



# Youth Led Green Social Accountability

## *Lessons from the SAUTI-Youth Project*



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## Introduction

This document is a compilation of the different research, evaluations, learnings, discussions and engagements of the SAUTI project over the past 3 years. The document also includes a week of learning and sharing recently completed in Tanzania with a Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) conference. The prevailing issue of climate change is recognized as a profound intergenerational injustice, particularly affecting young people whose participation in climate action decision-making is often symbolic rather than substantive. With their present and future at stake, it is imperative that their concerns and solutions take centre stage in decision-making processes.

The SAUTI-Youth project, an initiative managed by World Vision Ireland, implemented by World Vision Tanzania and Youth Work Ireland Galway. The project focuses on youth involvement in Citizen Voice and Action (CVA), applying this model to climate action policies for the first time. The report delves into the achievements, challenges and insights gathered from this pioneering project offering valuable lessons for scalable and replicable approaches to youth involvement in climate policy development and implementation.

The CVA model, a foundational guide for citizen engagement, has been instrumental in enhancing youth participation, moving beyond awareness-raising to drive meaningful impact in the context of climate action. The document sheds light on how SAUTI successfully adopted the CVA model, sharing learnings and best practices at local, national, and international levels, providing an evidence base for future scalability and replicability across different contexts.

## Youth Participation and Climate Change

The prevailing issue of climate change is acknowledged as a profound intergenerational injustice, particularly affecting young people whose participation in climate action decision-making is often superficial and fragmented across various levels. Despite being the demographic most directly impacted by the consequences of climate change, their involvement seems can often be a symbolic gesture than a real effort. With their present and future at stake, it is imperative that their concerns and solutions take centre stage in decision-making processes. Research shows that young people exhibit higher levels of concern and anxiety about climate change and the planet's future (Renton, 2010).

Globally, the youth population aged 15 to 24 constitutes a staggering 1.2 billion, representing the largest cohort transitioning to adulthood. Over 85% of youth reside in developing countries where they account for up to 30% of the population and their numbers continue to rise (IIED, 2022). Despite contributing minimally to climate change, young people are poised to bear the brunt of its impacts due to factors such as poverty, exclusion from decision-making spaces, limited education and exposure, restricted access to resources, knowledge, and skills. According to Agenda 21 and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, youth are recognized as an important part of society.

In developing nations, engaging youth in climate action empowers them to safeguard communities and nature from climate change impacts. Conversely, developed countries focus on reshaping policies for sustainable growth. Tailoring approaches to each country's unique context, considering factors like education, employment, and culture, becomes imperative. Young people confront challenges such as economic exclusion, leading to heightened poverty and vulnerability to climate impacts. Existing systems exacerbate their marginalization from decision-making platforms globally, nationally, and locally, rooted in anti-youth structures and policies. This governance gap perpetuates a cycle of exclusion, hindering meaningful youth participation in public and economic spheres.

Despite these obstacles, young people actively participate in climate action through protests, activism, and initiatives like the Citizen Voice Action (CVA) method, challenging traditional norms and catalysing societal

shifts. Their political agency is evident in social movements, demanding accountability from decision-makers. Participatory approaches empower youth as decision-makers, ensuring their voices influence climate-related decisions. Education plays a transformative role in equipping young individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills for effective climate action. Recognizing climate change as a "slow pandemic" underscores the urgency for proactive measures and accountability, even in the absence of a crisis. The unique circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic have inspired a vision for a sustainable future, motivating youth to engage in citizen voice action and social accountability efforts.

**Insight:** Research indicates that for the youth impact to be strong and lasting, they need to work together and be involved as a group. Supporting, empowering, and capacitating youth as a collective is crucial to claiming spaces in climate policy and decision-making at all levels (IIED, 2022).

In Tanzania, youth empowerment is considered cross-cutting but faces challenges due to limited coordination and multisectoral planning. Governance processes are hampered by centralized power structures, reduced civic space, and emerging civil society. Limited government accountability, low-quality public services and institutional capacity issues persist. To address these challenges, political commitment, increased engagement from citizens, civil society, the media, and parliament are deemed essential.

