

Youth4Capacity: Once upon a time... capacity-building stories for climate action

November 15th, 2022: Building Capacities with ACE Day

4th Capacity-building Hub, COP27

Outcomes Article



The Building Capacities with Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) thematic day on November 15th, during the 4th Capacity-building Hub at COP 27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, provided space for the Youth4Capacity initiative. This session engaged with youth in the climate action landscape from a wide variety of backgrounds, ranging from business, science, and policymaking to activism and art, through a storytelling modality. It sought to empower young people to share their story of how they got involved in the climate action space and transitioned from being capacity-recipients to taking a greater role in capacity-building efforts as capacity-builders.

To watch this session, head to the Paris Committee on Capacity-building's YouTube channel or click here. For more information on this session, head to the event page.



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Setting the scene

This [session](#) opened with **Alejandro Kilpatrick**, Manager of the Capacity-building subdivision at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), introducing the Youth4Capacity initiative. An initiative set up by the **UN Climate Change Secretariat** with the contribution of the **Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security** which seeks to build the capacities of young people to meaningfully engage in climate action while advocating for youth as **capacity-builders** themselves. He outlined the key approach to accomplishing this as active **exchanges of knowledge**, experiences, and innovations that young climate leaders have encountered along their journeys.



Alejandro Kilpatrick,
UNFCCC

Thereafter, **Ovais Sarmad**, Deputy Executive Secretary at the UNFCCC, brought attention to the ways in which youth are building capacities for the future through **intergenerational dialogue** and in sharing their knowledge with older generations. He likewise reflected on the importance of programmes such as the Youth4Capacity initiative in providing support for this capacity-building process, by identifying and addressing capacity-building gaps to boost **youth-driven** climate solutions.

Riddhi Dutta highlighted the many ways in which the youth are integrated into UNFCCC processes, such as through the [Regional Climate Weeks](#) and the annual [COP](#) process, particularly highlighting the efforts made by the Youth4Capacity initiative in **streamlining youth capacity-building** by engaging with youth directly through sessions such as this one and providing space to learn from the experiences of youth in climate-related capacity-building efforts. This intervention included a [video](#) under the Youth4Capacity initiative which aimed at bringing attention to the opportunities for youth in capacity-building efforts for climate action, while underscoring the need to invest in youth with intersectionality in mind in order to create a future where young climate leaders have the capacity to address climate change meaningfully.



Riddhi Dutta,
UNFCCC



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Storytelling

Following these introductory remarks, six young capacity-builders in the climate action space, shared their stories.



Omnia El Omrani, COP27 President Envoy on Youth for the COP 27 Presidency, and **moderator** for this session provided commentary on the importance of capacity-building for enhanced **leadership and decision-making** on behalf of young people. Her intervention also included a reflection on the inspiring work done by millions of youths around the world, highlighting the fact that youth make up the majority of the world's population, but suffer the most disproportionately from the effects of climate change. In order to effectively engage in the climate agenda, she emphasised the need to build the capacities of young people to actively take part in the decision-making and negotiation processes. Her final comments highlight that young people are not victims in this process, but **capacity-builders** who take charge of their own **advocacy**, and their own **solutions** to the climate crisis.

Joshua Amponsem, the executive director of Green Africa Youth Organization (GAYO) in **Ghana**, shared his experiences as a capacity-builder, recognizing the important role **education** played in initiating his engagement with climate action. Likewise, he emphasized the importance of bridging the gap between **formal and informal learning opportunities** to effectively engage with climate-related issues. This intervention also highlighted the success of GAYO in creating **youth-led** opportunities, thus not only enhancing climate action, but also building capacity at an individual level for youth development.



Joshua Amponsem,
Green Africa
Youth
Organization



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Storytelling

Archana Soreng, Climate activist and Member of the **UN Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change**, shared her experience as a young climate activist, focusing on the importance of **community** and **indigenous knowledge** as a foundation for effective capacity-building. Likewise, she brought attention to the importance of contextualizing climate issues within broader discussions, such as those of **land rights** and **forest rights**. Additionally, she stressed the importance of respect and recognition in capacity-building efforts, identifying that indigenous youth contribute to capacity-building efforts for climate action in their own way. Lastly, Archana pointed to the need for **accessible institutional capacity-building**, through inclusive language-use and acceptance of alternative world views within UNFCCC processes.



Archana Soreng,
UN Secretary-General's Youth
Advisory Group
on Climate
Change



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Storytelling

Chris Cameron, scientist and learning designer with **CLEAR Environmental**, shared her experience with **digital storytelling** as a means to raise awareness of the lived environmental and health issues of communities in the United States who experience daily exposure to toxins due to mining. Her intervention highlighted the ways in which **young people act as capacity-builders** by engaging directly with community members and raising awareness. Additionally, she reflected on her own capacity-building journey at COP27 by **learning** about UNFCCC processes **directly from other young people**.



Chris Cameron,
CLEAR
Environmental

Muraki Kazumi, the President of the **Carbon Capture Research Institute (CRRA)**, provided interesting insights into capacity-building for **technological** and **business innovations**, highlighting the importance of capacity-building from a young age. His intervention highlights the pivotal role that capacity-building plays in youth innovation and **entrepreneurship**, as he shared his experiences of founding a research institute while still engaged as a university student at the undergraduate level.



