



World Union of  
Catholic Women's  
Organisations



# WUCWO School for Synodality

*Final Report “Conversations in the Spirit”*

August 2024

# INTRODUCTION

## WUCWO School for Synodality

### Fundamental purpose

Promote synodal methodology among women and members of the People of God.

Joint transformation towards a Synodal Church in mission.

### Main activities

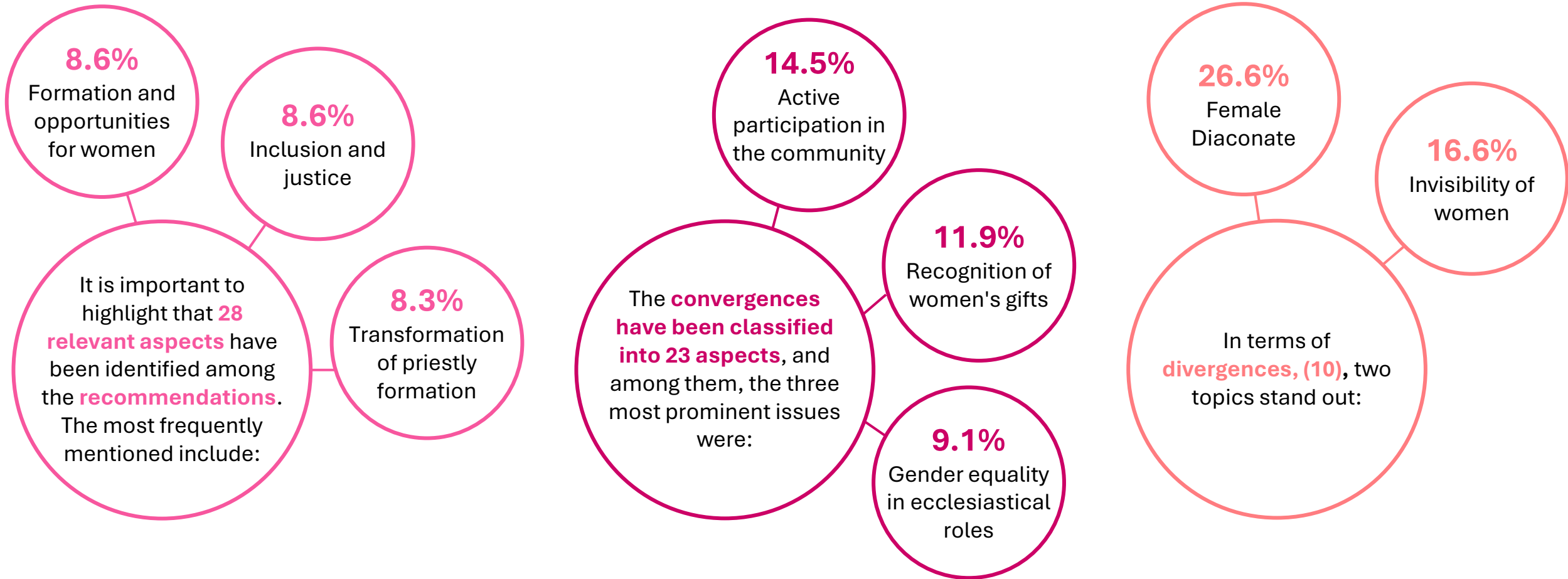
- 1. Webinars (from February 2024):**
  - Title: "Experiences and reflections of Assembly participants".
  - Participants: 507 participants from 61 countries.
- 2. Global Conversations in the Spirit:**
  - Theme: Women's participation in a Synodal Church.
  - Media: Zoom.
  - Participants: 678 participants from 79 countries.
  - Development: 93 groups sharing experiences and discernment.

### Basis for current research

Conversations in the Spirit.

**Focus:** To examine the role of the Church in valuing and promoting the gifts and charisms of women and men in the ecclesial community.

