

7<sup>th</sup> Cycle of EU Youth Dialogue  
Working Group Reporting Tool

Section 1

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**Overview**

Contact Name: Anna Īviņa
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Working Group: Latvian National Working Group
Who was involved in your working group?
Number of youth representatives: 3 Number of government representatives: 7 Number of national agency representatives: 1 Number of experts: NGO representatives 5; Municipality Youth case specialists 4
Attributions: <i>Please list the names of any individuals or organisations who wish to be attributed as contributing to the creation of this document and any derivative works or publications produced from it.</i>
Please briefly describe the methodology you used to conduct your consultation (no more than 250 words):
<p><b>National Opening conference</b> was organized on 26th of April:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- to introduce the public with the themes of 7th Cycle of EU Youth Dialogue;</li><li>- to evaluate the implementation of Structured dialogue in Latvia (and what were barriers for not participating in the process);</li><li>- to discuss on the best ways how to implement EU Youth Dialogue in Latvia.</li></ul> <p><b>Direct consultations with youngsters:</b> NWG organized different types of workshops, focus groups, youth forums and idea walls in youth events to gather a range of youngsters opinions.</p> <p><b>Open consultations:</b> In accordance to the results of Opening conference we developed different type of support to give chance for a wider range of different stakeholders to be involved in the consultation process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Organized 5 training courses in different regions of Latvia called "Participation 2.0." to encourage teachers and youth workers to develop participation events about the themes of 7th Cycle of EU Youth Dialogue;</li><li>- Created methodological materials in accordance with the sent methodology to organize participation events about the themes of 7th Cycle of EU Youth Dialogue;</li></ul>

- Provided different type of support for open consultations for people interested to develop participation activities to organize their own consultations with youngsters about the themes of 7th Cycle of EU Youth Dialogue (gave consultations, helped develop event plans, ensured needed specialists or technical support for events)

This was done to insure that wider range of the society is informed about EU Youth Dialogue, to give a chance for new stakeholders to get involved in the process and develop the knowledge and skills of people who work with young people on the topics how they can moderate participation activities.

**Online consultations:**

NWG had voted that participation through questionnaire was a low involvement engagement form and developed a plan to update the process by creating an online tool. The plan was that it would gather quantitative data, but what would also serve as an interactive participation tool for group work and could be used remotely by NGO's, Youth canterers, schools etc. Unfortunately, due to late signing of Grant agreement we were not able to carry out the development of the online tool for this cycle.

Did you hold a survey (Y/N):	Y (two separate surveys were implemented as open consultation methods by a NGO and a municipality)
Total number of young people taking part in the survey:	226 (164 + 62)
How many focus groups did you conduct?	4
Total number of young people taking part in focus groups:	51
How many dialogue events did you hold?	60 events  5 training courses 4 focus groups 12 dialogue events organized by NWG 5 EYD discussion events with opinion walls that were incorporated in different youth festivals 34 dialogue events or open consultation organized by other involved parties
Total number of young people taking part in dialogue events:	2073
How many action research projects did you run?	-
Total number of young people taking part in action research projects:	-
Did you use visual methods? (Y/N)	Y (two separate municipalities used this as

	an open consultation method)
Total number of photos received for PhotoVoice (if known):	25 (11 + 14)
Total number of videos received for participatory videos (if known):	-
Number of young people participating through other methods (please describe):	-
Total number of young people participating in your dialogue overall:	2073

### Breakdown of participants

**These questions are optional. There may be specific laws within your country which you need to take into account when gathering this information and you should comply with any local, national and EU legislation at all times.** Please be aware that questions about young people's backgrounds are sensitive personal data under GDPR if they can be linked to any data which identifies the person. It should always be optional for participants to give you this information.

If you did not monitor the backgrounds of young people participating, or feel it is not appropriate to do so, please leave these questions blank. If you monitored the backgrounds of only some of the young people (e.g. if you monitored within the survey but not the focus groups) you can use the "Number not disclosing / Not known" option to show this. You can also include numbers of people who choose not to provide you with this information in the "Number not disclosing / Not known" category.

