

# **“Empowering Tomorrow’s Immigrants Youths: Fostering Youth Engagement in Environmental Activities in Finland”**

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## DEGREE THESIS

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### Abstract

In this thesis, the researcher investigated the engagement of young immigrants in environmental activities in Finland, using a mixed-method approach. The research found that 64.67% of these young immigrants are not involved in environmental activities, despite significant interest. The reasons for such lack of participation include language and cultural barriers, lack of targeted projects, and time constraints due to studies and work commitments. There are issues like racism and anti-immigration movements in the country. For the NGOs in Finland, they use social media and multilingual materials to reach out to this group of people. However, the NGOs are facing financial constraints and a lack of cultural understanding. The survey conducted by the researcher found that there is a high preference for activities like nature camping, beach cleaning, and volunteering, which means integrating environmental programs from the beginning of their study life in Finland could enhance participation. Recommendations based on the study findings are to increase advertisement and awareness of environmental programs by promoting cultural exchange and to develop inclusivity and engagement in environmental activities.

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Language: English

Key Words: Young immigrants, Finland, Environmental activities, Language barriers, NGOs

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# Chapter 1

## 1.1 Introduction

Over the last few decades, the role of sustainability has become an important concern for people around the world. The issue of sustainability and the environment has also become part of the UN (SDG). From the experience of the pandemic to the continuous deterioration of climate change, people around the world are concerned about the future of the earth (Hautea et al., 2021). The engagement of the youths (defined in this study as people from 13-28 years old) around the world in saving the earth and taking part in climate action is important. It must be noted that both millennials and Gen Z are likely to take part in conserving the environment, which is a positive sign. According to Ylönen and Salmivaara (2021), Finland is one of the leading countries in the world in sustainability with its long-term and short-term plans. Finland is a pioneer in achieving the SDG goal of sustainability and has proper governance, infrastructure and human resources to establish sustainable development. Lu and Everson-Härkälä (2024) found that due to its developed system and high-quality education, many people immigrate to Finland, especially young people who come to the country for education. Finland also provided asylum to hundreds of Ukrainians recently due to war with Russia. Over the last decade, the number of international students in the country increased by 10%. In this research, I will evaluate how these immigrant youths can be integrated into the environmental protection activities in Finland.

## 1.2 Background

Integrating the youths in environmental protection programs can be an effective way to reduce the risk of climate change. Throughout the UN SDG goals in many countries, different programs are introduced to involve the youths in environmental protection programs (Lu and Everson-Härkälä, 2024). Finland in this case is the pioneer in using its youths in various programs related to climate change and sustainability. The country is the first country to establish the Youth Act which is a law that allows young people in the country to be involved in decision-making (Kulttuuriministeriö, 2024). The national policy of the country is to involve youths in different areas of governance. Finland has a population of 5.56 million which has a significant influence on the country's internal policy-making (Mertanen et al., 2022). However, this paper is concerned with the immigrant youths in the country. Finland is one of the leading destinations for the youths around the world. According to Economic Times (2023), Finland had a goal of attracting 15000 international students and 30000 workers from different parts of the world. The reason behind such a move is that the country's population is declining fast, and a lack of youth is creating problems for the economic sustainability of the country. In this study, I will conduct a study on the role of immigrant youths in environmental activities in Finland. The study will evaluate the government or NGO initiatives to involve immigrant youths in such activities.

## 1.3 Problem Statement

Finland is one of the world leaders in terms of erasing poverty and improving the living conditions of its people. The high quality of life and its good governance are attracting people from around the world. The participation of the youths in environmental protection programs can have a significant impact on climate action programs and overall sustainable goals. In Finland, the country's youth are already involved in such programs under different NGOs (Huttunen and Albrecht, 2021). However, there is a lack of research on the participation of immigrants, and international students in these programs. As these people are also part of society, their participation is crucial in ensuring

climate action. Research on this issue can help the policymakers in finding the current participation of these youths and the challenges they face which in turn will help the policymakers to develop mechanisms to improve their participation. Thus, this research will help to assess these issues.

## **1.4 Research aim, and questions**

This study aims to evaluate the participation of immigrant youths in environmental activities in Finland.

### **Research questions.**

- How is the current level of participation of immigrant youths in environmental activities?
- How effective are the existing engagement strategies in reaching and involving immigrant youths in environmental activities in Finland?
- What are the key challenges faced by immigrant youths in integrating into environmental initiatives?
- What are the preferences and interests of immigrant youths regarding environmental engagement?

## **1.5 Implications of the research**

The outcome of this study will provide new insights into the use of youths in the environmental efforts in Finland. The outcome of this study will help to develop a process to increase the participation of immigrant youths in environmental activities. It will also help the policymakers to find mitigations for the challenges faced by immigrant youths who struggle to integrate into volunteer work. The outcome will also benefit academics as this research will help to outline new areas of research.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Background**

The participation of youths in environmental activities is a significant issue for environmental activism as it helps to prepare future generations for environmental protection activities. However, the integration of immigrant-speaking youths in those activities can bring different dimensions to these activities in Finland. It can improve the commitment of the youths from other countries to the sustainability practices and activism in Finland. In case of the long-term effect of such practice, it will help to promote environmental activities in different parts of the world as some of these youths can use this experience in their home country. In this chapter, the researcher will provide a critical assessment of the relevant literature on this topic.

### **2.1 Participation of Youths in Environmental Activities**

The role of youths in environmental activities is significant as they are an integral part of society. In many countries, the use of youths in environmental activities has played a significant role in reducing environmental depreciation and conserving the local environment. The youth in most countries is highly influenced by the urge to play an active role in society. For instance, in Malaysia, a study by Rahman et al. (2021) focused on Malay Muslims found that the participation of youths in these activities is related to religious and biospheric values which urge them to volunteer. The researchers found that their engagement in environmental efforts was not only a way to contribute

to the preservation of the Earth but also a reflection of their religious duties. It shows that environmental programs that align with local cultural and religious values can enhance youth participation and effectiveness in conservation activities. It can be also noted that the use of religious values in environmental volunteering can encourage broader community engagement and sustainable environmental practices. It is also found in another study by Browne, Garst and Bialeschki (2011) that youth participation in local environmental actions has been recognised as an effective method for developing capabilities as in the United States these types of practice are crucial for democratic participation and scientific literacy. Understandably, the use of environmental activities helps to generate a sense of belonging to the youths where young people are treated as contributors to environmental solutions. For instance, youth engagement programs that promote deliberate action can effectively educate the youth about scientific processes and environmental issues. Using such practices helps to develop a generation that is aware citizens and conscious about their political and environmental rights.

Now in the case of Finland, it is already found that the youth of the country is actively involved in the decision-making process as the country is the pioneer in involving its youth in various decision-making processes. In a study by Huttunen and Albrecht (2021), it was found that several movements in the country involve the youths in environmental activities. For instance, the Fridays for Future (FFF) movement is a significant aspect of youth activism related to climate change (Huttunen, 2021). Finnish youths have been actively participating in this global movement which has notable influence on the country's policymaking. According to the authors, the movement in Finland promotes climate issues and maintains regular campaigns as a form of continuous consciousness. However, the movement is criticised for its depoliticization of youth protests by adults, which can diminish the perceived impact of these movements (Huttunen and Albrecht, 2021). Despite this, the movement has played a crucial role in enhancing youth participation and shaping their views on environmental citizenship. Another study by Kettunen (2021) found that northern Finland explores how young people engage in everyday environmental politics. Though the local meets resistance from local communities, they are making their voices heard and claiming space in the political arena to push for environmental changes. This participation of the youths is one of the most crucial elements that can provide a profound idea about the interaction between youths and the elder generation for the goal of environmental protection. The research covered the role of young people in environmental politics, and how they are bringing changes in the local governance that in turn is ensuring environmental sustainability.

Now the immigrant youths in Finland have a handful of options to participate in environmental activities. A study conducted by Harinen *et al.*, (2005) found the social and societal membership of immigrant youths depends on their participation in activities with the local community. However, they meet with significant resistance in the form of racial discrimination. The study found that there is a need for anti-racist work and better inclusion of immigrant youth within Finnish society. Thus, it also has implications for environmental activities. Another relevant study by Salin *et al.* (2022) addressed the participation of immigrants in outdoor activities in Finland. It found that participation in such activities helps immigrant youths integrate into Finnish society and plays a critical role in teaching them the language and understanding the culture. The study found that the participation of these immigrant youths can create a positive culture of social integration of these foreign youths which can have a long-term positive impact on Finnish society.

