

CLIMATE RIGHTS IRELAND

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS IN IRELAND



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Who are we?

This report was compiled by **Climate Rights Ireland**, a group of young people working with the support of **UNICEF Ireland** to investigate and report on how the climate crisis interacts with children's rights in Ireland. We worked as a team of entirely young people, led by young people, to create a report for young people. We hope that this report will be a catalyst for change and drive a shift in Ireland's performance on the climate crisis and children's rights.



OUR MAIN FINDINGS

We focused our research on the following articles from the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child:

- *Article 2: No discrimination*
- *Article 6: Survival and Development*
- *Article 12: Right to be heard*
- *Article 22: Children who are refugees*

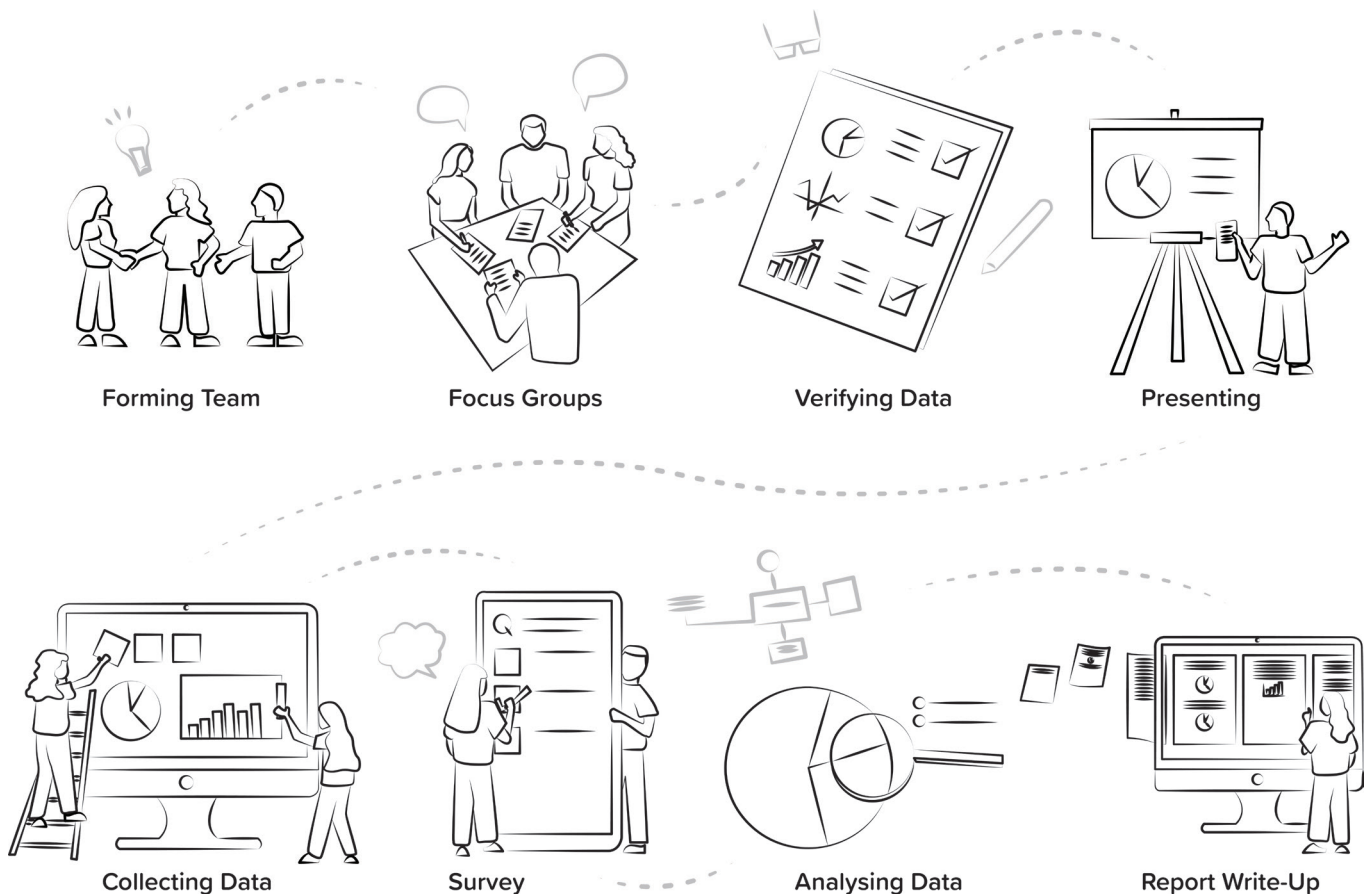
ARTICLE 2	ARTICLE 6	ARTICLE 12	ARTICLE 22
<p>The climate crisis is not being felt equally across Ireland.</p> <p>The rural-urban divide is creating disproportionate impacts on those residing in rural Ireland. This is particularly apparent in access to resources, degree of support and access to a Just Transition.</p> <p>Substantial development is highlighted in the areas of (a) transport (b) delivering a Just Transition and (c) education.</p>	<p>Children in Ireland are already experiencing the negative impacts of the climate crisis.</p> <p>It was found that this is seen predominantly in the area of mental health. Children report the climate crisis is having a damaging effect on their mental health and sense of security.</p> <p>It was highlighted that children experience feelings of anxiety that are being compounded by government inaction.</p> <p>There is an evident need to improve access and quality of mental health support for children in Ireland.</p>	<p>Young people report that they do not feel that they are meaningfully engaged on climate policy. They feel there is a lacking in a sense of urgency in preventing catastrophic impacts of climate change.</p> <p>Furthermore, young people outlined barriers for engagement for example, a lack of spaces for young people to engage in climate policy.</p> <p>Young people do not see their input and opinions being translated into policy. Accountability, accessibility and support must be delivered in this area.</p>	<p>Children living in Direct Provision are experiencing severely negative impacts on their mental health and human rights.</p> <p>The climate crisis is causing many children worldwide to become refugees.</p> <p>The Irish government must take immediate steps to work with Direct Provision residents and campaigners, and to protect the rights of children who seek asylum in Ireland.</p>

What do we want to come from this report?