In general, best practice when collecting this sort of data is to allow young people to self-define their identity, for example by asking "do you consider yourself to have a disability?", rather than asking "are you registered as disabled with the state", but you may follow your own practices when collecting this information. You can use the template participant monitoring form as a tool to help you collect this information during face to face activities if you wish to do so.

**You should not include details of young people participating in Visual Methods within this table, as it is difficult to count these accurately.**

<b>Breakdown of participants (not including visual methods)</b>	
Gender of young people who participated	Number of males:535 Number of females: 1017 Number of other gender: Number not disclosing / Not known / Not asked: 526
Age of young people who participated	Number aged under 16: 506 Number aged 16-18: 735 Number aged 19-25: 124

	Number aged 26 - 30: 224 Number not disclosing / Not known / Not asked: 305
Number of young people with disabilities*	Number who identify as not having a disability: Number who identify as having a disability: 12 (specific focus group) Number not disclosing / Not known / Not asked:
Ethnicity**	Number of young people from the majority ethnic group: Number of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds: Number not disclosing / Not known:
Religion**	Number of young people from the majority religious group: Number of young people from minority religious backgrounds: Number not disclosing / Not known:
Sexuality of young people	Number who identify as heterosexual: Number who identify as homosexual, bisexual or other sexuality: Number not disclosing / Not known / Not asked:
Rural areas	Number of young people living in rural areas: Number of young people not living in rural areas: Number not disclosing / Not known / Not asked:
Employment and education status	Number of young people in work: Number of young people in education: Number of young people not in education, employment or training:

\* By disabilities, physical and mental impairments are covered.

\*\* The question on ethnicity and religion is country specific. The majority group is defined by what is the major ethnic group in the country the young person lives in.

Section 2 Guiding questions report\*

\*throughout the text clarifications made by NWG are underlined to tell the context of the youth opinion.

**Guiding question 1a):** What measures and actions can we take in order to implement the targets of the Youth Goal #7

**What were the main topics raised by young people in the dialogues?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *Please report here a summary of general trends and information coming from young people.*

**Fear of making the wrong decision.** One of widely mentioned concerns that young people outlined was the fear that they “will not make the right choices”. Young people feel huge pressure to make the right study and career choices and the fear of failure leads to the inability to make the decision. They are concerned whether they will find “the right place” and whether they will know that it is the right one, so they often refrain from making any

choices. Young people would want the support to identify personal strengths that would help and guide them in choosing the study or career paths.

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

**Accessible - personal support.** Young people outlined that there are vast information available on the internet, thus sometimes adults think that it is youngsters responsibility to access and analyse that information. However, youngsters point out their lack of skills to navigate and evaluate the available information and that they want personal support, real people who engage with them, who can ensure individual support. Youngsters outline the need to improve and develop career coach programs and mentoring programmes in and outside schools.

"**Easy money**" gives the wrong idea: young people idolize influencers and *youtubers* who make money relatively easy with their posts. Thus, many young people think they will make money in the same easy way with no effort and worries. That gives a false impression of the job.

**Other concerns:**

- youngsters outlined that work conditions, relationships and teamwork are the most important factor for a good workplace. Thus, the focus on good teamwork and collaboration skills is essential;
- the relevance of the profession in the future;
- a chance to have a job with the opportunity to grow and to fulfil themselves.

**Diverse voices - Did any groups of young people have experiences or views that differed from the overall messages? What were these groups and what did they say?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *If you identified that particular groups of young people, such as young women or young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, had particular concerns that differed strongly from the overall trend, you can report them here. It is not necessary to complete this section if you did not identify any differences.*

**Guiding question 1b):** What measures and actions can we take to improve formal and non-formal education so that it prepares young people for the future of work?

**What were the main topics raised by young people in the dialogues?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *Please report here a summary of general trends and information coming from young people.*

**Stronger links between formal education and labour market.** Overall youngsters and employers outline the need of stronger links between the formal education and the skills needed in the labour market.

