



promoting youth involvement and
social engagement

PROMISE: Promoting Youth Involvement and Social Engagement: Opportunities and challenges for ‘conflicted’ young people across Europe.

Collection of short comparative country reports – FINLAND

Summary: The full report presents a collection of standardised country reports from the ten partner countries involved in PROMISE. Using the most recent data available from macro-indicators and surveys, each country report provides a national baseline of the attitudes, activities and social involvement of young people. The macro-indicators used to describe the national context are used consistently throughout to allow comparison.

In particular, each country report provides an overview of the general ‘state of the country’s health’; the situation that young people face; how young people feel about their situation; and what, if anything, they are doing to change it.

We employ a concept of social and political engagement developed for PROMISE that includes four dimensions of engagement: civic activism, formal political participation, activism, and everyday engagement.

This report (Finland) should be read in conjunction with the Introduction and Appendices document. It was submitted to the EC as part of deliverable D9 (D4.3).

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Finland



Population	5,495,096
Population aged 15-29 years old	18.1%
Population aged 65 years old and above	20.8%
Birth Rate	10.1
International migrant stock as a percentage of the total population	5.7%

1. Standards of living in Finland¹

Finland has sometimes been tagged as the “sick man of Europe”. However, the country seems to be slowly recovering from the global financial crisis of 2008-2010. In Finland, the gross national income (GNI) was 43800 (Fig. 1.1) in 2016 and unemployment rate remained at 8.6% in 2017 (Fig. 1.3). However, in 2017, the Finnish economy was still smaller than it was in 2008 despite the fact that regulations are rated as business-friendly (Fig. 1.2), the level of corruption is perceived as low (Fig. 1.4) and government effectiveness is rated highly (Fig. 1.5).

Fig. 1.1 GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$), 2016

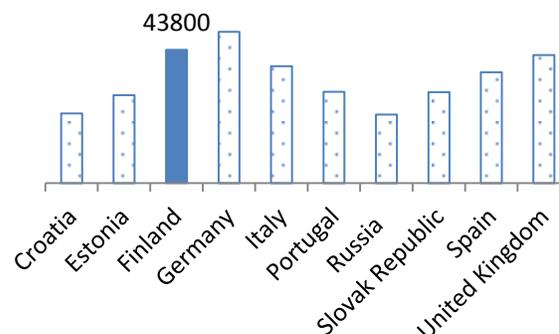


Fig. 1.2 Ease of doing business index (1=most business-friendly regulations), 2017

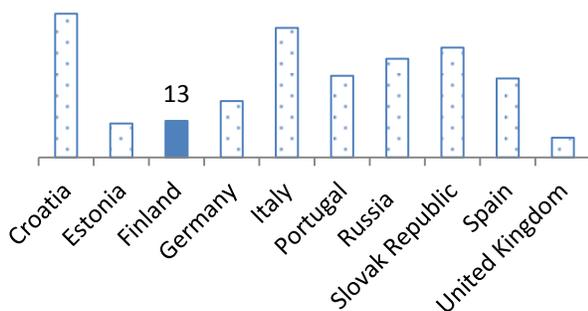


Fig. 1.3 Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate), 2017

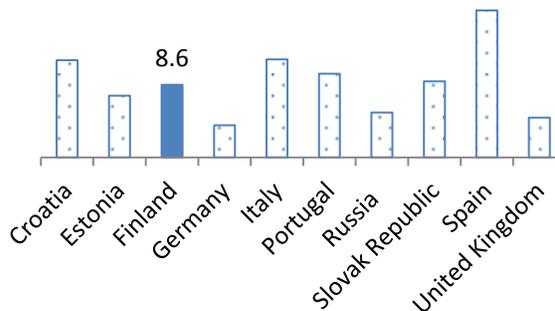


Fig 1.4 Corruption Perception Index - Transparency International (1 to 100; 1= high corruption perceived), 2016

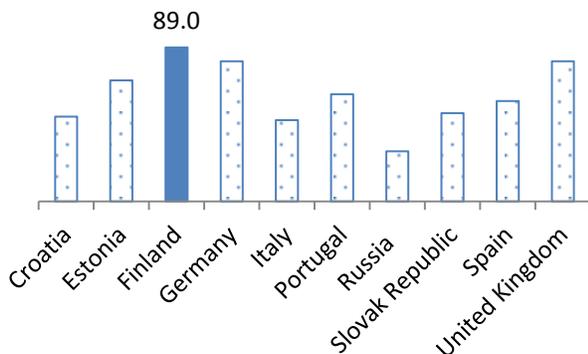
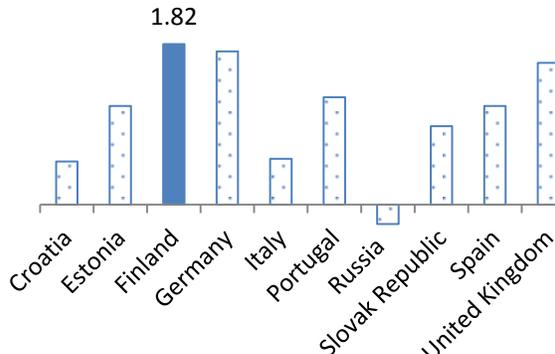


Fig 1.5 Government Effectiveness: Estimate, 2014 (-2,5 to 2,5 -2,5=very low effectiveness perceived)



¹ Last available data. Sources: World Bank; Transparency International; Freedom House; Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum); Eurostat; OECDStats. See Appendix for detailed references.

Fig. 1.6 Freedom of the press (0=best, 100=worst), 2017

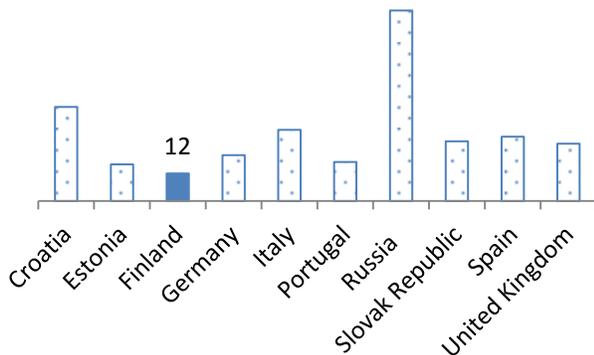
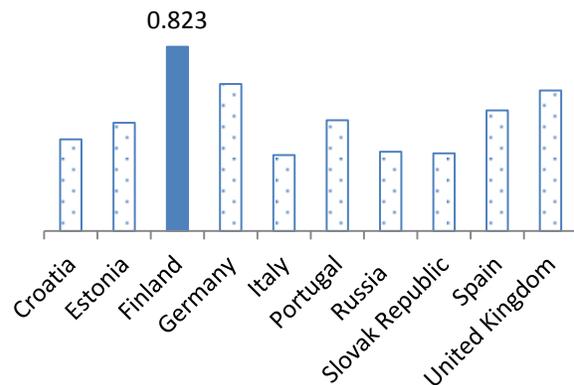


Fig. 1.7 Global Gender Gap Index (0 to 1, 1= gender equality), 2017



The Freedom House evaluates the freedom of the press through 23 methodology questions divided into three broad categories: the legal environment, the political environment, and the economic environment. Finland was categorised as “free”, as it received 4 points out of 30 in each category (Fig. 1.6). Finland also ranks high in the Global Gender Gap Index for gender equality (Fig. 1.7). The share of people with tertiary education is among the highest in the EU at 43.1% (Fig. 1.8) and almost 9 people out of 10 use the internet (Fig. 1.9).

Fig. 1.8 % of people with tertiary education (25-64 years old), 2016

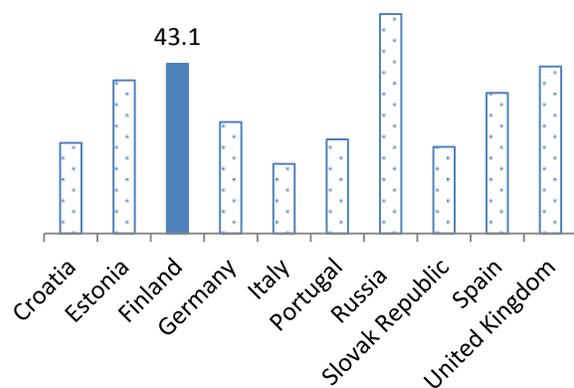
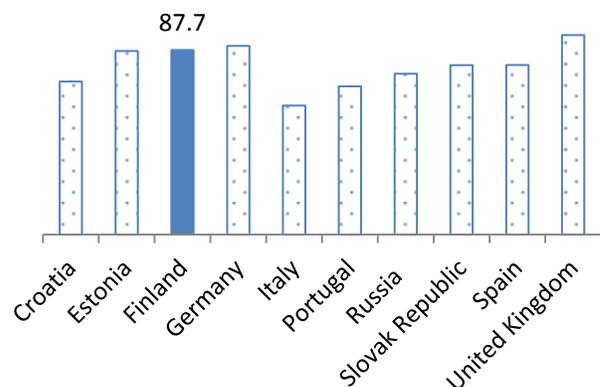


Fig. 1.9 Internet users (per 100 people), 2016



2. Being young in Finland – young people’s condition in Finland

2.1 Demographic situation

Finland is an aging country. The proportion of young people among the whole population rose between 1960 and 1970 when the so-called baby boomers, who were born between 1945 and 1949, reached adolescence (Fig. 2.1). After that the birth rates have shown a steady downward trend. In the 1990s, the share of people aged 65 or more, surpassed that of youth aged 15-29, and the number of older people was nearly double that of the young by 2015.

