

### Youth and COVID-19: long-lasting scars ahead?

Allam, Miriam; Ader, Moritz; Igrioglu, Gamze

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

#### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Allam, M., Ader, M., & Igrioglu, G. (2021). Youth and COVID-19: long-lasting scars ahead? *Intergenerational Justice Review*, 7(2), 46-55. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-86397-4>

#### Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de>

#### Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more information see:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

# Youth and COVID-19: long-lasting scars ahead?<sup>1</sup>

by Miriam Allam, Moritz Ader and Gamze Igrioglu

**A**bstract: This article focuses on the long-term effects or, as mentioned in the title, scars of the COVID-19 pandemic. Surveys conducted by youth organisations in July-August 2021 show that the predominant concerns of the youth revolve around mental health, education and employment. The article then dives into the topics centred around the “disconnect” with democracy amongst the young people. Youth organisation’s trust in governments has decreased since the start of the pandemic. Several reasons and explanations are brought forward, including a lack of youth representation and inadequate support for vulnerable groups. The article then concludes with an account of what seems to promote an increase in government trust by OECD survey respondents.

**Keywords:** OECD, Young people, COVID-19 pandemic, Mental health, Employment and education crises, Trust

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

While the trajectory of the pandemic continues to evolve and varies across countries, most OECD countries were easing social distancing, confinement, and social isolation measures along with the ongoing deployment of vaccines when survey data was collected (July-August 2021). During this period, schools and universities in OECD countries gradually started re-opening after significant disruptions in 2020 and the first half of 2021 (OECD 2021j). The global recovery continued to progress but has lost momentum and remains uneven across countries (OECD 2021e). Youth unemployment rates in the OECD, which surged at the onset of the pandemic, had started to decline in many countries by July 2021 (OECD 2021f). At the same time, the prevalence of mental health symptoms related to anxiety and depression has risen dramatically among young people and remains higher than before the crisis (OECD 2021b; OECD 2021i).

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

Findings from the 2021 survey show that many of the challenges identified by respondents of the 2020 survey persist 16 months later. When asked to identify the top three concerns regarding the effects of the crisis on young people, youth organisations surveyed in July-August 2021 across the OECD expressed greatest worries about the impact of COVID-19 on mental health (83%), education (64%) and employment (42%), followed by familial relations and friendships (35%), and limitation of individual freedoms (34%) (Figure 1).

Among two-time respondents, concerns about the impact of COVID-19 have been growing in the areas of mental health, education and familial relations and friendships. Moreover, concerns about challenges in accessing and maintaining employment remain at a very high level.

These results reflect young people’s ongoing – and, in some cases, increasing – concerns about long-lasting scars that will stretch beyond employment and education.

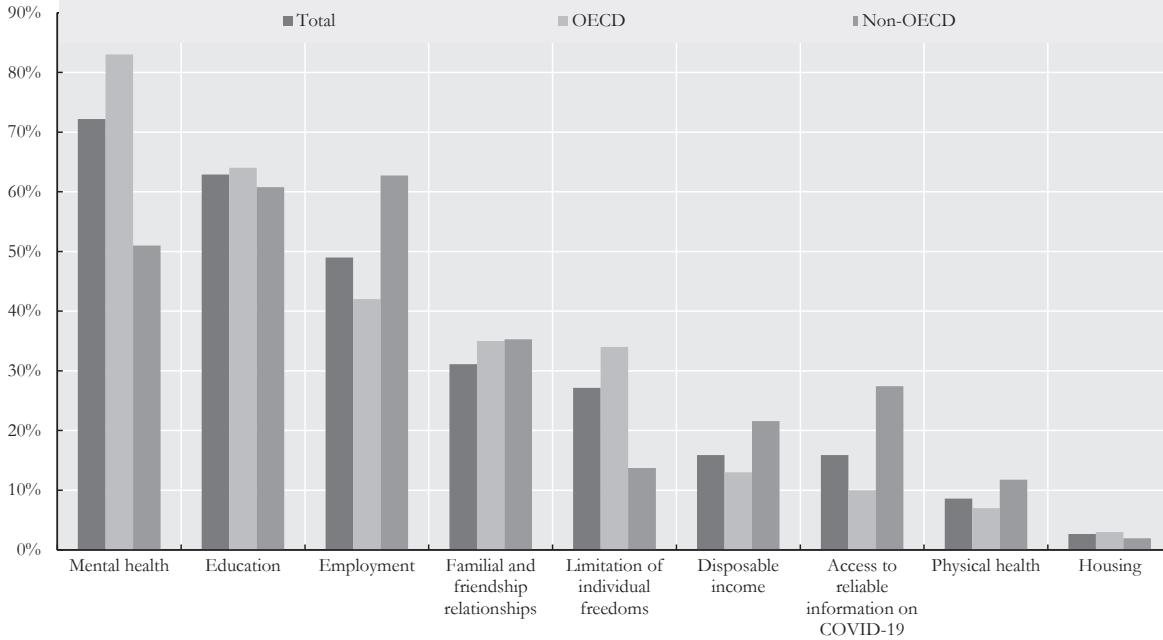
## Youth organisations are increasingly concerned about young people’s well-being

When asked about the long-term implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, respondents from OECD countries expressed greatest concerns about the well-being of young people (85%), followed by concerns about the impact on youth rights<sup>2</sup> (72%) and inequalities across age cohorts (69%). They also indicated important concerns about the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the spread of disinformation (fake news) (67%), racial discrimination (61%), the risk that the crisis may divert government attention away from tackling climate change (59%) and political polarisation (56%) (figure 2).

