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PR1: Local context and needs analysis



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cesie
the world is only one creature

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Abstract of the PR	The first project result of ReCAP consists of a local context and needs analysis. The consortium, made by 10 entities from 7

	<p>European countries, has investigated the social problems that the pandemic caused or worsened on young people through desk research and a questionnaire. Despite the disparities between the countries, we can find similarities. Professionals who work with youth are concerned about the negative effects of COVID-19 pandemic on psychological health and emotional well-being, both for the general society and for young people. Regarding this group, they point out specifically the effects on socialization and cultural life and studies and training, too. Results also show that young people's relationships with all the spheres of their lives have worsened, especially relationships with educational environment, relationship with themselves and with the local community. Most of the respondents answered that young people now visit the services more often, which could mean that youngsters are aware of their situation and seek support. Young people mostly need psychological and emotional health support and educational support and professionals have a strong agreement about the use of psychological support as the most relevant tool to work with youngsters nowadays. Moreover, professionals are aware of the negative perspective young people have about the future. The study also reveals that most professionals consider artistic and cultural tools useful and motivating for youngsters, which is undoubtedly a positive outcome that will ensure a positive uptake of the ReCAP project tools.</p>
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Table of contents

Summary	5
1. Introduction.....	5
2. Desk research	7
3. Process of questionnaire implementation	13
4. Survey results.....	14
Profile of participants	14
Profile of vulnerable young people	17
Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic	18
Use and provision of services	20
Use of artistic tools for intervention	23
Young people's perspectives on the future	24
5. Conclusions	25
References	26
Annex 1: Questionnaire	30

Summary

The **ReCAP project** aims to promote the social inclusion and civic engagement of youth (14-29 years) through the use of specific artistic and cultural tools, in the post-pandemic context. The first project result of ReCAP project consists of a local context and needs analysis. The consortium, made by 10 entities from 7 European countries, has investigated the social problems that the pandemic caused or worsened on youth people through desk research and a questionnaire. Despite the disparities between the countries, we can find similarities. Professionals that work with youth are concerned about the negative effects of COVID-19 pandemic on psychological health and emotional well-being, both for the general society and for young people. Regarding this group, they point out specifically the effects on socialization and cultural life and studies and training, too. Results also show that young people's relationships with all the spheres of their lives have worsened, especially relationships with educational environment, relationship with themselves and with the local community. Most of the respondents answered that young people now visit the services more often, which could mean that youngsters are aware of their situation and seek support. Young people mostly need psychological and emotional health support and educational support and professionals have a strong agreement about the use of psychological support as the most relevant tool to work with youngsters nowadays. To finish, professionals are aware of the negative perspective young people have about the future. The study also reveals that most of professionals consider artistic and cultural tools useful and motivating for youngsters, which is undoubtedly a positive outcome that will ensure a positive uptake of the ReCAP project tools.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered the world in innumerable aspects, including the way we approach diseases and the way they interact with other conditions. The term “syndemic” (Singer, 1990) has been increasingly associated with COVID-19, it defines a theory according to which epidemics arise from the complex interaction between the spread of a disease and social/environmental/economic factors, which, in turn, negatively impact the disease itself (Singer, 1990, Calcaterra, G., et al., 2022, Mendenhall, E., et al., 2022,). Recent research indicates that we can apply this concept to the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the severity and impacts around the world have not been uniformly distributed across populations. In fact, the pandemic has demonstrated how political actions to support public health and the historical patterning of chronic health conditions are situated within contexts of great inequity, which profoundly affect who is most vulnerable, as well as where and why this vulnerability exists (Calcaterra, G., et al., 2022). In this content some theories defend we have experienced a “Syndemic Pandemic” (Calcaterra, G., et al., 2022, Monteiro. N., et al., 2022).

The health crisis and its economic and social impacts disrupted the lives of all groups in society (2), and 2 years into the pandemic, the medium- and long-term implications are becoming increasingly clear.

Among these implications, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of young people has been significant. Several circumstances can help to explain the higher levels of mental distress of many young Europeans, such as loss of physical interaction, physical activity and employment, and protracted time spent online.

Moreover, the pandemic has affected the mental health of young people unequally. For example, young people with pre-existing mental health issues found it more difficult to access support services and suffered the psychological consequences of the pandemic to a greater extent (19). Young people belonging to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual plus (LGBTQIA+) community were at a higher risk of mental health issues during COVID-19, especially when faced with a difficult family environment. In addition, lockdowns prevented many from participating in community activities.

Research indicates that the consequences of the pandemic for young people's mental health will continue in the long term (132). The scarring effects of extended periods of isolation and distress on youth mental health are likely not only to persist but also to affect several dimensions of the lives of young Europeans, such as education, employment and social inclusion.

In this context, **ReCAP project** aims to promote the social inclusion and civic engagement of youth (14-29 years) through the use of specific artistic and cultural tools, in the post-pandemic context. To pursue the final outcome, the project intends to achieve two specific results: to improve the quality of youth work and to engage, connect and empower young people. The results are planned to be achieved through 3 project activities:

1. Local context and needs analysis. The consortium will investigate the social problems that the pandemic caused or worsened.
2. Artistic and cultural toolbox for youth workers and training of trainers, based in the results of the analysis.
3. Local path for social inclusion through creativity, to implement the tools with young people at the local context.

In this sense, this report is the result of the first activity and it aims to draw a picture of the post pandemic social context in each of the local contexts addressed.

2. Desk research

Bulgaria

COVID-19 pandemic has challenged all aspects of social and economic life in Bulgaria, the health care system, as well as the mental health of the population. This is confirmed by Health World Organization studies on the negative effects on the human mentality and emotions following the pandemic caused (2022). Main impacts are: increase in sales of psychotropic drugs, including tranquilizers and antidepressants, which have a calming effect, eliminate anxiety, fear, and other disorders in the emotional sphere, which indicates latent morbidity and increase in prevalence of anxiety. The period was marked also by an increase in the number of visits to neurologists and psychiatrists following lockdown periods, escalation of domestic violence among both children and women and increase on number of suicides in both genders, more pronounced in women.

Another aspect of the national research was the impact of COVID-19 on educational environment. In general teenagers acted responsibly in spite of the anger they felt.

The prolonged period in which communication took place reflected on the re-adaptation on return to school. The return to school was accompanied by positive attempts at re-establishing communication and joy in interaction. From one side schools should continue working on enhancing face to face communication and team work but at the same time they should invest in organizing activities related to cyberbullying and the need to recognize it and providing counselling services should another round of isolation be necessary and lead to negative experiences and a sense of loneliness. It is also important to continue to research the emotions, perceptions, behavioral patterns, beliefs and coping strategies of teenagers with a view to arriving at trends that may inform effective communication and activities targeting the group of young people.

