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# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YOUTH FOCUS ON ASIA AND ITALY

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### **The Impact of COVID-19 on Youth – Focus on Asia and Italy**

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# **The Impact of COVID-19 on Youth**

## Focus on Asia and Italy



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# FOREWORD

by **Zurab Pololikashvili**

Secretary-General,

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Children and youth must not only be considered the future leaders of our societies, but important stakeholders of the present. Young generations have never been so empowered and capacitated to effectively contribute to the policymaking. They must therefore be given an opportunity to also speak up about their vision for the tourism of tomorrow.

To give children and youth a platform where they could echo their views on the future of tourism, the World Tourism Organization, the United Nations specialized agency that promotes responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, has joined forces with the Global Tourism Economy Research Centre to prepare this report on the *Impact of COVID-19 on Youth – Focus on Asia and Italy* in anticipation of the first Global Youth Tourism Summit.

The Global Youth Tourism Summit is a series of international events, where children and youth will get together and do what they do best: learn, discuss and think outside of the box to come up with the most innovative ideas for the future of sustainable tourism, fitting in the global framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Youth's desire for self-development and innovation and their motivation to explore and experience new cultures are important driving forces of tourism. With less than ten years left to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – the target that will determine the future of our societies – children



and youth must have a say in the actions we take today, that will shape the tourism – and the world we live in – tomorrow.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the tourism industry. Every single country in the world has seen a fall in international tourism never witnessed before. The consequences are many-fold for the economies, but what is more important, for the people with youth being particularly at risk.

However, times of adversities are also times of opportunities. This is our opportunity to build a stronger, more sustainable, more inclusive and more resilient tourism sector. The ingenuity of young people can play a crucial role in it.

For centuries, youth has been considered a carrier of hope and a force for change, progress and growth. We believe in the power of youth. And we want to help young people to take center stage in paving the way towards a full recovery and shaping a sustainable future of tourism.

I want to thank everyone who contributed to the development of this report for their tireless work and dedication, and express my special gratitude to Mrs. Pansy Ho, UNWTO Tourism Ambassador and the Chairman of Global Tourism Economy Research Centre.



## FOREWORD

by **Pansy Ho**

Chairman,

Global Tourism Economy Research Centre

This special report, *Impact of COVID-19 on Youth – Focus on Asia and Italy*, ahead of the UNWTO Global Youth Tourism Summit, has been prepared at a precipitous time as it examines how to support young people throughout the recovery and beyond. I trust this report and its findings will serve as a valuable resource as the global tourism economy is reshaped.

Across the world, the global pandemic has had significant impacts, but it cannot be overlooked of the unique impacts the pandemic has had on young people during this “once-in-a-century” crisis. Globally there are 1.2 billion young people from 15 to 24 years, accounting for 16% of the global population. Asia and the Pacific is home to the majority of the world’s young people, making an in-depth look into how the pandemic has impacted youth education, career prospects, consumer behaviour, home life and health, in this region a necessary endeavour. Considering these five aspects, the report explores how young people are faring and most importantly recommendations of how to support our youth. An in-depth look at the preferences and behaviours of these future travellers is important – as one of the largest traveller source markets in the world, Asia has a substantial potential in the global recovery of travel and tourism.

This report also has a special feature on Italy, which is the Partner Country for the 10th Edition of the Global Tourism Economy Forum (GTEF). By

showing how the pandemic has impacted youth in both Asia and in Italy, it creates a new dialogue on the outlook of young people and brings to light common experiences from both parts of the world.

Because travel and tourism form a deeply connected ecosystem that cuts across many industries, the sector is in a unique position to support youth by maximizing job creation and economic growth, enhancing sustainable development, and embracing innovations and technologies. Travel has always served as the great connector, in addition to a source of education, inspiration and exchange. Today’s youth are tomorrow’s travellers, and this report, as well as the Global Youth Tourism Summit, provides a good starting point to lay the groundwork for future visions of sustainable tourism.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General of UNWTO, Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, and his team for their steadfast support in this research collaboration between UNWTO and the Global Tourism Economy Research Centre.



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# INTRODUCTION

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The COVID-19 pandemic has been described frequently, including by many world leaders, as a 'once-in-a-century crisis' of global proportions. While the effects of COVID-19 have been most severe for the elderly and those with serious underlying health conditions, young people around the world have suffered – and are likely to continue to suffer – from the effects of the crisis in different ways.

What impact has COVID-19 had on those in younger generations at the time of this 'once-in-a-century' crisis? And how has it shaped the outlook of young people, particularly in relation to their personal and professional aspirations? The answer to these questions will arguably have important implications for the global economy and society in future years and, by extension, the future development of global travel too.

Asia and the Pacific is home to the majority of young people in the world. More than 660 million youth are in the 15–24 age group alone,<sup>1</sup> and they have been identified as "key to current and future inclusive economic and social development in the region".<sup>2</sup> Prior to the emergence of COVID-19, generation Zs and their older millennials counterparts from Asia and the Pacific had been driving the strong growth in international tourism arrivals within the region and were the beneficiaries of a period of economic and social development that

## Defining 'youth'

For the purpose of clarity and consistency, the term *youth* is used in this report to refer to the age cohort commonly referred to as *generation Z* or *Gen Z*. While definitions vary according to different sources, the broad definition provided by the European Travel Commission (2020) shall be used as those born between 1996 and 2012.<sup>a</sup> At the time of publication (2022), this refers to individuals ranging from 10 to 26 years of age. Given that young people's tastes, life experiences and consumer spending power evolve rapidly between these years, it is important to keep in mind that generation Z includes young people at three key stages of their lives:<sup>b</sup>

- Ages 9 to 12 (older primary school children);
- Ages 13 to 18 (teenagers, secondary school age); and
- Ages 19 to 25 (students and young professionals).

a) European Travel Commission (2020), *Study on Generation Z Travellers, ETC*, Brussels, online available at [www.etc-corporate.org](http://www.etc-corporate.org) [03-01-2022]

b) International Labour Organization (2021), *Population and Labour Force*, ILO, online available at [ilostat.ilo.org](http://ilostat.ilo.org) [10-10-2021].

1 International Labour Organization (2021/b), *Population by sex and age – UN estimates and projections*, [Statistics on the working age population and labour force, 2021], online available at: [ilostat.ilo.org](http://ilostat.ilo.org) [10-10-2021].

2 International Labour Organization and United Nation Development Programme (2021), 'Youth employment and entrepreneurship in Asia-Pacific – Lessons for a human-centered recovery', *Decent Jobs for Youth, ILO*, concept note and agenda for webinar on 6 October 2021, online available at: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org) [16-10-2021].

spanned three decades. Collectively, the share of the population in the generation Z group in Asia and the Pacific is one of the largest in the world.<sup>3</sup> The combined population of Gen Z across the Asia and the Pacific region counts for almost 1.085 billion people of which 1.075 billion live in Asia and the rest in Oceania. To illustrate relative sizes of the Gen Z population, in a selection of Asian countries, the Republic of Korea includes 9 million Gen Zs, Japan 17.3 million, Indonesia 69 million, India 374.7 million and the Philippines 31.5 million, while China includes nearly 259 million Gen Zs.<sup>4</sup>

As this report explains, the sudden emergence of COVID-19 and the implementation of strict public health measures has severely stunted growth in many countries. They had a direct impact on those included in some form of education or training, or entering the workforce. It has also triggered other, perhaps less-reported, impacts such as a rise in anxiety, loss of social interaction and a curtailment of travel opportunities.

At the same time, the sudden slowdown in daily life imposed by the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic has created an opportunity for many people to reflect on wider global issues such as the climate crisis, the interconnected nature of global business and society and how to help those who are in the most vulnerable situations. As the United Nations observed in 2020, the pandemic has generated a pause on 'business-as-usual' activities and encouraged global society to envision a realistic way forward towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change. It has also brought to the fore how central the Sustainable Development Goals are for building resilience against shocks and avoiding backslides into poverty.<sup>5</sup>

Against this backdrop, this report has been produced in collaboration with the Global Tourism Economy Forum (GTEF)<sup>6</sup> and is intended to provide a useful starting point for discussions that are due to take place at the UNWTO Global Youth Tourism Summit in 2022. The GTEF, established in 2012 and held annually in Macao, China, is a leading international-exchange platform that brings together thought leaders from the public and private sectors and is designed to promote the sustainable development of the global tourism industry. Motivated by the ethos of the GTEF, this report focusses particularly closely on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth in Asia and the Pacific from a range of perspectives including education, career prospects, consumer behaviour and home life, and explores the implications of these impacts for the tourism sector in the region. Reflecting the GTEF partnership with Italy for its 10th Edition, this report also examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic of young people across Italy, presented in a special feature on [page 22](#). It seeks to highlight areas of common experiences, as well as policy areas that could be addressed as a matter of priority to help young people in both parts of the world to advance in the wake of the pandemic.

3 Africa is the region with the combined population of generation Z and their younger counterparts occupying the largest share of the total population of the continent.

4 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2020), *2019 Revision of World Population Prospects*, UNDESA, online available at: <https://population.un.org/wpp/> [16-10-2021].

5 Mukherjee, S. and Bonini, A. (2020), 'Integrated national financing frameworks – a framework to build back better', United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, Policy Brief No. 87, published in June 2020, online available at: <https://www.un.org/> [31-01-2022].

6 For more information, please visit: <https://gte-forum.com>.



Strict public health restrictions across the region have forced the closure of schools, universities and workplaces, causing severe disruption to daily life for all sectors of the population. For young people in education or training, or those entering the workforce, the disruption has been particularly severe. Yet the effects have not been uniformly felt among young people across the region and in some cases, some have reported that the pandemic has had the positive effect of slowing a hitherto frenetic pace of life.

The following section explores the ways in which COVID-19 has affected five key aspects of life for young people across Asia and the Pacific:

1. Education;
2. Career prospects;
3. Consumer behaviour;
4. Home life; and
5. Health and well-being.

## 1.1. Education

'Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all' is the fourth UN Sustainable Development Goal. However, according to the United Nations, around the world the effect of COVID-19 on education has been to wipe out 20 years of educational gains.<sup>7</sup> The closure of schools and higher education institutions (even for brief periods) has not only hampered learning opportunities, it has also meant the loss

of structure, social interaction and pastoral support that many young people would normally receive through attendance at school, college or university.

Across Asia and the Pacific, learning losses range from 8% of a learning-adjusted year of schooling in the Pacific, where schools have mostly stayed open, to 55% in South Asia, where periods of school closure have been the longest. According to the Asian Development Bank, the present value of these losses for developing countries in Asia and the Pacific is estimated at USD 1.25 trillion, equivalent to 5.4% of the region's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020. On average, every student affected by school closures in developing countries of the region stands to lose an estimated USD 180 every year, equivalent to a 2.4% fall in average annual earnings (with the decline as high as 4% in East and South Asia), while these losses capture only personal losses from missed education and not the full value of social returns or the long-term benefits of education on an individual's health.<sup>8</sup>

Inequality in accessing online learning has also proved to be a major setback for many young people across Asia and the Pacific. Among those of higher education age, 73% of those aged 8–29 years who study or combine study with work had experienced school closures since the start of the pandemic. However not all members of this group were able to shift to online learning, leaving one in eight without access to courses, teaching or training at all.<sup>9</sup>

7 United Nations (2021), The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021, UN, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18356/9789210056083>.

8 Asian Development Bank (2021), Learning and Earning Losses from COVID-19 School Closures in Developing Asia – Special Topic of the Asian Development Outlook 2021, April 2021, ADB, online available at: <https://www.adb.org/> [10-10-2021].

9 Hernando, R.C. (2021), APEC Regional Trends Analysis February 2021 Update: Uneven Recovery, Unequal Impact, February 2021, APEC, online available at: <https://www.apec.org> [10-10-2021].

Among younger age groups, it is estimated that around 147 million children in South Asia and 80 million children in East Asia and the Pacific cannot be reached in order to undertake digital and other forms of broadcast remote learning at home.<sup>10</sup> The pandemic has exposed the fact that a lack of access to the internet or computer equipment significantly decreased the efficiency of remote education which is largely based online. In particular, developing countries in the region have been unable to reach every child, since this depends heavily on what technology – if any – is available within each household. It has also been challenging to understand where gaps in provision exist, which remote learning approaches are most effective and what measures can improve equity in order to overcome persistent problems of access to education.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, in 2020, the severe economic stress faced by many of the poorest households due to the impact of COVID-19, forced an estimated 506,130 more students (pre-primary, primary and secondary) in developing Asia and the Pacific countries to drop out of school during the pandemic.<sup>12</sup>

## 1.2. Career prospects

The emergence of COVID-19 curtailed decades of economic growth across Asia and the Pacific which, in many places, had been driven by a young, skilled

workforce. Yet fast-paced economic growth has in some cases concealed underlying structural challenges and inequalities which have become exacerbated during the most serious stages of the pandemic. For example, even before the COVID-19 crisis, more than 8 out of 10 young workers in Asia and the Pacific were in informal employment. More than 160 million youth in the region were not in employment, education or training (so-called NEET) and nearly three quarters of NEETs were young women.<sup>13</sup>

Job losses hit young people aged 15–24 in Asia and the Pacific particularly hard, with a 10.3% decline in employment in 2020, compared with 2.4% for older adults during the same period.<sup>14</sup> The main reason for this is that young employees are typically easier and cheaper to hire and fire. As the Asian Development Bank noted in 2020,<sup>15</sup> at the onset of the crisis, nearly half of young workers in the region were employed in the four sectors destined to be hardest hit by the recession. These sectors – wholesale and retail trade and repair; manufacturing; rental and business services; and accommodation and food services<sup>16</sup> – employed nearly half of all young people (more than 100 million) working in Asia and the Pacific at the onset of the crisis. Young women are overrepresented in three of the four highly impacted sectors and industries, particularly in accommodation and food services. Moreover, the percentage of youth employed in the tourism sector

10 United Nations Children's Fund (2020/b), 'Covid-19: Are children able to continue learning during school closures? – A global analysis of the potential reach of remote learning policies using data from 100 countries', UNICEF, New York, online available at: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/> [10-10-2021].

11 Raluca, D. et al. (2020), 'Education during the COVID-19 crisis: Opportunities and constraints of using EdTech in low-income countries', *EdTech Hub*, published 14 April 2020, online available at: [www.edtechhub.org](http://www.edtechhub.org) [12-10-2021].

12 Asian Development Bank (2021).

13 International Labour Organization and Asian Development Bank (2020), *Tackling the COVID-19 youth employment crisis in Asia and the Pacific*; ILO, Bangkok (Thailand), and ADB, Manila (Philippines), online available at: [www.ilo.org/](http://www.ilo.org/) [12-10-2021].

14 International Labour Organization (2021/c), *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021, ILO Flagship Report*, ILO, Geneva, online available at: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org/) [12-10-2021].

15 International Labour Organization and Asian Development Bank (2020).

16 Accommodation and food services: for UNWTO these are considered tourism industries within the tourism sector. For further information on definitions and terms used by UNWTO, please refer to: World Tourism Organization (n.d.), *Glossary of Tourism Terms*, online available at: [www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org) [03-03-2022].

is much higher than the percentage for adults in general (47% vs. 39%). In other words, almost half of young people in employment (approximately 100 million) are employed in the industries affected the most by the impact of COVID-19.<sup>17</sup>

The impact of the COVID-19 crisis in labour extends further to disruption in education, training and work-based learning, as well as a deterioration in the quality of employment, reduced working hours and earnings,<sup>18</sup> and increased difficulties and delays for young jobseekers in entering the market.<sup>19</sup> Those who have entered the workforce to work in professional careers during the pandemic have also faced the daunting prospect of starting their career without being able to meet their colleagues in person or integrate into the workplace due to the imposition of remote working practices.

Apart from the young employees, 92% of enterprises owned by young people in Asia and the Pacific have also been negatively affected in the first year of the pandemic. Under pressure from the economic impact of the pandemic, 85% of young entrepreneurs took actions to shrink their business model or limit their growth to survive, while 51% had to partially or fully close at some point, 59% experienced a cash flow decrease and 21% had to lay off staff or reduce wages. At the same time, young entrepreneurs showed notable agility and resilience amid challenging conditions. According to research conducted by the Asian Development Bank and International Labour Organization, the most effective actions undertaken have been:<sup>20</sup>

1. Increased use of mobile/digital solutions (92%);
2. Introduction of innovations such as the launch of new products/services and transformation of operating models (86%);
3. Liquidity protection (70%); and
4. Tapping into strong networks/partnerships (68%).

Meanwhile, many young entrepreneurs provided COVID-19 crisis solutions to help their local communities; yet, in March 2021, more than one third had not yet received any form of financial assistance, while the support that had been received was not always aligned with their true needs. As a result, its effectiveness has so far been difficult to evaluate.<sup>21</sup>

### 1.3. Consumer behaviour

Globally, young people are frequently associated with fast-moving sectors such as fashion, music, entertainment, fitness, dining out and travel. In many places, public health restrictions imposed strict limitations on young people's ability to meet, shop, keep fit and travel, while the economic slowdown also led to a fall in disposable income. Therefore, the pandemic has caused a range of interesting shifts in young people's consumer behaviour in Asia and the Pacific, with the increasing use of digital tools among the most important of these. Before embarking on a brief analysis of young people's consumer spending behaviour in the region, it is

17 International Labour Organization and Asian Development Bank (2020).

18 International Labour Organization and United Nation Development Programme (2021).

19 International Labour Organization (2021/a), *An update on the youth labour market impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Statistical Brief, June 2021*, ILO, Geneva, online available at: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org) [10-10-2021].

20 Youth Co:Lab (2021), 'How Young Entrepreneurs in Asia-Pacific Responded to COVID-19', *Youth Co:Lab*, published 2 June 2021, online available at: [www.youthcolab.org](http://www.youthcolab.org) [05-10-2021].

21 Youth Co:Lab (2021).



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important to recognize that a significant proportion of young people in Asia and the Pacific are not sufficiently economically empowered to consume the products and services described above. This section however attempts to illustrate the effect of COVID-19 on young people's spending behaviour as consumers by presenting representative samples of youth spending behaviour in selected sectors.

COVID-19 increased the digital footprint of young people in a wide range of digital tools such as e-commerce services, social media, digital government services, food delivery, ride-hailing and telemedicine to name just a few. Almost nine out of ten young people in the ASEAN region alone increased their use of at least one digital tool during the pandemic, while 42% had picked up at least one new digital tool of the type described above. Moreover, as a result of retail and hospitality closures, young people in the region also reported making greater use of online shopping, food delivery services, e-banking and e-wallet apps.<sup>22</sup>

Members of generation Z, as well as their older millennial counterparts are often referred to as 'digital natives'. This group, which accounts for more than one third of the consumers in Asia and the Pacific, are expected to account for 40% to 50% of all consumption across the region by 2030.<sup>23</sup> The spending power of this group is rapidly becoming clearer. For example, in China, Gen Zs, although making up just 17% of the population, account for 25% of expenditure on new brands in the country.<sup>24</sup>

With variations within Asia and the Pacific, the region's digital generation typically tends to use US-based social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat (where these are available), while they follow local social media influencers and use Asian e-commerce platforms.<sup>25</sup> Examples of these platforms include the Chinese shopping platform TaoBao and Lazada and Shopee, which is focussed on South-East Asia. However, the pandemic brought a cultural shift in terms of use of social media, which is an important indicator

22 World Economic Forum (2020), *COVID-19 – The True Test of ASEAN Youth's Resilience and Adaptability. Impact of Social Distancing on ASEAN Youth*, ASEAN Youth Survey 2020 Edition, WEF, online available at: <https://www.weforum.org/reports> [05-10-2021].

