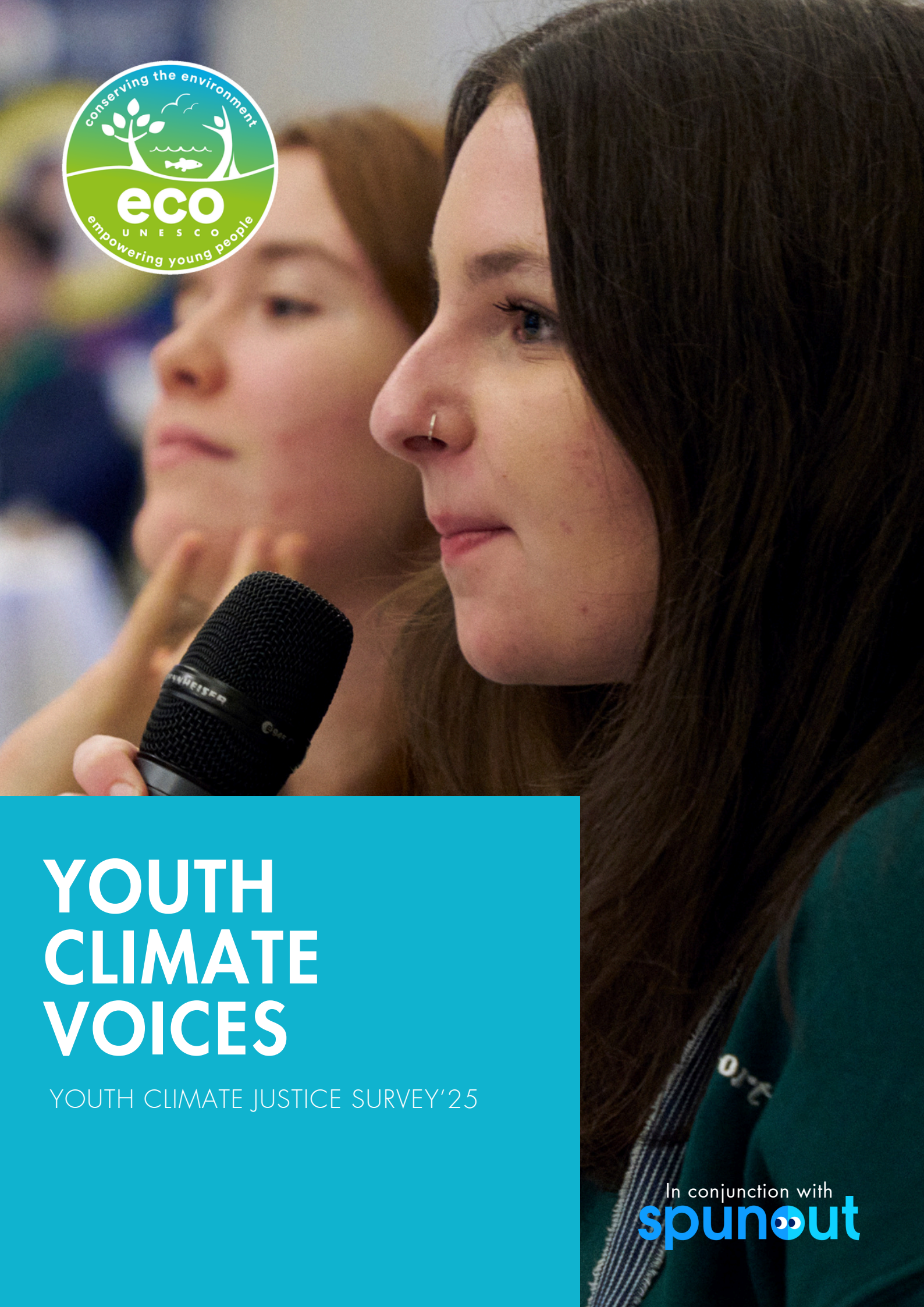


YOUTH CLIMATE VOICES

YOUTH CLIMATE JUSTICE SURVEY'25

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 2025, as part of the Youth Climate Justice Programme, ECO-UNESCO, in collaboration with SpunOut.ie, conducted an online survey with young people. The purpose of the survey was to highlight the voices of young people in Ireland, capturing their feelings about climate change, their understanding of climate justice, their willingness to serve as change agents, the barriers they face when getting involved, the areas they are interested in, and what support organisations like ECO-UNESCO can offer. It also explored other relevant topics such as climate education in the curriculum and green job prospects. The survey was released in September 2025 and included a range of multiple-choice questions alongside open-ended questions to allow for personalised responses.

This Survey saw a significant response rate with over 1000 respondents. 91.76% of the participants were below 25 years old, and more than 91.14% were in education. 32.47% of respondents are Dublin-based, and 67.53% are from other counties of Ireland. 65.94% of participants were female, 23.51% were male, 5.58% were non-binary, and 4.98% prefer not to say or self-identify their own gender.

This survey was part of The Youth Climate Justice Programme 2025 which has been funded by the Department of Education and Youth through the Youth Climate Justice Fund. This project involved multiple partners including Feachtas Óg-Ghluaiseacht Gaeilge and Poppintree Youth Project.

This report provides an analysis of the survey findings. The results will help survey users inform relevant stakeholders at the International, national, and local levels about young people's priorities on climate justice and will shape ECO-UNESCO's organisational work in the future.

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

1004

PARTICIPANTS

GENDER

66% FEMALE

24% MALE

5.58% NON-BINARY

4.98% SELF-IDENTITY AND OTHER

LOCATION

32% DUBLIN-BASED

68% FROM OTHER COUNTIES

EDUCATION

33.77% IN PRIMARY OR SECONDARY EDUCATION

51.59% IN HIGHER EDUCATION

7.22% IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND OTHER

AGE

91.76% 18 AND YOUNGER

28% BELOW 18

OCCUPATION

39.55% ENGAGED IN WORK

Key Findings



GROWING CONCERN, PERSISTENT ANXIETY

- In the Youth Climate Justice Survey 2024, 99.36% of the young people expressed concern about climate change (an increase from 97% in 2024). Notably, 27% of respondents indicated that they feel "extremely concerned" (unchanged from 2024).
- Levels of anxiety (75.5%) and fear (60.0%) remained high and similar to 2024. Though confidence and hopefulness declined while loneliness increased, the rise in eagerness to act offers a promising sign (increased from 45.0% to 47.9%).



TACKLING SYSTEMIC ISSUES IN SOLIDARITY

96.53% of young respondents acknowledged that climate justice views climate change as both an ethical and political issue, rather than merely an environmental concern. This perspective highlights the unjust and unequal dynamics produced by our current systems, in which certain countries bear greater responsibility than others. Participants also identified key areas where change is most urgently needed: big business practices (55.84%) and policies and regulations (36.59%) were considered the most critical for effectively addressing the climate crisis.



BARRIERS TO ACTING ON CLIMATE ISSUES

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

- 47% feel climate issues are not prioritised enough compared to other issues (e.g., far-right).
- 41% cite limited time as a barrier.
- 37% feel not being heard enough, and 34% don't know how to contact decision-makers.
- 27.41% fear backlash in the current social/political climate.
- 27% reported low confidence.



ENGAGING IN CLIMATE ACTION IN SCHOOL LIFE

When asked how they would like climate action integrated into school life:

- 74% want it to be part of a few different subjects
- 31% prefer it as an extracurricular activity, and 30% would like a student-led club
- Only 2.24% said they do not want it in their school curriculum at all

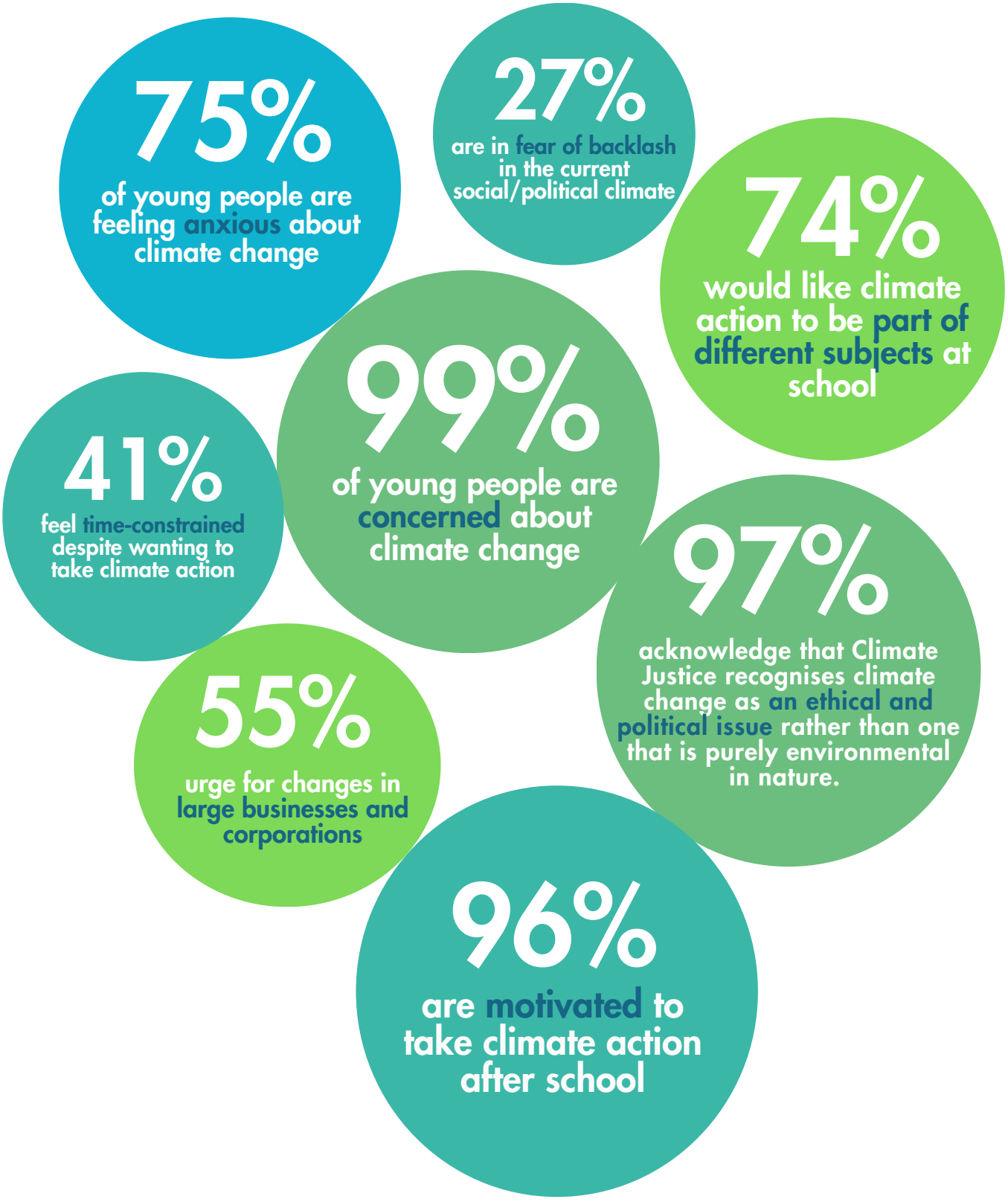


MANAGING ECO-ANXIETY

Although 15% of young people still haven't yet found a way to manage their eco-anxiety, The most helpful strategies reported by respondents include:

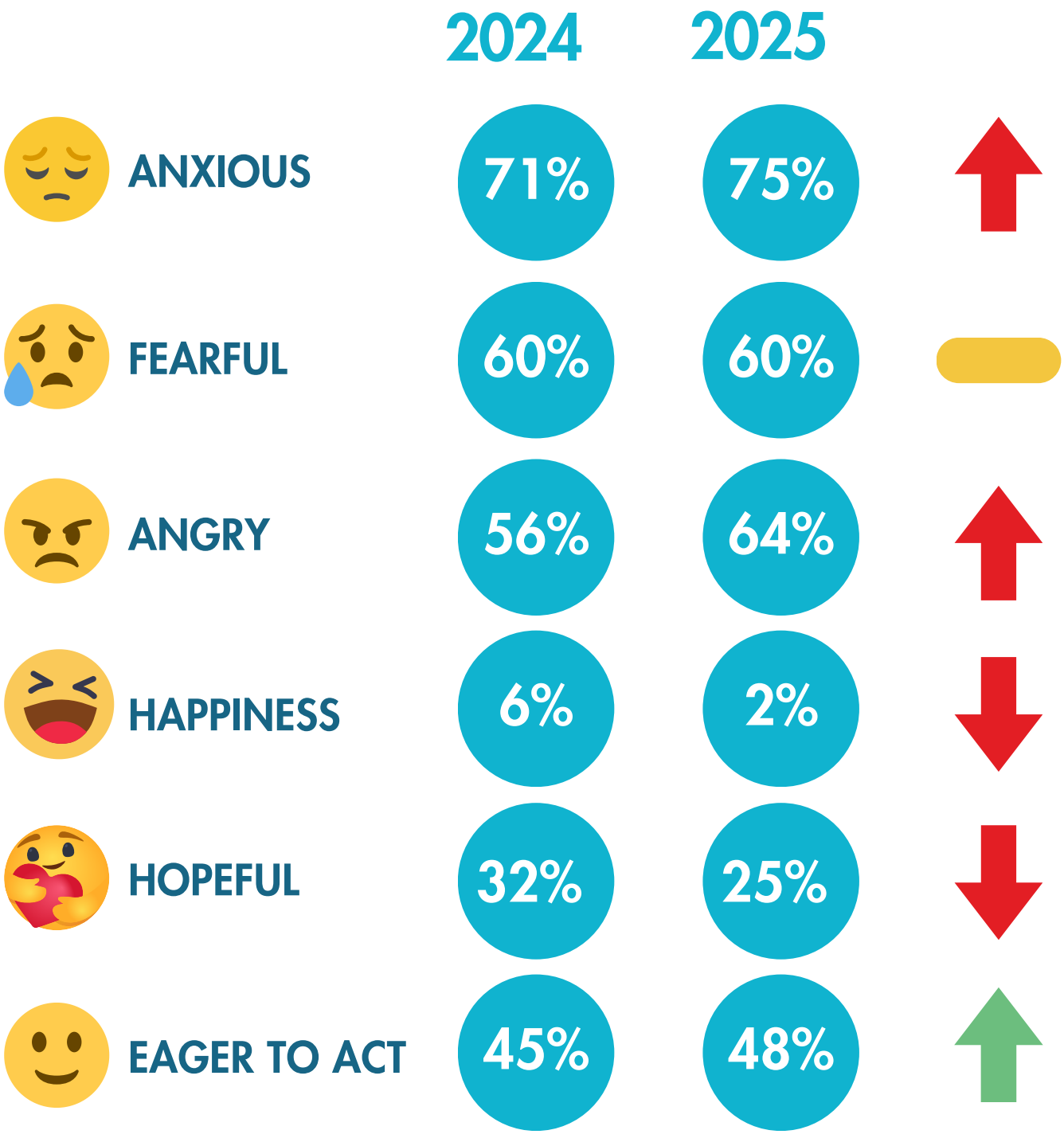
- Looking for positive climate news (37%)
- Making responsible changes to habits (e.g., saving energy) (35%)
- Learning about the solutions (29%)
- Spending time in nature (29%)
- Taking climate action (22%) - showcasing an admirable attitude and proactive approach

