



DETAILED REPORT

ON YOUTH PERSPECTIVES AND GREEN INTERVENTION AREAS

Go Green

**New learning path promoting
green entrepreneurship**

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Introduction

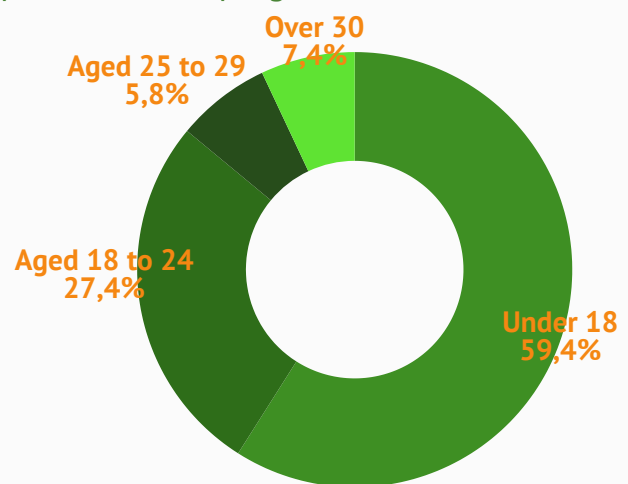
The aim of this study is to explore young people's interest in green entrepreneurship programs, their attitudes towards such initiatives, and the factors influencing their participation. The analysis is based on an online questionnaire survey conducted in February and March 2025 across six European countries: Ireland, Spain, Slovenia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and North Macedonia.

The research targeted individuals aged 15 to 29, and a total of 500 valid responses were collected. These responses provide insight into young people's entrepreneurial intentions, their attitudes toward sustainable business initiatives, and the factors that may either encourage or hinder their participation in such programs.

The demographic profile of the respondents reflects a diverse composition. The majority identified as women (55.0%), while men (38.6%) and individuals with other gender identities (4.8%) were also represented in notable proportions. The age distribution is presented in the accompanying chart.

In terms of employment status, the majority of respondents are students – either in college or university (43.6%) or in secondary school (39.4%). Those who are employed make up 13.0% of the sample, while the proportion of unemployed respondents is 1.0%.

Due to significant differences in response rates across countries, the comparative analysis of the questionnaire results was conducted using weighted data. In the following sections, we present a detailed overview of the respondents' profiles, the levels of interest in and attitudes toward green entrepreneurship programs, as well as the key factors—whether supportive or hindering—that influence young people's participation in such initiatives.



Mention of disadvantaged status and difficulties:

- Financial difficulties: 20.2%
- Physical or mental barriers: 11.4%
- Family-related problems: 8.6%
- Work- or study-related obstacles: 3.4%
- No difficulties reported: 41.4%

Women are more likely to perceive themselves as disadvantaged;

Students report experiencing the most barriers, particularly in the form of financial difficulties;

Green business development education programs



Sustainability and green entrepreneurship are playing an increasingly important role in both the economy and society. The attitudes, knowledge, and commitment of younger generations are key factors in determining the future success of such initiatives. To explore these aspects, the first three questions of the survey focused on respondents' views on sustainability, the importance they attribute to green businesses, and their awareness of related development programs.

The results of the questionnaire highlight that sustainability is widely regarded as an important value. However, perceptions of the practical role of green businesses, as well as awareness of related programs, vary significantly across different social groups and countries.

The results of the questionnaire clearly indicate that sustainability holds significant importance among young people, and the role of green enterprises is widely acknowledged.

The majority of respondents believe that environmental sustainability is not only an individual responsibility but also a crucial economic and societal factor that can contribute to sustainable development in the long term.

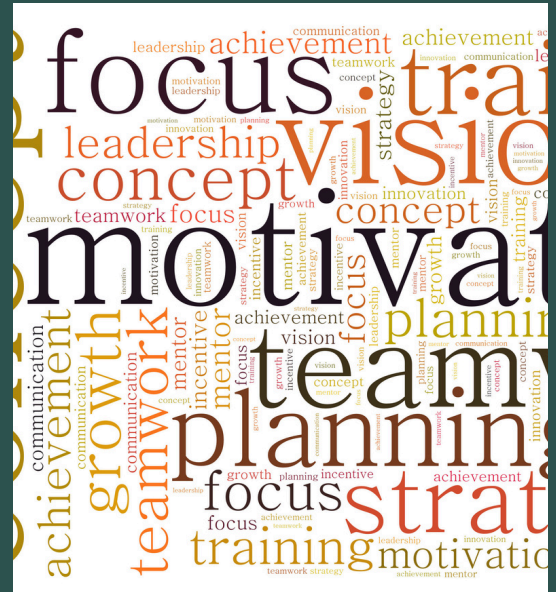
While green businesses are generally viewed positively, the findings show that many respondents consider their effectiveness to be industry-specific, and their success highly dependent on the regulatory and support environment. Furthermore, a degree of skepticism is evident, particularly among older respondents and those already in the workforce, who believe that sustainability considerations are often influenced by other factors in business decision-making.

