



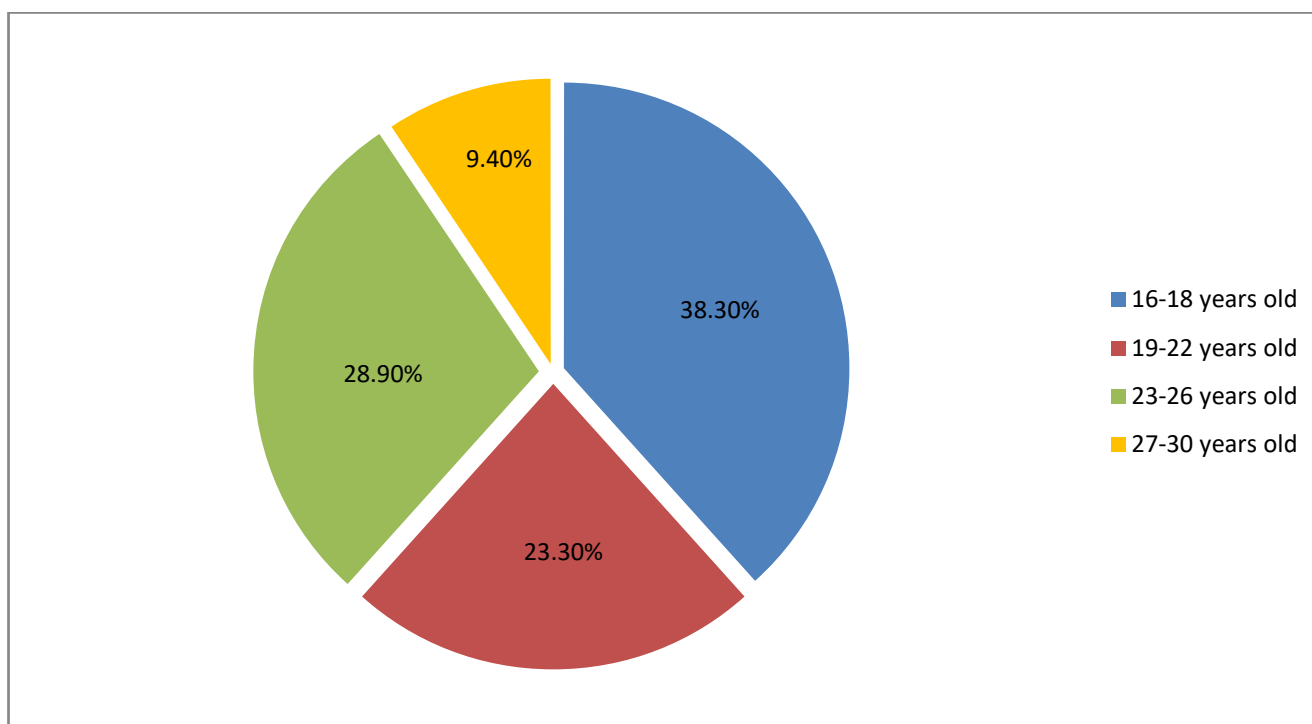
Research: *Young people ask young people*

The research “Young people ask young people” has been designed and implemented by the young group MAKE USE, which is active in Larissa/Greece. What triggered the group to make this research was a common observation by the group’s members: the city’s youth is merely represented or not represented at all in public discourse. Decisions about youth and its social role are often made in absentia. So, the group wrote down and distributed the following questionnaire in order to comprehend the circumstances and the reasons of this absence of Larissa’s young people from actions based on and, at the same time, supporting modern democracy.

180 young people aged 16 to 30 years old from the region of Larissa have responded and completed the questionnaire. Distribution of the questionnaire has been done in 2 main phases: (a) April-May 2019 and (b) December 2019 – February 2020. The research follows a scientific methodology and combines both quantity and quality indicators data. For the distribution of the questionnaire, snowball sampling method has been used.

It has to be noted that, due to the relatively small number of questioned people and sampling, the results of this research should not be generalized, but, instead, they can, relatively securely, imprint the inclinations of today’s youth of Larissa regarding certain issues.

In which age group do you belong?



