



Youth Work Ireland

Voices of Youth Poll

Economic Crisis

Hear our voice!



National Youth Poll 2009



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Why a Youth Poll?

Everyone is used to debate and discussion about “the current economic climate”. In such debate we often hear about the needs of future generations, about how decisions made today will affect those in years to come.

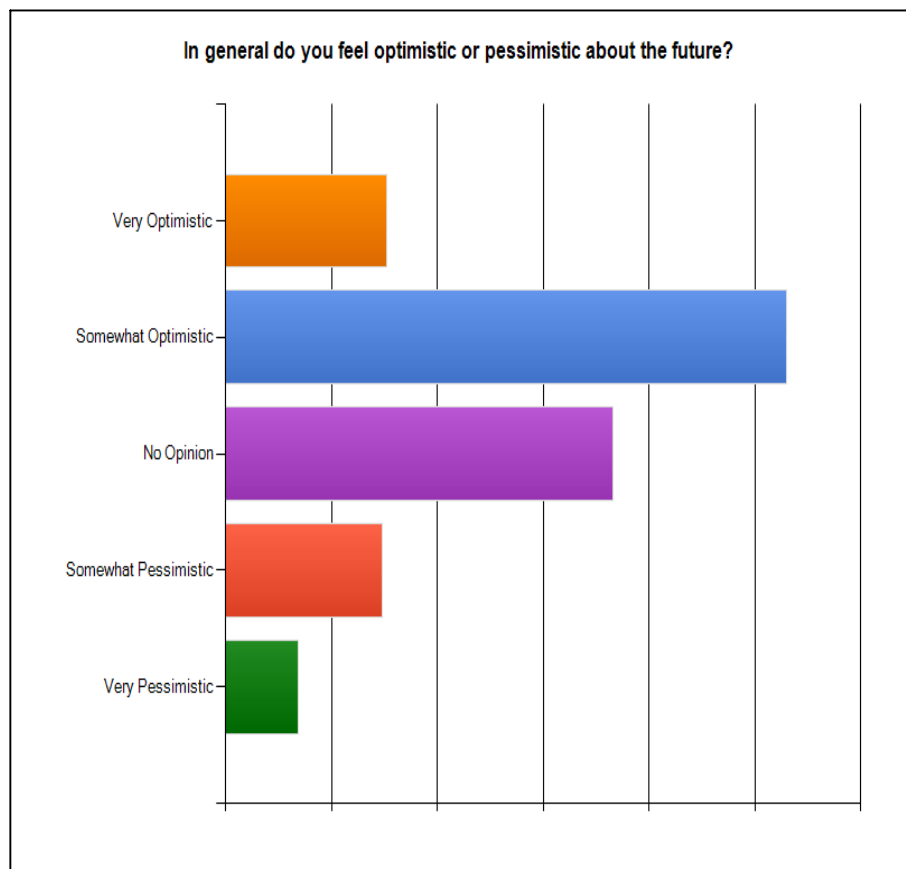
However we rarely hear directly from young people about what they think. This Poll is a joint venture between **Youth Work Ireland** and **Voices of Youth**, a youth led media group, which we facilitate.

The Poll attempts to address the absence of young voices from the economic debate to some degree. The Poll was designed in consultation with young people and they have also contributed to the process and are available to comment on it. We surveyed **1,029** young people between the ages of 12 and 18 all around Ireland. These are their views!

General, Confidence & Trust

In general those surveyed felt more optimistic (**53.4%**) than pessimistic (**18.5%**) about the future, while **28%** had no opinion. A small majority say that they have not been affected by the current economic crisis. Young People were almost evenly divided about their future job prospects with **47%** expressing confidence in this area. Marginally more of those surveyed felt confident about their future quality of life (**52.8%**).