23 McKinsey Global Institute (2021), 'Beyond income: Redrawing Asia's consumer map', McKinsey, published 7 September 2021, online available at: [www.mckinsey.com](http://www.mckinsey.com) [05-10-2021].

24 L Catterton (2021), 'Fads vs. Facts: Hunting for Unicorns in China's Booming Consumer Market', published in February 2021, online available at: <https://www.lcatterton.com/pdf/2021-LCA-Insights.pdf> [05-10-2121].

25 Tonby, O. et al. (2021/a), 'Meet your future Asian consumer', McKinsey, published 28 July 2021, online available at: [www.mckinsey.com](http://www.mckinsey.com) [05-10-2021].



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for understanding the broader behaviour of young Asian consumers. For example, whereas previously sharing one's purchases on social media was typically led by a need for external validation, post-pandemic social platforms are being used more and more for conversations around issues such as mental health, equality, poverty, climate change and local democracy.<sup>26</sup>

With regard to personal finances, more than 70% of digital natives are very confident of meeting their financial goals and thus are expanding their consumption, enabled by easy access to digital platforms and borrowing. In China, digital natives already take out more consumer loans than any other generation, leading to one of every two indebted consumers being under 30 years of age. The possibility of accumulating personal debt at a young age is helping to drive additional online

consumption in categories such as apparel and durable goods.<sup>27</sup> Gen Zs resort to e-wallets and "buy now, pay later" services are helping them sustain this new lifestyle, while being more easily able to monitor their bank balance. In India and South-East Asia, 12% of Gen Zs are currently using e-wallets, while this figure is higher in more established e-commerce markets such as Singapore (18%).<sup>28</sup> Thus, the availability of credit and the need to repay debt is also likely to be a key determinant of future consumption patterns. In China the use of electronic transactions is increasing further with the new national digital currency. In April 2020, People's Bank of China started testing its digital currency, the e-CNY (digital yuan) in major cities.<sup>29</sup> At the moment the e-CNY is used domestically, while it does not carry interest, which means that is for payments and not an alternative to deposits.<sup>30</sup> As per October 2021, approximately 140 million people had

26 Soh, S.; Tuff, B. and Maroni, M. (2021), 'Outlook 2021: APAC POV', Medium, published 18 February 2021, online available at: <https://medium.com/ipg-media-lab> [05-10-2021].

27 Tonby, O., et al. (2021/b), 'The trailblazing consumers in Asia propelling growth', McKinsey Global Institute, published 7 June 2021, online available at: [www.mckinsey.com](http://www.mckinsey.com) [05-10-2021].

28 Ko, D. (2020), 'Vibe check: How is Gen Z influencing the future of retail and services', *Think with Google – Asia Pacific*, published December 2020, online available at: [www.thinkwithgoogle.com](http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com) [05-10-2021].

29 Freidin, E. (2021), 'China's digital currency takes shape', *The Interpreter*, published 8 September 2021, online available at: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org> [11-01-2022].

30 Greene, R. (2021), 'What Will Be the Impact of China's State-Sponsored Digital Currency?', *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, published 1 July 2021, online available at: <https://carnegieendowment.org> [11-01-2022].



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opened “wallets” for the e-CNY totaling 62 billion yuan of transactions,<sup>31</sup> with the Bank continuing the expansion strategy through initiatives such as the partnerships with messaging app WeChat that has a one-billion-user base.<sup>32</sup>

#### 1.4. Home life

Growing up in a safe, loving environment is an essential ingredient for young people’s physical and emotional development. Time spent with family is, for most, quality time and lockdowns increased the opportunity for this, while limiting the amount of time or money young people could spend out of the time. The COVID-19 pandemic therefore caused young people to experience life at home for longer, and more intensively than would typically be the case.

According to one study by VICE Media Group in 2020, during the pandemic young people across Asia and the Pacific use their time to connect with themselves and others, as well as explore their creativity such as making art and music. In particular the main activities have included: increasing social media (48%), exploring hobbies (32%), improvement of their sleep (31%), playing games online (29%), reconnecting with friends (29%) and trying new recipes (28%).<sup>33</sup> Those between 16 and 25 years (ASEAN region)<sup>34</sup> were most likely to say they had learned new skills which ‘speaks to their nimbleness’, while, overall, 44% of women said they had learned new skills as a result of lockdowns, compared to 39% of men.<sup>35</sup>

While technology has enabled young people to connect, learn and socialize without leaving the house, it is important to consider that greater use of technology has problematic aspects too, for example the negative impacts of video game

31 Reuters (2021), ‘\$9.5 billion spent using Chinese central bank’s digital currency – official’, published 3 November 2021, online available at: [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com) [11-01-2022].

32 Kharpal, A. (2022), ‘China’s digital currency comes to its biggest messaging app WeChat, which has over a billion users’, *CNBC Tech*, published 6 January 2022, online available at: [www.cnbc.com/](http://www.cnbc.com/) [11-01-2022].

33 VICE Media Group (2020), ‘Youth in Pandemic: Outlook from APAC’, VICE, online available at: <https://www.vicemediagroup.com> [05-10-2021].

34 The report is based on a survey of 68,574 youths, aged between 16 and 35 from six countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) namely: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

35 World Economic Forum (2020).



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addiction. (Gaming addiction is officially recognized as disease by WHO.)<sup>36</sup> For example, research evidence from 4,579 respondents from the Asia and the Pacific region showed 42% increase in the monthly spend of gamers on video games during the coronavirus outbreak and 15% after (2020).<sup>37</sup> This appears to be most problematic among younger generations. Research conducted during two separate periods (October to November 2019) and during the COVID-19 pandemic (April to May 2020) among 1,778 children and adolescents (57% male, 43% female) from eight Chinese schools in Southwest China showed that children and adolescents both increased videogame use during the pandemic, while adolescents significantly increased in IGD (Internet Gaming Disorder) severity, with pre-pandemic levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms resulting from greater video game use and gaming addiction<sup>38</sup>. Another study conducted among young people (16–25 years old)

in low- and middle-income countries confirmed the reinforcement of problematic internet use during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. Participants from the Philippines scored highly on “pathological internet use, social media use, gaming addiction, psychological distress, and escapism”, while Indian participants reported “similar scores of problematic internet use, gaming addiction, psychological distress, self-esteem, loneliness and escapism”<sup>39</sup>.

With regard to a different trend, there is also alarming evidence that the financial hardships many households have faced due to COVID-19 (particularly those experiencing poverty), has led to an increased rate of parents to keep especially girls from school in order to work or to force them into early marriage, and as well as to rising domestic violence.<sup>40</sup> It is also alarming to note that online searches related to physical violence increased significantly between October 2019 and

36 World Health Organisation (2020), ‘Addictive behaviours: Gaming disorder’, available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/addictive-behaviours-gaming-disorder> [11-01-2022].

37 Statista Research Department (2021), *Monthly video game spend growth during and after COVID-19 APAC 2020*, [Statista data set] published 9 November 2021, online available here: [www.statista.com](http://www.statista.com) [11-01-2022].

38 Donati, M.A. et al. (2021), ‘Gaming among Children and Adolescents during the COVID-19 Lockdown: The Role of Parents in Time Spent on Video Games and Gaming Disorder Symptoms’, *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, June 2021, 18(12), DOI: 10.3390/ijerph18126642.

39 Blossom, F. et al. (2021), ‘Internet use during COVID-19 lockdown among young people in low- and middle-income countries: Role of psychological wellbeing’, *Addictive Behaviors Reports*, volume 14, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.abrep.2021.100379>.

40 Blomqvist, O.; Chughtai, S. and Rahman, T. (2020), *COVID-19 Pandemic Lessons from Asia-Pacific, July 2020*, Save the Children Asia Regional Office, online available at: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/> [05-10-2021].

September 2020, in particular for keywords related to searches for help. At the same time according to research conducted in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, online bullying rose, including trolling, sexual harassment and victim-blaming.<sup>41</sup>

## 1.5. Health and well-being

While young people have not generally suffered the worst health impacts from COVID-19 itself, the pandemic and the restrictions on daily life associated with it have nonetheless had significant effects on young people's well-being, particularly in terms of their mental health (hitherto a taboo subject for many). The impacts on young people's mental health have varied in nature and severity, with some consequences manifesting relatively quickly (e.g., self-isolation, depression or anxiety), while others may take months or years to become evident (e.g. inability to form social bonds, or even through suffering the consequences of trauma). At a critical phase in their physical and social development, the circumstances of the pandemic have forced young people apart, depriving them of regular social contact with their peers through school or other social environments. The troubling economic context caused by the pandemic has contributed towards anxiety around young people and their family members losing jobs, or not being able to find employment in the future, while the pandemic has also induced social tensions in some cases, as lockdowns and extraordinary health restrictions have changed daily life for many. Finally,

it is also important to recognize that at a more severe level, lockdowns have exposed many young people to dangerous living conditions with abusive relatives, accompanied with inevitable mental stress. Early research carried out in 2020 hinted at some of the impacts on mental wellbeing faced by young people in Asia and the Pacific. In a survey by VICE Media Group that explored the emotions of youth in the region during the pandemic compared to an average day before COVID-19, the majority expressed uncertainty (71%), empathy (62%), fear (58%), stress (57%), anxiety (51%) but also gratitude (51% – mainly due the extra time they were able to enjoy from the slowdown of daily life). Still more young people in the APAC region felt hopeful (43%) compared to their peers in EMEA<sup>42</sup> (33%), Latin America (23%) and North America (21%). Another study on the mental health effects of COVID-19 in over 1,000 higher education students in China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand indicated that 38% had experienced 'mild-to-moderate' depression and anxiety, and over 20% regularly experiencing 'severe anxiety'.<sup>43</sup>

In this case, the main causes of fear and anxiety among young people included concern about family and friends becoming sick (66%), the anticipated economic impact of the pandemic (52%), getting the virus themselves (52%) and concerns about personal finances in general (39%).<sup>44</sup> Further evidence also suggests that income and expenditure caused by the pandemic affected people's mental health with those suffering the most tending to be women, young people (particularly LGBTQ youth<sup>45</sup> young people

41 Quilt.ai; United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency (UNFPA) and United Nations Women (2021), *COVID-19 and Violence against Women: The evidence behind the talk – Insights from big data analysis in Asian countries*, UNFPA, online available at: <https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/> [05-10-2021].

42 EMEA is defined in the cited study as Austria, Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Switzerland and United Arab Emirates.

43 Jiang, N. et al. (2021), 'Depression, Anxiety, and Stress During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Comparison Among Higher Education Students in Four Countries in the Asia-Pacific Region', *Journal of Population and Social Studies*, volume 29, pp. 370–383, online available at: <https://www.tci-thaijo.org/> [10-10-2021].

44 VICE Media Group (2020).

45 United Nations Children's Fund (2020/a), 'A Snapshot: UNICEF's approach to mental health during Covid-19 in East Asia and the Pacific', UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO), Bangkok, online available at: <https://www.unicef.org/eap/media/6786/file/Mental%20health%20advocacy%20brief.pdf> [15-10-2021].



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from ethnic minority backgrounds), unemployed people and those experiencing financial difficulty, and those with existing mental health conditions.<sup>46</sup> Other reasons contributing to the deterioration in mental health include lack of access to exercise, schooling, a daily routine, social connections and difficulties in finding employment.<sup>47</sup>

In terms of general health conditions, research carried out in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka suggests that disruptions caused by COVID-19 reduced coverage of child and maternal health services by more than 50% in the second quarter of 2020 – including nutrition assistance, immunization programmes, family planning services and antenatal care. The study found that this likely contributed to approximately 229,000 child deaths and an expected 11,000 maternal deaths, an additional 3.5 million unintended pregnancies and a 50% increase in unsafe abortions. However, over the

first two quarters of 2021 the situation returned to levels seen previously in 2019.<sup>48</sup>

Finally, a further concerning phenomenon from the past decade that has accelerated as a result of COVID-19 is the increased levels of obesity and poor diet among young people in many countries.<sup>49</sup> In many cases, school closures have led to reduced physical activity for children, while the worsening of household finances and the increasing mental stress has in many cases led to lower-quality food intake for young people. Research carried out in 2020 among 10,000 Chinese students from high schools, colleges and graduate schools, found that young people's average body mass index significantly increased from 21.8 to 22.1 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, with the prevalence of overweight/obesity increasing from 21.4% to 24.6% and from 10.5% to 12.6%, respectively.<sup>50</sup>

46 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2021), *Supporting young people's mental health through the COVID-19 crisis*, OECD, Paris, online available at: <https://www.oecd.org/> [05-10-2021].

47 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2021).

48 SickKids: Centre for Global Child Health and United Nations Children's Fund (2021), 'Direct and indirect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and response in South Asia', UNICEF, published in March 2021, online available at: <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/13066/file/Main%20Report.pdf> [05-10-2021].

49 Watson, F. and Kupka, R. (2021), 'The child obesity crisis: Don't blame the victims, change the environment', *UNICEF Connect*, published 28 June 2021, online available at: <https://blogs.unicef.org/east-asia-pacific/> [18-10-2021].

50 Jia, P. et al. (2021), 'Impact of COVID-19 lockdown on activity patterns and weight status among youths in China: the COVID-19 Impact on Lifestyle Change Survey (COINLICS)', *International Journal of Obesity*, vol. 45, pp. 695–699, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41366-020-00710-4>.



# 2

## HOW HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED KEY ELEMENTS OF YOUTH TRAVEL IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC?

Prior to the emergence of COVID-19, young travellers from Asia and the Pacific had largely been responsible for the rapid growth of international tourism in the region and beyond. Large populations of young consumers, a growing middle class with more disposable income, urbanization, rapid adoption of technology and improved gender equality had all helped to propel millennials from the region, followed by Gen Zs as the region's primary consumers of travel.<sup>51</sup>

However, this growth came to an abrupt halt during the first quarter of 2020, when border closures and other strict public health measures were imposed across the region in order to contain the spread of COVID-19.<sup>52</sup> Since that time, UNWTO reports on travel restrictions have consistently highlighted that Asia and the Pacific has remained the region with the greatest number of border closures, with international travel largely at a standstill across the region.<sup>53</sup> As a result, where local public health restrictions have allowed, leisure and business travel has largely been restricted to domestic travellers, who have sometimes been incentivized to travel through heavy discounting and promotion through online channels, or government-backed national tourism incentive schemes to stimulate the domestic market. One example of this is the distribution of e-shopping vouchers of Macao (China) which encouraged local consumers to shop with the territory's small and medium sized enterprises, as well as the setup of a 'Macao

Ready Go!' platform which collated offers for local residents in one online portal.<sup>54</sup> Later, during 2021 several countries from the region took measures to encourage domestic travel and shopping, particularly for the Lunar New year. For instance, Thailand subsidized hotel room rates through its 'We Travel Together' programme while Singapore also launched a travel subsidy campaign for all adult Singaporeans.<sup>55</sup>

While COVID-19 has disrupted all types of travel in the region, it is important to consider that for young people in the region, travel restrictions have proved to be particularly disruptive for those who relied on being able to travel in order to visit friends and family living abroad, to take up a study placement or to gain work experience in another country. The barriers to travel caused by the pandemic to young people have not only been logistical: It has been observed that in the region, many families live with their parents or their grandparents at home, who are more at risk. So younger travellers are not necessarily concerned for themselves – their concern is actually going home and bringing the disease, infecting their parents or grandparents."<sup>56</sup>

Particularly, international student mobility has been heavily affected by travel restrictions, with additional challenges caused by the fact that border closures generally occurred during the middle of the academic year, leaving many students stranded away from their home country. China and India are

51 Pacific Asia Travel Association (2016), *The Rise of the Young Asian Traveller*, PATA, Bangkok, online available at: [www.genctraveller.com](http://www.genctraveller.com) [15-10-2021].

52 World Tourism Organization (2020), *COVID-19 Related Travel Restrictions – A Global Review of Tourism – Seventh Report as of 10 September 2020*, UNWTO, Madrid, online available at: [www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org) [02-03-2022].

53 World Tourism Organization (2021/a), *COVID-19 Related Travel Restrictions – A Global Review of Tourism – Eleventh Report as of 26 November 2021*, UNWTO, Madrid, online available at: [www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org) [02-03-2022].  
World Tourism Organization (2021/b), *COVID-19 Related Travel Restrictions – A Global Review of Tourism – Ninth Report as of 8 March 2021*, UNWTO, Madrid, online available at: [www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org) [02-03-2022].

54 World Tourism Organization and Global Tourism Economy Research Centre (2020), *UNWTO/GTERC Asia Tourism Trends – 2020 Edition*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284422258>.

55 Yuda, M. (2021), 'ASEAN tourism fears Lunar New Year chill with borders closed', *Nikkei Asia*, published 11 February 2021, online available at: <https://asia.nikkei.com/> [15-10-2021].

56 BBC travel (n.d.), *The new normal? Travel in the world of Covid-19*, online available at: <https://www.bbc.com/storyworks/travel/travel-on/the-new-normal-travel-in-the-covid-19-world> [15-10-2021].



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the two largest source markets for international students in the world, and these flows have been heavily stemmed by border closures in receiving countries, while in some cases the families of students have been reluctant to send students abroad to areas which face higher levels of infection than at home. Even Australia which saw generally low levels of infection during most of 2020–2021, saw visa applications by international students decrease by 55.5% in the 2020/21 programme year compared with 2019/20.<sup>57</sup> The country also saw a significant drop in working holiday visa applications too, falling from 119,800 in December 2019 to just 26,000 as at 31 August 2021 – a fall of 78%.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, the Japan Association of Overseas Studies reported a 76% drop in the number of students they sent abroad in 2020 compared with 2019.<sup>59</sup>

While higher education establishments across the region have taken huge steps to putting in place online or blended learning programmes (using a mixture of online and in-person teaching methods), it appears that international students are very eager for in-person classes and many would be willing to switch destinations in order to receive face-to-face instruction. According to a survey conducted by IDP Connect supported by the Canadian Bureau for International Education on the attitudes and behaviours of more than 5,000 international students, more than half of international students (56%) said they were 'likely' to switch destinations, and 32% of them said they were 'highly likely' to do so. Furthermore, 75% of Chinese and 80% of Indonesian students would accept quarantine on arrival in order to be able to enjoy in-person teaching, while 25% and 20% respectively, would be

57 Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs (2021/b), *Student visa and Temporary Graduate visa program report, June 2021 (BR0097)*, Australian Government, online available at: [www.homeaffairs.gov.au](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au) [05-10-2021].

58 Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs (2021/a), *BP0019 Number of Temporary visa holders in Australia, updated in September 2021*, data files, Australian Government, online available at: <https://data.gov.au> [10-10-2021].

59 Japan Association of Overseas Studies (2021), *Japanese agents report that they sent 76% fewer students abroad in 2020*, news release, published 28 June 2021, JAOS, online available at: [www.jaos.or.jp/](http://www.jaos.or.jp/) [15-10-2021].



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prepared to defer their placement and wait until in-person teaching became available.<sup>60</sup> Other elements of international educational travel, such as school tours or short-term placements (e.g., language immersion) have also faced curtailments, depriving students of valuable opportunities for learning new skills, benefitting from intercultural exchange or gaining valuable confidence and experience.

