SOLIDinEDU

Field investigation

and

Interviews results

Intro

Institute Perspectives from Bulgaria was tasked with conducting a study in the field of the education system of the respective country. The survey includes a goggle form with questions related to pupils, students and graduates of educational institutions and a questionnaire in the form of an interview designed for a variety of experts working in the field of education.

The field investigation and the interviews include 5 sections:

I. Personal Information
II. Diversity & inclusion
III. Solidarity, Empathy & Democratic Culture
IV. Sociocultural identity & reflection
V. Volunteerism

In this reposrt we will analyse the results obtained by the persons concerned.

From the google form we received:
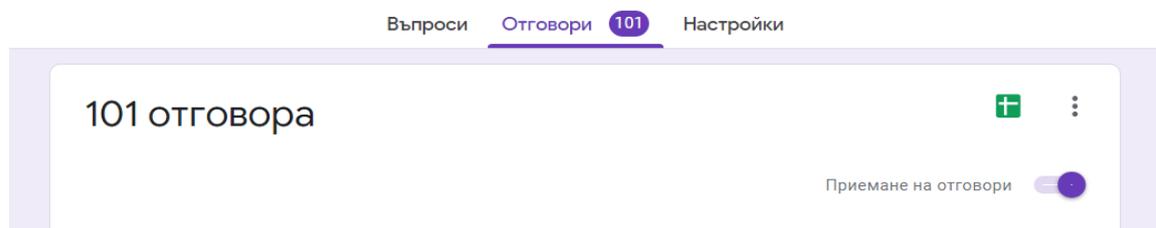
and interviewed 10 experts.

Let's look at the answers depending on the section.

Section I: Personal Information

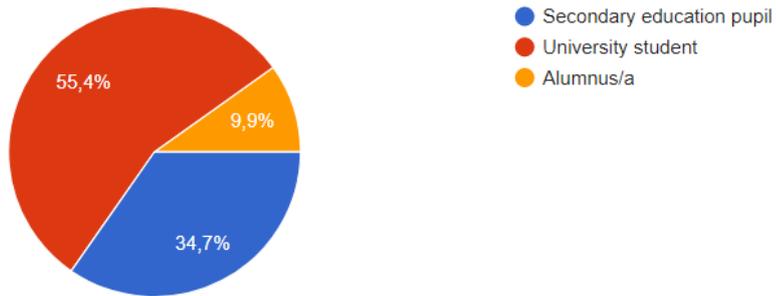o *Overview of the experts: profession and type of educational institute:*

The experts we interviewed are professors from different universities (medical, economical ect.), teachers working in kindergarten and high schools, also experts like speech therapist, psychologist, resource teacher and consultant.

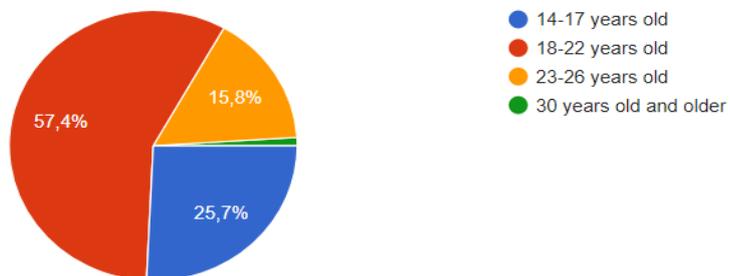o *Overview of the respondents: status, age, and gender*
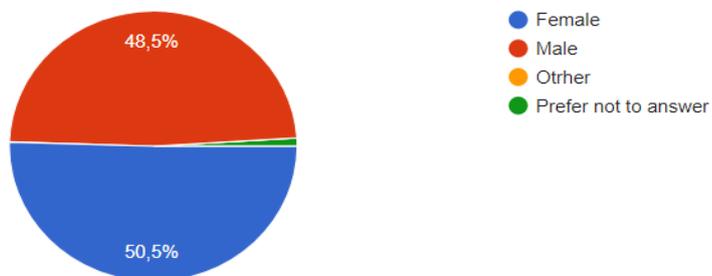
Personal information

