

EcoYOU – Clean and green Minds for Environmentally Friendly Behaviour
***A1.18 Developing a Joint Study that includes a Blue-Map used to raise awareness on
environmental protection for youth in BSB regions***

Focus Group Results- ACTIE

Based on the two focus group reports, here is a detailed analysis of the responses, similarities, and differences between the youth group and the adult group (teachers, youth leaders, parents).

1. What does environmental protection mean to you?

Youth

The youth have a pragmatic and personal perspective. They define environmental protection through concrete actions: a cleaner environment , acting responsibly , sorting waste , and protecting animals and plants. They view environmental protection as a form of **respect**—for nature, for others, and for themselves—and emphasize that "every action matters".

Teachers, youth leaders, parents

Adults have a broader, more technical perspective. Their answers include concepts such as:

- having clean air and unpolluted water
- preserving nature as it is
- responsible use of natural resources
- protecting ecosystems and biodiversity
- a commitment to a healthy future for everyone

Similarities and Differences

- **Similarities:** Both groups mention the importance of a clean environment and protecting animals and plants.
- **Differences:** The youth focus on individual actions and personal impact , while adults use more technical language, specifying concepts like ecosystems and biodiversity.

2. How did you first learn about environmental issues?

Youth

Young people learned about environmental issues from multiple and varied sources, with a strong emphasis on digital media and personal experiences. Sources mentioned include:

- school
- social media and YouTube
- personal observations of trash in nature
- documentaries about endangered animals
- conversations with family and friends

They emphasize the realization of "personal responsibility".

Teachers, youth leaders, parents

Adults learned from personal experiences that developed over time, as well as from traditional media sources. Examples include:

- observing seasonal changes like snowless winters
- becoming a parent
- from the media (news, documentaries)
- direct contact with nature, like seeing disappearing forests
- getting involved in civic or NGO activities

Similarities and Differences

- **Similarities:** Both groups learned from direct personal observations of environmental degradation and from media.
- **Differences:** The youth are more influenced by **social media and online platforms**. Adults mention parenthood as a significant factor, while youth talk about responsibility toward future generations.

3. In what ways do you get involved in pro-environment activities?

Youth

The youth's responses are very practical and include:

- greening campaigns
- picking up trash from the street
- reducing plastic consumption (using reusable bottles and bags)

- using energy-efficient light bulbs
- planting trees and flowers
- donating clothes and items

Teachers, youth leaders, parents

Adults get involved in concrete actions, with a focus on community and influencing others:

- participating in tree planting campaigns
- sorting plastic bottles and paper
- using reusable products
- discussing how to reduce energy consumption with colleagues
- attending online workshops

Similarities and Differences

- **Similarities:** Both groups participate in tree planting campaigns, recycling, and using reusable products.
- **Differences:** The youth mention more modern actions like donating items, while adults emphasize influencing colleagues.

4. What motivates you to participate?

Youth

The youth's motivations are personal and idealistic:

- a cleaner environment
- love for nature
- a sense of responsibility toward the planet
- the desire to leave a cleaner world for future generations
- the power of personal example
- the satisfaction of doing something concrete

Teachers, youth leaders, parents

Adult motivations are more focused on the impact they have on others, especially children:

- the desire to have a clean planet for themselves and their children
- the satisfaction of doing something concrete

- being an example for young people and children
- a sense of belonging to a community that cares
- the positive impact they see in places where they take action

Similarities and Differences

- **Similarities:** Both groups are motivated by the desire to contribute to a better environment and leave a cleaner place for future generations. Both feel the satisfaction of doing something tangible.
- **Differences:** Adults are strongly motivated by their role as a role model for youth and children. The youth emphasize personal responsibility and the idea that change "must start with me".

5. Have you ever been involved in an environmental project or campaign?

Youth

Youth have participated in school and local projects, and their experiences brought them satisfaction and new knowledge:

- tree planting campaigns, where they learned about biodiversity
- educational projects, where they explained recycling to younger students
- nature clean-up days, where they were saddened by the amount of trash but happy with the result
- collaborations with young people from other countries

Teachers, youth leaders, parents

Adults had similar experiences, often alongside their children:

- clean-ups organized by the city hall
- tree planting activities
- unofficial actions, organized with family
- attending meetings with local authorities

Similarities and Differences

- **Similarities:** Both groups participated in concrete actions like clean-ups and tree planting. Both were shocked by the amount of garbage found in nature.

- **Differences:** Adults mention the importance of dialogue with authorities , but also the frustration of wanting to see more concrete actions follow. The youth mention a wider range of activities, including educational projects and international collaborations.

6. What difficulties do you face in adopting a sustainable lifestyle?

Youth

The youth's difficulties are mainly related to infrastructure, costs, and support:

- lack of waste collection infrastructure
- sustainable products are more expensive and hard to find
- lack of time for planning a sustainable lifestyle
- lack of support from family or colleagues
- contradictory information on what is truly "eco"

Teachers, youth leaders, parents

Adults' difficulties are similar, with an emphasis on the attitude of others and local infrastructure:

- not enough recycling bins
- eco products are sometimes expensive or hard to access
- their family doesn't recycle, making it difficult for them to do it alone
- some people find it easier to throw garbage carelessly
- lack of good public transportation

Similarities and Differences

- **Similarities:** Both groups identify the high cost of eco-products and the lack of recycling infrastructure as major obstacles. The lack of support from family is a common problem.
- **Differences:** The youth also mention lack of time and contradictory information, suggesting a greater complexity in their consumption decisions.

