

Insight Brief:

Youth Engagement in NDCs

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SECTION 1

Introduction

Young people make up the stakeholder group most affected by climate change, and youth inclusion in the development of NDCs 3.0 helps strengthen their implementability and build buy-in for climate action. Engaging young people in the development, planning and implementation of their countries' NDCs is core to the Partnership's commitment to support countries engaging all of society in national climate action.

The NDC Partnership Support Unit characterizes "Youth engagement" as efforts to increase the involvement or incorporate the voices of youth in climate change action.

About Insight Briefs

Insight Briefs are analyses developed by the NDC Partnership's Support Unit, members, or its partner institutions to share insights into thematic issues based on requests received by countries and the support provided by the Partnership. This Insight Brief analyzes requests for support the NDC Partnership has received from developing country members that are related to youth engagement. It identifies trends related to country requests and support offerings, informing how the Partnership can refine and scale up needed support for youth-focused initiatives, engagement of youth communities within climate policy development and interventions to support whole-of-society ownership over NDC action.



Photo by Publikasi SMKN 1 Cibadak/Unsplash

SECTION 2

Youth engagement requests: facts & figures

Since 2018, close to half of all developing countries requesting support from the NDC Partnership (43 out of 100) have requested support related to youth engagement. However, these requests (117 individual requests received) add up to only 3% of all requests for support circulated through the NDC Partnership. These requests include activities ranging from developing capacity to raising awareness and public education, and cover a wide range of sectors, including but not limited to agriculture, water, energy, and FOLU.

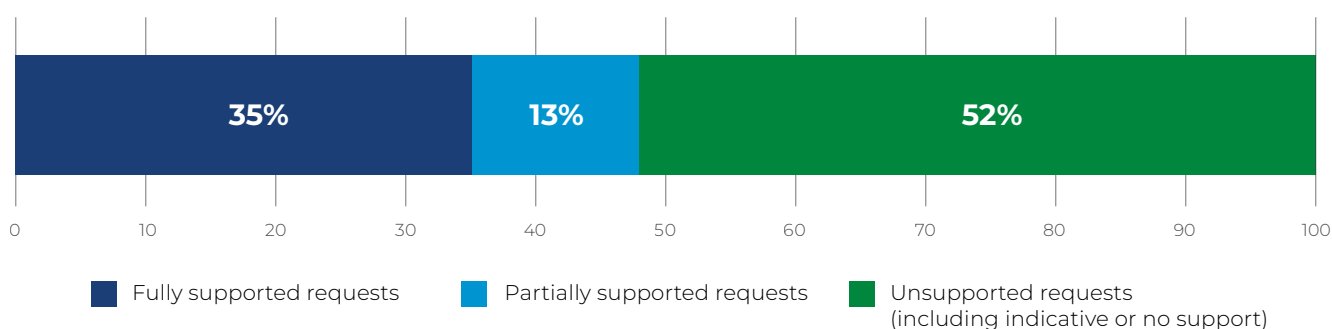
While over 30 partners have provided support in response to these country requests, just over half of all requests (52%) have not received any support, and 13% are receiving partial support. More support is needed, both to respond to countries' existing requests and as countries continue to mainstream the unique priorities and needs of youth into NDCs and climate action.

Just under half of all countries requesting support through the NDC Partnership have requested support for youth engagement (43 out of 102 countries).



Photo by Bibi/Unsplash

FIGURE 1

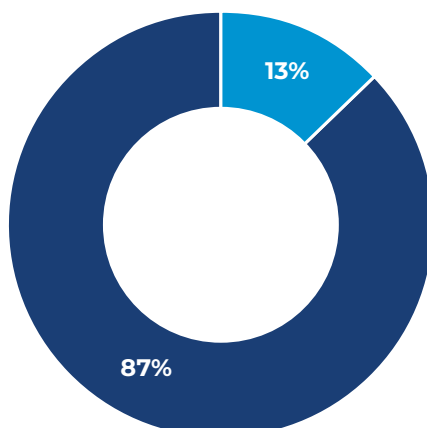
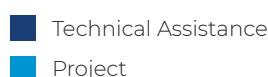


Breakdown of Requests

Type of Support

The majority of youth engagement requests are for technical assistance (87%), with countries requesting much less support to engage youth in projects.

