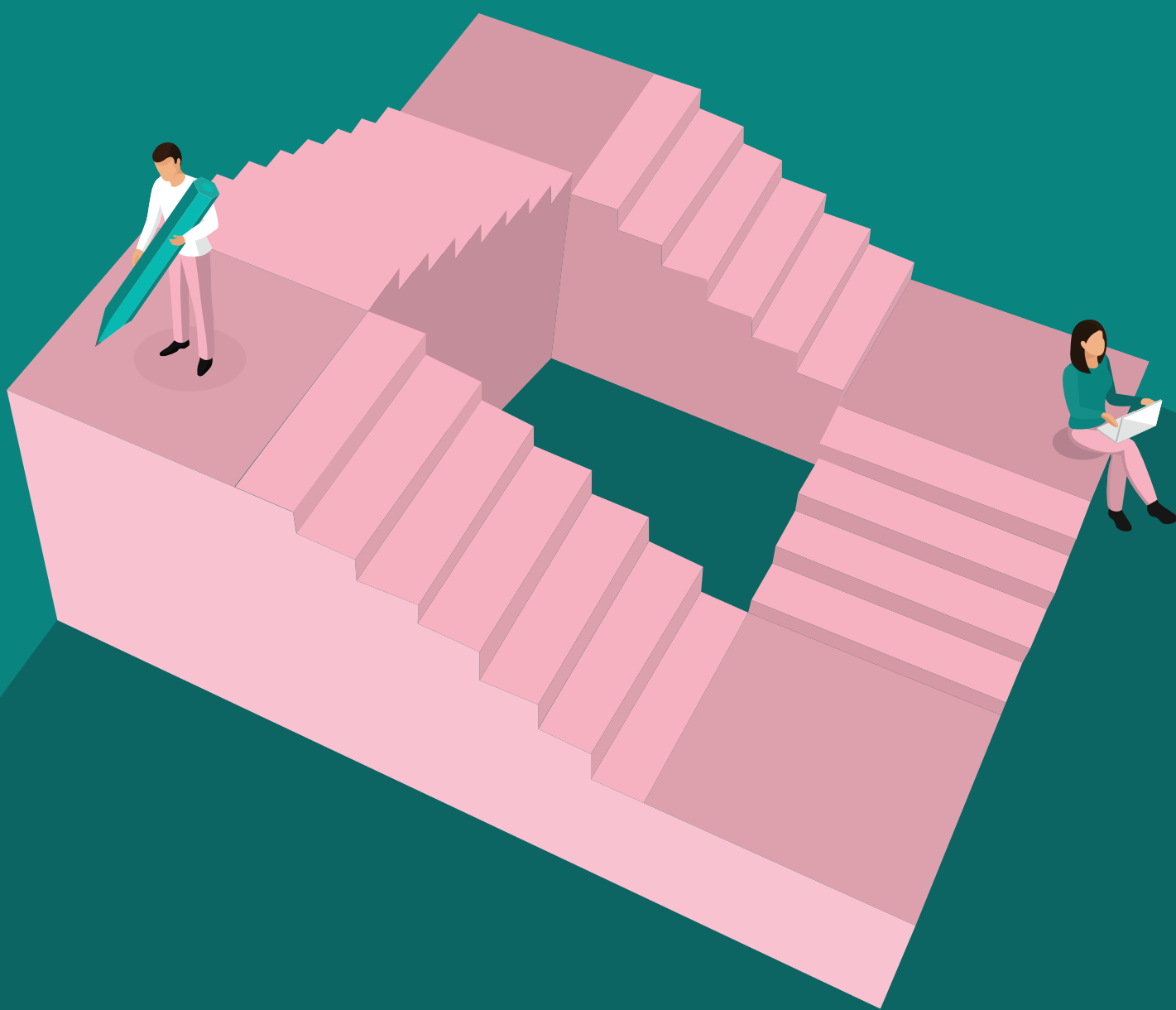


# YOUTH STATUS QUO: TEN YEARS OF STAGNATION

A Study of Social Capital among Young People





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**A Study of Social Capital among Young People**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a study on social capital among high school and university students in the Republic of North Macedonia. The study was conducted as part of the project – Youth Expression Project. The Youth Expression Project is implemented by the Youth Educational Forum in partnership with Youth Alliance – Krusevo and the Center for Balkan Cooperation Loja and is financed by the European Union's IPA Civil Society Facility. The goal of the study is to determine the social capital (defined as networks of shared norms, values, and understanding that support cooperation within and among groups), attitudes towards and forms of civic engagement, as well as the opinions on and exercise of freedom of expression among young people in the Republic of North Macedonia. A total of 1,960 high school students and 1,833 students from the public higher education institutions in the country participated in the survey. In addition to the analysis of the participants' attitudes, perceptions, and civic engagement, we also compared the results to the study on social capital among high school students conducted in 2011.

The results of the study indicate a lack of an enabling environment for the development of social capital among young people. Young people show relatively low interest in civic engagement, have little trust in institutions, and their actions are mainly directed at the primary groups – family and friends. Furthermore, social capital, connection and support networks, the forms of youth engagement in the community, and trust in social institutions all have a downward trend as young people transition into adulthood. A comparison of the results from the responses of the high school students with the study on the same topic conducted in 2011 point to the conclusion that there is a consistent lack of enabling environment for social capital, of its development, and of its effectuating among young people. These conclusions are confirmed with the following results:

- 54% of high school and university students have never participated in an activity to solve a problem in their community;
- Almost one in four high school students and one in five university students said that they would never do volunteer work;
- The primary groups (parents, siblings, friends) are those to whom almost two thirds of high school students turn when they are faced with problems they cannot solve themselves, while about 10% of high school and university students said that they deal with their problems independently;
- 86.1% of high school students and 87.3% of university students said that they have not had subjects that require them to stay informed and follow current events in the country in the course of their education;
- Only 34.38% of university students send that they had the opportunity to discuss youth problems in the course of their education;
- Almost one in three high school and university students that participated in the survey believe that they “cannot change anything” through engagement in the community;
- Conventional forms of political participation, such as voting, are important to 53.3% of high school students and 59.58% of university students;

- 67.4% of university students said that they are not members of any political party and that there is no political option that represents their political views;
- More than half of high school and university students believe that they cannot have any real influence over how governments work;
- Individual responsibility for care for the community is an opinion supported by 58.7% of university students and 48.3% of high school students;
- More than 70% of high school and university students believe that local and state officials care very little or not at all about young people's needs;
- More than 70% of high school and university students believe that most people cannot be trusted;
- More than half of high school students and two-thirds of university students refrain from sharing their opinions in class.



## 1. SOCIAL CAPITAL AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In social sciences, social capital emerges as a relevant concept for researching the potential of agency<sup>1</sup> in individuals and groups. Theorists from various disciplines have attempted to systematically analyze the knowledge, relations, and potentials for social action. This is especially true for social action that makes use of specific and practical knowledge (cultural capital), connectedness, and goal rational action towards creating (potential) benefit for both individuals and the community. This does not mean that all attempts to define social capital have arrived at identical end points: as a problem for the personal positioning of individuals in society, through regarding social capital as an aspect of human capital, to defining social capital as a side effect of collective action by various actors.

Social capital is a category that has incited scientific interest for more than half a century. Since the introduction of capital as a category, it has been regarded in various forms and various ways as a term that can be connected to social relations, and human capacities for self-realization and action in society. In the framework of social theory, social capital is regarded as a category that is embedded in social relations and is facilitated or inhibited by them. Furthermore, social capital is relevant in terms of its connection to social action, above all as the potential for knowledge exchange and pooling of skills and abilities with the goal of achieving social influence. In general, social theories that study social capital analyze the positive impacts of these networks, norms and relations, with little regard to the negative outcomes of this concept.

Bourdieu was one of the first social scientists to study this concept, defining social capital as an aggregate of all resources that are available to the members of a network or a group, from which individuals gain multiple benefits. Relationships with individuals that have different “expertise” increase access to knowledge and cultural capital; these relationships also represent potential for achieving economic gains. For Bourdieu (1985), it is precisely the individual benefit, the access to rare and limited resources, that is the main motive for the relationships. Coleman (1988) developed a different view of social capital. According to him, social structures are based on dense social networks<sup>2</sup> characterized by the existence of common defined standards for conduct, trust, and reciprocity. Within networks with highly developed social capital, individuals have a mutual benefit from the relationships through access to information or other resources, which help them achieve their personal interests and increase their chances for success. Among the main theorists of social capital there is also Robert Putnam, who defines this concept as “features of societal organization such as trust, norms, and networks, that can advance efficacy in society by facilitating coordinated action” (Putnam et al., 1993, p. 167). Analyzed from this aspect, communities with developed social capital are considered better equipped for cooperation in overcoming social problems. According to Putnam, communities with higher levels of social capital are communities in which it is easier to establish cooperation between individuals for overcoming social problems, maintaining government responsiveness, and improving their institutional performance. Communities that have underdeveloped social capital remain stuck in a vicious circle with governments that are less responsive and principled.

It is precisely this last definition (Putnam’s) that is key to analyzing the potential of social capital for improving the participation of actors in social processes and that was regarded as relevant in the design of this study. Namely, if social capital represents the potential for collective action with societal goals, then developed social capital is a significant factor in awareness raising and increasing civic participation.



Towards the end of the 1990s, social theories diversified the perspectives on this concept, in terms of the relevance of social capital for non-Western cultures. Post-socialist societies were set apart as distinct, as they generally note lower civic participation. In this context, developing social capital among the generations that experienced socialization through especially tumultuous transition processes is of particular interest for researchers. According to some authors (Badescu & Uslaner, 2003), there are certain specifics of post-socialist societies that share a common profile in terms of trust – lower tolerance for Otherness, higher perception of corruption, and lower prevalence of post-materialistic values.

Trust<sup>3</sup> and civic engagement are two key elements in Putnam's civic community. It is precisely these two elements that, according to the author, contribute to raising collective consciousness in the community and create the conditions for better governance. Most of the studies (Badescu & Uslaner, 2003; Fukuyama, 1995; Jarett et al., 2005; Putnam et al., 1993; Zaff et al., 2010) that research trust and civic engagement treat them as part of the general concept of social capital, or as causally linked notions.

Much of social research presents high levels of societal trust as an indicator of positive/desired social conditions: Fukuyama's analyses present trust as a signifier of solidarity, cohesion, and economic development (Fukuyama, 1995); in the research of other authors societal trust is a relevant factor for the support of the development of democratic processes in societies (Muller & Seligson, 1994). In social capital theories, it is considered as both the cause and effect of a high level of civic engagement (Putnam et al., 1993). Finally, many studies (Badescu & Uslaner, 2003; Rotter, 1980) link social capital to a factor that suppresses immoral behavior – those who believe that others can be trusted are less likely to lie, cheat or steal, and vice versa: low levels of societal trust lead to the erosion of respect for normative rules.

There are several reasons for the interest in young people as a distinct social group. Firstly, this is tied to the need for creating and improving the conditions for integrating young people in society. In this aspect, according to Ilišin and associates (Ilišin et al., 2013), young people are viewed from two (contradictory) aspects – on the one hand, they are expected to be a factor of stability, adopting accepted patterns of values and behavior, and on the other hand, to be leaders and drivers of dynamic social change. The authors point out that the relevance of research interest in young people as a distinct social category is primarily tied to their generally unfavorable social status in comparison to adults, which is manifested in their weaker integration into social life and the development of specific, generationally shaped subcultural behavior patterns. (Ibid.)<sup>4</sup>

Youth is a period of transition/shift from childhood to adulthood. In the last few decades there has been a tendency to increase the age range to identify young people as a social group. This is partly due to the phenomenon of "extended youth," characterized by extended formal education, difficult and inadequate labor market participation, delayed socio-economic independence, postponed plans to start a family, and lowered participation in the decision-making processes in society, i.e., the transition into adulthood is a lengthier and more uncertain process. These processes, the weakening of the links with the primary groups, above all family, leads young people to an uncertain search for identity and individual strategies for social integration.

What is especially relevant in the Ilišin et al study is the finding that there are increased risks, both by number and intensity, to the social integration of young people from post-socialist societies. Namely, the youth in these societies are faced with the process of "double transition" (Ilišin et al., 2013, p. 10), since their personal transformation takes place in societies

that are at the same time in a process of fundamental transformation, in unstable conditions, in processes and social norms and values that are unstable. The authors emphasize a few processes that complicate the social integration of young people in post-socialist societies:

- increase in social differences and inequality of educational opportunities;
- increased competitiveness on the labor market and insecure employment;
- increased crime and other deviant behavior;
- decreased quality of healthcare;
- transition of value systems;
- weakened transgenerational transmission of values (Ilišin et al., 2013).

One relevant aspect in the development of young people is the forging of personal relationships between them and the adults in the wider community. In the framework of this transition, these relationships provide the resources and benefits – social capital – that contribute to an easier transition into the world of adults (Benson in Jarett et al., 2005). In this context, Jarett and associates conclude that this supports not only the socialization of adolescents (whereby the authors particularly emphasize interaction with adults), but also the development of a healthy civil society. Through the interaction with prosocial individuals, young people are socialized in terms of shared norms,<sup>5</sup> are encouraged to take up relevant social roles and to prepare for leadership roles in their communities and in society as a whole (Putnam, 2000).

According to Bassani (2007), who builds on Coleman's research, studying relationships, norms and trust among young people is important because social capital is a factor of well-being. Namely, research has not only identified it as the only form of capital that contributes to youth well-being, but also as a form of capital that contributes to the strengthening and development of other forms of capital (financial, human, cultural, material).

The subject of this study is social capital among young high school and university students in North Macedonia. The initial idea for a more detailed study of the opinions of high school students on this topic is related to the study "Capitulation, Confusion or Resistance: Social Capital among High school Students" (Korunovska Srbijanko et al., 2011), which is a comprehensive study researching social capital among young people in North Macedonia. In the period after the publication of the study, the country was involved in deep political and social turmoil, in the context of which a number of authentic attempts for youth organizing and action emerged.<sup>6</sup> It was precisely these events that sparked interest in revisiting the conditions and the status of young people in North Macedonia, and the issue of social capital as a relevant category for socialization and activism. In this context, the study builds upon the Youth Educational Forum's study from 2011 (Korunovska Srbijanko et al., 2011) in terms of determining and comparing the relationships, values, and norms that impact the development and expression of social capital, comparing the conditions and determining the attitudes and practice of freedom of expression among young people.

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## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main goal of the study is to determine the social capital (defined as a network of shared norms, values, and understanding that support cooperation in and among groups (Put-

nam, 2000)), attitudes towards and forms of civic engagement, as well as attitudes and practice of freedom of expression among young high school and university students in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The findings of the study, the recommendations, and its entire contents aim to contribute to the knowledge base on social capital among youth in the Republic of North Macedonia, but also to raise awareness among stakeholders about developing social capital among young people.

The study was conducted between October and December 2018. The study used quantitative methodology (a survey questionnaire) to determine the environment for developing social capital, attitudes towards and forms of civic engagement, as well as attitudes and practice of freedom of expression among young high school and university students in the Republic of North Macedonia.

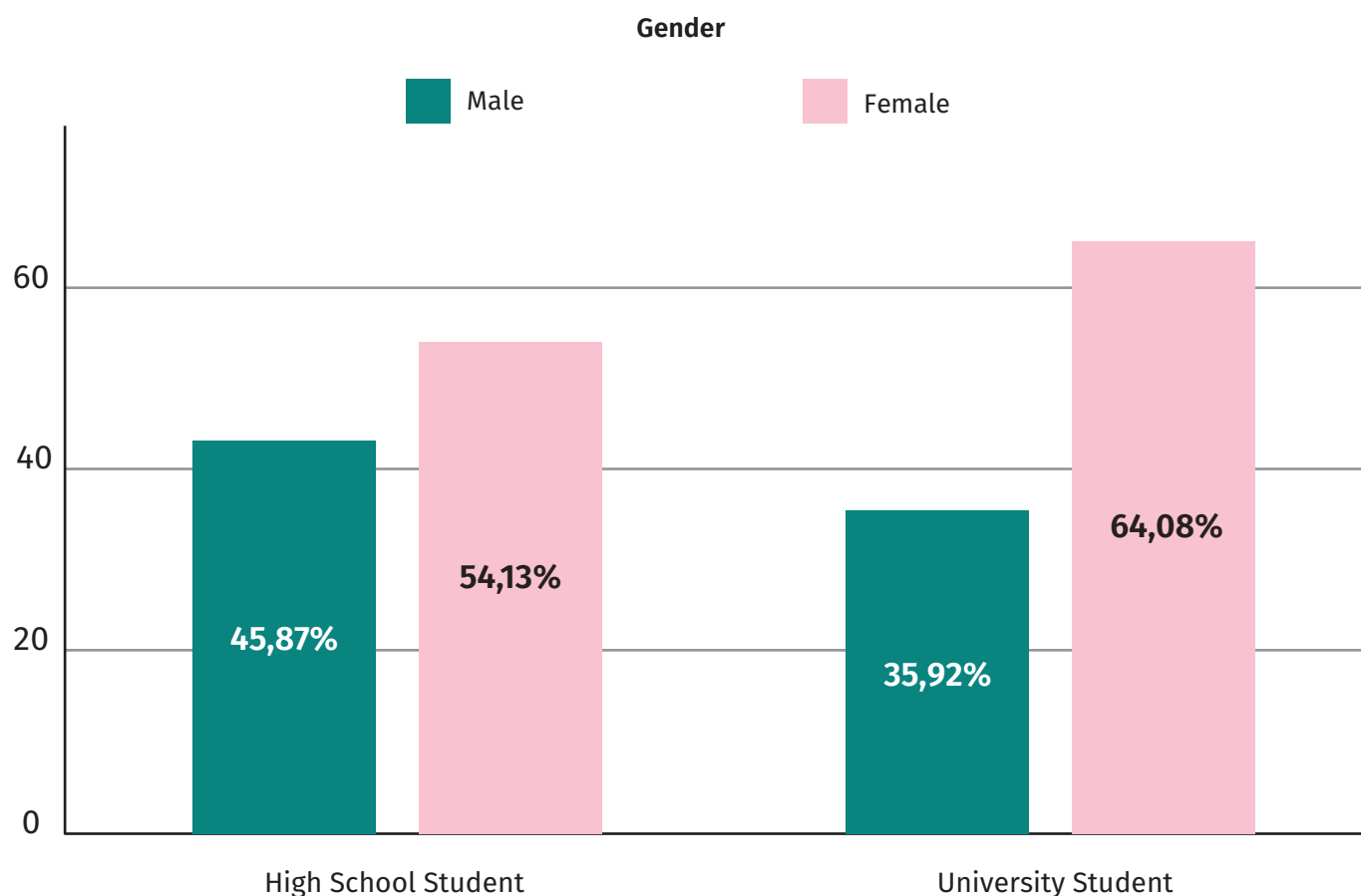
The study was conducted on a stratified sample that included all statistical regions of the country. In determining the target population of high school students, we used the last available data on students enrolled in the public high schools in the Republic of North Macedonia in the 2016/2017 school year, published by the State Statistical Office. The number of students in each high school was distributed in percentages based on the number of students enrolled in the school year. The study was conducted in eight cities, determined as regional centers of the statistical regions in the Republic of North Macedonia: Skopje, Tetovo, Bitola, Veles, Strumica, Ohrid, Kumanovo, and Shtip. Based on the selection of cities, we included a suitable number of high schools (general education and vocational schools) in order to obtain relevant data on the target group.

In order to also gain insight into the social capital among university students, the survey included students from the public higher education institutions in the country. The selection and size of the sample by institution were determined based on data from the State Statistical Office for 2018, resulting in a stratified sample of students based on the percentages of enrolled students in public higher education institutions, as well as gender and ethnicity. The data collection process was completed between October 15th and December 10th.

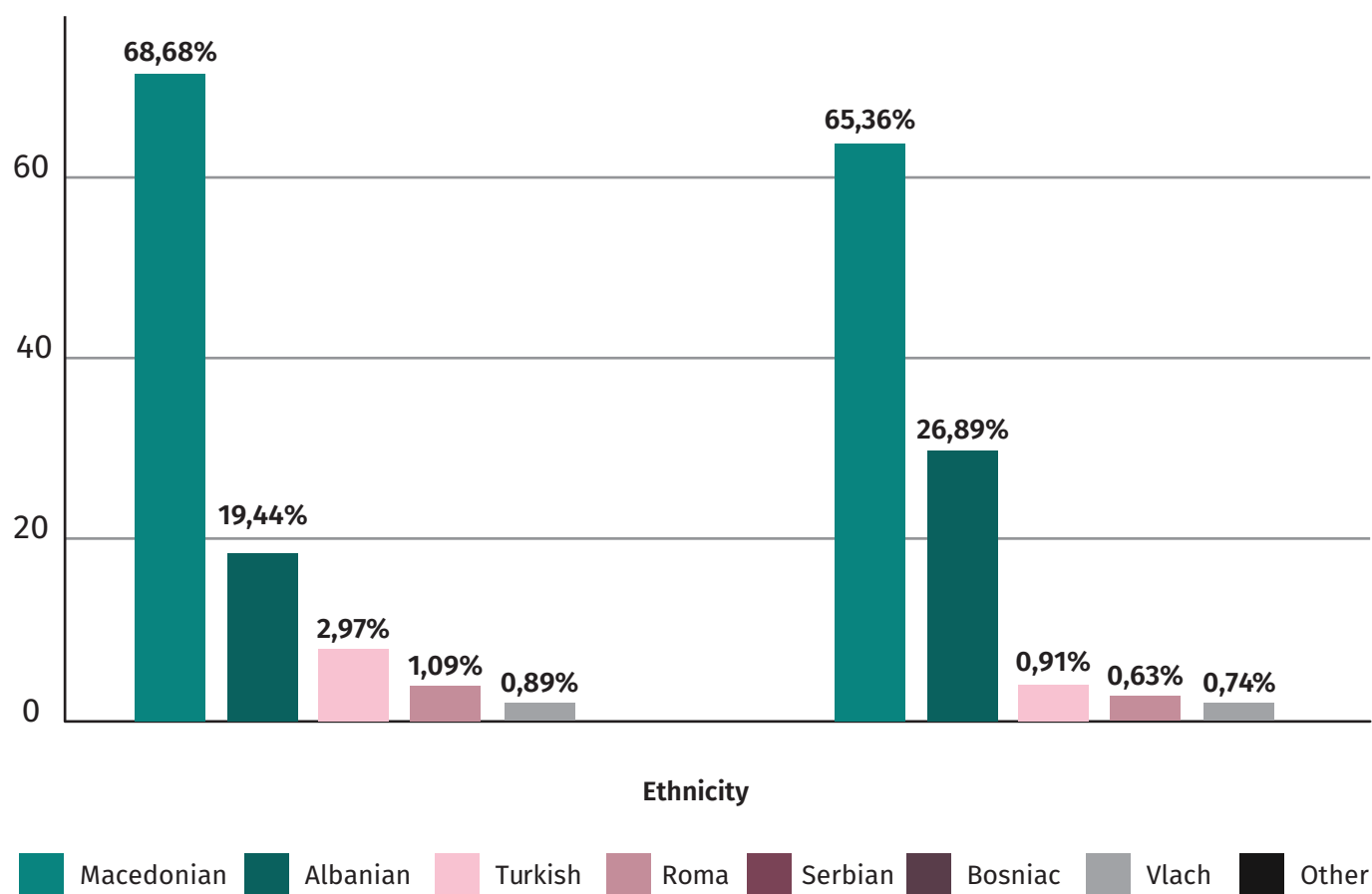
Two instruments – questionnaires – were designed for the purposes of the study. The first questionnaire was used on a sample<sup>7</sup> of 1,960 participants – students from high schools in the Republic of Macedonia. The questionnaire contains 50 questions, divided in sections: civic engagement and volunteer work, attitudes towards education, family and trust in others and institutions, conventional citizenship, and freedom of expression. The questionnaire was designed in a way that allows comparison with the results from the study conducted by YEF and Reactor in 2011 (Korunovska Srbijanko et al., 2011), where the target group was limited to students from the high schools in the country. The second instrument contains the same groups of questions, with certain adaptations to the experiences and conditions relevant to the target group – 1,833 students in public higher education institutions in the country.<sup>8</sup> The choice to limit the sample to students in public institutions was due to the fact that students were enrolled predominantly in these institutions (in 2018, 85.7% of students studied in public higher education institutions, while 13.9% were enrolled in private higher education institutions),<sup>9</sup> and because of easier access to students, an opportunity afforded through previously established cooperation with these educational institutions.



**Figure 1. High school and university students by gender, in percentages, 2018**



**Figure 2. High school and university students by ethnicity, in percentages, 2018**



Both questionnaires included questions cited in research relevant to the study of youth populations and used in a number of large national studies: the Belgian Youth Survey 2006, the survey conducted by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement CIRCL, the Zaff et al questionnaire, the questionnaire from the study conducted by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education FIRE, as well as YouGov from 2017 (Naughton, 2017). Part of the questions were designed for the purposes of the study, and part were adapted to correspond to the local context. The designed questions covered the following topics:

- questions on activism in the community and volunteer work;
- questions on the knowledge of and participation in decision-making processes in the educational institution;
- questions to measure trust in others and institutions;
- questions on participation in democratic processes (voting in elections);
- questions on attitudes and conduct with regard to freedom of speech.

The process of data collection, especially among students who at the time of the survey were underage, was conducted with permission from the Ministry of Education and Science and the Bureau for Development of Education, to whom the complete research methodology and sample was submitted prior to the survey. The collected data was subject to statistical processing, whereby the statistical analysis included a comparison with the results from the study conducted in 2011,<sup>10</sup> as well as an analysis based on a number of socio-demographic factors: gender, ethnicity, type of education. In terms of the last category, the comparison between the high school students was based on whether the students are enrolled in general or vocational education. In the case of the university students, the sample was divided based on the area of study: natural sciences, medicine, technical sciences, social sciences, bio-technical sciences, and the arts. Each question was analyzed for differences based on gender, ethnicity, and type of education (general or vocational education, area of study), but only statistically significant differences are presented in the results.

## 3. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

### 3.1. *Young People's Problems and Interests*

The first, introductory group of questions attempted to identify the key areas of interest for young high school and university students in the country, as well as their views and opinions on the main problems in their communities, and the problems that are relevant to young people as a category. This group of questions attempted to provide an overview of how young people experience the world around them, how interested they are in various types of events (economic, political, societal) in the community, as well as how they participate in it.