France

France, like other European countries and the rest of the world, has suffered the brunt of the consequences of the Covid-19 epidemic. According to a publication of INJEP (National Institute of Youth and Community Education) based on the DJEPVA barometer on youth in 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic has deeply affected young people in France, weakening them in several aspects of their life: work, education, psychological sphere with an increase in depression episodes. There are more frequent episodes of loneliness than in 2019, and young girls are the most affected by the pandemic consequences, showing a lower level of optimism. Moreover, it also shows the heterogeneous effects of the pandemic on different groups of young people, according to their background, socio-economic conditions, and geographical location, with a greater impact on the most vulnerable youngsters.

However, the resulting overview seems to be not highly negative, since young people show a more positive attitude towards their actual life and future in general.

It's important to remark that the consequences have been different for different population groups. The proportion of people who experienced a feeling of abandonment during confinement is 4 times higher among the poorest than the wealthiest (Bordet, 2022, p.97-108).

Young people were particularly affected by the health and economic crisis in 2020, with a significant drop in the employment rate and an increase in inactivity. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the proportion of young NEETs increased by more than one point, to 13.5% of this age group in 2020. Given the breaks in the series on the concept itself of NEET, INSEE does not quantify the number of additional young people represented by this increase of one point. By relating it to the number advanced for 2019, we obtain an order of magnitude of some 130,000 additional young people concerned, i.e. a total exceeding 1.6 million last year.

In addition, young people integration into sustainable employment is slow and difficult, often marked by internships, unemployment and low wages. These young people can be captured by “uberized” professions, which have been booming in recent years. The steps are indeed quite simple to obtain the status of auto-entrepreneur and make it possible to avoid more formal job interviews.

If we look at New Aquitaine, the region where of the organizations is base, youth are less likely to volunteer than young people across the country. On the other hand, they do not differ from the national average with regard to their satisfaction with their life, the non-use of social rights, European mobility, the feeling of loneliness or even the feeling of having been a victim of discrimination. Other interesting data (INJEP, 2022):

- The level of satisfaction of young people from New Aquitaine with regard to their life is as high as that of young people as a whole: 60% of young people in the region declare that, in general, their current life corresponds to their expectations (i.e. -1 point compared to the national average).
- The rate of non-take-up of young people in this region is almost identical to that of the national average: during the last twelve months, 23% of young people in New Aquitaine declare that they have not benefited from the measures, allowances, rights, aid or social tariffs to which they were entitled (+1 point compared to the average).
- 74% of New Aquitaine residents aged 18 to 30 have already left for another European country during their lifetime (all reasons for departure combined), i.e. 3 points more than the metropolitan average
- 43% of young people living in New Aquitaine say they feel lonely every day or almost, or often, a figure slightly higher than the average for young people in France (+2 points). • 58% of young

people in the region testify to a personal experience of discrimination, i.e. 1 point more than all young people in France.

Greece

There are very few official accounts and systematic research on the situation among young people during and after the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on their lives. There is some large scale research addressed generally at young people examining the post-pandemic society, but it fails to address people from vulnerable backgrounds. This fact coincides with the political context nowadays in the country, where a current political strategy based on the “dogma” of “personal responsibility” dominates but is also the result of a minimal approach to timeless social inequalities in updated social policies.

The post-pandemic context is characterised by increased violence among life partners leading very often to femicides, increased cost of living and normalisation of inequality and discrimination (General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality, 2021). The start of 2023 shows us a minimised access to free healthcare and depreciation of the work, studies and contributions of culture workers and artists.

In terms of employment, official data (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2023) showcase a relative decrease in unemployment but there are no indications of information on NEETs and other vulnerable social groups, such as long term unemployed, Roma communities and ethnic minorities, migrants/refugees and people with disabilities.

The psychological and, consequently, social effect is not reported, so most information comes from experience and everyday interactions of people with relevant organisations. From the discussions with youth and culture workers there is a generalised sense of “a borderline tolerable desperation” and a feeling of “pessimistic hope” (meaning there is a need for hope that things will change but people are not optimistic that it will happen)¹

Italy

The COVID pandemic has strongly affected youth. The psychological well-being conditions of 14-19-year-olds have worsened in 2021; alongside these, the economic conditions too: the total number of minors in absolute poverty in 2021 is equal to 1 million and 384 thousand: 14.2%, stable compared to 2020, but higher by almost three percentage points compared to 2019, when it was equal to 11.4% (Il Sole 24 Ore, 2022).

¹ Phrases in quotations are taken from replies of the participants in the face-to-face session

The effects can also be seen in education: In 2021 the educational path was interrupted very early for 12.7% of young people between 18 and 24 years. In 2020, the incidence of NEETs increased on a European average, and even for the world of work, photography does not inspire optimism: among young people (20-34 years) the employment rate in 2020 fell to 50.6% (only half had a job) and the recovery in 2021 (+2 .1 points), although more intense than in the other age groups, did not compensate for the drop suffered. The impact of the pandemic has been strongest on cultural and creative jobs, with a loss of 55,000 jobs (Il Sole 24 Ore, 2022).

The 14-19 age group experienced the strongest deterioration in psychological well-being conditions. Sense of loneliness and isolation, fear, boredom, sense of disinterest in daily activities (study, hobbies, sports) and the outside world, anger and aggression, inability to imagine the future were found (Caporale and Collicelli, 2021). There are increased sleep disorders, panic attacks, anxiety, eating disorders, depressive symptoms, with acts of self-harm and suicidal ideation and an increase in psychiatric hospitalization requests (Stenico, 2022). Lockdown and distance learning have caused concentration difficulties and learning loss, with an increase in school dropouts. Lockdown has jeopardized the emancipation process understood as the achievement of autonomy, individuation, differentiation and structuring of one's own identity and personality, leading to an increase in negative feelings toward oneself. Some behavioral addictions have increased, such as those to gambling, video games and pornography (Ospedale Niguarda, 2021). The increased use of the Internet and social networks has resulted in the sharing of very large amounts of personal information (oversharing) exposing teens to a number of risks such as cyberbullying and viewing age-inappropriate content and experiencing disturbing approaches (Associazione Nazionale Di. Te, 2021). Boys in situations of family vulnerability (cases of domestic abuse and mistreatment have increased) or economic vulnerability, and also socio-cultural and digital divide (limited access to education) have been most affected.

In adolescents, the problems are more related to identity (psychological and bodily), while in young adults (20-30 years old) to life project, with dropping out of university studies and the fear of not finding a job.

Minors in absolute poverty tripled (L'orientamento, 2023), and in many high COVID-19 prevalence settings their families were significantly affected by the disease. For minors aged in first and second reception centers and CAS (Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria), pandemic-related uncertainty overlapped with uncertainty related to legal status as migrants. Unaccompanied migrant minors manifested difficulties in managing isolation and quarantine in reception facilities (Istituto Superiore di Sanità, 2020).

