

Lesson 4: Gender and Youth Dimensions of Climate Finance



Welcome

Throughout this learning journey we have seen numerous examples of how increasing the inclusivity of climate adaptation programming and actions not only increases the legitimacy and relevance of adaptation efforts, but also significantly increases the success and efficiency of such efforts. We have also explored how diverse gender and youth perspectives have been mainstreamed in varying degrees within the policy sphere, and have examined successes and persistent challenges in this space.

Climate finance is another central facet of international climate discourse and action where the perspectives of diverse gender and youth voices are critically important to ensuring more equitable climate solutions, higher returns on investments, and enhanced market reach and impact. Similarly, youth, especially in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), are key actors in driving innovative climate solutions. Yet, they are often overlooked in financial decision-making processes. Climate finance must actively recognize youth as critical stakeholders and enable their access to resources.

Specific barriers to inclusivity in climate finance, which can hinder the effective participation of women, youth and other marginalized groups, are summarized in the box below.

1. Introduction



Barriers to Inclusivity in Climate Finance

- **Financial Products:** Traditional financial products are often not tailored to the needs of low-income populations, making it difficult for them to benefit from climate finance.
- **Decision-Making Spaces:** Women and youth are often underrepresented in climate finance negotiation and decision-making spaces, leading to a lack of diverse perspectives in policy and funding decisions.
- **Policy and Governance:** There is a need for more inclusive policies and governance structures that actively incorporate gender and youth perspectives.
- **Capacity Shortfalls:** Many organizations lack the capacity and resources to navigate the complex landscape of climate finance, which can be a significant barrier to inclusivity.
- **Awareness and Knowledge:** There is often a lack of awareness and knowledge about available climate finance opportunities among marginalized groups. This information gap can prevent these groups from accessing necessary funds.
- **Gender Norms and Biases:** Socio-cultural norms and biases can restrict women's and youth's participation in climate finance initiatives.

1. Introduction

Lesson four explores the climate finance space, looking specifically at current barriers and enablers to inclusion of gender and youth knowledge, perspectives, and needs & priorities in how climate finance proposals are developed and executed. In this module, you'll find text, short videos, case study features, and critical-thinking questions to help guide your investigation into urgent challenges related to climate finance access in LDCs.

What to expect in this module:

- Enhanced understanding of common climate finance concepts and terminology, and of the influential actors, organizations, and finance mechanisms
- Increased understanding of why inclusion of gender and youth perspectives are essential for equitable and impactful climate finance outcomes
- Broader knowledge of key barriers and enablers for gender and youth perspectives in relation to climate finance
- Increased knowledge of key climate finance agreements and the climate finance negotiation landscape
- Better understanding of climate finance in the context of the LDCs
- Better understanding of pivotal discourses around finance for adaptation and for loss and damage



1. Introduction

Source Note: This lesson has numerous sources cited throughout the text, in the early sections we have drawn significant information from the following five climate finance short-course sources in particular.

Source: <https://unilead.weadapt.org/short-courses/>

Djohy, M.S. et al., Developing Concept Notes and Funding Proposals for existing climate finance mechanisms. Workbook of the Short Course 5. Capacity Development Programme in Adaptation Finance Access in LDCs. Produced within the framework of the LDC University Leadership for Catalyzing Climate-Adaptation Finance (UNI-LEAD) project.

Tenzin Wangmo et al., Basics of Climate Finance in the LDC Context. Workbook of the Short Course 1. Capacity Development Programme in Adaptation Finance Access in LDCs. Produced within the framework of the LDC University Leadership for Catalyzing Climate-Adaptation Finance (UNI-LEAD) project.

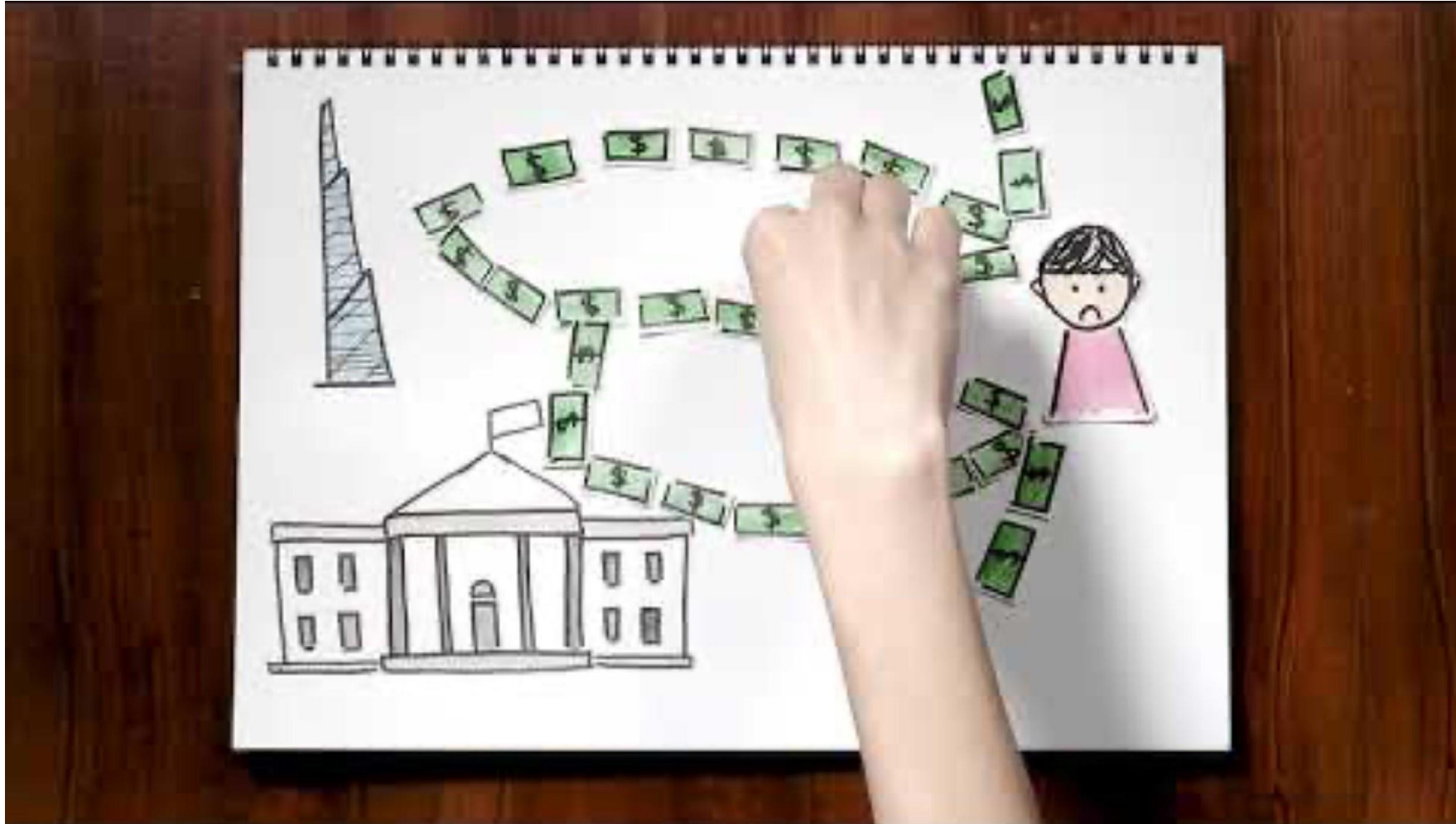
Chipo, P.M. et al., (2024) Mainstreaming GESI in Climate Finance and Climate Adaptation Activities. Workbook of the Short Course 3. Capacity Development Programme in Adaptation Finance Access in LDCs. Produced within the framework of the LDC University Leadership for Catalyzing Climate-Adaptation Finance (UNI-LEAD) project.

