LIVING IN THE CLIMATE CRISIS: YOUNG PEOPLE IN UGANDA

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Published in November 2021

DOI: 10.17863/CAM.75235

https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.75235

https://www.cisl.cam.ac.uk/centres/centre-for-policy-and-industrial-transformation/peak-youth-climate-change

Reports in this series:

Barford, A., Olwell, R. H., Mugeere, A., Nyiraneza, M., Magimbi, P., Mankhwazi, C., & Isiko, B. (2021). *Living in the climate crisis: young people in Uganda.* University of Cambridge. https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.75235

Barford, A., & Cieslik, K. (2019). *Making a life: a youth employment agenda.* Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge. https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.41570

Barford, A., & Coombe, R. (2019). *Getting by: young people's working lives.* Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge. https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.39460

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Climate disruptions are having devastating impacts on human lives and livelihoods, and demand urgent and concerted responses. This requires cooperation of local, national and global stakeholders and people from all generations and walks of life. Failure will mean that the young people of today and the generations to follow will face increasingly severe climate disruptions likely to impact every facet of their lives.

Our understanding of climate change must take into account its impacts on those most vulnerable to severe climate disruption – particularly young people in Africa. Accordingly, our research focuses on young people in Uganda. Uganda is one of the world's youngest countries, and is situated in the continent most vulnerable to climate disruptions. Worsening droughts and flooding are exacerbating pre-existing socioeconomic challenges such as youth underemployment, food insecurity, and inadequate social protection. Young people in Uganda face considerable uncertainty concerning work, education, and their futures. They often lack the financial resources to absorb shocks caused by climate disruptions. The negative consequences of increasing livelihood insecurity are not limited to the economic sphere, but also impact mental and physical health.

This report documents the diverse livelihood strategies of young people living in Uganda, the impacts of climate change on their lives, and the adaptation and mitigation strategies that they have employed to address the crisis so far. By foregrounding views of young people, our research presents a vivid picture of how climate disruptions are already impacting young people. These impacts are set to intensify in the coming decades.

The research draws on 1214 survey responses, 102 interviews, and 12 focus group discussions with young people in the Karamoja and Busoga sub-regions of Uganda. The report also highlights insights from the multisectoral, youth centered Kampala-Cambridge workshop, 'Young People, Climate Disruption and

Adaptation in Africa', held on 12-14 July, 2021. The research, funded by a British Academy 'Youth Futures' grant, has been carried out collaboratively by members of Makerere University, Restless Development Uganda, and the University of Cambridge. The key points arising include:

Disrupted livelihoods: Our research found that 76% of survey respondents had their livelihoods disrupted by environmental changes over the course of the past year. Agriculture is a vital source of income for young people in Uganda, but is prone to climate related disruptions. Variability in weather, rainfall, and seasonality puts pressure on agricultural production making it risky and unprofitable, leading to food insecurity. Young people are increasingly seeking alternative livelihoods, especially in the informal sector, though often these alternatives are also affected by climate disruptions.

Climate-driven loss and displacement: Young people associate climate change with loss. For instance, the livestock, raw materials, or infrastructure they work with may be damaged by extreme weather events. Recent floods in Karamoja swept entire herds of cattle away, destroying roads and bridges. Prolonged and frequent droughts and flooding greatly impact the economic stability of individuals, households, and communities. These climate change disruptions have led some young people to move, due to loss of homes or livelihoods, or in search of better opportunities.

Mental health and well-being: Our research showed that young people in Uganda are anxious about their futures and expect the climate crisis to accelerate. For example, 64% of survey respondents felt anxious about environmental change and 57% were concerned that climate change will have a strong impact on them and their families. At the workshop, Dr. Mary Lillian Nabwire explained that "Many young people feel anxious, desperate, or hopeless about climate change and the negative impacts that climate disruption will have on their lives."

> ***Look and consider the ideas of these young people. Although most of us come from humble backgrounds, we have rich ideas.***
>
> 25 YEAR OLD MAN, BEE KEEPER AND STUDENT, KARAMOJA

Adaptation and mitigation: Many young people are seeking to adapt to climate disruptions in whatever ways they can, although such adaptation strategies are often constrained by a lack of financial resources. Our research found that only 31% of those surveyed had adapted their livelihoods in response to environmental changes. Conversely, 49% of respondents felt that they had no control or ability to influence the situation. Some young people are engaged in awareness campaigns, tree planting, and other proactive responses. However, many other young people have limited knowledge of the climate crisis and are not actively responding to climate change, in part due to inadequate climate education and training, and insufficient resources.

Franco, volunteer supporting livelihoods in Karamoja, Uganda.

To support young people in their efforts to respond to climate change, and to overcome the barriers posed by limited resources and structural constraints, we offer the following youth-informed messages to COP26:

1. Education must be prioritised, and should emphasise environmental education, climate change, and adaptation strategies.

2. Training is needed to provide young people with new skills for alternative, climate-resilient livelihoods, with a focus on green jobs.

3. Young people need external support to access stable income sources and livelihoods, as well as financial programs and incentives that enable them to actively engage in climate mitigation strategies.

4. Inclusive dialogues at the national and international levels that engage young people and validate their experiences, expertise, and solutions are essential to the delivery of effective change.

GLOSSARY

Adaptation: Adjusting to living with climate change.

Circular economy: An alternative mode for production and consumption, which keeps materials in circulation and designs out waste, thus reducing environmental damage.

Climate change: Long-term, large scale shifts in average temperatures and weather patterns.[1] This report refers to anthropogenic / human driven changes.

Greenhouse gases: Gases which trap earth's radiated heat, especially: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulphur hexafluorides.[2]

Least developed countries: The 46 lowest-income countries which are especially vulnerable to environmental and economic stresses.[3]

Livelihood: Activities of everyday life that help to secure basic necessities, including earning, subsistence activities, education, and care work.

Mitigation: Preventing further climate change by reducing atmospheric greenhouse gases.

Resilience: Capacity to withstand climate change, by anticipating and absorbing climate shocks and stresses, and longer term by reshaping development pathways.[4]

Young people and youth: The time between childhood and adulthood. The Ugandan National Youth Policy of 2001 defines youth as 12 to 30 years of age;[5] research participants in this study were 18-30 years old.

Mbale District, Uganda.

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Hilda Flavia Nakabuye
Founder and Organiser
FridaysForFuture
Uganda

CALL TO ACTION

24 year old Hilda Flavia Nakabuye calls for change.

Climate change is without a doubt the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced, and it affects us all. Its indiscriminate nature leaves us wondering what tomorrow will be like. Thinking of our reactions towards this crisis saddens me. Knowing that very little or nothing at all is being done to combat it, while at the same time companies like Total and Shell are opening up fossil fuel industries and oil pipelines around the world. Companies like Coca Cola are producing more plastic every day despite the harm it is causing to our environment and to our health.

I take this moment to applaud us humans. 68% average biodiversity decline in the last 50 years. 750 gigatonnes of carbon a year. At 1.5°C of warming people are dying – massive floods, droughts, heatwaves, unimaginable hurricanes, lakes drying up, oceans rising, corals drying, ice melting; and yet, we are still comfortable. Global crop failures at 2°C by 2035. Most humans will be dead at 4°C by 2065. Our planet will be uninhabitable at 6°C by 2095.

Dear leaders, your choice of inaction is leading us to extinction. Your choice of inaction and reluctance to combat climate change is affecting the entire planet. We are in a crisis, we are in a climate emergency. Melting glaciers, the arctic is warming, rising temperatures, rising sea levels, flooding, drought. All this and more is what your choices are creating. Your choice to ignore science, your choice to not listen to young voices. Your choice to pretend that you have everything in control, and yet every day of inaction sets us back.

Right now, brand new oil pipelines are opening up. In my country Uganda, the French oil giant Total is constructing the world's longest heated crude oil pipeline. For many years, groups of indigenous people, corporate organisations, and scientists have talked and warned about the climate crisis, about climate change. This makes me wonder if words from a young woman, a victim of the climate crisis from Uganda will make any difference, or if they make any sense to you right now.

Climate change exacerbates existing inequalities in gender, social and health. All these are interconnected and we cannot have one without the other. Climate change is not a generational fight, it's an intergenerational fight. One which we took on from our grandparents and which we hope to end in our generation, because we are the first generation to know what we are doing and therefore the last to be able to solve it. Future generations deserve better.

