

The Weekly

Information Resource Bulletin

FOCUS: Youth & Climate Change

Climate change is one of the challenges the whole world is facing. We have discussed in our previous bulletins that climate change impacts range from affecting agriculture and food security to increasing the intensity of natural disasters and causing the spread of diseases such as malaria.

Youth can play a crucial role in combating climate change. Currently, more than half of the population of Malawi is under the age of 25 and that means Malawi's highest population demographic is young people.

The young generation has the energy and knowledge to lead our society towards a low carbon and climate resilient future.

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- To learn from the youth how they have contributed to climate change
- To understand how climate change has affected the youth
- To help youth understand what they can do to slow the effects of climate change.
- To give journalists tips and guidance on their reporting on the youth and climate change issues

The Problem: Youth need to be Actively Involved in Slowing Climate Change Effects

Youth fit into the climate change equation both as victims and also as solution providers.

The youth are victims of climate change because its current effects are a result of on-going and past human activities.

Though youth from different parts of the world are affected differently depending on the severity of these effects and the resilience of their own communities, there is one thing in common: they did not contribute to the current climate change problems.

However, young people will become contributors – just as past generations have been doing, unless they begin to find ways to slow the effects of climate change.

Youth must be encouraged to actively participate in addressing climate change problems, not as victims, but as solution providers.

Although climate change affects individuals of all ages, young people are particularly heavily burdened because they are likely to live longer and face more intense impact of the effects of climate change.

They have a great role to play in actively contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

It is important to engage young people in mitigating climate change effects. For example, the youth could be involved in environmental conservation, pollution and litter prevention.

Activities for Journalists

Use your radio station to help your community understand the role that young people have in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Encourage youth to do something to mitigate and help society to adapt to climate change effects. Challenge them to identify solutions to the problem before it gets worse and before future generations have to deal with the same problem.

Through this program, you can encourage the youth to do some or all of the following:

- Create youth networks across the country so that they can be able to exchange information and ideas. Maybe there already is a youth group in your community focused on climate change.
- Encourage behavior change especially in consumption patterns and care for the environment and the climate. For example; planting vegetation for erosion control, planting trees and conducting litter pick-ups. Involving the youth in climate change mitigation and adaptation activities not only creates direct impact on changing youth behavior and attitudes, and may even influence their parents, relatives and friends.
- Youth participation in climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives such as conducting a wetland or stream clean-up in their community.

- Also let your listeners know that there are already some young people who are trying to do something to adapt and slow the effects of climate change. One example is the Ekwendeni Youth AIDS Center which is run by the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Mzimba district. It is involved in paper making – it is 100% recycled paper and is handmade by the youth.
- Have a panel discussion with the youth from your area. Ask them how they have been affected by climate change, how they think they have contributed to climate change and what they think is their role in mitigating climate change effects.

Also interview a local environmental officer in your area on what he/she thinks the youth can do in mitigating climate change effects.

Help organize a youth group in your community – and work with other radio stations to create a network of young people engaged in climate change mitigation.

Community Engagement

Ask your listeners to call or sms their thoughts on what they think is the youths' role in mitigating climate change effects.

Useful Contacts

- Centre for youth and development Director; +265995463231
- Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy; Tel: +265 (0) 212 700 104
- Climate Change Policy & Practice <http://climate-1.iisd.org/>
- Africa Adaption Programme (UNDP) <http://www.undp-adaptation.org/>



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