## 2.2 Strategies to engage youths in environmental activities.

The primary strategy to educate and train the youths for the future is integrating them through systematic programs that will help them to cooperate with the long-term environmental goals. In different countries, there are ingenious methods that can attract and integrate the youth. According to Aden (2022) in Djibouti, the government has a reward program that provides special incentives to university youths to participate in environmental activities. Here, the government developed a reward system that has a unique feedback system which can track the long-term impact of these activities. It is also found that youth engagement in environmental activities uses innovation by the youth in Djibouti's policymaking. These initiatives also promote skill-building and leadership development programs that help the country by providing an environmentally conscious generation. Similarly, a study by Chen et al. (2019) found that in Canada, particularly in isolated coastal communities where the environment is harsh, due to economic instabilities and migration trends, it is difficult to engage the local youths in such activities. There are some attempts to develop a program called 'virtual stewardship' and integrate environmental education into school curricula which helped the local young people's connection to their local environments. This approach is found to be effective in sustaining long-term environmental awareness and participation despite geographic and economic changes. It is also found by Melo (2019) that community-based educational projects that involve environmental activities, can be an effective method of engaging the youths. These programs are designed to be inclusive which can significantly reduce the chances of racism and promote the integration of immigrant youths into society. For the youths, it will provide a practical understanding of sustainability practices which improves the learning of the next generation.

Now in the case of Finland, various methods are applied to integrate the local youths into environmental programs. A study by Uitto *et al.* (2011) found that students in Finland are integrated into such programs from the high school level as an outdoor activity. From a very early age, youths in the country are introduced to these concepts. The authors also found that Finland has attempted to integrate environmental education at the university level where the policymakers of the country aim to prepare future decision-makers who can significantly influence sustainable development through actions. Despite this, the lack of participation compared to the effort means there is a gap in preparing youth for effective environmental engagement. In northern Finland, young people are increasingly participating in environmental politics which is influencing the local government's role in climate action. However, challenges persist as their participation is sometimes met with resistance in local communities (Kettunen, 2021). It is found to Mickwitz and Kivimaa (2007) environmental policy integration in Finnish technological R&D support is highly impacted by the integration of sustainability concepts. While environmental issues are identified at the strategy level, there is no overarching integration, indicating a need for comprehensive approaches in funding applications and policy making. There is a growing green infrastructure and ecosystem services in land use planning in the Helsinki-Uusimaa Region and the City of Jarvenpaa which shows that the country has an integrated plan where policymakers, scientists, and technology experts are engaged in a plan to turn the country into a role model in sustainable development (Di Marino et al., 2019). However, the country is also facing economic struggles and geopolitical tensions which is creating barriers for the implementation of this plan.



## 2.3 Challenges of integration

In terms of challenges faced by authorities, there is sometimes friction and resistance from local communities when young people actively participate in environmental politics. The promotion of active citizenship among youth, particularly in rural and urban areas in northern Finland is helping to improve the situation regardless of the resistance from the local communities (Kettunen, 2021). It is often found that environmental principles are often discarded by local firms, especially in the tech sector. There is also a lack of funding applications and strategy formulations which shows that the country is not successfully integrating green policies in many of its institutions (Kivimaa & Mickwitz, 2007). Just like many western countries, it is struggling to choose between economic growth and sustainability. For the education system in Finland, the integration of environmental sustainability effectively in the universities lacks the urgency and voice that can lure the youth into action. The case study from the University of Jyväskylä found that teaching environmental issues through an educational framework brings challenges of implementation and resource constraints (Pesonen, 2003). It is found that in movements like Fridays for Future, adult voices often create hegemony in these movements which can effectively reduce the voices and concerns of the youth themselves, especially immigrant youths. This particular finding points out that young people's perspectives may not always be presented by these organisations which in turn means there needs to be discussions about climate action and environmental policies in more different corners of society (Huttunen and Albrecht, 2021).

On the other hand, a study by Nshom, Sadaf, and Ilkhom (2022) found that immigrant youths in Finland suffer from racism, cultural barriers and guidance which reduces their will to participate in such actions. Some of them struggle with their livelihood and there is also a significant cultural difference which leads to misunderstandings or a lack of engagement in local environmental issues. The study found that racism and discrimination in various forms create a significant challenge for immigrant youths. As a result, a large number of these youths are not interested in going to communal activities which include environmental sustainability initiatives. Immigrant youths often face challenges in accessing educational opportunities that can teach them about environmental activities. It must be also noted that discrimination in employment also reduces their will to work in environmental fields or to share their experiences which could lead to meaningful participation in such activities (Kettunen, 2021). It is also found that social exclusion and marginalization from mainstream society can leave immigrant youths feeling isolated, which hampers their ability to participate in community-driven environmental initiatives. Lack of representation in environmental groups or activities can further exacerbate this issue, leading to lower levels of engagement (Nshom, Sadaf, & Ilkhom, 2022). Due to their diverse background, it is also difficult to develop a common strategy to train these youths for a better understanding of Finnish culture.

## 2.4 Theoretical construct

The theoretical construct in this part of this study will help the researcher to correlate relevant theories to the research topic. The researcher here used three theories that are relevant to the research objectives.

**Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory:** The first stage of this model is called *Microsystem* where direct interactions in immediate environments like schools or community centers can be used to engage immigrant youths. English language programs can be used to train the youths which can help to reduce the cultural barriers. In that face, cooperation with NGOs can effectively help the youths in learning local environmental practices (Bronfenbrenner, 2013). In the next stage, the

*Mesosystem* occurs where strengthening the connections between various parts of a youth's life, such as family involvement in school-led environmental projects, can enhance engagement. In this phase, a significant number of youths can be integrated into the youth program which occurs in Finland where school children are part of summer camps including environmental activities. For the immigrant youths' programs such as community clean-ups or recycling initiatives can adjust them to the values of local society. Then local government policies and media can play significant roles which under this model is called *Exosystem*. Advocating inclusive policy for immigrant youths can increase opportunities for engagement as it will reduce the chances of racism. In that case, the role of media can be effective. It must be noted that campaigns in multiple languages can increase the visibility of the campaigns which can lead to the increment of participation by these youths (Bronfenbrenner, 2013). For cultural integration, the role of special programs for these students can help to bring an inclusive atmosphere. In the final stage, *Chronosystem* is introduced where authorities apply intervention in proportion to the social and environmental events which can help better integration of people from all walks of life. These programs can integrate ongoing environmental trends into their operations which can improve their relevance.

**Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory:** In this model, the first stage is observational learning where using the models for Finnish students, authorities can apply similar methods for the immigrant communities who are active in environmental initiatives that can inspire youths (Bandura, 2001). In that case, the NGOs can find people with similar backgrounds who can then bring the immigrant youths to engage in environmental activities which in turn can provide visible pathways for involvement. In that case, specific programs for these youths on environmental activities can boost confidence which will also make them part of the operations. The NGOs can also provide training in environmental advocacy, recycling, and sustainable practices which can benefit the home countries of these youths as some of them may go there in the future. The benefits of such programs can be outlined using social media before starting the workshops can bring positive results. It can be also noted that setting up personal and group goals regarding environmental activities can increase their effectiveness. In that case, project-based learning with achievable targets can improve and encourage their participation. Considering the language and cultural barriers it will be better to develop bilingual instructional materials which would enable the youths to participate in environmental activities.

**Self-Determination theory:** This theory which was developed by Deci and Ryan (2008) states that human motivation is influenced by the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. As the immigrant youths will engage in environmental activities it will provide them these 3 elements.

As the immigrant youths will participate in these activities it will provide them a sense of belonging to the local society which will create a feeling of autonomy. It is found in this study that many immigrant youths face language and cultural barriers, which prevent this sense of autonomy. As the NGOs will provide them with materials and a variety of activities it will provide options for these youths to choose which ones they want to participate in which will be the source of autonomy. The next part of this model is called *Competence*. It is a critical aspect of SDT. In this part, the NGOs or other bodies will help these youths to develop competence as they will offer workshops and training sessions in multiple languages to ensure that immigrant youths are competent in playing their role.

The final element of this model is called *Relatedness*, which can be described as the need to feel connected to others and to belong to a community. It is often challenging for immigrant youths in Finland to integrate with society and create this sense of belonging. The application of this model and the participation of these youths in environmental activities are correlated to this relatedness. Cultural exchange and interaction between Finnish communities and immigrant youths can be applied to create this relatedness.

## **2.5 Research gap**

Although there is a considerable amount of studies on youth participation in such environmental activities globally and in Finland, most of the studies lack the specific challenges and integration strategies for immigrant youths. This gap is significant considering Finland's reputation for sustainability and the increasing number of immigrant immigrants and international students in the country. This thesis will research to fill this gap by assessing the current engagement levels, identifying effective strategies for inclusion, and exploring the challenges faced by these youths as well as the NGOs.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

For this study, I used an explanatory research design. It can be an effective way to develop the relationship between different variables of participation of immigrant speaking youths such as their participation levels, age levels of the immigrants, country of origin, gender, and the types of challenges that helped the researcher to develop insights about the research topic. However, the complexity of this model created some rigidity for the research. It also could not focus on the qualitative elements of the study. For this reason, I decided to follow a mixed-method research design where I will follow qualitative methods to find out the qualitative elements.

