

Needs Assessment

Compilation Report · Activities 2.1 & 2.2 – Summary and Practical Implications

Project	NatureVR – Virtual pathways to youth well-being and environmental stewardship
Work Package	WP2 – Research and Analysis
Activities covered	2.1 – Focus groups with young people / 2.2 – Survey with youth workers
Report author	BACKSLASH (Spain), Activities 2.1 and 2.2 lead
Participants reached	110 young people and 259 youth workers

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Purpose of This Report

The NatureVR project describes Work Package 2 (Research and Analysis) as the foundation that ensures the project's interventions are evidence-based, tailored, and effective. Within WP2, Activity 2.1 (focus groups with young people) and Activity 2.2 (survey for youth workers) together build the project's needs assessment phase, run in parallel and designed, per the application, to be read side by side. Together, these activities provide data-driven insights to guide the development of effective, inclusive VR tools and training programs that empower youth workers.

The Focus Group Implementation Guidelines make the same point about reporting: findings from both activities will be synthesised together in the final WP2 report. This document is that synthesis: a short, practical compilation of the two final activity reports, intended to give the consortium a single, joined-up view of what the needs assessment phase found and what it means for the activities that follow (2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and WP3/WP4), rather than to repeat the detailed data already presented in each source report.

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A note on scope: This is a short compilation report, not a data report: it draws together the headline conclusions of the two Activity 2.1 and 2.2 final reports and translates them into practical implications for the next phases of WP2 and the entire project. For full methodology, country-by-country detail and complete data tables, see the 2.1 Focus Groups Report and 2.2 Youth Workers Survey Report.

The Phase in Numbers

Youth

Activity 2.1 – Young people (focus groups)

Target (per project application)	120 young people 8 focus groups
Actual reached	110 (91.7%) 8 sessions (100%)
Countries	Spain, Croatia, Netherlands
Output indicator (per application)	"Completion of a research report on young people's needs... Target: 1 published report"
Status	Report completed

Youth workers

Activity 2.2 – Youth workers (survey)

Target (per project application)	400 youth workers
Actual reached	259 (64.8%)
Countries	Mainly Spain, Croatia, Italy, plus scattered responses elsewhere in Europe
Output indicator (per application)	"Completion of a youth workers' needs assessment report... Target: 1 published report"
Status	Report completed

Both reports complete

Both final activity reports are now complete, satisfying the two “1 published report” output indicators set out in the project application. The youth worker survey fell short of its 400-respondent target (259 responses, 64.8%); per the final Activity 2.2 report, the consortium reviewed this gap and judged it not to compromise the validity of the findings, prioritising the project timeline over an extended collection window. This will be revisited in BACKSLASH's Quality Analysis with corresponding mitigation measures. The focus groups met their session target exactly (8 of 8) and came close on participants (110 of 120, 91.7%).

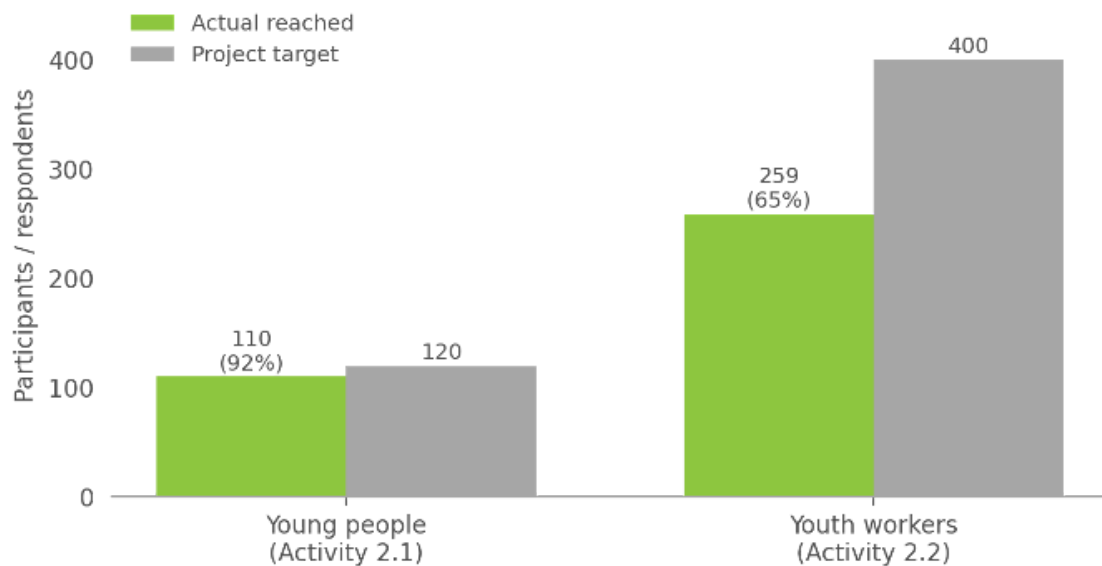


Figure 1. Participation reached vs. project targets, both activities.

What the Two Activities Found

The two reports describe two audiences who broadly want the same thing from NatureVR, for different reasons: young people are curious about VR but protective of their real relationship with nature, while youth workers are supportive in principle but under-equipped in practice. Four themes run through both activities.

1. VR as a bridge, never a replacement

VR must be a bridge, never a replacement, both audiences say so independently. Young people across all three focus-group countries raised the same concern in their own words (VR should not substitute for real outdoor experience), while 90% of surveyed youth workers agreed that clear ethical guidelines are necessary for VR in youth work. This is the single most consistent message across both activities and should anchor how NatureVR communicates the tool to both audiences.