Djohy, M.S. (2024) Public and Private Sector Financing for Climate Change Adaptation Workbook of the Short Course 2. Capacity Development Programme in Adaptation Finance Access in LDCs. Produced within the framework of the LDC University Leadership for Catalyzing Climate-Adaptation Finance (UNI-LEAD) project.

Vyas R. et al., (2024). Fundamentals of Developing a Climate Rationale. Workbook of the Short Course 4. Capacity Development Programme in Adaptation Finance Access in LDCs. Produced within the framework of the LDC University Leadership for Catalyzing Climate-Adaptation Finance (UNI-LEAD) project.



2. What is Climate Finance?



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2. What is Climate Finance?



There is no commonly agreed definition on climate finance. Many different ones are used by key actors, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), etc. The IPCC defines climate finance as applied to “All financial flows whose expected effect is to reduce net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and/or to enhance resilience to the impacts of climate variability and the projected climate change. This covers private and public funds, domestic and international flows and expenditures for mitigation and adaptation to current climate variability as well as future climate change.”

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Standing Committee on Finance use the following definitions:

1. According to UNFCCC, Climate Finance refers to “local, national and transnational financing – drawn from public, private and alternative sources of financing – that seeks to support mitigation and adaptation actions that will address climate change”.
2. According to the Standing Committee on Finance, the operational definition of climate finance “aims at reducing emissions, and enhancing sink of greenhouse gases and aims at reducing vulnerability of, and maintaining and increasing the resilience of, human and ecological systems to negative climate change impacts”.

It is important to note that the definition of climate finance is itself an extremely contested topic. Developed countries do not agree to a consensus definition in the interest of maintaining a degree of freedom/leeway for subjective interpretations under the [OECD's Rio Markers](#). Developing countries do not generally believe in the OECD or the [Climate Policy Initiative](#) data. G77 negotiators cite in their interventions, such as the [OXFAM Shadow Reports](#).

2. What is Climate Finance?



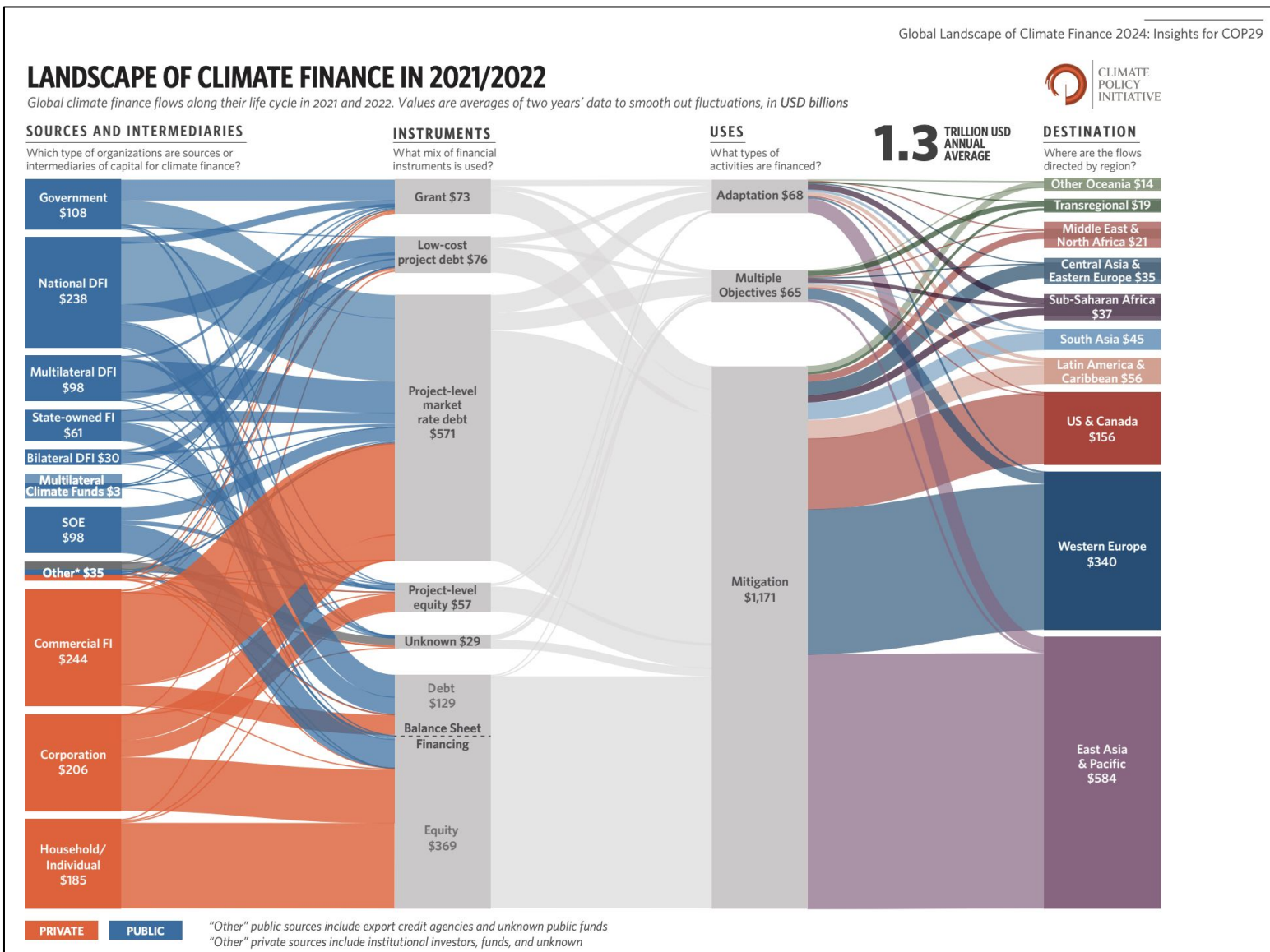
About the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF):

The Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) was established at COP16 in Cancun to support the COP and the CMA with improving coherence and coordination in the delivery of climate change financing; rationalization of financial mechanisms; mobilization of financial resources; and measurement, reporting and verification of support provided to developing country Parties. The SCF is consistently given new mandates to study these dimensions of climate finance.

A key point to remember is that all of these definitions continue to be extremely contested by different country parties for different reasons.

3. Climate Finance Flows

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report (2023) estimated the climate finance flows from developed to developing countries at USD 89.6 billion in 2021 (public sources), whereas the Climate Policy Initiative (CPI) estimated the climate finance flows at USD 1.3 trillion in 2021/2022 (from public and private sources). CPI includes public (domestic, international and development financial institutions (DFI) and private financing. Sectors include renewable energy and energy efficiency, transport, industry, agriculture, technology and adaptation.



3. Climate Finance Flows



Mitigation finance remains the largest share of climate finance and it is largely driven by investment in clean energy, energy efficiency in building, and sustainable transport. Adaptation finance increased from an annual average of USD 30 billion in 2017-2018 to USD 49 billion in 2019-2020. However, it remained low compared to mitigation (SCF-Biennial Assessment Report 2022).

