Youth audiences

[Lab team member name here]
Climate Advocacy Lab
Youth audiences overview

• Understanding who youth are
• The politics of youth
• Youth perspectives on climate change
• Communicating to and recruiting youth audiences
• Working with youth activists

Photo: BEN STANSALL/AFP/Getty Images
Youth audiences

• Who are they?
  • Millennials: born 1981-1996
  • Gen Z: born 1997-2012
  • Most racially diverse in American history

Pew Research Center 2019
Youth audiences

- Digital natives who frequently receive and communicate information online
- Savvy information consumers

“Fox leans toward more the red side. CNN cares more about necessarily being the first. MSNBC cares more leaning toward the left. Everyone already has their biases. As long as you’re really aware of them, you can make a better opinion about something. And it’s better to get it from multiple sources. At the very least, you have a bunch of facts to work with, instead of just one person’s particular story or agenda.”

— Male / 23 / African-American

“The news that we get individually is so filtered down, both by our own hand and by the hands of the people who are making it and displaying and producing it.”

— Female / 23 / Hispanic & African-American
The politics of youth

• Youth activists are primed and ready for decisive governmental action to address society’s ills
  • Solidly progressive (Harris 2019)
  • Support an activist government (Pew Research Center 2018)
  • Believe in a pluralistic society (Pew Research Center 2018)
The politics of youth

• Disillusioned with policymakers and distrustful of two-party system

My momma went to vote, my grandma went to vote, my auntie went to vote, my granddaddy went to vote, and they were so happy and the same result… nothing got better for them. So you all say it’s our future. But I didn’t forget when my mama, my grandma, my granddad, my auntie voted and their future didn’t get better. So what is the motivation to make me feel good about politics if I ain’t see no results. My family showed up. They weren’t the ones that didn’t go out and vote. They were involved, informed, they made advised decisions and still the same result.

_Miami AAs, high vote likelihood_
The politics of youth

• While less responsive to voting and traditional GOTV outreach, youth are nevertheless willing to engage politically via activism and direct action

Most-cited sources of action-taking: contact from movement/NGO (28%), social media networks (27%), acted alone (25%), peers (24%)
Understanding youth activists

• Holistic progressive vision
  • Climate change, wealth inequality, racial justice, gun safety
  • Enthusiasm for “bundled” policies like a Green New Deal

They didn’t come from nowhere. Eight in 10 D.C. climate strikers said they had attended another strike or demonstration; nearly 60 percent had attended the March for Our Lives to protest gun violence in 2018.

The strikers were also remarkably civically engaged; the vast majority of organizers and just under half of the D.C. strike participants had contacted an elected official in the past year. More than 60 percent of organizers had participated in a direct action like the Shut Down DC protests that blocked traffic Monday — a number Fisher called “ridiculously high.”
Understanding youth activists

- Broad and common participation on a range of progressive issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did you Participate In...</th>
<th>US Activists 7/19</th>
<th>Organizers of 9/19 Strike</th>
<th>DC Strike Participants 9/19</th>
<th>Organizers of 4/20 EDL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s March 2017</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March for Science 2017</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Climate March 2017</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s March 2018</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US National School Walkout 2018</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March for Our Lives 2018</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s March 2019</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Global Climate Strike (2019)</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated Climate Strike</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Global Climate Strike (2019)</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2019 Climate Strike</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Understanding youth activists

• Holistic progressive vision
  • Unafraid to campaign for allied causes, particularly justice-focused

Police Brutality: A Pillar of the Government

By: Kira Ortoleva

Join the #DivestChallenge. By participating in divestment, you are able to help redistribute resources towards programs that support communities.
Youth on climate

• More knowledgeable, concerned, and engaged than elders
• Climate is consistently a top issue for youth voters!
• The key is to promote hope and efficacy that society, fueled by the energy of youth, can rise up to the threat of climate change

