

Youth

Needs Analysis for
Capacity Building
towards UNFCCC
Work Programmes



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YOUNGO
OFFICIAL YOUTH CONSTITUENCY OF THE UNFCCC

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Official Children and Youth Constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (YOUNGO).

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About **YOUNGO:**

The abbreviations YOUNGO stands for YOUTH NGOs accredited to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), YOUNGO works to include the voices and proposals of children and young people globally at UNFCCC negotiations, as well as serving as a catalyst for grassroots climate projects and action. The Constituency has 7,000+ members representing various youth experts, NGOs, student groups, activist and grassroots

organizations, including 4.5% of 3 024 non-governmental¹ formally registered to the UNFCCC. The members are connected via the official mailing list of YOUNGO, which also serves as a moderated communication channel for all standard communication within YOUNGO.

Learn more at younggo.climate or follow [IG@younggo.unfccc](https://twitter.com/IG@younggo.unfccc) X@IYCM

¹ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/parties-non-party-stakeholders/non-party-stakeholders/statistics#Statistics-on-admission>



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Executive Summary



Approximately five hundred (500) individuals from eight (8) regions filled the survey. The survey indicated higher participation of males as compared to other genders, eight (8) regions were represented with the highest region being Sub Saharan Africa and the lowest being Oceania. The majority of young people highlighted they are familiar with the UNFCCC processes but not so familiar with YOUNGO and its roles. The participants highlighted they were much keen in understanding the COP process and how negotiations work within the UNFCCC process.

They also indicated interest in understanding the Conference of Youth (COY), a YOUNGO flagship event which normally takes place prior the UNFCCC COP with the aim to build the capacity of youth who will participate at the UNFCCC COP². The survey highlighted that most young people were very interested in understanding more about climate change adaptation, including the global goal on

adaptation, followed by education and public participation, and Climate Finance. The topics with less interest were science, markets and non-market mechanisms and global stock-take. The survey highlighted that most young people are free on Saturdays and Sundays to take part in the capacity building sessions as compared to other weekdays.

The majority of young people who filled in the survey indicated they represented the NGO space followed by activists and students with only a few who represented the Intergovernmental Non Governmental Organisation (INGO). The majority of youth at least thought the capacity building is very much necessary and should be conducted more often. The report sheds light on the capacity building needs for youth. The findings shall provide more information to diverse initiatives, organizations and stakeholders on youth engagement and empowerment.

² <https://unfccc.int/topics/education-and-youth/younggo/coy>

Section 1:

Introduction

UNFCCC³ is the international negotiation process on climate change, with the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) being the key intergovernmental meeting where most major global decisions are made. The constituency has been conducting capacity building sessions facilitated by experienced constituency members since 2009 to equip members to be prepared for Conference Of the Parties (COP) and the Subsidiary Bodies (SBs). However, due to the technical nature of the process, YOUNGO sometimes sources external capacity with knowledge and depth on various thematic areas. In order to do this in an efficient and inclusive manner, a survey was conducted amongst YOUNGO constituency members to understand more about their capacity building needs.

The survey was conducted by YOUNGO's capacity building team and was available in four languages English, Spanish, Portuguese and French. Voluntary sampling was applied. The survey was shared on YOUNGO's mailing list and shared with different YOUNGO working groups in order to increase the reach. More than five hundred people responded to the survey. Participation was voluntary while the survey was implemented online, with respondents being

ensured confidentiality. The survey had fourteen questions and it approximately required an average of ten minutes for a respondent to complete. The data compiled was analyzed and compared with previous research conducted in YOUNGO.