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

A similar trend can be observed among two-time respondents who express strongest concerns about the well-being of young people and the spread of mis- and disinformation in the 2021 edition. In turn, they now express fewer concerns about the impact of the crisis on the well-being of the elderly and the rise in public debt. As the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted from being a public health

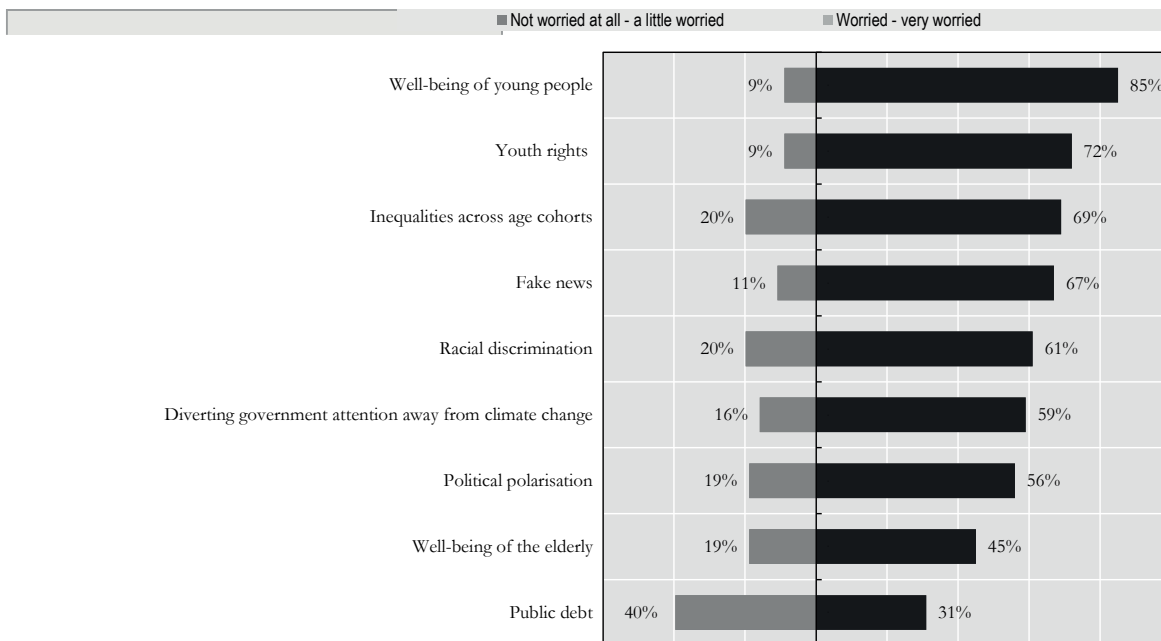
**Figure 1. Youth organisations express significant concerns about mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on mental health, education and employment**



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

Source: OECD 2021 Survey on Youth and COVID-19

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



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

Source: OECD 2021 Survey on Youth and COVID-19

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

Findings also illustrate that concerns about the spread of mis- and disinformation<sup>4</sup> associated with the COVID-19 pandemic persist, posing significant challenges to public perceptions about democracy, notably among young people (OECD 2021g). Social media accounts for a large part of the mis- and disinformation related to the pandemic (OECD 2020f). This is especially important for young people, given that they tend to be more digitally literate and source news predominantly from social media (Brennen 2020). Moreover, evidence shows that disinformation can fuel confusion, division and distrust, all of which has implications on young people's perceptions of their governments (OECD 2020g; OECD 2020f). While 54% of 15-year-old students in OECD countries reported being trained at school on how to recognise mis- and disinformation, data shows that those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds continue to score lower than their peers in terms of recognising the credibility of information sources (OECD 2021a). OECD evidence suggests that the rise of disinformation can also reinforce polarisation in society by harming electoral processes and outcomes and misleading citizens toward undemocratic alternatives (OECD 2020f). Indeed, more than one in two OECD-based respondents to the 2021 OECD Survey on COVID-19 and Youth (56%) report being worried about political polarisation in the context of the COVID-19 crisis.

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

Considerations about intergenerational justice and equity have also gained further traction, as the repercussions of the crisis are unfolding with differentiated impacts within and across age cohorts. While respondents identify inequalities across age cohorts (69%) as one of

the top concerns, a majority of respondents (59%) is concerned that the COVID-19 crisis will divert government attention away from taking measures to tackle climate change. This is particularly relevant as young people have been at the forefront of advocating for climate justice to be placed at the top of the political agenda, highlighting that young people and future generations will have to shoulder the burden and be most impacted by the consequences of the decisions taken today (OECD 2021c; OECD 2020a). Findings from an analysis conducted in July 2021 indeed point to the risk that the focus on short-term emergency responses may have superseded long-term economic, social and environmental objectives in the elaboration of recovery measures. As of July 2021, 83% of recovery funds had not considered environmental impacts or have negative effects on the environment (OECD 2021d).