Another branch that has become synonymous with the youth market – adventure travel – has seen a series of shifts in demand which are perhaps indicative of wider shifts in consumer travel preferences across Asia and the Pacific. According to a study by the Adventure Travel Trade Association in September 2021, in general the top trending activities in Asia and the Pacific adventure travel landscape include wellness-focussed activities, followed by hiking, nature photography, cycling and overland 4×4 driving.<sup>61</sup> Where domestic travel has

been possible, many destinations across Asia have reported an increase in visitors seeking to enjoy outdoor activities away from crowds or in small groups, such as those described above. There is considerable speculation that once international travel is possible again, the recovery is expected to be led by pent-up demand among young travellers eager to explore other countries, while replicating some of the trends and preferences (such as a taste for outdoor adventure activities) seen during the pandemic.

60 idp connect (2020), 'Crossroads III reveals international student choices and motivations are increasingly driven by the availability of face-to-face teaching', press release, published 19 November 2020, online available at: [www.idp-connect.com](http://www.idp-connect.com) [15-10-2021].

61 Adventure Travel Trade Association (2021), *Adventure Travel Industry Snapshot*, September 2021, online available at: <https://cdn-research.adventuretravel.biz/> [15-10-2021].

<https://www.e-univ.ro.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284423422> - Web site - 2022 8:50:27 PM - IP Address:202.86.171.178

# 3

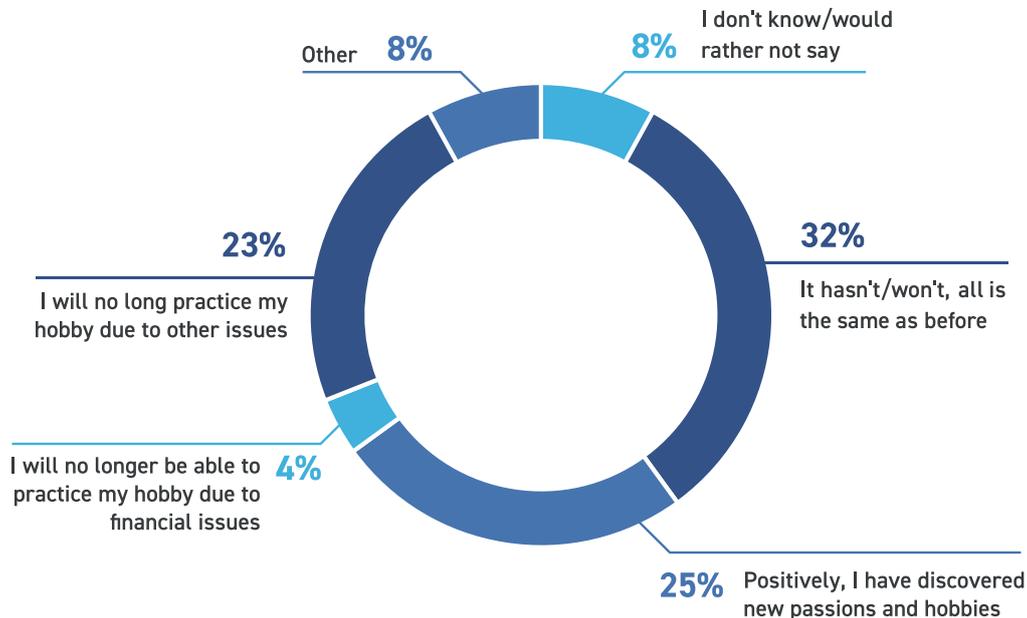
## SPECIAL FEATURE: COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUTH - AN ITALIAN PERSPECTIVE

In recognition of Italy's status as a partner country of the Global Tourism Economy Forum in 2021, this publication includes a special feature exploring the impact of COVID-19 on young people in Italy. While many thousands of kilometres separate Italy from the countries addressed in this report, some common themes and challenges exist in the experience of young Italians during the pandemic. These are analysed from a range of perspectives below.

### 3.1. The impact of COVID-19 on education in Italy

Education has faced significant disruption from COVID-19 across Italy and despite being technologically literate, the majority of younger undergraduate students found it difficult to get used to e-learning. While Italian generation Zs are broadly socially and digitally skilled, during the pandemic they showed a much lower affinity for this new format of formal education. This pattern of dissatisfaction was recorded throughout the entire country, since while Italian younger people have had relatively equal access to the internet and homeschooling, they faced the most difficult challenges related to the negative emotional impact of changes experienced in their social, academic and community activities.<sup>62</sup>

Figure 3.1: The influence of COVID-19 on the passions and hobbies of young people in Italy



Source: United Nations Children's Fund (2020/c), 'The Future We Want – Manifesto by adolescents on the post Covid-19 future in Italy', online available at: <https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/12936/file> and [https://www.unicef.it/media/\[07-10-2201\]](https://www.unicef.it/media/[07-10-2201]).

<sup>62</sup> Ranieri, J. et al. (2021), 'Buffering effect of e-learning on Generation Z undergraduate students: A cross sectional study during the second COVID-19 lockdown in Italy', *Mediterranean Journal of Clinical Psychology*, volume 9, issue 2, University of Messina, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13129/2282-1619/mjcp-3051>.

Similarly, a study of more than 1,800 Italian adolescents conducted by UNICEF in 2020 found that almost 60% of students, particularly girls, declared that the shift to using digital tools generated stress during learning.<sup>63</sup> The differences in experience between the genders is mostly linked to the feeling of insecurity at home which appeared to be higher for girls (73%) than for boys (53%). However, among both genders displayed a particular concern that they would not be able to practice their regular hobbies outside of home because of social distancing measures. Moreover, according to a study of 2,064 Italian teenagers conducted in March 2020 and published by the *Italian Journal of Pediatrics* (IJOP), over a quarter of males surveyed had improved their social relationships with friends, while less than a fifth of girls said the same thing. This difference is attributable to the fact that at the respondents' age (13–20 years) males' sociality has generally developed more in outdoor settings than females'.<sup>64</sup> The combination of those factors explains why only a quarter of students wanted to follow lessons via online learning.<sup>65</sup>

### 3.2. The effect of the pandemic on young Italians' mental health

In contrast to the common perception that COVID-19 has strongly affected Gen Zs' well-being, numerous studies have shown that younger generations in Italy have achieved a relatively good emotional balance and have adapted well to situations of instability and have to new routines by finding alternatives to their personal and social needs.

**Table 3.1: COVID-19 degree of general concern among young people in Italy, by gender (2020)**

Degree of concern	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total average (%)
nothing	2.6	8.2	4.7
little	24.1	38.4	29.6
moderately	54.9	45.2	51.2
a lot	18.3	8.2	14.5
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100

Source: Buzzi, C.; Tucci, M.; Ciprandi, R. et al. (2020), 'The psycho-social effects of COVID-19 on Italian adolescents' attitudes and behaviors', *Italian Journal of Pediatrics*, 46(69), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13052-020-00833-4>.

63 United Nations Children's Fund (2020/c), 'The Future We Want – Manifesto by adolescents on the post Covid-19 future in Italy', online available at: <https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/12936/file> and <https://www.unicef.it/media/> [07-10-2201].

64 Buzzi, C.; Tucci, M.; Ciprandi, R. et al. (2020), 'The psycho-social effects of COVID-19 on Italian adolescents' attitudes and behaviors', *Italian Journal of Pediatrics*, 46(69), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13052-020-00833-4>.

65 United Nations Children's Fund (2020/b).



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As the above table reveals, the majority of adolescents surveyed for the IJOP study, declared that they did not face considerable worry, while just one third defined their level of concern as 'little'.<sup>66</sup> At the same time, this could confirm the common tendency among adolescents (more in males than females), to underestimate the danger and the gravity of the pandemic situation. Furthermore, even though the level of concern was generally low, this varied according to geographical location in Italy: Among adolescents living in the central-southern regions (generally less affected by the spread of the pandemic), the level of concern was still double that of their peers from the northern regions. This outcome probably depended on the fact that in the north the emergency was being severely experienced in full from the beginning of the COVID-19 emergency.

### 3.3. Seeking a better future: COVID-19 and young people's career prospects in Italy

The economic and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have had a strong impact on the concerns of Italian teenagers, particularly with regard to the economic consequences of the pandemic. A survey on millennials and Gen Zs revealed that 45% of young people in Italy were concerned about being able to find a job, while anxiety linked to their long-term financial perspective rose from 47%, compared to 41% among their peers in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, in a UNICEF study on Italian youth carried out in 2020, almost three in ten students declared that the pandemic emergency has influenced their future plans for learning.<sup>68</sup> In fact, for some of them the idea of pursuing their education or choosing professional training away from home seemed to have become even more unattainable due to economic difficulties. Another survey found that almost 39% of young people in Italy surveyed were afraid of not finding a new job or changing their current one due to the economic conditions brought about by the pandemic.<sup>69</sup>

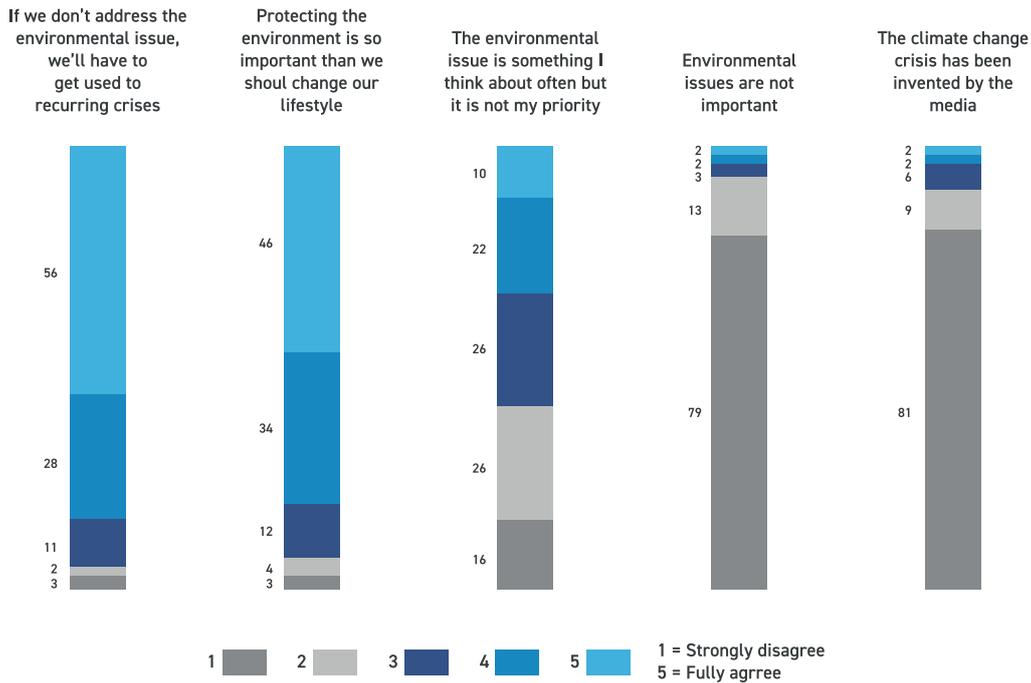
<sup>66</sup> Buzzi, C.; Tucci, M.; Ciprandi, R. et al. (2020).

<sup>67</sup> Deloitte (2021), *The Deloitte 2021 Millennial and Gen Z Survey*, online available at: [https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en.html?cid=site\\_selector\\_global](https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en.html?cid=site_selector_global) [07-10-2021].

<sup>68</sup> United Nations Children's Fund (2020/c).

<sup>69</sup> Agenzia Nazionale per i Giovani (2020), *La condizione giovanile in italia in tempi di Covid19*, published 10 July 2020, online available at: <https://agenziagiovani.it/> [09-07-2020].

Figure 3.2: The importance of protecting the environment and fighting climate change among Italian youth (%)



Source: United Nations Children's Fund (2020/c).

Despite the anxiety young people are facing about the economy, they have become very keen on entrepreneurship and have high aspirations to run their own business within the next 10 years. These ambitions are not only related to a greater desire for freedom or more flexibility in terms of when, where and how they will work, but also to the inner desire to create a better world. Many young Italians have been inspired by Greta Thunberg and her fellow school climate activists who have asked governments and corporations to act on global warming by putting people ahead of profit and prioritizing environmental sustainability through their policies.<sup>70</sup>

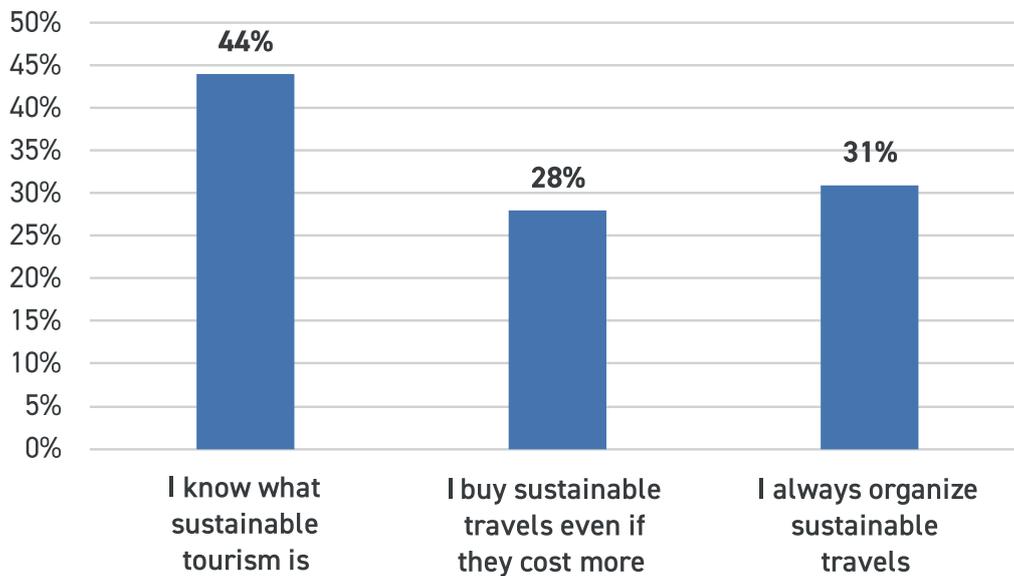
As the above figure shows, 84% of Italian adolescents (sum of grades 4 and 5) think that if urgent steps are not taken to tackle the environmental crisis, humankind will have no choice but to get used to recurring emergencies. The percentage of respondents who stated this, increased during the first lockdown in April 2020, possibly from noting the positive environmental impact derived from the sharp reduction in manufacturing activities.<sup>71</sup> The pandemic also appears to have reinforced the importance for young people of taking personal initiative to protect the environment and fight climate change: Eight in ten teenagers (sum of grades 4 and 5), mostly girls, believe that 'we should change our lifestyle to reduce our global carbon footprint'.<sup>72</sup> More specifically, in order to reduce pollution, many young Italians have highlighted the need to reduce

70 Deloitte (2021).

71 United Nations Children's Fund (2020/c).

72 United Nations Children's Fund (2020/c).

Figure 3.3: Sustainable tourism – how Italian generation Zs travel



Source: Lifegate (2020), *L'anima sostenibile degli italiani – Sesto Osservatorio Nazionale sullo stile di vita*, online available at: <https://osservatorio.lifegate.it/> [07-10-2021].

meat consumption, improve waste management, reduce plastic consumption, decrease unnecessary consumption and last, but not least, actively participate in community and political life.

### 3.4. Generation Z – the future of tourism

The effect of the pandemic on young people's behaviour and their willingness to change the status quo has also become evident in their travel choices. Given that young Italians seem willing to contribute to the low-carbon transition and stop environmental degradation, this appears to have persuaded them to gradually change their travel habits in order to choose more sustainable forms of travel tourism as the sixth Lifegate report shows:<sup>73</sup>

According to the above figure, more than a third of young people surveyed already buy a sustainable travel package even if it costs more than a common one or seeks to organize their travels sustainably. This percentage is expected to increase among young Italians in the next few years since Gen Z has become more attentive to organic food, sustainable accommodation, zero emissions mobility options and to showing a greater appreciation for local traditions.<sup>74</sup> If on one hand Gen Z is experiencing adulthood at a time when the tomorrow looks uncertain, the disruption of COVID-19 could be an extraordinary opportunity for young Italians to reshape the future, improving their behaviour and actively guiding the policymaking process.

<sup>73</sup> Lifegate (2020), *L'anima sostenibile degli italiani – Sesto Osservatorio Nazionale sullo stile di vita*, online available at: <https://osservatorio.lifegate.it/> [07-10-2021].

<sup>74</sup> Lifegate (2020).

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# 4 MEASURES TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH COVID-19 RECOVERY

In light of the findings on the impact of COVID-19 on young people in Asia and the Pacific and in Italy presented in this report, the following section provides a non-exhaustive series of guidelines on measures that can be taken across a range of policy areas to support young people's

needs and ambitions through COVID-19 recovery measures. These are presented in two stages: first policy measures relating to education, career development, responsible consumer practices and health, and second, measures relating to travel and tourism.

#### 4.1. Recovery measures to support young people's education

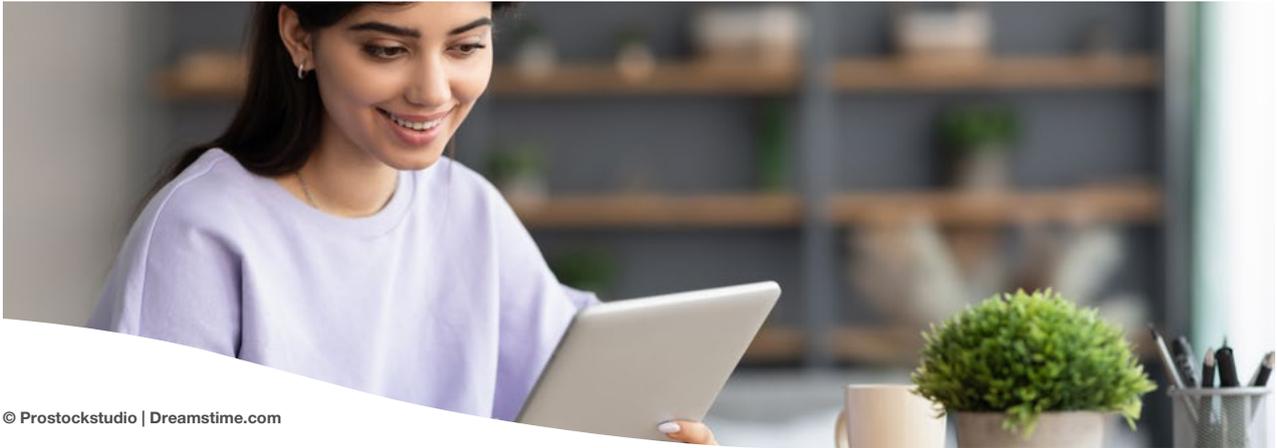
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##### **Ensuring access to remote learning for everyone through:**

- Stronger and more widespread communication technology infrastructure.
- Provision of more affordable or free-of-charge electronic devices (e.g., computers) to students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Digital literacy training for students and parents.
- Supporting teachers with skills in delivering online lessons.
- Creating special provisions for online learning for young people with disabilities.
- Ensure common/analogue means of training such as TV, radio or paper-based learning are available.
- Adoption of technologies such as AI for adaptive, personalized learning.
- Supporting networks that enable peer learning opportunities, such as live events, webinars and courses.

