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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 (Slovakia)

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1. Introduction

This report covers the content analysis of the focus group interviews and individual interviews with children and young people from several locations in Slovakia. We focused on children from central Slovakia, young people from western Slovakia and interviewees from eastern Slovakia.

The structure follows the general guidelines prepared by the WP4 coordinator. There are 4 types or categories of respondents: children from primary school, young people from secondary school, non-organized young people and organized/involved young people.

In the first part we have characterized the process of the fieldwork that took place during November – December 2014. The interviewers transcribed the major results from the audio records according to the main topics and most important domains that are relevant for measuring of the well-being. All names of the focus groups members and respondents of individual interviews were anonymised and we used typical Slovak names or pseudonyms.

In section 3 – Main empirical findings – we prepared the content analysis of the interviews and focus groups sessions, separate for each group of respondents (children and young people). We explored and analysed the different understandings of well-being, its major domains, responses to happiness and life-satisfaction and issues of psychological well-being.

Furthermore, we formulate basic remarks on the definition and operationalization of well-being as implicated from the fieldwork. The last parts of the report are dedicated to certain factors that may have caused the different understandings of the concept among children and young people and the possibilities to survey engagement of the respondents.

2. Fieldwork characteristics

2.1. Fieldwork

For the fieldwork, we employed 4 researchers who conducted focus groups and interviews, each having their own group of respondents' selection (primary school – 13-15 years old, secondary school – 17-18 years old, non-organised young people – 15-18 years old and organised/involved young people – 15-18 years old). One interviewer has a PhD. in pedagogics; the remaining interviewers are PhD. students of social sciences. We conducted the fieldwork in different locations in Slovakia. We

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covered western Slovakia and villages in eastern Slovakia. The major difference in the locations is the social situation and economic deprivation and also the mixed ethnic structure of the location. For various reasons explained below, it was not always the case that interviewers succeeded in the planned fieldwork, which resulted into repeated attempts and further negotiation with schools and representatives and a very similar scenario occurred for the selection of interviewees for individual interviews.

For the primary school, there were 5 students from the central region of Slovakia, from one rather small primary school. It was not possible to arrange more interviewees from different ethnic or national category (such as Roma respondents or Hungarian nationals). A very similar scenario is applicable for the focus group organised at the very same primary school. Fortunately, there were 3 Roma respondents. There were 6 students involved in the focus group with one respondent coming from Romania. We divided the group into talkative and open respondents compared to those who were very shy and not open to discussion. The problem emerged even earlier before we started the fieldwork, since all selected primary schools representatives were not keen to meet with us. They literally refused even to listen to our intentions. As soon as we mentioned “ the word ‘research’” there was a perceptible surge in negativity towards us and there seemed to be a lot of negative emotions toward academics. Perhaps they were right; their poor assessment of Slovak teachers (and their perceived financial benefits) make them think that researchers are just rude and wasting their time since they never get any benefit from the research (not meaning financial). At the end of each such “ interview” we were actually quite ashamed as to why we had come there.

The interviewees and members of **focus group in secondary school** were in their final grade prior to final graduation with boys studying to be chefs (3 year studies) and girls studying to be hairdressers (also 3 year studies). They came from western Slovakia. Altogether 5 students agreed to individual interviews and 6 respondents created the focus group of secondary school pupils. Everything was done at a secondary school in Pezinok (Bratislava region), and all respondents were from 3rd (last) year.

The first problem we encountered was that the composition of the class was male only. The respondents were rather open to communicate although their responses were usually short and brief. I tried to put follow up questions but it was not helpful. I could not reach the expected length of the interview. A similar situation arose in the focus groups where in-depth interviews were shorter than planned.

The non-organized respondents were difficult to set up for a focus group since they had nothing much in common and were from various age groups (15-19). The focus group was organized at the third attempt and only with the help of a friend who literally begged students to participate. Only 4 out of 9 finally came to the meeting. One of the arguments was that they didn't see the reason to waste their time with

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research when they don't understand the context since the term well-being is unknown to them. One respondent was already employed through the Labour Office as she had finished secondary veterinary school, and the others were students of different disciplines at secondary schools (hotel academy, conservatorium, and gymnasium). For the individual interviews, we also used the method of quota sampling in order to meet the age and education variability. Therefore, we recruited respondents aged 16-20, with one student at university and all of them in full-time secondary education. Two respondents were very shy and quiet and remained passive to the topics we discussed. None of the respondents were involved in any kind of activities or organization.

The most difficult part of the fieldwork was the **active/involved young people** recruitment, both for the focus group and for individual interviews. Based on the fieldwork diary the major obstacle was to meet with the particular young people. After a recommendation to conduct the research with young people from DOMKA (Association of Salesian Youth in Trnava) we contacted a priest who works with the group. From the very beginning, he was not excited about the research and so the negotiation took longer and for most of the time, the agreed meeting went awry; either the priest forgot about it and he didn't announce the time and date to his group or the group changed their usual place of meeting so I had to find them in a different location to agree another meeting. For the focus group, we arranged respondents aged 16-18 all of whom are active in DOMKA, so we had to find different respondents from different organization for individual interviews. None of the respondents was particularly willing to participate and we had to ask them several times and beg for focus group interviewees. The respondents for individual interviews were recruited only based on personal knowledge of them. Both are involved in A.D.E.L. – Association for Development, Education and Labour. It is an organization that is trying to create opportunities for young people who would like to be active and want to try and learn something new and gain some experience and knowledge for personal and professional development. They would like to enrich the educational, social and cultural life of young people living in our country, mainly young people with fewer opportunities and who come from eastern Slovakia. Otherwise, despite two successful interviews, we were unable to recruit any more active/involved participants.

To sum up, there were many common problems in recruiting the volunteers both for focus groups and for interviews. Firstly, young people and pupils in Slovakia do not trust researchers and there is also a growing apathy from teachers and directors toward any kind of sociological research – they explained to us that it brings nothing to them and they barely get to hear of any results. Similarly, the non-existing financial incentives are a burden for them, as well as time management. As one respondent pointed out, it is rather motivating to give some gifts or financial benefit to participants, which we lack in our research budgets and no one wants to sit down with unknown researchers to share his or her own feelings or personal information about life. The moderators tried to motivate their respondents with small gifts but

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such incentives should be incorporated in the research project itself since this creates one of the major problems when working with people.