Key Findings



Thinking about climate change

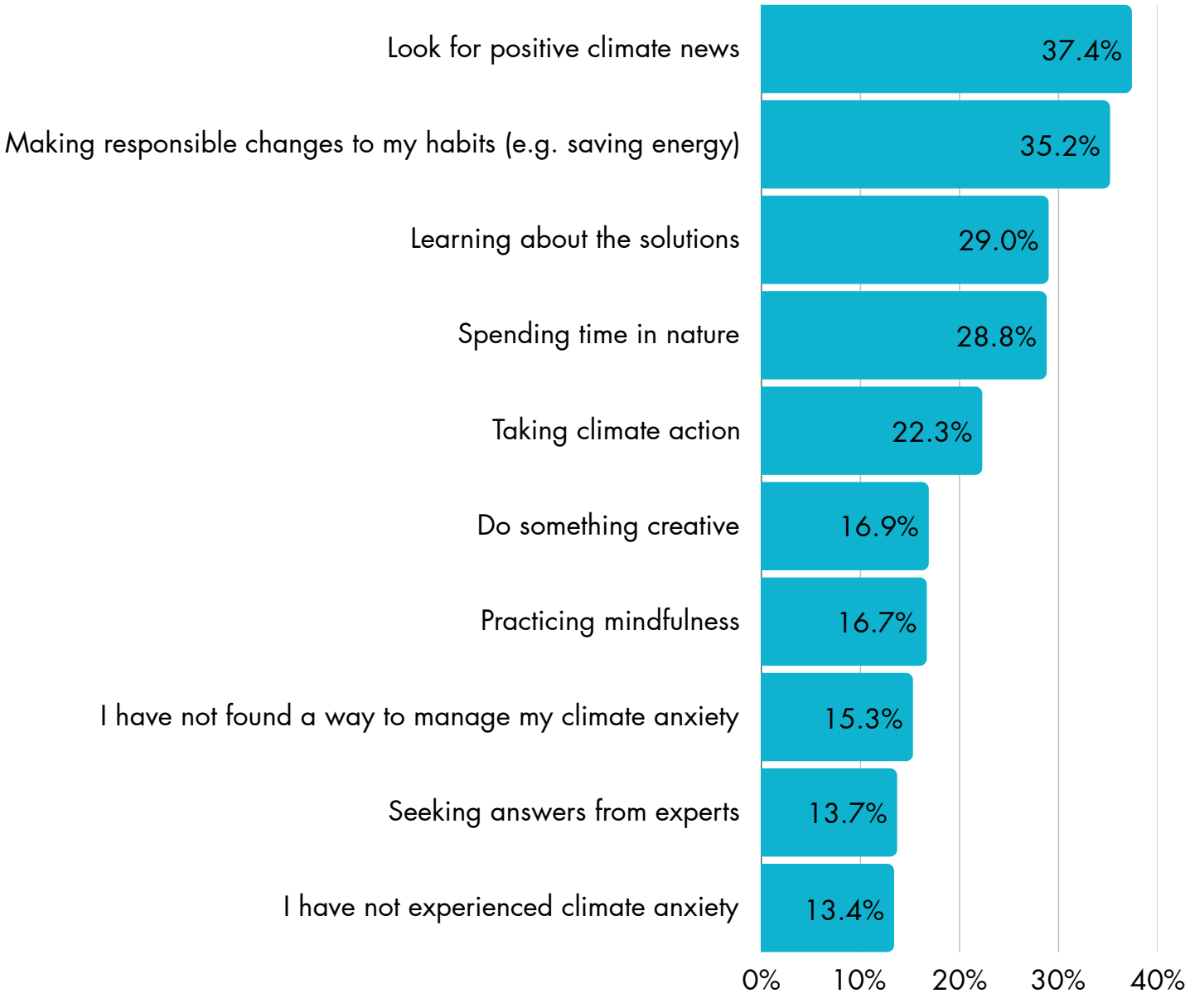
Levels of anxiety and fear remained high and broadly similar to 2024. In 2025, 75.5% of respondents reported feeling anxious (compared to 71% in 2024), while 60% reported fear (same in 2024). Notably, eagerness to act increased from 45% in 2024 to 47.9% in 2025, signalling a small but positive shift toward proactive engagement. However, feelings of confidence (11.8% → 4.8%), hopefulness (32.0% → 24.8%), and happiness (6% → 2%) declined. Reported loneliness rose from 8.5% to 12.2%. Overall, while negative emotions remain prominent, the rise in eagerness to act offers a promising direction for youth climate action.



Top things young people find helpful for managing climate or eco-anxiety

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.

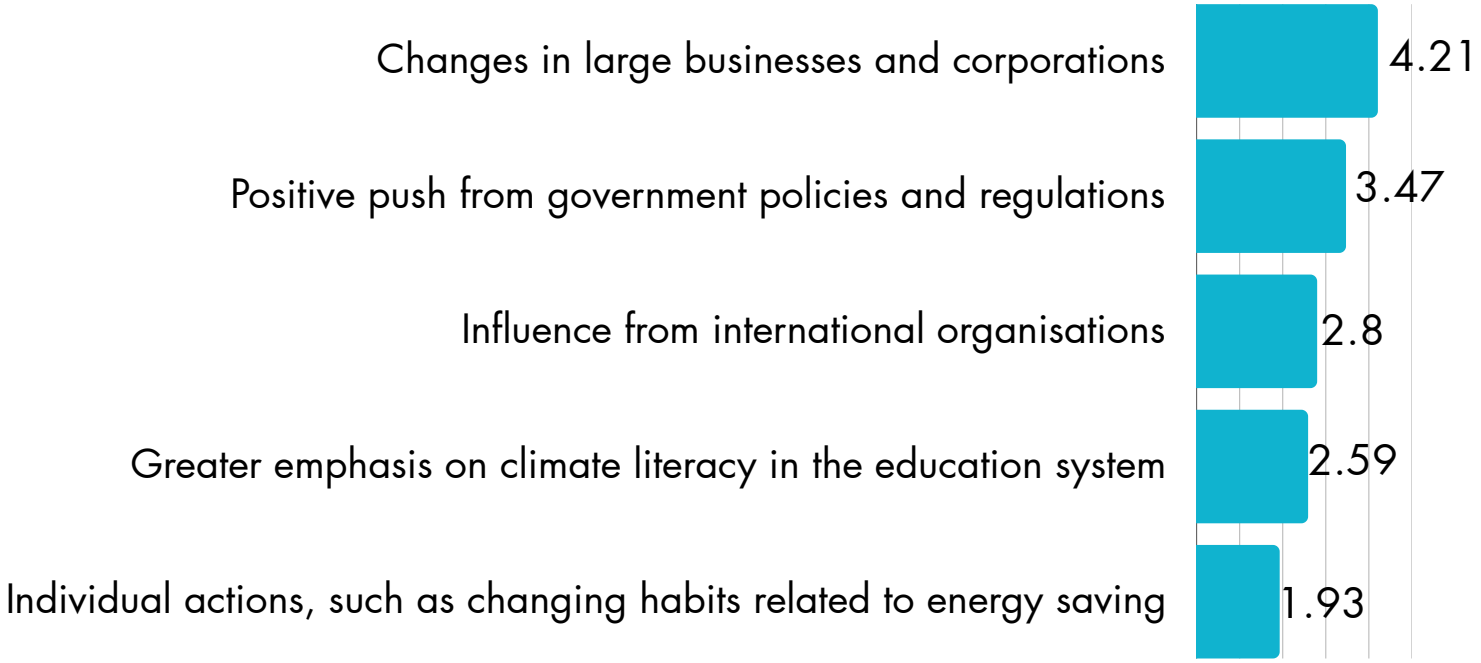
This year, 15.28% of young people have not yet found a way to manage their climate anxiety – a slight increase from 14% in 2024. Meanwhile, these findings continue to show that Irish young people are proactively seeking ways to channel their climate anxiety into constructive action, from personal lifestyle changes (35%) to engaging with hopeful narratives (37%) and solutions (29%). The most helpful strategies reported by respondents include:



What Young People See as Most Urgent for Tackling Climate Change

When asked to rank which areas most urgently need change to support climate change mitigation, young people placed changes in large businesses and corporations firmly at the top – with 55.84% selecting it as their primary priority. The second most crucial area was positive push from government policies and regulations, chosen by 36.59% of respondents. Influence from international organisations ranked third, followed closely by greater emphasis on climate literacy in the education system and individual actions (such as changing energy-saving habits).

Young People's Ratings of Urgency for Climate Action (score 1–5)



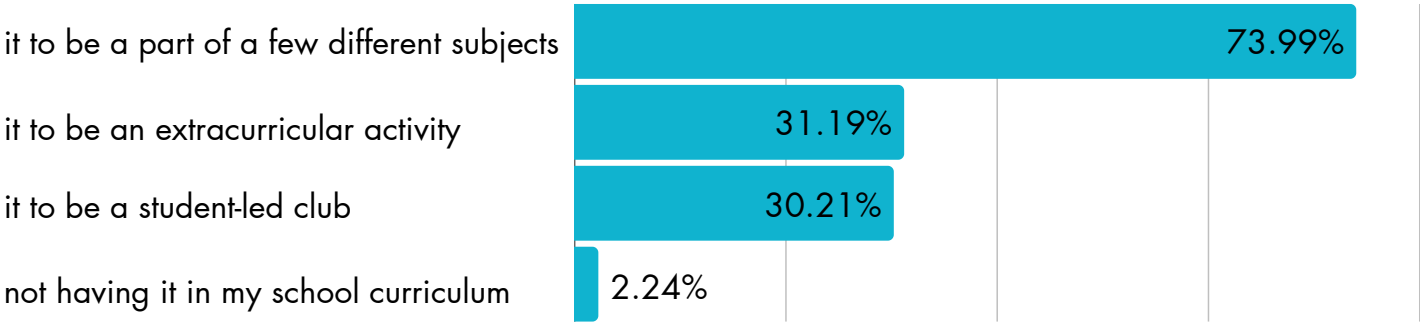
Notably, young people recognise the significance of learning and taking personal action rated only similarly high as the role of international organisations, which reflects a balanced understanding that systemic change and individual effort must go hand in hand.

How would young people like to engage in climate action?

Climate Action in School Life

When asked how they would like to see climate action integrated into their school experience, young people could select all options that applied. The chart below shows the percentage of respondents who chose each preference. Overwhelmingly, students want climate action to be part of a few different subjects, followed by extracurricular activities and student-led clubs. Very few said they do not want it in the curriculum at all.

I would like climate action to be a bigger part of my school life, I prefer



Motivation for After-School Climate Action

Young people were also asked how motivated they feel to engage in climate action outside of school hours. The chart below shows the breakdown of responses. When we combine those who said they are moderately, very, or extremely motivated, the total number of motivated students is substantially larger than any single category, which reflects a strong appetite for after-school climate engagement. In total, 95.66% out of 1004 respondents expressed some level of motivation.



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

When we asked young people what gets in the way of taking climate action, a few things came up again and again. The most common barrier was feeling that climate issues just aren't prioritised enough compared to everything else. Factors checked by a quarter of respondents include limited time, not feeling heard, not knowing how to contact decision-makers, fear of backlash, and low confidence. Some also pointed to practical obstacles: unsure where to find like-minded groups, lack of advocacy skills, or simply no local youth opportunities nearby. A small but significant number mentioned disability or lack of family support. In all, most of these barriers are not about apathy – they are about access, visibility, and feeling that their voice actually matters.