In children and youth with developmental neuropsychological disorders, the situation of uncertainty generated increased levels of stress and anxiety.

Portugal

In Portugal this “syndemic pandemic” has affected society transversally, causing a syndemic crisis that directly and indirectly has deeply impacted people, families, work life and institutions. It had negative impacts on well-being, mental health, and social cohesion, increasing imbalances and inequalities, with significant impact in groups already considered vulnerable in our society, such as women and individuals from lower social classes, but also to other groups, whose risk was estimated to be low, such as young people (Monteiro. N., et al., 2022).

Young people have been particularly penalised in economic terms. Overall, the pandemic has had a regressive effect on the labour market, particularly penalising the lower paid and lower income groups. It has reinforced previous inequalities and has penalised the youngest, least experienced, and least educated. Younger people have been particularly affected in terms of job losses, although recent employment data shows signs of a strong recovery. (Monteiro. N., et al., 2022). At an individual level not only had repercussions at the physical level, but it represents a new way of life, both individually and in society. These negative impacts mainly affected younger people (under 30 years old) and were more evident among women (such as weight gain, reduced hours of sleep, increased consumption of psychiatric drugs). Hence, the pandemic also results in invisible consequences for the mental health of the population (Monteiro. N., et al., 2022).

Although the quality of personal relationships was evaluated as less positive by the youngest, according with recent studies interactions have been improving within this group (Monteiro. N., et al., 2022). Another aspect to be concern about, are youth expectations, young people reveal a lower sense of wellbeing, lower life satisfaction and higher levels of depression anxiety and stress during the pandemic period. Even though the incidence of severe infection and mortality from COVID-19 was very low among young people, the analysis of the indirect effects of the pandemic reveal the need to explore new responses for social inclusion, even more if we consider Portugal is facing considerable demographic problems (Monteiro. N., et al., 2022).

Romania

The COVID pandemic has strongly affected the NEET category, 4 young people out of 10 who do not have a job, an education or vocational training have declared that from the beginning of the pandemic they feel “unable to face life”. The percentage of young people who feel depressed always or very often increased from 38% to 58% (Lungu, 2021, p.243).

In 2021, there was an increase in drug use among young people compared to 2020, the research has found an increase in drug use in the last month as well as in the experimental consumption of illegal substances. Even though this increase affects all specters of young people, the most affected is the social group with modest income, without a job or education and even without housing.

The various analysis and studies focused on the needs and problems of young people in the context of the pandemic show that this period affected young people on different levels: of physical health, of psycho-emotional health, of inequality in access to education, of increased exposure to situations of violence and abuse.

An online research carried out at the national level by Romanian Ministry of youth and sport shows that, for young people, the biggest problems they had in terms of physical and mental health. The isolation imposed by the pandemic restricted their movement, socialization with friends and extended family, they also faced anxiety and depression disorders, fear of becoming ill them and those close to them, sleep problems, lack of motivation for school-related activities, the feeling of loneliness. In addition, young people say that they want to have their own homes, both out of the need for independence or to start a family, as well as from the need to separate from conflictual or abusive situations in the family, exacerbated during the pandemic. However, for the majority, neither renting nor buying a house is financially accessible.

Another analysis (Alexandru, Braga & Pantel, 2021) focused on how women were affected in the pandemic emphasizes that the pandemic has accentuated inequalities, many women have lost their jobs and incomes, faced physical and mental exhaustion, violence in the family and at work.

A study regarding the crisis generated by COVID-19 (Romanian Institute for Human Rights, 2020) showed the impact of the pandemic on the education system, by accentuating inequalities in access to education (lack of internet access and technological equipment) especially of children from disadvantaged families and from rural areas, where many children from Romania live.

The negative consequences for students of school closures and pandemic restrictions are also highlighted by a study conducted by an organization with activities aimed at children and youth (Salvati Copiii, 2023) which shows the risk of exclusion and social marginalization, affecting educational progress (many children not having access to a tablet or computer, to be able to participate in online courses), implications on emotional health (the children faced internet addiction, boredom, fatigue, sadness, anger) but also on online safety (increasing exposure to aggressive content, online bullying and fake news).

Spain

During the last decade, Spain has been one of the countries with the biggest youth unemployment rate (15 to 29 years) of the European Union. In 2019, Spain had the 3rd biggest youth unemployment rate (24,7%) and this figure increased during the pandemic, to 29,8% in 2020. Although in 2021 decreased (28,4%) it was still very high, only after Greece. Youth unemployment rose in the European Union in 2022 from 14.8% to 15.1%, an increase of 180,000 new unemployed young people, of which 68,000

(38%) are Spanish. This means that four out of every ten newly unemployed young people in the EU lost their jobs last year in Spain (Eurostat, 2022).

Regarding the hardest moment of the pandemic, during the confinements phase, we have some data that show us that the effects of the pandemic on the youth labour situation was different according to gender and social class. According to Simón (2021), who bases his analysis in studies from the INJUVE (Youth Institute of Spain, in english), the percentage of total young people who lost their job due to the COVID-19 crisis was 16,2%. The rate was higher for women (18,7% vs 13,3% for men) and for low economic class (18,5% vs 10,1 for high economic class).

Apart from the quantitative data, this reality have also emotional implications: pessimism among young people to find stable employment returned to the levels of the 2008 crisis (Ministry of Labour and Social Economy, 2020).

In addition, recent evidence points to the fact that the population has suffered a significant deterioration in mental health, with a particularly strong effect among children and young people (Eurofound, 2020). In Spain, almost 30% of young people reported feeling tense, and tense, and nearly a quarter of them had difficulty sleeping, low morale sleep, low morale or stressed; just over 5% of young people or stressed; just over 5% of respondents felt lonely. In principle, these figures are not so far from the average values the average values found among adults (around 20% reported feelings of psychological stress during the initial phases of the pandemic). More up-to-date studies looking at a longer period of longer period of the pandemic reinforce these findings. Studies that have compared the moods of young people and adults show that the former admit to more frequent sadness and to having felt sadness and distress more frequently during confinement (Alberich distress during confinement (Alberich et al., 2021).

3. Process of questionnaire implementation

A first draft of the questionnaire was elaborated by Solidaridad Sin Fronteras, the partner entity in charge of this Project Result. Based in this first skeleton, the final questionnaire was co-designed by all partners, it means 10 organizations from 7 countries.

A total of 121 questionnaires were distributed: 14 in paper and in online format, using Google Forms. In general, general calling (by Newsletters and massive emails) haven't work, so the organizations have distributed personally the survey to close contacts from other organizations or services.

Given the working conditions of the partners at the local level and the limitations of an Erasmus+ project, the statistical representativeness of the sample cannot be assured. Nevertheless, the representativeness of the different types of discourse efforts have been made to achieve. Partners did

a previous phase of identification of stakeholders, to cover each of the areas where stakeholders working with vulnerable youngsters can be found: Municipal youth centers, Educational centers, Social work services, Labor orientation services, Security office, Health center, Other.