# RESULTS' SUMMARY



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## The 5 most commonly expressed recommendations

8.6%

**Training and opportunities for women**

Need to provide advanced training for women

8.6%

**Inclusion and justice**

Need to create more inclusive structures reflecting gender justice and equity

8.3%

**Need for transformation of priestly formation**

Need to modernise the formation of priests, focusing on improving their ability to establish stronger links with the laity. Emphasis is placed on the importance of adapting priestly formation to contemporary challenges, ensuring that priests are better prepared to connect and collaborate with the lay community

7.6%

**Need for change in structures**

Widespread feeling that the structure of the Church needs profound changes

7.6%

**Female diaconate**

Directly addresses the possibility of ecclesiastical roles for women (traditionally reserved for men)

# CONVERGENCES

## The 3 most commonly expressed convergences

**14.5%**

**Active participation in the community**

Promote the active participation of women in all activities of the ecclesial community, ensuring that their voices are heard and valued

**11.9%**

**Lack of recognition of women's gifts**

Although progress has been made in the recognition of some women's gifts, women perceive that their abilities are still not fully harnessed and respected

**9.1%**

**Gender equality in ecclesiastical roles**

Promote equal rights and opportunities for men and women in all aspects of church life, ensuring that there are no gender-based barriers

# DIVERGENCES

## The 2 most commonly expressed divergences

**26.6%**

### Female Diaconate

There is a clear division of opinion regarding the female diaconate. Some participants strongly support the inclusion of women in this role as a necessary response to the lack of clergy and a sign of justice and equality. Others are sceptical, arguing that this could exacerbate problems such as clericalism. The complexity of this issue reflects a deep divergence over the role of women in the church structure

**16.6%**

### Invisibility of women

Women experience invisibility of their full identity, being seen in a simplistic and stereotypical way rather than being recognised for their complexity

# OBJECTIVES

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01

To deepen how the Church has encouraged and welcomed the gifts and charisms of men and women in the ecclesial community, collecting specific examples and analysing their impact.

02

Examine the experiences of exclusion of church members, identifying how these experiences have affected people positively or negatively, through testimonies and case studies.

03

To explore ways in which the Church can include more women in existing roles and ministries, proposing changes to current structures and new roles needed.

04

Identify strategies to strengthen and enhance the formation of women, enabling them to participate fully in the synodal Church in mission and to become leaders in their communities, parishes and organisations.

**Sample:** 93 dialogues summarising the assessments of focus group facilitators (678 participants from 79 countries).

We worked on the analysis of 431 notes (significant statements) of which:

**38.7%** were classified as **recommendations**

**48.4%** as **convergences**

**12.7%** as **divergences**

These texts are classified into:

- a) Recommendations
- b) Convergences
- c) Divergences

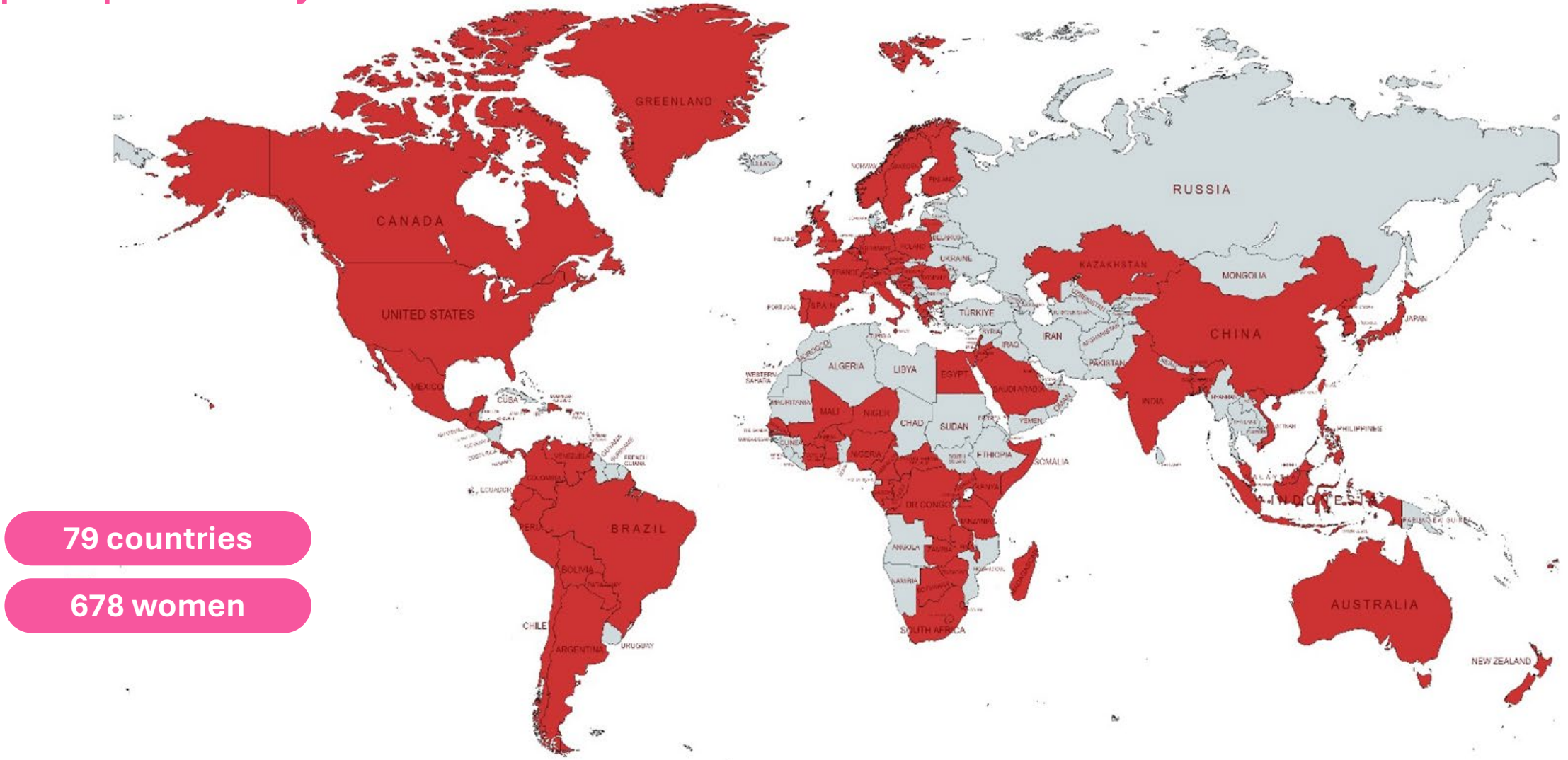
The insights (synthesis of the discussions) respond to the following trigger questions:

- How has the Church encouraged and welcomed your gifts and charisms as a woman (or man) in the Church community?
- Have you ever felt excluded by members or structures of the Church? Give examples and explain how it affected you, positively or negatively.
- How can the Church include more women in existing roles and ministries?
- What changes in Church structures or what new roles and ministries might be needed and why?



# CONVERSATIONS IN THE SPIRIT

April 23 and May 9 Conversations in the Spirit on women's participation in a Synodal Church



| COUNTRY              | PARTICIPANTS |
|----------------------|--------------|
| United States        | 129          |
| Canada               | 67           |
| Mexico               | 46           |
| Argentina            | 21           |
| Colombia             | 5            |
| Brazil               | 1            |
| Guatemala            | 3            |
| Bolivia              | 1            |
| Ecuador              | 2            |
| Honduras             | 2            |
| Jamaica              | 2            |
| Puerto Rico          | 2            |
| Trinidad and Tobago  | 2            |
| American Samoa       | 1            |
| Chile                | 1            |
| Costa Rica           | 1            |
| Dominican Republic   | 1            |
| Greenland            | 1            |
| Paraguay             | 1            |
| Peru                 | 1            |
| Venezuela            | 1            |
| <b>TOTAL AMERICA</b> | <b>294</b>   |

| COUNTRY             | PARTICIPANTS |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Kenya               | 20           |
| Senegal             | 16           |
| South Africa        | 16           |
| Nigeria             | 15           |
| Ghana               | 10           |
| Tanzania            | 9            |
| Dem. Rep. Congo     | 8            |
| Cameroon            | 6            |
| Burkina Faso        | 5            |
| Malawi              | 4            |
| Egypt               | 3            |
| Eswatini            | 3            |
| Lesotho             | 3            |
| Mali                | 3            |
| Zimbabwe            | 3            |
| Côte d'Ivoire       | 2            |
| Uganda              | 2            |
| Gabon               | 1            |
| Liberia             | 1            |
| Togo                | 1            |
| Rwanda              | 1            |
| Madagascar          | 1            |
| Mauritius           | 1            |
| <b>TOTAL AFRICA</b> | <b>134</b>   |