I am currently a:

101 отговора

- Secondary education pupil
- University student
- Alumnus/a

55,4%
9,9%
34,7%

My age is:

101 отговора

- 14-17 years old
- 18-22 years old
- 23-26 years old
- 30 years old and older

57,4%
15,8%
25,7%

My gender is:

101 отговора

- Female
- Male
- Otrher
- Prefer not to answer

48,5%
50,5%
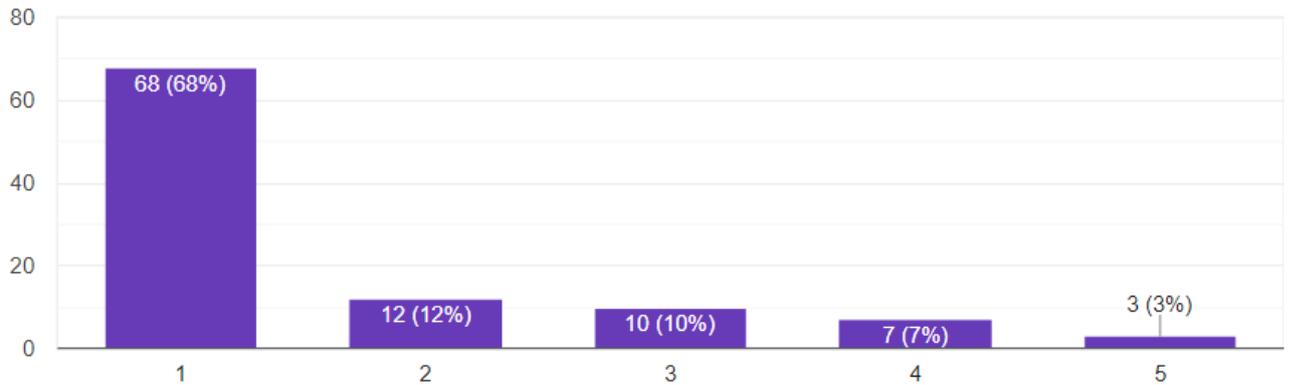
Section II: Diversity & inclusion

- o *Give an overview of how many respondants felt not represented or faced special obstacles in the content of your curriculum (And why did they feel that way if it applies):*


As we can see from the diagram only 3% of the respondants felt not represented or faced special obstacles. There are two respondants who answered: "Prayer rooms are not something common in Bulgaria, so its pretty hard to do my prayer and be in University." and "I'm a christian, so sometimes when I say something related with Christianity while the others talk about the same topic I get a little bit like "pushed away, not in a litteral way, but I feel the other student more distant."

