

DELIVERING FOR YOUTH

How governments can put
young people at the centre
of the recovery





Abstract

Governments across the OECD are investing significant resources to address the immediate and long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given that the crisis has affected different age groups differently and that its repercussions will be felt by many for decades to come, it is crucial to adopt an integrated public governance approach to COVID-19 response and

recovery efforts. This policy brief presents the views of a non-representative sample of 151 youth organisations from 72 countries, including 100 youth organisations based in 36 OECD countries, on how young people have been experiencing the crisis and related government action. It is complemented by an analysis of the measures adopted across 34 OECD countries and provides recommendations on how to deliver a fair, inclusive and resilient recovery for young people through a range of public governance approaches.



Key policy messages

- Youth organisations are most concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on mental health, followed by its impact on education and employment outcomes, familial relations and friendships, as well as the limitation to individual freedoms.
- More than half of OECD-based youth organisations indicates their members are satisfied with the way in which the government in their country has used scientific evidence to mitigate the pandemic (53%) and has communicated about the risks of the pandemic to their citizens (54%).
- On the other hand, surveyed OECD-based youth organisations are rather dissatisfied with the way governments have delivered public services for young people during the COVID-19 crisis, notably in the area of sports, culture and leisure (63%), education (60%), housing (56%) and employment (56%), and to a lesser extent in health (46%), transportation and mobility (36%) and justice (33%).
- Beyond its direct impacts on young people's wellbeing, youth organisations express concerns about broader societal effects of the COVID-19 crisis. OECD-based youth organisations are most worried about the impact of the crisis on youth rights (72%), inequalities across age cohorts (69%), the spread of disinformation (67%), racial discrimination (61%) and political polarisation (56%). 59% are worried that the crisis may divert government attention away from tackling climate change. 45% express concerns about the wellbeing of elderly and 31% say they are worried about public debt.
- OECD-based youth organisations express concerns about the lack of opportunities for young people to shape response and recovery measures. Only 15% feel their government considered young people's views when adopting lockdown and confinement measures. More than half believe financial support schemes (56%) and infrastructure investment responses (54%) have not incorporated young people's views.
- More than one in three OECD-based youth organisations (38%) estimate their members' trust in government decreased since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, whereas only 16% report an increase. Similarly, 31% say their members' satisfaction with democratic processes has decreased during the same period, while only 15% report an increase.
- 29 of 32 OECD countries with a comparable national response and recovery plan in place include specific policies, programmes or other commitments for young people in their plans, with 10 of them also elaborating how young people have been consulted in the process.

- 24 of 32 OECD countries with a comparable national response and recovery plan in place have put in place measures to support young people in vulnerable circumstances.
 - While nearly all surveyed OECD-based youth organisations have contributed to mitigating the impacts of COVID-19, for instance by organising (online) workshops and running information campaigns, including groups in disadvantaged circumstances, less than a third of OECD countries with a response and recovery plan explain how young people can engage in the delivery of recovery measures.
- To better ensure the delivery of a fair, inclusive and resilient recovery for young people, governments can consider a range of public governance approaches, including:*
- Adopting an integrated approach to supporting young people across all relevant sectors – both through specific sectoral policies and integrated youth strategies at the appropriate level(s) of government – raising awareness among civil servants about the impact of the crisis on young people and creating mechanisms for cross-sectoral co-operation.
 - Embedding the perspectives of all age groups in response and recovery measures, including in the identification of policy priorities, design of policies, services and (support) programmes, allocation of public resources.
 - Involving young people and youth organisations in building social cohesion and in the implementation of recovery efforts by promoting meaningful volunteer services and youth work through laws, strategies and adequately resourced programmes.
 - Assessing and anticipating the long-term impacts of the crisis across different age groups by improving the collection, use and sharing of data and evidence disaggregated by age and all other identities young people associate with, as well as their intersections, including socio-economic status and geographic area, gender, race and ethnicity, indigeneity, migrant status, (dis)ability status.
 - Building institutional, administrative and technical capacities and skills among policymakers to deliver a fair, inclusive and resilient recovery for young people in line with the recommendations above.



Introduction

In the last 15 years, two generations of young people were hit by two major global crises: the 2007–2008 financial crisis, which left lasting scars¹ on adolescents and young adults' socio-economic prospects and trust in government, and the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, young people (aged 15 to 29)², who already shouldered much of the economic consequences of the financial crisis, have again found it increasingly difficult to transition to an autonomous life. Various indicators show that young people have been hit hard by the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, and are expressing growing concerns about the long-term implications it may have on disposable income and future earnings, mental health, education and employment outcomes, among others (see e.g. (OECD, 2021_[1]; OECD, 2021_[2]; OECD, 2020_[3]; OECD, 2021_[4]; OECD, 2021_[5]; OECD, 2020_[6]; OECD, 2021_[7]).

In the first months of the pandemic, young people lost their jobs faster than other age groups due to their over-representation in industries most affected by the crisis or in insecure jobs with temporary or fixed-term contracts (OECD, 2021_[8]). Youth unemployment rates soared initially in nearly all OECD countries, with an impact twice as high as for the working age population, although they have recovered since to pre-crisis levels in most countries (OECD, 2021_[8]). Results from the OECD Risks that Matter survey show that, as a result, many young people have been experiencing financial insecurity and housing instability, (OECD, 2021_[5]), while high levels of mental distress have continued to be experienced by young people (OECD, 2021_[9]). Further, while the long-term effects of the crisis on young people's access to education remain to

be fully observed, the crisis has significantly reduced international student mobility, widened educational attainment gaps across different student populations and increased the risk of students disengaging from education entirely (OECD, 2020_[6]; OECD, 2021_[7]; OECD, 2021_[10]). Overall, the effects of the crisis have often been more significant for young women, young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs), young migrants, young people with disabilities and other young people in vulnerable circumstances (OECD, 2021_[2]). The long-term economic and social consequences of the crisis thus have the potential to negatively impact young people's trust in government and public institutions as well as their association with democratic processes (Aksoy, Eichengreen, Saka, 2020_[11]).



Young people have been finding it increasingly difficult to transition to an autonomous life.

Already prior to the crisis, studies indicated that young people's satisfaction with democracy and their trust in government were on the decline (see e.g. (Eurofound, 2021_[12]; Foa et al., 2020_[13]); (Gallup, 2019_[14])). According to findings from the OECD survey among youth organisations³ conducted in July–August 2021 for the purpose of this policy brief (hereafter "*2021 OECD Survey on COVID-19 and Youth*")⁴, more than one in three respondents from OECD countries (38%) reported that the trust of their members in government has decreased since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis.⁵ Moreover, 31% said their members' satisfaction with democratic processes has decreased during the same period.⁶

1 Contributory factors in the "scarring effect" are human capital depreciation and the loss of professional networks during out-of-work periods. Employers might also see early periods of unemployment as a sign that a young person is less productive or motivated. Scarring might even negatively impact young people's preference for work (Heckman and Borjas, 1980_[91]; Ellwood, 1982_[92]).

2 For the purpose of this paper, "youth" is defined as a period of transition from childhood into adulthood, which is characterised by significant changes in people's lives, while recognising that life trajectories experienced differ across individuals. To compare outcomes across countries and facilitate standardisation of data collection by age group, this paper uses the definition of "young people" as individuals aged 15–29 in consistency with the updated OECD Youth Action Plan (OECD, 2021_[8]).

3 Youth organisations are youth-led, non-profit, voluntary non-governmental associations, and under some circumstances, can instead be part of the state apparatus or be youth worker-led. They are mostly established to further the political, social, cultural, or economic goals of their members by implementing activities for young people and/or engaging in advocacy work to promote their cause (Council of Europe, 2018_[89]).

4 See Annex 1.A

5 Trust in government decreased for 38% of respondents from youth organisations based in OECD countries. It increased for 16% and remained the same for 46% of respondents in the same group.

6 Satisfaction with democracy decreased for 31% of respondents from youth organisations based in OECD countries. It increased for 15% and remained the same for 54% of respondents within the same group.

Established democracies across the globe are recording a decline in civic participation, deteriorating trust and greater polarisation (OECD, 2021^[15]). Addressing age-based inequalities is critical to avoid further disengagement of citizens – especially younger ones – from democratic processes. As governments mobilise significant public resources to recover from the crisis, they have a unique opportunity to create better opportunities for young people, address age-based inequalities and create the foundations for future well-being and public trust.

Public governance – laws, public policies, services and institutions, the way public decisions are made, and how resources are allocated – is at the core of these efforts. OECD evidence demonstrates that the far-reaching effects of the COVID-19 crisis across all sectors cannot be addressed in “silos” (OECD, 2020^[16]; OECD, 2020^[17]; (OECD, 2020^[3]). An integrated public governance approach is crucial for delivering a fair, inclusive and resilient recovery for young people and other age groups.

While a wealth of studies have focused both on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on young people and on inequalities within and across different age cohorts (OECD, 2021^[5]; OECD, 2020^[18]); (OECD, 2020^[3]), further research is needed to better understand how governments across the OECD have addressed the challenges faced by young people through their national response and recovery plans. This policy brief analyses the extent to which the plans provide age-disaggregated evidence, cover cross-sectoral commitments specific to young people and have engaged young people in their design and implementation.⁷

This policy brief draws on work on youth empowerment and intergenerational justice carried out by the OECD Public Governance Committee. It builds on and complements insights presented in the updated OECD Youth Action Plan (OECD, 2021^[8]). The paper presents findings from two data sources:

1. A comprehensive analysis of the response and recovery plans developed by 34 OECD countries as of November 2021 (see Annex 1.B); and
2. Findings from the 2021 OECD Survey on COVID-19 and Youth, an online questionnaire run between 16 July and 30 August 2021 with the participation of a non-representative sample of 151 youth organisations from 72 countries (see Annex 1.A).

The analysis also draws on and updates findings from the policy brief “Youth and COVID-19: Response, recovery and resilience” (OECD, 2020^[3]). Where possible, it compares findings among a non-representative sample of 43 youth organisations (hereafter “two-time respondents”) that responded to the 2020 and 2021 editions of the survey (see Annex 1.A).

The policy brief is structured in three sections:

- **Views of youth organisations:** New evidence on the needs, concerns and circumstances of young people (aged 15–29) in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, their expectations from governments; their satisfaction with public services; and a discussion on the drivers of young people’s trust in government, public institutions and democracy.
- **Response and recovery measures:** A comparative analysis of the extent to which OECD countries’ response and recovery plans cover cross-sectoral youth commitments, age-disaggregated evidence, and information about how young people have been consulted and will be engaged in their implementation.
- **Moving from commitments to action:** A mapping of ongoing and planned initiatives across OECD countries to partner with young people in designing and delivering a fair, inclusive and resilient recovery for all generations.

⁷ Cross-sectoral response and recovery measures cover all relevant policy areas and require a co-ordination mechanism among different ministries, levels of government and public bodies responsible for and working on issues affecting young people.



1. Youth and COVID-19: Long-lasting scars ahead?

Youth organisations express growing concerns about the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on mental health and access to education and employment

While the trajectory of the pandemic continues to evolve and varies across countries, most OECD countries were easing social distancing, confinement, and social isolation measures along with the ongoing deployment of vaccines when survey data was collected (July-August 2021). During this period, schools and universities in OECD countries gradually started re-opening after significant disruptions in 2020 and

the first half of 2021 (OECD, 2021^[1]). The global recovery continued to progress but has lost momentum and remains uneven across countries (OECD, 2021^[19]). Youth unemployment rates in the OECD, which surged at the onset of the pandemic, had started to decline in many countries by July 2021 (OECD, 2021^[20]). At the same time, the prevalence of mental health symptoms related to anxiety and depression has risen dramatically among young people and remains higher than before the crisis (OECD, 2021^[4]; OECD, 2021^[9]).

The road to recovery is characterised by significant uncertainty and risks as new COVID-19 variants continue to appear (OECD, 2021^[19]). At the time of writing, the emergence of the Omicron strain has resulted in new lockdown and confinement measures and tightened travel restrictions in some OECD countries (OECD, 2021^[19]).

Findings from the 2021 survey show that many of the challenges identified by respondents of the 2020 survey persist 16 months later. When asked to identify the top three concerns regarding the ef-

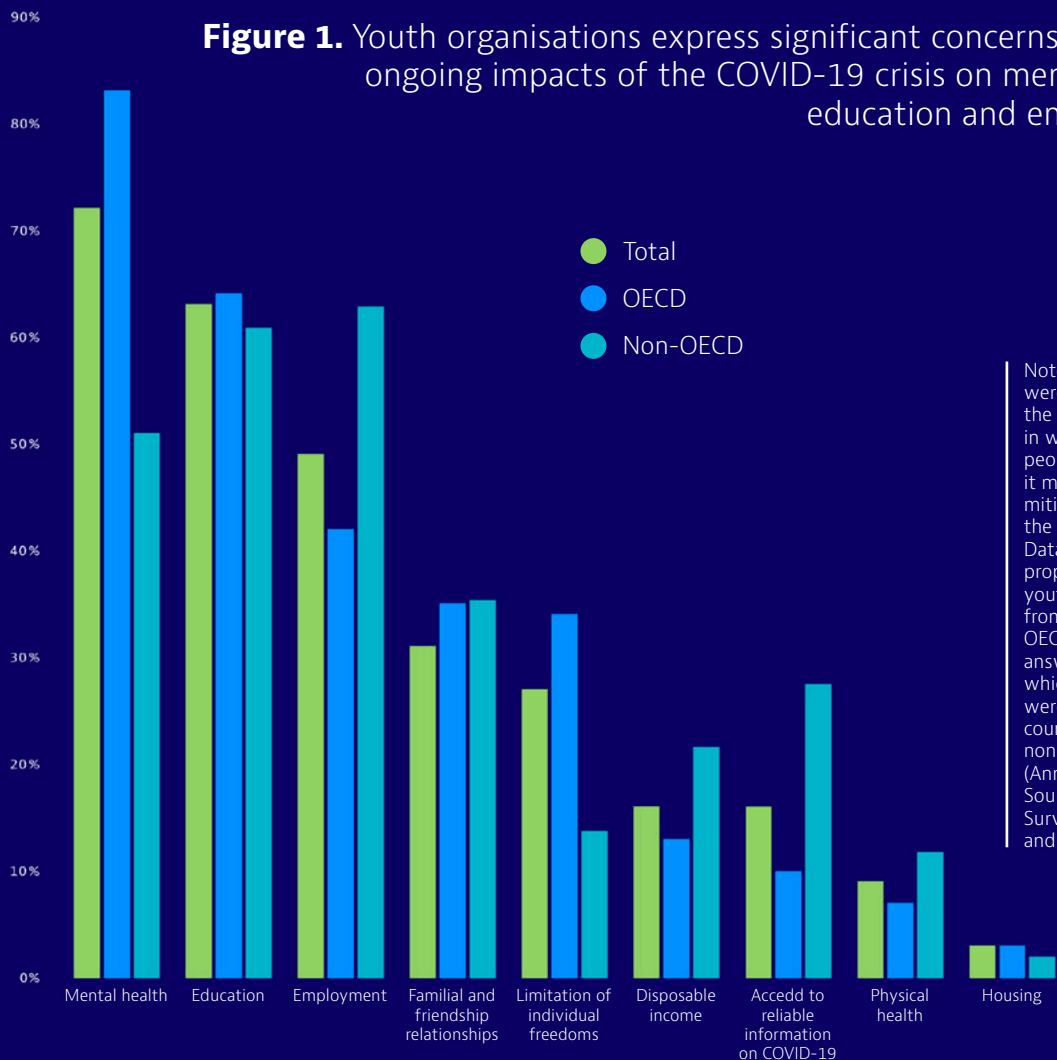
fects of the crisis on young people, youth organisations surveyed in July–August 2021 across the OECD expressed greatest worries about the impact of COVID-19 on mental health (83%), education (64%) and employment (42%), followed by familial relations and friendships (35%), and limitation of individual freedoms (34%) (Figure 1).

