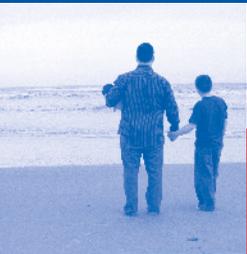
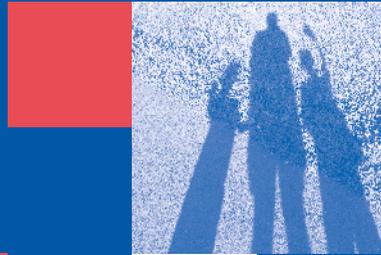




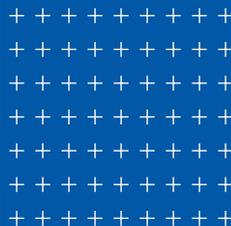
DÓRA GRÖBER - BARNABÁS HIDASI

TRANSPARENTING

*Documentation of the
parenting situation
of trans persons in
Hungary*



2016-17

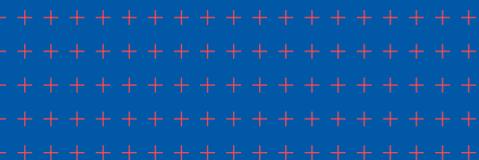


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TRANSVANILLA
TRANSZNEMŰ EGYESÜLET

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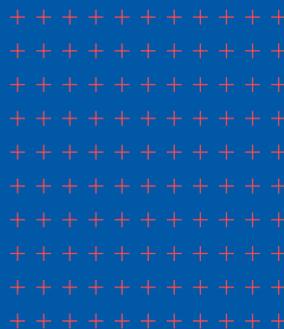
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TRANSVANILLA TRANSGENDER ASSOCIATION



Transvanilla is an organisation, advocating for the interests of transgender, gender non-conforming and intersex (TGNI) people in all walks of life. Our vision is for a Hungary where TGNI people are respected, accepted and visible in society. Our goal is to achieve social, legal and medical change to improve the situation of TGNI people's everyday life.

PROJECT

TransParenting - Documentation of the parenting situation of trans persons in Hungary

Between March 2016 and April 2017 we mapped the current legal context and published a detailed analysis of the legal environment.

As well as data collection, the legal analysis involved community research with an online questionnaire and personal interviews. Our fact based advocacy

aims to raise awareness on trans specific situations of organisation already working on parental issues and through disseminating information, finding allies with politicians and other decision makers. The results of the legal analysis were published in a Q&A format in Hungarian. (Trans family rights Q@A)



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The empirical research project had two elements, carried out at different times.

First we conducted a self-administered online survey. The survey was carried out online due to the fact that trans* people are difficult to reach and they are in a unique situation. This guaranteed full anonymity to respondents so they could answer more safely even on intimate and embarrassing topics.

Our survey contains 243 completed questionnaires. In the evaluation process we only took into account these completed responses and the interviews.

As a second step we conducted structured interviews. The interviewees were selected from the survey respondents who applied.

MAIN FEATURES OF THE SAMPLE

The questionnaire participants came from a number of sources including, Transvanilla Transgender Association's website visitors, social media followers, social media group members and newsletter subscribers.

42,81% (104 persons) of the respondents identify as woman, mostly woman, or trans woman, and 42,38% (103 persons) as man, mostly man or trans man. 14,82% (36 persons) marked both, neither, does not want to decide, does not know or other.

4 persons identified as other, two as crossdressers, one as an autogynephil man and one as transmasculine genderfluid.

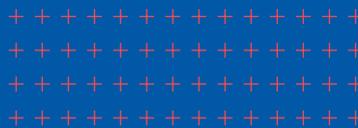
Regardless of which gender they identify with, 3 persons (1,23%) reported they were assigned female at birth, but are intersex and 9 persons (3,70%) reported they were assigned male at birth but are intersex. This is equal to 4,93% (12 persons) of respondents, which equates to every 20th respondents in the research.

Crossdresser: man or woman wearing items of clothing associated with the other sex within society.