##### **Adapting educational content to help young people build resilience through:**

- Developing well-rounded, structured learning plans that go beyond the normal curriculum and include modules that help students develop soft and transferable skills (such as language, communication, research and analytical skills).
  - Promoting courses that will help young people understand and interpret better the world around them, such as sociology, international relations, anthropology and philosophy
  - Arranging learning formats such as self-guided and real-time classes.
  - Developing virtual tools that allow peer interaction and engagement with real-world problems.
-



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## 4.2. Recovery measures to support young people's career development

### Support for work-based learning schemes

- Encourage apprenticeships or work experience posts for young people which can be incentivized through subsidies or tax relief schemes.
- Develop virtual apprenticeships to enable young people to try different career paths.
- Design and develop multinational programmes that allow work experience across borders.
- Develop relationships between employers and the academic sector to ensure courses meet employers' needs.

### Temporary income support

- Expand social benefits for vulnerable youth groups such as recent graduates, young job seekers and young parents to ensure a minimum acceptable living standard.
- Provide emergency allowances to compensate for income gaps between jobs.
- Design and launch national incentive schemes to support study and work placements away from home (and indirectly support the hospitality sector).

### Reducing the cost of hiring or retaining young employees

- Expand job retention schemes such as wage subsidies and short-time work schemes.
- Subsidize young people recruitment, with special emphasis on the hardest-hit industries such as tourism and arts.

### Support new and existing entrepreneurs and their young entrepreneurship start-ups

- Expand the most effective measures or launching new entrepreneurship such as:
  - Direct financial support or subsidized access to funding;
  - Quality mentorship and networking opportunities; and
  - Launch of specialized incubators and competitions addressing regional-specific needs (e.g., healthcare, poverty reduction or education).
- Assist businesses in applying new measures and accessing public support funds-
- Leverage technology to provide flexible and quick support such as chatbots informing about current conditions and opportunities or e-matching between entrepreneur and investors.
- Provide incentives to investors such as tax breaks to invest in startups.
- Organize meetings with entrepreneurs to obtain feedback and proceed with reforms based on the feedback.
- Monitor, evaluate and improve existing measures.

### 4.3. Recovery measures to support young people as responsible consumers

#### Encourage initiatives that promote financial literacy

- Support, encourage and promote start-ups dedicated to financial literacy.
- Create relevant incubation or sandbox environments to foster initiatives that prove to be effective.
- Organize free relevant webinars.
- Establish web information platforms around sound consumer decisions.
- Include financial literacy in the educational curriculum.
- Design and launch region-wide educational programmes (such as the "Bank Game" of the Bank of Thailand)

#### Addressing potential disparities between stated attitudes and behaviours related to responsible consumption (i.e., the 'value-action gap')

- Create one-stop platforms with clear, accessible information, options and tools to guide sustainable choices and reduction of the consumption impacts.
- Identify barriers that encourage young consumers acting in a more responsible way and make it as simple as possible for them to do so.

### 4.4. Recovery measures to support young people's mental and physical health

#### Enhancing youth mental health services

- Create and operate crisis phone lines or e-mental health platforms (e.g., 'chat with a specialist').
- Organize youth centres for support (external or in a school context).
- Support specialist charities that promote well-being and carry out research on mental health.
- Subsidize visits costs to mental health specialists.
- Design specialized programmes where there is potential more need such as for digital addiction treatment.
- Provide continuous training to relevant professionals so as to update their methods and also be able to understand and cope with special groups such as LGBTQ youth.
- Identify underlying causes of poor mental health and integrate evidence-based approaches such as:
  - Worsen employment prospects and coordinate efforts with relevant centers; or
  - Difficult home conditions by helping school or health-care workers reach parents.
- Find solution to reduce barriers into tackling youth mental health issues such as:
  - Increased social stigma through community awareness campaigns
  - Lack of funding by leveraging social media

#### Ensuring access to a healthy diet and promotion of physical activity

- Enhance science- and data-based policies such as:
  - Taxes on sweetened beverages;
  - Food marketing restrictions;
  - Physical education e-classes;
  - Labelling for food/beverages highest in unhealthy fat, sugar and/or salt; and
  - Urban/rural plans that encourage out door physical activity.
- Increase supportive interventions in vulnerable groups
- Raise awareness of the need to pursue a healthy lifestyle

## 4.5. Travel and tourism recovery measures to support young people

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### **Design of products and services for digital natives**

- Ensure that tourism suppliers are easily searchable and bookable through online platforms (particularly mobile ones).
- Provide real-time customer service through applications such as multilingual chatbots, smart speakers and instant messaging through social media.
- Support user-generated content and encourage young visitors to share responsible tips and positive personal experiences from travel.
- Ensure easy access to high-speed Wi-Fi for locals and visitors.
- Display transparent policies on pricing and the use of personal data.

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### **Engaging with young people with attractive, engaging content**

- Use 'immersive content' to help young consumers understand what they will see, hear, taste and smell through specific travel experiences.
- Help to make cultural experiences come to life by using gamified tools such as Instagram stories and TikTok to tell stories and encourage interaction.
- Provide highly curated, clear, practical information that encourages quick, well-informed decision-making.
- Ensure that messaging about pricing and the composition of travel packages is accurate and transparent.
- Ensure that content reflects the true identity and diversity of young audiences (i.e., ensuring the appropriate representation of people of colour, as well as those in the LGBTQ community, social classes, etc.), as well as the most relevant aspects of the destination's local youth culture.

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### **Encourage practices that benefit both young travellers and destinations**

- Encourage young visitors to engage in projects and activities that contribute towards environmental or social regeneration.
  - Work with businesses to develop specific youth-oriented activities that help young visitors to understand the impact of their travel and adopt more responsible practices when travelling.
  - Provide planning and booking tools that encourage young travellers to choose local operators that adhere to internationally recognizable sustainability criteria.
  - Develop products and experiences that actively promote well-being such as running routes, outdoor gyms and calm spaces that encourage reflection and mindfulness.
-

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**Tourism as a vehicle/  
catalyst of dialogue and  
knowledge**

- Integrate responsible travel practices into educational travel programmes to ensure that young visitors understand the impact of their visits and how this can be improved:
    - Facilitation of respectful contact and interaction with local culture's elements (language, customs, traditions, history, etc.) and people;
    - Provision of information and ways for reduction of environmental impact;
    - Inclusion of local businesses so that young people can support the local economy; and
    - Assurance that the experiences (e.g., volunteerism) young people are engaging with are compliant with sustainable tourism policies.
  - Provide official support for school travel and international student mobility and exchange programmes.
  - Develop experiences that support intercultural exchange and dialogue between young local people and visitors.
  - Provide opportunities for volunteerism experiences for local residents and international visitors.
  - Mentor young leaders in the sector to provide inspiration and boost both confidence and skills.
  - Carry out further and continuous research needed to understand how the untapped potential of tourism, and educational travel programmes in particular, can be unlocked and better promote the development of transferable skills and address wider needs of young people
-



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# A YOUTH-LED RECOVERY OF GLOBAL TOURISM PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS





# **A Youth-led Recovery of Global Tourism**

## Priorities and Recommendations



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# FOREWORD

by **Zurab Pololikashvili**

Secretary-General,  
World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

The return of tourism brings with it immense opportunities, as well as anxieties and challenges. The years ahead will define our sector and its important role in delivering positive transformation and sustainable development. Young people, who have been among the hardest hit by the pandemic, must benefit from our sector's restart. At the same time, they must have a say in how tourism grows and develops, including through the work of UNWTO, as well as across the public and private sectors.

This publication brings together the results of vital collaborative research into how exactly the pandemic has impacted global youth and what this means for how they view the tourism sector. The findings show where we can – and must – do better in integrating

the voice of youth into our decision-making, from the government level right down to tourism's grassroots. It will also inform the work of the Global Youth Tourism Summit, a landmark initiative designed to give young people a strong voice in our sector.

I wish to thank all those involved in the study and in this publication, above all the Global Tourism Economy Forum. And I am confident that the study will help inform the big decisions we must now make to ensure tourism fulfils its unique potential to build a better future for all, above all for young people everywhere.





# FOREWORD

by **Pansy Ho**

Vice Chair and Secretary-General, Global Tourism  
Economy Forum (GTEF)

This report, *A Youth-led Recovery of Global Tourism – Priorities and Recommendations*, takes an in-depth look at the issues that young people have faced throughout the global pandemic in different parts of the world. As the industry looks towards the future, understanding the priorities and motivations of next generations is a forward-looking approach for the recovery of the global tourism sector.

Importantly, this report offers glimmers of hope for the future of the global tourism economy. Despite the challenges of today, younger generations are putting forth innovations to respond to the world's most pressing problems.

Today's youth has deep concerns for the world's fragilities and is seeking solutions to accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals. Tourism plays an important role in many of these solutions, as it not only supports cultural and natural resources and local economies, but it also opens the eyes of travellers to cultures and customs different from their own.

The global pandemic has accelerated the rise of experiential tourism, through which consumers

seek deeper engagement with people and places. Today's youth is increasingly seeking diverse and authentic experiences, as well as travel experiences that cultivate new skills and that improve physical and emotional well-being. The strong penchant for sustainability and meaningful experiences will continue to have a strong influence on young people's values and attitudes toward travel.

I trust that this report like the first report, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Youth – Focus on Asia and Italy*, will provide key insights to better understand the future of tourism and to benefit from its immense development potential. The messages throughout both reports reinforce the importance of making travel more purposeful, more inclusive and more fulfilling.

I take this opportunity to thank the UNWTO, and in particular Secretary-General Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili, for the continuous partnership with the Global Tourism Economy Forum and the strong commitment to ensuring tourism's sustainable and resilient future.



# INTRODUCTION

Continual disruption, be it technological, political, social, economic or – above all – climatic, has become a hallmark of our age. Yet, the way that young people today are facing this disruption, reaching across borders to approach global challenges with a newfound spirit of innovation and determination, gives much cause for hope. How today's youth experiences this disruption and react to it, will define the future of mankind on planet earth; particularly as opportunities to halt the mass decline in biodiversity and a sharp rise in global heating appear to diminish as every year goes by. How young people (defined for the purposes of this report as members of generation Z; see Box 1: Defining youth) feel about the world that they are inheriting and how they may be prepared to adapt their own behaviour, in solidarity with the environment – and with each other –, therefore matters considerably.

It is against this backdrop that the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has embarked on a major programme of work to engage directly with young people around the world and mobilize inspiring young leaders to come together, learn, share their experiences and discuss how some of the world's major challenges – particularly those facing the global tourism sector – can be addressed in innovative ways. The first milestone in this engagement with global youth is the UNWTO Global Youth Tourism Summit (GYTS), held from 27 June to 3 July 2022 in Sorrento, Italy. To provide a solid basis for the discussions that took place at this Summit and at future events,

UNWTO, with the kind support of the Global Tourism Economy Forum,<sup>1</sup> has published two major reports that explore their world view and how this impacts the global tourism sector.

The first of these reports, titled *The Impact of COVID-19 on Global Youth – Focus on Asia and Italy*, explores the real-life consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for young people in two different geographical regions and cultural contexts during 2020 and 2021. It also presents recommendations to governments around the world on measures to support young people through COVID-19 recovery policies.

The second of these reports is presented here. Through primary research data (gathered specifically for this report) and a range of other resources used in the secondary research, this report explores the wider issues and concerns that young people face in different parts of the world, as well as their priorities and ambitions for the recovery of the global tourism sector. A series of case studies showcasing various approaches to supporting education, entrepreneurship and personal development is also presented, together with a series of recommendations that can help national tourism organizations to take young people's priorities into account when designing tourism policies.

---

<sup>1</sup> The GTEF, established in 2012 and held annually in Macao, China, is a leading international exchange platform that brings together thought leaders from the public and private sectors and is designed to promote the sustainable development of the global tourism industry. For more information, please visit <https://gte-forum.com>.



## Defining 'youth'

For the purpose of clarity and consistency, the term *youth* is used in this report to refer to the age cohort commonly referred to as **generation Z or Gen Z**. While definitions vary according to different sources, the broad definition provided by the European Travel Commission (2020) shall be used as those born between 1996 and 2012.<sup>a</sup> At the time of publication (2022), this refers to individuals ranging from 10 to 26 years of age. This is also in line with the definition of ILO - Given that young people's tastes, life experiences and consumer spending power evolve rapidly between these years, it is important to keep in mind that generation Z includes young people at three key stages of their lives:<sup>b</sup>

- Ages 9 to 12 (older primary school children);
- Ages 13 to 18 (teenagers, secondary school age);  
and
- Ages 19 to 25 (students and young professionals).

### Sources:

- a) European Travel Commission (2020), *Study on Generation Z Travellers*, ETC, Brussels, online available at: [www.etc-corporate.org](http://www.etc-corporate.org) [03-01-2022].
- b) International Labour Organization (2021), *Population and Labour Force*, ILO, online available at: [ilostat.ilo.org](http://ilostat.ilo.org) [10-10-2021].



# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research for this report has been gathered from a range of both primary and secondary sources.

Two **primary research** methods were used to collect insights for this report. Firstly, an online survey of young people aged 10 to 26 was carried out for a period of approximately seven weeks, between 30 March and 19 May 2022. The survey was prepared by the authors and distributed by GYTS participants and the UNWTO Regional Department for Europe through its own networks and partners. The survey consisted of 16 questions covering a range of topics such as the impact of COVID-19 on respondents' daily life, the global issues that are important to them, their perceptions of sustainability and tourism and their future travel ambitions. A total of 2,106 responses were received with a survey completion rate of 65% (given that some open-ended questions were not made compulsory). **It is important to underline that the nature of the survey was exploratory; no fixed quotas were set for gender balance nor geographic scope; however, the individual results show a broad spread of respondents from nearly all world regions enabling a range of young peoples' perspectives to be reflected in the findings.** The key characteristics of survey respondents are presented as follows:

1. The majority of the respondents were from four countries: Maldives (20%), Philippines (18%), China (15%) and Montenegro (15%). The list of the top ten countries of origin is completed by Brazil, Japan, Slovenia, Fiji, Italy and Croatia. While the responses are highly concentrated in specific countries and regions and these do not represent the countries with the highest number of outbound or inbound travellers (with the exception of China),

the spread of responses from around the world helps to fulfil the exploratory research aim of gathering perspectives from young people in different parts of the world.

2. 13% of the respondents were between the ages of 10 and 13 years old, 41% were between 14 and 19 years old, while 46% of respondents were aged 20 to 26.
3. Regarding respondents' current study or employment status, almost half of respondents (47%) were studying in university or some other form of higher education. 25% were in compulsory (high school) education, while 10% were both studying and working at the same time.
4. Seven out of ten respondents were currently living with their parents or guardians, while one out of ten were living with roommates in shared accommodation or with other family members.
5. A little more than half of respondents (54%) were studying or working in the travel/tourism/hospitality sector, compared to 46% who were not.

Further primary research was conducted through two youth focus groups, both held online with GYTS participants on 29 April 2022. A total of 20 young people participated in the exercise, representing 17 countries. The focus groups were hosted by UNWTO and facilitated by the authors of this report. During the focus groups, participants were shown a brief presentation by the facilitators that discussed pre-prepared insights about issues that matter to generation Z, and key characteristics of generation



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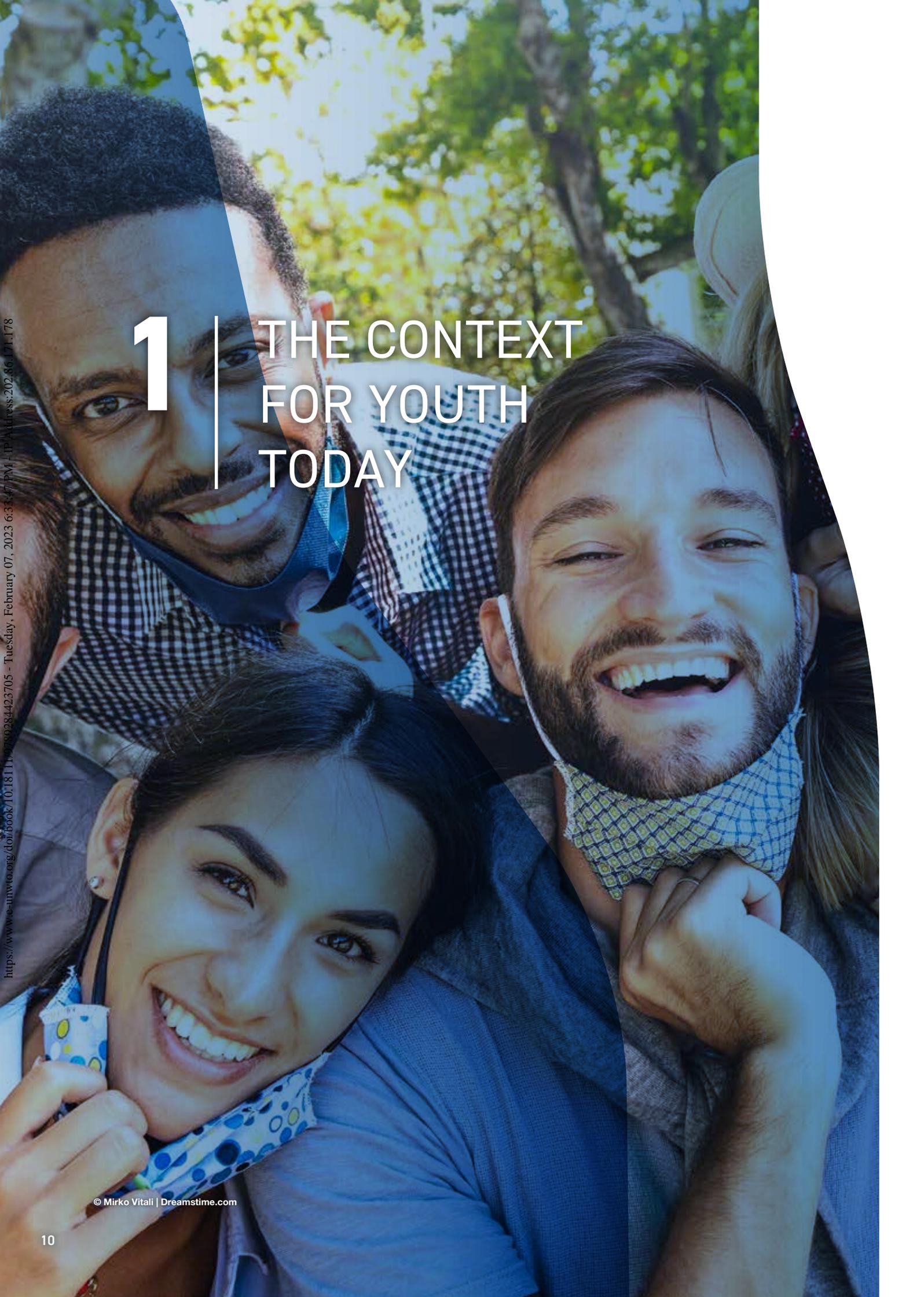
Z's travel behaviour. Participants were asked to react to the contents of the presentation and voice their own opinions about the extent to which the issues reflected their own views and those (in general) of other young people in their country. Their responses were captured and are presented in this report through a series of key quotes which give a glance of the participants' perception of their environment and that underline the survey findings.