Climate Finance Needs estimates

Given the pressing climate challenges confronting developing nations, assistance from developed countries is increasingly imperative. The Needs Determination Report by the SCF projects a funding requirement of approximately USD 5.8-5.9 trillion for the pre-2030 period to facilitate the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) in developing countries.

Additionally, the Adaptation Gap Report (UNEP, 2023) estimates the annual adaptation finance needs to range between USD 215 billion to USD 387 billion until 2030. According to the World Energy Transition Outlook (IEA, 2023), an estimated USD 4.3 trillion per annum is necessary for clean energy initiatives until 2030, with a further USD 5 trillion per year needed until 2050 to achieve net zero emissions by mid-century. These substantial financing gaps were identified as pivotal outcomes of COP28 in Dubai.

Climate finance needs estimates for 2023-2050

CPI further estimates that in the average future scenario annual climate finance needed through 2030 will increase steadily from USD 8.1 trillion to USD 9.0 trillion. Subsequently, anticipated needs will surge to surpass \$10 trillion annually from 2031 to 2050. This highlights the need to increase climate finance by a minimum of five-fold annually, as quickly as possible, to avoid the most serious consequences of climate change.

4. What challenges do LDCs face in accessing climate finance?

The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) bear the brunt of climate impacts, while contributing the least to the problem, and they have the lowest resource levels to adequately adapt. LDCs face significant challenges in accessing climate finance due to lack of expertise, experience and knowledge of the complex processes and requirements of the major funding schemes. The system of accessing funds is complex, onerous and slow with high transaction costs. For example, the development of concept notes and project proposals to Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a complex process containing stringent climate rationale requirements for adaptation projects that are data intensive and therefore difficult to meet.

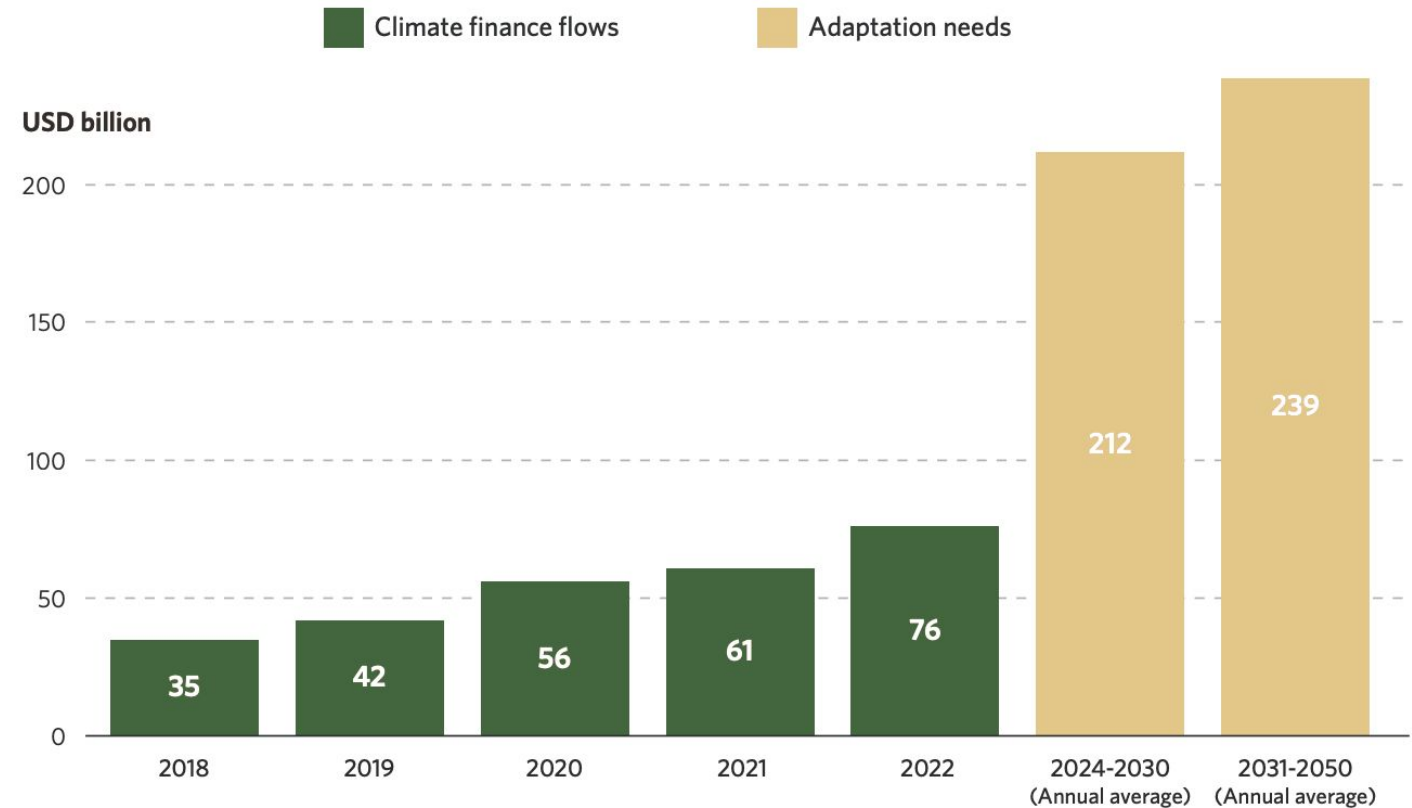
There are also structural barriers to building capacities for climate finance access in the LDCs. Capacity building (in the climate finance context) is about much more than organizing a few training workshops but rather it entails strengthening institutions and building capacity within these institutions. The Direct Access Modality is expected to strengthen institutions and build capacity at the national levels to access GCF resources. However, national Direct Access Entities (DAEs) remain low in LDCs and those accredited are implementing low-risk, micro and small projects, not the kind of large-scale adaptation responses that are needed.

Furthermore, current climate finance flows are woefully insufficient to meet the needs of vulnerable communities facing loss and damage. For example, the 2022 Adaptation Gap Report indicates that international adaptation finance flows to developing countries are significantly below estimated needs. At COP 15, delegates attempted to address this challenge through the commitment by wealthy countries to a collective goal of mobilising USD 100 billion per year by 2020 for climate action in developing countries. However, loans still account for approximately half of that amount, and grants provided only a fifth of that amount, thus exacerbating the debt trap that LDCs face.

4. What challenges do LDCs face in accessing climate finance?

Other important points to consider are that the recent diminution in development funding flows from the Global North to the Global South could have negative implications for climate finance, as well as the fact that the majority of climate funds are committed for mitigation, whilst LDCs critical climate finance needs relate to adaptation.

Figure 2.3: Global adaptation finance flows vs. needs



Note: Measuring the adaptation gap is challenging both conceptually and quantitatively. These figures are likely underestimates as they only account for EMDEs' needs, and many adaptation investment needs cannot be accurately measured. From 2018 to 2022, EMDEs accounted for 92% of adaptation finance.

4. What challenges do LDCs face in accessing climate finance?

In undertaking efforts to access climate finance, it is important to understand the difference between a climate-focused project and a classic development project. The primary distinction between the two project types lies in their primary objective, focus and climate change consideration:

	Climate adaptation project	Classic development project
Focus	Specifically designed to reduce the vulnerability of communities and systems to the adverse effects of climate change.	Primarily aimed at improving socio-economic conditions, such as poverty reduction, infrastructure development, or healthcare improvement.
Climate change consideration	Climate change is the central driver, and the project is explicitly designed to address its impacts.	Climate change might be a secondary or tertiary factor, if considered at all.

