

Youth in Cyprus

Aspirations, Lifestyles & Empowerment

CYPRUS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2009



OVERVIEW

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Acknowledgements



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Giving Young Cypriots a Voice

One of the main achievements of the project which produced this Report, was the creation of the first ever Cyprus Youth Charter. This Charter has been produced by Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots, who together have designed a vision of a future Cyprus. Below are some of the most significant articles of the Charter.



We, the young people from the Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot communities, have jointly considered our lives, problems and concerns, and have come to agree on a number of suggestions, which we wish to propose to our compatriots, as vital for living a full and productive life on the island and for securing our common future.



We, the youth of Cyprus:

Education:

- would like the educational system to reflect changes in society and to take a leading role in fostering the values of openness to difference, tolerance, cultural diversity and co-existence, and the resolution of problems through peaceful means

Independence and Freedom of Speech:

- believe every member of society, including the youth, should be able to freely and confidently express their opinion, without fear of discrimination or physical violence

Socio-political Participation:

- feel we should be considered and accepted as substantial contributors to the public sphere and civil society of Cyprus; as such, we fully support mechanisms which would allow us to take part in political decisions at all levels

Peace and Reconciliation:

- must be afforded the opportunity and the required support and encouragement to become a driving force in building bridges between members of the two communities
- support the promotion of a strong, common, over-arching Cypriot civic identity and recognise that the term 'Cypriot' refers to both Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots
- support the creation of an all-inclusive Cypriot society and youth that is 'united in diversity', accepting and respectful of other cultures and open to change

The full Charter is included at the end of this booklet.

Youth in Cyprus: Aspirations, Lifestyles and Empowerment



This first **Human Development Report** for Cyprus focuses on the lives and aspirations of the island's young people¹. The Report is unique as it is the first time that aspects of the life of youth in both the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities have been mapped out in tandem. This is significant given the long existing division between the two communities that has resulted in young Cypriots growing up apart from one another.

This Report is a part of the **Youth Dialogue Project**, supported by the United Nations Development Programme – Action for Cooperation and Trust (UNDP-ACT) between 2007 and 2009. It is largely based on the results of a comprehensive, island-wide survey, the **Youth Aspiration Survey (YAS₁)**, administered to over 1,600 youth between November 2007 and March 2008, and a series of 60 in-depth interviews conducted among young Cypriots from the two communities. Due to important developments that occurred shortly after administering the initial survey, namely the election of a new government in the Republic of Cyprus and a renewed effort towards finding a settlement to the long-standing political problem on the island, a follow-up survey (**YAS₂**) was conducted in July 2008.

An innovative feature of the research study was the use of two modern research techniques: Participatory Action Research and Interpretive Reproduction. The former technique has emerged as a significant methodology for intervention, development and change within communities and groups, while the latter focuses on research with youth as opposed to research on youth. In order to successfully practice the aforementioned research techniques and to actively involve Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth in all aspects of the project, a **Youth Advisory Board (YAB)** was formed, consisting of 12 Greek-Cypriots and 12 Turkish-Cypriots². Playing a supportive role, the Youth Advisory Board assisted the research team in the development of the initial survey and, later, in the interpretation of its results.

This Overview of the Cyprus Human Development Report 2009 presents selected findings from the research study, and includes the **Cyprus Youth Charter**, created with input from the YAB. It is hoped that this Charter will serve as a tool to further encourage and strengthen the role played by young Cypriots in the peace process and the future of their country.

«Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.»
Margaret Mead

Human development in Cyprus is complicated by the long-standing political problem facing the island

The human development approach aims to go beyond indicators of national income and economic growth as measures of development. It places individual human beings at the heart of the development process and aims to widen people's choices by creating an environment

in which people's capabilities are expanded so that they may develop their full potential in order to lead productive and fulfilling lives, in accordance with their needs and interests. The HDI for Cyprus is 0.912, ranking the Republic of Cyprus³ 30th out of 179 countries⁴.

Human Development Index and Other Development Indicators for Cyprus - 2008

Life expectancy at birth (years)	Adult literacy rate (% of ages 15 and older)	Combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio(%)	GDP per capita (PPP US\$)	Overall HDI value
79.0	97.6	77.6	25,837	0.912
23rd out of 179 countries	30th out of 147 countries	72nd out of 179 countries	30th out of 178 countries	30th out of 179 countries

In Cyprus, as a result of the political situation, both communities have suffered various losses which have, at best, hampered, and at worst, infringed on their path to human development. The vast majority of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth have grown up separated from one another, deprived of the right to learn about the lives and aspirations of each other. Given this, Cypriot youth have the most at stake,

as a solution to the Cyprus Problem will have a direct impact on their lives and on the lives of future generations to come. Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth, in their capacity as agents of change and as peace-builders, must be empowered to play an important, necessary and valuable role in their country's development and in the ongoing peace process.

Youth development may be used as a tool to build skills among the youth, in turn, contributing to youth empowerment and the development of a greater sense of personal and social responsibility

In the case of this Report, human development can be seen to focus specifically on the development of Cypriot youth. Youth development, simply put, is the growing capacity of a young person to understand and act on the social environment. The ultimate outcome of youth development is to enable all young people to thrive in the communities and countries in which they live. One of the paths to youth development is youth participation. Through socio-political participation young people find themselves learning and growing from experiences and activities that allow them to build up, or improve upon, certain skills or capacities. In gaining these competencies, young people become empowered in all the important areas of their lives, such as their education, employment and socio-political participation. Empowerment cannot exist without responsibility and young people must learn to possess a sense of individual and social responsibility towards their community, environment and the socio-political development of their society. Feelings of responsibility and empowerment may allow young Cypriots to begin to take part in decision making processes that affect their lives. Additionally, they will be able to take action on the issues which are important to them.

Youth empowerment can be described as a “transactional partnering process between adults and youth” consisting of two sub

processes⁵. The first, the adult sub process, involves creating an empowering environment for young people by fostering a welcoming social atmosphere and enabling youth to become empowered, the second, the youth sub process, is driven by youth becoming empowered through stimulating their participation, realising their potential and undertaking constructive change. Accordingly, the process of youth empowerment is driven by the enhancement of youth capacity which is cultivated through “enabling and welcoming transactions that provide youth with repeated opportunities for rising to and overcoming challenges”⁶.

In Cyprus such processes are complicated by the division of the island and the social-economic and political consequences which it brings. In spite of this reality youth empowerment in Cyprus should be shared by adults and young people in an approach which emphasizes partnership. In this way, youth are considered as “collaborators in society” rather than simply victims or problems⁷. While it is the responsibility of parents, educators, civil society, the media and the leaders of both communities to empower Cypriot youth, young Cypriots themselves must be active in seeking out and making full use of the available opportunities for empowerment. In this way, Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth can progress towards harnessing their full potential.

The youth of Cyprus need to navigate a road from childhood to adulthood against a legacy of deep division and an uncertain future

Social scientists generally agree that there is no universal concept of ‘youth’. A special category, between childhood and adulthood, ‘youth’ is a modern concept related to the industrial revolution and the rise of modern society. How ‘youth’ is constructed varies according to history, time, space, and country. Cyprus has undergone rapid changes in the last few decades – since Independence in 1960 and especially since 1974 and its aftermath, transitioning from an agricultural to a service economy, and witnessing a dramatic increase in mass education, as well as in other indexes of modernisation, such as urbanisation, the expansion of mass media, a developing consumer society and women entering the workforce. This has resulted in the considerable prolongation of the period of ‘youth’ as compared to earlier, traditional Cypriot society. Cypriot youth face the modern-day challenges typically experienced by young people in western societies. These are made doubly difficult for young Cypriots as they must find their way in a society which is in the process of quickly transforming itself from a highly traditional to a more modern one.

Today’s young Cypriots live in a deeply divided country, territorially separated since before they were born. The modern history of Cyprus has left a powerful imprint on the way young Cypriots view the future. This history is coloured by decolonisation and independence from the British (gained in 1960), inter-communal conflict⁸ (in the mid 60s), a Greek-Cypriot coup backed by the Athens military junta and the subsequent military (re) action⁹ by Turkey (July 1974), which led to violence, loss of life and the de facto division of the island.

This division makes it difficult to present a clear picture of the demographic data pertaining to youth in Cyprus. However it is estimated that the number of young Cypriots between the ages of 15 and 24 ranges from 134,900 to 147,900, consisting of 121,200 Greek-Cypriot¹⁰ youth and between 13,700 to 26,700 Turkish-Cypriot youth, comprising approximately 15.5% of the total population. In addition Cyprus has one of the youngest populations¹¹ among the EU member states.

Fast Facts about Cyprus	
Total Area, km ²	9,251
Capital	Nicosia (Lefkosia in Greek, Lefkosa in Turkish)
Population (2006)	867,600
Independence	1960
EU Accession	1 May 2004
Official Languages	Greek and Turkish; English is widely spoken
Religion	Christian Orthodox (Greek-Cypriots); Muslim (Turkish-Cypriots)
Human Development Index	0.912 (30th in the world) (2008)
Currency	Euro (since 1 January 2008)

Several attempts to solve the Cyprus Problem have come and gone. In spite of this, substantial inter-communal contact developed throughout the 1990s, fuelled by the initiatives and activities of the bi-communal movement and of the political forces in favour of rapprochement. Crossing points were opened along the Green Line in 2003, enabling those displaced to visit their homes and villages, and providing an opportunity to the long time segregated communities for interaction – albeit within limits. Shortly afterwards, on 1 May 2004, Cyprus joined the European Union.

In the period leading to accession, the UN increased its mediation efforts in an attempt to assist the two communities to reach a solution, which would allow the island to enter the EU united. UN efforts led to the formulation of a comprehensive Plan for the settlement of the Cyprus Problem (which came to be known as the Annan Plan). The Plan was put to parallel referenda on 24 April 2004, which resulted in 65% of Turkish-Cypriots voting in favour of the

proposal, while 76% of Greek-Cypriots voted against. As a result, Cyprus joined the EU a few days later, still divided, with the acquis communautaire consequently applied only in the southern part of the island. The years after the referenda were marked by relative stagnation in developments regarding the Cyprus Problem. Post-accession elections on either side of the divide have resulted in new leaders for both communities, and sparked renewed interest in, and activity towards, finding a final settlement to the Cyprus Problem.