- o *Overview about the frequency that educational institutes talk about diversity and inclusion:*
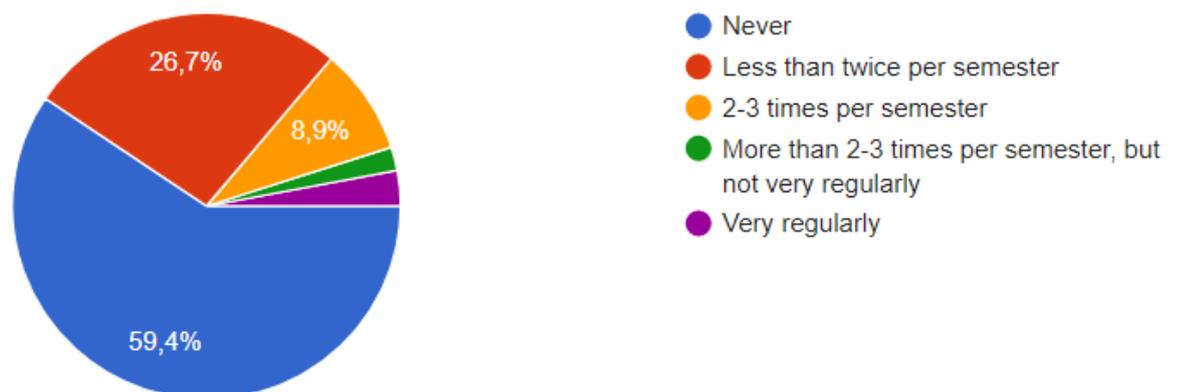
o *Evaluation of the support measures given to students/pupils with special educational needs by institutions:*
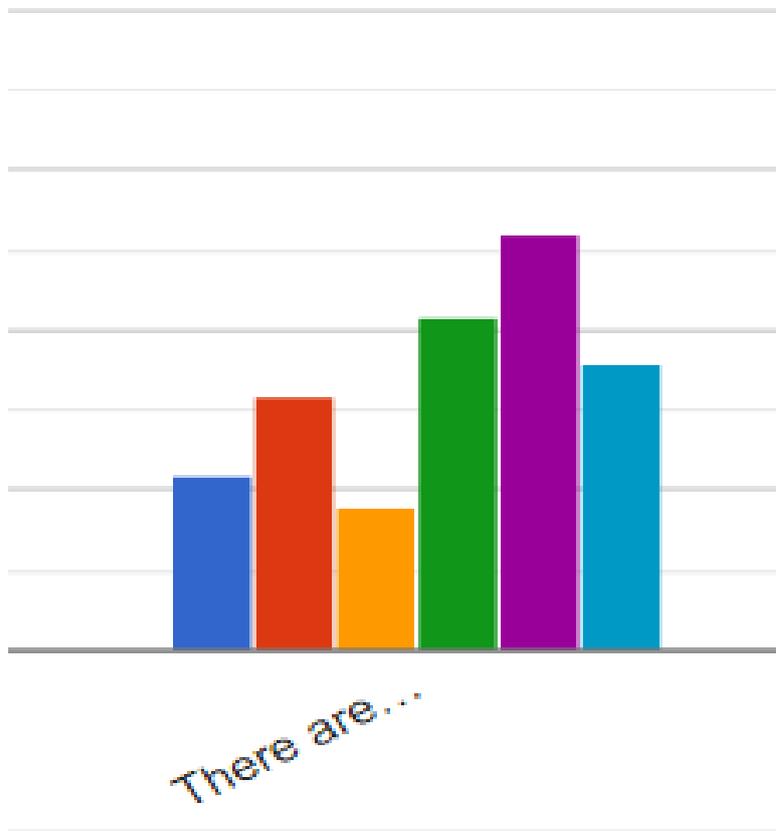
Students agree (4) that there are available support services (e.g. disability advisor, school psycologist, counsellor, special education advisor, Student's Union) effectively dealing with pupils'/students' special educational needs, psychological and mental health issues at their school/university.

o *List the three main ways that educational institutes use to deal with special needs of the pupils/ students:*
1. My school/university has specific procedures at place for taking pupils'/students' views on their learning environment and contents into account;
2. My school/university has established rules and is effective in meeting individual educational needs (e.g. needs of pupils/students with dyslexia, ADHD, hearing/visual impairments or other Special Education Needs);
3. My school/university provides adapted transport facilities & building infrastructure for pupils/students with physical mobility limitations;

- o *Most important measures of inclusion of students/pupils belonging to vulnerable groups according to respondents:*

My school/univercity effectively enforces a code of conduct/ non-discrimination policy.

- o *Is it common that the experts notice that their studends face significant obstacles, because of their special educational or other needs? List the reasons:*

Most experts believe that students with SEN face significant obstacles due to the fact that they may have a variety of both physical and mental signs of the disorder. Thus, they are subject to ridicule and unfair treatment by classmates (aggressive behaviour can also be reached).

- o *Explain the prearation that the national education system provides to the educators and the main gaps in terms of inclusive education:*

„ To prepare colleagues for working with children with SEN, seminars and courses are held, and the materials I use are adapted or prepared in advance for the classes. In school we have a resource teacher and two psychologists who specifically work to make it easier for children with SEN to adapt."

