



GLOBAL
CENTER ON
ADAPTATION



Mobilizing Youth-Led Adaptation Action

5 Years of the Youth Leadership and Education Program



#Youth4Adaptation



www.gca.org

Conference Edition

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND AUTHORS

About this Publication

This guide was produced under the guidance of Professor Patrick V. Verkooijen, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA). The guide was developed by the GCA Youth Leadership and Education Program under the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program (AAP).

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Region(s): Global, Africa

Keywords: Youth Leadership, Adaptation, Education, Youth Academy on Climate Adaptation and Leadership, Climate

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About the Global Center on Adaptation

GCA is an international organization that promotes adaptation to the impacts of climate change. It works to create climate-proof development by instigating policy reforms and influencing investments made by international financial institutions and the private sector. The organization's goal is to bring climate adaptation to the forefront of the global fight against climate change and ensure that it remains prominent. The Youth Leadership and Education Program connects and empowers young people to create a climate-resilient future, while spotlighting African youth leadership around the globe. The mission of GCA's Youth Leadership and Education Program is to mobilize the next generation of adaptation leaders around the world, empowering young people to make the case for adaptation on the global stage and make their communities more climate resilient.

Learn more at www.gca.org or follow GCA's social media accounts:



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Funding Partners

GCA produced this guide with the financial assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Global Affairs Canada, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, and the UK Government. The contents of this guide are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies, views, or official opinions of GCA or the contributing organization(s), who cannot be held responsible for the information contained herein. References to non-GCA websites or resources do not imply endorsement by GCA of the accuracy of information nor the views expressed therein.



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FOREWORD BY PROF. PATRICK V. VERKOOIJEN, PRESIDENT AND CEO

The urgency of the climate crisis requires fresh perspectives and bold action. In Africa, the world's youngest continent, and across the globe, we have seen firsthand how young people are not waiting for permission to lead; they are already at the forefront, driving change in their communities and beyond. They are the innovators, educators, and ground-level organizers who are transforming climate conversation from abstract policy into tangible, on-the-ground solutions.

What began as a simple "Call to Action" five years ago has grown into a powerful global movement: the Youth Adaptation Network. It is now an active, thriving network connecting 35,000 young people across the globe. These dedicated individuals are collaborating, sharing best practices, and pushing the boundaries of what is possible in climate adaptation.

In 2025, the African Youth Adaptation Network has been strengthened, with 46 In-Country Focal Points across the continent. This step ensures that GCA's efforts are deeply rooted in local communities, guaranteeing that young people on the ground are meaningfully engaged in shaping and executing the adaptation agenda where it matters most.

Over the past five years, I have been honored to collaborate with some of the young people on the frontlines of the climate crisis. I wish to show my deep gratitude to the four Youth Advisory Panels who have served since the inception of the Youth Leadership and Education Program. These young people are a testament to the new generation of climate leaders. Their commitment to adaptation has shaped the Youth Leadership and Education Program that exists today.

The stories and achievements within this publication are a clear demonstration of the impact we can make when we trust and invest in the next generation. The future of a resilient planet rests in their hands, and it is my privilege to stand with them. I wish to extend a special thanks to the Youth Leadership and Education team: Adriana Valenzuela (Lead), Lauren O'Neill (Program Officer), and Anetta Oksitycz-Munyawiri (Junior Program Officer), as well as all previous employees and interns of the team for their continued commitment and support in advancing youth leadership in the adaptation agenda.

I challenge every reader, partner, and organization: Join GCA in a decisive push to scale these initiatives. Provide the resources, the platforms, and the political will to match the boldness of these young leaders. Their determination is unwavering, and our support must be equally absolute. Let this publication serve not just as a record of success, but also as the blueprint for the future of youth-led climate action. This is not the time for incremental steps. This is a mandate for urgent action. We must move beyond acknowledging young people's efforts and accelerate our commitments.

Prof. Patrick V. Verkooijen

President and Chief Executive Officer, Global Center on Adaptation

KEY RESULTS

As the Lead of the Youth Leadership and Education Program, I have had the immense privilege of witnessing, supporting, and learning from young leaders who are rapidly redefining the global adaptation agenda across Africa and the world. Looking back on the achievements of the past five years, I am filled with profound pride and a renewed sense of urgency. The achievements laid out in this publication are a powerful testament to all the young people, decision-makers, and experts who have supported the youth agenda over the past five years.



Adriana Valenzuela

Lead Youth Leadership and Education,
Global Center on Adaptation

Key achievements:



35,000+ youth members of the Youth Adaptation Network



Training of Trainers Model,
50 countries trained from 4 continents



15 grants to replicate the training



Small grants in
46 countries to deliver Youth Consultations on Climate Policy



2 Youth Climate Adaptation Action Days



35 Youth Adaptation Forums
engaging **150** countries



4 Youth Advisory Panels, 46 members from 32 countries



BACKGROUND OF THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

A million young people urge governments to prioritise climate crisis

World leaders will meet for Climate Adaptation Summit to consider how to adapt to extreme weather



📷 Climate campaigners in Lisbon last year. Photograph: Horacio Villalobos/Corbis/Getty Images

More than 1 million young people around the world have urged governments to prioritise measures to protect against the **ravages of climate breakdown** during the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.



“

You are the most important generation in our history. The actions you take and the influence you bring to decision-makers will decide the fate of all future generations."