The Human Development Report links the socio-economic and political features of young people's lives through the prism of youth empowerment and responsibility, analysing how these factors in the day-to-day lives of young people affect their capabilities to make a real contribution to reconciliation and building peace. In this context it explores the lives and aspirations of young Cypriots in their homes, education, places or work, personal attitudes and the political sphere.

The traditions of a strong and secure family life need to be balanced with parental guidance to support individuality and the empowerment of young people

Traditionally, the family has been the primary social, economic and moral unit in both the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities and even though Cypriot society has seen dramatic changes, the family remains the central institution. In traditional Cypriot society, there existed a strict separation of the sexes, visible through the division of labour and the roles played by men and women within

the family, the work force and society. Over time, gender roles of young Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots began to change. To a large extent, this was a consequence of education and employment. Young people became better educated and could thus find gainful employment in the fast developing urban centres, resulting in enhanced independence from their parents.

Average Age to Wed (Females)				Average Age to Wed (Males)			
GC	GC	TC	TC	GC	GC	TC	TC
1975	2007	2000	2005	1975	2007	2000	2005
22.5	28.2	24.3	26.1	25.5	30.6	28.0	29.2

GC = Greek-Cypriots, TC = Turkish-Cypriots

Nowadays, Cypriot youth are freer than in past times in areas such as their choice of life partner, field of studies, and type of employment. Yet the family unit continues to play a strong role in modern Cypriot society and features heavily in the lives of Cypriot youth. Most young Cypriots continue to be largely dependent on their parents in various ways, such as in financing their studies, finding employment, the provision of a house at marriage, or taking care of their children when they are at work. Overall, young Cypriots tend to receive a great deal of support from their families and, as a result, are raised in what

can be described as a secure and (over) protected environment. The flipside to this 'safety' is a number of problems that may derive from the dependency often entailed in relationships with parents, which can potentially spill over into other domains of the lives of Cypriot youth, such as education, lifestyle and socio-political participation. While the behaviour of young Cypriots' parents may be classed as 'dedication', this prolonged reliance – which can continue well into adulthood – only hinders the independence and empowerment of Cypriot youth.

The relationships between parents and children need to be based on open dialogue and trust. Young Cypriots need to be empowered and to become less dependent on their parents.

Without a doubt, the family unit will continue to play a pivotal role in society and in the lives of young Cypriots. However, as Cypriot youth continue to navigate through the constant and rapid transformation taking place in their country, as well as in the world around them, it becomes necessary for them to forge new relationships with their parents. The relationships between parents and children need to be based on open dialogue and trust. Young Cypriots need to be empowered and to become less dependent on their parents. Simultaneously, the parents of Cypriot youth must learn to be less controlling and take the

appropriate measures to cut the “golden chains” which bind their children to them. This entails supporting their children’s life choices, development and independence, not necessarily through monetary support but by moral and emotional support as well – by encouraging them not to fear to be free¹². This is not an argument against close relationships between parents and children. Rather, it is to support that close relationships must be freely chosen and maintained once family members view them as desirable, supportive and nurturing – and not a result of coercion or material incentives.



Even though at eighteen years old I’m considered an adult, I’m not independent in certain things. I also want my parents’ help with my finances and I’m provided with, let’s say, protection by them, and I have a place to stay.

[Greek-Cypriot, female, 18, single, college student (aesthetics), part-time salesperson, urban Nicosia]

When the time is right, families can help buy a house for their children, but I think that a car is a luxury that children can buy in the future, when they start earning their own money.

[Turkish-Cypriot, female, 20, university student (psychology), urban Morfou]



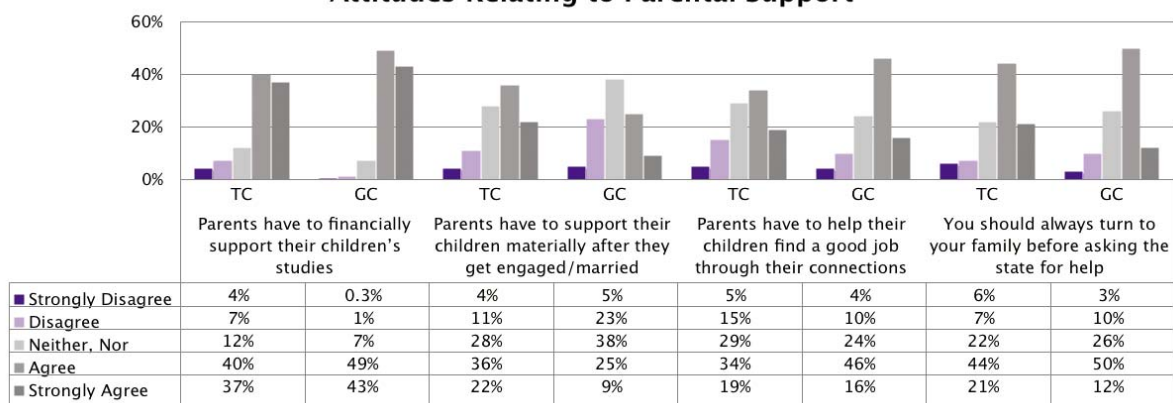
Investing in a multicultural and a multi-perspective education system will support reconciliation and advance young people’s life choices

Education is one of the fundamental rights of individuals, and young people around the world, regardless of socio-economic background must be able to access education. The inability to freely pursue education can detrimentally affect multiple facets of their life - including civil and political participation, economic well-being and social welfare. Globalisation has caused the world of work to become increasingly competitive and fast-paced, while the new prerequisites of the work market require educated and skilled individuals. Young Cypriots are not excluded from the educational challenges faced by today’s youth.

are extremely well educated. In fact, one of the problems is that many often find themselves in the position of being over-qualified and end up in employment that does not reflect their qualifications, knowledge and skills. Young Cypriots, as well as their parents, place a great deal of importance on education. Nowadays, the young spend more years pursuing their higher education, either in Cyprus or abroad, consequently delaying their entry into the workforce. Since many young people postpone employment, or find it difficult to find a job given reduced youth employment opportunities, they continue to remain either fully or partially financially dependent on their parents.

In general, young Cypriots across the island

Attitudes Relating to Parental Support



Gross Enrolment Ratios – Tertiary Level Education

GC (2006)	TC (2005)
65%	74%

Cypriot Youth in Tertiary Education – in Cyprus and Abroad			
2005/2006		2006/2007	
GC (in Cyprus)	GC (abroad)	TC (in Cyprus)	TC (abroad)
41.6%	58.4%	84.5%	15.5%

» [Education] is a necessary tool for progressing in your life [...] it is important for career prospects but education also completes you as a person [...] You broaden your horizons, you aren't narrow-minded, you get to know new ways of thinking, new things and, somewhere along the way, you become more open-minded.
[Greek-Cypriot, female, 24, university graduate, chemist, single, rural Limassol]

It is very important in terms of preparing a person for real life and allowing them to stand on their own feet financially.
[Turkish-Cypriot, male, 22, civil servant, urban Nicosia]



Between Statements (a) and (b) below, which do you consider as the most important?

■ GC ■ TC



Statement (a): Education is primarily a tool for finding a good job.

Statement (b): Education is primarily a means of developing as a person.

However, as most observers acknowledge, education has played a divisive role in Cypriot society, and has served to alienate each community from the other, rather than bringing them closer together. Teachers and textbooks were imported from Greece and Turkey (so called "motherlands") and many young Cypriots continued their university education there. Within the school curriculum of each community, the history of Cyprus was presented as an extension of the history of either Greece or Turkey; this became all the more pronounced after the division of the island.

In 2003, a newly elected Turkish-Cypriot leadership began implementing an educational reform by changing the history books. The new textbooks, published in 2004 and revised in 2005, purposely presented Turkish-Cypriots

as a distinct people, autonomous from Turkey and open to reconciliation with the Greek-Cypriots¹³. As yet, similar changes have not been implemented in the Greek-Cypriot community though the new government of the Republic of Cyprus (2008) seems intent to implement changes in this domain, noting that there is 'very little awareness of the island's recent history among the young generations'¹⁴. Young Cypriots recognise that through revising the history books, the educational systems of both communities can begin to educate the island's youth on the possibility of living in an open, European country where people are tolerant of different ethnicities and nationalities, interacting with one another on a basis of openness and trust. The challenge is accomplishing this without discarding the past and the unique identity of each community.

The educational systems in each community should consider implementing diversified methods of study, which can prepare young Cypriots for the important changes and complex challenges of the modern world.

» I find all of this amusing... I mean, imagine! On the one hand, we visit the south everyday – shopping and talking to Greek-Cypriot friends... On the other hand, they still teach us that the Greek-Cypriots killed us and, as a result, some people still believe that the real intention of Greek-Cypriots is to kill us! I don't like history lessons – that's why I got the lowest score in that lesson!
[Turkish-Cypriot, female, 17, high school student, urban Morfou]

History, today, does not have to be changed. We simply have to choose what we put in it, and instead of choosing to put in only what suits us and makes us look good and the others bad, we must put in our good and their good, our bad and their bad.
[Greek-Cypriot, male, 19, student, single, rural Nicosia]



In general, the presence of young Turkish-Cypriots and Greek-Cypriots in schools and universities is seen as a positive measure which can work towards bringing the two communities closer together.

