

CONTEXT

Less than 5 in 10 youth trust their government across OECD countries in 2021 and they continue to lack voice and representation in public life. Already before the COVID-19 crisis, young people across 16 OECD countries were more likely than older people to hold a disenchanting view about democracy. The high-level event brought together **more than 200 policymakers, representatives from youth associations and international partners from 56 countries** to discuss how governments can strengthen the participation and representation of young people in democratic processes in times of crisis, notably in the recovery from COVID-19. The event was organised by the OECD Public Governance Directorate in the context of the [OECD Youth Week 2021](#).

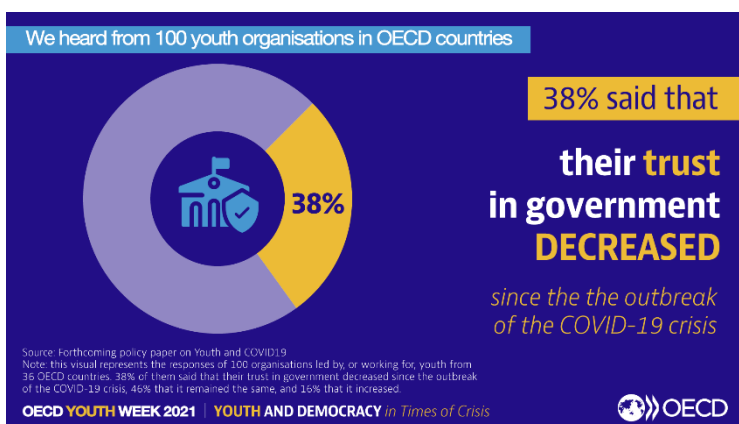
KEY TAKEAWAYS

The event was opened by **Mr. Jeffrey Schlagenhauf**, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD, **Ms. Maria-Kaisa Aula**, State Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Finland, and **Mr. Raymond Knops**, State Secretary for the Interior and Kingdom Relations, the Netherlands. **Ms. Federica Cocco**, Financial Times, moderated the event, including a panel on strengthening democracy for and with youth. The panel included **Mr. Mete Coban**, Chief Executive, My Life My Say, **Ms. Bettina Bundszus**, Head of Children and Youth Department, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Germany, **Ms. Ayla Johnstone**, Chairperson of the Franklin Youth Advisory Board, New Zealand, and **Ms. Marta Cristina Rodríguez Sánchez**, Deputy Director of International Affairs, Mexican Institute of Youth, Mexico. The event was closed by **Ms. Elsa Pilichowski**, Director for Public Governance, OECD.

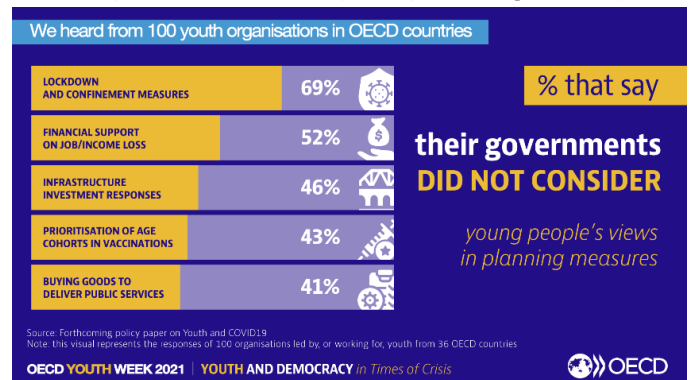


Participants highlighted that:

- The **COVID-19 crisis has widely impacted the lives of youth**, including their trust in government and satisfaction with democracy.
- In a recent data collection with youth associations conducted by the OECD, **more than one in three respondents reported that the trust of their members in government had decreased** since the onset of the crisis.



- **One in three respondents also said their members' satisfaction with democracy decreased** since the onset of the crisis. The recovery provides a chance to rethink democratic governance and make public institutions more representative, inclusive, and responsive.
- **Youth are not a homogenous group** and governments should make specific efforts to ensure public services are accessible to all, including by investing in youth **digital skills**.
- **Participatory, resourced, cross-sectoral national youth strategies** can unite different ministries and non-governmental stakeholders to deliver coherently for youth.
- Governments can adopt ex-ante youth checks and governance tools to **integrate youth and intergenerational considerations** in recovery measures and policymaking widely.
- It was necessary for governments to make quick decisions in response to COVID-19. However, in the recovery, it is crucial to **integrate youth's voices through institutionalised channels** such as consultations and youth councils.
- Governments can adopt **creative solutions to engage youth**, using social media and accessible language, and leveraging youth associations and networks.
- Governments should strengthen **civic and citizenship literacy** to build youth trust in government and strengthen their association with and participation in democratic processes.
- **Youth-led organisations need to be equipped with appropriate capacities** and resources to co-design and co-deliver public services and support youth engagement.
- **Recognising, promoting, and protecting youth rights** can be instrumental to ensure youth can contribute to social progress and inclusive economic growth.
- **Almost 7 in 10 youth organisations** consulted by the OECD reported to be **worried about the crisis' impact on inequalities across age cohorts**. Involving young people in the recovery will be crucial to promote intergenerational justice.



WAY FORWARD

- The OECD will publish a **policy paper to support governments in delivering a recovery fit for all generations**. It will be informed by a data collection with youth organisations and by an analysis on youth and intergenerational commitments in recovery measures.
- The OECD is working towards a **Recommendation to promote government-wide strategies to support young people** and set out evidence-based policy principles to improve youth measures and outcomes in all relevant policy areas.

CONTACTS

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Further information on [OECD work on youth empowerment and intergenerational justice](#)