47% I feel that climate issues are not prioritised enough compared to other issues, e.g., far-right concerns

41% Time constraints

37% I don't feel heard enough

34% Don't know how to contact decision-makers

27% Fear of backlash in the current social/political climate

27% Low confidence

26% Unsure where to find groups or online communities

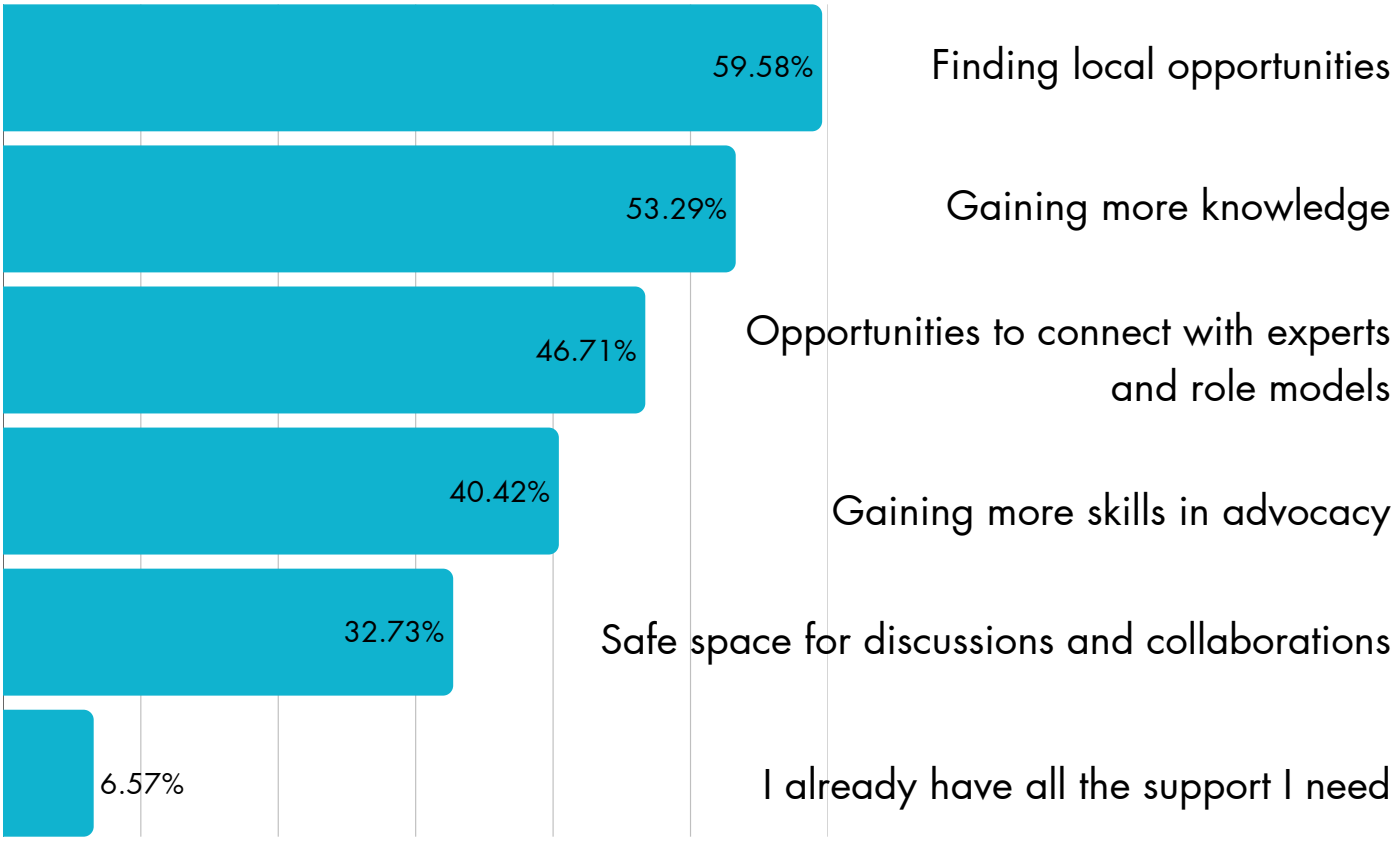
24% Lack advocacy skills or training

16% No local youth groups or opportunities nearby

10% Disability limits my ability to participate

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 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 to support them. The most requested support was creating action opportunities for young people to take part in (53.85%), followed closely by communicating with decision-makers on their behalf (53.01%). Offering training and education programmes (44.34%) and giving young people a platform to amplify their voice (41.54%) were also highly valued.

54% Create action opportunities for young people to take part in

53% Communication with decision makers on young people's behalf (e.g. surveys, letters)

44% Offer training and education opportunities

42% Give young people a platform to amplify their voice

34% Provide opportunities to connect young people with experts and decisionmakers

26% Support young people to learn knowledge and develop skills

23% Offer information and guidance on green career

23% Provide an open door for questions, discussions, and debates

1.5% of all respondents who selected "Other" wish organisations to::

Make climate action accessible to all

Get a petition and send it to the government

Provide opportunities for people of any level of understanding of climate justice

Make the information more accessible, potentially trying trendy advertising to attract public attention

Advocate for reducing barrier to green jobs

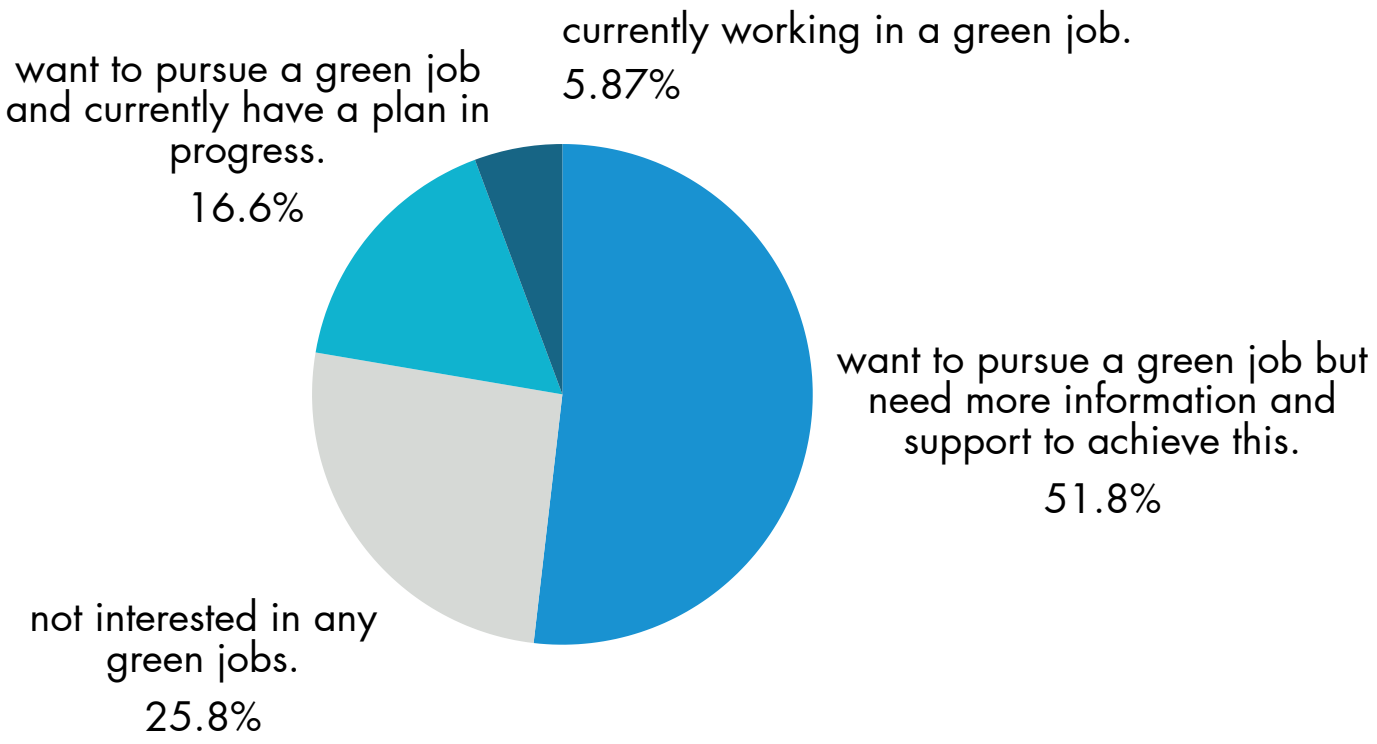
Youth on Green and Sustainability Career

'Green jobs' are jobs that aim to reduce environmental damage, restore nature, reduce emissions, and protect the environment. These can include roles in: sustainable business or agriculture, renewable energy and energy efficiency, electric transport and electric vehicles, nature protection or eco-friendly tourism.

When asked about their interest in green jobs – findings highlight a strong appetite for green careers, alongside a clear gap in resources and guidance. Over half of young respondents (53.57%) said they want to pursue a green job but need more information and support to achieve this. A further 17.20% already have a plan in progress, while only 5.87% are currently working in a green job. Just over a quarter (26.71%) expressed no interest.

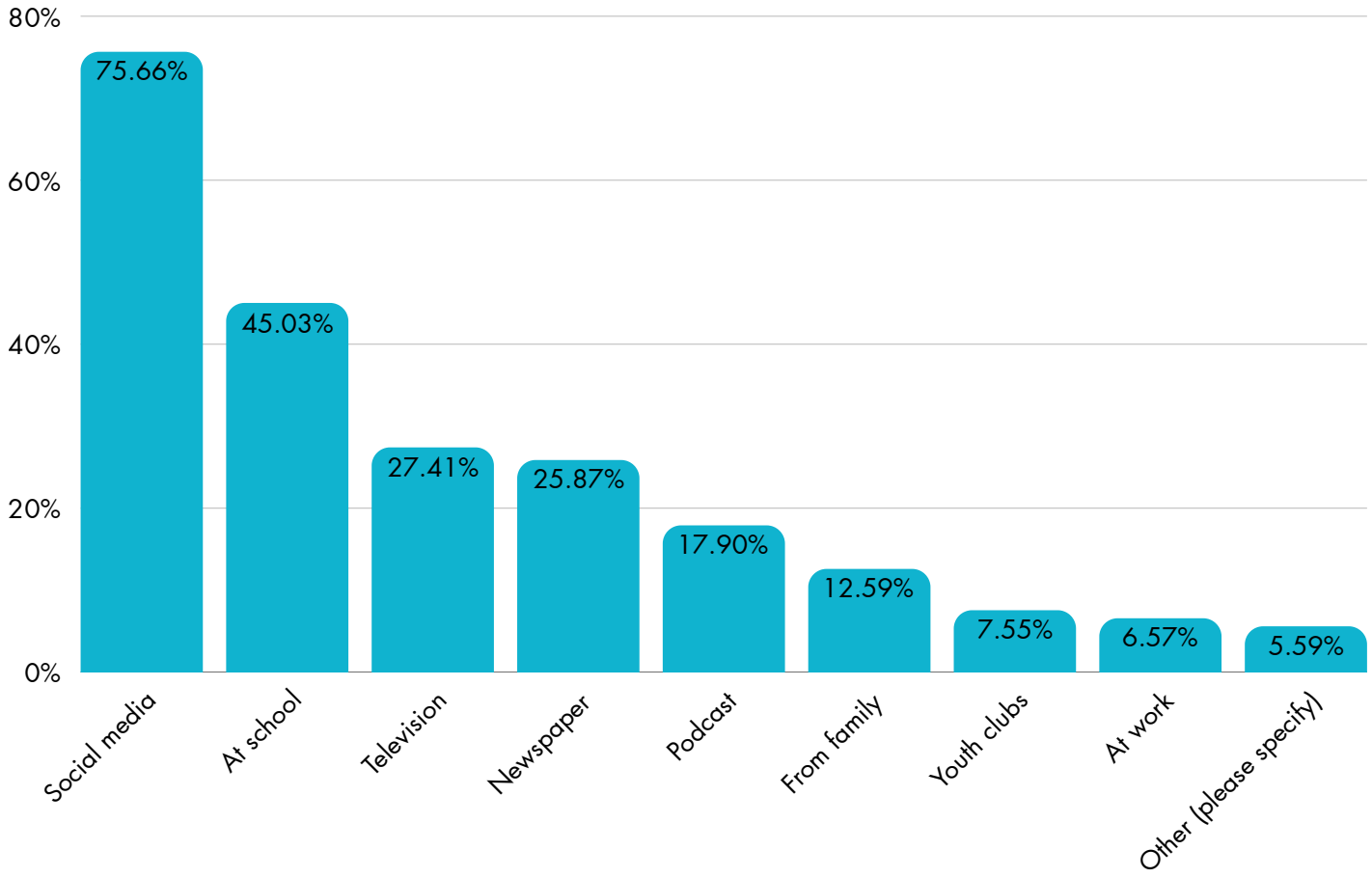
ECO-UNESCO has been running its Green Youth Employability Programme since 2023, offering workshops, mentorship, and action-based learning to help young people navigate this path. Participant feedback has been consistently positive, with many reporting increased confidence, clearer career direction, and practical skills. The programme demonstrates how targeted support can bridge the gap between interest and action – a model that could be scaled to meet the evident demand.

Are you interested in a green job or a sustainability/climate-related career?



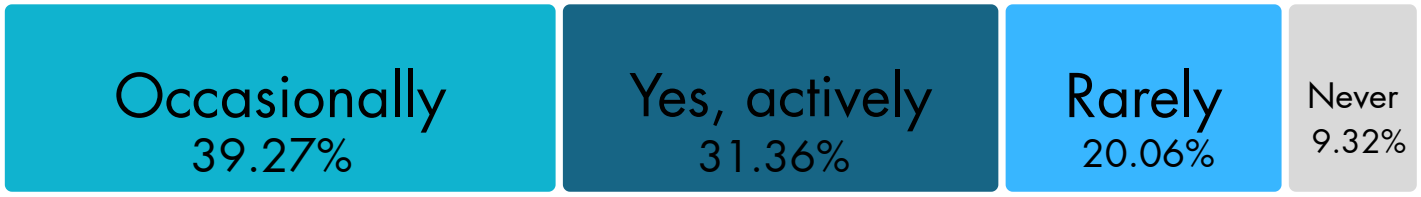
How Young People Access Climate Information

Young people were first asked where they normally get information about climate change. Social media emerged as the dominant source, with over three-quarters of respondents turning to platforms like Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube. Schools also play an important role, cited by nearly half of participants, while traditional media such as television and newspapers were mentioned by about a quarter each.