We have included key recommendations under each Article for the changes the Irish government ought to deliver. Ultimately, we want systemic change that places the rights of children and the planet at the forefront. We want justice, equity and a sustainable society. Our aim is that future reports do not need to highlight these issues, and that it can act as a mechanism for this change to be delivered. We wish to see a fairer, more equitable and sustainable world created for this generation, and all those who go after us.

This project, led by a team of **10** Irish young people, brought together young people from all over the country to voice their views on their rights and the climate crisis. This is how we collected our research:

METHODOLOGY



Beginning the report

- We formed the *Working Group* and met to outline the main focus of the report.
- We met with **UNICEF** and **CERI** to discuss prior work on children's rights and the climate crisis and how this report can contribute to the wider conversation.
- We decided to structure the report around **4** key articles of the **UNCRC** and how they relate to children's rights and the climate crisis: **Articles 2, 6, 12 and 22**. We selected these articles following consultation with young people.
- We created a timeline to plan out the report and our research process.

Collecting data

In order to make sure our data was as representative of the population as possible, including children of all **backgrounds** and **levels of familiarity with the climate crisis**, we collected research through a variety of methods:

SURVEY

- We conducted a survey of children across Ireland in the period between **July and September 2021**, regarding Articles 2 and 12. The survey included questions around participation, impacts of the climate crisis, feelings of security, and other issues captured by these articles. It received **74** responses in total. The survey questions can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.
- The survey was shared across youth activism networks as well as our social media page. We reached out to organisations working with young people to share the survey with their networks in order to reach young people not already involved in the climate movement.
- When we closed the survey, we validated all responses to avoid duplication and maximise accuracy.

FOCUS GROUPS

- On August 16th 2021, we held an online event with *Focus Groups* of young people from across Ireland to discuss Articles 2, 6 and 12. The *Focus Groups* were formed through an open sign-up online on our social media and shared with a variety of youth organisations.
- The groups discussed Article 12 in the morning, and Articles 2 and 6 in the afternoon. Discussions were centred around prompt questions drafted by the group, and evolved from these. These questions were designed to be open-ended to prompt conversation and a wide variety of responses. We used collaborative online tools such as Mural to allow participants to work together in real-time. These virtual whiteboards were then used to ensure our data captured what the young people were saying.

ARTICLE 22

To collect data regarding Direct Provision, its link with the climate crisis and its impacts on children's rights, we contacted **Abolish Direct Provision** - a group working to further the rights and protections of those living in Direct Provision. They kindly agreed to meet with us and discuss the climate crisis and the rights of refugees. We recorded their answers and have compiled this alongside secondary data.

Other sources of data

We received input from the **Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU)** Debate Your Decision-Makers event in April 2021, open to all second-level member schools of the Union. Secondary research and statistics also informed our research.

Analysing and compiling the data

- When we had finished collecting data, we began to analyse it and compile this report.
- We met in-person, in line with COVID-19 restrictions, and reviewed all the data we had collected section-by-section, bringing together data from all of our sources. We identified the key trends and formed recommendations.
- After this, we wrote the sections together and reviewed them as a group.





ARTICLE 2

**NO
DISCRIMINATION**

Young activist at COP26 in Glasgow

1. *States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.*

2. *States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.*

ARTICLE 2

OUR FINDINGS

From our research, we found that children in rural Ireland are **disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis** and need to have **better access to support**.

Young people were consulted on the following topics:

- *Impact of the climate crisis*
- *Access to resources and support*
- *Access to a Just Transition*

How are young people in rural Ireland impacted by the climate crises?

During our consultation it became evident that children living in rural areas had been disproportionately affected by the impacts of the climate crisis.

FIGURE 1

Has your community been impacted by the climate crisis?
(Urban)

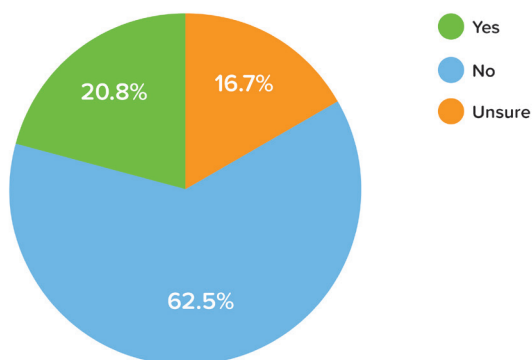


FIGURE 2

Has your community been impacted by the climate crisis?
e.g. storms, flooding etc. (Rural)

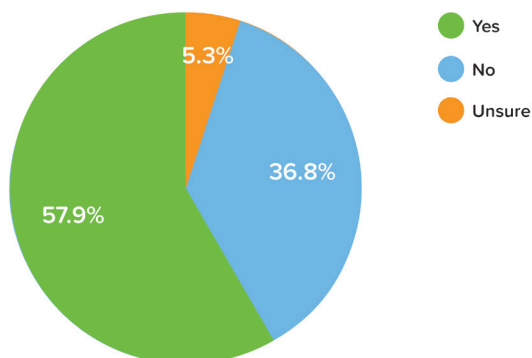
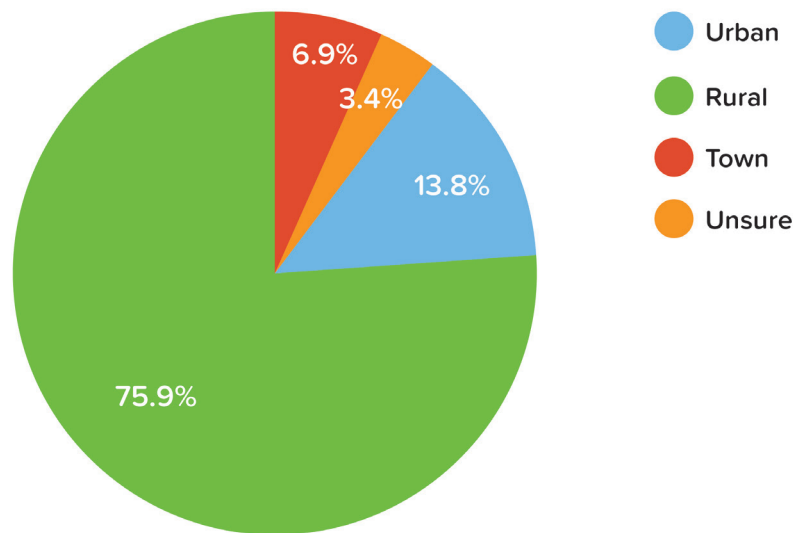


FIGURE 3

Which of the following best describes where you live?
(Answered yes to being impacted by the climate crisis)



58% of rural respondents (Figure 2) had been impacted by the climate crisis, compared to just **21%** of urban respondents (Figure 1). This indicates a much **heavier impact in rural areas**.

