



Root

Resilient youth through local heritage

We conducted workshops in three European countries – France, Italy and Finland – with the aim of understanding young people's concerns about the health of our planet and their future employment, with a focus on gender equality and so-called “green” jobs.

This document brings together the results and opinions obtained.

moh



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MOH – Outcomes of the Workshop

Participant Profile and Context

The MOH workshop took place in Bari and involved mainly young women aged 18 to 30, both students and workers, coming from different educational and professional backgrounds. The participants live in an area characterised by a high presence of NEETs, limited access to employment for women, restricted mobility, and an increasing impact of the climate crisis. This context significantly shaped their perceptions, concerns, and proposals during the workshop.

Perceptions of Climate Change and Territorial Challenges

Participants showed a strong awareness of the impact of climate change on their lives. In Puglia, phenomena such as extreme heatwaves, drought, fires, and soil degradation are considered tangible realities. The young women highlighted how these phenomena affect not only the natural environment but also psychological wellbeing and the possibility of building a stable future in the region. A clear intersection emerged between climate crisis, job insecurity, and lack of opportunities in an area marked by the outmigration of young graduates and low female employment rates. Many expressed feelings of uncertainty, eco-anxiety, and fear of not being able to remain in their territory.

Skills for the Green Transition and Perception of Their Own Capacities

The workshop activities encouraged participants to reflect on *green skills*, recognising that many competencies relevant to ecological transition are already part of their daily lives: creativity, resilience, problem-solving, and awareness of their own consumption choices. However, a need emerged for more accessible environmental literacy, clearer information on green jobs, circular economy, and renewable energies, as well as concrete opportunities to gain practical experience. While the desire to contribute to the ecological transition is strong, it is often hindered by the perception of not having real spaces or pathways to do so.

Gender, Care, and Future Prospects

The young women shared how the climate crisis intersects with gender expectations, economic precarity, and care responsibilities. They highlighted difficulties in accessing green transition professions, often perceived as male-dominated sectors. The group emphasised the importance of an ecological transition that takes gender differences into account, guaranteeing fair access to work, recognition of care labour, and support for mental health.

Relationship with the Territory and Expectations Toward Institutions

Participants expressed a strong connection to their land, recognising its cultural and artisanal richness. At the same time, they pointed out structural challenges such as a lack of job opportunities, limited recognition of women's craft-based work, a lack of safe spaces for young people, and insufficient public services, especially transport and education. They called for more involvement in decision-making processes, investments in sustainable mobility, free training programmes, and support for youth-led sustainability initiatives.

Emotional Climate and Group Dynamics

The workshop created a trusting environment in which young women were able to share experiences, anxieties, and aspirations. Creative activities facilitated the expression of often invisible personal narratives, transforming the workshop into a space for connection, care, and collective imagination. Many participants expressed relief in feeling part of a community that shares similar concerns and a sense of urgency for change.

Conclusions

Several key elements emerged from the workshop in Bari:

- young women are fully aware of the climate and social challenges shaping their future;
- they experience a strong sense of precarity but show a desire to take an active role in ecological transformation;
- they call for real listening spaces and meaningful participation;
- they view the green transition as a process that must be fair and inclusive;
- they appreciate creative methodologies that enable the expression of needs and visions.

The workshop confirms the importance of pathways that integrate creativity, listening, and co-design in order to amplify the voices of young women and to imagine fairer and more sustainable futures.

DADAU “Consultation tool” and “Solution tool” workshop outcomes

We conducted two types of surveys. On the one hand, we interviewed young people aged between 18 and 30, mainly of Asian origin, who are in higher education and living in France on a medium-term basis. On the other hand, we conducted an in-depth interview with a 24-year-old student who is committed and actively involved in green transition issues. He is originally from the Isère department of France.

The workshop survey

We submitted a questionnaire during the workshop-survey to the group of students we met; some of the answers were provided in writing, while others were collected during plenary discussions.

