



Project 101091233 - So I BeLiv

Research on the impact that the COVID-19 crisis had on young people in Croatia, France, Italy, Slovenia and Spain

Synthesis report



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April 2023

**Gathered by Udruga mladih mladi u Europskoj uniji together with
Izobraževalni center Geoss d.o.o., Pistes solidaires, Unione degli assessorati alle
politiche socio-sanitarie, dell istruzione e del lavoro and Asociacion caminos -
asociacion para el intercambio educacion y desarrollo social**



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1 Introduction

During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, health problems (especially of the elderly) were the most important issues the countries had to deal with and now, with the pandemic calming down, other issues are coming into the limelight. Among them are the social, economic and educational issues young people (aged 18 – 29) face. When looking at health issues, young people were not affected by the pandemic in a great deal, however, they still went through the same democratic and civic restrictions which might lead to even worse civic and democratic participation of young people on local/national/European levels.

Young people have been one of the groups most severely affected by the COVID-19 crisis in terms of employment and financial difficulties. In addition to experiencing higher unemployment rates and worsening economic conditions, as a result of the non-pharmaceutical interventions put in place by governments, they have also suffered from limited mobility and physical activity, the closure of face-to-face educational services and the cancellation of social events, resulting in social isolation. Many have experienced emotional difficulties in managing their situation during the lockdown. They have also reported experiencing boring routines, stress and compulsive use of smartphones, among other issues.

National researches done in some of the participating countries have already shown some consequences that the COVID-19 pandemic had and still has on youth, and with this research, the project partners will further identify the affected areas arising as consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic among youth in the participating countries. We wish to include youth groups who were particularly vulnerable to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (young people working part-time, young people who just finished their education, young people at risk of poverty or social exclusion, young people with existing mental health issues, and young people with housing or family issues). To investigate if all the COVID-19-related challenges among youth have been discovered and defined in participating countries and if any new consequences are arising after the end



of the pandemic, desktop research and an online survey will be conducted in all partner countries. Partners will gain knowledge on the areas of life that were most affected and compare the results from Croatia, France, Italy, Slovenia and Spain regarding the habits of young people before, during and after the lockdowns.



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2 Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on young people

2.1 Employment and education

Most young people in the four countries covered by this study were most affected by the pandemic in terms of employment. This is because the majority of young people were employed on temporary and student contracts. The employment sector also played a significant role in the decline of youth employment during the pandemic. Specifically, young people predominantly worked in jobs related to tourism and entertainment (bars, restaurants, etc.), i.e. in sectors that could not adapt to remote work like office jobs.

National studies preceding this one have also shown a decrease in youth employment compared to older cohorts of the population. In France, as in other countries where the study was conducted, this situation has particularly affected the student population. Between the ages of 18 and 24, more than one young person in two is a student, and eight out of ten of those are enrolled in higher education programs. This represents 2.2 million young people enrolled in higher education in 2019-2020 and 2.3 million in 2020-2021. The closures of schools, train centers, etc. has had negative effects on their learning conditions and may have weakened the financial situation of the most vulnerable among them. Difficulties in finding part-time or summer jobs may have weighed heavily on students' budgets. Difficulties in finding an internship can also reduce young people's resources and affect their student career or their ability to continue it. This is evidenced by the fact that the use of specific ad hoc aid for students facing serious financial difficulties increased significantly during the confinements and remains at an unusually high level in the first half of 2021.

Given the worsened financial situation of students, a large part of young people returned to their parents' homes, which particularly affected students from less affluent families. This led to overcrowding of family homes and inadequate conditions for distance learning. To address and find solutions to stop the growth and reduce youth unemployment, the European Commission has decided to help member states in several ways to mitigate the



consequences of the pandemic for young people, such as strengthening the Youth Guarantee.

2.2 Health, well-being, lifestyle

While historical literature does not provide much guidance on the psychological impacts of prolonged school closures on young people due to the pandemic, several recent studies have shed light on the issue. For instance, a study published in *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health* journal found that school closures during the pandemic have led to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and stress among young people. Another study published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* found that prolonged school closures and social distancing measures can lead to increased feelings of loneliness, social isolation, and disconnection from peers. Additionally, research conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has shown that school closures and the interruption of routine support services, such as mental health counselling, can negatively impact the mental health and well-being of students. These studies and others suggest that school closures can have a significant impact on the psychological well-being and mental health of young people, particularly adolescents who rely heavily on social relationships with peers to develop their sense of identity and independence.

A yet unpublished systematic review (Viner 2021) considered the effects of school closures on the health and well-being of children and young people. Studies from all 20 countries involved documented impairments in children and adolescents and young people aged 0 to 20 years affecting mental health and well-being, noting problems with restlessness, behavioral and emotional disturbances, inattention and psychological malaise.

It details:

- A lowering of the stress tolerance threshold and an increase in post-traumatic symptoms in children/young people aged 13-18 years. Anxiety symptoms were detected in 53% of the females and 44% of the males, and depressive symptoms in 19% of the females and 21% of the males.



- An increase in suicidal ideation in 16-18-year-olds, especially during the second wave of the pandemic.
- A reduction in perceived life satisfaction/quality of life in the 13-17 age group.

Other aspects examined by the studies included in the Viner review are:

- The reduction of child protection measures, with a halving of the number of reports and risk situations (trauma, ill-treatment, abuse, etc.).
- The reduction of psychiatric visits/counselling with a decrease in reports of self-harm.

Other outcomes not related to psychological aspects examined by Viner are:

- A potential widening of inequalities in vaccination coverage.
- A significant increase in time spent in front of screens (including the use of social media).
- Unhealthy lifestyles, including lack of physical activity and changes in diet. School closures could exacerbate the childhood obesity epidemic and increase disparities in obesity risk.
- Sleep difficulties for 16-24-year-olds during the lockdown period.

These findings were all supported by national data from the courtiers included in this research. Therefore, in France, the situation was the following: “In May 2020, the prevalence of depressive syndromes rose sharply among 18-29-year-olds, while it remained stable at older ages. This strong increase is mainly driven by 18-24 year-olds, for whom the prevalence doubled (from 10% in 2019 to 22% in May 2020). In autumn 2020, it remains higher for them than for their elders. In 2020, the share of 18-29-year-olds who say they are optimistic about their future drops by 17 points (to 51%)” (French public health survey). Additionally, the survey claims that “[f]or young adults, this is by far the lowest level recorded since 2004. The loss of confidence is particularly marked for students (-25 points compared to -13 points for other young adults)” (French public health survey).



In Spain, the FAD's Barómetro Juvenil (2021) states that the percentage of young people who reported having very frequent mental health problems rose from 6.2 % in 2017 to 15.9 % in 2021, with women close to doubling the percentage of men. The barometer data indicate that self-perception of health status worsened among young people, with only 54.6 % in 2021 considering themselves to be in good health. By gender, more men (59.9 %) than women (50.2 %) thought they were in good health.

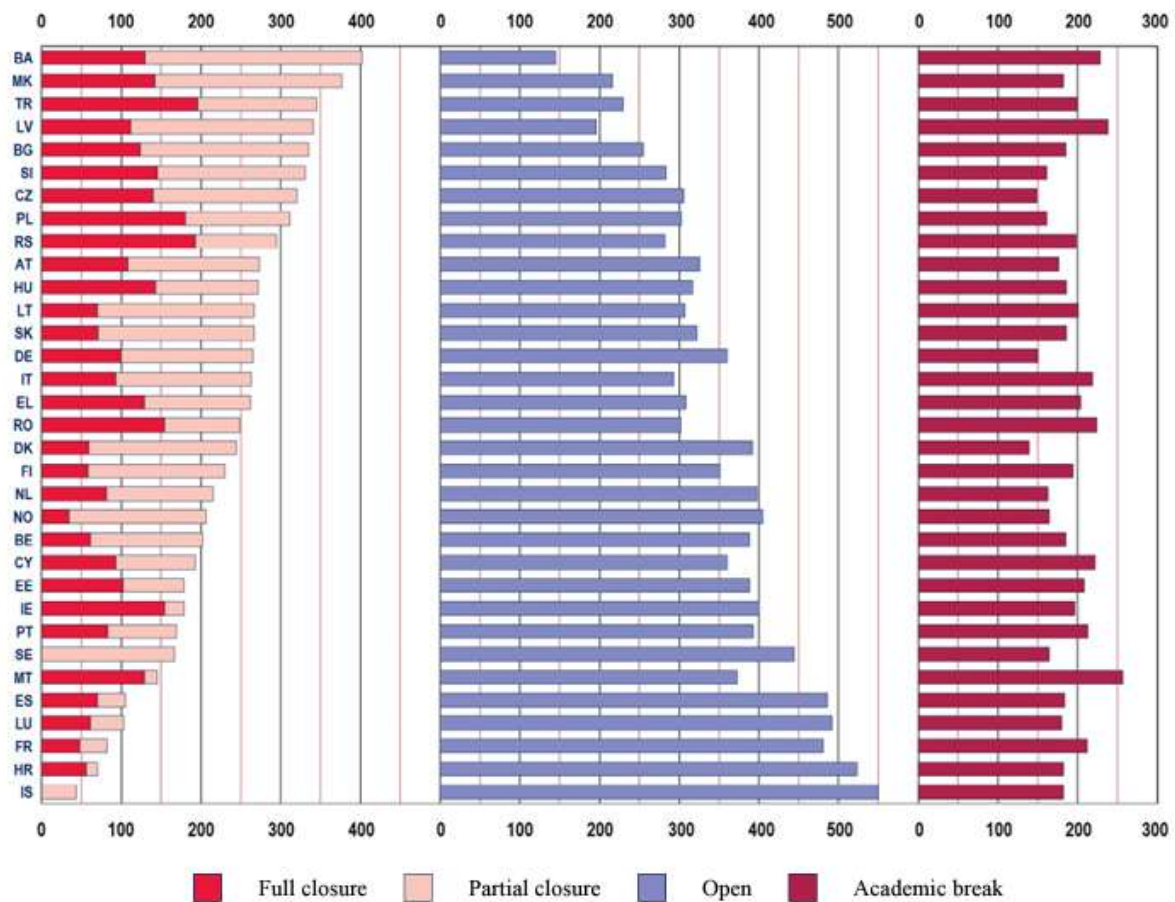
The Slovenian Association of School Counsellors reports that many children and adolescents experienced emotional distress, depression, anxiety, and social difficulties when returning to school after lockdown. In 2020, almost 50% more adolescents were treated for suicide attempts, and 50% more children and adolescents with eating disorders were treated at the Ljubljana Pediatric Clinic than in the previous year. The number of emergency admissions continued to rise in the first three months of 2021 (Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje, 2021).

Young people in many European countries have experienced negative consequences related to their physical health, such as reduced motor skills, deterioration in physical fitness, and unhealthy habits. In Slovenia, for instance, half of young people spent more time in front of screens, just under half were less physically active, a good third avoided going to the doctor because of a problem unrelated to COVID-19, almost a fifth smoked more, and a good tenth drank more alcohol than before the pandemic (Urad Republike Slovenije za mladino, 2021).

A national survey was also conducted by the Central State Office for Demography and Youth in collaboration with the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, which examined the opinion of young people during 2021 about the impact of the disease COVID-19 on the quality of life, the future of the European Union and support for older citizens. From the results of the mentioned research, it is highlighted that every other examined male/female high school graduate (59.1%) believes the pandemic has harmed their lives. Young people who participated in the research also stated that today's generation feels deprived compared to previous generations (prohibitions and impossibility of going out, travelling, celebrating, quality education, and getting to know each other). All included



courriers in this paper saw worsening mental health conditions of their youth regardless of the duration of educational institution closures (Graphic 1).



Source: UNESCO 2022.

An important factor explaining the differences in the number of days of full and partial school closure between countries is the variation in the general strategies applied to cope with the pandemic. Although the restrictions imposed on mobility and social activities were broadly similar, the timing and enforcement of these differed considerably across countries. It is important to note that, even when schools fully reopened, the disruptions of attendance continued for many students. The continuing spread of COVID-19 among the teaching staff caused the suspension of courses and the temporary resumption of online learning (European Commission, 2022).

2.3 Civic engagement

Civic engagement of youth in the European Union has been an important topic of discussion in recent years. The term "civic engagement" refers to the active involvement of individuals in their communities, through actions such as volunteering, voting, or participating in public events. Civic engagement is seen as a critical component of democratic societies, as it allows citizens to have a voice in decisions that affect their lives.

The political turnout of youth in Croatia, Italy, France, Slovenia, and Spain can vary depending on the specific election and age group of the youth population. Generally, young people tend to have lower voter turnout rates than older age groups.

As an example, according to the European Commission's 2019 European elections post-election survey, the youth turnout rates in the countries mentioned were as follows:

- Croatia: 28% of voters aged 18-24 and 28% of voters aged 25-39
- Italy: 40% of voters aged 18-24 and 51% of voters aged 25-39
- France: 42% of voters aged 18-24 and 49% of voters aged 25-39
- Slovenia: 24% of voters aged 18-24 and 31% of voters aged 25-39
- Spain: 45% of voters aged 18-24 and 50% of voters aged 25-39

Croatia and Slovenia's turnover rates are lower compared to the EU average. During the pandemic in the context of limited movement and the closure of sports facilities, young people all over Europe couldn't engage in certain activities. Moreover, NGOs faced big problems regarding financing. The problems faced by organizations during that period went in two directions - financing and impact on activities. Public calls on which the funding of organizations depends have, in most cases, been delayed, postponed, or completely cancelled. Grant payments were delayed or cancelled due to diversion to the health sector. That's why most of the activities couldn't be implemented.

On the other hand, during the COVID-19 pandemic, there were volunteering opportunities aimed to help elders in Croatia as a consequence of the devastating earthquake near



Petrinja. Many informal groups and NGOs provided volunteering services to the people in need.

In Slovenia, young people face challenges of participation in political processes, institutions, and policy-making at even the best of times, while the pandemic amplified the challenges. Over one in four young people (31 %) reported a high degree of engagement in voluntarism and making donations towards the COVID-19 response with only a small gender difference observable.

Involvement of French youth in associations remains at the level observed in 2020: 43% say they have been part of or participate in the activities of an association (sports, cultural, leisure, youth, humanitarian, political, etc.) compared to 42% the previous year. As in Slovenia, even France has increased volunteering among 18-30-year-olds since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, as highlighted by the youth barometer (Djepva- Injep- Crédoc). According to this, in 2021, 64% of young people say they will volunteer their time to an association or other organization (political party, trade union, etc.), compared to 51% in 2019.

In Italy, during the lockdown, Italians' confidence in the government and the health system grew (Scavo, 2020). The common condition of danger in which individuals found themselves acted as a generating mechanism for a social solidarity attitude that might explain the events emerging among the population. Altruistic behaviors also increased: donations to the health system increased by about 30% compared to previous years; more than 10 million Italians declared they had given money at the beginning of the pandemic emergency and many others declared their intention to do it soon (Castiglioni & Lozza, 2020). Studies also show an increase in civic behavior by the increase in the hours devoted gratuitously to the benefit of others. In the lockdown stage, according to the data, social associations may have played an important role in stimulating behavior tending towards interpersonal assistance and civic engagement.



In conclusion, civic engagement of youth in the European Union has been an important topic of discussion, with the active involvement of individuals in their communities being seen as a critical component of democratic societies. However, the political turnout of youth in countries such as Croatia, Slovenia, and Italy is generally lower compared to the EU average, with the COVID-19 pandemic amplifying the challenges faced by young people of participating in political processes, institutions, and policy-making. Despite the challenges, there have been some positive developments, with an increase in volunteering and civic behavior observed during the pandemic. Overall, governments and organizations need to continue to encourage and support the civic engagement of youth to ensure the active participation of citizens in decision-making processes.



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3 Comparative analysis of the survey results conducted in partner countries

In the first quarter of 2023, the project consortium has made research in Croatia, France, Italy, Slovenia and Spain. Thanks to this research, we could compare how similar COVID-19 measures have affected young people in aforementioned countries. Because of the different fields in which partner organizations are working, respondents are quite heterogeneous.

Demographics

Age	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
25 – 29	31.7 %	13.3 %	46.7 %	61.3 %	26.7 %
18 - 24	48.8 %	76.7 %	46.7 %	35.5 %	50 %
≤ 17	19.5 %	10 %	6.7 %	3.2 %	23.3 %

Gender:

- Female: 62.4 %
- Male: 36.3 %
- Other/Not specified: 1.3 %

Current status	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
Employed	17.1 %	10 %*	50 %	25.8 %	23.3 %
Student	61 %	76.7 %	30 %	25.8 %	13.4 %
Studying and working	14.6	10 %	3.3 %	38.7 %	23.3 %
Unemployed and looking for a job	7.3 %	3.3 %	13.3 %	9.7 %	26.7 %
Unemployed and not looking for a job	0 %	0 %	3.3 %	0 %	13.3 %

*Included civil service

Level of study	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
PhD	0 %	0 %	3.3 %	3.2 %	0 %
Ma	12.2 %	6.7 %	16.7 %	38.7 %	6.7 %
Ba	26.8 %	16.7 %	23.3 %	16.1 %	6.2 %
High school	26.8 %	66.7 %	50 %	41.9 %	30 %
Elementary school	34.1 %	10 %	6.7 %	0 %	56.7 %



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Obstacles you might be facing	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
No barriers	85 %	76.7 %	73.3 %	58.1 %	50 %
Health problems	0 %	0 %	6.7 %	3.2 %	0 %
Barriers linked to education and training systems	2.5 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	23.3 %
Cultural differences	0 %	3.3 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Social barriers	0 %	6.7 %	3.3 %	3.2 %	0 %
Economic barriers	2.5 %	3.3 %	3.3 %	22.6 %	16.7 %
Discrimination	2.5 %	3.3 %	6.7 %	3.2 %	6.7 %
Geographical barriers	7.5 %	6.7 %	6.7 %	9.7 %	3.3 %

Habits before, during and after the pandemic

Young people from Croatia and Spain have not typically been involved in NGOs. In Slovenia, however, many young people have become active in organizations after the lockdown. In all five countries, young people have shown little interest in joining political parties.

When it comes to civic activities, respondents in Italy and France are more involved than those in other countries. Although participation in civic activities remained steady in Italy, France saw an increase in enrollment after restrictions were lifted. This trend is in line with the youth barometer (Djepva-Injep-Crédoc), which found that 64% of young people in France plan to volunteer their time to an association or other organization in 2021, compared to 51% in 2019.

In France, the majority of respondents were enrolled in various sports clubs before the pandemic, and 46.7% of young people confirmed that they had been doing more sports after the outbreak.

Enrolment in NGO	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
Before	7.3 %	16.7 %	16.7 %	29 %	20 %
During	4.9 %	6.7 %	3.3 %	12.9 %	10 %
After	0 %	23.3 %	3.3 %	16.1 %	36.7 %
N/A	87.8 %	53.3 %	76.7 %	41.9 %	33.3 %

Enrolment in a sports club	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
Before	17.1 %	40 %	23.3 %	16.1 %	26.7 %
During	2.4 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %



After	9.8 %	16.7 %	0 %	12.9 %	0 %
N/A	70.7 %	43.3 %	76.7 %	71 %	73.3 %
Enrolment in a political party	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
Before	0 %	0 %	6.7 %	3.2 %	3.3 %
During	0 %	0 %	0 %	3.2 %	0 %
After	2.4 %	6.7 %	0 %	3.2 %	3.3 %
N/A	97.6 %	93.3 %	93.3 %	90.3 %	93.3 %

Contribution to the civic activities	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
Before	9.8 %	16.7 %	16.7 %	16.1 %	3.3 %
During	2.4 %	6.7 %	3.3 %	12.9 %	0 %
After	9.8 %	23.3 %	3.3 %	12.9 %	3.3 %
N/A	78 %	53 %	76.7 %	58.1 %	70 %

During COVID I had problems with my education	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
Yes	7.3 %	16.7 %	20 %	25.8 %	53.3 %
No	82.9 %	26.7 %	80 %	58.1 %	36.7 %
N/A	9.8 %	56.7 %	0 %	16.1 %	10 %

After the lockdown your income is	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
Lower than before	12.2 %	13.3 %	6.7 %	19.4 %	23.3 %
Same as before	17 %	3.3 %	50 %	19.4 %	20 %
Higher than before	22 %	3.3 %	10 %	32.3 %	20 %
N/A	48.8 %	80 %	33.3 %	29 %	36.7 %

With the lifting of restrictions, most young respondents did not experience issues with social interaction. However, in Slovenia, over 50% of young people reported having less social interaction than before COVID-19.

Do you have less social contacts than before the pandemic?	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
Yes	29 %	10 %	23.3 %	25.8 %	53.3 %
No	61 %	76.7 %	46.7 %	61.3 %	26.7 %
Not sure	9 %	13.3 %	30 %	12.9 %	20 %

I read more than before the pandemic.	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
Yes	17.1 %	26.7 %	10 %	22.6 %	40 %



Is the same	43.9 %	46.7 %	56.7 %	35.5 %	16.7 %
No	26.8 %	16.7 %	13.3 %	16.1 %	36.7 %
N/A	12.2 %	10 %	20 %	25.8 %	6.7 %

I do more sports than before the pandemic.	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
Yes	34.1 %	46.7 %	30 %	38.7 %	30 %
Is the same	39 %	26.7 %	46.7 %	12.9 %	20 %
No	24.4 %	16.7 %	13.3 %	35.5 %	40 %
N/A	2.5 %	10 %	10 %	12.9 %	10 %

I travel more than before the pandemic.	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
Yes	36.6 %	23.3 %	13.3 %	35.5 %	26.7 %
Is the same	48.8 %	30 %	36.7 %	12.9 %	10 %
No	7.3 %	20 %	20 %	25.8 %	53.3 %
N/A	7.3 %	26.7 %	30 %	25.8 %	10 %

I take more care of my mental health than before the pandemic.	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
Yes	65.9 %	53.3 %	26.7 %	58.1 %	43.3 %
Is the same	14.6 %	13.3 %	26.7 %	19.4 %	26.7 %
No	7.3 %	20 %	16.7 %	12.9 %	26.7 %
N/A	12.2 %	13.3 %	30 %	9.7 %	3.3 %

Visiting more cultural activities than before the pandemic:	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
Yes	43.9 %	60 %	26.7 %	32.3 %	40 %
Is the same	36.6 %	23.3 %	50 %	35.5 %	23.3 %
No	12.2 %	10 %	10 %	12.9 %	23.3 %
N/A	7.3 %	6.7 %	13.3 %	19.4 %	13.3 %

The highest levels of concern about the future after the pandemic were reported among young people in Slovenia and Spain. Their primary worries were related to mental health (48.8% in Spain, 43.3% in Slovenia) and education (34.1% in Spain, 33.3% in Slovenia). On the other hand, over 50% of respondents from France and Italy reported having no concerns after restrictions were lifted.



Most young people strongly or partially agreed that anti-COVID-19 measures had been successful in preventing the spread of the virus. However, the measures were perceived as having the most negative impact on young people in Croatia and Italy.

When asked which aspects of their lives were most negatively affected by the pandemic, young people in Croatia (86.7%) and Slovenia (73.3%) reported the greatest negative impact was on their social lives. In terms of economics, young people in Croatia, Slovenia (both 33.3%), and Italy (32.3%) were the most affected. Education was the most impacted in France (63.3%) and Slovenia (46.7%), which had the longest period of school closures. Young people in Spain (75.6%) reported the most negative impact on their mental health, followed by Italy (61.3%) and Croatia and Slovenia (both 60%).

At the end of the pandemic, what problems do you face?	ES	FR	HR	IT	SI
Unemployment	17.1 %	10 %	20 %	9.7 %	36.7 %
Education	34.1 %	26.7 %	0 %	19.4 %	33.3 %
Mental health	48.8 %	26.7 %	40 %	29 %	43.3 %
Physical health	14.6 %	13.3 %	3.3 %	9.7 %	0 %
Economic stability	4.8 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Housing	0 %	0 %	20 %	0 %	13.3 %
None	34.1 %	50 %	40 %	58.1 %	36.7 %



4 Final words

Based on the research conducted among young people in five European countries, it can be concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on their lives. The study found that social interactions, mental health, education, and economic situations were among the most affected aspects of their lives. While most young people agreed that anti-COVID-19 measures had achieved their goal of preventing the spread of infection, young people in Croatia and Italy were among the most negatively affected by these measures.

There were also significant differences among the countries in terms of young people's participation in civic activities and NGOs, as well as their concerns about the future after the pandemic. Young people in France and Italy reported fewer concerns than those in Slovenia and Spain, while respondents in Italy and France were more involved in civic activities than in the other countries.



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5 Resources

1. Consortium of the So I BeLiv project, 2023. Research on the impact that the COVID-19 crisis had on young people: National report Croatia, Italy, France, Slovenia and Spain.



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6 Annex – national reports

Annex 1: National report Croatia

Annex 2: National report France

Annex 3: National report Italy

Annex 4: National Report Slovenia

Annex 5: National report Spain



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Project 101091233 - So I BeLiv

Research on the impact that the COVID-19 crisis had on young people

National report Croatia



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January 2023

Udruga mladih mladi u Europskoj uniji



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1 Introduction

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and concomitant measures have had large impact on various aspects from 2020 to 2021 (Clemente-Suárez et al., 2020). Many people have had to change their lifestyle behaviors due to restrictions such as self-quarantine and curfews. The COVID-19 pandemic has provoked social isolation and loneliness.

Implementing this research, we would like to see socio-economic impact on youth during and after peak season of COVID-19 pandemic.

With this research involved partners will provide and compare the results in Croatia, France, Italy, Slovenia and Spain regarding habits of young people before, during and after lockdowns.

Results of this research will be discussed between partners and stakeholders during the conference which will be led in Šibenik, Croatia. The aim is to use received data in order to make proposals on how to tackle socio-economic issues resulted by COVID-19 pandemic.

The coronavirus pandemic has affected every aspect of the lives of the Croatian population: the national lockdown, school closure, job losses, rising prices. Since early 2020 to the present due to the COVID 19 pandemic citizens have been experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety. Some of the causes contributing to increased tension are unemployment resulting in loss of income, sickness, social isolation, the uncertainty of what the future holds, helplessness, and lack of individual control over the situation we are all facing.

The psychosocial impact of the COVID-19 crisis has resulted in the mental health and emotional well-being of millions being affected in many ways. This is particularly true when it comes to young individuals. The seclusion, lack of contact with peers, and for many, the loss of emotional and financial security, impacted their daily lives including disruption in their education. This has resulted in youth facing an increased risk of suffering from depression, anxiety, and sleep disorders. The pandemic has also



contributed to the diminished productivity of the youth, because of the various stressors mentioned above.

Moreover, the COVID-19 crisis has actually exacerbated the already existing digital divide and has resulted in massive closures of educational institutions.

To effectively address the negative impacts caused by COVID-19, decision and policy-makers, educational leaders, professors, and the staff of academic centers jointly with the youth, need to work together to ensure that young people have the support and resources they need to address their mental, emotional, and behavioral health needs in the wake of the pandemic. Furthermore, we all need to be as tolerant and empathetic as possible.



2 Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on young people

Viral pandemics, such as the last pandemic, are always associated with short-term and long-term psychological and social consequences. A factor that can affect the mental health of young people in the long term is the very large burden placed on their backs in the Republic of Croatia already at the beginning of the pandemic in the spring of 2020. At the very beginning, very little attention was paid to the emotional and social well-being of young people, which went hand in hand with the large number of unknowns that the world was dealing with at the time. Young people were called out for the unwitting or intentional spread of infection, insufficient protection against disease, neglect of elderly people from their family and/or environment, and inappropriateness and misunderstanding of the extent of the pandemic, for example, when demanding regular classes (at all levels of education) in relation to introduced online courses.