A very large part of youngsters across Latvia highlighted that work shadowing<sup>1</sup> do not offer enough insight into the work life. They suggest that these programs should be extended for a longer periods ( for example: there were suggestions for a week long work shadowing brake in school curriculum) with more investment from the different companies into this process, so that the pupils can get a fuller insight of what it means to work in a particular field or company.

Youngsters outlined that young people are **missing the understanding of the different career paths** that they can take and some more detailed information on what skills are necessary in the different workplaces.

Young people outlined that often they do not know if they have **career consultants at schools**, or they are not sure if they could approach them, because all they do is “they have big workshop in auditorium about something, but I don’t know if I could go and ask her personal advice”. Youngsters often do not trust them to be impartial - “she is the same teacher who teaches other subjects. And she talks with other teachers and have perceptions about you - that you might not be the best pupil or judges you in regards to how you behaved previous year etc.” The young people noted that the current events available have severe limitations or do not occur often enough. They highlighted that they would like to have **an impartial support person**, that is dedicated to helping students and finding their strong sides, who gives advice, who is available “similar to **guidance teachers** you see in American TV shows”.

The needs of youngsters that the formal and non-formal education should answer:

**What am I good at?** Many youngsters strongly stated that the formal education (but also non-formal education) should focus more on helping young people to find their strengths and ways to improve them.

**Personal attitudes and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills** - many young people outlined that the improvement of self-esteem would help them and they should work more on their 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, communication, IT skills etc.).

**Trainings for practical knowledge** - young people want to learn more about creating CVs, behaviour at the job interview, they need more information on work agreements, taxes, and opportunities of different professions, lectures on time management, career choices, and practical knowledge regarding work.

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<sup>1</sup> Work shadowing - an annual career education day during which kids from schools all over nation have the opportunity to visit various companies and government agencies in order to get acquainted with the professions they would like to pursue in the future.

**IT and languages** - regarding the work and the quality of education young people mention the necessity to improve the IT skills and language skills. They need more languages at school to feel better about their prospects of getting a job.

**Entrepreneurship** - youngsters feel the need to improve their entrepreneurial skills, to learn more about how to create jobs rather than being an employee.

**Diverse voices - Did any groups of young people have experiences or views that differed from the overall messages? What were these groups and what did they say?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *If you identified that particular groups of young people, such as young women or young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, had particular concerns that differed strongly from the overall trend, you can report them here. It is not necessary to complete this section if you did not identify any differences.*

**Guiding question 1c):** What can we do to make sure all young people including those from marginalised backgrounds are equally treated, protected, safe and secure in the workplace and the labour market of the future?

**What were the main topics raised by young people in the dialogues?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *Please report here a summary of general trends and information coming from young people.*

**Knowledge about their rights.**

Young people across the Latvia outlined the fact that they are unaware of different forms and the legal aspects of different work contracts (royalties, employment contract, and self-employed status).

Youngsters, especially from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, outline that they do not have a chance to object a work contract that might be unfair to them. Mostly they do not even know if it is unfair and they do not know where to go for advice - as they might not have close relationships to ask family members or their family members and social circle do not have the knowledge themselves).

**Youth friendly services.**

Young people outline that they are not aware where to turn for help in a case if they do not feel equally treated, protected, safe and secure in the workplace. Young people see worker unions as strictly a “ghost of Soviet Union” and are not aware of what kind of services and legal advice they could offer. They outlined that negative connotations in regards to workers unions come from their parents experiences. Some young people outline that there should be a permanent and separate youth friendly consultation centre that offers direct and online

support for youngsters for entering the world of work (provide training courses, individual support, you can turn there for advice, receive suggestions, legal help with your work contract if necessary etc.).

### **Self-doubt and lack of emotional intelligence in workplace**

Youngsters with existing work experience outlined the “fear of failure” as a major obstacle for youngsters to stay in work. “When you enter a workforce, you have to learn a lot what the job requires of you, so in the start you make mistakes and are corrected. However, I often see that many youngsters cannot take it, they are not able to see failure as learning mechanism, but you feel as failure yourself - so you quit the job”. In addition, youngsters outline that many youngsters do not have the skills for manage their fears and expectations and knowledge how to communicate their concerns in workplace.

