



YOUTH CLIMATE VOICES

YOUTH CLIMATE
JUSTICE SURVEY'24

2025

In conjunction with
spunout

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Introduction

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) the climate has been changing since pre-industrial times, human activities have caused approximately 1°C of global warming; at current rates, this could reach or exceed 1.5°C between 2030 and 2050.

The world is already seeing consequences for people, nature and livelihoods. The impact of climate change is being felt in different ways by different people and these profound and drastic changes raise several questions for climate justice.

In late 2024 as part of the 'Youth Climate Advocate Programme', ECO-UNESCO in conjunction with SpunOut.ie, conducted an online survey with young people. The purpose of the survey is to highlight how young people of Ireland feel about climate change and climate justice, how they want to be involved in solving climate issues, the barriers faced when getting involved, areas they feel are most important to tackle climate change, areas they are interested in learning more about and what support organisations like ECO-UNESCO can give them. The survey was released in 2024 and included a range of multiple-choice questions alongside open-ended questions allowing for personalised responses.

This Survey saw a significant response rate with over 959 participants. 93% of the participants were below 25 years and more than 92% were students. 29% of them are based in Dublin and 71% are from other counties in the Republic of Ireland. 59% of participants were female, 33% male, 3% non-binary and 4% participants categorise themselves through self-identity and others.

This survey was part of 'The Youth Climate Advocates Programme 2024' which has been funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth through the Youth Climate Justice Fund. This project involved multiple partners including Irish Girl Guides, Feachtas, Poppintree Youth Project, The No Name Club, and Young Irish Film Makers.

This report provides an analysis of the survey findings to highlight how young people in Ireland feel about climate change and climate justice issues.

Answers to multiple-choice questions and examples of open question answers can be found in the appendix.



SINCE PRE-INDUSTRIAL TIMES,
HUMAN ACTIVITIES HAVE CAUSED
APPROXIMATELY 1°C OF GLOBAL
WARMING



Who responded?

SURVEY RESPONSES

959

PARTICIPANTS

LOCATION



29%

DUBLIN-BASED



71%

FROM OTHER COUNTIES

AGE

78%
18 AND
YOUNGER

22%
OVER 19

GENDER

59%
FEMALE

33%
MALE

4.5%
SELF-IDENTITY
AND OTHER

2.9%
NON-BINARY

OCCUPATION



92%

ARE IN EDUCATION



8%

ENGAGED IN WORK

DAILY TRANSPORT MEANS



47% CAR



1% MOTOR



50% PUBLIC



11% BIKE



41% WALK



2% OTHER

Key Findings



GROWING CONCERN

- In the Youth Climate Justice Survey 2024, 97% of the young people expressed concern about climate change (an increase ↑ from 96% in 2023). Notably, 27% of respondents indicated that they feel "extremely concerned".
- There has also been an increase in numbers highlighting negative feelings compared to last year. 71% reported feeling anxious (up from 65%), 62% indicated fear (up from 52%), 54% expressed anger (up from 38%), and 9% reported feeling lonely (compared to 6% last year).



TACKLING SYSTEMIC ISSUES

In our survey, 95% of young respondents acknowledge that climate justice views climate change as both an ethical and political issue rather than merely an environmental or physical concern. This perspective highlights the unjust and unequal dynamics produced by our current systems where certain countries bear a greater responsibility than others. Additionally, participants identified significant areas for impact: changes in big business practices (50%) and changes in government policy (40%) are considered most crucial in effectively addressing the climate crisis.



BARRIERS TO ACTION

The survey also identified barriers that young people face in engaging with climate action:

- 37% believe they lack sufficient knowledge about climate change.
- 37% feel like no one listens to their concerns.
- 36% express concerns about not having necessary skills.
- 32% feel they don't know how to get in touch with politicians.
- 30% report a lack of protests or events in their area.



TAKING ACTION

The survey shows that young people are eager to engage in climate issues:

- 57% want more local opportunities to get involved in climate action.
- 41% are interested in gaining more skills, such as organising events and communication.
- 40% expressed the need for training on how to get involved in climate issues.

These insights highlight the need for targeted support and resources to empower them.



MANAGING ECO-ANXIETY

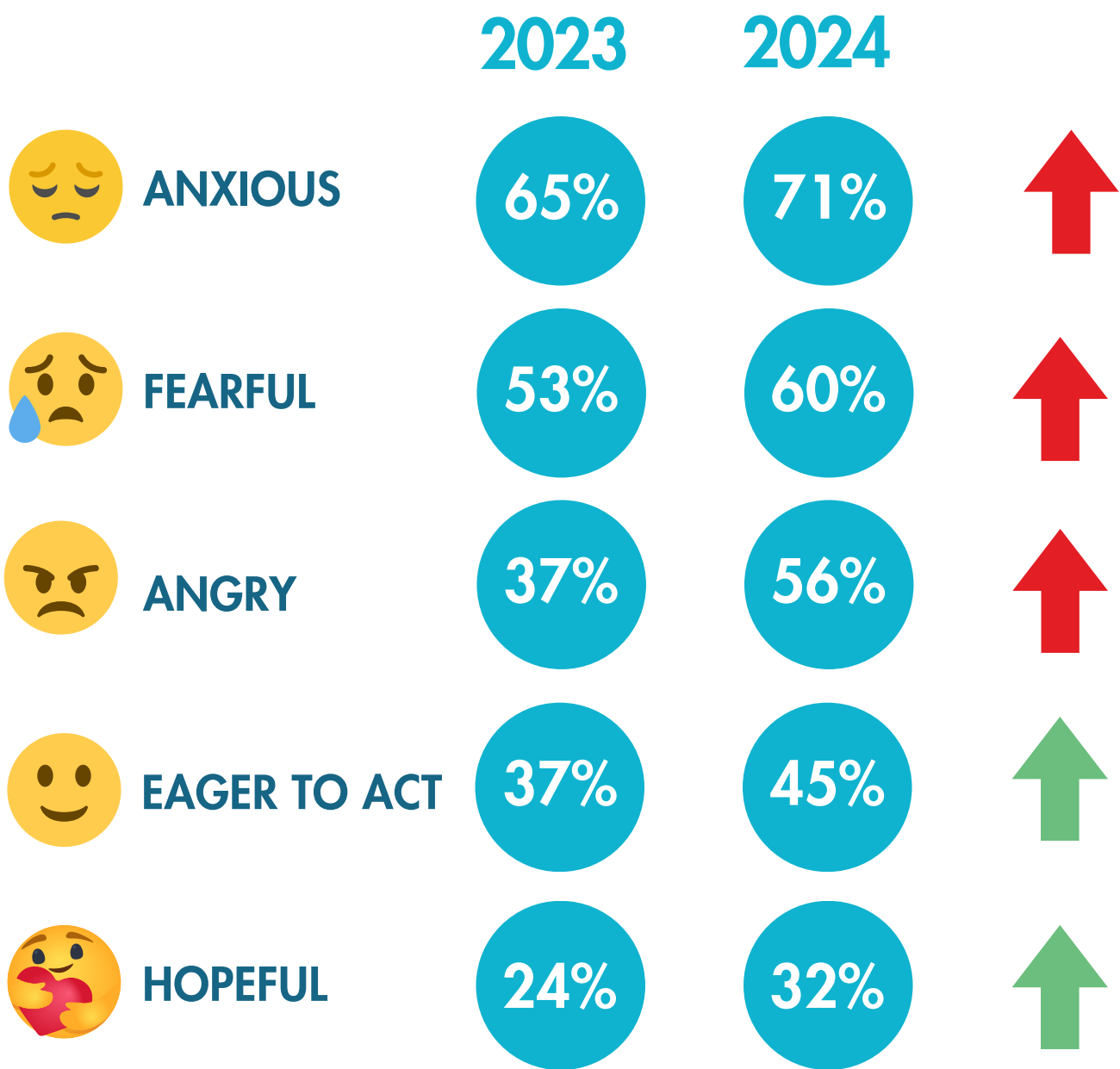
Although 14% of young people still haven't yet found a way to manage their eco-anxiety, 38% of young people find encouragement in hearing positive climate news from around the world most helpful. Other high ranking answers are spending time in nature (32%), making changes to their lifestyle and habits to help the environment (29%), and by learning about solutions to climate change (27%). These insights highlight Irish young people's proactive approach to global citizenship.

