



# YOUTH STOCKTAKE *of UNFCCC PROCESSES*

**YOUNGO**   
OFFICIAL YOUTH CONSTITUENCY OF THE UNFCCC

**December  
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# YOUNGO

**Disclaimer:**

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the YOUNGO constituency as a whole.

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# About YOUNGO

YOUNGO is the official group for children and youth constituencies in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Since it was given its formal status in 2011, YOUNGO has represented the voices of children and young people in UNFCCC climate negotiations. It has enabled thousands of children and young people across the world to be part of important climate-related processes at the local, national, regional and international level. As an official UNFCCC constituency group, YOUNGO provides a platform whereby the world's children and young people can participate in important processes, respond to the issue of climate change and contribute to shaping intergovernmental decision-making and policies on climate change with direct implications for their future and that of future generations.

YOUNGO is an independent, self-organised, youth-led network with a membership that is composed of hundreds of youth-led and youth-focused NGOs, organisations, groups, delegations and individual young people aged up to 35 years old.

YOUNGO focuses on the following areas:

- 1) Awareness, Knowledge and Capacity Building;
- 2) Collaboration, Cooperation and Network;
- 3) Policy, Lobby and Advocacy and
- 4) Youth Action.



YOUNGO



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# Executive Summary

The Youth Stocktake of UNFCCC Processes is an initiative driven by the youth that assesses key milestones, identifies gaps, and addresses challenges associated with youth inclusion in international climate policy processes. The stocktake process was led by YOUNGO, the official children and youth constituency to the UNFCCC, as the major platform for bringing the voices of global children and youth to the international climate arena where they can influence climate policies processes, with support from the Youth Climate Champions Team (YCC).

The Youth Stocktake of UNFCCC Processes assesses youth inclusion by Parties to the UNFCCC and details the development of key YOUNGO initiatives, focusing in particular on the UN Climate Change Conferences of Youth (COYs) that take place at local, regional, and global levels (LCOYs, RCOYS, and GCOYs) and where the global youth's policy statement, known as the 'Global Youth Statement' (GYS) is produced. The GYS is a crucial policy tool for youth that identifies areas of consensus and common alignment among global youth and works to ensure that the diversity of the voices and efforts of young climate advocates across the globe are not only heard and acknowledged but also have the opportunity to be integrated into a broader, global platform of climate action. In Chapter 3, the stocktake details the evolution of these conferences, building up to the achievement of a key milestone of LCOYs in over 100 countries, and the GCOY reaching its 18th edition in 2023. Going further, in Chapter 4 it focuses on the effectiveness of the COYs and the GYS in influencing the outcomes of climate policy processes.

Yet, the COYs and the GYS, while key advocacy and engagement tools by and for youth, are not sufficient in themselves to attain the ultimate goal of young people having the ability to contribute meaningfully to climate policies; Youth inclusion is an important policy agenda item for non-Youth stakeholders to engage with too. Youth have been demanding that their governments directly involve them in government-led climate policy processes and while there is growing momentum of youth inclusion by Parties, for example with official Party delegations increasingly including Youth Delegates, there is much progress to be made. In Chapter 5, the Youth Stocktake's assessment of Party youth inclusion sheds more light on this, incorporating the data that was gathered from the 31 Parties that responded to an invitation to participate in this process.

The efforts of all the above has begun to impact COP decisions related to youth. Such achievements, that are highlighted in the Youth Stocktake report in Chapter 6, are the tangible results of young people's dedicated efforts, and the support they have received over the years from key stakeholders, including other UNFCCC constituencies, the UNFCCC Secretariat, past and present COP Presidencies, and, of course, UNFCCC Parties. At the COPs, youth have lobbied for decisions within various negotiation tracks, as well as for a seat on diverse work programs such as the CTCN, Standing Committee of Finance, among many others. This report highlights some of the notable COP decisions on youth and discusses how they can influence change and increase youth participation in the UNFCCC process. Finally, in Chapter 7, the report outlines how the Youth Stocktake can serve as a blueprint for a continuous youth stocktake process parallel to the GST. It also encourages innovative initiatives to address the gaps highlighted in the stocktake and to enhance youth inclusion in future climate negotiations. While increased recognition for children and youth is commendable, it is essential to recognize that acknowledgment alone falls short.

## The key outcomes of the report include to:

### ***Address data availability issues for monitoring and reporting.***

By stressing on the importance of documenting youth efforts, increasing resources for monitoring, and communicating time-bound information to stakeholders. This includes establishing synergies for future youth stocktakes.



### ***Call for the institutionalization and structuring of youth inclusion initiatives.***

To ensure their long-term effectiveness. Many initiatives lack proper institutionalization, relying on ad-hoc efforts rolled out before or during COPs. It underscores for a more structured approach, emphasizing the importance of establishing clear mandates and guidelines that align with current trends in climate policy processes.



### ***Enhance trust-building measures and transparency in Parties' engagement with youth.***

Trust and accountability are viewed as reciprocal with youth expected to be accountable for their own engagement and for providing progress reports, and Parties for working with youth to ensure their effective inclusion and helping to overcome barriers. The report emphasizes the need for strengthening two-way communication between youth and Parties, and other stakeholders, in the fast-paced climate negotiation environment.



### ***Mobilizing funding from various stakeholders, financial recognition for dedication to youth initiatives, and establishing a financial mechanism within YOUNGO.***

The current funding structure, while supporting youth involvement in various conferences and international events, is criticized for its cumbersome fundraising process. The report acknowledges the positive impact of partnerships in supporting youth initiatives. However, it calls for a more streamlined fundraising approach that involves multiple stakeholders, including Parties and organizations, allocating funds at local, regional, and global levels.



This initial effort towards a Youth Stocktake of UNFCCC processes aims to inform diverse stakeholders, including Parties, the UNFCCC Secretariat, and broader civil society, about necessary recognitions, addresses, and leverages to strengthen youth inclusion in climate policy processes. The Youth Stocktake envisions a lasting progress on strengthening youth inclusion including through enhancing transparency and accountability in youth inclusion by Parties, promoting youth-led climate initiatives, fostering synergies and peer learning in youth inclusion, and providing a roadmap for future youth inclusion and its impact on climate policy processes. COP28 introduces the inaugural GST and the Youth Stocktake, both considered by the youth to be integral to the fulfilment of the Paris Agreement. Both assess collective progress in key climate-related goals and acknowledge the important roles that non-state actors, particularly youth, play in meeting climate ambitions through the policy processes.

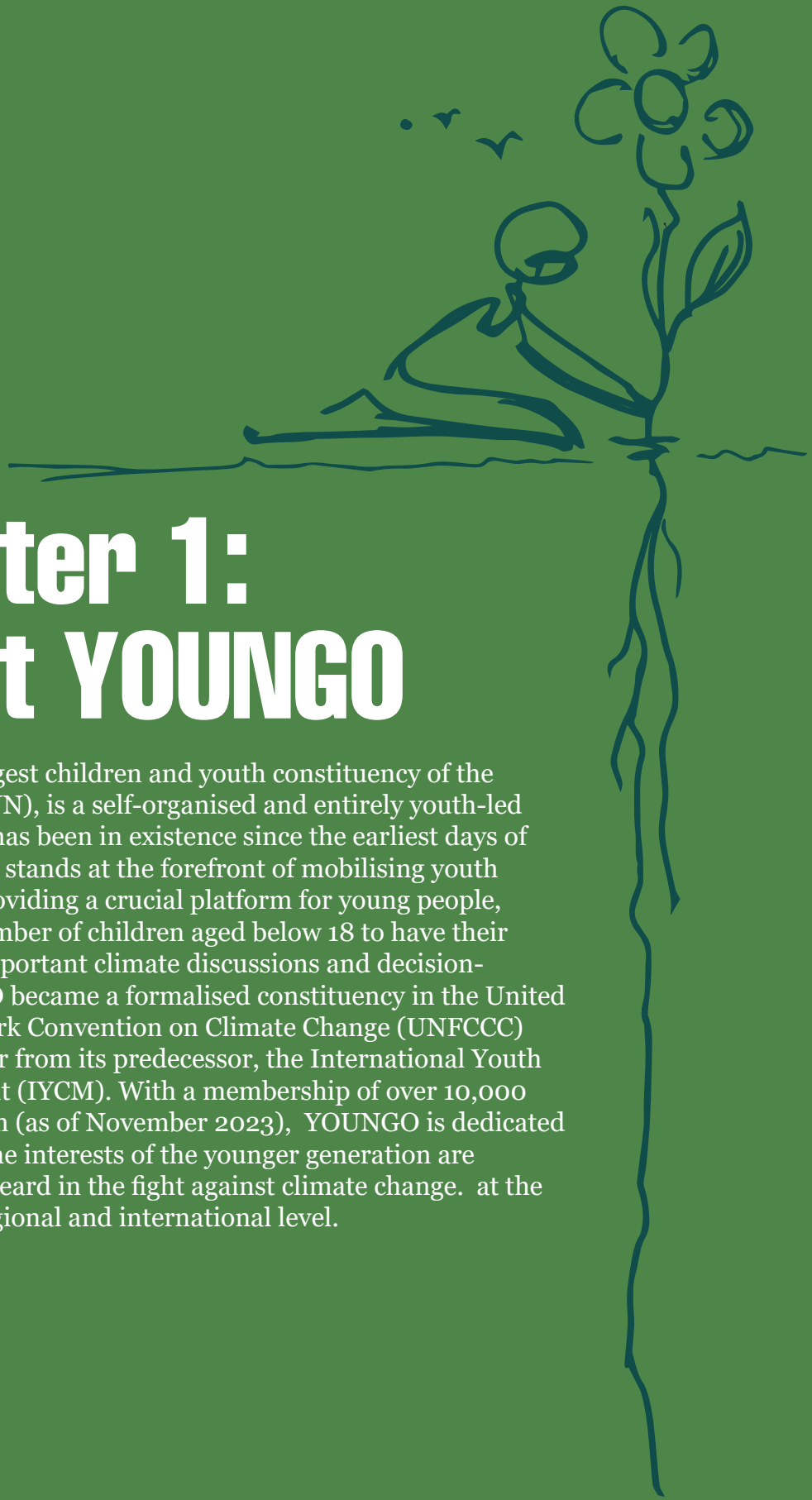
The UNFCCC Children and Youth Constituency (YOUNGO) thereby requests Parties to acknowledge, recognise and support a Youth Stocktake by the children and youth constituency in parallel with future GST processes. This is deemed crucial for enhancing youth inclusion, in addition to helping to scale youth engagement and inclusion in climate action and policy processes more broadly.

YOUNGO encourages other stakeholders to conduct a stocktake, similar to the Youth Stocktake and Local Stocktake by Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA). These processes should feed into the Global Stocktake, ensuring that the actions, participation and representation of diverse groups are accounted for. Further, this will also enhance understanding, generate more capacity building and inclusive participation of stakeholders in the lead up for Global Stocktake.

# Acronyms

<b>ACE</b>	Action for Climate Empowerment	<b>MGCY</b>	Major Group for Children and Youth
<b>APAC</b>	Asia and the Pacific	<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>ATAR</b>	Adaptation Technical Analysis Report	<b>NbS</b>	Nature-based Solutions
<b>AYCAP</b>	Africa Youth Climate Action Plan	<b>NCCAP</b>	National Climate Change Action Plan
<b>AYM4COP</b>	Africa Youth Mobilisation for Conference of Parties	<b>NDCs</b>	Nationally Determined Contributions
<b>BNEP</b>	Barbados National Energy Policy	<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organisation
<b>BMZ</b>	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	<b>PCCB</b>	Paris Committee on Capacity Building
<b>BLT</b>	Bottom Lining Team	<b>RCOY</b>	Regional Conference of Youth
<b>CIFF</b>	Children’s Investment Fund Foundation	<b>SCF</b>	Standing Committee on Finance
<b>CMA</b>	Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement	<b>SBs</b>	Subsidiary Bodies
<b>COP</b>	Conference of Parties	<b>SBI</b>	Subsidiary Body for Implementation
<b>COY/GCOY</b>	Conference of Youth/Global Conference of Youth	<b>SBSTA</b>	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation	<b>SIDS</b>	Small Islands States
<b>CTCN</b>	Climate Technology Centre and Network	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>CW</b>	Climate Week	<b>UNCRC</b>	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>FP</b>	Focal Point	<b>UNDESA</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>GIZ</b>	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>GCT</b>	Global Coordination Team	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund
<b>GAYO</b>	Green Africa Youth Organisation	<b>UNITAR</b>	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
<b>GST</b>	Global Stocktake	<b>UNCRC</b>	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>GYS</b>	Global Youth Statement	<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>IKS</b>	Indigenous Knowledge Systems	<b>VCOY</b>	Virtual Conference of Youth
<b>IMWG</b>	International Mobilisation Working Group	<b>WG</b>	Working Group
<b>IYCM</b>	International Youth Climate Movement	<b>YAG</b>	Youth Advisory Group
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicators	<b>YCC</b>	Youth Climate Champion
<b>LAC</b>	Latin America and the Caribbean	<b>YECAP</b>	Youth Empowerment in Climate Action Platform
<b>LGBTQIA</b>	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual	<b>YOUNGO</b>	Youth + NGO Children and Youth Constituency of the UNFCCC
<b>LCOY</b>	Local Conference of Youth	<b>YST</b>	Youth Stocktake
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa		



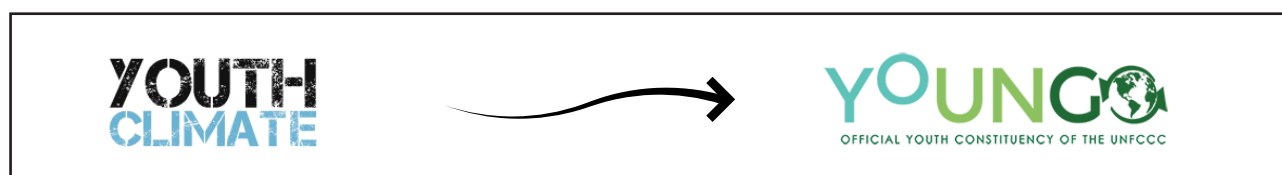


# Chapter 1: About YOUNGO

YOUNGO, the largest children and youth constituency of the United Nations (UN), is a self-organised and entirely youth-led entity. YOUNGO has been in existence since the earliest days of the UN. The latter stands at the forefront of mobilising youth climate action, providing a crucial platform for young people, and a growing number of children aged below 18 to have their voices heard in important climate discussions and decision-making. YOUNGO became a formalised constituency in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2011 taking over from its predecessor, the International Youth Climate Movement (IYCM). With a membership of over 10,000 children and youth (as of November 2023), YOUNGO is dedicated to ensuring that the interests of the younger generation are represented and heard in the fight against climate change. at the local, national, regional and international level.

Young people have a long history of participating in UNFCCC processes and leading advocacies for the meaningful inclusion of youth in climate negotiations. At the 5th Conference of Parties (COP), in Bonn, a parallel conference entitled Children and Youth Forum on the Environment was hosted. Young people thus took part in official COP events as members of various non governmental organisations (NGOs) and constituencies and helped to shape official interventions and lobby delegates (UNFCCC, 2010).

With additional support from the UNFCCC Secretariat, national governments, as well as NGOs, young people continued to participate in various climate advocacy initiatives at preceding COPs, including drafting a Youth Declaration at COP6 which was presented to the COP6 President, crafting statements of support for the Kyoto Protocol at COP7 in Marrakesh, Morocco, and hosting a children's conference for the first time at COP9 in New Delhi, India (UNFCCC, 2010). During COP10 in Buenos Aires, young people came together to campaign for an official youth constituency and ahead of COP11 by formally gathering in Montreal, Canada as the IYCM and continued to push for greater inclusion in climate negotiations as a unified voice for the younger generations. Youth were finally granted official status in the UNFCCC in 2009 at COP15 in Copenhagen, Denmark where the UNFCCC and its member states recognised youth as an observer constituency in its own right (UNFCCC, 2010). As YOUNGO marks its 12th anniversary at COP28 in the UAE, there is much for its members, past, present and future, to celebrate and remark on.



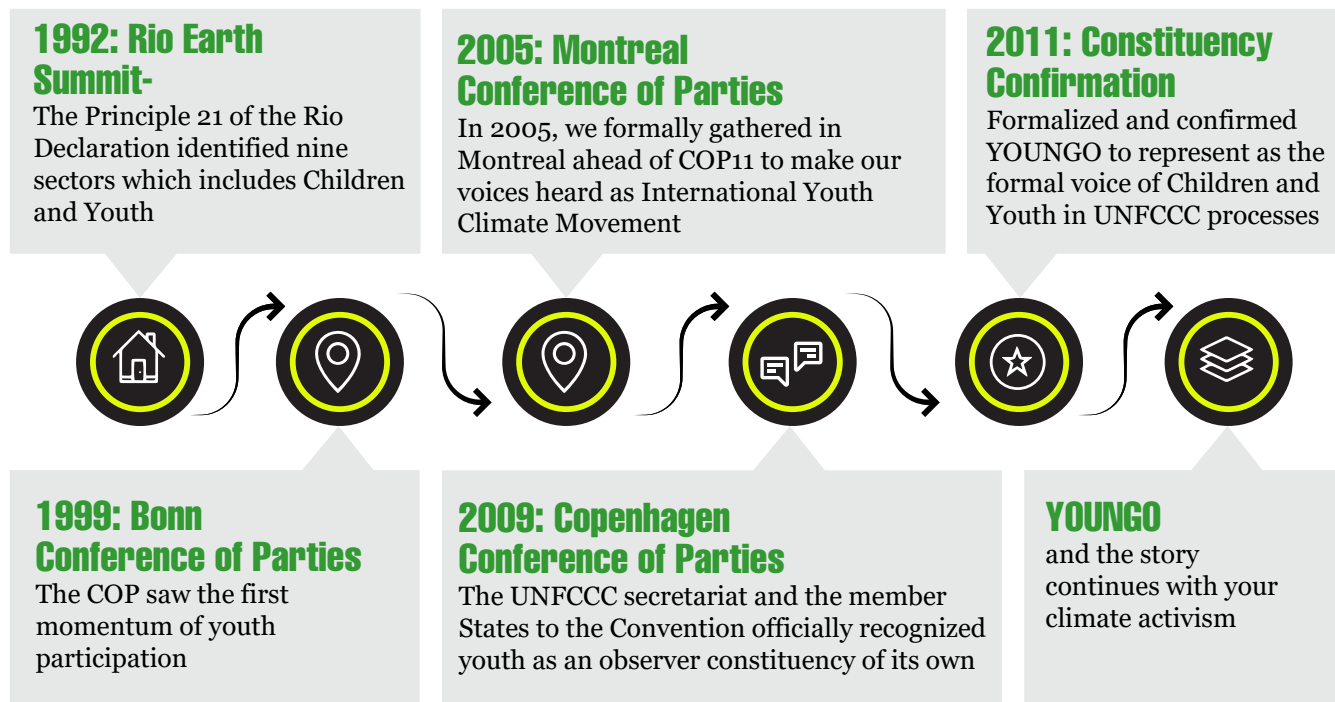
*Official International Youth Climate Movement logo to new YOUNGO logo*

Yet, at the same time, there is a lot of progress that is still to be made in the pursuit of ensuring the voices of children and youth are included in international climate negotiations. The youth climate activists of today continue to face a multitude of challenges that restrict their participation in climate negotiations, including visa-related restrictions, logistical and practical hurdles around accreditation and accommodation as well as various other socio-economic, gender-based and regional discriminations. These challenges prevent many young people from being able to access climate negotiation spaces.

As the planet stands on the edge of climate catastrophe, with vulnerable countries and communities around the world increasingly facing the worsening effects of climate change, a collective commitment by the global community to strengthen young people's inclusion in climate decision-making is key. Young people not only possess the strong desire to transform the world, they inherently possess the capacity to do so on a broad and expanding scale. The degree to which the UN is successful in drawing upon the enormous potential of youth will have a determinative impact on humanity's future.

1. Constituencies in the UNFCCC are loose groups of NGOs with diverse but broadly clustered interests or perspectives. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/parties-non-party-stakeholders/non-party-stakeholders/overview/admitted-ngos#Constituencies-in-the-UNFCCC>

## OUR HISTORY TIMELINE



**Figure 1:** YOUNGO History in UNFCCC Processes (Source: YOUNGO)

### 1.2

## YOUNGO Operations

YOUNGO operates on a decentralised governance framework, where the authority to participate in climate policy advocacy and the ability to impact and mould climate policies are distributed among its members. YOUNGO has a flat structure in which decision-making is based on consensus ensuring inclusion and equitable representation of all children and young people. YOUNGO has seven principles encompassing access to every young person who wants to contribute to the constituency, and maintains transparency, inclusiveness, dignity and integrity across its actions.

### YOUNGO Working Groups

To ensure that the perspectives of children, youth and future generations are taken into account in the UNFCCC negotiation process, YOUNGO members organise themselves into different Working Groups (WGs) focusing on key UNFCCC negotiation thematic. The number of YOUNGO WGs that have been established to date totals more than 35. YOUNGO WGs cover the major core components of UNFCCC operations - policy, action, communications and translation - and address the key thematic areas of the UNFCCC, including Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE), Adaptation, Finance and Markets, Gender & Women, Human Rights, Mitigation, Energy and Child's Rights, among others.

YOUNGO members also have the option of setting up WGs that are based on their specific areas of interest or work in line with UNFCCC. For example the Nature WG was re-established and reinforced after COP26 to focus on Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and other thematic areas including wetlands and forestry and the Reducing Inequalities and Inclusion Rights WG was created in 2021 to deliver on disabilities, race and LGBTQIA rights and address the exclusion of these voices in climate justice.

In addition to WGs, members of YOUNGO are also active in various stages of climate negotiations as part of advocacy groups, coalitions and as members of national delegations where they can participate as official Youth Delegates. In the majority of cases young people participate with Observer status and report on climate negotiations and on their outcomes for the younger generation.

### **YOUNGO Bottom Lining Team (BLT) / Global Coordination Team (GCT)**

The BLT's purpose was to offer oversight, logistical assistance, and coordination support to Focal Points and YOUNGO, ensuring their effectiveness. Amid ongoing constituency reforms, the current interim structure involves the Global Coordination Team maintaining its role, providing logistical support to Focal Points and the constituency without decision-making authority. This support is carried out by a team of dedicated volunteers.

### **YOUNGO Global Focal Points**

YOUNGO annually elects two Focal Points (FPs), one from Global North and one from Global South. The mandate of the FP is to liaise with external contacts and primarily with the UNFCCC Secretariat. Focal Points have no exceptional decision-making mandate and must remain neutral at all times, simply serving to facilitate constituency organisation, activities and consultations, and reflect the constituency voice.



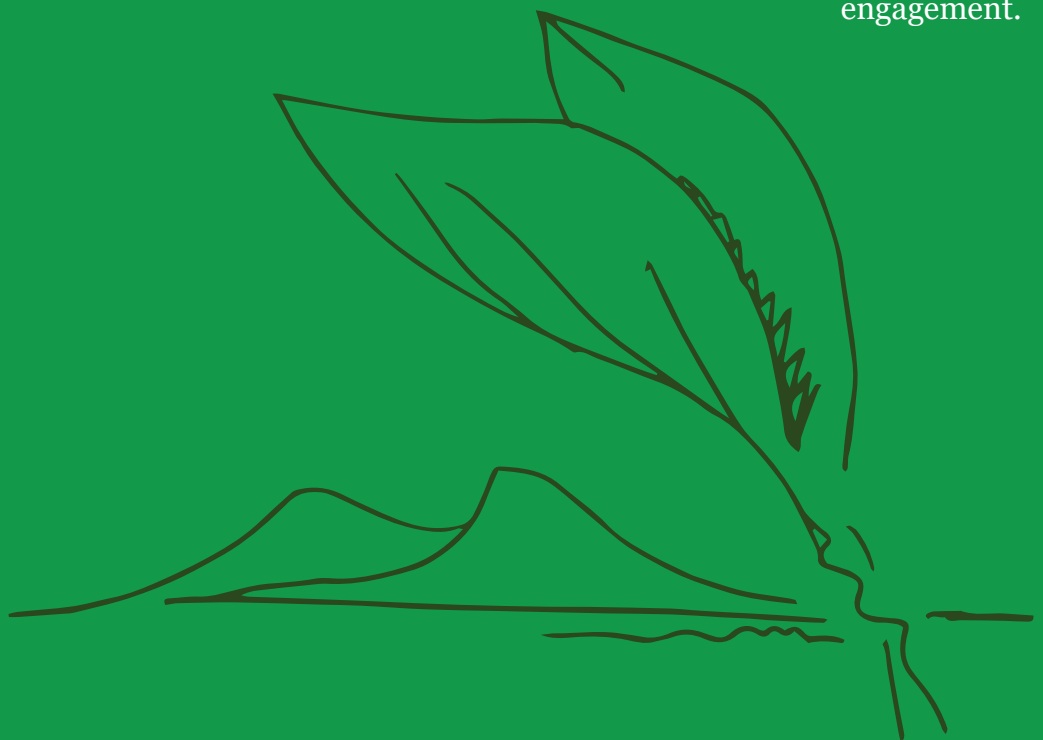
*Former YOUNGO Focal Points from left Marie-claire Graf, Chiagozie Udeh, Yugratna Srivastava and Timothy Damon in Madrid Spain COP 23.*

# Chapter 2: Introduction

**2:1**

## **Setting the Scene**

This report presents the findings of the first-ever Youth Stocktake (YST) of UNFCCC processes, a process that was initiated by YOUNGO with support from the Youth Climate Champions Team (YCC) during the 58th Subsidiary Body meeting (SB58) in Bonn, Germany (UNFCCC, 2023). The YST took on the momentous task of mapping youth inclusion in UNFCCC processes, including the challenges and opportunities. Moreover, the YST aimed to provide an enhanced understanding on the ways in which young people are included in the development of climate policy, at the local, national, regional and international level, the challenges that Parties are facing in regards to implementing youth inclusion in international climate negotiations, as well as highlighting some of the success stories, and create a roadmap for future youth inclusion and engagement.



