

VOICE OF 1,000



A Survey of 1,000 Kids on Climate Change



Table of Contents

Foreword	3
Collaborators	4
Introduction	5
Insight 1: Climate change is a real and urgent issue. Apathy is not an option	6
Insight 2: Small actions, big impact	7
Insight 3: Teamwork makes the dream work	10
Insight 4: Adults, Step Up!	11
Insight 5: Optimism is blooming	12
Calls to Action	14

Foreword

As a researcher, I've always been fascinated by the dynamics of intergenerational influence, particularly the powerful role parents play in shaping their children's values and actions. This second iteration of the Voices of 1000 report shows us that today's youth care passionately about climate change and they want to take action to solve it. We have instilled in them values of care and a desire for proactive response to the challenges facing our planet. But they need the help of the adults in their lives to do so.

This report is a call to action to parents, educators and policy makers. The passion young people demonstrate for climate action is inspiring. But passion alone is not enough. They need guidance, support, and resources to translate that passion into effective action. This is where the words and actions of parents and other adults are crucial. By fostering open communication, actively listening, and providing both emotional and practical support, adults can empower children to become true climate champions. It's not about dictating solutions, but about nurturing critical thinking, encouraging informed decision-making, and providing a platform for their voices to be heard. It is about equipping the next generation with the tools and confidence they need to make a real difference.

We are living through difficult times marked by political turmoil and division. In these circumstances, it's easy for us to become distracted by the daily news cycle and lose our focus on the biggest challenges facing humankind. The key take-away of the Voices of 1000 report is that our youth are up for the challenge of fighting climate change.

They're informed, but optimistic. They're engaged, but calling on adults to do their part. The young people who shared their voices with us give us great hope for the future. It's our obligation to them and to our planet to enable and support their passion.

Dr. Sean Lyons
Professor of Management and Leadership
Gordon S. Lang School of Business and Economics
University of Guelph

Collaborators



Adeola Adegoke
SoWCool.org



Erik Steiner
PhD. student, York University



Jen Kostuchuk
PhD. student, University of Victoria



Nike Macaulay
Wakanow



Sean Lyons
University of Guelph



Tom Norman
KAPOW Creative




INTRODUCTION

A powerful wave of kids understand that climate change is one of the most consequential issues of our time, and many are committed to doing their part in the fight for a sustainable future.

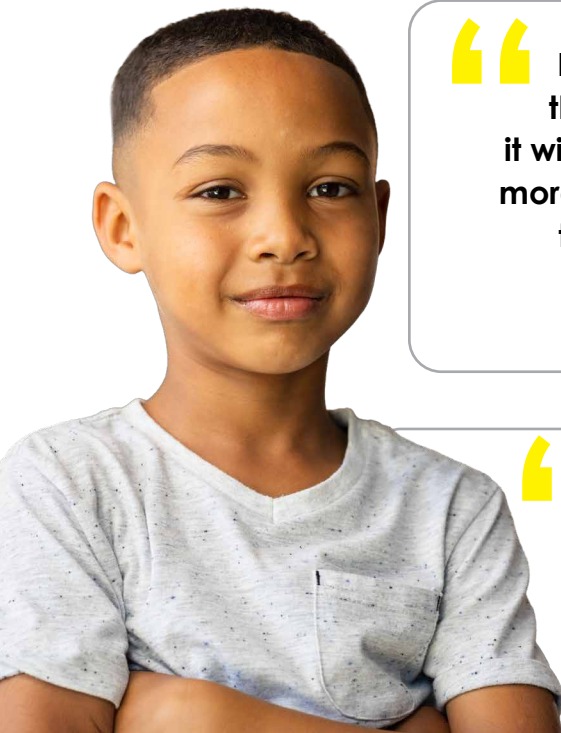
The 2024/25 edition of the Voice of 1,000 report presents results from a survey of 1,000 individuals (ages 8-14) across Canada and the United States of America regarding their sentiments on climate change.

What strikes us most are youth's community-based values and their shared sense of urgency on the need for climate change adaptation.

Here are **five(5)**
key takeaways
from the
2024/25 survey:



Unless where attributed, the responses to the survey were anonymous and participation in focus groups was confidential. The images of children shown in the report do not depict actual study participants.

**INSIGHT
1****Climate change is a real and urgent issue. Apathy is not an option.**

“ I would like adults to know that I am concerned about the impact we are having on the environment and how it will affect future generations. I feel that it is urgent to take more serious measures to protect our planet, from reducing the use of plastics to investing in renewable energy. ”

Says an 8-year-old from a small city.

“ One thing I wish adults knew about how I feel about the environment is that young people are deeply concerned about its future and are eager to take action to protect it. ”

Says another 8-year-old.

86%

are concerned about the long-term impacts of climate change on future generations

**91%**

agree and/or strongly agree that we should be more concerned

While 86% of kids surveyed are concerned about the long-term impacts of climate change on future generations, 91% agree and/or strongly agree that we should be more concerned about the state of the environment.