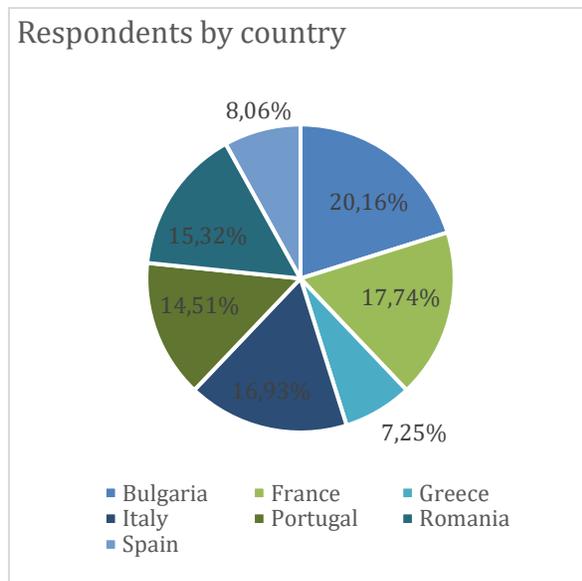
At the end, as will be shown below, the sector where the survey has been implemented the most is the education sector, so it is over-represented. This has to be taken into account when looking at the overall results.

4. Survey results

Profile of participants

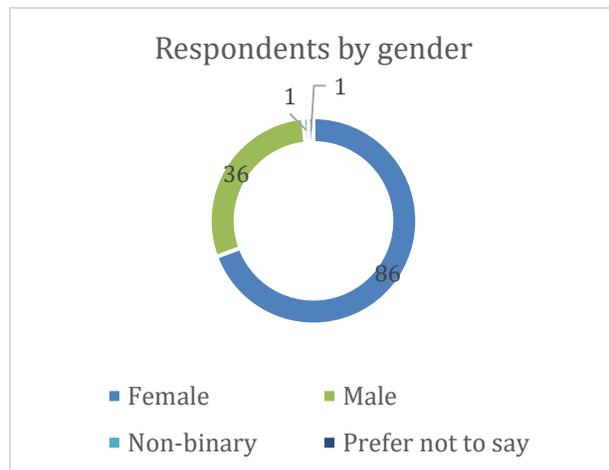
The research involved **124²** subjects from 7 different countries, the partner countries of the consortium of ReCAP project. Number of participants were as follows: Bulgaria (25), France (22), Italy (21), Romania (19), Portugal (18), Spain (10) and Greece (9). In the case of France, Italy and Romania, two organizations per country participate in the project.

Graphic 2



Source: Own production

Graphic 1



Source: Own production

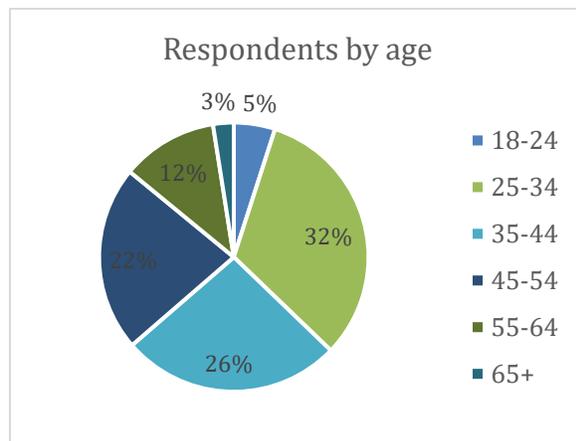
² In the case of Greece, 3 of the 9 participants answered in a face-to-face semi-structured interview. The individual data is available but it has not been possible to cross-reference the data, so their answers are only reflected in the responses corresponding to a single variable.

According to the gender, 84 participants (declared themselves as female gender, which represents 69,42% of total participants; 35 as men, which represents 28,92% of participants; and 1 non-binary and 1 person who preferred not to say.

The large number of women responds to the **feminisation** of the different jobs that we can find in the social intervention sector, in a broad sense (work, education, health, leisure and free time, etc.) and is a situation shared by all countries. The highest percentage of male participants is found in France (50%) and Italy (47,6%).

According to the age, most of participants are in the age group 25-34, followed by 35-44 and 45-54 years old. As we can see in Table 1, women are especially numerous in the age group 25-34 years old.

Graphic 3



Source: Own production

Table 1. Respondents by age and gender

	Female	Male	Non-binary	Prefer not to say	TOTAL
18-24	4	2			6
25-34	28	10		1	39
35-44	25	6	1		32
45-54	20	7			27
55-64	4	10			14
65+	3				3
TOTAL	84	35	1	1	121

Regarding the **professional sector** which participants develop their work with young people, the education sector dominates among respondents: 47 people, which represents 38,84%. In second place by far, 17,35% of respondents work in non-governmental organizations, which can be of various natures. Then we can find social work services (11,57%) and municipal and local youth center (10,74%).

In terms of country distribution, **education sector** is the predominant sector in all countries except in Spain, where most of respondents work in labour counselling services; and Greece, with the artistic sector being the first one.

Table 2 Professional sector by country

	Bulgaria	France	Italy	Greece	Portugal	Romania	Spain	Total
Municipal and local youth center	5		4		3		1	13
Education	9	8	11	1	8	8	2	47
Social work services	2	7	2			2	1	14
Labor orientation services				1	1		5	7
Creative/artistic sector		2	2	4	1			9
Health	2		1		3	1		7
Non-governmental organizations	4	4	1	2	2	8	2	23
Not specified	3	1						4
Total	25	22	21	6	18	19	10	124

Source: Own production

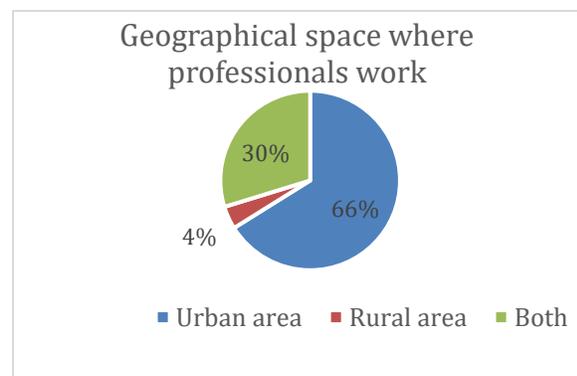
Regarding the specific position of respondents, most of them are teachers or professors, followed by director or coordinator of intervention projects or programmes; project managers and labour counsellors.

Table 3. Respondents by specific job position

Position	
Administrative	5
Teacher/Professor	24
Social worker	12
Labor counsellor	9
Youth worker	21
Director/Coordinator	21
Project manager	19
Psychologist	3
Doctor	2
Mediator	3
Pedagogist	2
Not specified	3
	124

In relation to the place where professionals work with youngsters, most of professionals work in urban area (80). Only 5 professionals work in rural area, all from Greece, Italy and Romania; and 36 professionals work in both areas.