FIGURE 2

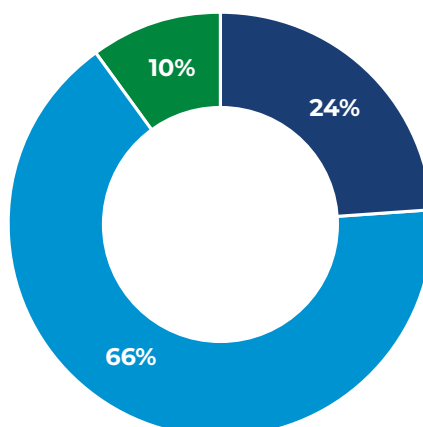


Focus Area

The majority of youth engagement requests are categorized as cross-cutting (66%) which reflects aspects of both adaptation and mitigation elements. This includes activities such as raising awareness in student populations about climate change mitigation and adaptation actions and developing youth employment programs to run climate-smart agriculture enterprises. Youth engagement requests are significantly more likely to be cross-cutting than the overall requests received by the NDC Partnership (of which 43% cross-cutting).

FIGURE 3

■ Adaptation
■ Cross-cutting
■ Mitigation

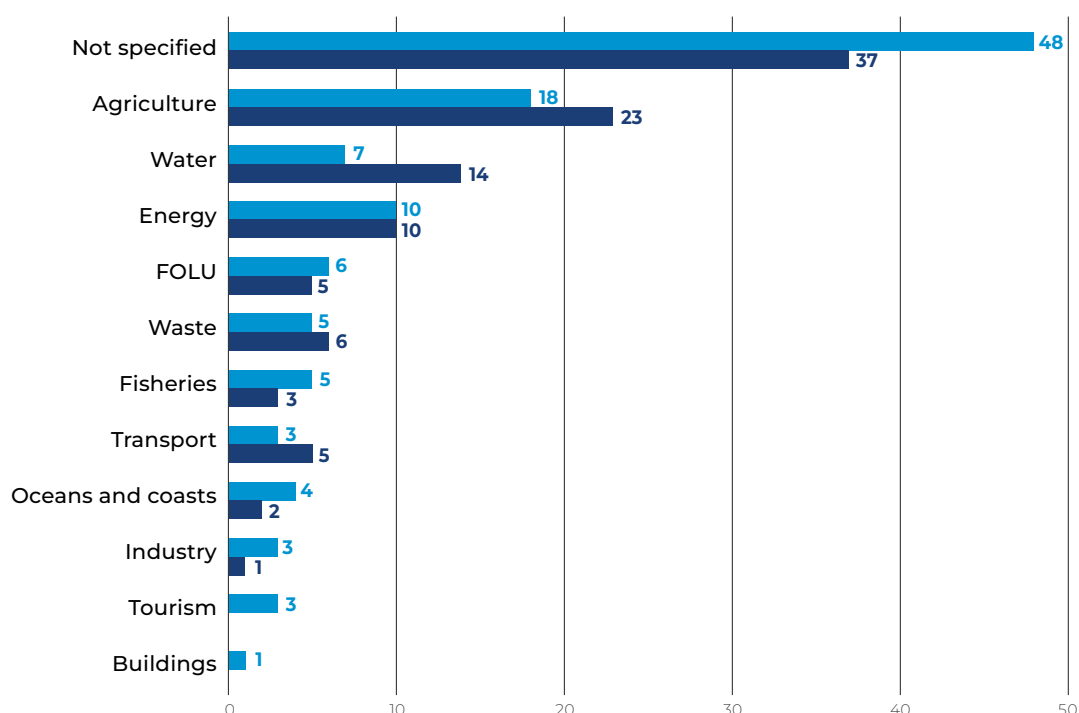


Sectors

Most youth engagement requests do not have a specific sectoral focus, reflecting the cross-cutting nature of many of these requests. Of those that are specific to sectoral needs, agriculture, water and energy are the most common. Sector-specific requests focus largely on building the capacity of young people to work within and benefit from climate-focused enhancements to sectoral practices.

