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### Youth Work in Finland

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How are young people doing?

People at the Finnish Youth Co-operation Allianssi are often asked how the Finnish youth is doing. There are many answers to the question as they are doing well and not that well. The well-being of the majority of youth has increased. A fifth of them are, however, doing worse than before and some serious problems are accumulating.

This publication tells about the youth, and about their living conditions and status in Finland. In addition, it describes the youth as social actors and tells about Finnish youth work. The preface presents the central findings.

The youth are doing well

• The majority of young people are satisfied with their lives.
• Over 80 percent estimate their health is good.
• The total amount of abortions and chlamydia infections has decreased.
• Suicide among young men has decreased.
• The largest proportion of students in OECD countries are young adults.
• More than two thirds of over 25-year-olds have completed a vocational degree or an academic degree.
• Civic knowledge of the Finnish youth is at a high level when compared internationally.
• Voting in elections and voting intentions are gradually on the increase after the low ebb.
• Youth work has been allocated more resources in the 2000s.

The youth are not doing well

• The amount of socially excluded youth has increased.
• Resorting to child and youth psychiatric services, foster care, and open care in child welfare has increased.
• The amount of youth retiring on disability pension is increasing drastically.
• Binge drinking among 16 to 18-year-olds has increased and the proportion of those who drink until very drunk is at its peak since 1977.
• The amount of overweight youth has increased and the overweight youth are heavier than before.
• The amount of victims of violence, bullying, and theft is higher than in twenty years.
• Within Scandinavia, Finnish families suffer from family violence and excessive substance abuse the most.
• The proportion of poor families with children has increased significantly.
• The amount of homeless youth has begun to increase.
• Young people’s payment defaults have doubled.
• Approximately 200 young people are left without a basic education certificate yearly and approximately 8,000 young people in each age group are left without further education.
• The school success of foreign language students is clearly weaker than that of their peers and they are often left outside further education.
• Youth unemployment rate has increased; one fourth of youth in labour force are still unemployed.

Because of the previous, Allianssi demands that

• Young people have a central position in all plans.
• Young people’s well-being is taken seriously and that the introduced cuts directed at youth resources must end.
• More resources are directed to basic prevention work, to pupil welfare, and to youth mental health and health care services.
• Poverty in youth is addressed.
• According to the constitution, youth are offered youth services.
• Youth participation becomes a reality. Experiences in influencing at a young age are the key to active citizenship.

Investing in young people and youth work is investing in the future. We hope that this publication opens new vistas and provides a general view to the status of Finnish youth.

We challenge you to participate in this important work to support and develop young peoples’ living conditions, opportunities to act and participate, and position in society. The youth will be doing well, if we work together to make it happen.

Hanna-Mari Manninen, Chairman

Jukka Tahvanainen, General Secretary
Who Are the Young People?

Youth is a flexible concept. In everyday language, youth is the phase of life between childhood and adulthood. Youth is individual – one person can, in different situations, be a child, an adolescent, or an adult. The definitions of youth vary in legislation as well as in different studies and statistics.

According to the Youth Act, young person is used to reflex to all under 29-year-olds. This publication attempts to adhere to this definition and consider 16, the age at which the compulsory education ends, the minimum age. However, all figures cannot always agree; for example, all under 25-year-olds are young people in unemployment statistics, whereas all under 40-year-olds are young farmers according to the law. This should be considered in comparisons of the data in this publication.

The Amount of Young People

At the end of 2009, the population of Finland was 5.35 million. The amount of 15 to 29-year-olds was 1,003,743 which is 18.7 percent of the total population.

The amount of families with children, that is families with children under 18-year-olds, was 585,224 at the end of 2008. Of these families, 43 percent had one child and 38 percent had two. The proportion of families with four or more children was 5 percent. There were 117,099 single parent families, of which 87 percent consisted of children living with their mother. The amount of families consisting of a father and children was 15,382. A registered couple were parents in 187 families.

In the home of a family with children lived an average of 1.83 children. The current estimated total amount of children in families with children is 2.4.

At the end of 2008, there were 54,000 blended families. A blended family has at least one under 18-year-old child from the other parent. There are almost 78,000 of these children. The amount of blended families has in-
creased with approximately 200 families since last year. Around half of the parents in blended families live together and half of them are married.²

Last year, 29 114 persons moved to Finland, of which 5 001, or 17 percent, were less than 15 years old. More children moved in than out, as 2 027 under 15-year-olds moved abroad, which is 15 percent of all emigrants.²

The amount of foreign language speakers in Finland has doubled in nine years. The largest foreign language speaking groups are speakers of Russian (51 683), Estonian (25 096), English (12 063), Somali (11 681), and Arabic (9 682). The amount of those whose mother tongue is other than Finnish, Swedish, or Sami was 207,037 or 3.9 percent of the total population. The proportion of young people in foreign language speakers is larger than in the original population. There are 56 420 foreign language speaking 15 to 29-year-olds, which means 5.6 percent of the age group. 27.2 percent of foreign language speakers are young people.²

Immigrants live mainly in large cities. There are 13 cities with over 2 000 immigrants, 70 percent of the whole immigrant population live in these cities.³

It is estimated that, of the whole population, around 5 percent are disabled, of whom around one percent are seriously disabled. Of those who have been granted Kela’s (The Social Security Institution in Finland) rehabilitation for seriously disabled people (20 654 people), 2 222 were 16 to 24-year-olds and 1 504 were 25 to 34-year-olds. Those with mild disabilities and those in institutional care are not included in this figure.⁴

Of the Finnish population, 538,805 15 to 24-year-olds and 499,497 25 to 34-year-olds belong to the Evangelical-Lutheran Church and 6 618/5 809 belong to the Finnish Orthodox Church. The largest of other churches are other Christian communities with 7 413/8897, Islam with 1 264/1 277, and Judaism with 159/153 young people. There are 104 669/166 724 young people who are not a part of any denomination.⁵

[1] Väestörakennetilasto. Tilastokeskus
The statistical life expectancy is a hypothetical mortality index that denotes the average life span of a generation in case the mortality rate does not change. In reality, mortality has constantly decreased and over half of each generation lives longer than the average life span. Life expectancy has, in fact, increased with approximately 10 years during the past 40 years. A girl who is born in 2010 is expected to live 83 years and a boy 77 years.¹

According to the population forecast for 2009-2060 by Tilastokeskus (Statistics Finland), the population of Finland will exceed six million in 2042. The forecast predicts that in 2034 the annual mortality rate exceeds the birth rate, although net immigration is expected to maintain population growth thereafter. The annual net immigration rate is expected to be 15 000 persons.²

At the end of 2009, there were 888,323 under 15-year-olds in Finland.

Population Forecast
This is the lowest count since 1895. The amount of under 15-year-olds has decreased uninterruptedly since 1994. At the end of 2009, the population dependency ratio or the proportion of under 15-year-olds and over 65-year-olds to 100 people of a working age was 50.6 percent.

The amount of working population decreases after the baby boom generation starts retiring. The proportion of working population (15 to 64-year-olds) in the whole population decreases from the current 66 percent to 58 percent by 2040 and to 56 percent by 2060. According to the forecast, the population dependency ratio would be 60.4 percent in 2016, which would reach 70.5 percent by 2026. In 2060, the population dependency ratio would be 79.1 percent.

A review of the effects of population forecasts on the production and availability of public sector services predicts a strong increase in services for the elderly, and, respectively, a decrease in the services directed to the children and young people, especially as regards social services, health care services, and education services.

From the point of view of labour market policy, the situation is predicted to signal labour shortage in certain industries. There will be a shortage of public sector employees, especially in the municipal sector. Kuntaliitto (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities) estimates that 223,000 employees, which is almost half the current staff, will retire in 2006-2020.

If the national migration continues as it has during the past five years, the population of Southern Savonia will diminish with 8 percent by 2030. The forecast suggests the second largest decrease, 6 percent, will be seen in Kainuu region. The largest relative population growth is predicted to happen in the regions of Åland Islands, Eastern Uusimaa, and Uusimaa. Their population would be 20 percent larger than today in 2030.