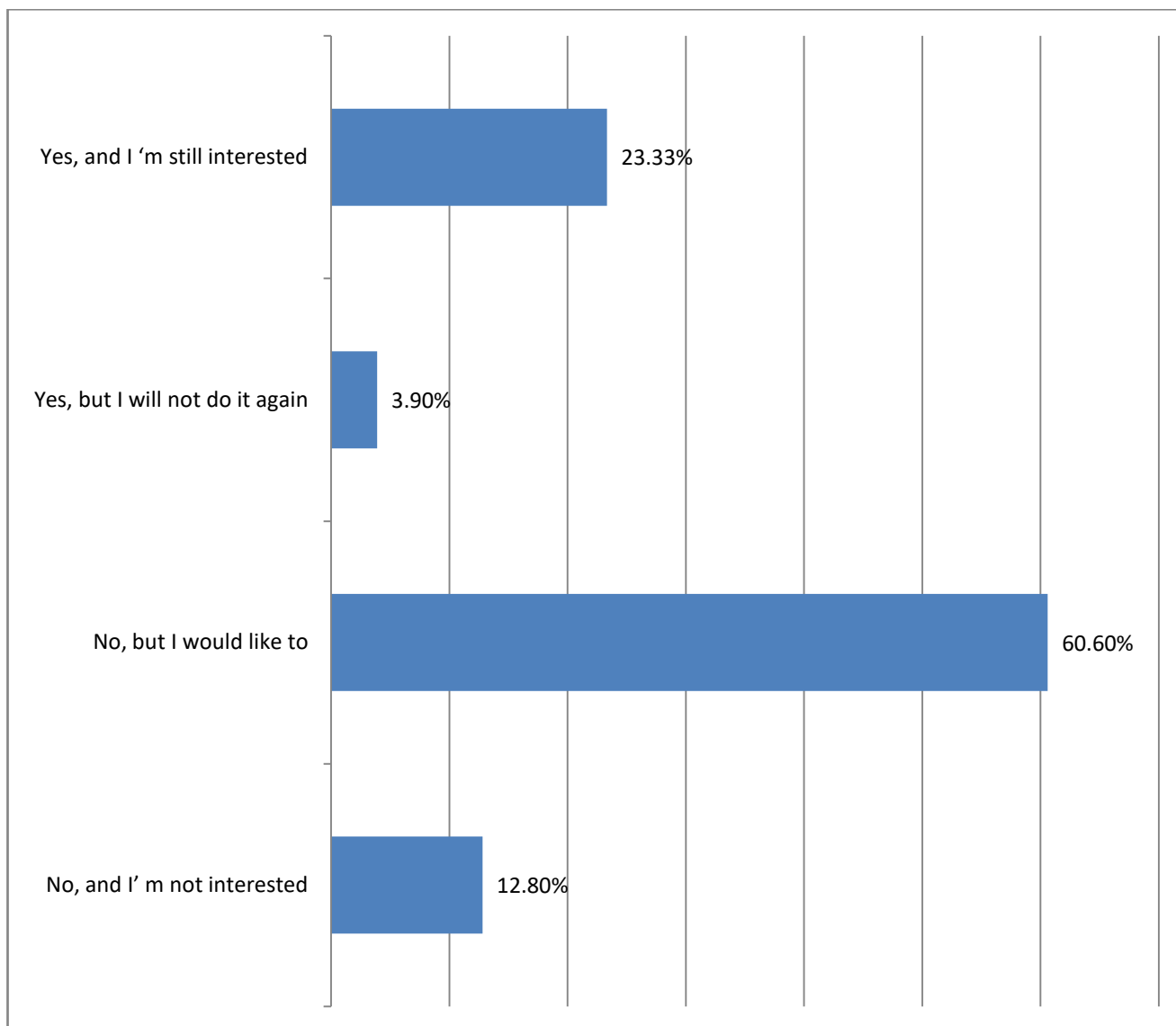
During the first days of the research, there has been a significant absence of the age group 16-18. The group then addressed to teachers in private education supporting schools in the city (multipliers) who informed students at High Schools 3rd grade about the questionnaire and its optional filling in.

Thus, 69 questionnaires have been collected from the age group 16-18, 42 from the age group 19-22, 52 from the age group 23-26 and 17 from the group 27-30 years old.