The ideal of (individual) independence is highly valued in Finland. Compared to other EU countries, young people leave home early, at the age of 20 (women) or 21 (men) on average (see Deliverable D3.1). So, while nearly half of 18 to 24-year-olds still live with their parents, the share of young people who still live with their parents drops dramatically to 6-7% for the 25 to 29 age group (Fig. 2.2).

Fig. 2.1 Demographic trends in Finland, 1950 -2015: proportion of people aged 15-29 years old vs 65 years old and more

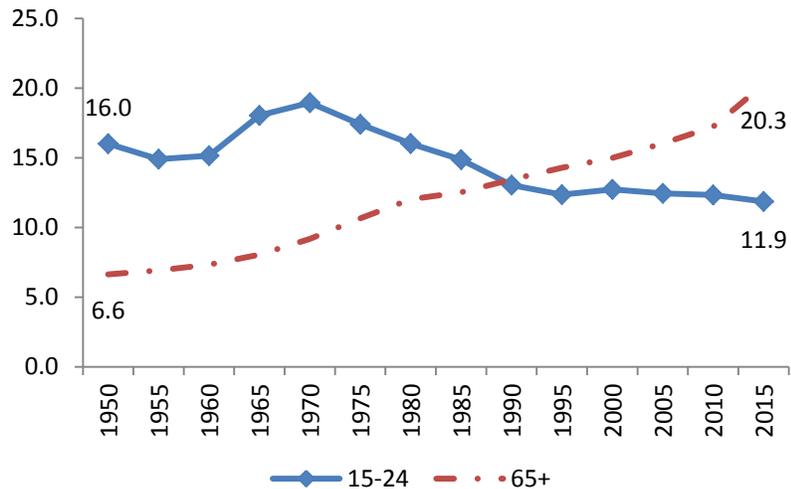
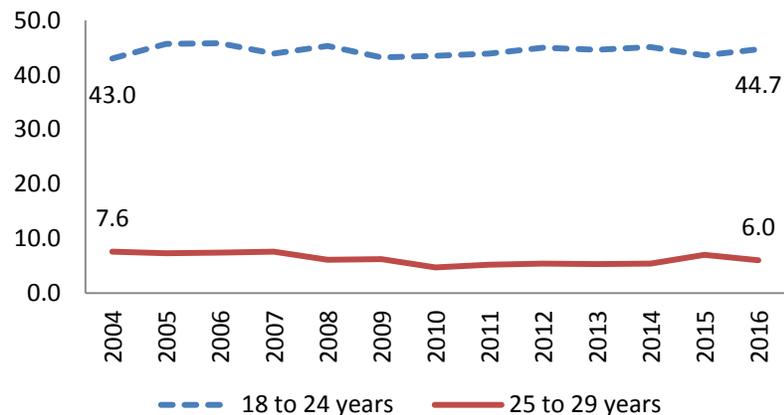
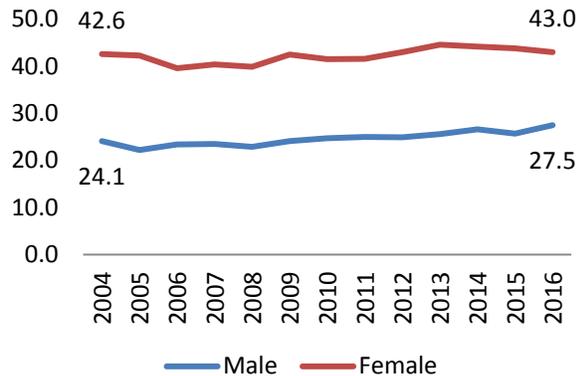


Fig. 2.2 Percent of young people (18-29 years old) living with parents 2004-2016



2.2 Education & Labour market

Fig. 2.3 Percentage of young people aged 25-29 with tertiary education (2004-2016) by gender



In Finland, the share of young people with tertiary education is high and has been consistent throughout the past decade: around 43% of women and 27% of men have a university degree (Fig. 2.3). Overall, the share of early leavers from education and training (Fig. 2.4), and of young people aged 15-29 not in employment, education or training (NEET) (Fig. 2.5) have not changed much over the past decades. While the share of young women who left the education and training system early decreased from 10.8 in 1996 to 6.9 in 2016, the share of NEET young men increased from 3.7 to 5.6 between 2004 and 2016.

Fig. 2.4 Early leavers from education and training by gender (1996-2016)

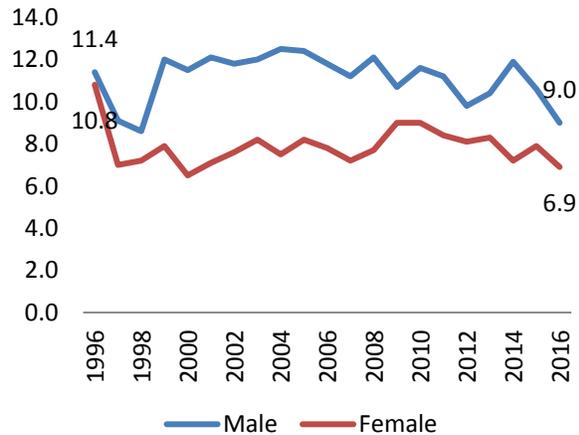


Fig. 2.5 Percentage of NEET aged 15-29 (2004-2016)

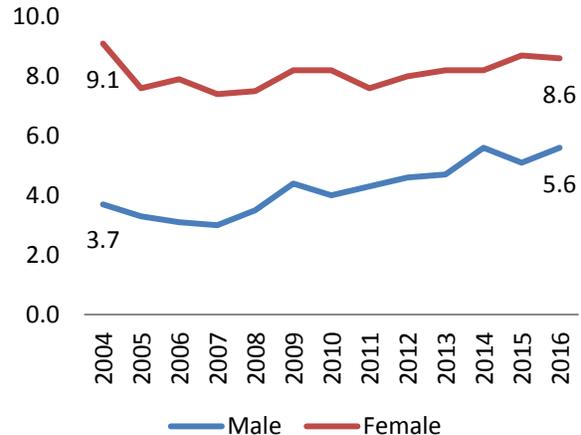


Fig 2.6 Youth (25-29 years old) employment by gender (2000-2016)

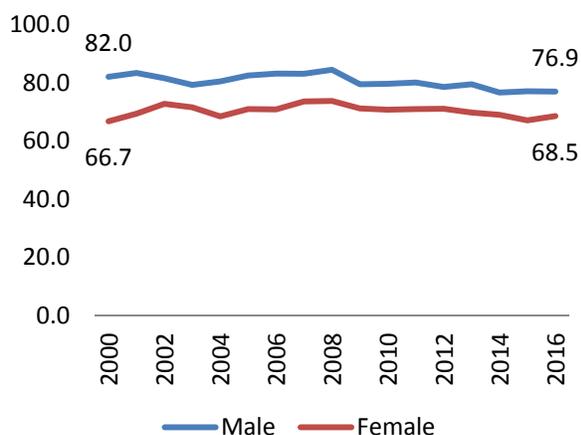


Fig. 2.7 Young people at-risk-of-poverty or exclusion rate by gender (2004-2013)

