

Abstract

The Youth Barometer is a survey of the values, attitudes and experiences of young people aged 15 to 29 living in mainland Finland that has been conducted annually since 1994. The focus in the 2025 Youth Barometer is on the expectations and pressures on young people. A total of 2,312 individuals took part in the survey. This is the first Youth Barometer where all information was collected using an online form, and for the first time, the survey was also conducted in English. Until now, it has only been carried out in Finnish and Swedish. Collecting information online has also made it possible to analyse the open answers given by the young people.

The questions asked in the Youth Barometer concerned the causes of pressures and living with pressures, expectations arising from studies, hopes that have to do with the course of life, and concerns and the feeling of guilt resulting from environmental problems. The respondents were also asked about the long-term themes of the Youth Barometer such as perceived wellbeing, diversity and equality.

Seven out of ten young people had experienced pressures to get a job, and there were also various kinds of pressures concerning studies. Half of the respondents faced pressures to look good, to get an education, to have an outward mindset and to have the resources to meet with friends. Women told that they faced pressures more often than men, and the women aged 20 to 24 were the group with the most pressures. Young people reported that in most cases they received support from their friends and parents when facing pressures.

Most of the respondents said that their parents had hoped that they would seek general upper secondary education or higher education. For only a quarter of the respondents, the parents had hoped that their children would seek vocational upper secondary education and training. About six out of ten respondents hoped that they could take a university degree, and seven out of ten believed that they would be able to take the degree they are aiming at. Just over one third of the respondents told that they would be ashamed if they were not able to take the degree they are aiming at. About 10% of the respondents expected unpleasant consequences from their parents if they failed to complete at least the degree they are currently aiming at.

At least about half of the respondents said that they were already dating, had moved away from home, had had sex and were able to support themselves. However, only five per cent of the respondents already had a child. Those who had not experienced the above matters were asked how important it is to experience them. Supporting oneself and moving away from home were considered the most important things. Those aiming at higher education or those who already had a higher education degree considered, more often than others, it important to have a child compared to those aiming at a lower qualification.

About half of the young people told that they belong to at least one minority. Most typically, young people reported that they belong to a sexual minority (18%), a linguistic minority (14%) and a neuro-minority (14%). There were major differences between genders in the membership in some minorities. For example, eight per cent of men, 24% of women and 87% of non-binary people reported that they belong to a sexual minority. Young people belonging to a minority considered their membership in a minority an important part of their identity. This view was particularly

common among the young people belonging to a sexual and religious minority. Young people who had experienced discrimination reported that the discrimination they had encountered usually stemmed from not meeting gender-related expectations, or political views or language.

More than half of the respondents had been concerned about climate change and loss of species, and about one third had felt guilty about not doing enough for the environment. Of those feeling guilty about not doing enough for the environment, only a minority (13%) felt that the feeling of guilt has driven them to act for environment beyond their own resources.

Respondents' satisfaction with their lives had decreased since 2024. Young people's faith in their own future had improved slightly during the same period but was still at a relatively low level. The proportion of young people with a pessimistic attitude towards the world's future had almost doubled since 2021 when they were last asked about the matter (28% -> 50%). Some of the growth is explained by the change in the data collection method.

Of the 11 factors mentioned to the respondents, global political situation, the values and attitudes prevailing in society and finding work caused uncertainty and insecurity in more than half of the respondents. It seems that uncertainty and insecurity among young people has increased.