

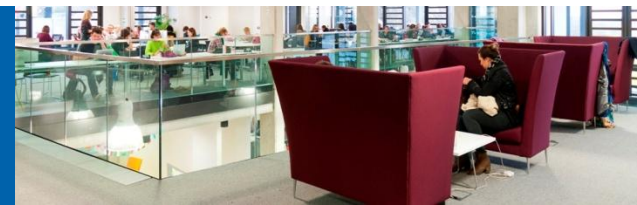


Returning to a 'Place to Hang Out': Leisure behaviours, experiences and expectations of rural youth 1998-2011

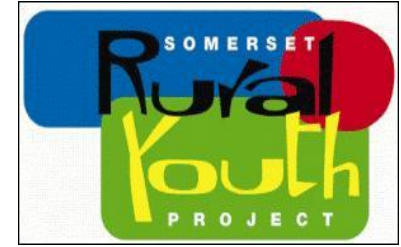
Dr Michael Leyshon, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2013

# Structure of Talk

- Contextualising Research
  - Research Aims/Context
  - Rural Youth
- Methods
- Empirical Data
  - Recession: Impact & Opportunity
  - Leisure Behaviour – Hanging Out
  - Rural Lifestyles
  - Aspiration
- Challenging Low Aspiration
- The Big Issues



# Researching Rural Youth



Research commissioned by the Somerset Rural Youth Project. To identify trends and changing circumstances of rural youth compared to previous reports in 1998 & 2003, through exploring survey data in 2007 & 2011.

Research examined the leisure behaviour, experiences, and expectations of rural youth in Somerset, UK.

1. To examine how the experiences of young people living in rural Somerset have changed since 1998.
2. To identify young people's barriers to social, cultural and economic participation in rural areas.
3. To investigate the aspirations and leisure behaviours of rural youth.





# Research aims

1. To prioritise the voices of young people to capture their experiences of self and place.
2. To identify consistent themes and investigate the changing circumstances of rural youth by comparing the views of successive generations.
3. To provide insight into the experiences of young people so that services are better able to support them.
4. Is the only longitudinal study of the changing circumstances of rural youth.

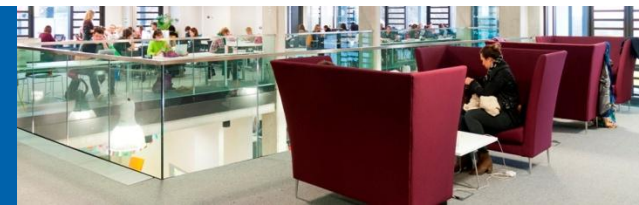


# Contextualizing the Research: Drivers for change – ‘the bad news’

- Public sector funding reductions
- Socio-economic challenges
- Different planners and commissioners lead to disjointed services (decline of youth services)
- Professional boundaries
- Prevention/Service as a bolt-on
- Dependency culture



*"Let's face it - without their support we'd collapse."*

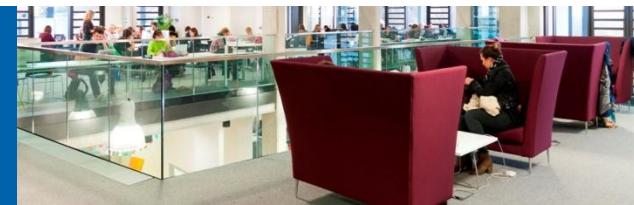


# Contextualizing the Research: Drivers for Change – ‘the good news’

- People want to get involved
- Global social action
- High rates of volunteering
- Technology
- Increasing Role of the Voluntary Sector
- Joining up commissioning and budgets across all public services



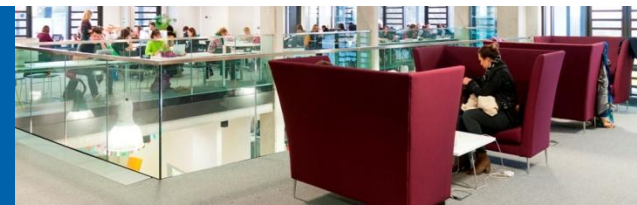
*"What a coincidence! We're a pair who use teamwork to improve our locality too."*



# Positioning Rural Youth

It's just like ... you don't even realise they are there half the time, until you see them and think who the hell is that? Um, you know, you just don't realise...

*(Joe, 14, personal interview)*

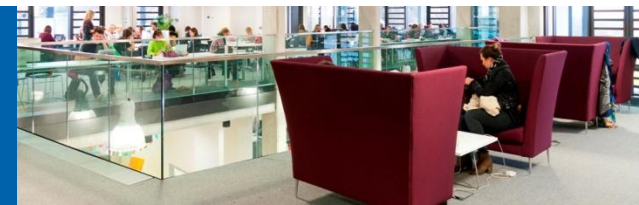




# Positioning Rural Youth

## ‘Countryside’: green and pleasant land

- Idyllic place to grow-up (Valentine)
- “Rural England is experiencing a huge displacement of its young people” (Layton and Leyshon, 2011: 1)
- The CRC claim this “is the greatest threat to the future viability of our rural communities” (State of the Countryside Report, 2009)





# Positioning Rural Youth

## Changes to the rural economy

- Post-productionist countryside
- Rural restructuring
- Emergent forms of lifestyle/economy/wellbeing
- Declining youth population

## Structural inequality

- Education, services, housing, facilities (Big Society)
- Power relationships (regulation)

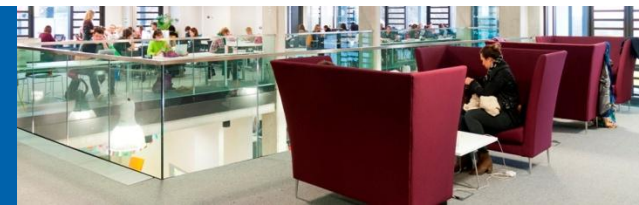
## Why young people?