Muraki Kazumi,
Carbon Capture
Research
Institute

Finally, **Eddy Frank Vasquez**, Climate Activist and Founder of **Juventud Sostenible** and Member of the **Dominican delegation to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**, shared his experiences with engaging at the governmental level on climate-related issues. He noted that youth were only considered in discussions surrounding nationally determined contributions (NDCs) for the Dominican Republic as **capacity-building recipients**, not as **capacity-building providers**. By inserting himself into these processes, Eddy reflected on the enhancement of **youth-driven capacity-building**, particularly in recognizing youth as capacity-builders with agency at the national and international level through advocacy and awareness raising.



Eddy Frank Vasquez,
Ministry of
Environment and
Natural
Resources of the
Dominican
Republic

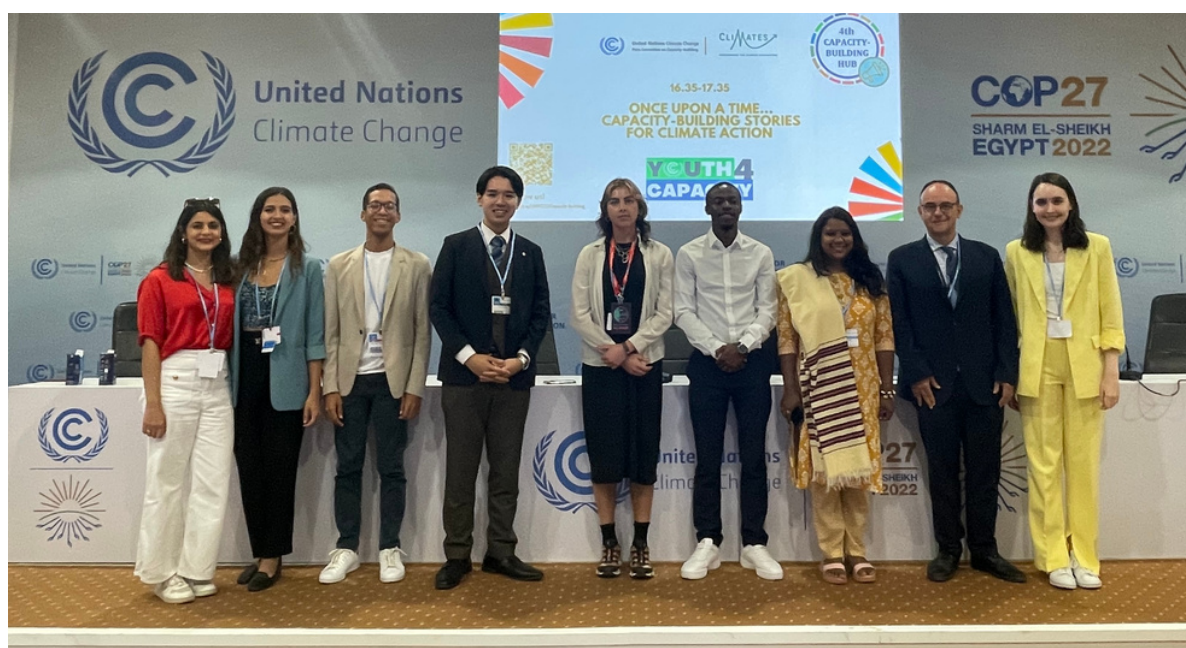


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Closing

Thereafter, the panelists opened the floor to an **'Ask Me Anything'** round of questions from audience members. In response to being asked about the **biggest challenge** for youth in climate action, speakers reflected on the ways in which they are **perceived**, and particularly the difficulties they face in being taken seriously and in being **considered experts**. To overcome these challenges, speakers noted the individual level of capacity-building needed in order to be recognized. **Access to high-level spaces** is also limited, particularly to young indigenous people, which requires the application of ancestral knowledge, as well as a dedication to taking up space.


The session concluded with a **storytelling game** which involved participants **envisioning a future** of climate action where young people are empowered to utilise their capacities and at the same time build the capacities of those around them. Audience members explored the story of a young climate negotiator named Hermione, who was able to enact powerful change and solve the climate crisis through engaging with capacity-builders around the world. The full story is available **below**.





Once upon a Time

There was a young girl named Hermione and it was her first time at COP27. She got lost on her first day, and it was her first time as a young negotiator! Once she explored COP27 further, and began understanding the process better, she realized that some of the existing processes went against her ethics and identity, so she decided to fight against these injustices. She started engaging in the climate action process, where she was able to speak with President Joe Biden. She used this opportunity to negotiate and finalize the carbon pricing framework, and advocated for one hundred youth negotiators to join President Biden's team to implement the carbon pricing framework. This made her realize that no one is too small to make a difference. She was offered a job at the White House and she used this opportunity to share her capacity-building story with other young capacity-builders. Hermione realized that the United States of America (USA) is just one small part of the world, and decided to expand her capacity-building efforts with youth around the world. Hermione remained ambitious, and became the UN Secretary General. After all her work, she took a nap to rest and recover, then going on to become president of the USA. She solved the climate crisis and lived happily ever after.



Participants created their own story here, but now it is up to each and every one of us to shape and build the future we want to see!