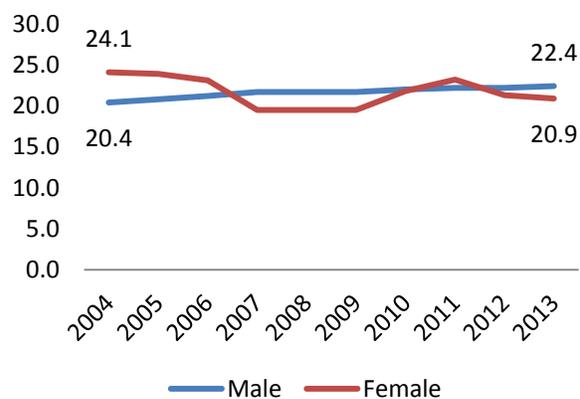
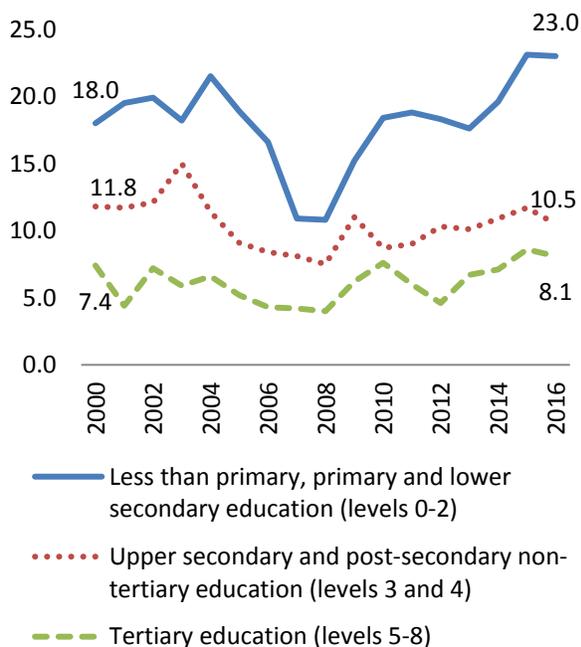


Fig. 2.8 Youth unemployment rate (25-29 years old) by educational attainment (2000-2016)



In 2008, the share of youth in employment was 84.4 and 73.7 for men and women respectively (Fig. 2.6). By 2017, the Finnish economy still had not recovered from the global financial crisis of 2008-2010. Young people with lower levels of education (levels 0-2) were affected particularly hard by the crisis: the unemployment rate of young people with lower levels of education rose from 10.8 to 18.4 between 2008 and 2010, and the share of unemployed youth with lower levels of education grew further between 2013 and 2015 from 17.6 to 23.1% (Fig. 2.8). The share of young people at risk of poverty or exclusion has remained around 20% since 2004 for both young men and women (Fig. 2.7).

2.3 Health, well-being, and risk of marginalisation

Fig. 2.9 Percentage of young people who perceive their health as good/very good by gender (2004-2015)

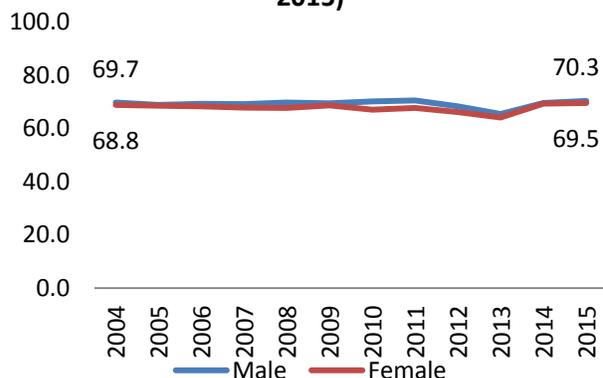


Fig. 2.10 Percentage of youth with current depressive symptoms by gender and age group (2014)

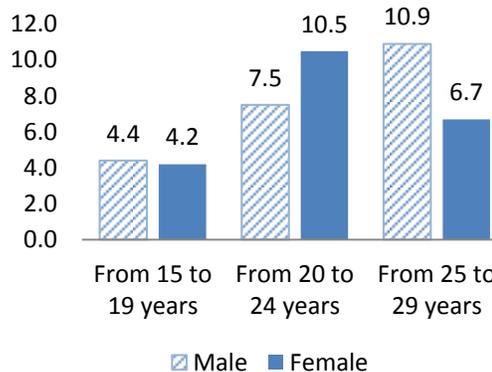
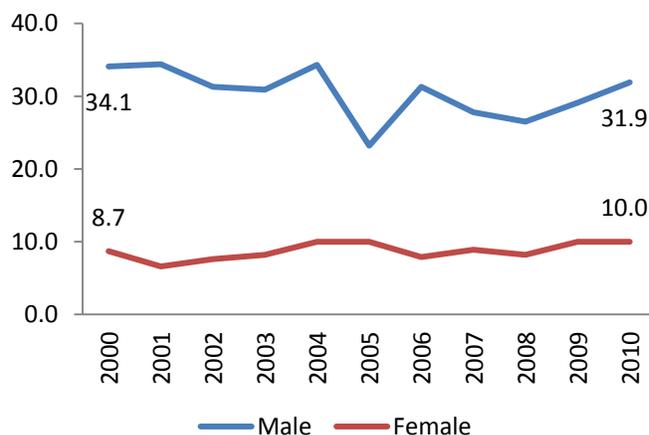


Fig. 2.11 Crude death rate per hundred thousand inhabitants by suicide of young people (2000-2010)



According to their self-report, a little more than two thirds of both young men and women in Finland perceive their health as good or very good (Fig. 2.9). Around 4% of young people aged between 15 and 19 years reported to have depressive symptoms, but the share was almost double that among older age groups (from 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 years) (Fig. 2.10). Compared to young people in other PROMISE project countries, suicide rates have been very high among Finnish and Estonian young men: in both countries it was around 30 per 100 000 inhabitants between 2000 and 2010 (Fig. 2.11). Crude death rate among young women has been lower at around 10 per 100 000 inhabitants.

2.4 Use of substances and crime

Compared to other EU countries, drug abuse in Finland is below average. In 2015, 3% of young women and 8.6% of young men reported to have used illegal drugs in the last month (Fig. 2.12). While for illegal drug use the difference between two genders is nearly threefold, there was almost no difference in the share of young people who reported to have consumed alcohol in the last month (57.7 and 58.5% among young men and women respectively)

The share of juvenile prisoners is considerably higher among young men than women: between 2008 and 2015, around 15 young men and 1 woman per 100 000 inhabitants were imprisoned (Fig. 2.13).

Fig. 2.12 Percentage of aged 15-29 who in the last month used... (2015)

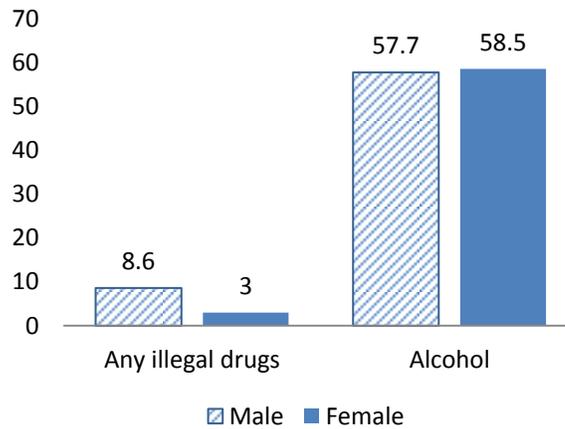
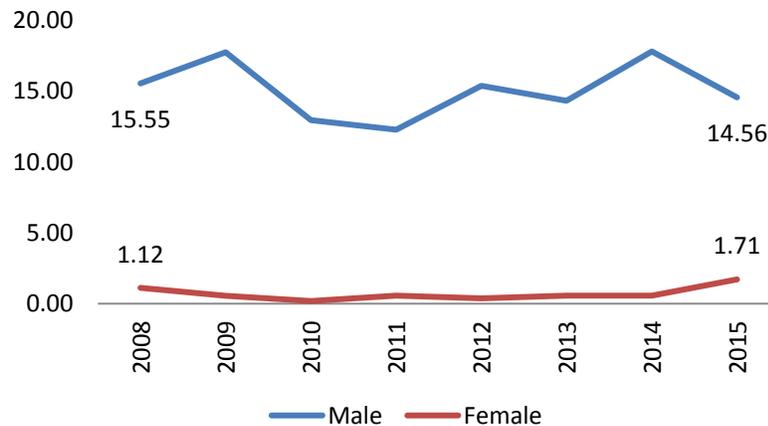


Fig. 2.13 Juvenile prisoners per hundred thousand inhabitants (2008-2015) by gender