The Status and Activities of Young People

The youth can be divided into those outside labour force (of whom the majority are students), those who work, and those who are unemployed. In 2008, 55 percent of the 15 to 29-year-olds were actively working, 7.5 percent were unemployed, and 37 percent were outside labour force. The amount of the employed increases the higher the age. Of 15 to 19-year-olds, 24 percent are employed, 9 percent are unemployed, and 67 percent are outside labour force. Of 20 to 24-year-olds, 63 percent are employed, 8 percent are unemployed, and 29 percent are outside labour force. Of 25 to 29-year-olds, 79 percent are employed, 6 percent are unemployed, and 15 percent are outside labour force.¹

¹ Suomen tilastollinen vuosikirja 2009. Tilastokeskus

Young People at School

In 2007, 88 percent of 15 to 19-year-olds participated in education in Finland. 43 percent of 20 to 29-year-olds studied, which is the highest rate in all OECD countries.¹

In 2008, 3,602, or 5.6 percent, of those who completed their basic education did not continue studying immediately. Of those who completed their upper secondary education, 19,166, or 58.2 percent, did not continue studying immediately. However, considering the group of over 25-year-olds, over 70 percent have completed a vocational degree or an academic degree.²

There were 189 students who, in one way or the other, dropped out of their basic education in the academic year 2008/2009. There were 39 of those who completely neglected their compulsory education, and 150 of those who were no longer of the compulsory education age and had dropped out without a basic education certificate. The amount of school dropouts...
increased from the previous academic year by 27 pupils.²

According to the statistics of Opetushallitus (The Finnish National Board of Education), there were approximately 100,500 applicants in the national joint application for vocational and upper secondary school education in spring 2010, of which around 78 200, or 78 percent, will be awarded a placement in the education that started in autumn 2010. 2.4 percent of those who completed their basic education did not leave an application.²

Six percent of students dropped out of their degree studies and did not continue with any education aiming at a degree during the academic year 2007/2008. The drop-out rate in upper secondary education directed at youth was 4.5 percent, in vocational education for youth 10 percent, in university of applied sciences education 9 percent, and in university education 6 percent. If those who changed from one education sector to another, for example from upper secondary education to vocational education, are considered, the drop-out percentage decreases.²

If compared to the previous academic year, the drop-out rate increased slightly in all education sectors except vocational education, in which it decreased.²

Men are more prone to drop out than women. Approximately 8 000 young people in each age group remains without further education.²

In 2007, the amount of foreign language pupils and students, including basic education, was almost 50 000, or 3.8 percent of all students. The success in school of foreign language pupils at comprehensive school is significantly weaker than that of the original population and they are often left outside of further studies after comprehensive school. The status of second generation immigrants is better. The proportion of foreign language speakers who are accepted to higher education is over two times smaller than that of Finnish and Swedish speakers. The unemployment rate of foreign language speakers among those who have completed a degree in vocational education, university of applied sciences, or university is multifold as compared to the original population.³

The Livelihood and Working Life of Young People

Six out of ten 13 to 17-year-olds receive regular pocket money from their parents and the majority of them would also receive extra money if necessary. Parents give an average of 44 euros of regular pocket money per month. The amount of pocket money increases with age. The differences between income groups seem to have balanced since 2007, when the children of large income families would get considerably more regular pocket money.¹

During the academic year 2008/2009, there were 271,747 17 to 29-year-old students, which means 31 percent of the age group, within the Student Financial Aid system. The average Student Financial Aid was 346,90 euros per month. 286,033 persons had taken a student loan, 40 percent of these were still studying. The average amount of student loan was 4696 euros.²

A good fifth of 15 to 28-year-olds have combined studies and work. Studying alongside work is, on average, more common with students at universities of applied sciences and universities than other students.³ Girls work more than boys and working alongside studies is more common in Southern Finland than in other parts of the country. The amount of those working during holidays has decreased and summer jobs are not as readily available as before.¹

In 2009, working is still the most important way of financing one’s studies. 36 percent of students report financing their studies primarily by working. Working is the most important financing method for 56 percent of 25 to 28-year-olds. Student Financial Aid is the second most important financing method; the proportion is currently 25 percent. The third most important financing method is the support from family and relatives. The fourth and fifth most important methods are own savings and student loan.³

Working does not, however, have to mean neglecting the studies. The European Union discusses educational exclusion in the case of those 18 to 24-year-olds who only have a basic education degree and are not studying. In Finland, there were 9.8 percent of these young people in 2008.⁴

The employment of a young person is commonly untypical temporary employment or part-time work. The proportion of those in a so called normal employment or a full-time job was increasing before the depression, but decreased in 2009. More than every third 15 to 24-year-old has a normal
The regular working time of 15 to 24-year-old employees that has been recorded in statistics is 31 hours a week on average, when it is 37 hours in all employees. [5] 37 percent of 15 to 24-year-old employees work in shifts, which is more than employees on average. Young people often work on Saturdays and evenings as well. This makes it possible to combine studies with work. [4]

Commerce employs the largest quantities: in 2009, commerce offered work for approximately 89 000 young people. Proportionally the largest amount of young people work within hotel and restaurant business; of the employees, 45 percent are less than 30 years old. In 2007, 94 000 young people worked within industry, but in 2009 there were only 67 000. Public administration, education sector, and health care and social services also employ young people. [4]

In 2009, 12 360 16 to 29-year-olds were on disability pension. [6]

Child disability allowance is paid to disabled children or children with chronic conditions who are under 16 years old. In 2009, 33 243 children were on disability allowance. [6]

Adult disability allowance is paid to a person who is over 16 years old and whose functional ability is weakened due to an illness or injury. Its purpose is mainly to provide financial support to those working age people not on disability retirement. In 2009, 3916 16 to 34-year-olds received this support. [6]

Pensioners’ care allowance can be granted to a person who has turned 16 and its purpose is to enable chronically ill or disabled pensioners live at home. In 2009, 10 141 16 to 34-year-olds were granted this support. [6]

Youth Unemployment

Statements suggesting that young people’s attitudes towards work and the working life have changed, and that their appreciation of work has decreased are not true. According to Nuorisobarometri (Finnish Youth Barometer), young people’s attitudes towards work have not eroded: work is still appreciated.\(^1\)

According to Työvoimatutkimus (Labour Force Survey), in 2009, the average unemployment rate of 15 to 24-year-olds was 25 percent of youth of working age. If the rate is extended to include all young people, comprising students, the figure is over 10 percent.

There is considerable regional variation in youth unemployment. The unemployment rate is the lowest in Uusimaa and the highest in Northern Ostrobothnia.\(^2\)

In 2009, 10 459 17 to 29-year-olds received basic unemployment allowance and labour market support was granted to 34 493 young people due to having been unemployed for more than 500 days or due to not meeting the employment condition. This is 44 952 young people altogether.\(^3\)

During 2007 and 2008, youth employment situation was better than in 16 years, but in summer 2008, the amount of young employed began decreasing due to the depression. The employment rate continued dropping in 2009 when the amount of 15 to 29-year-old employees decreased with approximately 40 000. Youth unemployment doubled in 2008-2009. Most of the unemployed, 32 000, were under 25 years old. The employment rate of young men diminished more than that of young women.\(^4\)

In addition to the traditional unemployment rate and registered unemployment, a sign of the rapid deterioration is, according to Työvoimatutkimus (Labour Force Survey), also the fact that the amount of non-active young people is on the increase. According to the survey, the increase is particularly strong in those under 20-year-olds who are invisible in all registers, because they do not register themselves as unemployed as they would not be granted unemployment benefit.\(^5\)

The strong increase in youth unemployment that started in autumn 2008 has stopped in the late summer 2010 and the youth unemployment rate has started gradually decreasing. In September 2008, there were 29 000 unemployed job seekers under 25 years old registered as job seekers at the Employment and Economic Development Offices. The amount was 5 000 less than in September of the previous year. The unemployment rate of young
people aged 15 to 24 was 16.2 percent in September, which is 0.3 percent less than in September of the previous year. The general unemployment rate was 7 percent.\textsuperscript{6}

Long-term unemployment in young people has been prevented, however, in the conditions of the depression. At the end of September 2009, only 183 of those 33,952 young people who were unemployed were unemployed a year later.\textsuperscript{7}

The employment of immigrants follows economic cycles and is more challenging than that of the original population. The longer the immigrant has been in the country, the easier it is to get a job. There were approximately 35,059 immigrant job seekers in 2009, 16,256 of them were unemployed job seekers.\textsuperscript{7}

The unemployment rate of foreign citizens was approximately three times higher than with the original population. The unemployment rate has, however, been significantly decreasing. It has almost halved from 2000, when it was 31.8 percent, until September 2008, when it was 17.7 percent. In 2006, the most common professions among those with immigrant background or those who are foreign language speakers were sanitation person, sales person, and driver. 9,000 employees, or 20 percent, of all foreign language speakers were employed in these professions.\textsuperscript{8}

In 2007, the proportion of foreign language speakers in the age group of 20 to 24-year-olds was about 11 percent lower than with Finnish speaking people, and about 16 percent lower than with Swedish speaking people. In the age group of 25 to 29-year-olds, the differences reached 25 percent as compared to Finnish speakers and over 30 percent as compared to Swedish speakers.\textsuperscript{8}

That the disabled are left outside the working life is taken for granted too often. In 2007, it was estimated that approximately 17 percent of Finnish disabled were a part of the working life. The main reasons behind the significant unemployment rate are employers’ prejudices, lack of education, the degree of difficulty of the disability, the lack of necessary changes at work place, and the lack of support and counselling.\textsuperscript{9}

According to Kulutustutkimus (a consumer research), there were 344,000 under 30-year-olds’ households in 2006. This is 14 percent of all households. Of young adults’ households, the majority were households of single people or childless couples. Households of under 30-year-olds consumed 18,100 euros per consumption unit in 2006. There was an actual increase of 12 percent in the consumption expenditure of young adults’ households from 2001, whereas the consumption expenditure of all households increased approximately 18 percent. As a consequence, the position of young households weakened in comparison to other households. The increase in consumption expenditure of young people’s households is behind other households even in the 2000s.