FIGURE 4

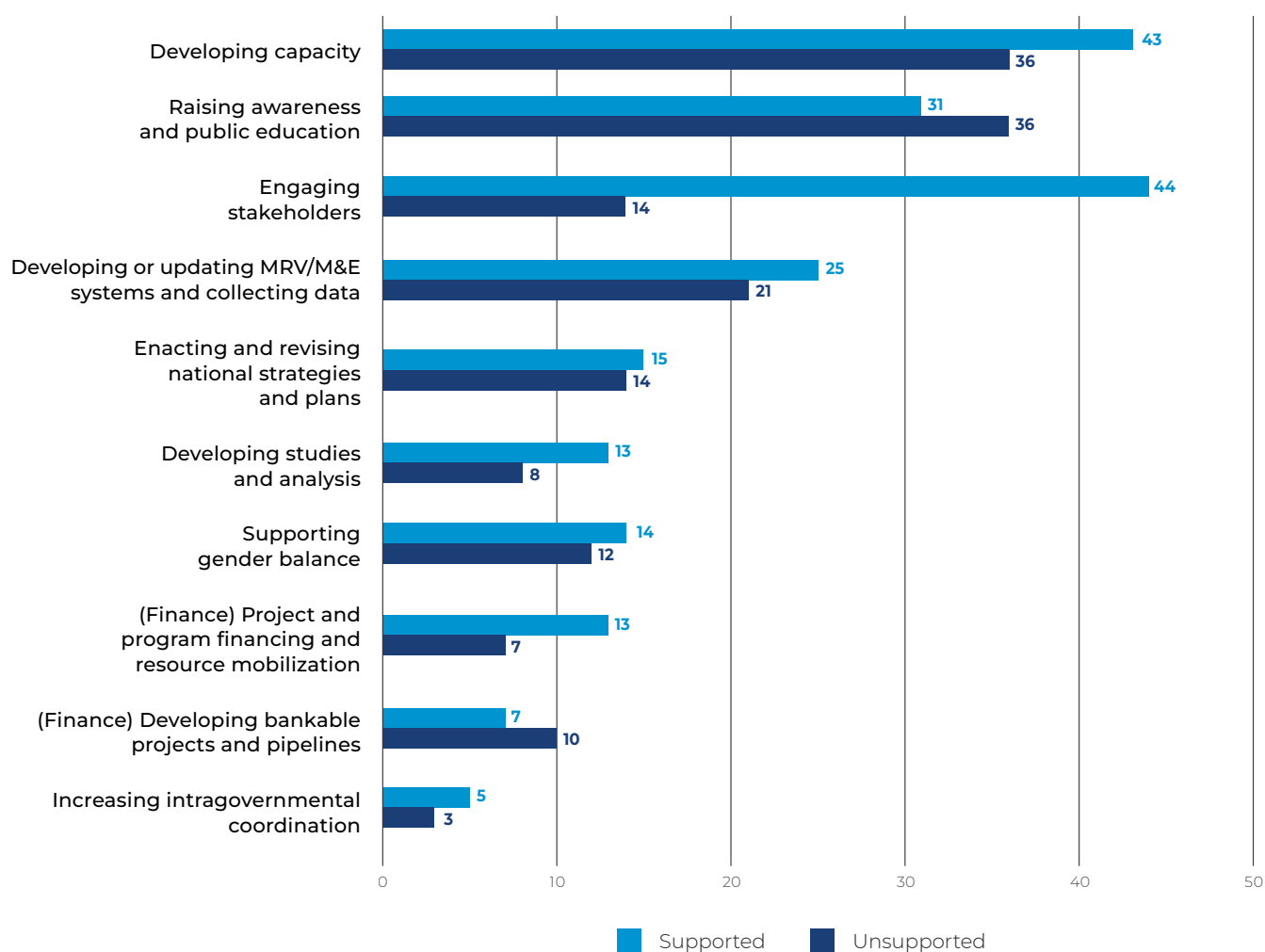
■ Supported
■ Unsupported



Activity Type

Most youth engagement requests focus on developing capacity, raising awareness and public education, and engaging stakeholders. The prominence of activities focused on developing capacity is in line with the cross-cutting nature of these requests, many of which seek support to strengthen government capacity to engage on topics relating to young people, capacity to develop policy frameworks which impact young people, or efforts to strengthen the capacity of young people to implement NDC commitments. Requests related to raising awareness and public education and engaging stakeholders also characterize many youth engagement requests.