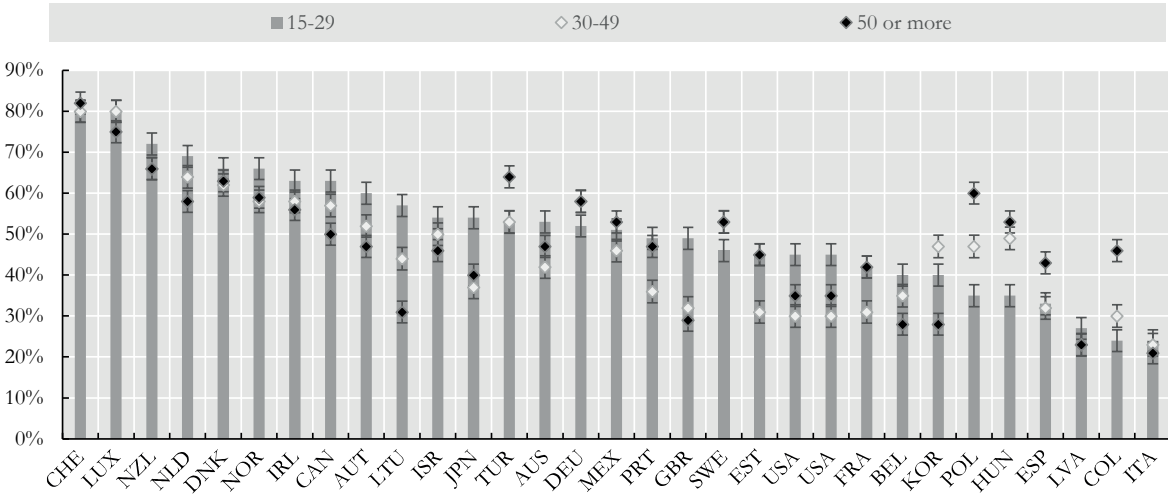
**A moving target: young people's trust in government during the pandemic**

In responding to the COVID-19 crisis, governments have taken measures that have drastically altered the everyday lives and behaviour of citizens. Trust in government is a critical factor in people's understanding of and compliance with extraordinary measures in extraordinary times (OECD 2021d). When citizens trust public institutions, they tend to comply voluntarily with rules to a greater extent (Murphy 2004). During the COVID-19 pandemic, studies have found a strong correlation between trust and compliance with measures taken to contain the spread of the virus (Bargain/Aminjonov 2020).

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

Since the onset of the pandemic, citizens' trust in government and their confidence in government's ability to handle and recover from the crisis have been volatile. Following the initial increase in trust levels in the early phase of the pandemic, most OECD

Figure 3. Trust in national government by age group, 2020



Source: Gallup World Poll, 2020

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

countries have seen a decline over its course (Brezzi et al. 2021). According to the Gallup World Poll, in 2020, 51% of people in OECD countries trusted their government, a 6% increase from 2019 (figure 3) (OECD 2021d). However, in 2021, 48%<sup>3</sup> of people in OECD countries trusted their government, a 3% decrease from 2020 (Gallup 2021). While tracing trust and its respective drivers is challenging, studies point to similar trends for young people. According to a study by Eurofound, trust in government among people aged 18-34 dropped significantly between April 2020 and March 2021 in all EU countries (Eurofound 2021). Findings from the 2021 OECD Survey on COVID-19 and Youth reaffirm this downward trend over the past year. Whereas 40% of OECD-based youth organisations considered that their members' trust in government had increased in response to how the crisis was handled (as opposed to 22% reporting a decrease) in 2020, that share dropped to 16% of survey respondents in 2021. In turn, in 2021, 38% consider that their members' trust in government had decreased since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (figure 4).

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

Increasing levels of trust in government in times of crisis, combined with the public perception that a nation as a whole is under threat, is known as “rallying around the flag”. It predicts an increase in trust during sudden crises as people unite behind leaders and institutions, and temporarily pay less attention to other policy issues (Brezzi et al. 2021). This effect is confirmed by the survey

data discussed above and has been discussed by other studies in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic (Kritzinger et al. 2021). In 18 of 22 OECD countries, average trust in government fell between April/May and June/July 2020, indicating that this effect quickly faded away (OECD 2021d).

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

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

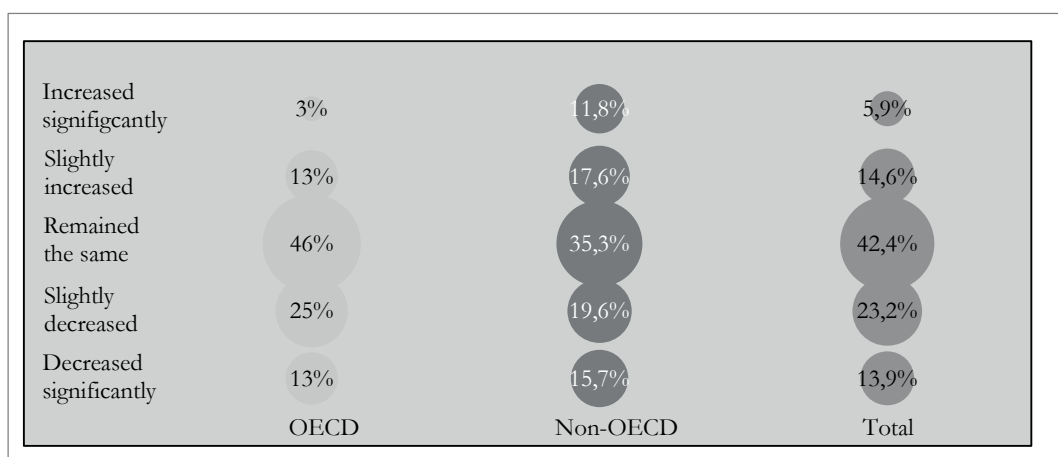
Youth organisations reported lowest levels of satisfaction with the provision of sports, culture and leisure services during the pandemic. In fact, 63% of OECD respondents expressed dissatisfaction in this area (see figure 5). A majority of OECD respondents also expressed dissatisfaction with the delivery of public services in the field of education (60%), housing (56%), and employment (56%). Further, 46% of OECD-based respondents express dissatisfaction with the delivery of healthcare services during the pandemic, for instance by pointing to insufficient mental health support and unaffordability in some countries.

