

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT and CAPACITY-BUILDING on CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION in GHANA

INFORMATION NOTE



BACKGROUND

The Republic of Ghana is a climate-vulnerable country with a population of more than 31 million people, approximately 73% of which are below the age of 35. According to [UN World Population Prospects](#) data, Ghana has a **youth population of roughly 11 million people (35%) between the age of 15-34 years**, which is projected to grow further in the next decades.

This young and growing population offers **challenges but also opportunities** that will shape Ghana's development into the future, including efforts on climate change adaptation, resilience-building, and risk management. Among the key challenges are gaps in climate awareness and education, technical expertise, finance and support, and the enabling environment, including a high rate of youth unemployment.

Youth in Ghana have the potential to engage across all levels and become changemakers, innovators, entrepreneurs, communicators, and decision-makers. If given the space and the capacities, they can organize or implement awareness and education campaigns, training programmes, workshops, research, community-

level projects, advocacy, social media outreach, community sensitization, engagement with local leaders, and other related activities.

The **inclusion of youth into climate processes is crucial to achieving resilience and sustainable development**. This includes processes under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), such as work led by the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) unit or the Paris Committee on Capacity-Building (PCCB), activities by youth constituencies such as YOUNGO, and other relevant global and regional processes connected to climate action.

METHODOLOGY

To enhance youth engagement in climate action, address capacity gaps, and identify entry points for scaled-up youth participation, **SLYCAN Trust and SYND Ghana are developing a youth engagement strategy for climate action**.

As part of this process, a survey was conducted among youth and youth groups working on climate change in Ghana. The **survey questionnaire** designed by the research team was distributed via an online form and filled by a total of 79 people. Further information was collected from a **youth workshop with 40 participants** and **comprehensive desk research**.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

In recognition of the challenges related to youth engagement and youth employment, Ghana has established an **institutional and policy framework that aims to address youth-specific needs and barriers**. Key institutions governed by laws such as the National Youth Authority Act of 2016 include the National Youth Authority and the Ghana Youth Federation, as well as schemes such as the National Youth Policy, the National Youth Employment Agency Scheme, or the National Entrepreneurship & Innovation Programme (NEIP).

As indicated in Ghana's **National Youth Policy**, the national government has pledged to:

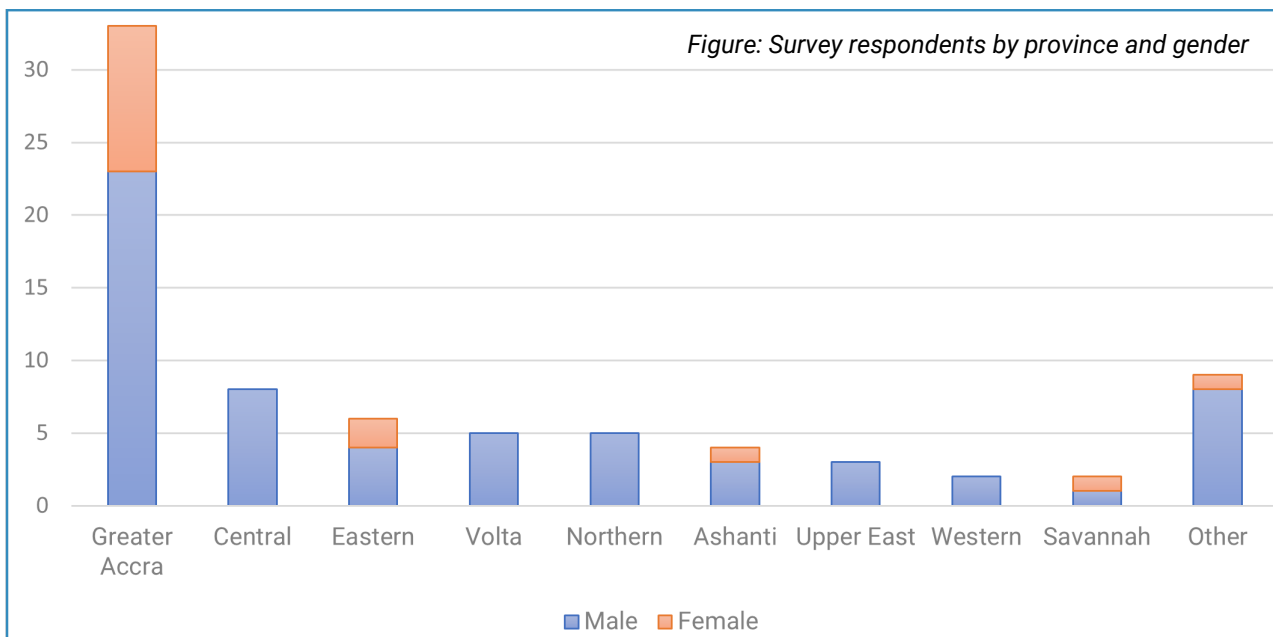
- Make youth active participants in preservation and improvement of the environment.
- Provide alternative livelihood programmes for youth engaged in practices that negatively affect the environment.
- Provide rewards for youth whose ideas and activities enhance understanding, appreciation and preservation of their local environment.