The other problems arose when maintaining the **suggested length of the interviews** where in most cases it was **rather impossible** to keep the interviewees discussing longer than 60 minutes. This was because the **respondents were not familiar with the context** of the interviews so most of the time the interviewers tried to explain the purpose and context of the research, particularly the references to well-being, life happiness and personal feelings. Similarly, the interviewees were not keen to be more specific and it was impossible to ask follow-up questions since we never got adequate feedback or topic enhancement. Based on this, we may conclude that the research area of well-being and related issues is quite unknown among Slovak children and youth. For this reason, it was also **impossible to reach the required recording time** and in reality it varied from 20 minutes to 80 minutes. During focus groups, when following the interview schedule, the interviewees acquired the feeling of repeated questions due to the structure and context of the schedule.

The following will explain: the number of interviews and focus groups, the selection criteria of the two contrasting schools, the profile of organised/active young people, the main difficulties faced during the fieldwork (for instance, difficulties of access for being minors, presence of adults in the interviews or the focus groups), problems with the schedule, ethical considerations, profile of people who did the interviews and facilitated the focus groups, use of particular facility dynamics.

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

	Interviews	Focus groups
Pupils from primary school	3 boys 14 years old 2 girls 13 years old 5 students 5 whites All live in rather small villages in central Slovakia All have siblings 3 have employed parents Father of 1 works in GB, mother unemployed 1 from divorced family	3 boys 3 girls All 14 years old, last year of primary education 3 Roma respondents All live in rather small villages in central Slovakia All have siblings Only 1 have both parents employed 2 have both parents unemployed 2 from divorced family
Pupils from secondary school	3 boys (18 years and one 21 years old)	6 boys (three 17 years, two 18 years, one 20 years old)

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	<p>2 girls (17 and 18 years old) 1 girl is epileptic 1 girl suffers from allergies so she cannot perform the job she is studying for Boys study to be chefs, girls for hairdressers All come from various cities in western Slovakia, close to the capital Bratislava All live with parents 2 also work in part-time jobs</p>	<p>All study to be chefs at the same school All come from various cities in western Slovakia, close to the capital Bratislava All live with parents All are single</p>
Non-organised young people	<p>3 boys (two 18 years and one 20 years old) 2 girls (16 and 18) All come from Trnava city All are in full-time education, although one is a university student</p>	<p>4 girls (two 15 years, 18 and 19 years old) 3 studying, one working All come from Trenčín city All single Variety of study fields (hotel services, veterinary school, 8-year gymnasiums)</p>
Involved young people	<p>1 boy and 1 girl (18 years old) From different regions (eastern Slovakia) Different from focus group Members of A.D.E.L. - Association for Development, Education and Labour</p>	<p>6 girls (16-18 years old) All come from DOMKA – Association of Salesian Youth in Trnava They meet at regular meetings, with the presence of catechist or a priest</p>

2.2. Methodological differences among interviews and focus groups

The methodological problem for both parts of the fieldwork is the abstract and vague concept of well-being. All in all, during the fieldwork we had to explore and introduce the topic very descriptively in order to get the children and young people involved. The concept of well-being is also dramatically different in understanding when translated to the Slovak language.

It was rather easier to organize the focus groups, although in some cases, it was also the friendship and benevolence of known people that helped to establish it. The

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most difficult part was to organize individual interviews, also due to the unattractive topic and unknown areas of different approaches to the concept.

The major difference in the focus groups and interviews was that members of the group usually associated their arguments with their classmates and friends. This usually led to repeating what the one before had already said, leaving nothing more to add or to comment.

Apart from this, the focus groups were cooperative. It is also true that the focus groups reached consensus in their debates rather than disagreement or division in opinions. During individual interviews, the respondents were more spontaneous and revealed more emotion on the context of the topics, i.e. agreement or disagreement with particular questions and debates compared to the discussion in the focus groups where the respondents were rather brief. However, the individual interviews were composed of children and young people and therefore, different from those organized in focus group, so this finding might be strictly hypothetical.

3. Main empirical findings

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

A focus group with 6 children aged 14 years was conducted. There were also 5 individual interviews recorded at a small primary school in central Slovakia. Parents are usually divorced, and often unemployed. If they are employed, at least one of them works outside the permanent place of residence. Each of the respondents lives with parents (or single parent), one boy with a mother who comes from Romania who came to Slovakia in order to seek a better life.

There was **no major problem with this primary school**, the children were mostly communicative as we expected. **They understood the questions and topics** and there were no troubles answering them, even such questions that were quite emotive and personal (family, divorce, love...).

Since the respondents were younger they did not pay attention to some issues.

Global understanding/definition of well-being

The term well-being was not problematic, even though they didn't connect it exclusively to material things such as housing or cars. They quite well understood it as a concept of happiness, health and work opportunities. They reacted very well to the questions related to happiness and satisfaction with aspects of life (family relations, in community – municipality, school), but their relative youth revealed itself during questions about systems (health, social issues) – they usually did not respond or they claimed not to be interested in it.

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The focus group respondents agreed that well-being means: *“happiness, to have everything we want...or what we need for life...everything I can have in order to be happy...”* (focus group, primary school). As the primary school belongs to the main facilities where young people, socialize and notice everything, the respondents in the focus group compared the different understandings between themselves and other countries:

“M: Do you witness that someone lives in greater well-being and others in worse situation?

R: Definitely.

M: Where do you witness it?

R: Among classmates, mostly. How they behave, how they dress. In other countries, it is very different, for example in Germany there is greater well-being, higher development” (focus group, primary school).

For individual interviews, well-being has a rather differentiated meaning. As stated by Dominik, well-being *“is at home where I live with my parents and we are happy, without any problems”*. He mentions that well-being could be easily troubled if the parents argue among themselves or they have huge financial problems. He also thinks that people living in well-being have money and a satisfied family and they are happy, they lack nothing. On the other side, his father lives in England and he plans to build a house there to move his family, so they started to learn English at home. There is a great expectation from living in the Great Britain. As suggested by the interviewee: *“people in wealthier countries live better lives, they have more money and they can spend more time on holidays...so we want it too”* (interview, Dominik, male, 14 years old).