### **3.2 Research philosophy**

I used realism philosophy as the research philosophy for this study. Research philosophy determines the process of reasoning, collecting information and conducting the overall research process (Zhang, Gong, and Brown, 2023). Now the reason for using realism as the research philosophy for this study is that the researcher will follow a quantitative research method which corresponds with the explanatory research design.

However, I found that the thesis topic has some qualitative elements for which I used interpretivism research philosophy. Interpretivism research philosophy. Interpretivism research philosophy is suitable for understanding human experience. I used this philosophical stance to understand the challenges and issues faced by the NGO staff in Finland in recruiting immigrant youths in this paper.

### **3.3 Research Approach**

The researcher followed deductive reasoning as it corresponds with the research philosophy. Deductive reasoning is used in research that works with quantitative data. It is suitable for research that involves the study of the nature of reality (Chawla and Sodhi, 2011). For the qualitative part, I used an inductive approach where I developed findings by gathering information about challenges faced by NGOs, and integration strategies for the immigrant youths.

### **3.4 Research method**

I used a survey as the research instrument for this study which required minimal time (Flick, 2015). The survey instrument is an effective way to collect primary quantitative data. The use of the quantitative method provided me with quantifiable outcomes for this study which can help the policymakers to make effective decisions about the participation of immigrant youths in environmental activities. For the qualitative part, I took semi-structured interviews which is suitable for this study as semi-structured interviews provide flexibility to take account of the challenges opportunities and solutions for the integration of immigrant youths in environmental activities.

### **3.5 Data collection**

#### **Quantitative data**

The researchers collected both primary and secondary data for this study. It is already stated that the researcher used the survey as a research instrument for this study. For the primary data collection, the researcher invited the participants to participate in the primary data collection. I used primary data collection to invite people from the student community and other youth community of international students into their social media and community groups (Zhang, Gong, and Brown, 2023). The data were collected from 12/4/24 to 6/5/24. The researcher provided the survey link which was conducted in a Google form to participate in the survey. Before participating in the survey, the participants had to fill out the Google forms which provided their personal information and then they had to agree to a disclaimer which also provided a consent form. The researcher used this method as it is convenient to collect the information using the Google form which reduces the time and cost of collecting information. The researcher also explained the purpose of the participants and the purpose of the research in the disclaimer before starting the survey. The researcher aimed to collect information from at least 60 immigrant youths in the survey. However, after 40 youths participated in the survey due to time constraints, I stopped the survey data collection and the collected data was used in descriptive data analysis. The reason for no response from the participants varied as I found that many participants were reluctant to participate in the survey. Some of the potential participants stated that they were not interested in environmental activities and many participants found their invitation mail in their spam folder which was the reason they did not participate. The researcher also collected information from relevant academic papers, journals, NGO reports, and publications to collect information.

#### **Qualitative data**

For the qualitative part, I directly contacted employees, and managers of some NGOs and they were interested in helping me with information. For this study, the officials of the NGOs were my primary target for the qualitative part as I intended to understand the challenges, they face in integrating immigrant youths into environmental activities. I also wanted to understand the strategies of the NGOs to integrate immigrant youths into their activities. For the qualitative data collection, I conducted interviews with 4 employees of an NGO called 'Luontoliitto' and the interviews were about 10-15 minutes long and were taken from April 12<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> 2024. I used semi-structured interviews and before the start of the interview, I familiarised myself with the participants by discussing this issue. It helped me to ease the process of interviewing as I tried to develop an emotional connection with the participants. I used anonymous coding of the transcript to ensure the privacy of the participants.

**Table 1 Theme Table**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Sub-Themes</b>	<b>Final Themes</b>
<b>Multilingual materials, translation services</b>	Language Accessibility	Increasing accessibility and communication
<b>Social media strategies, digital engagement</b>	Digital Engagement	
<b>Language barriers, cultural misunderstandings</b>	Communication Barriers	Cultural, communication and financial barriers
<b>Funding constraints, resource limitations</b>	Resource Limitations	

After the collection of the interviews, I transcribed them to develop themes. In this case, I searched for specific patterns and keywords in the transcripts (Appendix C). I found language and culture issues as the main challenges and there were also financial issues for the NGOs. I found that the NGO tries to use English language leaflets and social media content as their main strategy to reach immigrant speaking youths. I followed standard procedures of thematic analysis where I used codes to develop sub-themes and from those sub-themes, I developed the final themes in Table 1.

### **3.6 Data analysis**

Before starting the data analysis, the researcher ensured that the information was free from invalid data using MS Excel. The data set was cleared of missing values. Then the researcher developed graphs and a frequency table from the collected information. I then compared the primary data with the secondary data using comparative analysis. The comparison between the primary findings and secondary data helped the researcher to identify the similarities and differences between the results of this study with other relevant papers and publications. It also helped to develop new insights about the research topic. The qualitative information on the other hand was used in the transcript of the interviews to develop themes on the challenges, opportunities and solutions for the integration of immigrant youths in environmental activities. The thematic analysis was later discussed and compared with quantitative data.

### **3.7 Data reliability and validity**

In the context of today's research environment, especially in the case of collecting information from web sources, data validity and reliability is a significant problems (Zhang, Gong, and Brown, 2023). For the primary data, the survey is designed to provide the participants with vibrant questions which reduces the chance of random ticking of answers which in turn reduces the chance of invalid data. The researcher also conducted data cleaning to reduce the chance of missing values. In the case of secondary data, the researcher collected information from peer-reviewed journals, reports of renowned NGOs in Finland, and government websites to ensure the reliability of the secondary information.

### 3.8 Ethical practices

The researcher followed ethical guidelines throughout the research for this study. The researcher collected consent forms from the participants before starting the survey. Before the start of the survey, there was a disclaimer which covered the purpose of the study and the role of the participants in this research (Flick, 2015). The participants were given assurance that no harm would come to them for participation in the study. The participants' personal information was stored in cloud storage which would only be accessible by the researcher and the supervisor for research purposes. The researcher assured that after the completion of the research, this information will be deleted by the researcher. The participants are allowed to leave the research on their wish. Apart from that the researcher also kept a hardcopy of the information due to the fear of cyber security issues and it was also addressed to the participants and the researcher assured that it would be destroyed after the completion of the research.

## Chapter 4 Results & Discussion

In this chapter, I will provide the findings which were collected in the primary data collection. I will first provide the quantitative findings. The data collection was quite difficult as reaching people and encouraging them to participate in the survey through mail required conviction. I explained the purpose of this research and conscious people responded to the survey.

### 4.1 Demographic information

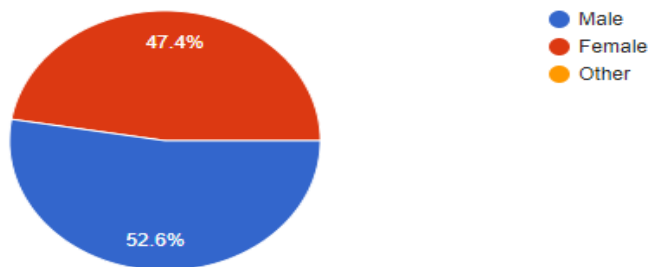


Figure 1 Gender of the respondents

During the data collection, my priority was to take a survey of an equal number of male and female respondents. The reason for such a move was to evaluate whether there were different challenges or experiences of the male and female immigrants which could influence their participation in environmental activities. In this study, I found in (Figure 1) that 52.6% of the participants are male while 47.4% of the participants are female.

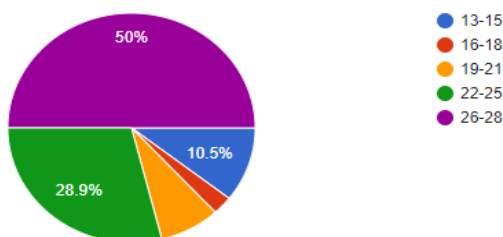


Figure 2 Age of the participants

In the pie chart, I found in (Figure 2) that 50% of the participants are aged 26-28 and are immigrants, and it is natural as these are the students or workers who come to Finland to study or work. It is also found that 28.9% of the respondents are also aged 22-25 which also suggests they are young students and workers who have come to Finland for higher studies or work.

