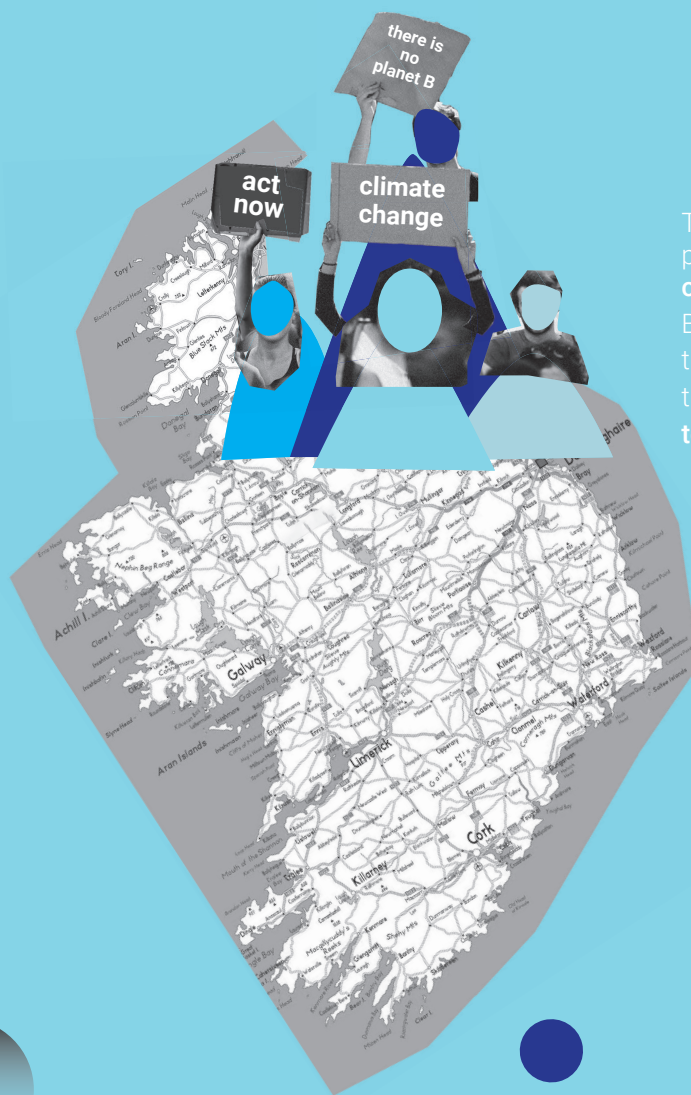


# European Youth and Climate Change

A Community Baseline



Three in four Irish young people consider **climate change a priority**. But does that mean that they have the **right tools to address the issue?**

PEOPLE  
& PLANET  
A COMMON DESTINY

IRELAND

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## Individual action

## Background

The project People and Planet: A Common Destiny aims to mobilise youth citizens and glocal (global + local) authorities in the fight against climate change in 8 EU Member States (Germany, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Spain) and Cape Verde between 2020 and 2024.

This factsheet represents the key findings drawn from a baseline survey answered by Irish Young Citizens in 2021.

The most common pro-environmental day-to-day action among Irish young people relates to water saving, with 89% of the participants saying that they always take showers instead of baths and 76% turn off the tap while brushing their teeth. Additionally, 81% report that they always recycle their waste. The sustainable practices that fewer people adopt regularly are participation in environmental campaigns, as 44% admit never having taken part in such initiatives – this is slightly higher than the European average, standing at 42%. The use of sustainable transportation is also not a common practice among Irish youth, with around 2/5ths of the people stating they never walk or cycle to work, and almost one-fourth admitting they never use public transportation. This may also be due to inadequate public transportation services in Ireland.



