

# SESSION 10 ISPA CONFERENCE

1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2016

- Politics & Political Participation
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# EDUCATION TO INCREASE VOTERS PARTICIPATION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

- Creating a connection between young people and social/civic engagement
- Creating awareness of barriers
- Eliminating hurdles and barriers to meaningful political participation

The research paper was completed as part of a Masters in Social Justice and Public Policy in 2015.





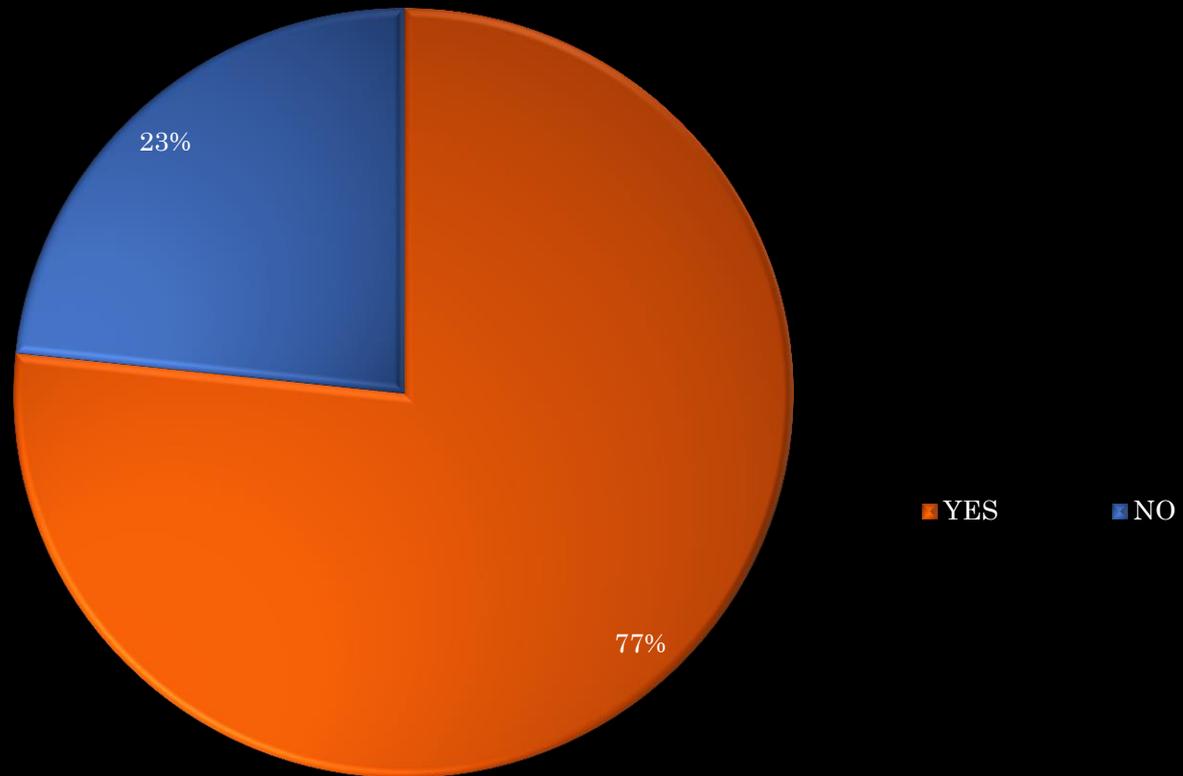
# DEMOCRACY IN IRELAND THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

# IRISH HISTORICAL CONDITIONS FOR VOTING

- 19<sup>th</sup> century
- 20<sup>th</sup> century
- 1918 Representation of the People Act
- End of the civil war
- 1973 referendum



