

# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH



Quality  
Learning



Quality  
Employment  
for All



Moving Rural  
Youth Forward

**7th Cycle of the  
EU Youth Dialogue**

**2019/2020 National Report  
on Consultation in Ireland**



## The National Youth Council of Ireland

The National Youth Council of Ireland is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. We use our collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people.

[www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie)

### Young Voices

Young Voices is implemented by NYCI in partnership with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the National Working Group on EU Youth Dialogue.

Young Voices is a programme that offers ongoing opportunities for young people from age sixteen to thirty years who have an interest in change making. Young Voices is about encouraging participation, promoting equal participation, including diverse voices, strengthening young peoples citizenship competences and sense of belonging and ultimately bringing about positive change.

Within the flow of the 18 month cycle of the EU Presidency we work on thematic areas that are impacting on young people across the EU.

Our challenge is to explore the issues, consult as many young people as possible and ultimately to propose actions that might have a positive outcome for young people at EU and National level.

Many thanks to all the young people and youth workers/leaders taking part in the consultation for their invaluable input.

Written and compiled by: Sandra Roe on behalf of the National Youth Council of Ireland in partnership with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Edited by: Jean-Marie Cullen

Cover Design and Illustrations by: Eimear McNally

First published by the National Youth Council of Ireland in 2020 by © National Youth Council of Ireland 2020. All rights reserved  
ISBN: 978-1-900210-62-1

National Youth Council of Ireland  
3 Montague Street, Dublin 2, D02 V327  
[www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie)  
T: 01 478 4122  
E: [info@nyci.ie](mailto:info@nyci.ie)  
Registered Charity Number: CHY 6823

## Index

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Quality Employment for All.....	12
Chapter 2: Quality Youth Work for All.....	30
Chapter 3: Opportunities for Rural Youth.....	39

## Figures

Figure 1: Gender of participants.....	8
Figure 2: Age of participants.....	8
Figure 3: Ethnicity of participants.....	9
Figure 4: Employment and education status of participants.....	9
Figure 5: Young people have access to quality jobs which guarantee them fair working conditions.....	12
Figure 6: Young workers have good social protection and healthcare in Ireland.....	13
Figure 7: Young people get fair treatment & equal opportunities in the labour market in Ireland.....	13
Figure 8: Young people have equal opportunities to develop the skills and experience they need for the labour market in Ireland.....	14
Figure 9: Recognition of non-formal learning and education by employers in Ireland.....	15
Figure 10: Young people have access to quality information and adequate support to prepare them for work.....	15
Figure 11: Young people in rural areas in Ireland have good access to quality public services.....	39
Figure 12: Young people in rural areas have good access to quality education.....	40

Figure 13: Young people in rural areas have good opportunities for quality employment.....	40
Figure 14: Young people in rural areas have good access to housing.....	41
Figure 15: Rural areas have good infrastructure and good public transport connection to urban areas.....	42
Figure 16: Rural areas have good data connectivity and high-speed broadband.....	42
Figure 17: There is a positive image of rural areas in Ireland.....	43
Figure 18: Rural traditions are valued in Ireland.....	43
Figure 19: Access to quality public services.....	45
Figure 20: Access to high quality of education.....	46
Figure 21: Availability of quality jobs and employment opportunities.....	46
Figure 22: Opportunities to participate in decision-making.....	47
Figure 23: Good infrastructure and good public transport connections.....	50
Figure 24: Good data connectivity and high speed broadband.....	50
Figure 25: Impact of pollution and climate change.....	51
Figure 26: Preserving rural traditions, culture and customs.....	52

**Tables**

Table 1: Youth Worker Priorities.....	34
---------------------------------------	----

References.....	55
-----------------	----

## Introduction

### About this report

This report details the findings of EU Youth Dialogue consultations conducted with young people in Ireland. Consultations took place between March and October 2019.

### New context

In November 2018, a [new EU Youth 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 (formerly known as Structured Dialogue) and [the EU Youth Goals](#) among others.

### What is the EU Youth Dialogue?

The EU Youth Dialogue is a flagship youth participation mechanism at EU level aiming to bring youth voice to the EU policy-making. It's 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 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<sup>1</sup>.

### **The 7<sup>th</sup> Cycle of EU Youth Dialogue 2019-2020: Theme and outcomes**

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

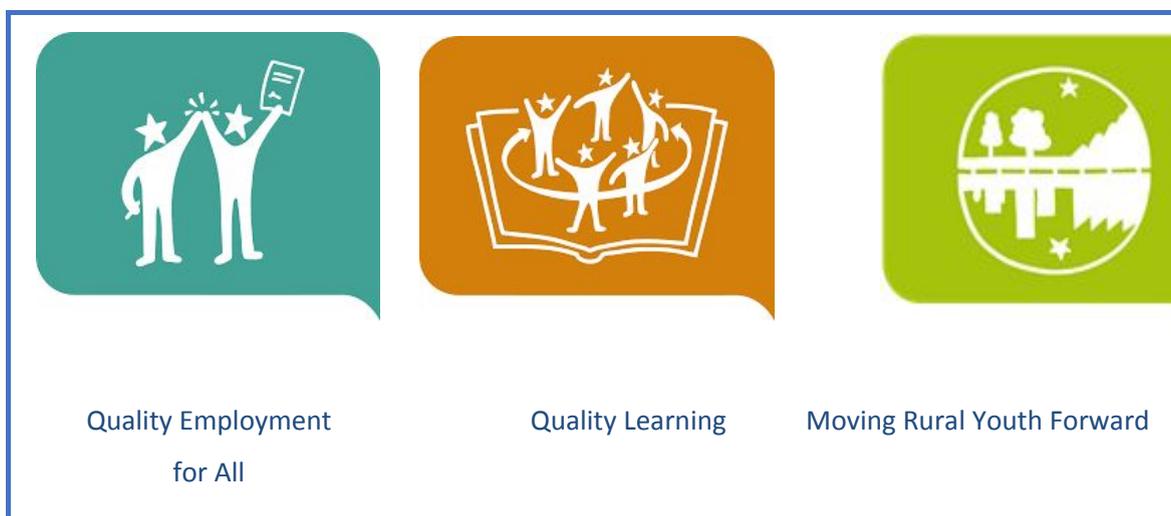
The common theme chosen by the Trio Presidency was:

- **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 connected to three EU Youth Goals:



### **Youth Dialogue Guiding Questions**

---

<sup>1</sup> See the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027) available [here](#).

The guiding questions provide a thematic framework for working groups to design their local, and national dialogues (or in the case of the IYNGO's their European dialogues) in combination with the guidelines for each dialogue method. The guiding questions are set within the subthemes of the TRIO of Presidencies and their corresponding youth goals. They were developed based on the discussions held by delegates at the Romanian Youth Conference 2019 during the workshops on EU Youth Dialogue In Action and finalised by the European Steering Committee of the EU Youth Dialogue.

The guiding questions are not designed to be sent directly to young people. Instead, National Working Groups use the guiding questions to formulate questions and activities that are addressed to young people and provide their engagement in the EU Youth Dialogue.

The Guiding Questions for EU Youth Dialogue 2019 were:

**Subtheme: Youth Goal #7 Quality Employment for All**

- 1a)** What measures and actions can we take in order to implement the targets of the Youth Goal #7?
- 1b)** What measures and actions can we take to improve formal and non-formal education so that it prepares young people for the future of work?
- 1c)** What can we do to make sure all young people including those from marginalised backgrounds are equally treated, protected, safe and secure in the workplace and the labour market of the future?

**Subtheme: Quality Youth Work for All: Youth Goal #8 Quality Learning**

- 2a)** What measures and actions can we take in order to develop quality youth work?
- 2b)** What are the most important competencies that youth workers need in order to support and work with young people and why
- 2c)** What measures and actions can we take to provide access to quality youth work for all?

**Subtheme: Opportunities for Rural Youth: Youth Goal #6 Moving Rural Youth Forward**

- 3a)** What measures and actions can we take to implement youth goal #6 Moving Rural Youth Forward?
- 3b)** What measures and actions can we take to improve rural areas for young people in the short term, in current conditions?
- 3c)** What are the main measures and actions to take in order to improve quality of life for young people in rural areas in the long term?

### **How does Youth Dialogue work at a national level?**

**National Working Groups (NWGs)** are set up at national level to organise and coordinate the EU Youth Dialogue with young people. NWGs 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. In Ireland, the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) has a lead role in relation to Youth Dialogue. Other members of the National Working Group in Ireland included three youth representatives, two government representatives from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), one representative from Léargas and one representative from NUI Maynooth.

### **Young Voices**

Youth Dialogue is known as Young Voices in Ireland.

### **Youth Dialogue Consultations in Ireland**

In total, 326 young people participated in Youth Dialogue consultations in Ireland in 2019. Of these, 164 (50.3%) took part in National Youth Dialogue events, 113 (34.7%) completed the Youth Dialogue national survey and 49 (15%) participated in local workshops/focus groups.

### **Methodologies**

Methodologies used to conduct the consultations in Ireland included:

- National Youth Dialogue events
- Local workshops/focus groups
- Online survey

### **National Youth Dialogue events**

Two national dialogue events were held with young people in Dublin.

- A graphic facilitator to document key emerging themes
- Kahoot polls
- Workshop activities in smaller groups on each theme, e.g. brainstorming, recipe for good quality youth work/youth workers

One national dialogue event was held specifically with young people from minority ethnic backgrounds. Methodologies used at this event included:

- Story sharing among young people from minority ethnic backgrounds on lived experiences
- Watching a film and providing feedback on themes familiar to their lived experiences
- 'Story walk' on lived experiences using post its
- Story investigation of lived experiences using newspaper headlines

### **Making Links**

The National Youth Council of Ireland's (NYCI) Making Links Network brings together minority ethnic youth group leaders with little or no engagement with, or access to, the mainstream youth work sector in Ireland i.e. with NYCI or its 52 members. The members of this group vary, some have active youth groups that regularly meet, some run programmes that bring young people together mostly for events or summer programmes, others work within their communities engaging largely in 1:1 detached work. The Network provides connections, training and workshops from NYCI on topics that are important to them and the strength they gain from one another.

The Making Links members have engaged with NYCI on two youth consultations designed to hear the lived experiences of minority ethnic young people. The first of these looked at their experiences of racism (an IHREC report on this is pending), the second was in collaboration with NYCI's Young Voices programme. Key to our minority ethnic youth event is that it is peer facilitated by our Making Links group so that the young people have trust in the process and the event facilitator also comes from a minority ethnic background.

Having built trust with the making Links Network and the young people, they continue to engage at the Young Voices events, valuing the opportunity it gives them to be heard on issues that impact on them. In the future we will continue to hold one off minority ethnic only events under the Young Voices programme to ensure the groups specific issues are voiced and included.

<https://www.youth.ie/articles/making-links/>

### **Online survey**

An online survey was used to consult with young people in Ireland as part of the Youth Dialogue process. Standard survey questions were provided by the trio of Presidencies which were used by all EU countries. In Ireland, the online tool Survey Monkey was used to develop the survey for Ireland.

In total, 113 young people responded to the survey. Of these, 40 young people responded to the survey online through the National Youth Council of Ireland website.

A further 73 young people, predominantly from rural areas, responded to the survey at the Irish Ploughing Championships. Surveys were conducted face-to-face with young people using tablets. It was decided to target young people at the Ploughing Championships in order to get a large response from young people from rural areas which is one of the themes of Youth Dialogue.

### **Local workshops/focus groups with young people:**

Three workshops/focus groups were conducted with young people exploring the three main themes.

### **Student youth workers focus group**

One focus group was conducted with students of the Youth Studies and Community Development course in Liberties College Dublin, This focus group explored the most important competencies of youth workers

### **Creative methodologies**

Throughout the consultation a variety of creative methodologies were undertaken in a conscious effort to support the engagement of the diverse young people who were participating.

Methodologies included creative arts and media, for example:

- developing manifestos and presenting them to plenary in a 'press conference style' capturing experiences at events using digital graphic recording;
- photography and video, capturing moments and outputs at workshops/events and disseminating them through social media channels;
- using Instagram stories from the National Youth Council account to log the story of a full day event;

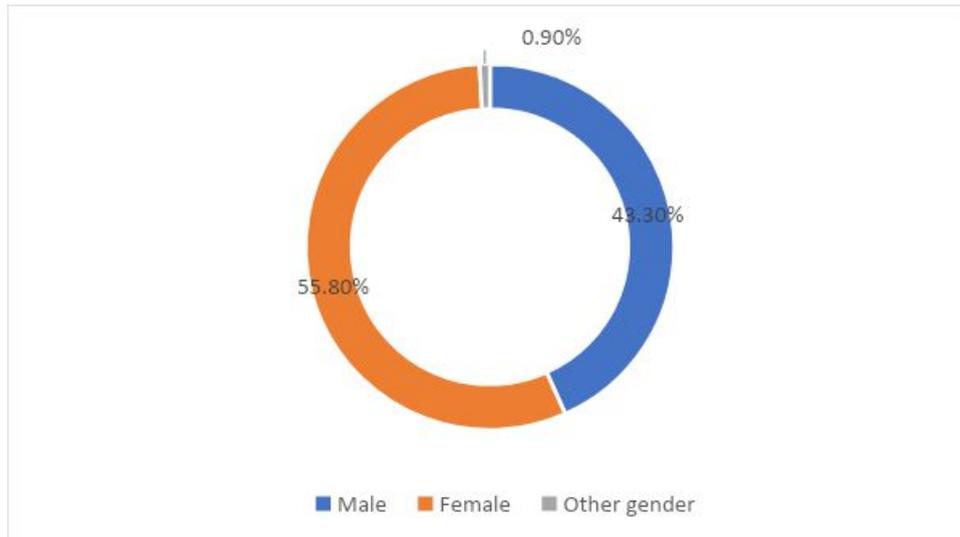
- using drama techniques to support young people's engagement in exploring issues such as employment and discrimination;
- using digital tools such as Mentimeter to facilitate engagement and feedback;
- developing artistic representations of the Front Page of a newspaper with 'headlines' about youth issues.