- o *List the three best practices that the educators use in order to support the students with special needs:*

An example of good support is the principle of individual approach and work with each student with SEN. According to the child's abilities, individual needs, etc. Individual programmes are drawn up, some children are worked with in a home environment, other children attend school and classes regularly, but there are additional materials for them.

o *Overview and conclusions of the Section II, Interesting insights:*

Due to the fact that the classes are large, with different abilities of the children in the class, the it is difficult to cover all the children in one lesson and to work
individually with each child, so for children with SEN there must be additional hours for work, which is currently not provided for in the curricula.

Section III: Solidarity, Empathy & Democratic Culture

o *Give a general view whether or not schools/universities are perceived as a safe space of expression by respondents and if teachers and other classmates are considered active listeners:*
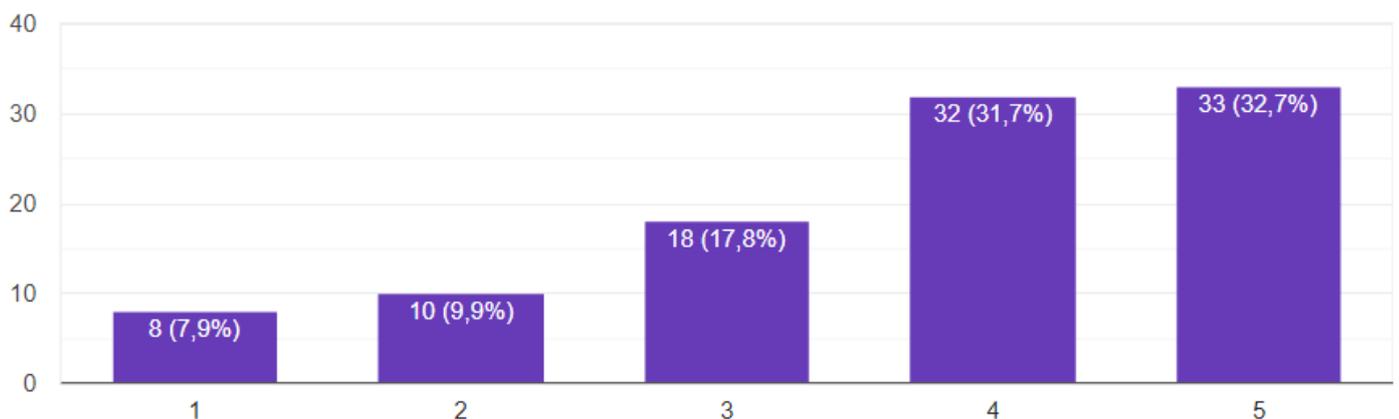

According to the respondants teachers/professors are supportive or willing to help and their classmates/fellow students be more comfortable in expressing their views, needs and problems to them.

"If the students ask and seek more guidance, I believe most professors are willing to help and provide answers".

"Not every teacher is as open-minded but the general teching culture is supportive like that".

o *Overview of the opportunities provided by education institutes to discuss about the social and political issues:*
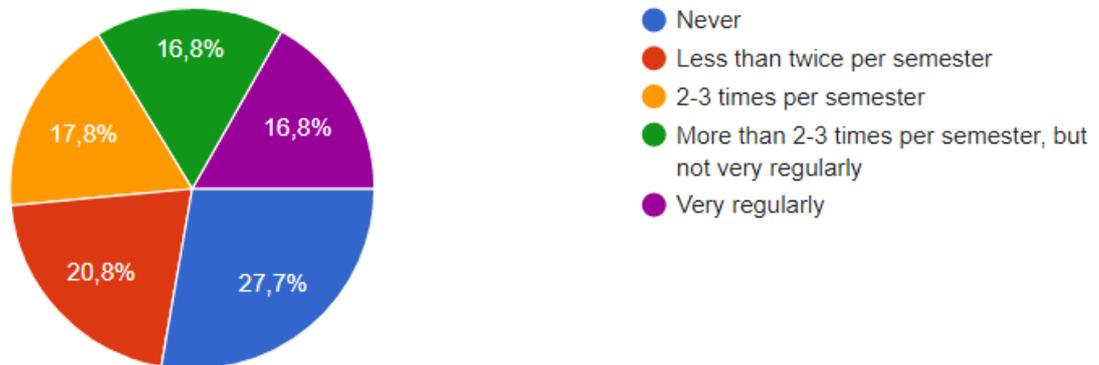
On the diagram we can see how often students have the chance to discuss their problems, either related to school or not, with their teacher and the whole class, to find solutions based on active listening and understanding.

