

# Youth4Capacity @ Asia-Pacific Climate Week 2023

13-17 November 2023 in Johor Bahru, Malaysia

## Summary Report



## INTRO

Youth4Capacity, in collaboration with its partners including **YOUNGO**, **United Nations Global Compact**, **COP28 Presidency**, **United Nations Development Programme**, **Asian Development Bank**, **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**, **United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies**, and **Care About Climate**, extended an invitation to youths to partake in the Asia-Pacific Regional Climate Week in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. Youths were convened to bolster their contributions to the climate action landscape through immersive capacity-building sessions. These sessions covered vital themes such as a just energy transition, green entrepreneurship, leadership in policy-making, community-based climate action and advocacy, and systems change. The objective was to empower and equip youth attendees with the knowledge and skills needed to actively engage in and drive positive change within the climate action sphere.

# Youth4Capacity #1: Empowering Youth in Asia-Pacific to Co-Create Climate Policy Solutions

The session, “Empowering Youth in Asia-Pacific to Co-Create Climate Policy Solutions” focused on empowering the youth in the Asia-Pacific region to co-create climate policy solutions, recognizing the heightened vulnerability of the region to climate change impacts. With over half of the world's youth residing in the region, it is crucial to integrate their creativity and energy into policy-making processes for sustainable development. The event aimed to address the under-representation of youth in international policy forums, emphasizing the need to equip them with skills to actively engage in climate policy discourse. The session sought to elevate young people's capabilities, foster inclusive policy development, and explore collaborative approaches between policymakers and youth to co-create effective solutions for climate challenges, emphasizing the role of youth as catalysts for positive change. The session was organized by **COP28 YCC IYCDP**, **UNDP**, **UNESCAP**, **YOUNGO** and **Care About Climate**.

## Launch of Policy Brief

POLICY BRIEF

### Meaningful Youth Engagement in Climate Action in Asia and the Pacific

Building sustainable futures today



The policy brief emerging from the 79th session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) underscores the critical need for comprehensive youth involvement in climate action throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Recognizing the marginalization of youth in crucial policy decisions and implementation processes due to various constraints, the document provides a series of recommendations for governments and institutions. Advocates from the region are calling for heightened youth engagement, emphasizing the urgency of robust climate action. The brief advocates for a phased approach, commencing with educational initiatives, progressing into capacity-building endeavors, and culminating in active participation in climate projects. The broad spectrum of recommendations encompasses education, research, campaigns, public information accessibility, political involvement, backing youth-led solutions, and establishing an enabling environment. The aim is to ensure a comprehensive strategy that empowers youth to actively contribute to and shape effective climate policies.

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT  
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# Youth4Capacity #2: Engaging youth in green jobs at scale for a just transition

In a world where many young individuals grappled with challenges in education and employment, the potential of the green transition shone brightly—offering hope through the creation of up to 60 million new jobs in the green economy by 2030, as highlighted by the International Labour Organization (ILO). This presented a unique opportunity not only to alleviate the struggles of over 160 million working youth living in poverty but also to fortify environmental preservation and bolster climate resilience. Grounded in the interconnections underscored by the Paris Agreement and Our Common Agenda report, this urgent call to engage youth at scale in the green economy and just transition was the focal point of the session on "Engaging Youth in Green Jobs at Scale for a Just Transition."

With objectives ranging from raising awareness and building capacities to fostering knowledge exchange, the session aspired to empower young climate practitioners, entrepreneurs, and activists. Through Youth Talks, an Intergenerational Panel Discussion, and an Interactive Workshop, the session aimed to showcase success stories, outline challenges and opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region, and paved the way for collaborative initiatives, amplifying the role of youth in steering a sustainable and equitable future. The session was organized by **United Nations Global Compact (UNGC)**, **United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS)**, **Youth Empowerment in Climate Action Platform (YECAP)** and **YOUNGO**

## Youth Talks “Pursuing my dream green job”

**Samantha Thian (Electrolux)** emphasized the significance of redefining roles within existing jobs to make them more sustainable. She highlighted her experience in corporate settings, particularly in the context of working for Electrolux. She showcased how even roles like human resources and procurement can contribute to sustainability by integrating eco-friendly practices. Her story underscored the idea that sustainability is not limited to specific job titles but can be woven into various roles within an organization.

