

NEWSLETTER



Youth Partnership for
Peace and Development

With funds from



Empowering Communities for Climate Justice

Leading Environmental Accountability

Across Western Rural District, communities are living with the daily consequences of environmental degradation, deforestation, mining, coastal erosion, pollution, and climate-related disasters. While laws exist to protect people and the environment, many communities have historically lacked the knowledge, confidence, and collective structures to demand accountability. With support from the Legal Empowerment Fund through The Fund for Global Human Rights, Youth Partnership for Peace and Development (YPPD) has been working alongside communities to change this reality.

Why This Intervention Matters for our Targeted Communities

Climate change and environmental harm do not affect everyone equally. Women, young people, and communities dependent on land and natural resources often bear the heaviest burdens, while having the least access to decision-making and justice mechanisms. In Sierra Leone, weak enforcement of environmental laws and limited legal awareness at the community level have allowed harmful practices to persist. This project was designed to close that gap.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

5

Communities Engaged
(Koya, Fogbo, Macdonald,
Bureh Town, Lakka)

50+

**Community Leaders
Trained as Advocates**

60%

**Female Participants
Across Project Engagements**



Our Strategies

What We Did

The Outcome

Training of Trainers

- Equipped youth and women leaders with knowledge of environmental laws, advocacy, and rights-based strategies.

- Created a network of local trainers to ensure knowledge continues to spread throughout the communities.

Community Environmental Justice Committees

- Established formal committees in each community to serve as focal points for monitoring and advocacy.

- Shifted from individual complaints to organized, collective action, strengthening confidence and long-term impact.

District & National Engagement

- Facilitated dialogues with the District Council and linked local realities to national climate commitments (NDCs).

- Elevated community voices from passive recipients to active contributors in local and national climate governance.

Building Knowledge & Capacity

Community knowledge of climate justice and environmental laws increased significantly across all five communities.



Impact at a Glance

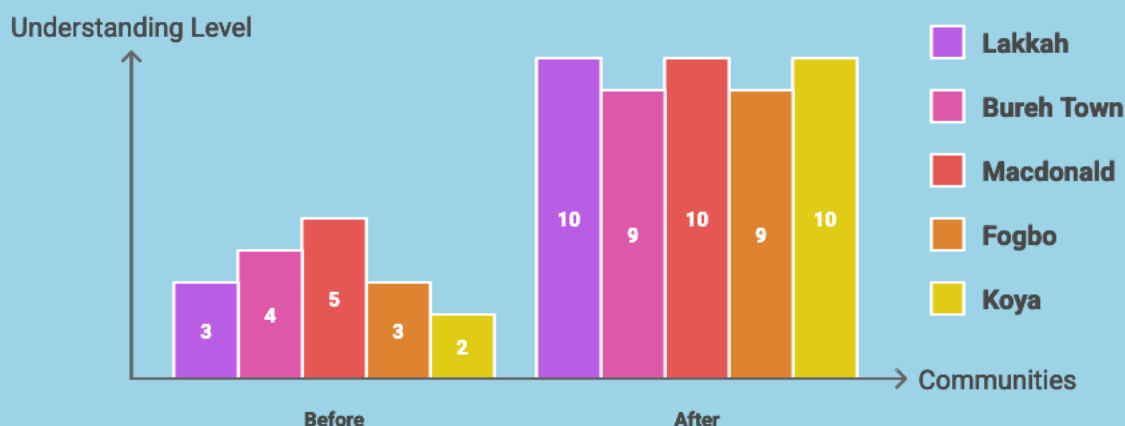
- Community knowledge of climate justice and environmental laws increased significantly, and now leading to actions at the local level.*
- Organized community structures and groups are now actively monitoring and responding to environmental harm.*
- Community priorities are influencing district-level planning and dialogues around climate and environmental justice.*
- Environmental abuses are being reported more confidently and systematically to inform central level decision making, evidence-based decision-making at policy levels, and advocacy for civil society.*
- YPPD's role as a bridge between communities and policy actors has been strengthened and now serves as trusted interlocutor to articulate the varying views and issues they are being recorded.*



YPPD's COMMUNITY AND CONTEXT-SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

Our Approach	Details	Outcome
Listening First: Baseline Engagements	Engaged 50 participants (60% women) via surveys and discussions to identify environmental challenges and legal awareness gaps.	Identified key issues: deforestation, mining, pollution. Confirmed low awareness of legal rights, shaping project strategy.
Building Knowledge and Leadership	A Training of Trainers workshop brought together youth leaders, women leaders, and community stakeholders from all five communities. Facilitated with support from the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, the training focused on climate justice principles, environmental protection laws, rights-based advocacy, and legal empowerment.	Participants moved beyond theory to practical skills; learning how to file complaints, document violations, engage the media, mobilize communities, and work with traditional leaders. By the end of the training, participants committed to serving as trainers and advocates within their own communities, ensuring the knowledge would continue to spread.
From Individuals to Collective Power	Established Community Environmental Justice Committees (CEJCs) in each community to sustain action and reduce risks.	Shifted from isolated complaints to organized, collective action. Strengthened community confidence and long-term impact.





Bar Chart showing evidence of existing and post-baseline community knowledge of the issues

Learning Along the Way

One of the strongest lessons from this work is that legal empowerment works best when it is collective, accessible, and rooted in trust. Fear of retaliation and economic dependency required a shift from confrontational approaches to dialogue, documentation, and collective advocacy. Using local languages, visual tools, and participatory methods proved far more effective than technical legal training alone.

Partnerships with government institutions, civil society organizations, and legal experts were most effective when roles were clear and advocacy was framed around shared goals such as safety, livelihoods, and sustainability.

YPPD extends sincere appreciation to the Legal Empowerment Fund, The Fund for Global Human Rights, community leaders, youth and women advocates, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, Climate Change Network, and all partners who made this work possible.



Looking Ahead

The journey toward climate and environmental justice is long, but these communities that we have jointly identified have taken important first steps. Moving forward, YPPD will continue to strengthen Community Environmental Justice Committees, deepen legal support, expand partnerships, and amplify community voices at district and national levels.

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Stay Connected

Together, we can continue building informed, organized, and resilient communities at the forefront of climate justice.



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