Right now we are suffering the effects of the emissions from our parents, and many people tell us that we do not know what we want. But I want to assure you that the youth of the climate generation know exactly what they want. We youth are organising globally, we are connecting, we are ambitious, empowered and unstoppable.

In the course of history there comes a time when humanity has to shift to another level of understanding. That time is now. The time for youth inclusion in decision making, planning and action. Because youth-led organisations are providing an invaluable perspective that sometimes policy makers lack.

I am on a mission. A mission to fight for the future. And the voice of the dying young people, displaced women, dying animals and distorted nature. I am here to speak for all generations to come. I am not shocked that there isn't any action taken yet, rather I am in fear. In fear because of the risk I am taking right now. But the only thing I fear more than climate change is the idea that we youth and people will ever give up on this fight. This is our fight and we have to take on this fight together.

Please, leaders and corporations, stop asking us what you can do about the climate crisis, because you know exactly what to do. You know what you are not doing. You know exactly what it takes. So, let's stop the pretenses, the empty promises, and get to real concrete actions. The world needs change, the world needs change makers. Let's be the change we want to see in the world. Let's not wait for miracles to unfold because there won't be any. Let's take on this fight as if it were ours, because it is ours. We owe this to our children and grandchildren. Let's take concrete actions to combat the climate crisis. Together we can do it. This is my plea. ●

INTRODUCTION

"Climate change is not taking place at an abstract level, but instead is in neighbourhoods, in the places young people live and work."

DR. ADAM BRANCH, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

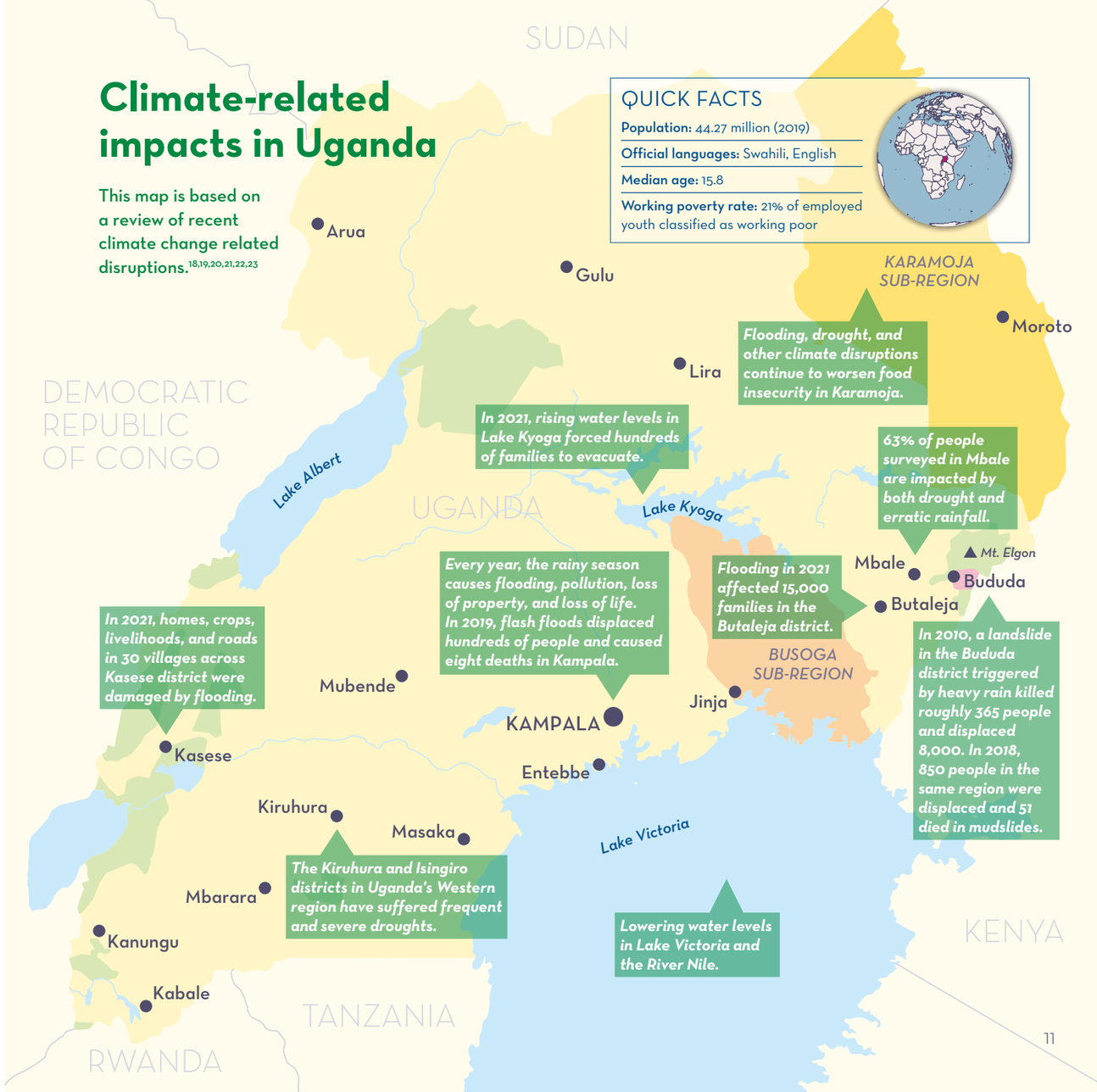
The climate crisis – the single greatest challenge of our time – is also a crisis multiplier.[6] And Africa, home to the world's youngest population,[7] stands to be the continent worst impacted by climate change.[8] As the climate crisis exacerbates underlying social, economic, and development challenges, young people will be disproportionately impacted by climate change.[9] We are on course for these challenges to escalate, especially for young people, as climate change deepens. Unless we take urgent action at the local, national, and global scales, today's young people and subsequent generations will face increasingly severe climate disruptions that will impact many facets of their lives. This report details the early stages of a worsening situation, explores specific challenges, and proposes some solutions.

The voices of young Africans are often unheard in public and political discussions of climate change impacts, adaptation and mitigation. This reflects various barriers including digital disconnection, poverty, denied visas, and non-existent invitations.[10] Yet it is essential that the experiences, insights and recommendations of young people, who already experience climate change in their daily lives, are heard and listened to.[11] This report adds the voices of young people living in Uganda, one of the world's least developed countries, to the global understandings of climate change adaptation, mitigation, and justice.

Young people face considerable uncertainty concerning work, education, and life prospects.[12] Now combined with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic,

Climate-related impacts in Uganda

This map is based on a review of recent climate change related disruptions.[18,19,20,21,22,23]



RESEARCH PROJECT

Peak youth, climate change and the role of young people in seizing their future

The *Peak Youth, Climate Change and the Role of Young People in Seizing their Future* project gathered data through a 1214 person survey, 102 interviews with young people, and 12 focus groups (with 60 young people) from the Karamoja and Busoga sub-regions of Uganda. Karamoja is an arid, largely pastoralist region in northeast Uganda while Busoga is a better connected region on the shore of Lake Victoria, close to the capital, Kampala. Our youth-led methodology engaged young climate experts from the wider region in the design of the research tools, and it was young researchers who collected, analysed and validated the data alongside academic analysis. The same young researchers then played a key role in dissemination of findings and advocacy.

Our youth-led research design aims to empower young people with the research skills and evidence. It subsequently enables young people to use evidence to devise solutions and hold their leaders to account, while also sharing findings collected by people with strong local connections and good local knowledge. The research balanced gender (survey 51% female; interviews 44% female) and disadvantage (37% of survey respondents did not complete secondary school). Young researchers worked mostly face-to-face with participants who are often excluded from research due to remote location, poverty,[24] language barriers, or digital disconnection. During the 2021 summer lockdown, surveys were conducted by telephone, with researchers addressing imbalances in responses when restrictions eased. Interviews were conducted in Lusoga and Ngakarimojong, then translated into English.

This research stems from a collaboration between Restless Development Uganda, Makerere University, and the University of Cambridge. The work is funded by the British Academy's Youth Futures programme.

▶ the climate crisis is amplifying the development and economic challenges that have faced young people in sub-Saharan Africa for decades. For instance, in Uganda, the collapse of urban job opportunities due to COVID-19 has led many people to make a living from agriculture, while agricultural production has become less reliable due to climate change.[13] Climate change and COVID-19 are layered onto insufficient and insecure job opportunities[14,15] disrupting the provision of education, and causing further population displacement in a country already impacted by conflict-driven displacements.[16,17] These disruptions have immediate impacts and longer term scarring effects on young people.