Among two-time respondents, concerns about the impact of COVID-19 have been growing in the areas of mental health, education and familial relations and friendships. Moreover, concerns about challeng-

es in accessing and maintaining employment remain at a very high level.

These results reflect young people’s ongoing – and, in some cases, increasing – concerns about long-lasting scars that will stretch beyond employment and education. Section 2 of this paper will analyse to what extent the response and recovery efforts of countries have taken into account the needs and perspectives of young people in an integrated way.

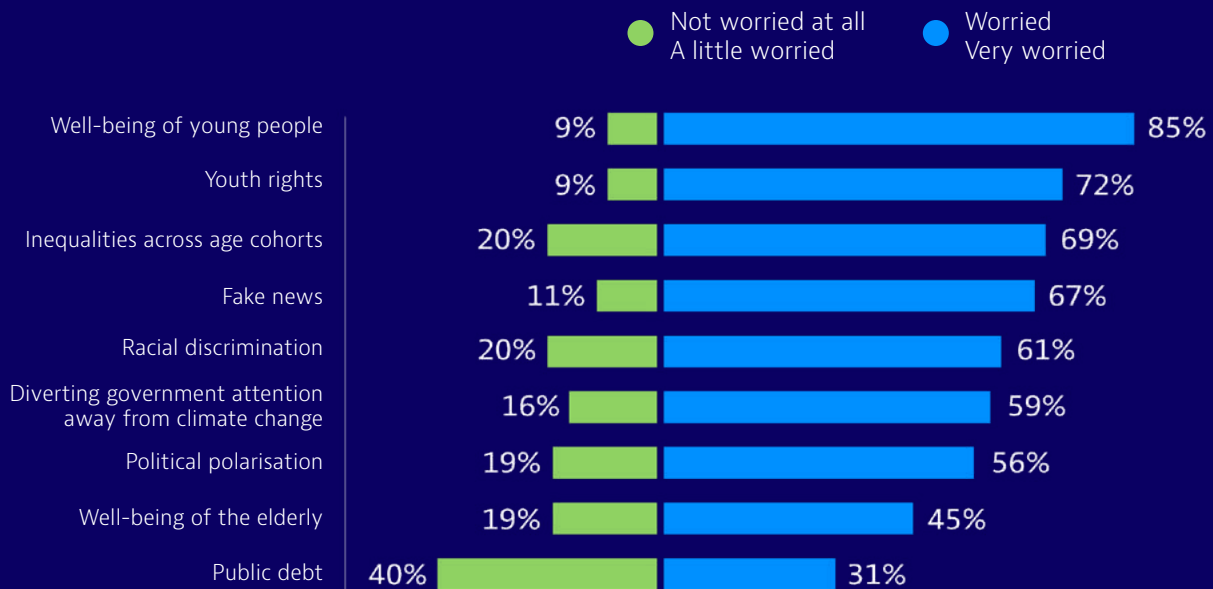
Figure 1. Youth organisations express significant concerns about the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on mental health, education and employment



Note: Respondents were asked to identify the top three areas in which young people were finding it most challenging to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 crisis. Data refers to the proportion of all 151 youth organisations from OECD and non-OECD countries that answered the survey, of which 100 respondents were from OECD countries and 51 from non-OECD countries (Annex 1.A). Source: OECD 2021 Survey on COVID-19 and Youth



Figure 2. Youth organisations are most concerned about the long-term implications of COVID-19 on the well-being of young people, youth rights and inequalities across age cohorts



Note: Respondents were asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 5, the extent to which they were worried about the impact of COVID-19 in a number of areas, where 1 is not worried at all and 5 is very worried. The graph presents grouped answers 1-2 (Not worried at all – A little worried) and 4-5 (Worried – Very Worried), excluding those who answered ‘Neither worried nor not worried’. Data refers to the proportion of youth organisations from the OECD that answered the survey (N=100 out of 151 respondents). Results are rounded to the nearest decimal.

Source: OECD 2021 Survey on COVID-19 and Youth.

Youth organisations are increasingly concerned about young people’s well-being

When asked about the long-term implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, respondents from OECD countries expressed greatest concerns about the well-being of young people (85%), followed by concerns about the impact on youth rights⁸ (72%) and inequalities across age cohorts (69%). They also indicated important concerns about

the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the spread of disinformation (fake news) (67%), racial discrimination (61%), the risk that the crisis may divert government attention away from tackling climate change (59%) and political polarisation (56%) (Figure 2).

These findings differ considerably from the results of the 2020 edition of the survey. In the early stages of the pandemic, concerns expressed by youth organisations about the well-being of the elderly outweighed worries about young people’s well-being, the spread of mis- and disinformation (fake news), increasing levels of public debt and racial discrimination (OECD, 2020_[3]).

A similar trend can be observed among two-time respondents who express strongest concerns about

⁸ While definitions of youth rights vary across international bodies and organisations, the UN OHCHR postulates that human rights of youth refer to the full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms by young people (UN, 2021_[90])

the well-being of young people and the spread of mis- and disinformation in the 2021 edition. In turn, they now express fewer concerns about the impact of the crisis on the well-being of the elderly and the rise in public debt.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted from being a public health emergency to a crisis of far reaching impacts, young people's concerns have also shifted. Amongst the respondents to the 2021 edition of the survey, a shift is seen towards growing worries about young people's well-being, a concern supported by findings that demonstrate that a majority of youth organisations are discontent with the way in which governments have delivered public services. These findings will be presented in greater detail below.

Findings also illustrate that concerns about the spread of mis- and disinformation⁹ associated with the COVID-19 pandemic persist, posing significant challenges to public perceptions about democracy, notably among young people (OECD, 2021^[15]). Social media accounts for a large part of the mis- and disinformation related to the pandemic (OECD, 2020^[21]). This is especially important for young people, given that they tend to be more digitally literate and source news predominantly from social media. (Brennen, 2020^[22]). Moreover, evidence shows that disinformation can fuel confusion, division and distrust, all of which has implications on young people's perceptions of their governments (OECD, 2020^[3]); (OECD, 2020^[21]). While 54% of 15-year-old students in OECD countries reported being trained at school on how to recognise mis- and disinformation, data shows that those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds continue to score lower than their peers in terms of recognising the credibility of information sources (OECD, 2021^[23]). OECD evidence suggests that the rise of disinformation can also reinforce polarisation in society by harming electoral processes and outcomes and misleading citizens

9 This paper employs the following OECD definitions of dis- and mis-information. Misinformation: false or inaccurate information not disseminated with the intention of deceiving the public. Disinformation: false, inaccurate, or misleading information deliberately created, presented and disseminated to deceive the public. (OECD, 2021^[88])

toward undemocratic alternatives (OECD, 2020^[21]). Indeed, more than one in two OECD-based respondents to the *2021 OECD Survey on COVID-19 and Youth* (56%) report being worried about political polarisation in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.

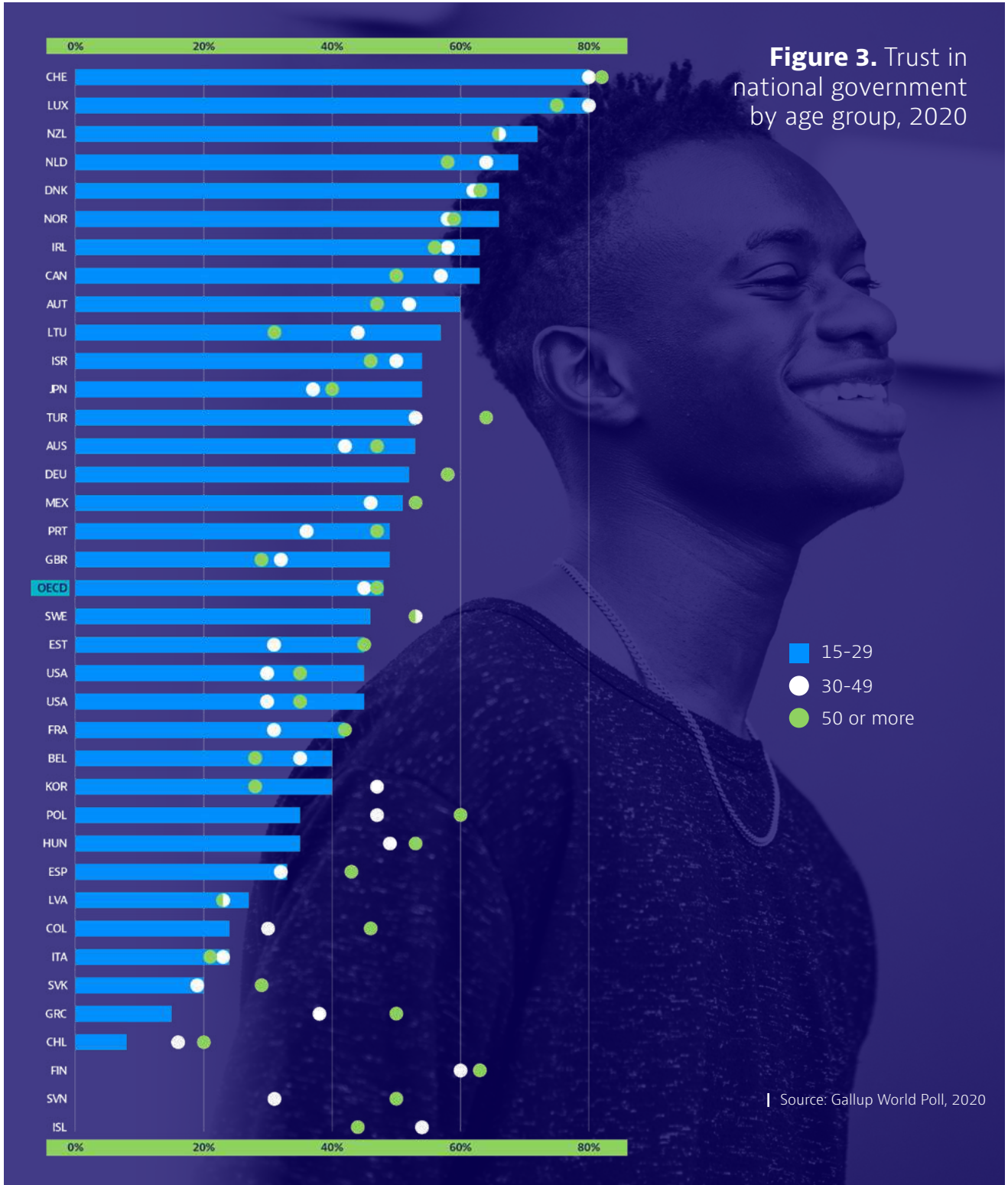


As the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted from being a public health emergency to a crisis of far reaching impacts, young people's concerns have also changed.

Considerations about intergenerational justice and equity have also gained further traction, as the repercussions of the crisis are unfolding with differentiated impacts within and across age cohorts. While respondents identify inequalities across age cohorts (69%) as one of the top concerns, a majority of respondents (59%) is concerned that the COVID-19 crisis will divert government attention away from taking measures to tackle climate change. This is particularly relevant as young people have been at the forefront of advocating for climate justice to be placed at the top of the political agenda, highlighting that young people and future generations will have to shoulder the burden and be most impacted by the consequences of the decisions taken today (OECD, 2021^[24]; OECD, 2020^[25]). Findings from an analysis conducted in July 2021 indeed point to the risk that the focus on short-term emergency responses may have superseded long-term economic, social and environmental objectives in the elaboration of recovery measures. As of July 2021, 83% of recovery funds had not considered environmental impacts or have negative effects on the environment (OECD, 2021^[26]).

A moving target: young people's trust in government during the pandemic

In responding to the COVID-19 crisis, governments have taken measures that have drastically altered the everyday lives and behaviour of citizens. Trust in gov-



ernment is a critical factor in people's understanding of and compliance with extraordinary measures in extraordinary times (OECD, 2021_[26]). When citizens trust public institutions, they tend to comply voluntarily with rules to a greater extent (Murphy, 2004_[27]). During the COVID-19 pandemic, studies have found a strong correlation between trust and compliance with measures taken to contain the spread of the virus (Bargain and Aminjonov, 2020_[28]).

After a general deterioration of trust in government in the aftermath of the 2007-2008 financial crisis in many countries, governments had been slowly regaining the trust of young people (OECD, 2020_[25]). However, despite gradual improvements over the past decade, only 46% of people aged 15-29 expressed trust in national government across the OECD prior to the crisis though there is great variation across countries (Gallup, 2019_[14]).



Findings from the OECD survey reaffirm a downward trend in the trust expressed by youth organisations in government.

Since the onset of the pandemic, citizens' trust in government and their confidence in government's ability to handle and recover from the crisis have been volatile. Following the initial increase in trust levels in the early phase of the pandemic, most OECD countries have seen a decline over its course (Brezzini et al., 2021_[29]). According to the Gallup World Poll, in 2020, 51% of people in OECD countries trusted their government, a 6 percentage point increase from 2019 (Figure 3) (OECD, 2021_[26]). However, in 2021, 48%¹⁰ of people in OECD countries trusted their government, a 3 percentage point decrease from 2020 (Gallup, 2021_[30]). While tracing trust and its respective drivers is challenging, studies point to similar trends for young people. According to a study by Eurofound, trust in government among people aged

18-34 dropped significantly between April 2020 and March 2021 in all EU countries (Eurofound, 2021_[12]).