Online engagement with climate informtion

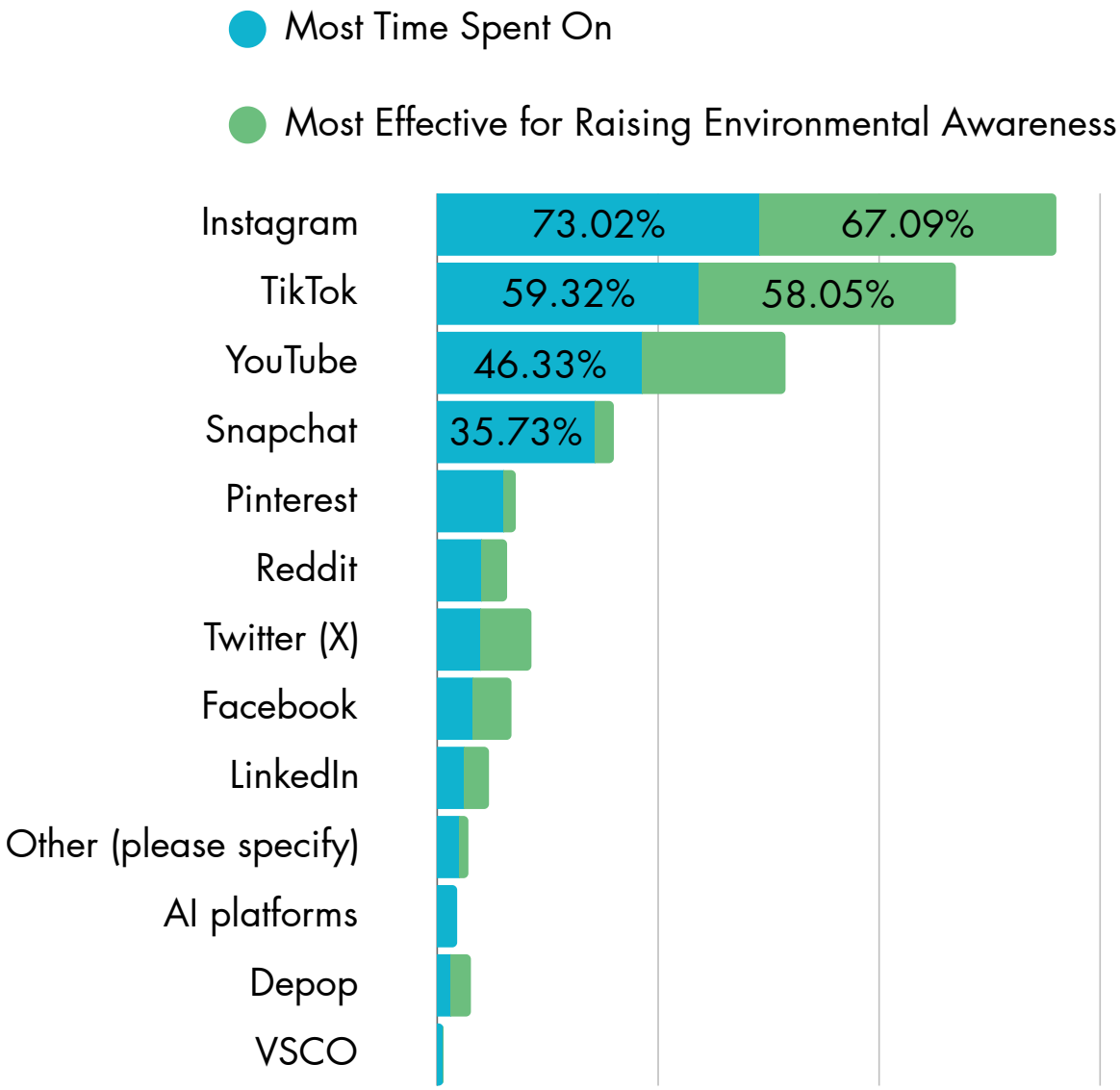
When it comes to following climate-focused content online, just over 30% of young people said they actively follow climate change or climate justice accounts, and another 39% do so occasionally. Only 9% said they never follow such content, suggesting that most young people encounter climate information on social media at least from time to time.



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

Regarding platforms use most often and found to be most effective for raising environmental awareness, young people consistently ranked Instagram highest – similar to previous years, 73% use it most often, and 67% most effective. TikTok followed closely (59% usage, 58% effectiveness), while YouTube was used by 46% and 33% effective. Snapchat had moderate usage (36%) but was less effective for influencing (4%).

Notably, only 4.5% of respondents cited AI platforms as a source of climate information – not a huge reliance. This may indicate a general attitude of keen learning with discretion and rigour, while also pointing to space for further exploration in future studies.



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.

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.



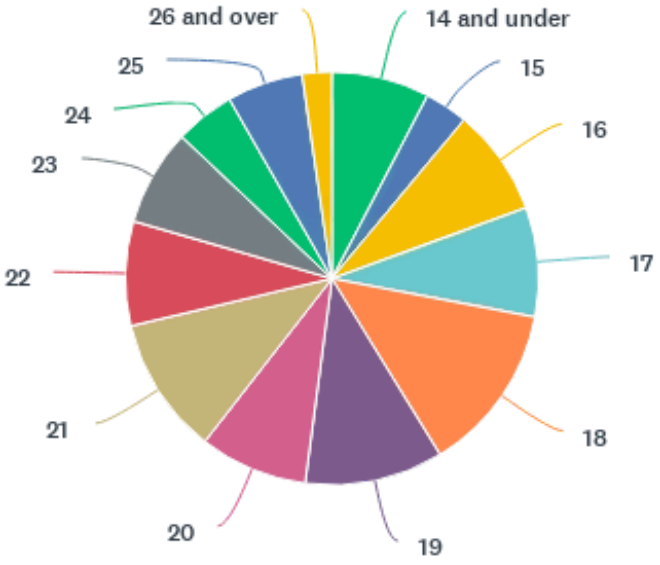
If you could send one message to world leaders about climate justice, what would it be?

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.

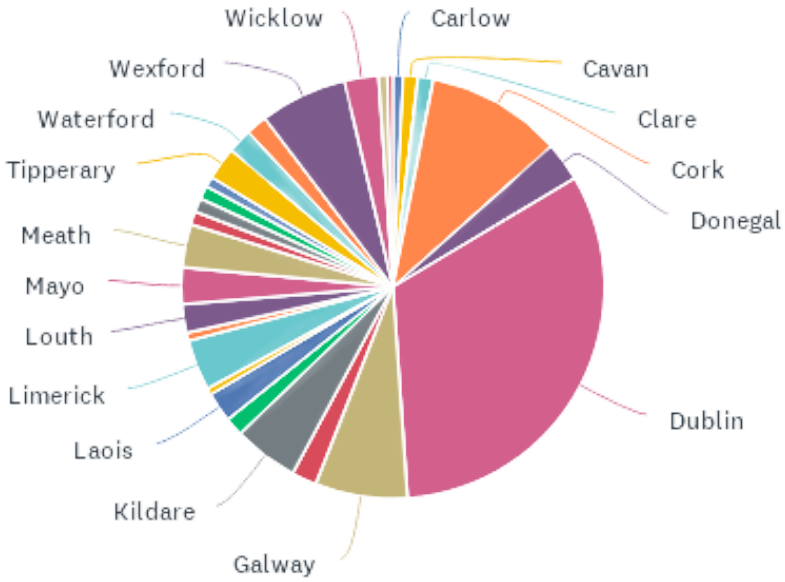


Appendices

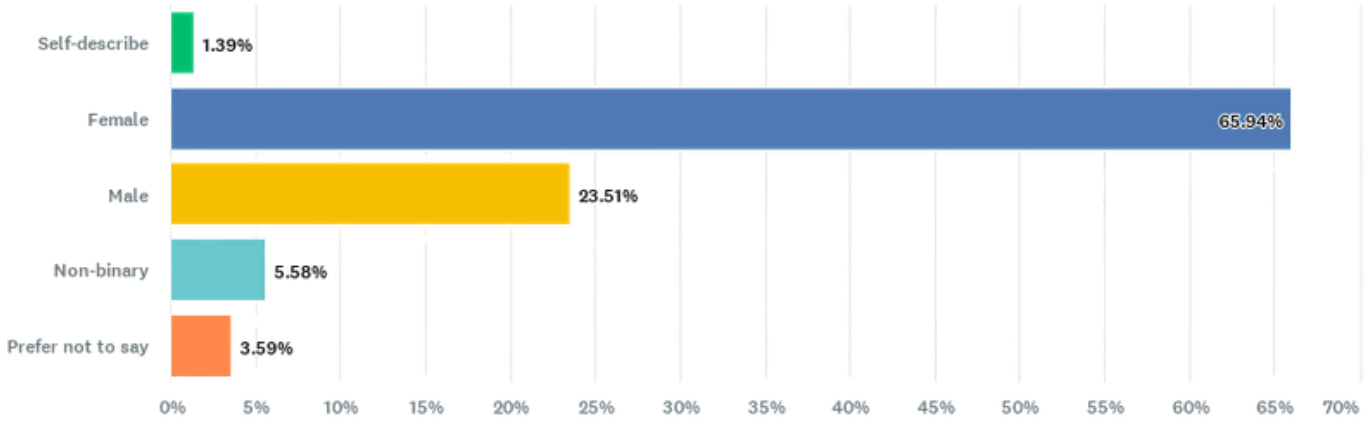
Q1 What age are you?



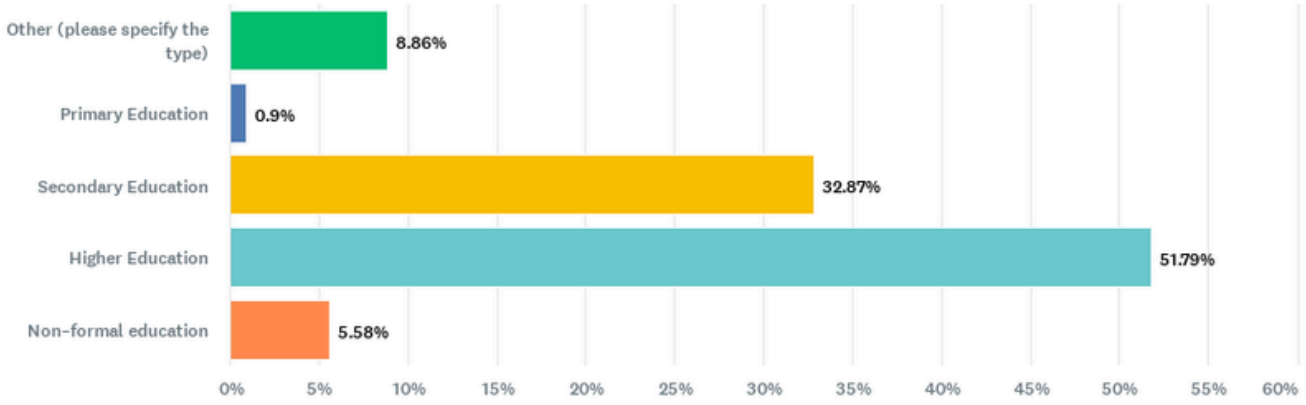
Q2 Where do you live?



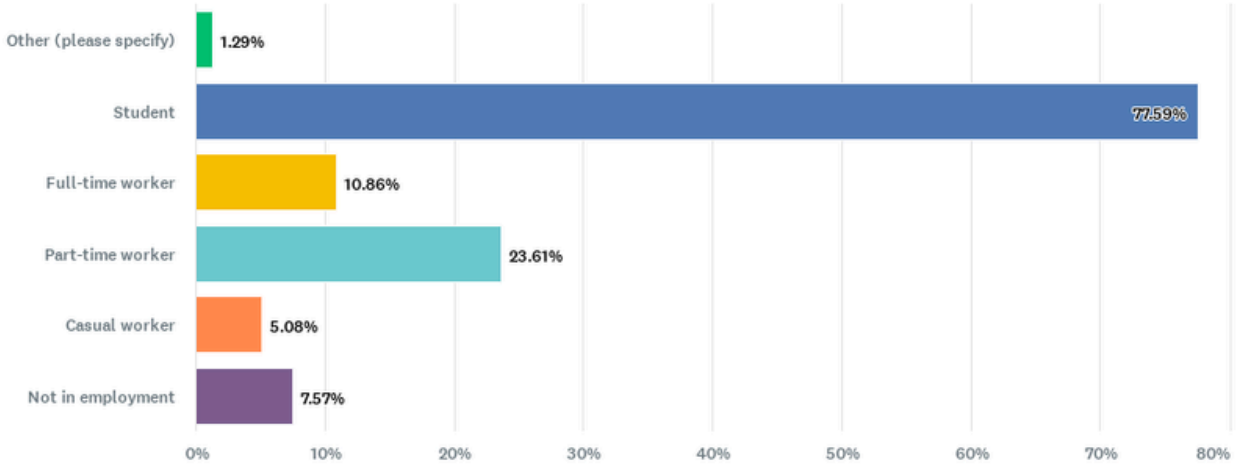
Q3 What is your gender?



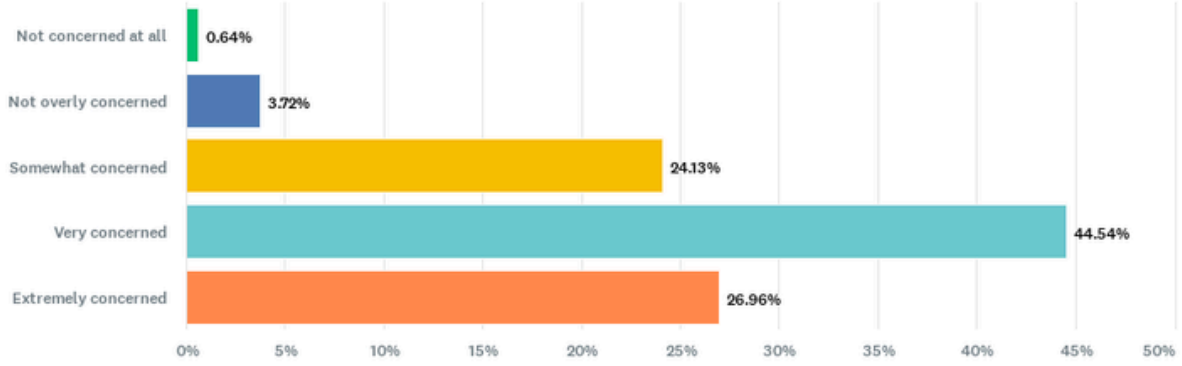
Q4 Are you currently involved in any form of education?