3/4 of the respondents who answered 'yes' to having been impacted by the climate crisis were from rural areas (Figure 3), despite only **31.4%** of Ireland's population living in a rural area. This further illustrated a disproportionate impact on children in rural areas.

Following from this finding, we investigated whether adequate supports have been provided to address these impacts.

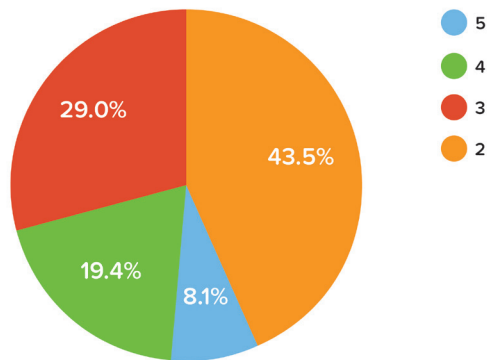
How supported do young people in rural communities feel they have been supported in accessing resources, managing impacts and accessing a just transition?

We found a notable discrepancy between rural and urban respondents in the level of support offered to achieve a just transition.

65.6% of those who rated the support offered to their community in the 1-2 (**lowest**) range were from rural areas. (Figure 5). This compared to **28.1%** in urban areas.

FIGURE 4

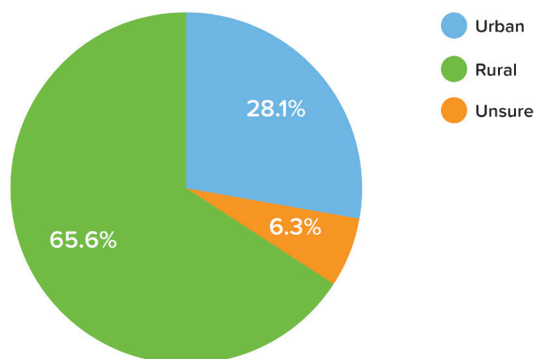
How supported by the government is your community in accessing a Just Transition? (Urban)



Not a single urban respondent gave a score of 1 (lowest). (Figures 4) This indicates that children in **rural areas are receiving a lower level of support**.

FIGURE 5

Which of the following best describes where you live? (1 - 2 for Just government support)



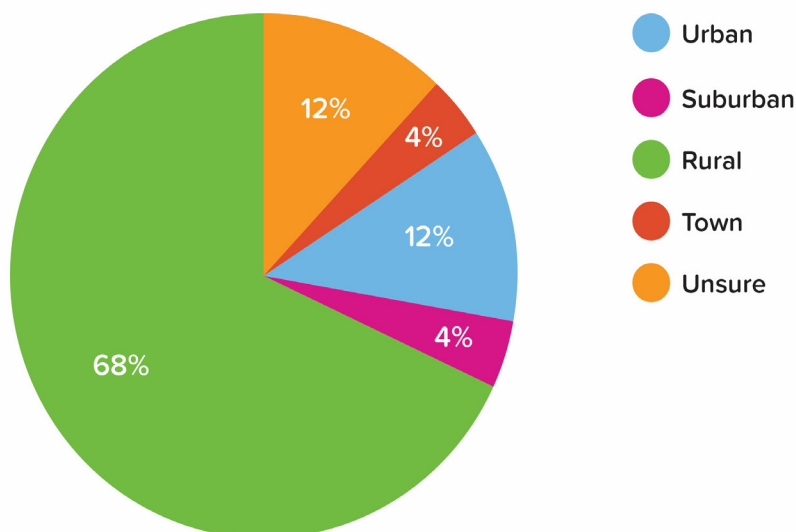
Young people are feeling the impact of a lack of resources and support in their day-to-day lives, one commenting:

“How can we have transitions to solutions that don’t even exist”. The farming community bears a particular burden here, “[there are] no grants which most people need, e.g small farmers cannot afford greener options”.

68% of respondents who reported that **resources were inaccessible** to them were from rural areas, compared to **4%** in suburban areas and **12%** in urban areas (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6

Which of the following best describes where you live?
(1 - 2 for accessibility of resources)



One participant in our consultation stated;

“I live in a rural area and though we have the space for greener alternatives, we are never paid any heed, or given any options”.

There is a **disparity in the quality of resources available**. A participant noted that electric cars at petrol stations are *“often broken, which turns people off switching to electric cars”*.

Furthermore, young people often have to **seek out information** on the climate crisis **independently** rather than it being accessible in school.

“[There are] not many physical resources but I am fortunate enough to have good WIFI and internet connection so I can find plenty of resources online.” When asked where they find information about the climate crisis one rural participant said, *“Only online and only if I seek them out myself”*.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our research regarding discrimination and inequality surrounding:

- *Impacts of the climate crisis*
- *Supports for dealing with the impacts of the crisis*
- *Accessibility of resources*
- *Government support for accessing a Just Transition*

We make the following recommendations:

TRANSPORT

We believe our recommendations will work to reduce disparity between rural and urban areas, and also increase the ability of children to access opportunities in education and employment.

- 1** We need comprehensive rural public transport infrastructure.
- 2** Ireland should work towards 15 minute cities which are walkable and accessible by public transport.
- 3** We should have increased pedestrianisation in cities.

This will work to **reduce discrimination between rural and urban** and also **increase ability of children to access opportunities in education and employment**.

JUST TRANSITION

- 1** The government needs to meaningfully engage with and support rural Ireland.
- 2** The government should economically incentivise sustainable farming and support the farming community.
- 3** The policy emphasis should be on corporations and those who are most responsible for the climate crisis.
- 4** The government must engage with children in the Travelling Community.
- 5** The government should provide more community resources such as bins, benches and cycle paths.
- 6** There should be more accessible grants for electric cars and solar panels.
- 7** The government should work on retraining workers and supporting continued employment in alternative and sustainable sectors.