Findings from the *2021 OECD Survey on COVID-19 and Youth* reaffirm this downward trend over the past year. Whereas 40% of OECD-based youth organisations considered that their members' trust in government had increased in response to how the crisis was handled (as opposed to 22% reporting a decrease) in 2020, that share dropped to 16% of survey respondents in 2021. In turn, in 2021, 38% consider that their members' trust in government had decreased since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 4).

This trend is confirmed by evidence from two-time respondents. Among them, the share of organisations reporting a decrease in trust increased by 21 percentage points between April 2020 and July-August 2021.

Increasing levels of trust in government in times of crisis, combined with the public perception that a nation as a whole is under threat, is known as "rallying around the flag". It predicts an increase in trust during sudden crises as people unite behind leaders and institutions, and temporarily pay less attention to other policy issues (Brezzini et al., 2021_[29]). This effect is confirmed by the survey data discussed above and has been discussed by other studies in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic (Kritzing et al., 2021_[31]). In 18 of 22 OECD countries, average trust in government fell between April/May and June/July 2020, indicating that this effect quickly faded away (OECD, 2021_[26]).

Satisfaction with the delivery of public services during the pandemic is overall low

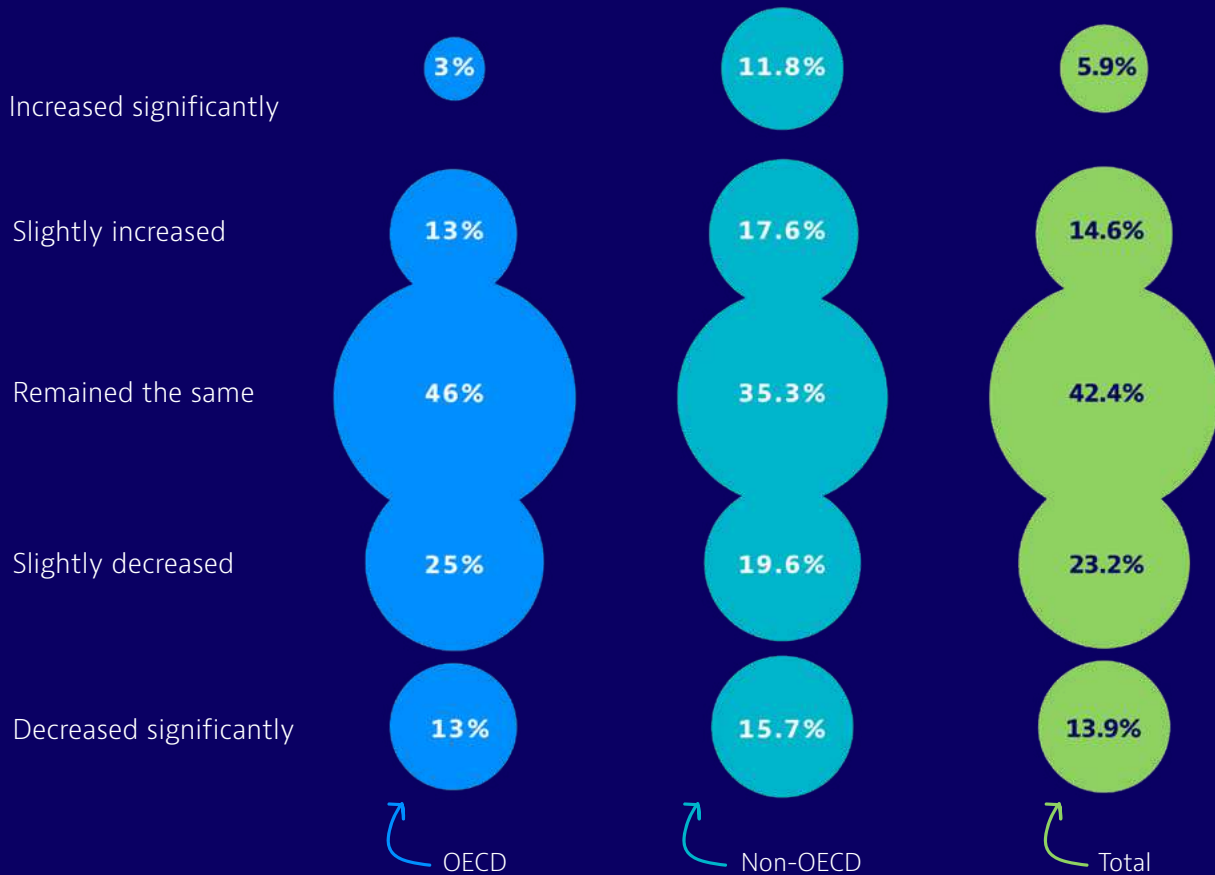
According to the OECD Framework on Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions, the accessibility, responsiveness and quality of public services are important determinants of citizens' trust in government (OECD, 2017_[32]). Survey results show that, overall and across various sectors, respondents from youth organisations express low levels of satisfaction with the way governments have delivered public services for young people during the COVID-19 crisis.

¹⁰ Findings exclude Chile, Israel and Luxembourg as data for these countries was not available at time of publishing.



Figure 4. Youth organisations are more likely to report a decrease than an increase in their members' trust in government since the outbreak of COVID-19

Share of respondents indicating how their trust in government has evolved since the outbreak of COVID-19



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate changes of trust in government among members of their organisation since the outbreak of COVID-19. Options given included a. Increased significantly, b. Slightly increased, c. Neither increased nor decreased, d. Slightly decreased, and e. Decreased significantly. Data refers to the proportion of all 151 youth organisations from OECD and non-OECD countries that answered the survey. Responses are separated between OECD respondents (N=100) and non-OECD respondents (N=51).
Source: OECD 2021 Survey on COVID-19 and Youth.

Youth organisations reported lowest levels of satisfaction with the provision of sports, culture and leisure services during the pandemic. In fact, 63% of OECD respondents expressed dissatisfaction in this area (see Figure 5). A majority of OECD respondents also expressed dissatisfaction with the delivery of public services in the field of education (60%), housing (56%), and employment (56%). Further, 46% of

OECD-based respondents express dissatisfaction with the delivery of healthcare services during the pandemic, for instance by pointing to insufficient mental health support and unaffordability in some countries (see Figure 5).

Respondents located in non-member countries point to similar challenges but express higher dissat-

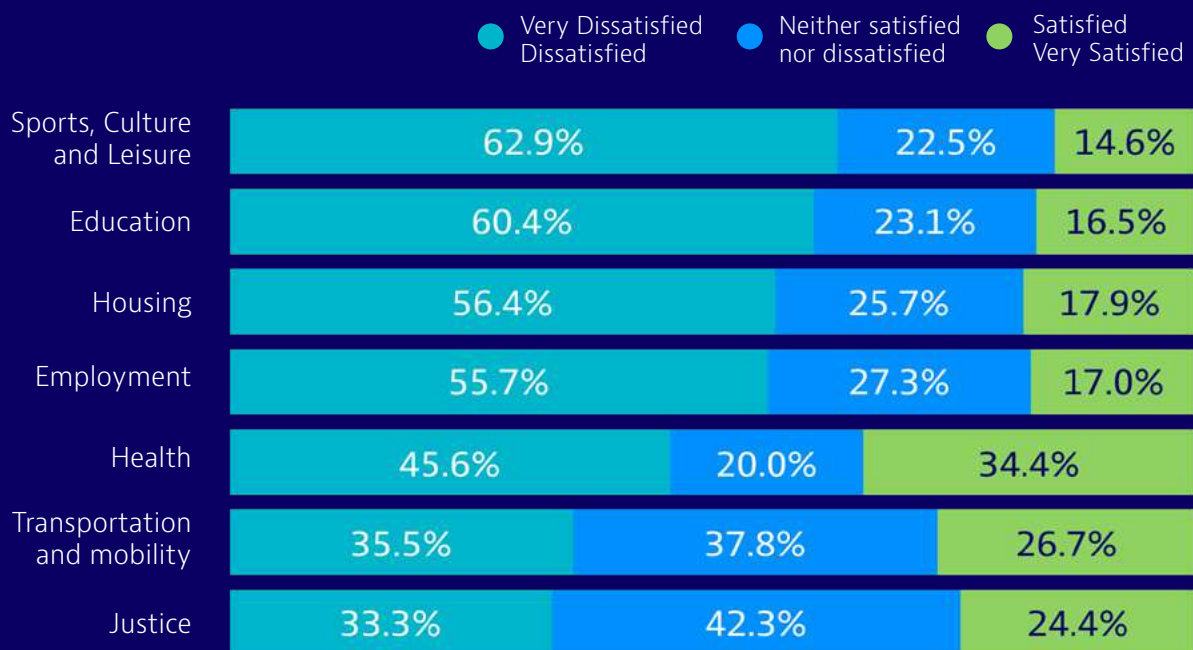
isfaction with government performance in the area of employment (75%), followed by housing (54%), and sports, culture, leisure and education (53%).

These results also underline the importance of an integrated approach across different sectors and ministerial portfolios to support young people and mitigate the impacts of the crisis. For instance, different studies suggest that the lack of young people’s access to sports, culture and leisure activities is likely to have a negative impact on their mental health (Hagell, 2016^[33]; Rodriguez-Bravo, De Juanas and Garcia Castilla, 2020^[34]). Identifying the cumulative effects of

the lack of young people’s access to certain public services and programmes is important to ensure ministries and agencies across the whole of government co-ordinate their interventions in the context of the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

The analysis of response and recovery plans, presented in the second section of this paper, points to significant gaps and the risk of fragmented support provided to young people. Notably, only a few countries spell out in their plans how young people shall be supported in areas beyond education and employment.

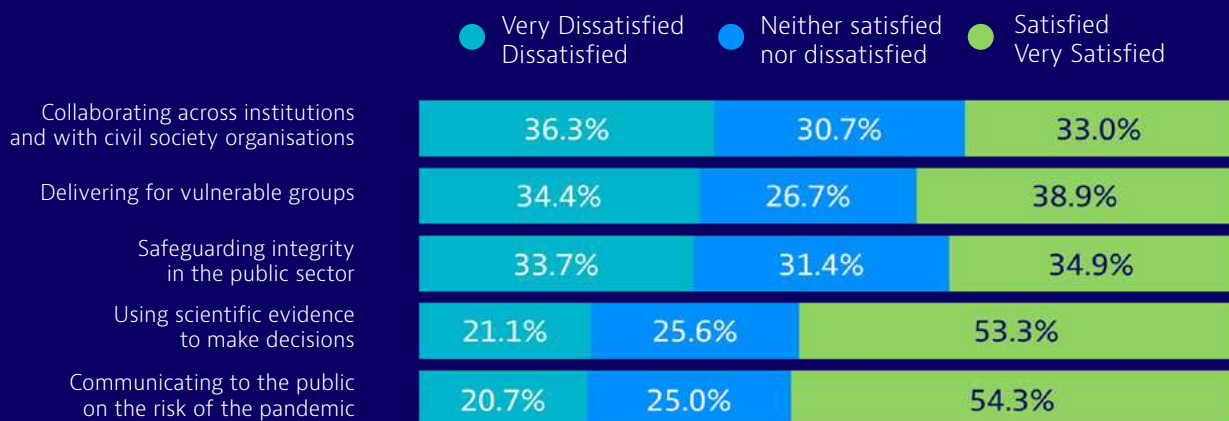
Figure 5. Youth organisations in OECD countries express low levels of satisfaction with public services, especially in sports, culture and leisure, education, housing and employment



Note: Respondents were asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 5, the extent to which the members of their organisation were satisfied with government delivery of public services for young people since the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied. Answers 1-2 (Very Dissatisfied - Dissatisfied) and 4-5 (Satisfied - Very Satisfied) are grouped in this graph. Data refers to 78 to 91 (depending on answer option) youth organisations in OECD countries for which data for this question is available. Source: OECD 2021 Survey on COVID-19 and Youth.



Figure 6. Youth organisations appreciate the way in which governments have communicated on the risks of the pandemic and made use of scientific evidence but are less satisfied with measures to safeguard integrity, deliver for vulnerable groups and ensure collaboration



Note: Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which the members of their organisation were satisfied with government delivery of public services for young people since the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied at all and 5 is very satisfied. Answers 1-2 (Very Dissatisfied - Dissatisfied) and 4-5 (Satisfied - Very Satisfied) are grouped in this graph. Data refers to 86 to 92 (depending on answer option) youth organisations in OECD countries for which data for this question is available.

More than half of youth organisations appreciate the way in which governments have communicated on the risks of the pandemic and made use of scientific evidence

Evidence-based decision-making and effective public communication play a key role in retaining and increasing trust in government in times of crisis (OECD, 2020_[21]). When asked about their satisfaction with the way governments have reacted to the COVID-19 crisis, more than one in two OECD-based respondents (53%) state that their members are satisfied with the use of scientific evidence by governments when taking decisions to mitigate the pandemic. Moreover, 54% of youth organisations report being satisfied with the performance of governments to communicate about the risk of the pandemic to their citizens (Figure 6).

The results differ for respondents from non-member countries: While 66% state that their members are

satisfied with the way their government communicated about the risks of the pandemic, only 37% are satisfied with their use of scientific evidence in decision-making.

Section 2 presents some of the measures OECD countries have put in place to ensure evidence-based decision-making and effective public communication during the crisis, as well as lessons learned that can inform recovery efforts and help governments prepare for future challenges.

Youth organisations point to elevated risks to public sector integrity

The COVID-19 crisis has revealed concerns about safeguarding public sector integrity, notably in the context of important public procurement decisions taken by governments and economic stimulus packages (OECD, 2020_[35]). Emergency situations that



require rapid responses by governments can create conditions that make integrity violations more likely, most notably fraud and corruption (OECD, 2020^[35]). Several studies point to instances of price gouging and bribery during the pandemic, for instance, as medical equipment and supplies were often procured through emergency processes (OECD, 2020^[36]).

By diverting public resources away from their intended use, instances of fraud, corruption and bribery undermine the access to and quality of public services for citizens, including young people (OECD, 2020^[37]). Already the perception of increased levels of corruption is associated with negative impact on trust among citizens. For instance, findings from the April 2020 edition of the *OECD Youth and COVID-19 Survey* show that respondents who felt the integrity of public institutions was compromised were more likely to report that their trust in government had decreased (OECD, 2020^[3]). Among the OECD-based respondents to the 2021 survey edition, only 35% express satisfaction with the measures taken by governments to safeguard public sector integrity during the pandemic, compared to 26% of respondents from non-member countries (Figure 6).

