

How can we empower the next generations to build a more sustainable future?

EY and JA Worldwide

Generational Sustainability Survey 2023



The better the question. The better the answer.
The better the world works.



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Foreword

In survey after survey, when asked which issues are most important to Gen Z and its younger counterpart, Gen Alpha, climate change appears at or near the top of every list. Their concern with climate change is a major reason why young people across the world are at the forefront of the global environmental movement to mitigate global temperature rise, minimize severe weather events, ease dependence on fossil fuels and embrace measures to improve the environment.

Intrigued by the passion with which young people approach sustainability issues, EY, through its corporate responsibility program [EY Ripples](#),¹ and JA Worldwide have been working together to educate, upskill and activate students through innovative sustainability learning and activities.

To further understand perspectives on this opportunity, the two organizations collaborated to survey and hold discussion groups with Gen Z and Gen Alpha, along with millennials, Gen X, and baby boomers. We asked 24 questions about participants' environmental concerns, their current engagement and future action plans, and their ideas for improving sustainability education.

After collecting more than 1,200 responses from 72 countries, we found that while both of the two younger generations (Gen Z and Gen Alpha) are better educated on sustainability and environmental issues than any generation before, they still yearn for more learning and volunteering opportunities.

As we've seen in the past, young people look to corporations to make a difference, whether those companies design sustainable circular economies, embrace green energy or wield their influence to drive regulatory change. Young people expect to work for – and shop from –

businesses that share their values, and they're eager for information and direction from the brands they trust. Hence, attracting workforce talent and new customers depends on companies' embrace of sustainability.

Young people also look to their schools to prioritize sustainability education, update curricula often enough to capture current trends and utilize hands-on learning methods that focus on skills acquisition as much as knowledge acquisition. As Gen Z and Gen Alpha complete their primary and secondary education over the next decade, they anticipate and expect sustainability topics to be table stakes for their learning experience.

NGOs and government agencies, meanwhile, can be ready to bridge the gap between the corporate and educational worlds. In fact, no organization is completely off the hook: Gen Z and Gen Alpha look to every local and global organization to share sustainability knowledge, provide materials, develop and implement ideas, reduce their own carbon footprint and more.

Solving the climate crisis will require substantial effort from all parties – corporations, educational institutions, governments and NGOs – to further educate the younger cohorts on the sustainability solutions at its fingertips. At the intersection of climate change and the need for sustainability education, there exists a pathway to progress; the onus is on these organizations to find the way.

JA and EY are eager to work together with educators, NGOs and other companies as we solve these issues and build a more sustainable future.



Julie Linn Teigland

EY EMEA Area Managing Partner
and Member of the EY Corporate
Responsibility Global Council



Gillian Hinde

EY Global Corporate
Responsibility Leader



Asheesh Advani

Chief Executive Officer
JA Worldwide

Executive summary

The global environmental sustainability movement has gained momentum as businesses, governments and NGOs respond to increasing demands from a wide range of stakeholders – investors, customers, regulators, employees and local communities – to adopt more sustainable practices and reverse the impact of climate change.

During the last five years, an increasing number of organizations have pledged to achieve net-zero carbon emissions² by 2050 or earlier, engage in a broad suite of related efforts to reduce their carbon footprint, build a more resilient and biodiverse world and eliminate or curb other wasteful practices.

As Gen Z and Gen Alpha, the generations born between 1997-2007 and post-2007, respectively, continue to enter the workforce, organizations will naturally look to involve them in sustainability initiatives.

To parse out how to engage these generations, EY and JA Worldwide, conducted a survey in late 2022 to analyze how both younger and older generations regard sustainability education and related activities.

JA's global membership of students and educators provides a unique snapshot of the concerns and expectations of these generations.

These are the generations who have grown up with the climate and sustainability agenda evolving and embedding in business and society.



As policy, data and the science has matured, sustainability has moved from the sidelines of business discussions to be considered table stakes for organizations worldwide.

This poses fundamental challenges for new and established organizations on how to best engage with these generations to support the scale of change required to embed sustainable consumption and behaviors, build trust, and secure their license to operate sustainably.

Among the key findings of the survey

Building environmental literacy

The survey results found that although Gen Z and Gen Alpha have a deeper knowledge of sustainability issues, members of these generations are still hungry for more sustainability-related information and content. Moreover, in focus groups hosted by JA Worldwide that ran parallel to the survey, students and educators also said they found the curriculum related to sustainability to be superficial, outdated and lacking in inspiration.

In fact, the survey found that only

56%

of Gen Alpha and

45%

of Gen Z were satisfied with the sustainability education they received in school.

While concerning, these findings on shortcomings in sustainability education present an opportunity for organizations seeking to engage the workforce of tomorrow, within both the professional world as well as day-to-day life. Given that younger generations express a desire to learn more about sustainability, they will welcome the opportunity to participate in employee-development programs that help them develop sustainability skills, attitudes and mindsets.



E mbedding trust: Tackling misinformation and disinformation

The survey found that

30%

of all generations ranked social media as their most prevalent source for information about sustainability, especially for Gen Z and Gen Alpha.

At the same time, all generations said social media was only their third or fourth most trusted source of information. On the other hand, while print, audio and/or digital sources are the most trusted sources for older generations; television news is the most trusted for younger generations. To address this, organizations should find ways to amplify information from more trusted sources, especially with members of Gen Alpha and Gen Z.

M aking sustainable lifestyles affordable and accessible

The survey found that

50%

of all the respondents, across generations, pointed to the cost of achieving a sustainable lifestyle as the primary barrier for increased sustainability. They also said the lack of tangible sustainability knowledge is the next biggest barrier.

In addition, across generations, local issues of most concern are those that impact daily life and health, such as waste processing and severe weather due to climate change. Again, corporations have a unique opportunity to mobilize employee volunteerism to address local concerns with a dual benefit of engagement and education, along with creating stronger, safer or more resilient communities in which their employees live and work.

At the same time, survey respondents said they were willing to take steps to address **climate change**, such as eating less meat or even choosing to reduce air travel.

Gen X and millennials expressed even greater willingness than the younger two generations. Of course, saying one is willing to change is quite different than following through and changing behaviors. The next 5 to 10 years will require consumers to make significant lifestyle changes on a scale never before seen, while organizations and educators can set examples for consumers to follow to achieve this.

Methodology

The survey was distributed by JA Worldwide to participating JA locations across the globe. Survey respondents include current JA students, JA alumni and JA employees.

The survey ultimately garnered more than 1,200 responses from 72 different countries in the Americas, EMEA and APAC regions.

The survey also generated responses from the five primary generation cohorts: Gen Alpha, Gen Z, millennials, Gen X and baby boomer+.

The survey contained 24 questions around respondents' perceptions of the future of global sustainability,

climate change concerns and goals, ideas for improving sustainability education, their comfort level with acting, and citizenship and civic engagement. Focus groups were also held by JA Worldwide to augment survey data with qualitative perspectives.