| COUNTRY                | PARTICIPANTS |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Spain                  | 44           |
| United Kingdom         | 32           |
| France                 | 25           |
| Italy                  | 16           |
| Germany                | 7            |
| Poland                 | 6            |
| Czech Republic         | 3            |
| Malta                  | 3            |
| Portugal               | 3            |
| Switzerland            | 3            |
| Ireland                | 2            |
| Slovakia               | 2            |
| Vatican (Italy)        | 2            |
| Albania                | 1            |
| Austria                | 1            |
| Belgium                | 3            |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 1            |
| Greece                 | 1            |
| Hungary                | 1            |
| Lithuania              | 1            |
| Netherlands            | 1            |
| <b>TOTAL EUROPE</b>    | <b>156</b>   |

| COUNTRY                     | PARTICIPANTS |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Philippines                 | 16           |
| China                       | 14           |
| Australia                   | 12           |
| India                       | 11           |
| Lebanon                     | 6            |
| Indonesia                   | 3            |
| Singapore                   | 3            |
| Malaysia                    | 2            |
| Timor-Leste                 | 2            |
| Vietnam                     | 2            |
| Bahrain                     | 1            |
| Bangladesh                  | 1            |
| Japan                       | 1            |
| <b>TOTAL ASIA - OCEANIA</b> | <b>74</b>    |

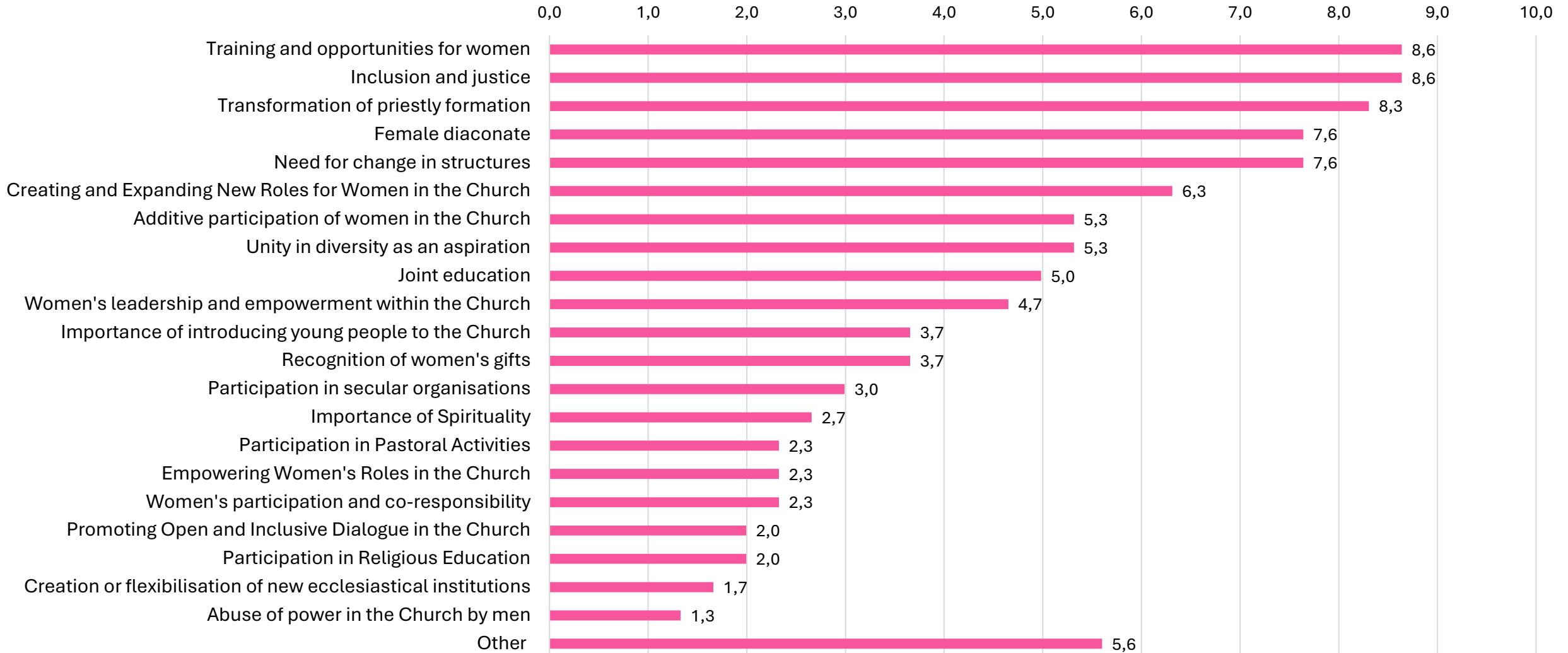
| NO.          |           |              |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| CONTINENT    | COUNTRIES | PARTICIPANTS |
| AMERICA      | 21        | 294          |
| EUROPE       | 21        | 156          |
| AFRICA       | 23        | 134          |
| ASIA         | 12        | 59           |
| OCEANIA      | 2         | 15           |
| NO DATA      |           | 19           |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>79</b> | <b>678</b>   |

