



Ministry of
Climate Change

YOUTH & NDCs

Effective Engagement of Youth for Meeting NDC Goals to Address Climate Change

POLICYBRIEF





This policy-oriented publication is part of 'Voices Organized for Climate Advocacy and Lobbying' - a national campaign and movement supporting national and regional coalitions uniting stakeholders for collective climate action through strong evidence-based advocacy.

Effective Engagement of Youth for Meeting NDC Goals to Address Climate Change

Executive Summary

The year 2020, holds particular importance for the climate discourse across the globe as it is time for participating countries of the Paris Agreement to turn in their revised climate commitments. In accordance with this, Pakistan too is in the process of ramping up its climate ambitions.

Inclusion and promotion of the youth have been an active mandate of the government culminating in the form of initiatives such as Clean Green Pakistan and the Prime Minister's Green Stimulus Program. Recognizing the immense role that could be played by the country's Youth in climate action and green growth, it is imperative that the Youth be an area of focus in the new Nationally Determined Commitments (NDCs) that Pakistan puts forward in the coming months.

Towards this end, the Ministry of Climate Change in collaboration with Islamic Relief Pakistan has directed Momentum Ventures to conduct this study aimed at unlocking ideas for enhancing youth participation in the formulation and implementation of Pakistan's NDCs. This research is conducted to sensitize policy/decision-makers and other actors on the rationale and urgency of critical climate challenges, related development issues, and the role of youth in addressing them. As a document prepared for the Ministry of Climate Change, this brief could act as a building block for further consideration and action.

In order to ensure that the needs of the youth, their perspective concerning climate action, and the barriers they face for involvement in the climate policy arena in Pakistan are taken into account, a

two-fold approach is adopted. The first approach aims at gauging the current level of awareness on climate change and the NDC process amongst the youth of the country, as well as the challenges faced by youth for greater involvement. The second approach looks at global examples of successful climate interventions and attempts to get more focused expert opinion and information from policymakers, UN agencies, and other climate professionals within the country and the associated challenges they face in their work.

To complement our secondary research, a series of focused interviews were conducted with professionals and youth engagement experts from the Ministry of Climate Change, Academia, Youth leaders, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), YOUNGO (Children and Youth constituency to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) and Civil Society Representatives. The discussions held proved extremely useful in gaining insight and contextualized knowledge of the current climate crisis in Pakistan, and how the youth of the country could take meaningful action to combat this challenge. Thus, all the knowledge gained through the secondary research and the interviews accumulates in the formation of a set of recommendations for the government under five different, broad action areas: climate education and awareness, youth involvement in policy formulation and execution, development of youth networks, the establishment of youth support mechanisms and initiatives, and society-based ownership for NDCs.



FOREWORD

With a population of 220 million, Pakistan cannot progress in the sectors of economic development, prosperity, and improving socio-economic indicators without efficient incorporation of the youth at the center stage for all. Putting them at the center now means that they will be leaders of these policies in the future, given the intergenerational and cross-sectoral nature of incumbent climate change challenges.

In terms of commitment, the current government is very focused and has clarity on the conversion of the youth bulge of Pakistan into a dividend. All existing and planned government initiatives have a specific youth focus and our goal remains to pronounce it further by effective dissemination.

Youth are the change agents and should be incorporated not just as a mere mention, but as major stakeholders as participants, as the population that will be impacted, and those who will eventually have to lead the fight against climate change. The development of this research and document is a step in the right direction with regards to the identification of the gaps and opportunities for further policy interventions at a national and international level.

I have always found the youth of Pakistan to be energetic, innovative, and forthcoming. The MoCC wants to ensure that their energies are not wasted by providing a range of forums for youth to guide current policymakers towards the future that they envision for themselves. Ultimately, the youth are the hope of Pakistan.

Ms. Naheed Shah Durrani

**Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change,
Pakistan**



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EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF YOUTH FOR MEETING NDC GOALS TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

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1 Introduction

1.1 What are the NDCs?

The Paris agreement is a landmark in the global climate regime, as it represents a multi-lateral consensus on a singular goal of combating climate change and limiting temperature rise to well below 2 °C (preferably 1.5 °C). Implementation of the agreement requires countries to undergo a social and economic transformation sustainably, with the help of the best available science and technology. Five yearly cycles of climate ambitions by the signatories ensure that participating countries are regularly monitoring and ramping up their climate ambition. This requires each of its signatory countries to communicate their climate ambitions and plans for adaptation in the form of national climate action plans and strategies. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are long-term national plans that highlight measures for climate change response, including strategies and policies that governments aim to implement within states, and as part of their contribution to global climate action. More specifically, NDCs embody a country's effort in reducing its national greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and provides an opportunity for countries to mitigate and adapt to the threat of climate change [1]. Through the fulfillment of these NDCs, the world can come together in ensuring that GHG emissions peak as soon as possible and the planet transitions towards carbon neutrality; a world that is safe from the ever-looming threats of climate-related disasters such as devastating wildfires, raging storms, extreme rainfall, droughts and mass extinction of species.

As of 2020, out of 194 Parties to the Paris Agreement, 188 have ratified the Agreement and hence are expected to provide their revised Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for the upcoming 5-year cycle starting in 2020 [2]. To ensure that the emission levels ordained by the Paris Agreement - for not more than an increase of 1.5 degrees of temperature due to global warming is met, more ambitious NDC targets need to be established by all signatories. This in turn warrants well-developed policies and plans that involve and engage local bodies and communities to ensure effective implementation.

1.2 Importance of Youth Engagement

Youth is at the forefront of tackling climate change; the greatest challenge facing humankind right now and in the foreseeable future. Young leaders and activists have been globally active in the promotion of a narrative aimed at urgent climate action, whether it be in the forms of climate strikes, climate legislation, climate summits, or leadership conferences. Realizing their crucial role, the UN also hosted its first-ever Youth Climate Summit in 2019, providing a platform for global youth to engage with leaders from around the world to propose solutions and innovations for the challenges faced on the climate front [3].

Youth remains the biggest stakeholder of any future world that is built and forms a vital cog for all global climate action. Representing a major chunk of the global population, youth under 25 is almost 42% of the world population and hence as such is a pivotal partner and stakeholder in the development, design, and implementation of climate solutions [4]. Youth voices are gaining traction globally in climate action plans, as well as consultation processes aimed at a sustainable future.

Today, there are over 1.8 billion young people (age 10 to 24) in the world. Pakistan is a young country with 64 percent of its population younger than 30 years, with 29 percent falling between the age bracket of 15 to 29 years. This trend is predicted to persist with the number of youth in Pakistan expected to peak till 2050 [5]. This presents the country with a unique opportunity as well as a predicament. This "youth bulge" needs to be harvested into a demographic dividend and requires growth and empowerment of this faction to effectively act as agents of change in the development journey of Pakistan. This young

faction alone can make or break the future of the nation and the onus lies on the country to ensure that this potential is harnessed and the economic and social growth of this faction is ensured.

The youth of Pakistan currently suffers across all three human development drivers of change namely *Education, Employment, and Engagement*. A 2017 UNDP survey reveals that almost 29 out of 100 young people are illiterate, while 61% are either unemployed or not seeking employment, while only a staggering 15% have access to the internet [5].

The unprecedented advent of the global health crisis through COVID-19 seeks to exacerbate an already worsening situation in the developing country. While the virus will have lasting effects on all factions within the country, none would be as severely affected as the youth of Pakistan. An ILO report studying the impact of the pandemic on the global youth concluded that almost 73% of the youth experienced school closures, while 17% were forced into unemployment. The report also concludes that this effect was disproportionate in lower-income countries and for vulnerable demographics of the society.[6] Add the looming threat of climate change to the mix and we have a recipe for a disaster that could have an irreversible impact on the country.

This further mandates urgent investment in the development of its young and vulnerable population. Effective measures, policies, and programs need to be introduced to cushion the impacts of the climate crisis through social and economic empowerment of the youth. This enormous potential should be utilized as a part of the climate solution by making the youth torchbearers of this transformation. While climate change is adversely affecting governance, employment, and businesses, it also presents an opportunity to enable young leaders, workers, and entrepreneurs to bring about an innovative change.

The NDC Partnership proposes a socially engaging approach to ensure successful planning and subsequent action for NDC implementation. They realize that since climate change is an intergenerational problem, youth-led movements and coalitions need to be at the table for climate policy-related discussions [7].

Youth engagement and public mobilization are tools to not only ensure more robust action but also to educate, engage, inform and involve future generations about the importance of

climate science and the challenges of the future. Youth can play a role in all facets of society, from the government to the community. The onus of increasing awareness, communication, conversation, and education on these pivotal issues lays on the government and its local and international partners to ensure a robust action plan with inputs from all stakeholders of the society.

1.3 Statistics about how many countries have youth as a part of their NDCs and to what extent

In 1998, young people were initiated into the fabric of climate change negotiations for the first time, and they continue to be engaged through their involvement in the processes, programs, and initiatives related to combating climate change throughout the UN system ever since. Youth NGO (YOUNGO) [8], the youth constituency of the UNFCCC provides a global platform for young people to network, debate, and organize themselves for active participation at UN climate negotiations. Young people create public awareness, educate, train, mobilize and engage stakeholders to take positive action on climate change through such bodies as the International Youth Climate Movement (a global network of youth organizations) and the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) [9].

