

Young people not in education, employment or training and their views of the future, democracy and public services – a Youth Barometer special sample (2017–2019)

This study is based on giving a voice to young people who have been or are not in education, employment and training. We are interested in hearing how they perceive **democracy, society, confidence, participation, a good life, wellbeing, their position** and how the **services** targeted at them are working. It is as important to offer these young people the experience of being heard as it is to bring their views into decision-making. This study is about broadening the information base: putting marginalized young people at the centre to create a new form of knowledge on how the welfare of young people can be strengthened not only as clients of public services, as agents of their own life but also as citizens of the civil society, municipalities, regions and states in their pursuit of a meaningful life and making a difference. In addition, this is a long-term study, possibly lasting ten years, although the first report will be published already in autumn 2019.

Aims of the study

The research will add to existing knowledge on the wellbeing of young people and their opportunities for making an impact by producing more comprehensive information on which decision makers can rely, concerning:

1. Factors affecting the life and wellbeing of young people not in education, employment and training.
2. Service development needs from both a preventive and remedial point of view.
3. The ways society and municipalities can strengthen their wellbeing support role and democratic communities of and for young people.
4. The identification of megatrends linked to social adherence, democracy and engagement.

The study also has methodological aims:

5. To increase the meaningful use of survey data and its validation by benefitting from triangulation with qualitative data. There is, for example, the need to identify the effects of nonresponse biases in surveys.
6. To develop research methods from an ethical perspective when contacting, following the life span of and providing a group of marginalized young people the opportunity to voice their thoughts.

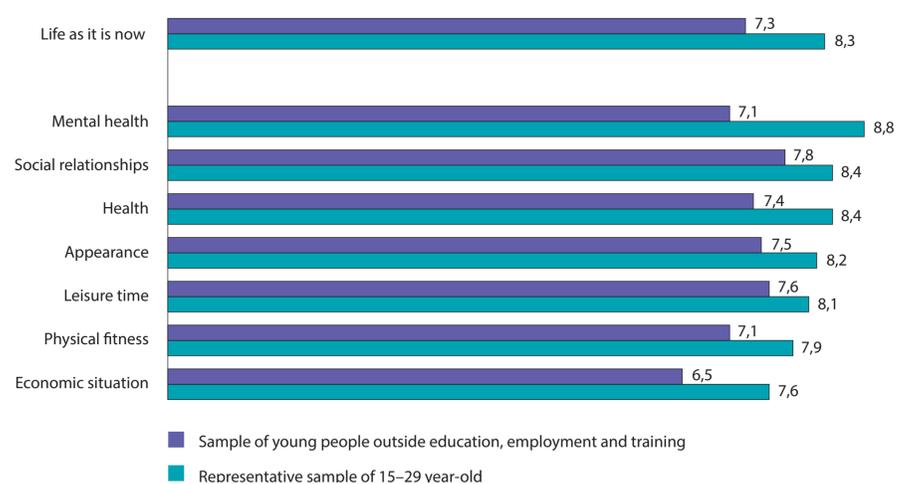


Figure 1. Level of satisfaction with different aspects of life. (School marks from 4-10, average). Young people not in education, employment and training interviewed by outreach youth workers were found to be less satisfied with their life in all the aspects on which they were questioned than those who responded to the general Youth Barometer telephone interviews. The strength of the study is that it can take into account different forms of research data resources.

About the data and comparative research setting

The data collected by interviews of youth outside education, employment and training will be linked with register-based data of youth and their parents containing sociodemographic background variables. This enables a comparison of the respondents' own experiences with the register-based information, as well as an examination of life paths and intergenerational factors leading to youth not being in education, employment and training. 117 structured interviews of young people not in education, employment or training have already been conducted by outreach youth workers; continuing with 30-40 in-depth interviews with a researcher and followed by register data analysis of 50 subjects.

The results of the interviews and register data analysis will also be compared with the Youth Barometer, a telephone survey, which has been conducted annually since 1994 by the State Youth Council and the Finnish Youth Research Network. Its target group is young people aged 15–29 living in Finland. In total, 1900 young people are interviewed using quota sampling, in which the assembled sample has the same proportions of individuals as the reference population with respect to gender, age and mother tongue.

Timetable

- Structural interviews autumn 2017
- In-depth interviews 2018
- Interview analysis and reflection period and register data 2019
- Publishing autumn 2019
- Follow up in ten years

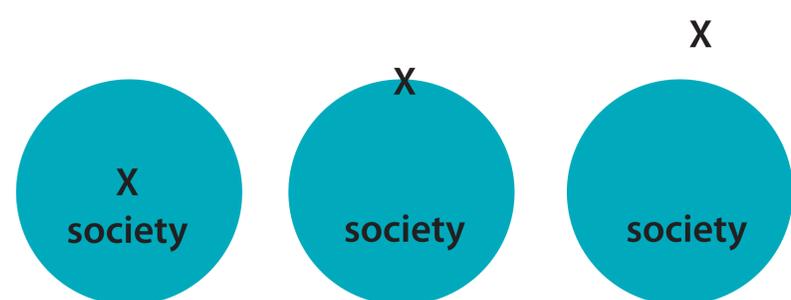


Figure 2. The study also aims to discover whether the young people feel they are a part of society, on the margins or outside (a similar question was also asked in the structural interviews). In the in-depth interviews the way the young people argue their position is highly valued. The theoretical frame of reference used in the analysis is based on speech acts (Austin, John L. (1962) How to do things with Words? Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun.) and positioning theory (Davies, Bronwyn & Harré, Rom (1990) Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves. Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour 20 (1), 44–63.)

RESEARCHERS

Anu Gretschel, Ph.D., Senior Researcher
Sami Myllyniemi, M.SocSc, Researcher