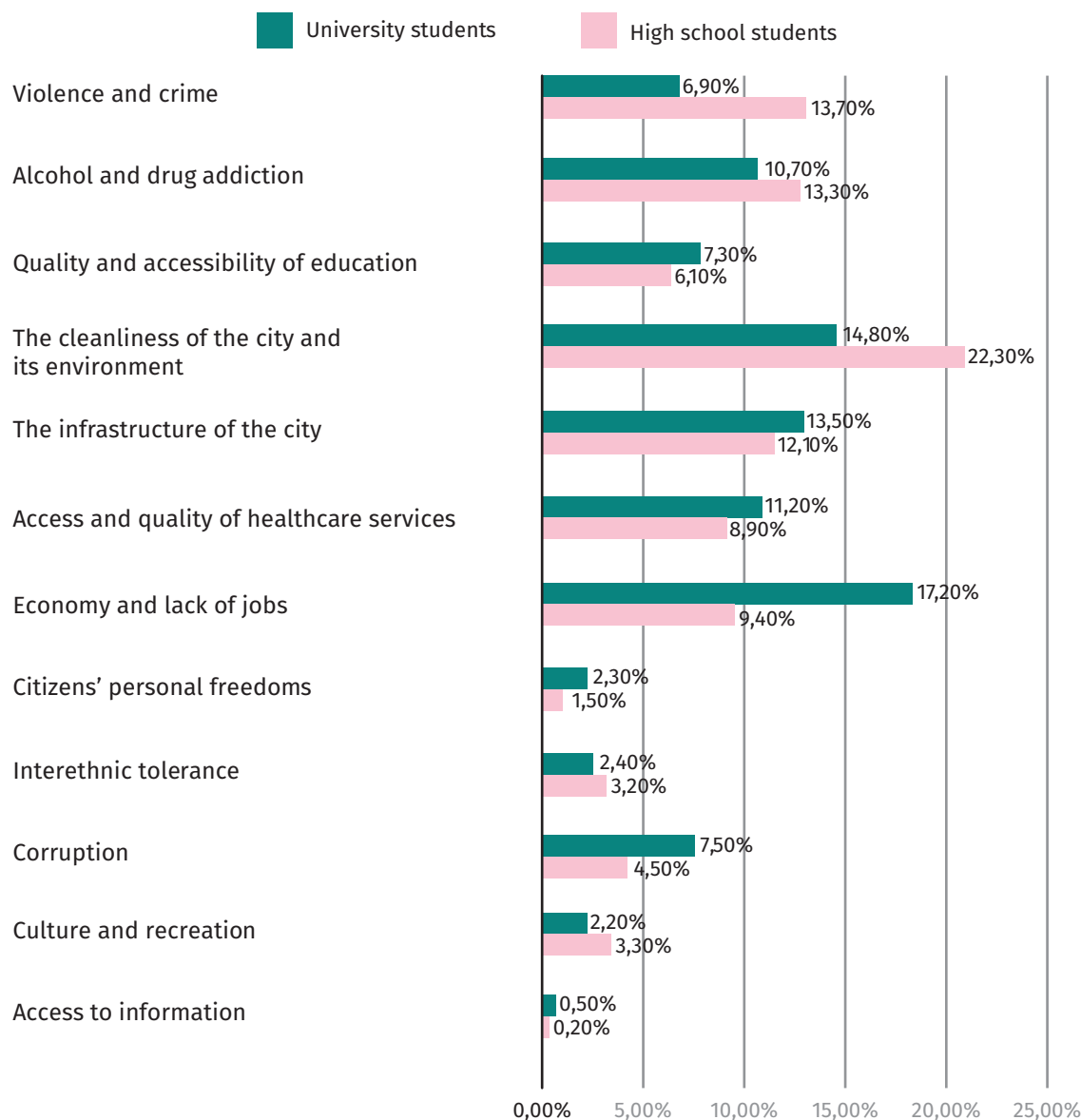
#### 3.1.1. *Ranking problems in the community*

In order to determine their attitudes to events in the community<sup>11</sup>, the participants were asked to identify the biggest problem in their community that they would like to see resolved. The participants were given twelve different problems and were asked to select the most significant one. In this context, the cleanliness of the city and its environment was selected by high school students as the most pressing problem (22.3%). The least prioritized problems, according to the high school students, are access to information (which was selected by only 0.17% of the participants) and citizens' personal freedoms (1.49%). Compared to the findings from 2011, where the biggest problem identified was a weak economy and the lack of jobs for

young people (19.8%), this issue was considered to be most significant by only 9.43% of the participants in 2018.

On the other hand, for university students, who as a social category are closer to participating in the labor market, the biggest problem identified was the weak economy and the lack of jobs (17.81%). When it comes to the lowest ranked problems, like the high school students they also were least likely to choose access to information (0.48%) and citizens' personal freedoms (2.3%). The results of the responses from the high school students and the university students are presented in Figure 3.

**Figure 3. Prioritizing problems in the community, comparison between high school and university students, 2018**



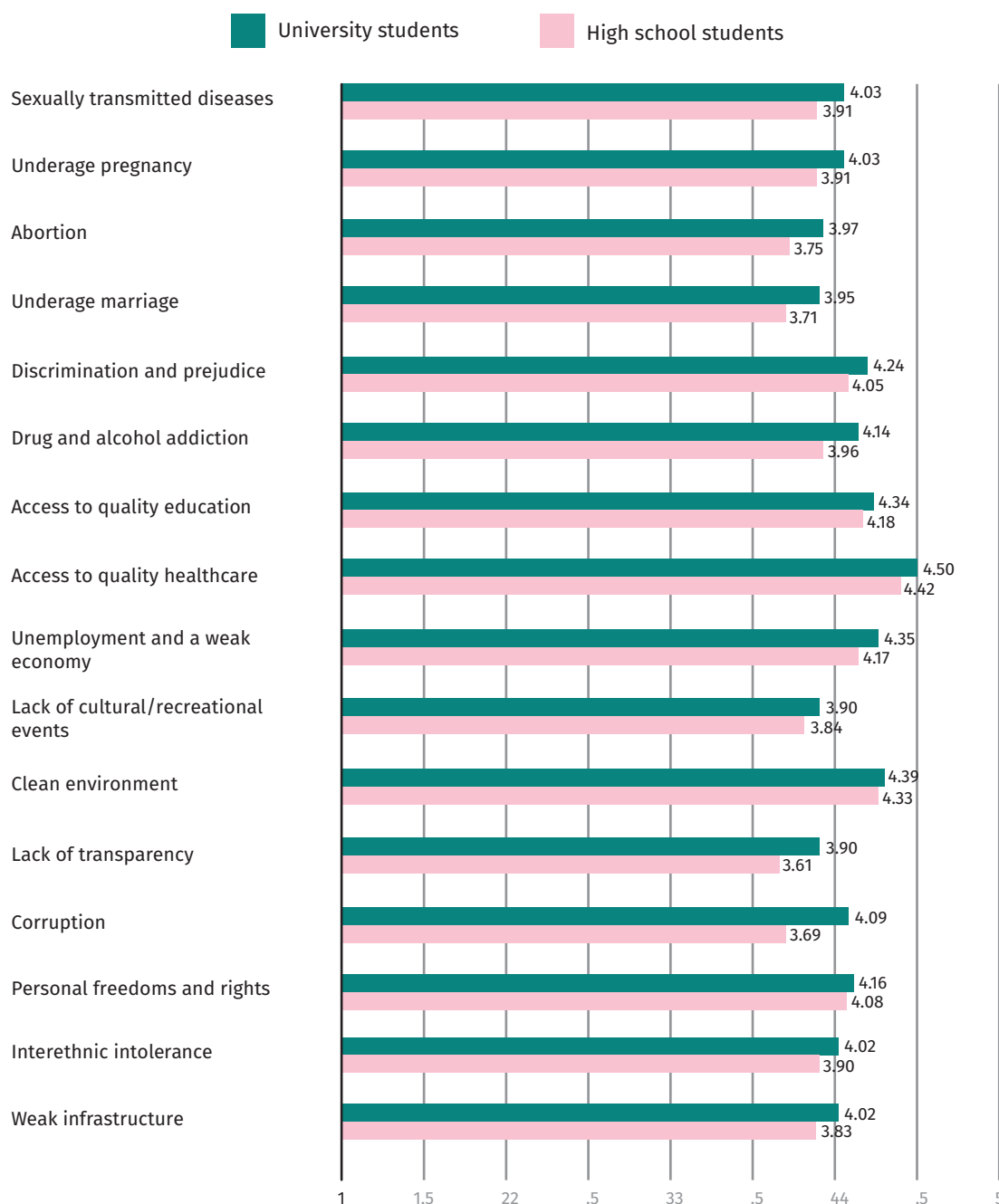
### 3.1.2. Problems young people are faced with

In terms of identifying the problems that are most relevant to young people as a specific category, the participants were given the option to respond to a number of proposed problems on a scale from 1 to 5.<sup>12</sup> The analysis of the data from the entire sample of participants (both high school and university students) reveals that young people in North Macedonia are most concerned about maintaining a clean environment (mean value of responses: high school students – 4.33, university students – 4.39), which corresponds to the question about problems in

the community, as well as access to quality healthcare (mean value of responses: high school – 4.42; university – 4.52). Of all the listed problems, young people are least concerned with lack of transparency and lack of access to information (mean value of responses: high school - 3.61; university 3.9). Compared to the findings from the 2011 analysis, we did not note a significant difference in terms of young people’s concerns with various issues, i.e., in 2011 high school students provided the same answers to the same question, that they are most concerned with a clean environment and access to quality healthcare.

Overall, university students show more concern about the listed potential problems in the community compared to the high school students. If we consider the mean values of the responses, the two categories of students reveal a high level (mean value above 4) of concern over a number of problems: access to quality education (high school – 4.18; university – 4.34), unemployment and a weak economy (high school – 4.17; university – 4.35), citizens’ personal freedoms and rights (high school – 4.08; university – 4.16), discrimination and prejudice (high school – 4.06; university – 4.24). The results of the responses from the high school and university students are provided in Figure 4.

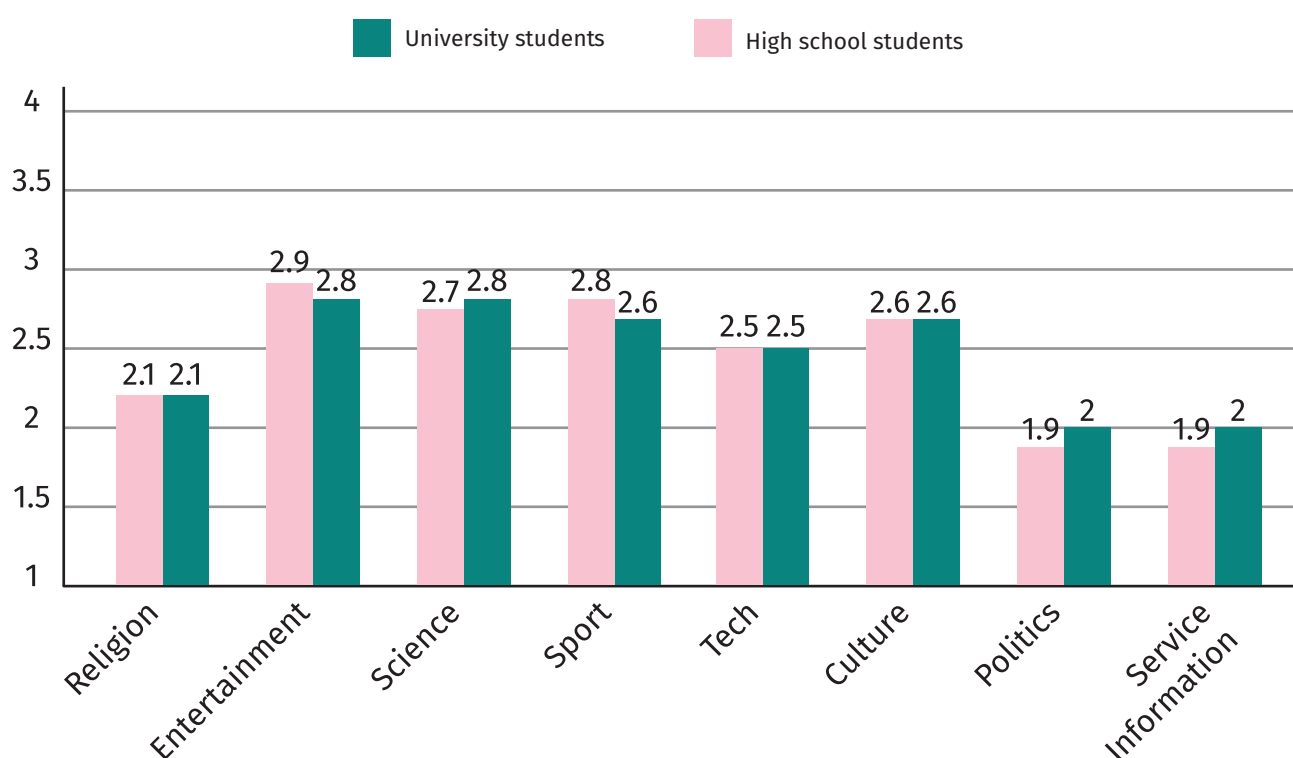
**Figure 4. Problems that young people face, comparison between high school and university students, 2018**



### 3.1.3. Extra-curricular activities, hobbies, and interests

Young people's interests were measured using a self-assessment of how frequently they follow content in various areas, i.e., topics that they follow daily, frequently, sometimes, and topics that they never follow.<sup>13</sup> The relevance of these questions to the subject of the study is derived from the fact that they provide information about young people's various interests, and by extension, potential interest in joining groups in the public sphere, as well as general interest in participating groups and networks that contribute to building social capital. The results from the overall sample reveal that young people are most interested in entertainment, sports and scientific information, which confirms the dominant interest in topics of personal development. High school and university students are least interested and are least likely to follow political content, service information and religious topics. The results of the responses from the high school and university students are provided in Figure 5.

**Figure 5. Frequency of following content on various topics, 2018**



When it comes to high school students' extra-curricular activities, most of them are drawn to activities that contribute to personal development, such as learning a foreign language (62%) and membership in sports clubs (44.9%). About 7.4% are involved with a civic organization, while slightly over 10% said that they do not participate in any activities.

The dominant interests in free time activities are the same for university students, although a lower percentage of them responded that they participate in the two most selected categories of activities (foreign languages – 54% and sports clubs – 32.4%). It is notable that an even lower percentage of university students compared to high school students are involved with civic organizations, at 2.51%. Almost one in five students (17.7%) are not involved in any additional activities outside of their studies, which is a significant indicator of the low level of inclusion of this group in the public sphere.





### **3.2. Civic Engagement and Volunteer Work**

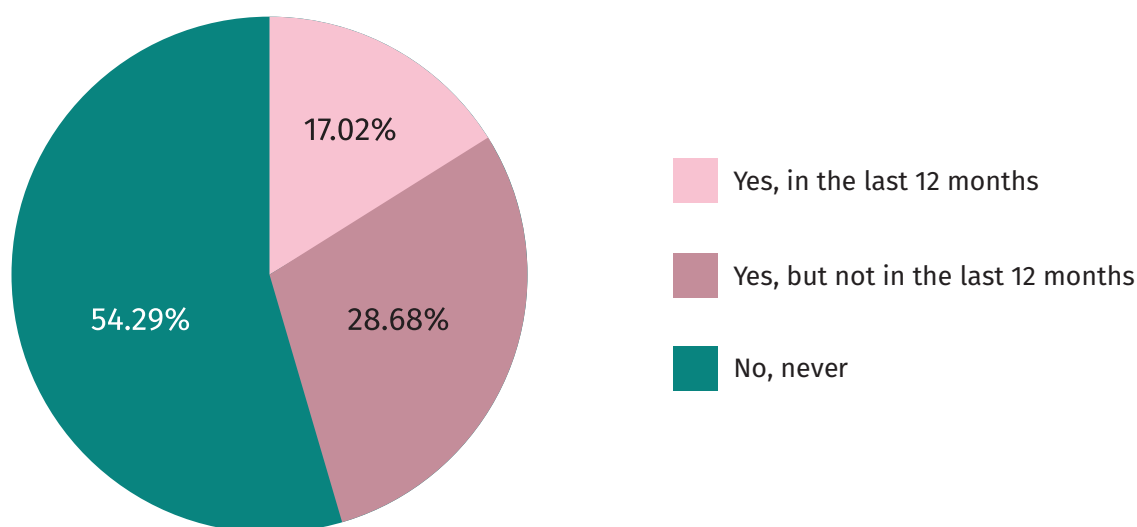
The questions on civic engagement and activism are relevant because they provide insight into the existing forms of engagement among young people in the community, the scope and quality of the relationships in the community outside of the primary groups – engagement in interest groups, cooperation with others to realize common (personal or societal) goals. In other words, these questions provide insight into the readiness and openness among young people for activities and engagement in the community, for creating and participating in networks for cooperation and support, which is one of the key features of the concept of social capital. The problem of civic engagement is one of the key challenges in the development of democratic societies. Civic engagement refers to various individual or group activities that work towards solving problems that are of public interest. The problem of low civic participation is traditionally more prominent in societies with a fragile democratic culture, undeveloped democratic institutions, and a low level of trust in abstract systems. From this aspect, building a culture of civic engagement is a relevant aspect of the socialization of young people and their inclusion in the social system. Civic engagement and activism are also main factors in building and simultaneously effectuating social capital.

#### **3.2.1. Youth engagement in activities to solve a certain problem in the city in which they live**

The study attempted to also gain insight into the readiness, interest, and level of inclusion of high school and university students in various forms of cooperation with other people, with the goal of solving certain problems in their local communities. The results of the study show that more than half of the high school students (54%) included in the study have never participated in this type of activity, 28.7% have not had this type of experience in the last 12 months, while only 17% responded that they had participated in activities that attempted to solve a problem in their communities in the last 12 months (the results from the high school students' responses are provided in Figure 6). Compared to the 2011 study (where 37.2% of high school students were engaged in this type of activity), we note a slight increase in the total percentage of students that have community engagement experience, but this increase is largely in the category of youth that participate in community engagement activities less frequently. The data comparison shows that even after eight years, the percentage of young people who engage in these activities is relatively low. The relevance of these results lies in the

fact that this type of engagement is an indicator for developing and effectuating social capital, revealing that despite potential changes in the circumstances that define social inclusion and engagement among young people, this does not translate into reality.

**Figure 6. Community engagement among high school students, in percentages, 2018**



When it comes to the university students, the percentages are almost identical – more than half of those surveyed have never participated in solving problems in their communities, while just under one in three participate in these types of activities infrequently (did not participate in the preceding year). The results from the responses of the university students are presented in Figure 7. In terms of type of studies, arts students stand out in that one in five has participated in some activity in the past year, and an additional 40% have done so in the more distant past.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 7. Community engagement among university students, in percentages, 2018**

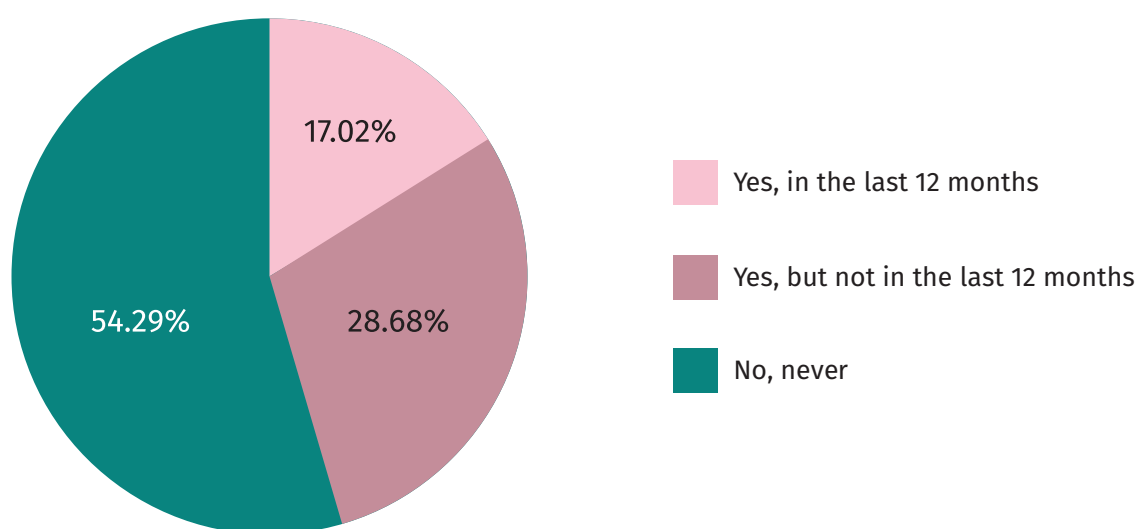


Table 1. Community engagement among university students, by type of studies, 2018

Have you ever worked on or participated in an activity with someone else or in a group to solve a certain problem in the city in which you live?			
Type of studies	Yes, in the last 12 months	Yes, but not in the last 12 months	No, never
Natural Sciences	14,9 %	23,4 %	61,7 %
Medicine	12,2 %	37,6 %	50,2 %
Technical Sciences	13,6 %	31,7 %	54,7 %
Social Sciences	15,2 %	27,7 %	57,1 %
Bio-technical Sciences	10,5 %	30,1 %	59,4 %
Arts	22,9%	40,0 %	37,1 %



### 3.2.2. Participation in volunteer work

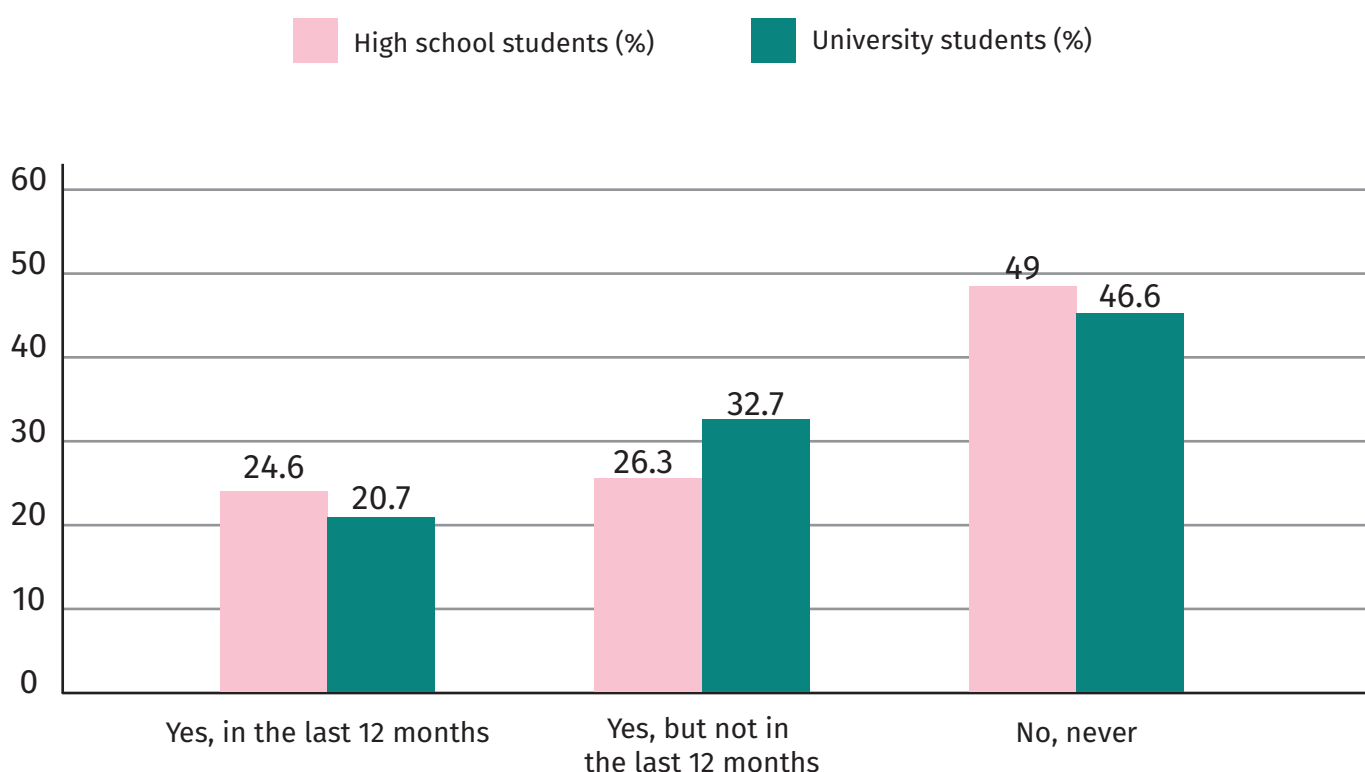
When asked whether they have ever participated in some type of activity as a volunteer, the findings again indicate a low level of inclusion of young people in civic engagement: namely, almost half (49%) of the surveyed high school students have never volunteered. This is almost identical to their peers from the 2011 study (51.2%), i.e., there is no statistically significant difference between the two generations of surveyed high school students. This question again confirms the lack of a culture of altruism and a sense of responsibility towards the community.

Among the university students, the percentage of those who have never volunteered is somewhat lower (46.61%) compared to the high school sample, but the percentage of those who have participated in some type of volunteer work is still below one in five (the data is



provided in Figure 8). In this case too the arts students set themselves apart, as a significantly higher percentage among them have participated in volunteer activities (65% of arts students have volunteered in the past). This engagement tends to increase familiarity with and inclusion of students in the civil society sector. Namely, based on the responses to the other questions about the engagement of students with various groups and activities, we can conclude that the familiarity and engagement with civil society organizations results in greater interest and readiness to volunteer.

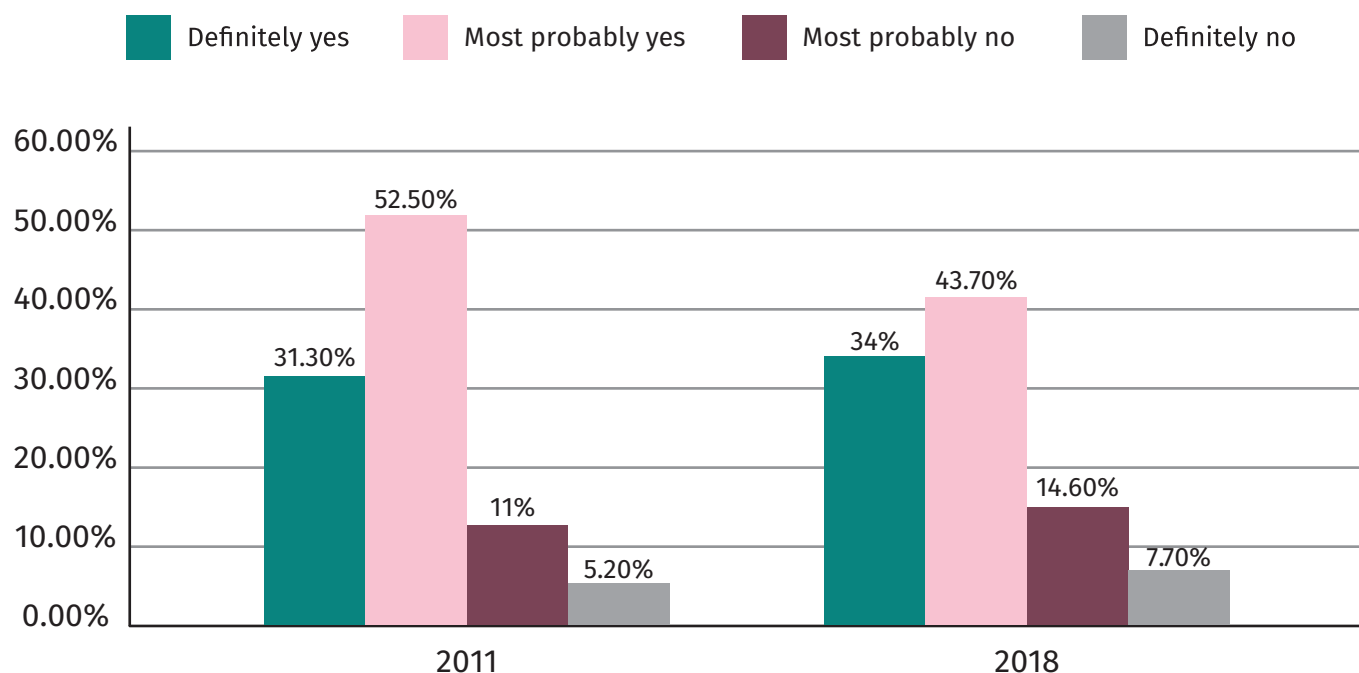
**Figure 8. Participation in volunteer work among high school and university students, 2018**



These findings confirm that an exceptionally small percentage of young people showed a more substantial interest in active participation and cooperation towards solving problems in their communities through volunteer work. The interpretation of this finding should be viewed also in the context of trust in social institutions and the self-perception of one's own potential in the community, which are considered key factors in creating an enabling environment for developing social capital among young people.