This report brings together new research in Uganda with key takeaways from the *Kampala-Cambridge Workshop* on the impact of climate change on young people in Uganda (see boxes). The report is composed of four main sections, each focusing on one facet of the interactions between young people and climate change. The first examines climate change in Uganda and the scholarly and policy narratives concerning climate, development, and charcoal in Uganda, alongside young people's understandings of climate change. The next chapter centres on the diverse impacts that climate change has on the livelihoods, education, mental health, and food security of young people. The third chapter considers the adaptation and mitigation strategies that young people in Uganda have employed, especially at the individual and household levels, and reviews youth activism. The penultimate chapter elaborates on practical solutions, focusing on green jobs and policy innovation. The final chapter of the report concludes with targeted recommendations informed by young people experiencing the sharp end of climate change. ●

Young researchers Mikanto and Joseph.

THE KAMPALA-CAMBRIDGE WORKSHOP

Young people, climate disruption & adaptation in Africa

From 12-14 July 2021, an international online workshop drew together the voices, ideas, and expertise of diverse groups, to explore and start to problem-solve some of the most pressing issues around daily experiences of climate change. Delegates included young researchers, climate activists, NGO representatives, academics, and policy makers mostly based in Uganda. While much previous discussion has concerned mitigation of climate change, less is known about the day to day challenges young people are facing because of it, how young people are already adapting and responding, or what interventions they want to see. This is the gap the workshop aimed to fill.

With adaptation now a clear priority in the context of worsening and increasing climate change-driven events, this workshop explored what needs to be done and what young people living with climate change want. The event involved sessions on the impacts of climate change on young people, young people's responses in terms of adaptations and activism, and also on how policies, especially green jobs policies, might address the intersecting challenges of job scarcity and climate change.

CLIMATE CHANGE IN UGANDA

"[By 2100] rainfall will be more frequent and more intense. There will be more floods, more dry spells and dry conditions, and higher evaporation rates so the soils dry out."

DR. DAVID MFITUMUKIZA, MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

Many young people in Karamoja make their living from burning charcoal.

Climate change is already impacting Uganda through both rapid- and slow-onset events (see map on page 11). In recent years, notable impacts include falling lake and river levels, more frequent and severe droughts, and erratic and excessive rainfall leading to flooding, mudslides and landslides (see page 16).[25] Exposure to climate risks has been exacerbated by influxes of refugees from neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Somalia, with an estimated one and half million refugees now in Uganda.[26] Globally, roughly 9 out of 10 natural disasters can be linked to extreme weather events and climate change,[27] yet a lack of long term and recent data on environmental changes in Uganda, and Eastern Africa more broadly, hampers scientific analysis of past trends, undermining projections.[28,29] Nevertheless, it is clear that the physical impacts of climate change in Uganda are set to worsen in the coming decades.

Susceptibility to climate change depends upon the nature of physical events, and on the durability of existing economic, political, social, and infrastructural systems.[30] When roads are built without foundations, flood defenses are not constructed, homes are fragile, or weather warning systems inoperative, risk increases. Similarly, a high dependence on agriculture for livelihoods means that single climate events can have long lasting impacts on family health, wealth, income, and nutrition.[31] When families reliant on agricultural production are displaced, they abandon homes, fields, and livestock and may have only meagre funds with which to rebuild their lives. Such families may then be forced to make other difficult decisions, such as removing their children from school or entering their daughters into early marriage.[32]

This chapter focuses on how climate change plays out in the Ugandan context. First, we consider the intersection of climate change and development, then explore a mainstream political and developmental narrative about climate change, and end by reviewing how young people perceive and understand climate change. Overall, this shows a disconnect between the detrimental effects of climate change on development, with some narratives of climate change demonising the constrained choices of the most vulnerable young people. Yet many young people have not had the opportunity to learn about the causes and longer term consequences of climate change, despite experiencing it in their daily lives.

62% of survey respondents did not know where to get accurate information on local weather patterns.

For those who did know where to find accurate weather information, their first choice was generally the radio, followed by TV, and then community leaders.

TIMELINE: A CENTURY OF LANDSLIDES IN BUDUDA DISTRICT

1922
20 people died, many injured, during the end of harvest celebrations.

1942
Broken dam killed people, and destroyed rice fields and coffee farms. Debris flow killed monkeys, snakes and baboons, and blocked roads.

1964
18 people died.

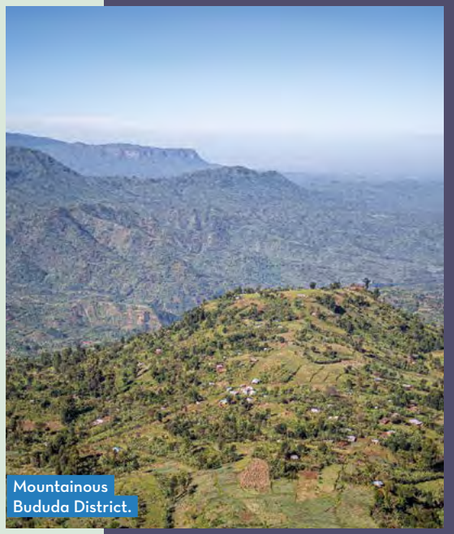
1967
Six people died, others were missing, and many houses were destroyed in Buwali valley.

1970
More than 60 circumcision dancers buried alive by the landslide, many people were injured, and homes were destroyed.

1993
25 people died.

1997
48 people died and 10,000 people were displaced; houses and bridges were destroyed and roads were blocked with debris.

1999
Five people died and many more were injured.


Mountainous Bududa District.

SPOTLIGHT ON BUDUDA:

Landslides increase with heavy rains

Located on the slopes of Mount Elgon, at the Uganda-Kenya border, Bududa District is home to 210,173 people. Bududa has become synonymous with landslides,[33] which follow heavy rain that swells the clay soil.[34] With high demand for agricultural land, and illiteracy rates of nearly 30% for those aged over 18 years,[35] many people locate their homes and farms on steep slopes that are more susceptible to slope failure. Bududa has been hit repeatedly by landslides, which often destroy crops and homes and claim lives. In March 2010, 350 people were killed by landslides in the villages of Nametsi, Kubehwo and Namangasa in Bukalasi sub-county.[36] In 2020, survivors took the Ugandan Government to court, alleging that their "rights to land, property, and the right to a clean and healthy environment" had been compromised.[37] Meanwhile, the Ugandan Government is relocating people from landslide prone parts of Bududa District.[38]

2010
Flooding of the River Manafwa and landslides, over 400 people died and 5,000 were displaced.

2011
11 people died, and homes, bridges, crops and latrines were destroyed.

2012
Landslides hit the villages of Namanga and Bunakasala. 18 people died, 856 households (5,824 people) were affected.

2013
One person died, 17 were injured.

2017
Seven people died, and hundreds displaced from Bufupa parish in neighbouring Sironko District.

2018
42 people died, property destroyed, more than 500 people displaced in Bukalasi.

2019
Five people died and 400 displaced in Buwali. Multiple landslides in Sironko and Bududa districts, killed eight people and displaced hundreds.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

Development and climate change are linked in diverse ways, explains Dr. David Mfitumukiza. Firstly, the disruption and increasing uncertainty associated with environmental changes will impact social and economic development. Secondly, developed countries are responsible for far greater per capita emissions than less developed countries, presently and historically. The Ugandan national pathway to development currently relies on oil, gas and minerals extraction; yet on this path Uganda will continue to contribute to the global climate crisis. This conundrum leads Dr. Mfitumukiza to question 'is development threatened or is development a threat' to climate change?

Climate change does not embody a single threat, rather there are many stressors which affect people's experiences and outcomes. Dr. Mfitumukiza explains:

- Agricultural productivity may decline as less predictable seasons make it hard to know when to plant and harvest crops. Furthermore, heavy rains lead to soil erosion and nutrient losses. Low yields may be balanced by extending land under cultivation, resulting in loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. All this can increase food insecurity; with most (four-fifths) high emissions scenario models projecting declining rice production.

> 74% of survey respondents reported not having adequate access to information about how the environment is changing.