## Rationale for a Youth Stocktake

The YST process emerged in parallel to the Global Stocktake (GST), a process for countries and stakeholders to see where they're collectively making progress towards meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement and where they're not (UNFCCC, 2023). The first GST concludes at COP28 where the findings of the technical assessment will be discussed by negotiators, ministers and heads of state. Recognising young people as members of a generation that will inherit the planet and its associated challenges, and therefore as having a long-term stake in the outcomes of climate negotiations, a process that assesses the progress of the UNFCCC youth inclusion agenda through YOUNGO is a vital necessity. Integrating a youth stocktake in official UNFCCC processes is not only necessary to support young people's active participation in shaping climate policy but in upholding intergenerational equity, a key principle of climate action enshrined in the Paris Agreement (UN, 2015). As young people continue to call for their voices to be heard in climate negotiations, the YST provides a vital youth-oriented and youth-led assessment of the current state of youth inclusion in international climate negotiations aimed at ensuring the perspectives, concerns, and solutions presented by the younger generation are given due consideration in the decision-making processes.

The YST comes to light against a backdrop of wider calls for UN reforms that prioritise meaningful youth engagement across the entire UN system, including the UN Secretary General's Our Common Agenda report (2023) that included key recommendations to member states to expand and strengthen youth participation in decision-making at all levels and make meaningful youth engagement a requirement in all UN decision-making processes (UN, 2023).

### 1 CASE STUDY



Young people made their expectations for the future of meaningful youth engagement clear in the Torchbearers for the SDGs consultation which took place in the lead up to the UN SDG Summit 2023. Over 4,000 youth from 159 countries participated in two virtual youth consultations hosted between June and August 2023 and shared their views on topics related to SDG implementation. The youth perspectives captured highlight the need for a global standard for meaningful youth engagement (UN, 2023).

## Nexus between Youth Stocktake and Climate Negotiations

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### ***Youth as Changemakers:***

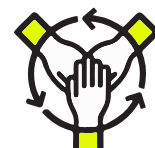
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Considering the recognition of young people as empowered agents of change (UN, 2018), a youth stocktake process will help to harness the power of young people in climate action and support the energy of young people as it is directed towards the realisation of climate-resilient, sustainable futures. Moreover, it would help to ensure that today's generation of youth are politically empowered and meaningfully engaged as future leaders, policy-makers, negotiators and climate experts.

### ***Fostering youth inclusion:***

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A youth stocktake provides a critical platform to amplify youth voices, ensuring that their perspectives, ideas and concerns are actively included in climate policy while simultaneously helping counter challenges for youth inclusion and engagement. A stocktake would assist youth inclusion by supporting the implementation of targeted measures that seek to address the barriers preventing young people from accessing climate negotiations and hindering their ability to participate in climate action in the international political arena as actors and stakeholders in their own right.

### ***Enhancing intergenerational equity:***

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A youth stocktake would help to bridge the gap in representation of young people in climate negotiations by establishing a platform to address their specific aspirations in the realm of climate change. Linking the process to the GST would further reinforce the spirit of inclusivity, participation, and intergenerational cooperation enshrined in the Paris Agreement and help facilitate meaningful and inclusive intergenerational dialogue between current decision-makers and young people, valuing the exchanging of diverse experiences in leading to more holistic and innovative approaches to tackling impacts of climate change.

### ***Complementing the Global Stocktake:***

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In much the same manner as the GST process evaluates the progress made by Parties to the UNFCCC in achieving the objectives of international agreements, a youth stocktake would help to simultaneously evaluate and examine progress made by Parties regarding international commitments to youth inclusion, notably through Article 63 & 65 of the Glasgow Climate Pact and Article 88 of The Sharm el Sheikh Implementation Plan.

### ***Establishing accountability:***

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Actively involving youth in climate discussions and actions is essential to uphold the rights and interests of young people who will be most affected by the consequences. Neglecting their involvement would be detrimental. The inclusion of a youth stocktake to the GST process holds great potential for helping to promote greater accountability for Parties for their commitments and actions towards supporting youth inclusion.

## Defining Key Concepts of the Study

The key concepts that underlie the YST are youth, youth participation and youth inclusion. A brief discussion on the key concepts is included in this section of the report.

### Youth

The YST incorporates the YOUNGO perspective on youth. YOUNGO recognises any individual below the age of 35 years to be a youth. As the constituency representing global youth, this age range takes into consideration the varied definitions of youth used across different world regions.

### Youth participation in the UNFCCC: rights, equal partnerships and climate justice

Youth participation is a dynamic concept rooted in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (McMellon & Tisdall, 2020). The UNCRC recognises participation as “a substantive right” of all children and youth articulating this right through various participation rights, including; freedom of expression (Article 13), freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14) and freedom of information (Article 17), among others (UNICEF, 1989). Historically, these rights have shaped participation processes for children and young people as well as informing adult-child dynamics in participatory processes (McMellon & Tisdall, 2020). Where youth participation must continue to evolve in response to changing external conditions and requirements, its roots in the UNCRC placing emphasis on participation as a fundamental right of all children and youth must consistently remain intact.

For the first time, Agenda 21 acknowledged the special talents and strengths of young people as invaluable tools for achieving development goals (UN, 1994). Moreover, it acknowledged the participation of young people as being essential for tackling global issues and achieving sustainable development (UN, 1994). This elevated thinking helped transition young people from beneficiaries of development to partners in development (Bersaglio et al., 2015). This transition signalled a shift to a recognition of young people as key stakeholders in the development of policies relating to sustainable development.

The UN’s current approach to youth participation, namely Youth:2030: the UN Youth Strategy, builds on the UNCRC and its emphasis on rights, Agenda 21 and its emphasis on intergenerational partnerships that recognise the competency of youth to achieve sustainability and promotes a vision of young people as “fully-fledged partners in the United Nations work to build a better world for all, as they are both beneficiaries and partners” (UN, 2018). Youth:2030 has helped to elevate young people’s status in development work, while paving the way for new and innovative youth participatory mechanisms, notably the UN Youth Envoy post established in 2017 and the Secretary-General’s Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change that was inaugurated in 2020 (UN, 2020).

For youth participation in the UNFCCC, the concept of “climate justice”, as included in the Paris Agreement (UN, 2015), has important implications, including for members of the younger generation. Youth are one group in society, alongside others including women, local communities and indigenous peoples, migrants, children and persons with disabilities, that



are the most vulnerable to climate change (UN, 2015). Youths in particular occupy a unique position in the policy space since their lives will most overlap with current policy windows. Furthermore, children are among the groups of the most vulnerable whose health is most impacted by climate change, especially by increased heat and pollution from burning fossil fuels (UNFCCC, 2023). Thus, as climate justice becomes an increasing reality for climate policy to grapple with, youth participation must take into consideration the specific needs of the younger generation who face the disproportionate impacts of climate change and as the ones who will face the direct consequences of any of today's failings to effectively and urgently respond to climate change.

### ***What is meaningful youth participation in climate action?***

UNDP (2022) describes meaningful youth participation in climate action as: a broad array of mechanisms of participation to influence climate change governance where youth share power to steer the process and outcome of their participation. This entails their empowerment and involvement, individually or collectively, to express views, narratives and solutions in ways that are compatible with large-scale system transformations needed to achieve climate-neutral and resilient futures, overall contributing towards a sustainable society (UNDP, 2022).

## **Youth inclusion in international climate negotiations**

Tackling the issue of young people not having access to climate negotiations has remained a top priority for YOUNGO since it was granted constituent status in 2011. Despite increased awareness among key stakeholders within the UNFCCC, including Parties, of the necessity to enhance youth inclusion, many youth struggle for meaningful inclusion and instead experience marginalisation, especially those from developing and least developed countries. Young people experience various logistical and representational barriers to inclusion and these are a persistent challenge year after year. Even for those young people who make it to the COP conferences, tokenism and “side-lining” prevent them from accessing key decision-making spaces, thereby blocking youth representation in climate policy. As a counter to youth exclusion, youth inclusion has emerged as a critical policy agenda item, supported by policy frameworks such as Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) which encompasses climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information, and international cooperation on these elements (UNFCCC, 2021). Fundamentally, youth inclusion should specifically work to address the removal of barriers to participation and addressing systemic inequalities to empower young people.

More strategic efforts have been made to promote youth inclusion at more recent COPs, for instance with the introduction of a youth-themed day to highlight the power and participation of youth at the UN climate change conferences and the first-ever Children and Youth Pavilion at COP27. Such initiatives are crucial in signalling greater acceptance of the inclusion of children and young people in the COP space. Additionally, youth inclusion has gained the support of COP Presidencies, including the COP28 UAE Presidency which issues a *Joint Inclusion Letter to Parties*<sup>2</sup> urging a significant shift towards increased participation and meaningful engagement of youth, women, local communities, and Indigenous Peoples as members of Party and observer delegations to COP, and in climate decision-making, policy, and action in the lead up to and during COP28.

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2. <https://unfccc.int/documents/630676>

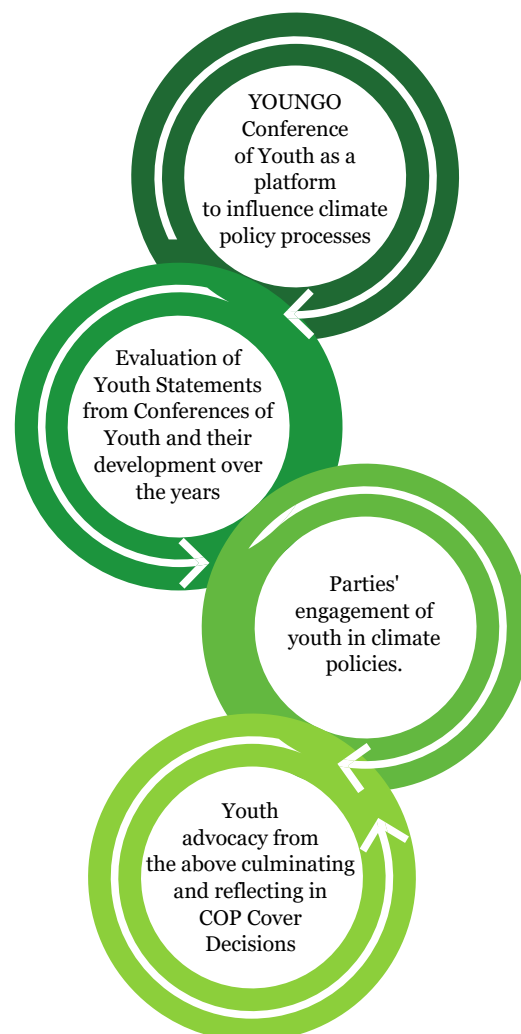
**Chapter 3:** The study puts forward the first youth stocktake being carried out in UNFCCC processes through YOUNGO. In so doing, it first illustrates the role of the conference of youth introduced in 2011 to mobilise youth on the road and eve of COP to advocate and participate in climate policy processes. Since then, those youth-led conferences have transcended to regional and local level. The chapter traces the introduction of the first conference to now standing at 100 conferences at local level. Despite the growth of the conference, a stocktake on the evolution of those youth-led conferences, their pivotal role in influencing climate policy processes and on the need for support is carried out.

**Chapter 4:** The key outcome of the youth climate conferences is the ‘youth statement’ produced during each event, be it on local, regional or global level. These statements are used as a tool to channel the youth demands on climate policy processes to governments on regional, local and/or global level. Over the years, the nature and process of shaping the youth statement has evolved. This study looks into mapping its evolution and identifies key recommendations required to strengthen this process so that this document can serve as effectively influencing climate policy processes mainly in line with COP.

**Chapter 5:** Through the conferences of youth and the youth statements, young people have been advocating for more inclusion in international climate negotiations. Whilst youth continue to lobby, a stocktake on Parties’ engagement of youth becomes vital. This chapter provides a comprehensive overview on Parties’ engagement of youth, portrays case studies and practices for Parties’ peer learning, whilst simultaneously identifying the ongoing barriers for youth inclusion in climate policy processes.

**Chapter 6:** The ultimate aim of the above efforts (conferences of youth, youth statement, engaging with Parties and more) is to be able to influence the negotiation processes. This chapter sheds light on the COP cover decisions related to youth and investigates the diverse opportunities that youth are provided with to influence climate policies in the UNFCCC.

**Chapter 7:** Finally, the study culminates with the key outcomes and the way forward from the youth stocktake process.



**Figure 2:** Overview of the chapters covered (Source: Authors)

# Chapter 3: Evolution of Conferences of Youth and their influence on Climate Policies



## 3.1 Background

Local Conferences of Youth (LCOY), Regional Conferences of Youth (RCOY) and Global Conference of Youth (GCOY/COY) are events under the banner of YOUNGO. They are events led by children and youth, for children and youth. These conferences are non-restrictive in the manner of events organisations, exhibiting young people's activism, creativity and innovations. Alongside these events, seminars, training, and skill-building sessions, they would also include community service projects, consultations, exhibitions, roundtable discussions, and many other activities. The aims of the conferences are to:

- ›› Empower young individuals to take meaningful action towards a sustainable future;
- ›› Serve as a mobilisation platform, allowing young people to organise and participate in collective actions, such as petitions and campaigns;
- ›› Streamline youth demands from the local to regional to the global level that young people's voices are heard and considered at climate negotiations.

**Local Conferences of Youth (LCOY)** are local events with a national focus that empower youth to participate in climate action and decision-making processes. LCOYs are vital for reinforcing and strengthening local networks of youth and in some cases, new climate activism groups are formed through LCOYs. The output documents from LCOYs are the final report along with LCOY Declarations/National Youth Statement which contributes to Local, National decision making and legislation. These also feed into regional level contributions through RCOYs and global level through the Global Youth Statement (GYS).

**Regional Conferences of Youth (RCOY)** are events with a regional focus incorporating inputs from local and national level inputs from young people. RCOYs are where young people from a specific region gather to discuss and address the challenges and issues related to climate change. These events provide a platform for youth groups to come together and develop strategies to combat the climate crisis, forming regional positions on different thematic areas of interest. This year, most of the conferences have been scheduled in line with the regional climate weeks such that the youth can amplify their advocacy.

**Conference of Youth (GCOY/COY)** is a global gathering of young individuals from around the world who are interested in addressing the issue of climate change. COY is a precursor event of the UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP) which takes place on the eve and in the same city as COP. The final output is the Global Youth Statement (GYS) which combines LCOY, RCOY and GCOY youth policy input and demands. UNFCCC<sup>3</sup> also recognises it for being *'the biggest and most substantial youth conference related to the multilateral UN climate processes'*.

The first COY took place in 2005 in Montreal, Canada on a global level. The notion of COY was mainly to bring youth voices together on the eve of each COP and ensure that they are included in the policy decisions and negotiations. However, over the years YOUNGO has appraised the constraints for youth participation in one single global event and thus decided to deconstruct the event on local and regional level. The COYs are distinct in their own way, especially on the geographical impact.



COY 9, 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark Photo Credits Shadia Wood

3. [https://unfccc.int/topics/education-and-youth/youngcoy#:~:text=Global%20COY%20\(GCOY\)%20is%20the,COP\)%20at%20the%20same%20location.](https://unfccc.int/topics/education-and-youth/youngcoy#:~:text=Global%20COY%20(GCOY)%20is%20the,COP)%20at%20the%20same%20location.)

<b>Geography</b>	<b>LCOY</b> <i>National Level</i>	<b>RCOY</b> <i>Regional Level</i>	<b>GCOY/COY</b> <i>Global Level</i>
<b>Timeline</b>	Takes place throughout the year until COP	In 2023, the RCOYs are aligned to the regional climate weeks dates	Takes place on the eve and in the same city as COP.
<b>Outcome document</b>	Local Youth statement	Regional Youth Statement	Global Youth Statement
<b>Policy Influence</b>	National policies and the statement feeds into regional and global statements	Regional policies, advocacy during regional climate weeks and the statement feeds into the global statements	Main advocacy takes place prior and during COP to influence the key decision outcomes.
<b>Stocktake on the number of COYs</b>	Started in 2015, it stood at 23 in 2021, 75 in 2022 and 110 LCOYs in 2023.	Started in 2017, it stood at 2 in 2021, 7 in 2022 and 8 RCOYs in 2023.	On its 18th edition in 2023. One event being held annually.
Type of activities : Capacity building, advocacy, cooperation, networking, community projects, volunteering activities and more.			

**Table 1:** Overview on L/R/GCOYs (Source: Authors)

## 3.2 Aims

This chapter maps the evolution of the conferences of youth and shed light on the opportunities to be leveraged on. It also portrays the conferences of youth as a platform for youth inclusion in climate policy processes. The objective of the research is to understand the development and impact of youth conferences and evaluate their ability to influence policy decisions.

## 3.3 Methods of Data Collection

**Interviews of former LCOY Liaison and Head of IMWG** included structured and semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth insights. Interviews were audio-visual recorded with permission, transcribed, and then analysed for key themes. Interviewees were asked about creation of youth conferences, their experiences with youth conferences, their assessment of policy influence, and any recommendations for improvement. A snowball method<sup>4</sup> was adopted to reach out to interviewees who were engaged in the initial phase of conferences of youth either as an organiser or participant.

**Interview of former Focal Points:** Former YOUNGO Focal Points (from 2018-2022) were interviewed to better understand their role in fostering the policy processes for youth. In total, five former Focal Points were interviewed for a duration of 45 minutes virtually. The interview questions revolved around providing an overview on the LCOY, RCOY and

4. a technique in which interviewees participants are asked to assist researchers in identifying other participants to be interviewed.

GCOY conferences during their year in post, the obstacles encountered in establishing of the conference processes and the collaboration and engagement with external stakeholders that was involved to maximise youth engagement in policy processes.

**A survey** titled, “An assessment of the development of YOUNGO processes, notably through Local, Regional, and Global Conferences of Youth 2021-23”, was sent out to a wider youth audience, including organisers, participants, delegates and volunteers and gathered around 140 responses. The survey consisted of both closed and open-ended questions to obtain quantitative and qualitative data.

**Desk reviews** involved analysing reports and documents submitted by L/RCOY hosts. The reviews focused on evaluating conference effectiveness, analysing the success of events and their impact, identifying areas of improvement as well as look into outcomes from LCOYs/RCOYs establishing best case practices and highlighting the nature/extent of policy influence achieved.

**Consultations** were carried out amongst youth participants during the 2023 regional climate weeks held in Nairobi, Kenya (Africa), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (Middle East and North Africa), Panama City (Latin America and the Caribbean) and Johor, Malaysia (Asia and Pacific). The consultations assessed their engagement in climate policies.

However, the researchers acknowledge the potential limitations of the research, such as potential self-reporting bias in surveys, as such efforts were made to mitigate this limitation through survey follow up, fact-checking amongst members of the organising team and triangulation of data sources using data from different times, spaces, and people.



Actions taking place during COP18 in Doha, Qatar. credits theverb.org

## 2 CASE STUDY



### From 1 Lcoy to over 100 LCOYs

Local conferences of Youth have evolved significantly over the years in YOUNGO history. The growth reflects the increased urgency of addressing climate change and the growing interest among young people. Here is an overview of the key stages in the evolution of youth climate conferences:

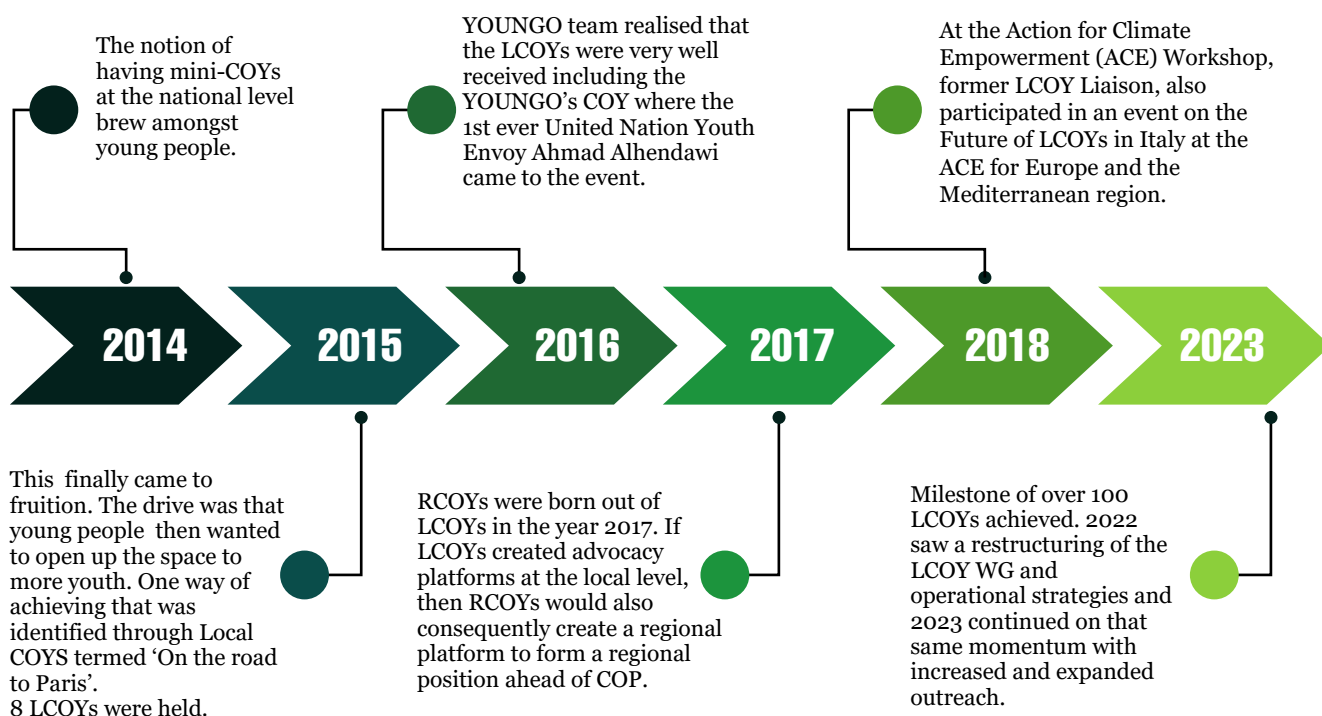
#### Idea to execution

Initially, an ‘International Mobilisation Working Group’ (IMWG) was in place, whose main goal was to mobilise international youth to attend COY11 in France. At the time, there were 35 volunteers from different countries in this working group (WG) (Head of IMWG 2015). The notion of establishing Local COYs originated in this working group. They were able to identify a gap through the mobilisation of youth globally for the GCOY. The rationale behind this rested on the financial constraints and travel restrictions to the global COY.



**Figure 3:** Rationale for introducing LCOYs (Source: Authors)

The IMWG noted that both processes Local COY and GCOY may occur concurrently and further admitted that this was quite a huge ambition considering that COY was the only well-known meeting. In early 2015, the IMWG looked into local existing networks and introduced the idea of a down-sized COY that is Local COY. The IMWG then developed a **Local COY Toolkit** which was made available in other 2 languages, **Portuguese** and **French**. The idea was to have at least 1 LCOY per region, serving as pilot LCOYs. These conferences were often small-scale, local events, but they played a crucial role in raising awareness and forming a united front for young people.



**Figure 4:** Evolution of LCOYs in YOUNGO (Source: Authors)

YOUNGO's team discussed scaling the LCOYs through collaboration with universities and schools to broaden the scope and ultimately to bring down the technicalities of the UNFCCC processes to the local level. At that time there was the YOUNGO Bottom Lining Team (BLT) which then formally decided through consensus to also keep the concept of LCOYs.



**Figure 5:** Map of first LCOYs (Source: Authors)



## **Influence of technology (2020-21)**

In the period 2020-21 as a result of COVID-19, the majority of the LCOYs were in virtual format but during these uncertain times, there was also a stagnation in the momentum of LCOYs. While this presented challenges, it also allowed for increased inclusivity by reducing travel barriers and reaching a wider virtual audience.

Virtual conferences introduced innovative tools, interactive sessions, and virtual networking, leading to new ways of engagement. Social media platforms enabled greater collaboration and coordination among young activists, leading also to the development of more dynamic and interconnected conferences. The pandemic was a subtle reminder of the intimate, vital and delicate relationship between humans and mother nature and the need to do away with unsustainable actions. However, virtual participation still suffers from inclusiveness given the poor and expensive network in the most vulnerable communities. This eventually hinders the voice of the most vulnerable youth.

### ***The rise of Virtual COY (vCOY)***

The Virtual Conference of Youth (vCOY) launched on August 12th, 2021, marked a pivotal moment in the global climate action movement. The vCOY was highly effective in fulfilling its mission. It bridged the knowledge gap for participants by implementing key strategies such as providing pre-reading materials and organising informative in-session workshops for around 309 delegates. There were also special spots open on International Indigenous Day specifically for the indigenous young people to join the vCOY. Youth who attended the conference gave feedback that the session capacity building helped them in starting and continuing their climate advocacy journey hence also felt welcome to the space.

## **Transition to post Covid era and strengthening of L/RCOYs**

L/RCOYs exemplified rediscovering the power of human interaction in a post-Covid era, harnessing it to drive productivity to new heights. They evolved numerically and in strategic collaborations. To ensure continuity in these events re-structuring was done in YOUNGO:

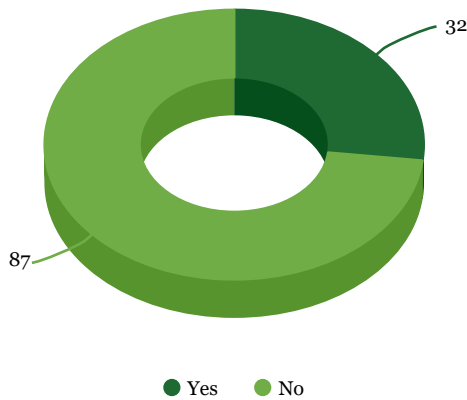
- » Establishing the LCOY Working Group (WG) with defined roles and duties including selections, media, communications, reporting mechanism, partnerships and capacity building.
- » 2022 YOUNGO Focal Points emphasised on the restructuring in their action plan with increasing focus on LCOYs.
- » Scale of financial support from UK Government supporting a total of 15 LCOYs in 2022. UNICEF and UNDP were and are also key financiers of L/RCOYs and this also highly depends on good relationships formed at the local level amongst youth groups and UN country offices.