The initial mistakes directed at young people have begun to be corrected as various actors, from local levels to national and global institutions¹, have begun to take numerous steps (and are still taking them) with the aim of investigating the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of young people, as well as the steps necessary to promote conservation their mental health. UNICEF Croatia² thus focused on providing concrete information about the pandemic, advice on how to preserve one's own mental health, and critically checking and sharing information about the pandemic. A national survey was also conducted by the Central State Office for Demography and Youth in collaboration with the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, which examined the opinion of young people during 2021 about the impact of the disease COVID-19 on the quality of life, the future of the European Union and support for older citizens. From the results³ of the mentioned research, it is highlighted that every other examined male/female high school

¹ „COVID-MINDS NETWORK: Global mental health in the COVID-19 pandemic“

<https://www.covidminds.org/newsletter>

UNICEF Hrvatska. <https://www.unicef.org/croatia/szo-odgovori-na-najcesca-pitanja-adolescenata-i-mladih-vezanih-uz-pandemiju-covid-19>

² UNICEF Hrvatska. <https://www.unicef.org/croatia/szo-odgovori-na-najcesca-pitanja-adolescenata-i-mladih-vezanih-uz-pandemiju-covid-19>

³ Conference of the future of Europe. <https://futureu.europa.eu/processes/OtherIdeas/f/7/meetings/36433?locale=hr&page=2>

graduate (59.1%) believes the pandemic has had a harmful impact on their lives. Young people who participated in the research also stated that today's generation feels deprived compared to previous generations (prohibitions and impossibility of going out, traveling, celebrating, quality education, and getting to know each other).

Research conducted on young people (aged 18 to 34 in 32 European countries) which points out that one of the most worrying research findings is that the mental health and well-being of almost two thirds of young people can be affected.⁴ During the assessment of their own mental health, identified is that around half of young people (48%) may have anxiety and depression, while 15.9% probably have them. By comparison, in pre-pandemic times, one in four to five people were typically thought to be affected by deteriorating mental health. It is inevitable to add the perceived difference among young people from marginalized and non-marginalized groups, with the former stating a higher probability (19.6%) that they probably felt anxiety and depression compared to the non-marginalized group of young people (12.2%). The student population in Croatia also states that they feel their mental health is impaired during the pandemic period - almost every second student perceives their mental health to be worse and much worse compared to the period before the pandemic⁵.

The closure of educational institutions that occurred with the first days of the declaration of the pandemic in the Republic of Croatia, but also more widely, is another direct consequence of the pandemic on young people, in addition to the previously shown increase in financial instability among young people. In a very short time, elementary, secondary schools, and colleges were closed and the rapid digitization of formal education was introduced, which affected many young people (for the first time in March 2020). It was mentioned earlier that many young people have experienced anxiety, depression, and a feeling of isolation and deprivation, and the "lost generation" is already being discussed in the public space as a direct result of the pandemic and sudden closures and social

⁴ Moxon, D. et al. (2021.), „Beyond Lockdown – The Pandemic Scar on Young People“. Publisher: European Youth Forum.

⁵ Đorđević, M., Plužarić Ž. i I. Bišćan (2020.), “Studenti i pandemija: kako smo (pre) živjeli”. Publisher: Agencija za znanosti i visoko obrazovanje.

isolation. The fact that is unquestionable is that young people can currently be characterized as a group that is deprived of many essential elements of socialization that school life brings. The training of young people for life through education is also connected with their preparation for the labor market, so it will only be visible afterward what and how big the consequences are for young people due to changes in this area of their lives. However, the educational system also has a vital educational element, i.e. schools are places where children and young people acquire many emotional, cognitive, and social skills. It was mentioned earlier that educational workers are often the first to recognize if a child is neglected, abused, or has certain psychological, developmental, or family problems. With the advent of the pandemic, the possibility of this detection was very difficult or reduced to a minimum. The pandemic was the cause that prevented not only socializing with peers but also prevented a whole other developmental and educational spectrum that schools and the school environment provide.

Young people between the ages of 15 and 29 in the Republic of Croatia thus make up about 16.6% of the population (an estimated 671,400 people) of the total population in 2020.¹⁶ⁱⁱⁱ Of the total number of the working population (people who are either employed or in looking for employment) during 2020, young people aged 15 to 24 accounted for a share of 7.9%. About 6.8% of young people were employed, which is a decrease compared to 2019, when 7.4% of young people of this age group were employed. The available data show that it was within this age group that there was the biggest drop in employed persons, looking at the pandemic year compared to the previous year, which is one of the direct consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of young people. Similar data on the increase in the youth unemployment rate are available for other countries such as the United Kingdom, which also recorded a sharp decline in the number of employed youth (aged 16 to 24)⁶. The International Labor Organization concludes at the global level that one out of six young people has stopped working since the beginning of the pandemic, while at the level of the European Union, unemployment among young people between

⁶ Hagell, A. (2021.), "Summarising what we know so far about the impact of Covid-19 on young people". Publisher: Association for Young People's Health.

the ages of 15 and 24 increased in 2020, and in August 2020 amounted to 17.6%⁷ (before the pandemic, youth unemployment was 14.9%). Unfortunately, it was easiest for young workers as well as students who worked on student contracts to resign or not extend the employment contract after its expiration. It was during the introduction of the lockdown and the suspension or the reduction of work and working hours in various occupations that most young people were fired from jobs related to tourism, that is, hospitality and accommodation. Likewise, young women lost their jobs more often than young men⁸.

In order to act and find solutions to stop growth and reduce youth unemployment, the European Commission has decided to help member states in several ways⁹ in order to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic for young people (e.g. strengthening Youth Guarantee).

⁷ European Parliament <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/hr/headlines/society/20200709STO83004/covid-19-kako-eu-zeli-sprijeciti-nezaposlenost-mladih>

⁸ European Institute for Gender Equality. <https://eige.europa.eu/news/covid-19-derails-gender-equality-gains>

⁹ European Commission https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/economy-works-people/youth-employment-support_hr

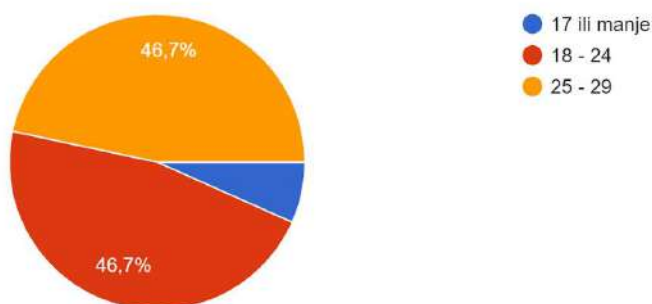


3 Results of the questionnaire

SECTION 1 - Respondent personal details

Koliko imate godina?

30 ОТВЕТОВ



Age

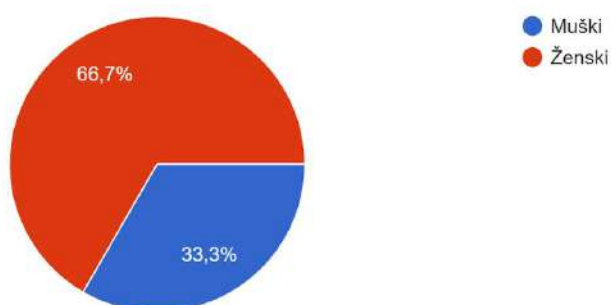
46,7% of the respondent's age is between **25 and 29 years old**.

46,7% of the respondent's age is between **18 and 24 years old**.

6,6% of the respondents is **under 18 years old**.

Spol

30 ОТВЕТОВ



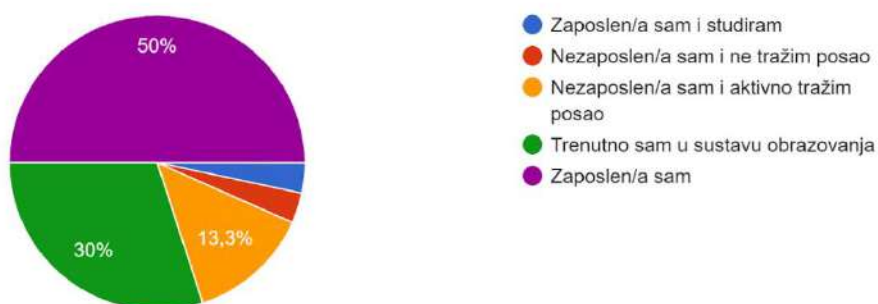
Gender

66,7% of the respondents are **female**.

33,3% of the respondents are **male**.

Trenutni status

30 ОТВЕТОВ



Current employment situation:

50% of the respondents are working.

30% of the respondents are studying.

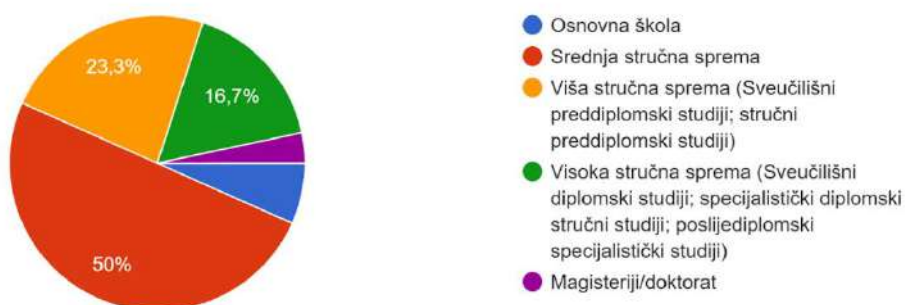
13,3% of the respondents are unemployed and looking for a job.

3,3% of the respondents are unemployed and looking for a job.

3,3% of the respondents are working and studying.

Posljednja završena razina obrazovanja

30 ОТВЕТОВ



Educational level

50% of the respondents have a **high school diploma**.

23,3% of the respondents **have a Bachelor degree**.

16,7% of the respondents **have a Master's degree**.

6,7% of the respondents **finished school**.

3,3% of the respondents completed a PhD.

Susrećete li se s nekim od sljedećih prepreka?

30 ОТВЕТОВ



Do you face any of the following obstacles/barriers?

73,3% of the respondents are not facing any kind of difficulty.

6,7% of the respondents faced health problems.

6,7% of the respondents faced geographical barriers

6,7% of the respondents faced barriers liked to discrimination.

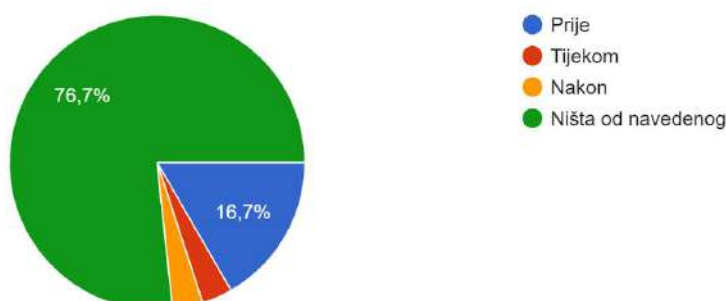
3,2% of the respondents faced social barriers.

3,2% of the respondents faced economical barriers.

SECTION 2: Change of habits before, during and after lockdown

Postao član NGO-a

30 ОТВЕТОВ



I joined an NGO:

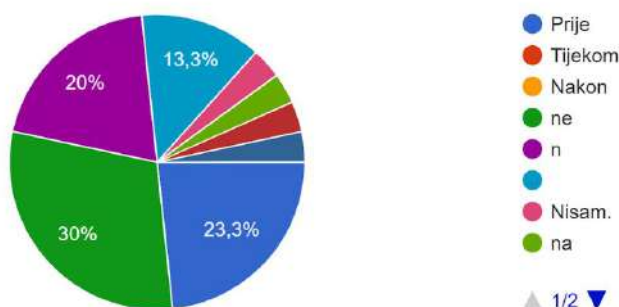
16,7% of the respondents joined an NGO **before** the lockdown.

3,3% of the respondents joined an NGO **after** the lockdown.

3,3% of the respondents joined an NGO **during** the lockdown.

Postao član sportske organizacije

30 ОТВЕТОВ



I joined a sport club:

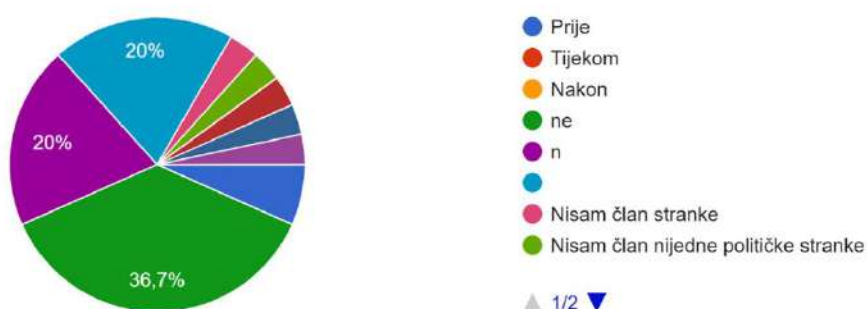
23,3% of the respondents joined a sport club **before** the lockdown.

20% of the respondents joined a sport club **after** the lockdown.

3,3% of the respondents joined a sport club **during** the lockdown.

Postao član političke stranke

30 ОТВЕТОВ



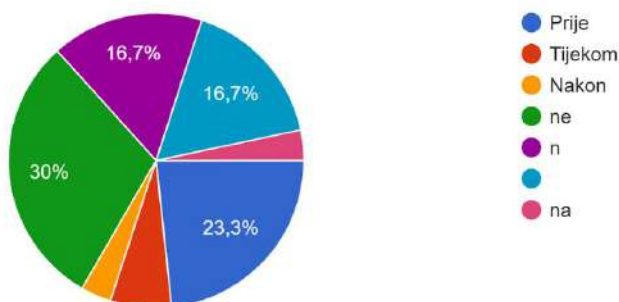
I joined a political party:

6,7% of the respondents joined a political party **before** the lockdown.

3,3% of the respondents joined a political party **during** the lockdown.

Započeo sam zadnji stupanj obrazovanja

30 ОТВЕТОВ



I started my last level of education:

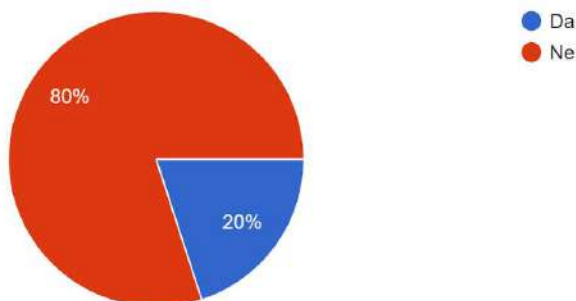
23,3% of the respondent started their last level of education **before** the lockdown.

6,7% of the respondent started their last level of education **during** the lockdown.

3,3% of the respondent started their last level of education **after** the lockdown.

Jeste li imali problema s obrazovanjem?

30 ОТВЕТОВ



Have you had problems with your education?

80% of the respondents **did not have any problem with their education.**

20% of the respondents **had problems with their education.**

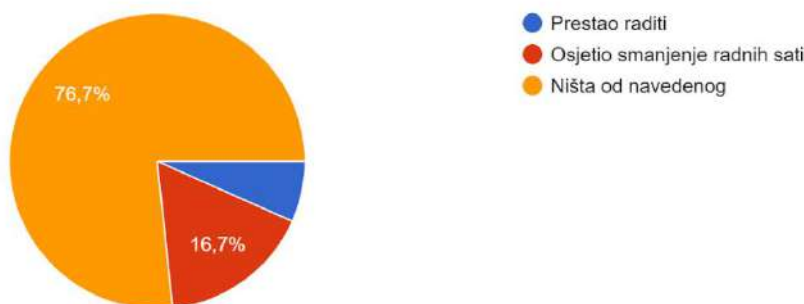
If your answer above is yes, do you still have problems with your education? And what kind of problems do you face?

This is a list of problems that 20% of the respondents to the above question faced, are still facing, or no longer facing in their educational path, following the lockdown.

- I didn't like online courses
- Video-calls used to be hard
- I didn't have a real college experience

Tijekom lockdown-a ja sam:

30 ОТВЕТОВ



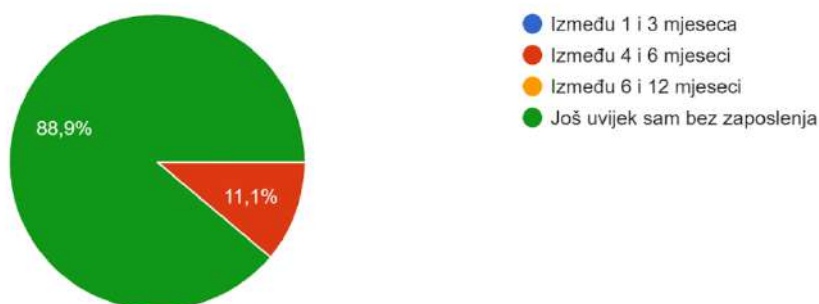
During Covid-19 pandemic I:

16,7% of the respondent experienced a reduction of their working hours.

6,7% of the respondent stopped working.

U slučaju da ste dali otkaz/izgubili posao, koliko brzo ste pronašli novi posao s punim radnim vremenom?

9 ОТВЕТОВ



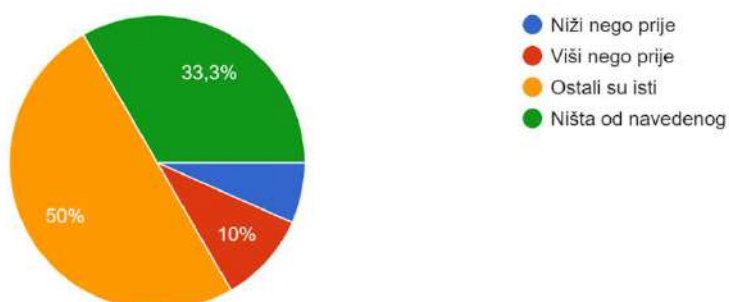
In case you left/lost your job, how long did it take you to find a new full-time job?

88,9% of the respondent are still unemployed.

11,1% of the respondent are found a job within 4-6 months.

Nakon lockdowna vaši prihodi su:

30 ОТВЕТОВ



After lockdown your income is:

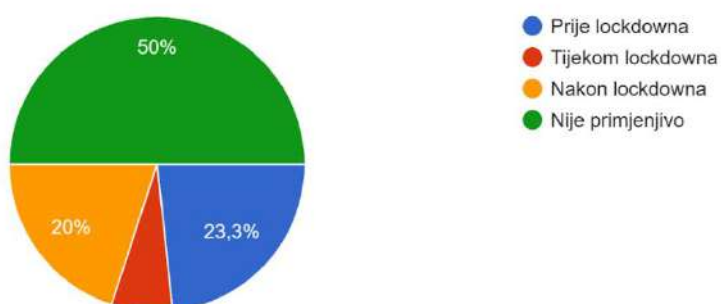
50% of the respondents have **the same income** as before the lockdown.

10% of the respondents have a **higher income**.

6,7% of the respondents have a **lower income**.

Kada ste se uključili u društvene akcije (volontiranje i sl.)

30 ОТВЕТОВ



I got involved in civic actions:

23,3% of the respondent got involved in civic actions **before** the lockdown.

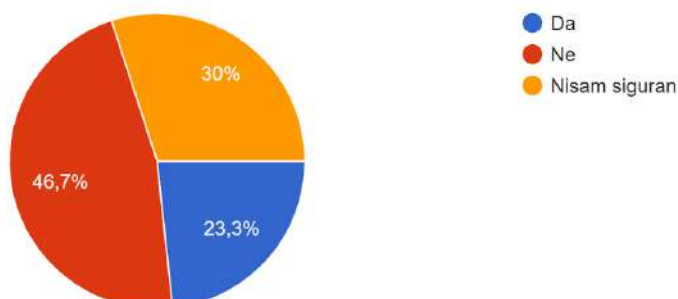
20% of the respondent got involved in civic actions **after** the lockdown.

6,7% of the respondent got involved in civic actions **during** the lockdown.

SECTION 3: Post Covid-19 Trends

Imate li još uvijek manje društvenih kontakata u odnosu na prije izbijanja pandemije?

30 ОТВЕТОВ



Do you still have fewer social contacts than before the outbreak of the pandemic?

46,7% of the respondents stated they **don't have fewer social contacts** than before the pandemic outbreak.

30% of the respondents are **not sure** about it.

23,3% of the respondents stated they **have fewer social contacts** than before the pandemic outbreak.

If your answer above is "Yes", what is the reason for having fewer social contacts after lockdown?

These are the reasons why the 23,3% of the respondents to the above question answered "yes":

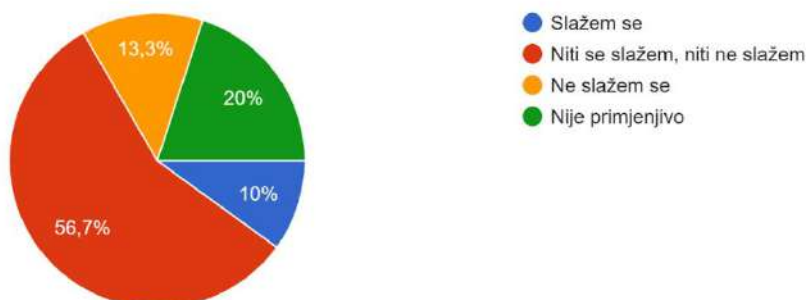
6,7% of the respondents still **don't feel safe**.

22,5% of the respondents state they lost **confidence in people**.

70,8% of the respondents I **don't feel comfortable with people as they used to**.

Čitam više nego prije izbijanja pandemije

30 ОТВЕТОВ



I read more than before the pandemic

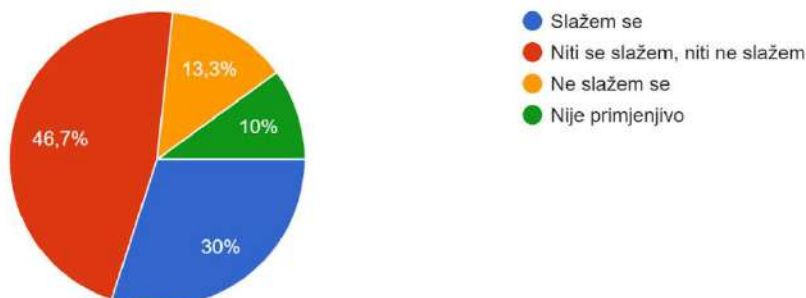
56,7% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.

13,3% of the respondents disagree.

10% of the respondents agree.

Bavim se više sportom nego prije izbijanja pandemije

30 ОТВЕТОВ



I do more sport than before the pandemic

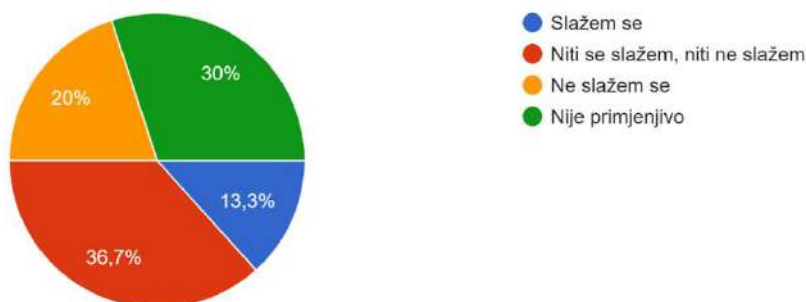
46,7% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.

30% of the respondents agree.

13,3% of the respondents disagree.

Više putuem nego prije izbijanja pandemije

30 ОТВЕТОВ



I travel more than before the pandemic

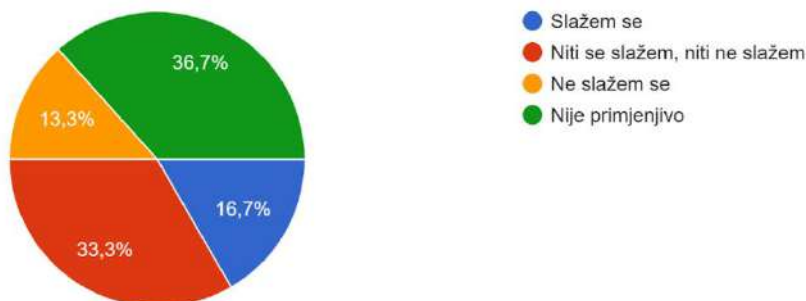
36,7% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.

20% of the respondents disagree.

13,3% of the respondents agree.

Više se obrazujem nego prije izbijanja pandemije

30 ОТВЕТОВ



I am getting more education than before the pandemic

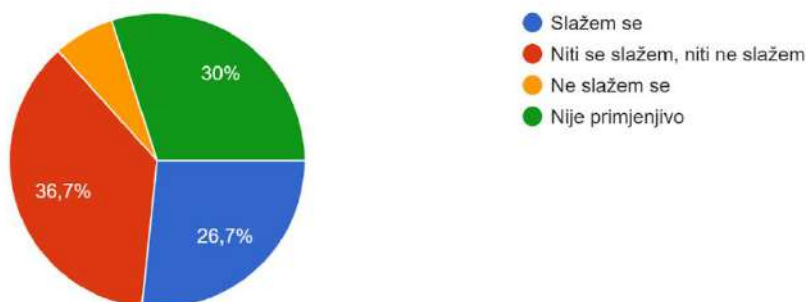
33,3% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.

16,7% of the respondents agree.

13,3% of the respondents disagree.

Više sudjelujem u građanskim akcijama nego prije izbijanja pandemije

30 ОТВЕТОВ



I get more involved in civic actions

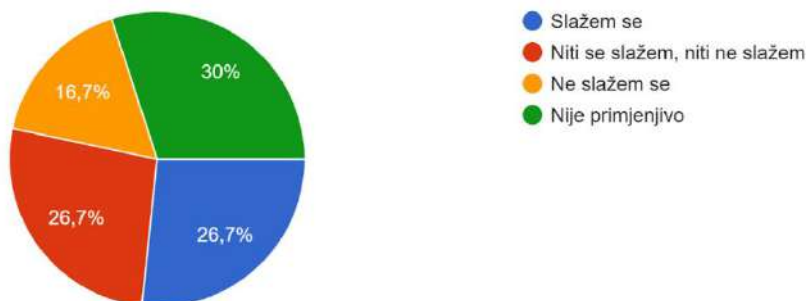
36,7% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.

26,7% of the respondents agree.

6,7% of the respondents disagree.

Više više se brinem o svom mentalnom zdravlju nego prije izbijanja pandemije

30 ОТВЕТОВ



I pay more attention to my mental health than before pandemic

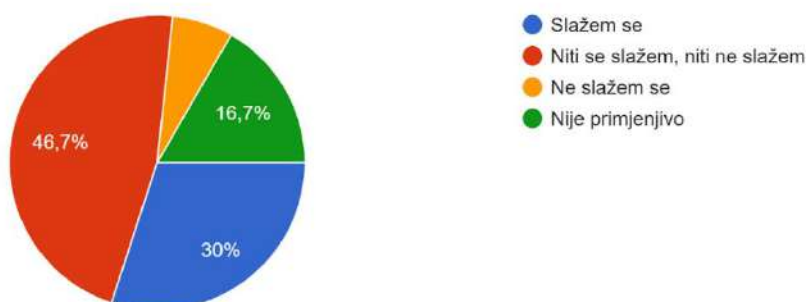
26,7% of the respondents agree.

26,7% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.

16,7% of the respondents disagree.

Posjećujem kulturna događanja više nego prije izbijanja pandemije (muzeji, kazalište, koncerti)

30 ОТВЕТОВ



I attend more cultural events than before the pandemic (museums, theatre, cinema, concerts, festivals, etc.)

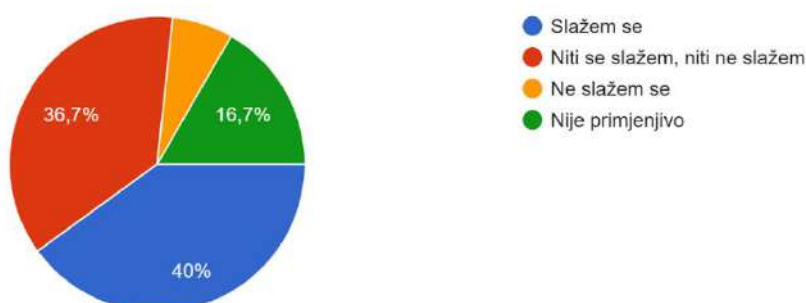
46,7% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.

30% of the respondents agree.

6,7% of the respondents disagree.

Volontiram više nego prije izbijanja pandemije

30 ОТВЕТОВ



I volunteer more than before the pandemic

40% of the respondents agree.

36,7% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.

6,7% of the respondents disagree.

