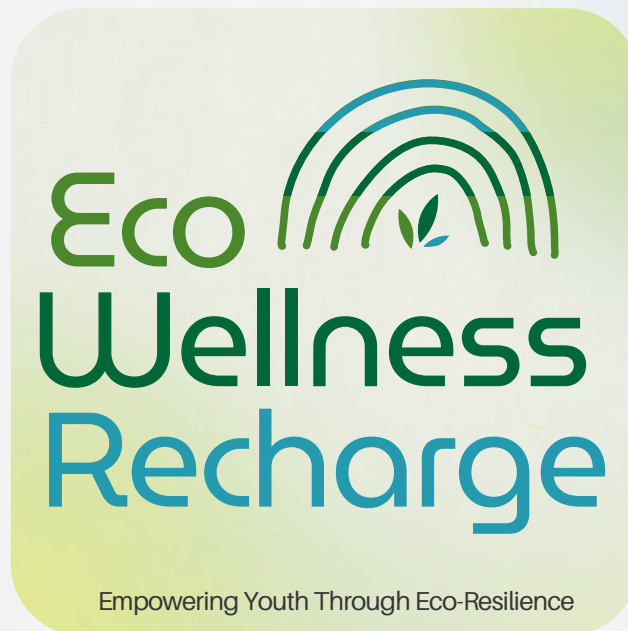




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WORK PACKAGE 2: ASSESSMENT TOOL AND ECO-ANXIETY LITERACY (EAL) REVIEW

FINAL REPORT

ERASMUS+ KA220-YOU - COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS IN YOUTH
2025-1-DE04-KA220-YOU-000357786

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This final report integrates the WP2 needs assessment evidence generated in Italy, Serbia and Germany for the Eco Wellness Recharge project. The evidence base includes 207 youth self assessment response records, 97 youth worker assessment response records and 30 in depth interviews with youth workers. The combined material provides a substantial, multi method picture of how climate related emotional distress is experienced by young people and understood by practitioners in three different national and organisational settings. The report uses the detailed sample totals contained in the analytical sections of the national reports. Where cover pages or summary passages contain conflicting totals, those discrepancies are recorded transparently in the limitations and data harmonisation notes.

The overall finding is not that every young person experiences severe eco-anxiety. Rather, climate concern appears across a continuum. Some participants report low and manageable concern, while others report recurrent worry, grief, intrusive thinking, difficulty concentrating, sleep disruption, or reduced confidence that their actions can make a meaningful difference. Italy and Serbia show predominantly low-moderate to moderate composite burden, with 11% of both samples in the elevated band. The German sample shows a substantially higher burden: 77.8% of respondents fall within the moderate, elevated or very elevated categories. This contrast should not be read as a national prevalence estimate. It more plausibly reflects the older age profile of the German respondents, their recruitment channels and, in some cases, migration experiences and international mobility.

Across countries, the strongest recurring emotional themes concern place, family and future stability. Young people frequently linked environmental change to places where their families live, homelands or regions they can no longer visit. The results therefore support a broader understanding of eco-anxiety that includes anticipatory fear, solastalgia, grief for environmental loss, concern for relatives, and anxiety about displacement or renewed instability.

This is particularly important for young people with migration backgrounds, for whom environmental decline may be connected to lived memories of drought, flood, conflict, resource scarcity or forced movement rather than to an abstract future scenario.

The results also expose a consistent gap between awareness and coping. Many young people can recognise that climate concern affects mood or behaviour, and many understand basic peer-support principles. However, knowledge of concrete self-regulation strategies, reliable support pathways and thresholds for seeking additional help is uneven. At the same time, many respondents feel constrained by housing, income or other life circumstances when trying to act sustainably. This indicates that WP3 should avoid framing eco-anxiety as an individual failure or treating sustainable behaviour as a test of personal morality. The programme should instead combine emotional skills, realistic agency, collective action and recognition of structural constraints.

Youth workers in all three countries report that eco-anxiety is already visible in practice, including in organisations whose main focus is not environmental education. Practitioners commonly observe worry, hopelessness, anger, guilt, withdrawal, doomscrolling, burnout and difficulty imagining the future. Their existing responses are relational and practical: listening, validating emotion, using creative or nature-based activities, facilitating group dialogue and supporting small local action. Nevertheless, they repeatedly request structured methodologies, ready-to-run session plans, culturally and linguistically accessible materials, referral guidance, safeguarding tools and support for their own wellbeing.

The central recommendation for WP3 is to develop a modular, trauma-informed and youth-work-oriented programme rather than a single linear curriculum. The resource package should include concise theory, practical 60-90 minute workshop plans, body-based regulation activities, an emotion-to-agency pathway, multilingual and easy-language adaptations, referral and triage guidance, and youth worker self-care and peer supervision.

Materials should be flexible enough for schools, youth centres, NGOs, migrant-support settings and international mobility activities. Piloting should deliberately include different age groups, migration backgrounds and levels of reported eco-anxiety, with pre/post feedback that measures emotional safety, usability, learning and constructive agency rather than knowledge alone.

Indicator	Italy	Serbia	Germany
Youth respondents (analytical n)	71	73	63
Composite burden: moderate or above	52%	68.50%	77.80%
Composite burden: elevated or above	11%	11.00%	33.30%
Knows at least two calming strategies	15%	53.40%	61.90%
Knows where to seek support	20%	46.60%	57.10%
Can explain eco-anxiety in own words	48%	41.10%	60.30%
Youth worker assessment records	32	34	31

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Methodology

Total Participants and Evidence



1. INTRODUCTION



1.1. Project Background

Eco Wellness Recharge (EWR) is an Erasmus+ KA220-YOU Cooperation Partnership in the field of youth. The project responds to the growing recognition that climate change is not only an environmental, economic and political challenge, but also an emotional and psychosocial one. Young people are exposed to repeated information about climate disruption, ecological loss, extreme weather and uncertain futures. For some, this produces concern that remains proportionate and can motivate action. For others, the emotional load becomes persistent, intrusive or difficult to manage.

The term eco-anxiety is used in this report as an umbrella concept for climate-related worry, fear, grief, helplessness, guilt and distress. It is not treated as a diagnosis. The focus is on recognising when understandable concern begins to affect wellbeing, everyday functioning, decision-making or participation.

The EWR project is particularly attentive to young people with migration backgrounds. This emphasis does not imply that eco-anxiety is unique to migrant youth. The national reports consistently reject such a narrow interpretation. Instead, migration can alter the context in which environmental distress is experienced. Some young people remain emotionally connected to places already affected by drought, flood, desertification, wildfire, pollution or resource scarcity. Others worry about relatives living in climate-vulnerable regions or carry memories of environmental loss, conflict and displacement.

In these situations, climate concern may overlap with grief, trauma, insecurity and disrupted belonging. A programme designed without this context could unintentionally minimise lived experience or reproduce a Western, middle-class model of environmental concern that does not fit all groups.

The project therefore seeks to equip youth workers and youth-serving organisations with practical and inclusive educational resources. The intended response is neither to dismiss anxiety nor to intensify it through catastrophic messaging. The objective is to create learning environments where young people can name emotions, regulate distress, evaluate information, seek support, reconnect with others and translate concern into realistic forms of agency. This requires an integrated framework connecting climate literacy, emotional literacy, participation, safeguarding and wellbeing.

1.2 Purpose of the Transnational Survey

Work Package 2 establishes the empirical foundation for the educational programme to be developed in WP3. Each national partner collected evidence from two target groups. Target Group 1 consisted of young people completing the Youth Eco-Anxiety Self-Assessment Tool. Target Group 2 consisted of youth workers and other practitioners, represented through both an assessment tool and in-depth interviews. Combining these perspectives makes it possible to compare what young people report about themselves with what youth workers observe in practice, the methods they currently use and the support they need.

The purpose of this final report is to consolidate the three national evidence bases into one coherent transnational analysis. It does not replace the national reports. Instead, it harmonises their main results, preserves country-specific detail, identifies converging and divergent patterns, and translates the evidence into concrete recommendations for WP3. The country chapters therefore present the results at the most detailed level available in the source documents, including question-level percentages and counts where reported. Where a national report provides only a narrative summary rather than a full item distribution, the report states this explicitly rather than reconstructing data from rounded percentages or inventing missing values.

A second purpose is to support responsible interpretation. Cross-country comparison can be useful, but it can also be misleading when samples differ in age, language, recruitment channels, employment status or migration background.

The German sample, for example, is older than the Serbian sample, was reached through international and English-language channels, and shows a correspondingly different burden profile. Similarly, the Serbian sample includes a relatively high share of 16-19-year-olds and a meaningful NEET subgroup, while the Italian sample is older and includes more respondents combining study and work. These compositional differences are relevant to interpretation.

1.3 Why Italy, Serbia and Germany

Italy, Serbia and Germany provide three useful but non-equivalent contexts for the project. They differ in migration patterns, youth-work infrastructure, socioeconomic conditions, exposure to environmental risks, language environments and the organisational settings through which participants were reached. Italy contributes evidence from youth workers working across rural, educational, psychological, voluntary and migration-related settings, with strong attention to solastalgia, outdoor practice and the distinction between lived environmental loss and future-oriented concern. Serbia contributes evidence from youth work, peace-building, environmental action, mental health and migrant transit contexts, including detailed accounts of the intersection between climate-related distress and displacement. Germany contributes a large bilingual response base and evidence from urban, migrant, community, public-institution and environmental youth-work settings.

The three-country design allows the partnership to identify needs that are likely to be shared across contexts, such as practical coping strategies, referral guidance and the need to move from helplessness to agency. It also reveals where adaptation is essential. The value of the comparison is therefore not to rank countries or claim national prevalence. It is to identify a common methodological core and the adaptation principles needed for safe implementation.

2. METHODOLOGY



2.1. Overall Design

The WP2 needs assessment used a mixed-method design. The quantitative strand consisted of online self-assessment tools for young people and youth workers. The qualitative strand consisted of semi-structured in-depth interviews with ten youth workers in each country. The mixed approach was appropriate because eco-anxiety involves both measurable response patterns and contextual experiences that cannot be adequately represented by percentages alone. The assessment tools provide a structured overview of symptom frequency, competencies, knowledge and resource needs. The interviews explain how distress appears in real youth-work settings, which groups may be more affected, what practitioners already do and where they encounter limits.

The youth self-assessment tool included demographic questions, frequency-based items covering emotional reactions, intrusive thoughts, interference with daily life, and decision-making or self-efficacy, followed by self-rated competence items. These competence items addressed eco-anxiety literacy, coping, support-seeking, peer support, constructive agency and media literacy. A four-item knowledge quiz tested basic psychoeducational understanding, and three usability items assessed whether the tool was understandable, easy to complete and clear in purpose. The national reports calculated composite burden bands, although Germany's report included an additional very elevated category of 75 and above.

The youth worker assessment tool examined confidence across six broad domains: understanding eco-anxiety, emotional support and coping, referral and safeguarding, empowerment and participation, media literacy and digital wellbeing, and self-regulation or professional boundaries. It also asked about perceived prevalence, observed signs, training needs, resource preferences, organisational readiness and usability. The completeness of these sections varies by country because some exports did not include all response fields.

2.2 Country Implementation

Country	Timeframe	Languages	Distribution and interview mode	Detailed analytical sample
Italy	March–June 2026; interviews March–April 2026	Italian	Online youth and youth worker forms; 10 online in-depth interviews	71 youth; 32 youth worker assessments; 10 interviews
Serbia	Youth form: 6 April–15 May 2026; youth worker form: 27 March–15 May 2026; interviews mainly 23 March–7 April 2026	Serbian	Online forms; six interviews via Zoom and four face-to-face	73 youth; 34 youth worker assessments in the detailed section; 10 interviews
Germany	Interviews: 2–31 March 2026; German youth form: 24 March–30 April 2026; English youth form: 16 March–2 July 2026; youth worker forms: March–June 2026	German and English	Online youth and youth worker forms; 10 semi-structured interviews	63 youth; 31 youth worker assessments; 10 interviews

Italy's qualitative strand involved ten professionals working in varied contexts, including youth work, psychology, education, voluntary organisations, environmental practice and support for young people with migration or war-related experiences. The youth tool reached 71 residents of Italy, mainly young adults, while the youth worker tool received 32 responses.

Serbia's qualitative strand deliberately included youth workers from non-formal education, Erasmus+ and ESC coordination, peace-building, environmental NGOs, mental health, intercultural training, migrant and refugee support, a youth centre and humanitarian psychosocial work.

The youth assessment was distributed online in Serbian. The detailed youth section reports 73 respondents, while the detailed youth worker section reports 34. These figures differ from the cover-page totals and are used in this transnational report because they are tied to the analytical tables and item-level results.

Germany's qualitative strand involved ten practitioners working in urban, migrant, community, public-institution and environmental youth-work settings. The youth tool was distributed online and received 63 responses, while the youth worker tool received 31 responses. The detailed analytical counts attached to the item-level tables are used throughout this report.

In summary, 207 young individuals through Assessment Tool 1, 97 youth workers via Assessment Tool 2, and 30 youth workers through interviews were reached out to. In total, 334 people engaged with the project's surveys and interviews across three countries.

2.3 Analysis and Harmonisation

The transnational analysis followed four rules. First, country results were retained in their original structure wherever possible. Second, exact counts and percentages were reported only when the national report provided them. Third, rounded percentages were not reverse-engineered into exact counts unless the national report itself supplied the count. Fourth, data inconsistencies were flagged and resolved using the most detailed internal evidence, normally the sample size attached to the item-level analysis.

