

Young people empowered to have a say in climate policy

In South Africa, young people are the most likely to be affected by accelerating climate change, which is why the youth want to have a say in the climate policies that will determine the planet's future.



Source: Supplied. @WWF/Staff Bosch

The Youth Climate Champions (YCC) programme has just concluded its second week-long bootcamp aimed at empowering young people to engage with critical climate policy processes that will determine the future of the planet.

The YCC bootcamp, which took place at Cradle Moon in the Cradle of Humankind in Gauteng was aimed at capacitating, supporting and facilitating collaboration between young people and youth organisations interested in climate change.

The YCC programme operates under the banner of the Climate Ambition to Accountability Project (CAAP), a partnership between WWF South Africa, Climate Action Network South Africa and the Institute for Economic Justice. The project is co-funded by the European Union and the Swedish International Development Cooperation.

For the second year running, the YCC hosted 20 young people at the climate bootcamp to help them learn how to take meaningful action. The programme included sessions on green careers; international, national and local climate policy; climate justice and equity; and learning about tools (such as social media) to influence climate policy. Among the speakers were members of the Presidential Climate Commission, Irfaan Mangera from Rise Mzansi and Alia Kajee from 350.org.

Ivanna Katz, youth engagement co-ordinator with WWF South Africa, said: “We were very excited to see how much interest there was in this year’s bootcamp. We received more than 800 applications which we had to narrow down to only 20 slots.

This meant the calibre of participants and level of engagement were extremely high. The enthusiasm and energy in the room was fantastic.”

Last year’s bootcamp also saw the development of a position paper on youth engagement in climate policy. The policy paper advocates for a more inclusive and equitable decision-making process that reflects the diverse needs and concerns of all South Africans, including youth who have a significant role in shaping the future of the planet. It also calls for the establishment of a Youth National Climate Council.

For those interested in youth climate activities, sign up to the Youth Climate Champions network and subscribe to the Climate Ambition to Accountability newsletter.

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