■ never ■ sometimes ■ always

Base: All respondents (N= 105)

Chart 2.1. Baseline survey results. **Individual action. Daily activities. Average**

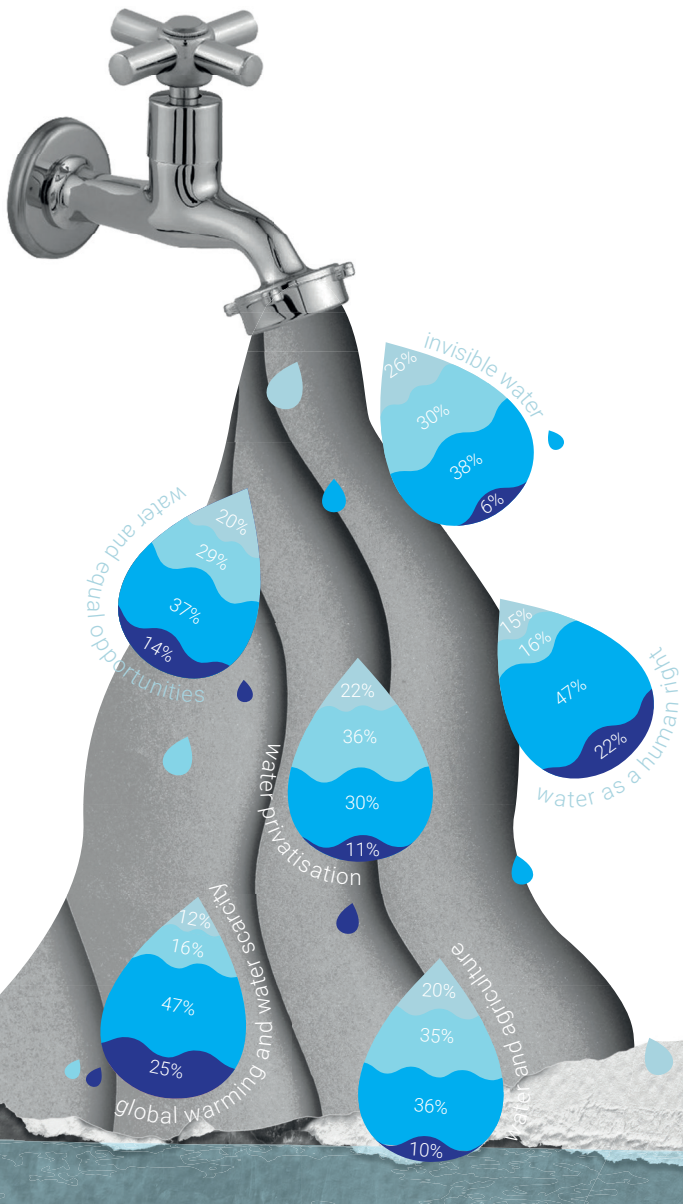


Base: All respondents (N= 496)

Chart 2.2. Baseline survey results.

**Individual action. Actions in the last 3 years**

Regarding public activities related to climate issues, the most favoured actions are the ones related to digital participation, like signing online petitions or sharing political or civic posts on their social media profiles. The least common is signing in-person petitions. It is also interesting to note that almost half of the participants (44%) stated that they currently participate in voluntary activities – which is higher than the European average (38%).



Irish young people are divided about whether climate action is talked about in their general conversation. Global warming and water scarcity are topics that are more frequently talked about (71%), followed by water as a human right (69%), while water privatisation (42%) and invisible water (44%) are the topics least frequently mentioned. Across the board, Irish Youth are less likely to discuss climate action and its link with water (about 10% less) when compared to their European counterparts. This is indicative of how Irish youth are aware of global warming, but less of its impact and consequences on water scarcity.

- Very unlikely
- Unlikely
- Likely
- Very Likely

Base: All respondents (N= 421)  
 Chart 2.3. Baseline survey results.  
**Individual action. Discussing climate change with those closest to you**

We can further confirm this trend when looking at the Irish youth advocacy interests, as ¾ state climate change as a topic of interest, while only around 1/2 do so with pollution, and 1/3 with water resources. Discrimination ranks second among topics of interest to participants.



