

# RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Youth Perspectives on Climate Change and Education in Afghanistan





**Cover:** In Goharshad Begum school for girls, in Herat city, students in Grades 1 to 6 have commenced once again their learning. Around 4,000 girls study at this school when operating at full capacity from Grades 1 to 12. (September 2021)

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**Disclaimer:** This climate change and education regional poll and subsequent analysis of results in Afghanistan was carried out between August 2020 and March 2021. The analysis showcases a snapshot of Afghan youth beliefs and perceptions around climate change and education prior to the Taliban takeover in August 2021. The authors believe that the insights provided by the report remain relevant and can be leveraged to inform future efforts to strengthen climate education in schools and improve the climate resilience of the education system in Afghanistan.

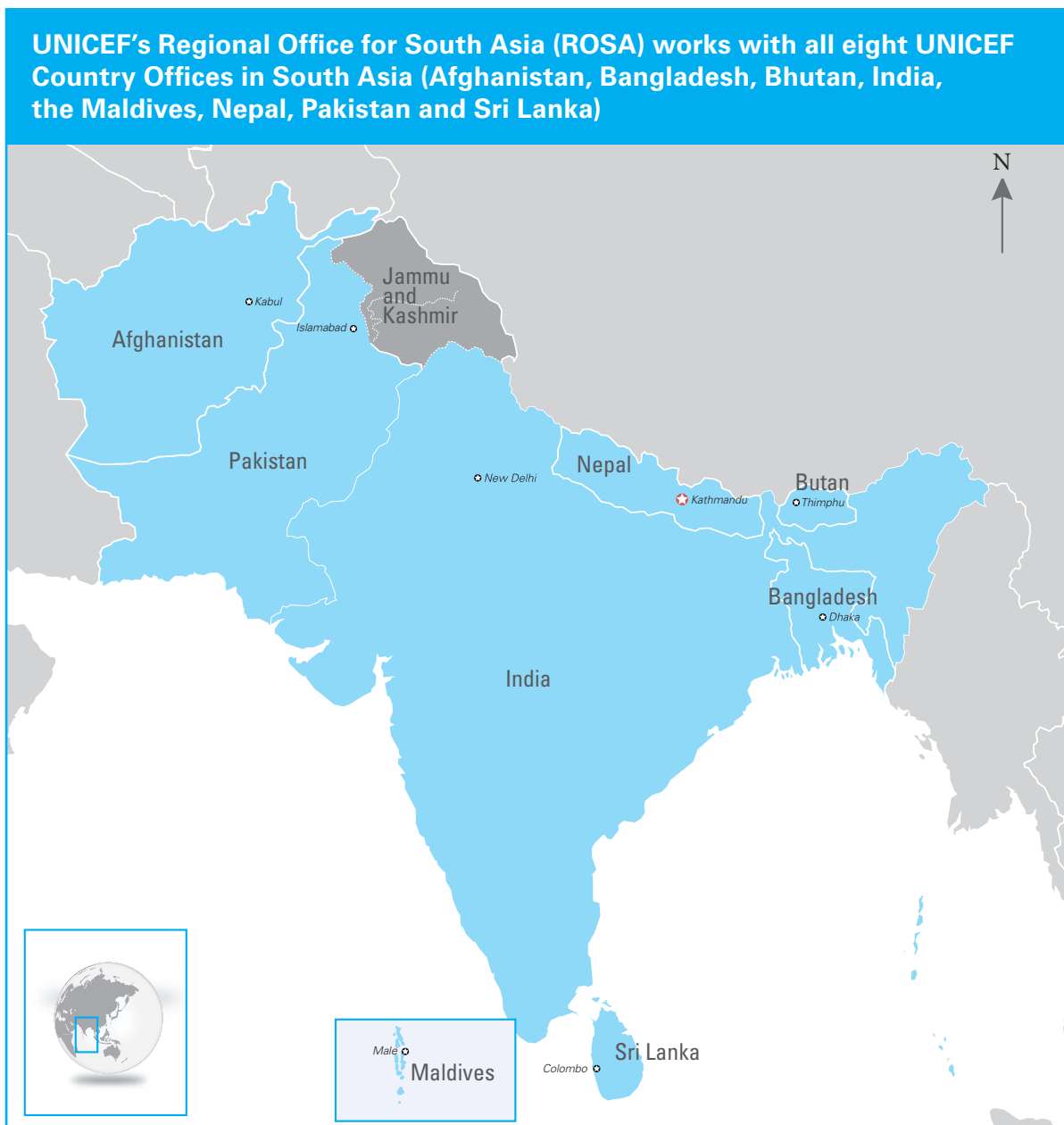
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# 1

**OBJECTIVE**





# OBJECTIVE

The survey was structured to examine the following:

- > **Youth experiences and perceptions** of climate change in their locality and surroundings.
- > Youth perceptions of **climate change learning and action opportunities at school** and in their community.
- > Youth experiences of, and involvement in, climate change **learning and action initiative(s) at school and in their community.**
- > Youth views on support **needs to empower them** to become effective and confident agents of change.



# 2

## SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY





# SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY



**25,826**  
respondents



**8**  
countries



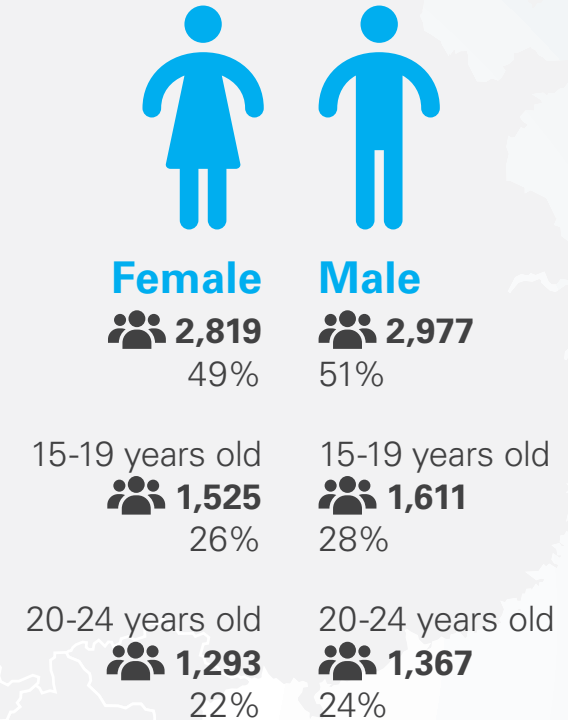
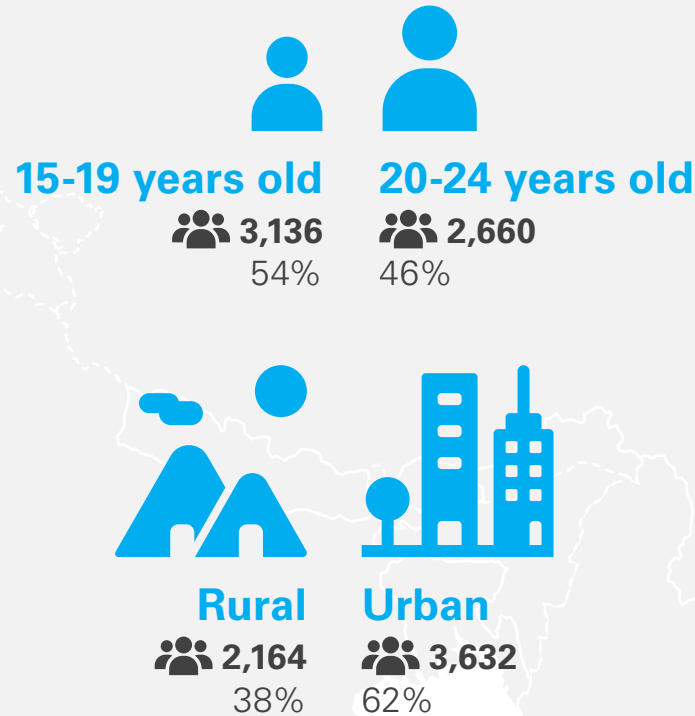
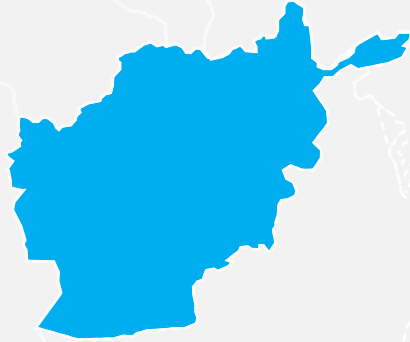
**10\***  
languages

The survey was conducted online in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka between 7 August and 9 September 2020. It was administered through Facebook Messenger, Viber and Whatsapp. Cleaning steps were undertaken for cases that had erroneous entry, were outside the age range or empty cases, and 4,231 cases were dropped.

