

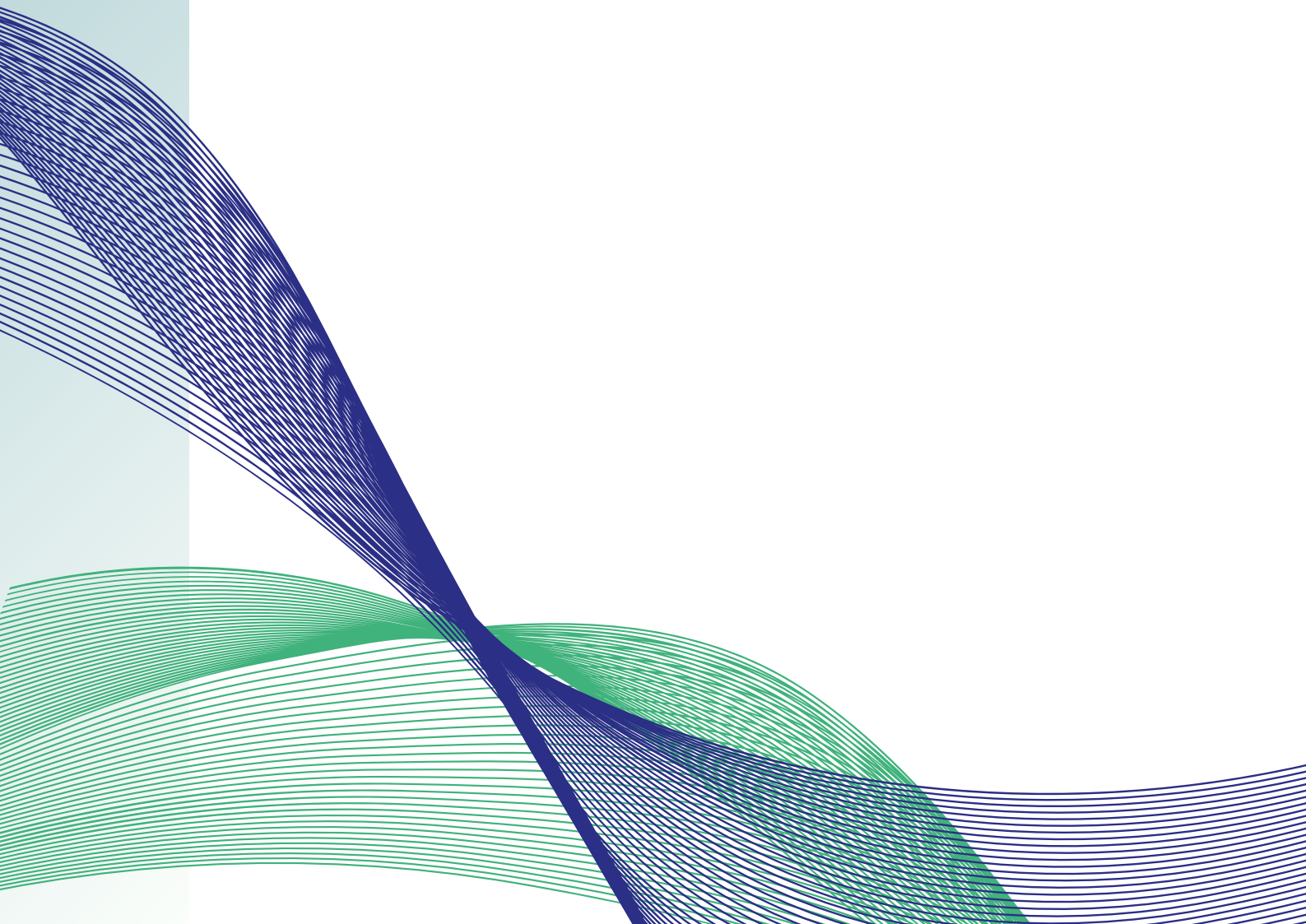
# ECO ANXIETY REPORT GEORGIA

2023

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## Note from Iris Sustainable Development

Anxiety relating to a multitude of ecological crises, or eco-anxiety, is a subject of growing research significance. The main idea of the first report series is to establish an international overview of eco-anxiety rates in 20 countries utilizing the HEAS scale and correlate these rates with variables of geographical location (urban, rural), education as well as the type of experiencing climate crisis (indirectly via the media or public discourse).