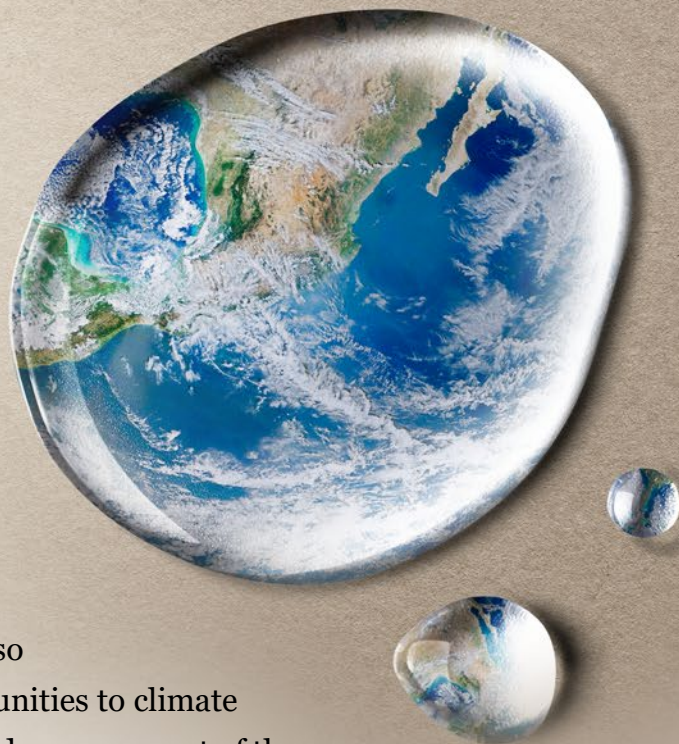
The objectives of the survey were to understand the needs of global youth in climate change capacity building needs and negotiation process and to inform policy makers on gaps hindering the participation of youths in climate change diplomacy and ways to address them. The targeted audience for this survey are youths, policy makers, NGOs and CSOs, academia and private sector, philanthropic sector and any other interested stakeholders.

³ <https://unfccc.int/>

Section 2: Background

The nexus between youth and climate change governance is reciprocal. On one hand, young people are one of the most important stakeholders to mobilize climate actions, and on the other hand, youth is also considered as one of the most vulnerable communities to climate change. The role of the youth has been recognised as a core part of the governance of climate change. The heterogeneity of NGOs brings along local and expert knowledge to address the climate crisis⁴. The growing global youth population represents great potential to mobilize and influence climate actions. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognises youth as a vulnerable stakeholder which requires tailored support to ensure the safety and protection of their rights. Against this backdrop and through the engaging movements and advocacy of the youth, policy makers have adopted several initiatives to increase their inclusion in the decision making process.

The inclusion of youth in the international climate change and negotiations arena has been a long process, and the progress achieved is credited to the hard-won battles fought by young people and allies both at UNFCCC sessions and across the years, nevertheless, those efforts have been culminating in different milestones being achieved. Firstly, since COP21 in Paris, Youth and Future Generations Day was born and has been part of every COP since then, spotlighting youth voices and perspectives in the COP thematic agenda. Secondly, the Glasgow Climate Pact⁵ urges parties and stakeholders to ‘ensure meaningful youth participation and representation in multilateral, national and local decision making processes, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Article 6) and the Paris Agreement (Article 12)’, underlying the vital inclusion of youth in the climate change instances at all levels. Thirdly, the very first Children and Youth Pavilion⁶ was



⁴ *Youth Participation in UN Climate Change Conferences: Challenges and Opportunities*

⁵ *COP 26 Cover Decision, Glasgow Climate Pact*

⁶ *CYP social pages and <https://lnkd.in/evhHurqX>*

launched on the road to COP27, a space for youth and by youth where side events related to youth and climate change thematic areas were hosted.

Article (88) of the Sharmel Sheikh implementation plan⁷ recognises the children and youth pavilion and encourages future incoming Presidencies of the Conference of the Parties to consider doing the same. Over the years, many UNFCCC decisions have been enshrined through implementation of Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE). Despite the above milestones and the participation of youth in the UNFCCC conference for more than a decade now, their contributions and experiences has received limited attention to date. In addition, the support to youth is still being considered as tokenistic and instrumentalist with wide-spread ‘youth-washing’ in climate change initiatives (Thew et al., 2021). YOUNGO being the official children and youth constituency of UNFCCC, felt the urge to assess the needs

for capacity building of youth such that the findings can inform different stakeholders and the momentum to foster youth inclusion can be accelerated.

A review of blogs and articles shed light on the governing ambiguity of youth inclusion in the decision process. It can be deduced that despite the access being provided to the youth, the latter was not empowered to make most out of it. A blog post by a young COP delegate posted on IISD platform in 2021 points out that the navigation of the conference zones and processes still remains a complex process. Similarly, another blog post by the Oxford Institute flags about the struggles in youth participation⁸

Temilade Salami

“

Building capacity for young people is not an option, but a necessity, for the purpose of taking action and building resilience.