On the contrary, a 13 year-old-girl considers that well-being should refer to *“luxury life, better life, when you have money to buy anything you want,”* but she adds quickly that *having family, friends is also very important”* (interview, Eva, female, 13 years old). This means that the immediate association of well-being refers to mostly materialistic understandings. Another interviewee concurs that to be well *“you just need place to live, clothing and food and you are ok”* (interview, Viktor, male, 15 years old).

Major domains

Among the **major domains** related to well-being and the general situation belong mostly: **to be with father (divorced family), to have more contact with father who is abroad, better communication with parents, exclusive references to living standards** (i.e. it would be better to live in house with a garden instead of an

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apartment).

For Eva, for example, she would prefer that her mother stays more at home but since she has two jobs, it is complicated. For Jakub, it is also the main domain of having the basic needs for life such as housing, clean clothes and something to eat. The respondents do not solely connect well-being with such domains as being very rich or wealthy, because you cannot buy health or family.

School creates a good environment for the interviewees to make friends and to adapt and they speak enthusiastically about school reconstruction. Although, the school is not that modern in equipment, which is particularly true for computers and IT in general, they are optimists. Sometimes they have problems commuting to school because the school is not located in the village where they live. Also, free time activities in the village where they live are mostly satisfactory, since they *“have pub, playground, culture house, church...we have everything here”* (interview, Viktor, male, 15 years old).

Generally, they considered the very bad shape of our health facilities and willingness of the personnel to help. They were reporting from their own experience – for example, one respondent had suffered a broken leg.

Happiness

Happiness is clear for them: it is not related to money but to family: *“Im happy when my father is at home”* (he works in the UK, interview, Dominik, male, 14 years old) or *“my happiest day would be if my parents got together”* (interview, Jakub, male, 14 years old). They also connect it to love issues: *“I wish my girlfriend was with me more”* (interview, Dominik, male, 14 years old) or health related issues. In order to be happy they do not expect much, just good family relations and friends. Moreover, they mentioned having a good financial situation. For example, *“if there is no health you cannot enjoy what you have, what money you have”* (focus group, primary school).

As interpreted by Dominik: *“I am quite happy, I have friends, family, happy family...I have good marks at school, I think I am intelligent, I have many friends, everything that I need. For now I am very happy. So far. Maybe, when I get older and need to earn money, but I will sort it out somehow”* (interview, Dominik, male, 14 years old).

Unhappiness is clearly demonstrated through death, loss of close people, bad health or a disappointment caused by someone. They also referred to unhappiness related to teachers, authorities - when they have no word compared to them. They do not feel lonely or extremely sad but they had problems qualifying this domain of happiness.

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Life-satisfaction

In general, **the group is surprisingly satisfied with the regional socio-economic situation** (unemployment and social issues). They answered the question about not being happy with something related mostly to school issues, its equipment and their idea that they are being taught useless things. They accept education as important and they connect having good job and financial benefits to education. Everyone was clear about their near future (secondary school) and then work.

In general, the focus group respondents in primary school did not claim any particular issues of dissatisfaction with life, although they remarked that it always could be better, for example at home or to have better school results but they usually blame it on laziness. Usually, there are references regarding dissatisfaction and sadness, but they were not witnessing any particular problems during the fieldwork. There is more disappointment when they cannot help someone who needs it, so it is rather an abstract reference. Eva refers that she is mostly happy when she is together with her favourite horses: *“I am very happy to spend my time with horses. I am generally a very positive person and I always try to smile. And I am not happy when people around me frown”* (interview, Eva, female, 13 years old).

At their age, they do not go out that much and often like their older friends, they prefer to stay at home, reading a book or going out during the day for soft drinks.

In general, we must conclude they are happy with their lives, though they would like to change the relationships of their parents (when divorced or separated), equipment in school and better job positions for everyone and more cultural events in their village.

Psychological well-being

The respondents agree that the meaning of life should be established around responsibility for all our actions and decisions. They understand the necessity of learning and studying more, which is very important for them. It is also possible to compare that in the past they had less to do, less to care about but at the same time they agree that parents and adults trust them more as they get more mature. It is interesting that they already feel responsible for parents once they are not be able to take care of themselves, so the focus group respondents think about the future. One of the main domains of psychological well-being and future development lies in working habits and the elimination of laziness. Although they understand that this is not be solely in their hands, because they cannot directly change the social and political development of the region or country itself.

For some, it is quite early to talk about the near future; they are still at primary school so their next step is the selection of an appropriate secondary school and the field of study. For example, Dominik, a 14-year-old-male has not thought about his

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future yet. He thought about studying engineering at secondary school but he also wishes to have enough free time to avoid routine and tiredness.

3.2. Understanding and measuring well-being among young people

The first focus group and individual interviews were done with secondary school students. Respondents were open to communicate although their responses were but were rather quick and brief. We tried to put follow up questions but it was not helpful. We could not achieve the expected length of the interview. Similar to the focus groups, the in-depth interviews were also shorter than planned.

The focus group with non-organized young people was conducted on the second round and attempt. According to the guidance, it should consist of final year students and at least 5 people, but after all our problems, we were only able to recruit 4 women - 1 hadn't graduated, 1 graduated last year and the remaining 2 were 15 years old. Since they ought to be non-organized, I chose religious confirmees (although I am aware that there are people who never attend Church but whose grandmother gives them money when they get religious confirmation). Nevertheless, those finally selected were not open to meet, so they didn't come to the first agreed meeting (they used various excuses from true to untrue).

The focus group of involved/organized young people come from DOMKA (Young Salesians Association) and they meet on regularly in the presence of a priest or catechist. They work with younger children, teaching them and helping with their socialisation. They are all of Christians. There were two other respondents for individual interviews from A.D.E.L. - Association for Development, Education and Labour.

