



Youth Action for Climate and Clean Air Now

Webinar Report July 2024



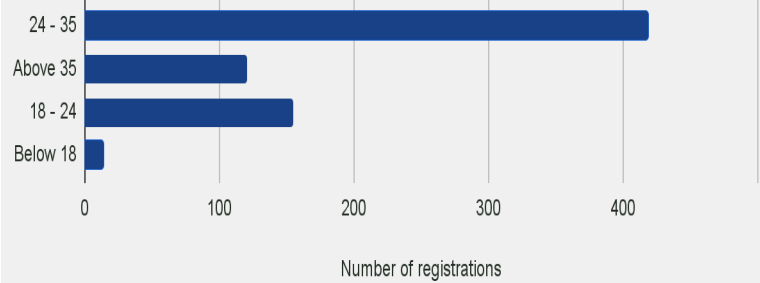
Number of registrations

710

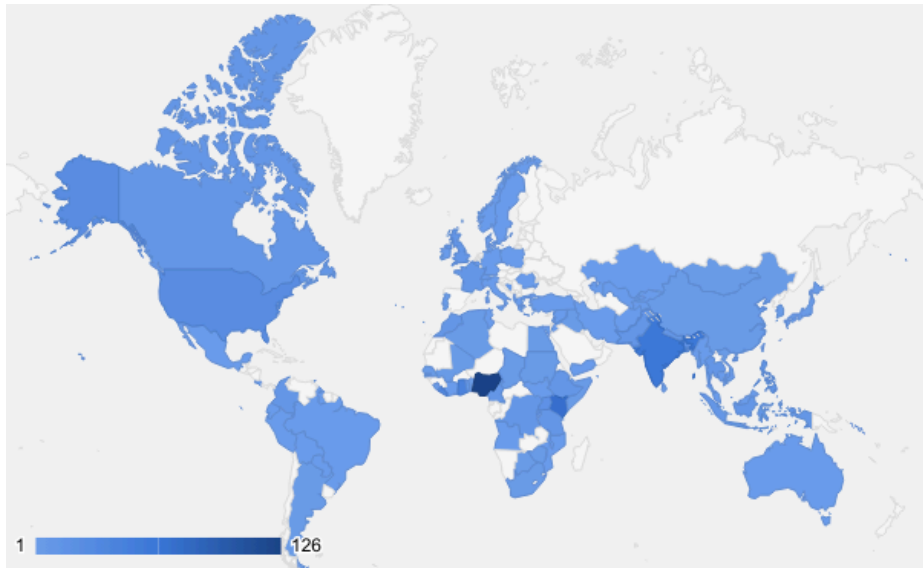
Max No of Attendees at a Given Time

144

Age Distribution of Registrants



Countries with Highest Number of Registrations



Webinar Summary

On 12 July, 2024, over 140 youth activists, entrepreneurs, coalition leads, students, community leaders, young professionals, researchers and youth leaders from around the world came together for 90 minutes to discuss different actions the youth can play in addressing climate change and air pollution. The participants listened to key presentations and discussions from renowned speakers, including:

- Global coordinator of the Children and Youth Major Group to the United Nations, Environment Program, **Zuhair Ahmed**
- Chief Scientist, Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development, **Gabrielle Dreyfus**
- Co-founder, EBAPreneur Solution clean-cookstoves in Ghana, **Deladem Kojo Xonu**
- Co-founder, El Derecho a No Obedecer, **Laura Serna Mosquera**
- Centre Director of the Stockholm Environment Institute, University of York, **Sarah West**
- Gender and Youth Associate, NDC Partnership, **Hannah Girardeau**.

Breakout sessions on SLCP solutions for communities, advocacy and policy change for clean air, and building green jobs in climate and clean air highlighted key areas for interventions. These areas include raising awareness about SLCP and its impact, increasing youth engagement opportunities, harnessing the power of the community to mitigate the effects of SLCPs and encouraging policy changes to create opportunities for green technology, employment and socio-economic gains.

Key Insights

The webinar identified the following key insights:

- **Collaboration and networking:** Actively engage with organisations, networks and initiatives that are already working towards addressing climate change and air quality challenges.
- **Engage the NDC process:** As countries update their Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2025, young people should engage the process to ensure air pollution priorities as linked to young people are captured.
- **Affordable alternatives:** Government to integrate affordable and accessible clean energy solutions at the local level. This includes cooking and transportation.
- **Knowledge acquisition for collective action:** Take the initiative to learn more about the interrelation between air quality and climate change. Understand the scientific, environmental, and societal aspects of the issue. Believe in the power of making a difference.
- **Local to global action:** Begin the journey towards change at the local level. Explore actions that can be taken individually or collectively to address these issues effectively.

