The 7th Cycle of EU Youth Dialogue

Findings from EU Youth Dialogue Activities in the Member States and across Europe

Creating opportunities for youth

This photo was submitted by Nastasia Caullet, a young participant, to the Belgian French Speaking Community Working Group, as part of a photo competition exploring the themes of the youth dialogue. It is called 'Liberty', and described by the young person as such:

"This picture alone represents the life I would like to live when I am 25. I just entered the job market and I feel overwhelmed by all the obligations to follow, with no means to escape I submit to this vision of society which imprisons me and obliges me to earn a living. My dreams are elsewhere, I want to be free of my choices and desires. This hawk is free and I envy it a lot."

Introduction

The documents outlines the findings from the National and European working group activities as part of the 7th Cycle of EU Youth Dialogue held under the Romanian - Finnish - Croatian Presidencies of the EU.

It is based on the activities of the National and European Working Groups relating to the Presidency theme of 'Creating opportunities for youth'.

- Part I (p.8) provides the introduction to the context, background, and proceedings and thematic background of the 7th Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue 2019-2020,

- Part II (p.11) outlines the methods used and numbers and participation rates of young people involved.

- Part III to V outlines the findings in relation to each of the three subthemes.
    - Quality employment for all (p 15.)
    - Quality youth work for all (p.32)
    - Creating opportunities for rural youth (p.50)

- Part VI (p.73) Provides a summary of the findings. An easy to read graphical version of this is also available.

- Appendix 1 contains detail of the backgrounds of participants who took part, as reported by working groups.

- Appendix 2 contains analytical details of the survey sample.

Acknowledgements

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Working Group	With attributions made by the working group to:
The Austrian National Working Group	The Austrian National Youth Council National Working Group Austria
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The Slovakian National Working Group National Working Group	
The Slovenian National Working Group	All young people who have participated in the consultation sessions. National Youth Council of Slovenia (MSS) Umbrella organization for youth clubs in Slovenia and (Mreža Mama) Trade union Mladi plus ('Youth Plus') Slovenian Rural Youth Association (ZSPM) Ministry for education, science and sport (MIZŠ) Office for youth (URSM) Ministry for labour, families, social affair and equal opportunities (MDDSZ) Representatives from National agency for youth in action programme (MOVIT) Researcher from Faculty for Social Science (FDV) Representatives of employers: Ministry of Public Administration (MJU) Employment service of Slovenia (ZRSZ) Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (GZS)
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Part I: Context

In November 2018, a new EU Youth Strategy (hereafter - the Strategy) was adopted by the Youth Ministers in the Council of the European Union for the period 2019-2027. The Strategy focuses on three main dimensions under the titles connect, engage and empower and encourages a cross-sectorial cooperation in respect to issues concerning young people. The Strategy includes specific annexes on the EU Youth Dialogue (successor of the Structured Dialogue with young people) and the EU Youth Goals among others.

What is the EU Youth Dialogue?

The EU Youth Dialogue is a flagship youth participation mechanism on the EU level aiming to bring youth voice to the EU policy making. Its main element is the dialogue between young people, youth organisations and policy and decision makers, as well as experts, researchers and other relevant civil society actors. It serves as a forum for continuous joint reflection and consultation on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European cooperation in the field of youth.

It builds on the achievements of past dialogue processes (Structured Dialogue), with the aim of including more decision-makers and young people in the dialogue activities. Particular attention is given to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in decision-making processes and in the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy.

Objectives of the EU Youth Dialogue

The specific objectives of the EU Youth Dialogue, as outlined in the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, are to:
   a) encourage the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe in line with Article 165 Treaty on the Functioning of European Union (TFEU);
   b) promote equal participation between young women and men;
   c) include diverse voices and to ensure openness to all young people to contribute to policy-shaping;
   d) bring about positive change in youth policy at local, regional, national and European level;
   e) strengthen young people's' citizenship competencies and sense of belonging to the society and the European Union[1].

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[1] See the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027) available here.

How does the EU Youth Dialogue function and who are the actors?

At European level

Following the rotation system and the political cycle of the Trio Presidency, every 18 months a new cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue is organised at European level. According to the Strategy, each cycle should preferably have one thematic priority per cycle that is closely linked to the priorities of the Strategy and the European Youth Goals where appropriate, building on the results of previous cycles.

The **European Steering Committee (ESC)**[2] is an informal body that brings together representatives of the:

- decision makers in each of the three Presidencies (Ministries responsible for youth sector, Permanent representations, etc.);
- young people from the three countries (National Youth Councils or equivalent bodies according to national youth representation);
- National Agencies in the three countries;
- European Youth Forum;
- European Commission;
- Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth (hereafter the Youth Partnership).

The role of the ESC is to ensure a common framework for the EU Youth Dialogue cycle (theme, outcomes, methodology, etc), steer the implementation of the cycle, gather the results of the consultation in order to provide the analysis and seek ways to follow-up on the outcomes on a European level.

In order to provide a common approach to the consultations and activities, the ESC, according to timeline of the cycle, provides National Working Groups (NWGs) and the European Working Group (EWG) a full package on the current cycle. The ESC also collects the results from the NWGs and EWG through the designed reporting tool. The results are then analysed and combined in a common European report, corresponding to the subthemes of the Cycle. They are assisted in their work by a team of researchers from the Pool of Researchers of the EU-COE Youth Partnership.

In the youth field, at European Union level, the Open Method of Coordination is the basis for cooperation among the Member States. It rests on voluntary cooperation and soft policy. The intergovernmental cooperation happens in the main decision-making body that is the Council of Youth Ministers (Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council configuration) - which also

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[2] The Youth Working Party is currently preparing a document on the governance of the EU Youth Dialogue. The description of the role and composition of the European Steering Committee in this Introduction to the 7th Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue (2019-2020) describes the current state of affairs without prejudice to the outcomes and decisions stemming from the current work in the Youth Working Party.

decides on the policy and political follow-up on the results of the EU Youth Dialogue on EU level.

The **European Working Group** (EWG) is formed by representatives of European non-governmental youth organisations/networks, selected through an open call by the European Youth Forum. The EWG takes part in the EU Youth Dialogue to provide a European dimension and perspective to the dialogue process. They organise dialogue activities with young people and youth organisations and, in line with the provided timeline, they send a report with the results of the consultation and activities to the ESC.

At National level

National Working Groups (NWGs) are set up at national level to organise and coordinate the EU Youth Dialogue with young people. While there are various practices in terms of composition of the NWGs, normally a NWG would bring together decision makers in the field of youth and other policy fields, representatives of youth civil society, experts and practitioners (youth workers, researchers, etc.). The Strategy states that a leading role in the NWG should be given to the National Youth Councils.

While the EU Youth Dialogue follows a common theme, the NWGs can add other topics of local or national relevance to the theme of dialogue proposed at European level, when running consultations and activities. They can make use of the suggested methodology, but also use other methods of working that are more suitable for their national context.

In line with the provided timeline, the NWGs send to the ESC a report with the results of the consultation and activities on the European theme which is feeding in an overarching European report.

Additional reports comprising the results of the consultation on local, regional or national themes can be made available by the NWG.

NWGs ensure the learning dimension of the EU Youth Dialogue so that young people taking part in the consultations and activities are learning about participation, citizenship at EU and national level, following the objectives of the Strategy.

NWGs follow-up on results (both the overall European results and the outcomes of their own activities on a local and national level) at local and national level as appropriate, ensuring their integration in youth policies, strategies, programmes and activities at local and national level.

The 7ᵗʰ Cycle of EU Youth Dialogue 2019-2020: Theme and outcomes

The 7ᵗʰ cycle is held under the Trio Presidency Romania - Finland - Croatia which started on 1 January 2019, lasting for 18 months until June 2020.

The common theme chosen by the Trio Presidency is:

Creating opportunities for youth

With a focus on:

- ❖ **Quality Employment for All**
- ❖ **Quality Youth Work for All**
- ❖ **Opportunities for Rural Youth**

The thematic priority is therefore directly or indirectly connected to three EU Youth Goals and their targets:

| Quality Employment for All | Quality Learning | Moving Rural Youth Forward |
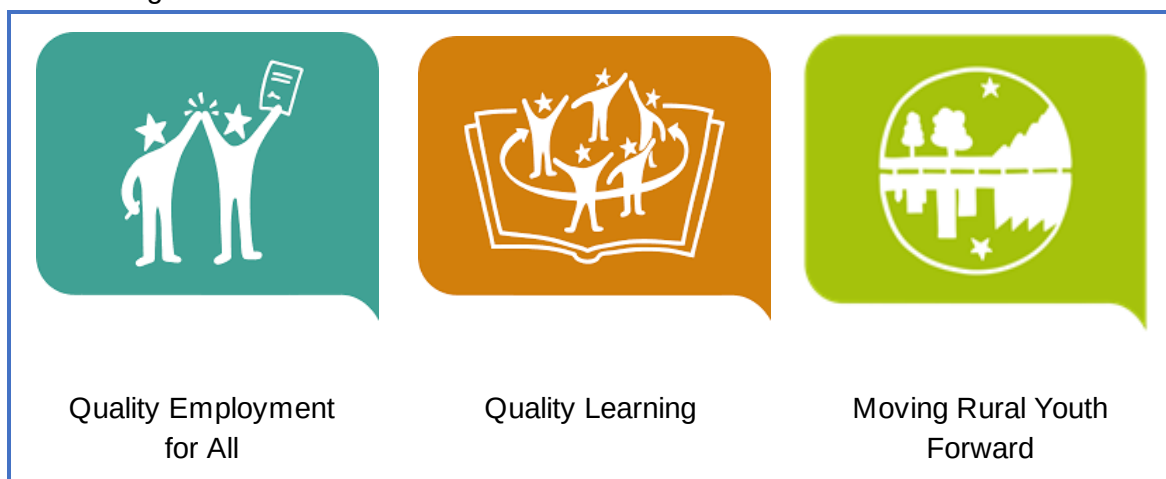
This cycle builds on the achievements of the previous cycle, notably the adoption of the Strategy and the related EU Youth Goals - which provide the vision and targets until 2027, and aims to provide further insight on how to realise them through policy measures, programmes and actions at European, national and local level.

Part II: Methods used and participation rates

NWGs and the EWG received guidance on methods which can be utilised during the consultation process, and these included:

- Surveys (a common set of question to be used in online questionnaires distributed to the young people)
- Focus groups (group conversations with young people on a given topic)
- Large Youth Dialogue events (bringing together large numbers of young people discussing given topics)
- Workshops (small groups of young people using various methodologies to debate given topics)
- Participatory action research (engaging young people in devising concrete measures and implementing them)
- Participatory visual methods (using photos and videos as a medium to convey messages from the young people).

Working groups were asked to supply a thematic working group report supplemented, if they wished, by thematic reports of focus groups on rural areas. These were analysed using constructed grounded theory to produce the qualitative findings in this document. Alongside this working groups could also supply a database of results from the common survey. These were combined into a single database and analysed using standard statistical technique to provide the statistical findings in this document.

Limitations and purpose of the methods

It is important to emphasise that the EUYD is a participatory process which intends to be youth led. **Methods and analytical tools are developed to support this participatory process and the ESC encouraged a wide range of methods in order to facilitate effective participation.**

EUYD7 does not intend, or claim to be, a research process or survey which conforms to scientific method, and the findings should not be viewed in this regard. That is not to say that the findings should be treated as less valuable or inferior than scientific research. Instead it should be recognised that the approach taken is underpinned by a different purpose and set of values. The primary goal is to support young people's participation across Europe, rather than to conduct research on young people.

At the end of 2019, **28[3] NWGs from 26 EU Member states and one EWG[4] submitted their reports** for analysis on the international level. These reports contained information reported by working groups on the methods used and backgrounds of participants. As to be expected

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[3] Greece and Poland did not supply reports, Belgium provided one for each of their three communities. The UK was in the EU at the time of the findings being drafted and supplied a report.

[4] There is one European Working Group consisting of European non-governmental youth organisations active in the current Dialogue Cycle.

with a multinational participatory process, the accuracy of this information varies and in all cases should be treated as an estimate. In some cases, such as France, WGS are not able to collect background information. In other instances, (such as Bulgaria's large scale roadshows), the methods used only enabled estimates of participation rates. Participant reports by working groups (see appendix) were treated at face value, and no preference was given to one method over others when analysing data.

Methods employed by working groups

Based on the estimates supplied by the 29 Working Groups (both NWGs and the EWG) through their reports:

96.6% employed surveys in their consultation processes, **86.2% implemented focus groups**, **72.4% held large Youth Dialogue events**, but only **10.3% used participatory action research** approaches, **27.6% used participatory visual methods**, and **17.2% used other approaches**. All in all, **more than 489 participatory events were held** during the 7th Cycle of the Youth Dialogue. Apparently, various combinations of methods were used, suitable to each national context and making use of existing structures as well as creating and opening new opportunities for the young people.

Taking into account all potential opportunities young people across Europe had to participate in the 7th Cycle of the Youth Dialogue, all in all an estimated **56 287 young people from all over Europe took part**. Out of this amount, 30 533 (54.25%) of young people took part specifically in surveys. Out of these surveys, **26 604 (47.26%) young people from more than 46 European countries[5] took part in the standardised questions survey[6] conducted in 20 EU Member States by the NWGs[7]** and submitted for the purposes of the international analyses and providing basis for findings presented in this report. Some NWGs commissioned expert bodies (e.g. private research companies) to conduct the surveys, others conducted the surveys themselves or in collaboration with other existent national youth organizations or NGOs, in come cases utilizing combination of both approaches. (see the section below for details of the sample set)

Moreover, qualitative face to face methods were used across the WGs, with interesting examples of focus groups held with young people in prisons, rural areas, in school environments, using Young Ambassadors to reach out to non-organised young people, engaging NEETs, Roma youth, disabled people, and other groups. Methodologies used also varied from workshop settings (e.g. World Café methodology), through open discussions, utilization of QR codes in order to provide direct links to online consultation tools during the face to face meetings, round tables and various visual methods. All of these approaches have together provided for the following participation opportunities:

- **252 focus groups across the three sub themes** were organized with **4 047 (7.19%) young people taking part**.

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[5] Young people were asked about their country of origin in the surveys.
[6] For details on the survey data, please refer to Appendix 2 to this report.
[7] NWGs conducted the surveys and reached out to young people currently living in these countries.

- **225 large Youth Dialogue events** were held with **10 493 (18.64%) young people taking part**.
- **12 participatory action research projects** were implemented with **82 (0.15%) young people taking part**.
- Further **10 436 (18.54%) young people took part in other Youth Dialogue events**.
- **260 various visuals** were collected via participatory visual methods.

Profile of young people participating in youth dialogue processes

Based on the estimates supplied by the 29 Working Groups (both NWGs and the EWG) through their reports:

All in all, most of the NWGs provided some **background data** which **overall accounted for about 52% of all young people taking part in the YD processes** (over 29 000 of young people in absolute numbers). This group of 52% of youth participants whose background data was collected was analysed in order to shed some light on the profile of YD participants, and the results are shown in figures below. Data where NWGS did not report demographics, or individuals chose not to disclose was not used when calculating these figures.

Figure 1: Gender of the YD participants.

Gender

0.8%
38.9%
60.3%

■ Males ■ Females ■ Other genders
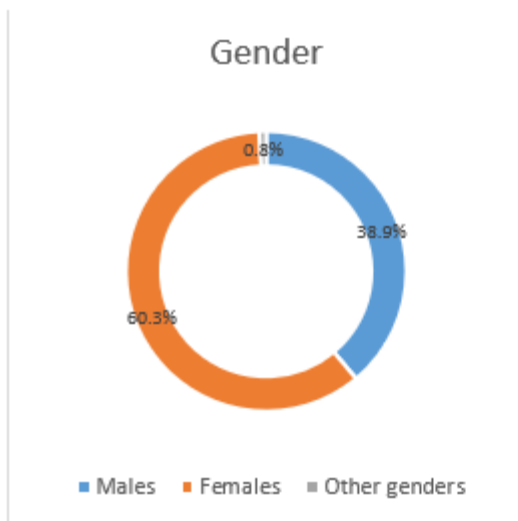
Figure 2: Age profile of the YD participants.

Age

18.0% 19.1%
33.9% 29.1%

■ Under 16 ■ 16-18 years of age
■ 19-25 years of age ■ 26-30 years of age
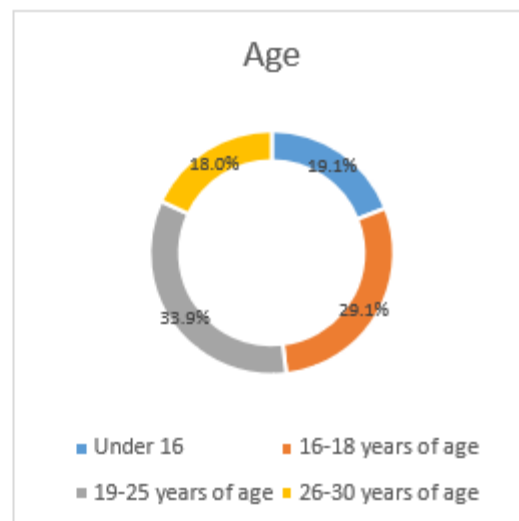
All in all, as shown in Figure 1, there were about 60% of women, almost 1% of young people of other genders, and about 39% of men. In terms of age, young people were rather balanced across the categories as presented in Figure 2. Most of the YD participants came from urban areas (see Figure 3) and were in good health (see Figure 4). There were around 13% of both religious and ethnic minorities among the YD participants (see Figure 5 and Figure 6) and almost 10% of young people with different than heterosexual sexuality (see Figure 7). In terms of economic activity, most YD participants were still in education, about a quarter was already in employment, and around 14% of the YD participants were characterized as not in employment, education or training (NEETs; see Figure 8).

Figure 3: Residence profile of the YD participants.

Place of Residence

36.4%

63.7%

■ Rural area   ■ Urban area
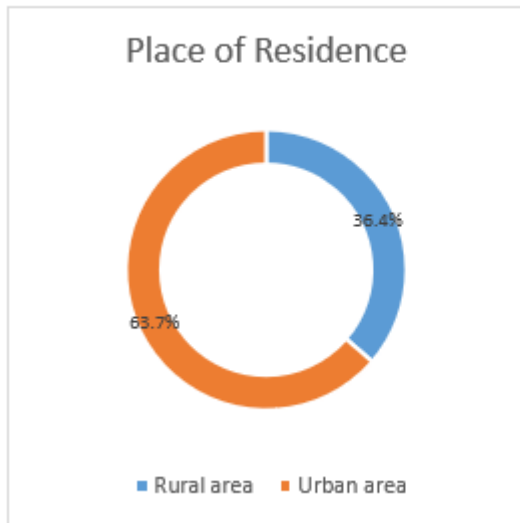
Figure 4: Disability status of the YD participants.

Disability

4.8%

95.2%

■ Young people who do not identify as having a disability
■ Young people who identify as having a disability

Figure 5: Religious background of the YD participants.

Religious Minorities

13.3%

86.7%

■ Young people with majority background
■ Young people with religious minority background
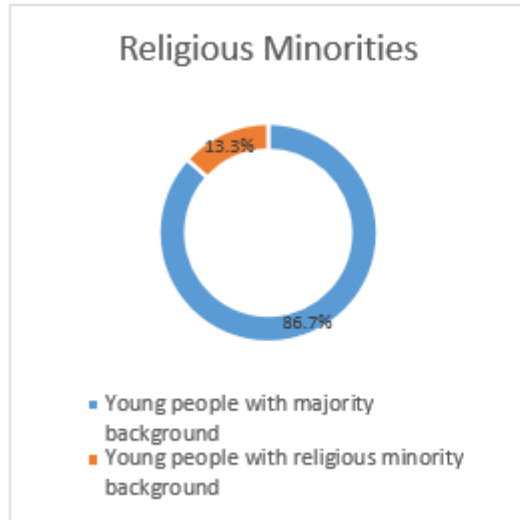
Figure 6: Ethnic background of the YD participants.

Ethnic Minorities

13.4%

86.6%

■ Young people with majority background
■ Young people with ethnic minority background
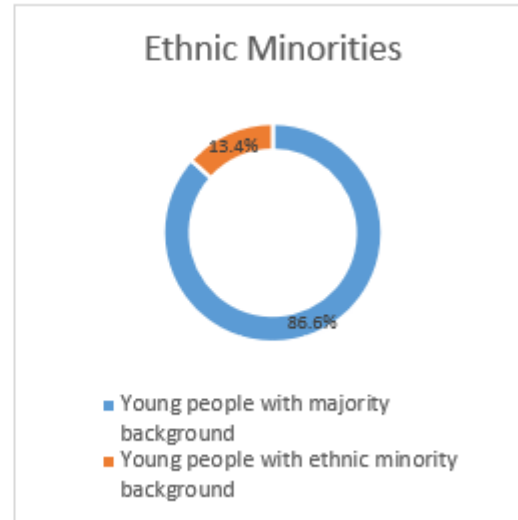
Figure 7: Sexuality of the YD participants.

Sexuality

9.7%

90.3%

■ Heterosexual   ■ LGBTQI+
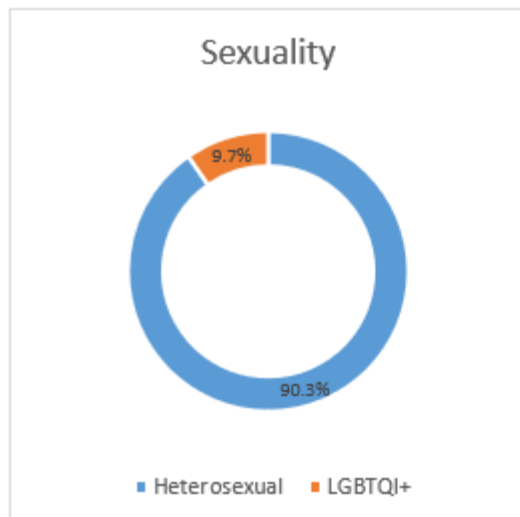
Figure 8: Economic status of the YD participants.

Economic Status

13.9%

26.3%

59.9%

■ In work   ■ In education   ■ NEETs
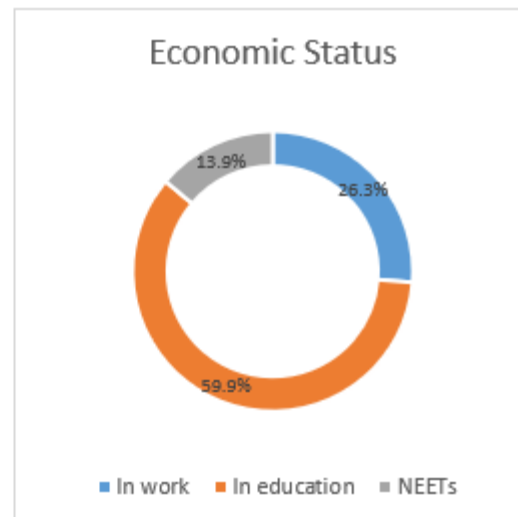
Part III: Quality employment for all

The future work that young people want

Progress on Youth Goal #7

The 7th cycle youth dialogue standard survey explored the extent to which young people believed Youth Goal #7 was being implemented. Participants were asked a series of questions based on the extent to which they agreed Youth Goal #7 targets were being achieved in their realities. Six of the seven targets were used, though it was necessary to simplify wording to make a functional question. One target, relating to involvement of young people in youth organisation in employment policies was not explored, as most participants would not have direct experience of this.

Youth Goal #7: Guarantee an accessible labour market with opportunities that lead to quality jobs for all young people.

Targets
- Create quality jobs which guarantee fair working conditions, working rights and the right of living wage for all young people.

- Safeguard social protection and healthcare for all young workers

- Guarantee fair treatment and equal opportunities for all young people in order to end discrimination in the labour market.

- Ensure equal opportunities for all young people to develop the necessary skills and gain practical experience in order to smoothen the transition from education to the labour market.

- Guarantee the recognition and validation of competencies acquired through internships, apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning, as well as volunteering and non-formal education.

- Ensure involvement of young people and youth organisations as equal partners in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of employment policies at all levels.

- Ensure equal access to quality information and adequate support mechanisms to prepare young people for the changing labour market and future of work.

Overall, the survey data show that young people have mixed experiences and are sceptical when asked about the extent to which Youth Goal #7 is being implemented. Figure 1 outlines levels of agreement with youth goal #7 targets in which young people could indicate to what extent they believe these are true, and being achieved in their experience. Figures clearly show a rather balanced agree–disagree ratio in some of the statements, suggesting that young people have very different experiences across Europe. This is true for the three top statements in Figure 1, focusing on recognition of out-of-school learning, social protection and healthcare, and access to quality information. Neither young people who indicate agreement nor those who voice their disagreement get majority in these areas.

A rather sceptical view can be seen in the three bottom statements where most of the young people disagree with the statements on fair treatment, equal opportunities in skills development, and access to jobs with fair working conditions. Disagreement in these cases stretches between 56% and 68%, giving a rather strong indication that young people, in their experience, do not think there is fair treatment in the labour market, or that everyone has equal opportunities to develop skills necessary for the labour market, or that access exists to quality jobs with fair working conditions.

Figure 1: General agreement with achievement of Youth Goal #7 targets in percentages.
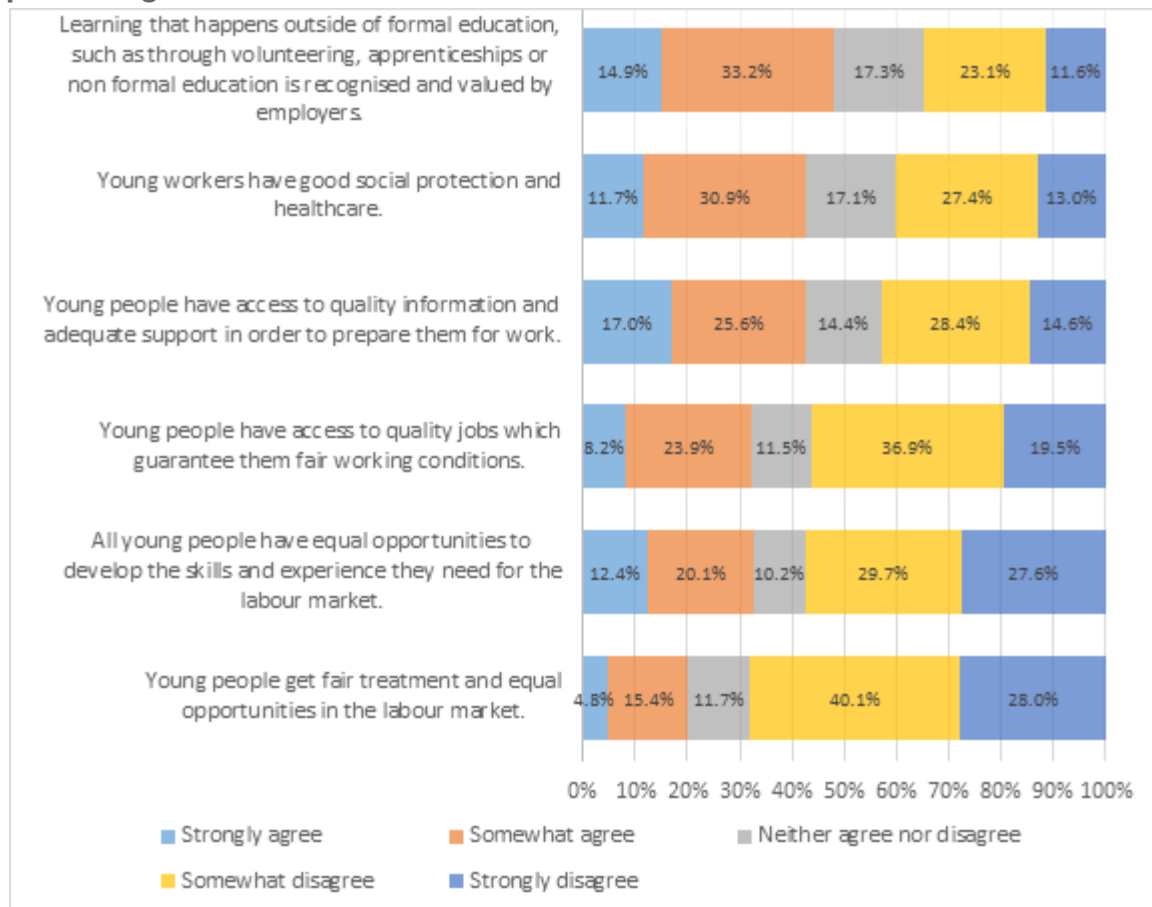
Detailed analyses (see Figure 2) show stronger disagreement in almost all statements **by young people of other genders** as well as slightly more agreement in almost all statements by male respondents. It seems that young people of other genders perceive the labour market situation more sceptically in comparison to female respondents and, on the other hand, males seem to be more positive in almost all respects compared to others.