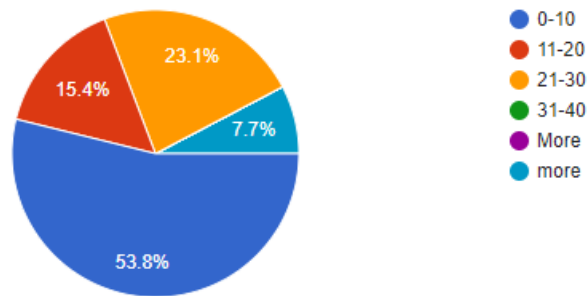


Figure 3 Staying in Finland

I found in the pie chart (Figure 3) that 53.8% of the respondents have lived in Finland for less than 10 years. I found that 15.4% of the participants have lived in Finland for 11 to 20 years. And 23.1% of the participants have lived in Finland for 21 to 30 years. So, the majority of these participants have been living in the country for less than 10 years which corresponds with the data in the previous charts where it is found that the majority of the participants are immigrants who came to the country for higher study and work.

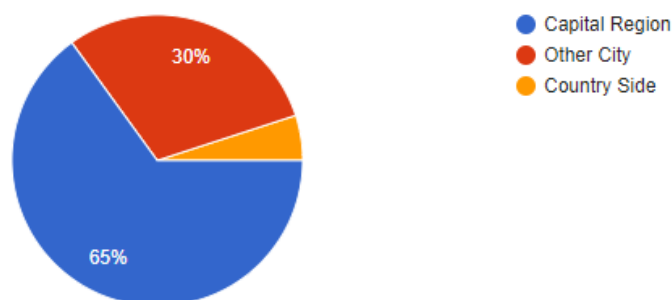


Figure 4 Places of living for participants

From (Figure 4) here I found that 65% of the participants live in the capital city which is understandable as the immigrant population of Finland lives in the capital. Only 30% of the participants live in other cities. These participants can be students whose universities are in other cities.

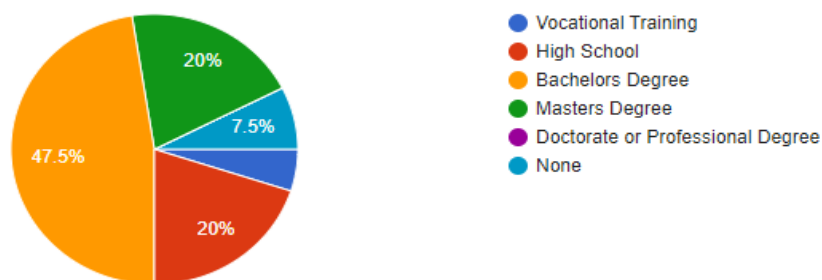
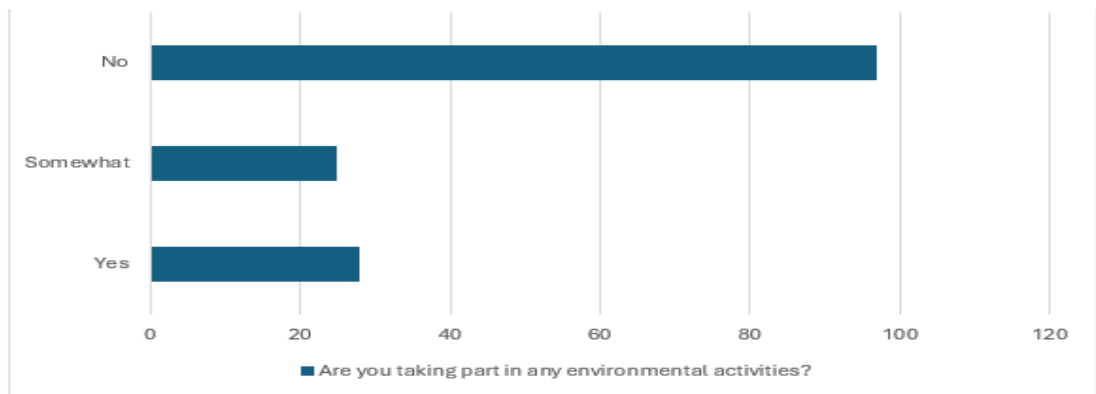


Figure 5 Educational background of the participants

I found that in (Figure 5), 47.5% of the participants have bachelor’s degrees, 20% of the participants have master’s degrees and another 20% of the participants have high school degrees. These findings provide an important insight into the nature of immigrants in Finland. Highly educated young immigrants are coming to the country for their education and residency purposes. These immigrants are likely to take part in activities related to Environmental Protection.

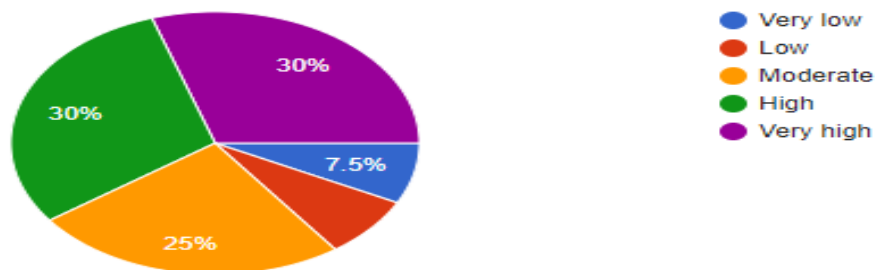
## 4.2 Findings of Research Questions

### Question 1 Current state of participation of immigrant youths in environmental activities



**Figure 6** Participation of immigrant youths in environmental activities

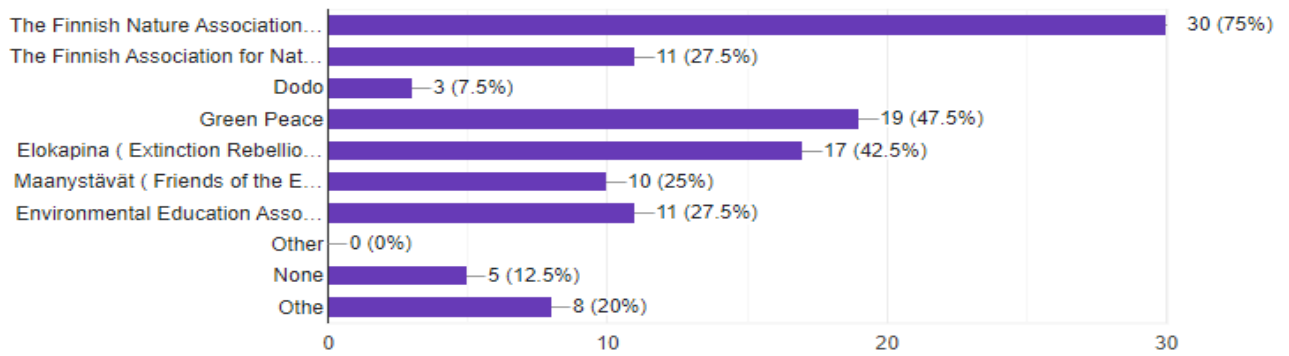
Current conditions of participation of immigrant speaking youths in the country. In the above (Figure 6), it is found that 64.67% of the participants are not involved in any kind of activities. While 14% were involved in some activities.



**Figure 7** Immigrants' interest in taking part in such activities

(Figure 7) shows that while a large number of the participants have not participated in any kind of environmental activities, a large number of participants are enthusiastic about their participation. I found that 30% of the participants are interested in participating in such activities while 30% are highly interested in participating in such activities. It shows that the participants are highly interested in taking part in the activities. However, there are several barriers and challenges which prevent them from participating.