Global understanding/definition of well-being

The well-being in the secondary school focus group was generally connected to money: *"to have enough, not to deal with life situations"* (focus group, secondary school). I had a feeling that well-being is not accepted as something that is related to them directly. They didn't mention other areas or fields spontaneously that would influence their well-being. At the end of focus group, I tried to go back to well-being issues and the respondents more openly responded to other factors. The focus group also considers some background to live well: *"if you study well, you will get a better job and this complements the well-being as well"* (focus group, secondary school). Also very important is the influence of family and friends. At the same time there are differences in the understanding of well-being among young people: *"in poor*

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families, there are visible differences” (focus group, secondary school). They also consider being young as good because they have more time, less duties and troubles. But they view as negative the situation when they do not earn money and are dependent and subordinated to parents. Sometimes they mentioned that their arguments are not taken seriously.

As individual interviews revealed, those who live well usually feel superior to the others because they can afford more goods and they judge other people. The other issues of well-being were mentioned, but respondents were unable to explore the topic, such as explaining the problems of well-being in our society.

Iveta also mentioned the differences in understanding well-being among people: *“those who live well are rich, have cars, houses, joy and holiday. The others, for example live from day to day, from salary to salary” (interview, Iveta, female, 17 years old).*

Well-being is also understood as having plenty of everything, without any problems of getting some goods: *“in a store I can buy whatever I want, compared to socialism. And there should also be adequate salaries in order to buy what we want” (interview, Filip, male, 21 years old).*

Filip argues that living well is also very subjective. Some need big house, countless cars and money compared to those who just need food and clothes. So there is a difference between the basic needs and wealth and luxury. He reflects on well-being as *“fortune, expensive cars, and prominent people” (interview, Filip, male, 18 years).* For him personally, it is more important to emphasise education and health, more than family issues. He also feels that well-being may be transformed when he has a car or when he turns 18. His plans are to finish school, to get rid of problems, earn money and to survive.

Major domains

Under well-being they imagine: luxury, money, a care-free life, being happy, no need to care about anything, no need to count money, having a big house, enjoying life only and having whatever we wish.

The most important for well-being: to have happy life, being yourself.
What prevents respondents to be well: money, school, wish to have graduated, family, being yourself.

The most important thing in their lives to be happy is to have family and friends. They feel they have less worries and they have more free time. As reported, they were happy, for example when they met people who they like but at the same time

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they realize additional problems that are currently occurring: *“I was happy and everything went good last week when I finished at work, I had time to meet with my friends. Before, I was not happy at getting up so early, it was complicated. I also got kicked out from my girlfriend’s parents’ house. But, also I can tell, my parents are getting divorced, so it is not so good right now as well”* (focus group, secondary school). In general, they try to avoid a situation when they are not happy. Mostly, they worry about relationships among friends or at school.

They also worry with family issues, for example the relationships with stepmothers and not having enough freedom from their father. Sometimes, the negative issues arise from laziness at work or final exams. They worry a lot about school. They also referred to money problems. They finished the discussion about money with a general statement: *“everyone talks about money as it would be the major problem globally”* (focus group, secondary school). This reference is contrary to more important problems in the family, divorcing parents and other crucial issues.

When asked to mention positive things it was referred mainly to friends, family, sport, joy, happiness, girlfriends, money, intimacy or sport activities. When asked to mention negative things they immediately responded with money problems, stepmother issues, bad life experience, death of someone close and lack of freedom.

Kristína refers to youth issues. The great thing about life is *“to have free time. I used to go to parties, but now I cannot anymore. I have health problems”* (interview, Kristina, female, 18 years old). Furthermore, she criticizes young people: *“most of them are rude.”*

Another domain related to youth was discussed as the following: *“it is good to be young, you can go to school, you can have fun, going out with friends. We do not need to go to work. But on the other hand, we cannot afford the same things as adults. We cannot buy what we want”* (interview, Juraj, male, 18 years old). To some extent, young people feel limited and dependent on parents, specifically recalling money issues. At the same time, it is great that parents pay for everything, they drive them everywhere, so they can live a care-free life but in exchange you must obey the rules and behave (interview, Iveta, female, 17 years old).

Happiness

In order to be happy, the respondents in the focus group claim it is important to have money, love, good life start or career development. They think there are enough working opportunities but it is very poorly paid. It is not worth working for a minimal salary because you need to pay the rent and then you have nothing to live from. According to them it is useless work. They are rather unhappy with the current situation in the labour market and consider it as a demotivating factor. Young people therefore do not have resources to enjoy life. According to them a lot of young people suffer from a lack of money.

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They feel happy mostly among friends, they consider it as the most important factor:

“Friends, you have never enough of them. It is always great to have them to carry you, to help you out. And also it is good to do sports, to be healthy. And learning, we learn throughout life to have a good job and money to enjoy life. We also like listening to music...But education itself does not guarantee you the good job, you also need to practice and have contacts...” (focus group, secondary school).

Filip is happy to be young: *“I attend school and I do not need to work yet. So, it is good that I can learn. I do not feel stress yet. But on the other hand, I have to listen to others; I cannot make my very own decisions. But it is ok”* (interview, Filip, male, 21 years old).

Life-satisfaction

The satisfaction of life was difficult to express. Mostly, the discussed topics led to the impressions and expectations from life. The focus group respondents were generally happy and satisfied with their lives and they try to prepare themselves for their next steps but sometimes they feel tired and unsuccessful. What is their direction in life? Generally, it is to become independent, to be self-sufficient and perhaps, to leave Slovakia for a better life and to gain experience. The perspective is to have a harmless life and not to miss anything. The expectation is to be wealthy and to have the options to travel without limits.

Juraj is satisfied with his family and he sees the perspective in football training. He is also satisfied with the majority of the teachers and he claims that it would be better if he learns more. But he was injured at that time, so the health issues prevented him from being better. His immediate response to non-happiness is associated with the dormitory, with boredom; his friends are away in different cities. He thinks that young people are mostly happy with life, at least those he knows personally because they do not need to work, pay taxes and rent and other expenses. He feels most happy when he plays football, goes out with friends or for walks. But he is not happy that at dormitory they have only one hour for outdoor activities.

