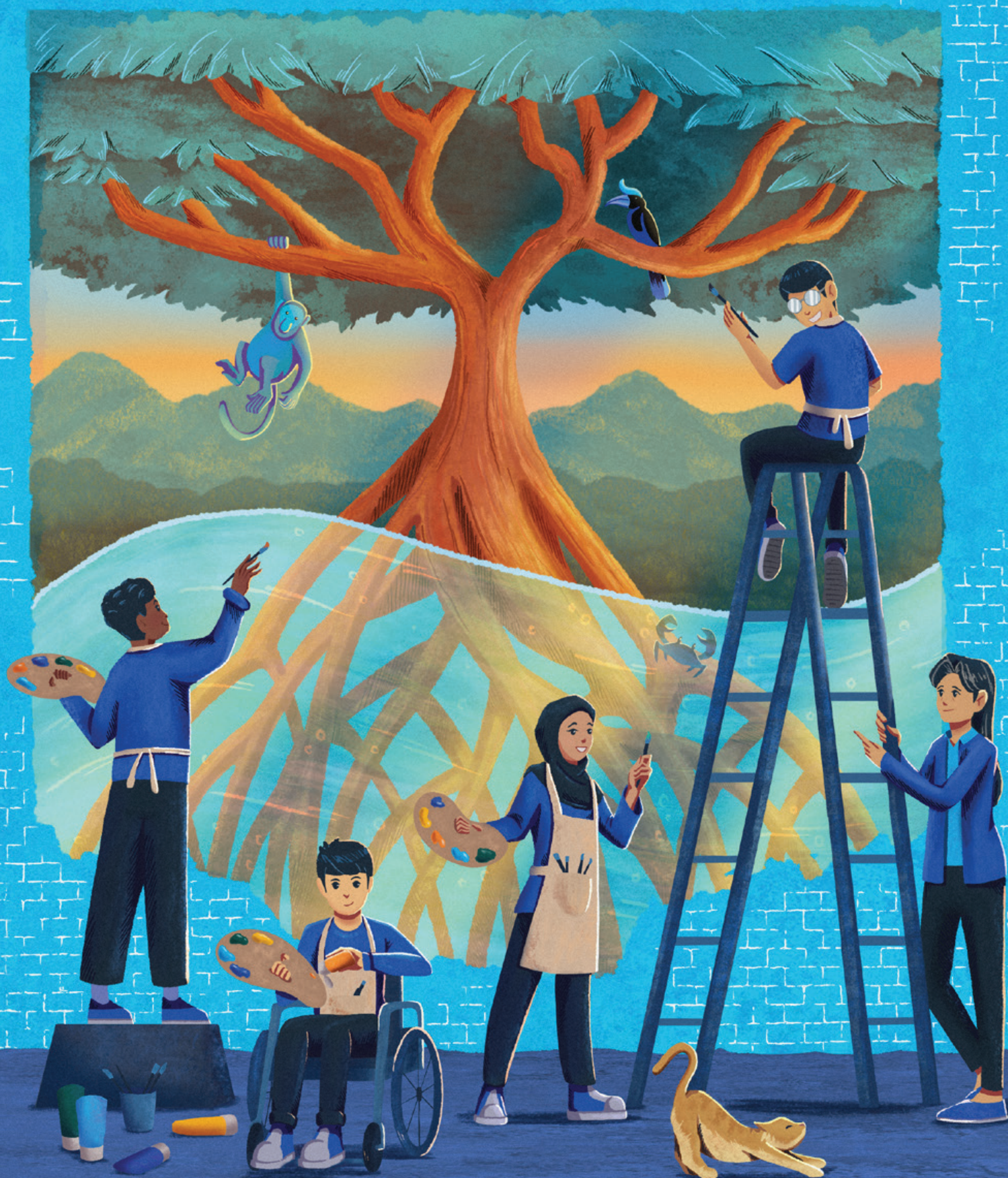


Nurture the Youth, Create the Change

Findings from the National Youth
Climate Change Survey 2025

unicef 
for every child



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for every child



Foreword



The climate crisis is a child's rights crisis. Every day, it is reshaping the lives and futures of children and young people, who bear the greatest burden of a crisis they did least to cause.

The National Youth Climate Change Survey 2025 makes it unmistakably clear that climate change is no longer just a future concern for young people in Malaysia. It is already shaping their daily lives. More than eight in ten respondents report experiencing a climate- or environment-related disaster in the past year, while over nine in ten expressed concerns about the world they will inherit.

The inaugural 2020 survey provided a national picture of how youth in Malaysia understand and experience the climate crisis. Building on this, the 2025 survey deepens the focus on youth experiences with climate shocks, their professional aspirations and their priorities for climate action.

The findings from both surveys make it clear young people are not only experiencing the climate crisis; they are ready to help address it. Far from being bystanders, they are informed and determined to help shape a more resilient Malaysia. Their perspectives and lived experiences are essential to building climate policies that are effective, inclusive, equitable and grounded in children's rights.

At UNICEF, our responsibility is to ensure that these voices meaningfully influence Malaysia's climate policies. The National Adaptation Plan and the next generation of the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) must create meaningful opportunities for young people to help shape Malaysia's transition towards climate resilience.

As Malaysia strengthens its ability to withstand and adapt to climate change, it is vital that national plans and policies uphold and protect children's rights. This includes ensuring that the essential services children rely on such as health, education and safe community environments are prepared for a changing climate, and that children have meaningful opportunities to participate in decisions that shape their futures.

I welcome the Government of Malaysia's efforts to place youth perspectives at the centre of national climate action.

UNICEF stands ready to continue supporting these efforts, ensuring that every child is protected, every voice is heard and every young person has the opportunity to shape a safer, healthier and more resilient future for Malaysia.

Robert Gass

UNICEF Malaysia Representative to Malaysia and
Special Representative to Brunei Darussalam.

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Mendengar dan Bertutur
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Cikgu Rizal menunjukkan paparan video tentang lima kumpulan. Setiap kumpulan melakonkan simulasi berdasarkan paparan tersebut.

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Aktiviti 2
Had Laju di Jalan Raya

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Aktiviti 3
Perskitan Jalan Raya

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SK FAKEH ABD. SAMAD
KUANTAN

Fakih Abd Samad

Executive Summary

The National Youth Climate Change (NYCC) Survey 2025, conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Malaysia and supported by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES) engaged **1,420 respondents nationwide** through UNICEF's U-Report platform. The findings reveal **a generation that is not only highly aware of climate risks but a generation already experiencing their effects firsthand.**

The 'Nurture the Youth, Create the Change' report builds on the first 2020 report, 'Change for Climate', which examined youth awareness and perception of climate change. Over the five-year period from 2020 to 2025, the survey recorded a **four-point increase in the share of young people who view climate change as a crisis**, and an 11-percentage rise in overall climate change knowledge¹.

A near unanimous **94.6% of respondents believe climate action should be a national priority.** This mandate is shaped by lived realities: **83.2% respondents experienced at least one disaster from 2024 to 2025**, and 44.0% experienced two or more. These exposures, which range from floods, haze, heatwaves, to drought, are strongly linked to disruptions in learning, access to essential services, and physical and emotional wellbeing.

Climate and environmental impacts also vary sharply across states. Youth along the East Coast report flood exposure well above national levels. In Perlis, more than half experienced life-threatening heat, while urban centres such as Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, and Negeri Sembilan face the highest air-pollution exposure. These geographic differences accentuate the need for **localised, risk-informed adaptation that reflect the hazards children face where they live.** Health challenges are widespread: 25.9%

reported worsening existing illnesses, 19.7% skin conditions, 18.0% heat-related illness, and 14.3% respiratory issues. 56.5% also experience service disruptions during disasters, affecting information access, learning continuity, and safe spaces. Emotional impacts are significant, with **nearly ten of ten (97.4%) reporting fear, grief, hopelessness, stress, or tiredness** during climate events.