More precisely, the main objectives of this report series is to:

- create an international overview of eco-anxiety rates in 20 countries
- contribute to the growing body of knowledge around to what extent the climate crisis affects mental health identifying possible differentiation on eco-anxiety determinants
- raise awareness on the impact of climate crisis on mental health

The target group of the Georgian national report are citizens of Georgia and/or people (ages 18-50) that are/have been experiencing climate change in the country.

## Climate change impacts in Georgia

Almost all types of climate are presented over Georgian territory except savanna and tropical forests. The Black Sea coastal zone has humid subtropical climate. Mean annual temperature here is 14-15 0C and annual precipitation sums range from 1500 to 2500 mm. On the Plains of Eastern Georgia the climate is dry-subtropical with average annual temperatures in the range of 11-13 0 C and annual precipitation sums between 400-600 mm. In mountainous areas this value reaches 800-1200 mm. In the cold period of the year stable snow cover does not form in both regions of Georgia up to the altitude of 400 m a.s.l. Duration of bright sunshine over the most part of the country's territory ranges from 1900 to 2200 hours. Warming period with 10 0C threshold value on the plains comprises 120-160 days, while in a mountainous zone it reaches 220-320 days (UNDP, 2023). In the western part of Georgia the climate is subtropical, while in the eastern part experiences a dry moderate continental climate. Annual precipitation in Georgia ranges from 400 to 4,500 mm. Due to its location at a relatively low latitude and moderate cloudiness, Georgia receives significant heat from the sun. The average annual duration of bright sunshine ranges from 1,350 to 2,520 hours. (World Bank, 2023)

### Greenhouse gas emissions

Georgia's carbon dioxide equivalent emissions amount to around 17.6 million tonnes per year (2.37 tonnes per capita), which totals around 0.03 percent of global greenhouse emissions. The energy sector is responsible for the largest share of emissions (62 percent), followed by agriculture (19 percent), production and industry (12 percent) and waste (7 percent) (EEAS, 20)



In Health Statistics 2018 Georgia ranks 70th among 194 countries by the indicator of mortality due to air pollution. Photo: Euobserver/Thomas Depenbusch  
Source: <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2018/1465>

# Climate change impacts in Georgia

## Extreme weather events

Georgia has embarked on a climatic odyssey over the past decade, featuring an array of extreme weather events that shape the narrative of a nation wedged between Europe and Asia. From heatwaves sweeping through ancient valleys to floods reshaping the contours of rivers, Georgia grapples with the tangible impacts of climate change on its historical sites and pristine landscapes.

One profound chapter in Georgia's recent climate story unfolded in 2015 when the country faced severe flooding, particularly in the capital city, Tbilisi. Intense rainfall led to the overflowing of the Kura River, triggering flash floods that swept through the city, claiming lives and displacing communities. The event highlighted the vulnerability of urban areas to changing precipitation patterns and prompted discussions about the need for adaptive strategies to manage flood risks.

Conversely, Georgia has also felt the scorching touch of heatwaves that have become more pronounced in the region. In 2018, temperatures soared above 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) in cities like Kutaisi and Gori. The extreme heat not only strained energy infrastructure and posed health risks but also prompted reflections on the resilience of agricultural practices and water resources in the face of rising temperatures.

The mountainous regions of Georgia, including Svaneti and Kazbegi, have witnessed changes in snowfall patterns and glacier retreat. Reduced snow cover in winter has implications for water resources and the delicate ecosystems of these high-altitude landscapes. The changing alpine scenery prompts discussions about the broader impacts of climate change on Georgia's unique and ecologically rich environments.

Georgia's coastal regions along the Black Sea, including Batumi, have faced challenges from changing sea levels and storm surges. Erosion of shorelines and the threat to coastal infrastructure illustrate the interconnected challenges posed by climate change on both marine environments and coastal communities.