In other words, most kids want everyone to take the climate crisis more seriously and level up their positive impacts.

INSIGHT 2

Small actions, big impact.

Being a climate leader isn't just about attending climate strikes and protests. It is about **taking practical actions** and **educating others** **through information sharing.**

Ella, a 14-year-old, actively reflected:

“ Am I a climate leader? I think I have done my part in terms of educating people on climate change, but I know there are tons of people who have done way more, so, in that sense, if you would say I'm a climate leader compared to someone who is going out to protests and stuff, no. But in a small way, yes [I am a climate leader]. ”

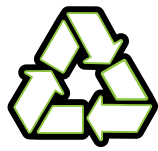
This quote highlights the self-awareness and humility of youth about the environment.

Another youth member shared:

“ I mostly recycle, conserve water, take shorter showers, and fix appliances – [as for] renewable energy, not me directly, but my parents switched to solar and hydroelectric power. I also plant trees and gardens to support reforestation and biodiversity. I also use public transport to reduce air pollution and read a lot of books concerning that to stay informed. ”



So, what actions do kids prioritize most?



84%

Recycling

(84% report they agree or strongly agree).



83%

Reusable containers such as bags, bottles

(83% report they agree or strongly agree).



82%

Switching lights off when not in use

(82% report they agree or strongly agree).

While decisions impacting food choices, transportation, and purchasing decisions are usually outside of the control of most kids



6 in 10 kids report **throwing very little food** out when they do.



4 in 10 kids **prioritize taking the bus or carpooling**, and support **eco-friendly brands**.

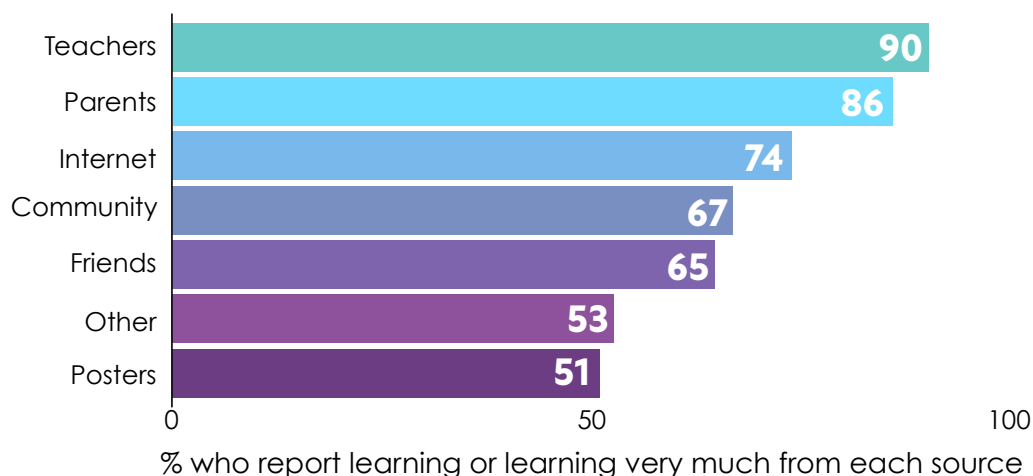


2 in 10 kids report **eating plant-based meals**.

Learning

Young people learn about the environment from a variety of sources, with teachers and parents being the most influential.

Learning Sources Cited By Kids



However, many kids learn about climate change from **books, digital and social media, and online forums** such as BBC Kids and TikTok.

One young girl reflected:

“ I would say if there's a really big issue, like, I know there's something called the Climate Clock in New York... I mean, the thing with social media, you never know what's true and untrue, but that thing [Climate Clock] came on my For You page...and everybody in the comments, they were saying 'this is very real, we have to do something about it.' ”

Information-Sharing

Information-sharing is one way in which youth demonstrate climate leadership, and in doing so, they educate their peers, adults, friends, and parents.

66%

66% of kids feel that people their own age learn about the environment from them

.....

62%

62% talk to their friends about it frequently.



INSIGHT

3

Teamwork makes the dream work.



I wish adults knew that I really care about the environment and want to help, but I sometimes feel like my ideas don't matter because I'm just a kid.



Kids are ready to take climate action and want to be part of the solution.

54%

of kids **wish they could do more** to help the environment, **but they don't know how** to take charge effectively.



90%

of youth surveyed are **interested or very interested in learning more about the environment**, they recognize the limits of their individual power and believe **they can only do so much on their own** to improve the state of the climate.



For instance, a 9-year-old notes

I wish big industry and governments would stop asking us to do something when they continue to fly in private jets [and] drill for oil and more; we are asked to recycle.



Another kid in grade 6 states,

life should be affordable, and big corporations should comply with climate change incentives.



These insights suggest that kids think critically about the bigger picture of climate change accountability and believe they cannot bear all the burden individually.

INSIGHT

4

Adults, Step Up!