- Future society
  - Fear *of* (in need of control - neo-libertarian)
  - Fear *for* (socially inclusive - liberal)



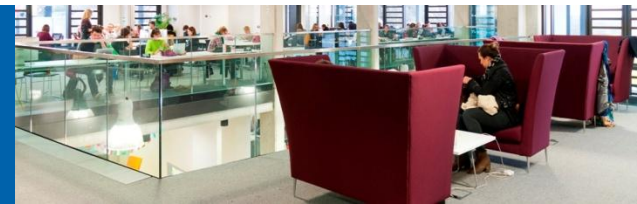
# Method

- The findings are based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative data
- Multiple Surveys in 1998, 2003, 2007 & 2011
  - Focus groups – contextualise the survey findings
  - Analysis



# Recession: Impact & Opportunity

- Rural areas are more susceptible to down-turns in the economy (Commission for Rural Communities 2012)
- Rising unemployment in rural Somerset
- Increasing numbers of young people have no form of income





### Occupational Classification 1998

Occupational Classification	Managerial/ Professional	Intermediate non-manual	Skilled & semi-skilled manual	Unskilled manual
National* (%)	19	34	40	6
Somerset (%)	41	20	18	21

### Occupational Classification 2003

Occupational Classification	Managerial/ Professional	Intermediate Non-manual	Skilled & semi-skilled manual	Unskilled manual
Somerset (%)	35	30	22	13

### Occupational Classification 2007

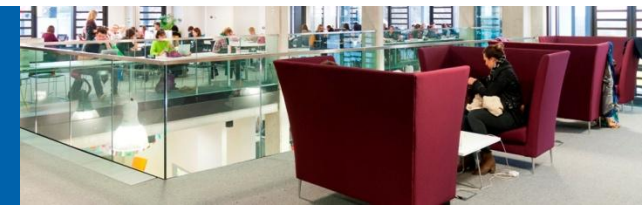
Occupational Classification	Higher Managerial/ Professional	Intermediate Occupation	Routine Occupation	Unemployed
Somerset (%)	13	26	17	5

\*30% of respondents did not list their parents' occupation

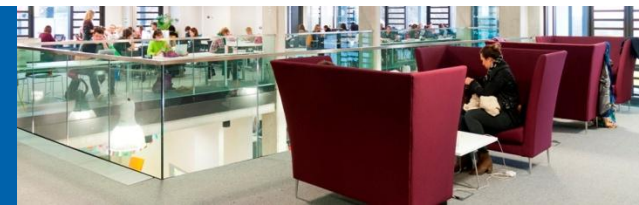
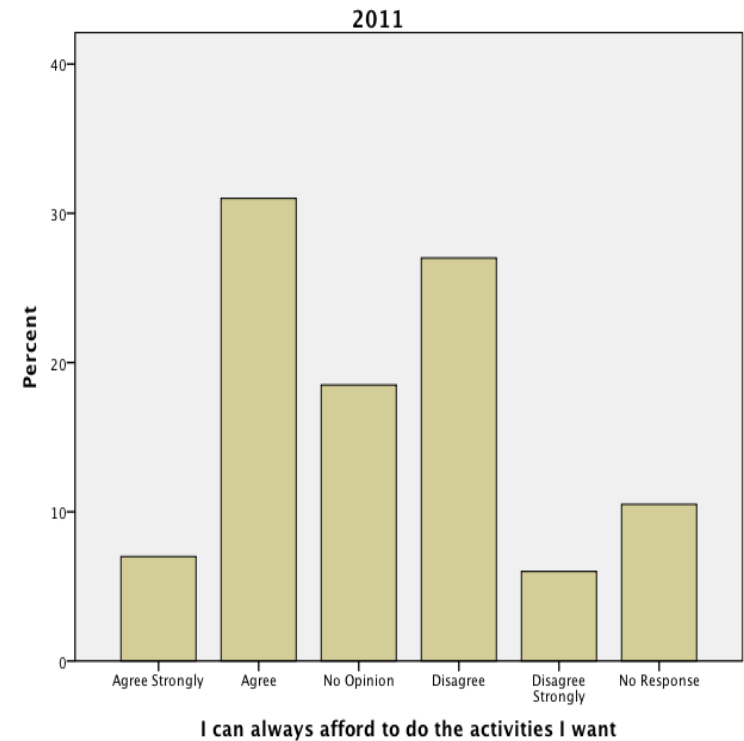
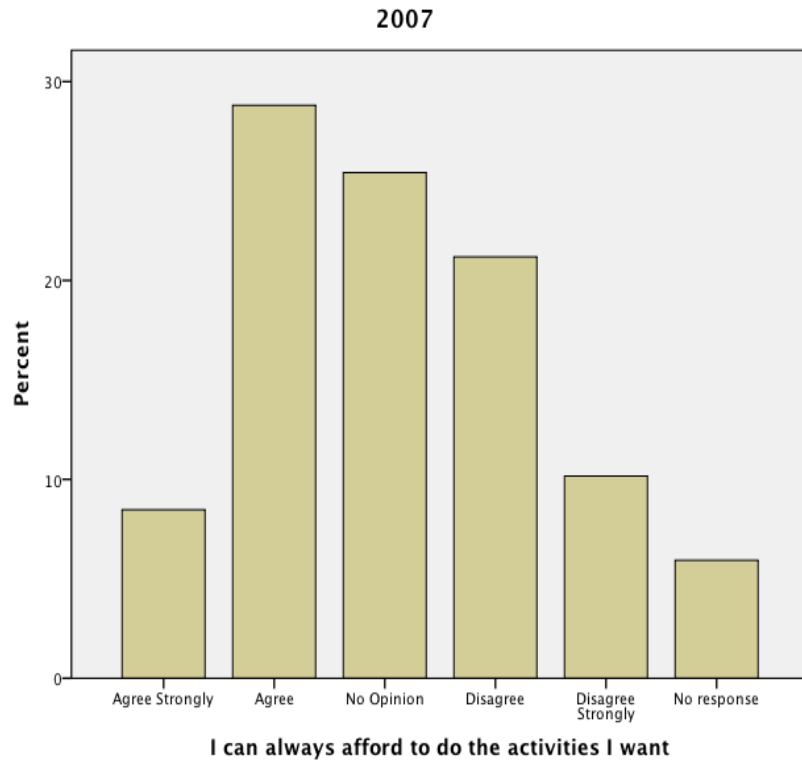
### Occupational Classification 2011

Occupational Classification	Higher Managerial/ Professional	Intermediate Occupation	Routine Occupation	Unemployed
Somerset (%)	14	26	7	5