24
Questions

72
Countries

5
Generations

1,200
Respondents

For the purposes of this analysis, the following [generational birth year ranges](#)³ were used:

Gen Alpha was defined by birth years 2007<; **Gen Z** was defined by birth years 1997-2007; **millennial** was defined by birth years 1981-1996; **Gen X** was defined by birth years 1965-1980; and **baby boomer+** were defined by birth years 1964>. Throughout the report, the term “younger generations” is referring to Gen Alpha and Gen Z, while “older generations” is referring to millennials, Gen X and baby boomer+.

Americas

Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, United States, Uruguay*.

EMEIA

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Côte d'Ivoire, Czechia, Egypt, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lithuania, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Poland, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Asia-Pacific

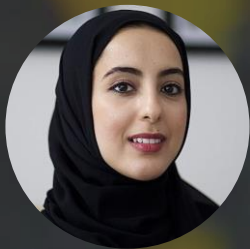
Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Micronesia, People's Republic of China, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Vanuatu, Vietnam.

* Focus group only.



“

The climate crisis isn't isolated to a singular location, ethnicity or generation. It's an all-encompassing challenge that needs the collective effort of all of humanity to be resolved. The best path forward will be charted by those with a vision to unite us, bringing the best and brightest minds to author a radically hopeful future for our planet.



Her Excellency,
Shamma Bint Suhail Faris Al Mazrui

UAE Minister of Community Development
and COP28 Youth Climate Champion





1 Environmental awareness

Hopefulness for the future

Younger generations, Gen Z and Gen Alpha, displayed more education, awareness and empowerment to add sustainable behaviors to their lifestyles, while all generations displayed optimism about the future of global sustainability. Middle-aged generations exhibited the most hopefulness for the future.

Sixty percent of Gen X and 57% of millennials said they are at least somewhat hopeful, while 55% Gen Z and 57% Gen Alpha expressed some degree of hope.

Increasing younger generations' hopefulness should be a key priority of organizations and educators moving forward.

For example, in the US alone, 2022 represented the eighth consecutive year in which 10 or more \$1 billion weather- or climate-related disaster events impacted the country.

At the same time, we must continue to build hope through focusing on and communicating the importance of sustainable actions and innovative solutions, helping young generations prepare for and shape the future.

In a 2021 report from EY and JA Worldwide⁴ that focused on the future of work for younger generations, 53% of Gen Z respondents look to organizations to prepare them for trends such as automation, globalization and new work norms.

These are just a few of the skills the next generation of workers will need as they gear up for a future in which sustainability drives job creation.

To that end, companies need to be ready to set sustainability at the heart of their strategy so that it becomes a focus of both their commercial and social agendas.

That means establishing science-based targets, transforming organizational structures and value chains, managing and measuring progress, and communicating transparently with stakeholders – including the incoming workforce.

This will demonstrate to employees and the public how large-scale changes that drive sustainability are possible, thus motivating younger generations to take more action while also helping businesses attract talent.

Microsoft further emphasized the need to educate workers and students on sustainability issues in its recently published [report](#):⁵

Closing the Sustainability Skills Gap: Helping businesses move from pledges to progress.

To achieve this goal, Microsoft detailed three focus areas for organizations:

- 1. Developing** a shared understanding on evolving jobs and the sustainability knowledge needed to perform them.
- 2. Upskilling** the current workforce through education and initiatives focused on sustainability skills.
- 3. Preparing** the next generation of workers for the vast and crucial sustainability jobs of the future.



EY Ripples, together with Microsoft, has developed programs such as the **Green Skills Passport** (focused on preparing the next generation with sustainability education and job pathways) and **Climate Action Workshops** (focused on educating and ideating with EY employees on local sustainability solutions) to address these focus areas.

Percentage of respondents at least somewhat hopeful for the future



Most concerning environmental issues

Corporations, governments and educators have an opportunity to focus on real-world examples that demonstrate how people can work together to find innovative ways to address climate change, including those issues that are of most concern to individuals.

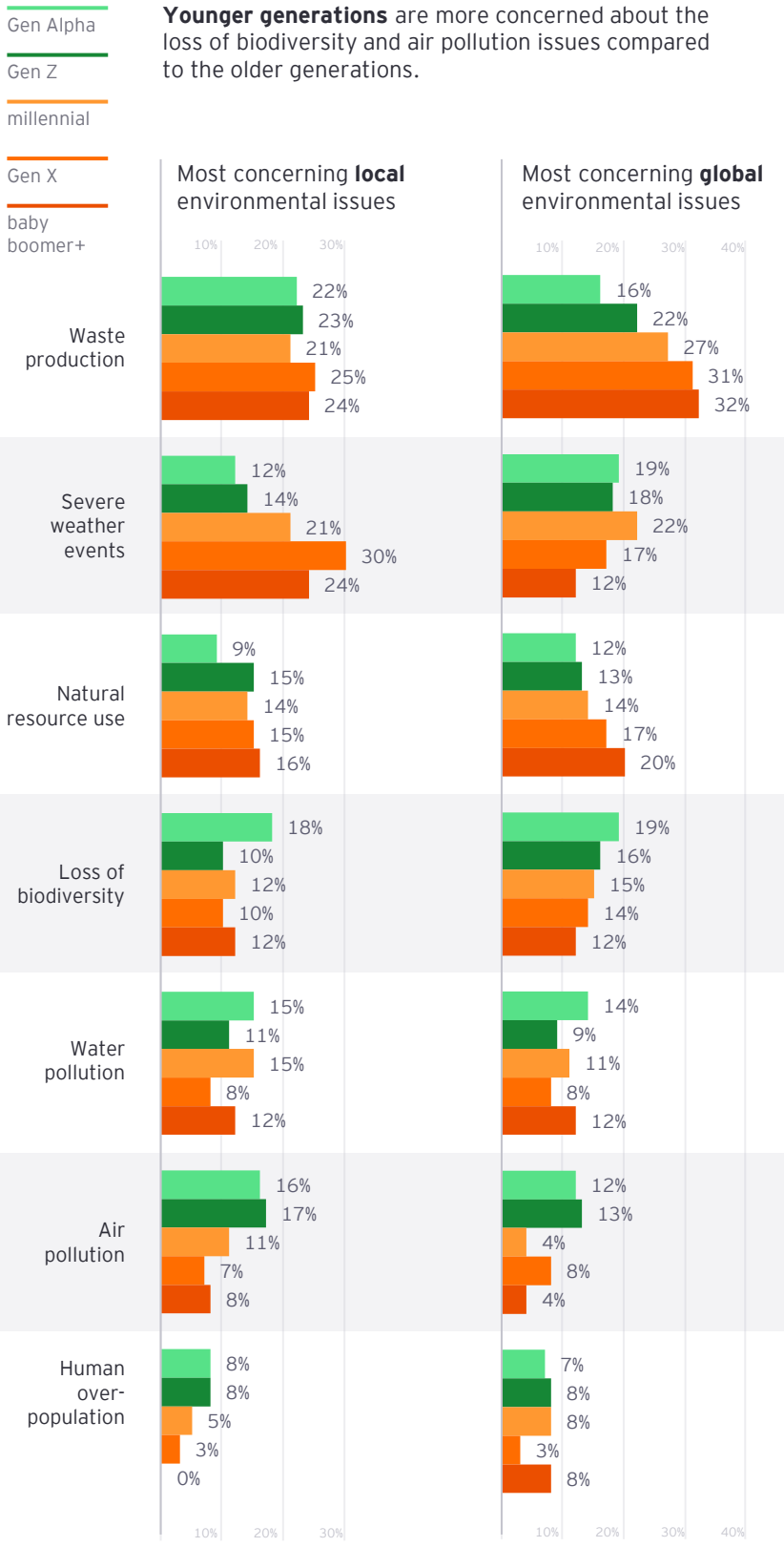
Waste production was ranked the most concerning local climate-related issue by four out of five generational cohorts.