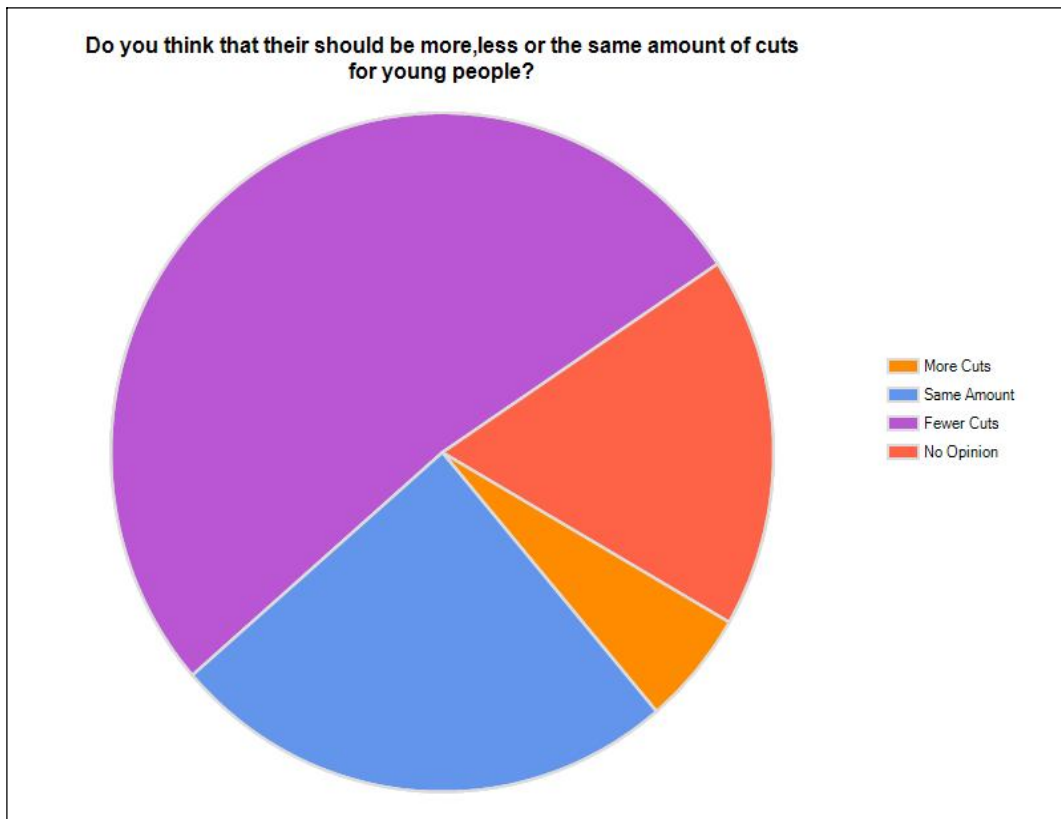
However politicians and the Government receive a huge vote of no confidence with nearly **86%** saying they did not trust politicians with their future and over **73%** saying they did not feel the Government cared about young people or their future



Cuts

Just over **56%** of those surveyed want fewer cuts for young people and **59%** of young people feel they are taking more than their fair share of cuts. Nearly **81%** oppose the re-introduction of third level fees.

Nearly **80%** feel there are fewer opportunities for them in the recession with over **87%** feeling there are less apprenticeship opportunities and nearly **80%** less work experience opportunities. Just under **66%** feel there are more opportunities to volunteer however.



Just over **51%** have been directly affected by cuts in education, approximately a third have been affected by cuts in housing. Just under **42%** have been affected directly by unemployment in their family and **19%** by emigration. Just under **29%** have lost a temporary or part time job while just over **58%** cannot get one. Some **44%** have experienced the closure of a facility for young people in their area.

Over **50%** report fewer opportunities for sports and recreation in their schools and over **40%** less opportunities for ICT work in school. Just under thirty six and **37%** respectively report less subject choice and less maintenance of schools.

Needs and the Future

When given three options about their own needs the following were the views of those who expressed an opinion

The young people surveyed saw the same or an increased need for a range of services particularly advice and information on jobs, training and education (over **90%**) Those who saw the need for the same or increased services came to over **85%** for all the options including youth clubs, drop in centres and counselling.