\*34% of respondents did not list their parents' occupation

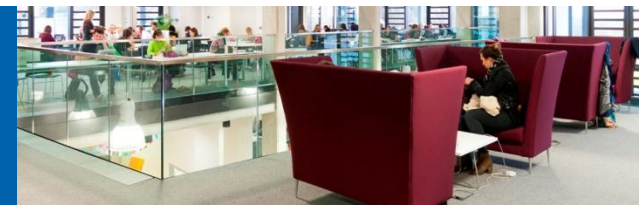


# Personal Finance



# Outcomes

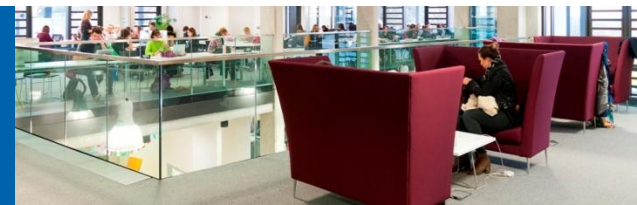
- Opportunity & Experience
- Mobility
- Employment
- Social Exclusion






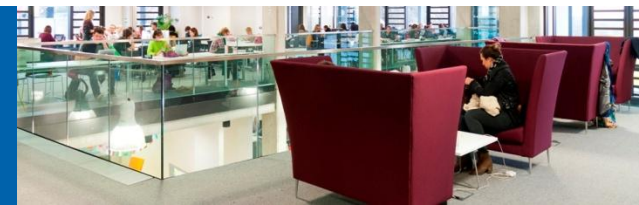
# Leisure Behaviour – Hanging Out

- Increased formal provision
- Increased adult regulation of young people's informal spaces
- Young people still feel they need somewhere to hang out

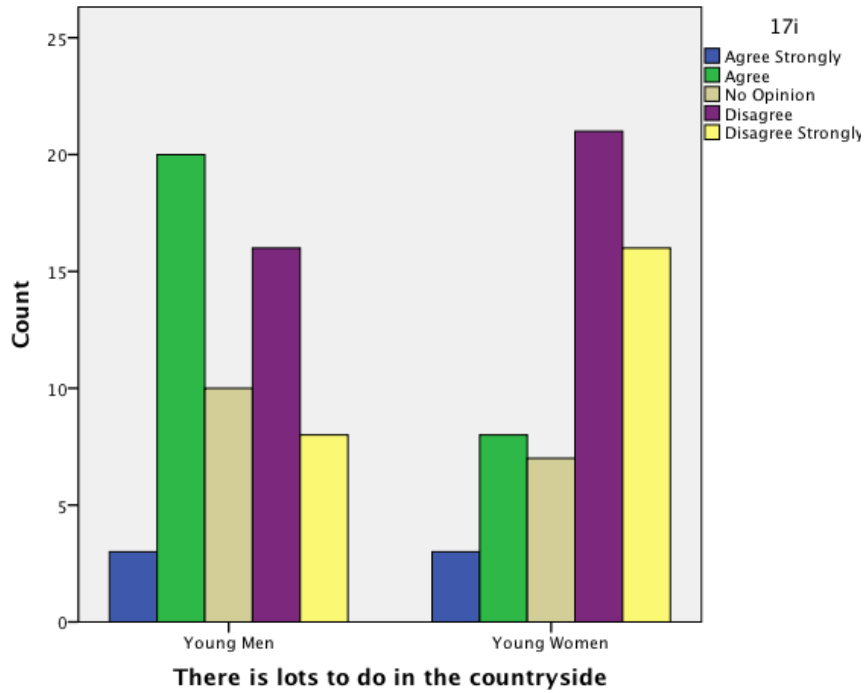




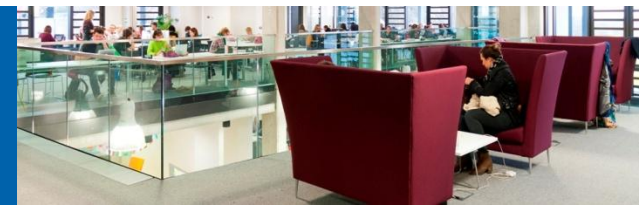
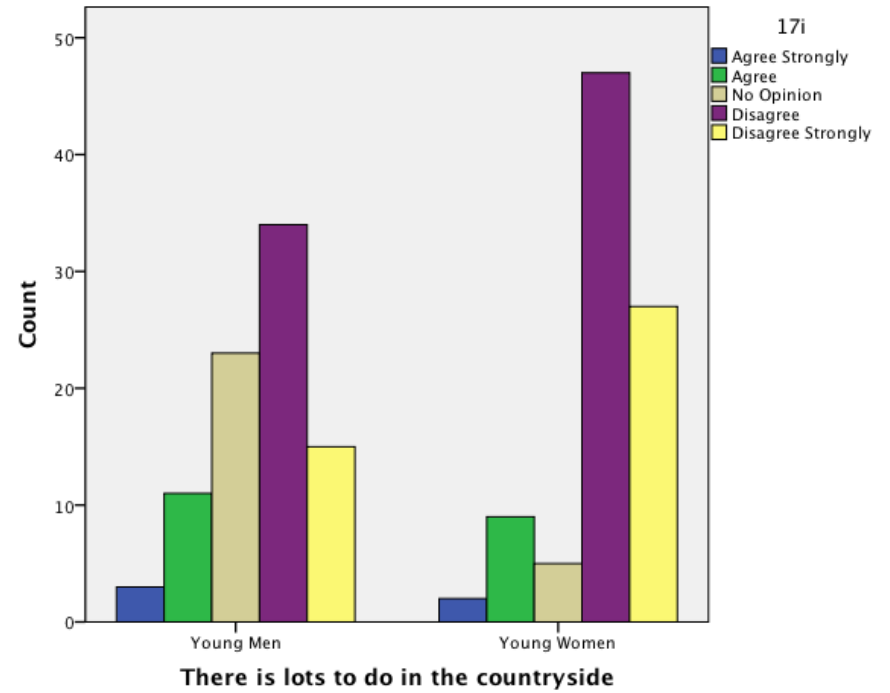
*“We used to hang around in the car park, and we went there because there was nowhere else to go and it was easy to get there. And then the Police started turning up saying that there were too many people there”.*