On the contrary, Iveta feels unhappy with her current life situation because she knows she will have to go to work soon. On the one hand it means more money for herself but on the other hand, she cannot imagine going to work everyday instead of attending school. She feels satisfied with family and friends. Compared to Juraj, she thinks that young people are not happy with their lives: *“most of my friends are unhappy with their everyday life...they cannot go out to have fun, they need to work a lot. They need to be responsible. They have conflicts with their parents, because they restrict them a lot”* (interview, Iveta, female, 17 years old).

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Kristína misses her father since her childhood; she remembers that she was raised by grandparents, then her mother and aunt. Otherwise, she is ok with everything. The most satisfying factor for her is love, which she gets from her relatives and friends. Apart from that, she is disappointed with her mother's boyfriend.

Psychological well-beingThe focus group of secondary school students realizes the barriers in life such as: work, knowledge of languages and potential health problems. They are aware of everyone's own self-realization and that everyone should be responsible. They are afraid of laziness and they worry about being unsuccessful in life. The problem is the uncertainty of the future; for example, the education they receive and the future job requirements and the difficult starts. Similarly, they realize that if they had the chance to repeat school they would try harder. From the psychological perspective, they also lack the space of living alone or living with friends. Also parents limit them because to live alone means you do not need to listen to them all the time, to have privacy but they realize this is related to a financial burden. The respondents expressed the will to try to live alone or with their friends. Definitely, they agree they can always try harder but there are some personal attitudes such as laziness that prevent this.

Based on individual interviews life expectations are realistic: *"my ambition is to become a professional football player...and to have family"* (interview, Juraj, male, 18 years old).

He also wishes to live alone mainly because his parents did not allow him to sign a contract with a football club in Austria. Life achievements are thus far not satisfactory as he wants to achieve more - for example to get to play for a well-known football club. He wants to earn enough money so as to have a good living and resources. He thinks he can achieve it. When he gets older he is sure that well-being will be about money – salary, so nothing will change that much from the perspective of expectations.

Iveta thinks that helping her mother and attending school is important and worthwhile in life. She also uses her free time to get part-time jobs, to babysit her younger brother and to prepare for school. She is quite ambitious. When talking about her life purpose and orientation she is not very sure about the answer. She wants to continue in education but she is rather afraid of it because she feels responsible to help her mother because they live alone. Derived from these problems, she wants to finish graduation during night classes or externally. During a discussion about her life ambitions and goals she wishes to be rich. She does not believe she lives well nowadays. Mostly, she is aware that the need to help her mother is the major barrier. Generally, she is proud of accomplishing the driving licence exams and that she moved on to higher grade in school. Iveta is enthusiastic and she thinks she can achieve her goals and she can be happy compared to her

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childhood when toys meant her entire world. Her next goal is to have a family and children and she feels responsible that she will have to secure a good life for them. At the same time, she is aware of the current problems of young people in order to get a job or to have mortgage to find somewhere to live.

The respondents of non-organized focus group understood well-being more emotionally than as material concepts. Well-being for them was mostly connected to the good situation in family together with the emotional background and understanding with parents. Definitely, they mentioned some material issues, but more practically. Well-being does not mean luxury for them. Mostly, they argue that they are well when they have food, drink, good living conditions, they have some clothes and maybe a car to commute but they definitely do not need expensive things such as what they see from American movies. As Gabriela from the focus group explains: *“at first sight I realize financial issues to be well, money, security. Of course, emotional feelings are also important, but first argument would be money”* (focus group, non-organized). Generally, to have family and friends is the most important, to feel secure, emotionally and also materially. The group may be divided into those who prefer material well-being, i.e. housing and enough money to be wealthy, whilst others consider as most important the above mentioned psychological factors of well-being.

The focus group also reflects the differences in understanding well-being. It is visible in their classroom and some show it very obviously, mostly by their behaviour but also clothes. They wear a lot of branded clothes. As suggested by the group they do not mind if someone has new clothes everyday or new brands but they mind their priggish behaviour and pretending to be better than the others. So they claim that mostly young people who need to represent themselves lack something emotional, that something is missing inside of them. They pretend to be more, have money but inside they are empty. They identify that this might be mostly the problem in the family.

For them, well-being is not only related to emotional feelings but also to the material issues. Some claim they are fine when they compare to others who are worse in life. Good living standards, completeness of family and good family environment. Some appreciate when parents buy their children something more expensive but they need to save more money for it and therefore the children understand they should value such things more. For example, Gabriela from the focus group connects well-being to something physical and expensive that not everyone has, for example an expensive guitar. Barbora also compares that in the past her parents did not earn that much but the emotional relations were better. So now she connects well-being such to things that they could not afford in the past such as a summer holiday.

For Juraj (interview, male, 18 years old) well-being means something that he enjoys. Something physical and also intangible, anything that gives him and his soul mates a

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good feeling such as a good car, fancy living or a holiday. He also thinks there are differences in understanding well-being among young people:

“Everyone comes from different environments, there are differences. One classmate is having difficult relations – their father is alcoholic, he took their living off, so it is most obvious there. On the other hand I have a classmate and his occupation will be “son,” so this is the counterpart. But there are not any extreme differences. Maybe 10% are polarizing issues on one or the other side (good or bad)” (interview, Juraj, male, 18 years old).

He also connects well-being to such issues like being able to secure good conditions for himself and his friends and family. In other words, to have enough resources, ideas and contacts to live life according to his dreams and wishes. At the moment, money is a very important factor because some people can buy health. For him, *“it is not the most important part to have money and be without friends, you can not be happy like that. Money is a tool to buy stuff. I cannot say what is the least important factor of well-being”* (interview, Juraj, male, 18 years old).

The girls in the individual interviews did not understand the question relating to well-being. They had problems to illustrate well-being according to their knowledge. The most important aspect is work where you earn good money, the least important was the character of a person. Lenka thinks that it is not related to well-being. For her, well-being is associated exclusively with material issues, to be rich, to have enough, and to buy fancy things. She does not think there is a different understanding of well-being among young people.

After explaining to other interviewees the differences in well-being understanding, Martina also referred: *“I think there are differences. I have schoolmates who need to have everything new. Clothes, mobile phones, purses, bags. Definitely, their parents are well off compared to mine but they always think in the way they need something more, to have brand new, all the cool things”* (interview, Martina, female, 18 years old). For her personally she realizes that well-being should be related to enough money, to have living space and to buy a car, to go on holiday and to buy quality food. In general, to buy whatever we wish and not to look at the price label. When she specified “whatever we wish” she mentioned clothes, for example trainers, just everything she likes although she does not immediately need it.