The students believe that the most serious problems related to climate change are: global warming and more extreme weather events were the most frequently mentioned, followed by the reduction of water resources, pollution caused by a growing population, air pollution, the melting of Arctic ice, the ubiquity of plastics, the disappearance of large forests and food waste. Among the problems that participants noted as the most difficult to change in the coming decades, we find many of the themes mentioned in the previous point, with the addition of a few more specific problems: excessive car use, climate change and in particular the desertification of large areas of land, the increase in natural disasters, the decline in biomass, the increase in droughts, rising sea levels and disruption to rainfall patterns, and air pollution. As for the problems that most impact participants in their daily lives, they consistently mentioned two points: extreme summer heat and severely degraded air quality.

Young people seem to have a superficial understanding of the most widely publicised issues relating to global environmental problems. However, it is important to note that they make a direct and indisputable link between human activity and extreme weather events or natural disasters.

The people whose work practices seem most eco-responsible to the young people surveyed are: a former teacher who recycles and travels by bicycle, Green Party deputies who plant trees, animal protectors, chefs who use local seasonal produce, builders, salespeople and professional drivers who use electric cars, refuse collectors who contribute to waste recycling, forest rangers, landscape designers who design gardens and use local plants and recycled materials, and researchers in the renewable energy sector.

Most of these examples show that the young people surveyed are looking for virtuous professions as role models, while they find it difficult to identify eco-responsible practices in the daily activities of shopkeepers, service providers, local officials, etc. whom they regularly encounter.

The most pressing issues relating to green transition that young people would like to discuss with their local stakeholders concern projects to reduce carbon footprints, concrete solutions to help mitigate global warming, measures to reduce the use of plastics, local council initiatives to encourage citizens to use less private transport, develop public transport and cycle paths, greening projects, raising awareness of eco-responsible practices, improving access to more green energy and reducing energy consumption in public spaces, better protection of rivers around the municipality and more measures to control factories that discharge water into the environment, plans to reduce food waste in school canteens, and new measures to improve air quality.

It is clear that young people are poorly informed about the importance of specific local measures and do not seem to distinguish between global issues and local community issues in the fight against climate change. It is essential to raise awareness among young people about the importance of small-scale initiatives and the impact and effectiveness of commitments and actions developed specifically for local problems.

Among young people who do not show a particular interest in environmental issues, questionnaires have shown that their primary sources of information on climate change issues are social media, school and the Internet. Scientific literature is rarely consulted. Finally, family and friends provide the least relevant information. It is clear that most of the information they receive on this subject is unreliable and that those around them do not serve as role models for eco-responsible practices and attitudes.

Participants were also asked to rank the reasons that influenced their choice of studies. The most important motivation was to earn a good living in the future, followed by the desire to find a job they would enjoy. The desire to learn and train came in third place, while ecological issues in future studies and professions came last.

Conclusion

Several important points can be noted from this survey: groups of young people who are not very involved in green transition issues are aware of the major topics covered in the media and link the phenomena they have experienced (such as extreme weather events and air and water pollution) to global warming, but do not seem motivated to become actively involved in the green transition. Their information often comes from unreliable sources, and their family and friends do not serve as role models for eco-responsible practices. At the same time, environmental issues are not decisive in their career choices. The most surprising finding of the survey is the invisibility of eco-responsible initiatives among young people, both at the local and municipal levels and at the individual level, in their formal and informal environments.

The interview survey

The perceived impacts of climate change and long-term prospects

Among the impacts of climate change that participants feel most in their daily lives, 24-year-old Pierre (first name changed) mentions the irreversible consequences on biodiversity in the forests and natural environment in his region, in the Vercors, in the Chartreuse natural parks. He notes that Mediterranean species have appeared there since his childhood and are beginning to occupy an increasingly important place, thus creating two competing forms of biodiversity. He notes the impossibility of controlling the survival of the original local fauna and flora, their difficulty in adapting to the presence of new species, and the complex management of invasive species. He considers this to be one of the most striking aspects of climate change and the most difficult to change.

The most impactful and urgent issue to be resolved among the phenomena generated by the ecological disaster is the management and use of water. Pierre believes that the groundwater in his region is in poor condition, agriculture and industry continue to pollute natural waters, and he deplores the fact that rainwater is very rarely collected and only in some recently constructed buildings.

The increase in heat waves and extreme weather events is becoming increasingly noticeable, and participants fear that this phenomenon will intensify in the future.