While waste production may not be the most critical issue in all biomes, the data does give us an idea of what individuals care about most and thus what activities they are most likely to partake in.

Therefore, activation of local programs, such as waste cleanup and response to severe weather disasters, may resonate most across not only younger groups and employees but the older generations as well.

Moreover, many organizations are taking steps to adopt a more circular economy, from addressing waste prevention in their offices (e.g., composting, etc.) to embracing green energy.

This is also an opportunity for corporations to work with local governments and municipalities to ensure there are waste prevention tactics and resources in communities that are not involved in corporate programs.



Awareness of environmental practices

The key here is helping young people leverage innovative practices from other countries and regions so they can move forward with initiatives tailored to address local challenges.

To help advance this effort, global companies and NGOs can host expanded learning opportunities to share sustainability solutions from all the countries and regions within their network. Leveraging successful and impactful sustainability solutions in other regions will help expedite movement on a global scale.

At the same time, educators can use workshops and hands-on activities to engage students and help put the information that they are getting from other sources, including social media, digital websites and print, into context.

24%

Gen Alpha

and

17%

Gen Z

are very aware or extremely aware of global environmental practices

vs.

15% millennial

10% Gen X

4% baby boomer+

“

Education is the gateway to a sustainable future for all generations. We need to challenge traditional approaches to integrate sustainability in how we live, work and learn, and close the gap between people's appetite to learn and their access to opportunities and information. Ultimately it will help accelerate progress and opportunities for citizens, business and society.



Amy Brachio

EY Global Deputy Vice Chair,
Sustainability



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Sources of sustainability information

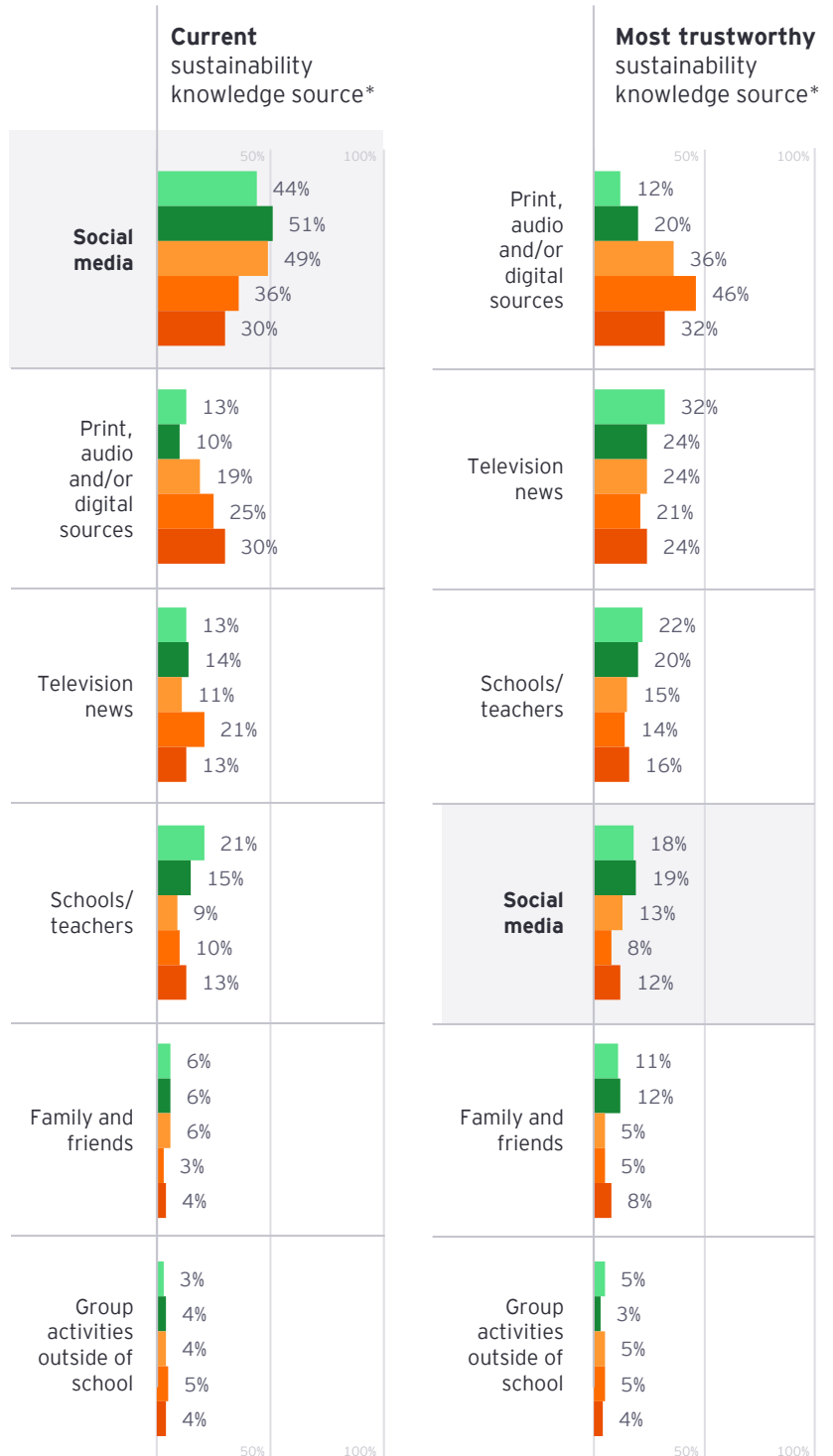
Sources of sustainability information

Trust in, and transparency of, media play an increasingly important role in how individuals, across all generations, perceive and react to information. The survey found that all generations ranked social media as their primary source of sustainability knowledge, with at least 30% of every generation citing it as one of their top three sources.