Composite bands were compared descriptively rather than statistically. The national samples were convenience or purposive samples and were not designed to estimate national prevalence. No inferential tests are presented, because the underlying raw datasets were not available and the sampling procedures do not support population-level claims. The comparative analysis therefore focuses on patterns, practical implications and areas requiring further testing.

Qualitative interview findings were synthesised thematically. Common themes included future uncertainty, environmental grief, helplessness, guilt, anger at institutional inaction, withdrawal, doomscrolling, activism burnout, the relationship between eco-anxiety and migration-related vulnerability, and the shortage of practical tools. The report also notes country-specific emphases, such as solastalgia and outdoor practice in Italy, trauma and transit migration in Serbia, and multilingual urban practice and digital wellbeing in Germany.

2.4 Ethics and Confidentiality

Participation was voluntary. The youth and youth worker tools were anonymous, and the interviews were reported confidentially using anonymised participant codes. The national reports indicate compliance with relevant privacy principles and do not include personal identifiers. The final report preserves this approach and uses only aggregated results and anonymised examples already included in the national evidence.

Because eco-anxiety can overlap with depression, trauma, grief or other forms of distress, the assessment tool should not be interpreted as a clinical diagnostic instrument. Composite bands are used for needs assessment and educational planning. They do not establish a mental health diagnosis, and elevated responses should be understood as a signal for supportive conversation, careful assessment of functioning and, where appropriate, referral to qualified services.

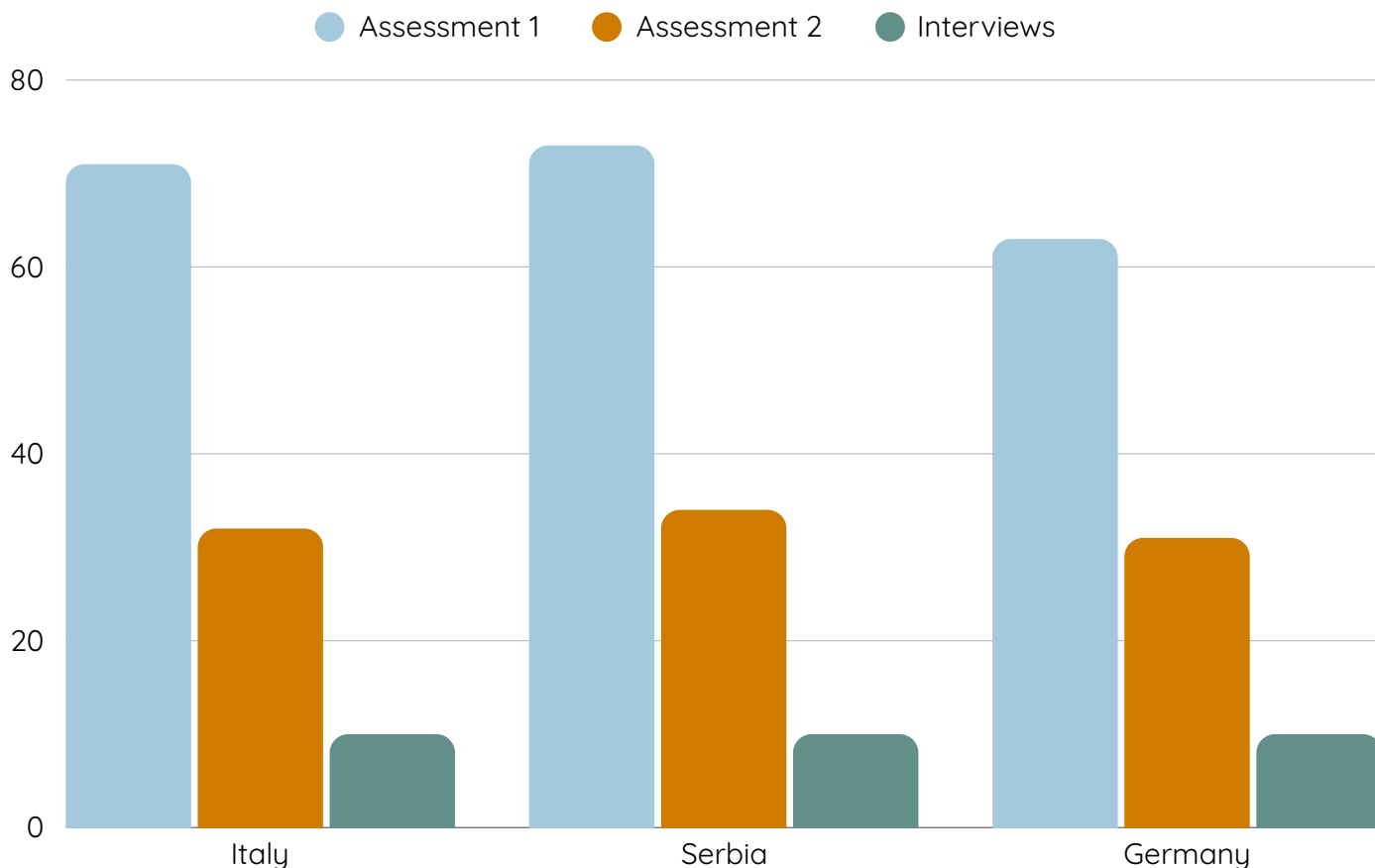
3. TOTAL PARTICIPANTS AND EVIDENCE



The core survey population for the transnational youth analysis consists of 207 youth self-assessment response records. Italy contributed 71 responses, Serbia 73 and Germany 63, giving three national samples of comparable size. These are response records rather than verified unique individuals.

The broader WP2 evidence base also includes 97 youth worker assessment response records and 30 in-depth youth worker interviews. On that basis, the project generated 334 participation records across the three countries. This total should not be interpreted as 334 confirmed unique people. Some interviewees may also have completed a youth worker assessment, and the available national reports do not provide de-duplication information.

Records



Country	Youth self-assessment	Youth worker assessment	Youth worker interviews	Total records
Italy	71	32	10	113
Serbia	73	34	10	117
Germany	63	31	10	104
Total	207	97	30	334 participation records

Interpretation of totals: The most defensible headline number for the survey is 207 youth responses. The total of 334 is useful for describing the full WP2 evidence base, but it includes different instruments and may include overlapping youth worker participants.

The age and status distributions differ across samples. Italy's youth sample is weighted toward ages 20-30, with 39% aged 20-25 and 23% aged 25-30. Serbia's sample is younger, with 56.2% aged 16-19 and 30.1% aged 20-25, and includes 16.4% NEET respondents. Germany's sample is mainly aged 20-25 and includes a larger share of respondents balancing education and employment. These differences are central to the interpretation of burden scores and help explain why cross-country comparison must remain descriptive.

CHAPTER 2

Italy Results

Serbia Results

Germany Results



4. ITALY RESULTS

The Italian evidence base combines three complementary strands: 71 completed youth self-assessments, 32 youth worker assessment responses, and 10 in-depth interviews with practitioners. Data collection took place from March to June 2026 and was conducted in Italian. The youth sample includes adolescents, young adults in higher education, employed respondents and participants combining study with work. The practitioner sample brings together youth workers, psychologists, trainers, educators, activists and professionals working with migrant and socially disadvantaged groups. This range is important because it shows how eco-anxiety appears not only in explicitly environmental programmes but also in education, inclusion, psychosocial support and community work.

The Italian report provides exact distributions for the composite eco-anxiety score, demographic questions, self-rated competence statements, knowledge questions and usability items. For the thirteen symptom and interference questions, it presents a thematic interpretation together with the principal frequency percentages for each item, although not always all four response categories. The present chapter therefore reports every exact figure available for these questions. This provides a full quantitative account alongside the interpretive reading of the findings.

4.1 Youth Respondent Profile and Context

The Italian evidence base combines three complementary strands: 71 completed youth self-assessments, 32 youth worker assessment responses, and 10 in-depth interviews with practitioners. Data collection took place from March to June 2026 and was conducted in Italian. The youth sample includes adolescents, young adults in higher education, employed respondents and participants combining study with work.

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Indicator	Italian result
Youth self-assessment respondents	71
Data-collection period	March–June 2026
Language	Italian
Age distribution	Under 16: 9.9%; 16–19: 26.8%; 20–25: 39.4%; 25–30: 22.5%; 30+: 1.4%
Current status	Studying: 46.5%; studying and working: 22.5%; working: 28.2%; other: 3%
Connection to affected places	68% reported personal or family ties to places experiencing environmental change
Youth worker assessment respondents	32
In-depth youth worker interviews	10

The largest age group was 20–25, followed by 16–19 and 25–30. Compared with the Serbian sample, the Italian group is therefore somewhat older and more likely to be navigating transitions between education, employment and independent adulthood. These transitions can influence how environmental concern is interpreted. Climate change may be considered alongside decisions about housing, mobility, career, family formation and financial security. The substantial share combining study and work also suggests that some participants were already managing competing responsibilities, which may reduce the time and psychological capacity available for environmental action.

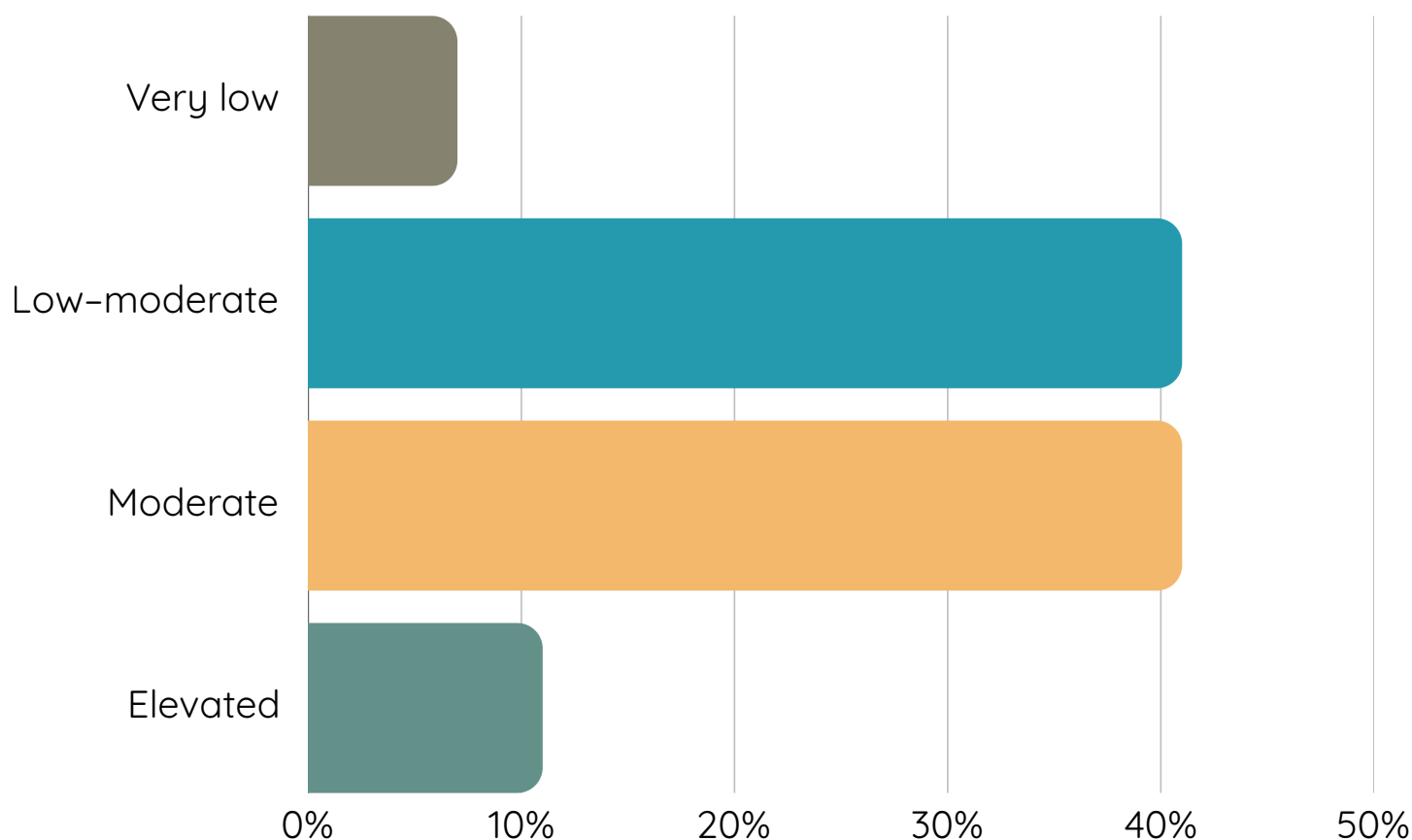
The finding that 68% had personal or family links to places undergoing environmental change is particularly relevant to EWR. It means that climate concern cannot be interpreted only as exposure to news about distant events. For many respondents, environmental deterioration may be associated with a known landscape, a family history, relatives, agricultural livelihoods or memories of a place. This provides a plausible context for the Italian interviewees' distinction between anticipatory eco-anxiety and solastalgia or grief arising from environmental loss already experienced.



68% had personal or family links to places undergoing environmental change is particularly relevant to EWR.

4.2 Overall Eco-anxiety Burden

Overall eco-anxiety



5 respondents showed very-low eco-anxiety; 29 respondents low-moderate, 29 respondents moderate, and 8 respondents elevated.

