



Youth Work Ireland



**Youth Work Ireland
Press Release
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Generation Welcome - Young people in Ireland leading the way on Equality

GENERATION WELCOME: 3 in 4 young people in Ireland are more accepting of immigrants than their parents

Today the largest youth organisation in Ireland, Youth Work Ireland, launches their '#Equality17' Campaign at the start of Youth Work Ireland Week 2017. A new survey released to launch the campaign shows how 14 - 24 years olds in Ireland think about equality compared to their parents.

The findings show that the young people of Ireland are significantly more tolerant of differences and more likely to take action to improve society than previous generations. 84% of the over 1,000 respondents said they take part in more social action than their parents' generation.

Youth Work Ireland, which works with over 116,000 young people every week, conducted the survey to mark the launch of their #Equality17 Campaign during Youth Work Ireland Week. Through #Equality17 Youth Work Ireland is supporting a generation which embraces equality, progress and change to become involved and active through events, activities and workshops across the country. The campaign will culminate in a National Conference in Royal Hospital Kilmainham in October of this year.

The survey shows that young people in Ireland are bucking the international trend of conservatism demonstrated by Brexit and the Trump presidency in the UK and the US with 3 in 4 young people say they are more accepting and tolerant of all immigrants than their parents.

A huge 80% say they are more accepting and tolerant of immigrants from Africa, and two-thirds cautiously say they are more accepting and tolerant of immigrants from Muslim countries, showing that even young people still have reservations.

When asked about religious influence in their lives, 91% say they are less influenced by the Catholic Church than their parents' generation.

Age of Information

Information and technology are both cited as the reasons why young people in Ireland appear to be more socially active. 79% of respondents say they are more informed about

problems and injustices and 62% say they get more involved in social issues because social media allows them to join causes more easily.

22% of young people believe they are more caring and concerned about social issues than their parents generation.

Empowered Generation

86% say they are more empowered to make a difference in society than their parents' generation

71% say they are more likely to join a protest or march for a cause than their parents' generation

Politicians take note; 67% say they are more likely than their parents to vote for politicians who want to make progressive change for Ireland.

91% say they are more likely to sign an online petition for a cause we care about than their parents' generation

Accepting of Differences

Unsurprisingly given the recently marriage referendum, the group young people say they are most accepting of are gay and bisexual men and women (95%) but this drops to 89% for transgender people, still a very high figure but noticeably lower, causing some concern.

Two of the areas where young people scored themselves the lowest in terms of their acceptance and tolerance was the Irish Travellers and the Roma community (58%) and the disabled people (74%).

Racism is also addressed in the research with 89% of respondents saying they are more accepting and tolerant of people of colour than their parents' generation.

"These survey findings prove something we at Youth Work Ireland have known for some time; young people in Ireland are some of the most tolerant, socially active and socially aware young people in the world. The research shows that young people want to get involved in their society. Our #Equality17 Campaign will provide opportunities for young people to get involved and be heard about the issues that are important to them." Dr. Patrick Burke, CEO Youth Work Ireland

Responding to the survey findings, Dr Katherine Zappone TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs said:

"Young people are passionate about the future of our communities, our country and our world. As Minister I am determined to ensure their voices are heard. I am engaging with them on Brexit, the migrant crisis and climate change. I have also recently announced funding for Councils to include children and teenagers in local decisions. As a life-long campaigner I am greatly encouraged that Youth Work Ireland is supporting a generation which embraces equality, progress and change. I look forward to exciting conversations at #Equality17."