> ***We plant and then the rain washes away what we plant. Recently we received little rain, which means it is hard to plant rice as it dries out. Young people cannot go to school because not enough was earned from selling rice, and then there are early marriages too. People get frustrated because rice is not working, but without an alternative to go to.***
>
> ONAN OLINDI FELIX, YOUTH RESEARCHER

- Water shortages, excessive rainfall and flooding are highly disruptive, compromising water quality and raising the risk of outbreaks of waterborne diseases. Insufficient water (and siltation from erosion) can also disrupt household and agricultural water use, and compromise the hydroelectricity production upon which Uganda depends.

- Thirdly, 'development and adaptation deficits' are likely to lead to conflicts and forced migration.

> ***In Uganda, we need to not only focus on how climate change is affecting agriculture, and turn our lenses to the other side of the coin... as long as there is no alternative source of livelihood, or the appreciation of sustainable approaches to agriculture, questions raised by communities will continue to come in the form of 'What other chance do we have for survival?'***
>
> ALLEN LUNKUSE, WORKSHOP DELEGATE

Climate change threatens Uganda's social and economic development on multiple fronts. Dr. Mfitumukiza emphasises the need to build capacity and resilience to better confront climate change. Local governments should roll out climate change policies which engage the close linkages between climate change mitigation and poverty reduction. In fact, adaptation and mitigation are complementary goals rather than separate agendas. A good example of this is afforestation, which creates a carbon sink while stablising water supplies and acting as a windbreak. Dr. Mfitumukiza reminds us that while adaptation is especially important for Uganda, it is important not to lose sight of climate change mitigation.

CLIMATE CHANGE NARRATIVES

A pervasive charcoal-climate-youth narrative promoted by NGOs and current policy agendas shows an interpretation of charcoal production that demonises and criminalises poor rural communities, explains Dr. Adam Branch. Moreover, the narrative offers little climate change mitigation, and diverts attention from the industrial actors behind large-scale deforestation. This narrative runs as follows.

1. Charcoal is a dirty energy source and is being replaced by gas and oil. In fact, charcoal is the primary energy source in 90% of households. Fuel switching to electricity is not happening so there is a need to work with charcoal and not against it.

2. Charcoal production is driving deforestation and climate change. However, facts about biomass energy are not well known. In Uganda, charcoal is blamed for climate change despite its low carbon footprint compared with many other energy sources.

3. Charcoal is produced by rural young people who exploit shared resources, due to desperation, greed, or a lack of environmental concern. The idea that young people are the primary drivers of destructive charcoal production is false – most damage is caused by large industrial work crews clearcutting entire forests.

Flooded village after heavy rainfall, Lira.

RESEARCH DATA INSIGHTS

What comes into your mind when someone talks about climate change?

"Rain is good but when it over rains, for us who work on the shores, the rain affects us. Because on my side of the work place you would find a lot of water flooding inside. Now the sun is shining, but when you find this place on a rainy season, it's a disaster. Rain affects us as you see in this area, you can't walk in this place when it rains. That is why we wear boots. Our feet are always in the boots; you can't live in this community without boots because you would become sick, your feet will swell. The climate changes affect us strongly."

26 YEAR OLD WOMAN FROM A PERI-URBAN COMMUNITY IN JINJA

Young people's observations and understandings of climate change, according to our 1214 respondent survey in Karamoja and Busoga sub-regions

OBSERVATIONS

72% noticed temperatures increased

55% saw rainfall decrease, an additional 29% saw more fluctuation in rainfall

61% observed increased droughts

55% saw more wind

UNDERSTANDINGS

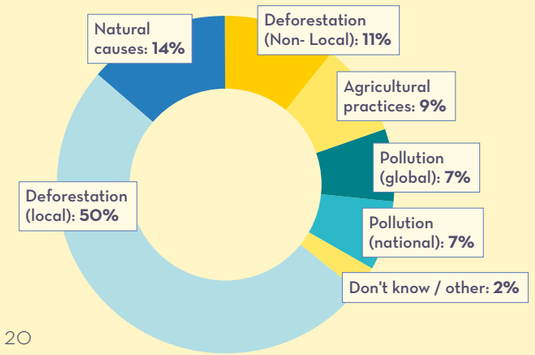
94% attributed environmental changes in part to (mainly local) deforestation

71% attributed environmental changes in part to pollution

FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

85% of respondents expect further environmental changes in the coming five years

What do you think has been the main cause of the environmental changes that you have seen in your community?



- **4. Finally, there is a need to halt charcoal production.** Halting production impacts marginalised people more severely than the elites. Small-scale and vulnerable households who rely on charcoal production for their livelihoods are worst impacted by its criminalisation.

We need to be careful about identifying the causes of climate change and promote environmental justice, concludes Dr. Branch. Environmental justice must build upon the understanding that the rural poor sell charcoal due to poverty, precarity and unemployment. Socially responsible responses to climate change would enable poor people to still make a living. Dr. Branch warns how climate change can "be used to justify interventions which are not good for the poor or the environment", proposing that "policy should start with youth activism and struggle for environmentalism and energy justice".

CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS

Adding to existing science and policy understandings of climate change, our primary research investigated young people's experiences and knowledge of climate change. Most of the young people surveyed had observed environmental changes during the past five years, particularly increased temperatures and droughts, with changes to rainfall too, and stronger winds. The primary driver of these changes is understood to be local deforestation, followed by natural causes. More than four-fifths (84%) of respondents expected more environmental change in the next five years.

Despite these tangible changes, the survey responses indicate an information vacuum. Around three-quarters (74%) lacked access to adequate information about how the environment is changing; nearly two-thirds (64%) did not know where to get meteorological forecasts which could warn of extreme events; and over half (57%) did not know where to find information on how to respond and adapt to climate change. This information deficit means that while young people experience and have to respond to climate change in very immediate ways, they are doing this with little guidance, or understanding as to why they are facing these challenges.

Moving forwards, the local and indigenous knowledge of young people and their elders should be incorporated into wider understandings of the consequences and solutions to anthropogenic climate change. While the intensity and frequency of climate disruption is new, the experience of responding to prolonged drought and food insecurity is not. These strands of understanding need to be woven into media reporting on climate change, new school curricula, vocational training, and policy. ●

> ***Local people understand change in climate, not in the scientific research, but from the way they are directly affected in the seasons.***
>
> RICHARD HAMBA, EBAFOSA (UNEP)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. More environmental data are needed to enable scientific analysis and future climate predictions for Uganda and neighbouring countries.

2. Future policies should take into account the interconnections between climate change and poverty.

3. Mitigation and adaptation should be seen as connected and complementary.

4. Caution is needed around the charcoal-climate-youth narrative given its tangible and damaging effects.

5. Policies should build upon environmentalism and energy justice.

6. More reliable climate change information is needed in the media and through schools – this should detail the causes of climate change, pathways to mitigation, local weather and climate change warnings, and advise on immediate responses and longer term adaptation.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON YOUNG PEOPLE

"Climate change is increasing poverty levels in Uganda... [with] effects like school dropouts, early marriages, increased diseases, increased violence, malnutrition, increased unemployment..."

JALIDAH NABUKALU, YOUTH RESEARCHER

Cultivating a patch of cleared forest for planting a community vegetable garden.

The consequences of climate change for young people in the developing world run the gamut from the economic to the emotional. Such impacts include disrupted livelihoods and climate-related displacement, and also disrupted education, nutritional deficits in young people and children, and anxiety and other mental health challenges. Uganda is one of the world's youngest countries, with a median age of just 15.8.[39] Uganda's youthful population, who are still building the social and economic capital of older generations, are likely to bear the brunt of climate-related disruptions. Moreover, young people around the world have suffered from increased uncertainty and higher unemployment rates as a result of the worldwide economic downturn linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.[40] This section discusses the way that climate change affects the lives of young people in Uganda and offers recommendations for how individuals, households, communities and other national or international actors can mitigate climate disruptions.

LIVELIHOODS

Agriculture is a vital source of income for young people in Uganda and across Eastern Africa, many of whom are engaged in low-productivity employment in smallholder agriculture.[41] Historically, farmers in Uganda have been able to profit from two growing seasons a year – March to May and September to November. However, variability in weather and rainfall has put pressure on agricultural production by shortening the growing season and reducing predictability. One young Ugandan reported that "There has been a change in seasons. Due to these climate changes these days, people [are only able to] plant in one season".