### 3.4

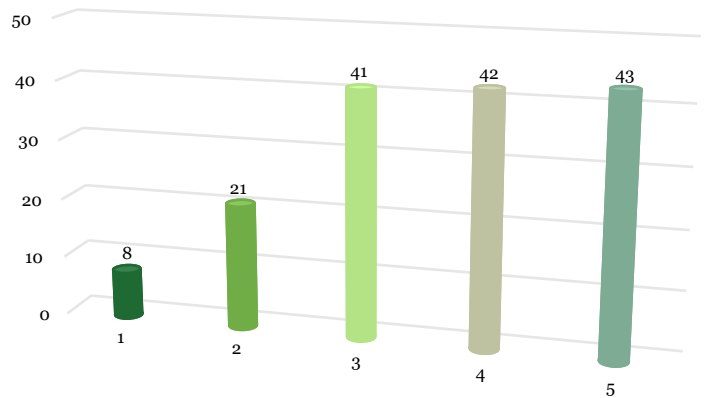
## L/R/GCOYs and their Influence on Policy Processes

The key role of the conference of youth is to feed into climate policies. The study further analysed their effectiveness to do so and the mechanisms adopted for doing so. It aggregates the participation of youth and the factors influencing that.

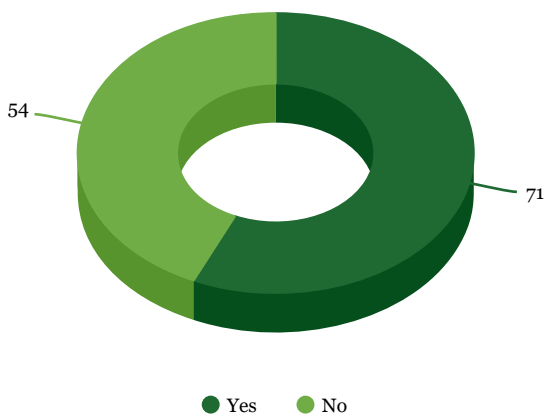
### 3.4.1 Effectiveness and tools to influence policy decisions



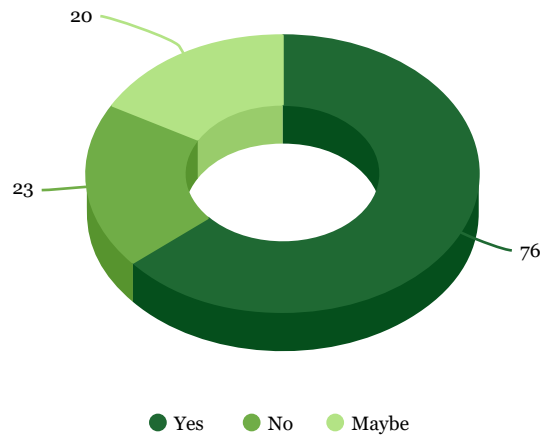
**Figure 6:** Effectiveness of L/R/GCOYs in influencing policy processes



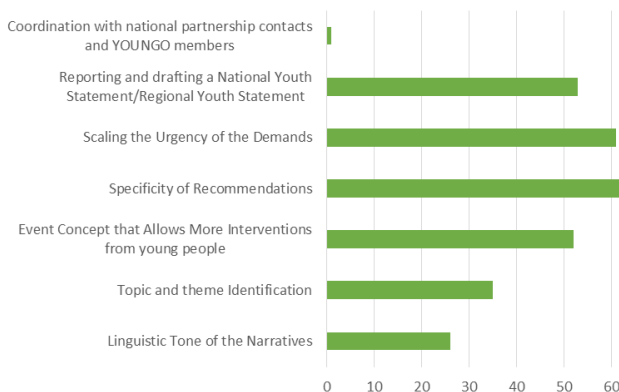
**Figure 7:** Optimism about GCOY deliverables influencing UNFCCC processes



**Figure 8:** Participation of government in L/R/GCOYs



**Figure 9:** Knowledge about engaging government in L/R/GCOYs



**Figure 10:** Expected deliverables from L/R/GCOYs

The results demonstrate the effectiveness of youth conferences in influencing the processes of climate policymaking. It is critical to promote youth activism, support them and motivate more young people to take part in these kinds of conferences.

While organising L/R/GCOYs, 60% have been able to work with their governments. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that there is a significant level of government participation in youth climate conferences. This indicates a positive trend towards government involvement and recognition of the importance of youth engagement in climate action. Nevertheless, there are hurdles to overcome such as bureaucratic and gatekeeping by institutions, lack of support from government departments, inadequate resources to implement ‘youth’ initiatives. These challenges also include an unpredictable political landscape and competing priorities within the government. Addressing these challenges requires efforts to establish clear communication channels with government representatives, add something on feedback and response, emphasising the urgency of climate issues and the importance of young voices in shaping sustainable policies.

To further assess the effectiveness to influence policy decisions, the study mapped whether youth are knowledgeable about engaging the governments in their initiatives. Based on the findings, 58.7% of the respondents indicated that they know how to engage their government when organising a youth climate conference. This suggests that a majority of the respondents have some understanding of the process and steps involved in engaging the government for such an event. 18.3% of the respondents admitted that they do not know which government entity to approach and are in need of help. This group requires assistance in identifying the appropriate government body to engage with, for organising a youth climate conference.

C40 Cities (2021)<sup>5</sup> sets out a playbook on how to tackle the climate crisis through collaboration with youth; this alone could potentially create an environment where those youth groups who do not know which government entity to approach, are met halfway in that process. The C40 Cities Playbook recommends for local governance to map out youth and civil society organisations that they can engage with, organise initial meetings with organisations that are willing to connect the city to youth organisations and provide resources and meeting spaces for youth and partner organisations.

Youth were queried on improving the deliverables and impact from these conferences. The survey results indicate a range of compelling reasons for respondents’ confidence in the ability of GCOY deliverables to influence the UNFCCC processes. Respondents point to the platform’s ability to engage with UNFCCC negotiators and policymakers, offering an opportunity to young people to advocate for their perspectives, needs, and concerns.

From Figure 10, a recurring theme is the recognition of the energy and commitment of young people in driving change. (63.6%) of the respondents want to see the event and programme curated, and that would allow more interventions from young people. They also highlighted the need to bring in more focused recommendations (62.9%) as well as to scale the urgency of the demands (52.1%). These can be achieved by:

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5. <https://www.c40.org/what-we-do/building-a-movement/youth-engagement/playbook/>.

**Accommodating more interventions from young people:** organisers of the conferences should consider upscaling local level consultations that can best represent the plight and demands of young people from all provinces, upscale interactive sessions for presentation of participants'/delegates' ideas or organising brainstorming sessions to gather input.

**Specificity in Recommendations:** Organisers of the conferences should ensure that the recommendations provided in the deliverables are clear, concise, and specific as with YOUNGO's GYS, avoiding generic input

**Scaling the urgency of demands:** Form coalitions to scale the urgency of their policy demands by collaborating with like-minded individuals and organisations or policymakers to increase their impact and reinforce the urgency of their demands. Additionally, by considering the immediate and long-term impact, scientific evidence, social justice, inclusivity, global challenges, public support, and collaboration, evaluating policy demands based on their potential to create a fair, equitable, and sustainable future for themselves and future generations.

**Linguistic tone of the narratives:** Pay heed to the guidance and policy toolkit developed by YOUNGO Policy team and UNFCCC language training that reinforces the skills to state and align the inputs to the UN processes. Examples include the pocket guide<sup>6</sup> developed by IIED on climate negotiations.

**Example of LCOY Costa Rica (organised by Red de Juventudes y Cambio Climático):** The impact of these conferences reflect in the demonstration of the immense potential of youth-led movements in shaping a more environmentally conscious world. LCOY Costa Rica 2022 served as a **National Youth Forum in Climate Action**, which was essential to contribute to a more connected and strengthened climate action at the country level. This was possible through the revision of the Costa Rican government Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in December 2020 which involved citizen consultations, with youth engagement, narrative scenario design, and climate modelling. Contributions 10.10 and 10.11, which state that “by 2022, the country has generated a Plan for the Integration of Youth in Climate Action” and “by 2024, the structures for the incorporation of youth and children into actions for climate empowerment will be strengthened, including the establishment of an **Annual Forum for Youth in Climate Action** as part of the climate action axis of the Public Policy for the Person Junior 2020-2024,” respectively, highlight the role of youth in this update.

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6. <https://www.iied.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/migrate/10148IIED.pdf>

### 3.4.2 Mechanisms of L/R/GCOY towards policy decisions

There are diverse mechanisms that conferences of youths can adopt to level up and influence policy decisions.

#### Power of networks

Young people who participate in the conferences of youth are exposed to a variety of cultures, experiences, learnings and collective lobbying which heightens their understanding of technical UNFCCC processes, provides opportunities for cooperation towards a common goal, recognizing that the fight in the battle against climate change is together and not in isolation. Young people's selection of participatory strategies and power sources is shaped by their level of agency, when their self-perception of agency is high, young participants offer constructive policy amendments which can lead to recognition (Thew, 2018).

Interestingly, the findings reflect that LCOYs have had ripple effects in their growth, leading to increased youth engagement in climate governance and including events like the National Youth Policy Dialogues on Climate Change and COP. These policy dialogues are incorporated through activities such as seminars, workshops, panel and roundtable discussions. Growth in L/R/COYs is perceived through successfully reaching out to new youth groups. New members are enthusiastic about participating in LCOYs locally, fostering a sense of responsibility and engagement in addressing local environmental issues.



**Figure 11:** *The Power of Networks (Source: Authors)*

**Example of LCOY Mozambique organised by The Youth Platform for Climate Action, Centro Terra Viva Eduardo and Mondlane University:** This team supported by Save the Children and UNICEF managed to demonstrate and exhibit higher children and youth engagement in local policy processes. They were able to secure one of the largest numbers of signatures on a National Youth Statement, which was presented to the government and cooperation partners. The statement was signed by 300 children and young people at national level and endorsed by 580 young people at provincial level.

**Example of LCOY Kenya 2019-2022** - The impact of these conferences extends far beyond their duration. On continuity of LCOYs, in Kenya (LCOY Kenya) there has been

great success since inception of these conferences in 2019 under the theme “The role of transforming climate policies to local climate actions.” In 2020, the LCOY Kenya team decided to focus the LCOY on conducting a Kenyan NDC Youth Consultation with the Kenyan National Focal Point to the UNFCCC. This was important because it was the year Kenya was set to submit her updated NDC’s. It was pertinent to intentionally consider the benefit and the role of young people being considered in the implementation of the NDCs. By 2021, LCOY Kenya proved to be the largest and most supported LCOY in Kenya. It featured Understanding Climate Days, a High-level Intergenerational on Climate Change, a Youth Climate Innovation Festival and culminated with a Kenya Climate Live Concert (bringing the voices of grassroots youth climate advocates, innovators and artists to contribute to the climate discourse). In 2022, the LCOY Kenya team adopted a new theme, “Leveraging Youth in Creating Sectoral Climate Impact,” and deliberations focused on energy, food systems and sustainable public transport systems for Kenya.

## **Partnerships**

Tackling this global crisis requires concerted efforts and coordinated actions on an unprecedented scale. While individual actions and government policies play pivotal roles, it is increasingly evident that the power of partnerships in addressing climate change is indispensable. Partnerships have multifaceted power in driving alliances which results in progress for climate action resilience and innovation. The power lies in harnessing collective strength, pool resources, and aligned interests in the pursuit of common goals, which Whitaker (2022) calls the art of collaboration.

## **Example of LCOY Ghana**

Green Africa Youth Organisation (GAYO), a host of LCOY Ghana initiated a partnership with UNICEF for LCOY Ghana 2021, resulting in the formation of Youth Climate Council Ghana. This collaboration led to the launch of the ‘Regional Focal Point Program’, which ensured the inclusion of climate advocates from all 16 administrative regions of Ghana in climate change decision-making discussions. Through this partnership, Youth Climate Council was able to establish the ‘Advocacy Seed Fund Initiative’, providing seed grants to support the advocacy initiatives of youth advocates. This partnership further evolved, giving rise to the Youth Negotiator Training Program, aimed at training young individuals interested in climate governance, diplomacy, and negotiations. In the 2022 LCOY Ghana event, GAYO and Youth Climate Council penned a partnership with the National Youth Authority, fostering a strong relationship between these organisations. As a result, the National Youth Authority welcomed YCC as a committee member of the National Youth Action Group on Climate Change. These sustainable partnerships have been established through the platform of LCOY, enabling meaningful engagement and collaboration in the realm of climate action.

## **Capacity building and outcome document**

L/R/GCOYs share a common objective to provide capacity building to young people on UNFCCC processes and enabling them to engage in climate governance spaces. L/R/GCOYs

have provided training in climate change and policy advocacy, serving as a valuable exercise for youth climate policy action. As a requirement of all L/R/GCOYs is the output of a National/Regional/Global Youth Statement. The hosts of those conferences offered training and support from YOUNGO's Policy Team alongside the LCOY Working Group (WG). There is no common paradigm for the concept, structure and content of a national/regional youth statement. Each country/region would elaborate these details based on its own cultural heritage, social, environmental, economic context and reflecting the inputs of children and youth. However, guided by these steps for effective and impactful policy demands:

★ Scoping out national/regional/global climate-related frameworks and regulations to see what reforms need to be made.

Identifying national/regional/global climate organisations or bodies that can potentially be co-sponsors of the policy demands, or at the very least amplify the demands through mass media or social media platforms. ★

★ Identifying national/regional/global intergovernmental networks and organisations to whom the thematic policy demands can be made.

Possibly, conduct a literature review of any existing policy demands (particularly by youth) to prevent duplication and/or reinforce the demands. ★

★ Be concise and clear in the demand and specify the issue, the target, the responsible entity, and the call to action.

Designate a specific party responsible for the demand (for e.g UN agencies, parties, corporates, institutions). ★

★ Avoid redundancy in ideas between demands and sections of the youth statements.

Push for evidence-based demands using results from research, reports, grassroots and programs. ★

★ Write statements easy to lobby for and to adopt by negotiators.

**Figure 12:** Guidance for effective and impactful policy demands



RCOY, 2022 Asia-Pacific credits YOUNGO Communications

### 3.4.3 Evaluation of Youth Participation in L/R/GCOYs

The survey findings pertaining to respondents’ involvement in L/R/GCOYs present a varied and active participation history. It is apparent that the year 2023 was highly significant in terms of engagement. Some respondents participated in both 2022 and 2023, emphasising their ongoing involvement. There were even a few mentions of participation in the conferences in the year 2021.

#### Factors and barriers to participation in L/R/GCOYs

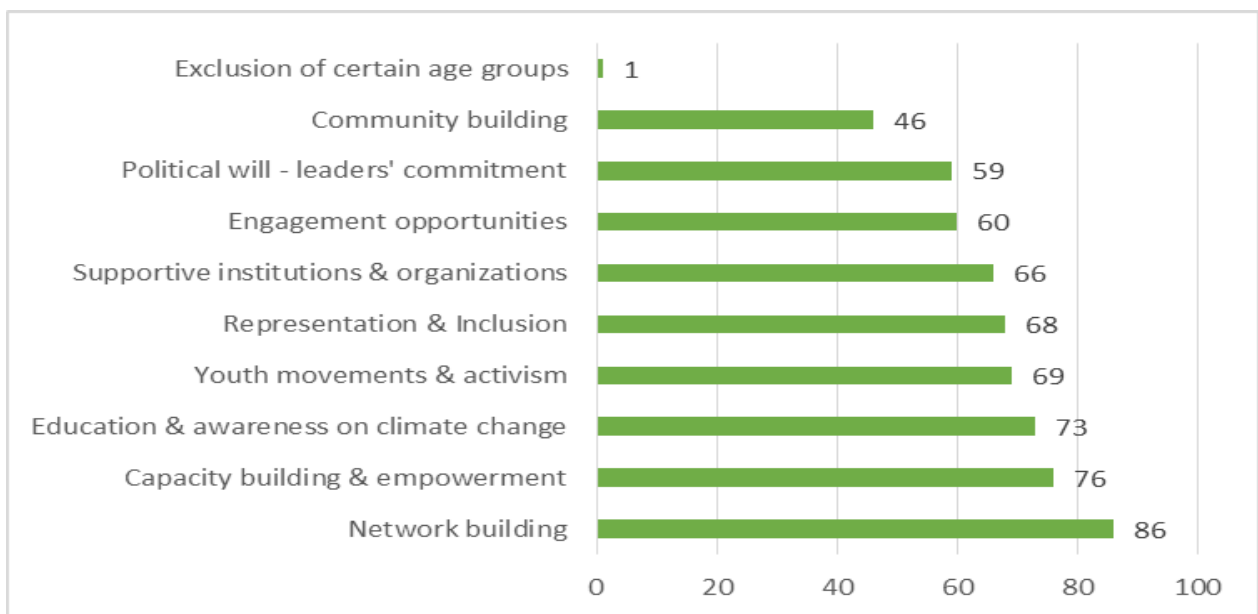
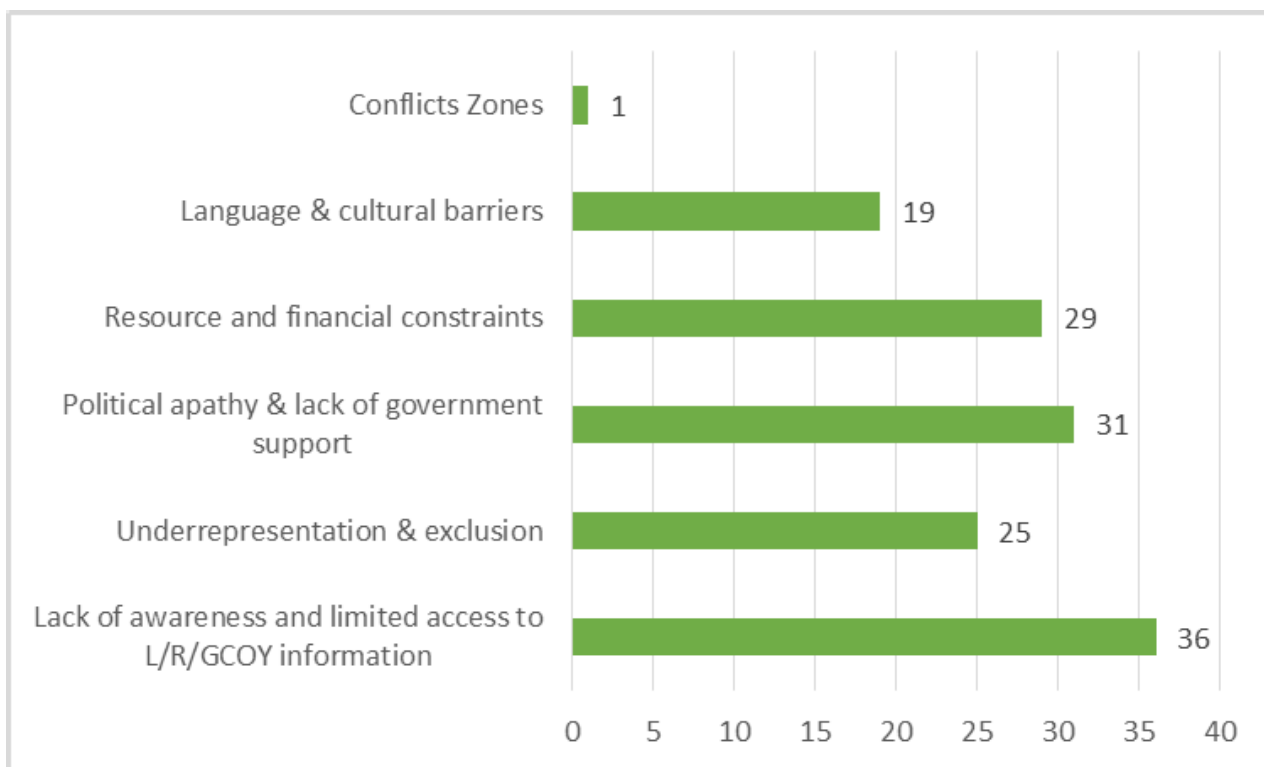


Figure 13: Factors influencing participation in L/R/GCOY processes





**Figure 14:** Barriers participation in L/R/GCOYs

The findings suggest that the main factors influencing young people’s participation in youth conferences are youth movements and activism, capacity building and empowerment, and representation and inclusion. This indicates that young people are actively creating opportunities for participation for everyone. Additionally, network building and community building are also significant motivators for young people to participate in these conferences. This is also a clear reflection of the principles underpinning youth participation which is *purposeful engagement*, where young people take on valued roles, addressing issues that are relevant to them, and influencing real outcomes.

The results above show that the main barriers to participation of young people in L/R/GCOY processes is resources and financial constraint, with 75.7% of respondents highlighting this as a reason. Lack of awareness and limited information about these processes is also a significant factor. Additionally, lack of political and government support, as well as language and cultural barriers, were mentioned as reasons for non-participation by 60% and 41.4% of respondents, respectively.

Kofi Annan rightfully posits that

“  
*The role of government in youth empowerment goes beyond providing resources; it also entails creating an enabling environment for young people to express their opinions, participate in decision-making, and contribute to policy development. Governments must be partners and allies in the journey of youth empowerment.*  
 ”

Efforts should be made to provide financial assistance and resources to young people to organise or participate in L/R/GCOY processes. The absence of systematic and structured resourcing to support youth participation can widen the under representation of youth perspectives. Not supporting youth climate conferences can lead to underrepresentation of youth perspectives in climate-related discussions, policies, and decision-making processes, excluding a generation who will live to experience the wrath of climate change. These

conferences have the potential to catalyse important changes in political systems and policy processes and prospects for climatic change.

One factor affecting the participation is cited as the absence of political and government support for youth conferences. L/R/GCOY organisers can play an important role in stimulating local action. It is crucial for political leaders and government officials to demonstrate their support for young people's participation in L/R/GCOY processes as they ultimately seek to influence policy from a youth perspective in one way or another.

## 3.5 An appraisal of the Evolution of L/R/GCOYs

As depicted above, the conferences of youth have been through cycles of evolution. The following sub section illustrates the evolution in organisation of the event, ensuring diversity, inclusion and continuity of the youth-led initiatives.

### 3.5.1 Organisation of L/R/GCOYs



**Funding:** Funding is at the heart of a successful conference. Whilst some conferences for youths have garnered support from Governments and UN agencies, the majority of them still cannot secure the funding. This funding challenge can impact various aspects of the event, including logistics, advocacy efforts, planning and overall execution. For instance, LCOY Mongolia 2023 struggled with limited resources, hindering the full realisation of their 'Environmental Leadership Program'. LCOY Nepal 2023's inclusive platform was constrained by financial limitations. Similarly for RCOY Asia and Pacific 2023 is fully virtual due to inability to secure the funding on time.

*In order to mitigate this challenge, organisers highlight the need for early and consistent engagement with potential sponsors, international organisations, and local businesses. For example in Zimbabwe, the UNDP office has pledged to support LCOY in recurrent years. This reflects the necessity for collaborative efforts in creating a comprehensive funding guide shared among conference organisers.*



**Commitment to sustainability:** A thorough evaluation was done on L/R/ GCOY partnerships, sponsors and funders and there was no sponsorship from fossil fuel entities or those that stand in conflict with the interest of young people and unethical environmental standards. The partners include UN Agencies, government entities, players in the private sector, CSOs and universities at the most. This signals a commitment to prioritising sustainability and avoiding promotion and/or association with industries that contribute to climate change. These youth climate conferences maintain their independence and credibility in addressing climate change issues. These conferences prioritise clean energy solutions, sustainable practices, and the voices of young activists concerned about the environment are also well reflected in their policy demands. However, this may not always be the case. Sometimes the partners want to have hands on the agenda of the event and make use of the platform for their own visibility and promotion.

*As recommended above, recurrent partnership is favourable for youth organisations. The organisers also need to ensure effective engagement of their partners in the process without impeding on influencing the programmes. Safeguarding measures in securing partnership should be reinforced.*



**Coordination:** The conference of youths are hosted by different groups in different countries (RCOY and GCOY), therefore the coordination differs. For example, the COY13 hosted in Germany was well coordinated between the volunteers and other stakeholders as the Country has a significant youth movement and volunteering culture. In other countries, youth can find it hard to juggle between their commitments and volunteering for the conferences. The finding mentions a lack of coherent coordination, indicating that the organisers faced difficulties in synchronising their efforts. This lack of coordination can lead to inefficiencies, confusion, duplication of tasks, and ultimately affect the overall success of the event. Such cases include small team sizes managing diverse responsibilities, huge tasks and others facing limitations in coordinating discussions, managing international travel logistics in time with a lack of streamlined communication.

*This calls for a centralised platform for collaboration, resource sharing, and knowledge transfer from one subteam to another. It also necessitates capacity building of the hosts and volunteers to allow smooth rolling of the conference.*



**Timeline of the event:** The conference of youth organisers are announced early to mid year, depending on the round of approval of applications. They are mandated to host the event prior to each COP. This gives them barely a few months to mobilise the resources. The results provided mention a very short timeline of execution. This indicates that the organisers in some cases had limited time to plan, execute and promote the event. Such time constraints can affect the overall event quality and the ability to reach the intended audience effectively.

*There is a need to reconsider the timeline for application and approval of the hosts such that they have ample time to roll out the event. It is also imperative to start reaching out to organisations and other stakeholders to discuss potential partnership well in advance. For example, a group of RCOY for Western Europe has been set up informally to start brainstorming in advance, knowing the challenges to mobilise resources.*



COY13, 2017 Bonn Germany

## Characteristics of LCOYs

To date LCOYs have no minor age restrictions but the maximum limit for participation is 35 years. LCOYs are conducted in multiple local languages implying that youth who do not have proficiency in the official languages used at COP and who would struggle to fully engage in discussions and contribute their perspectives, are accommodated through LCOYs.

Overtime, the underrepresentation of Global South youth is being addressed as well as the diverse representation of youth from different regions, backgrounds, and marginalised communities are catered for. LCOYs have reduced the disparities in resources, opportunities, and limited participation of youth from marginalised backgrounds to COY and COP. Young people are now able to influence policy decisions on a local level.

Measuring the impact: Upon review of LCOY reports the majority, 75% resoundingly indicated that they managed to meet their set out objectives. However, the metrics used were not expanded. For example, most of the organisers considered the conference's success based on the event attendance, comparing the stated number of participants during application proposal and actual event turnout. Though, most of them exceeded their targeted number, the evaluation of the event needs to be enhanced through more key performance indicators (KPIs) related to youth empowerment and especially on the influence on policies.