2007



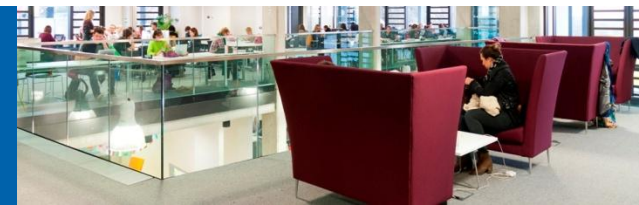
2011





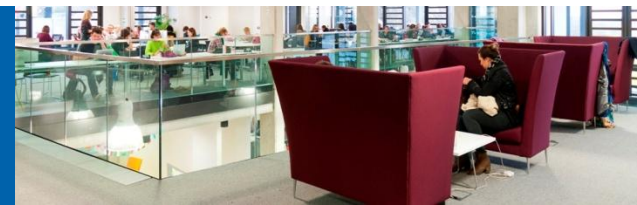
# Outcomes

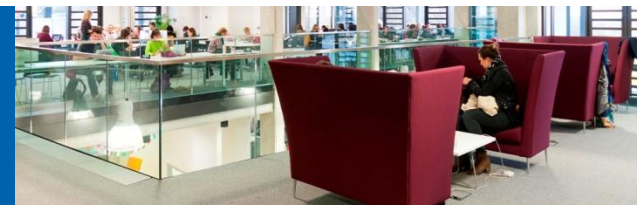
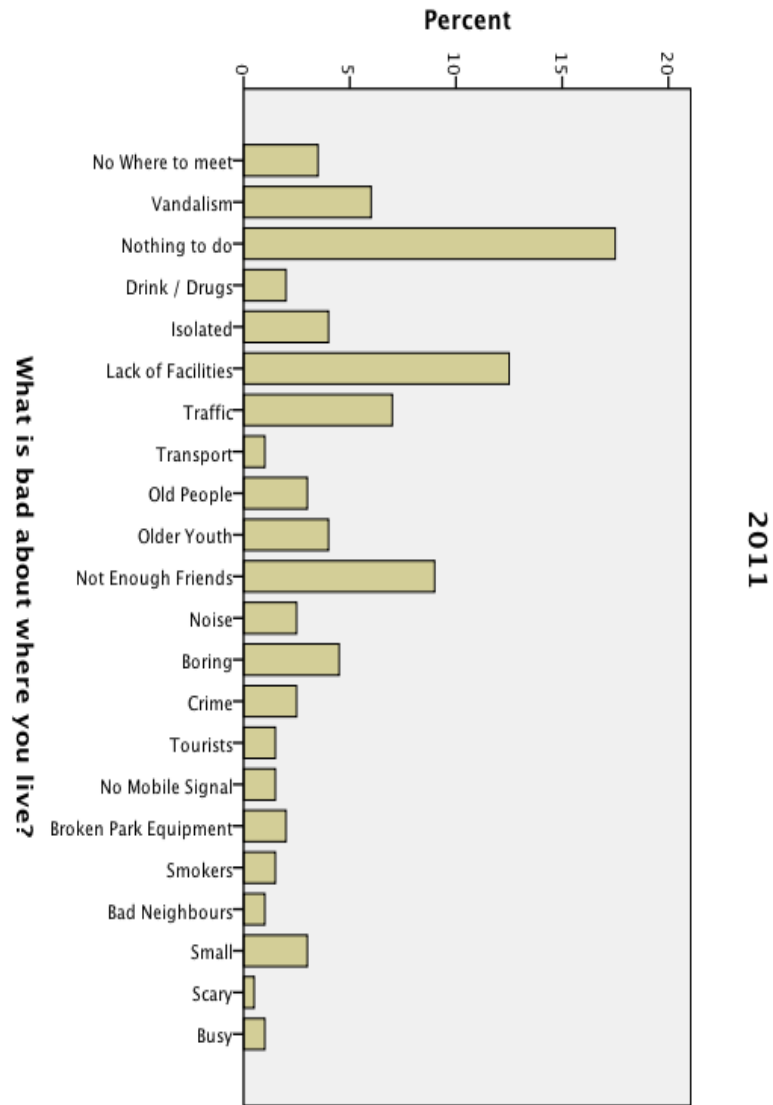
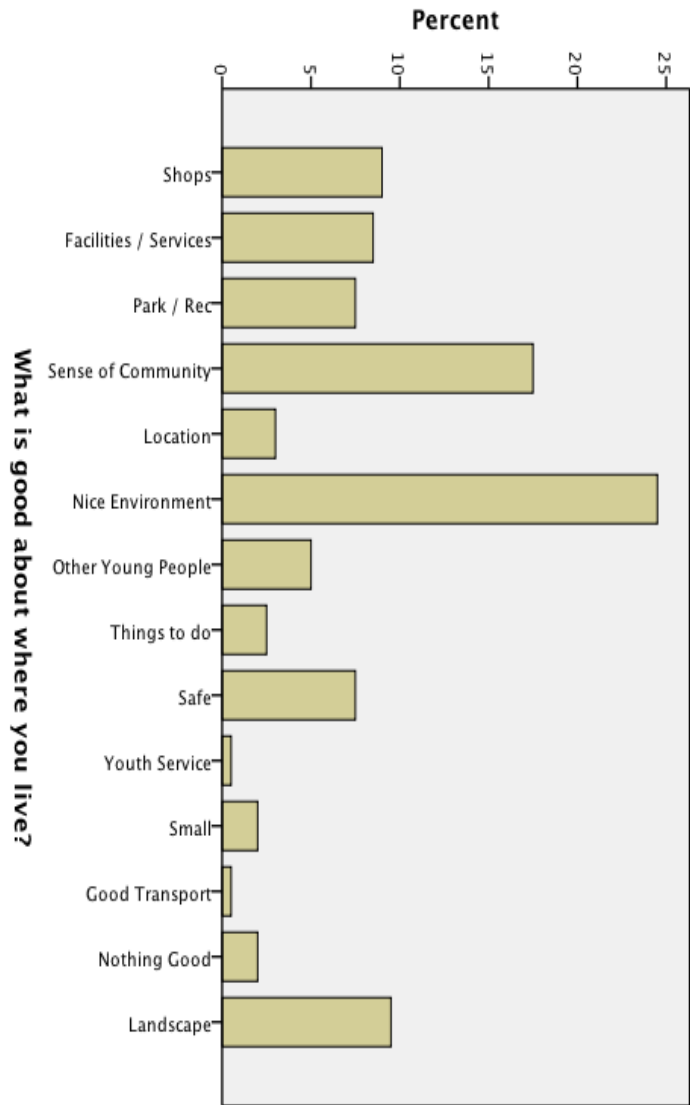
- Increasing numbers are hanging out in towns
- Young people are becoming disaffected with rural spaces
- Polarisation of young people's views of the countryside