The negative impacts of climate change are not limited to rural areas – in urban areas, young people seeking to sell food or other goods contend with increasingly dusty conditions during dry seasons and flooding in rainy seasons. Some young people in our research had their offices and workshops damaged by flood waters, while brewers and carpenters reported how flooding disrupts the production and transportation of their raw materials (see box on page 24).

The combination of low household incomes and a deficit of social protection means that many people diversify their incomes by engaging in a multitude of economic activities.[42] As climate change continues to impact agriculture in Uganda, young people continue to seek alternative livelihoods. For example, some young

64% of survey respondents felt anxious about environmental change – this anxiety stems from a combination of uncertainties for the future, bleak predictions about climate change impacts, and people's reluctance to change.

▶ people are turning to boda boda (motorcycle taxi) driving or poultry farming as an alternative source of income, though these activities are not immune from climate change disruptions. Overall, a disproportionate number of young people are employed in the informal sector, underemployed, or jobless,[43] so are particularly vulnerable to economic downturns and the disruptive economic impacts of climate change.

76% of survey respondents had their livelihoods disrupted by environmental changes (floods, drought, winds, changed seasonality) during the past year.

DISPLACEMENT

Climate-related displacements in Uganda and elsewhere are driving people from their homes, compromising livelihoods and weakening or severing social ties. Climate-driven displacements include the movement of people due to slow- or rapid-onset weather events, voluntary migration to mitigate risk, and planned relocation (such as from Bududa district, see page 16).

Although rapid-onset events make headlines, it is slow onset changes that are likely to spur the majority of climate-related migration flows.[44] To give a sense of scale, globally, in 2020 roughly 26,900 children were forced to leave home as a result of weather-related events every day.[45] The past decade has seen weather-related internal displacement overtake conflict-driven displacement in Uganda (see chart right).[46]

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

How has your work been affected by climate change?

"... the floods displaced me from where I was working... my workshop was swept away when the water levels rose."

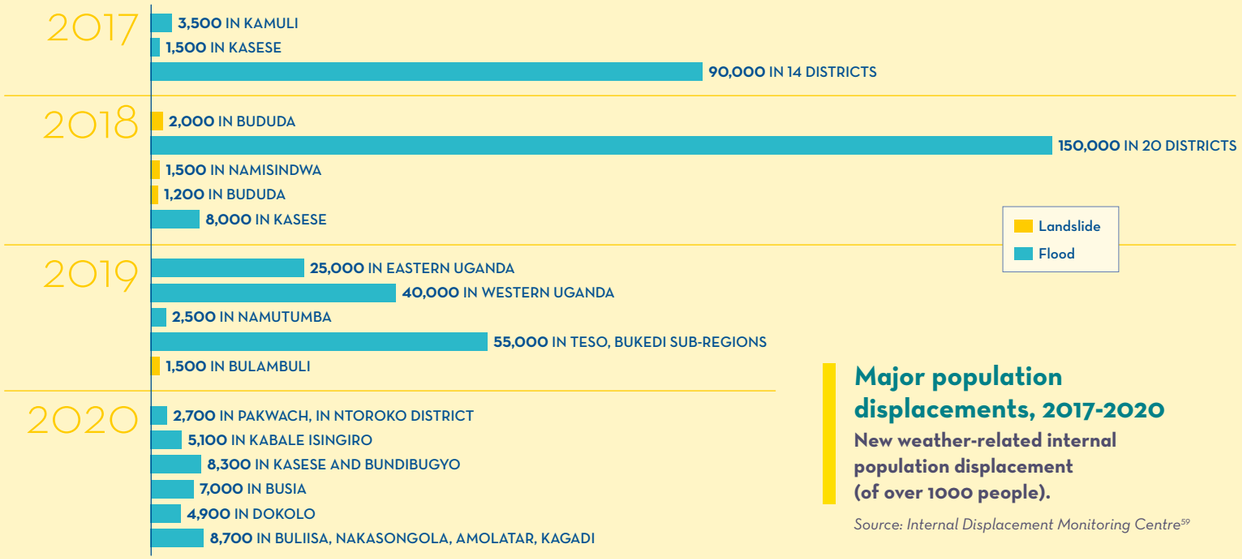
"Activities like brewing gets to a standstill because the major input for making it is sorghum and maize in which prices automatically hike if the harvest is poor thus rendering us unemployed."

"Carpentry has also been affected, because when there is severe drought, plants wither out so there is less timber..."

"Too much sunshine always affects our plants and also affects the seasons. Seasons can change and planting could be for March but you end up planting in April or May."

"Most young people who do bricklaying find it difficult to dry their bricks in case rain comes abruptly, and worst when it comes with floods, already made bricks will be wiped out by floods."

"We don't have places to set up our small businesses because of the floods."



Major population displacements, 2017-2020
New weather-related internal population displacement (of over 1000 people).

Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre[59]

In Eastern Africa, a major cause of migration is the region's increasingly long and frequent slow-onset droughts.[47] Nevertheless, in Uganda rapid-onset flooding and landslide events have driven hundreds of thousands of people from their homes (see chart above and page 16). Recent floods in Karamoja damaged roads and bridges, destroyed homes and businesses, and swept away the livestock upon which pastoralists depend.[48] The loss of one's home, land, business, or livestock can be economically and emotionally devastating, pushing some to rebuild their lives in a new place.

EDUCATION

One consequence of climate change disruptions and displacements is interruptions to education. UNICEF UK's Anja Nielsen explains that disrupted education has short and long term impacts on children and young adults, including on their educational attainment and future economic opportunities. Moreover, climate-related disruption to education does not occur in a vacuum, but adds to an existing education crisis in which globally millions of children are already out of school and roughly half of the children living in low and middle income countries are not able to read a basic story by the age of ten.[49] There is also an issue of education sometimes seeming irrelevant, as one interviewee explained:

"Most youths don't have jobs, some have degrees but don't have jobs. They are always on the lakeside, dirty, carrying passengers to the boats yet the parents spend a lot of money educating them. So I have realised that I won't educate my child because even the ones educated lack jobs."

26-YEAR-OLD MALE MECHANIC, JINJA

Girls walking home from school, Mukono District.

Although the threats that climate change poses for education are serious, education can also strengthen awareness of, and responses to, climate change. Many workshop participants highlighted the need for increased climate change and environmental education in schools, beginning at the primary level. Education has an important role to play as a mechanism for knowledge and capacity building.

One workshop participant suggested that climate change education be localised, so that students and community members can learn about and be prepared for the climate disruptions that may affect their own localities. Another attendee suggested that older students would benefit from training and skills development focused on climate adaptation and mitigation. Young people in Karamoja want to learn more about climate change, in order to understand weather patterns and gain knowledge about local adaptations to climate disruptions.[50]

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Climate change losses

Young people often associate the impacts of climate change with loss – loss of livelihoods, of agricultural produce, of lives, or of natural resources.

A young respondent from Jinja stated that: "***A youth would put up a temporary canteen made out of wood and make a small business so that they can be able survive, but now the waters from the lake come and destroy and they are displaced, sweeping away all these small houses.***"

Recovering from such losses is an enormous challenge for most young people. Damage to infrastructure such as houses, shops and markets was found to be more prominent in Jinja, whereas respondents from the Karamoja sub-region reported suffering more damage to property and livestock due to floods.

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Anxiety about climate change

The eco-anxiety of many young people should relay a strong message to world leaders about the importance of combating climate change. A respondent from Jinja lamented that: ***"In the coming times... people may face a [year with] no season, or a disorganised season structure which will confuse farmers and lead to drastic changes in food production. The more we delay, the more the problems will continue, and even worsen".***

Other young people highlighted that climate change is happening right now: ***"I am worried about the environmental changes in the future because we are already experiencing them. I am more worried about the indirect impacts we will see."***

Climate conflicts are currently on the rise in Eastern Africa. A young respondent from a pastoralist community in Uganda's north-eastern said: ***"Raids, insecurity, diseases, hunger... These are the effects that make me most anxious because they will lead to a loss of lives and livelihoods..."***

Young people also lack government support. One respondent said that ***"When these impacts happen, the Government does not come to help, and we are facing many losses".*** Another respondent called for support to ease climate conflicts and help communities to coexist peacefully.

MENTAL HEALTH

Many young people feel anxious or hopeless about climate change. Workshop discussions emphasized the harmful effects of climate change on the mental health of young people in Uganda. Young people experience devastating impacts from climate change as jobs, homes and families are lost – impacts which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Negative mental health outcomes include Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, and depression. Moreover, mental health services are often inadequate.