Countries have already agreed to provisions in the Paris Agreement “rulebook” to consider the views of youth and stakeholders to form their NDCs. However, only 67 of 160 NDCs (approximately 42%) include a direct reference to children or youth, Pakistan being one of the 67 that do. However, these mentions are mostly attributing the youth as a vulnerable demographic instead of a stakeholder that needs to be engaged in the decision-making process. Only 7 NDCs make that acknowledgement of youth as a stakeholder, while most NDCs fail to highlight the importance of climate education, awareness, and participation for youth [10].

Our analysis of 15 NDCs from a mix of developed and developing countries revealed that developing nations, in general, were more cognizant of recognizing youth as a vulnerable stakeholder in the scheme of climate risk, and mentioned youth in their nationally determined contributions within this context. Norway, New Zealand, Japan, EU, Switzerland, and China had no mention of youth, young people, children, or girls in their

NDC documents. Even emerging economies like Colombia and developing countries like Rwanda did not make that distinction while laying down their climate commitments.

Indonesia is one such country that doesn't go beyond acknowledgement of youth as a vulnerable demographic in the country in their first NDC. **Inspirator Muda Nusantara**, a youth empowerment community organization based in Bandung-Indonesia expressed strong reservations against the fact that in Indonesia's NDC (2015) the government had only mentioned youth in the context of Indonesia having its largest population of young people and workforce in the country's history, without any consideration or efforts to optimize youth's role towards achieving national development goals more progressively.

“Indonesia is also a nascent yet stable democracy and the fourth most populous country in the world, with the largest generation of young people and the most working-age people in its history.”[11]

The community organization also emphasized that the government doesn't realize the importance of creating jobs, which could have the dual advantage of solving the country's unemployment dilemma as well as settle climate-related issues, both of which would involve youth as a key stakeholder [12].

Chile emphasizes a just transition towards sustainable development where the future generations are an important stakeholder, but no specific mentions could be found towards youth, children, or young girls.

“This NDC is based on the just transition and sustainable development social pillar.”[13]

Singapore's NDCs state that the government will continue to engage stakeholders including youth and schools to co-create and co-deliver climate solutions and raise awareness, while encouraging ‘a whole-of-nation’ effort to tackle the climate crisis.

“The Singapore Government will continue to engage stakeholders (including businesses, civil society, youths, schools, and the research community) to co-create and co-deliver solutions, amplify awareness, and encourage a whole-of-nation effort to address climate change.”[14]

Bhutan mentions its youth in the context of the country being a least-developed country with a young population having pressing needs and imperatives for economic development, which could be met with implementation of the country's intended mitigation goals.

“As a least-developed country, with a young population and pressing needs and imperatives for economic development, the successful implementation of our intended actions to mitigate will depend on the level of financial and technical support received.”[15]

India's NDCs emphasize on the empowerment of youth to achieve economic growth. However, there was no direct focus on the country's youth in particular concerning climate action.

“There is a need to evolve a set of precepts, a kind of commandments, especially for the youth of the world, that help in developing a unified global perspective to economic growth so that the disparity in the thinking of the ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ countries could be bridged.”[16]

Somalia while laying down its development context in the country's NDC document relayed that the country's development agenda was focused primarily to benefit the farming communities of the country with limited resources and assets, with an emphasis on women and youth amongst these communities.

“The primary target of this programme is pastoralists and farming communities with limited access to assets and resources, including an emphasis on women and youth among these communities.”[17]

Vietnam in its updated NDCs which were recently submitted to UNFCCC in September 2020 identified synergies between mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable development while pressing upon the reduction of climate risk for vulnerable groups such as poor and ethnic minorities, women, and children. Vietnam considers responding to climate change and protecting the Earth's climate system for present and future generations as an item of prioritized action and cooperation for all countries in the world.

“The poor, ethnic minority groups, people whose livelihoods depend on the climate, the elderly, women, children, and people with chronic illnesses have the highest level of vulnerability. Women, especially ethnic minority women, are highly vulnerable due

to limited access to education and fewer opportunities to participate in non-farm employment.”[18]

The NDCs also details the impacts of climate on children and women in relation to public health, gender equality, and child protection, highlighting the fact that women and children are more vulnerable to risks posed by a changing climate. The country also lists down its adaptation efforts from the past years which included enhancement of analytical and risk mapping capacities within the country using 'socio-economic and multi-dimensional child poverty indicators'.

Vietnam has also deployed a school safety framework that incorporates national disaster prevention and mitigation along with climate change resilience into the educational system within the country.

It is also critical to highlight that within the constituency of youth, the rights of girls and children for meaningful participation in climate action face considerable neglect. A Brookings's Institute report analyzing 160 NDCs pinpoints that only three countries i.e. Malawi, Venezuela, and Zambia include references to girls and the role they can play in climate strategy. Furthermore, they conclude that not a single NDC report makes formal recognition of the importance of girl's education in the fight against climate change [10]. This points towards an important gap that needs to be addressed in upcoming NDCs where greater stress needs to be laid on involving young people in meaningful ways from policy to implementation. Equal consideration given to all genders in matters of environmental education is necessary so that our youth as a collective front is empowered in preventing climate change and environmental degradation. This gender balance should be a way of achieving equal participation from girls in the male-dominated green jobs sector.

1.4 Global NDCs and Youth Engagements

Youth leadership within and beyond the climate action sector is not problem-free: tokenistic engagement, marginalization of vulnerable youth groups, inter-generational mistrust, and adult-centric decision making, and organizational structures are some of the challenges this leadership faces. There is a growing need to critically assess the assumed 'unequivocal'

relationship between young people and the opening of spaces for 'real' climate action. This can help key stakeholders including the national and provincial governments, IGOs, CSOs/NGOs, academia, and private partners in gaining an insight into the governance context, policy frameworks, and engagement practices to help strengthen youth-led climate governance within the country and helping young people move beyond just climate-based activist movements towards greater involvement in policymaking and implementation.

In March 2020, the NDC Partnership Steering Committee established a group of youth representatives from NDC Partnership members (Costa Rica, Jamaica, Marshall Islands, Netherlands, UK, Sweden, Pakistan, UNICEF, UNDP, and RCCC), to craft the Partnership's Youth Engagement Plan. The Plan was mandated to outline best practices and key action areas aiming at inspiring member countries and institutions to strengthen the engagement of young people as part of their work developing and implementing NDCs under the Paris Agreement [7].

The four key action areas highlighted by the plan include:

- Design youth inclusive NDC processes at the country level
- Support the development of youth-led NDC implementation projects
- Strengthen climate change capacity building for young people
- Support youth participation in global NDC partnership activities

A few examples of youth involvement observed through the work of the NDC partnership including member consultations in various aspects of NDC development and implementation are highlighted below:

Zimbabwe has engaged youth NGOs working for climate action and sustainability in their development of an NDC communications strategy aimed at effective dissemination of information and greater awareness [19].

The Marshall Islands has formalized youth representation in the government's "adaptation working group", with formal youth positions in the group to ensure their perspective is taken on board in the decision-making process. They also organized a National Climate Change Dialogue in 2019, where students of all ages were allowed to present their ideas and solutions to pertinent

climate issues and challenges [19].

Grenada has also formally included students in its Sustainable Development Goals Council; a body that is tasked with reviewing the NDC plans and other climate legislation and documents [19].

Kenya and Namibia have requested support from the NDC Partnership to enhance youth participation in their national climate action plans and movements through consultations and youth engagement activities [19].

Armenia has been active in seeking out youth for their innovative and creative ideas in battling climate change. Through the Small Grants Programme's (SGP) Innovation Program on Youth and Climate Change, Armenia received funding for "enhancing youth employment and entrepreneurship opportunities by creating a network of Low Carbon Energy Education Centers" [20]. These centers train students from tech universities and unemployed youth in the provision of green energy services such as the design, installation, operation, and maintenance of solar systems. This will lead to the creation of green jobs and provide companies with green services. Armenia has also developed an educational program targeted at raising awareness and increasing the competency of 'high-grade school children' on climate change issues, environmental mitigation & conservation, and green energy development [19].

Uganda has also developed a climate action innovation challenge under UNDP's NDC Support Programme, which will fund women and youth-led movements and enterprises on climate change mitigation and adaptation. The fund will empower youth and women in their undertakings on climate action as well as help Uganda meet its NDC implementation goals [21].

1.5 Pakistan's NDC and Youth

There is a range of ways in which NDCs can position children and young people as agents of change. Through its NDC, Pakistan has vowed a 20% reduction in its projected emissions for 2030 but the role of youth in helping achieve these goals has been mentioned in a limited capacity. In the case of Pakistan, the youth is brought up in discussing Pakistan's broader context of development and are positioned as valuable assets for their potential contributions to economic growth rather than acknowledging their importance in climate action, and attributing specific roles for

them in mitigating against further environmental degradation or increasing the adaptive capacity of Pakistani society that is needed for NDCs [22]:

“The sizable youth bulge offers an opportunity for accelerated economic growth and for reaping developmental dividends if required investments flow into social and development sectors.”

Besides the acknowledgement of its youth bulge, Pakistan's I-NDC statement 2016 does not expand or identify youth engagement strategies or plans to leverage this potential. Given Pakistan is in the process of revising its NDCs in advance of the COP26 in 2021, there is an opportunity to move away from tokenistic mention of young people in policies and plans, and actively engaging with young people to define the future. It is imperative to look at climate governance structures and frameworks through a youth engagement lens to ascertain the enablers and deterrents for effectively engaging youth, not as targeted beneficiaries but also as collaborators and leaders initiating positive climate action at multiple geographical levels.

Pakistan National Human Development Report 2017 developed by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) illuminates different developmental aspects of the country's youth. Pakistan is classified as one of the youngest countries in the world and preceded only by Afghanistan in South Asia for having the youngest population in the region. Pakistani youth falling between ages 15 and 29 forms just under 50% of the country's total workforce (15-64 years) [23][5][24].