Respondents located in non-member countries point to similar challenges but express higher dissatisfaction with government performance in the area of employment (75%), followed by housing (54%), and sports, culture, leisure and education (53%).

These results also underline the importance of an integrated approach across different sectors and ministerial portfolios to support young people and mitigate the impacts of the crisis. For instance,

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

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



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

Source: OECD 2021 Survey on Youth and COVID-19

different studies suggest that the lack of young people’s access to sports, culture and leisure activities is likely to have a negative impact on their mental health (Hagell 2016; Rodriguez-Bravo/De Juanas/García-Castilla 2020). Identifying the cumulative effects of the lack of young people’s access to certain public services and programmes is important to ensure ministries and agencies across the whole of government co-ordinate their interventions in the context of the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. The analysis of response and recovery plans points to significant gaps and the risk of fragmented support provided to young people. Notably, only a few countries spell out in their plans how young people shall be supported in areas beyond education and employment.

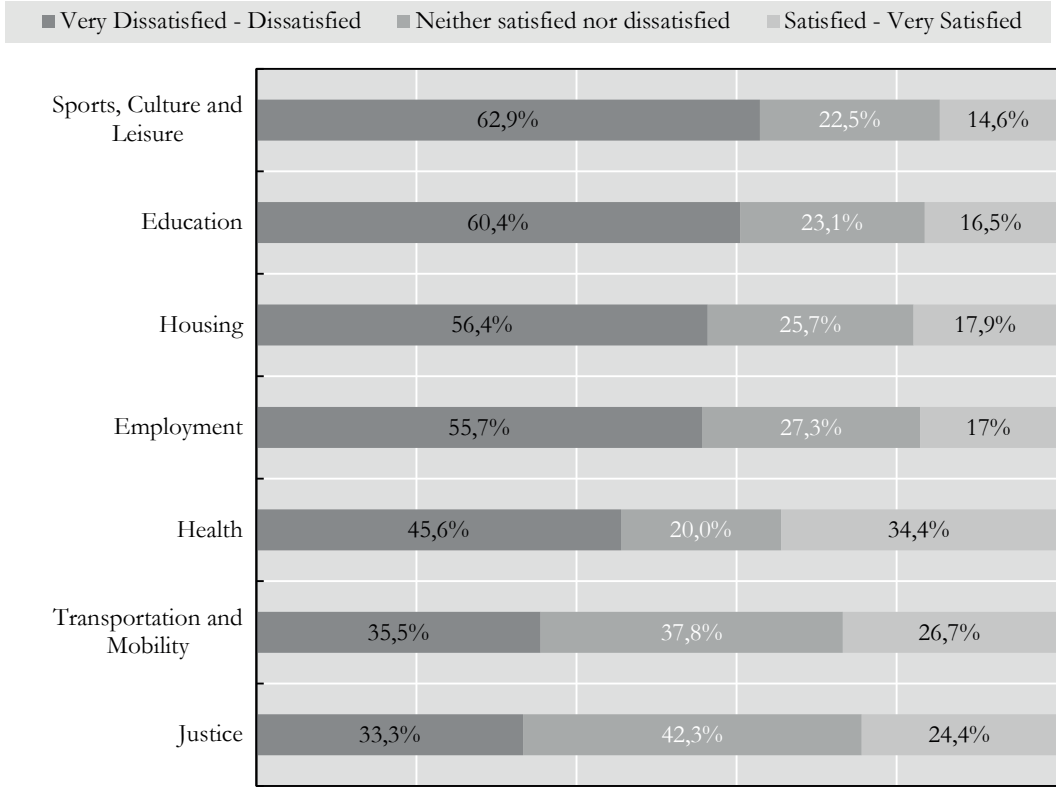
*More than half of youth organisations appreciate the way in which governments have communicated on the risks of the pandemic and made use of scientific evidence*

Evidence-based decision-making and effective public communication play a key role in retaining and increasing trust in government in times of crisis (OECD 2020f). When asked about their satisfaction with the way governments have reacted to the COVID-19 crisis, more than one in two OECD-based respondents (53%) state that their members are satisfied with the use of scientific evidence by governments when taking decisions to mitigate the pandemic. Moreover, 54% of youth organisations report being satisfied with the performance of governments to communicate about the risk of the pandemic to their citizens (see figure 6). The results differ for respondents from non-member countries: While 66% state that their members are satisfied with the way their government communicated about the risks of the pandemic, only 37% are satisfied with their use of scientific evidence in decision-making.

*Youth organisations point to elevated risks to public sector integrity*

The COVID-19 crisis has revealed concerns about safeguarding public sector integrity, notably in the context of important public procurement decisions taken by governments and economic stimulus packages (OECD 2020c). Emergency situations that require rapid responses by governments can create conditions that make integrity violations more likely, most notably fraud and corruption (OECD 2020c). Several studies point to instances of price gouging and bribery during the pandemic, for instance, as medical equipment and supplies were often procured through emergency processes (OECD 2020b). By diverting public resources away from their intended use, instances of fraud, corruption and bribery undermine the access to

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



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

and quality of public services for citizens, including young people (OECD 2020e). Already the perception of increased levels of corruption is associated with negative impact on trust among citizens. For instance, findings from the April 2020 edition of the OECD Youth and COVID-19 Survey show that respondents who felt the integrity of public institutions was compromised were more likely to report that their trust in government had decreased (OECD 2020g). Among the OECD-based respondents to the 2021 survey edition, only 35% express satisfaction with the measures taken by governments to safeguard public sector integrity during the pandemic, compared to 26% of respondents from non-member countries.