\*Dari and Pashto (Afghanistan), Bangla (Bangladesh), English (Bhutan), Hindi (India), Dhivehi (Maldives), Nepali (Nepal), Urdu (Pakistan), Sinhalese and Tamil (Sri Lanka).

## SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY

### Afghanistan



#### Weighting:

- **Iterative proportional fitting** was used to weight the sample intra-country to correct for non-response and selection bias across demographic factors.

- **Gender** and **age** were adjusted using 2020 population data from the International Labour Organization database ILOSTAT.

#### Other Countries:

- For this country report, each response from Afghanistan is compared to the overall regional response from all respondents\* to the survey.

#### Limitations:

- **Demographic:** Respondents were not asked questions about socio-economic status, education or region.
- **Imbalanced response:** Given the incomplete demographic profile of the respondents, data presented should be interpreted “in-sample”, meaning that these attitudes are from a sample population with internet access, literacy both in terms of reading and ability to navigate internet-enabled devices, and willingness to opt-in to a survey.

- **Drop-off:** As with many online surveys, there was a consistent drop-off in respondents throughout the survey. Missing data were treated as missing at random (MAR) with the assumption that auxiliary variables in weighting adjusted for missingness. It is possible, given point 1, that there are additional factors related to drop-off. Moreover, a respondent who does not know about climate change is potentially more likely to drop off than those that know a lot about the subject. Results should be interpreted with this in mind.

\*Based on first question (does not incorporate drop-off).



# 3

## DETAILED ANALYSIS







## SECTION 1: **PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

Respondents were asked about their knowledge of, and exposure to, climate change.





## KNOWLEDGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

**Students were asked:**

*How much do you know about climate change and global warming?*

*Do you learn about climate change in school?*

**32%**

of respondents in Afghanistan reported that they could explain climate change

**53%**

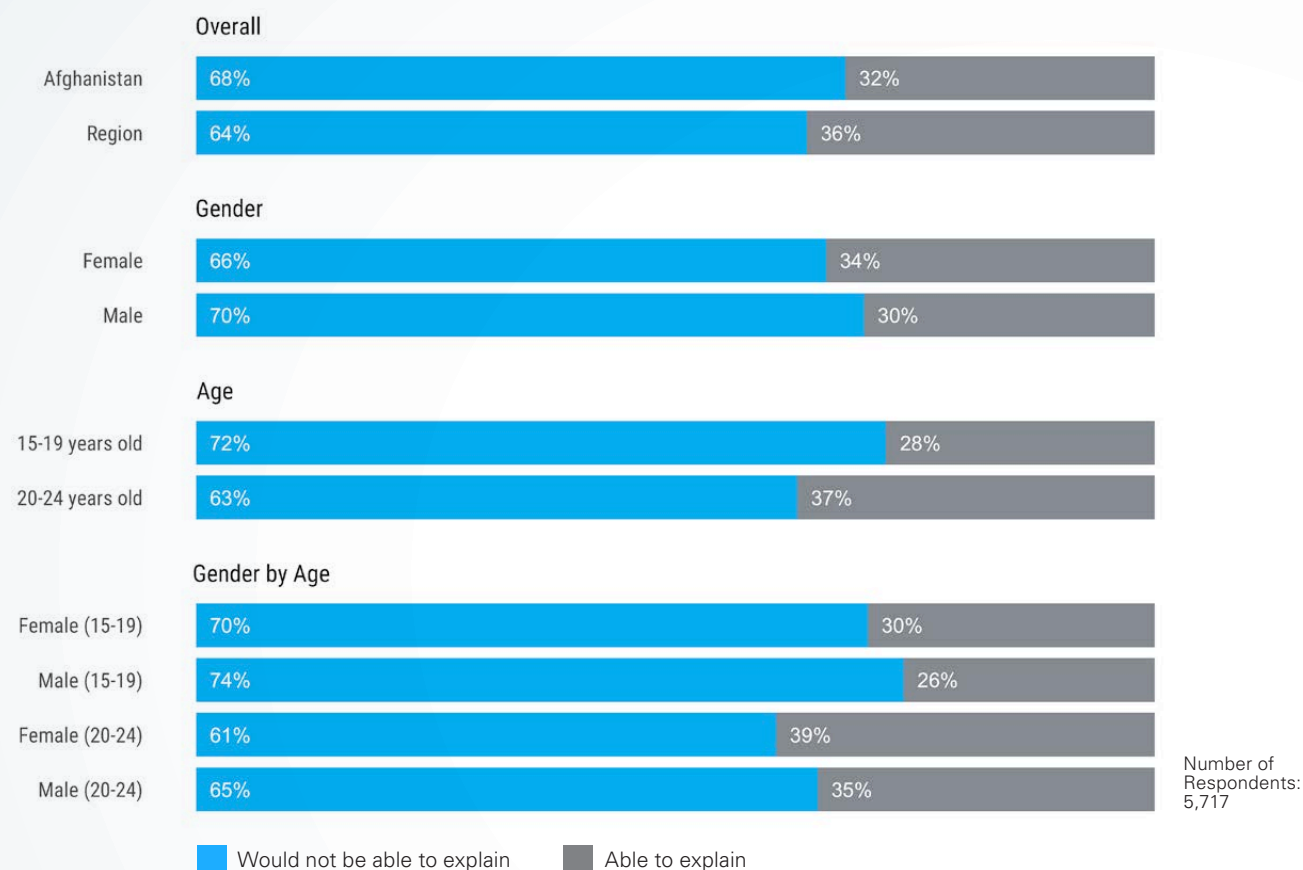
of respondents in Afghanistan reported that they “very often or often” learned about climate change in school

**10%**

of respondents in Afghanistan reported that they “never” learned about climate change in school

## KNOWLEDGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

### How much do you know about climate change and global warming?



- Overall, 32% of respondents in Afghanistan reported that they were able to explain climate change and global warming. This was lower than the regional average of 36% and was the *second lowest* of all eight countries surveyed.

- **Age:** A greater proportion of older respondents (20-24 years) were able to explain climate change. This was 9 percentage points higher than younger respondents (15-19 years).

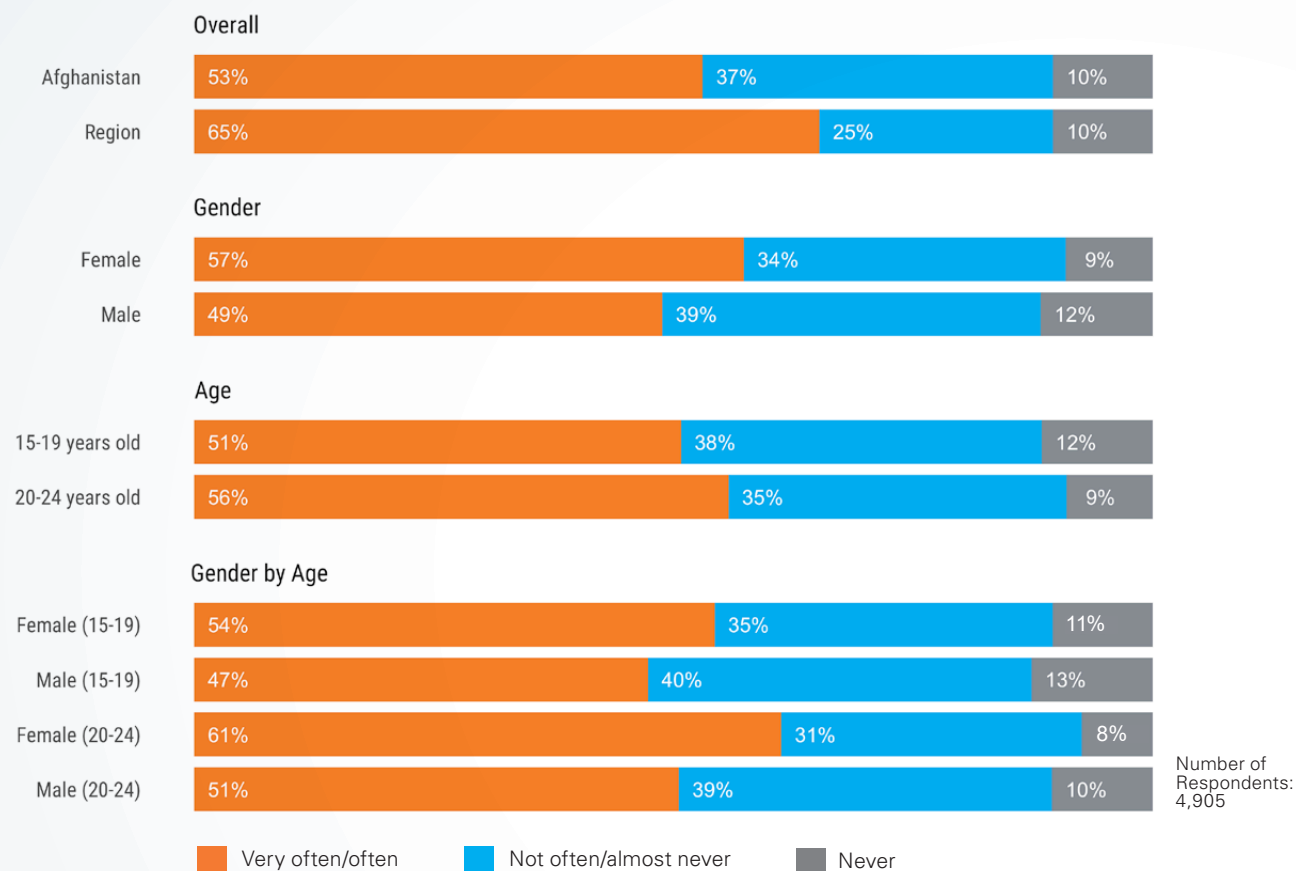


“Our classrooms are often so hot that it diverts our minds from the lesson. So we often go outside the classroom to wet our face and hands and feel relaxed, which is why we often miss important lessons. And because of this, our understanding of the subject is incomplete.”  
Male respondent from Afghanistan, age 23



## CLIMATE CHANGE IN SCHOOL

### Do you learn about climate change in school?

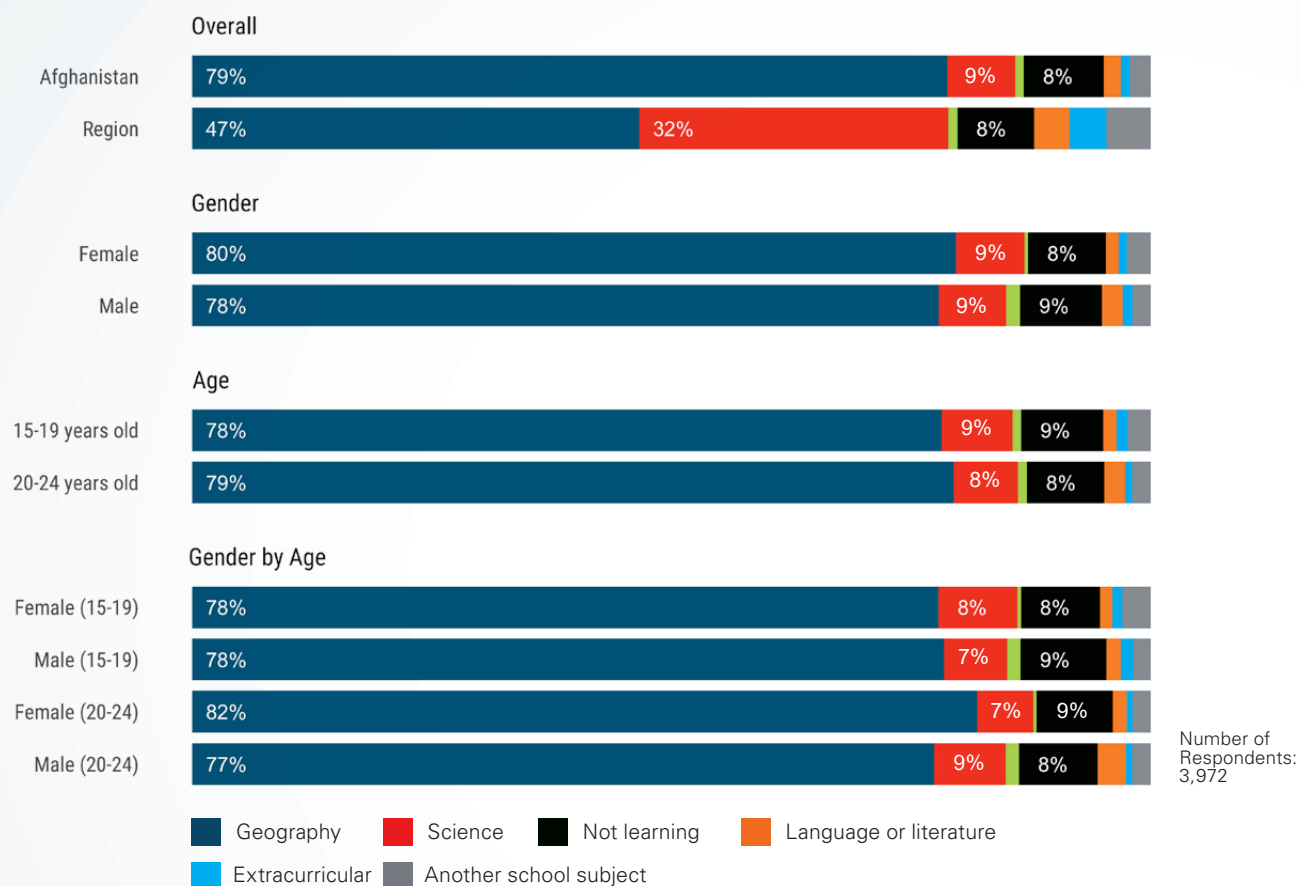


- Overall, 53% of respondents in Afghanistan reported that they “very often or often” learned about climate change in school. This was lower than the regional average (65%) and the *second lowest* out of the eight countries surveyed.

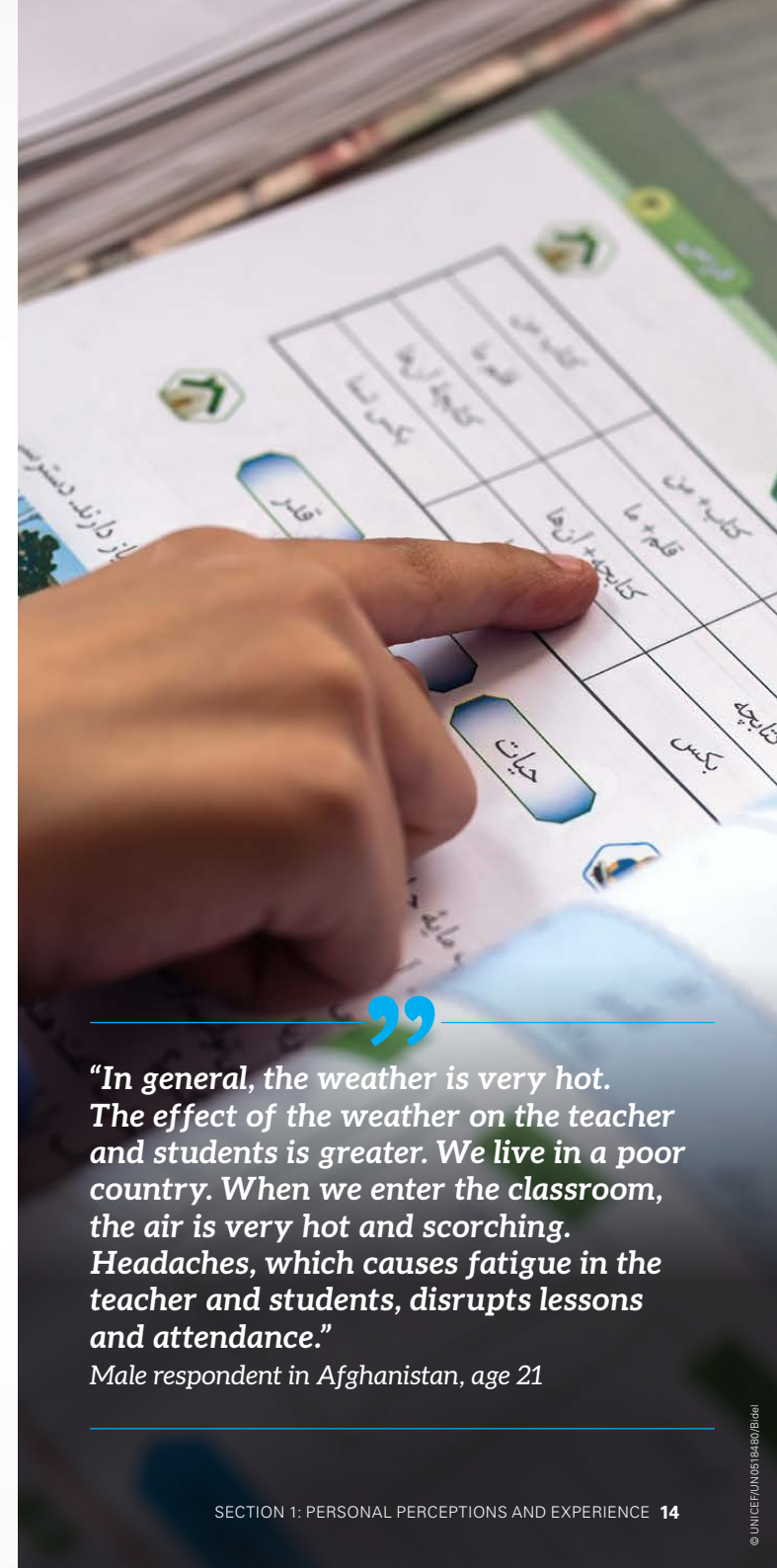
- **Age:** A higher proportion of older respondents (56%) reported that they “very often or often” learned about climate change in school compared to younger respondents (51%).
- **Gender:** A higher proportion of female respondents (57%) reported that they “very often or often” learned about climate change in school compared to male respondents (49%).