In light of the survey respondents' and focus group participants' characteristics described above, it is important to underline that this research was exploratory. The research samples collected are not intended to be *fully representative* of global youth and reflect the characteristics of the sample (for example, the majority of respondents came from four countries and more than half of all from Asia and the Pacific, participants' educational attainment was higher than the global average, and their ability to participate in the research in fluent English also indicated a higher socioeconomic level than many of their peers). Instead, the data and opinions collected offer an insight on the respondents' own world view, with an attempt made, to the greatest possible extent, to draw conclusions and recommendations based on this.

Factors such as the balance of countries represented (trending towards developing countries, or those that are more socially conservative) and their share of respondents may also explain certain results such as the lower level of importance (1 in 5) given to social issues such as LGBTQI+ equality.

A range of **secondary resources** have been used in the preparation of this report, including publications by

international organizations, NGOs, market research companies, youth-oriented businesses and respected media sources. Further details on these sources can be found in the bibliography.



# 1 | THE CONTEXT FOR YOUTH TODAY

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As the United Nations *Youth 2030 – A Global Progress Report* explains, today's generation of young people is growing up at a time marked by profound challenges – from conflicts and climate change, to persistent inequalities, inadequate education, youth unemployment and the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup> In effect, the pandemic is one of two major global crises that have hit two generations of young people; the first of these having been the 2008 financial crisis, which left lasting scars on adolescents and young adults' socioeconomic prospects and trust in their governments. Additionally, various indicators show that young people have been hit hard by the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 crisis and are expressing growing concerns about the long-term implications it may have on disposable income and future earnings, mental health, education and employment outcomes.<sup>3</sup> These concerns are reflected in the findings from the primary research presented in this chapter and explained in more detail below.

## 1.1 Disruption to education

Prior to the pandemic, access to education globally for young people had been unequal, with children experiencing significant differences in access to learning facilities and academic progress both across and within countries. However, the global disruption to education caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is without parallel, and its effects on learning have been

severe. According to UNESCO, the crisis brought education systems across the world to a halt, with school closures affecting more than 1.6 billion learners in over 190 countries.<sup>4</sup>

While nearly every country in the world offered remote learning opportunities for students, the quality and reach of such initiatives varied greatly, and they only represented partial substitutes for in-person learning. To date, many schools remain closed for millions of children and youth, and millions more are at risk of never returning to education.<sup>5</sup> The long-term impact of these school closures on children's learning reveals a troubling harrowing reality. Learning losses have been large and inequitable: recent learning assessments show that children in many countries have missed out on most or all of the academic learning they would ordinarily have acquired in school, with younger and more marginalized children often missing out the most.<sup>6</sup> These marginalized groups often included those from remote and rural areas, migrants and refugees, young people with special needs and other disadvantaged backgrounds. Young people have also risked being excluded from online teaching and learning since many families and learners have lacked the necessary competence, resources and equipment to cope with distance learning. This was particularly a major concern for those who would normally receive targeted learning support, subsidized meals or access to a variety of extra-curricular activities and mentoring.<sup>7</sup>

2 United Nations (2022), *Youth 2030 – A Global Progress Report*, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, New York, p.3, online available at: [www.unyouth2030.com](http://www.unyouth2030.com) [27-05-2022].

3 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2022), *Delivering for Youth: How governments can put young people at the centre of the recovery*, OECD, Paris, p. 5, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/92c9d060-en>.

4 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2020), *From COVID-19 learning disruption to recovery: A snapshot of UNESCO's work in education in 2020*, published online on 16 December 2020, available at: <https://en.unesco.org/news/covid-19-learning-disruption-recovery-snapshot-unescos-work-education-2020> [08-06-2022].

5 UNICEF reports that three years into the pandemic, 23 countries – home to nearly 405 million schoolchildren – are yet to fully open schools, with many schoolchildren at risk of dropping out. For more information about the impact of the pandemic on children, visit <https://data.unicef.org/covid-19-and-children>.

6 The World Bank, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and United Nations Children's Fund (2021), *The State of the Global Education Crisis: A Path to Recovery*, The World Bank/UNESCO/UNICEF, Washington D.C./Paris/New York, online available at [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org) [27-05-2022].

7 European Commission (2021), *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Implementation of the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2021)*, EC, Brussels, pp. 3–4, online available at: [ec.europa.eu](http://ec.europa.eu) [27-05-2022].

## 1.2 Disruption to employment opportunities

Reflecting the unequal effect that the pandemic has had on education outcomes for young people around the world, current employment and future job prospects for young people have also varied widely both across and within countries. In the first months of the pandemic, young people lost their jobs faster than other age groups due to their over-representation in industries most affected by the crisis or in insecure jobs with temporary or fixed term contracts. Youth unemployment rates soared initially in nearly all OECD countries, with an impact twice as high as for the working age population. However, there is some evidence that in countries where COVID-19 restrictions have been released, employment rates for young people are recovering quickly. At the same time, it is important to recognize that just as for those in education, overall, the effects of the crisis have often been more significant for young women, young people from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs), young migrants, young people with disabilities and other young people in vulnerable circumstances who find it challenging to access employment opportunities.<sup>8</sup>

## 1.3 The impact on young people's mental health

With educational establishments closed during the pandemic, young people's physical and emotional well-being has been compromised, with schools and universities unable to offer structured activities or access to facilities and support services. Pandemic-related closures also heavily affected the social dimension of education, and many youngsters

have experienced feelings of isolation, anxiety and depression.<sup>9</sup> A survey of 151 youth organizations from OECD and non-OECD countries around the world found that the greatest worries experienced among these organizations were for young people's mental health (83%), ahead of education (64%), employment (42%), familial relations and friendships (35%), and limitation of individual freedoms (34%).<sup>10</sup> As discussed in the first report in this series, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Global Youth – Focus on Asia and Italy*, in many cultures, discussing mental health remains a social taboo, limiting the opportunities for young people to openly discuss challenges that they may be facing and, concurrently, limiting motives for governments to address these challenges in a proactive manner. Set against this backdrop, social media, which young people use most heavily of all generations, has been blamed for exacerbating young people's feelings of anxiety, while at the same time offering an outlet to discuss mental health more openly, and a space to connect to others who may be experiencing feelings of isolation.

With this in mind, this publication aims to explore to what extent the pandemic had negatively affected the lives of young people around the world, through the survey and focus groups presented in the Introduction. The first question asked to what extent the pandemic affected respondents' general quality of life during the past two years. The results are presented in figure 1.1.

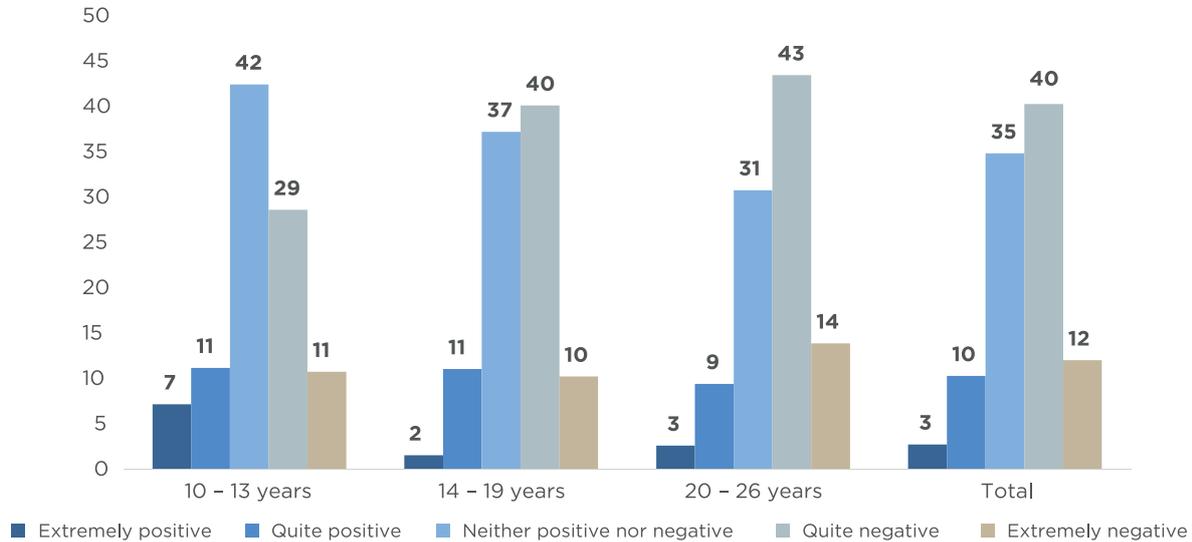
8 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2022), p. 5.

9 European Commission (2021), p. 4.

10 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2022), p. 7.

Figure 1.1: Effect of the pandemic on young peoples' quality of life (age range, %)

*Thinking about the past two years, to what extent has the pandemic affected your general quality of life?*



Notes: a) Total responses provided to this question: 1,802.  
 b) Percentages relate to the total number of answers provided per question, which differed per age group.  
 Source: World Tourism Organization (2022), based on data collected through an online survey carried out for this publication.

In total more than half of the respondents consider the impact of the pandemic on their quality of life as having been negative or extremely negative, with older respondents (20 to 26 years old) reflecting most negatively on this period. This may potentially stem from the disruption caused by the pandemic on this group's study plans, early career steps and/or plans to live independently. At the same time, the youngest respondents (aged 10-13) expressed the highest levels of uncertainty (or ambivalence) about the impact that the pandemic had had on their quality of life. This may be due to the fact that at this age, school and home life is broadly determined along routine lines. Studies have shown that many young people also valued the opportunities that lockdowns brought to spend more time with their family,<sup>11</sup> while being in contact with friends through social

media helped to offset the most negative aspects that came with lockdowns. Unfortunately, for some youth, the reverse was true: many young people – particularly girls – were kept from school or forced to work or enter early marriage, as well as to being subjected to increased cases of domestic violence.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, it is important to highlight that based on the survey, the percentage of those who felt a negative impact on their quality of life was higher among those respondents studying or working in the hospitality industry, reflecting the severe impact that the pandemic had on career paths and earning potential for workers in this sector during the past two years.

Following this, respondents were asked if they felt that the pandemic had had any lasting negative

11 VICE Media Group (2020), *Youth in Pandemic: Outlook from APAC*, VICE, online available at: <https://www.vicemediagroup.com> [05-10-2021].

12 Blomqvist, O.; Chughtai, S. and Rahman, T. (2020), *COVID-19 Pandemic Lessons from Asia-Pacific*, July 2020, Save the Children Asia Regional Office, online available at: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/> [05-10-2021].

effects on their life. The results are presented in figure 1.2.

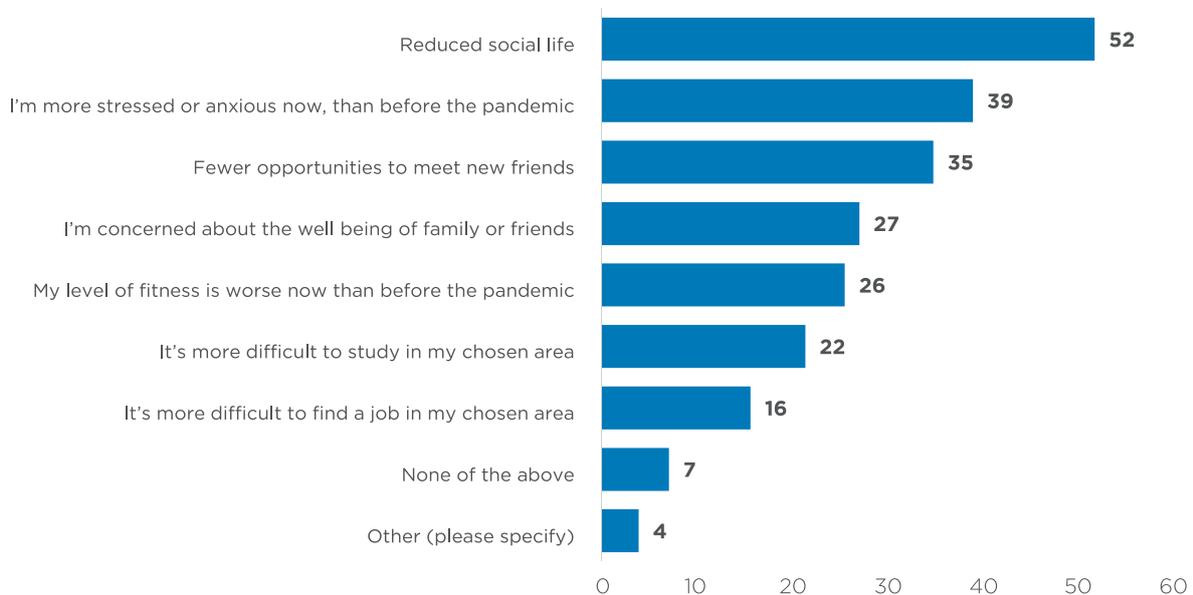
More than half of the respondents stated the reduction of social life as the most important negative impact of the pandemic. This was also reflected in the reply of a 20-year-old participant from China responding to the survey: "I hate my university life; I cannot understand why I have to spend the four best years of my youth in such a small place." Even where opportunities for quality remote education were available, the pandemic prevented young people from enjoying leisure time and socialising with friends, potentially a strong contributing factor to the second most common long-term impact of the pandemic: increased stress and anxiety. Responses given during the focus groups show compassion with the situation that many peers had found themselves in: "I am convinced that the pandemic had a horrible impact on students.

Particularly when we are talking about issues such as student debt or disciplines that require real-life workshops and practise such as in medical studies." (Vlad, 17, from Ukraine). The third most cited reason shows again the importance of socialization, and this has to do with fewer opportunities to meet new friends, while three out of ten responses expressed concern about the well-being of family and friends, as well as their physical health which they think is worse than before the pandemic. Two out of ten respondents also feel that the pandemic had made it more difficult to study in their chosen area of interest.

While the pandemic presented many obvious challenges to daily life for young people around the world, it is also notable that lockdowns and time at home in the company of family sparked much innovation for many. This was reflected by the comments of some focus group participants who

**Figure 1.2: Lasting negative effects of the pandemic on young peoples' quality of life (%)**

*Thinking about your personal situation, do you think the pandemic has had any lasting negative impacts on your life?*



Notes: a) Multiple answers were possible.

b) The percentages were calculated based on 1,376 fully completed surveys.

Source: World Tourism Organization (2022), based on data collected through an online survey carried out for this publication.

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described some of the positive ways in which they had used their time:

*“Home-schooling requires motivation, self-discipline and self-control, so this is something we achieved.”*

**Vlad**, 17, Ukraine

*“In spite of the challenges, the pandemic provided opportunities such as to eat healthy, exercise and take care of the little things you normally overlook.”*

**Abdullah**, 17, United Arab Emirates

*“During the pandemic I learned how to divide my time better, developed new skills and surpassed my fear of trying new things.”*

**Mellina**, 16, Algeria

*“It was a period of a lot of thinking, and insights and taking time for myself.”*

**Caridad**, 18, Spain

While the pandemic has presented an extraordinarily challenging backdrop for young people growing up in the world today, the proactive manner in which young people are discussing the world’s challenges and presenting solutions (including those discussed by GYTS delegates in the lead up to the summit) gives much cause for hope. A hyper-connected generation growing up in the era of 24-hour news and ‘Internet everywhere’, generation Z has grown up in an era of unprecedented awareness about human behaviour, personal health, technology and humankind’s impact on the environment. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that major issues that have grown in importance since the start of the 21st century, such as globalization, the 2008 financial crisis, terrorism, climate change and technology, have played a strong role in shaping this generation’s attitudes and beliefs.<sup>13</sup> As the following citation from the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, shows, these

issues have also elicited a strong response from young people in terms of activism and a willingness to tackle these global challenges head-on.<sup>14</sup>

*“Young people are not passively accepting the world as it is. Instead, they are actively taking the lead in changing it, as innovators, activists and voices of progress. Online, in their communities and in the streets, they are championing the values of equity, justice and international cooperation, and demanding that leaders act now to build a better world for all and to protect our planet.”*

**Antonio Guterres**,

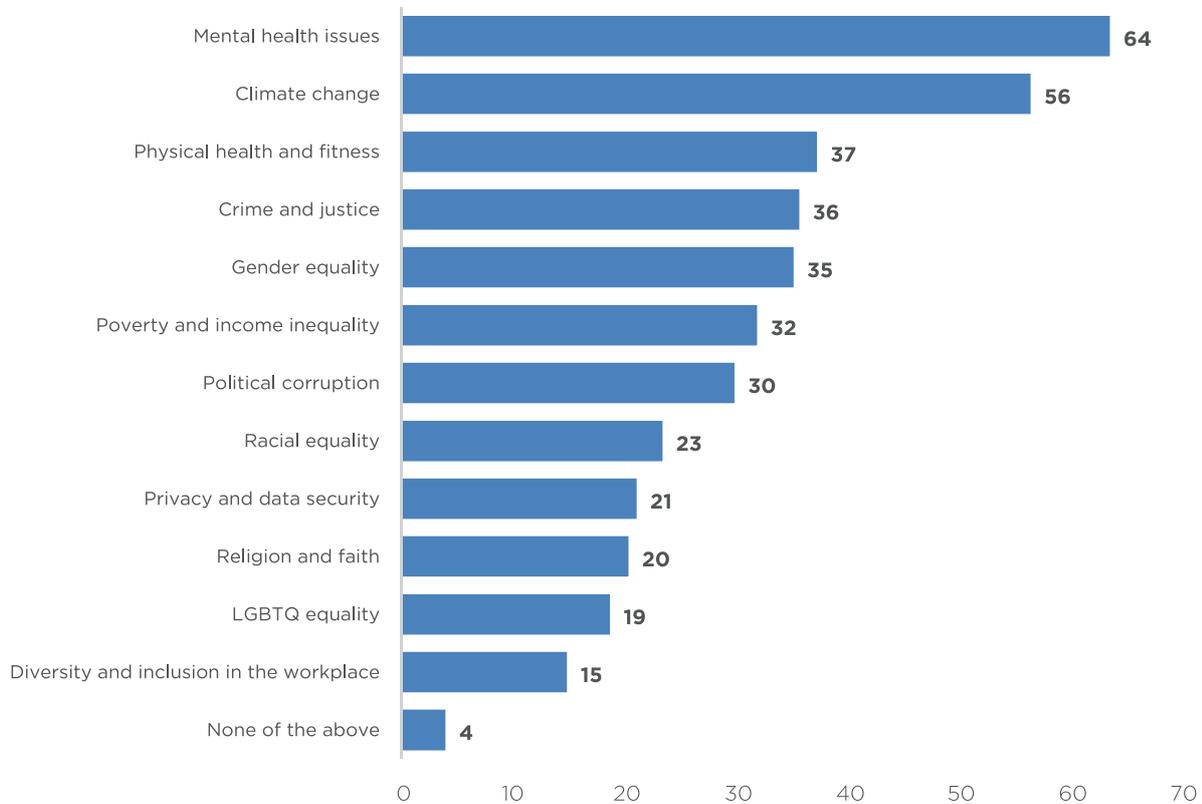
United Nations Secretary-General, April 2022

13 European Travel Commission (2020), *Study on Generation Z Travellers, ETC, Brussels*, p.14, online available at [www.etc-corporate.org](http://www.etc-corporate.org) [27-05-2022].

14 United Nations (2022), p.3.

Figure 1.3: Issues of importance to youth (%)

*Which of the following issues are especially important to you?*



Notes: a) Multiple answers were possible.  
 b) The percentages were calculated based on 1,376 fully completed surveys.  
 Source: World Tourism Organization (2022), based on data collected through an online survey carried out for this publication.

