

# SUSTAINABILITY IN TOURISM AND GREEN ECONOMY IN THE VIEW OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE FROM BUCOVINA

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## Abstract:

*The transition to the green economy is a difficult and complicated process involving several distinct stages. For this transition to take place, it is important that both national elites and broad sections of society are aware of this. This study analysed the views of young people in Bukovina on the green economy - how they perceive it, sources of information accessed, possible solutions and benefits. All young people need to have a solid understanding of entrepreneurship and sustainable development (SD) in order to be aware of the impact of their decisions on the SD process. Education for Sustainable Development aims to strengthen the links between human well-being, the economy and environmental protection in order to build an eco-efficient welfare society. It promotes understanding of one's own cultural heritage, cultural diversity, justice and capacities for intercultural and international interaction, increasing involvement and motivation in decision-making as citizens and community members, in order to create the conditions for sustainable industrial development. Young people have the capacity and responsibility to make a crucial contribution to the transition to a green economy. We believe that sustainability and environmental issues must be taught from an early age, adopting innovative educational tools that take into account environmental protection, social and economic development and the achievement of related goals. Recently, young people in Europe have been actively involved in environmental actions, forming various social movements at different territorial, national and European levels to advocate for environmental protection and the implementation of climate neutral policies.*

**Key words:** sustainability, green economy, education, Bukovina.

**JEL classification:** Q32, Q56.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, interest in environmental and sustainability issues has increased and the focus on the green economy has intensified worldwide. It is therefore crucial to focus on researching and supporting sustainable businesses to tackle environmental problems and ensure a sustainable future.

A big change globally has been the shift to a green economy, which has been very significant. This is based on sustainability principles, which include lowering carbon emissions, using natural resources efficiently, promoting renewable energy and adopting sustainable practices.

This study looks at how young people aged 15-34 view the green economy, sustainability and the future of the planet, and aims to draw out appropriate solutions that can contribute to the development of a sustainable lifestyle and the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Climate change is one of the major issues facing us today. Education and training, like all sectors, must take action to respond to this global crisis.

We are convinced that young people have the capacity and responsibility to play a crucial role in the green transition process. We believe that it is crucial to develop a different model of leadership that promotes inclusiveness and enables the active participation of young people in decision-making.

In 2022, the European Year of Youth has been designated to mark both support for young people, who have been most affected by the pandemic, and to highlight the positive impact of the green and digital transition on their future.

In order to achieve a just green transition, it is necessary to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at European level, including the implementation of a new governance model that is inclusive and involves young people in decision-making processes.

Decisions taken by political leaders today on climate change and other environmental issues will particularly affect young people today and future generations. According to the 2030 Agenda, young people have the right to be involved in decisions that affect them and are seen as key drivers for change under the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNEP, in 2011, encouraged reducing environmental risks and correcting environmental deficits through a green economy. Its aim is to improve human well-being and promote social equity; therefore, a global harmonisation programme is needed to ensure the well-being of both current and future generations. To achieve this goal, business must conform to the values of sustainability to ensure social well-being and the conservation of natural resources.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

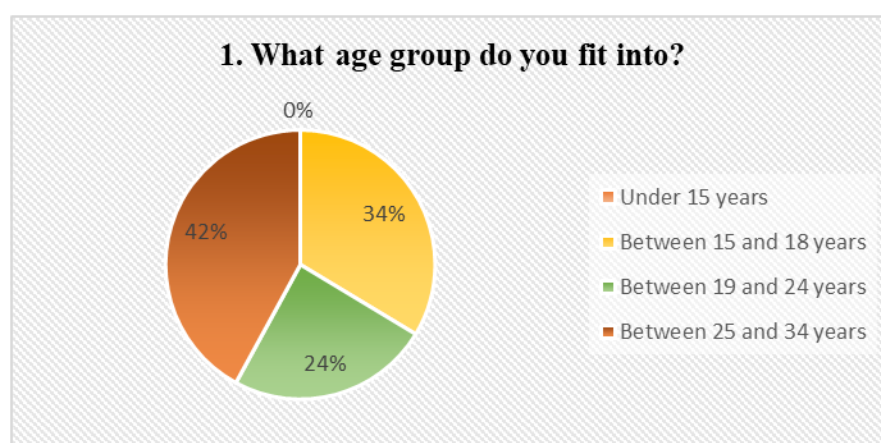
In this paper the views of young people in Bukovina on the green economy - their perception, sources of information, solutions, benefits - were examined. The answers allow us to determine to what extent there is support of this category of citizens for the values of the green economy, especially in the context that they will implement the transition to the green economy, will ensure a sustainable future for other generations.