Key Findings



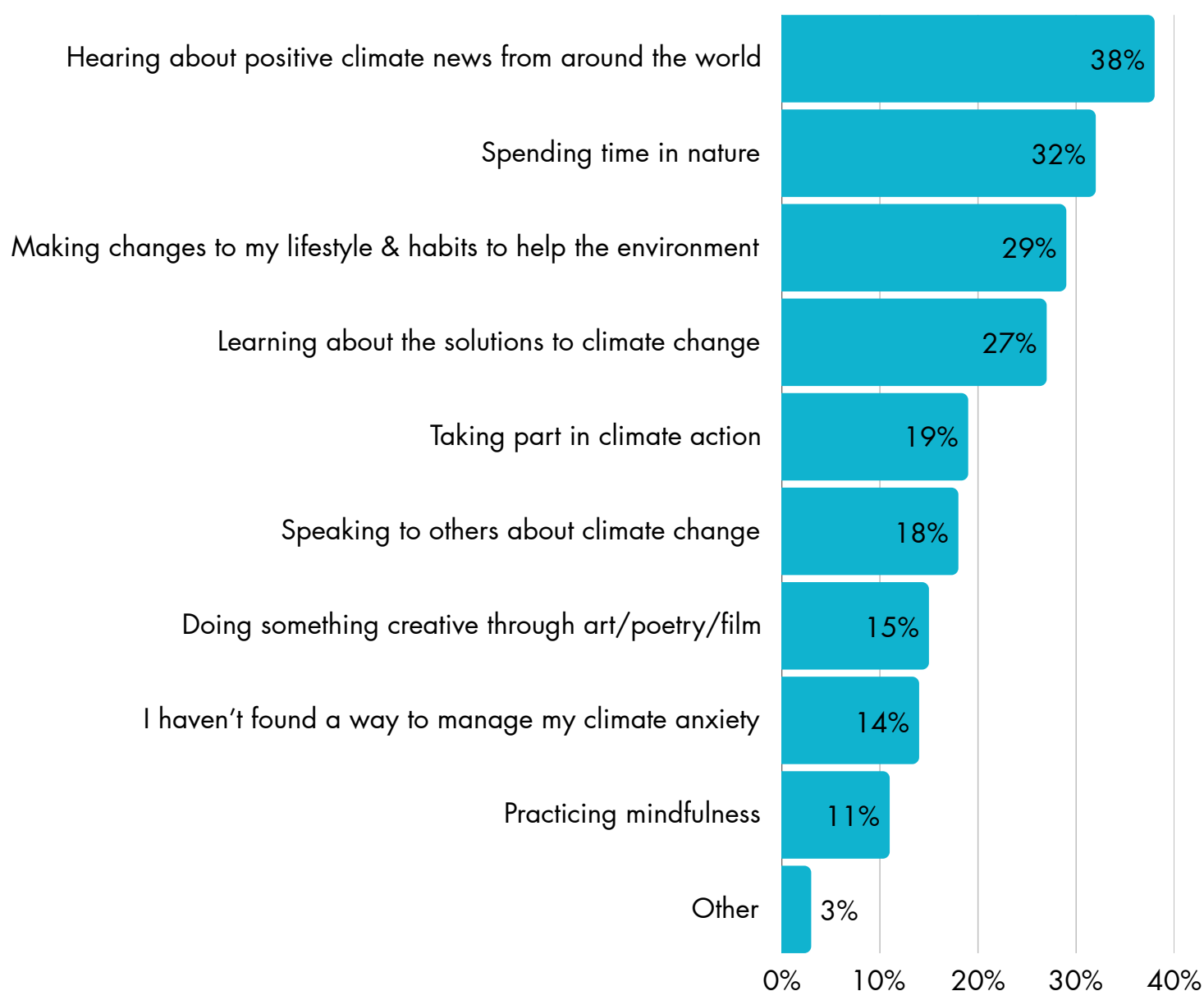
Thinking about climate change

The Youth Climate Justice Survey captures the shift in emotions related to climate concerns from 2023 to 2024. There is a noticeable increase in anxiety, fear, and anger, indicating heightened emotional responses to climate issues. However, there is also an encouraging rise in eagerness to take action and hopefulness, suggesting that more young people are motivated to engage proactively and believe in potential positive change. This emotional landscape reflects both the urgency of the climate situation on youth mental health and the growing desire to contribute to solutions youth organisations like ECO-UNESCO in collaboration with other stakeholders in climate action field are able to support.



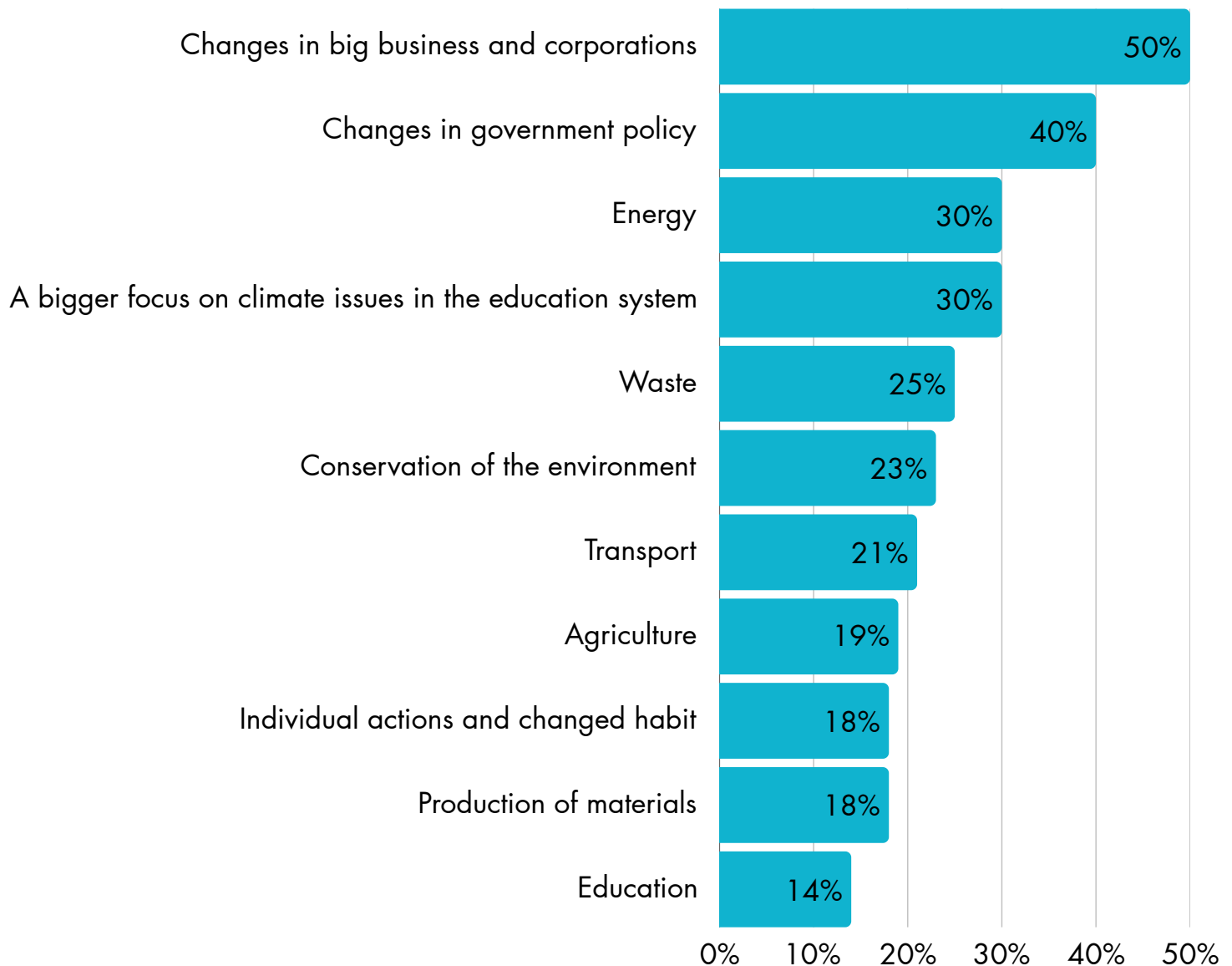
Top things young people find helpful when it comes to managing climate anxiety or eco-anxiety

Despite 14% of young people reporting they haven't yet found a way to manage their climate anxiety, many agreed that diverse approaches are helpful. These include: hearing about positive climate news from around the world (38%), spending time in nature (32%), making changes to lifestyle and habits to help the environment (29%),



