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## MYWEB (Measuring Youth Well-Being)

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### WP4: Direct engagement with children and young people (CYP)

#### Deliverable 4.1: Country level reports on interviews and focus groups from delivery partners (Greece)

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## 1. Introduction

In this report we present the findings and the results of the fieldwork research we conducted for the purposes of WP4 of the MYWEB project. As the title of the work package suggests, we designed and carried out a series of interviews and focus groups, following the given guidelines, so as to establish a direct engagement with children and young people, a significant task given the recent EU interest in the age categories that the MYWEB project involves.

Our goals were to deploy the social sciences research methods of *interview* and *focus groups* with different age categories of children and young people in order to explore the meanings they convey and the way they understand 'well-being' and, also, to observe and unveil potential differences and/or similarities between different profiles of children and young people.

At the same time, we sought to get knowledge of and gain experience on the difficulties and challenges of working with children and young people in order to have their views about their well-being and living conditions while in different economic, social, environmental and cultural contexts. What mattered most was to highlight the residential, social, material, health, environmental and educational parameters that play role to, or define, the way they perceive 'well-being', along with emotional and psychological parameters. This would eventually give us a quite dynamic, yet preliminary, and certainly not in-depth, perspective of what children and young people think and/or believe about 'well-being' or, alternatively, 'quality of life' or 'prosperity'.

Last but not least, we were also keen on bringing up the issue of whether children's and young people's voice is actually heard within society. This issue is crucially linked to recent initiatives across Europe taken up so as to empower children's and young people's degree of participation to the decision making procedures, thus affecting policy making on EU level.

This report is structured in a quite clear and straightforward way. At first, we present the characteristics and settings of the fieldwork research. The number of interviews and focus groups is explained as well as the criteria (and procedure) of the two contrasting schools and pupils' selection, in compliance with the given guidelines. The profile of both non-organised and organised/active young people is outlined, so as to give a more detailed picture of the sample.

Reference is made to the various difficulties, minor and/or major, we faced during the fieldwork, and to some problems with the schedule that derived from the difficulties we had to confront. Other issues also presented are that of the ethical considerations, an issue of ever central importance in social research, and the profile of people who did the interviews and facilitated the focus groups; an important issue as well as it is essentially helpful for the total research procedure to be carried out by research staff that is qualified in both scientific and previous experience terms.

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Fieldwork characteristics and settings are followed by a table that summarises the socio-demographic characteristics of the twenty-one (21) interviewees and four (4) focus groups. Information includes: age, gender, level of education, activity status (student, working, unemployed, NEET), type of social, political etc. involvement, ethnicity, disability, and place of birth.

Next follows the presentation of the main empirical findings. Emphasis here is placed on the understanding and measuring of well-being among children and young people (each on a separate chapter), for which analysis is based on the following axes: a) global understanding / definition of well-being, b) happiness (positive and negative effect), c) life satisfaction, and d) psychological well-being (autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life-purpose, mastery, positive relatedness). The results are admittedly quite interesting; noting down the opinions of children and young people gives us the chance not only to formulate a basic idea on what these age categories think about well-being, but also enables us to trace useful pinpoints that can work as signifiers for future policy amendments. It should also be said that results are not presented comparatively. Still, differences and/or similarities are easily detectable.

The sections about the remarks on the definition and the operationalization of well-being in the fieldwork, and on the understanding of well-being depending on certain factors, are of great value. On the one hand, it turned out that well-being, a rather vague concept in its definition, is conclusively worked rather differently depending on the age category of the respondents. On the other hand, compared to the older ones (15-18 years old), most of the younger ones (10-12 years old) were not able to understand and define the concept of prosperity, but they fully understood and defined the term quality of life. Beyond that, differences between them in terms of gender, age, social background, level of education, activity status, ethnicity or social and political involvement were limited to three main issues: a) age, b) young people with disabilities, and c) respondents coming from one-parent families either because of divorce or because of the death of one parent.

The report closes with a reference to a couple of issues that can easily be considered fundamental; that of whether the voice of children and young people is actually heard within the society they live in; and that of survey engagement in the future.

As for the first issue, the majority of the respondents feel that their voice isn't heard by the politicians, the government and/or the grownups in general. They are not so much interested about children and young people; they don't care about the problems children and young people face. And even when they seemingly do listen to them, what actually happens is that they don't pay genuine attention to their needs, they don't care, they ignore them – their interest is not genuine. As for the latter issue, the majority of the respondents argued that the MYWEB project is useful because it gives them the opportunity to express their views and personal opinions freely. And although they appear to be a little bit skeptical about whether something will eventually be done after the end of the project, were very positive and willing to participate in future research in general and about their quality of life in particular, motivated by various reasons.

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## 2. Fieldwork characteristics

### 2.1 Fieldwork

#### Number of interviews and focus groups

The guidelines given for the fieldwork research asked for a specific number of interviews and focus groups: a) five (5) interviews with children, 10-12 years old, b) five (5) interviews with adolescents, 15-16 years old, five c) five (5) interviews with young people engaged in some sort of social, political, civic etc. activity, 16-18 years old, and d) five (5) interviews with young people not organised in any kind of social, political, civic etc. activity, 16-18 years old as well. It must be noted here that in cases c) and d) we were given the option to include one (1) interviewee that could be 19-20 years old, on condition it would be difficult to find participants 16-18 years old. Likewise, we were asked to conduct four (4) focus groups, with participants from the same age categories as for the interviews.

The final number of interviews we conducted is as follows: a) **six (6)** interviews with children, 10-12 years old, b) **five (5)** interviews with adolescents, 15-16 years old, five c) **five (5)** interviews with young people engaged in some sort of social, political, civic etc. activity, 16-18 years old – one (1) 20 years old, and d) **five (5)** interviews with young people not organised in any kind of social, political, civic etc. activity, 16-18 years old.

The final number of focus groups we conducted is as follows: a) **one (1)** focus group with children, 10-12 years old – **seven (7) children** participated, b) **one (1)** focus group with children, 14-15 years old – **seven (7) children** participated, c) **one (1)** focus group with young people engaged in some sort of social, political, civic etc. activity, 16-18 years old – **five (5)** young people participated, one (1) 19 years old, and) **one (1)** focus group with young people not organised in any kind of social, political, civic etc. activity – **five (5)** young people participated, one (1) 20 years old.

It must be noted here that interviews with children 10-12 years old were finally six instead of five, as initially planned, because after our contact and arrangements with the primary school we did the fieldwork research, it turned out that there were thirteen (13) pupils interested in participating. So, since we had seven (7) of them included in the focus group, we decided it would not be wise to exclude one (1) pupil from the interview procedure.

