

Listening to young people: Mobility for future

Abstract

Many young people travel regularly and are committed to the global fight against climate change. However, not all forms of youth mobility are climate-sensitive. Under the **Learning Mobility in Times of Climate Change** (LEMOCC) project, a survey was conducted to provide initial insights into the link between youth, mobility and climate change specifically from the point of view of young people. The survey, which used a mixed-method design (a quantitative questionnaire and qualitative focus group sessions), examined the matter from the perspective of young people aged 15 to 30 from seven countries. Over 1,500 participants from China, Germany, Estonia, Finland, France, the UK and Turkey responded to the LEMOCC study.

This report, entitled ***Listening to young people: Mobility for future***, outlines their responses. Its intriguing insights inspire a reassessment of youth mobility and suggest ways in which learning mobility could, and should, be rethought from a climate-sensitive angle.

The outcomes of the study have key implications for international youth work and youth mobility. For instance, it emerges that young people across all participating countries feel that climate change is a (very) serious issue, however their opinions about the impact of travel on climate change vary according to their personal experience of mobility. The young respondents who travel internationally more frequently were more likely to state that the negative impacts of travel on the climate are higher than their peers who travel less often.

Overall, the young LEMOCC respondents consider mobility to be exceptionally important to them, and do not feel that digital formats are a good substitute for travelling to in-person activities.

The outcomes of the survey have potential implications for the international youth work field. For instance, it may be required to come up with new(er) formats exclusively involving climate-friendly and sustainable mobility options. After all, the survey shows that young people are willing to adjust the way they travel – for instance, choosing climate-friendly means of transportation and/or travelling less frequently but planning to stay for longer.

Overall, the LEMOCC study reveals that young people are very aware of the connection between their personal choices, the responsibility they decide to accept, and climate change. This is also reflected in their desire for climate-sensitive youth mobility. For instance, they indicate that the availability of vegetarian or vegan products and meals is relevant to them – both in their day-to-day lives and when travelling.

The survey report also discusses the contrast between young people’s awareness of their personal choices and actions and the fact that fewer than one in five of the respondents of the quantitative survey said they engaged on climate change either individually or through a group. Asked during the focus group sessions how they interpreted “climate engagement”, most young people said it was a matter of personal lifestyle. They also stated that engagement as part of a group or political party required time, financial resources and infrastructure, along with courage. Accordingly, international youth work and programmes should also seek to support, encourage and assist young people in engaging on climate issues.

Listening to young people: Mobility for future provides valuable inspiration for this and suggests a number of possible approaches that respond specifically to what young people want. And rightly so, for young people need to be given a loud(er) voice heard along with opportunities to connect with like-minded peers in other countries and engage in debate.

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