This is hardly surprising given that **more than half of the world⁶ now uses social media.**

Despite the popularity of social media as a source of information, however, all generations said that it was only their third or fourth most trusted source of information. This was true even for Gen Z and Gen Alpha, who ranked television news and schools and teachers as more reliable.

Younger generations trust television news more than schools and teachers, begging the question of how education systems can increase their credibility with students as it pertains to sustainability knowledge.



Gen Alpha Gen Z millennial Gen X baby boomer +

* responses exclude "other" and only shows responses ranked first

As social media has become one of the fastest means for distributing news and information, corporations have adjusted their communications programs accordingly.

Our findings suggest that companies can team with trusted organizations, such as environmental organizations with peer-reviewed studies and research to ramp up their efforts within the sustainability world, to ramp up their efforts in establishing sustainability knowledge to a broader scope of generations in their workforce. This could prove to be a valuable step forward in influencing opinions on the validity and trustworthiness of social media content related to sustainability.

Looking ahead, all organizations can take steps to improve the digital literacy of social media users, particularly students and young professionals, on how to validate false or biased news, social media posts and reports about sustainability.

One step would be reinforcing strong research habits, such as authenticating sources of data, certifying research sponsors and checking the number of participants involved in studies.

In addition, organizations can encourage younger consumers of media to become agents of change by providing access to platforms that would enable them to amplify social media posts about sustainability and climate change from more reputable outlets.

Among traditional sources of information, print, audio and/or digital sources remain the most trusted sources for older generations.

Younger generations ranked television news as most trusted, with nearly one-third of Gen Alpha saying they trusted television news most, compared to 24% of Gen Z.

To better engage their audience, corporate entities, educators, NGOs and governments need to provide multichannel communications on a wide range of sustainability initiatives, from carbon footprint metrics and commercial offerings to environmental activism and thought leadership.

At the same time, they must leverage trusted sources and encourage strong research habits among their audience to build legitimacy and momentum around the global environmental sustainability movement.





Environmental literacy education

Desired sources for sustainability knowledge

While younger generations have received more education content related to sustainability than the generations before them, both Gen Z and Gen Alpha indicated in the survey they want to receive more teaching related to environmental literacy from educators.

This follows on the heels of the [2021 JA-EY Gen Z report](#),⁷ in which 77% of students said they believe environmental literacy is one of the three most important topics in their educational portfolio. These findings reflect younger generations' view of teachers as one of the most trusted and desirable sources for sustainability content.

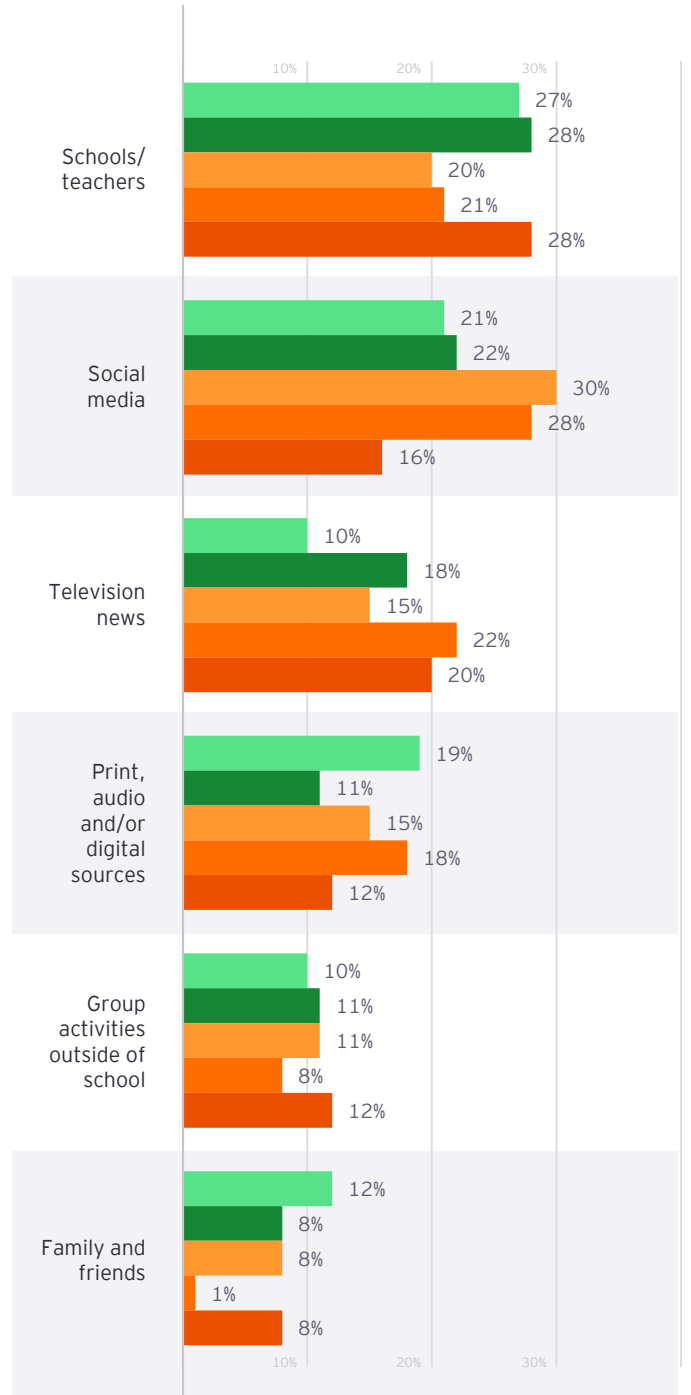
More than 25% of both the younger generations listed schools and teachers as a top source from which they would like to receive more sustainability knowledge.

“ Today’s young people are driven by a blend of practicality, ideology and hope. Nowhere is this combination more evident than around issues of sustainability education, as young people hunger for hands-on learning opportunities, while looking to companies to provide them with volunteering and other skill-building opportunities. At the same time, young people are keeping an eye on corporate environmental policies to determine where they want to work and shop.