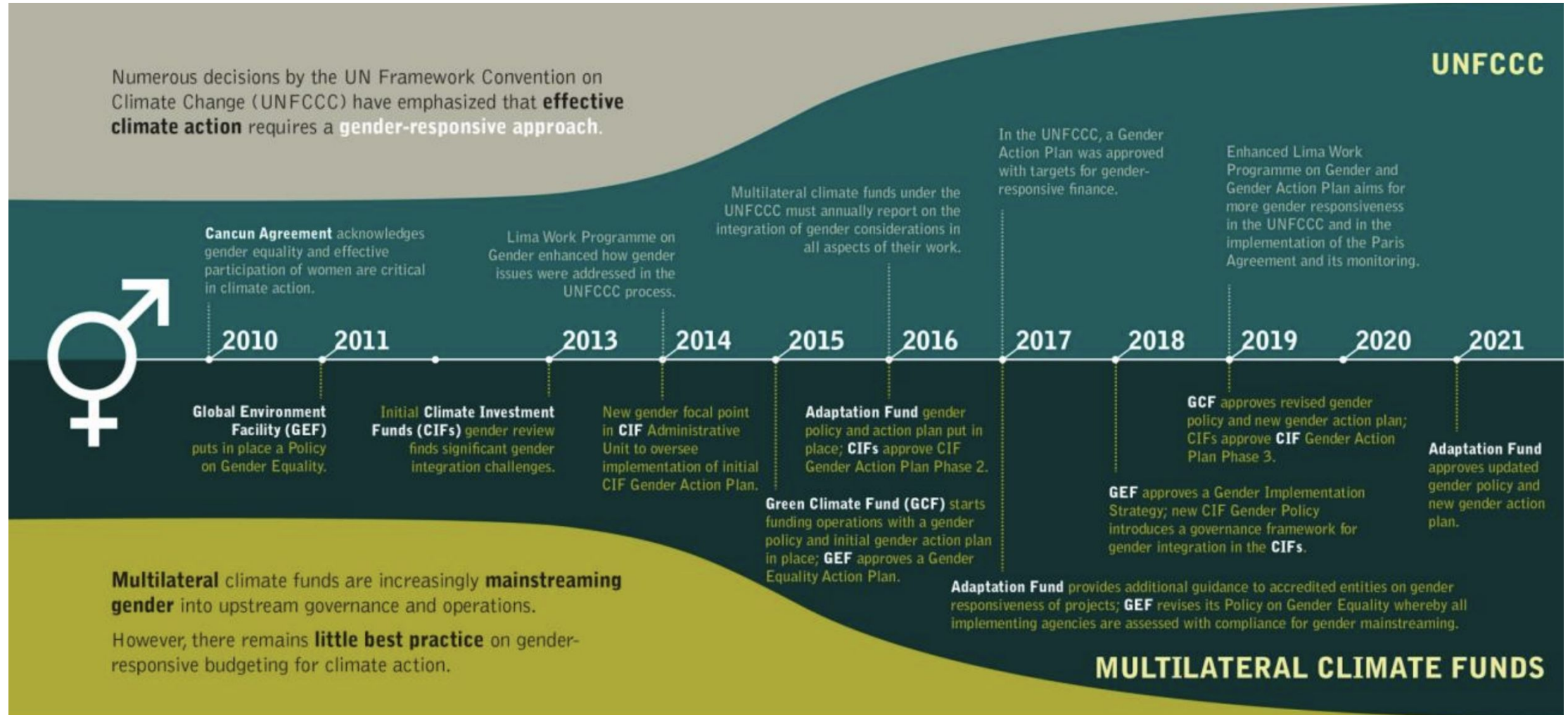
It's important to note that *these two types of projects are often interconnected*. Many climate adaptation projects also contribute to development goals, and vice versa. For instance, building climate-resilient infrastructure can both protect against climate impacts and improve economic activity and livelihoods. In essence, while both types of projects aim to improve people's lives, climate adaptation projects have a specific focus on building resilience to a changing climate.

We are now going to examine the gender and youth dimensions of climate finance. However, before we delve into this topic, it is important to realize that the climate finance landscape is *very complex* and becoming increasingly so. After learning about gender and youth dimensions, we encourage you to spend time reviewing the supplementary feature in section 11 to learn more about:

- The origins of the climate negotiations, the UNFCCC and the IPCC, all of which are key elements in the climate finance landscape
 - The climate finance provision to the UNFCCC
 - The New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance
 - The major established climate finance mechanisms, and the newest mechanism, the Loss & Damage Fund
- 1Direct Access Modality enables developing countries to access international climate finance directly, bypassing traditional international intermediaries like multilateral development banks.

5. Considering Gender in the Climate Finance Sphere

Within the complex space of international negotiations, the importance of gender has been increasingly recognized through a variety of different policy decisions and agreements (as seen in previous modules and referenced in the figure below), albeit with varying degrees of tangible success.



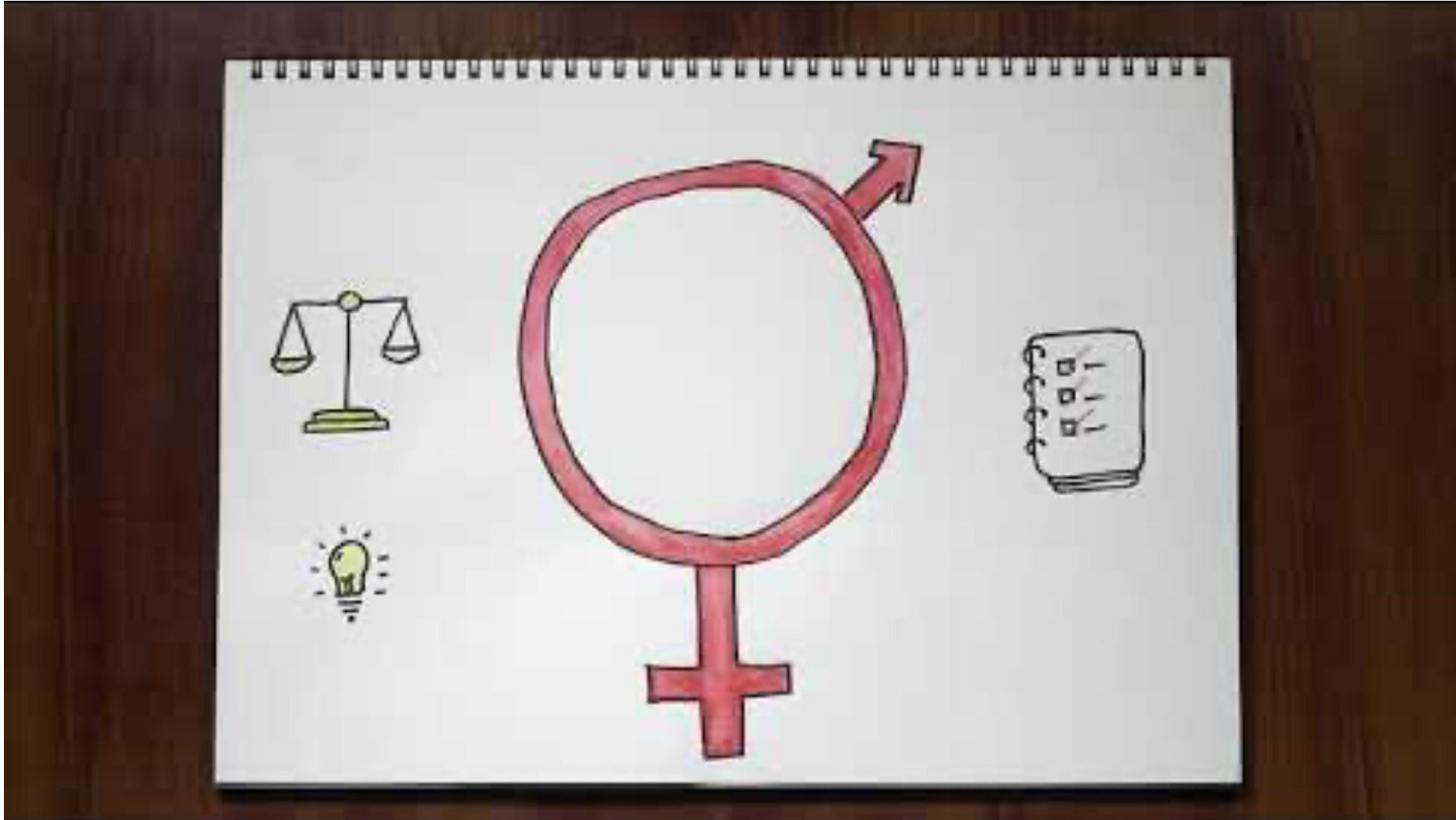
5. Considering Gender in the Climate Finance Sphere