Young people’s households’ consumption structure does not differ significantly from other working age households: living costs, transportation, and food expenditure are over 50 percent of all expenditures. The difference is, however, the euro level of consumption. For example, the living costs of 30 to 64-year-olds are around one forth higher than in young people’s households in 2006. 70 percent of young people’s households are located in apartment buildings. The same percentage lives in a rental apartment. Of other households of working aged people, the majority live in small houses whose living costs are higher than the average. The transportation expenditure in young people’s households is also clearly lower than in all households, which is partly explained by the fact that older households often own a car. 62 percent of young people’s households use a car, whereas 80 percent of 30 to 64-year-olds’ households use a car.

Some differences can also be detected in the expenditure structure. The proportion of young people’s hotel, cafeteria, and restaurant expenditures of all expenditures is larger than in other households. Similarly, this refers to the amount of used euros. Young people’s households are also more prepared to invest in culture and free-time, although, in euros, the older households spend a bit more. Young

The Status of Young People’s Households
In 2009, 40 percent of 15 to 28-year-olds have loans. This means, proportioned to the population included in a research by Finanssialan keskusliitto (Federation of Finnish Financial Services), approximately 372,000 young persons. The proportion of young people who have loans is smaller than in the entire population, as half of the entire population of 15 to 74-year-olds have loans. 14 percent of young people have a student loan, 15 percent have a mortgage on the house at the moment, and 20 percent use consumption credit. Due to the economic uncertainty, the proportions of all loan takers decreased from 2008 to 2009. The age group of 25 to 28-year-olds have the largest amount of loans. 71 percent of them have some kind of a loan.

[1] Nuorten rahankäyttötutkimus. Finanssialan keskusliitto

Young People’s Payment Defaults

In 2009, almost 57,000 under 30-year-olds, or seven percent of the entire age group, had at least one payment default entry. In the older age groups, the percentage is 50 percent less. Young people’s payment default entries are strongly increasing; in January-March 2010, a total of 65,000 new payment default entries were registered for under 30-year-old young people. This is almost 50 percent more than in 2008 and 10 percent more than in 2009.

The reasons behind young people’s payment defaults are most commonly unpaid payday loans or phone bills, but also arrears of rent are common with young people. Typical of young people’s payment default entries is, however, that the amount of debts is usually only a few hundred euros.¹

Children and Young People in Poverty

The proportion of poor families with children has increased significantly over the past 10 years. 32 percent of Finnish single parent families are below the poverty line. Of all families with children, over 14 percent are below the poverty line. The financial difficulties of a family is a significant risk for a young person’s well-being.¹

International recommendations define low-income people as those who are a part of a household whose income per consumption unit is smaller than 60 percent of the median income. In 2008, a low-income person earned less than 13,758 euros per year.²

In 2008, the proportion of child poverty, that is, of children under 18 years old in a low-income household, was 13.2 percent of all under 18-year-olds. The low-income rate of 18 to 29-year-olds living alone is over 40 percent.²

In 2008, income support was granted to a total of 339,394 persons. 6.4 percent of the population received income support. 89,529 minors and 84,935 18 to 29-year-olds received income support. 51 percent of those receiving income support were young people. In 2008, 10 percent of all children and young people received income support.³

Maintenance allowance is financial support paid by Kela (The Social Security Institution in Finland) that is intended to secure the maintenance of a child when he/she does not receive it

²
³
from a parent liable to provide maintenance. At the end of 2009, 95,900 children and 65,000 families received this allowance. The amount of children who receive maintenance allowance increased with 2.3 percent from last year, whereas during the past 10 years, the amount had decreased. The proportion of 0 to 17-year-olds receiving maintenance allowance is 8.8 percent.\footnote{Elatustukea saaneiden lasten määrä nousi. Kela: tiedote. http://www.kela.fi/it/kelasto/kt_2010_04_21/$File/TK_2010_04_21_Elatustukea_saaneiden_lasten_m%C3%A4%C3%A4%C3%A4_nois.pdf?OpenElement}

4


\[2\] Tulonjakotilasto. Tilastokeskus

\[3\] Toimeentulotuki 2008. Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos

\[4\] Young People’s Housing and Migration

Finnish youth move away from home relatively young as compared to most Europeans. Finnish men move away from home at the age of 21 on average, whereas youth in Bulgaria, Greece, and Italy move away from home after turning 30. The median age for women moving away varies between approximately 20 years in Finland to 28 years in Greece, Spain, Italy, Malta, and Slovenia.\footnote{In 1995, under 50 percent of 21-year-olds lived at home, but in 2007, the amount was even less than a third. 10 percent of 30-year-olds lived at home in 1985, but the proportion has gone down to 5 percent in 2007. Less than a fourth of 21-year-old young people who lived in urban municipalities lived at home in 2007, whereas 60 percent of those who lived in rural municipalities still lived at home. Both men and women move and live alone at first.}

Three fourths of young people rent an apartment. The current high rental level and lack of rental apartments concerns all young people.\footnote{Nowadays, every fifth 18 to 29-year-old lives with their parents. Three years ago, it was only every tenth person. However, only one out of twenty pays actual rent to their parents.}

In 2009, less than a fifth of homeless people were young people and the amount of homeless young people started increasing again after decreasing for a long period of time. There were 1,498 homeless young people.\footnote{The amount of homeless immigrants has increased with a couple of hundred from last year, which means 532 persons.}
Young People and Free-time

In a research on free-time in 2009, young people were asked to evaluate their satisfaction with various areas of life using school grades from 4-10. The majority of the young people seem satisfied with their lives: the most common grades were eight and nine, and only very few give very low grades for any area. As a whole, the life satisfaction has not changed, but satisfaction with free-time and especially financial situation is decreasing.¹

The time 25 to 30-year-old young adults spend awake at home is around eight hours a day. The groups that spend the highest amounts of time awake at home are full-time mothers and fathers (approximately 12 hours), and the unemployed (approximately 10 hours). The amount is slightly over 7 hours as regards entrepreneurs and those in leadership positions, clerical employees, or experts. The most common activities at home are taking care of oneself and free-time activities (such as following media, socialising, and hobbies).²

In their assessments, the most important things for young people are, firstly, unorganised activities with friends, secondly, time with family, and only thirdly, organised civic activities.¹

Two out of three of young people have a creative hobby. 40 percent have more than one. The majority of the creative hobbies are at least weekly events. Young women have more creative hobbies than men and they are also more regular with hobbies.³

92 percent of 3 to 18-year-olds do sports. The number of sports club members is decreasing, although 42 percent of children belong to a club. 57 percent of 15 to 24-year-old men and 74 percent of women did sports at least 2-3 times a week in 2008.⁴

63 percent of 13 to 19-year-olds and 66 percent of 20 to 29-year-olds read newspapers in 2008. Both percentages have diminished with 4 percent since 2007.⁶

In January-May 2010, 15 to 24-year-olds watched television for approximately 105 minutes a day (92 minutes in 2009). 25 to 44-year-olds watch television 158 minutes a day (154 minutes in 2009). The amounts are low, however, as compared to adults, who spend

almost double the amount of time on watching television, and to pensioners who watch television three times more.7

Using the Internet has bypassed watching television as a free-time activity of 15 to 19-year-olds and almost of 20 to 24-year-olds. However, a part of the Internet use is watching television or film material.8

89 percent of 15 to 19-year-olds use the Internet daily and 8 percent several times a week. The corresponding figures with 20 to 30-year-olds are 93 and 6.8

Over 90 percent of 25 to 30-year-olds use the Internet daily or almost daily. 61 percent of 25 to 30-year-olds belong to a virtual community. 57 percent use an average of 10 hours or more a week on the Internet, 33 percent say they use 4-9 hours, and 10 percent less than that. As much as 35 percent of men and 19 percent of women reach 20 hours per week.2

According to a youth crime survey in 2008, 69 percent of youth admitted having uploaded files from the Internet without permission during the past 12 months. Of these youth, the uploading was daily or almost daily for almost a third. The most common uploads were music and films.9

11 percent of all holders of a driving licence are 18 to 24-years-old. 28 percent of all single-vehicle accidents and 20 percent of collisions were caused by young people. Young people were the adversary of a collision in one percent of the cases. The most typical ac-
cidents with young men were single-vehicle accidents and with young women collisions. 25 percent of fatal accidents are caused by 18 to 24-year-old drivers. 31 percent of those young drivers who caused a fatal accident were intoxicated, whereas 26 percent of over 24-year-olds were intoxicated.\textsuperscript{10}

