Youth Goals

Youth Dialogue

The 7th Cycle of EU Youth Dialogue:
Summary of Findings

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56,287
young people from all over the EU took part.

30,533
people took part in a survey.

25,744
people took part in other methods.

260
photographs and visual methods were created.
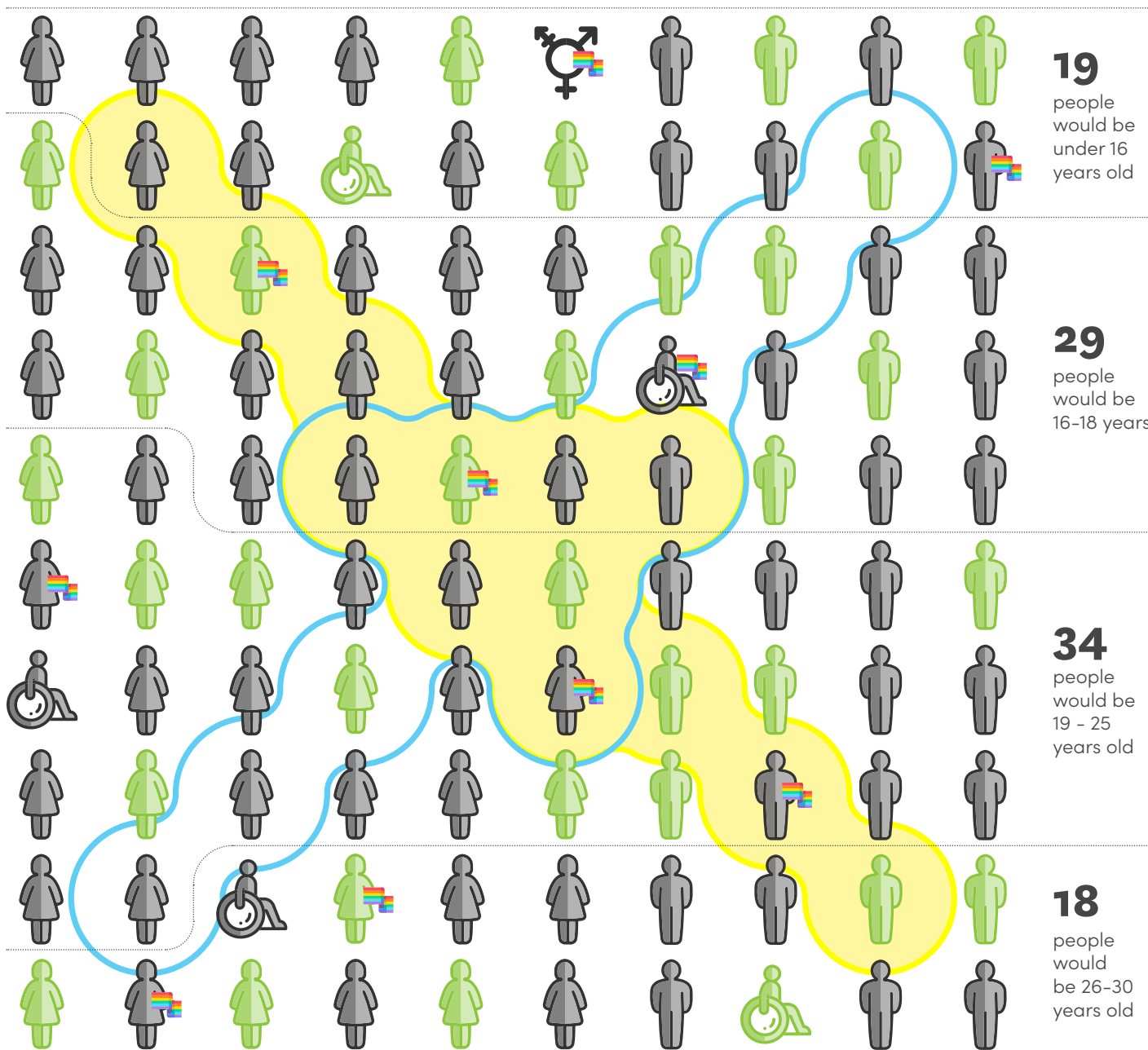
252
focus groups were held.

225
large youth dialogue events were held.

12
participatory action research projects took place.

This report contains summary findings from the 7th cycle of EU Youth Dialogue Activities in the Member States and across Europe. The findings are based on activities carried out by National Working Groups from every EU country (including the UK) except Poland and Greece, and a European Working Group comprised of International Youth Non Governmental Organisations.