The Italian distribution is centred on the low-moderate and moderate bands, which together account for 82% of respondents. A further 11% fall within the elevated range. The result does not support a claim that severe eco-anxiety is universal among Italian youth. It does show that climate-related emotional strain is sufficiently common to justify preventive and educational intervention. The moderate group is especially important for WP3 because these young people may not need clinical services, yet they may benefit substantially from emotional literacy, coping strategies, peer support and structured opportunities for action.

The presence of an elevated group means that facilitators must also be prepared for participants whose distress is more persistent or functionally disruptive. A youth-work programme should not attempt to diagnose or treat mental-health conditions, but it must include safeguarding procedures, clear limits of competence and referral guidance. Sessions should be designed so that young people can participate without being required to disclose traumatic experiences or prove the intensity of their concern.

4.3 Symptom Questions

The youth instrument contains thirteen frequency questions covering emotional reactions, repetitive or intrusive thinking, effects on daily functioning and perceived efficacy. The Italian national report does not reproduce the full response distribution for each item. It instead identifies the recurring patterns across the answers. The question-by-question discussion below therefore distinguishes between the exact wording or construct assessed and the qualitative result reported at national level.

Emotional Reactions

Q1

"I felt worried or tense when I thought about climate or environmental problems."

Reported result: 49% experienced this on a few days, 27% on most days and 10% almost every day. The result indicates that climate information is emotionally salient for a meaningful part of the sample. WP3 should normalise concern without presenting anxiety as the only legitimate response. An opening emotional check-in and a distinction between useful concern and overwhelming distress would help participants locate their experience on a continuum.

Q2

"I felt overwhelmed by environmental conditions in places where my family still lives."

Reported result: 41% experienced on several days, 25% more than half of the days, 4% nearly every day.

This contextual figure makes family-linked environmental distress a central Italian theme. Activities should allow participants to speak about transnational family concern, but facilitators should avoid assuming that every migrant-background participant has experienced environmental harm. Optional, private and non-verbal forms of reflection are preferable to compulsory storytelling.

Q3

"I felt afraid that climate change could threaten the stability I'm working to build, or force me/my family to move again."

Reported result: 34% experienced on several days, 27% more than half of the days, 4% nearly every day. The concern appears connected to broader uncertainty rather than to environmental knowledge alone.

A useful educational response is to separate global uncertainty from decisions within a young person's immediate sphere of influence. This does not remove structural risk, but it can reduce the sense that every future decision is impossible.

Q4

"I feel grief about environmental losses in my homeland or places I can no longer visit."

Reported result: 32% experienced on several days, 32% more than half of the days, 7% nearly every day. This item extends the concept of eco-anxiety beyond fear. Grief-oriented exercises should not rush participants toward optimism or action. They may first need acknowledgement, memory, symbolic expression and connection.

Intrusive or Repetitive Thoughts

Q5

"I could not stop thinking about what climate change might cause in the future, and what that could mean for my life."

Reported result: 46% experienced on several days, 31% more than half of the days, 3% nearly every day. Repetitive thought becomes educationally significant when it narrows attention or prevents rest. WP3 should include practical "information boundaries," grounding and techniques for postponing or containing worry, while making clear that these methods are not a denial of climate realities.

Q6

"My mind kept returning to environmental changes in my home region or the places my family has lived."

Reported result: 41% experienced on several days, 18% more than half of the days, 1% nearly every day. For transnational youth, environmental concern may involve simultaneous attachment to several places. Activities should therefore use inclusive language such as "home, origin, family place or place important to you," rather than assuming a single national identity.

Q7

"I kept thinking about what is being lost in nature (e.g., clean water, forests, seasons), and how these losses make people move."

Reported result: 37% experienced on several days, 31% more than half of the days, 11% nearly every day. The question is especially sensitive because it can activate memories of forced migration. WP3 materials should include a trauma-informed facilitator note: do not ask participants to narrate displacement; offer a right to pass; keep discussion from becoming a debate about whether someone's experience is "really" climate-related.

Interference with Daily Life

Q8

“My climate/environment worries made it harder for me to fall asleep.”

Reported result: No youth-item distribution is available for this question: the item was omitted from the questionnaire in error and therefore returned no responses. Evidence for this dimension is limited to practitioner accounts, which noted sleep and appetite disruption among some young people.

Sleep disturbance is a practical marker that concern may be affecting functioning. Youth workers require a simple threshold guide explaining when to offer basic regulation support and when repeated sleep disruption warrants encouragement to contact a qualified health professional.

Q9

“My concerns about climate or environmental issues have made it difficult for me to enjoy time with friends or family, partly due to my circumstances and the challenges I face (e.g., limited support, lack of resources).”

Reported result. 41% experienced on several days, 6% more than half of the days, 1% nearly every day. Group programmes can reduce isolation by demonstrating that climate emotions are shared and varied.

However, facilitators should avoid group pressure. Some participants cope by limiting discussion, and that boundary should be respected while keeping routes for later support open.

Q10

“My climate or environmental worries made it harder to focus at school, work, or daily tasks.”

Reported result: 46% experienced on several days, 4% more than half of the days, 3% nearly every day. Concentration problems connect eco-anxiety to education and employment. WP3 should include short embodied pauses and manageable session segments. Materials should also avoid dense blocks of catastrophic evidence immediately before reflection tasks.

Decision-making, Constraints and Perceived Efficacy

Q11

“I felt worried about the environmental impact of my choices, even though my current housing or financial situation limits my options.”

Reported result: 48% experienced on several days, 24% more than half of the days, 7% nearly every day. The result supports a non-moralising approach. Personal behaviour can be discussed, but the programme should explicitly reject perfectionism and shame. Participants should be invited to select feasible actions rather than being evaluated against an idealised sustainable lifestyle.

Q12

“Even when I care about the environment, my living situation makes it hard to make sustainable choices.”

Reported result: 37% experienced on several days, 34% more than half of the days, 6% nearly every day. This question prevents the programme from confusing agency with purchasing power. Sustainable choices may be constrained by housing, transport, income, disability, family rules or legal status. WP3 should value collective, civic and relational forms of action as well as consumer choices.

Q13

"I felt worried that what I do personally will not make much difference for environmental problems."

Reported result: 39% experienced on several days, 37% more than half of the days, 8% nearly every day. Perceived inefficacy is a central bridge between distress and disengagement. Workshops should connect individual action to collective processes, visible local outcomes and realistic timeframes. The goal is not to promise that a small action solves the climate crisis, but to demonstrate that participation, connection and contribution can still be meaningful.

4.4 Self-rated Literacy, Coping and Support Competencies

Respondents rated a series of competence statements. The national report groups positive responses as agreement and also reports the proportion who were unsure. These figures identify both established strengths and areas where many young people lack confidence. "Unsure" is not equivalent to inability, but it is operationally important: participants who cannot confidently identify a skill may be less likely to use it under stress.

Recognising when climate worry affects mood or behaviour

Reported result: 75% agreed; 18% were unsure.

Recognition is comparatively strong. WP3 can build on this foundation by helping participants distinguish intensity, duration and functional impact rather than beginning from a purely definitional lesson.

Explaining eco-anxiety in one's own words

Reported result. 52% agreed; 34% were unsure.

Almost half lacked confidence or remained uncertain. A concise, non-clinical explanation with examples of worry, grief, anger, guilt and numbness is therefore necessary.

Distinguishing normal concern from a situation requiring additional support

Reported result. 50% agreed; 44% were unsure.

This is one of the clearest safety gaps. Participants need simple indicators such as persistence, loss of functioning, severe hopelessness, self-harm risk or inability to carry out daily tasks, together with clear instructions to seek qualified support.

Understanding that eco-anxiety affects people differently depending on context

Reported result. 83% agreed; 13% were unsure.

Contextual awareness is relatively developed. The programme can deepen it through migration, disability, socioeconomic and rural/urban scenarios without stereotyping.

Knowing at least two ways to calm down when upset by climate information

Reported result. 18% agreed; 45% were unsure.

This is the weakest Italian competence result. Regulation skills must be taught experientially rather than listed. Participants should practise two or three language-light methods and identify which ones feel safe and realistic.

Balancing care for the planet with care for personal mental health

Reported result. 35% agreed; 45% were unsure.

The result signals risk of guilt, over-responsibility and activism burnout. The programme should legitimise rest, boundaries and sustainable participation.

Knowing where to obtain support for climate-related distress

Reported result: 23% agreed; 37% were unsure, 41% disagreed

Low route-to-support knowledge requires local signposting. A generic European toolkit should include a template that each implementing organisation completes with national and local services.

Feeling free to ask for help when climate worry becomes too much

Reported result: 40% agreed; 44% were unsure.

Help-seeking is inhibited for a large group. Facilitators should address stigma, confidentiality, what happens after asking for help, and the difference between peer support and professional care.

Being able to listen to and support a friend who shares eco-anxiety

Reported result: 47% agreed; 38% were unsure.

Peer-support confidence is limited. Young people need a simple response sequence: listen, validate, ask what is needed, avoid minimising or catastrophising, and involve an adult or professional when safety is at risk.



Knowing small realistic steps that can be taken

Reported result: 76% agreed; 18% were unsure.

Action knowledge is a clear strength. The remaining challenge is to ensure that action is emotionally sustainable and structurally realistic.

Finding reliable climate information

Reported result: 44% agreed; 35% were unsure.

The result supports media-literacy training that focuses on source evaluation, uncertainty, scientific consensus and emotional impact.

Avoiding sharing climate information when uncertain about its accuracy

Reported result: 63% agreed; 28% were unsure.

Nearly half were not confident in this information-hygiene behaviour. WP3 should include a short pause-and-check routine before sharing alarming material.

4.5 Knowledge Quiz

#1

Identifying the meaning or typical features of eco-anxiety

Reported result. 87% selected the correct answer.

Basic conceptual recognition is high. This allows WP3 to spend less time on terminology and more time on practical application, while still clarifying that eco-anxiety is not itself a formal diagnosis.



#2

identifying a healthy or helpful response to eco-anxiety

Reported result. 54% selected the correct answer.

This is the weakest quiz item and suggests that recognition does not automatically translate into healthy coping. The programme should contrast validation and realistic action with shame, denial, compulsive responsibility or avoidance.

#3

how to support a friend experiencing eco-anxiety

Reported result. 85% selected the correct answer.

Peer-support knowledge is strong at the level of principle: 85% selected the recommended listen-validate-encourage response. This contrasts with the much lower self-rated confidence in actually supporting a friend (39%), indicating a gap between knowing the recommended response and feeling able to apply it. WP3 should close this gap through rehearsal and practice rather than additional information.

#4

recognising a sign that additional support may be needed

Reported result. 63% selected the correct answer.

The result is moderate rather than strong: 63% correctly identified worry that affects sleep, concentration or daily functioning as the relevant signal. Combined with the finding that only 44% felt confident distinguishing normal concern from a need for support, this confirms threshold recognition as a priority for the Italian materials and reinforces the traffic-light referral guidance recommended for WP3.

4.6 Usability of the Youth Tool

Usability statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
The questions were understandable	75%	20%	6%
The tool was easy to use and complete	75%	15%	10%
I understood what the tool measures	83%	11%	6%

The usability findings are broadly positive. Nevertheless, one quarter of respondents were unsure or disagreed that every question was understandable, and one quarter were unsure or disagreed that the tool was easy to complete. This matters if the instrument is later used with younger participants, people with limited literacy or groups working in a second language. WP3 should retain plain language, give examples for abstract terms and offer facilitator-supported or visual versions. Usability should be assessed separately from emotional safety: a tool can be technically easy to complete while still raising difficult feelings.

4.7 Youth Worker Assessment Results

Thirty-two Italian youth workers completed the assessment tool, although two records were reported as partial. The report interprets the practitioner results across domains rather than providing a complete response table for every statement. The overall pattern is one of strong relational and educational experience combined with uncertainty about specialised eco-anxiety methods, formal referral pathways and organisational systems. This is consistent with the interviews: practitioners already listen, validate and facilitate action, but frequently improvise by adapting general youth-work or psychological techniques.

4.7.1 Resources Requested by Italian Youth Workers

	<i>Age-appropriate resources</i>	71.9%
	<i>Case studies and practical examples</i>	59.4%
	<i>Screening or assessment instruments</i>	56.2%
	<i>Intervention guides</i>	43.8%
	<i>Face-to-face training</i>	40.6%
	<i>Online training</i>	15.6%
	<i>Supervision or peer consultation</i>	15.6%
	<i>Resources for parents or families</i>	12.5%
	<i>Research summaries or evidence briefings</i>	9.4%

The preference for age-appropriate resources and case studies indicates that Italian practitioners are not primarily asking for more abstract information. They need material that can be translated directly into facilitation decisions. Screening tools were also frequently selected, but this need must be interpreted carefully. A youth-work screening aid should support observation, conversation and referral; it should not encourage non-clinical practitioners to diagnose. Intervention guides and face-to-face training are also prominent, suggesting that implementation support is as important as the written toolkit.

The lower selection of online training should not be read as rejection of all digital formats. Interviewees expressed mixed views: some use reels, visual media and interactive tools, while others deliberately prioritise embodied, analogue and outdoor approaches. A blended training offer is therefore preferable, with live practice and reflection as the core and concise online material as supplementary support.