Overview

Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCPs), including methane, black carbon, and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), are powerful climate forcers - also known as super pollutants - that have a significant impact on global warming and air quality. Addressing these pollutants can bring immediate benefits to both the climate and public health. The [Climate and Clean Air Coalition \(CCAC\)](#) in partnership with [Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP \(CYMG\)](#), [Fast Action on Climate to Ensure Intergenerational Justice \(FACE\)](#), [NDC Partnership](#), [OpenAQ](#), and [Stockholm Environment Institute \(SEI\)](#) recognize the crucial role that young people play in addressing climate change and air pollution. As part of CCAC's commitment to engaging and empowering youth, CCAC launched a [Youth Engagement Strategy](#) last year to empower young people to reduce SLCPs and improve air quality globally.

Objective

The main goal of this webinar, titled "Youth Action for Climate and Clean Air Now," was to actively engage, educate, and empower young people to take meaningful steps towards addressing SLCPs and improving air quality. This first Youth Action For Climate and Clean Air webinar brought together youth leaders, experts, and advocates in a collaborative environment where creative ideas and effective solutions were discussed.

With over 600 confirmed registrants from across the globe, the webinar was held at 8:00 (US Eastern Daylight Time) on Friday, 12 July 2024 to discuss the role of youth, as future leaders and innovators, in driving forward solutions that address these urgent issues.

The Webinar

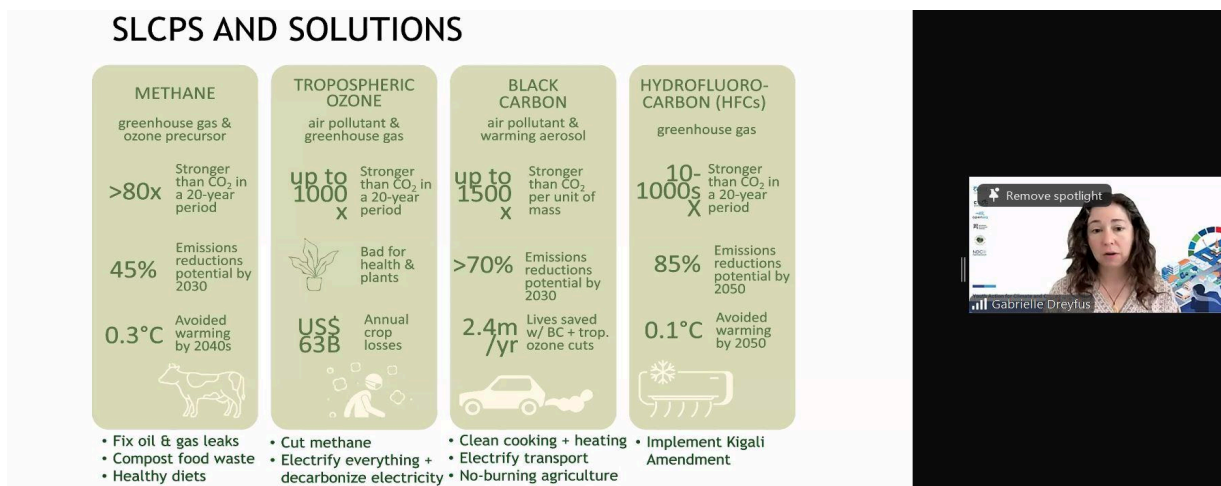
In his keynote remarks, Zuhair Ahmed, Global Coordinator of the Children and Youth Major Group to the United Nations Environment Program explained that young people, including children, are exposed to polluted air and the harmful consequences of air pollution. Our children are suffering from various diseases in very polluted cities around the world, particularly in Asia, Africa, and other regions of the global south.

Despite being the least responsible for climate change and air pollution worldwide, young people are often systematically excluded from participating in meaningful actions and policymaking on climate and clean air.

To cope with this new scenario young people need to be meaningfully engaged in employment and cleaner actions.

Presentation: The Science of SLCPs and their Impact on Climate Change, Air Quality, and Specific Health Risks to Young People - Gabrielle Dreyfus, Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development (IGSD)

Reducing SLCPs such as methane, HFCs, black carbon (soot), and tropospheric ozone (smog) is essential to mitigate the catastrophic impacts we are currently experiencing. A 2022 [UNICEF report](#) reveals that a significant number of children, exceeding 1.5 billion, are currently exposed to high heat wave frequency, a figure projected to reach 2 billion by 2050. SLCPs, which are far more potent at [trapping heat](#) than CO₂, can be cut to provide rapid



benefits while also addressing air pollution.