If Youth Dialogue was 100 people...

This diagram is for illustrative purposes only, intersections between different groups are not always accurately shown.
Data is based on WG reporting which covers 52% of participants

19
people
would be
under 16
years old

29
people
would be
16–18 years

34
people
would be
19 – 25
years old

18
people
would
be 26–30
years old

60
people would
identify as
female

39
people would
identify as
male

1
person would
identify as
'other gender'

36
people would
be from rural
areas

5
people would
identify as
disabled

13
people would
identify as
being from
an ethnic
minority
group

13
people would
identify as
being from
an religious
minority
group

10
people would
identify as
LGBTQ+

Quality Employment for All

Youth Goal #7:
Quality Employment for All

Guarantee an accessible labour market with opportunities that lead to quality jobs for all young people.

Read the youth goals in full:
www.youthgoals.eu

The youth dialogue suggests young people have very different experiences across Europe in relation to employment. When it comes to:

- Safeguarding the social protection and healthcare of young workers,

- Ensuring young people have access to quality information and guidance on work,

- Guaranteeing recognition of the competencies young people learn outside of school, such as through internships or non-formal education.

some young people feel these are being achieved well in their realities, but others do not.

However, when it comes to:

- Access to quality jobs which guarantee fair working conditions,

- Equal opportunities for all young people to develop the skills and experience they need for the workplace,

- Young people getting fair treatment and equal opportunities in the workplace,

the majority of young people do not believe these are being achieved.

The future of work: Discrimination and inequality in the workplace?

Discrimination and inequality in the workplace seems to be common for many young people who participated in the youth dialogue. This topic is a serious concern for many young people.

Sometimes this is discrimination on the basis of age, sometimes it occurs on the basis of background.

For example, young Roma, young people with chronic illness and young people who had been in prison all identified that they had been discriminated against because of their backgrounds.

In the youth dialogue survey, young people with fewer opportunities were less likely to say that Youth Goal #7 was being achieved. This was especially true for young people of other genders such as trans and non-binary young people.

The future of work: Wellbeing before profit?

There was concern that the future of work and particularly increasing precarious or uncertain employment for young people was likely to have a negative effect on young people's wellbeing.

"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

In the youth dialogue, many young people identified that having work which allows them to feel fulfilled and look after their mental health and wellbeing was more important than their income.

Flexibility, self-determination and having control within your work was said to be an important part of achieving this.

Precarious employment is work which is unstable or uncertain, where the worker's rights are often poorly protected.

What should be done? Protecting young workers

To protect and support the rights of young workers in an ever-changing labour market there were calls to:

- Ban unpaid internships and traineeships.

- Support youth participation and involvement in the development of labour policies.

- Increase education and information about workers rights, particularly around discrimination.

What should be done? Education for the future of work

There was a strong call to modernise schools, colleges and universities. The formal education system was said to be outdated, and focused on teaching skills that were not relevant to the future work.

It was said schools and other formal education institutions should focus on:

- Practical, vocational and soft skills that are relevant to the labour market.

- Giving young people access to a mixture of work and learning opportunities.

- Providing career orientation and guidance.

- Providing support for young entrepreneurs.

- Cooperating with employers.

Equipping young people with skills that can be used in a variety of work settings was said to be very important. This included foreign languages, communication skills, financial literacy and digital competencies.

Young people in the youth dialogue said it was important to change teaching methods and make formal educational institutions more flexible. This meant bridging the gap between non-formal and formal education, and increasing recognition of non-formal education. It was suggested that the EU should:

- Developing ways to integrate formal and non-formal education, such as through cooperation between youth organisations and schools.

- Support cooperation between all types of educational institutions and employers.

- Agree on a common framework of recognition of non-formal education and competencies across all the member states in the European Union.

Quality Youth Work for All

Youth work and the Youth Goals

There is no single Youth Goal dedicated to youth work, but youth work is relevant to many of the youth goals. Youth Goal #8 'Quality Learning' is strongly connected to the educational aspects of youth work. However, Youth Goal #9: 'Space and Participation for All' and Goal #11: 'Youth Organisations and European Programmes' are also linked. Youth work can also make a contribution to achieving many of the other youth goals.

Youth Goal #8 'Quality Learning'

Read the youth goals in full:
www.youthgoals.eu

Does the EU promote the sort of Youth Work that young people want?

Overall, young people who took part in the youth dialogue consider youth work to be a complex service bringing together many types of support which are all valued by young people.