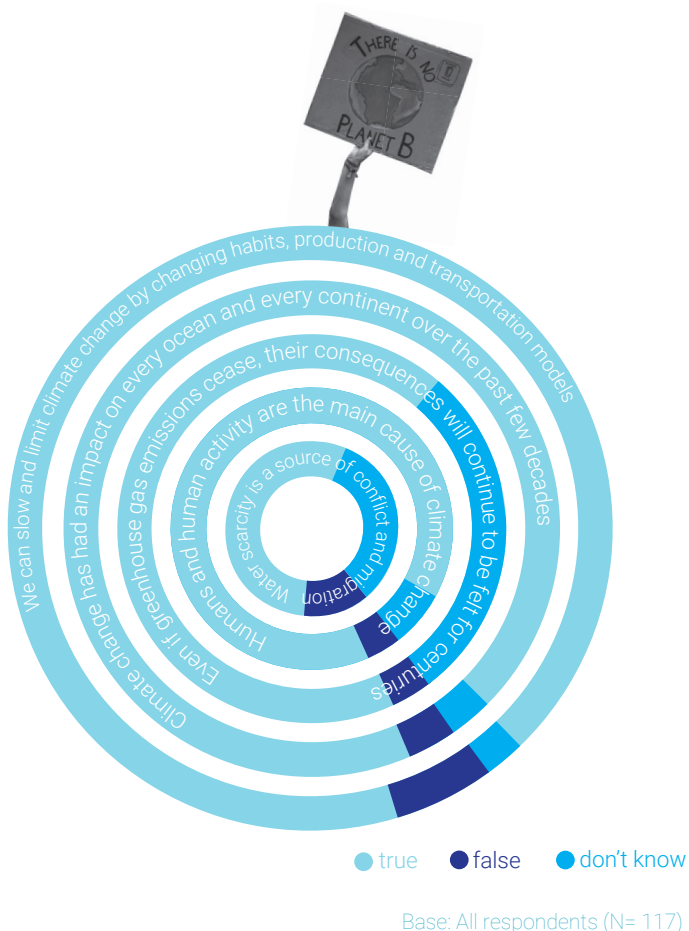
Base: All respondents (N= 338)  
 Chart 2.4. Baseline survey results.  
**Individual action. Advocacy interests**

# Knowledge and perception about climate change



Irish youth have significant knowledge about the impact of climate change on the planet and society. 93% believe that we can mitigate climate change effects by changing our lifestyle. Less well-known is that water scarcity is a trigger for regional conflicts and migrations (57%), in addition to the long-term consequences of the current greenhouse gas emissions.

At a personal level, participants indicated several climate change impacts as having a major impact in their lives, such as air pollution (55%), water scarcity (54%) and fewer food resources (53%). At a national level, both soil degradation (67%) and more floods (64%) are the topics that are of more importance. Young people from Ireland realise that climate change has a major impact at the global level – the lowest recognised effects are soil degradation and increased temperatures.



Base: All respondents (N= 117)

Chart 3.1. Baseline survey results. **Perceptions about Climate Change. Statements concerning climate change. Average**

Chart 3.2.1. Baseline survey results. **Perceptions about climate change. Climate change impact in your own life and the people closest to you**

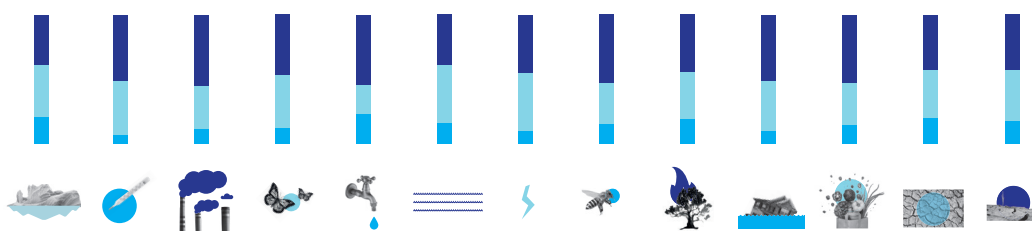


Chart 3.2.2. Baseline survey results. **Perceptions about climate change. Climate change impact in your country**

