

EcoA Research Nutshell

Understand your audience: Youth

Below, in a *Nutshell*, are some key findings on youth, drawn from EcoAnalytics research since 2016. To see the recommendations, check out the Engaging Youth *Nutshell*.

Key details

Key terms: individual behaviour, systems change, degrowth, carbon tax, social justice, elections


Demographic profile:
Youth (18–34 years old)


Sources: Climate of Change Survey (2020), Climate of Change Survey (2018), Panoramic Survey (2018), General Population survey (2019), Partner-Supporter Survey SSHRC (2019), COVID & Environment Focus Groups (2020); Baromètre Climatique (2020); Climate Outreach


Reports: *Which Canadians support nature-based solutions to the climate emergency?* (2021); *Who do Canadians blame for climate change?* (2021); *Radicals, Reformers, Lifestylers* (2020); *Building support for carbon pricing among Canadians* (2017); *Care of nature, Care of Community* (2020); *Millennial Paradox* (2019); *Is bad weather good?* (2019); *Shifting Perceptions, Influential values, and the Power of Trust* (2018); *Shades of Green* (2017)


Note: Reports not listed here did not feature any relevant information on youth.

Why engage youth?

 Youth make up the largest generation of Canadians.¹

 Youth in the general population (unlike young environmental supporters) tend to be more engaged with the environment than older generations.²


 In Quebec, 18–34 and 55+ dominate the “techno-optimistic” category, who tend to believe the solutions are not up to them and have high hopes in technological development—in fact, they have the highest expectations for industry and believe tech companies should do more.³


 Youth are under-represented among supporters of EcoAnalytics Members and Subscribers.⁴

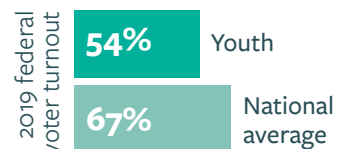
Youth are most likely to be Potential Greens, and least likely to be Skeptical Greens:⁵




● True Greens ● Potential Greens ● Reluctant Greens ● Eco-Indifferent ● Skeptical Greens

 Youth are taking leadership in climate-change activism. They are well-positioned to be credible messengers when speaking about saving the planet.⁶

 In Quebec, youth are the dominant age group in the “worried” group: very concerned about climate change, but pessimistic about solutions. They are also the most likely to believe that individuals, governments, and industry are not doing enough.⁷



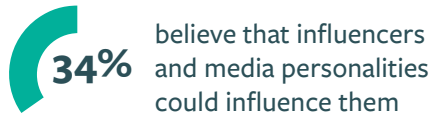
In 2015, voting among youth 18–24 increased, but declined by 3.2% in 2019.⁸

 NGOs that fail to engage youth risk loss of income and irrelevance.

Know your audience: Key findings

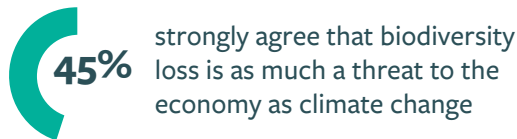
Note: the youth category is broad, spanning 18–34 year olds. It's important to remember that it is still a very diverse group, so when engaging youth be specific about who among them you are trying to reach.

Credible messengers



In Quebec, the Baromètre climatique found that scientists are the most credible messengers for the Quebec population. 18–34 year olds are less likely than other groups to believe that the media effectively communicate on opportunities for climate action.

