



English summary
of Fafo-rapport 2022:20

The Norwegian Union of
Municipal and General
Employees' Youth Barometer
2021

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This report is based on a nationwide survey among young people born between 1996 and 2005, and includes young working people, students, and pupils. The survey was conducted in 2021. Young peoples' experiences and views will be important for the development of the Norwegian society during the next decades. In 2017, the first youth barometer was published, and many of the questions are repeated in 2021. This makes it possible to compare answers from 2017 to 2021.

The main findings from the survey

What determines young people's career choices?

Much of our youth is spent considering what kind of work we would like to end up doing. What are the factors that determine our choice of career?

- The two most important factors in choosing a career are a job which fits in with our interests, and prospects of a permanent position. The same two topped the list in 2017.
- High income and status are less important when it comes to choosing a career. This tendency was the same four years ago.
- Young people make traditional choices: 51 per cent of the women with a vocational education in our survey had studied health and social care. Among the men, 43 per cent had studied electricity and electronics, and 39 per cent technical and industrial production.
- Women are to a greater degree than men keen on doing a job that is important for society. They are also less preoccupied with pay and status than men.

Expectations of working life

In the years to come, the labour market will probably face major changes including an increased need for competence. How do today's youth feel about their own opportunities, and what are their experiences so far?

- Almost 30 per cent believe they will have to wait a long time before getting a job that reflects their education, or they expect to continue studying in the same or a different field.
- Seven out of ten feel that the education they have chosen will still be relevant in years to come. This is the same proportion as in 2017.

- Five per cent said they think they risk periods of unemployment. This is a lower proportion than in 2017, despite the pandemic and uncertainty around changes in the labour market.
- More than eight out of ten of those who are employed experience a high degree of learning in connection with their work and were able to use their skills.
- A lower degree was satisfied with their pay in 2021 than in 2017: there was a reduction from 30 per cent to 20 per cent in those replying, 'I am satisfied with my pay'.

Attitudes to trade union membership

Is there reason to believe that the union density in Norway will decline, or is the younger generation keen on joining a trade union?

- 53 per cent of the employed belong to a trade union. That exceeds the total union membership in Norway, which is around 50 per cent.
- The two main reasons for joining a trade union were the safeguarding of rights and membership benefits such as insurance.
- 16 per cent of those who are not members of a union replied that they did not know what a trade union was.

Young people on multiculturalism in Norway

Racism engages and upsets people in the 16-25 age group. Questions were also asked about whether Norway ought to admit more refugees and whether there is discrimination against young people with an immigrant background.

- The two most important political issues for the age group were buying their own home and combating racism and xenophobia. Climate and environmental issues were further down the list of priorities.
- 65 per cent completely or somewhat agreed that Norway ought to admit more refugees. In 2017, seven out of ten were of the same opinion.
- 70 per cent believe that racism is a problem in Norway.
- More than half believe that young people with an immigrant background do not have the same opportunities in the labour market as young people with a Norwegian background.
- 73 per cent completely or somewhat agreed that it is important to counteract the large gap between rich and poor in Norway. This is ten percentage points lower than in 2017.

Politics and trust

Tax and welfare programmes are hot topics of political discussion. The same goes for the affiliation to the EU through the EEA agreement. Since the last survey, the world has also witnessed high profile movements such as #metoo and Black Lives Matter. What did the young people make of this?

- 43 per cent completely or somewhat agreed that it is important to increase taxation in order to maintain public services such as education, health care, and care for the elderly.
- Seven out of ten completely or somewhat agreed that it is right for everyone to receive full pay when they are ill. This is nine percentage points lower than four years ago.
- Half the young people feel it is right to keep the EEA agreement. 14 per cent wish to join the EU.
- Half the respondents said that unwanted sexual attention is an increasing problem among young people.
- The young people generally expressed lower levels of trust in 2021 than in 2017, both in other people and social institutions. This is in line with the generally lower level of trust in political and democratic institutions.

Young people and the Covid-19 pandemic

There is reason to feel sympathy for the younger generation, who during the pandemic had to endure remote learning and only limited contact with their peer group. So have young people become more worried about the future than previously?

- Seven out of ten believe that young people have been hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly six out of ten have confidence in the Government's handling of it.
- 35 per cent are more worried about the future than before the pandemic.