



### Youth Climate Action Webinar Series

#### Youth and Climate Finance: Unlocking Finance for Youth-led Climate Action in West and Central Africa

**UN Climate Change Regional Collaboration Centre for West and Central Africa (RCC WAC Africa)**

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

**United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**

**Official Youth Constituency of the UNFCCC (YOUNGO)**

**Webinar for West and Central Africa**

**Date and time:** 9 October 2025 from 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM (UTC) in English

and 2:30 PM to 4:00 AM (UTC) in French

**Platform:** MS Teams

#### Introduction

On 9 October 2025, the UNFCCC secretariat ([UN Climate Change](#))'s Regional Collaboration Centre for West and Central Africa ([RCC WAC Africa](#)) co-organized with [UNDP Sub-Regional Hub for West and Central Africa](#), [UNICEF WCARO](#), and [YOUNGO](#) a webinar on **youth and climate finance to explore how to enhance access to climate finance for youth in west and central Africa** as part of the [RCC's 2025 Youth Climate Action Webinar Series](#). This session webinar dedicated to the theme of youth and climate finance aimed to explore the intersection between youth and climate finance and identify both challenges and opportunities for scaling up youth-led climate solutions through enhanced access to funding and investment mechanisms.

#### Objectives of the webinar

The objectives of the webinar were to: i) discuss current barriers youth face in accessing climate finance (e.g., eligibility, technical capacity, scale); ii) present good practices and models of youth-led projects that have successfully accessed funding; iii) explore entry points and opportunities for youth in national climate finance frameworks, including NDC<sup>1</sup> financing strategies, Article 6, and green entrepreneurship schemes; and iv) facilitate dialogue between youth and key stakeholders (governments, climate funds, philanthropic foundations, private sector, MDBs<sup>2</sup>) on co-designing inclusive financial mechanisms.

#### Attendance

The webinar included a dedicated session in [English](#) attended by 65 participants, followed by one in [French](#) attended by 113 participants. Participants comprised of youth climate advocates, youth climate entrepreneurs, youth-led organizations and CSOs representatives, climate finance institutions ([BOAD](#), etc.), [YOUNGO](#) reps, UN Agencies ([UNICEF](#), [UNDP](#), etc.), universities, think tanks, and partners involved in youth empowerment for climate action in west and central Africa.

<sup>1</sup> Nationally Determined Contribution

<sup>2</sup> Multilateral Development Banks



## Structure

The two sessions followed the same structure. Each session lasted for 90min and was structured around a scene setting presentation, followed by two panel discussions, interspersed by an interactive Q&A session.

## Remarks

### Opening

To begin with, opening remarks from the Regional Lead for the UN Climate Change Regional Collaboration for West and Central Africa highlighted youth as game changers and as active agents driving climate action "...from community-based adaptation projects to green entrepreneurship, youth are demonstrating vision, innovation, and resilience...". The West and Central Africa region is a home to a youthful demographic and making climate finance accessible to youth can significantly support Parties in the region to meet their climate commitments and boost economic growth and sustainability.

### Closing

For the closing, the Governance and Peacebuilding Advisor at UNDP Sub-regional Hub for West and Central Africa, traced that climate finance is a powerful accelerator for transformation when youth are meaningfully included. Young people were encouraged to explore and utilize climate project financing existing opportunities. At the same time, most available funding targets large-scale infrastructure or institutional actors, leaving a gap for small grants, micro-loans, and seed capital tailored to youth-led green startups and community-based adaptation projects. An emphasis was made on the need for governments and regional banks to establish youth climate innovation funds that prioritize flexibility, low collateral requirements, and mentorship. Also, governments and development partners should simplify application processes by using plain language, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and offering multilingual support. This approach ensures that young people are not just aware of climate finance mechanisms but are equipped to access and utilize them effectively. In the meantime, government should institutionalize youth representation in national climate councils, regional climate negotiations, and budget planning processes. Mechanisms such as youth climate parliaments or advisory boards can empower young people to co-create policies that reflect their priorities—such as climate education, green jobs, and intergenerational equity. By embedding youth voices in governance structures, the region can foster more inclusive and responsive climate finance frameworks that accelerate just transitions.