#### Criteria of contrasting schools and pupils selection procedure

It was made clear in the guidelines that one part of the fieldwork research (including ten (10) interviews and two (2) focus groups) should be carried out with the participation of **two (2) contrasting schools**: one (1) school with children (10-12 years old) in the last year of primary compulsory education and, one (1) school with adolescents (15-16 years old) in the last year of compulsory education. This was asked for two main reasons; a) in the compulsory educational system it is expected that the full spectrum of social demographic pro-

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files of children and young people is present, and b) in many survey studies on children/youth well-being fieldwork research is to a great degree done at schools.

For the purposes of the fieldwork research at schools we thought of choosing one public school and one private, located in different districts in the city of Athens. Our first move was to consider asking for permission from the Institute of Educational Policy, a private legal entity supervised by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, so as to conduct research at the two schools. After contacting the Institute, we realised that waiting for permission would be a greatly time-consuming procedure, that we would not let us finish the fieldwork research within the given deadlines. It must be noted here that in Greece it is compulsory for someone to be granted permission from the aforementioned institute so as to conduct an academic or any other kind of research in schools.

With that being the case, we activated the alternative option we were given; the one that would let us make arrangements for interviews and focus groups at schools by coming to indirect (informal) contact with the school that we wanted, provided that the teachers' staff and the principal of the school would allow us to conduct the interviews and the focus groups.

So, using the network of contacts we had established during the implementation of previous work packages, we contacted a number of public and private schools. We informed them of the content and the objectives of the MYWEB project, and asked them if they could let us conduct our research in their school. After getting some negative replies, we finally had some positive ones from two (2) schools. One positive reply came from the 1<sup>st</sup> Experimental Primary School of the University of Athens (Marasleio School), a public school, located in the centre of the city of Athens. The other positive reply came from Platon Schools, a private school, located in the suburbs of the city of Athens.

So, these two schools met one set of contrasting criteria: a public (or state) school versus a private school. However, one more criterion that the chosen schools met came to light quite soon after coming to an agreement for the conduct of the research. This had to do with the fact that there was a school (Platon Schools) with pupils coming from families of rather high socio-economic status versus a school (Marasleio School) with pupils coming from families of rather low or middle socio-economic status.

The choice of the specific contrasting schools can be justified in methodological terms, as it gave us the opportunity to have sample for our research coming from different residential, educational, social and economic environments and contexts. Such choice of schools would ensure a wide variety in responses, opinions and ideas, that would then, guarantee for richer and more valid research results. Moreover, it would make it easier to bring up potential differences during the analysis procedure.

At this point it is important to stress that we asked for the cooperation of the teaching staff at both schools for the identification and the selection of the eligible pupils. Actually, we considered their cooperation and involvement rather as a necessity for our work, as they would use specific strategies and incentives in order to attract pupils' interest.

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Moreover, in both schools a preliminary meeting with the pupils was arranged before organizing the interviews and the focus groups, so as to inform them on the objectives and the purposes of the MYWEB project as well as the specific content of the fieldwork research. It was really important and useful for the pupils to become aware of information previously unknown to them. Members of the research team presented the research in detail and were happy to answer to the pupils' questions, which were not few, that is to say.

After that part of the procedure was completed, pupils were asked to inform their parents about the MYWEB project, so as to let them decide whether they would give their consent for their children to participate. In both schools there was eventually large participation, so it was then the teaching staff's and the principal's task to do the final selection. About a week's time later, we were notified that the pupils had been selected and, so, we started organizing the interviews and the focus groups.

### **Profile of organised/non-organised young people**

The profile of the young people, both organised and non-organised, was also largely predetermined, as was in the case of the children and the adolescents. For this specific age category (16-18 years old) we were asked to conduct ten (10) interviews and two (2) focus groups (5-9 people each) with young people engaged in some sort of social, political, civic etc. activity (five (5) interviews, one (1) focus group), and with young people not engaged in some sort of social, political, civic etc. activity (five (5) interviews, one (1) focus group), respectively.

For the purposes of this part of the fieldwork, we once again used the network of contacts and affiliations we had established during the implementation of previous work packages. Apart from that, in order to locate, select and recruit people for the organised youth group, we contacted numerous organisations of civic engagement: non-governmental organisations (NGOs), non-profit organisations (NPOs), leisure / hobby groups, youth sport clubs, youth political organisations, youth unions, LGBT groups, disabled people support groups, student unions, anti-racist organisations, against poverty organisations, charity organisations etc. On the other hand, in order to locate and recruit people for the non-organised youth group, we searched in areas such as universities, vocational training centres, teaching centres, labour unions, social organisations, minority support groups and social services.

After completing the contacts phase, we came up with a list of about thirty (30) young people, out of which we had to select for the fieldwork research phase. In this phase we took into consideration the following criteria (rationale of the selection): a) variation in gender, b) conditions of social, emotional and/or psychological vulnerability, c) communicative skills (this factor was determined by the research team members while implementing the contacts phase), d) variation in different social and economic situations, and e) residential status. Having done so, the groups of interviewees and focus groups participants were firmly decided, and from that moment on preparations and arrangements for the fieldwork research phase began.

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In terms of participants' profile, we succeeded in fulfilling large part of the standards and prerequisites specified in the given guidelines. More specifically, the profile of the sub-groups that were selected and finally took part was as follows:

- Interviews with organized young people: variation in gender, variation in age, variation in areas of civic engagement (scout associations, youth political organisations, voluntary support group), all participants of the same nationality (Greek)
- Interviews with non-organised young people: variation in gender, age and nationality, graduate students, disabled and unemployed people, part-timers
- Focus group with organized young people: low variation in gender, variation in age, variation in areas of civic engagement (youth political organisations, international NGO, immigrant support group, animal welfare association)
- Focus group with non-organised young people: variation in gender, variation in age, members of single-parent families, unemployed people, part-timers, certain level of homogeneity (middle class in our case) in terms of social background.

### **Main difficulties during fieldwork**

We can certainly claim that there were no significant difficulties the research team faced during the fieldwork research. The team that carried out the interviews and the focus group was fully prepared for the procedure. On the other hand, all participants were very cooperative, with no sign of stress or uneasiness, before or during the procedure. At the same time, the vast majority of the respondents showed satisfactory communicative skills that really made the work of the research team easier to carry out. Discussions during the interviews as well as the focus groups were open and unbiased in general. Few disputes, yet quite minor ones, took place during the focus groups among both organised and non organised young people; but were quickly resolved. So, conclusively, fieldwork research 'rolled' with no main difficulties.