Young people are eager to contribute to solutions and participate in climate action. **83.1% of respondents said they would consider working in Malaysia's green industry driven by a desire to make a difference and by genuine personal interest.** Beyond green careers, the youth also emphasised the importance of raising public awareness and engaging in advocacy with 70.3% identifying these as the most effective avenues for youth participation in climate action.

In response to these findings, UNICEF Malaysia recommend the following priority areas for intervention:

1. **Protect:** Strengthen health, wellbeing and safety systems to protect children and young people from climate-related risks and impacts.
2. **Support:** Ensure essential services, including education, social protection and emergency support, remain accessible during climate disruptions.
3. **Include:** Give children and young people a meaningful voice in climate planning and decision-making.

Together, these actions can strengthen Malaysia's climate resilience and ensure that every child is protected and able to thrive amidst a changing climate.

¹ The 2020 and 2025 findings are based on different sets of respondents; therefore, the comparisons reflect population-level trends rather than changes within the single cohort.

Almost all youth surveyed

think that climate change is a crisis. There is high correlation between knowledge on climate change and levels of concern.

More than 8 in 10 respondents

say they've faced one or more disasters from 2024 to 2025. The most common were air pollution, flooding, and drought.

AT A GLANCE

Almost 95% of youth surveyed

are worried about how climate change could affect their future, driven largely by uncertainty about what's ahead and the fear of losing natural ecosystems.

Over half

of those who experienced a disaster between 2024 and 2025 did not have access to at least one essential social service, particularly information on how to prepare for and recover from a disaster.

Nearly 10 in 10 youth

believe policymakers should prioritise climate action.

4 in 5 youth

are interested to work in the green industry. There are concerns about limited job opportunities, lack of education and skills development.

According to respondents, the top priority policies are:



Waste Management: better recycling and waste disposal systems



Disaster Risk Resilience: resilient infrastructure, early warning systems and disaster risk education



Sustainable Cities: improved public transport systems and more urban green spaces



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Introduction

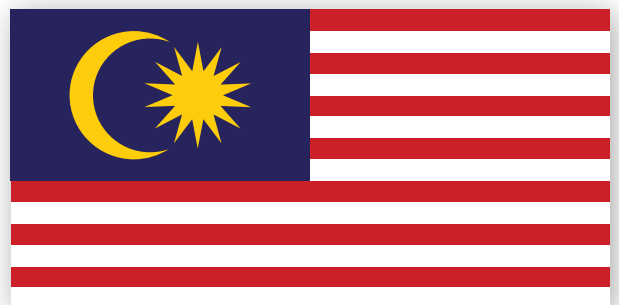
The climate crisis remains one of the most pressing global challenges, and its impacts are increasingly evident across Malaysia. **The youth, who make up over 25.0% of the country's population², are among the most exposed to climate-related risks yet their voices are often overlooked.** Recognising this gap, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and EcoKnights conducted the first National Youth Climate Change Survey (NYCC) in 2020. The findings, published in the Change for Climate report, revealed that youth in Malaysia overwhelmingly view climate change as a serious threat with 92.0% identifying it as a crisis and nine in ten reporting personal exposure to environmental and climate-related effects.

Five years later, the second edition of the National Youth Climate Change Survey 2025 builds on this momentum. Between June to October 2025, UNICEF carried out the survey with support from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES) gathering responses from 1,420 respondents³ across Malaysia between the ages of 15 to 30 years old through the U-Report chatbot platform. This survey sought **deeper insights into youth experiences with disasters, their health concerns, professional aspirations in a climate-affected economy**



Definition of 'youth'

At UNICEF, we use the term 'youth' for those aged 15 to 24 years. Following Malaysia's definition of youth up to 30 years old, UNICEF Malaysia interchangeably uses this range. Sometimes, we use the term 'young people', which includes both adolescents (aged 10 to 19 years) and youth.



Survey responded by 1,420 individuals across Malaysia between the age of 15-30 years old

and their advocacy priorities. The expanded focus reflects Malaysia's evolving climate landscape and the increasing recognition that climate change intersects not only with environmental issues but also with health, wellbeing and economic opportunities for young people.

The second survey comes at a pivotal moment as Malaysia strengthens its climate governance and expands youth participation. Recent joint initiatives between NRES and UNICEF, such as the drafting of the '**Langkawi Declaration: ASEAN Children and Youth Statement on Climate Action**' at the 'ASEAN Children and Youth Climate Summit 2025' and the 'Nationally Determined Contribution 3.0 Consultations with Children and Young People', reflect growing momentum for youth leadership, highlighting the role of meaningful youth engagement in achieving a climate resilient future.

The sections of the report are designed to collectively build comprehensive evidence on how the youth are experiencing and responding to climate change by moving from internal perspectives to lived realities and outward action. **Perception** establishes whether the youth recognise climate change as a crisis, **Feelings** capture the emotional and psychological dimensions and **Understanding** assesses the level of the youth's climate literacy. These internal dimensions are anchored by **Personal Experiences** that provide evidence of exposure to disasters, service disruptions and health impacts. Building on this, **Policy Priorities** reflect how these experiences translate into expectations for government action while **Youth Participation** highlights the ways in which the youth are responding. Together, these sections form progression from awareness to impact to action, demonstrating that the youth are informed, affected and

actively engaged stakeholders in the climate crisis.

At its core, the NYCC 2025 survey aims to strengthen evidence on how the youth are experiencing and responding to climate change and how they envision their role in shaping solutions. The data gathered seeks to inform more inclusive climate plans, policies and programmes. **Ultimately, this report aspires to advance national dialogue on climate change by placing youth priorities at the forefront of decision-making, contributing to a more resilient Malaysia and a climate movement grounded in youth agency and leadership.**



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² Based on the Department of Statistics Malaysia's mid-year population estimates of Malaysia from ages 15 to 30 years old (2025).

³ Refer to Annex 1 for Methodology and Respondent's Profile

1 Perception of Climate Change

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An overwhelming **96.6% of youth surveyed consider climate change to be a crisis or major problem**. This marks an increase of nearly five percentage points compared with the first survey in 2020, suggesting that the language of “crisis” has become more accustomed in how the youth interpret environmental change and its consequences. The percentage of respondents who do not consider climate change as an issue is very small with only marginal shares describing climate change as a “small issue”, “not worrying” or “non-existent”.

Perceptions are not uniform across demographic lines, but differences are small. By age, **adolescents report the highest perception of crisis: 97.5% of those aged 15–18 characterise climate change as a crisis**, compared with 96.5% among 19–24-year-olds and 96.3% among those aged 25–30. Gender patterns tell a similar story of high significance with slight variation. **Women are somewhat more likely to perceive climate change as a crisis (97.4%) than men (95.5%)**.

Perceptions of climate change as a crisis were also strong among Indigenous and Persons with Disabilities (PWD) groups. 95.3% of Indigenous respondents viewed climate change as a crisis or serious problem. **This was even stronger among PWD respondents, 98.9% of whom saw climate change as a crisis—the highest level across all demographic groups.**

96% of youth consider climate change is a **crisis**.



“

“I genuinely believe that the climate crisis is on a path to destroy our livelihoods. The evidence is present in the state of our food security, worsening climate disasters like flood, increasing regional temperatures, destruction of wildlife and marine habitats, our health and many other undeniable impacts,”

– Female, 21 years old, Melaka.

”

The rise in crisis perception since 2020 reflects a consolidation of views as well as a clear consensus that **most youth in Malaysia see climate change as a serious and urgent threat**. The latest results show that concern among the youth has both broadened and deepened since the first survey. This shift appears linked to lived experiences of disasters, which were examined in this round.