Major domains

The most important issue for well-being that is problematic is the labour market and work possibilities. They realize that getting a university degree is not the most important factor but also that subsequent career options and development is important once they finish their education. Similarly the lack of money (as students

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they ask for money from parents and they decide if they support them or not) even though they don't need it, they personally have the feeling that they might use it for something. Younger women mind the fact that they are too young to get employed and so cannot earn money to spend it voluntarily.

Health issues are also important, because having money without health is useless. As they interpret it: *"if you do not have money for proper treatment you will not be good. But if you have money and bad health, it is not good either. A person should have enough money for medicine when he gets ill in order to be well"* (focus group, non-organized).

The relationship between housing and well-being was explored as an important factor. A person does not need to have luxury housing but rather a place to stay in order to feel safe and well. A comfortable living place is necessary and important as a place where you can return. For some respondents, a house and garden is conditional for living well and they consider it as a step towards well-being. As pointed out by Tomáš (interview, male, 20 years old) he connects well-being with home, the place where he can be himself and be well, feel good.

Compared to the past, the respondents claim they valued minor things that they got. Nowadays, they notice the relationships among people, specifically within the family or with friends, whether they have fights or good relations. Currently, they think more pragmatically but those who live in dormitories have different thinking; they have more self-esteem and have a better understanding of the important things in life. For example, they are not used to the situation when parents deal with everything instead of themselves.

Happiness

Respondents were quite clear about their happiness or situations that occurred recently. For example, there were references about successful exams and they are also happy with small things such as meeting and talking with friends or making up good relationships with friends. There was also a reference to a festival GODZONE where they met friends. They do not feel bored, they enjoy each day, including working days.

The girls were unhappy about spreading gossip and rumours among friends.

Martina celebrated birthday with her friend, she baked a cake for the celebration and they were very happy. On the contrary, she had a negative experience with a homeless person who was rude when they wanted to help him.

Tomáš values his free time and he can do what he likes such as hunting. He is aware that when he gets older he will have less time for himself and his hobbies. He claimed he would be happy when he can do what he likes without regret.

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In general, the happiness among this group is quite dependent on factors such as a place to live, to have a cool family and food to eat and that parents can afford things to buy and going out for trips. There were a few exceptions such as a girl with no interests: *“I am not happy with my life, I am bored at school, it is also difficult at home. I do not have any particular hobbies, I was never given the chance to have a favourite something ”* (interview, Lenka, female, 16 years old). She would just prefer to go with her father for trips during summer and winter instead of meeting him every second week since they live apart. She mentioned a situation when she ended up in hospital due to excessive alcohol consumption but she did not feel guilty and she states that it can happen to anyone in her age. She confessed that she drinks occasionally when her mother works a night shift.

Life-satisfaction

The focus group claimed they are generally very satisfied with their lives. They are satisfied in situations when they are useful and comfortable with others, friends and family. As they remarked, young people who live and enjoy true values are satisfied compared to those who live without God and are not that happy and satisfied. Young people always argue and complain about everything as an expression of rebellion – I am young so I need to protest or they do not have problems so they create them.

The individual interviews revealed that not everyone is satisfied with their life:

“I imagined it differently. I am happy though, because I am healthy now, I can try to do something that I like or what I want to do in the future but for several periods I was not happy because I could not achieve what I wanted. It is not related to school but to private life. It is great when I can spend my time with my relatives, with grandfather – we can talk about hunting which gives me a lot and it satisfies me. But my relations with parents are not good. I do not want to be more specific” (interview, Tomáš, male, 20 years old).

Juraj worries about the bad relationship with his father, although he does not know why. For him, the most satisfying situation is when he comes home angry and then he goes out with friends, they have fun and all the bad things are gone.

Psychological well-being

The focus group agreed that everything they do is worth it. Of course, there are still issues that can be improved but they try their best. Usually, they blame it on laziness. They enjoy their time being young as there are plenty of options for them. For

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example, they can choose their future by going to which university they prefer. On the contrary, demotivation may be found in families where they push them too hard. Young people do not like limits or predicted future decisions. They value such aspects related to well-being such as doing what they like, being themselves and planning their own future.

Future aims and personality development is difficult to answer but all in all, they are happy to do what they want and to develop in things they like, perhaps to become a professional in a certain field.

For example, parents pushed them hard to go to university despite the fact that the visions of the child were different, regardless of his hobbies. Tomáš does not emphasize education as the priority to achieve his goals but something that his parents decided for him.

The respondents of organized/involved focus group understood the concept of well-being similarly to non-organized group. In the first place, there are references to love, health, happiness, family, friends, good relations with people, hobbies and trust in God. At the same time, they refer that well-being is everything that they like to do or to have. In second place, they put the concept of being wealthy and rich: *“rich people who have everything, they stay a lot at various spas and do not have many duties and obligations. Those who do not need to work hard anymore in order to be well”* (focus group, involved). They also suggest there are many differences in understanding well-being among young people: *“it depends from where, what background the young people come. They have different values and so that they understand well-being differently”* (focus group, involved).

On the contrary, the individual interviews revealed that for Jiří *“the first thought about well-being is related to money, but apart from that also the chance of self-realization. To live life and to decide as I want. What is not currently possible, since I still study and I do not have enough money to do so”* (interview, Jiří, male, 18 years old). He also confirms that there are huge differences in understanding well-being among young people:

“Definitely, as a student of secondary school I think that I can judge it quite precisely. I am student from poor or maybe average Slovak conditions, of course I travel to school by bus, I live in a dormitory with other colleagues, while the others have their own cars. I can feel it personally, from the perspective of money and well-being. But the psychological, soul well-being and the self-realization are difficult to judge and evaluate. But still I think it is largely connected with money” (interview, Jiří, male, 18 years old).