Youth organisations feel that they lack a say in government response measures

The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (OECD, 2017^[38]) underlines that open government is critical to building citizens' trust and achieving more inclusive policy outcomes. A recent study finds that European countries that invest in government openness, for instance by providing access to information proactively and engaging citizens in policy making, benefit from a higher level of citizen trust in the public system (Schmidhuber, Ingrams and Hilgers, 2021^[39]). The study also suggests that the perception of having meaningful opportunities for political participation can translate into greater levels of trust. Similarly, trust in national parliament is positively associated with turnout in national elections, while people's feelings of being able to understand and participate in political processes are positively related to their actual participation (Brezzi et al., 2021^[29]).

Only 33% of respondents from youth organisations in OECD countries (and 20% of respondents from non-members) are satisfied with how governments have collaborated across institutions and with civil society organisations to mitigate the crisis (Figure 6). This finding resonates with the observation that



many governments have operated with lower standards of stakeholder participation during the pandemic, for example when introducing emergency regulations (OECD, 2021_[26]).

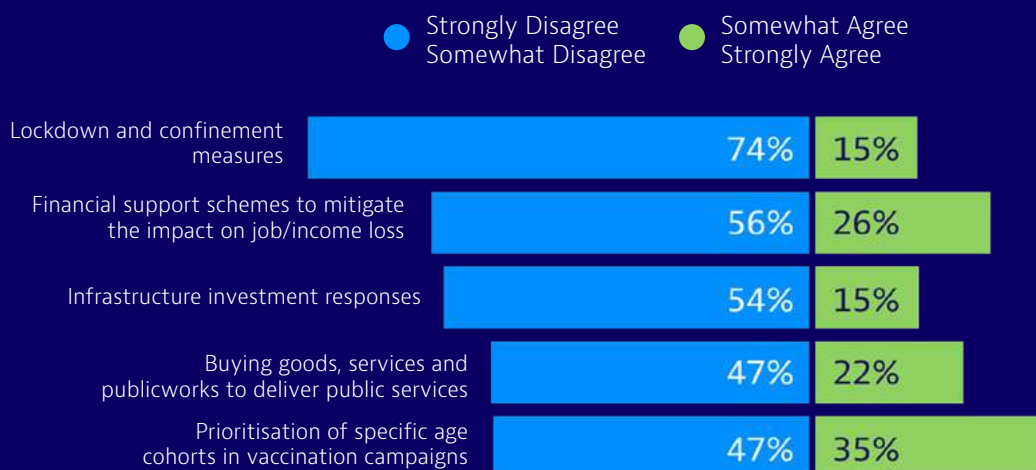
A majority of respondents also feels that their government has not incorporated the views of young people when taking emergency measures and decisions to mitigate the crisis. Among the respondents from OECD countries, 15% feel their government considered young people's views when adopting lockdown and confinement measures. 22% feel that young people's views were taken into account in the purchase of goods, services and public works and 26% somewhat or strongly agree that their views were reflected in the design of financial schemes to mitigate the impact on jobs and income loss. Similarly, around one in three OECD-based respondents (35%) considers that governments have incorporat-

ed young people's views when prioritising age cohorts in vaccination campaigns (Figure 7).

While some infrastructure services have been disrupted in order to stop the spread of the coronavirus (e.g. air transport, railway, urban public transportation), other public services and infrastructure industries have been key to government emergency and recovery responses, most notably health infrastructure, digital infrastructure and telecommunications (OECD, 2020_[40]). In this area, more than half of the respondents from OECD (54%) and non-member countries (52%) believe their government has not incorporated the views of young people when taking decisions.

These results show that, across some of the most impactful decisions taken by governments during the pandemic, members of youth organisations feel young people had few opportunities to meaningfully shape them.

Figure 7. Youth organisations feel that they lack a say in government responses to the pandemic



Note: Respondents were asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is Strongly Disagree at all and 5 is Strongly Agree, whether the government had incorporated young people's views on a number of measures. The graph presents grouped answers 1-2 (Strongly Disagree - Somewhat Disagree) and 4-5 (Somewhat Agree - Strongly Agree), excluding those who answered, 'Neither Disagree nor Agree'. Data refers to 85 to 93 (depending on answer option) youth organisations in OECD countries for which data for this question is available. Results are rounded to the nearest decimal. Source: OECD 2021 Survey on COVID-19 and Youth.

Only 4 in 10 OECD-based respondents are satisfied with the support provided TO young people in vulnerable circumstances

Citizens' perception of fairness, in both processes and outcomes of public policy, is a critical dimension of trust (Table 1). Higher levels of trust are related to a more equal distribution of political power amongst members of society. Demographic and socio-economic factors, including gender, age and income are important in explaining differences in public trust. For example, in most OECD countries, people with higher income tend to have higher levels of trust in government, although important differences exist and the direction of causality is not clear (Brezzi et al., 2021^[29]).

The pandemic has exacerbated inequalities between different age groups and among young people of different backgrounds and identities (OECD, 2020^[3]). For example, unemployment rose considerably more among young women than among young men at the onset of the pandemic (OECD, 2021^[41]). Inequalities in access to internet and digital devices have translated into barriers to learning and working in remote settings (OECD, 2021^[41]). Moreover, young women, young people with lower socio-economic status, and without a job reported higher rates of

mental distress in 2020-21 (OECD, 2021^[4]).

The *OECD Youth and COVID-19 Survey* found that respondents from youth organisations were more likely to report a decrease in their trust in government when they felt government had not done enough to support vulnerable groups (OECD, 2020^[3]). According to the 2021 survey data, only 39% of respondents in OECD countries are satisfied with the support governments have provided to groups in vulnerable circumstances during the pandemic (Figure 6). This issue is even more pronounced in non-member countries in which only around a quarter of respondents (26%) are satisfied.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, youth organisations have played a critical role in providing support to vulnerable groups, including older people in care facilities, disabled people, NEETs and migrants, to mitigate its impacts (OECD, 2020^[3]). While evidence from the analysis of national recovery plans across OECD countries shows that several outline specific measures to support vulnerable groups, explicit commitments to strengthen youth workers, volunteers and their institutional capacities are rarely mentioned (see Section 3).





How to bridge the “disconnect”: young people and democracy

Foundations of democracy such as free and open elections, the separation of powers, the rule of law and the protection of human rights have long been recognised as anchors of good governance (OECD, 2021^[15]). However, the Global Satisfaction with Democracy Report finds that dissatisfaction with democracy has risen since the mid-1990s, and is reaching an all-time global high, particularly in developed democracies (Foa, 2020^[42]).

Dissatisfaction with democracies manifests itself in different ways, including in declining party membership, declining voter turnout, a lack of trust in public institutions as well as the rise of populism and increased polarisation (OECD, 2021^[15]).

According to a study undertaken by the University of Cambridge based on data from 160 countries between 1973 and 2020, younger generations have become more dissatisfied with democracy not only in absolute terms, but also relative to how older generations felt at the same stages in life (Foa et al., 2020^[13]). The study finds that while a majority of millennials (defined as born between 1981 and 1996) today express “dissatisfaction” with the way democracy works in their countries, a generation ago those at a comparable age were largely satisfied with democratic performance (Foa et al., 2020^[13]). In the United States, levels of dissatisfaction with democracy have risen by over a third in just one generation (Foa, 2020^[42]).



The government engaged with civil society. Across government departments, there was a shift from consultation to partnership and co-design with stakeholders to harness pre-existing knowledge.

Youth organisation representative mentioning drivers for increasing satisfaction with democracy

The underlying reasons behind the risk of a “disconnect” between an increasing share of young people and democracy are shaped by various factors, notably the national context, perceptions of how governments are serving younger citizens and their capacity to respond to national and global challenges, (OECD, 2021^[15]) as well as a growing intergenerational divide in life opportunities (Foa et al., 2020^[13]). Higher levels of youth unemployment and wealth inequality have left younger citizens facing increasing difficulty in starting an independent life, fuelling “dissatisfaction” with the way democracy delivers for them.



The amount of people believing in fake news and conspiracy theories has increased and damaged democracy.

Youth organisation representative mentioning drivers for decreasing satisfaction with democracy

Moreover, young people remain underrepresented in public institutions, tend to participate less in elections than older peers and their share among the voting population is shrinking as a result of ageing, contributing to further shifting political weight and influence to older age groups (OECD, 2021^[15]); (OECD, 2021^[8]). Young people’s perceptions of democratic governments to handle the climate crisis might cast doubts on the overall ability of democracies to handle long-term, complex and interconnected challenges and invest in long-term priorities over short-term considerations (OECD, 2021^[24]).

The COVID-19 pandemic risks further exacerbating these challenges. Around one in three respondents from OECD countries (31%) states that their members’ satisfaction with democracy has decreased since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, while only 15% report an increase (Figure 8). A survey by Eurofound¹¹ points to a similar trend. Satisfaction with

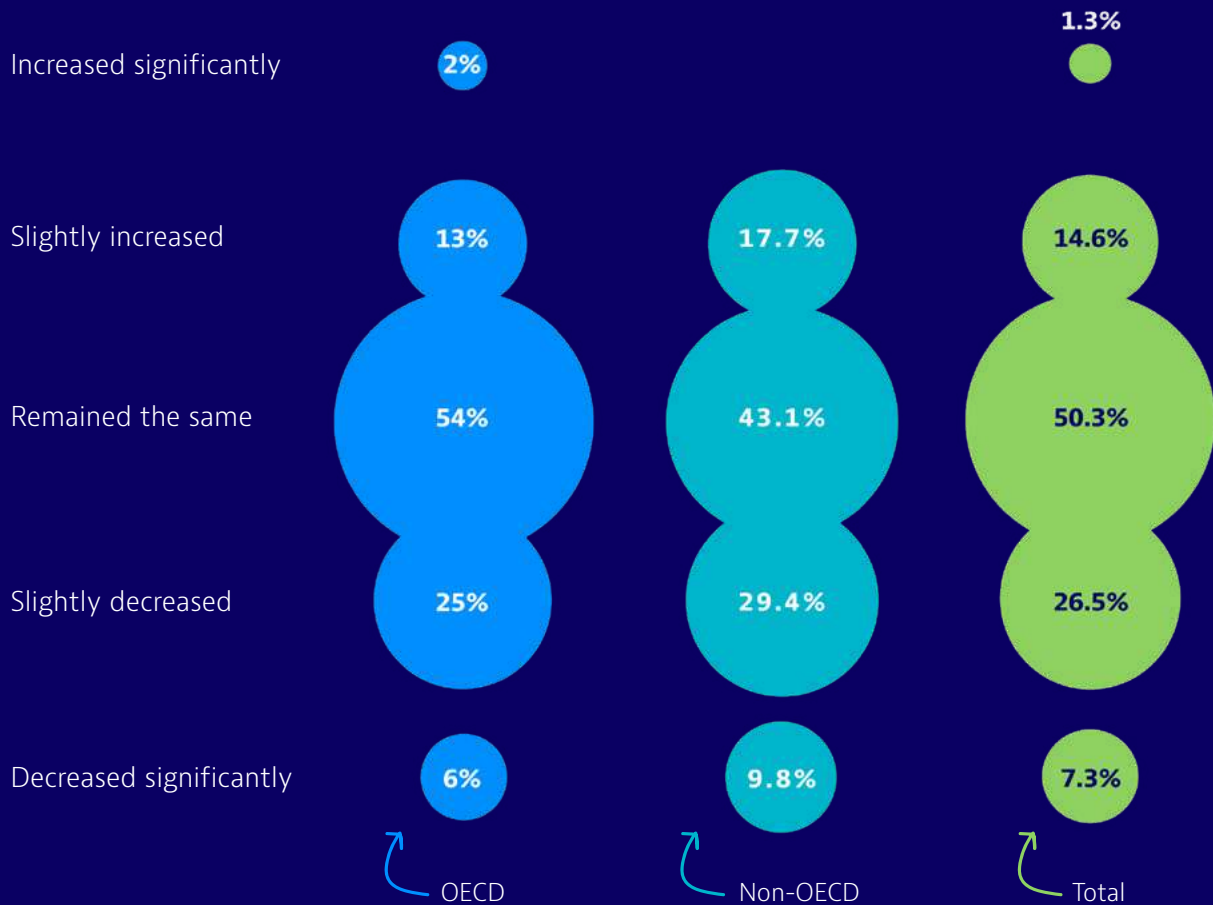
11 The living, working and COVID-19 survey by Eurofound gathers information from respondents via a web link. Anyone aged 18 or older with access to the internet could complete the questionnaire online. Hence, it presents evidence from a non-representative sample.

democracy among people aged 18-34 decreased between July 2020 and March 2021 in all EU countries (Eurofound, 2021_[12]).

A recent study finds that individuals who experience epidemics during their transition to adulthood display less confidence in political leaders, govern-

ments, and elections, which persists over their life-time. Long-lasting scars of the crisis are therefore not only a concern when the employment and income prospects of young people are considered but also in terms of their association with democratic processes and institutions over the life cycle (Aksoy, Eichengreen, Saka, 2020_[11]).

Figure 8. Youth organisations are more likely to report a decrease, rather than an increase, in their members' satisfaction with democracy since the outbreak of COVID-19



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate changes of satisfaction with democracy among members of their organisation since the outbreak of COVID-19. Options given included a. Increased significantly, b. Slightly increased, c. Neither increased nor decreased, d. Slightly decreased and e. Decreased significantly. Data refers to the proportion of all 151 youth organisations from OECD and non-OECD countries that answered the survey. Responses are separated between OECD respondents (N=100) and non-OECD respondents (N=51). Source: OECD 2021 Survey on COVID-19 and Youth.



When asked about why the satisfaction of their members with democracy had increased, OECD-based respondents point to the importance of government's responsiveness, inclusive decision-making and fair treatment of all citizens as well as the significance of accountability, public integrity, transparency and clear communication. Some respondents mentioned that satisfaction with democracy increased as their members observed an increase in social cohesion and recognised that governments had made efforts to protect human and civil rights. In turn, respondents reporting a decline in satisfac-

tion with democracy during the crisis pointed to its impact on civil and human rights. Some respondents also stressed that the crisis had demonstrated government's inability to address challenges and deliver for citizens, contributing to a more pessimistic outlook and raising doubts about the coherence of government measures. Some respondents also raised concerns over the increase in intergenerational inequalities, lack of support for vulnerable groups and increasing political and social polarisation as well as the lack of transparency and integrity, reliable information, the spread of fake news and accountability.