### **Young people with disabilities**

In the case of circumstances that prevent young people with disability from finding a job so easily is the lack of experience required. For young people with disabilities opportunities are often limited, because of the inaccessibility of the environment and lack of suitable workplaces, especially outside major cities. It is often very problematic to find a suitable place to live in or ensure access to transport if you work in another municipality.

When discussing the topic with youngsters with disabilities there are two types of attitudes to the accessibility of the labour market:

- Young people who have never been in paid employment tend to view the labour market as inaccessible, rather being ill advised towards young people with disabilities. A belief was present that when employing young people with disabilities, it is the responsibility of the company to find the right job, to accept all the mistakes and to be unable to cope. On the one hand, young people say they want to work and, on the other, have not even tried to look for work.
- Young people who have some work experience feel that everything is their own responsibility. They outline that with diligence and through studying, you can prepare yourself for the professional life. As well as you can find a job through different support programs.

### **Diverse voices - Did any groups of young people have experiences or views that differed from the overall messages? What were these groups and what did they say?**

(Suggested word limit 500 words.) *If you identified that particular groups of young people, such as young women or young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, had particular concerns that differed strongly from the overall trend, you can report them here. It is not necessary to complete this section if you did not identify any differences.*

**Guiding question 2a):** What measures and actions can we take in order to develop quality youth work?

**What were the main topics raised by young people in the dialogues?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *Please report here a summary of general trends and information coming from young people.*

#### **Information and recognition of youth work services between youngsters.**

Often young people do not understand the term “youth work” in Latvia (sometimes even mistakenly assuming it is connected with youth employment). Even if part of youngsters tend to know about specific programmes - specific organizations, international projects, youth houses etc. only part of them are aware that what they offer is “youth work”. Young people proposed that there should be more campaigns to help them understand what they can gain through participating in these activities, what are the benefits. Young people said that if famous young people and influencers would talk about it more, it would make taking part in youth work “more trendy”.

#### **Collaborations between schools and institutions/organizations who provide youth work services to young people.**

Many young people said that if you have never attended these places, you do not know what are the services provided, what are the benefits and if you can trust the people there. Young people who have not participated in these types of activities outlined, “if you are not active you often don’t do new things if it is not obligatory. Therefore, if a teacher would take us to a youth centre by and we would know what is happening there, then it would be much easier to decide to go there by yourself. Some young people proposed that there should be a half of day in start of the new school year when it is encouraged classes to visit youth centres and youth organizations or for them to visit schools. (In Latvia youth workers reported many situations where schools and teachers perceived youth work services as a competitor to young people focusing on their academic achievements and schools can be reluctant to collaborate. There should be more research about how competencies gained through youth work and non-formal education helps young people later to participate and succeed in school.)

#### **Recognition of youth work in municipalities.**

Often young people who are involved in youth work reported that schools are not always welcoming their participation, as sometimes taking part in projects and events lead them to missing some lessons. Young people who are active in youth organizations mention, that they wish there would be more recognition nationally and in the municipality about the importance and impact of youth work (paid youth workers, but also NGO representatives and volunteer youth workers), as this would encourage other youngsters to take more active part in organizations and become volunteers and peer educators. (Society and decision

makers often do not understand and value youth work. Thus paid and unpaid municipality and NGO youth workers are not enough appreciated).

**Diverse voices - Did any groups of young people have experiences or views that differed from the overall messages? What were these groups and what did they say?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *If you identified that particular groups of young people, such as young women or young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, had particular concerns that differed strongly from the overall trend, you can report them here. It is not necessary to complete this section if you did not identify any differences.*

**Guiding question 2b):** What are the most important competencies that youth workers need in order to support and work with young people and why?

**What were the main topics raised by young people in the dialogues?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *Please report here a summary of general trends and information coming from young people.*

**The intentions.** It is important for young people that the youth worker has integrity and they see real passion and care for youngsters. Young people mention that they should be able to see that the youth worker is enjoying their job; they see it as something more than just a job for salary.

