

Research: Values, appreciations and trust in the lives of youth

Abstract on the results

Life is at its best when you can combine trust with having fun, young people state. Adolescents think that their friends value highest the ability to have fun, but as for themselves honesty and trustworthiness are the most important values; and further, trust does not require merely decency or compliance. This study shows as well, that freedom, which is considered to be the essence of being young, in combination with keeping one's word, are common Finnish values also amidst young people.

According to the research youth build their specialty mainly through action. When asked what they are good at, the doing and knowing were emphasized in both girls' and boys' answers. Sports were underlined in boys' answers and they did not really take an interest in arts. Both girls and boys draw, but only girls pointed out writing stories and essays. Boys repair mopeds and bikes and they mentioned being skilful with computers considerably more often than girls.

Girls seem to emphasize social skills noticeably more often than boys. The mentioning of social skills was four to eight times more frequent in girls' answers than in boys' answers.

As a result of the study, accomplishing and accomplishments seemed to be less important, even marginalized. Instead of achievements, reliability and honesty as well as thoughtfulness and having fun, were emphasized. When evaluating others the ability to have fun was regarded as a very important quality, following immediately the highest evaluated qualities honesty and reliability. Honesty and trustworthiness were the most important things to the respondents themselves, but having fun was also emphasized, especially in answers to the question, "what do your friends value in young people". Adults were not considered to value the ability to have fun in young people.

Boys are more often than girls supposed to accomplish and deal with things, according to the study. Additionally, expectations attached to social skills and thoughtfulness, target girls mainly. To maintain your position amongst friends you have to be affirmative and listen to troubles told. This is a strict expectation on friends among girls - even when they are not capable of carrying it out themselves.

According to 60 % of those who answered the Zest-program has given them better collaborative skills. 57 % started to reflect on their own strengths. All in all, the research shows that young people are eager to think about their talents and life skills. The answers in the questionnaire reinforce the earlier feedback that has been received from students throughout the program: youth appreciate that schools offer the possibility for them to reflect on and consider their own strengths and social skills in addition to positioning a goal for their own future.

The research was answered by 1 011 13–16 year old students from all of the country. The research was funded by Nokia and the Ministry of Education.