107 respondents, students of USV at FEAA and students of the Tourism Technician specialization at colleges in Suceava county, participated in the survey. In order to achieve the research objectives regarding young people's vision and level of knowledge about green economy and sustainable tourism for the present research a mixed methods approach was used which included a literature review and the development of an online questionnaire.

In the present research, an indirect survey research method (the researcher and the respondents do not come into direct contact at all) was chosen, using the questionnaire distributed on social media during January - March 2024. Data collection was carried out following the following steps: selection of respondents, determination of categories of interviewees, preparation of questionnaires and their application.

## 3. FINDINGS

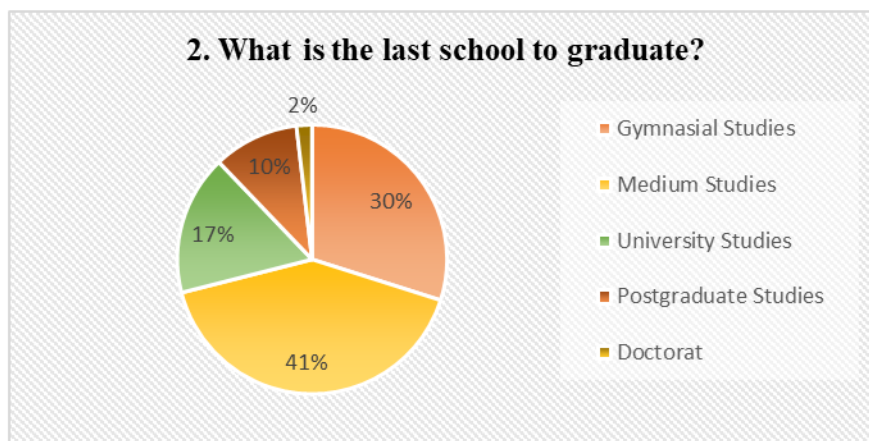
In January-March 2024, a survey was conducted among young people (pupils and students) in Bucovina on the awareness of the notion of green economy and its importance both in the development of sustainable tourism and in people's lives.



**Figure no. 1. Age group of respondents participating in the research**

Source: Own elaboration

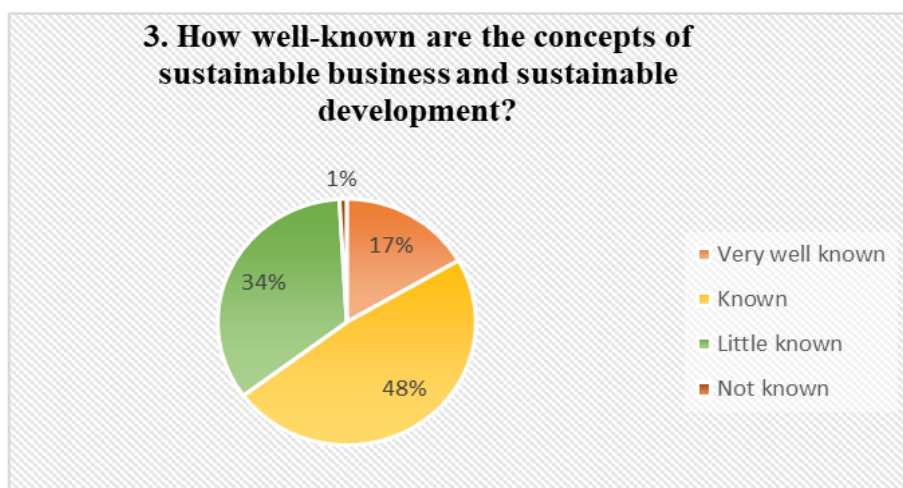
Of those who took part in the research 45 people i.e. 42% are aged between 25 and 34, 36 people i.e. 34% are aged between 15 and 18 and 26 respondents i.e. 24% are aged between 19 and 24.