Q5 Which of the following best describes your current occupation? (Select all that apply)

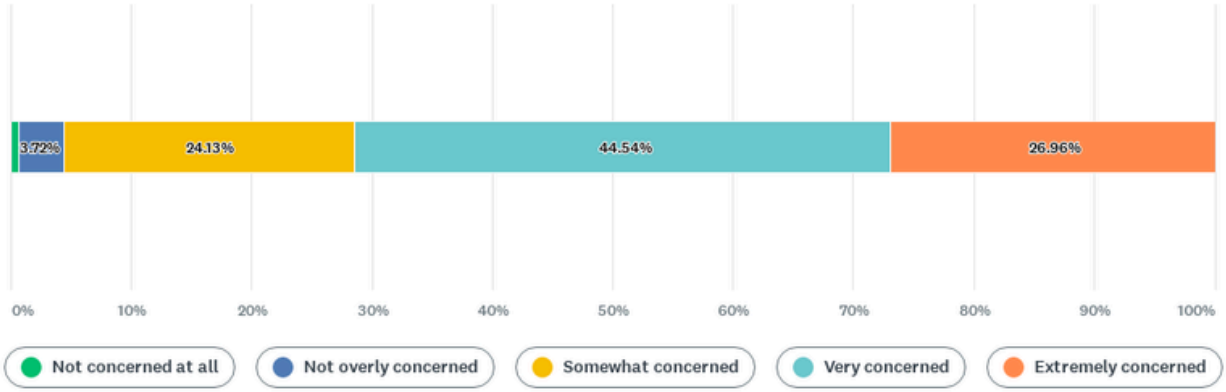


Q6 How concerned do you feel about climate change?



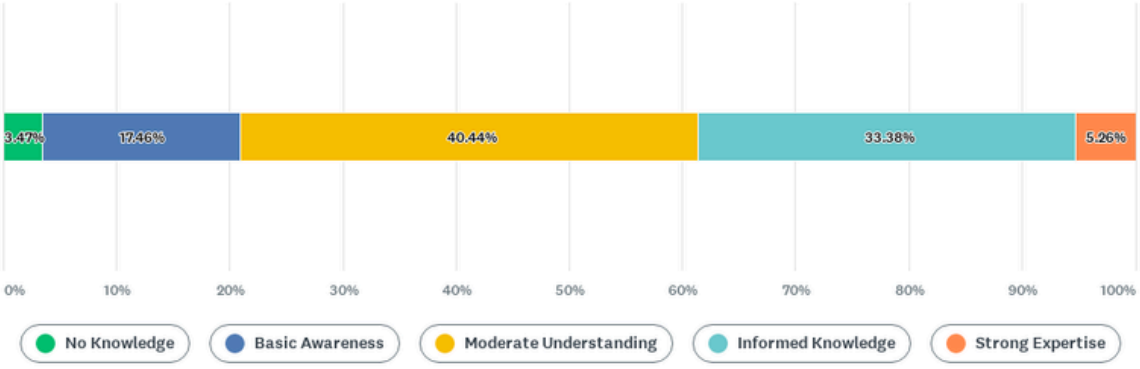
Q6 779 responses

How concerned do you feel about climate change?



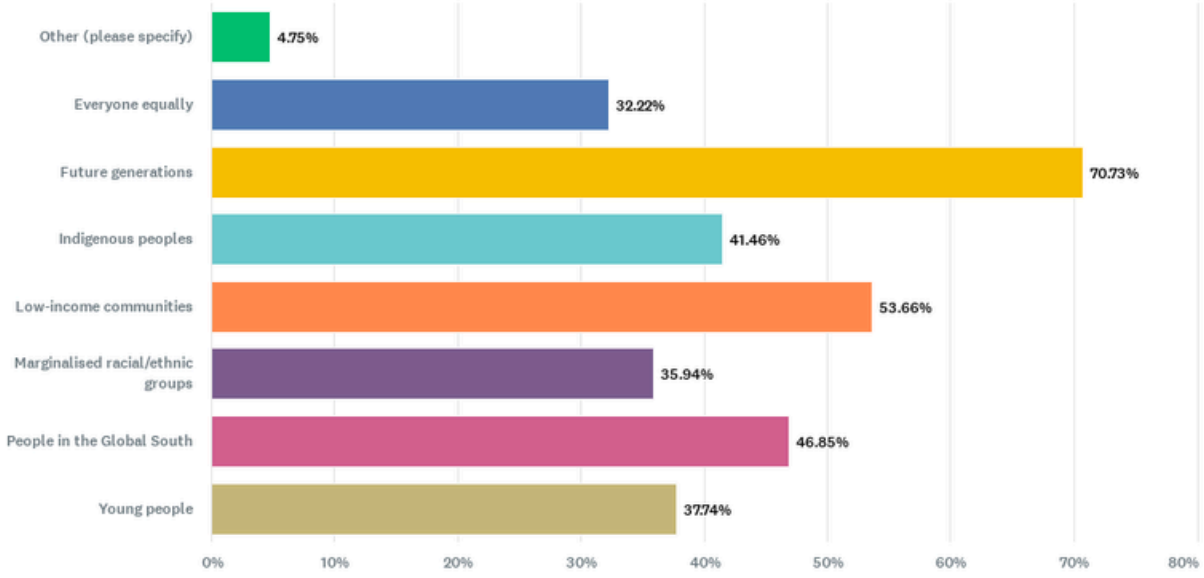
Q7 779 responses

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?



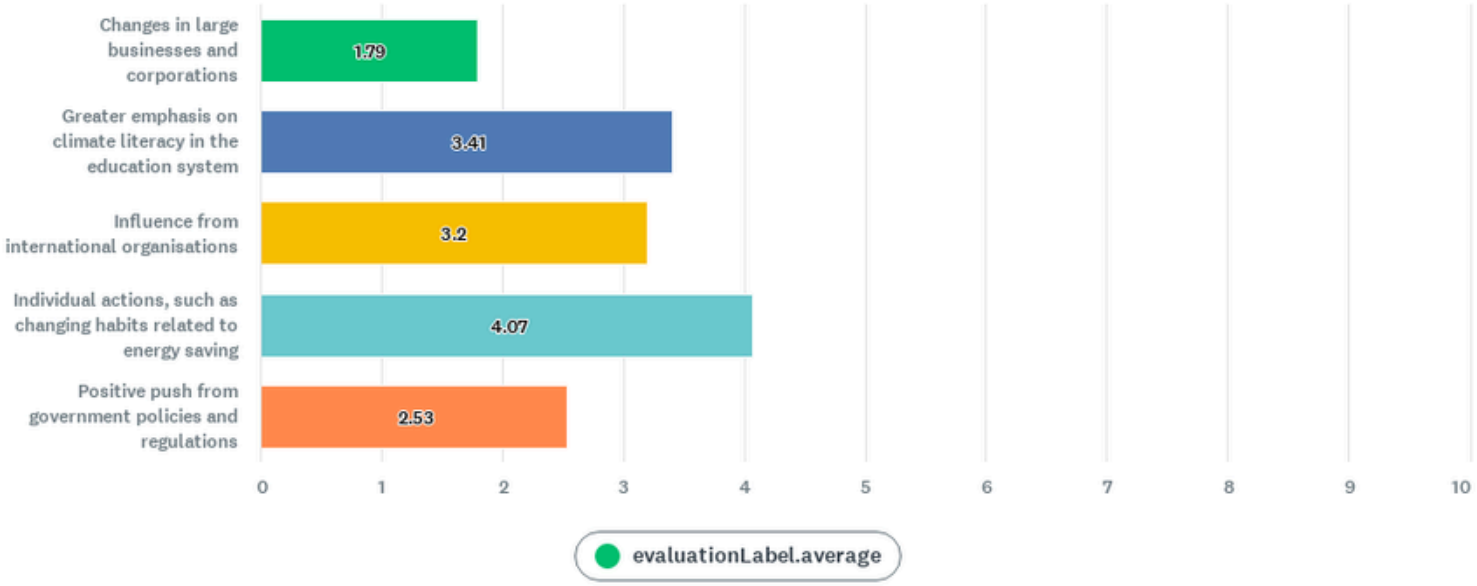
Q8 779 responses

Who do you think is most affected by climate change? (Select all that apply)



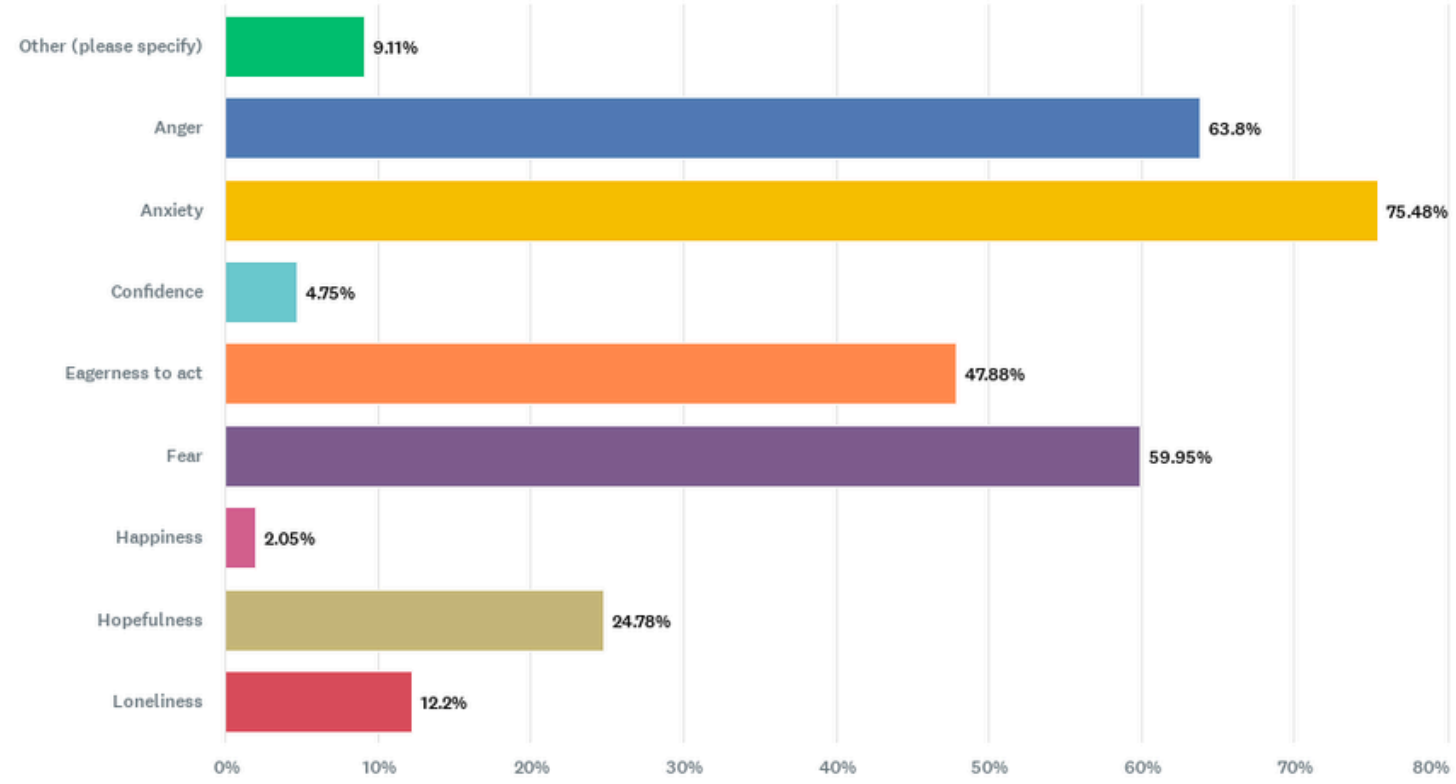
Q10 779 responses

Please rank the following areas in order of how urgently they need change to support climate change mitigation (1 = most urgent, 5 = least urgent):