o *The methods used to facilitate human rights education and democratic priciples/democratic culture in the curriculum:*

a) My school/university offers ample exposure to role models, i.e. opportunities to meet and/or learn about people who give their time and energy to make society better.

b) In my school/university there are many occasions during which we can discuss current events and analyze social problems that are personally relevant, but also relevant to different groups of people.

c) In my school/university students have a chance to participate in school/university and classroom governance through formal and informal means.

d) My school/university provides many opportunities for pupils/students to get involved in school/campus life by participating in clubs, unions, student societies, school newspaper/student-run media, etc.

- *Show the level of satisfaction of the respondents concerning their civic competences' improvement (sense of responsibility, understanding of social issues, proactive stance, team-work, communication):*
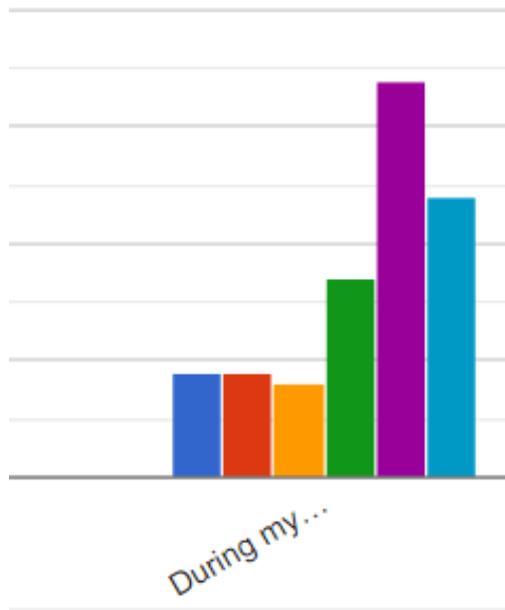
Students agree (4) that during their school/university studies, they have learned about effective team-work and respectful communication, or we have received instructions prior to group projects.

- *Overall effectiveness of formal education in promoting solidarity and empathy, as well as quality learning in democratic culture:*

ON A GOOD LEVEL
7/10

- *Explain the prearation that the national education system provides to the experts and the main gaps in terms of solidarity, empathy and democratic culture:*

Teachers' freedom to choose methods and means is limited by the requirements of the Ministry of Education, the Education Department, the number of classes and the thematic plan. Hence, children are also quite limited in terms of opportunities for expression. The few initiatives that take place such as - 'self-government day'; 'work in

student councils' are insufficient and do not give children to develop their creative potential.

- o *Most common teaching practices about human rights and democratic priciples/democratic culture, applied by the schools/universities according to the experts:*

To learn about human rights issues there are topics in the classes of class and in civics classes.

- o *3 best ideas to cultivate empathy provided by the experts:*

1. Invite people to share their opinions, faith and worldviewes.
2. Guest lectures from various viewpoints are helpful.
3. conducting charity initiatives

- o *Overview and conclusion of the section III, Interesting insights:*

There should be more classes in the compulsory curriculum, and there should be more exercises, lectures, talks and projects with a practical focus.

