



Young People Want Businesses to Do **More Than the Minimum**

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CSR-A worked with 15-year-old Olivier Adamczewski, a work experience student, to conduct a survey among his peers to gather insights from a younger perspective. He interviewed 10 individuals about sustainability, asking a series of questions as outlined below:

General Question

1) What impact do you want to have on the world?

Environment

2) Does climate change scare you?
3) What do you think businesses can do more to protect the environment?

Community

4) Do you think organisations do enough to help local communities (schools, churches, clubs), if not, what more could be done?

Philanthropy

5) Are you or your family donating to any charities now? If so, which ones? If not, which one would you like to donate to?

Workplace

6) Do you see exclusion and/or bullying around you? If so, then what do you think could be done to prevent it?

Young people are growing up in a world facing major challenges, from climate change and pollution to inequality, bullying, exclusion and pressure on local communities. Yet the responses to this CSR Accreditation survey show something hopeful: young people are not passive about these issues. They have clear views, personal values and practical ideas about how individuals, businesses and organisations can make a positive difference.

The survey was based on the four pillars of CSR Accreditation: environment, workplace, community and philanthropy. Across the responses, one message came through strongly: young people want a fairer, kinder and more sustainable world, and they believe businesses and organisations have a responsibility to help create it.



Wanting to Make a Positive Impact

When asked what impact they wanted to have on the world, many young people focused on kindness, safety, science, animals, the environment and helping others. Some wanted to “leave a mark on the world” that would have a lasting positive effect, while others spoke about spreading positivity, helping animals and humans, supporting wildlife, or raising awareness about climate change.

Not every answer was grand or dramatic. One respondent said they simply wanted to “live a nice and calm life,” while another said they might not change the whole world but would still like to help wildlife. This is important because it shows that young people do not always see impact as something huge or unreachable. For many, making a difference starts with everyday choices, such as picking up litter, being kind, helping others feel safe, or encouraging people to care more about the planet.

Climate Change: Concern, Fear and Action

Climate change was one of the strongest themes in the survey. Most respondents said climate change worries or scares them, although the level of concern varied. Some said it scares them because it could lead to global warming, melting ice caps and irreversible effects. Others felt anxious because climate change can seem almost impossible to solve.

However, the answers were not only fearful. Several young people showed a belief that change is still possible. One respondent said humanity could reverse climate change “to an extent if not then fully,” but only if people move away from the mindset that “I’m just one person, I can’t change anything.” Another said people need to work together, although they also recognised that some governments and organisations still do not take climate change seriously enough.

A smaller number of respondents said climate change does not scare them. One young person explained that they believe humanity will survive, especially if future progress includes expanding into space. This shows that young people’s views on climate change are not all the same. Some feel fear, some feel urgency, and some feel more optimistic. But almost all recognised that environmental action matters.

What Businesses Should Do for the Environment

When asked what businesses could do more to protect the environment, the responses were practical and direct. Young people repeatedly mentioned reducing fossil fuel use, cutting carbon emissions, recycling, reducing waste and switching to renewable or cleaner energy sources. Coal, fossil fuels and heavy CO₂ emissions were seen as major problems.

Several respondents wanted businesses to use more sustainable energy sources such as solar, nuclear and other eco-friendly options. Others suggested switching to biodegradable materials, reducing e-waste, repurposing unused equipment, turning off lights at night and using energy only when needed.

There was also a strong focus on waste and pollution. Young people want better waste disposal, more recycling, litter-picking events, cleaner water and cleaner air. One respondent linked environmental responsibility to everyday community action, saying they pick up rubbish when they see it. This suggests that young people want businesses to think beyond profit and take visible, practical steps to reduce their impact on the planet.

Supporting Local Communities

The survey also asked whether organisations do enough to help local communities, including schools, churches, clubs and other local groups. The responses were mixed. Some young people felt that organisations do help, especially by funding bigger projects and supporting schools, churches and clubs. Others said that while support exists, it is not enough.

A common theme was that local communities often need more funding, donations, volunteers and awareness. One respondent said many schools and community groups receive only the “bare minimum” needed to function, and that schools sometimes have to pay out of pocket for essential items. Another warned that some local facilities may have no choice but to shut down if they do not receive enough funding.