Awareness of green business development programs, however, remains uneven, with notable demographic and geographic disparities. Although many young people have heard of such opportunities, only a few possess deeper knowledge or hands-on experience. Respondents from Western European countries appeared to be more informed, while awareness was lower in Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

Overall, the survey suggests that while interest in sustainability and green entrepreneurship is substantial, there is a clear need for further education, awareness-raising, and targeted support systems to enhance knowledge and foster participation. Actively involving young people and making opportunities related to green businesses more accessible could play a key role in ensuring these initiatives gain wider traction and achieve meaningful impact.

Drivers and barriers

The success of green business development programs depends not only on young people's interest and awareness, but also on the barriers they face in participating and the extent to which they are motivated to take an active role in such initiatives. The survey results shed light on the factors that may hinder young people from engaging in these programs, as well as on the level of commitment expressed by respondents. In the following section, we present the most common difficulties and the levels of motivational willingness, both of which play a key role in engaging and mobilizing young people.



Barriers

Financial constraints: participation fees, training costs, and other financial factors (37.2%);

Lack of information: awareness of the existence and details of the programs is uneven; many young people are not familiar with the available opportunities (29.6%);

Lack of time: due to academic and work commitments, few are able to dedicate sufficient time to such a program (24.5%);

Geographical and accessibility constraints: for those living in rural or less developed areas, access to programs is more limited (18.7%);

Lack of motivation: not all young people clearly see the potential in green entrepreneurship, making participation feel less relevant to them (12.3%);

Motivation

20% of respondents are highly committed, while 55% are moderately motivated to participate in the programs;

Men are more likely to consider participation in green entrepreneurship programs as particularly important;

A higher level of interest in participating in the programs is observed among those under the age of 25;

Respondents with more experience, including those who already own a business, show a high level of motivation and generally do not require additional encouragement;

Hindering factors have a significant impact on young people's motivation.

Motivation is most strongly diminished by barriers related to individual resources—such as financial means, time availability, and access to information;

Motivators for participating in the programs

Young people's participation in green business development programs is influenced not only by hindering factors, but also by incentives that can help overcome challenges and strengthen their commitment. Appropriate support mechanisms—such as financial incentives, mentoring opportunities, or hands-on experience—can play a significant role in encouraging young people to engage actively in these programs. Below, we present the key factors that can enhance willingness to participate and foster greater commitment to sustainable entrepreneurship.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

41%

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING

31%

PRACTICAL TRAINING

28%

**MENTORING
OPPORTUNITIES**

19%

Implementation framework

When designing successful green business development programs, it is essential that they meet young people's expectations—both in terms of content and structure. According to the survey results, respondents clearly prefer flexible, practice-oriented formats that allow them to participate alongside their studies or employment. Among the most popular options were hybrid learning models, online and short intensive courses, as well as mentoring and hands-on training programs.

The amount of time respondents are able to dedicate to such programs is also a crucial factor for participation. The data show that most would be able to commit only a few hours per week, while longer programs requiring regular and sustained involvement are less attractive. Significant differences were observed between students and young workers in terms of time availability: university students generally have more flexible schedules, whereas employed youth and those in vocational training prefer shorter, modular courses.

Based on the findings, aligning program delivery with participants' time constraints—while maintaining a dynamic and practical focus—is essential for ensuring the effectiveness of green business initiatives.

The relevance of green entrepreneurship

The survey results highlight that, for the majority of young people, green entrepreneurship is not merely a sustainability effort but a relevant and viable long-term career path. Most respondents believe that sustainable business models are gaining increasing importance in the economy and may offer a competitive alternative to traditional forms of entrepreneurship in the future.

At the same time, the findings also reveal considerable differences in how this relevance is perceived: while some respondents are highly committed to green entrepreneurship, others view it as less profitable or marketable. Available support systems, adequate information, and the presentation of practical examples can play a key role in making sustainable entrepreneurship an increasingly attractive and realistic perspective for young people.



Sustainable Businesses: Key focus areas and trends - Part 1

Sustainable businesses are playing an increasingly important role in both global and local economies, as the demand for environmental and social sustainability continues to grow. Innovative business models not only contribute to environmental protection, but also offer economically viable solutions in the long term. Young people's entrepreneurial mindset and interest are crucial to the development of a sustainable economy, making it essential to explore which areas capture their attention the most and which sectors hold the greatest growth potential. Based on the survey results, the following key themes in sustainable entrepreneurship have emerged:

Circular economy and waste reduction (41.3%): nearly half of the respondents identified this area as the most interesting. Interest in recycling, waste reduction, and sustainable production models was particularly strong in Bulgaria (45.6%) and Hungary (42.3%), while slightly lower in Ireland (38.1%).

Green innovation and technological development (36.7%): this area was particularly popular among younger respondents and male participants. Interest in new technologies, smart solutions, and sustainable business models was highest in Ireland (39.4%) and North Macedonia (36.2%), while notably lower in Hungary (29.1%).

Renewable energy sources (31.2%): this topic was more popular among those willing to dedicate a greater amount of time to learning. Among respondents who indicated they would spend 6–8 hours or more per week on a training program, 40% preferred this area. Interest was highest in Hungary (32.4%) and Bulgaria (30.6%), while slightly lower in Ireland and Slovenia (both 27%).