EDUCATION

- 1** The government must implement Education for Sustainable Development.
- 2** A TY module on climate action should be introduced.
- 3** Education should focus on empowerment and developing key skills.
- 4** Free third level education should be provided.
- 5** There must be comprehensive youth involvement in designing education which places youth voices at the forefront.

A photograph of a young child and an adult protesting at COP26 in Glasgow. The child, in the background, has dark hair and face paint. The adult, in the foreground, wears a dark cap and a yellow scarf, and is blowing a whistle. They are both behind a blue perforated metal fence.

ARTICLE 6

SURVIVAL & DEVELOPMENT

Young child and adult protesting at
COP26 in Glasgow

1.

State Parties recognise that every child has the inherent right to life

2.

State Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child

ARTICLE 6

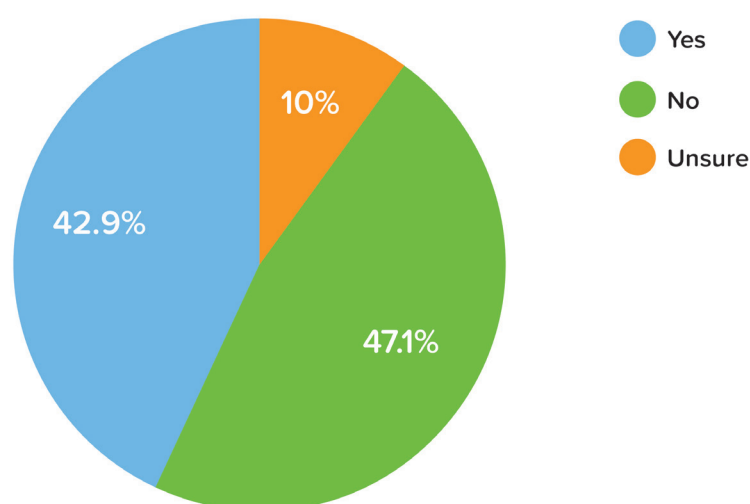
OUR FINDINGS

HOW THIS IMPACTS CHILDREN IN IRELAND?

42% of children surveyed stated they had been impacted by the climate crisis (figure 7). This includes increased flooding across the country, and extreme weather events such as Storm Ophelia.

FIGURE 7

Has your community been impacted by the climate crisis?
e.g. storms, flooding etc.



Participants stated that weather conditions are negatively **affecting their everyday lives**. One participant stated that their crops are dying more frequently in the heat waves Ireland is experiencing. Another drew attention to flooding in Cork City, and how this has had a negative effect on their sense of safety as well as the local economy and livelihoods. Participants described excess water waste in heatwaves, and of heating in *'freezing winters'*, as well as increased anxiety resulting from these abnormal weather conditions.

As a result, children outlined a **negative impact on their mental health and sense of security**. They outlined feelings of anxiety and a burden of responsibility due to lack of action by current generations in power. They also stated they did not feel they were receiving adequate support, or that the government was taking adequate climate action. This compounds the negative impact on their mental health.

Below are some of the ways children described this:

How, if at all, has the climate crisis impacted your mental health and feeling of security?

“Climate change has made me question if I have a future. It’s horrible to know that climate change will probably cause my death and yet no one seems to be doing anything about it”

“The poor air quality due to climate change and other industrial work in my town has severely harmed both my physical and mental health”

“The government has done nothing about [the climate crisis] and it makes me fear for the security of my fellow townspeople and I”

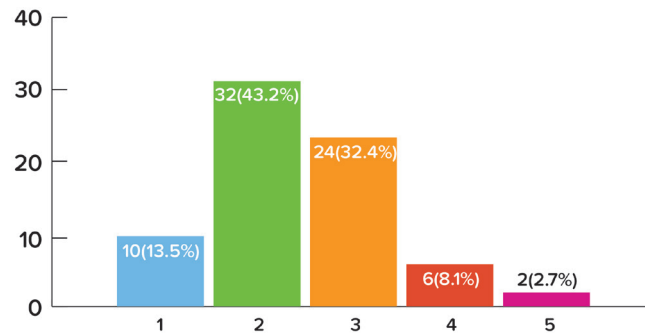
“I am in constant fear of losing my family as a result of climate change (e.g. due to air quality), as someone who is very anxious it causes me a lot of mental stress and depression”

“General climate anxiety gets to me when I consider my future and if there will be a liveable future at all”

Alongside this impact on children's mental health, we heard fears around their future and development.

74 responses

How much do you think that climate policy in Ireland reflects young people's input and perspectives?



Children outlined feeling *'helpless and hopeless'* stating *'the future is honestly terrifying'*. Members of the Focus Group outlined how climate change has impacted their future plans. They stated that they are *'unsure'* about what the planet will look like, and that *'climate change threatens the existence of my future'*. Children asked *'do I want to bring children into a world with climate change?'*

We therefore found that the climate crisis is having a **negative impact on children's mental health** and **sense of security**, an effect which is increased by a lack of adequate climate action.

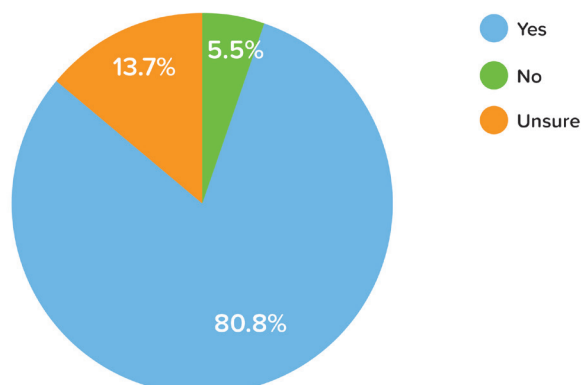
How does the climate crisis make you feel?

Mentimeter



73 responses

Do you feel there are barriers that prevent young people from being heard when it comes to climate change and climate action?