After the end of the pandemic, what problems do you face?

40% of the respondents is having **mental health problems**.

20% of the respondents is **unemployed**.

20% of the respondents is facing **problems with housing**.

3,3% of the respondents is having **physical health problems**.



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4 Final Words

Research has shown that the COVID-19 outbreak affected all segments of the population and was particularly detrimental to members of those social groups in the most vulnerable situations, continues to affect populations, including people living in poverty situations, older persons, persons with disabilities and youth.

Due to severe isolation and cessation of some social affairs, this disease caused problems such as social anxiety, panic due to insecurity, economic recession and severe psychological stress, which requires coordinated efforts to prevent and control them.

COVID-19 has disrupted students' lives in different ways and it has provided anxious times for students and parents. Closing schools and accepting distance education negatively affected on students' learning through four main channels: spending less time learning, stress symptoms, changes in how students interact, and lack of motivation to learn.

The pandemic has also deeply affected quality of life, including mental wellbeing, trust and employment prospects.

Further studies on the long-term effect of social distancing measures implemented over prolonged periods are needed, as would a comprehensive evaluation of the benefit/damage ratio of such measures by decision-makers.



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Project 101091233 - So I BeLiv

Research on the impact that COVID-19 crisis had on young people

National report France



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March 2023

PISTES SOLIDAIRES



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1. Introduction

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and concomitant measures have had large impact on various aspects from 2020 to 2021 (Clemente-Suárez et al., 2020). Many people have had to change their lifestyle behaviors due to restrictions such as self-quarantine and curfews. The COVID-19 pandemic has provoked social isolation and loneliness.

Implementing this research, we would like to see socio-economic impact on youth during and after peak season of COVID-19 pandemic.

With this research involved partners will provide and compare the results in Croatia, France, Italy, Slovenia and Spain regarding habits of young people before, during and after lockdowns.

Results of this research will be discussed between partners and stakeholders during the conference which will be led in Sibenik, Croatia. The aim is to use received data in order to make proposals on how to tackle socio-economic issues resulted by COVID-19 pandemic.

In France, as is often the case in Europe, young adults have been less at risk from COVID19 . However, they are now suffering the economic and social consequences. At the peak of the pandemic, young people's confidence in the future is decreasing: 51% of 18-29 year olds are optimistic in 2020, compared to 68% in 2019. In this context, the aim is to identify the most significant changes among young people living in France, from the point of view of professional integration (employment, studies, etc.), their health and well-being, and finally their civic commitment among young people.



2. Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on young people

On 1 January 2022, 9.3 million young people aged 18 to 29 were living in France. They represent 13.7% of the population. 49.4% of them are women. Young women and men do not finish their studies at the same age. Young women tend to continue their initial studies, but there are disparities in the entry into employment. Young men leave school more quickly, but face less unemployment. For example, 87% of women aged 18 continue their initial studies, sometimes in combination with a job, compared to 79% of men, who at the same age are already 12% employed or unemployed (compared to 6% of women). From the age of 23 onwards, women are much less likely to be in employment than men; this often coincides with changes in the family situation (couple, arrival of a child, etc.). Between the ages of 18 and 29, young men are more likely to live with their parents. (In 2018, 58% of men aged 18 to 24 lived with their parents, compared to 48% of women). Between 25 and 29, 24% of young men live with their parents, compared to 13% of young women.

In 2021, in France, 12.8% of young people aged 15 to 29 are NEET, which is slightly lower than the EU average (13.1%). Before the age of 25, young men are more often NEET than women, but the situation is reversed thereafter.

2.1. Employment and education

Young people are over-represented among those entering the labour market and are more often in temporary jobs, so they are more strongly affected by the economic effects of the crisis. In 2020, the employment rate for 18-24 year-olds will fall by 1.7 points compared to 2019 and that of 25-29 year-olds by 1.3 points, while it will remain stable for 30-64 year-olds (+0.2 points). Access to employment during this period has been made very difficult, further accentuating the financial precariousness of young people. In an economic crisis, young adults are often among the most affected, due to their recent entry and more fragile position on the labour market.



Young people in employment at the beginning of 2020 are also more likely to have experienced partial or technical unemployment: in May 2020, this was the case for 46% of 18-24 year olds, compared to 35% of those aged 25 or over (EpiCov survey).

This situation partly reflects the situation of young people on the labour market. With fewer qualifications, the under-25s have less qualified jobs: according to the Employment survey, in 2020, 6% of 18-24 year-olds in employment are managers compared with 21% of those aged 25 or over, while 33 % are manual workers or unskilled employees compared to 18% of those aged 25 or over. Moreover, young people are more often employed in certain sectors of activity that are most affected by partial activity (accommodation, catering, etc.). In this context, the fear of short-term unemployment is more acute.

Measures to support youth employment or professional integration (youth guarantee, work-study programmes....) have made it possible to partially contain the phenomena of unemployment and career breaks. It should be noted that young people who are neither in employment nor in training were strongly impacted in 2020 due to the health crisis, however it seems that the support measures will reduce the share of young NEETs to 11.6% by the summer of 2022.

The health crisis has particularly affected students, and this observation is shared throughout Europe. It should be noted that between the ages of 18 and 24, more than one young person in two is a student, including eight out of ten in higher education. This represents 2.2 million young people enrolled in higher education in 2019-2020 and 2.3 million in 2020-2021. The confinements and closures of schools, training centres, etc. have had repercussions on their learning conditions and may have weakened the financial situation of the most precarious among them. Difficulties in finding a part-time job or summer job may have weighed heavily on students' budgets. Difficulties in finding an internship can both reduce young people's resources and affect their student career or their ability to continue it. This is evidenced by the fact that recourse to specific ad hoc aid



(intended for students facing serious financial difficulties) increased sharply during the confinements and remains at an unusually high level in the first half of 2021.

The introduction of distance learning courses has changed students' living arrangements, with a significant return to living with parents, which is not always synonymous with good housing conditions. According to the EpiCov survey, 15% of students (including cohabitants) did not stay in their accommodation during the first confinement: 75% returned to their parents' home and 10% joined their partner. It should be noted that students who live with their parents on a regular basis do not always have favourable housing conditions for studying at home (10% do not have their own room).

Isolation during studies, partial or total unemployment, disruption of the professional integration process, financial insecurity, etc. This situation with regard to employment and professional integration has a marked effect on young people's confidence in the future. According to the Drees opinion barometer, young adults' confidence in the future has clearly deteriorated with the health crisis. Young people feel that their situation is "bad" and many "feel poor".

2.2. Health, wellbeing, lifestyle

The state of mental health of young people has clearly deteriorated as a result of the health crisis and its social and economic impacts.

Confinement, curfews, the closure of public spaces and places of socialisation (restaurants, bars, cultural spaces...) have considerably reduced the possibility of meeting and social interaction. One of the consequences is the isolation of people, especially young people, even though they are in that particular period of their lives, between childhood and adulthood, when access to autonomy is gradual and full of experimentation, encounters and openness to the world. It is an age when isolation is not expected. Young people are resourceful, they are generally festive and develop multiple social networks that have been brutally cut off.



Therefore, the feeling of isolation is strong among young people aged 15-30:

- 54% have a feeling of abandonment, exclusion or uselessness compared to 35% for the general average.
- 21% are in a situation of isolation, an increase of 9% in one year.

When you are young and you are in a situation of forced isolation, combined with financial difficulties and career breaks, the loss of self-confidence and confidence in the future is significant. The feeling of uselessness also develops when young people find themselves without the ability to study, work or travel... The feeling of irreversibility has been pointed out by researchers, in this context where "What you experience between the ages of 18 and 24 are things that cannot be made up for a priori". (Santé publique France survey).

"In May 2020, the prevalence of depressive syndromes rose sharply among 18-29 year olds, while it remained stable at older ages. This strong increase is mainly driven by 18-24 year-olds, for whom the prevalence doubles (from 10% in 2019 to 22% in May 2020). In autumn 2020, it remains higher for them than for their elders. In 2020, the share of 18-29 year olds who say they are optimistic about their future drops by 17 points (to 51%). "For young adults, this is by far the lowest level recorded since 2004. The loss of confidence is particularly marked for students (-25 points compared to -13 points for other young adults). (French public health survey)

While physical contact has fallen, digital contact has increased considerably, particularly among 15-30 year olds. For example, 39% of them admit to having been "more often than before the crisis" in contact with their loved ones by videoconference, compared to 32% for the average French person. Even though the use of digital technology has developed considerably in all areas, young people feel a need for concrete action to give meaning to their lives (Crédoc survey). The pandemic has prevented travel and investment in a social life, but has left young people free to get involved!



2.3. Civic engagement

Young people's involvement in associations remains at the level observed in 2020: 43% say they have been part of or participate in the activities of an association (sports, cultural, leisure, youth, humanitarian, political, etc.) compared to 42% the previous year.

In 2021, sport will be the most important area of involvement for young people (31%). It is followed by youth and education (19%), which in 2021 takes precedence over culture or leisure (17%), now in third place among the areas of commitment by young people, on a par with social and solidarity issues (17%). The environment remains the area that most encourages young people to get involved or to become more involved, with 22% of young people citing it.

For several years now, several associations have observed an increase in commitment among young people. The proof is in the increase in volunteering among 18-30 year olds since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, as highlighted by the youth barometer (Djepva-Injep-Crédoc). According to this, in 2021, 64% of young people say they will volunteer their time to an association or other organisation (political party, trade union, etc.), compared with 51% in 2019.

The health crisis has not dampened the enthusiasm of a large proportion of young people for associative participation or voluntary work. It has not dampened the spirit of solidarity and the desire to play a civic role. More and more of them are committed to a cause. The ecological crisis is a central theme for young people who want to mobilise other generations in favour of environmental protection. The most committed to this cause believe that changing environmental behaviour is a civic duty. Young people are also very sensitive to issues of discrimination (inequality) in their commitments or statements.

It also seems that the implementation of the Civic Service for several years now is a lever for mobilising young people as citizens.



It remains to be seen whether the investment of 18-30 year olds in an association, a trade union or a political party will last when the effects of the health crisis are less felt. To this end, the researchers put forward hypotheses that favour the durability of commitment, by situating, among other things, the way in which young people are welcomed into associations, the feeling of usefulness and meaning that they find and also the valorisation of the skills that they develop in voluntary work or commitment. (INJEP-J MALLET)



3. Results of the questionnaire

3.1. Who are the respondents

30 young people responded to the questionnaire in March 2023, two years after the start of the pandemic.

- 76.7% are between 18 and 24 years old
- 13.3% are between 25 and 29 years old
- 10% are minors (under 17)
- 56.7% are young women, and 43.3% are young men

46.7% of the young people who responded are students, so we have a preponderance compared to the national situation. For the rest :

- 10% In employment
- 6.7% Civic service
- 3.3% are employed and 3% unemployed

The majority have a baccalaureate level (66.7%), 10% have a level below baccalaureate, and 23.4% have a higher education diploma (bachelor or master)

A large majority of respondents indicated that they were not experiencing any particular difficulties.

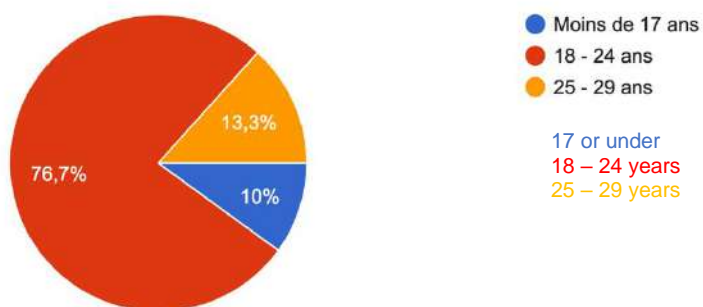
The young people mentioning difficulties cite

- A geographical barrier (remote or rural area), (2)
- A barrier linked to discrimination, (1)
- Economic difficulties, (1)
- Difficulties related to their origin, culture (1)
- Social difficulties (disability, addiction...) (2)



Age

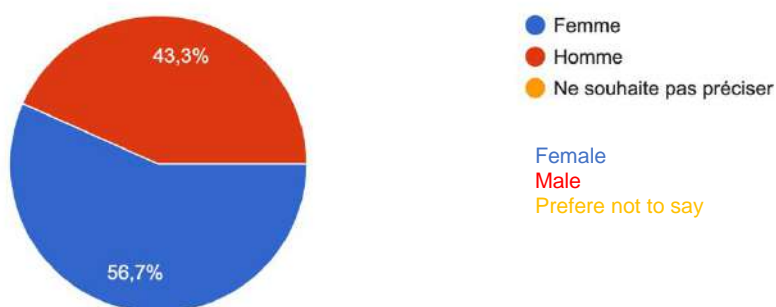
30 réponses



Gender

Genre

30 réponses



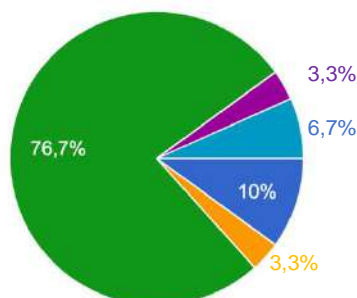
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Current situation

Situation professionnelle

30 réponses



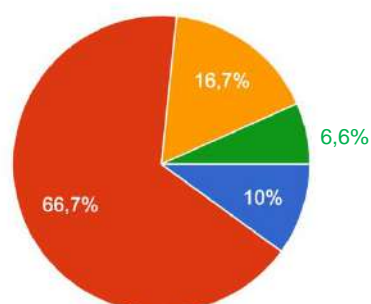
- Je suis étudiant et j'ai un emploi
- Je suis sans emploi et je ne cherche pas de travail
- Je suis sans emploi et je recherche un travail
- Je suis étudiant
- Je travaille
- Service civique

I am studying and working
 I am unemployed and not looking for a job
 I am unemployed and looking for a job
 I am studying
 I am working
 Other (Service Civique)

Last level of education completed

Dernier niveau d'étude validé

30 réponses



- Brevet des collèges
- Baccalauréat
- Licence ou Bac+3
- Master ou bac +5
- Doctorat ou Bac+5 et plus

Elementary school
 Baccalaureate
 Bachelor's Degree
 Master's degree
 Doctorate



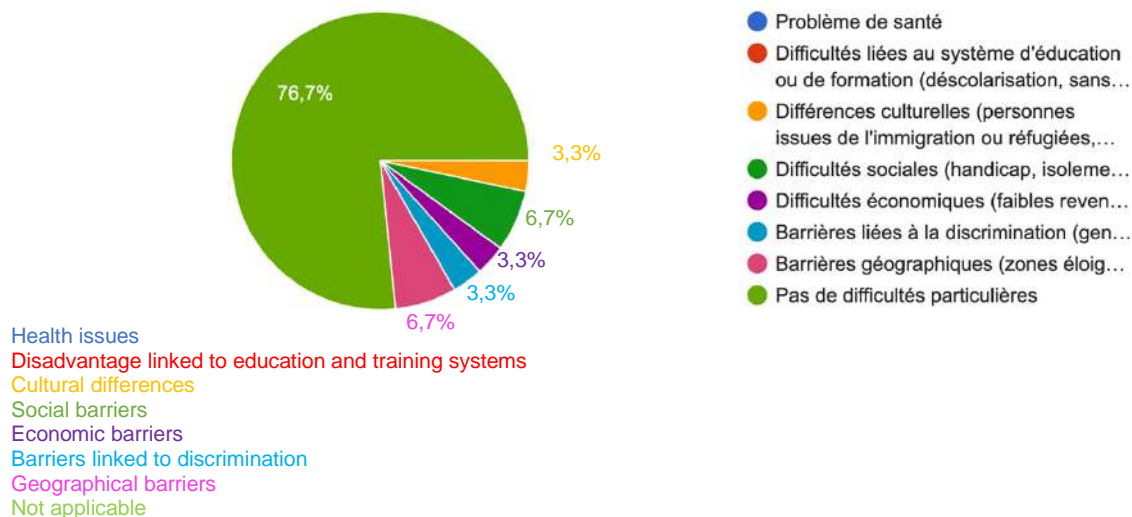
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Do you face any of the following obstacles/barriers?

Rencontrez vous des difficultés et lesquelles ?

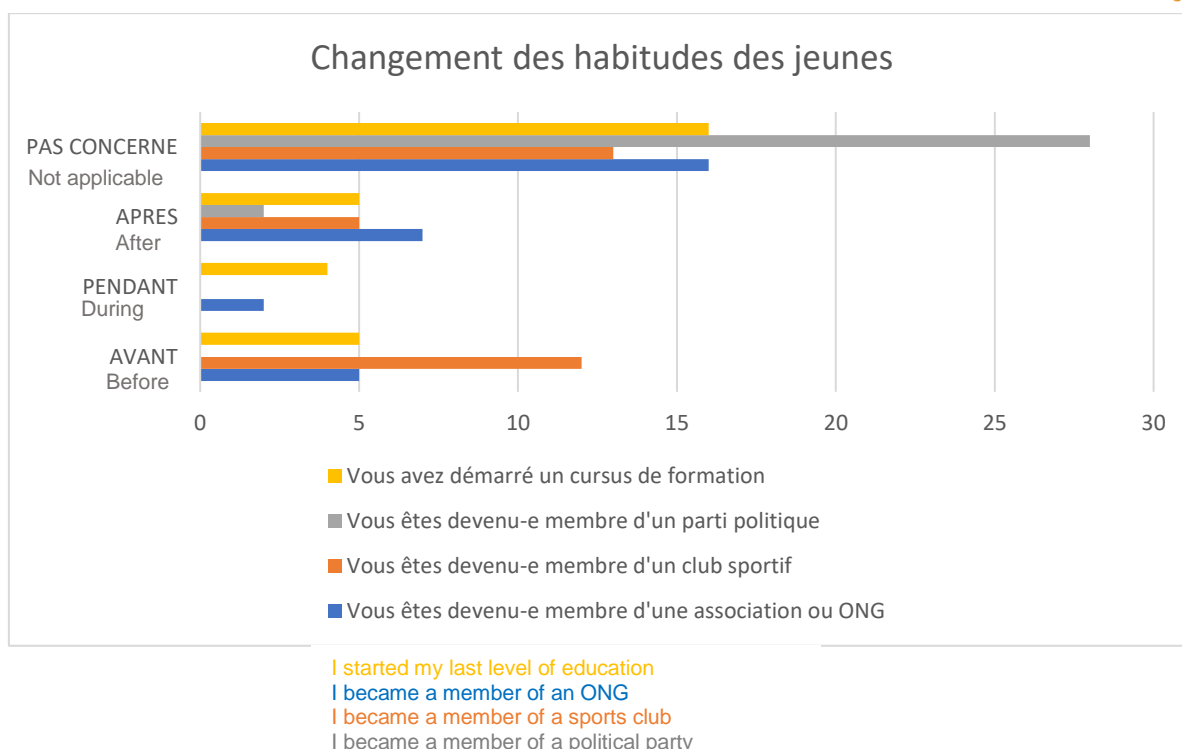
30 réponses



3.2. Change of habits before, during, after the COVID19 crisis

	BEFORE	DURING	AFTER	NOT CONCERNED
Member of an association	16,7%	6,7%	23,3%	53,3%
Member of a sports club	40%	0	16,7%	43,3%
Member of a political party	0	0	6,7%	93,3%
Starting a training course	16,7%	13,3%	16,7%	53,3%

16.7% of those in training indicate that they have encountered difficulties in continuing their training. They mention the following reasons: "Finding internships / loss of motivation to work / lack of choice in studies / distance learning / lack of concentration / loss of reference points (distance learning) / social anxiety / disillusionment with institutions.



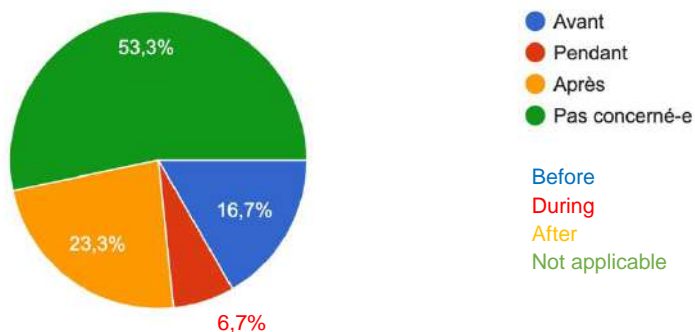
Even if a majority of the respondents indicate that they are not concerned by the proposals, we can note that the evolution of young people's practices goes towards associative commitment in first place, followed by sport and training. Lastly, involvement in a political party.

While young women were more involved before the pandemic (associations, sports clubs), young men were more involved after the pandemic. Two girls were involved in political parties.

I became a member of an NGO

Vous êtes devenu-e membre d'une association ou ONG

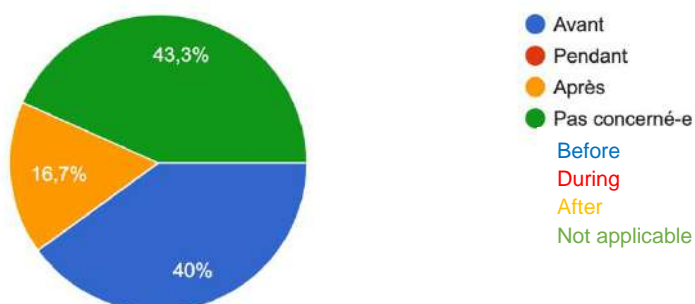
30 réponses



I became a member of a sports club

Vous êtes devenu-e membre d'un club sportif

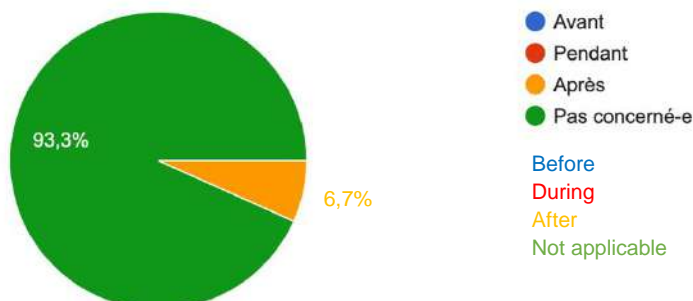
30 réponses



I became a member of a political party

Vous êtes devenu-e membre d'un parti politique

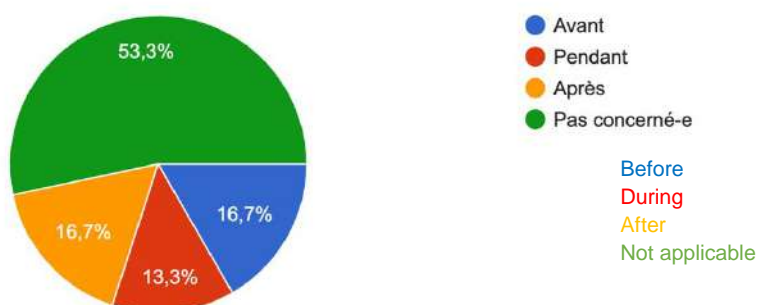
30 réponses



I started my last level of education

Vous avez démarré un cursus de formation

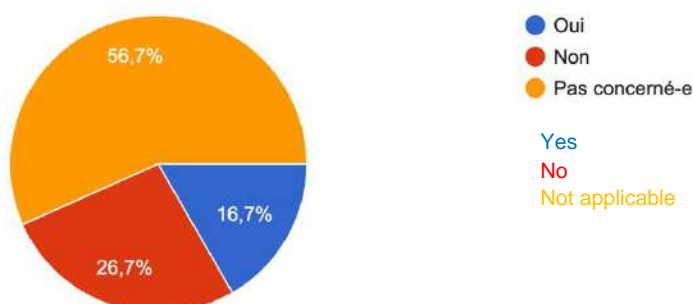
30 réponses



Have you had problems with your education?

Avez-vous rencontré des problème avec votre poursuite de formation

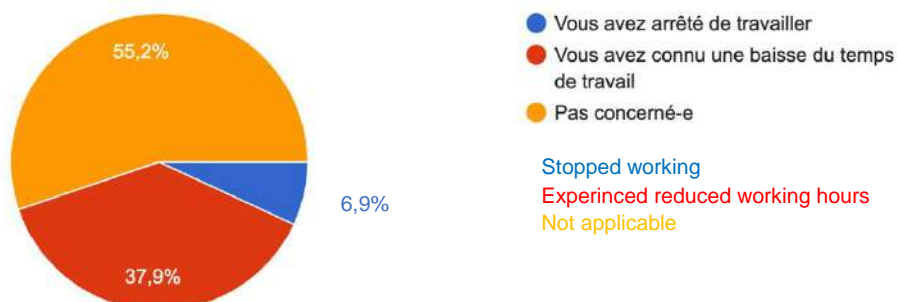
30 réponses



Professional situations

During COVID-19

Pendant le COVID19
29 réponses



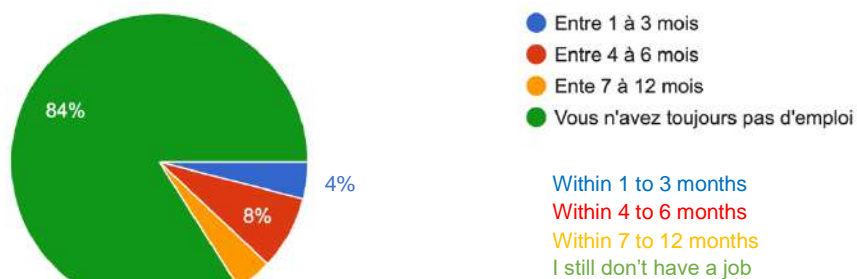
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In case you left/lost your job, how long did it take you to find a new full-time job?

Si vous avez quitté ou perdu votre emploi, en combien de temps avez-vous trouvé un nouvel emploi à temps plein ?

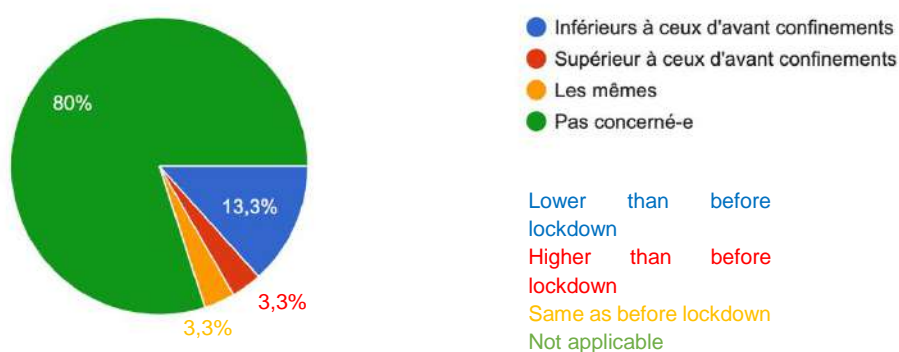
25 réponses



After lockdown your income is

Après les confinements, vos revenus sont

30 réponses

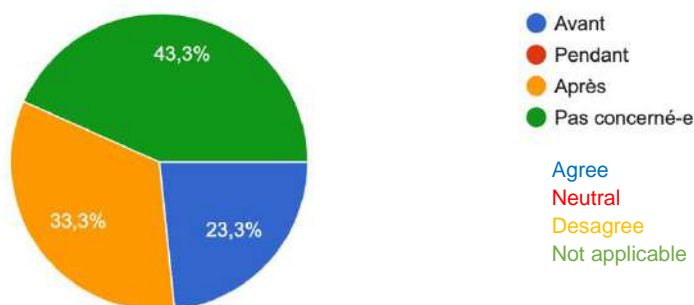


Civic and citizen engagement: 33.3% report being involved in civic and citizen actions after the pandemic

I got involved in civic actions

Vous êtes vous impliqué-e dans des actions civiques et citoyennes ?

30 réponses

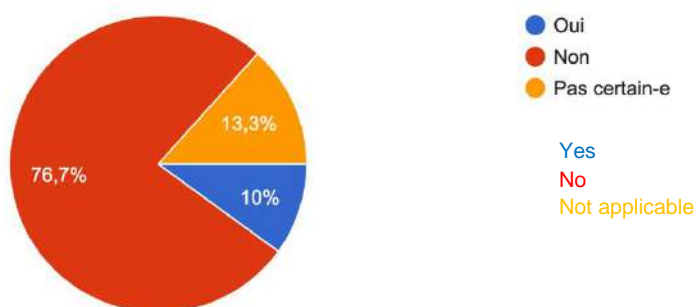


3.3.Trends after COVID19

Do you still have fewer social contacts than before the outbreak of the pandemic?

