



Let's talk focus group

National questionnaire report

Tavo Europa - Lithuania

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

LetsTALK: An Effective Mental Health Promotion, Prevention and Intervention Programme Towards Positive Youth Development in the 21st Century.

YP's Mental Health crisis is a global phenomenon that is currently escalating, with the COVID-19 pandemic and the war crisis in Ukraine. According to the World Health Organization, 14% of 10–19-year-old YP experience Mental Health Disorders, such as anxiety and depression. 1 in 7 Young People aged 10-19 years suffers from a Mental Health Disorder (MHD), representing 13% of the global burden of disease in this age group (WHO).

Mental Health Disorders such as stress, anxiety, depression, PTS etc. usually appeared during the transition to adulthood, a critical period where Young People are more vulnerable as they need to make important educational decisions, lifestyles choices and form interpersonal relationships.

In response to these concerning facts, the consortium of partners from 5 countries (Sweden, Estonia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Cyprus) with this project aims to develop a mental health promotion, prevention and intervention programme targeted to Young People for supporting them comprehensively in coping with Mental Health Disorders in adulthood through the enhancement of life skills as well as to promote the importance of positive Mental Health and well-being.

Therefore, the target of this project are young people with MHD who face social stigma and lack of life skills (social and emotional skills) or simply youngsters who are interested to learn more about these problems and to develop further their intellectual and emotional potential in order to be ready to deal with Mental health Problems.



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2. INTRODUCTION:

The aim of the project is to effectively improve the mental health of young people, strengthen and carry out prevention and intervention. To that end, the partner countries conducted surveys in their countries in order to find out what knowledge young people have about mental health and well-being, how they are able to recognize one or another difficulty, whether they and their relatives have or had difficulties, problems related to mental health, and what kind of help they need.

In Lithuania, 33 young people from city of Marijampolė participated in the survey. The project and its goals were presented to the young people. The aim was to ensure that young people felt comfortable reflecting on their experiences and understanding.

The results will be used in the development of new methodological tools, recommendations for those working with young people, who carry out prevention and intervention, and which can strengthen the mental health and well-being of young people.