3. What do young people in Finland think and feel?

3.1 Perception of opportunity/constraints

Fig. 3.1 Perception of social climate

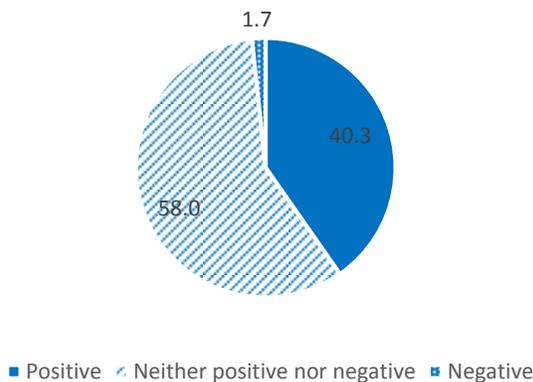
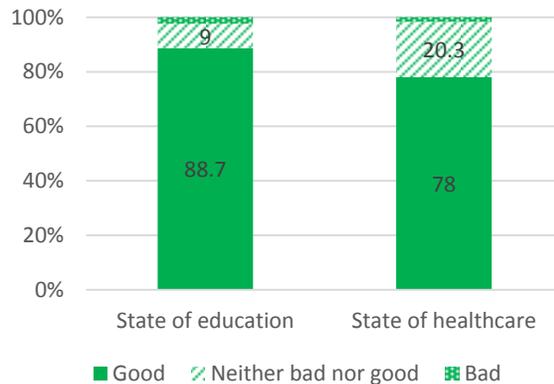


Fig. 3.2 State of services



Young people in Finland perceive the social climate as positive or neutral (Fig. 3.1): they believe that most people are helpful, try to be fair and can be trusted. They also feel that the state of education and healthcare is good (Fig. 3.2), and are satisfied with the way democracy works in the country (Fig. 3.4). Around one third of young people in Finland are also satisfied with the economy and the government. More than 90% of 15-29-year-olds also feel safe to walk alone in the local area after dark (Fig. 3.3). More people among women, adolescents and young adults, those who are economically disadvantaged and living in big cities, suburbs or smaller cities admitted to feeling unsafe compared to others.

Fig. 3.3 Feeling unsafe to walk alone in local area after dark by gender, age, economic condition and place of residence

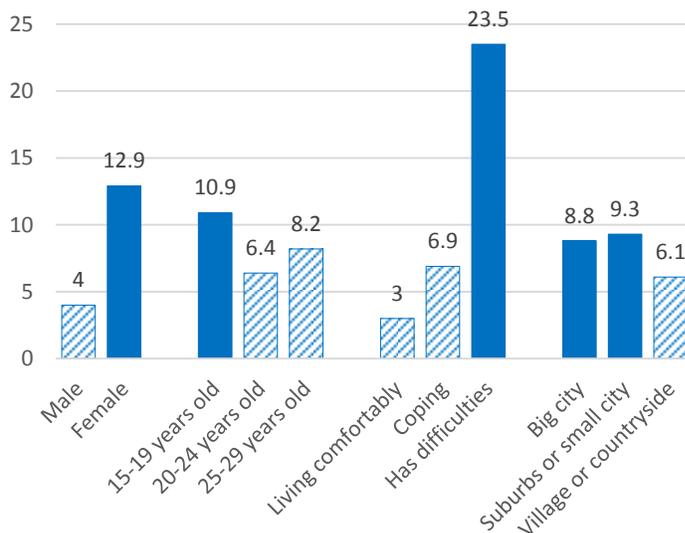
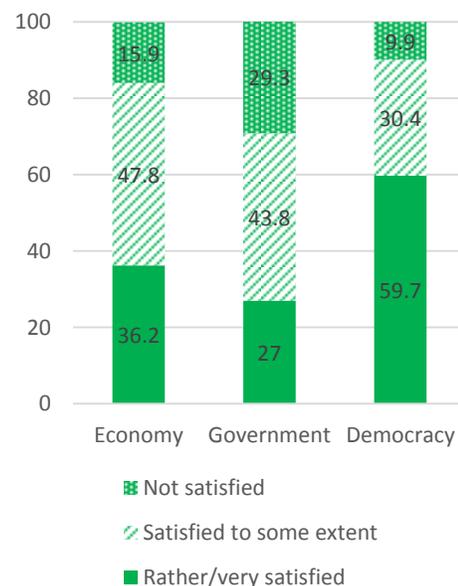
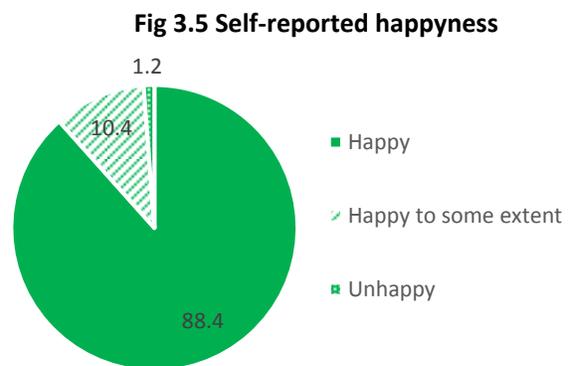
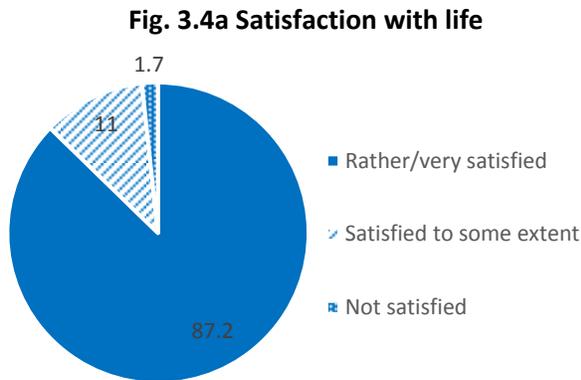


Fig. 3.4 Satisfaction with ...



3.1.1 Finland's situation

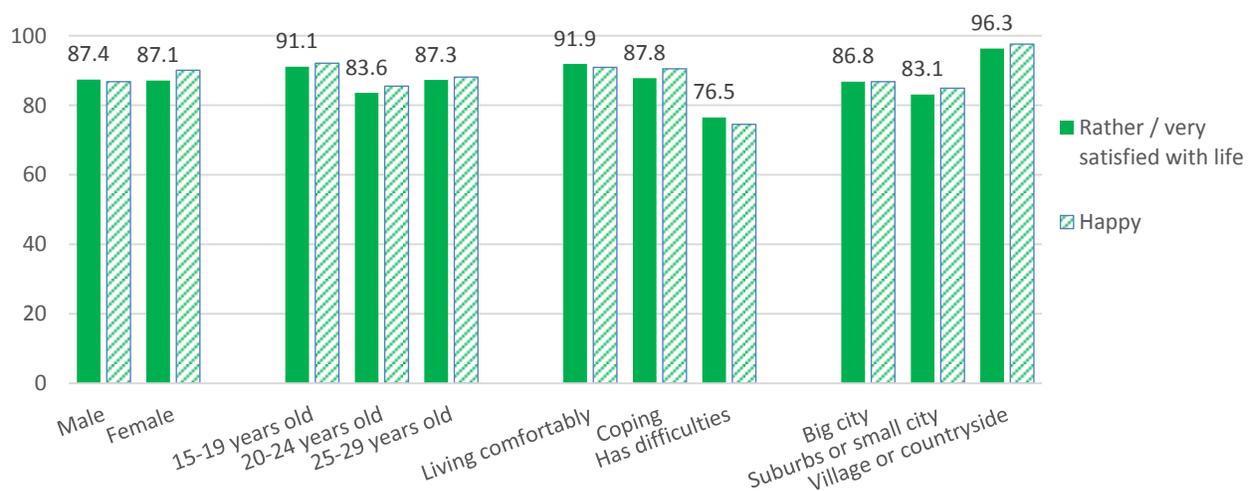
3.1.2 Personal situation



A vast majority of young people in Finland feel satisfied with their life (Fig. 3.4a) and happy (Fig. 3.5) (approx. 88%). There is not any noticeable difference between genders, but people in the youngest age group (15-19 years old), those whose economic condition is good, and young people living in a country village or countryside, are more satisfied with their life and are feeling happier than their counterparts (Fig. 3.6).