Figure 2: Differences in achievement of Youth Goal #7 targets in mean values according to gender (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).
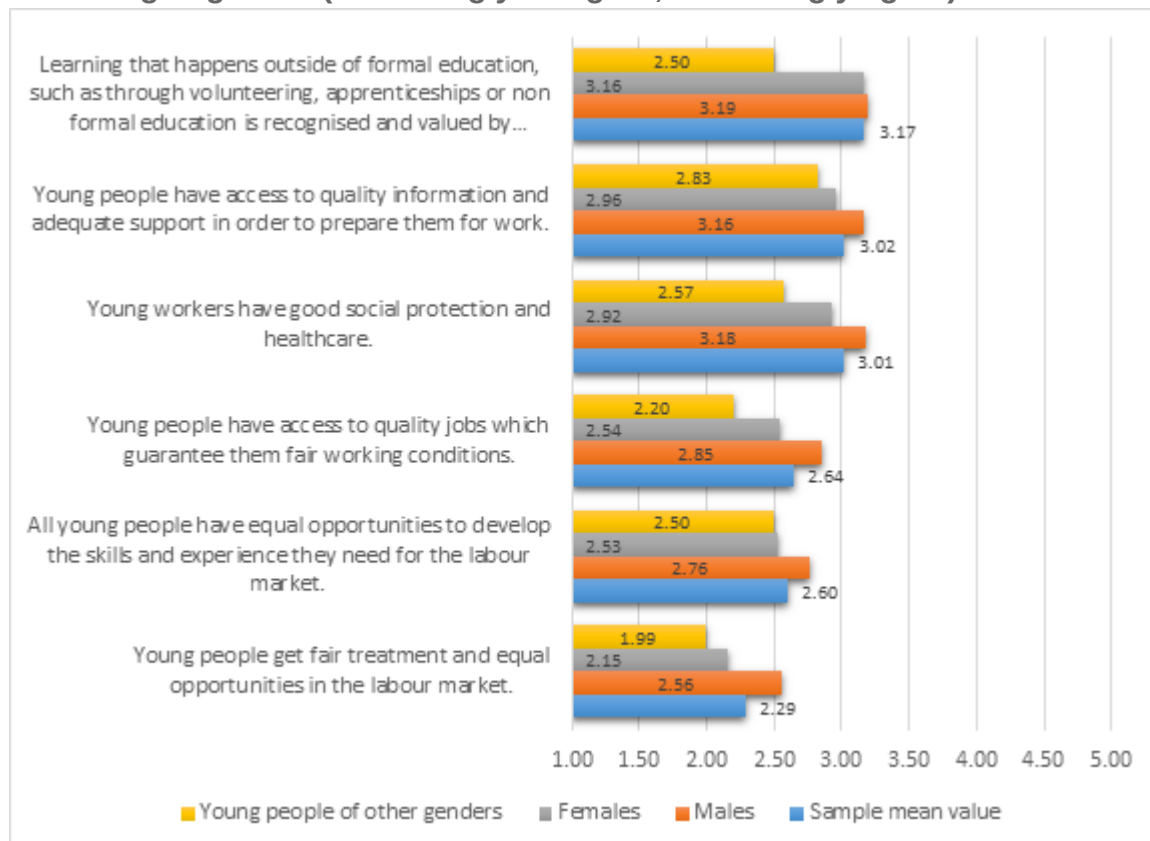
Note: All mean differences higher than 0.16 are statistically significant.

Relatively balanced are opinions of young people across their employment statuses: there seem to be minimal differences between those who work to different extents and those who do not work at all in their valuation of employment-related statements. Figure 3 shows only one marked difference in the group of **full-time employed** which is more positive in the case of social protection and healthcare than their counterparts. It also seems that this difference is the most striking in comparison to those who only work part time. Both the **part-timers** and full-timers are also less enthusiastic about recognition of out-of-school learning and access to information supporting work preparation in comparison to those who do not work at all. This starker assessment by young people with direct work experience in comparison to those who do not work may suggest a disillusionment young people undergo when their initial image of the labour market is confronted with the labour market reality. At the same time, this discrepancy is rather small, and therefore the disillusionment and a change to a more critical view is also rather slight.

Figure 3: Differences in achievement of Youth Goal #7 targets in mean values according to employment status (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).
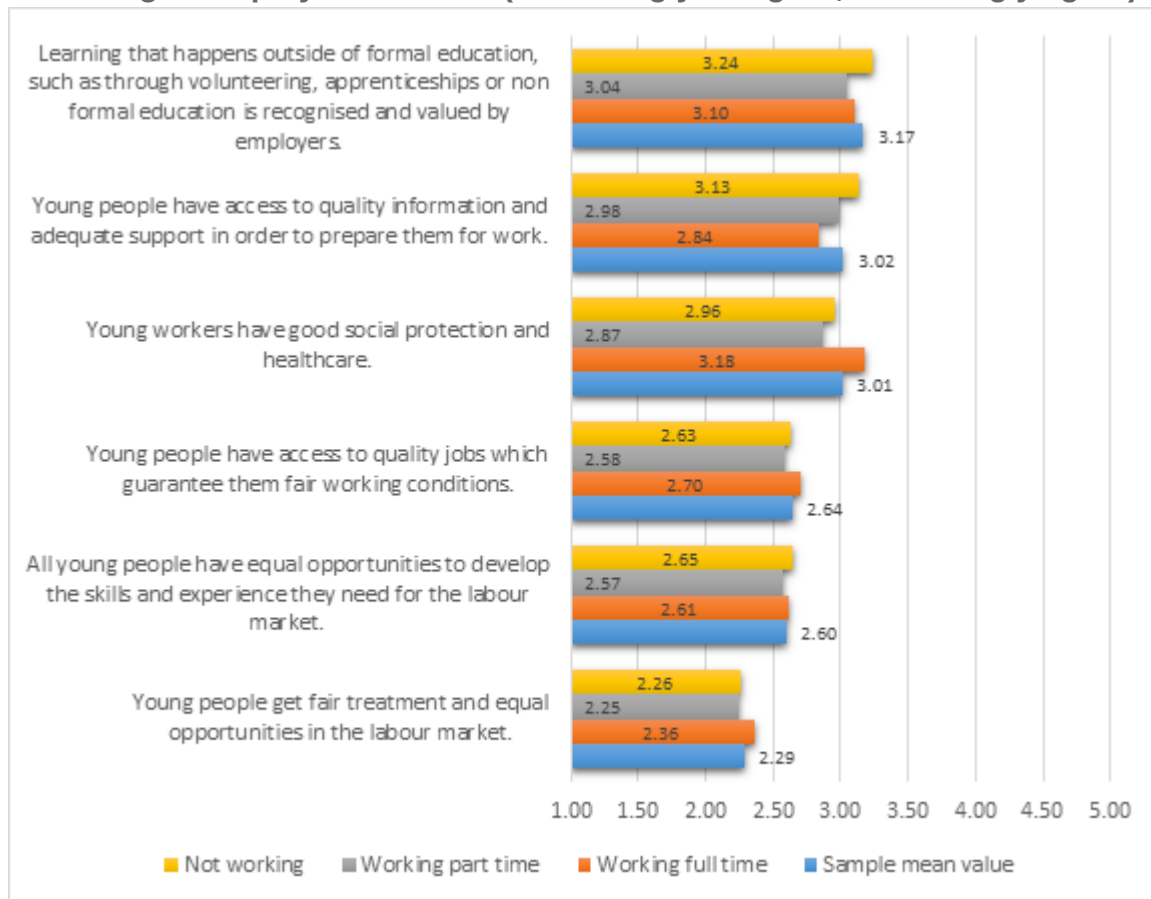
Note: All mean differences higher than 0.07 are statistically significant.

Much more striking differences can be found in young people of different educational attainments (see Figure 4). **Young people without any formal education** believe to a larger extent that equal opportunities exist for skills development and information access in connection to the labour market. On the other hand, it is again the **young people without any formal education** who are most worried about social protection and healthcare. **Young people with basic education** are more optimistic than others, scoring systematically more towards the positive end of the scale than their counterparts from other educational backgrounds.

Young people with university diplomas are, on the other hand, more sceptical than their counterparts, especially when it comes to questions of fair treatment or equal opportunities for skills development. All in all, it seems that the more educated the young people are, the more sceptical they also are towards the labour market. This may also be connected to the fact that those respondents who exhibit higher educational attainments are also more likely to be directly involved in the labour market, while their counterparts with no or basic education are more likely to have rather limited experience in this domain. This may be linked to the disillusionment described above.

Figure 4: Differences in achievement of Youth Goal #7 targets in mean values according to educational level (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.30 are statistically significant.

A similar picture can be seen in Figure 5, showing groups of young people differentiated according to their educational status. The most enthusiastic group in all statements are the young people still in **full-time education**. The least optimistic are the young people who are in **part-time education,** which suggests that combining educational and labour market efforts can be demanding and lead to a more critical view of the labour market.

Figure 5: Differences in achievement of Youth Goal #7 targets in mean values according to educational status (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).
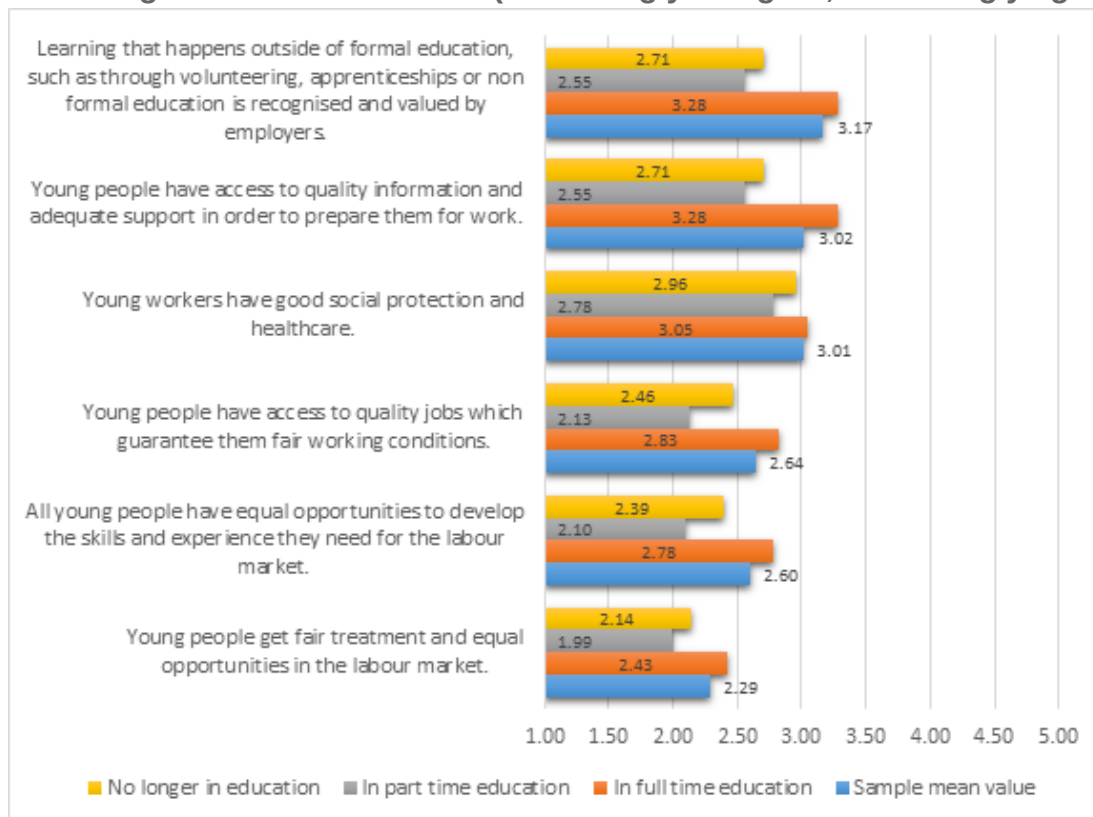
Note: All mean differences are statistically significant.

Figure 6: Differences in achievement of Youth Goal #7 targets in mean values according to socio-economic status (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).
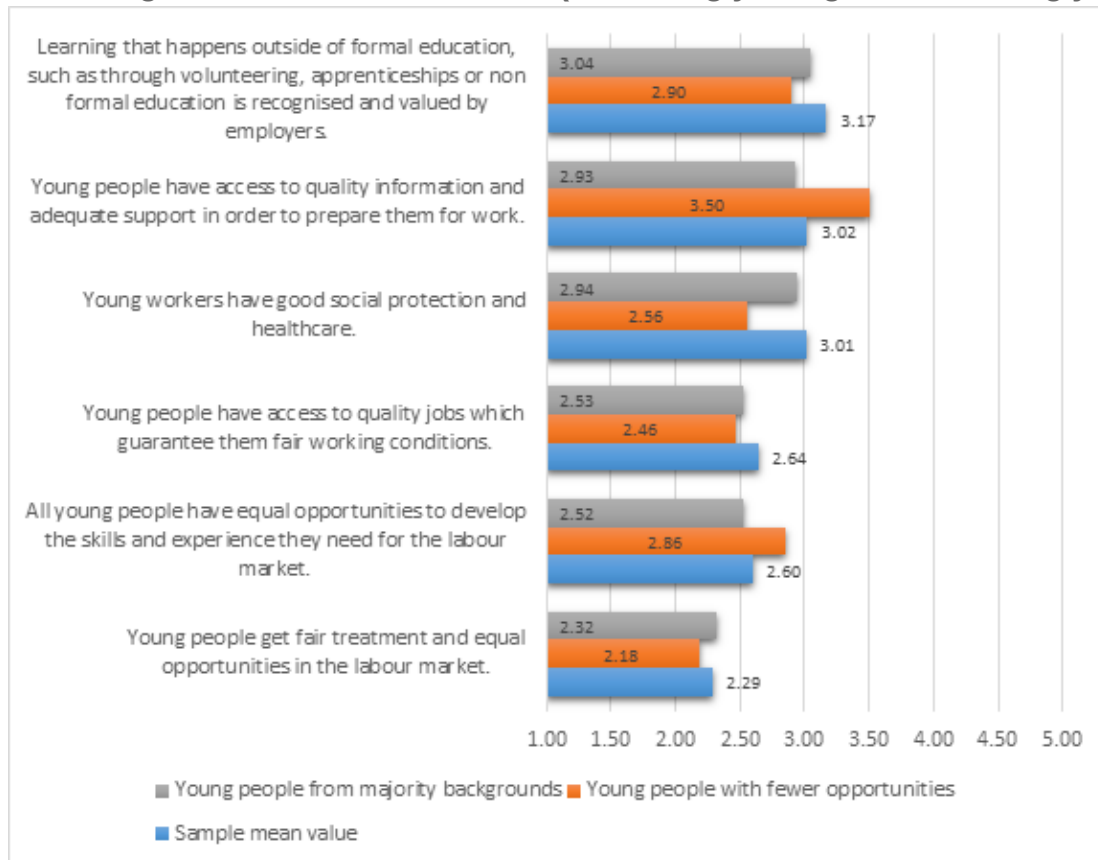
Note: All mean differences are statistically significant.

Interesting results come from comparing **young people with fewer opportunities** and **young people from majority backgrounds** (see Figure 6). While young people with fewer opportunities are more critical than their counterparts in the majority of statements, there are two specific areas in which they are, on the contrary, more enthusiastic: in the case of access to quality information and in the case of equal opportunities for learning skills connected to the labour market. While the more critical approach by the young people with fewer opportunities towards the labour market in general is expectable, given the fact that they experience obstacles which may cause their relationship with the labour market to be more complex and complicated than in the case of other young people, the differences in information access and skills learning are not easy to explain and are worth deeper exploration.

Figure 7: Differences in achievement of Youth Goal #7 targets in mean values according to age groups (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).
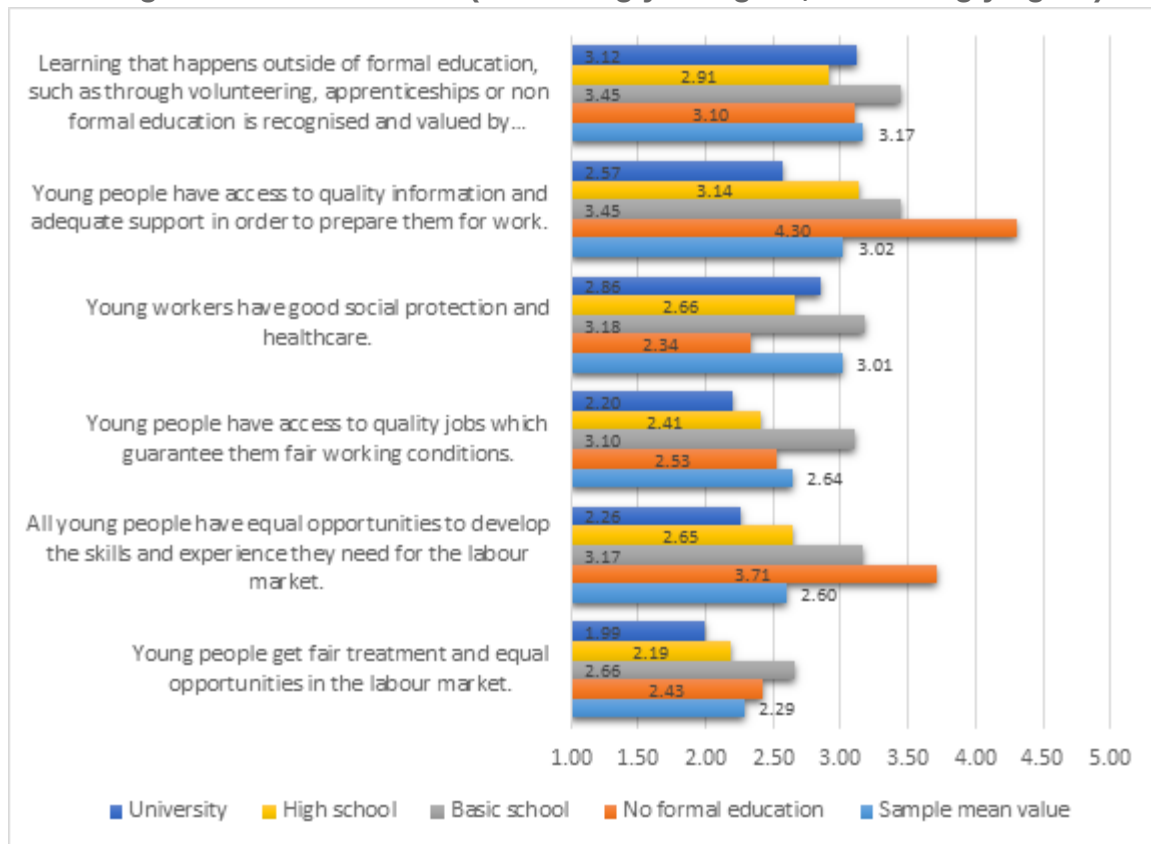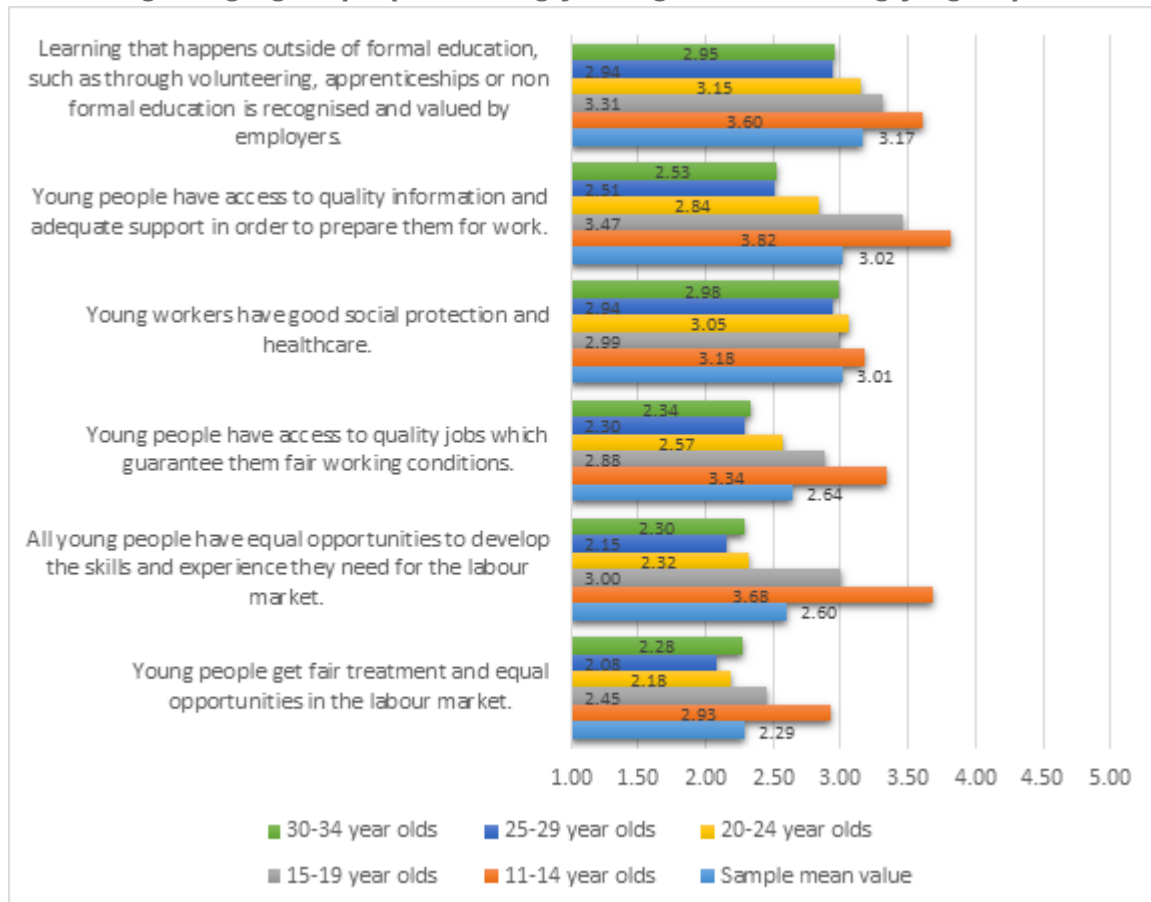

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.10 are statistically significant. Age groups are aligned with the Eurostat age group methodology.

Detailed insight into **age groups** of young people (see Figure 7) shows that the views of the labour market are generally increasingly sceptical the older the young people become. The starkest contrast can be seen between the youngest age group of 11–14 year olds and the group of 25–29 year old respondents.

Progress on achievement of Youth Goal #7: Summary

All in all, young people are uncertain and sceptical towards the labour market today and the extent to which Youth Goal #7 is being achieved. Detailed analyses also show a rather worrying discrepancy between the young people who have a direct labour market experience and those who do not, with a more critical approach by those possessing more labour market experience and more enthusiasm in those who have less experience. This may suggest a process of disillusionment in young people: the expectations they may have before entering the labour market do not match the reality and hence their views become more critical once these expectations are confronted with the labour market first-hand.

Social protection and the future of work

In line with the guiding questions developed from the Romanina Presidency Youth Conference, the role of social protection in relation to the future of work was a topic explored through the Youth Dialogue. A qualitative analysis of the working group reports is shown in this section.

Fulfillment and wellbeing before profit and income

Messages emerged across a number of working group reports about the sorts of employment young people wanted in the future. This was less about the industries and professions than **workplace culture and the role of work** itself. For many young people it was clear that fulfillment and wellbeing was a priority over salary and income, and references to the importance of ensuring a balance between work and personal life and maintaining mental health were common.

And above all, the young people don't want any stress: "A bit of stress is always the case, but it should still be fun. I definitely don't want to get sick due to my job." The salary plays a subordinate role for them, as long as the work is fun and the social competence is encouraged in the work (both in the sense of good working atmosphere and in the sense of helpfulness for badly placed people).

Belgian German Speaking Community National Working Group Report

Flexibility, self determination and control or reduction of working hours was an important part of work priorities as well as undertaking work that allowed the best use of your skills, knowledge and experience and enabled personal development. As the French working group stated "the notion of choice is central to quality employment". However, financial stability was still important to young people.

We see... the main concerns of young people on the future of work are:
- *Lifelong learning*
- *Flexibility vs social security*
- *Mental Health*

Belgian Flemish Speaking Community National Working Group Report

Responding to precarious employment

Concerns were raised by young people about the increasing uncertainty and instability of unemployment. However, although some working groups called for an end to all forms of precarious employment, the general tone was that **an ever changing labour market was now an inevitable** picture of young people's future work, and it was therefore important to protect young people's working rights within this.

In that regard, there were a number of calls to improve young workers rights and the pay of young workers. Internships were particularly focused on and there were several calls to **ban unpaid internships and traineeships**. Stronger legislation around workplace protection, minimum or living wages, equality and inclusion were suggested as a method of doing this, as well as better monitoring of the contracts offered to young people.

There was widespread support for **youth participation in the development of labour policies** such as through collaboration with National Youth Councils or youth checks, whilst the European Working group highlighted the importance of common EU policies and regulations for employers. The role of youth civil society organisation focused on workers rights was called for by some, but there was a sense that this was something other than the traditional trade union model. Trade unions were only mentioned by the Latvian National Working Group Report which commented they were seen as a "ghost of the soviet union" by young people. 11% of young people replied to a national survey conducted by the French working group to indicate the end of collective sense amongst workers was considered a threat.

In addition to this there was said to be a need for young people to receive more **education and information from schools** or other sources about their workers rights and how to protect them, particualrly around discrimination.

Many respondents also stated they would welcome better preparation at school for how to deal with cases of unequal treatment. The school should also educate young people better on assertiveness, ability to express opinions, being tolerant and ability to deal with their own mistakes. It would also be useful to educate young people about their labor rights.

<div align="right">Czech Republic Working Group Report</div>

Finally there was a sense that companies should do more to **make workplaces more youth friendly or accessible** to young people (for instance, by providing mentors or youth representatives), and some working groups' reports identified ideas that employment of young people be incentivised by the state.

Ending discrimination and inequality in work

Discrimination and inequality in the workplace was seemingly both **a common experience** and a serious concern for young people who participated in the dialogue. Some commented that, combined with precarious temporary work positions, it significantly increased vulnerability of young employees who could have their work ended more easily.

Within working groups' reports it was described as occurring in three interlinked ways. Firstly, **age discrimination** directed towards young people. Here concerns were expressed that young people were routinely used as a cheaper workforce to undertake lower quality jobs. Frequently denied opportunities in favour of older workers and then trapped in a situation where they were unable to gain the experience required to move forward.

Secondly, some working groups reported young people's concerns about **nepotism and inequality**. For them, access to job opportunities was too reliant on having networks and connections, meaning those without these networks, especially young people from minority backgrounds, were often excluded.

More concerning, there was widespread concern and evidence of **discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics** such as disability, gender, ethnicity, as well as other factors such as chronic illness. Many working groups who had consulted specifically with marginalised groups, or analysed differences between survey responses identified this as an issue.

Young Roma participants of our offline consultations have articulated discrimination as one of the key obstacles in accessing work. The majority of the participants of our three Roma-majority groups have expressed their will to move out of the country once they become legally responsible for themselves.

Slovakia National Working Group Report

In our local events some of the young people described they feel discrimination because of ethnicity due to not having a majority Swedish name or not being white. This issue was mostly described by young Muslim women.

Swedish National Working Group Report

Young people with a bi-cultural background often feel that they have to work twice as hard to get the same job as their white peers. When they get the job, they often face prejudices, discrimination and even bullying at work. One participant shared her story of being bullied because of her headscarf. She was told in her face, multiple times, that she looked stupid.

Netherlands National Working Group Report

There were quite a few individuals that took part in our consultation, who considered themselves to have a disability and they said they have never come across someone in a senior position with a disability. They said they felt very ignored because a lot of talk is about females or people from [ethinic minority] backgrounds at senior board positions – yet young people with disabilities dream of just finding a job, let alone being at a senior board position.

UK National Working Group Report

A young person identifying as transgender pointed out that this person is barely treated like a human being by employers.

German National Working Group Report

Although there was widespread support for tackling discrimination, few concrete solutions were proposed. Some working groups reported that young people found it challenging to provide specific examples of how to reduce discrimination. Suggestions included:

- Dedicated **support for young people from marginalised groups** as they transition from education to employment, by improving links between schools and employers to enable the young people to build better networks, or providing additional youth information and non-educational activities around accessing work.

- **Changes to recruitment processes** to base on skills rather than experience, encouraged anonymous applications or used positive discrimination and diversity quotas.

- Incentivising, sanctioning and awareness raising **measures with companies** to get them to take more responsibility for inclusion. For instance, by offering financial incentives to employ people from marginalised backgrounds, educational programmes around inclusion for companies, or stronger sanctions for employers and employers who discriminate, as well as better mechanisms for young people to report abuse.

Education and the future of work

In line with the guiding questions developed from the Romanian Presidency Youth Conference, the role of education, both formal and nonformal, in relation to the future of work, was a topic explored through the Youth Dialogue. A qualitative analysis of the working group reports is shown in this section.

By considering the link between education and work, the dialogue focused on education as a tool for preparing young people from the world of work. Whilst this is an important part of education, it is important to start by highlighting that the previous cycle of dialogue showed young people's view of education as something having a much broader purpose as shown by the Youth Goal on Quality Education for all. A focus on the links between education and employment in this cycle simply reflected the theme of the consultation rather than a shift in attitude amongst young people.

The role of schools and formal education

The need to modernise school[1] curriculums to ensure they delivered the skills needed for the labour market was a strong message from the dialogue.