The primary research carried out for this report asked which issues were especially important to respondents. The results are presented in figure 1.3.

Reflecting the study carried out by the OECD,<sup>15</sup> a clear majority of the responses (up to 83% depending on the country/region of origin) put mental health on the top of the most important topics for generation Z, aligning closely with the findings presented earlier in figure 1.1, in which the respondents reported that

increased anxiety and stress as one of the long-term impacts of the pandemic. The replies of the focus groups and the open-ended questions of the survey show a pattern of the participants being ready to adopt action towards climate change or reward/express favourable attitudes for organizations that they consider to be sustainable.

Broadly, the responses to this question present a strong mix of results, between issues that relate

15 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2022).



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directly to the individual (such as mental and physical health or privacy and data security) and those that relate to society more broadly, such as crime and justice, and income inequality. However, the results still do reflect respondents' social conscience, with more than three out of ten responses showing concern for issues such as gender equality, poverty and political corruption. It is also important to take

into account that issues such as gender and LGBTQI+ equality resonate more strongly in some countries than others, according to the openness with which they are discussed in the media or may be discussed on social media. The lower level of importance (1 in 5) given to LGBTQI+ equality may therefore reflect the balance of countries with a higher share of respondents (see methodology section).

# 2

## THE ROLE THAT TRAVEL PLAYS IN THE LIFE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Prior to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance that travel played in the lives of young people around the world, and for the destinations that they visited was well documented by UNWTO and other international organizations. Expressed in simple terms, and still valid for the current post-COVID-19 context, for young people:<sup>16</sup>

- Travel is a form of learning;
- Travel is a way of meeting other people;
- Travel is a way of getting in touch with other cultures;
- Travel is a source of career development;
- Travel is a means of self-development; and
- Travel is part of their identity, i.e., “you are where you’ve been”.

During the 1990s and early 2000s the increasing affordability of international travel, the opening of borders and relaxation of visa restrictions in many countries, coupled with the powerful inspirational effect of social media and the ease of booking online had already helped millennials (generation Z’s older counterparts) to perceive travel “as an essential element of their life and not just a brief escape from reality”.<sup>17</sup>

Generation Zs (or ‘Gen Zers’) are often compared to their slightly older millennial counterparts. Indeed, the two generations exhibit many similarities. One important factor that helps to distinguish the two generations is that of the role of technology, and

its effect in “flattening the world” for generation Z. While older millennials grew up as children prior to rapid emergence of the Internet (from the mid-1990s onwards), Gen Zers started to be born during the period when online commerce, use of mobile devices and social media was already well consolidated (from around 2005 onwards). As a result, in contrast to older generations, Gen Zers can truly be referred to as ‘digital natives’ as they have never known a time without the Internet.<sup>18</sup>

## 2.1 Factors shaping generation Z’s attitude towards travel

The Internet has therefore become a very important factor in shaping generation Z’s world view and how members of this generation relate to each other. In 2021, the consumer research firm GWI conducted a study of more than 204,000 members of generation Z in 47 countries and found that one of the most vital characteristics to understand about Gen Z is their curiosity for the world around them. As the first generation to be born post-Internet, Gen Z’s attitudes and values are largely reflective of different individuals, countries and even time periods. When asked what helps them best identify with other people, respondents to the study said that things like humour, interests and life experience were all important; however, interestingly, more Gen Zers said they identified with people their own age than those who spoke their language.<sup>19</sup>

Given that the COVID-19 pandemic struck during the formative years for generation Z, it is likely to exert a strong influence on young people’s values and attitudes toward travel – among other things – in the

16 World Tourism Organization (2011), *Affiliate Members Global Report, Volume 2 – The Power of Youth Travel*, UNWTO, Madrid, p. 6, DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.18111/9789284414574>.

17 World Tourism Organization (2011), p. 6.

18 European Travel Commission (2020), p. 13.

19 GWI (2022), *Generation Z: GWI’s generation report on the latest trends among Gen Z*, GWI, London, p.6, online available at: [www.gwi.com](http://www.gwi.com), [27-05-2022].

years to come.<sup>20</sup> Another important factor to take into account is that the current demographic structure of the world's population is likely to cause major changes in consumer travel demand as the world's youngest populations grow, become more affluent and begin to travel. As Gen Z reaches adulthood, major growth is expected in outbound travel from Africa, Latin America and South-East Asia. Therefore, understanding Gen Z travellers and their concerns and motivations is fundamental to evaluating how demand for tourism could evolve in the years to come, and how it could impact tourism in Europe and the wider world.<sup>21</sup>

## 2.2 Generation Z and the workplace

A task equally as urgent for the global tourism sector as understanding Generation Z as travellers, is to understand the concerns and motivations of Generation Z as current and future *employees* in the sector. COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on employment, including in hospitality, travel services and retail trade. It has disproportionately affected vulnerable groups, including youth and migrant workers, as well as workers with lower educational attainment and skills. Furthermore, exacerbation of the gender divide is evident, especially in developing countries, with women seeing greater declines in employment and labour force participation than men, while in advanced economies, earlier differences by gender have largely subsided.<sup>22</sup> For members of generation Z, witnessing a global standstill of tourism, this has undoubtedly reduced the attractiveness of the tourism sector as a sector offering stable,

rewarding careers. While in some locations (notably advanced economies) a shortage of labour in the sector may force increases in wages, this may not be sufficient to compensate for the increased workload or challenging environments faced by those working in the sector (e.g., navigating health restrictions or dealing with agitated customers).

This is significant because repeated studies have found that generation Z tends to place a high value on factors beyond salary in the workplace. Dell Technologies surveyed 12,000 Gen Zs globally prior to the pandemic and found that young people place their values on, e.g., working for a socially or environmentally responsible organization (38%), the possibility to learn new skills and have new experiences (50%), and doing work that has meaning and purpose beyond getting paid.<sup>23</sup> More recently, a smaller study conducted by Instagram of 1,200 social media users aged 13 to 24 in the United States of America found that 63% of respondents agreed that COVID-19 had made them reassess their career goals, that 71% agreed that they would rather have a meaningful job even if they made less money, and were also rethinking what success means in a system and a society that is changing.<sup>24</sup> Finally, a study conducted in 2021 by global consultancy EY found that global problem-solving, diversity and original thought were key motivators for generation Z at school and at work. It also found that generation Z has a strong desire for a new educational model that includes a blend of virtual and in-person learning, true-to-life work experiences and mentorship, future-focused curriculum and greater levels of creativity and self-direction.<sup>25</sup> These findings suggest that

20 Asian Development Bank and World Tourism Organization (2022), *COVID-19 and the Future of Tourism in Asia and the Pacific*, ADB, Manila, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284423385>

21 European Travel Commission (2020), p.12.

22 International Monetary Fund (2021), *World Economic Outlook – Recovery During a Pandemic*, October 2021, online available at [www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org) [04-10-2022].

23 Dell Technologies (2019), *Gen Z: The Future has Arrived*, Dell Technologies, p.53, online available at: [www.delltechnologies.com](http://www.delltechnologies.com) [27-05-2022].

24 Instagram (2021), *Instagram 2022 Trend Report*, published on 13 December 2021, p. 7, online available at: [www.about.instagram.com](http://www.about.instagram.com) [27-05-2022].

25 EY and JA Worldwide (2021), *Gen Z is poised to reframe the future, but are business and education ready?* EY, London, p. 26, online available at: [www.assets.ey.com](http://www.assets.ey.com) [27-05-2022].

tourism businesses will have to take greater steps to reassure potential employees about the impact that their operations have on the environment and to offer a wider range of conditions to young employees, beyond a fair wage.<sup>26</sup>

### 2.3 Travel intentions

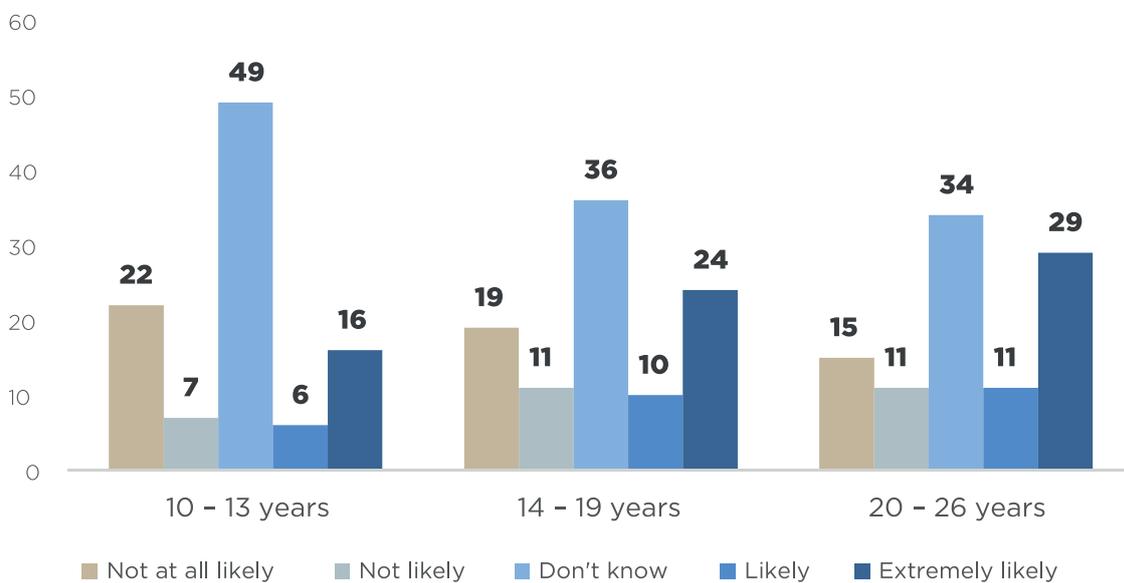
One of the aims of the primary research for this report was to understand respondents' likelihood of taking an international trip in the next 12 months. The results are presented in figure 2.1.

The highest probability to travel is recorded by those between 20 to 26 years old, who are more independent, while the increased intention to travel among this group might reflect the phenomenon of

*revenge travel*. While not referring exclusively to the behaviour of generation Z, *revenge travel* has been defined by Expedia as a way for travellers to make up for lost time by adding more trips than might typically be expected during a specific time period.<sup>27</sup> In a focus group, Mellina, 16, from Algeria, gave one more explanation: "There is still uncertainty about more lockdowns, thus people are taking the opportunity to travel and explore after a long period of time". On the other hand, the younger the respondent, the more uncertain they appear to be or not likely at all to travel. In particular, with regard to respondents in the 10 to 13 years old category, five out of ten do not know if they will travel, while two out of ten are unlikely to travel. It is important to underline that for all groups (particularly those in the youngest age bracket), a low intention to travel may not just reflect a low willingness to travel but also a low ability to

Figure 2.1: Likelihood of taking an international trip (age range, %)

*How likely is it that you will take an international trip for leisure in the next 12 months?*



Notes: a) Total responses provided to this question: 1,620.

b) Percentages relate to the total number of answers provided per question, which were differed per age group.

Source: World Tourism Organization (2022), based on data collected through an online survey carried out for this publication.

26 Asian Development Bank and World Tourism Organization (2022), p. 34.

27 Expedia Group (2021), *April Travel Outlook*, Expedia Group, published on 20 April 2021, online available at: [www.expediagroup.com](http://www.expediagroup.com) [22-05-2022].

(i.e., younger travellers are less independent, travel plans may depend on decisions taken by parents or guardians, or they may lack the financial resources to travel).

From a different perspective, when contrasted with data on how young people had experienced the pandemic (figure 1.1 above) the more positive that respondents felt about the impact of the pandemic on their quality of life, the stronger the intention they showed to travel over the next 12 months, which might conceal psychological or other (e.g., financial) underlying factors that need further examination.

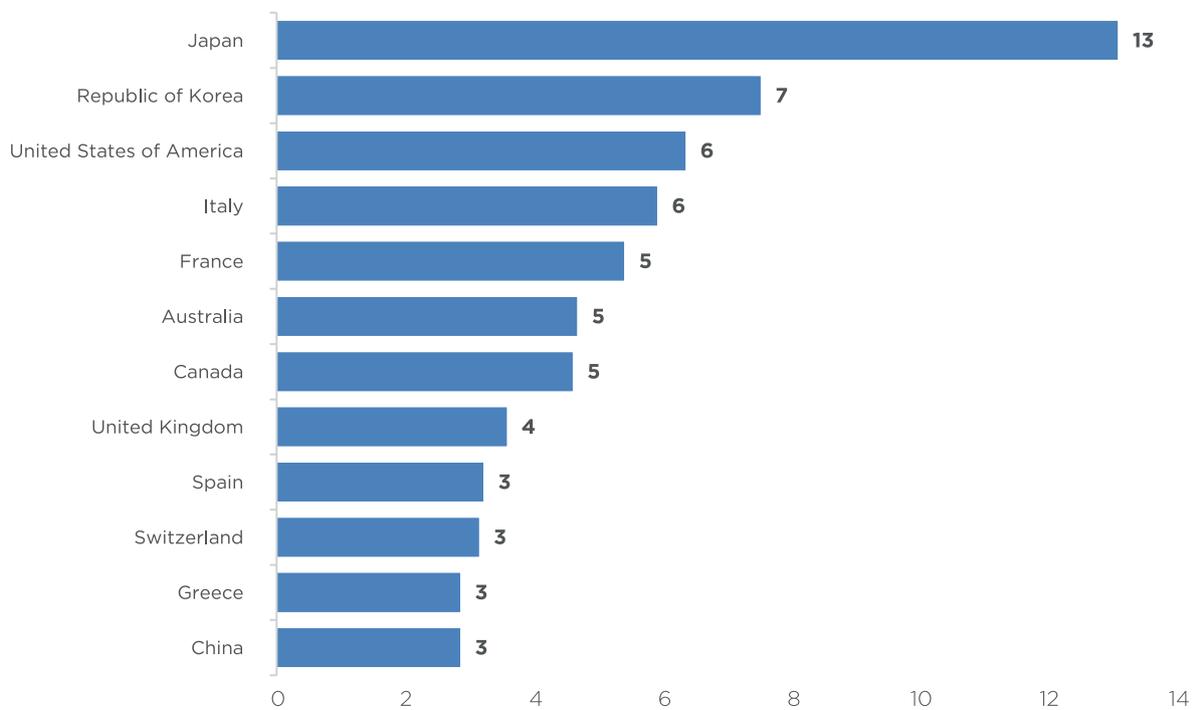
## 2.4 Destination choice

In addition to asking survey respondents about travel intentions, respondents were also asked which country was top on their travel wish list. This was asked as an exploratory question, and respondents were given the chance to choose three countries as first, second and third choice. The 12 most popular countries chosen as first choice by respondents are presented in Figure 2.2.

Given that the spread of countries of origin (see Introduction, Methodology) was so wide, it is perhaps unsurprising that the destinations on respondents' wish lists were extremely wide, both in terms of geographic scope and tourism product/experience on offer. The most desired destination selected by respondents is Japan (13%), followed by the Republic

Figure 2.2: Respondents' destination wish list (%)

*Which country is top on your travel wishlist?*



Notes: a) Total responses provided to this question: 1,618.

b) The ranking above are the twelve most popular replies that respondents provided as their first choice

Source: World Tourism Organization (2022), based on data collected through an online survey carried out for this publication.

of Korea (7%) and the United States of America (6%) which may also be a consequence of the fact that over 50% of respondents come from Asia and the Pacific and thus select destinations which are more popular in the region. It is notable that the list does include four Mediterranean countries: Italy, France, Spain and Greece. With regard to those countries chosen as second and third choice, the same countries remain on the top of the wish list with the exceptions of Spain and China, which are replaced by Germany and New Zealand, and Thailand and New Zealand, respectively.

## 2.5 Attitudes towards responsible travel practices

As previously discussed, climate change figures among the major preoccupations of generation Z (being the second greatest issue of concern to this generation according to the online survey for this report, after mental health). This generation has grown up during an era of unprecedented awareness about the impact of human activity on climate change and has been better equipped than any previous generation to discuss these issues and mobilize support using social media. Combined with the clarity of her message and determination, this helps to explain why the Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has become a major icon for youth today.

According to GWI's survey of generation Z, it is notable that in the United States of America, consumers typically worry about healthcare, infectious disease or gun violence ahead of climate change but for Gen Zs, it's their number one concern (44%). Even when the long-term effects of the pandemic are taken into account, generation Z's fears about climate change eclipse things like national debt (24%) and job security (28%). "Put simply, generation Zs worry more about the planet's future than their own."<sup>28</sup>

It is well understood that eliminating the use of fossil fuels in both aviation and ground transportation is one of the most critical tasks facing the global tourism and transportation sector. While COVID-19 restrictions caused a sharp decline in global aviation and forced more people to travel closer to home for leisure, there is much debate about the extent to which the global population will resume travelling with a similar intensity and using the same modes of transport as before the pandemic.

In early 2022, the Credit Suisse Research Institute presented a major study examining the attitudes of generation Z consumers around the world towards sustainability. The study polled 10,000 young people across ten countries: 50% in emerging economies and 50% in developed economies, 50% from generation Z and 50% from the millennial generation. With regard to electric vehicle (EV) ownership, China was the only country group where over 50% of respondents indicated they currently own an electric or hybrid vehicle; the second highest was India at only around 29% of respondents, while all other countries were less than 20%. In this regard, it is important to note that electric vehicles are currently typically more expensive than combustion engine vehicles, which may also limit ownership. Nevertheless, the overall results show a high willingness and "expectations to own" an EV or hybrid vehicle over traditional internal combustion engine vehicles in the future. This is particularly high in emerging countries (approximately 74% of respondents) where switching to EV or hybrid is most needed, but also encouraging in developed countries which where more than 50% of respondents expected to own an EV/hybrid vehicle.

With regard to flying, the study found a high willingness across both emerging and developed countries to take holidays closer to home in order to reduce [higher-carbon] long-haul flights in the future. This again was particularly high in China, India and the

28 GWI (2022), p. 9.

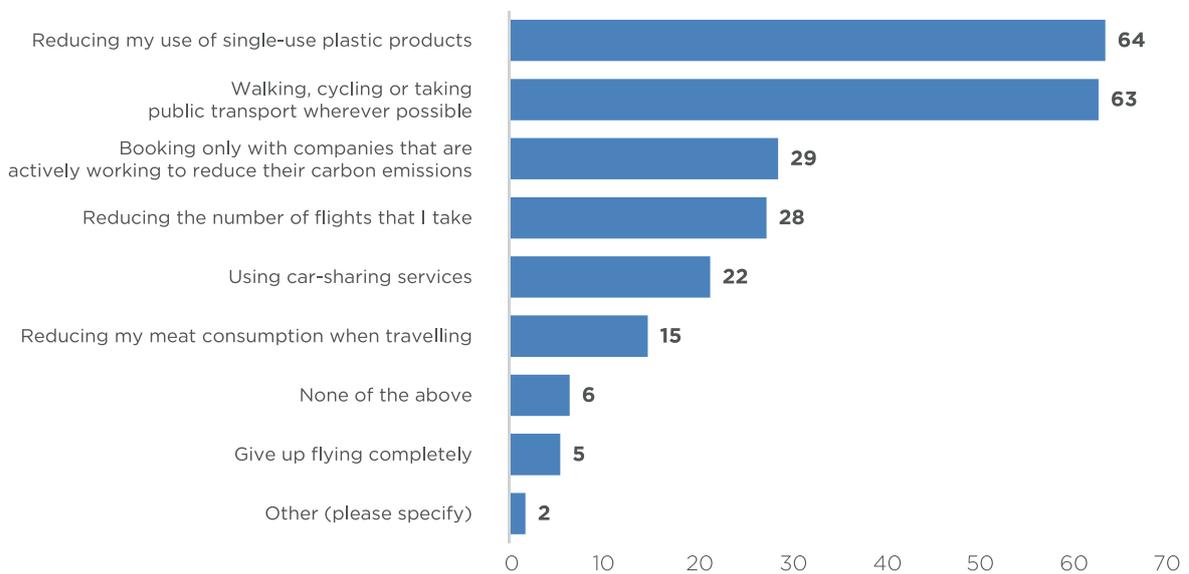
25–30 age group, as well as respondents with higher education levels and environmental concerns. Notably, the only sub-groups surveyed where less than 50% of respondents noted they would not take holidays closer to home in the future due to environmental concerns were Switzerland (albeit still around 49% responded they would) and those who had already stated that they were indifferent to or do not have environmental concerns. It is also interesting to note that respondents from developed countries generally seem less willing than those from emerging countries to take holidays closer to home in the future due to environmental concerns. Ultimately, government measures to reduce short haul flights may force young consumers’ decisions in the future in any case, as countries such as France and Austria have eliminated short haul (national) flights, or drastically increased taxes to disincentivize travellers to purchase them.<sup>29</sup>

Another encouraging takeaway from the study’s results is an overall high willingness across both emerging and developed countries to pay more for flights if the airline offsets the carbon emissions associated with the flight. This is again particularly high in China and India and the 25–30 age group, as well as respondents with higher education levels and environmental concerns.<sup>30</sup>

To what extent were these concerns reflected in the survey results for this report, and in the focus group discussion held with GYTS participants? Survey respondents were asked how they would be prepared to change their own travel behaviour. See figure 2.3 for results. The most notable results were that three out of five respondents would reduce the use of single-use plastic products and/or use low-carbon forms of transport

**Figure 2.3: Prospective behavioural changes in order to reduce environmental footprint (%)**

*In order to reduce your environmental footprint, in which of the following ways would you be prepared to change your travel behaviour?*



Notes: a) Multiple answers were possible.

b) The percentages were calculated based on 1,376 fully completed surveys.

Source: World Tourism Organization (2022), based on data collected through an online survey carried out for this publication.

29 Ledsom, A., (2022), ‘France Travel: Many Short-Haul Flights Outlawed from April’, *Forbes*, online available at: [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com) [04-10-2022].

30 Credit Suisse Research Institute (2022), *The Young Consumer and a Path to Sustainability*, Credit Suisse, pp.5, 45-50, online available at: [www.credit-suisse.com/researchinstitute](http://www.credit-suisse.com/researchinstitute) [27-05-2022].

https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284423705 - Tuesday, February 07, 2023 6:33:47 PM - IP Address: 202.86.171.178

such as walking, cycling or public transportation, wherever possible. It is notable that aside from the option of 'reducing meat consumption when travelling'. Both of these responses are related to behaviours which may be introduced as a new routine during travel, where they are often a means overcoming the value-attitude gap, and are later likely to be replicated at home and for which individuals are typically able to exercise their own control (without having to depend on the decisions of others).

Other responses received comparatively less support from respondents (all less than 30%) and typically involve some degree of sacrifice or additional complexity in travel planning; for example, the additional need to identify and book with companies that are actively working to reduce their carbon emissions or use car-sharing services rather than car rental or taxis. It is also notable 'reducing the number of flights I take' was selected by a comparatively smaller share of respondents than had been seen in the Credit Suisse Research Institute Study cited above, though this may also be related to the balance of countries sampled (since with a large share of respondents from the Maldives, it is perhaps inevitable that so many respondents would expect to fly in order to travel in the future).

When evaluating the responses given, it is important to consider that actual behaviour can often diverge from stated intentions (in surveys such as these) due to the 'value-action' gap, i.e., the gap between being environmentally aware and taking concrete actions to reduce one's environmental footprint. Key obstacles to taking action include the accessibility of such products and their increasing cost, as Aimé, 18, from Switzerland explained in one of the focus groups: "Using environmentally friendly products is getting even more difficult due to inflation, particularly for the younger generation." This is also the case when it comes to transportation. Talking from her own experience of living in a metropolis, Caridad, 18, from Spain, said: "When it comes to sustainable transportation, it is important to provide affordable, sustainable options".

Thoughts on travelling responsibly among GYTS participants:

*"Wanting to stop climate change does not necessarily match with people's real behaviour."*

**Aimé**, 18, Switzerland

*"It's a real shame that sustainable development goals are not taught effectively at schools."*

**Jurica**, 19, Croatia

*"Everybody thinks of climate action, but doesn't necessarily take action."*

**Mellina**, 16, Algeria

*"Overtourism is already back, I experience it where I live, and social media is playing a significant role in this"*

**Samuel**, 18, Austria



© Mirko Vitali | Dreamstime.com

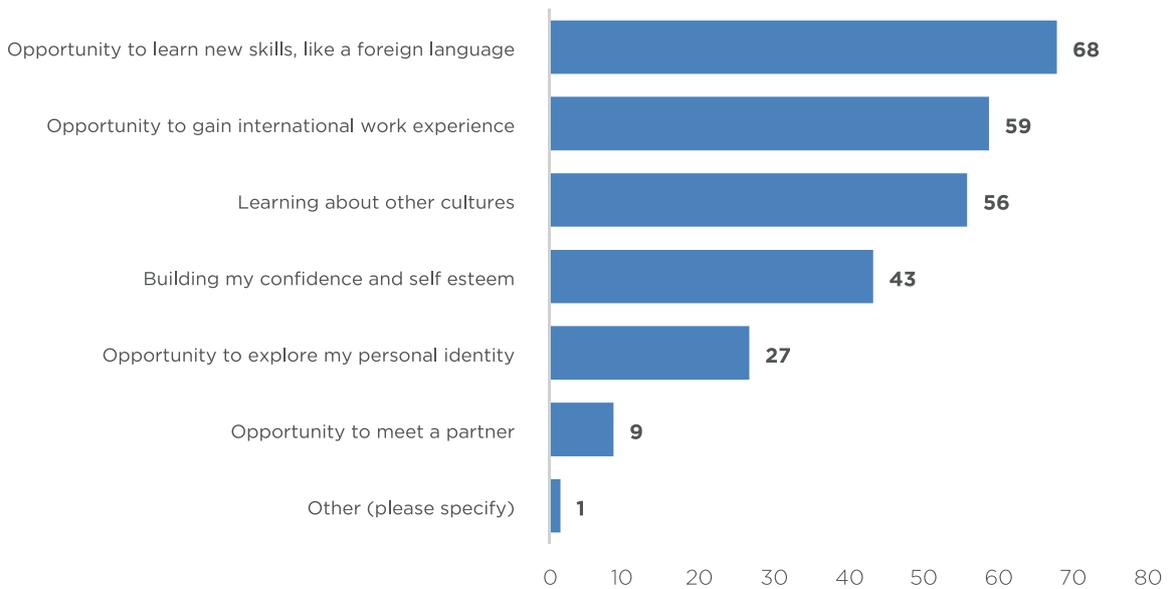
## 2.6 Future personal travel ambitions

As discussed at the start of chapter 2, travel has been found to offer a wealth of benefits to young people, as it offers opportunities for education, socialization, cultural discovery, career development

and self-development. One of the research aims of this study was to find out what travel represents for young people today. As part of the online survey, participants were asked 'In what ways do you wish travelling could help with your future life plans?' The answers to this are presented in figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4: Ambitions for travel supporting future life plans (%)

*In what ways do you wish travelling could help with your future life plans?*



Notes: a) Multiple answers were possible.

b) The percentages were calculated based on 1,376 fully completed surveys.

Source: c) World Tourism Organization (2022), based on data collected through an online survey carried out for this publication.



© Manop Phimsit | Dreamstime.com

These results largely confirm that young respondents largely perceive the greatest personal value in travelling in the opportunity to learn new skills and work experience. Seven out of ten responses express the aspiration of new skill development during travelling. In fact, seeking new skills and meaningful experiences seems to be a core value for the young generation that present in many manifestations of their lives. In a focus group, Abdullah, 17, from the United Arab Emirates, said that “obtaining new skills and learning new things should be one of the main criteria when choosing a job”. Similarly, six out of ten show the desire to obtain work experience, which is in line with the previous response, but also a reflection of those respondents who are also studying or working in the hospitality industry.

Meanwhile, more than half of respondents (56%) value the opportunity that travel offers to learn about new cultures (reflecting GWI’s research that underlined Generation Z’s striking curiosity about the world around them<sup>31</sup>). Young people’s concerns around mental health and self-esteem are also potentially reflected in the significant share (43%) of respondents who hope that travel could help to build their confidence and self-esteem in the future. As Vlad, 17, from Ukraine, summarized: “travel is an efficient way to relax, de-stress and learn new things.”

*“Tourism can help with socioeconomic issues such as unemployment, particularly in less developed countries”*

**Mellina**, 16, Algeria

# 3

## SUPPORTING EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP BY WORKING DIRECTLY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE:

### SELECTED CASE STUDIES



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The United Nations' Youth Strategy 'Youth 2030' is built on established principles of meaningful youth engagement. In essence, this 'meaningful' youth engagement requires the public and private sectors to work both *for* and *with* youth as critical foundations of change.<sup>32</sup> A multitude of programmes exist at different levels across the globe to give young people a voice in local policy formation, increase local resilience and harness their creativity and energy in addressing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Some programmes are administered by agencies of the

United Nations, while others are administered by other non-governmental organizations.

The following chapter presents five case studies that demonstrate good practices in engaging with young people in effecting meaningful change in their local communities. In some cases, this occurs through projects that are directly or indirectly linked to the tourism sector.

32 United Nations (2018), *Youth 2030: The UN Youth Strategy*, Office of the United Nations Youth Envoy, New York, p. 5, available at: [www.unyouth2030.com/](http://www.unyouth2030.com/) [27-05-2022].

## Case study 1: The Tipping Point in Education (Greece)

### Summary

An education and mentoring programme that enables students in remote areas to learn from seasoned tourism professionals.

### Overview

The Tipping Point in Education (TTP) is a non-profit organization that provides students throughout Greece with the opportunity to get in touch with accomplished professionals (i.e., mentors) and get practical answers and inspiration related to their future career plans. Although the organization addresses all sectors of the economy, some programmes with a special emphasis on tourism have been run, such as the project “Connecting Schools of Crete with the World of Tourism”, which has aimed to help students understand the value of opportunities that working in tourism offers and learn about new perspectives and practices in the sector. This is particularly valuable in Greece since sessions on “Tourism, Economy and Entrepreneurship” have been the most heavily in demand in several regions of the country.

### How the programme works

The programme, facilitated by the “100 mentors” platform, runs its projects in two ways: lecture and enquiry based. Regarding the former, schools send

a request to the mentor(s) of their preference for a specific timeslot and upon acceptance, the educator can upload questions in advance to ensure that time in the lecture is optimized for greater efficiency. When the lecture is held, the mentor replies to the questions and engages in further discussion with the students during a live video session. Alternatively, when a specific enquiry is made, mentors can upload short videos replying to pre-set questions from students. In the past, typical questions included: “What skills are required to engage with creative tourism?”, “How can rural tourism decrease seasonality?” among other highly relevant topics. During the COVID-19 pandemic and due to the challenging situation it created, the organization also provided the opportunity for educators to interact through videos and create a digital library with best practices.

### Impact

So far, TTP has reached 435 schools all over Greece, totalling 37,483 students and 1,041 educators, supported by a growing community of 1,803 professional mentors. Moreover, the programme is supported by leading organizations such as the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and Coca Cola Tria Epsilon.

### For further information:

<https://www.thetippingpoint.org.gr/en/>

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#### Sources:

The Tipping Point (n.d.), *Let's Get Digital Hub*, The Tipping Point, online available at: <https://www.thetippingpoint.org.gr/en/> [20-05-2022].

## Case study 2: Youth Career Initiative (international)

### Summary

A global programme to reduce unemployment among underprivileged youth through tourism.

### Overview

The Youth Career Initiative started in Thailand in 1995 as a programme offering young people at risk of child exploitation educational opportunities through a network of five-star hotels. Subsequently the initiative joined the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance and expanded all over the world, aiming to reduce unemployment among underprivileged youth from a variety of backgrounds (for example, low-income families, refugees or human trafficking survivors) through enabling their path to employment in the tourism sector.

### How the programme works

Currently, the Youth Career Initiative is targeted at young people from 18 to 24 years old and includes a training programme of approximately three months that starts with the development of basic hospitality and English language skills through more than 100 hours of classroom time. Subsequently, the young participants receive real-life experience in one of the partnered hotels across a variety of operational areas such as the housekeeping, and food and beverage

departments. Following the successful completion of the programme, participants are supported towards finding a job in hospitality.

### Impact

Since joining the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, the programme has helped more than 6,000 vulnerable young people, while more than 200 hotels have participated in the youth employment programme. The programme's youth working group now boasts participation by 17 leading hotel companies, while in 2016 the Youth Career Initiative won the 'People' category at the Tourism for Tomorrow awards from the World Travel & Tourism Council.

### For more information:

[www.sustainablehospitalityalliance.org](http://www.sustainablehospitalityalliance.org)

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### Sources:

Giorgadze, M. (2018), 'Youth Career Initiative', Tourism4SDGs, published on 15 October 2018, online available at: <https://tourism4sdgs.org/> [20/05/2021].

Sustainable Hospitality Alliance (n.d.), *Youth Employment Programme*, Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, online available at: <https://sustainablehospitalityalliance.org/> [20/05/2021].

### Case study 3: The World Challenge's pre-Departure Training Programme (international)

#### Summary

An educational travel company that embeds climate change education in its travel services for students.

#### Overview

The World Challenge is an educational travel company that has been operating for more than 30 years. The company offers a series of services such as its 'Leadership Expeditions', where student-travellers are also required to make decisions on issues such as supplies and trip planning for others in their group, as well as the 'Learning Service Journey', which aims to help students cultivate skills through immersive volunteering and other activities. In running these initiatives, the company works alongside several organizations such as Re-Think Orphanages, an organization that works with stakeholders in countries in the global north to shift their support (funding, mission, volunteering and tourism) away from orphanages towards strengthening families in the global south. During the pandemic, the World Challenge launched a series of initiatives such as domestic itineraries in Australia and New Zealand, while also turning climate positive. Through each of these initiatives, a pre-departure learning programme around sustainability was established.

#### How the programme works

The content of the programme is designed to provide learning around three pillars, namely: 1. Global Citizenship; 2. Personal Growth; and 3. Well-being. Various educational sessions are held throughout the programme to provide a foundation of knowledge and understanding which can develop further during the students' trips. Students get access to a range of online modules that they complete prior to departure along with their travel group. The modules are connected to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular those related to climate change and climate action. The company takes care to design its trips in a way that facilitates building the skills and a mindset towards taking climate action, with the trip leaders being specially trained in doing this, while other aspects of the trip such as packing lists that encourage eco-friendly products also promote responsible travel practices.

#### Impact

The World Challenge has served more than 150,000 students during its 30-year operations, organizing more than 12,000 trips in 44 countries. Regarding the recent Pre-Departure Training Programme, the company plans to start monitoring the impact of the programme against six educational outcomes from 2022 and onwards. So far 24 practical modules have been developed, while 346 teams gained access to the educational content.

#### For further information:

[www.weareworldchallenge.com](http://www.weareworldchallenge.com)

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#### Sources:

Tourism Declares (n.d.), *How can you embed Climate Change education in your trips?*, Tourism Declares, online available at: <https://www.tourismdeclares.com/> [20/05/2021].

World Challenge (n.d./a), *Our Story*, World Challenge, online available at: <https://weareworldchallenge.com/uk/> [20/05/2021].

World Challenge (n.d./b), *World Challenge Impact Report 2021*, World Challenge, online available at: <https://issuu.com/> [20/05/2021].

## Case study 4: Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs (European Union member states and selected other countries)

### Summary

An extension of the European Union's (EU's) long-established higher-education exchange programme, Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs aims to nurture skills and cultural understanding through international exchanges for young people entering the business world.

### Overview

Erasmus for young entrepreneurs is a cross-border scheme that facilitates the experience of entrepreneurial and management experience for young people aged over 18. It is targeted in particular at newly established entrepreneurs (with less than three years of business experience) or *potential* entrepreneurs (aged 18 and over), who would spend time with well-experienced SME entrepreneurs in another country. The programme aims at the "exchange of knowledge and experience, better networking possibilities across Europe and new commercial relations for European businesses". The programme allows exchanges across most EU member states, while the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneur Global also provides the opportunity for exchanges with experienced SME entrepreneurs from Canada, Israel, Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan Province of China and the United States of America.

### How the programme works

To participate in the programme, both types of categories of entrepreneur described above should apply through the programme's online platform and

choose their preferred local contact point in their country of residence, who acts as a guide to the programme from the beginning to the end. After the young entrepreneurs are assessed and accepted, they gain access to the list of host entrepreneurs and the contact the most relevant to the sector that they work in. Participants are also required to have certain materials in place such as a business plan, in order to get accepted. The programme provides a monthly financial allowance (provided by the EU) which is adjusted based on the cost of living of the destination country. In response to the pandemic, the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme provides those that cannot travel with the opportunity of a remote exchange which can last from 1 to 3 months with no financial allowance. Within 12 months from the remote exchange taking place, participants can also do a physical exchange based on the regular terms described above.

### Impact

Since its inception in 2009, more than 10,500 business exchanges have taken place, across 45 countries. However, the true impact can be found at micro level and on a case-by-case level and is expressed with both quantitative and qualitative metrics such as increase in employment, synergies, local businesses developed with better prospects among others. Regularly, there are featured success cases, with tourism businesses also featuring among them.

### For more information:

<https://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/>

[https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/supporting-entrepreneurship/erasmus-young-entrepreneurs\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/supporting-entrepreneurship/erasmus-young-entrepreneurs_en)

<https://eyeglobal.eu/>

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### Sources:

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Support Office, *Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs*, online available at: <https://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/> [20/05/2021].

## Case study 5: Uplink Youth Mental Health Challenge (international)

### Summary:

A human centric approach to tackling the problems that young people face.

### Overview

Launched at the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting in 2020, UpLink is the WEF's open innovation platform with the mission to create bridges within the innovation system, mainly through creating challenges (contests). In this respect, it is similar to the UNWTO Students' League and contests that have been launched in recent years that seek solutions for specific tourism themes (e.g., gastronomy tourism), problems (e.g., the global pandemic pandemic) or for the specific issues that certain regions face. The Uplink Youth Mental Health Challenge, launched in partnership with Salesforce and UNICEF is distinctive because it is aimed at designing solutions *by* youth *for* youth.

### How the programme works

The challenge launched in February 2022 to April 2022, during which time participants could make their submission. The solutions proposed were required to address the issue of stigmatization stemming from mental health and enable young people to address their mental health needs and improve their well-being. The review period closed at the end of May 2022, hence the final results are yet to be released. However, UNICEF had previously cooperated successfully with

the young innovator Gitanjali Rao to develop 'Kindly', an open-source software interface that uses machine learning to identify "toxic" messages by detecting abusive intent on social media and providing instant feedback for users to reconsider their messages. This is an indication of the results-oriented approach of the platform.