In addition to this, urban heat islands are a problem that requires a specific local response. Pierre notes that the cities in his region, particularly downtown Grenoble, have very little vegetation, and heat islands make poor neighborhoods uninhabitable in summer. On a small scale, green roofs and rooftop gardens could mitigate this problem, but currently only 1% of buildings have this type of feature. The participant believes that renovating old buildings and constructing new smart buildings could solve this problem and cites the "Bar Radis" as a beneficial experimental example. It would also be important to draw inspiration from examples of vernacular architecture in Mediterranean and African countries, particularly terracotta constructions that naturally regulate temperatures.

Finally, among the most significant problems mentioned are denial of the ecological disaster and "greenwashing." While participants are optimistic at the local level, because awareness is widespread in their region, they nevertheless consider that changing mindsets is a very slow process. They are keen to emphasize that we cannot pit generations against each other on this issue, as in every generation there are individuals who are very committed to developing ecological solutions and others who do not share these values.

Expectations toward local authorities

The following activities further reveal the importance Pierre attaches to education in advancing ecological causes. He would like local authorities to integrate ecological issues into the school curriculum and develop practical awareness-raising courses for children, for example, to explain to them during an excursion how a forest in their region works. For young adults, similar to civil service, an "ecological service" could be set up to provide better information on green jobs and regional fields of action in a more coordinated manner. But education must be popular, and local politicians should expand the training available to adults on the ecological transition. This participant establishes a clear link between the fight against poverty and the fight for a sustainable green transition: he would call on local authorities to create an ecological, agricultural, and solidarity-based service for the most disadvantaged. Finally, he would like young people to be given a more important role in the consultation and decision-making processes concerning ecological issues in the region. Like other regions, he would participate in youth councils within metropolitan authorities dedicated to ecological transition. Similarly, there is currently no structure in place where ecological projects led by young people could be supported by municipalities.

Investments for a just transition in the areas of education, health, mobility, and renewable energy

After a discussion on the concept of “just transition,” Pierre expressed that, in terms of mobility, his region should contribute to changing people’s perceptions of cycling, as he believes it is important to communicate about the potential expansion of bicycle use. In his opinion, affluent circles, urban journeys, and short individual trips are most associated with the image of this mode of transport. However, bicycles, which enable people with reduced mobility to get around, could be adapted and democratized, just as their use could be made easier for low-income families. Secondary roads in rural areas could be supplemented by “greenways” to ensure safe travel and offer an alternative to the almost exclusive use of cars.

Pierre believes that in the field of renewable energy, regional investment should focus more on wind turbines—which are few in this area—and solar panels. In general, a series of measures and innovations should make it possible to adapt and regulate energy consumption according to needs, avoiding overconsumption.

In terms of health, individual well-being and prevention should prevail, based on an eco-responsible approach: the widespread use of bicycles would be one example, as this means of transport is both sustainable and contributes to better physical health.

Finally, in the field of education, participants envision measures and programs rather than large investments: for example, a cross-disciplinary program dedicated to environmental education should be integrated into the curriculum of all higher education institutions, not just those already specializing in this field. Similarly, student initiatives and projects related to eco-responsibility should receive professional and administrative support.

Students who commit to an ecological activity or project could, for example, receive a “bonus” to free up the time needed to fulfill their commitment.

Studies and career changes compared to their parents' generation

Compared to his parents' generation, Pierre notes a lack of job stability and the impossibility of planning a career after graduation. Social benefits seem to have diminished, with less unemployment support and less union representation for workers.

Even after specialized studies, today's young people feel that, unlike their parents, their career path is not immediately clear, and even if professional mobility can have positive aspects, it is difficult to build a career if “you don't know where you're going.”

Currently, it seems that the most sensible approach is to alternate between studies and practical experience, participating in internships, civil service, and other professional experiences alongside studies or between two stages of academic learning.

Conclusion

The young people consulted show a strong commitment to ecological change, both in terms of education and attitudes, and in the search for innovative, practical, and sustainable solutions. They are very alert to ecological issues, both at a general level and at a local level.

Social awareness seems to be very present, and the young people consulted seem to be very alert to social inequalities in the face of the impacts of the climate crisis.

Young people are looking to pursue careers in which they can have an impact on the ecological transition process.