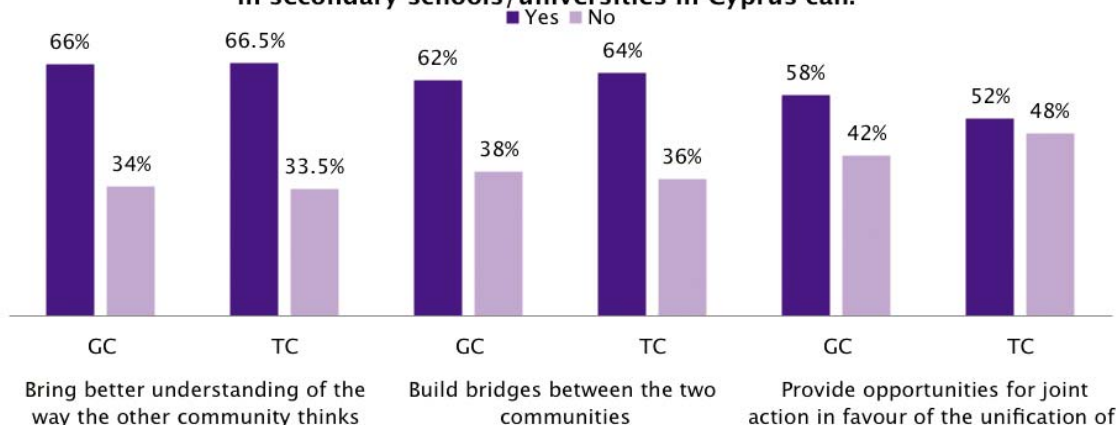
In spite of these efforts the education systems in both communities continue to be largely ethnocentric in character. In the spirit of providing the skills for the open, multicultural environment of the 21st century, which is moulded by the forces of globalisation, the educational systems in each community should consider implementing diversified methods of study, which can prepare young Cypriots for the important changes and complex challenges of the modern world. This becomes even more necessary given the changing fabric of Cypriot society which is becoming more multicultural in nature with each passing year. There are increasing numbers of young Cypriots from mixed marriages, as well as children of migrant workers, representing a blend of nationalities, ethnicities, religions and cultures. The educational system must reflect this change in society and take a leading role in promoting the values of openness to difference, tolerance, cultural diversity and co-existence, and the resolution of problems through peaceful means.

Education providers must invest in the development of new curricula and

teaching/learning methods. It is imperative that schools are able to adapt to modern trends in education, such as computer-based learning. In addition to embracing new technologies, the education system must continue to invest in its most important asset – namely teachers. Primary, secondary and tertiary education professionals must continually undergo training sessions so that they may be able to tackle the new opportunities and challenges facing education today.

The opening of the crossing points along the Green Line has attracted a number of Turkish-Cypriot students who have enrolled in schools and universities in the south. Whereas in 2003, only a few dozen Turkish-Cypriots were studying in the Republic of Cyprus, by 2006 the number had grown to 335, attending pre-primary, primary and secondary level schools, and another 73 were enrolled in tertiary level educational institutions. In general, the presence of young Turkish-Cypriots and Greek-Cypriots in schools and universities is seen as a positive measure which can work towards bringing the two communities closer together.

Do you think the presence of young Turkish/Greek-Cypriots in secondary schools/universities in Cyprus can:



The time has come to acknowledge youth as an asset to the local economy and recognise that competitiveness is increasingly linked to encouraging innovation, creativity and diversity in the workplace

The twenty-first century labour market is unforgiving, especially for young people attempting to make the transition from education to employment. Today's employers have higher expectations of their employees. Paired with the heightened competitiveness resulting from globalisation, it is not surprising that young people often represent the largest group of unemployed individuals. However, Greek-Cypriot youth are fortunate in that their unemployment rate (10.2%) is among the lowest in the EU¹⁵. The unemployment rate is higher among Turkish-Cypriot youth (23.8%), reflecting the existing disparity between economic conditions in the north and south of the island¹⁶. In turn, this economic reality influences the attitudes of young Cypriots towards employment. Greek-Cypriots indicate that, in selecting their current job, the main appeal revolved around "good pay and benefits",

followed by a "good working environment". Turkish-Cypriots, on the other hand, chose their current jobs because "it was better than being unemployed".

Both Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth agree that the main challenge facing young people in employment is that there are not enough job opportunities available for young people. The vast majority of businesses in Cyprus are classified as small or medium enterprises (SMEs) the personnel usually consisting of close and/or extended family members and close friends. The limited opportunities for youth employment, compared with the high qualifications earned by Cypriot youth, usually results in young Cypriots accepting employment in positions (and salary scales) which often do not match their qualifications and skills.

What do you think are the biggest problem(s) young people face, when they try to find a job?			
Greek-Cypriots	1st choice (%)	2nd choice (%)	3rd choice(%)
1. There are not enough job opportunities/ openings for young people	39	12	11
2. One can find jobs but they are badly paid	21	17	16
3. One can find jobs but some young people do not have the connections needed to get the job	15	18	13
Turkish-Cypriots	1st choice (%)	2nd choice (%)	3rd choice(%)
1. There are not enough job opportunities/ openings for young people	54	7	4
2. There are no job opportunities/openings at all for young people	17	19	2
3. One can find jobs but they are badly paid	12	22	7

Young Cypriots are encouraged to pursue employment paths that can guarantee financial and social security. To this end, many favour white collar professions in the fields of business, finance, accounting, engineering and medicine, to name a few. Also, public sector positions are strongly promoted to young Cypriots, who come to view these as coveted positions, given the better financial rewards and benefits (as compared to positions in the private sector). Parents, particularly in the Greek-Cypriot community, are known to "pull strings" in order to secure better positions for their children. This encourages another form of dependency on the part of Cypriot youth.

Both the private and public sectors stand to benefit greatly from the knowledge and skills accumulated by Cypriot youth through their modern education. Today's young Cypriot workforce is equipped with new ideas and concepts, as well as the ability to use the latest modern technologies. As such, they should be regarded as an asset by SMEs and larger organisations as they can contribute new and fresh approaches and help to strengthen businesses and the local economy. Young people are often able to commit more time and energy to their careers as they have yet to take on other commitments and obligations (for instance, children!). Cypriot businesses would do well to acknowledge this asset and encourage their young employees to innovate and be creative, while recognising and rewarding their hard work and commitment.

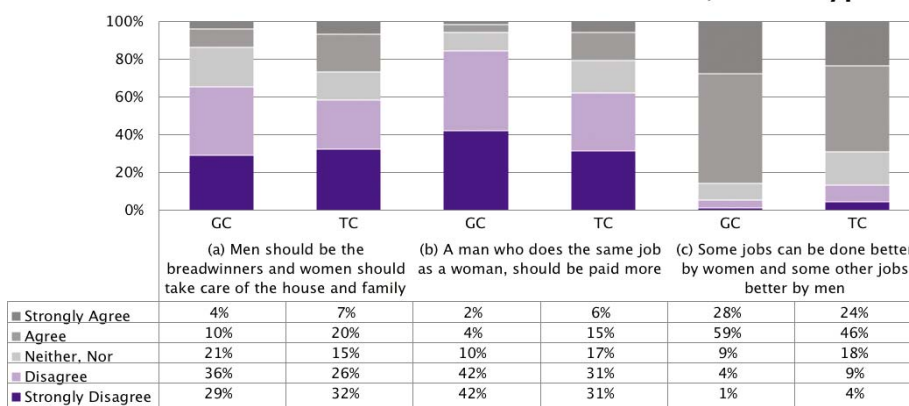
In a global labour market that is rapidly evolving young Cypriots must develop a stronger appreciation for lifelong learning in order to be able to keep up with global trends and changes. In this way, young Cypriots will be in

a better position to compete, in what is quickly becoming, an increasingly competitive global work force. Cypriots believe greatly in the pursuit of academic qualifications rather than pursuing education for its own sake. Today in Europe, and the modern world in general, good education is seen not only as important for employment but as an important political right for self-development and fulfilment. This attitude has yet to be cultivated in Cyprus.

The participation of women in the Greek-Cypriot labour force has increased steadily since the early 1980s. In 1999 the labour force participation rates were 54.7% for women and 81.8% for men; by 2006 the gap had narrowed as the labour force participation rate for women rose to 63.8% while the rate for men increased marginally to 82.7%.¹⁷ Participation rates of women in the Turkish-Cypriot labour force are considerably lower than that of their Greek-Cypriot counterparts. Turkish-Cypriot women make up 36.1% of the labour force (compared to 62.8% of Turkish-Cypriot men). The economic boom of the 1980s in the Republic of Cyprus created several job positions within the tourism industry and the wider services sector in general, which were available to women. These jobs were considered to be especially suited to women as they resembled the traditional service roles ascribed to Cypriot women in society – such as those of homemakers and care givers. Despite improvements in the working conditions of women and increasing levels of gender equality in the workplace, Cypriot women in both communities continue to struggle against attitudes which undermine their ability to break away from traditional stereotypes of the woman's role in society.

Cypriot businesses would do well to encourage their young employees to innovate and be creative, while recognizing and rewarding their hard work and commitment.

Attitudes towards Traditional Gender Roles / Stereotypes



Policies to encourage the participation and civic engagement of young people need to be detached from political interest

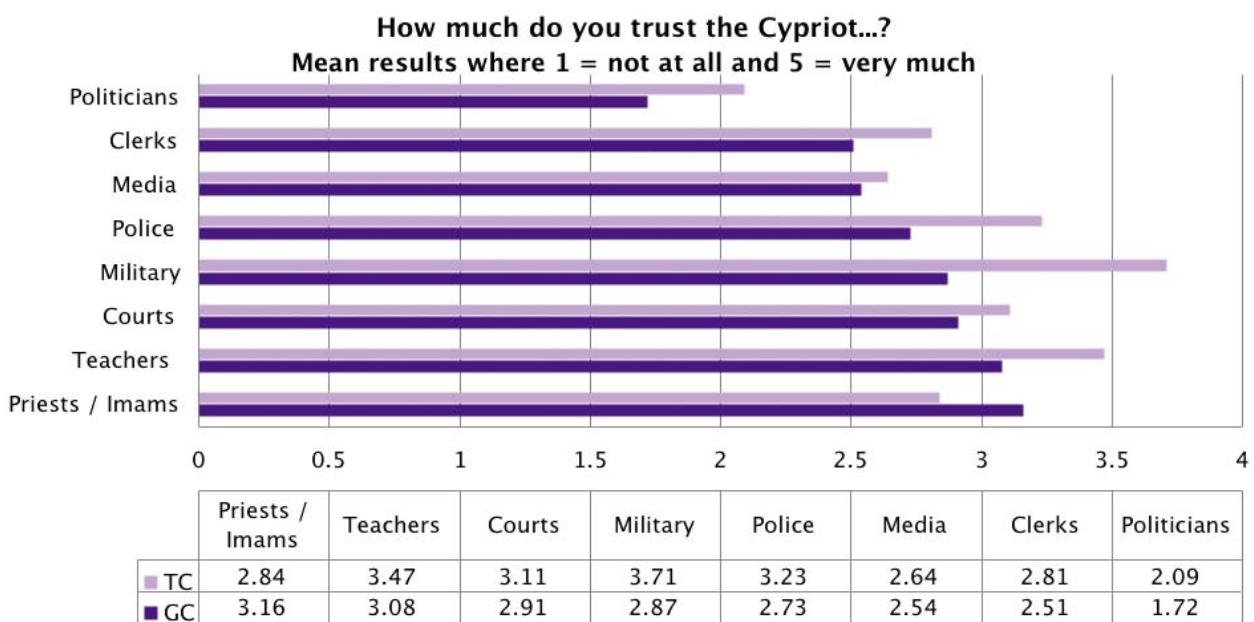
Young people have often been accused of lacking political awareness, and in general of being disinterested in politics, reflected by their limited and low levels of participation in the political process. Indeed, research has shown that young people show little interest in politics, which they view as boring and as having little relevance to their lives. This is not surprising given that politicians usually focus their political campaigning exclusively towards adults, dismissing the needs and concerns of the young. However, young people can still express their interest in politics without being active members of political parties, while others may be politically active but not vote and at the same time have an adequate understanding of political issues but be sceptical about their ability to influence the political agendas. Therefore, it is important to recognise the various forms and levels in which young people may be politically engaged. Cyprus is no exception to the above observations, and it is a fact that levels of socio-political participation among Cypriot youth are low and declining.