## CLIMATE CHANGE IN SCHOOL (SUBJECTS)

### How do you learn about climate change in school?



- Overall, 79% of respondents in Afghanistan reported that they learned about climate change in their Geography class.



“In general, the weather is very hot. The effect of the weather on the teacher and students is greater. We live in a poor country. When we enter the classroom, the air is very hot and scorching. Headaches, which causes fatigue in the teacher and students, disrupts lessons and attendance.”

Male respondent in Afghanistan, age 21



## WORRY ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

**Students were asked:**

*Are you worried about climate change and what it means for the future?*

**64%**

of respondents in Afghanistan reported that they were at least a little worried about the future effects of climate change

**36%**

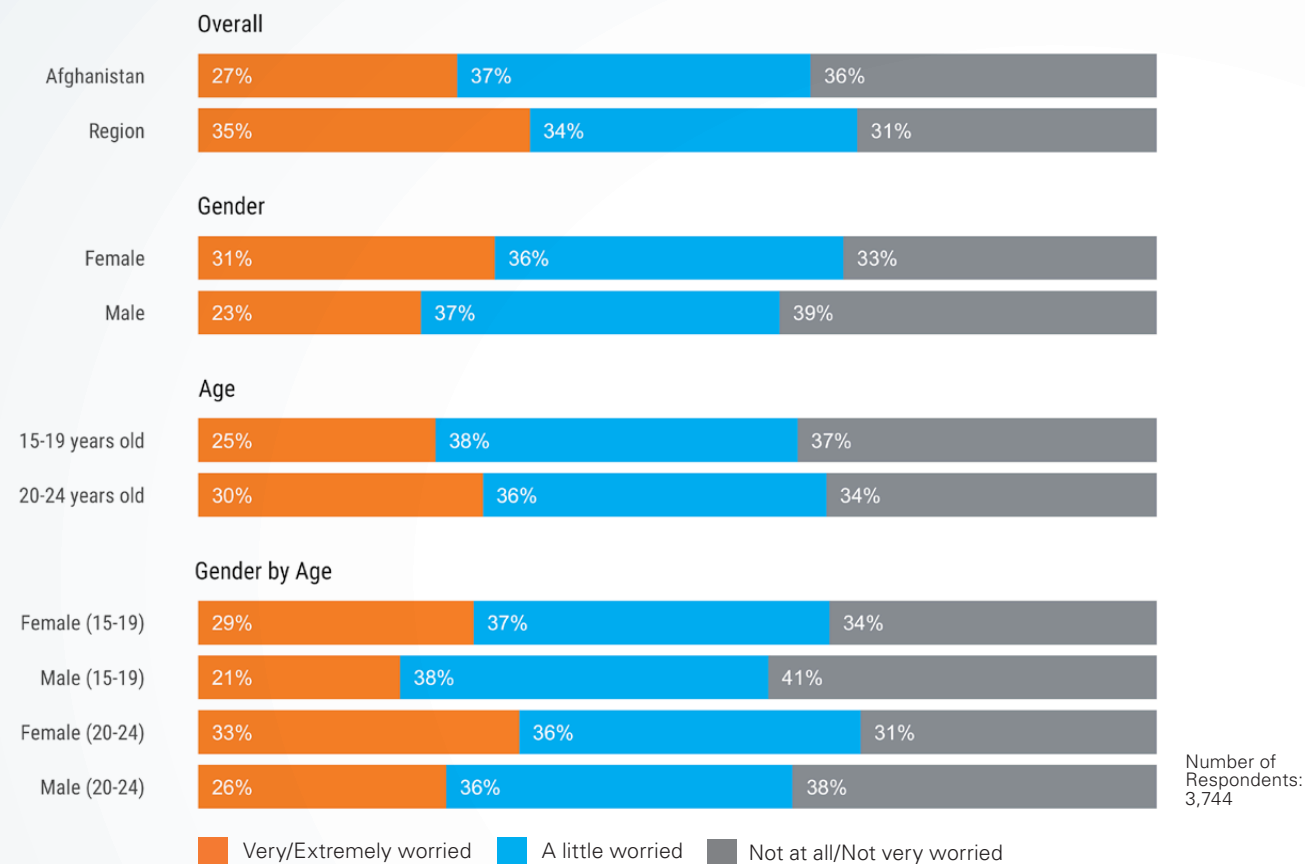
of respondents in Afghanistan stated that they were not at all or not very worried about climate change

**69%**

of older female respondents were at least a little worried about climate change

## WORRY ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

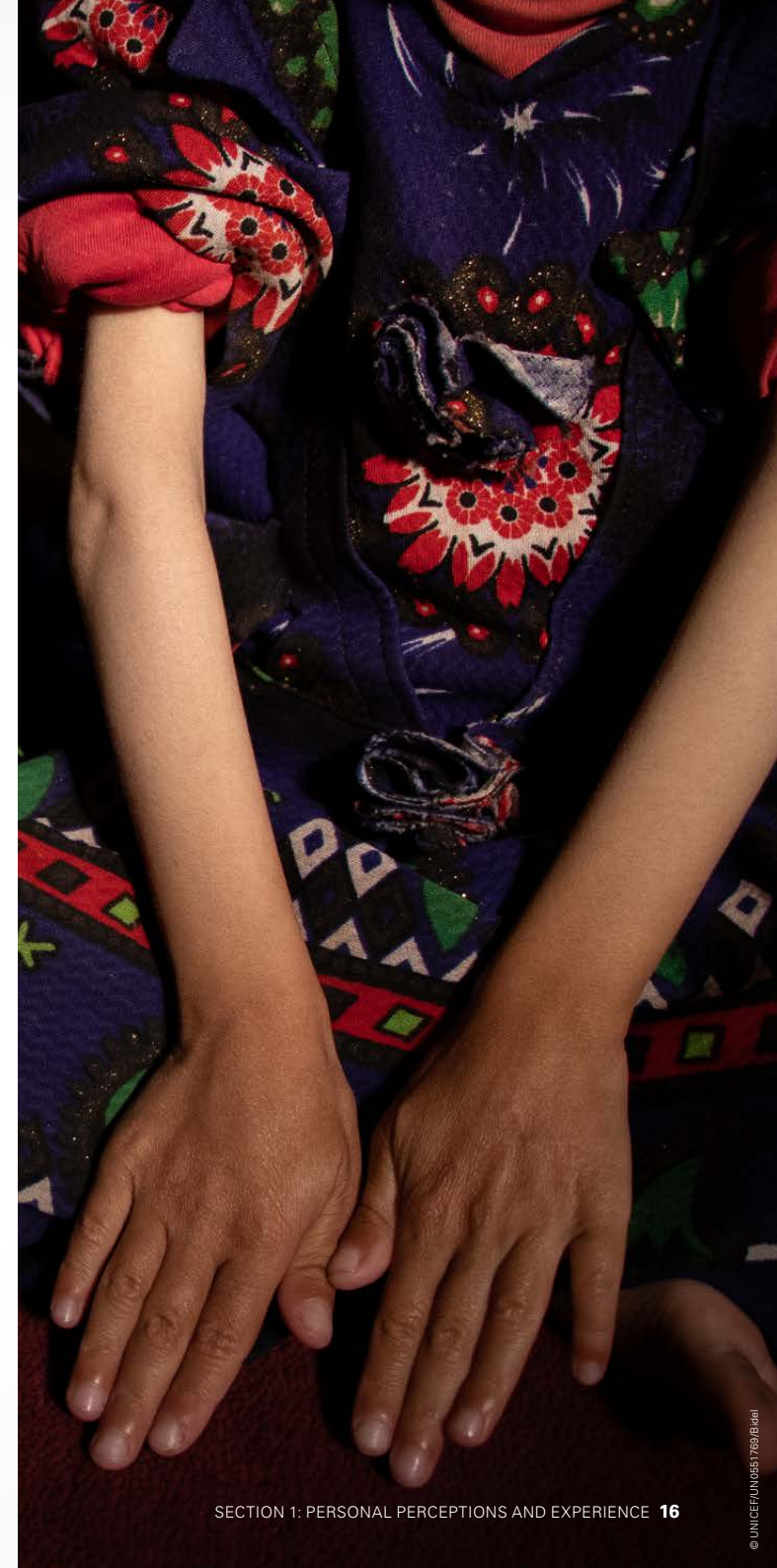
### Are you worried about climate change and what it means for the future?