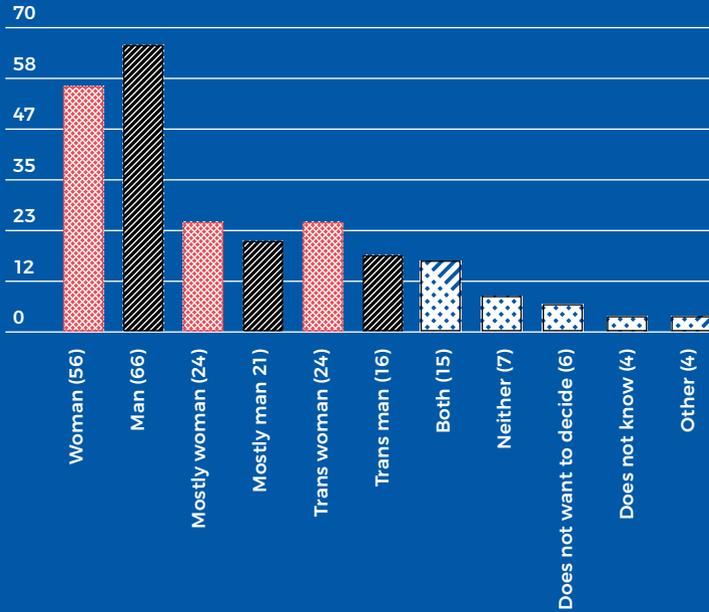
Autogynephil man: man who is sexually aroused at the idea of being a woman.

Transmasculine is a term used to describe transgender people who were assigned female at birth, but identify with masculinity to a greater extent than with femininity.

Gender fluid is a gender identity which refers to a gender which varies over time



How do you define your gender?



Trans woman

Assigned male at birth, but the individual's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender and/or gender expression does not correspond with that.

Trans man

Assigned female at birth, but the individual's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender and/or gender expression does not correspond with that.

Intersex is an umbrella term for the experience of being born with a body that does not meet the societal expectation of male or female.

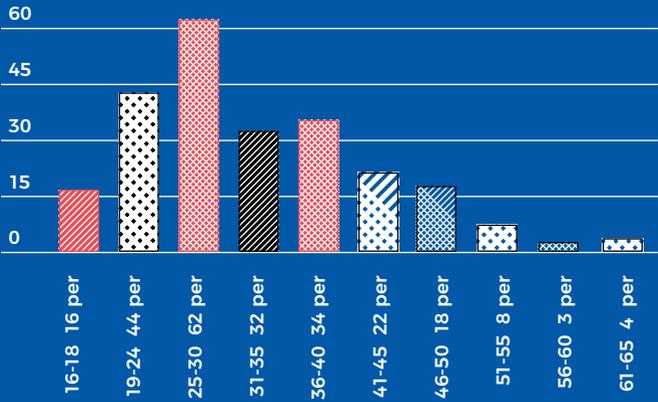


RESULTS

Demographics

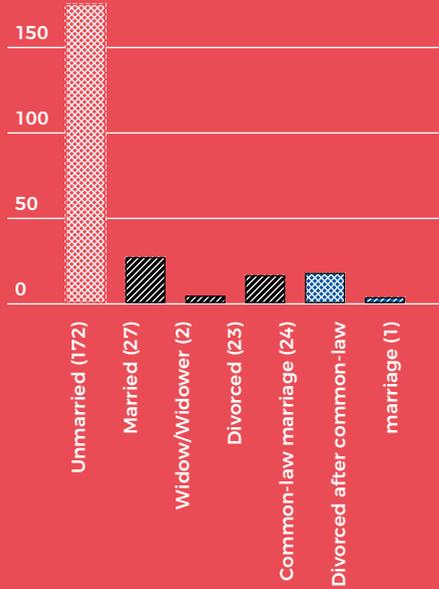
The youngest respondent was 16 years old, the oldest 65. The majority (63.37%) of the respondents fell within the age range between 16 and 35 years.

Respondents: 243
Age: min. 16 years, max. 65 years. Mean: 32.65 years.

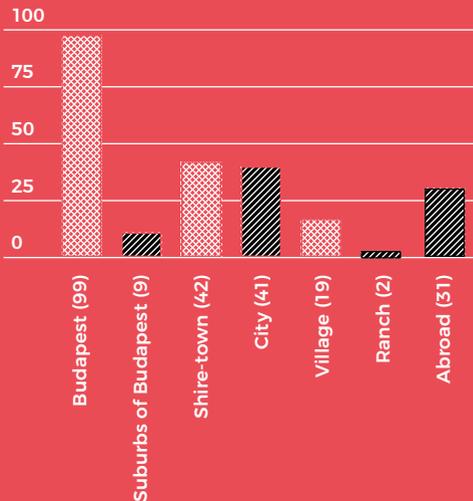


Marital status

70.78% (172 persons) of the respondents reported to be unmarried, 11.11% (27 persons) to be married, 9.47% (23 persons) to be divorced, 7.41% (18 persons) to live in common-law marriage, 0.82% (2 persons) to be widows/widowers and 0.41% (1 person) to be divorced after common-law marriage.