### **Problems with the schedule**

During the fieldwork research procedure we came across some minor difficulties, that is to say, and as it turned out, which however resulted in some delay to complete the interviews and the focus group within the given deadline and as scheduled.

The first problem we had to deal with was that in the first place the level of participation of pupils, 10-12 years old, was a little bit lesser than the one needed to conduct the required number of interviews and the number of pupils for the focus group. Some pupils' parents appeared to be reluctant to give their consent for their children to take part in the research. At this point, the schools' teaching staff made direct contacts with the pupils' parents so as to give even more detailed information about the objectives and the purposes of the MYWEB project. On our part, we made the ethical considerations much clearer and we

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emphasised the fact that the pupils' participation would be for the greater benefit not only of the project itself, but of their own children as well, in the long term.

Second problem we had to confront with was that it wasn't always easy to make time arrangements for the interviews and the focus groups with the young people, both organised and non-organised. A substantial part of the sample of this age category (16-18 years old) was pupils of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of High School. This means their time availability was quite limited, given the fact that most of their time is spent in studying for their lessons. This problem became more intense while organising the focus groups. Apart from the small time availability issue, some participants had to come to the place allocated for the focus group (Panteion University) from different and afar districts, and given that each participant had his /her personal things to do on a daily basis, it turned out initially somehow tricky to find the proper balance. Another example is of a participant with disabilities that could reach the place of the focus group only with the help of his father and by car, so we had to find the proper day and time for him to be able to participate, since he had expressed his strong willingness to participate.

### **Other issues / remarks**

- The research team made sure, especially while selecting the sample for the young people, 16-18 years old, so that it is not taking advantage of easy-to-access people; on the contrary, great effort was made to locate those people that not only did meet the specifications and other prerequisites set, but also contributed the maximum of their knowledge, experience and ideas to the purposes of the research.
- All interviews and focus groups were conducted in places that secured the lack of noise or any other source of potential distraction. Some interviews took place in the respondents' home; some others (along with the focus groups with young people, both organised and non-organised) took place in a class room at Panteion University, specially allocated for this reason. Interviews and focus groups at both schools took place in rooms that offered the appropriate conditions. Minor problems with noise did not affect the fieldwork research whatsoever.
- The research team translated the questionnaires, the socio-demographic data and parental/ personal consent forms into Greek language and made all necessary adjustments to the social, economic and cultural settings of the Greek society.
- Parental/ Personal consent forms were signed by all participants before conducting the interviews and/or the focus groups, and after all participants had been made fully aware of the content, the purposes and the ethical considerations of the research.
- The vast majority of the participants really enjoyed the research procedure, and felt much greater than they expected before the procedure. All of them had warmly agreed to take part. At the same time, however, it was a brand new experience for

all of them, one that they relished. This derives from the fact that they all explicitly expressed the propensity to participate in other surveys like the MYWEB project in the future.

**Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of interviewees and focus groups**

The table below summarises the socio-demographic characteristics of the twenty-one (21) interviewees and four (4) focus groups. Information includes: age, gender, level of education, activity status (student, working, unemployed, NEET), type of social, political etc. involvement), ethnicity, disability), place of birth.

	<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Focus Groups</b>
<b>Pupils from Primary School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 (11 years old)</li> <li>• 5 girls</li> <li>• 1 boy</li> <li>• 6 of Greek nationality</li> <li>• place of birth: Athens, Greece</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 (11 years old)</li> <li>• 4 girls</li> <li>• 3 boys</li> <li>• 11 of Greek nationality</li> <li>• place of birth: Athens, Greece</li> </ul>
<b>Pupils from Secondary School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 (14 years old)</li> <li>• 3 (15 years old)</li> <li>• 2 boys</li> <li>• 3 girls</li> <li>• 5 of Greek nationality</li> <li>• place of birth: Athens, Greece</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 (14 years old)</li> <li>• 4 (15 years old)</li> <li>• 3 boys</li> <li>• 4 girls</li> <li>• 7 of Greek nationality</li> <li>• place of birth: Athens, Greece</li> </ul>
<b>Non-organised Young People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 young people</li> <li>• 2 (17 years old)</li> <li>• 3 (18 years old)</li> <li>• 2 female</li> <li>• 3 male</li> <li>• 3 of Greek nationality</li> <li>• 1 of Sierra Leonean nationality</li> <li>• 1 of Gambian nationality</li> <li>• 2 disabled young people</li> <li>• 1 University student, unemployed</li> <li>• 1 student at a vocational training center</li> <li>• 1 working part-time</li> <li>• place of birth: Athens, Greece</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 young people</li> <li>• 1 (17 years old)</li> <li>• 3 (18 years old)</li> <li>• 1 (20 years old)</li> <li>• 3 female</li> <li>• 2 male</li> <li>• 5 of Greek nationality</li> <li>• 1 disabled young male</li> <li>• 2 members of single-parent families, both unemployed</li> <li>• 2 University students, 1 unemployed and 1 working part-time</li> <li>• place of birth: Athens, Greece</li> </ul>

<b>Organised Young People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 young people</li> <li>• 1 (16 years old)</li> <li>• 2 (17 years old)</li> <li>• 1 (18 years old)</li> <li>• 1 (20 years old)</li> <li>• 5 of Greek nationality</li> <li>• 3 members of scout associations</li> <li>• 1 member of youth political organization</li> <li>• 1 member of voluntary support group</li> <li>• place of birth: Athens, Greece</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 young people</li> <li>• 4 (18 years old)</li> <li>• 1 (19 years old)</li> <li>• 4 of Greek nationality</li> <li>• 1 of Albanian nationality</li> <li>• 2 members of youth political organization</li> <li>• 1 member of international NGO</li> <li>• 1 member of immigrant youth support group</li> <li>• 1 member of animal welfare organization</li> <li>• place of birth: Athens, Greece</li> </ul>
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## 2.2. Methodological differences among interviews and focus groups

After having completed the main fieldwork research part, we transferred and gathered all digital recordings to a computer's folder, dedicated to the storage of the digital files of the interviews and focus groups. The next step would involve analysis of the data, which is primarily presented in Section 3 (main empirical findings), along with a reference on the differences on the understanding of well-being depending on certain factors (Section 4). Analysis is performed on the differences while understanding and measuring well-being among children adolescents (10-12 and 15-16 years old) and young people (16-18 years old) following the structure of the questionnaire.