⁷ Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan
⁸ Oxford Institute blog



Section 3: Methods

Drawing on the existing reports or blogs on youth participation, the report explores the needs for youth capacity building. The study relies on surveys to gather quantitative and qualitative information on the capacity building needs of the youth. The survey was opened to youth aged between 10 to 35 years on a global level. For the purpose of this report, youth age band width is 10 to 35 years old which is aligned to YOUNGO's policy. The questionnaire was built on google form which can be easily shared across. The data was then downloaded to excel sheet for data cleaning and analysis. The survey was disseminated in four languages: English,

French, Spanish and Portuguese, in order to reach a wider audience and be more inclusive. The survey was shared across YOUNGO's network through email and recurrent social media posts for a period of one month.

The data collection was structured to address the following; to assess whether the youth are aware and are affiliated to the YOUNGO. As the official youth constituency of UNFCCC, YOUNGO wishes to appraise the engagement of youth and to identify the needs for capacity

Research Problem	Research Method	Analysis	Discussions
Investigating the context and defining the problem	Survey development and translation	Survey responses collection	Diagnosis of needs, gaps and opportunities
Mapping the youth needs for capacity building	The intended audience that this study addresses	Data analysis and compilation	Concluding remarks on method, discussion and outcomes
Identify gaps and opportunities			Provide recommendations

building. The report also maps those needs to both internal members and non YOUNGO members. The results shall help YOUNGO to build on and reinforce its ongoing capacity building programme to cater for the needs of its members.

The questionnaire (as per Annex 1) comprised of eighteen questions:

Question 1: Assessed whether the participant is part of YOUNGO

Question 2- 6 : Gather the demographic data about the participant such as age, region, gender and more

Question 7-8 : Evaluate if the participant will be part of any COP and the latter’s sector representation

Question 9- 15: Investigate the familiarity to UNFCCC processes and the needs for capacity building for the youth

Question 16-18: Gather information on the best way to shape the capacity programme based on time difference and preferable day of the week.

The report focuses on the capacity building needs related to UNFCCC work programmes which is in line with COP. While it may be argued that the capacity building needs goes beyond COP, this particular event and its work programmes have been selected given that it is the primary decision making body of UNFCCC. Thus, the youth should be equipped to be able to influence this process.

The descriptive statistics of the participants are as follows:

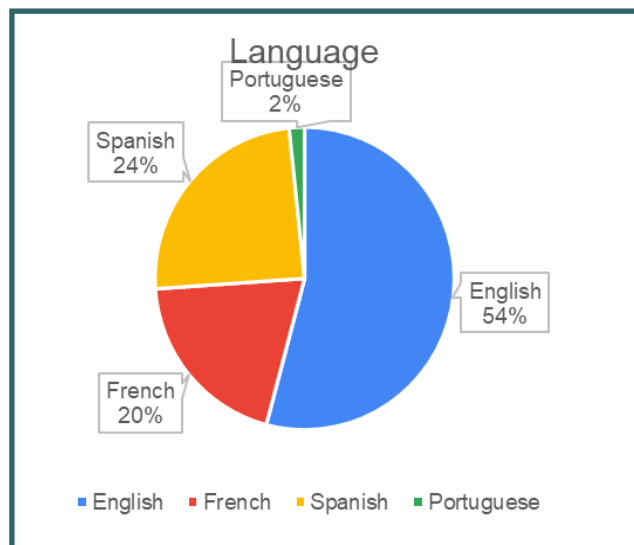


Figure 1: Language used in the survey
As portrayed in Figure 1, the majority of respondents answered in English. Despite the fact that several languages were used to disseminate the survey, the responses from non english speaking personnel has been quite low, further considerations and deliberations on the channel being used to circulate the survey will need to be made to ensure YOUNGO reaches out as many global youths as possible



Figure 2: Regional representation of the survey

The youth representation in the survey is skewed towards Sub Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean regions, followed by Central and Southern Asia. The results are aligned to the capacity building needs identified since those regions have been prey

to lack of accessibility to the negotiations and thus bringing forward their voice through such needs analysis is crucial.