Many young people have outlined a strong frustration that curriculum and skills that young people are learning now in schools is not what the labour market will demand of them. This is combined with a great deal of uncertainty about what will be demanded, even if youngsters have a feeling about what skills and knowledge they should have, they don't see how to do it as they have an evident feeling that "schools are not changing as quickly as the world around them".

Latvian National Working Group Report

A common theme was that formal educational institutions focus on **theoretical knowledge, and outdated topics** did not leave young people with the competencies and practical skills needed for employment. There was said to be a need to "create forward-looking programmes to prepare young people for the labour market/occupations of the future".

The role of schools and other formal education institutions in ensuring young people could successfully transition to work was said to comprise a number of elements:

● Equipping young people with the **practical, vocational and soft skills** that are relevant to the labour market.

● Facilitating **access to blended work and learning opportunities** such as internships, apprenticeships, work experience and a combined employer–educator programme of opportunities.

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[1]In general, working group reports tended to focus on schools more than universities or tertiary education systems, but not exclusively so. It can be assumed that school refers to secondary education unless otherwise stated.

- Providing **career orientation and guidance,** such as the opportunity to get to try out different professions, extensive work placements, information days, as well as access to careers advisors and support finding and applying for work.

- Providing **support for young entrepreneurs** such as financial management and advice on setting up companies. Although this function was much less emphasised than others.

There was a sense that the current system focused too much on "skills necessary for one specific job, rather than gaining skills that can be applied in an ever-changing job market". The competencies that were identified as valuable for the future of work and necessary to teach in schools were generally consistent across all reports that discussed them:

- **Foreign languages** – particularly key business languages such as English, Chinese and German.

- **Communication and soft skills** – such as public speaking, teamwork, self-management, leadership, autonomy, empathy and emotional intelligence.

- **Financial literacy and other life skills** – such as understanding tax, mortgages, finding accommodation. There was a sense this was particularly important in uncertain or changing economic circumstances.

- **Digital competencies** – such as knowledge of information and communication technologies, engineering, robotics, cyber security, and artificial intelligence. This was said to require better access to technology in schools.

Lesser mentioned in working group reports but still present were education on employment rights, entrepreneurship and business skill, and political or civic education.

To deliver the sort of education described, many reports commented that a **change in the methods used within schools and other institutions** was needed. There was a consistent message that schools needed to focus more on the practical dimensions of learning and applying skills, placing less emphasis on theory and memorisation. A common message was that non-formal education methods should be introduced in schools – this is explored in more detail elsewhere in this report.

Many working group reports noted the need for much **greater flexibility within formal educational institutions**. It was said this was needed to enable a young person to pursue their own choice of a blend of non-formal activities, formal education and employment which could help them on their career path. Specific ideas included customised timetables, time off to access employment, and modular curricular or self-led project weeks.

Some working groups also heard from young people with chronic illness and disability that increased flexibility was needed to accommodate their needs. Both to better enable time to access medical treatment and to accommodate absence due to periods of illness.

Blending work and learning

The need for better links between schools and employers was emphasised. This was said to increase possibilities for young people to combine studies with work and ensure correlations between the current curriculum and the skills employers need. It was said greater cooperation between employers and educational institutes could enable:

- Access to **better information about companies'** expectations for students.

- Direct **contacts and links** between representatives of companies and students, enabling students to build networks and hear the positive and negative aspects of different fields of work.

- Access to **relevant vocational training** that fitted in with the local economy.

- Promotion of **work-based learning** such as internships, traineeships or apprenticeships, and part-time jobs alongside studies.

Overall there was an underlying sense of a call for schools to enable young people to access a hybrid blend of education and employment. This meant a school environment which focused on practical and vocational skills, and was highly customisable based on career path, combined with extensive work-based learning such as internships, work placement, etc. However, some concern was expressed that education should not become exclusively for the purpose of training workers.

In general there was a strong call for increased access to **apprenticeships, internships and other forms of learning from work**. Many working group reports noted calls for an end to unpaid internships, or financial support for those unable to undertake them. Some called for mandatory internships at school or university level. Others noted the need to improve access to internship through accessible transport in rural areas, and better promotion of them to young people, such as through online platforms or encouraging more companies to offer them.

The need for **internships or other work-based learning** that suited young people in particularly vulnerable situations was highlighted. Young people interviewed in prisons and closed youth care facilities identified particular problems with being unable to access such opportunities as well as being offered lower level vocational qualifications than those on offer in mainstream education, creating barriers to accessing university education.

Similarly, consultation with **young people with chronic diseases or physical disabilities** highlighted the need for additional support during internships or similar opportunities, particularly around balancing attendance against medical care and periods of illness. Additional mentorship from school, and good communication between school, the young person and the employer, was said to be needed.

The role of career orientation and guidance

Considering careers guidance and access to information about careers, three general settings when this should be delivered were identified across the dialogues. In general, the main emphasis was within schools and across formal education as a whole. However, the

role of online platforms was also discussed, although concerns were raised about the young people who had more limited access to the internet, such as those in rural areas and those on youth care, and some working groups reported very limited enthusiasm from young people for them. Finally it was also said that youth information centres and youth workers had a role to play, although this was talked of in broader terms, as part of a role helping young people find their place in society (see the section on youth work for more details on this).

Within the dialogues young people identified the need for career guidance to be independent and impartial, as well as in sync with the labour market. Three dimensions of careers guidance could be seen in the dialogues.

- Providing **information about jobs available**, and educational choices (including non-formal education).

- Providing **support on how to apply for work** – such as guidance on CV or motivation letter writing, interview training, advice on where to search for work or taxes and employment rights.

- Provision of more **in-depth mentoring and guidance** to help "find your path" – this was said to be particularly important for young people who were excluded, such as those in prison, young people in NEET situations, or young people with disabilities who expressed that they wanted support from social workers, during the transition to employment.

In the working group reports there was some division over the extent to which young people already had access to this sort careers orientation and support, and the importance of ensuring it is accessed by young people who are already excluded was said to be important. This confirms the finding from the survey (see Figure 1) that young people have very mixed experiences relating to young people's access to quality information and adequate support mechanisms, and suggests this might vary significantly by country.

The role of non-formal education

There was a general consensus among the reports that non-formal education had a significant role to play in enabling young people to develop the skills needed for future forms of work. Some also highlighted that non-formal education could be a lifelong learning approach, and not specific to youth but others raised concerns that training for work was not the purpose of non-formal education A number of working groups consulted with specific groups of young people, such as those in rural areas, youth care facilities and prisons, who identified that their access to non-formal education was very limited, and there were concerns about the financial barriers to accessing non-formal education from some.

In terms of which **skills non-formal education could equip young people with** that are relevant to the future of work, as might be expected there was an emphasis on soft skills. This included team work, leadership, creativity, critical thinking, self-management and communication skills such as public speaking. In addition to this, the language skills gained, particularly from mobility projects and international opportunities, were highlighted.

A number of reports went on to highlight the importance of non-formal education equipping young people with the **ability to manage their mental health** and wellbeing and cope with issues such as mental health and anxiety. These were seen by some to be directly connected to the world of work, and therefore non-formal education could help young people develop their resilience needed to "resist the external pressures that young people face in the modern labour market". Several reports highlighted increasing pressure and anxiety on young people to balance a large amount of non-formal education activities, formal education, part-time jobs and hobbies, in order to ensure that they did not have gaps on their CV.

The role that non-formal education could play more directly in relation to the future of work was also noted. This was talked about in two ways: firstly, in terms of providing support to **access employment**, such as with CV writing and interview skills; and secondly, in terms of providing support around **entrepreneurship**, such as financial management and learning how to "do business".

Taking into account the important role it was felt non-formal education could play for equipping young people with skills for the future of work, many reports highlighted the importance of **improving recognition of non-formal education and the skills gained.** However, what was meant by "recognition" in detail was unclear. The difference between recognising taking part in an activity, and gaining a competency from this activity was not always made clear.

As indicated in the survey (see Figure 1) young people have very different experiences on the extent to which they believe non-formal education is recognised by employers. As a result, working groups reported very differing messages suggesting this **varies by country**.

Overall, part of the call for recognition seemed to be about promoting the value of non-formal education in comparison to formal education, and **increasing the political emphasis on non-formal education** within the education system as a whole. Some reports highlighted the way the current disparity impacted young people's perceptions of non-formal education.

This often creates a vicious circle whereby on the one hand both young people and employers agree about the importance of the skills gained through non-formal education sectors such as youth work, but on the other hand they still both give much more weight and importance for the formal education achievements. The skills gained from non-formal educational activities are seen as an addition to the achievement in formal education rather than an achievement on their own merit. This ultimately discourages young people from applying and committing themselves to non-formal education as they would know beforehand that when they would be looking for employment the formal education results take priority.

<div align="right">Maltese Working Group Report</div>

Ideas about how recognition can be achieved were generally limited, but they included use of legislation, development of standards and certification, and offering support for young people to help them articulate or identify their non-formal education experiences.

Bridging the gap between non-formal and formal education

As well as how the non-formal and formal education system could be improved, several working group reports focused on the idea of how they could better work together to compliment each other. For some, the extent to which young people wanted non-formal education to be brought into schools and universities was close to a blending of the two systems, and it was important to build recognition that both approaches had strengths and weaknesses and could therefore complement each other.

Ideas included reducing school hours to allow more access to non-formal education outside of school, as well as blending the school curriculum so it jointly delivered non-formal education and formal education methods. For some, bridging this gap meant closer collaboration between youth organisation or student organisations and schools, in order to enable youth organisation to deliver educational programmes within school settings.

Beyond the above points, an issue coming up from the discussions is not only how to improve, but also how to bridge these two types of systems. Formal education systems shouldn't opt-in but should be developed in such a way that they can meaningfully open up towards [youth] organizations and non-formal education. Such actions are happening in some member states, but there is a need to bring these practices in European level and at the same time, not have discussion between member states only, but also other stakeholders (students, schools, teachers, CSOs, Youth Organisations, etc…). That can provide more opportunities and higher quality when preparing young people for the future of work.

European Working Group Report

It was also noted that this collaboration between formal and non-formal sectors might also need to be a three-way collaboration with employers as well. The European Working group, in particular, suggested a number of areas EU institutions could play a role in relation to developing non-formal and formal education which supported the ideas put forward in the national working group reports. This included

- **Fostering cooperation** between all education sectors and the labour market around the theme of transition from education to work.

- **Promote guidance and training** in all education sectors in cooperation with the labour market, involving the support of EU and public institutions.

- Developing EU support mechanisms to **integrate formal and non-formal education**.

- Establish a dialogue with member states in order to agree on a **common framework of recognition** of non-formal skills and competencies.

- Development of **quality and assurance tools** for programmes such as Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps.

Part IV: Quality youth work for all

What do young people want from youth workers and youth work?

What should youth workers focus on doing?

The youth dialogue questionnaire asked participants what they thought the most important things for youth workers to prioritise doing when working with young people were, based on the youth workers competencies in the 'European Training Strategy: A Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally'. The results are shown in this section.

All in all, young people consider youth work to be a complex service bringing together many priorities, ranking all of them rather high, and indicate the EU is broadly on the right track in relation to competencies of youth workers.

Interestingly, some subgroups of young people stress learning opportunities while others put more emphasis on aspects supporting active participation of young people in society. Alongside this the working group reports emphasised young people's wishes to continually make youth work more inclusive and more participatory.

Figure 1: Young people's priorities for youth workers focus

WHAT SHOULD YOUTH WORKERS FOCUS ON DOING?

	High priority	4	3	2	Low priority
Building positive, non-judgemental and supportive relationships with young people.	55.8%	27.6%	11.0%		
Supporting young people to find the role they want in their community and society.	53.3%	28.4%	12.0%		
Supporting collaboration and understanding between people from different cultural contexts and backgrounds.	51.5%	26.8%	13.6%		
Supporting and enabling young people to voice their needs and opinions to others and speaking up on behalf of young people.	49.8%	28.0%	13.4%	5.7%	
Enabling young people to make positive changes in their community.	49.0%	26.7%	12.7%	6.7%	
Designing and creating activities and projects with young people.	48.5%	31.6%	13.1%		
Providing and supporting learning opportunities for young people.	46.5%	30.4%	16.8%	4.3%	

Young people were subsequently also asked about their priorities in youth work, as shown in Figure 1. Apparently, youth work is perceived as a very complex set of services by young

people as the proportion of high agreement ranges from 77% to 83% in all presented statements.

When it comes to gender differences, all of the listed priorities are highly important to females (see Figure 2). At the same time, young people of other genders exhibit much lower support to the priority area of creating understanding between people from different backgrounds; while scoring high, together with females. in supporting the priority areas of learning opportunities by youth work, as well as creating opportunities to voice opinions and needs of the young people.

Figure 2: Differences in youth work-related statements, mean values according to gender (1 = Low priority; 5 = High priority).

WHAT SHOULD YOUTH WORKERS FOCUS ON DOING?

Statement	Young people of other genders	Females	Males	Sample mean value
Building positive, non-judgemental and supportive relationships with young people.	4.21	4.43	4.13	4.32
Supporting young people to find the role they want in their community and society.	4.03	4.34	4.14	4.26
Designing and creating activities and projects with young people.	3.98	4.26	4.07	4.19
Supporting collaboration and understanding between people from different cultural contexts and backgrounds.	3.74	4.30	3.95	4.18
Supporting and enabling young people to voice their needs and opinions to others and speaking up on behalf of young people.	4.21	4.25	4.00	4.16
Providing and supporting learning opportunities for young people.	4.19	4.23	4.02	4.15
Enabling young people to make positive changes in their community.	3.82	4.15	3.97	4.08

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.17 are statistically significant.

Figure 3 shows that in the case of employment status, all groups of young people have comparable priorities when it comes to youth work. **Young people who are not working** are exhibiting slightly higher support for all listed priorities, while **young people who work full time** emphasise to a slightly higher extent active participation of young people (both in terms of bringing change to the community and in voicing the opinions of young people).

Figure 3: Differences in youth work-related statements, mean values according to employment status (1 = Low priority; 5 = High priority).

WHAT SHOULD YOUTH WORKERS FOCUS ON DOING?
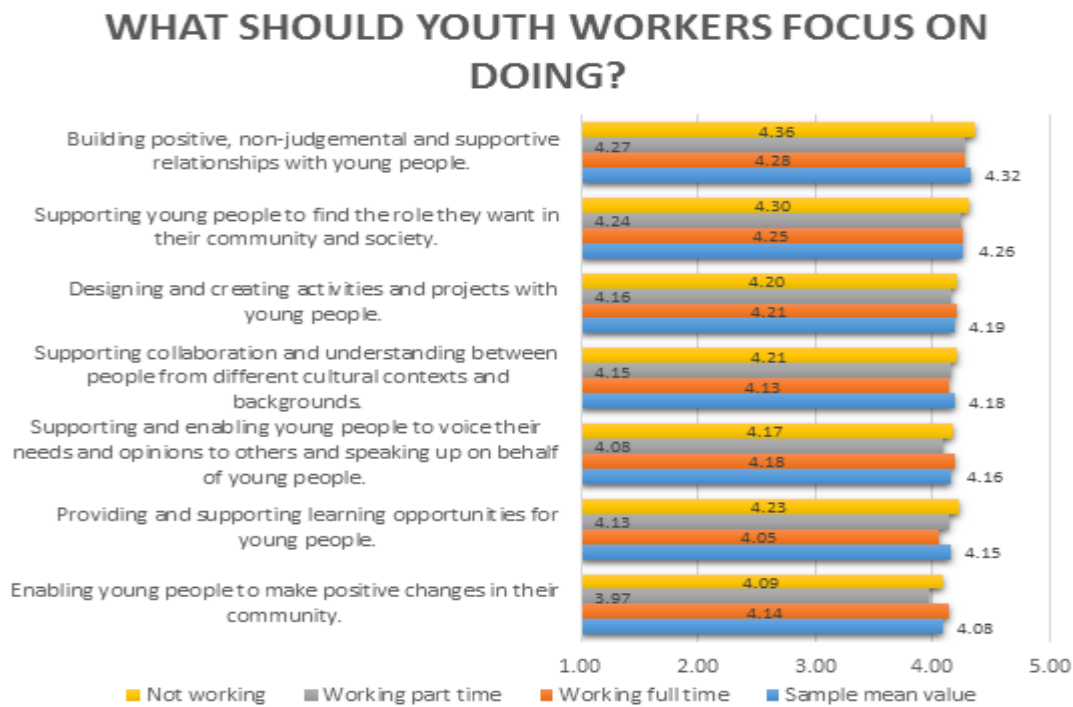
Note: All mean differences higher than 0.05 are statistically significant.

Figure 4: Differences in youth work-related statements, mean values according to educational level (1 = Low priority; 5 = High priority)

WHAT SHOULD YOUTH WORKERS FOCUS ON DOING?
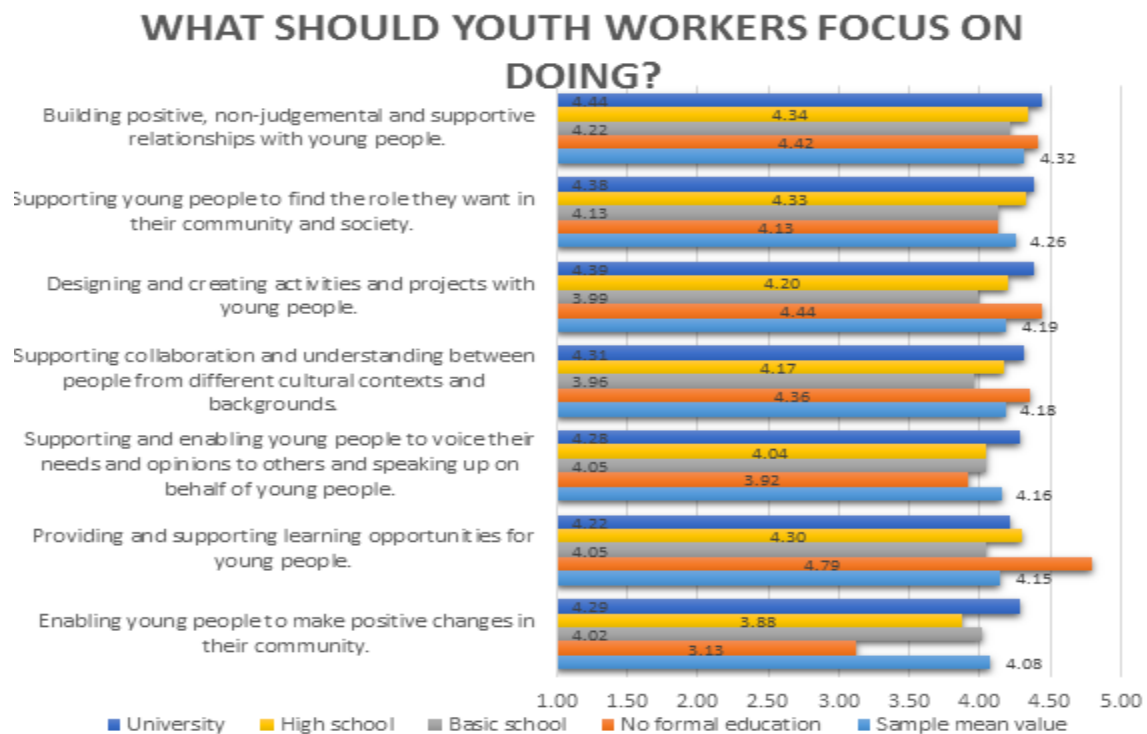
Note: All mean differences higher than 0.15 are statistically significant.

Interesting results wee found during analysis of young people with different educational attainments, shown in Figure 4. **University degree holders** exhibit high emphasis across all

listed priorities while **young people with no formal education** emphasise creation of learning opportunities as the most important priority on the list and showing limited support for active participation-related statements (again, both in terms of bringing change to the community and in voicing the opinions of young people).

Figure 5: Differences in youth work-related statements, mean values according to educational status (1 = Low priority; 5 = High priority).

WHAT SHOULD YOUTH WORKERS FOCUS ON DOING?

Statement	No longer in education	In part time education	In full time education	Sample mean value
Building positive, non-judgemental and supportive relationships with young people.	4.35	4.30	4.32	4.32
Supporting young people to find the role they want in their community and society.	4.29	4.34	4.24	4.26
Designing and creating activities and projects with young people.	4.28	4.15	4.16	4.19
Supporting collaboration and understanding between people from different cultural contexts and…	4.20	4.21	4.14	4.18
Supporting and enabling young people to voice their needs and opinions to others and speaking up on…	4.23	4.23	4.11	4.16
Providing and supporting learning opportunities for young people.	4.12	4.20	4.17	4.15
Enabling young people to make positive changes in their community.	4.14	4.22	4.01	4.08

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.06 are statistically significant.

Educational status (i.e. whether the young people are in full-time, part-time or in no education; see Figure 5) does not seem to have a profound impact on youth work priorities of young people, with all of the differentiated groups exhibiting comparable emphasis in all listed priorities.

Similarly to young people with no education, in **young people with fewer opportunities** (see Figure 6) a larger emphasis for creation of learning opportunities and a lower emphasis in case of active participation-related statements (again, both in terms of bringing change to the community and in voicing the opinions of young people) can be seen, in comparison to young people from majority backgrounds.

Figure 6: Differences in youth work-related statements, mean values according to socio-economic status (1 = Low priority; 5 = High priority).

WHAT SHOULD YOUTH WORKERS FOCUS ON DOING?

Statement	Young people from majority backgrounds	Young people with fewer opportunities	Sample mean value
Building positive, non-judgemental and supportive relationships with young people.	4.27	4.39	4.32
Supporting young people to find the role they want in their community and society.	4.33	4.30	4.26
Designing and creating activities and projects with young people.	4.21	4.16	4.19
Supporting collaboration and understanding between people from different cultural contexts and backgrounds.	4.17	4.12	4.18
Supporting and enabling young people to voice their needs and opinions to others and speaking up on behalf of young people.	4.16	4.00	4.16
Providing and supporting learning opportunities for young people.	4.23	4.37	4.15
Enabling young people to make positive changes in their community.	4.16	3.68	4.08

- ■ Young people from majority backgrounds ■ Young people with fewer opportunities
- ■ Sample mean value

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.04 are statistically significant.

Figure 7: Differences in youth work-related statements, mean values according to age groups (1 = Low priority; 5 = High priority).
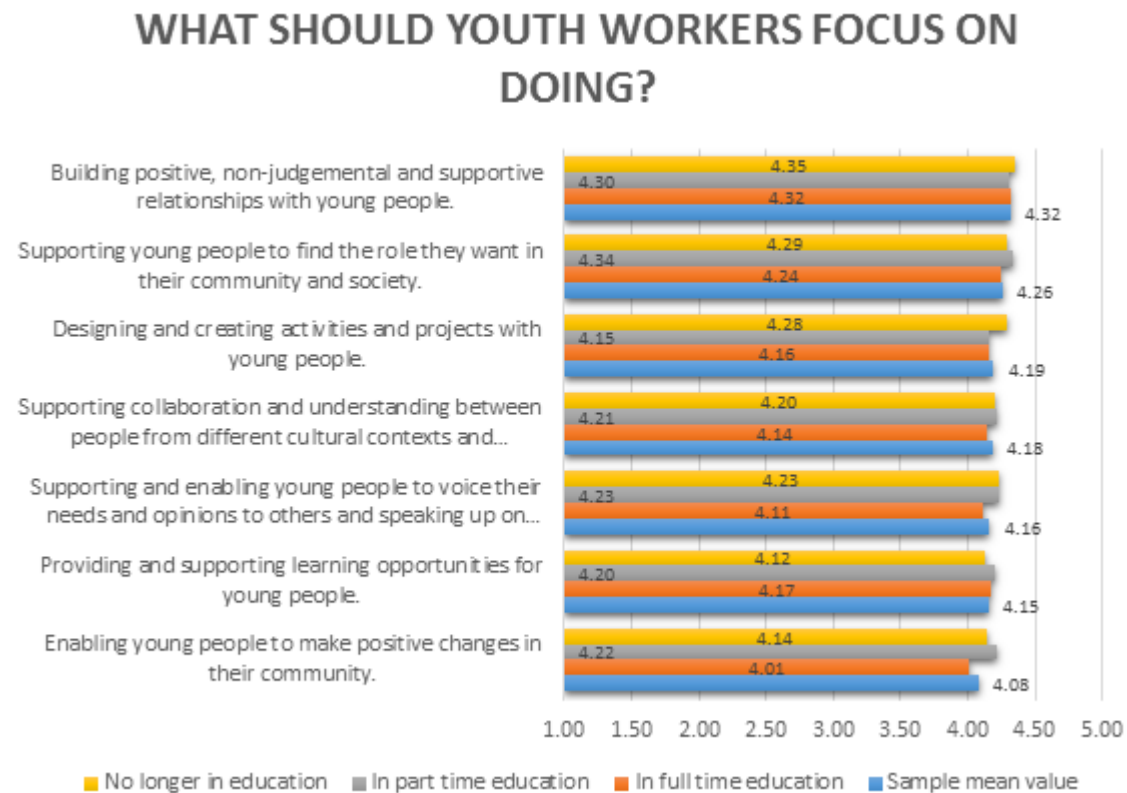
WHAT SHOULD YOUTH WORKERS FOCUS ON DOING?

Statement	30-34 year olds	25-29 year olds	20-24 year olds	15-19 year olds	11-14 year olds	Sample mean value
Building positive, non-judgemental and supportive relationships with young people.	4.42	4.37	4.26	4.30	4.30	4.32
Supporting young people to find the role they want in their community and society.	4.42	4.28	4.32	4.20	4.12	4.26
Designing and creating activities and projects with young people.	4.37	4.25	4.29	4.08	4.07	4.19
Supporting collaboration and understanding between people from different cultural contexts and backgrounds.	4.38	4.22	4.24	4.11	3.89	4.18
Supporting and enabling young people to voice their needs and opinions to others and speaking up on behalf of young people.	4.27	4.21	4.27	4.01	4.14	4.16
Providing and supporting learning opportunities for young people.	4.23	4.06	4.15	4.17	4.37	4.15
Enabling young people to make positive changes in their community.	4.39	4.28	4.20	3.81	4.14	4.08

- ■ 30-34 year olds ■ 25-29 year olds ■ 20-24 year olds
- ■ 15-19 year olds ■ 11-14 year olds ■ Sample mean value

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.10 are statistically significant. Age groups are aligned with the Eurostat age group methodology.

While some changes are visible in the case of age groups, the most profound and visible trend is a rather high emphasis for all listed priorities in the oldest age group above 30 years of age (see Figure 7). Interestingly, it is **young people 11–14 years of age** who emphasise the creation of learning opportunities the most and, on the other hand, **15–19 year olds** seem to have the least emphasis on active participation of young people (again, both in terms of bringing change to the community and in voicing the opinions of young people).

Figure 8 provides an interesting insight into the priorities of those young people with and those without a youth work experience. Young people with youth work experience tend to put more emphasis on most of the listed priorities, stressing the active participation of young people (again, both in terms of bringing change to the community and in voicing the opinions of young people); on the other hand those without any youth work experience see youth work more as a provider of learning opportunities.

Figure 8: Differences in youth work-related statements, mean values according to experience with youth work (1 = Low priority; 5 = High priority).
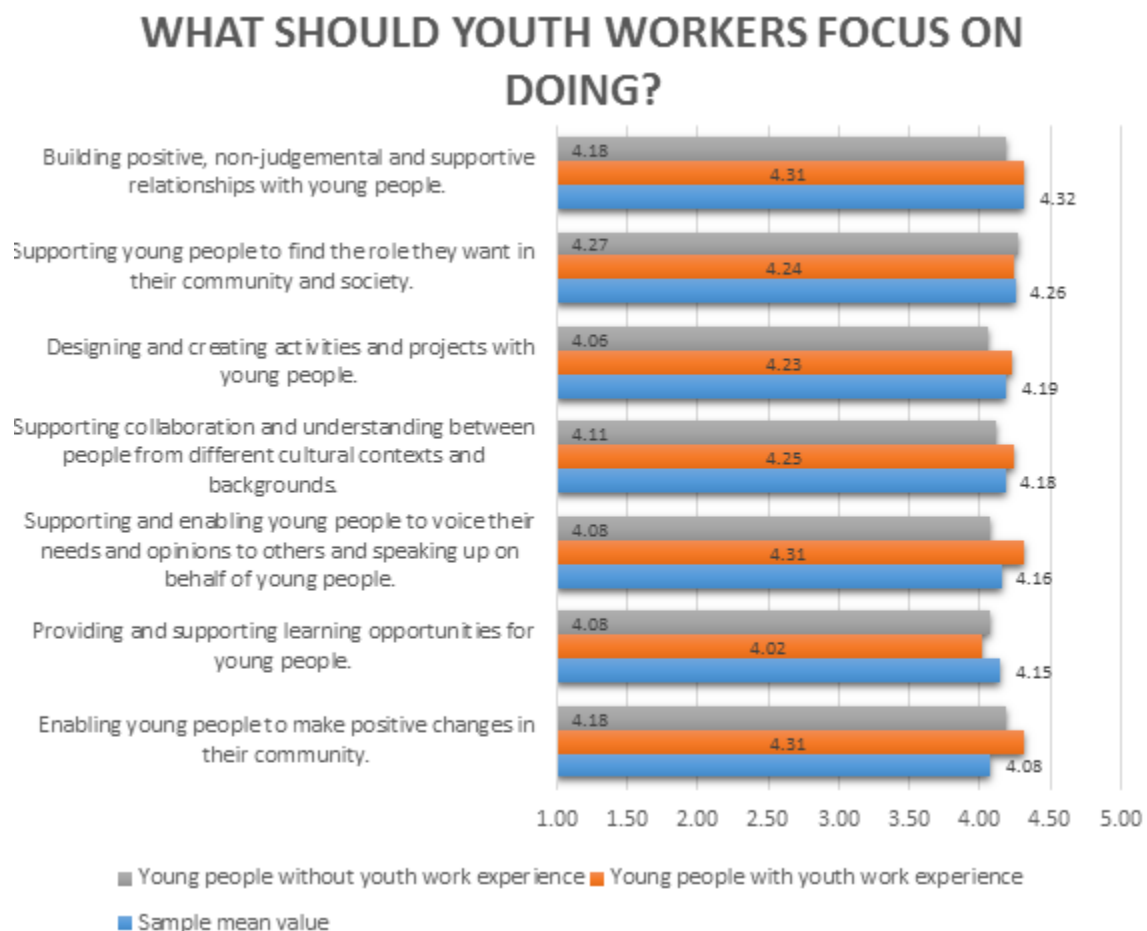
Note: All mean differences higher than 0.04 are statistically significant.