This trend is not specific to Cypriot youth as the percentage of the population that engages in volunteerism and participates in civil society organisations is fairly low¹⁸. More often than not, civil society organisations (CSO) are concentrated in urban areas, and attract the more affluent members of society. Limited financial and human resources, strong dependence on political parties and low participation rates are all factors that contribute to the limited strength and impact of CSOs in Cyprus. As a result, very little is done in order to promote the value of civic participation to the wider society.

Almost half of the Cypriot youth surveyed admitted that they did not actively participate in any socio-political organisation, faith-based organisation, human rights organisation or charity. Instead, young Cypriots are attracted to sports clubs and outdoor activities, as well as associations or organisations dealing with education, music, culture or the arts. Turkish-Cypriot socio-political participation is higher than that of Greek-Cypriots in all cases – except in the case of political parties (where it is slightly lower) and youth organisations (where it is the same). Although direct participation in political parties is not high, Cypriot youth do get involved with, or come under the influence of, political parties in various ways: for instance, most sports clubs are associated with a political party, or a political ideology. Most other types of organisations are similarly linked to political parties and/or ideologies – including youth and women’s organisations. Hence in being members or associates of such organisations, young people come to indirectly connect themselves with political parties, political blocks, or political ideologies.

Which societal institutions do Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots trust for leadership and support? The Human Development Report demonstrates that young people from both communities shared strong feelings of trust towards teachers, attesting to the importance of education. Politicians are another group that youth from both two communities share a common – albeit negative – trust-related attitude.

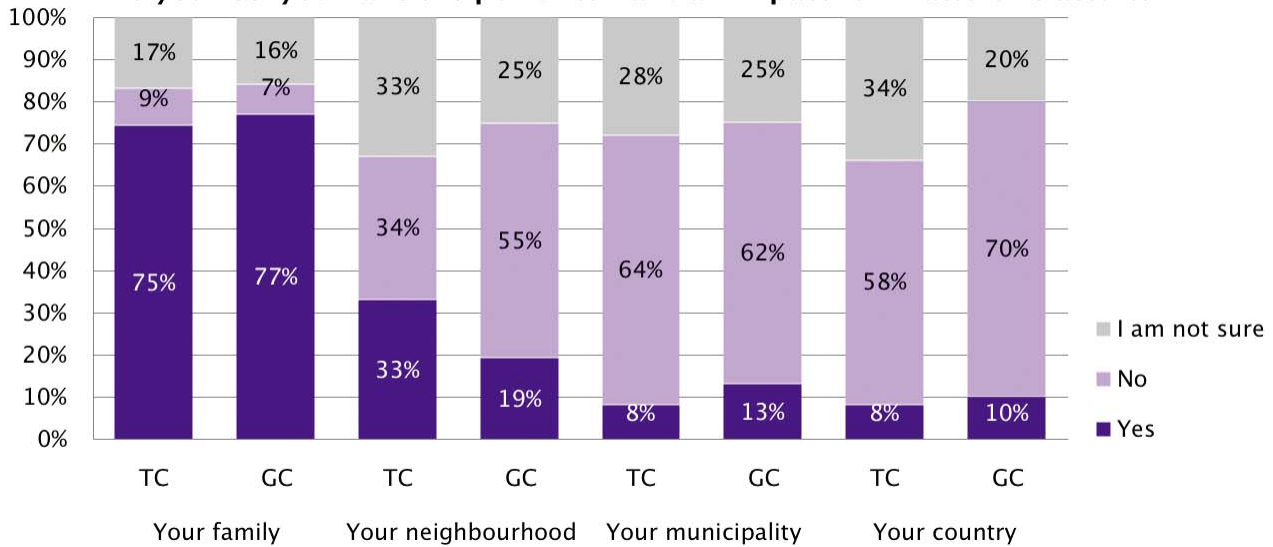
Almost half of the Cypriot youth surveyed admitted that they did not actively participate in any socio-political organisation, faith-based organisation, human rights organisation or charity.



Similarly, young Cypriots from both communities indicate that they feel disempowered when it comes to influencing the decisions that govern their lives. While three quarters of youth felt that they did possess the power to influence their families, feelings of power diminished regarding their neighbourhoods and their country. Only a fifth of Greek-Cypriots and a third of Turkish-

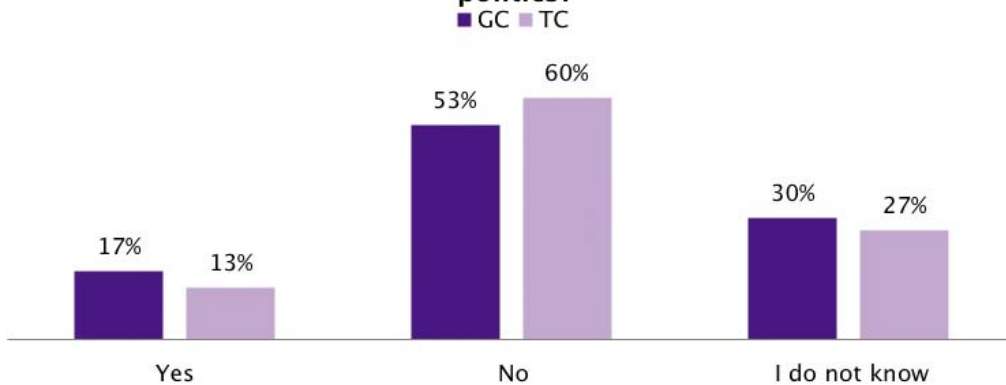
Cypriots felt that they had the ability to have an impact on their neighbourhood, while only one tenth believed that they had an input into matters concerning their municipality, and on issues related to their country. Given this, it is not surprising that large proportions of youth in both communities believed that there was insufficient representation of young people in Cypriot politics.

Do you feel you have the power to have an impact on matters related to:



» It seems that they worry about young people. They keep criticizing our behaviour. But when it comes to serious issues, and we have the chance to make a contribution, they do not take our views seriously. [Turkish-Cypriot, male, 21, high school graduate, unemployed, urban Nicosia] «

Do you think young people are sufficiently represented in politics?



Large proportions of youth in both communities believed that there was insufficient representation of young people in Cypriot politics.

Parents, schools and youth workers in Cyprus have an important role in educating and socializing Cypriot youth to improve their levels of socio-political participation.

The Human Development Report encourages the adoption of special measures to increase the level of socio-political participation of Cypriot youth by generating genuine interest and concern in the area of civic concern and duty. For example, the educational systems in both communities could introduce civic education curricula so as to instil in Cypriot youth a greater sense of responsibility towards the sustainable development of their community and country.

Political parties must come to realise that by being too controlling over young people's political affiliations and choices often leads to their alienation from politics. They need to agree self-consciously (firstly, between themselves) to encourage the greater involvement of Cypriot youth with public affairs, even if this involvement is autonomous from political parties. For example, there is a strong

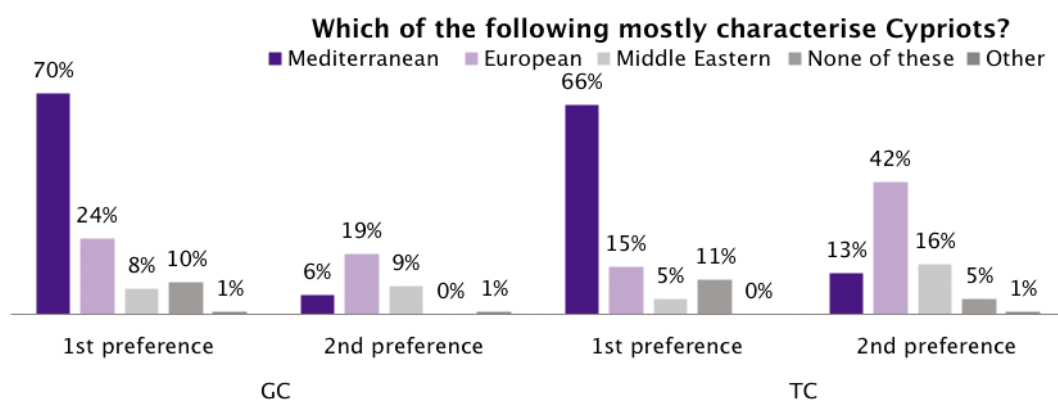
presence of political parties in universities and student politics. After elections for student offices take place, political parties announce the election results as if indicating victories for their own parties. Such practices do not allow much room for autonomous student politics.

Parents, schools and youth workers in Cyprus have an important role in educating and socializing Cypriot youth to improve their levels of socio-political participation. Cypriot youth also need to be given the tools and encouraged to be active collaborators in building a socially cohesive society. By allowing Cypriot youth to genuinely participate in projects, concerning real problems, they may begin to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility. Through continued participation, youth begin to develop the confidence, and competences required to participate.