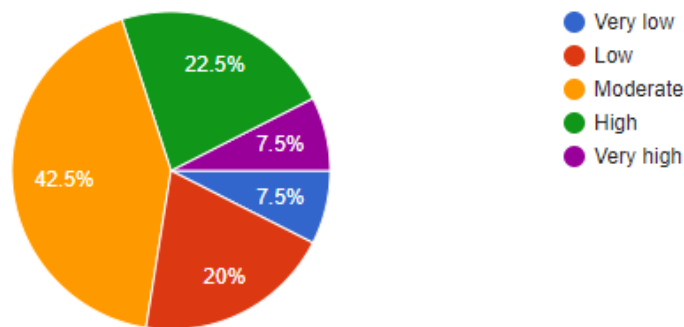




**Figure 8** Name of the NGOs known to participants

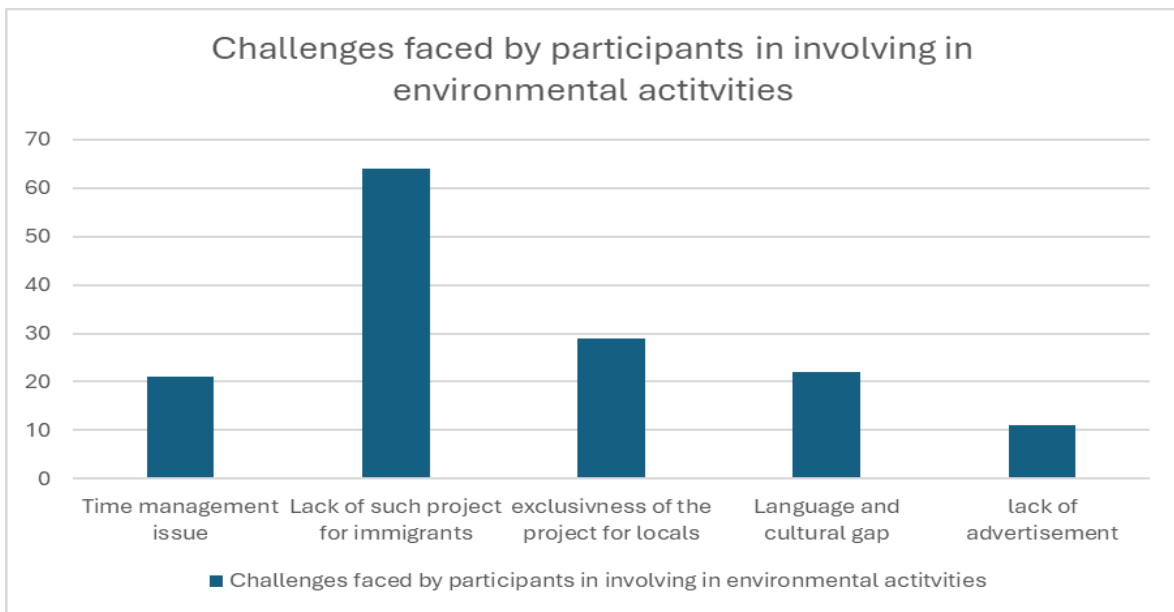
I found that the participants know about different NGOs that work for environmental activities in Finland which shows in (Figure 8) that the participants know about the environmental programs and different engines in Finland that work for it.

### Question 3 Challenges regarding the participation



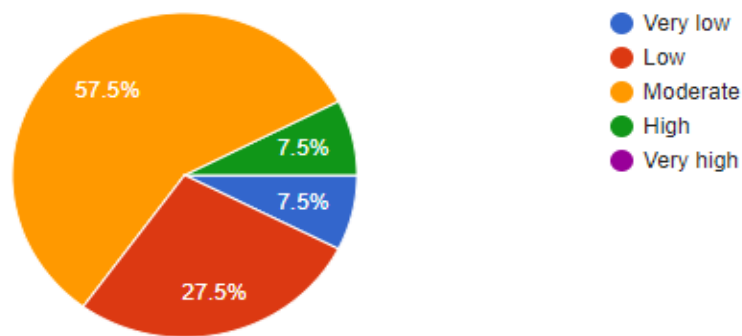
**Figure 9** Challenges faced by participants

I found in (Figure 9) that 22.5% of the participants faced high challenges in participating in environmental activities, and 7.5% of other participants faced very high challenges in participating in environmental activities in Finland. 7.5% of the participants faced low challenges in participating in environmental activities and another 20% of the participants faced very low challenges in participating in such activities. 42.5% of the participants responded that the challenges they face are moderate, which suggests that the majority of the participants face very high to moderate challenges in participating in environmental activities.



**Figure 10** Challenges faced by the participants

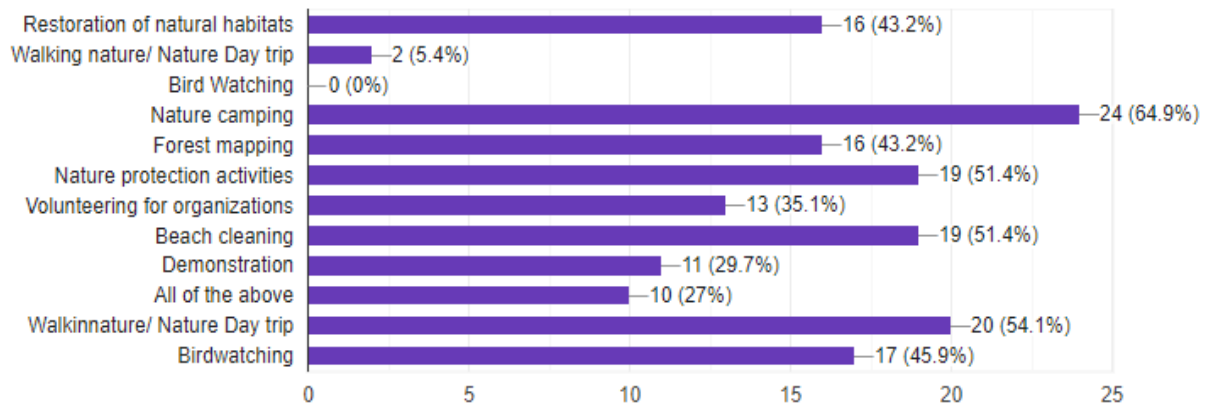
From the chart in (Figure 10), I found that the lack of environmental projects involving immigrant youths is the main reason for not participating in environmental activities. I found that 42% of the respondents face a lack of programs to participate in such activities. 6.7% found a lack of advertising as their main reason for not participating in such activities. 14% expressed that they cannot manage time as they had to study and work in Finland which gives them little time to participate in such activities. Another 14% of the participants stated language and culture barriers as the main reasons which create barriers for them.



**Figure 11** Resources for environmental activities for immigrant youths

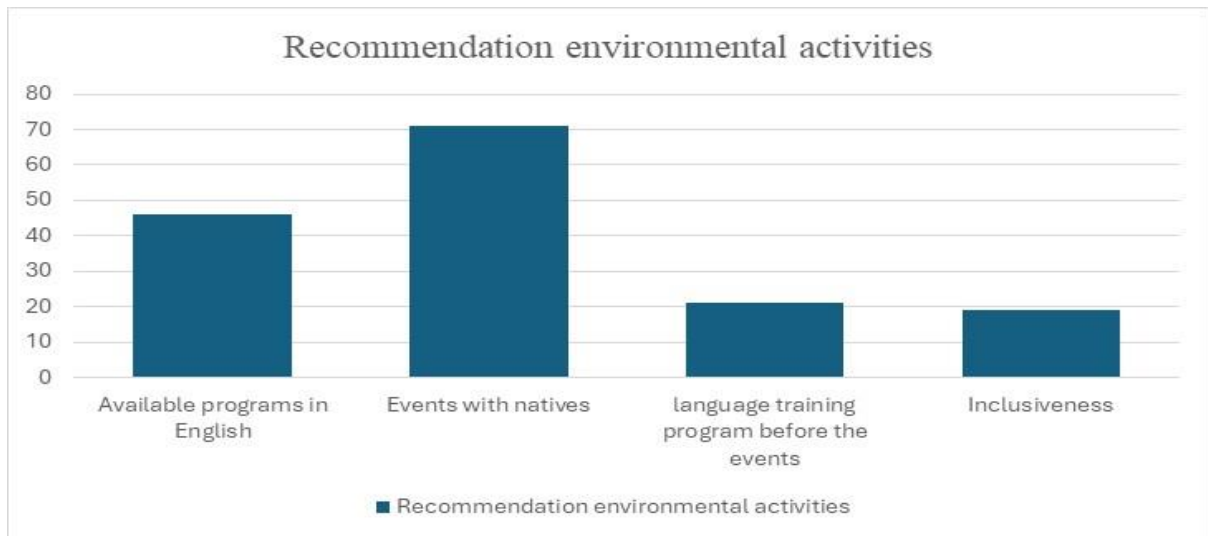
I found in (Figure 11) that 57.5% of the participants expressed that there are moderate resources available for immigrant youths for environmental activities. It was also found that 27.5% of the participants expressed that the resources allocated for environmental activities for immigrant youth are low. And another 7.5% of the participants believe that it is very low. It shows that the number of resources is minimal for immigrant speaking youths in Finland to participate in environmental activities which also corresponded to the previous chart where there is a lack of programs for immigrants in environmental activities. Lack of resources means minimal programs and a lack of advertisement which in turn creates a lack of participation.

**Question 4 Participant's interests and preferences for environmental activities.**



**Figure 12** Participants' favourite environmental activities

In understanding the favourite environmental activities of the participants in (Figure 12), I found it natural camping or walking in a forest is the most favourable type of environmental activity the participants want to attend. The participants also want to take part in beach cleaning, demonstration and restoration of natural habitats for animals full of stuff. Many of the participants want to volunteer for organizations that work for Environmental Protection. Many of the participants have ticked multiple options same time for which it was found that 64.9% of the participants want to take part in nature camping which is also quite popular in Finland during summer.