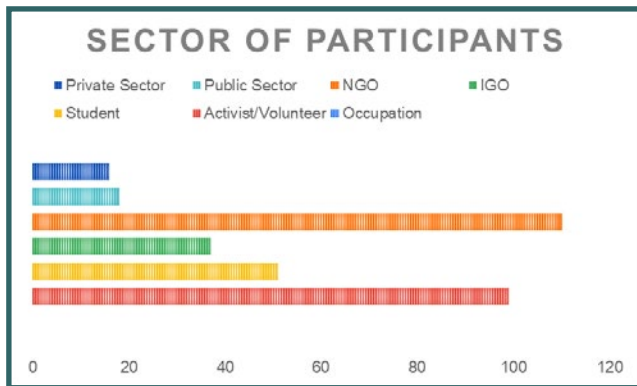


Figure 3: Sector of Participants

The majority of the participants were from NGOs, activists or volunteers. The survey also received some participation from both public and private sector respondents. This spread of responses provides insight on the expectations of participants from different sectors.



Disha Sarkar

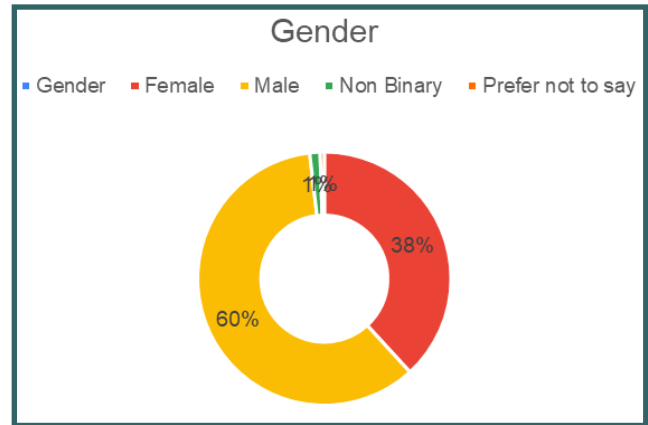


Figure 4: Gender of the participants

The gender parity in the responses was skewed towards the male respondents. The female representation is 38% compared to male being 60%

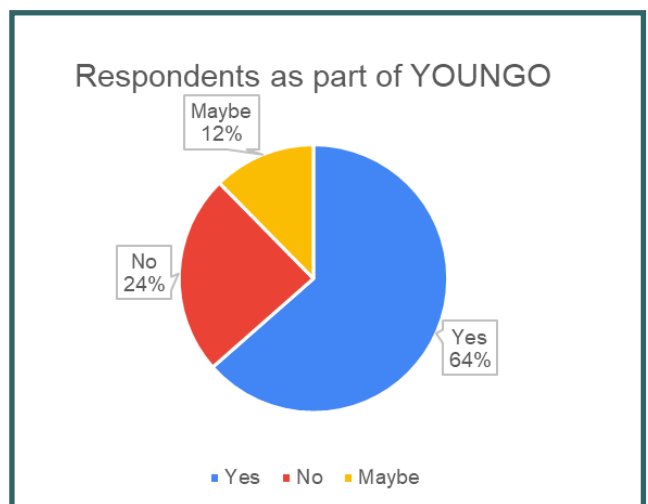


Figure 5: Respondents as part of YOUNGO

Finally, it was crucial to assess perspectives on the needs analysis both from YOUNGO and non YOUNGO respondents. This shall help to better shape the capacity building needs for the global youth.

Articles, clauses , sub clauses and numerous technicalities remain a barrier in youth engagement in decision-making processes. No empowerment is real without proper education and training.



Section 4: Needs Analysis on Capacity Building for Youth

4.1 Awareness & Participation in UNFCCC Work Programmes and COP

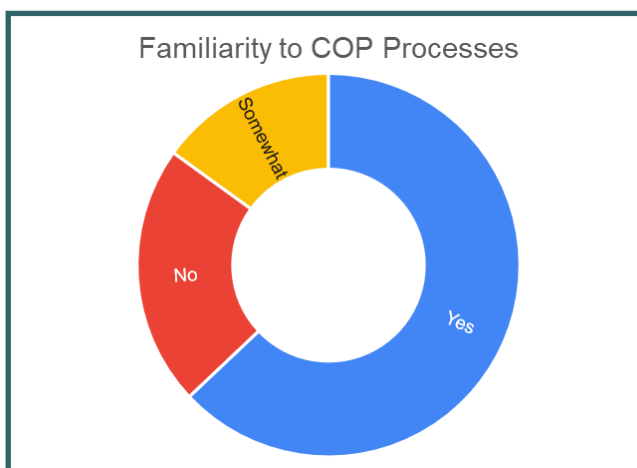


Figure 6: Youth Familiarity to COP processes

The study attempts to gauge to what extent youth are familiar with the COP processes. The majority mentioned that they are familiar with the process whilst a minority were somewhat familiar to the process.