## Breakdown of young people who participated in Youth Dialogue consultations:

### Gender

In terms of gender, as can be seen in Figure 1 below, 141 (43.3%) young people who took part in consultations were male, 182 (55.8%) were female and 3 (0.9%) identified as 'other gender.'

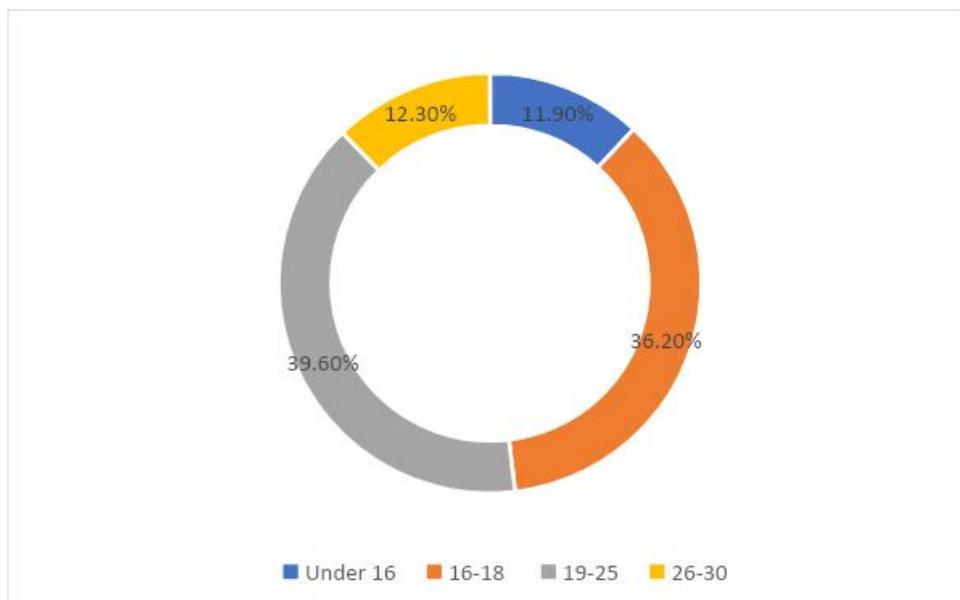
Figure 1: Gender of participants



### Age

With regard to age, 39 (11.9%) young people were under 16 years of age, 118 (36.2%) were aged 16 – 18 years, 129 (39.6%) were aged 19 – 25 years and 40 (12.3%) were aged 26 – 30 years (see Figure 2 below).

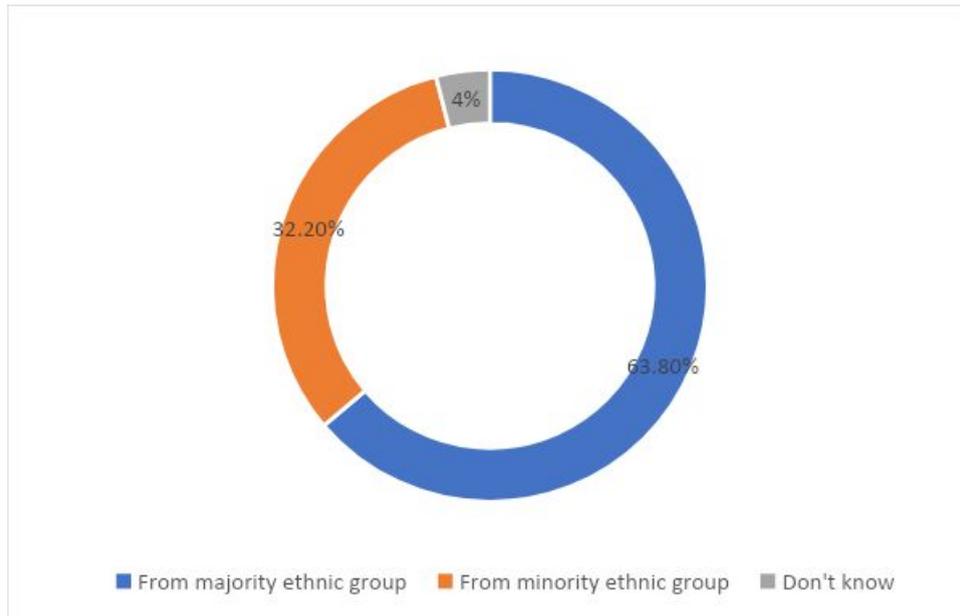
Figure 2: Age of participants



### Ethnicity

Overall, 208 (63.8%) young people were from the majority ethnic group, 105 (32.2%) were from minority ethnic backgrounds and 13 (4%) did not disclose or were not asked (see Figure 3 below).

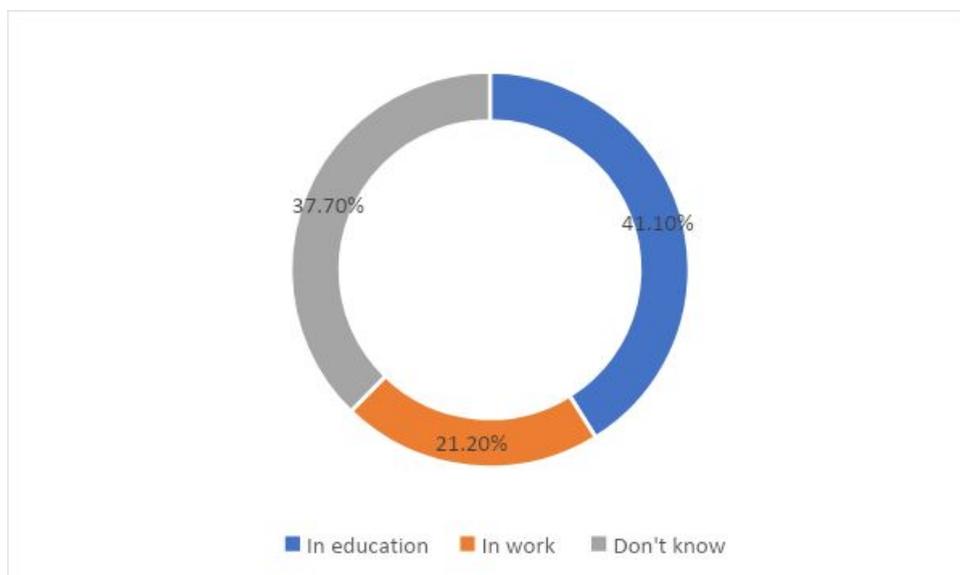
**Figure 3: Ethnicity of participants**



**Employment and education status**

In respect of employment and education status, 134 (41.1%) young people were in education, 69 (21.2%) young people were in work and 123 (37.7%) young people did not disclose or were not asked (see Figure 4 below).

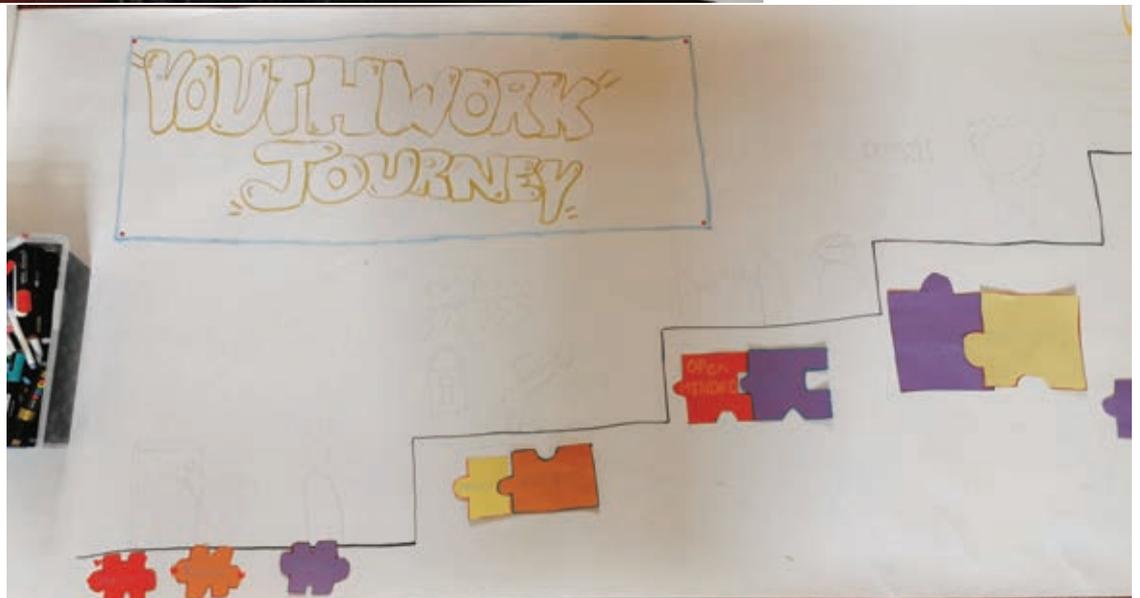
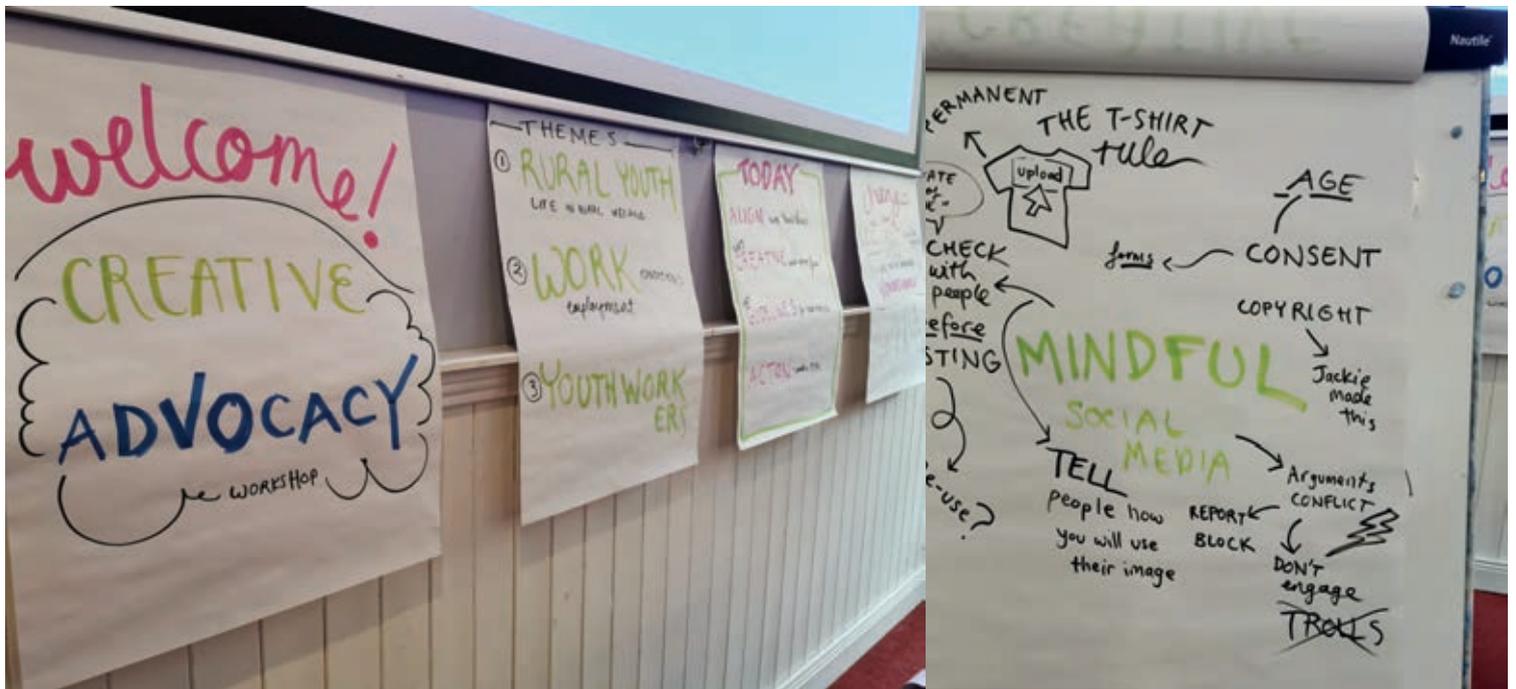
**Figure 4: Employment and education status of participants**



### **Other demographic information**

Other demographic information gathered found:

- 3.7% of young people identified as having a disability;
- 8% of young people were from a minority religion group;
- 8.9% of young people identified as homosexual, bisexual or ticked 'other'.