### Impact

The challenge attracted 14 top innovators and 76 solutions, while institutions such as Harvard University and other major global partners supported the initiative. Uplink has launched 34 innovation challenges, sourced more than 3,500 solutions and identified and selected more than 260 entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs known as 'Top Innovators' receive significant support to scale their impact up. The funding secured by the Top Innovators so far has reached around USD 950 million.

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### Sources:

Hijazi, Z.; Ladele, O.; Brophy, M. and Baeza, C. (2022), 'How young innovators can solve youth mental health challenges', World Economic Forum, published on 13 April 2022, online available at: <https://www.weforum.org/> [20/05/2021]

Uplink (n.d.), *Impact Report 2021–2022*, Uplink, online available at: <https://uplink.weforum.org/> [20/05/2021]

Further to the case studies, the online survey for this report also asked an exploratory question to respondents, regarding companies in the tourism sector that had inspired them due to their responsible practices: **‘Are there any companies or organizations in the travel and tourism sector that inspired you because of their responsible approach? What do they do that inspires you?’** (open-ended question).

Respondents’ replies show a series of patterns that reflect the corporate values and practices that they appreciate most. In summary, companies were mostly highlighted due to their:

- Awareness and practice of responsible/ethical behaviour;

- Respect for people (employees, customers);
- Diversity and inclusion practices;
- Professional opportunities provided to young people in the workforce; and
- Company’s mission and vision.

Furthermore, a series of international tourism organizations were mentioned by respondents, including UNWTO, World Travel & Tourism Council, Global Sustainable Tourism Council, European Network for Accessible Tourism, the student organization AIESEC, as well as other initiatives or start-ups, some of which have been highlighted in the table below:

**Table 3.1: Tourism companies and organizations highlighted by respondents for their responsible practices towards stakeholders**

Name	Brief description	Quote from survey
<b>Access Travel</b>	Access Travel is a group of travel enthusiasts and consultants helping with trip planning.	“They directly coordinate with local communities around the world to share genuine tourism experiences to their clients.”
<b>Good Journey</b>	Initiative that shows you how to get to the best attractions by train, bus, bike and foot in the United Kingdom..	“Good Journey encourages the use of public transport to reach visitor attractions”
<b>Jollibee Group Foundation</b>	The social responsibility arm of the Jollibee Group, which implements programmes on agriculture, education, and disaster response.	“Jollibee Group Foundation (JGF), because of their programmes to agriculture and disaster preparedness ,as well as in engaging with communities.”
<b>Responsible Travel</b>	Agency representing eco-friendly tours and trips that focus on local culture and people, independent businesses and wildlife conservation.	“The company that inspires me would be Responsible Travel. They offer holiday packages to tourists who care about the environment while also being more ethical.”
<b>Social BnB</b>	A booking platform for accommodation linked to social or ecological projects.	“Connection between NGOs and Travel with benefits for everyone.”
<b>Tourism Club Franchise</b>	Student-run talent pool for tourism, hospitality and gastronomy.	“Tourism Clubs in Hungarian universities, by Youth Business Group inspire me.”
<b>Travalyst</b>	Global initiative aiming to change the impact of travel, for good, led by the Duke of Sussex.	“Travalyst & GSTC – networks to share knowledge on sustainability and set guidelines.”
<b>Travel Foundation</b>	Independent charity that works with tourism companies and organizations to unlock the positive potential of tourism	“Travel Foundation supports destinations and communities to develop and improve sustainable tourism.”

# 4

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

HOW NATIONAL TOURISM  
ORGANIZATIONS AND  
GOVERNMENTAL  
AUTHORITIES CAN SUPPORT  
A YOUTH-LED DEVELOPMENT  
OF GLOBAL TOURISM

## 4.1 Conclusions

The findings of this report, as well as the outcomes of other preparatory activities for the Global Youth Tourism Summit, confirm that young people see tourism primarily as a vehicle for improving their educational skills, work experience and confidence, but that it also represents a vital channel for cultural exchange and improving 'soft skills' too. While still only at the beginning of their 'travel careers', the young people interviewed and surveyed for this report perceive the value of tourism very clearly. At the same time, the research presented in this study also confirms what has already been widely documented: that accelerating global heating and the collapse of biodiversity means that the post-pandemic recovery of global tourism should not come at any cost. This appears to be a fact that generation Z (sometimes referred to as the 'Sustainable Generation') appears to understand better than any other generation.<sup>33</sup>

As the world enters the mid-2020s, more and more of generation Z are growing up to become independent consumers and employees in the tourism sector. However, as they do so, it is important to keep in mind that climate change, conflict, economic pressures and the increasing scarcity of natural resources means that this generation is growing up in a world very different to the post-war boom experienced by baby boomers and generation X, or the heady days of globalization and Internet expansion experience by older millennials.<sup>34</sup>

For this reason, **rather than perceiving youth simply as a market to boost the recovery of the tourism sector, tourism should instead be seen as a vehicle to equip young people with the tools to confront the personal and social challenges that they currently face and are likely to face in the future.** This

should be the lens through which governments (in particular ministries of tourism and national tourism organizations) should design recovery policies and prioritize investment over the longer term.

The first report in this series, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Global Youth – Focus on Asia and Italy*, presented a series of guidelines across a wide range of policy areas to support young people's needs and ambitions through COVID-19 recovery measures. The recommendations presented in this report take a narrower, more focussed view on measures that ministries of tourism and national tourism organizations are particularly well-placed to address, based on their typical range of competencies (such as partnership building, research, marketing, education and skills development, and product innovation). Readers are therefore encouraged to consult both sets of recommendations in order to gain a rounded understanding of how a youth-led recovery in tourism can best be supported.

33 Petro, G. (2021), 'Gen Z is Emerging as the Sustainability Generation', *Forbes*, published on 30 April 2021, online available at [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com), [27-05-2022].

34 While some definitions differ slightly, the year of birth of each generation may be broadly defined as follows: generation Z: 1997–2012; millennials/generation Y: 1981–1996; generation X: 1965–1980; baby boomers: 1946–1964 and silent generation: 1928–1945.

## 4.2 Guiding principles for youth engagement in policy formulation and implementation

The following set of overarching principles should guide policymakers on ensuring that the recommendations that follow are implemented in a way that reflect the spirit and ethos of the United Nations' own Youth Strategy and are as effective as possible in meeting the needs of young people.

**Firstly**, following the principles of the UN Youth Strategy 'Youth 2030', **policies should be built on established principles of meaningful youth engagement**. In essence, this *meaningful* youth engagement requires the public and private sectors to work both *for* and *with* youth as critical foundations of change.<sup>35</sup> This engagement must also therefore be sincere and occur on an ongoing basis. This also includes demonstrating directly how young people can become involved in the delivery of national recovery plans. (According to research by the OECD, less than a third of OECD countries with a response and recovery plan explain how young people can engage in the delivery of their recovery measures.<sup>36</sup>)

**Secondly**, beyond engagement, **young people should be empowered more generally to be able to make decisions about the issues that affect their lives**. This is reflected in the 2021 report on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy, which calls for the participation of young people in political and other decision-making processes at local, regional, national and European levels. It also invites EU member states more specifically to empower young people through education and training, youth-oriented information, feedback, non-formal and informal learning and

youth work, and to build knowledge and capacity on youth participation in decision-making processes at multiple levels.<sup>37</sup>

**Thirdly, policy interventions should be as inclusive as possible, aiming to ensure that young people across the breadth of a country or territory's population can enjoy the impacts of interventions equally**. Extra efforts should be made to ensure that marginalized groups such as migrants, LGBTQI+ youth, youth from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, those living in rural and remote areas, and those with special needs are taken into account and are able to benefit from education and other programmes that support social mobility.

**Fourthly**, young people's well-being should be placed at the forefront of all policy interventions. **Policies should be designed to actively improve young people's physical and emotional well-being** and that young people are protected from harm through the responsible application of all appropriate safeguarding measures, including those relating to data protection and the right to privacy.

**Finally, policies that address the UN Sustainable Development Goals directly should be prioritized**, with a clear explanation of how a particular policy intervention helps to address specific SDGs, and how progress on attaining them is to be measured.

<sup>35</sup> United Nations (2018), p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2022), p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> European Commission (2021), p. 8.

### 4.3 Recommendations on travel and tourism measures to support young people

The following table provides a detailed breakdown of recommendations for national tourism organizations (NTOs) on tourism recovery measures to support young people through COVID-19 recovery and in the longer term. These recommendations build upon those presented in table 4.5 in the first report of this series (*The Impact of COVID-19 on Global Youth – Focus on Asia and Italy*), in that they also reflect the findings of the primary research conducted for this report. The following recommendations are organized around five key areas that relate to the typical range of NTO competencies. These include partnership building, research, marketing and branding, innovation and product development, and education and skills development.

#### 1. Building partnerships

- Identify sectors related to tourism and facilitate cross-sectional cooperation and support in both public and private sectors such as by training civil servants to understand and better cope with the impact of the crisis on young people.
- Follow a human centric approach in the implementation of tourism recovery efforts by engaging with young people and/or youth organizations and launch relevant tourism recovery programmes.
- Assess the impact of new policy initiatives on youth. An example of such an approach can

be seen in Flanders, where new legislative proposals with direct impact on the interests of persons under the age of 25 must be accompanied by a child and youth impact report.<sup>38</sup>

- Ensure that knowledge building on youth needs, priorities and travel behaviour is embedded into national tourism fora and policy debates, for example by ensuring that space is given to discuss these in national tourism industry events.
- Work with other national-level governmental agencies to remove the barriers to youth and student travel development, including the provision of specialist visas (such as study and working holiday visas) that support work experience and education for young international visitors.<sup>39</sup>
- Facilitate networking between public and private sector organizations interested in youth tourism by setting a national industry association or forum (or providing strategic support if one already exists) dedicated to youth and student travel.
- Support close partnerships between youth travel fora and other critical sectors including education, entrepreneurship, conservation, creative arts and sport.<sup>40</sup>
- Develop partnerships at national and local level with organizations that can help strengthen the product offer that appeals to young travellers and entrepreneurs, such as start-up hubs, business mentoring organizations, co-working

38 Desmet, E.; Beeck, H. and Vandenhole, W. (2015), 'Walking a Tightrope: Evaluating the Child and Youth Impact Report in Flanders', *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, DOI: DOI:10.1163/15718182-02301002.

39 World Tourism Organization (2011), p. 21.

40 World Tourism Organization (2011), pp. 20-21.

spaces, volunteering organizations, creative industries and sports associations.

- Support the organization of regular youth and travel policy summits (taking the lead from the Global Youth Tourism Summit) at global and regional level, to engage youth in meaningful policy discussions around the future of tourism.

## 2. Data and Research

- Improve the collection of age disaggregated data on tourism demand, education and employment
- Adapt national tourism data collection methods to ensure that sufficient data is being collected about the pre-departure and in-destination behaviour of youth (and that provision is made to separate 'youth' data collection on adults in general), in order to understand the specific characteristics that apply to certain age groups and markets of origin.
- Improve the production, reporting and sharing (open data) of data that is disaggregated by sex, also considering various gender identities that may be prevalent in different youth populations where possible, to assess and address the gendered impact of the pandemic and other crises on youth and facilitate informed tourism recovery policies.
- Develop research to identify policy actions required to tackle challenges experienced by youth now and in the future, and how tourism could contribute to tackling them, resulting in a well-rounded roadmap for action.
- Carry out research in order to understand the tourism markets with the greatest capacity for growth in the segment of youth, those with

the greatest resonance with the key themes in national youth policies and greatest potential for meaningful youth engagement (i.e., those markets which are able to add the greatest value through staying longer and studying, or those young travellers who are most likely to want to make a positive contribution to the places they're visiting).

- Make an in-depth analysis of the youth culture in the domestic market, in order to understand which elements of local culture (music, fashion, food, celebrity culture, among others) are most likely to resonate with young people from other countries.
- Involve young people in the development of research, including youth representatives in the corresponding committees.

## 3. Branding and marketing

- Engage young people through research on a meaningful and continual basis in order to test different approaches to marketing and product development and help avoid approaches that may be inappropriate or patronising.
- Develop dedicated marketing campaigns to attract young people (particularly around specific education or work experience opportunities), with comprehensive information from trusted sources (including local youth ambassadors).
- Use 'immersive content' to help young consumers understand what they will see, hear, taste and smell through specific travel experiences.
- Help to make cultural experiences come to life by using gamified tools such as Instagram and TikTok to tell stories and encourage interaction.

- Provide highly curated, clear and practical information that encourages quick, well-informed decision-making.
- Ensure that messaging about pricing and the composition of travel packages is accurate and transparent.
- Ensure that content reflects the true identity and diversity of young audiences (i.e., ensuring the appropriate representation of people of colour, as well as girls/women and LGBTQI+ community representatives, social classes, etc.), as well as the most relevant aspects of the local youth culture in the destination.
- Package and highlight unique offerings or hidden gems with well-designed content and consider alternative ways to reach the younger generation such as exclusive 'secret deals' (where the destination or activities are revealed at the last minute).
- Ensure that enquiries from young visitors are dealt with in a sincere and timely way, ideally using chatbots or instant messaging tools that allow for a rapid response.
- Provide formal opportunities to young people to promote their destinations through ambassadorship programmes, with a special focus on communicating sustainability related features of their tourism products.
- Establish platforms to allow young people to learn about and discuss their responsibility as travellers.

#### 4. Supporting innovation and product development

- Ensure that tourism suppliers are easily searchable and bookable through online platforms (particularly mobile ones).
- Provide real-time customer service through applications such as multilingual chatbots, smart speakers and instant messaging through social media.
- Support user-generated content and encourage young visitors to share responsible tips and positive personal experiences from travel.
- Ensure easy access to high-speed Wi-Fi for local residents and visitors.
- Display transparent policies on pricing and the use of personal data.
- Encourage young visitors to engage in projects and activities that contribute towards environmental or social regeneration.
- Work with businesses to develop specific youth-oriented activities that help young visitors to understand the impact of their travel and adopt more responsible practices when travelling.
- Provide planning and booking tools that encourage young travellers to choose local operators that adhere to internationally recognizable sustainability criteria.
- Develop products and experiences that actively help young people to care for their own physical and mental health, for example, by promoting running routes, outdoor gyms and calm spaces that encourage reflection and mindfulness. This also extends to encouraging

healthy eating and knowledge about healthy food sourcing and preparation using local products.

- Involve young people and youth organizations in building social cohesion and in the implementation of recovery efforts by promoting meaningful volunteer services and youth work through laws, strategies, and adequately resourced programmes.
  - Identify barriers to young travellers acting in a more responsible way and make it as simple as possible for them to do so, such as by creating a one-stop platform with clear, accessible information, options and tools to guide sustainable choices and reduction of the consumption impacts (e.g., transportation and single-use products).<sup>41</sup>
  - Utilize youth related structures such as youth advisory councils or youth organizations to introduce user-centred innovation and new skills in youth related products, services or even policy, such as by offering internships in the public sector.
  - Design tourism educational and employment programmes utilising digital technologies and ensure increased access from young people to enhance their future opportunities and decrease the gap between urban and rural areas.
- Support young entrepreneurs in the sector of tourism, hospitality, and travel tech by encouraging entrepreneurial programmes such as incubators and/or accelerators and innovation contests. The programmes should add value in areas such as:<sup>42</sup>
    - » High-quality mentors;
    - » Facilitation of pilots;
    - » Co-working spaces;
    - » Networking opportunities;
    - » Access to finance (e.g., grants, subsidies). Angel capital can be mobilized further with tax breaks and other incentives; and
    - » Information point for follow ups and communicating future opportunities.

## 5. Nurturing tourism as a vehicle for improving youth education and skills development

- Integrate responsible practices into educational travel programmes to ensure that young visitors understand the impact of their visits and how this can be improved, for example by:<sup>43</sup>
  - » Honouring local customs, traditions, and social conditions;
  - » Helping young travellers to become guardians of natural resources, and protectors of biodiversity;

41 For further information about reducing plastics in tourism – including a toolkit and repository of resources, please refer to: World Tourism Organization and United Nations Environment Programme (2019), *Baseline Report on the Integration of Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns into Tourism Policies*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284420605>.

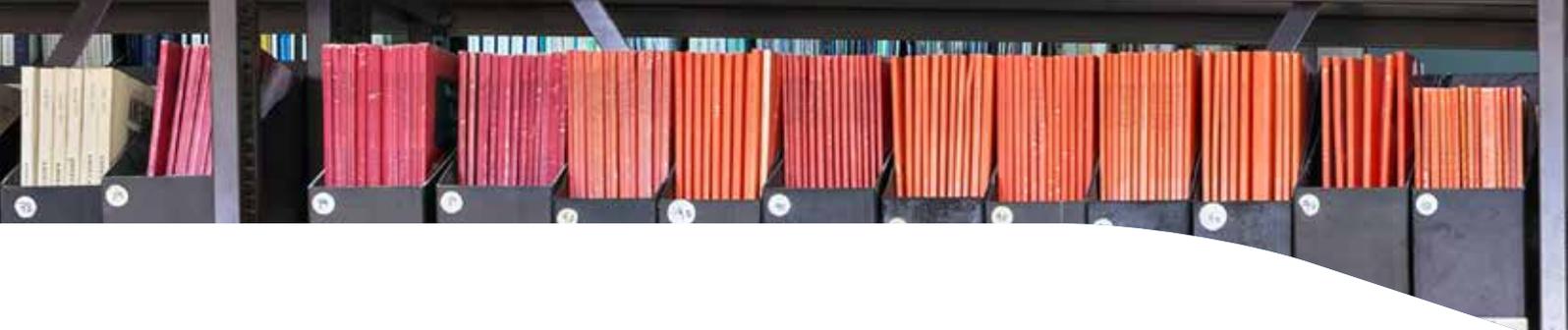
42 For further information recovery priorities and investment mechanisms in tourism please refer to the following publications: World Tourism Organization (2021/a), *UNWTO Investment Guidelines – Enabling Frameworks for Tourism Investment*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284422685>; and: World Tourism Organization (2021/b), *UNWTO Investment Guidelines – Strategies to Safeguard Tourism Investments during COVID-19*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284422913>.

43 Further information is available in the UNWTO publication *Tips for a Responsible Traveller* available at: <https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-07/Tips-for-Responsible-Traveller-WCTE-EN.pdf>



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- » Inclusion of local businesses so that young people can support the local economy; and
  - » Assurance that the experiences (e.g., voluntourism) young people are engaging with are compliant with sustainable tourism policies.
- Provide official support for school travel and international student mobility and exchange programmes.
  - Develop experiences that support intercultural exchange and dialogue between young local people and visitors.
  - Mentor young leaders in the sector to provide inspiration and boost both confidence and skills.
  - Carry out further and continuous research needed to understand how the untapped potential of tourism, and educational travel programmes in particular, can be unlocked, which gaps occur in the market, and how to better promote the development of transferable skills and address wider needs of young people.
  - Work with the education sector to embed teaching around responsible tourism practices into national education curricula, to ensure that children grow up with a respect for the natural environment and the destinations that they visit from a young age.
  - Launch tourism related education programmes to target, engage and upskill pupils and youth from vulnerable backgrounds and develop match-making tools for permanent employment in the sector following successful completion.
  - Ensure that policymakers have the skills and capacity to deliver such programmes for the benefit of youth.
  - Design, encourage and/or support youth exchange programmes that can increase their employability or probability for entrepreneurial success, while transferring know-how to their place of residence.



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