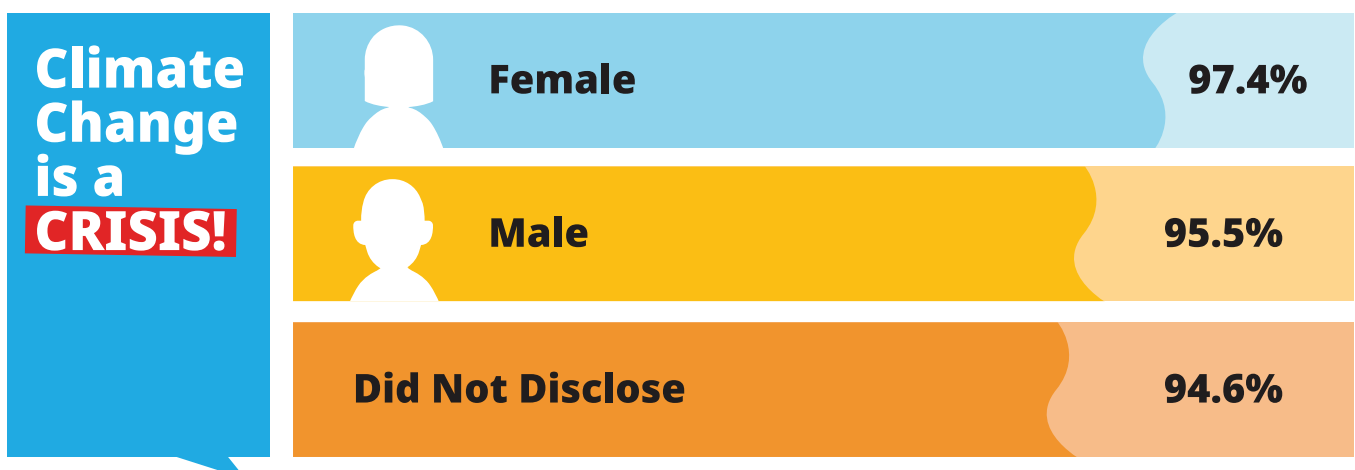
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“It’s frustrating and concerning how climate change disrupts daily life. Constant heavy rain and floods make me late for school, the journey feels unsafe and stressful. It’s a direct threat to my education and safety,”

– Female, 19 years old, Pulau Pinang.

”

Responses to “Do you think that climate change is a crisis or a serious problem?” by gender.





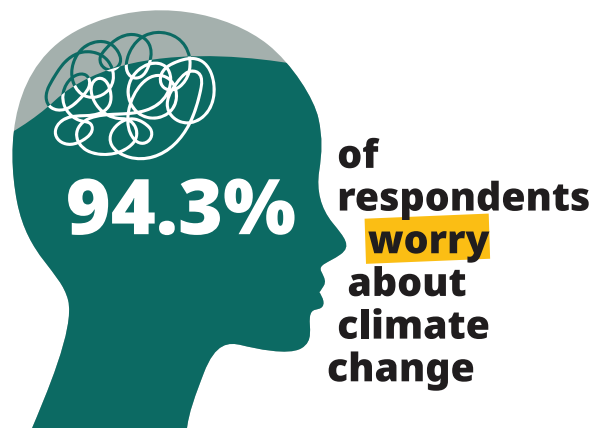
2 Feelings towards Climate Change

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A total of 94.3% of respondents reported that climate change worries them, indicating a near-universal concern about the long-term impacts of climate change on their lives and futures.

Gender differences in climate concern were minor but consistent. Women reported higher levels of worry (95.5%) compared to men (92.0%), reflecting the broader pattern observed in the survey where women tend to express greater sensitivity to long-term risks. Age patterns reveal that concern is strongest among adolescents with young people aged 15 to 18 years old being the most worried (97.3%). This corresponds with the shared high perception that climate change is a crisis within this age group.

These demographic trends are further highlighted when viewed alongside perceptions of severity. Among respondents who believe climate change is a crisis, 95.0% said that its long-term impacts worry them. By contrast, concern drops to 67.7% among those who consider climate change a “small issue”. These variations reinforce similar observations where **those who recognise climate change as an urgent threat are more likely to anticipate long-term disruptions to their lives.**



“

“The effects were quite severe on my mental and physical health because my school required us to wear full uniforms during hot weather. My learning became unfocused and I felt very tired even though I wasn’t doing anything,”

– Female, 18 years old, Selangor.

”

When asked what aspects of climate change worry them most, youths highlighted a range of concerns that span environmental, social, and psychological domains. **The most prominent fear was a deep sense of uncertainty about the future, which was reported at 78.2%.**

These patterns remain consistent across gender and age groups. Women were more likely than men to report being highly concerned about uncertain futures (82.9% vs. 70.3%). Younger respondents (15 to 18 years old) showed strong concern in this area (76.8%), too. This encompassed worries about worsening environmental disasters, pollution and perceived governance ineffectiveness in responding to climate impacts. This was followed by fear of losing biodiversity and natural landscapes (63.1%), concerns about wellbeing of family and community (54.9%),

worries about the possibility of lacking clean water or food in the future (52.5%) and unease linked to the pressure to take action (39.0%).

The data shows that youth in Malaysia are widely concerned about the long-term impacts of climate change with **nearly all demographics expressing high levels of worry over environmental degradation and risks to essential needs.** Their fears also signal that despite the many policies and plans already in place, meaningful action to address their concerns still falls short. Taken together, these findings underscore an urgent need for **visible, credible and impactful** climate action that responds directly to the youth's expectations, bridges the gaps they experience and demonstrates that Malaysia's commitments to the environment translate into real protection for the future of the youth.

“

I was a flood victim, and I experienced perceptual distortion where I saw floodwaters in front of me even though there was no water. This lasted for a week after the water receded, and it was uncomfortable for me,”

– Female, 22 years old, Kelantan.

”

78.2%
Feeling unsure
of the future

63.1%
Fear of losing biodiversity
or natural landscapes

54.9%
The potential impact
on their community
and loved ones

52.5%
No clean water
or food

39%
Pressure to
take action or
make a
difference

Share of responses to “If yes, what about climate change makes you feel **worried or scared the most?”**



3 Understanding of Climate Change

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Youth understanding of climate change has significantly strengthened as compared to the first NYCC survey. **83.1% of respondents report knowing what climate change is⁴**, reflecting a marked increase from 2020, when 72.1% described their understanding as either “very good” or “fairly good”. While awareness alone does not guarantee deep comprehension, the data indicates that a growing majority of youth now approach climate change with at least a foundational understanding of the issue.

A small percentage of youths surveyed continues to express uncertainty. In 2020, nearly one quarter of respondents (24.6%) reported having “not too good” of an understanding of climate change and 3.4% said plainly that they did not understand climate change at all. By 2025, the percentages dropped to 16.4% and 0.5% respectively. These are clear improvements yet still indicative of a knowledge gap.

Age-related patterns in understanding reinforces the importance of educational exposure. **Youth aged 15 to 18 report the highest levels of understanding at 85.4%**, followed by 83% among those aged 19 to 24 and 82% among those aged 25 to 30.

“

“Teach the kids! Bring them to the beaches and to the forest. Tell them about the importance. Early education is the best way to instil values in them as they are the future leaders who will change the mindset of their parents first,”

– Female, 28 years old, Selangor

”

Understanding of climate change was generally high across both Indigenous and PWD respondents. Among Indigenous respondents, 78.8% reported knowing what climate change is⁵. Among respondents with disabilities, understanding was slightly higher at 84.1%.