**Ability to involve.** Youth workers should be able to involve young people in decision making process on a daily basis regarding opportunities offered by youth work, events organized and decisions made, as well as they want to be involved in the decisions regarding the development of their municipalities.

**Creating safe environment.** Young people outlined that an important aspect of youth worker is his/her ability to create a safe environment - to ensure that youth worker (and others) treat all young people with respect and dignity. Young people should be involved in the decisions that affect them.

**Qualities.** Young people often outline the qualities that youth workers should have - joyful, friendly, understanding, empathetic, authentic, appreciative, adventurous, smart, good communicator, flexible, curious, kind, etc.

**Informed, modern.** The youth workers should be up to date with current events in Latvia and abroad. They should be modern, knowledgeable about technologies, and “trendy” about

topics regarding youth interests. They should be able to inform young people about the issues they care about (for example, currently environmental issues and climate change).

### **Opportunities.**

Youth worker should be able to consult young people regarding opportunities to work and study abroad, information on job opportunities in the future.

They should be able to give support for implementing ideas and projects of young people.

They should be able to inform young people regarding specific important topics (mental health, sexual health, problem resolving, and start of independent life) or give advice where to find this information.

**Knowledge, skills.** Youth workers should know different languages and have good organizational skills. Young people also outlined as a specific point – to have knowledge how to help youngsters with mental problems (or knowledge and contacts where the youngsters should turn to).

**Inspire youngsters to be oneself.** Youth workers should help young people to find themselves, to find the strengths in them; they should support them, and be able to *step into their shoes*. To be able to inspire youngsters to be daring.

### **Diverse voices - Did any groups of young people have experiences or views that differed from the overall messages? What were these groups and what did they say?**

(Suggested word limit 500 words.) *If you identified that particular groups of young people, such as young women or young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, had particular concerns that differed strongly from the overall trend, you can report them here. It is not necessary to complete this section if you did not identify any differences.*

Focus groups with youth work specialists (volunteers, youth workers, NGO representatives, municipality representatives) outlined these as the most important competencies:

- Stress resistance;
- Coaching and mentoring skills;
- Psychology, especially about different age group;
- Reducing the risk of social exclusion - a topical and difficult topic that requires a path of self-education from a youth worker;
- Knowledge of healthy & active lifestyles - need to know what physiological changes, addiction problems, to provide adequate support in real-life situations. You also need to know where to go for help.
- Ability to provide career and personal guidance - young people want to turn to youth workers as reliable persons with whom they can talk about their issues, as often they do not trust professionals in the school.

**Guiding question 2c):** What measures and actions can we take to provide access to quality youth work for all?

**What were the main topics raised by young people in the dialogues?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *Please report here a summary of general trends and information coming from young people.*

**Creating a safe space and providing youth work services in local areas.** In smaller municipalities and rural areas where there are no youth centres young people mentioned the sports centres /libraries/school as a place where youth work (or extracurricular activities outside the school) takes place. They also often outlined that they are not welcomed there to spend their free time apart from taking part in specific activities. Youngsters indicate that the rules of how these places are used are not properly communicated and it leads to the fact that even if there are spots, where young people could gather, learn new skills, they can be left unutilized, because of mismanagement. It would be useful to recognize the different premises and service providers and agree that they all work together on improving the accessibility of different services for young people.

There is a need to ensure **sufficiently spacious and accessible premises for youth work** (incl. young people with disabilities). There should be a number of rooms to provide both individual counselling, conference room or group activities, leisure and board games, video. Not everything in one place.

**Outreach.** There are only a few municipalities where **mobile youth work** is starting to develop, but there are municipalities and regions where young people cannot easily access youth centres due to not having good connections to the city, not having a good public transport system. Often these young people are from disadvantaged backgrounds and this is another challenge to involve this target group in these activities. Youngsters themselves outline that they would need someone “to show why it is worth to do it”, “that youth centres should come to schools or school takes us there” to break the barrier of not engaging.