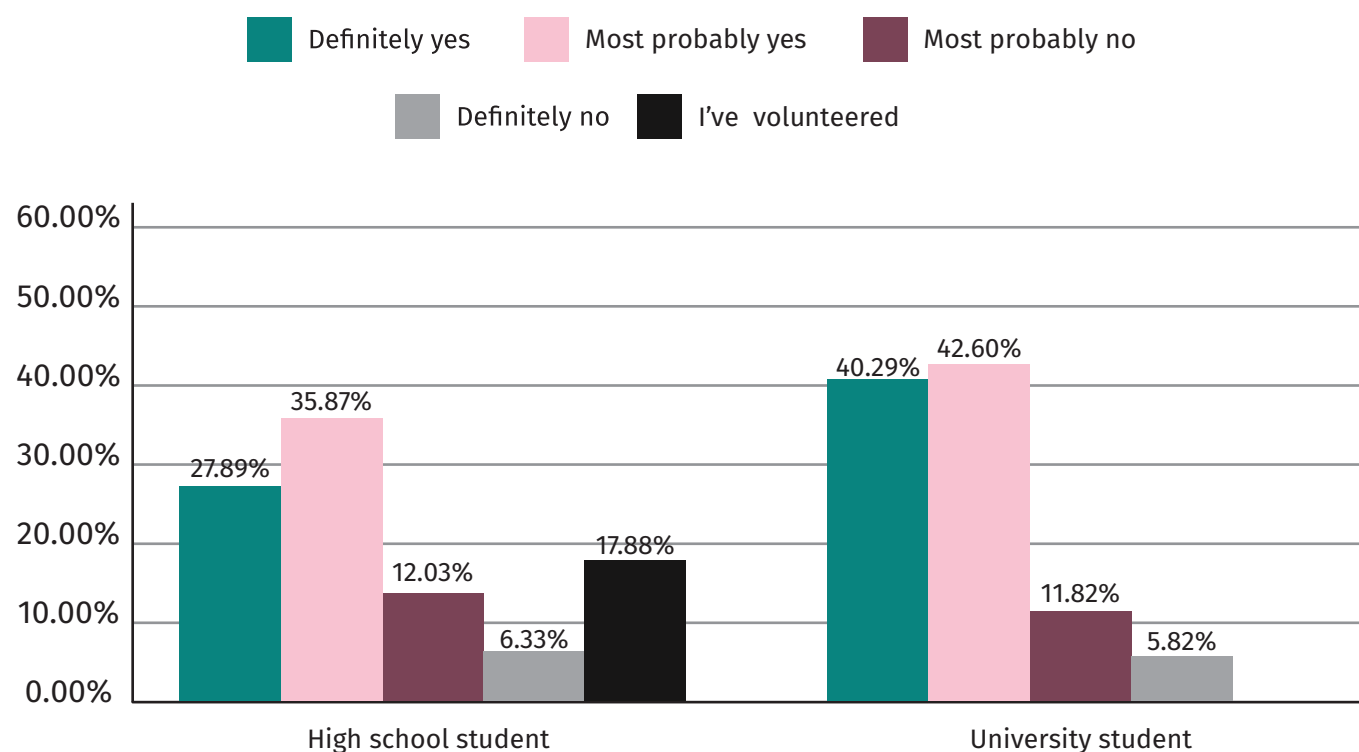
Regardless of the level of involvement of participants in volunteer work, it was also relevant to examine their readiness and interest in becoming involved in this type of activity in the future. In general, high school students showed interest in volunteer work, as about 77% responded that they are willing to get involved in volunteer work at some point (this is a cumulative percentage of students who said that will definitely or most likely volunteer). Even though this is a relatively high percentage, it should be noted that almost one in five high school students who took part in the survey said that they would never volunteer. When it comes to this question, we note an increase in the percentage of students who are not interested in volunteering, compared to 2011 (the findings are presented in Figure 9). The analysis of the data by gender revealed that young women are more interested in volunteer work compared to the young men (82.2% of high school girls replied that they would definitely or most likely volunteer, compared to 72.2% of high school boys).

**Figure 9. Interest in volunteer work among high school students (2011 and 2018 studies), in percentages**



The percentage of university students interested in volunteer work is somewhat higher (the cumulative percentage of students who are willing to volunteer is 82.3%) compared to the high school students. Once again, women (85.7%) are more willing to participate in volunteer work compared to men (77%).

**Figure 10. Interest in volunteer work among high school and university students, 2018**



In order to identify the motivation factors for volunteer work among young people, the high school and university students who responded that they had volunteered in the past were asked about what led them to volunteering. The analysis of the responses of the high school

students revealed that most of them did it “for no particular reason” (20.6%). Peers (12.3%) and interest in these types of activities (9%) are next in terms of importance for volunteer work, while school (8.3%) and family (5.4%) are singled out as the least important determinants of volunteer work among high school students in 2018. The relevance of these determinants are in line with the results from the 2011 study. It remains unclear whether the low influence of family and the educational system is due to their low level of engagement in promoting volunteer work, or generally due to the low level of influence they wield over young people.

Based on the responses from the university students, we can conclude that their reasons for volunteering are in line with those of the high school students, with the exception that education (“volunteer work was compulsory for my studies”) and peers carry equal weight in motivating volunteer work, i.e., they were a motivating factor for 13.1% of university students.

### **3.3. Social Inclusion, Opportunities**

#### **3.3.1. Satisfaction with the educational system**

Satisfaction with the educational system was measured with a general question (How is school/university for you?), which asked the high school and university students to respond on a five-point scale.<sup>15</sup> Based on the responses to this question, most high school students have a positive perception of high school: 39.91% said that they have a good time at school, while 36.05% said that they have a great time at school. It should be noted that these findings provide the subjective experiences of those who take part in the educational process, which cannot be directly linked to the quality of education or the forms of engagement of the participants in school activities.

In the responses from the university students, we note a higher percentage of “I’m having a good time” responses – 52.11%, compared to the high school students, but we also note a lower percentage of participants who responded that they are having a great time (24.9%).

#### **3.3.2. Vision of self in the future**

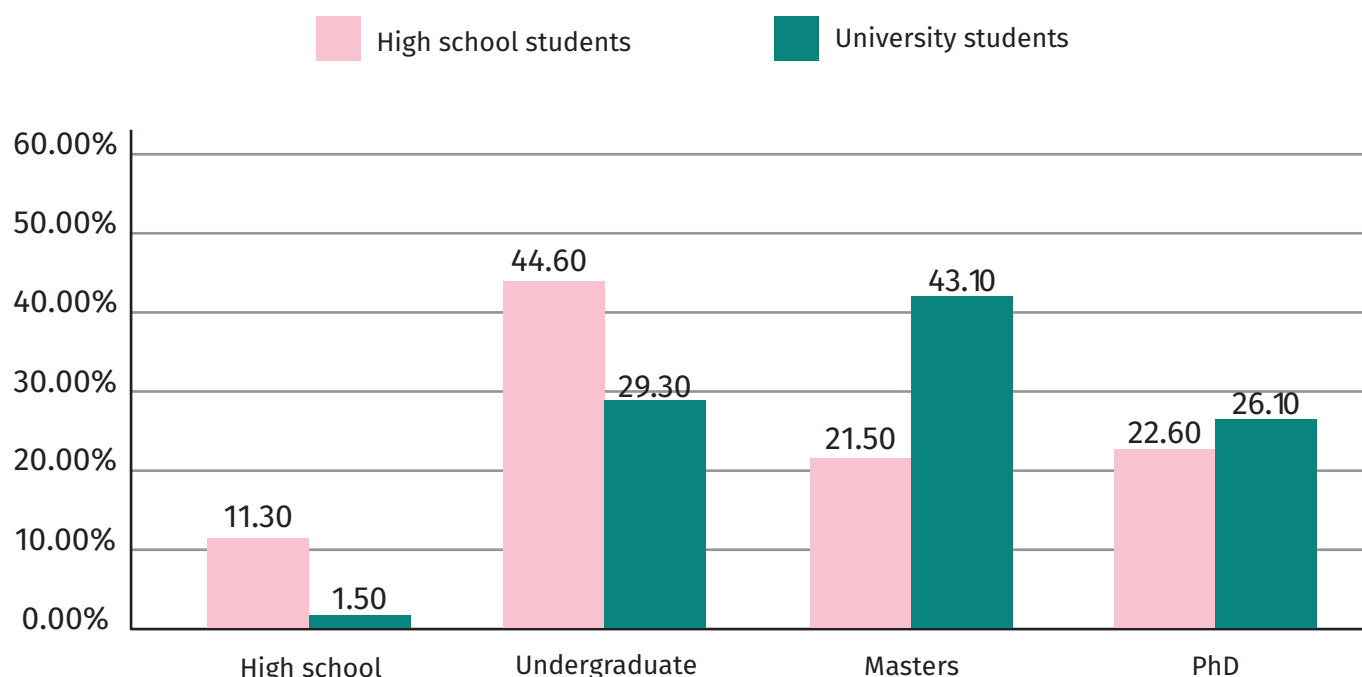
In general, high school students showed interest in continuing their education past high school. The majority of students (44.62%) plan to obtain undergraduate degrees as their highest level of educational attainment, while a relatively high percentage plan to continue their education to postgraduate 21.45% and doctoral studies 22.6% (the findings are presented in Figure 11).

An analysis of the data based on gender revealed that the young women in the survey are more ambitious and would continue their education up to a postgraduate (27.07%) and doctoral degree (26.39%). These percentages are lower among the young men planning to continue up to postgraduate (15.3%) and doctoral (18.23%) degrees.

A significant percentage of students who are already in higher education plan to continue their education beyond the undergraduate level: 43.06% plan to complete postgraduate studies, and 26.12% plan to complete doctoral studies. It should be noted that almost one in four plan to obtain an undergraduate degree as their highest level of educational attainment. These results are to be expected considering the noted trend among young people to be interested in continuing their education beyond undergraduate studies. This can be interpreted as a result of the increased importance of these educational qualifications on the labor market, but also as an attempt to extend time spent in education and delay entry into the labor mar-

ket (which is common in countries with high youth unemployment rates).<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the wording of the questions does not provide sufficient information to allow us to determine the reasons behind the aspirations among participants to continue their education.

**Figure 11. Highest level of planned educational attainment among high school and university students, 2018**

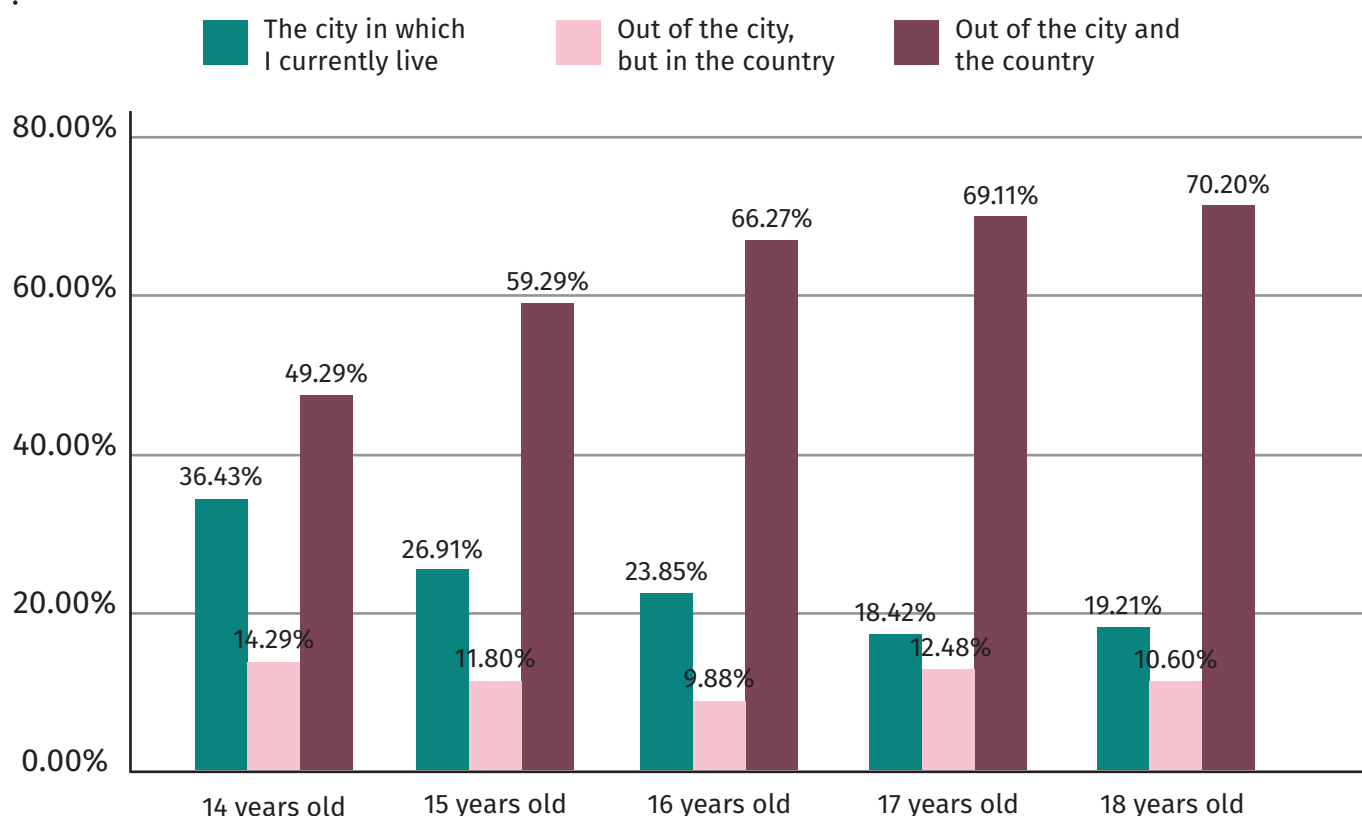


Equally relevant for the outlook in terms of self-realization in society is the vision of where young people plan to build their future. When asked “where do you see yourself in ten years,” high school students mostly envision their future out of the city in which they live and out of the country. Almost two thirds, i.e., 65.09% of participants see themselves out of their current environment in ten years. Current plans to remain in the city in which they live were chosen by 23.54%, while 11.37% of participants see their future in North Macedonia, but in a different city. A comparison with the responses from high school students in the 2011 study reveals similar tendencies – 45.5% of students in 2011 responded that they see their future out of the city and the country, 16.3% would like to stay in the country, but live in a different city, while 38.3% would stay in the city in which they live. The data from the responses of high school students disaggregated by age are provided in Figure 12.

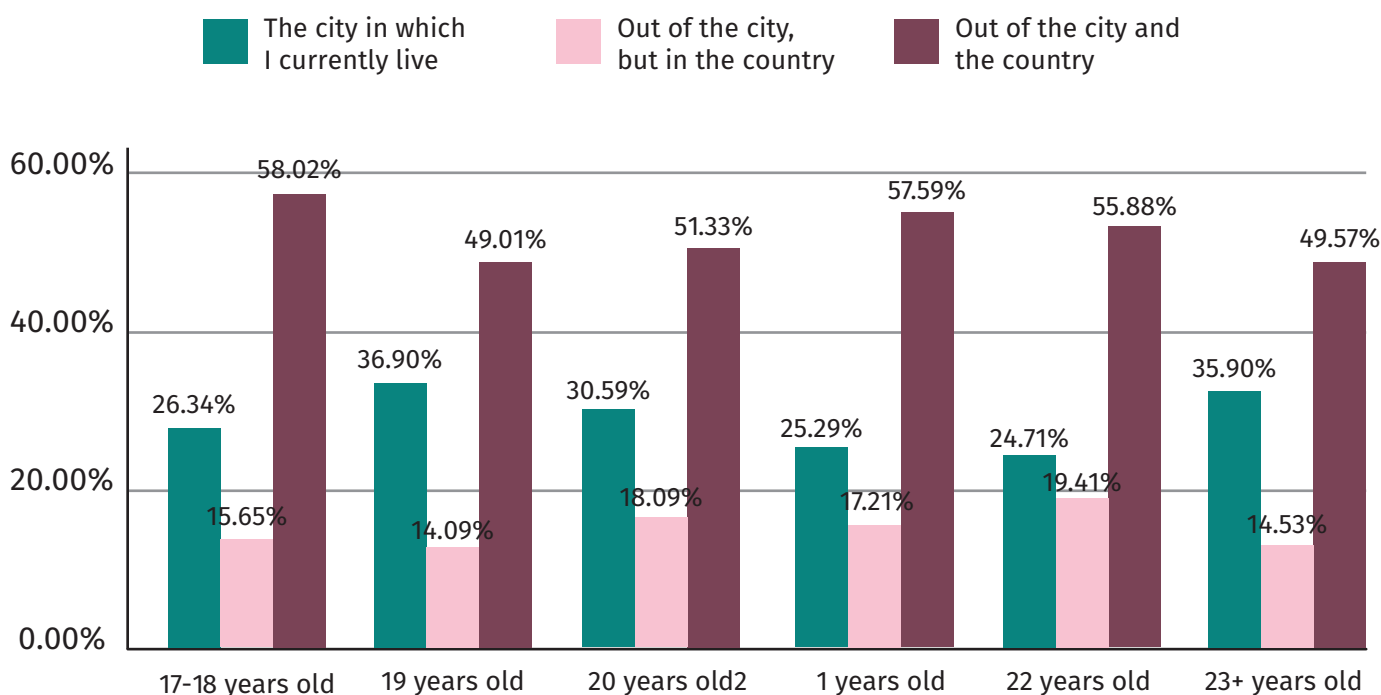
There is a notable upward trend towards emigration with age, and in this context, 49.29% of high school students at 14 years old would leave the city and the country in ten years, compared to the 70.2% among 18-year-olds who do not see themselves in their current environment.

Compared to high school students, university students would leave the country and the city in which they live at lower rates. Nevertheless, even here this percentage is relatively high, as half the students (52.95%) would leave the city and the country, while almost a third – 30.88% – would not leave the city in which they currently live. An analysis of the data based on type of studies revealed that students in technical sciences are the group with the highest percentage of reported interest in building their career abroad, compared to students in other studies. The data from the responses of the students disaggregated by age is provided in Figure 13.

**Figure 12. Interest in emigration among high school students, by age, in percentages, 2018**



**Figure 13. Interest in emigration among university students, by age, in percentages, 2018**

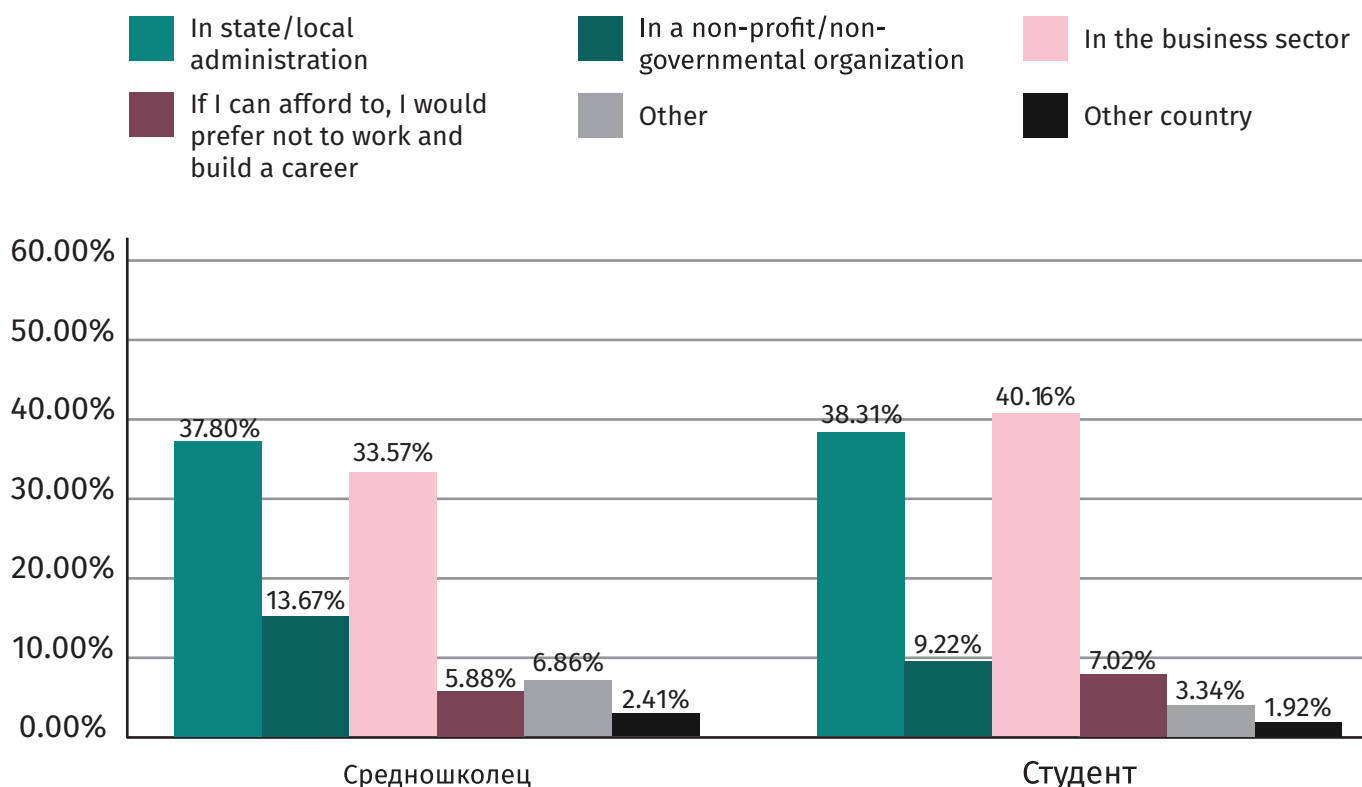


High school and university students were also asked about their professional future plans, in terms of what sector they would like to work in (public sector, private for-profit sector and private non-profit sector, as well as not working at all given the opportunity). The question refers to career planning and the sectors in which young people would choose to build their careers. More than two thirds of high school students would work in state or local administration (37.8%) and in the business sector (33.57%). There is less interest among high school



students in non-profit/non-governmental work, which was chosen by 13.67% of respondents. The responses are provided in Figure 14.

**Figure 14. Preferred work sector among high school and university students, in percentages, 2018**



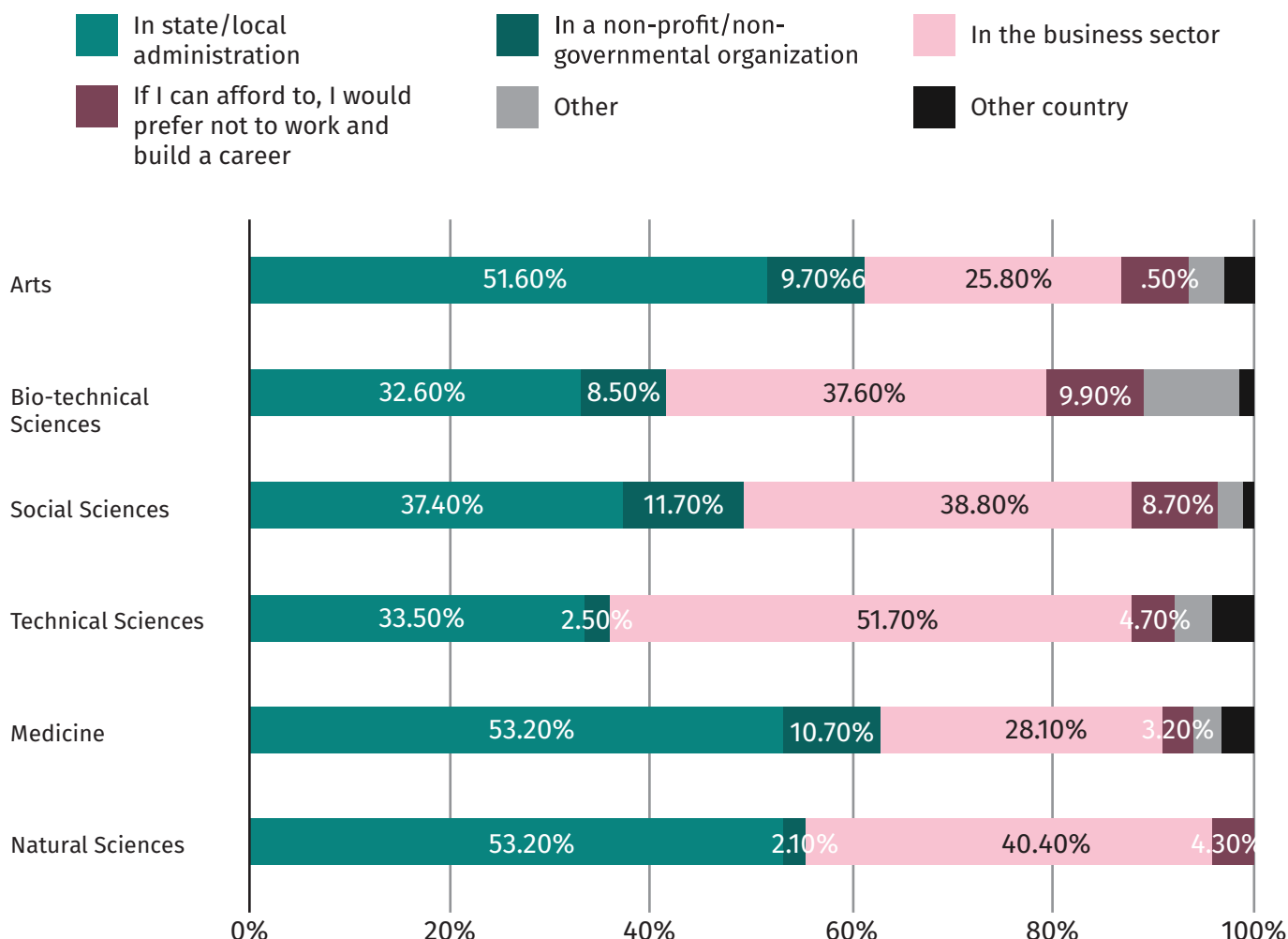
We note an upward trend among university students in interest in the business sector (48.14%), although a high percentage (as was the case with the high school students – 33.6%) would also like to work in state or local administration.



The students in technical sciences, who are more drawn to the business sector, would prefer to steer their career towards this sector – 51.7%. A majority of students from the natural sciences (53.2%) and medicine (52.2%) would choose a career in the state or local administra-

tion. Among those who envision careers in the non-profit sector, the social sciences students make up the majority (11.7%). Furthermore, students from social sciences are equally interested in work in the state institutions (37.4%) and in the private sector (38.8%). The arts students on the other hand are most likely to envision a future in state institutions (51.6%) (Figure 15).

**Figure 15. Preferred work sector among university students, by type of studies, 2018, in percentages.**



### 3.4. Family as a Support System

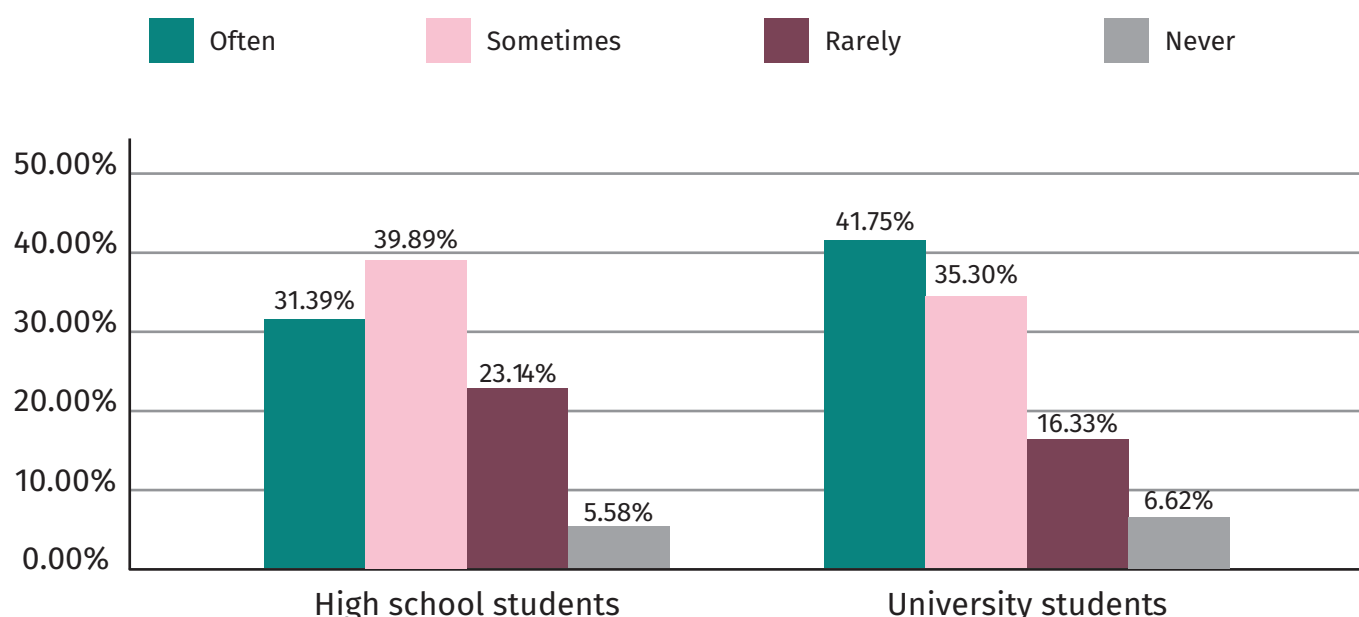
This group of questions attempted to determine the role of one of the significant primary groups – the role of family in developing social capital, i.e., the family's stimulating or inhibiting impact on whether young people actively consider societal problems, the ways in which they can become engaged in the community, and how they do it. These questions are also significant in relation to the attitudes and practices of conventional citizenship – several studies (Abrams, Iversen, & Soskice, 2011; Sinclair, 2012) show that family has a significant impact on their descendants' political socialization and their future behavior in this area.