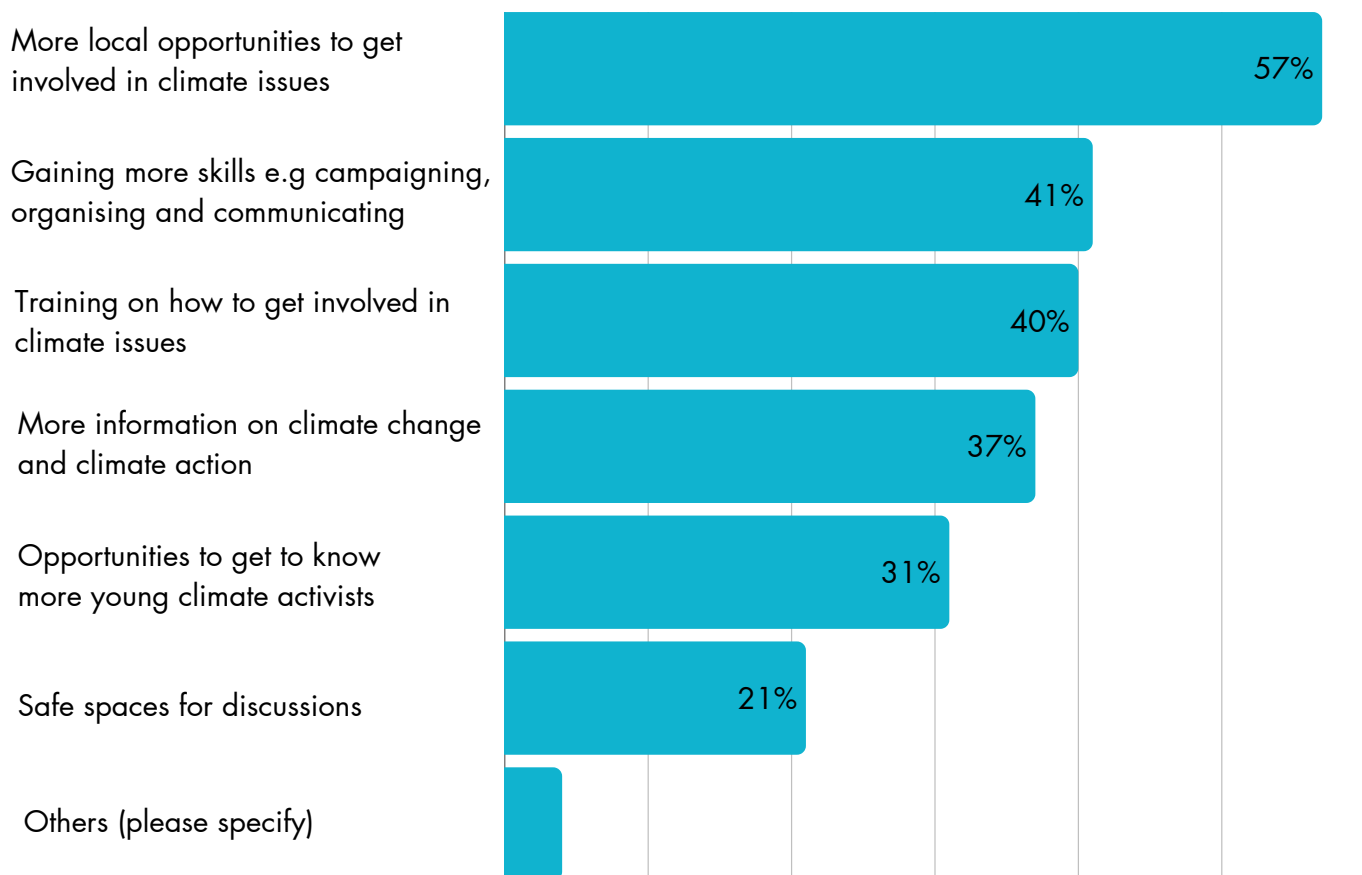
Top areas young people feel are most important when it comes to tackling climate change

Climate anxiety or eco-anxiety can be experienced when people worry about the threats facing the earth as a result of climate change and environmental damage. When young people were asked to select top three areas that they think are most important when it comes to tackling climate change, 50% of respondents thought 'Changes in big business and Corporations' was most important, 'Changes in government policy' ranked second (40%), 'Energy' third (29.7%), and 'A bigger focus on climate issues in the education system' (29.6%) fourth. 25% selected 'Waste', 23% selected 'conservation', and 21% selected 'Transport'. It is worth noting that 14% of respondents consider 'Education' an important area.



What supports do young people need to get more involved in climate action?

When young people were asked what supports they needed more than half (57%) said more local opportunities to get involved in climate issues. 40% would like to get training on how to get involved in climate issues and 41% to learn skills such as campaigning, event organising and communicating. 37% of respondents wish to get more information on climate change and climate action, and 31% seek opportunities to get to know more young climate activists.



Here is what young people expect when they selected 'Other':

- "should be more widely recognised with rewards or prizes and treated with more respect"
- "guidelines with specific and practical steps I can take in my everyday life to support climate action/activism"
- "More discussion in schools about climate change"
- "School activities with environmentalists"
- "Better analysis and outlook on the problem and consequent solution. More informed and edited politics"
- "Citizens assemblies and actual democracy"
- "Meetings that let people share their beliefs on climate change"
- "local political people to talk up"

What barriers do young people see with taking action on climate issues?

Young people taking the survey identified a number of barriers to taking action on climate issues. They included the feeling that no one listens (37%), a lack of knowledge on climate change (37%), a lack of skills like public speaking and communication (36%), a lack of protests or events in young people's locality (30%), , not enough information on how to get involved (30%), and not knowing how to get in touch with politicians (32%).

37%

I feel like no one listens

36%

I feel like I don't have the skills e.g public speaking, organising etc

36%

I feel I don't have enough knowledge on climate change

32%

I don't know how to get in touch with politicians

30%

There's not enough info on how to get involved

30%

There are no protests or events in my area

6%

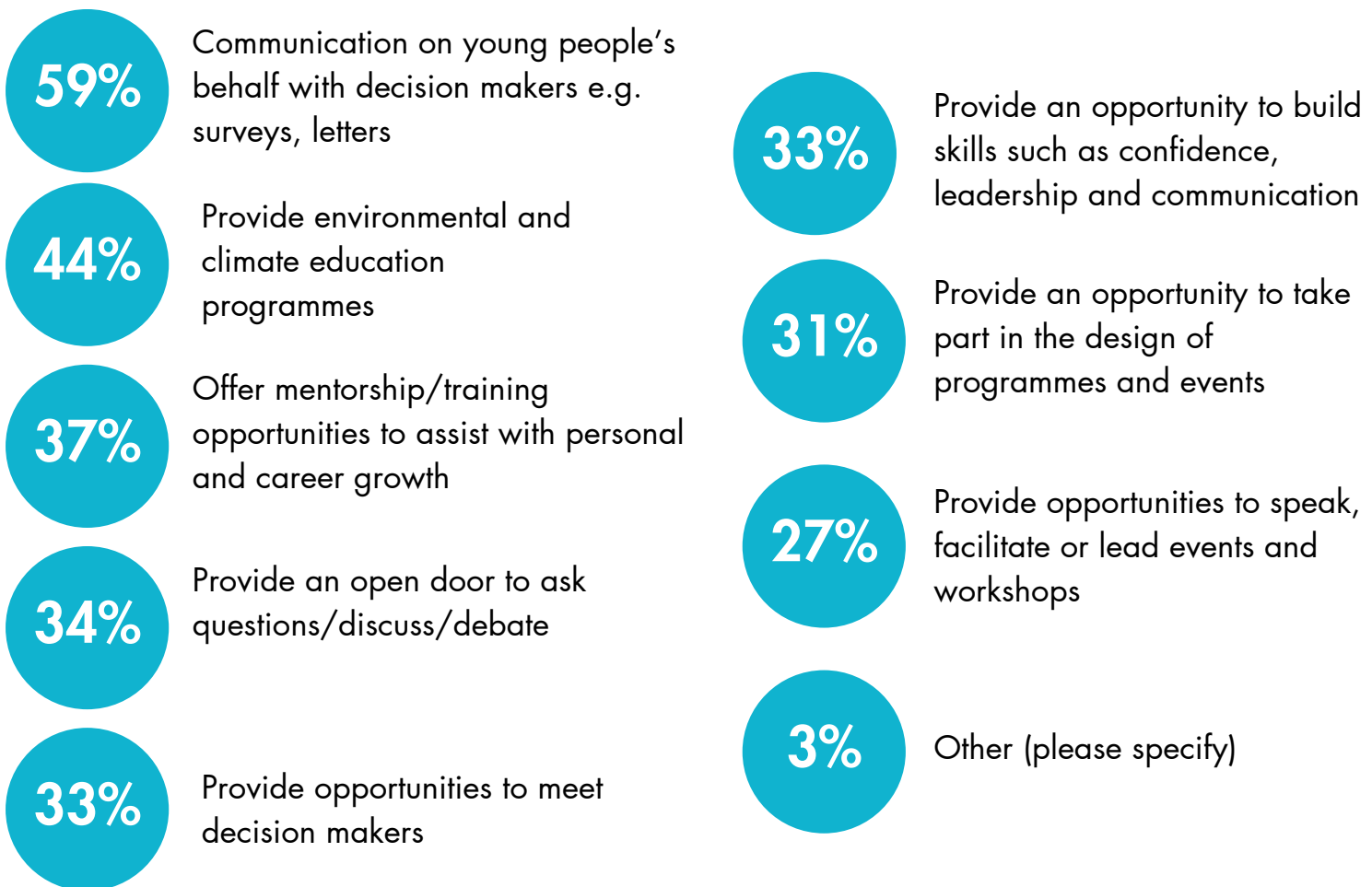
I have a disability which makes it difficult to get involved

6%

There are no barriers preventing me from taking action

What can youth organisations like ECO-UNESCO do to support young people in climate action?

Young people were asked what youth organisations like ECO-UNESCO can do and they highlighted the communication with decision makers on young people's behalf with decision-makers as their top support (59%). Provision of environmental and climate education programmes ranked second highest (44%).