# PERCENTAGES OF YOUNG PEOPLE REGISTERED TO VOTE

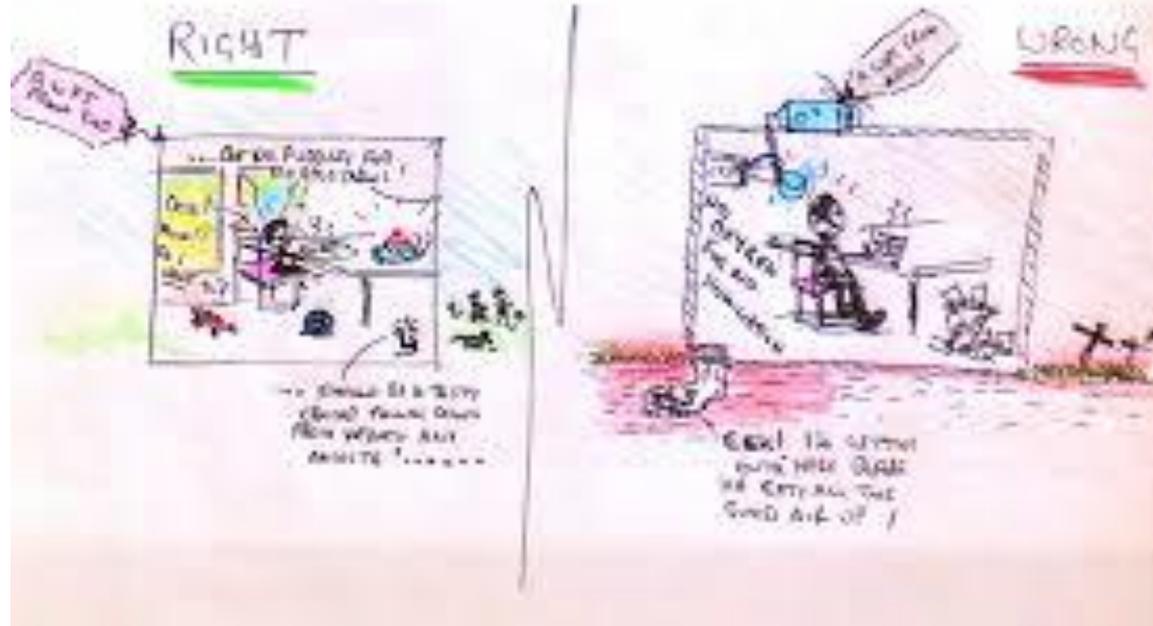


# CURRENT BARRIERS TO VOTING

- Registration process
- Education
- Lack of feeling connected
- Disabilities (Learning & physical)
- Infrastructure
- Homeless individuals



# Threat to Democracy



# EDUCATION AS A RESOURCE

- Lalor et al 2007” state that Education is said to be “*the biggest influence on levels of political interest and activism*”
- Educational inequalities
- Compulsory education programme



# EDUCATION IN PRACTICE

## Vincentian Partnership “Voter Education Programme”

*“It has long been recognised that education plays a particular role in supporting the development of the person’s capacity to be an active member of a democratic society.”(Tormey, 2006)*



# RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

**Questionnaire**

**60 participants**



**Focus group and Voter Education  
Programme**

**24 participants**



**Semi-structured interviews**

**6 participants**



# FINDINGS

## **Attitudes before Participation in programme**

**Jack:** The government uses language that I do not understand. They use big words and all.

**Lucy:** The narrative never makes sense. I think they do that on purpose. That's why young people do not vote.

**Jack:** If it doesn't make a difference to your life then there is no need to vote, let the people who it affects vote.



# FINDINGS

## Attitudes after participation in programme

- **Lucy:** most definitely, I feel humble that so many people fought for the right to vote.
- **Andrew:** I am more aware of my issues on further education and transport. I feel I now understand the system better and can do something about it.