Young people should receive more guidance to measure their impact on influencing policy decisions, this entails introducing more KPIs and also a reporting practice from the policy makers on the outcome from youth engagement. The KPIs need to be decentralised to evaluate the local and regional impact as well. They also need to monitor the impact of the capacity building. Often, youth face time constraints post events to carry out the exercise. This necessitates more funding so that reporting and data collection can take place post events.

### 3.5.2 Inclusion and Diversity in L/R/GCOYs to influence policy decisions

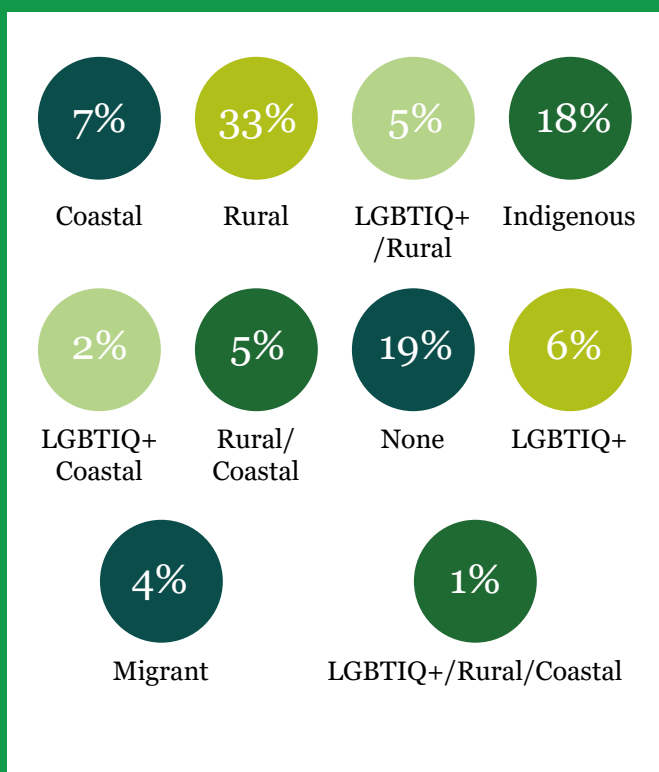
Diversity and inclusion are terms which are often used interchangeably however, their meanings are different (Shore et al. 2011). The review's conclusions demonstrate that conferences of youths uphold diversity and inclusivity.

**Inclusion:** The conferences of youth attract a diverse group of participants which suggest that efforts are being made to create an inclusive environment where individuals from various backgrounds feel welcome and valued. It is aligned with LCOY and GCOY principles Policy on inclusion and diversity. Over the years, organisers are fostering strategies to enhance inclusion by promoting the event to a wider audience, use of different language, keeping a percentage of the event for vulnerable groups and more.

**Diversity:** The presence of participants from diverse age groups, genders, abilities, and sexual orientations indicates that L/R/GCOYs are attracting individuals from different walks. This diversity can contribute to a more enriching experience for attendees, as it provides opportunities for the exchange of ideas, perspectives, and cultural understanding. The findings indirectly suggest that L/R/GCOYs are successful in cultivating an environment where people from different backgrounds feel comfortable and accepted.

One such instance among many others is LCOY Costa Rica 2022 reporting on the diversity of the participants.

LCOY Guatemala 2022 organised by Cumbre Nacional de la Juventud sobre el Cambio Climatico had participants belonging to 18 departments of the country, with 20% of Mayan<sup>7</sup> ethnic groups and people with disabilities, LCOY South Korea 2023 organised by World Vision Korea - Children’s Ambassador had the first ever entirely Local Conference of Children, organised by Africa Youth Initiative on Climate Change Zimbabwe, ERAT, YVE, Green Institute, Green Hut, IVYAM, Green Shango, SCAT, ZYBN, LCOY Zimbabwe 2022 meeting being graced by ministers of Junior / Children’s Parliament of Zimbabwe who affirmed the plight of children and youth in the face of climate change stresses and children forming part of the delegates, LCOY Egypt organised by ACT Sustainable had 6 cities under one LCOY banner for Egypt with diverse age group youth, with gender and geographical inclusion selection strategy to maintain equal access to participation amongst many others.



**Figure 15:** LCOY Costa Rica 2022, Diversity amongst participants (Source: LCOY Costa Rica 2022)

**Safeguarding measures** are also put place in the pre to post conference phase including participation informed consent for children from guardians, schools and, data protection, age appropriate and tailor made sessions, proper supervision with assigned responsible adults mostly teachers to provide guidance and support and safe physical environments.

**Accessibility assessments** are conducted to identify and address any physical barriers that might hinder the participation of persons with disabilities. These include wheelchair ramps and event rooms accessible facilities. This includes dietary requirements which are sought from participants during registration.

### 3.5.3 Networking and Collaboration

It is vital to map the network and collaboration that stems out from the conferences. There are several instances whereby long term actions have been rolled out by the conference organisers. The number of continuous networking and collaboration is however, not captured and evaluated intensively due to the monitoring and organisational constraints mentioned above. The box below puts forward examples of collaboration.

7. The majority of indigenous peoples in Guatemala are of Mayan descent. The Mayans of Guatemala are the only indigenous culture that constitutes a majority of the population in a Central American republic.



Armenia's first ever LCOY organised by UWC Dilijan College, managed to have a representation of young people from 20 different high schools. The participants took it upon themselves to raise awareness about the responsibility of every individual in solving the climate crisis through personal action and individual pledges. A year after, they check on students' individual progress and commitments to action.



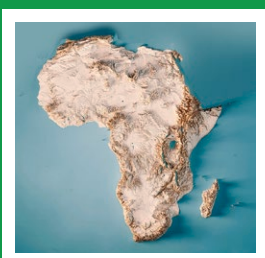
LCOY India 2022 organised by Centre for Environment Education, Enact Earth Foundation and Brahma Kumaris managed to establish multiple collaborations among attendees and their affiliated organisations for climate change interventions. Delegates further attended COY17 and COP27 with the exposure at LCOY, which also later led to formulation of an informal group of youth within India- called 'Indian Youth For Climate'. LCOY India also resulted in some LCOY delegates being able to have a bilateral with the Environment Minister at COP27 and shared LCOY inputs. The capacity building during LCOY India 2022, led to various sub-national chapters of LCOY's statement with policy recommendations submission to state-level events such as the 'Maha Youth for Climate Action Conference' led by LCOY India 2022 delegates.



The LCOY Mexico 2022 team managed to hold lobbying meetings with decision makers and promoted a climate change policy observatory producing a document on the NDCs with the perspective of Mexican youth.



LCOY Pakistan 2023 organised by Climate Fresk, Climate Fresk, NUST, PRCS and YECAP  
Fridays for Future Pakistan, Movers Program - Pakistan Chapter Climate Justice Centre and PakSarZameen was conducted right after the National Youth Policy Dialogue on Climate Change where to their advantage many of the policy paper authors were either the organisers or delegates/ participants of the LCOY. The policy recommendations were therefore highly impacted by the two day deliberations during the LCOY.



In terms of long-term impact of the conferences RCOY Africa 2022's biggest outcome was the Africa Youth Climate Action Plan (AYCAP) born out of consultations from all sub-Saharan African regions coordinated by the Africa Youth Mobilisation for COP (AYM4COP) a campaign of YOUNGO. The AYCAP serves as a monitoring mechanism by tracking the implementation of priority actions that have been enlisted in the action plan. It includes actions directed at governments as well as commitments made by African youth to advance climate action. Twenty-five actions (including both government and youth-led actions) have been selected for annual tracking and have been assigned a performance indicator.

### 3.5.4 Building Continuity of Conferences of Youth

Over the years synergies have been maintained across LCOYs of the same country. There has been a build up of youth groups merging on their own or being merged by the LCOY WG to form an organising team. Amongst them there are more experienced organisations that might have hosted a conference of youth to ensure continuity and knowledge sharing within the climate youth networks. These experienced hosts can provide guidance and support to the newly found youth groups, helping them navigate the complexities of organising a successful L/R/GCOY event and understanding the structures and processes of YOUNGO despite not being a member of the constituency. Similarly, for the GCOY, liaisons are appointed to bridge the gap between YOUNGO and the hosts. The liaisons are familiar with the event. Each GCOY is mandated to submit a report post event that is handed over to YOUNGO and passed onto the next hosts.



## 3 CASE STUDY

LCOY Chile 2021 (organised by Juventudes COP Chile) & 2022's (organised by Uno Cinco, Academia JovenesxFuturo, Diario Sostenible and Tremendas) goals included co-creating a declaration on climate change that represents the vision of Chilean youth. Following the first version of LCOY, carried out between August and October of 2021, the first LCOY Chile Statement was designed from online sessions regarding four topics with 30 petitions and related proposals. Throughout the 6 weeks of the Conference (including Pre-LCOY), a total of 10 training sessions and debates were held where there were 20 specialists from the public, private, academic and civil society sectors, as well as open participation instances to raise positions of the youth, with a total of 260 young people registered and around 150 participants who collaborated on the content of the National Youth Statement and for LCOY Chile 2022 a cross-evaluation was done of the proposals and fulfilled steps from 2022 to build upon previous efforts. This resulted in more than 350 young people coming from different territories coming together in order to validate and complete the statement.



GWP Press Conference at COP22

During the interview with the former YOUNGO FPs, numerous topics and concerns came to the forefront, offering valuable insights into the complex mechanisms and dynamics that impact the advancement of youth climate policy engagement within YOUNGO processes, particularly on events like COYs. These discussions delved into several areas of significance, including:

» **Challenges in identifying COY hosting organisations**

In order to effectively organise a successful LCOY, RCOY, and GCOY, it is imperative that the hosting organisations possess a solid grasp of YOUNGO's procedures and workings. In past instances, FPs have underscored the difficulties stemming from the failure to identify local organisations well-versed in YOUNGO's operations. This lack of understanding has disrupted the process, leading to delayed kick-off and limited time for resource mobilisation.

» **Mobilising resources**

Securing essential resources stands as a pivotal component in the organisation of GCOYs to ensure their success. While it would be ideal for GCOYs to maintain a high degree of independence from governments to prevent potential biases in youth statements, the reality has often seen governments generously supporting these events. Prominent examples encompass the Netherlands government's sponsorship of young participants during COY 5 in Copenhagen in 2009, the French government's backing for COY 11 in Paris, France in 2015, and COY 12 in Marrakech in 2016, where the Moroccan government offered complimentary meals and facilitated a venue at Cadi Ayyad University. Additionally, the German government provided assistance during COY 13 in 2017, the Scottish and United Kingdom government supported the participation of one hundred youths at COY 16 in 2021 and the Egyptian government supported COY 17 in 2022 by offering a venue for the event. Among the critical resources that need to be secured at the earliest stages of planning are accommodations, suitable venues, and financial support for participants. Additionally, other vital services such as internet access, resource persons capable of providing insights into both YOUNGO and UNFCCC processes, inclusive catering, and personnel for safeguarding are highlighted as crucial aspects of successful GCOY organisation.

» **Partnership for COYs**

According to former FPs, it was inferred that establishing partnerships is crucial and can, at times, be the deciding factor in the success of an event. Over the previous years, YOUNGO has collaborated with various UN agencies, civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), constituencies, and other movements that have also contributed to resource mobilisation for GCOY. Nonetheless, in conversations with various FPs, it was acknowledged that funding and support may be contingent on the relationships FPs establish with different entities, rooted in trust, rather than solely on YOUNGO's status as a UNFCCC constituency. This dynamic has had an impact on the mobilisation of resources for the constituency since FPs typically serve for just one year. On the other hand, some organisations seek to leverage the GCOY platform without offering any support or rather offer minimum support for their own benefit and not necessarily to COY as a platform.



» **YOUNGO procedures and processes**

YOUNGO's policies unequivocally state that the constituency will not entertain any support from Fossil Fuel Companies. Nevertheless, as many companies are in the process of shifting towards renewable energy, YOUNGO's policies have not been updated to incorporate this transitional phase. Consequently, significant funding offers from companies that were formerly associated with fossil fuels but are now transitioning have been declined. The decision-making process within YOUNGO, which relies on consensus, has been adversely affected by this situation. Nevertheless, to prevent greenwashing, this has heightened the constituency's awareness, serving as a notable illustration of YOUNGO's careful approach within the realm of youth-led climate voluntary initiatives.

» **GCOY hosts to take full ownership of the event**

The success of GCOY is highly dependent on the complete ownership assumed by local organisations. It has been observed that FPs do not determine the success of GCOY, as their responsibility is relatively limited due to the flat structure of YOUNGO. Moreover, recent findings have revealed that local organisations can play a pivotal role in the success of GCOY, especially when they are empowered and equipped with the necessary skills, including but not limited to project management, event organising, financial literacy, partnership engagement, and strong interpersonal relations. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize and support the potential of local organisations in order to maximise the impact of GCOY.

» **Lack of understanding on the function of constituency**

Although certain constituencies are registered organisations to the UNFCCC, YOUNGO is a highly dynamic and diverse community. It encompasses not only registered youth organisations to the UNFCCC but also extends its welcome to any young people interested in understanding the UNFCCC process. However, it has taken time for the presidency, parties, and other organisations to fully grasp the intricacy and dynamics of YOUNGO. *Regrettably, this lack of understanding has resulted in the duplication of efforts and the bypass of vital information*, leading to challenges within the youth sphere. As an illustration, during COP 26, the COP Presidency received two distinct youth statements—one from the YOUNGO constituency and the other from Youth4Climate. Another example is when a presidential team decided to establish a youth advisory board on climate change, which overlapped with the work that YOUNGO had been tirelessly pursuing for more than a decade. These instances underscore the necessity for enhanced coordination and collaboration among various youth organisations and stakeholders within the UNFCCC process.

» **Red flags on wellbeing during the process**

Throughout all the interviews conducted with former Focal Points, they consistently emphasised the prevalence of burnout, fatigue, and mental health challenges. These issues were portrayed not only as affecting them personally but also as widespread challenges faced by the majority of young individuals in the climate space. This arises from the extensive hours dedicated to planning events, coordinating activities, and mobilising resources throughout the year in parallel to their personal and professional commitments. The demanding nature of these responsibilities is further compounded by active participation in both the COY, COP and recently through the increasing number of regional climate weeks. It is laudable to see the growing number of youth initiatives and engagements by diverse organisations. However, these still rests on the shoulders of a limited number of youth. YOUNGO often faces lack of capacity to champion those initiatives which are harboured by third parties coupled with unremunerated roles and lack of resources at their disposal. The relentless schedule leaves little time for individuals to pause, rejuvenate, or strike a balance. Consequently, this

exhaustive commitment not only takes a toll on personal well-being but also significantly impacts social, academic and professional aspects of life for many individuals in the climate space. Therefore, it is strongly advisable to promote awareness among young people about the significance of mental health and the importance of striking a balance, with particular emphasis on YOUNGO as a constituency.

## 3.7 Recommendations

Although an increasing influence of youth has been observed in the context of climate change in particular, their involvement in such policy networks has been under-researched so far. We therefore address this research gap by examining youth policy influence forming around the UNFCCC processes as well as YOUNGO as the official children & youth constituency. Based on these findings, the following recommendations can be made to address the non-participation of young people in L/R/GCOY processes:



### 1. Increase access to resources and financial support:

Efforts should be made to provide financial assistance and resources to young people who want to organise and participate in L/R/GCOY processes. This could include scholarships, grants, or funding opportunities specifically targeted at L/R/GCOYs.

### 2. Enhance political and government support:

It is crucial to engage political leaders and government officials to demonstrate their support for young people's participation in L/R/GCOY processes. This can be done through advocacy efforts, lobbying, and creating platforms for dialogue between young people and decision-makers.

### 3. Address language and cultural barriers:

Steps should be taken to overcome language and cultural barriers that hinder young people's participation. This can involve providing translation services and promoting cultural diversity and inclusivity within L/R/GCOY processes.

### 4 Delegates, community and stakeholder Feedback:

Gather feedback from delegates, stakeholders, sponsors, partners, and local communities to understand their perspectives on the conference's impact. Mandatory post event survey to be incorporated as another measuring tool for L/R/GCOYs to explore areas of improvement

### 5. Enhance information dissemination:

There should be a focus on raising awareness about L/R/GCOY processes among young people. This can be achieved through targeted outreach campaigns, educational programs, and the use of various communication channels such as social media, websites, and community events.

### 6. Documentation and proper handing over :

This begins from one Focal Point to another, one L/R/GCOY Liaison to another, essentially to pass on relevant information to the new person in that role. This ensures continuity in the work being done with minimal disruptions or loss of productivity, shares the necessary background information, and context required to perform duties effectively. Above all, it allows for knowledge retention on institutional cognizance. Similarly, the documentation process for the conferences being organised should be reinforced and structured such that further stocktaking could take place.

## ***Acknowledged limitations***

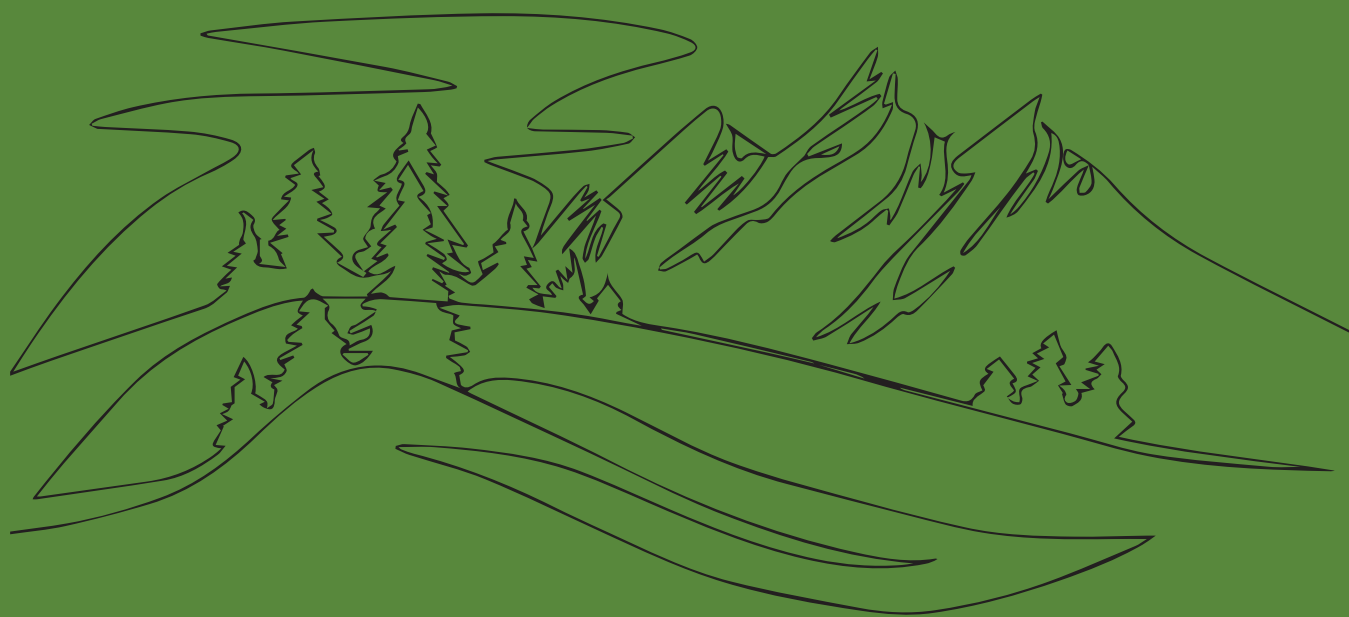
**1. Submission of reports:** Due to the fact that not all confirmed LCOYs , RCOYs and GCOYs submitted their reports and National/Regional Youth Statements and organisation report of the conferences, it was decided to focus on the available submitted works. This report therefore only includes information on reports submitted through set and designated channels.

**2. Identification of cases:** During the desk review stage it became evident that some out of others did not adhere to the provided LCOY reporting template and otherwise made use of their own reporting structure. This would then limit the standardised identification of cases that can be easily picked out through the required reporting template. It is likely that additional similar cases exist but were not found during the literature search.



*YOUNGO members at Africa Climate Week 2022, Gabon*

# **Chapter 4: State of Youth Statements and Policy Inputs by Youth**



## 4.1 Background

Youth have not been given due recognition in climate policies so far. A report by UNICEF (2019) shows that only about 40 percent of NDCs contain direct references to children or youth. While youth might be under-represented in climate policies and commitments, they demand for a significant shift in the process. Over the years, YOUNGO has been laying the ground for youth to provide inputs in the policy processes at COP and beyond. The process is carried out through a holistic way whereby youth are invited to make their voice heard through the local, regional and global conference of youth.

Youth can frame and inform their narratives with the latest available science and data and align with UNFCCC work programmes and negotiations, which helps to communicate their demands to the broader society and, above all, inform the political debate. In doing so, young people require a multi-level coordination approach pioneering from the local to the regional and, ultimately, to the global level. This approach also requires working with a range of actors at national and regional levels such as governments, businesses and other actors (UNDP, 2022). The process of gathering policy inputs from youth has evolved over the years and includes building the deliberative capacity of youth on key thematic and policy making in order to promote reflexivity as well as wider social debates on the narratives. This process also encompasses the democratic representation and inclusion of youth from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, ages, areas of expertise and interests, and more. Over the years, youth have been advocating for just and ambitious climate targets, and most importantly, to be included in decision making. Young people's focus has been on the systemic justice that needs to improve so as not to hinder youth participation and inclusion in the policy process. The lobbying is also centred on long term and future oriented policies.

The Global Youth Statement (GYS) is a key policy document that synthesises the collective demands of children and youth across the world, represented by YOUNGO. The collected and unified demands of global youth are integrated into the documents agendas, actions and commitments. Youth constantly call for an inclusive approach to climate governance that acknowledges the disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on their demographic as well as the need for systemic and radical action. The GYS is a product of YOUNGO through the Policy WG. The WG's mandate primarily rests on the GYS which is produced through input collection from diverse stakeholders and a holistic process described below.



*YOUNGO members pausing for a pic*

## 4.2 Aims

YOUNGO has achieved 17 Conferences of Youth (COY) so far, with COY18 scheduled to take place on the margins of COP28. Along the way, local COYs and Regional COYs have taken place to scale youth engagement in providing policy demands on the road to COP. So far, however, this crucial mechanism for seeking policy inputs from youth has not been appraised. The objectives of this chapter are to map the evolution of the GYS and analyse the role of YOUNGO Policy Team.

## 4.3 Methods of Data Collection

**Focus group:** Data was collected by consulting the members of the Policy Team for the past three years (2021-2023) during two separate focus groups. In total, around 10 individuals took part in the process. The focus groups investigated the role of the policy working group, the mechanisms adopted to gather input from youth globally, measuring the impact of the GYS and the recommendations to improve on the process. On average, the team members had one year of experience with the WG. Experienced members of the group who had been participating since 2021 also took part in the research.

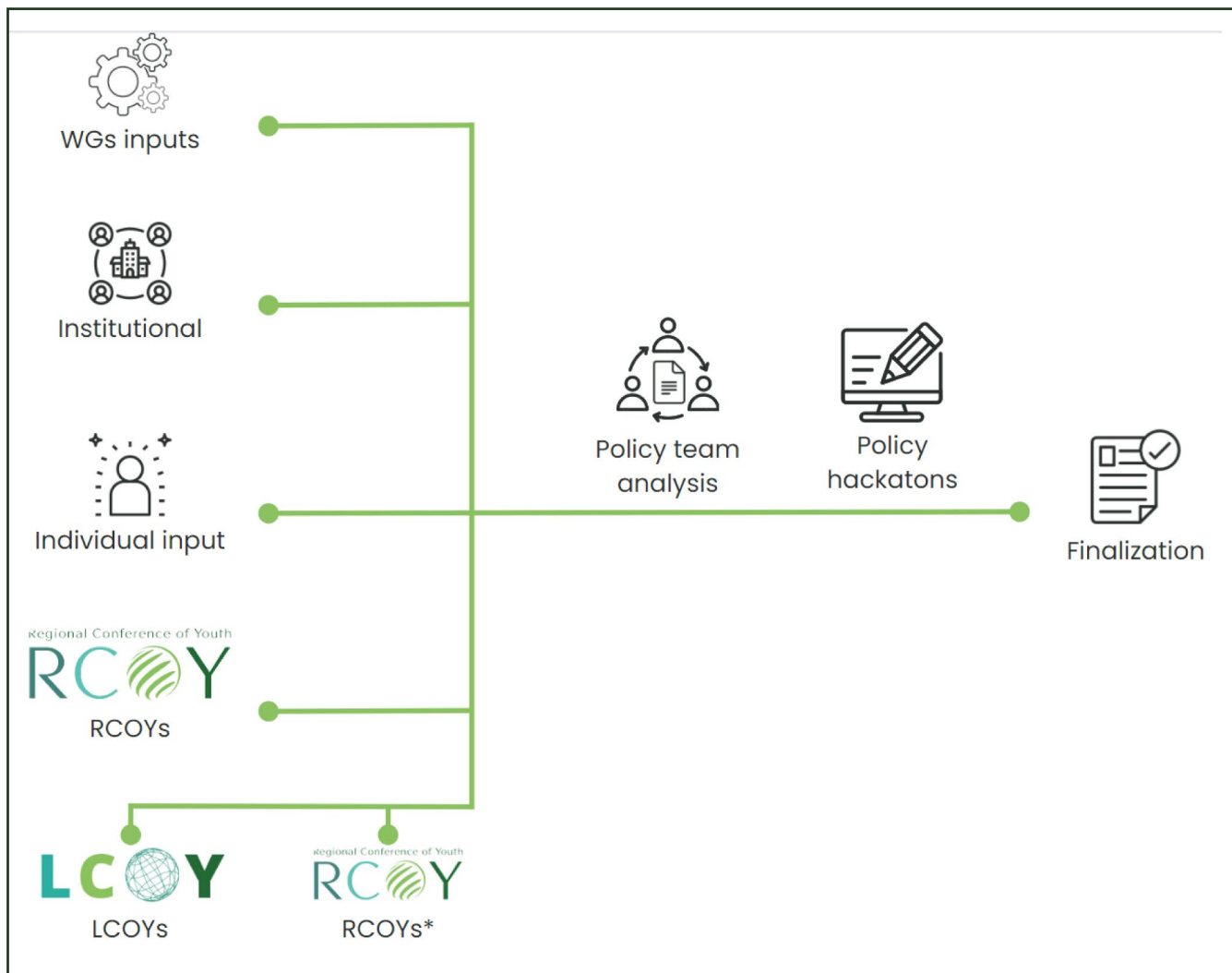
**Desk review:** The youth statements published by YOUNGO through the COY were analysed for COY13 to COY17, five years in total. The process aims specifically at identifying the transition from 'Youth Statement' to 'Global Youth Statement'. The five most recent youth statements/policy documents were reviewed given that not all of the statements had been archived.