Photos from Creative Advocacy Workshop for people engaged with Young Voices 12th October 2019

## Chapter 1: Quality Employment for All

### Introduction

This chapter details the findings of the survey questions related to Youth Goal #7, 'Quality Employment for All'.

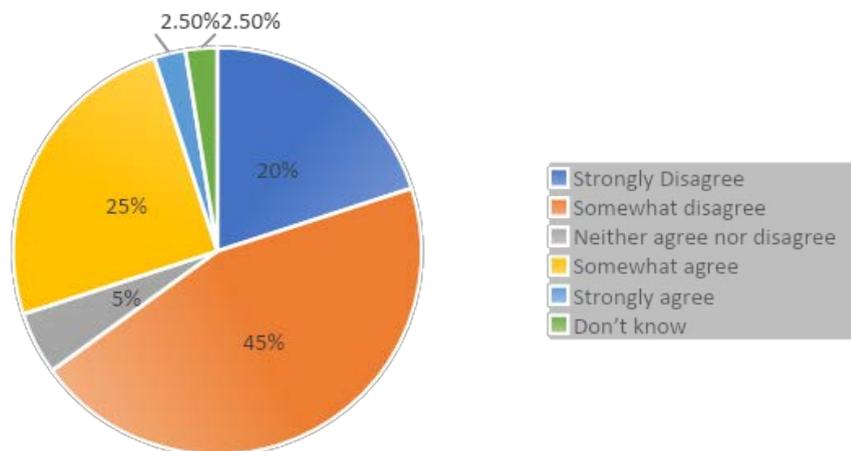
### Guiding Question 1a):

*What measures and actions can we take in order to implement the targets of the Youth Goal #7?*

### Access to quality jobs

The Irish survey found that 27.5% of respondents either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that young people have access to quality jobs which guarantee them fair working conditions (see Figure 5 below).

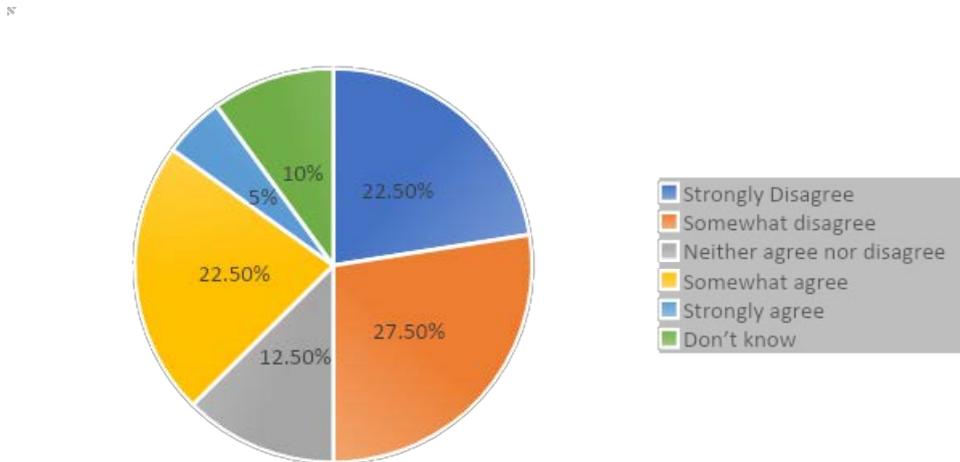
**Figure 5: Young people have access to quality jobs which guarantee them fair working conditions**



### Social protection and healthcare

Just over one quarter (27.5%) of respondents either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that young workers have good social protection and healthcare in Ireland (see Figure 6 below).

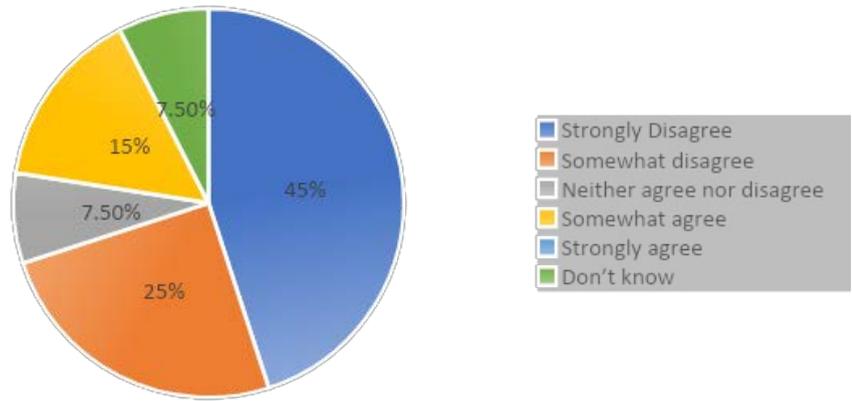
**Figure 6: young workers have good social protection and healthcare in Ireland**



### Fair and equal treatment and opportunities

Just 15% of respondents somewhat agreed and 0% strongly agreed that young people get fair treatment and equal opportunities in the labour market in Ireland (see Figure 7 below).

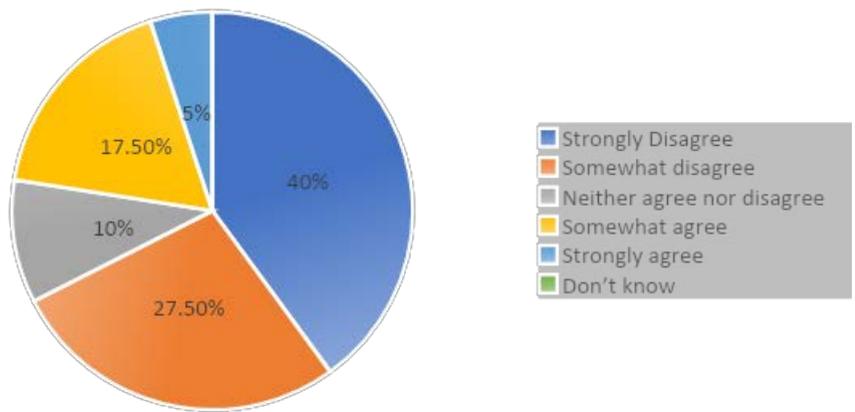
**Figure 7: Young people get fair treatment and equal opportunities in the labour market in Ireland**



### Equal opportunities to develop the skills and experience

Just over two out of ten (22.5%) respondents either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that all young people have equal opportunities to develop the skills and experience they need for the labour market in Ireland (see Figure 8 below).

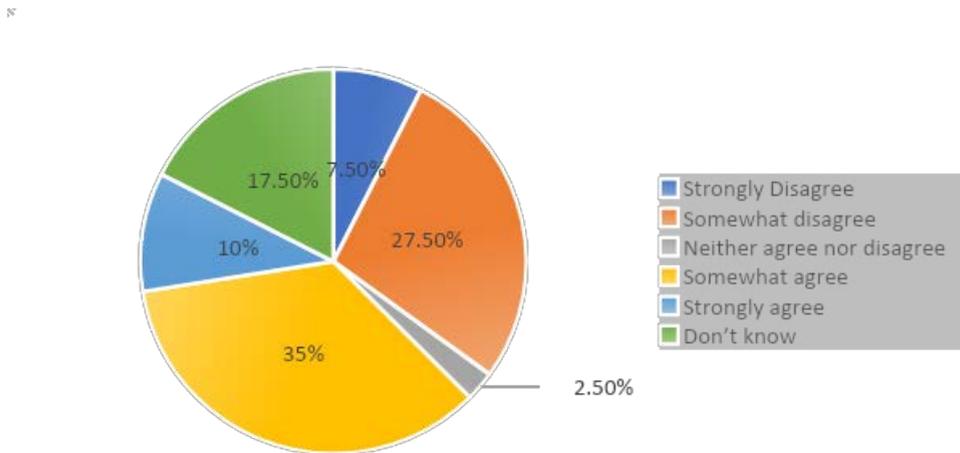
**Figure 8: Young people have equal opportunities to develop the skills and experience they need for the labour market in Ireland**



### Recognition of non-formal learning and education by employers

Overall, 45% of respondents either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that learning that happens outside of formal education, such as through volunteering, apprenticeships or non-formal education is recognised and valued by employers (see Figure 9 below).

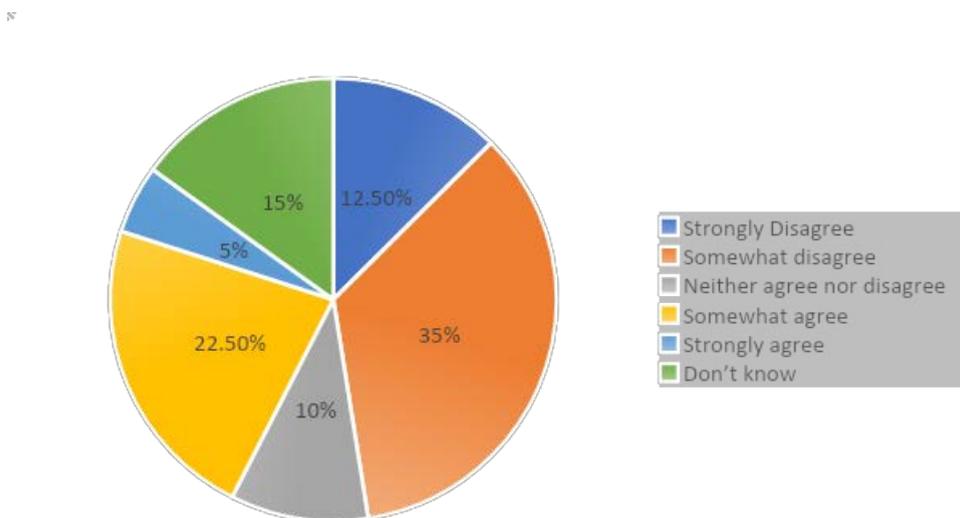
**Figure 9: Recognition of non-formal learning and education by employers in Ireland**



**Access to quality information and support**

The survey found that 27.5% of respondents either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that young people have access to quality information and adequate support in order to prepare them for work (see Figure 10 below).

**Figure 10: Young people have access to quality information and adequate support to prepare them for work**



## **Key issues identified by young people in relation to the implementation of Youth Goal 7:**

Consultations with young people identified a number of key issues in relation to the implementation of the targets of Youth Goal 7.

### **Minimum wage**

- According to those consulted, all young people should be entitled to the minimum wage. Young people argued that the minimum wage should be raised every year, e.g. with inflation. They also agreed that the any internships should pay young people the minimum wage.

### **Internships**

- Young people stated the government should introduce funded paid internship scheme with the minimum wage to help young people gain employment. They felt there should be a ban on unpaid internships.

### **Tax**

- It was proposed that young people under 18 years of age should pay less tax.

### **Social welfare**

- Participants suggested that all young people should be entitled to social welfare supports, e.g. job seekers benefit.

### **Education and training**

- Consultations suggested that all young people should be entitled to further education and training in their workplace. It was also recommended that the government increase public funding for upskilling course for all ages.

### **Work contracts and conditions**

- While zero-hour contracts became illegal in Ireland in 2019, young people felt strongly that this new legislation should be closely monitored, implemented and enforced.
- They also argued that the government should address precarious work contracts, e.g. employees being forced to be 'self-employed.' In terms of working conditions, they stated that young people should be given proper contracts, full job descriptions, more

responsibility in the workforce and be entitled to fair paid leave, e.g. holidays, sick leave, maternity leave.

### **Job applications**

- Young people would like to have more ways to apply for jobs, e.g. online. They would also like employers to provide reasons for not gaining employment to help young people improve their skills, e.g. mandatory rejection letters. Introducing quotas for young people in the workforce was discussed by some respondents.

### **Unions**

- Young people would like to see more youth unions set up in Ireland.

### **Work experience**

- Respondents suggested that more work experience should be available for young people. The creation of an access to work scheme for young people was also discussed.

### **Mentoring programmes**

- It was suggested that mentoring programmes should be developed by the government to help young people access employment.

### **Work life balance**

- Young people identified the need for a better work life balance, e.g. changing the 9-5 working day, make jobs and working hours more flexible.

### **Free public transport**

- Young people thought employers should pay for public transport for employees to travel to work.

### **Participation in decision-making**

- It was argued that young people should be supported to engage in participation on decision-making in the employment policies that affect them.

### **Employment policies**

- Young people suggested introducing a 'Youth Check' in employment policies, i.e. an impact assessment tool designed to consider the impact on young people and children of any new Policy or Legislation that is relevant to them. It was also recommended that labour market should change to support the future work opportunities of young people, e.g. develop policies that support young social enterprises.