2. Government responses to mitigate the crisis for young people

Strategic responses and employing resources for a fair, inclusive and resilient recovery

Section 2 presents the result of a benchmarking exercise, which analyses 34 publicly available national response and recovery plans across OECD countries.¹² Sectoral and subnational responses are not consid-

¹² This research incorporates a comparison of 32 publicly available national response and recovery plans (see Table 1) in addition to a qualitative analysis of the plans of Mexico and the United States which are excluded from quantitative observations due to their non-comparability. See Annex B for further information.

ered in this analysis. By the end of 2021, at least 34 OECD countries had put forward government-wide response and recovery plans to address the complex economic, environmental and social effects of the pandemic (Table 1). Within the European Union, for instance, the Next Generation EU stimulus package and the EU long-term budget have allocated EUR 2.018 trillion to boost national recovery efforts and help rebuild a greener, more digital and more resilient Europe (EC, 2021^[43]). The Response and Resilience Facility (RRF), a key instrument of the stimulus package, is structured around six pillars, including Pillar 6 on policies for the next generation, children and youth.¹³

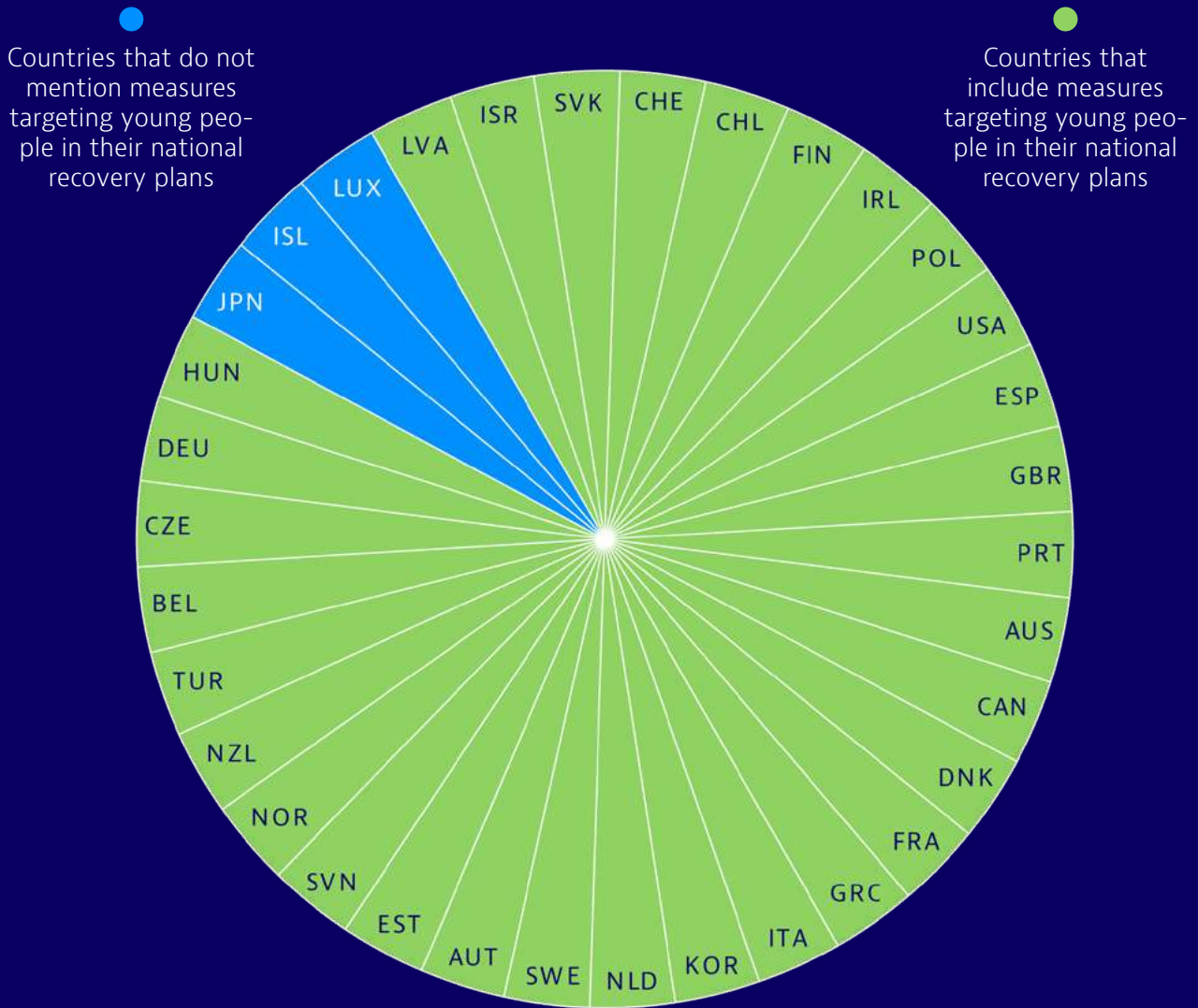
To date, 21 OECD countries within the EU have published government-wide strategies guided by these six core pillars.

Other OECD countries, including Iceland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, Korea and Japan have elaborated national integrated strategies to recover from the

¹³ The Response and Resilience Facility (RRF) is structured around the six following pillars: digital transformation; green transition; smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and jobs; social and territorial cohesion; health and resilience; and policies for the next generation, children and youth.



Figure 9. A majority of OECD countries have included specific measures targeting young people in their national response and recovery plans, 2021



Note: The graph shows 32 OECD countries that had published whole-of-government national response and recovery plans by November 2021. Chile, Israel, Mexico, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States are excluded as no comparable documents were publicly available at this time.
Source: OECD calculations based on information available on the websites of government entities responsible for planning national response and recovery measures.

Table 1. Assessment of youth commitments in national response and recovery plans across OECD countries

- Yes
- No

Country	Evidence Based*	Participatory**	Youth commitments are budgeted	Cross-sectoral***
AUSTRALIA	Yes	No	Yes	No
AUSTRIA	No	No	No	No
BELGIUM	Yes	No	Yes	No
CANADA	Yes	No	Yes	No
COLOMBIA	Yes	No	No	No
COSTA RICA	Yes	No	Yes	No
CZECH REPUBLIC	No	No	No	No
DENMARK	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
ESTONIA	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
FINLAND	Yes	No	Yes	No
FRANCE	Yes	No	Yes	No
GERMANY	Yes	No	Yes	No
GREECE	Yes	No	Yes	No
HUNGARY	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
ICELAND	No	No	No	No
IRELAND	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
ITALY	Yes	No	Yes	No
JAPAN	No	No	No	No
KOREA	No	No	Yes	No
LATVIA	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
LITHUANIA	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
LUXEMBOURG	No	No	No	No
NEW ZEALAND	Yes	No	Yes	No
NORWAY	Yes	No	Yes	No
POLAND	Yes	No	Yes	No
PORTUGAL	Yes	No	Yes	No
SLOVAK REPUBLIC	Yes	No	Yes	No
SLOVENIA	Yes	No	Yes	No
SPAIN	Yes	No	Yes	No
SWEDEN	Yes	No	Yes	No
TURKEY	No	No	No	No
UNITED KINGDOM	Yes	No	Yes	No
OECD TOTAL				
Yes	25	10	27	26
No	7	22	5	6

Note: Data refers to 32 OECD countries that, by November 2021, had published whole-of-government national response and recovery plans. Recovery responses from Chile, Israel, Mexico, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States are excluded as no comparable plans were available at the time.

* Evidence-based: National recovery plans include statistical information of age-disaggregated impacts of the pandemic, with particular focus on impacts on young people.

** Participatory: Countries explicitly mention in their plans that they have consulted with youth organisations or young people in the planning of proposed recovery measures.

*** Cross-sectoral: Countries include specific commitments for young people across different government sectors beyond employment and education.

Source: OECD calculations based on information available on the websites of government entities responsible for planning national response and recovery measures to recover from the pandemic in 2021.



COVID-19 crisis. Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Norway have opted instead for adapting their annual budgets to deliver strategic recovery responses. While each measure responds to the unique challenges faced by countries in their respective national context, a comparative analysis shows that environmental, digital and economic themes are common priorities identified by all countries.

Table 1 presents the results of an assessment of commitments targeting young people (hereafter “youth commitments”) in national response and recovery plans across OECD countries against principles of good governance, notably whether they are evidence-based, participatory, budgeted and cross-sectoral, in line with the methodology of the OECD Assessment Framework of National Youth Strategies (OECD, 2020_[25]).¹⁴ The analysis finds that 29 countries include commitments for young people in their plans (Figure 9). Further, 27 out of 32 comparable plans incorporate evidence of the pandemic effects on young people on at least one of the following policy areas: employment, education, healthcare, mental health, involvement in sports, arts and leisure activities, and engagement in volunteering activities. 26 plans include youth-specific commitments that cover policy areas beyond education and employment sectors to address cross-sectoral impacts in areas such as housing, mental health, and the criminal justice system. In turn, only ten countries explicitly mention having consulted young people in the elaboration of recovery plans. A specific budget to implement youth-specific commitments is allocated in 27 recovery plans.

14 The OECD Assessment Framework of National Youth Strategies identifies eight dimensions to measure whether youth commitments are evidence-based, include young people’s participation in their planning, are budgeted, are transparent and accessible, are monitored and evaluated or accountable, are cross-sectoral, and are gender-responsive. The analysis on Sections 2 and 3 provides quantitative information on whether youth commitments in national recovery plans are evidence-based, include youth participation, are budgeted and cross-sectoral. Qualitative information is provided on transparency and accessibility and monitoring and evaluation. The gender-responsive dimension has been expanded to assess whether youth commitments include an intersectional approach to provide support for young women and young people belonging to vulnerable groups. See Appendix B for more information.

Integrated approaches to support young people during and beyond the pandemic

While governments have largely concentrated their efforts on younger populations to address employment, skilling and education impacts (OECD, 2021_[41]), the majority of response and recovery plans also outline support measures for young people across other policy areas including physical and mental healthcare, digitalisation, social services, public infrastructure investments and sports, culture and leisure. In line with previous OECD findings (OECD, 2020_[25]), countries use different definitions to identify “youth” as a target population, which in turn may explain variances in the type of measures governments have put in place. Notwithstanding these differences, the diverse nature of challenges experienced by young people through the pandemic (See Section 1) call for government measures that engage multiple sectors and stakeholders in an integrated and coordinated approach.



Response and recovery plans across OECD countries identify measures to support young people beyond the field of employment and education.

In their national response and recovery plans, countries have both expanded initial emergency investments and launched new measures to support young people in areas of employment, skilling and education, among other policy areas. For example, France extended the duration of a number of financial support schemes included in the 1 Youth, 1 Solution (*1 Jeune, 1 Solution*) Plan from December 2021 to June 2022. Within this Plan is included a financial aid for businesses providing apprenticeships and internships (Government of France, 2021_[44]). Moreover, Austria, Belgium, Colombia, Czech Republic, Germany and the United States have launched education programmes to re-engage young people who have dropped out of school and to address academic achievement lags among pupils from vulnerable backgrounds. For instance, the programme

“COVID-19 Catching Up Action Programme for children and adolescents for the years 2021 and 2022” in Germany supports young people from disadvantaged backgrounds through volunteering activities, cultural engagements and psychological support (BMFSFJ, 2021_[45]). Evidence suggests that strengthening the collaboration between different government agencies, external actors, services and the education sector is key to addressing learning gaps and improving educational outcomes for students (OECD, 2021_[46]).

Employment and skilling programmes in Estonia, France, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, New Zealand, Poland, Turkey and the United Kingdom, among others, have focused on lowering entry barriers to young people into the labour market, ensuring young workers are retained once employed. These plans have also increased funding for lifelong learning opportunities and digital literacy programmes to equip young people for “the future of work”.

Box 1. Addressing the complex challenges young people face through cross-sectoral government approaches

France’s National Response and Recovery Plan:

Addressing social exclusion and isolation through arts, sports and mental wellbeing

As part of its national recovery plan, France has committed to invest over 36 billion euros to support youth in the recovery and foster solidarity across generations. Notably, the plan “One Youth, One Solution” (*Un Jeune, Une Solution*), designed to support young people’s entry into the labour market, has been expanded. To address the impacts of social exclusion and isolation, the recovery funding will support young people’s engagement in the arts and sports, among others, by allocating 53 million euros to increase young peoples’ access to literature and libraries. The plan also includes provisions to support young people’s mental health, in coordination with “Santé Psy Étudiant”, a nationwide government programme to support students through the provision of up to eight free therapy sessions.

Finland’s National Response and Recovery Plan: One-stop-shop services for youth

Finland includes in its national recovery plan a budgeting reform to increase the capacity of its service hubs “Ohjaamo” (“The Cockpit”). This service acts as a ‘one-stop-shop’ for citizens under 30 to access a wide range of public services, including education and employment, mental health, housing and more. The reform aims to better integrate public services delivered by various government sectors and make them available more easily.

Costa Rica’s National Response and Recovery Plan:

Achieving socioemotional development and community well-being for students

The recovery plan of Costa Rica allocates funding to the implementation of an inter-sectoral plan, which aims to ensure the socio-emotional development and well-being of students. A study identifying socio-emotional impacts of COVID-19, including an assessment of student’s family situations and ability to self-regulate emotionally and mentally, will inform the direction of a national education programme. The Ministry of National Education will also provide scholarship supports for vulnerable students that have been impacted by the crisis.

| Source: France: (Government of France, 2021_[44]; France, 2022_[47]); Finland: (Government of Finland, 2021_[48]); Costa Rica: (MIDEPLAN, 2021_[49])



To address growing concerns over the mental health impacts of the pandemic, Australia, Canada, Finland, Slovak Republic and Portugal, have invested in strengthening data collection capacities of relevant government sectors in this area. The United Kingdom, for instance, announced a further GBP 79 million would be allocated to measures dedicated to children and young people's mental health (OECD, 2021^[41]). Moreover, most OECD countries are launching digitalisation reforms in areas of education, employment and access to other government services to modernise services and increase accessibility for young people. Similarly, nearly all countries include programmes to enhance their population's digital skills through national education systems or targeted education initiatives.

Recognising that young women have faced increased risks of experiencing domestic and gender-based violence during the pandemic, Australia and Canada have created new strategies to address these risks taking into consideration the effects of lockdowns and other pandemic-related impacts (See Box 2 for Canada).

Adopting an integrated approach will be crucial to effectively addressing the implications of the crisis on young people's lives (OECD, 2020^[25]). Finland and

Canada, for instance, have adjusted existing governance mechanisms to co-ordinate the delivery of public services for young people more coherently across different sectors and ministerial portfolios (see Box 1 for Finland).

Addressing the needs of young people in vulnerable circumstances

The pandemic laid bare longstanding structural inequalities that existed before its outbreak. It is well documented that vulnerable groups have been hit particularly hard by the social and economic implications of COVID-19 (OECD, 2020^[18]). These effects have been greater for young women and young people in vulnerable circumstances, including those belonging to minority groups; adolescents and children facing increased risks of domestic violence; migrant youth; young people with disabilities; youth from lower socio-economic backgrounds; NEET among others (see Section 1).