We further deepened the investigation on familiarity to assess how the youth understand their engagements through YOUNGO to influence the COP decisions. However, inconsistency has been noted whereby the youth claimed to be familiar to COP but did not clearly understand the role



of YOUNGO. Most of the respondents described YOUNGO as being the ‘voice of young people’. Only a handful of respondents have been clearly able to describe YOUNGO’s core contribution to COP processes as being ‘technical and policy inputs, engage with decision makers, empower young people to undertake climate action and advocate for climate justice’. A handful of respondents left the section blank or highlighted that they would like more information about this.

The lack of awareness on YOUNGO’s role leaves much to be desired on the engagement of youth to be able to influence the COP processes. Further investigation is needed to assess how the youth understand the COP processes i.e how would they describe it and which aspect of the negotiations are they likely to relate to.

4.2 Need for Capacity Building

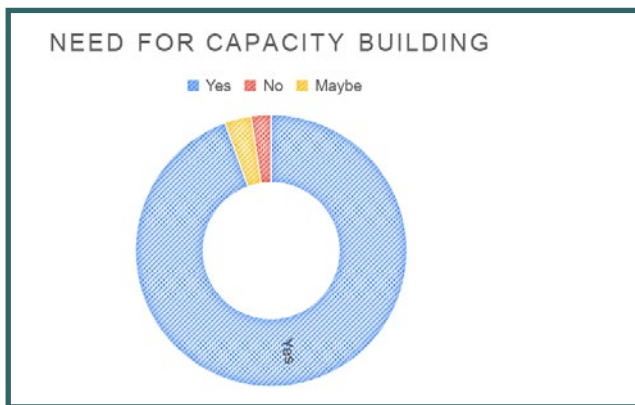


Figure 7: Need for Capacity Building

This section shows the need for capacity building initiatives on the road to COP events. The majority of respondents are in favor of being empowered and having more capacity building sessions.

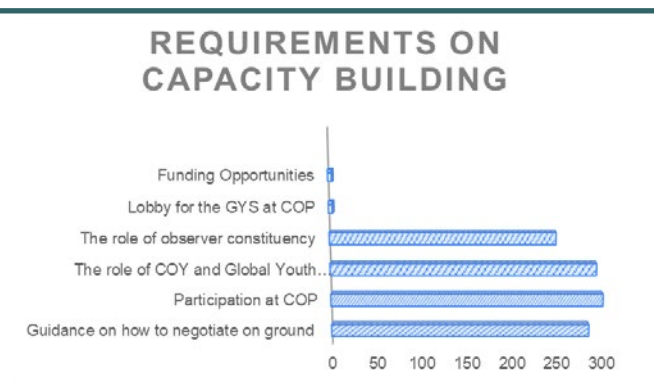
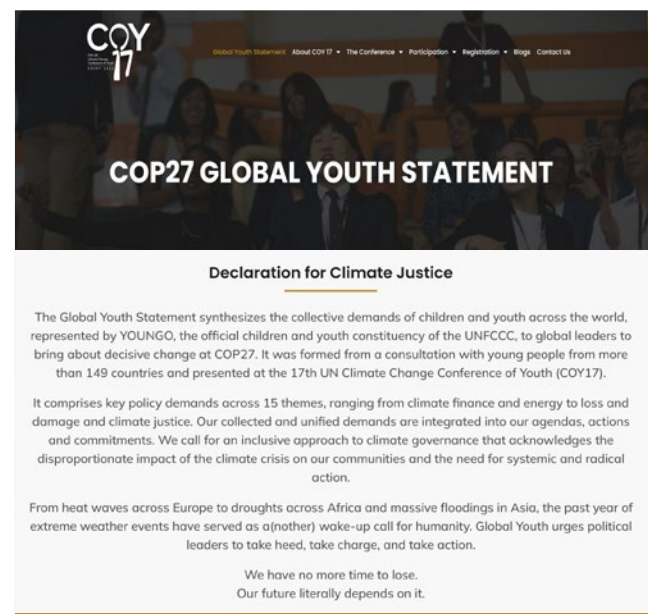


Figure 8: Youth requirements on capacity building.