The 2025 survey depicts a youth population that is increasingly informed about climate change yet still marked by pockets of uncertainty tied to educational exposure and generational experience. **This highlights the need for strengthening climate literacy through early education, targeted outreach and more accessible public communication to ensure that the youth possess the knowledge required to navigate and respond to new climate realities.**

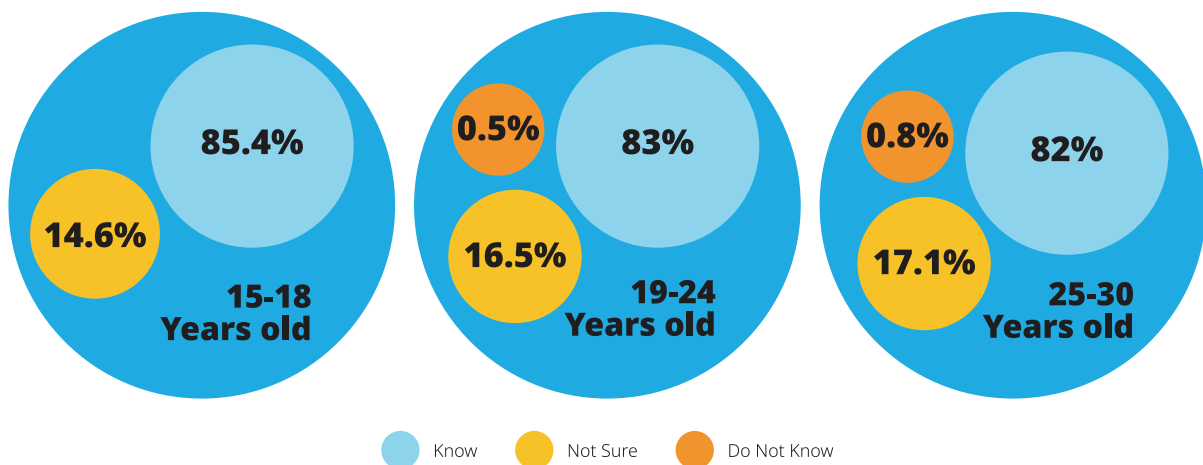
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“[I worry for] the future generation! They will be sick; sick from poor sanitation, poor education, poor health and more. We were supposed to give them a healthy place to nurture them, not a place to torture them,”

– Female, 28 years old, Selangor.

”

83.1% of respondents report knowing what **climate change** is



Responses to **“Do you know what climate change is?”**, by age group

⁴ Note: Respondents were not tested on their understanding of climate change. Reported levels of understanding are subjective and based solely on respondents' self-assessment.

⁵ Despite lower self-reported understanding of climate change, respondents from the Indigenous demographic frequently identified it as a crisis and reported higher than average disaster exposure, indicating that lived experience may be informing their perceptions more strongly than academic comprehension.



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4 Personal Experiences of Environmental and Climate-related Hazards

Experiences with Disasters

Many young people in Malaysia are living through frequent and overlapping environmental and climate-related hazards. **83.2% of respondents had experienced at least one disaster from 2024 to 2025.** Among those who lived through a disaster, approximately one in five (22.3%) felt that climate change had significantly altered their lives. Disaster exposure among young people is not isolated, as 44.0% had experienced two or more disasters within the span of a single year.

Among Indigenous and PWD respondents, experiences of climate-related disasters closely mirrored national patterns. 83.5% of Indigenous respondents and 83.0% of non-Indigenous respondents reported experiencing at least one disaster from 2024 to 2025. Disaster exposure was slightly higher among respondents with disabilities with 87.6% reporting at least one disaster compared to 82.5% among those without disabilities.



Air Pollution

50.8%



Flood

30.9%



Drought

27.7%



Life-threatening Heat

21.9%



Water Pollution

14.9%



Landslides

6.4%

Share of disasters experienced

Type of Disasters Experienced

Air pollution, particularly haze, emerged as the most common environmental hazard, affecting 50.8% of respondents nationwide.

This was followed by floods (30.9%), drought (27.7%), life-threatening heat (21.9%), and water pollution (14.0%), while smaller proportions experienced landslides (6.4%) and 17.8% reported experiencing no disasters at all.

These national averages conceal geographic contrasts. Negeri Sembilan (61.4%), Putrajaya (64.3%) and Kuala Lumpur (61.1%) reported the highest exposure to air pollution, reflecting the concentration of haze and emissions-related events in urban and peri-urban regions.

Flood exposure was most pronounced in the East Coast and Sabah with Terengganu (68.8%), Sabah (54.7%) and Kelantan (57.6%).

Drought was experienced most frequently in Negeri Sembilan (36.8%) and Perak (34.9%) while life-threatening heat was highest in Perlis (54.5%) and Sarawak (30.6%). **Sabah stands out as a multi-hazard state, reporting not only high flood exposure but also the highest rates of landslides (34.0%) and water pollution (30.2%)⁶.**

Access to Essential Services

Service disruptions during and after disasters reveal key gaps in preparedness, communication and continuity support for children and young people who rely on timely communication and stable routines to stay safe.

58.9% of respondents who experienced at least one disaster reported experiencing interruptions, including access to essential information and services. 10.1% of respondents had no access to information on how to stay safe or recover from the event and 8.9% lacked real-time updates or official news. An identical share of 8.9% experienced

disruptions to learning, whether due to school closures, unsafe travel conditions or the inability to continue schoolwork at home. State-level patterns reveal clear clusters of unmet needs during disasters. Johor (72.0%), Kelantan (63.9%) and Perlis and Melaka tied (63.6%) experienced the highest frequency of service disruptions, reflecting the widest gaps in access during disasters.

Risk-communication shortfalls are most pronounced in Pahang, where 14.6% lacked real-time updates and 12.5% lacked safety or recovery information. Learning disruptions were highest in Pahang (12.5%), followed by Sabah (11.1%) and Pulau Pinang (10.7%).

Gaps in monetary aid were most common in Sarawak (12.9%), Pulau Pinang (11.7%) and Sabah (11.1%) while unmet psychosocial support needs were concentrated in Pahang (14.6%) and Negeri Sembilan (13.8%). WASH related unmet needs were highest in Kelantan (13.9%) and Sabah (13.0%) and shelter needs were most evident in Terengganu (11.1%) and Perlis (9.1%). Overall, while 43.5% of affected youth nationwide reported having access to all services, portions of the population continue to face gaps, especially in information access, learning continuity, financial assistance and essential services.

⁶ It is important to note that survey-reported experience does not measure disaster incidence directly. Nonetheless, a comparison with administrative data shows notable similarity. The National Disaster Management Agency records Terengganu, Perak, Pahang and Kedah as the states with the highest number of minor disaster incidents (2025), while Environment Statistics Malaysia identifies Sarawak, Terengganu and Kedah as the most flood-affected states (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2025), echoing spatial patterns captured in the survey.

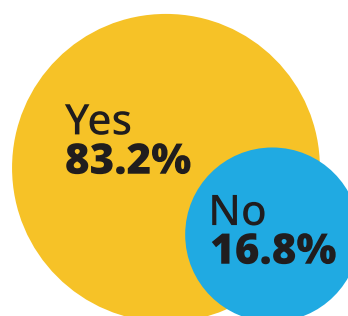
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“It was my first time experiencing a flash flood in my life. It rained non-stop for two days straight which caused the river to overflow beyond control and flooded an entire housing area in an urban landscape. In the middle of the night, we had to evacuate our houses in chest-deep waters. It was heart-breaking to leave our houses. What was even more devastating was the aftermath—I lost a lot of my books which I regard as my priceless possessions. No one should ever be in that situation,”

– Female, 27 years old, Selangor

”

Percentage of respondents who have experienced a disaster in the past 12 months



Impacts on Health

The emotional toll of disasters on young people is substantial and varies across states. **97.4% of respondents who experienced at least one disaster reported experiencing fear, grief, hopelessness, stress or tiredness during disasters. States with repeated or multi hazard exposure registered some of the highest levels of emotional strain.** In Sabah, where communities face a combination of hazards, reports of stress and anxiety reached 42.9% with 33.3% experiencing panic and 50.0% reporting exhaustion from cleanup work. Flood prone East Coast states exhibited the same pattern. In Kelantan, which has the second highest flood exposure (57.6%), 52.0% of youth reported stress or anxiety, among the highest across all states. Terengganu, which had the highest flood exposure at 68.8% of youth surveyed, also showed notable levels of emotional distress, including 42.3% reporting stress/anxiety. **These findings strongly suggest that frequent and severe disaster exposure intensify emotional fatigue and can heighten psychosocial burden.**

Physical health impacts from disasters followed similar geographic trends. Nationally, 25.9% experienced worsening of existing illnesses, 19.7% reported skin conditions, 18% heat related illnesses and 14.3% respiratory problems. State-level variation is influenced by local environmental conditions. In Perlis, for example, life threatening heat exposure is the highest at 54.5%, which corresponds with above average rates of worsening existing illnesses (36.4%). In states heavily affected by haze and air pollution such as Negeri Sembilan (60.3%), Putrajaya (69.2%) and Kuala Lumpur (58.7%), higher-than-average respiratory and vision-related symptoms were visible. For instance, Kuala Lumpur recorded 15.7% respiratory issues and 10.0% vision related problems—both exceeding national averages of 14.3% and 11.1% respectively.