4.8 Findings from the Italian Interviews

All ten interviewed practitioners described eco-anxiety as a cluster of emotional and behavioural signals rather than a neatly labelled condition. Young people often do not use the term themselves. The issue emerges through conversations about the future, work, whether to have children, where to live, security, environmental injustice or a loss of trust in institutions. Reported manifestations included withdrawal and silence, protective avoidance, hyperactivity, an urgent need to act, exhaustion, demotivation, emotional rigidity, sleep or appetite changes and difficulty planning a future.

The interviews make an important distinction between anticipatory anxiety and grief for environmental loss already experienced. Practitioners working with people affected by migration, war, wildfire, drought or resource insecurity noted that climate distress can be layered onto previous trauma and disrupted belonging.

At the same time, they resisted portraying migrant youth as a homogeneous or uniquely vulnerable category. Biographical proximity, socioeconomic position, territory, access to environmental education and current living conditions were described as more explanatory than migration status alone.

Existing practice follows a recognisable sequence: acceptance and validation, perspective-taking, and movement toward manageable action. Practitioners use empathetic listening, circles, emotion maps, journaling, storytelling, theatre, phototherapy, sensory work, school gardens, walks and other contact with nature. These methods provide a strong basis for WP3. The gap lies in shared structure: facilitators want practical guidance on how to introduce the topic, prevent overwhelm, adapt activities, recognise professional limits and close a session safely.

The Italian evidence therefore points to five priorities. **First**, regulation skills must be substantially strengthened, because only 15% of youth respondents confidently reported two calming methods. **Second**, support routes and help-seeking require practical attention. **Third**, the programme must address grief and attachment to place, not only fear of the future. **Fourth**, agency should be framed without guilt and should recognise material constraints. **Fifth**, resources should be concrete, age-adaptable and case-based, with live training that lets practitioners rehearse difficult situations.

5. SERBIA RESULTS



The Serbian evidence base combines 73 completed youth self-assessments, 34 youth worker assessment records and 10 in-depth youth worker interviews in the detailed analytical sections. The cover table lists 70 young people and 33 youth workers, while the executive summary also refers to 73 youth responses and 33 youth workers. Because the question-level analysis is explicitly calculated on 73 youth respondents and the practitioner demographic table is calculated on 34, those detailed denominators are used in this chapter. The discrepancy is retained as a data-quality issue and discussed in the limitations section.

Data were collected in Serbian, with interview material translated into English for reporting. Youth interviews and assessment activities were carried out between March and May 2026. The Serbian report offers the most complete item-level youth dataset among the three national reports. It includes counts or percentages for demographic characteristics, composite burden, all symptom domains, competence items, the knowledge quiz and usability. The qualitative strand is also extensive and gives particular attention to migrant and refugee youth, humanitarian transit settings and the intersection of eco-anxiety with trauma.

5.1 Youth Respondent Profile

The Serbian youth sample is concentrated in the 16–19 age group, which accounts for more than half of respondents. This makes the evidence particularly relevant to secondary-school-age participants and youth-work settings serving late adolescents. The sample also includes a relatively large NEET group: 12 respondents, or 16.4%, were not in education, employment or training. The national analysis reports that this subgroup had a higher mean composite score than the sample overall, suggesting that broader uncertainty and reduced access to structured support may amplify climate-related distress.

Although most respondents originated from and lived in Serbia, the national report includes qualitative evidence from organisations working with migrants and refugees.

The quantitative youth sample should therefore not be treated as a direct statistical measure of migrant youth in Serbia. The migration-related findings are strongest in the interview strand, where practitioners describe young people whose concern is connected to environmental loss, displacement, conflict and family circumstances.

Indicator	Serbian result
Youth self-assessment respondents	73
Age distribution	Under 16: 1; 16–19: 41 (56.2%); 20–25: 22 (30.1%); 25–30: 8 (11.0%); 30+: 1
Current status	Studying: 34 (46.6%); working: 12 (16.4%); studying and working: 11 (15.1%); NEET: 12 (16.4%); secondary/other category: 4 (5.5%)
Youth worker assessment respondents	34
In-depth youth worker interviews	10
Data-collection period	March–June 2026
Language	Serbian

5.2 Overall Eco-anxiety Burden

The mean composite score was reported as 48.3, with an approximate standard deviation of 10 and a range from 27 to 74. The dominant category was moderate, containing 42 respondents. Together, the moderate and elevated groups represent 68.5% of the sample. This is a stronger burden profile than the Italian sample.

The result should be interpreted as an indication of need within the recruited sample rather than a prevalence estimate for all Serbian youth.

The NEET subgroup had a reported mean score of 51.7, above the overall mean. The source does not provide a formal significance test, so this difference cannot be generalised. It nevertheless reinforces the importance of social context. Eco-anxiety may become more difficult to manage when young people already experience uncertainty about employment, education, housing or future opportunities. WP3 should therefore avoid offering only individual coping messages and should incorporate social support, participation and accessible local action.

5.3 Symptom Questions

Emotional Reactions

Q1

"I felt worried or tense when I thought about climate or environmental problems."

Reported result: 69.9% experienced this on at least a few days: 54.8% on a few days, 9.6% on most days and 5.5% almost every day.

Worry is common but, for most, intermittent rather than constant. A preventive youth-work intervention is appropriate because it can reach participants before concern becomes more persistent. Facilitators should offer skills to regulate arousal and make room for concern without turning the workshop into a catalogue of climate threats.

Q2

"I felt overwhelmed by the environmental conditions in places where my family still lives."

Reported result: 71.2% reported the feeling on at least a few days: 56.2% on a few days, 9.6% on most days and 5.5% almost every day.

The result is close to the general worry item but has a more personal frame. Environmental distress is therefore not only global or abstract. It can be connected to immediate living conditions and family wellbeing. Place-based exercises should allow respondents to identify both sources of loss and sources of resilience in their local environment.

Q3

"I felt afraid that climate change could threaten the stability I'm working to build, or force me/my family to move again."

Reported result: 85% reported the experience at least sometimes. The report specifies that 28.8% experienced it on most days and 11.0% almost every day.

This was one of the most widespread emotional experiences. Grief deserves a distinct place in the curriculum because it cannot always be resolved through problem-solving. Ritual, art, storytelling, nature connection and collective acknowledgement may be more appropriate than an immediate action-planning exercise.

Q4

"I feel grief about environmental losses in my homeland or places I can no longer visit."

Reported result: 52.1% reported the feeling: 35.6% on a few days, 12.3% on most days and 4.1% almost every day.

The item directly links climate concern to stability and movement. Although less frequent than sadness, it affected more than half the sample. It is especially relevant in contexts where migration, regional instability or economic uncertainty are already salient.

Intrusive or Repetitive Thoughts

Q5

"I could not stop thinking about what climate change might cause in the future, and what that could mean for my life."

Reported result. 72.6% reported this on at least a few days; across the rumination items, the proportion reporting "most days" or "almost every day" ranged from 19.2% to 36.9%. Future-focused rumination is widespread.

Q6

“My mind kept returning to environmental changes in my home region or the places my family has lived.”

Reported result: 75.3% reported the experience on at least a few days.

The item is particularly important for young people with transnational attachments. Materials should not use “local” as if it refers only to the country of current residence. Participants may care about several communities and should be able to select which place they wish to discuss.

Q7

“I kept thinking about what is being lost in nature (e.g., clean water, forests, seasons), and how these losses make people move.”

Reported result: 82.2% reported the experience on at least a few days, the highest of the three rumination indicators.

Repeated thought about loss and movement is a major Serbian finding. The interview evidence gives it further depth through accounts of young people from climate-affected and conflict-affected regions. A trauma-informed approach is essential.

Interference with Daily Life

Q8

“My climate/environment worries made it harder for me to fall asleep.”

Reported result: 32.9% experienced at least some interference with sleep or rest; 9.6% reported frequent interference.

The majority did not report this effect, but approximately one in three did. Sleep disruption is a meaningful threshold because it indicates that concern is entering daily functioning. Facilitators need clear instruction to encourage additional support when sleep disturbance is persistent.

Q9

“My concerns about climate or environmental issues have made it difficult for me to enjoy time with friends or family, partly due to my circumstances and the challenges I face (e.g., limited support, lack of resources).”

Reported result: 45.2% reported at least some effect; 10.9% reported frequent interference.

Social effects were more common than sleep effects. Eco-anxiety can lead to conflict with peers or family, withdrawal, frustration with people perceived as indifferent, or exhaustion from repeated discussion. Group exercises should practise disagreement without dismissal and support boundaries around climate conversation.

Q10

“My climate or environmental worries made it harder to focus at school, work, or daily tasks.”

Reported result: 37.0% reported at least some interference; approximately 9.5% reported frequent difficulty.

Concentration difficulties can affect education, work and participation. Sessions should be paced carefully, use concrete language and include emotional regulation before complex planning. Youth workers should also recognise that concentration problems have many possible causes and should not automatically attribute them to eco-anxiety.

Decision-making, Constraints and Perceived Efficacy

Q11

“I felt worried about the environmental impact of my choices, even though my current housing or financial situation limits my options.”

Reported result: 64.4% reported this on at least a few days.

Concern about choices is common and can support responsible behaviour, but it can also become guilt or perfectionism.

The curriculum should use “good enough” action planning and explicitly discuss shared and institutional responsibility.

Q12

“Even when I care about the environment, my living situation makes it hard to make sustainable choices.”

Reported result: 74.0% reported this experience.

This is one of the strongest Serbian results and demonstrates that material conditions constrain perceived agency. Cost, transport, housing, family decisions and access to services may limit individual choice. WP3 must not equate environmental responsibility with consumption.

Q13

“I felt worried that what I do personally will not make much difference for environmental problems.”

Reported result: 73.9% reported the concern.

Low perceived impact can produce resignation even among informed young people. Action modules should include collective mapping: who else is involved, what institutions can be influenced, how local results can be observed, and how participants can share responsibility.

5.4 Self-rated Literacy, Coping and Support Competencies

The competence profile contains several clear strengths. More than two thirds understood that context affects eco-anxiety, could balance environmental care with wellbeing, knew small realistic steps, or avoided sharing uncertain information. Confidence in supporting a friend and distinguishing normal concern from a need for support was also relatively high. These strengths suggest that many participants already possess elements of emotional and civic literacy that WP3 can activate.

The principal gaps concern language, support routes and information appraisal. Only 41.1% felt able to explain eco-anxiety, while 50.7% were unsure. Less than half knew where to find support. Nearly 44% were unsure whether they could identify reliable information. These figures support three concise learning units: “name and recognise,” “check and choose information,” and “know where support begins.” The uncertainty rate should be treated as a training opportunity, not as a deficit label.

Taken together, the item-level results point to four practical implications. Recognition of eco-anxiety’s effects was less confident than in Italy or Germany and should be taught through concrete emotional, cognitive, physical and behavioural examples. The comparatively strong ability to distinguish normal concern from a need for support can be consolidated with a simple threshold (traffic-light) tool.

Calming strategies and help-seeking need rehearsal rather than description, with every implementation site completing a local referral map before delivery, and peer support framed with clear limits: a friend listens and connects, but is not responsible for treatment. Finally, information-verification skills should be linked to emotional regulation — people share quickly when alarmed — building on the strong existing norm against sharing unverified content.



Recognising when climate worry affects mood or behaviour

Reported result: 53.4% agreed; 37.0% were unsure.

Explaining eco-anxiety in one's own words

Reported result: 41.1% agreed; 50.7% were unsure.

Distinguishing normal concern from a situation requiring additional support

Reported result: 65.8% agreed; 28.8% were unsure.

Understanding that eco-anxiety affects people differently depending on context

Reported result: 71.2% agreed; 24.7% were unsure.

Knowing at least two ways to calm down when upset by climate information

Reported result: 53.4% agreed; 32.9% were unsure.

Balancing care for the planet with care for personal mental health

Reported result: 67.1% agreed; 23.3% were unsure.



Knowing where to obtain support for climate-related distress

Reported result. 46.6% agreed; 37% were unsure, 38.4% disagreed

Feeling free to ask for help when climate worry becomes too much

Reported result: 60.3% agreed; 27.4% were unsure.

Being able to listen to and support a friend who shares eco-anxiety

Reported result. 65.8% agreed; 24.7% were unsure.

Knowing small realistic steps that can be taken

Reported result. 72.6% agreed; 20.5% were unsure.

Finding reliable climate information

Reported result. 52.1% agreed; 43.8% were unsure.

Avoiding sharing climate information when uncertain about its accuracy

Reported result. 80.8% agreed; 16.4% were unsure.

5.5 Knowledge Quiz

#1

Identifying the meaning or typical features of eco-anxiety

Reported result: 80.8% answered correctly.

Conceptual knowledge is strong but not universal. The terminology module should be concise and linked to practical examples.

#2

identifying a healthy or helpful response to eco-anxiety

Reported result: 65.8% answered correctly. 23.3% selected “feel ashamed that you are not doing enough.” The shame response is a significant warning. Nearly one quarter endorsed a moralising reaction that can intensify distress and burnout. WP3 should explicitly challenge shame-based climate communication and distinguish responsibility from self-punishment.

#3

how to support a friend experiencing eco-anxiety

Reported result: 79.5% answered correctly.

Most respondents (79.5%) selected the recommended listen-validate-encourage response for supporting a friend. Local route knowledge remains weaker, so the educational task is to convert this peer-support principle into accessible action.