Graphic 4



Source: Own production

Profile of vulnerable young people

86 respondents say they work with different groups, inside the category of “vulnerable young people” according to the ReCAP project. On the other hand, 35 respondents chose only one category, it means that their work is more specialized and they only work with specific group of vulnerable youth. Most of them work with young people from ethnic group (11), a category that appeared in the response “other”, by respondents from Bulgaria (10) and France (1). This category can be included inside “minorities”. Subsequently, they work only with girls (12), youth with special needs (5), migrant background (5) young people with disabilities (1) and youth from the LGTBIQ+ community (1).

In total count, the young population group with whom professionals work most often is girls (39,67%), youth not in employment, education or training (“NEET”) (38,02%), youth with migrant background (33,88%), minorities (29,75%), youth from the LGTBIQ+ community, youth with disabilities (3,30%) and minors in the penal system (1,65%).

Regarding the age, the range 14-17 is reported in 66,94% of the responses; followed by 18-22 (75% of responses), 23-26 (39,66%) and 27-29 (30,5%). As it seems logical, the older people get, the less they are cared for by professionals.

Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

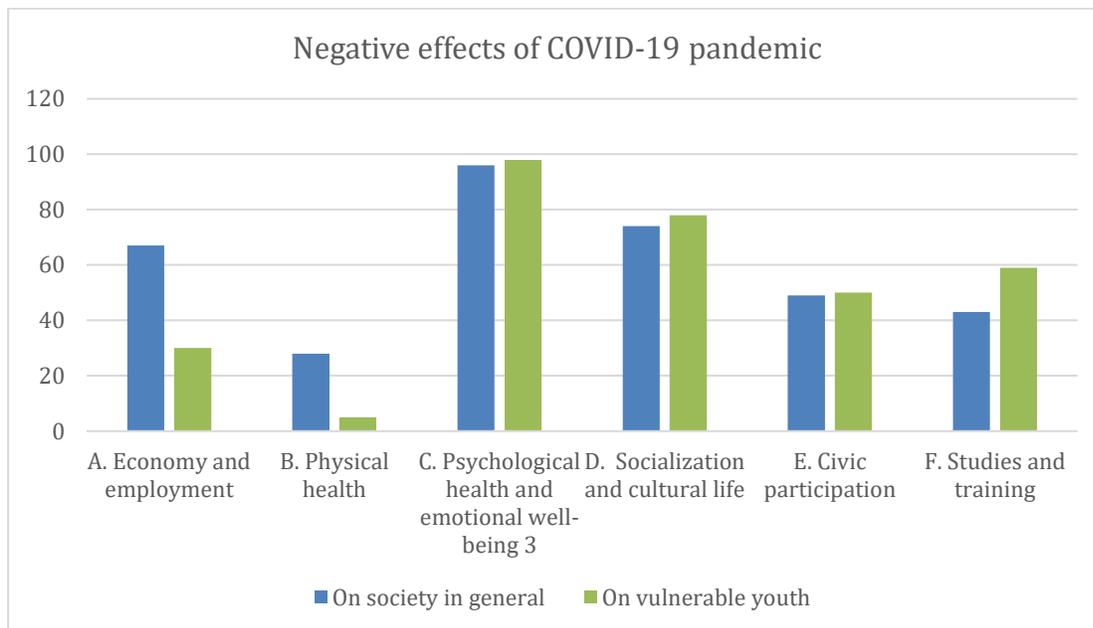
Participants were asked about their concerns related to the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the society in general and on vulnerable young people, in particular.

For the society in general, professionals are more concerned about the negative effects on psychological health and emotional well-being, socialization and cultural life and economy and employment.

For the vulnerable young people, professionals are more concerned about the negative effects on psychological health and emotional well-being, socialization and cultural life and studies and training.

The biggest difference among the two groups can be found in the category “economy and employment”. The pandemic has caused more effects in the economic field of society in general than in youngsters. It has sense and is consistent with the fact that the studies and training category is more relevant for young people than for the society in general, given that many of the young people are studying and the educational centers were closed during the confinements, thus having an impact on the educational development of young people, in all countries.

Graphic 5



Question: At the moment, what are your main concerns related to the negative effects of the COVID-19 crisis? (In general, and on young people)

Source: Own production

In addition, to measure the changes in different spheres of young people lives, professionals have assessed the changes in youngsters' relationships with their family, friends, couple/sentimental partner, work, educational environment, themselves and the local community.

Table 4. Changes in young's people relationships

	Has improved	Has worsened	Unchanged	Don't know/doubt	TOTAL
Relationship with the family	21	51	27	22	121
Relationship with friends	23	52	35	11	121
Relationship with couple/partners	15	45	32	29	121
Relationship with working environment	18	64	14	25	121
Relationship with educational environment	14	89	11	7	121
Relationship with themselves	18	74	16	13	121
Relationship with the local community	11	70	25	15	121
TOTAL	120	445	160	122	

Question: In your opinion, young people's relationships within their environment after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic...

Source: Own production

As we can see, in a global analysis we can see that **the conception that relations have worsened is predominant**, for all categories. Relationships that have worsened the most are relationships of young people with educational environment (pointed out by 89 respondents), followed by relationship with themselves (74) and relationship with the local community (70).

Regarding the countries, data shows which are the most optimistic and pessimistic countries, in general, analyzing only the “has improved” and “has worsened” responses. In all the countries, except from Bulgaria, the overwhelming majority of respondents said that relations have worsened. Inside this response, the areas that worsened the most by country are: relationships with educational environment (France, Greece, Portugal, Romania and Spain); relationships with themselves (France, Italy and Spain) and relationships with the working environment (Greece).