Which competencies do youth workers need?

Within the dialogues young people identified a range of competences necessary for a youth worker. The were reported in the working group reports. Qualitative analysis of this is shown in this section.

Values-based competencies: "meeting young people at eye level"

Within the dialogues a consistent set of values for youth workers were discussed. Much of this stems from the idea that a youth worker should be able to take young people at equal level, and "meet them at eye level" as several reports referred to it. This was said to mean being

- **Non-judgmental** – not judging people based on background, appearance, and also mistakes they had or might make.

- **Being open to tolerant and respectful of difference** – this meant being open to new ideas, different world views, diverse opinions, and recognising that young people were neither a homogenous group, nor defined by their background.

- **Showing empathy, kindness, compassion and selflessness**.

- Being **ethical and trustworthy**, and acting with **integrity and authenticity**.

Competencies to support youth participation

Competencies to support youth participation was a dominant theme within dialogues. There were a number of different dimensions related to this.

Firstly, being able to **communicate the possibility of participation,** and convince young people that their voices are heard and listened to. Part of this included inspiring young people to speak up, potentially by being a role model for this.

Next, the ability to be able to **prepare young people for participation** was stressed. This included being able to facilitate young people's communication skills, confidence and ability to express themselves. However, in addition it meant being able to pass on **knowledge of decision-making systems, political processes and policy**. Thus a key competency for a youth worker was a high knowledge of these things. This meant not just knowledge of these systems but the **skills and ability to undertake advocacy** within them was necessary. Including both being able to advocate for young people or to enable young people to engage in advocacy themselves.

Finally, the ability to **design and create activities and projects *with* young people** was identified as a necessary competency. This meant having the skills to enable young people to design and implement their own project as well as the ability to involve young people and work collaboratively with them on a day-to-day basis throughout all youth work activities. Thus the skills to design and implement processes for participative decision making within a youth project or programme were required of youth workers.

Enabling the ability to communicate with young people and a positive experience of participation: enabling young people to develop their own responsibility and later take on an active role in shaping society; encouraging commitment, promoting tolerance and political interest; stimulating performance instead of pressure to perform.

<div align="right">Austrian National Working Group Report</div>

Supporting young people in order to help them express their opinions and needs in front of others – to be the voice of young people – comes second as a trend for good quality youth work. 347 of respondents strongly support this claim. This tendency is resulting mainly from the strong post-communist influence, under which young people, especially those in small villages, do not have the courage to stand up and express their views and desires.

<div align="right">Bulgarian National Working Group Report</div>

There was some tension reported over the role of youth leaders and youth workers; youth workers enabling young people to act as leaders was on the one hand supporting participation, but on the other hand challenging for professionalisation and quality assurance of youth work.

Competencies to support social inclusion and non-discrimination

Another common theme was the need for youth workers to challenge dicrimination rather than reproduce or permit it. This was said to require:

- Knowledge and **sensitivity of different backgrounds and cultures.**

- Knowledge and understanding of the **needs of young people from marginalised or excluded backgrounds.**

- **Open mindedness and tolerance** to diversity opinions.

- The **ability to promote cooperation between young people** from different backgrounds and bring different cultures together.

- **Knowledge of specialist services** and the ability to connect young people to them (e.g. mental health support services).

Many working group reports referred in a general sense to youth workers needing the skills to work with young people from excluded backgrounds; however, it was not always clear how those skills might be different from working with young people as a whole. Some reports, however, explored the needs of specific marginalised groups in detail and how that related to youth worker roles:

Young people in prison do not know and do not understand what youth work is and how they could benefit from it. When trainers explained what it is, they said that youth workers should reach young people with fewer opportunities in the most remote and deprived areas. Young people in prison said that they didn't know any organisations outside school that could have given them the opportunity to participate. If they had known it, they would have tried to join the association and maybe they would have been helped and they wouldn't have ended up in prison. Youth organisations and youth workers should offer opportunities for training,

guidance, support, orientation to give young people the chance to be included in society after prison. They want to be supported by youth workers to give back to the society what they learned during their experience in prison and start a new life.

<div align="right">Italian National Working Group Report</div>

Competencies in non-formal education methods

One consistent message was the importance of youth workers having the competencies to support non-formal education programmes and facilitate the learning of young people. This included:

- The competency to **facilitate and understand group work** as well as create team building processes and team dynamics amongst young people.

- The competency to **design and use creative, varied and interactive, non-formal education methods**.

- The ability to **assess learning needs** of individuals and develop non-formal education programmes and methods in responses to this.

- The competency to **support volunteer**s and create rewarding volunteering activities.

Facilitation of young people's learning was seen as a key part of the youth work role, enabling young people to develop competencies such as communication skills, leadership and teamwork competencies, conflict resolution abilities, tolerance, self-determination, confidence and mental health and wellbeing self-care.

Linking to ideas about bridging the gap between non-formal and formal education elsewhere in this report, The Portguese National Working Group described this as youth workers needing "knowledge about formal education and non-formal education and act like a mediator between these two world".

Competencies in the curation of youth spaces

The idea of a youth worker as someone who would **create and maintain a safe youth friendly space** was common. Within this, the youth worker's role was ensuring youth centres and other youth spaces were safe and welcoming for young people enabling them to feel at home and feel ownership of the space. It was felt that youth workers needed the ability to:

- Create a safe space where young people feel comfortable and not under pressure.

- Cultivate a space in which young people could learn in a self-directed manner, that encouraged young people to challenge themselves in a safe way.

- Create spaces where values such as dignity, respect and tolerance were projected and maintained.

Coaching, mentoring, information and guidance competencies

The ability to provide guidance to young people was identified as important.

This was firstly giving young people information about what life options or opportunities were available to them, and secondly supporting them to think through which choices were right for them. Thus youth workers were said to need **knowledge of an incredibly wide range of opportunities, topics and issues relevant to young people** in order to present them with different choices and possibilities. This included not just educational and work opportunities, but also knowledge of a whole manner of other topics such as sexual or mental health, leisure and cultural opportunities, and political choices. In that regard the topical knowledge a youth worker was said to need was so extensive, the important message is an identified need for breadth, more than depth of knowledge.

However, as well as providing information about the opportunities and choices available to young people, the youth worker role was said to be about actively helping young people make choices, providing support and challenge, helping them find their strength, but without giving instruction or pushing a certain expectation. Thus guidance was not just about information giving but also **required competencies as a coach or mentor**.

Young people in vocational training felt that the most important thing in youth work would be to gently guide young people to cross their comfort zone and gain tools for self-development. Majority of young people, however, hoped for more concrete help, such as going through CVs with a youth worker.

Finnish National Working Group Report

Competencies with digital tools

Knowledge and ability to use digital tools was frequently raised as in important youth worker competency. However, across the reports a number of different approaches and reasons for this were given. Youth workers were said to need:

- A general **understanding of the online work**, because it is now a key part of young peoples' lives.

- The competency to **use social media for publicity** in order to promote youth activities and programmes.

- The competency to **use digital tools as a method of delivering** education programmes.

- The ability to **train young people who do not have access** to digital tools in order to reduce the digital divide.

- The competency to educate and guide young people on the **risks of digitalisation** to help them navigate the digital world (e.g. cyber bullying).

Competencies in critical thinking, self awareness and flexibility

A number of working group reports identified the importance of youth workers having critical thinking and a kind of self-awareness and flexibility to continually reflect on and adapt their work.

The capacity for ongoing learning and learning from failure: youth workers consequently have a continually transforming role and any framework for education and training must embrace this and support this by both equipping youth workers with the skills to adapt and by providing structures for ongoing learning.

European Working Group Report

Communication and relationship building competencies

Communication skills were identified as a key competency for a youth worker. As well as being able to listen and communicate directly to a young person, this meant facilitating communication between young people, for instance in order to resolve conflict or create dialogue between cultures and groups.

The **ability to motivate others** was a common theme. Youth workers were described as needing to be enthusiastic, inspirational and engaging to young people. Someone who is fun with good humour and energy, as well as being a role model.

Linked to this was the **ability to build positive relationships** with young people, that were built on trust. This meant being friendly and approachable and able to form a bond or find a common ground. Some working groups identified that young people from ethnic minority backgrounds would value access to youth workers from the same background as them, in order to have common experiences.

What do we need to improve the quality of youth work? To accept young people as full-fledged people; communicate; try to get to know a young person; finding common ground with a young person.

Lithuanian National Working Group Report

General competencies

Alongside the competencies above, a number of generic competencies were identified such as leadership, teamwork abilities, planning and budgeting skills, and organisational skills.

Young people's access to quality youth work

This youth dialogue explored how young people's access to quality youth work could be promoted, and many working group reports focused on this more heavily than youth worker competencies. This section combines analysis of the levels of access to youth work that youth dialogue participants had along with a qualitative analysis of the working groups.

The survey shows that almost 70% of respondents from across the youth dialogue participants have a direct experience with youth work, as shown in Figure 9 below. This experience is comparable across all genders (see Figure 10) and is higher in university graduates than in young people of other educational attainments (see Figure 11). This experience is also slightly higher in young people who work full time than in their counterparts who either work part time or do not work at all (see Figure 12) as well as in those who are no longer in education than in those who are in part time or full time education (see Figure 13). Analysis of the age groups shows only slight and non-systematic differences (see Figure 14).

All in all, the data show a rather widespread youth work experience across all subgroups of the survey sample, hinting at a rather well-rooted culture of youth work across the EU countries. As the youth sector is strongly involved in conducting the youth dialogue survey, it should be expected that these figures substantially overrepresent the extent to which young people in general have access to youth work. However, they do indicate that **where youth work is delivered it reaches young people from a diverse range of backgrounds**.

Figure 9: Direct experience with youth work among the young people in percentages.

Have you ever had regular contact with someone who could be described as a youth worker?

30.8%   69.2%

■ Yes ■ No

Figure 10: Direct experience with youth work among the young people in mean values according to gender (1 = Yes, I have had regular contact with someone who could be described as a youth worker; 2 = No).
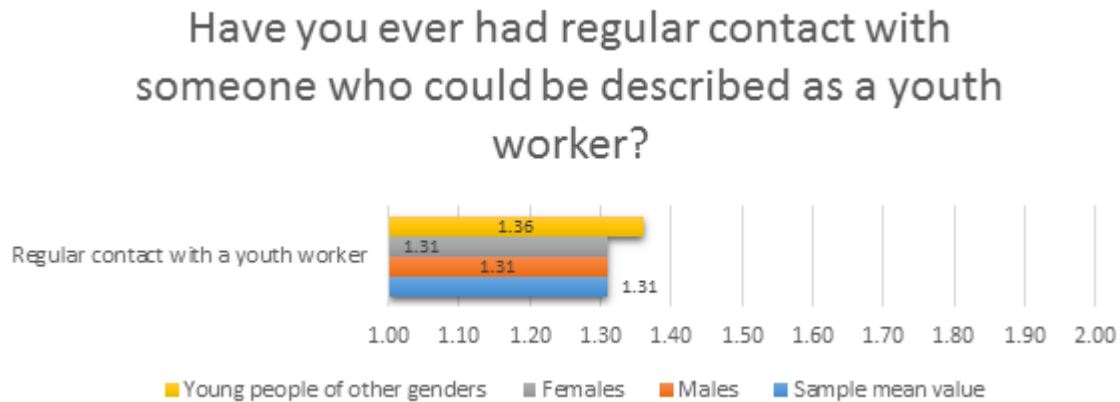
Note: No mean differences are statistically significant.

Figure 11: Direct experience with youth work among the young people in mean values according to educational level (1 = Yes, I have had regular contact with someone who could be described as a youth worker; 2 = No).
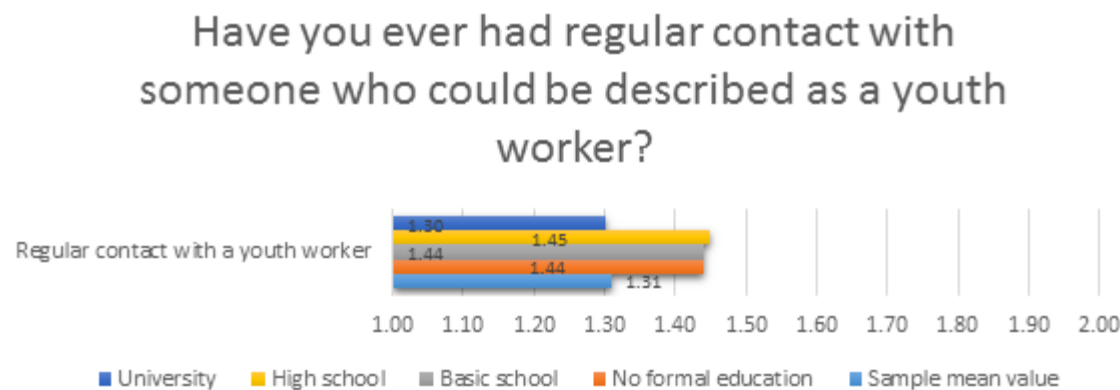
Note: All mean differences higher than 0.13 are statistically significant.

Figure 12: Direct experience with youth work among the young people in mean values according to employment status (1 = Yes, I have had regular contact with someone who could be described as a youth worker; 2 = No).
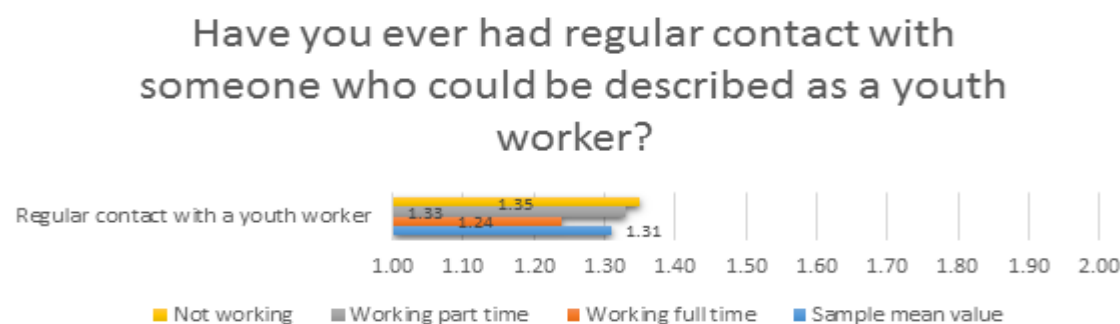
Note: All mean differences higher than 0.03 are statistically significant.

Figure 13: Direct experience with youth work among the young people in mean values according to employment status (1 = Yes, I have had regular contact with someone who could be described as a youth worker; 2 = No).

Have you ever had regular contact with someone who could be described as a youth worker?

Regular contact with a youth worker: No longer in education 1.34, In part time education 1.31, In full time education 1.30, Sample mean value 1.32

(x-axis: 1.00 1.10 1.20 1.30 1.40 1.50 1.60 1.70 1.80 1.90 2.00)

Legend: ■ No longer in education ■ In part time education ■ In full time education ■ Sample mean value
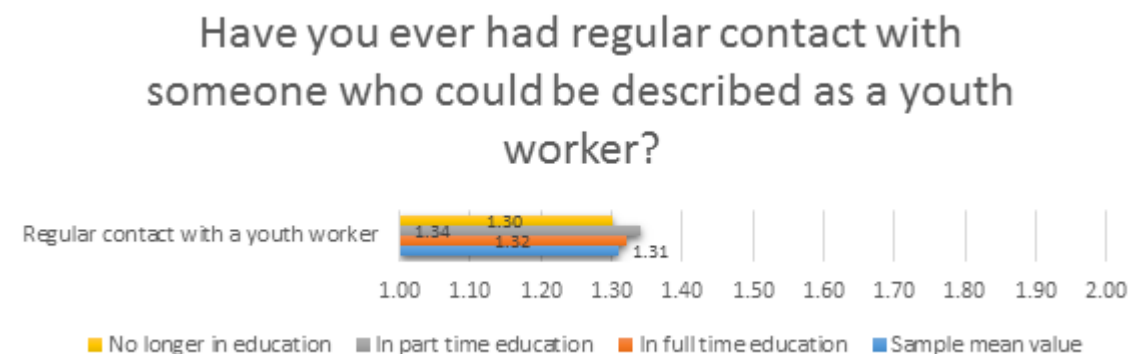
Note: All mean differences higher than 0.03 are statistically significant.
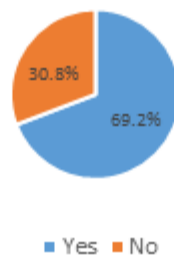
Figure 14: Direct experience with youth work among the young people in mean values according to employment status (1 = Yes, I have had regular contact with someone who could be described as a youth worker; 2 = No).

Have you ever had regular contact with someone who could be described as a youth worker?

Regular contact with a youth worker: 30-34 year olds 1.28, 25-29 year olds 1.32, 20-24 year olds 1.29, 15-19 year olds 1.33, 11-14 year olds 1.29, Sample mean value 1.31

(x-axis: 1.00 1.10 1.20 1.30 1.40 1.50 1.60 1.70 1.80 1.90 2.00)

Legend: ■ 30-34 year olds ■ 25-29 year olds ■ 20-24 year olds ■ 15-19 year olds ■ 11-14 year olds ■ Sample mean value
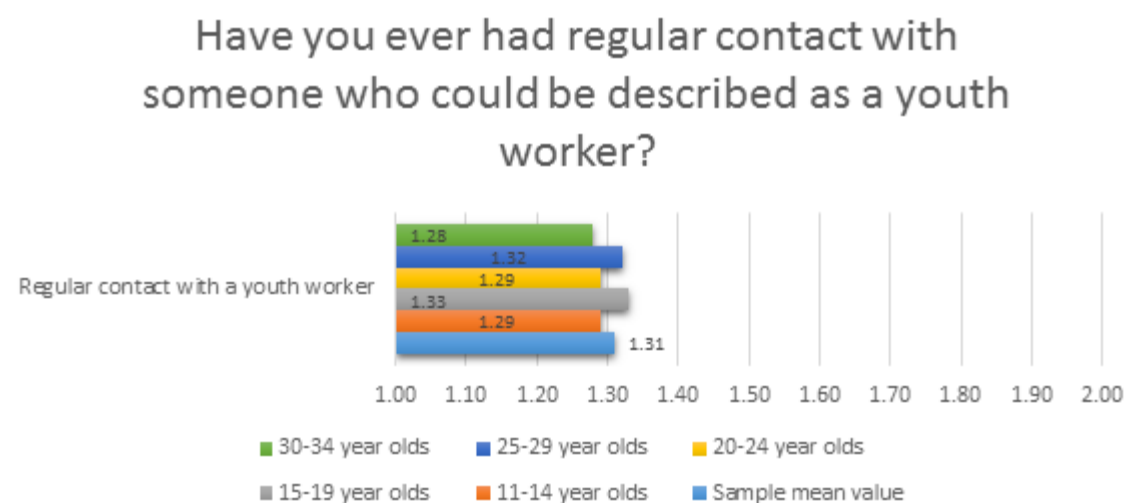
Note: All mean differences higher than 0.05 are statistically significant.

In their reports, working groups reported a general **desire to increase the access young people had to youth work**. Whilst the importance of youth work being accessible universally to all young people was stressed, there was clear support for dedicating resources for marginalised or excluded groups of young people.

One must also consider the necessity of strengthening equal access to non-formal learning and consider factors such as geographical residence, socio-economic status when discussing who and which group of people having the possibilities in being engaged in youth work.

The European Working group in particular called for EU resources to be used to firstly identify underrepresented communities and secondly provide dedicated youth work resources for them.

Unsurprisingly many reports suggested **increasing funding** for youth workers, youth projects and youth organisations as a method of increasing access. Some reports noted the importance of stability of funding, both to ensure sustainability of youth organisations and stable jobs for paid youth workers.

In their responses, young people said that youth work should be a continuous journey that is not dependent on project-specific financing, which frequently leads to successful projects being abolished after a particular financing period.

Croatian National Working Group Report

Increasing access to youth work through schools

Reflecting the messages elsewhere in this report about the calls to bridge the gap between formal and non-formal education, a number of working group reports discussed **improving the collaboration between youth work and schools**. This was seen by some as a method for increasing access to youth work.

Create a coherence between formal and non-formal education, in which teachers and experts will create a more concrete ground for youth work to be developed and to manage to be equally accessible for all.

Cypriot National Working Group Report

Concrete suggestions for this included placing youth workers in schools and universities, or ensuring that youth organisations had access to schools.

Give youth organisation more space in public education to promote their activities and get more young people involved.

European Working Group Report

Some reports also suggested that formal education hours could be reduced to allow more time for informal education and others noted that recognition and certification of youth work activities was important if it were to occur in schools.

Youth centres and youth spaces as sites of access

The importance of youth centres as spaces for accessing youth work was highlighted. Youth centres were described as places where young people could safely develop their ideas and projects, being creative and generative. A youth centre was seen as both **something that provides access to youth work** and also **a learning space which was created by youth work**.

The participants suggested that there should be an open community centre in every big city where the youngsters can find qualified youth workers if they need any kind of help.

The young people surveyed appreciate youth work (often specifically their youth centre) as a special leisure activity, whereby good opening hours and open-minded employees who accompany them and are available as discussion partners are particularly important to them. ("You can always talk to the youth centre staff." "They helped me to overcome my fear." "I like it so much because you can relax here after school." "You have everything you need here." "Everything is perfect, there is enough.")

<div align="right">Austrian National Working Group Report</div>

The importance of good facilities, longer opening hours and being accessible by public transport was highlighted.

Increasing publicity and visibility

The **low visibility of youth work** and poor publicity of youth work to young people was a clear message, and it was noted that many young people were not aware of what was on offer through youth work or how to access it.

There should be an informing campaign about this new work type because most of the youngsters do not have ideas about this.

<div align="right">Hungarian National Working Group Report</div>

The need for the youth sector to **improve the use of publicity and media campaigns** about its work was highlighted by many, and large-scale information and publicity campaigns about youth work were suggested. This was seen to be particularly helpful in countries where the concept of a youth worker was less clearly established; improving media and publicity about the role would help crystalise the concept of a youth worker.

Professionalization of youth worker image: Right now the youth worker image is really diffused and it is not the same in all the territory, neither has a recognition, regulation or specific studies of its own. Professionalizing will give tools and support to the different youth workers.

<div align="right">Spanish Working Group Report</div>

As part of this, the need to **improve the way digital tools and other mediums are used for outreach** and promotion was highlighted. However, these were tools to be used *alongside*, rather than *instead of*, traditional methods of promotion, such as distributing information about youth work through schools, libraries and other public services.

The most important thematic area concerning youth work – which was identified on the basis of conversations held with young people – is to ensure the availability of information and offer support with regard to communicating information to young people. It is important that youth workers use creative methods in communicating information to young people in order for young people to stay informed about the activities held in their place of residence, in youth centres, at school, etc

<div align="right">Croatian National Working Group Report</div>

The European Working Group report also highlighted the potential to improve the way mobility projects and youth work opportunities are communicated at European level.

Measures to develop quality

Working group reports that addressed developing quality youth work brought back answers that will be familiar to many in the youth sector. Most working groups focused this element of their national report on giving more of an institutional response to the messages they heard from young people, rather than reporting messages from young people directly.

The importance of **quality standards for youth work** and other quality assurance frameworks for youth work was highlighted by many working group reports. Some called for this to be done on a pan European basis, others on a national level.

Adopting quality standards in working with young people, including in training youth workers, regarding the implementation of as many actions for and alongside with young people, with the aim of developing new competencies (attitudes, skills and knowledge) that will ensure equal opportunities for them, including for those from marginalized backgrounds.

Romanian National Working Group Report

Various calls to **increase recognition of youth work** were made in working group reports though they were sometimes vague about what this meant in practice and how it would be achieved. A notable exception was the European Working report, who specified that member states should do more to find tools to validate the working experience and competencies of youth workers within a common European framework. Some working groups also emphasised the importance of distinguishing between professional youth work and a volunteer status within recognition processes.

The **delivery formats for training** both voluntary and professional youth workers was directly commented on within some working group reports; messages focused on the need for a blend of formal and practice-based education methods, the need for continuous professional development and the importance of common training frameworks.

The importance of access to **research, knowledge and expertise** on youth work and its impact was highlighted by a number of working groups, and the European Union and the Council of Europe's potential for coordinating this was noted.

The need for increased **coordination at local level** was commented upon by some groups, and it was felt there was a role for greater cooperation between youth actors and municipalities' schools and other actors, through local and national youth work frameworks.

The importance of developing the youth sector's use of digital tools was also highlighted by some groups, particularly the need for **digital professional standards and frameworks** around the use of technology, focusing on things such as boundaries between young people and youth workers.

Furthermore, a number of working groups reported that young people they consulted with were not familiar with the term youth work or did not have access to youth work, making conducting the consultation more challenging. Some called for **the need to define the term youth work** in more detail within their realities.

Part V: Creating opportunities for rural youth

Progress on Youth Goal #6: Moving rural youth forward

The 7th cycle youth dialogue standard survey explored the extent to which young people believed Youth Goal #6 was being implemented. This was based on the format of "In my country young people in rural areas have access to… [description of youth goal target]". Participants could then rank their response on a five point scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".

Six of the seven Youth Goal #6 targets were used, though it was necessary to simplify wording and split some targets to make functional questions. One target, relating to decentralisation of services, was not explored, as most participants would not have direct experience of this. This results in eight questions overall.

Youth Goal #6: Create conditions which enable young people to fulfill their potential in rural areas.

- Ensure appropriate infrastructure in rural areas in order to provide equitable delivery of public services, data connectivity and housing opportunities for young people.
- Ensure that sustainable, high quality jobs, accessible to young people are created in rural areas.
- Ensure the decentralisation of different activities by, for and with young people in order to support their inclusion and to benefit local communities.
- Ensure that young people in rural areas are actively participating in decision-making processes.
- Ensure equal access to high quality education for young people in rural areas.
- Establish a positive image of rural areas.
- Ensure the protection of rural traditions.

As shown in Figure 1, young people see room for improvement in implementation of most of the Youth Goal #6 targets. There is only one aspect in which the majority of young people agree the target is being implemented: valuing of rural traditions. In all other aspects, less than 50% of young people believe that the given aspects are implemented in rural areas across the EU, with the majority of young people directly disagreeing with the bottom four statements (see Figure 1). This depicts rather unfavourable living conditions in the rural areas, as seen by the young people across the EU, since the most criticised aspects of quality living consist of public services, transportation and infrastructure, and employment. The aspects of the rural areas the young people believe are the most implemented consist of valuing the rural traditions, access to housing and access to education.

Figure 1: General agreement with achievement of Youth Goal #6 targets in percentages.

IN MY COUNTRY, YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS HAVE …

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
In my country rural traditions are valued.	16.0%	35.9%	22.2%	18.4%	7.5%
… good access to housing.	14.1%	35.7%	22.1%	18.7%	9.3%
… good access to quality education.	9.9%	33.0%	19.1%	27.8%	10.2%
In my country there is a positive image of rural areas.	8.0%	20.8%	27.3%	29.6%	14.4%
… good data connectivity and high speed broadband.	7.1%	20.9%	19.1%	30.5%	22.5%
… good opportunities for quality employment.	6.4%	18.5%	19.4%	36.7%	19.0%
… good infrastructure and good public transport connection to urban areas.	4.2%	14.8%	15.1%	33.0%	32.8%
… good access to quality public services.	4.1%	19.5%	17.2%	43.0%	16.1%

Figure 2: Differences in achievement of Youth Goal #6 targets, mean values according to gender (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).