#4

recognising a sign that additional support may be needed

Reported result: 71.2% correctly identified persistent interference with sleep, concentration and daily functioning as the signal that additional support may be needed.

5.6 Usability of the Youth Tool

Usability statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
The questions were understandable	62%	37%	1%
The tool was easy to use and complete	66%	25%	10%
I understood what the tool measures	62%	34%	4%

Agreement is positive, but uncertainty is substantial: more than one third were unsure whether the questions were understandable and whether they understood the construct being measured. This may partly reflect the abstract nature of eco-anxiety and the complexity of frequency items linking environment, migration and daily life. Future versions should add a short introduction, examples of response periods, and plain-language explanations of terms such as “environmental loss,” “region of origin” and “support.”

The 9.6% who disagreed that the tool was easy to complete also warrant attention. Assisted administration, read-aloud options and visual response scales may improve accessibility. Because the tool can evoke difficult memories, the closing screen should include a grounding prompt and support information.

5.7 Youth Worker Assessment Results

The detailed Serbian practitioner analysis uses 34 responses. Across 23 competency items, scores ranged from 10 to 64, with a reported mean of 39.6 and an approximate standard deviation of 14. The profile is dispersed: some practitioners demonstrate broad confidence, while others report limited preparedness. The national report describes relational support and constructive agency as relative strengths, with referral pathways, migration-sensitive adaptation and specialised methodology as weaker areas.

Understanding of eco-anxiety is uneven. Many youth workers can recognise concern, hopelessness or withdrawal, but fewer feel able to distinguish eco-anxiety from trauma, depression or other mental-health difficulties. This matters because migrant-facing practitioners may encounter climate-related material embedded in a much wider history of loss. WP3 should not ask youth workers to make clinical distinctions they are not qualified to make. It should instead provide observable indicators, questions for a supportive conversation, red flags, and a clear route to qualified support.

Emotional support and resilience-building are already central to Serbian practice. Interviewees use dialogue, expressive arts, movement, structured play, nature contact, psychosocial support and digital communication. The need is not to replace these methods but to organise them into a coherent sequence with safe openings, regulation, reflection, agency and closure. Body-based and language-light approaches are especially important in multilingual and transit settings.

Referral is a pronounced gap. Interviewees noted limited mental-health infrastructure in Nis and southern Serbia and uncertainty about when to escalate. A static list of services will become outdated; the toolkit should therefore provide a referral-mapping template, a decision checklist and a requirement for organisations to verify local contacts before delivery. Emergency and safeguarding procedures must remain aligned with national law and organisational policy.

The practitioner findings also highlight self-regulation and professional sustainability. Almost all interviewees raised their own exposure to climate despair or secondary trauma. Youth workers need permission and structure to debrief, share responsibility and seek supervision. A programme that teaches young people regulation while ignoring facilitator wellbeing would be internally inconsistent.

5.8 Findings from the Serbian Interviews

All ten interviewees stated that eco-anxiety appears in their work, including in peace-building, mental-health, youth-centre and migrant-support organisations whose primary mandate is not environmental. They described stress, fear, aggression during climate discussion, fatalism, alternating hypervigilance and avoidance, resignation, sleep and concentration problems, and a gap between awareness and action. Young activists were described as vulnerable to cumulative exposure and burnout.

The most distinctive Serbian qualitative finding concerns young people with migration backgrounds from climate-affected regions. Practitioners described environmental distress as connected to lived loss, displacement and trauma. One account involved a young man from Somalia showing photographs of land around his family home changing from green fields to desert. Another concerned a young man from Afghanistan becoming distressed when mountains near Nis evoked memories of his village. These examples demonstrate why a generic Western European lesson about “worry for the future” may be inadequate. For some participants, the environmental crisis is already biographical.

Practitioners requested ready-to-run 60–90 minute workshops, a facilitator guide for introducing the issue safely, multilingual and low-literacy materials, an emotion-to-agency pathway, referral and triage checklists, body-based regulation methods and youth-worker self-care. These requests are highly consistent with Italy and Germany, but the Serbian report gives additional urgency to trauma-sensitive adaptation and mixed-group facilitation.

The Serbian evidence therefore supports a modular programme with differentiated pathways. A general youth group may begin with climate emotions and media exposure. A migrant-support setting may need to begin with safety, choice, grounding and indirect case material. An activist group may need a stronger focus on burnout, boundaries and shared responsibility. The same core principles can be retained, but the sequence, language and depth of disclosure must be adapted.

5.8.1 Resources Requested by Serbian Youth Workers



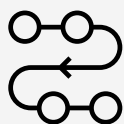
Ready-to-run 60–90 minute workshops,



A facilitator guide for introducing the issue safely



Multilingual and low-literacy materials



An emotion-to-agency pathway



Referral and triage checklists



Body-based regulation methods



Youth-worker self-care

6. GERMANY RESULTS

The German evidence base combines three complementary strands: 63 completed youth self-assessments, 31 youth worker assessment responses and 10 semi-structured in-depth interviews with practitioners. The youth and youth worker tools were administered online, and the practitioner sample covers urban, migrant, community, public-institution and environmental youth-work settings. The youth sample is somewhat older than the Italian and Serbian samples and includes a substantial share of respondents balancing education and employment.

This chapter reports the German results at the most detailed level available in the national report: the respondent profile, the composite burden distribution, question-by-question symptom and functioning results, self-rated competencies, the knowledge quiz and usability items, followed by the youth worker assessment results and the interview findings.

6.1 German Youth Sample

The sample is older than the Italian and Serbian samples, with a majority aged 20–25 and a substantial share balancing education and employment. Participation may correlate with international mobility, migration background or participation through specific organisations, although the report does not provide enough demographic detail to test those possibilities. The sample should therefore be treated as a distinct recruited group, not a nationally representative one.

Indicator	German result
Youth self-assessment respondents	63
Age distribution	16–19: 16 (25.4%); 20–25: 38 (60.3%); 25–30: 5 (7.9%); 30+: 4 (6.3%)
Current status	Studying: 36 (57.1%); working: 13; studying and working: 14
Youth worker assessment respondents	31
In-depth youth worker interviews	10
Data-collection period	16 March–2 July 2026
Language	German and English

The sample is older than the Italian and Serbian samples, with a majority aged 20–25 and a substantial share balancing education and employment. Participation may correlate with international mobility, migration background or participation through specific organisations, although the report does not provide enough demographic detail to test those possibilities. The sample should therefore be treated as a distinct recruited group, not a nationally representative one.

6.2 Overall Eco-anxiety Burden

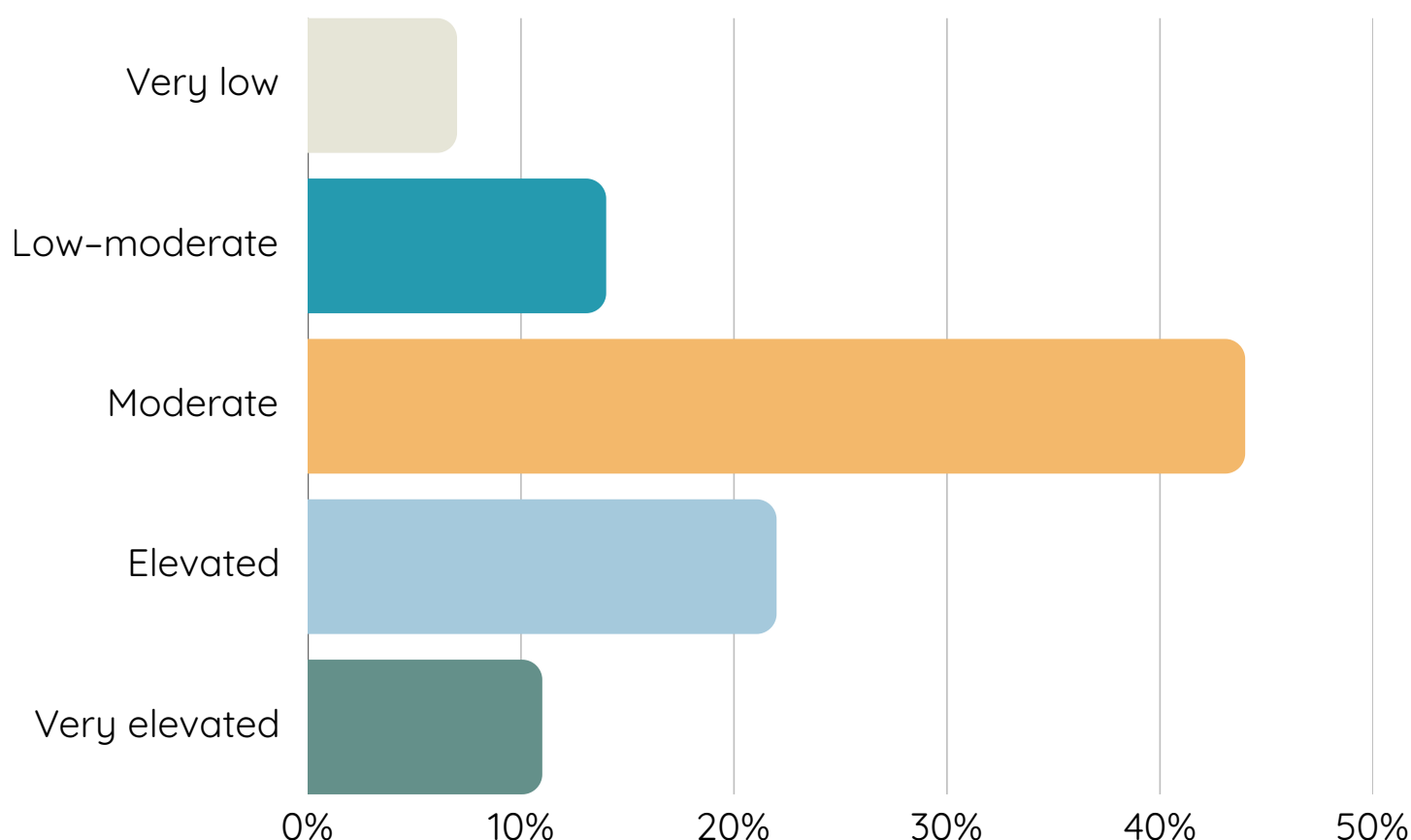
Forty-nine respondents, or 77.8%, fall within the moderate, elevated or very elevated categories, and one third are in the elevated or very elevated categories. This makes safeguarding, referral information and careful session design particularly important for any group recruited through similar channels. The burden profile cannot be interpreted causally. The older age profile may expose participants to different life decisions and responsibilities. Recruitment may also have reached internationally mobile or migrant-background youth with stronger links to climate-affected places.



77%, fall within the moderate, elevated or very elevated categories, and one third are in the elevated or very elevated categories. This highlights the importance of safeguarding, providing referral information, and designing sessions carefully for any groups recruited through similar channels.

Part of the profile may additionally reflect scoring, translation, item presentation or data handling. WP3 piloting should collect the same demographic variables and use one verified scoring script across all languages.

Overall eco-anxiety



6.3 German Youth: Symptom and Functioning Questions

Forty-nine respondents, or 77.8%, fall within the moderate, elevated or very elevated categories, and one third are in the elevated or very elevated categories. This makes safeguarding, referral information and careful session design particularly important for any group recruited through similar channels.

Emotional Reactions

Q1

"I felt worried or tense when I thought about climate or environmental problems."

Reported result: 55 respondents (87.3%) experienced it on at least several days; 22 (34.9%) reported frequent experience.

Climate concern is nearly universal in this sample, and more than one third experience it frequently. The programme should offer both universal prevention and routes for participants needing more support.

Q2

"I felt overwhelmed by the environmental conditions in places where my family still lives."

Reported result: 53 (84.1%) reported at least some experience; 26 (41.3%) reported it frequently.

The family and place dimension is very strong, supporting culturally sensitive, migration-aware facilitation and optional forms of personal reflection.

Q3

"I felt afraid that climate change could threaten the stability I'm working to build, or force me/my family to move again."

Reported result: 42 (66.7%) reported at least some experience; 17 (27.0%) reported it frequently.

Future stability is important but less widespread than general worry or family-place distress. Decision-making and uncertainty-tolerance activities are appropriate.

Q4

"I feel grief about environmental losses in my homeland or places I can no longer visit."

Reported result: 50 (79.4%) reported at least some experience; 26 (41.3%) reported it frequently. Grief is both common and frequently experienced. The programme should not treat every difficult emotion as something to eliminate. Acknowledgement and collective meaning-making are valid outcomes.

Intrusive or Repetitive Thoughts

Q5

"I could not stop thinking about what climate change might cause in the future, and what that could mean for my life."

Reported result: 54 (85.7%) reported at least some experience; 25 (39.7%) reported it frequently. Rumination is common and may sustain distress. Information-hygiene and attention-regulation practices should be integrated rather than offered as an optional appendix.

Q6

"My mind kept returning to environmental changes in my home region or the places my family has lived."

Reported result: 46 (73.0%) reported at least some experience; 22 (34.9%) reported it frequently. This result supports transnational place-based content, but the programme must avoid making assumptions based on language or visible background.

Q7

"I kept thinking about what is being lost in nature (e.g., clean water, forests, seasons), and how these losses make people move."

Reported result: 56 (88.9%) reported at least some experience; 29 (46.0%) reported it frequently. This is the most widespread and one of the most frequent items. Trauma-sensitive facilitation, right-to-pass procedures and non-disclosure options are essential.