Have you ever participated in a group activating in democracy matters and citizenship development in a local level?

We consider the filling in of a questionnaire as a political action. One of small scale, as it demands a minimum of time and commitment, but essentially political, as both the subject and the methodology deal with democracy. So, we suppose that the majority of people answering the questionnaire consists of active young people.

In that way, it could be possibly explained the very low indicator (12,8%) that have responded “No, and I’m not interested” concerning the participation in active groups. In reality, this percentage is much higher.

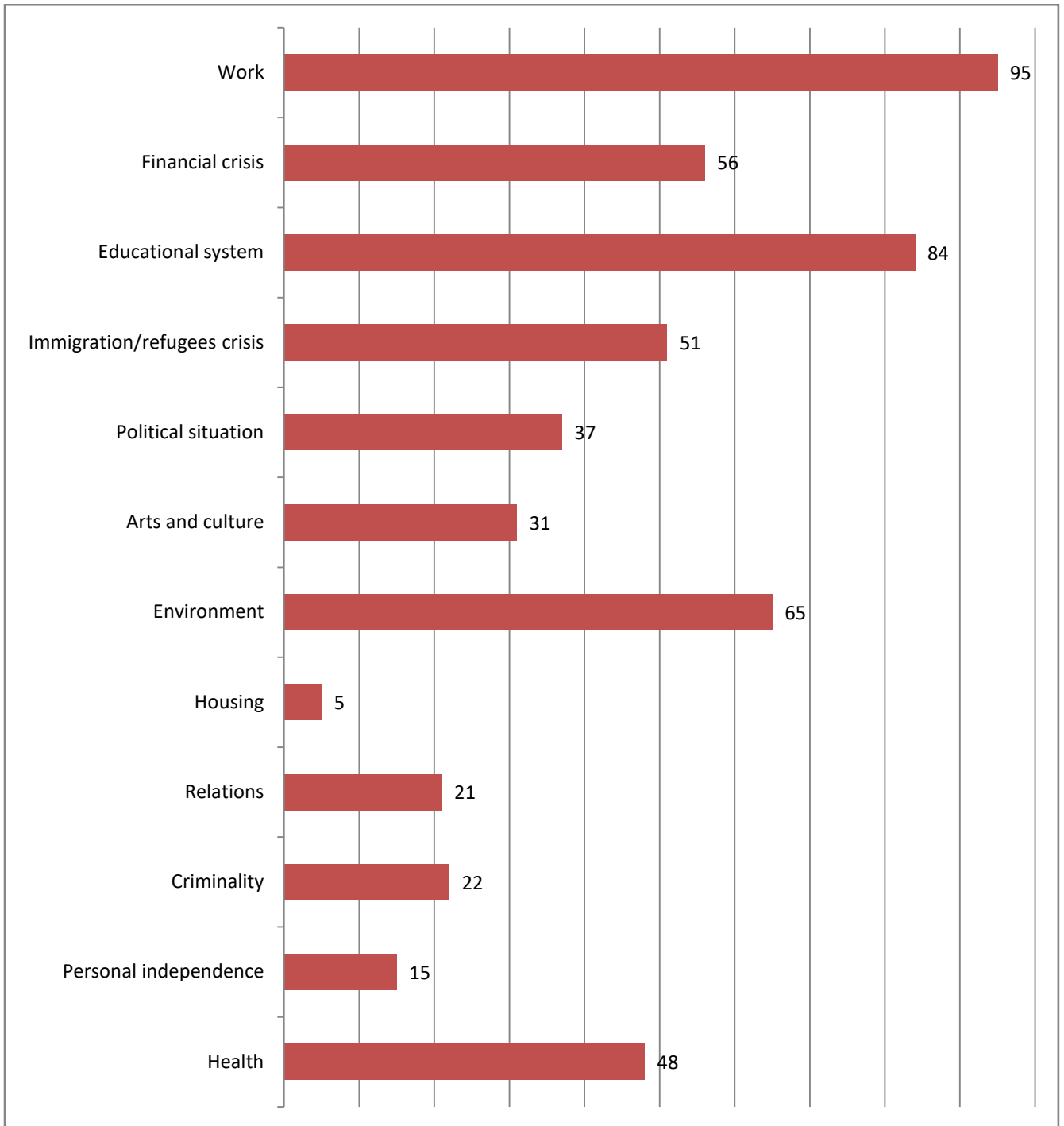


Perhaps the most significant finding of this question are the 108 choices “No, but I would like to”, showing that in Larissa’s youth **there is a dynamics towards participation** in groups activating in democracy and active citizenship.