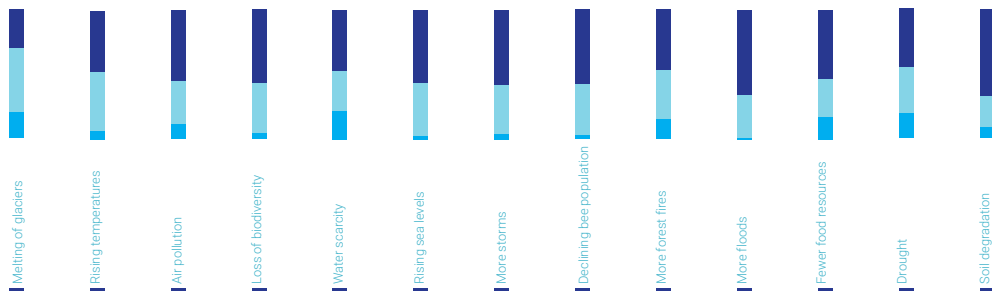
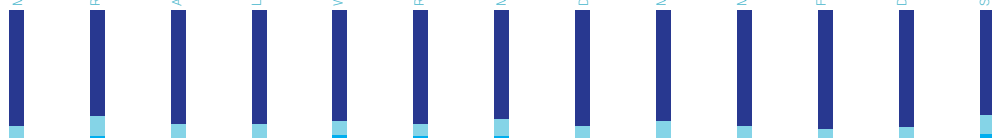


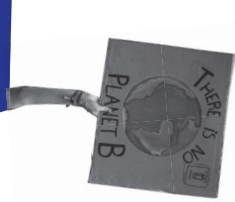
Chart 3.2.3. Baseline survey results. **Perceptions about climate change. Global climate change impact**



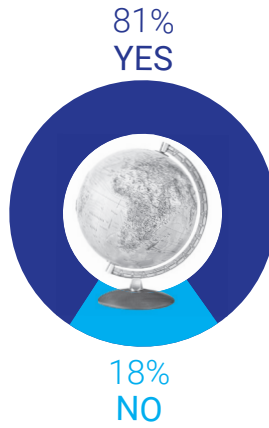
Base: All respondents (N= 116)

■ yes, a major impact   ■ yes, a minor impact   ■ no, no impact

# Policy awareness and action



Irish youth seem to be more familiar with international climate agreements than with national measures to address environmental degradation. This may be indicative of the active targeting of children and younger citizens by the UN Sustainable Development Goals or of the fact that national programmes are not being properly communicated to this target group. Still, they demonstrate a higher knowledge on both cases when compared to the European average (around 10% more).