# Rural Lifestyles

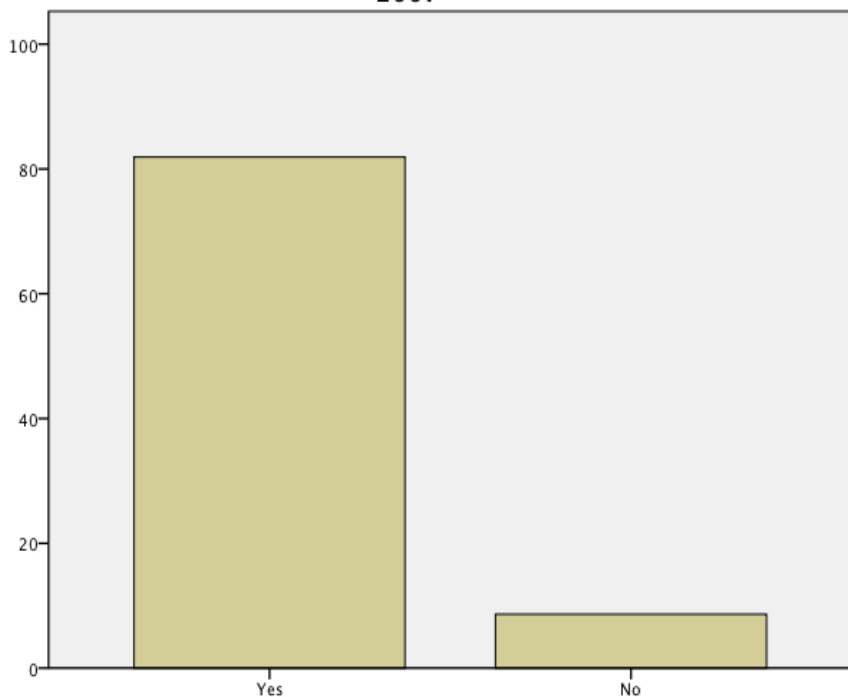
- Young peoples' feelings towards living in the countryside are contradictory
  - due to the environment many have a positive view of the countryside, however they also feel isolated and cut off from amenities.
- Increasing numbers of young people do not feel a valued part of rural society





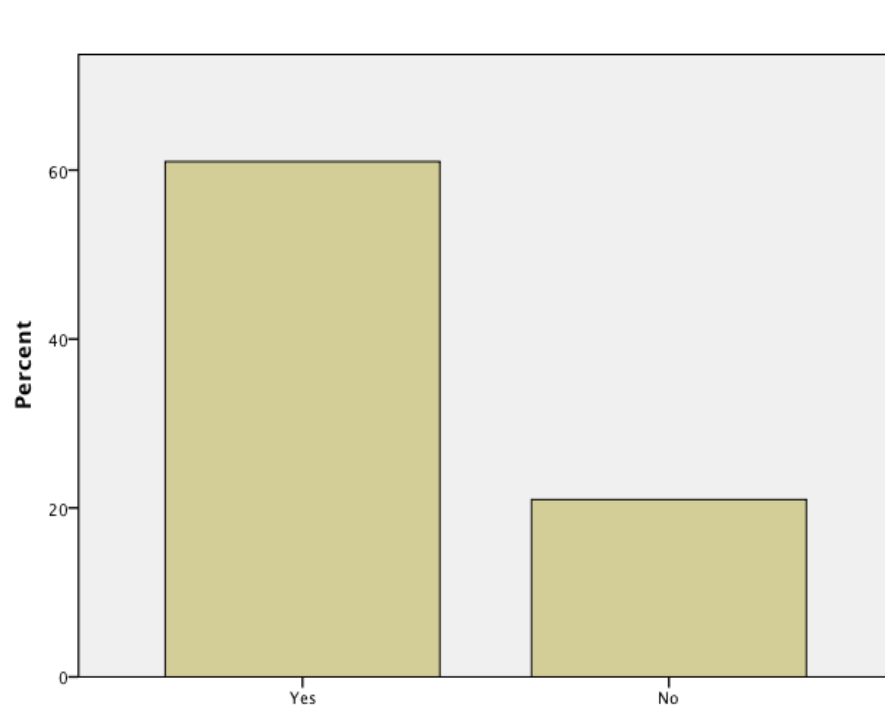
*'I like living in the countryside but not this countryside – I know it don't make much sense but I just don't like living in this area'.*

2007

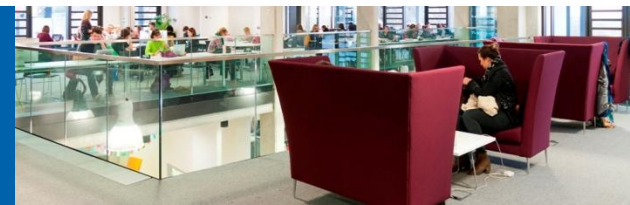


Do you think young people are an important part of rural society?

2011



Do you think young people are an important part of rural society?