- Overall, 64% of respondents in Afghanistan were at least a little worried about climate change and its impact on the future. This was lower than the regional average (69%). Afghanistan had the second lowest proportion of respondents reporting being worried.
- Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to state that they were at

least a little worried about climate change (7 percentage points more).

- Older female respondents (20-24 years) were the most likely to say they were at least a little worried about climate change (69%). Younger male respondents (15-19 years) were the least likely to say they were at least a little worried (59%).





## INTEREST IN LEARNING

**Students were asked:**

*What do you most want to learn about climate change?*

**38%**

of respondents in Afghanistan said that they wanted to learn about “all” aspects of climate change

**18%**

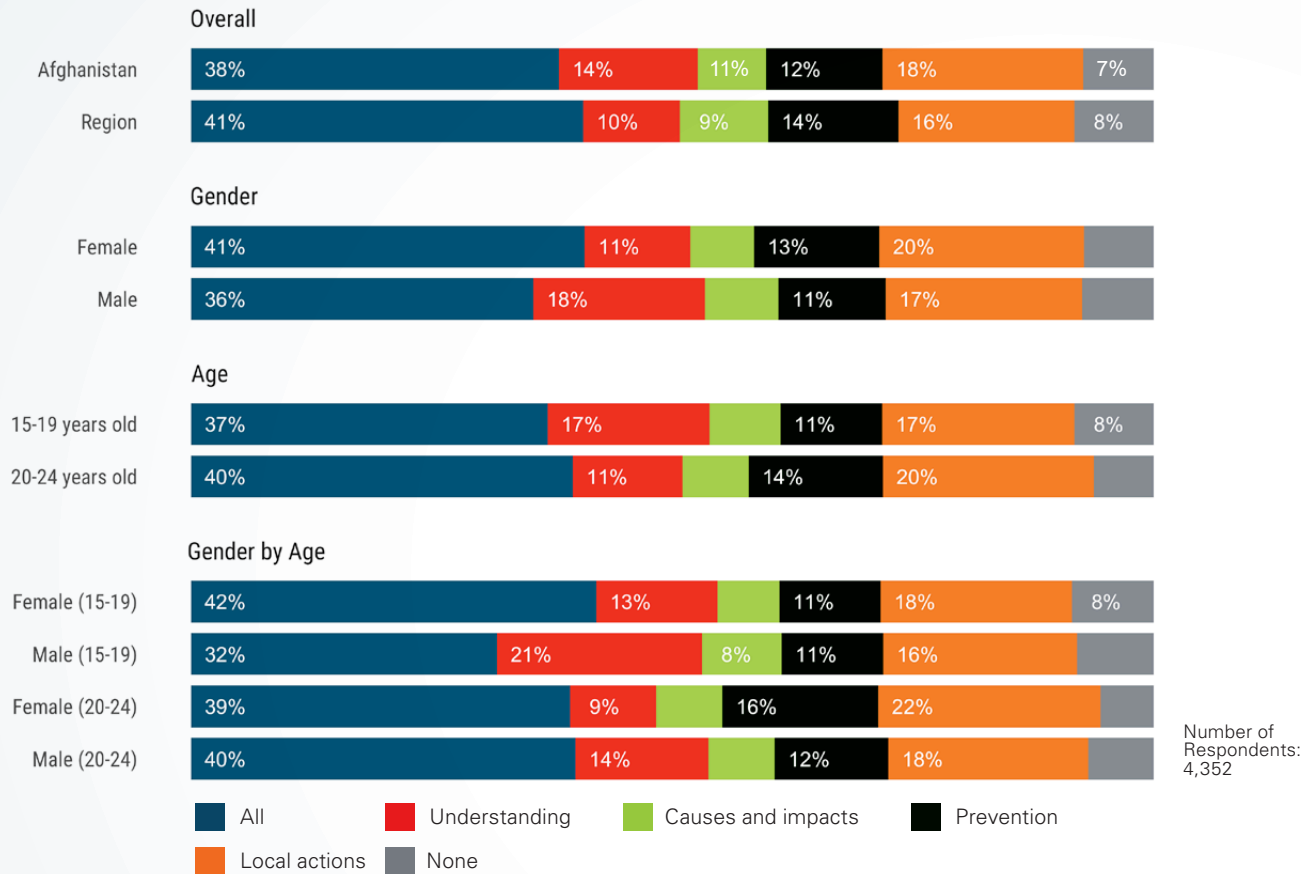
of respondents stated that they were interested in “local actions”

**7%**

stated that they had no interest in learning about climate change

# INTEREST IN LEARNING

## What do you most want to learn about climate change?



- 38% of respondents said that they wanted to learn about “all” aspects of climate change.
- 18% of respondents said that they wanted to learn about “local actions”.
- 7% of respondents in Afghanistan stated that there was “nothing” they wanted to learn about climate change.







## SECTION 2: **IMPACT AND ACTION**

Respondents were asked about the ways climate change has personally impacted them, as well as ways they will act in the future.