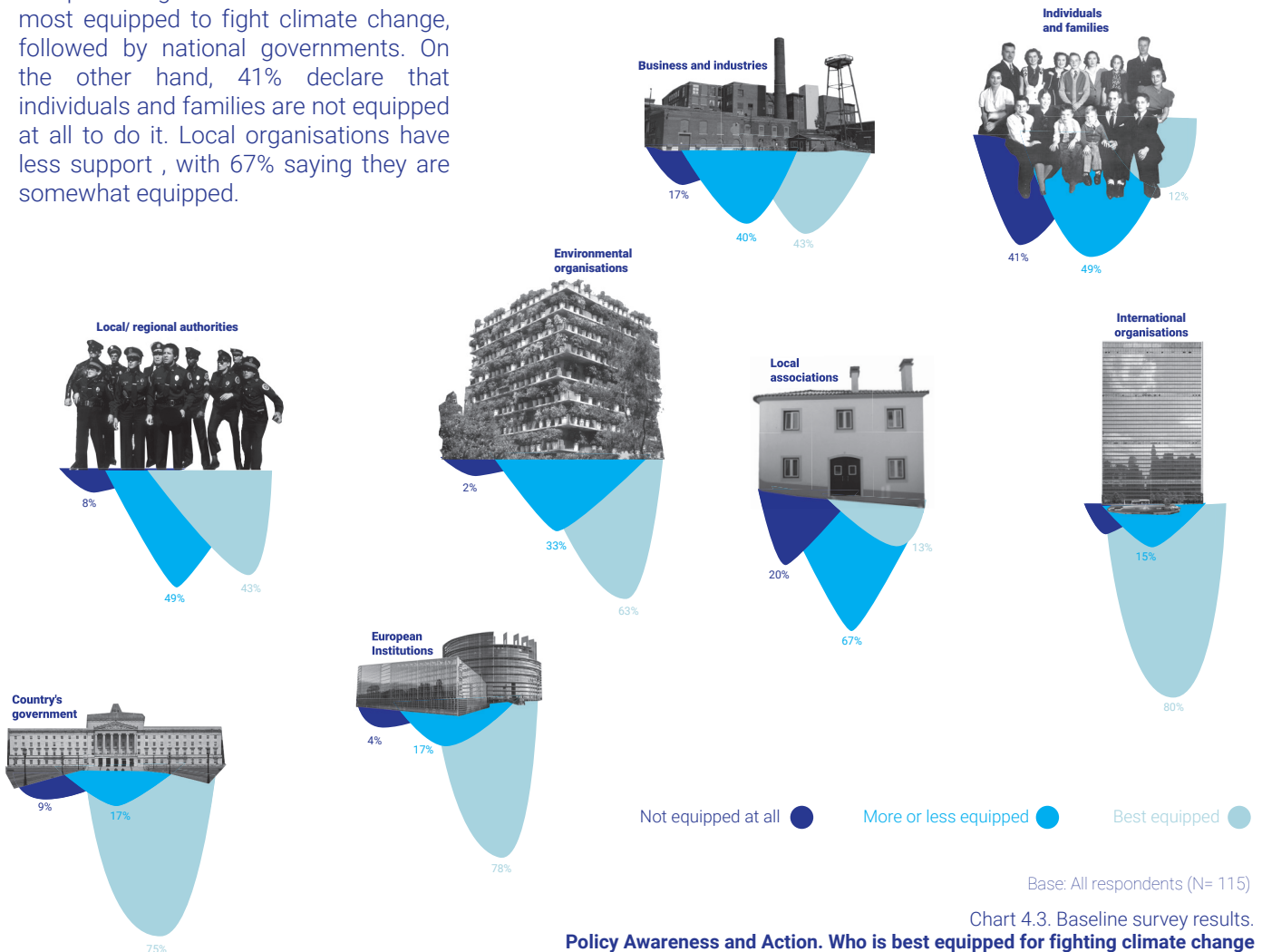


Base: All respondents (N= 105)  
 Chart 4.1. Baseline survey results. **Policy Awareness and Action. Participants' knowledge about global policies or initiatives to reduce climate change**



Chart 4.2. Baseline survey results. **Policy Awareness and Action. Participants' knowledge about environmental policies in your country**

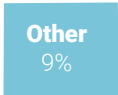
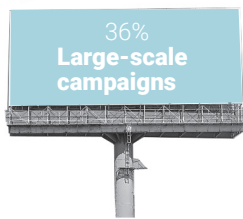
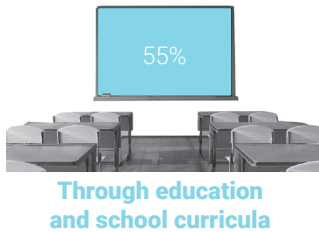
Irish youth believe that international and European organisations are the ones most equipped to fight climate change, followed by national governments. On the other hand, 41% declare that individuals and families are not equipped at all to do it. Local organisations have less support, with 67% saying they are somewhat equipped.



Base: All respondents (N= 115)  
 Chart 4.3. Baseline survey results. **Policy Awareness and Action. Who is best equipped for fighting climate change**

# What can be done?

To mobilize people to act regarding climate change, the most common tool revolves around fines and penalties (60%). Education and scholarly curricula follow closely in the second spot (55%). Irish youth believe, on the other hand, that street actions are the least effective in mobilising their peers for action (31%).