Free-time activities are not equally accessible to all young people. Social background and living environment affect how meaningful free-time surroundings and activities feel. One fifth of young people mention lack of money as an obstacle for participation, which can be considered a great challenge in supporting the well-being of young people’s everyday life in today’s Finland. Equal possibilities to spend free-time should be guaranteed also in case there is inequality in the starting points of the youth.\textsuperscript{1}

Immigrant youth participate in hobbies and free-time activities actively and only around 8 percent say they did not have a hobby. The obstacles for participating in youth activities are experiences or notions of prejudice in other youth and the leaders.\textsuperscript{11}

Young People’s Health

Over 80 percent of 13 to 22-year-olds evaluated their health as good or very good. Only 2-4 percent said it was bad or very bad. On the other hand, every tenth 12 to 18-year-old say they have a chronic disease (usually diabetes, asthma, or allergy), disorder, or injury that troubles their everyday life. Of stress-related symptoms, neck, shoulder, and back problems, as well as tiredness have increased.\textsuperscript{1}

There were no significant changes

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{1}] Sami Myllyniemi: Aika vapaalla. Nuorten vapaa-aikatutkimus 2009. Opetusministeriö, Nuorisosiain neuvottelukunta ja Nuorisotutkimusseura/Nuorisotutkimusverkosto, julkaisuja 92
\item[\textsuperscript{2}] Taina Mäntylä:  Nuorten aikuisten koti, kulutus ja ajankäyttö, Kuluttajaviraston julkaisusarja 3/2010
\item[\textsuperscript{4}] Tilastollinen vuosikirja 2009. Tilastokeskus
\item[\textsuperscript{5}] Kansallinen liikuntatutkimus 2009-2010. Suomen Liikunta ja Urheilu
\item[\textsuperscript{6}] Kansallinen mediatutkimus 2008. Sanomalehtien liitto
\item[\textsuperscript{7}] Tv-mittaritutkimus. Finnpanel oy
\item[\textsuperscript{8}] Viestintäministeriön markkinakatsaus 3/2010
\item[\textsuperscript{11}] Päivi Harinen, Mitähän tekis? - Monikulttuuriset nuoret, vapaa-aika ja kansalaistoimintaan osallistuminen -tutkimushankkeen raportti
\end{itemize}
in how pupils experience their health between 1994 and 2006. Boys evaluate their health in a more positive way in general than girls. Although the majority of pupils evaluate their health in a positive way, having symptoms became more common during the review period. It was more common in pupils at upper comprehensive school to have symptoms than at lower comprehensive school, and it was more common in girls than in boys.

Experiencing several symptoms daily, almost daily tiredness, weekly neck or shoulder pains and headaches have become more common since 2002/2003 among 8th and 9th graders at comprehensive school. In 2008/2009, 16 percent experienced almost daily tiredness and 19 percent experienced at least two symptoms daily. 31-33 percent of pupils had weekly neck and shoulder pains, and headaches. In addition, moderate and severe depression decreased at first, but has become more common at the end of the decade and returned to 13 percent.

The amount of young people who receive sickness allowance has increased steadily since 1999. In 2008, the proportion of under 25-year-olds who received sickness benefit was 0.47 percent of the whole population. At the end of 2008, 2.2 percent of under 25-year-olds received some illness-based income benefit, including rehabilitation allowance. The corresponding proportion was 1.5 percent in 1995.

Based on a study of health habits, the proportion of overweight youth tripled between 1977 and 2005. In 2009, every fifth 15 to 24-year-old man and every sixth 15 to 24-year-old woman was obese. The weight of all young people has, however, not increased, but the most obese ones are more obese than before.

Unfavourable living conditions in childhood predict poor health and life-styles that are detrimental to health in young adulthood. For example, parents’ smoking and alcohol abuse are passed down as operation models to children and many childhood problems predict bad health in young adulthood. Education also affects health. Young adults who have completed only basic education often have a more unhealthy life-style than those with a higher education.

According to a school health survey, the proportion of those who found it difficult to access the school nurse or doctor has slightly increased. In 2008/2009, 14 percent of upper comprehensive school pupils found it difficult to access the reception of a school nurse and 23 percent found it difficult to access a doctor. In 2008/2009, 23 percent were unsatisfied with school
Young People and Sexuality

Puberty begins dramatically earlier than before in Europe. Girls reach their sexual maturity three years earlier than 100 years ago, usually between 10.5 and 15.5 years. The gap between sexual maturity and psychosocial maturity is constantly growing.¹

According to a school health survey, four out of five upper comprehensive school pupils, two out of three lukio (upper secondary school) students, and one third of vocational education students do not have intercourse experiences. 91-94 percent of boys and 95-97 percent of girls feel that refusing unwanted sexual behaviour is easy. However, five percent of girls in lukio (upper secondary school) and 12 percent of girls in vocational education have experienced intercourse against their will.²

In a 2006 survey by Väestöliitto (The Family Federation), approximately 11 percent of 8th graders have experienced unwanted touching of their intimate parts. 4.1 percent of boys and 2.3 percent of girls have experienced forcing to intercourse or other sexual activity.¹

Young people’s sexual health improved steadily until the mid-1990s, but after that, the indicators show de-
Approximately every fifth young person suffers from some form of mental imbalance. The most common mental health problems are mood disorders, anxiety, behavioural problems, and substance abuse related disorders.

Having multiple problems and simultaneous disorders is typical of young people’s mental health problems.1 Moderate and severe depression is more typical in girls than in boys. The prevalence of depression has var-

ied a little with girls in the 2000s, but has remained the same with boys. In 2008/2009, 18 percent of upper comprehensive school girls and 8 percent of boys had moderate or severe depression. 13 percent of girls at lukio (upper secondary school) and 7 percent of boys suffered from depression.\(^2\)

In 2008, 5 800 sickness allowance periods started for under 30-year-olds due to depression. The increase from 2004 was 45.6 percent. For men, 2 000 sickness allowances started and the increase is 39.5 percent. For women, the corresponding figures are 800 and 49.0 percent. From 2000 to 2008, the amount of under 30-year-olds retiring because of mental health problems more than doubled. Only in 2008, 1 848 young people retired due to mental health problems, of whom over 400 were depressed. During the review period, the amount of depression-caused retirement in young men increased 66.7 percent and the amount of women increased as much as 181.8 percent.\(^3\)

Depression found in adolescence predicts daily smoking, alcohol abuse, regular binge drinking, and abuse of snuff tobacco and drugs. The majority of depressed youth could be reached within school health care, which deserves more attention in the form of more resources such as quick availability of school psychologist services and co-operation between youth psychiatry units.\(^4\)

126 persons on average commit suicide in the age group of 10 to 24-year-olds, of whom 75 percent are men. The suicides of young men have diminished since 1990.\(^1\)

Young People and Social Exclusion

The well-being of the majority of youth has increased, but for a minority of 15-20 percent, it has decreased. Difficult problems accumulate among a small minority (3-5 percent) and their problems are very severe. Ministry of the Interior Affairs has brought social exclusion into the forefront as the most important internal threat. A special focus is particularly on social exclusion.

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\(^3\) Raimo Raitasalo ja Kaarlo Maaniemi: Mielenterveyden häiriöt aiheuttavat nuorille yhä enemmän sairauspoissaoloja. Sosiaalivakuutus 4/09
of children and young people, and on passing the problems on from generation to generation. It has been estimated that the cost of a person who becomes socially excluded when they are young is 1.2 million euros during his/her life span.¹

The amount of young people at risk of social exclusion or outside statistics has been determined in many ways. The results of the calculations vary between 13 000 and 100,000.

