction: The Equal Futures Project aims to advance gender equality, youth participation, and social inclusion in Lithuania, in line with the European Union's commitment to promoting equality, nondiscrimination, and youth empowerment. These recommendations are evidence-based, drawing on project findings and EU policy frameworks to guide policymakers, local authorities, and civil society in implementing inclusive and effective strategies.

RECOMMENDATION 1: EXPAND INTERSECTIONAL LABOUR-MARKET PARTICIPATION

Objective: Increase representation of women, youth, and minority groups in high-value sectors such as STEM, finance, and leadership positions.

Context & Rationale: Despite high female education levels in Lithuania, occupational segregation and a gender pay gap persist. EU directives and strategies emphasize transparency and equal opportunities to address systemic barriers.^{1 2 3}

Recommended Actions:

1. Implement mandatory pay audits and job-evaluation reviews across sectors.
2. Launch mentorship and career transition programs for young women and ethnic minorities.
3. Encourage flexible work models, including part-time and remote work, without penalizing career progression.

Stakeholders: Ministry of Social Security & Labour, employers' associations, youth and gender-focused NGOs.

Implementation Considerations: Ensure regular monitoring, transparent reporting, and evaluation of program effectiveness; provide financial and logistical support to participants.

Expected Impact: Reduced pay gap, increased representation of marginalized groups in leadership and STEM sectors, improved retention of young women post-education.

RECOMMENDATION 2: STRENGTHEN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

Objective: Reduce educational and skills gaps among marginalized youth and facilitate smooth transitions into the labor market.

Context & Rationale: Educational disparities affect youth from rural areas, ethnic minorities, and low-income families. Inclusive curricula and vocational programs are essential to meeting EU standards for equitable education.^{4 5}

Recommended Actions:

1. Expand vocational and apprenticeship programs with quotas for under-represented youth.
2. Offer return-to-learning and upskilling programs for early school leavers.
3. Integrate gender equality and diversity modules into secondary and higher education curricula.

Stakeholders: Ministry of Education, vocational training centers, municipalities, youth organizations, EU funding bodies.

Implementation Considerations: Target NEET youth (not in employment, education, or training), ensure accessibility in rural areas, provide mentoring and career guidance.

Expected Impact: Increased skills among marginalized youth, improved labor market access, reduced gender and ethnic disparities in education and employment.

RECOMMENDATION 3: INCREASE DATA TRANSPARENCY & MUNICIPAL EQUALITY MONITORING

Objective: Enable evidence-based policymaking through systematic monitoring and public reporting of equality indicators at the municipal level.

Context & Rationale: Comprehensive disaggregated data is crucial to identify inequalities and track policy impact. EU frameworks encourage local authorities to adopt transparency and monitoring tools.^{6 7}

Recommended Actions:

1. Implement municipal equality dashboards with key indicators on employment, education, and leadership representation.

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2. Publish annual “Equality Scorecards” accessible to the public and civil society.
3. Strengthen capacity of municipal equality officers to analyze data and develop action plans.

Stakeholders: Municipalities, Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, Statistics Lithuania, civil society organizations.

Implementation Considerations: Standardize data definitions, provide training, allocate sufficient budget, and link data outputs to funding incentives.

Expected Impact: Improved targeting of local policies, increased accountability, and greater public awareness of equality performance.

RECOMMENDATION 4: PROMOTE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN POLICY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Objective: Strengthen youth-led advocacy for equality and inclusion.

Context & Rationale: Youth engagement drives sustainable equality outcomes. Involving young people in policy and decision-making fosters innovation and leadership development.⁸

Recommended Actions:

1. Include youth representatives in municipal and national councils.
2. Support youth-led networks and advocacy initiatives.
3. Provide capacity-building workshops in policy analysis, advocacy, and public communication.

Stakeholders: Ministry of Education, municipalities, youth NGOs.

Implementation Considerations: Establish transparent selection processes, ensure diversity, and monitor participation outcomes.

Expected Impact: Increased youth influence on policy, enhanced leadership skills, and broader societal awareness of gender equality issues.

RECOMMENDATION 5: REDUCE GENDER STEREOTYPES AND ENCOURAGE CULTURAL CHANGE

Objective: Address unconscious bias, stereotypes, and social norms limiting equality.

Context & Rationale: Persistent gender norms influence education and career choices. Awareness campaigns and diversity training are effective in shifting attitudes.⁹

Recommended Actions:

1. Implement mandatory diversity and inclusion training for educators and managers.
2. Launch national awareness campaigns highlighting diverse role models.
3. Integrate gender and diversity education into school curricula.

Stakeholders: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs, municipalities, schools, NGOs.

Implementation Considerations: Develop standard training materials, involve civil society, monitor attitudinal change, and adjust programs accordingly.

Expected Impact: Reduction in unconscious bias, broader career choices, and positive shifts in social norms supporting inclusion.

RECOMMENDATION 6: SUPPORT UNPAID CARE WORK RECOGNITION

Objective: Recognize and reduce the disproportionate care burden on women.

Context & Rationale: Women provide the majority of unpaid care work, limiting their employment and leadership opportunities. EU policies highlight the importance of care recognition and support.¹⁰

Recommended Actions:

1. Provide pension credits or benefits recognizing unpaid care work.
2. Introduce tax incentives and support programs for caregivers.
3. Promote shared parental leave policies.

Stakeholders: Ministry of Social Security & Labour, municipalities, family associations.

Implementation Considerations: Monitor uptake, ensure equitable access, and evaluate long-term effects on gender equality.

Expected Impact: Improved labor market participation of women, reduced economic inequalities, and enhanced social recognition of care responsibilities.

REFERENCES / EU FRAMEWORKS

1. Directive (EU) 2023/970 on Pay Transparency.
2. EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025.
3. European Pillar of Social Rights.
4. EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027.
5. Council Recommendation on the European Child Guarantee (2021).
6. EU Recommendation on Strengthening Equality Bodies (2022).
7. Eurostat Guidelines on Gender-Disaggregated Data Collection.
8. European Commission Guidelines on Youth Participation in Policy (2020).
9. EU Guidelines on Combating Stereotypes in Education and Employment.
10. EU Work-Life Balance Directive (2019/1158).