However, we can at the same identify another level of analysis; the one that refers to methodological differences among interviews and focus groups. As mentioned above, in this part of the fieldwork research we were expected to use two classical sociological research and data collection methods: semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Therefore, on the one hand we are supposed to analyse the data accumulated via the fieldwork research, while, on the other hand, we need to indicate specific methodological differences, among interviews and focus groups. Such differences results as follows:

- In interviews participants are prone to express their own feelings, opinions and ideas in a more open and unrestrained way; in focus groups, the phenomenon of some participants not being very active, talkative and tending to be rather indifferent or detached is not unusual. Such phenomenon appeared once, in the focus group with adolescents, 15-16 years old, where in two out of the seven participants hardly contributed to the discussion, despite the motivation enabled on the moderators' part.

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- In interviews participants are prone to express their own feelings, opinions and ideas in a more open and unrestrained way; in focus groups, the phenomenon of some participants not being very active, talkative and tending to be rather indifferent or detached is not unusual. Such phenomenon appeared once, in the focus group with adolescents, 15-16 years old, where in two out of the seven participants hardly contributed to the discussion, despite the motivation enabled on the moderators' part.
- In interviews it typically is less likely for disputes to arise between the interviewer and the interviewee; contrariwise, focus groups quite often offer a fertile ground for differentiated attitudes and points of view to come about. The interaction in an individual interview does not allow for personal ideas to be expressed on the researcher's part. The researcher is trying to extract knowledge out the respondent's answers, and make true statements come to light; causing conflict it is not part of his/her role during the procedure.
- Added to the previous point, we need to stress that while in a focus group, a certain level of consent or dissent, respectively, is expected to be reached. This is so as participants are given the chance to interact with each other during the discussion. This happened in the two focus groups with young people (both organised and non-organised ones), where almost all participants got themselves involved into discussion with each other, that most times resulted in seeing them agree, or disagree, on a specific topic talked about.
- In interviews it is usually difficult, some might possibly say inescapable, for the respondent to avoid answering a question, while in focus groups part of the participants can choose to keep a rather low profile, and keep themselves out of the discussion, despite the researcher's efforts to make their presence to the procedure productive and contributory. It must be noted here that such cases were really few in our fieldwork research.
- Lastly, we often notice that in focus groups participants sometimes tend to follow other participants answers instead of giving their own. Such phenomenon was observed in the focus groups with children and adolescents, in which children were 'caught' by the researcher providing the answer of another participant, almost automatically, perhaps because they didn't want to share their own opinion, or they were bored, or didn't want to appear to the other children that they don't have a personal opinion.

### 3. Main empirical findings

#### 3.1. Understanding and measuring well-being among children

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## **Global understanding/definition of wellbeing**

We faced some difficulties in translating well-being in Greek so we used the words 'prosperity' and 'quality of life' since there isn't an equivalent of well-being in Greek. However, children were not aware of the word 'prosperity', but they understood the word 'quality of life'. "[Quality of life] is about the way people live their lives, whether they are happy or not" (Interview, Iro, female, 11 years old).

The vast majority of children who were interviewed and participated in focus groups were not familiar with the term 'wellbeing' and some of them did not understand the term 'quality of life', either. When we explained the terms, they agreed that quality of life first and foremost is related and defined by the family relations. Being able to have a healthy family environment where your parents are always there for you, ready to support you, encourage you and help you in every problem or difficulty that you encounter, is one of the most crucial factors of wellbeing. "You can talk with your parents, you can discuss with them the problems you face at school" (Interview, Ioulia, female, 11 years old). Most of the participants suggested that good relations with friends consist of another very important factor which is related with wellbeing.

Some of the respondents argued that school plays a substantial role in the quality of their life, because it provides children with the necessary skills in order not only to find a good job in the future but to learn how to deal with multiple situations in life.

Of course, besides the psychological factors, many of the respondents suggested that material variables are equally noteworthy. Having the necessary things to cover your basic needs was mentioned as an important factor for the determination of well-being as well as the extra things which they are defined from the respondents as 'luxury' that could make you happy.

Finally, they all agreed that inequalities exist (on health, living conditions, money, freedom, protection of rights) among children in terms of the quality of life. They mainly see these differences between Greece and other countries, especially in Africa, but they also mentioned differences among children in Greek society based on the familiar relationships or their relations with friends.

## **Major domains**

### **Happiness**

In the majority of their responses, children identified happiness with pleasure which is derived from everyday situations. For example, many of the children mentioned that when they were announced they were not having classes due to a strike, were extremely happy. "No lessons and no school would make a perfect day" (Interview, Iro, female, 11 years old).

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They mostly feel unhappy, stressed and moody when they have a lot of homework or when they have difficult tasks to cope with in school or even when they have a fight with friends. The overloaded everyday programme which includes not only school activities but also extra school work, usually stresses them. They suggest that free time is of great value for them feeling satisfied and content as they have the opportunity to be engaged in outdoor activities, meet with their friends and clear their minds from everyday pressure.

### **Life-satisfaction**

Generally the vast majority of the respondents feel content with their life. "I am happy just because I live" (Interview, Ioulia, female, 11 years) old. This feeling of satisfaction is derived from the fact that they have good and loyal friends, they like their house and the area they reside, they have strong and good relations with their family and also they like their school. The school itself is a source of strong feelings of satisfaction as almost all respondents claimed that they are happy with their school because they get the skills needed for the future accomplishment of their goals.

They even feel more satisfied when they achieve their goals at school; for example when they get good grades at exams or when they get praised from their teachers or even when they excel in after school activities such as piano lessons, sports. Furthermore, they are satisfied knowing that their parents are employed and thus are able to pay for their extra school activities.

### **Psychological well-being**

In general, their environment influences them positively (parents, friends, teachers), especially their parents who act as role-models and they are very supportive to them.

Most of them claimed that achieving their goals will help them have a better life in the future. Although, they strongly believe their future life will have more difficulties and they will have to overcome many obstacles to achieve their goals, they are very optimistic about their future. They think they will fulfill all their dreams if they organize their time correctly. When they grow older, they believe they will have new interests, different activities but also more pressure and stress.

As I grow older I understand better the problems which exist in the world and for that reason I am not as happy as I used to be (Interview, Tina, female, 11 years old).

All of the respondents agreed on the indispensable help and support they receive from their family and evaluate it as the most important factor of encouragement in their ongoing efforts. Besides the familiar environment, friends and teachers support them in everything they do.

## 3.2. Understanding and measuring well-being among young people

### Global understanding/definition of wellbeing

In general, young people were familiar with the concept of wellbeing. Adolescents were more familiar with the term 'quality of life', but not always able to understand and define it.

...when someone has the ability to cope with his needs, no matter what needs are these, I mean mental, financial. It is difficult to have a good quality of life in our time because we have many obligations and it is difficult to be achieved (Interview, Odysseas, male, 15 years old).