## EFFECT ON STUDIES

**Students were asked:**

*How has climate change affected your education/ studies?*

*What would you like to do to address climate change in the future?*

**82%**

of respondents believed that climate change has had an effect on their studies

**20%**

of respondents stated that climate change had impacted their journey to school

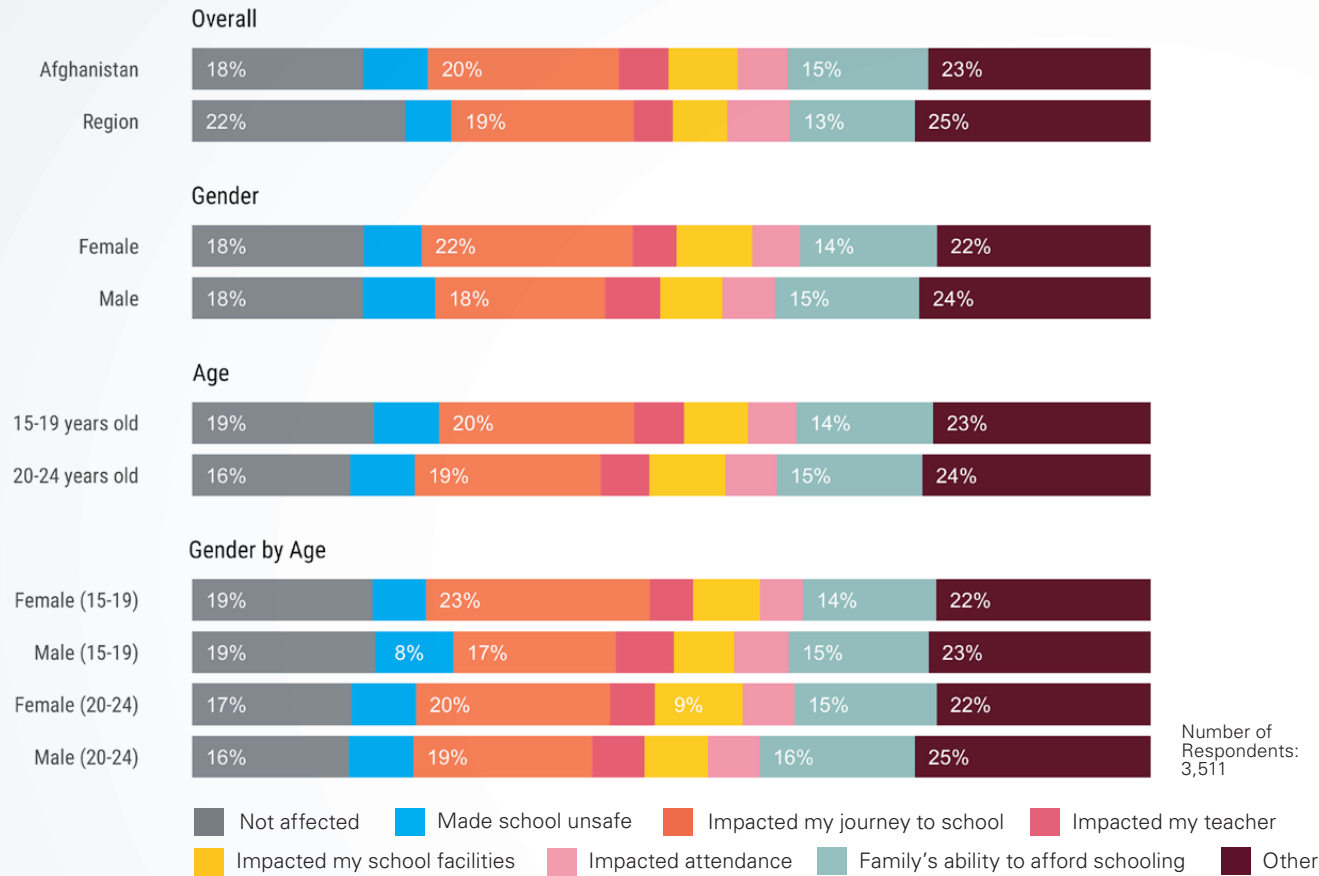
**89%**

of respondents said that they would like to do something to address climate change with the necessary support



## EFFECT ON STUDIES

### How has climate change affected your education/studies?



- Overall, 82% of respondents in Afghanistan stated that climate change had affected their education or studies. This is at par with the average regional response. 20% of respondents stated that climate change had impacted their journey to school.

- **Gender and Age:** These trends did not appear to differ across age or gender groups.









## SECTION 3: **RELATIONSHIPS AND CORRELATIONS**

Based on the responses received, relationships and correlations were explored to provide more insight about youth beliefs and perceptions about climate change.





## KEY QUESTION PAIRINGS

In an effort to better understand how knowledge of climate change affected students' beliefs and attitudes, **two relationships** were explored among respondents in Afghanistan\*.



# Can you explain climate change?

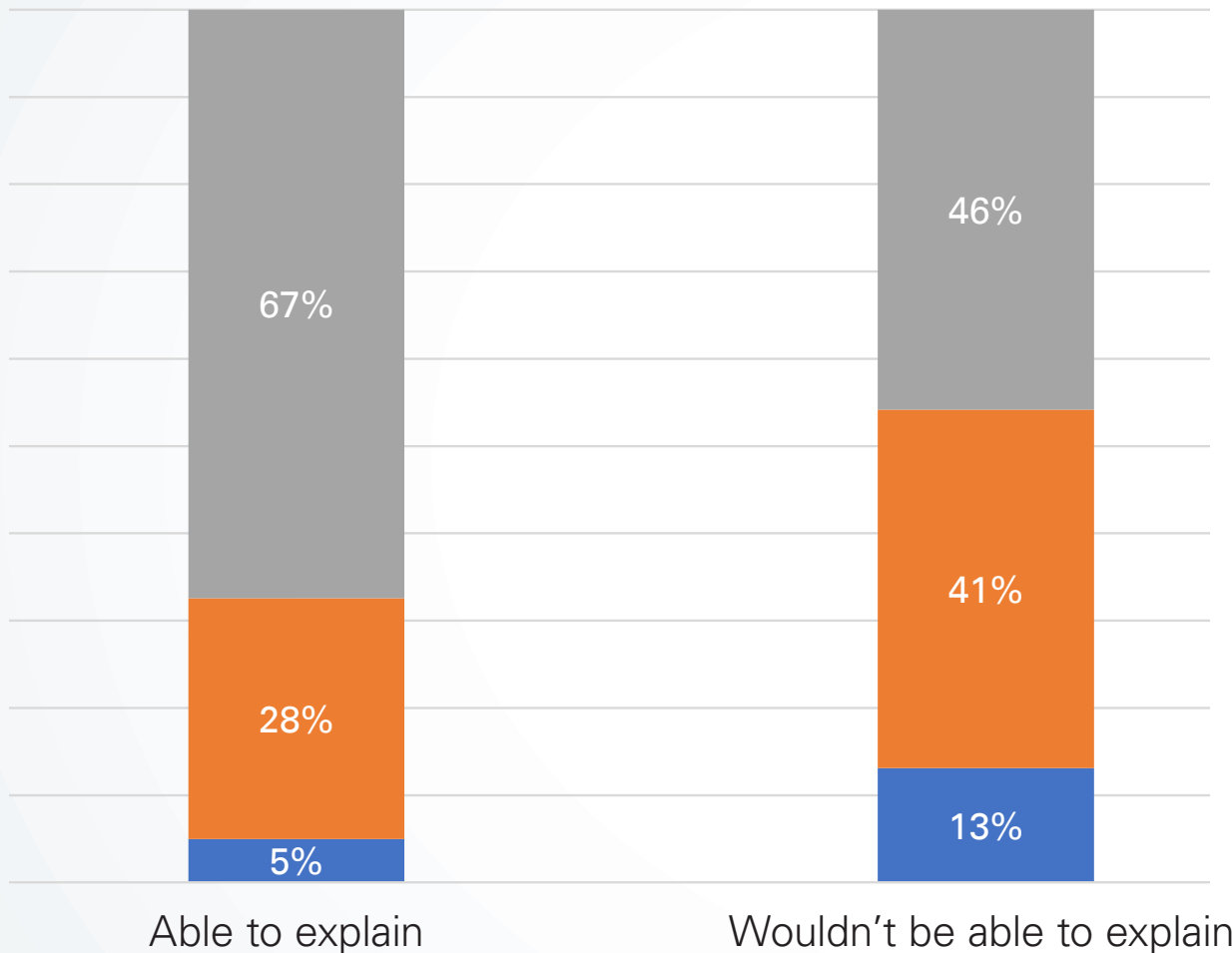
**1.** Do you learn about climate change in school?

**2.** Are you worried about climate change?

\*Note: This analysis only contains respondents who answered both questions. This could bias the results by under-representing respondents who stopped the survey due to a lack of knowledge around climate change, so results should be interpreted with care.

## RELATIONSHIPS AND CORRELATIONS

### Knowledge and education about climate change



A relationship was explored among two questions: *Can you explain climate change?* and *Do you learn about climate change in school?*

- Overall, among respondents who could explain climate change, 67% reported learning about it in school "often or very often".
- This was 21 percentage points higher than those that did not feel comfortable explaining (46%).
- 13% of respondents who reported being "unable to explain" climate change reported "never" learning about it in school.