Interference with Daily Life

Q8

"My climate/environment worries made it harder for me to fall asleep."

Reported result: 30 (47.6%) reported at least some interference; 15 (23.8%) reported frequent interference.

Almost half experienced some sleep impact and nearly one quarter experienced it frequently. This is a clear functional marker that requires referral and support information.

Q9

"My concerns about climate or environmental issues have made it difficult for me to enjoy time with friends or family, partly due to my circumstances and the challenges I face (e.g., limited support, lack of resources)."

Reported result: 40 (63.5%) reported at least some impact; 17 (27.0%) reported frequent impact. Social interference is substantial. Peer-support and communication exercises should address both withdrawal and conflict.

Q10

“My climate or environmental worries made it harder to focus at school, work, or daily tasks.”

Reported result: 36 (57.1%) reported at least some difficulty; 18 (28.6%) reported it frequently.

More than half reported concentration effects. Sessions should be paced, emotionally contained and followed by grounding rather than ending with unresolved alarm.

Decision-making, Constraints and Perceived Efficacy

Q11

“I felt worried about the environmental impact of my choices, even though my current housing or financial situation limits my options.”

Reported result: 46 (73.0%) reported at least some worry; 26 (41.3%) reported it frequently.

Personal responsibility is emotionally loaded. The curriculum must actively counter shame and perfectionism.

Q12

“Even when I care about the environment, my living situation makes it hard to make sustainable choices.”

Reported result: 46 (73.0%) reported at least some constraint; 25 (39.7%) reported it frequently.

Structural and material barriers are central. Inclusive agency must include collective, organisational and political forms of participation.

Q13

"I felt worried that what I do personally will not make much difference for environmental problems."

Reported result: 53 (84.1%) reported at least some concern; 26 (41.3%) reported it frequently.

Perceived inefficacy is exceptionally common. The action pathway should show how individual contributions connect to groups, institutions and longer-term change.

6.4 Self-rated Literacy, Coping and Support Competencies

The German competence profile is generally stronger than the Italian and Serbian profiles, particularly for contextual understanding, balancing wellbeing with environmental care and distinguishing normal concern from a need for support. Nevertheless, one third were unsure about recognising effects, explaining eco-anxiety or locating support. High symptom burden therefore coexists with moderate-to-strong self-rated competence. Knowledge and distress should not be treated as opposites: a well-informed person may still experience substantial grief, rumination or functional interference. The support-route item is again weaker than the conceptual items. This pattern appears across countries and is a direct WP3 priority. A programme can teach universal principles, but actual referral information must be local, current and accessible in the participant's preferred language.

Taken together, the item-level results show solid conceptual confidence coexisting with practical uncertainty. Roughly one third were unsure about recognising effects, explaining eco-anxiety or locating support, so symptom recognition should cover bodily, cognitive and behavioural signs, and a shared vocabulary should be established early. The strong results on contextual understanding and on distinguishing normal concern from a need for support justify intersectional case studies and a structured threshold tool that guards against overconfidence. Calming methods, help-seeking and peer support require practice, explicit limits and local referral mapping, particularly given the elevated burden in this sample. The strong information-hygiene norm provides a base for applied source-evaluation exercises linked to collective, non-moralising action planning.

Recognising when climate worry affects mood or behaviour

Reported result: 65.1% agreed; 33.3% were unsure.

Explaining eco-anxiety in one's own words

Reported result: 60.3% agreed; 34.9% were unsure.

Distinguishing normal concern from a situation requiring additional support

Reported result: 74.6% agreed; 20.6% were unsure.

Understanding that eco-anxiety affects people differently depending on context

Reported result: 82.5% agreed; 14.3% were unsure.

Knowing at least two ways to calm down when upset by climate information

Reported result: 61.9% agreed; 30.2% were unsure.

Balancing care for the planet with care for personal mental health

Reported result: 76.2% agreed; 22.2% were unsure.

 Knowing where to obtain support for climate-related distress

Reported result: 57.1% agreed; 33.3% were unsure

 Feeling free to ask for help when climate worry becomes too much

Reported result: 61.3% agreed; 24.2% were unsure.

 Being able to listen to and support a friend who shares eco-anxiety

Reported result: 66.1% agreed; 22.6% were unsure.

 Knowing small realistic steps that can be taken

Reported result: 74.2% agreed; 25.8% were unsure.

 Finding reliable climate information

Reported result: 66.1% agreed; 29.0% were unsure.

 Avoiding sharing climate information when uncertain about its accuracy

Reported result: 77.4% agreed; 17.7% were unsure.



6.5 Knowledge Quiz

#1

Identifying the meaning or typical features of eco-anxiety

Reported result. 79.0% selected the correct answer.

#2

identifying a healthy or helpful response to eco-anxiety

Reported result: 77.4% answered correctly.

#3

how to support a friend experiencing eco-anxiety

Reported result: 83.9% answered correctly.

#4

recognising a sign that additional support may be needed

Reported result: 74.2% answered correctly.

Quiz performance is consistently high, ranging from 74.2% to 83.9%. As in the competence profile, this demonstrates that substantial knowledge can coexist with substantial burden. WP3 should therefore not rely on information provision alone. Its added value lies in emotional processing, regulation, peer support, agency and access to help.

6.6 Usability of the Youth Tool

Usability statement	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
The questions were understandable	84%	16%	0%
The tool was easy to use and complete	82%	18%	0%
I understood what the tool measures	78%	22%	0%

Usability was strong among the 61 respondents who completed these items. The reduced denominator should be recorded explicitly because two participants did not provide usability responses. Even with positive results, future versions should include an emotionally safe closing and support links, especially given the number of participants in elevated categories.

6.7 Youth Worker Assessment Results

Thirty-one youth workers completed the English-language form. The average score was 64.2, the median 67, and 20 respondents (64.5%) were classified as high or very high. Reported domain percentages were 86.5% for understanding, 84.7% for emotional support, 85.3% for referral and professional limits, 84.5% for constructive agency, 81.5% for media literacy and 87.1% for self-regulation. The overall profile is strong.

The observation profile closely matches the youth data: helplessness, rumination, avoidance, guilt, anger and sleep difficulties all appear in both strands. This convergence strengthens the case for a programme that combines emotional recognition, coping and action. It also shows that youth workers are already encountering the issue and do not need persuasion that climate-related distress exists.

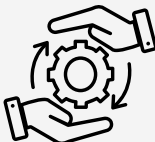
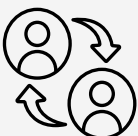
6.7.1 Resources Requested by German Youth Workers

	<i>Conversation and communication methods</i>	58.1%
	<i>Intervention or coping techniques</i>	54.8%
	<i>Recognising signs</i>	41.9%
	<i>Understanding impacts</i>	41.9%
	<i>Supporting agency</i>	35.5%
	<i>Managing group processes</i>	35.5%

All practitioner respondents indicated that they would benefit from training. The strongest requests concern conversation methods and intervention techniques. This reinforces a practice-oriented WP3 design. A training package should demonstrate exact facilitator language for opening a conversation, validating emotion, responding to hopelessness, setting limits, handling silence and closing safely. Participants should practise rather than only read these methods.

Organisational support statement

The organisational findings show that competence is not solely an individual property. Even confident youth workers need resources, supportive workplaces, referral systems and colleagues. WP3 should therefore include an organisational implementation checklist rather than focusing only on trainer skills.

	<i>Need additional resources</i>	90.3%
	<i>Professional development should be available</i>	80.6%
	<i>Workplace support is important</i>	83.9%
	<i>Referral systems are needed</i>	80.6%
	<i>Colleague or peer support is needed</i>	77.4%

6.8 Findings from the German Interviews

Ten interviewees with two to eight years of experience described persistent worry, helplessness, guilt, anger at political inaction, grief, catastrophic thinking, avoidance, doomscrolling, emotional exhaustion and difficulty imagining long-term plans. Youth workers reported stronger distress among young people with relatives in climate-vulnerable countries, those already experiencing economic or social insecurity, highly informed youth, climate activists and participants with pre-existing emotional vulnerability.

Current German practice is diverse. Youth workers use guided conversations, emotional check-ins, emotion mapping, breathing and grounding, creative expression, community gardening, clean-ups, recycling, upcycling, sustainable cooking and local action projects. They also use simple-language resources, multilingual infographics, visual prompts, social media, short videos and collaborative digital tools. The combination of emotional support, inclusion and practical agency is closely aligned with the direction indicated by the youth data.

Practitioners requested structured toolkits, ready-to-run workshop plans, clear referral pathways, safeguarding and triage guidance, inclusive materials, methods for difficult group dynamics, coping exercises, training on activism burnout and media-literacy tools. These needs closely match Italy and Serbia, demonstrating that WP3 can develop a shared core. German implementation should test whether materials function consistently across German, English and other languages used by migrant communities.

CHAPTER 3

Comparative Analysis

Meaning and Significance

Recommendations for WP3



7. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The three national evidence bases point in the same strategic direction but are not statistically equivalent. They use a common conceptual instrument, yet the samples differ in age, language, recruitment pathway, status and reporting completeness. The comparison should therefore identify patterns and design implications rather than rank countries. Apparent national differences may reflect who was reached and how the data were processed as much as broader cultural conditions.

7.1 Comparison of Samples

Dimension	Italy	Serbia	Germany
Youth response records used	71	73	63
Youth worker assessment records used	32	34	31
Interviews	10	10	10
Dominant youth age profile	20–25 largest group	16–19 majority	20–25 majority
Main data language(s)	Italian	Serbian	English (forms); German (interviews)
Data period	March–June 2026	March–May 2026	March–July 2026

The age differences are likely to matter. Adolescents may encounter climate change mainly through school, social media, family discussion and future imagination. Young adults may be making immediate decisions about higher education, work, mobility, housing and relationships. These developmental contexts can affect both the meaning of the questions and the frequency of distress.

Employment and education status also vary. Serbia contains a meaningful NEET subgroup with a higher reported mean score. Italy includes many respondents combining study and work. The German sample is older and includes more participants balancing education and employment. Insecurity, workload and reduced access to stable support may intensify the sense that environmental problems are one additional uncontrollable pressure.

7.2 Comparison of Composite Burden

Sample	Very low	Low–moderate	Moderate	Elevated or above
Italy (n=71)	7%	41%	41%	11%
Serbia (n=73)	2.70%	28.80%	57.50%	11.00%
Germany (n=63)	7.90%	14.30%	44.40%	33.3% including 11.1% at 75+

Italy and Serbia have similar elevated shares, at 11%, but Serbia has a larger moderate group and a smaller low-moderate group. The German sample has the highest reported burden, with one third elevated or very elevated and nearly four fifths at least moderate. Note that the “very elevated” 75+ band is reported only for Germany; the other samples report on a 0–74 scale, so band-by-band comparison at the top of the distribution is approximate.

The common implication is more robust than the ranking: every country contains young people for whom climate concern is meaningful, and every country requires a differentiated response.

A universal workshop can build literacy and normalise emotions, but facilitators also need a pathway for participants with functional interference or severe hopelessness. The programme should not presume that a group has low burden based on country or language.

7.3 Emotional Reactions and Attachment to Place

Worry, grief and future insecurity recur in all three reports. Serbia provides the clearest complete percentages: 69.9% reported climate worry on at least a few days, 85% reported sadness or grief, and 52.1% reported fear for future stability or relocation. The German sample similarly reports 87.3% with some worry, 79.4% with grief and 66.7% with future-stability fear. Italy does not publish item distributions, but the national narrative identifies the same emotional cluster.

The connection to place is not incidental. Italian practitioners distinguish eco-anxiety from solastalgia and describe grief for places already changed. Serbian youth frequently think about homeland, environmental loss and movement, while interviewees provide concrete examples from migrant and refugee contexts. German respondents report distress concerning locations where family members live and repeated thought about countries or regions of origin. Across the partnership, “place” may mean current neighbourhood, rural home, family region, homeland, transit location or an ecosystem of symbolic importance.

This similarity supports a place-sensitive curriculum. However, national context shapes the form it may take. Italy’s report emphasises territorial diversity, rural practice and differing experiences between privileged urban concern and lived resource insecurity. Serbia gives particular weight to transit migration and climate-linked trauma. Germany highlights transnational family concern within diverse urban communities. These are contextual tendencies in the reports, not fixed cultural traits.

7.4 Rumination, Media Exposure and Information Literacy

Repetitive thinking is one of the strongest cross-country themes. In Serbia, 72.6% to 82.2% reported at least some experience across three rumination items. In the German sample, the corresponding range is 73.0% to 88.9%, with displacement-related thought the most frequent. Italian practitioners describe persistent future-oriented thought and paralysis, although item percentages are absent.

Youth workers in all countries connect distress to media exposure. Serbian practitioners describe hypervigilance alternating with avoidance. German interviewees mention doomscrolling and alarming online content. Italian practitioners refer to media-amplified catastrophism and differ in how extensively they use digital methods. These findings suggest that media literacy should not be restricted to identifying false information. It should also include information dosage, timing, emotional effects, algorithmic amplification, purposeful disengagement and choosing sources that combine accuracy with context.

Self-rated information competence is uneven. In Italy, 44% felt able to identify reliable information and 48% felt confident avoiding uncertain sharing. In Serbia, the corresponding figures were 52.1% and 80.8%. In Germany, they were 66.1% and 77.4%. The difference between source identification and non-sharing is important: a young person may know to pause before sharing but still feel uncertain about evaluating evidence. A short, repeatable verification process would be a useful supporting element where sessions touch on information use.