**Figure 13** Recommendations from the participants

From the quantitative findings in (Figure 13), I found that the majority of the participants want to participate in events where locals are involved. The participant intends to know about the Finnish culture and local people to increase their cultural sensitivity in that country. Some of the participants suggested providing a language training program before the events which will help

them to engage with locals more effectively. Inclusiveness of the program and programs available in English are also suggested by the immigrants to participate in environmental activities.

### **4.3 Qualitative findings**

#### **Theme 1 Increasing accessibility and communication**

From the information obtained from the interviews, it is found that the NGOs in Finland use multilingual materials and mediums to connect with the immigrants about environmental activities. That engagement largely occurs in universities and colleges where the majority of the young non-finished speaking youths can be found. Here the following findings show that the NGOs are active in finding youths in universities which include immigrant speaking youths.

**"We normally start by providing multilingual materials and workshops in colleges and universities. Sometimes we begin from language schools or immigrant support groups where they can be found to provide materials."** Participant A.

**"Sometimes we offer translation and interpretation during our activities is essential. We also develop multilingual promotional materials and educational content for our immigrant youths in social media so that they can learn from each other can help bridge the language gap."** Participant B.

**"We need to focus on making our events fun and engaging. We follow different types of approaches to make our activities accessible. Sometimes we look at social media. But events like these will also require money. Now we are already struggling with funds."** Participant C.

**"We use social media to our advantage by connecting environmental issues to the platforms youths are already using. We do it in English to reach the immigrant youths often."** Participant D.

From these findings, I can see that the NGOs are trying to use social media and offline campaigns such as going to universities to reach the immigrant youths. The use of social media for marketing and communication purposes can be an effective solution for increasing the reach of environmental activities of the NGOs to their target population. As a large number of the students are from different countries and some young people from different countries are active users of social media, it can be an effective medium to provide knowledge about the environmental efforts made by NGOs. It is also found that NGOs try to make their activities fun and engaging as is found in that using fun and outdoor activities can be an effective solution to bring the youth into environmental activities. Their methods include providing English content and using social media to get the attention of the participants which is understandable as English content can reach international students. They also recruit people from university campuses where the NGOs continue their work to bring people to their operations.

#### **Theme 2 Cultural, communication and financial barriers**

For the NGOs, I found that they have some limitations in recruiting immigrant youths into the programs. These organisations are often engaged in running programs for local students and citizens which creates resource issues for these firms.

**"Cultural diversity is important, and it is one of the key problems we have to encounter regularly. We have opened our country to the rest of the world and brought intelligent people who are welcoming to our views and our way of life. At the same time, we also want to learn from their**

**culture and bring positivity to our lives. We will integrate the immigrant speaking youth in our organisation it will help us to learn from them as well as we also will be able to teach them about our culture, so this is more like a cultural exchange with my organisation aims to achieve.”**  
Participant A.

**“I think we have to be smart and innovative. Currently, we are not enough smart or innovative in our social media and offline strategies which would attract them. We don't have a clear understanding of the cultural aspects of our target group, and we lack youth workers who specialize in engaging immigrant speakers or immigrants.”** Participant B.

**“We need to focus on making our events fun and engaging. I think it can be game-like interactive and hands-on activities that are appealing to youths. I think we are not understanding their minds and it is creating communication gaps. But events like these will also require money. Now we already struggling with funds.”** Participant C.

**“Sure. One of the biggest challenges is funds for us. We don't have many. Especially for immigrants, we have some humanitarian programs which require good money. So, developing another program to make them involved in environmental projects is quite ambitious for us.”**  
Participant D.

The findings here show that there is a lack of cultural understanding and lack of participation from the NGOs which also contribute to the lack of participation from immigrant youths. It is found that the NGOs know that culture is an important factor in integrating people in their activities. Cultural challenges are considered one of the most significant challenges the NGOs have to face in conducting their operations the immigrant speaking immigrant youths. Just like that previous theme here it is also found that there is an urgency from the NGOs to make their events more fun and engaging complete will enable immigrant youth and the local community to reduce their differences and engage in positive dialogues. The NGOs find that due to the lack of cultural understanding, there is a communication gap between the immigrant youth and the local communities. However, financial issues have been a critical problem for the NGO's. It is found that the nature of the activities of these NGOs is not appealing, and they have budget issues which are creating barriers for them.

## **4.4 Discussion**

### **Research Question 1**

The first question of this study is about the current state of participation of immigrant youths in environmental activities The current state of the participation of immigrant youths in environmental activities is quite low. In (Figure 6) it is found that 64.67% of the participants do not participate in any environmental activities. However, in the figure, it is found that a large number of participants are enthusiastic about their participation. I found that 30% of the participants are interested in participating in such activities while 30% are highly interested in participating in such activities. It shows that the participants are highly interested in taking part in the activities. However, there are several barriers and challenges which prevent them from participating. It means it can bring lots of involvement if there are programs related to it. In (Figure 10), it was found that 42% of the respondents face a lack of programs to participate in such activities. It is also found that 6.7% found a lack of advertising as their main reason for not participating in such activities. 14% expressed that they cannot manage time as they had to study and work in Finland which gives them

little time to participate in such activities. Another 14% of the participants stated language and culture barriers as the main reasons which create barriers for them.

The qualitative findings in this case also suggest similar findings where in chapter 4.3 in theme 2 of (Table 1) that the NGOs are struggling for funds which is the reason they cannot run programs for the immigrant speaking youths. Found by Kettunen (2021) in the literature review chapter 2.2 that the immigrant speaking youths want to take part in such activities as participation in such activities helps immigrant speaking youths integrate into Finnish society and plays a critical role in teaching them the language and understanding the culture. The involvement of immigrant youths in such activities can be related to Bandura's social cognitive theory described in chapter 2.5. The current state of their participation is largely influenced by their willingness to learn and integrate into Finnish society. For the other reasons found, it is clear that these youths have to go through hardship which creates time issues for them, and some people are not interested in such activities. A study by Maiknen (2017) found that the participation of immigrant youths in social and environmental programs is due to their willingness to integrate into society given the anti-immigration activism in the country. I witnessed similar activism in the country which may raise tension in any immigrant student's mind. It can be concluded in the case of the conditions in Finland that even though there is willingness from the immigrant speaking youths to participate in environmental activities, there are lack of programs and strategies which is the reason for the current situation. Here the theoretical background and quantitative and qualitative findings correspond to each other.

### **Research question 2**

For this research question, I had to look at the interviews to understand the strategy of the NGOs. In the qualitative findings, I found the strategy followed by the NGOs where there is a lack of comprehensive strategy. I found that there was a lack of advertisements from the NGOs to involve the immigrant speaking youths participating in such programs. However, it is found in Theme 1 of (Table 1) that the NGOs prepare social media content and publications in the English language to involve immigrant speaking youths in their programs. The use of social media and offline activities such as going to campuses to recruit university-going immigrant speaking youths in various programs are the common strategy that is being followed by the NGOs. It is found in chapter 2.3 that in Finland are integrated into such programs from the high school level as an outdoor activity. For the immigrant speaking youths, this study conducted research on the strategies used. The use of social media to increase reach and offline activities may bring some volunteers however, the policy may not be sustainable enough to engage the immigrant youths. Considering *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems* theory described in chapter 2.5, the integration of these youths from their early entry into Finland by directly approaching them from the start of their academic life in Finland can bring success in creating a culture of environmental volunteering. A study by Handoyo, Astina and Mkumbachi (2021) on Indonesian campuses found the involvement of youths in environmental activities in their early academic lives can bring long-term relationships. It shows that the findings of this study correspond to the theories described in Chapter 2 and the findings of other studies.

### **Research question 3**

For the third research question, there are challenges for both immigrant youths to engaging in environmental activities and there are challenges for the NGOs to involve the immigrant youths in environmental activities due to various financial and resource constraints. For the immigrant

youths, there are cultural, social and language barriers which is a significant issue. It is found in (Figure 9) that 30% of the participants faced high challenges in participating in environmental activities play 30% of other participants faced very high challenges in participating in environmental activities in Finland. 7.5% of the participants faced low challenges in participating in environmental activities and another 7.5% of the participants faced very low challenges in participating in such activities. 25% of the participants responded that the challenges they face are moderate, which suggests that the majority of the participants face very high to moderate challenges in participating in environmental activities. It is found in the literature review in chapter 2.4 that immigrant youths in Finland, often face significant language barriers, which limit their ability to participate fully in society and specific activities like environmental initiatives. As many of them struggle with cultural differences it leads to misunderstandings or a lack of engagement and issues like racism which is another challenge for the immigrants. It is also found in the study conducted by Maiknen (2017) that immigrants have to go through racism and anti-immigration movements which is another challenge.

