



YOUNG PEOPLE AND GREEN SKILLS

PREPARING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

August 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Climate change and environmental degradation are gender, intergenerational, social and economic justice issues. Today's young people will have to live with the increasingly severe impacts of the climate crisis for the longest and are increasingly concerned about the impacts on their lives and futures.

The imperative for all countries to transition from a fossil-fuel-dominated economy to a green economy is clear and urgent. Young people are on the cusp of entering the labour market as this transition gets underway. This is therefore an important time to understand their perspectives on the emerging green economy.

If well managed, this transition can tackle the climate crisis, protect the environment, and advance gender equality and intergenerational equity, all while creating millions of jobs. In other words, it is critical that the economic shifts now underway promote not only a 'green' transition but also a 'just' transition. A just transition to a green economy cannot be achieved without transformation in the underlying structures of inequality, including discriminatory gender and social norms.¹

Plan International conducted a global online survey to find out more about whether and how young people feel prepared to participate in the green economy.

GLOBAL ONLINE SURVEY



2,229 ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH PARTICIPATED

PARTICIPANTS WERE FROM **53 COUNTRIES**

61% WERE GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN

PARTICIPANTS WERE BETWEEN THE AGES OF **15 AND 30**



A girl waters her adopted tree at her school in Kenya.

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1. Kwauk, C. & Casey, O. (2021). A new green learning agenda: Approaches to quality education for climate action.

KEY FINDINGS



Young people are experiencing extremely high levels of exposure to climate change and the vast majority are worried about its impacts.

Ninety-four per cent of the young people surveyed have been directly exposed to climate change, mostly through changes in temperatures, rainfall patterns or seasons. Ninety-five per cent of respondents say they are worried about the effects of climate change and environmental degradation.



Education was identified by over a third of respondents as a priority for addressing climate change. In some regions almost half of young people surveyed prioritised social and gender justice in the response to the climate crisis.

Fifty-four per cent of respondents said that promoting low-carbon, clean and renewable energy was the top priority in addressing climate change and protecting the environment. Guaranteeing quality, inclusive and accessible education was the third most commonly selected measure, prioritised by 36 per cent of respondents.



Respondents prioritised a range of skills they considered young people should have to address the challenges of climate change.

However, fewer than 30 per cent reported feeling competent in the skills they prioritised. Young women felt less competent in prioritised skills than young men.



Only one in three respondents reported that their education had completely prepared them to address the impacts of climate change.

Young women felt less prepared to participate in the green economy than young men.



Young people who had technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in addition to school or higher education felt more prepared to participate in the green economy than those without experience of TVET.

Thirty-one per cent of respondents with this combination of education reported feeling completely prepared, compared to 22 per cent who had only school or higher education.

KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)



Despite their concerns about the impacts of the climate crisis, only a minority of young people appear to view their employment and career choices as a way to take action in response to these concerns.



Despite not prioritising climate change in their career choices, almost half of those young people that are in work believe that their work does help to address the challenges of the climate crisis.



Overall, respondents had moderate levels of awareness of opportunities in the green economy that they had access to. Young women were less likely to say that they were aware of accessible opportunities than young men.

While 60 per cent of respondents were aware of opportunities for green jobs, only 42 per cent reported that these opportunities were available in their local area.



The main barriers identified to accessing green jobs or work were a lack of start-up capital and skills. Increased training and education on green skills and climate change, as well as increased opportunities in the green economy, were seen as priorities for future action.

Young women were more likely to indicate a lack of skills as a primary barrier, whereas young men were more likely to identify the requirement for start-up capital as the main barrier to their accessing opportunities in the green economy.



A 17-year-old is a young leader campaigning for climate action (Ecuador).

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Children prepare to plant tree saplings (Indonesia)

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RECOMMENDATIONS

PROMOTE, SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN EDUCATION FOR A JUST TRANSITION THAT IS INCLUSIVE AND GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE

- Take an interdisciplinary approach to climate change education that supports skills development.
- Take a gender-transformative approach to education and curriculum reform.
- Ensure equal access to education on climate change and the green economy.
- Provide continuous teacher training that supports teachers in developing young people's skills and knowledge about climate change and the green economy.
- Promote action-oriented learning in schools that supports pro-environmental behaviours.

FROM LEARNING TO EARNING: SUPPORT PATHWAYS INTO GREEN JOBS

- Anchor sustainable development, green economy principles and green skills development throughout education systems and across business development services.
- Promote employment services in green sectors.
- Provide young people with career guidance on pathways into green jobs and training opportunities.
- Provide a TVET curriculum that is holistic and includes courses on climate and the environment and training in green skills.

SUPPORT INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO ACCESS GREEN JOBS AND DEVELOP GREEN SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE

- Provide and fully fund paid internships, training opportunities and apprenticeships in green jobs and environmental and climate initiatives.
- Ensure that all young people have equal access to green job opportunities.
- Increase young people's access to loans and grants for start-ups in the green economy.
- Provide in-work training on green skills and environmental sustainability for young people already in employment.

ENSURE THAT POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND FINANCING PROMOTE A JUST TRANSITION TO A GREEN ECONOMY

- Ensure that climate and environmental policies and strategies include actions at all levels that support a just transition.
- Governments, businesses and other employers should work together to ensure a just transition to a green economy.
- Support young women to access work in the green economy, which requires reducing and redistributing girls' and women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work.



Cover photograph: A young woman picks green chili peppers in Uganda. © Plan International

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About Plan International

We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. We recognise the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood, and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 80 years we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 75 countries.

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