Section IV: Sociocultural identity & reflection

- o *Give a general view of how much the socio-cultural background (e.g. belonging to minorities) affects the students' learning experience:*
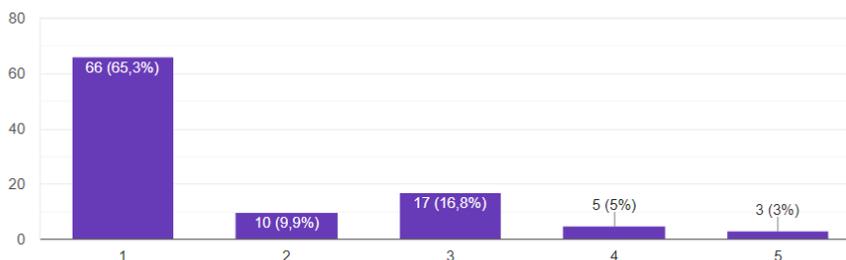

Only 3% of the respondents felt affected because of their different cultural or social background.

o *Help that teachers/professors provide to the students/pupils, who belong in a minority group, in order to integrate:*
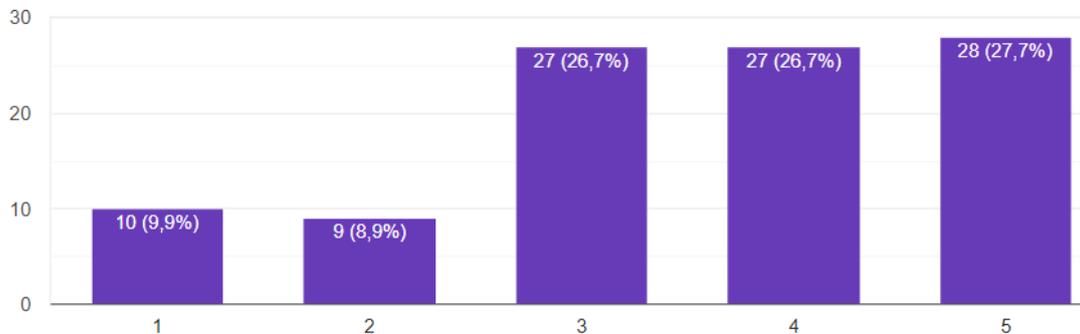

27,7 % of the respondents feel that their teachers/professors are willing and capable to help them and/or other students that belong to a social or cultural minority feel better understood and integrated by their classmates.

o *Implemenation of events in order to educate students about socio-cultural differences, perceptions and identity:*
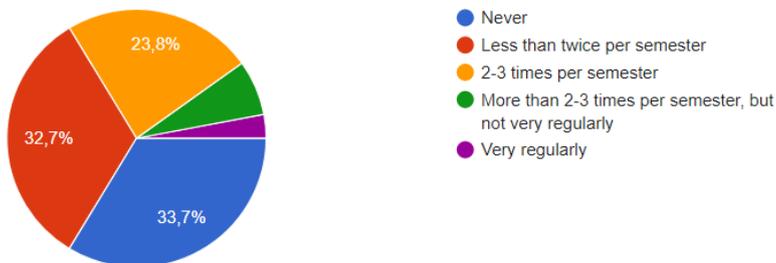
In the diagrame we see how many times was a special event organized and/or class-time devoted to discussing and learning about different social/cultural backgrounds and their impact on values, perceptions and identity.

o *Implemenation of events in order to educate students about socio-cultural differences, perceptions and identity:*
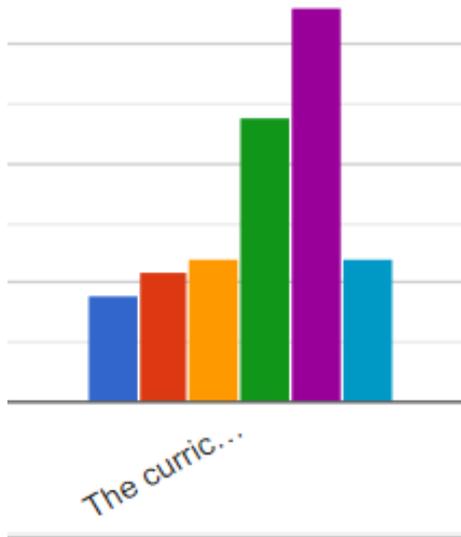
The curriculum at my school/university teaches students about the contributions of men and women from different cultural backgrounds, promoting equal appreciation for all of them.

o *Describe the level of cultural understanding, minority inclusion and reflection on local and global issues that the educational institutes provide:*

My teachers/professors encourage students to reflect on both local and global issues relevant to the different subjects covered by the curriculum.