The report categorizes Pakistan's youth as having an 'unacceptably high' illiteracy rate of 30%, which is further exacerbated by the urban-rural divide. While a reasonable number of young people manage to attain education up to at least a matric level in urban areas, a major portion of the rural youth remains uneducated, not even making it to school most of the time.[24]

The National Human Development Report also develops a 'Youth Development Index (YDI)', which presents an assessment of youth inclusion regarding education, employment, and the degree of political and social life led by youth. The YDI finds that Azad Jammu and Kashmir, eastern Punjab, and northern Punjab had the highest youth development whereas Baluchistan, northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and FATA were

found to be the most deprived.

Pakistani youth ranked very low on the employment scale as well. Pakistan's youth unemployment rate is higher than other South Asian countries like India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. The ILO reports the youth in Pakistan between the ages of 15 and 24 to have an unemployment rate as high as 10.8 percent.[24]

The general dearth of knowledge in the country's youth trickles down to matters of climate change as well. The youth in Pakistan is relatively unaware of the need for youth-driven climate action and the role youth-led movements can play in the formulation of inclusive and equitable NDCs. There is thus a need to educate the youth about country-level challenges faced by Pakistan and the role youth engagement can play in addressing these concerns. This way the Youth Task Force that is being developed in Pakistan can link their efforts directly to those of the Partnership.

Pakistan's current political climate is cognizant of the role youth could play in combating environmental challenges and has designed various initiatives to facilitate such developments. The country intends on leveraging its NDC revision process to assess the country's climate governance infrastructure from the perspective of youth. By understanding the deterrents to effective youth engagement, it intends to close these gaps through the provision of an enabling environment so that the youth is successful in playing a collaborative role in climate action at multiple political and geographical levels. The government has already initiated various schemes to involve youth in many of its environmental-oriented undertakings:

Clean Green Champions Programme (CGPC):

A volunteering mechanism under the Prime Minister's Clean Green Pakistan Initiative (CGPI), to create national champions from the country's youth. CGPI aims to mobilize the citizens, especially youth, to engage in environmental protection activities. Designed as a competition amongst various cities of the country, the movement motivates citizens to play their role and contribute to indicators of environmental service delivery and governance. Through this program, volunteers known as the Clean Green Champions are taking action on five key environmental themes; Hygiene, Sanitation and liquid waste management, solid waste management, safe water, and tree plantation [25].

Pakistan Citizen Portal: The Launch of the Pakistan Citizen Portal by the Prime Minister's Office unlocked an innovative platform for open communications regarding the NDC implementation process in the country, as it allows anyone (especially youth) to come forward with suggestions on what they think is the best way to tackle the climate change challenge and implement Pakistan's NDCs.

Imran Khan Tiger Force: A youth-led task force was instituted by the Prime minister to combat the adversities of the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan. Participation in the program now stands strong at 1 million participants which have been assisting the government in various capacities. The mandate of the task force has been extended to tree plantation and waste management in recent times, and the task force has even proved helpful in combating the country's worst locust invasion on agricultural lands [26].

Pakistan's 10 Billion Tree Tsunami Program (10 BTTP) / 'Green Stimulus' package:

In order to capitalize on the opportunity for a greener comeback from the economic fall out in the wake of COVID-19, the prime minister has introduced a 'Green Stimulus' program targeted at the unemployed youth and women in the country. Through this program around 65,000 people have been employed as *nighabans* (custodians) of the environment on a daily wage basis for massive tree plantation drives across the country. It is envisioned that this program will be extended for the creation of almost 200,000 green jobs in the coming months [27]. The 'Green Stimulus Package' is housed under the 10 BTTP, which is a broad tree plantation initiative aimed at increasing the participation of different members of the society including the Youth to participate in achieving the NDC targets set by the government through tree plantations. While all these initiatives are commendable and pertinent to the challenges faced by the incumbent government, more long-term initiatives need to be planned that explicitly chalk out the strategies to engage youth for NDC implementation to bring about a systemic and lasting change. The role of youth needs to be expanded from tools of actions to actual planners and stakeholders in the decision making and policy formulating stages. Their youthfulness and creativity need to be harnessed by ensuring a greater role and responsibility for the youth in climate change action. There is an urgent need to realize that climate change is an

intergenerational problem, and hence youth-led movements and coalitions need to be at the forefront of any climate discussions and debate. Equal representation needs to be afforded to this demographic and any such support should not be limited to youth activism alone, but should also guarantee actual economic empowerment of youth through the provision of green jobs, investment in cleaner energy options, and capacity building through greater education, awareness, and engagement.



2 Youth Analysis on Climate Change

2.1 Perspectives from climate change and youth experts across different sectors

To complement our secondary research and literature review, focused interviews were carried out with climate professionals and youth engagement experts from the Ministry of Climate Change, Academia, Youth leaders, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), YOUNGO (Children and Youth constituency to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) and Civil Society Representatives. The discussions held have proved extremely useful in gaining insight and contextualized knowledge of the current climate crisis in Pakistan, and how the youth of the country could take meaningful action to combat this challenge. The information gained has been detailed in the sections below.

2.1.1 Academia

Dr. Tania Saeed is an Associate Professor of Sociology in the Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) and was interviewed about how the climate policy design in Pakistan should address youth development needs.



She was of the view that climate policy design should engage with young people by listening to those who had already been organizing and raising awareness on these fronts. Citing the examples of the Institute for Development Studies and Practices (IDSP) in Quetta, Pakistan which is already teaching about indigenous environmentally sustainable methods and practices, as well as research spaces such as Karti Dharti under Dr. Nosheen Ali which is spreading awareness about land, culture, and indigenous knowledge, she suggested the formation of a climate action committee to bring different stakeholders and environmentalists together in formulating the climate policy.

Dr. Saeed also pointed out that climate policy design cannot exist in isolation and had to cut across other areas of policy design such as urban and rural planning, housing, education, agriculture, etc.

“Education reforms (especially curriculum and pedagogy) should be a part of the climate policy design. Within education, learning about the environment or the climate emergency cannot simply be reduced to one topic - it must cut across all subjects from the Natural Sciences educating students about planetary sustainability, to the Humanities and Social Sciences that should draw on local,

indigenous, and global knowledge. Students should be taught techniques related to rainwater conservation, recycling, the value of traditional agricultural methods, solar energy, wind turbines – in short, a combination of science, technology, and indigenous knowledge.”

Mr. Hassaan Sipra, a climate and environmental researcher working at COMSATS University Islamabad and a former Andrew Sabin International Environmental Fellow, was of the view that youth participation in climate action was critical for Pakistan to successfully



transform itself in line with national NDC aspirations and the SDGs. With a median age of just 22, Pakistan's large youth base requires deep investments in educational and technical training, to shape future leaders and address the sustainable development challenges associated with climate change vulnerability. Pakistan's climate reality is one of devastation already, and it will only get worse. Unfortunately, the level of awareness remains low to this predicament.

He recommended leveraging Paris Agreement Article 12 on education, training, and public awareness in all aspects of approaching policy and decision-makers, ensuring clarity that these are mandated under Pakistan's international obligations.

He also suggested that climate awareness surveys should be conducted at all levels of the education system and a Climate Education Fund must be established to facilitate scholarships and grants for students, teachers, and researchers to enhance climate change awareness and research at local institutions. In addition to this, climate education programs should be incorporated within the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Increasing young student engagement by tying scientific products, such as ozone testing patches, small air quality monitors, water quality testing kits, et cetera, to reporting mechanisms that can be submitted through pre-designed templates to Environmental Protection Departments and university climate/environmental clubs. To inculcate responsibility in educational institutes and its stakeholders through a suite of performance indicators connected to reporting dashboards across the educational sector must be a priority; instituting focal points in each educational institute with the responsibility for tracking these indicators is a proven strategy for youth engagement, and facilitates reporting on the SDGs framework.”

2.1.2 Youth Leaders

Ms. Heeta Lakhani, a climate educator from Mumbai, India, and the current Focal Point from the Global South for YOUNGO, the official youth constituency of the UNFCCC was also interviewed for this process.

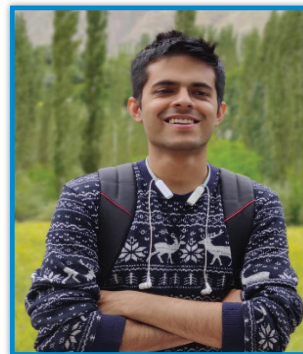


She stressed the importance of building capacity and knowledge in order to bridge the gap youth face in meaningful climate understanding and action. She stated that to better engage youth, it has to be ensured that they are involved in the climate process right from the beginning and throughout all the stages. This can be done by reaching out to youth organizations as well as young people in universities or schools to gauge their input.

Drawing similarities between India and Pakistan, she opined that higher risks are faced by the rural populations, especially those living along the coastlines, hence the capacity building of this youth including dissemination of basic knowledge becomes all the more important.

On some ways to better involve youth, she stressed that governments should ensure that youth from all demographics be involved and not just urban youth, especially all levels of society including marginalized communities should be mainstreamed. In order to involve the indigenous youth, especially young Indigenous women and girls living in vulnerable rural areas, education should be provided so as to better understand and mainstream the practical knowledge and adaptation techniques they've learned hands-on by facing the brunt of the climate crisis and could serve as answers to the problems faced on multiple fronts.