Acceptance of multiple identities can provide a framework for a socially inclusive society

The issue of identity among Cypriot youth is neither simple nor clear-cut and is complicated by the island's history of colonisation, identification with the respective "mother countries" and the enduring division between the two main communities. Given the island's location, at the crossroad of three continents, its unique position within the European Union and the two communities' association with Greece and Turkey, Cypriot youth have at their

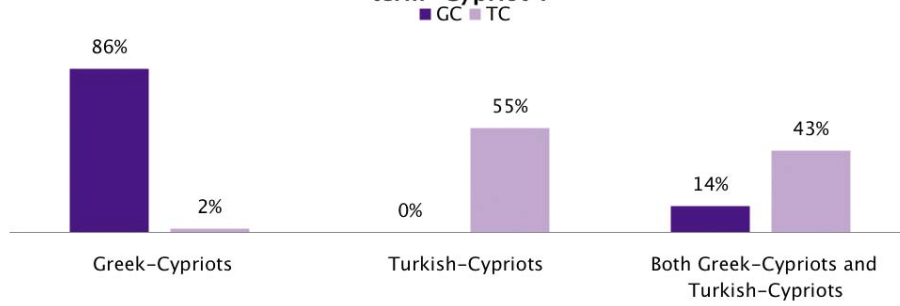
disposal a number of identities with which they build a multi-layered self. Approximately two-thirds of youth from the two communities felt more 'Mediterranean' than 'Middle Eastern' or 'European'. This finding indicates that this can be a part of a more overarching identity, bridging, to some extent, the gap between the two communities who have long since been separated mentally, emotionally and physically.



A closer examination of what the term 'Cypriot' signifies to young people highlights that, a striking 86% of Greek-Cypriots and a corresponding 55% of Turkish-Cypriots, when using the term 'Cypriot', refer exclusively to Greek-Cypriots or Turkish-Cypriots, respectively. Thus, the term 'Cypriot' seems to be used by most young people as

synonymous to their own ethnic community, and not to all Cypriots. It becomes clear that Cyprus' leaders and decision-makers need to work with the organisations which make up society to introduce mechanisms that will help nurture a common Cypriot political identity which embraces diversity and celebrates difference.

Which group of people do you usually mean when you use the term "Cypriot"?



➤ **I am Cypriot, because Cyprus is the place I was born, where we have our traditions [...]; Greek, because it is the language we speak [...] and, finally, European, although I have never felt like one.**
 [Greek-Cypriot, female, 24, college graduate, cashier, single, urban Nicosia]



Cyprus' accession into the European Union in 2004 added another dimension to the identity issue. This applies to the case for Turkish-Cypriots even though the European acquis communautaire is not applied in the northern part of the island. Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth strongly associated the EU with the ability to travel freely between all EU countries. Furthermore, young Cypriots from

both communities correlated the EU with technological and scientific improvements in Cyprus and with a better future for young people. Additionally, Greek-Cypriots seem to associate the EU with the increased protection of human and citizens' rights, whereas Turkish-Cypriots believed that the EU represented a good means for the economic improvement of Cyprus.

➤ **I wish I could be a European Turkish-Cypriot.**
 [Turkish-Cypriot, female, 20, university student, urban Nicosia]



Beyond this discussion of the benefits of a European identity and association, many young Cypriots believe that the barriers resulting from the political division represent obstructions to the realisation of the most fundamental human rights¹⁹. Unless an agreed

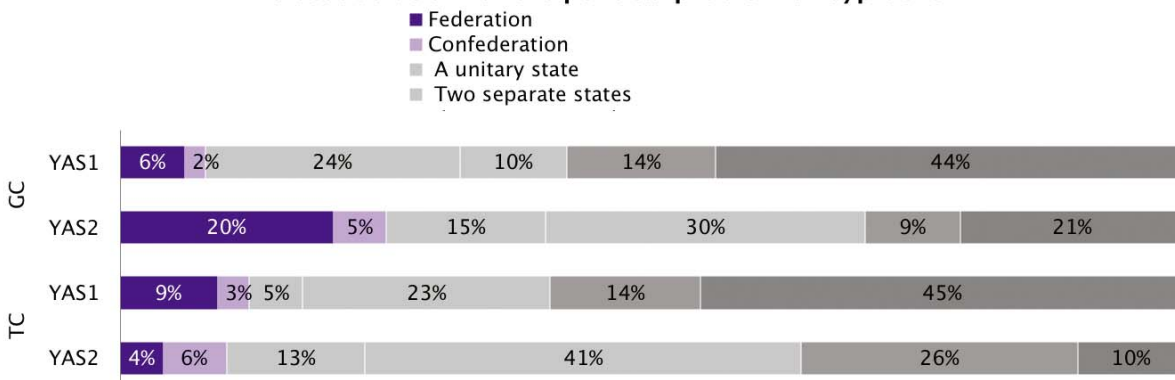
solution is found to the political problem, Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth across the island will continue to suffer from such obstacles which also serve to impede their human development.

When it comes to finding a solution to the Cyprus problem young people are travelling an uneven road from disenchantment and disempowerment to optimism and empowerment

Youth opinions on the best solution to the Cyprus problem largely reflect the official discourses of the two communities. Greek-Cypriots tend to place emphasis on a

unified/integrated Cyprus, which will return things, as much as possible, back to the pre-1974 era. Turkish-Cypriots rather emphasize autonomy and equality.

The best solution for the political problem of Cyprus is:



Moreover, many Cypriot youth feel as though they are not equal players in the public sphere, but rather are assigned subordinate roles via the political parties and their political agendas.

Indeed the data gathered for this Report show that the youth from both communities, if not directly in favour of, are becoming increasingly resigned to the prospect of a two-state solution. This was especially evident in the follow-up survey (YAS2), which when compared to the initial survey, showed a 20% and 18% increase (in percentage points) in the number of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth, respectively, who felt that "two separate states" represented the best solution to the political problem of Cyprus.

The Human Development Report asked why the youth of the society should conform so closely to conventional narratives, when one would expect the youth to offer new and radical perspectives to the issues of conflict and peace. According to the Report's authors the answer can be found in the process of socialization of Cypriot youth, starting from the fact that young Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots have spent their whole lives apart from one another, and that the educational systems in each community have, for the most part, served to drive a psychological (and emotional) wedge between the two communities. In addition politicians and the media have relentlessly focused on every, and any, angle of the Cyprus Problem, so much so, that it has become a constant drone in the soundtrack of the lives of young people.

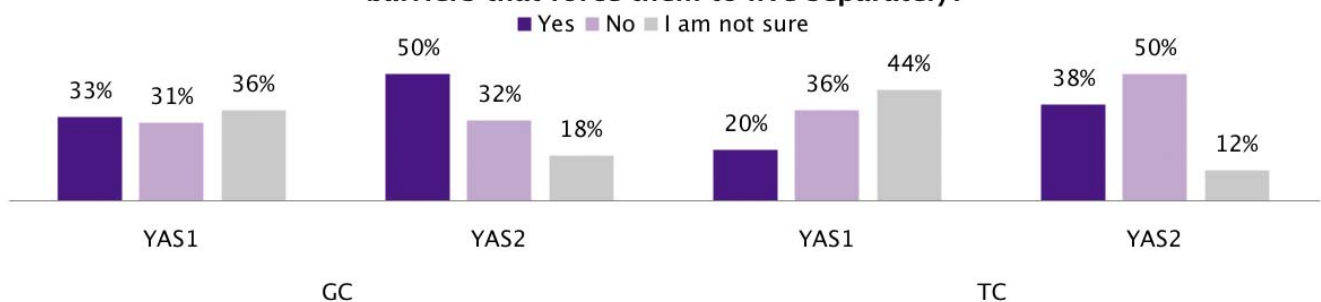
In particular, the media in each community, rather than helping bring harmony to the two communities, has largely focused on portraying their own community as the 'victims' of the conflicts, while the members of the other community are depicted in toto as the 'aggressors' or 'manipulators'. The different religions and languages, but mostly the politicisation of culture, and the consequent nationalist discourse, as well as the attachment to or influence of the "mother countries",

Greece and Turkey, all help to widen the gap between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities.

This institutionalisation of the politics of division has become one of the major obstacles in young people taking an active interest in local politics. Since politics in Cyprus is largely equated with the Cyprus Problem, political participation automatically becomes a complicated affair, given the legal, political and constitutional ramifications of the ethno-national conflict. One of the results of this is the large-scale political apathy on the part of youth in both communities who feel deterred from becoming embroiled in the acrimony of the inter-communal issue. Moreover, many Cypriot youth feel as though they are not equal players in the public sphere, but rather are assigned subordinate roles via the political parties and their political agendas. Despite their low levels of socio-political participation, young Cypriots are not isolated from the politics of the island; politics and political parties do play a pervasive role in their lives. Due to their strong family ties and social habitus Cypriot youth tend to find themselves supporting the same political party and political ideologies as their parents, and perpetuating prevalent or dominant views and values. According to the Human Development Report, the result is that Cypriot youth appear to have lost faith in the idea of a united island.

Nevertheless, despite such feelings of disempowerment, Cypriot youth appear to have a realistic grasp of the existing obstacles to reaching a solution that would allow the two communities to live together peacefully. More young Cypriots are starting to make the distinction between the issues around the political division and issues relating to personal contact between members of the two communities.

Do you believe that Turkish-Cypriots and Greek-Cypriots can overcome the barriers that force them to live separately?



Recent events such as the election of a new government in the Republic of Cyprus, the opening of Ledra Street crossing and the restart of negotiations for a peaceful solution to the Cyprus Problem, have left young Cypriots feeling more confident about the ability of Cypriots to move past the barriers that have forced them to live apart. Indeed, the months following the election saw a marked increase in the levels of optimism expressed by young people from both communities. Although

contact between the youth of the two communities is still not a mainstream activity those cases of interaction among members of the two communities, which do take place, demonstrate that they could serve as one tool to allow Cypriot youth to create a new narrative about the other community and to foster a greater sense of understanding, compassion and responsibility towards the people with whom they share the island.



Personally, I would like to get to know them [Turkish-Cypriots]: I would like to talk to them and hear about their beliefs regarding the events that happened between our two communities...what happened that made us come to the point that we are at now.

(Greek-Cypriot, 16 years old)

I don't have Greek-Cypriot friends but I want to have [some], whom I can meet in common activities. I really want to learn more things about them.