Findings show that at least 24 OECD countries have made concerted efforts in their response and recovery plans to understand and respond to the challenges of young women and young people living in vulnerable

Box 2. Intersectional approaches to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis for young people**Canada 2021 Budget:****Investing in secondary education for minorities and addressing gender-based violence**

Canada's Budget 2021 includes commitments to support indigenous students, the majority of whom are young women, to complete secondary school through COVID-19, and introduces childcare and financing supports for young women, regardless of their background, in an effort to bridge the gender wage gap. The Budget also provides funding toward a new National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence (GBV) to support survivors (half of whom are young women between the ages of 18 and 24), fund grassroots organisations and engage men and boys in programmes to combat GBV.

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021: Targeting vulnerable youth to bridge education and employment gaps

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 of the United States allocates funding to address pandemic-related academic, social, and emotional impacts on young people and children, with targeted measures for young people to close learning gaps. Focus is given to low-income youth, youth with disabilities, students who speak English as a second language, migrant youth, racial and ethnic minority youth, young people experiencing homelessness and young people in foster care.

Ministry of Youth in Belgium: Engaging vulnerable children and youth through creative activities

The Minister of Youth in Belgium approved 59 project grants for a total of more than EUR 2 million in the framework of a project to build resilience of socially vulnerable children and young people through meaningful, challenging and creative leisure time during the COVID-19 crisis.

Sweden National Response and Recovery Plan: Supporting young migrants

The Swedish government extended the period during which young migrants enrolled in upper secondary education are to find a job after graduation from 6 to 12 months. Having a job upon graduation is a requirement for both renewing residence permits and obtaining permanent residence.

Slovak Republic National Response and Recovery Plan: Addressing teen pregnancies and domestic violence faced by young women

The Slovak Republic's recovery plan includes provisions to address the increased vulnerability of young women to risks including teenage pregnancies and domestic violence in the context of lockdowns and curfews. Funding is allocated to providing mentoring and tutoring services for young women to be better equipped to address these risks.

Sources: Canada: (Government of Canada, 2021^[50]); United States: (U.S. Congress, 2021^[53]); Belgium: (Council of Europe, 2020^[54]); Sweden: (Government of Sweden, 2021^[55]); Slovak Republic: (Government of Slovak Republic, 2021^[56]).



circumstances. For instance, Austria, Colombia, Costa Rica, Italy, New Zealand and Portugal have committed to making strategic investments in education and employment sectors to bridge the divide between rural and urban young people's access to opportunities. Costa Rica is planning to launch targeted labour market inclusion programmes to engage youth and women in rural areas most affected by COVID-19 (MIDPLAN, 2021_[49]). Canada has engaged young women to develop a National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence, and provided funding to youth-led funds and foundations to build social cohesion among racial minority communities (Government of Canada, 2021_[50]). France, Belgium and Estonia, among other countries, have sought to absorb NEETs into the labour market through new programmes and trainings to build skills and encourage employers to recruit young people (Government of France, 2021_[44]; Government of Belgium, 2021_[51]). To address the needs of NEETs in Estonia, the government's national recovery plan allocates budget to local governments for the design and implementation of employment and skilling programmes tailored to local needs (Government of Estonia, 2021_[52]). Increasing access to digital tools, launching education and employment programmes and tailoring solutions to the needs of disabled young people are also prominently featured solutions in over

20 OECD country plans. The French recovery plan, for example, commits to support employers that have recruited people of all ages with disabilities between September 2020 and December 2021 with a grant of up to EUR 4,000 to integrate them into their organisation (Government of France, 2021_[44]).

Evidence from the OECD survey shows that, notwithstanding these measures, youth organisations are worried that they may not be sufficient. Across OECD countries, only 39% of respondents are satisfied with the extent to which their government has provided support to vulnerable groups during the pandemic. In non-member countries, only around a quarter of respondents (26%) express satisfaction (see Section 1). To tackle growing inequalities driven by the pandemic and generate buy-in among hard-to-reach communities, governments should consider investing in targeted measures, regularly monitoring and evaluating their impact and engaging young people from vulnerable and marginalised backgrounds in the planning and delivery of recovery measures.

Taking into account all generations, present and future

Concerns over whether response and recovery measures have been fair for all age cohorts, as well as over



Box 3. Engaging young people and the elderly in recovery efforts**National Recovery Plans in Latvia and Lithuania:
Engaging young and older populations in digital literacy programmes**

Latvia and Lithuania outline measures to increase opportunities for young and older populations to engage with each other through digital literacy programmes. For instance, the “Connected Lithuania” programme, aimed at increasing digital literacy among older people, was expanded under the country’s national response and recovery plan to support projects led jointly by youth and senior organisations. This new funding aims to build digital skills among marginalised communities and senior citizens to better integrate them into the labour market and build social cohesion.

| Sources: Latvia : (Government of Latvia, 2021_[61]) ; Lithuania : (Government of Lithuania, 2021_[62])

the long term fiscal sustainability of current government expenditure and the burden future generations may have to carry, have permeated media debates and policymaking across OECD countries. From vaccination campaigns to prioritising the opening of schools and workplaces, youth organisations surveyed often expressed concerns over whether their needs have been taken into account (see Section 1). Similarly, while examples exist of youth organisations and senior communities making joint efforts to address the crisis, the pandemic has contributed to widening generational divides, both by decreasing opportunities for physical interaction and increasing socioeconomic gaps (Ward, Flesicher and Towers, 2021_[57]).

On the road to recovery, countries have sought to address these concerns. At the level of the European Union, the Next Generation EU Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), guided by Article 3 of the RRF Regulation, calls on countries to design “policies for the next generation, children and youth” as one of its pillars (EC, 2021_[43]). To ensure considerations about the well-being of young people and future generations are integrated into all areas of policymaking, OECD evidence points to innovative efforts undertaken by some countries to create independent institutions and use new public governance tools acknowledging that investments made now will have profound future implications (OECD, 2020_[25]).

The “Fit for the Future Programme for Government”, adopted by the Future Generations Commissioner of Wales, is an example from the United Kingdom of how long-term thinking can be integrated across the public administration (OECD, 2020_[3]). In this programme, the Commissioner proposes recovery investments that consider long-term implications and give voice to future generations. Examples of these proposals include prioritising investments that lead to the decarbonisation of homes and creation of green jobs, launching skills programmes to engage those furthest away from the labour market, applying well-being economics in all policy decisions to align spending with national well-being goals, and create a National Nature Service to restore Wales’ natural environment.

To date, 20 OECD countries discuss the intergenerational impact of their recovery plans in some way. For instance, in its planning, Germany includes an assessment of how labour market participation will be impacted by demographic changes. Among others, the recovery plan discusses job losses among young people and youth underemployment; the feasibility of sustaining current expenditure levels on social service provision including pensions and support for young people; and the impact this may have on future senior communities. Austria’s recovery plan considers public debt and environmental burdens on future generations, changes in social mobility across age groups, and healthcare priorities (Government



of Austria, 2021^[58]). Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Portugal and Slovenia anticipate the needs of future generations in infrastructure investments, including building cycle ways or social housing.

The planning and implementation of response and recovery plans affords countries an opportunity to adopt an intergenerational lens to anticipate the distributional effects of fiscal decision-making (OECD, 2020^[25]). Canada, Belgium, Germany, Slovenia and New Zealand already use measurement frameworks, albeit to varying extents. Canada's Gender Results Framework, for instance, assesses how commitments across its Budget will be relevant and have an impact on different demographic groups, including across genders and ages (Government of Canada, 2021^[50]). New Zealand's Budget includes reforms to achieve intergenerational well-being, focused on healthcare outcomes, which are informed by its Living Standards Framework (New Zealand Treasury, 2021^[59]). The Slovenian Demographic Fund, in turn, aims to ensure fair and balanced fiscal planning on the basis of intergenerational solidarity, including the voices of younger and older citizens (Government of Slovenia, 2021^[60]).

Besides anticipating and assessing age-specific impacts in rule making and public budgeting, age diversity in public life and decision-making is critical to ensure the concerns of different age groups are reflected in decision-making. For instance, Portugal and Italy launched programmes to employ and retain younger staff in their public administration (See Box 8). Lithuania and Latvia, in turn, engage senior communities and young people in programmes to build social cohesion and increase digital literacy skills (see Box 3).

Gathering age-disaggregated evidence to inform decision-making

Collecting age-disaggregated data on the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis is crucial to ensure recovery measures are inclusive and take into account the well-being of different age groups (OECD, 2020^[25]). This is important not only to address current population needs, but also to identify future risks, and increase governments' capacity to anticipate and respond to changing needs over time.

Box 4. Youth commitments are evidence-based

Costa Rica's National Response and Recovery Plan: Building human capital across regions

In Costa Rica, "building human capital" is one of the key priorities identified by its recovery plan. Commitments under this pillar include measures to contribute toward better education and employment outcomes, as well as increasing social cohesion. As important regional differences exist, Costa Rica's recovery plan outlines quantitative indicators of the expected labour market and education outcomes of relevant reforms and investments per student or young worker in each region.

Italy's National Response and Recovery Plan: Quantifying impacts of fiscal policymaking

The Italian response and recovery plan is informed by impact assessments generated through the MACGEM-IT model, a tool developed by the Treasury Department to quantify the disaggregated, direct and indirect impacts of fiscal policies. Information such as the anticipated labour market outcomes of proposed measures, disaggregated by gender and age, is taken into consideration throughout the plan, which presents measures to support youth in a stand-alone section, called "Generational Gaps: Young People".

| Sources: Costa Rica: (MIDEPLAN, 2021^[49]); Italy: (Government of Italy, 2021^[67]).

To date, at least 29 OECD countries have gathered disaggregated evidence on the impact of the crisis on young people and tracked inequalities across age cohorts as part of their recovery plans. This practice is most established in employment and education policies where young people are direct targets of government action. To reflect the cross-sectoral impact of the pandemic on young people, Belgium, Canada, Colombia and France have taken into account a more comprehensive set of indicators to measure young people's well-being, including mental health impacts, access to housing, and likelihood to be exposed to domestic violence (Government of Belgium, 2021^[51]; Government of Canada, 2021^[50]; Government of France, 2021^[44]; CONPES, 2021^[63]).



A number of countries have used regulatory impact assessments to anticipate the impact of recovery measures on young people.

Regulatory impact assessments provide a systematic approach to incorporate evidence-based analyses of the expected effects of new laws and regulations. Such evidence can help determine whether a certain challenge can be addressed most effectively and efficiently by new legislation or non-regulatory alternatives of intervention, such as awareness raising programmes. "Youth checks" are an example of ex-ante regulatory impact assessments that countries can apply to incorporate the considerations of young people more systematically in policy-making and legislation (Bethke and Wolff, 2020^[64]; OECD, 2020^[25]). For example, Germany uses "youth checks" to examine the effects of bills on young people to identify intended and unintended effects of proposed legislations (Germany, 2021^[65]). In Flanders, Belgium, based on the initiative of the Flemish Government, a child and youth impact report must accompany all legislative proposals with a direct impact on the interests of persons under the age of 25 (Desmet, 2021^[66]).

The recovery plans of countries with a "youth check" in place (i.e. Austria, France, Germany, Flanders/Belgium,

and New Zealand) do not provide any information whether this tool was or will be applied. The design and monitoring of Canada's 2021 Budget measures, however, is informed by the country's Gender Results Framework (GRF) and Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) to assess systemic inequalities and policy impacts on different population groups depending on their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age and mental or physical disability. The information gathered through this analysis informed the design and monitoring of Canada's 2021 Budget and recovery measures (Government of Canada, 2021^[50]). Costa Rica has monitored young people's education and employment performance across its regions to address the effects of COVID-19 in rural areas (MIDEPLAN, 2021^[49]). New Zealand's Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework provided a lens to identify reforms across different government sectors to anticipate the needs of current and future generations (New Zealand Treasury, 2021^[59]).

Engaging young people in the design and implementation of response and recovery measures

Consulting young people and engaging them in the design of response and recovery measures can have positive effects on their personal development, build social cohesion and ensure that policies are well informed and responsive (OECD, 2017^[38]). Moreover, when governments communicate proactively and engage citizens in the policy cycle they can generate citizen buy-in and engagement, including among young people (OECD, 2017^[38]). In 2020, numerous countries launched digital engagement opportunities, including online consultations, to involve young people in the design of response measures to the crisis (OECD, 2020^[3]). A majority of OECD countries (25) already have national youth councils, which help governments to gather information, ensure wide consultations and run joint activities and programmes. In addition, 17 OECD countries have national youth advisory councils affiliated to the government or specific ministries, such as in Denmark where the Ministry of Environment and Food has established a Youth Climate Coun-



cil (OECD, 2020^[25]). However, available information in the response and recovery plans suggests that only Estonia has engaged its National Youth Council in the planning and implementation of response and recovery measures (Government of Estonia, 2021^[52]). While not explicitly mentioned in their plans, other countries – Canada, for instance – have also consulted young people in the planning of national response and recovery plans (Government of Canada, 2021^[68]).

Some governments have made efforts to digitally engage constituents through innovative emergency responses in the early stages of the crisis. Examples of this include hackathons conducted in Germany, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Switzerland (OECD, 2020^[3]). Despite these efforts, pandemic containment measures diminished civic space across the OECD. While most OECD countries gradually relaxed containment measures in 2021, the prospect of ongoing lockdowns and similar measures could contin-

ue to have an effect on the ways in which citizens will exercise their civic rights.

Findings from the assessment of national response and recovery plans and budgets show that less than a third of all OECD countries (10) explicitly mention having consulted young people or youth organisations in their elaboration (Table 1). In turn, findings from the OECD survey presented in Section 1 indicate that a majority of youth organisations disagree that the views of young people have been taken into account regarding decisions on lockdown and confinement measures, prioritising age cohorts in vaccination campaigns and other response and recovery measures. At the same time, 72% of respondents from OECD countries expressed worries about the impact of the crisis on youth rights (see Section 1). Box 5 presents examples of governments engaging young people in planning national recovery responses in Australia, Austria, Lithuania, Mexico and the Slovak Republic.

Box 5. Examples of countries partnering with young people in planning recovery measures

Participation of youth organisations

In Australia, Austria, Estonia, Lithuania and the Slovak Republic, public consultations included youth organisations as key stakeholders. In Austria, each measure proposed by civil society organisations, including youth organisations, was displayed in a table which included a pillar on youth and future generations. In Australia, a list of youth organisations that provided feedback on the 2021-2022 Budget priorities is publically available, and non-confidential submissions, including those of youth organisations, were transparent and accessible online. Estonia included its National Youth Council as a key partner in the consultation that led up to the creation of its response and recovery plan.