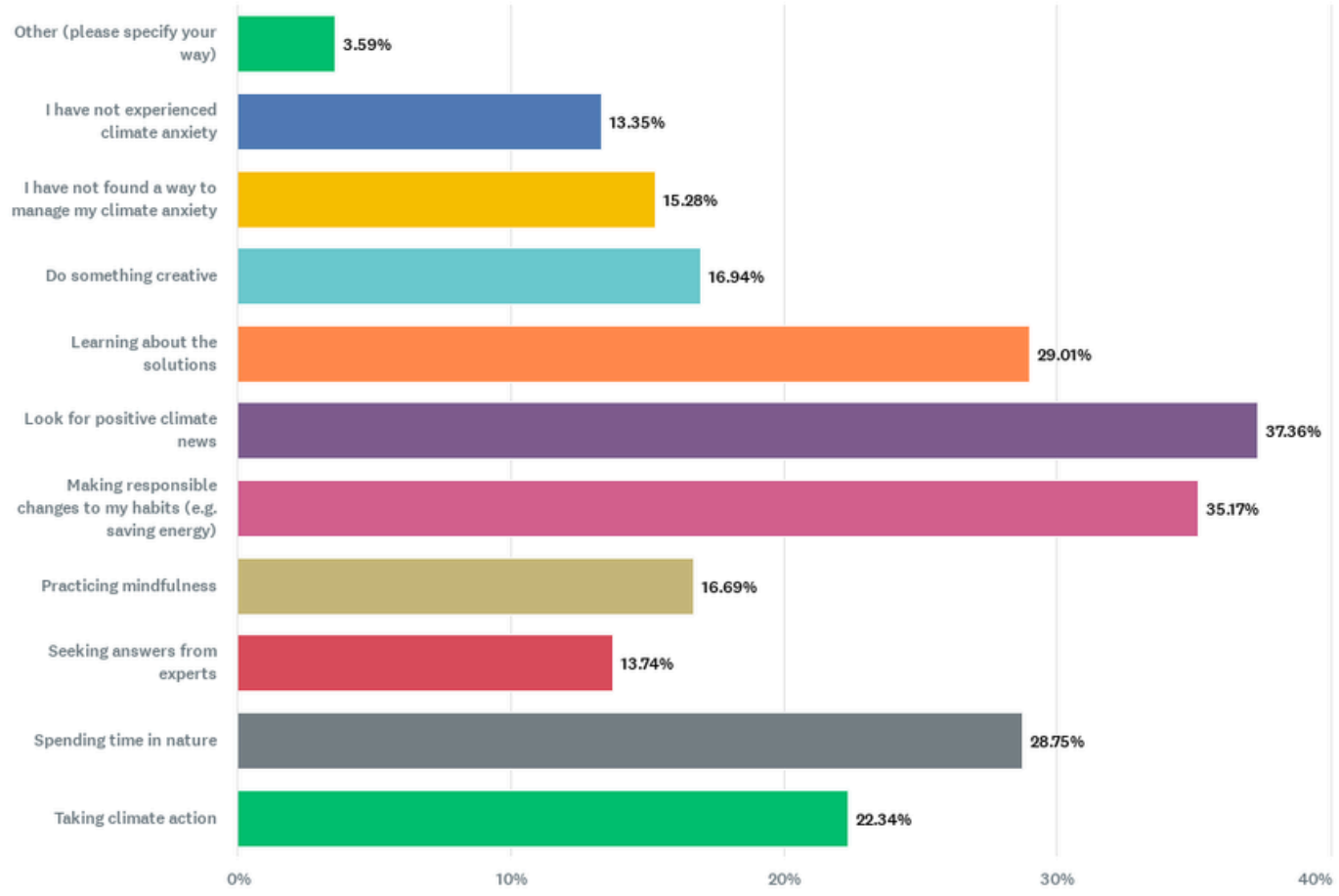
Q11 779 responses

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



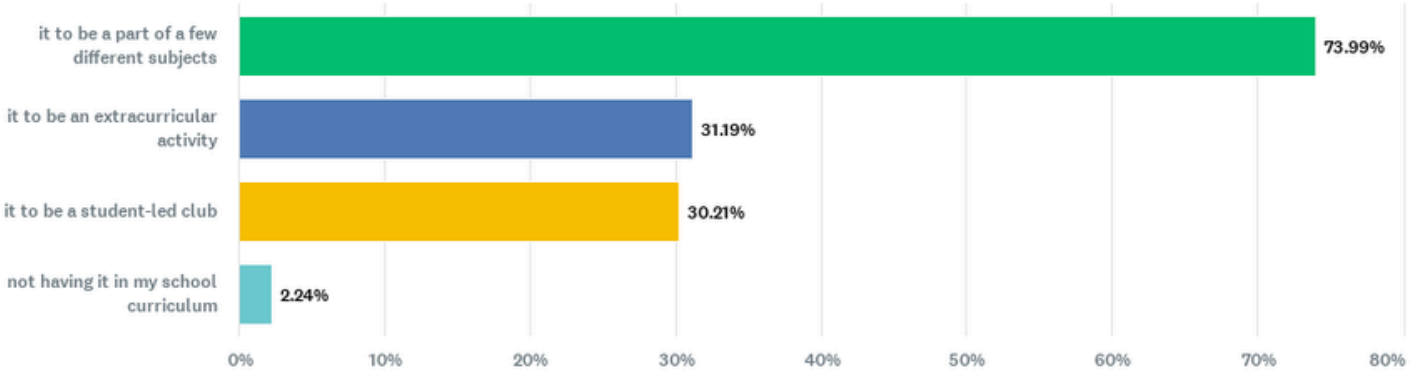
Q12 779 responses

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 helps you manage climate anxiety? (Select all that apply)



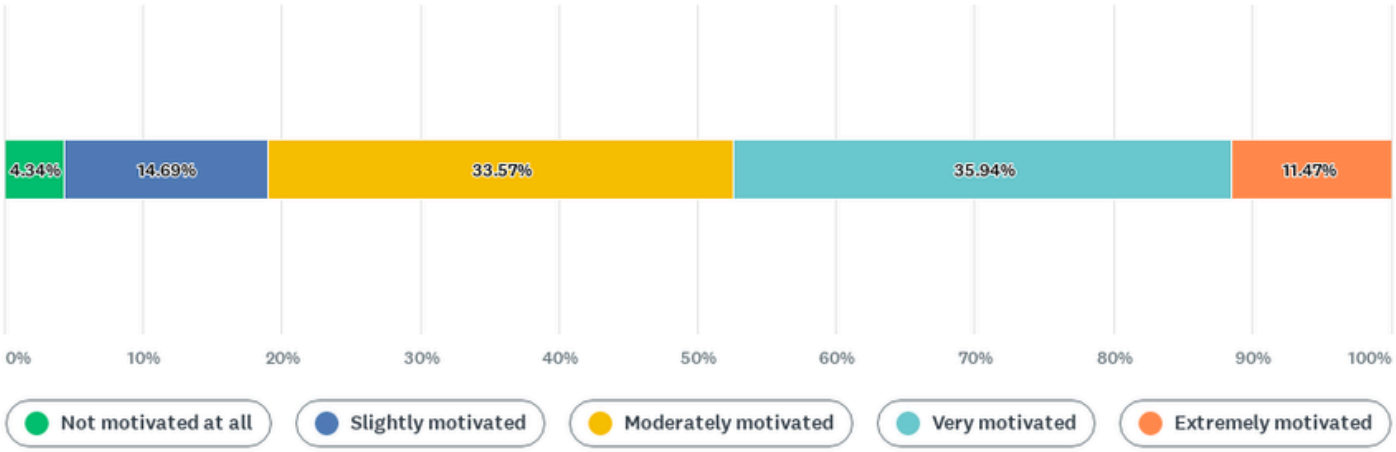
Q14 715 responses

I would like climate action to be a bigger part of my school life, I prefer _____ (Select all that apply)



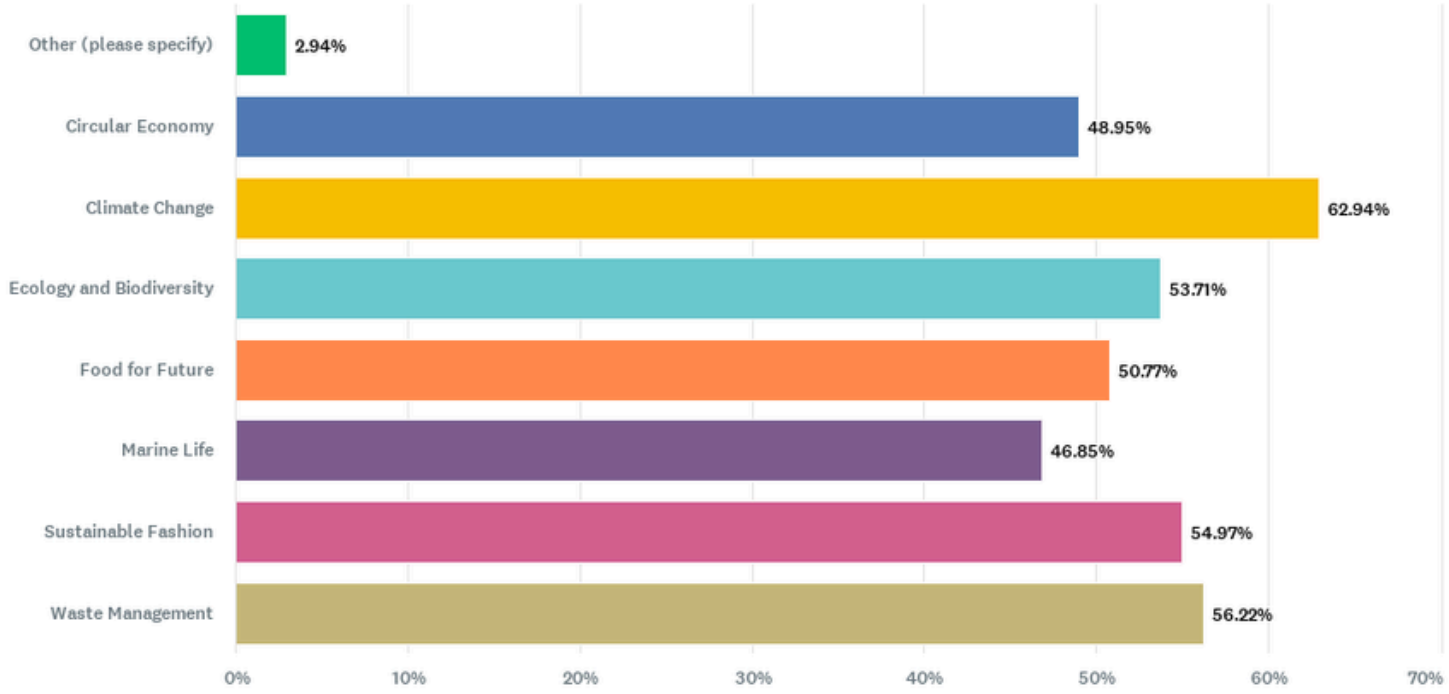
Q15 715 responses

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



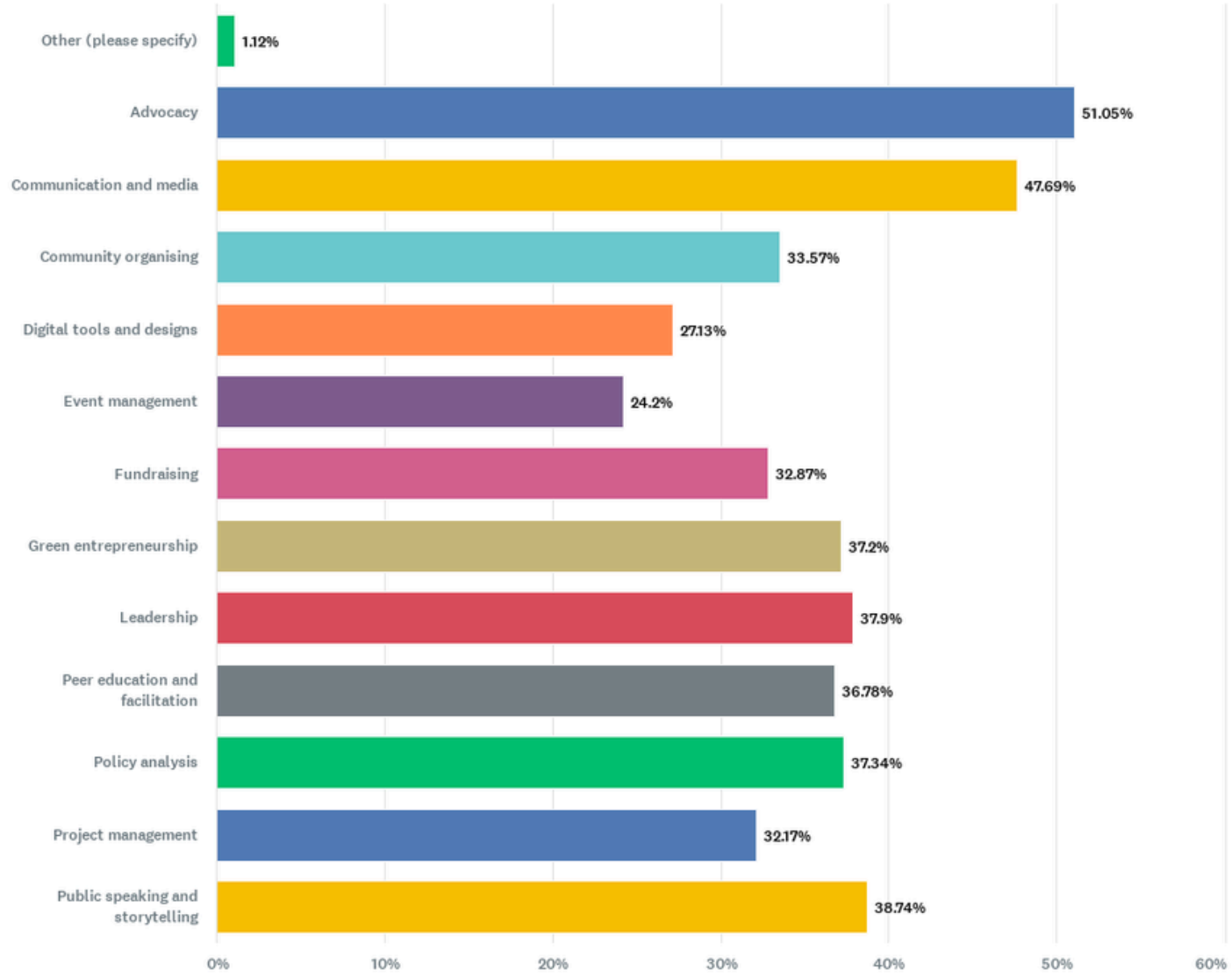
Q16 715 responses

Which areas of knowledge would you like to learn about? (Select all that apply)



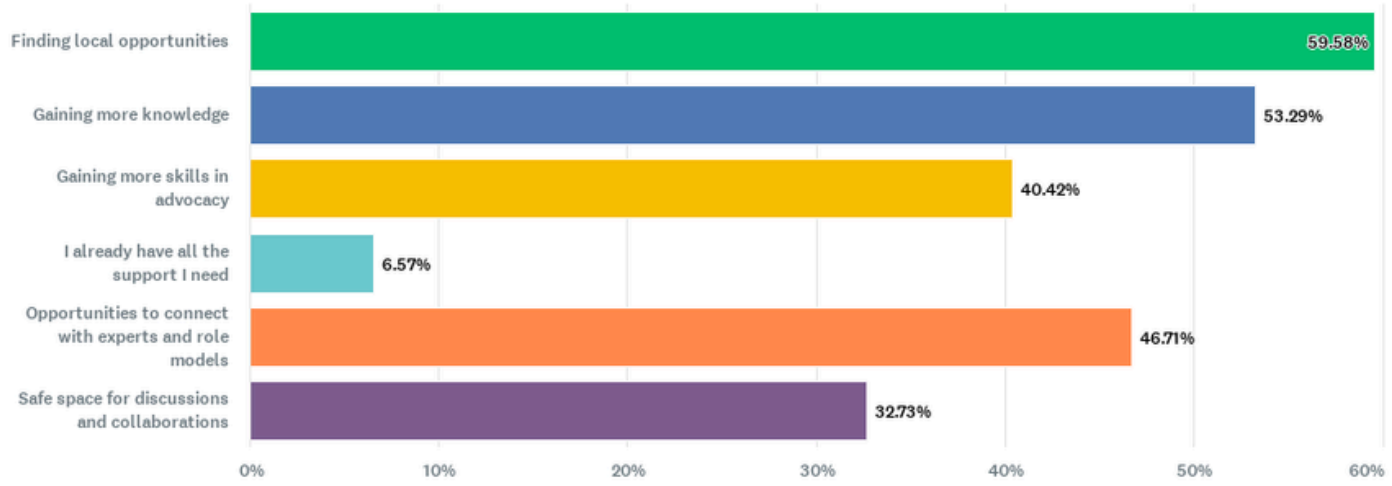
Q17 715 responses

What skills you want to develop as a climate advocate? (Select all that apply)