#### 3.4.1. Young people sharing their opinions on current events and problems with the family

When asked how often they talk about local problems and current events in their city, the high school students' overall response was that they have these conversations with their families relatively frequently. The highest percentage responded that they have these conversations sometimes (39.89%), while 31.89% responded that they frequently discuss problems and events in their area. More than two thirds of high school students are interested in and discuss

current events and problems with their families, even though we did note differences based on ethnicity and gender.<sup>17</sup> The responses from the high school and university students are presented in Figure 16.

**Figure 16. Inclination to discuss current events with the family among high school and university students, 2018**



University students are more likely to share their opinions with their parents and discuss local problems and current events (41.75% of the university students reported that they discuss problems and current events with the family); among them, 6.62% never discuss these topics with their families.

### 3.4.2. Help and support networks

It was also relevant for the study (in the context of trust and the subjective feeling of safety) to determine who young people turn to in times of crises and problems. The primary groups (parents, siblings, friends) are the ones almost two thirds of high school students turn to when they are faced with problems that they are unable to deal with themselves. Almost 11% of high school students said that they deal with their problems themselves. Reliance on the primary groups was also dominant among university students, who reported almost identical percentages (50%) of seeking help and support from parents, siblings (14.2%) and friends (13.4%).

### 3.4.3. Support from the family

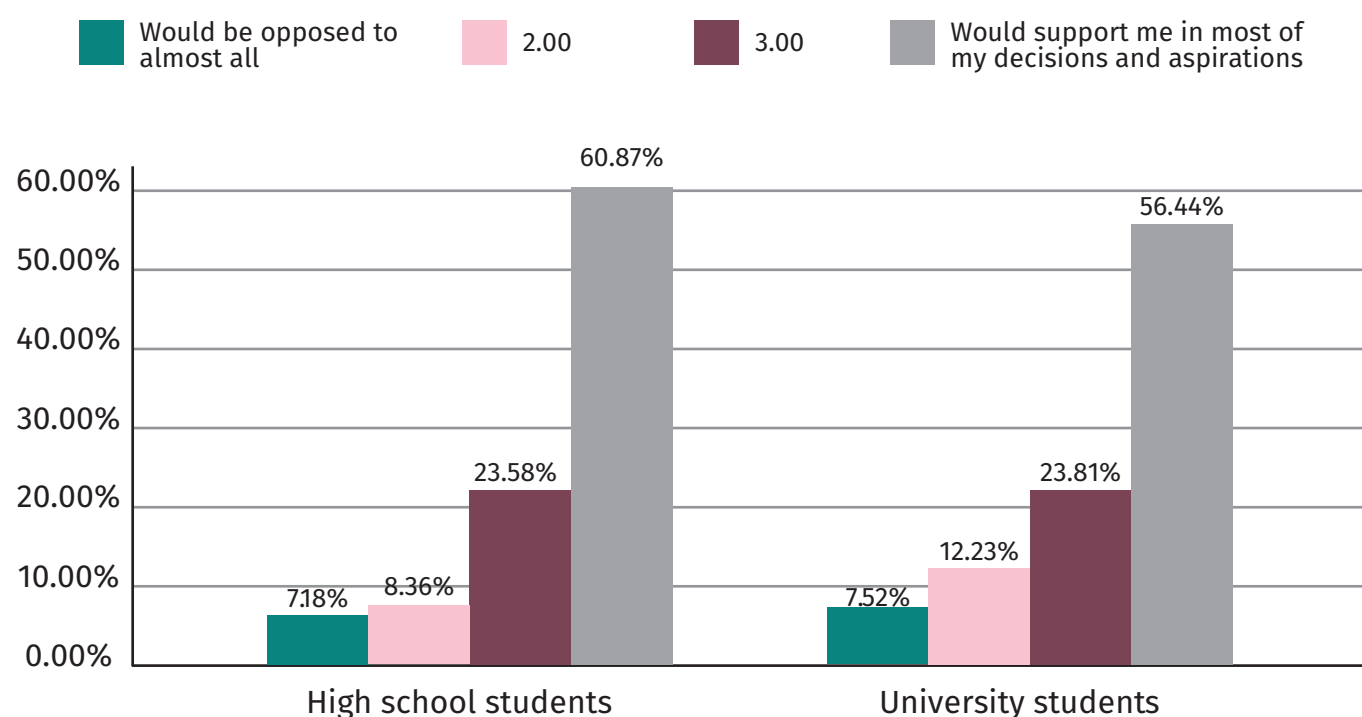
This question measured the participants' perceived parental support for life decisions.<sup>18</sup> More than half of the participants (60.87%) believe that their parents/guardians would fully support them in their decisions and 23.58% expect partial support. From the participants' responses (to this question and the one before it) we can conclude that there is a high level of connection with and trust in one's family and parents. There were no significant differences in the responses of the participants compared to the findings from the 2011 study (63% of the



high school students in 2011 believed that their parents/guardians would fully support their decision-making).

Like the high school students, the data revealed that the majority of university students would also expect to be fully supported by their parents in their decisions and aspirations – 56.4%, and 23.8% expect partial support. The results from the responses from the high school and university students are provided in Figure 17.

**Figure 17. Subjective perception of parental support among high school and university students, in percentages, 2018**



When asked whether they were provided sufficient opportunities to succeed in life, the responses revealed that a significant part of the high school students believe that they were provided all opportunities and have a chance to succeed,<sup>19</sup> which is confirmed by the high percentage of affirmative responses – 41.24%, while an additional 30.6% believe that they have somewhat more opportunities compared to others. The comparison of the data with the 2011 study did not reveal any differences in the responses – 40.2% responded that they were provided with opportunities, while 35.2% believed they were partially provided with opportunities for success.

When it comes to the students, more than a third (36.51%) believe that growing up, they were provided with all opportunities and conditions for success, while 10.3% believe that they have no opportunities and that others had more opportunities than them.

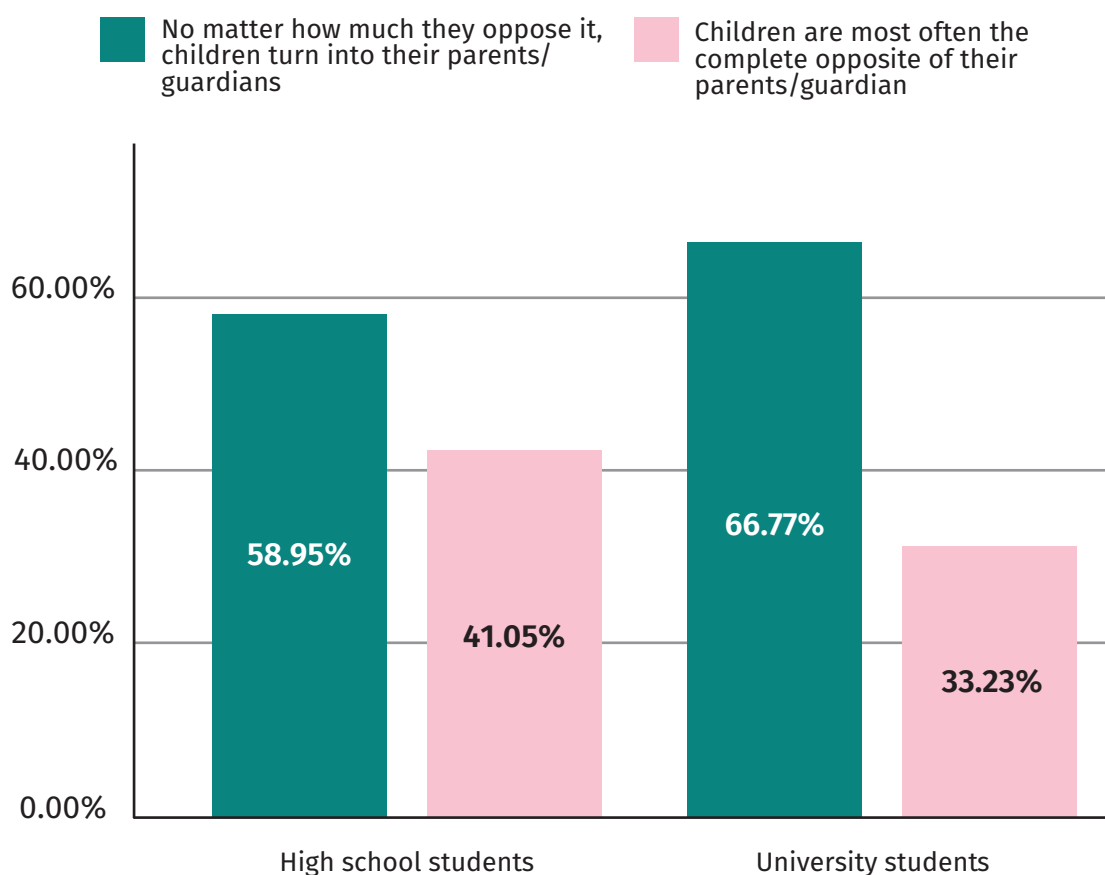
#### 3.4.4. Attitudes on the parent – child relationship

In terms of how big an influence parents/guardians have in forming opinions, the surveyed high school students are divided in the responses. Almost half believe that “children adopt opinions from their parents/guardians” – 45.02%, compared to the “majority” of 54.5%, who responded that “children create their own views.”<sup>20</sup> The distribution of the results was

similar in the 2011 study: “[o]f those who responded, 59.1% said that children create their own views and 40.9% that they adopt the views of their parents” (Korunovska Srbijanko et al., 2011). In the choice between the two extremes, more than half – 55.1% – of the university participants believe that children adopt their parents’ views. Analyzed by gender, the responses show a slight difference between the women and the men, i.e., 54.4% of the women believe that children adopt their parents’ views, compared to 64.4%; however, the difference is not statistically significant.

“No matter how much they oppose it, in the end children turn into their parents.” 58.95% of the high school students believe that this claim is true, while 41.05% responded that children are the opposite of their parents<sup>21</sup>(the data is provided in Figure 18). The findings were similar among university students, i.e., 66.77% believe that children turn into their parents, compared to 33.23% who believe that children are the opposite of their parents/guardians.

**Figure 18. Attitudes on the parent – child relationship, high school and university students, in percentages, 2018**



### 3.5. Support from the Educational System

The group of questions on support from the educational system looks at how much support education provides students not just in the educational process, but also in the socialization of young people as citizens prepared to be included in community life, through personal and community development. Education is also considered on the basis of how much it encourages students to follow current political topics by following the news in daily newspapers, watching the news, and following announcements on television and the internet, the inclusion

of the students in the decision-making processes by involving them in the governance bodies<sup>22</sup> of the high schools/universities, and decision-making that is relevant to them.



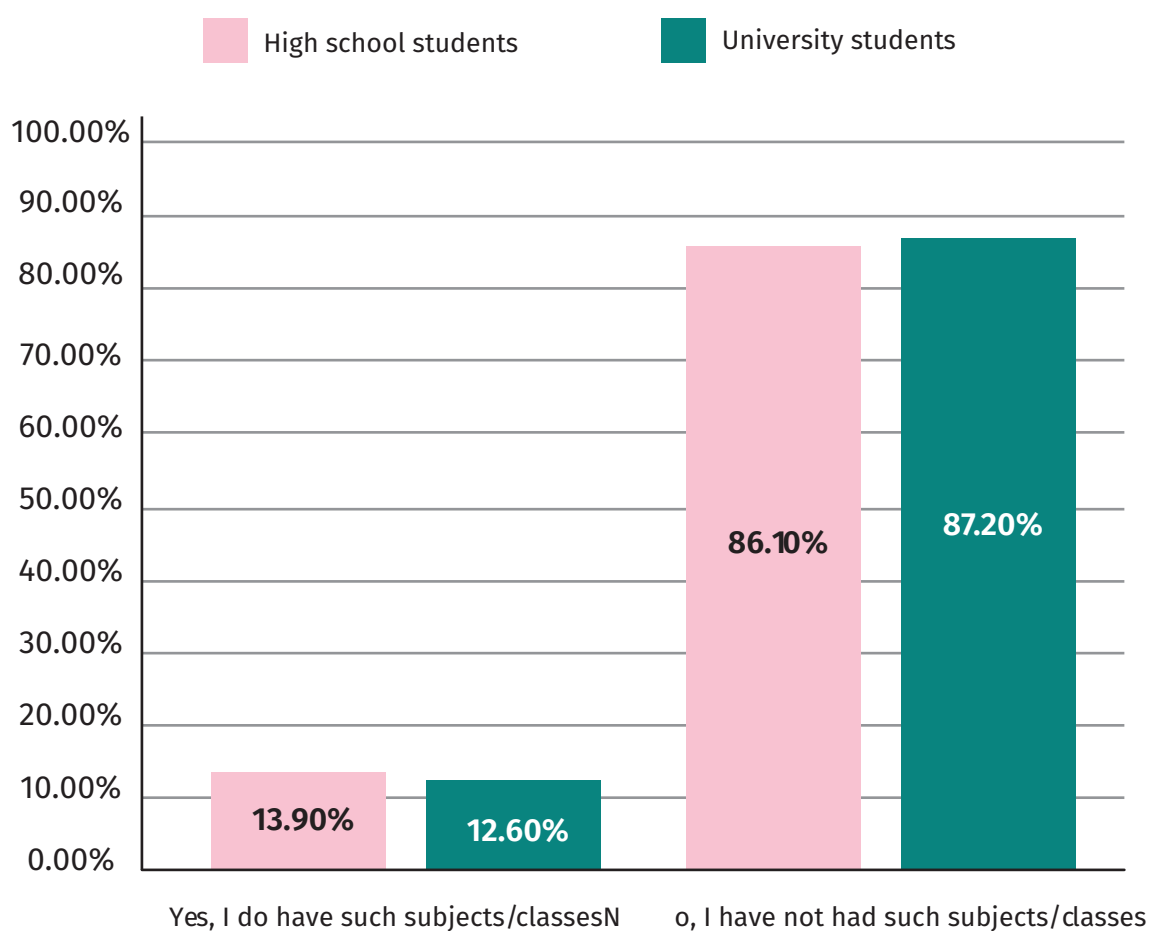
### *3.5.1. Education as a factor that encourages interest in following current political events in the community*

This question was about subjects that students have in their formal education that require them to stay informed about current political affairs in their city or the country, by following various media (daily newspapers, watching the news, TV, internet). The highest percentage of participants (86.06%) said that they have not had such a subject, compared to 13.94% who said that they do have such a subject. The percentage of participants who responded that they have had a subject that requires them to follow current political events increases with age. Compared to the findings from the 2011 study, we do not note differences in the responses to this question.

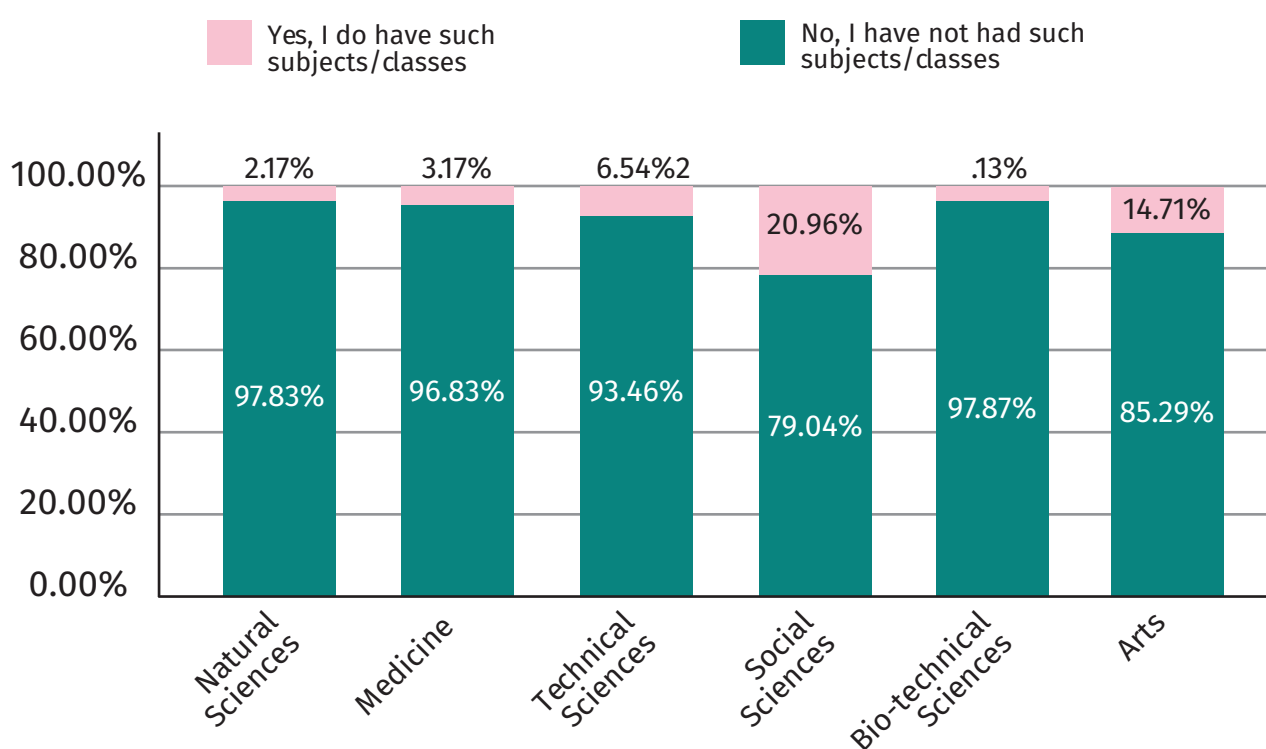
It is disheartening to note that even in higher education, young people are also not asked to follow current events in the city and country through various media (daily newspapers, watching the news, TV, internet, etc.), which is made evident with the fact that 87.3% of surveyed university students do not have a class that requires this. Only a small percentage of students responded that they have a class that requires them to regularly follow political events (12.7%). The findings are presented in Figure 19.

If we look at the university students' responses based on their area of study, it should be noted that students from the natural (97.8%), bio-technical (97.2%) and medical (96.4%) sciences said that they were never asked throughout their studies to regularly follow political and current events. Based on the curricula in social sciences and the arts, it is to be expected that students enrolled in these programs would be asked to follow current events, and 21% of students in social sciences, and 14.7% of arts students said that they have classes that require them to regularly follow media and current political and social events (Figure 20).

**Figure 19. Following current events as a requirement in the educational process for high school and university students, in percentages, 2018**



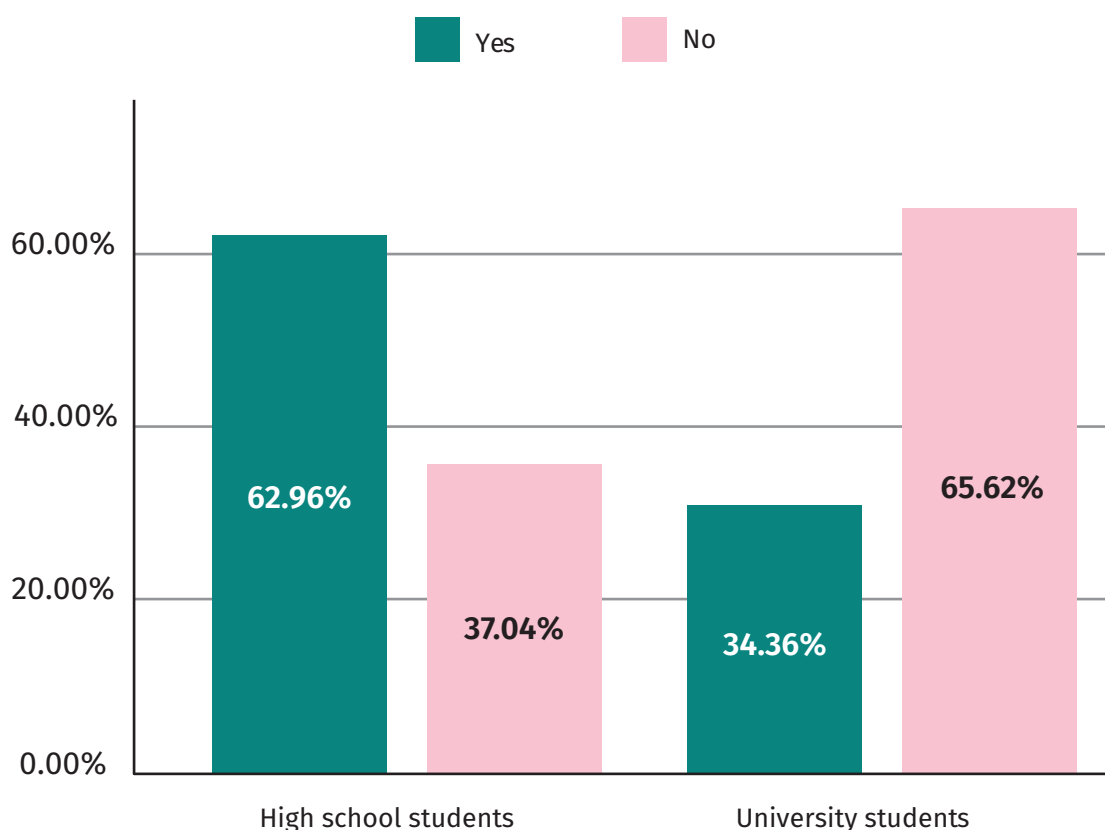
**Figure 20. Following current events as a requirement in the educational process for university students, by type of studies, in percentages, 2018**



### 3.5.2. The educational system's openness to youth problems

In general, a high percentage (62.96%) of high school students have had the opportunity to discuss their problems in class, and there is no statistically significant difference with the responses from the high school students in 2011 (59.9%). The same question has drastically different results among university students, i.e., only 34.38% of the surveyed students talked about their problems in class, compared to 65.62% who have not had that opportunity (data on the responses from high school and university students is provided in Figure 21). Students in social sciences were most likely to have had the opportunities to discuss youth problems in their classes – 42.1%. Youth problems are most unlikely to be discussed in classes in bio-technical (78.2%) and technical (74%) sciences, where a high percentage of students responded that they have not had that opportunity in class.

**Figure 21. Discussions on youth problems in the educational process, among high school and university students, percentages, 2018**



### 3.5.3. The educational system (does not) encourage(s) young people to become active citizens

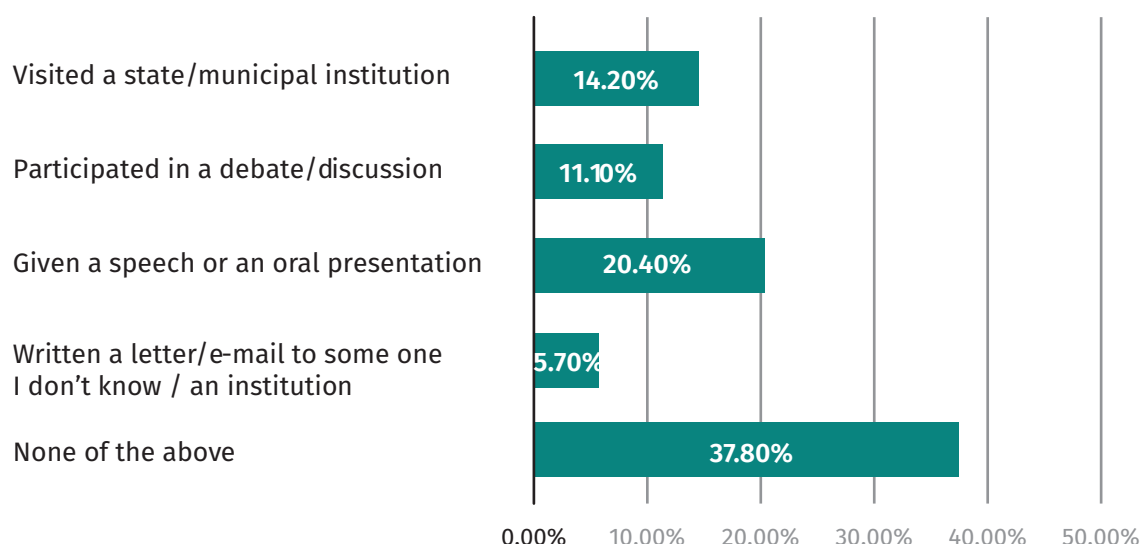
The educational system should encourage young people to actively become involved in various activities, to develop critical thinking, and to formally communicate with public institutions.

High school education, based on the collected responses, does little to adapt high school students and to encourage their development into active social actors.<sup>23</sup> Even though communication with institutions has become much easier over the years with the development of new technologies, only 5.71% of high school students have had any formal communication with an institution, either by writing a letter or an e-mail, while only 14.18% have visited a state or municipal institution. Throughout their education, either in class or through other



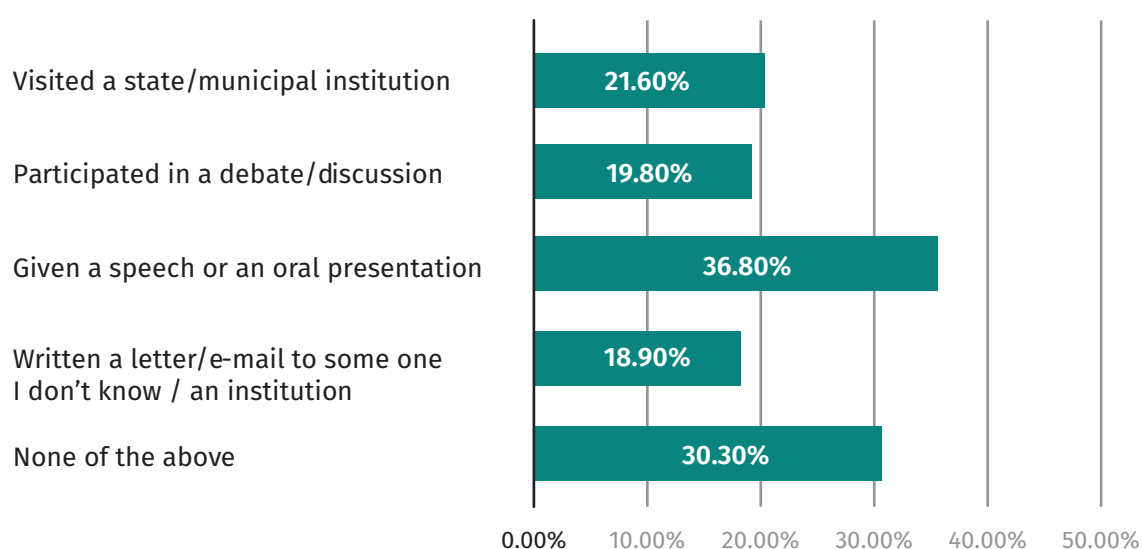
forms of engagement within the school, only 11.01% of high school students have participated in debates/discussions where they had to persuade someone of their point of view (the results are provided in Figure 22).<sup>24</sup> Presentations and/or speeches are the most frequent activity in high school, selected by 20.45% of participants. The findings show that 37.84% of high school students have never been involved in one of the listed activities throughout their high school education.