As with other studies on increasing gender sensitivity in climate adaptation, evidence has shown that without a gender lens, climate financing instruments delivering adaptation funding can exacerbate current tendencies that discriminate against women (ODI and HBF 2022, www.climatefundsupdate.org; UNDP). This, and many other pervasive gendered inequalities are related to the fact that in many places, women consistently face unequal and inequitable access and control over financial and other resources useful in adapting to climate change. This can include access to credit, land ownership, access to small business financing and so forth (UNDP). In order to succeed, climate finance must be ambitious in scale, adequate to address gender-differentiated needs, and appropriate to deliver transformative climate action. This means considering the specific impacts of climate change on different genders and ensuring that finance flows are sufficient to meet these needs.

The (IPCC) in its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) (IPCC, 2014) emphasizes that climate hazards increase existing gender inequalities, and thereby contribute to the greater climate change vulnerability of many women (Schalatek, 2022). Just as we have learned in previous modules, using the category “women” does not mean that all women within this group will experience climate change in a similar way, or that they will all have the same experience with climate finance. Evidence is clear though, that disregarding gender disparities can make things worse for the most vulnerable women.



5. Considering Gender in the Climate Finance Sphere



[Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Washington, DC- Gender Responsive Climate Finance](#)

5. Considering Gender in the Climate Finance Sphere

In addition to the challenges with climate finance access faced by women, there are also substantial equity issues within climate finance negotiating processes and groups themselves. For example, during COP23 in Bonn (2017), Parties adopted a multi-year Gender Action Plan (GAP) prioritizing monitoring and reporting of gender-disaggregated climate change impacts (UNFCCC, 2018). A review by the UNFCCC Secretariat though, showed that of the 15 constituted bodies under the Convention ([see here](#)), “only seven demonstrated their progress towards integrating a gender perspective in their processes and substantive work in 2018, beyond improving the gender balance in their composition, a number that remained unchanged for the 2019-2020 period” ([Schalatek, 2022](#)). In 2021, men still made up 60% of active speakers in the COP plenary, and claimed three quarters of the speaking time (([Schalatek, 2022](#), and [UNFCCC, 2021b](#)).

Women comprise a smaller presence on the Boards of major multilateral climate finance instruments, such as the GCF, AF, and GEF. According to the UNDP, women constituted only 22 percent of representation on the major climate finance Boards in 2015. While that number may have increased over the past decade, women are still significantly underrepresented (See: [UNDP Gender and Climate Finance Policy Brief 5](#)).



5. Considering Gender in the Climate Finance Sphere

Spotlight on Gender Lens Investing (GLI)

GLI is an investment approach that integrates gender-based factors into financial decision-making to promote gender equality and enhance financial performance. By evaluating investments based on their impact on gender diversity, support for women in leadership roles, and addressing gender-specific challenges, GLI aims to create positive social change while achieving strong financial returns. This strategy not only contributes to gender equality but also taps into a broader talent pool, leading to improved business practices and outcomes. On the following link you can access a comprehensive training on gender lens investing developed by UNIDO [here](#).

A notable initiative in this field is 2X Global, formerly known as 2X Collaborative, which has been instrumental in catalyzing billions of dollars in gender-smart investments since 201. 2X Global continues to drive the deployment of capital across asset classes and markets, promoting gender equality and empowering women economically. <https://www.2xglobal.org/>



5. Considering Gender in the Climate Finance Sphere

Click on the picture below to navigate to the featured article from Brookings.

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COMMENTARY

Why gender equality must be part of global climate finance reform initiatives

Caren Grown, Anika Heckwolf, and Eleonore Soubeyran
November 20, 2024

- Despite growing awareness of the link between gender equality and climate change, recent climate finance reform proposals largely fail to consider gender equality.
- Global climate finance reform initiatives must consider the quality of finance, and prioritize critical areas like care infrastructure, targeted agricultural adaptation, and social safety nets—recognizing women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid labor and vulnerability to climate impacts.
- Overlooking these gender-specific challenges risks deepening inequalities, while integrating them into climate finance reforms can help create a more inclusive and just transition to low-carbon and climate-resilient economies.



7. Considering Youth in the Climate Finance Sphere

In 2022, the IPCC reported that, “children aged ten or younger in the year 2020 were projected to experience a nearly four-fold increase in extreme events under 1.5°C of global warming by 2100, and a fivefold increase under 3°C warming” ([IPCC, 2022](#)). Even so, research reveals that only 2.4% of climate finance over the past 17 years has supported child-responsive projects ([Children's Environmental Rights Initiative, 2023](#) and [Samuel, 2024](#)). This is in the context of a rapidly growing young population in many places, as noted by [Okinda \(2025\)](#) young people under 30 constitute 70% of the [Sub-Saharan Africa’s] population and are projected to represent 42% of global youth by 2030”.

Youth face several barriers in accessing and benefiting from climate finance

- Limited Access to Funding: Youth-led initiatives often struggle to secure direct funding due to restrictive eligibility criteria and bureaucratic constraints. (See: [y.labs](#), [Opportunities for Youth](#), and [Alliance](#))
- External Funding Dependence: Many young participants, especially from resource-constrained regions like Africa and South America, rely heavily on external funding, which can be inconsistent and insufficient (See: [y.labs](#) and [Women Deliver](#)).
- Symbolic Inclusion/ Youth-Washing: There is a tendency for symbolic inclusion of youth in climate finance discussions without granting them real influence or decision-making power. This can lead to frustration and disengagement among young activists. (See: [y.labs](#) and [World Bank](#))
- Underrepresentation in Decision-Making: Youth are often underrepresented in climate finance negotiation spaces and policy-making bodies, limiting their ability to influence decisions that affect their future (See: [y.labs](#), [World Bank](#), and [World Justice Project](#))
- Regional Disparities: Youth from the Global South face greater barriers to participation compared to their counterparts in Europe and Asia, due to institutional access and resource constraints. (See: [y.labs](#), [Lightupimpact](#), and [AUEU Youth](#))
- Awareness and Knowledge: There is often a lack of awareness and knowledge about available climate finance opportunities among youth, which can prevent them from accessing necessary funds. (See: [Funds for NGOs](#) and [NIH](#))
- Technical Assistance: Limited access to technical assistance and capacity-building support can hinder the ability of youth to develop and implement climate projects effectively. (See: [AfriLabs](#) and [Youth Climate Justice Fund](#))
- Perception and Bias: Young people may face challenges in being taken seriously in decision-making processes, which can limit their influence and access to climate finance. (See: [y.labs](#) and [World Justice Project](#))
- Support Networks: The absence of strong support networks can make it difficult for youth to navigate the complex landscape of climate finance. (See: [Funds for NGOs](#) and [NIH](#))

7. Considering Youth in the Climate Finance Sphere

Youth-led organizations in LDCs face unique challenges, including legal and institutional restrictions, limited proposal development capacity, and lack of recognition in national climate finance structures. Tailored mechanisms are needed to ensure youth actors can access and benefit from climate finance.