For the NGOs, it is found in Chapter 4.3 that the NGOs lack financial support to start such a program and they too have a lack of cultural understanding of the immigrant youths. It is creating barriers for them to reach these people. The findings in theme 2 of (Table 1 )also show that the NGOs know integrating people with different cultural backgrounds can potentially increase the diversity in the organisations. Considering Bandura's cognitive learning theory described in chapter 2.5 both immigrant speaking youths and the NGOs can learn from each other. Thus, here the findings and theoretical background correspond to each other.

#### **Research Question 4**

Based on the challenges described in Chapter 2.4 and the findings in this chapter, there are also suggestions about the preferences and interests of immigrant youths regarding environmental engagement. I found that natural camping or walking in the forest is the most favourable type of environmental activity the participants want to attend. The participants also want to take part in beach cleaning, demonstration and restoration of natural habitats for animals full of stuff. Many of the participants want to volunteer for organizations that work for Environmental Protection. In (Figure 12) and (Figure 13) I found there is positive intention from the immigrant youths to participate in programs like camping in nature or beach cleaning. Some of the participants want to take language courses before their involvement in such activities, which would strengthen their capability to work with locals. This concept is also described in chapter 2.5 where Bronfenbrenner's *Ecological Systems* has a stage called *Mesosystem* and under this system, these suggestions can be applied to improve the integration of these youths in environmental activities. In the later stage, the involvement of the government with funding to these NGOs can lead to an *Exosystem* which will ensure proper integration.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusion & Recommendations**

### **Key findings**

The involvement of youths in environmental activities is critical for SDG goals. For a developed country like Finland, it is important to involve the immigrant youths in such a system which will ensure the long-term sustainability of the country. I found in this study that, while a significant portion of immigrant youths are enthusiastic about participating in environmental activities, there are cultural, social and racial issues which is causing barriers for businesses. The data reveals that

64.67% of the participants are not involved in any environmental activities, although there is a high interest among them in participating which is found in the primary data. The study also found that the local NGOs engage these youths by using multilingual materials and social media outreach. However, the lack of funds reduces the effectiveness of such policies. Here are the key findings of this paper-

- For the current state of participation in environmental activities, it is found that a significant majority of the immigrant youth want to participate in environmental activities, but they cannot because of a lack of programs and marketing. The study found that 64.67% of the participants were not involved in any environmental activities. The current participation level is minimal however, the study found that there is some increasing interest from these immigrant youths to participate in environmental activities. The study found that 30% of the participants are interested in participating in such activities while 30% are highly interested in participating in such activities.
- I found that many immigrant youths are preoccupied with academic and work commitments which gives them little time to participate in such activities. They hardly find any programs or resources specifically targeted at engaging immigrant youths in environmental activities which is another reason for their lack of participation.
- I found that language is a significant barrier for immigrant youths. The participants expressed that they struggle with the Finnish language, which creates barriers to their ability to participate in activities that are often conducted in Finnish. This language barrier creates a gap in communication and understanding with the locals.
- I found that NGOs face their own set of challenges such as financial constraints which are limiting their reach to these students. There is also a lack of cultural understanding and a lack of specialised workers who can face such challenges.
- I found that the local NGOs use social media and multilingual material to reach the immigrant youths and they often go to universities and colleges to recruit participants directly. The use of social media is quite common among the NGOs to reach these people.
- In the primary findings, it is found that the preferences and interests of immigrant youths are crucial for designing effective engagement programs where I found that a significant number of participants expressed interest in nature camping and walking in the forest which is quite popular among the youths. The Participants also showed a strong preference for beach cleaning which can be applied to future work design of these volunteers.

## **Recommendations**

- The NGOs should seek financial help from the government and increase their advertisement using omnichannel mode which will maximise their marketing efforts and it will also create awareness for environmental programs.
- There should be new programs that integrate immigrant youths from the start of their academic life in Finland. It will be interesting to make it part of their curriculum.
- The use of cultural programs can be effective in reducing racism and promoting cultural awareness.

## **Chapter 6: Critical Review**

Now conducting this study was a profound experience for me and despite the completion of data analysis and discussion, I have noticed several issues with this research. These limitations must be properly understood before starting any future research.



- The first issue for this study is the sample size. I think I should have used a bigger sample for the quantitative part as 40 people may not represent the whole population. I think a small sample size restricted the generalizability of the findings to the broader population. The use of only 40 participants may not provide an accurate presentation of the findings. As I used specific demographic groups, such as international students and recent immigrants, it may overlook the experience of immigrants who have been living here for many years.
- The research is conducted only in a city where the majority of the participants are living in capitals and as a result, it has created geographical bias. It must be noted that the type of environmental activities and the challenges associated with participation can vary significantly between urban and rural areas.
- For the qualitative part, I think I should have interviewed people from more NGOs who could have provided more insights on the research issues. Many NGOs in the country may have different strategies and experiences in working with immigrant youths. Those experiences should have been evaluated in this study.
- The study has limited scope as the role of government and other relevant bodies have not been covered in this paper.
- The research focused on some specific types of environmental activities for which I could not capture all types of activities for youth engagement. There are many activities such as urban gardening, wildlife conservation, and environmental advocacy which are ignored in this research.
- The research used a cross-sectional timeline design which focused only on single instances of time and failed to provide the long-term effect of such practice.

Based on these limitations, the future researchers can follow my guidelines:

- There should be an increase in sample size and diversity of the target population. For any kind of future research, research must include different groups of immigrant youths and long-term residents in the country, youths from various socioeconomic backgrounds, and those living in different geographic regions in Finland.
- To reduce selection bias in the sampling, the researcher can use random sampling methods.
- A longitudinal time horizon can be effective in understanding the long-term impact of the environmental participation of immigrant youths.
- On the racism issue, focus group discussions with students can also bring new insights. More focus on environmental activities can also bring new insights.

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## Appendixes

### Appendix A Survey Questionnaire

1. What is your age?
  - 13 -15
  - 16-18
  - 19-21
  - 22-25
  - 26-28
2. What is your gender?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Other
3. For how long have you been living in Finland?
  - 1-10
  - 11-20
  - 21-30
  - 31-40
  - more
4. Are you interested in environmental protection and volunteering for environmental activities in Finland?
  - Very low
  - Low
  - Moderate
  - High
  - Very high
5. Do you feel connected to Finnish nature and animals?
  - Very low
  - Low
  - Moderate
  - High
  - Very high
6. Do you find any challenges in getting involved in environmental activities?
  - Very low
  - Low
  - Moderate
  - High
  - Very high

Comment What are the challenges you find?

7. What barriers do you find most challenging to engage in environmental activities? [ Choose multiple]
  - Language
  - Culture
  - Lack of promotion
  - Social isolation

- Other

Comment on the other barriers you face.

8. How much resource do you think is available for non-native youths to engage in environmental activities?
- Very low
  - Low
  - Moderate
  - High
  - Very high
9. What are the organizations that you know work for environmental protection in Finland? [ Choose multiple]
- The Finnish Nature Association (Luontoliitto)
  - The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation (FANC)
  - BirdLife Finland. ...
  - Coalition for Environment and Development (Ympäristö ja kehitys)
  - Dodo.
  - Environmental Education Association, FEE Finland (FEE Suomi)
  - Other
10. If any of these organizations invite you to volunteer in environmental activities, will you join in the events?
- Very low
  - Low
  - Moderate
  - High
  - Very high
11. What kind of environmental activities would you rather participate in? [ Choose multiple]
- Restoration of natural habitats
  - Nature camping
  - Forest mapping
  - Nature protection activities
  - Volunteering for organizations
  - Beach cleaning
  - All
12. Would you like to leave your email for future events on the environment?

Email

13. What are the most important aspects, in your opinion, to motivate young people who are not Finns to actively engage in environmental initiatives in Finland?

Comment

## Appendix B Interview Transcript

### Interview for Participant A

**Interviewer:** Thank you for joining us today. Could you start by describing some of the challenges Luontoliitto faces in engaging immigrant youths?

**Participant A:** Sure. I think some of our methods lack flexibility and sometimes there are issues with the language you know there are immigrants who lack the language, and you can say that the Finnish language is quite difficult for foreigners. In that case, I think the language is the main challenge which creates communication barriers.

**Interviewer:** What specific steps do you think can be taken to make your activities more flexible with languages?

**Participant A:** "We normally start by providing multilingual materials and workshops in colleges and universities. Sometimes we begin from language schools or immigrant support groups where they can be found to provide materials."

**Interviewer:** Funding is often a challenge for many NGOs. How do you manage it?

**Participant A:** yeah yes you are right finances have been quite difficult for the last few years because you know the organisation that used to fund us even the government is struggling with the economic conditions I think if we want to open another programme for immigrant students we will struggle financially the reason we're still not progressing with such plan

**Interviewer:** Volunteer engagement is crucial. How can Luontoliitto attract more volunteers, especially for your events?