**Figure 22. Activities in high school, in percentages, 2018**



The results from the survey of university students show that higher education does more to encourage young people to become active,<sup>25</sup> yet still almost a third of students (30.15%) in higher education have not visited a state or municipal institution, have not participated in a debate, have not given a presentation, nor established formal communication with an institution. Education is most likely to provide university students the opportunity to engage in activities such as, for example, giving a speech or an oral presentation, which was selected by 36.7% of the respondents, and least likely to encourage formal communication with institutions over letter or e-mail (18.92%). Less than a fifth of university students have had the opportunity to participate in a debate/discussion in which they would argue their opinion (19.85%). The results are provided in Figure 23.

**Figure 23. Activities at university, in percentages, 2018**



#### *3.5.4. The Educational system as a support factor for marginalized groups*

When it comes to high school and university students' perceptions about the extent to which their educational institutions are open and supportive of members of various marginalized groups, the participants were given the opportunity to provide their opinion on a scale from 1 to 5.<sup>26</sup> The findings from the survey revealed that high schools students generally believe that high schools are supportive of marginalized groups.<sup>27</sup>

High school students are most likely (73.4%) to believe that schools are supportive of special needs students. Slightly more than two thirds (66.4%) believe that schools create an enabling environment for students with mental health problems, for poor students (67.2%), as well as for students from non-majority ethnic groups (68.2%). High school students believe that those least supported are the students with a non-normative sexual orientation (32.7% believe that schools support this category of students).

We noted a statistically significant difference based on the students' type of education – students from vocational schools were more likely to believe that schools support special needs students (37.3% of vocational school students believe that schools support students with special needs very much, compared to 28.5% of students in general education). Nevertheless, the limitations of the questionnaire on this topic do not allow for an interpretation of whether participants from vocational schools are more tolerant of special needs students compared to participants from general education schools.

On the other hand, university students are generally less likely to believe that universities offer a supportive environment to special needs students (60.5%), students with mental health problems (55.9%), and poor students (63.7%). The exceptions here are students with a non-majority ethnic background (71.6%) and students with non-normative sexual orientations (36.7%), for whom university students are more likely to believe that universities provide a supportive environment, compared to the responses from the high school students.

### *3.6. Youth Participation in Decision-Making Processes in Educational Institutions*

Community participation can happen in different ways. One form of participation is the direct involvement in areas that are an immediate part of young people's daily lives. Participation in school organizations allows young people to become involved in decision-making processes, to learn from these processes, and to collaborate in a way that will allow them to further their interest and their socialization in community participation. From this aspect, it was also relevant for the study to determine whether and to what extent high school and university students are familiar with the organizations that enable the articulation of their interests and promote their participation in decision-making in the relevant educational institutions.

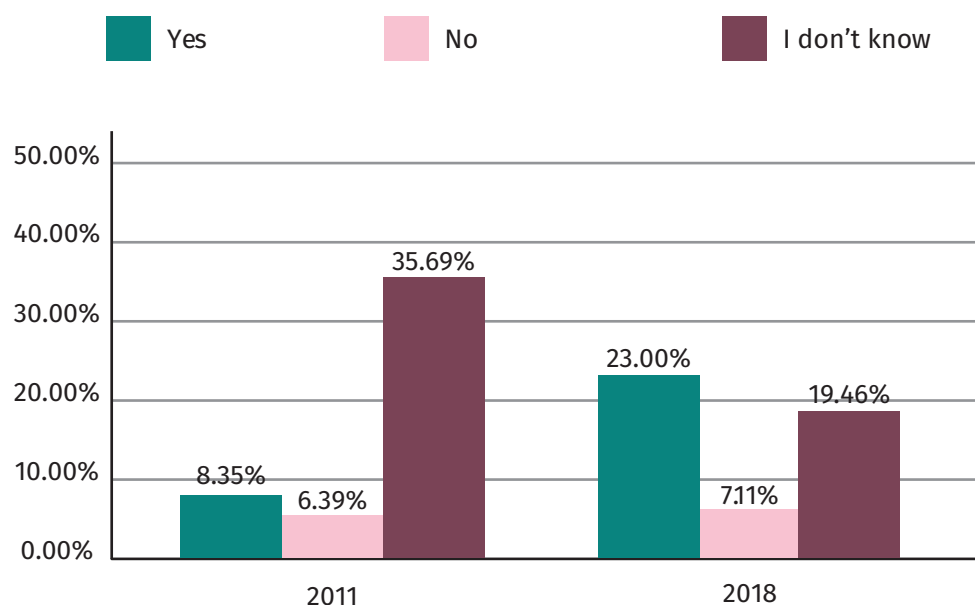
#### *3.6.1. Student associations*

High school and university student bodies are crucial for high school and university students to exercise their rights, as well as improve their standard of living. In the past few years, we have witnessed weak and corrupt formal student associations in both high schools and universities (Zdravkovska & Barlakovski, 2016), but also strong informal organizing through the high school and student plenums. This is the reason we asked young people whether there are associations in their high school or university that they recognize as an organized form of representation.

A high percentage of high school students – 46.4% responded that their school has a high school association, compared to 14.34% who claimed that there is no such organization in their school. Nevertheless, an equally high percentage of 39.26% did not know whether their school has a high school association.

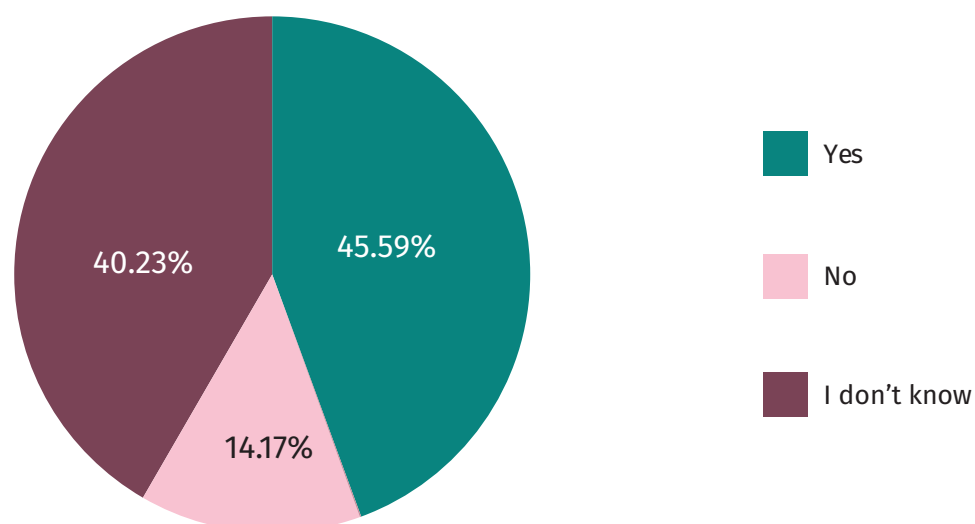
Compared to the data from the 2011 analysis, this is a high percentage, as the majority of high school students had responded that they did not know whether their school has some form of student governance – 70.3%, and only 12.8% said that their school does have one (the results are provided in Figure 24).

**Figure 24. Familiarity with forms of student governance, among high school students (2011 and 2018 studies), in percentages**



Almost half of university students (45.49%) said that their university has some form of student organizing, but an almost identical percentage (40.14%) are not familiar with the existence of an organized form of student governance. The results are provided in Figure 25.

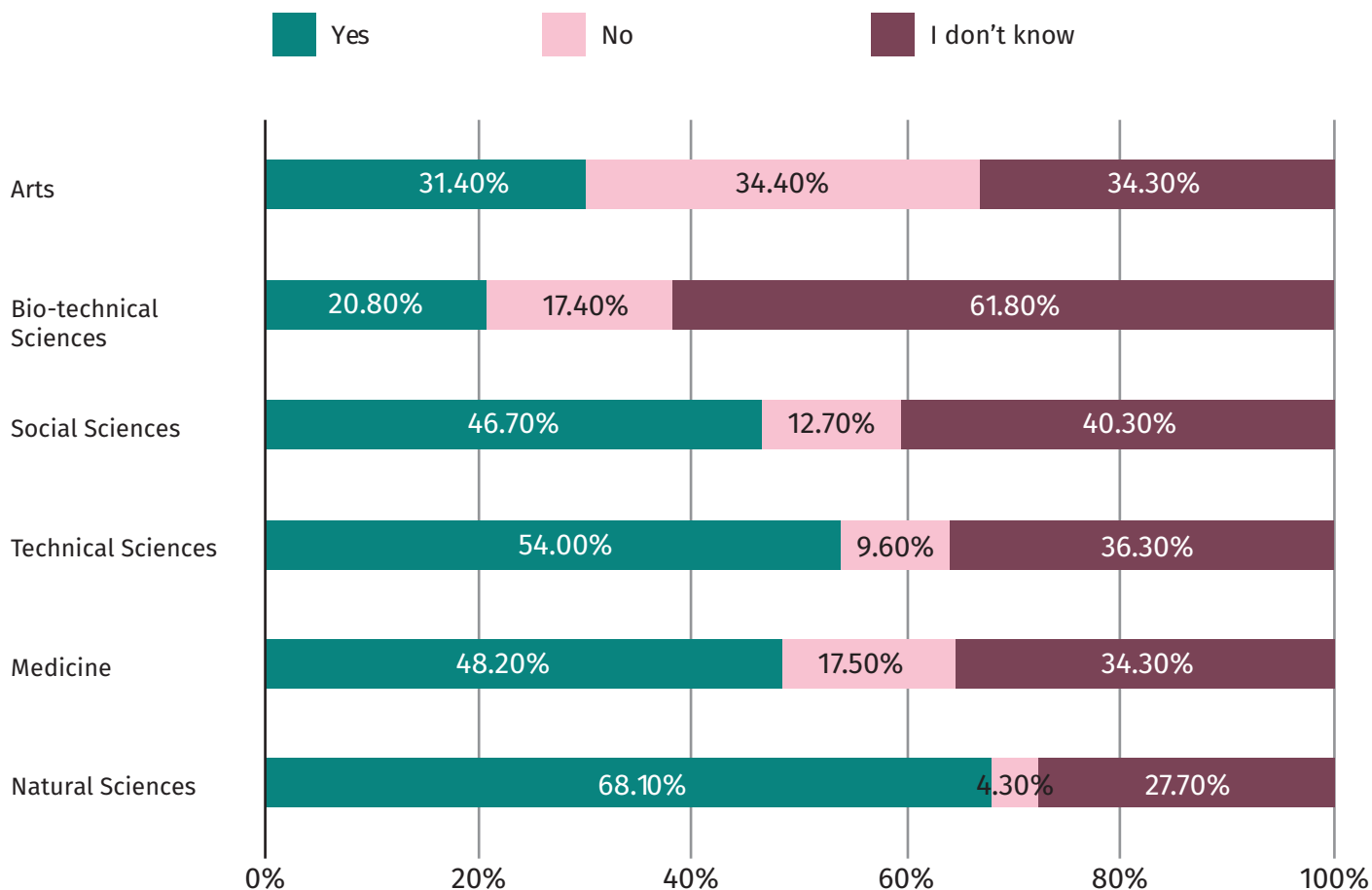
**Figure 25. Familiarity with forms of student governance, university students, in percentages, 2018**





More than two thirds (68.1%) of the students in natural sciences are familiar with the existence of a student organization that participates in the governance of their departments, while 34.3% of the arts students said that there are no such organizations in their departments (Figure 26).

**Figure 26. Familiarity with forms of student governance among university students by area of study, 2018, in percentages**



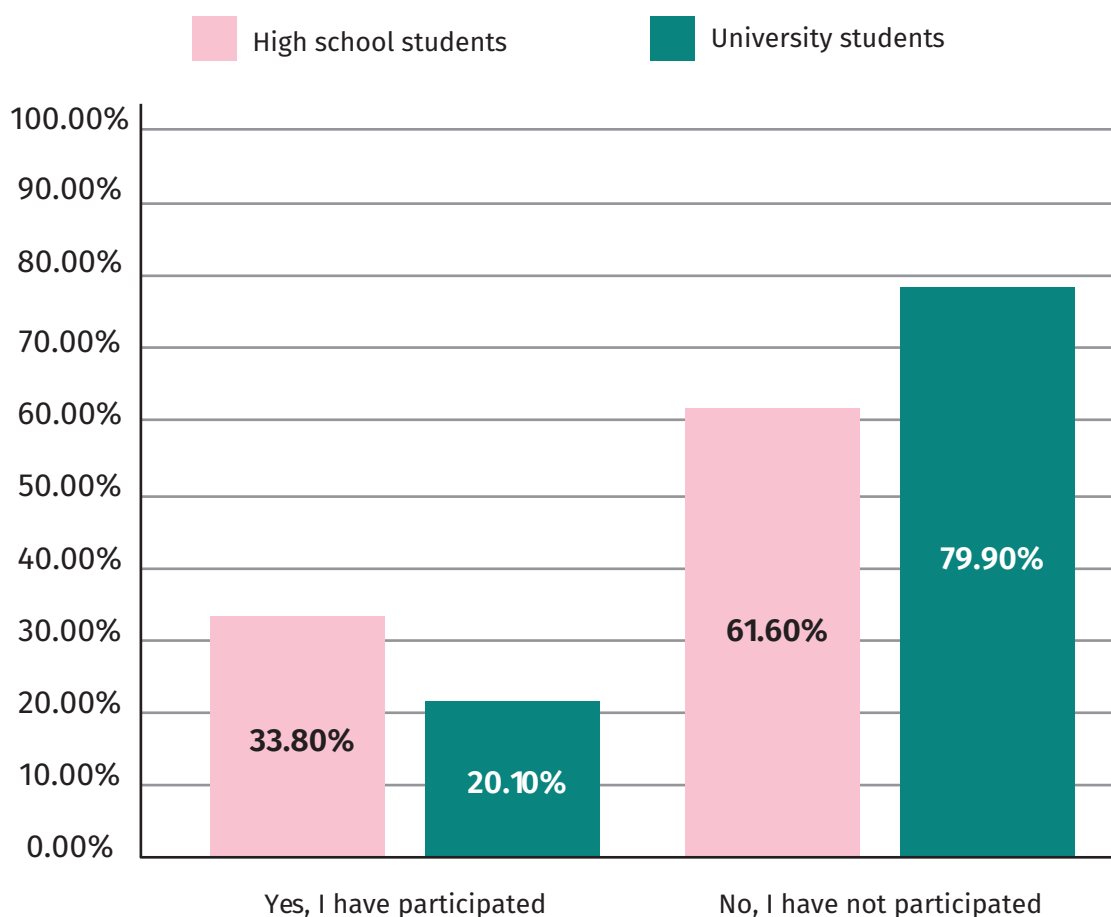
### 3.6.2. Interest and involvement in the work of high school/university representative organizations and bodies

One third of the surveyed high school students have participated in electing a representative to the high school organization/association in their school. This is an increase in the percentage of young people who participated in the election of representatives in relevant school bodies compared to the 2011 study (19.7%). The number of high school girls who participated in school elections (36.1%) is higher compared to the boys in 2018 (31.4%). In terms of ethnicity, the participating Albanians stand out as least likely to have participated in these elections (20.1%), while the percentages are significantly higher for Macedonians (37.9%) and Roma students (40%) who took advantage of the opportunity to elect their representatives in student councils. This is an interesting finding considering that Albanian students were an exception with higher percentages of interest or familiarity with these bodies. The high school students in general education participated in student elections in higher percentages (38.95%) compared to students from vocational high schools (30.6%). There were no significant differences based on the students' place of residence.

A significantly lower percentage of university students (20.1%) compared to high school students took part in the election of their representatives in student bodies. We noted significant gender differences in the responses to this question; namely, a significantly higher per-

centage of men (26.80%) voted in student elections compared to women (15.30%).

**Figure 27. Participation in the election of high school/university student representatives, in percentages, 2018**

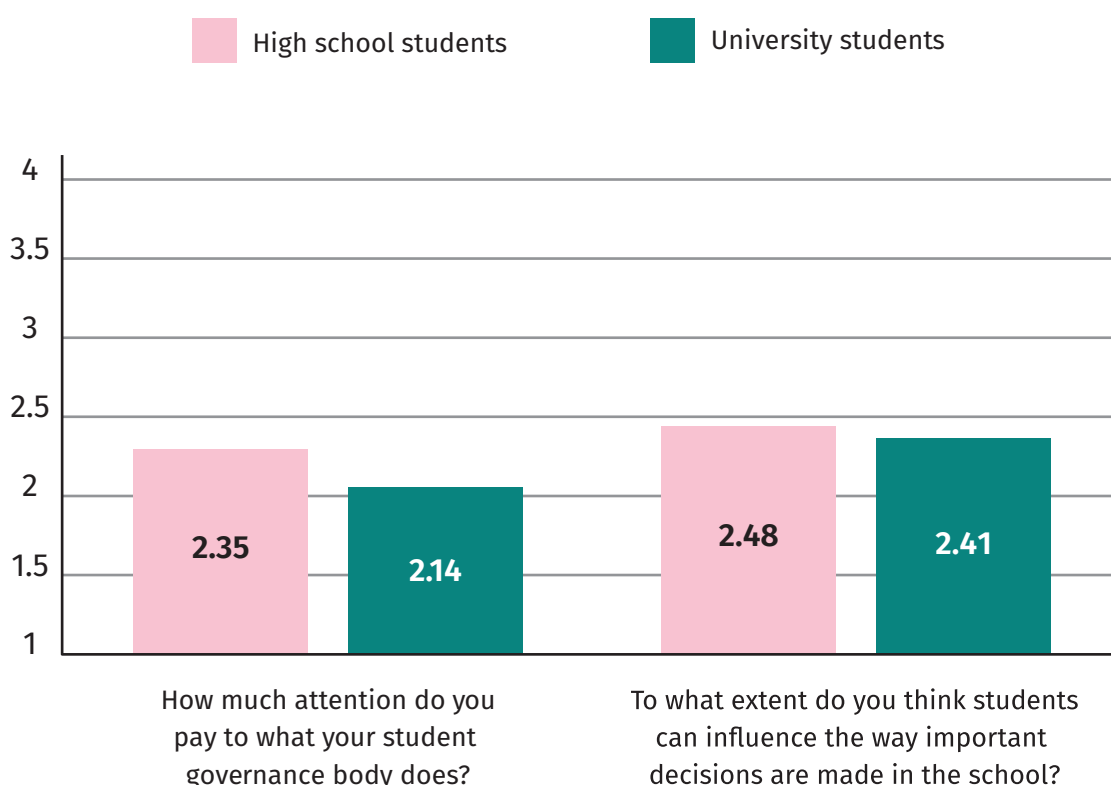


In general, it can be concluded that an exceptionally low percentage of high school and university students are involved in the bodies that should represent their interests in the educational institutions. Even though the numbers are higher to 2011, this low percentage indicates that the work of these bodies/organizations cannot be said to represent and advocate for the interests of young people.

In addition to the information on the percentage of high school and university students that participate in the processes of electing members to the bodies that represent their interests in educational institutions, another question looked at their general interest in the work of these bodies. This question was used above all due because participating in the election of representatives in high school/university student bodies is not necessarily an indicator of interest and involvement in the work of these bodies – participants may consider the election process illegitimate and refuse to take part even when they are invested and interested in their work. For this question, the mean value of the participants' responses was 2.35.<sup>28</sup> There were no differences in the responses to this question compared to the results from the 2011 study. Namely, a quarter of the participants said that they “pay no attention” to the work of high school associations (26.5%), compared to 30% of the high school students in 2011. In line with the increased participation of high school girls in student elections, this question also reveals their higher levels of interest in the activities of the high school organizations compared to the boys (49.5% of the girls said that they are interested in the work of these bodies, compared to 37.95% of the boys).

More than two-thirds of the university students who participated in the study pay very little attention, or none at all, when it comes to the work of the student organizations (the results from the high school and university students' responses are provided in Figure 28).<sup>29</sup> When it comes to ethnicity, the lowest percentage of students who “pay a lot of attention” (8.65%) was among Macedonian students, which was significantly lower compared to the other ethnic groups. This is in line with the significantly lower percentage of Macedonians who participated in the student representative elections. When it comes to types of studies, the highest percentage of students who said that they care about the work of student organizations was among the arts students (48.4%). On the other hand, an almost identical percentage of students from bio-technical sciences said that they “do not care at all” about the work of these organizations.

**Figure 28. Interest in the work of representative bodies and the perception of influence over decision-making processes, mean values, 2018**



What we can conclude from the students' responses is that the low level of involvement in the democratic procedures for electing their representatives can also be interpreted as a manifestation of the equally low (dis)interest among high school and university students in the work of these bodies, as well as their capacity to represent youth interests.

The study also attempted to gain insight on the general perception among students on their opportunities to influence decision-making processes in educational institutions, independent of their interest and involvement in the high school and university student representative bodies.<sup>30</sup> Almost half of the high school students (48.3%) believe that the students have some potential to influence the way in which decisions are made in their schools. As with the other questions from this section, we did not note significant differences compared to the results from the 2011 study (49.9% said that students can influence the decision-making processes). Even though the high school girls were more likely to have participated in high school

elections and are more interested in the work of the high school associations, we did not note significant gender differences in terms of perceived influence over school governance. In terms of ethnicity, the Albanian high school students stand out here, as a higher percentage among them (29%) compared to the other ethnic groups said they could have “great influence” over the decision-making processes in the school. This is an interesting finding in the context of the lower involvement of Albanian participants in the high school associations.

As with the other questions, here too we note relatively more pronounced pessimism among university students about the possibility to influence decision-making processes in their universities/departments. Namely, 21.09% of them believe that students have no influence, an additional 32.4% believe that students have little influence, and only 16.4% believe that students have great influence in the decision-making processes at the universities. Among the university students, we note a higher percentage of Macedonians (32.71%) who believe that students have a great influence, compared to Albanians (24.68%) and almost all other ethnic groups.

These results point to the conclusion that in the transition from high school to university, there is a downward trend in the interest, the participation, but also in the perceived own influence in the educational institutions.



### **3.7. Personal Responsibility, Inclination to Agency - Activism**

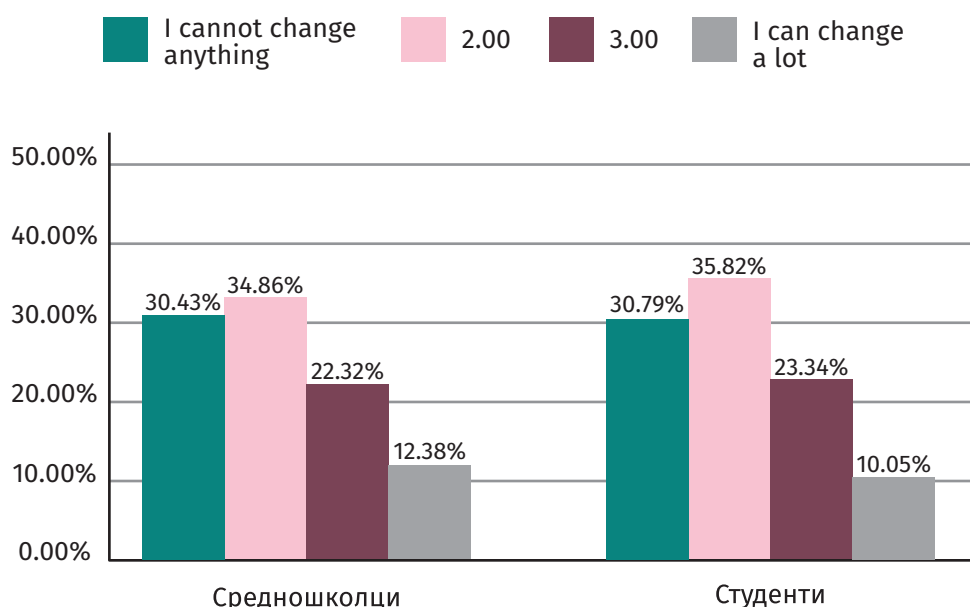
#### **3.7.1. Perception of one's own influence in the community**

The individual's subjective feeling of the potential to have agency, i.e., the belief that their contributions in the community can have influence and impact, is a relevant aspect of social capital. In this context, high school and university students were asked about their perception on how much their individual engagement can contribute to solving problems in the community.

Almost a third of high school students who participated in the study said that they “could not change anything” through their engagement in the community, while only 12.4% of them believe that they can change a lot. The mean value of their responses is 2.17<sup>31</sup> (the results are presented in Figure 29). Comparing this with the results from the 2011 study did not yield statistically significant differences in the participants' responses, i.e., the identified pessimism in terms of potential influence in the community remains unchanged (the mean value in the high school students' responses in 2011 was 2.16). When we analyzed the responses based on gender, we noted statistically significant differences and determined that high school girls are more optimistic about their influence in the community (mean value of 2.21), compared to the boys (2.10).



**Figure 29. Self-perception of own influence in the community, high school and university students, in percentages, 2018**



An analysis of the data based on type of education (general or vocational) revealed slightly higher optimism in terms of perceived own influence in the community among high school students in vocational education (14.5% believe that they can change a lot) compared to those in general education (8.2% share this opinion), with a very small effect of statistical significance.

The results were similar in the university students' responses. A relatively lower percentage among them (10.05%) compared to the high school students believe that they can have significant influence in their environments. A socio-demographic analysis of the responses identified significant differences based on gender, where the men (35.7%) were more optimistic about their potential for influence compared to the women students (31%). Based on ethnicity, the key finding is in the changed perception among the Roma on voting as a form of democratic participation.

The questionnaire also contained a section of questions (importance of voting as a form of democratic participation, voting in elections, membership in political parties, attitude towards elected officials) that attempted to determine the opinions on (and in the case of the university students, also the practice of) conventional forms of citizenship. This group of questions is an additional indicator of trust in the system and/or the presence of apathy, which has implications on the potential to build social capital.

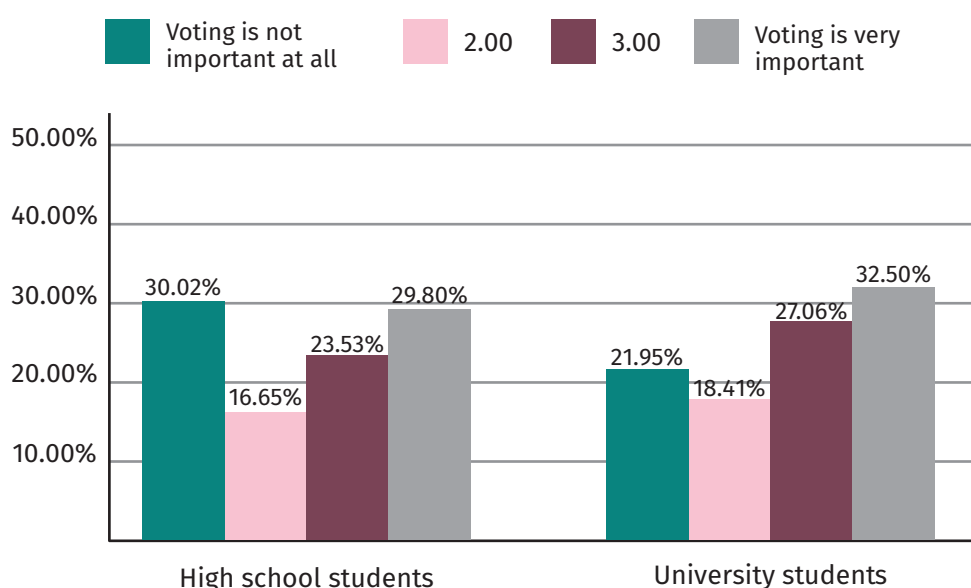
In this context, high school and university students were asked to assess the importance of voting to them personally on a scale from 1 to 4.<sup>32</sup> Based on the collected responses, voting is personally important to more than half of the surveyed high school students (53.3%). This question also did not yield any significant differences compared to 2011 study (51.3% believed that voting is important). The statement "voting is not important" resonated with almost half of the Bosniac participants and 30.1% of Macedonian students. In this context, it should be noted that there is a statistically significant difference in the responses between the Macedonians (27.2% believe that voting is very important) and the Albanians, where Albanians (37.5%) are more likely to positively rate the importance of voting. Furthermore, there was a statistically significant difference based on type of education, where general education students (37.2% believe that voting is very important) had a more positive assessment of the importance of



voting compared to the students from vocational high schools (26.1%). The findings from the responses from the high school and university students in 2018 are provided in Figure 30.