## Survey results

### LOCATION



Urban Area



75%



Rural Area



25%

### EDUCATION

Elementary School Degree  0%

High School's Degree  6%

Bachelor's Degree  41%

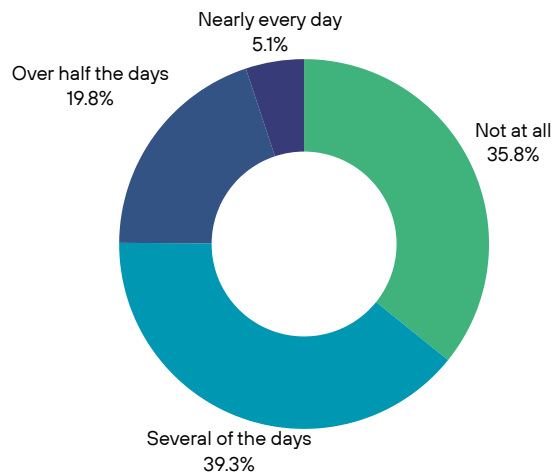
Master's Degree or higher  53%

## Survey results: The Hogg Scale

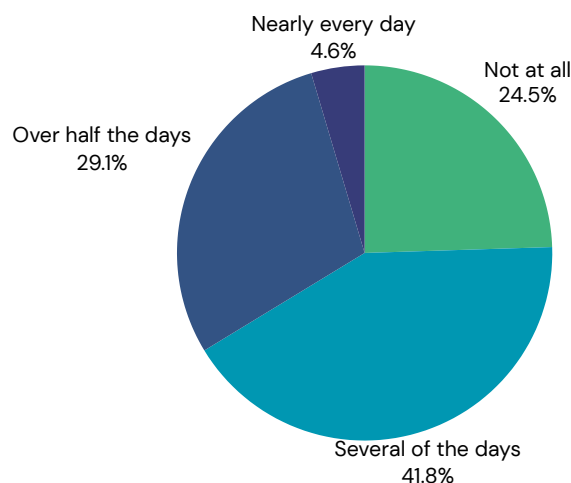
*“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?*

*Response scale: 0 = not at all, 1 = several of the days, 2 = over half the days, 3 = nearly every day.*

### Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge



### Not being able to stop or control worrying

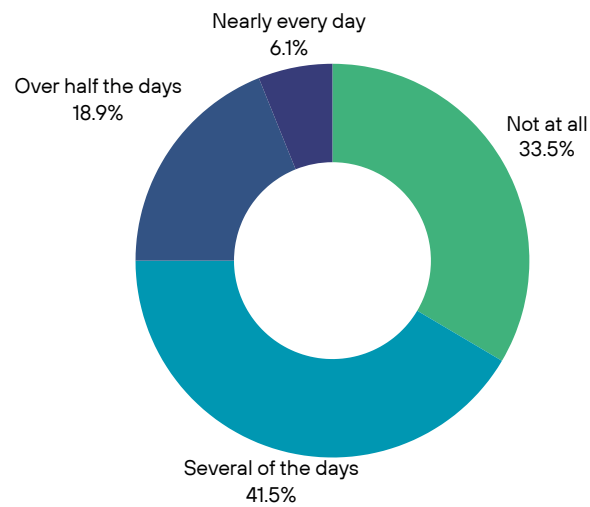


## Survey results: The Hogg Scale

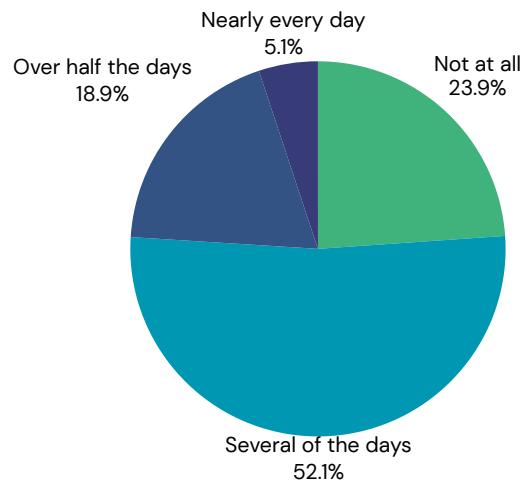
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### Worrying too much