	Decreased	Same amount of need	Increased need
Youth projects	13	39	48
Youth Cafe/Drop in centres	13	38	49
Youth clubs	10	40	50
Sports facilities	11	42	47
Drop in centres/places to go	13	32	55
Counselling	12	34	53
Information/advice on employment/career	10	28	62
Information/advice on education options	9	30	62

Assistance related to jobs, careers and education are seen as in need of most increase.

Those surveyed were asked about how the economic situation would affect their future plans. Just over **55%** said it would impact on their future education plans with just over **52%** saying they would stay in education longer and **46%** reporting they would change the type of course or education they would undertake.

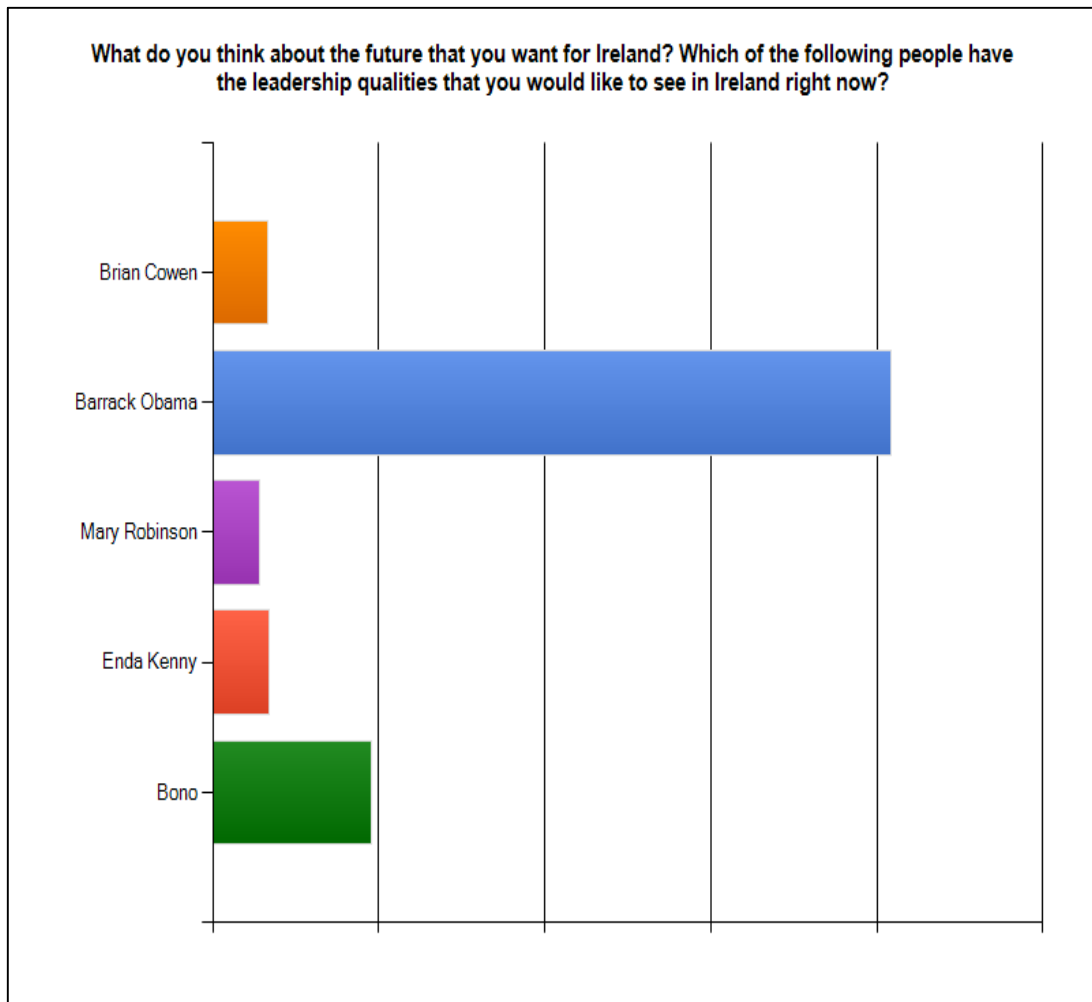
Nearly **60%** expect to experience unemployment in their future with **48%** envisaging emigration. Only **26%** say they will not be affected in any way.