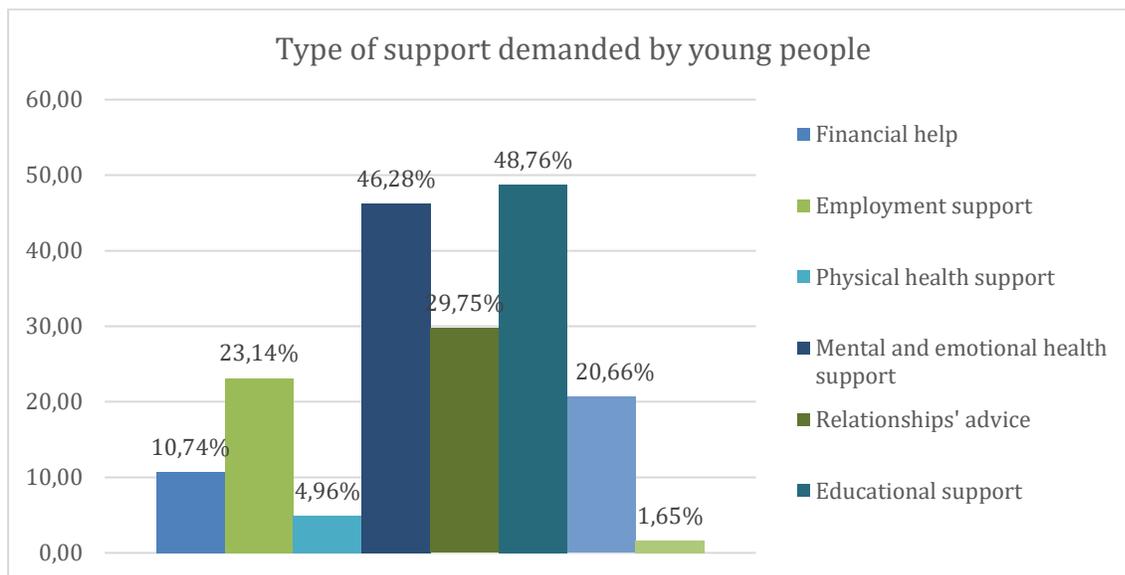
In the case of Bulgaria, inside the more general optimistic view, family relationships are considered the ones that have improved the most.

Use and provision of services

Regarding service provision, 81% of respondents say that young people came to their services during the confinement and in the months after for help (March 2020 – March 2021).

Regarding the type of support that young people asked for during the hardest moments of the pandemic, educational support is indicated by 48,76% of respondents, followed by mental and emotional health support (46,28%) and relationships’ advice (29,75%).

Graphic 6



Question: If you answered yes, which type of help did young people mainly ask for?
Source: Own production

Participants also have assessed the level of service provision to young people, compared to pre-pandemic levels. For the 31,4% of respondents service provision now is slightly higher (125%) than before the pandemic. Results highlights the increase in service provision in Bulgaria and Greece and the decrease especially in Italy, as it is showed in the following table.

Table 5. Service provision, compared to the pre-pandemic situation.

	BU	%	FR	%	IT	%	GR	%	PT	%	RO	%	SP	%
a) There are much more services now than before the pandemic (150%)	4	16%	2	9%							2	10,5%		
b) Service provision is slightly higher (125%)	14	56%	3	13,6%	4	19,05%	3	60%	7	38,88%	5	26,3%	2	20%
c) Service provision is at the same level than before de pandemic (100%)	5	20%	10	45,4%	3	14,29%	1	20%	3	16,66%	6	31,6%	6	60%
d) Most services have been restored, but not all (75%)	2	8%	7	31,81%	13	61,9%	1	20%	6	33,33%	3	15,78%	2	20%
e) There are half as many services as there were before the pandemic (50%)					1	4,76%				0	1	5,26%		
f) Very few services have been resumed (25%)									2	11,1%	2	10,5%		
g) Services provided before the pandemic are no longer available (0%)														
	25		22		21		5		18		19		10	

Question: Would you say that service provision towards youth and vulnerable groups is now at the same levels as before the pandemic, at your local context?

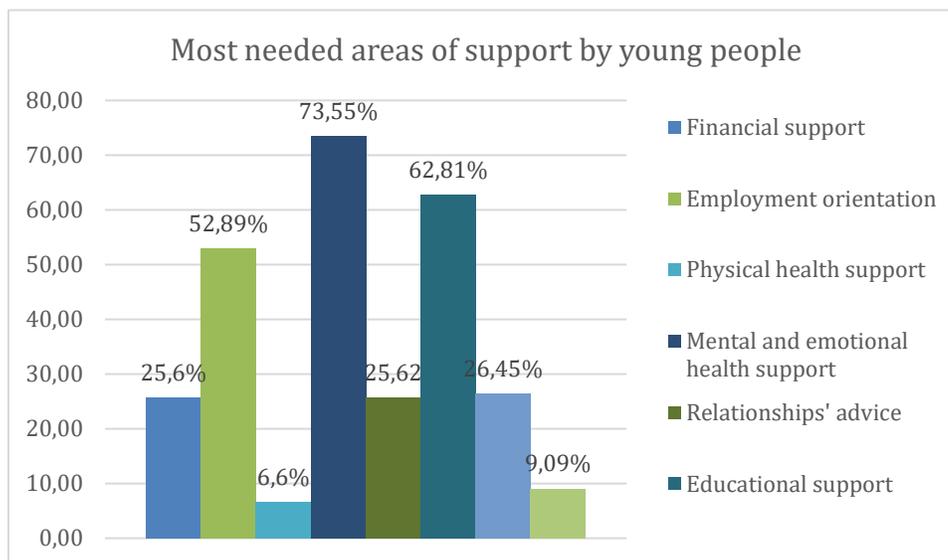
Source: Own production

Given the work that professionals develop nowadays, they consider that the support that is needed the most is mental and emotional health support (pointed out by 73,55% of respondents), educational support (62,81%) and employment orientation (52,89%).

If we saw that relationships' advice was relevant during the hardest moment of pandemic, we can see now that professionals don't consider it a priority for young people. This would be an aspect to consider as the survey has also shown that young people's relationships have worsened across the board.

On whether young people are more likely to use services now than before the pandemic, due to the worsening of their living conditions and relationships, as we have seen, **55,37% answered positively and 44,62% negatively**, which shows that probably young people are aware of his worsening conditions and seeks support from a variety of professional services.