Young people also wanted organisations to listen better. One respondent said organisations should pay more attention to “personal problems and voices of the people” rather than assuming they already know what the real issues are. This is a powerful point. It suggests that responsible organisations should not just donate money where they think it is needed; they should work with communities, listen carefully and understand local priorities.

Philanthropy and Causes Young People Care About

Many respondents said that they or their families already donate to charities. The charities and causes mentioned included International Animal Rescue, Apele Romane, Aylesbury Mosque, Oxfam, Florence Nightingale, clothing charities and Wheelchair Power.

For those not currently donating, the causes they wanted to support included poverty, hunger, wildlife and environmental charities. One respondent said they did not donate directly but supported Planet Wild by helping fund its progress through YouTube. This shows that philanthropy is changing. Young people may support causes not only through traditional donations, but also through events, online platforms, awareness and everyday participation.

The answers also suggest that young people connect charity with both local and global issues. They care about people experiencing poverty or hunger, people needing medical or mobility support, animals, clean water and the environment. Their sense of responsibility is broad and compassionate.

Bullying, Exclusion and the Need for Stronger Action

The workplace pillar was explored through a question about exclusion and bullying. Many respondents said they do see bullying or exclusion around them, although some said they did not. One respondent described their class as “incredibly united,” while others said bullying and exclusion were visible and needed to be taken more seriously.

A strong theme was that current consequences are often not enough. Several respondents called for stricter sanctions, more serious disciplinary action and stronger consequences when bullying or exclusion happens. One said that when there are no consequences, bullying and exclusion can become worse.

However, young people did not only focus on punishment. They also called for more support, better parenting, stronger teacher awareness and more effort to help students interact and engage with each other. One respondent said schools should do more than the minimum they are legally obliged to do. This phrase captures one of the biggest messages from the whole survey: young people want institutions to care properly, not just do the minimum required.

A Clear Message for Businesses and Organisations

The survey shows that young people expect businesses and organisations to act responsibly across all four CSR pillars. They want environmental action that is practical and measurable. They want communities to receive proper support, not token gestures. They value charity and giving, but they also understand that support can come through time, awareness, fundraising and participation. They want bullying and exclusion to be tackled with seriousness, care and consistency.

Most importantly, these responses show that young people are paying attention. They notice when businesses pollute, when schools are underfunded, when communities struggle and when bullying is ignored. They also notice when people and organisations make an effort.

The challenge for businesses and organisations is clear: listen to young people, involve them in decisions, and take action that goes beyond the minimum. A fairer, kinder and more sustainable future will not be built by words alone. It will be built by organisations that reduce harm, support communities, give back, and create places where people feel safe, included and valued.

It is now more important than ever to show that we are doing all we can to be a **responsible business.**

CSR-A has established a new, relevant and holistic framework that delivers an up to date standard and accreditation for social responsibility.

A new standard that is supported by the CSR-A Four Pillars of environment, workplace, community and philanthropy. This provides a structure that will help an organisation plan and act responsibly.

A new standard that states that social responsibility should be for every organisation. For this to happen, the C in CSR must be more inclusive. 'Corporate' excludes a large number of stakeholders, specifically the third and public sectors, sole traders and small SME's. We have re-defined the C to be more inclusive; to include Companies, Communities, Charities.

Social responsibility allows you to enrich the quality of lives for all by investing in social value as an essential part of an organisations culture. This provides purpose and impact and will ensure a sustainable and profitable business. It will help to build a better world for future generations by improving the environment and ensuring a cohesive community to live and work in.

It is amazing what many of us are already doing that we don't talk about. CSR-Accreditation provides the perfect opportunity for you to tell your positive story.

In addition to this training course CSR-A provides:

Accreditation

Register now for CSR Accreditation. Registration is free and easy and you will be provided with our comprehensive Guidance for Accreditation, information on our fee structure, a full list of membership benefits and a Word document application form in which you compile and upload your completed application.

Consultation

Our consultants work with you to define and record what you have already achieved in relation to social responsibility initiatives. We provide expert gap analysis to identify areas that need improvement and set targets for improvement against the Four Pillars of CSR. We provide general, pre and post accreditation services

Communication

A Social Impact Report is similar to an annual report and shows all your audiences the impact that your organisation is making through its CSR commitments. This includes financial benefits, environmental impact, staff and stakeholder engagement, positive impact on communities and charities.

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