Among the university students we note a higher appreciation of voting – almost a third (32.58%) of the surveyed students said that “voting is very important” (the results of the responses from the high school and university students are presented in Figure 29). Like the high school students, here too the group of Albanian participants stands out and a higher percentage among them (compared to the other ethnic groups) rate voting positively – 41.79% of Albanians responded that “voting is very important.” Namely, in the responses, and especially among the students who are Albanian, we note higher levels of trust in the voting process, but at the same time also involvement in the formal processes of decision-making, as well as perception of influence in the community.<sup>33</sup>

**Figure 30. Assessment of the importance of voting as a form of democratic participation, high school and university students, in percentages, 2018**



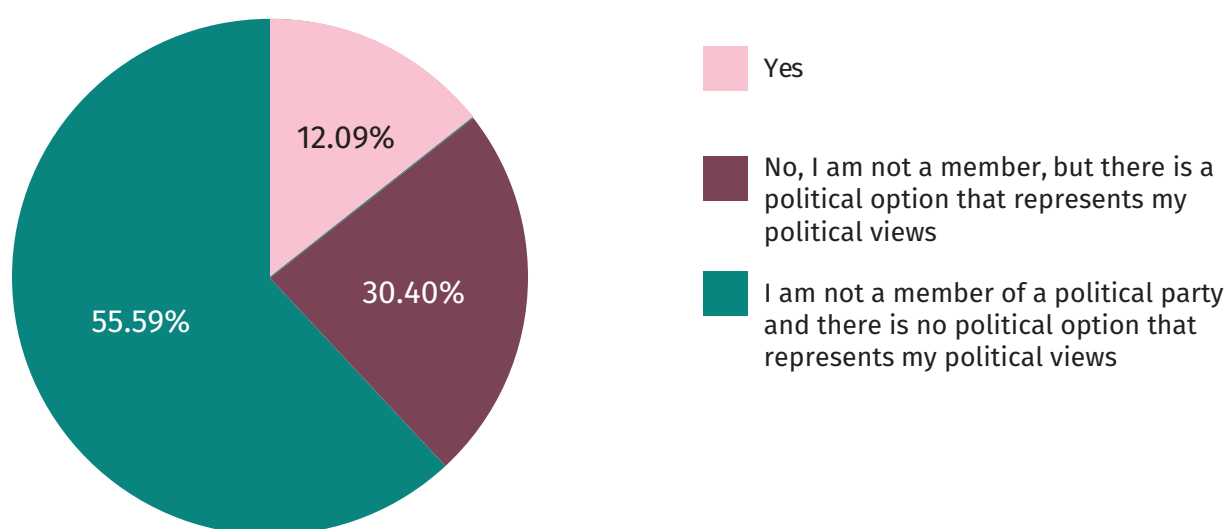
In attempting to determine the role of family in the attitude towards voting, high school and university students were asked whether their parents voted in elections. More than half (56.6%) of the high school students' parents voted in all elections, and this percentage is even higher among university students (64.6%). This question is relevant because young people's perception of their parents' attitude to the act of voting can influence their own attitudes to voting later in life.

Considering part of the participants in the sample – the university students – are citizens of voting age, we also included a question about their history of voting in elections. The question they were asked was whether they had voted in the last local election held in October 2017. Even though voting behavior can vary depending on the type of elections (local administration, parliamentary, presidential, local and national referendums), it was important to include an election cycle for which most of the university students had the right to vote.<sup>34</sup> Based on the student responses, about half of them (51.16%) voted in the last election. Significant differences were noted only in terms of ethnicity, and the students Albanians (64.04%) were the group that had voted in the highest percentage in the local elections.

### 3.7.2. Membership in political parties

In addition to voting attitudes and behavior, we also studied interest in membership in political parties among the university students.<sup>35</sup> Namely, membership in political parties does not only contribute to building political opinions, complying with a certain ideology, and developing a political culture, but membership in these organizations can also contribute to building networks of contacts, and the personal and professional promotion of the members. The responses from the students point to the conclusion that an exceptionally small percentage of students are interested in political party membership, which is in line with the demonstrated lack of trust in these organizations: 12.09% of students are members of political party. This percentage is higher among men and members of the smaller ethnic groups (the results are presented in Figure 31).

**Figure 31. Membership in political parties among university students, in percentages, 2018**



### 3.7.3. Perception of influence over the work of governments

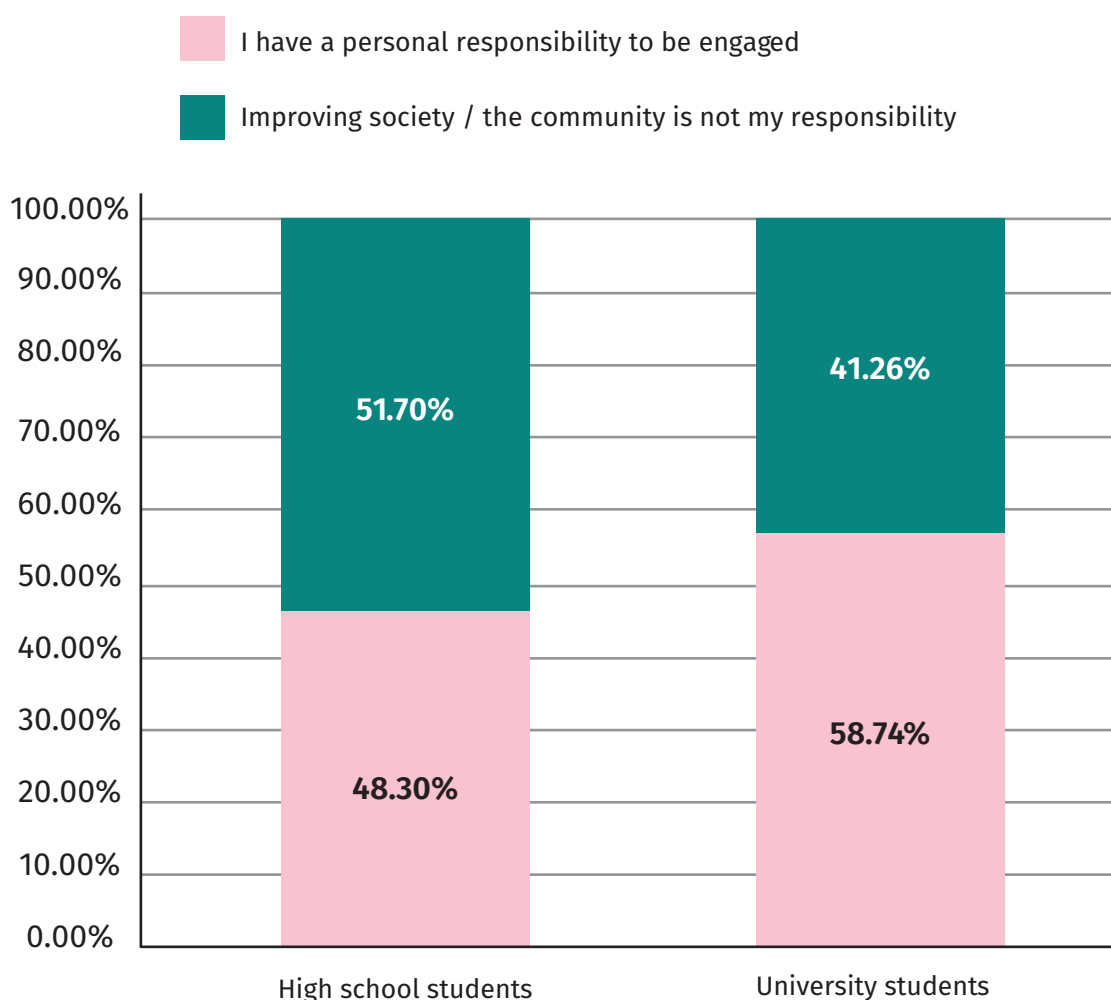
A high percentage of high school students rated highly the importance of voting, yet their perception of the potential for their own influence over elected officials is pessimistic. This was measured with the question “To what extent do you believe that you can influence how governments work?”<sup>36</sup> More than half (52.9%) believe that they cannot have any real influence over how governments work – an increase compared to the findings from 2011 (39.9% believed that they have no influence), which is a disheartening finding. Based on ethnicity, the Albanian and Turkish students are more likely than the other groups to believe that they can have “real influence”. An analysis of the responses from the participants from the two most populous ethnic groups – the Macedonians and the Albanians – revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in the responses, where the Albanians give a more positive assessment of their potential to influence how governments work. This response is again consistent with the higher perceived influence among this group in decision-making in educational institutions.

An almost equally high percentage of university students (50.85) believe that they cannot influence the work of governments. In this case too we did not note significant gender differences. In the analysis of the findings based on ethnicity, the Roma and Bosniac students stand out, among whom a higher percentage (both in the high school/university comparison, and among the students from different ethnic groups) positively assessed the potential for their own influence.

### 3.7.4. Attitudes to personal responsibility

To determine the sense of personal responsibility to care for the community, respondents were given a question with two possible answers that represent two contradicting perspectives on the issue.<sup>37</sup> The results showed that high school students are split when it comes to individual responsibility to improve the community in which one lives (Figure 32). This split remains unchanged if we compare the results from 2011 (in 2011, 46% of the high school students said that they have a personal responsibility to the community, while in 2018 48.5% of the students shared this view). The Albanian high school students (54.7%) had higher rates of agreement with the statement that improving the community is the responsibility of the individual, compared to the students from the other ethnic groups. We also note a significant statistical difference based on type of education: general education students were significantly more likely to agree that improving the community is an individual obligation. A higher percentage of university students (58.74%) believe that improving the community is an individual obligation (Figure 32).

**Figure 32. Personal responsibility in terms of caring for the community, high school and university students, 2018**



### 3.8. Trust in Other People and Institutions

Trust in other people and abstract systems is one of the fundamental indicators of the existence (or lack) of conditions for building social capital. In social capital theory and research, trust in other people and institutions (abstract systems) is connected to the presence



of developed social capital. Conversely, the lack of this trust considerably decreases opportunities for building social capital (people who do not approach other people with distrust and who believe that institutions in the system are doing their job are more motivated to be included in community engagement activities).

### *3.8.1. Trust in education as an agent of socialization*

The importance of education as a mechanism for self-realization and advancement in the community was assessed on a scale from 1 to 4.<sup>38</sup> More than 60% of high school students said that they agree with the view that education is exceptionally important. Because this question was modified, a comparison with the 2011 findings was not possible.

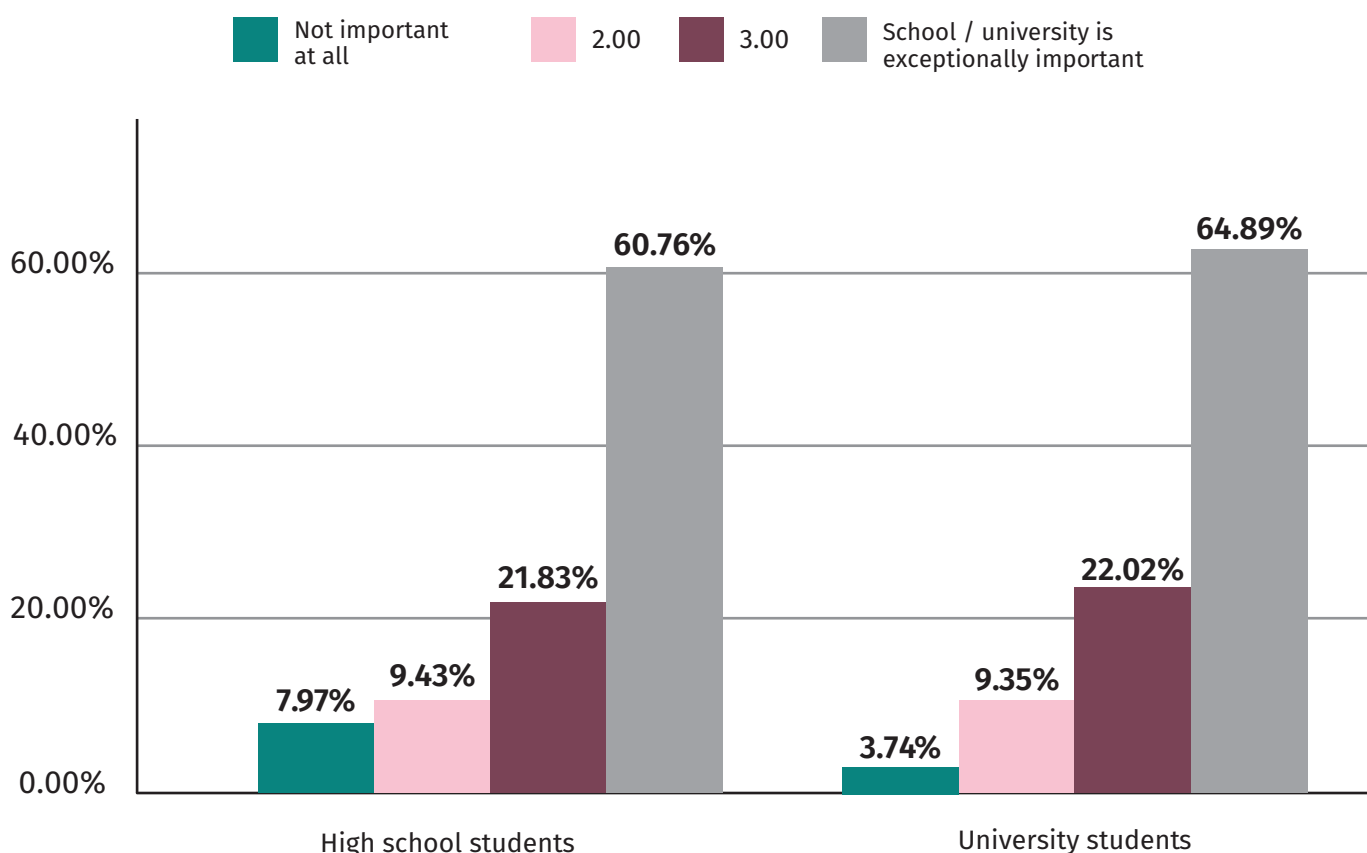
A gender analysis of the data revealed that high school girls (68.2% said that school is exceptionally important) place higher importance on education compared to high school boys (52.1%). Over 70% of high school Albanians rated the importance of education highly, in contrast to about 50% of the participants from other ethnic groups. Along with the higher level of trust in institutions and democratic procedures, this finding reveals a higher level of overall trust among these young people, which could be an enabling factor in the development of social capital. Nevertheless, this potential can be fulfilled only if the demonstrated trust goes hand in hand with increased inclusion, for which we do not have sufficient evidence in the framework of this study. There were minor statistical differences based on the type of education, where students from vocational high schools (63.4% claimed that school is exceptionally important) place more importance on education compared to students in general education (56.3%).

An almost identical percentage of university students (64.9%) said that studying is exceptionally important. Much like the high school students, here too the women (68.2%) place higher importance on education compared to the men (58.9%). An analysis of the data based on ethnicity revealed that the Albanian students (73.6%) and the Roma students (81.3%) more than all



the other communities<sup>39</sup> place high importance on education.

**Figure 33. Perception of the importance of education, high school and university students, in percentages, 2018**



Based on these results, we can conclude that young people show a high level of trust in the educational system and consider it a relevant mechanism for self-realization in society. This conclusion is confirmed with the results from the study on the level of trust in various institutions, which are analyzed in this chapter.

### 3.8.2. Perception on whether elected officials care about young people and their needs

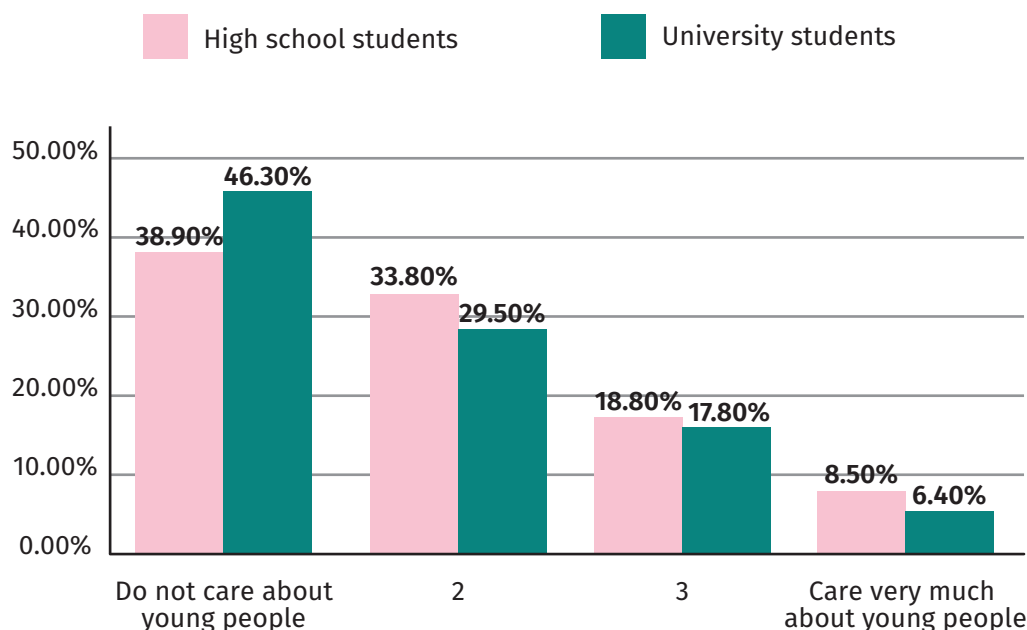
When it comes to trust in the work of local and state officials,<sup>40</sup> more than two thirds (71.3%) of high school students believe that local officials care very little or not at all about the needs of young people, compared to 68.5% of high school students in 2011 who shared this opinion. For this question, we did not note differences in the perceptions between high school students in 2011 and 2018. In comparison, three in four university students believe that elected local officials care very little or not at all about young people and their needs.

An even higher percentage (75.8%) of high school students believe that elected state officials care very little or not at all about young people and their needs (Figure 34).

More than 70% of university students believe that state officials care very little or not at all about the needs of young people (Figure 34). A higher percentage of Albanian (51.93%) and Vlach (50%) university students believe that state officials do not care at all about the needs of young people.



**Figure 34. Perceptions on whether state officials care about young people, high school and university students, in percentages, 2018**



The results of the analysis revealed that there is a high level of dissatisfaction both among the high school and university students with commitments from local and state elected officials in terms of addressing the problems and interests that young people are faced with.

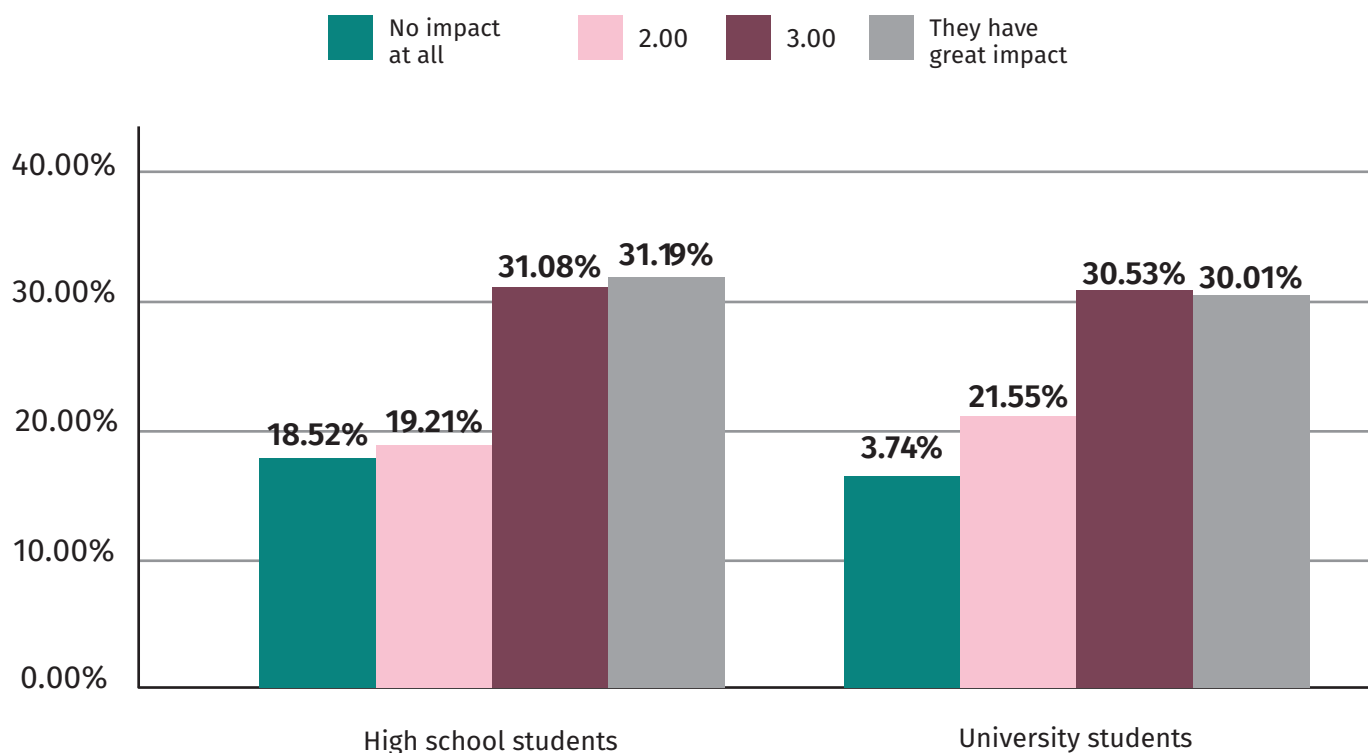
### *3.8.3. Impact of governments over the daily lives of young people*

The study participants generally have a negative perception in terms of the potential of their own influence in the decision-making processes. Nevertheless, there is a perception among a significant part of them that the decisions made by governments have a strong impact on their lives. Namely, more than two thirds of high school students believe that the work of governments has partial to great influence over their lives (62.3% - Figure 35). These perceptions remain unchanged if we compare them with the responses from their peers in 2011 (64.6% believed that these decisions have partial to great influence over their lives). Among the Albanians, we note higher agreement with the claim that the government's decisions have "no influence at all" over their lives. Namely, more than a quarter of these students share this opinion. Comparing the data based on type of education revealed that high school students in general education are more likely to feel the influence of the government's actions compared to students in vocational education.



An almost identical percentage of university students (60.54%) believe that governments have partial to great influence over their lives (Figure 35). Albanian students (22.22%) stand out in that they believe, in a higher percentage compared to the other groups, that government decisions have no influence at all over their lives.

**Figure 35. Perception of government influence on the daily lives of young people, high school and university students, in percentages, 2018**



#### 3.8.4. Impact of non-governmental/non-profit organizations on the daily lives of young people

More than 40% of high school students believe that the actions of non-governmental organizations have partial to great influence over their lives,<sup>41</sup> compared to 27.5% of the participants who believed that non-governmental organizations “have no influence” over their lives. There were no differences in the responses to this question compared to those from the 2011 study on social capital among high school students (42.7%). We noted some differences in the analysis based on type of education: students from vocational high schools were more likely (30.2%) to believe that non-governmental organizations have no impact on their lives, compared to high school students in general education (22%).

We noted similar results in the responses from the university students. Among them, 37.8% believe that the work of non-governmental organizations has some influence over their lives, while 25.6% believe that non-governmental organizations have no such influence. We noted some differences in terms of ethnicity, where compared to the other students, the Albanians were more likely (15.8%) to believe that the work of non-governmental organizations has influence over their lives.

The results from the question about the impact of non-government organizations over the personal and professional development of young people reveal a divided group, which is to be expected to a certain extent if we consider the perceptions of high school students of the overall influence of non-governmental organizations on the lives of young people. In this context, high school girls (43.4% believe that they have partial to great influence) had a relatively

more positive assessment of the impact of non-governmental organizations in this domain, compared to high school boys (35.3% - a statistically significant difference with a small effect size). We noted identical results in the responses from the university students. The Roma students were outliers here, as 43.8% among them believe that non-governmental organizations have great impact over their personal and professional development.

### 3.8.5. Trust in others and institutions

When it comes to trust in institutions,<sup>42</sup> educational institutions are the institutions in which the high school students place the most trust (3.54 on a scale from 1 to 5). The second highest ranked institution in terms of trust is the army (3.48). High school students also have partial trust in the healthcare system (3.15), customs administration (3.10), the judiciary (3.03), and the ombudsman (3.09). They are least likely to trust political parties (2.26), the Assembly (2.78), the Government (2.69), and the media (2.86). The results are presented in Figure 36.

The Albanian high school students have significantly more trust in the healthcare system, the judiciary, the police, the Assembly, the Government, and political parties, compared to the Macedonian high school students, who showed little trust in these institutions.

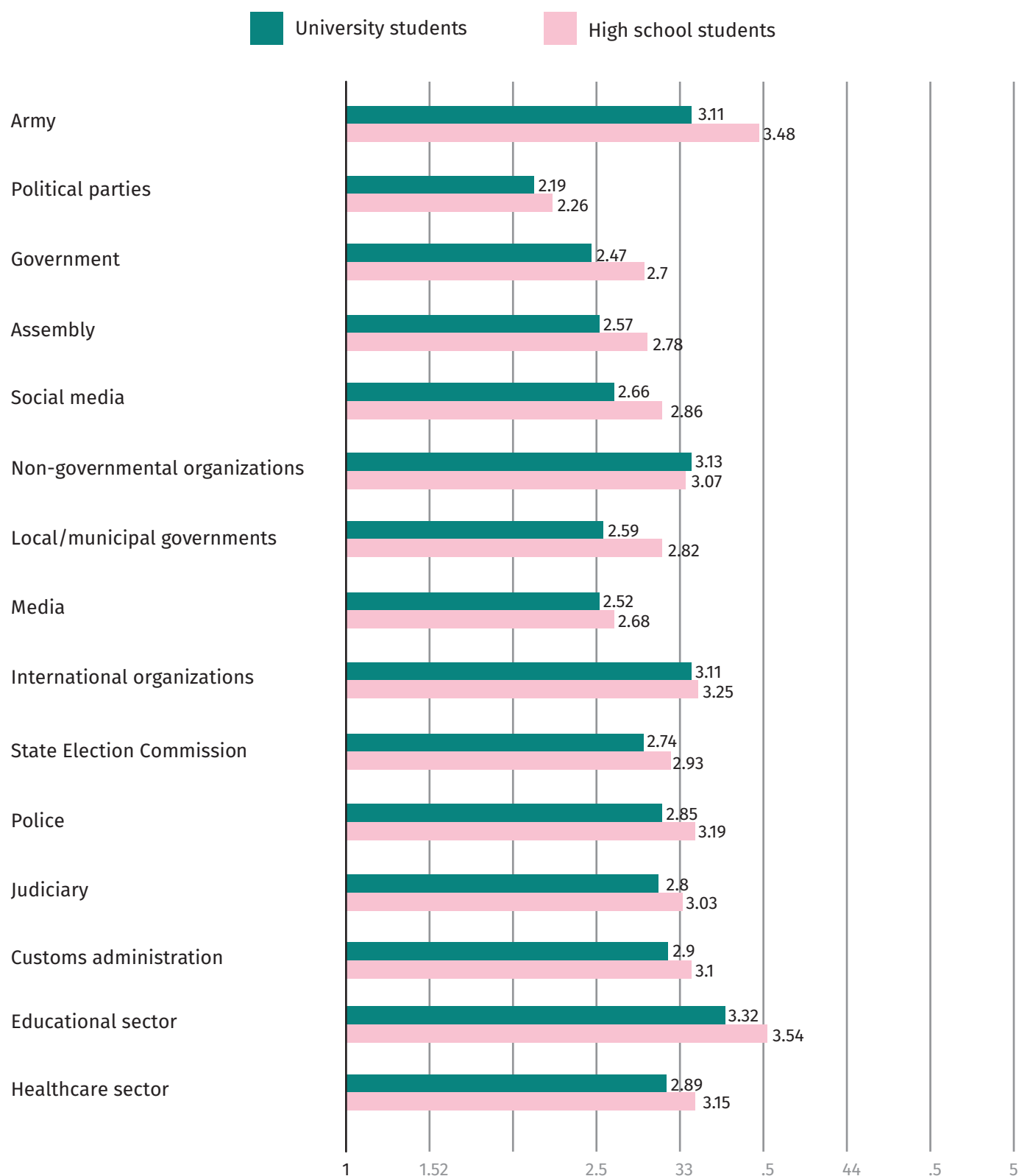
**Table 2. Trust in institutions by ethnicity, high school students 2018, mean values**

Trust in institutions \ Nationality	Macedonian	Albanian	TurkishR	oma	SerbianB	osniac	Vlach	Other
Healthcare system	3.07	3.55	3.07	3.18	2.98	3.21	3.08	2.76
Education	3.50	3.74	3.53	3.67	3.31	3.32	2.83	3.41
Customs	3.07	3.28	3.26	3.24	2.92	3.11	2.50	2.63
Judiciary	2.99	3.37	3.11	3.05	2.64	3.22	2.55	2.41
Ombudsman	3.09	3.31	3.21	2.93	2.71	2.63	2.73	2.65
Police	3.15	3.45	3.29	3.04	2.88	3.10	2.25	2.76
State Election Commission	2.90	3.19	3.16	2.83	2.49	2.47	2.42	2.35
International Organizations	3.25	3.41	3.22	2.98	2.88	3.00	3.25	2.94
Media	2.61	2.95	2.86	2.72	2.36	2.89	1.67	2.53
Local Government	2.78	3.06	2.95	2.73	2.43	2.42	2.50	2.65
Nongovernmental Organizations	3.10	3.10	3.05	2.96	2.82	2.47	3.25	2.82
Social media	2.83	3.01	3.00	2.77	2.50	3.10	2.67	3.00
Assembly	2.68	3.28	3.06	2.78	2.36	2.75	1.83	1.88
Government	2.59	3.17	2.85	2.70	2.37	3.00	2.17	1.76
Political parties	2.18	2.60	2.49	2.39	1.90	2.80	1.75	1.65
Army	3.61	3.25	3.00	3.20	3.24	3.45	3.33	3.06

The university students are generally less trusting of all the listed institutions compared to the high school students. The highest level of trust, though still reserved, was in the edu-

cational system (3.32), non-governmental organizations (3.13), and international organizations (3.11). Students reported the least trust in political parties (2.19), the Government (2.47), the Assembly (2.57), the media (2.52), and local government (2.59). Women students have more confidence in the customs administration and the judiciary (Figure 36).