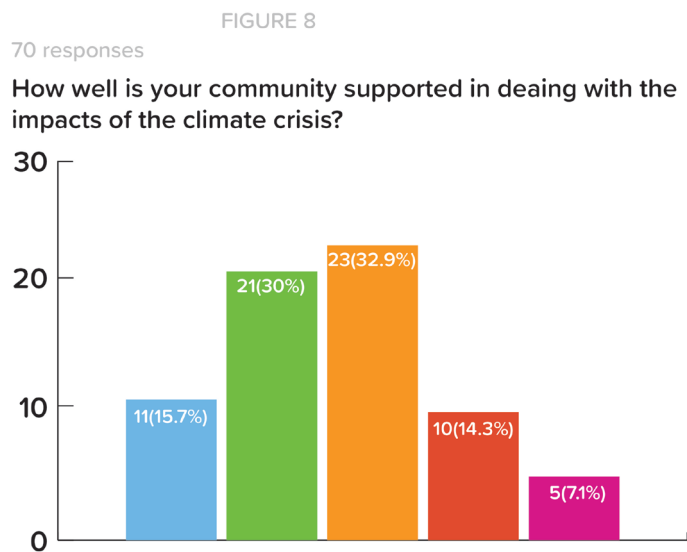
SUPPORT

Children also outlined a lack of adequate support from the government in dealing with the impacts of the climate crisis.

15% of participants gave the lowest score of 1 when asked ‘How well is your community supported in dealing with the impacts of the climate crisis?’ (Figure 8).

Over 3/4 (78.6%) gave a score of 3 or below. There is a lack of support for communities to face the climate crisis. This adds to the negative impact on children’s sense of security and safety in relation to this crisis.

Finally, participants described a lack of adequate mental health support. This, coupled with a failure to take effective climate action, further damages children’s sense of security and safety.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Action must be taken to prevent these impacts of the climate crisis on children's sense of security and safety. Alongside this, adequate resources for communities and for mental health must be provided to support children.

We therefore recommend:

- 1** Systemic action to tackle the climate crises.
- 2** Clear communication of action being taken, without greenwashing.
- 3** Investment in and expansion of mental health services for young people.
- 4** Community support for resilience and adaptation to protect young people from the impacts of the climate crisis.



Young indigenous child at COP26 in Glasgow

ARTICLE 12

**RIGHT
TO BE HEARD**

1. *State Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.*

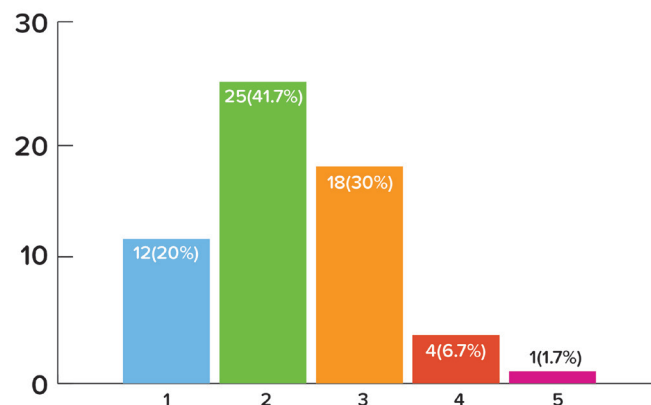
2. *For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.*

OUR FINDINGS

The data below illustrates that **young people do not feel listened to in climate policy** in Ireland. Where spaces are created, their input is not meaningfully taken onboard. These spaces can be inaccessible, tokenistic, and lack impact. These must be reformed to provide accessibility, accountability and support, as outlined in our recommendations.

60 responses

If you have participated, how much do you feel the government and other bodies have actively listened to your input and taken it on board?



1. The government needs to meaningfully listen:

- Young people in Ireland felt that **their voices were being tokenised** and then brushed aside, *'it most feels performative'*.
- Many **focus group members** engaged with their decision makers but faced **being ignored or disregarded**.
- The few who felt somewhat listened to by the government stated that it **never translated into real policy and change**.
- Young people stated that they **felt heard but not seen** by the Irish government. They felt that the climate strikes were heard but the necessary action didn't follow. They expressed their disheartenment as they are deeply concerned for their future, or what is to come of it.
- One young person stated that they emailed **ALL** their representatives and only received one response. Young people stated that they have **no avenues to directly communicate their concerns and opinions and demands to their representatives**.
- One member said our voices are *'rarely ever taken onboard to the extent that [they need] to be'*.



Young activist leading a chant at COP26
in Glasgow

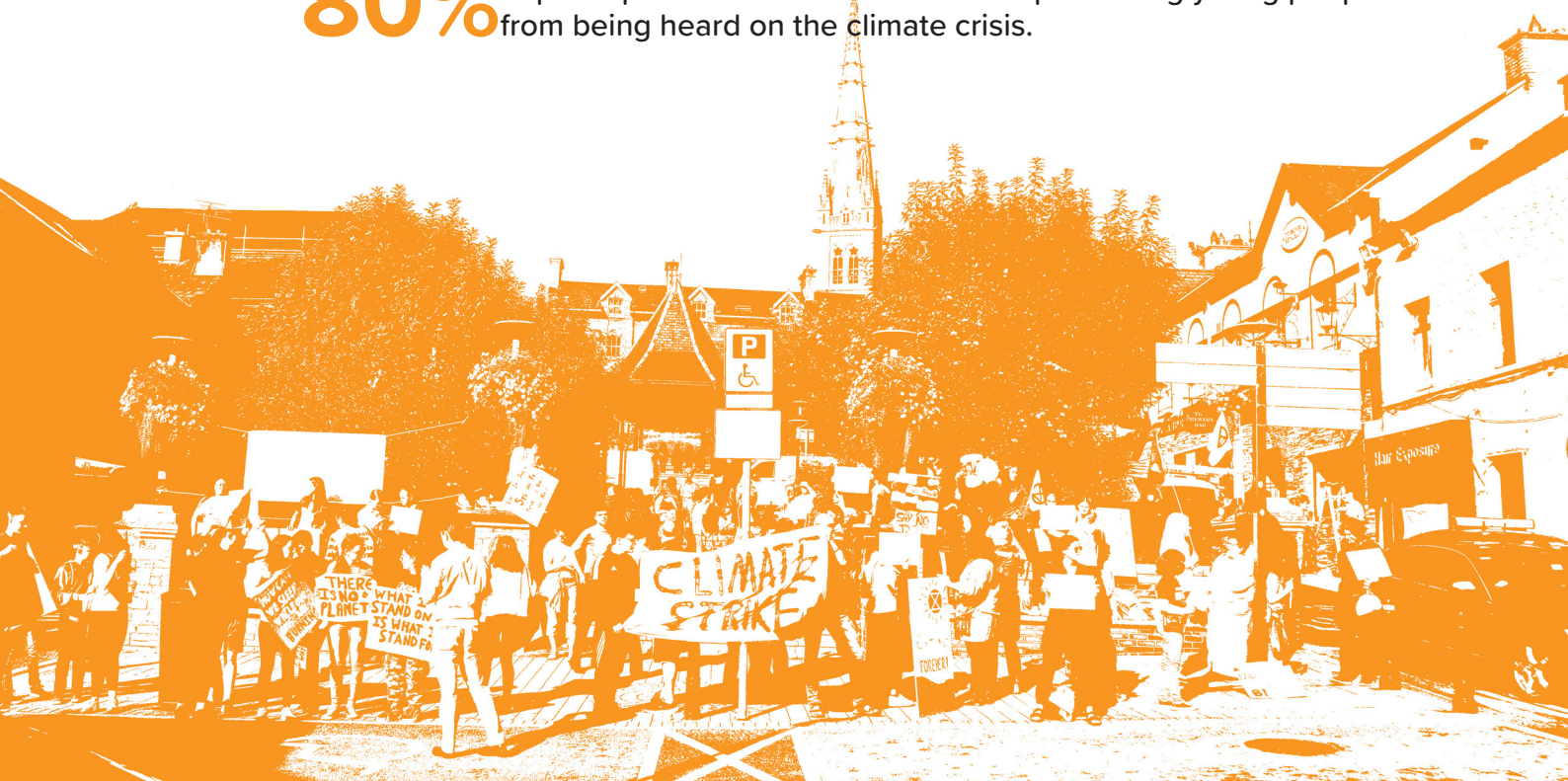
2. There is a lack of spaces to engage:

- Young people felt there was **no clear space in Ireland** for young people to state their concerns and give their input. This made them **feel closed off to the decision-making** sphere.
- Some young people stated there were opportunities to be listened to, but they agreed that there needs to be more clear and open avenues of communication. They felt that **their opinions hold value as it is their future in danger**.
- Young people raised the **lack of climate and political education** aimed at creating skills and youth engagement was raised.
- We found that government language and processes can be **inaccessible and full of jargon**.
- There is a **lack of representation of young people** in policy-making spheres.

3. There is a lack of sense of urgency:

- Young people felt the government understood the severity of the issue but **didn't fully comprehend the urgency of climate justice**.
- They felt **isolated in their call for immediate climate justice and action** as the government seemed to be focusing on small term mitigation.

80% of participants felt there were barriers preventing young people from being heard on the climate crisis.



Below are quotes from participants describing this issue:

‘Young people are not respected’

‘Dismissive attitudes from adults and politicians’

‘Not being taken seriously’

‘As youth, our voices seem to be neglected as we are more so looked at as under age and most adults would think that we are either disrespectful or we don’t know what we are talking about but we are the future and it’s us that should have a say in a lot of climate-related discussions’

‘Lack of communication, lack of respect and attention given by government, no information exchange between youth and government body’

‘The government won’t listen and take on what the young people say, they hope we will stop but we won’t.’

‘Their level of education on how the state operates politically, as this restricts them from understanding what happens with their expressed voices at a national level. And how much of that voice is taken not only ‘on board’, but is actually acted upon.’

‘No one really takes us seriously until it’s way too late’

RECOMMENDATIONS

The overwhelming call from participants was one for accountability, accessibility and support to solve this issue.

We make the following recommendations:

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Irish government must be accountable to young people and **translate their input into real policy**, rather than a box-ticking exercise.

- 1** The government should follow up on the ideas raised by young people. They should communicate clearly about the next steps and how young people will continue to be engaged. There should be measurable, impactful consequences of all youth engagement.
- 2** Youth engagement should focus on broader, systemic issues of policy rather than solely on individual change.
- 3** The government should improve the distribution of public funds for climate justice and consultation.
- 4** Young people should be included on the Climate Change Advisory Council.
- 5** Comhairle na nÓg should be reformed.
- 6** Representatives should regularly consult young people.
- 7** The government should establish a Youth Citizens Assembly on climate with a binding mandate.

ACCESSIBILITY

The government should **provide clear and accessible mechanisms for young people** to engage with their decision-makers.

- 1 They should encourage young people of all backgrounds to engage, including those with no prior experience in the climate movement. These spaces should include comprehensive and accessible information to help participants to engage.
- 2 Participation spaces should be widely communicated and should aim to be representative of Ireland's youth population.
- 3 Participation spaces should be accessible to all.
- 4 The government should lower the voting age.

SUPPORT

- 1 The government should improve funding for youth organisations.
- 2 Education for Sustainable Development must be provided and improved at all levels.
- 3 Education and support should focus on climate justice, science and intersectionality. It should be aimed at empowerment and skills development.



ARTICLE 22

CHILDREN WHO ARE REFUGEES

Activists leading a walk-out action at
COP26 in Glasgow

1. *States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties.*

2. *For this purpose, States Parties shall provide, as they consider appropriate, co-operation in any efforts by the United Nations and other competent intergovernmental organizations or non-governmental organizations co-operating with the United Nations to protect and assist such a child and to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. In cases where no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be accorded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment for any reason , as set forth in the present Convention.*

ARTICLE 22

This part of the report deals with the **connection between the climate crisis and refugee children** in Ireland, in particular *children living in Direct Provision*. To conduct our research, we met with members of **Abolish Direct Provision (DP)** to communicate the lived experience of children impacted in this area.

OUR FINDINGS

- The climate crisis is impacting children across the world, with approximately **1 billion children** at *'extremely high risk'* of the impacts of the climate crisis. Since 2008, there has been an average of **67,000 displacements** each day as a result of floods, windstorms, earthquakes, or droughts. Despite this, the term *'climate refugee'* has no international legal recognition.
- **Abolish Direct Provision (DP)** outlined that the climate crisis also **affects how children travel to Ireland**, for example, it may prevent them from walking or sailing.
- Almost **30%** of Direct Provision residents are children.
- Abolish DP stated *'the trauma inflicted in this system harms children's mental health and wellbeing. Some people stay in DP for up to 20 years. This acts as incarceration'*.
- Key issues for children in DP are:
 - *Impacts on mental health*
 - *Restriction of movement and freedom*
 - *Loss of motivation*
 - *Lack of independence.*

We must **connect climate justice to the protection of refugees**, the climate crisis forces people to leave their homes. The two struggles are connected, and the Irish government must adequately protect refugees, particularly children.