YOUNGO, as mentioned in our last module, is the official children and youth constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). A YOUNGO report was released in 2023 in collaboration with the [Commonwealth Secretariat](#) entitled '[Availability of Climate Finance for Youth](#)'. "This report ... aims to inform diverse stakeholders (policy-makers, the private sector and civil society) about the landscape of climate finance for youth. In an attempt to do so, we analysed a sample of around 100 funds/initiatives dedicated fully or partially to youth (<https://thecommonwealth.org/publications/availability-climate-finance-youth>)". Key highlights of [the report](#) are found in the figure on the next slide. .



7. Considering Youth in the Climate Finance Sphere

- The provision of climate finance for youth varies significantly, particularly in terms of the types of instruments being used. Grants and in-kind support (capacity-building or awareness initiatives) related to climate finance prevail. There is an urgent need to unlock other types of finance, mainly to support youth entrepreneurship.
- The above is coupled with the small size of the grants being provided, which puts limits on the contribution to climate action. Funding received is constrained with regard to building on the long-term sustainability of actions.
- The majority of climate finance for youth is being provided by international organisations or United Nations agencies. There is limited participation by the private sector in scaling up climate finance for youth.
- Allocation of climate finance for youth is skewed towards mitigation actions, while youth in the most vulnerable communities need to foster resilience. Funding of adaptation and loss and damage should be increased.
- The funds analysed target youth globally; only a minority of funding targets the regional level. While working globally is laudable, it can also hinder access, since youth may lack the capacity to apply for such funding and the requirements can be a burden. It is thus advisable to decentralise the provision of climate finance for youth.

7. Considering Youth in the Climate Finance Sphere

Many of the persistent challenges associated with youth and climate finance link back to our previous module's highlighting of insufficient attention and concrete efforts toward integrating youth into climate action across the board in a tangible way.

Okinda (2025) gives the following recommendations for supporting the role of youth in climate finance.

- Mainstream youth climate finance.** Youth-led organisations often struggle with financial literacy and access to climate finance mechanisms. Complex application processes further aggravate these challenges. However, by developing and mainstreaming youth-specific funding channels and simplifying application processes, more youth-led initiatives will be able to access essential climate finance. Implementing capacity-building initiatives and targeted funding is key to addressing these disparities.
- Maximise investment in information, communication and technology (ICT).** Countries investing in ICT for climate finance saw an 18% increase in project success rates due to improved coordination and data-driven decision-making. Investments in ICT can help develop more inclusive climate finance systems by providing real-time data on project performance and enabling more effective monitoring and evaluation of climate projects. The use of AI and predictive analytics, for example, enables more accurate assessment of climate risks, leading to better targeted investments.
- Expand youth climate finance literacy.** The gaps in financial literacy among youth-led climate organisations, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, significantly hinder their ability to access climate finance, such as the Green Climate Fund or carbon markets. There is a critical need to establish youth-focused financial literacy programmes and mentorship opportunities to assist young leaders in navigating climate finance.
- Tailor financial services to young people's needs.** Historically, women have received substantial funding in gender equality initiatives, especially in education, entrepreneurship and health. While youth-led initiatives are gaining attention, targeted funding for young people's needs should be increased to provide support similar to that provided to women. According to a report on making development accountable to youth by the World Bank (2024), youth-led projects in sub-Saharan Africa receive significantly less funding than international NGOs and established organisations.⁵
- Streamlining visa processes.** Addressing these visa challenges is crucial for fostering innovation and collaboration among the youth and key industry players. Promoting more inclusive policies can help empower the young people particularly from the global south to thrive on the international stage.

7. Considering Youth in the Climate Finance Sphere

Leading the Way

Several organizations are spearheading efforts to engage youth in climate finance and to increase visibility of youth-focused issues in this space.

- The [Youth Climate Justice Fund](#) supports youth climate justice groups with flexible, trust-based funding, resources and youth-to-youth capacity development.
- The [Global Youth Climate Action Fund \(GYCAF\)](#) is the first of its kind climate fund dedicated to financing youth-led climate action around the world.

CASE STUDY

DOMESTIC FUNDING FOR YOUTH-LED DEVELOPMENT IN RWANDA

The Rwandan National Youth Council (NYC), in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Culture, has proactively implemented equitable youth engagement initiatives with substantial funding. NYC coordinates all youth activities across the country, mobilizing and facilitating the formation of youth cooperatives through a structured network of executive committees.⁴⁰ This allows youth representatives at all levels to advocate for their needs and, at the same time, accelerates the buy-in of both local and international organizations to fund youth initiatives directly. In 2020, the Ministry of Youth and Culture, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), awarded 5 million Rwandan Francs each to 55 youth co-operatives in rural areas, successfully reaching some of the most vulnerable youth in the country and creating jobs for more than 3,500 youth across the country.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Youth and Culture has put in place a practical approach to securing domestic funds for youth initiatives through leveraging existing opportunities from other local and government institutions. In 2019, the Ministry of Youth and Culture negotiated with the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Ministry of Local Government to contract 153 youth-led companies for recurring road maintenance activities across the country. Each company receives monthly funds of 3 million Rwandan Francs, creating 7,760 jobs.

More efforts for domestic funding continue as NYC advocates for promising projects created by youth to secure funds from organizations such as the Business Development Fund Rwanda. Additionally, the Ministry of Youth and Culture regularly organizes competitions through Youth Connekt Africa and other local initiatives, where youth-led organizations can win grants to implement their initiatives while also receiving coaching and mentorship services to strengthen their management and leadership capacities. These initiatives have provided significant opportunities for youth to showcase their capabilities while contributing to their communities' development.

Source: [womenandriver.org](https://www.womenandriver.org)

8. Gender and youth dimensions of the major climate finance mechanisms

It is essential that climate finance is accessible to grassroots groups, community-led organizations, and Indigenous Peoples who are working at the intersection of gender and climate justice. Direct access to funds empowers these groups to implement solutions that are tailored to their unique contexts. While the Direct Access modality can help to strengthen institutions and build capacity at the national levels to access climate finance, national Direct Access Entities (DAEs) remain low in LDCs and those accredited are implementing low-risk projects that are micro and small in scale. The following links will lead you to more information on the specific gender and youth themes of the various major climate finance mechanisms.