Social exclusion has a lot to do with interrupted education, as, in order to become employed, it is often crucial to have a certificate of having completed basic education. A couple of hundred adolescents (189 persons in 2009) each year do not get their basic education certificate. 10 percent of students dropped out of vocational education in 2008-2009 (9 percent in 2006), 9 percent out of universities of applied sciences (6 percent in 2006), 6 percent out of universities (5 percent in 2006), and 4.5 percent out of lukio (high school) (2 percent in 2006). Men drop out more often than women.²

Approximately 8 000 young persons in each age group remain without further education.²

According to a labour force survey, as unemployment increases, the amount of non-active youth increases. The increase is particularly strong in under 20-year-olds, who do not show up in any registers because they do not register themselves as unemployed as they cannot get unemployment benefit.³

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, in each age group, there are 1000 young people of whose activities there is no information. This means that of all 15 to 29-year-olds 15 000 are “lost”.⁴

Those young people who only have basic education have difficulties in making a connection to the modern labour market requiring qualifications. Hence, it is not only an educational policy question, it is more broadly related to social exclusion. There are approximately 14 000 15 to 24-year-olds who are at risk of social exclusion in the previously described manner.²

According to a survey by Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos (THL) (National Institute for Health and Welfare) (2008), there are at least 65 000 children and young people at risk of social exclusion.⁵

THL defines the core of social exclusion as those children who are in foster care outside their homes. In 2008, altogether 16 000 children and young people were in foster care outside of their homes. Of these, 11 000 were under custody. The amount has increased with 3 percent form last year. The amount of children and young people who are in foster care has re-
cently increased with an annual rate of 2-5 percent.\(^5\)

The total amount of customers in child protection open care increased further in 2008. There was an increase of almost eight percent as compared to the previous year. In 2008, there were altogether 67 000 children and young people as customers within the child protection social work and support of open care.\(^5\)

THL sees young people’s mental health problems also as a prediction of social exclusion.\(^5\)

Loneliness is one of the reasons behind young people’s problems. Although the proportion of pupils who do not have close friends has decreased at the end of the 2000s, 14 percent of boys and 6 percent of girls at 8th and 9th grades at comprehensive school say they do not have any close friends. Similarly, 12 percent of boys and 5 percent of girls at lukio (upper secondary school) do not have a close friend.\(^6\)

There may be friends, but no one seems to listen or discuss important questions. A young person, who feels lonely, can show symptoms of this by being restless, disobedient, and infest in many ways such as pilfering or illegal spraying/tagging, or damaging property in other ways. Prolonged loneliness can lead to desperate deeds such as violence, severe substance abuse, and suicidal thoughts.

Disability is often connected with loneliness that affects mental health and energy-levels, and that increases the possibility of depression. Mental health or substance abuse services that are in inaccessible locations or lack of staff in psychiatric hospitals often compromise getting mental support for the severely disabled.\(^7\)

There may be pressure for change towards an immigrant’s own culture in the new home country. In an environment whose norms seem forceful and require adjustment, it is likely that the immigrant’s own culture provides something that he/she resorts to much more than in the original country. The growth of immigrant youth is defined by, in addition to growing in the middle ground of youth and adulthood, growing in the middle ground of two or more cultures. At the greatest risk of social exclusion are particularly those immigrant youth who break from the membership of both their new home country, and their original country and family.\(^8\)

Using services directed to disturbance-oriented people such as child and youth psychiatry, placement in custody outside home by child protection, and special education has increased rapidly. Research Professor Matti Rimpelä estimated in 2008 that the previously mentioned customer-
ship types are 2-4 times more common than at the beginning of the 1990s.⁹

In autumn 2008, the civil servants and elected officials were asked to estimate whether the municipality had acted sufficiently to prevent young people’s social exclusion and to help them in problematic situations. Almost 40 percent of the decision-makers were satisfied with the operation of their municipality and less than a third were not satisfied. The remaining third was not able to evaluate the operation of their municipality in any way.¹⁰

An extra investment of at least 60 million euros to maternity and child health clinics, school health care, and health care centres providing student health care is required, so that the recommended minimum goals can be reached in all municipalities.¹¹

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### Relationship with Parents

Young people estimate that their relationship with their parents as a child was mostly very good.¹ Difficulties in discussing with parents have decreased in the 2000s.² In general, both girls and boys find their relationship with their mother better than with their father. Young people meet their parents more seldom than in the 1990s.¹

A negative shift has occurred in parents’ awareness of their children’s whereabouts during weekend evenings. In 2008/2009, 39 percent of up-
per comprehensive school pupils said that their parents did not always know where they spend their weekend evenings.²

Of OECD countries, Finnish families eat together the least often. Less than 60 percent of families eat together at least five times a week, whereas in other OECD countries the amount is 80 percent on average. According to a school health survey by Stakes (since 2009: National Institute for Health and Welfare), more than half of upper comprehensive school pupils do not eat at the same time with their families.³

The law prohibits corporal punishment. Corporal punishments by parents to their children have decreased very much during the past 20 years. Despite this, violence in families is still relatively common.⁴ There is more violence and heavy substance abuse in Finnish families than in other Scandinavian families. One out of ten 12 to 13-year-olds and 15 to 16-year-olds had been victims of corporal punishment by their parents.⁵ Violence in the family concerns, based on conservative estimates, 17 percent of Finnish children and causes substantial human suffering and burdens service systems.⁴

Almost one fourth of Finns (23 percent) report substance abuse in their childhood home.⁶ Almost 14 percent of the respondents in the school health survey in 2009 felt that the alcohol abuse of a close relative causes disadvantages and problems in the life of the young person.⁷

Constant fear of a family member in childhood, divorce of parents, continued financial problems, severe conflicts in the family, serious illness of a family member, or problems with alcohol increase the risk of early retirement, depression, or coronary artery disease, and increases the likelihood of bad quality of sleeping in adulthood.⁸

The amount of children and young people placed in foster care outside their homes has increased during the past years. In 2008, over 16 000 children and young people were cared for
outside their homes. In addition, there are 67,000 children and young people within the open care support system. Taking in custody and emergency foster care are increasing with a yearly rate of 2-6 percent. In 2008, the increase was 5.3 percent from the previous year. In 2009, over 76,000 child protection reports were made that concerned over 50,000 children, of which 48 percent concerned 13 to 17-year-olds.9

According to a pupil survey by WHO, the school experiences of young people became more positive between 1994 to 2006. At the same time, the proportion of those who did not like school at all increased. Boys have a more negative general attitude towards school than girls in all grades.1

According to yearly school health surveys targeted at 8th and 9th graders at comprehensive school, 1st and 2nd year students at lukio (upper secondary school) and at vocational schools, the proportion of those who found there were shortages in the physical working conditions diminished until 2004/2005 and the proportion of those who felt the work load is too too heavy diminished until 2006/2007. In the most recent surveys, 35 percent of upper comprehensive school pupils found shortages in the physical working conditions and 39 percent felt the work load was too heavy.2

Lack of support in case of school difficulties has diminished a little during the past years: in 2008/2009, 9 percent of pupils did not get enough support. The proportion of those pupils who did not like school at all has de-

References:

School Satisfaction

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Lack of support in case of school difficulties has diminished a little during the past years: in 2008/2009, 9 percent of pupils did not get enough support. The proportion of those pupils who did not like school at all has de-
Experiences of not being heard at school have remained at the same level and work atmosphere problems have slightly increased. In 2008/2009, 29-30 percent of upper comprehensive school pupils experienced problems in the work atmosphere at school and felt they were not heard at school.²

Burnout at school was more common in girls than in boys at lukio (upper secondary school). The difference has remained the same between the two surveys asking this question. In 2008/2009, 14 percent of girl students and 9 percent of boy students had burnout at school. At upper comprehensive school, there was no significant difference between genders as to burnout at school: 14 percent of girls and 12 percent of boys experienced burnout at school. The proportion of those pupils who went to bed later than 11 PM on school nights has increased from 23 percent to 27 percent during the past six years. Boys are more prone to stay up late in evenings preceding school days than girls. The difference has diminished during the past six years. In 2008/2009, 45 percent of boys and 28 percent of girls at lukio (upper secondary school) went to bed after 11 PM on school nights. The corresponding proportions in upper comprehensive school pupils were 31 percent of boys and 22 percent of girls.²

Pupils’ positive experience of safety at school seems to have become more common, particularly from 2002 to 2006. The research does not show the recent school violence cases and school threats yet. The youth feel unsafe at school because of bullying, for example, and because there is not enough supervision to prevent bullying.¹

Young People’s Substance Abuse

18 percent of 15 to 24-year-old men and 14 percent of women smoke daily, while in 1988-1992, 29 percent of young men and 24 percent of young women smoked. 71 percent of young men and 68 percent of women were non-smokers.¹

Smoking experiments have decreased in 1977-2009. In 2008-2009, the decrease in experiments continued, except for 14-year-old boys, in which group the amount of experi-

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menters increased. Almost a third of 18-year-olds have not tried smoking. Approximately every fourth (24 percent) 16 to 18-year-old smokes daily. The extended decrease in daily smoking stopped in 2008-2009 and started increasing again in 14 to 16-year-old boys.

Snuff tobacco experiments decreased at the beginning of the 2000s. In 2007-2009, the amount of those 14, 16, and 18-year-old boys who tried snuff tobacco increased, however. In addition, the amount of those who use snuff tobacco are on the increase.

Rolling cigarettes from leaf tobacco became more common in 2007-2009 than in earlier years. The last time rolling cigarettes became this popular was during the economic depression at the beginning of the 1990s as young people’s available funds decreased.

Although binge drinking has decreased in Finnish school children in the 2000s, it is still more common among them than in Europe on average. In 2007, more than half of 9th graders had been drunk at least once, around one third in the past month, and around one tenth got drunk almost weekly. The attitudes towards binge drinking have become more strict since the previous survey in 2003. Similarly, binge drinking starts later than in earlier years.