Participation of non-organised youth

In Mexico, the Institute of Youth (IMJUVE), the Ministry of Health and the Population Council surveyed more than 50,000 young people in the areas of education, employment, health, violence and resilience. The evidence gathered was used to create the VoCEs-19 report, which has informed the design, implementation, and analysis of public policies at a sectoral level that are responsive to social sensitivity and the needs of young people. A second survey was planned between November 2021 and February 2022 to identify new trends and needs.

Sources: Australia : (Government of Australia, 2021^[69]) ; Austria : (Government of Austria, 2021^[58]) ; Estonia : (Government of Estonia, 2021^[52]) ; Lithuania : (Government of Lithuania, 2021^[62]) ; Slovak Republic : (Government of Slovak Republic, 2021^[56]) ; Mexico : (Mexican Health Secretariat, 2021^[70])



3. Beyond commitments: Governance approaches to support young people and foster intergenerational justice in the recovery from COVID-19

Public governance is vital to support an effective implementation of youth commitments in the recovery. This includes, but is not limited to, the allocation of sufficient resources to developing and implementing such measures with a view to their intergenerational impacts. It also relies on the collection of data and systematic monitoring and evaluation of programmes and measures to ensure they are effective and generate the desired impact. In turn, strong accountability mechanisms are needed

to ensure young people and other youth stakeholders can hold government accountable.

This section analyses efforts across OECD countries to ensure the successful implementation of youth-specific commitments in national response and recovery plans along these three dimensions. In addition, it provides insights about the efforts countries with a national response and recovery plan have undertaken to engage young people and youth organisations in its implementation.

Allocating resources in a fair and sustainable way for all generations

Since the onset of the pandemic, governments across the OECD have adopted fiscal policy measures to support businesses, households and the health sector, with a number of these measures directly targeting young people. Twenty-seven OECD countries with a national recovery plan or strategic budget provide information about the budget envelop to implement measures that target young people specifically. At least 20 OECD countries commit to in-



crease income support for young people, including student allowances, job seeker support and welfare payments through expanding their eligibility criteria and increasing monetary support. Similar trends can be observed in the provision of hiring subsidies, delivery of skill training programmes and mental health service provision for young people (OECD, 2021_[41]). To ensure sustainability in fiscal expenditures and a fair allocation of resources across different social groups, Sweden utilises BUDGe for Gender Equality, a gender budgeting tool, to determine public spending across various government sectors including social service provision and public education of young women (Government of Sweden, 2021_[55]). According to analysis informed by this tool, housing policies proposed as part of the recovery plan will benefit young women more than other groups (Swedish Ministry of Finance, 2021_[71]).

With the design of national response and recovery plans and budgets, intergenerational considerations are being gradually introduced into fiscal planning and budgeting. The Next Generation EU Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) funding mechanism, for example, directs countries to adopt a long-term view in public financial management, to address environmental challenges and take into account the well-being of young people and future generations. To receive funding from the RRF, recovery plans must allocate at least 37% of their budget to measures to protect the climate and biodiversity. Plans must also be consistent with country-specific recommendations, embedded in each country's response and recovery plan, which often include commitments for young people and future generations guided by the EU Youth Guarantee (EC, 2021_[72]).

The OECD Recommendation on Principles for Independent Fiscal Institutions guides countries in incorporating intergenerational considerations in policy planning processes through engaging independent financial institutions (IFIs) to analyse the fiscal sustainability of policy through an age-differentiated lens (OECD, 2014_[73]).

Keeping track of the implementation of youth-specific commitments

In light of the significant resources governments are mobilising in the context of their national response and recovery efforts, public scrutiny is particularly important. Effective monitoring and evaluation systems can increase accountability and transparency, as they provide information for citizens, media and independent institutions to act as watchdogs of government action. To keep track of the implementation of measures targeting young people, the collection, use and sharing of evidence should be disaggregated by age and other intersecting identity factors to track and address inequalities and inform decision-making (OECD, 2020_[74]). Such efforts should go hand in hand with establishing clear arrangements for data collection and sharing, collaborative approaches with national statistics offices and line ministries as well as research institutions, where feasible, and inform new policies, programmes and related measures.



Effective monitoring and evaluation systems are crucial to keep track of the implementation of recovery measures targeting young people and for better public scrutiny.

To date, only 10 response and recovery plans and budgets link output indicators with measures targeting young people, most frequently in the area of education. Costa Rica, for instance, presents information about the number of new schools to be created per region, the number of students that will be targeted and investments allocated per student (MIDEPLAN, 2021_[49]). Italy includes information on training and hiring of teachers, and commits to put in place a mechanism to address and monitor territorial gaps in educational outcomes (Government of Italy, 2021_[67]). Korea's plan includes output indicators aimed at ensuring schools become more en-



environmentally sustainable and better equipped to teach digital skills to young people (MOEF, 2020^[75]). The plans of Canada, France and Slovenia include target indicators and expected impacts across each of their youth commitments and identify which government agencies and stakeholders are responsible for implementation (Government of Canada, 2021^[50]; Government of France, 2021^[44]; Government of Slovenia, 2021^[60]). The national recovery plan of Germany also outlines a timeline for completion, targets and qualitative indicators across all its commitments, including those for young people (Ministry of Finance in Germany, 2021^[76]).

Partnering with young people to deliver a fair, inclusive and resilient recovery

Over the last two decades, governments have increasingly collaborated with civil society organisations and citizens in the delivery of public services with the objective of being more effective in responding to the needs of their constituents and addressing multidimensional challenges (OECD, 2011^[77]). Findings show that engaging civil society in the delivery of services can lead to better outcomes in terms of reducing costs of production, increasing satisfaction with services and building social and government abilities to overcome complex

societal problems (OECD, 2016^[78]). Co-production, or the act of involving citizens in the planning and delivery of government projects and services, can also help identify service failures, especially when targeting minority groups and hard-to-reach communities. Examples of co-production include youth-led programmes to engage school dropouts back into education and community programmes to reduce criminal recidivism among young people (Singh and White, 2000^[79]; OECD, 2011^[77]).

While nearly all youth organisations surveyed by the OECD in July–August 2021 engaged in addressing the effects of the pandemic, by the end of 2021, only eight OECD countries state in their national response and recovery plans how young people shall be engaged in the implementation of commitments relevant to them. Most frequently, plans envisage involving young people and their organisations in running digitalisation campaigns, providing mental health support, and delivering education and employment programmes. Denmark, for instance, has committed to allocate funding to increase the capacity of the Youth Climate Council under its climate policy commitments (Ministry of Finance in Denmark, 2021^[80]). Canada increased funding for young people and community organisations to deliver community activities autonomously rather than as part of a government service, in an effort to build resilience and cohesion (Government of Canada, 2021^[50]).



Box 6. Engaging young people in building for the recovery

Belgium and Latvia: Involving young people in driving digital reform

Belgium and Latvia include young people in the implementation of digital reform projects. In Belgium, youth and senior associations will be partners for the delivery of projects to make digital infrastructure and the cyberspace more accessible to vulnerable groups. In Latvia, the government includes the Latvian Student Union in the implementation of a national plan to improve the digital literacy of the country's population, including young people.

Canada: Partnering with young people in building social cohesion

In Canada's 2021 Budget, a number of civil society organisations are grant recipients and implementation partners. The Black-led Philanthropic Endowment Fund, for example, was created to fund projects to combat racism and improve social and economic outcomes in Black communities, with particular involvement of Black youth. The Youth Stars Foundation, a Montréal-run, non-profit organisation, founded in 2008 to serve a diverse linguistic and cultural youth population, received funding for programmes to support young people in vulnerable circumstances through fostering life skills and healthy living habits.

Finland: Young people engaging with peers to improve employment and mental health outcomes

As part of Finland's national recovery plan, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health commits to implement a programme to strengthen the mental health and productivity of Finnish workers. Activities include developing virtual mental health support trainings and disseminating self-assessment tools. In recognition of the important scarring effects that the pandemic may have on young people entering the labour market, the Ministry identified secondary vocational schools and student organisations as project implementers and partners.

Australia: Engaging young people in co-production of local-level recovery measures

The City of Onkaparinga in South Australia is currently developing a youth-led recovery project that aims to connect and upskill young people, aged 15-25, through three key streams; i) an incubator programme to engage those employed in creative industries, ii) a digital storytelling programme curated by youth, and iii) the design and delivery of a work experience programme to provide young job-seekers with employment opportunities. Besides creating opportunities for learning, the project aims at improving social, economic and emotional well-being, reducing isolation and increasing the inclusion of young people in decision-making.

Sources: Belgium: (Government of Belgium, 2021^[51]); Latvia: (Government of Latvia, 2021^[61]); Slovenia: (Government of Slovenia, 2021^[60]); Canada: (Government of Canada, 2021^[50]); Finland: (Government of Finland, 2021^[48]); Australia: (Local Government Association of South Australia, 2020^[81])

Another way to continue engaging young people in pandemic recovery efforts is through strengthening national civil service and youth volunteering programmes. Findings from the early stages of the pandemic indicate that young volunteers were pivotal in ensuring the continuity of day-to-day activities, especially for vulnerable groups (OECD, 2020_[3]).

The OECD report “Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for All Generations?” (OECD, 2020_[25]) shows that 68% of OECD countries already have youth volunteering programmes. Robust volunteering programmes not only increase youth resilience and their civic involvement (OECD, 2020_[25]), but also contribute to strengthening community resilience. Findings from a study on community resilience in the aftermath of the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes in Christchurch, New Zealand,

show that communities with high volunteering activity were more cohesive and recovered more quickly than their less engaged counterparts (Vannier et al., 2021_[82]). Available data suggests, however, that only Italy and France include explicit provisions to support youth volunteering as part of their national recovery plans (Government of Italy, 2021_[67]; SNU, 2021_[83]). Both countries allocate funding to increasing the number of financial resources available to young volunteers to keep them mobilised in their communities (Box 7) (OECD, 2020_[3]). Further, the Italian Minister of Youth and the French Secretary of State for Youth recently signed an agreement of bilateral co-operation to increase the mobility of volunteers that take part in the civil services across the two countries (French Ministry of Education, 2022_[84]).

Box 7. National Volunteering Strategies

Youth Volunteering in France: National Universal Service (Service National Universel)

France’s newly created National Universal Service (Service National Universel) engages young people between the ages of 15 and 25 in various volunteering activities to build social and territorial cohesion. The first phase of this programme engages young people between the ages of 15 and 17 in a volunteering activity related to either of the seven thematic areas: physical activities and sports; autonomy, knowledge of public service provision, access to rights and promotion of healthcare; citizenship and national and European institutions; culture and patrimony; discovering engagement; defence and national security; and sustainable development and ecological transition. The second phase, for ages 16 to 25, includes a voluntary engagement of at least three months in either defence or security, supporting vulnerable populations, patrimony or environmental conservation, or tutoring.

Youth volunteering in Italy: National Civil Service (Servizio Civile Nazionale)

Italy has included a provision to increase funding for youth volunteering activities through the National Civil Service (Servizio Civile Nazionale) as part of its national response and recovery plan. Funding will be allocated towards each of the 15 areas of actions identified in the three-year plan. Moreover, the Minister for Youth Policies and the Minister of Ecological Transition have jointly launched an “Environmental Civic Service”. This volunteering programme is expected to raise awareness among young people on environmental issues and support their involvement in tackling climate change. The programme will also support “capacity-building” efforts by young people in alignment with the National Civil Service and orient young people toward “green jobs”, especially in reference to young women’s employment.

| Sources: France : (Government of France, 2021_[44]) ; Italy: (Government of Italy, 2021_[67])



Lessons for the long-term: Institutional innovations and governance tools to address the challenges of young people and future generations

Government capacity to respond to future crises, as well as the increasingly complex social, economic and environmental challenges on the road to recovery, will require a review of existing governance structures and tools. Public administration reforms over the last 20 years have sought to optimise government service delivery through increasing the interconnectedness of government agencies and becoming more responsive to the diverse needs of their populations (Ingrams, Piotrowski and Berliner, 2020^[85]). By acting as a stress test for governments, the pandemic has accelerated innovation in public governance in areas such as online service delivery, state-local relationships and cross-border co-operation. On the road to recovery, governments will need to continue to adapt their governance frameworks in order to respond to the changing context of the current and future crises.

Some countries have already started to integrate longer-term considerations into policy and budget cycles, increase funding to gather data on the diverse needs of populations and establish measures to ensure cross-sectoral and more integrated approaches, backed up by new or reinforced institutional and financial capacities (see Box 8). New Zealand, for example, established a new Government Implementation Unit within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to monitor the delivery of programmes and projects under its Living Standards Framework, covering areas across all government sectors including commitments for young people and future generations in education, healthcare and employment (DPMC, 2021^[86]). Other countries including Portugal and Italy have sought to bring in new skills and innovation through employment programmes that engage and retain younger talent, seeking to rejuvenate the public sector workforce and facilitate the transmission of knowledge between older and younger civil servants.

Box 8. Future fit? Innovative governance approaches to consider and address inter-temporal challenges

To adapt to complex inter-temporal challenges posed by issues including climate and demographic change, as well as the social and economic effects of the pandemic, some countries are responding with innovative approaches to rethink existing processes within the public administration.

Canada's 2021 Budget: creating a new Disaggregated Data Action Plan

Recognising the varied impacts of pandemic challenges across demographic groups, the Canadian government will allocate CAD172 million over five years to Statistics Canada. This funding will support the implementation of a new Disaggregated Data Action Plan to support evidence-based decision-making across priority areas including health, quality of life, the environment, justice, business and the economy by taking into account intergenerational justice considerations and the needs of diverse populations.

Slovenia's National Response and Recovery Plan: Launching the Slovenian Demographic Fund

In Slovenia, the newly created Demographic Fund will co-finance pension funds and finance projects to promote intergenerational solidarity. These projects aim to improve the conditions of vulnerable youth and young families through, for example, co-financed housing policy and scholarships, to facilitate the transition of young people into the labour market. While a legal basis for this fund exists since 2014, the Slovenian Demographic Fund is planned to come into effect as part of the response and recovery funding plan. It was developed in consultation with the Youth Council of Slovenia and youth organisations will be involved in delivery of measures and programmes.

Italy and Portugal: Engaging young people in public administration to bring in new skills and innovation

The national response and recovery plan of Portugal includes an EUR 88 million provision to increase capacities within the public administration to address emerging challenges and build a more resilient, green and digital future. As part of these efforts, the Extraordinary Internship Programme in Public Administration offers 500 vacancies to engage young people in public service for up to nine months. These vacancies are being made available across multiple government sectors, prioritising those with a majority of senior staff to ensure intergenerational knowledge is transferred and service models are rejuvenated.