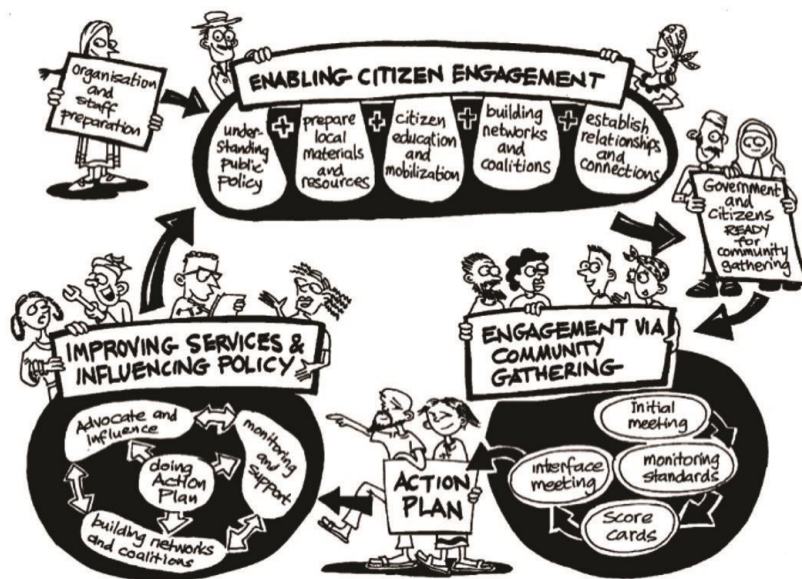
In Ireland, youth civic participation is relatively high, yet intersectional factors impact how young people experience empowerment. Challenges in delivering on climate action persist, with Ireland listed as one of the worst performers in the EU for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Despite this, youth involvement in climate change advocacy is growing as evidenced by initiatives like the Friday for Futures protests.

## Citizen, Voice & Action (CVA)

Accountability is a central principle for good governance. World Vision Ireland sees social accountability as a core component of achieving a more just and equitable world for the most vulnerable children. We look to empower communities – including women, young people – to hold their governments accountable for services promised. The CVA approach provides a structure for this engagement. CVA can be applied at local, sub-national, national and global levels to promote accountability. (WVInternational, 2022)

WV promotes the utilisation of social accountability approaches, primarily Citizen Voice and Action (CVA), to bring local communities alongside service providers for evidence-based constructive dialogue and collective action towards significantly improved service delivery and service quality, and to influence public policies. The CVA approach is designed to empower communities – including women, young people – to hold their governments accountable for services promised, including health care, waste management, education, child and social protection, access to clean water, climate action and other areas that impact the well-being of children and their families. Since 2005, CVA has been implemented in up to 50 countries and more than 600 programmes.

The CVA model involves three interconnected phases. The first phase focuses on raising awareness about citizenship, accountability, and human rights, aligning with the need to equip youth with knowledge for meaningful engagement. The second phase involves participatory community gatherings, emphasizing collaborative assessment and monitoring processes to increase the credibility of findings and ensure a comprehensive evaluation of public services. The third phase translates gathered data into policy influence, emphasizing local-level campaigns, partnerships, and collaboration for sustained advocacy efforts and system improvement. Finally, communities work with other stakeholders to influence decision-makers to improve services, using a simple set of advocacy tools. As government services improve, so does the well-being of children.



A foundational guide: Using CVA for climate action and environmental Management.

Over the years, World Vision Ireland has supported CVA actions across its projects including our flagship European Funded social accountability projects Sustainable actions uniting Tanzanian and Irish Youth (SAUTI-Youth) and Citizen Voices Addressing Violence Against Children (CVAVAC) implemented in Tanzania and Ireland, and Lesotho respectively. WV adapted the model for the first time for youth-only programming in climate change in both developed and developing contexts specifically for SAUTI-Youth

Overall, the CVA model provides a comprehensive method for promoting effective citizen engagement, particularly among young individuals, aligning with literature emphasizing the significance of informed youth engagement for active participation in climate change. It underscores the practical implications of the CVA model in enhancing youth engagement beyond awareness-raising, fostering a deeper understanding of how to drive meaningful impact in the context of climate action. The model provided a framework for engaging LGA and step-by-step guidance on creating community action. Below is a snapshot of how SAUTI successfully adopted the CVA model

## SAUTI-Youth Project

SAUTI-Youth (Sustainable Accountability Uniting Tanzanian and Irish Youth project) is a four year project funded by the European Commission; managed by World Vision Ireland and implemented by World Vision Tanzania and in Korogwe and Handeni Districts within the Tanga Region and Youth Work Ireland Galway (YWIG) in Galway City and Galway County of Ireland.

The project was youth led with an overall goal of meaningfully engaging young people in the governance process in particular in relation to climate adaptation and mitigation policies through empowering them to be strong voices in and for their communities and to monitor government commitments on climate action (Youth, 2022).