Avez-vous toujours moins de relation sociales qu'avant la pandémie ?

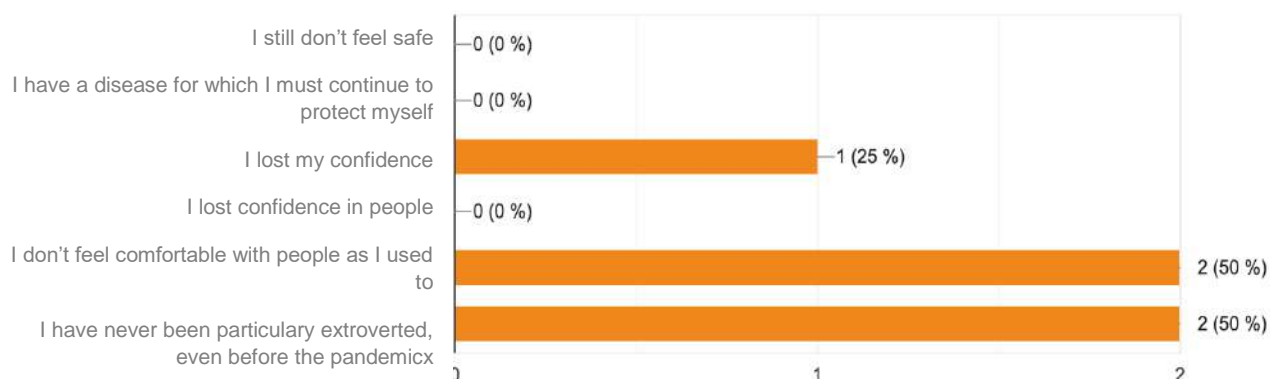
30 réponses



If your answer above is "Yes", what is the reason for having fewer social contacts after lockdown?

Si votre réponse précédente est "oui", quelle est la raison pour laquelle vous avez moins de relations sociales après le confinement ?

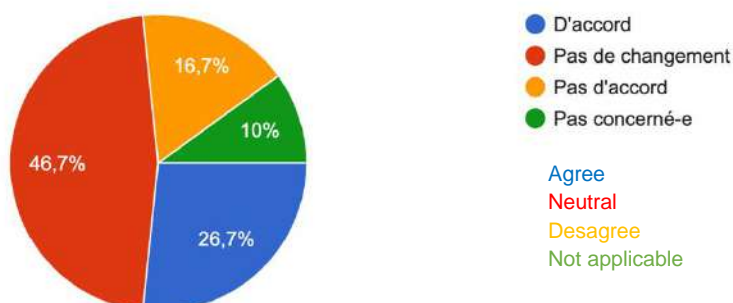
4 réponses



I read more than before the pandemic

Vous lisez plus qu'avant la pandémie

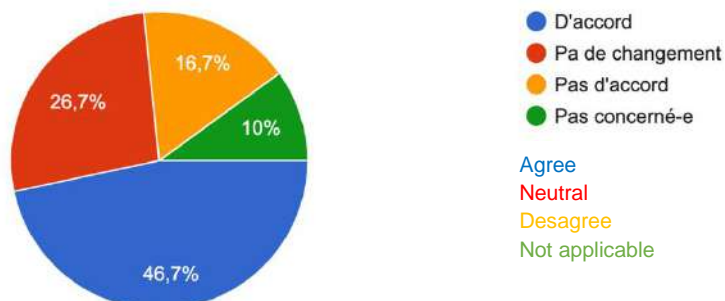
30 réponses



I do more sport than before the pandemic

Vous faites plus de sport qu'avant la pandémie

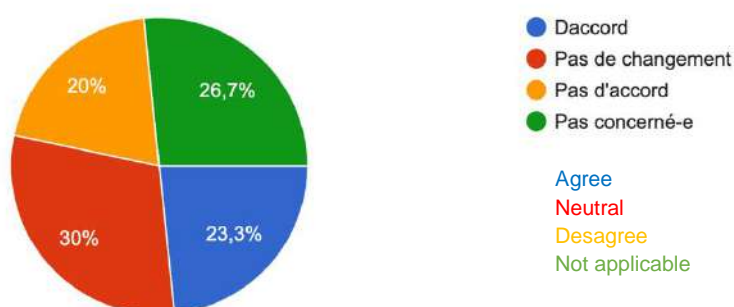
30 réponses



I travel more than before the pandemic

Vous voyagez plus qu'avant

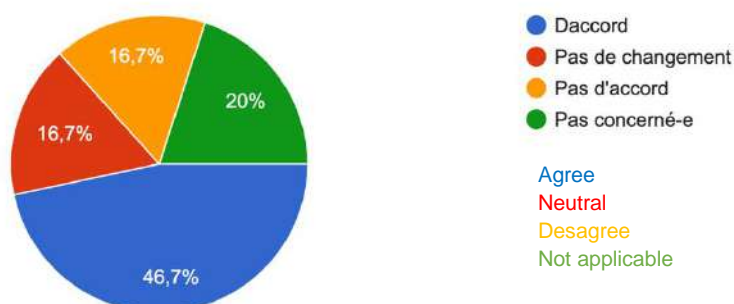
30 réponses



I am getting more education than before the pandemic

Vous êtes plus diplômé-e (formé-e) qu'avant la pandémie

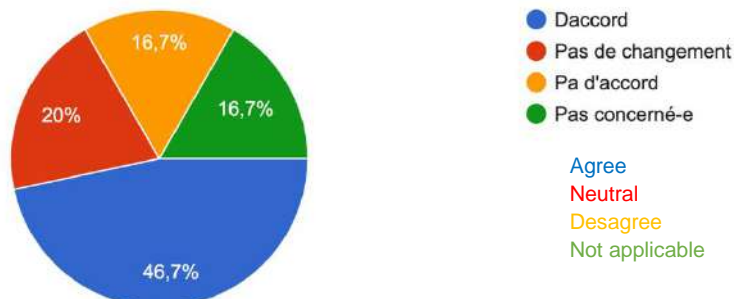
30 réponses



I get more involved in civic actions

Vous êtes plus impliquée dans des actions civiques et citoyennes

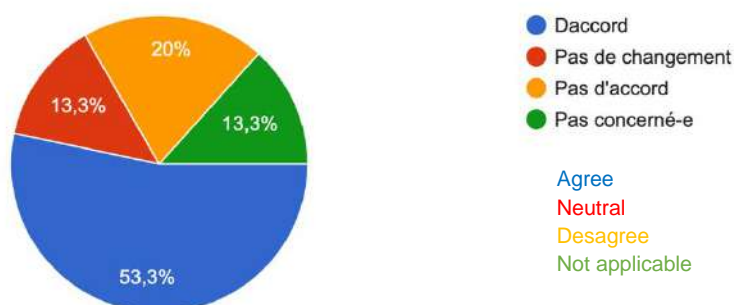
30 réponses



I pay more attention to my mental health

Vous faites plus attention à votre santé mentale

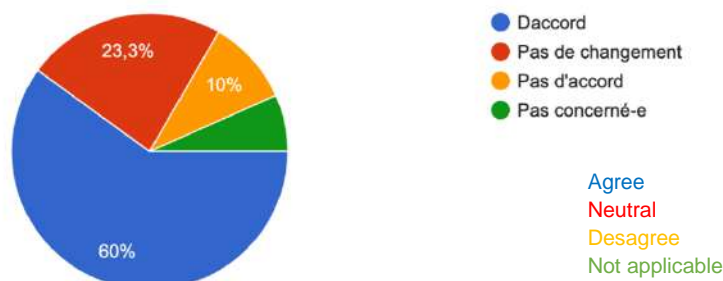
30 réponses



I attend more cultural events than before the pandemic (museums, theatre, cinema, concerts, festivals, etc.)

Vous participez à d'avantage d'évènements culturels qu'avant la pandémie (visite de musée, théâtre, concert, festival...)

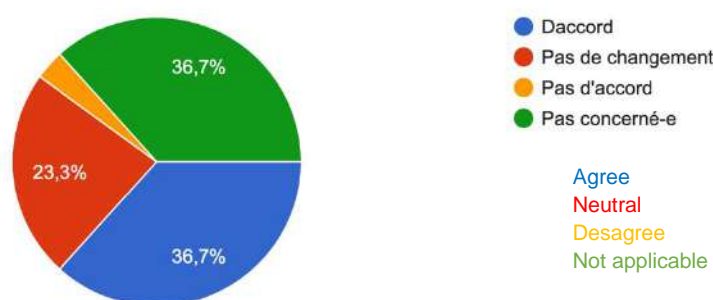
30 réponses



I volunteer more than before the pandemic

Vous êtes d'avantage investi-e en tant que bénévole au sein d'association

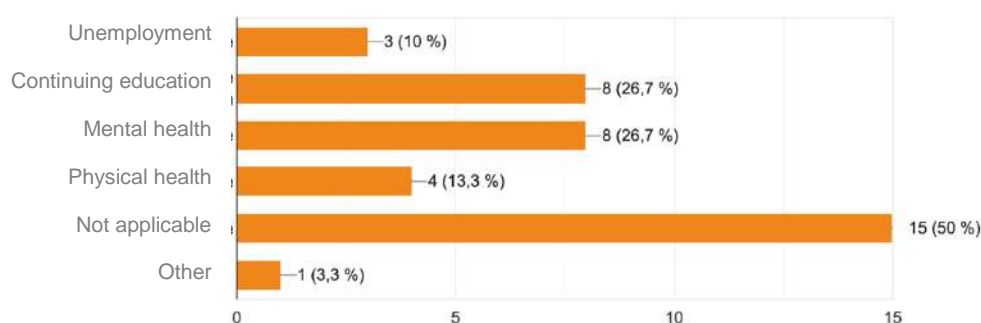
30 réponses



After the end of the pandemic, what problems do you face?

Après la fin de la pandémie, quels sont les problèmes que vous rencontrez ?

30 réponses



The results of the survey confirm the trends in the youth population, namely a resumption of social relations and social activities (going out, travelling, etc.), an increase in civic awareness and commitment.

The effects of the pandemic and of the measures taken to contain it are still felt by young people, particularly in terms of their mental health and professional integration.



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4. Final Words

- A health crisis that has accentuated inequalities and increased the economic and social difficulties of young people.
- Difficulties in integrating young people into the labour market have been exacerbated by the pandemic.
- Faced with this situation, the fear of unemployment is still prevalent, and difficulties in accessing employment or training, which leads to a lack of confidence in the future and difficulties in planning ahead.
- The problem of mental health, which has become a national concern and a lasting phenomenon to be taken into account.
- Young people's civic and citizenship awareness is still present, and they are ready to mobilise, innovate and invent for a cause.

Issues clearly identified by the public authorities, which have put in place local or national measures to support employment and health prevention.



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Project 101091233 - So I BeLiv

Research on the impact that COVID-19 crisis had on young people

National report Italy



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January 2023

Unione degli Assessorati



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1 Introduction

The corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and concomitant measures have had large impact on various aspects from 2020 to 2021 (Clemente-Suárez et al., 2020). Many people have had to change their lifestyle behaviors due to restrictions such as self-quarantine and curfews. The COVID-19 pandemic has provoked social isolation and loneliness.

Implementing this research, we would like to see socio-economic impact on youth during and after peak season of COVID-19 pandemic. With this research involved partners will provide and compare the results in Croatia, France, Italy, Slovenia and Spain regarding habits of young people before, during and after lockdowns. Results of this research will be discussed between partners and stakeholders during the conference which will be led in Sibenik, Croatia. The aim is to use received data in order to make proposals on how to tackle socio-economic issues resulted by COVID-19 pandemic.

The advent of the globe-spanning pandemic, in addition to spreading terror among the population, has exacerbated the fluid and uncertain characteristics of today's society. In the first half of 2020, almost all countries implemented strict social distancing measures to counter the transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 infection, including the closure of schools and universities, which affected more than 1.5 billion young people. This containment measure, combined with other restrictions on personal freedom, negatively affected the psychological well-being and mental health of young people by causing social isolation, loss of support with peers and teachers, reduced physical activity, and disruption of child protection activities. The increase in mental distress and the growth of stress-related problems in at-risk targets such as young people, leads us to speak today of a real psychological emergency among young people. However, the pandemic has not only had a negative impact on public and psychological health, but also on the global economic system with particularly negative consequences on the labor market, with different effects depending on the gender or ethnicity of the workers, but also on the



level of education and sector of activity. The aim of this paper is to explore some of the aspects affecting the traumatic nature of the pandemic experience and the socio-economic effects of the pandemic on young people and adolescents.



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2 Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on young people

Not only has the Covid-19 pandemic claimed more than five million lives, it has pushed the global economy into the worst recession since World War II. In December 2021, there were 272,514,490 Covid-19 cases worldwide, 5,346,333 deaths and 244,907,647 recoveries from the disease. The countries most affected by the pandemic, in terms of number of registered cases, are the United States followed by India, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Russia, Turkey, France, Germany, Iran, Spain, Argentina and Italy.

The pandemic had serious repercussions on the health of the elderly and frail. However, the negative consequences were not only on people's health. The prolonged lockdown led to negative effects on the economic, social, employment, educational and mental health of the entire population, affecting people of all ages. These effects continued even after the end of the lockdown and overwhelmingly affected young people.

2.1 Consequences on the labor market

The most significant negative consequences are to be found in the labour market. The negative effects occurred with considerable differences between different categories of people, the most noticeable of which were differences in the gender and ethnicity of workers, but also differences in the level of education and sector of activity. The sectors most affected were the catering and tourism sectors, the personal services sector, which require close contact, and the transport sector. The public sector, the financial and insurance sector and, more generally, all those sectors that were able to resort to remote working, were less affected by the negative effects of lockdown measures.

In relation to the characteristics of individuals, those most affected were women, people with a low to medium level of education and young people. Italy is one of the European countries with the highest youth unemployment rate, especially the regions in the south, which exceed those in the north by as much as 22 percentage points. Before the outbreak of the pandemic, 64.3 per cent of young people were involved in education, 14.1 per cent were already employed and 21.6 per cent were out of education and training or without a job: the so-called NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or



Training), i.e. young people aged between 15 and 29 who are not working and are not enrolled in any course of study or training and who now represent 23.3 per cent of the population in Italy (about 2.1 million inhabitants). According to the young people's report on the effects of the coronavirus, young Italians, compared to their European peers, perceive their life plans to be more at risk and most believe that the health emergency will have a negative impact on their plans for the future.

There has also been an exponential increase in early school leavers as a result of the pandemic. Among the main factors, as Istat data show, are the socio-economic conditions of the family of origin, which play a key role in the decision-making process. In fact, early school leaving affects 22.7 per cent of young people whose parents have at most a secondary school leaving certificate, 5.9 per cent of those whose parents have an upper secondary qualification and 2.3 per cent of young people whose parents have a university degree. In addition to this, there are strong territorial differences: in the South, the probability of young people entering the world of work is 27.3% compared to 40% in the North and 37.4% in the Centre. According to the analysis of the Save the Children report (2020) on the impact of the Coronavirus on educational poverty, the worsening of material deprivation linked to the Covid-19 emergency has been accompanied by educational and cultural deprivation due to the closure of schools, but also to the impossibility of access to extracurricular, cultural and relational opportunities that underpin the educational experience.

The data reported confirm a deterioration in the quality of life of families with minors caused by the impact of the emergency on a multitude of dimensions and aspects. Among the most important we can identify:

- the difficulties associated with methodologically ill-founded distance learning that is poorly able to reach and meet the needs of all learners, despite the efforts made by educational institutions and teaching and non-teaching staff;
- Obstacles related to the housing and family conditions of students, which have been the sites of a 'halved' and 'cramped' living not always capable of ensuring 'peaceful' coexistence. According to the ISTAT report (2020), 42% of students in Italy live in overcrowded houses, thus lacking adequate space for study, where



activities that fulfill different functions intersect. Added to this is the substantial number (12.3%) of 6-17 year-olds living in homes without internet connection and devices such as computers or tablets in 2019, a percentage that reaches almost 20% in the South.

2.2 Educational, psychological and social problems caused by the closing of schools

On the psychological impacts of prolonged school closures on young people due to the pandemic, the historical literature does not provide much guidance, however, several studies have been conducted on the psychological well-being and mental health effects of lockdown on young people.

Some scholars claim that school lockdown, especially when combined with other measures restricting personal freedom, can affect the psychological well-being and mental health of young people by causing social isolation, loss of relationships with peers and teachers, reduced physical activity, disruption of child protection activities through reporting cases of maltreatment, and loss of access to meal distribution programmes for disadvantaged families.

For adolescents, more than for adults, school closures and social distancing can be particularly difficult to bear; in fact, in adolescence, children begin to gain their independence from the family and develop their individual personality mainly through social relationships with peers. The inability to mirror themselves in peers can generate loneliness and bewilderment; moreover, for older children, the suspension of school activities and the cancellation of examinations can generate anxiety about their academic and professional future.

The potential benefits of school closures and social distancing measures, especially if prolonged for long or very long periods of time, should be considered alongside the potential damage to physical health and psychological well-being and the social and economic impact, which is as always likely to hit the most disadvantaged socio-economic classes hardest. According to a study conducted in China, 8,079 children reported a prevalence of anxiety of 37.4 per cent and depression of 43.7 and 31.3 per



cent both. Multivariate logistic regression analysis showed that female gender, higher age and attending high school were predictors of higher levels of anxiety and depression.

Other qualitative studies have assessed the impact of school closures on the frequency of notifications and reports of child abuse, maltreatment, neglect and abandonment. A report conducted in Florida (USA), analysing the trend of reports made in March and April from 2004 to 2020, showed a 27% reduction in these in 2020 compared to expected frequencies. This was not due to an actual decrease in cases of abuse or maltreatment, but to the failure to detect suspected cases, as schools are the main source of detection and subsequent reporting of potential cases.

A yet unpublished systematic review (Viner 2021) considered the effects of school closures on the health and well-being of children and young people. Studies from all 20 countries involved documented impairments on children and adolescents and young people aged 0 to 20 years affecting mental health and well-being, noting problems with restlessness, behavioural and emotional disturbances, inattention and psychological malaise.

In detail it emerges:

- a lowering of the stress tolerance threshold and an increase in post-traumatic symptoms in children/young people aged 13-18 years. Anxiety symptoms were detected in 53% of the females and 44% of the males, and depressive symptoms in 19% of the females and 21% of the males.
- an increase in suicidal ideation in 16-18 year olds, especially in the second wave of the pandemic.
- a reduction in perceived life satisfaction/quality of life in the 13-17 age group.

Other aspects examined by the studies included in the Viner review are:

- the reduction of child protection measures, with a halving of the number of reports and risk situations (trauma, ill-treatment, abuse, etc.).
- the reduction of psychiatric visits/counselling with a decrease in reports of self-harm.



Other outcomes not related to psychological aspects examined by Viner are:

- a potential widening of inequalities in vaccination coverage.
- a significant increase in time spent in front of screens (including the use of social media).
- unhealthy lifestyles, including lack of physical activity and changes in diet. Closing schools could exacerbate the childhood obesity epidemic and increase disparities in obesity risk.
- sleep difficulties for 16-24 year olds during the lockdown period.

According to the Wang study (2020), for children and adolescents, school closures can have an even more problematic and lasting psychological impact than the consequences on the physical level, due to stress factors such as prolonged suspension, fear of infection, frustration and boredom, incorrect information, lack of contact with peers and teachers, lack of personal space at home and family financial problems.

Let us also think of the violence of death during pandemic peaks and the impossibility of accompanying loved ones towards the end of life, or the perception of the other as a potential 'bringer of death'. All these factors have further compromised the intersubjective space, preventing the work of mourning and enhancing social distancing even beyond health needs.

2.3 Consequences on civic engagement

Activism and youth movements also experienced some difficulties during the pandemic, as the virus prevented people from taking to the streets to express concern about injustice. Fortunately, thanks to digital and information exchange, staying at home did not translate into remaining silent.

Over the past decade, a wave of mass movements demanding radical change has mobilized activists globally more than ever before. But the pandemic forced demonstrations, protests and rallies to come to a sudden halt.



Thus, a digitized activism emerged with young people redefining civic engagement, becoming active participants in leading dialogues through the continued use and development of social media and other digital platforms. Although this is not the first time that social movements have used social media to protest, the pandemic has certainly made the digitization of activism more global.

Young activists use digital to share resources and information and educate others on the importance of speaking out against injustice, discrimination, systematic racism and concepts and realities unknown to many of us.

The fight to protect our earth from climate change also moved online. Young people continued the fight for climate change in the digital space to ensure that it was not overshadowed by the pandemic. The movement created concrete ways for online involvement. A prime example was the commemoration of *Earth Day 2020* for which a 72-hour live digital march was organized, complete with protests and speeches attended by over 200,000 viewers. Thus, activism was further revolutionized to engage millions of people from all over the world through innovative strategies applied to the digital space.

Unexpectedly, during the lockdown Italians' confidence in the government and the health system grew (Scavo, 2020). The common condition of danger in which individuals found themselves acted as a generating mechanism for a social solidarity attitude that might explain the events emerging among the population. Altruistic behaviors also increased: donations to the health system increased by about 30% compared to previous years; more than 10 million Italians declared they had given money at the beginning of the pandemic emergency and many others declared their intention to do it soon (Castiglioni & Lozza, 2020). Studies also show an increase in civic behavior by the increase in the hours devoted gratuitously to the benefit of others. In the lockdown stage, according to the data, social associationism may have played an important role in stimulating behavior tending towards interpersonal assistance and civic engagement.

At the same time, the lack of civic sense of citizens who contested and violated the lockdown rules disappointed the majority of Italians (Ipsos, 2020), who, however, over



the months have become more pessimistic about the financial consequences of the blocking measures, so much so that concerns about current and future economic conditions have become stronger than health concerns (Graffigna et al., 2021).

After the end of the first lockdown the relationship between institutional trust and emergency appears complex. Crises and their impact on quality of life reduce citizens' institutional trust (Miller & Listhaug, 1999; Polavieja, 2013). Consequently, people started ignoring government-imposed rules and social norms if they consider politicians' decisions inadequate

On social networks, more and more skeptics expressed distrust of government decisions and contested the warnings of experts and the information disseminated by the mass media about the severity of the virus and the number of deaths.

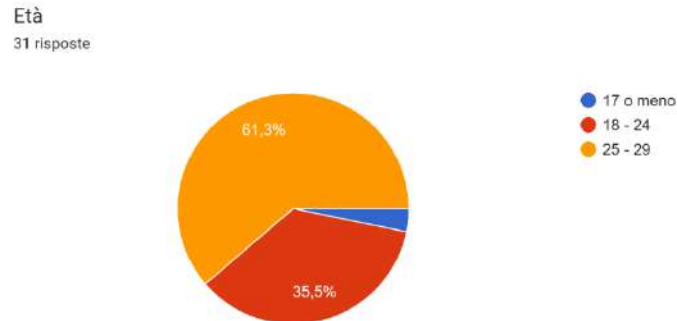
Digitized protest allowed new forms of cooperation and communication between citizens and their governments, even while we are confined to our homes; but it is opening up new avenues for populism, forms of manipulation and disinformation, an increased risk of strict control and direct administration by repressive regimes. Moreover, although online interaction allows for greater transparency and accountability, the danger of targeted attacks on activists and movements increases.

However, it is clear that despite the devastating pandemic, civic participation is flourishing as technology brings us together to support radical change. The power of the people has not been entirely diminished by the Covid crisis and digitized activism has expanded the space for creation, strategy and innovation. The need to adapt to the pandemic has unleashed a new potential for social movements and activism.



3 Results of the questionnaire

SECTION 1 - Demographics

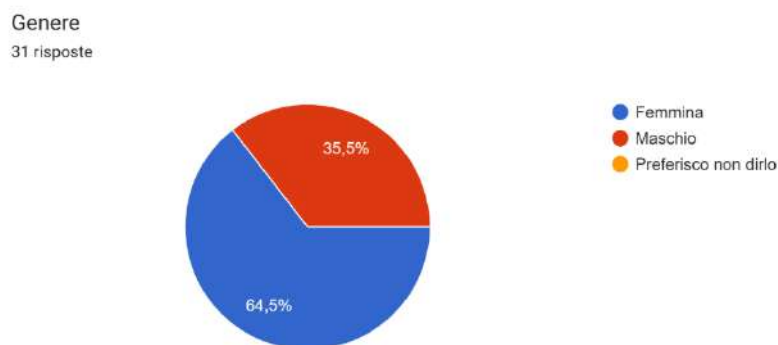


Age

61% of the respondent's age is between **25 and 29 years old**.

35,5% of the respondent's age is between **18 and 24 years old**.

3,2% of the respondents is **under 18 years old**.



Gender

64% of the respondents are **female**.

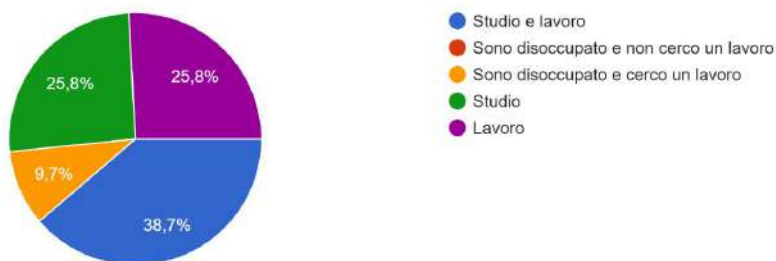
35,5% of the respondents are **male**.



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Occupazione attuale
31 risposte



Current employment situation:

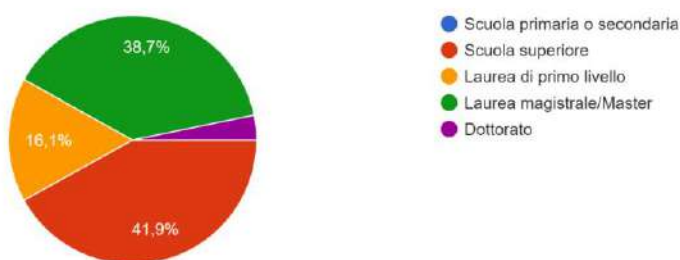
38,7% of the respondents study and work at the same time.

25,8% of the respondents are neither studying nor working (NEET).

25,8% of the respondents are studying but not working.

9,7% of the respondents are unemployed and looking for a job.

Livello di istruzione
31 risposte



Educational level

41,9% of the respondents have a **high school diploma**.

38,7% of the respondents **have a MA**.

16,1% of the respondents **have a BA**.

3,3% of the respondents **completed a PhD**.



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Ti trovi ad affrontare alcune di queste difficoltà nella tua vita attuale?

31 risposte



Do you face any of the following obstacles/barriers?

58,1% of the respondents are **not facing any kind of difficulty.**

22,6% of the respondents **faced economical barriers**

9,7% of the respondents **faced geographical barriers**

3,2% of the respondents **faced barriers linked to discrimination.**

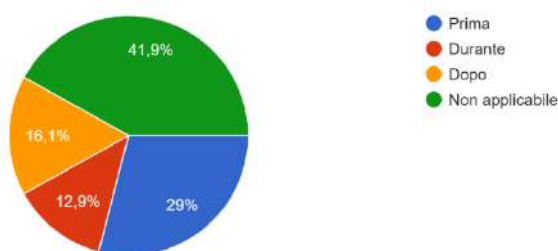
3,2% of the respondents **faced social barriers.**

3,2% of the respondents **faced health problems.**

SECTION 2: Change of habits before, during and after lockdown

Sono entrato a far parte di una organizzazione privata senza scopo di lucro che realizza iniziative a carattere umanitario e di cooperazione allo sviluppo ...anili riconosciute, associazioni volontariato, ecc.)

31 risposte



I joined an NGO:

29% of the respondents joined and NGO **before** the lockdown.

16,2% of the respondents joined and NGO **after** the lockdown.