IN MY COUNTRY, YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS HAVE …

	Young people of other genders	Females	Males	Sample mean value
In my country rural traditions are valued.	3.02	3.33	3.38	3.35
… good access to housing.	2.68	3.18	3.44	3.27
… good access to quality education.	2.30	3.01	3.12	3.04
In my country there is a positive image of rural areas.	2.41	2.72	2.92	2.78
… good data connectivity and high speed broadband.	2.24	2.59	2.63	2.6
… good opportunities for quality employment.	1.89	2.48	2.73	2.57
… good access to quality public services.	2.33	2.50	2.59	2.52
… good infrastructure and good public transport connection to urban areas.	2.03	2.17	2.40	2.25

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.17 are statistically significant.

Figure 2 shows that young people of other genders generally exhibit profoundly lower confidence in the implementation of all listed aspects of quality living in rural areas and are especially sceptical of quality employment opportunities in rural areas. At the same time, males seem to be the most confident in implementation of all listed aspects of quality living in rural areas, exhibiting higher agreement rates than any other group. These results raise questions of reasons for such different levels of confidence in implementation of the listed aspects in the rural areas and of potential differences in access to the listed aspects (e.g. employment, transport, education) to young people of different genders. Differences may be caused either by structural inefficiencies, such as gender-based differences in ratios of young people possessing driving licenses which may cause certain gender groups to perceive obstacles in reaching the rural areas; or by social barriers, such as higher levels of gender-based discrimination in job interviews in rural settings, leading to a limited access to quality employment in rural areas. These differences should be further explored, and young people of different genders should be encouraged to express the reasoning behind their opinions.

Figure 3: Differences in achievement of Youth Goal #6 targets, mean values according to employment status (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).

IN MY COUNTRY, YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS HAVE ...

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.04 are statistically significant.

When it comes to employment status (see Figure 3), there are no systematic or profound differences in explored subgroups.
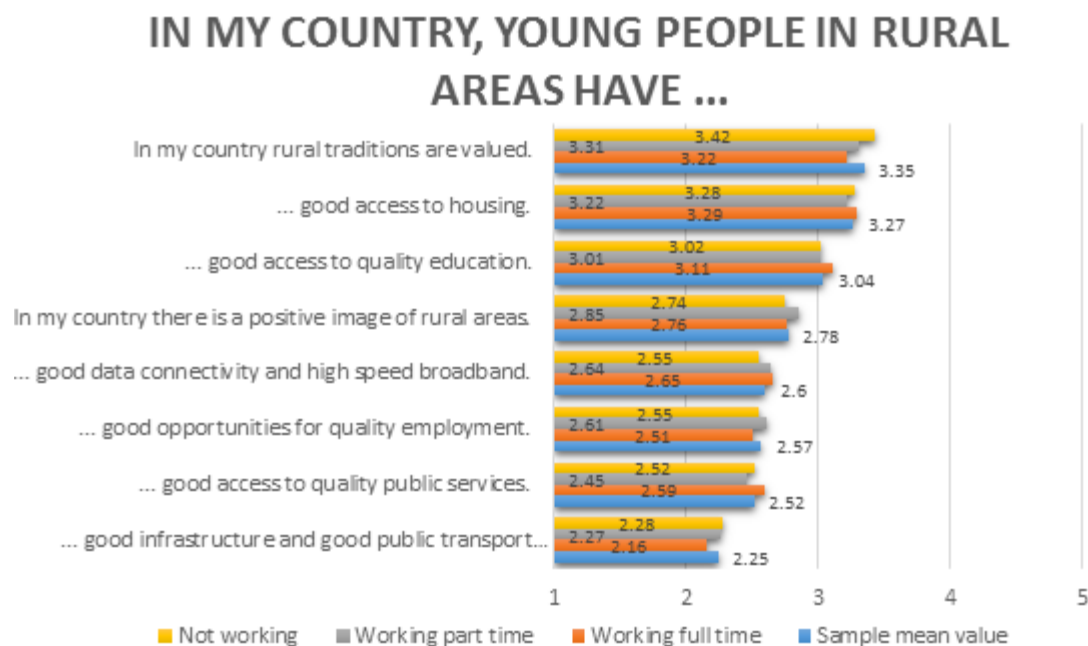
Figure 4: Differences in achievement of Youth Goal #7 targets, mean values according to educational level (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).

IN MY COUNTRY, YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS HAVE …

	University	High school	Basic school	No formal education	Sample mean value
In my country rural traditions are valued.	3.08	3.44	3.35	3.39	3.38
… good access to housing.	3.11	3.12	3.27	3.34	3.42
… good access to quality education.	2.80	2.91	3.04	3.01	3.30
In my country there is a positive image of rural areas.	2.58	2.87	2.78	3.30	3.12
… good data connectivity and high speed broadband.	2.56	2.74	2.6	2.85	3.02
… good opportunities for quality employment.	2.25	2.43	2.57	2.60	3.03
… good access to quality public services.	2.34	2.54	2.52	2.70	2.79
… good infrastructure and good public transport connection to urban areas.	2.01	2.38	2.25	2.88	2.86

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.24 are statistically significant.

Differences are visible in young people of various educational attainments as exhibited in Figure 4. University graduates show systematically and profoundly lower agreement in all listed aspects of quality living in rural areas, with especially critical attitudes in the areas of transportation and employment. On the other hand, young people with no or basic school education seem to be showing overall higher agreement rates in all listed aspects, with the largest difference in the area of employment, where young people with basic education exhibit more optimism when it comes to quality employment opportunities.

The above-mentioned differences may be connected to the type of quality living conditions young people with different educational backgrounds expect. While young people with lower educational attainments may be satisfied with employment, data connectivity or public services of certain quality, young people with higher educational backgrounds may have higher or more specific expectations, which then leads to a more critical assessment of the rural areas in various aspects of quality living.
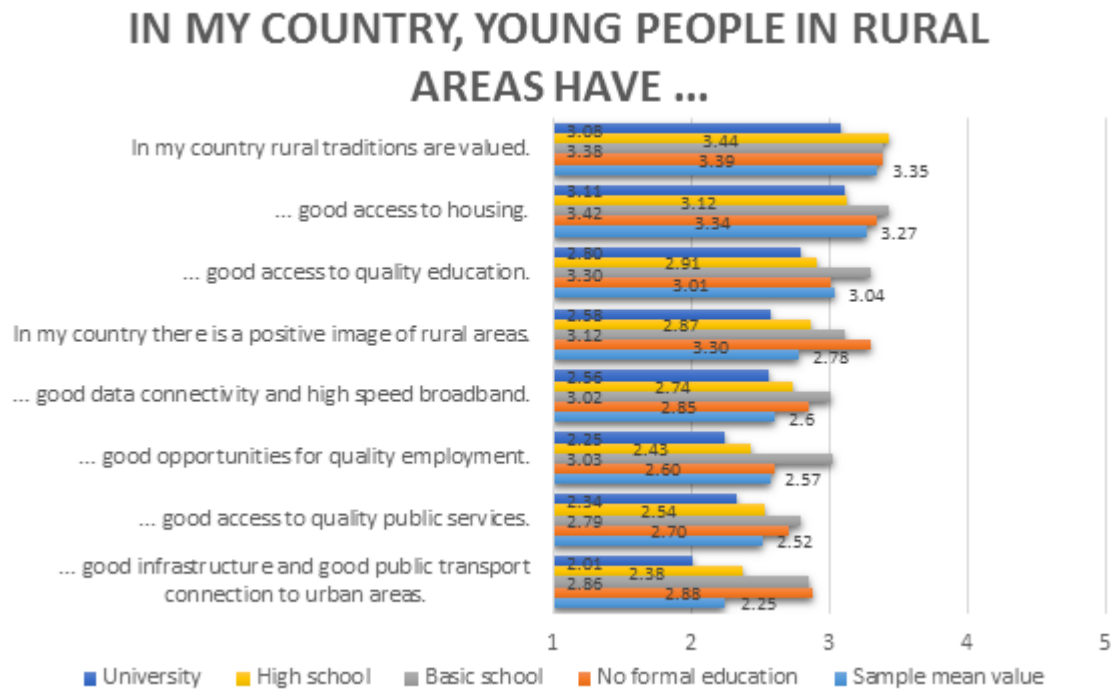
Figure 5: Differences in achievement of Youth Goal #7 targets, mean values according to educational status (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).
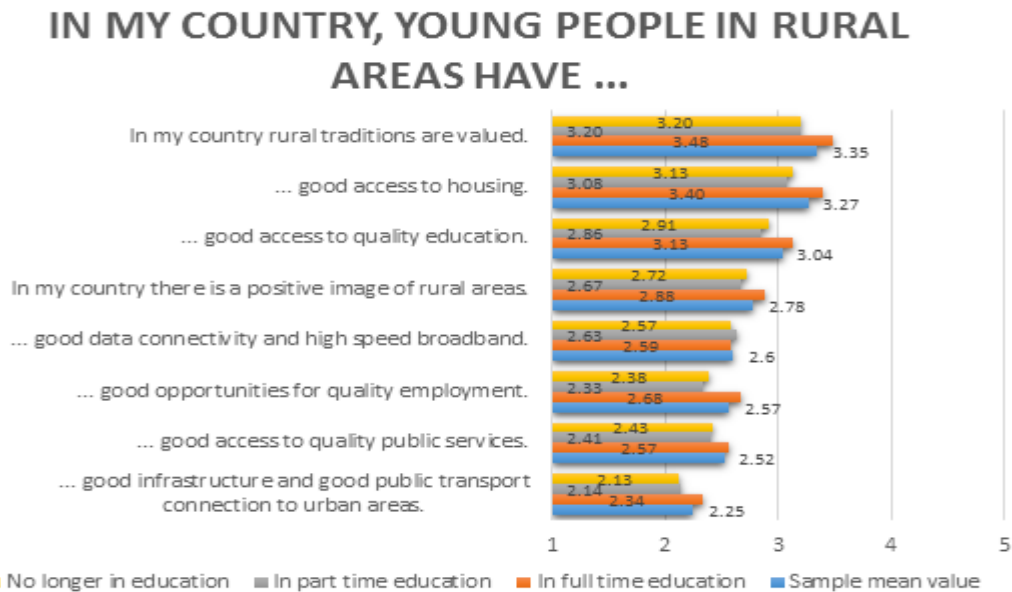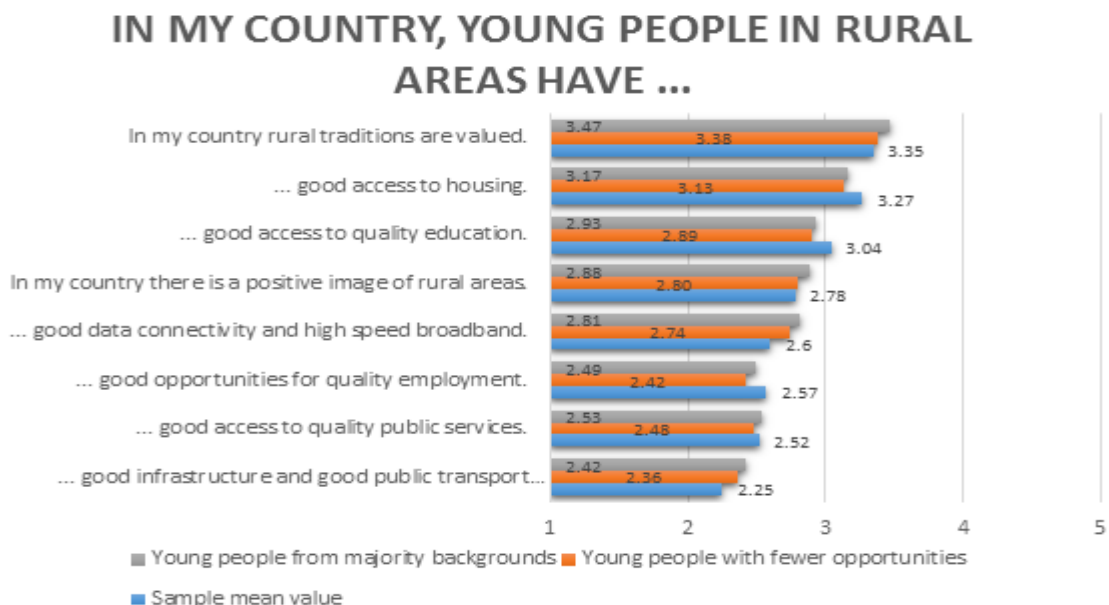

IN MY COUNTRY, YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS HAVE ...

	No longer in education	In part time education	In full time education	Sample mean value
In my country rural traditions are valued.	3.20	3.20	3.48	3.35
... good access to housing.	3.13	3.08	3.40	3.27
... good access to quality education.	2.91	2.86	3.13	3.04
In my country there is a positive image of rural areas.	2.72	2.67	2.88	2.78
... good data connectivity and high speed broadband.	2.57	2.63	2.59	2.6
... good opportunities for quality employment.	2.38	2.33	2.68	2.57
... good access to quality public services.	2.43	2.41	2.57	2.52
... good infrastructure and good public transport connection to urban areas.	2.13	2.14	2.34	2.25

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.06 are statistically significant.

Young people in full-time education are generally more optimistic when it comes to implementation of all listed aspects of quality living in rural areas (see Figure 5). This result should be further explored, as the differences are not extremely large, but may suggest a systematic difference in experience levels of young people in full-time education in comparison to those who are out of the educational system either completely or partially.

Figure 6: Differences in achievement of Youth Goal #7 targets, mean values according to socio-economic status (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).

IN MY COUNTRY, YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS HAVE ...

	Young people from majority backgrounds	Young people with fewer opportunities	Sample mean value
In my country rural traditions are valued.	3.47	3.38	3.35
... good access to housing.	3.17	3.13	3.27
... good access to quality education.	2.93	2.89	3.04
In my country there is a positive image of rural areas.	2.88	2.80	2.78
... good data connectivity and high speed broadband.	2.81	2.74	2.6
... good opportunities for quality employment.	2.49	2.42	2.57
... good access to quality public services.	2.53	2.48	2.52
... good infrastructure and good public transport...	2.42	2.36	2.25

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.04 are statistically significant.

In the case of young people with fewer opportunities and young people from majority backgrounds, as shown in Figure 6, slight differences are detected. Young people with fewer opportunities exhibit lower agreements with all of the aspects of quality living in rural areas, but compared to the results of other subgroups (e.g. gender-based or education-based), the differences are rather slight, albeit systematic.

Figure 7: Differences in achievement of Youth Goal #7 targets, mean values according to age groups (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).
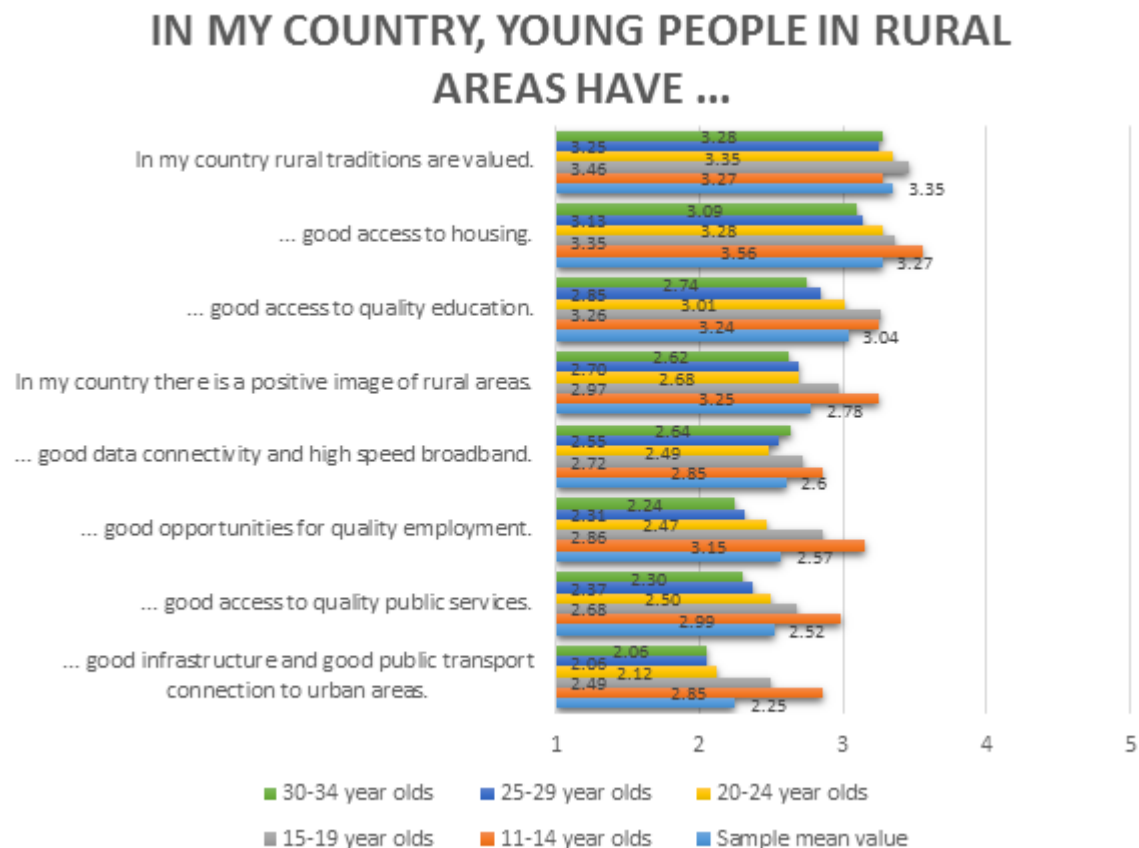
Note: All mean differences higher than 0.14 are statistically significant. Age groups are aligned with the Eurostat age group methodology.

As the age group analysis shown in Figure 7 suggests, young people under 20 years of age show systematically and profoundly higher levels of agreement with most of the listed aspects of quality living. The only aspect in which all of the age groups exhibit the same levels of agreement is valuing of rural traditions. In all other aspects of quality living, the older the young people are, the more critical they are towards the listed aspects. This may suggest a rising level of expectations in young people or differing levels of experience and perceptions in different age groups.
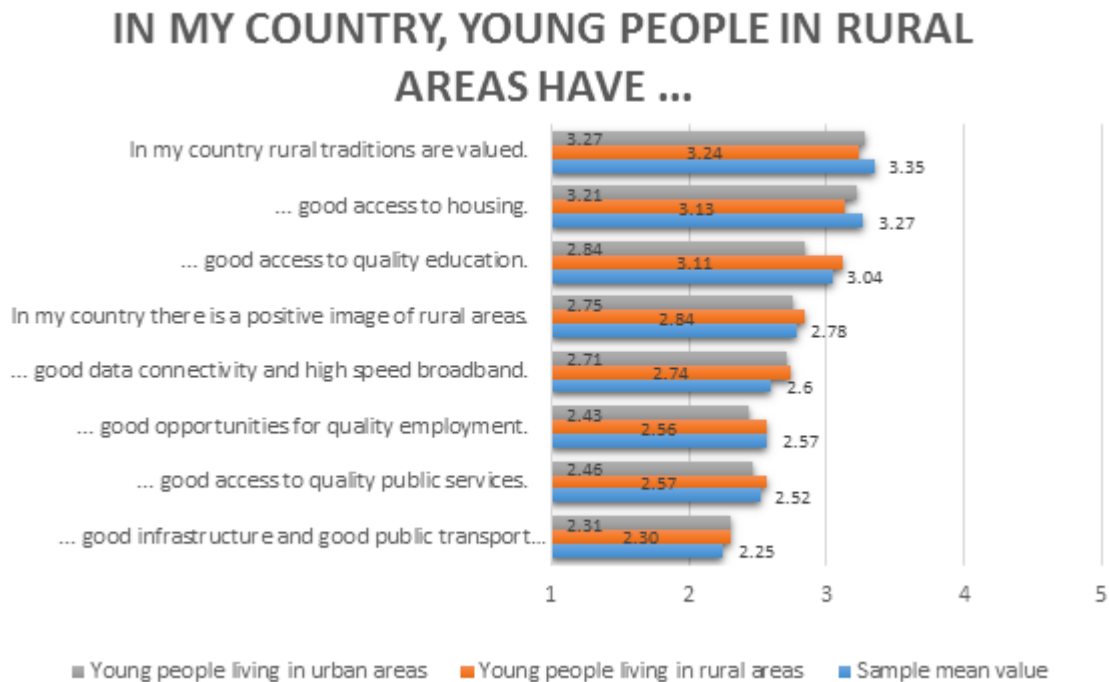
Figure 8: Differences in achievement of Youth Goal #7 targets, mean values according to socio-economic status (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree).

IN MY COUNTRY, YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS HAVE ...

	Young people living in urban areas	Young people living in rural areas	Sample mean value
In my country rural traditions are valued.	3.27	3.24	3.35
... good access to housing.	3.21	3.13	3.27
... good access to quality education.	2.84	3.11	3.04
In my country there is a positive image of rural areas.	2.75	2.84	2.78
... good data connectivity and high speed broadband.	2.71	2.74	2.6
... good opportunities for quality employment.	2.43	2.56	2.57
... good access to quality public services.	2.46	2.57	2.52
... good infrastructure and good public transport...	2.31	2.30	2.25

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.04 are statistically significant.

Figure 8 suggests that young people living in rural areas differ in their opinions from those who live in urban places. Most notably, both groups agree on a rather low rating of infrastructure and public transport in rural areas. At the same time, young people living in rural areas are slightly more positive in most statements, with an exception of valuing rural traditions and access to housing, where young people from urban places show slightly optimistic views.

Implementation of Youth Goal #6: Summary

Young people across the EU see living conditions in rural areas as rather unfavourable, with several subgroups being especially critical to some of the aspects of quality living. Young people of other genders as well as highly educated young people are among the more critical subgroups, while a general trend of increasing criticism in higher age groups has been detected. These differences can be based either on differing living conditions for different subgroups (e.g. gender groups or people of specific educational attainments), on various experience and perceptions of young people, or on different levels of expectations in certain subgroups.

# What would make rural areas more attractive to young people?

The youth dialogue survey also focused on exploring aspects which are important to young people in order to consider rural areas an attractive place to live in. Questions for this section were set by the Croatian Presidency. All in all, to make the rural areas attractive for young people, all of the priority areas listed in the surveys seem to play an important role for the young people across the EU. Despite differences in some subgroups, none of the priority areas failed to gain the attention of the young people and it suggests that young people of all backgrounds are rather demanding when it comes to living conditions and expect high quality of a wide range of services to be present in rural areas in order to come and live there.

Figure 9 shows that all of the priorities in the list are highly emphasised by the young people, with the importance ratios ranging from 64% to 83% for all of the listed statements. First three, and visibly similarly high rated priorities are the following: quality education; good infrastructure and transport; and quality employment. These can be considered the most vital in the eyes of the young people, and expectedly so, given that these constitute the basic preconditions of reasonable living standards.

Figure 9: General agreement with making rural areas attractive statements in percentages.

WHEN CONSIDERING IF YOU WANT TO LIVE IN A RURAL AREA, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO YOU?
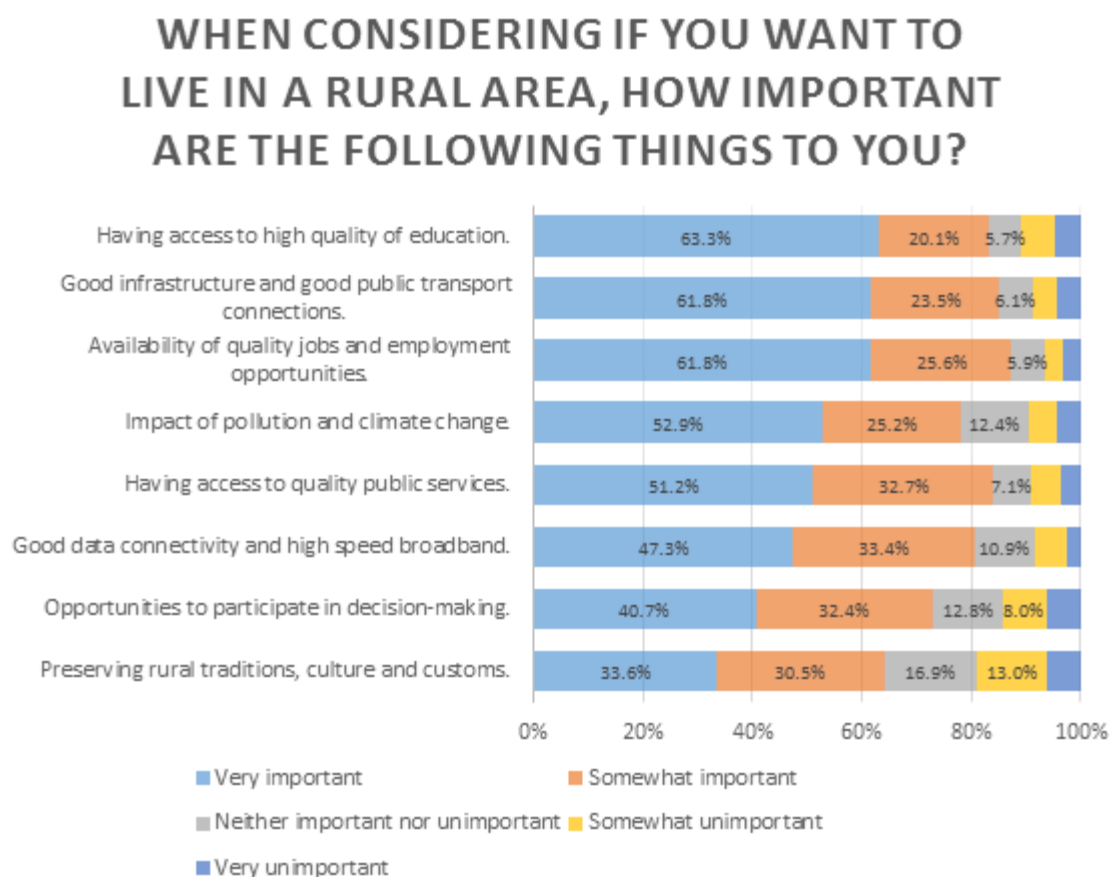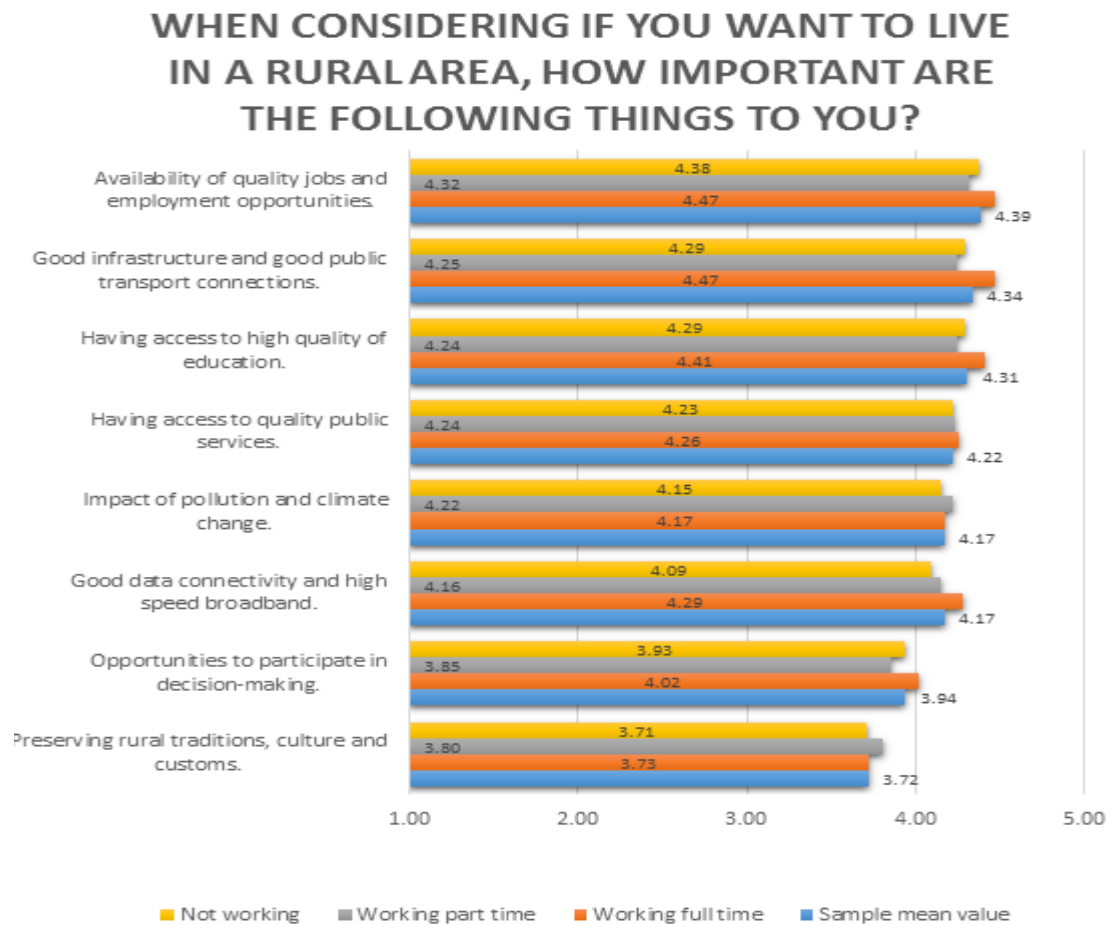
Figure 10: Differences in making rural areas attractive statements, mean values according to gender (1 = Very unimportant; 5 = Very important).
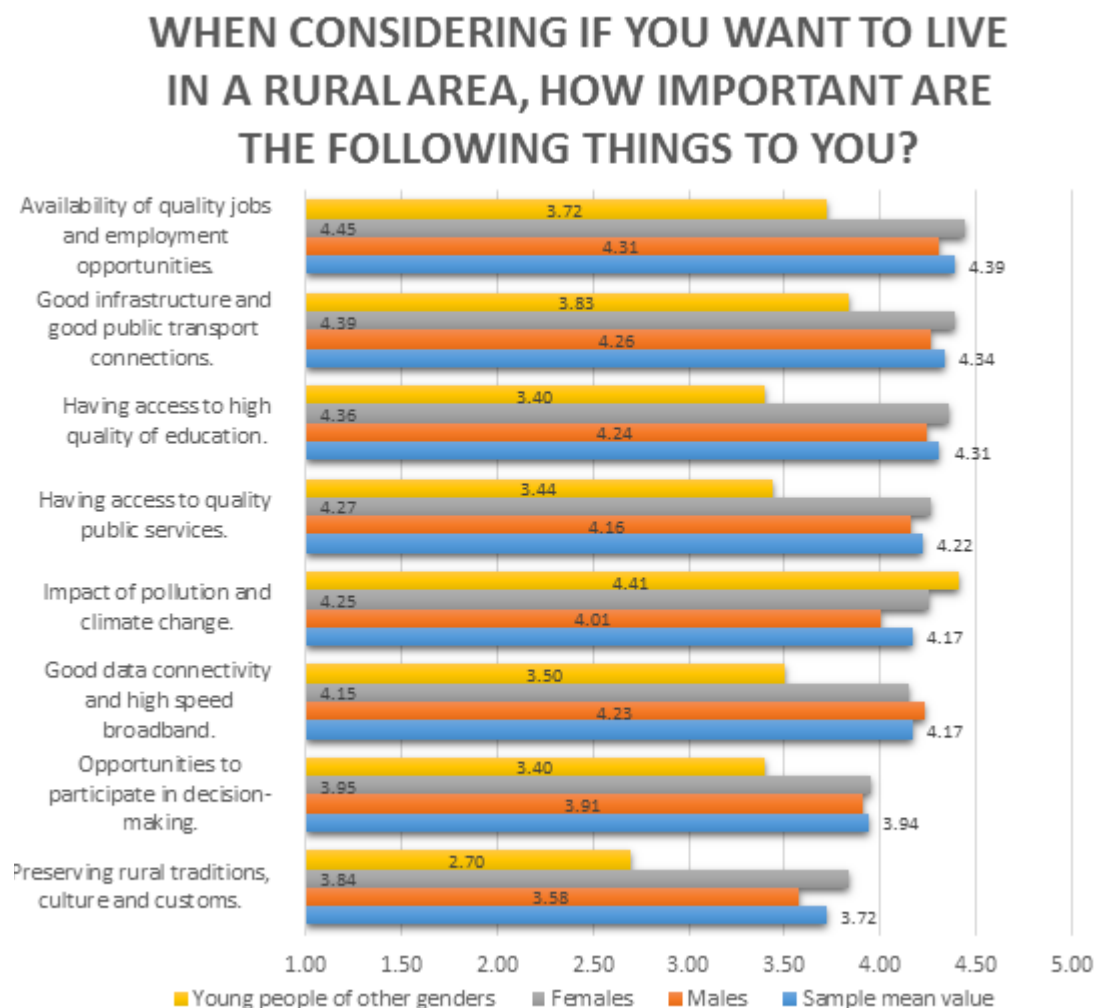
Note: All mean differences higher than 0.16 are statistically significant.

