



# Youth Voices Summary

Key themes emerging from Futures For You  
(FUTU4U) workshops

June 2026

Laurea University of Applied Sciences



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



# About this Summary

This summary presents key themes emerging from workshops conducted for young adults aged 18–30 as part of the Futures For You (FUTU4U) project (2024–2026). This summary is based on a synthesis of workshop reports prepared by the project partners. It is not an academic research-based analysis, but a practice-oriented compilation of themes, discussions, and workshop outputs described in the reports from the My Voice and My Future, Our Future workshops.

Approximately 1,500 participants took part in 78 workshops in Finland, Ireland, Italy, and Slovenia during 2024–2025. While this total includes both young adults and professionals who participated in the training workshops, the summary focuses specifically on the perspectives and outputs of young participants. The project aimed to strengthen young adults' societal inclusion, democratic competencies, and capacity to envision and pursue desired futures.

Analysis and synthesis: Hilikka Lydén, Laurea University of Applied Sciences

Core Values Framework: Ilkka Vuorikuru, Laurea University of Applied Sciences



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



# FUTU4U Project:

## Desirable Futures for Young Adults

- Strengthening young adults' societal inclusion, sense of belonging, and agency in their communities and across the European Union
- Themes: democracy and preferred futures in communities and society
- Laurea University of Applied Sciences (coordinator), partners City of Vantaa (Finland), Municipality of Fano (Italy), Monaghan County Council (Ireland), Ormož Library (Slovenia)
- Implementation time: 2 September 2024 – 1 September 2026
- Funded by the European Union (CERV). Project number 101147830.



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



# Identified themes in young adults' views

## Agency

- Opportunities to influence, participation

## Democracy

## Good life

- Wellbeing and meaningful everyday life

## Relationships and belonging

## Security and living conditions

## Justice and inclusion (societal dimension)

## Responsibility for the future (societal dimension)

## Cross-cutting tension between individual responsibility and systems



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



# Agency

- Young adults have a strong desire to influence their own lives and society
- The perceived ability to influence is limited
- An individual voice often feels insignificant
- Some experience frustration, distrust or disengagement
- Need to find ways to participate and be heard



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



# Democracy

- Democracy is seen as an important ideal, associated with peace, justice and cooperation
- Trust in the functioning of democracy is declining
- Political systems are perceived as complex and distant
- Democracy does not always appear functional or effective in everyday life
- Participation is often reduced to voting



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



# Good life

- A good life is built on physical and mental wellbeing, maintained through everyday choices
- Meaningful everyday life is important, not only success
- Personal growth, courage to change, learning and self-awareness are emphasized
- Meaningful work, education and competence are central
- Balance and inner peace are key aspirations



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



# Relationships and belonging

- Family, friends and love act as anchors, providing meaning and stability
- Loyalty and kindness are recurring guiding values
- Care and responsibility for children are linked to ideas of parenthood
- Connections with others are essential for a meaningful and fulfilling life
- Participation and interaction often take place through digital tools in everyday life
- Hobbies and local identity strengthen the sense of belonging



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



# Security and living conditions

- Financial security and livelihood are key
- Housing, employment and well-functioning services form the foundation of a good life
- Aspiration for stability and predictability in everyday life
- Possibility for independent living and managing everyday life
- A good life requires well-functioning societal structures



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



# Justice and inclusion

- Inequality and discrimination are major concerns
- Equality, equity and minority rights are emphasized
- Gender equality and social justice are important
- Human rights are seen as something that requires continuous effort
- A more just and inclusive society is strongly desired



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



# Responsibility for the future

- Strong desire to build a sustainable and responsible future
- Environment, climate and animal welfare are key themes
- Connection to personal action: choices, lifestyle, participation
- The future is seen as both personal and shared
- Responsibility towards others and society is emphasised



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



# Cross-cutting tension

- **Individual responsibility vs. functioning of systems**
- Young people are expected to take responsibility for education, work and wellbeing
- At the same time, systems are perceived as insufficiently supportive
- Opportunities to influence are experienced as limited
- A gap between ideals and reality generates distrust



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



# A Grouping of Core Values

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Healthy, Stable, and Ethical Life</b><br><br>Physical and mental health, Financial security, Good housing, Affordable hobbies, Exercise, Healthy diet and sobriety, Sleep and rest, Strong moral and ethical foundations, Money | <b>Social Cohesion and a Just Society</b><br><br>Safe everyday life, Friends, family, and love, Strengthening empathy, Reducing economic inequality, Preserving democracy                                                                       |
| <b>Personal Growth and Autonomy</b><br><br>Freedom to be themselves, Knowledge, Independence and self-sufficiency, Developing skills, Continuous learning, Self-expression, Getting a job                                          | <b>Civic Responsibility and Sustainability</b><br><br>Parenthood, Societal responsibilities, Desire to help others, Nature is protected, Sustainable choices, International cooperation, Voting and civic engagement, Climate action, Hard work |



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



# Reports Used for This Summary

- Voices from the Language of Democracy Cafés (Deliverable D9.2, 2025)
- Voices from the Futuring Good Life Workshops (Deliverable D18.2, 2026)



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.





**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



# Contact and Further Information

**Raija Kaljunen**

Project Coordinator, Consortium Lead

Project Manager, Laurea UAS

[raija.kaljunen@laurea.fi](mailto:raija.kaljunen@laurea.fi)

LinkedIn: [FUTU4U – Futures For You](#)

[Project Website](#)



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