However, different groups of young people value different things more. For example, young people with no formal education and those with fewer opportunities identified that what they want most from youth work are opportunities to learn. In contrast, young people who work full time emphasise that participation is most important to them. There are also variations across the age ranges.

In general', the EU promotes competencies for the training of youth workers that young people value.

Almost 70% of people who took part in the youth dialogue survey said they had access to quality youth work. However, because youth dialogue is conducted by the youth sector, this figure probably does not reflect the experience of all European young people.

Young people with fewer opportunities who took part in the survey were no more or less likely to have access to youth work than everyone else. This tells us that where youth work is in operation, it reaches a diverse range of young people.

Some countries' national working groups reported that youth work was not very established in their country.

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1   Based on the competencies in **'European Training Strategy: A set of competences for trainers working at international level'.**

What competencies do youth workers need?

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.

What next?: Improving access to quality youth work

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

- Bringing youth work into schools, and promoting collaboration between the youth workers and schools.

- Promoting high quality youth centres and youth spaces as places to access youth work. These should be open for longer hours, have good facilities and be accessible by public transport.

- Developing publicity and visibility of youth work – for instance, with national or European publicity campaigns or improving the way digital tools are used for outreach.

- Other measures such as youth work quality standards, improved training for youth workers, increased recognition of youth work, promotion of youth research and professional standards on digital youth work.

Creating Opportunities for Rural Youth

Youth Goal #6:
Moving Rural Youth Forward

Create conditions which enable young people to fulfil their potential in rural areas.

Read the youth goals in full:
www.youthgoals.eu

Is Youth Goal #6 being achieved?

Young people who took part in the youth dialogue 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 targets, less than 50% of young people believe they are being implemented in rural areas across the EU.

The youth dialogue survey showed that young people were most critical of aspects such as lack of public services, transportation and infrastructure, and lack of employment opportunities in rurals.

In the survey, university graduates were much more critical of the quality of life in rural areas than young people without degrees. Graduates were especially critical in the areas of poor transportation and employment opportunities in rural areas.

Within the focus groups 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.

Across the youth dialogue there was a clear and consistent message from young people: rural areas simply lacked the infrastructure and opportunities that young people wanted.

What should be done? Transport and public services

Lack of access to public services, such as housing and health services was a common issue, in rural areas. This was closely connected to concerns about poor quality public transport.

Poor transport in rural areas prevented young people from rural areas traveling 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 – buses 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.

What should be done? Employment and entrepreneurship

In relation to jobs it was clear that whilst some young people in rural areas wanted to be able to commute to city areas for work, others wanted to work within the areas they lived in and have jobs close to their places of home.

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.

What should be done? Education

Improving the quality of education was said to be one of the things that would make rural areas more attractive to young people.

It was generally felt that with fewer educational institutions in rural areas, young people had less choice around their educational opportunities.

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 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.

What should be done? Youth information and counselling

Improving youth information in rural areas was said to be a potential solution to some of the issues affecting rural youth. Suggestions for this included:

- Improving access to information about job opportunities and entrepreneurship schemes in rural areas, in order to help young people find work.

- Increasing promotion of EU funds such as Erasmus+ within rural areas, in order to increase their use and help young people realise their own projects.

Some people in the dialogues suggested dedicated youth information campaigns targeted at rural areas, promotion through schools and rural youth information points.

The use of digital tools was mentioned but not strongly emphasised – it was said many rural areas had poor digital connectivity.

Young people in rural areas had the same needs as young people in urban areas when it came to career counselling:

- Providing information about jobs and educational choices available.

- Providing support on how to apply for work.

- Provision of more in-depth mentoring and guidance to help "find your path".

However, because the jobs in rural areas were different this might mean providing information about different sorts of education and work opportunities.

What should be done? Rural youth centres and rural youth work

There were calls to offer a wider range of youth facilities in rural areas and to decentralise youth work from cities.

It was said to be important to bring youth programmes and youth work opportunities directly into rural areas, and to promote and resource rural youth organisations.

Youth centres and youth spaces were said to be an important part of what was needed in rural areas. These were identified as being an important place to be able to access quality leisure opportunities and socialise. For some young people in rural areas they were the only place they could meet others.

The potential for inter-rural or rural-urban youth mobility programmes between rural areas, or between rural and city areas, was highlighted, as well the need to increase the numbers of youth workers in rural areas.

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.

There was also said to be a need to promote the participation of young people in rural areas, with dedicated youth organisations or rural youth councils, or by dedicated political or administrative figures for rural youth.