**Figure no. 2. Last school completed by respondents participating in the research**

Source: Own elaboration

The majority of respondents have secondary education (vocational school, high school, post-secondary) - 41%, only 27% have university and postgraduate studies and only 1.9% have doctoral studies.

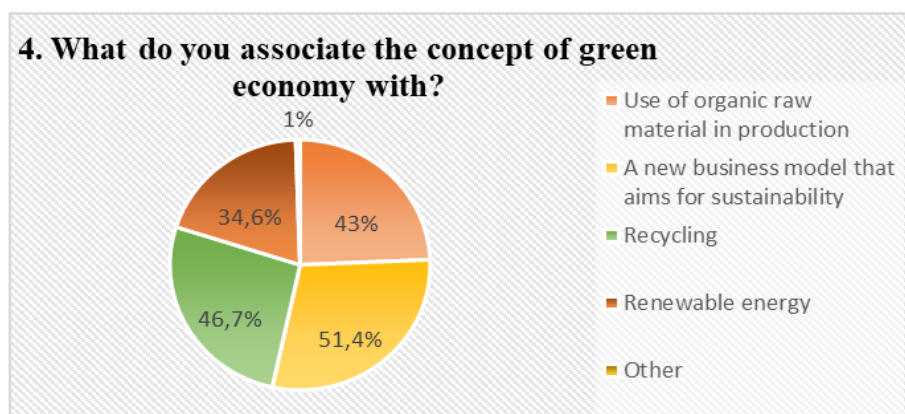


**Figure no. 3. Level of knowledge of sustainable business and sustainable development concepts**

Source: Own elaboration

In order to identify the degree of young people's perception of green economy principles, we asked this question to find out whether young people studying Tourism specialization are aware of the concepts of "sustainable business" and "sustainable development".

Thus we identified that out of the total of 107 interviewees 18 respondents (16.8%) said that these concepts are very familiar to them, 52 respondents (48.6%) know these concepts, 37 respondents (34.6%) said that they do not know much about sustainable business and sustainable development and 1 respondent (0.9%) said that they have never heard about these concepts.

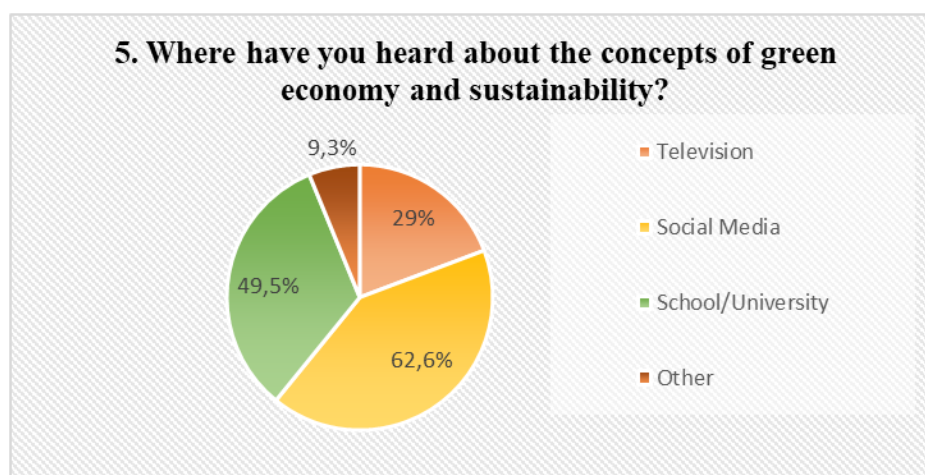


**Figure no. 4. Association of the concept of green economy**

Source: Own elaboration

The largest share of responses accumulated the association of the concept of green economy with "a new business model that tends towards sustainability", 51.4%, which constitutes 55 respondents. In second place we can observe the association with "recycling", being chosen by half of the young people - 46.7% or 50 people.