Interestingly, as shown in Figure 10, **young people of other genders** seem to show much less importance for all priority areas in comparison to their male and female counterparts. There is one priority area which is apparently rather important to young people of other genders: impact of pollution and climate change. This is an area in which this group shows more profoundly exhibited importance than in males or females, while all other priority areas show profoundly less importance, especially in the area of preserving rural traditions and customs. This difference is difficult to explain and may be further explored in future consultations with specific subgroups of young people. It is also noteworthy that **female respondents** are exhibiting stronger agreements with most of the priority areas in comparison to males. The only area in which this is not the case is the area of data connectivity and high-speed broadband, where males show stronger agreement; this difference, however, is too slight to lead to any general conclusions.
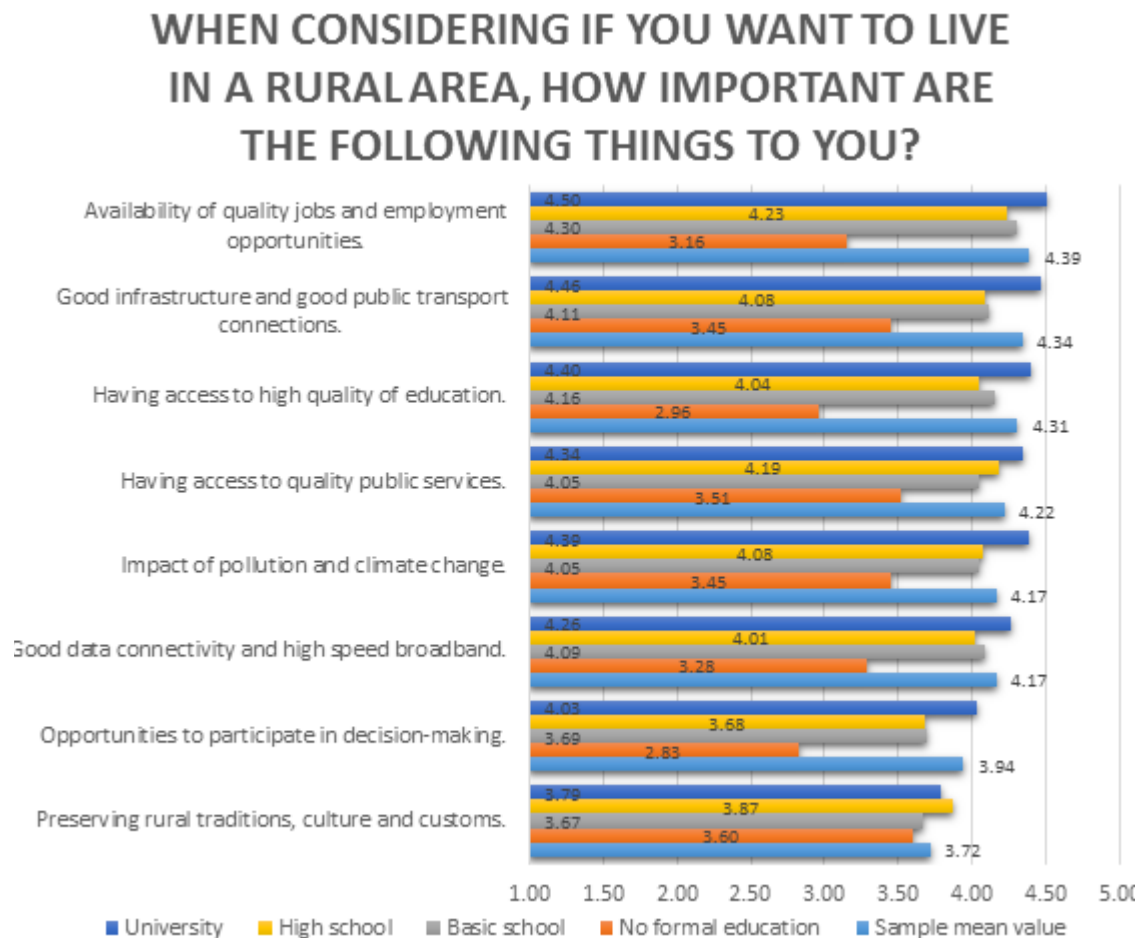
Figure 11: Differences in making rural areas attractive statements, mean values according to employment status (1 = Very unimportant; 5 = Very important).

WHEN CONSIDERING IF YOU WANT TO LIVE IN A RURAL AREA, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO YOU?

Statement	Not working	Working part time	Working full time	Sample mean value
Availability of quality jobs and employment opportunities.	4.38	4.32	4.47	4.39
Good infrastructure and good public transport connections.	4.29	4.25	4.47	4.34
Having access to high quality of education.	4.29	4.24	4.41	4.31
Having access to quality public services.	4.23	4.24	4.26	4.22
Impact of pollution and climate change.	4.15	4.22	4.17	4.17
Good data connectivity and high speed broadband.	4.09	4.16	4.29	4.17
Opportunities to participate in decision-making.	3.93	3.85	4.02	3.94
Preserving rural traditions, culture and customs.	3.71	3.80	3.73	3.72

■ Not working ■ Working part time ■ Working full time ■ Sample mean value

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.05 are statistically significant.

Figure 11 shows that there are slight differences in preferences of the priority areas based on the labour market status of young people. The **young people who work full time** seem to exhibit strong agreements with priority areas such as employment opportunities, infrastructure and transportation, educational opportunities, data connectivity, or decision-making opportunities. Apart from the full-time workers, however, there is no other group which would show any systematic or striking differences, with all of the groups showing high agreement across all of the priority areas.
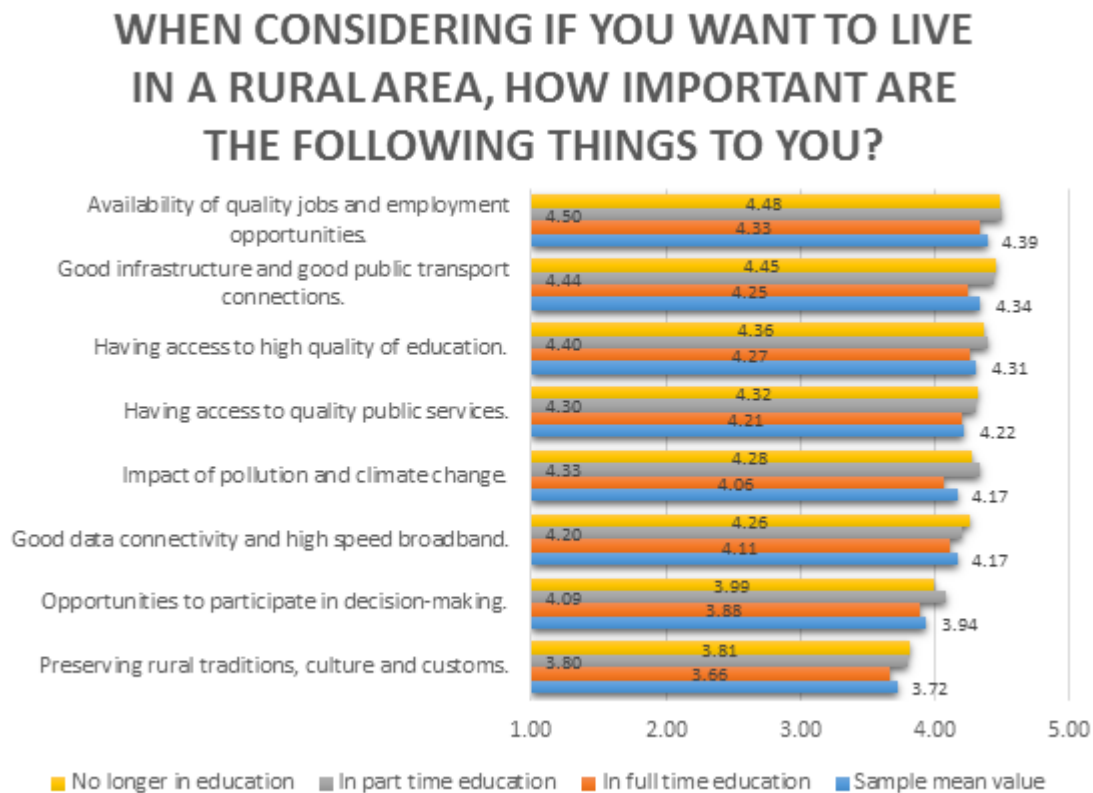
59

Figure 12: Differences in making rural areas attractive statements, mean values according to educational level (1 = Very unimportant; 5 = Very important).

WHEN CONSIDERING IF YOU WANT TO LIVE IN A RURAL AREA, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO YOU?

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.20 are statistically significant.

There are, as shown in Figure 12, rather profound differences across the young people of various educational attainments. First and foremost, the **young people with no formal education** exhibit far lower agreement rates in all of the priority areas, with decision-making opportunities and quality education at the bottom of their priority list and rural traditions and customs as well as access to public services topping their list. **Young people with basic school or high school education** seem to share their priorities and the level of agreement, while **university graduates** exhibit profoundly higher level of agreement with most of the priorities in comparison to any other educational attainment group.
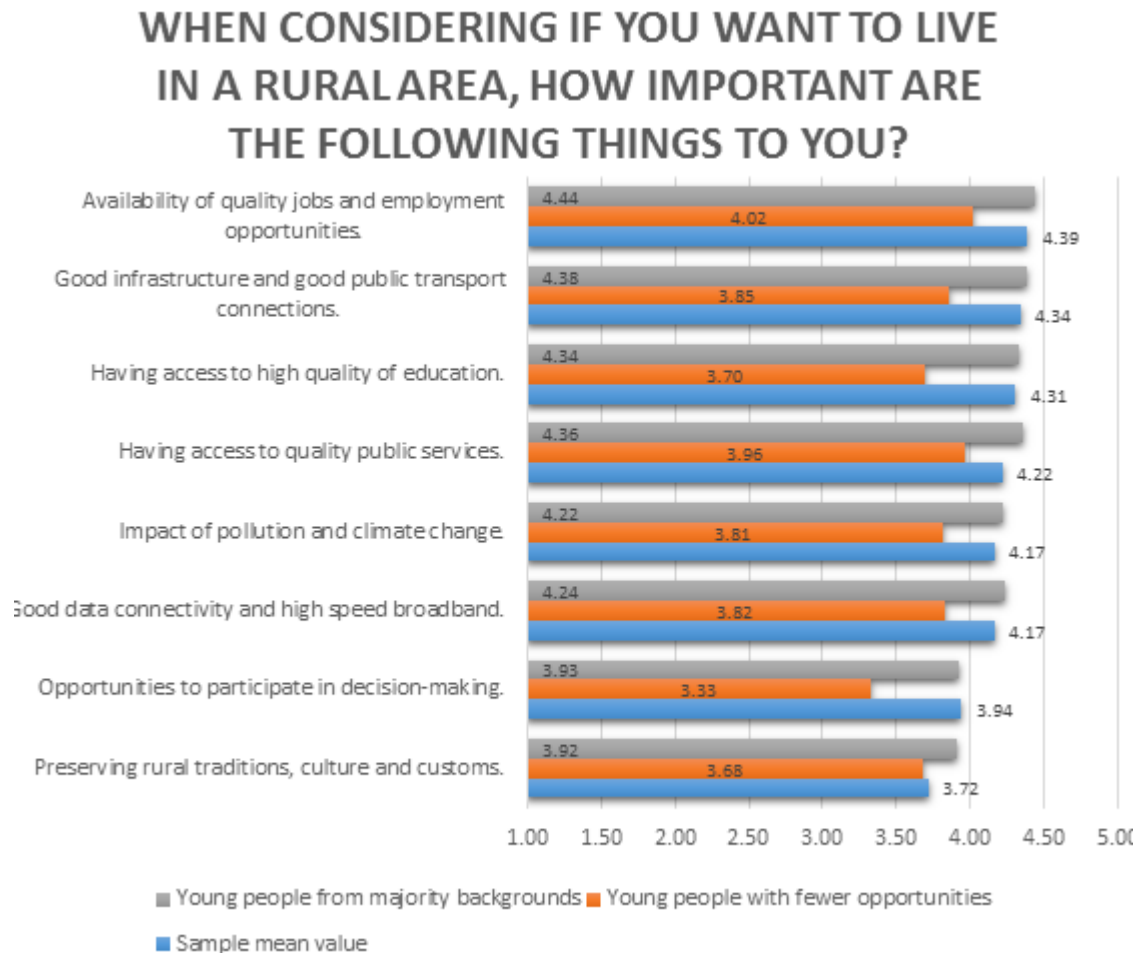
Figure 13: Differences in making rural areas attractive statements in mean values according to educational status (1 = Very unimportant; 5 = Very important).

WHEN CONSIDERING IF YOU WANT TO LIVE
IN A RURAL AREA, HOW IMPORTANT ARE
THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO YOU?

Availability of quality jobs and employment opportunities.
- No longer in education: 4.50
- In part time education: 4.48
- In full time education: 4.33
- Sample mean value: 4.39

Good infrastructure and good public transport connections.
- No longer in education: 4.44
- In part time education: 4.45
- In full time education: 4.25
- Sample mean value: 4.34

Having access to high quality of education.
- No longer in education: 4.40
- In part time education: 4.36
- In full time education: 4.27
- Sample mean value: 4.31

Having access to quality public services.
- No longer in education: 4.30
- In part time education: 4.32
- In full time education: 4.21
- Sample mean value: 4.22

Impact of pollution and climate change.
- No longer in education: 4.33
- In part time education: 4.28
- In full time education: 4.06
- Sample mean value: 4.17

Good data connectivity and high speed broadband.
- No longer in education: 4.20
- In part time education: 4.26
- In full time education: 4.11
- Sample mean value: 4.17

Opportunities to participate in decision-making.
- No longer in education: 4.09
- In part time education: 3.99
- In full time education: 3.88
- Sample mean value: 3.94

Preserving rural traditions, culture and customs.
- No longer in education: 3.80
- In part time education: 3.81
- In full time education: 3.66
- Sample mean value: 3.72

■ No longer in education   ■ In part time education   ■ In full time education   ■ Sample mean value

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.06 are statistically significant.

Slight differences can be seen in the case of young people in various stages of education (see Figure 13). Those **young people who are no longer in education** in most cases align with **young people in part-time education**, while **young people in full-time education** seem to exhibit slightly lower levels of agreement across all of the priority areas than any of the previously mentioned groups. All in all, however, there is no large difference in agreement levels or the order of the priority areas themselves across the educational status of young people.
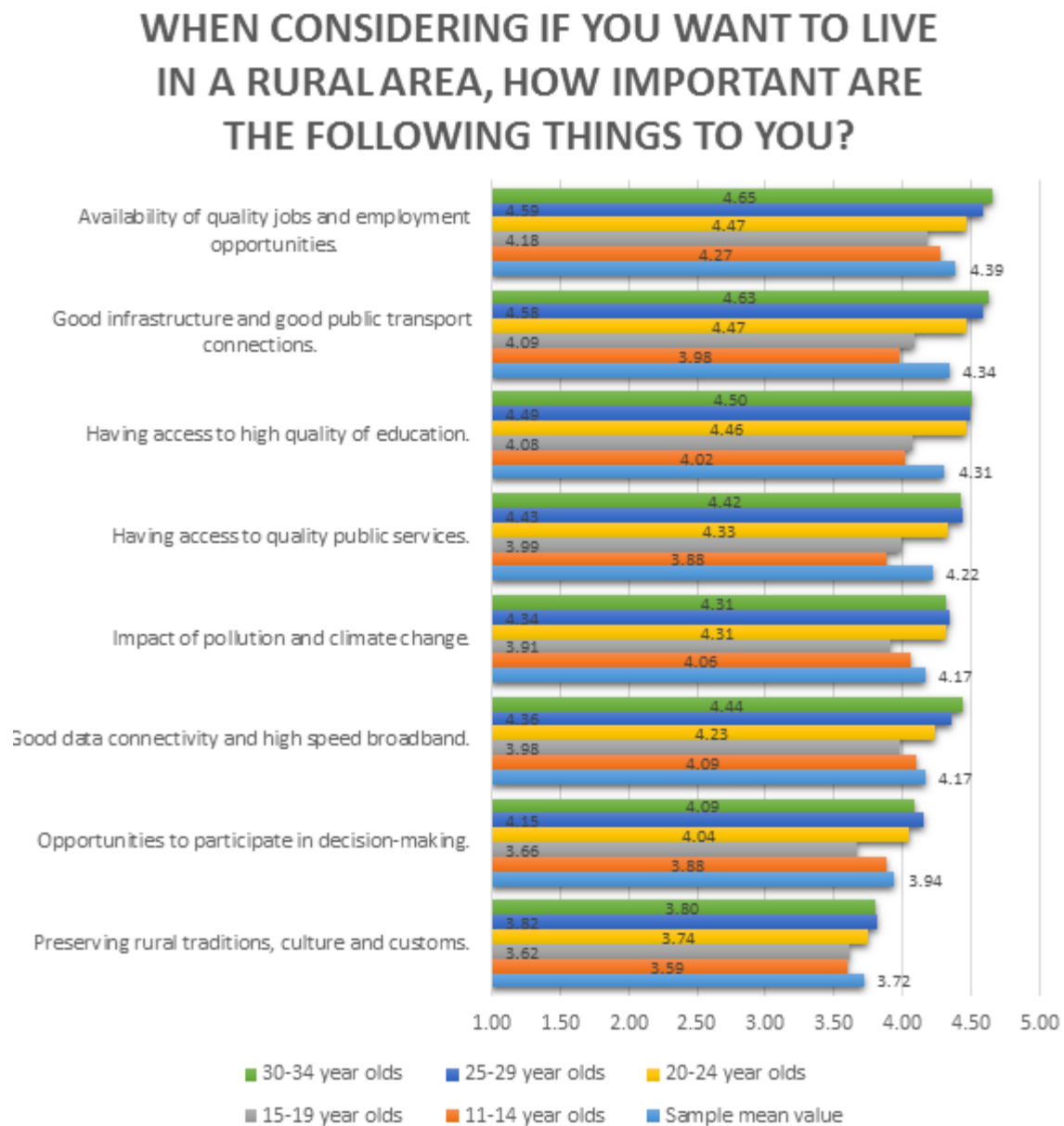
Figure 14: Differences in making rural areas attractive statements, mean values according to socio-economic status (1 = Very unimportant; 5 = Very important).

WHEN CONSIDERING IF YOU WANT TO LIVE IN A RURAL AREA, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO YOU?

	Young people from majority backgrounds	Young people with fewer opportunities	Sample mean value
Availability of quality jobs and employment opportunities.	4.44	4.02	4.39
Good infrastructure and good public transport connections.	4.38	3.85	4.34
Having access to high quality of education.	4.34	3.70	4.31
Having access to quality public services.	4.36	3.96	4.22
Impact of pollution and climate change.	4.22	3.81	4.17
Good data connectivity and high speed broadband.	4.24	3.82	4.17
Opportunities to participate in decision-making.	3.93	3.33	3.94
Preserving rural traditions, culture and customs.	3.92	3.68	3.72

Note: All mean differences are statistically significant.

When comparing **young people with fewer opportunities** and young people from majority backgrounds (see Figure 14), there are rather profound differences in both the level of agreement and the order of the priority areas in both groups. While **young people from majority backgrounds** generally align with the general, average levels of agreement in all priority areas, therefore also aligning with the order of priority areas, the young people with fewer opportunities seem to generally exhibit lower levels of agreement in all priority areas and moreover suggest a slightly different order of priorities. Decision-making opportunities and quality education seem to be of lower importance to the young people with fewer opportunities, while public services, data connectivity and climate change are higher on their list of priorities.
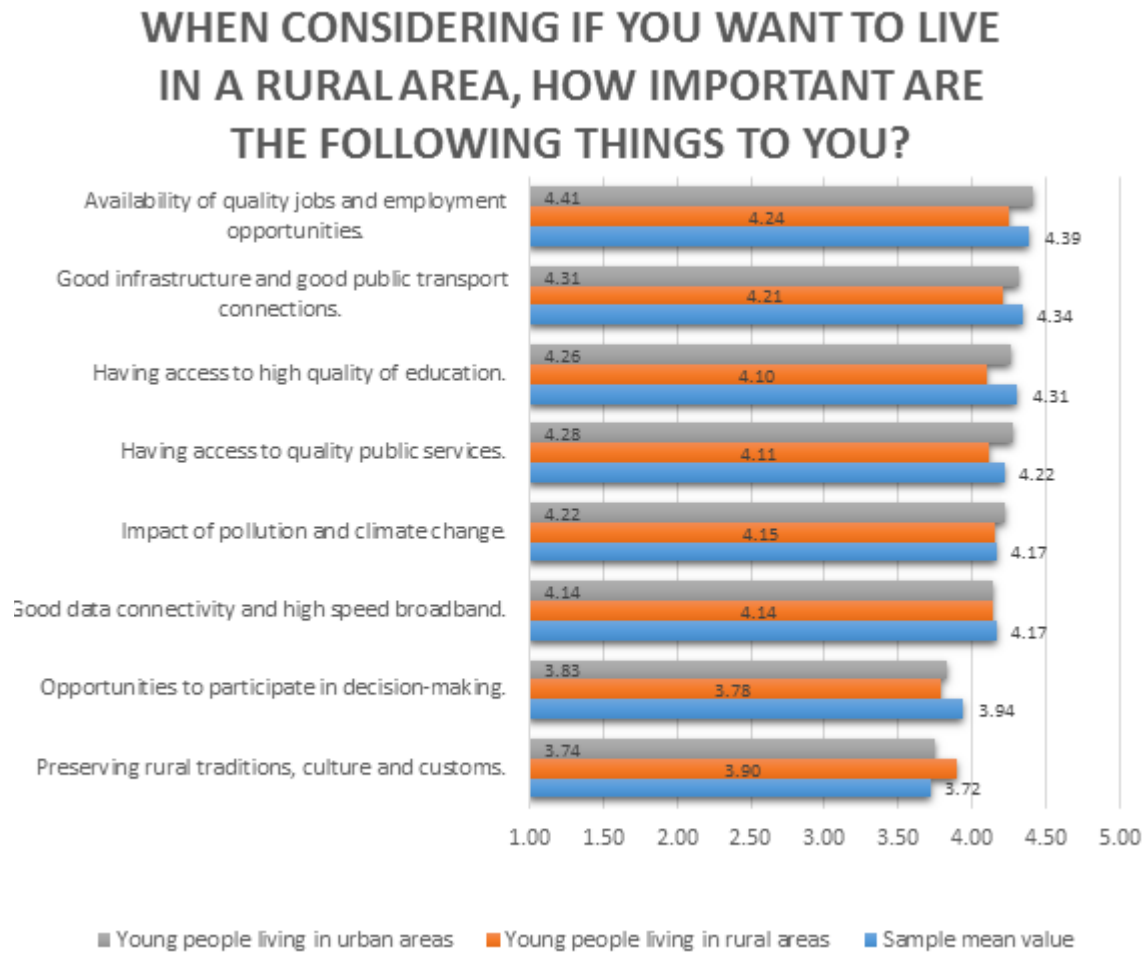
Figure 15: Differences in making rural areas attractive statements, mean values according to age groups (1 = Very unimportant; 5 = Very important).
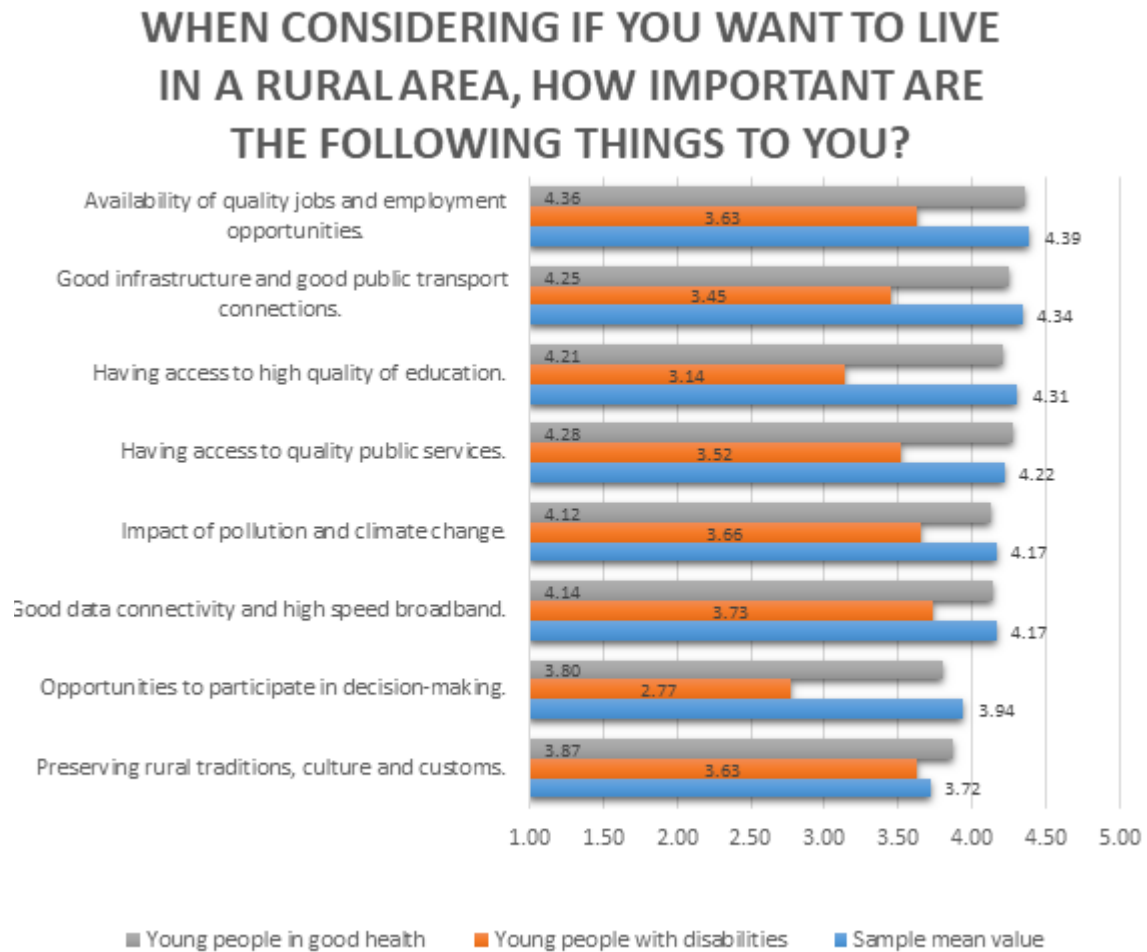

WHEN CONSIDERING IF YOU WANT TO LIVE IN A RURAL AREA, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO YOU?