(Turkish-Cypriot, 20 years old)

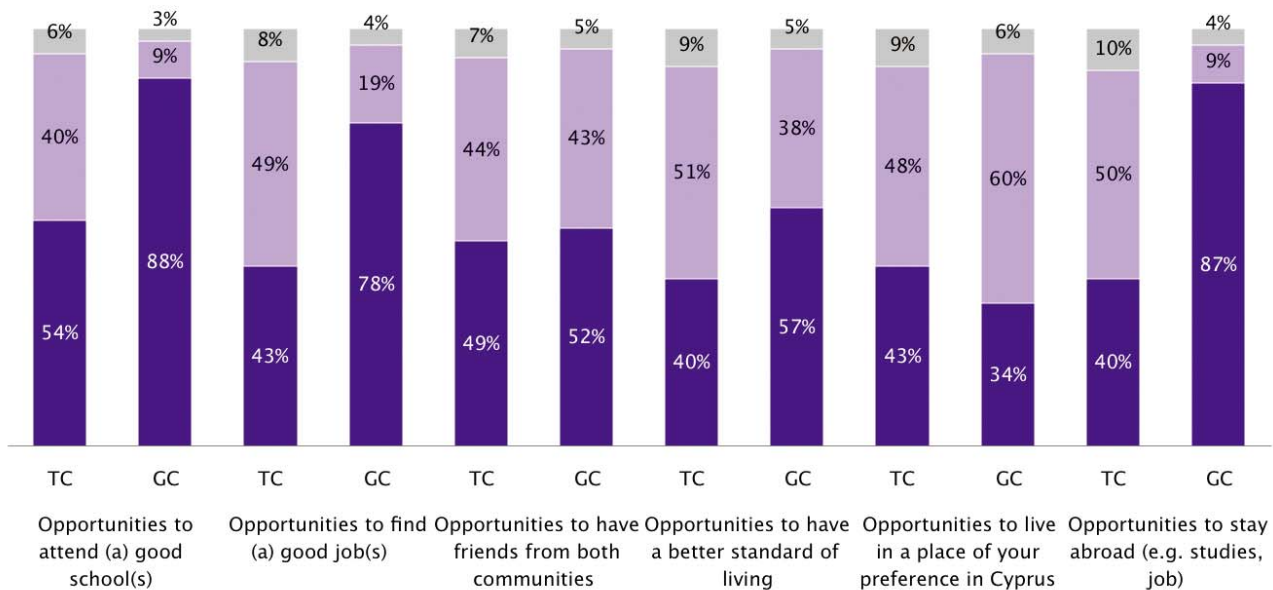


The question is how can this type of interaction between Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth make any difference to the Cyprus Problem? Growing up with the background noise of the political division young Cypriots have become acutely aware of the impact of the conflict on their lives. Nearly half of all young Cypriots (50% of Greek-Cypriot and 49% of Turkish-Cypriot) felt that the division of the

island had had a negative impact on their family's financial affairs resulting from the loss of land or property²⁰. Similarly, close to half (49% of Greek-Cypriots and 46% of Turkish-Cypriots) felt that their families had suffered emotionally due to the loss of loved ones, who may have died during the violence or been taken as war hostages, many of which remain missing until today²¹.

Has the division of Cyprus affected your personal opportunities in any of the following?

■ Not at all ■ Affected negatively ■ Affected positively



Through bicommunal interaction youth may discover and cultivate common values necessary for a generation of Cypriots which will be responsible for shaping the future of the island.

Young Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots feel that the division of the island has undermined their personal opportunities. The fact that a significant proportion of the island's youth (60% of Greek-Cypriots and 48% of Turkish-Cypriots) share a common frustration with their inability to live in a place of their choosing reflects the strong emotions associated with displacement and the cost of conflict, which still affect both communities. The data shows that, in relative terms, Greek-Cypriot youth feel more strongly about this issue, probably reflecting the widespread Greek-Cypriot view that the partitioning of the island was, and continues to be, something totally unacceptable. Turkish-Cypriots also consider the inability to live in a place of their preference as a problem – but this is one among a number of difficulties they attribute

to the consequences of division – the opportunity to find decent employment, to live abroad and to have a better standard of living being other important concerns.

From a social perspective, slightly more than two-fifths of Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots considered the separation of the two communities from one another to have hindered their ability to make friends from both communities. For the youth, the distance from past events may allow a chance to discover a shared empathy with the trauma of each other's communal suffering. Through bicommunal interaction youth may discover and cultivate the common values necessary for a generation of Cypriots which will be responsible for shaping the future of the island.

What benefits can you foresee if the Cyprus Problem were resolved tomorrow?		
(Mean results where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree)	Greek-Cypriots	Turkish-Cypriots
Freedom of movement	3.85	3.60
An improved environment for democracy and freedom of speech	3.48	3.44
The demilitarization of the island and the departure of foreign troops	3.34	3.12
A return of property lost during different conflicts	3.29	3.26
Economic development for both communities	3.26	3.69
Better social relationships between the two communities	3.24	3.47
Lessening of political tensions between the two communities	3.23	3.39
The ability to better manage the island's environmental resources in a sustainable way	3.21	3.39
The overcoming of fears and prejudices towards the other community	3.18	3.35
Compensation and justice for those who suffered from the Cyprus conflict	3.18	3.30
More job opportunities	3.11	3.73
The revelation of the truth behind war crimes in Cyprus committed in the past	3.09	3.20
The ability to effectively tackle social problems (such as drugs trafficking, people trafficking and the spread of HIV/AIDS)	3.02	3.49
Better educational opportunities	2.92	3.61
There would be no significant benefits for my community	2.92	2.76

There is a marked difference between Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youths' views of what would be the benefits of an immediate solution to the Cyprus Problem, their views reflecting the current realities of each respective community. Benefits arising from the solution of the Cyprus Problem that both Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth agreed on, included the revelation of the truth behind the war crimes committed in Cyprus in the past; the provision of compensation and justice for those who suffered from the Cyprus conflict; an improved environment for democracy and freedom of speech; and the lessening of political tensions between the two communities.

The research shows that the voice of Cypriot youth in relation to the Cyprus conflict has, for

the most part, been largely muted. Young Cypriots have not been expected to partake in the ongoing negotiations, but they will be expected to live with the consequences of the outcome of the decisions made by those who direct the politics of Cyprus. Against this background the authors of the Human Development Report extend the challenge to the adults of the island who are engaged in the high level peacemaking efforts - to provide young Cypriots the opportunity to play a part in the current peace process. Excluding the youth from this process may prove to be a grave mistake given that, as the future generation who will 'live out' a solution, young Cypriots have a great stake in the outcome of the current negotiations, as well as a large role to play in the implementation of a settlement.

Many young Cypriots recognise that the future peace and stability of their island is also their responsibility; the question is how adults and the current political elite will support their aspiration to be agents of change

Young Cypriots represent the future of Cyprus. Regardless of the outcome of the ongoing peace negotiations, it is the right and responsibility of both Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth to play an active part in working towards a peaceful, tolerant and inclusive existence where they will share the island as neighbours, compatriots and co-citizens, rather than as members of two separate communities. In order for this to be the case, however, Cypriot youth must be sought out and given the opportunity to participate in determining the direction of their future.

Cypriot youth, like their counterparts around the world, possess the various traits which could make them ideal agents of social change and peace builders. As the new generation, Cypriot youth are imbued with significant levels of creativity, inventiveness, and an orientation

towards the future. However, Cypriot youth have often been accused of being apathetic and disengaged from society. As things stand, young Cypriots have been conditioned to feel as though they cannot make a difference. Instead of harnessing their energy and optimism, Cypriot youth have been relegated to the part of passive bystanders. As a result Cypriot youth feel as though they are neither included, nor valued by the rest of society.

Cypriot youth were asked to define what “a peaceful Cyprus” or “peace in Cyprus” meant to them. Among Greek-Cypriot respondents, the most cited response was “freedom”, followed by “everyone co-existing in harmony”. The most popular definition of a peaceful Cyprus among Turkish-Cypriot respondents was “living together without borders” and the “absence of war and conflict”.



[Peace in Cyprus is] an island without boundaries where there are two different communities living under the same roof, with a common language. I cannot imagine peace by considering two communities living separately: Peace is living together.

(Turkish-Cypriot, 19-24 years old)

To start with, there should be no dividing line; the two communities should be mixed.

(Greek-Cypriot, 14-18 years old)



For the most part, young Cypriots from both communities felt as though they had no role to play in the reconciliation process. Several young Cypriots were put off from actively participating in the reunification process as they felt that, ultimately, the role of politicians and political parties was overpowering, leaving little space for independent initiatives or voices. Others felt overwhelmed by what they

considered as the determining interference of foreign powers in local politics and the destiny of Cyprus. Furthermore, Cypriot youth, on either side, felt that they were not provided with adequate support and opportunities and that, more often than not, their opinions were completely overlooked, or even worse, ignored by decision makers.



Young people have an inferior voice. They are treated as second class citizens. This is true. Look at the school: you have to listen to teachers...they are asking you questions...you don't have the right to ask questions, you cannot criticize. Look at families: they criticize you [but] you do not have the same rights... So I think that to be young is a disadvantage... I believe that our politicians do not respect young people in our culture.

(Turkish-Cypriot, 19-24 years old)

One's sense of responsibility is promoted by their family, and mine raised me to feel responsible to my country. However, young people cannot make decisions and bring about drastic changes because even the youth associations which exist are supported either financially or 'ideologically' by some political party, and this deprives [youth] of their freedom and the potential to change things.

(Greek-Cypriot, female, 23, college graduate, employed, single, urban Nicosia)

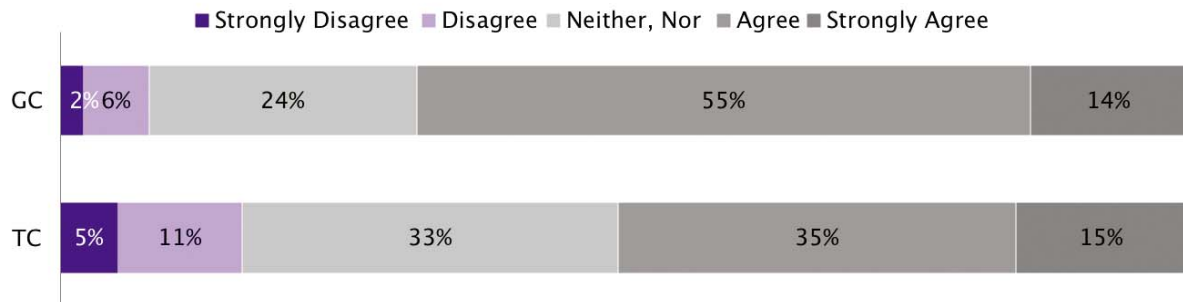


Over half of the Cypriot youth surveyed agreed that young Cypriots have a responsibility to assist in finding a peaceful solution to the Cyprus Problem, while nearly half of Cypriot youth surveyed wished to play an active role in the reconciliation of the island.