H.E. Ban Ki-moon,
8th UN Secretary-General and Chair of GCA

Young people comprise 1.21 billion of the world's population,² the largest youth population in history. Young people are disproportionately vulnerable to the climate crisis. In many developing countries, climate shocks disrupt schooling, threaten health, and erode livelihoods, compounding existing social and economic barriers. Meaningful youth participation in adaptation dialogues is therefore essential to designing measures that are inclusive, equitable, and effective.

With the intensifying effects of climate change, such as increasing extreme weather events, young people around the world are calling for governments and decision-makers to prioritize the climate crisis and the inclusion of young people in designing and implementing adaptation measures.³

Over the last five years, the Youth Leadership and Education Program has worked to advance youth participation and engagement with climate adaptation across Africa and around the world. Based upon the mandate of a Global

Call to Action developed by young people, the Program focused on youth participation in climate policy and empowering young people to design and implement adaptation solutions.



TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES (2020–2025)

2020



- Establishment of the **Youth Adaptation Network (YAN)**.

2021



- **Global Call to Action: Adapt our Future**, developed by young people globally.
- Youth Leadership Anchoring event as part of the Climate Adaptation Summit 2021.
- GCA introduces its first **Youth Advisory Panel**.
- GCA High-Level Event "Education and Youth Accelerating Adaptation and Climate Resilience."

2022

- Regional Youth Adaptation Forums were held across Africa, Pacific Asia, Europe, North America, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and Latin America and the Caribbean.
- GCA Hybrid Youth Dialogue on Adaptation Action: Delivering on the Glasgow Climate Pact.



2023

- Launch of the **Toolkit for Youth on Climate Adaptation and Leadership**.
- Regional African Youth Consultations on Adaptation across Western, Eastern, Central, Northern, and Southern Africa.
- Harnessing the Power of Youth in National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) at NAP Expo 2023.
- Africa Youth Climate Assembly (AYCA23).
- *Youth Engagement with the Global Stocktake* report published.
- **#Youth4Adaptation** Communique presented at COP28, urging leaders to scale up adaptation finance.



COP28
UAE

2024



- **Thematic Youth Adaptation Forums** on Young Women Leadership, Water, Climate-Resilient Agriculture, Climate-Resilient Infrastructure and Nature-based Solutions, Youth Entrepreneurship, and Locally Led Adaptation.
- NAP Expo 2024: Consultation on Youth Engagement with NAPs.



- Online Consultations: Young voices from Small Island Developing States.
- Launch of the Youth Academy on Climate Adaptation and Leadership at the University of Nairobi.
- **First** Youth Climate Adaptation Action Day.

2025

- Launch of the African Youth Adaptation Network and the selection of In-Country Focal Points.
- Intergenerational Dialogue with H.E. Ban Ki-moon and H.E. Macky Sall in Nairobi, Kenya.
- In-Person Youth Adaptation Forums held in Bonn (Germany), Uganda, Ghana, Kenya, Zambia (alongside the NAP Expo), Ethiopia (alongside the Africa Climate Summit), and Brazil (COP30 Youth Forum).
- Pan-African Youth Adaptation Forum on Climate Adaptation and Leadership at the Kenyan School of Government.
- **Second** Youth Climate Adaptation Action Day 2025, focusing on nationally determined contributions (NDCs), NAPs, youth, and adaptation.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS: FROM THE CALL TO ACTION TO TODAY

The Global Youth Call to Action

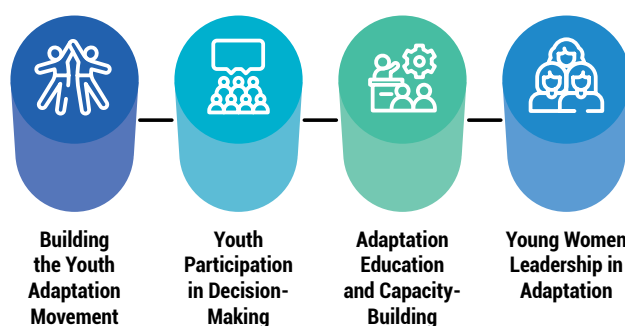
In 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, GCA's YAN facilitated 15 global and regional consultations to collate input from young people in 120 countries across the globe. The results of these consultations led to the Global Youth Call to Action on Adaptation. Young people called upon governments and stakeholders to implement the Global Youth Call to Action on Adaptation in addition to the mitigation measures already in place.



The **Global Call to Action** highlighted the need for:

- 1 Raising awareness on adaptation to climate change.
- 2 Promoting universal education, training, and skills development to empower younger generations to adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- 3 Fostering youth participation in the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- 4 Accelerating adaptation implementation and scaling of climate resilient solutions.
- 5 Expanding economic opportunities for youth, adaptation jobs, and youth-led businesses.
- 6 Strengthening the youth leadership of girls, young women, Indigenous youth, young farmers, and the most vulnerable youth.

As a result of the Global Call to Action, the four pillars of the Youth Leadership and Education Program were formed. These are:



These four pillars have guided the work of the Youth Leadership and Education Program, whilst ensuring that all the demands from the Global Call to Action have been met.

YOUTH ADAPTATION NETWORK

In 2020, GCA observed a gap: few youth networks were actively engaged in climate **adaptation**. International youth efforts tended to focus elsewhere, leaving adaptation underrepresented. In response, GCA established the YAN.

The YAN is an umbrella platform that engages, empowers, and amplifies young people in the adaptation agenda. It provides access to adaptation knowledge and campaigning materials and connects youth with leaders and businesses driving the global climate response. By treating young people as equal stakeholders and offering practical learning opportunities, the Network helps translate knowledge into action, supporting meaningful youth participation in adaptation.

Global Youth Adaptation Network

The YAN was launched in Bangladesh on 8 September 2020 by H.E. Saima Wajed Hossain, Ambassador for Vulnerability for the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF). The YAN further developed these insights to form a [Global Youth Call to Action on Adaptation](#), a set of key demands and actions from young people to decision-makers. The Global Call was published in January 2021 and presented to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and other global leaders at the Adaptation Summit.

The YAN aims to:



Connect young people and youth organizations to build the youth adaptation movement.



Empower youth to lead and drive effective climate adaptation action.



Ensure youth voices are central to climate decision-making.

African Youth Adaptation Network

In 2025, GCA amplified the world's largest YAN across Africa to build the African YAN. A call was made to select one youth-led organization per African country as the In-Country Focal Point for the African YAN.

Key numbers:



466 youth organizations applied



154 youth organizations shortlisted



31,000+ votes



46 In-Country Focal Points

The selected In-Country Focal Points commit to:



Building the YAN in their countries through increasing awareness of the YAN



Leading the Youth Climate Adaptation Action Day celebrations in their countries



Replicating the Youth Academy on Climate Adaptation and Leadership



Sharing knowledge on adaptation and engaging in knowledge transfers on best practices in adaptation within the YAN.

YOUTH ADAPTATION FORUMS

“



Don't give up on government, don't give up on the UN. We're not giving up on you. We are counting on you. And that's a heavy burden but it's no more than the one I had because I was you once.”

H.E. Amina Mohammed,
UN Deputy Secretary-General

measures. It has been demonstrated that building upon youth-led movements and incorporating the knowledge and lived experiences of young people can accelerate the design and implementation of locally led climate-resilient solutions, as well as raise awareness of climate issues and influence climate policies.

Over the last five years, GCA has organized a number of Youth Adaptation Forums with the aim to connect the young people who are driving the adaptation agenda. The Youth Adaptation Forums provide an opportunity to engage in knowledge transfer, share good practices across continents, and build connections in climate adaptation. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, these started as Virtual Youth Adaptation Forums. Over time, the Forums evolved into Regional, Thematic, and In-Person African Youth Adaptation Forums.

Key numbers:



35 Youth Adaptation Forums

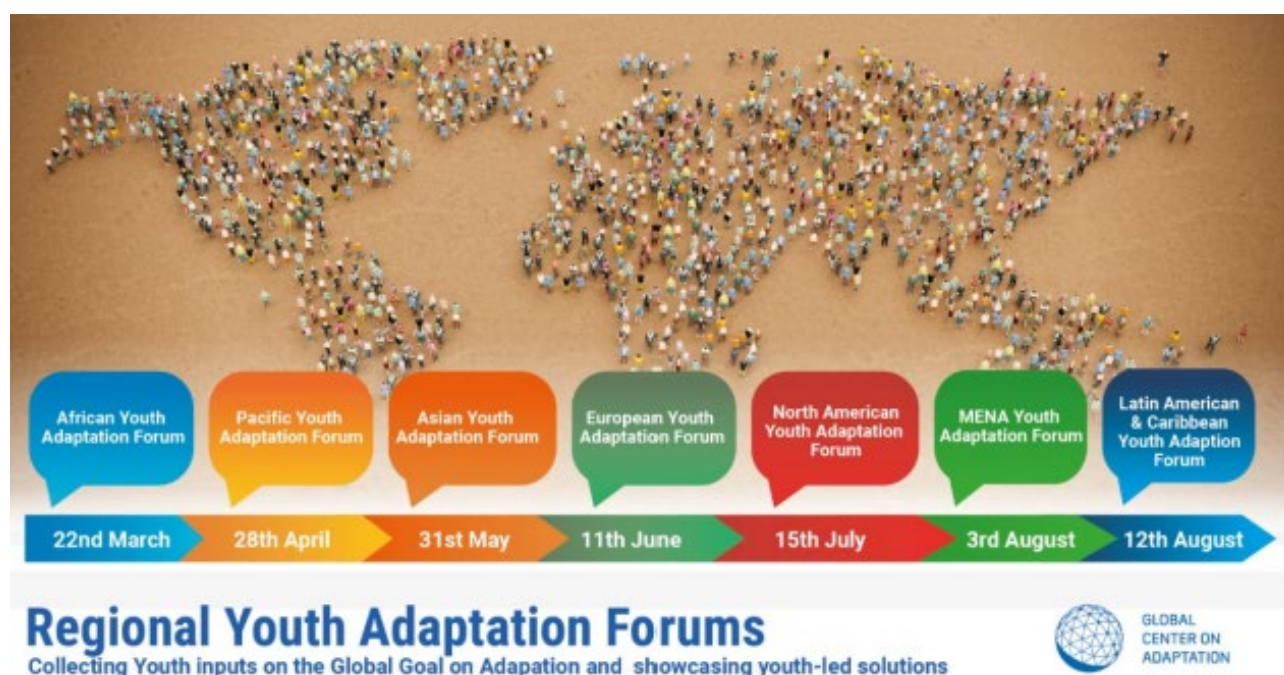


150+ Countries




Young people are at the forefront of the climate crisis. Whilst they are disproportionately affected by the impact of the climate crisis, they are leading in developing innovative solutions and implementing adaptation

Regional and Sub-Regional Youth Adaptation Forums



Throughout 2022, GCA organized seven regional Youth Adaptation Forums. The Forums took place in hybrid and virtual formats, engaging youth around the globe. The Youth Adaptation Forums aimed to elevate youth voices and increase the influence of young people worldwide on the adaptation agenda. Each Forum consulted the youth participants on their priorities, challenges, and needs on the Global Goal on Adaptation.

The seven regional Youth Adaptation Forums engaged:

 **24** partners to organize virtual, in-person and hybrid consultations

 **110** speakers from over 50 countries

 Over **2,300** registered young people from around the world

Regional Youth Adaptation Forums 2023



"Young people raising global ambition, advancing national policies and driving adaptation solutions"



In 2023, GCA organized five **Regional Youth Adaptation Forums** and five **Regional African Youth Consultations** on Adaptation that mobilized the global youth adaptation movement on the road to the Africa Climate Summit and COP28.

 **5** Regional Youth Adaptation Forums

 Engaging young people from **137** countries

 **5** Regional African Youth Consultations on Adaptation

 Engaging young people from **51** African countries

The Forums focused on engaging young people about adaptation policies, including NAPs, the Global Goal on Adaptation, and the Global Stocktake, as well as showcasing youth-led adaptation solutions. The main objectives were to

- **Promote the perspectives of young people in adaptation policies**, including the Global Goal on Adaptation and NAPs to advance inclusive and equitable adaptation decision-making and action by bringing together experts, policymakers, and young people.
- **Catalyze innovative ideas and adaptation action** in young people by featuring African youth leadership around the world, including the African YouthADAPT winners.
- **Establish and strengthen regional connections** between young people and youth organizations to scale adaptation actions and strengthen young people's adaptation advocacy activities by uniting young people for the adaptation agenda.

Thematic Youth Adaptation Forums

In 2024, GCA organized six Youth Adaptation Forums.

The Youth Adaptation Forums focused on Young Women Leadership, Water, Climate-Resilient Agriculture, Nature-Based Solutions, Youth Entrepreneurship and Jobs, and Locally Led Adaptation. The forums sought to collect good-practice adaptation solutions from around the world, with a special focus on Africa, and influence adaptation policies that are related to the thematic priority areas, which were identified in the [Regional Youth Adaptation Forums](#).

The thematic Youth Adaptation Forums aimed to



Boost global interest and knowledge of young people about climate adaptation



Inspire young people to take climate adaptation action



Spotlight young people's priorities on adaptation for policy engagement and adaptation action.

By diving deeper into each identified theme, the forums mobilized young people to take and initiate adaptation action at a local level ahead of the global Youth Climate Adaptation Action Day 2024. The outcomes of the forums were shared during COP29 in Baku.

In-Person African Youth Adaptation Forums

In 2025 in the lead up to [COP30](#), GCA, in partnership with local youth organizations, organized **In-Person African Youth Adaptation Forums 2025** to build a network of youth engaged with adaptation and spotlight youth-led adaptation solutions across different regions of Africa.

Key numbers:



6 Youth Adaptation Forums organized



46 African countries engaged



The Forums brought together students, youth-led organizations, universities, government representatives, and adaptation experts to engage in an adaptation exchange. Young people had the opportunity to share best practices, their needs for building a climate-resilient future, and recommendations for governments and decision-makers. Each forum engaged a geographically diverse demographic of youth from within the country, bringing representatives from different regions.

Each forum developed Youth Communiqué, highlighting the needs and recommendations of young people, which were presented at GCA's AAAP Partnership Forums.



In-Person Youth Adaptation Forums 2025



Youth Adaptation Forum Uganda

Date: 3rd and 4th April

Location: Makerere University

Partners: Climate Change Adaptation Innovation, Ministry of Water and Environment, Makerere University

[Communiqué](#)

[Flickr](#)



Youth Adaptation Forum Ghana

Date: 13th and 14th May

Location: University of Ghana

Partners: Ghana Youth Environmental Movement, University of Ghana

[Communiqué](#)

[Flickr](#)



Youth Adaptation Forum Bonn (on the sidelines of SB62)

Date: 24th June

Location: SB62 Climate Change Conference

Partners: United Nations University

[Flickr](#)



Youth Adaptation Forum Zambia (on the sidelines of the NAP Expo)

Date: 8th and 9th August

Location: University of Zambia

Partners: Inclusive Education for Sustainable Development, Ministry of Green Economy and Environment, University of Zambia

[Communiqué](#)

[Flickr](#)



Pan-African Youth Adaptation Forum Kenya

Date: 5th September

Location: Kenya School of Government

Partners: Kenya School of Government, University of Nairobi, University of Groningen, and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST)

[Communiqué](#)

[Flickr](#)



Youth Adaptation Forum Ethiopia (on the sidelines of the Second Africa Climate Summit)

Date: 7th September

Location: Kenya School of Government

Partners: The Youth Print, Addis Ababa University

[Communiqué](#)

[Flickr](#)



YOUTH ADVISORY PANELS



Your voices on the adaptation agenda are underutilized. My call, my request to you is jump on that bandwagon and drive it."

Prof. Patrick V. Verkooijen,
President and CEO of GCA



The CEO's Youth Advisory Panel was first established under Professor Patrick V. Verkooijen at COP26 in Glasgow, with the goal of strengthening youth engagement in the global adaptation agenda. At the same climate summit, world leaders committed to doubling adaptation finance to developing countries by 2025.

Since its inception, the panel has played a vital role in amplifying youth voices in climate adaptation. The 2022 and 2023 panels worked closely with GCA colleagues to mobilize over 13,500 young people globally through 12

regional Youth Adaptation Forums, forming the backbone of GCA's flagship youth consultation process.

Building on this momentum, the 2024 panel expanded its reach, engaging 15,300 young people through six thematic Youth Adaptation Forums. It also took on a significant advocacy role in Youth Climate Adaptation Action Day, organizing Lighthouse Events and developing a petition urging global leaders at COP29 to strengthen their commitment to adaptation finance.

Each year, the CEO's Youth Advisory Panel continues to grow its impact, empowering young leaders to shape the future of climate adaptation.

Key numbers:



4 panels



46 panel members



32 countries



2022 Panel Members:



- Desmond Alugnoa, Ghana
- Benjamin Strzelecki, Poland
- Neekhil Prada, Fiji
- Manal Bidar, Morocco
- Kervelle Baird, Trinidad and Tobago
- Rory Mondshein, United States of America
- Cathy Li, China
- Joyce Mendez, Brazil
- Elysa Vaillancourt, Canada
- Irfan Ullah, Pakistan
- Hayley Payne, Australia
- Emily Vernall, United Kingdom

2023 Panel Members



- Deon Sekuza, Namibia
- Baliquees Salaudeen, Nigeria
- Natalia Gómez Solano, Costa Rica
- Soomin Han, Canada
- Manav Khanna, India
- Sadia Jahan Rothi, Bangladesh
- Adéla Pokorná, Czech Republic
- Xan Northcott, United Kingdom
- Hannah Athaliah James, Papua New Guinea
- Fale Andrew Lesa, Samoa
- Shaemma Mebwana, United Arab Emirates
- Abdallah Emad Afify, Egypt

2024 Panel Members



- Ivy Wambui Muchoki, Kenya
- Kolade Victor Otokiti, Nigeria
- Rabeb Aloui, Tunisia
- Ahmed Fathy, Egypt
- Nikka Gerona, Philippines
- Sofia Barbeiro, Portugal
- Salim Stokey, the Netherlands/ Ghana
- Adolfo Urquiza, Bolivia
- Ashley Lashley, Barbados
- Anusha Seechurn, Mauritius
- Julia Tubang, Fiji/Papua New Guinea
- Joyee Chakma, Bangladesh

2025 Panel Members



- Febechi Desmond Uzomadike, Nigeria
- Mitin Sandrine Yaah, Cameroon
- Omar Farhate, Morocco
- Livia Chaves Marcolin, Brazil
- Des-Rose Engelbrecht, Namibia
- Katrina Khan-Roberts, Trinidad and Tobago
- Genesis Daquinan, the Philippines
- Marij Tolsma, the Netherlands
- Sankara Nyagaya, Kenya
- Dee-Raya Antonio, Palau



HIGH-LEVEL INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUES AND CONSULTATIONS

Over the past five years, GCA has convened high-level Intergenerational Dialogues to connect young leaders with decision-makers. These forums accelerate adaptation action by showcasing youth-led solutions in entrepreneurship, advocacy, and policy, and by elevating concrete youth recommendations to shape the international adaptation agenda.

Through formats such as Written Communiqués and Calls to Action, young people present their needs and proposals directly to senior leaders, who respond and engage in open dialogue. The result is a practical bridge between generations—and a real seat at the decision-making table for youth.

Notable speakers include:



Prof. Patrick V. Verkooijen, President and CEO of GCA



H.E. Ban Ki-moon, 8th UN Secretary-General and Honorary Chair of GCA



H.E. Macky Sall, 4th President of the Republic of Senegal and Chair of the Supervisory Board



H.E. Anne Beathe Tvinneim, Minister of International Development of Norway



Hon. Ababu Namwamba, Former Cabinet Secretary of Youth Affairs and Sports of Kenya



Graça Machel, Co-founder and Deputy Chair of The Elders



Bo Li, Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund



Arjen Robben, former Bayern München football player



H.E. Mohamed Nasheed, former President of the Maldives



Hon. Gladys Wanga, Governor of Homabay County



H.E. Dr. Abdul Momen, Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh



H.E. Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General

2021 Dialogue



- **GCA High-Level Dialogue with Youth:** Accelerating Adaptation in a Climate Emergency, University of Groningen/Hybrid Event
- **Partner:** University of Groningen

2022 Dialogue



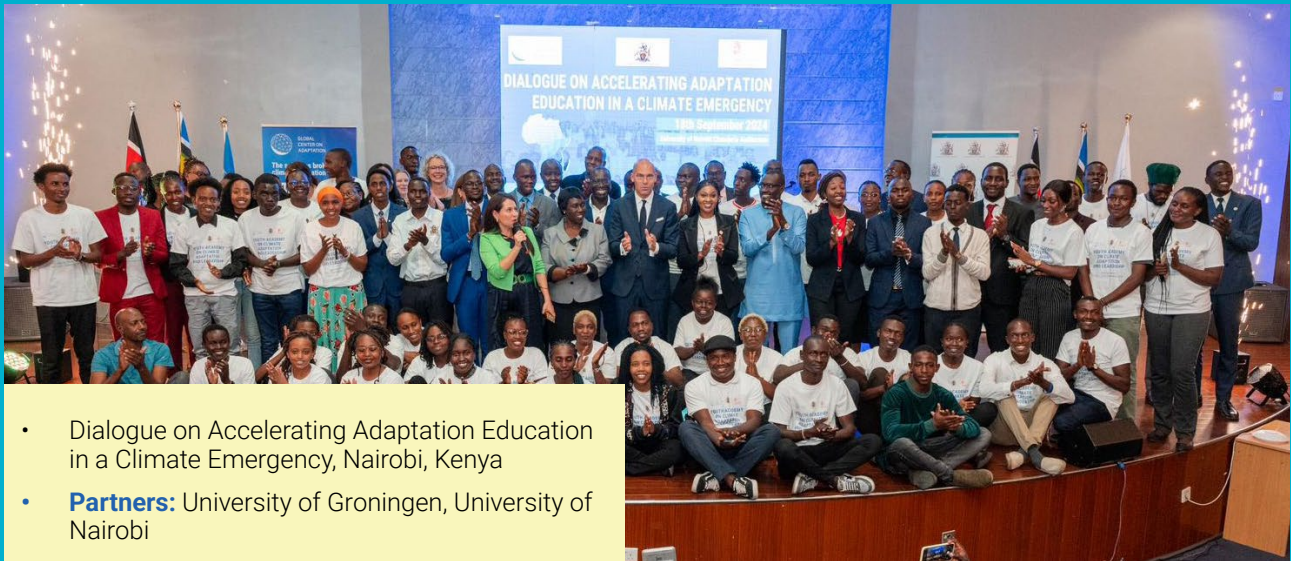
- **GCA Hybrid Youth Dialogue on Adaptation Action:** Delivering on the Glasgow Climate Pact, Rotterdam Floating Office/Hybrid Event

2023 Dialogue



- **Africa Climate Summit:** High-Level Intergenerational Dialogue: Africa Driving Climate Adaptation Solutions, Nairobi, Kenya

2024 Dialogue



- Dialogue on Accelerating Adaptation Education in a Climate Emergency, Nairobi, Kenya
- **Partners:** University of Groningen, University of Nairobi

2025 Dialogue



- High-Level Intergenerational Dialogue on Accelerating Adaptation, Nairobi, Kenya

YOUNG WOMEN LEADERSHIP

Over the past 20 years, the number of climate-related disasters has almost doubled.⁵ These climate-related disasters exacerbate existing gender inequalities in society, leaving women and girls to bear the brunt of the climate crisis disproportionately. Climate change could push almost 236 million more women and girls into a situation of food scarcity, compared to 131 million men and boys.⁶

Despite being disproportionately affected by climate change, women remain underrepresented in policy and decision-making processes and often have limited control over their livelihoods. These structural barriers restrict their access to the resources, finance, and opportunities needed to adapt effectively to a changing climate.

In 2021, GCA and the Ban Ki-moon Center for Global Citizens joined forces to contribute to implementing the AAAP and Youth Leadership and Education in Africa by piloting the Online Executive Training – Young Women Leadership on Climate Adaptation. This virtual educational and capacity-building program sought to empower young African women to unleash their full potential and capabilities to contribute to and drive climate change adaptation solutions. The Online Executive Training Course aimed to provide:



Leadership Capacity Building: Enhance leadership skills to effectively lead and advocate for sustainable solutions in the face of climate change.



Project Management Coaching: Acquire valuable insights and guidance on climate adaptation project management, empowering young women to implement impactful initiatives.



Networking and Career Guidance: Connecting a global hub of young women leaders and changemakers, fostering collaboration across regions, genders, sectors, and generations.



Proposal of a Micro Adaptation Project: Develop a micro adaptation project proposal to address climate challenges in local communities.

Key facts about the Online Executive Training:

- A 20-week part-time training program
- Fully virtual and hosted on an exclusive online learning platform
- Made for selected young women leaders from African countries
- Blended learning approach combining live webinars and self-guided learning materials.

What does the training consist of?

- Leadership capacity-building
- In-depth knowledge about climate adaptation
- Coaching for climate adaptation project management
- Exceptional networking opportunities

Key numbers:



Participants from **12** countries were trained through the Online Executive Training



Countries engaged: DRC, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Malawi, Namibia, Senegal, Cameroon, and Morocco

2022 Training Participants



2023 Training Participants



2024 Training Participants



YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANS



To me, meaningful youth participation is about more than being heard. It must also be about: Ensuring young people and their issues become priorities in climate policies and policy decision-making, recognizing young people's efforts and impacts to date, and promoting and enabling young people's participation and leadership in climate politics, policy-making and action."

H.E. Simon Stiell,
UNFCCC Executive Secretary

Youth participation in decision-making processes is fundamental. Currently, this generation of young people is the largest in history, with 1.21 billion individuals aged 15–24 alive today.⁷ Approximately 87% of these young people live in developing countries,⁷ which are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

As the generation that will inherit both the planet and the impacts of climate change, young people must be meaningfully involved in designing and delivering adaptation policies – especially NAPs – to spur innovative, climate-resilient solutions. While references to youth in NAPs have grown, their participation is often limited to areas like education, capacity-building, job creation, and

communication. Significant gaps remain: young people are still largely excluded from core phases such as decision-making, co-design, knowledge sharing, and monitoring and evaluation of NAPs. Meaningful youth participation across the full policy cycle is essential.

GCA has been working with the UNFCCC Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) and governments to promote youth participation in the NAP Expo. Through consultations, GCA has fostered dialogue surrounding examples of good practices of youth engagement with NAPs from design to implementation, allowing governments to engage in a knowledge transfer on how best to facilitate youth participation in NAPs.



NAP EXPO 2023 CHILE

- ***Harnessing the Power of Youth in NAPs***
- NAP Expo Chile
- **Partners:** UNFCCC LEG Group, Government of Chile



NAP EXPO 2024 BANGLADESH

- **Multi-Stakeholder Consultation on Youth Engagement in NAPs**
- NAP Expo Bangladesh
- **Partners:** UNFCCC LEG Group, YOUNGO (the UNFCCC's official youth constituency), the International Center for Climate Change and Development, Eco-network



NAP EXPO 2025 ZAMBIA

- **AAAP Partnership Forum (on the sidelines of the NAP Expo)**
- NAP Expo Zambia
- **Partners:** Inclusive Education for Sustainable Development, Ministry of Green Economy and Environment

YOUTH ACADEMY ON CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND LEADERSHIP



Key numbers:



50

countries trained across 4 continents



15

small grants to replicate the training



1

model developed to replicate across Africa



Toolkit for Youth on Adaptation and Leadership

A core pillar of GCA is universal education on climate adaptation. Education is both heavily affected by the climate crisis and central to the solution. Each year, the learning of an estimated 38 million young people is disrupted by climate-related events.¹³ At the same time, higher levels of education are strongly correlated with greater adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change.¹⁴

In response to the global call to action and in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, and build capacity of young people, GCA has created different educational resources relating to youth leadership and adaptation. Among these the training-of-trainers model, which was piloted in Kenya and is to be replicated across Africa, is a tool to equip young people with the skills to adapt to the changing climate.

To strengthen adaptation education, GCA has developed a:

- 1 Toolkit for Youth on Adaptation and Leadership
- 2 Youth Academy Training-of-Trainers Model
- 3 Pan-African Youth Academy
- 4 Trainers Handbook

In response to the global call to action on Adaptation, GCA launched the Toolkit for Youth on Adaptation and Leadership in 2023. The Toolkit for Youth on Adaptation and Leadership aims to equip young people with the knowledge and skills to engage in climate adaptation policy, advocacy, and action. It is a tool for universal education on climate adaptation to enable all young people to have access to information on climate adaptation. To ensure the Toolkit is reflective of the different realities across Africa, it was developed in partnership with 40 youth organizations from across the African continent and responds directly to the needs and recommendations of young people. The Toolkit is available in French, English, and Arabic.

The modules include:

1. Understand Climate Change
2. Understand the Basics of Vulnerability and Climate Change Adaptation
3. Understand Vulnerable Groups and Climate Adaptation Planning
4. Learn Youth-Led Climate Adaptation Solutions
5. Develop Soft Skills for Youth Leadership in Adaptation
6. Engage Climate Adaptation Policies: Local, National, and International
7. Design Adaptation Advocacy Strategy
8. Design Adaptation Action

Pilot Youth Academy on Climate Adaptation and Leadership



Building on the Toolkit for Youth on Adaptation and Leadership, GCA developed a training-of-trainers model to be replicated across Africa. The model incorporates workshops on personal skills development, effective communication, and training techniques, to strengthen the capacity of participants to share their knowledge and skills with others.

From 18th to 26th September 2024, GCA partnered with the University of Nairobi and the University of Groningen to develop and execute the inaugural Youth Academy on Climate Adaptation and Leadership at the University of Nairobi's main campus. This training program aimed to equip young people in Kenya and across Africa with the skills to become climate adaptation leaders and trainers in their communities.



Pan-African Youth Academy on Climate Adaptation and Leadership



In 2025, GCA built upon the success of the Pilot Youth Academy on Climate Adaptation and Leadership and hosted the Pan-African Youth Academy on Climate Adaptation and Leadership. The Pan-Africa Academy is a **training-of-trainers program** designed to equip participants with the skills and knowledge to replicate climate adaptation training in their home countries. It was co-organized by GCA, the Kenya School of Government, the University of Nairobi, the University of Groningen, and the MMUST.



The Youth Academy on Climate Adaptation and Leadership features modules and lectures by leading professors and experts, equipping participants with the skills to multiply impact across Africa and beyond.

Scaling Up Adaptation Training in Africa

To facilitate the replication of the Youth Academy, GCA, in partnership with MMUST, awarded 15 small grants. Alongside the small grants, the youth organizations receive coaching to replicate the training within their communities.

The Small Grants initiative, launched by GCA, aims to strengthen the capacity of youth organizations across Africa to replicate and scale the Youth Academy model using the GCA Youth Adaptation Toolkit. Youth groups from 37 countries participated in a competitive application process, from which 15 organizations were selected to receive €2,000 grants each.

The funded projects primarily focus on in-person training on climate adaptation, empowering young people to design and implement context-specific solutions to local climate challenges, with some incorporating online follow-up sessions to enhance engagement and continuity. This initiative not only supports the replication of the Youth Academy model but also nurtures a continent-wide network of youth-led adaptation champions driving locally led climate action.

MMUST has been providing one-on-one coaching and technical mentorship to guide grantees throughout the replication process, from understanding and contextualizing the GCA Toolkit to developing proposals, aligning budgets with project activities, implementing training, and reporting on outcomes. This tailored coaching approach has strengthened the organization's capacity in

project design, facilitation, monitoring, and documentation while fostering collaboration, accountability, and knowledge sharing. As a result, youth groups are now better equipped to sustain and scale locally led climate adaptation initiatives within their respective communities. This approach has proven to strike the right chord in meeting the needs of young people for climate adaptation knowledge and skills, demonstrating a scalable and replicable model that positions young Africans at the forefront of climate action. The demonstrated impact and growing demand from youth organizations across the continent make a compelling case for sustained investment in this initiative. This initiative promises exponential returns as these empowered youth leaders transform climate discourse into tangible, community-driven solutions that will shape Africa's climate-resilient future.

Countries to receive small grants:

- Benin, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Egypt, Kenya, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Mauritius, Madagascar, South Sudan, Tunisia, Seychelles, Zimbabwe



YOUTH CLIMATE ADAPTATION ACTION DAY



Youth always have proven to be real change makers in history. They know what needs to be changed, they have great ideas and they know how to mobilise and how to accelerate using social media. Let's give them a place in the driving seat in the adaptation agenda."

H.R.H. Princess Abze Djigma,
Burkina Faso



In 2023, at COP28 in Dubai, Prof. Patrick V. Verkooijen announced that GCA will host the "Youth Climate Adaptation Action Day," which will mobilize young people from across the world and bring together local adaptation actions to create one global movement. The purpose of the Day is to bring young people together in a knowledge exchange to implement adaptation solutions that will accelerate adaptation action. Young people from around the world were invited to join the global movement to engage with climate adaptation actions and accelerate adaptation solutions worldwide.

The Youth Climate Adaptation Action Day responds to GCA's global call to action to raise awareness on climate adaptation and to accelerate adaptation worldwide. The mass mobilization of young people acts as a reminder that youth are leading the adaptation agenda.

The Youth Climate Adaptation Action Day aims to:

- 1 Build the youth adaptation movement with schools, universities, and youth organizations.
- 2 Raise awareness and increase the knowledge of young people on climate adaptation.
- 3 Drive knowledge sharing for youth-led adaptation actions in Africa and around the world.

2024 Youth Climate Adaptation Action Day

In 2024, the inaugural Youth Climate Adaptation Action Day was opened at Tsinghua University with the High-Level Anchoring Event. Using the 'follow the Sun' approach, young people, schools, universities, partner networks and youth-led organizations hosted **Youth Climate Adaptation Lighthouse Events** in 73 countries. The Day culminated with a closing event at the University of Groningen. Youth Climate Adaptation Lighthouse Events (Lighthouse Events) are virtual or in-person events aimed at raising awareness on climate adaptation, showcasing adaptation solutions, connecting young people, and inspiring action on climate adaptation.

Key Numbers:



365 Lighthouse Events in 70+ countries, of which 48 were African Countries



Our message was seen

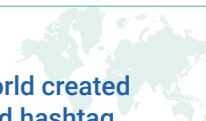
3.769.946 times across various platforms, spreading awareness and amplifying the call for urgent climate adaptation action.



A total of **1.355.981** people were reached directly, showing a widespread connection with youth all around the world.



1,100 people and organizations around the world created posts using our template and hashtag, sharing their Lighthouse Events and amplifying the Youth Climate Adaptation Day message globally.



2025 Youth Climate Adaptation Action Day

In 2025, the Youth Climate Adaptation Action Day invited young people, youth-led organizations, students, and grassroots groups to organize consultations on NDCs, NAPs, youth, and adaptation. NDCs are plans submitted by countries under the Paris Agreement outlining their climate action goals. The theme of “NDCs, NAPs, Youth, and Adaptation” emphasizes the role young people play in building resilient economies and achieving these national commitments.



Key results:



Young people engaged
in Youth Consultations in

90+ Countries, 49 of
which were African Countries



172 countries engaged
on social media



Our message was seen

119,522,650 times
on social media, raising awareness on
youth engagement with NDCs, NAPs,
and adaptation.

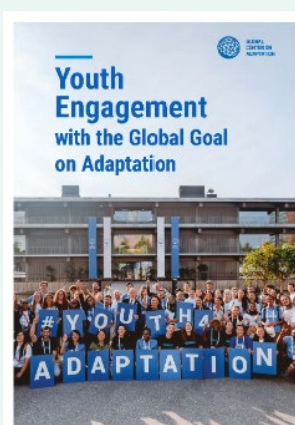
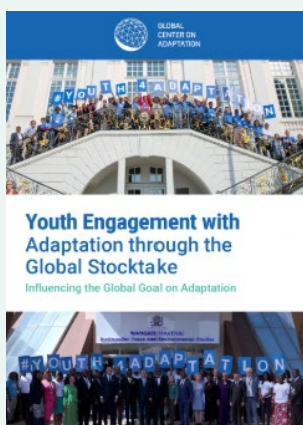
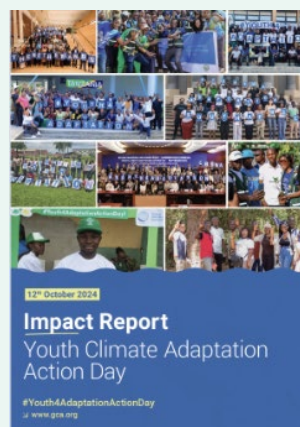


A total of **31,856,479**
people were directly reached.



RESOURCES

Reflecting five years of dedicated effort, GCA has produced a variety of materials designed to empower Youth Leadership and Education for climate adaptation. You can explore the comprehensive list of publications and resources below.



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