3. RESULTS:

3.1 Demographics

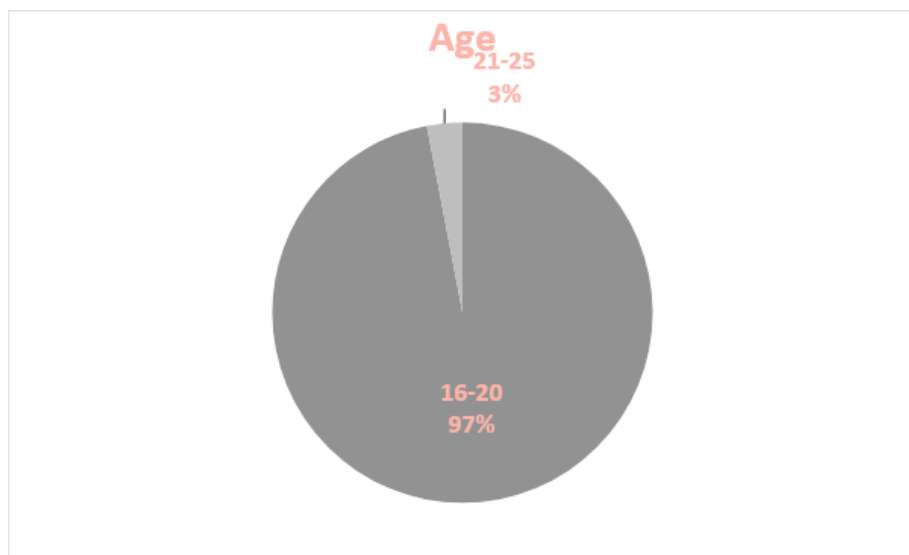


Fig. 1 Age of the respondents

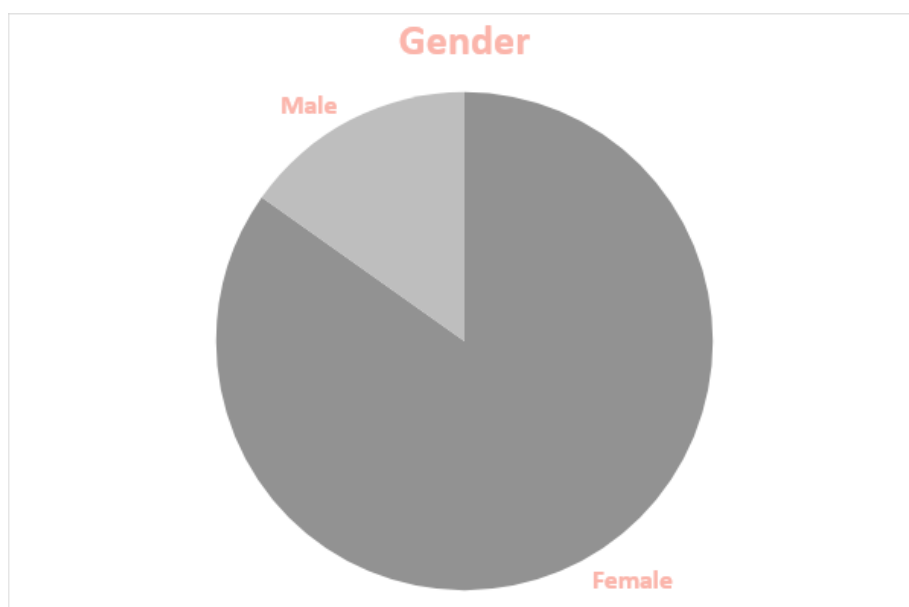


Fig. 2 Gender of the respondents

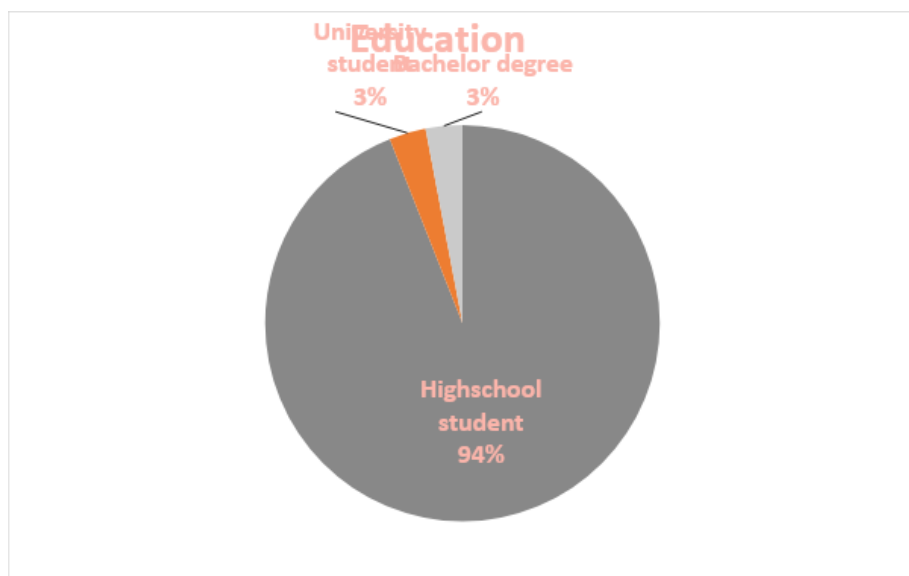


Fig. 3 Education of the respondents

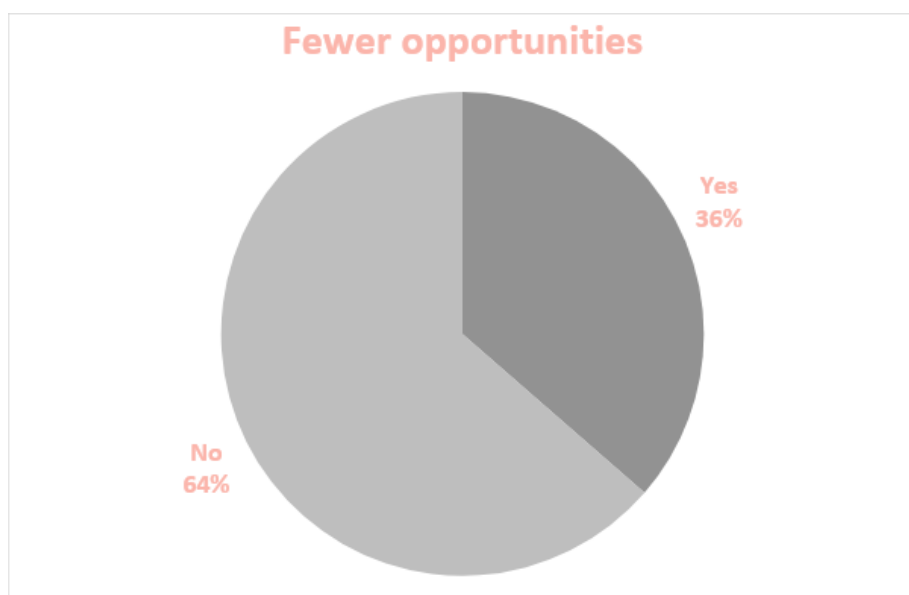


Fig. 4 Respondents who consider themselves youth with fewer opportunities



Fig. 5 Difficulties respondents consider facing

3.2 Key findings

As seen from the demographics data, more than 63 percent of respondents do not consider themselves youngsters with fewer opportunities, however when later asked to specify the category, one third of them mentioned having some troubles.

To the question what is mental health and well-being 21% answers named it as an internal state, 15% as an emotional state, 12% as some kind of behaviour (ability to act responsibly, smart and evaluate the decisions and environment). 9% of the answers called it feeling good, similar number as “happiness” and “help”. Less than 3% of the answers were logical thoughts, not having problems, calmness, an illness that one avoided and feeling needed by others. Moreover, a big number (17%) of the answers were the mentions of various issues or illnesses.