Asheesh Advani
CEO, JA Worldwide

Percentage of respondents indicating **where they would like to receive more of their sustainability knowledge**



Gen Alpha Gen Z millennial Gen X baby boomer +



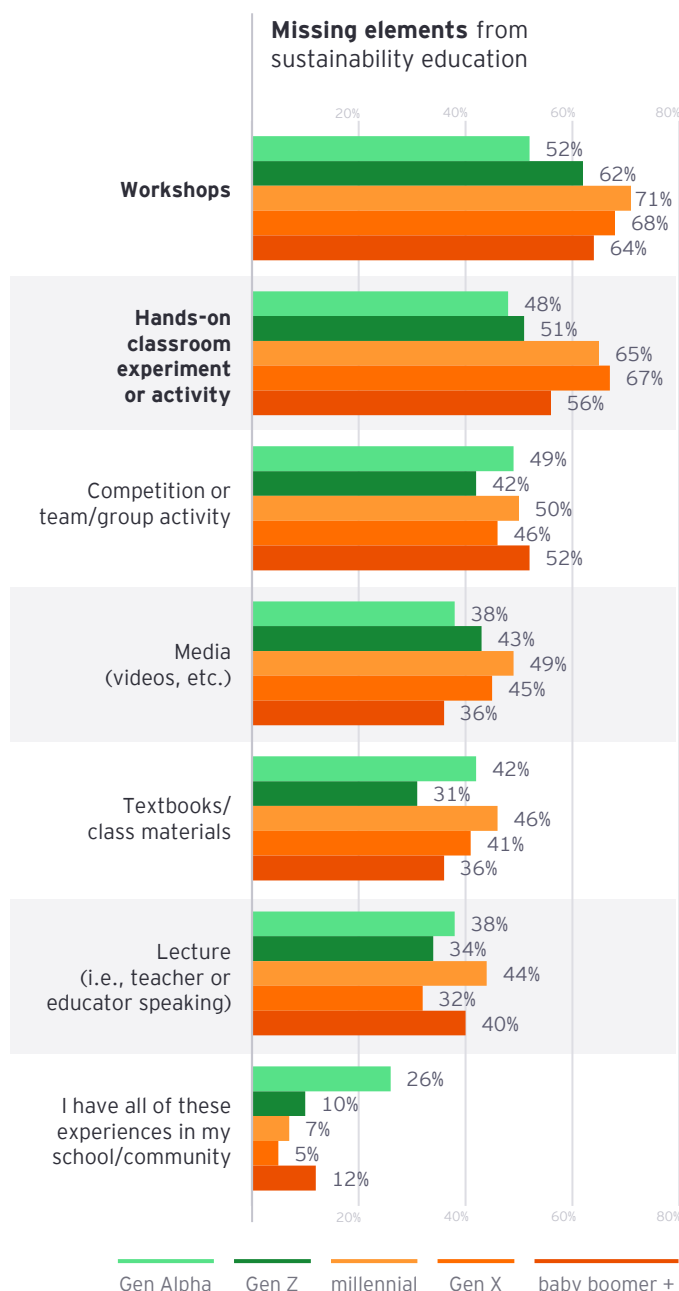
Sustainability education improvements needed

The survey and focus groups found that all generations believe workshops and hands-on classroom learning are often lacking in relevant material for sustainability education. For corporate learning and development departments, data like this can give them credence for tailoring practical, interactive learning programs for both younger and older generations.

EY Ripples, the EY global corporate responsibility program, has created programming that combines education and hands-on volunteering, requiring employees to first learn about the benefit of the specific hands-on environmental activity (e.g., habitat restorations or contributing to a circular economy) before partaking in a group initiative.

Workshops and hands-on classroom learning were the two most cited improvements needed across generations, with both improvements displaying at least 48% selected across generations.

Missing elements from sustainability education



Top 10 Sustainability Development Goals (SDG) learned in school

Gen Alpha

Gender equality	<div style="width: 71%;"></div>	71%
Climate action	<div style="width: 60%;"></div>	60%
Good health and wellbeing	<div style="width: 60%;"></div>	60%
Quality education	<div style="width: 57%;"></div>	57%
Clean water and sanitation	<div style="width: 52%;"></div>	52%
Zero hunger	<div style="width: 49%;"></div>	49%
Peace and justice strong institutions	<div style="width: 48%;"></div>	48%
Partnerships to achieve the goal	<div style="width: 44%;"></div>	44%
Industry, innovation and infrastructure	<div style="width: 43%;"></div>	43%
No poverty	<div style="width: 40%;"></div>	40%

Gen Z

Good health and wellbeing	<div style="width: 71%;"></div>	71%
Gender equality	<div style="width: 63%;"></div>	63%
Quality education	<div style="width: 62%;"></div>	62%
Clean water and sanitation	<div style="width: 61%;"></div>	61%
Zero hunger	<div style="width: 60%;"></div>	60%
No poverty	<div style="width: 57%;"></div>	57%
Climate action	<div style="width: 48%;"></div>	48%
Affordable and clean energy	<div style="width: 44%;"></div>	44%
Industry, innovation and infrastructure	<div style="width: 43%;"></div>	43%
Decent work and economic growth	<div style="width: 41%;"></div>	41%

There is still a large population of younger students not learning about environmental SDGs – at least 39% of students within each generational cohort say they are not learning about one of the environmental SDGs.

Organizations seeking to elevate environmental literacy, from governments and universities to corporations and NGOs, should take steps to emphasize sustainability as a key aspect of their overall education curriculum. These entities could advocate for education ministries and administrations to take steps to not only update content and make it more relevant for younger generations, but also ensure that the process of updating curricula in the future is fast and responsive.

However, organizations need to go beyond teaching and draw the connection between learning and action. For example, in Africa, JA has teamed with the UN to mobilize thousands of young people to join the fight against plastic pollution and marine litter by participating in the [Plastic Tide Turners Challenge](#).⁸

Programs like the Tide Turners offer an excellent way for organizations such as JA to help raise awareness about the UN’s 17 Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) while also activating physical solutions to climate change in what they can do to advance environmental sustainability, both globally and locally.

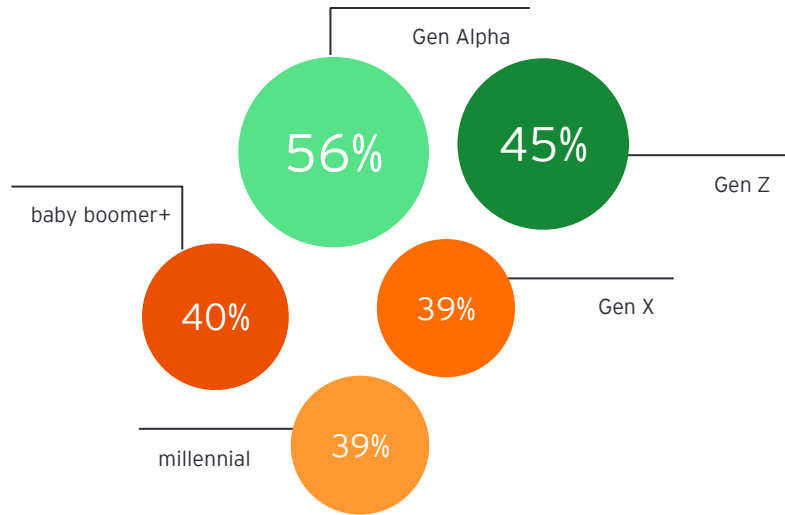


Comprehensiveness of sustainability education

To address this lack of relevant information on environmental literacy, government, corporations and educational organizations can also develop ongoing activities designed to give employees and students first-hand experience in what they can do to advance environmental sustainability, both globally and locally.

In addition, they can also team with schools to build with more resources to provide work-readiness content and opportunities around the green jobs of the future. Preparing youth for the sustainable jobs of the future is a key area in which corporations, NGOs, government agencies and educators can pool their individual expertise and work together to build youth knowledge and skills.