**Jaganath Puvan Thiran (Nutrition Technologies)** explained the circular economy concept in their process, where agricultural waste is converted into valuable products like protein oil and organic fertilizer. Jaganath shared the company's involvement in the UN Global Compact SDG Action Program, emphasizing the importance of addressing sustainability challenges and understanding the broader impact of their industry. His perspective highlighted the role of research and innovation in creating sustainable solutions for global challenges.

**Mark Liao (Sarawak Eco Warriors)** shared that while he initially delved into conservation sector with a business background, he found his niche by establishing "Plants for Plastic." This venture not only tackled plastic pollution but also showcased the transformative potential of recycled materials in creating a sustainable business model. He spoke about the challenges of startup costs in creating a green business and stressed the importance of diversifying skills within the green job sector. His experience illustrated the resilience needed to adapt to changing circumstances and the potential for creative solutions to environmental issues.

# Youth4Capacity #2: Engaging youth in green jobs at scale for a just transition

## Panel discussion

**Mark Akrofi (United Nations University)** emphasized the urgency of addressing climate change and achieving a just transition. He highlighted the potential for job creation in renewable energy, particularly in the Asia Pacific region. He stressed the importance of making these job opportunities accessible to young people and proposed strengthening collaborations between industries and educational institutions. He also touched upon the challenge of communicating complex concepts like green jobs to local communities, suggesting the need for clear and relatable language.

**Reshma Muram (University of the South Pacific)** provided insights into the unique challenges and opportunities in the region. She emphasized the importance of incorporating traditional knowledge into education systems and creating educational pathways that align with the needs of the next generation. She shared practical examples, such as sustainable transport initiatives in the Pacific Islands, highlighting the role of local communities and youth in these initiatives.

**Mohamed Husni (IMPACT VOICES - The Social Innovation Intermediary)** focused on the practical aspects of creating an enabling environment for green jobs. He highlighted the significance of holistic understanding, emphasizing that innovation and systems thinking should be more than buzzwords—they should be practiced. He underscored the need for evolving educational pathways to suit the next generation and stressed the importance of self-awareness and conscious leadership. He also talked about the importance of reflection and self-care in maintaining well-being and avoiding burnout.

All three speakers echoed the importance of collaboration between industries and educational institutions to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. They emphasized the need for an inclusive and accessible approach to green job opportunities, considering not only urban areas but also rural communities. They collectively painted a comprehensive picture of the challenges and opportunities in transitioning to green jobs. Their insights ranged from the need for accessible education to the practical application of sustainable initiatives in various regions, all underlining the importance of collaboration, ethical leadership, and a holistic understanding of sustainability issues.

## Workshop

In the Interactive Workshop, **Dinh-Long Pham (UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub)** guided participants through activities that encouraged them to identify the green aspects of their current or future jobs. The workshop fostered a sense of urgency, prompting participants to brainstorm creative solutions and envision how their unique skills could contribute to environmental sustainability. Facilitators provided practical tools for participants to develop personalized action plans, empowering them to integrate sustainability into their career paths. This interactive and hands-on approach not only instilled a sense of purpose but also showcased that every profession, from finance to healthcare, can play a crucial role in a just transition. Participants left the workshop with tangible steps and a renewed commitment to making their careers more environmentally conscious.

# Youth4Capacity #3: Human Library Workshop: Amplifying community-led climate action in driving change

The session “Human Library Workshop: Amplifying community-led climate action in driving change” was designed to empower youth with knowledge and inspiration to actively participate in community-led climate action, addressing the pressing challenges of climate change. Through engaging youth with community leaders, the goal was to underscore the pivotal role of local initiatives in driving meaningful change. Participants gained insights into the significance of community-led engagement, enabling them to take informed actions, advocate for robust climate policies, and foster connections with like-minded peers for impactful discussions and collective action.