The enormity of climate change can seem overwhelming. Many young people frame the climate crisis in pessimistic terms and feel that they lack the agency and influence to address the multifaceted challenges of climate change.[51] Young people employ a variety of coping mechanisms to deal with these negative feelings, including de-emphasizing the seriousness of the climate crisis, seeking to distance themselves from negative emotion, and problem-focused strategies.[52] Problem-focused strategies include seeking out information, taking direct action to address climate change, and working to raise the awareness of others.[53] Such strategies channel anxiety or stress about the climate crisis into positive action. This can be supported by engaging young people in climate mitigation and policy discourse at all levels.

49% of respondents felt that they had no control or ability to influence climate change.

Bosco serving a customer in his shop.

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Rising living costs

In peri-urban and rural communities, young people endure numerous direct effects of climate change on their livelihood activities due to their extensive dependence on natural resources. It is commonly perceived that young people in urban communities do not face many of these direct effects yet declining supply of food and natural resources with reduced agricultural productivity inflate food prices. Urban dwellers are also directly impacted by extreme weather.

A young woman in rural Jinja described how *"**climate change has led to poverty because of too much rain. People won't go to work, and we can't transport our goods to the market – for example, today most young people are not going to work because of this rain, which affects the income of the young people in the community.**"* For a demographic that is especially vulnerable to shocks and stressors, a worsening climate crisis is stretching their resilience, pushing a generation to the brink of poverty.

The need for jobs is pressing. One interviewee explained that *"**Many young people in this community lack jobs due to the disasters that occurred in this community.**"*

FOOD INSECURITY

A major risk of climate change in Uganda is worsening food insecurity. Food insecurity exists when people are unable to access sufficient safe, nutritious food.[54] As climate disruptions continue to impact agriculture and economic growth, increasing numbers of people will struggle to purchase food – a problem that may be compounded by rising food prices.[55] Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole is one of the regions of the world most vulnerable to climate-related food insecurity.[56]

The 2020 Global Hunger Index rated food insecurity in Uganda as "serious", and the World Food Programme has highlighted concerns about acute food and nutrition insecurity in several districts of the Karamoja sub-region.[57] Young people there reported increased food and water shortages, with these shortages leading to higher food prices and compounding the risk of food insecurity by imperiling the ability of households both to grow and to purchase food. Climate shocks such as drought and flooding can lead to reduced food consumption and increased poverty levels.[58] Recent flooding in the Karamoja region is likely to exacerbate food insecurity.

57% of respondents were concerned that climate change will have a strong and direct impact on them, their friends, and their families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a continued need to engage and listen to youth in climate change discussions.

2. Environmental education can empower young people to understand climate change and respond. This education must be relevant to young people's own communities, with actions that can feasibly be taken at the individual, household, and community level.

3. Young people would benefit practically and psychologically from support for problem-focused activities such as raising awareness, taking concrete action in their own lives, and engaging in climate policy debates.

4. There is a continued need for job creation in order to offer reliable income streams which can buffer against some climate change impacts.

5. Job finding support and training will become increasingly important as large numbers of young people continue to leave traditional agricultural production and migrate to urban or peri-urban areas.

YOUTH RESPONSES: ADAPTATIONS & ACTIVISM

"Much is yet to be done."

GEORGINAH NAMUYOMBA, TASLAF LEGAL ASSOCIATE

Fetching water from the public well in Entebbe.

Climate change is already happening, so through necessity young people are responding. Youth responses include making adjustments to daily behaviours, reducing individual-level environmental impacts, actively participating in tree planting programmes and other green agendas, and engaging in political activism to advocate for systematic change. Young people's responses to climate change thus fall along a wide spectrum, from activists at the global level, to those active in their communities, those seeking to fortify their own livelihoods or support their families, to those who are not at all proactively responding.

Many young people are not equipped with the social, financial, or political capital needed to adapt to climate disruptions. Indeed, more than two-thirds (69%) of the young people surveyed reported that they were not adapting to environmental changes. This may be as a result of their limited resources, or feelings of hopelessness, a perceived lack of agency in climate discourse and policy making, or limited awareness of climate change adaptation strategies.

At the other end of the spectrum, global youth climate activism movements like FridaysForFuture have attracted widespread attention from politicians, policymakers, and ordinary citizens alike. Many young people in Uganda are inspired by and participate in climate justice movements. Amongst them, high profile Ugandan climate justice activists Hilda Flavia Nakabuye and Vanessa Nakate connect to international youth climate networks while also engaging in grassroots activism (see pages 8-9).

This chapter highlights the responses of young people in Uganda, both in their own lives and as part of broader activist movements and awareness raising campaigns. Moreover, the chapter outlines challenges that young people face in their efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate disruption on their own lives and to make real change to politics and policy. This section also briefly outlines some gaps in current mitigation strategies and recommends steps that can be taken by individuals, communities, and other actors to address these challenges.

31% of respondents have adapted their livelihoods in response to environmental changes.

These adaptations include increasing irrigation by hand, planting trees, diversifying crops, leaving their villages, starting brewing or brick making, starting businesses, and sharing environmental messages.

> ***During rainy seasons I create water paths to redirect water away from the community I stay in. I have involved my neighbours in creating water channels to avoid floods from accumulating within our areas, now most of the community members are doing the same to minimise floods.***

28-YEAR-OLD BRICK LAYER AND
BODA BODA DRIVER, NAWAIKOROT

RESPONSES

Many of the steps that young adults in Uganda have taken to adapt to climate disruptions in their own lives centre on day-to-day shifts and adaptations at the household level. During the Kampala-Cambridge workshop, participants highlighted an array of ways that young people reduce climate impacts on their lives and in their communities. Many young people are leaving agricultural production, seeking to diversify their income by engaging in the informal sector to generate income. Some activities also contributed to climate change mitigation, such as recycling materials or promoting cleaner cooking stoves. Derrick Mugisha explained how young people turn used plastic into earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and other crafts; which has a low environmental impact while offering a new income stream to young craftspeople.

Some young people have diversified their income sources to build resilience to climate change disruptions to agricultural livelihoods. One example is shifting away from sugar cane, which is highly vulnerable to climate disruptions, and finding crops that are more resistant to heat and drought. Some households diversify their income streams to include poultry farming or beekeeping. Young people have also sought out livelihoods beyond agriculture. In Uganda, popular alternatives include sports betting, selling food or other goods in urban areas, and driving motorcycle taxis.

The adoption and use of eco-friendly energy sources such as charcoal briquettes is making its way into young people's homes. Young people in Busoga's urban communities are learning to recycle and produce their own sustainable energy sources as an alternative to cutting down trees. These are some of the initiatives that must be supported and scaled up to cultivate a wider positive impact and permanent switch to clean energy in surrounding communities.

In addition to seeking out ways to support themselves and their families, young people are also engaging in many activities related to directly combating climate change and raising awareness about the global

Raising ducks and chickens, Katunguru.

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Obstacles to activism

Recognising the direct and indirect impacts environmental changes today will have on their futures, young people are demonstrating a strong willingness and commitment to address climate issues. But before they can take any community action, they must overcome their fears of authority and build their self-esteem to contribute to meaningful change. ***"My only challenge is the authorities. I am young, I cannot tell someone mature that what you are doing by cutting the tree is bad"***, stated one of the respondents. Another young person expressed that ***"the hostile political atmosphere in the country has barred my activities as an activist."***

climate crisis. Many young people in Uganda are active in youth-mobilisation groups, climate activism movements, NGOs, and other organisations that seek to promote awareness of climate change and foster climate mitigation activities.

BARRIERS TO CHANGE

Young people typically lack the financial and material resources needed for major climate adaptation, and are not well represented in high-level policy and business discourses on climate change. Many of the young people interviewed over the course of our research expressed hopelessness and anxiety (see page 27), feeling that they had limited ability to drive meaningful, large-scale change. Similarly, many young people identify a lack of systemic, organised support (financial and otherwise) for young people and communities affected by climate change.

The individual and household adaptation strategies that many young Ugandans have already employed or are likely to rely on in the future are inadequate to meet the challenges of climate change – particularly when such disruptions are likely to worsen in the future. To support and empower young people with climate mitigation and adaptations, both big and small, it is vital young people receive education, training, and financial support. Moreover, older generations, governments, and other actors must work to ensure that the expertise and aspirations of young people are integrated into climate change responses.