## 4.4 Appraising the Role of YOUNGO Policy Team

**Spotlight on the strategy for policy input collection:** Prior to COY16, i.e 2021, the policy input collection was mainly carried out by YOUNGO WGs, the core coordination team in YOUNGO (known as BLT) and the participants of Global COY. This process certainly suffered from drawbacks in terms of inclusion and representation of youth voices.

“ The wave of change in the policy input collection as from COY16 and beyond

”



*Photo adapted from YOUNGO Policy Team (2023)*

Starting with COY16, the process follows a bottom-up approach for collecting inputs from local and regional conferences. Those conferences take place on a national and regional level. In addition to these, institutions (mainly youth organisations), the different working groups from YOUNGO and young individuals are invited to provide their inputs. Once the inputs have been received through a survey or reports being shared, the policy team synthesises the inputs and hosts hackathons<sup>8</sup> open to the public and YOUNGO members to participate in the final draft of each theme on climate change.

*8. Hackathons refer to multiple three hours (or more) sessions hosted virtually to compile the inputs gathered. The sessions are coordinated by YOUNGO Policy Team and Working Group and are open to any youth to join.*







	<b>Working Group Inputs</b>	<b>Institutional and Individual Inputs</b>	<b>LCOYs and RCOYs Inputs</b>	<b>Hackathons</b>
<b>Tool used</b>	Google Document share to gather inputs and meetings held to synthesise within each working group	Form shared through YOUNGO mailing list and social media. Form breakdown in multiple themes for the GYS.	Each L/RCOY comes with their own statement and is ultimately uploaded to a form shared with them.  Policy team synthesises the statements received.	Virtual sessions of three hours were carried out twice for each theme to synthesise each theme for the GYS through Google Document. 18 breakout groups were carried out
<b>Duration</b>	Call open for around 1.5 months but it compiles the work done over the year as well.	Form shared over a month widely and takes around 10 minutes to fill in per theme.	Form shared near around August-September and events taking place from July until COP.	3 hours virtually held over two different days and time zones.
<b>Key figures per GYS</b>	Over 20 working group inputs are being collected annually since 2016.	Over 500 individual inputs collected through the form in 2023.	Over 50 statements from L/RCOYs are shared to be included in the GYS this year.	More than 100 youth participants in each hackathon.
<b>Forward looking process</b>	Enhance cross working group alignment on the GYS	Wider capacity building and sharing of resources to improve quality of inputs being received.	Capacity building of organisers on curating sessions related to policy inputs.	Include translation during the sessions.  Wider reach to have more youth equipped with the technical knowledge involved.

**Table 2:** Mechanisms for Input Collection from Youth (Source: Authors)



## Improvements of the process over the past three years:

The following maps the improvement of the process:

	<p><b>Timeline:</b> Previously, the GYS was shared during COY and ultimately lobbied with Parties during COP. This year (2023), the draft GYS is being shared during the Pre-COP event to be able to influence the process.</p>
	<p><b>Outcome documents:</b> Alongside the GYS, a condensed version is shared widely. The latter is a shorter version with summary of demands from each thematic. A negotiation aligned table is also being produced this year to put forward the key demands from each negotiation track from COP.</p>
	<p><b>Language:</b> First the form for individual inputs is open for submission in different languages. Second, the team members have benefitted from training on UN Language. This knowledge was transmitted to the wider youth community to ensure strong and aligned language is used to effectively out forward the policy demands.</p>
	<p><b>Internal coordination:</b> The presence of experienced members helps in the knowledge transfer and the transmission of the experience of building up the process to others. There was early and enhanced coordination within the COY team which led to more actions on the run up to COY18 and COP28. The themes to be included in the GYS were finalised based on intensive consultation with the whole YOUNGO constituency in 2022.</p>
	<p><b>Capacity building:</b> Sessions were hosted to empower LCOYs and RCOYs organisers on drafting policy demands on different levels. The working groups in YOUNGO also benefited from additional support from the Policy WG to work around the timeline, language and aligning to the negotiation tracks at COP.</p>
	<p><b>Collaborative efforts:</b> The GYS process has benefited from wider collaboration from LCOYs and RCOYs. For example, some of the demands from RCOYs have been shared during Regional Climate Weeks, increasing the voice of youth and lobbying on a regional level. Further, UNICEF has collaborated to share their data from the 'U-Report' that provides snapshot findings on the impact of climate change on children and youth. Those findings have been integrated in the GYS to amplify the stance of the policy demands.</p>

The inaugural international youth statement on climate change was a milestone event that took place during COP 11 held in Montreal, Canada in 2005. This marked the beginning of the COY on climate change, and the statement was titled **‘Our Climate, Our Challenge, Our Future International Youth Declaration.’** While specific details about the consultation process leading up to this declaration are not readily available, it is worth noting that this key document contained clear outcomes and explicit requests from youth. These requests, which were the result of collaborative efforts by youth representatives, set the stage for meaningful actions over the subsequent five years. One of the pivotal demands outlined in the inaugural youth statement was the establishment of a permanent and funded representation of youth in the international climate negotiation process. This demand gained momentum and ultimately led to the formal recognition of YOUNGO in 2011, marking an important step towards youth engagement in climate discussions.

Two years later, youth gathered in Bali for COP 13 and presented a **‘high-level youth statement.’** This presentation came with a unique challenge as there was no official constituency for children and youth at the time. Nevertheless, an exception was made by the UNFCCC secretariat, emphasising the growing recognition of the importance of youth voices in the climate change dialogue. In subsequent years, during COY 5 in Copenhagen, young people again played an active role in climate discussions. After several days of policy briefings and capacity building, a comprehensive youth statement titled **‘Youth Declaration on Climate Change’** was published and formally submitted to the Presidency.

The data collected highlighted a notable lack of consistency in the publication of youth statements or COY reports from different youth gatherings. Several factors may have contributed to this inconsistency, with some of the reasons being;

- 1 Funding - the limited availability of sufficient funding to enable youth participation and meaningfully contribute into the process,
- 2 Technical capacity - understanding the negotiations process requires massive capacity building and development, and
- 3 Access to technology - internet availability for live streaming, virtual participation and cloud storage for documents like the youth statement, reports and other documents.

It is important to note that the youth statement has undergone changes over the years with a certain level of consistency in terms of its development starting from 2014. Additionally, the table in Annex A below illustrates the various names that have been given to the statement since 2011, which may symbolise the diversity or self-identification of youth involved in climate activism and advocacy. It is worth emphasising that from COY 1 in 2011 to COY 17 in 2022, there has been no standardised format for the youth statements in terms of agenda items, layout, nomenclature, and visual design. This demonstrates the dynamic and adaptable nature of the youth climate movement as it continues to expand and adjust to the evolving landscape of climate action.

## Avenues to improve the GYS

1

Though it has been the norm to submit the GYS at COY and to the COP presidency, this process does not give much time for policy makers to review and consider the youth demands highlighted in the GYS, making the GYS less impactful. YOUNGO might consider changing its strategy and submit the GYS at the Subsidiary Bodies (SBs), this gives more time to parties to review and ample time for YOUNGO to lobby for the GYS till COP.

2

YOUNGO should consider the establishment of a standardised template for the GYS. Although there are elements of consistency between the GYS of COY 16 and COY 17, this consistency may not be sustained in the future, given the inevitability of shifts within the policy team. Nonetheless, the development of a uniform template for the GYS is strongly recommended.

3

YOUNGO should consider establishing an implementation strategy for action points in the GYS and those reflected on cover decisions that delineates specific responsibilities and focuses on garnering support for the actual execution of initiatives, rather than just seeking backing for policies related to youth.



As depicted above, the document comprising the youth demand has undergone significant transition since 2021 (COY16 and COP26). This section identifies the transition by comparing the five latest youth statements produced, i.e from COY13 to COY17. This section identifies the gap in the process pre 2021 and does not explicitly question the essence of the policy demands. By doing so, the laudable effort of the transition process is recognised to strengthen the position of youth in the climate policy space.

Pre 2021		2021 onwards
On average 18 pages each year.	Length of the document	Over 70 pages in 2021 and over 100 pages in 2022. Publication of summary of the demands of 10 pages.
Carried out mainly on ground during COY and with the Working Group.	Input collection	Follows the rigorous process by collecting inputs in advance from LCOYs/RCOYs, individuals, institutions, Working Group and COY attendees.
Ranged between 8 to 12 and for some years, the presentation of demands were not categorised under negotiation tracks.	Thematics on climate change	Negotiation aligned thematics built in consultation with the constituency. Comprises of 15 thematics on average.
The previous documents were inconsistent with the thematics, structure of the report and process for gathering inputs. For e.g for COY14, a more comprehensive statement has been produced.	Consistency	Consistency maintained over the process and the thematics adopted as well as for the structure.



Pic 8 YOUNGO Policy Team in action 2023



### Partnership

Building partnership is strained due to in-house capacity constraints from the Policy Team. However, the GYS should see more collaboration from like minded institutions to deepen research on the nexus between youth and relevant climate policies.



### Evaluation and Monitoring

The process currently lacks evaluation and monitoring mainly due to capacity constraints. However, the youth calls for an evaluation by mapping the number of interventions produced from the GYS and delivered during diverse sessions at COP and beyond, the impact of capacity building sessions, the impact per negotiation track and work programmes.



### Continuity

The evaluation should be coupled with learned lessons on the process and handed over to the next Policy Team such that it can be improved. It was also shared that members should be part of the Policy Team for at least two years as to ensure knowledge transfer and continuity of actions.



### Capacity Building

The process can be leveraged if capacity building is extended to local and regional level. Examples include publication of toolkits to gather policy demands and also empowering the youth community on lobbying with Parties on their respective level, especially to capture the input from vulnerable groups.



### Awareness and Outreach

There is a need to scale the coordination with youth organisations and climate activists to amplify the policy demands coming from the youth. The communication and lobbying strategy should be strengthened in order to access more Parties and negotiating groups. The demands should also be disseminated well ahead of COP and socialised with Parties when Party Groups are negotiating their positions.



### Funding

The Policy Team constantly faces constraints to attend key events such as SBs, Pre COP and COP itself. The availability of funding to increase on ground presence is crucial for the lobbying of the GYS.



# Chapter 5: Youth Inclusion in Climate Policy Processes by Parties

## 5.1 Background

As previously discussed, youth have been participating in UNFCCC processes since the early days of the COPs (UNFCCC, 2010). However, young people's participation has traditionally been side-lined, away from major events and decision-making spaces. Moreover, it has been the youth themselves who have been driving youth participation, supported by some NGOs, and national governments. More recent phenomena, including youth party delegates, and youth civil society representation in Party decision-making has yet to be thoroughly explored. The YST sets out to investigate youth inclusion by Parties, specifically in the development of climate policies at the local, national, regional and international level and its findings are discussed in this chapter.

## 4 CASE STUDY



### Youth Delegates and Youth Civil Society Representatives

#### *Youth Delegates*

In 2010, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) launched the UN Youth Delegate Programme with the aim of enhancing youth participation by UN Member States. Youth Delegates are becoming more popular with Parties to the UNFCCC as government delegations realise the value that young people add to international conferences and negotiation processes, including in the negotiations, ensuring continuity of the follow up UNFCCC work programmes and building the on ground capacity of delegations at the COPs. As a member of the official Party delegation, Youth Delegates can speak on behalf of their governments including as part of internal discussions, in meetings with other Parties, and in negotiation processes. Youth Delegates may receive additional education and training to fulfil the requirements of the role, which may include technical skills training, for example negotiation, and other relevant training.

#### *Youth as Representatives of Civil Society*

Youth have a unique voice to offer to the solution of climate change and their views and perspectives are hugely significant to the policy process. There are many ways in which Parties can engage with youth civil society voices in their work on climate agendas, for example through one-off consultations with youth or through a process of longer engagement such as a national youth council. When national governments engage with Youth as civil society representatives, listen to their views and take them on board, young people can help shape new narratives that challenge the status quo, thus contributing to new developments towards a sustainable future.



*YOUNGO members protecting the mangrove in the Philippines 2022*

## 5.2 Aims

This study aims to provide a greater understanding on youth inclusion by Parties in climate policy processes by investigating how Parties are engaging with and including youth in the development of climate policies, identifying the key challenges that Parties are facing in including youth in key climate policy processes and, sharing a forward looking agenda for youth inclusion in climate policy processes.

## 5.3 Methods of Data Collection

The information in this chapter contains the consolidated findings from a short survey (referred to as a checklist) and interviews carried out with Parties. UNFCCC National Focal Points and ACE Focal Points<sup>9</sup> were invited to fill in the checklist and participate in an interview. Data collection took place over a period of two months (between September - October 2023), including during the following Regional Climate Weeks (CWs): Africa CW, Middle East and North Africa CW, Latin America and the Caribbean CW and Asia-Pacific CW. To assist the researchers in connecting to Party representatives, an email communication was sent to YOUNGO members via the YOUNGO mailing list requesting help with connecting to Parties.

**Checklist:** The purpose of the checklist was to assess the different mechanisms and strategies being used by governments and/or Party delegations to facilitate youth inclusion in climate policy processes, analyse the role of youth in climate policies (such as NDCs, GST, climate policies at national or regional level), understand what support is being provided for youth to attend COP and regional climate weeks (financial and capacity building programme), and appraise the constraints and opportunities that can be leveraged towards strengthening youth inclusion. The checklist was built from ongoing challenges being put forward by members of YOUNGO over the years. Those challenges are constantly highlighted in speeches, discussions and statements circulated amongst members. The questions were mostly quantitative, with some qualitative follow up questions. At the end of the checklist, Parties were asked whether they would like to participate in a follow-up interview to share more about their example of youth inclusion. Almost 70% of Parties' respondents requested a follow-up interview with the researchers.

**Interviews:** The interviews provided an opportunity for the research to gain a deeper understanding of Party-specific examples and map out the broader landscape of youth inclusion in climate policy processes. The interview questions provided a space for Parties to further elaborate on their specific examples of youth inclusion and, on average, lasted 45 minutes. The majority of interviews were held virtually and in English, while a small number were conducted in person during regional climate week conferences.

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9. By Decision 17/CMA.1, Parties decided that the focal points nominated under Article 6 of the Convention will also serve as focal points under Article 12 of the Paris Agreement and will be referred to as Action for Climate Empowerment focal points in the context of the Paris Agreement. <https://unfccc.int/topics/education-youth/national-ace-focal-points#Mandate>



**Respondents:** 31 Parties in total participated in the YST process, of which 24 completed the checklist, 12 participated in an interview. 5 Parties completed both the checklist and participated in an interview. All regions achieved balanced representation between 5-8 Parties, excluding Asia-Pacific which had representation from only 2 countries. For a full list of Parties respondents refer to Annex B. The inputs were garnered from diverse representatives, most of whom were engaged with Parties at Officer level. The research also caught the attention of some Head of Delegations and Advisers to Ministers who provided their inputs directly. Meaningful contributions to the data collection process were also made by some ACE Focal Points.

Region		Profile of respondent/ interviewees		Way of responses	
Africa	8	ACE Focal Point	7	Checklist	24
MENA	6	Director Level	3	Interviews	12
Europe	7	Adviser to Minister	6		
Latin America and The Caribbean	6	Officer	9		
Asia and Pacific	2	Youth Representative	6		
North America	2				

**Table 4:** Demographic information about the respondents

## 5.4 Key Findings

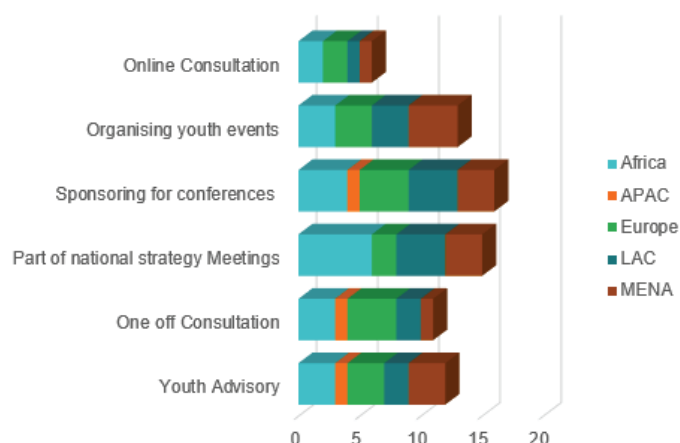
### 5.4.1 Mechanisms for engaging youth in climate policy processes

Youth inclusion in the development of climate policy can be strengthened through the use of engagement mechanisms (Thew, 2018). While the types of mechanisms may differ across Parties, owing to a variety of different factors, the end goal is typically to be able to provide a means for governments and other stakeholders to connect with youth, gather youth inputs and ensure that the inputs of youth are factored into decision-making.

**Types of mechanisms for youth inclusion:** The checklist provided a list of the most common mechanisms for facilitating youth inclusion, which included a dedicated Youth Advisory Group (YAG) or panel, consultations with youth representatives, inviting youth to be part of national strategy meetings, and sponsoring youth participation in conferences.

Mechanisms of youth inclusion	Usage by Parties
Youth Advisory Group/Panel	12
One off consultations with youth	11
Including youth in national strategy meetings	15
Sponsoring youth participation in conferences	16
Organising youth events	13
Online surveys & consultations	7
No specific youth involvement	2

**Table 5 : Mechanisms for Youth Inclusion**



**Figure 16: Mechanisms for youth inclusion by region**

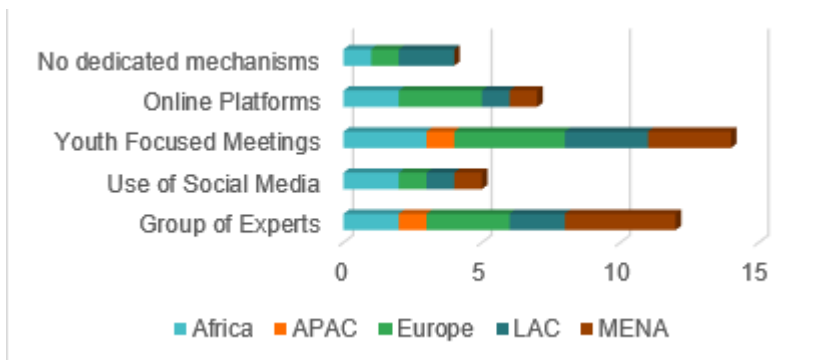
**Snapshot on the numbers:** The most commonly adopted mechanism for including youth in climate policy processes is the sponsorship of youth participation at climate conferences (including regional and international) with 16 Parties out of 20 engaged in this practice. The second most popular mechanism utilised by Parties for youth inclusion is the inclusion of youth in national strategy meetings (15), followed by organising youth events (13) and setting up a dedicated Youth Advisory Group (YAG) or panel of Youth Experts (12). Based on the data gathered, on average, countries in the Africa region are utilising different mechanisms for youth inclusion more than other regions.

### Youth inclusion by Parties has been exemplified by The Netherlands:

In The Netherlands regular contact takes place between youth representatives and the government's Climate Policy Officers through the creation of the Youth Environment Council (Jongerenmilieuraad). The Jongerenmilieuraad enables youth to provide the government with structural inputs for their national environmental program. Through this mechanism, 75 young people have been structurally involved and the government has so far collected the opinions of 1750 young people from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, the government has subsidised the Youth Environment Council for the next four years ensuring the continuation of youth inputs for the coming few years.

**Strategies to gather youth inputs:** Reaching out to youth to form connections and on-going collaborations is an important part of facilitating youth inclusion. Thus, developing strategies to facilitate this and gather youth inputs can be a valuable exercise for Parties to incorporate into the development of climate policy. Additional benefits include providing spaces for discussion and dialogue exchange between government and youth to facilitate trust-building and enabling youth to develop their understanding on the activities of their government as well as engage with and learn about important issues being discussed at the national level.

Strategy for youth engagement	Usage by Parties
Group of Experts	12
Use of Social Media	5
Youth Focused Meetings	14
Online Platforms	7
No dedicated mechanisms	4



**Table 6:** Strategies for youth engagement

**Figure 17:** Strategies for youth engagement by regional level

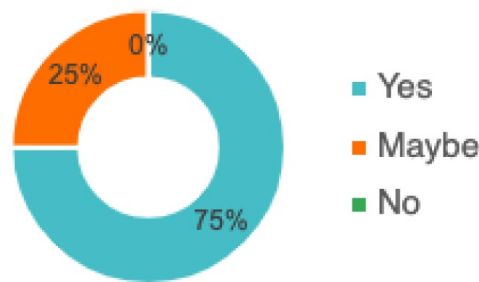
**Snapshot on the numbers:** The most common strategy that Parties are using to engage with youth is through hosting youth-focused meetings (14). The least common is by use of social media (5), which is surprising given the popularity of social media among the youth of today as a tool for communication and, increasingly, activism. This has been reinforced by Scorce (2022) that mapped the Greta Thunberg’s effect on social media and how it influenced the youth. Furthermore, social media platforms and applications are constantly upgrading and experimenting with different ways of facilitating engagement and interaction of and between its billions of users (Kolleck and Schuster, 2022).

Some examples of youth engagement strategies shared by Parties to include Finland which is delivering workshops designed specifically to reach Indigenous Sámi youth, Spain where Citizen Climate Assemblies are used as an opportunity to meet with youth climate activists and The Netherlands where online platforms are used for on-going idea submissions from youth. Similarly, in Sudan the youth of social media is prevailing to mobilize youth for actions

**Frequency of engaging youth:** There are key moments in the global climate policy processes where important decisions are made and policy is developed, including during the SBs, the COPs, and in the development of NDCs. For youth inclusion to be truly meaningful, it is important to align engagement with these key moments as much as possible.

Frequency of gathering youth input	
Annually	11
Bi Annually	7
Monthly	2
Every 3 years	1
Other	5

**Table 7:** Frequency of gathering youth input



**Figure 18:** Parties' interest in capacity building for meaningful youth inclusion

**Snapshot on the numbers:** The most common frequency of gathering youth inputs is on an annual basis (11), with the least common frequency being every 3 years (1). In response to Others, some Parties mentioned that they prefer to engage with youth at more specific times, for example when they are developing a specific climate policy or plan and that the frequency might differ for each of the Ministries involved in climate policy development. One Party shared that they engage with youth several times a year through a partnership with a youth NGO.

**Capacity-building for Parties of youth inclusion:** Effective youth inclusion is a practice that requires knowledge and certain skills. While it is common to hear of the need for capacity-building for youth to engage in political processes, it is less common to hear about the need for building the capacities of Parties and other stakeholders to effectively include and engage with youth. Both are vitally important for ensuring meaningful inclusion of youth in political processes. '75% of Parties responded Yes and 25% responded Maybe' to receiving capacity building on youth inclusion. None of the Parties who responded to the checklist said No to this question. This is an important finding that reveals that even Parties known to be actively practising youth inclusion feel they would benefit from training in youth inclusion.



## 5 CASE STUDY

### Kenya Youth National Climate Change Action Plan 2023-2027 Engagement (NCCAP III)

Kenya has launched its third National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) for 2023 to 2027. The strategy prioritises the integration of the youth in climate action; capacity building of the youth to take climate action; and inclusiveness of youth-led climate action. In order to build this strategic plan, a nationwide and deconstructed consultation was carried out on community level as well as capacity building was rolled out for the youth.

#### From nationwide policy transcending to youth specific policy:

Section 13 of the Climate Change Act, 2016 in Kenya provides for the development of a five year NCCAP to prescribe measures and mechanisms to mainstream adaptation and mitigation actions into sector functions of the National and County Governments. Acknowledging the vital role of young people as well as the precarious situation being faced due to climate change, Kenya embarked on devising a NCCAP for youth. The NCCAP for youth is now on its third cycle and has been enhanced in the following way.

**Tools of engagement during the consultation :**

**Mapping of youth organisations:** The measure included mapping 694 youth networks/ organisations working on climate change in Kenya. Based on the mapping report, the Ministry developed the youth and children capacity building concept note which informed the youth NCCAP III engagement workshops. This led to four youth engagement workshops that brought together 235 youth (115 male and 120 female) across the 47 counties.