2. Comfort, safety, accessibility

Comfort, safety and accessibility concerns are shared. Young people raised motion sickness, eye strain and discomfort in every country; youth workers rated VR tools as only slightly or not at all accessible for young people with fewer opportunities in 70.3% of cases. Both point to the same design priority: NatureVR needs to be genuinely comfortable and accessible, not just engaging.

3. Enthusiasm, but a confidence gap

Enthusiasm exists on both sides, but so does a confidence/experience gap. Young people are curious about VR, especially for reaching places they cannot otherwise visit; youth workers are constructive in attitude (most see clear benefits) but have very limited hands-on VR experience (83% have never used VR professionally) and rate their confidence in VR-specific skills as the lowest of any competency measured. The tool and the training that supports it both need to assume a low starting baseline, not prior familiarity.

4. Sound, simplicity and a clear purpose

Both reports converge on the same practical fix: sound, simplicity and a clear purpose. Young people rank sound as the top priority for VR to feel authentic; youth workers ask, above all, for practical training, ready-to-use materials and clear guidance rather than abstract concepts. Both are asking NatureVR to be concrete and well-explained rather than technically impressive for its own sake.

Activities

2.1 & 2.2 in Brief

3.1 Activity 2.1 in brief – young people

Across Spain, Croatia and the Netherlands, young people already experience nature positively and describe it in terms of calm, relief and connection, the barrier to more time in nature is overwhelmingly time and routine, not distance, cost or lack of interest. VR is wanted for what young people cannot otherwise reach (exotic or distant landscapes) rather than as a stand-in for local nature, and sound is consistently the top priority for making a VR experience feel real. See the Activity 2.1 report for the full country-by-country breakdown, including where Spain, Croatia and the Netherlands diverge (graphic style preference, appetite for interactivity, and learning style).

3.2 Activity 2.2 in brief – youth workers

Youth workers are already comfortable, engaged digital practitioners in general, and believe strongly in the value of nature-based practice, but their confidence drops sharply on the two most VR-specific skills: operating VR equipment (2.36/5, the lowest-rated area in the whole survey) and adapting VR content for young people with fewer opportunities (2.51/5). Only 21.6% of their organisations currently have access to VR headsets. Their priorities for training are practical and hands-on: 59.1% want hands-on experimentation with equipment and 56.4% want in-person workshops, well ahead of self-paced e-learning. See the Activity 2.2 report for the full breakdown of capacity gaps and training-format preferences.



Practical Implications for the Next Phases

The needs assessment phase exists to feed directly into the four activities that follow it within WP2, and into WP3's tool design. The following sets out what each phase should take from these findings.

Next activity	What it should take from the needs assessment
Activity 2.3 – Benefits/risks study & VR benchmark	Both audiences flagged the same risk themes independently (physical discomfort, data privacy, over-reliance on VR instead of real nature) giving Act 2.3 a ready-made, cross-validated starting list of risks and ethical considerations to analyse in depth, rather than starting from scratch.
Activity 2.4 – Learning objectives & NQ competency framework	Young people's own language about what nature gives them (calm, restoration, connection, curiosity) maps closely onto the emotional, cognitive, spiritual and physical dimensions of the Natural Intelligence model the application commits to. This vocabulary can ground the framework in participants' own words rather than abstract theory.

Next activity	What it should take from the needs assessment
Activity 2.5 – User research & persona development	Per the Focus Group Guidelines, "Block D data on learning preferences, graphic style preferences, and digital comfort will serve as the empirical foundation for developing user personas." The divergence found between countries (e.g. graphic style preference varying by age/context) should be tested further during persona work rather than resolved into a single universal persona.
WP3 – VR tool design	Both reports point to the same design priorities: invest early in high-quality spatial sound, offer exotic/hard-to-reach environments as core content, build in a visible pause/stop option and a no-headset alternative, and make the "VR is a bridge, not a replacement" message explicit in the first-use experience.
WP4 – Training and capacity building	Activity 2.2's capacity gaps translate directly into WP4's training brief: prioritise hands-on, in-person formats over e-learning; sequence basic NQ theory before VR-specific skills; make adapting content for inclusion a dedicated module, not an add-on; and build in peer-learning, since 40.9% of youth workers specifically asked for a network to exchange experience.

Highlights & Closing Conclusion

Overall conclusion

The needs assessment phase confirms that NatureVR is solving a real, shared problem from both sides: young people are open to VR but want it to respect and lead back to real nature, while youth workers are willing but need practical, hands-on support to deliver it well.

Both audiences, independently, arrived at the same practical priorities: sound and authenticity, comfort and safety, and a clear "bridge, not replacement" purpose. This gives WP3 and WP4 an unusually well-validated starting brief for the phases that follow.

1. Both output indicators for this phase are met. The Activity 2.1 and 2.2 reports are complete, satisfying the project application's "1 published report" target for each.
2. Participation was strong though short of target on the survey side. Sessions target met almost exactly for focus groups (110/120 participants, 91.7%); 259/400 (64.8%) for the youth worker survey, showing a short target on the survey side.
3. The two audiences validate each other. Young people's caution about VR replacing real nature and youth workers' near-unanimous call for ethical guidelines (90%) are two independent signals pointing to the same design and communication priority.
4. Sound, simplicity and comfort are the clearest, best-evidenced design priorities for WP3. These recur across countries and across both audiences more consistently than any other single design element.
5. WP4's training brief is now well defined. Hands-on, in-person, peer-supported training that starts from a low VR-experience baseline and treats inclusion as a core module, not an extra.



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