Building on these provisions and the institutional framework, there are many opportunities to further strengthen **youth inclusion into planning, implementation, and evaluation processes on climate and environment** in Ghana.



SURVEY RESPONDENTS

As stated in the methodology box, preliminary findings in this working paper are based on desk research and a youth survey with **responses from provinces across Ghana**, with the majority (43%) located in Greater Accra, followed by the surrounding provinces of Central, Eastern, and Volta (together another 23%). The larger portion of respondents (81%) were male, with only 15 women (19%) filling the questionnaire.



ENHANCING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT in CLIMATE ACTION

Out of all survey respondents, the overwhelming majority (97%) found it **important for youth in Ghana to engage in climate action**. 63% of respondents stated that they had engaged or are currently engaged in climate action, but only 34% considered themselves to be involved in climate-related decision-making processes.

When asked about **the role that youth or youth-led organizations could play in climate action**, almost half of respondents (48%) put a spotlight on **awareness creation, outreach, and education on climate change**. This was followed by 16% for advocacy, 14% for capacity-building and training, 12% for mobilization of communities, 7% for

organizing youth and creating platforms, 6% for developing smart climate solutions, and 3% for improving access to finance.

The respondents highlighted several **challenges for youth engagement across four key areas**:

- A. Awareness and education
- B. Technical expertise
- C. Finance and support
- D. Enabling environment

When asked about **how to overcome these challenges**, respondents named a number of actions they believe could be implemented:

Table: Challenges and proposed actions to enhance youth engagement in climate action

Key area	Challenges for youth engagement	Actions to enhance youth engagement
A. Awareness and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge on climate change, adaptation, and sustainable development • Need to enhance access to reliable information on climate change and adaptation • Need for more capacity-building programmes and workshops on climate action • Insufficient finance and resources for climate education • Limited free time to engage in extracurricular activities such as climate action • Need to enhance motivation and enthusiasm of youth to engage in climate action • Need for youth leaders on climate change in the education system • Need for platforms that highlight youth voices • Need to enhance access to quality education opportunities and networks • Need to overcome traditional and cultural barriers • Gaps in coordination and organizational structure of the education system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the education system to better incorporate key aspects related to climate action and sustainable development • Promote national reforms and further enhancement of the education system • Providing capacity-building and support on climate action for youth, including development of communication, planning, and fundraising skills • Creating youth cohorts and youth networks at the local level to increase youth engagement in climate action • Enhancing coordination for the implementation of climate-related actions at school level • Utilizing new technologies and techniques in the education system • Adopting youth-oriented communication channels for the dissemination of climate information • Conducting dedicated sessions on youth inclusion and providing toolkits for youth engagement • Inviting youth representatives and focal points to climate-related planning processes at all levels • Creating mentoring platforms and forums for exchange for young leaders

Table: Challenges and proposed actions to enhance youth engagement in climate action (cont.)