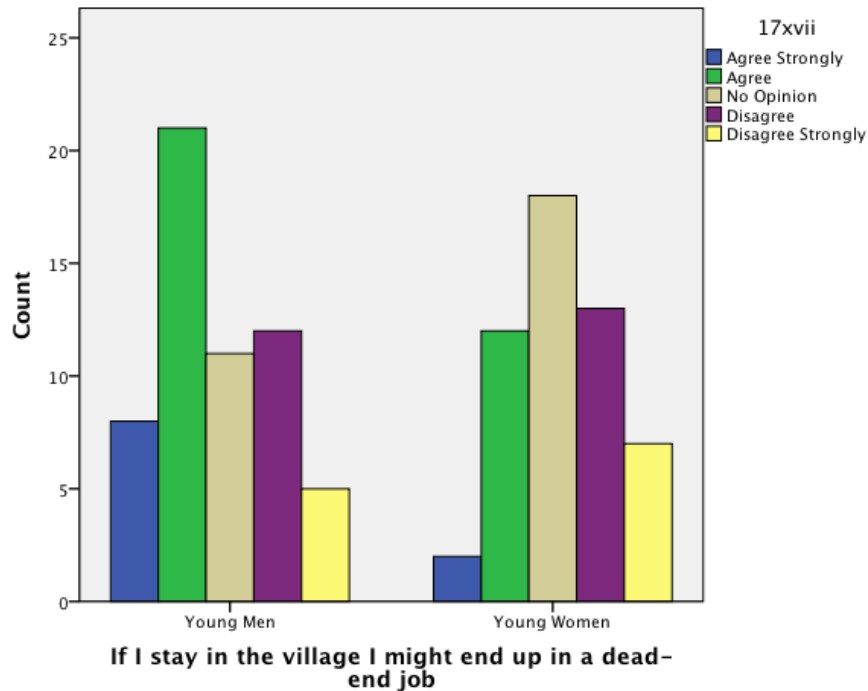




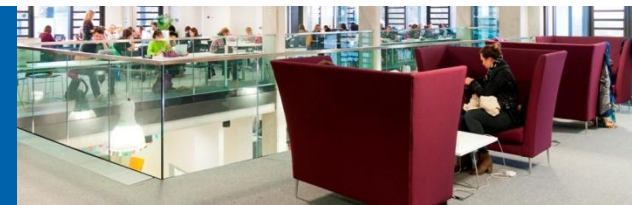
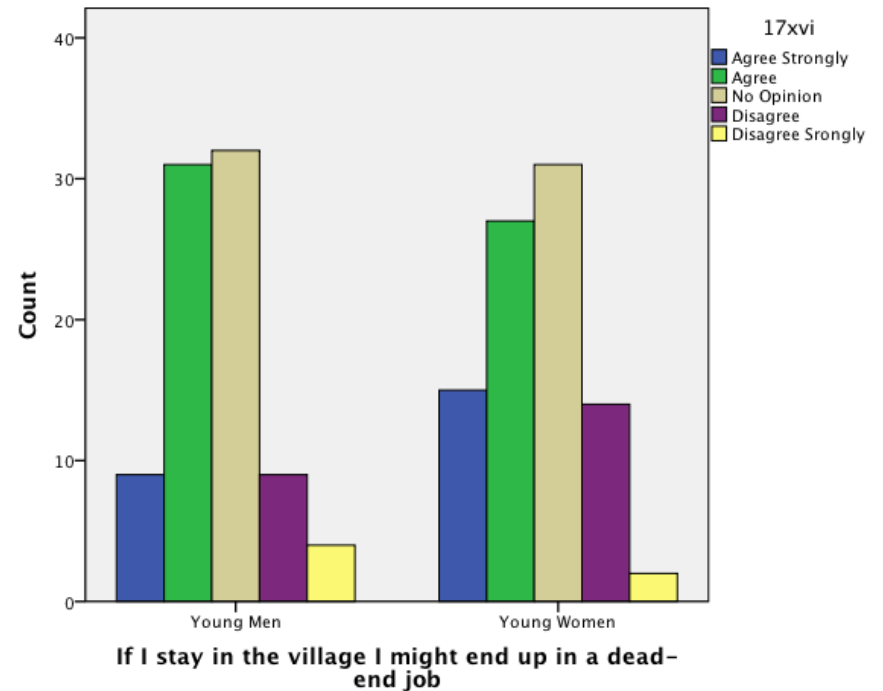
# Outcomes

- Many experience an erratic sense of belonging.
- Increasingly young people feel that they do not have a future in the countryside.