The figure further depicts the requirements of young people on capacity building. The results correlate to the above findings on lack of understanding on YOUNGO and thus they would like to know more about the role of observer constituency, role of the ‘Conference of Youth (COY)’ and guidance to negotiate on ground.

The Global Youth Statement⁹ (GYS) is a document that carries out the key asks from youth to COP. It follows a bottom up approach whereby the information is collected through diverse mechanisms; survey, focus groups, local and regional conferences (known as LCOYs and RCOYs). Youth wishes to familiarize themselves with the pivotal role that the GYS and COY

can have. This year, YOUNGO has achieved a milestone by approving one hundred and seven (107) Local Conference of Youth (LCOYs) and 9 Regional Conference of Youth (RCOYs). There is a clear need to upscale the capacity of the youth to be able to put forward their voices aligned to the policy decisions, using the effective communications and advocacy mechanisms to do so and connecting with diverse stakeholders.



The high interest of youth on COP leans towards their inclusion and participation in the event and process as well. There is a growing number of initiatives related to COP and especially related to youth (e.g the

⁹ <https://coy17eg.com/globalyouthstatement/>

International Youth Climate Delegate Program (IYCDP) by the COP28 Presidency, Youth4Climate initiated by the Italian Government, cohorts of youth negotiators by Parties, NGOs and more). However, it is crucial to understand the ecosystem and how youth can be engaged in different opportunities. By grasping the intricacies of

COP negotiations, young individuals can effectively advocate for ambitious emission reduction targets, sustainable policies, and innovative solutions. Their voices can amplify the urgency of climate action, driving leaders and nations to take bolder steps in the fight against climate change.



International Youth Climate Delegates (IYCD) pausing for a pic at SB58 in Bonn Germany