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Pathways to change

A young respondent implores us to: ***"Imagine climate change as though it is a wound on the planet. Educating people about climate change is the most effective treatment that can be applied for this wound to heal."***

Human activities and daily habits are difficult to change, but the climate crisis demands immediate responses: ***"The truth is that many people are not educated and are ignorant about environmental conservation."***

Climate education is an important intervention with the ability to catalyse a faster, large scale collective response to climate change. Climate education would enable people to understand the causes and consequences of climate change, which can empower them to support adaptation.

Education is a critical gap that continues to widen even as various stakeholders are working to address climate issues across Uganda. A young respondent we spoke to hinted that although NGOs are addressing climate change through different interventions: ***"they have not engaged young people or encouraged them to take part in climate activism. Their focus has mostly been on older adults"***.

Young people must be prioritised in climate related interventions, especially climate education, as they will face worsening climate change impacts in the near future.

Franco planting seedlings.

37% of respondents took actions to mitigate environmental changes, this was primarily tree planting, but also reducing plastic waste, changing fuel to biogas and briquettes, and environmental activism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Young people need access to financial resources to adapt to climate change. This could involve financing youth-led climate initiatives and the innovations of young activists and entrepreneurs.

2. Climate discourse and education must be inclusive. Educational or skills-building materials need to be relevant and translated into a wider range of languages to make them accessible to some of the most marginalised young people.

3. Integrating climate change education into school curricula would engage young people who are currently excluded from climate change discussions.

4. Activists, NGOs, governments and businesses must work together to amplify the voices of young people. Currently, the exclusion of young people from political and policy making circles blunts their potential, contributing to feelings of powerlessness.

GREEN JOBS

"COVID-19 fiscal recovery packages have typically not been green, nor have they sufficiently targeted youth."

KEE BEOM KIM, ILO

Mechanics and boda boda drivers, Kampala.

Existing social and economic insecurities amplify the new uncertainties wrought by climate change, and so require decisive policy and labour market responses. The challenge is to address both social and environmental issues – concurrently promoting adaptation, mitigation and resilience. The rationale for this integrated approach is threefold. Firstly, vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change increases with poverty (see pages 22-29). Secondly, the creation of decent, well-paid jobs offers a route out of poverty, thereby increasing resilience to climate change. Finally, new work opportunities could bring additional environmental benefits if these new jobs are green jobs.

Green jobs contribute to the preservation or restoration of the environment. This impact might be achieved through enhancing efficiency to reduce the consumption of energy and raw materials, limiting waste and pollution, protecting ecosystems, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, or enabling climate change adaptation. Green jobs thus include a broad range of occupations and activities. Some green jobs can be grown within existing sectors such as construction and in new sectors such as renewable energy.[60] Of course some caveats surround this idealised solution. In particular, new jobs should be 'decent' and inclusive – meaning that they pay living wages for safe work, convey legal and social protection, and recognise workers' voices.[61,62] Ideally these jobs will promote the creation of a low impact, circular infrastructure which minimises the environmental impact of new consumption.

Green jobs fall into a wider policy ambit that also includes broader responses to climate change, young people, and development and addresses key questions about the future of energy (including the relative balance of oil, hydro, solar, and biomass) and who will be the winners and losers in any transition. Historically, poorer people have often lost out in major economic transitions. A just transition would actively reduce inequalities, ensuring the outcomes for the world's most vulnerable people improve the fastest.

Here we share insights from the Kampala-Cambridge workshop. Although the young people interviewed and surveyed in our research said little about green jobs specifically (the green jobs discourse often

If I would meet the district leader, I would tell them to grant jobs to the youth because many young people in this community lack jobs.

26-YEAR-OLD BOAT MECHANIC, KARAMOJA

▶ focuses on urban elites), many workshop participants demonstrated a strong interest in what green jobs could mean in practice in Uganda. Young research participants shared what they want from policy makers in response to climate change. This chapter concludes with green jobs recommendations from the workshop discussions and wider policy recommendations stemming from our research findings.

NEW GREEN JOBS

Kee Beom Kim notes that the green economy constitutes one of five economic sectors that are key to a job rich recovery from COVID-19 for young people. The others are the blue economy, creative economy, digital economy and care economy. In global terms, a transition to energy sustainability could create 25 million new jobs gross (while 7 million jobs could be lost). A circular economy transition could create 78 million jobs gross (while 71 million are lost).[63] This transition will require coordination between ministries, and the provision of social protection for people displaced by climate change or unable to find new work.[64] Spending choices must address immediate needs and also enable a just transition.

Georginah Namuyomba explained that in Uganda there is great potential for green job creation in agriculture because it is the 'backbone of the Ugandan economy' and the main employment sector for rural young people. Within agriculture, some circular economy practices are well established, such as using manure to fertilise crops. However, various barriers persist for those seeking to fund or develop green jobs. One such challenge is the lack of a legal framework to reassure lenders that debts will be repaid; another challenge is identifying new green jobs with the most potential in the Ugandan context. Two examples of green businesses follow.

10 tips for green entrepreneurs

Gabriel Okello, founder of Green Heat

1. **Write down the business plan**
2. **Utilise your networks (feedback, training, collaborations etc)**
3. **Build a team and share the vision**
4. **Apply for grants and training opportunities**
5. **Ensure that the team get relevant training**
6. **Understand the numbers**
7. **Listen to the feedback from the customers**
8. **Engage with the community**
9. **Utilise social media**
10. **Get some rest to recharge**

GREEN BUSINESSES

Green Heat – renewable energy

At the workshop Gabriel Okello described setting up biogas and charcoal briquettes business, Green Heat, to offer clean cooking technology. Where he grew up in East Uganda, everyone cooked using firewood but at university he learnt about cleaner cooking fuel. Alternative sources of fuel increase access to fuel availability, support waste management in the community, and slow deforestation. Gabriel encountered various challenges including access to capital, both to start up and scale-up, and the issues of a small team needing to cover all the skills needed for a business. Team well-being suffered because of high work demands, and Gabriel sometimes worked 15 hour days. Gabriel shares advice for young green entrepreneurs (see left).

Eco Brixs – circular economy plastics

Eco Brixs, located in Masaka, recycles plastic waste into durable products such as bricks, fencing posts, benches, paving slabs, and visors. Each month as many as 3,000 people in the local community bring plastic for recycling – creating a green income stream for many disadvantaged local people. Furthermore, Eco Brixs employs 13 full time staff. Currently, they collect 30 tonnes of plastic a month – processing six tonnes at their plant in Masaka and exporting the rest. Removing plastic from the local environment and processing it safely reduces river, soil, and air pollution.[65] ▶

> ***Plastics recycling is a viable green job in Uganda because of very many tonnes of plastics available.***
>
> MBEIZA PEACE, YOUTH RESEARCHER

Setting up a solar powered lamp, Luweero District.

Which green jobs are most favourable for young people in Busoga growing districts like Jinja, Luuka and Mayuge, as they are trying to shift from sugarcane?

MBEIZA PEACE, YOUTH RESEARCHER

NEXT STEPS

Learning and training are top priorities to enable a green transition. Current teaching on climate change does not give children an adequate understanding of what climate change is, why it is happening, or how mitigation responses work. Incorporating climate change learning into school curricula from primary school onwards would equip young people to understand climate change. Furthermore, training in the particular skills needed for green jobs is vital. Such skills could be taught in vocational schools. Education and training are essential for building skills and capacity, while simultaneously sensitising young people to the issues of climate change (see pages 25-26).

The costs of setting up and running green businesses can be prohibitive. As a result, many workshop recommendations pivoted around making green jobs economically viable – especially via government grants, subsidies, and tax relief. In particular, reducing the costs of solar power and biogas technology, subsidising machinery and equipment, and financial support for education and training would help. Such interventions must sit within a wider employment programme that prioritises sustainability and promotes social and development imperatives, offsetting the economic risk associated with green job creation.

RESEARCH INSIGHTS

What could be done to better support young people's hopes for the future?

Some young people feel despondent and overlooked by politicians. Here are some interviewee's responses to the question above.

"Open up more income generating activities for young people and especially for the disabled like me..."

"District leaders have done nothing to the youth in this community. What I can ask them to do is to extend programs like carpentry, bakery, weaving which are not very common here."