**Figure 36. Trust in institutions, mean values, 2018**



When it comes to attitudes expressing trust in others and the role of power structures—other institutions in society—high school students generally reiterate the low level of trust they expressed towards various social institutions. Namely, when they were asked about how

the state is governed<sup>43</sup> high school students predominantly agreed with the opinion that power and government are primarily used for fulfilling personal interests. In the study, more than 70% of high school students agree with this opinion. When it comes to general trust,<sup>44</sup> the majority of high school students (70.8%) believe that people are driven by personal gain in their interpersonal relationships. High school girls reported lower levels of trust compared to high school boys, while Albanians (45.7%) were more likely than other ethnic groups to believe that “most people would try to be fair” in their relations with others. The lowest level of trust in others was noted among the Serbs and the Roma – about 14% among them believe that people try to be fair in interpersonal relationships.

We also noted a split in the opinions on trust in non-governmental organizations – 52.8% of high school students in this study believe that narrow interests also dominate the work of non-governmental organizations.

An almost equal percentage of university students (76.83%) believe that the state is governed by narrow personal interests and half of them believe that the same principle dominates the work of non-government organizations. What is notable is that distrust in others increases with age, so it is even more pronounced among university students – 76.4% believe that most people cannot be trusted. An analysis of the data based on gender revealed that women students have more trust in non-governmental organizations (52.4%) compared to the men (44.1%). When it comes to non-governmental organizations, the high level of distrust reported among the high school Roma students is significantly lower among the Roma university students – they are the group with the highest percentage of reported trust in non-governmental organizations (66.7%), compared to the other ethnic groups. In terms of trusting other people, the Turkish (42.9%) and Roma (53.9%) students report higher general trust in people.

### **3.9. Freedom of Expression**

The group of questions on freedom of expression were relevant for gaining insight into the understanding of basic democratic processes. It is also relevant to look at freedom of expression in terms of the existence of (self-)censorship among young people and their attitude towards authority. This group of questions was also important for understanding young people's opinions on the responsibility that this freedom entails, including hate speech.

#### **3.9.1. Sharing opinions in class**

When asked whether they feel free to share their opinions in class, 76.7% of high school students said that they generally feel free. Nevertheless, about two thirds feel occasional discomfort in doing so (63.2%), while more than half (52.6%) refrain from sharing their opinion in class. One in three high school students do not feel comfortable sharing their opinions outside of class as well. The high school students were also asked how important it is for them to hear opinions and views that are different from theirs in their education. For more than 80% of the high school students who participated in the study, the opportunity to hear different opinions in school is important, even when these opinions are not in agreement with theirs. This was more important to the high school girls (83.9%) compared to the boys (76.8%). The Turkish and Bosniac high school students were less likely to feel free to share their opinions in class.

An almost identical percentage of university students (76.1%) feel free to share their opinion in their classes. Nevertheless, two thirds among them sometimes feel uncomfortable when they have to express their opinion at university, and a significantly higher 72.8% refrain



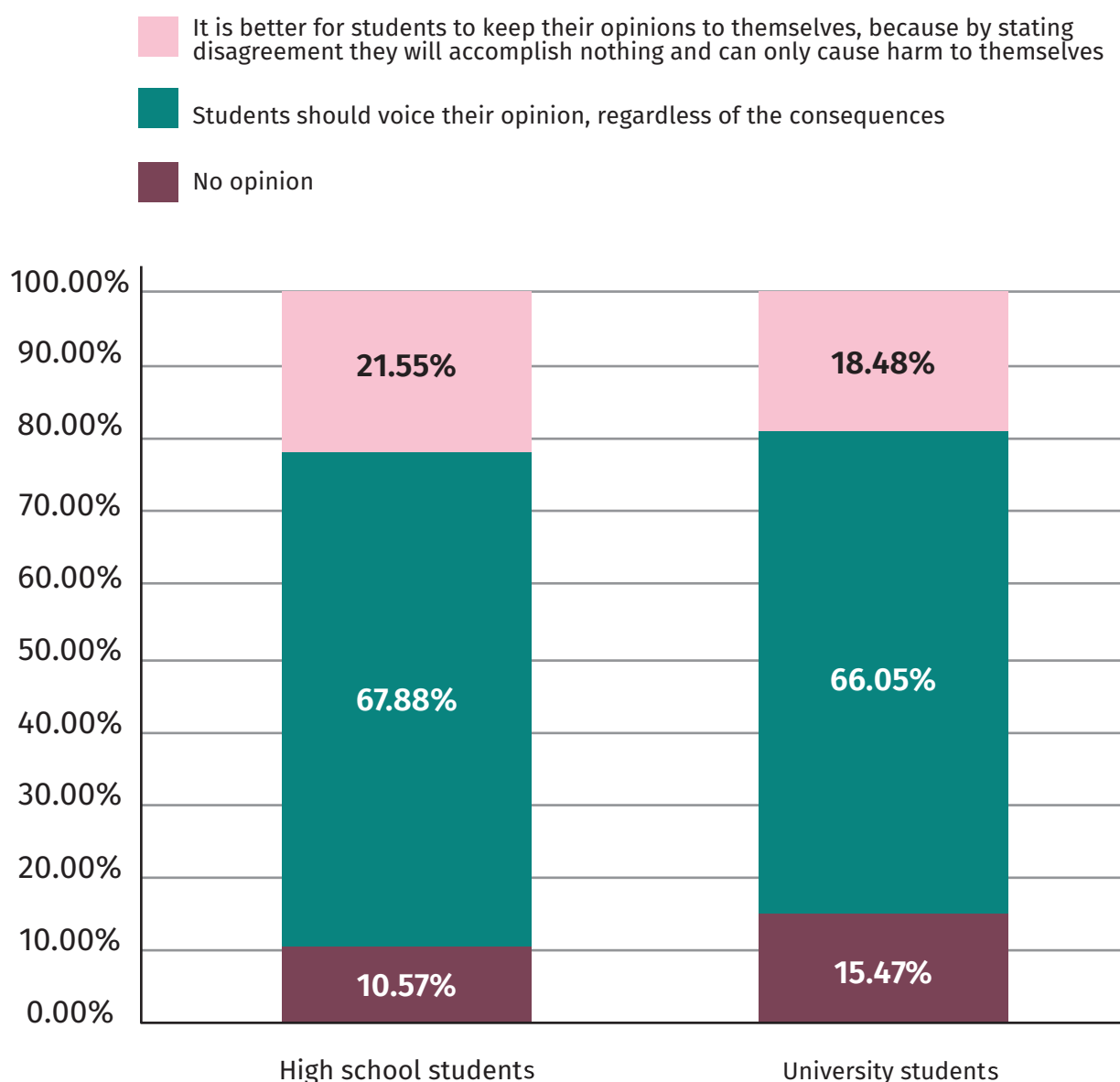
from sharing their opinion altogether. Almost half (49.9%) do not feel comfortable sharing their opinion in communicating with their peers outside of the educational process. Even though it was generally high, a comparatively lower percentage of students (72.3%) compared to high school students positively rated the opportunity to be exposed to different opinions in university.



More than two-thirds of the surveyed high school students believe that students should always voice their opinion, even when these opinions conflict with their professors' opinions (Figure 37). When it comes to this question, we noted a significant difference in terms of gender. Namely, a significantly higher percentage of high school girls (73%) believe that they should publicly state their opinions, compared to 61.9% of high school boys who believe this. The analysis of the data based on ethnicity revealed that the percentage of those who share this opinion was highest among Macedonian high school students (69.9%), and lowest among Bosniacs, among whom 57.1% believe that opinions should always be publicly voiced in school. This opinion was shared to a greater extent among students in general education (73.8%), compared to students from vocational high schools (65.6%).

An almost identical percentage of university students (66.05%) share the view that their opinions should be voiced publicly, regardless of their professors' opinions, which is a relatively high percentage of participants who show awareness of the importance of freedom of expression in educational institutions (Figure 37).

**Figure 37. Publicly voicing opinion in school/university, 2018**

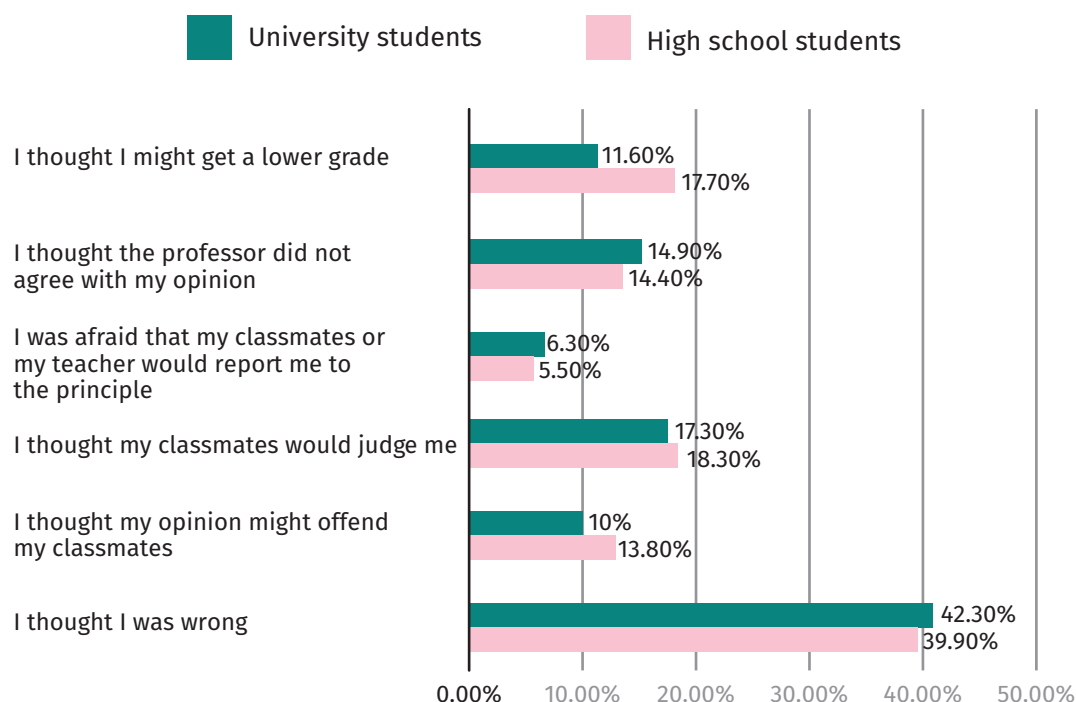


More than a third (38.3%) of high school students have refrained from sharing their opinion in class because they thought they were wrong, 18.3% refrained because they were afraid of being judged, while 17.7% refrained because they were afraid of getting a lower grade. The main reasons for refraining from sharing one's opinion in university lectures was the same – 42.3% of university students have refrained from sharing their opinion in class because they were unsure if their opinion was correct (they thought they were wrong). Fear of judgment was the reason for refraining from free expression among 17.3% of participants, while for 14.9% this was due to concerns that their opinion was not in line with the opinions of the professor (Figure 38).

When it comes to the reasons for refraining from sharing one's opinion outside of classes and school, the main reasons provided by the high school students were fear of making a mistake (26%), avoiding confrontations with their environment (25.2%), as well as the concern that their opinion could be offensive to their collocutors (20.9%).

Avoiding confrontation (25.2%) and fear of the “wrong” opinion (24.8%) were the dominant reasons provided by the university students for refraining from sharing their opinions outside of lectures.

**Figure 38. Refraining from voicing one's opinion, high school and university students, mean values, 2018**



When they hear an opinion that is in line with their views and opinions, 62% of high school students said that they publicly voice their support, 17.2% talk with their classmate after class, while 16.8% talk about what was said with their classmates.

University students were somewhat less likely to voice public support for their classmates' views and opinions that they agree with – 43.1%. Nevertheless, they were more likely compared to the high school students to decide to talk to their classmate after the lecture (23.6%) and to talk to other classmates about what was said (24.5%).

More than a third (34.6%) of high school students said that when they hear a classmate's opinion in class that they do not agree with at all, they attempt to understand the point of view of the classmate. A lower percentage (27.9%) will publicly voice opposition to what was said, while 14.4% avoid future contact with the classmate in question. The ranking of the reactions is identical when it comes to the university students. Namely, a higher percentage of university students (41.2%) attempt to understand the point of view of the collocutor, but a significantly lower percentage (17.3%) publicly voice their opposition, while 12.7% avoid future contact.

The responses were different in cases when the participants are faced with opinions that they believe to be offensive to their classmates. In this case, 31.7% of high school students said that they would publicly oppose what was said, 18.3% would ask the classmate to keep their opinions to themselves, while 14.3% would avoid future contact. The university students reported different reactions to views they believe to be offensive. Namely, a significantly lower percentage of them would publicly oppose what was said (21.2%), 24.4% said that they would try to understand the point of view of the classmate, while 18.6% would avoid future contact with the person in question.

When they were asked to define the term hate speech, 39.7% of high school students said that it was "a statement that aims to offend someone based on their belonging to a certain group", 28.4% said that it is "words directed to a certain person or group that characterize them in a negative and stereotypical way", a lower percentage that it is "a term that is used to define negative and controversial statements" (14.7%), and 14.2% define the term as "statements that

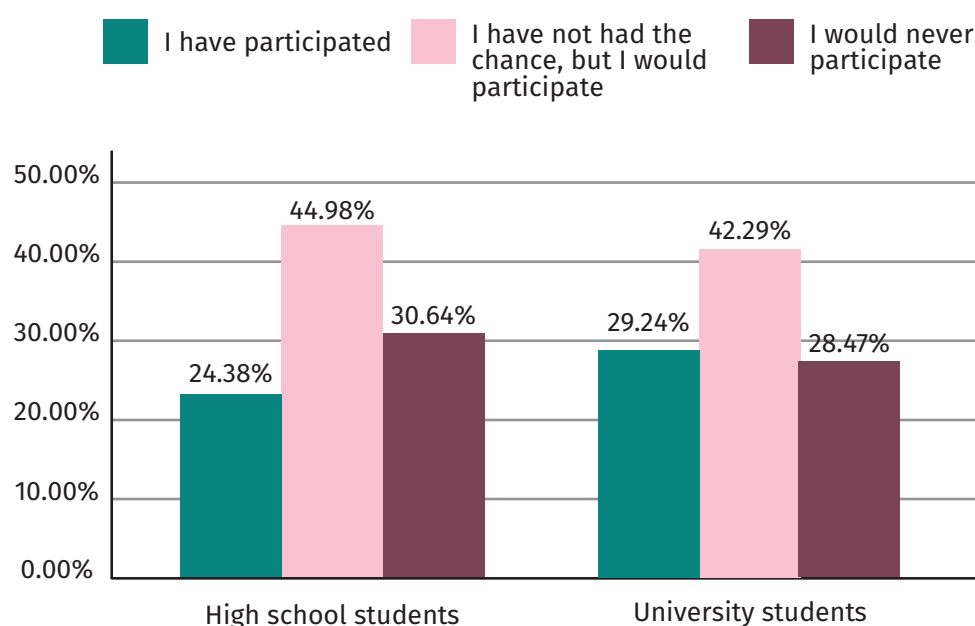
incite harmful behavior (for example, stress, exclusion)”.

Among university students, 33.2% believe that hate speech is “a statement that aims to offend someone based on their belonging to a certain group”, 29.1% that it is “words directed to a certain person or group that characterize them in a negative and stereotypical way”, while a smaller percentage (less than 13% each) agree with the two other statements.

### 3.9.2. Openness to various forms of protest

The study also attempted to determine whether high school and university students participated or are prepared to participate in various forms of expressing protest (signing a petition, participating in a protest, boycotting classes). The results of the study conducted in high schools revealed that about 22% have participated in such activities, that more than 40% report they are prepared to participate, while a third would not participate at all (Figure 39). The analysis based on ethnicity revealed that the percentage of participants who would never take part in some form of protest was higher among the Turkish (41.9%), Roma (40 point 7%), and Bosniac (45%) high school students.

**Figure 39. Participating in protests as a form of voicing dissatisfaction, high school and university students, in percentages, 2018**



The results were similar in the university students’ responses (Figure 39). An analysis of the findings based on the participants; gender revealed that men were more likely to have participated in all forms of protest compared to the women, but there was no difference in terms of their preparedness to participate in these activities.

High school students were split on the issue of whether their classes should be interrupted due to student protests. The Albanian high school students (a cumulative percentage of 78.6%) reported the strongest agreement with the opinion that classes should not be interrupted due to protests, while this opinion is shared by 45.4% of Macedonians, and only 33.3% of Bosniacs. The students from vocational high schools (56.2%) were more likely to agree with this opinion compared to the students from general education high schools (43.1%).

Among the university students, the percentage of participants who believe that classes should not be interrupted for student protests is somewhat higher – 57.7%. The men (64%) are slightly more likely to agree with this view compared to the women (60%). An analysis of the



findings based on ethnicity showed the opinion that classes should not be interrupted dominates in all ethnic groups.

On the other hand, high school students overwhelmingly (83.8%) agree with the opinion that schools should be spaces for the free expression of opinion and protest. This opinion is most likely to have support among Macedonians (85.7%), Vlachs (83.3%), and Albanians (83.2%), and has slightly less support among the Turkish (71.5%) and the Roma (62.9%) high school students. Among the university students, 86.9% agree with the view that universities should be spaces for free expression and protest.



## 4. CONCLUSIONS

The interpretation of the findings and the formulating of the conclusions were carried out by taking into consideration several methodological limitations imposed with the goals and the implementation of the study. Namely, the methodological instrument was developed to allow for comparison with the study on the high school population that was conducted in 2011, which prevented us from making some of the topics and questions ‘more contemporary’. Furthermore, the manner in which the data collection process was carried out (participants independently completing survey questionnaires), as well as the size of the methodological instrument (over 50 questions), limited the opportunity to include questions that would allow for an in-depth analysis of certain results. In this sense, a recommendation for future research attempts is to focus on the analysis of various experiences and perceptions conditioned by the various socio-cultural factors and environments that form young people’s experiences.

The results of the study of social capital among high school and university students point to a lack of activities, environment, and expression of social capital among young people. There are two key conclusions that appear throughout the analysis of the responses from the young participants: firstly, that conditions remain almost unchanged eight years after the first study in terms of development of social capital among young people; secondly, that social capital, networks for connecting and cooperation, the forms of engagement of young people in the community, and trust and societal institutions all show a downward trend as young people transition into adulthood. In terms of the first conclusion, it is disheartening that the events in the period between the two studies, during which time authentic high school and student movements were initiated, do not indicate the presence of an enabling environment,



the development, and the effectuating of social capital among young people. Namely, despite multiple cases of youth activism in the past decade, it seems that these events and processes did not leave a lasting impact on the perceptions and opinions of young people in terms of responsibility for and interest in community engagement.

In the context of the second conclusion, the results showed that students are even more reluctant in terms of forging relationships with the environment and involvement in any form of engagement in the community outside of activities dedicated to their personal development. Among the low percentage of young people who nevertheless take up voluntary activities for solving (also their own) problems in the community, what is evident is the lack of goal-rationality in these initiatives. A significant number of them do it “for no particular reason,” which indicates a lack of purpose and consciousness of the impact of this engagement. Even though young people nominally demonstrate a culture of altruism (evident from the responses for personal responsibility to the community and readiness to become volunteers), this is not effectuated through concrete action.

When it comes to the institutions that could have an empowering influence over the development of social capital among young people—the educational system and family—the general conclusion is that they have no such influence. Namely, we can conclude from the findings that young people have relationships in the family that are based on trust (which can be concluded from the responses to the questions about who they turn to for help and support, conversations about current events with parents, and the subjective assessment of parents as support); however, the family does not play the role of a significant determinant for getting involved in volunteer work in the community. Additionally, it was revealed that the educational system does exceptionally little to utilize its potential for building the social capital of young people: very little is asked of them in terms of being informed about current events in society; an exceptionally low percentage of young people communicate with institutions as part of the educational process, or were encouraged to share and exchange ideas, or even volunteered as part of their education. Furthermore, young people show a low level of awareness about the existence (especially in the case of university students) of high school/university associations as student representative bodies within educational institutions and show little interest in their work.

When it comes to forms of conventional citizenship, we can conclude that young people nominally believe that these are important, but it is disheartening to note their apathy and pessimism in terms of the possibility to influence decision-making processes, from their micro environments – schools and universities, to local communities and society. In this context what is noteworthy is the high level of distrust that is manifested towards a significant number of social institutions. It is precisely the high level of distrust that could be a significant inhibiting factor for the development of social capital in the long term, which is also indicated in the comparison of the responses from the high school and university students.

In terms of freedom of expression, even though young people are of the opinion that their views should be shared publicly, regardless of whether they are in line with the opinions of authorities, a significant part of them would refrain from sharing their opinions due to insecurity and fear of judgment.

Finally, the perception of the inability to have influence in their environment, the low level of trust in other people and institutions, the exceptionally low involvement in volunteering initiatives to help the community – all indicate that young people in the country remain encapsulated in their primary groups, while participation in the public sphere is mainly tied to pragmatic goals. These circumstances prevent the development of relationships and cooperation that enrich social capital and encourage their socialization into active citizens.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Young people's problems and interests*

1. Increased visibility of the self-employment measures, as well as making it easier to employ young people, which should be provided by the Employment Service Agency of North Macedonia.
2. A local offer for cultural and recreational events for young people in smaller towns should be created by the Ministry of Culture.
3. Providing and creating a greater number of extracurricular activities for high school students, in line with their interests and their context.

### *Civic engagement and volunteering*

1. Incorporating volunteering as a value within the educational process.
2. Promoting and encouraging volunteer work within the educational process through cooperation with the non-governmental sector, the private sector, and local communities.
3. Introducing community service by having educational institutions and local communities create volunteering programs.
4. Including and consulting young people in the creation of activities for the local community, by establishing functional local youth councils within every municipality.

### *Social inclusion, opportunities*

1. The educational system should build a competitive workforce for the Labor market.
2. Creating economic policies and stimulus measures for employment and the development of entrepreneurship among young people.
3. Career guidance for young people from the earliest ages within the educational process.

### *Support from the educational system*

1. Encouraging civic activism and social responsibility among young people in all levels of the educational process through changing the curricula, introducing contemporary examples, and providing space for the practical application of skills within the educational process.
2. Providing opportunities for young people's personal development, in parallel with career development.
3. Focusing pedagogical and psychological services on the mental health and personal development of young people by reducing their administrative workload, i.e., growing their work teams.
4. Providing additional training for professors and expert staff for providing support for discrimination, violence, and solving young people's problems.
5. Revising the curricula and the study aids, by emphasizing the results of studying and increasing the skills of students.
6. Encouraging young people throughout the educational process to communicate regularly and effectively with local and national institutions to advocate for their interests.

### *Youth participation in the decision-making processes in educational institutions*

1. Creating an enabling environment for youth organizing and participation in decision making at the level of schools, the local, and the national level, by establishing youth representative bodies.
2. Supporting youth organizing by building capacities for the successful creation and management of youth representative bodies.

3. Creating mechanisms for including young people in areas that are of personal interest to them, such as educational policies and youth policy and decision making processes that are relevant to them.

### ***Personal responsibility, inclination to agency – activism***

1. Increasing political literacy among young people by including them in relevant decision making, as well as through education on the mechanisms for direct democratic participation, with special emphasis on voting rights.
2. Revising the civic education programs and expanding them to include practical exercises and knowledge, with the goal of promoting the concept of active citizenship.
3. Local and state officials should address the problems that young people are faced with and work towards finding solutions together with young people.
4. Creating opportunities for free expression within the educational system through the promotion of debate, active citizenship, volunteering, and youth organizing.
5. Increasing the level of trust towards state institutions by familiarizing young people with their work and promoting the existing mechanisms for advocacy in institutions.

