Climate Skills

BRITISH COUNCIL

Report Brief

Skills for an Inclusive Transition: Youth realities and green opportunity pathways

Context

Developed through the Climate Connection Hive, a research and campaign initiative commissioned by the British Council, the Skills for an Inclusive Transition report builds on youth-led research across 15 countries to gather perspectives around green skills and jobs for young people. These findings are situated within an effort to provide insights into how multi-sector actors can design more inclusive pathways for youth within the green transition in a global, regional, and country specific context.

This report examines what it will take to deliver an inclusive global green transition for young people (18–30) with in-depth analysis of Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico, and Viet Nam as examples, focusing on those most likely to be excluded from emerging green opportunities. It brings together evidence on how young people understand green skills, where pathways into green work break down, and what policy and programmatic actors across the youth sector, education, non-formal education, and beyond, can do to convert "green potential" into equitable, locally available livelihoods.

Across the dataset, one message is consistent: young people recognise the importance of green skills, but the pathway from learning to work remains fragmented and unequal. Surveys show that 211 of 234 respondents (90.1%) view green skills as important or very important for their future livelihoods, yet 162 respondents (69.0%) report challenges accessing green opportunities, with the most frequently cited barrier being the lack of local green job opportunities (151 respondents; 64.3%).

Findings indicate the gap is not simply a skills shortage but a broader breakdown in the pathway from training to employment, where information, funding, and labour-market demand do not align, particularly outside major cities. An inclusive transition therefore requires end-to-end pathways: from climate literacy and applied learning to paid entry routes and locally available jobs or enterprise opportunities, supported by mentorship, networks, and targeted inclusion measures. Without this redesign, green transitions risk remaining "green" in name but unequal in outcome when the need for inclusive approaches is urgent. Climate impacts are intensifying, economic systems are shifting, and the transition is not automatically an opportunity for all.

Research Approach

Evidence-to-action through the Climate Connection Hive

The Climate Connection Hive generates actionable evidence on how young people can access and thrive in green opportunities globally, and channels this into advocacy, partnerships, and programming aligned with the COP cycle.

In line with the Climate Connection Hive's approach, the study captured evidence not only through surveys, but through workshops, interviews and diaries to broaden the data set and capture a depth of lived experience for effective action.

A core feature of the Hive is its commitment to youth participation throughout the research process. Young people act as co-creators in design, data collection, and validation, shaping focus, refining tools, and ensuring accessible framing, broadening recruitment, supporting youth-friendly data collection, and strengthened interpretation through lived experience. By engaging youth leaders, local partners, and diverse stakeholders across fifteen countries, the project reflects cultural relations principles of two-way engagement rather than one-way knowledge transfer.

This report consolidates insights across these strands into a single thematic analysis framework of eight themes.

Research Team

British Council

Commissioning & oversight

Research Advisory Group

Climate experts from each deep-dive country

Training

Insight

Hive Youth Researchers

15 young people
Co-created research design
Tested & refined methods

Training

Insight

Green Box

Research Agency

5 countries: 1 Youth Field Researcher leading focus groups in each country

Brazil	Mexico	India	Indonesia	Viet Nam
Field Researcher	Field Researcher	Field Researcher	Field Researcher	Field Researcher

Wider youth participants & stakeholders

Interviewed and in workshops – contributing data and perspectives

Key Findings

The eight themes presented in the report collectively describe how young people experience the green transition not as a single skills challenge, but as a connected pathway problem shaped by education systems, labour markets, and educational institutional design.

Key Findings by Theme:

Theme 1: Climate education and skills are widely valued, but education pathways are not delivering

Climate education is widely seen as essential for an inclusive transition, but it often begins too late, is overly theoretical, and does not lead to employment pathways. Nearly half of respondents report misalignment with industry needs (107; 45.5%), and over half cite limited access to relevant training (130; 55.3%). Practical barriers add another layer: financial constraints are common (124; 52.8%), and many lack access to trusted information on green jobs (148; 63.0%). Young people also point to what would improve access: local training opportunities (119; 50.6%) and better digital learning tools (91; 38.7%), highlighting the need for decentralised, flexible delivery.