### **Decentralisation**

- Young people suggested the government should decentralise jobs to increase worker's work/balance, e.g. develop better infrastructures, more tax incentives etc.

### **Key issues identified by young people from minority ethnic backgrounds**

Young people from minority ethnic backgrounds identified the following issues in relation to implementing Youth Goal 7:

#### **More employment opportunities**

- Create more employment opportunities for young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

#### **Impact of lack of opportunities on mental health**

- Young people from minority ethnic backgrounds highlighted the negative impact of lack of opportunities on their mental health. Consultations with young people from minority ethnic backgrounds identified pressure from parents in relation to education and employment as having a negative impact on their mental health. This pressure can be further compounded by a lack of education and employment opportunities.

#### **Government legislation**

- The government should ensure there are adequate anti-discrimination and hate speech legislation to protect young people from minority ethnic backgrounds in the workplace.

## **Role models**

- Create role models for young people in diverse groups in terms of accessing employment.

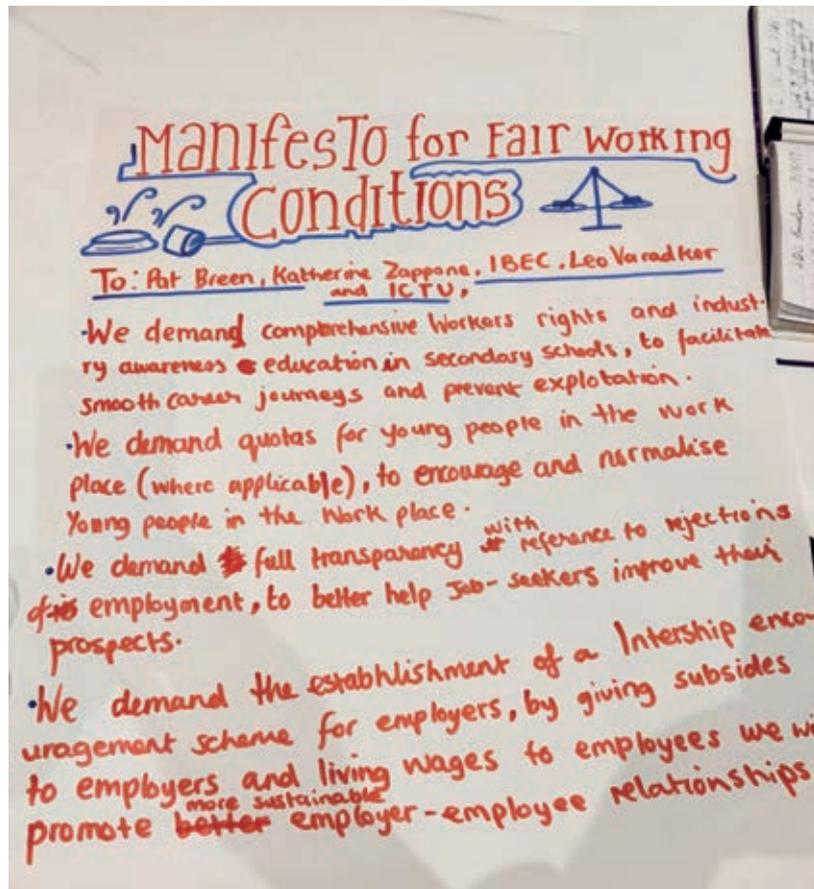
## **Other research recommendations and resources**

In its pre-budget submission 2019, the National Youth Council of Ireland (2019a) recommended the following measures to support young jobseekers into education, training, apprenticeships and employment to prevent the drift into long-term joblessness:

- Investment in a National Access to Apprenticeship Scheme
- Increased investment in the Youth Employment Support Scheme
- Additional places on the Back to Education Allowance Scheme
- Greater promotion of Jobs Plus Youth to young jobseekers and employers

The 110% project highlights the experience of young people from migrant backgrounds in and around employment. For more information see:

<https://separatedchildrenservice.wordpress.com/resources/>



## Responses from young people in relation to Quality Employment for All

We want to close barriers for young people working in Ireland.

All young people deserve to go to University.

Respect for individual ability.

Reduced college fees and financial support for young people.

Equal treatment in the workplace.

Equal pay for young people.

Raise the minimum wage yearly- tied to inflation. Living wage is the minimum wage.

Zero hour contracts must end.

Diversity training and awareness for employers.

We need more success stories and role models from different diversities.

### **Guiding question 1b):**

*What measures and actions can we take to improve formal and non-formal education so that it prepares young people for the future of work?*

**Key recommendations made by young people included:**

#### **Access to good quality education**

- All young people should be entitled to access good quality education to ensure equal access to employment in the future.
- Ensure all young people have the relevant education to secure employment.

#### **Cost of education**

- Reduce third level education fees and provide grants to young people.

#### **Subject choice**

- Ensure there are subject choices in schools that will cater for the future of work, e.g. computer science, information and communication technologies, engineering, robotics, cyber security, environmental studies, energy/sustainability studies, entrepreneurship, pharmaceuticals, biomedical engineering genetics, modern languages, business/commerce, economics, politics, philosophy, psychology etc.
- Ensure there are diverse subject choices in single sex schools, particularly in girl's schools.

#### **Jobs skills**

- Include a subject in the curriculum on jobs skills in the formal education curriculum, e.g. CV writing, interview skills, stock taking etc.

#### **Life skills**

- Teach work related life skills classes in school, e.g. tax, budgeting.

#### **Focus on future of work in the curriculum**

- The Civic Social and Political Education (CSPE) and Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculums in Ireland should be reformed to include information and debate on the future of work.

#### **Work experience**

- Formal education should have a module of work experience for students

### **Young workers rights**

- Educate young people on their workplace rights, e.g. workers unions giving talks in schools.

### **Career guidance**

- Make career guidance available to younger children, e.g. in primary schools.
- Increase career guidance for all young people in secondary schools.
- Ensure there is good quality career guidance in schools to help with transitions from education to employment.

### **Work placements**

- Education based work placements should be funded to make it easier for young people to access.

### **Role of youth work**

- Acknowledge the important role youth work can play for young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS), e.g. programmes combining youth work education and employment pathways.
- Youth workers can offer ongoing individualised supports to NEETS at a community level.
- Youth work should promote the idea of lifelong learning.

### **Recognition of non-formal education by employers**

- The labour market should recognise the value of young people's non-formal education experiences and the skills they have learned when seeking employment
- Employers should take into consideration volunteering and non-formal education experience when employing young people.
- Young people should be offered support to articulate/identify their non-formal education experiences.
- Change the application process for third level education to include after school activities/volunteer hours etc.

## **Recommendations made by young people from minority ethnic backgrounds**

Consultations with young people from minority ethnic backgrounds identified the following recommendations:

### **Work placements**

- Schools should support young people from minority ethnic backgrounds seeking work experience in Transition Year who experience more difficulties in accessing work placements.

### **Career guidance**

- Schools should treat all young people from all backgrounds and ethnicities fairly and equally in terms of career guidance.
- Schools and guidance counsellors should encourage young people from minority ethnic backgrounds to pursue their third level career choices and not discourage them.

### **Supports**

- Schools should be better prepared to support the diversity of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds and their needs, e.g. language supports.
- There should be buddy systems in schools to support young people from minority ethnic backgrounds

### **Diversity**

- There should be more diversity in schools, e.g. among teachers, boards of management etc.

### **Listening to young people**

- Schools need to listen more to the needs of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

### **Young girls identified the following issue:**

- Ensure there are more subject choice in girls' schools

### **National developments**

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) launched Skills Summary in 2019. Skills Summary is both a process and a product.

- As a process, Skills Summary aims to support young people's learning, with a particular focus on those who may find traditional academic learning challenging, by helping them to map

the learning acquired through their participation in youth work and other non-formal settings to a set of competences.

- As a product, Skills Summary supports young people to articulate the competencies they have acquired both for themselves and potential employers.

<https://www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/skills-summary/>

Skills Summary resources are available on how to include Skills Summary in youth work practice.

<https://www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/skills-summary/skills-summary-resources/>



## Responses from young people from Minority Ethnic Groups



**Guiding question 1c):**

***What can we do to make sure all young people including those from marginalised backgrounds are equally treated, protected, safe and secure in the workplace and the labour market of the future?***

**Key recommendations made by young people:**

**Inclusion**

- There should be inclusion of young people from all backgrounds in the workplace.

**Equality**

- All young people should be treated equally in the workplace.

**Worker's rights**

- Ensure there are comprehensive workers' rights for young people in the workplace.

**Legislation**

- Ensure there is anti-discrimination legislation in the workplace, e.g. on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexuality etc.

**Training**

- Cultural competency training should be provided in workplaces to teach understanding among co-workers.
- Empathy training should be provided in workplaces.

**Access to employment**

- Create opportunities for young people from minority groups to access employment, e.g. young people with disabilities, young Travellers.

**Workplace education and training**

- All young people should have opportunities to educate and upskill themselves in their workplace.

- All workers should be entitled to 'mental health' days off.

### **Equal working terms and conditions**

- There should be gender equality in terms of opportunities and pay in the workplace
- There should be more maternity benefit for women and paternity leave for men.
- All worker should be entitled to equal working conditions, e.g. equal breaks, safe working conditions.

### **Sexual harassment**

- There should be no sexual harassment in the workplace.

### **Gender neutral toilets**

- There should be more gender neutral toilets in the workplace.

### **Worker's unions**

- Worker's unions should support all young people in the workplace.

## **Recommendations made by young people from minority ethnic backgrounds**

Consultations with young people from ethnic minority backgrounds identified the following recommendations:

### **Nepotism**

- Ensure there is no nepotism in the workplace, as young people from minority ethnic backgrounds perceived it to be more difficult to gain employment as they do not have as many connections as other young Irish people.

### **Employer's perceptions of ethnic minorities**

- Employers need to change their perceptions of ethnic minorities in terms of employment, e.g. perception of not speaking good English.

### **Inclusive work environments**

- Ensure there are inclusive workplace environments for future generations of ethnic minorities.

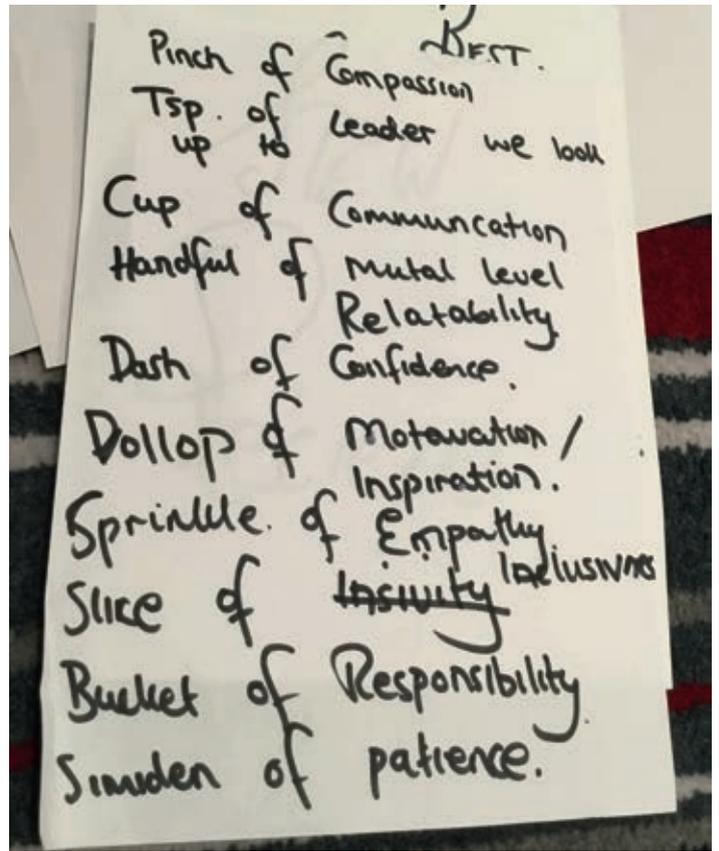
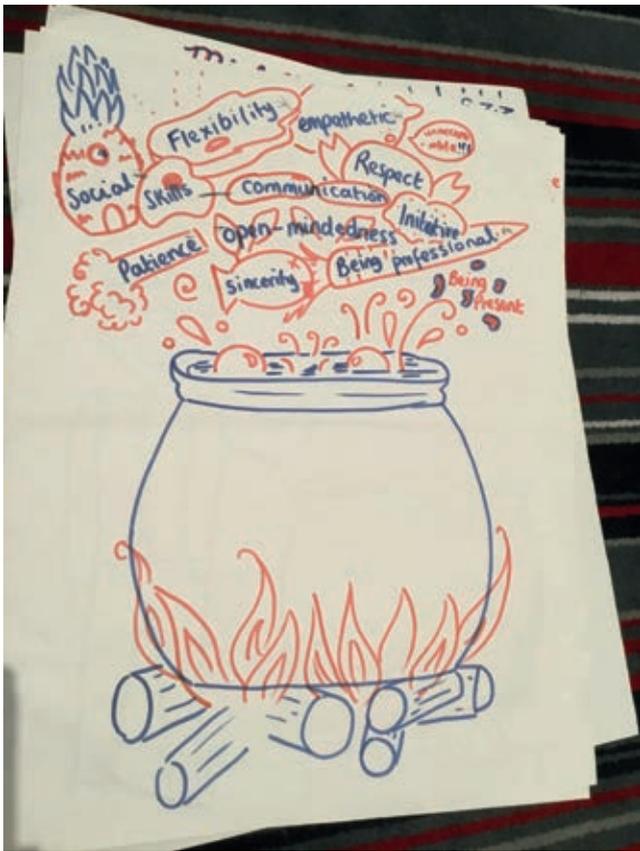
### **Government policies and legislation**

- The government needs to tackle racism and discrimination in the workplace, e.g. through Hate Crime policies and legislation which will increase access to employment.