**Participant A:** I think in today's context the students in the youth only come to volunteer directly because as they want to take part and make something useful they also want something in return I think in that case the weekend provides them with some skill-building training and help them to integrate with the locals which I think can help them to volunteer

**Interviewer:** Communication is another critical area. What strategies can be implemented to improve the spread of information about Luontoliitto's events?

**Participant A:** right now we are using social media mainly to reach the youth but we all know sometimes a large group of these immigrants are not active on social media and some of them are busy with work and study and for this reason, we also look for them under campuses and areas where immigrant workers hang out.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned making your events more interesting and impactful. Can you elaborate on how you plan to achieve this?

**Participant A:** yes you are right, actually any kind of activity I think must be a fun activity to engage the youth. Some of them lead a pretty stressful life and they come to such events to refresh themselves for this reason we design our activities like picnic or game events which both create flexibility and allow these immigrants to engage in fun activities with the locals which I think helps them to integrate with the locals.

**Interviewer:** What role do you think cultural diversity plays in your efforts to engage immigrant youths?

**Participant A:** Cultural diversity is important, and it is one of the key problems we have to encounter regularly. We have opened our country to the rest of the world and brought intelligent people who are welcoming to our views and our way of life. At the same time, we also want to learn from their culture and bring positivity to our lives. As we will integrate the immigrant speaking youth in our

organisation it will help us to learn from them as well as we also will be able to teach them about our culture, so this is more like a cultural exchange that my organisation aims to achieve.

**Interviewer:** Last question, what are your long-term goals for Luontoliitto in terms of youth engagement and environmental impact?

**Participant A:** The long-term goal of our organisation is to bring all people of Finland under pressure to have a society that cares about its people, its environment and the world.

**Interviewer:** Thank you, for sharing your insights and thoughts. It's been great talking to you.

**Participant A:** Thank you. It's been a pleasure.

### **Interview of Participant B**

**Interviewer:** Thank you for joining us today. We will start with the challenges Luontoliitto faces in engaging youths?

**Participant B:** . Language is the main problem to reach them. The immigrant students lack the language, and you can say that the Finnish language is quite difficult for foreigners. In that case, I think the language is the main challenge which creates communication barriers. I think language barriers especially from Asian or South Asian student communities are one of the serious reasons for the failure of our strategy to reach them. There is also a lack of smart people who are specialised in youth working and managing.

**Interviewer:** How do you think Luontoliitto can become better known among youths?

**Participant B:** I think we have to be smart and innovative. Currently, we are not enough smart or innovative in our social media and offline strategies which would attract them. We don't have a clear understanding of the cultural aspects of our target group, and we lack youth workers who specialize in engaging immigrant.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned the lack of specialized youth workers. What steps can be taken to address this issue?

**Participant B:** I think we should start by hiring some international students who have a specialisation in understanding their culture. I think these students will help us to understand the necessity and specific preferences of international students as well as young immigrants from different countries. I think after pioneering this programme we will be able to develop some workforce who are capable of working with immigrant speaking youths.

**Interviewer:** Language barriers are a significant challenge. What strategies can Luontoliitto implement to overcome these barriers?

**Participant B:** Sometimes we offer translation and interpretation during our activities is essential. We also develop multilingual promotional materials and educational content for our immigrant youths in social media so that they can learn from each other can help bridge the language gap.

**Interviewer:** What opportunities do you see in improving youth engagement through these strategies?

**Participant B:** I think these activities can significantly aid their integration into Finnish society. It provides them with a healthy environmental hobby and an opportunity to contact the locals.

**Interviewer:** Could you elaborate on the benefits of engaging immigrant youths in environmental activities?

**Participant B:** I think it is important to understand that in Finland we want to build a society that integrates people regardless of their backgrounds in the sustainability fields. I think this is what made this country one of the leading nations in promoting sustainability and Environmental Protection. The benefits of integrating this youth will help them as well as their home country to understand the value of sustainability and the environment.

**Interviewer:** Funding is often a challenge for NGOs. How do you propose to secure more funding for Luontoliitto?

**Participant B:** We need to explore various funding avenues, including government grants but honestly speaking these are not enough. We are all suffering because we don't have enough funds to open specific programmes for immigrant youths.

**Interviewer:** What role do you think partnerships play in Luontoliitto's success?

**Participant B:** I think we understood people's pulse and our campaign resonated with our target groups.

**Interviewer:** Finally, what are your long-term goals for Luontoliitto in terms of youth engagement and environmental impact?

**Participant B:** We want to reach every corner of the country where any soul living in Finland works on a common goal of sustainability.

**Interviewer:** Thank you for helping me.

**Participant B:** My pleasure.

### **Interview of Participant C**

**Interviewer:** Thank you for joining us today. First, tell me about the challenges your organisation faces.

**Participant C:** I think we fail to understand their preferences. We use English language content and social media but I think they are not enough. We are missing something important to them and that will create a sense of interest. For this, I think we need to understand their culture and also present ours to them.

**Interviewer:** What strategies do you think can help in making it interesting and culturally diverse?

**Participant C:** We need to focus on making our events fun and engaging. We follow different types of approaches to make our activities accessible. Sometimes we look at social media. But events like these will also require money. Now we are already struggling with funds.

**Interviewer:** How can you make it easier for youths to be informed to be active participants in your activities?

**Participant C:** funny social media marketing is still relevant among the users and the immigrants use they use social media especially Facebook or Instagram quite frequently and I think we need to invest in some big data or analytics to target our specific youth groups.

**Interviewer:** What opportunities do you see in enhancing youth participation in Luontoliitto's activities?

**Participant C:** I think we can help to create a more active and environmentally aware community. For the immigrant youths, we can arrange interactive sessions for them. We can arrange dialogue between them, and it will promote positive discussion and help to fight racism issues.



**Interviewer:** How do you plan to encourage repeat participation and get youths to bring their friends?

**Participant C:** We need to make our activities memorable and enjoyable so that youths want to come back. Creating memories is more effective than hours of Facebook content.

**Interviewer:** How can Luontoliitto increase its reach?

**Participant C:** I would like to say money but in reality, I think it should be innovation. We need to be smart and innovative in our approach and understand the culture and communication process to reach these people.

**Interviewer:** What are your thoughts on making environmental activities more accessible to immigrant youths?

**Participant C:** "We need to focus on making our events fun and engaging. We follow different types of approaches to make our activities accessible. Sometimes we look at social media. But events like these will also require money. Now we are already struggling with funds."

**Interviewer:** Finally, tell me about your long-term goals.

**Participant C:** Our long-term goals are to significantly increase youth but also fight issues like racism, and homophobia.

**Interviewer:** Thank you, Elina, for sharing your insights and plans. It's been great talking to you.

**Participant C:** Thank you. It's been a pleasure discussing these important topics with you.

#### **Interview of Participant D**

**Interviewer:** Thanks for joining us, Merja. Can you start by telling us about the main challenges Luontoliitto faces in engaging youths, especially immigrant speakers?

**Participant D:** Sure. One of the biggest challenges is funds for us. We don't have many. Especially for immigrants, we have some humanitarian programs which require good money. So, developing another program to make them involved in environmental projects is quite ambitious for us.

**Interviewer:** How can Luontoliitto compete with social media and other distractions to engage youths?

**Participant D:** We use social media to our advantage by connecting environmental issues to the platforms youths are already using. We do it in English to reach the immigrant youths often.

**Interviewer:** What opportunities do you see in improving youth engagement through social media?

**Participant D:** It is not that effective but better than nothing. I think we need to understand cultural aspects before making social media content.

**Interviewer:** What are some specific strategies you think could improve engagement and hold their interest?

**Participant D:** We need funds and activities that promote fun-like learning environments. It will bring us high social media reach and offline volunteers.

**Interviewer:** How important is it to have collaboration with other organizations and influencers?

**Participant D:** It is important, especially when you look at the current situation.

**Interviewer:** What situation?

**Participant D:** I think youths today are not interested in such activities unless they are being influenced by people in social media or it becomes a trend.

**Interviewer:** OK, how do you see the role of communication in engaging immigrant youths?

**Participant D:** Effective communication is key, but it is difficult to develop methods of effective communication.

**Interviewer:** Can you talk about the challenges of culture?

**Participant D:** It is tough and honestly speaking we lack the cultural understanding, but we have the willingness, and the immigrant students are quite welcoming to introduce us to their culture.

**Interviewer:** What are your long-term goals for Luontoliitto for the youths' program?

**Participant D:** I think I would like to see more people from different backgrounds working for us and our community.

**Interviewer:** Thank you.

**Participant D:** Thank you.