The Italian national recovery plan also includes a provision to recruit young people in public administration with the purpose of absorbing new talent and experiences, investing in human capital and addressing issues related to generational turnover. Measures include targeted recruitment of young people with high qualifications (doctorate and master's degrees or international experience) and forming agreements with universities, training centres and associations to facilitate selection and recruitment of young people.

Source: Canada : (Government of Canada, 2021_[60]) ; Slovenia : (Government of Slovenia, 2021_[60]) Portugal: (Government of Portugal, 2021_[87]) ; Italy : (Government of Italy, 2021_[67])



Despite significant efforts by some countries to generate innovative ways to incorporate young people's perspectives and longer-term considerations into the recovery, more systematic changes and innovation in public administration are needed to address current and future societal and economic challenges. For example, public administrations can employ governance tools, put in place institutional set-ups as well as technical and administrative means to increase their capacity to embed an intergenerational perspective into rule-making, public budgeting, public procurement, infrastructure decision-making and delivery. As outlined in Section 1, youth organisations' growing concerns over the mental health

and overall well-being of young people points to the need for more holistic, cross-sectoral approaches that addresses young people's needs in an integrated way. Gaps also exist in the measures and tools available to governments to formulate evidence-based policies and perform systematic evaluations that consider the diverse needs of their (young) populations. Given that the pandemic had disproportionate effects on some vulnerable groups over others, governments can take this opportunity to innovate mechanisms to better measure and tackle inequalities based on age and other intersecting identity factors such as gender and socio-economic background.



The pandemic has presents a turning point for the ways in which public administrations **anticipate and prepare for future risks**. As governments look to address complex challenges and future crises, including climate change, new pandemics, population ageing and the rise of digitalisation, **integrating systematic considerations of the well-being of future generations will be key to implement future-proof policymaking and service delivery.**



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Annex 1.A.

2021 OECD Survey

on COVID-19 and Youth

This policy paper draws on the results from an online survey run by the OECD between 16 July and 30 August 2021 with the participation of 151 youth-led organisations from 72 countries (“respondents”). The survey was disseminated via email, social media as well as an online workshop, instructing respondents to answer on behalf of their organisation rather than reflect their individual views. The assessment surveyed respondents about the disruptions of COVID-19 to youth’s access to education, employment, mental health, and participation in public life among others. Respondents were also surveyed about their long-term worries and changes in trust in government and satisfaction with democracy since the outbreak of the crisis, as well as reasons underlying such changes. Moreover, youth organisations were asked about the type (and description) of the initiatives they put in place to mitigate the impact of the crisis. Finally, youth organisations were asked about their perceptions on whether they considered youth views had been incorporated in the planning of recovery measures put forward by governments in their countries. An earlier iteration of this engagement was performed in 2020 to understand similar concerns in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey designed for this purpose is presented below. It was disseminated via networks of youth-led organisations, youth policymakers, and delegates to the Public Governance Committee of the OECD. While the survey does not represent jurisdictions or stakeholder groups, its goal was to include the perspective of a diverse group of youth-led organisations operating at the international, national and local level. The survey respondents do not consti-

tute a representative sample statistically speaking and the analysis does not investigate respondents’ self-selection biases, hence making statistical inference not possible.

Respondents were asked to provide information that served to characterise their organisation. After data cleaning, 61 respondents indicated they represented a youth-led organisation (e.g. the majority of members are below 30 years-old); 44 respondents represented a non-governmental organisation focused on youth issues (e.g. youth rights, youth participation, youth work); 32 respondents represented a youth umbrella organisation (e.g. regional, national or sub-national youth councils, association of youth organisations); 13 respondents represented other type of youth structure (e.g. student councils, advisory youth board of governmental institutions or other type of organisation) and one respondent represented a non-formalised group led by young people (e.g. a social movement).

The survey also asked survey respondents whether their organisation was registered as a legal entity (e.g. a charity or a political party). Most respondents (127 of 151) indicated that they were registered as a legal entity, while 22 indicated they were not, Two respondents indicated they did not know whether they were registered or not.

Besides this, respondents were asked which country their organisation was based in. The total number of youth organisations from OECD countries was 100, based across 36 countries. Out of all OECD countries, only Israel and Slovak Republic were not represented among the respondent population. Youth organisations from non-OECD countries, which accounted for 51 responses of the total population, were based in 36 countries worldwide.

Respondents were asked whether they had discussed the impacts of the pandemic among their members prior to having answered the questionnaire. Most youth organisations discussed pandemic impacts on young people (78% of total respondents

chose this option), impacts on specific areas including education and employment (75% of respondents), and government action to address the crisis (38% of respondents). Youth trust in government and wider implications for democracy were explicitly discussed among members by 14% and 13% of youth organisations respectively. 5% of youth organisations mentioned not having discussed COVID-19 crisis impacts with their members.

As similar questions were presented in the 2020 iteration of this survey, the responses of youth organisations that answered both surveys were analysed separately to draw comparative conclusions. Of all responses, 43 youth organisations answered both surveys, of which 30 were based in OECD countries and 13 in non-OECD countries. These are referred to as “two-time respondents” in the analysis of the findings presented in this paper.

Finally, respondents were also asked to provide a link to the website of their organisation. All questions on substance as well as on respondent information were compulsory. Only those responses that included a valid URL/website presenting the work of a youth organisation were included in the final analysis.

2021 Survey:

First name

[Open-ended question]

Last name

[Open-ended question]

Name of your organisation

[Open-ended question]

My organisation represents a:

- a. Youth-led organisation (e.g. majority of members are below 30 years)
- b. Non-governmental organisation focusing on youth issues (e.g. youth rights, youth participation, youth work)

- c. Youth wing of a political party
- d. Youth umbrella organisation (e.g. regional, national or subnational youth council, association of youth organisations)
- e. Other youth structure (e.g. student councils, advisory youth board of governmental institutions or other organisations)
- f. Non-formalised group led by young people (e.g. social movement)
- g. Other, please specify.

Is your organisation registered as a legal entity (e.g. charity, political party)?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know

Website of your organisation

[Open-ended question]

Your position in your organisation (e.g. Director, Policy Officer, Member)

[Open-ended question]

Email

[Open-ended question]

In which country, territory or economy is your organisation based¹?

[Drop-down menu selection]

1. How is your organisation participating in the efforts to mitigate the effects of COVID-19?

- a. By running information campaigns to keep youth informed on the measures to protect

¹ Contrary to the 2020 iteration of this survey, respondents were not able to tick “international”. Youth organisations with an international presence indicated the country where their headquarters was based.



- themselves and others
- b. By sharing practical advice on how to deal with mental and physical health, stigma and discrimination
 - c. By implementing specific programmes to support the most vulnerable youth (e.g. homeless youth, youth with no access to digital means or health services, etc.)
 - d. By participating in programmes implemented by the government in your country to contain the spread of COVID-19
 - e. By providing online activities/workshops/dialogue sessions to keep youth engaged with service areas (e.g. education programmes, employment opportunities, trainings, etc.)
 - f. By running/participating in vaccination campaigns targeting youth (e.g. running vaccination centres, disseminate information about vaccines, etc.)
 - g. Other, please specify (or insert n.a. if none of the above)
- 2. Please share a brief description of up to three initiatives that your organisation is implementing in response to the COVID-19 crisis to support recovery efforts (e.g. prepare vaccination campaigns targeted to young people). Should your organisation not have implemented any programmes, please insert n.a. Please include links in your response and/or send supporting documents to GOVyouth@oecd.org**
[Open-ended question]
- 3. According to your organisation, in which 3 areas are young people finding it most challenging to mitigate the COVID-19 crisis? (Please select 3 options maximum)**
- a. Familial and friendship relationships
 - b. Education
 - c. Employment
 - d. Disposable income
 - e. Housing
 - f. Physical health
 - g. Mental health
 - h. Access to reliable information on COVID-19
 - i. Limitation of individual freedoms
 - j. Other, please specify (or insert n.a. if none of the above)
- 4. Has your organisation organised/participated in activities to discuss the impact of COVID-19 crisis? If so, tick all the areas that have been discussed:**
- a. Impact on young people
 - b. Impact on specific areas (e.g. education, employment, health)
 - c. Government action to address the crisis
 - d. Wider implications for democracy
 - e. Youth's trust in government
 - f. My organisation's members have not discussed COVID-19 crisis impacts
- 5. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is not worried at all and 5 is very worried, please indicate the extent to which members of your organisation are worried about the impact of the COVID-19 crisis:**
[1: Not worried at all; 2: Little worried; 3: Moderately worried; 4: Worried; 5: Very worried]
- a. Well-being of young people: [your rating from

- 1 to 5]
- b. Well-being of the elderly: [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - c. Public debt: [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - d. Fake news: [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - e. Racial discrimination: [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - f. Inequalities across age cohorts: [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - g. Diverting government attention away from climate change: [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - h. Political polarisation: [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - i. Youth rights: [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - j. Other, please specify [your rating from 1 to 5]
- 6. Please rate, on a scale from 1-5, the extent to which members of your organisation are satisfied with the way government has delivered public services for young people since the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis?**
- [1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neither satisfied or dissatisfied, 4 = satisfied, 5 = very satisfied]
- a. Education [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - b. Employment [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - c. Health [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - d. Housing [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - e. Justice [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - f. Transportation and Mobility [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - g. Sports, Culture and Leisure [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - h. Other, please specify [and rate from 1 to 5]
- 7. Please rate, on a scale from 1-5, the extent to which members of your organisation are satisfied the way government reacted to the COVID-19 crisis with reference to:**
- [1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neither satisfied or dissatisfied, 4 = satisfied, 5 = very satisfied]
- a. Communicating to the public on the risk of the pandemic [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - b. Using scientific evidence to make decisions [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - c. Delivering for vulnerable groups [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - d. Collaborating across institutions and with civil society organisations [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - e. Safeguarding integrity in the public sector (e.g. transparency in buying masks, other goods and services) [your rating from 1 to 5]
 - f. Other, please specify [and rate from 1 to 5]
- 8. How has the trust in government expressed by members of your organisation evolved since the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis?**
- a. Increased significantly
 - b. Slightly increased
 - c. Neither increased nor decreased
 - d. Slightly decreased
 - e. Decreased significantly
- 9. How has the satisfaction of members of your organisation with democracy changed since the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis?**



- a. Increased significantly
- b. Increased slightly
- c. Neither increased nor decreased
- d. Decreased slightly
- e. Decreased significantly

10. Please explain your answer to Question 9:
[Open-ended question]

11. Please indicate the degree to which members of your organisation agree or disagree with the following statements:
[1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Somewhat Agree, 3= Neither agree nor disagree, 4= Somewhat agree, 5= Strongly Agree]

I feel the government in my country **has incorporated** the views of **young people like me and/or those in my organisation** when deciding on:

- a. Lockdown and confinement measures: [your rating from 1 to 5]
- b. Financial support schemes to mitigate the impact on job/income loss: [your rating from 1 to 5]
- c. Prioritisation of specific age cohorts in vaccination campaigns: [your rating from 1 to 5]
- d. Buying goods, services and public works (public procurement) to deliver public services: [your rating from 1 to 5]
- e. Infrastructure investment responses: [your rating from 1 to 5]
- f. Other, please specify [and rate from 1 to 5]

12. What does your organisation think the OECD could do to support a fair and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 crisis?
[Open-ended question]



Annex 1.B.

Benchmarking National Response and Recovery Plans

The OECD Secretariat conducted an assessment of youth commitments included in national response and recovery plans launched by governments between 2020 and 2021 to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic across the OECD. The analysis of Sections 2 and 3 compares youth commitments in alignment with the principles outlined in the OECD Framework for the Assessment of National Youth Strategies (OECD, 2020_[25]) (See Endnote 1). An adaptation of this assessment for the purposes of this analysis is shown in Table 1.B.1.

Data from 34 publically available national response and recovery plans was collected through a desk research exercise, gathering information from sources including government websites and cross-national platforms including the European Union Next Generation EU stimulus package website. The criteria to include country responses in the analysis that informs this policy paper included whether response and recovery plans included a whole-of-government approach and whether they had been created with the strategic intent to address the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Across OECD countries, 32 countries have so far put forward a crisis recovery plan that fulfils this criteria. Most (21) OECD countries within the European Union developed their plans as part of the European-wide stimulus package, Next Generation EU, to coordinate a joint recovery vision in the region (EC, 2021_[43]). Other OECD countries, namely Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Norway have opted instead to adapt their yearly budgets to deliver strategic recovery responses to the COVID-19 crisis. Turkey, the United Kingdom and Korea have developed their own standalone strategies, not linked to yearly budgets or wider cross-country initiatives. At time of writing, 6 OECD countries do not have a standalone strategic plan to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and have focused instead on sectoral approaches. These include Chile, Israel, Mexico, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States. To ensure comparability, these countries are not included in quantitative analyses but do feature in qualitative analysis where relevant.

The analysis and subsequent benchmarking of response and recovery plans is guided by seven dimensions as follows.



Annex table 1.B.1. Dimensions and measures to assess the inclusion of youth commitments in national response and recovery plans

Dimension	Meaning
Youth commitments are included in the response and recovery plan (and include an intersectional dimension)	The response and recovery plan (RRP) makes an explicit inclusion of youth commitments and makes mention of outcomes for specific subgroups such as gender-based differences, youth living in precarious conditions, youth from ethnic minorities, youth with disabilities, etc.
Youth commitments are evidence-based	The RRP includes reliable, relevant and up-to-date age-disaggregated data and research on pandemic impacts and/or the anticipated outcomes of youth commitments.
Young people were able to participate in the planning of response and recovery measures in the plan	Youth organisations and/or non-organised youth participated in the elaboration of the RRP in a meaningful way. Examples of youth participation include face-to-face meetings and consultations, surveys, seminars and conferences, online consultations, and virtual meetings (webinars).
The youth commitments included in the plan are monitored, evaluated and accountability mechanisms are outlined / Youth participate in monitoring and evaluating these commitments	Youth commitments outlined in the RRP are complemented by specific output indicators. Youth organisations and/or non-organised youth are included in the monitoring and evaluation of commitments.
Youth commitments are cross-sectoral/transversal	Youth commitments are either constrained to employment and education or their scope extends beyond this to include other relevant policy areas and inter-ministerial coordination exists to deliver youth outcomes. Plans will be classified within these two subcategories.
New government tools or institutional innovations have been created to pursue youth commitments	Budgeting or organisational capacity has been allocated to the implementation of government tools or institutional innovations relevant to the delivery of youth outcomes (e.g. Generation Check, creation of new inter-ministerial body focused on youth).
Response and recovery plans include an intergenerational lens in identifying challenges and responding to them	The plan includes mechanisms such as budgeting tools that anticipate the effects of public expenditure across age cohorts, assessments of impacts of commitments outlined in their plan on current and future generations, or similar.

| Source: (OECD, 2020[25])

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