Overall, the state specific data reveals a clear and compelling picture that young people’s emotional and physical wellbeing is tightly correlated with the types of hazards they face and the frequency with which these hazards occur. Multi hazard states and flood exposed East Coast states consistently report the highest emotional distress and a wide range of physical health consequences. Meanwhile, heat intensive states report higher heat-related illnesses while air pollution-affected

states show elevated respiratory and vision symptoms.

These patterns highlight the sobering reality that climate impacts are not evenly distributed and neither are their emotional and physical consequences. A localized, risk informed approach is essential to protect the wellbeing of young people who are already living at the frontlines of overlapping climate hazards.

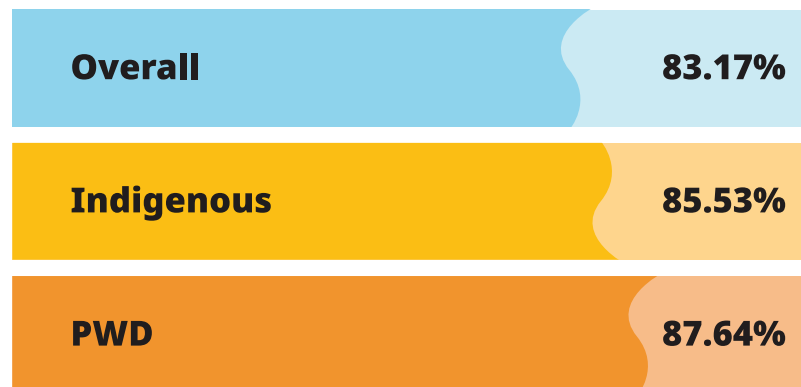
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“The flood in Bintulu, Sarawak, was so bad, affecting almost the whole of Bintulu. Almost everything in the house needed to be thrown away. 10 months after the floods and we still haven’t fully recovered [from it],”

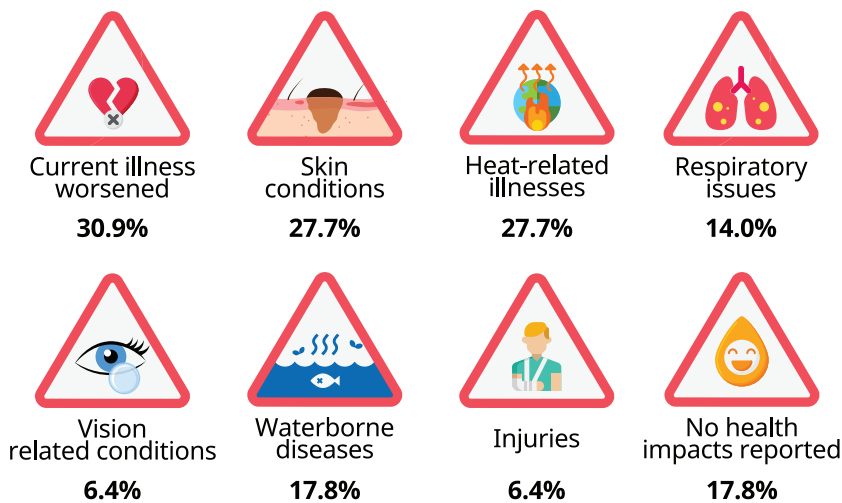
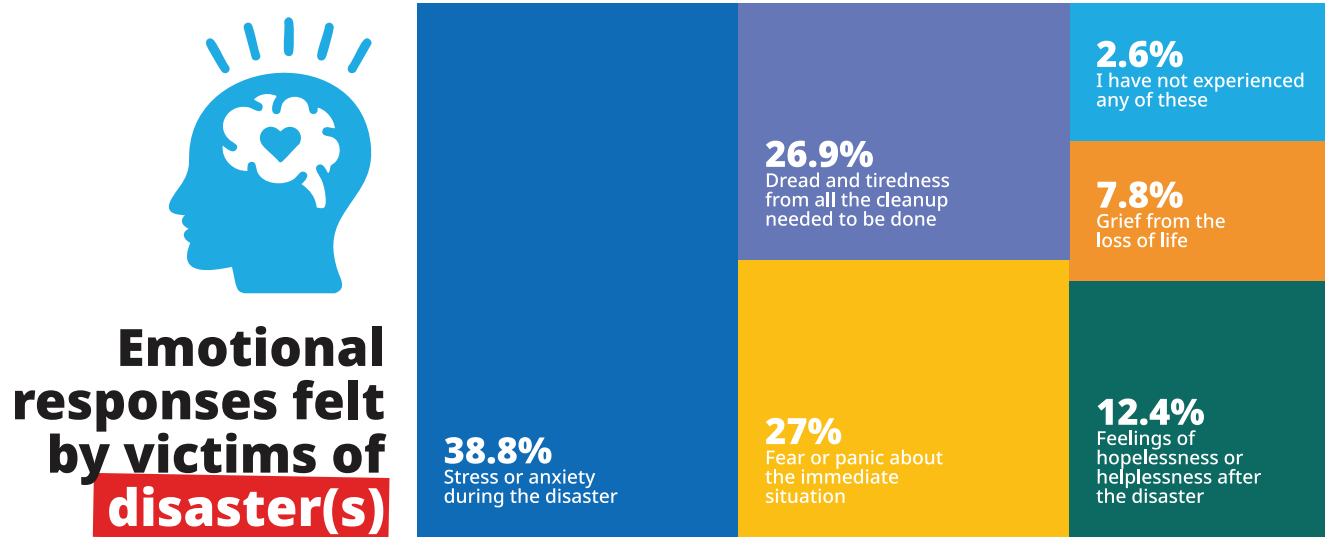
– Female, 29 years old, Sarawak