The vast majority of young people agreed that people's quality of life is dependable on many factors; amongst them good health is characterised as the most valuable. Almost all the interviewees claimed that besides health, the good and calm relations with the family are equally important. They suggested that familial relations are one of the most important factors for a good life, as well as interpersonal relations and specifically relations with friends which constitute a rather crucial factor in the determination of a good life.

If something happens to our parents, those who will be by our side are friends, I think, either psychologically or financially; they will be by our side forever (Interview, Olga, female, 15 years old).

All the respondents agreed on the lack of free time. They stressed the fact that society has put many expectations of them and consequently they feel great pressure and stress due to a vast amount of activities they are engaged in. For that reason, almost all the respondents claimed that free time is significant in order to be able to relax, hang out with their friends and entertain themselves.

Having enough money in order to be able to achieve your goals and enjoy a qualitative life, along with the need to feel free to be engaged in activities that you like, are two extra factors that define wellbeing for young people. Many of the respondents supported the view that freedom and the ability to do what you prefer the most is important for a good and happy life. In addition to that, they mention that if they had more leisure time they would feel happier and more satisfied. "I study for school all week and I would like to relax during the weekend, but I can't anymore" (Focus group, Petros, male, 15 years old).

The respondents acknowledged the fact that not all young people have the same quality of life and claimed that this phenomenon derives from the financial situation of the family, the insufficient place of residence or the unsteady familial environment. Consequently, many young people do not have the same opportunities with others or even they are not able to have things that most people take for granted such as food, water, shelter.

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“*Wellbeing* equals joy which does not exist nowadays...health and being around people you love and they love you” (Interview, non-organised, Kimonas, male, 18 years old). Young people stress the interaction between material and psychological factors in the definition of wellbeing. Besides health, the combination of financial comfort along with the good interpersonal and familial relations, is what makes a good life. More specifically, the majority of the respondents said financial prosperity facilitates the achievement of your goals, enables the involvement with the activities that make you feel satisfied and fulfilled. As a result you feel independent and good about yourself. On the other hand, personal and interpersonal relations, social networks contribute to the socialization of young people and to the general cultivation of their social traits. Furthermore, they stressed the importance of family, friends, and education. Being able to be educated provides you with the necessary skills to achieve your professional goals.

Some said that wellbeing is related with higher living standards when you do not target only to livelihood but to an easier and comfortable life. Some others added that young people should be close to nature and take care of their physical needs in the same way as their psychological and mental needs. “[Wellbeing is achieved] when someone is well not only psychologically but also physically” (Interview, organized, Achilleas, male, 17 years old). Only one of the respondents said that religion is very important for him because he suggested that if a young person doesn’t believe in something or someone won’t be able to have a good life.

All the respondents agreed in the existence of inequalities between young people in terms of quality of life. Some suggested that people which they belong to a higher social class and enjoy a financial prosperity, have a better life because they can do whatever pleases them. Young people do not have the same access to information, to entertainment and they do not have the same opportunities. Nationality is a crucial parameter that is closely related to the mode and standards of living, as they said. More specifically, some respondents suggested that even though the financial crisis in Greece has affected in many ways the Greek young people, things are even worse for immigrants as they have less privileges and they frequently face racist attitudes and behaviours.

## **Major domains**

### **Happiness**

Generally, the majority of the respondents identify youth with both positive and negative traits. Being young for most of the respondents means to be carefree, not responsible for taking serious decisions about life and at the same time having courage and positive mood to engage with many activities. As many of the respondents said young people think they can change the world.

We have the resources to organise our future the way we want and like and [young] people around me do that; I see them fighting while

older people are not doing that (Interview, organised, Lilly, female, 20 years old).

They argued that with right and careful planning you can do many things in that age. All the respondents stated that the ability to dream and make plans for the future along with the always optimistic feeling that makes you feel confident energetic is a precious trait of youth.

On the other hand, the majority of the respondents claimed that this urge for action and optimism sometimes creates problematic situations, because young people are unable to put limits and frequently are driven to inappropriate behaviours. Another negative aspect of being a teenager is that you are not as independent and autonomous as you would wish to be and this increasing need causes tensions in the familial environment.

Growing up makes you understand more what is going on around you, you may see further in the future, how you are about to live and the negative aspect is that you grow up (Interview, Eirini, female, 14 years old).

They argued that being a teenager means that you are dependent on your parents and are not completely free to act as you wish. Moreover, the strict school programme for the adolescents and the extra school activities, means that they do not have enough free time to entertain themselves and rest. They feel pressured by society which “do not accept mediocrities” (Focus group, Spyros, male, 15 years old) and expect too much of them. Nevertheless, they enjoy the fact that they do not have to decide on serious matters and have plenty of energy and positive attitudes towards life. Moreover, they get angry when they deal with injustice in personal and social level, when they face rejection and exclusion due to certain social stereotypes and when their parents do not understand them.

The respondents were divided when they were asked about the economic crisis in Greece and how it affects them. Some of the respondents said that the economic crisis provides young people opportunities to find ways out and fight more for the goals they want to achieve. For others, the economic crisis entails obstacles for their lives and their dreams and at the same time they feel they do not have the same opportunities in comparison with young people in other countries.

The place of origin, their nationality affects the feeling of happiness for the immigrants. The insecure status of legalization in Greece defines their everyday life and they feel they do not have the same opportunities as the Greek young people. Furthermore, they come against racist behaviours, discriminative attitudes which affect their social life and their professional life as well. “When I was at the second grade in High School one of the teachers used to refer to my colour in an offensive way” (Interview, non-organised, Kimonas, male, 18 years old).

## **Life-satisfaction**

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In general, young people are satisfied with their lives, and more specifically from their performance at the University or at all other activities in which they are engaged with. The majority of the respondents feel content with their ability to cope with new circumstances and to shape their lives the way they want. They are satisfied with their familial relationships and they only complain about the tensions they sometimes face with their parents or about not seeing them enough due to their busy agenda. Family is a very important factor for a good quality of life. Moreover, they wish to have more free time but they accept it because they know it is necessary in order to achieve their goals.

Three of the respondents who do not have the Greek nationality are less satisfied with their lives due to the fact that they are struggling to gain the Greek nationality and face institutional obstacles. One of the three respondents is born in Greece while the other two have migrated in a very young age. For that reason, they feel Greek but the state does not recognise them as Greek citizens, yet.

Two of the respondents were disabled young people who mentioned practical difficulties in their everyday life related with their ability to move in the city and these difficulties decrease their feeling of satisfaction. One of them mentioned that his attitude towards life has changed and he has become tougher and less sentimental in his effort to accept himself and make others accept him as well.

Young people who were active in different spaces of civic engagement declared that their engagement in such groups has helped enormously in growing up, in communicating with other people, being more responsible and adopting a more positive view on life; thus, increased their life satisfaction.

