

WORKSHOP 8

NOVEMBER 2023

# READY FOR ACTION?

YOUTH ASSEMBLIES - A CATALYST  
FOR ACTION



WORKSHOP IN THE GREENSCENT  
YOUTH ASSEMBLIES, NOVEMBER 2023

PREPARED BY SIF JUHL, DEMOCRACY X,  
FORMERLY THE DANISH BOARD OF TECHNOLOGY

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## INTRODUCTION

After one and a half years, the GreenSCENT Youth Assemblies came to an end. In the final workshop, all four Youth Assemblies gathered in a virtual goodbye and to look back on their shared experiences.

In the final Youth Assembly workshop, we set out to explore: How have the participants experienced being part of the GreenSCENT Youth Assemblies? In what ways have the Youth Assemblies inspired them to take action in the green transition? And how do they feel about green issues and their own agency in the light of their participation in the Youth Assemblies?

## FIRST TIME READING ABOUT THE YOUTH ASSEMBLIES?

The Youth Assemblies are divided into four assemblies with a total of 56 young people (14 in each), with participants aged between 14 and 24 from seven European countries: Denmark, Finland, Greece, Italy, Romania, Serbia, and Spain. Since September 2022, these young people have convened and participated in online and in-person workshops facilitated by GreenSCENT project managers and partners to discuss a wide variety of important topics that are central to the state of our planet and society. The participants test apps and tools, provide feedback, and generate ideas and suggestions for the design and implementation of these tools in educational settings. Democracy X designs and facilitates the activities of the Youth Assemblies.



## PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES BEING PART OF THE GREENSCENT YOUTH ASSEMBLIES

The participants were asked to reflect and discuss in groups, what impact the GreenSCENT Youth Assemblies had had on themselves and their own role in the green transition. The questions they discussed were:

- What eye-opening insights have you gained about the green transition?
- Has your participation deepened your understanding of environmental issues or solutions?
- What personal insights have you gained from participating in GreenSCENT's Youth Assemblies?
- Have you become more motivated in activism and green action? How could you imagine to use this motivation in your life or in your local community?



Many participants highlighted the collaboration with peers from other countries as an important part of the experience. Particularly listening to other people's perspective on green issues, and learning how to work together, even across great distances:

*"Different opinions from different people give a lot of insight"*

*"Connections"*

*"Learning new perspectives and problems related to climate change, from other countries"*

*"Meeting people in the YA and learning about their countries and experiences with sustainability"*

It is also evident from the statements, that the Youth Assemblies have made many participants more motivated to take part in the green transition. Several mention that they have started taking "small actions". Others mention that they feel more equipped to take green action because the Youth Assemblies have provided them with both knowledge, experience, and motivation to act:

*"GreenSCENT has made me reflect more on my own actions against climate change"*

*"This experience has definitely deepened my understand with the issues and what activities we can do to potentially make a small difference"*

*"I definitely feel more motivated to act in favor of green action, having done physical experiments and developing apps"*

*"After the meeting in Barcelona I tried to eat less meat"*

*"I reduced the amount of plastic I used"*

*"This winter I am reducing the use of heating at home. I feel motivated to do "little" actions"*



The Youth Assemblies have opened the participants' eyes and minds to topics related to climate change, environment, and the green transition. Several participants mentioned that their participation in the Youth Assemblies made them consider topics and issues, that they had previously given little thought. And some mentioned, that what they had learned has qualified and expanded on their existing knowledge:

*“Great initiative from the EU and very helpful to gain knowledge and get inspired to give back to the community.”*

*“All of the different areas were really eye opening”*

*“My own participation meant that I got to delve into topics that normally I wouldn't consider”*

*“I have been more informed and I am now actively going for more information so i can further my studies that I can use in my professional career”*

*“Would have liked to know more about how we in Europe can do more - actively coming up with solutions”*



# READY FOR ACTION? HOW THE PARTICIPANTS FEEL ABOUT THEIR OWN ROLE AND AGENCY IN THE GREEN TRANSITION

In the previous workshop the participants have been working with the topic TAKING ACTION.

The participants met Lise Coermann Nygaard, Danish Youth Delegate to UN on Climate & Biodiversity, who shared her experience and gave some advice and inspiration. After Lise shared her experience and advice, the participants were asked to formulate an action goal for themselves, in order to get started on their own action path.

Two months had passed since this so it was time to follow up on their action goals and find out what had changed for the participants regarding activism and taking green action.

We asked the participants to discuss the following questions in small groups:

- Did you set an action goal?
- How did it go?
- What has being part of YA made you feel about taking action?
- Do you feel better equipped to take “action” in the future?
- Why/why not?



Several participants shared with us, that their co-participants' enthusiasm and support had motivated them to take action:

*“I was motivated to take action because everybody else was enthusiastic and happy to take action.”*

Many reported, that the Youth Assemblies, and particularly the workshop about TAKING ACTION, had inspired them to pick up new habits and to take the first steps towards an active citizenship in the green transition:

*“Last time I set an action goal to organize a garage sale with infographics about climate change. (...) I definitely feel empowered to take action in my community, as I got inspired by GreenSCENT. We learned about the different ways in which one can take action and other participants raised interesting points that I will remember in my path against climate change.”*

*“I think being part of a YA has given me a more nuanced perspective on the struggles others might face in the fight against climate change. However, I do not think being part of a YA has given too much new knowledge, but rather let me be a part of creating change. In terms of being better equipped for taking action in the future I think the biggest thing that impacted this was Lise, who showed how to engage in your own way.”*