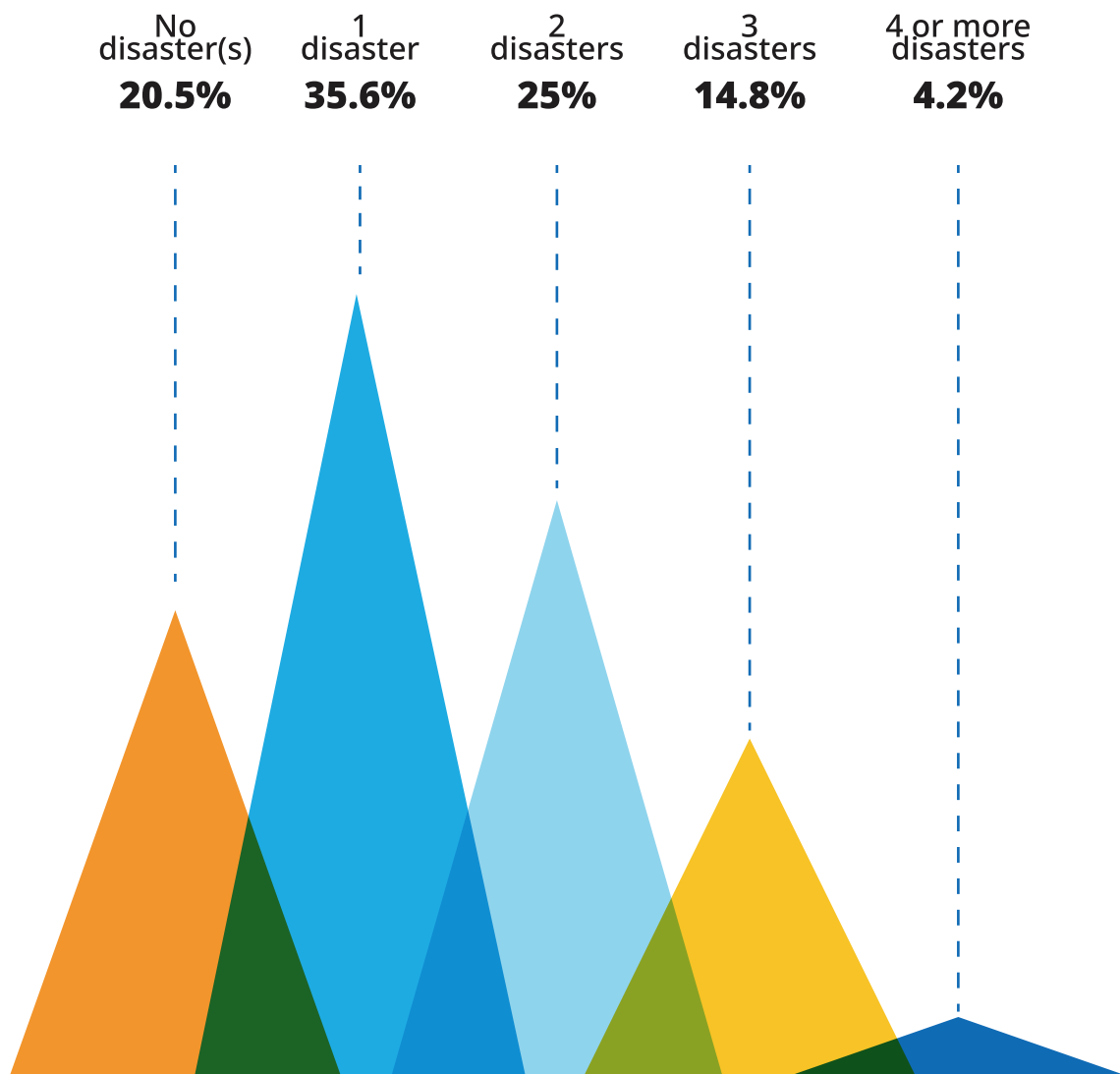
”

Proportion of respondents who experienced a disaster in the past 12 months, disaggregated by Indigenous identity and disability status



Share of disruption to services experienced by respondents due to disasters





Number of **disaster(s)** experienced by respondent



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“

“We have to do something about [climate change and its impacts]. Flood mitigation is still nonexistent and that frustrates me,”

– Male, 19 years old, Kelantan.

”

Young people deliver a strong mandate for more decisive climate policymaking. **A total of 94.6% of respondents indicated that it is important for policy makers to prioritise climate action**, with only 0.9% saying it is not important and 4.5% responding “maybe”. Support for climate action was highest among respondents who view climate change as a crisis, 95.1% of whom believe it must be a policy priority. Similarly, young people with clearer climate knowledge expressed the strongest support at 95.2%, a correlation which indicates that a stronger grasp of climate change tend to demonstrate clearer expectations for policy action.

When asked about the most important areas to include in climate adaptation and resilience planning, respondents identified a diverse but well-defined set of priorities. The top three areas were **Waste Management (58.7%), Disaster Risk Resilience (57.7%) and Sustainable Cities (54.3%)**, reflecting a mixture of environmental, infrastructural and urban concerns⁷. These were followed by Forest and Biodiversity protection (51.7%), Public Health measures (50.8%) and Water Resources and Security (44.1%). Climate Change Education (42.3%) also featured prominently, highlighting young people’s desire for better awareness and skills.

Share of answers to: “Is it important to you that policymakers prioritise climate actions?”

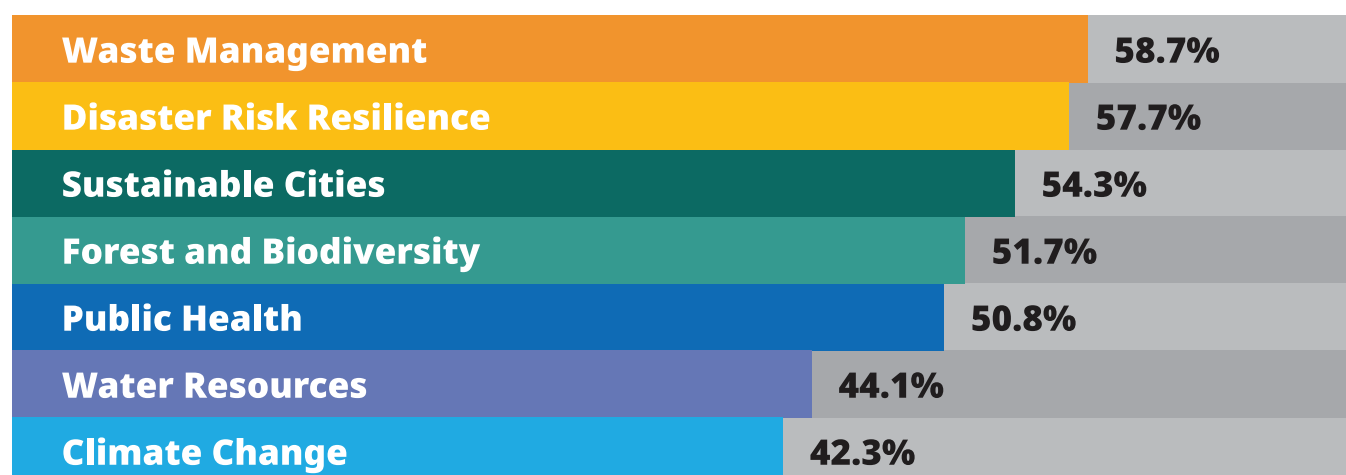


State-level variations were also evident, reflecting different local experiences and environmental contexts. For example, Kelantan showed high support for disaster resilience (75.9%), consistent with its high flood exposure. Urban states such as Johor and Selangor showed stronger prioritisation of sustainable cities and waste management, reflecting the pressures of urban density and infrastructure demands. In Johor, for example, 62.5% of respondents prioritised Sustainable Cities—well above the national average of 54.3%—while 61.1% highlighted Waste Management that is also above the national average. Selangor showed a similar pattern with 56.9% selecting Sustainable Cities and 58.5% selecting Waste Management, placing both within the state's top priorities.

Meanwhile, states such as Sabah and Sarawak placed significantly higher emphasis on biodiversity protection and disaster resilience, reflecting their diverse habitat and multi-hazard exposure. In Sabah, 57.1% prioritised Forest and Biodiversity—above the national average of 51.7%—and 59.2% prioritised Disaster Risk Resilience, aligning with the state's high exposure to disasters. Sarawak reported similarly elevated patterns with 55.3% prioritising Forest and Biodiversity and 60.5% prioritising Disaster Risk Resilience.

The policy preferences of young people demonstrate a clear and nuanced understanding of climate change and their solutions. Whether through improved waste systems, resilient infrastructure, ecosystem protection or strengthened public health and education systems, **youth in Malaysia are calling for climate action that is practical, future-focused, and responsive to the realities of their communities.**

Share of answers to: “In your opinion, what should be the priority areas in climate adaptation plans?”



⁷ Note: The top priorities may be influenced by the higher proportion of urban-based respondents in the sample, which could shape perspectives on issues more visible or pressing in urban settings.



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6 Youth Participation in Climate Action

“

“Young people I know are very concerned about climate change but the lack of knowledge of ways to help is preventing more people from joining so maybe some structure and organisation about how to make some real changes will help,”

– Female, 20 years old, Kuala Lumpur.

”

Young people in Malaysia are eager to participate in climate action and see multiple pathways for contributing at both national and local levels. When asked about the best ways for youth to be involved, **the most widely supported approach was raising public awareness and engaging in advocacy by 70.3% of respondents.** This was closely followed by adopting sustainable lifestyles (69.2%) and mobilising local communities (52.6%), reflecting a strong interest in both personal action and community-based initiatives. A significant portion also expressed interest in more formal engagement with 45.6% identifying participation in policy discussions and 43.3% highlighting attendance in climate dialogues and summits as important avenues for influence. Only 3.2% felt that young people

should not be involved, indicating broad support for youth participation.