Mr. Iqbal Badruddin, the founder of the #FridaysforFuture movement in Pakistan, was also interviewed about his experience as a budding climate activist and practitioner in Pakistan. Talking about the barriers and challenges he'd faced while orchestrating the



#Fridaysforfuture movement across 35 universities in Pakistan, Mr. Badruddin said that people had little or no knowledge of climate change, so during their educational campaigns, they always had to start from basic scientific knowledge, which resulted in these people having a very rudimentary knowledge of the subject matter. In addition, many people associated the adverse impacts of climate change such as floods, extreme, rainfall or drought as trials from God. These entrenched faith-based beliefs and associations also made it hard for people to believe in the anthropogenic nature of climate change.

Mr. Badruddin also reflected on the economic realities of the rural populations in the country, where earning livelihoods often warred with the choice of a sustainable living.

“Economic priorities also matter, if someone's livelihood is linked to cutting trees, then considerations for the environment and climate will always take the backburner”

When asked for recommendations as to how the government could help alleviate some of these barriers faced by the youth in the country, Mr. Badruddin emphasized on the importance of climate education, saying that climate education should be made a part of the school curriculum at all levels of education, and the disconnect between federal and provincial priorities when it came to climate action needs to be bridged. Bi-partisan climate policies that could weather political changes need to be introduced and existing initiatives such as Clean and Green Pakistan could be augmented further with the addition of a climate component.

Ms. Adeena Tahir, a 4th Year, Environmental Engineering student at NUST and the Co-Founder of Ductus Exemplo, a youth climate advocacy organization that trains youngsters on conducting meaningful climate action was



also reached out, for sharing her experience as a young entrepreneur and climate educator. She termed meaningful youth participation in climate change as “a group of empowered individuals, who are well informed and actively involved in leading roles for opportunities of climate action”. She related that since the youth would be inheriting the world we are building today, they had to be viewed as important stakeholders for climate action and hence should be provided with genuine representation during matters of consultation, planning, policy, and decision-making on climate issues today.

Recounting her own experience as a youth climate change advocate, Ms. Tahir was of the opinion that lack of meaningful representation during the climate change policy-making process and lack of resources and institutional support were two of the major barriers that stood in the way of effective youth engagement in the climate action process in Pakistan.

“Currently, as most senior-level positions in every institute are being headed by people of an older age group, they tend to take fewer inputs from youth during planning and decision making on climate topics. Even if the youth is consulted, their opinions are viewed as secondary. This is problematic because in many cases, youth can feel that they have no real, concrete influence on decisions that

affect their future and their role is limited to chanting slogans on streets.”

She also pointed out the dearth of public funds available for meaningful climate action, saying that campaigning required extensive resources and logistics as well as governmental permits such as Non-Objection Certificates (NOCs). It is often quite difficult for the youth to get such permits and documents, which made the campaigning process slow and discouraging.

Lack of public safe spaces such as local environmental clubs, youth chapters, co-working offices, networking centers, youth meet, and greets were also pointed out as another challenge, which made it difficult for youngsters to engage in-person to person networking under a safe, comfortable environment to share ideas, learn from peers and organize events.

To overcome these obstacles she suggested the need for a greater allocation of roles and resources in the public sector that directly engage with youth. For example, the Clean and Green Pakistan Program by Pakistan Government could be further enhanced so registered volunteers could easily plan and implement their ideas and activities. To create ease in the NOC permit process a system, preferably online could be established, which would generate NOCs more rapidly for conducting public awareness campaigns and climate rallies. Safe spaces could be built for youth to freely express and record their opinions and concerns on the environment and society. This could be done by promoting community outreach initiatives, such as public Townhall meetings on local levels. She also pitched the idea of having specific bodies, like a Climate Action Cell at Youth Parliament Pakistan so young people could actively register their views in systematic ways.

2.1.3 United Nations (UN) Agencies – United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Ms. Laura Sheridan manages UNDP’s youth empowerment program in Pakistan, which is a 30 million dollar initiative spanning over 5 years. The program was launched officially in 2018 based on the recommendations of UNDP’s National Human Development report and focuses around the three E’s of youth development i.e. Youth Engagement, Youth Education, and Youth Employment. UNDP is also the technical partner for the Prime Minister’s Kamyab Jawan Program. In addition, to support federal policy, UNDP has also been providing on-site support in the provinces of KP, Sindh, and Balochistan. When asked about

the challenges UNDP had faced in relation to their youth engagement work in Pakistan, Laura was of the view that the concept of volunteerism was somewhat misconceived in the country and efforts were needed to make volunteerism a widely accepted phenomenon amongst the youth in Pakistan. Other challenges related to the cultural concept of the youth not being considered serious stakeholders in the decision-making processes by the elders including senior decision-makers from government and parliament. The mismatch between the youth that was coming through Pakistan’s educational system and the kind of jobs

available to them was also a contributing factor towards the youth not being actively engaged in Pakistan's climate action spaces.

Laura also opined that a differentiated approach needed to be adopted for different segments of the youth when it came to engagement for climate policy and decision making:

“It has to be very differentiated. The Youth of Pakistan is not at a homogenous growth. Youth in South Punjab or Southern Balochistan is radically different from the urban youth in Lahore. So, the way we’ve tried to segment the youth is through levels of digital literacy. The digitally literate youth would have more awareness of climate change due to more open informational channels. At the same time, rural youth would have a better

understanding of the impacts of climate change on their personal lives. Rural youth would be more cognizant of how their life is changing because of climate change, and this type of youth is much more in numbers than the youth segment that occupies spaces for climate activism”.

Laura also provided insight on how various UN bodies and agencies could provide support to the government by extending technical assistance, sharing best practices from other countries that have implemented similar programs, and providing linkages with other international and regional partners as well as the academia and private sector.

2.1.4 Climate Change Policy Makers

Ms. Naheed Shah Durrani, an

experienced civil servant, and the current federal secretary for the Ministry of Climate Change also afforded us with some valuable insight into the government's current plans for youth when it came to climate action. She informed that the current government was very focused and had clarity on the conversion of the youth bulge into a dividend.



“With a population of 220 million, the country won’t progress with economic development, prosperity, and improving socio-economic indicators without efficient incorporation of the youth at the center stage of all sectors including youth development. Putting them at the center now means that they’ll be leaders of these policies in the future, given the intergenerational nature of incumbent issues”

She shared that the government was keen on making public policy youth-specific and gave the example of the recent afforestation programs introduced by the government. She stressed that these initiatives were more than just about the greening part they entailed. In addition to improving the environment and increasing the forest cover, the initiatives are also meant to respond to other challenges including the economy. She said that such initiatives were always people-centric and had to be carried out and owned by communities resulting in adding a huge value for the marginalized communities

in particular. Engaging such communities with nature, both in terms of the environment as well as its productivity and the subsequent returns in terms of income, health, and livability would generally improve community wellbeing.

She gave another example in the form of the 'climate-resilient agriculture' project which had a youth-based segment on water management and accounting through education and awareness. She pointed out that the information generated through these projects would majorly be circulated to youth that is functioning as working hands in the fields, and would be able to mainstream these ideas into their daily lives.

Ms. Durrani stated that youth could also be a part of campaigns aimed at behavioral change such as WASH activities and waste management awareness including recycling and waste minimization.

Responding to a question on the inclusion of marginalized communities in climate-related policy, she opined that MoCC though a small ministry, is still coming of age.

“While we still have a lot of work to do, in our current projects, we ensure that our teams are very sensitized on such issues. Our 10 billion tree tsunami program, for example, has a policy that the majority of seed nurseries must be outsourced to women. So we are coming down hard on typical mindsets and emphasizing the involvement of communities and within these communities, the women and youth. The women and youth are natural stakeholders and our positioned better for implementation and action, due to their better knowledge, ideas and innate understanding of climate change-related problems.”

Ms. Durrani also admitted to the fact that even though overarching policy documents and frameworks in Pakistan did have a dedicated focus on marginalized communities such as differently-abled persons or other minorities, the implementation of these policies still lacked sensitive implementation action.

As an advice for the youth of Pakistan, she suggested that a lot of work needs to be done on the education and literacy front. She highlighted

youth participation in climate action in Pakistan. Ms. Gilmour reiterated the importance of having youth voices at the decision-making table. Pointing out to the different youth cohorts, she said that each had a unique role to play, for example, school-going children could act as advocates to their parents, while secondary school children could be champions of youth activism as was in the case of the Fridays for Future movement.



She related that it was important that the messaging around climate change, especially when it came to young people, should be brought down to a micro-level, encompassing everyday behaviors and immediate environments. For example, children in rural communities would need to understand what types of actions would be needed in order to educate their families and communities on the best ways for climate change adaptation. She recalled her recent experience of visiting the Shigar valley where the evidence of woodcutting, overgrazing and un-regulated building practices, could be widely seen, which would have an impact on youths' futures - so it would be good if they had information on these matters, and an opportunity to express their views.

"To me, it is very critical and I've always been a great believer in explaining to people why it matters to them, and what actions you can take as an individual and that's what the schools should be working on..."

On topics of intersectionality and integrating vulnerable communities into the climate policymaking process, Ms. Gilmour stressed the importance of education saying that people who are at a subsistence level of living do not have time or space to think about the policy impact of political decisions, but that they live with the consequences of these decisions. Climate

the need for more programs such as the 'Kamyab Jawan' program, which would allow the youth to organize naturally and organically through dedicated youth forums. She praised the youth of the country for always being forthcoming but regretted that their energies went to waste at times due to lack of organization or the availability of the correct forums.

Ms. Wendy Gilmour, the designated High Commissioner of Canada to Pakistan was also sought out for her perspective on enhancing

education was all the more important so that people could make changes in their everyday lives to better adjust to the adversities of climate change while improving their resilience and adaptation to changing realities.