About which matters are you more preoccupied? (up to 3 choices)

The population of the research (people aged 16-30) consists of school students, University/vocational schools students, employees, employed and unemployed people. A high percentage is directly related to the Educational

System (General and Technical High Schools, Higher Education Institutes) and vocational training, and another high percentage is in contact with the labour market.



Work (52,8%) and Education (46,7%) are considered as the biggest problems.¹. It is not a particularly encouraging find that these two systems, designed for

¹United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (OHCHR):

Article 23.1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

the needs of education and professionalization of youth, are considered as the biggest problems young people are facing. It is also worth mentioning that the discontentment from the situation in education and work labour is leading young people abroad or to bigger Greek cities, contributing to the local brain drain.

Environment follows (36,1%), financial crisis (31,1%), immigration/refugees crisis (28,3%), health (26,7%), political situation (20,6%), arts and culture (17,2%).

In your opinion, which of the following do impede young people's active participation in local actions related to democracy and citizenship? (up to 3 choices)

“The conviction that nothing can change even if I participate” has the most answers (60,6%) and imprints how the city's youth **strongly tend to frustration**.

Combined with the option “Suspiciousness towards their organisers” (31,1%), creates a situation in which young people in Larissa seem to consider participation procedures as ineffective in their daily lives and/or incited by individuals/groups with different expectations.

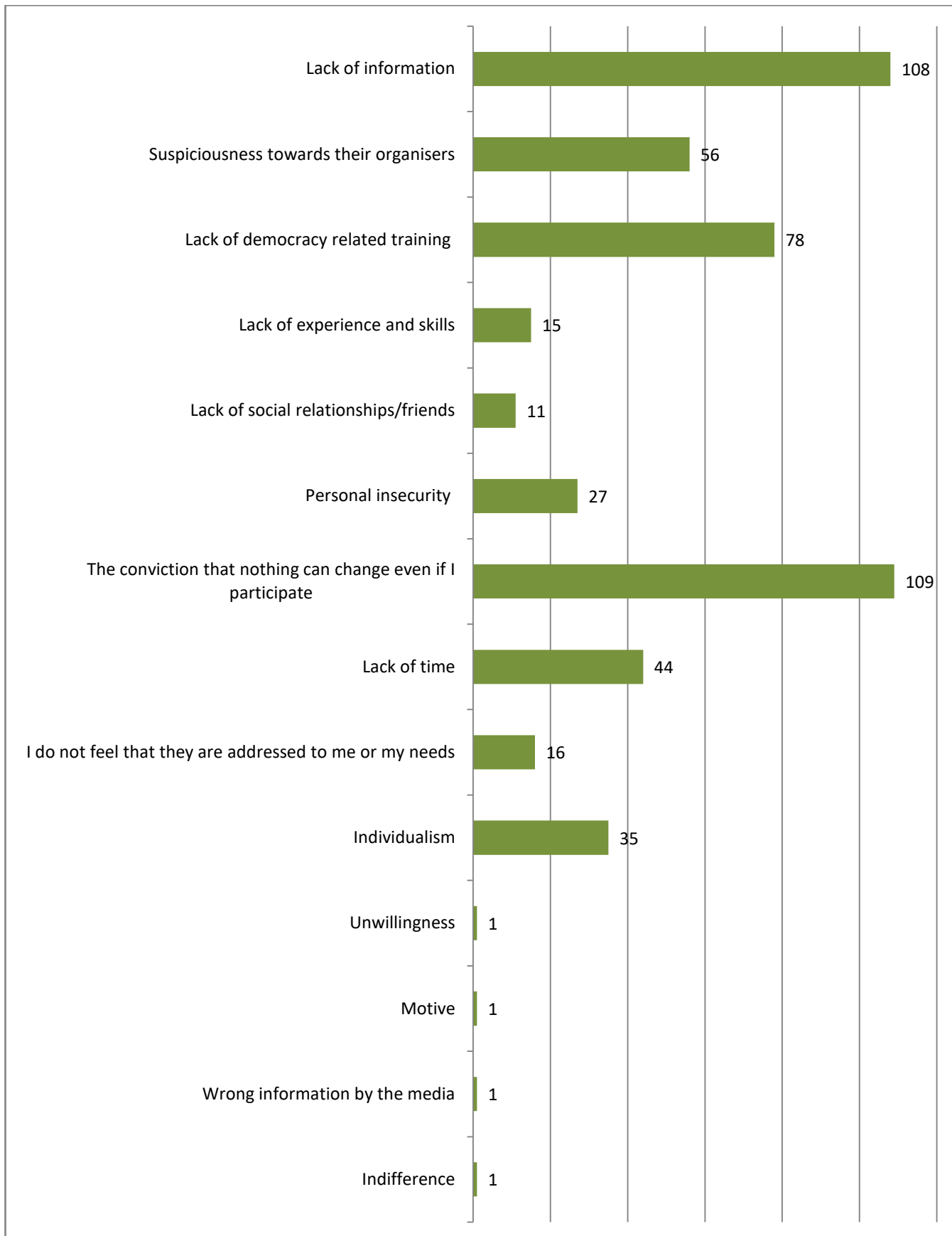
“Lack of information” (60%) and “Lack of democracy related education (43,3%) could be faced relatively easily through actions made by carriers (eg local authorities, educational programs), at the same time that “Lack of time” (44%) demands structural social and cultural changes inside Greek society.