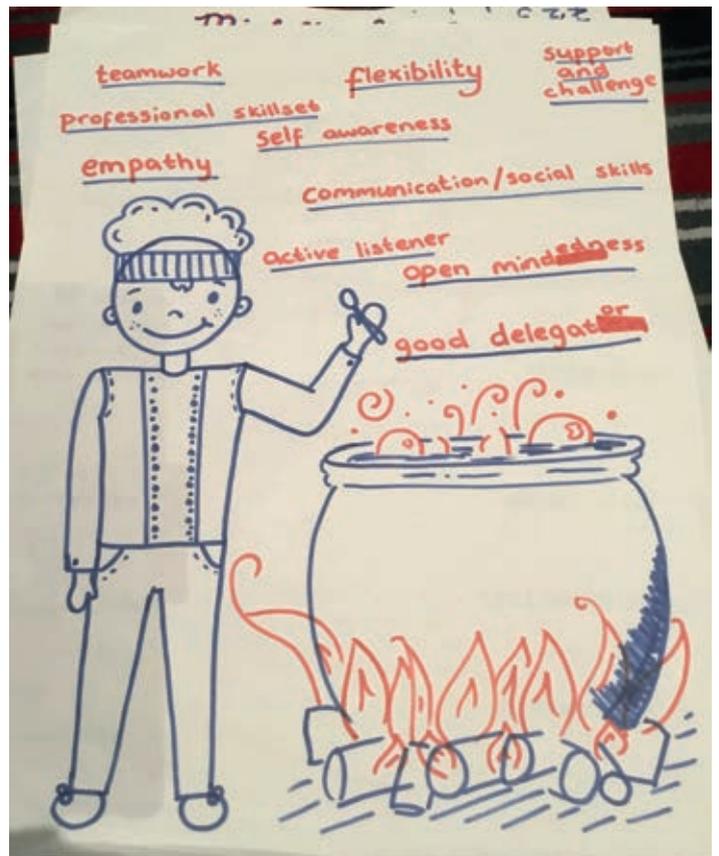
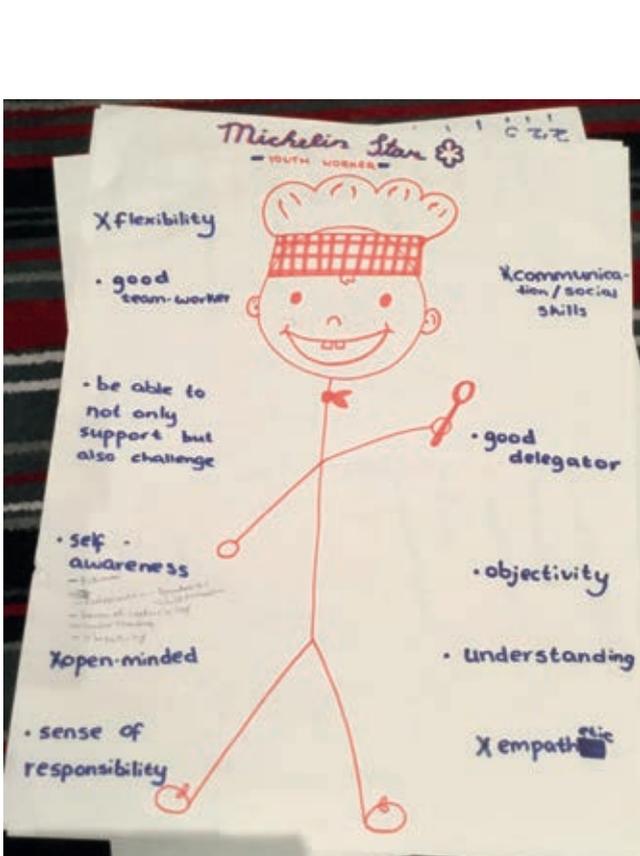
### **Asylum seekers**

Asylum seekers identified the following issues relating to working rights:

- Strengthen worker's rights for Asylum seekers, e.g. end the nine month period of eligibility to work, provide equal right to work for asylum seekers.



## Responses from young people in relation to Quality Youth Work for All



## **Chapter 2: Quality Youth Work for All**

### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the findings of questions asked in consultations with young people related to Youth Goal 8, Quality Youth Work for All.

### **Guiding question 2a):**

***What measures and actions can we take in order to develop quality youth work?***

### **Definition of youth work**

Youth work in Ireland is defined in the Youth Work Act (2001) as a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young people through their voluntary involvement, and which is complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training and provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations.

### **Contact with youth workers**

In the Irish survey, 65% of young people stated they had regular contact with someone who could be described as a youth worker, whereas 22.5% had not.

### **Key recommendations made by young people in relation to developing quality youth work:**

#### **Personal, social and civic development**

- Quality youth work should focus on the personal, social and civic development of young people

#### **Non-formal learning**

- Youth work should support non-formal learning.
- and acquiring soft skills

#### **Creativity**

- Youth work should provide a space for young people to be creative

#### **Youth participation in decision-making**

- Youth work should support young people's participation in decision-making in issues that affect their lives.

### **Support services**

- Youth work should provide specialised support services to help young people, e.g. in relation to their sexuality, mental health etc.

### **What quality youth work means to young people from minority ethnic backgrounds:**

#### **Personal, social and civic development**

- Personal development, e.g. increasing self-confidence, self-esteem, self-representation skills.
- Social development, e.g. making friends, increasing social networks.
- Civic development, e.g. encourages young people to lobby for their rights.

#### **Empowerment**

- Empowers young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

#### **Listening to the voice of young people**

- Ensures the voice of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds are heard.

#### **Advocacy**

- Encourages young people from minority ethnic backgrounds to advocate on behalf of others.
- Brings young people from minority ethnic backgrounds voices to a political level.

#### **Creates opportunities**

- Creates opportunities for young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, e.g. travel.

#### **Integration**

Youth Clubs should be everywhere not just in disadvantage areas.

We need youth services where young people are- such as rural areas.

Lack of access to and knowledge of all services.

Could workers be asked to volunteer in minority communities?

Change the stigma that youth clubs are for "disadvantaged" young people or young people "with issues".

### **In Relation to Services, including Youth Work**

## **Responses from Young People from Minority Ethnic Groups**

### **In Relation to Friends and Peers**

Stick up for each other!

I don't need you to fix things- I just need you to listen.

Understand that not everyone has the same privilege as you.

Be kind- because you don't know what others are going through.

Fake friendships- don't take advantage of people. Try not to be misled or misguided.

Don't hide your feelings or worries.

- Brings people from different cultures and backgrounds together.

### **Equality**

- Creates equality by erasing cultural, educational differences.

### **Supports learning**

- Supports learning about issues such as development education.

### **Creates values**

- A place to create values.

### **Guiding Question 2b):**

***What are the most important competencies that youth workers need in order to support and work with young people and why?***

### **Youth worker priorities**

As can be seen from Table 1 below, on a scale of one to five (1 = low priority; 5 = high priority), 80% of respondents agreed supporting and enabling young people to voice their needs and opinions to others and speaking up on behalf of young people should be a high priority for youth workers. According to young people, the next highest priority for youth workers should be building positive, non-judgemental and supportive relationships with young people (77.5%); followed by enabling young people to make positive changes in their community (70%); supporting young people to find the role they want in their community and society (60%); supporting collaboration and understanding between people from different cultural contexts and backgrounds (55%); providing and supporting learning opportunities for young people (50%) and designing and creating activities and projects with young people (47.5%).

**Table 1: Youth Worker Priorities**

Youth Worker Priorities	%
Supporting and enabling young people to voice their needs and opinions to others and speaking up on behalf of young people	80%
Building positive, non-judgemental and supportive relationships with young people	77.5%
Enabling young people to make positive changes in their community	70%
Supporting young people to find the role they want in their community and society	60%
Supporting collaboration and understanding between people from different cultural contexts and backgrounds	55%
Providing and supporting learning opportunities for young people	50%
Designing and creating activities and projects with young people	47.5%

### Most important youth worker skills

According to young people consulted, the most important skills youth workers need in order to support and work with young people, from the most to the least commonly mentioned, are:

- Empathy and non-judgemental
- Compassion and kindness
- Confidence and sociability
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Honesty, trustworthiness and reliability
- Good listening skills
- Patience, tolerance and open-mindedness
- Good sense of humour
- Good leadership skills
- Good communication skills
- Good interpersonal skills
- Planning and budgeting skills
- Relationship building skills
- Group work/team building skills

- Problem solving skills
- Organisational skills
- Good facilitation skills
- Self-awareness/able to manage boundaries/read situations
- Emotional intelligence
- Can work independent, on own initiative and as part of a team
- Creativity
- Empowering
- Positive attitude
- Confidence
- Passion
- Knowledgeable/aware of policy
- Interested in learning/Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- Respectful
- Fairness
- Inclusive
- Determination/assertiveness
- Fun/energetic/enthusiastic
- Self-aware
- Support and challenge young people
- Reliable, responsible, punctual
- Approachable/easy going
- Motivated/uses own initiative
- Able to work under pressure
- Critical thinking
- Objectivity
- Relatable
- Representative of the area/group of young people they are working with
- Role model/someone for young people to look up to
- Inspiring

**Most important youth worker skills identified by young people from minority ethnic backgrounds**

Young people from minority ethnic backgrounds identified the following important skills that youth workers need in order to support and work with them:

### **Listen to young people**

- Youth workers need to listen to young people from minority ethnic backgrounds in order to understand their needs and help them with their problems.

### **Experience of working with young people from minority ethnic backgrounds**

- Youth workers should volunteer in minority communities in order to gain a greater understanding of their issues and needs.

### **More youth workers from ethnic minority backgrounds**

- There should be more youth workers from diverse backgrounds so young people can relate to them.

### **Guiding Question 2c):**

***What measures and actions can we take to provide access to quality youth work for all?***

### **Recommendations made by young people:**

The key recommendations made by young people in consultations in relation to measures and actions that can be taken to provide quality youth work for all included:

#### **Access to youth work**

- Youth work should be universal, e.g. open to all young people from all backgrounds.
- Youth work should not be just for young people in disadvantaged areas or with specific issues or needs.

#### **Stigma**

- There should be no stigma associated with attending youth services for young people.

#### **Youth work hours**

- Youth work should be available at more times, e.g. morning, afternoon and evening time.

### **Cultural diversity campaigns**

- Run cultural diversity campaigns to create more culturally diverse youth projects and promote integration of young people from ethnic minority groups.

### **Social media and technology**

- Better use of social media and technology by youth services to engage young people.
- Create an app for youth work, e.g. for attendance, communication etc.

### **Transport**

- Ensure youth services provide transport to help young people access youth work, e.g. buses.

### **Sustainability**

- Ensure youth work is carbon neutral and sustainable.