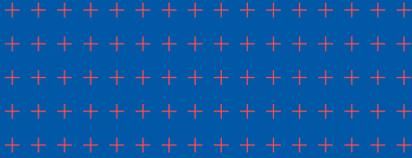


Place of residence

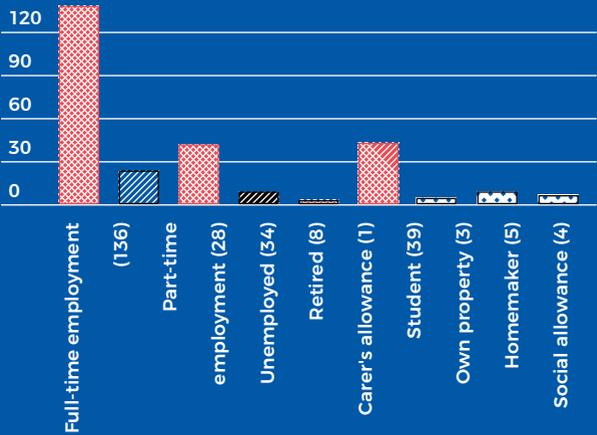


44.44% (108 persons) of the respondents reported to live in Budapest or in its metropolitan area, 12.76% (31 persons) reported to live abroad. Migration from the place of birth seems to be the most significant towards these two areas: it showed a growth of 14.39% in Budapest or its area and 6.59% abroad.

Employment rate



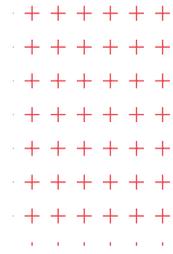
55.97% (136 persons) of the respondents reported to have a full-time job, 16.05% (39 persons) to be students, 13.99% (34 persons) to be unemployed and/or to be jobseekers, 11.52% (28 persons) to have a part-time job, 3.29% (8 persons) to be retired, 2.06% (5 persons) to be homemakers, 1.65% (4 persons) to get regular social allowances, 1.23% (3 persons) to make a living by their own property or renting real estate and 0.41% (1 person) to get regular carer's allowance.



Each person was able to choose more than one option (for example the same person could mark to be a "student" and to have a "part-time job").

According to the Federal Statistical Office's flash report, (as of the 28th of April, 2017) in 2017, between the months of January and March, the employment rate of the residents between the ages of 15 and 64 years reached 67.1%. It's worth mentioning that 67.49% (164 persons) of our transgender respondents have a job: 55.97% (136 persons) reported to be in full-time employment and 11.52% (28 persons) to be in part-time employment.

TRANSITION



The personal and online interviews made it clear that the respondents all had a slightly different way of explaining the term "transition".

"Getting my body to resemble my soul. In my case it means getting operations and hormone therapy to become a man." (trans man, 41)

"[Transition makes it possible] to adjust my biological sex, the one I was born with, to my conscience (...). To let me live my life completely, physically as a woman. As my conscience is a woman too. (...) A lot of things need to be done to reach this." (trans woman, 38)

"In my opinion, transition means to get from one biological sex I don't feel my own to the other - so to transform, partly or fully. It depends on the person." (trans woman, 29)

"The process through which the person who cannot identify with the body they were born in get to their adequate gender. (This gender is mostly the "opposite" of their originally assigned gender but this process might not mean a complete, 100% transformation in every case. There are people, for example, who do not want to undergo surgeries.)" (trans man, 31)

TRANSITION

Looking at these interview excerpts, it's fair to say that the most significant difference arises when it comes to the question of surgery: some of the respondents thought surgeries are a necessary part of a "full transition", while others thought that the whole process of the transition solely depends on the person's needs, which means that if they can live a full life as themselves without surgery, their transition should still be considered complete.

Noting this subjectivity, 48.15% (117 persons) of the respondents reported to have had been, or to currently be in, transition. 33.74% (82 persons) reported they had not yet begun transition, but would like to in the future, with 12.76% (31 persons) reporting they had not transitioned and were not planning to in the future either. 5.35% (13 persons) marked the option "this is not an important question to me/it doesn't concern me".