Interviewee: *"What else can I say, they might change my way of living in the future, who knows maybe I will also go on streets begging."*
Researcher: *"Oh no! In Jesus name you won't go begging. My dear, I trust you and you are a creative person."*
Interviewee: *"Madam, the creativity you are talking about is nothing when the worst comes to the worst."*

Weavers making a mattress, Kibale.

Young people are critical to growing green jobs in Uganda. Many young people, early in their working lives, are open to new opportunities so are well positioned to transition into green jobs. This process must extend beyond urban elites to reach poorer people and those living in rural areas, and work will be required to maximise the accessibility of training, and not rely on digital provision. Furthermore, given the large informal economy in Uganda, any move towards green job creation must engage the informal sector. It will be important to involve young people in policy conversations, and to incorporate their job aspirations into the next round of policies and policy implementation. ●

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Climate change education should begin at primary school, followed by green jobs skills training opportunities for young people.

2. Build a supportive policy environment to incentivise and finance green job creation, and to handle the legalities, monitoring and evaluation.

3. Inclusive approaches, involving diverse young people, will generate stronger understanding of the issues and enable tailored, sector-specific solutions.

4. A strong dialogue is needed between young people, government, business and international donors.

5. A platform is needed to connect, learn, share and be heard.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

"I would like to see that my response to this research makes an impact and brings change."

22-YEAR-OLD MAN FROM IGANGA

A typical Karamajong home.

This report shares new insights into how young people experience and adapt to climate change in Uganda, one of the least developed and youngest countries, on the continent set to be most affected by climate change. The goal of this report is to amplify the voices, insights, and recommendations of vulnerable, highly-impacted young people in the global conversation about the nature of climate change. By creating space for their voices in climate change discourse, we discover the obstacles that young people face, how they are already responding to climate change, and their demands for the future. It is well established that the experiences, needs, and wishes of the so-called beneficiaries, as offered in this report, must be taken into account when designing effective policy.

This report is evidence-based and future facing. Our research and workshop, which engaged more than 1350 young people in 2021, took place in the context of ongoing disruptions due to climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. Even in a zero emissions scenario, climate change will continue because of the greenhouse gases that have already accumulated in the atmosphere.[66] As a result, our findings speak not only of the challenges that young people already face, but also those to come in a future defined by the global climate crisis.

As climate change imperils agricultural production, increasing numbers of young people will seek alternative livelihoods in the informal economy or migrate to urban and peri-urban areas. Food and water shortages and higher food prices threaten further food insecurity and childhood malnutrition in Uganda, and especially in the Karamoja region, which is already an area of particular concern to the World Food Programme. Millions of people are displaced every year by slow and sudden-onset climate events. In Uganda, worsening droughts and severe flooding are threatening the lives and livelihoods of many families. Climate change induced displacement and poverty can disrupt children's education, harming their wellbeing ▶

> ***Most young people get wasted when they are still young, these people go to school and have no scholastic materials ... yet Karamoja needs them, they are the ones to help Karamoja.***

24-YEAR-OLD MALE HEALTH SCIENCES STUDENT, KARAMOJA

A behind the scenes shot of the photographer that went to visit Franco and his community.

▶ and their economic prospects, and adding to the historical challenge of enabling education for all.

Young people are not passive in response to climate change. Some relocate, diversify income streams, or tweak their livelihoods to build resilience. Others may have fewer options, or lack the resources to invest in new training, work or business ventures. Feelings of powerlessness, along with the strong sense of loss that climate change brings, can present a bleak outlook for young people. A few make practical and political interventions such as tree planting (to store carbon and improve the local environment), and climate activism (to raise awareness and spur political and business responses). FridaysForFuture Uganda, as part of a global network of youth climate activism, campaigns for three goals. First, to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5 °C compared to pre-industrial levels. Second, to ensure climate justice and equity. Third, to listen to the best united science currently available.[67]

73% of survey respondents were concerned that climate change might prevent them from achieving their future livelihood goals.

Much wider responses are needed that engage young people, including those who are poorer, more vulnerable and/or hard to reach. Having learnt from young people about what they want and need, it is necessary to mobilise the power of policy, business, finance and the international community to strengthen responses to climate change in respect of both mitigation and adaptation. The urgency and scale of the challenge demand action.

Climate action and adaptation must simultaneously address inequalities, poverty, and the jobs deficit, and support the most vulnerable. At times, responses to climate change can be misaligned, for instance the charcoal-climate-youth narrative in which the most vulnerable are misconstrued and demonised as drivers of climate change and suffer from increasingly constrained livelihood options as a result.

What follows are two sets of recommendations. The first set comes from young people and is directed at political leaders; the second is a synthesis of the youth-led research and a youth-focused workshop. ●

RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM YOUNG PEOPLE TO POLITICAL LEADERS

1. Secure education and jobs. Many young people's education is cut short due to financial constraints; this could be addressed with scholarships or free education. Large scale job creation is needed to provide reliable incomes and good career prospects.

2. Strengthen agriculture. Farming is badly hit by climate unpredictability, yet irrigation systems and drought resistant crops could increase climate change resilience.

3. End hunger. Many people already go hungry and this may worsen as climate disruption increases. Food insecurity must end.

4. Prevent embezzlement. Sometimes funds do not reach their targets due to embezzlement, so greater financial accountability is needed.

5. Stop exploitation. There is a lack of transparency and accountability amongst large companies, for instance in the mining sector, and local monopolies often control resources. This unequal power, weak transparency, and preferential resource access must end.

6. Build infrastructure. Infrastructure is sometimes damaged by flooding, blocking transport routes and damaging property. Strong roads, water storage, and drainage ditches are needed, so that rainwater can be channeled away from infrastructure. Water could also be saved from wet spells and used in dry spells.

7. Plant trees. Land and property are damaged by strong winds and flooding. Trees can offer protection. Although we need access to the local trees from our area to plant, we cannot find them.

8. Provide training and start up capital. There is a lack of resources and funding to support more climate resilient livelihoods. Training and start-up capital are needed so young people can diversify their livelihood options (such as carpentry, poultry farming, chapati making, mechanics, and small shops).

More recommendations on the next page ▶

RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR POLITICIANS, BUSINESS, AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

1. Inclusive dialogue for fairer outcomes. Strong dialogue is needed between young people, government, business and international donors. With an inclusive and accessible platform to connect, learn, share and amplify, such dialogue would amplify the voices of disadvantaged young people, and enable learning about policy needs and outcomes.

2. Education and training. Starting at primary school, environmental education is needed to empower young people to understand and respond to climate change. Later, green skills training should be relevant to young people's own lives and communities, with actions they can feasibly undertake.

3. Information sharing. More reliable climate change information is needed in the media and through schools – this should detail the causes of climate change, pathways to mitigation, local weather and climate change warnings, and advice on immediate responses and longer term adaptation.

4. More and better data. More environmental and meteorological data are needed to enable scientific analysis and future climate predictions for Uganda and neighbouring countries. Longitudinal social science data are needed to continue to document and understand the ongoing impacts and support policy makers to design well-informed policies.

5. Green job creation. Job creation must be stepped up to provide reliable income to buffer against climate change disruption; green jobs can be boosted by green skills training, start-up capital, and a supportive policy environment.

6. Cut greenhouse gas emissions. We are on track for more climate change and disruption, yet to prevent it being much worse there is a great urgency to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. Adaptation should be built into mitigation interventions, as they are complementary and some interventions can achieve both.

7. Increase financial support. Accessible financial support and financing initiatives are key to enable young people to make adaptations to their own lives. Young people also need greater financial resources that will empower them to respond to climate change in their communities and home countries, and on international stages.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was funded by the British Academy Youth Futures Programme grant, for the research project *Peak Youth, Climate Change and the Role of Young People in Seizing their Future*. The School of Technology at the University of Cambridge funded the production of this report.

The content of this report builds upon the research, research participation, and workshop contributions of roughly 1400 young people, NGOs, academics, and policy makers, who are primarily based in Uganda. In addition, we are grateful to Kate Whipkey, Sam Simmons, Clive Oppenheimer, Sean Canty and Paola Buonadonna for proofreading this report, and to Night Train for producing the workshop.

Photographs are courtesy of Restless Development, Sam Simmons, Shutterstock and iStock.

Design by Georgia King Design.

Printing by Langham Press.

This report is produced with vegetable-based inks and made of material from well-managed FSC®-certified forests and from recycled materials.

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