While 92% of kids agree and/or strongly agree that **everyone can and should do more to help**, their feedback points to the need for greater involvement by adults in their lives.

How can adults help?



There are a lot of things that can be done, curriculum integrations... sustainable skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and maybe explore the ecosystems and biodiversities and actually encourage students to design and implement climate-friendly projects and carry out field trips and organize visits to renewable energy sites or environmental organizations and sometimes, maybe occasionally, the school can invite climate experts, activists, or scientists. ””



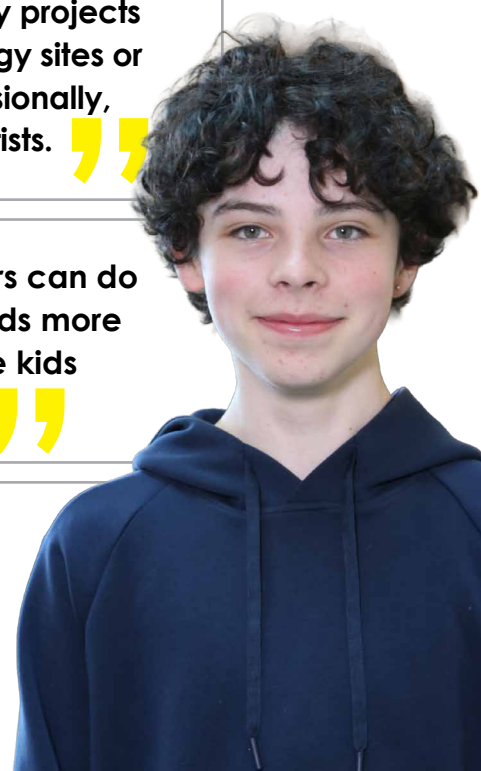
Kids are very inspired by adults and teachers, so teachers can do more research and include it more in classes and tell kids more about climate change and educate us better so that the kids know what to do and how to help for the future. ””



I wish that most adults would push us kids more to be more involved in each of our communities in some way, or maybe have our school donate one day a month for all the kids to go to parks and clean up or plant trees to make the world cleaner. ””



On a positive note, 87% of kids reported that adults they know are already very (or at least somewhat) interested in helping. This means adults truly have the potential to influence a kid's commitment to environmentally friendly habits or choices.



INSIGHT 5

Optimism is blooming.



Kids are concerned but also optimistic and want to work together to improve the world. **79% of kids reported they are hopeful** or at least neutral about the future state of the environment.

What's behind the optimism?

When we inquired about what *exactly* makes kids hopeful, they cited:



the value of
community



the need for accessible
green spaces



the interest in **technological
advancements**



Value of Community:

Kids observed that “many more people are trying...so many people are helping now,” and others emphasized, “I really care about my community” or reflected on how “each year I try to make the community a better and safe place to be”.

Kids exhibit a strong sense of community-mindedness, revealing an essential relationship between their appetite for climate action and their sense of belonging.



Accessible Green Spaces:



92% agree and/or strongly agree that **bad things happen when we mess with nature**, and various highlighted the critical role of trees in our ecosystems.

“our trees produce oxygen, so stop cutting them down” (age 9)

“they are building a new neighbourhood near me and cutting down so many trees” (age 12)

“cutting down the forest is a bad thing to do; we need trees to give a home for many living things” (age 14)

Technology:

Youth are excited about the potential for leveraging technology to bring about positive change. For example, kids addressed the importance of investing in renewable energy.



One particular young person optimistically shared excitement in

seeing a bunch of new inventions – creativity has been a major aspect around the impacts of climate change and seeing what a lot of people will create and what I will create and what my generation will create [makes me hopeful].



Conclusion

Kids are thinking critically about the future and look to adults, such as parents, teachers, and elected officials, to prioritize actions that promote the ease of youth learning and adopting habits that will help minimize waste and carbon emissions.



**CALL TO
ACTION****1****Zero Hour:**

Youth are eager to be responsible consumers, but need the support and guidance of adults in their lives to role-model and demonstrate what this means.

**CALL TO
ACTION****2****Politics Aside:**

Youth are looking to leaders and elected officials to double down on infrastructure and education. Citizens need to adopt and maintain sustainable lifestyle choices.

**CALL TO
ACTION****3****Together We Can:**

Despite many devastating events and consequences of climate change, youth share a sense of optimism and responsibility for environmental citizenship.

**CALL TO
ACTION****4****Engage Youth:**

Kids want to do more to build a sustainable future. Parents, teachers, leaders, do they have your support?

**CALL TO
ACTION****5****Dare to Change:**

Kids need adults to BOLDLY pursue ideas and actions for a greener economy by working together.



VOICE OF 1,000

To access digital or electronic copies of this report, please visit <https://www.sowcool.org> to download for free

To access current and historical data sets for research purposes, please email info@sowcool.org to request a data access form

Please send feedback or questions to
The Humanity in Motion Society
by email to info@sowcool.org