The average age of starting the transition was 24.8 years - based on the 117 respondents who reported to have had transitioned or to currently be in transition.



COMING OUT

The respondents disclosed their trans status most often to their friends (73.66%, 179 persons), their parents (53.91%, 131 persons), their sibling/siblings (48.56%, 118 persons) and/or their spouse/partner (36.21%, 88 persons). 7.82% of the respondents (19 persons) disclosed it to their child/children. 12.76% (31 persons) live in complete secrecy.



DISCRIMINATION

In sociology negative bias, discrimination or negative discrimination means an instinctive or conscious excluding and/or humiliating act.

Based on the data from our whole questionnaire, respondents experience significant discrimination in relation to the following situations: 48.97% (119 persons) of the respondents experience or experienced discrimination within the circle of their family (for example ignorance, rejection), 69.96% (170 persons) experiences or experienced verbal abuse (for example bullying, teasing)

because of their gender identity, 20.16% (49 persons) have suffered physical abuse before because of their gender identity, 28.4% (69 persons) lost their job and one or more lost job opportunities because of their gender identity.

51.85% (126 persons) often avoid medical treatment because of previous discrimination or because of fear of discrimination.



13%

lives in complete secrecy.

Attitudes

You can read here the percentage and number of respondents "agreeing" or "mostly agreeing" with the following statements::

"A lot of people don't want to accept transgender people."	76,55% (186 respondents)
"Trans people lose their partners if they find out about the person's trans status."	56,08% (138 respondents)
"Lots of employers underestimate trans people, regardless of their qualifications."	70,37% (171 respondents)
"Lots of people act differently around trans people than around others."	82,72% (201 respondents)
"Lots of people have negative attitude towards trans people."	81,48% (198 respondents)
"Lots of people cannot regard trans people as normal people."	82,71% (201 respondents)
"Trans people are not welcome at public events, for example in clubs."	52,67% (128 respondents)
"Lots of parents would be disappointed if they had a trans child."	86,42% (210 respondents)
"Lots of people think that most trans people are HIV positive and will die from AIDS."	39,92% (97 respondents)

57%

"You're trying to seem cisgender to avoid being rejected."

56,79%-a (138 respondents)

"Lots of people think that most trans people are sex-workers."

51,44%
(125 respondents)

"Lots of health professionals feel uneasy/show negative attitude when they treat trans people."

60,08%
(146 respondents)

"Sometimes you wish you weren't transgender."

57,2%
(139 respondents)

"Sometimes you think you would be happier if you weren't transgender."

60,08%
(146 respondents)

"To avoid being found out, you have tried to live according to your assigned gender."

69,96%
(170 respondents)

"Sometimes you wish you could identify a lot more with your assigned gender."

33,74%
(82 respondents)

"You feel like being transgender is a personal flaw of yours."

30,87%
(75 respondents)

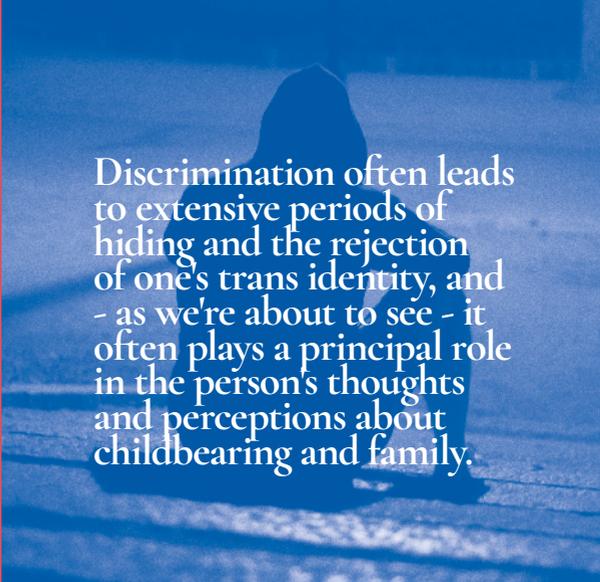
"Sometimes you feel ashamed because of your gender identity or the way you express it."

37,45%
(91 respondents)

"You're afraid of your family and friends to find out about your gender identity."