2007



2011

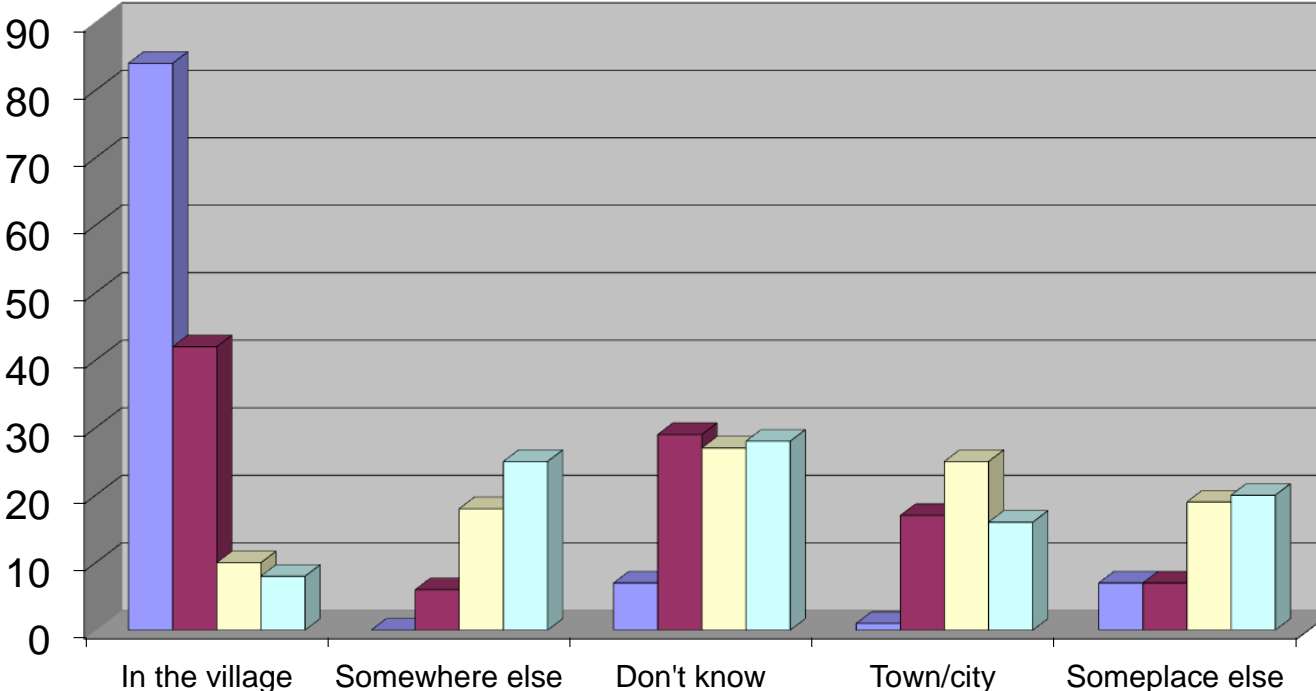


# Aspiration

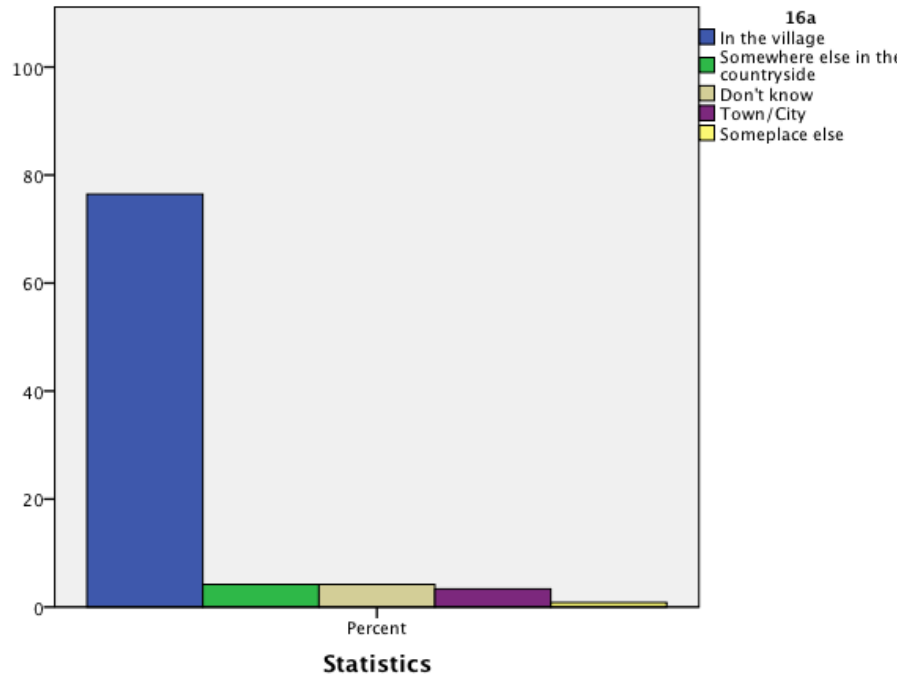


Where do you see yourself in ...?