Once again, the respondents are divided when they were asked whether young people in Greece are content with their lives. Generally they think that they are satisfied with their lives although they are strongly affected by the economic crisis as they feel a lot of pressure, some of them have to work in order to support their families and at the same time they feel that their goals are not going to be fulfilled. For that reason, many of them think very seriously going abroad for studies and maybe live there permanently. On the other hand, some respondents although they generally agree with the aforementioned view they believe that these difficulties force you to try more and to be more persistent in your efforts to achieve their goals.

### **Psychological well-being**

The majority of the respondents feel confident about their future and they strongly believe that they will accomplish their goals with the right organisation of their time, with strong efforts and persistence. Their attitude is characterised by optimism and faith in their own powers. "I do not feel insecure because my father taught me that no one gets lost in life" (Interview, organized, Achilleas, male, 17 years old). They agreed on the invaluable support they receive from their family and claimed that with a steady and healthy familial environment their efforts and struggles for a successful life are easier. Moreover, they praise the help they get from their friends and school/university teachers.

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Teenagers, even though they are under a lot of pressure, they know that school provides them with all the necessary skills and resources for their professional future; they considered engagement in sports very helpful and productive because you learn how to be a part of a team; and acknowledged that hanging out with friends empowers the process of socialization. For that reason, they feel they evaluate their time in the right way as they consider significant all the activities they are engaged with. "I do not want to think my future life because I see that my parents are so stressed and they work so many hours and I don't like it" (Interview, Ismini, female, 15 years old).

Even though they acknowledged that their life would be completely different in the future, some factors that determine their good quality of life remain the same such as family, friends and the ability to engage in activities they like. The majority of them feel confident about the skills that they will obtain in order to achieve their goals. Moreover, they stressed that financial prosperity would be a goal for them in the future as money is always vital for the fulfillment of their goals.

Some of the respondents are characterised by insecurity about the accomplishment of their goals because they believe the economic crisis has narrowed their potentials and opportunities. For that reason they consider seriously going abroad for a better life.

Amongst the interviewees there were two disabled people. One of them, the male respondent was disappointed from his life and he was pessimistic about the fulfillment of his dreams because he had faced behaviours of social exclusion, his interpersonal relations were not many and he was trying to accept himself and his new situation. Moreover, the respondents that they were immigrants in Greece stated that their psychological wellbeing is determined by their status of residence in Greece and also from the racist attitudes and behaviours that face often.

### **3.3 Remarks on the definition and operationalization of 'wellbeing' in the fieldwork**

'Well-being', a rather vague concept in its definition, worked rather differently depending on the age category of our respondents.

None of the children participated in the study understood the concept 'wellbeing' and some of them had trouble understanding the term 'quality of life', as well. When the aforementioned terms were explained by the researchers, the children replied to all our questions. Also, even though some of the adolescents knew the term, it was necessary to use the term 'quality of life' in order for them to be able to answer the research questions. On the other hand, all young people were familiar with the specific concept and we did not face any difficulties during the research procedure.

The children, as it was anticipated, faced difficulties in projecting their lives on the future, trying to hypothesise and state the factors which will define their future state of wellbeing.

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In general, children were more focused in everyday situations that defined their happiness—such as a day that school was closed due to a strike—and appreciated small things that gave them life satisfaction. Adolescents and young people presented a different approach to life in which future goals play a rather significant factor in their happiness and satisfaction.

It is worth mentioning that the dimension of ‘happiness’ and of ‘life satisfaction’ worked in a parallel way during the interviews because all the things and situations the respondents felt that needed improvement or worked perfectly, sometimes affected their mood and their sense of happiness in a negative or a positive way, respectively. The conceptual boundaries between these two dimensions of the term ‘wellbeing’ are in a way interlocked.

#### 4. Differences on the understanding of well-being depending on certain factors

Since there is no equivalent of the term well-being in Greek, the words we used during our interviews and focus groups were prosperity and quality of life.

Having found a common ground of communication with children and young people it should be mentioned that differences between them in terms of gender, age, social background, level of education, activity status, ethnicity or social and political involvement were limited to three main issues. The first one was their age. Children of 10-12 years old, even though they also mentioned the lack of leisure time, many extra-school activities and a full everyday study programme for school, they were more relaxed compared to the older ones. That means that despite some everyday difficulties, they mentioned that they are less stressed and anxious about the future. Young people of 15-16 years old expressed their anxiety for the tough programme they have at school and their disappointment for the continuous changes of the curriculum and the examination procedure to enter the university. As one of them has put it:

The Ministers [of education] are not taking under consideration the children, because if they did so, they wouldn't change the school system so often, i.e. when a new Minister comes in, the system changes, because he wants to prove that he is doing something and he is important (Interview, Eirini, female, 14 years old).

Young people are feeling exhausted and they expressed the will to finally have a stable national curriculum and examination procedure, with less study hours and more opportunities for leisure time. In addition, they said that they have many extra-school activities and even though most of them are satisfied with that, they also feel the pressure from their social environment and especially their family that they must achieve high goals either at sports or in learning foreign languages to mention some of them.

Another difference between the children of 10-12 years old and the older ones (15-16 and 16-18 years old) was the one about the current socio-political and economic crisis and their

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future. Young people were familiar or at least more familiar of what the crisis is about, how they and their families are influenced by it, etc. The younger ones seemed to be less worried about that, they were more carefree and they didn't problematise as the elder ones. Young teenagers were more anxious about the future. They expressed their anxiety regarding their ability to pass the national exams for the university and what should they do if they fail. Those already at the university (18-19 years old) expressed the additional anxiety of unemployment, since the unemployment rate is quite high among young people (around 60%). Many of them said that they are seriously thinking of migrating abroad for studies and afterwards for work, while in some cases their own parents are supporting them to leave and return to Greece only for holidays or as pensioners (Focus group, non-organized, 16-18 years old). This anxiety for the future influences them in their everyday lives, since the uncertainty they face and the possibility of immigration do not create a safe environment to live in.

The second field where differences were traced was with young people with disabilities. They highlighted the problems and the obstacles they face in their everyday lives, because the Greek state and Greek society on the whole are treating them as second class citizens. Despite the fact that all of them mentioned that they feel satisfied from their quality of life as far as their families is concerned, they underlined the everyday obstacles, especially in terms of access, they all face (Focus group, non-organised, Ektoras, male, 17 years old; Interview, Odysseas, male, 17 years old; Interview, Niki, female, 17 years old). They mentioned that it is very difficult for them and in general for every person with disabilities to cross a street because many people park their cars on the pavement and they can't cross it with their wheelchair or it is difficult to have access to public transportation except from the subway (Focus group, non-organized, Ektoras, male, 17 years old).