Ms. Gilmour was cognizant of the fact that it wasn't common practice to create space at the decision-making table for non-traditional input to be incorporated into the policymaking process for many countries, including Canada and Pakistan. Canada has made recent efforts to provide such opportunities, particularly for indigenous (Canadian native peoples) and remote communities. On that front, she advised that youth and marginalized groups would have to engage the government to think creatively as to how representatives are chosen for the decision-making process and how their voices are fed into the mix.

She lamented the fact that youth voices were often forgotten in favor of older generations and senior officials. This is part of the cultural fabric of Pakistan and presented a major challenge to youth being taken seriously, even if they had substantive inputs that could make a real difference.

Ms. Gilmour also commented on the lack of student activism in Pakistan, attributing this gap to political and security reasons which prohibited such occurrences. While she agreed that students shouldn't directly come into conflict with the government, she said there was no harm in coming together for technical reasons. This could be done if the government supported the formation of such clubs and societies. The Ministry of Climate Change could work together with HEC to ensure that there is government support for student associations on issue-specific topics such as climate change. This would provide students and youngsters with the safe spaces needed for discussions on such issues.

2.1.5 Youth Leaders and Climate Activists from Nigeria

Embarking on its 'Youth Engagement' in the NDC process, Nigeria held its first National Youth Climate Consultation on NDC Enhancement on September 11th, 2020. The event showcased the Nigerian governments' commitment to include youth in climate governance design and introduced eight thematic 'Youth Working Groups' (YWG), established to facilitate cross-sectoral interfacing between various sectors that could be connected to climate change and its impacts and the department of climate change itself.

Mr. Olumide Idowu, Mr. O'Seyifunmi Adebote, and Ms. Oladosu Adenike

were some of the key organizers of the event. 'Seyifunmi Adebote is one of Nigeria's leading environmental advocates and has represented Nigeria at several international engagements including the United Nations General Assembly, Conference of Parties, and the first-ever Climate Action Summit. 'Seyifunmi is also regarded as a respected media consultant with his ClimateTalk Podcast informing over 10,000 subscribers of the complexities and dangers of climate change.

Ms. Oladosu Adenike Titilope is an eco-feminist & an agricultural economist (first class), passionate about youth involvement in climate action through climate education. The founder of ILeadClimate advocates for the restoration of Lake Chad. In 2019, she became a recipient of Amnesty International's Ambassadors of conscience award, the same year she was invited to the first United Nations Youth Climate Summit. She has showcased her dedication to climate action in several international conferences from COP25, World Economic Forum events to Global Landscape Forum and at the National level, and local



Olumide Idowu,



O'Seyifunmi Adebote



Oladosu Adenike

level. Recently she has been invited to join the UNICEF Nigeria young change-makers.

Olumide IDOWU is the co-founder of the International Climate Change Development Initiative (ICCDI Africa), Youth Focal Point Nigeria UNDP Small Grant Program, Youth Lead Author Global Environmental Outlook (GEO6) & Communication Director for African Youth Initiative on Climate Change.

Seyifunmi shared his climate journey in Nigeria, telling us that it was the year 2015 when there was an awakening on environmental concerns amongst the youth in Nigeria. It started with small groups, each with a different mandate such as climate education, advocacy, on-ground activism, but gradually with support from a pro-environment 'Minister for the Environment', progressed into something much larger. Hence, 2019 was a very active year for climate action by the youth in Nigeria. Youth were invited and sponsored to attend international summits and conferences all over the world. They were able to gain knowledge on climate innovation and share these ideas with the government, particularly the federal ministry of environment and the climate change department within it. They even had a week-long event where they sourced ideas on climate innovation and were able to get 1344 ideas from across the country to resolve climate change.

Seyifunmi was of the view that in 2015 when the Nigerian government was designing its NDC which was submitted to the UNFCCC, the youth was largely ignored in the consultation process. There was also skewed representation of the negotiations which resulted in putting out targets that were not realistic or in the context of the Nigerian landscape. This has contributed to why Nigeria hasn't been able to meet its NDC targets. The COP 25 experience in Madrid Spain where Nigerian youth actively participated made the government rethink this approach and it was decided that the youth could play a much stronger role in the upcoming iteration of the NDCs. Subsequently, an email was shared with the Minister for State Environment, **Sharon Ikeazor**, in which the youth representatives called for a national youth consultation. After approval was granted, they went to youth climate leaders across Nigeria and formed a group that got together to organize the consultation. The event was inclusive of the 6 geo-political zones of Nigeria. A gender balance was also ensured in participation.

Adenike Oladosu said that consistency in advocacy and demands matter when working towards something. The NDCs were not just conjured up in isolation and government support is paramount. It is having to do with the right leaders, who're open to the engagement of people for the success of climate action. For them, this was the minister for state environment.

The leadership should be ready to engage with everyone. It's not an easy thing to get all the things we've accomplished done. The minister has been ready to listen to them and hear them out. She gave us the platform to voice our opinions through COP.

Oladosu Adenike

"The way we demand climate action also matters", she added. The process shouldn't be violent. Ways through which demands are heard and met as social media platforms can also be utilized.

Adenike expanded on the eight working groups which had been formed by the Nigerian government for cross-sectoral youth engagement. Nigeria has formed 8 working groups that will be a part of Nigeria's upcoming revised NDCs, across different sectors of the NDCs and a youth focal point will be appointed in each of these sectors as designed, so whenever there's anything that's coming up on any of these areas, the focal points are called upon to share with their group members.

Olumide echoed Adenike's thoughts relaying that a good working relationship with the government was crucial if Pakistan wanted to enhance youth participation in the NDC formulation and implementation process. He also commented on the importance of forming a collective of all authorities that were already working on the NDC process in Pakistan, while giving the example of the NDC partnership's coordinator in Nigeria

and the coordinator for UNDP NDC Support programme in Nigeria who had facilitated the youth consultation process throughout.

Olumide also added on the importance of sending youth representatives to the Conference of Parties (COP), sharing personal experiences on how witnessing climate negotiations themselves had enhanced their knowledge and given them ideas.

The importance of familiarity with climate agreements, treaties, and government policies and documents also came up in the discussion. It was recognized that it is important for youth groups to organize themselves and increase their knowledge so that they can speak with clarity, such that the government understands what they're saying, what they're asking for, and that the issue is important to them. That is when the government would listen to them.

As an advice to the youth of the country, Seyifunmi Adebote had three major thoughts to share on how the youth in Pakistan could organize better:

- **Mentorship:** Mentorship can have many advantages such as the provision of access to documents with technical information on climate change issues as well as access to events where knowledge sharing and advocacy were happening. So, mentorship can be a great way of bringing in young people who want to work in the climate action space together.
- **Organizing locally:** Bringing local organizations that are already working on these issues together such as anti-air pollution and wildlife conservation groups.
- **Getting other parts of the world to appreciate it as well.** Getting support and promotion from other countries as well could help build regional and international linkages.

2.1.6 Climate Change and Youth Experts

Mr. Ali Tauqeer Sheikh is the former and founding Chief Executive Officer of the Leadership for Environment and Development (LEAD) Pakistan, an organization engaged in research and policy advocacy on sustainable development within Pakistan. With prior



experiences as advisor to the Asian Development Bank, European Commission, International Development Research Center, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Packard Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, The Asia Foundation, and the United Nations Development Program, Mr. Sheikh is considered a leading environmental practitioner in Pakistan.

Mr. Sheikh stressed that the arenas of action

for climate change mostly fall under provincial domains whereby after the 18th Amendment, issues such as energy usage, conservation, agriculture, emissions, forestry, REDD+ are all provincial issues. So for the formulation of NDCs, he suggests that there is a need for deeper engagement, understanding and ownership, and commitment of the provinces regarding the NDCs and their targets. He stressed that the central government has to engage and ensure ownership for provinces, with a clear baseline, targets, and a methodological coherence between provinces to standardize data sets and standards for reporting.

He also suggested that the MoCC should have a designated office that should constantly improve and update the baselines and inventories of climate-related data, and coordinate with provinces for the same. To the same end, he suggests that the ministry should either develop their own research capacities or engage with universities for data mining and collection.

Talking about mitigation and adaptation, he suggested 4 ways through which a country's emissions increase: population increase, more industrial activity, inefficient technology use and lack of improvements in the current trajectory of energy selections, etc. He stressed the importance of better housekeeping activities suggesting that the IPCC itself reports that 1/3rd of the emissions can be reduced by good housekeeping measures and practices such as energy efficiency and such. He believes that youth can help spearhead this awareness campaign.

Similarly, he believes that the youth can persuade the government and nudge them away from the bad quality of fossil fuel use or promotion of renewables, etc. Given the extraordinary youth bulge increase in Pakistan, there is a role for youth

Mr. Imran Saqib Khalid

is a Research Fellow at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in Islamabad, Pakistan. His research focuses on identifying institutional vulnerabilities and analyzing the political economy of regions and communities most vulnerable to climate change impacts, particularly floods. Imran S. Khalid was one of the main organizing forces behind the Pakistan Climate March inspired by the teen climate activist Greta Thunberg that took place in 2019.



in terms of advocacy, in terms of population growth and control measures, and should be highlighted in government policies as such. For the 4th component i.e. low carbon development pathways, youth can have a non-consumptive lifestyle, while startup businesses and entrepreneurship should have youth taking the lead.

