

**Youth Climate Action Workshop:
Aligning Youth-Led Initiatives with Ethiopia's National Climate Strategies**



**Part of the Youth Canvas Networking Sessions
Summary Report
May 2026**

Introduction

Youth Canvas is a CDKN-supported directory that maps youth-led and youth-serving initiatives across Addis Ababa working on climate action and environmental protection. Alongside the development of the directory, Youth Canvas also conducted research to better understand how these organisations operate, the successes they have achieved, and the challenges they continue to face. Based on the feedback collected, one recurring challenge identified across many organisations was the need for stronger awareness of, and alignment with, Ethiopia's national climate strategies. In response, Youth Canvas prepared a capacity-building session titled "Aligning Youth-Led Initiatives with Ethiopia's National Climate Strategies," designed to strengthen participants' understanding of national climate priorities and support youth-led initiatives in aligning their work more effectively with Ethiopia's broader climate action agenda.

The Youth Climate Action Workshop was held on May 28, 2026, at the Hub Hotel. Organised by Enfluencers and EWYCA with support from the CDKN programme of SouthSouthNorth, the event created a collaborative learning and engagement space for young people to deepen their understanding of Ethiopia's climate policy frameworks.

We had 14 male and 9 female participants, civil society actors, government representatives, and climate practitioners, the workshop explored how youth-led action can contribute to national climate priorities while fostering vital discussions on policy, and practical climate solutions. The workshop combined document analysis, group presentations, expert reflection, panel discussion, organisational spotlight, and solution-building activities.

The workshop began with introductions from all participants present. This helped create a participatory environment and allowed participants to briefly share who they are, the organisations or communities they represent, and their interest in climate action. Following the introductions, welcoming remarks were delivered by Kaleb Asnake from SouthSouthNorth, Nahom Fekadu from Enfluencers and Hilina Teklu from EWYCA.

Session 1: Understanding Ethiopia's Climate Policy Documents

The first session focused on helping participants understand Ethiopia's key climate policy and strategy documents. Participants were divided into four groups, and each group was assigned one document to analyse. The documents were:

1. Ethiopia's NDC 3.0
2. Ethiopia's National Adaptation Plan, NAP
3. Ethiopia's Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy, CRGE
4. Ethiopia's Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy, LT-LEDS

Each group was given guiding questions to help them analyse the assigned document. The purpose of the activity was to help participants identify the main ideas, objectives, priority areas, implementation approaches, and relevance of each document to Ethiopia's climate agenda.



Mercy Habte presenting about Ethiopia's NDC 3.0

After the group discussions, each team presented its assigned document to the wider group. The presentations helped ensure that all participants gained a basic understanding of the four documents, even if they had only worked directly on one. Through this activity, participants were able to see how Ethiopia's climate policies connect across mitigation, adaptation, resilience, green growth, and long-term low-emission development.

A key contribution to this session came from Mulatwa Wolde a human rights campaigner and social science researcher who was involved in the development of the CRGE document. She provided a brief reflection on the document, including how it was developed, the thinking behind it, and its importance in Ethiopia's climate and development planning. This gave participants a useful insider perspective and helped connect the document analysis with real policy development experience.



Participants analysing the policy document given to them.

Panel Discussion: Bridging Policy and Youth-Led Action

The second session was a panel discussion focused on the theme “Bridging Policy and Youth-Led Action.” The panel brought together representatives from government, civil society organisations, and youth actors. The panelists were Genene Mulugeta from the Environmental Protection Authority, Nahom Fekadu executive director Enfluencers, Biruk Aschalew, CEO and Founder of Enderase Youth Association.

The discussion explored how national climate policies can be translated into practical youth-led initiatives. Panelists reflected on the gap that often exists between policy documents and implementation on the ground, especially for young people who may not always have access to decision-making spaces, funding, technical guidance, or institutional support.

The panel also highlighted the importance of creating stronger links between youth organisations, government institutions, civil society, and development partners. Participants were encouraged to think beyond awareness-creation and consider how youth can contribute through project implementation, advocacy, innovation, research, community mobilisation, and monitoring of climate commitments.