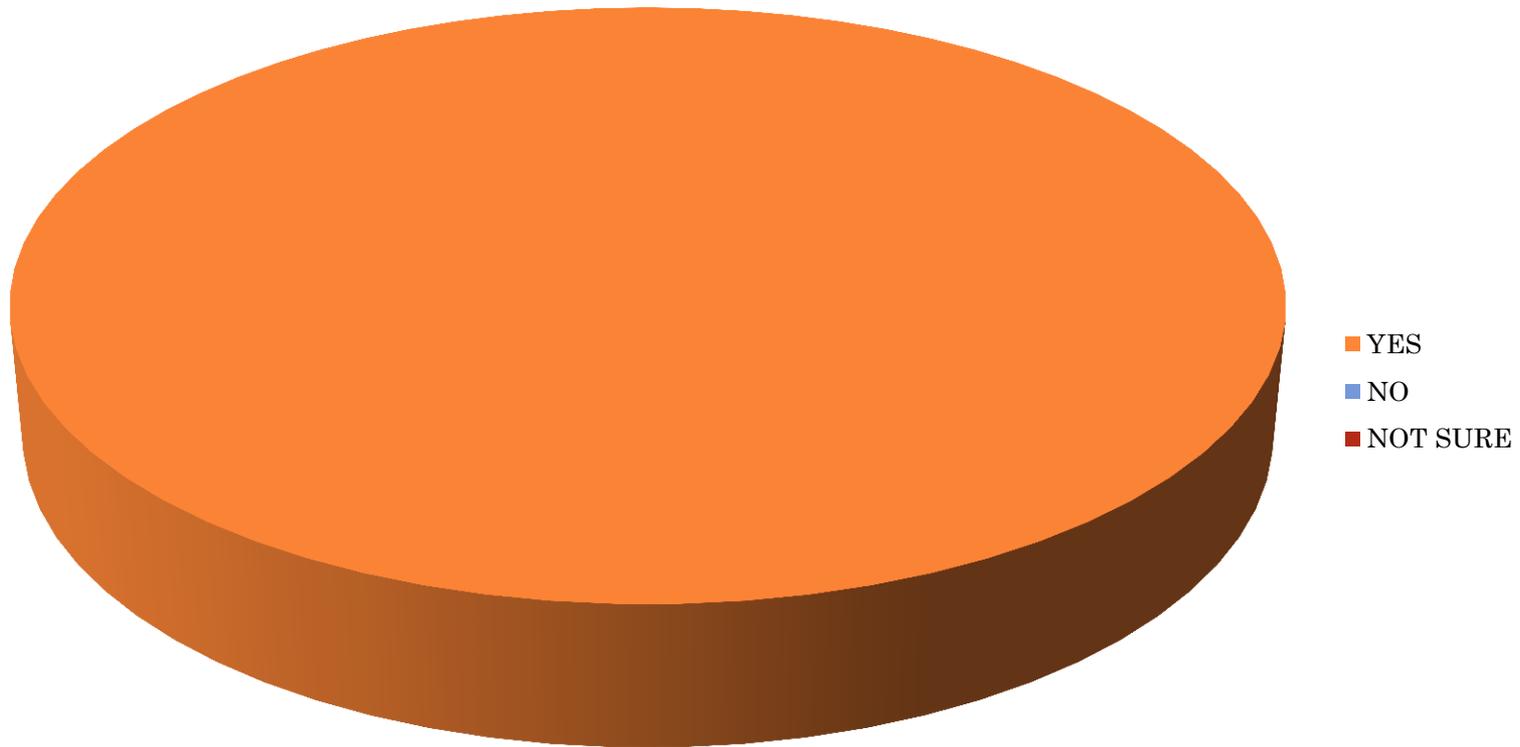


# Do you feel this course has impacted on your attitude towards voting in a positive way?

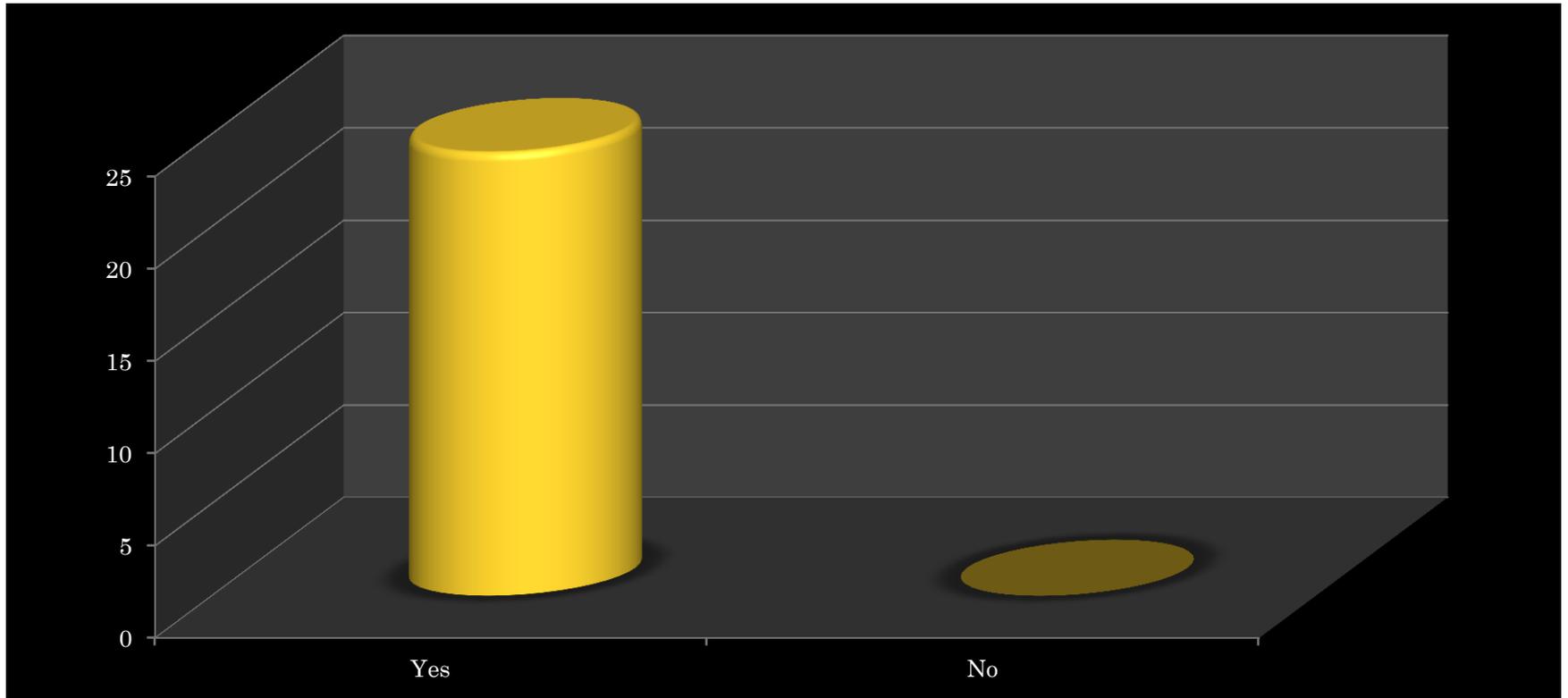
Yes

No

Maybe



# 2015 MARRIAGE EQUALITY REFERENDUM



*“The marriage equality movement has ignited the imagination of a people to have an active part in the Ireland they want to live in and be proud of.”*  
(Sheehan, 2015)

# CONCLUSION

- To ensure that education in this area is made available to a greater population it is important for direct policy change. Any such policy change that **ensures** civic responsibility is part of the education curriculum would be a step in the right direction for equality and social justice.