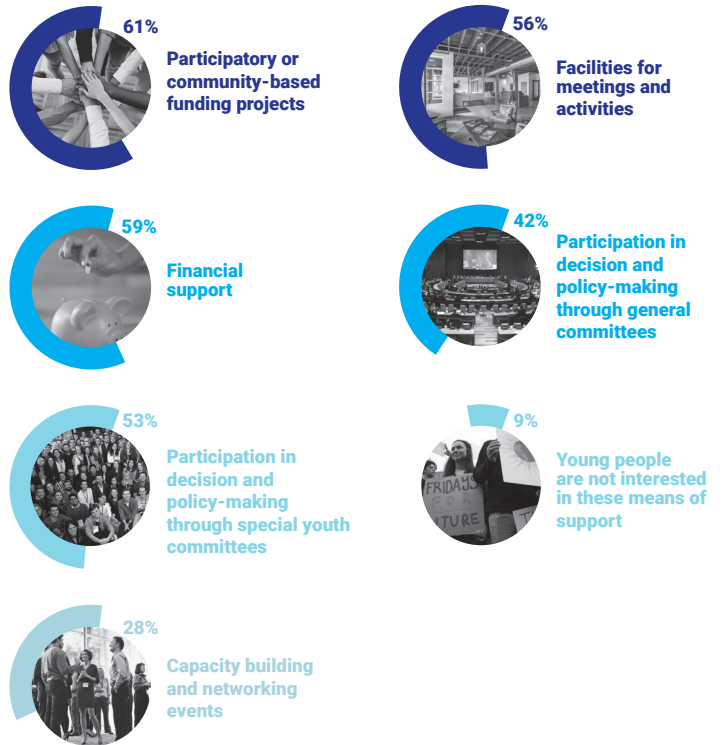
Base: All respondents (N= 98)

Chart 4.4. Baseline survey results.

## Policy Awareness and Action.

### What would motivate people to act on climate change

Multiple answers possible



Base: All respondents (N= 98)

Chart 4.5. Baseline survey results.

## Policy Awareness and Action.

### How can local authorities support young people's sustainability campaigns and other sustainable activities

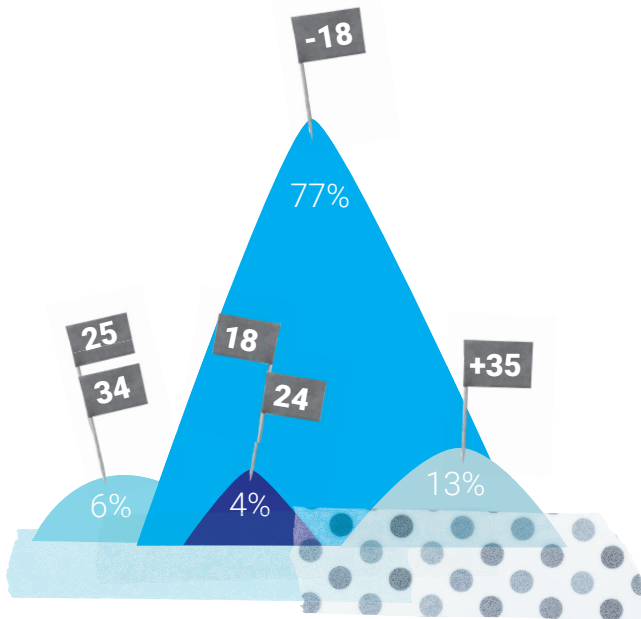
Multiple answers possible

Irish participants also identify ways for local authorities to support young people's activities on sustainability, with higher priority given to participatory or community-based funding projects and financial support.

Survey respondents also provided advocacy suggestions. Most highlighted the need for effective communication, for example, clear, relatable and straightforward transmission of information that can be understood by anyone, regardless of their experiences. Furthermore, quality education was the second most mentioned suggestion, with the need for people to understand the information that they have access to.



## Demographic characteristics of survey participants

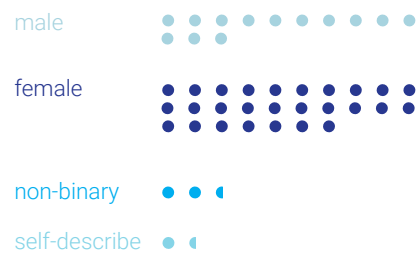
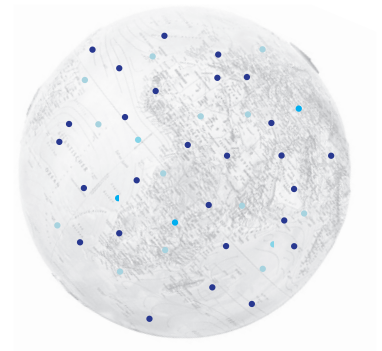


Base: All respondents (N= 145)

Chart 1.2. Baseline survey results.