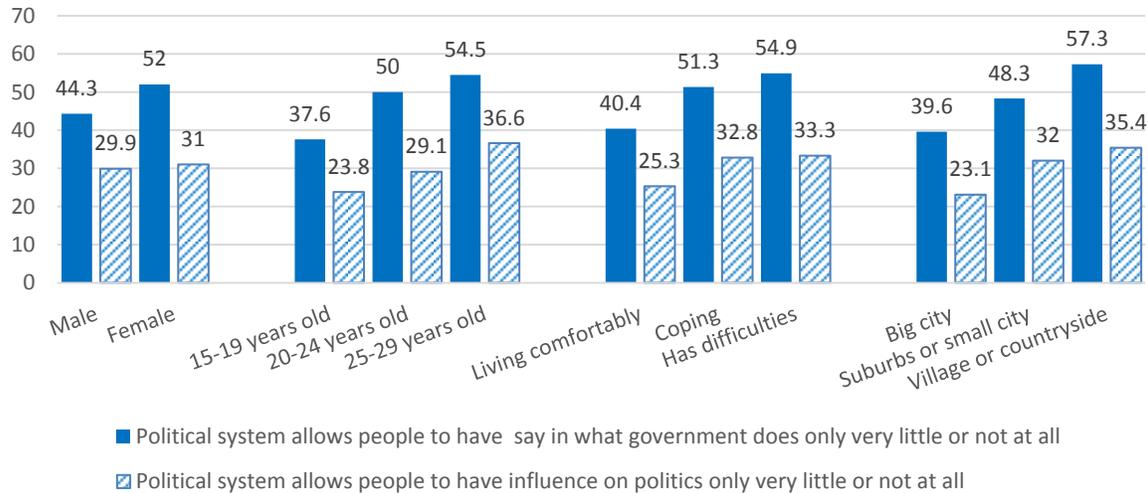
The ongoing migration from rural to urban areas limits educational and leisure-time opportunities for young people in places with diminishing population, “forcing” families to move to bigger cities, even despite having strong emotional ties to rural areas (see Deliverable D3.1). However, the share of young people who are happy and satisfied with their lives, is the highest among those who remain at the countryside (97.6% and 96.3% respectively).

Fig. 3.6 Satisfaction with life and happiness by gender, age, economic condition and place of residence



3.2 Relation with authority

Fig. 3.7 Opinion on the inclusiveness of the political system by gender, age, economic condition and place of residence



Nearly half (49%) of young people in Finland believe that the political system is not very inclusive: that the system allows people to have a say in what the government does, only very little or not at all. Nearly one third (30.5%) also believe that people have very little or no influence on politics. Young men, 15-19-year-olds, economically well-off and young people living in big cities believe that the political system is more inclusive than their counterparts (Fig. 3.7).

The majority (72.8%) of young people in Finland have high trust in the law and order institutions (the legal system and the police) (Fig. 3.8) and the share of young people who trust these institutions remains rather constant among different sub-groups (Fig. 3.9). On the other hand, only 27.2% of young people in Finland have high trust in political institutions (the parliament, politicians, political parties and the European Parliament). Trust in political institutions is also significantly lower among older age-groups (20-24 and 25-29-year-olds).

Fig. 3.8 Trust in political and law & order institutions

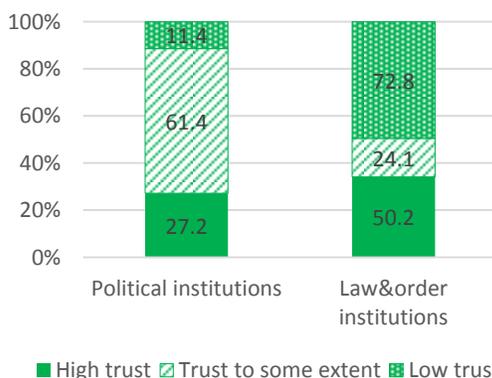
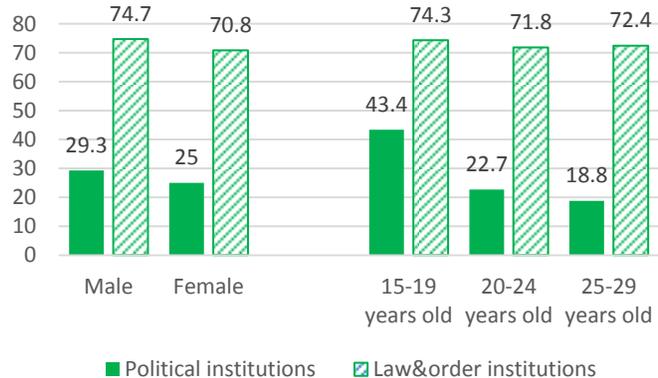


Fig. 3.9 High trust in political and law & order institutions by gender and age



3.3 Opinion on social issues

Fig. 3.10 Opinion on the occurrence of climate change

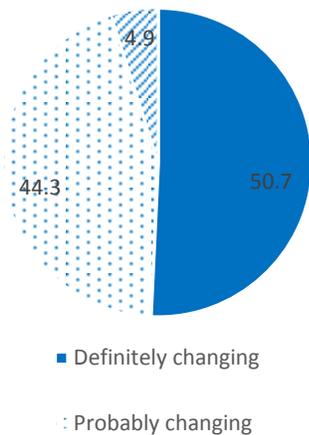


Fig. 3.11 Opinion on the factors causing climate change

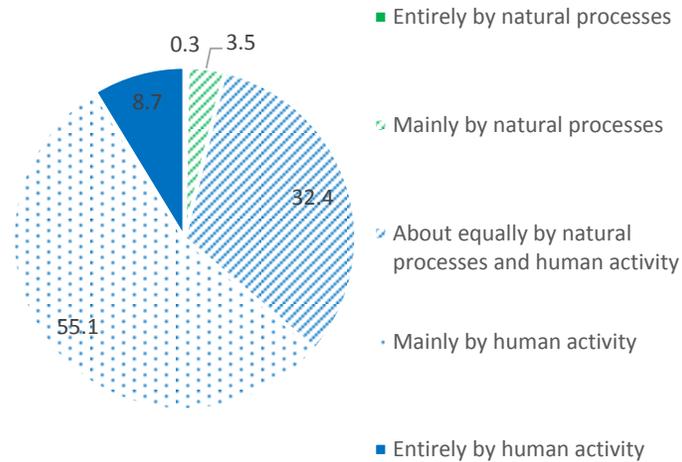
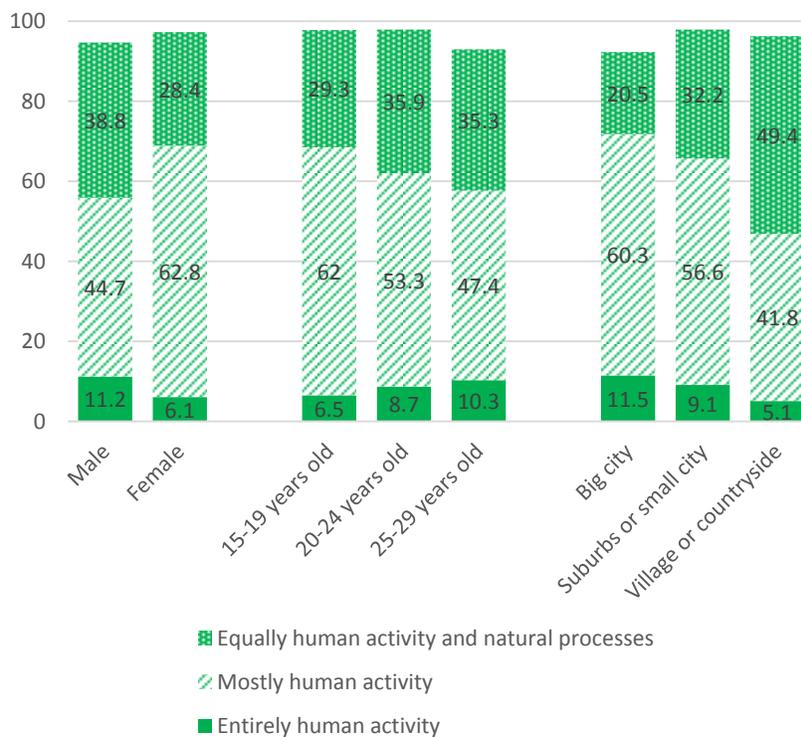
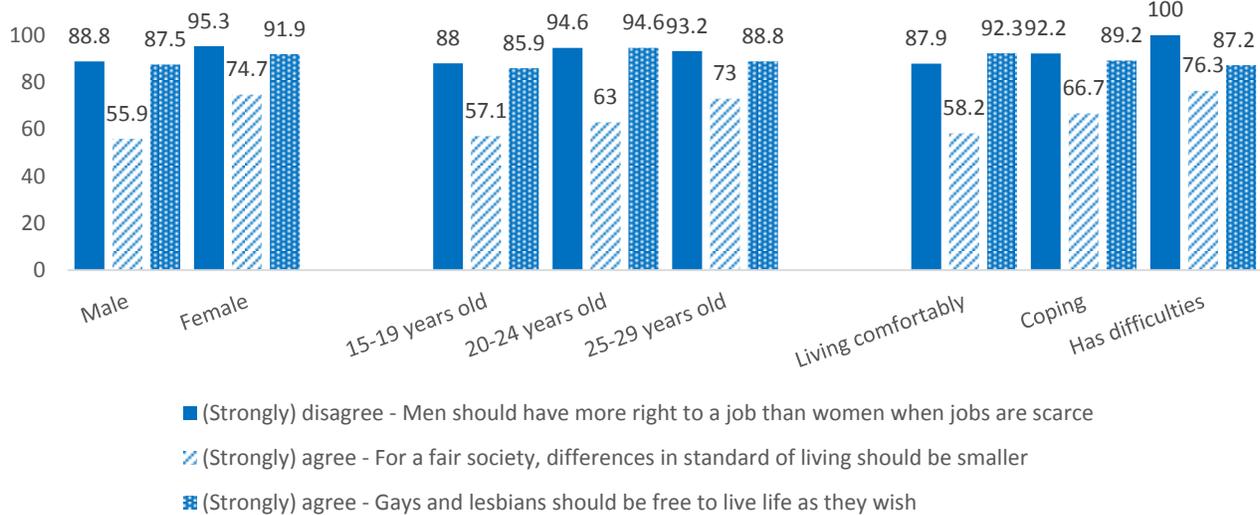