ON A GOOD LEVEL
7/10

o *Evaluate the effectiveness of the different methods and approaches that educational institutes provide that support student-derived assessment of the teaching practices as well as self-reflection of their learning:*

"Not so much, they could include more of these classes."

o *Level of satifaction of formal education concerning its efficacy in reflecting on sociocultural identity:*

SATISFIED

7/10

o *Explain the support that the national education system provides to the students and the main gaps in terms of socio-cultural identity:*

_____

o *Capability of instructors to deal with students coming from different socio-cultural background:*

In working with students of various cultural backgrounds it is important that you have clear expectations, responsibilities and clear codes of conduct. Bulgarian schools do not have this and, therefore, are hampered in their abilities to prepare students from various backgrounds.

o *List the three best practices that the experts use in order to support the students to raise their awareness and self-reflection on their learning experience and outcomes:*

1. Practical lessons and project development
2. Non-formal learning methods

o *Overview and conclusion of the section IV, Interesting insights:*

More work on this topic!

Section V: Volunteerism

  o *Explain to which extent schools/universities are considered a space for improving the engagement in the society/community:*

  43.6% of the respondents answered with number 3, which means that they are not much considered that schools/universities are space for improving the engagement in the society/community.
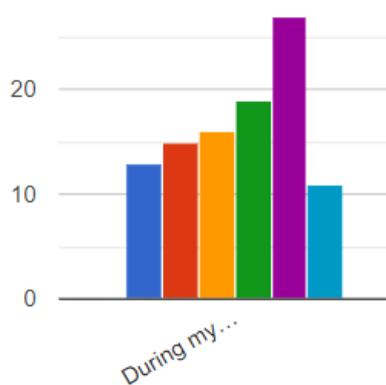
  o *Describe the effectiveness of formal education in social and civic skills development, and sense of contribution to the community:*
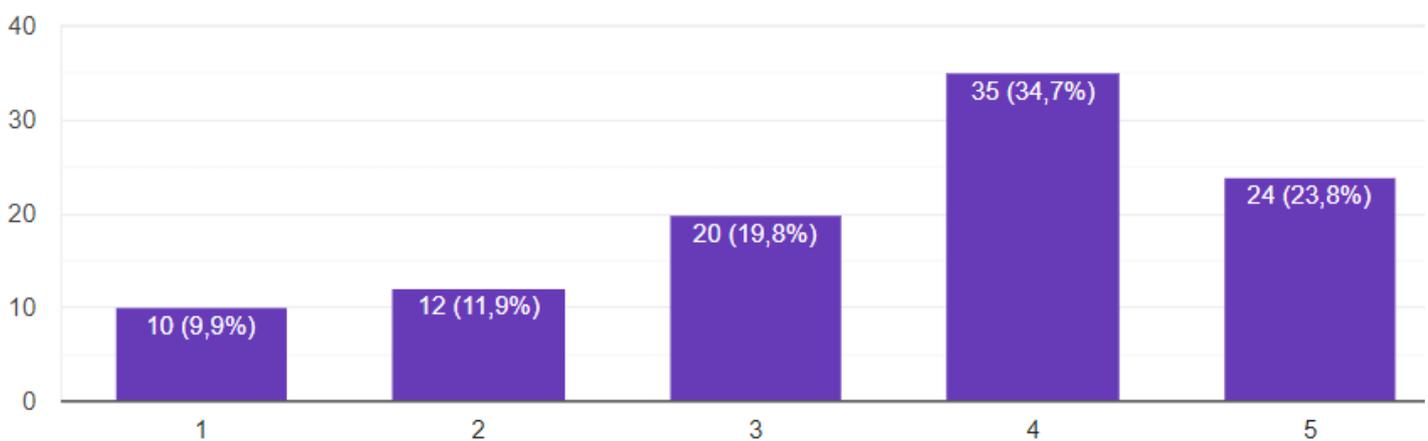
  o *Frequency of special events that are provided by the institution in order to engage young people with the community:*
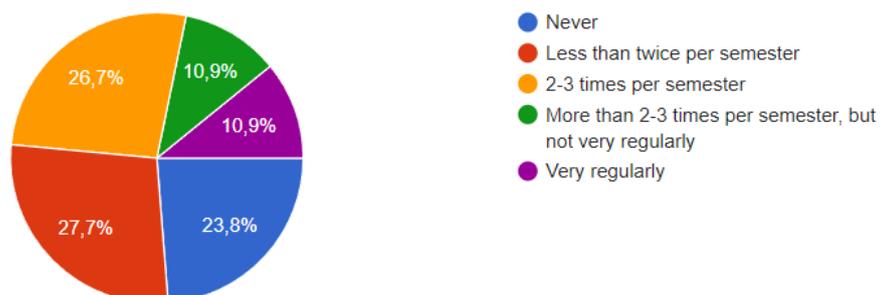
o *Show the extent to which schools'/universities' are means of promoting volunteering opportunities:*