Here is what young people said on selecting 'Other':

"I am experiencing time constraints to get involved after school"

"lack of funding that reward youth led solutions"

"There can be a lot of stigma and judgement towards those who speak up about climate change as many people do not think it is a pressing issue and that solving it is inconvenient"

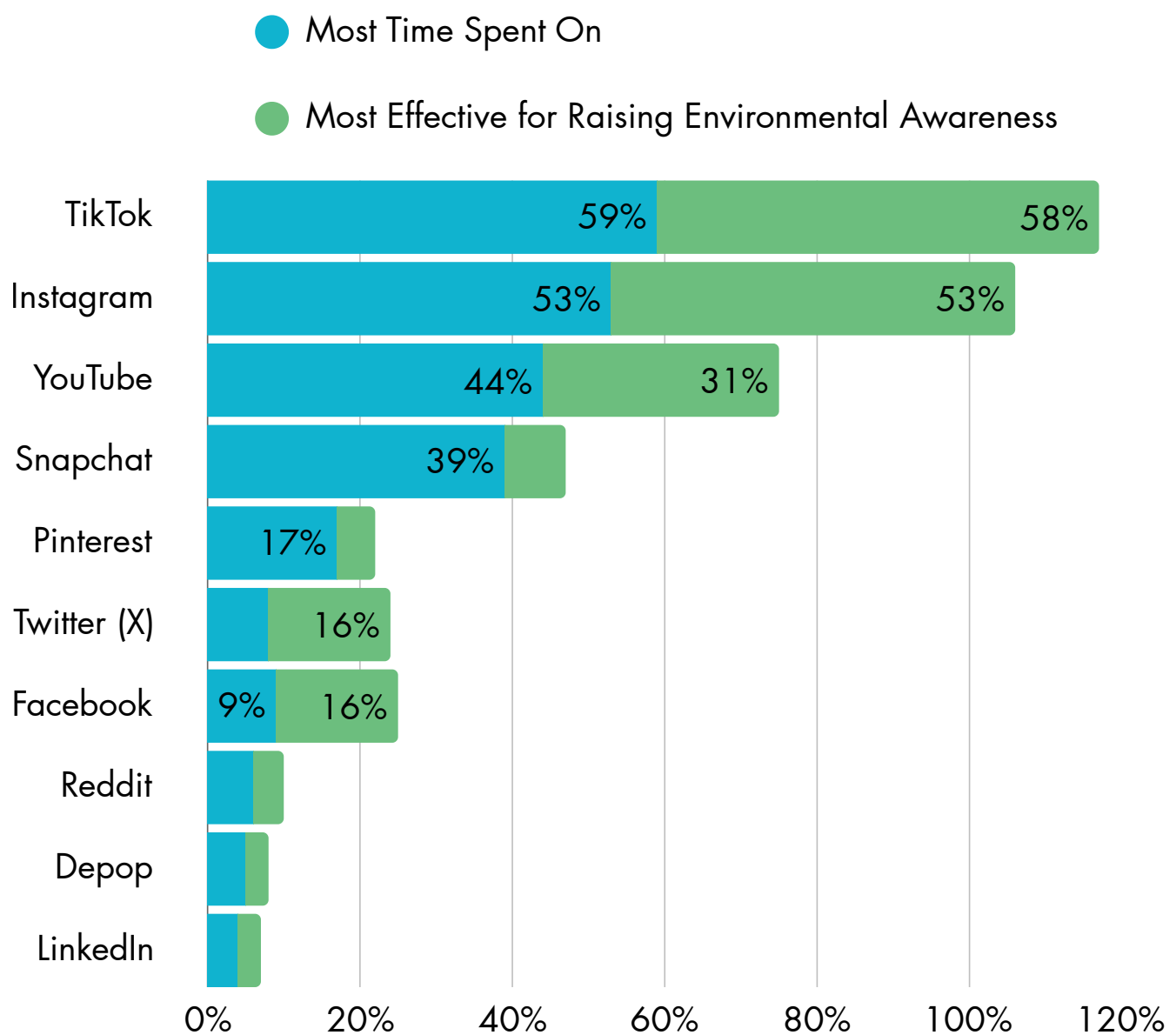
"Living in a rural area makes it difficult to engage with climate action, which feels very urban-centric"

"Existing groups and structures are inadequate and counter productive"

"Financial obstacles in day to day life. Sometimes, you literally don't have the money to make the choice you know is better for the environment."

Which platforms do you find most effective for raising environmental awareness?

Over 21% of young people who responded to the survey reported that they actively follow accounts or pages related to environmental awareness on social media. Among all social media channels, TikTok was the most voted platform for effectively raising environmental awareness (58%), followed by Instagram (53%) and YouTube (31%).



What gives you hope when you think of climate change and the future?

When reflecting on climate change and the future, young people find hope in several key areas. One significant source of optimism is the diverse perspectives they engage with which broaden their understanding and inspire innovative solutions. They also emphasise the power of policy guidance, technological innovation, and collective action on both local and global scales in driving meaningful changes.

“

That sustainable development policies can combat the climate crisis and create a just future

The lowering cost of renewable energy+ advancements in Carbon Capture and other technologies

That there are people like me in the world that care about climate change and are able to help

I know that people are inherently good at heart and will join together if need be to stop a catastrophic event like the climate crisis. I believe in people.

in moments when large groups of people gather together with great projects and to discuss their plans of action

The fact that climate change is reversible and we can change things

”

What gives you hope when you think of climate change and the future?

Most importantly, they recognise themselves as active contributors and agents of change. This human agency enhances their belief that they can make a difference, whether through personal lifestyle choices or leadership or advocacy. Their commitment to being proactive in addressing climate challenges is a profound source of hope for a sustainable and equitable future.

“

There seems to be a better awareness in the young generation

Young social activists who care about our environment inspire me & give me hope.

More people are learning about it and taking action than in the past

My generation, growing up we were told we were "the first to realise and last chance to act". So we have that knowledge of the urgency to act.

When I think of climate change and the future, I get hope from reading about the numerous different stories of people who have made a difference and have had their voice heard on climate change.

When I see the progress in moving towards cleaner energy sources, businesses cutting their carbon emissions and enforcement of climate law.

”

What gives young people hope?

This question was answered by **959 young people**. Here is what they said:



When thinking about climate change and our future, I find hope in the increasing awareness and action being taken globally. More people are advocating for sustainable practices, renewable energy, and conservation efforts. Innovations in technology and community initiatives are also making a positive impact. It shows that change is possible when we work together.

That we have the power in our hands to actually change something in our society, to fix the issue that will otherwise impact the whole global population and our future children.

That we have so many scientists and innovators in so many different industries coming up with sustainable alternatives to unsustainable materials and also the young people of this generation fighting for climate justice.

I find hope in reading positive articles, for example, a shift in political power which will lead to climate action, campaigns, and awareness spreading, and local efforts in my local area.

The small acts in our communities, e.g., recycling the return bottle scheme, the many bins and water filling stations placed around my town. Some modes of transport have become more eco-friendly, e.g., electric cars and local buses. Climate change is an important topic taught in schools which makes me hopeful that the generations to come will become more aware of climate change and will support this global issue in anyway they can.

Reading positive news stories such as reduced pollution or increased number of planted trees. I felt hopeful during COVID when pollution was reduced as industry and production levels were lowered due to lockdown.

We are familiar with the quote, "A House is never a Home". Earth is our home and we have to protect it. At this point, it seems like we are looting our future generations. Climate action is emerging as a prime concern of our society as more people are getting educated about it. This gives us hope. What we need is not just targets set by International Organisations and Governments, but real holistic action and conservation measures by each & every person on Earth needs to be done.

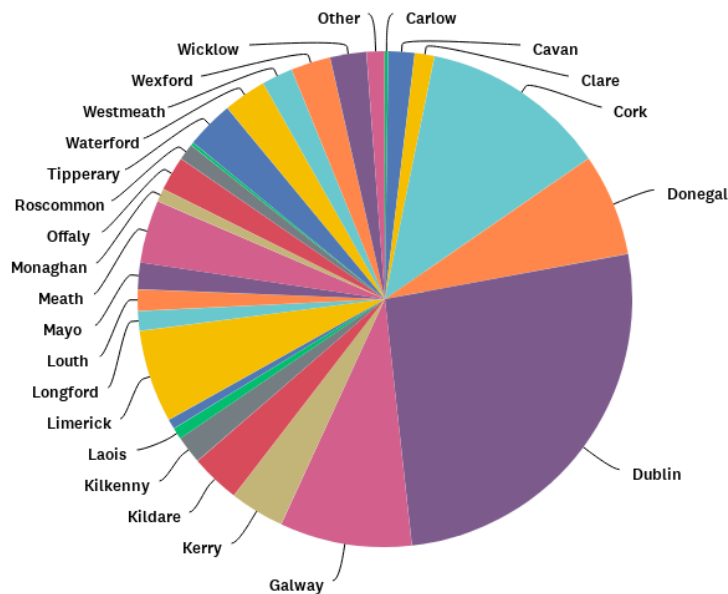
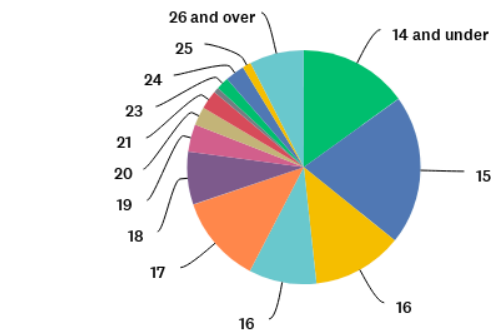
My generation will be leading the fight against climate change in the next decade or so, and I have hope that we are more educated than those before us! Also, that there is a generation emerging who want to do better for ourselves and our children.



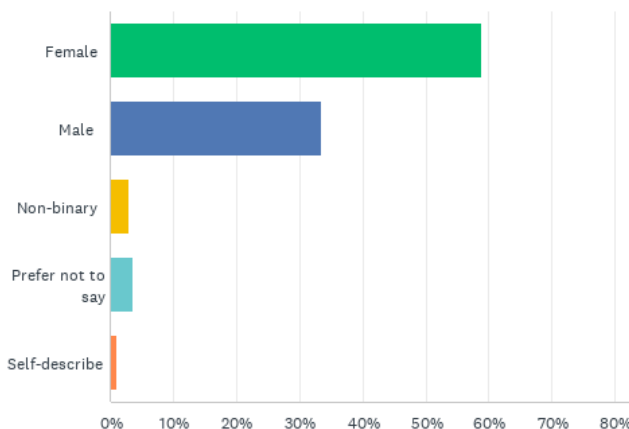
Appendices

Q2 Where do you live?