Graphic 7

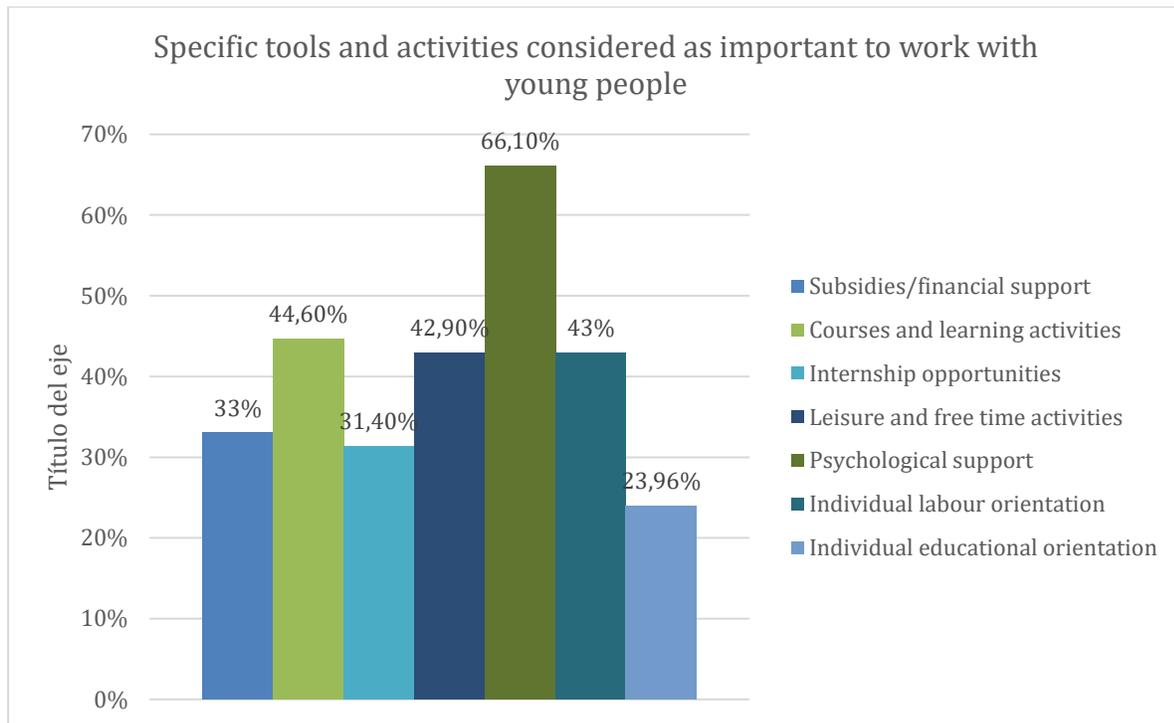


Question: In which areas do you think young people currently need the most support?
(Max. 3 options)

Source: Own production

Regarding the specific tools and activities that professionals consider more important for the young people now at the local context, **psychological support (66,1%), courses and learning activities (44,6%) and leisure and free time activities (43,02%) and individual labour orientation with the same percentage (43%)** are the most relevant. In this case, the categories are more evenly spread out, with the psychological support clearly indicated by the majority.

Graphic 8



Question: Which specific tools/activities do you consider more important for the young people now at your local context? (Max. 3 options)
Source: Own production

Taking a look to the results **by country**, the three activities most highlighted are (in order of relevance): Bulgaria (courses, leisure activities and internship); France (individual labour orientation, psychological support and internships); Greece (subsidies, leisure activities, psychological support and individual labor orientation); Italy (psychological support, individual education orientation and courses); Portugal (psychological support, individual labor orientation and internships); Romania (psychological support, courses and individual education orientation); and Spain (psychological support, individual labor orientation and individual education orientation).

Use of artistic tools for intervention

The final scope of the ReCAP project is to promote the social inclusion and civic engagement of youth (14 -29) through the use of specific artistic and cultural tools. For this reason, the questionnaire includes specific questions related to the use of artistic and cultural tools by professionals, in their intervention with young people.

81 professionals used artistic and cultural tools before the pandemic, 69 during and 82 after. With two exceptions, people who used tools before the pandemic continued to use them before and after. Efforts to carry out these activities in the context of constraints to social interaction, and the resilience of social intervention practitioners.

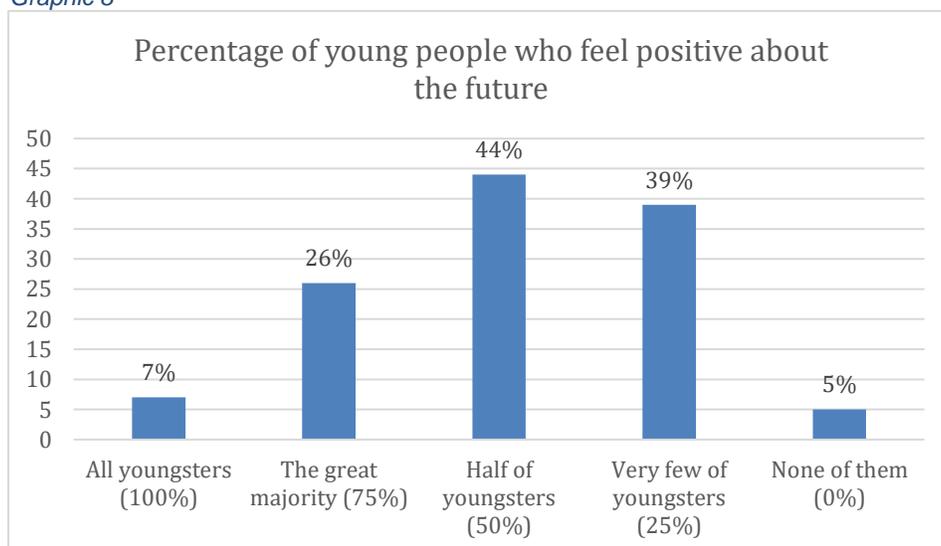
A great majority of respondents (82, 5%) consider artistic and cultural tools useful and motivating for their beneficiaries; 17, 5% are not completely sure but they could consider the possibility of their use.

Among those professionals who have never used artistic and cultural tools, 57,7% agree that these type of tools can be useful and motivating for the young people they work with and 38,5% consider that it could be, but they are not completely sure.

Young people's perspectives on the future

Professionals were also asked to give their assessment, based on their work with young people, as to whether young people, in general, have a more positive view and expectations about future at this moment, after the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of them consider that only half of youngsters have a more positive view and expectations, which clearly gives us a pessimistic view of the situation of youth in the present and near future. This again points to the need to work on the issues of emotional well-being, in order to achieve an improvement of expectations and hope for the future, accompanied, of course, by material improvements.

Graphic 8



Question: *Would you say that young people, in general, have a more positive view and expectations about future at this moment, after the COVID-19 pandemic?*

Source: *Own production*

5. Conclusions

The main goal of this study is analyzing the post pandemic situation in the targeted local contexts from the point of view of professionals who work with young people; an objective which has been successfully achieved. The resulting analysis aims to be more qualitative than quantitative, since the questionnaire has been unequally distributed in the different countries and it is not a representative sample of the real situation.

124 professionals from 7 countries have answered the survey, mainly young women (25-34) who work in the educational sector. The over-representation of the education sector is a factor that should certainly be taken into account because of its influence on the results of the study.

The study has explored the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in many aspects. For society in general, professionals are more concerned about the negative effects on psychological health and emotional well-being, socialization and cultural life and economy and employment. Regarding the vulnerable young people, professionals are more concerned about the negative effects on psychological health and emotional well-being, socialization and cultural life and studies and training.

Also, the young people's relationships with all the spheres of their lives have worsened, especially relationships with educational environment, relationship with themselves and with the local community. All countries, except Bulgaria, are pessimistic about the changes in young people's relationships because they consider that the most significant of these is that relations have worsened, in a general analysis.

The studies consulted in the different countries shows that, although the levels of interaction have been restore after the general confinement of 2020 and the different restrictions that occurred until 2022 in most of the countries, the psychological health and emotional well-being of people in general, and young people in particular, has worsened since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This effect is also pointed out by the professionals consulted.