7.5 Functional Interference

Sleep, concentration and social life provide a practical way to distinguish concern from more disruptive burden. Serbia reports some sleep interference for 32.9%, concentration interference for 37.0% and social interference for 45.2%, with frequent interference in approximately one in ten.

The German sample reports higher levels: 47.6% sleep, 57.1% concentration and 63.5% social interference, with roughly one quarter experiencing frequent effects. Italy's youth percentages are unavailable, but practitioners observed sleep, appetite, withdrawal and emotional paralysis.

As a methodological lesson for future rounds, functional items should be reported with complete counts, and the scoring algorithm should be independently checked.

Across countries, functional interference should trigger a change in facilitation. A participant reporting occasional worry may benefit from general discussion and coping practice. Persistent sleep disruption, substantial concentration loss or withdrawal requires individual follow-up, safeguarding assessment and possible referral. WP3 should encode this distinction without presenting a diagnostic test.

7.6 Agency, Constraints and Responsibility

The surveys show a recurring tension between willingness to act and doubt about effectiveness. In Serbia, 64.4% worried about the environmental impact of decisions, 74.0% felt constrained by living conditions and 73.9% worried that personal action would not matter. The German sample reports 73.0%, 73.0% and 84.1% respectively. Italy's narrative identifies the same movement from strong responsibility to exhaustion or paralysis.

At the same time, knowledge of small realistic steps is a relative strength: 72% in Italy, 72.6% in Serbia and 74.2% in Germany agreed with this competence. The gap is therefore not simply a lack of action ideas. Young people may know possible actions while doubting that those actions matter or feeling unable to implement them under current conditions. WP3 should focus on collective efficacy, visible local outcomes, shared responsibility and structural literacy.

This approach also reduces inequity. A curriculum centred on buying sustainable products, changing household energy systems or choosing transport independently may exclude participants with limited income, insecure housing or restricted autonomy.

Action options should include mutual aid, community care, organisational change, dialogue, creative communication, participation in local decisions and support for existing initiatives.

7.7 Coping, Support and Peer Response

The largest cross-country competence gap concerns coping and support pathways. Only 15% of Italian respondents confidently knew two calming strategies, compared with 53.4% in Serbia and 61.9% in Germany. Italian confidence in balancing environmental care with wellbeing was also lower, at 31%, compared with 67.1% in Serbia and 76.2% in Germany.

Knowledge of where to obtain support was limited everywhere: 20% in Italy, 46.6% in Serbia and 57.1% in Germany. Confidence in asking for help was somewhat higher but still incomplete. This difference suggests that young people may accept the idea of help-seeking without knowing which person or service is appropriate. A support map should therefore be concrete, local and multilingual.

Peer-support confidence ranged from 39% in Italy to 65.8% in Serbia and 66.1% in Germany. The programme should build this skill while setting limits. Young people can listen, validate and connect a friend to help, but they should not be made responsible for managing severe distress.

7.8 Youth Worker Convergence

Practitioner evidence converges more strongly than the youth burden distributions. In all three countries, youth workers report worry, grief, helplessness, anger, avoidance, burnout and difficulty translating awareness into action. They already use relational and experiential methods: safe dialogue, emotional reflection, creative expression, outdoor activity, grounding and local environmental action.

They also identify similar gaps: dedicated methodology, ready-to-run sessions, inclusive materials, referral guidance, safeguarding, group-facilitation skills and professional support.

There are differences of emphasis. Italian practitioners give particular attention to solastalgia, territorial context, experiential learning and the need for intelligent, adaptable resources. Serbian practitioners stress trauma, transit migration, language-light practice and scarce referral infrastructure. German practitioners emphasise multilingual urban inclusion, digital media, doomscrolling and structured safeguarding. WP3 should preserve these national insights through adaptation notes rather than creating three unrelated curricula.

The repeated request for practical tools shows that the project should not over-invest in theoretical explanation. Youth workers need enough conceptual knowledge to understand the phenomenon and their limits, but the primary product should be usable facilitation architecture: preparation, opening, emotional check-in, activity, reflection, action, closing, follow-up and referral.

7.9 Possible Contextual Explanations

Several cautious explanations can be considered. First, recruitment composition is likely to account for part of the variation. The German sample is older and may include more internationally mobile or migrant-background participants. Serbia includes a visible NEET group and is concentrated among adolescents. Italy includes more young adults balancing work and study. These differences affect exposure, responsibilities and perceived control.

Second, environmental experience varies. Italy's interviews include wildfire, rural agriculture and territorial loss. Serbian interviews include drought, desertification, transit migration and conflict-linked displacement. German interviews include family ties to climate-vulnerable regions, urban inequality and cost-of-living pressures. Such contexts shape whether climate concern is anticipatory, biographical, economic or relational.

Third, institutional and mental-health contexts matter. Serbian practitioners report limited referral infrastructure in southern Serbia, which may leave youth workers carrying more responsibility. German organisations describe comparatively developed methods but still seek coherent pathways.

Italian respondents show particularly low confidence in coping and support, which may reflect dissemination gaps rather than absence of services.

Fourth, reporting and translation effects cannot be excluded. Different interpretations of frequency labels, language nuance or recruitment introductions may influence responses. These possibilities confirm the need for cognitive testing and common scoring procedures in later project phases.

8. MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE



The combined results establish eco-anxiety as a relevant youth-work issue rather than a niche topic confined to environmental activism. It appears in schools, youth centres, migrant-support organisations, humanitarian settings, community programmes, mental-health initiatives and international youth activities. This broad presence means that practitioners do not need to run a climate-specific project to encounter climate-related worry, grief or helplessness. EWR therefore addresses a cross-cutting competence need within youth work.

The evidence also clarifies that eco-anxiety is not one uniform experience. The survey captures a continuum from occasional concern to frequent emotional reactions and functional interference. It includes fear about future conditions, grief for places already changed, concern for family members, repetitive thoughts about displacement, guilt about personal behaviour, frustration with institutions and doubts about whether action can matter. This wider emotional ecology is important. A narrow focus on anxiety symptoms would miss anger, sadness, numbness, burnout and solastalgia, all of which require different facilitation responses.

A second major conclusion is that climate distress is relational and place-based. Family, homeland, region of origin and meaningful landscapes recur across the data. For young people with migration backgrounds, this can create a transnational form of concern: they may live in one country while worrying about environmental conditions, relatives or memories in another. Migration background does not automatically produce greater eco-anxiety, and the reports repeatedly warn against stereotyping. The significant factor is often biographical proximity to environmental harm combined with present insecurity, limited resources or unresolved trauma.

Third, the evidence reveals an awareness-coping gap. Many young people understand climate change, recognise that emotions are affected and know some possible actions. Yet confidence in calming strategies, balancing engagement with wellbeing, locating support and asking for help is inconsistent.

The educational need is therefore not simply “more climate facts.” In some groups, additional alarming information without emotional containment may worsen overload. WP3 should treat emotional skills and support navigation as core learning outcomes.

Fourth, the results challenge individualised models of responsibility. Large proportions of Serbian and German respondents report that their living circumstances constrain sustainable choices and that personal action may not make a difference. Italian interviews similarly distinguish between privileged, lifestyle-oriented environmental concern and distress grounded in resource insecurity or lived loss. Young people should not be told that anxiety is solved by making perfect consumer choices. A more credible response connects personal action with collective, organisational and political agency while acknowledging limits.

Fifth, functional interference provides an important safeguard. Worry alone is not necessarily harmful and may motivate learning or participation. Sleep disruption, concentration difficulties, withdrawal and loss of everyday functioning indicate that additional support may be needed. The project should not medicalise ordinary concern, but it must help youth workers recognise when a situation exceeds an educational response. This is especially important where distress overlaps with depression, trauma or hopelessness.

Sixth, the practitioner findings demonstrate that youth workers already possess valuable assets. Across countries, they use listening, validation, group dialogue, creative expression, nature-based methods, grounding and practical action.

WP3 can therefore be designed as capacity-building rather than correction. It should organise existing strengths into a coherent methodology, add eco-anxiety-specific knowledge, clarify limits and provide tested resources.

Seventh, the reports show that organisational readiness matters as much as individual skill. Referral pathways, safeguarding procedures, multilingual communication, supervision and peer support cannot be created by one facilitator during a session. Implementing organisations need to prepare contacts, assign responsibilities and support staff. An EWR workshop should therefore be accompanied by an implementation standard stating the minimum organisational conditions for safe delivery.

Finally, the results have methodological significance for the project. Harmonised tools do not automatically produce harmonised data. Denominator discrepancies and missing item distributions demonstrate the need for common data dictionaries, verified scoring syntax and mandatory reporting templates. Improving the evaluation system is not separate from WP3 quality; it is necessary to determine whether the programme works for different groups and whether any participants experience unintended harm.

8.1 Implications for the Target Groups

For young people, the findings support a programme that validates difficult emotions, increases practical self-regulation, strengthens information literacy and creates realistic forms of participation. The programme should communicate that climate concern can be understandable and ethically meaningful, while also making clear that no participant is required to carry the crisis alone. Rest, joy, relationships and ordinary life are compatible with environmental commitment.

For young people with migration backgrounds, the programme must offer choice over how personal the discussion becomes. It should recognise family-place concern and environmental loss without treating migration as trauma by definition. Multilingual, visual and low-literacy options should be normal components rather than special adaptations added later.

For young people with migration backgrounds, the programme must offer choice over how personal the discussion becomes. It should recognise family-place concern and environmental loss without treating migration as trauma by definition.

Multilingual, visual and low-literacy options should be normal components rather than special adaptations added later.

For youth workers, the results justify practical training in facilitation, safeguarding, referral and self-care. Training should include rehearsal of difficult moments: a participant becomes overwhelmed; a group member dismisses climate concern; an activist expresses guilt about resting; a young person reveals serious sleep disruption; or a migration-related exercise evokes painful memories. Competence should be assessed through reflection and scenarios, not self-rating alone.

For organisations, the findings imply responsibility for preparation. Before delivering EWR activities, an organisation should verify local mental-health and safeguarding contacts, establish a response protocol, ensure that facilitators can debrief, and decide how to communicate with participants about confidentiality. Without these systems, even a well-designed activity may leave youth workers unsupported.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WP3



WP3 should translate the needs assessment into a modular educational programme and resource package for youth workers. The recommendations below are designed as implementation requirements rather than general aspirations. Each recommendation specifies the need it addresses, the proposed product or practice and the way it can be tested.



Adopt a modular, non-linear curriculum

WP3 should not assume that every group needs the same sequence or intensity. Develop a core programme with stand-alone modules that can be combined according to age, setting, language, burden and facilitator competence. A recommended core sequence is: understanding climate emotions; recognising personal signals; grounding and regulation; peer support and help-seeking; grief and connection to place; realistic agency; and safe closure.

Each module should contain learning outcomes, preparation requirements, contraindications or cautions, a 60–90 minute session plan, shorter alternatives, materials, adaptation notes and debrief questions. Facilitators should be able to deliver a single introductory workshop or a longer pathway without losing the project's conceptual coherence.

Pilot the modules in at least one school or student group, one community youth setting, one migrant-support or multilingual setting and one environmentally active group. Record which modules were selected and why, so that evaluation can distinguish curriculum effects from local adaptation.



Build every session around emotional safety

Every workshop plan should use a consistent safety architecture: voluntary participation, a right to pass, a non-disclosure option, group agreements, a brief emotional check-in, an accessible grounding method, time for debriefing and a calm closing. Activities should not end immediately after catastrophic information, personal testimony or intense action planning.

Facilitator notes should identify activities that may evoke grief, displacement or trauma. Personal migration stories must never be requested as proof of relevance. Hypothetical cases, images, drawing and third-person reflection should be available for participants who prefer distance. The programme should also explain that a safe space cannot guarantee the absence of difficult emotion; the goal is to reduce avoidable harm and respond responsibly when emotion arises.

Piloting should include a brief emotional-safety measure: whether participants felt able to choose their level of participation, whether the session ended in a settled state and whether they knew where to seek support afterward.



Create a practical regulation skills unit

The Italian youth results show a particularly large gap in knowing calming strategies, and all three countries report sleep, concentration or emotional-overload concerns. WP3 should therefore teach regulation experientially. Include at least four language-light methods: paced breathing, sensory grounding, orienting to the room, and a brief muscle-release or movement exercise. Add options based on drawing, rhythm or contact with nature for participants who do not find breathing exercises comfortable.

The facilitator guide should explain choice and consent. Some trauma-exposed participants may dislike closing their eyes, focusing on breathing or being still. Instructions should always offer alternatives and avoid implying that one technique works for everyone. Participants should leave with a personal “two methods I can try” card rather than a long undifferentiated list.

Evaluate whether participants can demonstrate or describe two methods after the session and whether they perceive those methods as safe, realistic and culturally acceptable.



Develop a clear emotion-to-agency pathway

Across countries, young people know many possible actions but often doubt that personal action matters or report that living conditions limit sustainable choices. WP3 should use a structured pathway: name the emotion; identify the need or value behind it; map what is controllable, influenceable and outside immediate control; select one realistic individual or collective action; identify allies; define a visible short-term result; and schedule reflection.

Action should never be prescribed as the price of emotional legitimacy. A participant may choose rest, learning, peer conversation, creative expression, community participation or advocacy. Consumer behaviour should be only one category. Activities should explicitly recognise financial, housing, transport, disability, legal and family constraints.