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

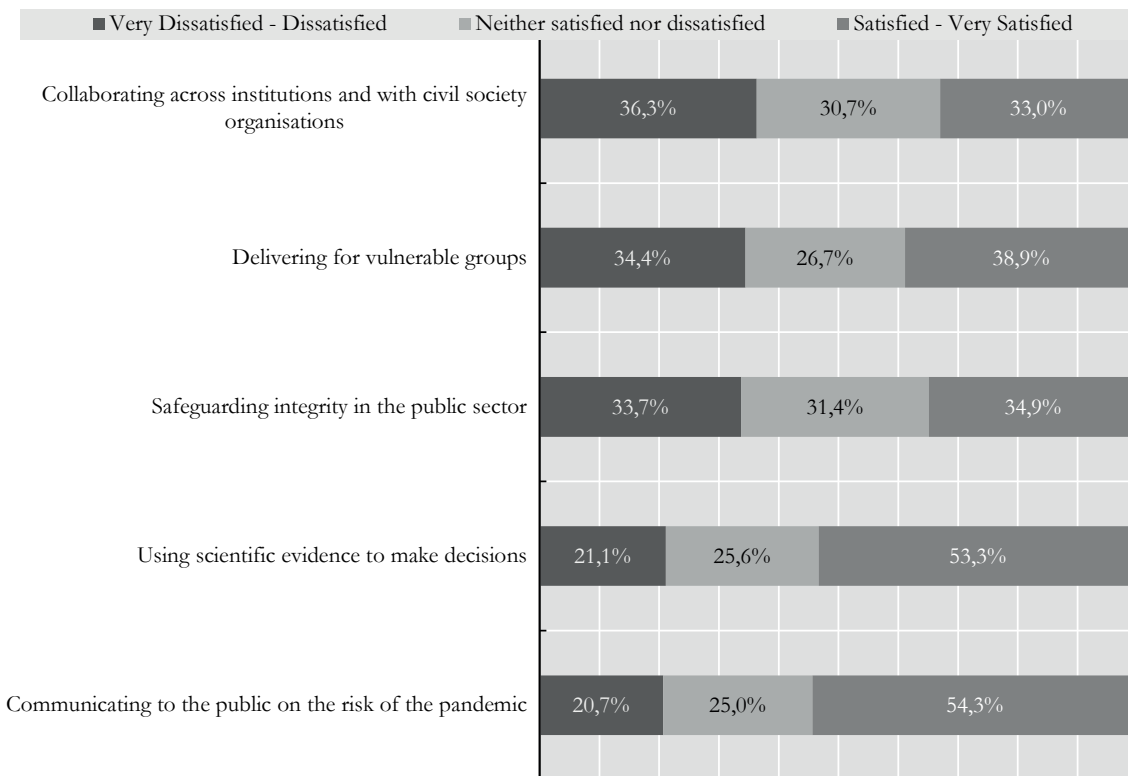
The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (OECD 2017a) underlines that open government is critical to building citizens' trust and achieving more inclusive policy outcomes. A recent study finds that European countries that invest in government openness, for instance by providing access to information proactively and engaging citizens in policy making, benefit from a higher level of citizen trust in the public system (Schmidhuber/Ingrams/Hilgers 2021). The study also suggests

that the perception of having meaningful opportunities for political participation can translate into greater levels of trust. Similarly, trust in national parliament is positively associated with turnout in national elections, while people's feelings of being able to understand and participate in political processes are positively related to their actual participation (Brezzi et al. 2021).

Only 33% of respondents from youth organisations in OECD countries (and 20% of respondents from non-members) are satisfied with how governments have collaborated across institutions and with civil society organisations to mitigate the crisis (see figure 6). This finding resonates with the observation that many governments have operated with lower standards of stakeholder participation during the pandemic, for example when introducing emergency regulations (OECD 2021d).

A majority of respondents also feels that their government has not incorporated the views of young people when taking emergency measures and decisions to mitigate the crisis. Among the respondents from OECD countries, 15% feel their government considered young people's views when adopting lockdown and confinement measures. 22% feel that young people's views were taken into account in the purchase of goods, services and public works and 26% somewhat or strongly agree that their views were reflected in the design of financial schemes to mitigate the impact

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



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

Source: OECD 2021 Survey on Youth and COVID-19

on jobs and income loss. Similarly, around one in three OECD-based respondents (35%) considers that governments have incorporated young people’s views when prioritising age cohorts in vaccination campaigns (see figure 7).

While some infrastructure services have been disrupted in order to stop the spread of the coronavirus (e.g. air transport, railway, urban public transportation), other public services and infrastructure industries have been key to government emergency and recovery responses, most notably health infrastructure, digital infrastructure and telecommunications (OECD 2020d). In this area, more than half of the respondents from OECD (54%) and non-member countries (52%) believe their government has not incorporated the views of young people when taking decisions. These results show that, across some of the most impactful decisions taken by governments during the pandemic, members of youth organisations feel young people had few opportunities to meaningfully shape them.