Over half of the Cypriot youth surveyed agreed that young Cypriots have a responsibility to assist in finding a peaceful solution to the Cyprus Problem, while nearly half of Cypriot youth surveyed wished to play an active role in the reconciliation of the island. Given the low

socio-political participation rates among Cypriot youth, it is encouraging that such a large percentage of youth believe that they are responsible for assisting in reaching a peaceful settlement to the Cyprus Problem. This is testament to the optimism of young people.

Young Cypriots have a responsibility to help find a peaceful settlement to the Cyprus Problem



We are all responsible at this age we're at, because it is us who will make the difference in the future, as long as we maintain positive opinions without preconceptions passed on from previous generations. We must discover our own truth and try to support it, and if we support it properly, with the appropriate beliefs, we will make it.

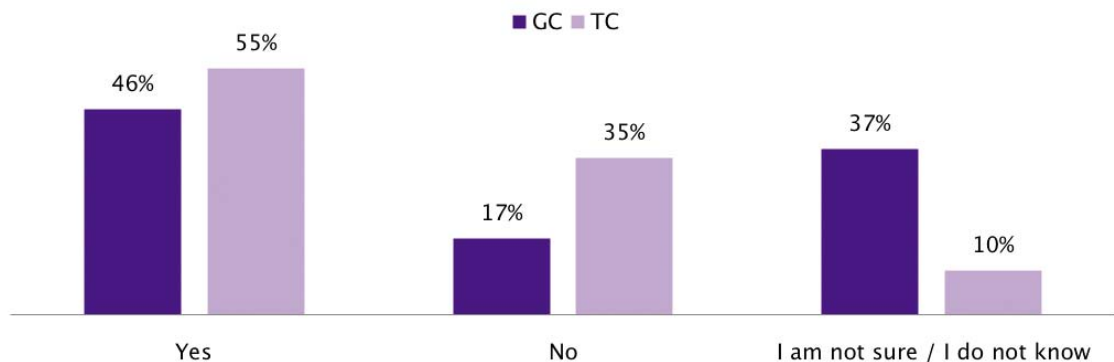
[Greek-Cypriot, male, 23, student, single, urban Nicosia]

Young people are [...] inadequate in some areas. But, in some other areas there are young people who are really active. I think that in general they could be effective in helping change the way in which people think about bicomunal relations.

[Turkish-Cypriot, male, 18, student]



As a young Cypriot, do you want to play an active role in the reconciliation of the island?



The low levels of youth participation in the socio-political arena runs against the grain of what is required for the future; a future in which any solution to the Cyprus problem needs to incorporate the voice of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth who account for approximately one sixth of the total population.

Given that Cypriot youth represent the generation that will implement and, in effect, 'live out' a potential solution, any agreement, which fails to take into consideration their voice and needs, may lack support and weaken its chance of succeeding.

In this vein, young Cypriots proposed various measures, which in their opinion, could contribute to building peace in Cyprus. Greek-Cypriot youth favoured direct talks between the leaders of the two communities, as well as joint events between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriot. Turkish-Cypriots supported practical measures, like the sharing of common spaces, such as schools or the workplace. Overall, Cypriot youth suffer from a lack of knowledge or awareness as to how they might be able to become more engaged in bringing

the two communities closer together. Thus, while it is the right of every young person to participate in society and the decision-making process that can shape their realities, it is the responsibility of adults to encourage the participation of youth. Before Cypriot youth can begin to play an active role as active citizens, they need to feel empowered to do so. This falls under the responsibility of parents, educators and leaders to facilitate and provide youth with a safe, shared environment for communication, learning and growth.



I believe there are no [opportunities for participation] because adults decide alone [...] so we do not want to, nor do we have the opportunity [to participate in the peace resolution process].

[Greek-Cypriot, female, 23, university graduate, employed as policewoman, single, rural Nicosia]

I think that the young people have no such right [to have their views and needs represented in society]. This means that the young don't feel free to talk about their own ideas or to express themselves in public. No one asks for our ideas.

[Turkish-Cypriot, 19-24 years old]



As regards the future of the island, the priority must be to promote sustained interactions and relationships among Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth. As more and more Cypriot youth begin communicating with one another, and in turn, trusting and learning from one another, the barriers which have kept them apart for most of their lives will slowly begin to break down. As this takes place, Cypriot youth may become key connectors and educators, sharing their opinions and experiences with their social networks, such as parents and other family members, teachers and friends. Through sustained dialogue and interaction Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth will be able to overcome the barriers keeping them apart, and, together, may be able to start the arduous task of building a shared future based on tolerance and respect for different beliefs, cultures and lifestyles.

The current peace process calls for the Cypriot people to actively participate in an informed, public dialogue on future of the island. Cypriot youth, as key stakeholders in the peace process, obviously must be engaged in such a discourse. To do so, various measures may be necessary in order to motivate young Cypriots from both communities to actively participate in the peace process. These may be implemented through the educational systems, after-school initiatives and new media communications (that is through television programmes and websites designed for Cypriot youth). The significance of Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots sharing an educational space on a daily basis should not be overlooked or downplayed. Educational institutions and educators play an extremely important role by providing young Cypriots with a safe place, which encourages academic and social interaction and, above all, personal growth and

development. Universities, in particular, serve as places where "new politics, new norms and new attitudes are shaped", thus: A higher education system which is at peace with the other community is an important precursor to a society and political system that is at peace with the other community²². It is imperative that schools, colleges and universities play a positive role in reunification by promoting principles of multiculturalism and tolerance. This will become even more important in a post-settlement period.

Young Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots are in favour of joint activities that bring youth from each community closer together. Bi-communal events and initiatives allow young people to break down existing barriers – real or imagined – between them and begin to develop lasting relationships based on existing similarities and a common future. Sports, music and the environment all serve as areas where young Cypriots can come together. The inclusion of youth in the peace building process can bestow various beneficial skills to young Cypriots, such as the development of critical reflection and the ability to compare different perspectives and skills necessary for engaging in productive dialogue and conflict resolution. In conclusion, adult actors, be they family members, educators, politicians, civil society activists or religious leaders, would do well to realise that "under the cynical passivity [of youth] lies an inherent motivation for wanting to make a difference"²³. As such, they must work together to harness the untapped potential of Cypriot youth across the island and provide them with the chance to make their voice heard, not just vis-à-vis the Cyprus Problem, but in all facets that affect their lives and their collective future.

A higher education system which is at peace with the other community is an important precursor to a society and political system that is at peace with the other community.

»» Youth Charter for Cyprus

It is clear that the voice of Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth should no longer go unheard, or worse, unwelcome. Young Cypriots living across the island, in both communities, wish to play an active role in the reunification of their island. To this end, and in the framework of the Cyprus Youth Dialogue Project, a Youth Charter for Cyprus has been developed. It is hoped that this Charter will serve as a tool to further encourage and strengthen the role played by young Cypriots in the peace process and the future of their country.

The Cyprus Youth Charter is a product of the Cyprus Youth Dialogue Project, a bi-communal research study conducted by the University of Nicosia and the Cyprus Social and Economic Research Centre (KADEM), among Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot youth, aged 15 to 24. The Charter was created with input from a team of 12 Greek-Cypriot and 12 Turkish-Cypriot youth, known as the Youth Advisory Board and it is intended to make the voices of young Cypriots heard throughout the island.

Cyprus Youth Charter

»» We, the young people from the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities, have jointly considered our lives, problems and concerns, and have come to agree on a number of suggestions, which we wish to propose to our compatriots, as vital for living a full and productive life on the island and for securing our common future. ««

We, the youth of Cyprus:

Family

- want to build positive relationships with our parents and families through open dialogue and mutual trust
- would like to take part in our families' decisions, especially those concerning our own lives
- would like our parents to support our choices, nurture our development and respect our independence, by encouraging us to make our own decisions, and to freely develop our own views and ideas

Education

- believe that every young adult should have access to higher education in accordance to the standards set by the EU, without regard to one's social or economic background
- wish to receive a quality, multi-dimensional education that will equip us with analytical and critical thinking skills, and promote creativity, innovativeness and discovery, turning Cyprus into a true 'society of knowledge'
- want to be provided with an education that will enable us to effectively compete in today's increasingly competitive, globalised world.
- desire to be part of an educational system which promotes continual personal and professional development, investing in new curricula and new teaching/ learning methods
- want to be involved in the decision-making and planning of our education – in establishing curricula and school activities, as well as to have input in what we learn in both our core and optional classes

- would like the educational system to reflect changes in society and to take a leading role in fostering the values of openness to difference, tolerance, cultural diversity and co-existence, and the resolution of problems through peaceful means
- may benefit from learning about multiple perspectives of Cypriot history, in the hope of developing a common understanding of the past and a shared concern for the future of the island

Employment

- support the need for more job opportunities that are designed specifically for and directed towards young graduates and young employees
- believe in the principle of equal pay for equal work; employers should not discriminate against employees regardless of gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, or disability
- demand to live in a country where meritocracy plays a defining role in our career progress, and where we are given the opportunity to pursue career paths based on the merit of our academic qualifications, capabilities and experiences
- are concerned about the state of the economy and financial matters and, as such, would like to be involved in the decision-making processes related to these
- feel that employers should recognise the value of young employees – namely, their hard work, creativity, innovativeness and commitment; this should be reflected fairly in young employees' remuneration
- believe that the public and private sectors should support young people's entrepreneurship

- encourage and value the pursuit of life-long learning, either through the provision of "on-the-job" or other training opportunities

