

Country Brief: India

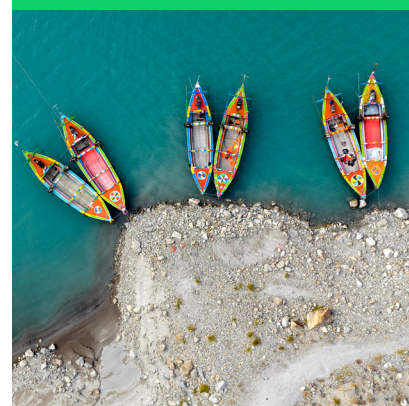
India brings significant strengths to the green transition: a large and motivated youth population, a rapidly growing renewable energy sector with real market demand for installation and maintenance skills, and an active civil society that is already bridging gaps between national policy and local delivery. Youth across the country show strong awareness of green skills and high levels of self-directed learning, with many developing capabilities through their own initiative when formal routes are unavailable. NGOs and community organisations are working closely with government to strengthen non-formal education pathways and reach rural communities. These foundations provide a strong base to build on. At the same time, the research identifies areas where current systems could be strengthened to match the scale of youth ambition: connecting education more directly to labour market needs, ensuring that training leads to employment outcomes, widening access to information and opportunity beyond major cities, and developing enterprise support instruments for green businesses.

At a glance

- When asked about barriers, more than three in four respondents identified areas where access could be improved, pointing to practical opportunities for strengthening current systems.
- The most frequently cited barrier was insufficient information or awareness (selected by nearly two in three respondents), followed closely by lack of local jobs and limited training access. Education-to-industry misalignment was also high.
- Rural youth and youth with disabilities were most frequently identified as vulnerable to being left behind. Mentorship and local training were the joint top requests for support, alongside improved information.
- Most respondents were unsure whether current green training programmes are sufficiently inclusive, suggesting an opportunity to strengthen visibility and reach of existing programmes alongside the design of new ones.

Key Findings

- **Youth show strong motivation and self-directed learning.** Indian youth demonstrate high levels of personal initiative in building green skills. One youth reflected: 'Most of my skilling happened through means of self-learning. I learned most of the things while I was on the job' (Youth, India). Another emphasised the value of stakeholder engagement: 'The ability to talk with different kinds of stakeholders becomes important' (Youth, India). Sector experts confirmed growing market demand for practical green skills, particularly in solar installation and maintenance: 'I would say like assembling of these solar plates' (NGO Representative, India). Civil society is actively partnering with government to reach rural youth: 'Without the help of the NGO, without the help of the technical institutes, targets can't be achieved. Their roles are very important to make our rural youth more aware about the solutions' (NGO Representative, India).
- **Environmental education could be strengthened through applied, assessable content.** An educator confirmed: 'Environmental education is not a graded subject in the curriculum' (Educator, India). Youth reinforced this: 'Climate education should be more practical. They don't know what climate change is' (Youth, India). Peers are described as unaware of basic concepts. The survey echoed this: more than half of Indian respondents said education is not aligned with industry needs.
- **Training programmes would benefit from stronger job linkage and post-training support.** One NGO representative stated: 'What happens is we often do training without any outcomes' (NGO Representative, India). A policymaker was blunt: 'What is the point of green skilling if there is no absorption? Job linkage is missing' (Policymaker, India). Post-training 'handholding' is also absent, and green skilling is not yet a priority for state governments: 'Plumbing and carpentry are the traditional courses. For green skilling, I don't know whether the state thinks it's a priority' (NGO Representative, India).
- **Widening access beyond major cities would reach motivated rural youth.** One youth explained: 'Only when I came to Delhi, I got to know more. Getting access to that information is very crucial' (Youth, India). Another described how marginalised groups arrive late: 'By the time it reaches the most marginalised groups, the privileged will already be quite ahead' (Youth, India). Insufficient information was the single most cited barrier among Indian respondents.
- **Enterprise support instruments for green businesses represent an untapped opportunity.** A private sector leader stated plainly: 'There is no subsidies or grants for green businesses' (Private Sector Leader, India). At the Launchpads, a youth participant argued: 'Governments must pay youth to learn, not expect free internships.' Another participant observed: 'Technical skills get you in; soft skills keep you there,' pointing to the need for broader capability support.



“What is the point of green skilling if there is no absorption? Job linkage is missing.”
Policymaker, interview, India

Spotlight: Matching infrastructure to community needs

An NGO representative described how green infrastructure investments can miss local needs entirely: ‘Imagine that in my village there is absolutely no scope for a solar-based system. Suddenly, the government decides to place a solar plant here and asks the people to start training, whereas the need is actually in some other village’ (NGO Representative, India). A policymaker linked this to climate-driven migration: ‘The dams in remote areas provide water to cities, while the people living there can only do small-scale agriculture for three to four months. After, they leave their villages and go to work in factories. They don’t have opportunities for doing climate-resilient agriculture’ (Policymaker, India). These accounts point to the value of community-informed planning: starting from local needs and capabilities, and connecting national ambitions to what works on the ground. India’s strong civil society sector is well positioned to support this kind of locally grounded delivery.

Key Recommendations

Recommendation	Evidence basis	Who should act
Make climate/ environment learning assessable and applied	Educator confirms it is ungraded. Youth describe absence of practical content. More than half of Indian respondents said education is misaligned with industry.	Ministry of Education (NCERT, CBSE, state boards); NCVET; universities
Require job linkage in all publicly funded green skilling	Policymaker and NGO interviews describe training without outcomes. Post-training support is missing. Three in five Indian respondents cited lack of local jobs.	Ministry of Skill Development (MSDE); National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC); state skill missions
Scale hands-on technical pathways for renewables through TVET and apprenticeships	NGO stakeholders describe demand for solar installation and maintenance roles. Sneha (India, Launchpad): ‘Every certification should come with a real-world project.’	MSDE; Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs); Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE); solar and wind employers
Rural inclusion: local delivery, travel stipends, decentralised career guidance	Youth describe urban concentration of information. Three in five Indian respondents requested local training. Launchpad: ‘Diploma courses are very high in price; youth cannot afford’ (Youth Researcher, India).	State governments; district skill committees; rural development agencies; NGOs with rural reach
Create enterprise support instruments for green businesses	Private sector leader: ‘There are no subsidies or grants for green businesses.’ Green skilling not treated as a state priority. Youth describe limited formal job options in many regions.	Ministry of MSME; NABARD; state industrial development corporations; impact investors
Strengthen gender-responsive and disability-inclusive pathways	Indian respondents identified rural youth and disabled youth as the most vulnerable groups. A youth described gendered perceptions: women in green jobs are seen as ‘caring for the environment, not fighting for it.’	Ministry of Social Justice; disability organisations (NIEPMD, NHFDC); women’s self-help group networks

India contributed the second largest country sample in the global survey (n=47), reflecting strong youth engagement with the research. More than nine in ten Indian respondents rated green skills as important or very important for their future, and sectors such as waste management, renewable energy, and agriculture were widely recognised as green opportunity areas.

Source: Country survey respondents: n=47. Supplemented by key informant interviews, youth diaries, and Innovation Launchpad discussions.

“The actual interventions that happen on the ground are mostly done by indigenous people and rural communities themselves. And I think they don’t get the limelight that they deserve.”
Youth participant, interview, India