Methane, found in fossil energy, agriculture, and organic waste, is a noteworthy example. The IPCC AR6 WGI Figure SPM.2 indicates that although CO₂ contributes the most to cumulative warming, SLCPs account for about half. Black carbon, tropospheric ozone, and methane are potent air pollutants responsible for millions of premature deaths and billions in crop losses. Addressing leaks and capturing emissions could prevent the wastage of 110 million metric tons of methane annually

By electrifying transportation, cooking and heating, these measures will improve air quality, saving lives all over the world.

- Gabrielle Dreyfus, Chief Scientist, IGSD

Every fraction of a degree matters, and immediate action is crucial to slow down warming. By implementing substantial reductions in SLCPs, we can significantly slow warming in the next [20 years](#) and prevent four times more warming by 2050 compared to CO₂-focused strategies alone.

Panel discussion on climate actions and young people

1. Youth initiative on climate and clean air in the agriculture sector: Case study from Ghana: Deladem Kojo Xonu, EBAPreneur Solution clean-cookstoves in Ghana

Deladem and partners embarked on a mission to address the issue of crop losses caused by inefficient and unsuitable drying methods. They took proactive steps by constructing solar dryers that significantly reduce the drying time for cassava, thereby reducing post-harvest losses. Additionally, they recognized the need to repurpose cassava peels, considering that approximately 70% of Ghana's population heavily depends on unclean cooking fuels, charcoal and firewood which contributes to air pollution and also the limited access to electricity and gas. Even in urban cities, 60% of the population relies on such fuels. The group recognized the urgency to provide a sustainable alternative and focused on finding innovative solutions to repurpose cassava peels, thereby contributing to cleaner cooking practices and reducing reliance on unclean fuels.

By educating communities about value-added cassava products like cassava chips, they aimed to create market linkage and economic opportunities for farmers. Their efforts demonstrate the power of innovative solutions and collaborative networks in addressing pressing environmental and socioeconomic issues.

2. Advocacy and environmental justice - the strength in numbers: Laura Serna Mosquera, El Derecho a No Obedecer

Laura co-led and co-founded a national network for AQ in Colombia with over 20 organizations working in different regions with a clear vision on clean air and environmental health for all people in Latin America. This kind of collaboration is uncommon in Latin America, making it a significant step in promoting sustainability, reducing air pollution, and addressing climate change. While Colombia has made progress in its air quality monitoring system, most actions taken remain reactive rather than preventive.

El Derecho a No Obedecer network, envisions a Latin America with clean air and environmental health for all its people. To achieve this, they hold workshops, engage with students and public schools, and collaborate on symbolic actions. They aim to raise awareness and promote positive change in the region. By highlighting the intersection between air quality, climate crisis, and public health, they strive to create a culture of preventive measures and proactive approaches. The group believes in the power of networking to reduce inequalities and address air pollution issues and through their collective efforts, El Derecho a No Obedecer is making a valuable contribution to addressing climate justice and fostering sustainable practices in Latin America.

3. Citizen science and young people engagement - the SAMHE Project: Sarah West, Centre Director, SEI York, University of York

Considering that we spend up to 80% of our lives indoors in the UK, understanding the effects of the air we breathe in indoor spaces becomes incredibly important for our health. It

is crucial to recognize that actions within our homes, schools, and workplaces can also contribute to air pollution indoors and outdoors. This realisation emphasises the significance of the Schools Air Quality Monitoring for Health and Education (SAMHE) .

The SAMHE project monitors indoor air quality in over 800 classrooms in the UK. SAMHE employs local sensors and actively involves young people and their teachers in the process. Together, they have co-designed a web app that enables individuals to access their air quality data and conduct experiments to better comprehend the factors influencing air quality. This collaborative approach places young scientists at the core of the project, empowering them to actively contribute to the understanding and improvement of air quality. By engaging the younger generation, SAMHE not only fosters a sense of ownership but also promotes a deeper understanding of the issue and encourages actions to enhance air quality.

Discussions

- **BR. 1: SLCP Solutions for Your Community: Innovative Solutions for Clean Air - Lead by OpenAQ**

In identifying the barriers to adopting innovative solutions to clean air in communities, participants emphasised the importance of education for a broad range of stakeholders. These stakeholders include those on both the supply and demand sides, as well as other indirectly involved parties. Educating these groups on how their actions contribute to the generation of short-lived climate pollutants and other air pollutants is crucial. This can range from educating road construction contractors to raising awareness about the impacts of using firewood.

To address these issues, there is a need to work with partners to promote the use of clean cooking alternatives, such as cleaner fuels and stoves, and to transition away from fossil fuels towards alternative energies like solar, wind, and geothermal. However, the group noted that alternative energy sources can be less economically viable for some communities.