Fig. 3.12 Opinion on causes of climate change by gender, age and place of residence



Nearly all (95%) young people in Finland believe that the climate is changing (Fig. 3.10). Majority of young people (64%) also believe that climate change is caused entirely or mainly by human activity (Fig. 3.11). More than 10% of young men, 25-29-year-olds and young people living in big cities believe that climate change is caused entirely by human activity (Fig. 3.12).

Fig. 3.13 Opinion on equality and social inclusion by gender, age and economic condition



Finland has relatively strong equality legislation and gender equality ideals were intertwined with the welfare project from its early days (see Deliverable D3.1). This can be seen in high levels of agreement with statements regarding equality and social inclusion: approximately 90% of young people in Finland - and 100% of young people in poor economic conditions who participated in the survey - disagree with the statement that men should have more right to a job than women when jobs are scarce (Fig. 3.13). Also nearly 90% of young people in Finland believe that gays and lesbians should be free to live their lives as they wish. The statement that for a fair society differences in the standard of living should be smaller, received less support – from 65% of young people in Finland.

73% of young people in Finland also see that immigrants enrich the cultural life of the country (Fig. 3.14). However, only about one third (36 and 38%) believe that migration is good for the economy and that immigrants make Finland a better place to live.

Fig. 3.14 Opinion on immigrants and migration, by gender, economic condition and place of residence

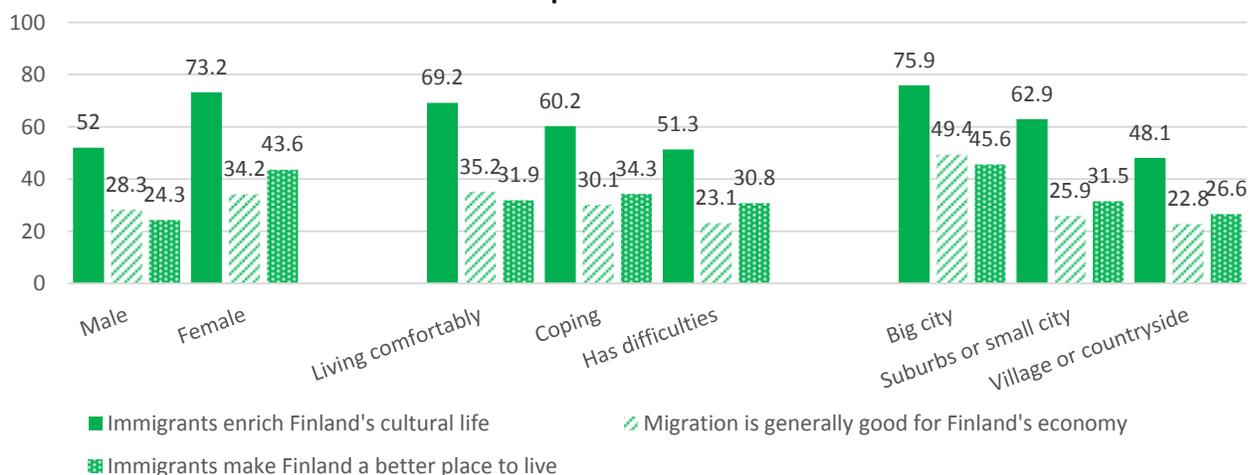
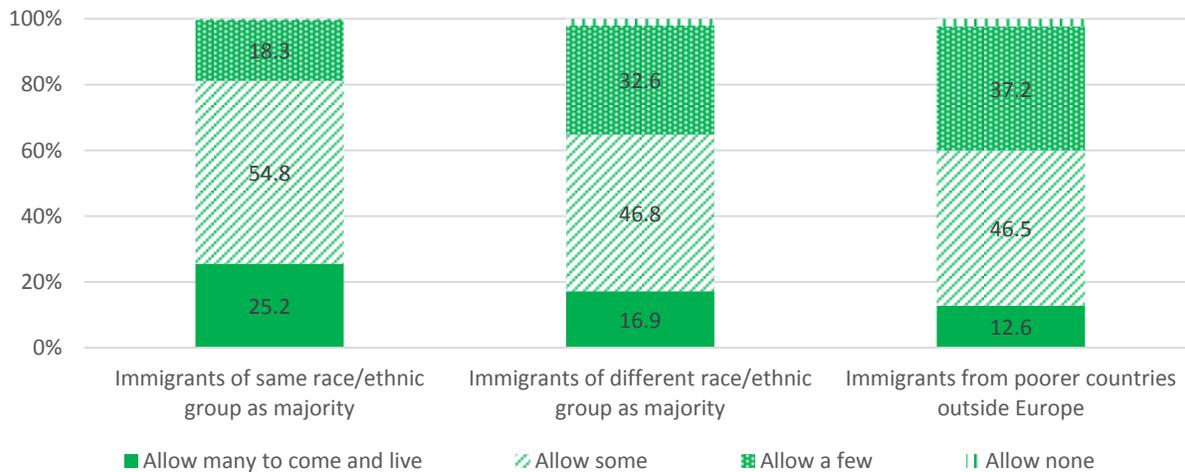


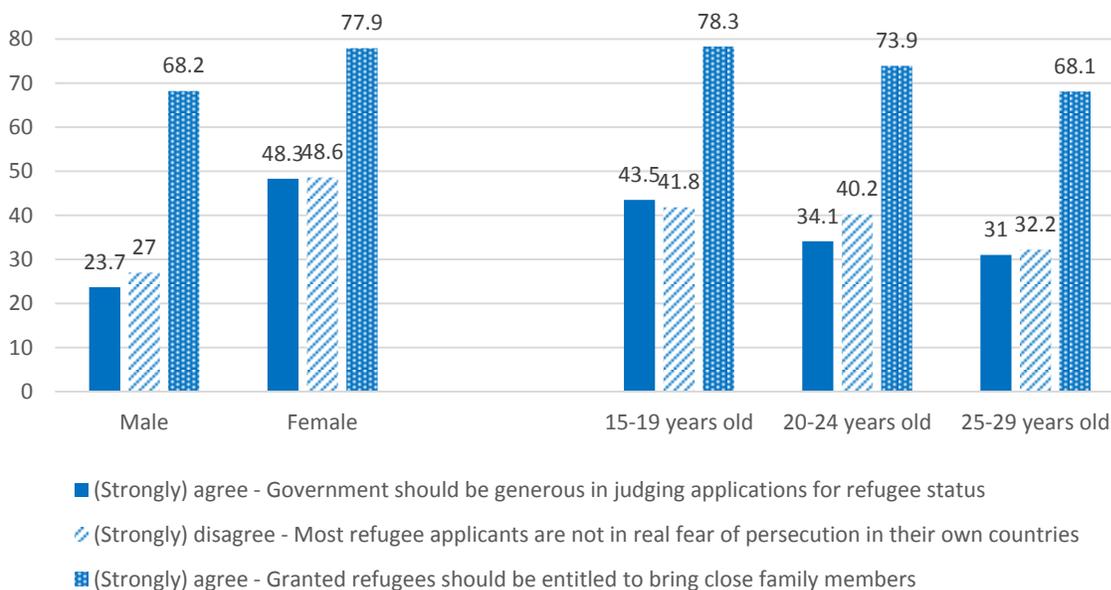
Fig. 3.15 Opinion on migration



Immigration on a larger scale started at the beginning of the 1990s and intensified the discussions concerning multiculturalism, racism and the “ethos of equality” (see Deliverable D3.1). Despite a surge in xenophobic and social-conservative party politics, young people in Finland seem to be rather welcoming of immigrants as more than 60% of young people would allow many or some immigrants to come and live in Finland (Fig. 3.15).