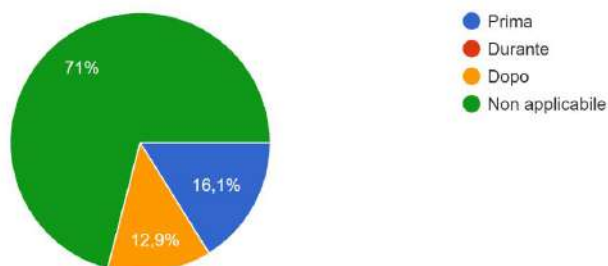
12,9% of the respondents joined and NGO **during** the lockdown.



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Mi sono iscritto a un club sportivo
31 risposte

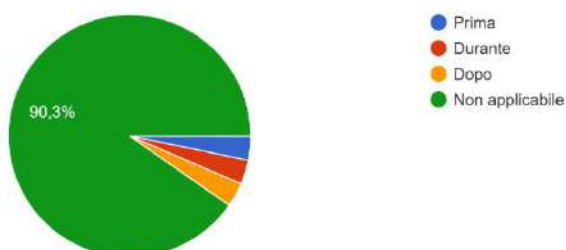


I joined a sport club:

16,1% of the respondents joined a sport club **before** the lockdown.

12,9% of the respondents joined a sport club **after** the lockdown.

Sono entrato a far parte di un partito politico
31 risposte



I joined a political party:

3,2% of the respondents joined a political party **prima** the lockdown.

3,2% of the respondents joined a political party **during** the lockdown.

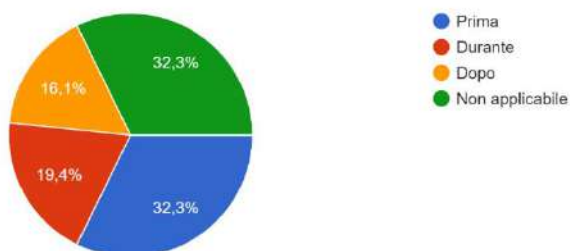
3,2% of the respondents joined a political party **after** the lockdown.



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Ho iniziato un ciclo di studi
31 risposte



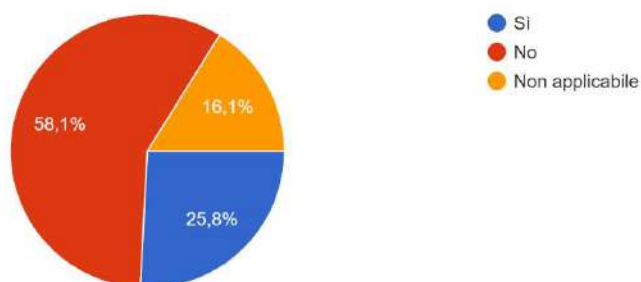
I started my last level of education:

32,3% of the respondent started their last level of education **before** the lockdown.

19,4% of the respondent started their last level of education **after** the lockdown.

16,1% of the respondent started their last level of education **during** the lockdown.

Hai avuto problemi negli studi?
31 risposte



Have you had problems with your education?

58,1% of the respondents **did not have any problem with their education.**

25,8% of the respondents **had problems with their education.**

If your answer above is yes, do you still have problems with your education? And what kind of problems do you face?

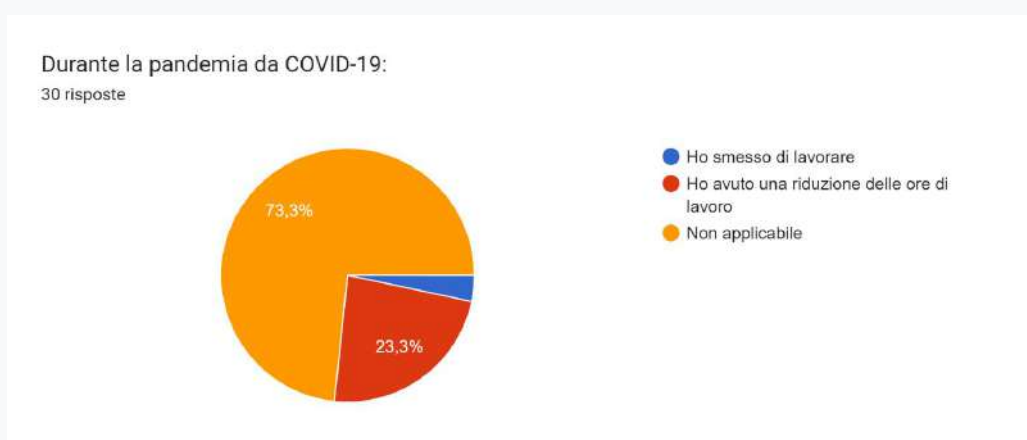


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This is a list of problems that 25.8% of the respondents to the above question faced, are still facing, or no longer facing in their educational path, following the lockdown.

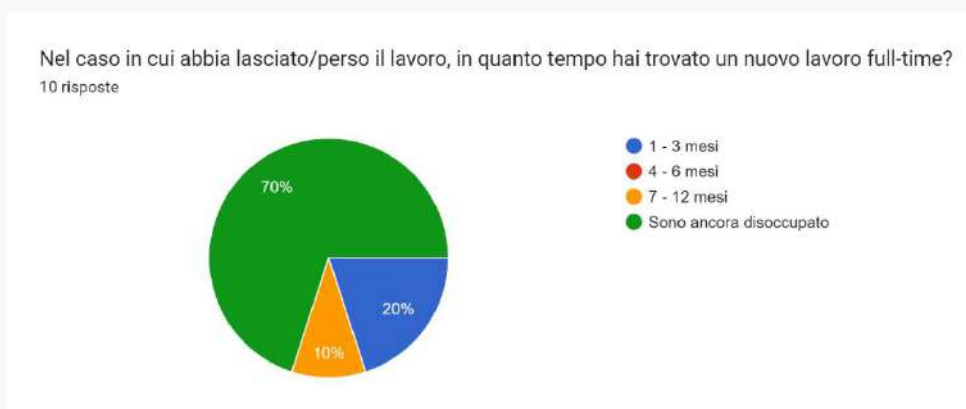
- Distance learning.
- Lower marks at University.
- High level of anxiety to maintain a high level of performance.
- Distance learning helped me combining study and work. My problems started once the distance learning finished.
- I am no longer experiencing problems (x4)



During Covid-19 pandemic I:

23,3% of the respondent experienced a reduction of their working hours.

3,3% of the respondent stopped working.



In case you left/lost your job, how long did it take you to find a new full-time job?

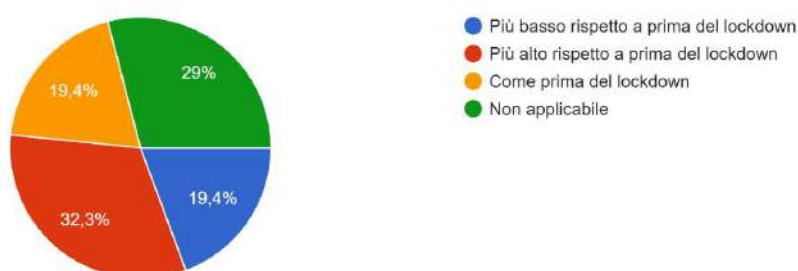
70% of the respondent are still unemployed.

Il 20% of the respondent are found a job within 1-3 months.

Il 10% of the respondent are found a job within 7-12 months.

Dopo il lockdown il tuo reddito è:

31 risposte



After lockdown your income is:

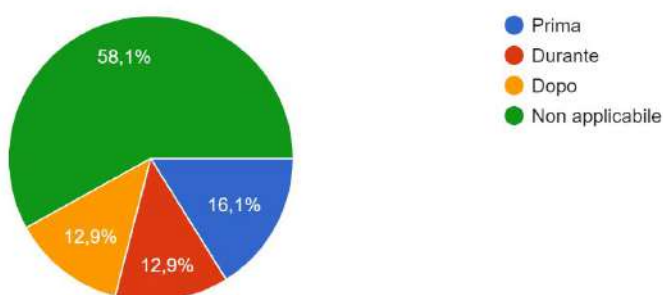
32,3% of the respondents have a higher income.

19,4% of the respondents have a lower income.

19,4% of the respondents have the same income as before the lockdown.

Mi sono impegnato in azioni civiche

31 risposte



I got involved in civic actions:



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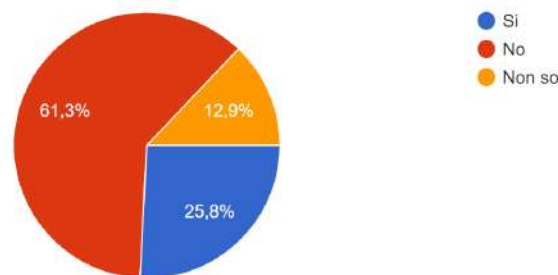
16,1% of the respondent got involved in civic actions **before** the lockdown.

12,9% of the respondent got involved in civic actions **during** the lockdown.

12,9% of the respondent got involved in civic actions **after** the lockdown.

SECTION 3: Post-covid Trends

Hai ancora meno contatti sociali rispetto a quelli che aveva prima dello scoppio della pandemia?
31 risposte



Do you still have fewer social contacts than before the outbreak of the pandemic?

61,3% of the respondents stated they **don't have fewer social contacts** than before the pandemic outbreak.

25,8% of the respondents stated they **have fewer social contacts** than before the pandemic outbreak.

12,9% of the respondents are **not sure** about it.

If your answer above is "Yes", what is the reason for having fewer social contacts after lockdown?

These are the reasons why the 25.8% of the respondent to the above question answered "yes":

12,5% of the respondents still **don't feel safe**.

25% of the respondents state they lost **confidence in people**.

75% of the respondents I **don't feel comfortable with people as they used to**.



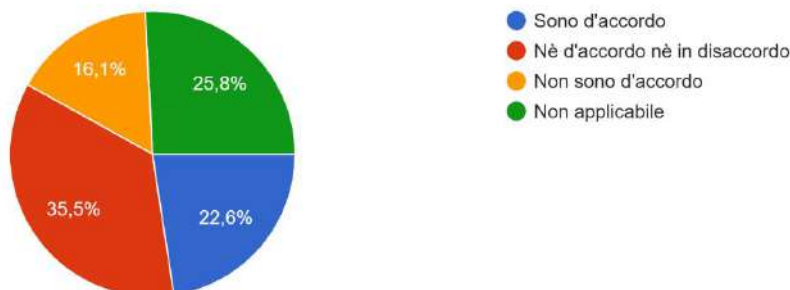
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12,5% of the respondents because they are busier than before the pandemic (studying).

Leggo di più rispetto a prima della pandemia

31 risposte



I read more than before the pandemic

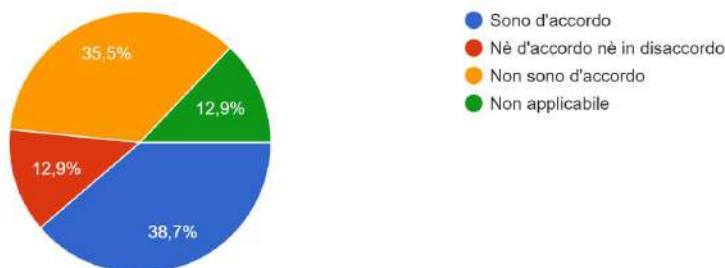
35,5% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.

22,6% of the respondents agree.

16,1% of the respondents disagree.

Faccio più sport rispetto a prima della pandemia

31 risposte



I do more sport than before the pandemic

38,7% of the respondents agree.

35,5% of the respondents disagree.

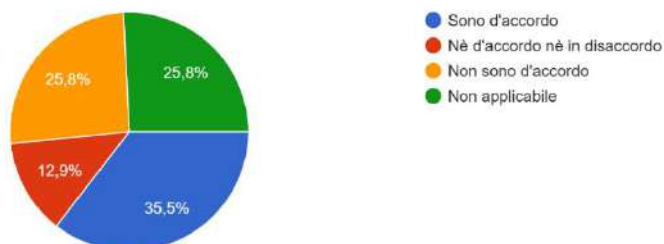
12,9% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.



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Viaggio di più rispetto a prima della pandemia
31 risposte



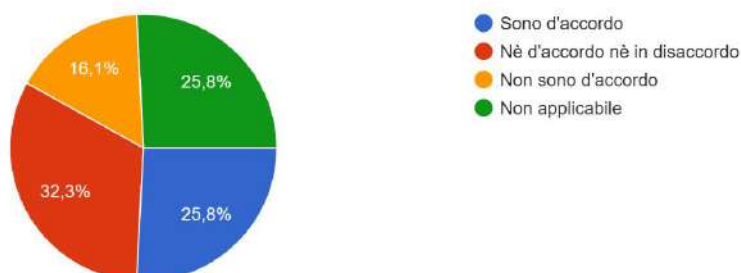
I travel more than before the pandemic

35,5% of the respondents agree.

25,8% of the respondents disagree.

12,9% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.

Studio di più rispetto a prima della pandemia
31 risposte



I am getting more education than before the pandemic

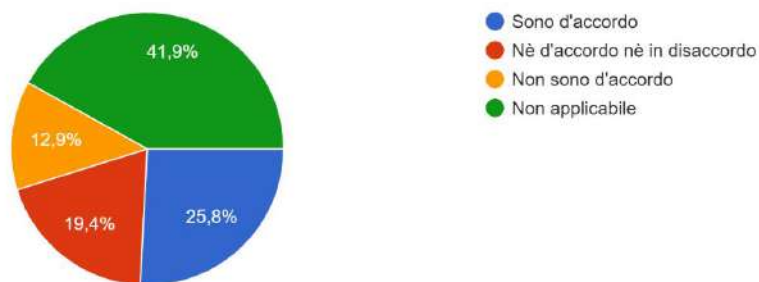
32,3% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.

25,8% of the respondents agree.

16,1% of the respondents disagree.

Partecipo di più in azioni civiche

31 risposte



I get more involved in civic actions

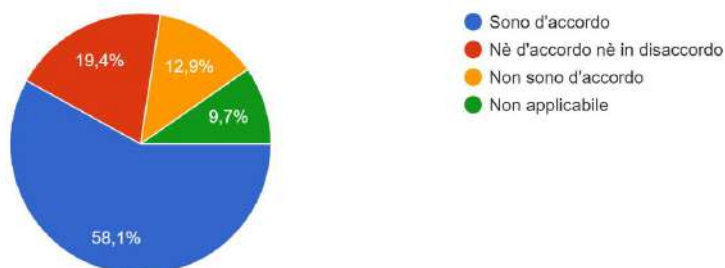
25,8% of the respondents agree.

19,4% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.

12,9% of the respondents disagree.

Curo di più la mia salute mentale

31 risposte



I pay more attention to my mental health

58,1% of the respondents agree.

19,4% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.

12,9% of the respondents disagree.

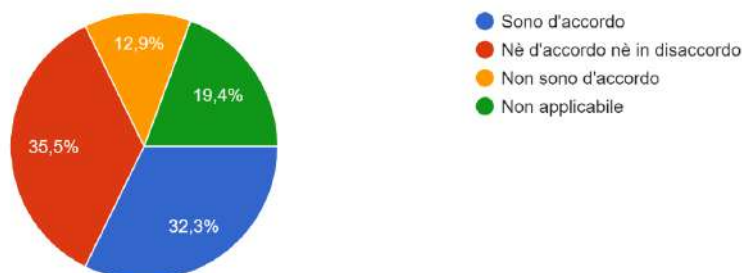


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Frequento eventi culturali più spesso rispetto a prima della pandemia (musei, teatri, cinema, concerti, festival, etc.)

31 risposte



I attend more cultural events than before the pandemic (museums, theatre, cinema, concerts, festivals, etc.)

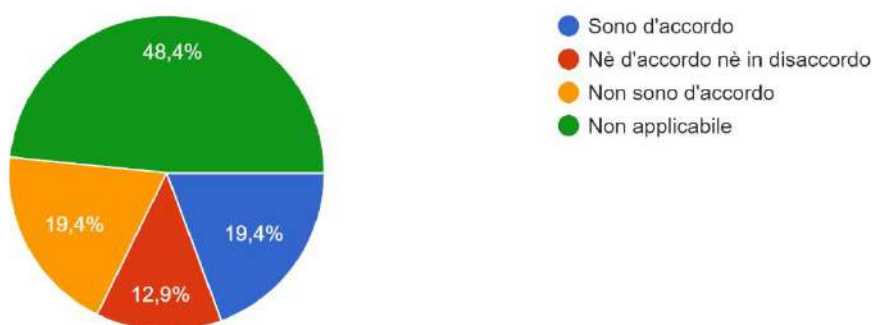
35,5% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.

32,3% of the respondents agree.

12,9% of the respondents disagree.

Faccio più volontariato rispetto a prima della pandemia

31 risposte



I volunteer more than before the pandemic

19,4% of the respondents agree.

Il 19,4% of the respondents disagree.

Il 12,9% of the respondents do not agree nor disagree.



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After the end of the pandemic, what problems do you face?

9,7% of the respondents is **unemployed**.

19,4% of the respondents is facing **problems continuing studying**.

29% of the respondents is having **mental health problems**.

9,7% of the respondents is having **physical health problems**.



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4 Final Words

Research has shown that the virus has triggered repercussions on all levels, generating new needs, new forms of poverty and social inequalities within the population: let us think of the phenomenon of the digital divide that has given rise to a new form of marginalization affecting the most disadvantaged, least educated and oldest sections of the population; those who had the opportunity to exercise their profession remotely in smart working mode and those who, carrying out a job in close contact with the user, have had to come to terms with the psychosis of the virus; those who have experienced the state of emergency in a small flat, especially children, and those who have been lucky enough to spend it in a large home, with open spaces and balconies.

Restrictive measures that severely limited the children's ability to maintain social relations among peers, especially if implemented for prolonged periods of time, on psychological, social and economic variables, although necessary, must be carefully evaluated through a rigorous benefit/damage analysis in terms of the ratio between the estimated number of contagions avoided and the negative impact of the measures on psychological well-being, economic hardship for families, social relations and other health indicators. Studies have in fact shown a worsening of the psychological condition of young people, especially among adolescents: if school closures and the imposition of restrictive measures that severely restrict social relations among young people are prolonged over long or very long periods of time, an even more pronounced negative effect is to be expected. Further studies on the long-term effect of social distancing measures implemented over prolonged periods are needed, as would a comprehensive evaluation of the benefit/damage ratio of such measures by decision-makers. On the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, there is a need for intensive and continuous cooperation between Member States in order to build sustainable, inclusive and resilient economies to synergistically address the global challenges ahead by reducing the negative consequences that could spill over into global economic development.



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Project 101091233 - So I BeLiv

Research on the impact that the COVID-19 crisis had on young people

National report Slovenia



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January 2023

Education centre Geoss



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1 Introduction

During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, health problems (of especially the elderly) were the most important issue the countries had to deal with first. When the pandemic slowly started calming down other issues of different target groups came up front. The COVID-19 pandemic represented a different type of crisis for young people: ‘artificial restrictions’ on economic activity (the closure of shops and restaurants, for example) particularly affected sectors that employ a large proportion of young people with insecure contracts. Restrictions on social activities had effects on young people’s social development and participation, while the closure of educational institutions hampered their opportunities to accumulate skills and human capital (Eurofond, 2021). In terms of employment, young people have been more strongly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic than older people. In addition to experiencing higher unemployment and worsening economic conditions, as a result of government interventions, they have also suffered from limited mobility and physical activity, the closure of face-to-face educational services, and the cancellation of social events, resulting in social isolation. Many have experienced emotional difficulties in managing their situation in lockdown. They have also reported experiencing boring routines, stress, and compulsive use of smartphones, among other issues.

From the view of health issues youth was not affected by the pandemic in a great deal, but went through the same democratic and civic restrictions which might lead to even worse civic and democratic participation of young people on local/national/European levels. Implementing this research, we would like to see the socio-economic impact on young people (18 – 29 years old) during and after the peak season of the COVID-19 pandemic. With this research, involved partners will provide and compare the results in Croatia, France, Italy, Slovenia, and Spain regarding the habits of young people before, during, and after lockdowns. The aim is to use received data to make, in the next steps of the project, proposals on how to tackle socio-economic issues resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and other potential future global or national crises.



2 Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on young people

Around 312. 000 young people aged between 15 and 29 live in Slovenia, representing around 15% of the population. Among them are vulnerable groups that need extra attention like people with disabilities, young people from socially vulnerable backgrounds and poor family situations, and many so-called hidden vulnerable groups. The epidemic and the economic downturn have deepened the problems that young people in Slovenia have been pointing out for some time: the difficult transition to the labour market, the instability of precarious work, and the housing issue. When there is a crisis, resources run out sooner than they would otherwise, and they run out for those who are weakest. Young people are on the side where there are slightly fewer resources for them than for others. Although there is often an implicit intergenerational conflict in politics, especially between the young and the elderly, it is precisely these two populations that are doing the worst, even in this COVID-19 situation (Šebenik, 2020).

Slovenian government first announced the epidemic on 12th March 2020 and had taken several measures to prevent the epidemic of COVID-19, which were among the most stringent in comparison with other EU countries. Events with more than 500 people were cancelled, non-emergency preventive health services were suspended in health facilities, all sports competitions were cancelled, and all educational establishments and non-emergency stores, except grocery stores, pharmacies, petrol stations, banks, post offices and newsagents, were closed. Public transport was suspended, and hospitals were restricted to emergency or very urgent services, except oncology and treatment of pregnant women (Kovač et al., 2021).

Slovenia was one of the first countries in the EU to declare an end to the epidemic in May 2020 and to declare an epidemic again on 18 October. Immediately after the epidemic was declared, a curfew (from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.) was introduced in Slovenia for the first time since World War II. The government then suspended public transport, banned all outdoor



gatherings, the sale of non-essential items in shops, the passage between municipalities, etc. The strict measures were in place until the end of December 2020 (Kovač et al., 2021).

2.1 Employment and Education

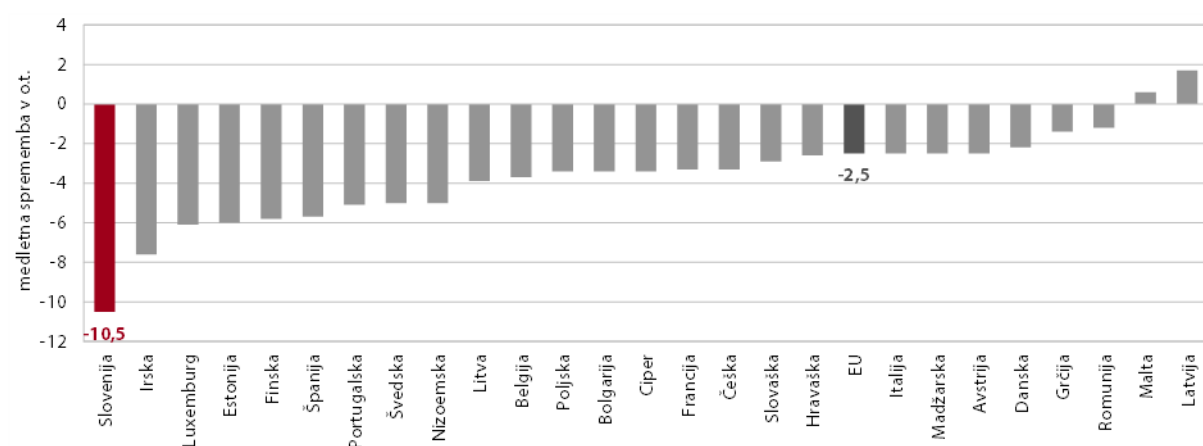
In recent decades, young people have been more vulnerable than other age groups to economic crises. During the 2007–2013 economic crisis, the youth unemployment rate and the rate of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEET) increased to historic levels; this crisis negatively impacted their prospects (Eurofond, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic affected strongly the employment level of young people; at the beginning of the epidemic, the youth and the less educated, especially women, were the most affected by the crisis. Young people are more likely than other age groups to be exposed to temporary employment, which is particularly true in Slovenia (student work). The high proportion of employees with low educational qualifications in the sectors most affected by the restrictive measures also contributes to the greater impact on the less educated (UMAR, 2020).

The impact of the epidemic on employment was reflected in the decline of rates of labour participation, which has been most significant among young people (15-24 years). Rates of labour participation fell in all EU countries in the second quarter of 2020, with the decline in younger age groups, especially 15-24-year-olds, being significantly larger than in older age groups. The labour participation rate of the 55-64 age group even increased in many countries, which may also be related to the low prevalence of temporary jobs among older workers. However, temporary employment is much more widespread among young people than among other age groups, which contributed to their above-average exposure during the early years of the epidemic. Temporary employment is the fastest way to respond to changes in demand, and employers simply do not renew it in the case of temporary jobs, or, as in the case of student work, use it to a much lesser extent when economic activity falls. In Slovenia, student work, which is a very flexible form of youth employment, also contributes to the high share of young people in temporary



employment. Labour force participation of the age group 15-24 fell by 2.5% on average in the EU in the second quarter of 2020, while in Slovenia it fell by 10.5% (see Figure 1) (UMAR, 2020). The volume of student work was, in this period, half the size, as in the same period in 2019, which is an important reason for the much larger decrease in the youth labour force participation in Slovenia.

Figure 1: Change in labour force participation rates of young people 15-24 in Q2 2020, EU



Source: UMAR 2020, adopted after Eurostat

In contrast, the largest increases in the share of employed people aged 15-29 in the third quarter of 2021 compared with the pre-COVID situation were made in Ireland, France, and Slovenia (all at least +2 pp in Q3 2021 compared with Q3 2019) (Eurostat, 2022).

In a survey, where a total of 743 Slovenian young people were included, carried out by the National Youth Council of Slovenia during the first wave of the pandemic, 47% of respondents said that their income had decreased during the pandemic. One-quarter of respondents claimed that their income did not cover their basic needs. The National Youth Council attributed this drop in income to reduced demand for students and other forms of labour (Mladinski Svet Slovenije, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has led, among other changes, to the closure of educational institutions and a shift to online education for all those involved in schooling and

education. Distance education has been a major challenge for many, both for institutions and school staff, as well as for pupils, students, and learners. The home environment has also become an educational environment, where some have encountered difficulties, either because of inadequate family conditions or because of a lack of resources, such as a computing device, through which virtual education has been established (Hoofman and Secord, 2021).

Educational institutions in Slovenia were among the longest-closed in the EU. In the school year 2019/20, they were closed from 16th March 2020 until the end of the school year, for students of secondary school and faculties, except students in their final year of secondary school, who returned to schools on 18 May 2020. In the school year 2020/21 they remained closed, or were open only under special requirements, until 15 February 2021. Table 1 shows how the course of events, regarding school closure went on in the period from March 2020 to January 2021 (Križaj et al., 2021).

A lot of students in secondary schools boycotted online lessons on February 9th 2021. Some attended a peaceful protest in Maribor and demanded that the schools reopen again. Six students who were 18 or more were fined 400€ while 3 underage students were called to court since at that time there was a governmental restriction against public gatherings to prevent the spread of COVID-19 disease. Charges against students were later dropped (24ur.com, 2021).

Table 1: Closure of schools

Date	Course of events
5 March 2020	1st COVID-19 infection discovered in SI
16 March 2020	Schools closed
2 April 2020	Peak of 1st COVID-19 wave
27 April 2020	School vacation
4 May 2020	Schools closed
25 May 2020	Schools partly open
1 July 2020	School vacation
1 September 2020	School open



Date	Course of events
19 October 2020	School closed
23 December 2020	School vacation
5 January 2021	Schools closed
10 January 2021	Peak of 2nd COVID-19 wave
18 January 2021	Schools partly open

Source: Križaj et al., 2021

In Slovenia, 72% of respondents, included in the previously mentioned survey¹, were studying online during this period, with a higher proportion of women, as the proportion of the student population was higher among women. This type of education is perceived as less effective, and several problems were perceived. It is also very important to note that a fifth of the students did not have all the necessary or good enough equipment for online education, and a good third had problems with the internet connection, which points to certain inequalities in access to education, which may be conditioned by the material situation of the students or their families, or by the unfavourable location of their residence. 72 % of those who were studying online rated it as significantly less effective (30 %) or somewhat less effective (42 %). Among the answers offered on the type of problems associated with distance education, the most frequently agreed answer was that they lacked contact with their classmates. More than half also felt that they did not learn the material as well as they would have done in a normal course and that they did not get enough relevant and clear information (Mladinski Svet Slovenije, 2020).

2.2 Health, well-being, lifestyle

Numerous studies have reported how the COVID-19 crisis has affected the lives of young people, especially those aged between 15 and 24. Most worrying is the rise in mental health problems, with the proportion of young people experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression expected to be twice as high as before the crisis in March 2021. In the US,

¹ Survey conducted by the National Youth Council of Slovenia: Mladinski svet Slovenije (2020). Mladi v času epidemije COVID-19. Mladinski svet Slovenije, Ljubljana.



43% of 18-29-year-olds and young adults reported problems with anxiety and depression. In Belgium, the proportion of 16-24-year-olds experiencing symptoms of depression was 29% in April 2020, a threefold increase among young women and a fourfold increase among young men compared to 2018 (OECD, 2021). The crisis has particularly affected young people with pre-existing mental health problems, those with substance use disorders, individuals on lower incomes, ethnic minorities, and individuals who identify as LGBT+ (OECD, 2021).

All measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic have required long-lasting and, until recently, unimaginable adjustments to the way of life of all social groups and systems. Fourteen months of adjustments and measures that have radically interfered with the necessities of life, such as interpersonal relationships and socializing, family support, and physical activity, have deepened the disparities between families, children, and, in particular, young people, who seem to be particularly affected by the epidemic². The Slovenian Association of School Counsellors reports that many children and adolescents returned to school with a loss of motivation, emotional distress, depression, anxiety, and social difficulties. In 2020, almost 50 % more adolescents were treated for suicide attempts and 50 % more children and adolescents with an eating disorders were treated at the Ljubljana Pediatric Clinic than in the previous year. In the first three months of the year 2021, the number of emergency admissions continued to rise (Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje, 2021).

During a period of self-isolation and the absence of normal contact with people, the feeling of loneliness was amplified for some young people. When asked if they could turn to someone if they felt unwell, 13% of young people, included in the national survey, answered that they could not and that most of the time they felt left to themselves, with a difference between men, where 7% of young people felt this way, and women, where 15% of young people felt this way. On the other hand, a significantly higher proportion of men

² To hear about real life experiences of Slovenian young people during the covid-19 pandemic you can listen to podcast <https://val202.rtvsl.si/podcast/kronika-plus/173251160/174770434> (available in Slovenian language only).



(35 %) than women (18 %) also answered that they did not feel any need to turn to anyone. Young women also show a higher level of concern, especially for their future, but also for the future of society in general. The most prominent increased concern during the epidemic, however, was reported by young people (regardless of gender) to be an increased concern for the health of their loved ones. Women also reported significantly more negative feelings such as depression, anxiety, and nervousness. The latter is somewhat consistent with the finding that women are more prone to depression than men; at the same time, the responses indicate that they are more sensitive to the issues related to the epidemic (Mladinski Svet Slovenije, 2020).

Many other negative consequences for physical health among young people were being noticed, with some still being present like reduced motor skills, a deterioration in general physical fitness, and the development of unhealthy habits. Half of the young people spend more time in front of the TV, computer, or other electronic devices, just under half are less physically active, a good third avoid going to the doctor because of a problem unrelated to the new coronavirus, almost a fifth smoke more and a good tenth drink more alcohol than before the pandemic (Urad Republike Slovenije za mladino, 2021).

During the epidemic, there was a higher intensity of various leisure activities noticed among young people, with young women again showing greater changes in themselves. However, the changes in habits are particularly significant when it comes to eating habits, with 52% of women and 31% of men saying that they ate more during this period than they would have otherwise (Mladinski Svet Slovenije, 2020).

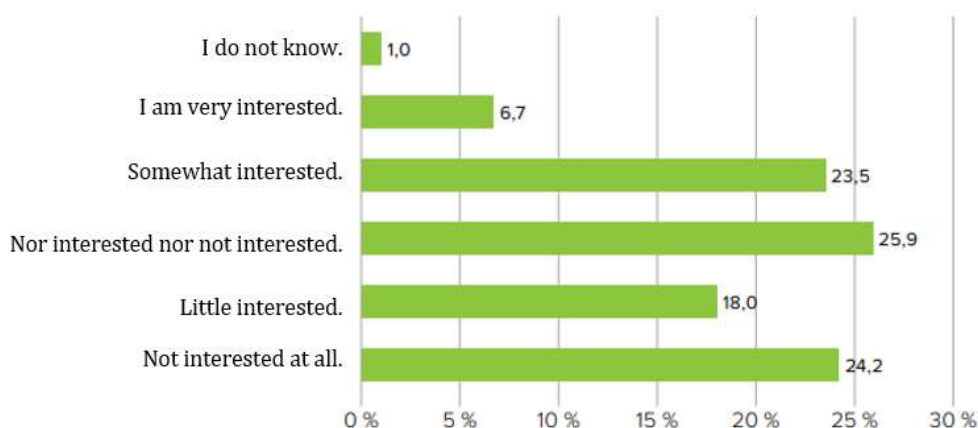
3.3 Civic engagement

According to OECD (2019), comparatively speaking, interest in politics in Slovenia is extremely low. It is quite below the average for OECD countries and almost half that of the rest of the population. According to the national survey Youth 2020, only 6.7% of young people say they are very interested in politics, while 23.5% are somewhat interested. (Figure 2). Consequently, this means that only about one-third of young people in Slovenia



demonstrate circumstances that create good preconditions for political participation. It can therefore be said that interest in politics among young people in Slovenia is low.

Figure 2: Interest in politics among young people in Slovenia



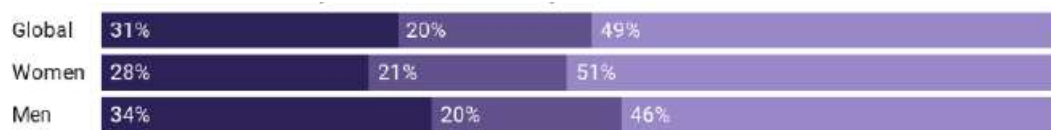
Source: Lavrič et al., 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has also harmed EU youth and education programs in the field of youth work and volunteering. Since we did not find any data for Slovenia regarding the civic engagement of young people during COVID-19, the information below is based on the International Labour Organization's research on Youth and COVID-19 from 2020.

According to the survey, one in three young people had noticed a significant impact on their right to participate in public affairs. This impact is higher for youth in low-income countries (40 %) compared to those in lower-middle (36 %) and high-income countries (28 %)³. Young people face challenges to participating in political processes, institutions, and policy-making at the best times, while the pandemic amplified the challenges. Over one in four young people (31 %) reported a high degree of engagement in voluntarism and making donations towards the COVID-19 response with only a small gender difference observable, as seen in Figure 2.

³ Slovenia is among high income country.

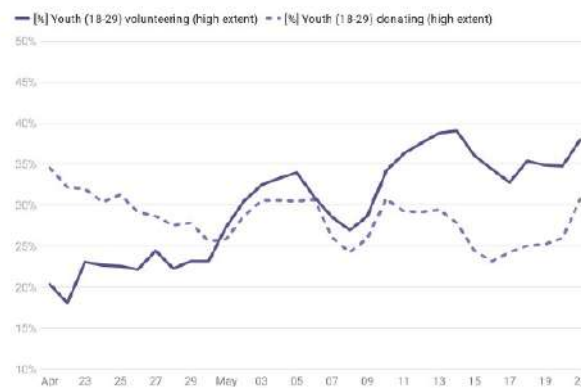
Figure 3: Percentage of young people volunteering for initiatives to help others deal with the impact of the coronavirus



Source: ILO, 2020

Young people steadily increased the extent of their volunteering in response to the crisis over the survey period. At the start, 20 % of youth reported a high degree of volunteering, which has grown to 38 % by the end as seen in Figure 3.

Figure 4: Young people's social activism over time



Source: ILO, 2020

3 Results of the Questionnaire

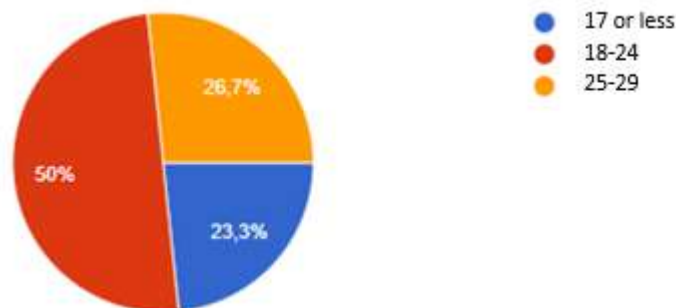
30 young people participated in the online questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three sections; the first included demographics questions, the second had questions about changes in habits before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic and the third part included questions about post-COVID-19 trends. The questionnaire assumed the COVID-19 pandemic is over with the goal being to research the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on young people (18 – 29 years old).

The questionnaire was anonymous and distributed among participants of a Slovenian program Project Learning for young adults, who belong to the target group of NEETs. It was also distributed online (through social media, and web pages of the Slovenian project partner and associated partner) to anyone within the target group interested in participation.

Demographics information

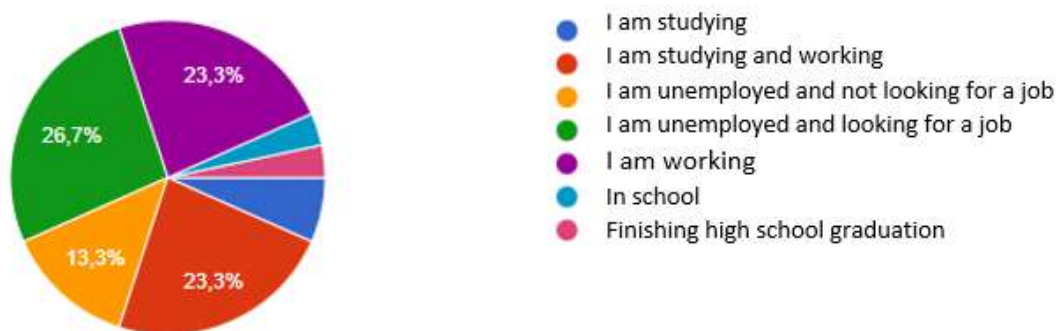
- All the respondents live in Slovenia.
- Half of the respondents were between 18-24 years old, 26.7% were between 25-29 and 23.3% were 17 years old or less. Results are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Age of respondents



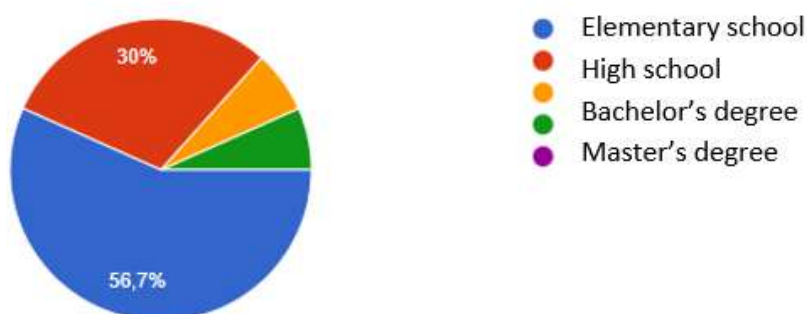
- The current situation of respondents shows (as seen in Figure 6) that the majority are unemployed and looking for a job (26,7%), 23.3% are studying and working and 23.3% are working. 13.3% are unemployed and not looking for a job.

Figure 6: Current situation



- Last level of finished education is, for the majority of young people participating in the questionnaire, (56,7%), elementary school, followed by high school graduates (30%).

Figure 7: Last level of education completed



- 50% of respondents answered that they are facing some kind of disadvantages: 23.3% are faced with disadvantages linked to education and training systems (barriers may be faced by people who find it difficult to perform in education and training systems for various reasons, early school leavers, NEETs, and low-skilled adults), 16.7% are faced with economic barriers (such as low standard of living, low income, learners needing to work to support themselves, welfare dependency, long-term unemployment, precarious or poverty-stricken situations, homelessness, indebtedness or financial problems, etc.), 6.7% are facing barriers linked to discrimination (discrimination linked to gender, age, ethnicity, religion,

beliefs, sexual orientation, disability) and 3.3% are facing geographical barriers (living in remote or rural areas).

Change of habits before, during, and after lockdown

- Results showed that 36.6% of respondents became a member of an NGO after the COVID-19 pandemic, 10% became a member during the pandemic and 20% was a member already before the pandemic. 33.3% answered that they are not part of a NGO.⁴
- None of the respondents became a member of a sports club during the COVID-19 pandemic, 26.7% were already members before the pandemic, and 73.3% were not members.
- 93.3% of respondents answered that they are not a member of a political party which shows very low civic participation of youth in Slovenia. 3.3% was a member before the pandemic and 3.3% became a member after the pandemic.
- Low civic participation in Slovenia was also confirmed with answers to the question regarding civic participation: 70% of respondents answered that they are not involved in civic actions, 13.3% of young people got involved in civic actions during the pandemic, 10% got involved after the pandemic and 6.7% were involved already before the pandemic.
- Questions regarding the educational process: 33.3% were included in schooling already before the pandemic, 16.7% got involved during and 13.3% after the pandemic. 53.3% of those included in the schooling were and still are facing some problems with their education like technical problems, time management, problems with focusing, and professors not taking into account that online schooling was not as effective as live.
- Questions regarding employment and income: 6.7% of young people lost employment during the COVID-19 pandemic, while 6.7% worked fewer hours. The

⁴ NGO in Slovenia includes associations active in virtually all spheres of life - from social, cultural, sport, advocacy, ecology, health to civil protection and almost every aspect of today's society. Most are sports clubs and organizations involved in sporting activities.

majority 86.7% was not employed. 50% of the ones that lost their employment found new employment within a 6-12 month period while 50% are still unemployed. 23.3% of respondents claim that their income is now lower than before the pandemic, 20% have the same income, and 20% have a higher income than before the pandemic.

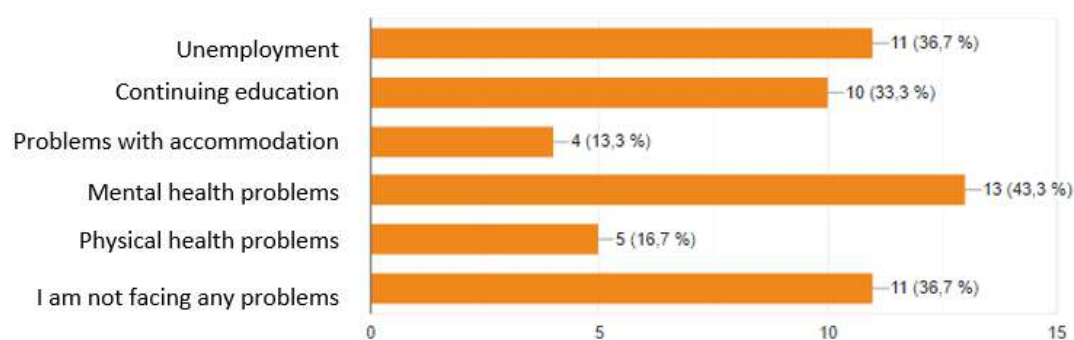
Post-COVID-19 trends among young people

- 40% of respondents read more than before the pandemic,
- 30% does more sport,
- 26.7% travel more,
- 30% is spending more time on education than before,
- 20% get involved more in civic actions than before,
- 43.3% pay more attention to their mental health than before,
- 40% attend more cultural events than before the pandemic (museums, theatre, cinema, concerts, festivals, etc.) and
- 20% of respondents volunteer more than before the pandemic.

Results showed that the majority of respondents are facing some kind of problems after the pandemic. Only 36.7% said they are not facing any problems, while 63.3% face some problems. The most common answer was mental health problems (43.3% of respondents), followed by unemployment problems (36.7% of respondents) and problems with continuing education (33.3% of respondents).



Figure 8: After the end of the pandemic, what problems do you face?



4 Final Words

In past global crises, it was revealed that young people have been more vulnerable than other age groups to economic crises. It can be said the same for the COVID-19 health crisis. Although young people were not the most exposed target group directly affected by the disease, endangering their health, the epidemic exposed/amplified problems for young people in the field of employment, education, and well-being. In Slovenia, some of these problems are difficulty to transition to the labour market, the instability of precarious work, housing issues, troubles in the online educational process that can result in a long-term shortage of knowledge and a disadvantaged position in the labour market, and mental health issues. The pandemic also revealed some gender differences with women reporting significantly more negative feelings such as depression, anxiety, and nervousness.

The majority of young people participating in the questionnaire, implemented within the So I BeLiv project, were less educated, with elementary or high school as their last completed level of education. 50% of respondents answered that they are facing some kind of barrier (economic, linked to education, geographical barriers,...). All these factors put them in a disadvantaged position making them a vulnerable group of young adults, also when it comes to the level of the negative impact that COVID-19 or other potential global crises can have on them. Looking only at the results of the questionnaire we can say that the COVID-19 pandemic did not interfere with the educational plans of the young people but did cause some problems with schooling, affecting their level of success. Only a small percentage of respondents claim to have lower income than before COVID-19, but the reason for that could be a high percentage of unemployed participating in the questionnaire. The COVID-19 pandemic did not seem to encourage young people to a high degree to participate more in civic actions related to politics but had some positive impact on the lifestyle of youth like an increased rate of youth doing more sports, spending more time for education, attending more cultural events, volunteering more, etc. On the other hand, a high degree of respondents reports that they are facing problems, after the



pandemic, with mental health problems as the most often mentioned, which can leave long-term consequences for young people if not addressed properly.



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Project 101091233 - So I BeLiv

Research on the impact that the COVID-19 crisis had on young people

National report - Spain



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January 2023

Asociación Caminos



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1 Introduction

At the beginning of the COVID-19 epidemic, Spain was one of the most severely affected countries.

On 14 March 2020, the government decreed a state of alarm in the country, as well as the beginning of a lockdown which, although relaxed in phases over time, lasted about 3 months. This measure had an impact on the physical and, above all, the psychological health of a large part of the population, who were facing something they had never experienced before.

The economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic affected Spain from the first quarter of 2020. The impact that the measures taken to counteract the virus had on statistical activity and on the economic situation posed a major challenge. Spain's gross domestic product in 2020 fell by 11 % from the previous year. In 2020 the GDP figure was €1,119,976 million¹. In 2021, GDP stood at €1,205,063 million, 7.4 % higher than in 2020, and in volume terms, GDP registered a change of 5.1 %². Later on, in the year 2022, GDP grew by 5.5 % in volume terms and GDP stood at €1,327,108 million, 10 % higher than in 2021³. According to the indicators, Spain is expected to recover to pre-pandemic GDP levels in the course of 2023.

On the other hand, the touristic sector is one of the most important drivers of the Spanish economy, so the damage of the crisis was particularly severe in the country. According to the data from the Encuesta de Población Activa (Labour Force Survey) conducted at the end of 2020 and compiled by the National Statistics Institute (INE), the total number of unemployed people in Spain was 3,719,800, which represented 16.13 % of the country⁴.

¹ INE (2021) Contabilidad Nacional Trimestral de España: principales agregados
<https://www.ine.es/daco/daco42/daco4214/cntr0420a.pdf>

² INE (2022) Contabilidad Nacional Trimestral de España: principales agregados
<https://www.ine.es/daco/daco42/daco4214/cntr0421.pdf>

³ INE (2023) Contabilidad Nacional Trimestral de España: principales agregados
<https://www.ine.es/daco/daco42/daco4214/cntr0422.pdf>

⁴ INE (2020) Encuesta de Población Activa. EPA. Cuarto Trimestre 2020
https://www.ine.es/dyngs/INEbase/es/operacion.htm?c=Estadistica_C&cid=1254736176918&menu=ultiDatos&idp=1254735976595

According to the latest data, there are currently a total of 2,911,015 unemployed people in the country, which is 13 %, the lowest figure since 2008⁵.

On another note, the following are some updated health data related to COVID-19 and published by the Spanish Ministry of Health⁶:

- Total confirmed cases reported in Spain: 13,790,580
- Total confirmed cases reported in persons aged 60 years or older in Spain: 3,124,913
- Total number of deceased cases reported in Spain: 120,170
- Doses of vaccines delivered: 109,978,803
- Doses of vaccines administered: 105,552,606
- Number of people with full vaccination schedule: 40,730,568

According to the European Health Survey in Spain⁷ that took place between July 2019 and July 2020, in terms of mental health, at the beginning of the pandemic there was an increase in the percentage of the population who felt depressed or down on some level, experiencing problems falling asleep, and citing little interest or joy in doing things in their daily lives.

Further on, according to a survey by the Instituto de Salud Carlos III (ISCIII)⁸ published at the end of 2022, 47 % of the Spanish population claimed to have suffered a worsening in their access to health care; 33 % complained of a worsening of their social life; 32 % of worse mental health; and 28 % of worse physical health.

On the political scene, the country has been very agitated for several years. It all began in 2011 as a result of the global economic crisis, when two political parties emerged at the

⁵ La Moncloa (2023) El paro aumenta levemente en 2.618 personas en febrero, muy por debajo de la media de este mes <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/serviciosdeprensa/notasprensa/trabajo14/Paginas/2023/020323-datos-paro-febrero.aspx>

⁶ Ministerio de Sanidad (2023) Situación actual actualizada a 24/03/2023 <https://www.sanidad.gob.es/profesionales/saludPublica/ccayes/alertasActual/nCov/situacionActual.htm>

⁷ INE (2021) La salud mental en la pandemia https://www.ine.es/ss/Satellite?L=es_ES&c=INECifrasINE_C&cid=1259953225445&p=1254735116567&pagina=ProductosYServicios%2FINECifrasINE_C%2FPYSDetalleCifrasINE

⁸ Instituto de Salud Carlos III (2022) Monitorización del comportamiento y las actitudes de la población relacionadas con la COVID-19 en España (COSMO-SPAIN): Estudio OMS <https://portalcne.isciii.es/cosmo-spain/>



national level that gradually gained strength and ended the traditional bipartisanship. In a very short time several important events took place for the first time in Spain's current democratic stage: the first motion of censure to prosper, the first time that an extreme right-wing party managed to reach Congress, and the first coalition government.

Also, added to this is a politically divided society, with conflicting views on the management of the situation during COVID-19. The problems related to the economy during the COVID-19 crisis led to an “us against them” issue: racism and xenophobia, two different and opposing models of country.

If we combine all those factors, we obtain the current climate of social tension and political polarization in Spain.

But what effects did all this have on the lives of young Spaniards? Through this research we will try to elucidate the socio-economic impact on young people (aged 18-29) during and after the peak season of the COVID-19 pandemic. With this research, the partners involved in the *So I BeLiv* project will provide and compare results in Spain, Croatia, France, Italy, and Slovenia regarding the habits of young people before, during, and after the lockdown. The ultimate goal is to use the data to make a series of proposals on how to address the socio-economic problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and other possible future crises.

To this end, it is of the utmost importance to convey to young people that they are counted on to contribute proposals that may affect them one day, for they are the present and the future of our country, not a possible lost generation because of COVID-19. We owe them more than that, and we owe it to all of us as a society.



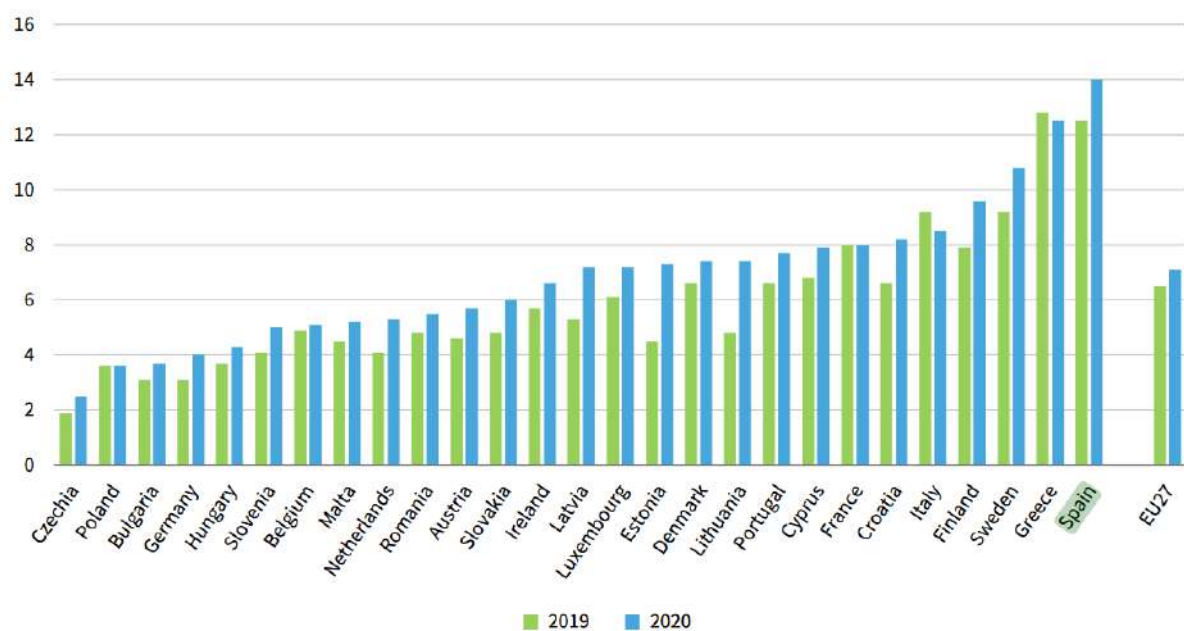
2 Impact of the COVID-19 crisis on young people

Spain has a total population of 47,475,420 people, of which 5,916,920 are young people aged between 18 and 29 according to INE data in 2022⁹, i.e., 12.46 % of the Spanish population is aged between 18 and 29.

The effects of COVID-19 in the country almost sent many young people back to square one, while some were still recovering from the economic and financial crisis that began in 2008. By age, young people were again the hardest hit by the economic side of the crisis in 2020, and the impact was greatest in female-occupied sectors.

2.1 Employment and education

Figure 2: Youth unemployment ratio by Member State, 2019 and 2020 (%)



Source: Eurostat, Youth unemployment ratio by sex, age and NUTS 2 regions [yth_empl_140]

According to Eurostat data estimates for Spain, the **youth unemployment** rate was supposed to reach 31.13 % in 2020. But with COVID-19, the statistical office of the

⁹ INE (2022) Población por edad <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/tabla.do?path=/t20/e245/p08/l0/&file=01003.px>

European Union showed that youth unemployment in Spain stood at 39.9 %¹⁰. In February 2023, Spain's youth unemployment rate stood at 29.3 %¹¹, the second highest in the European Union. Youth unemployment is 6 percentage points higher among women than men¹².



Source: Jóvenes y paro registrado. Febrero 2023 (INJUVE)

¹⁰ Eurostat (2021) *Euro area unemployment at 8.1%*, EuroIndicators https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/portlet_file_entry/2995521/3-04032021-AP-EN.pdf/cb6e5dd6-56c2-2196-16b7-baf811b84a4f

¹¹ El País (2023) La tasa de paro de la UE cae al mínimo histórico del 6% <https://cincodias.elpais.com/economia/2023-03-31/la-tasa-de-paro-de-la-ue-cae-al-minimo-historico-del-6.html>

¹² INJUVE (2023) Jóvenes y Paro Registrado. Febrero 2023 <https://www.injuve.es/observatorio/formacion-empleo-y-vivienda/jovenes-y-paro-registrado-febrero-2023>



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In Spain there has been a general stigmatisation of unemployed youngsters by adults. The so-called NEETs suffered from the consequences of the financial crisis of 2008, and now these young people have been hit again, this time by the crisis caused by the COVID-19 epidemic, which has had a huge impact on the socio-economic situation of young people.

The pandemic has had a direct impact on the concerns of Spanish youth. The results of a survey carried out by the consulting firm Deloitte in 2020 showed that the situation of the labour market was among the main concerns of young people¹³. In 2023, the main concern is the high costs of living.

Prior to COVID-19, the situation was not good. There are major structural problems in Spain due to the economy being based on tourism and construction, 2 very volatile sectors. For years, the young population in Spain has been one of the most precarious groups in terms of job insecurity due to a much higher temporary employment, lower salaries, greater part-time work, higher discontinuity, and a greater risk of over-qualification. In just over a decade, the way that young people define and project their socio-economic expectations in the medium term has been transformed - for the worse.