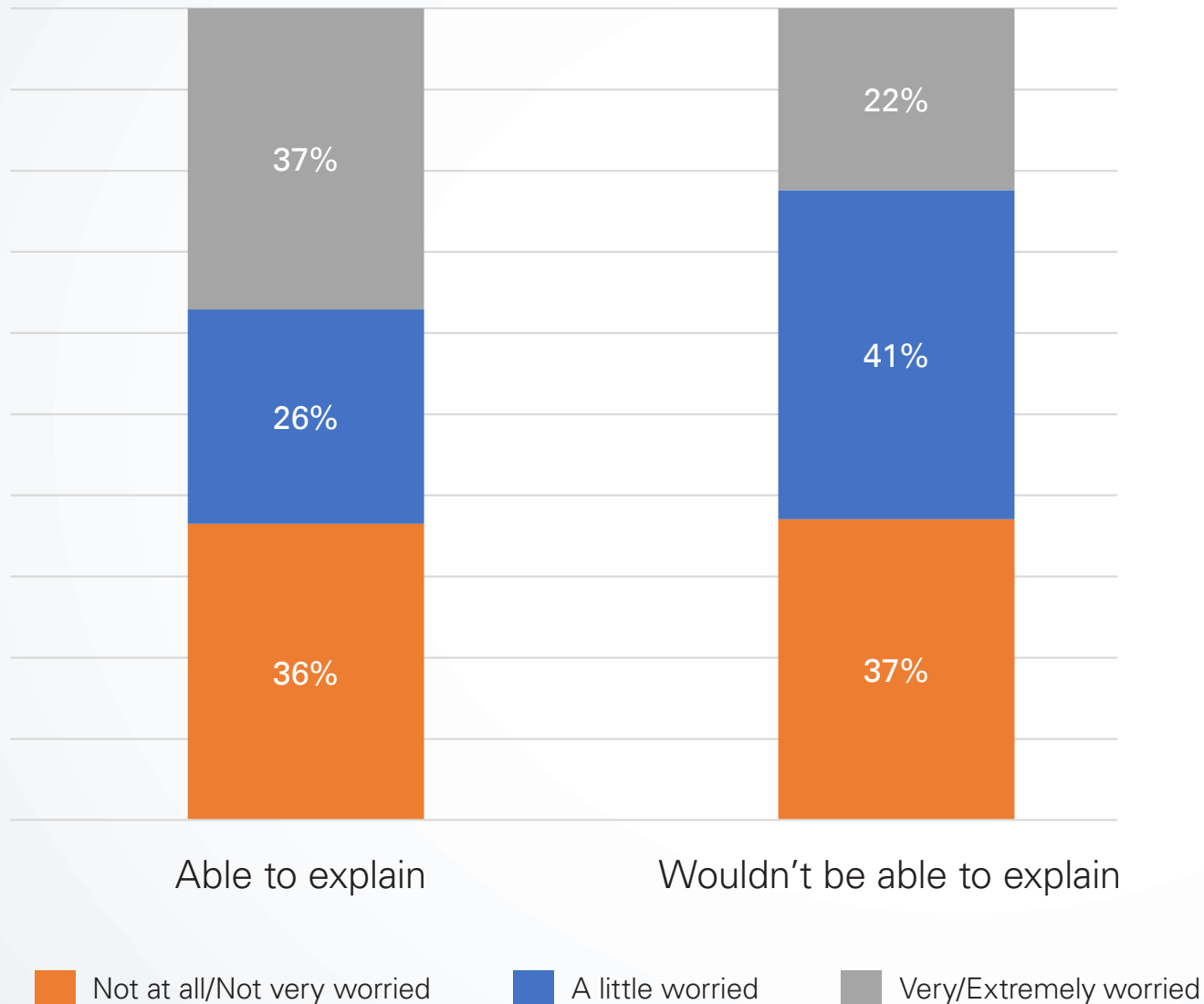
Never learned about it in school

Not often/almost never learned about it in school

Very often/often learned about it in school

## RELATIONSHIPS AND CORRELATIONS

### Knowledge and worry about climate change



A relationship was explored among two questions: *Can you explain climate change?* and *Are you worried about climate change?*

- Overall, those who were able to explain climate change were more likely than those that were not able to explain to state that they were “very or extremely” worried about the impact of climate change.
- Among respondents able to explain climate change, 37% were “very or extremely worried” about climate change and its impact on the future. This was 15 percentage points higher than those that were not able to explain climate change.
- Conversely, 37% of respondents who were unable to explain climate change said that they were “not at all worried” about climate change.



# 4

## FINDINGS



## FINDINGS

**68% of respondents in Afghanistan reported that they were not able to explain climate change and global warming.**

### Advancing climate education

68% of respondents in Afghanistan reported that they were not able to explain climate change and global warming, a number that was slightly higher than the regional average (64%). Older female respondents (20-24 years) were the group most likely to be able to explain climate change (39%).

The majority of respondents stated that they learn about climate change in Geography class (79%), however only 53% of respondents reported that they “very often or often” learned about climate change in school. This figure was lower than the average regional response (65%) and the second lowest out of the eight countries surveyed.

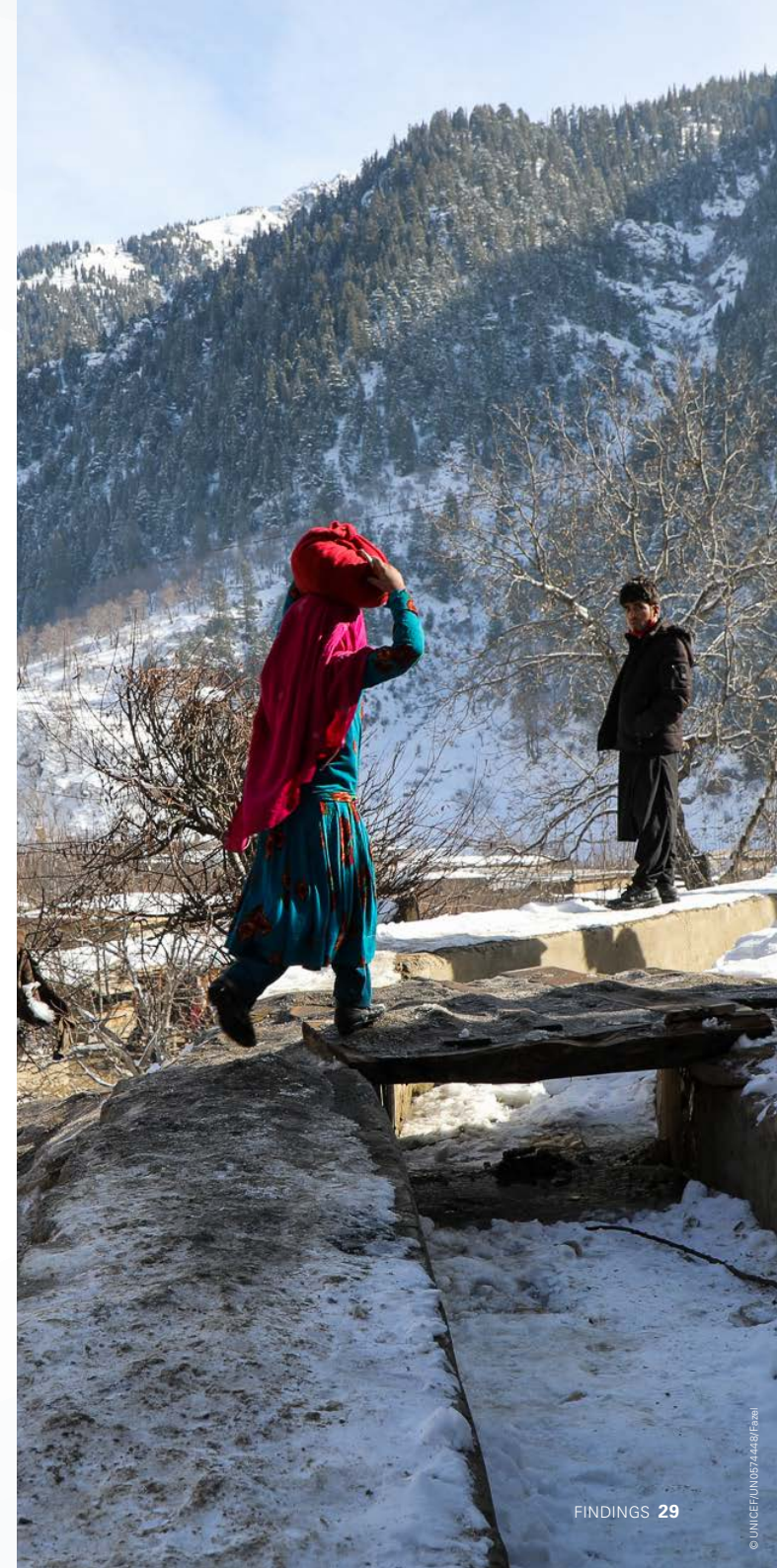




## FINDINGS

***Climate change should be treated as a multi-disciplinary topic to the extent possible in the national curriculum and linked to new and emerging industries and sectors of the economy.***

These figures suggest an opportunity to focus on inclusion of climate change in the curriculum, teacher training and learning materials and pedagogical approaches in formal, non-formal and informal education. Climate change should be treated as a multi-disciplinary topic to the extent possible in the national curriculum and linked to new and emerging industries and sectors of the economy.