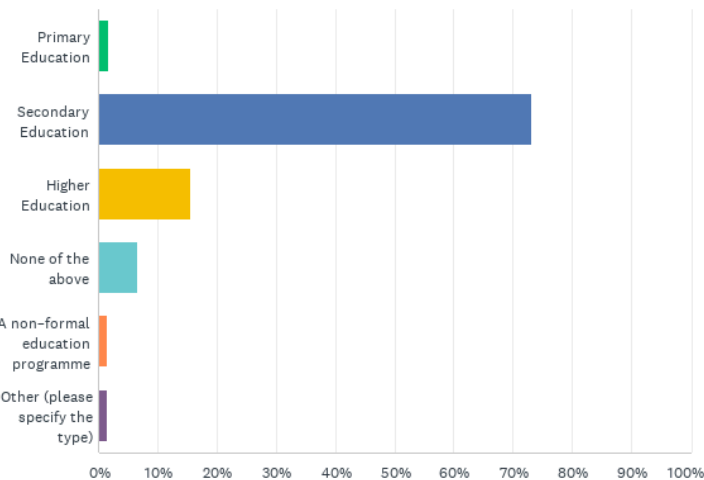
Q1 What age are you?



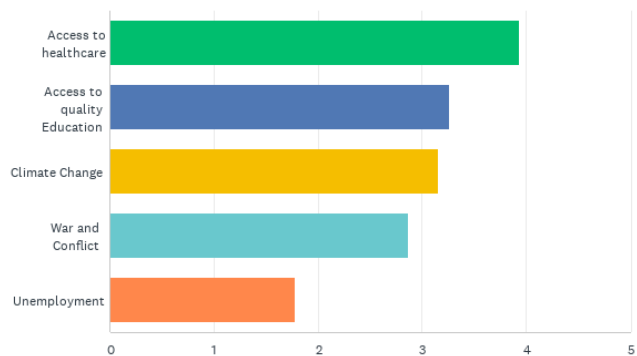
Q3 What is your gender?



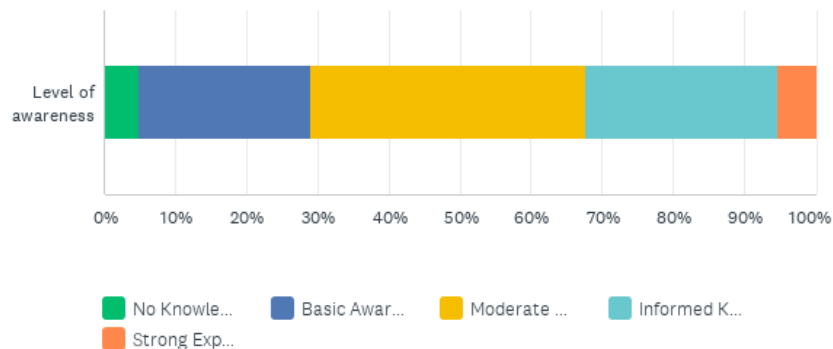
Q4 Are you currently involved in any form of education?



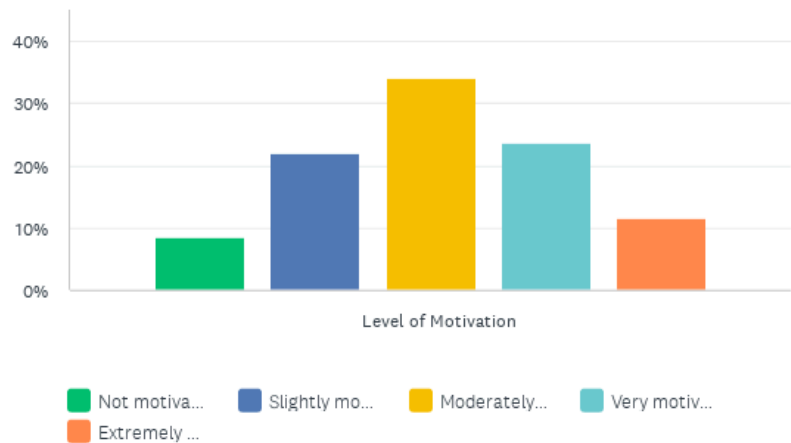
Q5 In the context of global challenges, how would you prioritise the following pressing issues for the well-being of yourself and other young people?



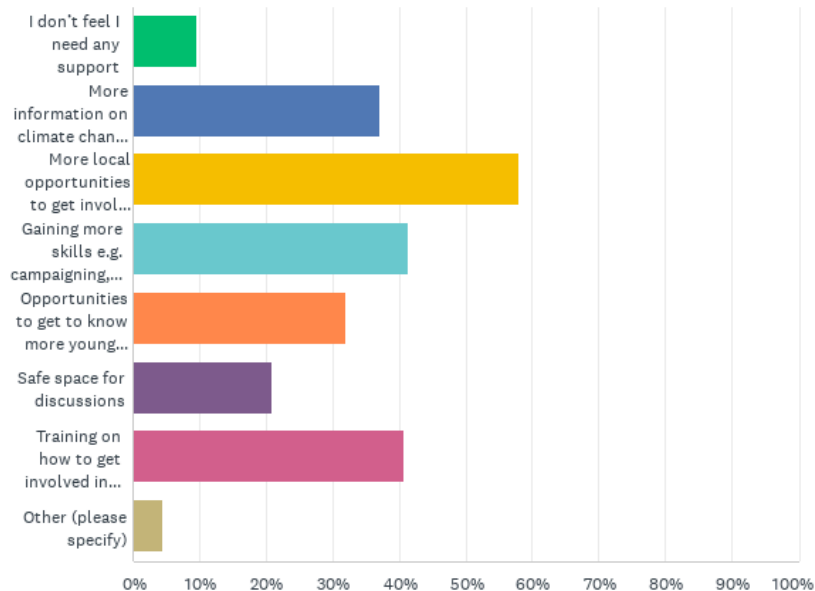
Q6 Climate Justice recognises climate change as an ethical and political issue, rather than one that is purely environmental or physical in nature. The term acknowledges the unjust and unequal situation our current system produces, with some countries more responsible than others. How would you rate your current knowledge on Climate Justice?



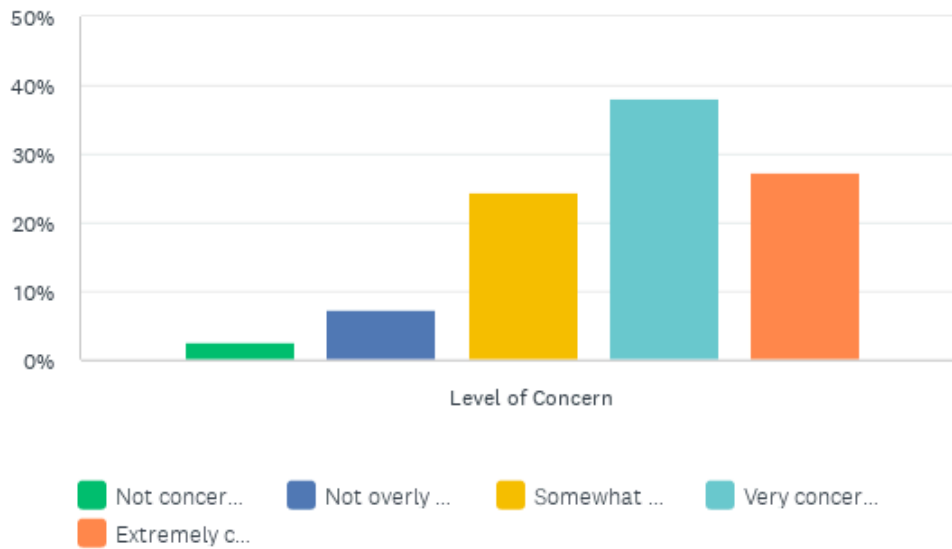
Q7 How motivated are you to engage in climate action after school?



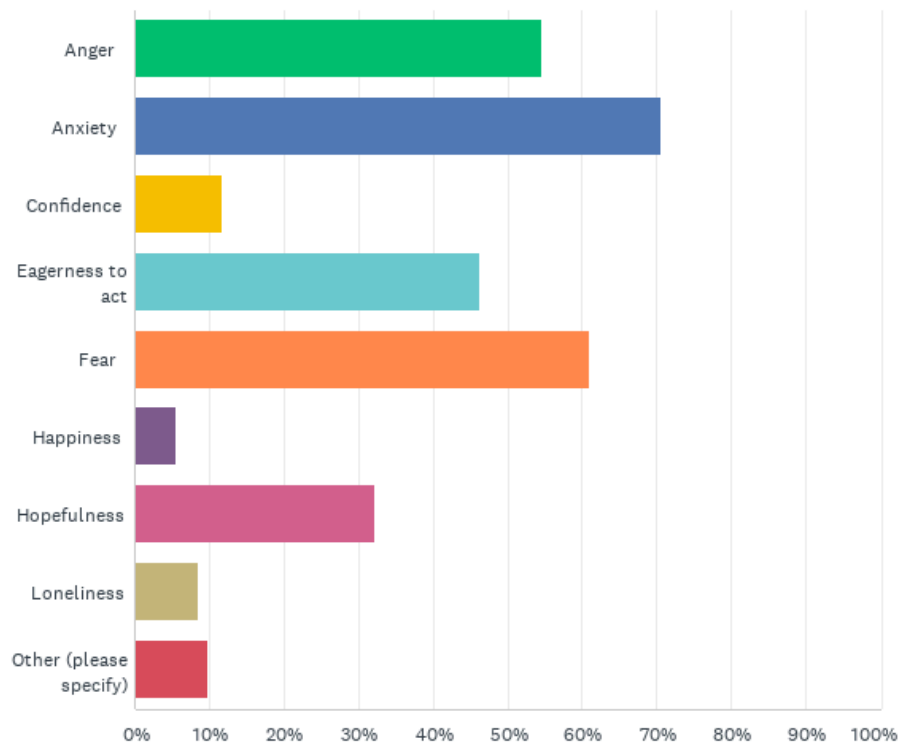
Q8 What supports do you need to get more involved in climate action?



