

ACE Youth Forum

Outcomes

On Sunday, 29th April, 2018, the first-ever Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) Youth Forum¹ (“AYF”) was held at the AHH Upper Conference Room at the UN Campus, Bonn, Germany. The ACE Youth Forum is a youth-led initiative of the Presidency of the 23rd UN Climate Change Conference (COP23) and YOUNGO (the official Youth Constituency to UN Climate Change), in partnership with and support of the Government of Canada, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the UN Climate Change.

AYF brought together over 110 participants from more than 70 countries around the world. It provided a dedicated, informative and interactive space for youth in the lead up to the ACE Workshop, negotiations, dialogue and other Global Climate Action Agenda related events; produced concrete youth recommendations to feed into the ACE-related negotiations taking place at SB 48; and built the capacities of young people to undertake enhanced actions on ACE in their respective national contexts.

A vital component of the Forum was providing the AYF Scholarships² (comprising full-funding support and capacity building), that enabled about 40 youth (“Scholars”) from the countries of the Global South, to participate and engage at the Forum. There was also a focus on enhancing representation from Small Island Developing States (SIDS), who experience an increased vulnerability to environmental challenges. A global selection process evaluated over 3,330 applications from 125 countries to select these Scholars.

Key outcomes from the forum:

1. ACE-National Focal Points

The participants of the AYF expressed the belief that the ACE National Focal Points (NFPs) of the Parties to the Convention are crucial to successfully implementing ACE and the Paris Agreement. Therefore, the following actions are suggested to enhance the work on ACE and the actions of the ACE NFPs:

- Strengthen the connection between the ACE NFP and key national actors and stakeholders, especially youth organizations, ensuring an equal exchange of ideas.
- Organize events, such as annual national ACE summits, to foster connections between relevant experts, practitioners, and the public in order to enhance ACE actions.
- Development of ACE-related web platforms at the national level that could serve as a platform between ACE related training material and ACE NFPs.
- Enable an inclusive access to all the material produced by the secretariat on an open source basis, for instance: braille availability, both online and offline. This will enable

¹ www.aceyouthforum.org

² www.aceyouthforum.org/ayf-scholarships/

the training and support of national practitioners and ACE NFPs to achieve their mandate.

- Create a support group at the national level for the ACE NFP; whereby, different stakeholders could come together to collaborate on the elements of ACE. These groups should continue with the spirit of Talanoa - connecting different stakeholders, working as a communication and implementation channel. This will also enable both, top-down and bottom-up communication between international and national ACE practitioners.
- Encourage ACE NFPs to amplify voices of people engaged in ACE activities, including young people with expertise on ACE, and in a cross-cutting manner with climate action. At the same time, build capacity and enhance the accessibility of youth to the governments so as to support negotiations on ACE related matters.

2. Youth Involvement

Young people are engaged in climate action globally. The AYF recommended the following to enhance youth involvement at all levels:

- Having official youth delegates within all Party delegations is crucial for capacity building and for having an inclusive dialogue. Therefore, we suggest that ACE NFPs encourage their colleagues to include youth delegates at the sessions of UN Climate Change in order to support the engagement of young people.
- Nominating a national Youth Focal Point for ACE can help address the limited capacity of many ACE NFPs, while also enhancing youth engagement in ACE activities and bringing further skills and ideas to the table.
- Establish new programs, while also building upon existing Youth Delegate programs, in order to enhance youth participation, as well as to build a larger pool of youth who could support or be appointed as ACE NFPs or ACE Youth Focal Points.
- Competitions and contests, especially with a creative approach, should be explored as an effective way to enhance youth involvement and awareness in climate action. Good examples are Momentum for Change, the Global Youth Video Competition and the Climate Comic Contest.
- Parties should provide financial support in form of a fund, or other mechanisms, for projects and scholarships for youth to participate at the climate change negotiations and to engage in climate action at the international level, as well as to build their capacity for undertaking actions at the national level - the first-ever ACE Youth Forum, and associated scholarships for youth from Global South, is a prime example of such a project.
- Parties should support the organization of national and regional model COPs (e.g., COP simulations), and further ACE Youth Forums, in order to reach and engage more young people on the ground and to educate and inspire them.

3. Education

One of the key aspects that needs to be highlighted as a part of ACE is the education system. Education has a major role to play in bridging the awareness gap between the success and challenges of Climate Empowerment. This form of education is not limited only to formal education, but also encompasses vocational training and other aspects of informal education along the principle of leaving no one behind. Similarly, capacity building programs, both on international level and, as relevant, on the national level, should also be incorporated.

Several recommendations were offered for enhancing education under ACE; Parties are requested to:

- Ensure that climate education, as well as elements under the Education for Sustainable Development, are incorporated into the curriculums at all levels of learning.
- Integrate Climate change education into both formal and informal education materials. These should include key areas such a mitigation and adaptation, where the younger generations must have their capacity built for effective climate change actions.
- Provide and promote attractive online material on climate change and sustainability, as well as on the UN Climate Change process, for interested teachers and youth. The Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) is an attractive model to inform such actions.
- Build a climate resilient community by having a sustainability capacity building program that targets youth in both formal and informal learning arenas.

As part of these capacity building activities, education can work in line with the Paris Committee of Capacity Building (PCCB). The mentorship of youth by the Parties also can be implemented to increase the capacity of youth, as well as to grow the connection between Parties and youth. Implementing sustainable capacity building programs on climate change will ensure a smoother, farther-reaching and cross-cutting awareness on the hazards of climate change, which is paramount in ACE and implementation of the Paris Agreement.

4. Finance

The AYF also noted the vital role of financial support for the implementation of ACE-related activities and the empowerment of youth action. While such resource mobilization can mainly take place at the national level, initiative must also be taken at the international level, along with a framework for effective collaboration on finance via the existing and new Finance Mechanism under the Convention. Thus, consideration was given to options for including ACE into the decisions concerning climate finance: some options were explored:

- Integrating ACE elements into the NDCs and the NAPs could be a funding opportunity to finance formulation and implementation of ACE-related strategies for mitigation and adaptation goals. Thus, Parties should make provisions in NDCs for ACE activities especially in relation to youth as a target group.

- While some ACE elements are already included in specific types of funded projects - such as those of the GEF Small Grants Programme, the Readiness Programme within the Green Climate Fund (GCF), or most Adaptation Fund projects - the Parties should explore ways for integrating relevant ACE-related elements as distinct eligible activities in order to be recipient of funding, thereby incentivizing dedicated ACE-programs.
- Similarly, discussions should be carried out on how elements under ACE could be included as mandatory components (with designated allocation) to existing funding eligible activities, for example participation and access to information within the formulation of climate change related strategies, such as is already the case for Gender, to allow accreditation to the GCF.
- It is also recommended to increase transparency standards for funding mechanisms and also support the youth-led projects to be financed to serve ACE goals.
- Resources, including through other work plans and committees such as the work plan of PCCB, could also be invested to enhance capacity of youth groups to be able to navigate and formally seek funding from GCF, GEF Small Grants Programme, Adaptation Fund, and other mechanisms.

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Climate Students Network
(CSN)

Plant-for-the-Planet-
Foundation (Planet.)

Global Youth Development
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³ www.plant-for-the-planet.org; www.climatestudents.net; www.globalyouthdev.org