"Use of environmentally friendly raw materials in production" and "Renewable energy" are an association for 43% and 34.6% of respondents respectively.



**Figure no. 5. Source of information on green economy and sustainability concepts**

Source: Own elaboration

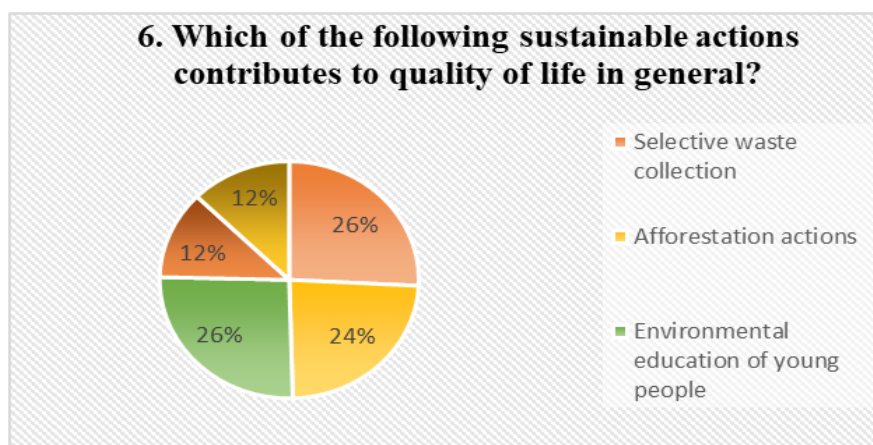
To this question most young people answered that they learned about the concepts of green economy and sustainability from "Social media" 67 young people, which is 62.6% of the total of 107 respondents.

This was followed by School/University with 53 responses or 49.5% and 31 respondents (29%) answered that they heard about green economy and sustainability from TV.

It should be pointed out that as expected the main source of information is social media, however the share of TV is below potential, therefore some measures should be taken that would allow the promotion of green economy principles and sustainable business in traditional media.

The equally modest share of awareness of green economy principles on the internet 9.3% i.e. 10 respondents can be explained by the fact that there is no intrinsic interest of young people in this topic.

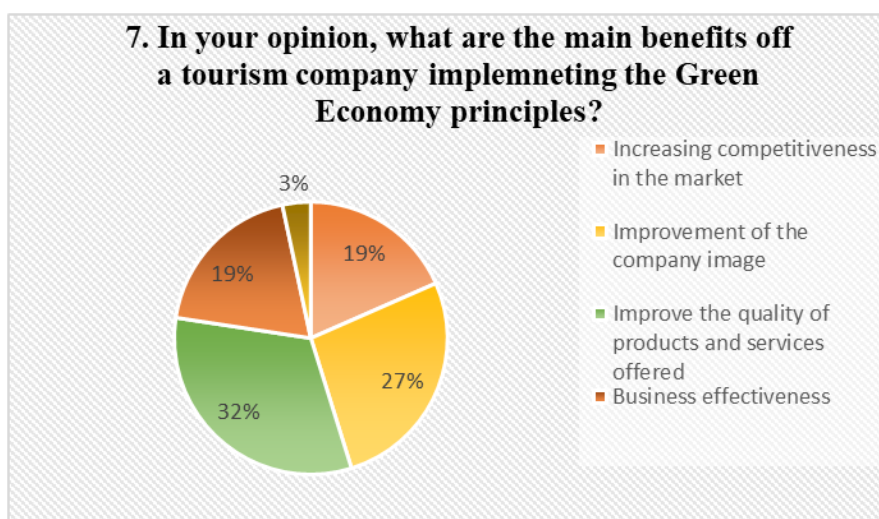
We can therefore see that although the subject is relatively well known, it is not a major priority for many.



**Figure no. 6. Sustainable actions contributing to quality of life**

Source: Own elaboration

From the responses received, it was found that Environmental Education - 26% and Selective Collection - 26% are the sustainable actions that contribute most to the quality of life. These are followed by Afforestation actions - 24% and 12% by Purchasing Organic products and Involvement in the guarantee-return system.