Key area	Challenges for youth engagement	Actions to enhance youth engagement
B. Technical expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps in technical expertise on climate action among youth and youth organizations • Need to enhance incorporation of youth as a key stakeholder group into climate-related processes to increase their exposure and opportunities for engagement • Limited knowledge on scientific aspects of climate change • Limited awareness of international and intergovernmental processes on climate change • Need for resources to enhance skill development and technical support • Limited experience in implementing climate-related activities and projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing technical support for youth on different aspects of climate action, including project planning and implementation, outreach and communications, and access to finance • Promoting job creation for youth with technical expertise to engage in green and sustainable occupations • Supporting and scaling up climate-friendly youth entrepreneurship through accelerators, incubators, and ecosystem support • Including youth in local and national processes related to climate change and creating youth constituencies in relevant bodies to enhance youth exposure and experience
C. Finance and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for reliable and sustained funds and resources for youth-led climate action and project implementation • Need for financial support for climate-related education and capacity-building • Constraints and limited market opportunities for climate-friendly entrepreneurship or businesses • Gaps in institutional structures for funding youth-led climate actions • Need to enhance fundraising and proposal writing skills among youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilizing funding and support for youth-led climate action • Increasing youth proposal-writing skills and knowledge to access funding • Increasing financial literacy of youth • Providing climate grants and scholarships for youth • Promoting economic models for youth-led climate action and entrepreneurship • Supporting youth entrepreneurship and ensuring youth access to mechanisms to leverage private sector investment • Allocating resources for youth in project teams and activity implementation
D. Enabling environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing policy framework create restrictions for youth engagement • Limited institutional support for youth-led climate action • Need to establish platforms and opportunities for youth engagement in climate action • Limited interest of other stakeholders to engage with youth • Need for increased climate change awareness and capacities among political, traditional, religious, and opinion leaders • Need to scale up attention on and implementation of climate action with youth as key stakeholders • Need to enhance targeted advocacy for youth inclusion and participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing space and opportunities for youth engagement at different levels • Designing climate-related policies and programmes to include youth • Mobilizing political will towards scaled up climate action • Increasing awareness of political, traditional, religious, and opinion leaders on climate change • Formulating policies with key emphasis on youth engagement in climate action • Preparing support packages for youth-led initiatives • Conducting risk assessments for climate impacts on youth in Ghana • Collecting and analyzing age- and sex-disaggregated data to inform actions on climate change

ENHANCING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT in POLICY PROCESSES

To enhance youth engagement in climate action, it is key to understand the **enabling environment including policy and planning processes in Ghana** that can provide entry points on the local, national, or international level.

The following areas are relevant for youth as vital stakeholders and future decision-makers, youth as a climate-vulnerable group, and youth as change-makers and innovators:

NATIONAL CLIMATE POLICIES and LEGISLATION

On the national level, youth could be mainstreamed and included in policies, laws, plans, and decision-making processes on climate change, including by ensuring youth representation in working groups and committees, allocating resources for youth engagement, collecting data, providing training opportunities, selecting youth ambassadors, and communicating key information. A [national ACE strategy](#) could further support the integration of youth into climate policies and processes.

NATIONAL YOUTH POLICIES and RELEVANT SECTORAL POLICIES

By building on its existing institutional framework and the 2010 National Youth Policy, Ghana could further enhance the enabling environment for youth engagement and ensure that youth are recognized as a key stakeholder group. In addition to youth policies, it is also important to strengthen youth integration into other sectoral policies, such as those related to education, health, agriculture, rural development, technology and innovation, gender, migration, entrepreneurship, or ecosystems.

NDC IMPLEMENTATION and REVIEW PROCESS

Ghana ratified the Paris Agreement in 2016 and submitted its [first Nationally Determined Contributions](#) (NDCs) in the same year, with an [updated submission in November 2021](#). The NDCs include 13 adaptation measures, including an action program on building resilience, promoting livelihood opportunities, and fostering social inclusion for youth. It is therefore vital to include youth into the NDC process and address obstacles for youth engagement in NDC implementation.

NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANNING PROCESS and NAP

Ghana is in the process of formulating a [National Adaptation Plan](#) (NAP) to guide adaptation planning, implementation of adaptation actions, monitoring, and evaluation. As per the Least Developed Countries Expert Group's [NAP Technical Guidelines](#), climate change education is a key area that should be included in NAP development, as well as training and awareness creation among youth. The NAP could also serve to proactively strengthen youth capacities and address obstacles for engagement.

AGENDA 2030 and SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Sustainable development and achieving the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) is one of the key challenges for Ghana in the coming decade. SDG indicators, implementation, and tracking need to be localized, which offers opportunities to integrate youth and youth engagement into relevant SDG areas (for example livelihood-related SDGs, SDGs on health and education, or SDG 13-15 on ecosystem conservation and climate change) and (sub)national development planning.

OTHER RELEVANT PROCESSES and PLANS

In addition to climate policies and processes, development planning, and sectoral strategies, youth should also be included and empowered through other processes, including those related to social protection and risk management, through regional or global initiatives (such as the [Africa Agenda 2063](#)), or through processes such as those under the Government of Ghana's agenda of a national digital transformation and promotion of a digital innovation ecosystem.