Theme 2: Human skills and networks are central to inclusion, not secondary

Human skills – encompassing communication, collaboration, empathy, and adaptive thinking – are described as the enabling layer that helps youth turn knowledge into agency, participation, and opportunity, especially when navigating complex systems and working with institutions. This shows up clearly in the survey: 128 respondents (54.5%) request mentorship, and 104 (44.3%) request networking support. Together, these signals suggest that inclusive green pathways must build both technical and human skills, treating mentorship and local and international networks as core infrastructure rather than optional add-ons.

"What is the point of green skilling if there is no absorption... job linkage is missing"
Policymaker, India

Theme 3: Skills-to-jobs mismatch is a defining constraint, especially at local level

Across all countries, youth consistently describe training that fails to translate into employment, with green opportunities unevenly distributed and often poorly absorbed locally. Beyond job scarcity, unclear entry routes and uneven sector maturity deepen the mismatch. The survey also shows where opportunity visibility clusters: green jobs are most strongly associated with renewable energy (194; 82.6%), waste management/ circular economy (194; 82.6%), and agriculture (181; 77.0%), while manufacturing (89; 37.9%) remains far less visible despite its central role in decarbonisation and supply chains. The implication is clear: programmes must strengthen "pathway legibility", including clearer occupational mapping for less visible roles.

Theme 4: Intersectionality determines access and who gets left behind

The report treats youth as diverse groups shaped by overlapping barriers. Survey responses identify those most at risk of being left behind as youth with disabilities (138; 58.7%), rural youth (132; 56.2%), ethnic/Indigenous minorities (121; 51.5%), and non-English speakers (75; 31.9%). These risks stem from structural constraints – connectivity, transport, affordability, discrimination, inaccessible workplaces, and weak representation – meaning inclusion requires targeted design and funding rather than generic programmes.

"We must start by challenging the idea that knowledge comes from classrooms, from universities... Young people gain critical green skill through lived experience... Cultural practices, peer learning, and community work."
Speaker, Indonesia

Theme 5: Gendered barriers persist across education, work, enterprise, and leadership

Gender consistently shapes access to green skills and opportunities: 33.2% identify women as at risk of being left behind – 30.0% of men and 34.3% of women respondents". The small 4.3-point gap shows that the concern is shared across genders, reinforcing that this is seen as a systemic issue rather than a self-reported one. Qualitative evidence highlights barriers such as gendered norms in technical fields, confidence and visibility constraints, unequal access to finance and networks, time poverty linked to care roles, and workplace safety concerns. At the same time, women's strong leadership in community-level climate action is visible, suggesting that inclusion requires connecting this informal leadership to formal training, decision-making, and investment pathways.

Theme 6: Community learning, non-formal education, and networks often function as the "'real system'"

Where formal systems are inaccessible or ineffective, youth turn to community-based learning ecosystems – peer networks, NGOs/CSOs, local organisations, hybrid models, and informal routes. This aligns with survey demand for localised training and networking support, and with qualitative evidence showing that trust, relevance, and access often sit outside formal institutions. As a result, inclusive pathway strategies must recognise and fund non-formal delivery partners and create routes for community learning to translate into recognised credentials and decent work.

Theme 7: Policy ambition is present, but implementation credibility is fragile

A core institutional challenge is the gap between policy commitments and delivery. Only 11% of respondent perceive current green training programmes as inclusive; 59.6% are unsure and 29.4% say no, signalling low confidence in whether current systems can deliver inclusion at scale. Funding is the most decisive lever: 162 respondents (68.9%) request scholarships, grants or stipends, reinforcing that inclusion depends on whether participation is financially feasible – not merely whether programmes exist.

Theme 8: Systemic risks could reinforce existing inequalities if not addressed early

The report identifies an interconnected risk profile that can derail inclusive transitions: elite capture through credentials and networks, perceptions of green jobs as elitist, unpaid entry routes and "experience traps", information and language barriers, climate impacts that heighten vulnerability, rural youth out-migration, and psychosocial stress including climate anxiety and burnout. These risks are reinforced by the survey's "barrier cluster": limited training access (130; 55.3%), financial constraints (124; 52.8%), and information gaps (122; 51.9%), alongside the dominant constraint of local job scarcity (151; 64.3%).

Taken together, these themes show that achieving an inclusive transition for youth requires moving beyond isolated interventions towards end-to-end, locally anchored pathways that connect skills development to decent work, participation and agency.