*Only four in ten OECD-based respondents are satisfied with the support provided to young people in vulnerable circumstances*

Citizens’ perception of fairness, in both processes and outcomes of public policy, is a critical dimension of trust. Higher levels of trust are related to a more equal distribution of political power amongst members of society. Demographic and socio-economic factors, including gender, age and income are important in explaining differences in public trust. For example, in most OECD

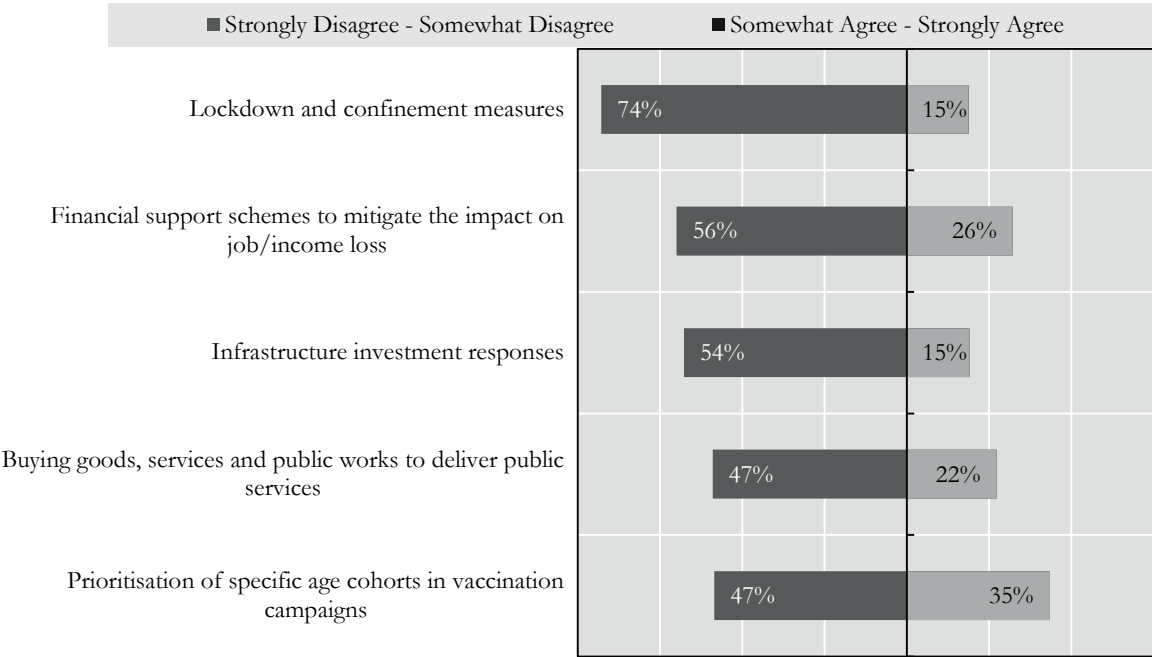
countries, people with higher income tend to have higher levels of trust in government, although important differences exist and the direction of causality is not clear (Brezzi et al. 2021).

The pandemic has exacerbated inequalities between different age groups and among young people of different backgrounds and identities (OECD 2020g). For example, unemployment rose considerably more among young women than among young men at the onset of the pandemic (OECD 2021i). Inequalities in access to internet and digital devices have translated into barriers to learning and working in remote settings (OECD 2021i). Moreover, young women, young people with lower socio-economic status, and without a job reported higher rates of mental distress in 2020-21 (OECD 2021i).

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

Since the beginning of the pandemic, youth organisations have played a critical role in providing support to vulnerable groups, including older people in care facilities, disabled people, NEETs and

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



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

Source: OECD 2021 Survey on Youth and COVID-19



migrants, to mitigate its impacts (OECD 2020g). While evidence from the analysis of national recovery plans across OECD countries shows that several outline specific measures to support vulnerable groups, explicit commitments to strengthen youth workers, volunteers and their institutional capacities are rarely mentioned.

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

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

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

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

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

The amount of people believing in fake news and conspiracy theories has increased and damaged democracy. Youth organisation representative mentioning drivers for decreasing satisfaction with democracy

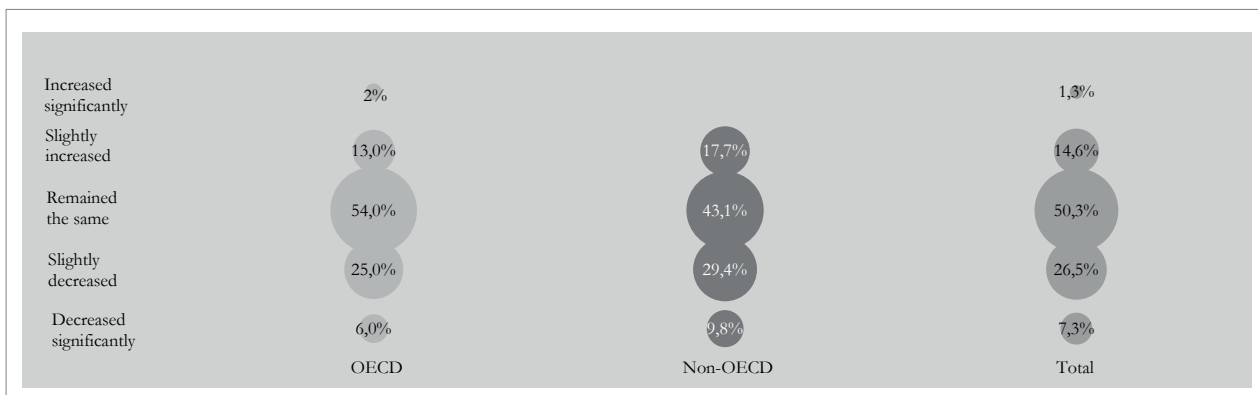
Moreover, young people remain underrepresented in public institutions, tend to participate less in elections than older peers and their share among the voting population is shrinking as a result of ageing, contributing to further shifting political weight and influence to older age groups (OECD 2021g;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