73% of young people in Finland also believe that granted refugees should be entitled to bring close family members to the country (Fig. 3.16). The share of those who support more generosity in judging asylum applications was lower, as was the share of those who disagree with the statement that asylum seekers are not in real fear of persecution in their own countries.

Fig. 3.16 Opinion on refugees by gender and age



4. Engagement and social change (What do young people do?)

4.1 Civic engagement

The younger generation’s lack of interest towards (party) politics and societal activities is a recurrent concern in Finland (see Deliverable D3.1). More than one third of young people (35.2%) in Finland feel that they take part in social activities less than their peers (Fig. 4.1). However, nearly one third (31.6%) have taken part in voluntary work in a civil society organisation or association during the last year.

Fig 4.1 Taking part in social activities

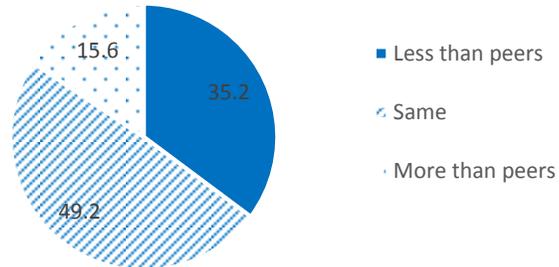
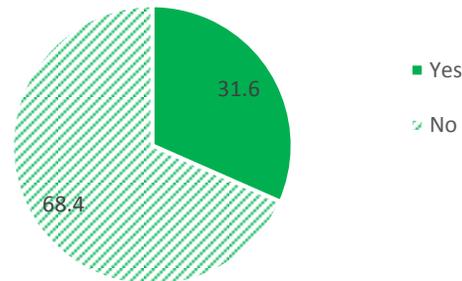


Fig. 4.2 Worked in a civil society organisation or association in the last 12 months



4.2 Formal political participation

Fig. 4.3 Voting in last national election

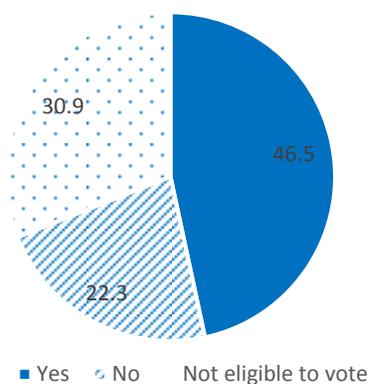


Fig. 4.4 Would vote for Finland to remain member of the European Union or leave

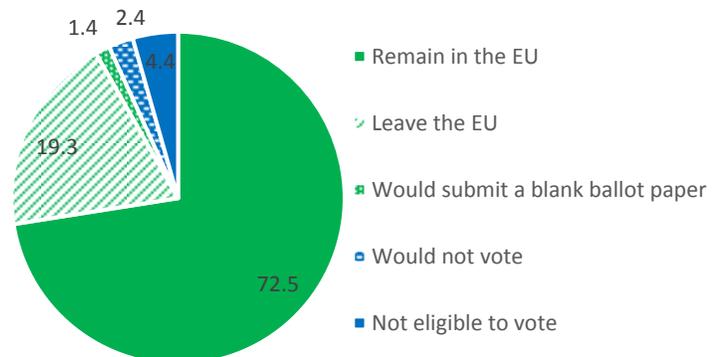
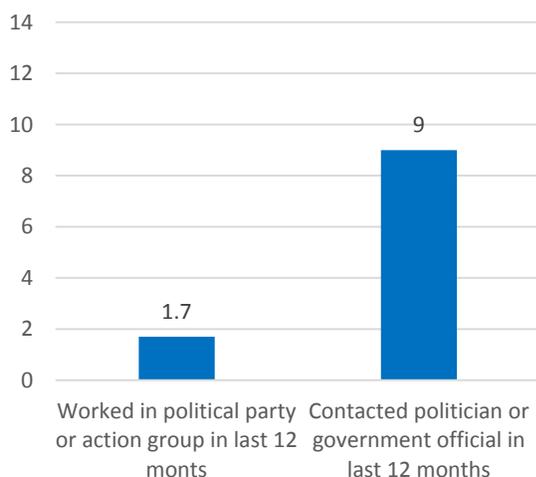


Fig. 4.5 Formal political participation

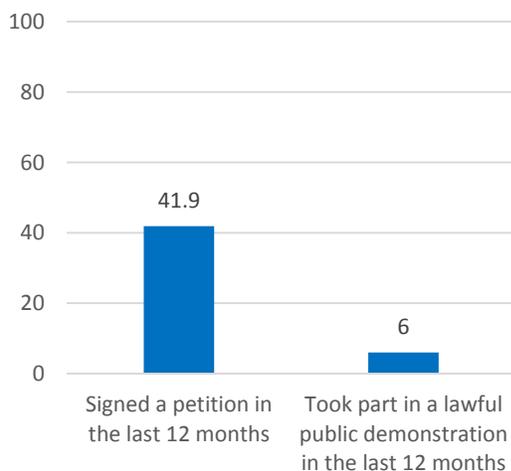


Political activity (voting and interest towards party politics) among young people in Finland has decreased significantly in the last half century (see Deliverable D3.1). Nearly one quarter of young people (almost one third of those eligible to vote) in Finland did not vote in the last national election (Fig. 4.3). 1.7% of young people worked in a political party or action group and 9% contacted a politician or government official in the last year (Fig. 4.5).

Majority of young people in Finland feel positive about the country being a part of the European Union and would vote for Finland to remain in the EU (Fig. 4.4).

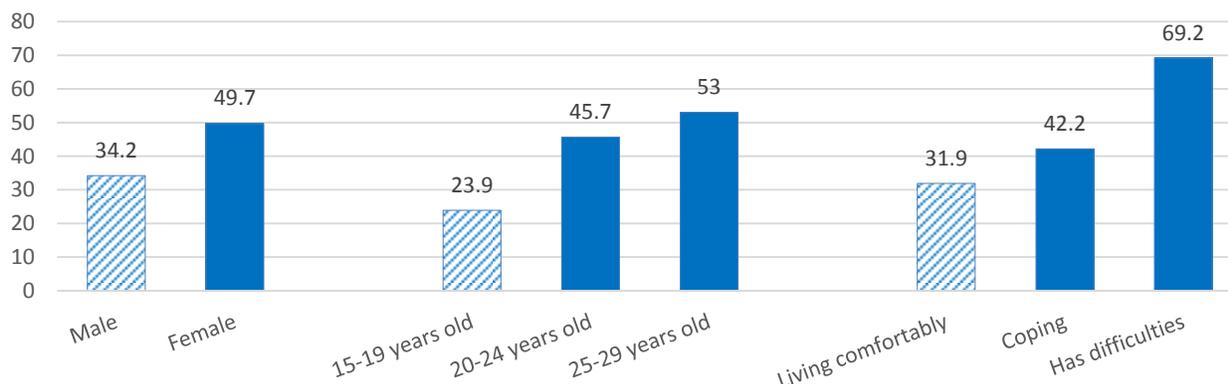
4.3 Activism

Fig. 4.6 Activism



Political activism (signing petitions, taking part in lawful demonstrations) is not very common in Finland. More than 40% of young people had signed a petition during the last year (Fig. 4.6). Women, older age groups (20-24 and 25-29-years old) and those whose economic condition is not good were more likely to do so (Fig. 4.7). However, only 6% of young people took part in a lawful public demonstration during the last year, which could be partly explained by relatively high satisfaction with the economy and the government (see part 3.1.1) or the belief that people have very little or no influence on politics (see part 3.2).