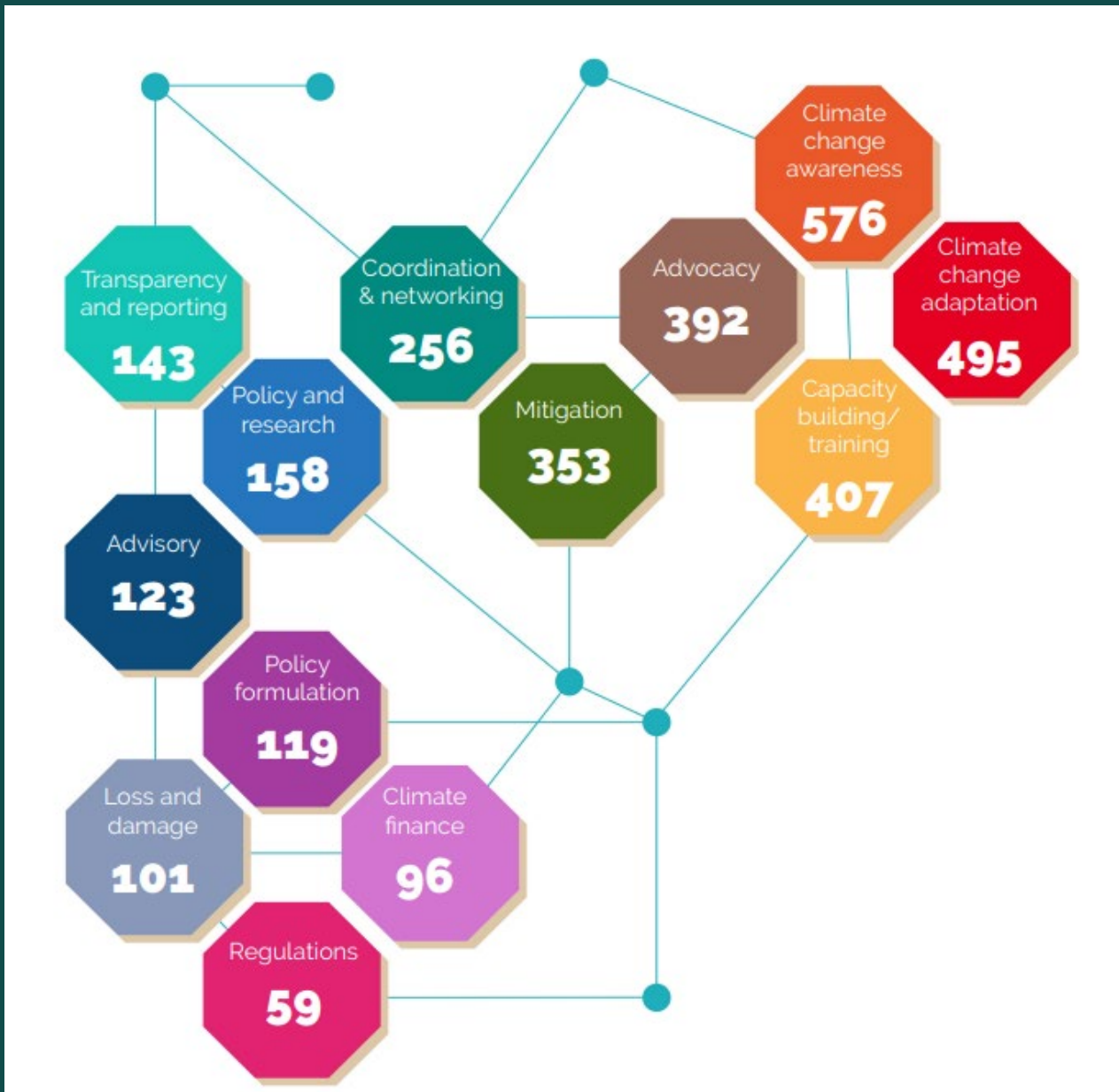


Photo adapted from Kenya NCCAP III for Youth Engagement (2023)

**Poll shared nationwide:** The initiative collaborated with UNICEF in executing a Yunitok poll that had over 14,000 children and youth respondents. This was conducted to gather further valuable insights and gauge the opinions of young Kenyans on the utilisation and effectiveness of the NCCAP. The poll covered six questions about the NCCAP 2023-2027.

**Capacity building and consultation forums:** Design and conduct consultative and capacity building forums to sensitise the youth (19-35) in different sectors on Climate Change frameworks and discuss their role in climate action. The youth capacity building concept covered introduction to climate change; Policy and regulatory framework; Sector presentations in forestry, agriculture, water, energy and waste sector; climate finance; Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE); technology and innovation; and development of youth focused NCCAP 2023-2027 priority actions and enablers.

**Campaigns:** Conceptualize awareness raising campaigns through creative competitions targeting high school children (15-18).

**From youth strategy to embedded in sector strategy**

The proposed youth actions and enablers were presented to the NCCAP Coordinating Committee, the Adaptation and Mitigation Technical Working Groups for inclusion into NCCAP and Adaptation Technical Analysis Report (ATAR). Most of the priority actions were then adopted by sectors. The agriculture sector also budgeted for the youth actions on climate smart agriculture.

The initiative received support from the Sector Programme Human Rights of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

**5.4.2 Impact and monitoring of youth inclusion in climate policy processes**

Assessing impact is an essential element of the practice of youth inclusion to ensure it is meaningful and to avoid falling into the trap of youth tokenism.

**Methods of tracking and measuring the impact of youth inclusion:** In the checklist, Parties were asked to identify the specific climate policy development they include youth in and also how they track and measure the effectiveness of youth inclusion efforts in advancing climate policies and initiatives.

Climate Policy	Parties inclusion of youth
NDCs	11
GST	6
National Budget	2
National Level-Climate Policies	18
Regional Level-Climate Policies	8

**Table 8:** Climate Policies and Youth Inclusion

Methods of tracking and measuring the effectiveness of youth inclusion	Utilisation by Parties
With regular surveys and other types of feedback collection	3
With key performance indicators for youth inclusion	1
With independent evaluations	6
No specific tracking	14

**Table 9 :** Methods of tracking and measuring youth inclusion

**Snapshot on the numbers:** The analysis shows that Parties are most commonly including youth in the development of national level climate policies (18). This is followed by Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) (11), regional level climate policies (8) and lastly, national budget (2). The few qualitative responses received reveal that there may be an issue of Parties not feeling confident that youth have the capacity for being included in specific climate policy developments. Therefore, a lack of capacity, or a perceived lack of capacity on behalf of youth to be able to be effective contributors to climate policy development can be regarded as a potential barrier for youth inclusion. However, there are some efforts being made by Parties to address this issue.

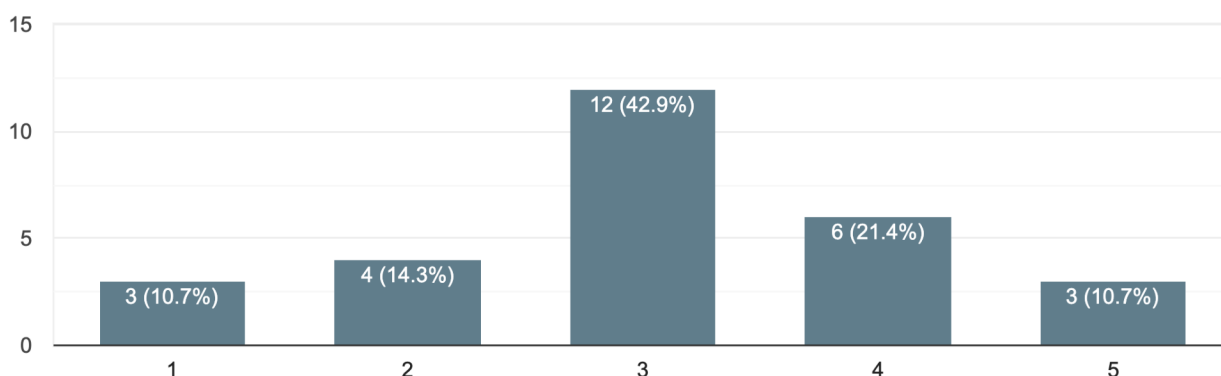
The research found that more than half of Parties that responded to the checklist had no specific tracking in place to assess the impact of youth inclusion. 6 Parties told us they used independent evaluations, 3 said that they capture feedback using surveys and other methods and 1 party shared that they use KPIs for youth inclusion.

Finland’s national Youth Barometer, an online surveying tool used to measure domestic youth’s values and attitudes. The Netherlands shared about the individual evaluations it conducts with youth representatives after every COP. Mexico shared the following statement, ‘There are different ministries in charge of different national policies and it’s not necessarily the same people who are involved in negotiations. That’s a disconnect that they have, the people who negotiate are not the same people who do the implementation and that becomes a barrier to get all of that translated into national policies.’

**Parties’ perspectives on youth inclusion:** Parties were asked to state their attitude towards youth inclusion by rating how they feel youth inclusion has enhanced their government’s climate policy development process.

On a scale from 1-5 (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest) how much has youth inclusion enhanced your government’s climate policy development process?

28 responses



**Figure 19:** Parties’ perspectives on youth inclusion



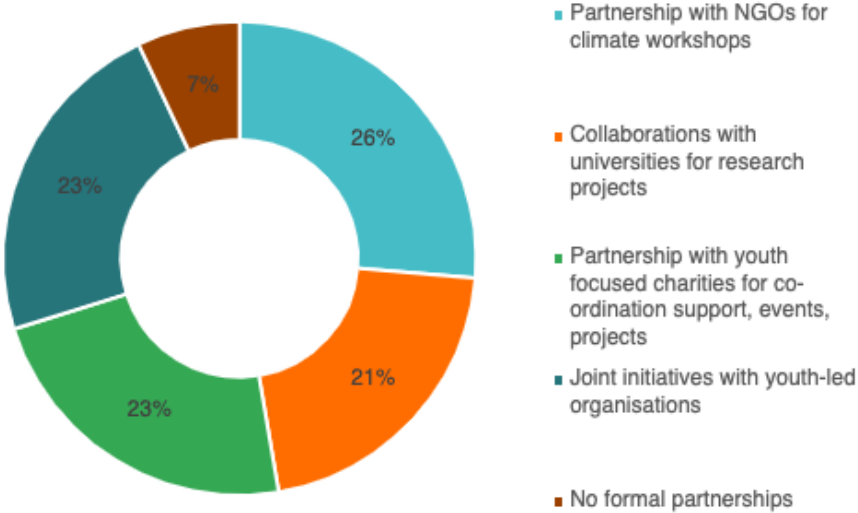
Most of the respondents were somehow agreeing that youth inclusion has been able to effectively impact on the policy development processes. This perspective might also be highly constrained given the fact that monitoring and evaluation of youth inclusion is scant.

**5.4.3 Support and continuity of youth inclusion in climate policy processes**

Youth inclusion is not a practice that Parties must not take on alone. Other key stakeholders, such as educational institutions, NGOs and civil society groups and organisations, can be great assets to Parties through the establishment of partnerships formed for the purpose of strengthening youth inclusion.

**Supporting youth inclusion through partnerships:** Parties were queried on the partnerships they have with other key stakeholders including youth organisations, educational institutions, or youth-focused NGOs, to enhance youth engagement in climate-related activities.

**Figure 20:** Type of partnership established between Parties and Youth





**Snapshot on the numbers:** The most popular type of partnership Parties are involved are with NGOs for climate workshops (26%). The next two most popular types of partnerships are joint initiatives with youth-led organisations (23%) and partnerships with youth focused charities around the coordination and support of events and projects (23%). 21% of Parties signalled that they are in partnership with universities for research purposes. 7% of Parties shared that they have not engaged in any formal partnerships. From the interviews conducted with Parties,, it was clear that partnerships with other key stakeholders were, for many, a key part of their strategy for youth inclusion, predominantly for outreach with youth but also for educational purposes. One Party did highlight the issue of ensuring fair representation in the sense that they prefer to engage directly with youth themselves in an open way and not through organisations which may have particular affiliations and therefore lack certain representation from youth among their membership.



## 6 CASE STUDY

### Barbados - Strong partnerships with youth leaders and youth organisations

Leading the way as a small island developing state (SIDS), the government of Barbados has put forward a smart sustainable climate plan, including its national energy policy, Barbados National Energy Policy 2019-2030 (BNEP)<sup>10</sup> and the Bridgetown Initiative<sup>11</sup>, an action plan to reform the global financial system. Based on a vision for transformation of Barbados, the Prime Minister for Barbados, Honourable Mia Amor Mottley, saw it as of utmost importance to include everybody as part of the process of the development and action of Barbados' climate agenda. This included establishing a secretariat for the SDGs and embarking on a 'three-pronged approach' to tackle climate change focusing on policy, engagement, education and outreach. Core to this vision has been partnerships with youth and youth-led community groups established for the sake of strengthening youth inclusion in the development of Barbados' approach to climate action.

#### A 'three-pronged approach'

Barbados' approach to partnering with youth incorporates policy, education and outreach and engagement.

- Policy - concerning itself with the diverse impacts climate change is having on it's country, notably on its farming and agricultural sector, public health and water resources. Barbados has taken an intersectional approach to climate policy development, engaging interministerial support for the development of its national climate action plan. Various ministries have set up focus groups to hear what the youth have to say and are engaging with youth-led CSOs in an advisory capacity, including local community-based organisations and youth climate groups.
- Education - public education around climate change is regarded as a high priority for the government of Barbados. CSOs and other external organisations are heavily involved in the educational component of the government's climate action strategy.

10. <https://energy.gov.bb/publications/barbados-national-energy-policy-bnep/>

11. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/01/barbados-bridgetown-initiative-climate-change/>

For example, the formation of the National Transformation Initiative<sup>12</sup> which was developed to upskill and transform all Barbadians as part of the 2030 agenda. Most notably, in 2022, a partnership was formed with the online university COURSERA<sup>13</sup> which involves giving the Barbadian public access to thousands of courses for free. The partnership includes a climate academy as part of the agreement. The courses available are formulated areas of national significance, including tourism, sports, agriculture, health, and culture and thousands of Barbadians have accessed courses through this partnership.

- Outreach and engagement - a range of outreach and engagement initiatives, specifically focusing on youth, have been developed in partnership with youth-led & youth-focused community organisations. A key partnership for the Barbados government has been with The Ashley Lashley Foundation<sup>14</sup>, a foundation set up by Barbadian youth activist Ashley Lashley in 2019. This partnership has brought the government closer to thousands of Barbadian youth which it leverages for strengthening advocacy and awareness, policy consultation, youth representation and international engagements. Additionally, agencies like the United Nations and other environmental organisations have aided in this regard. Of note, the UN formation of the Regional Youth Advisory Group which Barbados has 2 Ambassadors as part of this group.

By focusing on these three core components, Barbados has been able to strengthen and reinforce youth engagement, particularly in regards to the youth education around climate change, and enabled youth to be more proactive in government climate

## 7

## CASE STUDY



### Zimbabwe- Training the Youth to become Experts and building continuity

In the year 2020, Zimbabwe received crucial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with the Russian Federation. This support came under the umbrella of the project titled ‘Support towards Implementation of Zimbabwe’s Nationally Determined Contributions’ (STIZ-NDC). The government of Zimbabwe initiated a comprehensive project that involved the training of young individuals in Greenhouse Gas Inventories. The training specifically focused on the four sectors outlined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which encompass waste, Agriculture Forests and Other Land Use (AFOLU), energy, and Industrial Processes and Product Use (IPPU).

Following an intensive month-long training program, 21 young participants successfully underwent examinations administered by the Greenhouse Gas Management Institute

12. <https://www.nti.org.bb/>

13. <https://training.nti.org.bb/coursea-courses-browse/>

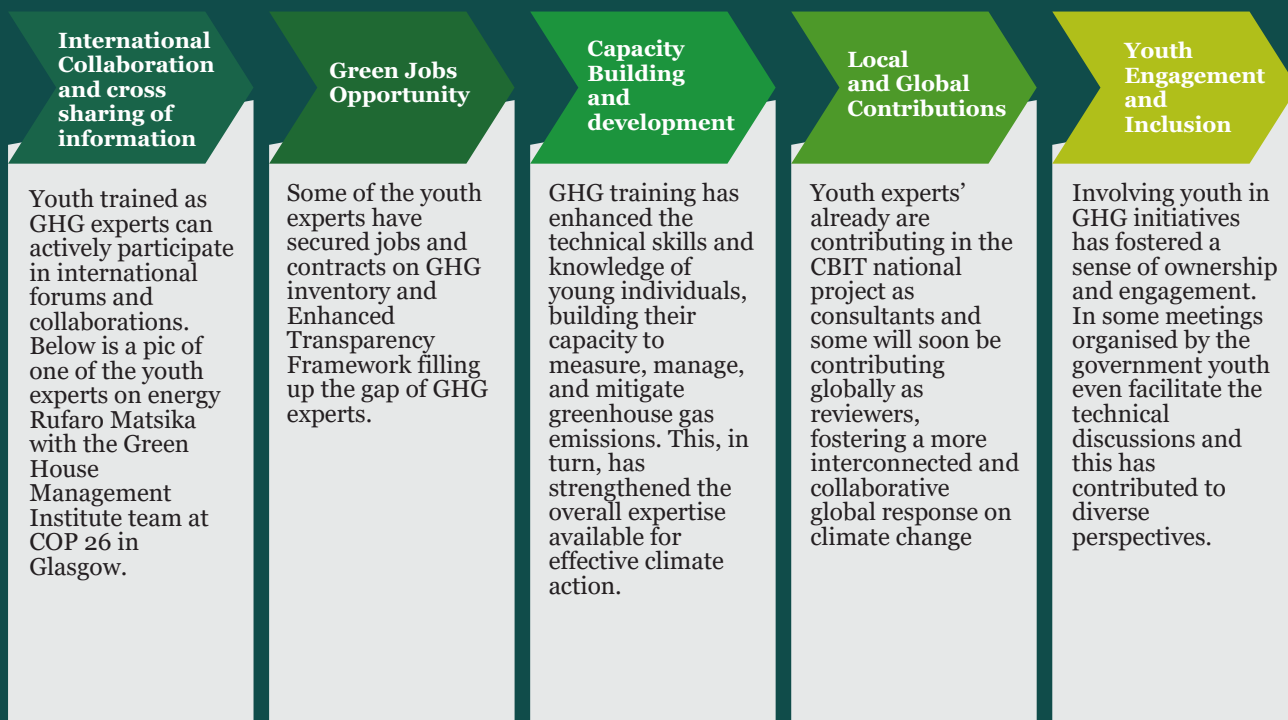
14. <https://www.theashleylashleyfoundation.org/>

based in Washington DC. This accomplishment stands as a testament to the effectiveness of international collaborations and targeted projects in equipping young individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to contribute meaningfully to climate action. The country has managed to acquire more funding through the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) and more youth will be trained under this initiative and support the Zimbabwe's Government in compiling its GHGs inventory on the country's Bi annual Transparency Report (BTR) and National Communications (NC5).

### Statistics on Youth Experts under IPCC thematic

Sector	Waste	Energy	IPPU	AFOLU
Number of Youth Experts	4	9	1	6

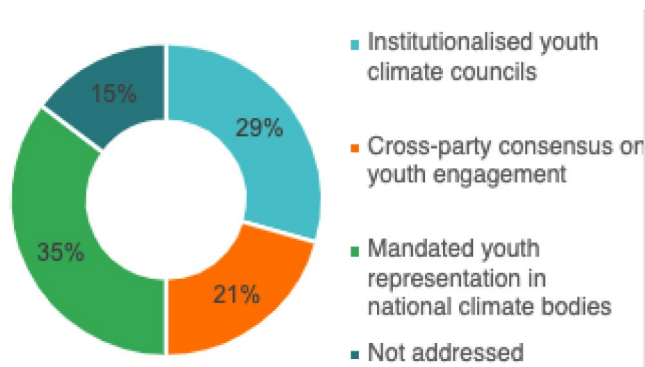
### Outcomes of training as GHG experts



### Ensuring continuity of youth inclusion:

Parties were queried on how they provide support for continuity of youth inclusion, even with changes of leadership.

**Figure 21:** Avenues for Parties to ensure continuity on youth engagement

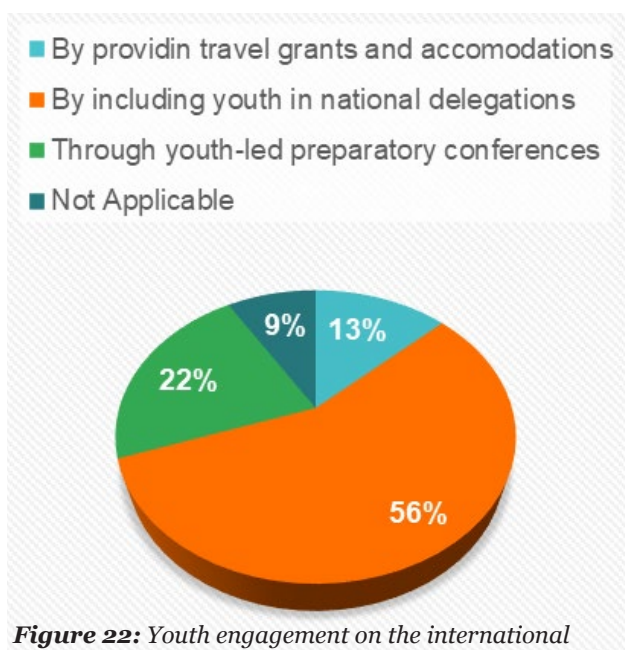


The response is skewed towards Parties leaning into mandated youth representation in national climate bodies and through institutionalised youth climate councils. The ACE programme has helped to foster the institutionalisation and the role of youth on a national level. The inclusion of youth on a national level can ensure that they are engaged in discussions and have a mandated role in the process. Nevertheless, a deep dive on the continuity is required to allow for peer learning amongst Parties to sustain their youth inclusion initiatives.

#### 5.4.4 Youth engagement by Parties on international arena

Young people are the ones who will be around to see and feel the long term effects of policy decisions, it is only right that they are provided with meaningful and substantial opportunities by being heard and given a seat at the decision making table i.e at COP and regional climate weeks. Youths have been lobbying to change the narrative from being observers to being integrated into the negotiation processes through official Party delegation during COP and further engagement at regional climate weeks.

The responses are highly skewed towards inclusion of youth as part of the national delegation to COP, followed by youth led preparatory meetings. Parties highlighted that the preparatory meetings are often a meeting between experts, negotiators and youth on the different thematics on climate change on the road to COP. Over the years, the participation of young people has increased at COP but they have largely been restricted to observers. The results might be biased since Parties who are likely to have a youth delegation at COP responded to the checklist. This calls for a wider research on Parties who have not been able to engage youth in national delegations.



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**Snapshot on the numbers:** A zoom in on the number of young delegates being supported at COP and regional climate weeks shows the number ranges from 1 to a maximum of 20. Most Parties identified less than 5 youth being supported due to lack of funding. The highest number of 20 was noted from Tunisia whereby the youth group mobilises their own funding to attend those conferences. Nevertheless, an increase can be noted in the number of youth participants as part of the official delegation which is 8 on average.

On the road to COP: Mentoring and capacity building is key to enhancing meaningful participation during international conferences. Parties were queried on whether they had such programmes in place for young people. 65% of them responded positively to having a preparatory programme in place for young people. These programmes take shape in different avenues such as training sessions on negotiations through organisations such as Climate Young Negotiator Program and Climate Reality. The capacity building is also mostly applied by inviting youth to partake in preparatory meetings.

## 8 CASE STUDY



### Mexico - Youth Ambassadors for the Climate - training youth to lead negotiations

In 2021 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico in coordination with the Climate Reality Project for Latin America launched Operation COP: Youth Ambassadors for the Climate, a comprehensive, three-month training and mentoring program tailor-made to enable Mexican youth between the ages of 18-25 to lead negotiations on behalf of Mexico at the COPs. The first-of-its-kind program was initiated by the Mexican delegation for climate change in collaboration with various government Ministries, including the Matías Romero Institute (Diplomatic Academy of Mexico)<sup>15</sup>, the National Institute of Youth<sup>16</sup>, the National Institute for Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund<sup>17</sup> (now the United Nations International Children’s Fund) and relevant areas of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The program’s design incorporates key educational and skills training relating to the issue of climate change and global environmental governance, and includes technical skills training including negotiating climate and environment-related policy, in addition to education on geo-politics and Mexican foreign policy.

The program is open for youth from any professional and socioeconomic background between the ages of 18-25 to apply. A special call is made for individuals hailing from Mexico’s large representation of Indigenous communities, particularly in the Southern and Northern regions. 30-35 youth are selected from the applicants to participate in the program where they learn about climate change, why it’s so important and the impacts seen in the region and in the world. The participants are also educated on the history of the UNFCCC, the key findings of the IPCC reports, and key developments relating to the COPs. The participants hear from experts from various Ministries of Mexico like the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance as well as from different national and international institutions that follow climate issues on various topics of negotiation and have the opportunity to learn about Mexico’s position on key principles such as human rights, gender, and youth.

From the 30-35 youth, four are selected to be part of the Mexican delegation to COP, noting that one of them is a young representative of an Indigenous community, and receive advanced training and mentoring, involving one-on-one sessions and personal mentoring

15. <https://www.mexicoescultura.com/recinto/53785/en/matias-romero-institute.html>

16. <https://www.mexicoescultura.com/recinto/66959/en/mexican-institute-of-youth-imjuve-.html>

17. <https://www.unicef.org/>

from the Head of the Mexican delegation. Each delegate is assigned as a lead negotiator for a specific track of negotiation that is based on their interests, strengths and background and they participate in meetings with experts on their topic in order to gain more technical details. The program covers the youth's expenses, including travel and accommodation for the COPs where they get to sit at the negotiation table with the Mexico flag and make their comments, provide inputs and negotiate on behalf of Mexico and participate in bilaterals as representatives of Mexico. The delegates stay until the end of the COP and are part of the whole process. Previous negotiators who have been through the program have managed to include text in the final COP cover decisions. They have been constructive not only as Mexico, but for the international process too.

In addition, it is notable that Mexico has signed an MOU with The Netherlands to promote and guarantee more youth participation at COPs and in climate processes since the two governments recognize the importance of ensuring intergenerational equity and they have been very actively working together, both on the international level, to strengthen programs related to Youth Ambassadors for the Climate.

## 9 CASE STUDY



### **COP 28 The International Youth Climate Delegate Program (IYCDP)**

The International Youth Climate Delegate Program (IYCDP) a program overseen by the COP28 Youth Climate Champion Her Excellency Shamma Al Mazrui, in collaboration with YOUNGO, the Official Children and Youth Constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), seeks to ensure the participation of 100 youth from all over the world, with priority for delegates from countries from the Least Developed (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Indigenous Peoples and other marginalised groups such as youth with disabilities, or from conflict zones.

The objectives of the program are to;

- Ensure that youth views and proposals are fully integrated into global climate policy-making and dialogues.
- Build youth skills, capacity, knowledge, and networks, particularly in the most impacted countries, to engage in climate processes.
- Provide a model for the COP process on meaningful youth inclusion.