The COVID-19 pandemic risks further exacerbating these challenges. Around one in three respondents from OECD countries (31%) states that their members’ satisfaction with democracy has decreased since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, while only 15% report an increase (figure 8). A survey by Eurofound5 points to a similar trend. Satisfaction with democracy among people aged 18-34 decreased between July 2020 and March 2021 in all EU countries (Eurofound 2021).

A recent study finds that individuals who experience epidemics during their transition to adulthood display less confidence in political leaders, governments, and elections, which persists over their lifetime. Long-lasting scars of the crisis are therefore not only a concern when the employment and income prospects of

The government engaged with civil society. Across government departments, there was a shift from consultation to partnership and co-design with stakeholders to harness pre-existing knowledge. Youth organisation representative mentioning drivers for increasing satisfaction with democracy

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



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

Source: OECD 2021 Survey on Youth and COVID-19

young people are considered but also in terms of their association with democratic processes and institutions over the life cycle (Aksoy/Eichengreen/Saka 2020).

When asked about why the satisfaction of their members with democracy had increased, OECD-based respondents point to the importance of government's responsiveness, inclusive decision-making and fair treatment of all citizens as well as the significance of accountability, public integrity, transparency and clear communication. Some respondents mentioned that satisfaction with democracy increased as their members observed an increase in social cohesion and recognised that governments had made efforts to protect human and civil rights. In turn, respondents reporting a decline in satisfaction with democracy during the crisis pointed to its impact on civil and human rights. Some respondents also stressed that the crisis had demonstrated government's inability to address challenges and deliver for citizens, contributing to a more pessimistic outlook and raising doubts about the coherence of government measures. Some respondents also raised concerns over the increase in intergenerational inequalities, lack of support for vulnerable groups and increasing political and social polarisation as well as the lack of transparency and integrity, reliable information, the spread of fake news and accountability.

## Notes

1 This article is a reprint. It first appeared as Section 1 in OECD (2022): Delivering for youth: How governments can put young people at the centre of the recovery, 7-21. OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19). <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/delivering-for-youth-how-governments-can-put-young-people-at-the-centre-of-the-recovery-92c9d060/>.

2 While definitions of youth rights vary across international bodies and organisations, the UN OHCHR postulates that human rights of youth refer to the full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms by young people (UN 2021f).

3 This paper employs the following OECD definitions of dis- and misinformation. Misinformation: false or inaccurate information not disseminated with the intention of deceiving the public. Disinformation: false, inaccurate, or misleading information deliberately created, presented and disseminated to deceive the public. (OECD 2021h).

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

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

## References

Aksoy, Cevat Giray / Eichengreen, Barry / Orkun, Saka (2020): The Political Scar of Epidemics. Bonn: IZA - Institute of Labor Economics. <https://www.iza.org/publications/dp/13351/the-political-scar-of-epidemics>. Viewed 7 December 2021.

Bargain, Oliver / Aminjonov, Ulugbek (2020): Trust and Compliance to Public Health Policies in Times of COVID-19. <http://grettha.u-bordeaux.fr/LAREFIhttp://larefi.u-bordeaux.fr/>. Viewed 2 December 2021.

Brennen, Scott J. (2020): Types, sources, and claims of COVID-19 misinformation. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/types-sources-and-claims-covid-19-misinformation>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

Brezzi, Monica et al. (2021): An updated OECD framework on drivers of trust in public institutions to meet current and future challenges. OECD Working Papers on Public Governance no. 48. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/b6c5478c-en>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

Eurofound (2021): Democracy and trust during COVID-19. <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/covid-19/democracy-trust>. Viewed 28 November 2021.

Foa, Roberto (2020): The Global Satisfaction with Democracy Report. Cambridge, UK: Centre for the Future of Democracy.

Foa, Roberto et al. (2020): Youth and Satisfaction with Democracy: Reversing the Democratic Disconnect? Cambridge, UK: Centre for the Future of Democracy.

Gallup (2021): Gallup World Poll. [https://www.gallup.com/topic/world\\_poll.aspx](https://www.gallup.com/topic/world_poll.aspx). Viewed May 12 2022.

Gallup (2019): Gallup World Poll. [https://www.gallup.com/topic/world\\_poll.aspx](https://www.gallup.com/topic/world_poll.aspx). Viewed May 12 2022.

Hagell, A. (2016): The connections between young people's mental health and sport participation: Scoping the evidence. <https://network.streetgames.org/sites/default/files/AYPH%20Literature%20Review.pdf>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

Kritzinger, Sylvia et al. (2021): Rally round the flag: the COVID-19 crisis and trust in the national government. In: West European Politics, 44 (5-6), 1205-1231. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2021.1925017/SUPPL\\_FILE/FWEP\\_A\\_1925017\\_SM0155.PDF](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2021.1925017/SUPPL_FILE/FWEP_A_1925017_SM0155.PDF). Viewed 12 May 2022.