38,27%
(93 respondents)

*The following
interview
excerpts
demonstrate
all these quite
clearly:*



Discrimination often leads to extensive periods of hiding and the rejection of one's trans identity, and - as we're about to see - it often plays a principal role in the person's thoughts and perceptions about childbearing and family.

"They regularly bullied me, sometimes they even got a bit physical (they pushed me around, they threatened me, (...) they threw bottles at my girlfriend - I couldn't be there with her then because I just had my surgery). The people in the village keep talking behind my back. For example, they know about me in the neighboring villages too; some guys who live 2 villages away from me, started teasing me at a class, it almost got out of hand."
(trans man, 31)

"When you're looking for a job, they value non-trans applicants more - even if they don't say it to your face. There were times when I haven't heard back from any of the places I applied to for months."
(trans woman, 47)

"When I tried to get my expert opinion to be able to arrange my request about the legal change of my name and gender, I first went to a local gynecologist. (The gynecologist has to state that there's no physical holdback of the reassignment surgeries.) The doctor told me that he knows how homosexuality was accepted in ancient times but he doesn't think it's a normal thing and that I should get ahold of myself and start sleeping with a man regularly. (I had to tell him that I have a girlfriend.) It really hurt me; he didn't even know what transsexual meant and he told me several times that I'm a woman."
(trans man, 21)



EXISTING CHILDREN

80.25% (195 persons) of the respondents do not have children (biological, adopted or nurse-), 19.75% (48 persons) have.

10.29% (25 persons) of the respondents reported to have an outstandingly good relationship with their child/children and 4.12% (10 persons) feel like their transition has not changed the quality of their relationship with their child/children.

9.05% (22 persons) of the respondents reported to have children with whom they do not live. The most common reason of the separation is either the child's age (they are old enough to live alone and they do) or the divorce/break-up of the parents following which the child stayed with the other party.

Current parental identification

- I was a mother and I still am. 6,25% (3 respondents)
- I was a mother, now I'm a father. 6,25% (3 respondents)
- I was a father and I still am. 37,5% (18 respondents)
- I was a father, now I'm a mother. 4,17% (2 respondents)
- I'm a parent. 45,83% (22 respondents)

How children currently regard their parent

- She was my mom and she still is. 10,42% (5 respondents)
- He was my mom, now he's my dad. 2,08% (1 respondents)
- He was my dad and he still is. 52,09% (25 respondents)
- She was my dad, now she's my mom. 8,33% (4 respondents)
- He/She is my parent. 27,08% (13 respondents)

BIRTH CERTIFICATE

16.66% (8 persons) of the respondent parents would like to initiate changes in their child's birth certificate. These changes are as follows in all cases: their adequate name and/or gender identity and/or the adequate parental role they fulfill.

PARENTING

53,91% of respondents (131 persons) would like to have children in the future, 46,09% (112 persons) don't.



For those who don't wish to have children in the future, the reasons are as follows:

- The respondents already have a child, and don't want any more.
- The respondents consider themselves too old for parenting.
- The respondents don't think that their lifestyle and their surroundings are appropriate for parenting (e.g. they are students, they don't have the financial background, lack of partner, etc.)
- The respondents think that they wouldn't be a good parent, partially or fully because of their trans identity.
- The respondents would like to have a biological child but have no opportunities to do that.
- The respondents have a fear, that gender identity disorder is heritable.
- The respondents don't want any children because of their personal preferences (so this decision is not related to trans identity).

There are no studies that would show that a transgender parent could influence the development of a child's sexual orientation or gender identity, or that trans identity could be hereditary. However, as we can see in the above statements, 7 respondents (2,88%) mentioned it as an inhibitory factor at the question "Why don't you want children?". This opinion was also represented when 4,12% (10 people) absolutely disagreed with the statement "Trans parents are just as good parents as anyone else."

To the question that in which way do they imagine parenting, the majority of respondents mentioned some of these options:

- *Adoption*
- *Artificial insemination*
- *Surrogacy*
- *Natural procreation*
- *The respondents would like to raise their partner's child*

54,32% (132 people) of respondents agrees with the following statement: "Parenting comes with significant difficulties for trans people"

(Concrete information about parenting options and family rights of trans people from Hungary can be found in the publication Trans family rights Q@A, which was also produced the Trans-Parenting project. Only available in Hungarian.)