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.10 are statistically significant. Age groups are aligned with the Eurostat age group methodology.

In the case of age groups, as shown in Figure 15, the main difference seems to lie between **young people under and above 20 years of age**. Young people above 20 years of age exhibit higher agreement rates in most of the priority areas, compared to those under 20. All in all, nevertheless, the order of the priorities seems to be mostly unchanged for all of the young people.

Figure 16: Differences in making rural areas attractive statements, mean values according to place of residence (1 = Very unimportant; 5 = Very important).

WHEN CONSIDERING IF YOU WANT TO LIVE IN A RURAL AREA, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO YOU?

Statement	Young people living in urban areas	Young people living in rural areas	Sample mean value
Availability of quality jobs and employment opportunities.	4.41	4.24	4.39
Good infrastructure and good public transport connections.	4.31	4.21	4.34
Having access to high quality of education.	4.26	4.10	4.31
Having access to quality public services.	4.28	4.11	4.22
Impact of pollution and climate change.	4.22	4.15	4.17
Good data connectivity and high speed broadband.	4.14	4.14	4.17
Opportunities to participate in decision-making.	3.83	3.78	3.94
Preserving rural traditions, culture and customs.	3.74	3.90	3.72

■ Young people living in urban areas   ■ Young people living in rural areas   ■ Sample mean value

Note: All mean differences higher than 0.01 are statistically significant.

Interestingly, young people living in rural areas (see Figure 16) rate almost all aspects less positively than their counterparts living in urban places. The only two exceptions are data connectivity, where both groups show identical results, and preserving rural traditions, where young people living in rural areas exhibit more optimistic opinions than youth from the cities.

Figure 17: Differences in making rural areas attractive statements in mean values according to disability (1 = Very unimportant; 5 = Very important).

WHEN CONSIDERING IF YOU WANT TO LIVE IN A RURAL AREA, HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING THINGS TO YOU?

Statement	Young people in good health	Young people with disabilities	Sample mean value
Availability of quality jobs and employment opportunities.	4.36	3.63	4.39
Good infrastructure and good public transport connections.	4.25	3.45	4.34
Having access to high quality of education.	4.21	3.14	4.31
Having access to quality public services.	4.28	3.52	4.22
Impact of pollution and climate change.	4.12	3.66	4.17
Good data connectivity and high speed broadband.	4.14	3.73	4.17
Opportunities to participate in decision-making.	3.80	2.77	3.94
Preserving rural traditions, culture and customs.	3.87	3.63	3.72

■ Young people in good health   ■ Young people with disabilities   ■ Sample mean value

Note: All mean differences are statistically significant.

Rather profound differences can be seen in comparison of young people with disabilities with young people in good health (see Figure 17). Most notably, young people with disabilities rate much lower in vast majority of all listed priorities, with profound differences namely in areas such as decision-making opportunities, access to quality education and public services, or infrastructure and transportation

How to move rural areas forward

This section analyses the key messages from reports and rural issues focus[1] groups reports (henceforth both referred to as reports) on *how* to create opportunities for rural youth.

Working groups explored how young people's priorities of the development of rural areas might vary across the short and long term. Within the reports there was a general understanding that development of **infrastructure was a long-term issue** and a tendency to focus more on **decentralisation of youth activities was a more immediate step** that could be taken. However, outside of this there was not a general consensus on how issues should be prioritised between the short and long term, and nothing to indicate that resolving one particular problem was necessary before others could be tackled.

Improving rural infrastructure and public services

Overall there was a clear sense in the reports that **rural areas simply lacked the infrastructure and opportunities that young people wanted** when compared to cities. Lack of transport, education and employment opportunities were the dominant themes (explored in more detail below). Alongside this, across the reports there were calls for increased investment and development of the following within rural areas:

- Commercial leisure time facilities such as shops, bars, cafes, etc.

- Cultural and sports facilities.

- Public services in general and especially healthcare.

- Affordable housing, particularly for young people who wished to get their first home.

- High quality public spaces and meeting points such as libraries and playgrounds.

- Educational facilities.

- Youth facilities (see next section).

- Transport (facilities).

The role of **digital connectivity** was emphasised, and the need to ensure rural areas had access to phone and broadband facilities was repeated many times. It was stated that this could enable better access to information for young people (for instance, about education and job opportunities) and also to improve employment opportunities by attracting businesses and enabling remote working.

Unsurprisingly it was generally felt that with fewer educational institutions in rural areas, young people had less choice around their **educational opportunities.** However, there was also a perception that some rural educational institutes lacked facilities and were poor quality compared to cities. This lack of educational opportunities combined with the lack of transport

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[1] Working groups from Belgium (DE), Croatia, Cyprus, France, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, supplied rural focus group data in the format requested by the Croatian Presidency. 270 young people participated in these.

to city areas was said to be a significant cause of young people leaving rural areas. The European working group identified the need for rural education systems to link more clearly to agriculture, with specific training for young people on agricultural topics or traineeships and entrepreneurship programmes linked to agriculture.

Overall there was a sense of frustration with rural areas about the way **many issues interconnected:**

We held two sessions in Madeira Island and a few others in rural/semi-rural areas. In these sessions, it is clear that young people feel frustrated by the isolation and identify sometimes very specific problems, for instance: the internet and cellular coverage, the fact that they don't know, or are not well-informed about opportunities and programs that exist or that their social life is much determined by the deficient or non-existing public transportation.

<div align="right">Portugese National Working Group Report</div>

Several working groups identified young people's concerns about the way a combination of lack of access to educational opportunities, lack of jobs and general opportunities for development cause young people to leave the rural areas of the cities. This was said to further contribute to the decline in rural areas. The European working group report highlighted the way that poor infrastructure in rural areas was fundamentally a problem of **lack of investment**. They called for more investment through EU structural funds and for cooperation on a European level to develop infrastructure in rural areas.

Improving public transport in rural areas

Central to some of the infrastructure issues affecting young people was felt to be poor quality transport in rural areas. The need to substantially improve public transport in rural areas was an issue reported clearly and extensively by nearly all working groups. It was identified that poor transport in rural areas prevented young people from these areas commuting easily to city regions to access job opportunities, educational opportunities, youth organisations, leisure activities, shopping facilities, and medical facilities.

Many young people in rural areas are willing to travel for their job, however, as many job opportunities lie in urban areas, it is essential that young people in rural areas have access to good and frequent public transportation. Hence good infrastructure and connections with public transport is essential.

<div align="right">Netherlands National Working Group Report</div>

A group of participants said they would like to be members of youth organizations, to attend extra-curricular activities all based in a town nearby. However, since they live in a village, they need to commute and the last bus connection they have leaves the town too early for them to be able to attend any activities.

<div align="right">Slovakian National Working Group Report</div>

The **double exclusion for disabled young people** or **young people with chronic illness** who live in rural areas was highlighted by some reports. For these young people, not only were they more reliant on public transport, for instance because they were less able to use bicycles or drive, but they also needed to travel to the city more frequently to access specialised medical care.

Young people with disabilities wished for better opportunities to move to another city to study. After primary education the education possibilities in rural areas are often very limited, and people with disabilities might have to choose the closest possibility, instead of the school they would like to go, because of poor transportation and other difficulties.

<div align="right">Finnish National Working Group Report</div>

In the dialogues young people identified the need for **better connection** from rural to urban areas, and to a lesser extent between rural areas. It was felt that bus and rail services should be more frequent, more direct, more flexible, run later into the night and be cheaper. Some reports called for free bus and rail services. In the case of Malta similar calls were made in relation to ferry services between islands, reminding us that for many young people in rural areas transport is not entirely on land.

A small number of reports identified the need for **promoting cycle use**, for instance by providing bike rental schemes in rural areas, or bicycle lanes to make roads safer, though it was noted that the distances involved meant cycling was not always a viable option. The need to improve the quality of roads in rural areas was also raised in some reports.

Some more specific suggestions were also made for improving transport. Young people suggested to the Luxembourg National Working Group that rural areas should "Put in place a *Business bus* – same system as a school bus, but for employees of companies with headquarters in rural areas" as well as a "*Call-a-bus* (offering a *mobility on demand*) or a *Youth taxi*".

Similarly, The Irish National Working Group reported young people's ideas to linking **transport specifically to access education**, calling for "Free public transport in rural areas for young people to access school, college etc." and "More public transport in rural areas to connect young people directly with neighbouring areas and universities".

A number of ideas relating to **car transportation** were also suggested. Although many reports commented on young people's desire for green transport solutions and the feeling that public transport was greener. Others noted the young people they spoke to felt the need for effective transport solutions in rural areas outweighed green issues, and that there were small numbers of people traveling in some rural areas, so car transportation was necessary. Ideas in this regard included:

- Financial **subsidies for rural families** to buy cars.

- Efficient and affordable **car sharing** model.

- Smaller taxi or minibus style public **transport systems that operate on demand.**

The IYNGOs highlighted the potential for EU regional and cohesion funds to be used for rural public transport.

Developing work opportunities for young people in rural areas

Similar to the findings in the employment section of this report, increasing **access to *quality jobs*** was important in rural areas. This meant jobs which provided good pay and conditions,

the opportunity to utilise your skills and for career development. Specific to rural areas, the need to improve working conditions for agricultural employees was highlighted by some working groups. A particular issue of the precariousness of seasonal work related to agricultural employment was highlighted by some groups.

It was clear that whilst some young people in rural areas envisaged access to quality jobs being about **being able to commute** to urban areas for work, others wanted to work within their areas and have **jobs close to their places of residence**. Overall there was concern that the lack of access to quality jobs was one of the things that causes young people to leave rural areas.

Still, there is a problem with ensuring employment in rural areas, due to the lack of available quality work positions. The consequences are migrations to urban centres, which is another issue for the youth.

Slovenian National Working Group Report

Some working groups also highlighted **concerns about gender inequality in relation to work in rural areas**. It was said that young rural women could face "triple discrimination" and many traditional employment sectors in rural areas discriminated against women. The importance of strong female role models in rural areas and drawing attention to the invisible work conducted by women was said to be a solution to this.

Some working groups explored what sectors young people in rural areas would want to work in. Here the general sentiment was that there was a need to explore **new forms of rural work** such as agricultural tourism, ecotourism, work related to sustainability, or digital work which could take place from any location. However, alongside this there was clearly a desire that **farming and agriculture should not be abandoned,** and many young people were interested in the production of food, particularly creating and selling local brands. To develop work opportunities in rural areas a variety of measures were proposed. These included:

Measures targeted at business

- Financial incentives for **businesses to locate in rural areas**, along with improvements to the transport and digital connectivity infrastructure which businesses would need.

- Promotion of **remote working** to business based within cities.

Measures targeted at young workers

- Financial and other support measures to encourage young people to study and work in high income professions whilst **remaining in rural areas during and after study**.

- **Improving vocational training in rural areas** so that it is directly linked to the local labour market.

Measures relating to youth information

- Improving young people's access to **information about job opportunities** in rural areas.

- Improving access to **information in rural areas about existing youth entrepreneurship programmes**

The IYNGOs particularly highlighted the way that existing EU investment and support geared at **promoting youth entrepreneurship** could be better promoted and targeted at rural areas. Alongside this is was felt that specific financial instruments might be developed to support young entrepreneurs in starting, maintaining and diversifying their activity, thus ensuring the availability of jobs in rural areas in the future. A number of working groups highlighted the need for more research into the needs of young people in rural areas in relation to jobs, and the potential for better use of the common agricultural policy to support young people.

Supporting youth participation in rural areas

Ideas from young people about how to foster their participation in rural areas tended to focus on methods that are well established within participation generally. Suggestions included:

- Developing **rural youth councils**, youth participation events and youth dialogue events specifically within rural areas.

- Increasing support for **rural youth organisations** such as Young Farmers.

- Create **opportunities for young people in rural areas** to be involved in the elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public youth policies.

- Encourage young people from rural areas to **stand in elections.**

- **Promote collaboration** between youth organisations, municipalities and young people.

- **Awareness raising** campaigns on the role of public institutions.

The European working group suggested it was important to increase promotion of EU funds such as Erasmus+ within rural areas through information campaigns, promotion in schools and rural youth information points. This was said to help enable young people to realise their own projects. Surprisingly there was limited mention of digital tools or methods of participation.

Overall then there was a sense that rural participation did not need differing methods or new approaches compared to city-based participation; instead, it was a matter of ensuring that not all participation activity is focused in urban areas. Linked to this, a number of working groups explored the idea that decision making, politics or politicians somehow needed to be localised or decentralised to rural areas. Suggestions in this area included:

- **Ensuring city councillors regularly came** to participate in rural participation events.

- Giving r**esponsibility for youth policy to local rural administrations.**

- **Dedicated political or administrative figures in rural youth** that were based in, or very active in, rural areas.

Some commented that in a context where the politician is already living in the village, the pathway to the decision maker is much shorter for young people.

Promoting positive images of rural areas and rural customs

In terms of promoting a positive image of rural areas many of the working groups highlighted substantial differences in perceptions between young people and often differences between the views of young people in rural areas and urban areas.

It is important to notice that young people actually living in rural areas have a more positive view on the conditions in rural areas.

Danish National Working Group Report

Despite frustration with the lack of infrastructure and opportunities, many working groups reported that young people in rural areas felt proud of the area they lived in; for instance, by feeling fellowship/solidarity and security due to there being less people within the rural area and enjoying access to nature and outdoor life.

Given that rural areas were said to be viewed more negatively by those in the city, an emerging theme was the idea of stigma towards young people in rural areas, and the importance that city politicians and people in city areas did not label young people in rural areas as "clumsy, stupid villagers" or assume that they were all farmers. Suggestions for challenging this stigma included awareness raising campaigns making the quality of life in villages visible based around networks of identities in villages. Calls to promote rural traditions did not feature heavily in reports, though, as the survey indicated that young people are more in agreement that this aspect of the youth goal is currently being achieved.

Decentralisation of youth activities

The decentralisation of youth activities from cities to rural areas was seen to be one of the things that could be implemented in the short term to improve quality of life for young people in rural areas.

In the answers provided by young people, the need for more events and activities in rural areas is evident and answering it is an important solution. A great part of the respondents is identifying youth events and campaigns as a vital part of their well-being and engagement with the community. The lack of such events determines the view that young people have towards rural areas as unattractive for them in terms of utilising their free time, their willingness to engage with the community and to contribute to certain causes, as well as having their ideas being taken into account.

Bulgarian National Working Group Report

Young people say that they need more free events, non-formal education and youth camps, organisations to be more social and communicate with others. This can improve their communication skills and grow their self-confidence to express themselves to others (both young and grown-ups).

Estonian National Working Group Report

Youth activities and youth organisation were **closely linked to the idea of access to leisure** opportunities in rural areas. In a way, this made the sort of offer that young people in rural

areas wanted from the youth sector perhaps less focused on non-formal education and more focused on access to youth spaces and places to connect with other young people as well as cultural opportunities or sports. Some reports highlighted that in situations where young people had limited access to other opportunities, the youth centre became a vital hub:

Leisure time in the countryside has also been mentioned several times in focus groups. Young people find it a pity that there are few shops or bars. They want more activities in the countryside, so there is more going on in the village. Especially at their young age, the young people would like to experience more things, try them out or become independent. Here the youth club or the youth organisation is mentioned as the only contact point.
<div align="right">Belgian German Speaking Community National Working Group Report</div>

Overall there was a call to create a more diverse offer for youth in rural areas. Unlike education or work, this was much more focused on **bringing youth structures and opportunities into rural areas** rather than enabling commuting to city areas for rural youth.

Unsurprisingly, given the focus on leisure, the role of youth centres and youth spaces was an important part of a rural youth offer. The nature of these spaces was similar to sorts of youth spaces described in the youth work section of this report; however, there was a sense that they were one of the most important types of youth provision needed in rural areas.

Alongside this, the potential for inter-rural or rural-urban **youth mobility programmes** was highlighted to enable young people to have contact with those in similar situations or experiences opportunities within cities. This type of mobility programme, which was not necessarily international, was said to be an important part of decentralising youth provision to rural areas.

The importance of **strengthening youth organisation and civic society actors in rural areas** was highlighted. The IYNGOs in particular called for an increase in funding for youth projects specifically targeted at rural areas and youth organisation in rural areas. Some reports highlighted that the lack of youth information in rural areas prevented young people from accessing existing funds, such as those designed to enable them to take their own projects and ideas forward like Erasmus+ or ESC.

Some working groups highlighted the need for **increasing the numbers of youth workers in rural areas**, though this was much less discussed than other measures. Suggestions such as mobile youth provision were offered to enable this. Digital youth work was proposed by some as an option; however, it was not strongly called for by young people compared to face-to-face facilities.

Part VI: Summary of findings

Quality employment for all

Overall, the survey data showed that young people have mixed experiences or are sceptical when asked about the extent to which Youth Goal #7 Quality Employment for all is being implemented/achieved.

The youth dialogue results suggest **young people have very different experiences across Europe in relation to employment**. The survey responses on the extent to which elements of youth goal targets relating to recognition of out-of-school learning, social protection and healthcare, of workers and access to quality information on employment, were being achieved were mixed, with no clear consensus either way.

A rather more sceptical view can be seen on fair treatment in the workplace, equal opportunities in skills development and access to jobs with fair working conditions. Disagreement in these cases stretches between 56% and 68%, giving a rather strong indication that **young people, in their experience, do not think there is fair treatment in the labour market, or that everyone has equal opportunities to develop skills necessary for the labour market, or that access exists to quality jobs with fair working conditions.**

Through the survey, young people with fewer opportunites by young people of other genders (e.g. trans and non-binary young people) also reported more negatively than their counterparts in the majority of statements. In the working group reports **discrimination and inequality in the workplace was seemingly both a common experience and a serious concern for young people who particpated in the dialogue.** This included age discrimination as well as widespread concern and evidence of discrimination on the basis of protected equalities characteristic. Many working groups consulted specifically with marginalised groups such as young Roma or young people from minority ethnic backgrounds and found this to be a common issue.

Considering social protection and the future of work there was a general sentiment that young people valued their **fulfillment and wellbeing before profit and income**. This was linked to an increasing concern regarding the mental health and wellbeing of young people, connected to precarious employment. Flexibility, self-determination and control within work was said to be an important part of managing this.

"A bit of stress is always the case, but it should still be fun. I definitely don't want to get sick due to my job."

Belgian Young Person

The general tone in working group reports was that **an ever changing labour market was now a fact of life and young people would inevitably face precarious employment**. In order to respond to precarious employment there were calls to:

- Ban unpaid internships and traineeships.
- Support youth participation in the development of labour policies.
- Increase education and information about their workers rights, particularly around discrimination.

Considering the role of education in relation to the future of work there was a strong call to modernise the formal education system, which was seen as outdated and teaching skills that were not relevant. It was said school and other formal education institutions should focus on:

- Practical, vocational and soft skills that are relevant to the labour market.
- Access to blended work and learning opportunities.
- Providing career orientation and guidance.
- Providing support for young entrepreneurs.

Transversal skills were also said to be very important, for example foreign languages, communication skills, financial literacy and digital competencies.

However, updating education meant not just changing the topics but also **changing the methods and nature of educational institutions** to be more flexible. This meant

- **Blending work and learning** – such as by linking pupils to companies and providing work-based learning.

- **Improving career orientation and guidance** – ensuring it provides information about the jobs available, and support and guidance for applying for work.

There was also a large emphasis on **bridging the gap between informal and formal education**, either by promoting non-formal methods in schools and universities or improving recognition of non-formal education. IYNGOs summarised many of the ideas of the other working groups on how this could be achieved:

- Fostering cooperation between all education sectors and the labour market around the theme of transition from education to work.

- Promote guidance and training in all education sectors in cooperation with the labour market, involving the support of EU and public institutions.

- Developing EU support mechanisms to integrate formal and non-formal education.

- Establish a dialogue with member states in order to agree on a common framework of recognition of non-formal skills and competencies.

Quality youth work for all

All in all, young people consider youth work to be a complex service bringing together many priorities. The results from the youth dialogue survey indicate that the EU is broadly on the right track with regard to the competencies of youth workers it chooses to emphasise as defined by the European Training Strategy.

Interestingly, some subgroups of young people stress the role of youth work to provide learning opportunities while others put more emphasis on aspects supporting active participation of young people in society. For example, young people with no formal education and those with fewer opportunities emphasise creation of learning opportunities as the most important priority, whereas young people who work full time emphasise to a slightly higher extent active participation of young people. There are also variations across the age ranges.

The youth dialogue identified a range of competencies required by youth workers. These were

- **Values-based competencies** – such as being non-judgemental, open, tolerant and respectful of difference.

- **Competencies to support youth participation –** this included being able to communicate the possibilities of participation, support and engage in advocacy work and decision making systems, and involve young people in the design and delivery of activities and projects.

- **Competencies to support social inclusion and non-discrimination** – such as sensitivity to different backgrounds and cultures, the ability to promote cooperation between different groups of young people and the ability to refer young people to specialist services.

- **Competencies in non-formal education methods** – such as the facilitation of group work, design of non-formal education programmes and support of volunteers.

- **Competencies in the curation of youth spaces** – and the ability to create and manage a safe space where young people feel comfortable to learn and were treated with dignity and respect.

- **Coaching, mentoring, information and guidance competencies –** this was focused on having a broad range of knowledge of topics relevant to young people and the ability to coach or mentor them to make life choices.

- **Competencies with digital tools** – including understanding the online work, using social media for publicity, using digital tools for delivering youth work, and the risks of digitalisation.

- **Competencies in critical thinking, self awareness and flexibility**.

- **Communication and relationship building competencies** – enabling building relationships with young people and motivating young people.

There was a strong desire to increase access to quality youth work. It was said this could be done through:

- Increasing access to youth work through schools.

- Promoting youth centres and youth spaces as sites of access.

- Developing publicity and visibility of youth work – for instance, with national or European publicity campaigns.

- Measures to develop quality of youth work such as quality standards, increased recognition, promotion of youth research, and digital professional standards.

Creating opportunities for rural youth

According to the youth dialogue survey, **Young people see significant room for improvement in implementation of most of the Youth Goal #6 targets**. There is only one aspect in which the majority of young people agree the target is being implemented: valuing rural traditions.

In all other aspects, less than 50% of young people believe that the given aspects are implemented in rural areas across the EU, with the majority of young people directly disagreeing with the bottom four statements. **This depicts rather unfavourable living conditions in the rural areas, as seen by the young people across the EU**, since the most criticised aspects of quality living consist of public services, transportation and infrastructure, and employment. The aspects of the rural areas the young people believe are the most implemented consist of valuing the rural traditions, access to housing, and access to education.

There were differences amongst different subgroups of young people relating to gender, and **university graduates show systematically and profoundly lower agreement in all listed aspects of quality living in rural areas**, with especially critical attitudes in the areas of transportation and employment. Within the working group reports some young people with disabilities and chronic illness highlighted the double disadvantage that occurred when you were a young person with fewer opportunities living in a rural area.

Considering what would make rural areas more attractive to young people, quality education; good infrastructure and transport; and quality employment were identified as most important within the survey; however, it was clear that all other areas explored were still generally considered important.

The working group reports and focus group data that explored how to move rural areas forward continued to emphasise this message. They showed that, in the view of **young people, rural areas simply lacked the infrastructure and opportunities** that they wanted, and there was a need to significantly develop infrastructure and other levels of opportunity for young people.

Poor quality transport was felt to be central to some of the infrastructure issues affecting young people in rural areas. The need to substantially improve public transport in rural areas was an issue reported clearly and extensively across nearly all working group reports. It was identified that poor transport in rural areas prevented young people from these areas commuting easily to city regions to access job opportunities, educational opportunities, youth organisations, leisure activities, shopping facilities, and medical facilities that were within the city areas. The youth dialogue identified the need for:

- Better connection bus and rail from rural to urban areas.
- Promoting cycle use.
- Developing public transport specifically to enable access to education.
- Schemes to improve private vehicle use.

In relation to jobs it was clear that whilst some young people in rural areas envisaged access to quality jobs being about being able to commute to urban areas for work, others wanted to work within their areas and have jobs close to their places of residence. **Overall there was concern that the lack of access to quality jobs was one of the things that caused young people to leave rural areas**. There was said to be a need to promote and explore new forms of rural work, such as agricultural tourism and ecotourism, whilst ensuring farming and agriculture was not abandoned. There were calls to develop measures to:

- Attract business to rural areas.
- Provide incentives and support for young people from rural areas to remain within them during and after study.
- Improve youth information and vocational training in rural areas.

Considering how to **promote the participation of young people in rural areas**, many of the suggestions reflected general ideas about participation such as developing youth council or supporting youth organisation, but done specifically within rural areas. However, suggestions also included giving responsibility for youth policy to local rural administrations and dedicated political or administrative figures for rural youth.

Overall there was a call to create a more diverse offer for youth in rural areas. Unlike education or work, this was much more focused on **bringing youth structures and opportunities into rural areas** rather than enabling commuting to city areas for rural youth. It was felt the role of **youth centres and youth spaces are an important part of a rural youth offer**. The nature of these spaces was similar to the sorts of youth spaces described in the youth work section of this report; however, there was a sense that they were one of the most important types of youth provision needed in rural areas, and they were an important part of providing access to quality leisure time.

The potential for inter-rural or rural-urban **youth mobility programmes** was highlighted, as well as the importance of **strengthening youth organisation and civic society actors in rural areas**. Some working groups highlighted the need for **increasing the numbers of youth workers in rural areas**, though this was much less discussed than other measures. Suggestions such as mobile youth provision were offered to enable this. Digital youth work was proposed by some as an option, but not strongly called for.