FIGURE 5



Number of Requests Supported, by Partner (Top 10)

Forty-two partners, which comprised 18% of all partners at the beginning of 2025, have provided support for at least one youth engagement request. The top 10 partners (by number of youth engagement requests supported) are shown here. 11% of all youth engagement requests are supported by the requesting country governments themselves.

FIGURE 6

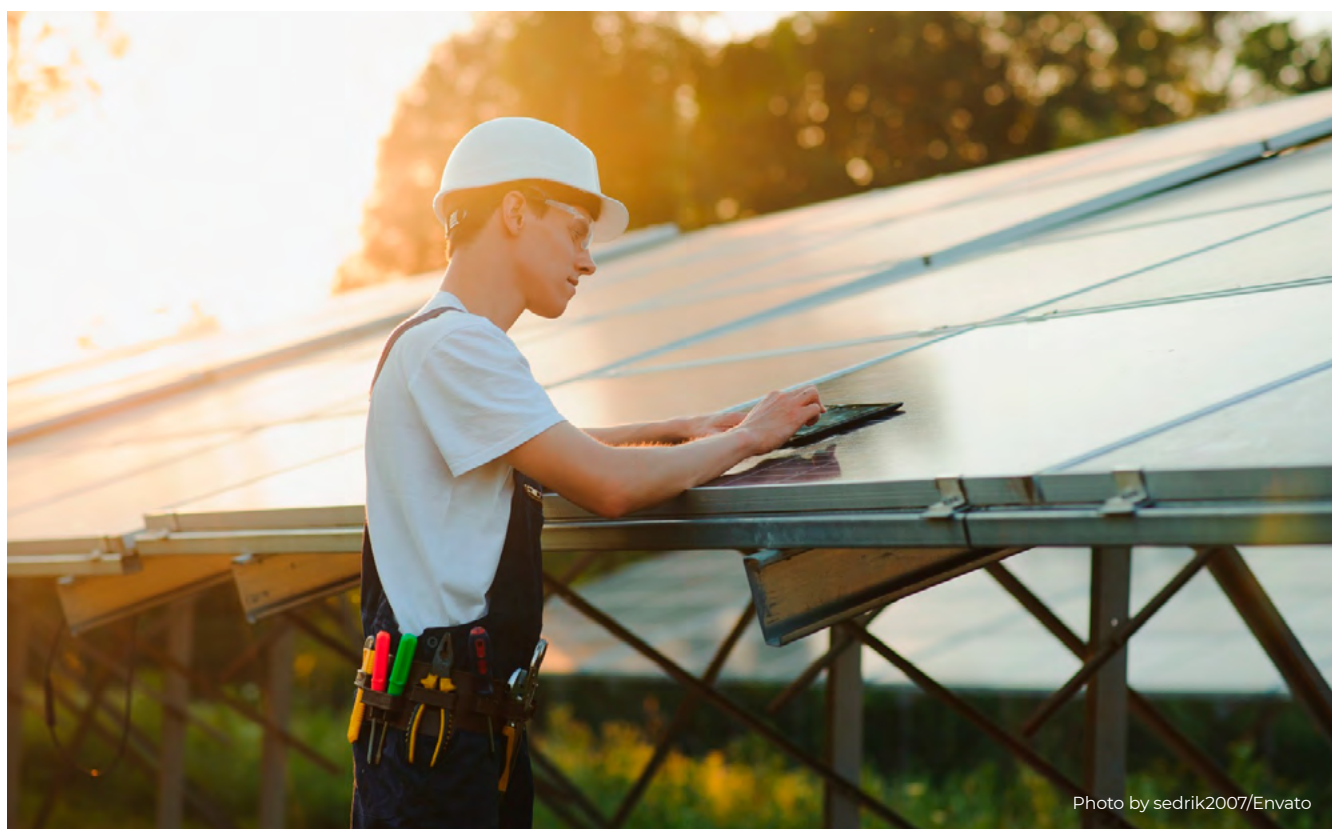
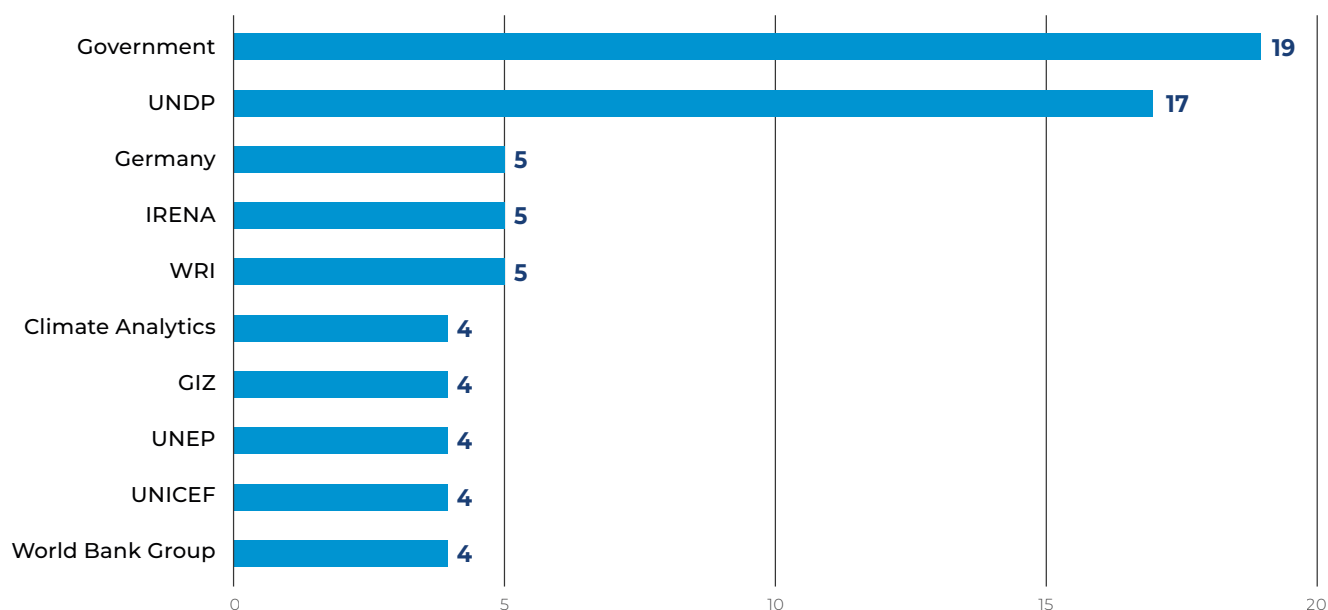