Murphy, Kristina (2004): The Role of Trust in Nurturing Compliance: A Study of Accused Tax Avoiders. In: Law and Human Behavior, 28 (2), 187-209. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/B:LAHU.0000022322.94776.ca>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

OECD (2021a): Are 15-year-olds prepared to deal with fake news and misinformation? <https://www.oecd.org/education/are-15-year-olds-prepared-to-deal-with-fake-news-and-misinformation-6ad5395e-en.htm>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

OECD (2021b): Fitter Minds, Fitter Jobs: From Awareness to Change in Integrated Mental Health, Skills and Work Policies. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/a0815d0fen>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

OECD (2021c): Governing Green: Gearing up government to deliver on climate and other environmental challenges. OECD Internal document.

OECD (2021d): Government at a Glance 2021. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

OECD (2021e): OECD Economic Outlook, 2021 (2): Preliminary version. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/66c5ac2c-en>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

OECD (2021f): OECD Employment Outlook 2021: Navigating the COVID-19 Crisis and Recovery. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5a700c4b-en>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

OECD (2021g): Reinforcing Democracy: 21st Century Governance Challenges – Framing the Issue. OECD Internal document.

OECD (2021h): Reinforcing democracy: Preventing and combating misinformation and disinformation. <https://www.oecd.org/governance/reinforcing-democracy/>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

OECD (2021i): Supporting young people's mental health through the COVID-19 crisis. <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/supporting-young-people-s-mental-health-through-the-covid-19-crisis-84e143e5/>. Viewed 7 December 2021.

OECD (2021j): The State of Global Education: 18 Months into the Pandemic. Paris: OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/1a23bb23-en>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

OECD (2021k): The Updated OECD Youth Action Plan Building Blocks for Future Action. <https://www.oecd.org/employment/youth/The-Updated-OECD-Youth-Action-Plan.pdf>. Viewed 7 December 2021.

OECD (2021l): What have countries done to support young people in the COVID-19 crisis? [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=1099\\_1099609-ia84hp7m3s&title=What-have-countries-done-to-support-young-people-in-the-COVID-19-crisis](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=1099_1099609-ia84hp7m3s&title=What-have-countries-done-to-support-young-people-in-the-COVID-19-crisis). Viewed 4 March 2022.

OECD (2020a): Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for All Generations? Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/c3e5cb8a-en>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

OECD (2020b): Policy measures to avoid corruption and bribery in the COVID-19 response and recovery. [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=133\\_133216-hn3bqtlvk&title=Policy-measures-to-avoid-corruption-and-bribery-in-the-COVID-19-response-and-recovery](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=133_133216-hn3bqtlvk&title=Policy-measures-to-avoid-corruption-and-bribery-in-the-COVID-19-response-and-recovery). Viewed 3 December 2021.

OECD (2020c): Public Integrity for an Effective COVID-19 Response and Recovery. [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=129\\_129931-ygq2xb8qax&title=Public-Integrity-for-an-Effective-COVID-19-Response-and-Recovery](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=129_129931-ygq2xb8qax&title=Public-Integrity-for-an-Effective-COVID-19-Response-and-Recovery). Viewed 2 December 2021.

OECD (2020d): Public procurement and infrastructure governance: Initial policy responses to the coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis. <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/public-procurement-and-infrastructure-governance-initial-policy-re>

[sponses-to-the-coronavirus-covid-19-crisis-c0ab0a96/](https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/sponses-to-the-coronavirus-covid-19-crisis-c0ab0a96/). Viewed 3 December 2021.

OECD (2020e): Safeguarding COVID-19 social benefit programmes from fraud and error. <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/safeguarding-covid-19-social-benefit-programmes-from-fraud-and-error-4e21c80e/>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

OECD (2020f): Transparency, communication and trust: The role of public communication in responding to the wave of disinformation about the new Coronavirus. <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/transparency-communication-and-trust-the-role-of-public-communication-in-responding-to-the-wave-of-disinformation-about-the-new-coronavirus-bef7ad6e/>. Viewed 8 December 2021.

OECD (2020g): Youth and COVID-19: Response, recovery and resilience. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/c40e61c6-en>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

OECD (2017a): Recommendation of the Council on Open Government. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/public/doc/359/359.en.pdf>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

OECD (2017b): Trust and Public Policy: How Better Governance Can Help Rebuild Public Trust. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264268920-en>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

Rodriguez-Bravo, Ana Eva / De Juanas, Ángel / García-Castilla, Francisco Javier (2020): Effect of Physical-Sports Leisure Activities on Young People's Psychological Wellbeing. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.543951>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

Schmidhuber, Lisa / Ingrams, Alex / Hilgers, Dennis (2021): Government Openness and Public Trust: The Mediating Role of Democratic Capacity. In: *Public Administration Review*, 81 (1), 91-109. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/PUAR.13298>. Viewed 12 May 2022.

UN (2021): OHCHR: Human rights of youth. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/Issues/Youth/Pages/HROfYouth.aspx>. Viewed 4 March 2022.

## Authors

Moritz Ader works as Policy Analyst and Project Coordinator for the OECD. He is an expert for youth, intergenerational justice and public governance.

Miriam Allam leads the implementation of the OECD's strategic directions on public governance in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). She is an expert for capacity building and comparative analysis on public sector reforms in transition countries.

Gamze Igriglu works as a Policy Analyst at the OECD's Public Governance Directorate. She is an expert for youth empowerment, intergenerational justice, gender equality, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and rule of law across OECD member and partner countries.