Regarding the provision of services, most of the respondents answered that young people now visit the services more often. This is a positive result; it could mean that young people are probably aware of his worsening conditions and seek support from a variety of professional services. Level of provision of services after the pandemic varies depending on the country, in general services have been restored.

National results highlight that, in general, service provision is now higher than before the pandemic, except in Italy. It is an optimistic result that shows that the local services probably have adapted to the

urgency of needs. It also shows the resilience of education and social sector professionals. The increase in service provision has been especially high in Bulgaria and Greece.

Young people mostly need psychological and emotional health support and educational support. Regarding specific tools, professionals from different countries have a strong agreement about the psychological support (psychotherapy, support groups, etc.) which is pointed out by most professionals in all the countries; followed by courses and learning activities, leisure and free time activities and individual labour orientation. Relevance of leisure and free time activities is in line with what is pointed out by the last study of the European Commission (2022), who says that it is important to focus on the area of leisure time activities to intervene with young people, when addressing needs, whatever their nature.

Apart from this, there are small differences between countries regarding the second and third tools considered most relevant. Taking account these differences will be crucial in order to apply the tools according to each need in the local context.

A great majority of respondents (82, 5%) consider artistic and cultural tools useful and motivating for their beneficiaries; 17, 5% are not completely sure but they could consider the possibility of their use. Even the professionals who have never used artistic tools consider them useful, which is a positive result for the ReCAP project aim.

Regarding the perspectives of young people towards the future, the situation doesn't seem to be very positive, because most of respondents consider that only half of the youngsters feel motivated and positive about the future. For this reason, attention to the psychological well-being of young people is once again one of the main issues to be taken into account now and in the near future.

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LOCAL CONTEXT AND NEEDS ANALYSIS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of the **ReCAP project**. It is part of the first Outcome of the project, which is a questionnaire aimed at drawing a picture of the post pandemic social context in each of the local contexts addressed.

Summary of the project: the ReCAP project aims to support the active involvement and civic participation of youth, through non-formal learning activities, with a special emphasis on young people with fewer opportunities. The final aim of the project is to promote the social inclusion and civic engagement of youth (14 -29), in particular, those with disadvantages, through the use of specific artistic and cultural tools. The results of this project will be:

- **PR1:** Local context and needs analysis questionnaire
- **PR2:** Art and Culture toolbox for youth workers
- **PR3:** Roadmap for youth social inclusion through art and culture in a post-pandemic context

Please, insert your e-mail: _____

1. Country where you work

- Bulgaria
- France
- Greece
- Italy
- Portugal
- Romania
- Spain

2. Gender

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

3. Age

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and more

4. In which sector, at local level, do you develop your work with young people and vulnerable groups? (*Single choice*)

- Municipal and local youth centers
- Education
- Social work services
- Labor orientation services
- Security office/local police
- Creative/artistic sector
- Health
- Non-governmental organizations
- Other: _____



5. Which specific position do you have in your organization, in relation to the work you implement with young people? (*Single choice*)

- Administrative
- Teacher/professor
- Social worker
- Youth worker
- Labor counsellor
- Director/Coordinator
- Project manager
- Other: _____

6. With which groups of vulnerable young people do you mainly work? (*Multiple choice*)

- Girls
- Youth not in employment, education or training (“NEET”)
- Youth with a migrant background
- Minorities
- Youths from the LGBTIAQ+ community

7. How old are the young people you work with/for? (*Multiple choice*)

- 14-17
- 18-22
- 23-26
- 27-29

8. Where do you develop your work with young people? (*Single choice*)

- Rural area
- Urban area
- Both

9. At the moment, what are your main concerns related to the negative effects of the COVID-19 crisis, in general? (*Multiple choice, max 3 options*)

- Negative effects on the economy and employment
- Negative effects on physical health
- Negative effects on psychological health and emotional well-being
- Negative effects on socialization and cultural life
- Negative effects on civic participation (volunteering, community involvement etc.)
- Negative effects on studies and training
- Other: _____
- None

10. And what are your main concerns related to the negative effects of the COVID-19 crisis on vulnerable young people? (*Multiple choice, max 3 options*)

- Negative effects on the economy and employment
- Negative effects on physical health
- Negative effects on psychological health and emotional well-being
- Negative effects on socialization and cultural life
- Negative effect on civic participation (volunteering, community involvement etc.)
- Negative effects on studies and training
- Other: _____
- None

11. In your opinion, young people's relationships within their environment after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic... *(Mark the box with an X)*

	Has improved	Has worsened	Unchanged/still the same	Don't 'know/doubt
Relationship with the family				
Relationship with friends				
Relationship with couple/partners				
Relationship with working environment				
Relationship with educational environment				
Relationship with themselves				
Relationship with the local community				

12. Did young people come to your services during the confinement and in the months after for help (March 2020 – March 2021)?

- Yes
- No

13. If you answered yes, which type of help did they mainly ask for? *(Multiple choice)*

- Financial help
- Employment support
- Physical health support
- Mental and emotional health support
- Relationships' advice
- Educational support
- Other: _____

14. Do young people now visit your services more often than before the pandemic?

- Yes
- No

15. Would you say that service provision towards youth and vulnerable groups is now at the same levels as before the pandemic, at your local context? *(Single choice)*

- There are much more services now than before the pandemic (150%)
- Service provision is slightly higher (125%)
- Service provision is at the same level than before de pandemic (100%)
- Most services have been restored, but not all. (75%)
- There are half as many services as there were before the pandemic (50%)
- Very few services have been resumed (25%)
- Services provided before the pandemic are no longer available (0%)



16. In which areas do you think young people currently need the most support? (*Multiple choice, máx. 3*)

- Financial support
- Employment orientation
- Physical health support
- Mental and emotional health support
- Relationships' advice
- Educational support
- Culture, leisure and free time activities
- Administrative support
- Other: _____

17. Which specific tools/activities do you consider more important for the young people now at your local context? (*Multiple choice, máx. 3*)

- Subsidies/financial support
- Courses and learning activities
- Internship opportunities
- Leisure and free time activities
- Psychological support (psychotherapy, support groups etc.)
- Individual labour orientation
- Individual educational orientation
- Others: _____

18. Have you ever used artistic and cultural tools in your work with young people? (*Single choice for each item*)

- Before the pandemic: Yes/No
- During the pandemic: Yes/No
- After the pandemic: Yes/No

19. Do you consider artistic and cultural tools useful and motivating for your beneficiaries? (*Single choice*)

- Totally (100%)
- It could be, I don't know for sure (50%)
- No at all (0%)

20. Would you say that young people, in general, have a more positive view and expectations about future at this moment, after the COVID-19 pandemic? (*Single choice*)

- Totally (100%)
- The great majority (75%)
- Only half of young people feel this way (50%)
- Very few feel positive and motivated (25%)
- They do not feel any motivation and do not show a positive attitude towards future (0%)

Please, comment on anything you feel is relevant to the issue:
