"… Like if they’re a genuine person, most people would help them, but if they’re a bad person like or something, it might turn you off them.”

(Young person, Age 14)

"We don’t know where to start; we’re like… I really want to help, but how? What will I do that will make a difference?”

(Young person, Age 16)

"Looking better than someone else matters more than caring for them”

(Young person, Age 15)

"Young people believe society promotes self-interest over empathy"

"I don’t think boys can show their feelings around their friends – their friends will be like, “Oh look, you’re being soft”… like, if you’re a boy you’re supposed to be hard and tough, so that’s the act that you put on.”

(Young person, Age 14)

"It depends on how you’re raised, like … and on how your parents treat you and stuff … if someone is told that they’re higher than you, that they’re the best, then they won’t have much empathy”

(Young person, Age 15)

"If you’re surrounded by a group of people who judge everyone as they pass, then you’re going to learn to be like that…”

(Young person, Age 14)

"Like if the school situation was changed maybe and they focused more on teaching students not only about academics but also about how to approach life, feelings, empathy…”

(Young person, Age 15)

"If you see someone just walking down the road and like donating to a homeless person, it might make you think why don’t I do that?”

(Young person, Age 14)

"If you’re surrounded by a group of people who judge everyone as they pass, then you’re going to learn to be like that…”

(Young person, Age 14)

"If you’re surrounded by a group of people who judge everyone as they pass, then you’re going to learn to be like that…”

(Young person, Age 14)
We examined 33 documents to see if empathy and social values are considered important in Irish policy and curriculum (e.g. what is taught in schools). We also asked 11 key informants (e.g. teachers, youth workers) about their opinions on how empathy & social values are promoted in Irish society.

**Our Irish policy & curriculum review found that...**
- Irish policy promotes the inclusion of Social and Emotional Learning in schools, youth work, and home settings.
- Policy places the greatest emphasis on formal education (i.e. schools) over non-formal and informal education (e.g., youth work, parenting).
- Irish policy is more targeted toward the promotion of self-oriented skills (e.g. resilience) than other-oriented skills (e.g. empathy) that help society.
- Social and Emotional Learning is not included in teacher training.

**Our key informants thought that...**
- Values in society in general have a strong influence on young people.
- Parents play a key role in promoting youth empathy.
- Youth work and a positive school climate are good ways to promote empathy & social values.
- It would be good if teachers had more training in this area.
- Schools and parents tend to see educational achievement as more important than empathy and related skills/values.

**Based on the overall study, our research recommends that...**
- Parents, youth, schools, communities and governments need to be aware of the important role they play in creating a culture of empathy.
- Better policy guidelines are needed that support the promotion of youth empathy and prosocial values across parent, school, peer and community/youth work settings.
- Social and Emotional Learning needs to emphasise other-oriented skills like empathy, social responsibility and civic behaviour that help society and not just the individual.