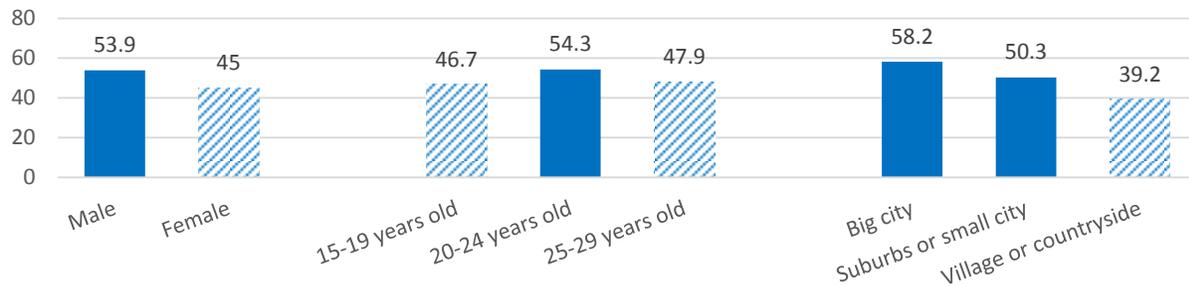
Fig. 4.7 Signed a petition in the last 12 months, by gender, age and economic condition



4.4 Everyday engagement

Similarly to political participation, interest in party politics has declined among young people in Finland since the 1950s. According to self-report, nearly half (49.5%) of young people are quite or very interested in politics (Fig. 4.8). However, in rural areas, share of those who are interested in politics, is considerably lower.

Fig. 4.8 Interest in politics: share of quite or very interested, by gender, age and place of residence



Majority of young people in Finland are concerned about climate change, especially women, younger age group (15-19-year-olds) and young people living in big cities (Fig. 4.9). More than half of young people in Finland also feel personal responsibility to reduce climate change and more than two out of three would take steps to accomplish that: buy the most energy efficient home appliance and do things to reduce energy use (Fig. 4.10).

Fig. 4.9 Concern about climate change, by gender, age and place of residence

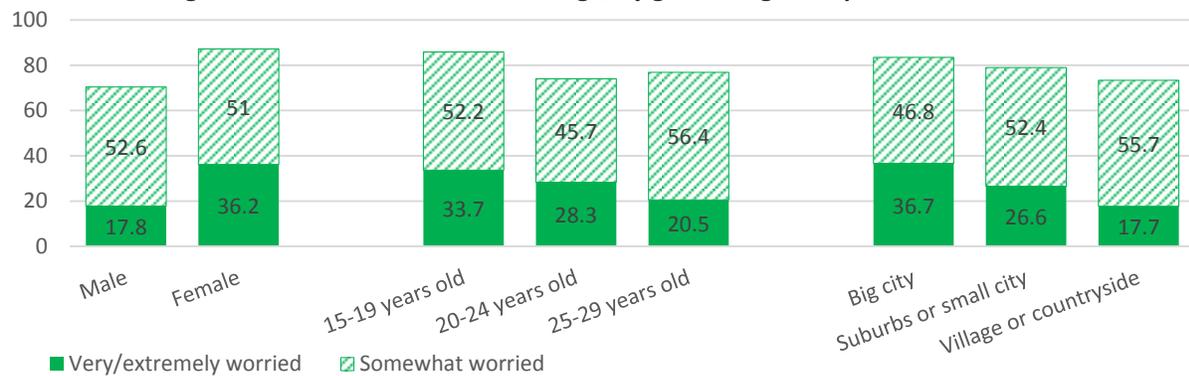


Fig. 4.10 Taking action against climate change: share of people who ...

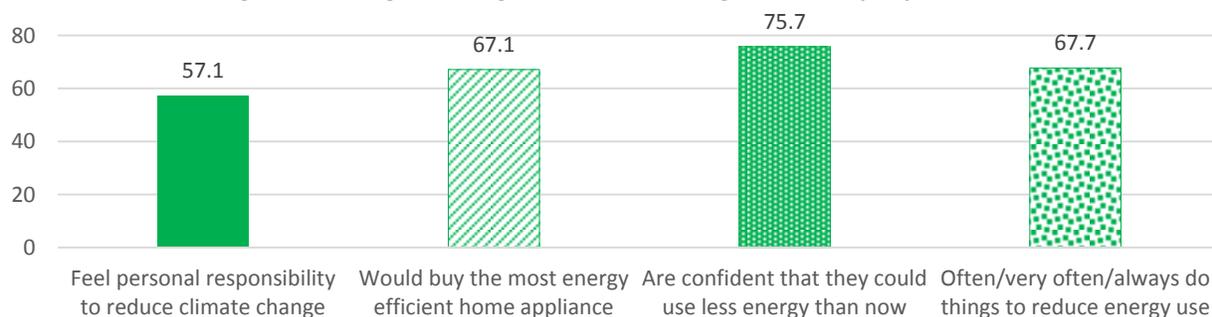
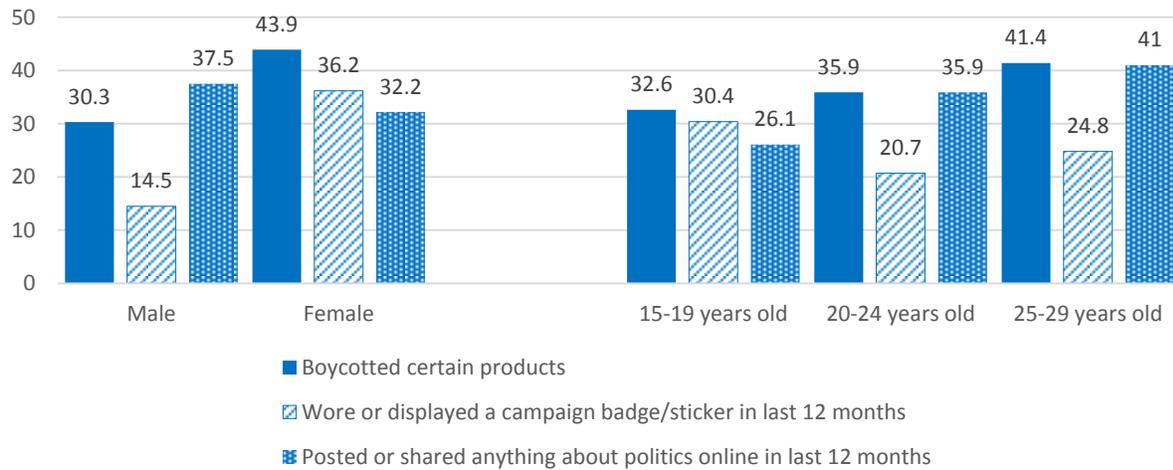


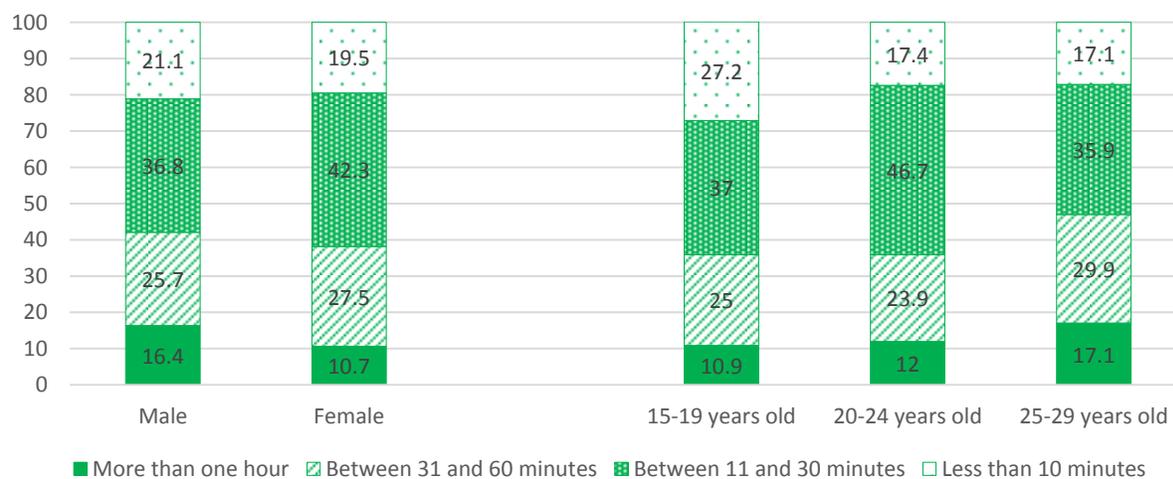
Fig. 4.11 Consumer participation and life-style



Around one third of young people in Finland (37% and 35% respectively) have boycotted certain products, and posted or shared something about politics online in the last year (Fig. 4.11). Wearing campaign badges and stickers is not particularly popular – a quarter of young people had done that in the last year. Doing those things is more popular among older age group (25-29-year-olds) compared to the younger ones, and women compared to men.

The majority of young people spend between 11 minutes and 1 hour following news about politics and current affairs (Fig. 4.12). The share of those who spend more than one hour a day following news is highest among young men, and people in the oldest age group (25-29-year-olds).

Fig. 4.12 Time spent in a day to follow news about politics and current affairs, by gender and age



Project Identity

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