In 2008, six percent of 15 to 24-year-old men and three percent of women drank hard liquor at least once a week. In 2007, alcohol was the cause of 10 deaths in 15 to 24-year-olds.

The positive development of sobriety has stopped in 14 to 18-year-olds and in both sexes during the past two years. The decrease turned into an increase in 16 to 18-year-olds, binge drinking also increased. The proportion of those 18-year-olds who drink until they are really drunk is the highest since 1977, especially in girls. (12-year-olds are still in their childhood and substances are not a part of their everyday life, so their substance abuse has remained rare.)

Only under half a percent of young people have tried doping.
Drug abuse in Finland has not become nearly as common as in Central Europe and many Southern European countries. In a survey in 2007, eight percent of 15 to 16-year-olds had tried cannabis.\(^4\)

Social exposure to drugs (a person knows at least one drug abuser and has been offered drugs) has been decreasing since the change of the millennium, but seems to have stopped now. The majority of drug offerings come from friends and acquaintances. This trend has been prevalent since the change of the millennium, when the proportion of strangers offering drugs started decreasing and, respectively, the proportion of acquaintances started increasing.\(^2\)

In the recent school health survey, 22 percent of vocational education students and 16 percent of lukio (upper secondary school) students said they had tried cannabis at least once. In the survey of 2008, the proportions were approximately four percent less. 18 percent of boys and 14 percent of girls in lukio (upper secondary school), 23 percent of boys and 21 percent of girls in vocational education, and 10 percent of boys and 6 percent of girls in comprehensive school reported having tried cannabis. As to experimenting other illegal drugs, there did not seem to be a significant change.\(^5\)

\[1\] Tilastollinen vuosikirja 2009. Tilastokeskus
\[3\] Sami Myllyniemi: Nuorisobarometri 2009. Nuorisoasiain neuvottelukunta
\[5\] Kouluverveyskysely 2010

**Bullying among Young People**

All kinds of bullying has clearly increased during the past ten years.\(^1\)

Bullying at school has become more common in pupils at upper comprehensive schools. In 2008, 7 percent of girls and every tenth boy said they had been bullied at least once a week during the academic year. In lukio (upper secondary school) students, bullying did not change (1-2 percent). 7 percent of boys and 3 percent of girls in vocational education have been bullied. Three out of four cases remain unnoticed by school staff.\(^2\)

A relatively common, new technology related bullying among youth
seems to be bullying and harassment on the Internet or by mobile phone. In 2006, every fifth (18 percent) 13 to 16-year-old living in Helsinki said they had sometimes offended or threatened others by email, mobile phone, or on a message board on the Internet.\(^1\)

In 2008, one out of five 12 to 13-year-olds and one out of six 15 to 16-year-olds had been victims of text message bullying during the past year. Every tenth 12 to 13-year-old and every sixth 15 to 16-year-old had an experience of someone spreading rumours or writing bad things about them on the Internet.\(^1\)


Young People and Violence

In 2008, averagely every fifth upper comprehensive school pupil and vocational education student, and every sixth lukio (upper secondary school) student has experienced physical violence during the past year. Boys have experienced violence more often than girls. The proportion of those boys who have participated in a fight or beaten someone up, and the proportion of those who have been threatened to be harmed or who have been attacked (beaten, kicked, attacked with some kind of weapon) has clearly increased.\(^1\)

According to Kansallinen uhritutkimus (National victimisation survey) (2009) by Oikeuspoliittinen tutkimuslaitos (National Research Institute of Legal Policy), the younger the defendant is (between 17-74 years), the more likely it is that they have experienced violence. Over 20 percent of 27 to 24-year-olds and over 15 percent of 25 to 34-year-olds have experienced violence that caused an injury, other physical violence, or threatening.\(^2\)

During the past year, every third boy and every fifth girl have been threatened with violence. 25 percent of boys and 16 percent of girls have experienced physical violence. Violence requiring visiting a nurse, doctor, or dentist is, however, rare. Situations in which a young person has had something stolen from them by using violence or by threatening with violence are also rare. Becoming a victim of theft, bullying, or violence was more common in 2008 than during the previous 20 years.\(^2\)

A child victimisation survey imple-
mented in 2008 revealed that the majority of violence directed at 12 to 13-year-olds and 15 to 16-year-olds is done by other young people. Approximately every third young person have experienced violent behaviour by a peer or a sibling during the year preceding the survey.³

In 2008, a youth crime survey targeted at 15 to 16-year-olds mapped out young people’s experiences in dating violence. (In the material, 28 percent of girls and 19 percent of boys were dating.) Of dating young people, every fourth had experienced physical violence or the threat of physical violence by their dating partner. The most common cases were prohibiting movement and grabbing, as well as slapping. 2 percent of dating girls and 9 percent of dating boys reported having been hit with a fist or a hard object, or kicked by their current partner. Experiencing physical violence in a dating relationship is more common for boys than girls. Boys’ experiences in repeated physical dating violence were also more common than girls.²

Registered bodily harm of 15 to 17-year-olds and 18 to 20-year-olds in particular has increased relatively much during the past 20 years. In 18 to 20-year-olds, this development has continued in the 2000s, whereas the level of registered bodily harm cases in 15 to 17-year-olds has remained relatively stable. In both age groups, the amount of registered bodily harm cases decreased in 2009. In the age group of under 15-year-olds, the registered cases have increased in the past years. The trend of homicide committed by under 18-year-olds is a decreasing one. In 2008, the underaged did not commit any homicides and in 2009 there were two cases.²

As regards long-term development of other serious violence cases, the amount of attempted homicides and severe bodily harm committed by children and young people has remained relatively stable. Instead, registered severe violence in the age group of 18 to 20-year-olds has been consistently on the increase.²

Young People and Crime

The proportion of under 21-year-olds in the penal code offences registered by the police in 2008 is approximately one fifth. The proportion of under 18-year-olds is less than 10 percent. In 2008, 15 to 17-year-olds committed 6 percent of all penal code offences, under 15-year-olds committed 3 percent of them. Young people’s attitudes towards criminal activities and to asocial behaviour have, however, become less tolerant. Violent crime has not increased. The most common crimes that a young person commits are thefts at shops, school, or home, and illegal uploading from the Internet.

The proportion of young age groups as suspects in penal code offences has decreased a bit in the 2000s. In 2000, the proportion of under 21-year-olds was a good fourth, and in 2009, it was around one fifth. The proportion of under 18-year-olds has gone down to less than 10 percent. The proportion of 15 to 17-year-olds has also decreased. In 2009, under 15-year-olds committed 3 percent and 15 to 17-year-olds 6 percent of penal code offences. Correspondingly, the proportion of over 20-year-olds has increased. This means that adults commit the majority of penal code crimes, but that youth is the most active time if proportioned to the sizes of the age groups. The amount of crimes in all crime groups committed by under 15-year-olds and over 20-year-olds are significantly lower than in the age group of 15 to 20-year-olds when proportioned to the sizes of the age groups. According to police statistics, the most criminally active life situation is at the age of 15-20 years.

Crimes in which the proportion of under 18-year-olds is great have to do with spending free-time, using alcohol, and age limit regulations. Vandalism, robbery, unauthorised or illegal use of vehicles, and malicious damage are relatively often committed by young people. Crimes that require methodicalness such as fraud, peculation, and financial crimes are rarely committed by young people. The proportion of drug crimes and drunk driving that the police know of is relatively small.

The most significant change concerning thefts has been the strong decrease in offences committed by 15 to 17-year-olds in the 1990s, which has balanced out in the 2000s. In addition, thefts committed by young adults have decreased, mainly in the 2000s. Proportioned to the sizes of age groups, 15 to 17-year-olds and 18 to 20-year-olds commit the most crimes.