Percentage that say their educational experience is providing enough opportunities or content to support interests in sustainability



“

Tomorrow's sustainable world requires the talent, skills and passion of our younger generation. Government, academia and business must collaborate to develop the educational programs that introduce and foster green skills and competencies and prepare the youth of today for the challenges of tomorrow.



George Atalla
EY Global Government &
Public Sector Leader



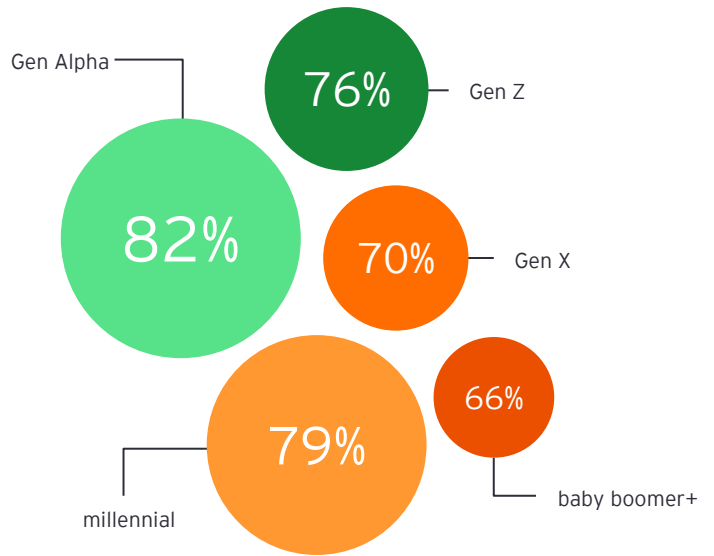
Education informing sustainable lifestyle

Companies and educational organizations should also take steps to strengthen ties with groups in local communities that can complement and provide real-world experience such as composting, engaging in circular economies, promoting renewable energy sources and restoring habitats, in addition to classroom learning.

This would bring local challenges to the forefront and help address the desire for more workshops and relevant hands-on training. This focus on education is a common thread throughout the survey, with younger generations reporting that education plays a significant role in helping them adopt sustainable practices in their lives, specifically for younger generations.

While this is a positive finding, it is also categorical, and thus focusing on expanding the ways in which education helps activate sustainable choices. This foundational knowledge will be critical as the next generation workforce looks to fill the need for green skills,⁹ or skills that enable the environmental sustainability of economic activities in the future.

Percentage that say their current (or former) education has helped them be more sustainable in their own life



Over
80%
 Gen Alpha

and

Over
75%
 Gen Z

report that their current (or former) education has helped them be more sustainable in their own life.



4 Taking action

Willingness to make lifestyle changes

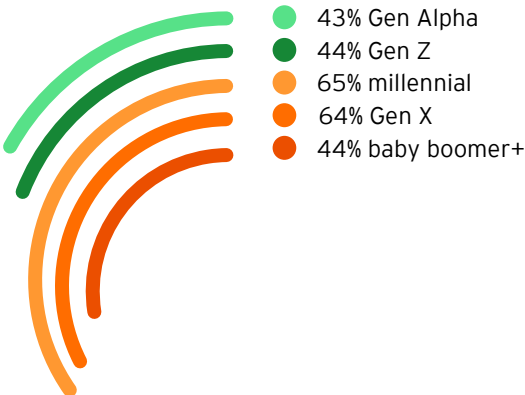
All generations surveyed said they were willing to take steps to combat climate change, such as eating less meat, composting or even choosing to reduce air travel.

However, Gen X and millennials expressed the greatest willingness, with 65% and 64% saying they were either extremely or very willing to make changes in their daily life.

Companies can leverage this willingness to act by engaging employees to trial or change their habits and behaviors in ways that advance sustainability, as well as providing additional incentives to act.

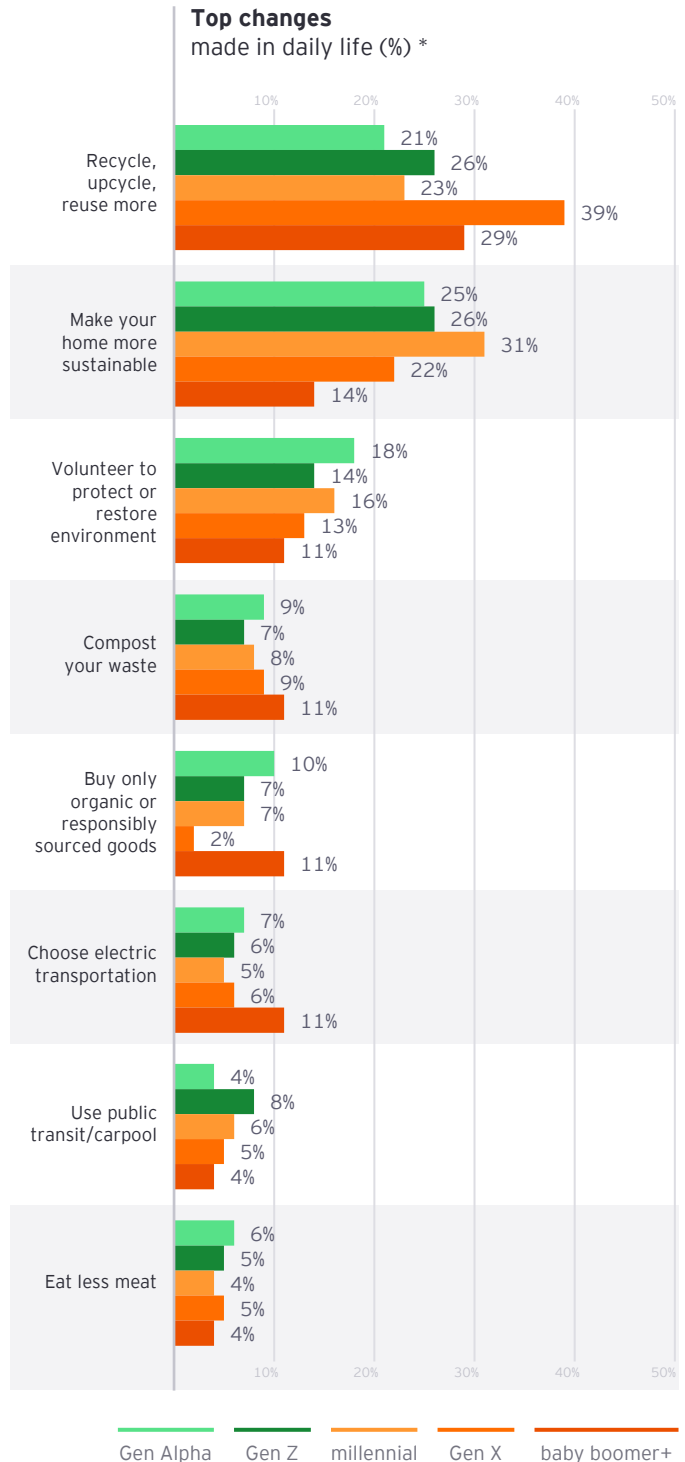
While organizations have taken steps to recycle or reduce energy use within the office, they can also advance these efforts to incentivize or support that behavior at home, especially with the increase in hybrid/home office environments. Both incentives and education (i.e., benefit of energy savings) regarding sustainable lifestyle choices are an easy win for companies looking to expand their sustainability impact via their employees.