How do you think the economic crisis will affect your future	Agree	Disagree
Stay in education longer	52.2	47.8
Leave education earlier	20.7	79.3
Change the type or course of education	46.2	53.8
Expect unemployment after education	59.8	40.2
Expect to emigrate for education	30.8	69.2
Expect emigration after education	47.6	52.4
Will not be affect in any way	26.3	73.7

The spectre of youth unemployment figures large in these findings.

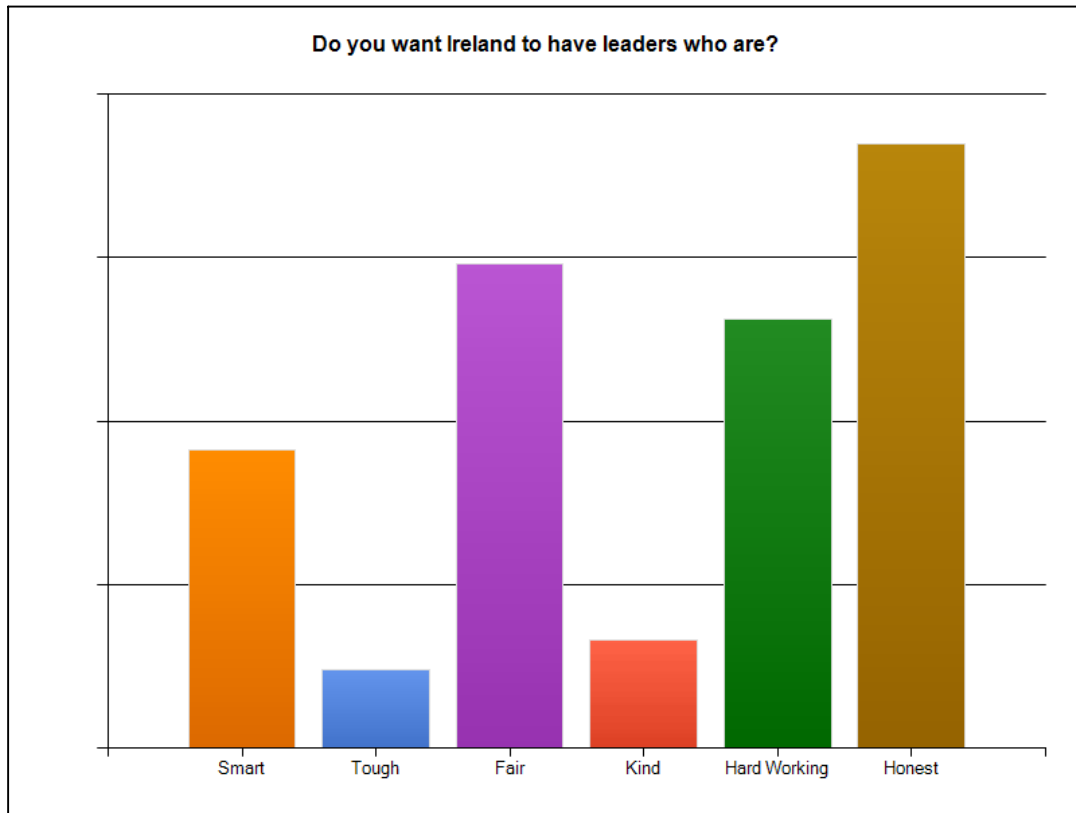
Leadership

We asked the survey group about the type and style of political leadership needed to get Ireland out of its problems. Firstly we asked about the leadership qualities displayed by named figures.



Nearly **69%** of those surveyed pointed to the leadership skills of Barack Obama, but only **4.5%** and **5.8 %** respectively Brian Cowen and Enda Kenny. Bono and Mary Robinson received **15.5%** and **7.4%** respectively.