**Diverse voices - Did any groups of young people have experiences or views that differed from the overall messages? What were these groups and what did they say?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *If you identified that particular groups of young people, such as young women or young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, had particular concerns that differed strongly from the overall trend, you can report them here. It is not necessary to complete this section if you did not identify any differences.*

Currently, in a lot of youth centres people with reduced mobility are excluded from youth work - they have special centres, but all would benefit if these young people work together. Many young people with reduced mobility can come to the youth centre to play board games or take part in projects, but they are treated as a special group.

**Guiding question 3a):** What measures and actions can we take to implement Youth Goal #6 Moving Rural Youth Forward?

**What were the main topics raised by young people in the dialogues?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *Please report here a summary of general trends and information coming from young people.*

According to the rural youth, the opportunities to realize their potential in rural areas as a pupils are wide in the active municipalities were the initiatives are usually welcomed and appreciated by both municipalities and potential employers - "active young people are on the hunt", however a big part of the youngsters are very passive. Young people pointed out that sometimes the fact that everyone in the municipality knows each other sometimes encourages you to be passive because you are afraid that if you fail, everyone will know.

A recurring theme of what draws young people away from rural areas is the access of high quality education, high quality employment and self-development opportunities. Young people stated that they want to have employment activities that they can look forward to and plan towards. The second aspect they want to ensure is that they have access to good education and access to diverse leisure and self-development activities.

**Education.** Mostly in the rural regions, the students outline a strong need for a more creative approach to teaching.

Fostering creativity, self-confidence and activity through the education system, not all the opportunities offered by schools are up to date with the interests of young people. Teachers should use non-formal education methods. Nowadays there is a lot of theory and very limited practical education, so it is difficult to take the first step. There is also no choice to choose the school or educators as there is just one local school and "teachers are what they are."

The problem why young people in the countryside cannot use their potential is **lack of transport** - they are often unable to go to different centres for activities.

Young people outlined that often the countryside may **lack the creative environment and youth spaces**. That it is the creative spirit that drives young people away to cities to find companions, healthy competition and fulfil their ambitions. When asked why they lack these things young people outline that youth centre offer does not always cover all age groups of young people - "If there are young kids, then older youngsters don't want to go there".

**Ensure possibilities for youth involvement.** Young people state that they should be involved in the organization of events in the municipality. This would make them feel as part of the local community. Adults should listen to young people's views on relevant topics; and everyone should have equally great opportunities to engage in decision-making processes. Many students in more remote areas voiced their desire for more discussion and participation events like this one, as they are not so common there.

**Diverse voices - Did any groups of young people have experiences or views that differed from the overall messages? What were these groups and what did they say?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *If you identified that particular groups of young people, such as young women or young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, had particular concerns that differed strongly from the overall trend, you can report them here. It is not necessary to complete this section if you did not identify any differences.*

When defining the advantages that young people in rural areas have over urban youth, young people who are actively participating in different youth centres and NGO activities mostly outlined these factors:

- “In small municipalities, nothing is so far out of use. For a youngster in the big cities, it is much more expensive, much harder to get to every possible place where he would like to develop himself. For me as a rural youngster - everything is close by, whether it is a youth centre or an art or music school. I have everything readily available, for very cheap money or free. ”
- In rural areas, the path to decision-makers is much 'shorter' - there is a more easy way to influence things if you know how to do it.
- Young people in rural areas are more likely to be selected if they apply for Erasmus+ projects (for example, youth exchanges organized by local NGO). As there are not as many youngsters, they often have more possibilities to be selected, while in the bigger cities the applicant number to participate in one project can be many times higher.

**Guiding question 3b):** What measures and actions can we take to improve rural areas for young people in the short term, in current conditions?

**What were the main topics raised by young people in the dialogues?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *Please report here a summary of general trends and information coming from young people.*

Young people outline the need for **active youth centres**, chances to participate in youth projects, have more non-formal events where you can develop yourself; get to know other young people etc.

Developing interesting **cultural activities** for young people (as often events focus on older generations). Ideally creating interesting and popular events that draw people from different regions to this place.