Percentage that are extremely willing or very willing to make changes in their daily life to be more sustainable



The report also found that every generation indicated they would like to recycle and volunteer more, as well as take steps to make their home more sustainable. These findings create another opportunity for all organizations and schools to boost employee and student engagement by encouraging recycling and composting programs, providing additional volunteering opportunities and offering education or incentives for sustainable solutions for the home, from growing gardens and cutting food waste to installing electric car chargers and solar roof panels.

The need for organizations to stimulate this behavior from its constituents has never been more important, particularly in the context of increased hybrid and at-home working.



* responses exclude "other" and only shows responses ranked first

Business leaders can harness this desire for action and advocate that more sustainable practices be deployed in core business processes if they haven't already.

Gen Z expects the companies they join to have such programs in place and companies should be prepared to get ahead of the curve if they want to attract the best talent.



On a local level, organizations can also support efforts to help local entities and municipalities better handle waste and environmental initiatives. On the national level, organizations that have embraced a sustainability agenda can intensify their efforts to push for more sustainable policies from government bodies. This also means defining and supporting the rationale that sustainability is not driven by a politically motivated agenda, but is good for business, both in the short- and long term.

In addition, companies can also provide information to advocate for consumers to make better decisions on which activities to embed into their daily routines to reduce their carbon footprint, from taking public transit several times a week and reducing shower time, to composting and buying reusable water bottles.

A recent IBM survey¹¹ found that 41% of consumers would buy more sustainable products if they had a better understanding of how their purchase made an impact. Survey respondents of all generations reported that individuals hold the most responsibility for making the world more sustainable, behind only governments, and are hungry for direction on how to change personal behavior.

A recent study reported that

90% of students¹⁰

say they are willing to **accept a salary sacrifice** to work in a company with a good environmental and social record.

“

Corporates must listen to what young people value and encourage them to create innovative sustainability solutions based on what they care about. Empowering the youth to act on their sustainability passion and knowledge is one of the most impactful things a company can do.



Louisa Kung
Greater China Corporate
Responsibility Lead, EY



5 Barriers to being more sustainable

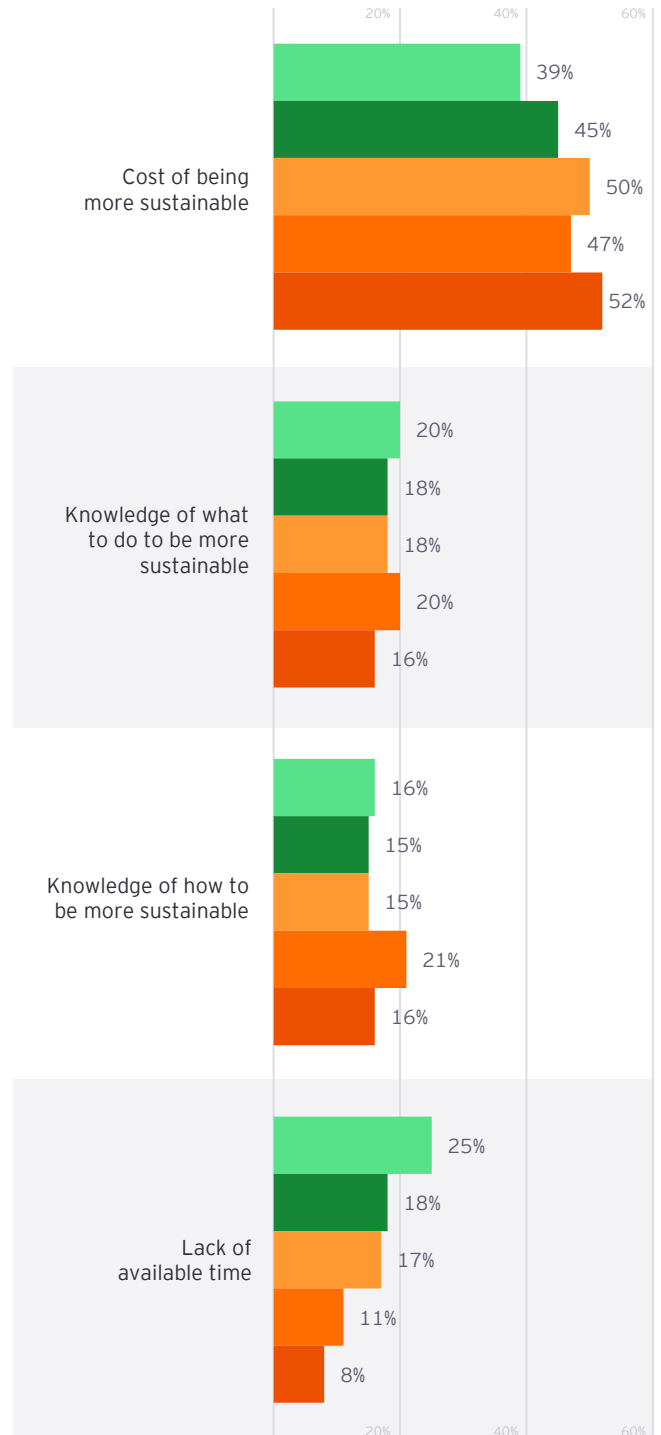
Top barriers to being more sustainable

Despite all generations expressing a desire to become more sustainable, they also recognized that cost represents the biggest hurdle toward achieving sustainability in their daily lives. And even though [economic models](#)¹² predict economic gains up to \$26 trillion from a sustainable economy movement, many individual consumer choices such as purchasing products made with sustainable materials remain prohibitively expensive for many younger workers.

While making sustainable choices is expected to decrease in cost moving forward, there remain sustainable choices that younger generations can make without incurring additional costs. Choices such as opting for pre-owned clothes, taking the bus or bicycle transportation, and greener vacations are all cost-effective alternatives that should be promoted and celebrated in education, media and in corporate settings.

Corporations can attract and retain young talent by detailing their efforts to find greater efficiencies, streamline supply chains, reduce their own carbon footprints and support renewable energy sources.

These entities not only have the ability and influence to take action to address climate change and make the world more sustainable, but also enhance their business interests when doing so. Over the last two decades, investors report that [companies with high ESG metrics](#)¹³ report greater financial performance.