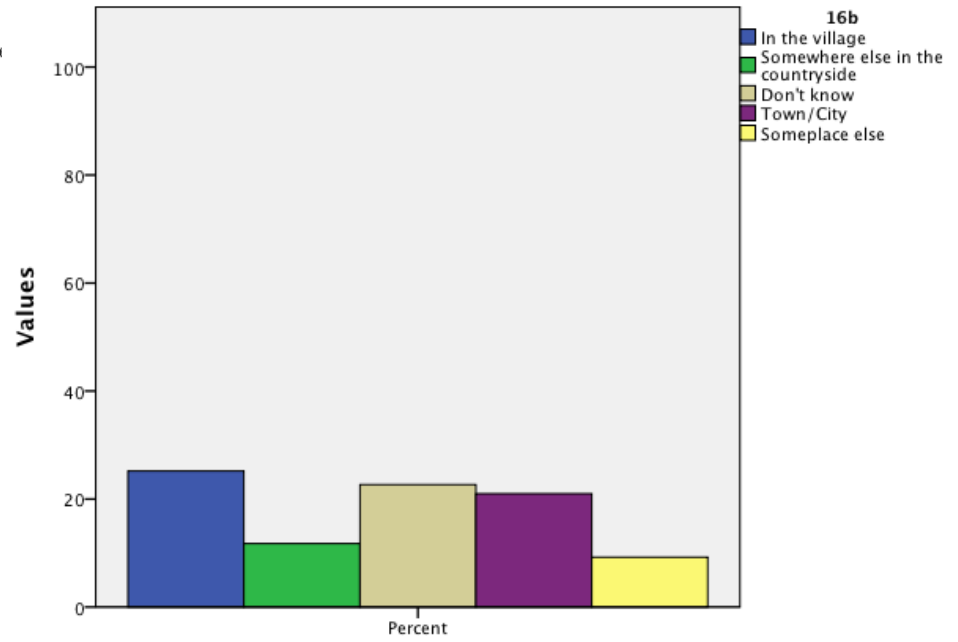
■ One ■ Five ■ Ten ■ Fifteen



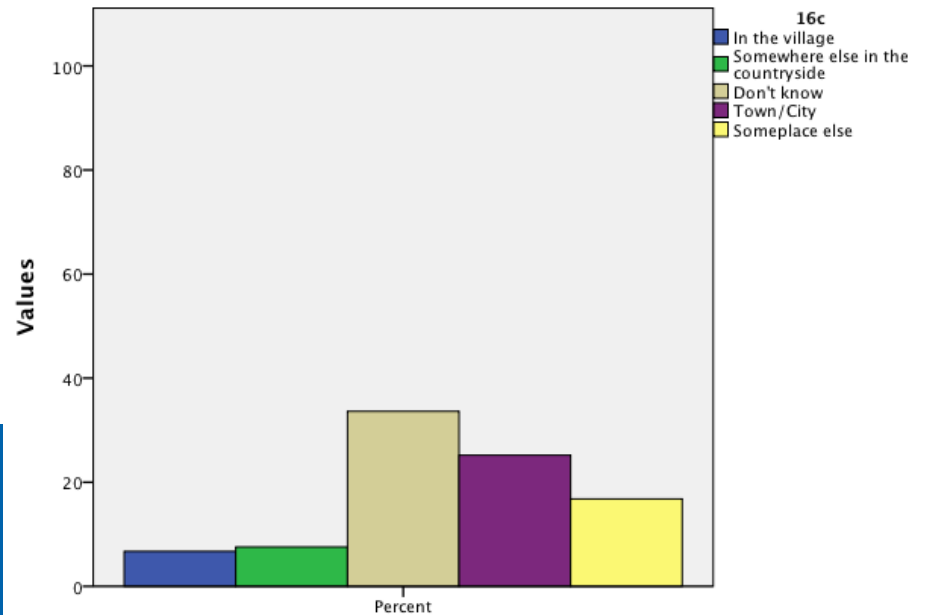
Where do you see yourself in? One year



Where do you see yourself in? Five years

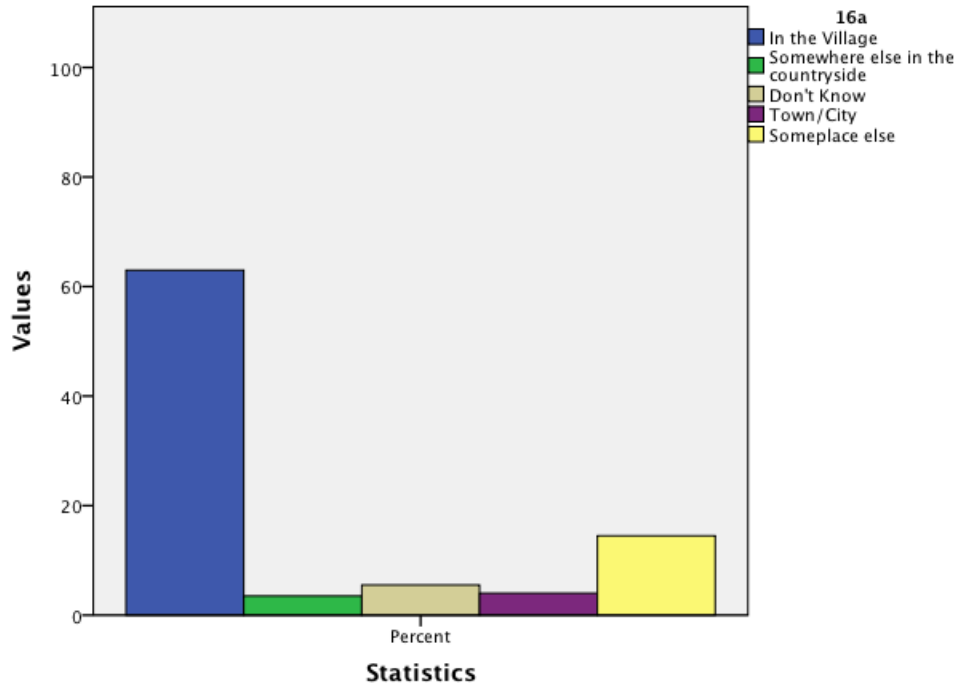


Where do you see yourself in? Ten years

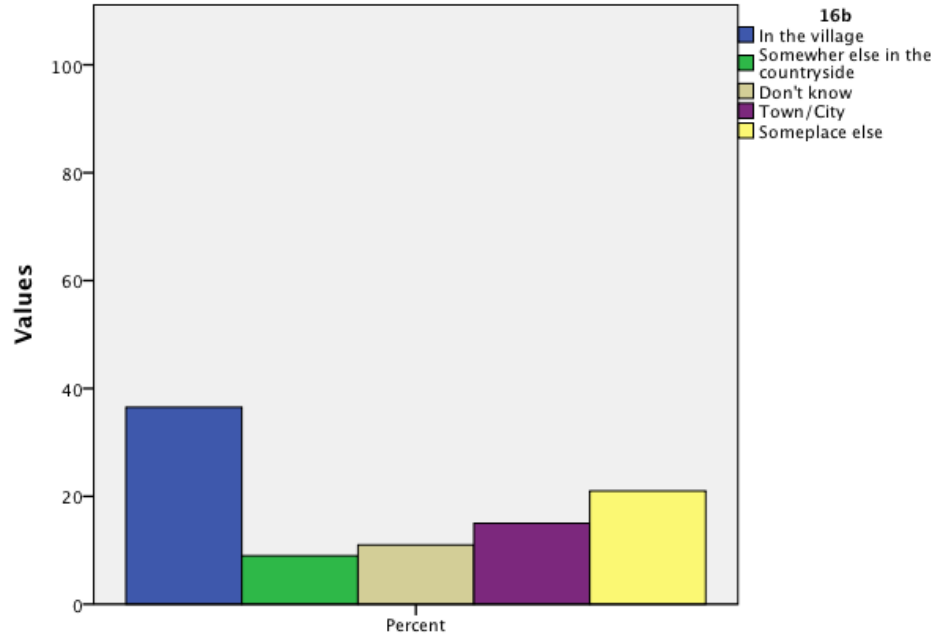


2007

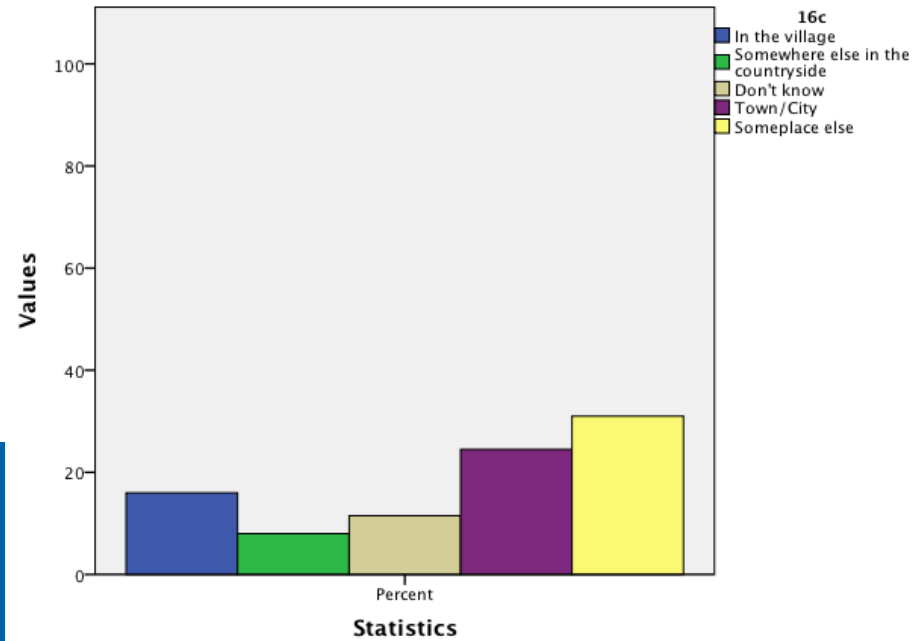
Where do you see yourself in? One Year



Where do you see yourself in? Five Years



Where do you see yourself in? Ten Years



2011



# Challenging Low Aspiration

How should we respond to this situation?

- Young people must be recognized as an important component of the community
  - 'Acute' versus 'chronic' issues
  - Young people's issues are modest
- Better tools for the *inclusion* of young people
  - *Meaningful* participatory planning for change
  - *Meaningful* future youth governance



# Challenging Low Aspiration

- What is the future role of youth agencies?
- Building communities
  - Do we want the countryside to be the preserve of the few?
  - Whole communities not just young people
- Need to link place, business, careers, lifestyle and community
  - Affordable housing is for young people too
  - Career prospects
  - Entrepreneurial training
  - Overcoming remoteness



# The Big Issues

- Impact of recession
  - Affects families and young people
  - Loss of belonging
- Opportunity and aspiration
  - Young people must be valued in their community
- Gender differences
  - Role models
  - Challenge young women's low aspiration for rural living
- Marginality and youth citizenship
  - Young people's (in)visibility
  - Ownership of spaces
- Recurrent challenges
  - Cyclical nature of youth work



# Coproduction - Multiple Outcomes