The other individual interview respondent also concurs in the same vein: *“well-being is to have luxury car, perfect mobile phone, fancy living...but it is not only about these material things, but also psychological and spiritual issues such as relationships in*

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family and children” (interview, Gabriela, female, 18 years old). She also feels the different understanding of well-being among young people: “I think this is obvious in Slovakia and specifically in eastern Slovakia because there are less job opportunities...my father bought me an Iphone for example and my friend has only LG, and also this is the same in clothing – someone has brand clothes and the others dress from Chinese markets” (interview, Gabriela, female, 18 years old). She has also witnessed jealousy among classmates and friends. She had an accident when her bag was stolen so now she has a cheaper one. Then, she dreams about studying medicine and then to become a good doctor. She also wants to go to the USA for an exchange period.

Major domains

For this group, aspects such as love, health, happiness, family, friends, relationships, hobbies and trust in God were mentioned.

Being young is also an important factor since you do not have as many problems as adults – then you need to seek for work in order to survive or to raise children:

“We are not bound yet, we can do what we want. But it has some disadvantages – parents do not understand us. My mother can understand me and she wants to know everything, whether I smoke or skive school, she requests the truth. She works there as well, I admire my parents and I can always tell them in a friendly way what I think. My parents have great demands and they require the best results” (focus group, involved)

The focus group also distinguished the changes that were more important when they were younger and now: *“for me the material things were always more important, for example during Christmas the gifts were important now it is more about family and atmosphere” (focus group, involved).*

Jiří is satisfied with the environment at school, among friends. He points out that in his class there are only males and also he describes the family relationships as standard.

Happiness

The respondents reacted that it is great to be young as you can change many things. But sometimes they do not feel happy about the limited space they are given. Usually, they are happy during holidays, because they connect it according to their own words to both aspects of well-being – they have money from parents and they can enjoy it deliberately anywhere. They are not really happy with school and the necessity to study.

In December they reported that they are exhausted from school and that they are looking forward to Christmas , which make them happy. They had harsh times buying

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and preparing gifts but they also are happy with this period of the year. Some references to unhappiness or disappointment also refer to the Christmas tree: *"I was angry at my mum since she made the tree without me"* (focus group, involved).

They feel happy with the aspects that satisfy them such as ambitions, goals in life (travelling and professional dancing) and letting their dreams come true. They are quite keen on fixing some personal things, such as problems, to have better life. Gabriela dreams of going to the USA and studying medicine.

Life-satisfaction

The discussion in the focus group related to satisfaction with life was quite limited. They understood satisfaction with joy and fun. As they remarked, most young people look forward to Friday when they can get drunk but the involved focus group does not see any reason to do so – to drink alcohol, then to sleep the next day. People are pretending they are ok, but most probably they have problems and they are not satisfied with life. It is awkward; such people lack ambitions and dreams.

They also try to enjoy the days reasonably and completely mostly during summer and other holiday. As expressed, young people are usually bored at school during lessons and they point out the boring routine and that they do not feel satisfied. Some things are senseless for them such as tidying their room and learning all the time.

Gabriela interprets her life satisfaction positively: *"I am finishing school this year and I believe that life after will be even better, I have good relations in family and at school I am quite ok, we are healthy, so I think everything is right"* (interview, Gabriela, female, 18 years old). Life satisfaction among young people is individual – some of them are more satisfied while some are less. They have friends who are unhappy and dissatisfied with everything but they do not do anything to change it, they do not think about the future.

There were no other specific statements or interpretations recorded either in the focus group or the individual interviews related to life-satisfaction.

Psychological well-being

From the position of life orientation, the focus group of involved young people was generally divided into satisfied and dissatisfied. Some mentioned the wrong decision in school selection or that they would prefer different occupations instead of what they studied. Usually, the selection of school was the choice of parents and the students did not have their voices heard there. For example, one student was enrolled to a sports college simply because all of her family studied there but she was not happy studying at it. Mostly, dissatisfaction is related to their routine and

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plenty of studying. They wish they already had jobs because they think when they get home from work they would not need to solve other tasks.

There are also some factors that limit their aims: for example, when training and lectures overlap, they have problems in choosing what to attend and school takes up too much time and they do not have enough time for free time activities. Generally, this focus group refers specifically to school and life-satisfaction is not a domain that they would interpret differently away from their school experience.

They are rather shy and afraid of new things or new collectives, while some are afraid of adulthood because life is too short then to achieve their goals – there will be work and family and they worry about career and family development.

Jiří is satisfied with his life orientation – he is going to graduate this year and he expects the gates will open to the world – he is willing to study abroad and he is quite sure about success. If not, he is decided to work abroad. At his age, he only lacks sufficient chances and options to go abroad and to meet other young people. For his future well-being development he suggests that the greatest influence will be vested in his family and life situation and also career and income success.

3.3. Remarks on the definition and operationalization of ‘well-being’ in the fieldwork

Our engagement with children and young people in Slovakia revealed that the general problem of understanding the concept of well-being is crucial. The respondents had major problems in defining and understanding the tasks and questions they were given. Many respondents, both in focus groups and individual interviews needed a lot of time to adapt to the meanings and we had to explore the topic further in order to get some response. For them, it was too difficult to define and operationalise well-being as it is interpreted in the MYWEB project theory.

Based on these findings, we usually got respondents to understand the concept in a very brief sense such as luxury, money, material things – cars, housing, holiday but most often we noticed “*I don’t know*” response in the first place. So the task for interviewers was to explain the concept a bit further, to explain the purpose of the project and what we measure and how.

We argue that well-being and all of its domains are rather very vague and abstract terms, merely a definition of something that is completely unclear for children and young people in Slovakia. It invokes something that is too distinct, far away and inaccessible for young people, perhaps known only to those who live well and have plenty of everything, despite this we tried not to focus predominantly only on material well-being.

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

As implicated from the fieldwork and the content analysis, there are several factors that influence the understanding of the concept of well-being differently such as age group, gender differences, social background or origin, activity status and level of education.

First of all, the age group – 13-15 (which means the pupils in primary school) recognizes and understand the concept of well-being only through issues that they see and hear at home, from parents and relatives. They are not even touched by the external factors such as the influence of TV or other mass media. The older groups and individuals already stressed the factor of money and wealth; in other words, in order to be well you need to be materially and financially safe. Usually, for children, and those from incomplete or divorced families, it is typical to stress the need for a father or mother or at least the options to see them more often, so this was more obvious from the perspective of psychological and emotional feelings.