The CVA model served as the core technical model for SAUTI-Youth. Based on successful test cases from Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Mauritania where the model had guided health and education programming with adults and youth. SAUTI Youth worked with 44 youth groups in Ireland and Tanzania who received training in CVA and applied it to climate action in their communities.

The Project was the first of its kind to focus primarily on youth involvement in CVA and the first to apply the approach to climate action policies. At the core of the project is the learning of the youth and a key outcome is the new learnings and best practices developed are shared between groups and

disseminated at the local, national and international levels. The learnings and successes of the project provide an evidence base for future scalability of the approach to youth involvement in climate policy development and implementation as well as replicability across different contexts and thematic sectors. Here are some of the achievements of SAUTI Youth project based on the key features of the CVA model.

## 1. Enabling citizen engagement

More than 1000 young individuals in both Ireland and Tanzania have been empowered with skills enabling them to actively participate in governance processes while upholding the principles of social accountability, community mobilization and coordination with local government. World Vision's vital role is evident in equipping these youth with essential skills in a portfolio of training opportunities such as courses on climate change, legislative processes, the CVA model, advocacy for awareness campaigns and in the case of Tanzania, digital literacy.

The application of this knowledge gain in the youths' daily lives, as well as community action to address issues they care about shifted the community and government attitude and perception toward the potential of youth participation. Increase in self-confidence, sense of agency, and sense of contribution to their society was one of the most significant changes of SAUTI-Youth according to the IICRD evaluation report (IICRD, 2023).

Equipped with this knowledge, the youth attentively monitored their local government's efforts in addressing climate related concerns, including the allocation of budgets for sustainable climate actions Vision. Furthermore, they initiated conversations with local authorities, creating an atmosphere that fosters creative solutions at the community level.

As a result, in Tanzania **38** active youth CVA groups were formed with a total of **920 (442 males and 411 female)** including **68** youth with disabilities (**38 male and 30 female**) in 2022. The CVA groups then educated a total of **22,142** (10,775 male and 11,367 female) **beneficiaries** on climate change and environmental protection through the CVA model (World Vision Tanzania, 2023). In Ireland, 6 CVA groups were formed with a total of 30 (9 male and 21 female) and the groups reached a total of 397 beneficiaries in 2023.

In Ireland, the CVA model guided young people in advocating for climate action in a non-confrontational way which was deemed important to youth because climate action is often associated with young people sparking violent protests at the dismay of the government (IICRD, 2023) while in Tanzania, youth shared that the CVA process equipped them with skills to identify local problems, seek solutions, and plan projects to bring about change that is meaningful to their immediate community.



SAUTI youth with Tanzania Local Government Officials during a youth exchange visit in Tanzania



SAUTI youth with Local Government Official Galway County Council during a youth exchange visit in Ireland

SAUTI empowered youth with a sense of belonging and confidence in practicing their agency to create positive change. Being part of a group of people with a shared interest in climate action, which is commonly stereotyped as ‘nerdy,’ instilled a sense of validation and belonging. Furthermore, the representation of young girls and persons with disability in the project conveyed that, regardless of our differences, everyone desired the same changes (Gomes, 2023).

Although the political and democratic spaces for youth engagement in local government processes looked different in Tanzania and in Ireland, the impact is worth highlighting. In Tanzania, following the active participation in SAUTI-Youth including knowledge and experience in initiating policy dialogue and bringing tangible changes to their community fostered confidence and motivation for the youth to continue. This led to a 77 youth (47 M and 30 F) being elected to their village environment committees across Handeni and Korogwe. This positive and unexpected outcome signals potential for long term impact of the project.

*“Before the project, the youth were a neglected group and now we are respected in our communities and we are proud of that, thanks to SAUTI” Evans SAUTI Youth TOT*

*“The project has built my confidence; I am now able to stand and speak in public” James SAUTI youth Tanzania*

*“I want to thank SAUTI on behalf of PWDs for giving us a platform where we can contribute to the development of our country” Joseph SAUTI youth Tanzania*

Policy coherence in Tanzania translated into integration into the ongoing national tree planting initiative; participating in the National Youth Week celebrations outside of Handeni and Korogwe as well as COP27 as youth representatives of Tanzania; and adapting sustainable means of livelihood in agriculture—one of the country’s largest sectors of the economy—as adaptation measures against deforestation, flooding, and drought, etc.



