

YECA JULY, 2025 NEWSLETTER

CLIMATE JUSTICE FOR ALL: EMPOWERING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WITH LEGAL KNOWLEDGE TO FIGHT CLIMATE INJUSTICES IN OIL REGION.



Group picture for University students after legal empowerment training at Makerere University.

INTRODUCTION.

Dear reader, welcome to our July 2025 Newsletter.

In July 2025, Youth for Environmental Justice and Climate Action (YECA) organised legal empowerment training at Makerere University. The training brought together university students from Kyambogo, Kampala International University and Makerere University. The training was one of the many legal empowerment trainings that YECA is organising to increase legal understanding of youth climate activists from local to National levels.

Currently, there is increased human rights violations especially for the University students and youth against the construction of the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project. Since January 2025, over 40 youth climate activists have been arrested whenever they come out to peacefully protest against the ongoing construction of the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) project. The arrest of youth climate activists have become a song of the day, and it's disheartening to see the judiciary seemingly politicize cases involving youth activists who oppose the EACOP project.

In July 2025, YECA focused on legal empowerment trainings and organized meeting discussions for youth to share legal gaps that have undermined their efforts to challenge climate justice impunities happening in Uganda. From these trainings and engagements, it was observed that many youth activities don't understand the laws that govern the climate activism work and many have been caught outside the law.

Due to limited knowledge about the laws, many youth have been brutally arrested and detained beyond 48 hours before being taken to court. Through our engagements with youth activists, a lot was observed including limited understanding about the laws that govern climate activism and the laws they can use to defend themselves during their activism work. Therefore, to fill this gap, YECA organized a one-day capacity building legal empowerment event that happened at Makerere University. The objectives of the training was to equip youth activists with legal knowledge to defend their rights during

climate actions/activisms work and identify legal gaps that have hindered youth's participation in climate activism.

The one-day training increased youth's understanding about the laws they can use during organizing activities and after activities to challenge any injustices targeting them. The training involved youth activists against the EACOP, youth-led organizations and university environmental organizations that doing climate justice work.

It should be noted that the shrinking civic space for the youth climate activists continues to rise and this call for comprehensive efforts to use litigation and other means to fight these injustices targeting youth climate activists.

Therefore, in this in this episode of the newsletter, we share the highlights from the legal empowerment training that YECA organized and call on the international partners to join us in defending rights of the affected communities by oil and gas projects.

Also in this newsletter, we share activities that YECA has been able to implement in the month of July 2025.

Enjoy the newsletter

Legal empowerment, a key tool to reduce on the risks of youth climate Activists in Uganda.



On 14 July 2025, Youth for Environmental Justice and Climate Action (YECA) organised youth legal capacity building training of youth climate activists in Makerere University-Uganda. The objective of the

training was to equip youth climate activists with legal knowledge to help them do climate activism advocacy in line with the laws to challenge the injustices imposed to them by different stakeholders.

Below we share with you observations from the training and recommendations to increase safety of climate activists in Uganda.

- **Limited Access to Justice:** Amon Muzora who was one of the participants indicated that the challenge of accessing legal representation has hindered the ability of youth activists to seek justice. He said the high cost and affordability of the lawyers have affected their litigation efforts and made it difficult to peruse climate related cases. It should be noted that the cases of youth climate activists take long to be heard and finished on time yet those filed by the rich get finalized within days
- **Lack of clear Laws and Policies;** In the discussion ,Andrew Arijuka who is one of the climate activists indicated the inadequate climate legislation with insufficient or unclear laws governing climate change has created uncertainty and hindered youth advocacy efforts. Andrew indicated that most of the laws are in legal language and terminologies are hard even to understand by local youth. This builds on the advocacy that YECA has been running to have the Ugandan constitution translated in all languages for people to fully understand and use these laws to protect their rights.
- **Gaps in environmental regulations:** Mary Asimwe who is climate Gender activist indicated weak regulation that have failed to protect environment and public health. She said that Uganda has good laws but the issue is segregative enforcement where by the laws are only enforced to the poor leaving the big investors to keep working in eco-sentive areas. She gave an example of ongoing rice growing in Lwera wetland by Chinese and the ongoing Bugoma forest destruction by Hoima sugar limited. Weak or inadequate regulations have failed the youth activists to protect the environment and exercise their rights.
- **Underrepresentation in decision-making:** Uganda has one of the youngest population across the world with over 78% of the total population being below age of 35 years of age, however the youth continue to be neglected and left out when it comes to policy formulation and decision making in climate related policies. Participants indicated that to fully have youth participation in climate justice work, their views and ideas need to be integrated in climate related policies to enable them fully participation in climate activism work.
- **Limited legal awareness and Education:** It was clearly indicated that there is limited information and limited awareness about climate related laws in education institutions. Participants indicated insufficient education and awareness about climate change as this impacted understanding of legal framework and youth participation.
- **High costs involved due to court delays.** Youth indicated that a lot of costs have been incurred due to movements to courts. For example, some of the youth battling court cases are coming from outside Kampala and they are always bounced back by post ponding the hearings. The high costs issues have greatly affected youth activists who have to travel distances to courts. Arnold who is one of the X-prisoners of stop EACOP campaign narrated a story during the training.
- **Continuous Arrests:** The youth said that they continue to be intimidated and arrested due to opposing EACOP. The arrest of environmental and human rights defenders (EHRDs) who protest against EACOP continues on the rise with the 11 students currently in Luzira Prison. The students and EHRDs continue to grapple with the court cases that were instituted

RECOMMENDATIONS:

against them by the Ugandan state because of participating in peaceful protests. Youth want this stopped.

- **Restrictions on Freedom of Expression.** The shrinking civic space for youth activists against EACOP continues on the rise, and the Ugandan government through security agencies continues to suppress peaceful protests for youth activists against EACOP. This has limited the ability of young people to express their concerns and opinions about the EACOP project.

Implemented activities in July 2025.

On July 18, 2025 we participated in court session for the hearing of the 11 environmental defenders that were arrested in April 2025 as they attempted to deliver a letter to KCB bank calling the bank to withdraw its funding for the EACOP project. The activists were finally released on bail of 200.000UGX each. We thanks everyone who participated in this advocacy to have our colleagues released.



On 14, July 2025, we organised a youth meeting on just energy transition in Mukono. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the energy needs for youth and their role in leading discussions on a just energy transition in Uganda. Participants indicated that for the energy transition to happen, the government of Uganda has to first stop investments in fossil fuels and priorities clean renewable energy sources.



On July 24, 2025, YECA organised youth film screening to showcase impacts of oil and gas activities using oil spill documentary from Niger Delta in Nigeria. The objective of the film screening was to build resistance and resilience of youth activists against oil projects in Uganda. Twenty-seven youth climate activists participated in the film screening.



On 27 July 2025, we organised community meeting at Katooke with EACOP affected communities. The objective of the meeting was to understand the land grabbing issues that have increased due to oil and gas projects. Participants indicated the increased population that have resulted into land grabbing in the areas. They requested for more capacity building in land rights.



In media



**We value
your
feedback**

**Thank
you.**

About YECA

Youth for Environmental Justice and Climate Action is a youth-led non-profit organization in Uganda. The organization was formed to build a climate justice movement in Uganda with a focus on youth especially in educational institutions. We are currently working with oil-affected communities to build resistance against the expansion of oil and gas projects in Uganda. Our goal is to stop these oil projects and advocate for clean renewable energy sources. Through building a movement of youth climate justice leaders, these oil projects will be stopped in Uganda.

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