### **Recommendations made by young people from minority ethnic backgrounds**

Young people from minority ethnic backgrounds identified the following issues in relation providing access to quality work for all:

#### **Information on youth services**

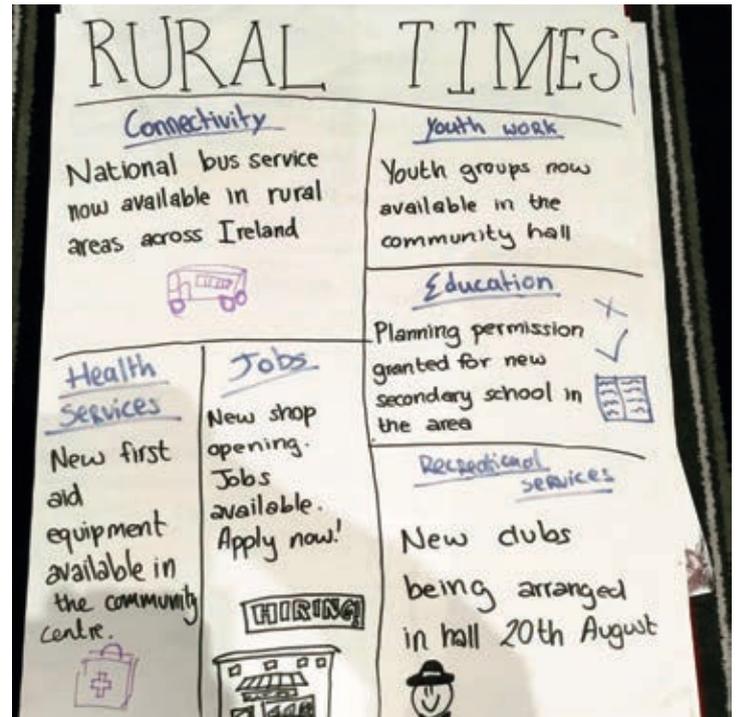
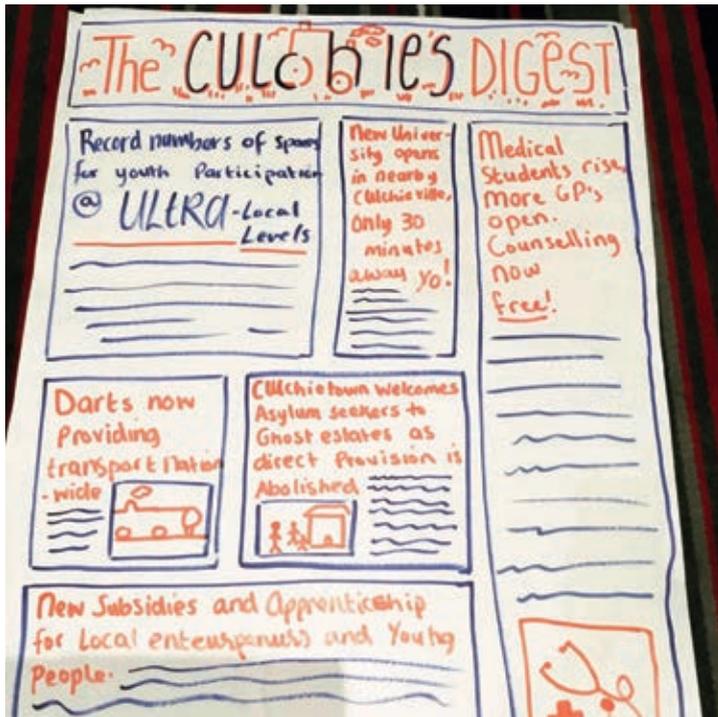
- Ensure young people from minority ethnic backgrounds are informed about what youth services are available in their area and how to access them, particularly in rural areas.

#### **Outreach youth work**

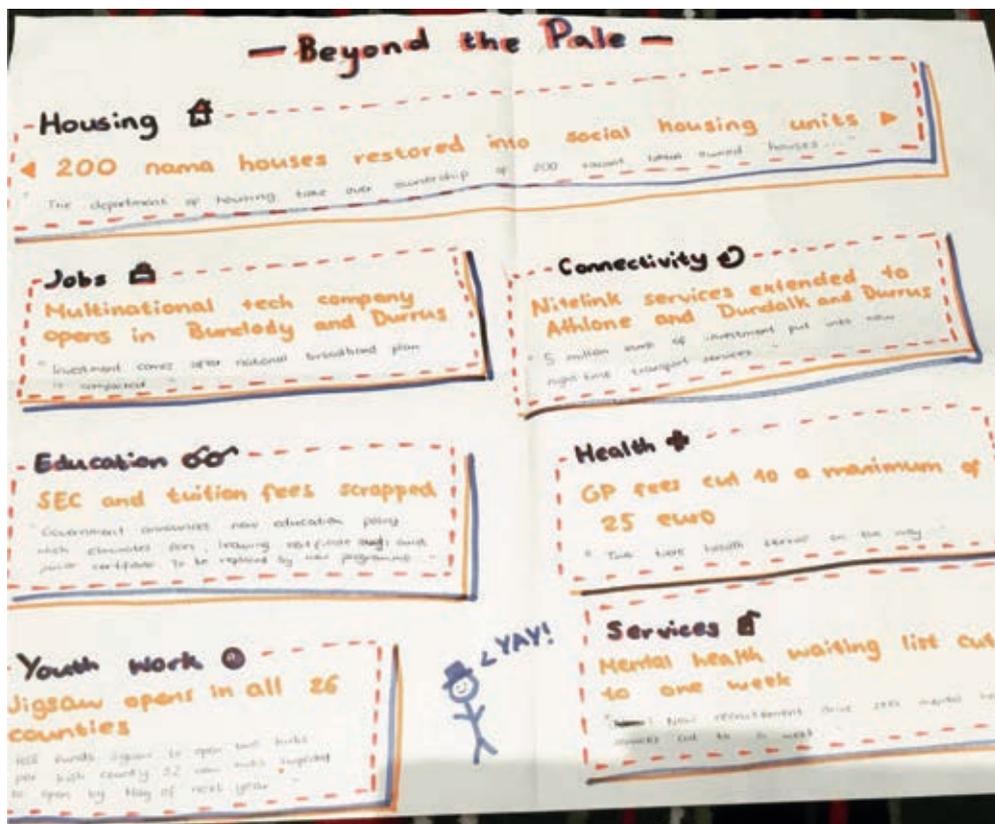
- Youth work should provide outreach services for young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

#### **Youth workers from diverse backgrounds**

- Ensure there are youth workers from diverse backgrounds in youth work settings



## Responses from Young People in Relation to Moving Rural Youth Forward



## Chapter 3: Opportunities for Rural Youth

### Introduction

This chapter outlines the findings of consultation questions related to Youth Goal #6, Moving Rural Youth Forward.

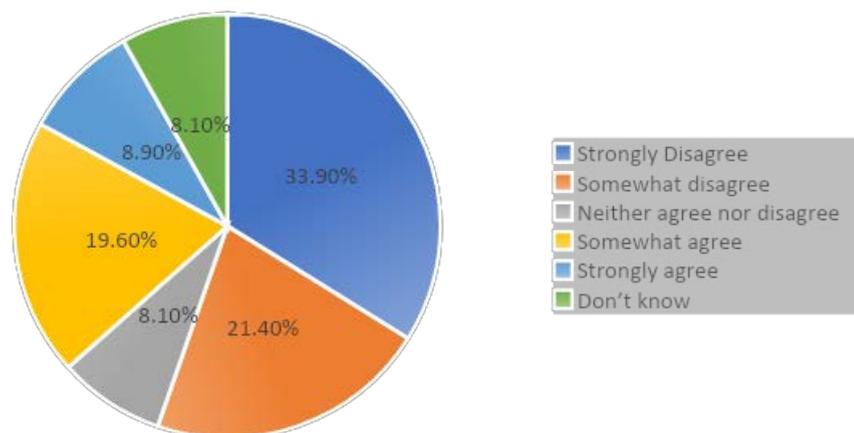
### Guiding Question 3a):

***What measures and actions can we take to implement youth goal #6 Moving Rural Youth Forward?***

### **Access to quality public services in rural areas**

In the Irish survey, 28.5% of respondents strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that young people in rural areas in Ireland have good access to quality public services (see Figure 11 below).

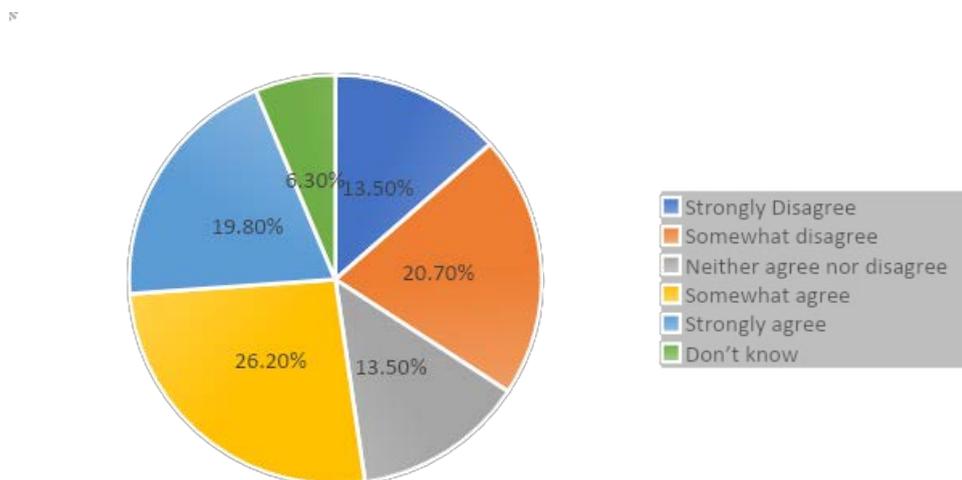
**Figure 11: Young people in rural areas in Ireland have good access to quality public services**



### Access to quality education in rural areas

In total, 46% of respondents strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that young people in rural areas have good access to quality education (see Figure 12 below).

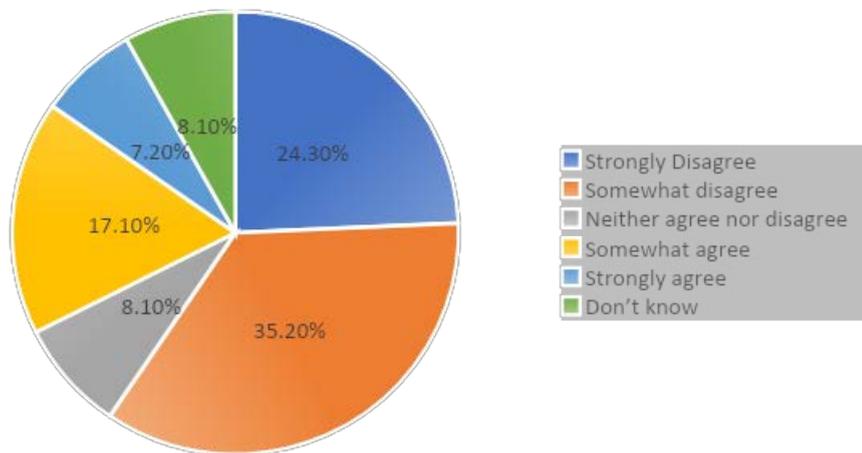
**Figure 12: Young people in rural areas have good access to quality education**



### Opportunities for quality employment in rural areas

Just under one quarter (24.3%) of respondents strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that young people in rural areas in Ireland have good opportunities for quality employment (see Figure 13 below).

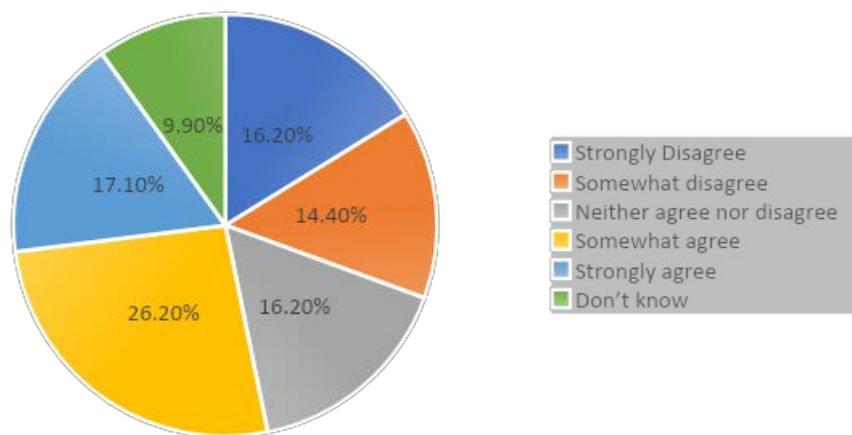
**Figure 13: young people in rural areas have good opportunities for quality employment**



### Access to housing in rural areas

In the survey, 43.3% of respondents either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that young people in rural areas have good access to housing (see Figure 14 below).

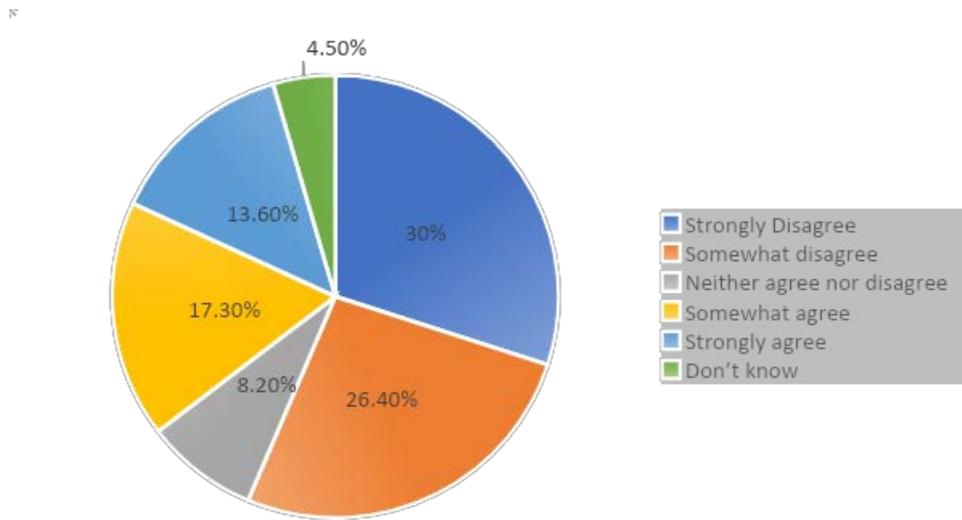
**Figure 14: Young people in rural areas have good access to housing**



### Infrastructure and public transport in rural areas

Just over three out of ten (30.9%) respondents either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that rural areas in Ireland have good infrastructure and a good public transport connection to urban areas (see Figure 15 below).