**Figure no. 7. Benefits of tourism companies implementing green economy principles**

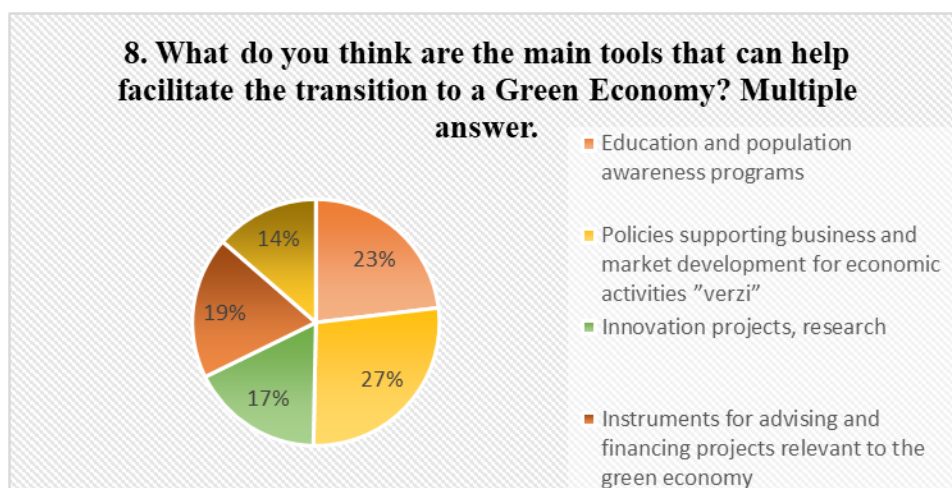
Source: Own elaboration

Following the systematization of the surveys completed by young people in Bucovina, specializing in tourism, among the main benefits of companies implementing the principles of a green economy, the following can be highlighted:

According to the opinion of young people from Bukovina the benefits of a company implementing the principles of a green economy (more than one answer could be ticked) would be: improvement of the quality of products and services offered - 32%, improvement of the image of the company - 27%, effectiveness of the business - 19%, increase of competitiveness on the market - 19% and 3% answered that other benefits would be for companies.

Therefore, young people perceive the green economy as a trend in the economy, a current and modern phenomenon, which would improve company image, improve product quality, but also increase competitiveness in the market.





**Figure no. 8. Tools to help facilitate the transition to a green economy**

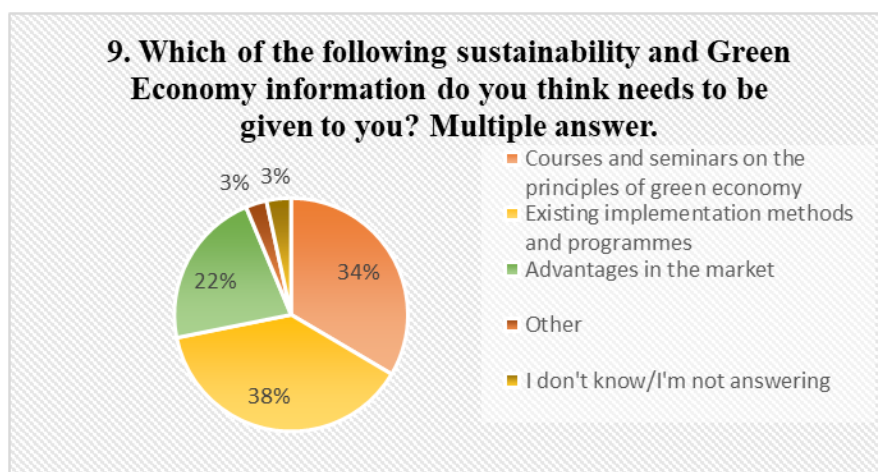
Source: Own elaboration

According to the graph shown, we can see that the main instrument that can help facilitate the transition to a green economy are policies to support business development and the market for green economic activities, this response being chosen by 27% of respondents.

The next main instrument is Public education and awareness programmes, this answer being ticked by 23% of respondents.