In addition to that, talking about general knowledge of mental health, 11% of the participants to the question “if you know any mental illnesses” did not know any and 10% of the answers mentioned intellectual disabilities (down syndrome, autism etc) instead of mental illnesses, which shows that there is a need of more informational campaigns of mental health and disability literacy among the youth.

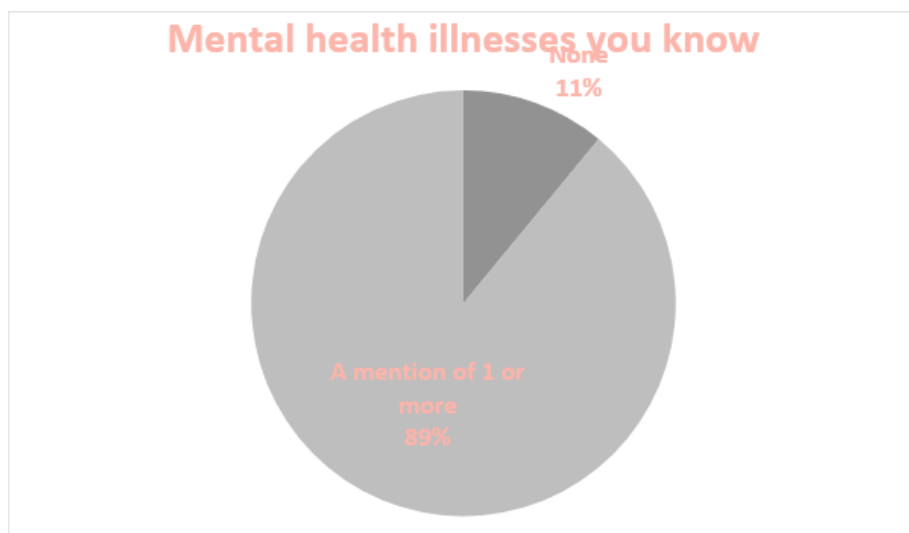


Fig. 6 Number of respondents knowing a mental issue

On the other hand, 89% of the respondents mentioned at least one mental issue, most of them mentioned 3 to 4 mental illnesses.

Most known mental health issues among the respondents were depression, anxiety and its attacks, eating disorders, like anorexia and bulimia, bipolar disorder, panic attacks, schizophrenia, stress, PTSD, adjustment disorder, aggressiveness, addictions like alcoholism, insomnia, anger disorder.

Most known mental health issues vs mental issues faced by the participants:

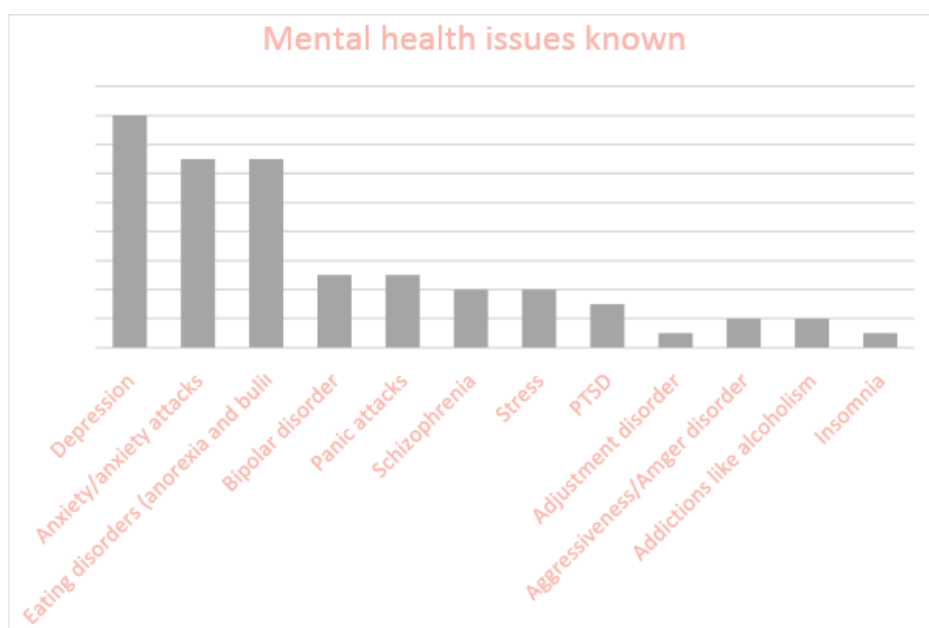


Fig. 7 Mental health issues known by the respondents

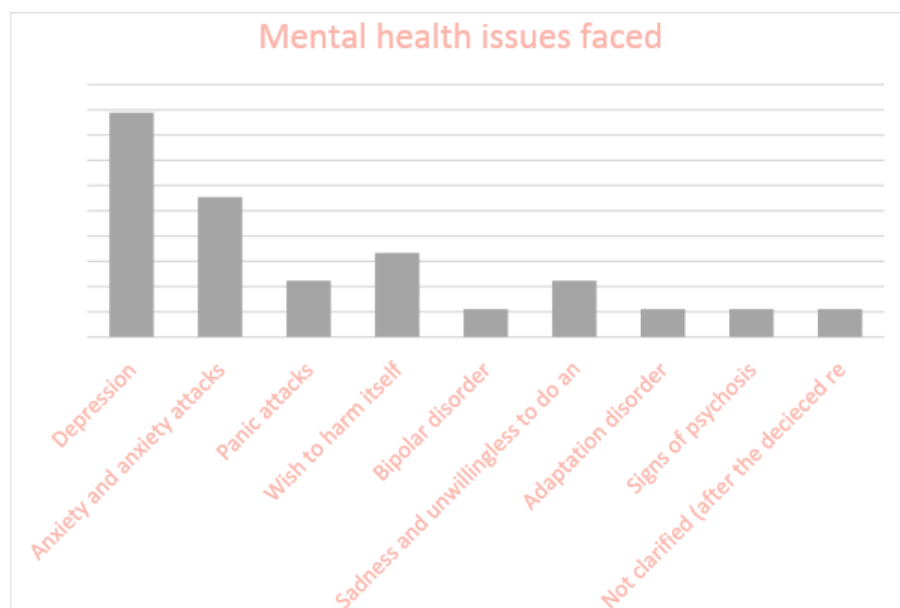


Fig. 8 Mental health issues the respondents are facing

Not surprisingly, mental illnesses that the group know, were mostly the ones the group of respondents faced: depression, anxiety or anxiety attacks, panic attacks, the desire to harm oneself, bipolar disorder, sadness, unwillingness to do anything, no joy, adaptation disorder, psychosis, troubles coping after a deceased relative. Most common ones being depression, anxiety and anxiety attacks, the desire to harm oneself is in the worrying numbers as well.