### Feeling afraid

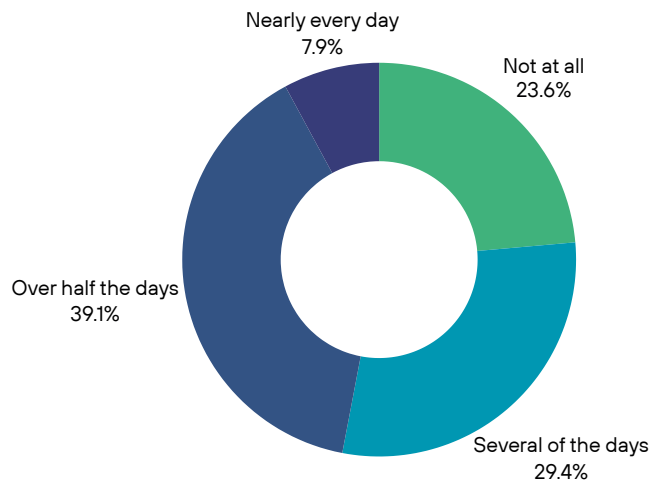




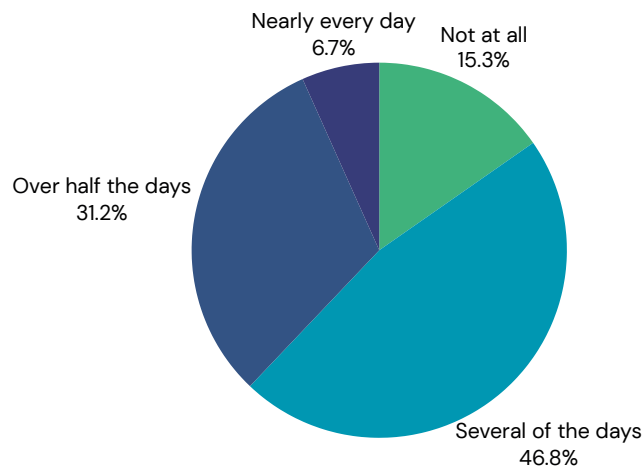
# Survey results: The Hogg Scale

*“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?*

## Unable to stop thinking about future climate change and other global environmental problems



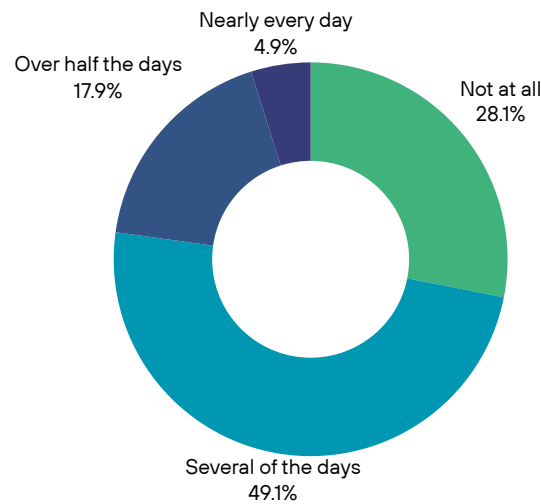
## Unable to stop thinking about past events related to climate change