## Presentation & Panel Discussions

Amongst the presenters were climate finance specialists from [UNDP](#) and [BOAD](#) who presented respectively on the current landscape of youth and climate finance in West and Central Africa, as well as reps. from [UNICEF](#), [YOUNGO](#) and [JVE](#) who provided insights on challenges and opportunities for youth in climate finance. Excellent contributions were received from young innovators and community leaders, including [UNDP Youth4Climate](#) awardees who shared their journeys, success stories and opportunities for job creation for youths through climate action/initiatives.



Youth reps included: *English session* - [Liberian Youth Climate Actions](#), [Centre for Community Impact Sustainability](#), Sierra Leone; [Trekk Mobility](#) and [Anatsor](#) (both from Nigeria); *French session* – [Ecolotrip](#), Togo; The World We Want, Cameroon; [Réseau des Jeunes pour le Climat au Sahel](#), Mali.

## Some takeaways

1. **Youth at the centre of climate action:** Across the two sessions, participants emphasized that young people in West and Central Africa are not just beneficiaries but critical drivers of solutions and should be seen as partners. Youth innovation and creativity are still an untapped resource if well utilized can support climate finance mobilization
2. **Barriers to Accessing Finance:** Youth-led initiatives face barriers in accessing climate finance: complex application requirements and high eligibility thresholds, limited local financing windows and institutional backing, insufficient mentorship, visibility and credibility for youth-led projects, climate finance awareness gap, skills gaps in financial literacy, proposal writing and project management
3. **Capacity development is essential:** From policy literacy to entrepreneurship skills, young people require structured capacity building & mentorship in climate finance proposal writing, including in carbon market to engage effectively. Trainings, webinars, mentorship programs, entrepreneurship support, and skills development in areas such as MRV<sup>3</sup>, GHG<sup>4</sup> inventories, and digital solutions are critical to empower youth
4. **Targeted financial mechanisms for youths:** Innovative, simplified tools and targeted windows or mechanisms are needed. Flexible financial instruments, youth-dedicated windows, concessional loans, guarantees, and seed grants can de-risk youth-led projects
5. **Universities and networks as catalysts:** Higher education institutions and youth networks emerged as key platforms to nurture research, innovation, and entrepreneurship for climate action. Academic and research institutions should expand programs in emerging climate finance-related skills
6. **Entry points for youth access to climate finance and tools:** Platforms exist such as: the UNFCCC's [Youth4Capacity](#) mentorship programme, the UNFCCC wide Capacity-building Coherence and Coordination Initiative ([CBCI](#)), the [CAPACITY fellowship programme](#), the work of the PCCB under its current focus area dealing with "Capacity-building to support the development of holistic investment strategies and bankable projects to support NDCs and NAPs", [Youth4Climate](#), [Youth Connekt](#), [Generation Unlimited | Generation Unlimited](#), [Equator Prize – Equator Initiative](#), [Global Environmental Facility \(GEF\) Small Grants Programme](#), [Youth Climate Justice Fund](#). List of knowledge and resources sharing platforms: UNDP [Climate Promise Knowledge Platform](#), [Africa Carbon Market Initiative \(ACMI\)](#), etc.
7. **Collaboration matters:** Stronger partnerships between governments, private sector, academia, and youth are critical to scale up climate solutions

There was a direct request to the RCC to establish a mentorship programme for youth in the region.

<sup>3</sup> Measurement, Reporting, and Verification

<sup>4</sup> Greenhouse gases



## Some achievements

1. **Knowledge Sharing:** Key insights were shared on how young people can access climate finance, including tips on designing bankable projects and navigating funding mechanisms.
2. **Awareness Raising:** Highlight of key barriers and solutions for youth engagement in climate finance, contributing to policy discussions and advocacy (e.g., Liberia's plan to set up a national climate innovation fund which features in the country's [NDC 3.0](#)).
3. **High-Level Engagement:** The webinar featured experts from regional development banks, UN agencies, and youth networks, increasing the visibility of youth-led climate initiatives.
4. **Networking & Collaboration Opportunities:** Youth participants connected with potential mentors, funders, and peer innovators, strengthening regional youth climate networks.
5. **Policy & Practical Recommendations:** The discussions generated actionable recommendations for supporting youth-led climate projects, which can feed into regional strategies moving forward