**Photo-**Shania with Ian Fry - UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights and Climate Change)

Shania a 15 year old SAUTI Youth from Tanzania addressed world leaders at the COP 27 and held meeting with high stake leaders including

- Minister of Natural Resource and Climate Change and climate change (Malawi)
- Nduwa Mkaka, Ian Fry - Special Rapporteur for Human rights and climate change
- Mikiko Otaeni - Chair of Committee on rights of Children
- Tobias Mwesiga - Tanzania National Environment Council
- Irish Minister for State for Overseas Development Aid and Diaspora – Colm Brophy

Shania was also the first child under the age of 18 to ever present to the Joint Foreign Affairs Committee of the Oireachtas, Ireland's national parliament committee

In Ireland, SAUTI-Youth was coherent to the

broader policy dialogue in the country and included but was not limited to the CVA activities such as climate action policy research, community awareness and waste management initiatives, direct communication with LGA, participation in COP27 and the Mary Robinson Conference, and execution of Climate Assemblies in partnership with academic institutions and the Galway County Council. (IICRD, 2023)

According to the SAUTI project evaluation respondents including stakeholders, youth and government officials agreed that the project directly addressed the gaps to meaningful participation of youth in governance, accountability, and climate actions. The contributions of SAUTI-Youth ranged widely across systems, community, and individual levels, from infusion of financial resources and human capital to empowerment of communities and youth increase in knowledge about climate action and skills to advocate for change (IICRD, 2023).

## 2. Engagement via community gathering.

The SAUTI youth have been involved in community gatherings in line with the CVA model where they have linked into participatory processes that focus on assessing the quality of public services and identifying ways to improve their delivery. Through the SAUTI project youth were enabled to advocate for their communities and as a result communities are gathering, communities have developed joint community government action plans, community scorecard meetings, interface scorecard meetings and interface meetings. In both Ireland and Tanzania, youth and children both in and out of schools have been trained on issues of the environment, children rights, CVA and climate change and as a result school environment committees have been formed and trained in schools to promote environmental and climate awareness among children.

*“As you can see our school is looking so green as a result of environmental conservation”* Head boy Kwedizinga Secondary school

*“We engage the students in different sports and after the sports they discuss climate issues”* SAUTI TOT Tanzania

*“In the past you could not plant a tree and it grows because animals would eat the seedling but now that animals are staying in designated areas trees are starting to grow”* Student environmental club Kwedizinga Secondary school

*“We have community gatherings where we tell members of the community the importance of taking part in development projects, we have managed to involve government officials who let us use their platforms to address*



*our issues, this has helped us a lot to gain public trust, we have managed to start tree planting campaigns, encouraging environmental conservation and established equal participation in decision making of matters of urgency such as budget discussions. We thank SAUTI CVA members who have tirelessly been on the front education community members on the climate issues and more” Yohana Ernest Chairman AMKA TWENDE Group (SAUTI youth group) (World Vision Tanzania, 2023)*

In Ireland, public participation and youth involvement is considered high with Ireland ranked 15th out of 183 countries in youth civic participation<sup>1</sup>. However, differences such as race, class, gender, culture, language, immigration status and sexuality can affect how young people experience empowerment. Youth input, captured as part of this programmes design process, revealed that whilst youth feel that they have increasing access to decision makers, they are keen to see improvements in how their voices are received i.e. that they are taken seriously and see actions taking place as a result of any meetings.

**Project level participation:** The unique needs and demands of youth in Tanzania and Ireland contribute to the distinct project outcomes. In Galway, youth typically being secondary school or college students with limited time while Tanzanian youth mainly engaged in subsistence agriculture and thus discovering alternative means of livelihood through green growth IGA instilled among youth a sense of economic empowerment (Gomes, 2023). The project served as a vehicle for Tanzanian youth to enhance their lives and incomes, creating a distinct dynamic from the conflicting priorities faced by youth in Galway.

The youth survey results suggested that SAUTI-Youth may have paved an entry point doing more than simply ‘include and stir.’ Majority of youth agreed that SAUTI-Youth helped them gain ‘a greater understanding of the impact of climate change on their community as well as marginalized communities.’ While interviews transpired limited mention of structurally vulnerable populations, participants seem to have grown aware of the differential effects of climate change on marginalized children and families. Exploring this connection which is clear to young people themselves, may offer WV a unique opportunity to facilitate meaningful inclusion of minorities. (IICRD, 2023)

**Addressing gender dynamics;** especially in Tanzania where cultural norms, initially hindering the engagement of female youth due to household expectations are being actively countered. The concerted efforts to empower young women align with the literature review's focus on fostering children's agency and advocating for gender equality in youth involvement. outlined mitigation strategies, emphasizing the direct involvement of women in environmental groups. The strategy ensures equal representation, empowering women and girls to actively participate.