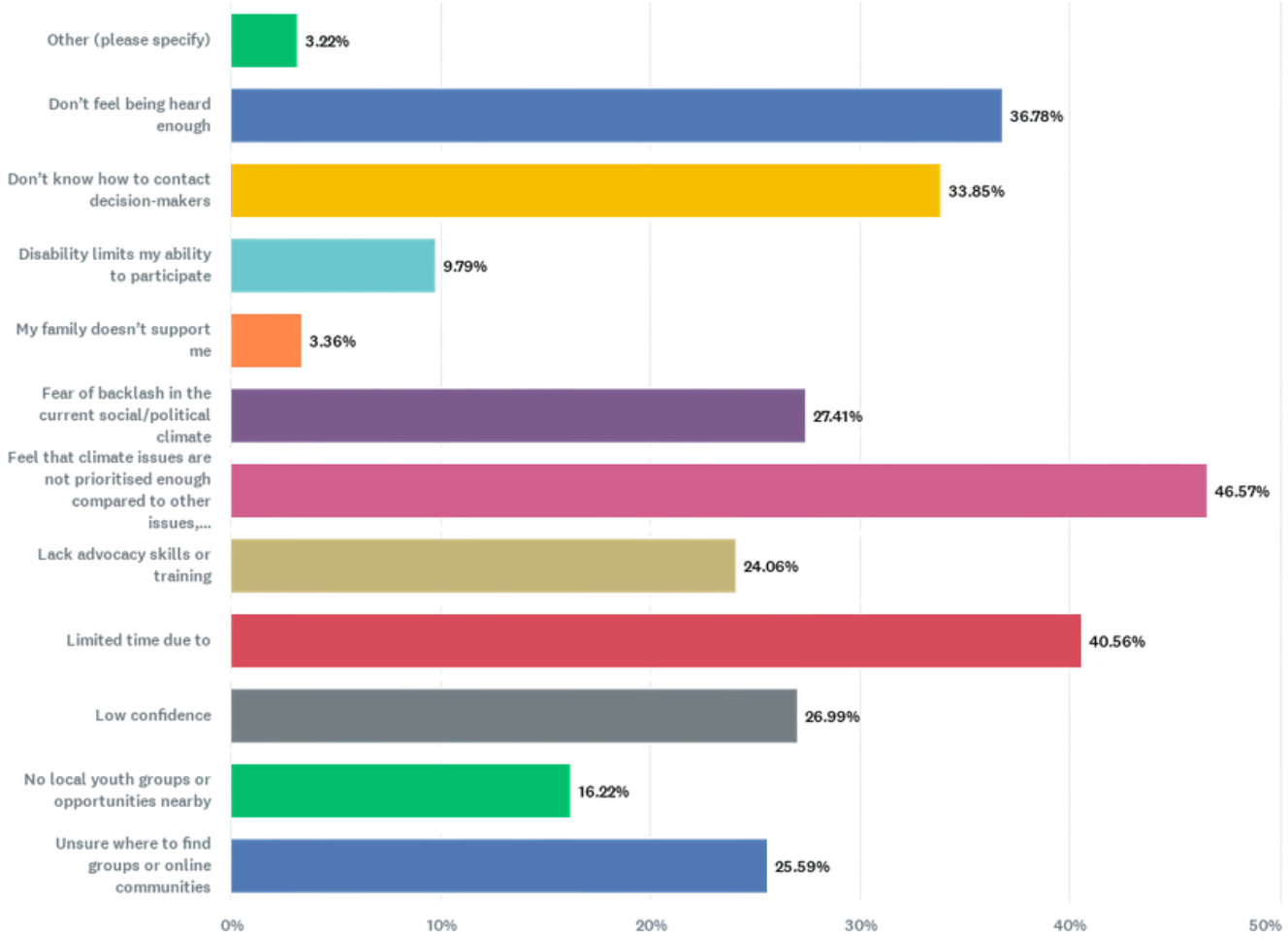
Q18 715 responses

What types of supports do you need to get more involved in climate action? (Select all that apply)



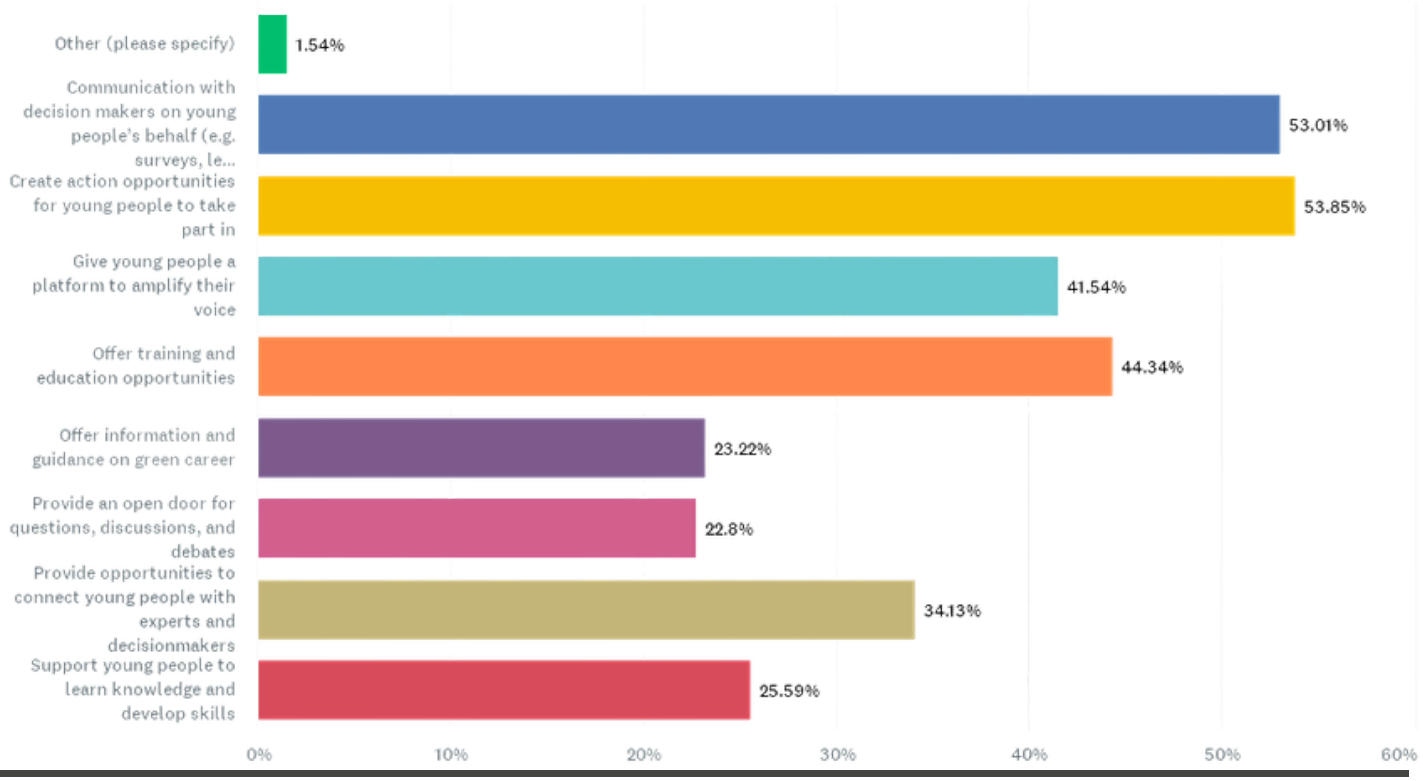
Q19 715 responses

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



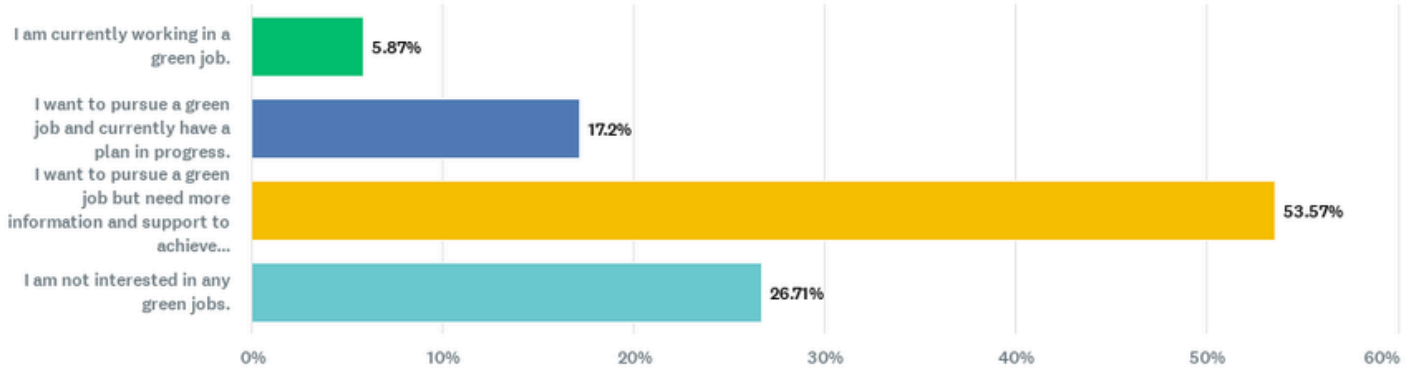
Q20 715 responses

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



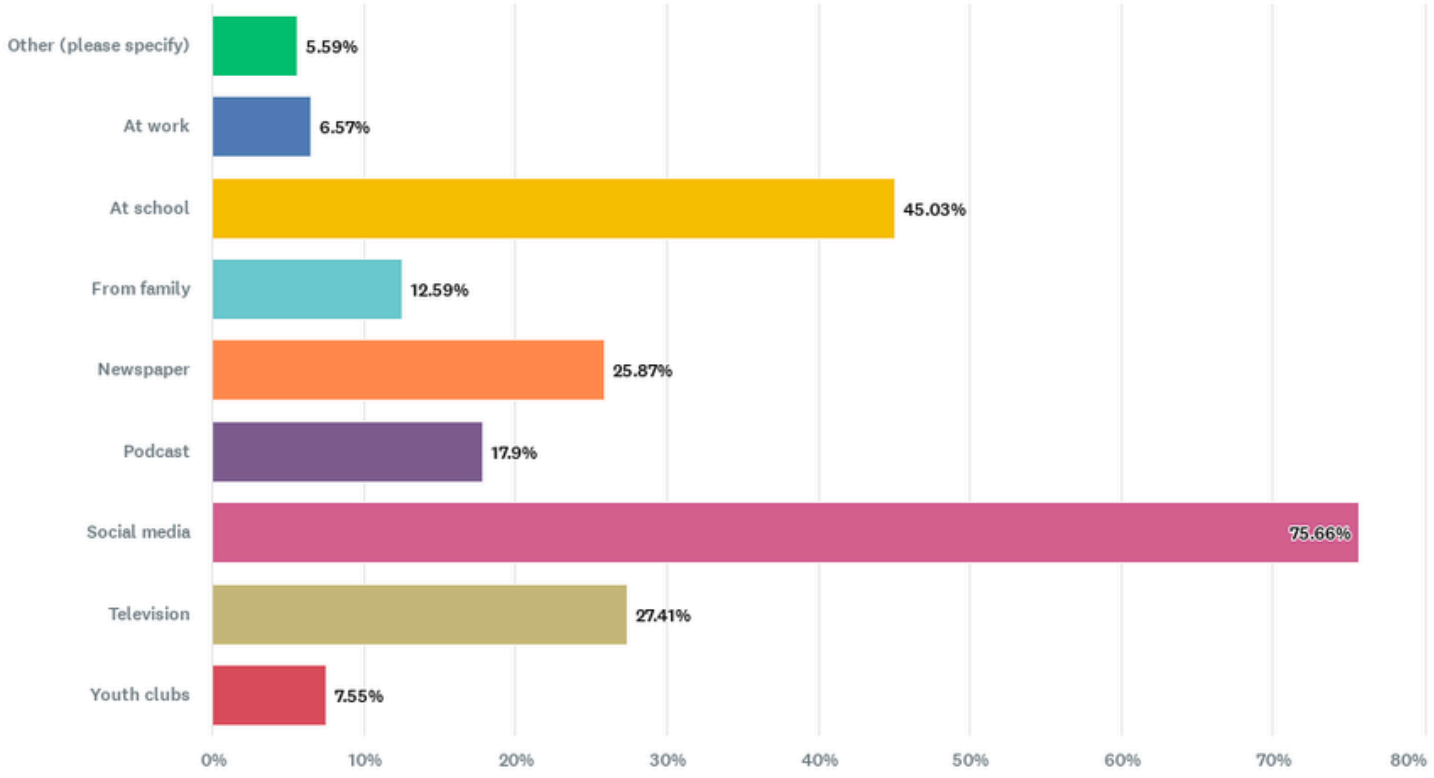
Q21 715 responses

'Green jobs' are jobs that aim to reduce environmental damage, restore nature, reduce emissions, and protect the environment. These can include roles in: sustainable business or agriculture, renewable energy and energy efficiency, electric transport and electric vehicles, nature protection or eco-friendly tourism. Are you interested in a 'green job' or a sustainability/climate-related career?