Results of consultation WS (concluding Finnish participants)

Reaching out the participants

The participants reached out to social media and instigated direct contacts with youth and education organisations. The NLF also cooperated with 3rd sector institutions in recruiting participants.

Profile of the participants

In total 12 participants were reached, 10 onsite and 2 online. They had different backgrounds, from politically active youngsters to those with challenges in their lives. Participants were from Mikkeli and other areas of rural Eastern Finland.

The participants were interested in climate change with an average of 7,4 (scale of 0-10, the same scale in use throughout the document).

Climate anxiety and worries

The participants' anxious level of climate change was moderate 6,9 as many described more significant worries in their lives and others said that they know about major issues going on, but they are not actively presented in their minds. For some participants, the level of worry also varied depending on the day.

The topics the youngsters worried about were shared. Most mentions were given to global warming, preservation of biodiversity and extinction of species, future pandemics and other health threats as well as the refugee crisis due to climate change.

Participants valued highly ecological diversity (9,1) and highlighted the importance of nature. Therefore they discussed and thought also that it is important to sustain life and temperatures in the area to be able to enjoy four seasons and its ecology and nature.

Personal sustainable choices

The feeling of doing enough to mitigate climate change impact was only 6,8. One of the reasons the youngsters were a bit hesitant about their own impact was that they didn't know enough about their own potential. The feeling of knowing enough of the consequences and impact of climate change was the lowest 6,4. The participants wanted to know more about individual-level choices, dietary choices, microplastics, the effects of technology and artificial intelligence on nature, recycling and its true nature, climate change in general and its effects on nature and species (bugs or similar) and where to find reliable information on the different topics.

However, many of the participants agreed with the thought that every action matters. They averaged the importance of ecological choices in their own life by 8,4. Their choices on recycling and dietary choices were often conscious, and they felt that they could do even more on these topics. These also raised emotions especially if they saw ignorant littering or fake news. The youngsters valued reliable information about climate change with an average of 8,9. Some of the youngsters read academic articles while others used social media and family.

Walking, cycling and other ways of moving without motored vehicles from A place to B was the most used way to contribute to mitigation of climate change in youngsters' daily life. Many participants said they did not have a car or driving license and if they had they avoided using it in short distances. Other means of transportation were seen to be more convenient even though inadequate public transport was critiqued by many young people.

Secondly, recycling was well presented and overlapped with fixing and repairing things. Third place was preferring local and ecofriendly products.

Climate activism was contradictory for youngsters. In a way they saw that it could have a massive impact and most consequences but for those who did not have the personality to do actions were hesitant to be involved in activism.

Generational differences

Most of the participants felt that there are generational differences regarding climate change and how to attain information on it. However, the results were slightly contradicting whether the older or younger generation is better or worse. For others, the parents were active recyclers while others were more ignorant and relentless in their actions. Some highlighted the self-sufficient lifestyle of the past generation and others emphasized more on vegetarian choices.

Young people were more attracted to fast fashion, but they knew the problems of it and knew which online shops to avoid. Instead, they actively used clothing recycling apps and flea markets without hoarding. Older people could learn how to find trustworthy and reliable information.

The older generation was said to value crafting more and know more about patching or fixing things. The younger generation is at the risk of not knowing the hand work as they do not own the equipment. Therefore, younger people could learn from perspective on the traditional ways of doing things like fixing and repairing instead of buying new ones.

Green jobs

Green jobs and employers' green values were seen to be important. Some of the participants found it hard to identify local businesses that are green without greenwashing. If options are not clear, they feel like they have no choice. However, some participants could mention their own experiences, for example, of recycling in different places either in previous or current jobs or otherwise as a part of public places.

Only some of the youngsters saw potential in their rural environment. They preferred beautiful nature and tranquility but most of the participants felt that there are more possibilities to have a career or meaningful life outside of the Mikkeli and South Savo area. The problems recognised were free time activities, education choices and poor public services.

Youngsters' messages for others

Many of the youngsters directed their message directly to the decision makers, both local and national. Especially, the recent deterioration of public funds for education, mental health and social benefits to have an adequate life in every part of the country has a significant impact on the young people. Young people demand from local authorities, for example, better public transportation, jobs, and actions while facing climate change. For peers, young people were more supportive and encouraged to be merciful for the actions they are currently doing.