*“Female youth in our communities are always looked at as child bearers and home keepers but with SAUTI we have been empowered beyond this” Nemhinha Julius women representative SAUTI Tanzania*

SAUTI's participatory approach created an inclusive environment for diverse voices, including marginalized groups such as women, people with disabilities and individuals with albinism. Additionally, recognition of existing skills, education, and experience favoured youth in leadership roles, particularly those proficient in English or mobilization. However, this facilitator also acted as a barrier, limiting engagement for youth lacking specific skillsets or educational backgrounds.

- 23 out of 38 SAUTI youth groups have registered as Income Generating Groups
- 4 Youth groups have acquired youth, women and disability loans from the government of Tanzania
- 8 out of 10 new action plans have been created by communities
- Reported reduction in fire bush burning, wood cutting, mono crop farming and human activities along water resources as a way to promote climate smart agriculture

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1 <https://www.youth.ie/articles/young-people-in-ireland-and-the-global-youth-development-index/>

In Ireland, the SAUTI-Youth through their advocacy have led to;

- The first local Climate youth assemblies in Galway
- Youth representation at COP27
- National mandate to create three climate action positions in all LGA (climate action coordinator, climate action officer and community climate action officer) which may set an environment ripe for leveraging political and democratic spaces for youth engagement.

*'There was a big disconnect between national and local levels when it came to the National Climate Action and youth participation. At the national level, we had just one person from Galway, which was not representative at all. So, we created the Galway Climate Action Assemblies.'* -YWIG

*'There was no participation of young people in decision-making processes. This included no representation of young people in the Development Committees of the Local Government structures. In regard to climate change, there were issues of environmental degradation; water resource shortages and unfriendly use of the natural resources.'* - Korogwe LGA

One of the greatest achievements of SAUTI-Youth was building quality relationships between youth populations and LGA. The youth agreed during the evaluation that the open relationship and the manner of interaction between LGA and the public in Tanzania enabled SAUTI-Youth groups to pursue a focused climate action agenda. In contrast, youth participants in Ireland found their LGA interested in hearing their voice, but unwilling to commit to concrete action, despite the national government prioritizing climate action in various global fora.

*"The government have put trust in us and have put us on environment committees in our communities to advocate on climate issues"* Richard SAUTI youth

*Michelle" In Galway we had youth groups go out and walk around the city and we had a document about the policies that were promised by the government for example we had a policy that said there would be more bike racks put in a certain location and we went out to that location and checked but we found that the bike racks had not been implemented so the youth group took photos and discussed it and brought it back to the community hall and we were able to go back to the community and look at things in a different light and were able to see things through the eyes of the policy maker."* Michelle SAUTI youth Focal Point Galway

*"I am proud of SAUTI for spreading more education and awareness and through some of the events they have brought young people together so they have a network they know that there are more people like them who care"* Allana O'Brien SAUTI youth Focal Point Galway.

### 3. Improving services and influencing policy

#### Addressing institutional gaps

SAUTI-Youth demonstrated an admirable response to a significant institutional gap in Ireland and Tanzania, effectively addressing the decline of youth trust in government and the inadequate attention to climate change issues. The identified problems encompassed a fundamental lack of faith and trust in Local Government Authorities (LGA) among youth, coupled with inadequate consultation on decisions affecting them. Additionally, the enduring unresponsiveness to climate change and environmentally harmful practices further intensified the challenges faced by local communities, particularly in rural Tanzania. Despite existing national policies and platforms for youth participation and climate action in both countries, a noticeable disparity between stated policies and actual implementation was evident. These findings emphasize the crucial need for initiatives like SAUTI-Youth to bridge the gap between policy intentions and

on-the-ground realities, promoting meaningful youth engagement and proactive climate change mitigation efforts (IICRD, 2023).

In Tanzania, the SAUTI project had a greater impact compared to Ireland, this was attributed to Tanzania's extensive experience and technical expertise, particularly in collaborating with overseas NGOs like World Vision. In Tanzania, collaboration between local governments and NGOs is common with the latter providing funding for various activities. This aligns with development aid principles emphasizing NGO and local government cooperation. In contrast, Ireland, as a more economically developed country, historically relies on direct government funding for development initiatives. The financial autonomy of the Irish government may lead to a perception that internal projects can be sufficiently supported without significant collaboration with NGOs. This underscores the potential influence of development assistance on funding patterns and joint efforts, as seen in Tanzania's strong collaboration with overseas NGOs compared to Ireland's historical self-reliance.