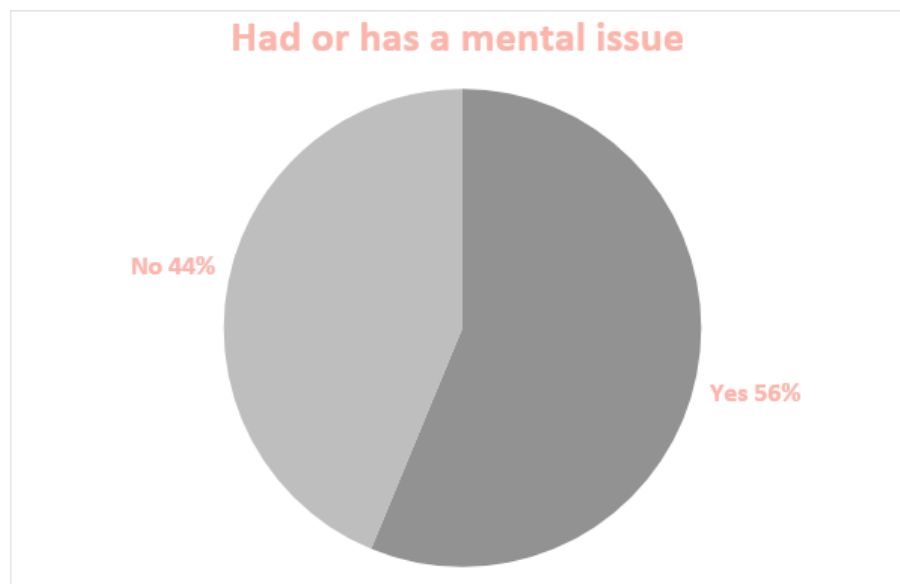


Fig. 9 Number of participants who has or had a mental health issue

Vast majority of the respondents see the cause of their mental issues, the relationships with others:

- 33% of the issues reported were related with issues with parents or family in general.
- 23% relationships with friends or partners.

- Traumatic losses or distancing of friends and family members severely affected 13% of the participants of the survey.
- 10% of issues were caused by the factors related to school.
- Stress reached a significant 6%.
- Bullying as stress, reached a significant 6%.

It was found that the majority of the respondents did not feel comfortable sharing about their mental issues with family or friends. What is interesting, that most of the ones who did, preferred to share it with friends rather than with their family, which might show how important having friends is at this young age. It can also be related to the fact that the majority of the issues are considered to be caused by the relationships in the family.

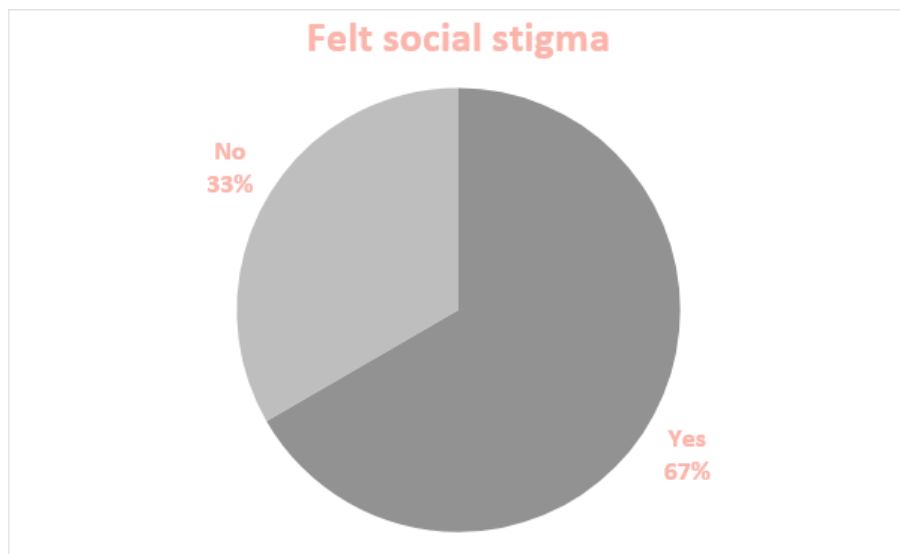


Fig. 10 Number of participants who had felt a social stigma

Most of the survey participants did not detail what kind of stigma, some of them mentioned were bullying, separation from the group and gossip.