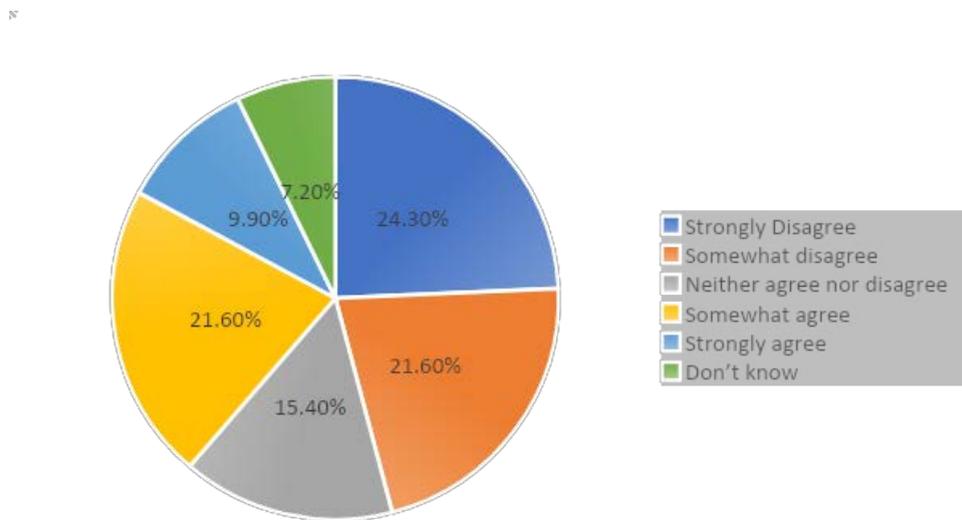
**Figure 15: Rural areas have good infrastructure and good public transport connection to urban areas**



**Data connectivity and broadband in rural areas**

Similarly, 31.5% of respondents either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that rural areas in Ireland have good data connectivity and high speed broadband (see Figure 16 below).

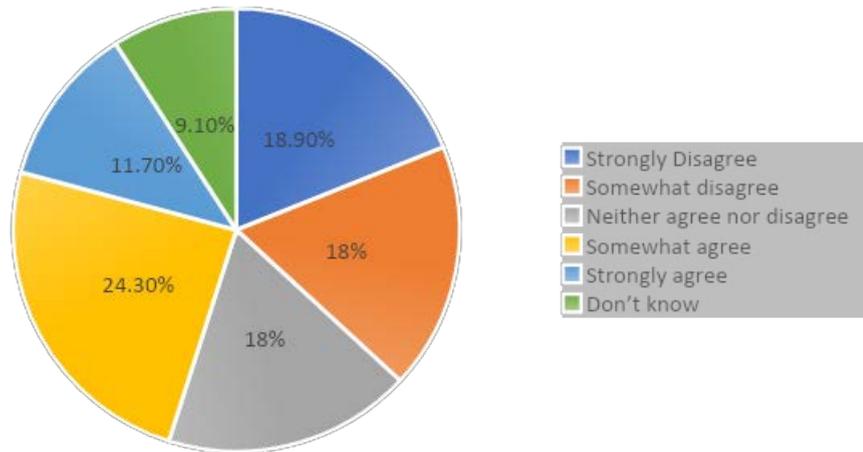
**Figure 16: Rural areas have good data connectivity and high-speed broadband**



**Image of rural areas**

In total, 36% of respondents either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that there is a positive image of rural areas in Ireland (see Figure 17 below).

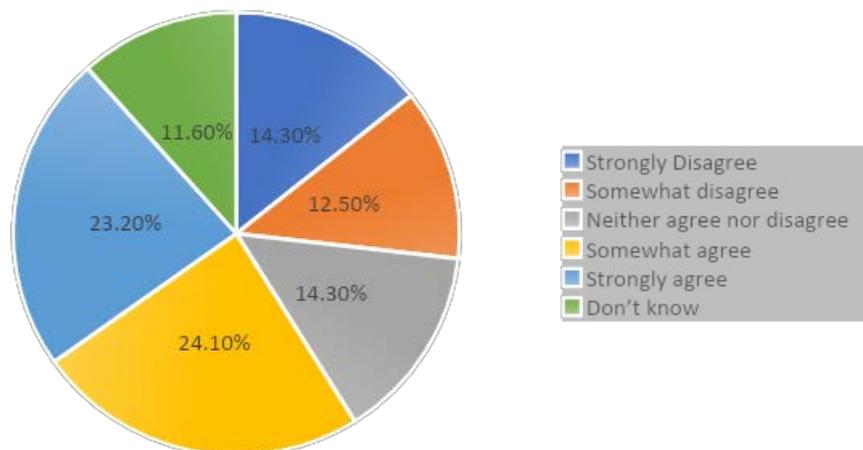
**Figure 17: There is a positive image of rural areas in Ireland**



### Valuing of rural traditions

Almost half of respondents (47.3%) either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that rural traditions are valued in Ireland (see Figure 18 below).

**Figure 18: Rural traditions are valued in Ireland**



## **Key issues affecting young people in rural areas**

Young people were asked to identify the key issues currently affecting young people in rural Ireland.

These included:

- Lack of adequate broadband
- Lack of public transport
- Lack of employment opportunities and young people moving to urban areas for employment
- Lack of recreational facilities
- Lack of public services and amenities
- Lack of health services in rural areas including ambulance services
- Less opportunities than young people in urban areas
- Lack of specialised support services for young people
- Alcohol and drug misuse
- Climate change/global warming issues
- Lack of educational opportunities
- Suicide and mental health issues
- Issues related to social media
- Social isolation
- Lack of political connection
- Stigma around social issues
- Decline in presence in youth culture

## **Key issues identified by young people from minority ethnic backgrounds**

Young people from minority ethnic backgrounds from rural areas identified the following issues:

### **Lack of youth services**

- Lack of youth services in rural areas where young people from ethnic minority backgrounds are living.

### **Difficulties access services**

- Difficulties for young people from minority ethnic backgrounds understanding how to access youth services in rural areas.

## Support groups

- More support groups needed for young people from minority ethnic backgrounds in rural areas.

## Public services

- Lack of access to public services in rural areas and lack of knowledge among ethnic minorities on how to access public services.

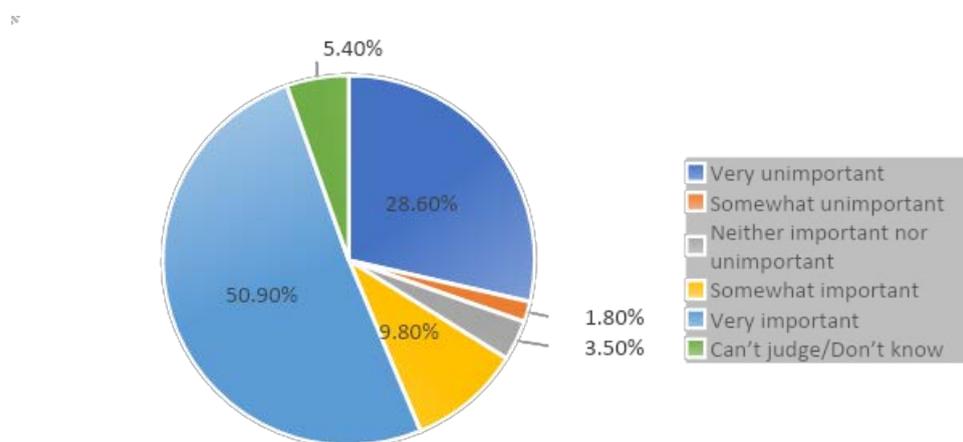
## Guiding question 3b):

*What measures and actions can we take to improve rural areas for young people in the short term, in current conditions?*

### Access to quality public services

The Irish survey of young people indicated that six out of ten (60.7%) respondents felt, when considering if they want to live in a rural area, access to quality public services was either very or somewhat important (see Figure 19 below).

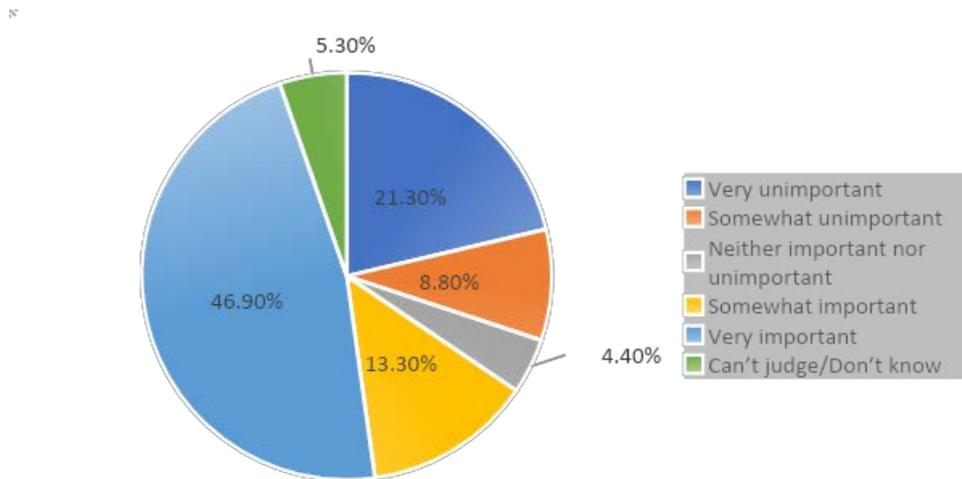
**Figure 19: Access to quality public services**



### Access to high quality of education

Similarly, 60.2% of respondents, when considering if they want to live in a rural area, stated that having access to high quality of education was either very important or somewhat important (see Figure 20 below).

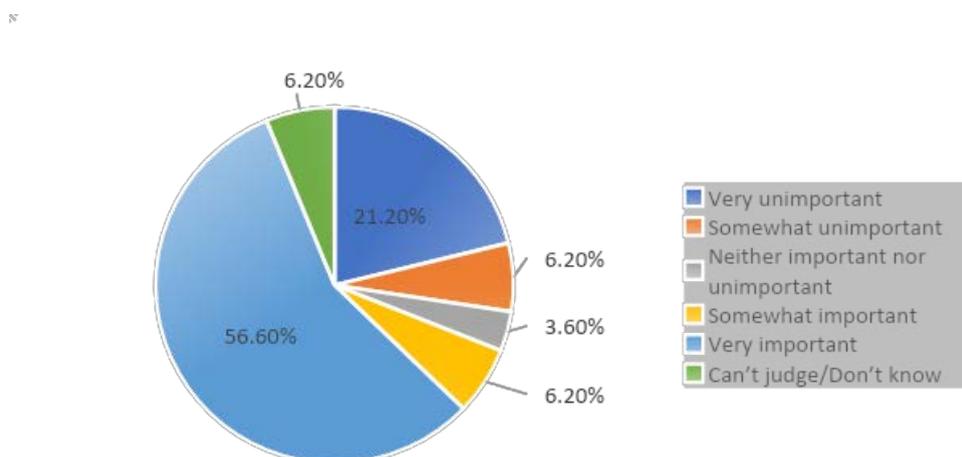
Figure 20: Access to high quality of education



### Availability of quality jobs and employment opportunities

Overall, 62.8% of respondents stated that when considering if they want to live in a rural area, availability of quality jobs and employment opportunities were either very important or somewhat important (see Figure 21 below).

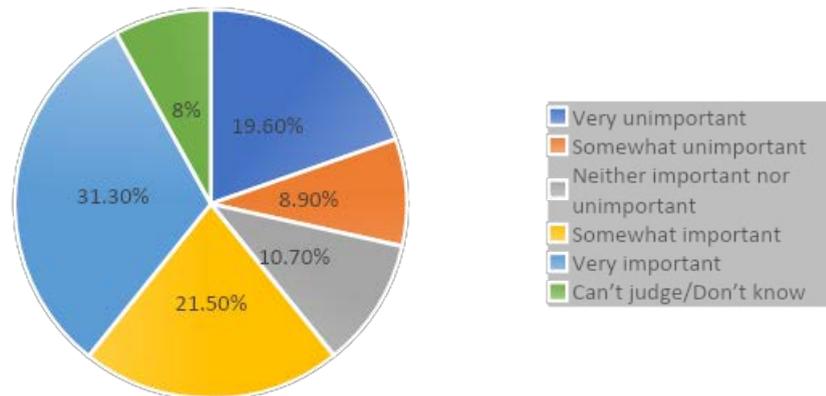
Figure 21: Availability of quality jobs and employment opportunities



## Opportunities to participate in decision-making

The survey found that just over half (52.8%) of young people, when considering if they want to live in a rural area, viewed opportunities to participate in decision-making to be very important or somewhat important (see Figure 22 below).