7. What factors hinder young people's involvement?

Youth

The youth feel hindered by:

- peer pressure
- lack of positive role models among adults
- limited financial resources
- lack of free local opportunities, especially in rural areas

- a mentality of "it's fine as it is"
- disinformation

Teachers, youth leaders, parents

Adults have a similar perspective, but with a stronger emphasis on education and policies:

- peer pressure to conform to uninterested groups
- lack of financial resources for eco products or educational activities
- cultural norms prioritizing comfort and overconsumption
- limited environmental education in schools
- lack of positive role models
- lack of clear, consistent local policies

Similarities and Differences

- **Similarities:** Both groups identify peer pressure, lack of role models, limited financial resources, and insufficient environmental education as major hindering factors.
- **Differences:** Adults specifically mention the lack of clear **local policies** as a systemic obstacle. The youth highlight the "it's fine as it is" mentality.

8. How effective do you think current environmental education is?

Youth

The youth find it somewhat effective, but state:

- too little time is dedicated to it
- topics are treated superficially, not regularly
- there are no dedicated ecology classes in many schools
- opportunities in rural areas are more limited than in cities

Teachers, youth leaders, parents

Adults have similar criticisms:

- education is useful but not enough to change habits
- lessons are often too theoretical and lack practical activities
- opportunities in rural areas are more limited than in cities
- teachers need better training to teach these topics effectively
- information is sometimes too complex

Similarities and Differences

- **Similarities:** Both groups agree that education is flawed due to limited time and a lack of practical application. The disparity between urban and rural areas is also a shared concern.
- **Differences:** Adults emphasize the need for teacher training, while the youth mention the need for dedicated and mandatory classes.

9. What improvements would you suggest to raise awareness among young people?

Youth

The youth propose solutions based on action and their own environment:

- introducing mandatory environmental classes
- educational trips into nature
- local projects with direct engagement
- student-led environmental clubs
- awareness videos adapted for social media

Teachers, youth leaders, parents

Adults propose similar solutions, but with an emphasis on collaboration and promotion:

- more practical classes and nature trips
- creating environmental groups in every school
- using social media for attractive campaigns
- engaging young influencers
- more contests and awards for youth projects
- organizing interactive workshops with experts

Similarities and Differences

- **Similarities:** Both groups suggest more practical activities, nature trips, and creating school environmental clubs. Both see immense potential in using social media for awareness campaigns.
- **Differences:** Adults mention engaging influencers and offering awards for projects, while the youth propose mandatory classes and involvement in school decisions.

10. What learning methods seem most interesting to you?

Youth

The youth are attracted to digital and interactive methods:

- YouTube, TikTok, and social media
- educational apps and games on phones or tablets
- workshops with practical and creative projects
- documentaries with impressive visuals

Teachers, youth leaders, parents

Adults prefer a combination of practical and interactive methods:

- short, fun videos on TikTok and Instagram
- educational games and apps
- workshops with practical activities
- documentaries with impressive visuals
- interactive discussions with experts and volunteers
- participation in clean-up and tree planting actions

Similarities and differences

- **Similarities:** Both groups recognize the power of social media (TikTok, YouTube), educational games, and documentaries. Workshops with practical activities are also considered effective by both.
- **Differences:** Adults also mention video presentations and discussions with experts, while the youth focus exclusively on their preferred platforms.

Key Conclusions

The analysis of the two focus groups shows distinct perspectives with a common core of values.

Youth:

- They have a pragmatic and digital vision of environmental protection. For them, small, individual actions are essential.
- They are heavily influenced by the online environment (social media, YouTube, apps) and see these platforms as crucial for education and awareness.

- They are motivated by personal responsibility and the desire to inspire other young people.
- Their main obstacles are a lack of infrastructure, high costs, and social peer pressure.

Teachers, youth leaders, parents

- They have a more mature and systemic vision, understanding complex concepts like biodiversity and ecosystems.
- They were shaped by personal observations over time and traditional media.
- They are strongly motivated by their role as a model for younger generations.
- Their primary obstacles are a lack of infrastructure and clear local policies, as well as the passive attitude of those around them.

Key Similarities:

- Both groups recognize the need for a **more practical environmental education**, with more concrete actions in nature.
- Both agree that the lack of recycling infrastructure and the high cost of eco-friendly products are major barriers.
- Both believe that the disparity in opportunities between urban and rural areas is a significant problem.
- Both see **social media** as an extremely effective tool to reach young people.

In conclusion, the two groups have complementary visions. The youth bring a dynamic, digital perspective focused on individual action and inspiring others, while adults bring a vision based on experience, emphasizing the importance of structures (family, community, school) and local policies to create a lasting impact. An effective strategy should combine these perspectives: use the modern and digital methods proposed by the youth, within more solid structures and with greater support from adults and authorities, as suggested by the latter.

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