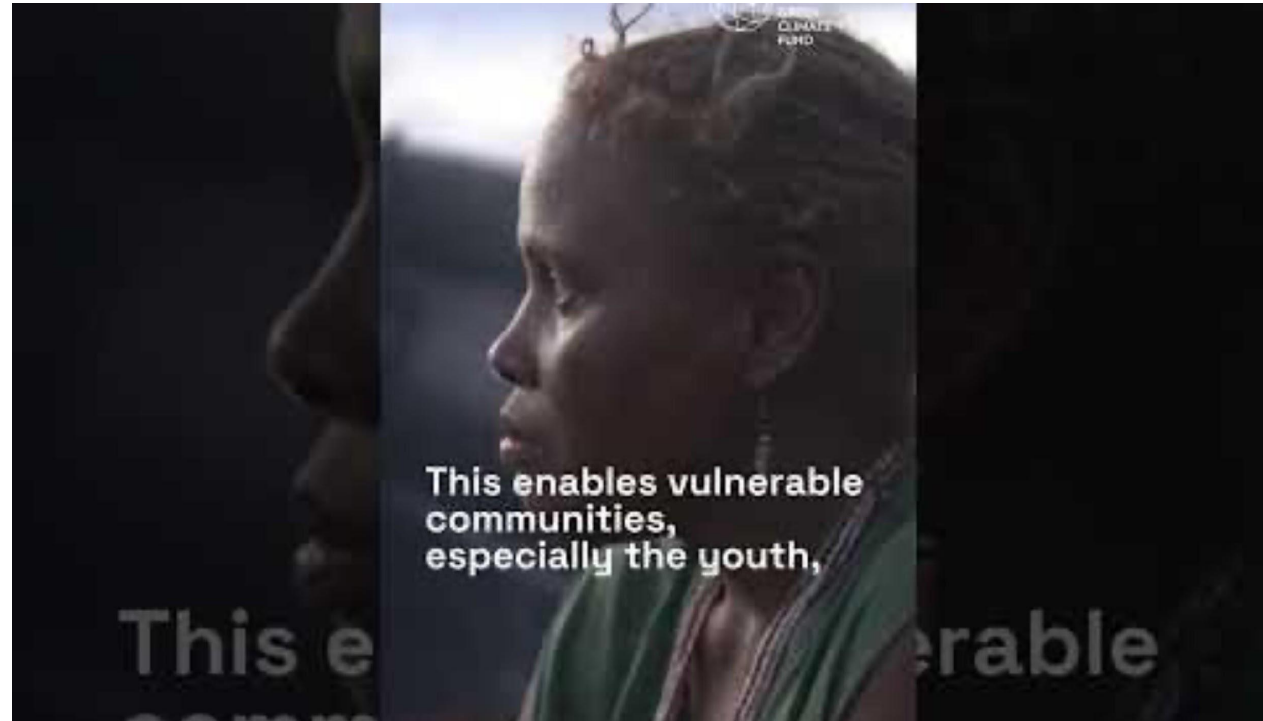
Global Environment Facility (GEF)



- "With support from the Global Environment Facility, youth leaders around the world are building careers to heal the planet and getting directly involved in local, national, and international initiatives in order to create a brighter future." [Learn more](#)
- "The GEF is working to support the systematic, substantive integration of gender perspectives in every project and program that we support." [Learn more](#).

8. Gender and youth dimensions of the major climate finance mechanisms

Green Climate Fund (GCF)



- "The Green Climate Fund, the Global Partnership for Education and Save the Children launch the world's largest investment for green schools at COP28." [Learn more](#).
- "In the context of sustainable development, GCF will consistently mainstream gender issues in its implementation arrangements and frameworks for its projects." [Learn more](#).

8. Gender and youth dimensions of the major climate finance mechanisms

Climate Investment Funds (CIF)



- "Led by CIF youth team members and developed in consultation with youth groups and youth climate leaders, this note identifies focus areas and activities that CIF can undertake to mainstream engagement with young people ages 16–35 in its work—promoting outreach to them, partnerships with and among young people, youth inclusion in CIF governance and operations, and youth capacity building for climate action." [Learn more](#).
- "This CIF Gender Policy serves as a governance framework for gender integration in the CIF. The CIF Gender Policy addresses gender integration in CIF approaches, procedures, and implementation of investment plans and projects, as well as integration in internal areas of CIF functioning, such as CIF governance, and staffing and budgeting." [Learn more](#).

8. Gender and youth dimensions of the major climate finance mechanisms

Adaptation Fund (AF)



- "This study provides an overview of youth participation in adaptation projects and interventions supported by the Adaptation Fund (AF)." [Learn more](#).
- "Gender is a strategic priority of the Adaptation Fund. Gender mainstreaming and gender responsive interventions are core components of the AF operations." [Learn more](#).

9. Exercise



Read this [statement](#) from the LDC around the outcomes of COP 29 and this [story](#) of one young negotiator's experience, then answer the following questions.

1. Think of your own country's context with regards to climate finance negotiations, what unique strengths can women and youth bring to these decision spaces?
2. Do you think the outcomes of the next COP might be different if the voices of women and youth were included in a much more equitable way in the discussions? Why or why not, and if so what would be different?
3. What is one action you would consider doing to strengthen the voice of women and youth in the climate finance debate?

10. Resources



- [Climate Funds Update: Gender and Climate Finance](#) (Schalatek, 2022)
- [Funding the future: climate finance for youth](#) (Okinda, 2025)
- [Climate Investment Funds \(CIF\) Young People Are At The Forefront Of The Climate Crisis](#)
- [Youth Climate Finance Initiative](#) (YCFI)
- [Global Innovation Lab for Climate Finance Advancing Gender Equality Through Climate Finance](#)
- [UNFCCC Gender and Climate Change Finance](#)
- [COP29 and the NCQG: linking climate, debt and gender justice](#) (Girshova and Fresnillo, 2024)
- [The broken promise of loss and damage finance: Can Europe help?](#) (ECDPM, 2025)
- [CIF Training Youth in Climate Finance](#)
- [Global Youth Climate Action Fund](#)
- [Current State of Climate Finance](#) (Video)
- [Introduction to climate finance](#) (Video)
- [It's About YOUth: Climate finance: The key to shaping a sustainable future](#) (Video)
- [28@28 - 28 minutes of youth-led climate finance solutions at COP28](#) (Video)
- [Climate Finance Fundamentals 10: Gender and Climate Finance](#)
- [Feminist Climate Finance Brief](#)
- [Pivotal Role of Gender Equality in Climate Finance](#)
- [UN Women calls for increased gender focused climate finance at COP29](#)
- [Gender Responsive Climate Action: The Path to COP30](#)
- [Ensuring Equitable Access to Climate Finance for Local Communities: Opportunities Post-NCQG at COP29](#)
- [UN Climate Finance Course](#)
- [Climate Negotiations Game](#)
- [Becoming a UNFCCC Delegate, what you need to know](#)

11. Supplementary Feature: Understanding the Climate Negotiation and Climate Finance Landscape

Understanding Climate Negotiations

Understanding the increasingly complex landscape of climate finance requires sufficient baseline knowledge of how we got to where we are now. Let's begin with the origins of the climate negotiations. The history of climate change negotiation dates back to the early 1960s and 70s when scientists raised concern over the relationship between global temperature and atmospheric levels of CO₂.

In the 1970s, concerns over human contributions to increasing CO₂ prompted the convening of the first World Conference in 1979. In 1988, the World Conference on the Changing Atmosphere: Implication for Global Security was held in Toronto, and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) collectively established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).



11. Supplementary Feature: Understanding the Climate Negotiation and Climate Finance Landscape

About the IPCC

The IPCC is the United Nations Body charged with assessing the science related to climate change. It provides regular assessments of the scientific, technical and socio-economic knowledge about climate change, its impact and future risks, and strategies for adaptation and mitigation.