We should note that this question gave the questioned the option to add some extra reason (option “other”) for the non-participation of young people in local

Article 26.1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

Article 26.2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

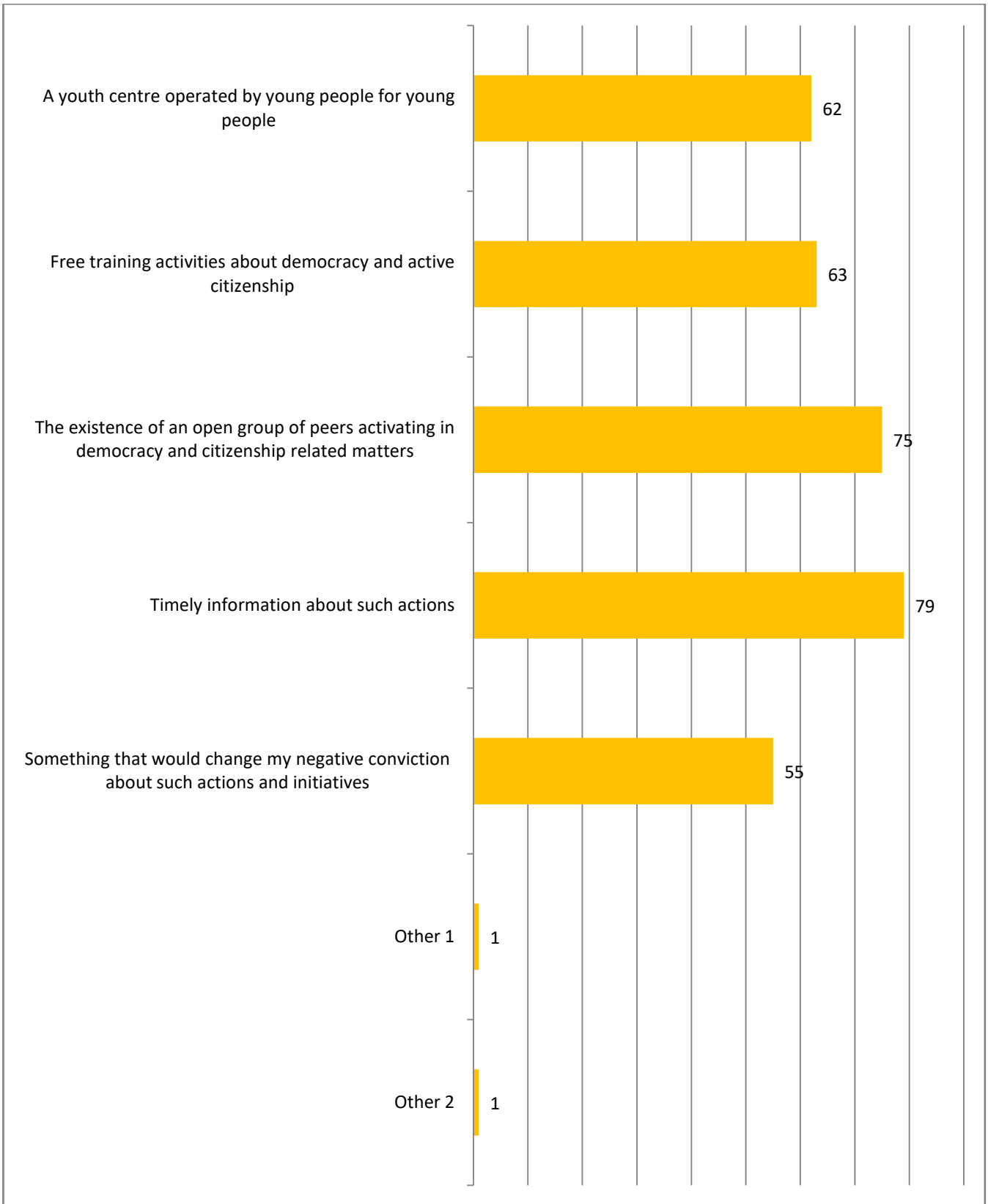
actions related to democracy and citizenship. In this framework, the following answers were added: “unwillingness”, “motive” (interpreted as lack of motive”, “wrong information by the media” and “indifference”.