Gen Alpha Gen Z millennial Gen X baby boomer +

Responsibility for making the world **more sustainable**

Survey respondents of all generations contend that governments remain the most responsible entities in making a sustainable world both possible and affordable.

Governments have access to immense funding, talent and lawmaking bodies that enable them to incentivize behavior and create bold, “whole-of-society”¹⁴ approaches to tackling climate change.

Within the business world and individual consumers, governments have begun to implement programs that incentivize sustainable behavior, from Emission Reduction Credits (ERCs) to consumer credits for driving electric motor vehicles. While companies and educators should continue to monitor and understand these incentives to educate and market these opportunities to employees and students, governments are in control of systemic changes that ensure sustainable choices are the easiest and most affordable options across the board.

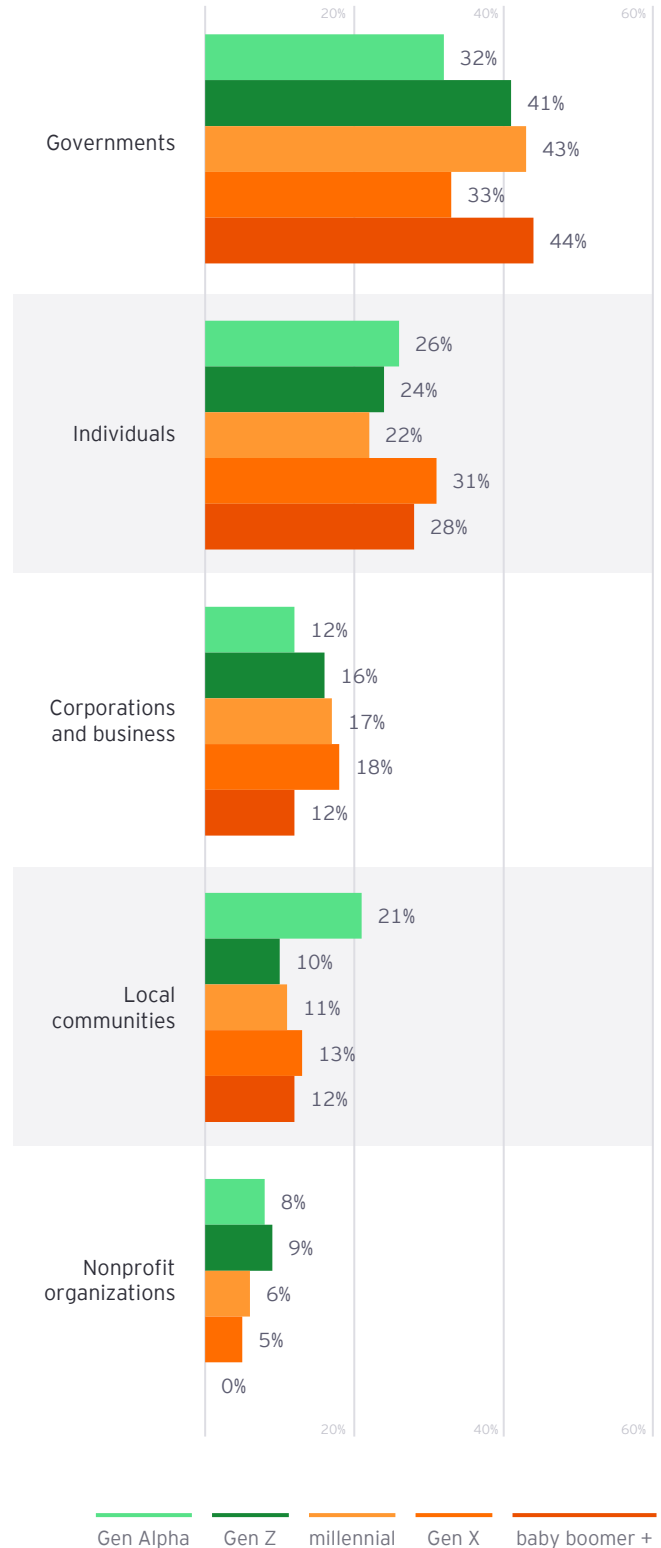
While increasing awareness of available opportunities continues to be a step in the right direction, all generations are looking toward government bodies to ensure that sustainable opportunities are not only available but are in fact the most attractive option.



Today’s younger generations are the driving force toward achieving a more sustainable future, yet they are looking to business and the public sector to act as catalysts for change. Coordinated efforts that promote education, training, legislature and investment are key to strategic action that will make a sustainable world possible.



Julie Linn Teigland
EY EMEA Area Managing Partner



Conclusion

Gen Z and Gen Alpha continue to express concerns about the climate crisis and their willingness to help build a more sustainable future.

Translating their energy for change into meaningful action requires concerted effort throughout business and society.

To harness the energy of younger generations and advance their own sustainability agendas, organizations of all types – from governments and corporations to NGOs and educators – will need to be ready to elevate the environmental literacy of younger and older generations.

Everyday decisions on transport, food, energy and consumables all contribute to how fast and far we can go to reduce emissions. Progress requires multi-generational education and action.

Given that many people receive news about climate change and sustainability from social media, organizations also need to actively engage employees and citizens on misinformation and disinformation, investing in strategies that build trust and engagement.

Organizations also need to be ready to identify ways to upskill employees,

both new and more experienced, to equip them with a broad range of skills to tackle sustainability challenges, from tracking climate emissions to developing comprehensive ecosystem management plans.

All organizations face a tremendous challenge in trying to help the world avoid the worst extremes of climate change. But it will be significantly more difficult without the skills, talent and energy of an emerging workforce of employees who are just now graduating from college or in high school, and their older peers who are ready to help. We hope this report has demonstrated the urgency for all of us, individuals and organizations, big and small, to take action within our own lives and companies but also work to equip younger generations with the knowledge and tools they need to help lead this effort.

Takeaways

for global companies and NGOs

- 1 **Host expanded learning opportunities** to share sustainability solutions from all the countries and regions within their network, sponsoring workshops and hands-on activities to engage students.
- 2 **Provide educators with the tools to share additional context** with students to help them better grasp the information they are getting from other sources, including social media, digital websites and print.
- 3 **Strengthen ties with groups in local communities** that can complement and provide real-world-experience in addition to classroom learning to address the desire for more workshops and relevant hand-on training.
- 4 **Provide information that helps consumers make better decisions** on which activities to embed into their daily routines to reduce their carbon footprint, from taking public transit several times a week and reducing shower time, to composting and buying reusable water bottles.
- 5 **Work with local and national government** to promote sustainability education and environmental action through better communication of existing sustainability programs, creation of new initiatives and programs, and improved alignment of priorities and actions.

Thank you

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The impact of JA's learning experiences goes beyond the lives of individual students. For over 100 years, JA has operated all over the world, even in areas of political instability, violence and war. By helping youth develop the employment and entrepreneurial tools to find meaningful work and start sustainable companies, JA serves as conduit for peace and prosperity.

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