For the assessment reports, thousands of scientists dedicate their time voluntarily to evaluate numerous scientific papers published annually. Their aim is to offer a thorough overview of the understanding regarding climate change drivers, its impacts, future risks, and the potential of adaptation and mitigation strategies in alleviating these risks.

The IPCC has three Working Groups: Working Group I, dealing with the physical science basis of climate change, Working Group II, dealing with climate change impacts, adaptation and vulnerability, and Working Group III, dealing with mitigation of climate change. It also has a Task Force on national greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories that develop methodology on GHG emission and removals.

IPCC assessments provide government entities, at global, regional and national levels, with state-of-art scientific information that they can use to develop climate policies. IPCC assessments are a key input into international negotiations to tackle climate change.

Author contributions from female scientists have steadily increased since the inception of the IPCC in the early 1990s, when women represented about 8 percent of the authorship to the Assessment Report 6, where they represented approximately one-third of the authorship. Despite this progress, women authors still contend with built-in disadvantages related to, for example, childcare duties and gendered power dynamics (See: [More women than ever are contributing to the next IPCC climate report](#)).



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About the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

In 1991, the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) took place in Washington D.C. In May 1992, the INC adopted the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at the UN Headquarters in New York. The Convention was opened for signature at the Rio Earth Summit in June 1992 and entered into force on 21 March 1994.

Today, it has near-universal membership. The 198 countries that have ratified the Convention are referred to as Parties to the Convention.

The ultimate objective of the Convention is:

1. Stabilization of greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.
2. Allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner

The UNFCCC itself includes no binding emission reduction target and no enforcement mechanisms. The first Conference of the Parties (COP) was held in 1995 in Berlin. Since then, countries have come together annually to discuss and negotiate how to implement the objectives of the Convention.



11. Supplementary Feature: Understanding the Climate Negotiation and Climate Finance Landscape

Climate finance provision in the Convention and the Paris Agreement

Climate finance is a key enabler for raising climate ambition and action. The Convention, Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement (the latter adopted in December 2015 and entered into force in November 2016) calls for financial assistance from the Parties, with more financial resources allocated to those that are less endowed and more vulnerable.

Climate finance is needed for mitigation and adaptation, to significantly reduce emissions, to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, and to respond to loss and damage.

According to the convention, developed country Parties should lead in mobilizing climate finance from a wide variety of sources, instruments and channels, that take into account the needs and priorities of developing country Parties. Such mobilization of climate finance should represent a progression beyond previous efforts.

In the Paris Agreement, Parties agreed to achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation finance. However, in practice adaptation has remained consistently underfunded. As described in Section 3, the developing countries are prioritizing climate finance for adaptation, while the developed countries are prioritizing climate finance for mitigation.



11. Supplementary Feature: Understanding the Climate Negotiation and Climate Finance Landscape

New collective quantified goal on climate finance (NCQG)

In 2021 at COP26, Parties agreed to at least double their collective provision of climate finance for adaptation to developing countries from 2019 levels by 2025, in the context of achieving a balance between mitigation and adaptation. However, since there was no mechanism to track progress, the Standing Committee on Finance was requested to prepare a report on doubling of adaptation finance for consideration at COP28 in 2023.

The New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG) is a new global climate finance goal that the Parties decided to set prior to 2025, from a floor of USD 100 billion per year, taking into account the needs and priorities of the developing countries. This was decided in 2015 at COP21.

The 9th Technical Expert Dialogue and first meeting of the ad-hoc work programme of the NCQG was held on 23-26 April 2024 in Cartagena, Colombia. The technical discussions helped advance understanding on each of the elements of the NCQG. However, there were still divergent views between developed and developing countries. For instance, there was no consensus on the overall mandate and scope of the goal. Developed country Parties are of the view that this is a global effort and the goal must be consistent with Article 2, paragraph 1(c) of the Paris Agreement, which aims to strengthen the global response to the threats of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, including by, making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emission and climate resilient development. Whereas the developing country Parties were of the view that the NCQG and its features must be in accordance with principles and provision of the Convention and Article 9 of the Paris Agreement where developed countries shall provide financial resources to developing countries for climate actions.

Views were also divergent on structure of the goal, timeframe, sources of finance. Further, as there is no agreed definition of climate finance, this leads to transparency and reporting issues. Without a climate finance definition, what counted as climate finance and what did not remained ambiguous.

[At COP29, \(Baku- 2024\)](#) the NCQG on climate finance was agreed, setting a target of at least \$300 billion annually from developed countries by 2035 to support developing nations. "The negotiations [were] marked by a troubling gap between what the global north countries are willing to deliver and what the global south needs, both in terms of the quantity (quantum) and quality of climate finance to be delivered." Negotiations ... intensified in the run up to COP29 but some key issues remain unresolved, which campaigner Mariana Paoli, (ChristianAid & CAN-International) says points to deeper "lack of consensus on most key NCQG elements including quality, quantity, structure, sources and timeframes." ([Girshova and Fresnillo, 2024](#)).

Many representatives from Global South countries and organizations expressed outrage about the NCQG, citing it as inadequate for the challenges at hand and often explicitly referencing gender and youth issues. For example, the [Women and Gender Constituency released a statement](#) that noted, among other things, that the NCQG "fails to acknowledge that climate finance must be gender-responsive to be effective, sustainable, and transformative. It fails to provide finance for loss and damage. It fails to provide direct access to frontline communities and groups, including women and girls, children, youth, persons with disabilities, and Indigenous Peoples".

As the NCQG evolves, it is critical to ensure that gender and youth equity are reflected in its structure. Youth from LDCs must be included not only as recipients but as designers and decision-makers within this new goal.

11. Supplementary Feature: Understanding the Climate Negotiation and Climate Finance Landscape

Loss and Damage

Loss and damage and climate finance are closely interconnected, as both address the financial aspects of climate change impacts. Loss and damage refers to the adverse effects of climate change that go beyond what people can adapt to. This includes both economic losses (e.g., property damage, loss of income) and non-economic losses (e.g., loss of cultural heritage, displacement) caused by extreme weather events and slow-onset changes like sea level rise and desertification.

The fund and funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage was established at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt. It was a historic decision, reached after 30 years of negotiations, and was considered an important breakthrough agreement in the history of climate negotiations. This Fund is considered a huge achievement for developing countries, including for particularly vulnerable countries like SIDS and LDCs, who have asked for support to address climate change induced loss and damage under the UNFCCC for decades.



CAFOD- What is loss and damage?

11. Supplementary Feature: Understanding the Climate Negotiation and Climate Finance Landscape

In designing the Loss & Damage Fund, the LDC Group has emphasized several priorities:

1. Ensure that the Fund delivers grants to support recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation following extreme climate change events, and to address ongoing loss and damage from slow-onset events;
2. Ensure simplified and direct access modalities that are low-burden and do not create capacity barriers;
3. Ensure access modalities that also allow for quick disbursement, to be able to respond to extreme events;
4. Ensure dedicated allocation for LDCs and SIDS, recognizing their special circumstances and priorities;
5. Provide direct budget support to designated national ministries or agencies identified by the government;
6. Ensure significant and predictable capitalization of the Fund at scale to meet the actual costs of loss & damage, that is also additional to other forms of climate finance.

(See: [World Resources Institute \(WRI\)](#), [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#), and [Stockholm Environment Institute \(SEI\)](#).)



The End.

Thank you!