Provide action-planning templates for individual, group, organisational and community levels. Include examples showing how small actions connect to collective processes without falsely claiming that they solve the climate crisis.



Provide peer-support scripts and help-seeking practice

Young people show uneven confidence in supporting friends and locating help. Create a simple peer-support sequence: listen without interruption; validate the feeling; ask what kind of support is wanted; avoid minimising, debating or increasing alarm; encourage connection with a trusted adult or professional when functioning or safety is affected; and seek urgent help when there is immediate risk.

Include short role-plays using varied scenarios and clear opt-out options. Scenarios should cover occasional worry, activism burnout, family-place distress, persistent sleep problems and expressions of hopelessness. Debrief what helped and what exceeded a peer's role.

Every participant-facing resource should state that peers are not therapists and are not responsible for fixing another person. The local implementation pack must identify trusted adults, organisational contacts and professional services in the relevant language.



Add a referral, safeguarding and professional-limits package

Develop a concise traffic-light guide. Green indicators may include proportionate concern with preserved daily functioning. Amber indicators may include persistent sleep or concentration problems, withdrawal, escalating hopelessness or inability to manage ordinary tasks. Red indicators include immediate safety concerns, self-harm statements, severe impairment or acute crisis. The guide must state that it supports decisions about conversation and referral, not diagnosis.

Provide a pre-delivery referral-mapping template covering emergency services, youth counselling, mental-health support, migrant and refugee services, school contacts and language-access options. Because services change, the toolkit should not rely solely on a central fixed list.

Each organisation should verify contacts and assign a safeguarding lead before implementation. Training should include scenario-based decisions and documentation principles. National partners must review the guidance against local law, safeguarding standards and organisational policy.



Design multilingual, visual and low-literacy adaptations from the start

Accessibility should be built into the core design. Produce plain-language versions, visual emotion cards, illustrated instructions, minimal-text activity sheets and facilitator prompts that can be translated without redesigning the entire resource. Avoid idioms, culturally specific metaphors and abstract psychological terminology where a concrete phrase is available.

Use flexible place language: “the place where you live, your family’s place, your region of origin or another place important to you.” This accommodates transnational identities without requiring participants to identify as migrants. Offer activities that can be completed through drawing, positioning, objects, movement or short phrases.

Translation should include review by youth workers and young people who use the language in practice, not only literal translation. Cognitive testing should check whether key terms such as eco-anxiety, grief, overwhelm, support and agency carry the intended meaning.



Include a dedicated migration, displacement and place-loss facilitator note

The Serbian and Italian interviews and the German youth results show that environmental distress may be linked to family places, homeland, displacement and lived loss. WP3 needs a concise specialist note explaining anticipatory anxiety, solastalgia, climate-related grief and possible overlap with trauma. The note should emphasise that youth workers do not determine whether an experience is clinically traumatic.

Provide guidance on mixed groups, where participants may relate to environmental change from very different positions. Facilitators should prevent comparisons of whose concern is more legitimate, avoid asking migrant participants to educate the group, and intervene when discussion becomes stereotyping or political invalidation.

Recommended activities should use indirect options and allow participants to focus on sources of connection, continuity and resilience as well as loss. This prevents the programme from reducing migration-background youth to vulnerability.



Address activism burnout and facilitator wellbeing

Create a module on sustainable engagement for young activists and a parallel self-care section for youth workers. Topics should include over-responsibility, guilt about rest, boundaries, role rotation, realistic expectations, grief, peer support and recognising exhaustion. The message should be that sustained participation requires recovery and shared responsibility.

For facilitators, provide a short pre-session readiness check, a post-session debrief form and guidance on peer consultation or supervision. Organisations should avoid assigning repeated emotionally intense sessions to one worker without support. The toolkit should recommend debriefing after disclosures or high-distress groups.

Evaluation should ask youth workers whether they felt prepared, supported and able to remain within professional limits, not only whether they completed the activity plan.



Supply ready-to-run resources with adaptation logic

The most consistent practitioner request is for practical session plans. Produce a facilitator handbook containing at least eight full workshops and a bank of short activities. Each workshop should specify group size, age range, duration, materials, accessibility, preparation, step-by-step instructions, facilitator language, likely challenges, safe alternatives, reflection questions, closing and follow-up.

“Ready-to-run” must not mean rigid. Add an adaptation matrix showing how to modify language, disclosure level, physical movement, reading load, digital use and action intensity. Include worked case studies from Italy, Serbia and Germany that illustrate rural, urban, school, migrant-support, activist and international youth settings without reproducing identifiable personal stories.

Provide editable formats so partners can translate, simplify and insert local contacts while preserving version control.



Establish a harmonised monitoring and evaluation system

Use one data dictionary across countries and languages. Define every variable, response code, missing-value rule, score direction, score range and category threshold. Build a single verified scoring file and test it with synthetic cases before field use. The national reports’ denominator discrepancies demonstrate that this is essential.

Require a common reporting template containing: invited participants where known; completed and partial responses; denominator for every table; age, status, language and recruitment setting; item counts and percentages; composite score checks; missing data; usability; and any adverse or safeguarding incidents. Automated validation should flag totals that do not match the denominator or percentages that fall outside plausible ranges.



9.1 Proposed Minimum WP3 Product Set

FACILITATOR HANDBOOK

Core framework, professional limits, eight complete workshops, adaptation notes, difficult-situation guidance and safe closing procedures.

ACTIVITY BANK

Short emotional check-ins, grounding, creative, nature-based, peer-support and action-planning activities.

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

Plain-language concepts, reflection pages, two-strategy coping card, action map and help-seeking page.

SAFEGUARDING AND REFERRAL PACK

Traffic-light guidance, local referral template, crisis protocol prompts and confidentiality explanation.



INCLUSION PACK

Easy-language text, visual cards, minimal-text versions, translation glossary and migration/place-loss guidance.

TRAINER PACKAGE

Slides, demonstration scripts, scenario practice, observation rubric, debrief and facilitator self-care.

EVALUATION PACKAGE

Common codebook, verified scoring tool, pre/post forms, safety and usability items, reporting template.

The minimum product set should be treated as an integrated system. A workshop manual without referral preparation is incomplete; a self-assessment without a closing and support pathway may be unsafe; and a multilingual translation without visual and conceptual testing may be inaccessible. WP3 quality should therefore be assessed at programme, facilitator and organisational levels.

CHAPTER 4

Limitations

Conclusion

Annex



10. LIMITATIONS



The findings provide a strong design direction for EWR, but they should not be interpreted as national prevalence estimates. The samples were recruited through partner networks and online distribution rather than probability sampling. Young people connected to youth organisations, education or project activities may differ from those who were not reached. Participation may also have attracted people with particular interest in climate change or wellbeing.

Sample composition differs across countries and within Germany. Italy includes a relatively broad young-adult profile, Serbia is concentrated among 16–19-year-olds and includes a meaningful NEET subgroup, and the German sample is older. Migration background, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, urban/rural setting and previous climate exposure are not reported consistently enough for robust subgroup comparison. Consequently, apparent country differences may be compositional.

The reports contain denominator inconsistencies. Serbia's cover lists 70 youth and 33 youth workers, while detailed sections use 73 and 34. Italy's cover page also describes the youth worker sample as aged from 30 to over 55, while its detailed demographic table reports that 37% were aged 18–29. These discrepancies do not invalidate all findings, but they reduce confidence in aggregate totals and require verification against raw data.

Reporting completeness is uneven. Serbia provides the most complete youth item-level distributions. Italy does not publish complete four-category distributions for the thirteen symptom questions and summarises the practitioner domains narratively. Germany provides detailed symptom data but omits several categories from some symptom items. This prevents a fully symmetrical question-by-question comparison.

Rounding and category aggregation introduce additional uncertainty. Several percentages do not total exactly 100%, and some reports combine "agree" categories or "frequent" response categories without always reproducing all original options.

In this final report, the figures are retained as published rather than recalculated from unavailable raw records. Small differences should therefore not be over-interpreted.

The composite scoring would benefit from validation against the raw datasets. The German report includes a “75+” category beyond the 60–74 elevated band used elsewhere, indicating that score ranges may not have been applied fully consistently across countries.

Self-assessment data are subject to recall, interpretation and social-desirability effects. Terms such as “most days,” “overwhelmed,” “home region” and “support” may be understood differently across ages and languages. A high self-rated competency score does not demonstrate performance under pressure. Conversely, uncertainty on a competence item does not prove absence of skill. Scenario-based assessment would provide stronger evidence.

The interview strand is deliberately qualitative and based on ten practitioners per country. It provides depth, examples and implementation insight but cannot establish frequency. Practitioners may be more likely to remember intense cases, and their observations are filtered through professional role and organisational context. Examples involving migration or trauma should therefore be treated as illustrative, not representative of all young people with similar backgrounds.

The project’s focus on eco-anxiety also creates an attribution challenge. Sleep problems, concentration difficulty, withdrawal and hopelessness can arise from many causes. The self-assessment identifies associations reported by participants, not clinical diagnoses or proof that climate concern caused the difficulty. Youth workers should not use the findings to label young people.

Cultural explanations remain tentative. The report discusses contextual factors visible in the national evidence, such as rural environmental loss, transit migration, urban inequality, family ties and language.



It does not claim that Italians, Serbians or Germans possess fixed cultural patterns of anxiety. More representative and demographically harmonised research would be required for such claims.

Finally, the survey captures a period rather than a stable trait. Climate events, media attention, political debate and personal circumstances can change responses. Data collection periods also differ slightly, extending to July for the German youth form. Future evaluation should record major contextual events and, where feasible, use repeated measurement.

10.1 Mitigation Measures for WP3 Evaluation

- Verify all raw response counts and remove or clearly classify partial records before scoring.
- Use a shared codebook, translation glossary and automated range and denominator checks.
- Report complete item distributions with a denominator for every question.
- Collect a minimum common demographic set while respecting privacy and sample size.
- Analyse recruitment streams separately before any national aggregation.
- Use scenario-based practitioner assessment alongside self-rating.
- Record emotional-safety feedback and any safeguarding follow-up during pilots.
- Treat composite scores as one indicator and interpret them alongside functioning, qualitative feedback and context.

11. CONCLUSION



The WP2 evidence from Italy, Serbia and Germany confirms that climate-related emotional distress is relevant to young people across different national, linguistic and organisational contexts. It is not uniformly severe and should not be medicalised by default. Nevertheless, substantial groups report worry, grief, repetitive thought, constrained agency and, in some samples, interference with sleep, concentration and social life. The recurring connection to family places, homeland, environmental loss and displacement broadens the issue beyond anxiety about a distant future.

The strongest transnational pattern is the gap between concern and supported agency. Many young people understand environmental problems and can name possible actions, but they are less consistently equipped to regulate distress, protect themselves from information overload, locate support or believe that action can matter under real-life constraints. This gap is educationally actionable. It can be addressed without denying the seriousness of climate change and without placing the burden of solution on individual behaviour.

Youth workers are already responding with empathy, creativity, nature-based activity, dialogue and practical action. Their request is for structure: a shared eco-anxiety framework, adaptable session plans, trauma-informed and multilingual materials, referral guidance, safeguarding tools and support for their own wellbeing. The convergence of these needs across all three countries provides a clear mandate for WP3.

The recommended WP3 response is a modular programme that integrates emotional literacy, regulation, peer support, place-based grief, collective agency and professional limits. It should be designed for variation rather than for an imagined average participant. A secondary-school group in Serbia, an English-speaking young-adult group in Germany and a mixed community group in Italy may use different modules, examples and levels of disclosure while still working from the same core principles.

The project should also treat data quality as part of programme quality. The national reports provide rich evidence, but denominator inconsistencies and missing distributions limit cross-country precision. WP3 piloting offers an opportunity to introduce a verified scoring system, common reporting template and evaluation approach that measures safety, coping, support knowledge and agency in addition to conceptual learning.

Taken together, the findings support an approach that neither minimises climate concern nor amplifies it. Young people need spaces where distress can be named without shame, grief can be acknowledged without forced optimism, information can be approached critically, and action can be shared rather than carried alone. EWR can make a practical contribution by giving youth workers the methods and organisational support to create those spaces consistently and inclusively.

11.1 Final Priorities

Emotional safety: Choice, right to pass, grounding, safe closure and safeguarding.

Coping gap: Practised regulation methods and personal coping plan.

Support gap: Peer-support scripts, local referral mapping and professional limits.

Place and migration: Trauma-informed, non-stereotyping and multilingual adaptation.

Low efficacy: Collective action mapping and acknowledgement of structural constraints.

Youth worker capacity: Ready-to-run sessions, scenario practice, debrief and supervision.

Evidence quality: Common codebook, verified scoring and complete reporting.

ANNEX

Assessment Tools

Assessment Tool for Young People (EN): <https://tally.so/r/vG2BM0>

Assessment Tool for Youth Workers (EN): <https://tally.so/r/lbRYXk>

Assessment Tool for Young People (IT): <https://tally.so/r/jaLP29>

Assessment Tool for Young People (SR): <https://tally.so/r/2ErGEA>

Assessment Tool for Youth Workers (SR): <https://tally.so/r/yPD5o4>

Assessment Tool for Young People (DE): <https://tally.so/r/VL8DyE>

Assessment Tool for Youth Workers (DE): <https://tally.so/r/yPDkYp>

Project Website

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