<b>March 2023</b>	The call for applications was launched at the Road to COP 28 event in Dubai on the 15 of March 2023. 10 939 applications received and 100 delegates selected. The selection process with youth-led by a YOUNGO selection committee, with assistance from the COP28 Youth Climate Champion Team
<b>June 2023</b>	8 Delegates participated at SB 58, following the SBI/SBSTA negotiations and taking part in youth related events
<b>October 23</b>	5 Delegates participated at Youth4Climate Sparking Solutions in Rome, Italy. 4 delegates won grants of up to \$20,000 to support their projects.
<b>October 23</b>	15 Delegates participated at Pre- COP in Abu Dhabi where they addressed global leaders directly (COP28 leadership, Simon Stiell, DSG, +70 Ministers and HoDs) and presented the Global Youth Statement to HE Shamma Al Mazrui, COP28 Youth Climate Champion, DSG Amina Mohammed and HoDs from several countries.
<b>September 23</b>	9 Delegates participated at Africa Climate Week in Nairobi, Kenya.
<b>September 23</b>	10 Delegates participated at UNGA and Un Secretary-General’s Climate Ambition Summit in New York, USA.
<b>October 23</b>	4 Delegates participated at Middle East and North Africa Climate Week in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
<b>October 23</b>	4 Delegates participated at Latin America and the Caribbean Climate Week which took place in Panama.
<b>November 23</b>	4 Delegates participated at Asia-Pacific Climate Week (APCW 2023) in Johor Bahru, Malaysia
<b>November 23</b>	100 Delegates participated at Conference of Youth 18 in Dubai, UAE
<b>December 23</b>	100 Delegates participated at COP 28 in Dubai, UAE

## Bespoke Capacity Building for the Youth on UNFCCC Climate Policy Processes

Delegates underwent 24 capacity building sessions hosted by both the Harvard Kennedy School Negotiation and Conflict Resolution Collaboratory and the UNFCCC Secretariat. Topics included content to build delegates' negotiation and advocacy skills as well as knowledge of UNFCCC policy thematics and key topics discussed at the COP. Sessions in the capacity building program include:

- Mitigation Ambition and Implementation
- Adaptation (including the Global Goal on Adaptation, and National Adaptation Plans)
- Loss and Damage, Warsaw Mechanism, the Santiago Network and Operationalisation of the Fund
- Advanced Concepts in Multiparty Negotiations
- When Process is Substance: The Importance of How to Negotiate
- Effective Process Management and Facilitation

<b>July 2023</b>	Capacity building Introduction to UNFCCC & Climate Science
<b>July 2023</b>	Capacity building introduction to UNFCCC Constituencies
<b>July 2023</b>	UNICEF Safeguarding Training program
<b>August-October 2023</b>	Negotiators training program with Harvard Kennedy School Negotiation and Conflict Resolution Collaboratory (NCRC)
<b>October-November 2023</b>	UNFCCC Capacity buildings on different negotiated items



*Delegates participation at Africa Climate Week, MENA Climate Week and Pre-COP28*

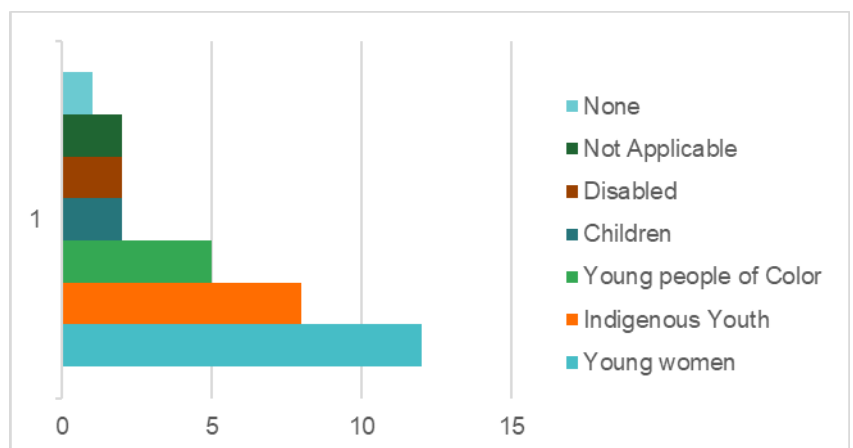


<b>Partner organisation</b>	<b>Scope of collaboration</b>
Harvard Kennedy School's Negotiation and Conflict Resolution Collaboratory	The Harvard Kennedy School's Negotiation and Conflict Resolution Collaboratory is a capacity building partner, contributing with in kind lectures and programming led by two graduate level university professors. These include 14 sessions and simulations building the delegates' negotiation and policy and advocacy skills
UNFCCC ACE team	The UNFCCC Action for Climate Empowerment team is a capacity building partner, contributing with 10 learning modules and Q&A sessions on various UNFCCC thematics and other key topics commonly discussed at the COP. The modules will also be made available to youth everywhere free of cost after they are professionally produced.
YOUNGO	The Youth and Children Constituency of the UNFCCC (YOUNGO) is a core partner of the program. Three coordinators from YOUNGO were appointed to the Program and support several elements of it, including the capacity building process, the selection of delegates for opportunities, the co-organization of events and the overall guidance and support of the 100 delegates.

#### 5.4.5 Diversity in youth inclusion and engagement

Diversity is at the centre of inclusion. Youths come from diverse backgrounds and are impacted by climate change differently. Involving youths from various ethnic, racial, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds ensures that climate initiatives consider the unique challenges faced by different youth populations. Diversity ensures that effective climate policies are adopted for all communities. Embracing the perspectives, ideas, and experiences of diverse young people is critical for driving innovation, fostering inclusivity, and ensuring that climate solutions are equitable and sustainable.

The figure above depicts the inclusion of young women by Parties followed by indigenous youths. There is certainly evidence of diversity but this needs to be enhanced and made more accessible for more groups, especially youth with disabilities and children. Parties are still navigating around diversity and should have concredited principles in place to ensure that diversity targets are achieved.



**Figure 23:** Diversity in youth inclusion and engagement



## Italy - Youth4Climate: A Platform for Intergenerational Collaboration

From 28-30 September 2021, as part of the collaborative agreement between Italy and the United Kingdom for the presidency of COP26, Italy hosted a global gathering of over 400 youth in Milan called “*Youth4Climate: Driving Ambition*”. This groundbreaking event provided a platform for young people worldwide to put forth their ideas, engage in discussions, and act on pressing climate-related issues. The outcome was the creation of the *Youth4Climate Manifesto*, a resolute and forward-looking blueprint for addressing climate challenges. During a high-level youth-affiliated event at COP26, it was announced that the Government of Italy would support *Youth4Climate* as a longer-term initiative in support of youth driving ambitious climate action.

Based on this vision, in 2022 the Youth for Climate (Y4C) initiative expanded into a global effort co-led by Italy (the Italian Ministry for Environment and Energy Security) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and critical partners, including influential youth constituencies such as YOUNGO, the United Nations Secretary-General’s Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change (YAG), previous members of Youth4Climate, as well as the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth. Connect4Climate from the World Bank and the UNFCCC Secretariat are vital collaborators in this collective effort.

In 2022, the Manifesto was amplified and two new initiatives were brought to life, the Youth4Climate Call for Solutions and Youth4Climate Online Engagement Platform. A flagship event was rolled out which featured 150 young people from all regions of the world. Key themes included youth meaningful engagement in climate action, climate justice and a deep-dive into youth-led implementation of solutions around the four areas of the Youth4Climate Manifesto, allowing for peer-to-peer exchange and a reflection on how to enhance support to youth and impact, and partnership-building and funding.

***The Youth Engagement Platform:*** The Y4C engagement platform is a go-to knowledge space for young climate leaders and partners to network and exchange opportunities, experiences, and resources. The platform already hosts close to 7,000 members consisting of young people from all parts of the world, high-level representatives from international organisations, the scientific community, and the private sector.

***The Youth4Climate Call for Solutions:*** In September 2022, UNDP launched the first Youth4Climate Call for Solutions, inviting young innovators, entrepreneurs, and climate leaders from 170+ countries to apply for funding for their actions in climate education, energy, food and agriculture, and urban sustainability. From among 1,100+ proposals received, 100 projects from 63 countries were shortlisted and invited to attend the Youth4Climate: Sparking Solutions Flagship Event held in Rome on 17-19 October 2023. The event gathered 130 youth from over 70 countries for three days of deep dive conversations, resource-sharing sessions, and networking opportunities on climate justice, private sector engagement, foresight, and more. The 50 selected projects announced at the event are set to receive up to USD 20,000 each in financial awards, peer-to-peer networking opportunities, as well as

learning offers graciously supported by partner organisations from the UN system, private sector, the COP28 Youth Climate Champion’s team, and others. A new round of this funding opportunity is due to be launched, accompanied by additional matching of resources from UNDP, to further advance youth-led and youth-inclusive solutions and enhance youth leadership and agency.



**Milestones: 2022**

<b>May 2022</b>	UNDP and Italy announce their partnership on Youth4Climate
<b>July 2022</b>	Covering all four thematic areas of the Youth4Climate Manifesto - e.g., Youth Driving Ambition; Sustainable Recovery; Non-State Actors’ Engagement; A Climate Conscious Society
<b>July 2022</b>	Engagement at Latin America and Caribbean Climate Week
<b>Sept 2022</b>	Preparatory meeting (virtual) with young participants (info-session)  Stockholm+50, where Connect4Climate - World Bank Group hosted a social media corner and hosted side events
<b>Sept 2022</b>	Africa Climate Week
<b>Sept 2022</b>	Youth4Climate: Powering action flagship global event in New York
<b>20 Sept 2022</b>	Launch of the Youth4Climate Call for Solutions
<b>2022</b>	Youth Empowerment in Climate Action Platform (YECAP), which supported communication and engagement of young climate leaders from Asia and the Pacific

## Milestones: 2023

<b>January - March 2023</b>	Applicants to the Youth4Climate Call for Solutions were offered trainings in proposal development and were able to request one-to-one mentorship from expert online volunteers: <a href="https://www.unv.org/Success-stories/enabling-young-people-fight-climate-change">https://www.unv.org/Success-stories/enabling-young-people-fight-climate-change</a>
<b>31 March 2023</b>	Closing of the Y4C Call for Solutions
<b>From April 2023 to October 2023</b>	Six meetings of the advisory committee for the organisation of the Youth4Climate: Sparking Solutions flagship event, as well as numerous youth-led task force meetings aimed at shaping the agenda.
<b>5-15 June 2023</b>	SBI 58 and SBSTA 58, at the World Convention Center in Bonn, Germany
<b>June - September 2023</b>	Youth4Climate Academy: Projects shortlisted through the Youth4Climate Call for Solutions benefited from one-to-one mentorship on pitching and communicating about their work. A series of six workshops was organised in collaboration with key partners of the initiative - the Centre for Public Impact, UNITAR, Future Food Institute, and Student Energy. These covered a range of topics including storytelling, leadership in complexity, experimentation, energy transition, climate education, and multi stakeholder collaboration.
<b>July 2023</b>	Launch of Youth4Climate V oices, a community newsletter
<b>4-8 Sept 2023</b>	Engagements at Africa Climate Week
<b>8-12 Oct 2023</b>	Engagements at MENA Climate Week
<b>17-19 Oct2023</b>	Youth4Climate: Sparking Solutions flagship event in Rome, Call for Solutions awardees announced
<b>23-27 Oct 2023</b>	Engagements at Latin America and the Caribbean Climate Week

This initiative signifies a steadfast commitment to empowering youth in the fight against climate change and fostering a sustainable and inclusive future for all.



The research sought to understand lingering challenges for youth inclusion from the Parties' perspective. The checklist listed some common challenges and asked Parties to select all of the options that they had come up against. The options included limited access to youth, lack of opportunities to include youth in, lack of resources, lack of training or awareness on youth inclusion and lack of interested youth.

Parties (75%) indicated a lack of resources as the biggest challenge. The next key challenges for Parties are a lack of training or awareness on youth inclusion affecting 54% of Party respondents, lack of opportunities to include youth in affecting 43% and limited access to youth affecting 36%. Only 7% of Parties indicated that a lack of interest from youth to engage was an issue.

#### **Other challenges that emerged are:**

**Language barriers:** With international negotiations being in English this presents a barrier for inclusion of non-English speakers in Parties' delegations. For example, for the Mexican delegation, negotiations taking place in English is a barrier for the delegation's representation of indigenous people who are not necessarily comfortable with English. The Mexican delegation attempted to roll out youth training for indigenous people but still the language barrier can constrain the engagement with other delegation groups and eventually the climate policy processes.

**Funding:** Parties have put forward the funding constraint. Undoubtedly, Parties from the global south have been dependent on funding from international organisations or even embassies to support young delegates. Parties highlighted that without access to funding, their youth engagement in international conferences could be near to zero. This stresses on the importance of mobilising domestic resources for youth.

**Resistance and ambiguity:** The inclusion of youth in the policy processes, especially COP delegation, is still a sensitive matter for many Parties. Some members of the negotiator team have not settled down with opening the door to external stakeholders. In addition to that, with youth being described as being the most 'vocal' stakeholder, some Parties are still navigating the space to accommodate bringing more youth onboard.

**Lack of framework for sustainable youth inclusion:** Lack of curated engagement, lack of long term vision and strategy (more one off). Whilst Parties may have been including youth in diverse initiatives, most of them do not have a long term strategy in place. This transcends to limitations of youth engagement and support such as to local conferences of youth as mentioned above. It also leaves uncertainty amongst youth groups about the way forward.

**Outdated institutions:** The issue of government institutions being outdated and not understanding the needs of today was cited as an issue for youth inclusion. The issue can present itself in various ways, for instance in a system of promotion that is based on seniority rather than work-based performance. In this scenario youth may feel that making change is impossible until they reach a certain age and position which would

take decades. As one national youth Focal Point put it, *‘for a 20-something year old coming into the system, it’s going to take them 40 years to get to the top. When a manager retires, a senior officer goes up to the managerial position and it flows like that to the top. Meanwhile at the bottom, for a young person coming in they have to work 30 years in one job to really make it to the top.’*

## 5.6 Recommendations

1

### **Two way communication**

It is imperative to foster a causal communication between Parties and youth so as to increase visibility on the work being done and how the latter can bring support to each other. This could also encompass curating capacity building and peer exchange programmes for Parties.

2

### **Peer learning**

Initiatives for peer exchange should be multiplied on regional level. Such as an exchange programme that could also explore the funding opportunities for the most vulnerable countries. Peer learning could also occur with existing organisations already providing negotiation training.

3

### **Exploring different mechanisms and strategies of engagement**

Parties to engage more on social media to connect with youth and collect youth input. This goes along with reinforcing the programme for engaging youth and having clear deliverables outlined. These should also be long term with mobilisation of domestic resources, for example allocation of budget for youth engagement.

4

### **Tracking and measuring meaningful youth participation**

Track and measure mechanisms for youth inclusion are imperative in a world where tokenism is no longer an accepted mode of youth inclusion and meaningful youth inclusion is expected. UNDP has Develop a framework for elevating meaningful youth inclusion in climate action around ‘process, narrative, outcome’ (UNDP, 2022). We recommend Parties to review this framework as a benchmark and consider how it can assist in the development of a Parties own track and measurement mechanism for youth inclusion.

5

### **Stocktake on the engagement**

The gap highlighted in monitoring and data collection on youth engagement is evident. Parties should put proper monitoring and evaluation processes in place to assess meaningful participation of the youth.

## 11 CASE STUDY



### Tunisian Young Climate Negotiators Group

The example of the Tunisian Young Climate Negotiators Group is a laudable one whereby the youth came forward with the initiative and advocated for the support of the Government. The group has a mandate to serve as a task force supporting the work of the Tunisian official delegation from 2021. This agenda was birthed over a number of years of lobbying. A group of young people created the mechanism and process and gained the support of the government. The modus operandi evolves around *'youth taking charge of their actions'*.

- **Maintaining independence:** The latter support the official Tunisian delegation but are not part of the official delegation. They maintain their independence in providing their submissions of inputs from a youth perspective.
- **The programme:** They cover themes such as (adaptation, finance, loss and damage, Article 6, mitigation, gender, ACE, technology, international framework and capacity building) and also hold training sessions for the young negotiators which is contextualised for Tunisia.
- **Organogram :** The group is divided into sub groups on different thematics with young people equipped with the relevant technical and academic background. Each sub group has a coordinator which then reports and forms the core team. Most members also belong to other international organisations such as Scout, LYDC, UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) among others. Members also come from the public, private sector, civil society or independent experts. ***In terms of diversity, over 64% of the young negotiators are women.***
- **Strategy and Growth :** The group curated their own mentoring system in place to invite other youth to accompany them in the initiative. They carefully strategise their growth focusing on the quality of profiles rather than quantity. The group recently met in September 2023 to work on their strategic plan during a retreat.
- **Funding:** The youth group curate their own programme and also seek funding for their initiatives and mainly to participate in international conferences. They are offered Party badges to participate at COP and the funding mainly come from external sources (from GIZ, Hevios and Heroes) given the funding constraints in the Global South.

### Impact of having youth on board:

- ➔ The youth ensures meaningful youth engagement and participation in climate diplomacy.
- ➔ They provide support to the official Tunisian delegation on several UNFCCC work programmes and negotiation tracks.
- ➔ The group supports in organising and also representing Tunisian youth in side events during international events. The group has remarkable attendance to events such as



COP, Innovate4Climate by World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organisation, Food Forum and more.

➔ All the above in turn empowers them and also strengthens their expertise and contributes to the green transition of the country.

### Their key to success :

- ★ Young people familiar with the UNFCCC space mobilised and leveraged on their knowledge to found the initiative.
- ★ They secured government support which created some sort of legitimacy and it became easier for them to have international organisations onboard to provide funding.



*YOUNGO members at COY 17*

*From left Xan Northcott (former focal Point YOUNGO), Isingizwe Honourine, Elizabeth Gulugulu (Former Focal Point YOUNGO), Cathay Lee (Former Contact Point Technology Working Group) & Brenda Mwale (YOUNGO Selections Team)*

# Chapter 6: COP Decisions on Youth

## 6.1 Background

Youth involvement in the UNFCCC processes has witnessed a noticeable increase and this is certainly partly due to massive youth policy advocacy, resulting in numerous policy decisions acknowledging and referencing youth involvement and participation (Kwiatkowski, 2017). During COP16, which took place in Cancun in 2010, the significance of involving youth in climate discussions was recognised. This pivotal moment led to the formal establishment of the children and youth constituency to the UNFCCC, YOUNGO (UNFCCC COP 16 Report, 2011). Young people are now not only calling for their voices to be heard but for substantive engagement in the UNFCCC processes. **Article 6 of the UNFCCC** underscores the crucial role of young people in climate education and training, emphasising their role as disseminators of vital information (United Nations, 1992). Consequently, the **Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) action plan under the Glasgow work program on Action for Climate Empowerment** (2022) mainstreams the roles and responsibilities of youth at the national, regional, and international levels in the implementation of ACE programs.



During COP26 in Glasgow, young people submitted the Global Youth Statement to the presidency. In response, the COP 26 Cover decision (2021) known as the ***Glasgow Climate Pact (FCCC/CP/2021/12/Add.1), paragraph (64)*** ‘urges parties and stakeholders to ensure meaningful youth participation and representation in multilateral, national and local decision-making processes, including under the Convention and the Paris Agreement’. Furthermore, ***paragraph (65) of Glasgow Climate Pact*** ‘invites future Presidencies of the Conference of the Parties, with the support of the secretariat, to facilitate the organisation of an annual youth-led climate forum for dialogue between Parties and youth in collaboration with the UNFCCC children and youth constituency and other youth organisations with a view to contributing to the implementation of the Glasgow work programme on Action for Climate Empowerment’. The inaugural youth forum took place in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt at COP 27, known as the ‘Sharm el-Sheikh youth climate dialogue’, bringing together policy makers through roundtable discussions focusing on mitigation and adaptation measures, which subsequently influenced future programming.

The COP27 cover decision (2022), the ***Sharm El-Sheikh implementation plan (FCCC/CP/2022/10/Add.1), paragraph (60)*** acknowledges the importance of the first children and youth pavilion within COP and the first appointment of a youth envoy of the Presidency of the COP, and encourages future COP Presidencies to carry these forward. Gulugulu and Shekar (2022) further elaborate on the significance of having a children and youth pavilion as a space for youth to gather, plan for negotiations and showcase projects, and stress the importance of establishing a clear mandate and accountability mechanism for the Youth Envoy of the Presidency.

As the UN, Parties and stakeholders are still familiarising themselves with meaningful youth engagement, it has taken several years for YOUNGO to be granted a position on the advisory board of the Climate Technology Center and Network (CTCN), participate in meetings of the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF), or being a member of the Paris Committee on Capacity Building (PCCB) including other opportunities. This section strives to evaluate the pertinence, worth, and influence of youth involvement in all of the aforementioned decisions, committees, and boards, identify any deficiencies or obstacles linked to youth participation, and assess the degree to which their engagement has proven advantageous to the constituency.

## 6.2 Aims

This section seeks to highlight some of the key COP decisions on youth engagement and how they have been implemented, and identify gaps and areas of improvement for consideration by Parties, youth and other relevant stakeholders.

## 6.3 Methods of Data Collection

In order to get in depth information, targeted sampling was used and a questionnaire was sent to twenty four (24) former focal points of YOUNGO from 2009- 2022 and only six (6) responded. Virtual interviews were conducted with youth representatives who have served as board members on relevant committees, or have participated in any referenced article on youth participation, as well as partners who have organised events for the children and

youth pavilion. During the interview process, semi-structured questions were prepared for each candidate.

## 6.4 Assessment of Youth Participation in COP Decisions

### 6.4.1 COP Presidency Youth Climate Envoy

The introduction of the Youth Envoy position was a significant development by the COP 27 Egypt Presidency, marking the first time in the twenty-six years of the COPs that a formal higher-level role on youth engagement was included within the COP Presidency team. The Youth Envoy's primary responsibilities included bringing the perspectives of young people to the Presidency, providing support for youth-related events on the COP agenda, and ensuring that the COP and Parties considered the needs and policy proposals of YOUNGO and other children and youth stakeholders engaging in COP. This broad engagement with youth allowed for a comprehensive understanding of their needs, proposed solutions, and policy recommendations. This year, the role has evolved and been rebranded by the COP28 UAE Presidency as the 'Youth Climate Champion,' accompanied by a dedicated support team consisting of five (5) youth advisors. Together, they focus on matters related to children and youth engagement in Climate Change and UNFCCC processes, especially working to support four pillars within the chain of youth engagement to UNFCCC: Participation (strengthening youth access to participation and representation), Education (supporting educational and capacity building opportunities to understand the UNFCCC processes), Voice (amplifying youth voices and policy proposals with meaningful engagement opportunities), and Action (leveraging COP to advance and resource youth-led climate action). The position now has well-defined terms of references, which may vary with each COP Presidency. Nevertheless, even with this role's recognition for the second time, it is of utmost importance to establish precise responsibilities, expected results, and a robust accountability framework to combat youth tokenism. Despite the UAE Presidency's efforts in this regard, there is still more work to be done to ensure that the involvement of young voices in climate action is substantive and meaningful, and consistently and sustainably delivered across years.

To enable the Youth Envoys Champion to effectively fulfil their role, securing financial support and assigning a dedicated support team across various youth needs and UNFCCC thematic areas is of paramount importance, as well as the sustainable handover of structure and programs between years.

### 6.4.2 CTCN Advisory Board

The Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) serves as the operational arm of the technology mechanism under the UNFCCC. At COP26, the CTCN extended an invitation to the children and youth constituency to join their advisory board. This decision came about after extensive advocacy efforts by the YOUNGO technology mechanism WG, including a formal submission requesting youth representation in the advisory board. The responsibility of the YOUNGO representative involves participating in and providing input for the annual work plan and other programs organised by the CTCN. Task force meetings occur on a monthly basis, while advisory board meetings take place biannually.

While the inclusion of youth representation in this capacity is strategic, it is essential to establish mechanisms to ensure that youth demands are actively considered, and proper follow-up on action items is conducted. This approach is necessary to avoid youth tokenism and to genuinely involve youth in climate-related decision-making processes.

#### **6.4.3 Action plan under the Glasgow Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment**

The GWP was adopted by Parties to the UNFCCC at COP26 in 2021, it provides a framework for implementing ACE article (6) of the UNFCCC and article (12) of the Paris Agreement for ten years from 2020 to 2030. The GWP defines the principles, scope, and priorities areas as well as recommendations for Parties and other Stakeholders on ACE. The GWP action plan references youth many times not only as a vulnerable group but as main actors in climate policy, decision-making and implementation. In addition to this, the action plan acknowledges the critical role that young people play in shaping the process of implementing Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE), with specific action points that young leaders and groups will need to continue advocating for (Action plan under the Glasgow work programme on Action for Climate Empowerment, 2022) . It is worth mentioning that achieving youth inclusion requires significant advocacy efforts. Members of the YOUNGO ACE WG bilaterally engaged with ACE negotiators from different countries, seeking to understand their positions and consulting on how they could best champion youth proposals in the negotiations with the aim of finding a shared vision for youth inclusion and demands for an effective ACE Action Plan. In most cases they had meetings with the UNFCCC ACE secretariat team for further understanding and clarifications of the process. This collaborative approach can serve as a model for other working groups seeking to incorporate specific youth demands into different negotiated items.

Moreover, while the integration of youth into the action plan has been well-received by young people, there remains a gap in ACE regarding access to finance to achieve ACE activities, especially on youth inclusion. Ensuring the effective implementation of the six ACE elements, which include climate change education and public awareness, training, public participation, public access to information, and international cooperation, requires adequate financial resources at the national, regional, and global levels. It is imperative that efforts are made to address this gap and provide the necessary financial support to fully realise the goals of ACE.

#### **6.4.4 YOUNGOs Participation in the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF)**

YOUNGO, through its Finance and Markets WG, has been actively participating in the meetings of the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF). These meetings are often highly technical, requiring a significant investment of time to grasp the processes and patience to learn from those who have been facilitating these discussions for many years. YOUNGO is typically allocated two slots for participation in these meetings, aimed at enhancing coherence and coordination in climate change financing delivery, streamlining the financial mechanism, mobilising financial resources, and improving the measurement, reporting, and verification of support provided to developing country Parties. Noteworthy achievements stemming from YOUNGO's engagement in the SCF meetings include the organisation of a youth training program which was organised by the UNFCCC secretariat in response to

recommendations from the YOUNGO Finance and Markets WG. YOUNGO members have also highlighted that they meaningfully feel engaged in the conversations and are supported in understanding the processes (through training and capacity development), thereby enhancing their ability to contribute effectively. However, a challenge stemming from the inclusive nature of YOUNGO's selection process is the inconsistency in youth participation.

Due to the rotation of representatives, this might lead to SCF members frequently reiterating their explanations and insights to different YOUNGO members throughout the year. To optimise this opportunity and foster greater continuity, the finance and markets WG may contemplate nominating two individuals who can attend SCF meetings for one-two years with proper feedback to the constituency. This would involve consulting with the constituency before each meeting and giving feedback after every meeting. After their term, a smooth transition would be facilitated to the next group, enhancing comprehension, engagement, and the implementation of short-term programs, such as youth capacity development, training, research, or exchange initiatives. An alternative approach would be to enhance capacity development among members of the working group, ensuring that each member is sufficiently equipped to understand and actively engage in discussions, thus allowing for a smooth rotation with confidence in the successor's capabilities.