The third difference found during the fieldwork is related with one-parent families either because of divorce or because of the death of one parent. In that case young people (usually the older ones) said that this has influenced them during the time that their parents were taking the divorce, but now they feel fine. However, as they mentioned this made them more mature and this maturity came much earlier compared to their peers, because they had to somehow find balance between their parents and take more responsibilities in the house, especially when a parent passed away. The interesting point, though, is that they are not necessarily considering this maturity positively. As one participant in a focus group have put "it is like that we lost our child innocence very rapidly" (Focus group, non-organized, Paris, male, 20 years old). According to that view, maturity came in a compulsory way and it is not something they wanted, but something that they were obliged to do. Nevertheless, none of them said that they are facing material difficulties. It seems that this situation influenced them mainly psychologically.

## 5. Having their voices heard and survey engagement

### 5.1 Having their voices heard

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One of the main outcomes of the WP2 and the interviews we conducted with experts in Greece and Cyprus was that young people's voices are not heard by the elders and especially by governments and politicians. As a consequence, asking young people about that, gave us the opportunity to find out if this true or not and to what degree. It was not a surprise to find out that young people of all ages (10-12 to 16-20) are feeling that their voices aren't heard by the politicians and the government and that as they almost all argued the older ones, 'the grownups', are not interested about children and young people and that they don't care about the problems they face.

I think that our voice isn't heard. The grownups believe that because we are children they shouldn't pay attention to us. I would like my opinion to be taken into consideration because sometimes I think I am right (Interview, Eleftheria, female, 11 years old).

All of them mentioned that they have problems, mainly with the educational system, but not alone and the politicians should pay attention to them. As one of them said, "we have problems that the grownups should listen to and think of them" (Interview, Tina, female, 11 years old) and another added that "the state should listen to us, because we say important things, but usually the older ones are not listening to children's voices, they don't hear their ideas" (Interview, Evi, female, 11 years old).

Some of our respondents said that the politicians are hearing their voices and demands, but actually they don't pay attention and they don't care, they ignore them.

I believe that our voices aren't heard, and if they are heard they are not actually taken under consideration. That is why as a country we are at this situation nowadays [i.e. the crisis]. They should help us make our voices heard (Interview, Olga, female, 15 years old).

Trying to explain this indifference from the part of the older ones they argue that "the grownups are not listening to us, because we are children, but sometimes children are thinking clearer than the older ones" (Focus group, primary public school).

As one respondent analytically put it:

In many cases the older ones are neglecting us, because they consider us immature, that we don't have the appropriate knowledge, but this is so untrue. They should take us under consideration more frequently. For example, they should reduce the age limit for someone to vote to 16 years old from 18 years old. They should take under consideration what the children believe before taking a political decision, but this is fantasy. For example, when the Prime Minister passes a law to augment the curriculum at school, he should ask the children if they are satisfied with the educational system. The older ones must understand that they should listen to our views too. They have to listen to us from the moment they are taking decisions about our lives (Interview, Odysseas, male, 15 years old).

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Others argued that the politicians actually have their own beliefs and nothing will change that.

I believe that they don't want to listen to us, they want to do what they have decided, they don't accept new things, they are stuck in the past, in their own things (Interview, Ariadni, organized, female, 18 years old).

Of course, they acknowledge the fact that their voices should be heard, because this is important, but they are not always prepared to mention the way this should take place:

The voice of young people is not heard especially during the last years, though it should be, but I don't know in what way, however it is important to be heard of (Interview, Achilleas, organized, male, 17 years old).

Furthermore, they added that they have to find ways to make their voices heard, because "writing a letter or going to a demonstration it doesn't mean anything" (Focus group, non-organized). Nevertheless, it was very difficult to express new and innovative ways in order to make their opinions taken under serious consideration.

It has to be noted that, when asked if their voices are heard by the older ones, young people, especially the younger ones (10-12 years old) referred also to their parents arguing that:

Parents can't understand you always so well and they think that your problems are less important than theirs. They can't understand your current situation (Interview, Iro, female, 11 years old).

However, most of them said that their parents are listening to them and try to understand their problems and worries, contrary to the politicians (Interview, Eirini, female, 14 years old; Interview, Kostas, male, 14 years old). As one respondent mentioned:

Usually my parents are listening to what I have to say, to my opinion, and they take it into consideration, especially some of my ideas about the house or if we need to buy something (Interview, Ioulia, female, 11 years old).

From the material we collected from the interviews and the focus groups two things are clear. On the one hand, despite the differences between generations and the fact that sometimes the gap between young people and their parents puts some obstacles in their communication, they feel close to their parents and that they are the only ones supporting them and listening to their problems and worries. The majority of them mentioned that their parents are always there for them and they pay attention to their problems.

On the other hand, it was evident that young people feel that the political system, the parties, the state, politicians, in general those in the decision making process, are not interested in them and that they take decisions based on their own opinions and ideologies. Probably this is a reason why young people are alienated from the mainstream politics and why sometimes they follow extreme views and ideologies while they grow or why indifference about politics is high and abstention from elections are high. The striking fact was not that young people and children are feeling distant from politicians and that their voices aren't heard of them, but the fact that this was expressed in one way or another from all of the respondents. It is very worrying that children and young people feel that they are ignored and this is something that politicians should take under serious consideration.

The majority of the respondents of all ages argued that the current research on children's and young people's well-being is very important because their quality of life is a crucial issue and because through this research they are able to express their views, opinions and ideas. As one of them said, "I like surveys because people are listening to my opinion" (Interview, Ioulia, female, 11 years old). However, most of them stressed the fact that despite the opportunity they have to make their voices heard, the most important outcome would be if the older ones and especially the politicians would listen to what they are saying and not only that, but furthermore take some action into the direction of improving their lives and resolving their problems.

The survey is helpful. It helps when you are discussing with a child. It would be better for more children to participate and not only some of them [i.e. from her school]. If children's opinions were heard by other people [i.e. not only by the researchers], for example by the ministers, it would be something positive, because something could be done. It is important to listen to children's opinions through surveys (Interview, Eirini, female, 14 years old).

Through this research the children feel that they are able to express their views, but the crucial point, according to them, is that the grownups should listen to them and take them under consideration (Interview, Odysseas, male, 15 years old); And according to another one:

The research is very interesting, measuring the prosperity of young people, and especially because the people above us, the people who govern us should learn about it. It would be very important to be taken into consideration (Interview, Achilleas, male, 17 years old).

Of course, there were also negative and pessimist views about the research and its purpose.

