



# Policy Recommendations

## Youth Council 4 Inclusion

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## Introduction

The Youth Council for 4 Inclusion is a platform for young women who address the issues of xenophobia, Islamophobia and gender inequality. The platform is an initiative from Gender Concerns International and based in The Hague, the Netherlands. The primary initiative of the platform is to increase the understanding of social challenges around the intersectional issues of xenophobia, Islamophobia and gender inequality in Dutch society. The Youth Council does this by raising awareness through Social Media and the organization of Events. The Youth Council organized a Round Table Discussion with experts and students in February. Through research, and insights from the Roundtable, the Youth Council has identified three Policy areas where progress can be made on the issues of xenophobia, Islamophobia and gender inequality: education, media and politics. This report will discuss the Youth Council's main Policy Recommendations for these areas.

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## Policy recommendations

### Education

Everything starts with good education. What people learn in their childhood will have a big impact on their view on society and life in the future. Therefore it is important to address the issues of xenophobia, Islamophobia and gender inequality at an early stage.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that the issues around xenophobia, Islamophobia and gender inequality are addressed in all classes and subjects, and not only in sociology.
- Create a structural change in History classes and teaching material, to teach children about the colonial history of the Netherlands. In this way children will understand the complex Dutch society in a better manner, decreasing preconceptions and discrimination.
- Pay attention to the images and language in teaching material. Avoid stereotyping and propositions.
- Make discussions about Racism, Discrimination, and Inequality in Society mandatory in the classroom. Schools should be encouraged to reach out to Experts to assist teachers to lead this discussion. This should already start in primary school.
- Classes with children from 10 years old should give special attention to the role and impact of religion. In this way children would learn from various religions and this will create a better understanding among different groups in society
- Teach children how to watch and read the news in a critical manner.
- Increase the attention on gender issues. Children will better understand that no gender is superior over another if included as central in the curriculum. These should not only be limited to gender but also to LGBT rights.
- Pay more attention to the history of human rights and the rights of every individual regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, etc.

## Media

The media is an important actor that influences the opinion and views of the public. They decide what they publish and from what perspective. It is hard for the public to recognize possible bias. This means that the media is responsible for balanced and professional reporting on the issues on xenophobia, Islamophobia and gender inequality.

Recommendations:

- Ensure that (Muslim) women are not stereotyped.
- Avoid alternative facts by researching and fact-checking everything double with regards to the racism and discrimination.
- Be aware that (Muslim) women are underrepresented in the media and create an active policy to increase (Muslim) women, especially as topical experts.
- Media should organize regular meetings between themselves, and with the government, private sector, think tanks and NGOs, to discuss how to report on issues of xenophobia, Islamophobia, and gender inequality, and how to increase the visibility of Muslim women in media.
- Social media outlets must be stricter in prohibiting posts which are discriminatory or encourage xenophobia and Islamophobia sentiments, and should be held accountable to the accuracy of their articles.
- Be aware of the language that is used when it comes to immigration, refugees or Muslims. For example do not write about refugee “tsunami” or “crisis”.
- Make clear distinctions between radicals and the Islam as such in the reporting.

## Politics

An inclusive Dutch society cannot be achieved without the active involvement of politics. The parliament can change policies, and they can have an active attitude towards countering xenophobia, Islamophobia and gender inequality.

Recommendations:

- Be aware of framing in politics. Address it directly when other politicians are framing Islam, migrants, or women in a negative manner.
- Meet on a regular basis with important stakeholders, for example in Civil Society, to have outside-Parliaments discussions on the issues of Islamophobia, xenophobia and gender inequality.
- Make it mandatory to pay special attention to Islamophobia and gender inequality by the reporting discrimination.
- Make it mandatory that all vacancies for government positions are applied for anonymously, and support it in the private sector,. This will decrease discrimination against (muslim) women.
- Mainstream Islamophobia and xenophobia into the overall policy framework. It is currently segregated policy areas. This will ensure more coherency in the policy framework regarding xenophobia, Islamophobia and gender.
- Create a government campaign to increase the visibility of (Muslim) women in society, and especially within the government.
- Avoid segregated schools, this will decrease discrimination and create a better understanding between groups.
- Create more interaction between the national government and municipalities on how to create a more inclusive society.
- Encourage grassroots initiatives and provide government grants for Civil Society projects that addresses xenophobia, Islamophobia and gender inequality, and contributes to a more inclusive society.