Interest in green careers was similarly strong. **83.1% of respondents said they would consider working in Malaysia's green industry with the leading motivation being the desire to make a difference (49.5%).** Other key motivators included personal interest (20.9%), growing job opportunities (15%) and long-term job prospects (10.1%). Among those that were not interested in green careers, the main barriers cited were limited job opportunities (35.1%), lack of climate-related education (22.9%), skill gaps (22.4%) and safety concerns related to forest or marine environments (21%). Low salaries (13.2%) and lack of awareness (11.2%) were also factors though less commonly reported.

“

“I want to but I lack knowledge about the green industry and have less exposure to work in this field,”

– Female, 18 years old, Kedah.

”

Knowledge about climate change appeared to strongly influence willingness to pursue green careers. Among respondents who said they “know” what climate change is, 84.6% were open to working in the green industry compared with 75.1% among those who were unsure.

Overall, the data suggest that the youth are not only concerned about climate change but also see themselves as active **changemakers** who seek ways to contribute whether through advocacy, lifestyle changes, community mobilisation, policy engagement or entering green sectors of the workforce.

Would you consider working in the green industry in Malaysia?

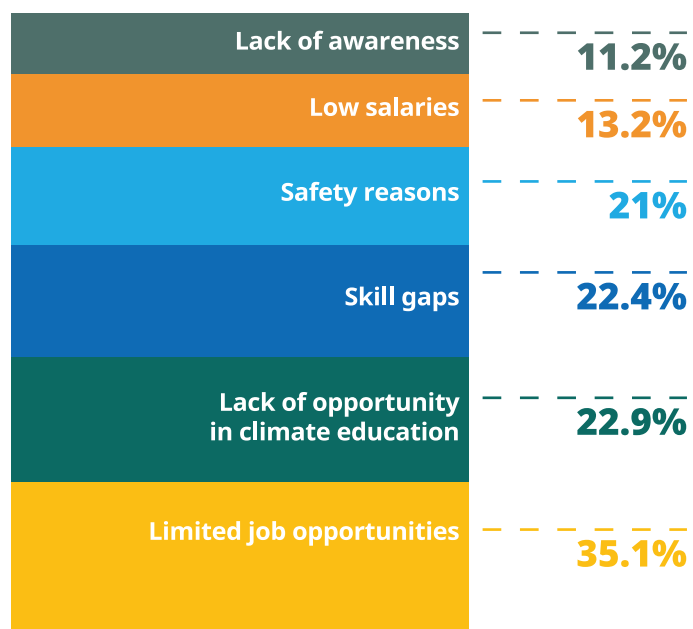


Share of answers to: “In your opinion, what would be the best way for young people to be involved in national/local climate action?”

Share of answers to:
"If yes, why?"
(Positive reasons for
working in the green
industry in Malaysia)



Share of answers to:
"If no, why?"
(Negative reasons
for working in the
green industry in
Malaysia)





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Results from the National Youth Climate Change survey 2025 show that young people in Malaysia are caught between rising climate impacts and limited preparedness with impacts that touch their schooling, health, safety and emotional wellbeing. At the same time, their responses show a strong sense of urgency and a willingness to be part of Malaysia's climate transition. Based on these findings, UNICEF Malaysia recommends the following priority areas for intervention:

1. PROTECT: Strengthen health, wellbeing and safety systems to protect children and young people from climate-related risks and impacts.

Prepare healthcare professionals and equip healthcare services to respond to climate-related impacts, expanding child and youth-friendly mental health and psychosocial support in schools and communities as well as deploying mobile health and support teams to ensure rapid and accessible care during and after climate events.

Strengthen localised adaptation planning by integrating child-sensitive and youth-generated data into subnational decision-making, including youth-led risk mapping and monitoring and ensuring that these insights systematically inform district planning, early warning systems and community-based disaster risk management (CBDRM).

2. SUPPORT: Ensure essential services, including education, social protection and emergency support, remain accessible during climate disruptions.

Ensure continuity of education, Water and Sanitary Hygiene (WASH), child protection, information systems, and psychosocial support during disasters. Enhance disaster preparedness for schools, establish community safe spaces and implement shock-responsive social assistance that delivers timely and targeted support to affected families.

3. INCLUDE: Give children and young people a meaningful voice in climate planning and decision-making.

Institutionalise inclusive youth participation across all levels of climate policymaking by strengthening formal platforms such as through a national 'Youth Advisory Board', including routine consultations within national frameworks such as Malaysia's National Adaptation Plan (MyNAP), expanding engagement to state and district levels and adopting child and youth-friendly consultation tools that ensure accessible, safe and representative participation.

Expand and align climate education, green skills training and employment pathways by strengthening learning programmes on climate impacts and solutions, supporting youth-led and community-based initiatives and scaling TVET and apprenticeships in key sectors such as energy, waste, ecosystem management and climate resilient infrastructure.

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Annex I:

Methodology & Respondent's Profile

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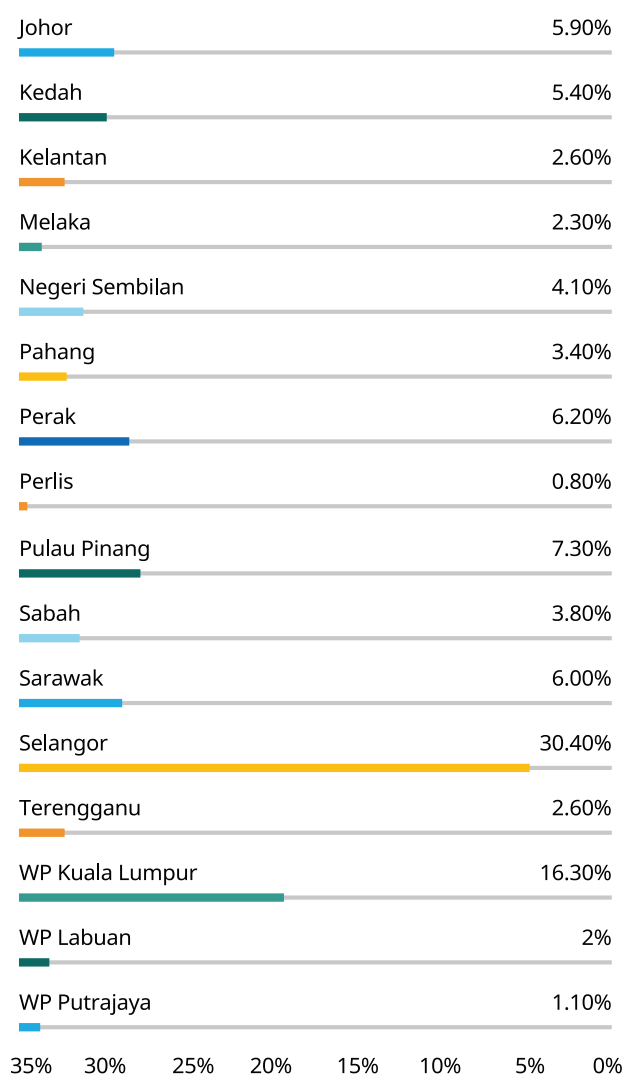
Survey Methodology

The National Youth Climate Change Survey (NYCC) 2025 was designed by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and reviewed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability's (NRES) Climate Change Division and the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Nature, Climate and Energy Team. It was further tested by UNICEF Malaysia's Young Persons Advisory Group (YPAG), a programme initiative designed to promote and strengthen the meaningful participation of young people in decision-making processes.