Appendix 1: Background of participants in Youth Dialogue 2019

Column groups: GENDER (Males–Gender DNK) · AGE (Under 16–Age DNK) · DISABILITY (Not disabled–Disab. DNK) · MINORITIES (ethnic: Majority/Ethnic minority/DNK; religious: Majority/Religious minority/DNK) · SEXUALITY (Heterosexual/LGBTQI/DNK) · RURAL (Rural/Urban/DNK) · EMPLOYMENT (In work/In education/NEETs/DNK)

Country	Total youth participants	Males	Females	Other gender	Gender DNK	Under 16	16-18	19-25	26-30	Age DNK	Not disabled	Disabled	Disab. DNK	Majority (ethnic)	Ethnic minority	Ethnic DNK	Majority (relig.)	Religious minority	Relig. DNK	Heterosexual	LGBTQI	Sexuality DNK	Rural residents	Urban residents	Rural DNK	In work	In education	NEETs	Employ. DNK
AT	3,385	1,007	2,267	23	23	94	421	2,164	608	33	3,042	125	153	2,882	236	202	2,772	201	347	2,521	401	398	1,408	1,821	91	1,558	2,631	476	
BE_DE	488	211	264	2	11	75	249	118	20	26	409	15	41	303	61	104	311	95	64	398	23	45	282	151	43	189	283	5	
BE-FL	589	217	228	3	7						417	7	16	247	40	157	316	33	93	353	49	40				16	422		
BE-FR	895	280	596	9	10	15	317	397	166	-	539	29	327							456	86	353	397	434	64		672	223	
BG*	12,851	130	296	4	1,533	52	62	113	209	1,500	413	6	1,517	367	44	1,525	370	32	1,534	382	35	1,519	42	366	1,522	203	430	1,731	
CY	216	72	69		2	3	11	45	84		137	2	4	12	128	3	125	16	2	126	13	4	16	121	6	99	68		
CZ	1,791	616	795	7	29	38	452	561	352	36	1,321	86	32	1,303	49	87	1,290	85	64	1,265	115	59	493	918	40	541	816	82	
DK	1,170	246	270	3	1	-	113	212	195	-	460	50	10	471	31	18	451	44	25	469	40	11	116	388	16	183	270	37	30
DE	350																												
EE	2,102	487	1,114	5		326	539	568	173		1,526	80		1,321	285								477	1,127	2	285	871	57	
ES	1,290	201	274	5	750	257	147	276	126	424	418	16	296	397	20	813	390	31	809	310	117	803	242	588	400	203	380	647	
FI	2,007	649	821	11	8	176	206	579	514	14	1,317	116	56	1,306	69	79	1,293	112	84	1,258	171	61	270	1,180	39	783	880		
FR	1,444	359	848	17	16	125	139	598	230	152													341	909		652	519	39	
HR	3,042	867	2,087	3	38	110	738	1,442	678	29	2,837	71	99	2,583	170	236	2,315	483	194	2,603	214	176	1,193	1,531	263	978	2,155	204	
HU	1,070																												
IE	326	141	182	3	-	39	118	129	40		125	12	189	208	105	13	91	26	209	110	29	187	63	74	189	69	134		123
INGO	989	313	535	1	140	1	409	344	87	151	234	-	755	208	36	745	200	5	784	180	55	754	33	189	767	121	650	3	215
IT	1,415	445	948	3	19	5	18	718	673	1	1,321	20	74	1,281	73	61	1,216	89	110	1,179	110	126	300	1,005	110	699	301	415	
LT	696																												
LU	385	91	126	3	180	16	42	116	51	175	211	9	180	156	25	219	181	16	203	175	39	186	102	112	186	89	143	29	139
LV	2,350	535	1,017		526	506	735	124	224	305		12																	
MT	1,062	522	540				154	487	421		1,013	43	6	805	186	71	722	316	24	986	64	12	366	690	6				
NL	772	302	388	20	62	225	184	50	4	309	609	43	120	481	55	236	538	46	188	563	57	152	171	507	93	402	678	3	
PT	690	116	117		228																		127						
RO	4,489	786	1,155			740	478	427	86	211	1,271	2	669	1,439	31	472	1,425	23	494	1,417	39	486	343	1,063	536	406	1,383	153	
SE	1,115	474	631	-	10	6	146	235	715	10	1,035	36	11	1,023	45	35	1,018	50	35	844	154	74	276	730	62	755	543	842	8
SI	565	236	265					322	183	56														504		160	401		
SK	8,222	3,612	4,126	130	171	3,316	3,308	1,049	162	143	7,029	444	561	5,142	1,641	1,258	5,609	1,412	1,018	6,902	535	599	3,501	4,031	511	1,271	7,351	99	
UK	521	119	240	6	165	87	164	107	8	164	277	80	173	234	112	184	225	77	228	240	85	205	97	223	210	114	299	117	
(1) TOTALS	56,287	13,034	20,199	258	3,929	6,212	9,472	11,042	5,882	3,683	25,961	1,304	5,289	22,169	3,442	6,518	20,858	3,192	6,509	22,737	2,431	6,250	10,656	18,662	5,156	9,776	22,280	5,162	515
(3) PARTIAL PERCENTAGES (based on partial totals)	60.53%	34.83%	53.98%	0.69%	10.50%	17.12%	26.10%	30.43%	16.21%	10.15%	79.75%	4.01%	16.25%	69.00%	10.71%	20.29%	68.25%	10.45%	21.30%	72.37%	7.74%	19.89%	30.91%	54.13%	14.96%	25.91%	59.05%	13.68%	1.36%
Sum of percentages in all areas					100.00%					100.00%			100.00%			100.00%			100.00%			100.00%			100.00%				100.00%
(5) VALID PERCENTAGES (percentages based on partial totals without the do not know option)	52.13%	38.92%	60.31%	0.77%	100.00%	19.05%	29.05%	33.86%	18.04%	100.00%	95.22%	4.78%	100.00%	86.56%	13.44%	100.00%	86.73%	13.27%	100.00%	90.34%	9.66%	100.00%	36.35%	63.65%	100.00%	26.27%	59.86%	13.87%	100.00%

(2) PARTIAL TOTALS for each subgroup (first cell on the right contains an average of all partial totals): 34,072 — GENDER 37,420 — AGE 36,291 — DISABILITY 32,554 — MINORITIES (ethnic) 32,129 — MINORITIES (religious) 30,559 — SEXUALITY 31,418 — RURAL 34,474 — EMPLOYMENT 37,733

(4) VALID TOTALS (first cell on the right contains an average of valid totals without the do not know option): 29,341 — GENDER 33,491 — AGE 32,608 — DISABILITY 27,265 — MINORITIES (ethnic) 25,611 — MINORITIES (religious) 24,050 — SEXUALITY 25,168 — RURAL 29,318 — EMPLOYMENT 37,218

*In case of Bulgaria, an approximate number of young people engaged in "Road Show" events was also given, totalling an estimate of 10 000 young people.

READING NOTES

First and foremost, all figures are estimates of the National Working Groups and need to be read as such.

(1) TOTALS are summs of all figures provided by the National Working Groups in all areas.

(2) PARTIAL TOTALS and **(3) PARTIAL PERCENTAGES** represent only figures for which National Working Groups provided information on backgrounds of the participants.

(4) VALID TOTALS and **(5) VALID PERCENTAGES** show only figures for which National Working Groups provided information on backgrounds of the participants, but leaving out the "Do Not Know" option, hence totalling all participants the valid background information is available for.

Appendix 2

Standard Surveys in 7th Cycle of Youth Dialogue 2019: What numbers were analysed?

In course of 2019 Youth Dialogue cycle, numerous National Working Groups (NWGs) conducted surveys amongst young people in Member States of the European Union (EU) in order to explore opinions of the young generation towards three Youth Goals:

- Moving rural youth forward (Youth Goal no.6)
- Quality employment for all (Youth Goal no.7)
- Quality learning (Youth Goal no.8)

Before presenting results of the survey data in these concrete areas, a summary of the survey data obtained across the EU Member States is offered below in order to provide an insight into the profile of young people who took part in the surveys of the NWGs. **All in all, 26 604 young people from more than 46 European countries[1] responded to the surveys conducted in 20 EU Member States by the NWGs[2].**

As shown in the Figure 1 below, the sample sizes varied greatly, depending on the NWG the survey data originated at (see 'unweighted, original sample distribution'). In order to compensate for the disproportionate sample sizes, all data used in the further analyses have been weighted in order to match the 2019 distribution of young people (11-34 years of age) as described by the latest Eurostat data (2019a). Dataset after applying the weights (see 'weighted') resembles to a large extent the distribution of young people across the EU Member States in 2019 (see 'according to Eurostat data for 2019').

In the overall survey data, about 35% of men as opposed to about 64% of women and about 1% of young people of other genders can be found (see Figure 2 below). Young people who answered to the YD surveys are distributed rather similarly across the age groups when it comes to their gender, with an exception of 11-14-year olds who show a larger proportion of men as well as a larger proportion of young people of other genders. Larger proportion of young people of other genders in this particular age group is interesting, as it may reflect a development of gender identities as well as it may be a sign of a slight rascality or misunderstanding of the concepts on the youngster's part. In comparison to the overall EU population[3], men are underrepresented, which may be a sign of generally lower levels of participation in the YD process in this particular gender group[4].

Young people were asked about a number of potential obstacles in their lives as shown in Figure 3 below. Apparently, living in rural areas is the most common potential obstacle for the young people and is dealt with specifically in the chapter dedicated to the Youth Goal no.6. It is noteworthy that

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[1] Young people were asked about their country of origin in the surveys.
[2] NWGs conducted the surveys and reached out to young people currently living in these countries.
[3] There are currently about 51% of women and 49% of men in the EU, with no other genders taken into account by the Eurostat surveys. (Eurostat 2019b)
[4] Some studies suggest that online surveys are more likely to be filled in by females than males, and hence this in itself can be a source of gender disbalance in the analysed data. (c.f. Smith 2008)

according to the Eurostat (2018) data, about 28% of EU population lived in rural areas in 2015[5] with an increasing trend over the years, suggesting that the proportion of young people coming from rural areas in the YD sample corresponds rather well with the overall situation in the EU.

Figure 1: Sample distribution in percentages in comparison to Eurostat (2019a) data (young people 11-34 years of age).
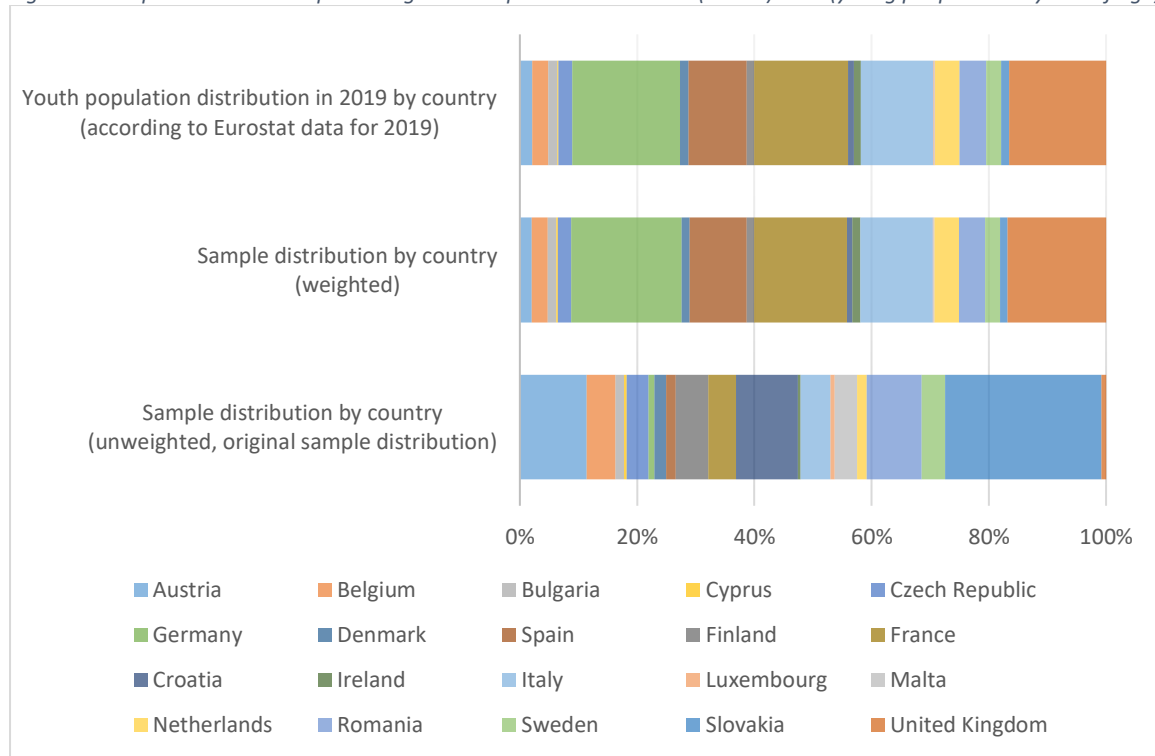
Source: National consultation data from Youth Dialogue process 2019.
Note: Countries listed in alphabetical order of the country abbreviation.

Figure 2: Sample distribution by gender in percentages.
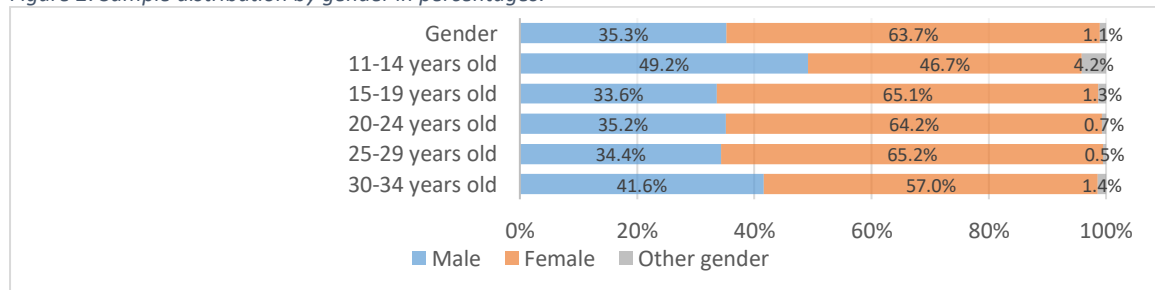
Source: National consultation data from Youth Dialogue process 2019.
Note: Age groups are aligned with the Eurostat age group methodology.

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[5] More current and age-differentiated data not available at the time of publishing this report.

Figure 3 also shows that around 7% of the YD survey respondents consider themselves to be physically disabled. According to the Eurostat (2016)[6], about 14% of the EU population (aged between 15 and 64) were physically disabled in 2011, with more disabled people located in older age groups (over 45 years of age), suggesting that this concrete subgroup of young people is slightly underrepresented in the YD survey data. This can be considered a successful result, given the limitations of survey data collection.

LGBTQI+ young people also took part in the surveys, totalling over 17% of all respondents, while young people with other potential obstacles accounting for around 11% in the area of religious faith, and around 13% in the area of ethnic minority background. Since it is difficult to get an overall picture for the EU countries in these specific indicators, it is not possible to see whether these proportions of young people with some potential obstacles are in line with the general situation in the EU. It is, however, positive to see that they are represented in the survey and their voice is heard.

Figure 3: Sample distribution by low socio-economic status indicators in percentages.
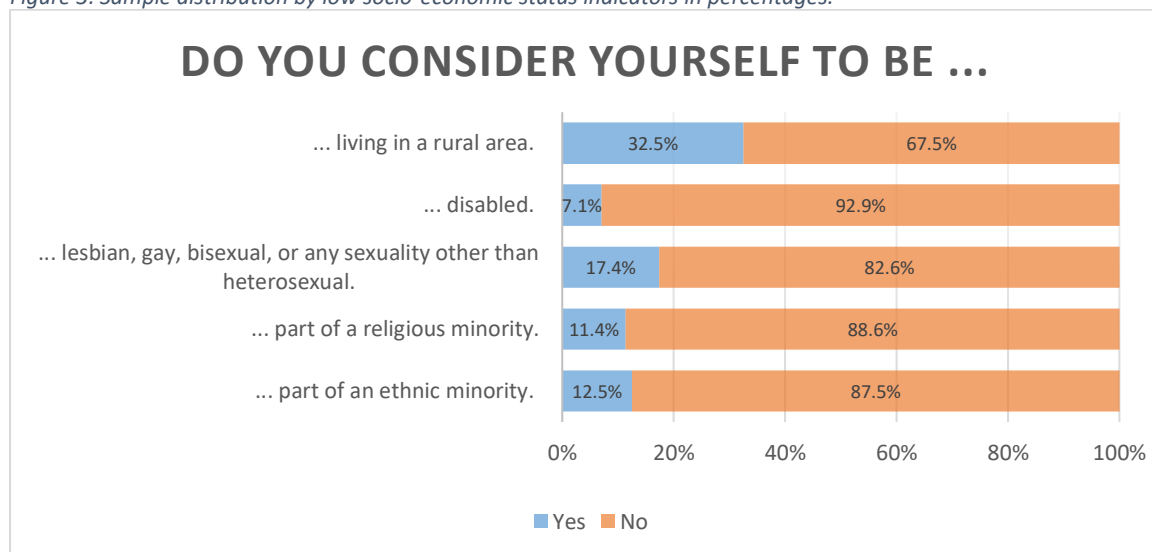
Source: National consultation data from Youth Dialogue process 2019.

Educational attainment of the young people participating in the YD surveys are shown in Figure 4 below. Latest Eurostat (2019c) data show that in 2018, the population of the EU divided into the following groups according to the highest educational attainment:

- 19.4% of basic school or lower education;
- 45.4% of high school or equivalent education;
- 35.2% of university or equivalent education.

This corresponds rather well with the general educational attainment as shown in Figure 4. Slightly higher percentage of the respondents with the lowest educational attainment as well as slightly lower percentage of respondents with high school diploma are to be expected, since the sample contains

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[6] More current and age-differentiated data not available at the time of publishing this report.

respondents as young as 11 years of age[7], and including a majority of respondents who are still actively pursuing their formal education tracks (over 60%; see Figure 6) . The YD sample, however, contains a higher percentage of university graduates compared to the EU average (Eurostat 2019c). This becomes even more obvious when age groups are explored: over 50% in the group of 20-24-year olds, almost 70% in the group of 25-29-year olds, and over 70% in the age group of 30-34-year olds. These data suggest that the YD surveys were largely filled in by well-educated young people[8]. All genders exhibit similar educational attainments, save for the young people of other genders who largely fall into the youngest age group and hence also score lower in their educational attainment.

Figure 4: Sample distribution by educational attainment in percentages.
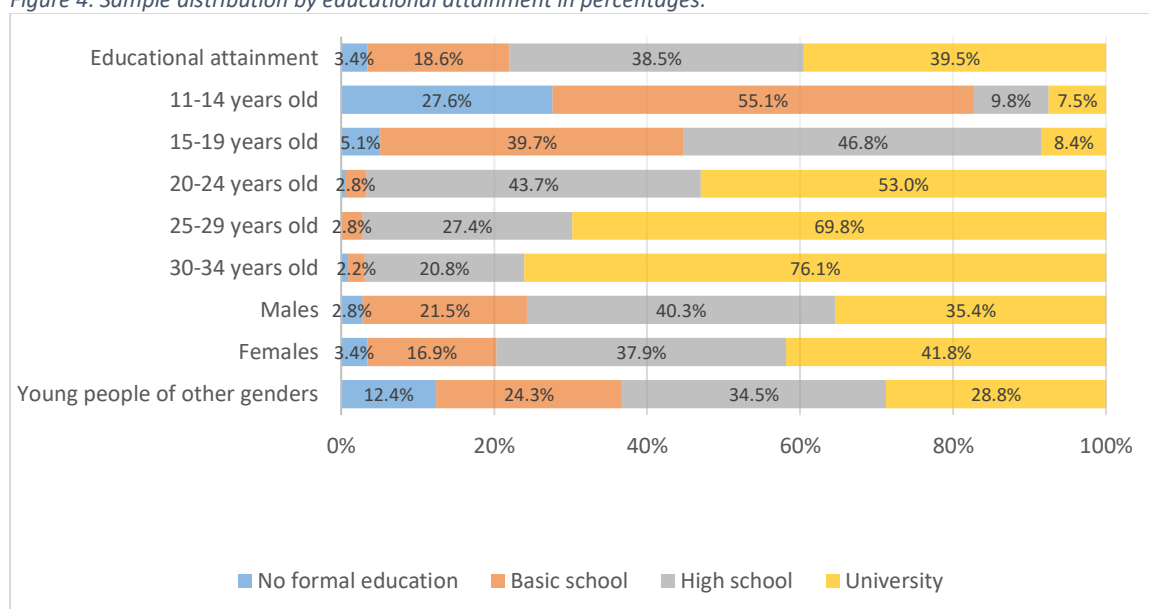
Source: National consultation data from Youth Dialogue process 2019.
Note: Age groups are aligned with the Eurostat age group methodology.

Figure 5 shows, that about 50% of YD surveys´ respondents were not working at all and about the same percentage of them were either part time or full-time workers. When exploring age groups, the proportion of respondents who are not working falls steeply from over 80% of 11-14-year olds to slightly over 16% of 30-34-year olds. The same trend can be seen when exploring educational status of the young people: those still in full time education work less than those out of formal schooling. Young people of other genders are, again, exhibiting higher proportion of those who are not working, which is connected to them largely falling into the youngest age group.

The YD sample contains voices of young people and as suggested above, the Figure 6 shows educational status of the YD respondents, with over 60% of them still in full time education. Detailed analyses show that this percentage drops profoundly in age groups containing individuals over 20

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[7] Eurostat (2019c) statistics only calculate educational attainment for 25-year olds and older, and the subgroup quoted in this text summarizes the highest educational attainment for 25-54-year olds.
[8] The survey results cannot be verified; however, it must be noted that it is rather unlikely for 7.5% of the 11-14-year olds and for 8.4% of 15-19-year olds to possess university degrees.

years of age: from almost 90% in respondents under 20 years of age to less than 10% in those over 30 years of age. Males and females show similar proportions of people in all categories, with young people of other genders again influenced by the fact that a large proportion of them falls into the youngest age group.
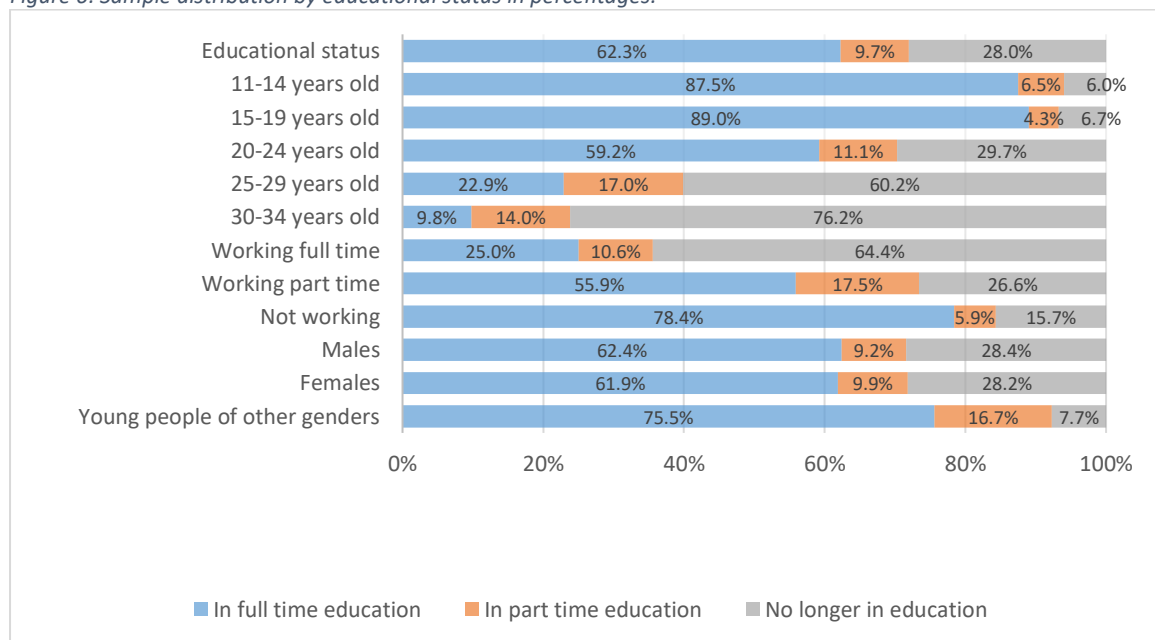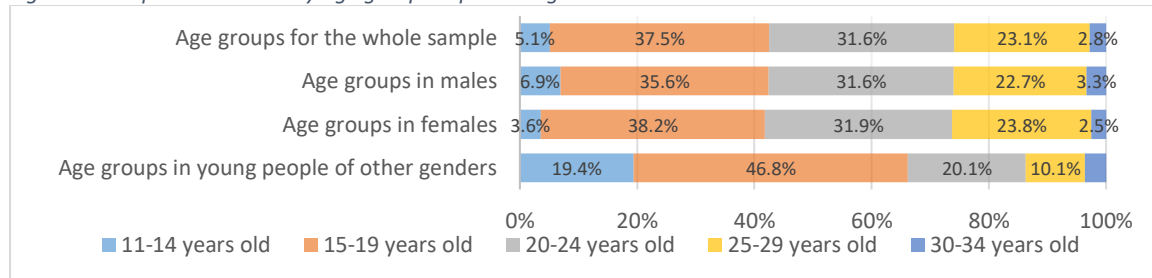
Figure 5: Sample distribution by occupational status in percentages.
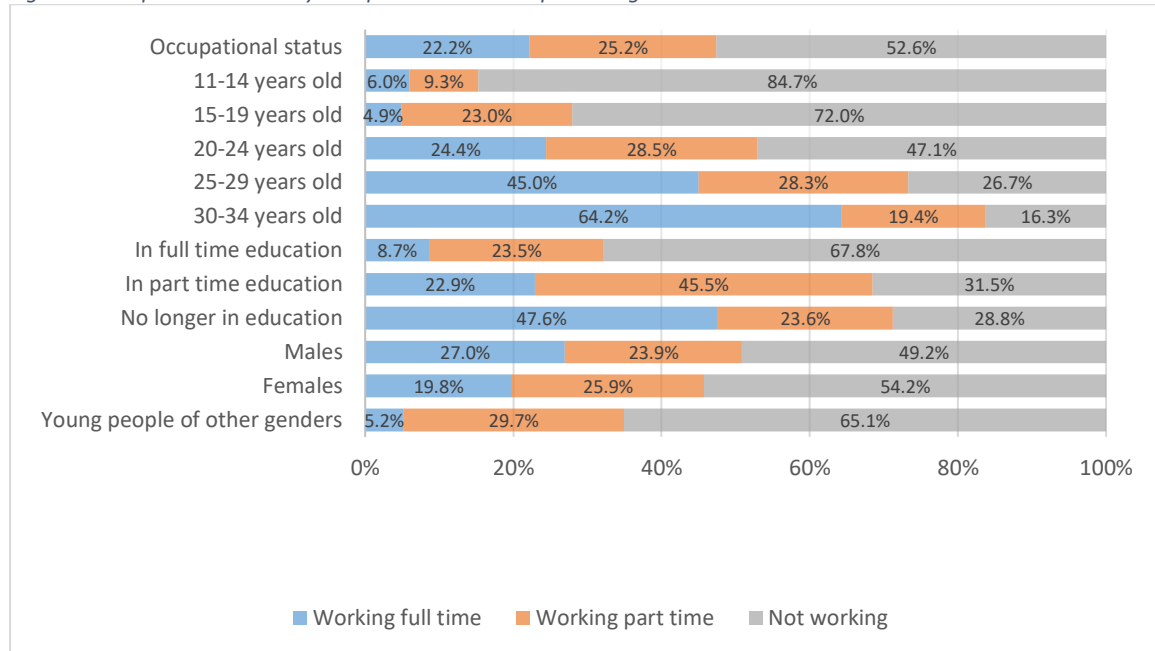
Source: National consultation data from Youth Dialogue process 2019.
Note: Age groups are aligned with the Eurostat age group methodology.

Figure 6: Sample distribution by educational status in percentages.

Source: National consultation data from Youth Dialogue process 2019.
Note: Age groups are aligned with the Eurostat age group methodology.

Figure 7 shows that over 90% of the YD survey sample is between 15 and 29 years of age, with over 5% of 11-14-year olds and under 3% of over 30-year olds. This is consistent across male and female genders, with young people of other genders spreading profoundly over the lower age groups.

Figure 7: Sample distribution by age groups in percentages.

Source: National consultation data from Youth Dialogue process 2019.
Note: Age groups are aligned with the Eurostat age group methodology.

Based on the previously mentioned items listing potential obstacles in the lives of young people (see previous Figure 3 for details), an indicator of young people with fewer opportunities was calculated using all of these items apart from the one which focused on living in rural areas. Based on this indicator, respondents of the YD surveys were differentiated into the following groups:

- young people with fewer opportunities;
- young people from majority backgrounds.

As shown below (see Figure 8), almost 40% of the respondents can be identified as potentially having fewer opportunities, with more females and young people of other genders falling under this category, as well as with younger age groups showing more young people with fewer opportunities than older ones.

Summary

All in all, 26 604 young people from more than 46 European countries responded to the surveys conducted in 20 EU Member States by the NWGs. All of these data were weighted and included in further analyses of the YD surveys. Data contain young people from various backgrounds, such as living in rural areas, coming from various ethnical and religious backgrounds, and being of different genders and sexual orientations. At the same time, the SD sample is rather well educated in comparison to the general situation in the EU. All in all, young people in the sample mostly study, with their working roles extending in older age groups.

Figure 8: Young people with fewer opportunities in sample distribution in percentages.
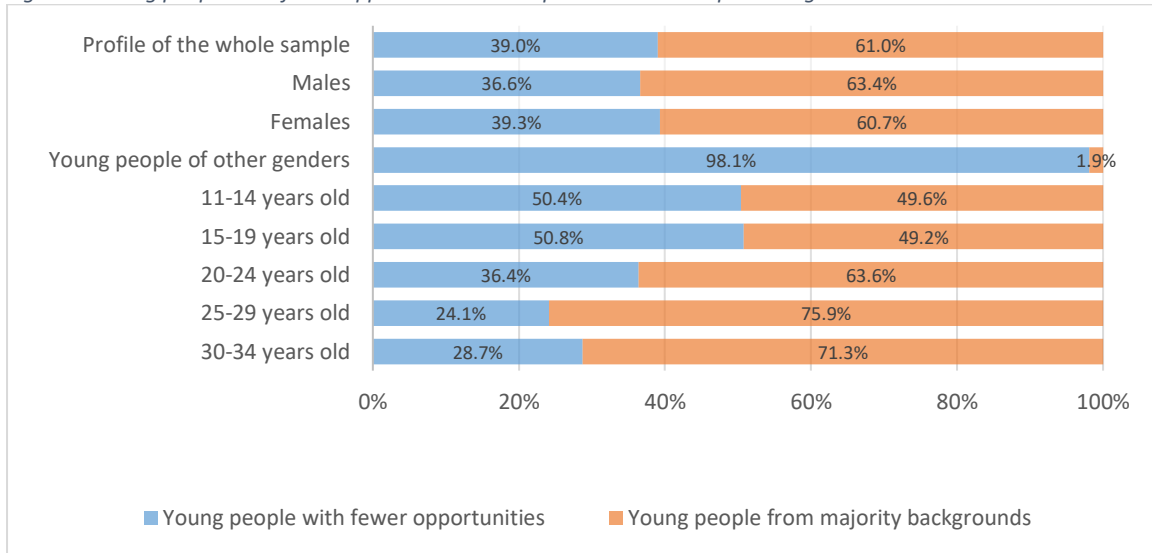
Source: National consultation data from Youth Dialogue process 2019.
Note: Age groups are aligned with the Eurostat age group methodology.

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