Photo by Martin Manugia/Mettle/NDC Partnership

SECTION 3

Addressing challenges in youth engagement & recommendations

While climate finance plays a crucial role in implementing effective climate action, young people have limited access to traditional finance structures.

To ensure successful implementation of inclusive climate action, climate finance support is necessary, with government stakeholders and young people working together to target youth-led solutions. The Partnership has received youth-related requests for issues such as entrepreneurship support for young people. Some organizations are attempting to fill this gap by providing seed funding for youth-led projects and solutions.

For meaningful youth engagement in climate action, institutions and government stakeholders need to understand the full extent of young people's capabilities.

Young people are usually seen as awareness-raisers, a primary source of community mobilization. However, it is sometimes overlooked that they are key implementers and negotiators in the climate action space. In the process of engaging with young people, it should be acknowledged that they have a wealth of technical knowledge that can be transferred to decision makers. Hence, it is important to ensure institutionalized mechanisms are present within government entities to allow young people to meaningfully engage across NDC development, planning and implementation.

While partners and member country representatives recognize the need for youth engagement in climate action, there is still a lack of youth participation in formal NDC implementation processes.

There are several effective ways to engage young people in climate action. Consultative processes, networking, and partnerships are effective ways to involve youth. Another avenue of engaging with young people is through sector-specific entry points, such as involving youth in agriculture, energy, and adaptation efforts. Innovative tools, including technology, digital platforms, and social media, are also seen as key for engaging youth in climate action and policy discussions. To highlight and provide stronger support for youth engagement in climate action, the NDC Partnership Support Unit is helping flag to Partnership members working on youth engagement when relevant government requests for support are circulated.



Insight Brief:

Youth Engagement in NDCs

Cover photo: Martin Magunia/NDC Partnership

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