Q9 How concerned do you feel about climate change?



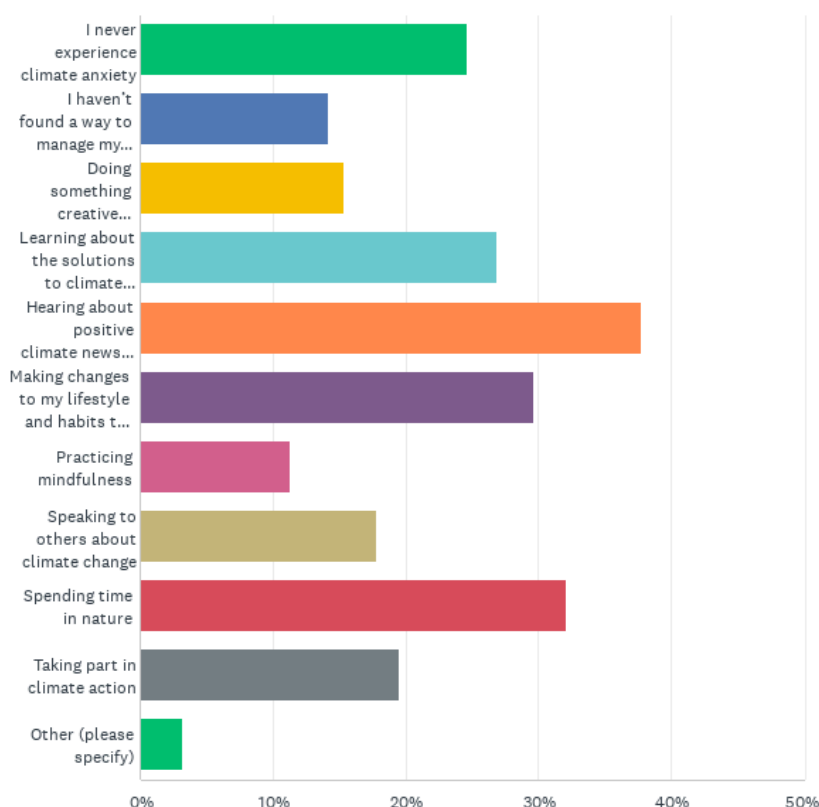
Q10 What feelings do you relate with the most when you think about climate change? (Select up to three)



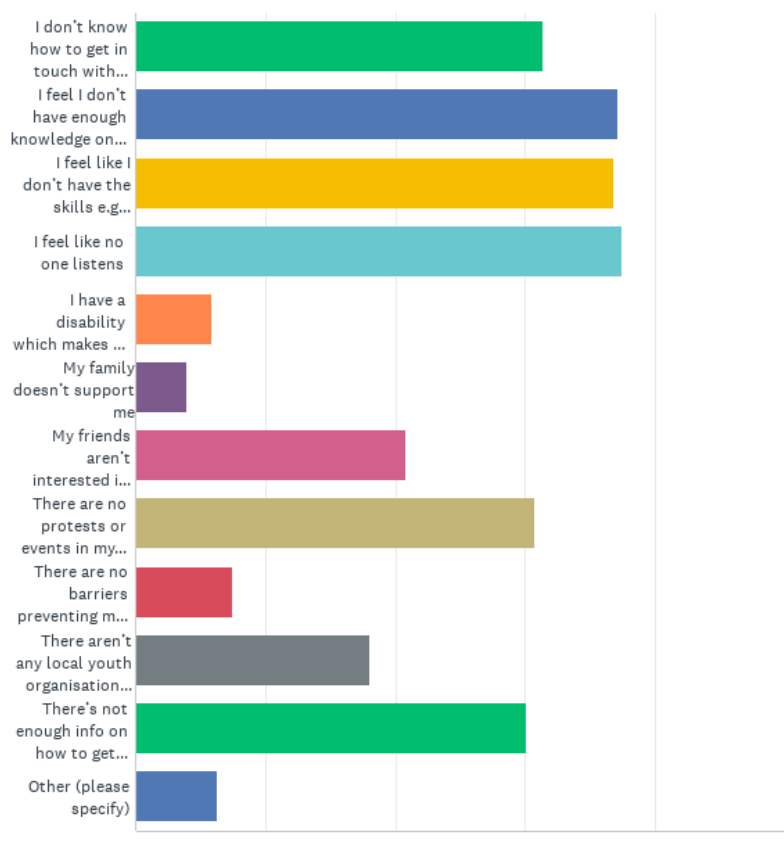
Q11 What gives you hope when you think of climate change and the future?

come earth hopefully Knowing people take dedicated take action give starting
 activists fight initiatives issue still stop technology improve people starting
 make difference Greta Thunberg need impact know aware much put now
 steps work fix things believe gives hope nature world us act
 happen think Ireland better sustainable hope
 think climate change will effort young people power
 people also climate change going
 change climate action made new help lot see
 companies action Seeing people nothing realise future positive
 fact stop climate change something right make change passionate
 governments even planet communities live electric cars generation
 action taken younger generation climate change future people will use
 countries prevent renewable energy reduce environment maybe youth
 involved future generations people trying way care awareness children feel
 organisations

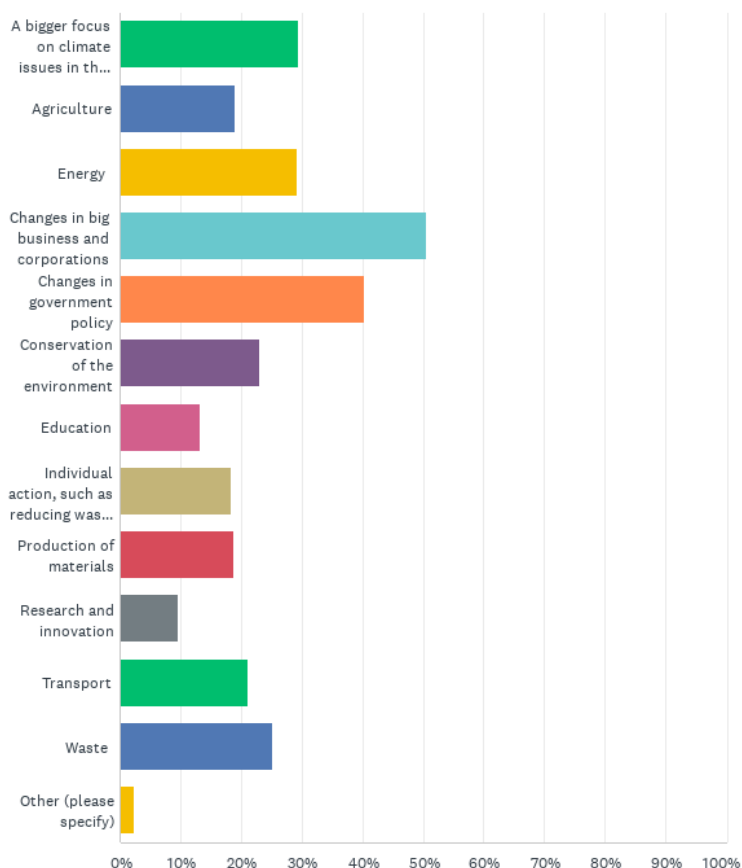
Q12 Climate anxiety or eco-anxiety can be experienced when you worry about the threats facing the earth as a result of climate change and environmental damage. What do you find helpful when it comes to managing your climate anxiety or eco-anxiety? Select as many options as you want.