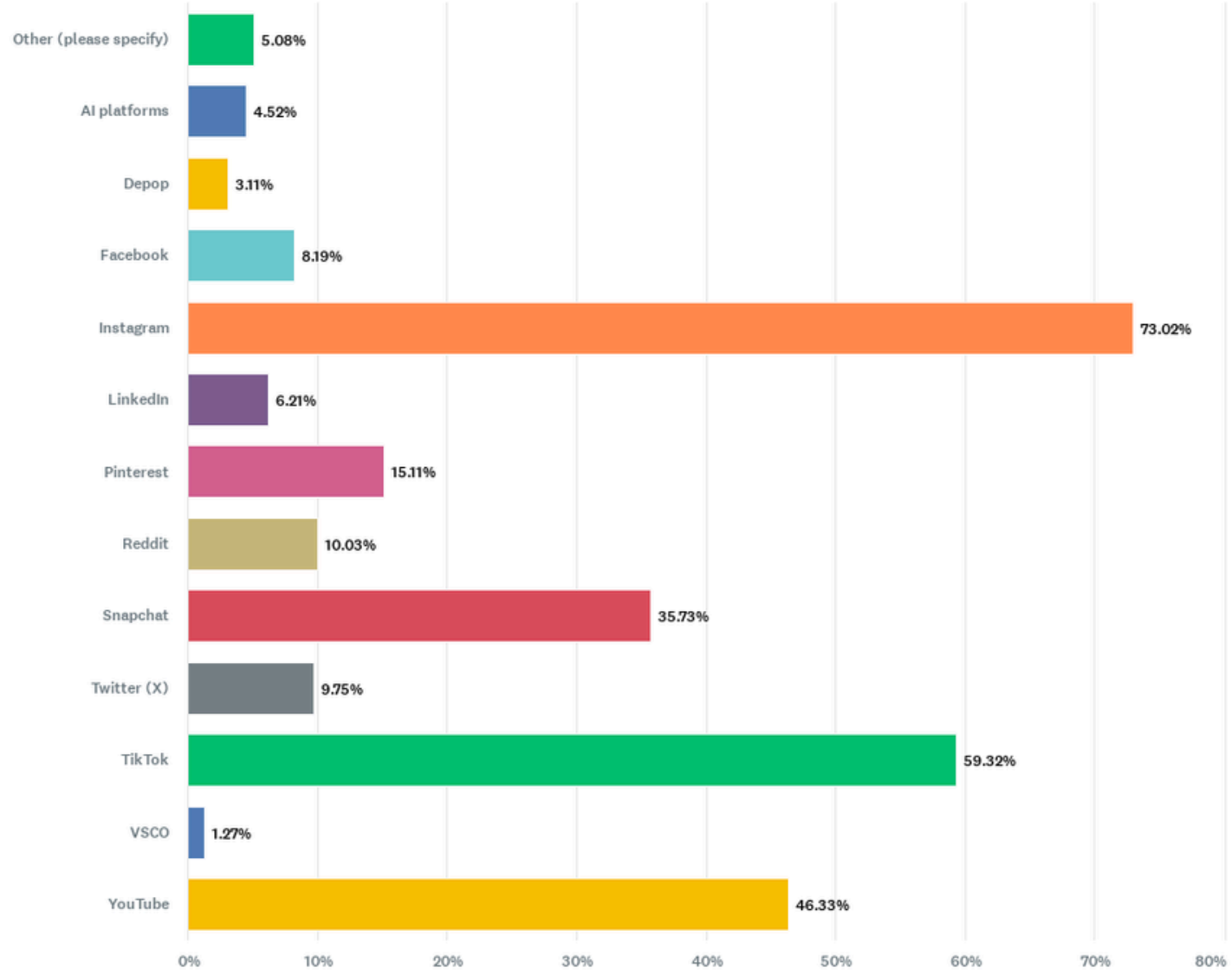
Q22 715 responses

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



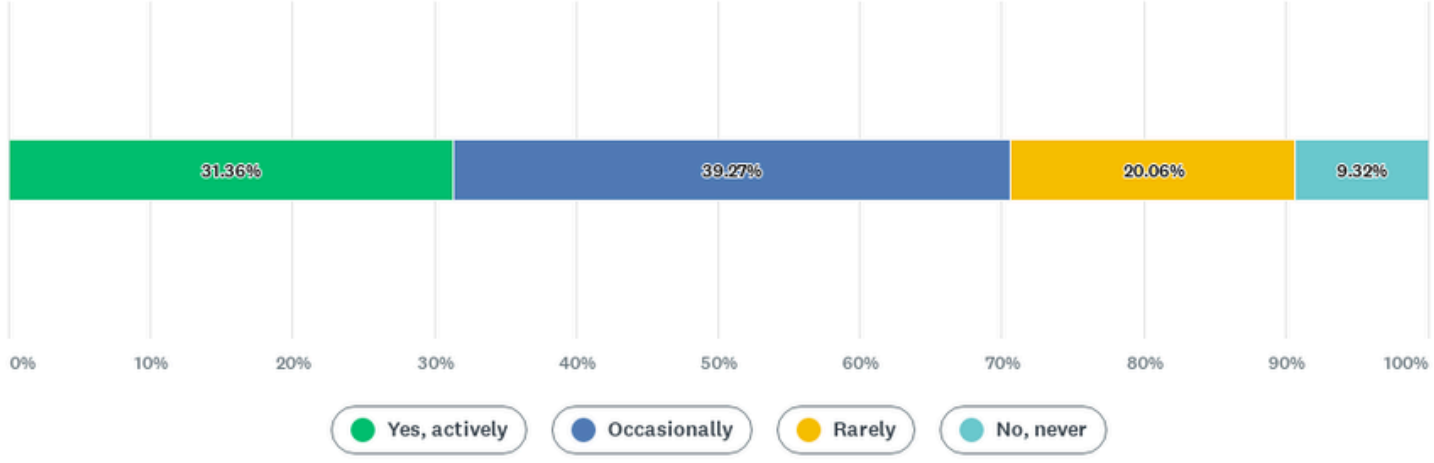
Q24 708 responses

Which of the following platforms do you spend the most time on? (Select top three)



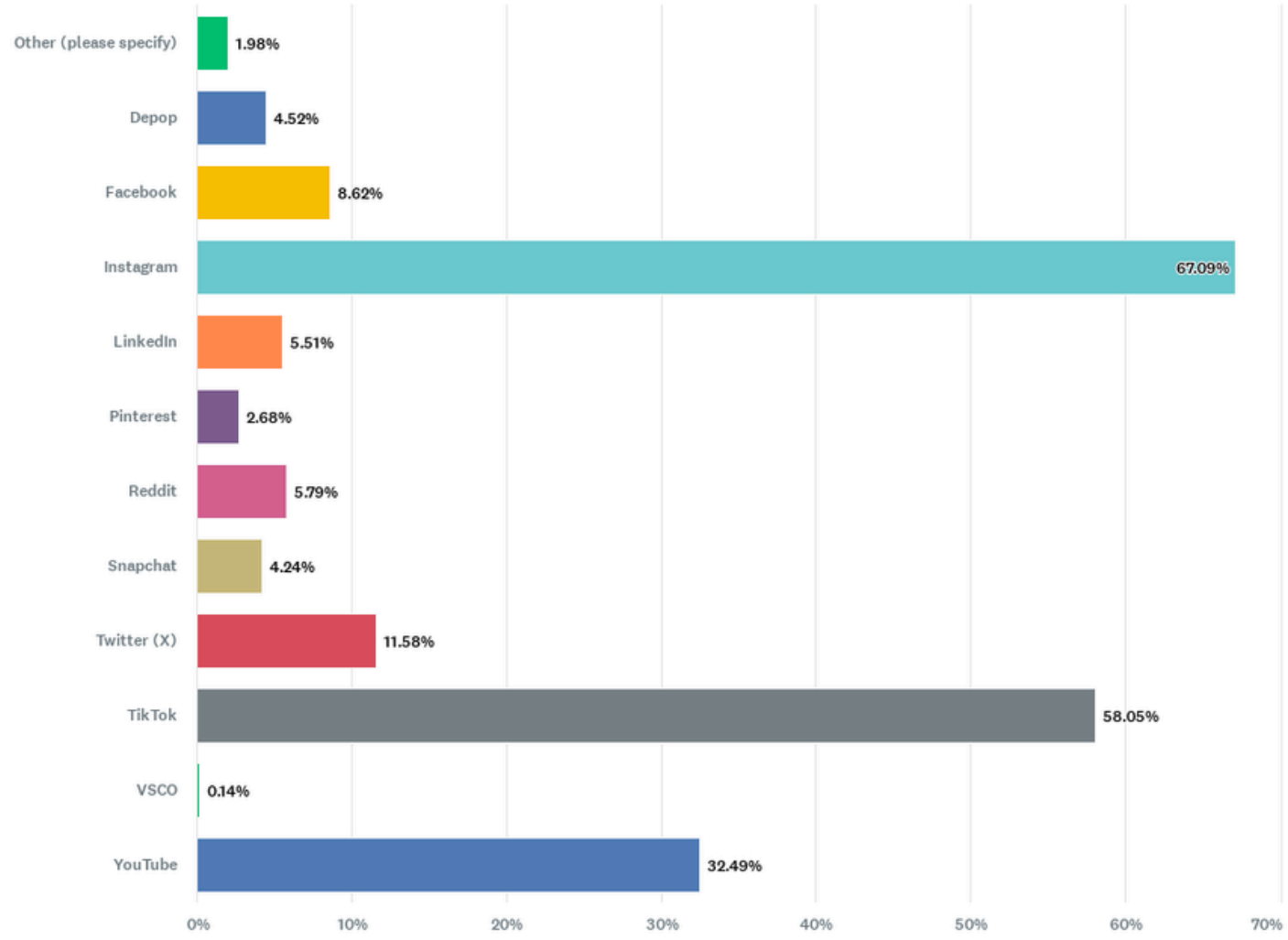
Q25 708 responses

Do you follow accounts or pages related to climate change and climate justice on social media?



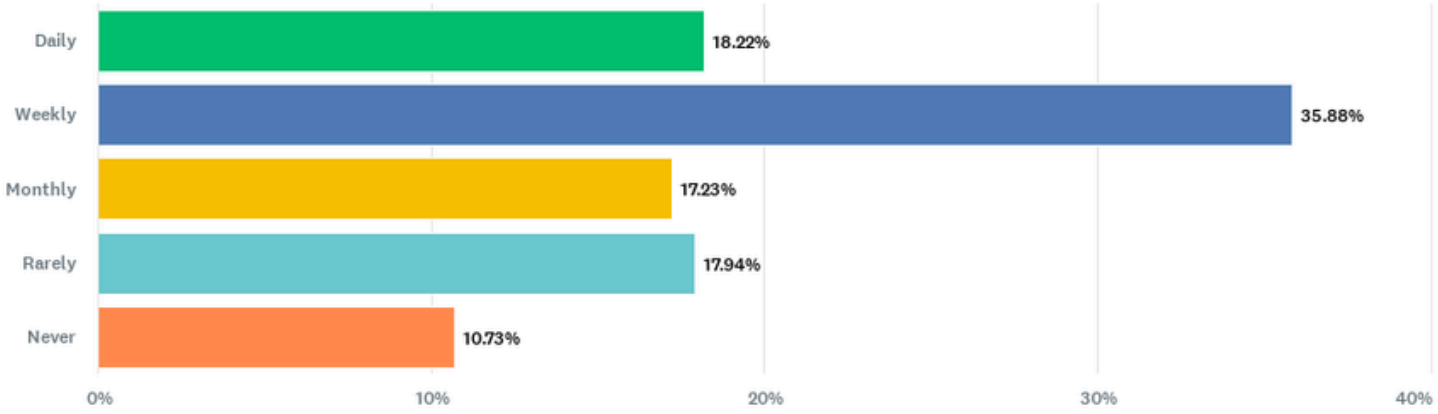
Q26 708 responses

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



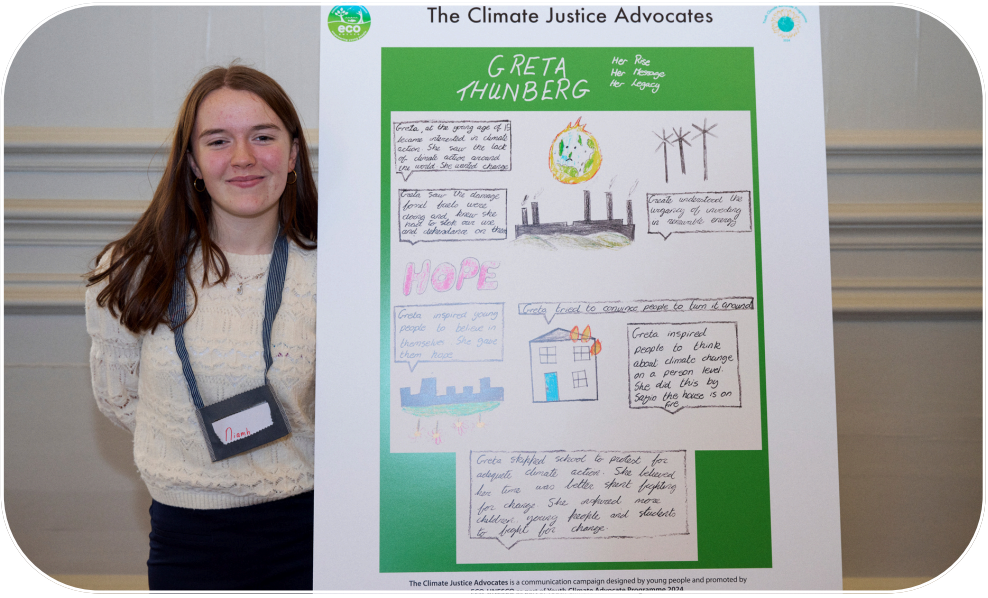
Q27 708 responses

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





BECOME A YOUTH CLIMATE ADVOCATE WITH ECO-UNESCO





The Youth Climate Advocate programme is a fantastic opportunity for 14-17 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 peers 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.

Develop 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.

SCAN ME
SCAN ME
SCAN ME
SCAN ME

Stay Updated to Receive More Information

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

About spunout

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

This survey was part of the Youth Climate Justice Programme 2025, a project led by ECO-UNESCO in partnership Poppintree Youth Project and Feachtas. The programme was funded by the Department of Education and Youth through the Youth Climate Justice Fund.

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