Youth-led participatory research journey

Recruitment and Training October 2024

25 Hive Youth Researchers
15 countries

Hybrid training:
Advocacy, research and campaigning skills

Delivered by
Green Box and British Council

Campaign launch 31 October 2024

31 Oct 2024
Youth Connect Live webinar

Initial research idea launched publically

Testing & validation November 2024

COP29 + COY19 (Baku, Azerbaijan)

In-person workshops with youth, policy & climate stakeholders

Research question refined

Global survey and youth diaries Early – Mid 2025

Global survey launched

Youth-led diaries capturing lived experience

In-country data collection Aug–Sept 2025

72 interviews across 5 countries:
Brazil, Mexico, India, Indonesia and Viet Nam

Youth (21) Policymakers (9)
Private sector (10) Educators (10)
NGOs/CSOs (12) Experts (10)

Presentation of emerging findings November 2025

COP30 + COY20
(Belém, Brazil)

Hive Researchers present insights

Final report & launch 2026

Synthesis, analysis, publication

Output shared globally

Recommendations: what needs to change in policy (Global, Regional and Local) and programme design

Global

Who is this for?

Multilateral agencies, global donors/funders, global standard setters, international NGOs, global private sector coalitions.

Key recommendation

The recommendations call for a fundamental shift from training-only green skills initiatives toward inclusive, outcome-driven "learning-to-earning" pathways that link young people – especially those marginalised by gender, disability, geography, or informal livelihoods – to decent work in the green economy.

Evidence

Triangulation of evidence from surveys, diaries, interviews, and roundtables, alongside insights from diverse stakeholders, including young people, educators, policymakers, practitioners, experts, and NGOs (see further chapter 3 of the full report).

Recommendation

Funders and standard setters should adopt a shared baseline for inclusive green pathways that mandates paid work-based learning, wraparound support, job or enterprise linkage, disaggregated inclusion metrics, and resourced youth participation in decision-making.

Recommendation

Financing should prioritise employment and enterprise outcomes, open-access learning resources, and employer commitments to paid entry routes, while actively challenging gender norms that frame technical and care-based skills as gendered.

Regional

Who is this for?

Regional agencies, regional donor/ funders, regional private sector coalitions, NGOS, regional advocacy groups, youth networks.

Key recommendation

Regionally, priorities include mapping green occupational pathways beyond formal jobs, modernising renewable and climate-resilient skills standards, supporting inclusive green enterprise finance, and protecting Indigenous knowledge through ethical engagement and benefit-sharing.

Evidence

Building on cross-regional analysis drawing on evidence from surveys, diaries, interviews, and roundtables, alongside insights from diverse stakeholders (see further Chapter 4 of full report).

Regional – Latin America

In Latin America, emphasis is placed on mapping diverse green livelihoods beyond corporate jobs, financing youth-led green enterprises, supporting cleaner industrial transitions, protecting Indigenous knowledge through formal ethical protocols, and ensuring bilingual Spanish–Portuguese design.

Regional – South East Asia

In Asia, priorities include regional standards for renewable and climate-resilient skills, modernising TVET systems, delivering training in low-connectivity contexts, enabling just transitions from fossil sectors, addressing climate migration pressures, and integrating Indigenous and local knowledge as protected, valued components of green skills frameworks.

Country

Who is this for?

Policymakers, trainers and educators, private sector leaders, local and national NGOs, youth groups.

National governments, educators, employers and NGO's.

Effective green skills and employment pathways must be tailored to country contexts rather than applied uniformly.

Evidence

Our key findings draw on insights across the five focus countries (see further Chapter 3) and regional comparisons (see further Chapter 4).

Recommendation

Across Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico, and Viet Nam, priorities include strengthening job-linked and paid entry routes, and aligning training with regional economies. Countries need more applied and assessable climate learning, stronger TVET and apprenticeship systems, and recognition of non-formal pathways where formal green jobs are limited. Inclusion is critical, particularly for rural communities, women, ethnic minorities, and youth in high-carbon regions. Better coordination across institutions, localisation of curricula, enterprise support, and investment in local green livelihoods are essential to enable just and sustainable transitions.

Recommendation

Emphasis is placed on applied and assessable climate learning, rural and sub-national inclusion, paid entry routes, stronger employer linkage, safeguards for safe and accessible participation, and intentional gender – and disability-inclusive design.

© British Council 2026
The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities.

www.britishcouncil.org/climate-skills