Participants called on the government to integrate clean energy solutions at the local level, making them more affordable and accessible to everyone. This could involve investing in local clean energy industries to drive down costs.

Another concern raised was the issue of open waste burning, which is still a problem in many areas. Proper waste management solutions, such as landfilling or composting for biodegradable waste, are still needed. Even with source segregation, low-budget solid waste management systems often lead to the mixing of all waste types.

Participants emphasised the need for comprehensive education campaigns to raise awareness about the negative impacts of air pollution and to share best practices that can encourage behaviour change at the individual and community levels.

- **BR. 2: Advocacy and Policy Change for Clean Air lead by FACE**



Participants actively discussed various strategies to enhance youth engagement in policymaking, specifically concerning air pollution with emphasises on collaborative and co-creative approaches throughout the entire policymaking process. These insights underscored the necessity of ensuring that the voices of young people are heard and valued, promoting equitable representation and encouraging a sense of ownership and responsibility for the outcomes of the policies.

It has worked for us to review the work plans of environmental institutions and propose projects aligned to the youth perspective. Now we are about to contribute to the creation of an integrated AQ monitoring system through citizen science (cheap), which we got with alliances from other states, and with that we will be collaborating in the state climate change program and a route of state decarbonization (forced instruments).

- Arabel Ali (Mexico)

In addition, participants highlighted the importance of building and strengthening the capacity of young people to effectively engage in policy making. This involves providing opportunities for education, training, and skill development that equip young individuals with the necessary tools to meaningfully contribute. Participants recommend engaging with

environmental NGOs, schools, neighbourhoods, community centres, and other stakeholders to strengthen capacity.

Furthermore, participants emphasised the need for clear and open stakeholder engagement, ensuring increased accessibility for young people to participate. Importantly, participants highlighted the need to discourage tokenism and instead foster genuine collaboration.

- **BR. 3: Building Green Jobs in Climate and Clean Air lead by CYMG**

Citizen science is a powerful tool that enables individuals to showcase the reality to governments, making a significant difference in addressing air pollution. Integrating knowledge into secondary schools and removing barriers to youth entrepreneurship supports emerging leaders in taking action. Awareness campaigns, including innovative approaches like supporting clean air days, play a crucial role in linking individual experiences to climate change and air pollution mitigation.

Empowering people to address these issues in their daily lives and providing them with agency to take action is essential. Such as tailoring campaigns to suit specific country or community contexts is important for success. Another example is Installing sensors in homes and communities generates evidence to engage governments effectively. The use of sensors and tailored campaigns further strengthens the impact of these efforts, enabling engagement with governments and driving positive change in air pollution mitigation.

Conclusion

The webinar ended on a positive note with participants providing feedback in broad areas captured below.

Education and awareness:

- Importance of education and communication for community engagement and support.
- Making opportunities to harness youth enthusiasm and increase awareness of the seriousness of the problem.
- Integrating atmospheric and climate sciences into curricula and creating interactive learning experiences.
- Humanising the impact of air pollution and climate change through personal stories and experiences.

Community engagement and collaboration

- Harnessing the power of the community to mitigate the effects of SLCP.
- Intergenerational dialogue and community engagement for reaching net-zero goals.
- Encouraging policy changes to enable community-level engagement and action.

- Sharing awareness and knowledge gained to generate immediate action in personal environments.

Policy and Green Technology

- Policy changes required to utilise various solutions for combating climate change.
- Adoption of green tech and creating opportunities for community-level action
- Empowering employers to reduce air pollution and integrating air pollution reduction into job roles.

In her closing remarks, Hannah Girardeau from the NDC Partnership emphasised the need for deep cuts in SLCPs and highlighted the role of communication, youth engagement, and empowerment in achieving these reductions. She emphasised the importance of community awareness and education to help people understand the impact of air quality on their health. She also mentioned the significance of individual choices in addressing pollutants and provided an example of transitioning from polluting household cooks to a cleaner fuel, which can have significant benefits. She stressed the need for increased implementation of NDCs and the importance of the NDC Navigator tool, developed in collaboration with various partners, to support countries in developing more ambitious and inclusive NDCs. She encouraged participants to explore the available resources and highlighted the valuable role that young people can play in advocating for policy change and driving climate action.

She concluded with the remarkable potential of young people to take quick action on air pollution, advocate for policy change and push governments and community leaders to take action.

Events like these are really important opportunities for us to come together to strengthen our collective understanding, and really walk away hopefully with ideas for how to take forward this learning into climate, action and implementation of policies.

- Hanna Girardeau, NDC Partnership

References

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