A close-up photograph of an Indigenous activist painting a red hand. The activist is wearing a traditional feathered headdress with a red and yellow geometric pattern. They are holding a black marker and painting the palm of their right hand, which is already coated in red paint. The background is blurred, showing other people and foliage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Cases in DP should be resolved in under six months.
- 2** An end to people and companies profiting off of incarceration of children in DP.
- 3** People in DP should be able to grow food and have food sovereignty.
- 4** Abolish DP stated Ireland should be taxing corporations and monitoring the gas release of large corporations.

Indigenous activist painting her hand in protest at
COP26 in Glasgow

ARTICLE 24

**HEALTH
OF CHILDREN**



1

Article 24 strives to protect the health of children. Ireland's environmental record, however, is diminishing children's ability to access a health environment, at home and abroad. This effect will only continue to worsen as the climate crisis grows.

Young family cycling together in rural Ireland

OUR FINDINGS

Ireland ranks in the top three countries for providing a **healthy environment for children** within its national boundaries. Despite this, according to **UNICEF Innocenti**, it ranks only **20th out of 39 wealthy countries** for protecting the world's environment for children. Ireland has **high rates of emissions, e-waste and consumption** which contribute to this low ranking. If everyone in the world consumed resources at the rate of people in Ireland, we would require the equivalent of **more than three earths** to satisfy this.

Alongside Ireland's impact on the health of children and the world environment, there are significant environmental concerns for children's health at home. One child in **50 (2%) are being poisoned by lead**, one of the most dangerous environmental toxic substances. Lead is globally responsible for more deaths than malaria, war and terrorism, or natural disasters. Additionally, **one in six (16.6%)** poor households with children find it difficult to heat their home, an issue which is likely to become more pronounced as the energy and climate crises grow.

Ireland's children are facing significant environmental impacts and concerns, as we have discussed, including impacts on their homes, security and wellbeing. **Ireland's environmental record is also threatening the health of children worldwide and it is among the top contributors to pollutants destroying the global environment.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations are informed by the research done by the UNICEF Innocenti office Report Card 17:

- 1** Ireland must reduce its waste output, air and water pollution and invest in sustainable practices such as high-quality housing and public transport.
- 2** Ireland must improve environments for the most vulnerable children, and ensure these children are heard in policymaking.
- 3** Ireland must put children's rights at the forefront of environmental policy.
- 4** The government ought to address loss and damage resulting at home and abroad from climate change, and work with other governments to do so.
- 5** The government must recognise and implement the right to a healthy environment.
- 6** Implementation of the recommendations in this report, alongside continued meaningful stakeholder engagement.



RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Government's Draft Report

The Government released a draft of its State report to the Committee in October 2021. We regret to see **no inclusion of the climate crisis as a dedicated section in the draft report, nor any reference to “climate crisis”, “climate change”, “climate action” or “climate” anywhere in the draft report.** This indicates a worrying lack of focus from the Government on the interaction between the climate crisis and children's rights. This particularly contradicts the Government's stated focus on justice in its **2021 Youth Justice Strategy** and the **Sláintecare Healthy Communities Programme** to improve the long-term health and wellbeing of disadvantaged communities. This also stands in contrast to its overall stated commitment to climate action. The climate crisis, as this report will outline, is having, and will continue to have, long-lasting and devastating impacts across all areas of children's rights. This lack of inclusion or effort to address this is cause for concern as we move into a decade which requires urgent action. Children have made their voices undeniably clear, through striking, engaging in processes and by forming a movement. The government appears to have made a conscious choice to fail to include any reference to this in its approach to children's rights.

Cost of Living Crises

As this report was written, a global cost of living crisis developed in 2022. **Inflation** is affecting basics such as food, energy and housing and **pushing millions into poverty.** Ireland is one of the richest countries in the EU, yet a fifth of the population is struggling amidst this rise in prices. **Social Justice Ireland** estimates an overall poverty rate of **19%** when housing costs are taken into account, which is much higher than the official rate.

May 2022 saw a **7.8% increase in prices**, the largest in almost 38 years. This is having a drastic impact on children. Barnardos found that **two out of three parents stated they and their children had to go without essentials in the last 6 months due to cost of living increases.**

Economic inequality and the climate crisis are inextricably linked. As has been shown across the world, and demonstrated in this research, those who are most vulnerable in our society are most affected by climate breakdown. This report has a common theme of a **lack of adequate protection for children's rights in the face of climate change.** This will only become more prevalent and damaging as economic inequality in Ireland grows, and as more and more families struggle under the pressure of economic crisis. **Action is urgently needed to address this issue, and to achieve climate justice.**

CONCLUSION

This report is the product of consultation with a large group of young people from across Ireland. It is imperative that young people, especially those who are not often heard by those in power, are engaged and consulted at every step along the way to a just transition.

It is clearly evident that adequate action is not being delivered on the four areas examined throughout this report. However, there is still time for a radical shift in the right direction. We have presented our ideas for change through our recommendations, and we ask that our government deliver upon these. Children's rights must be understood and examined through the lens of the climate crisis, and will be delivered and protected by climate justice. Now, more than ever, we need an evolution in our way of thinking in order to deliver a better, brighter future.