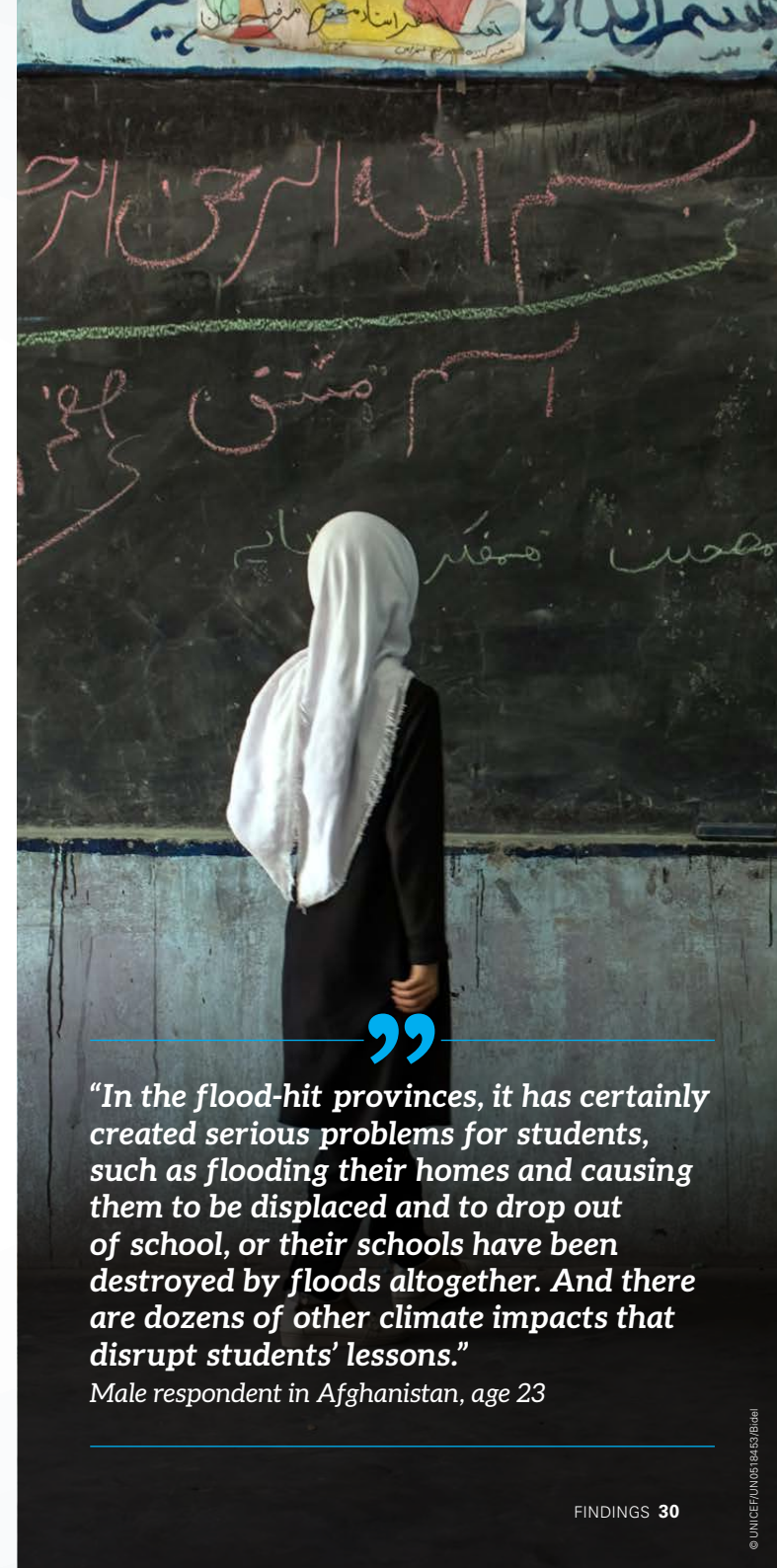
## FINDINGS

**A majority of respondents (89%) said that they would like to do something to address climate change.**

### Youth's call

82% of respondents in Afghanistan stated that climate change had affected their education or studies including that it had impacted their journey to school (20%).

A majority of respondents (89%) said that they would like to do something to address climate change with the necessary support like joining an organization to address climate change (31%) and teaching their community (21%), among others.



”

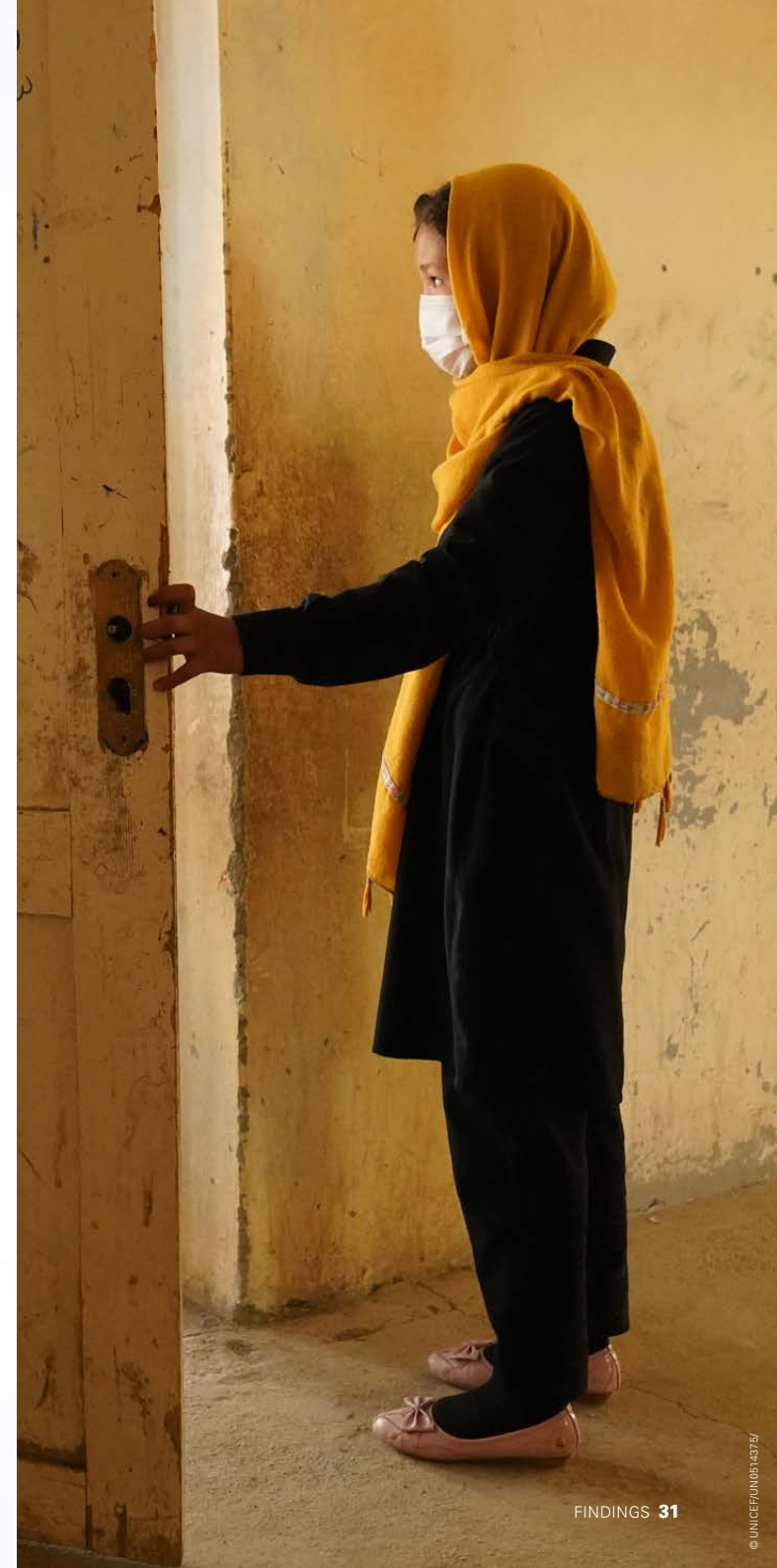
**“In the flood-hit provinces, it has certainly created serious problems for students, such as flooding their homes and causing them to be displaced and to drop out of school, or their schools have been destroyed by floods altogether. And there are dozens of other climate impacts that disrupt students' lessons.”**

*Male respondent in Afghanistan, age 23*

## FINDINGS

***Youth-led climate change networks as well as opportunities for volunteerism and community work should be expanded so that young people can fulfil their aspirations for climate action in Afghanistan.***

Young people's willingness to learn about climate change should be harnessed in the education sector by promoting students' knowledge concerning climate change, and by developing their capacity to apply their newly gained knowledge to real life situations. Youth-led climate change networks as well as opportunities for volunteerism and community work should be expanded so that young people can fulfil their aspirations for climate action in Afghanistan.





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## **RISING TO THE CHALLENGE**

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