Question and answer session following panel discussion

Afternoon Sessions

Discussion session: GESI integration in climate change initiatives

In the afternoon, participants took part in a discussion session focusing on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) and Climate Change.

The session introduced participants to the importance of integrating gender and social inclusion considerations into climate action. It highlighted that climate change affects different groups in different ways, depending on factors such as gender, age, income, location, disability, and access to resources.

The training helped participants understand that effective climate solutions should not only address environmental challenges, but also consider fairness, representation, access, and the needs of vulnerable groups. Participants reflected on how youth-led climate initiatives can become more inclusive by intentionally considering women, girls, persons with disabilities, rural communities, and other groups that are often underrepresented in climate decision-making.

Spotlight Session: LCOY Team Updates

After the GESI session, a short spotlight session was held to showcase the work that the Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) team has been doing throughout the year. LCOY is organised under YOUNGO (the official youth constituency to the UNFCCC); LCOYs are national versions of the global Conference of Youth that bring climate diplomacy to the grassroots level. By gathering regional insights, LCOYs directly build the Global Youth Statement presented to negotiators at COP, ensuring local perspectives reach global decision-makers. For COP32 specifically, upcoming African LCOYs will be critical to uniting regional youth voices around continental priorities like climate finance and adaptation, while simultaneously training local youth in climate diplomacy to turn grassroots passion into actionable negotiation skills.

The session provided an opportunity to present key activities, progress, and areas of focus from the LCOY team.

Group Activity: Developing Climate Solutions Around Ethiopia's COP 32 Priorities

The final activity of the workshop focused on solution development. Participants returned to group work and were asked to develop practical climate solutions connected to some of the climate related focus areas for Ethiopia.

1. Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Security
2. Adaptation and resilience
3. Green industrialisation, energy access, and jobs.
4. Nature-Based Solutions.

The purpose of this activity was to help participants move from understanding policy to designing action. Teams discussed possible solutions for different climate issues, and how their ideas could contribute to Ethiopia's national climate priorities.

The following are issues the different groups discussed and examples of suggested solutions:

- How can Ethiopia help farmers and food producers adapt to climate change while increasing productivity, income, and food security?
 - A model farmer support package that includes training, drought resistant seeds, water-saving irrigation, and market linkage.
- How can communities better prepare for droughts, floods, water shortages, and climate-related disasters?
 - An early warning system that helps people know what to do before, during, and after droughts or floods.
- How can Ethiopian cities become cleaner, more energy-efficient, and more climate-resilient while creating green jobs for youth?
 - A youth-led urban green jobs program focused on recycling, tree planting, cleaning rivers, and awareness campaigns.
- How can Ethiopia restore degraded land and protect forests while improving community income and resilience?
 - A community-led land restoration project that combines forest protection with income-generating activities.

The activity encouraged participants to think creatively and practically about climate action. Rather than discussing climate change only as a broad challenge, participants were pushed to identify specific solutions that could be implemented, showcased, and scaled.



Teams working on solutions for challenges presented to them

Key Outcomes, Takeaways, and Next Steps

The workshop strengthened participants' understanding of Ethiopia's key climate policy documents and helped them see how youth-led initiatives can better align with national climate priorities. It also created a space for dialogue between youth organisations, civil society, government representatives, and climate practitioners.

A key takeaway was that many youth-led organisations are already contributing to Ethiopia's climate agenda, but they need stronger policy awareness, technical support, partnerships, and access to resources to increase their impact. The workshop also emphasised the importance of inclusive climate action through GESI, ensuring that climate solutions consider the needs of women, girls, persons with disabilities, rural communities, and other vulnerable groups.

As a next step, Youth Canvas will have future sessions focused on relevant capacity strengthening topics including but not limited to, climate finance, project design, monitoring and evaluation, and policy engagement to help youth canvas members and other youth-led initiatives move from ideas to implementation.