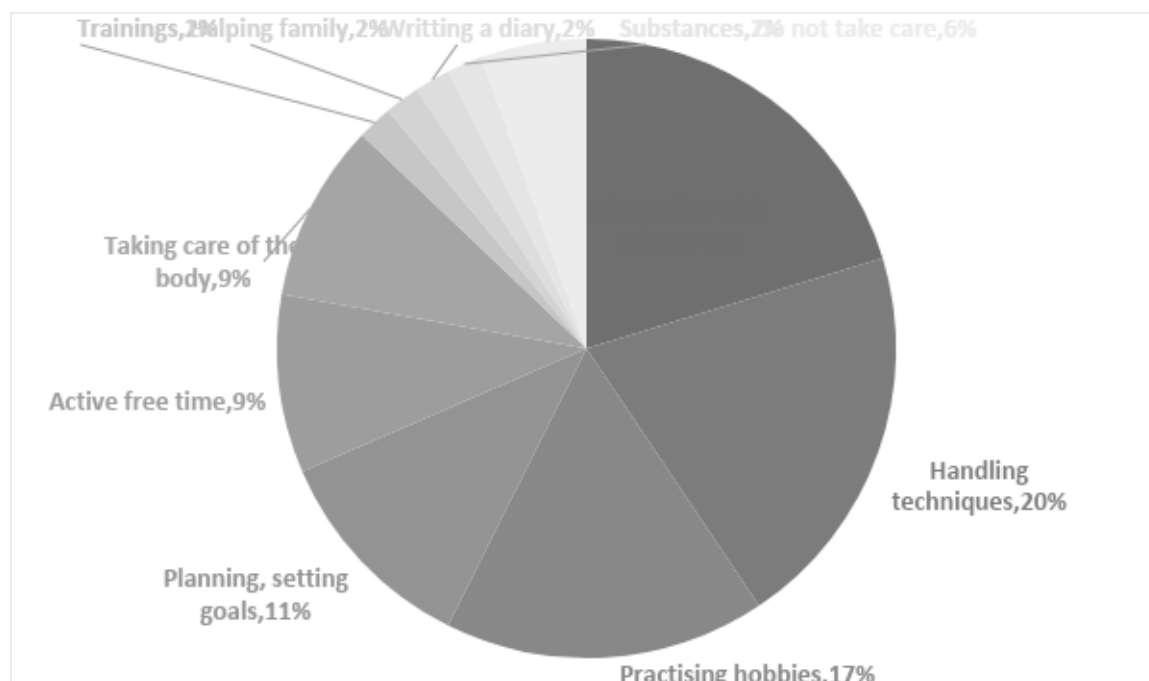
Even though most of the participants didn't feel comfortable sharing their issues with others:

- more than 40% turned to their **family and friends** to help them deal with it.
- **close relationships** with both categories were equally popular between the respondents in dealing with the mental issues.
- 22% **applied changes in lifestyle and habits**
- and only 10% **asked for help from the specialist.**
- Same number of youngsters dealt with the issues by **listening to music, watching movies and reading books.**
- Unfortunately, 5% of the respondents **turned to substances** like weed
- or didn't manage to deal with the issues.

It seems that talking with a specialist is still a very unpopular choice for the youth in Lithuania: only 39% of the respondents have talked with a psychologist or psychiatrist, and more than 60% have never done it. However, even 79% in the past had helped their friends who faced mental issues, with most popular methods being mentioned were talking, listening, giving advice and support. There was also a case of suggesting a specialist to talk to and informing the parents of a friend of the serious issues.

As for daily mental self-care, the most popular methods mentioned (20% each) were interaction with others and using techniques of positive thinking, self-encouragement and self-appreciation. A bit less popular, but still a significant option is practising hobbies like movies, books, etc. Planning and carefully selecting the

objectives as much as active free time, sports and yoga were popular answers as well. Food and good rest, participating in training, going to school, helping the family, or writing a diary were also mentioned. Unfortunately, some youth use bad habits such as smoking to relax. Important to notice that 9% of the respondents do not take care of their mental health.



A

concerning discovery of the study:

- only a bit more than half (55%) of youth think they have enough skills to take care of their mental health,
- 13% think they do not have enough skills,
- 31% think they do not have any skills.

It might be related to the fact that a very large number of survey participants (55%) have never participated in any activity about mental health and well-being compared with 33% who did. 15% of the respondents are not sure if they ever did it which just shows how less attention is still dedicated to mental health. Few people who have indicated the activities were related to occasional school psychology classes or educational activities.

4. CONCLUSIONS, NEXT STEPS

These findings highlight that there is not enough literacy of mental illnesses and well-being between youth. Even though a bigger and more detailed study is needed to have more accurate results, it is obvious that there is much work to be done to ensure the future generations are able to cope with the challenges they will face during their lives.

It is extremely important to educate young people and provide them with coping techniques and detailed knowledge about the help they can receive, as they are turning to their peers for help and for advice. This knowledge given by the project even to a relatively small group of young people will be multiplied by their actions towards others.

As the young people will be the ones building future families and educating their children and as we saw from this study, more than half of the issues faced by the young people are related with the family situation, which can change if we start to educate them to recognize the toxic and unhealthy relationships and forms to cope with it from the young age.



With this project the problems discovered by this questionnaire will be addressed directly through the development of mental health promotion, prevention and intervention programmes specifically designed to fit the concrete needs of youth in the six partner countries.