Ballew et al. 2019
Youth on climate

Young Democrats overwhelmingly support a range of climate policies and accept “bundled” policies with socioeconomic aims.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLIMATE AGENDA</th>
<th>Dem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition to 100% clean and renewable energy</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaring climate change a national emergency</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investing in public transit to reduce traffic emissions</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving away from fracking, oil, and gas pipelines</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinstating the United States in the International Paris Climate Agreement</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing the Green New Deal</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Youth on climate

- Republican/Conservative youth are also largely on board

% of U.S. adults who think the federal government is doing too little to reduce the effects of climate change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% in Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat/Lean Dem</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican/Lean Rep</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among Rep/Lean Rep

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Moderate/liberal</th>
<th>Boomer and older</th>
<th>Generation X</th>
<th>Millennial and younger</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of U.S. adults who say the more important priority for U.S. energy supply should be...

- Developing alternative energy
- Expanding fossil fuels

U.S. adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Developing alternative energy</th>
<th>Expanding fossil fuels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Democrat/Lean Dem</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
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<td>37%</td>
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Among Rep/Lean Rep

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Pew Research Center 2019
Recruiting youth leaders and supporters

• Digital platforms are already a mainstay in many youth lives
  • Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, TikTok

Which, if any, of the following social media platforms do you use most often? (% of youths 13 and older who have a social media account)

- **Instagram**
  - Male: 24
  - Female: 26

- **Facebook**
  - Male: 22
  - Female: 27

- **Snapchat**
  - Male: 15
  - Female: 29

- **YouTube**
  - Male: 12
  - Female: 20

- **Twitter**
  - Male: 4
  - Female: 5

How many minutes, if any, would you say that you spend online (e.g., browsing the internet, watching videos, playing games, chatting with friends, etc.) in a typical day? (%)

- **Children (ages 8 - 12)**
  - None: 31
  - 1 minute to less than 1 hour: 26
  - 1 hour to less than 2 hours: 16
  - 2 hours to less than 3 hours: 19
  - 3 hours to less than 4 hours: 12
  - 4 hours or more: 14

- **Teens (ages 13 - 17)**
  - None: 0
  - 1 minute to less than 1 hour: 38
  - 1 hour to less than 2 hours: 16
  - 2 hours to less than 3 hours: 16
  - 3 hours to less than 4 hours: 17
  - 4 hours or more: 14

September 6-12, 2019
Recruiting youth leaders and supporters

• Inspire with personal and relatable stories
• Use efficacy-based messaging to reinforce that youth organizing is powerful and effective
Supporting youth leaders and supporters

• Youth have energy, but need training and tools
• Leadership development (Sunrise School)
Bolstering youth leaders and supporters

• Relational organizing (Alliance for Climate Education’s Youth Action Network)
Supporting youth leaders and supporters

• Networking and movement-building (Communities for a Better Environment’s YouthEJ)
Youth as effective climate messengers

• Source credibility of youth messengers
  • Knowledgeability: strong passion and sharp grasp of climate and policy issues
  • Relatability: representative of youth cohort at large, moral standing due to future impacts

• Intergenerational learning (Lawson et al. 2019)
  • Youth (esp. girls) have been shown to be effective at initiating conversations and changing attitudes on climate change of older generations, particularly their parents
Youth as effective climate messengers

- Youth are great at educating and leading their parents
  - ACE trained youth members to have open-ended dialogue with their parents with success

![Pie chart showing the results of in-person and conversation continuation](image-url)

- In-Person: Will you continue talking with your parent?
  - Yes: 67.6%
  - Maybe: 29.7%
  - No: 2.7%

- Did the conversation lead to a good next step?
  - Yes: 45.9%
  - Unsure: 48.6%
  - No: 5.5%
Effective messages

- Efficacy (especially optimism and hope)
  - Our job as organizers is “to make the defeated man try the world again.”

- Legitimation
  - It’s normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis. Talking to people you trust can help.

- Climate justice
  - The most important thing to know about getting involved in Climate Justice is that the movement is rooted in inclusion.

- Intergenerational justice
  - "We deserve a safe future. And we demand a safe future. Is that really too much to ask?"