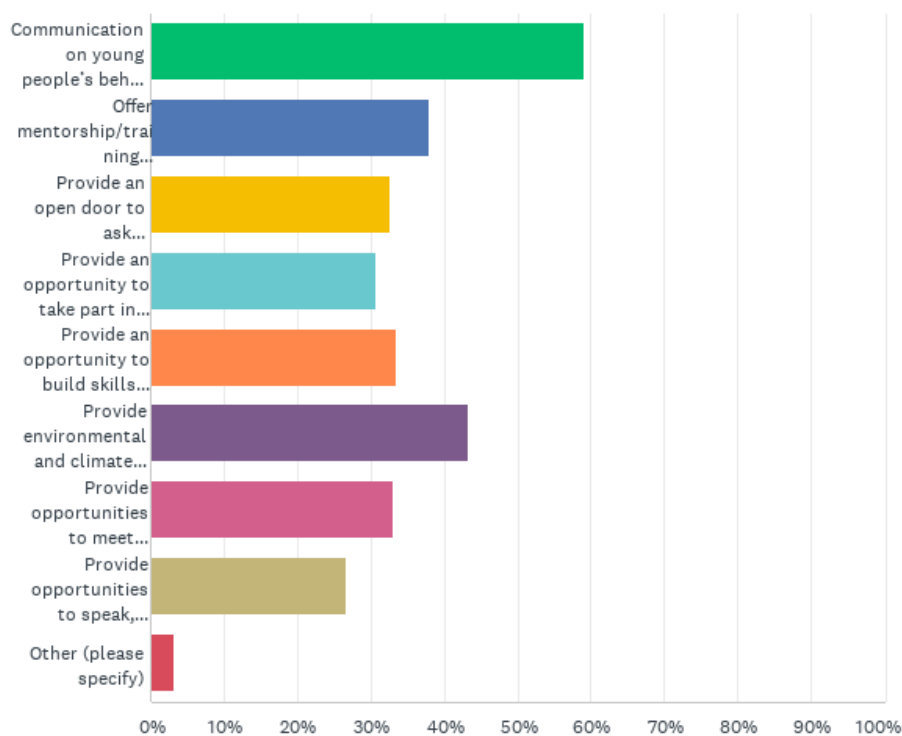
Q13 What barriers do you experience with taking action on climate issues? Select as many options as you want.



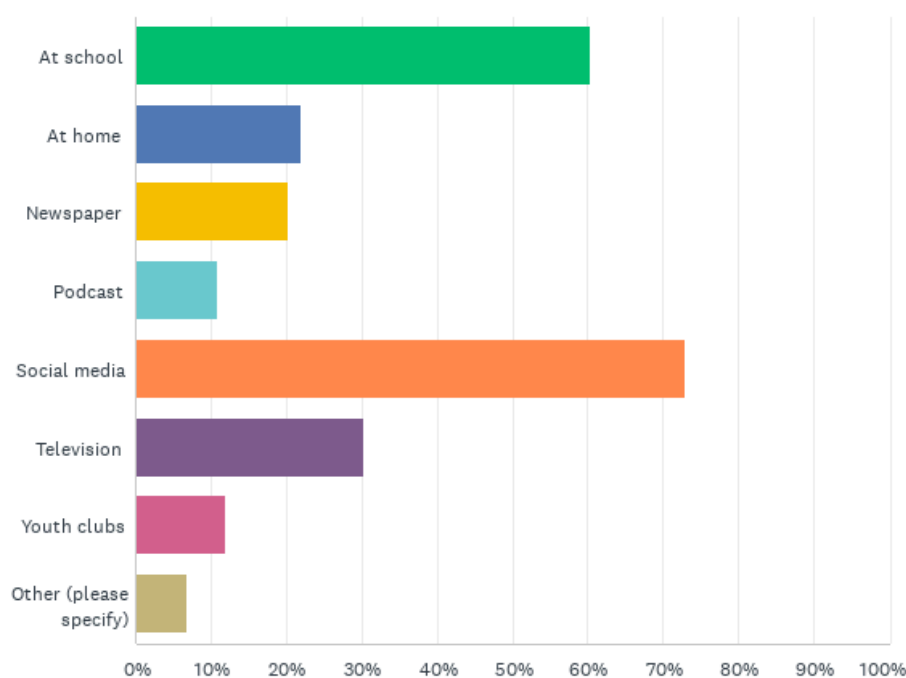
Q14 Please select the top three areas do you feel are most important when it comes to tackling climate change.



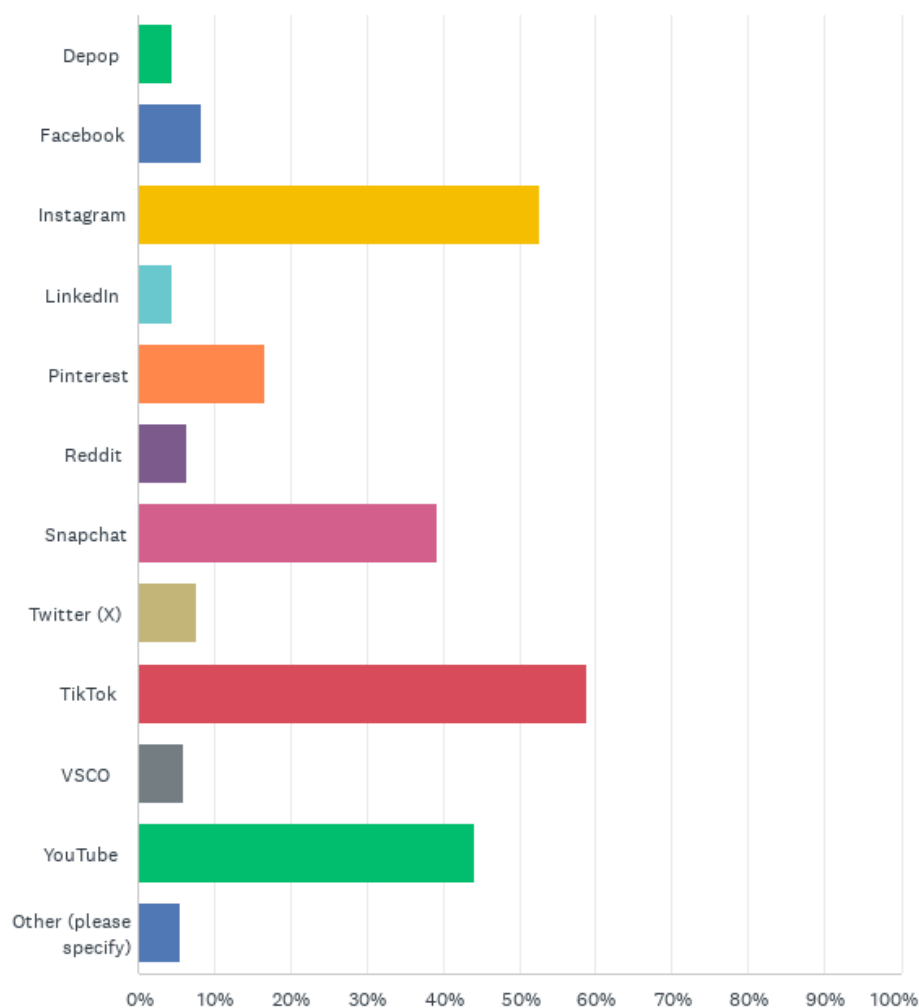
Q15 What can youth organisations like ECO-UNESCO do to support you in your climate action? (Select your top three)



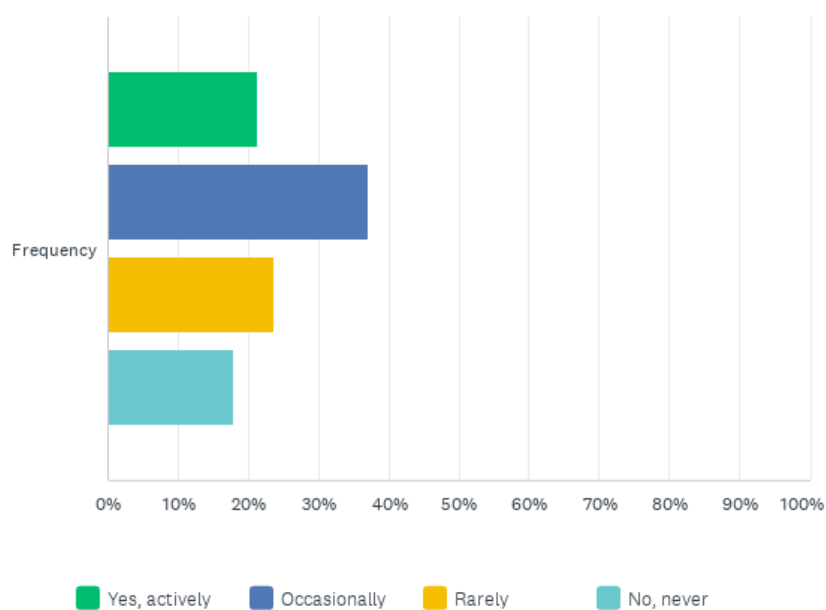
Q16 Where do you normally access information about Climate Change? (Select all that apply)