Regarding gender differences, it was difficult to measure it among children but, the older groups and individuals were differentiated; for example girls were typical in their suggestions regarding clothing or other possibilities related to fashion and outlook. On the contrary, boys aged 16+ stressed the importance of having luxury cars, houses, sporting activities and joy which is necessary for them to explain their well-being.

The social background/origin factor was more obvious, i.e. children and young people from less financially secure families mentioned money at the outset and a uxorious lifestyle and material concepts such as housing and car ownership. However, children differ from young people in the sense they often mentioned the aspects of complete, good and happy family, love issues and relationships with friends.

From the perspective of activity status, it was usually the older ones who have work experience from part-time jobs or summer jobs that understood the importance of money to be well and to have the opportunity to construct something. Thus, material well-being was important in addressing the immediate feelings of well-being, securities and the well-being of their close community. Children usually expressed the family situation when parents need to work hard in order to secure and support them.

It was rather difficult to elicit the differences between various levels of education

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since we had only one respondent that currently studies at university, compared to primary school pupils and secondary school students. Also it was difficult to set clear boundaries for the secondary school students even though they study different fields and forms of study. For example, we have not recorded the positions of sports science students and their career development, such as willingness to study at university or going to study abroad (although there was a girl respondent willing to study medicine and become a doctor). One focus group was composed of students who study to be chefs and hairdressers but all of them are looking forward to working, to earning money and to being financially independent from parents and self-sustaining. One girl from this group admitted that she would be unable to perform the job she is studying for because of her health status and allergy.

We recruited Roma respondents during the fieldwork, but based on the content analysis we have not found any particular differences in their understanding of well-being and its major domains.

5. Having their voices heard and survey engagement

Primary school

In answer to questions on whether their voice is being heard they were confused or uninterested and they didn't actually think about it. They have no problems with further research, or the location although some of them prefer didn't cafe scenario rather than school.

The focus group respondents were quite keen to be part of the research although they did not understand the point of longitudinal research. They suggested different environments to school.

Individual interviews revealed that children are more open to continue in such research and they think it has some sense. For example Dominik thinks it is good when someone is interested in his life and tries to help him out, he appreciates it and he is grateful. He also prefers different places to school.

As is typical for child respondents, they do not believe their voices are being heard and they think that adults ignore them.

We were unable to identify any secondary arguments about the research purpose for them or the survey engagement. They reacted positively, although we are not sure if they understood the principle of longitudinal study.

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Secondary school

Mostly they argue that society does not listen to young people. They expressed interest in the survey as the motivation is to learn something new and they suggest and prefer to have the survey during class time. The motivation is then clear, avoid classes and also some benefit in the form of a good mark for participation would be welcome.

Generally, secondary school students think that adults or older people do not pay attention to their voices and usually they think they know everything better. Also, they feel unhappy with the status quo and say that adults should listen to them more. Similarly to other interviewees, Filip argues that young people do not have a big say in things. He suggests some kind of a protest action because otherwise the society will not listen to them. According to him, they should respect young people and take their voices into account. All of the respondents are willing to take part in the survey because they do not have any problems with it. However, they were unable to use arguments as to why it motivates them, apart from occasional exceptions which were rather emotional such as: *“I am a fighter for well-being and I want to make it better for everyone”* (interview, Filip, male, 18 years old).

Non-organized young people

For them, to have their voice heard in society is not only about doing research but more importantly, it is to get relevant analysis and results and to establish necessary steps and politics to help the general situation. **If they were interviewed on the street they wouldn't participate in the survey.** They mentioned they would be more open-minded to focus group interview if they had known the interviewer before. So originally, they participated only due to the help and pressure from a friend who helped to organize them.

According to them, the adults always have different ways of looking at things and use different measures so they maybe care about what young people think but they do not give much in order to accept it.

Lenka also feels that adults do not care about young people's voices and arguments but she supports the idea of longitudinal measuring of well-being although she is not sure why. The motivation would be the financial incentive. Martina continues in the same trend: *“apart from my mother, no one really cares about what I think. The teachers in school do not care what we think. And generally, when I talk to someone everyone says I do not understand it, I am too young and I do not know how it works”* (interview, Martina, female, 18 years old).

Involved/organized young people

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Respondents from the focus group agree that currently they live in a very bad society, everyone cares only about themselves so that young people do not have much to say about being accepted. There are only some natural leaders and nobody cares about the others. Also they are unhappy with their mobile and internet communication but they prefer traditional forms of meetings, playing games, being involved in interest groups – sports, music instruments, astronomy and arts. They suggest that the organization DOMKA where they are associated provides enough options for them and people there listen to their voices. But outside this organization it is worse.

From the perspective of individual interviews, the respondents think that the rate of respecting the voice of young people is relatively low. Jiří argues that he can see it also in TV news: *“you cannot simply notice anything related to young people, no one cares about us, mass media do not allow us to be visible or to talk”* (interview, Jiří, male, 18 years old). Such low visibility and participation is, according to him, valid also in the local assemblies and in national parliament where the representation of young people is critically low and limited. He also agrees that in schools the scenario is quite similar. The measuring of well-being is reasonable only when we can get true and real results which can change the real situation. If there are no measures, it makes no sense.

The real results of the study are crucial for involved/organized young people. They also agree that it is great to talk about issues that matters them and that they can react to. Also the motivation for survey engagement should be supported by financial or other benefits.

6. Other recommendations informing MYWEB project

Rather than recommendations, we may share the general fieldwork experience and problems related to it. As was explored, the major problem is to get in touch with the potential respondents or interviewees, both for focus groups and individual interviews. The motivation to be part of a research project is currently very low; the essential factor is financial incentives or gifts, which was also suggested by the respondents. Also, the positions and attitudes of teachers or involved people such as the priests are generally negative toward such projects and even researchers. There is a great challenge on how to inform the involved people and participants about the relevant results and what are the project implications toward the targeted group of people and environment. We may observe that the attempt of a longitudinal study of measuring children’s and young people’s well-being might be a positive future step.

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