\* China: In-person Conversations in the Spirit

|                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| <b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS</b> | <b>678</b> |
| <b>TOTAL COUNTRIES</b>    | <b>79</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL SMALL GROUPS</b> | <b>93</b>  |

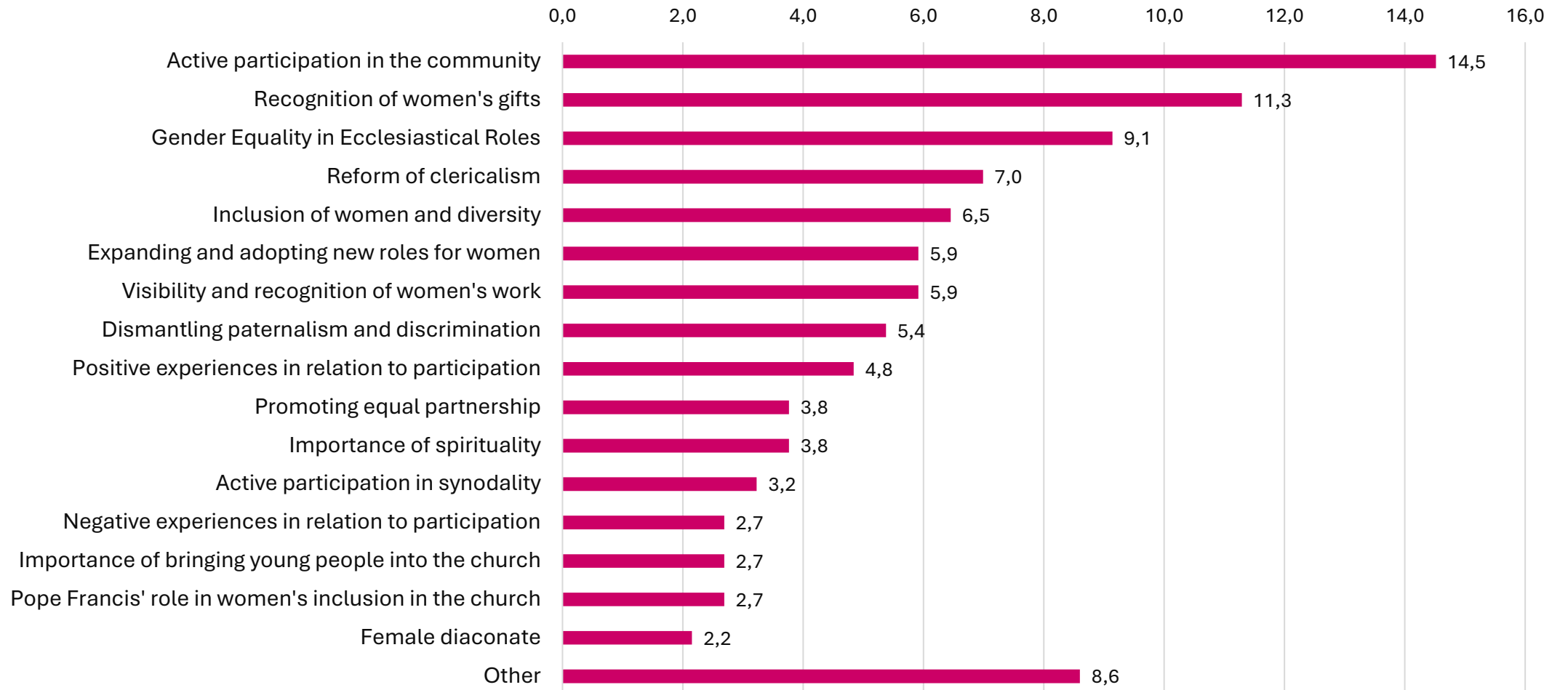
# RECOMMENDATIONS

## In % of locutions assigned to the code



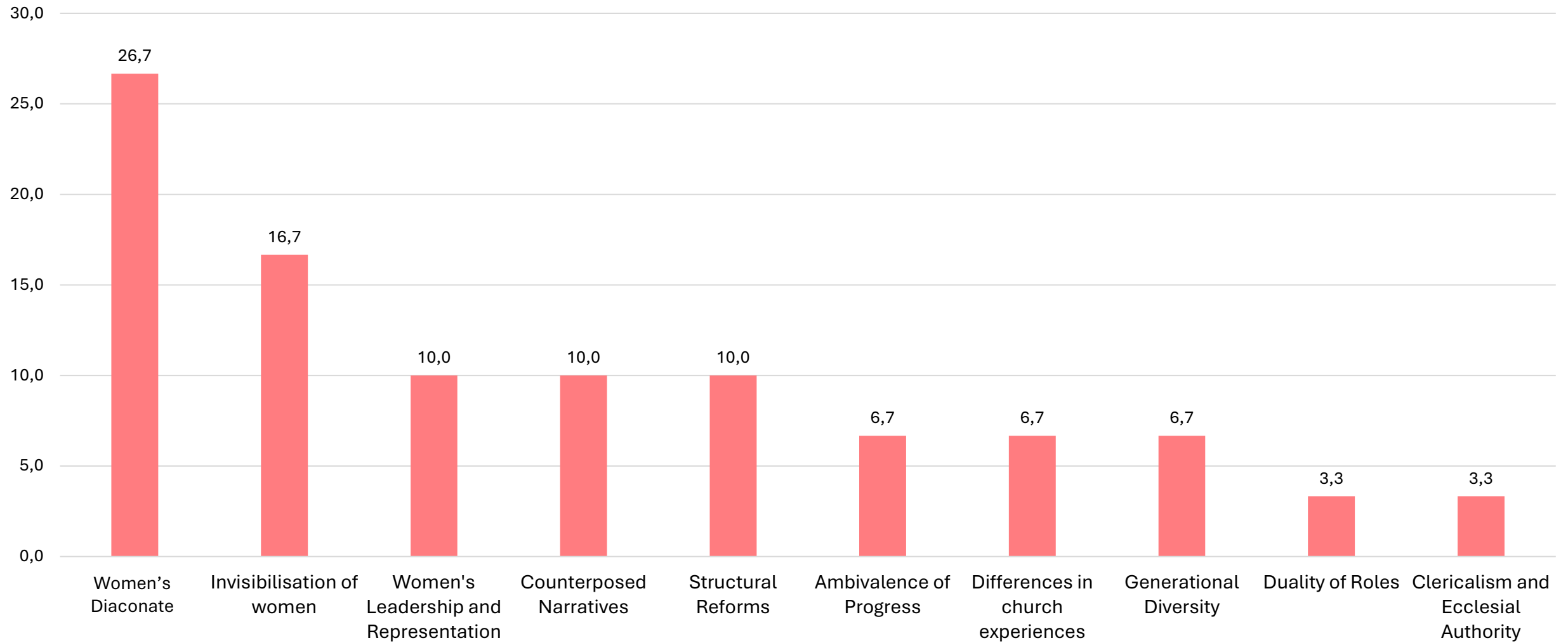
# CONVERGENCES

## In % of locutions assigned to the code



# DIVERGENCES

In % of locutions assigned to the code



# CONCLUSIONS

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01

## IDENTIFIED NEED

Recognise and encourage women's participation and leadership in the Church.

02

## MAIN FINDINGS

- Progress and initiatives towards inclusion in decision-making roles.
- Persistent lack of recognition of: Gifts – Work - Women's contributions.

03

## ESSENTIAL PROPOSAL

- Recognise the unique value of women in ecclesial mission.
- Value their contributions without trying to make their roles imitate male roles.

04

## NECESSARY CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

- Promote a culture that values diversity.
- Encourage inclusive dialogue and open communication.

05

## KEY OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that women's voices are heard and considered.
- Ensure gender equality in all aspects of church life.
- Eliminate barriers based on gender or orientation.

06

## EXPECTED IMPACT

- Building a more cohesive community.
- Enrich the Church by promoting an inclusive and dynamic environment that better reflects the diversity of its community.