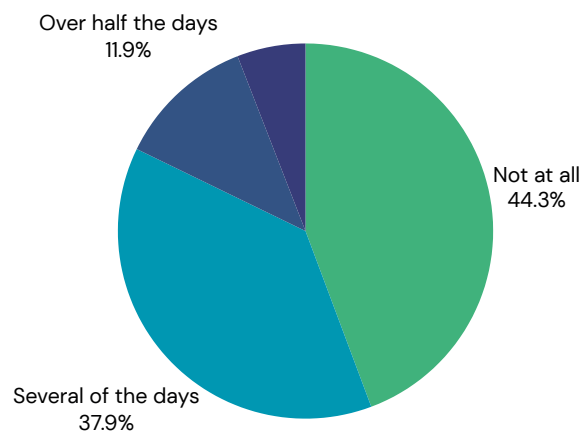
## Survey results: The Hogg Scale

*“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?*

### Unable to stop thinking about losses to the environment



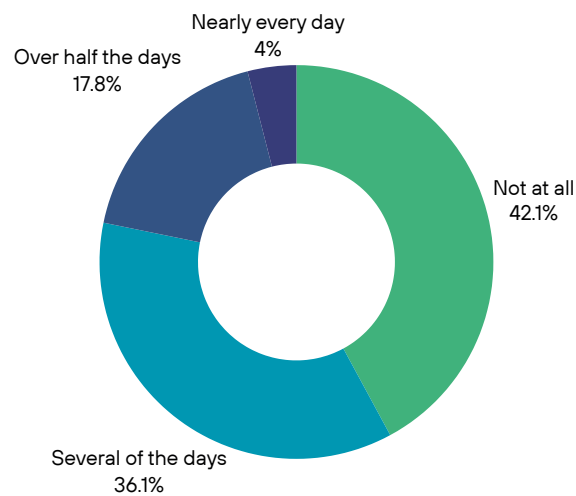
### Difficulty sleeping



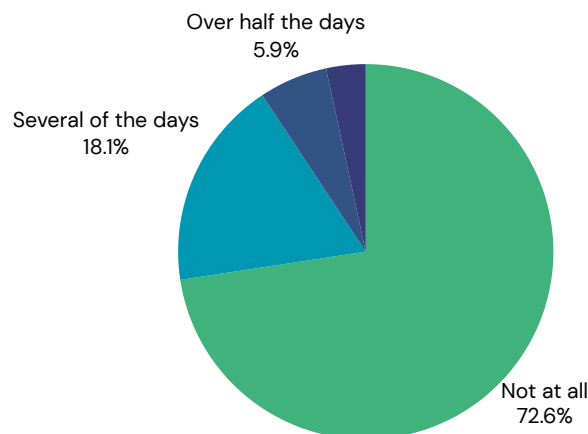
## Survey results: The Hogg Scale

*“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?”*

### Difficulty enjoying social situations with family and friends



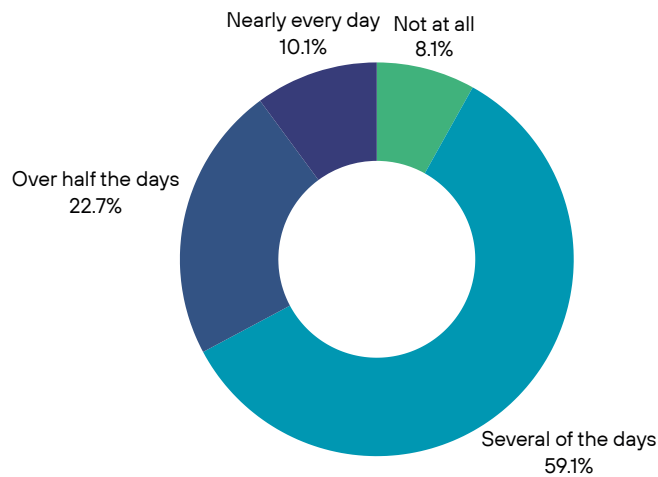
### Difficulty working and/or studying



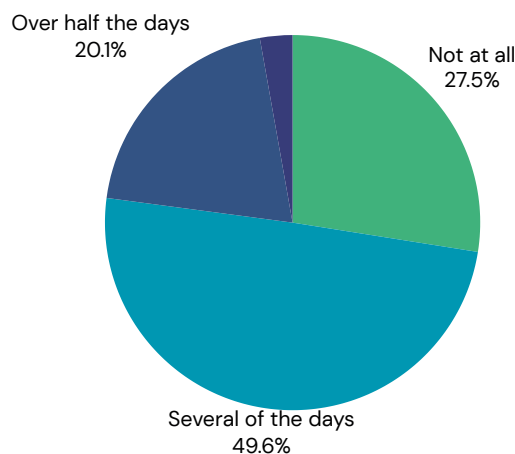
## Survey results: The Hogg Scale

*“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?*