The survey was conducted from June to October 2025 through the U-Report platform⁸. The survey was administered in English, Bahasa Malaysia, Mandarin Chinese and Tamil to ensure inclusivity and broad youth participation. A total of 1,420 young people aged 15 to 30 across Malaysia responded, representing all states and Federal Territories with the highest participation recorded in Selangor and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. The survey link was disseminated through UNICEF Malaysia's and partners' digital platforms, including social media networks, youth-led organisations, civil society groups, universities and schools, enabling nationwide outreach.

Participation was fully voluntary and anonymous. U-Report is UNICEF's digital engagement platform that enables young people to share their views through polls and dialogue (www.ureport.in).

Respondents by state



*percentage count does not sum up to 100% due to a 1.5% "Overseas" response (21 responses)

⁸ U-Report is UNICEF's digital engagement platform that enables young people to share their views through polls and dialogue (www.ureport.in)

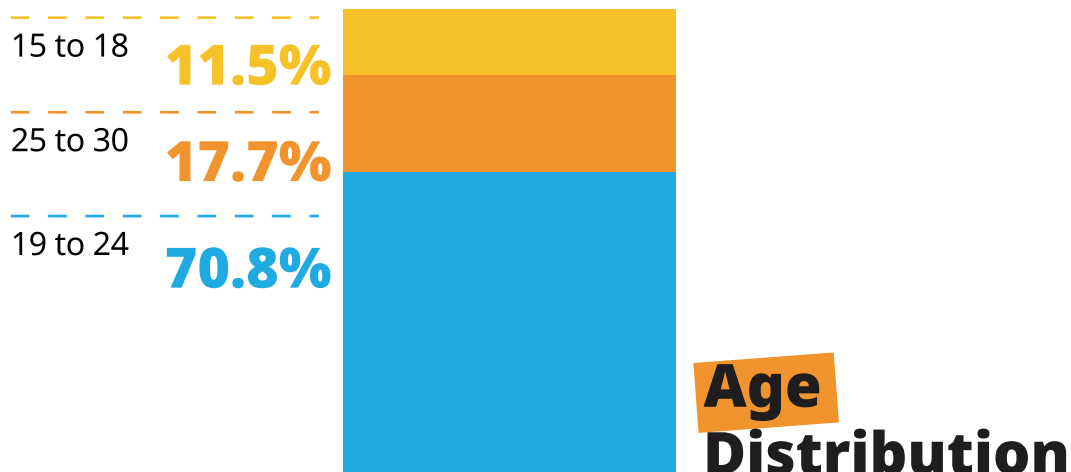
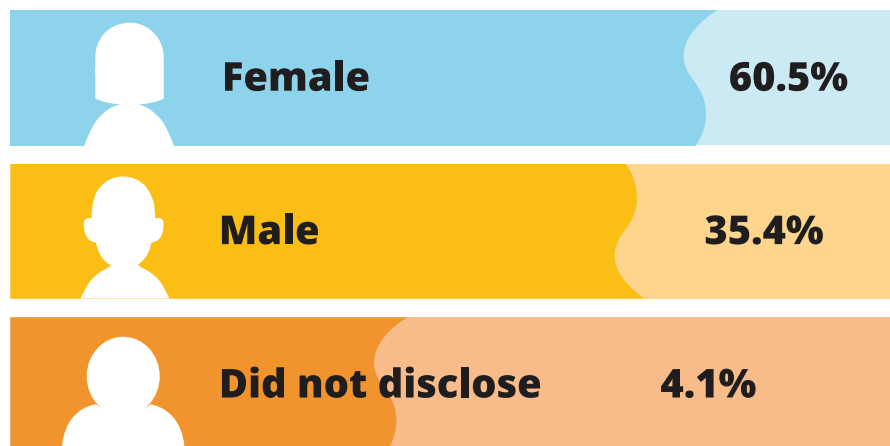
This survey provides timely insights into youth in Malaysia's knowledge, lived experiences, anxieties and policy priorities related to climate change, offering an important evidence base for youth-centred climate action and further in-depth research.

To support analysis, Large Language Model (LLM)-assisted qualitative analysis was used to identify emerging themes, weak signals and patterns in open-ended responses. Outputs were reviewed and validated by the research and data team to ensure analytical accuracy and contextual relevance to youth in Malaysia.

As an online survey conducted through the U-Report platform, the findings may

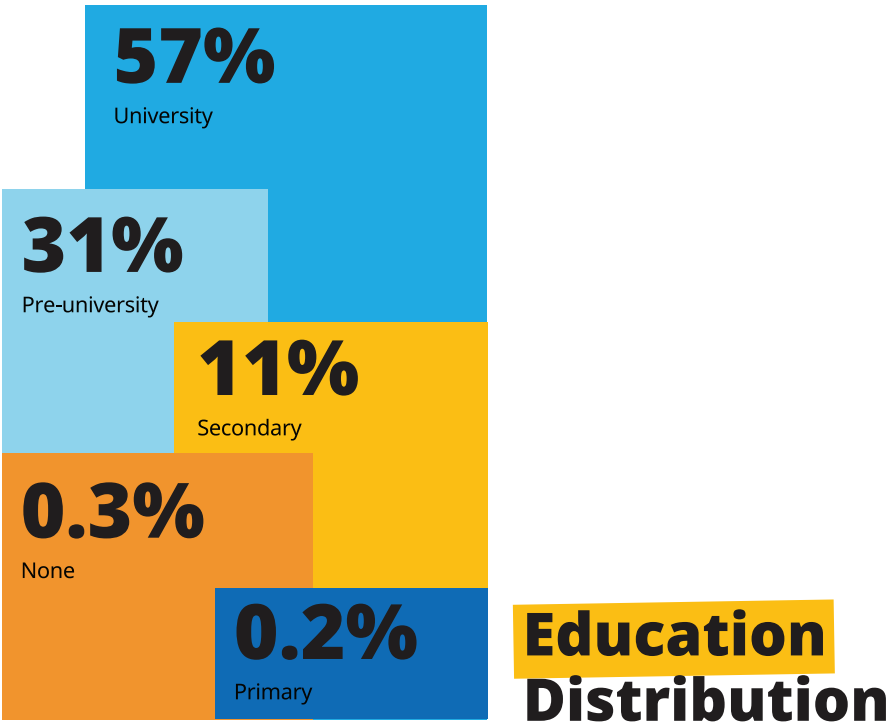
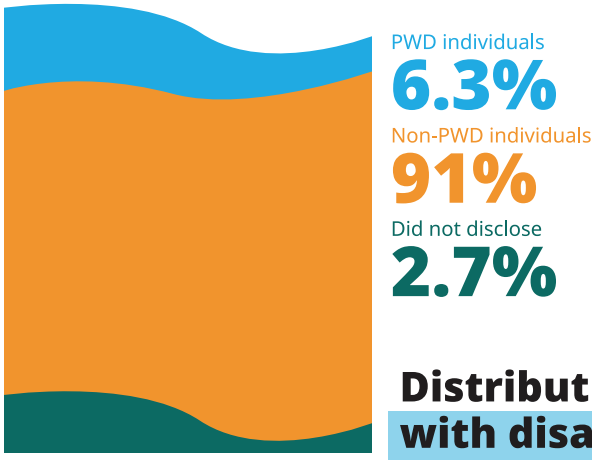
overrepresent young people who are more digitally connected, environmentally conscious and active on social media channels. While the survey achieved wide geographic coverage, participation varied across states. Highly urbanised states such as Selangor and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur contributed the largest share of respondents while states such as Perlis, Putrajaya and Labuan recorded lower response rates relative to their population size. Consequently, the findings cannot be interpreted as nationally representative but are nevertheless valuable to raise awareness on youths' experiences and perspectives, contribute to the evidence base on climate impacts to young people and raise the urgency of responding to climate change meaningfully.

Gender Distribution



Identifying People with Disabilities (PWD)

In the survey, we asked respondents whether they have any special needs or differences in their body or mind that make them do things in their own unique way, such as how they walk, see, listen, or learn. Other instances are whether the respondent uses visual aids, hearing aids or a wheelchair or need extra help at school.



Distribution of indigenous people



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