Sustainable Businesses: Key focus areas and trends - Part 2

Sustainable architecture and green technologies (26.8%): this area was especially popular among those interested in construction industry innovations and energy efficiency solutions. Interest was highest in Bulgaria (30.6%) and North Macedonia (29.8%), while it was less popular in Ireland (23.7%).

Organic farming and sustainable food industry (22.4%): this option was particularly favored by respondents living in rural areas or those considering involvement in sustainable agricultural initiatives. Interest was highest in Ireland (24.2%) and Hungary (22.8%).

Green transportation and mobility (20.1%): interest in electric vehicles and sustainable transport solutions was particularly notable among male respondents with an interest in the transport sector.

Eco-friendly products and services (18.9%): this area was more popular among those considering starting small businesses and aiming to implement local initiatives.

Environmental education and awareness-raising (16.2%): this topic was most popular among women and respondents working in the field of education, suggesting that sustainability education and awareness-raising can be powerful tools for increasing social impact.

Based on the data, the areas of sustainable entrepreneurship that attract the most interest are the circular economy, green innovation, and renewable energy sources. Respondents' gender, age, and employment background play a significant role in shaping which types of sustainable businesses they find most appealing. Younger generations tend to focus more on innovation and technology, while older respondents are more drawn to long-term, stable business opportunities. When developing green entrepreneurship initiatives, it is important to take these differing preferences into account to ensure that programs effectively reach and engage various target groups.

Visibility of the programs

Educational programs related to sustainability play a key role in equipping young people with the knowledge and skills needed to launch and manage green businesses. Such training not only supports the understanding of sustainable business models but also provides opportunities for gaining practical experience and building professional networks.



In the context of our study, it is particularly important to explore how well these programs are known among young people and what factors may hinder or facilitate their access. If the goal is to genuinely promote the spread of sustainable entrepreneurship, it is essential that young people have access to the right information and opportunities to participate in relevant training. The following analysis presents respondents' perceptions of how well these programs are promoted and outlines the steps they consider necessary to improve their visibility.

According to the survey results, awareness of sustainability-related educational programs varies significantly across different social and geographical groups. While most respondents had heard of such programs, only a few had in-depth knowledge or practical experience. The main challenges identified were a lack of information and limited access—particularly among younger respondents and those living in less developed areas.

Respondents indicated that the visibility of sustainable entrepreneurship training and programs could be significantly improved through the following measures:

- **Improved promotion and communication** – Broader outreach through social media, dedicated websites, and the involvement of educational institutions.
- **Targeted information for young people** – Active presence in secondary schools and universities through workshops and open days.
- **Improved accessibility** – Offering online training, and free or subsidized participation opportunities for disadvantaged youth.
- **Mentoring and practical opportunities** – Facilitating engagement in entrepreneurial programs through access to professional mentors and internship placements.

The research highlights that there is a clear interest in sustainable entrepreneurship programs. However, without effective promotional strategies and more accessible training options, many potential participants struggle to find opportunities that suit their needs. Future program development should focus on reaching a wider range of social groups and ensuring that training is more broadly accessible to young people.

What does green entrepreneurship mean to young people?



01. Sustainability and environmental responsibility (54%)

For most respondents, the primary meaning of green entrepreneurship is that a business should actively strive to reduce its ecological impact.

“The green entrepreneurial mindset prioritizes sustainability, environmental awareness, and social responsibility in business decision-making.”

02. Social responsibility and an ethical business model (8%)

A significant number of respondents believe that sustainable businesses also have ethical and social responsibilities.

“Green entrepreneurship is not only about environmental protection, but also about making ethical business decisions.”

03. Innovation and technological development (35%)

More than one-third of respondents believe that technological development and innovation are indispensable for sustainable businesses.

“Circular economy, new business models, and green innovation.”

04. Support for local communities and awareness-raising (27%)

Many people emphasize not only reducing environmental impact, but also raising awareness and taking on community responsibility.

“An enterprise that supports local communities in their transition toward sustainability.”



Conclusion

The results of the questionnaire clearly indicate that there is significant interest in sustainable entrepreneurship among young people. However, numerous barriers hinder the implementation of their initiatives in this field. Sustainability considerations are increasingly becoming part of young people's mindset, and it is evident that green businesses represent a relevant and viable long-term alternative for economic development.

According to the findings, the main challenges include financial constraints, lack of information, and limited access to appropriate educational programs. At the same time, the level of motivation can be increased through targeted promotion, practical opportunities, and more flexible training structures. Based on the respondents' suggestions, improving the visibility of sustainability education and establishing mentoring systems are essential for engaging more young people in these initiatives.

Overall, the research confirms that advancing sustainable entrepreneurship requires not only committed youth but also a supportive ecosystem that provides them with the necessary knowledge, resources, and opportunities. The next step involves a collaborative effort by educational institutions, policymakers, and entrepreneurial communities to ensure that green entrepreneurship becomes a real and practical career path for the younger generation.

“A sustainable business is resource-efficient, respects the environment, and is a good neighbor.”

Phil Harding