*“Better equipped to take action as I am more knowledgeable and educated regarding this”*



New habits, that were sparked by the Youth Assemblies were: Taking up a vegetarian diet, recycling and sorting waste, repairing, recycling, and upcycling clothes, eating sustainable foods, and walking and biking more:

*“Last time my goal was to eat more sustainable foods which I achieved by eating more from my family's farm.”*

*“Recycling more, separating waste.”*

*“Been walking more.”*

*“Making individual choices such as eating less meat, walking more to classes, and limiting food waste.”*

*“Been eating more vegetables.”*

*” I managed to reuse a bunch of spare materials I had lying around to make or fix up some clothes.”*

*“I set the goal of been vegetarian, I think I've decided to do this after participating in the project and meeting people that would support and advise me in that concern.”*

*“My goal was to make my own clothes out of sustainable materials, and I did manage to make some out of recycled fabrics and old clothes.”*

*“Eating a more ecofriendly diet and biking to school.”*

*“I reused my old clothes and turned them into rags so I can reuse them when I spill things.”*



Some even said that the Youth Assemblies had empowered them to spread awareness and pass on knowledge to other people:

*“I have been able to more easily separate into the different waste that way I feel more equipped to pass on knowledge and use more eco friendly alternatives.”*

# FEELINGS: WHAT PARTICIPANTS FEEL ABOUT GREEN ISSUES

It is evident, from the participants' statements, that they feel inspired and empowered by the Youth Assemblies, and that they now feel better equipped to take action in the green transition but we were also interested in finding out how the Youth Assemblies had affected their personal feelings about their role in the green transition and about green issues in general.

To explore this we asked the participants to discuss in groups what feelings they experienced in the relation to their participation in the Youth Assemblies.

The discussions were centred around the following question: Thinking about your experiences being part of the Youth Assembly: To what extent has participating in the Youth Assembly made you feel each of these feelings?:

- A feeling of urgency to act on green issues?
- An anger about the status quo of green issues?
- A hope for the future for greens issues?
- A feeling of solidarity with others around green issues?
- A feeling that you can make a difference on green issues?

The group discussions sparked many reflections. After the group discussions, the participants were asked to fill out a short questionnaire on the topic of their personal feelings after the Youth Assemblies.

The results from the survey are shown in figure 1 below. The results highlight two emotions that many participants felt to a large extent or to a great extent: “A feeling of solidarity with others around green issues” and “An anger about the status quo of green issues”.

Further analysis of these and other survey replies from the participants can be found in the forthcoming book about the GreenSCENT project.



Thinking about your experiences being part of the Youth Assembly, to what extent has participating in the Youth Assembly made you feel each of the following five feelings:

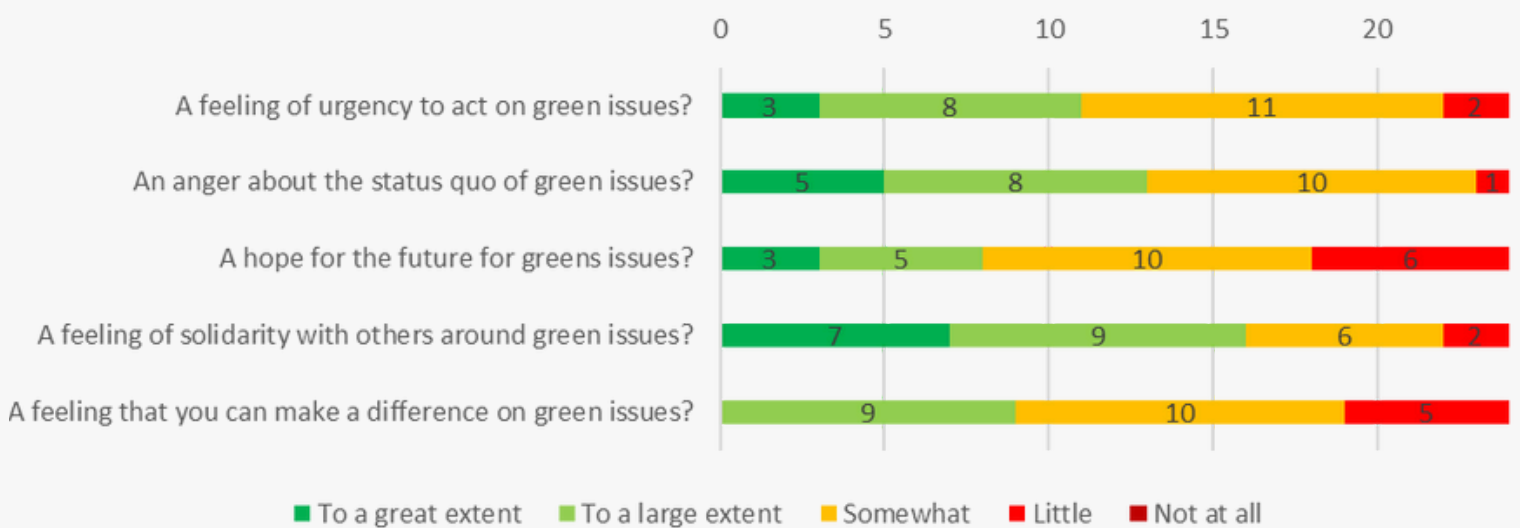


Figure 1: Participants’ feelings from being part of the Youth Assembly. The numbers represent individual replies from a short survey during the final workshop with 24 participants.

A special thanks to all participants in the GreenSCENT Youth Assemblies for engaging in developing ideas and sharing reflections and insights on how to motivate, empower, and educate students on clean air and air pollution.