Youth4Climate in Milan Italy for a Climate Youth Conference 2021

4.3 Interest in UNFCCC Work Programmes

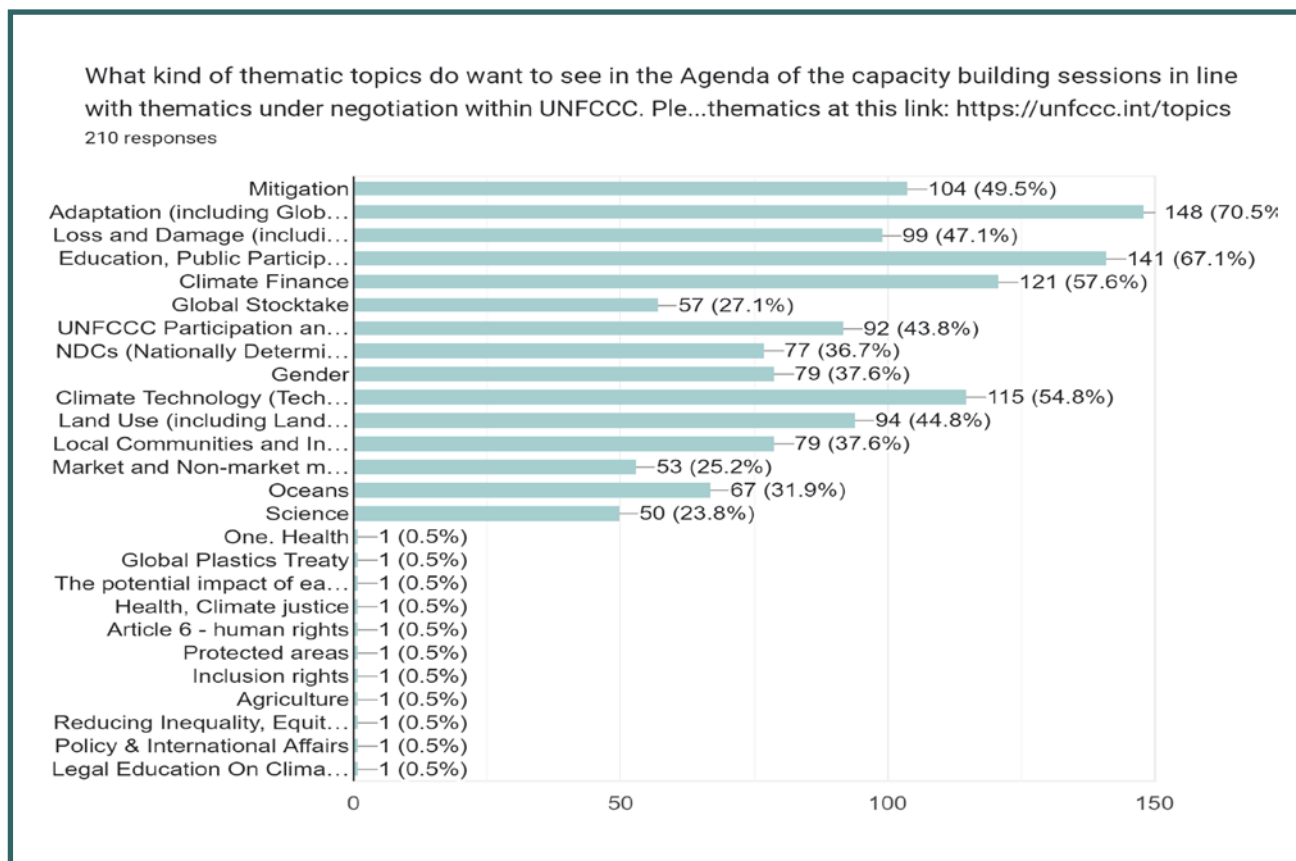


Figure 9: Interest of youth in UNFCCC Work Programmes

We further expanded the study to capture the interest of youth in the UNFCCC work programmes. In so doing, different thematic topics aligned with the negotiation tracks¹⁰ were proposed to them. Thematics such as Adaptation, Education, Climate Finance and Technology were favored by youth to be empowered on.

Climate change necessitates adaptation strategies to cope with its effects. Empowered youth can learn about and contribute to resilience-building efforts in their communities, enhancing their ability to respond effectively to changing environmental conditions. Furthermore,

climate change is a complex issue that spans multiple disciplines, including science, economics, politics, and ethics. Educating youth about climate change encourages interdisciplinary learning and critical thinking. This holistic understanding enables them to approach environmental challenges with a well-rounded perspective. Young minds are often at the forefront of innovation. When educated about climate change, youth can harness their creativity and inventiveness to develop novel solutions to environmental challenges. Their fresh perspectives and technological savviness can lead to groundbreaking advancements in renewable energy, waste reduction, and sustainable agriculture.

¹⁰ <https://unfccc.int/topics>

It is worth analyzing the other end of the curve. Topics such as Global Stocktake which is at the heart of the COP negotiations this year is not primarily on the agenda of the youth. Other thematics such as Science, Ocean, Market and Non Market Approaches have also not gained much interest. This could reflect the lack of understanding on the

thematics or the lack of engagements with the youth. It is important to foster all the thematics such that youths can use the platforms available to them to put their voices forward and also be engaged with them.

Hailey Campbell

“Young people are experiencing climate change in real time. Increasing access to climate education and skill development opportunities are critical for reducing structural barriers for meaningful participation and empowering children and youth to claim their seat at the decision-making table.”





Section 5: **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Capacity building and empowerment of the youth is at a critical juncture and is becoming more urgent than ever. This report provides a snapshot on the needs for capacity building of the youth and is just a first overview of many more avenues that can be explored.

We call for more studies to map the capacity building efforts by different organizations, to identify the gaps and opportunities that can be leveraged through them.

Similarly, the need for capacity building of youth should deep dive and breakdown into regional context so as to better package the actions.

Upcoming initiatives on capacity building should not work in silos but rather explore synergies to amplify their impacts.

Financial support for young people to be able to conduct such research on capacity building needs.

Empowered with knowledge, negotiation prowess, and a profound grasp of climate change themes, young leaders can forge a future defined by sustainability, equity, and collective prosperity. By engaging with international platforms like COP, they sow the seeds of cross-border collaboration and magnify their influence. Equipped with these tools, young individuals can harness their potential to drive positive change on both local and global scales. As future leaders, activists, and diplomats, they hold the key to addressing the world's most pressing challenges, from climate change mitigation to fostering peaceful international relations.

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