Feeling anxious about the impact of your personal behaviours on the earth



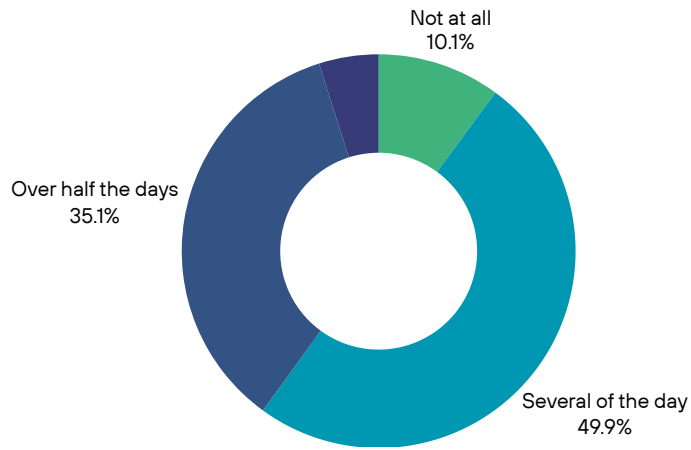
Feeling anxious about your personal responsibility to help address environmental problems



# Survey results: The Hogg Scale and Beliefs about climate change

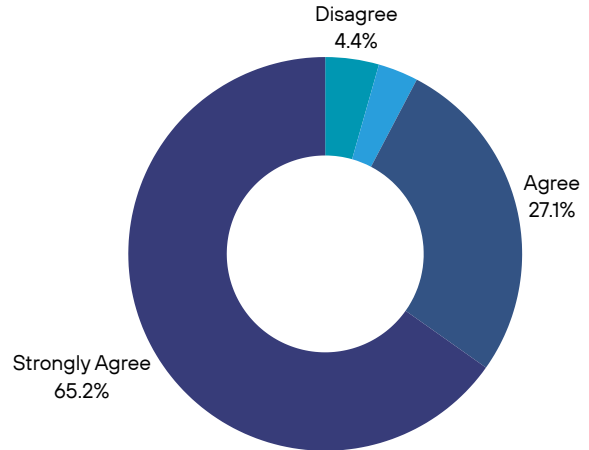
*“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?”*

Feeling anxious that your personal behaviours will do little to help fix the problem



## Beliefs about Climate Change

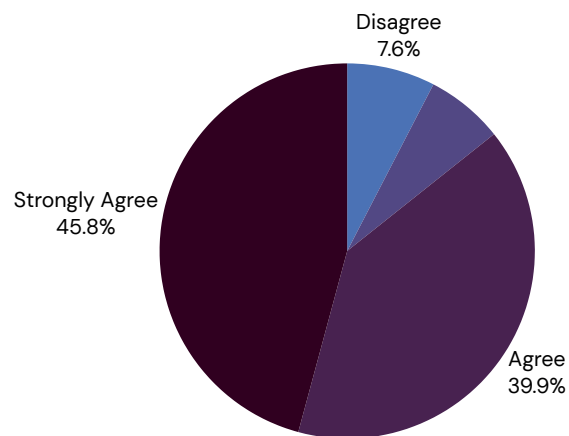
Climate change is real



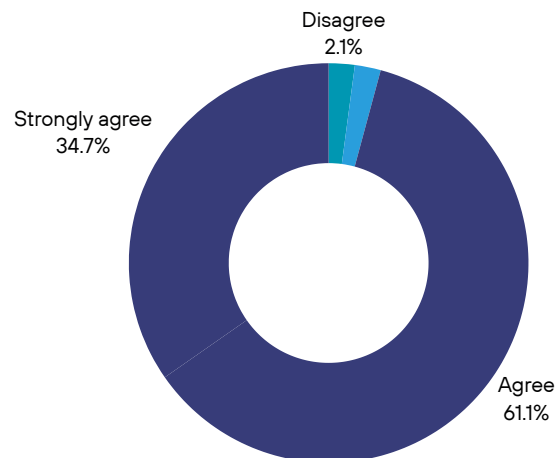
# Survey results: Beliefs about climate change