"First, my ideas: in the beginning, my plans were that I secure an opportunity for later by egg freezing, and if I get married once, my wife could carry out the baby, and I could proceed on transitioning. This whole thing sounds bizarre, the doctors, the petri dishes, the process behind chemically composing a child, but this is just temporary, and the result is just a casual family, like any of them. The situation is not so pleasant, so I thought that I just stop transitioning until I can have a kid (my appearance was already acceptable, when I was planning this), so if there is no other way, I could carry out a baby myself. By now, I feel like I will need to give up on parenting.

Inhibitory factors: Firstly, it's horribly expensive. But here in Hungary, even if there was enough money, and clinics, they don't deal with trans people. As I know, they can only freeze eggs from women and sperm from men. Possibly, marital status counts as well. If a trans person already transitioned, they can't comply to these criterions. I assume that even if they did it before transitioning, the owner couldn't have access to it after transition, or wouldn't be able to use it. As I know, it is an issue that they don't know who's name they should write to name the child's parent in the case of a trans person's child. E.g. everyone would feel uncomfortable if they should write a man's name as the mother's name. Trans parents can even lose their kids because of their trans identity." (trans man, 31)



Discrimination against trans parents and even against their children is a common fear.

42,79% of respondents (104 people) partially or fully agree with the following statement: “Trans parents

are discriminated against in the medical-, and other care systems.

39,92% of respondents (97 people) partially or fully agree with the following statement: “The children of trans parents are experiencing abuse in kindergarten and schools.”

“One of my acquaintances accused me, that they think that I shouldn’t raise children because they would get called out and beaten up because of my gender identity, and I shouldn’t want this, I shouldn’t want bad for my kid.” (trans man, 21)

“Our relationship didn’t change at all, as a young kid she already had a gut feeling that I am not a mother figure in the family, because she didn’t relate to me like that. She was the one who instinctively called me on that male name that I’m using today, so basically she gave me the name. It was never a problem to her, she seed me as a man, and luckily, in social circles like kindergarten and school, she didn’t experience any disadvantages, because others didn’t really know about it.” (trans man, 40)

89,71% of respondents (218 people) partly or fully agree with the following statement: “Trans parents are just as good parents as anyone else.”

4,12% of respondents (10 people) absolutely disagree with the same statement.

According to the respondents, the following options are available at the noted levels, for trans people in Hungary to become a parent::

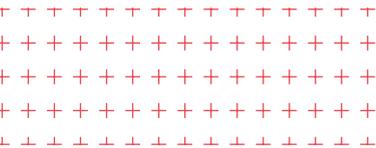
- In a biological way, with intercourse (59,67%, 145 people)
- Adoption as an opposite-sex couple (76,54%, 186 people)
- Adoption as a same-sex couple (11,52%, 28 people)
- Adoption as a single person (43,62%, 106 people)
- Adopting the child of a same-sex partner (in case of registered partnership) (20,99%, 51 people)
- Adopting the child of an opposite-sex partner (in case of marriage) (53,50%, 130 people)
- Artificial insemination (41,15%, 100 people)
- Artificial insemination of partner (44,44%, 108 people)
- Sperm-freezing (31,28%, 76 people)
- Egg-freezing (24,69%, 60 people)
- Surrogacy (27,57%, 67 people)
- Insemination at home (e.g. injection) (27,16% 66 people)
- Thanks to the development of Medicine, after uterus transplantation - in a biological way (10,70%, 26 people)



According to the respondents, the following services are available at the noted levels, for trans people in Hungary:

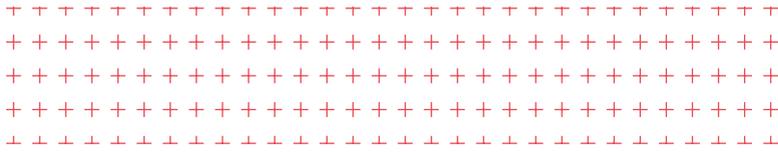
- Family planning counseling (15,23%, 37 people)
- Parenting information (20,99%, 51 people)
- Family law assistance (15,64%, 38 people)
- Information on family support benefits (18,11%, 44 people)
- Social administration (18,52%, 45 people)
- Finding similar parents (20,16%, 49 people)
- Free-time family activities (34,16%, 83 people)
- Consultation with parents, education counseling (20,16%, 49 people)
- Family consultation, family therapy (20,58%, 50 people)

(The percent figure shows how many respondents marked the “mostly available” or the “available” category)



According to the respondents' valuation, these statements are in the following order of importance:

- Family planning counseling (60,08%, 146 people)
- Consultation with parents, education counseling (64,61%, 157 people)
- Free-time family activities (66,67%, 162 people)
- Finding similar parents (67,08%, 163 people)
- Family consultation, family therapy (67,08%, 163 people)
- Parenting information (69,96%, 170 people)
- Family law assistance (72,43%, 176 people)
- Social administration (72,84%, 177 people)
- Information on family support benefits (73,66%, 179 people)



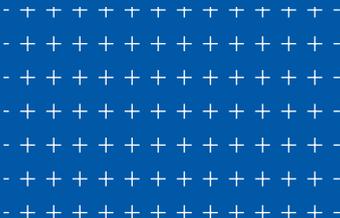
FINDINGS

Altogether it means that more than 50% of the respondents would like to have children in the future, but it's hard to find actual and complex information about trans parenting and available facilities.

Specific fears which appeared include, discrimination against trans parents and their children in health care and other institutions (like schools, kindergarten), the legal undermining of parenthood, and not finding the right partner to start a family with.

A smaller proportion of respondents, as much as 20%, already had one or more children when they gave response. In their case, limiting child visitation, or even totally depriving them of it because of their trans identity after a divorce/breakup became a frequent problem. In contrast, according to the majority of experiences, if a couple stays together, their relationship with their children didn't deteriorate (usually) due to their coming-out or that they started transitioning.

So it would be extremely important to form a trans-specific or at least trans-inclusive care system that would include a progressively expanding informational basis about available services and options, and which would keep up to date with different changes and alterations.



KEY TERMS USED

Trans people

A term encompassing a diverse range of people who find their gender identity or gender expression does not fully correspond with the sex they were assigned at birth. This term can include, but is not limited to, people who identify using the following more specific terms: transsexual people, transgender people, transvestite/ cross-dressing people, non-binary, gender-variant people.

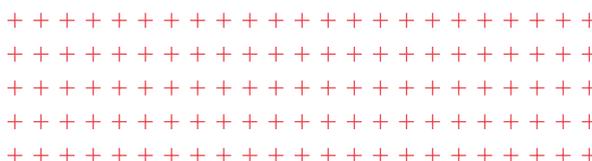
Those who are not transgender are cisgender, it means they have a gender identity that corresponds with the gender assigned at birth.

Gender identity

Each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms.

Gender expression

can be understood as the way in which a person expresses themselves through their external appearance and/or manifestations marked by behaviour, clothing, haircut, voice, body, language, and other external and physical characteristics.



KEY TERMS USED

Legal gender recognition

is the official recognition of a person's gender identity, including gender marker and name(s) in public registries and key documents. States can require different conditions for LGR although forced sterilisation, mandatory divorce, mental health diagnosis or age limits are all violating individuals human rights.

Transition

is a process which the individual undertakes in order to live according to their gender. Part of it can be social transition (e.g. coming out and/or changing appearance to be viewed differently by others), legal gender recognition (e.g. changing gender in documents) and/or medical transition (e.g. surgery and/or hormon therapy, which change the body of the person).

Coming out

is a metaphor for trans people's self-disclosure of their gender identity and/or gender expression.



REPORT VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION!

Transvanilla monitors discrimination and violence based on gender identity and gender expression. Reporting is anonymous and besides victims also witnesses can report.

Our aim is to raise awareness on discrimination/violence perpetrated against trans people. We intend to mobilize the community, in order to get more people seek redress.

Report to us the following incidents:

- You experience verbal abuse (including yelling at you in the street), threatening, harassment or intimidation because of your gender identity or expression,
- You face physical violence or sexual assault because of your gender identity or expression.
- You are denied access to services because of your gender identity or expression.

Why does it matter if you report?

Underreporting of transphobic incidents is a serious issue. Many trans people face such high level of transphobia, that they don't even consider anymore that such behavior is unacceptable and should be reported. Others don't report because they think nothing can be done or there is no available help and support for them.

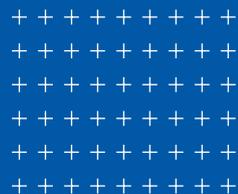
Reporting is a very important first step to initiate change. If we don't report cases the problem remains non-existent and change can not be achieved. Reporting is also important so victims can access already existing support services.

How can your report incidents and/or ask for legal and psychological help?

Online form: <http://transvanilla.hu/jelentes>

E-mail: szervezet@transvanilla.hu

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