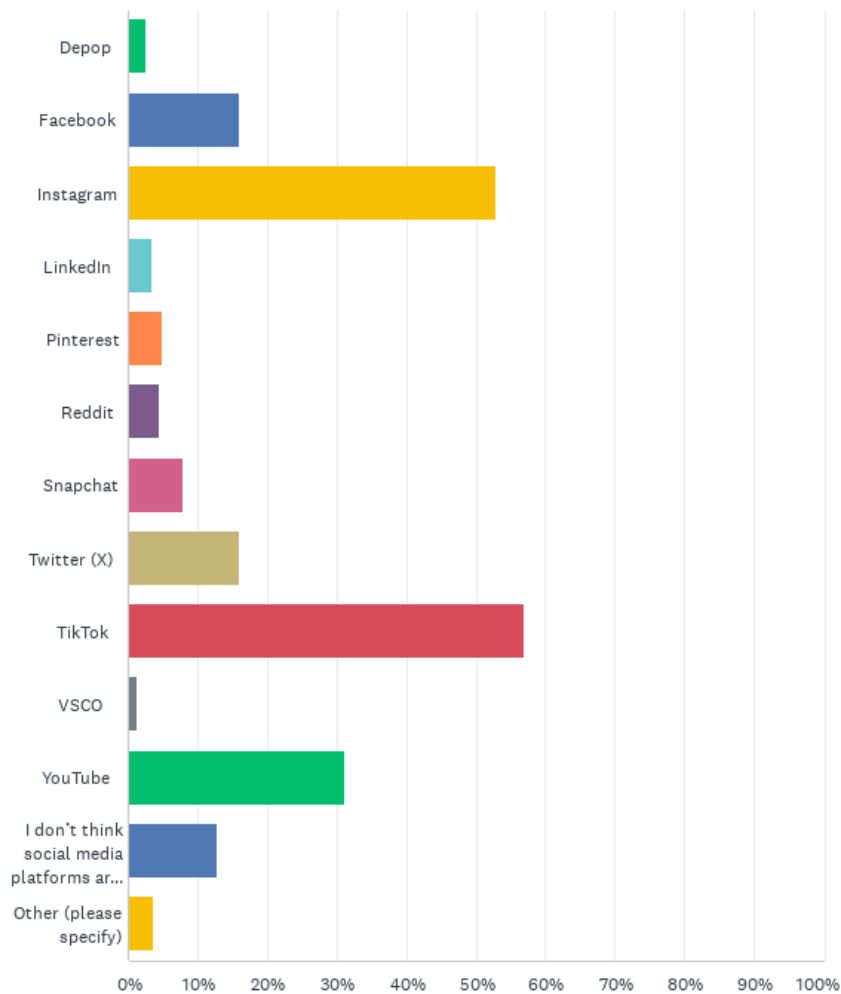
Q17 Which of the following platforms do you spend the most time on?



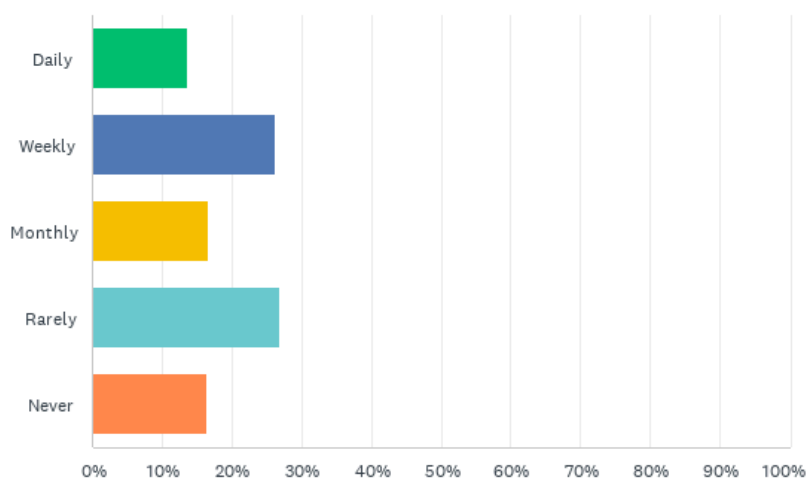
Q18 Do you follow accounts or pages related to environmental awareness on social media?



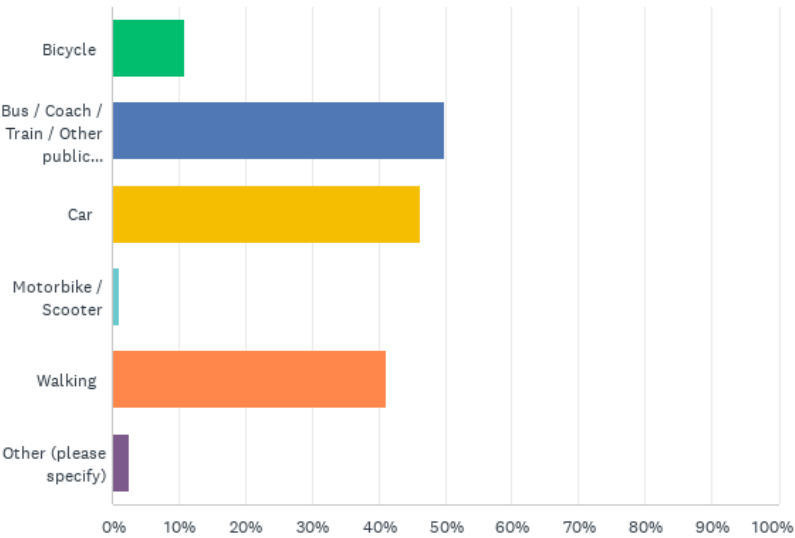
Q19 Which platforms do you find most effective for raising environmental awareness?
(Select all that apply)



Q20 How often do you engage (like, share, comment) with content related to environmental issues on social media?

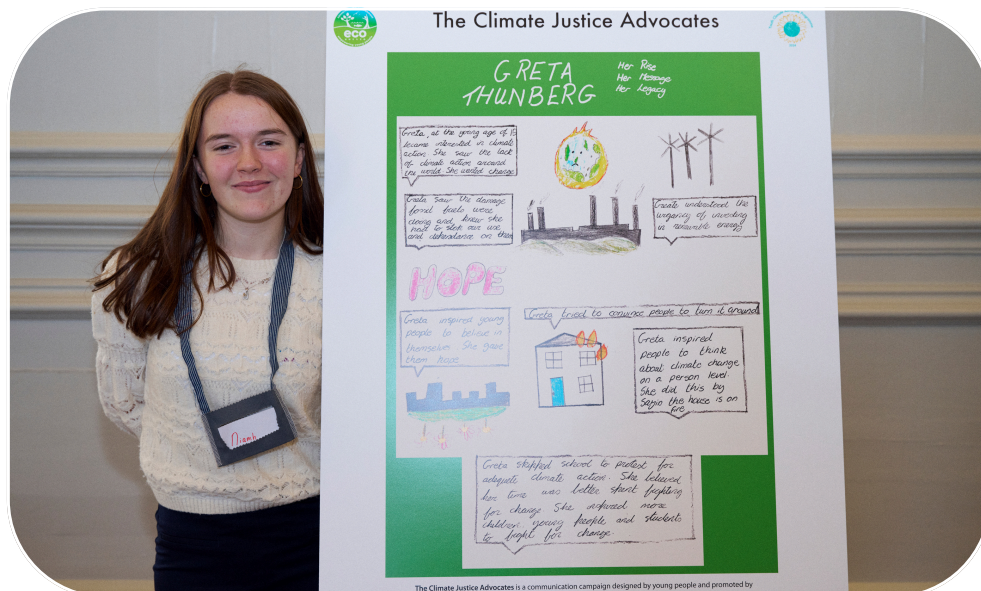


Q21 On a typical day, how do you get to your school/college/job/club etc.? (Select your top three)





BECOME A YOUTH CLIMATE ADVOCATE WITH ECO-UNESCO



The Youth Climate Advocate programme is a fantastic opportunity for 14-21 year olds, to become inspirational leaders and advocates in the areas of Climate Justice and Climate Action. Each participant is provided with amazing opportunities to practice new skills and grow as an advocate, in a safe and supportive environment.

Meet others who share your passion

We meet after school, online and in-person, from September to December, where young people share their experiences, learn from one another, and develop interpersonal skills along with programme offerings. There are also opportunities for participants to build networks with peers, experts, and policymakers.

Learn climate advocacy skills

Young people receive a series of workshops on Climate Justice topics, solutions and stories from Ireland and around the world as well as skills-focused training sessions including but not limited to advocacy and leadership, filmmaking, and campaigning.

Take Climate Action

Young people lead local actions and take part in a campaign, to inspire and empower others to take Climate Action or/and increase awareness about Climate Justice. Toward the end of the programme, young people have the chance to present their projects in front of policymakers and changemakers.



ABOUT ECO-UNESCO

ECO-UNESCO is Ireland's environmental education and youth organisation that works to empower young people and conserve the environment. We are a key partner of UNESCO's Global Action Programme on ESD, a Sustainable Development Goal Champion and a QQI accredited training centre.

Protecting the environment

ECO-UNESCO works with young people, educators and youth leaders on environmental projects across Ireland, helping to protect and conserve the environment. Each year our programmes, workshops, events and training programmes inspire environmental action at a local level amongst young people, their peer groups, communities and beyond.

Empowering young people

Through our innovative peer education programmes and youth-led events, ECO-UNESCO continuously strives to better achieve our mission of using environmental education as a means of empowering young people and supporting positive personal development.

To support our work and make a donation, please visit www.ecounesco.ie/donate or if you would like to discuss partnership opportunities get in touch with us at info@ecounesco.ie

spunout ABOUT SPUNOUT

SpunOut is Ireland's youth information website created by young people, for young people. For more information visit www.spunout.ie

YOUTH CLIMATE JUSTICE FUND



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

This survey was part of the Youth Climate Advocate Programme 2024, a project led by ECO-UNESCO in conjunction with Irish Girl Guides, Poppintree Youth Project, Feachtas, The No Name Club, and Young Irish Film Makers. The programme was funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth through the Youth Climate Justice Fund. The survey was carried out with the assistance of Spunout.ie.



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ECO-UNESCO is a trading name of the Irish Environmental Conservation
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Registered Irish Charity no. 20015145 – CHY Number 7225 – Companies
Registration Office Number 106860

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