Mr. Sheikh lamented that the Pakistani youth is neither organized right now nor sensitized. Hence, there remains a long way yet to go on this journey. He also lamented that political mandates have no discussions on youth and/or climate change and this discussion remains missing from the political discourse.

He also stressed how youth has to organize themselves and win support from the private sector, media, academia, and also the government.

“Globally, youth movements demand of governments rather than be facilitated by them. We still have a long distance to cover, but that is where aware youth should sensitize parliamentarians by prioritizing and highlighting the roles and shortcomings of the government. Youth has to exercise leadership and be proactive, rather than depend on governments.”

In terms of NDC improvements, he suggested that the NDC should be a document owned by all sectors, departments, and ministries. As a good starting point, he suggested that of the previous NDC document submitted by Pakistan, each section should have a subsection defining the youth role in this sector. He suggests adding a short and concise bulleted list of the role of youth for each sector within the NDC so that the government is also more aware and willing to understand, negotiate and collaborate.

Mr. Khalid reiterated that it was imperative to understand how climate change was enhanced and affected by environmental risks and vice versa. He stated that Pakistan was quite well placed with regard to policy formulation for environmental regulations, with climate change targeted in established frameworks as early as 1983. However, there was still a need for better implementation, greater ownership, and periodic revisions and updates to these policies and frameworks.

“We’ve never owned our environmental plans and documents”

He also stressed the importance of addressing the dissonance between central and provincial governments on the subject of climate change

by defining roles for both. Referring to the recent flooding in Karachi, he warned that more and more extreme weather events will follow for Pakistan as environmental degradation is exacerbating the climate change within the country. He also lamented the fact that policies were made and implemented in silos with community engagement missing from the backdrop.

With regards to possible avenues of youth engagement, he suggested that as data from vulnerable and rural communities remain missing in the national picture, High schools and university students can be engaged to conduct research on climate change through government-sponsored projects and assignments. This would also help educate students better about climate change

To expand on the role of youth and utilizing Pakistani citizens' strong faith-based associations, which is a particularly prominent case amongst the rural areas, **Mr. Sarmad Iqbal**, Environmental Lawyer and Manager Strategic Partnerships and Business Development at Islamic Relief in Pakistan was also interviewed.



On the importance of youth and faith, Mr. Sarmad shared that in order to mobilize youth, they had engaged academia and delivered awareness sessions with youth, through conversations in classrooms and competitions. The simple provision of information on the science of climate change to the youth bore amazing results where they saw children and young students take more interest in the subject for their research thesis and class projects. But the dynamics of the rural communities were different. In his experience working in the fields had led him to believe that all interventions, no matter the nature, were grasped much easier by the communities if they were backed by religious understandings and the same stood true for a complex concept like climate change as well. He talked about the importance of educating Pakistan's youth on the ongoing climate crisis and giving them the tools and resources that would enable them to become the drivers of change.

Mr. Iqbal also emphasized the significance of involving faith leaders in awareness campaigns by stating that the Islamic tenets of justice and ethics included all aspects of human life and taught us the lesson to help out the weak and vulnerable, which are the ones most affected by the adversities of climate change.

action.

As an organizer of the climate march, he stressed that while youth engagement in terms of advocacy is extremely important, do not expect the youth to lead on this issue. He urged that youth continue being engaged and educated through governmental forums as well to promote social entrepreneurship and advocacy. He suggested that the government should organize a youth conference in collaboration with youth groups, policy think tanks, and universities to provide a platform for rural and urban youth to engage with the government. He also stressed the importance of organic advocacy, urging greater tolerance by government and officials on dissenting voices and opinions from youth bodies.

"To be Islamic is to be just, ethical, and humanitarian in all aspects of life. This is what Muslims believe in and mold their life accordingly. When we talk about climate change, the realization that it is not a standoff phenomenon but affects us in innumerable ways socially, economically, and even politically, especially to the already most vulnerable communities, compels us to act, where our faith motivates us to step up and do something about it. Local community members are also convinced that challenges they face in the form of natural and man-made disasters are a test of faith from God. They are guided by their religious knowledge and motivation to be humanitarian if they have the resources to help, but if they are the victims of disaster themselves, they practice patience believing that it's a trial from God. Beyond the incident, the behaviors that affect the environment remain the same. For Effective Climate Action it is absolutely critical that a deeper understanding of changing climate is disseminated to the general public through the language and reasoning that they are most familiar with, in our case its Islamic teachings, and our religion clearly speaks of environment protection on various accounts. For materializing this, we have engaged religious clerics from all faith backgrounds, where they sat together with community members to discuss the faith perspective on climate change. The discussion concluded with the agreement that faith leaders especially the Muftis will research the relevant verses from Holy books, and Ahadees and document them for use for massive awareness, advocacy purposes as well as for talking points for Friday sermons."

On matters of support from the government, Mr. Iqbal was of the view that a bottom-up approach was a need of the hour in order to sensitize the affected communities with

knowledge of environmental challenges in their specific regions, with the youth at the center of such initiatives.

He also expressed that Islamic Relief and other civil society actors had taken large-

scale advocacy interventions on the ground but it was also needed to consolidate policies and plans at higher planning levels, such as the materialization of INDCs, and collectively negotiate for the reduction of global carbon footprints at International fora.

2.1.7 Key Takeaways from the interviews

- The interviews were conducted to give us a diverse range of perspectives on contextualizing the challenges in effectively addressing the climate change problem in Pakistan, and for some rich input on developing ideas on how youth in the country could meaningfully participate in the climate action process and be a part of Pakistan's upcoming NDCs. Our experts and youth leaders revealed that climate change awareness and education seemed to be the biggest hurdle that stood in the way of the youth actively participating in climate action. For rural populations, the situation becomes more complex as faith-based associations crop up and people start relating the disastrous impacts of climate change to trials from God.
- Adult centric decision-making processes and beliefs deeply embedded in the political and cultural fabric of our society are also important barriers that lead to tokenism and the youth not being taken seriously at decision making tables. Lack of institutional support and formalized safe-spaces for expression were also pointed out as suppressive elements that prevented the youth from coming forward and contributing to the climate policymaking process in a meaningful way.
- Much like the case of Nigeria, it is envisioned that the climate movement in Pakistan would also take time to take flight, however, existing channels such as the Clean Green Pakistan and the Karti Dharti programme could facilitate the process if elements for youth and climate action were added to them. Moreover, mechanisms of institutional support from the government like youth-government dialogues and formulation of cross-sectoral youth working groups can remove institutional barriers that stood in the way of the youth having a seat at the decision-making table. Representation at these tables also needs to be inclusive of minorities and marginalized communities, so that they are considered important stakeholders in the proceedings of such interventions. The creation of green jobs, ease of doing business for climate-related entrepreneurial ventures, and establishment of climate-education funds were proposed as some ways of balancing economic priorities with climate needs.
- Pakistan is currently in an advanced stage of revising its first-generation NDCs. To ensure that it effectively incorporates youth as an important stakeholder, the revision document needs to go beyond the recognition of youth as just a vulnerable demographic. It should effectively highlight and translate their role as an active contributor to activities and planning processes aimed at achieving Pakistan's Climate commitments. As expressed by several interviewees, academic institutions need to play a role in educating the youth on climate change and the environment. Once sensitized, young people should have access to safe spaces for the expression of ideas on tackling the climate challenges. To empower youth economically should be specific goals set in the document, where youth unemployment challenges in the country should be resolved through the creation of green jobs across all sectors of the NDCs. The rural-urban divide and the exclusion of minorities and marginalized communities when it comes to climate action should also be discouraged. Provisions also need to be made for allowing these factions of the society to come forward and share their expertise and knowledge on climate change mitigation and adaptation. This way, by ensuring that the youth is recognized as a pivotal stakeholder, Pakistan's NDCs can promise incentives for homogenous youth development through quantifiable checks and balances.



3 Climate Change Perception and Awareness Survey

A national survey targeting climate change awareness and perception levels within the young segments of the country was carried out by the MoCC in collaboration with UNDP, in addition to the interviews with climate change and youth experts. The survey was designed for both rural and urban youth populations and inclusivity was achieved by ensuring that gender and provincial parity were kept in mind when selecting the range of respondents.

The survey had the following key objectives:

- Understanding the prevalence and depth of climate knowledge in our communities (particularly the youth), which would help MoCC better design future programs aimed at education and awareness,
- Understand the success and failures of current endeavors as well as pinpoint challenges to be tackled moving forward,
- Get facts and figures on direct and indirect effects of climate change on Pakistan's vulnerable populations and the degree of dissemination of information regarding future challenges and their solutions,
- Explore youth's opinion on avenues of engagement in climate-related activities, by understanding their perceived obstacles in eradicating them.

The responses received and their further analysis will prove to be very helpful in designing future interventions for climate policy and decision making in the country as they highlight educational as well as institutional gaps that hinder progressive and meaningful youth-oriented climate action in Pakistan. They also direct possible future interventions as desired by the youth, as well as highlight the challenges and priorities of the rural and urban youth of Pakistan.

3.1 Methodology

A third-party vendor was contracted to carry out rapid learning and needs assessment with both the digitally enabled youth ¹as well as simple phone users.

The following table summarizes the sampling strategy together with the medium of data collection for the three surveys:

Table 1 Survey methodology summary

Beneficiary	Engagement method	Numbers of beneficiaries engaged	Examples of engagement tools proposed
Digitally enabled (Urban youth)	Online Survey	8,000	Typeform, SMS, Targeted Mass Messaging.
Simple phone users (Rural youth)	Two-way, automated survey	6,000	Targeted Mass Messaging

The surveys were designed with respect to access to different kinds of device ownership. The phone survey had an uncomplicated design and was conducted through IVR/Robocall services, targeted towards basic phone users predominately the populace in the rural areas. It collected basic information together with questions relating to the fundamental understanding of climate change knowledge and climate change vulnerabilities. Whereas, the digital survey was designed to collect more in-depth knowledge and was targeted towards users with access to smartphones and hence digital platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook. To ensure a 25% female participation rate specific women groups were targeted. This was done to ensure equitable gender representation in the data collected.