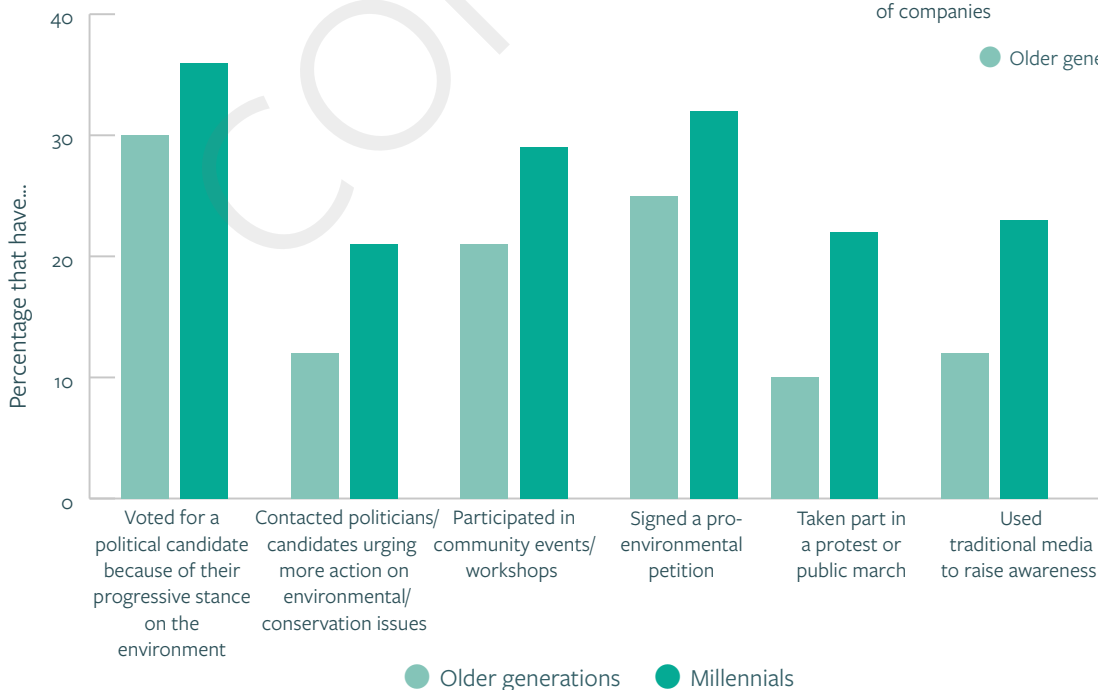
Biodiversity loss



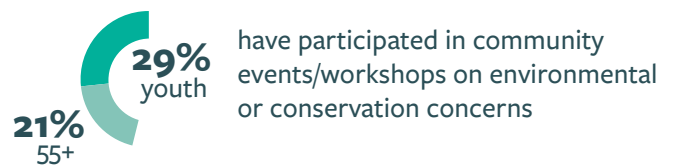
Relatively higher agreement with this view is also found among those on the left, federal NDP supporters, visible minorities, and those with a university education.⁹

Political participation

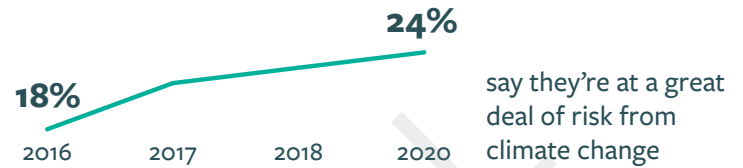
Youth in the general population are more engaged than older adults:¹⁰



Community participation¹¹



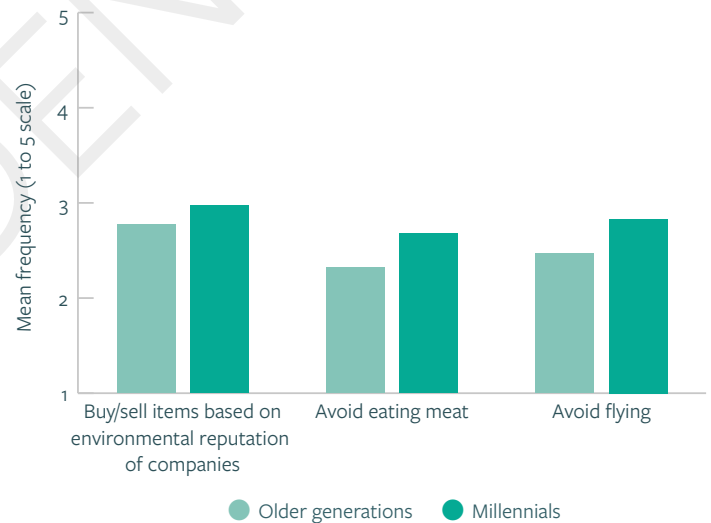
Personal risk



Millennials are more likely than 55+ to consider themselves at a great deal of risk from climate change.¹²