Honesty (29.7%) was the characteristic most sought in a leader with toughness (3.8%) least sought

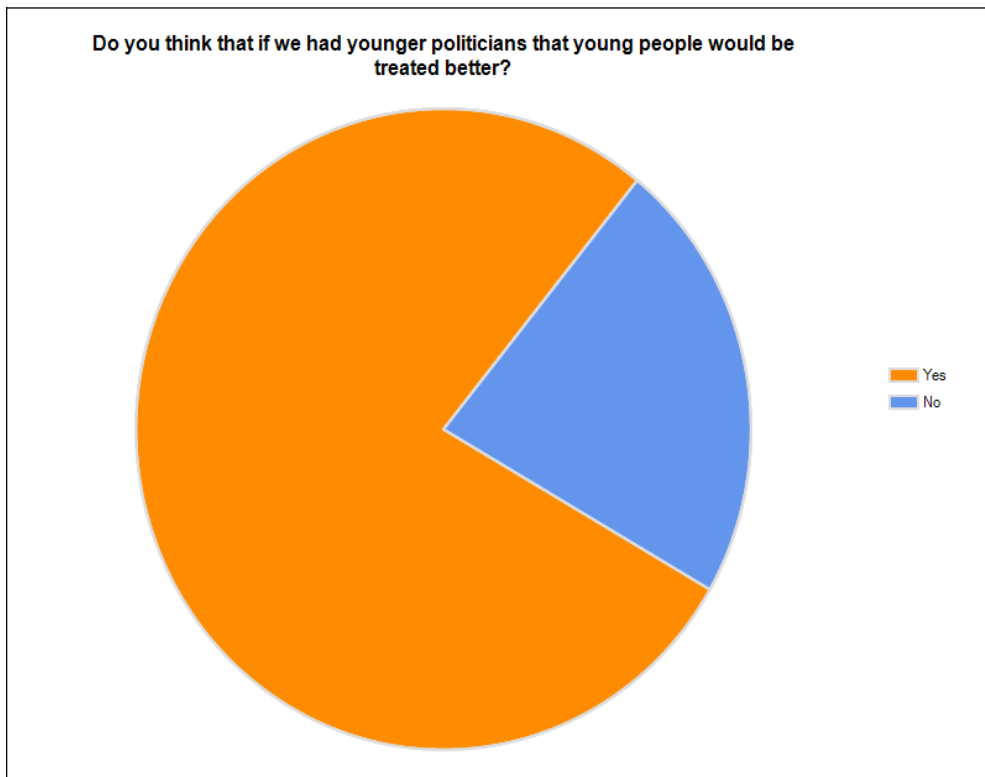


Asked to rank various statements on a 1-10 basis of importance, the following were the general feelings about the type of country the survey group wanted

Future Country....	% Low Importance	% Medium Importance	% High Importance
Highly educated	6.8	12.7	80.6
Equitable – wealth evenly distributed	11.5	17.6	70.9
Lots of money – not necessarily shared	49.3	24.4	26.3
A good environment	6.9	17.6	75.5
Rise in Culture and Arts	13.6	30	56.4
Healthy	4.8	7.6	87.7

This question shows a very strong importance attached to health and education.

Nearly **80%** of the young people surveyed do not feel their voice is heard by Government and a similar amount (**79.3%**) feel their voice would be better heard if there were more young politicians.



We then asked our survey group to rate the influence on Government policy of a number of groups in society;

Group	% Believe Low Influence	% Believe Medium Influence	% Believe High Influence
Teachers	24.9	39.6	35.5
Business People	11.6	28	60
Voluntary Groups	47.7	30.1	22.2
Young People	59.2	18.7	22
Farmers	39.1	33.9	27
Property Developers	17.6	30.4	52
Unions	11.9	25.3	62.8
The Banks	11.1	12.4	76.5

Those surveyed saw young people as having the lowest level of influence followed by voluntary groups. They saw the banks, unions and business having high influence. Over 3/4 of those surveyed saw the banks as having high influence.

Youth Work Ireland and the **Voices of Youth** Group wishes to thank Martin Geoghegan in the Dept. of Applied Social Studies of UCC for his advice to Youth Work Ireland and Voices of Youth on the Poll.

Thanks to all the Youth Work Ireland Member Youth Services, schools, and youth groups that took part in this poll.

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Some members of the Voices of Youth Group

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