The COVID-19 pandemic certified once again that the mass dismissal of workers with a temporary contract is the solution used in Spain when it comes to managing a crisis. Between February and June 2020, more than 7 out of 10 jobs¹⁴ lost were temporary contracts, and the fact that most temporary contracts have historically been for young people meant that 6 out of 10 jobs destroyed were for people under 30 years of age.

However, on 1 January 2022, a labour reform came into force and one of its measures has been the abolition of the temporary contract for works and services, which means that companies can now only hire temporarily to cover circumstances of production and for the replacement of workers. Among the effects there was an increase in unlimited contracts, since temporary employment has been one of the characteristics of the labour

¹³ El Español (2020) *¿Cuáles son las principales preocupaciones de los jóvenes tras el Covid-19?*
https://www.elespanol.com/invertia/economia/empleo/20200721/principales-preocupaciones-jovenes-espanoles-covid-19/506949863_0.html

¹⁴ INJUVE (2022) *Estrategia de Juventud 2030*
https://www.injuve.es/sites/default/files/adjuntos/2022/05/estrategia_de_juventud_2030_resumen_ejecutivo.pdf



market for young people in Spain. The contract statistics have confirmed the increase in unlimited contracts and the reduction in temporary ones. As a result, the ratio of temporary contracts decreased, especially among the youngest workers. In fact, according to the data, 79 % of young people today have an unlimited contract; that figure was 47 % before the labour reform. This does not end all their problems, but at least it gives them more rights in case of dismissal, for example.

In terms of **education**, according to data provided by the Ministry of Education, in 2020 the early drop-out rate from education and training in Spain stood at 16 %; early school leavers in the EU-27, however, stood at 10.2 %¹⁵. According to data published by the Government as of 2023, by the end of 2022, the drop-out rate had fallen to 13.9 %¹⁶. According to various international organisations and education experts, boosting vocational education and training, especially at the intermediate level, can help reduce early school leaving in the country. In fact, almost 30 % of the Spanish university students would opt to study a VET course if they could choose their studies again, and 60 % consider that they lack the preparation to face the labour market when they finish their university studies¹⁷.

On the other hand, among the direct effects of COVID-19 on the education of young people, we can mention the fact that schools were closed during lockdown, a situation that lasted for months, while schools, professionals, and students were forced to adapt to telematic education. This meant that inequalities and shortcomings in terms of computer equipment, the existence of a room in the house where classes could be followed in peace and concentration, or internet connection at home were revealed. This digital and social gap has had an impact on young people's education, which in turn may have long-term

¹⁵ Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional (2020) *Abandono temprano de la educación-formación en la UE por país, sexo y periodo*, EDUCAbase
<http://estadisticas.mecd.gob.es/EducaJaxiPx/Datos.htm?path=/laborales/epa/indi//10/&file=indi02.px&type=paxis>

¹⁶ La Moncloa (2023) La tasa de abandono educativo temprano se mantiene estable con un 13,9% en 2022
<https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/serviciosdeprensa/notasprensa/educacion/Paginas/2023/270123-tasa-abandono-educativo-temprano-estable.aspx>

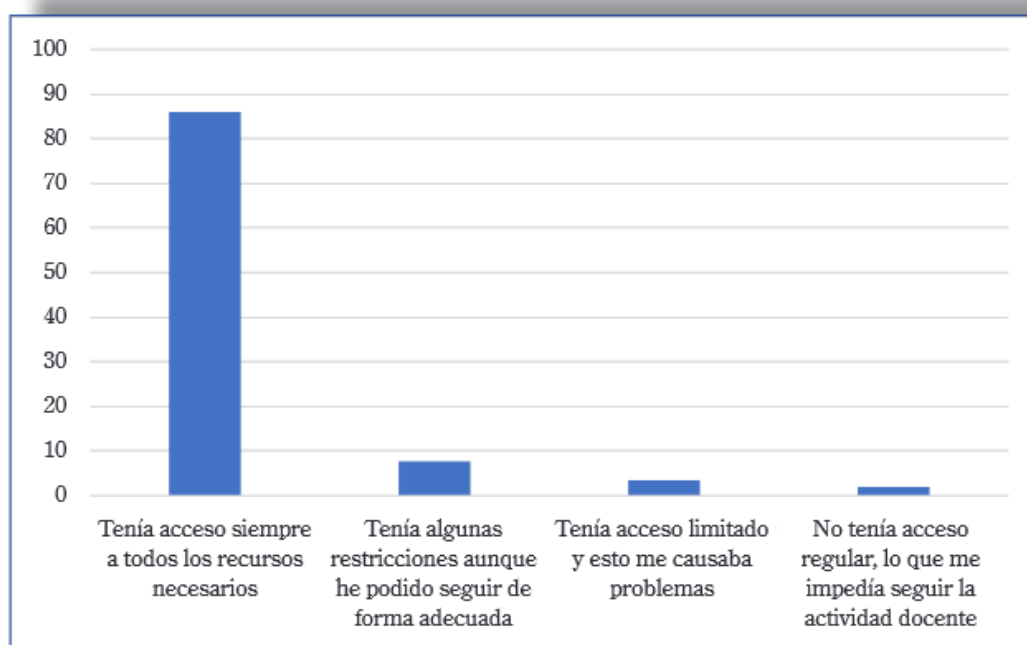
¹⁷ EducaWeb (2021) *9 de cada 10 universitarios necesita formación adicional para conseguir trabajo*
<https://www.educaweb.com/noticia/2021/03/22/9-cada-10-universitarios-necesita-formacion-adicional-19494/>



effects on their future, for example when competing in the labour market with other workers¹⁸.

According to the INJUVE data shown in the graph, 86 % of young people between 15 and 29 years old claimed to have had access to all the necessary resources to be able to follow the classes; 7.8 % claimed to have some restrictions; 3.5 % claimed to have had limited access; and 2.1 % claimed not to have the necessary resources to follow the classes.

GRÁFICO 2.13. Disponibilidad de recursos y los efectos de su potencial ausencia según los Jóvenes (porcentaje)



Fuente: Sondeo COVID-19 (INJUVE 2020)

Additionally, it is important to highlight that education centres were not able to exercise their socialising role among young people due to their closure for months, which can have a negative impact on young people's acquisition of social skills and the way they relate to

¹⁸ INJUVE (2020) Informe Juventud en España 2020
http://www.injuve.es/sites/default/files/adjuntos/2021/03/informe_juventud_espana_2020.pdf

each other, and this can have an effect not only on these young people but on society as a whole.

2.2 Health, wellbeing, lifestyle

The impact of lockdown, the suspension of social activities, the bad news day after day, the economic or employment situation (life uncertainty), the feeling of loneliness, the concern for the health of family members or the loss of someone due to COVID-19 caused great psychological discomfort to the entire population.

The pandemic and lockdown led to increased stress, discouragement, and difficulties in falling asleep. According to various studies, these figures are even higher for women and those in the most vulnerable situations. It may be that all of these factors have an effect not only on the mental health and future of today's youth, but also on their employment and educational prospects.

According to the Estrategia de Juventud 2022-2030 published by INJUVE, the changes in rhythm and routine caused by COVID-19 have had effects on the health of young people, stating that eating disorders have been aggravated in recent years. On the other hand, with regard to mental health, the aforementioned strategy states that 7.4 % of young people between 15 and 24 years of age have symptoms of depression. This percentage is 7.7% among 25–34-year-olds, and it particularly affects women. Also, 3.1 % of 15–24-year-olds suffer from chronic anxiety. The percentage of people considering suicide has increased after COVID-19 to 8.9 %.

In accordance with Fundación FAD, the balance of the pandemic was that young people started to eat healthier and exercising more; however, 66.8 % of young people believe that the COVID-19 crisis has had a negative impact on the mental health of youngsters in Spain¹⁹. Also, during the months of lockdown the consumption of illegal substances and psychotropic drugs, the consumption of pornography, and sexual relations decreased.

¹⁹ FAD (2022) Jóvenes en pleno desarrollo y crisis pandémica. Cómo miran al futuro https://www.adolescenciayjuventud.org/publicacion/impacto_covid_juventud/

Nevertheless, compared to the situation before the pandemic, the frequency of physical exercise and online gambling increased. After the end of lockdown, according to the same publication, alcohol consumption and sexual intercourse increased, and there was no decrease in physical exercise. The FAD's Barómetro Juvenil 2021²⁰ states that the percentage of young people who reported having very frequent mental health problems rose from 6.2 % in 2017 to 15.9 % in 2021, with women close to doubling the percentage of men. The barometer data indicate that self-perception of health status worsened among young people, with only 54.6 % in 2021 considering themselves to be in good health. By gender, more men (59.9 %) than women (50.2 %) thought they were in good health.

2.3 Civic engagement

In just over a decade, the way in which young people have defined and projected their socio-economic expectations in the medium term has been transformed - for the worse.

This period has seen a series of major social mobilisations (such as those of 15-M) and a social decline that has led to the impoverishment of a sector of the popular classes through increased unemployment and the precariousness of work, with a particular effect on the younger generations. Despite this, as discussed in a previous section, the latest labour reform that came into force on 1 January 2022 has helped to alleviate the problem of job insecurity.

In addition, the situation caused by the COVID-19 epidemic has had a direct impact on the concerns of Spanish youth as well as the socio-economic situation of young people. These consequences are currently being experienced and will be present for some time to come.

One of the permanent demands of Spanish youth is the need to have greater participation in the issues that affect them, since they consider that their participation is limited to

²⁰ FAD (2022) Barómetro Juvenil 2021

https://www.adolescenciayjuventud.org/publicacion/barometro_salud_bienestar/



voting when they reach the age of 18, and that there are no spaces where they can be heard.

This has caused Spanish youth - despite being very active in causes such as feminism, ecology, or the struggle for the acceptance of diversity - to feel very distant from the traditional political parties. Remarkably, they are very interested in politics but distrust it, and their disaffection is more institutional than political.

The current generation of young people has assumed the bankruptcy of the welfare state and insecurity with regret. They distrust the future and are emancipated later than previous generations. Young people see their present and their future with little hope. Moreover, it is the first time that a generation feels that they will not prosper and will live in worse conditions than their parents' generation.

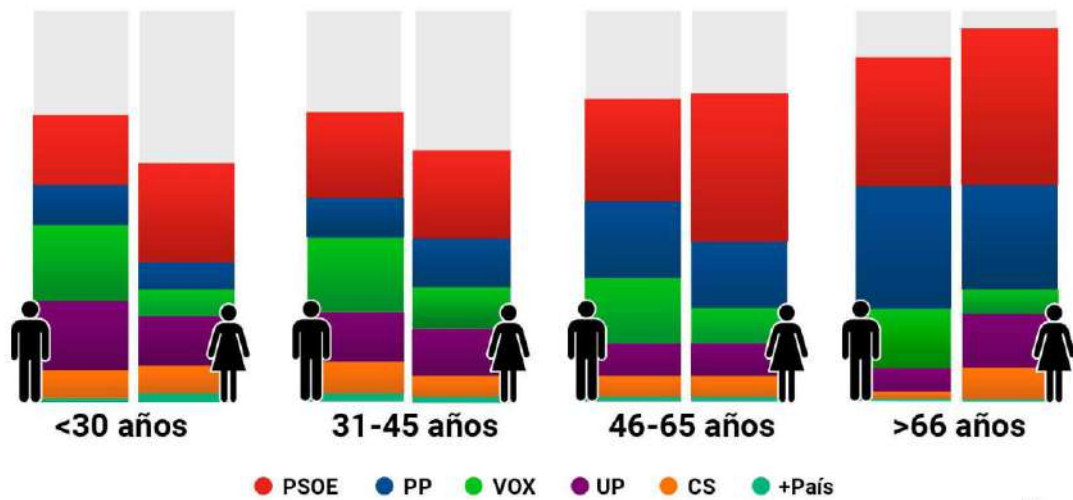
A report by *FAD* and the *SM Foundation* stated²¹ that young Spaniards between 18 and 29 vote less than the average, and that they are further to the left on the ideological scale.

In the last general election, Vox and Unidas Podemos were the most voted parties by men between the ages of 18 and 30. On the other hand, women in that age group were mostly inclined towards PSOE.

²¹ FAD (2019) Barómetro Juvenil 2019 <https://fad.es/noticias/1-de-cada-4-jovenes-se-situa-en-los-extremos-del-espectro-politico/>



Segmentos de voto por edad y sexo



Fuente: Sociométrica y CIS / Gráfico: Arturo Briones

EL ESPAÑOL

Source: ElEspanol.com²²

In terms of political participation, young Spaniards prefer participation in protests over participation in institutions, as well as signing petitions, demonstrations, and strikes. They mainly demonstrate on climate change, LGTBI issues, education, or gender equality. That said, this is not to say that young people do not participate in electoral processes. In fact, in the last general elections, the difference in turnout compared to adults was only 6.6 %.

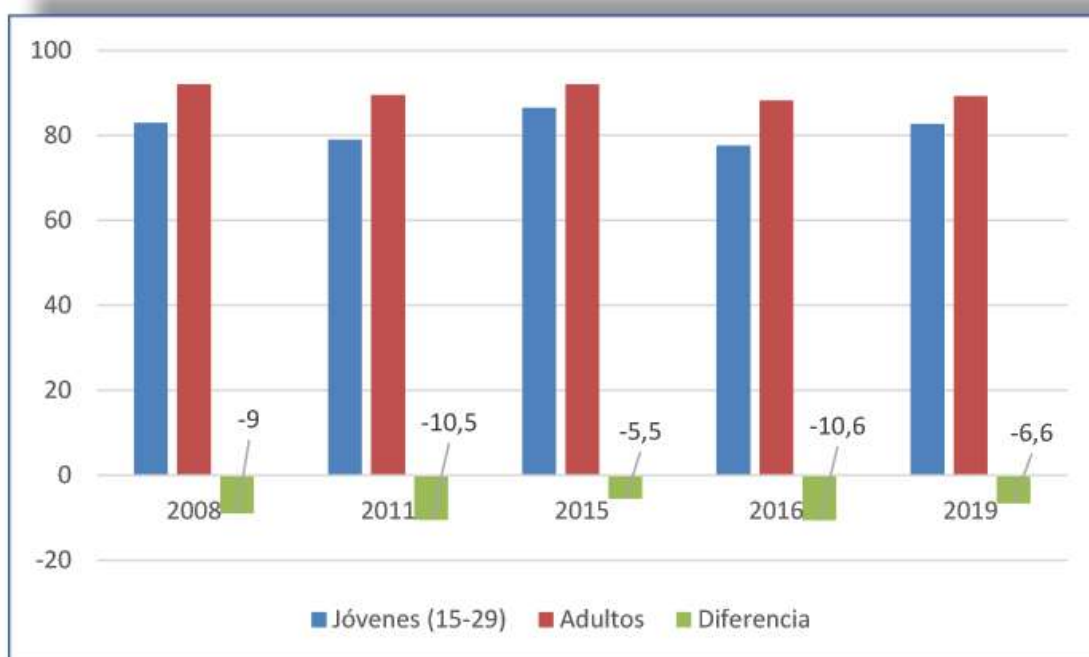
²²El Español (2020) Elecciones generales 10-N https://www.elespanol.com/espana/politica/20191116/vox-podemos-partidos-votados-varones-menores-anos/444955990_0.html



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GRÁFICO 9.7. Participación electoral, jóvenes y adultos



Source: INJUVE²³

²³ INJUVE (2020) Informe Juventud en España 2020

http://www.injuve.es/sites/default/files/adjuntos/2021/03/informe_juventud_espana_2020.pdf



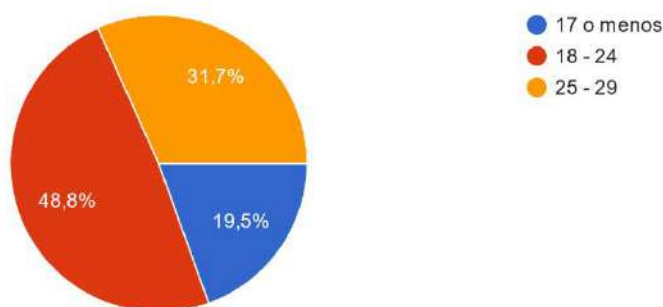
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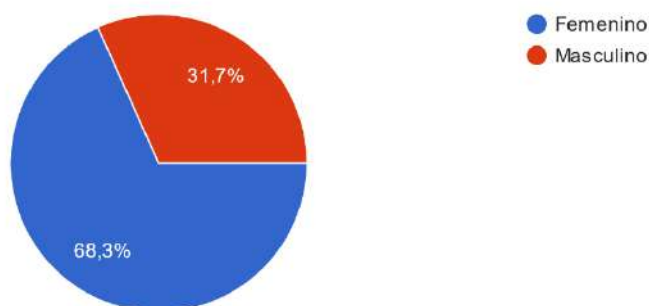
3 Results of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was answered by 41 young people, of whom almost half (48.8 %) were between 18 and 24 years old. Of the total number of young people, 68.3 % were women.

Edad
41 respuestas



Género
41 respuestas



Of the young people surveyed, the vast majority (61 %) are studying, while only 17.1 % are working. The last level of education completed by the majority (34.1 %) is compulsory education or intermediate vocational training.



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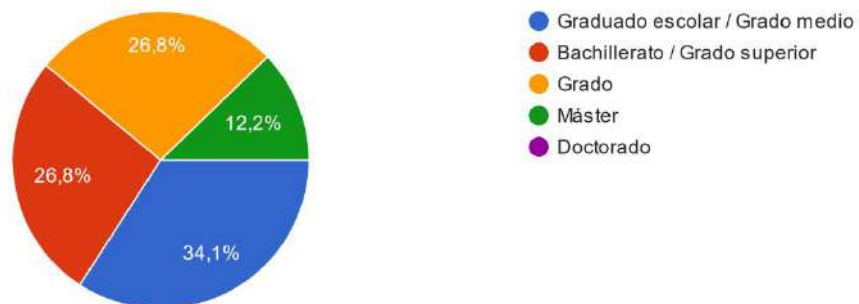
Situación actual

41 respuestas



Último nivel de estudios completado

41 respuestas



An overwhelming majority (82.9 %) consider that they do not face any of the social obstacles or barriers mentioned in the questionnaire.

¿Te enfrentas a alguno de los siguientes obstáculos/barreras?

41 respuestas

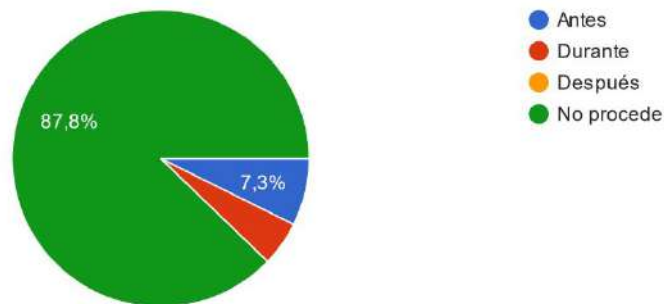


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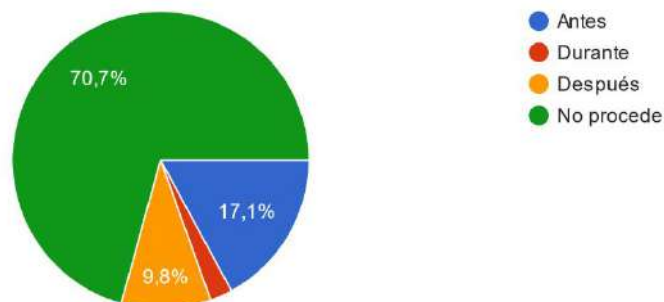
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Regarding changes in habits, such as becoming a member of an NGO, a sports club, joining a political party, or getting involved in civic action, the majority answered "Not applicable", i.e., they have not done so before, during or after the pandemic.

Me hice socio/a de una ONG
41 respuestas



Me hice socio/a de un club deportivo
41 respuestas

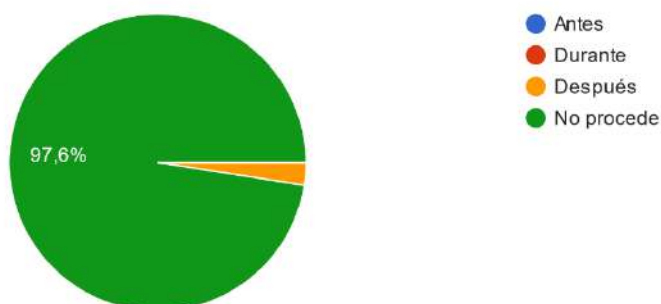


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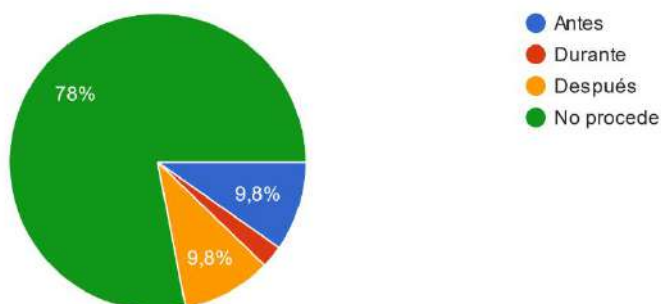
Me afilié a un partido político

41 respuestas



Me involucré en acciones cívicas

41 respuestas



There is a tie (31.7%) between those who started their most recent level of education before and after the pandemic, and 82.9 % say they had no problems with their education. Among those who answered that they have had problems, they mentioned financial problems and the low number of places in public centres.

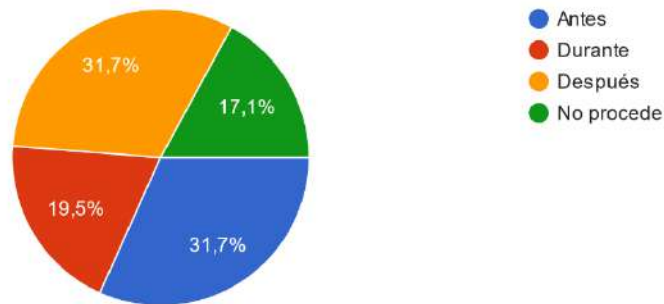


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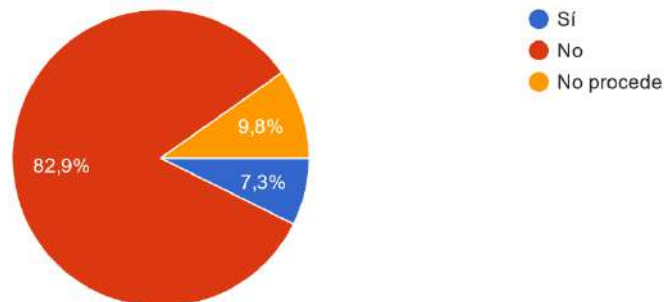
Empecé mi nivel de educación más reciente

41 respuestas



¿Has tenido problemas con tu educación?

41 respuestas



When asked whether they stopped working during the pandemic, 86.8 % of the respondents said that this question was not applicable, and only 13.2 % said that they did. 70.8 % are still unemployed today, and only 8.3 % found full-time work within 6 months. Given these data, almost 50 % answered that the question about income after lockdown was not applicable.

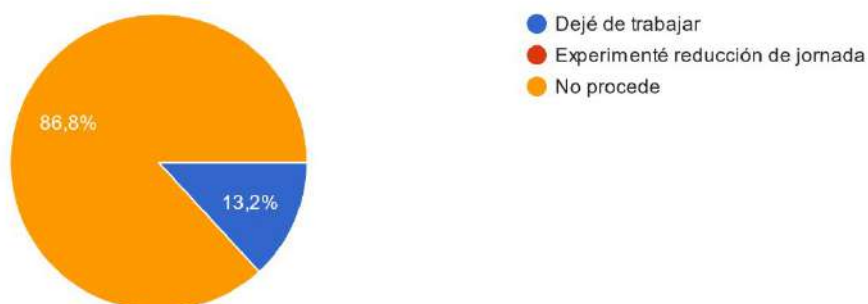


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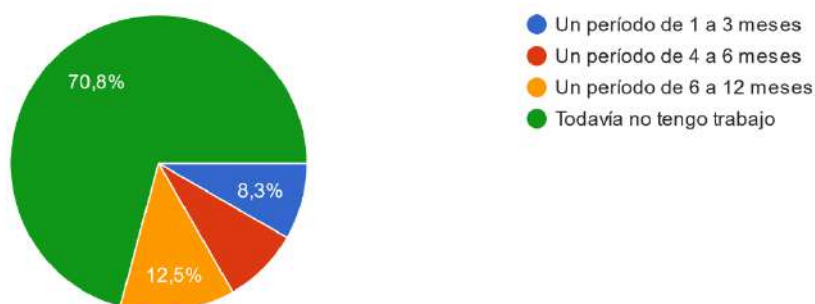
Durante el COVID-19 yo

38 respuestas



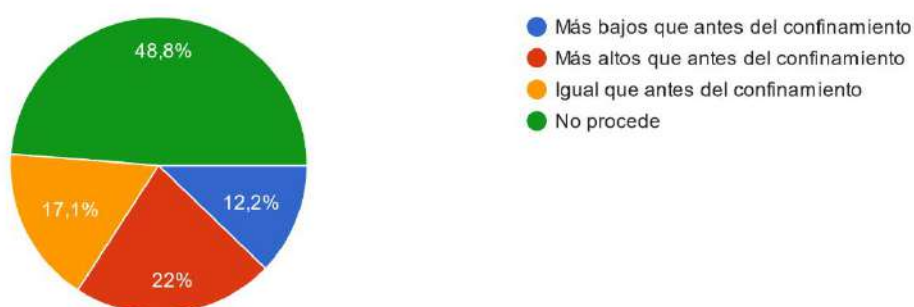
En caso de que dejaras/perdieras tu trabajo, ¿cuánto tardaste en encontrar un nuevo empleo a tiempo completo?

24 respuestas



Después del confinamiento tus ingresos son

41 respuestas



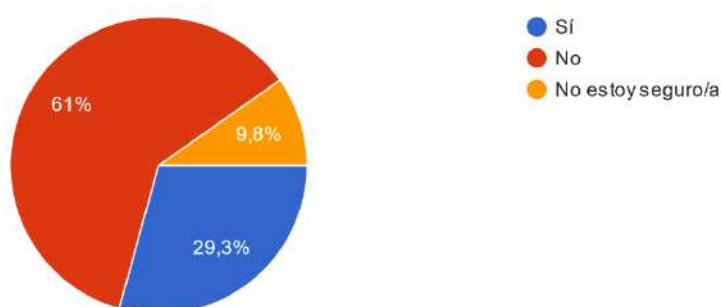
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In terms of trends after COVID-19, the results are shown below.

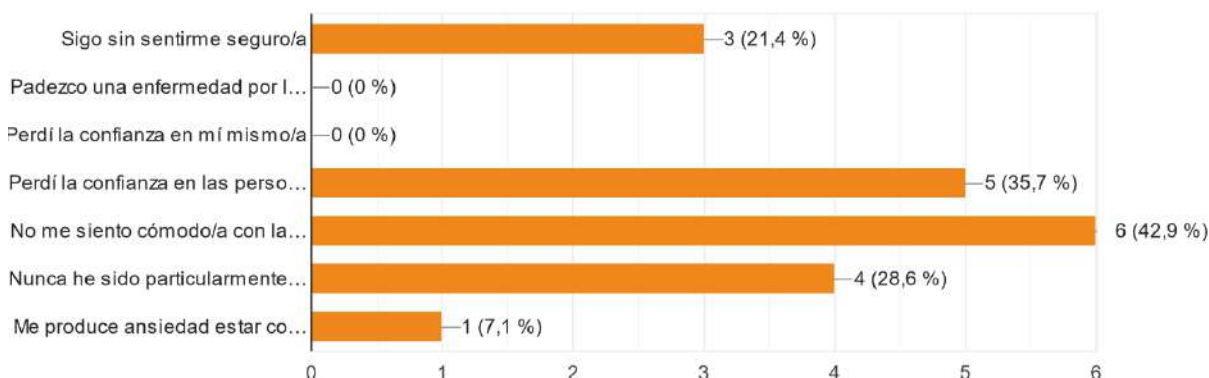
Almost 30 % of the young people surveyed responded that they still have fewer social contacts than before the outbreak of the pandemic. Of these, 42.9 % said that this is because they do not feel comfortable with people as before, or that they have lost trust in people (35.7 %).