In third place is the Instruments for advising and financing projects relevant to the green economy, this answer being chosen by 19% of respondents.

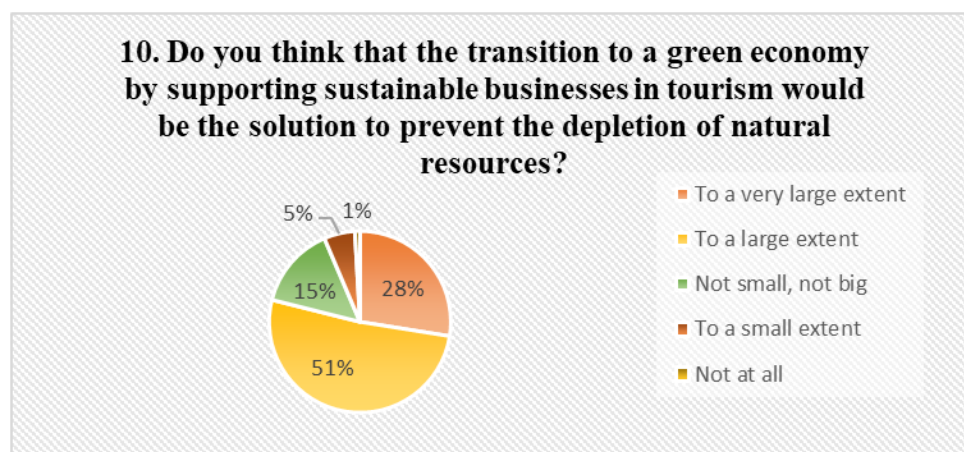
The results obtained for this question confirm the idea, which was also outlined above, that it is necessary to continue to carry out measures to inform and promote the principles of the green economy in order to increase the level of awareness of the population, which would constitute a basis for facilitating the transition to a green economy.



**Figure no. 9. Key information to be provided on sustainability and green economy**

Source: Own elaboration

40% of the young people surveyed believe that they need to be given as much information as possible about existing implementation methods and programmes in the field of sustainability and the green economy. Some 35% of young people would like to have access to courses and seminars on green economy principles and sustainability in business, while 22% of respondents think that information on the market benefits gained by the company from adopting green economy principles would be very useful.



**Figure no. 10. The role of the transition to a green economy in preventing depletion of natural resources**

Source: Own elaboration

When asked whether the green economy would be the solution to prevent the depletion of natural resources, respondents answered as follows:

The majority of young people from Bukovina studying tourism and services, say that green economy would be a solution to prevent depletion of natural resources, about 79% (to a very great extent - 28% and to a great extent - 51%), to some extent consider 15% and about 5% consider to a little extent and not at all 0.9%.

These results suggest the idea that young people in Bukovina are quite optimistic that the green economy would be a solution to prevent the depletion of natural resources.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Tourism will only be sustainable if it is developed for both visitors and the local community. This should be done through the prism of cultural, socio-economic and environmental conservation.

Tourism is extremely important for the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of our regions. It also contributes significantly to the preservation and promotion of European values and European cultural heritage.

The representative survey on the level of knowledge of young people in Bucovina about green economy and sustainability in tourism allows us to draw the following conclusions:

- There is a relatively high level of knowledge of the notion of green economy among young people in Bukovina;
- The knowledge is carried out through the prism of general notions and does not include detailed, comprehensive aspects related to the green economy;
- The main source of information about the circular economy is social media, unfortunately there is a minor involvement of traditional media (TV) in this field;
- Young people know little about the need to develop new green business models in tourism and their essence;
- They perceive the green economy as a current, modern economic phenomenon, but the benefits are generally perceived and the percentage of those who are concretely aware of these issues is quite modest;
- Young people believe that the main tool that can help to facilitate the transition to the green economy is education and awareness programmes.

Thus we can see that young people know the concept of green economy at a conceptual level, know some benefits of the green economy, but do not have a comprehensive understanding of the different principles, models characteristic of the green economy. It is recommended to carry out

promotional campaigns focused on describing the principles and values of the green economy, presenting new models of the green economy.

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