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## ANNEX - OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

**1. What is the biggest problem in your city that you would like to see solved as soon as possible? (Mark only one problem, the one you think is most pressing.)**

1. Violence and crime
2. Alcohol and drug addiction
3. Education quality and accessibility
4. The cleanliness of the city and its environment
5. The city's infrastructure (for example, traffic and parking, roads, water supply and sanitation, public transportation quality, etc.)
6. Accessibility and quality of healthcare services
7. The economy and lack of jobs
8. Citizens' personal freedoms
9. Interethnic intolerance
10. Corruption
11. Cultural life and recreation
12. Access to information
13. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Thinking about the problems you see in your city, to what extent do you think you can change, i.e., contribute to solving these problems?**

I cannot change anything    1    2    3    4    I can change a lot

**3. Have you ever worked on or participated in an activity with someone else or in a group to solve a certain problem in the city in which you live?**

1. Yes, in the last 12 months
2. Yes, but not in the last 12 months
3. No, never

**4. Have you ever participated in any type of volunteer work or activity? Volunteer work includes voluntarily providing services, knowledge and skills and/or carrying out other activities that benefit other people, organizations, institutions etc., that is unpaid.**

1. Yes, in the last 12 months (continue to question No. 5)
2. Yes, but not in the last 12 months (continue to question No. 5)
3. No, never (skip question No. 5 and continue to question No. 6)

**5. If you did volunteer, how did you start to volunteer? Choose all answers that apply in your case.**

1. Another member of my family was already volunteering
2. I (or someone from my family) was receiving services from the organization for which I later volunteered
3. A friend asked me to help out
4. I was very interested in the issue on which I worked
5. Volunteer work was compulsory for school
6. I was forced to volunteer (by my parents/guardians, the law, others, etc.)
7. I simply joined because I felt like it – no particular reason
8. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**6. If you have not volunteered, but have the opportunity and the time, can you see yourself volunteering for the community/the city? (Remember that we ask you to please give an honest answer.)**

1. Definitely yes
2. Most probably yes
3. Most probably no
4. Definitely no
5. I have volunteered

**7. At home, how often do you talk about or have talked about local problems and current affairs in your city?**

1. Often
2. Sometimes
3. Rarely
4. Never

**8. If you think about things that you would like to do in the future, do you think that your parents/guardians would support you in most of your decisions and aspirations, or do you think that they are more likely to oppose them?**

My parents/guardians would oppose almost all my decisions and aspirations    1   2   3   4    My parents/guardians would support me in most of my decisions and aspirations

**9. In general, given the choice, where would you like to work and build a career?**

1. In state/local administration
2. In a non-profit/non-governmental organization (for example, Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, UN, etc.)
3. In the business sector
4. If I can afford to, I would prefer not to work and build a career
5. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**10. The list below includes some problems that young people your age identified as issues they worry about. Please rate each of them on a scale of 1 to 5 by marking the appropriate number, where 1 means you are not worried about this problem at all, and 5 means you are very worried. Remember, you can select any number between 1 and 5, but it must be just one number.**

	I am very worried	I am worried	No opinion	I am not worried	I am not worried at all
Sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV, HPV, etc.	5	4	3	2	1
Underage pregnancy	5	4	3	2	1
Abortion	5	4	3	2	1
Underage marriage	5	4	3	2	1
Discrimination and prejudice	5	4	3	2	1
Drug and alcohol addiction	5	4	3	2	1
Access to quality education	5	4	3	2	1
Access to quality healthcare	5	4	3	2	1

Unemployment and a weak economy	5	4	3	2	1
Lack of cultural/recreational events	5	4	3	2	1
Clean environment	5	4	3	2	1
Lack of transparency and access to information	5	4	3	2	1
Corruption	5	4	3	2	1
Citizens' personal freedoms and rights	5	4	3	2	1
Interethnic intolerance	5	4	3	2	1
Weak infrastructure (roads, water supply, sanitation)	5	4	3	2	1

**11. If you take into account the city and the family conditions in which you were raised, do you think that you were given sufficient opportunities for success in life, or do you think that others were given more and have higher chances for success?**

There are no opportunities for me here    1    2    3    4    I am provided every opportunity

*In this part of the questionnaire, we will first ask about certain activities in your high school, and then a few questions about your opinions.*

**12. How is school going for you?**

1. I am having a great time
2. I am having an ok time
3. I am having a bad time
4. I am having a terrible time
5. I don't know, I have mixed feelings

**13. Which of the following have you done at school? (you can select more than one answer that applies)**

1. I have written a letter/e-mail to someone I do not know/ an institution
2. I have given a speech or an oral presentation
3. I have participated in a debate/discussion in which I had to convince someone of my point of view
4. I have visited a state/municipal institution
5. None of the above

**14. In any of your subjects at school, are you required to follow current political events in your city or the country, by reading daily newspapers, watching the news, TV, internet, etc.?**

1. Yes, I do have such subjects (Which ones? Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
2. No, I have not had such subjects

**15. Have you had the chance to discuss youth problems in class?**

1. Yes
2. No

**16. Does your school have a high school association/organization, or any other form of student governance?**

1. Yes
2. No
3. I don't know

If you responded with "yes", do you perhaps know who represents you? (Specify.)

**17. Have you ever participated in the election of a representative for the high school association/organization, or any other form of student governance?**

1. Yes, I have
2. No, I have never participated

**18. How much attention do you pay to what your high school union/your student governance body does?**

I pay no attention at all    1    2    3    4    I pay a lot of attention

**19. Which have of these activities have you taken part in? (Select all in which you have participated)**

1. Learning a foreign language
2. Membership in a sports club
3. Environmental and/or animal rights organization
4. Music classes
5. Drama club
6. I am a member of a nongovernmental organization
7. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
8. I have not participated in any extracurricular activities

*Now we have a few questions about your plans and views related to education*

**20. To what extent do you think students in your school can influence the way important decisions are made in the school?**

They cannot have any real influence    1    2    3    4    They have great influence

**21. When students disagree with their professors, do you think they should publicly state their opinion, or do you think it is smarter to keep their opinions to themselves? Please select the statement that you agree with more.**

1. It is better for students to keep their opinions to themselves, because by disagreeing they will accomplish nothing and can only bring harm to themselves
2. Students should voice their opinion, regardless of the consequences
3. I don't know/no opinion

**22. What do you plan to have as your highest level of educational attainment?**

1. High school
2. Undergraduate
3. Masters
4. PhD

**23. In your opinion, how important is school in life?**

Not important at all    1    2    3    4    School is exceptionally important

**24. Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

1. The city in which I currently live
2. Out of the city, but in the country
3. Out of the city and the country

**25. In your opinion, to what extent do elected local officials (mayor, municipal councillors) care about young people and their needs?**

They don't care about young people 1    2    3    4    They care about young people very much

**26. In your opinion, to what extent do elected state officials (MPs, ministers, managers of institutions) care about young people and their needs?**

They don't care about young people 1    2    3    4    They care about young people very much

**27. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is I don't trust them at all and 5 – they have my full trust), please indicate how much you trust the following institutions/organizations.**

	I trust them fully	I trust them	Neither trust nor distrust	I don't trust them	I don't trust them at all
The healthcare sector, including hospitals and clinics	5	4	3	2	1
The educational sector, including schools	5	4	3	2	1
Customs administration	5	4	3	2	1
Judiciary	5	4	3	2	1
Ombudsman	5	4	3	2	1
Police	5	4	3	2	1
State Election Commission	5	4	3	2	1
International Organizations	5	4	3	2	1
Media	5	4	3	2	1
Local/municipal government	5	4	3	2	1
Non-governmental organizations	5	4	3	2	1
Social media	5	4	3	2	1
(Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
Assembly	5	4	3	2	1
Government	5	4	3	2	1
Political parties	5	4	3	2	1
Army					

**28. Regardless of whether you currently have the right to vote, how important is voting to you personally?**

Voting is not important at all    1    2    3    4    Voting is very important



**29. From what you remember growing up, do you think that your parents/guardians voted in all elections, or?...**

1. In all elections
2. In almost all elections
3. Rarely
4. They did not vote
5. I don't know

**30. To what extent do you think the government's decisions impact your daily life?**

No impact at all 1   2   3   4   They have great impact

**31. To what extent do you believe that you can influence how governments work?**

I cannot have any real influence   1   2   3   4   I can have great influence

**32. To what extent do you think the actions of non-governmental/non-profit organizations impact your daily life?**

No impact at all 1   2   3   4   They have great impact

**33. To what extent do you think the actions of non-governmental/non-profit organizations impact your personal and professional development?**

No impact at all 1   2   3   4   They have great impact

**34. Finally, we would like to get your response to a few statements. Please select one of the two statements provided below, choosing the one you agree with more.**

1. The state is governed by a few people with big interests, who only look out for themselves OR
2. The state works for everyone's benefit

1. Non-governmental organizations are governed by a few people with big interests, who only look out for themselves OR
2. Non-governmental organizations work for everyone's benefit

1. Given the chance, most people would use others OR
2. Most people are fair with others

1. I have a personal responsibility to engage and attempt to improve society / the local community OR
2. Improving society / the local community is not my responsibility, but the responsibility of other people and politicians

1. Children adopt the views of their parents/guardians OR
2. Children create their own views

1. No matter how much they oppose it, children turn into their parents in the end OR
2. Children are most often the complete opposite of their parents/guardians

**35. When faced with a problem you cannot solve by yourself, do you turn to someone for help and support:**

1. Yes, to my parents/guardians
2. Yes, to my sibling (brother/sister)

3. Yes, to a friend
4. Yes, to a professor
5. Yes, to my boyfriend/girlfriend
6. Yes, to a professional (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Yes, to a non-governmental organization
8. No, I solve my problems by myself, I don't think I can rely on anyone
9. Other, (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**36. How often do you follow the news on the following topics:**

	Follow daily	Follow frequently	Sometimes follow	Never follow
Religion	4	3	2	1
Entertainment	4	3	2	1
Science	4	3	2	1
Sports	4	3	2	1
Computers and tech	4	3	2	1
Culture	4	3	2	1
Politics	4	3	2	1
Service information	4	3	2	1

**37. Please state to what extent you agree or disagree with the following:**

	Very much agree	Agree	Do not agree	Do not agree at all
I feel free to share my opinion in class	4	3	2	1
I sometimes feel uncomfortable when I have to share my opinion in class	4	3	2	1
I refrain from sharing my opinion in class	4	3	2	1
Outside of class, I do not feel comfortable sharing my opinion in school	4	3	2	1
It is important to me to hear different opinions or ideas at school, even when they are not in line with mine	4	3	2	1

**38. What was your reason for refraining from sharing your opinion in class? (select those responses that apply to you)**

1. I thought I was wrong
2. I thought my opinion might offend my classmates
3. I thought my classmates would judge me
4. I was afraid that my classmates or my teacher would report me to the principle
5. I thought the professor did not agree with my opinion
6. I thought I might get a lower grade because of my opinion
7. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**39. Outside of classes, what were your reasons for refraining from sharing an idea or an opinion? (select those responses that apply to you)**

1. I thought I was wrong

2. I thought my opinion might offend somebody
3. I was afraid I would be judged by my environment
4. I did not want to explain my idea/opinion
5. I did not want to start an argument or confrontation
6. I was afraid I would get in trouble with the police
7. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**40. In class, when one of your classmates says something with which you agree very much, how do you react? (select those responses that apply to you)**

1. I publicly agree with their opinion
2. I start to follow them on social media
3. I share the experience on social media
4. I talk to the classmate outside of classes
5. I talk to my friends or classmates about what was said
6. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**41. In class, when one of your classmates says something with which you do not agree at all, how do you react? (select those responses that apply to you)**

1. I avoid talking to that classmate in the future
2. I share the experience on social media
3. I publicly oppose what was said
4. I try to understand their point of view
5. I talk to the classmate after class
6. I ask the classmate to be quiet and keep their opinion to themselves
7. I talk to the professor about what was said
8. I talk to other classmates about what was said
9. I leave the classroom
10. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**42. In class, when one of your classmates says something that you find offensive to (an)other classmate(s), how do you react? (select those responses that apply to you)**

1. I avoid talking to that classmate in the future
2. I share the experience on social media
3. I publicly oppose what was said
4. I try to understand their point of view
5. I talk to the classmate after class
6. I ask the classmate to be quiet and keep their opinion to themselves
7. I talk to the professor about what was said
8. I talk to other classmates about what was said
9. I leave the classroom
10. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**43. In your opinion, what constitutes hate speech?**

1. A statement that aims to offend someone based on their belonging to a certain group
2. A term that is used to define negative and controversial statements
3. Statements that incite harmful behavior (for example, stress, exclusion)
4. Words directed to a certain person or group that characterize them in a negative and stereotypical way
5. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**44. In your opinion, to what extent does your school support and include, or does not support, the following groups:**

	Supports them very much	Supports them	Neither supports nor does not support them	Does not support them	Does not support them at all
Special needs students	5	4	3	2	1
Students with mental health problems	5	4	3	2	1
Students from poor families	5	4	3	2	1
Students from ethnic groups that are not the majority in the school	5	4	3	2	1
Students with non-normative sexual orientations	5	4	3	2	1

**45. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “My classes in school should not be interrupted because of student protests”?**

1. agree very much
2. agree
3. do not agree
4. do not agree at all

**46. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Schools should be spaces where students can freely express their opinion and protest”?**

1. agree very much
2. agree
3. do not agree
4. do not agree at all

**47. Have you participated, would participate, or would never participate in one of the following activities:**

	I have participated	I have not had the chance, but I would participate	I would never participate
Sign a petition	1	2	3
Boycotting classes	1	2	3
Take part in student protests	1	2	3

***Please provide the following information about you:***

**48. Gender:**

1. Male
2. Female

**49. Age:**

1. 14 years old
2. 15 years old

3. 16 years old
4. 17 years old
5. 18 years old

**50. Ethnicity**

1. Macedonian
2. Albanian
3. Turkish
4. Roma
5. Serbian
6. Bosniac
7. Vlach
8. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**51. Do you go to a vocational or a general education high school?**

1. Vocational
2. General Education

**52. Do you have your own room, or do you share it with a member of your family?**

1. I have my own room
2. I share my room with one other member of my family (sibling or other family member)
3. I share my room with a few members of my family
4. I live in student housing
5. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**53. Place of residence: (The question here is where you live, regardless of where you go to school)**

1. A village
2. A town with less than 10,000 inhabitants
3. A town or city with more than 10,000 inhabitants

**54. Have you ever heard of the Youth Educational Forum?**

1. No, never
2. Sounds familiar, but I am not sure
3. I have
4. Yes, I am a member/beneficiary of the Youth Educational Forum

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS  
IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

**1. What is the biggest problem in your city that you would like to see solved as soon as possible? (Mark only one problem, the one you think is most pressing.)**

1. Violence and crime
2. Alcohol and drug addiction
3. Education quality and accessibility
4. The cleanliness of the city and its environment
5. The city's infrastructure (for example, traffic and parking, roads, water supply and sanitation, public transportation quality, etc.)
6. Accessibility and quality of healthcare services
7. The economy and lack of jobs
8. Citizens' personal freedoms
9. Interethnic intolerance
10. Corruption



- 11. Cultural life and recreation
- 12. Access to information
- 13. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Thinking about the problems you see in your city, to what extent do you think you can change, i.e., contribute to solving these problems?**

I cannot change anything    1    2    3    4    I can change a lot

**3. Have you ever worked on or participated in an activity with someone else or in a group to solve a certain problem in the city in which you live?**

- 1. Yes, in the last 12 months
- 2. Yes, but not in the last 12 months
- 3. No, never

**4. Have you ever participated in any type of volunteer work or activity? Volunteer work includes voluntarily providing services, knowledge and skills and/or carrying out other activities that benefit other people, organizations, institutions etc., that is unpaid.**

- 1. Yes, in the last 12 months (continue to question No. 5)
- 2. Yes, but not in the last 12 months (continue to question No. 5)
- 3. No, never (skip question No. 5 and continue to question No. 6)

**5. If you did volunteer, how did you start to volunteer? Choose all answers that apply in your case.**

- 1. Another member of my family was already volunteering
- 2. I (or someone from my family) was receiving services from the organization for which I later volunteered
- 3. A friend asked me to help out
- 4. I was very interested in the issue on which I worked
- 5. Volunteer work was compulsory for school/university
- 6. I was forced to volunteer (by my parents/guardians, the law, others, etc.)
- 7. I simply joined because I felt like it – no particular reason
- 8. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**6. If you have not volunteered, but have the opportunity and the time, can you see yourself volunteering for the community/the city? (Remember that we ask you to please give an honest answer.)**

- 1. Definitely yes
- 2. Most probably yes
- 3. Most probably no
- 4. Definitely no

**7. At home, how often do you talk about or have talked about local problems and current affairs in your city?**

- 1. Often
- 2. Sometimes
- 3. Rarely
- 4. Never

**8. If you think about things that you would like to do in the future, do you think that your parents/guardians would support you in most of your decisions and aspirations, or do you think that they are more likely to oppose them?**

My parents/guardians would oppose almost all my decisions and aspirations 1 2 3 4 My parents/guardians would support me in most of my decisions and aspirations

**9. In general, given the choice, where would you like to work and build a career?**

1. In state/local administration
2. In a non-profit/non-governmental organization (for example, Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, UN, etc.)
3. In the business sector
4. If I can afford to, I would prefer not to work and build a career
5. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**10. The list below includes some problems that young people your age identified as issues they worry about. Please rate each of them on a scale of 1 to 5 by marking the appropriate number, where 1 means you are not worried about this problem at all, and 5 means you are very worried. Remember, you can select any number between 1 and 5, but it must be just one number.**

	I am very worried	I am worried	No opinion	I am not worried	I am not worried at all
Sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV, HPV, etc.	5	4	3	2	1
Underage pregnancy	5	4	3	2	1
Abortion	5	4	3	2	1
Underage marriage	5	4	3	2	1
Youth Emigration	5	4	3	2	1
Discrimination and prejudice	5	4	3	2	1
Drug and alcohol addiction	5	4	3	2	1
Access to quality education	5	4	3	2	1
Access to quality healthcare	5	4	3	2	1
Unemployment and a weak economy	5	4	3	2	1
Lack of cultural/recreational events	5	4	3	2	1
Clean environment	5	4	3	2	1
Lack of transparency and access to information	5	4	3	2	1
Corruption	5	4	3	2	1
Citizens' personal freedoms and rights	5	4	3	2	1
Interethnic intolerance	5	4	3	2	1
Weak infrastructure (roads, water supply, sanitation)					

**11. If you take into account the city and the family conditions in which you were raised, do you think that you were given sufficient opportunities for success in life, or do you think that others were given more and have higher chances for success?**

There are no opportunities for me here 1 2 3 4 I am provided every opportunity

*In this part of the questionnaire, we will first ask about certain activities during your studies, and then a few questions about your opinions.*

**12. How are your studies going for you?**

1. I am having a great time
2. I am having an ok time
3. I am having a bad time
4. I am having a terrible time
5. I don't know, I have mixed feelings

**13. Which of the following have you done in the course of your studies? (you can select more than one answer that applies)**

1. I have written a letter/e-mail to someone I do not know/ an institution
2. I have given a speech or an oral presentation
3. I have participated in a debate/discussion in which I had to convince someone of my point of view
4. I have visited a state/municipal institution
5. None of the above

**14. In any of your classes at university, are you required to follow current political events in your city or the country, by reading daily newspapers, watching the news, TV, internet, etc.?**

1. Yes, I do have such subjects (Which ones? Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
2. No, I have not had such subjects

**15. Have you had the chance to discuss youth problems in class?**

1. Yes
2. No

**16. Does your university have a student association/organization, or any other form of student governance?**

1. Yes
2. No
3. I don't know

**17. If you responded with "yes", do you perhaps know who represents you? (Specify.) Have you ever participated in the election of a representative for the student association, or any other form of student governance?**

1. Yes, I have
2. No, I have never participated

**18. How much attention do you pay to what your student association does?**

I pay no attention at all    1    2    3    4    I pay a lot of attention

**19. Which have of these activities have you taken part in? (Select all in which you have participated)**

1. Learning a foreign language
2. Membership in a sports club
3. Environmental and/or animal rights organization
4. Music / painting / drama / desing classes
5. I am a member of a nongovernmental organization
6. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
7. I have not participated in any activities

*Now we have a few questions about your plans and views related to education*

**20. To what extent do you think students at your university can influence the way important decisions are made in the university?**

They cannot have any real influence 1 2 3 4 They have great influence

**21. When students disagree with their professors, do you think they should publicly state their opinion, or do you think it is smarter to keep their opinions to themselves? Please select the statement that you agree with more.**

1. It is better for students to keep their opinions to themselves, because by disagreeing they will accomplish nothing and can only bring harm to themselves
2. Students should voice their opinion, regardless of the consequences
3. I don't know/no opinion

**22. What do you plan to have as your highest level of educational attainment?**

1. High school (I do not plan to continue my studies)
2. Undergraduate
3. Masters
4. PhD

**23. In your opinion, how important is higher education in life?**

Not important at all 1 2 3 4 Higher education is exceptionally important

**24. Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

1. The city in which I currently live
2. Out of the city, but in the country
3. Out of the city and the country

**25. In your opinion, to what extent do elected local officials (mayor, municipal councillors) care about young people and their needs?**

They don't care about young people 1 2 3 4 They care about young people very much

**26. In your opinion, to what extent do elected state officials (MPs, ministers, managers of institutions) care about young people and their needs?**

They don't care about young people 1 2 3 4 They care about young people very much

**27. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is I don't trust them at all and 5 – they have my full trust), please indicate how much you trust the following institutions/organizations.**

	I trust them fully	I trust them	Neither trust nor distrust	I don't trust them	I don't trust them at all
<b>The healthcare sector, including hospitals and clinics</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>The educational sector</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Customs administration</b>	5	4	3	2	1

<b>Judiciary</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Police</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>State Election Commission</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>International Organizations</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Media</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Local/municipal government</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Non-governmental organizations</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Social media</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>(Facebook, Twitter, etc.)</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Assembly</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Government</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Political parties</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Army</b>	5	4	3	2	1

**28. How important is voting to you personally?**

Voting is not important at all    1    2    3    4    Voting is very important

**29. From what you remember growing up, do you think that your parents/guardians voted in all elections, or?...**

1. In all elections
2. In almost all elections
3. Rarely
4. They did not vote
5. I don't know

**30. Did you vote in the last elections? (the local elections held in October 2017)**

1. Yes
2. No
3. No answer

**31. Are you a member of a political party?**

1. Yes
2. I am not a member, but there is a political option that represents my political views
3. I am not a member, and there is no political option that represents my political views

**32. To what extent do you think the government's decisions impact your daily life?**

No impact at all    1    2    3    4    They have great impact

**33. To what extent do you believe that you can influence how governments work?**

I cannot have any real influence    1    2    3    4    I can have great influence

**34. To what extent do you think the actions of non-governmental/non-profit organizations impact your daily life?**



No impact at all 1 2 3 4 They have great impact

**35. To what extent do you think the actions of non-governmental/non-profit organizations impact your personal and professional development?**

No impact at all 1 2 3 4 They have great impact

**36. We would like to get your response to a few statements. Please select one of the two statements provided below, choosing the one you agree with more.**

1. The state is governed by a few people with big interests, who only look out for themselves OR  
2. The state works for everyone's benefit

1. Non-governmental organizations are governed by a few people with big interests, who only look out for themselves OR  
2. Non-governmental organizations work for everyone's benefit

1. Given the chance, most people would use others OR  
2. Most people are fair with others

1. I have a personal responsibility to engage and attempt to improve society / the local community OR  
2. Improving society / the local community is not my responsibility, but the responsibility of other people and politicians

1. Children adopt the views of their parents/guardians OR  
2. Children create their own views

1. No matter how much they oppose it, children turn into their parents in the end OR  
2. Children are most often the complete opposite of their parents/guardians

**37. When faced with a problem you cannot solve by yourself, do you turn to someone for help and support:**

1. Yes, to my parents/guardians  
2. Yes, my sibling (brother/sister)  
3. Yes, a friend  
4. Yes, a professor  
5. Yes, to my boyfriend/girlfriend  
6. Yes, to a professional (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
7. Yes, a non-governmental organization  
8. No, I solve my problems by myself, I don't think I can rely on anyone  
9. Other, (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**38. How often do you follow the news on the following topics:**

	Follow daily	Follow frequently	Sometimes follow	Never follow
Religion	4	3	2	1
Entertainment	4	3	2	1
Science	4	3	2	1
Sports	4	3	2	1

<b>Computers and tech</b>	4	3	2	1
<b>Culture</b>	4	3	2	1
<b>Politics</b>	4	3	2	1
<b>Service information</b>	4	3	2	1

**39. Please state to what extent you agree with the following:**

	<b>Very much agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Do not agree</b>	<b>Do not agree at all</b>
I feel free to share my opinion in class	4	3	2	1
I sometimes feel uncomfortable when I have to share my opinion in class	4	3	2	1
I have refrained from sharing my opinion in class	4	3	2	1
Outside of class, I do not feel comfortable sharing my opinion at university	4	3	2	1
It is important to me to hear different opinions or ideas at university, even when they are not in line with mine	4	3	2	1

**40. What was your reason for refraining from sharing your opinion in class? (select those responses that apply to you)**

1. I thought I was wrong
2. I thought my opinion might offend my classmates
3. I thought my classmates would judge me
4. I was afraid that my classmates or my professor would report me to the dean
5. I thought the professor did not agree with my opinion
6. I thought I might get a lower grade because of my opinion
7. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**41. Outside of classes, what were your reasons for refraining from sharing an idea or an opinion? (select those responses that apply to you)**

1. I thought I was wrong
2. I thought my opinion might offend somebody
3. I was afraid I would be judged by my environment
4. I did not want to explain my idea/opinion
5. I did not want to start an argument or confrontation
6. I was afraid I would get in trouble with the police
7. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**42. In class, when one of your classmates says something with which you agree very much, how do you react? (select those responses that apply to you)**

1. I publicly agree with their opinion
2. I start to follow them on social media
3. I share the experience on social media
4. I talk to the classmate outside of classes
5. I talk to my friends or classmates about what was said
6. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**43. In class, when one of your classmates says something with which you do not agree at all, how do you react? (select those responses that apply to you)**

1. I avoid talking to that student in the future
2. I share the experience on social media
3. I publicly oppose what was said
4. I try to understand their point of view
5. I talk to the classmate after class
6. I ask the classmate to be quiet and keep their opinion to themselves
7. I talk to the professor about what was said
8. I talk to other students about what was said
9. I leave the lecture hall
10. Other (specify)

**44. In class, when one of your classmates says something that you find offensive to (an)other classmate(s), how do you react? (select those responses that apply to you)**

1. I avoid talking to that student in the future
2. I share the experience on social media
3. I publicly oppose what was said
4. I try to understand their point of view
5. I talk to the classmate after class
6. I ask the classmate to be quiet and keep their opinion to themselves
7. I talk to the professor about what was said
8. I talk to other students about what was said
9. I leave the lecture hall
10. Other (specify)

**45. In your opinion, what constitutes hate speech?**

1. A statement that aims to offend someone based on their belonging to a certain group
2. A term that is used to define negative and controversial statements
3. Statements that incite harmful behavior (for example, stress, exclusion)
4. Words directed to a certain person or group that characterize them in a negative and stereotypical way
5. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**46. In your opinion, to what extent does your university support and include, or does not support, the following groups:**

	Supports them very much	Supports them	Neither supports nor does not support them	Does not support them	Does not support them at all
<b>Special needs students</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Students with mental health problems</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Students from poor families</b>	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Students from ethnic groups that are not the majority at the university</b>	5	4	3	2	1

<b>Students with non-normative sexual orientations</b>	5	4	3	2	1
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**47. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “My classes at university should not be interrupted because of student protests”?**

1. agree very much
2. agree
3. do not agree
4. do not agree at all

**48. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Universities should be spaces where students can freely express their opinion and protest”?**

1. agree very much
2. agree
3. do not agree
4. do not agree at all

**49. Have you participated, would participate, or would never participate in one of the following activities:**

	<b>I have participated</b>	<b>I have not had the chance, but I would participate</b>	<b>I would never participate</b>
<b>Sign a petition</b>	1	2	3
<b>Boycotting classes</b>	1	2	3
<b>Take part in student protests</b>	1	2	3

***Please provide the following information about you:***

**50. Gender:**

1. Male
2. Female

**51. Age:**

Please provide your age \_\_\_\_\_

**52. Ethnicity:**

1. Macedonian
2. Albanian
3. Turkish
4. Roma
5. Serbian
6. Bosniac
7. Vlach
8. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**53. Where do you study?**

1. University (specify which one): \_\_\_\_\_
2. College (specify which one): \_\_\_\_\_

**54. What year of your studies are you in?**

Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**55. I live:**

1. Alone
2. With a roommate or roommates, in a rented apartment
3. In student housing
4. With my parents/guardians

**56. Do you work anywhere? (include any type of paid work, regardless of whether you have an employment contract or not)**

1. Yes
2. No

**57. Place of residence: (The question here is where you live, regardless of where you go to school)**

1. A village
2. A town with less than 10,000 inhabitants
3. A town or city with more than 10,000 inhabitants

**58. Have you ever heard of the Youth Educational Forum?**

1. No, never
2. Sounds familiar, but I am not sure
3. I have
4. Yes, I am a member/beneficiary of the Youth Educational Forum



## YOUTH EDUCATIONAL FORUM

Youth Education Forum is a youth community that creates space for debate, free expression and for youth organizing. At the same time this community encourages activism, protects and promotes youth rights and policies.

YEF achieves its goals through information, education, discussion, cooperation and by motivating and supporting young people.

The activities of the organization are implemented through the four main programs:

1. Debate program
2. Street Law program
3. Program for research, analysis and creation of youth and educational policies
4. Youth Activism Program

YEF was founded in 1999 and is an organization active on a national level, implementing its program activities in 10 cities through YEF centers in: Skopje, Tetovo, Struga, Bitola, Veles and Kumanovo.

In YEF's youth clubs and activities annually participate more than 1000 young people, program beneficiaries and organization members, mainly through the programs in the Debate clubs, Street Law and Media / Art youth clubs.

Within the organization in 2011 was established the first youth internet radio in the country, Radio MOF ([www.radiomof.mk](http://www.radiomof.mk)).