Leisure Activities and Health

- wish to see special efforts expended in the development of initiatives and programmes that appeal to our interests, while simultaneously providing us with useful and informative educational content
- require access to public spaces where we can safely meet, interact and socialise with our peers
- place our trust in parents, educators and health providers to make sure that the appropriate measures and actions are taken so that we can live a long and healthy life
- want to remain informed about the health services available to us, as well as benefit from easy access to these
- consider educators as vital in informing us about the harmful effects of smoking, heavy alcohol consumption, drug use and similar high-risk behaviour; consequently, educational/ awareness campaigns specifically targeting young Cypriots must be developed and disseminated across the island
- support sex education, so as to practice safe sex in order to safeguard ourselves from sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies
- appreciate the work of community workers, counsellors and health workers and believe that more of these trained professionals should be made available to cater to young people's growing needs

Independence and Freedom of Speech

- believe every member of society, including the youth, should be able to freely and confidently express their opinion, without fear of discrimination or physical violence
- want our voices to be heard, respected and valued by older members of society
- are capable of accepting responsibility for our actions and, as such, desire to take on greater independence in everything we do
- should be informed of matters which involve us in an objective, non-biased way and should be left to make our own decisions about these without being directed by our teachers and/ or families, and without any imposition
- want to be provided with the tools that will aid us to become independent from our parents; these include access to free education, increased job opportunities and fair and realistic housing terms

Socio-political Participation

- would like to be actively involved in civil society activities and initiatives which help bring positive changes to society
- feel we should be considered and accepted as substantial contributors to the public sphere and civil society of Cyprus; as such, we fully support mechanisms which would allow us to take part in political decisions at all levels
- consider that socio-political participation should remain detached from political parties and not be used to recruit political supporters

- need to be clearly represented or provided with platforms through which we can voice our collective concerns and ideas; this may be achieved through youth organisations that are not dominated by political parties and rigid ideologies, but rather function autonomously and are run by, and for, youth

- believe internship and/or volunteerism services or community services should be made available and accessible to all and should be further encouraged by the schools and parents
- recognise the need for alternative service to the army, for those who object to compulsory military service and prefer to offer social service
- feel that the educational curriculum should support the teaching of 'active citizenship', which implies concern with and active participation in common affairs
- support the development of Cypriot youth as concerned global citizens, aware of the issues affecting the world as a whole, and the EU and Cyprus in particular

Peace and Reconciliation

- are strong believers in peace and in the peaceful resolution of conflicts
- abhor violence and wish to cultivate a culture of dialogue and peaceful co-existence
- wish to see foreign armies withdraw from Cyprus, and support the increased demilitarisation of the island
- support ridding ourselves from any form of prejudice which has penetrated into our lives and consciousness regarding the 'other', and wish to nurture the common bonds between us
- must be afforded the opportunity and the required support and encouragement to become a driving force in building bridges between members of the two communities
- believe a solution should be reached between, and by, those who are directly involved and impacted by it; we, therefore, strongly support a solution for the Cypriots, by the Cypriots, free from external intervention or impositions
- promote the use of modern technologies as reconciliation tools that would allow us to learn more about each other (such as Internet blogs, chat sites and social networks and online videos)
- recognise the positive role schools, universities, religious institutions and the media can play in the reconciliation/ reunification process, by promoting principles of multiculturalism, tolerance and mutual respect
- encourage and value citizens' organisations, initiatives and events which bring the two communities together (including concerts, cultural festivals, youth camps and so on)
- support the promotion of a strong, common, over-arching Cypriot civic identity and recognise that the term 'Cypriot' refers to both Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots
- believe that we should learn from the past so as not to repeat the same mistakes in the future
- support the creation of an all-inclusive Cypriot society and youth that is 'united in diversity', accepting and respectful of other cultures and open to change

Notes

The use of TRNC sources in this Report does not imply any sort of recognition of TRNC institutions or agencies.

- 1 For the purpose of the present study, the UN Youth Programme definition of youth has been adopted, so that the terms "Cypriot youth" or "young Cypriots" refer to individuals between 15 to 24 years of age.
- 2 An open call for participants was made in early June 2007, whereby youth Cypriots from both communities were invited to participate in the project by completing an application form available in Greek, Turkish and English. Consequently, the 24 individuals making up the Youth Advisory Board were selected after a two-stage selection process consisting of the written application and a personal interview. The research team attempted to bring together a balanced and representative group of young Cypriots that would lend their voice to the project.
- 3 It should be noted that a certain degree of ambiguity exists as regards the Human Development Index (HDI) for Cyprus – specifically, whether or not the HDI refers to the areas under the control of the Republic of Cyprus and those that are not. Further examination showed that the statistics and indicators used to calculate the HDI for Cyprus did not indicate whether or not they referred to the entire island or not. It is most likely that the indicators used to measure the HDI refer only to the area under the control of the Republic of Cyprus. Therefore, the HDI for Cyprus may not accurately depict the HDI for the entire island.
- 4 Human Development Report 2007/2008, Country Fact Sheets: Cyprus, [http://hdrstats.undp.org/2008/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_CYP.html].
- 5 Cargo, M., Grams, G. D., Ottoson, J. M., Ward, P. and Green, L. W. (2003), "Empowerment as Fostering Positive Youth Development and Citizenship", *American Journal of Health Behaviour*, Volume 27, Supplement 1, pp. S66-S79.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. S77.
- 7 Finn, J. L. and Checkoway, B. (1998), "Young People as Competent Community Builders: A Challenge to Social Work", *Social Work*, Volume 43, Number 4, pp. 335-345.
- 8 The inter-communal violence of 1963-1964 led to loss of life and prompted the creation of the UN Force in Cyprus, which was mandated to "use its best efforts to prevent a recurrence of fighting and, as necessary to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to normal conditions" - UN Security Council Resolution 186 (1964).
- 9 The events of 1974 are viewed differently by the two communities: Greek-Cypriots view this as an "invasion" by Turkey, while Turkish-Cypriots regard the same events as a "peace operation".
- 10 Figures for the number of Turkish-Cypriot youth, aged 15 to 24, vary according to the source accessed [Statistical Service (2007) "Demographic Report", Population Statistics, Series II, Report No. 44, Nicosia: Printing Office of the Republic of Cyprus and the 2006 Census, State Planning Organisation, TRNC].
- 11 Statistical Service (2007) "Demographic Report", Population Statistics, Series II, Report No. 44, Nicosia: Printing Office of the Republic of Cyprus.
- 12 Fromm, E. (2001) *The Fear of Freedom*, 2nd edition, Routledge.
- 13 Vural, Y. 'Redefining Identity: A Step towards a United Federal Cyprus', presentation given at a panel discussion on *The Battle of the History Textbooks*, within the framework of the Citizens' Free University – University of Nicosia, Cyprus (6 November, 2008).
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- 15 Statistical Service (2008) "Labour Force Survey 2007", *Labour Statistics*, Series IV, Report No. 6, Nicosia: Printing Office of the Republic of Cyprus.
- 16 State Planning Organisation, (2007), TRNC.
- 17 Statistical Service (2006) "The Statistical Portrait of Women in Cyprus", *Social Statistics*, Series I, Report No. 1, Nicosia: Printing Office of the Republic of Cyprus.
- 18 CIVICUS (2005) "An Assessment of Civil Society in Cyprus: A Map for the Future, CIVICUS: Civil Society Index Report" [www.civicus.org].
- 19 Nearly two thirds of Greek-Cypriot youth (65.2%) and 36.1% of Turkish-Cypriot youth surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that "the division of the island makes it impossible for everybody to exercise his/her human rights"; more than two thirds of Turkish-Cypriots (43.0%) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement (compared to 27.8% of Greek-Cypriots).
- 20 Although those directly displaced were less than 49-50%, many others from both communities lost land they may have owned, second homes and inheritance property.
- 21 As a result of the violence generated during the inter-communal fighting (1963-1968) and the events of 1974, a total of 502 Turkish-Cypriots and 1493 Greek-Cypriots were officially reported as missing by both communities to the Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus (CMP). The CMP was established in April 1981, by agreement between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities, under the auspices of the United Nations. The mandate of the Committee is to establish the fate of missing persons. To date, the remains of 530 individuals have been exhumed from different burial sites located across the island; the remains of 150 individuals have been identified and returned to their families. CMP Fact Sheet – April 2009 [available from: http://www.cmp-cyprus.org/media/attachments/CMP/CMP%20docs/CMP%20Fact%20Sheets/CMP_Fact_Sheet_Apr09.pdf].
- 22 Kaymak, E., Lordos, A. and Tocci, N. (2009) *Building Confidence in Peace*, Centre for European Policy Studies.
- 23 Stoneman, D. (2002) "The Role of Youth Programming in the Development of Civic Engagement", *Applied Developmental Science*, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 221-226.



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CYPRUS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2009

Young Cypriots are at a crossroads. Amid political uncertainty they are struggling with their transition from children to adults in a world that is increasingly competitive, challenging and confusing. Their pursuit of education, decent jobs, friends and relationships is taking place against the background noise of the Cyprus Problem.

This first Human Development Report for Cyprus attempts to explore key human development dynamics in Cypriot society by focusing on one of the most critical stakeholders in the future of the island, namely youth. More specifically the Report attempts to bring to the fore the voices of young Cypriots through a research study, which for the first time maps the aspirations of youth in both the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot communities.

Largely based on the results of the comprehensive, island-wide Youth Aspirations Survey administered to over 1,600 young Cypriots across the island, the Report examines the aspirations and perceptions of youth in a variety of areas, including relationships with their families, choices on education, work and leisure activities. It also explores attitudes towards national identity and the European Union, the interaction with individuals from the other community and young peoples' opinions on religion, health and building peace in Cyprus. To this end, the Report offers valuable insight into the attitudes, perceptions and behaviours of young Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots residing on the island today. Moreover, the Report explores the socio-economic and political features of young people's lives through the prism of youth empowerment and responsibility and analyses how these two factors affect the development of young Cypriots.

The Report concludes that ultimately youth development needs to be geared towards ensuring that all young people have the tools and skills to thrive in the communities and countries in which they live. While it is the responsibility of parents, educators, civil society, the media and the leaders of both communities to empower Cypriot youth, young Cypriots themselves must be active in seeking out and making full use of the available opportunities for empowerment.