

MGOS RESPONSE AND QUESTIONS FROM THE CSOs IN ESTONIA TO THE VNR OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ESTONIA

Gender inequality must be tackled from an early stage of its development. For example, educational institutions can and should address the issue of STEM field subjects being male dominated. Campaigns especially targeting girls and women should be launched in order to raise awareness about STEM field subjects and opportunities within the field. This way, our future leaders would become more sensitive to the topic.

Mental health is another concern. Last year Estonia recorded 1782 first cases of mental and behavioral disorders per 100,000 people. The impacts of COVID-19 and social distancing, are likely to worsen the situation, especially for young people

Despite the the efforts made with the Green Paper on Mental Health, accessibility of mental health help remains a concern. It is essential to contribute to de-tabooing the topic of mental health and make all needed amendments to the law that would allow a minor to get psychiatric help without the consent of a parent. The issue can only be tackled by combining the availability of mental health specialists in educational institutions and the right to ask and receive psychological and psychiatric help.

The successful prevention of both gender inequality and ill mental health requires awareness-raising programs in all institutions - starting with primary schools and universities and ending with workplaces. While we appreciate the efforts by the Estonian Government on gender equality and accessibility of psychological and psychiatric help, we would like to ask what measures are being taken in order for minors to access psychological help independently.

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