### Demographic characteristics of survey participants. Age

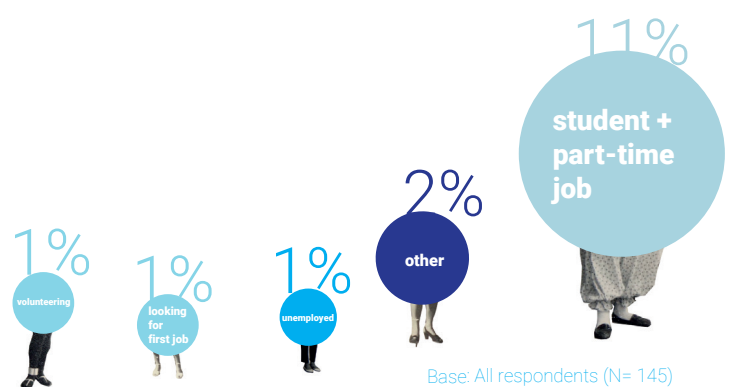
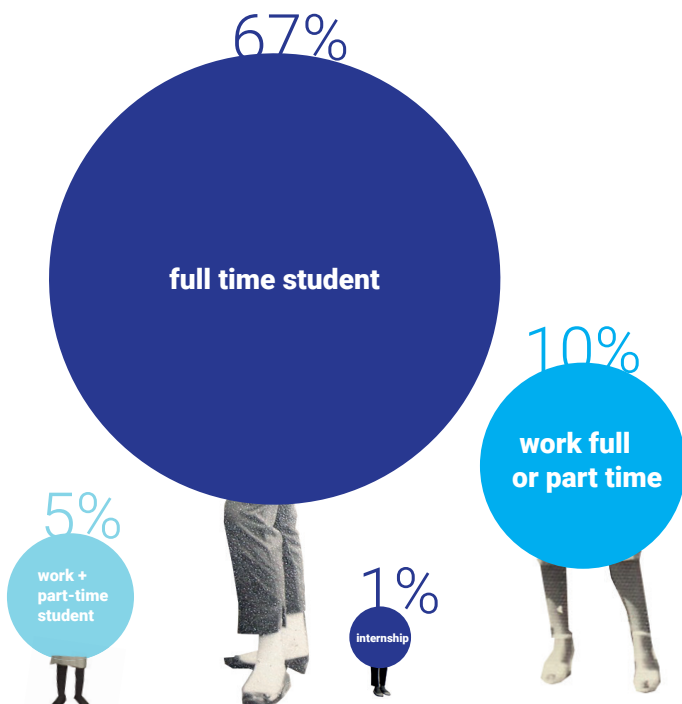
Most of the sample (86,9%) were under 35-years-old. Among them, there was a prevalence of people aged below 18 (76,5%).



Base: All respondents (N= 145)

Chart 1.1. Baseline survey results.  
Demographic characteristics of survey participants. Gender

Most of the survey participants were female (62%), 29% were male, and 9% were non-binary, genderfluid or unlabelled.



Base: All respondents (N= 145)

Chart 1.3. Baseline survey results.  
Demographic characteristics of survey participants. Main occupation

Two thirds of the participants were students, and one quarter were workers, with 16% overlapping as student-workers. The remaining 8% were divided among unemployed, doing an internship, volunteering or actively looking for a job.



## Useful resources for individual action

Comhairle na nÓg  
Youth Councils for Leadership  
<https://www.comhairlenanog.ie/>

STAND: Organisation for University and College  
Students to take action on climate  
<https://stand.ie/>

Eco-UNESCO: Ireland's Environmental Education  
and Youth Organisation  
<https://ecounesco.ie/>

## Useful resources for community action

National Youth Assembly on Climate  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-children-equality-disability-integration-and-youth/>

Citizen's Assembly Support  
the recommendations made by  
the Assembly to the Government  
on Climate Change  
<https://citizensassembly.ie/en/>

Public Participation Network,  
Environmental Pillar work to address  
climate issues at the local level  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/a58b8-community-groups-public-participation-networks/>

Climate Action Plan, Annex of Actions 2021  
<https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/ie/pdf/2022/10/ie-irelands-climate-action-plan.pdf>



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