## *Beliefs about Climate Change*

### Climate change is caused by humans

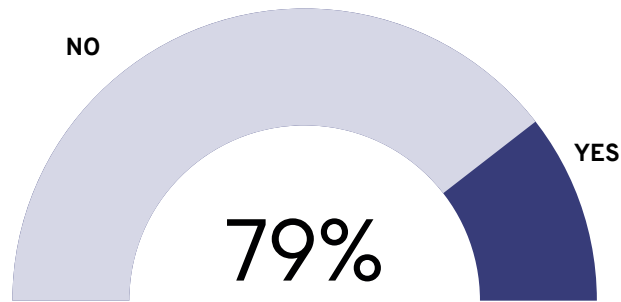


### Climate change is reversible



## Survey results: Beliefs about climate change

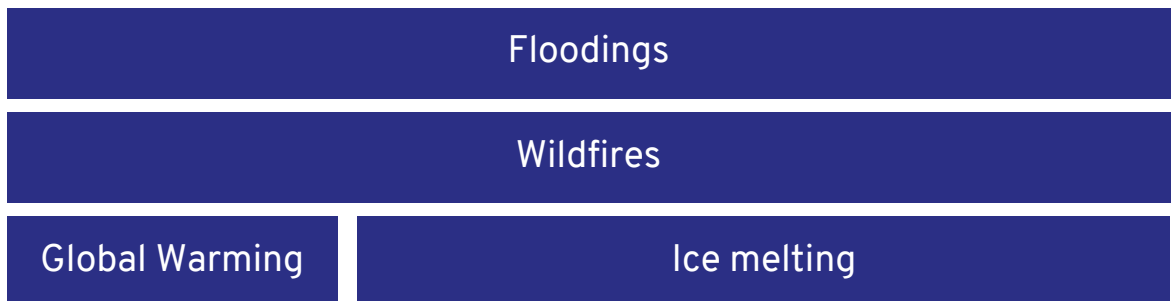
Do you have direct experience of environmental crisis?



I am experiencing climate crisis indirectly via the media or public discourse



Which climate disaster made you feel nervous (in your country or globally), if any



## Key Conclusions

Our research reveals a prevalence of eco-anxiety among the Georgian population, reporting varying degrees of eco-anxiety. This underscores the significance of the issue and the need for further investigation and intervention.

In terms of the interplay between eco-anxiety and specific variables, significant differences in eco-anxiety rates were observed across various demographics. Notably, the geographical location of participants was strongly linked with eco-anxiety. It is important that the 75% of the respondents are urban residents and they are exhibited higher levels of eco-anxiety compared to their rural counterparts. Additionally, while a slight interconnection with education was observed, we address that eco-anxiety can be experienced via media and public discourse, since the 87% has expressed that is experiencing eco-anxiety indirectly. This indicates that the media and information consumption play a substantial role in shaping eco-anxiety levels since participants who reported frequent exposure to alarming environmental news or content experienced higher levels of eco-anxiety. Simultaneously, the study found a strong interconnection between eco-anxiety and heightened concerns about environmental issues. Respondents who expressed high levels of eco-anxiety consistently cited factors and events such as wildfires, ice melting, and floodings as major sources of distress.

The findings of this research underscore the urgency for policymakers to address eco-anxiety as a public health concern. Developing sustainable environmental policies, educational campaigns, and psychological support services can help mitigate eco-anxiety and its associated mental health issues. This study provides a foundation for future research on eco-anxiety. However, further investigations into the long-term consequences of eco-anxiety, the effectiveness of interventions, and potential policy changes are essential for a comprehensive understanding of this emerging issue.

In conclusion, our research highlights the significant eco-anxiety rates in Georgia and the need for multidisciplinary efforts to address this concern. Addressing eco-anxiety is not only crucial for the mental well-being of individuals but also for the sustainable future.

**Disclaimer:**

This report provides an intention of the eco-anxiety rates in the country and cannot be generalised since the survey is not responded by a representative sample comparing to the country's population.



## References

Middle East Institute (MEI). (2021). Climate Change in Georgia. Retrieved from <https://mei.edu/publications/climate-change-georgia>

World Bank. (2023). Climate Data Historical - Georgia. Climate Knowledge Portal.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Adaptation. (2023). Georgia. Retrieved from <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/explore/europe-and-central-asia/georgia>

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