**Figure 22: Opportunities to participate in decision-making**



## Key recommendations made by young people

Key recommendations made by young people in consultations in terms of improving the quality of life for young people in rural areas in the short term included:

### Education:

- Create more educational opportunities in rural areas.
- Ensure all education is free to access.
- Improve schools facilities and learning resources.
- Create a more personalised education system such as in Finland.
- Fund more school transport, e.g. school buses.

### Enterprise and employment:

- Create more employment opportunities in rural Ireland.
- Incentivise large companies to open in rural areas to create job opportunities for young people.
- Set up jobs centres for young people in rural areas.
- Develop an 'access to work' scheme for young people in rural areas.
- Create new subsidies and apprenticeships for local entrepreneurs and young people.

**Public transport:**

- More funding for public transport in rural areas.
- Free public transport in rural areas for young people to access school, college etc.
- More public transport in rural areas to connect young people directly with neighbouring areas and universities etc.
- Create a national bus service in rural Ireland.
- Introduce a night time bus service.
- Improvement to local bus schedules so times suit young people.
- Introduce bike rental schemes in rural areas.

**Public services:**

- More government funding for public services in rural areas.

**Health**

- Introduce a youth health plan.
- Cheaper GP services in rural areas.
- New first aid equipment available in community centres.
- Run courses on health and wellbeing in schools.

**Mental health:**

- Provide more services and funding for mental health services for young people in rural areas.
- Provide free counselling for young people.

**Specialised support services:**

- Ensure there are adequate specialised support services for young people in rural areas, e.g. supports for sexuality identity issues.

**Drugs and alcohol misuse:**

- Set up local workshops to educate and support young people in rural areas around drugs and alcohol misuse.

**Youth work:**

- Fund more youth work services in rural Ireland.
- Open Youth Centres in rural areas, e.g. to run educational and skills based programmes for young people and have facilities such as gyms, sports equipment etc.
- Open youth clubs in existing community halls/facilities.
- Encourage more volunteering in youth work services.
- Ensure young people from minority ethnic backgrounds in rural areas are aware of youth services and how to engage with them.
- More advertising for local youth services, e.g. using community notice boards, social media, school assemblies.
- Develop Youth Cafes/youth hang outs for young people in rural areas funded by local authorities.

### **Participation**

- Ensure there is more youth participation in decision-making in rural areas.

### **Housing:**

- Introduce a Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme for students.
- Lower house prices in rural areas.
- Create social housing using vacant housing (NAMA) in rural areas.
- Address homelessness in rural areas.

### **Recommendations made by young people from minority ethnic backgrounds**

Consultations with young people from minority ethnic backgrounds identified the following recommendations:

- House asylum seekers in vacant housing in rural areas instead of Direct Provision Centres

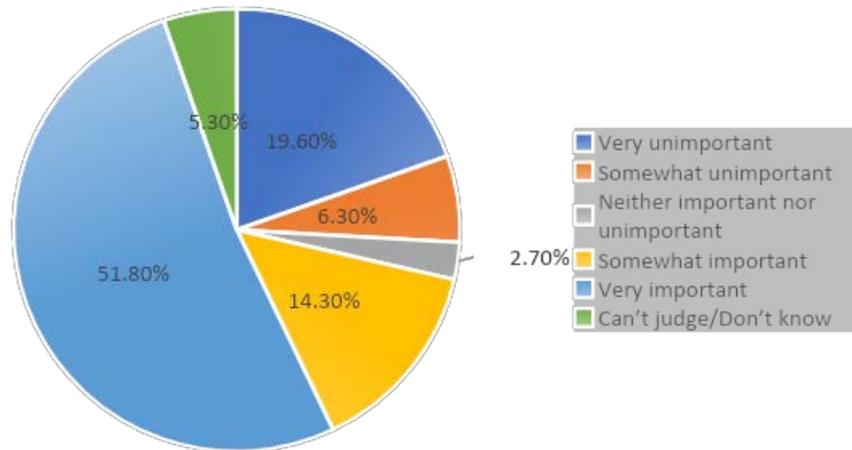
### **Guiding Question 3c):**

***What are the main measures and actions to take in order to improve quality of life for young people in rural areas in the long term?***

**Good infrastructure and good public transport connections**

In the Irish survey, two thirds (66.1%) of respondents, when considering if they want to live in a rural area, felt good infrastructure and good transport connections were very important or somewhat important (see Figure 23 below).

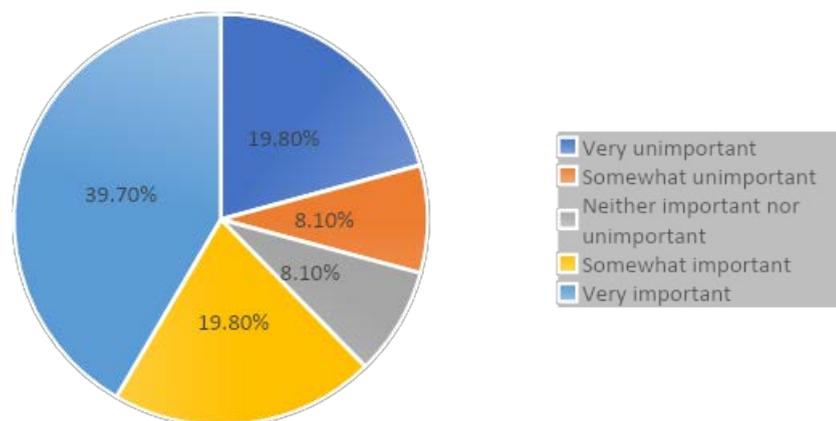
**Figure 23: Good infrastructure and good public transport connections**



### Good data connectivity and high speed broadband

Good data connectivity and high-speed broadband was judged to be either very important or somewhat important by almost six out of ten (59.5%) respondents when considering if they want to live in a rural area (see Figure 24 below).

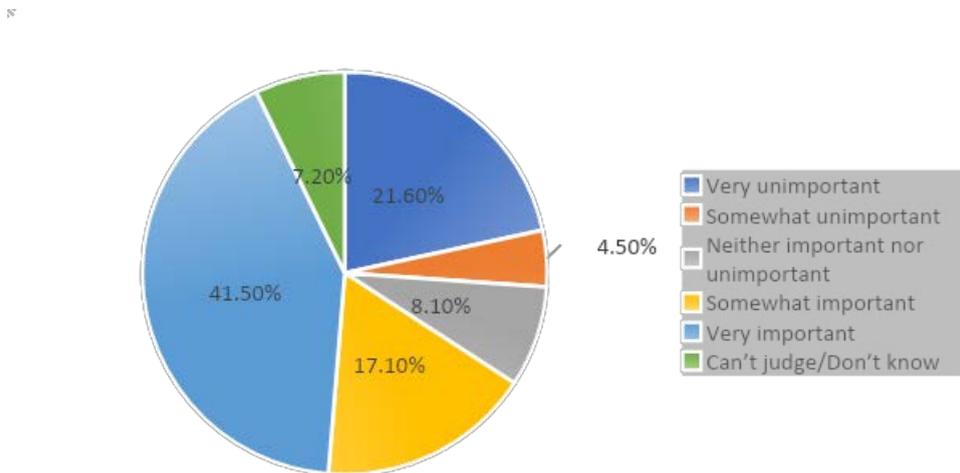
**Figure 24: Good data connectivity and high speed broadband**



### Impact of pollution and climate change

The survey found that 58.6% of respondents, when considering if they want to live in a rural area, judged the impact of pollution and climate change to be either very important or somewhat important (see Figure 25 below).

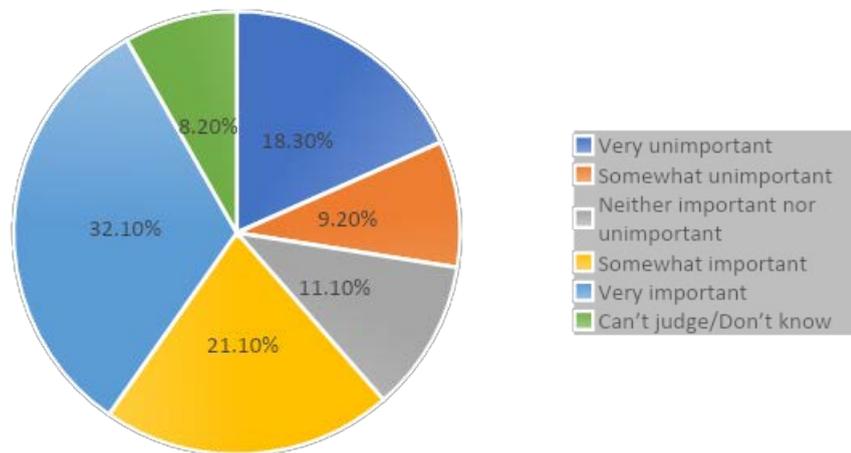
**Figure 25: Impact of pollution and climate change**



### Preserving rural traditions, culture and customs

Just over half (53.2%) of respondents agreed that preserving rural traditions, culture and customs was either very important or somewhat important when considering if they want to live in a rural area (see Figure 26 below).

**Figure 26: Preserving rural traditions, culture and customs**



Key issues identified by young people in consultations in relation to improving the quality of life for young people in rural areas in the long term included:

**Education:**

- Build more schools in rural areas.
- Open new universities close to rural areas.
- Build more agricultural colleges in rural areas.

**Connectivity:**

- Develop better broadband and mobile phone infrastructure.

**Health:**

- Build more hospitals in rural areas.

**Infrastructure:**

- Provide more government funding for infrastructural improvements in rural Ireland, e.g. roads, footpaths.

**Housing:**

- Encourage more housing development in rural Ireland.
- Address homelessness in rural areas.

**Environment:**

- Introduce new carbon neutral industries into rural areas to create new jobs.

## **Other research findings and recommendations**

Recent research conducted by the National Youth Council of Ireland (2019b), 'Youth Work in Rural Ireland,' identified a number of challenges and recommendations. Key challenges identified by youth workers in relation to youth provision in rural Ireland included:

- Lack of adequate funding for the provision of youth work services in rural localities.
- Inadequate funding to support youth work practice in rural communities where young people experience specific needs.
- Lack of access to a broad range of specialised youth support services such as mental health and counselling services in rural areas.
- Lack of accessible, affordable public transport for rural communities.
- Difficulty recruiting and retaining volunteers.
- The challenge of an increasingly regulated youth work sector, which has imposed on a volunteer's time and on levels of volunteer retention.
- The absence of adequate interpreting services to support new communities living in rural Ireland who have English language difficulties and experience challenges engaging with youth work services.
- The need for an increased allocation of resources to support new communities integrating into life in rural Ireland.
- The need for more investment in a National Apprenticeship Scheme with the allocation of dedicated resources and spaces for young people living in rural and remote areas in Ireland.
- Lack of broadband which inhibits young people's access to the internet and their ability to access social and digital media platforms, access information online and communicate with friends and youth work services online (NYCIb, 2019: 10).

Recommendations made by young people in rural areas to the government as part of the research included:

- Provide additional investment for youth work services and facilities in rural localities in Ireland.
- Provide an accessible rural public transport system.
- Invest in a subsidised rural transport scheme for young people like the Local Link transport service available to pensioners.

- Foster greater investment in the regions to provide improved educational and employment opportunities located in rural parts of Ireland and incentivise farming as an occupation.
- Increase the minimum wage for people under 18.
- Invest in the apprenticeship model and promote it to young people of both genders, who do not want to pursue a further or higher education, as an alternative career option (NYCib, 2019: 12).

## References

Government of Ireland (2001) *Youth Work Act*. Dublin: The Stationery Office. Available at: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2001/act/42/enacted/en/>

National Youth Council of Ireland (2019a) *Pre-Budget Submission 2020– A Fair Share for Young People and Youth Work*:

<https://www.youth.ie/documents/nyci-pre-budget-submission-budget-2020/>

National Youth Council of Ireland (2019b) *Youth Work in Rural Ireland: A Qualitative Research Study Exploring the Provision on Youth Work in a Rural Context*:

<https://www.youth.ie/documents/youth-work-in-rural-ireland-a-qualitative-research-study-exploring-the-provision-of-youth-work-in-a-rural-context/>

National Youth Council of Ireland (2019) Skills Summary Resources:

<https://www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/skills-summary/skills-summary-resources/>



# # YOUNG VOICES

**Get Involved:**

Go to:

[www.youth.ie/youngvoices](http://www.youth.ie/youngvoices)

Follow @nycinews on Twitter and Instagram

The National Youth Council of Ireland is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. We use our collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people.  
[www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie)



An Roinn Leanaí agus Gnóthai Óige  
Department of Children and Youth Affairs



Co-Funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union

This is part of the EU Youth Dialogue process which gives young people the opportunity to influence decisions affecting their lives.