Of vandalism reported to the police, the ones committed by 18 to 20-year-olds increased in the 1990s and
2000s. In addition, the amount of vandalism in the groups of 15 to 17-year-olds has increased in the long run, although less than in the group of young adults. In the age group of under 15-year-olds, vandalism registered by the police increased significantly a few years ago. However, in 2009, the registered vandalism cases decreased in all age groups of young people. Young people and young adults commit vandalism proportioned to the sizes of the age groups approximately six times more than adults.²

In particular, registered bodily harm offences have increased relatively much in 15 to 17-year-olds and 18 to 20-year-olds during the past 20 years. In 18 to 20-year-olds, this development has continued in the 2000s (see previous section about violence).²

In 2009, the police were notified of 1,007 hate crimes altogether, whereas in 2008, there were 859 cases. The increase is 17 percent. The most common crime was bodily harm. 85 percent of suspected hate crime cases had traits of racism. The total amount of racist crimes was 14 percent larger than in 2008. The suspect in racist cases was typically a 15 to 24-year-old Finnish man. The victims were also typically 15 to 24-year-olds. Nearly 60 percent of the victims were Finnish citizens such as Roma people and immigrants’ children born in Finland. Other than ethnicity or nationality based hate crimes are rare; other justifications are religion, sexual orientation, or disability.³

Informal activities are more clearly connected with young people’s general free-time satisfaction than organisation activities. Youth participation in organisations has decreased significantly during the 2000s. Approximately 45 percent of 10 to 29-year-olds participate in or are members of an organisation. A little less than half of them participate in the activities weekly. There has been a decrease in belonging to organisations as well as in participation. Acting in organisations has decreased especially in the youngest age group, that of under 15-year-olds.¹

The largest groups of those who participate in organisations participate in sports club activities, but this is also on the decrease.² 5 percent act in other youth organisations, which, in the survey, include political youth organisations.³

One third of young people think organisation and association activities serve well in learning leadership qualities. Many young people act in organisations that teach skills considered very useful in the working life as well.⁴

The concept of voluntary work is changing, but readiness to do voluntary work is, by no means, on the decrease, quite on the contrary. As regards new forms of voluntary work...
such as virtual voluntary work, short-term projects, and global voluntary work, doing voluntary work has even increased.³

There are extensive statistics about voluntary work starting from 2002, when the average Finn spent 17.5 hours on voluntary work each month. Youth participation was even more frequent than that; over 19 hours a month.³

Two fifths of Finnish youth would be ready to do voluntary work, if they were asked to do so. Only 25 percent would absolutely refuse, also when asked. Flow of information has, for long, been an obstacle for making voluntary work more common. Organisations are constantly searching out new methods, and the challenge is to find and recruit those young people who have not been reached yet. 40 percent of youth do not know the operation of the most significant organisations and 32 percent feel organisations are unapproachable. Only 8 percent of lukio (upper secondary school) students feel some civic organisation is important to them.³

Insufficient transportation and lack of accessibility to organisation facilities or meeting places may make it more difficult for a disabled youth to participate in the hobbies he/she is interested in. The dependency of disabled youth on their parents is increased, if the need for support is met with informal care and not an external personal assistant.⁵

According to a study in 2005, approximately 60 percent of the multicultural youth participated in organisations. Approximately 10 percent of youth participated in multicultural organisations, the largest groups, by far, in sports clubs. Many of the multicultural youth who participated in the study found influencing by participating relatively unlikely: around 80 percent of the youth thought that organisation activities do not have real influence in topical matters.⁶

Young People and Party Politics

The general attitude of young people towards party politics is negative. The Finnish youth very rarely support a party or plan to join one as adults. Only 27 percent of the Finnish youth are interested in some party, whereas the international average is 48 percent. People are less interested in parties only in Korea. Respectively, 12 percent of young people plan joining a party as adults, whereas the international average is 27 percent. Only Belgian and Czech youth have less intentions to join.¹

On the left-wing – right-wing line, the youth place themselves to the left more often than before, but this does not show as support of left-wing parties. Since 2004, adherence to Vasemmistoliitto (The Left Alliance) has gradually increased and adherence to SDP (the Social Democratic Party) has decreased according to the Nuorisobarometri (Youth Barometer). Adherence to Kokoomus (the National Coalition Party) has started a strong decrease since 2008 and Vihreät (the Green Party) has bypassed it as the most popular party. There are those among supporters of Vihreät and Perussuomalaiset (the True Finns Party) who identify themselves as left-wing. In two years, self-defined value liberalism has increased significantly.¹

[1] International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/iccs

Young People and Influencing

The civic knowledge of the Finnish and the Danish youth is internationally at top level. Despite this, Finnish youth are not interested in political and social issues, but trust the institutions of the society.¹

The Finnish youth are, in international comparisons, not interested in politics and social issues.

According to Nuorisobarometri 2010 (Youth Barometer), the proportion of those very interested in politics has steadily remained in 10 percent, but, at the same time, the proportion of “not at all interested” has more than doubled from 9 percent in 2003 to 21 percent in 2010.²

In international comparisons, the Finnish youth were at the bottom of the list as to interest in politics (46 percent interested) with Swedish, Belgian, Slovenian, and Norwegian youth.¹

Civic organisation activity does not interest the Finnish youth. Almost two
thirds (64 percent) of the Finnish youth have not participated in any civic organisation activities, whereas the international average is 35 percent. Only Taiwanese and Koreans are more passive.¹

Voting in elections is gradually rising from its low point. At its lowest, voting activity of youth is estimated to have been in the 1999 parliamentary elections, in which only a little more than half the youth are estimated to have voted. In 2003, the figure was already 54 percent and in the 2007 parliamentary elections the voting percentage is estimated to have been 56 percent. Despite the low figures, voting is still the most common way to influence society. The voting activity of youth remains 10-15 percent of the general voting activity.

In a questionnaire organised in the IRC Gallery of Finnish Youth Co-operation – Allianssi in autumn 2010, of all voting-age youth who responded, 64 percent are going to vote in the parliamentary elections next spring. No less than 70 percent of the respondents are going to vote in the presidential elections in spring 2012.

Students’ union activity is statutory in lukio (upper secondary school) and vocational institutions. Some of the upper comprehensive schools also have a students’ union. The majority of upper comprehensive school pupils and upper secondary education students do not, however, know how they could influence the matters of their school. 35 percent of lukio students (upper secondary school), 46 percent of upper comprehensive school pupils, and half of the vocational education students do not know the ways of influencing.³

Section 8 in the Youth Act 2006 states that, “Young people must be given opportunities to take part in the handling of matters concerning local and regional youth work and youth policy. Further, young people shall be heard in matters concerning them.”

In 2007, there was a child and/or youth influence group in approximately 60 percent of the responded municipalities in mainland Finland. The amount of influence groups increased by one fifth from 2003. The situation was particularly good in Lapland Province. The weakest situation was in the Province of Western Finland.⁴

A goal has been set in the Develop-

### Estimates of young people voting in the parliamentary elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Voting Percentage</th>
<th>General Voting Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>59 % (72.1 %)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>53 % (68.3 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>54 % (69.7 %)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>56 % (67.9 %)</td>
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</table>
ment Programme for Child and Youth Policy accepted by the Finnish Government to establish an active influencing and hearing system for 5 to 17-year-olds in all municipalities by the end of 2010 that would function considering the age and abilities of children and youth.⁴

In 2007, a little over one tenth of municipalities had only one influencing or hearing possibility. In 18 municipalities, the situation was particularly weak, as the children and youth of the municipality were not offered any influencing and hearing systems.⁴

In 2007, a little over 80 percent of the respondent municipalities in mainland Finland had a hearing system. There was an initiative system in a little less than 70 percent of municipalities in mainland Finland.⁴

Over 260 children and/or youth influence groups operated in the municipalities. The majority of the influence groups were youth councils, 170 altogether. A total of 3 400 children and young people acted in the influence groups. There were 13 members in each group on average.⁴

A little over 60 percent of municipalities in mainland Finland had a Youth Centre Committee or other similar operating method, but not in every Centre.⁴

[1] International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/iccs
Youth Work in Finland

What is Youth Work

Youth work is about the upbringing and human growth of a young person into a member of the society. The core tasks of youth work are social empowerment and the promotion of active citizenship. It is acting between two extremes: social exclusion and active citizenship.

Municipal youth workers do basic youth work. Young people meet with a youth worker in their free-time. Contacts in youth work are often informal and they are built based on the wishes and needs of the youth, according to what he/she chooses and feels as his/her own. The nature of youth work as extensive co-operation requires professionalism and expertise of the youth workers.

Successful youth work is not possible without the interaction of various actors and a consciously parallel role in reaching common goals. The most important partners of municipal youth work are youth workers in congregations and civic organisations, actors in sports and culture, schools, labour and industry services, as well as social and health care services.

Municipal youth work is complemented by municipality supported youth organisations or young people’s organisations or groups, as well as youth work in congregations.

Who Does Youth Work

The state and municipalities are responsible for implementing youth work. They strive to improve the living conditions of young people and to create opportunities for youth citizen activity with youth work.

Regional youth work is placed in six industry, transportation, and environment centres. The Ministry of Education and Culture exercises management by results and provides resources for regional youth work.

Municipalities attend to assisting young people’s local organisations and activity groups, maintaining youth centres, and special youth work. Mu-
municipalities are responsible for the implementation of youth work together with youth associations and other communities who do youth work.