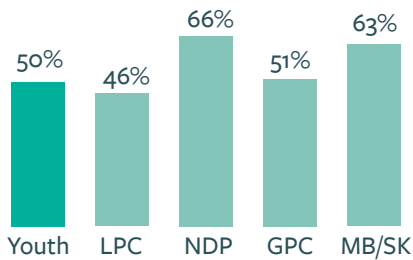
Political consumerism¹³

Political consumerism more widespread among youth compared to older generations¹⁴

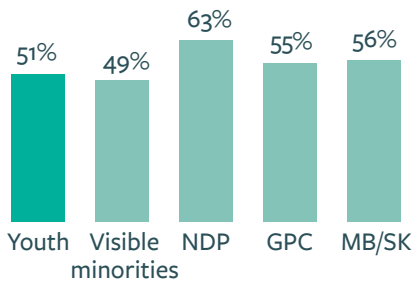


Systemic change

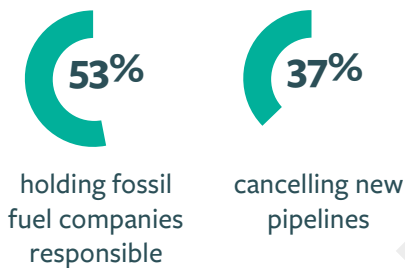
Systemic racism is a major problem in Canada¹⁵ (“strongly agree”):



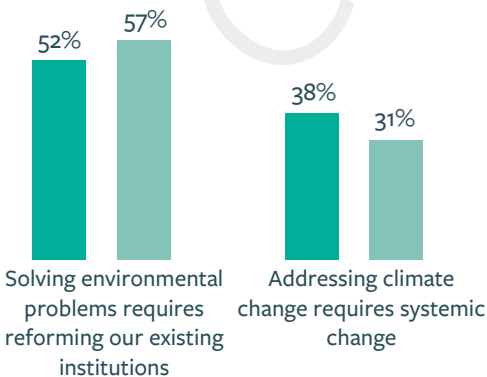
Colonial systems of economic dominance play a major role in causing climate change:¹⁶



Very important to fight climate change by:



Other characteristics associated with a higher probability of blaming these companies are being left-leaning, residing in Eastern Canada, and being on the lower end of household income.¹⁷



● Youth ● Older generations ¹⁸

Youth who are supporters of the environmental movement are more likely to believe that addressing climate change requires systemic change than youth in the general population.¹⁹

Technology

Youth and francophones are most likely to think that technology can solve environmental problems associated with growth.²⁰

Trust

Young respondents and higher educated people are more inclined to trust the competence of environmental groups.²¹

Additional resources

- Polling: [Abacus data on Millennials](#) (regularly updated)
- Engagement: *EcoA Research Nutshell: Engaging youth*

Notes

- 1 Statistics Canada
- 2 *Millennial Paradox*, 2019, p.3
- 3 *Baromètre de l'action climatique*, 2020
- 4 *Millennial Paradox*, 2019, p.3
- 5 *Shades of Green*, 2017, p.14
- 6 *Millennial Paradox*, 2019, p.3
- 7 *Baromètre de l'action climatique*, 2020
- 8 [Elections Canada](#)
- 9 *Climate of Change Crosstabs*, 2020
- 10 *Millennial paradox*, 2019
- 11 *Ibid.*, p.12
- 12 *Climate of Change Survey Crosstabs*, 2016–2020
- 13 Political consumerism has been defined as a consumer's use of the market as an arena for politics to change institutional or market practices found to be ethically, environmentally, or politically objectionable (Stolle and Micheletti 2013).
- 14 *Millennial Paradox*, 2019, p. 13
- 15 *Climate of Change Survey Crosstabs*, 2020
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 *Who do Canadians blame for climate change?*, 2021, p.5
- 18 *Climate of Change Survey Crosstabs*, 2020
- 19 *Radicals, Reformers, Lifestylers*, 2020, p. 12
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 21; *Baromètre de l'action climatique*, 2020, p. 25
- 21 *Shifting perceptions*, 2018, p. 32