**Professionals who work with young people** need to be responsive, motivating, and up-to-date, keep up with technological developments, flexible, confident. Centres need responsible and engaging youth workers; and there should be possible to involve

psychologist, career counsellor counselling in municipalities in youth centres, as there is no such possibility at school.

More opportunities for young people to **get acquainted with different professions that they could do, if they would work in rural areas**, their specifics, everyday skills;

Young people emphasize the need to **strengthen the local community** in the local regions (various joint sports, cultural and recreational activities);

Young people would like to **feel more valued from the local municipality** administrations (feel the interest, support that young people need for the place etc.).

**Diverse voices - Did any groups of young people have experiences or views that differed from the overall messages? What were these groups and what did they say?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *If you identified that particular groups of young people, such as young women or young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, had particular concerns that differed strongly from the overall trend, you can report them here. It is not necessary to complete this section if you did not identify any differences.*

**Guiding question 3c):** What are the main measures and actions to take in order to improve quality of life for young people in rural areas in the long term?

**What were the main topics raised by young people in the dialogues?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *Please report here a summary of general trends and information coming from young people.*

**Chance for real youth involvement in creating improvements.** Young people themselves should take the initiative to improve their environment, but this may require leaders capable of activating and mobilizing young people for common ideas. There is also the view that young people do not lack initiative, ideas, but they have lost faith that someone will hear them, because there are no the actions taken after listening to the views of youth.

**Offer and inform more about different job opportunities** including opportunities to earn not to just work.

Consequently, it is necessary:

1) support tools for starting a business - reducing the tax burden on new business ideas, new entrepreneurs in the rural areas.

2) promotion of self-employment status - "that you can do and create yourself";

3) All the possibilities to work remotely from home or co-production.

Youngsters do believe that there is a great opportunity in the rural areas for people to do different types of **remote work**, however it requires an investment in the educational field as most people from rural areas believe that it could be a great possibility, but don't believe they could do it.

**Development of infrastructure** (sports grounds, gyms, leisure facilities) in remote areas; Young people emphasize that leisure facilities (sports schools, halls, art and music schools) are being developed in county canters, but there is less opportunity for young people in parishes;

**Address housing issues** that would attract young families and those who do not wish to return to live with their parents after graduation.

**Transport problems** - this affect young people's chances of enjoying things or just getting to work in a nearby area. One solution would be financial support for purchasing your own transport, cheaper public transport prices for youngsters etc.

**Security challenges** - drug use in small towns, etc. security threats both in the evening and during the day, especially in the Russian border area.

**Distance/online, learning for higher education** - some youngsters outlined that if they would have a chance to learn remotely and still be able to obtain budget places in colleges or universities, they would consider staying in the rural regions. (In Latvia, state provided budget places are available only for full time studies during daytime (not including evening study programs or distance learning)).

**Diverse voices - Did any groups of young people have experiences or views that differed from the overall messages? What were these groups and what did they say?** (Suggested word limit 500 words.) *If you identified that particular groups of young people, such as young women or young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, had particular concerns that differed strongly from the overall trend, you can report them here. It is not necessary to complete this section if you did not identify any differences.*

### Section 3 Working group comments

**What other themes or youth goals did your dialogue focus on?** (please list)

The consultations focussed on only these 3 topics.

**What were the key messages coming from young people in relation to these?**

(Suggested word limit 500 words.)

Young people strongly voiced their concerns for the lack of knowledge how to deal with mental health issues in regards to all topics.

Mental health and knowledge how to deal with pressure and stress being an important factor for being able to decide about your study and career paths, to engage successfully in world of work and to succeed in it.

Mental health also came as important topic that young people want to address through youth work (as formal education often neglects this aspect or is the reason for mental health issues).

When discussing issues in regards of young people leaving the rural areas, they outlined the need to work on positive relationships between people, to stop bullying, learn how to not be affected by stress and depressive thoughts.

**Any other comments from your Working Group?**

To understand the presented opinions and key messages, it is important to reflect on the fact that in Latvia historically there is a weak civil society, low participation rates and low confidence in the government due to Soviet-era thinking. It manifests itself in the public's unwillingness to participate and collaborate with the state as "we expect from the state" and often the local government and public administration don't have a wide enough view and willingness to be open for new forms of the public engagement (outside the existing mechanisms).