Youth services in municipalities employ approximately 3 400 persons, of which some have other than youth work tasks. Municipal youth work put in 1 500 man-years, so, in the core tasks of youth work, there are approximately 1 700 employees.¹ There are 1 100 youth centres.² Youth workshops are organised in over 260 municipalities, but all workshops are not directly under youth work.³

In addition to municipalities, congregations and organisations do grass-root level youth work. The child and youth services in congregations put in 1 400 man-years and it is estimated that its volunteer network comprises 30 000 volunteers. It is estimated that organisations employ 500 persons, meaning employers who do actual youth work, and that they have a network of 50 000 – 100 000 volunteers.⁴


The Challenge of Equality

Equality is a theme that challenges youth work to notice diversity more extensively than before. There is research data on multicultural youth work from the point of view of both those who do youth work and the multicultural youth. There is no research data on how equality is manifested in youth work as regards sexual and gender minorities or youth who are disabled in various ways.

The manifestation of equality in youth work practice and operation principles touches all young people, youth work professionals and volunteers. There are some accepted practices in youth work that support the participation of multicultural youth in youth activities. There is an inconsistent amount of youth work competence and readiness that would support the participation of multicultural youth, however, and the so-called “best practices” have not become to be a part of everyday youth work practices or methods.

In addition to challenging youth work, manifesting equality and noticing diversity challenges Finnish society. Various studies have shown that there are breaks in social member-
ships of young multicultural people, when young people’s everyday life, citizenship, authority relationships, identity, participation, and belonging are considered.

The rights of Finnish Roma children and youth, as well as of Sami children and youth for their own language and culture are at risk because of insufficient early education and teaching, for instance.

The purpose of the personal assistant system based on the Disability Service Act is to promote the chances of a disabled person to live and act with others as equal members of the society. A personal assistant secures becoming independent of childhood home, mobility, and social participation for a young disabled person.

State Support for Youth Work

There are three main result areas in youth services: promoting active citizenship, socially supporting the youth, and improving the growth and living conditions of the youth.

Support allocated to youth work is meant for civic organisations that do youth work, municipal youth work, supporting national youth centre operation, promoting youth research, as well as for supporting international youth action and youth web media, and also for youth information and guidance services, implementing the Development Programme for Child and Youth Policy, and preventing social exclusion in youth workshops, for instance.

The state support for youth work comes mainly from Veikkaus (Finnish Lottery) profits and the Ministry of Education and Culture decides on its application. In addition to youth work, Veikkaus profits are distributed to cul-
ture, science, and sports. Libraries received support from Veikkaus until 2009.

State support to youth work diminished in the 1990s. This was mainly due to the transfer of library equalisation payments to be covered from Veikkaus profits instead of budget funds. At the beginning of the 2000s, it was decided that library allocations would be paid from budget funds again and, at the same time, a decision was made on how Veikkaus profits should be distributed.

The profits of Veikkaus are distributed so that 25 percent is given to promoting sports and physical education, 9 percent to promoting youth work, 17.5 percent to promoting science, 38.5 percent to promoting arts, and 10 percent is to be decided on separately by the Ministry of Education and Culture. During the past years, the portion that is decided on separately has been divided between the beneficiaries according to the so called “jakosuhdelaki” or proportion principle.

During the past years, the state support from Veikkaus funds has clearly increased. In 2005, the youth work budget reached the level it was at before the cuts during the economic depression in 1990.

In 2010, the state doles out 59.2 million euros as youth work appropriation, of which amount 13 million euros is budget funds. This is approximately 0.1 percent – one per mille – of the whole state budget. In 2011, the youth work appropriation is 61.1 million euros, of which the proportion of budget funds is 12.5 million euros. The amount of support from state budget funds will diminish in 2011.1


State Grants to Youth Organisations

The Ministry of Education and Culture supports national youth organisations and youth work service organisations, as well as national youth work organisations of whose work only a certain part is youth work from Veikkaus winnings funds. State grants allocated to youth organisations and organisations doing youth work diminished radically during the depression years of the 1990s. It was at its lowest in 1993 when organisation grants were as low as 4.8 million euros. Transferring library grants from Veikkaus funds to budget funds has made the rapid growth of state grants for youth work possible in the 2000s. The state grants of organisations were 15.3 mil-
lion euros in 2010. That is 25 percent of youth work's proportion in the 2010 state budget. In 2011, the amount will be 15.8 million euros, which is 26 percent of youth work's proportion in the 2011 state budget.¹

¹ Valtion tulo ja menoarvio 2010 ja 2011. Valtiovarainministeriö

State Grants to Municipal Youth Work

The payment principles of state grants allocated to municipalities for organizing youth work changed in 1993. Direct expenses to the municipality were no longer compensated, instead, the subsidies were based on population. Using this subsidy was left for the municipalities to decide upon. In practice, this means that the municipality has been able to organise administration and organisation of youth services in their chosen way. In many municipalities, this meant drastic cuts to youth service resources.

The totally free discretion was modified in 1997 so that municipalities were now obliged to use the state grants meant for youth work to securing the operational preconditions of youth work and youth activities. In 2000, the state grants allocated to youth work decreased in the 1990s from 71 million Finnish marks (6.5 million euros) to around 37 million Finnish marks (3.4 million euros). After the law of Veikkaus beneficiaries became effective in 2003, state grants allocated to municipalities started increasing, and, in 2010, the state allocated them 7.8 million euros. (8.1 million euros in the 2011 budget) In addition, building municipal youth centres was allocated 2 million euros from the state budget. (2.2 million euros in the 2011 budget)

In 2010, the state proportion to municipal youth activities is 14,50 euros per each under 29-year-old inhabitant. In the 2011 budget, it will increase to 15 euros. In 2008, it was still 13 euros.¹

¹ Valtion tulo ja menoarviot 2010 ja 2011. Valtiovarainministeriö
Municipal Funding for Youth Work

According to the financial statements of 2008, the operating costs of municipal youth services were approximately 166 million euros. In addition, the investment expenditure of municipal youth services was over 5 million euros. Suomen Kuntaliitto (Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities) estimates that in 2010 the operating costs will surpass 170 million euros while the investments remain the same. This means an average of 33 euros per inhabitant.¹

Municipalities receive 14,50 euros state subsidy imputed for each under 29-year-old inhabitant. The state subsidy is going to be 15 euros in 2010.² The state subsidy covers 4.5 percent of the municipal youth service operation costs.¹

Youth Work at Congregations

The operating costs of congregations were approximately 961 million euros in 2008. Congregations use almost one third (32 percent in 2008) of their resources (staff, workspace, services, and product costs) to child and youth work. They organise, among other activities, music and hobby clubs, afternoon clubs for school children, and evening happenings and camps for young people.¹

Every other congregation organises morning and afternoon activities for school children. In 2007, almost 61 600 children participated in the day-time clubs and 28 100 children in Sunday schools. Day-time clubs and Sunday schools reached a smaller proportion of the age group than in 2003.²

In 2007, almost 59 900 young people completed a confirmation class, which is the equivalent of 88.5 percent of 15-year-olds. The popularity of confirmation camp group leader activity increased in 2004-2007. In 2007, 27 000 young people participated in group leader training and altogether 18 000 young people worked as group leaders.²

In 2007, 15 200 young people participated in youth groups organised by congregations, which is the equivalent of 5.7 percent of 15 to 18-year-olds. In 2003, the percentage was 8.1. In 2007, 20 600 youth evening happenings or similar events were organised. There were almost 484,000 participants in these events. The amount increased

² Kuntaliitto, www.kunnat.net
with 2.4 percent from 2003.\(^2\)

In 2007, special youth work was done in every second congregation. It was done in the form of open doors (34 percent of the congregations), Saa-


Youth Workshops and Outreach Youth Work

The main function of youth workshops is to support the life skills, social empowerment, early support, and social growth at one’s individual speed, as well as learning by doing. A workshop offers the youth an opportunity for guided and supported work, and a tailored path to education, finishing education in co-operation with the education provider, or becoming employed in the open labour market.

There is youth workshop activity in 264 municipalities all over the country. In 2009, 11 304 under 29-year-olds participated in youth workshops. 9 410 of them were under 25 years old. Last year, there were 2 700 young persons more in the workshops than in 2008. 75 percent of young people who participated in youth workshops were placed in training, work, or other activity after the workshop. 67 percent of the workshop youth did not have vocational education. Youth with an immigrant background also participate in the workshops and altogether 68 different mother tongues were spoken at the workshops last year.

The purpose of outreach youth work is to help those under 29-year-old young people who are outside education or labour market, and who need support to reach public sector services or with committing to an available service, or who are at risk of social exclusion. 232 persons in 192 municipalities do state supported outreach work. The amount has increased with 60 municipalities since last year.

Last year, outreach youth work reached 3 363 young persons, of whom 70 percent were directed to the services they needed. All in all, in 2009, outreach youth work had over 32 500 contacts with authorities regarding young people’s issues. 73 percent of the youth were customers at some public sector service, but did
not participate in the services. Of the reached youth, 18 percent defined themselves as unemployed, although they had not registered themselves as such. The young people who outreach youth work reaches are provided services from an average of 3-4 different fields; issues related to livelihood were one of the most central problems to be solved.¹