¿Sigues teniendo menos contactos sociales que antes del estallido de la pandemia?
41 respuestas



Si tu respuesta anterior es "Sí", ¿cuál es la razón de tener menos contactos sociales después del confinamiento?

14 respuestas



According to most respondents, they have not noticed much change in terms of reading, sport, travel, education, participation in civic movements, or volunteering before and after the pandemic. There have been changes in attending more cultural events (43.9 % now attend more than before) and, above all, in mental health, with 65.9 % now paying more



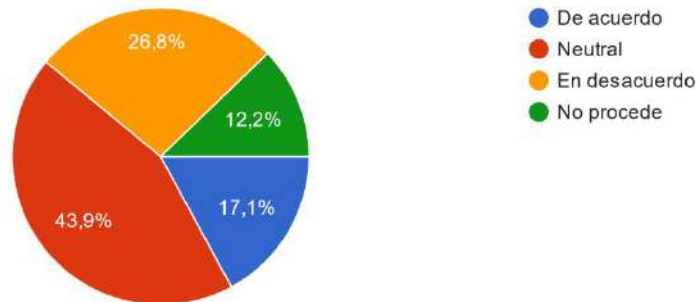
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attention to mental health. In fact, 48.8 % say that after the end of the pandemic they face mental health problems.

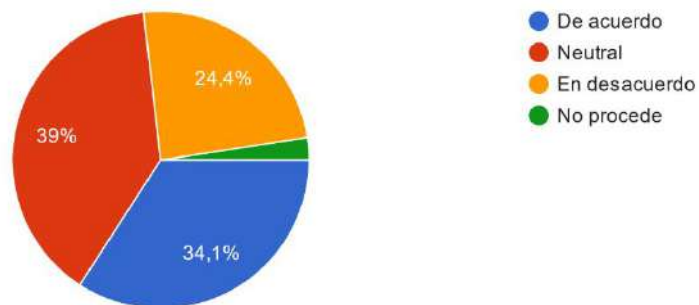
Leo más que antes de la pandemia

41 respuestas



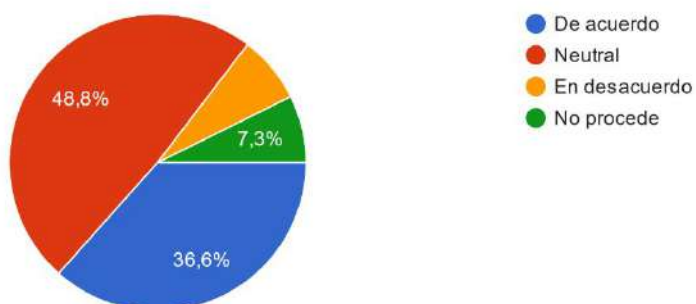
Hago más deporte que antes de la pandemia

41 respuestas



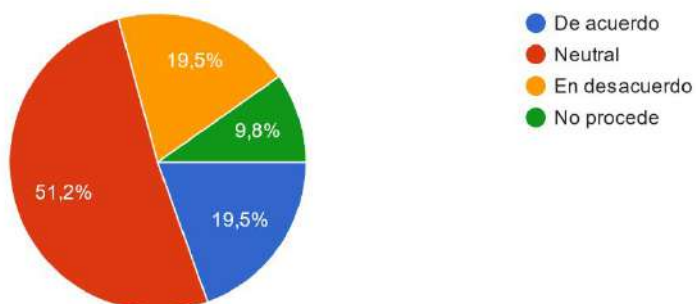
Viajo más que antes de la pandemia

41 respuestas



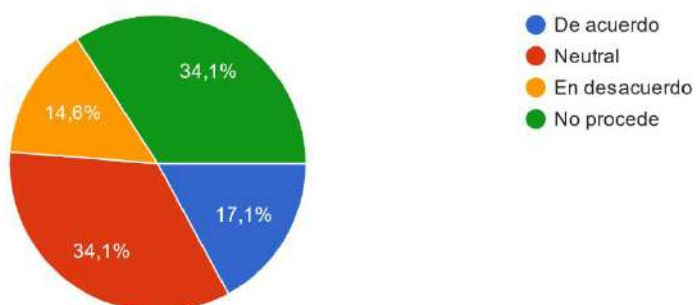
Estoy recibiendo más educación que antes de la pandemia

41 respuestas



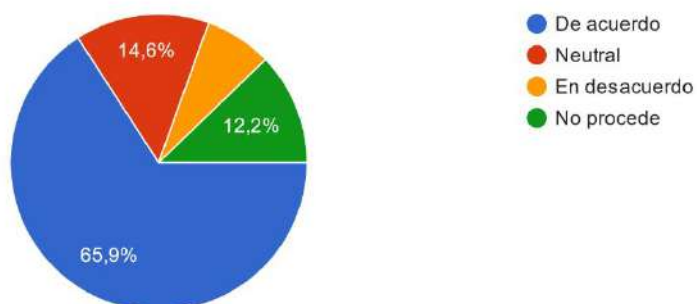
Me involucro más en acciones cívicas

41 respuestas



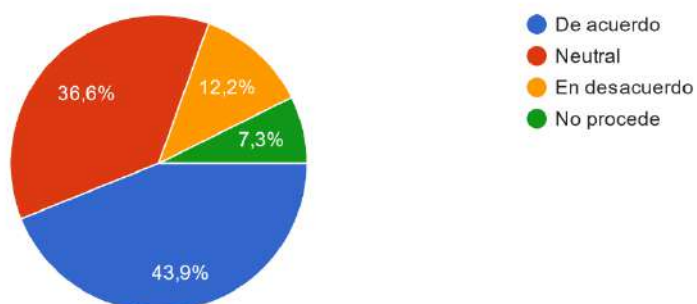
Presto mayor atención a mi salud mental

41 respuestas



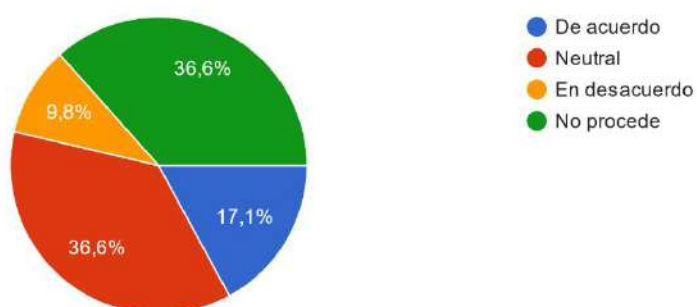
Asisto a más eventos culturales que antes de la pandemia (museos, teatro, cine, conciertos, festivales, etc.)

41 respuestas



Hago más voluntariado que antes de la pandemia

41 respuestas

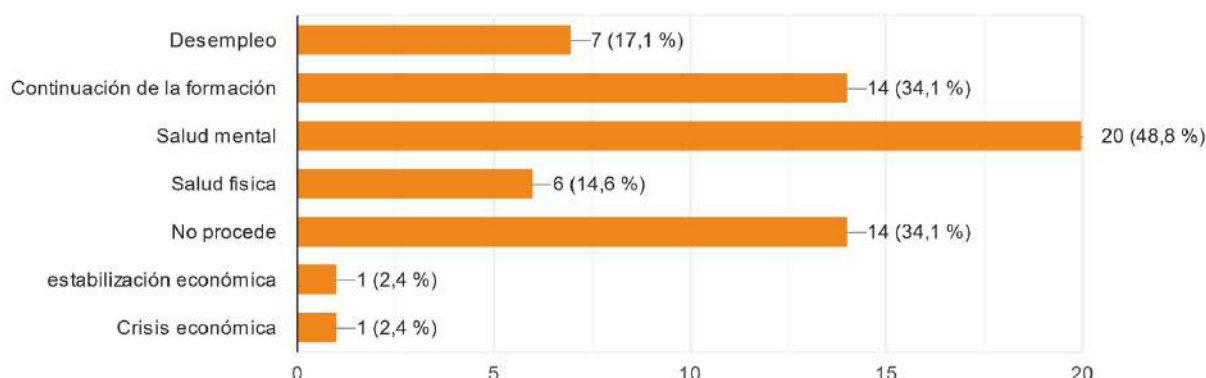


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Tras el fin de la pandemia, ¿a qué problemas te enfrentas?

41 respuestas

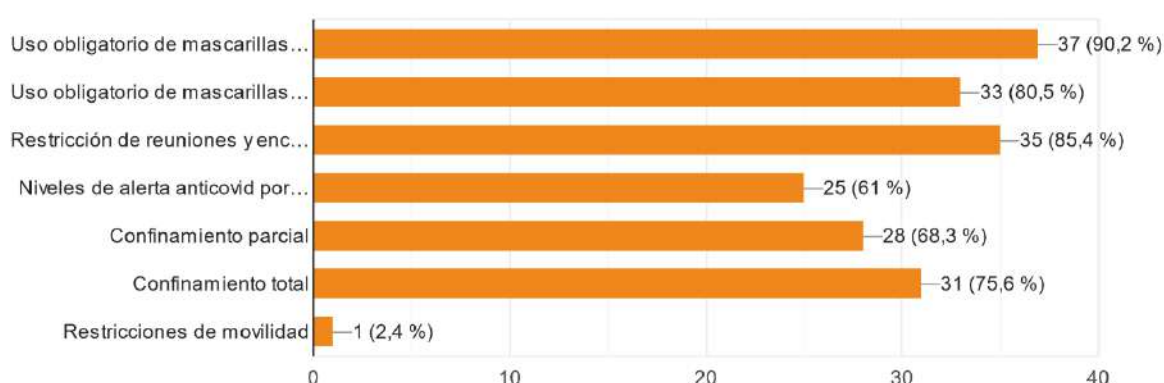


We now turn to the perception of the young respondents on the effectiveness of the measures taken to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis.

Most agree that both the national and local governments have put the use of face masks indoors before all other measures. It is striking that the dominant response is not lockdown, but this may be due to the fact that this measure was in place for a shorter period of time, whereas the use of the mask has been with us until very recently and, in fact, in places such as medical centres and pharmacies it is still mandatory.

¿Qué restricciones ha adoptado tu gobierno nacional para reducir el contagio?

41 respuestas

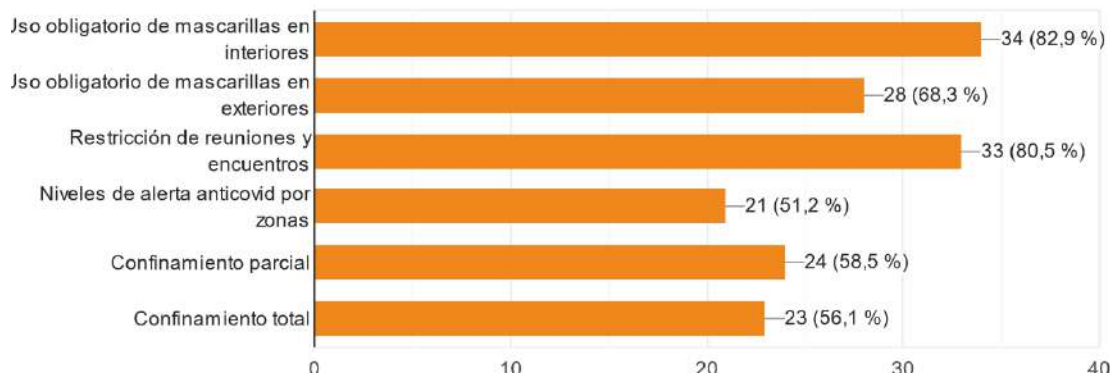


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¿Qué restricciones ha adoptado tu gobierno local para reducir el contagio?

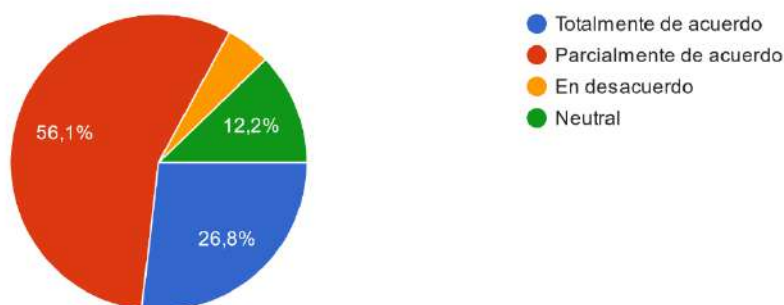
41 respuestas



A large majority strongly agree (26.8 %) or partially agree (56.1 %) that the measures taken were successful in preventing infections. Most young people also say that the measures have had a negative impact on their lives: 34.1 % strongly agree and 29.3 % partially agree. 3/4 say that they have been most affected by the measures in terms of psychological and mental health issues.

¿Las medidas adoptadas han logrado su objetivo de prevenir los contagios?

41 respuestas

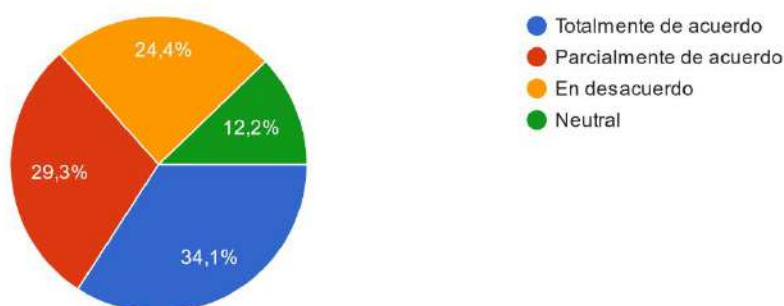


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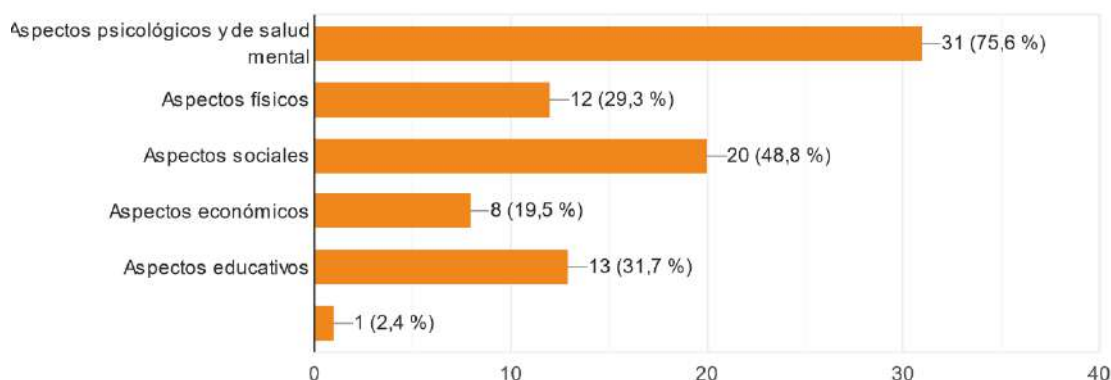
¿Las restricciones afectaron negativamente a tu vida?

41 respuestas



En caso afirmativo, ¿qué aspectos de tu vida se han visto más afectados?

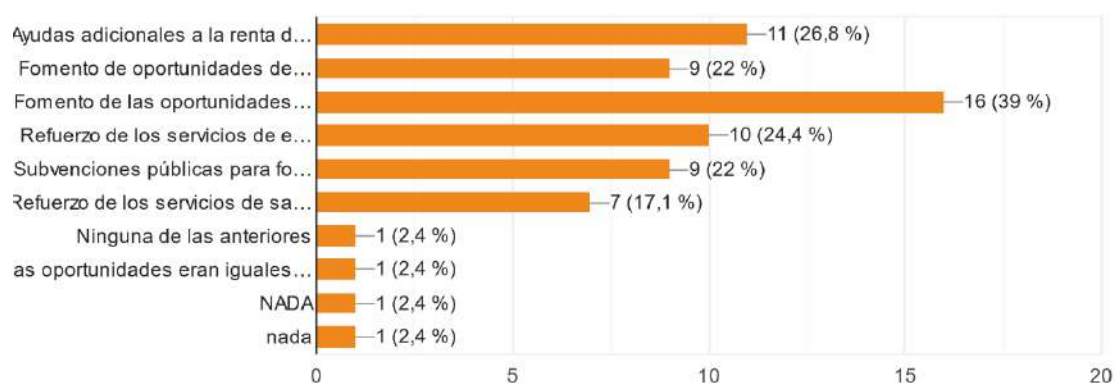
41 respuestas



Regarding measures to address the negative effects of COVID-19 after the lifting of restrictions, the same percentage of young people (39 %) responded that the measures adopted by the local government were the promotion of educational opportunities and financial support for this purpose, and those adopted by the national government were subsidies to encourage the employment of young people. However, in the opinion of young people, the measure most adopted by the national government was additional income support for young people, with 41.5 %.

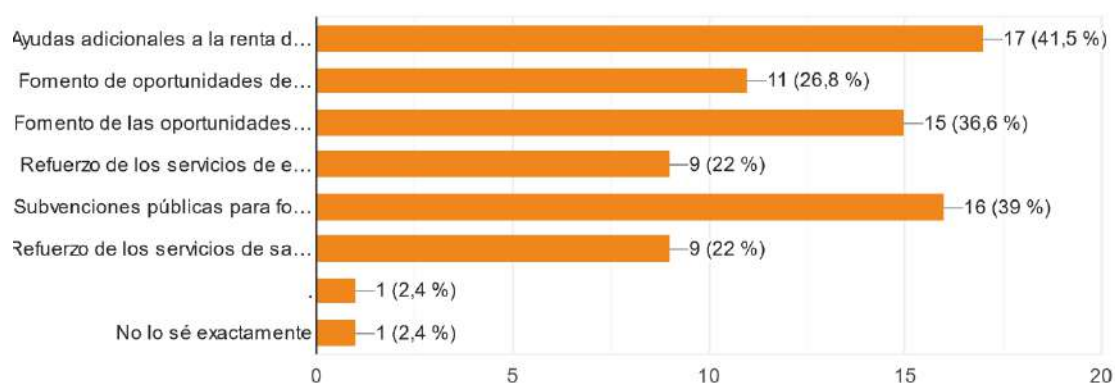
Tras el levantamiento de las restricciones, ¿qué tipo de medidas ha adoptado tu gobierno local para hacer frente a los efectos negativos de la crisis de COVID-19?

41 respuestas



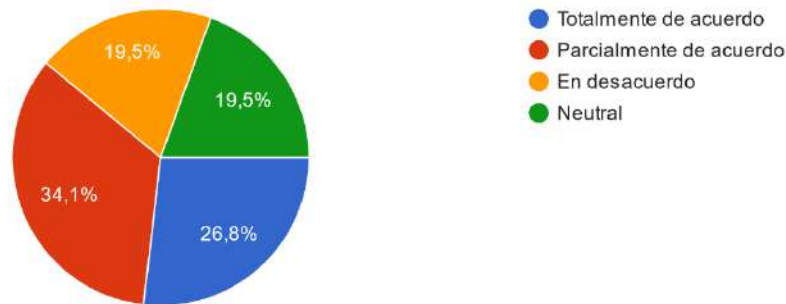
Tras el levantamiento de las restricciones, ¿qué tipo de medidas ha adoptado tu gobierno nacional para hacer frente a los efectos negativos de la crisis de COVID-19?

41 respuestas



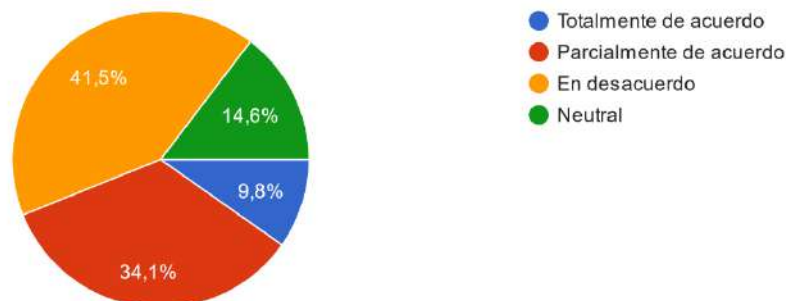
That said, most fully (26.8 %) or partially agree (34.1 %) that the measures taken at the national level have had an impact at the local level.

¿Las medidas adoptadas a nivel nacional han tenido repercusiones a nivel local en tu comunidad?
41 respuestas



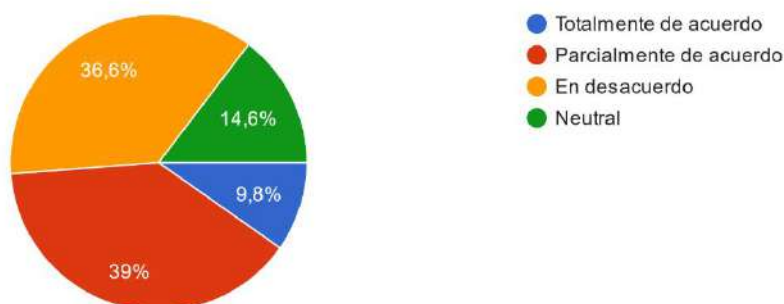
Despite the above, almost half of the respondents (41.5 %) consider that young people's opinions have not been considered in local measures. Paradoxically, this percentage drops to 36.6 % at national level, while 39 % partially agree that their views have been taken into account.

¿Las medidas adoptadas a nivel local incorporaron las opiniones de las personas jóvenes?
41 respuestas



¿Las medidas adoptadas a nivel nacional incorporaron las opiniones de las personas jóvenes?

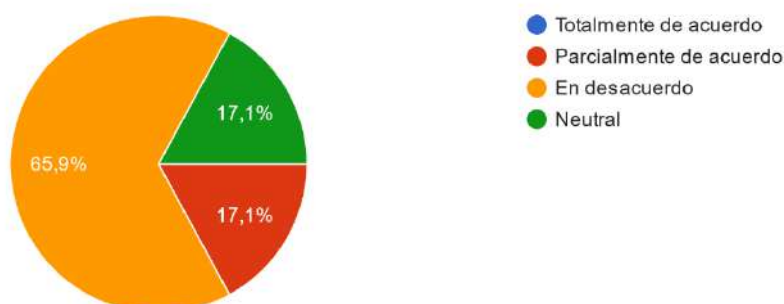
41 respuestas



In line with the above, 65.9 % think that local authorities have not taken their opinion into account and have not asked for their contribution, with the percentage dropping to 46.3 % in the case of local authorities.

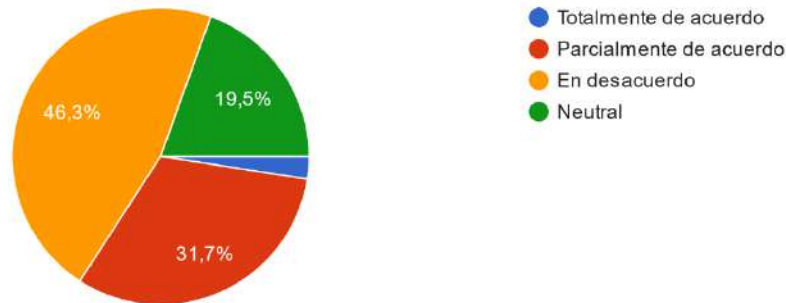
¿Las autoridades locales han tenido en cuenta la opinión de las personas jóvenes y les han pedido que contribuyan a determinar las medidas que deben tomarse para ayudarles?

41 respuestas



¿Las autoridades nacionales han tenido en cuenta la opinión de las personas jóvenes y les han pedido que contribuyan a determinar las medidas que deben adoptarse para ayudarles?

41 respuestas

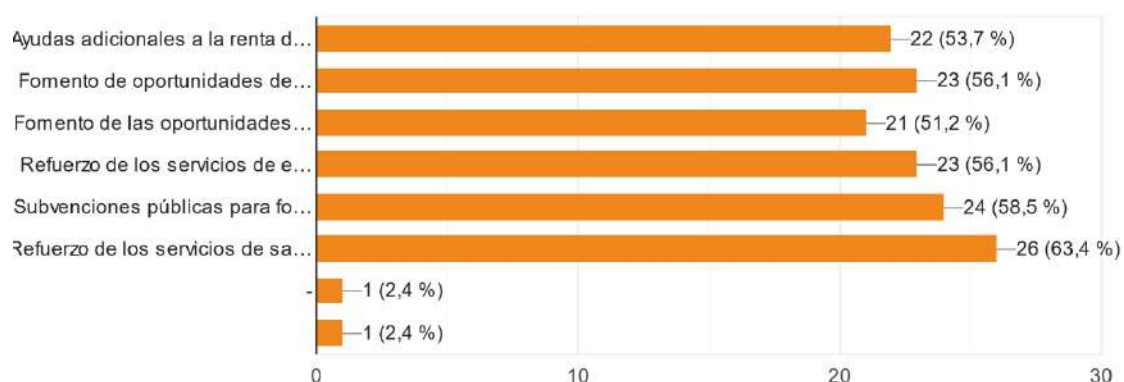


At both levels of administration, the young people surveyed consider that the measures outlined a few questions ago should have been increased, and that public opinion needs to be listened to and communication needs to be more direct. There is a demand for more attention to mental health at both local and national level.

Finally, most respondents felt that both local and national government should have implemented the measures cited in the questionnaire more widely to address the COVID-19 crisis.

¿Qué otras medidas crees que debería haber aplicado el gobierno local para atajar la crisis de COVID-19?

41 respuestas

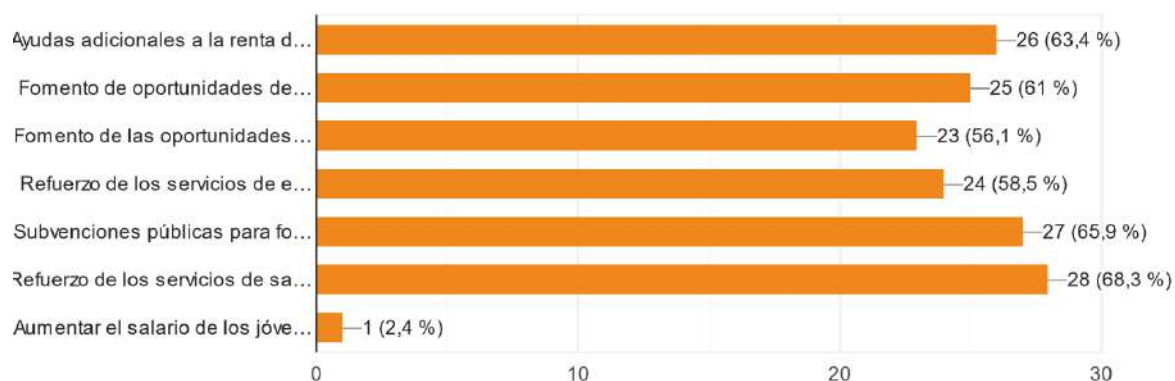


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41 respuestas



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4 Final Words

It is not possible to do politics, manage a country or a municipality, or aspire to solve young people's problems without taking them into account. It is essential to bring institutions closer to young people, to provide public resources for attention, listening and assistance, to communicate better and for communication to be two-way, to make known what is being done, to listen to young people and reach out to them in order to establish a more horizontal relationship, and to create synergies that are good not only for their generation, but also for the older ones and for those yet to come.

It is necessary to do more research, to do it from a gender perspective, and to establish protocols through updated data in order to adjust to the reality of young people and to attend to them effectively.

Policy makers need to harness the social capital of young people and invest in them, putting them at the top of the political agenda at all levels: local, regional, national and EU.

Measures such as the European Youth Guarantee need to be strengthened, as well as initiatives at national level to ensure that young people stay in education and training, and to streamline the procedures for granting financial support and social protection to young people. It is necessary that all the measures mentioned are not just an immediate response after the pandemic, with an end date, but that they are extended over time so that help for young people is not a one-off, but a continuous one, as this is the only way to see the effects not only after the COVID-19 crisis, but also as an effective tool for dealing with other possible crises that may occur.

Guaranteeing access to work and education in dignified and safe conditions, -as well as making mental health free and accessible-, informing and raising awareness in society, understanding its cross-cutting nature, and giving it the importance it deserves, are the first steps towards building the future.

How policy makers respond to these challenges will determine the stability and prosperity of an entire country.

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