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY QUESTIONS

Section 1: Introductory Questions

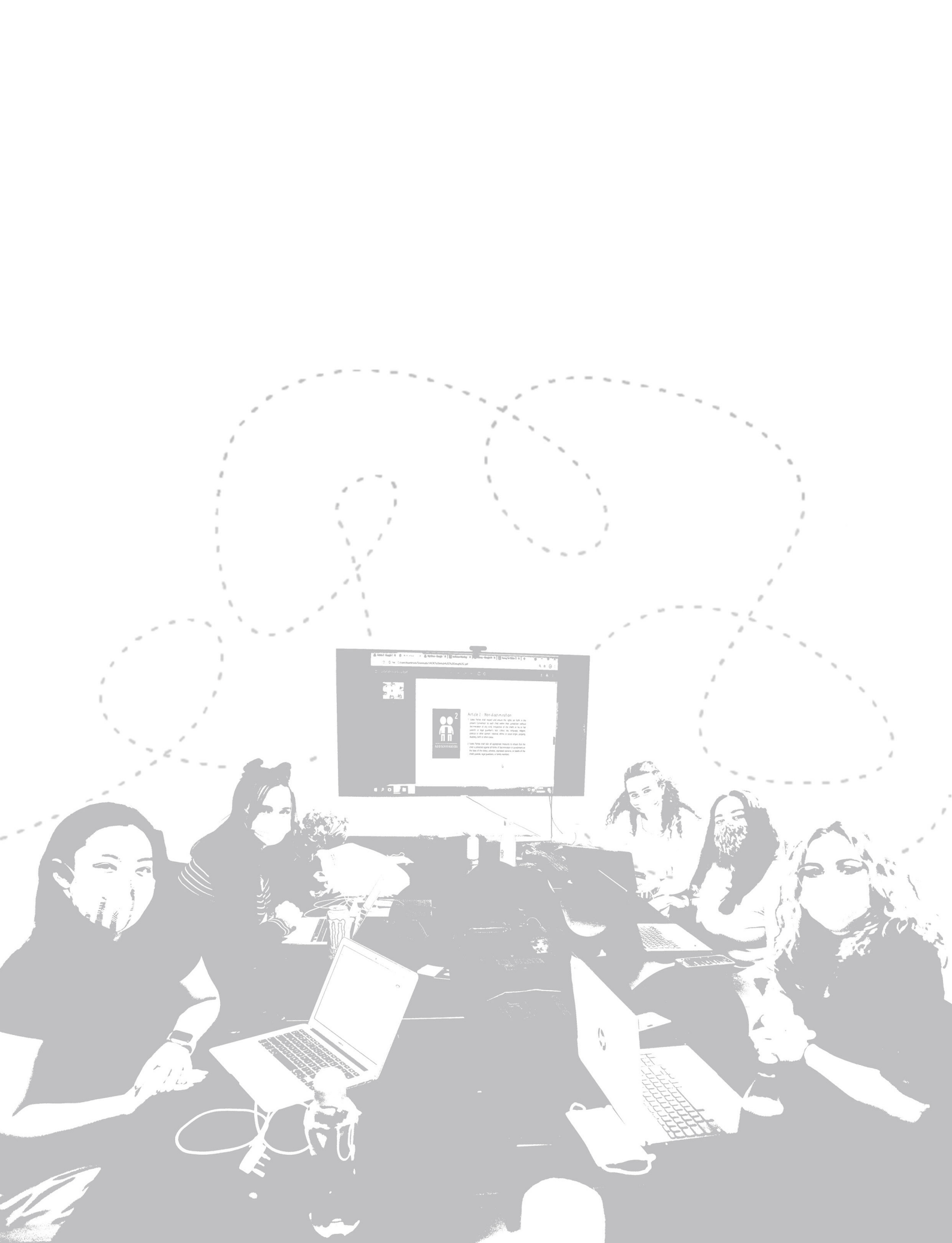
Question	Section	Type of question and option
Q1. Name (this was used to avoid duplicate answers and not associated with individual responses)	Introductory Questions	Open response
Q2. Age	Introductory Questions	MCQ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-8 • 9-12 • 13 • 14 • 15 • 16 • 17
Q3 Do you feel you have participated when it comes to the climate crisis and climate action?	Section 2: Article 12	MCQ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Unsure
Q4: Feel free to elaborate on the above	Section 2: Article 12	Labelled scale: 1 (not at all) to 5 (all the time)
Q6: How much do you think that climate policy in Ireland reflects young people's input and perspectives?	Section 2: Article 12	Labelled scale: 1 (it doesn't reflect it at all) to 5 (it reflects it really well)
Q7: Feel free to elaborate on the above	Section 2: Article 12	Open response
Q8: Do you feel there are barriers that prevent young people from being heard when it comes to climate change and climate action?	Section 2: Article 12	MCQ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Unsure
Q9: If yes, what barriers are preventing young people from participating in conversations about the climate crisis and climate action?	Section 2: Article 12	Open response

Section 1: Introductory Questions

Q10: How can the Irish government ensure young people are heard when it comes to the climate crisis and climate action?	Section 2: Article 12	Open response
Q11: If you identify with any of the following please let us know	Section 3: Article 2	<p>MCQ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black/African • Indigenous • Southeast Asian • Latinx • White • Travelling Community • South Asian • Pacific Islander • Han Chinese • Arab/Middle East/North African • Jewish • Romani people • Prefer not to say • Other
Q12: Gender Identity	Section 3: Article 2	<p>MCQ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female • Male • Non-binary • Agender • Fluid • I prefer not to say • Other
Q13: Do you identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community?	Section 3: Article 2	<p>MCQ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • I prefer not to say

Section 1: Introductory Questions

Q14: Which of the following best describes where you live?	Section 3: Article 2	MCQ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural • Urban • Unsure • Other
Q15: Do you have any disabilities?	Section 3: Article 2	MCQ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • I prefer not to say
Q16: Do you identify as neurodivergent?	Section 3: Article 2	MCQ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • I prefer not to say
Q17: Has your community been impacted by the climate crisis? E.g. storms, flooding etc	Section 3: Article 2	MCQ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No • Unsure
Q18: How well is your community supported in dealing with the impacts of the climate crisis?	Section 3: Article 2	Labelled scale: 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very well supported)
Q19: How accessible are necessary climate resources (e.g. flooding protection, recycling centres) to your community?	Section 3: Article 2	Labelled scale: 1 (Not accessible) to 5 (very accessible)
Q20: How supported by the government is your community in accessing a just transition? This means moving to a more sustainable economy while supporting	Section 3: Article 2	Labelled scale: 1 (Not supported) to 5 (very supported)
Q21: Please rate the education on the climate crisis, within the education system, which you have received e.g. primary school, Junior Certificate/Cycle, Leaving Certificate	Section 3: Article 2	Labelled scale: 1 (Very poor) to 5 (Excellent)



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