



# Youth-Led Initiatives Addressing Drought

Turning Drought Policies into Action (Workstream 4)

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# We are facing a turning point in human history.



The world is watching droughts increase in intensity and frequency, but more importantly, we are seeing their human impact. It is not just about water shortages or failing crops—it's about the mothers who are struggling to feed their children, the farmers who lose their livelihoods, and the communities that are forced to migrate. These stories are not isolated—they are happening all around the world.

As youth, we are uniquely positioned. We inherit both the challenges and the solutions to turn the tide. So today, I want to explore how we, as young people, are already stepping up to the challenge and why we are critical in turning policies into action.



Drought is no longer a faraway crisis; it's a daily reality. Imagine going days without clean drinking water or watching an entire season's harvest fail because there isn't enough rain. These are the kinds of struggles people across Africa, Asia, and other parts of the world face year after year.

The numbers are staggering:

2 billion	People live in countries experiencing water stress
29%	Droughts have increased in the last two decades
1 in 3	People globally work in agriculture, which is severely affected

# The Global Drought Challenge



**Despite global policies to address drought**, such as those from the UNCCD and national frameworks, we often find a gap between what's on paper and what's happening on the ground. Why? Because without the right resources, support, and local ownership, policies stay as ideas, not action.

# Youth as Key Actors in Drought Response

- Youth are not just the future; we are the present.

## **Innovation:**

Young people are constantly finding creative ways to solve problems—from developing drought-resistant crops to using technology for water conservation.

## **Community Mobilization:**

We are often at the forefront of grassroots movements, uniting local communities around shared challenges.

## **Awareness Creation:**

Through social media and advocacy, youth have a voice that can amplify issues like never before, pushing for real change.



# Youth-Led Initiatives

## Overview

We aren't waiting for the world to change. We're leading the change. Across the globe, youth are taking the lead in addressing drought, whether through local projects or global advocacy.

### 1 Global Youth Networks

Through youth organising with youth led movements like YOUNGO, GYBN and the UNCCD Youth Caucus are bringing young people together.

### 2 Youth-Driven Solutions

We're implementing rainwater harvesting systems, drip irrigation, and water recycling.







# Bridging the Policy-Action Gap

Why is there a gap between policy and action?

- Youth-led initiatives are promising, but often they face challenges like:



## Limited Access

Youth voices are often underrepresented in policy discussions.



## Lack of Resources

Youth-led projects often struggle to get funding.



## Weak Infrastructure

Policies sometimes fail because the necessary systems are not in place.



# Policy Recommendations

Here's what we need to do to turn policies into real change.

- **Increase youth participation:** Ensure that young people are at the table when decisions about drought and climate resilience are made, from local government to the global stage.
- **Integrate local knowledge:** Young people are learning from the wisdom of their elders—policies must reflect this fusion of innovation and traditional practices.
- **Youth-friendly funding:** Create funding mechanisms that cater specifically to youth-led drought resilience projects, making it easier for us to scale up our work.





# This is not a time to stand by.

We are the generation that will live with the consequences of climate inaction—but we are also the generation that can turn things around. Let's work together to:

## Engage Policymakers

Push for political leaders to invest in youth-led initiatives.

## Support Youth Networks

Strengthen our efforts by ensuring that youth-led projects have the support, funding, and recognition they need.

## Collaborate

This is a fight that no one can win alone.





# Empowering youth is not an option; it's a necessity.

In closing, I want to emphasize that we cannot afford to let drought policies remain ideas on paper. Youth are already turning these policies into actions even without recognising that they are, but we need your help. We need to be included, funded, and supported.





# Thank you!