Adopting the innovative "Human Library" format, the workshop featured youth leaders from Asia-Pacific region sharing experiences of their community-led initiatives. This was complemented by small group discussions, providing participants with diverse examples of such actions. Following this, a networking session facilitated the exchange of key takeaways and the identification of actionable steps in their respective communities. The overarching objectives included exposing youth to best practices in climate leadership, fostering valuable networks, identifying growth opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region, and emphasizing the importance of building consensus at the community level. The session was organized by **YOUNGO**, **Care About Climate** and **Asian Development Bank**.

The participants shared their stories that unfolded direct impacts of climate change on their lives and personal turning points toward climate action. They showcased climate initiatives at community level in their cities/countries that filled them with pride. The collective narrative portrayed a vibrant tapestry of experiences. A call for continued youth involvement and community-led solutions resonated strongly.

The discussion highlighted several key takeaways to support collective progress and strengthen social inclusion and collaboration in policy and finance processes for community-based climate change initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region.

1. Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: The need for multi-stakeholder collaboration involving governments, civil societies, local actors, and international partners is spotlighted. It highlighted the importance of inclusive processes and political will to facilitate an environment where communities can provide advice and voice their concerns effectively.
2. Allocation of Climate Finance: It is noted that only a small percentage (10%) of climate finance is allocated to local-level climate change initiatives. Suggestions were made to improve allocation of climate finance to support community-based climate actions, as these actions can contribute to sub-regional or national climate change policies and targets.

# Youth4Capacity #3: Human Library Workshop: Amplifying community-led climate action in driving change

3. Integration of Local-Level Actions: The importance of integrating local-level climate actions with national and international policies is underscored. There was a push for cascading high-level policies down to the local level and integrate local actions to achieve an integrated approach to addressing climate change.

4. Broad Societal Support: A strong emphasis was placed to develop broad societal support for community-based climate actions. It sought to highlight best practices, collaborative approaches, opportunities, challenges, and lessons to be learned and shared to garner support for community-based climate actions.

5. Inclusive Governance and Financing: The session explored recommendations and inputs for policymakers and negotiators to better integrate and support community-based climate change actions at all levels, including national, international, and regional. It brought into light the need to strengthen participatory and inclusive governance as well as financing in the decision-making process.

6. Recognition of Indigenous Rights: The deliberation also addressed the need to recognize and respect traditional knowledge and decision-making structures of indigenous communities. It pinpointed the importance of securing customary rights to land and water and ensuring inclusive benefit sharing in climate change initiatives.

7. Local champion approach: The use of the local champion approach, where individuals from the community take the lead in galvanizing local efforts, emerged as a powerful strategy for community-based initiatives, including climate actions. The importance of raising awareness and implementing effective communication plans was underscored, underlining the need for communities to be informed and engaged in the decision-making process.

Moreover, the session also provided insights into the mechanisms in place to ensure the involvement of local communities and leaders in decision-making processes. The involvement of local communities and leaders in decision-making processes was discussed in the context of legal processes and the goodwill of local governments. It addressed the importance of creating a safe forum for communities to voice their concerns and provide advice, as well as the need for support from translators and youth-led initiatives to facilitate inclusive decision-making processes. The need for inclusive benefit sharing, especially in the context of community-based climate change initiatives, was also acknowledged. It emphasized the importance of ensuring that local communities have a say in policies and decisions that affect their land and resources.

In summary, these mechanisms aim to facilitate inclusive and participatory decision-making processes to address climate change challenges at the local level. Overall, the discussions demonstrated the richness of local initiatives and the potential for scalable and impactful climate actions when communities are empowered and supported.

# Youth4Networking: Gamifying Systems Change

Under the **Youth4Capacity** programme, the **UK Youth Climate Coalition**, in collaboration with **YOUNGO** and the **ACE Hub**, delivered a networking session on 'Gamifying Systems Change.' Departing from the conventional focus on climate change, this interactive game centered around systems change. Participants actively collaborated to recognize the systems in their daily lives contributing to the climate crisis, uncovering power structures, identifying winners and losers, and ultimately constructing an intricate network that highlighted interconnections.

The primary objectives of this initiative were to:

1. Cultivate a systems thinking approach to comprehend the climate crisis and the intricate interconnections between diverse systems.
2. Augment participants' comprehension and capabilities related to systems, power dynamics, and their interrelations.
3. Establish a platform for participants to connect, share ideas, cultivate relationships, and engage in mutual learning