Which of the following would facilitate your active involvement in local actions and groups related to democracy and citizenship development? (up to 2 choices)

“Timely information about such actions” gathers most of the choices (43,9%), confirming and enhancing what was imprinted in the previous question (lack of information as an obstacle in young people’s participation). Similar confirmation is shown by the option “Free training activities about democracy and active citizenship”, also linked with the previous question.

Maintaining some doubt about the validity of the interpretation, MAKE USE group put the remaining three answers (“A youth centre operated by young people for young people” 34,4%, “The existence of an open group of peers activating in democracy and citizenship related matters” 41,7% and “Something that would change my negative conviction about such actions and initiatives” 30,6 %) in the same framework, considering the fact that young people would like to participate in something created by themselves and by their peers, and at the same time, addressed to their peers. That is to say, **Larissa’s young people seem to wish to take the situation in their hands, participating in something created by themselves**, so without suspiciousness, and **something catered to their needs** and not those needs defined by others (different age groups), authority carriers, public opinion influencers, etc.



You have the chance to change something in your city! What is it?

This specific question was optional, open-type (so every questioned person had his/her space to freely express) and gathered 113 answers.

Many answers were about Larissa's culture concerning driving behavior, but also the infrastructure of the city, which does not allow pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities to equally participate in city life. Moreover, many mentions are made about trash management culture, protection of the environment and stray animals.

What seems to gather many answers is the creation of spaces for expression, gathering and participation of young people (eg Youth Centre, Parks, making use of buildings and public spaces etc); Larissa's youth seem to miss and look for spaces for communication and interaction, which can be formatted by themselves.

Finally, although this questionnaire started to get filled in several months before the public announcement by the Municipality about Larissa's Youth Municipal Council, several answers mention the need of establishing a formal or non-formal youth council, able to co-form decision making in a local level.

Some indicative answers:

"Construction and disposition of more cultural spaces and youth gathering/meeting/discussion venues"

"Activation of public space and inclusion"

"Cheaper means of transportation"

"...this city is famous for its coffee, I don't know if the Municipality could take advantage in some way (legal) of the opening of a new café, eg 5% of any café could go for giving a house to refugees, for supporting a festival, for free classes for young (and not only young) people etc."

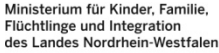
"To disinfect the shitty smell of humid-bird dropping from the city squares"

"To take young people more seriously and set a basis for the future"

Project implementation:



Co-funded by:



Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend

In collaboration with:

