

# YOUTH- CENTRIC ANALYSIS OF SRI LANKA'S NDC 2.0

A comprehensive evaluation of Sri Lanka's Nationally Determined Contributions with a focus on the role and impact of youth in driving climate action and shaping sustainable policies for a resilient future.



## 02

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Child Fund Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the Climate Change Secretariat- Ministry of Environment, conducted a youth-focused assessment of Sri Lanka's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the expert guidance of Professor Mohamed Mahees (Department of Sociology, University of Colombo). The findings, finalized with the Climate Change Secretariat, identified key gaps and opportunities to strengthen youth engagement in climate action.

ChildFund Sri Lanka decided to conduct this study in response to increasing demands for children and youth participation in national climate action efforts, as they are critical stakeholders in contributing for future climate policies.

The study reviewed current NDCs, pinpointed areas for youth contribution, and engaged with climate bodies and youth networks to integrate their voices into the NDC review process.

Using a mixed-methods approach, the research captured diverse youth perspectives, revealing moderate awareness of ecosystems and climate change but low NDC knowledge, the presence of valuable Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) in some communities, and barriers hindering youth engagement.

**Key recommendations include:**

- enhancing climate and NDC education
- integrating IEK into national plans
- addressing participation barriers
- promoting collective action
- developing inclusive youth-centric policies
- strengthening youth organization partnerships
- empowering youth with ecological democracy

Ultimately, the study highlights the need for targeted interventions to bridge the gap between youth interest in climate issues and their limited involvement in NDCs, unlocking their potential as agents of change.



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# INTRODUCTION

*“Youth engagement in climate action is vital, but currently low in Sri Lanka.”*

The purpose of the study was to identify gaps and recognize opportunities for improving youth involvement in Sri Lanka’s NDC2.0. A mixed-methodology approach was used in this study, with both quantitative and qualitative data being collected. Quantitative data was collected through online surveys and face-to-face questionnaires, while qualitative data was collected through focus group discussions.

Sri Lankan youth are aware of climate change impacts but often lack a detailed understanding of the causes and potential solutions.

Barriers to engagement include limited opportunities and socio-economic challenges.

This assessment, conducted with approval of the Climate Change Secretariat of Sri Lanka, seeks to amplify youth voices in climate action.



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# METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed method, combining quantitative and qualitative data.



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Questionnaires (200 online, 200 face-to-face) were administered across 11 districts, representing diverse socio-economic and climatic conditions.

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics.



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Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with various youth groups, including disabled youth, rural youth, and urban youth, to gather in-depth perspectives.

The qualitative data from FGDs were analyzed thematically.



## LINE MINISTRY ENGAGEMENT:

Throughout the study, relevant line ministries were engaged to raise awareness about the research, present key findings, and gather their perspectives on youth involvement in NDCs. This ensured that the study's outcomes were relevant to and considered by key government stakeholders.

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# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN CLIMATE ACTION

This chapter explores youth engagement with climate action, examining their knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

**Knowledge of Ecosystems:**

Their understanding of ecosystem dynamics is often limited, while their awareness of local biodiversity is moderate. This suggests a need for enhanced biodiversity education.

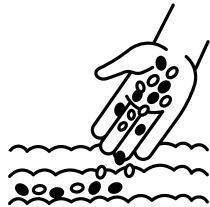
**Awareness of Climate System and Climate Change:**

Of the respondents surveyed, 65% of them were classified as being 'very much concerned' about climate change and its impact on their community, while 32% of the respondents were 'somewhat concerned'.



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# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN CLIMATE ACTION



## Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK):

Respondents from certain regions of Sri Lanka had valuable ecological knowledge to contribute to climate change initiatives, but this knowledge was not being adequately utilized.

## Awareness of NDCs:

Just over half (56%) of the respondents had some knowledge of NDCs, but only limited knowledge. This suggests that there is a need for more education and awareness-raising about NDCs among young people.



**Other Key Areas:** climate rights, power dynamics, gender and climate change, the role of education, culture, and religion, food security, wildlife management, inclusive approaches, and the role of arts and literature in climate action.



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# YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON CLIMATE ACTION AND NDCs

This chapter delves into youth perspectives on climate action and NDCs.

## CLIMATE VULNERABILITIES

### KEY EXPERIENCES:

Youth in Sri Lanka are increasingly vocal about the climate risks they face daily. They attribute these risks to a combination of factors:

- **Poorly coordinated policies:** Ineffective or inconsistent government actions.
- **Outdated regulations:** Existing laws that don't adequately address current climate challenges.
- **Limited community engagement:** Lack of involvement from local communities in climate-related decision-making.

### SPECIFIC CONCERNS:

- **Extreme heat:** The most significant concern, with rising temperatures and heatwaves affecting daily life.
- **Drought:** A major issue, impacting agriculture and causing water shortages.
- **Flooding:** Concerns about increased flooding due to changing monsoon patterns and other natural forces.



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# YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON CLIMATE ACTION AND NDCS

## Cont...

### CONTRIBUTIONS TO NDCS

#### POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

Youth see themselves as active participants in Sri Lanka's climate goals, particularly in:

- **Energy sector:** Strong preference for renewable energy sources like solar and wind power
- **Agriculture:** Willingness to adopt climate-smart agricultural practices, although there's a need for more education and awareness in this area
- **Climate action:** They are keen to use their technological skills, creativity, and community mobilization abilities to drive climate action

#### VIEWS ON THEIR ROLE:

Youth perceive themselves as agents of change, not just victims of climate change. They are ready to:

- Develop technological solutions
- Engage in community conservation
- Advocate for policy changes
- Promote sustainable practices

#### YOUTH PROVIDED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING NDCS:

- Removing barriers to youth inclusion
- Promoting equity in climate actions
- Engaging youth in key sectors

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# YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON CLIMATE ACTION AND NDCS

## Cont...

### PERCEPTIONS OF CLIMATE POLICIES

#### VIEWS:

Youth have a nuanced understanding of climate change and what's needed to address it. They emphasize:

- The importance of both learning and teaching about climate change.
- Their potential to lead climate action in the future.
- The need for active participation in community conservation and policy changes.

#### ROLE IN IMPLEMENTATION:

Youth see themselves as crucial in implementing climate policies, acting as:

- Technology providers.
- Community conservationists.
- Policy change advocates.
- Promoters of sustainable practices.

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# YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON CLIMATE ACTION AND NDCS

## Cont...

### BARRIERS AND ENABLERS

#### BARRIERS:

Youth face several obstacles in their efforts to contribute to climate action:

- **Limited state resources:** Lack of financial support, facilities, infrastructure, and equipment.
- **Organizational factors:** Complex procedures and processes that hinder youth engagement.
- **Societal factors:** Misconceptions about youth engagement, financial constraints, and lack of climate change awareness.
- **Practical obstacles:** Time constraints, difficulties in organizing, and challenges in accessing resources.

#### ENABLERS:

To overcome these barriers and enhance youth participation, the report suggests:

- Adopting a systems approach that considers both challenges and enablers.
- Developing inclusive structures for climate initiatives.
- Enhancing supportive mechanisms and procedures.
- Recognizing and valuing youth involvement in climate action.

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# ENGAGEMENT PLAN WITH LINE MINISTRIES (CONDENSED)

This study revealed several key areas for engagement to strengthen youth participation in climate action through the implementation of inclusive NDCs.

## Study Limitations

This study had several limitations, including its sample size and geographic scope. Future research could expand coverage to more districts. Furthermore, while line ministries were engaged, a more structured feedback mechanism on the study's methodology could be incorporated in future work.

## Administrative Procedures

Improve inter-agency coordination and streamline processes for youth engagement (e.g. funding, policy input).



# ENGAGEMENT PLAN WITH LINE MINISTRIES (CONDENSED)



## Community Engagement

Integrate youth meaningfully into local NDC action plans, empowering their participation and leadership.

## Official Awareness

Train government officials on the importance of youth engagement and how to effectively collaborate with young people.

## Multidisciplinary Integration

Foster cross-sectoral collaboration, including youth perspectives in all relevant climate initiatives.



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## CONCLUSION

The findings of this research underscore the critical importance of actively involving the youth of Sri Lanka in the nation's climate action strategies.

While youth demonstrate strong awareness and enthusiasm for climate action, their potential could be further leveraged by enhancing mobilization efforts, building deeper understanding of NDC policies, and creating more effective participatory channels.

To fully harness the energy and innovations of youth, we must bridge the gap between their climate awareness and active engagement by involving them in participatory decision making and implementation, fostering greater ownership of climate actions.



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# RECOMMENDATIONS

## **Enhance Educational Programs:**

Prioritize and expand climate change education in schools and communities to build a knowledgeable foundation.

## **Promote Awareness of NDCs:**

Launch targeted campaigns to demystify NDCs, making them understandable and relevant to the youth.

## **Leverage Indigenous Knowledge:**

Integrate indigenous ecological knowledge into national climate strategies, valuing the unique insights of rural youth.

## **Support Youth Initiatives:**

Establish funding and support systems for youth-led climate projects, empowering them to take direct action.

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# RECOMMENDATIONS

## **Ensure Policy Inclusion:**

Adopt effective tools that foster youth engagement in policymaking to establish an enabling environment. E.g.: Prioritize budget allocations to support youth-driven climate action programs and advocacy.

## **Strengthening Institutional Engagement:**

Expand opportunities for meaningful youth participation in climate-related ministries and departments to integrate their perspectives into policy and action.

## **Empower with Ecological Democracy:**

Educate the youth on their environmental rights, fostering a sense of responsibility and active participation in safeguarding their future.

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