#YouthTakeover at COP25

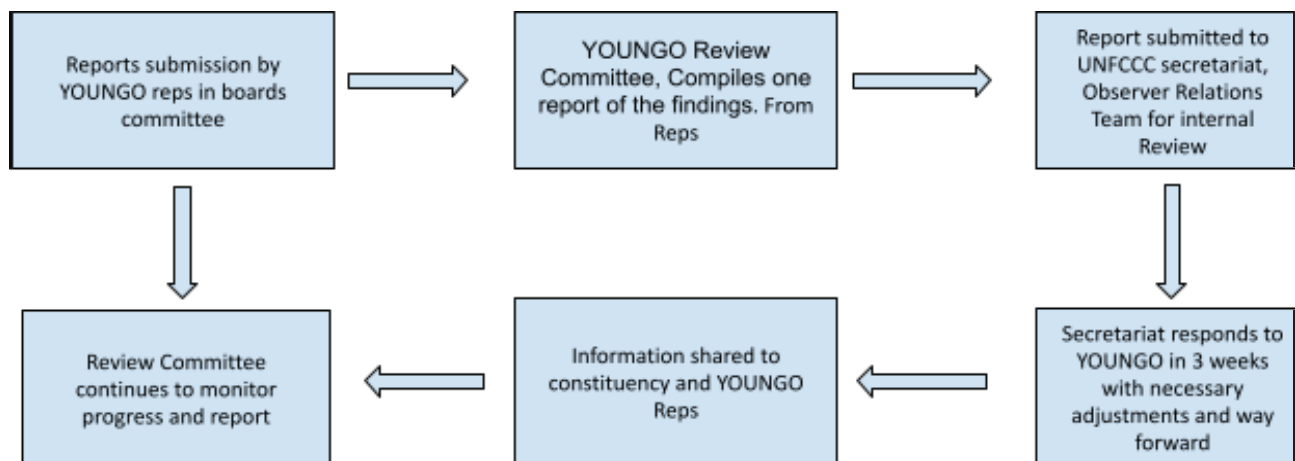
### **6.4.5 The Children and Youth Pavilion**

COP 27 represented a significant milestone as it hosted the inaugural Children and Youth Pavilion. This was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the UN Climate Change High Level Champions, the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) and the COP27 Presidency. The pavilion served as a secure space for young people to showcase their climate action and policy projects and contributions through various forms of expression, including events, art, music, poetry, and dialogues. The evolution of the Children and Youth Pavilion’s story underscores the pivotal role of partnership and financial resources in the successful execution of such projects. What initially began as the ‘African Youth Pavilion’ eventually transformed into the ‘Children and Youth Pavilion’ as additional partners joined the endeavour, recommending its expansion to embrace a more inclusive, global scope. The Children and Youth Pavilion has not only provided a platform for young people to connect and learn from one another but has also facilitated the exchange of valuable information and offered a central youth gathering space for work, meetings, planning, self-reflection, relaxation, and rejuvenation. Prior to the pavilion, it was often very challenging for youth to find any planning or meeting spaces, leaving meetings to take place on floors or corridor spaces. The pavilion has enabled non-youth stakeholders, including government ministers and Party representatives, to directly engage with the younger generations and serves as a crucial space to strengthen intergenerational partnerships and solidarity, as well as strategic advocacy partnerships. Numerous youth organisations and platforms have actively contributed to formulating guidelines for the Children and Youth Pavilion through a collaborative youth-led Steering Committee, ensuring that youth inclusion is integral, from the development of guidelines to program implementation. Another key consideration in the pavilion design was the agreement to have no organisational branding or logos of any kind, making the pavilion a space welcoming to all children and youth regardless of their identities and affiliations.

The sustainability of the pavilion hinges on the availability of financial resources, which, in turn, dictates the size and scale of the pavilion. Additionally, there is a strong encouragement for future COP Presidencies to provide more detailed information on their sponsorship packages, encompassing crucial elements such as translation services, communication protocols, and clearly defined support and working hours for youth volunteer organisers, aspects that are sometimes overlooked. It is noteworthy that all partners involved in various pavilion initiatives contribute their efforts on a voluntary basis, and it is highly advisable to consider establishing a separate budget in the future to compensate volunteers for their hard work. It is essential to establish a robust framework and structure for the pavilion, accompanied by greater clarity regarding the entity responsible for hosting and overseeing its operations in the future. This involves defining the organisational framework and delineating the roles and responsibilities of the individuals or entities involved in the pavilion’s management. There is a pressing need to articulate a comprehensive plan outlining the pavilion’s long-term hosting arrangements, ensuring transparency and a seamless transition for all stakeholders involved.

## Proposed Framework

Making reference to some challenges mentioned above, it is necessary for YOUNGO to have an effective, accountability and transparency mechanism for its participation in UNFCCC processes. In order to assess the involvement of youth representatives in boards, committees, and any processes that mandate the representation of a constituency member, YOUNGO should consider establishing a review committee. The committee should have access to reports submitted by YOUNGO representatives and have one-on-one meetings aimed at gaining insights into their participation. The committee should compile a report of their findings which includes recommendations and challenges and share it with YOUNGO Focal Points who will submit it to the UNFCCC observer relations team on an annual basis, prior to the COPs. This would allow for systematic follow-ups on the ground if need be. Upon receiving the report, the UNFCCC Secretariat should acknowledge its receipt and initiate the necessary follow-up actions with the relevant teams. They should aim to respond to YOUNGO Focal Points within a 3 week timeframe, providing essential feedback, action points and recommendations on how to enhance the youth participation. Figure 24 below illustrates the process



COP 27 Presidency Youth Climate Envoy, Omnia El Omrani



# Chapter 7 : Conclusion



## 7.1 Background

The Youth Stocktake assesses youth participation and inclusion in international climate policy processes. Whilst youth inclusion in climate-related processes has certainly improved in the past decade since the formalisation of YOUNGO as an official UNFCCC constituency, there are gaps that are impeding and opportunities that can be leveraged to enhance the meaningful inclusion of the younger generation in the development of climate policies. The stocktake thus carries out the crucial step to evaluate youth inclusion through a bottom up approach; first it focuses on the evolution and the role of conferences of youth on local, regional and global level in influencing climate policy processes, second it documents the state of the global youth statement, third it looks into Parties' engagement on youth inclusion in the climate policy processes and finally a discussion on more recent COP decisions relating to youth.

The findings outlined in this report are intended to inform diverse stakeholders on the status of youth inclusion in climate policy processes, and help to identify gaps and areas that can be leveraged. This stocktake has only been possible because of the generous contributions of YOUNGO veterans', including Former Focal Points, members who curated the first conferences of youth and rallied youth to participate and eventually accounted for Parties' engagement. As a very first of its kind, this publication on the Youth Stocktake of UNFCCC processes aims to provide a blueprint for establishing a long lasting youth stocktake process that that will run in parallel to the GST and also foster new and innovative initiatives for addressing the gaps highlighted in this report whilst contributing to enhanced youth inclusion in climate negotiations moving forwards.

## 7.2 Key recommendations

The key recommendations from the different chapters are culminated and reflected in the following key asks:

### Monitoring and Reporting

1

One of the major barriers faced in the process of stocktaking is the availability of data. Despite the decades of history of YOUNGO and youth in UNFCCC processes, the information available is scant and scattered. The authors had to reach out to YOUNGO members/former members and interview them. The flat structure in YOUNGO is also misinterpreted and leading to members not being accountable and therefore not reporting back. The fact that the YOUNGO members are volunteers as well, calling for such rigorous reporting and documentation often leads to burnout as members have personal and professional commitments. Similarly, the Parties are unable to provide documented information and statistics on youth inclusion. The latter are still familiarising themselves and paving the way to youth inclusion. At such an early stage, the information is limited. The effectiveness and impact of youth inclusion in the climate policy processes are barely evaluated. **The rationale above does call for proper documentation of the ongoing efforts, dedicate more resources to monitoring and reporting as well as building synergies over the reporting which can land into future youth stocktake. Support to YOUNGO needs to be scaled, especially to host the website domains, translation, data gathering and publication. Monitoring and reporting should be time bound, communicated to the stakeholders and feed into climate policy decisions.**

2

### Building trust and accountability

Trust is a causal factor between youth and diverse stakeholders. The Youth Stocktake has identified several constraints which are driven by trust. Examples include; gatekeeping by Parties due to their lack of trust in youth or youths trust on Parties to drive the climate agenda. Similarly, accountability is two way, youth should also be accountable for the engagement entrusted to them and provide the necessary reporting on the progress. Parties' engaging youth

should also be accountable for effective inclusion and ensuring that the barriers are overcome and the youth are able to contribute to the decision making. **In an environment which is fast paced, there is a need for establishing communication**

lines between youth and diverse stakeholders. Transparency should prevail and youth should be given the opportunity to understand the work of the Parties by being part of it. Likewise, greater understanding can be forged by engaging with youth.

3

### **Structuring and institutionalisation of youth inclusion**

It is laudable to see the youth inclusion initiatives mushrooming, however one cannot deny the looming ambiguity on the long term plans on the initiatives. Most of the initiatives have just kicked started and are being rolled out without proper institutionalisation and structure. Most of the time, it is only about ‘rolling out the initiatives again’ to land before or at COP. This practice makes coordination challenging with no accountability established nor recurrent support secured. Likewise, on YOUNGO’s side the process for reforms is quite time consuming since every time the constituency has to open consultations and try to reach a consensus. The volunteering of the organisations results as members coordinating the reforms opting out if it is too lengthy and time consuming. Or the consultations ending up in no reform at all due to lack of consensus. Therefore, some mandates and guidelines are still outdated and do not reflect the current trend to align with the climate policy processes. Several mechanisms being adopted for youth inclusion by Parties or UNFCCC work processes could benefit from structuring. This would allow for long term planning and continuity in the engagement of youth as well as send a clear signal about youth inclusion. This should be coupled with the needs of the young people in the local community to be able to integrate climate policy processes. Stakeholders should leverage on peer learning and build on synergies rather than working in silos and duplicating the efforts. The youth constituency also needs support to carry out reforms.

4

### **Mobilisation of funding and resources for youth inclusion**

The recognition of funding as a primary challenge and a potential solution is important. It acknowledges the need for diversified sources of funding to support youth inclusion efforts. Right from the bottom level for organising the local conference of youth until Parties’ engagement of youth inclusion in COP delegation, funding is a major concern. The current funding structure suffers from flaws but has nevertheless supported youth participation in LCOYs/RCOYs/GCOYs and also to attend international conferences. There are several initiatives such as the British Council supporting the GCOYs for the last three years and UNDP that has supported youth participation locally, regionally and globally for the past years. However the fundraising process is very tiresome as youth may spend months liaising for funding and end up not getting from partners. Nevertheless, so many partners have come on board with some contributions and when they are all combined it becomes a big impact. Mobilisation of funding should not only rest on one stakeholder group. The report has drawn examples whereby having the support of Parties could allow youth to access funding. Parties and organisations should scale allocation of funding on local, regional and global level for youth inclusion. Organisations collaborating and engaging the youth should also provide financial recognition for the number of hours being dedicated to their initiatives. Similarly, YOUNGO should have a financial mechanism even in its constituency capacity as the absence of capacity to host the funds derail progress and thus the constituency finds it challenging to secure funding.

## 7.3

### Way forward on the Youth Stocktake of UNFCCC Processes

The first Youth Stocktake of UNFCCC Processes has unravelled a lot about the diverse ways in which Parties engage with youth inclusion and identified some of the diverse approaches to ensuring the inclusion and engagement of youth in the development of climate policies. This initial effort intends to inform diverse stakeholders, including Parties, the UNFCCC Secretariat as well as broader civil society, on the efforts that need to be recognised, addressed and/or leveraged in order to strengthen youth inclusion in the processes of the UNFCCC. It is hoped that this youth stocktake should therefore last to:

- Build on the accountability and transparency of youth inclusion by Parties to the UNFCCC;
- Enhance youth-led climate initiatives, notably those spearheaded by YOUNGO, synergies and peer learning on youth inclusion; and
- Help to map the impact of youth inclusion in climate policy processes by providing a roadmap for future youth inclusion.

COP28 is delivering both the first Global Stocktake (GST) and the first Youth Stocktake whereby both stocktake processes form key components in the ratchet mechanism of the Paris Agreement. They both provide an assessment of collective progress on achieving the climate goals but with non state actors at the heart of these outcomes. Within the GST process, non-state actors will need to mobilize and play functionally differentiated roles. This is where young people can have a pioneer role and engagement to support as well as contribute to climate goals on local, regional and global level.

The findings of the Youth Stocktake suggest that involving youth in climate policy leads to tangible climate actions at local, regional, and global levels. Furthermore, the Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) has been a vital platform enabling youth to come together and share best practices in key climate change negotiations, such as adaptation and mitigation, and discuss their expectations for their respective governments in terms of youth inclusive policies and support for young people's policy demands. This aligns with the outcomes of the Technical Dialogue of the first Global Stocktake Synthesis Report by the co-facilitators on the technical dialogue (UNFCCC, 2023), table below explains youth actions in response to actions mentioned in the report.



<b>Technical Dialogue on first GST Synthesis report<sup>18</sup> by the co-facilitators</b>	<b>Youth Actions considered in the Youth Stocktake</b>
<p>Key finding 2: to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, governments need to support systems transformations that mainstream climate resilience and low GHG emissions development. <b>Credible, accountable and transparent actions by non-Party stakeholders are needed to strengthen efforts for systems transformations.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ It is evident that systemic transformations are contingent upon the actions of those in positions of power. Young people have actively advocated for change, participating in climate marches and influencing the negotiation process through submissions, interventions, and the Global Youth Statement.</li> <li>■ In some countries, as indicated in the report, youth are trained as National Experts. This training enables them to understand the Enhanced Transparency Framework, allowing them to comprehend greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories while supporting their countries in being accountable and improving transparency.</li> </ul>
<p>Key finding 3: systems transformations open up many opportunities, but rapid change can be disruptive. A focus on inclusion and equity can increase ambition in climate action and support. <b>Those most affected by climate impacts should be involved in crafting solutions.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Youth is considered as the most vulnerable stakeholder to climate change. A youth stocktake process should measure the progress on youth engagement and inclusion to craft those solutions.</li> <li>■ Parties are already including youth in the policy processes and consultations. Stocktaking will send signals on the effectiveness of inclusion and engagement.</li> </ul>
<p>Key finding 11: Adaptation, including loss and damage key. When adaptation is informed and <b>driven by local contexts, populations and priorities, both the adequacy and the effectiveness of adaptation action and support are enhanced, and this can also promote transformational adaptation.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Some initiatives by young people have been advocating for enhanced actions in their countries' National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). The gap in adaptation climate actions has been mainly technical and financial support, and this has been highlighted in a number of youth initiatives.</li> <li>■ Evidence of partnerships with youth has been highlighted throughout the report</li> </ul>

18. [https://unfccc.int/documents/631600?\\_gl=1\\*1nn7won\\*\\_ga\\*OTEwMzgwMjUyLjE2OTMyMjExMzc.\\*\\_ga\\_7ZZ-WT14N79\\*MTcwMDQ5NzAyNy41Ny4wLjE3MDAoOTcwMzEuMC4wLjA](https://unfccc.int/documents/631600?_gl=1*1nn7won*_ga*OTEwMzgwMjUyLjE2OTMyMjExMzc.*_ga_7ZZ-WT14N79*MTcwMDQ5NzAyNy41Ny4wLjE3MDAoOTcwMzEuMC4wLjA).

Technical Dialogue on first GST Synthesis report by the co-facilitators	Youth Actions considered in the Youth Stocktake
	<p>however, cases of youth tokenism and youth washing has been flagged by youths whereas some partnerships have yielded results</p>
<p>Key finding 17: Means of implementation. Capacity-building is foundational to achieving broad-ranging and sustained climate action and requires effective country-led and needs-based cooperation to ensure capacities are enhanced and retained over time at all levels. Needs-based approaches to capacity building determine the priority capacities required to move forward in terms of implementing the key instruments of the Paris Agreement (e.g. NDCs, NAPs, LT-LEDS, BTRs).</p>	<p>The youth stocktake has documented several capacity building initiatives to empower youth in aligning with the needs. Examples range from training of GHG experts in Zimbabwe, training of young negotiators by Parties, training and technical assistance to young entrepreneurs.</p>

The overview provided in the table emphasizes the significance of a youth stocktake. Given that young people are primary non-state actors profoundly impacted by climate change, their active engagement and inclusion in the stocktake process are crucial

### Our call for the Youth Stocktake

The UNFCCC Children and Youth Constituency (YOUNGO) thereby requests Parties to acknowledge, recognise and support a Youth Stocktake by the youth constituency in parallel with future GST processes. This is crucial to enhance youth inclusion, in addition to helping to scale youth engagement and inclusion in climate action and policy processes more broadly.

YOUNGO encourages other stakeholders to conduct a stocktake, similar to the Youth Stocktake and Local Stocktake by Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) carried out across 27 cities and 18 countries. These processes shall feed into the Global Stocktake, ensuring that the actions, participation and representation of diverse groups are accounted for. These stocktakes should be built on synergies amongst the non state actors allowing for reporting to Global Stocktake. Further, this will enhance understanding, generate more capacity building and inclusive participation of stakeholders in the lead up for Global Stocktake.

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## Annex A:

Year	Name Of Conference	Title of Youth Statement	Any other document available
2005	COY 1 Montreal, Canada	Our Climate, Our Challenge, Our Future International Youth Declaration	
2006	COY 2 Nairobi, Kenya		
2007	COY 3 Bali, Indonesia	High Level Youth Statement	
2008	COY 4		
2009	COY 5 Copenhagen, Denmark	Youth declaration on Climate Change	Report
2010	COY 6 Cancun, Mexico		Report
2011	COY 7 Durban Kwazulu Natal, South Africa		Report
2012	COY 8 Doha, Qatar	Statement	Report
2013	COY 9 Warsaw, Poland		
2014	COY 10 Lima, Peru	Global Youth Declaration on Climate Change	
2015	COY 11 Paris, France	Manifesto	Report
2016	COY 12 Marrakech, Morocco	Youth and Climate change: Time for action.	
2017	COY 13 Bonn, Germany	Final Output	Report
2018	COY 14 Katowice, Poland	YOUNGO Collective Policy Positions	
2019	COY 15 Spain, Madrid	COY15 Chile - Madrid Outcomes	Report
2021	COY 16 Glasgow, United Kingdom	The Global Youth Statement	Report
2022	COY 17 Sharm El sheikh, Egypt	COP 27 Global Youth Statement Declaration for Climate Justice	

## Annex B: List of Parties that participated in the Checklist

Africa	Europe	Latin America and The Caribbean	MENA	North America
DR Congo	Estonia	Barbados	Egypt	Canada
Kenya	Finland	Belize	Israel	USA
Liberia	Germany	Dominica	Saudi Arabia	Asia and Pacific
Ivory Coast	Italy	Ecuador	Sudan	Australia
Mauritius	Netherlands	Mexico	Tunisia	Indonesia
Nigeria	Spain	Peru	UAE	
Sudan	Sweden			
Zimbabwe				

## Annex C: Survey on L/R/GCOYs

### Link to google form:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mFyUxLK5UqBZDGTpf8c1XmjpMe4UvM3T/view?usp=sharing>

## Annex D: Regional Climate Week Consultations

### Assessing the development of youth participation in climate change decision making processes and through YOUNGO

- Q1.** What are the current mechanisms and channels in place for young people to participate in climate change decision making processes at various levels (local, national, international)?
- Q2.** How accessible and inclusive are these mechanisms for young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and communities?
- Q3.** In what ways have you been involved in any climate decision making processes at local, sub-national, national, regional or global level?
- Q4.** What barriers or challenges do young people face in participating in the UNFCCC climate change policy making processes?
- Q5.** What role does YOUNGO play in advocating for young people's participation in climate change decision making?
- Q6.** In your opinion, are YOUNGO's LCOYs / RCOYs and COYs gaining recognition and are L/R/GCOY processes evolving as a movement over the past few years to date? Explain
- Q7.** What strategies or initiatives have been successful in promoting youth engagement and participation in climate change decision making?
- Q8.** What are effective ways of involving young people in climate change decision making processes in the UNFCCC?
- Q9.** Do you have any best practices to share from your country, or regional/global level where young people have influenced or have been meaningfully engaged in climate decision and policy making processes?

## Annex E: Former Focal Points Questions

- Q. Can you please explain the rationale behind the decision to introduce a Global Conference of Youth (GCOY)?
- Q. What was the primary motivation in the establishment of LCOYs , RCOYs and GCOY?
- Q. How were the decisions made to later introduce Regional Conferences of Youth (RCOYs) and Local Conferences of Youth (LCOYs), and what impact did these decisions have?
- Q. Have you encountered any obstacles or resistance in the establishment of L/R/GCOY processes?
- Q. How was the facilitation of these processes during your term, and what challenges were encountered?
- Q. How did constituency members contribute to the development of the Youth Statement and to whom was it presented to?
- Q. How has the establishment of LCOY/RCOY/GCOY impacted the UNFCCC decision making processes thus far?
- Q. How do you collaborate and engage with other stakeholders, other youth organizations or local authorities, to maximize the impact of the youth constituency's work through L/R/GCOY processes?
- Q. What steps does the constituency take to ensure sustainability and longevity of L/R/GCOY processes?
- Q. Do you think that the agenda and event concept of youth L/R/GCOY is effective and able to deliver the needed/ expected outcome to the GYS?
- Q. In your opinion, has YOUNGO's L/R/GCOY processes evolved as a movement over the past few years to date?
- Q. Can you share any success stories of GCOY/RCOY or LCOYs in impacting their community, country, region and territory?

## Annex F: Checklist for Parties

### Link to google form :

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jZSlULiVuhLKcYdg8mxpo\\_rfPaoAXl\\_8/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jZSlULiVuhLKcYdg8mxpo_rfPaoAXl_8/view?usp=sharing)

## Annex G: Interview with Parties - Assessment of youth engagement on climate policies

Which Party/Government are you representing? Please state: .....

What is your current job role? \_\_\_\_\_

### **1. Please tell us how your government has involved/been involving youth representatives in the development and implementation of climate policies?**

*If not covered in the response, interviewer can ask the following questions to prompt greater details:*

» follow up on the type of involvement - for example, does your government have a youth advisory group, youth delegates, conduct consultations with young people or other such

activities?), if yes, please tell us how this works? which groups are usually involved (for example do you seek out individuals/groups/students/young professionals)?

» follow up on the specific climate policy development youth have been involved in - NDC, GST, national climate policies, regional climate policies etc.....

## **2.How does your government select the youth who will provide the input?**

*If not covered in the response, interviewer can ask the following questions to prompt greater details:*

» follow up on the selection process - Is there any specific criteria that has been established for the youth?, do you partner with any institutions, agencies, organisations, groups etc to select youth?, do you or have you used social media as a tool to reach young people? If yes, did you find it effective?, are there any key challenges that you have faced regarding selecting youth who will participate?, what steps have you take to overcome these challenges and what has been the outcome of this?

## **3.What has been the impact of youth inclusion in the development of climate policies?**

*If not covered in the response, interviewer can ask the following questions to prompt greater details:*

» follow up on the benefits and challenges of the involvement - how impactful and effective have the youth involvement been in providing those inputs?, do you find young people's inclusion enhances climate policies?, if yes, in what ways?,

## **4.Has your government supported any youth to attend international conferences, such as national/regional climate weeks, or the COPs?**

*If not covered in the response, interviewer can ask the following questions to prompt greater details:*

» follow up on how many, what support was given (capacity building & training, financial support & what it covered (flights, visa, accommodation, food etc), opportunities given to youth during the conferences (were they involved in events, panels, bilaterals etc), was any criteria used to ensure representation of underrepresented groups of Youth (young women, Indigenous Youths, disabled etc).

## **5.What advice or tips would you would give to other governments to enhance youth participation?**

### **Additional:**

If concrete examples are provided on youth engagement, try to use an extra 10 mins to gather photos and build up a half page story on the case example.

## Annex H: Focus Group Discussion with YOUNGO Policy Team

**Q1.** Can you please introduce yourself and the engagement that you have had with the Policy Team?

**Q2.** What is the role of YOUNGOs policy team?

**Q3.** How do you compile information from global youth, if you can elaborate about your strategy?

**Q4.** How do you measure the impact of the GYS?

**Q5.** What do you think should be done better to increase the impact of the GYS ?

## Annex I : Key informants questions

### Action for Climate Empowerment

**Q.** How have you been participating in UNFCCC processes?

**Q.** Kindly share with us about your contribution in the just recent ACE text on youth participation

**Q.** What does the text mean to young people

**Q.** How do you envision the implementation of the text

**Q.** Any overlooked issues that pose challenges?

### Climate Technology Center and Network

**Q.** Can you explain more about the decision to include young people in CTCN processes?

**Q.** How successful has been your engagement during your tenure as one of the youth representatives at the Advisory Board?

**Q.** Any overlooked issues you want to raise?

**Q.** How to make youth representation at the CTCN Advisory Board much value-adding in the implementation of CTCN activities mandated by COP decisions?

**Q.** Any inputs for future youth candidacy to the CTCN Advisory Board? What are the things to be strengthened?

### Article 65 & 88 Youth Climate Forum

**Q.** You are the first ever youth climate envoy who supported the first youth forum in 2022 in partnership with YOUNGO, the Presidency and UNFCCC. How was your experience?

**Q.** What is the importance of such platforms for youth and how can young people maximize their participation

**Q.** What's the importance of a Youth Envoy Role

**Q.** Any inputs for future youth envoys in the implementation of article 65 and other youth related policies What are the things to be strengthened?

**Q.** How can youth participation be strengthened in UNFCCC processes leveraging on youth related decisions

## **Article 88 Children and Youth Pavilion**

- Q.** last year the we had the first ever children and youth pavilion at COP27 as one of the contact points what's the importance of a Children and youth pavilion at COPs
- Q.** How can the participation of young people be amplified in children and youth pavilion activities
- Q.** How can we ensure continuity of the pavilion ?

# YOUTH STOCKTAKE

of  
*UNFCCC PROCESSES*

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The first ever youth forum Egypt 2022 COP 27