During my school/university studies, I have been taught about values of volunteerism and available volunteering opportunities in my community.

o *Describe the ways that schools/universities try to encourage young people to actively participate in volunteering activities:*

a) Local community groups are frequently invited at my school/university to make presentations and conduct workshops for teachers and students on various community issues and their work;

b) My school/university recognizes learning outcomes from volunteering activities by awarding academic credits (e.g. ECTS) to participating students;

c) My school/university provides elective courses, which require an element of volunteering as part of their placement modules (e.g. through student engagement offices, relevant info-days, collaborations with charitable organizations etc);

o *Present the opinion of respondents about whether or not volunteerism should be mandatory:*

"It should be something students do only by choice."

"I think it should be personal opinion, but at the same time a theme to discuss"

"It should be by choice"

"The essence of volunteering is to be optional and to be willingly"

"This should be a student choice, but must be available if they want it."

- o *Explain the point of view of educators regarding students' involvement in volunteerism:*

"I believe it is vital to building up a sense of one's part in the local community."

"Personally, I always support student initiatives, especially those related to supporting causes."

"Yes, I support the participation of students in volunteering, it will help them become better, compassionate and empathetic."

- o *Main ways of encouraging and including volunteerism in educational institutes:*

"In my school there are various donation campaigns led by students, many talks and volunteer initiatives. Students like to help and get involved in such activities."

"Volunteerism is a difficult concept within Bulgarian society. Many times I have tried to volunteer or help others volunteer only to be met with mountains of bureaucracy and red-tape the discourages any attempts at volunteerism."

- o *3 main problems/difficulties pointed out by experts in including volunteerism in formal curricula:*
1) The difficulties in my opinion are related to finding a large number of like-minded people to work together for a long period of time. Children today lose interest quickly in everything and to keep their attention for a long time on a cause must meet support and encouragement in the family, at school and among peers and friends.

2) For a community to promote volunteerism there must be a culture of self-sacrifice that comes from local churches and the family. This, by and large, does not exist in Bulgaria or exists in a skewed form; i.e. the opportunity to travel around the EU disguised as "volunteerism". There must be a heart-change at a deep emotional and spiritual level for volunteerism to be integrated successfully in society.
3) The lack of experience.
4) In my opinion, in order to be integrated into volunteering as part of the curriculum in primary and higher education, it must be a major subject in a specialty.

o *Overview and conclusion of the section V, Interesting insights:*

Creating models for the inclusion of volunteering in existing curricula would have a positive effect.