I think that it is a waste of time, because your opinion is not going to be heard, I mean the results of your research. In case that the outcome is that we have a good life and our quality of life is high, it will probably be heard. But if the outcome is that we don't have a good

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quality of life, no one will pay attention (Interview, Kimonas, male, 18 years old).

As a consequence, the majority of the respondents argued that this research, as every research, is useful because it gives them the opportunity to express their views and personal opinions freely. Nevertheless, as they also said, the most important issue is what happens after the end of the research. Will those responsible for their lives take the outcome under consideration? Will they do something to overcome the difficulties they face and their problems in school or in their everyday lives? The issue of their voices being heard comes again to the fore. In addition, they are worried not only if their voices are going to be heard by the politicians, but if the researchers' results and conclusions are also going to be taken under serious consideration. The impression we had was that surveys and researches are very useful, but there seems to be a missing point and this is the link between each study's outcomes and conclusions and the decisions the politicians take regarding their lives, e.g. about the educational system and this is probably another reason why young people feel alienated from politics and politicians.

## 5.2 Survey engagement

All the participants in the interviews and the focus groups were very positive and willing to participate in future research in general and about their quality of life in particular. One crucial motive was if the research had to do with their life: "I would like to participate in case it had to do with my life, children's life" (interview, Iro, female, 11 years old).

Another motive mentioned was that through these studies they feel that they can express their opinions, views and ideas without any fear and in a very free manner. "We feel relief that we say things to someone, and he listen to us, freely, without right or wrong answers" (Focus group, primary public school); "I would like to participate in a future research and a longitudinal one because I would like to express my feelings and views and feel better" (Interview, Eleftheria, female, 11 years old).

Furthermore, for some of them participating in a research is an opportunity to discuss issues they are worried about that they hardly discuss even with their parents:

I would like to participate in another research, because I like discussions. It is the first time that I have spoken about these things so much, not even with my mom. Usually, other people don't listen to you so carefully; they don't pay attention to you (Interview, Tina, female, 11 years old).

In addition, they are motivated by the fact that their opinions are heard by some people at least, i.e. the researchers, and they consider it very important: "I would participate because my opinion would be heard and this is very important" (Interview, Odysseas, male, 15 years old); "I would like to participate because my opinion is heard, which is very rare nowadays,

to discuss about such issues” (Focus group, organized). Another participant highlighted the importance of the research and added that she would also participate in a longitudinal one:

I would like to participate again in a research. It is important that some people want to listen to how teenagers feel. It is nice that some people are interested in knowing how we feel and they are coming to listen to us. I would also like to participate in a longitudinal research, without any second thoughts, of course (interview, Eirini, female, 14 years old).

Finally, they said that participating in a research makes them feel that they are helping the people conducting it and that they contribute in that, in some way.

Yes, I would participate, because that way you help some people to conduct their research, and you feel that you have contributed somehow. You are not just sitting on your couch watching the findings of the research (Interview, Ilektra, female, 17 years old).

Apart of that, they think that through their participation are contributing to the definition of the problems they face and also in the finding and suggestion of possible solutions: “I would participate because it was interesting. I feel I contribute to define the problem and find a solution. I would be motivated by the feeling of becoming useful” (Interview, Irida, female, 18 years old); “I would like to participate again because this is a way to see what is missing and what we need to fix” (Interview, Kostas, male, 14 years old).

The respondents were also positive in taking part in a longitudinal research, even though they expressed their worries about becoming boring: “I would like to participate in a future longitudinal research, because as you grow up, your way of thinking is changing and you can say different things, but it might become boring” (interview, Iro, female, 11 years old).

Regarding the places they would like the interviews or the focus groups to be conducted the majority of them said that they don’t have a problem with the place. However, the younger ones (10-12 years old) preferred their school, because they feel that they are in a familiar environment and because they miss classes! What was interesting, though, was that many of the younger ones (Focus group, primary public school) said that they would also like to have the interviews conducted in nature, in a park for example. The older ones, expressed no particular preference about the place, however, those in high school (Focus group, secondary private school) said that regarding the possibility of participating in a future research it would be very crucial if they are in the phase of preparing themselves for the university exams, because they will not have free time during that period and they wouldn’t like to lose any classes at school, contrary to the younger ones, of course.

## 6. Other recommendations informing MYWEB project

In order to summarise our findings and make some recommendations for the MYWEB project we need to stress three critical points. The first and positive one is that children and young people, almost unanimously expressed their satisfaction for participating in this research, because it gave them the opportunity to discuss their problems and express their feelings, ideas, opinions and worries about the present and the future. All the respondents mentioned their will to participate in future researches especially regarding their life and its quality. Motivated by many reasons (being helpful, express their opinions, make their voices heard, interest in research, etc.) they seem to form a fertile ground for future studies on well-being. Having also in mind that studies of that kind, especially longitudinal ones are extremely rare, it is clear that the ground is open for a future longitudinal survey. The only critical point the respondents mentioned was about the results and the influence this and any future research will have. They were very skeptical and they said that usually such studies are not taken under consideration by the older ones, i.e. those in the decision making process, e.g. the politicians and the governments.

As a consequence, the second point is that all the respondents argued that their voices are not actually heard of by the politicians and those responsible for their lives and when they are heard, they are not taken under serious consideration. That means that both for the MYWEB project as for any future research it is of high importance to work on policy recommendations and make an effort to pass the message of young people to politicians and policy makers in order to make our findings result to policy decisions that will influence young people's lives and improve their quality of life. This could be done between each phase of a longitudinal survey in order to have the possibility to examine if their lives are improved while asking them again in the next phase. In any case and having that in mind, we should expect that young people will be willing to participate in a future research for the additional reason of making their voices heard. This could be related to methodological issues, since we should reflect on how we could use and present children's and young people's voices and make them heard clear and unmediated and not reconstructed by the elders (politicians, parents, etc.), because this is what they themselves want and stressed in an almost absolute way as their need.

The third point we need to stress is basically related to practical issues for a future research. As mentioned above, incentives are not necessary, but place and time are crucial for participation. We could examine different places of conducting the interviews and the focus groups, since nature was a place mentioned by some respondents, mainly the younger ones (10-12 years old). Of course, school is the most usual place, but this puts some obstacles since it takes a long time to prepare the visit of the research team and find the proper time in the school programme, because teachers are not always willing to lose classes or exams that are programmed to take place, etc. Another important issue is related with those young people who are studying for the exams to enter the university (around 17-18 years old). These young people are very pressed by their families and they have a heavy everyday programme, so probably a possible longitudinal survey should avoid select-

ing participants from that particular group of the last one or two years of the secondary school.