The questions from the surveys were categorized into five different themes depending on the information that questions were trying to elicit. These themes are identified as:

- Climate Change knowledge
- Climate Change vulnerability
- Adaptation strategies
- Regulatory knowledge
- Climate advocacy

A total of 8795 responses were gathered for the digital survey while for the phone-in survey 5503 responses were obtained.

A climate change awareness tool has also been developed for the survey results, which utilizes the services of Microsoft's Power BI analytical tool. The tool developed translates the data obtained from the survey into meaningful correlations and interactive insights. The dashboard created allows users to visualize information that has been disaggregated and cross-tabulated in various ways. Insights and correlations have been developed for key questions and observations in the survey, such as those on barriers faced by communities in adapting to climate change, the most prominent impacts of climate change which had been felt by people, and how effective government interventions have been at improving access to climate change-related knowledge. Disaggregation can be done through the tool by gender, age, district, province education levels, and the correlation between responses can be accessed [here](#).

¹ The survey targeted ages 19 to 34 years old, to be able to get the opinion of students as well as working individuals.

3.2 Key Takeaways from the survey

Key Takeaways observed from the initial results include the following:

- The majority (70%) of the IVR respondents reported limited to no knowledge of the concept of environmental sustainability, while only 10% reported a high level of understanding, highlighting a major gap in climate change awareness within the digitally challenged youth of Pakistan.

Comparing this to the digitally enabled youth, where over 60% of the respondents claimed to have a high or very high understanding of the concept of climate change, almost 65% of the respondents claimed to have a good or very good understanding of the Causes of climate change, and almost 65% of the respondents claimed to have a good or very good understanding of the Impacts and Consequences of climate change. This makes a case of how effective digital and social mediums have been as one of the tools for climate change advocacy.

- A vast majority (79%) of the rural youth respondents reported poverty, economic crisis, and unemployment as the most serious problems facing society, with an economic crisis and unemployment selected by almost 38%. Similarly, for digital respondents 56.5% scored economic crisis and unemployment (5 on a scale of 5) as one of the most serious problems facing our society. A further breakdown of the respondents highlights that 57% of the digitally enabled youth were currently unemployed, while 39% of the digitally enabled youth belonged to the rural demographic. Responding to a question that

prompted on possible avenues that present the best opportunity for youth engagement in climate change policymaking and action, an overwhelming majority opted for green job creation with 44.5% while climate education was selected by 21%. This pinpoints the importance of creating employment opportunities for youth, particularly in the green domain not only as a tool of youth engagement but also to empower them.

- 30% of IVR respondents pointed to a high frequency of drought periods as the environmental change having the most significant impact on their lives in the last 10 years while almost 11% did not notice any change. This is in sharp contrast to the digitally enabled population results where the major concern was temperature and weather pattern changes. Only 4.7% of the digitally enabled population selected high frequency of drought periods as the most significant change observed in the last 10 years, highlighting a disconnect between IVR and digitally-enabled youth. Changing seasonal weather patterns (19.7%) and temperature changes (22%) were the most observed changes in the last 10 years for digitally enabled youth. The majority (76%) reported changes in weather conditions to have affected them the most due to climate change, where extreme heat and drought ranked 1st with 39%. Almost 24% of respondents reported factors that affected their livelihoods directly or indirectly. Breakdown of responses by districts also helps identify local challenges for each area and plan future policy actions accordingly.
- Almost 35% of the IVR respondents have

Climate Awareness and Perception Survey

A sample decision matrix to determine the best channel (robocalls, SMS, internet) for outreach and data collection in a diverse digital environment

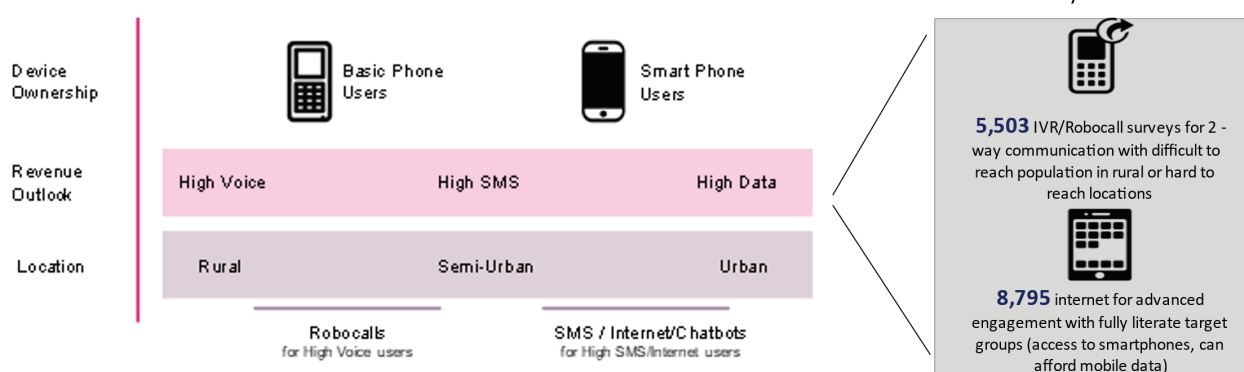


Figure 1 Methodology of the Survey

raised the plinth of homesteads as an adaptation measure to environmental changes while almost 19% had to undergo migration. In terms of the most significant impact of natural disasters, a high percentage (28.37%) reported the death or missing of a household member while 21% had to deal with house damage. 68% of the digitally enabled youth had personally suffered from climate changes as well. This highlights the ingrained nature of climate adaptation in rural areas and how there exists a need for supporting and mainstreaming these ideas as well as the impact Pakistan is already facing in various districts in the battle against climate change.

- Lack of knowledge on how to proceed and lack of resources, both ranked equally (36%) as the biggest adaptation challenge faced by the IVR youth. Lack of resources was the biggest challenge observed in the digitally enabled set of respondents with 41.8%, while 26% pointed to a lack of knowledge. Again, a breakdown by gender and district helps identify relative hotspots for future climate awareness campaigns and programs.
- Assistance from government, community and self-resilience were listed as the most effective means to alleviate environmental changes in IVR responses. 22% of the respondents wanted greater self-resilience pointing towards the willingness of the society to adapt towards climate change on their own accord. Governmental support was desired by 32% of the digital respondents for youth to better organize for involvement in climate change policy making process/climate action. Green Job creation was highlighted as the best avenue for youth engagement (44%) while climate education was selected by 22%, presenting a good metric for future investments and planning.
- 37% of the digital respondents did not have climate change and related activities as part of their formal education, highlighting a gap in climate curriculum and hence strengthening the case for greater climate education through schooling and basic education.
- 49% of the respondents were aware of or had benefitted from govt. related initiatives related to climate change and action, where one-third of the respondents reported being most familiar with programs/initiatives that entailed financial or cash-based incentives. 42% of the digital respondents were aware of govt. related climate change and action initiatives. Out of those who were aware of government initiatives, Clean Green Pakistan Initiative was the most well recognized with 31% of the respondents having knowledge of it followed

by Ten Billion Tree Tsunami at 24% and Kamyab Jawaan at 16%. Response breakdowns can help identify further actions and plans, but in general this provides a good spectrum of knowledge to ascertain what seems to be working and what's not. 84% respondents agreed that these initiatives had increased their climate change knowledge, pointing towards their success as a blueprint for further policy initiatives.

- 78% of the digitally enabled youth were not a part of any climate action or environmental organization or platform highlighting the opportunity for greater engagement. However, at the same time, 51% of the digitally enabled youth felt that they did have a say in how environmental decisions are made in the country, where lack of opportunities (54% selected), lack of awareness (47% selected) and lack of education (31% selected) were highlighted as the three biggest challenges for youth engaging in climate action. A high percentage (31%) of the IVR youth wanted to be involved in the design process of climate action and disaster management plans when queried on the best level of participation.
- 60% of the digital respondents stated that they consider use of environmentally friendly modes of transportation when making daily decisions pointing towards a possible avenue for greater investment and results. Waste recycling ranked highly as well providing a possible opportunity for greater streamlining with user education and opportunities as 45% of the respondents listed themselves as considering it a good tool to battle climate change.
- 69% of digital respondents were aware that Pakistan had a dedicated Ministry of Climate Change. In addition, the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Water Resources were also associated with climate change and action by the respondents.