**What positive change did Youth Dialogue help to bring about at local, regional and national level?**

*This could include changes that are planned to happen, or that have already happened.*

In the area of Quality Employment for All: *(suggested word limit 250 words)*

Many of the schools that took up the initiative to organize open consultations in regards to the topic of Quality Employment for all outlined in their feedback forms that it was very useful process. Some of the schools informed us that the gathered information is sent out to career consultants, have been discussed in school boards and is a base for now planning next step consultations, career events, educational classes etc.

On a larger scale - these findings we will present to directors of different branches of the Ministry (Education, Higher Education, Science, Sports, Language and Youth).

Ministry of Educational and Science will use insights and data while working on the next national planning document for Youth Policy (2021 - 2027).

In the area of Quality Youth Work for All: *(suggested word limit 250 words)*

The gained insights from youngsters and focus groups with youth work specialists is now a base for re-evaluating the National training programmes for "Youth Work specialists" and "Youth workers", that is provided by the Ministry. Youth Advisory Council outlined the need for changes and this will be the base for changes in the Cabinet regulations for these

professional training programmes.

On a larger scale - these findings we will present to directors of different branches of the Ministry (Education, Higher Education, Science, Sports, Language and Youth).

Ministry of Educational and Science will use insights and data while working on the next national planning document for Youth Policy (2021 - 2027).

Developed participation methodology will be included in the National webpage for professionals involved in youth work and used to further promote youth involvement in decisions that affect the lives of young people.

A second part of the training course "Participation 2.0." will be held on 26th of November with all the stakeholders who took part in Open consultation process. Training course will include reflection on carrying out open consultation process with youngsters, developing strategies for implementing the gained results in further processes and making plans how to involve young people in creating new participation activities for the next steps of EU Youth dialogue.

In the area of Opportunities for Rural Youth: (*suggested word limit 250 words*)

Many youth centres and youth workers from rural areas that took up the initiative to organize open consultations in regards to this topic outlined in their feedback forms that it has been a very useful process.

Gathered information and opinions are now used to have continued meetings with local politicians and in some municipalities will be used as a base for planning next step consultations and events; in one municipality, it will be used for re-evaluating local Youth work planning documents, in another to have a city-planning meeting about local infrastructure development.

Many of the open consultation organizers reflected that these findings would be used as a base to prepare funding applications for different projects.

Latvian Rural Forum (LRF) will use this information when attending European Rural youth parliament and lobbying for rural area development.

On a larger scale - these findings we will present to directors of different branches of the Ministry (Education, Higher Education, Science, Sports, Language and Youth).

Ministry of Educational and Science will use insights and data while working on the next national planning document for Youth Policy (2021 - 2027).

In other areas: (*suggested word limit 250 words*)

As mental health was outlined as, a pressing issue in many of the consultations this could be used to organize a methodological meeting for people involved in youth work on the topic.

On 15<sup>th</sup> of October, the Ministry of Education and Science held a methodological meeting "Mental Health for Adolescents" with a Manager of "Adolescent Resource Centre", Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist and Addiction Specialist in Children's Clinical University Hospital for those involved in youth work.

Discussing the following topics:

- What is the meaning 'mental' health of young people?
- What are the Most Common Mental Health Problems in Teenagers in Latvia? What causes them?
- How to recognize problems and issues? What are the most effective ways to help?
- What to do if a teenager is oppositional, stray or aggressive?
- When to start worrying about computer or mobile phone addiction?
- What are some practical ways to get a better understanding of a problematic teenager?
- How to assess the risk of suicide and how to help a suicidal teenager?
- When and where to seek professional support?

Ministry has planned another meeting - on 21st of November with a different Adolescent Psychotherapist.

On a larger scale - these findings we will present to directors of different branches of the Ministry (Education, Higher Education, Science, Sports, Language and Youth).

Ministry of Educational and Science will use insights and data while working on the next national planning document for Youth Policy (2021 - 2027).