4 Recommendations

A multipronged approach is necessary for any action plan to involve the youth in NDC development and climate change action and planning. The following agenda points should form the basis of all discussions with a special focus paid on gaining Pakistan based insights:[29]

1. Defining youth roles for effective climate action
2. Identifying the challenges and barriers for effective youth engagement
3. Providing enabling opportunities for youth to play a role in climate action
4. Empowering youth through the NDC process and discussion
5. Engaging meaningful youth participation in climate action

Keeping in mind the above-mentioned criteria, any climate policy should safeguard the following:

1. Climate education and awareness remain a major front lacking within Pakistan. All experts recommend the greater dissemination of climate-based information and knowledge by utilizing the education sector of Pakistan. Towards that end, the following suggestions are recommended:

- a. To ensure that the youth can play a role as a pivotal stakeholder in the decision-making process going forward, there is a need to build youth capacity before effective engagement. Schools and universities can be involved in such mobilization initiatives and curricula can play a pivotal role in preparing the leaders of the future.
- b. Pakistan is aiming for a uniform single national curriculum. It becomes imperative that any such initiative should include subject matters such as sustainable development, climate information, and circular economy in the curricula at all levels, so as to build knowledge and promote the interests of the youth in shaping their futures.
- c. Faith-based seminars and religious education centers should also be approached for ensuring climate education and awareness within students. Such an initiative will help kickstart faith-based climate initiatives and counter the set beliefs of God-ordained hardships through climate disasters.
- d. Climate surveys, awareness campaigns, and seminars should be held through the education channels in both public and private schools and universities. Not only would they help provide data for research purposes but also encourage youth involvement and awareness towards climate change and action.
- e. At a university level, Government should provide research grants, student projects, and competitions to encourage local climate research and action. Such initiatives can help increase awareness as well as the collection and availability of remote climate change data for future action.
- f. Initiatives must be taken to guarantee effective dissemination of information and understanding of NDCs and their process. This can be done through better communication means and greater access to information.

g. It is highly recommended that the government establishes a Climate Change Advocacy Strategy, targeting youth and vulnerable populations. Such an action plan should have youth inputs in its design phase while also sensitizing policymakers about the role of youth in climate action.

h. Youth champions and forums should be mandated in all education centers with particular emphasis paid to encourage and provide a safe space for young climate leaders and entrepreneurs to interact, brainstorm and share ideas.

2. Youth needs to be at the table from policy formulation to its execution, thus providing meaningful opportunities and engagement. Hence, promoting long term sustainability in decision making. Towards this end, the following actions are recommended:

- a. Rather than imposing decisions, projects, and initiatives on the youth, actions need to be taken in ensuring youth ownership in program planning, execution, and delivery. This in turn would promote qualities such as passion, commitment, and leadership while ensuring that creative solutions are implemented.
- b. Existing policies and climate legislation need to be adequately accessible as well as easy to understand. There is a need for youth to understand and comprehend all that is being done by existing decision-makers for a sustainable future. It is recommended that all future climate legislation, advocacy, and information be readily made available in local and regional languages to make the information more accessible and comprehensible across all youth. Youth can be utilized for such a translation project.
- c. Youth participation, including all vulnerable demographics such as persons with disabilities, religious and social minorities, etc. as well as gender balance should be ensured in all governmental bodies, meetings, forums, and delegations. These roles should be merit-based and not tokenistic.
- d. Youth champions need to be identified within the ministerial and policy-making bodies themselves, who can represent youth voices and perspectives in closed governmental meetings and decision-making processes.

- e. Youth working groups can be established for cross-sectoral research, suggestions, and policy recommendations.
- f. The government should facilitate, support, and incentivize existing youth movements, climate leadership, indigenous ideas, and research spaces. By mainstreaming and supporting their work and research, a lot can be gained in terms of awareness, advocacy, and future leadership.

3. Local and national mechanisms and networks need to be developed for youth engagement and organization. Such networks can help ensure youth participation, education, and connection to up and coming challenges. Towards that end, it is suggested that:

- a. A youth headquarters or center be set up at the MoCC, to work towards agendas and issues close to the youth. Such a center can help organize youth-based conferences, climate summits, and awareness sessions. At the other end of the spectrum, such a center can help challenge the set beliefs of current policymakers and also sensitize them towards greater involvement of youth.
- b. Youth champions and/or the fore-proposed youth center can also play a major role in nudging policies towards the betterment of youth and climate action. By providing a meaningful forum to youth, Pakistan can ensure that all future policies and legislations will have a youth voice and section, ensuring greater longevity and sustainable action.
- c. A youth focal person or center in other government ministries can help ensure regular input and mainstreaming of youth agendas and perspectives. These centers could then be scaled down to community levels or vice versa. Providing such platforms to engage youth in a merit-based structured system can help provide green leadership for the present and the future.
- d. An annual youth climate summit should be organized by the MoCC by gathering students from all-across Pakistan to discuss and debate climate change issues, challenges, mitigations, innovations, and ideas on a government-supported platform.

4. Follow up mechanisms need to be established to ensure action is taken based on youth opinions and input. Effective support needs to be provided to youth ideas and initiatives by providing access to funding, technical support, and opportunities. It is recommended that:

- a. Organizing training, seminars, events, and funding opportunities for youth-based initiatives should be a priority at the governmental level.
- b. Provision of user-friendly platforms and engagement tools through technology utilization and social media could serve as efficient and effective means for engaging young demographics.
- c. Online platforms to help youth engage amongst themselves on common issues faced by the community need to be provided. Such a platform can help unite voices towards directed action while also serving the purpose of climate learning and ambition.
- d. Community volunteering and learning programs could instigate youth empowerment particularly for climate education, technical development, and the creation and propagation of green jobs.
- e. Green funds should be set up to help finance green initiatives and ideas.
- f. Entrepreneurial workshops and competitions should be held at multiple levels under governmental support to provide financing channels and networking opportunities to up and coming climate change ideas and platforms.
- g. Greater access to climate-related data and research should be made available to students, researchers, and policymakers. This could be done by the platform of MoCC by acting as a focal for universities all across the country and ensuring easy availability of climate-related information and data.
- h. Engaging youth in International forums including UN climate talks needs to be a priority. Scaling up existing participation and providing merit-based opportunities for youth to participate in international forums can open up avenues of youth participation and engagement. All climate summits should have mandatory youth seats on the delegations and their opinions should be valued and incorporated.

- i. Programs need to be introduced to promote a generation of green engineers, scientists, entrepreneurs, and volunteers. These could either be community-supported initiatives backed by the government or governmental initiatives to seed green startups through effective policy and legislation.
- j. Any initiative needs to target and effectively engage vulnerable and underrepresented communities especially women, rural populations, people with disabilities, and minorities.

5. The ultimate ownership of the NDCs should be of the society. They should be the key driving force in the implementation of plans including mitigations and adaptations required for effective climate action. It is suggested that:

- a. The participation of youth shouldn't be a symbolic gesture, but any engagement has to be meaningful. Young people should be treated as valuable resources in the solution process of the climate crisis and not as a vulnerable demographic that needs to be catered to. Their involvement in the NDC process should center around utilizing youth's creativity and ingenuity towards modern solutions.
- b. The central government has to ensure that the provinces are on board with any implementation and plan chalked up at the national level. Focal persons need to be appointed to ensure effective communication channels, segregated and well-defined roles with utmost cooperation towards the achievement of a uniform and important agenda.
- c. Any NDC implementation plan, law, or legislation related to climate change should include dedicated youth sections with defined roles, responsibilities, and actions.
- d. The revised NDCs of Pakistan should have defined youth roles for all sectoral and thematic areas under the NDCs.
- e. All youth activities and engagements should be tracked and documented, with effective follow-up mechanisms ensured. A youth NDC tracker with set targets, progress reports, and indicators could streamline this process and ensure effective participation and engagement of youth.

5 Conclusion

Stories of successful youth participation in the climate action arena from around the world and rich input provided by our experts, youth leaders, and survey results could serve as a great blueprint for Pakistan to initiate its own youth engagement in climate policy and decision-making process. In fact, the country's revised NDCs, soon to be submitted to the UNFCCC would be a great way to spearhead this exercise. Like each country in the world, Pakistan has its own political climate and unique set of challenges. The interviews and the surveys conducted highlighted some of the salient features of the barriers faced by the youth in Pakistan for effective engagement in climate change action as well as the NDC process. A common issue highlighted by all mediums was the lack of climate education and awareness amongst the youth of Pakistan which was exacerbated by faith-based associations with the impacts of climate change in rural populations. Such beliefs hinder the propagation of climate education and foster climate change denial in the public. Lack of formal support was also a challenge highlighted by climate leaders and activists, while academia stressed the need for climate data, research, and innovative measures. Adult centric decision-making and tokenism are also attitudes that would need to be changed and challenged in order for youth to be taken seriously in the policymaking process.

First and foremost, there is a dire need for formalized channels of interaction between the government and youth leaders. A leaf could be taken out of the book of the Marshall Islands or Nigeria and cross-sectoral workgroups formed across all sectors of the NDCs with formal youth positions in them who'd coordinate with government officials and policymakers in ensuring

that all climate-related policies formulated are inclusive of the demands of the youth. To tackle faith-based beliefs, the help of young religious scholars and ulemas should be enlisted and the dangers of climate change should be included in education in madrassas and religious seminaries and care should be taken that these initiatives are inclusive of religious minorities too.

It was also understood that the lack of dedicated funds for youth-based start-ups and awareness campaigns is a major barrier that stands in the way of the propagation of concrete climate action. The Ministry of Climate Change needs to formulate a comprehensive advocacy strategy that involves large scale youth consultations and dialogues for soliciting the input of young people on climate change mitigation and adaptation in Pakistan. In addition, the creation of green job training centers such as vocational training centers for solar energy technicians, or developing/assembling energy-efficient technologies are other ways through which the youth of the country can be transformed into a double dividend that caters to both the economy and climate action. Lastly, platforms for youth mentorship regarding climate action need to be formalized. Existing avenues such as the 'Youth Council' or 'Clean Green Champions' would be great starting points for this engagement, provided that their ambit was increased to include youthful climate action. This can begin at a stage as early as the NDC revision process that Pakistan is currently undertaking and can be formalized by the COP 26 in 2021. Youth input needs to be ensured in all climate legislation and plans going forward, starting with immediate engagement for the NDCs revision process through measurable targets and outputs.

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