### Learning from bilateral exchanges between Ireland and Tanzania

The youth valued the rich learning from bilateral in-person and remote exchanges between youth in Ireland and youth in Tanzania. It exposed young people to not only each other's project reality, but life in general, which is how relationships and partnerships develop. The majority of youth during the evaluation agreed that the relationship formed among the Irish and Tanzanian youth through SAUTI-Youth was a good example of Africa and Europe working together.



The learning visit proved enriching particularly for the Irish youth, who witnessed the power of the CVA model when implemented faithfully. Seeing the tangible consequences of climate change caused mostly by the Global North on the populations in the Global South also helped them understand the complexity of international development.

*“The effects of climate change between the global north and south is not something that the young people in the global North really understand and even seeing the kind of employment young people have and the way young people engage in climate action is really interesting. It was very interesting to see that a lot of the activities in*

Tanzania are based on the land, on the ground! like today I got to see a chicken and being able to talk to the people who keep the chickens is really important and seeing James's work as a bee keeper and tasting his honey is a really unique experience and I am really grateful we got the opportunity" Michelle Youth Focal Person SAUTI-Youth Galway

"Before the exchange visit to Ireland, I thought that there were not much effects of climate change in Europe like we have in Tanzania but then I realised that there were many climate change effects in Europe like the raise in sea level so this fight is not only for us in Tanzania or Africa but it's a world fight against climate change". James SAUTI Youth Tanzania

### **Enhanced knowledge in climate mitigation and government policies and processes**

In both Ireland and Tanzania, youth claimed gaining knowledge on climate change and governance, as well as the confidence to initiate a climate action in their community as a result of SAUTI-Youth. LGA and project administrators, too, valued SAUTI-Youth's contribution to the increased knowledge among youth on a plethora of issues, including but not limited to policymaking, government processes, effects of climate change, community mobilization, and awareness-raising campaigns. They shared observing the learning leading to confidence and sense of achievement among youth participants.

"We have seen the youth participate in tree planting, horticulture activities, sanitation and hygiene activities and participating in meetings on how communities should be engaged in issues of climate change." Napoleon, District Natural Resources officer for Handeni District Council Tanzania

The SAUTI youth implemented the actions plans created during the community gatherings and here the youth together with the community members, citizens and stakeholders act to influence policy at both local and higher levels. As a result of implementing the action plans;

- More than 30,000 trees have been planted by SAUTI youth during the lifetime of the project ,of these 23,617 trees supported by Tanzania Forest Service Agency (TFS) and 8000 of the trees were fruit trees including oranges, papaya
- 4 tree nurseries established in FY 2023 in Ngomeni, Mnyuzi, Kwazimdawa and Mtomchafu with an expectation of producing 50,000 trees
- 18 Saving for Transformation (S4Ts) groups for youth have been formed and trained
- The government of Tanzania, through the community leaders at the village level, have been certified Youth Groups with pieces of land to practice climate smart activities like tree planting, vegetable growing and bee keeping
- 85% of youth engaged in the project believe that they have a role in shaping government policy and actions
- 5 climate policies implemented by SAUTI-Youth alongside the Tanzanian government as a result of SAUTI project including:
  - CIVIC PARTICPATION
  - PROTECTION OF WATER SOURCES
  - PROTECTION OF FORESTS, REFORESTATION
  - CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE
  - YOUTH AWARENESS RAISING ON CLIMATE ISSUES LAWS AND LEGISLATION

### **Challenges**

As with any activity, the CVA model was not absent of challenges. The CVA model provided a great framework, but required substantial contextualization to be effective, particularly in Ireland where government operations via-a-vis the public, let alone youth, did not lend itself to the open relationship assumed by the model (IICRD, 2023).

## Key Achievements

### Mass Youth inclusion in Local Government in Tanzania

SAUTI-Youth project has shown how youth proved that when youth are armed with the right tools they can be great advocates and active participants. One of the greatest achievements of the project was the mass inclusion of SAUTI youth CVA focal points in the local government structures across the 20 targeted villages in Handeni and Korogwe.

The youth have been highly empowered which is reflected by the election of over 77 youth including (47M and 30F) have been elected to village management committees which report to district level authorities. Youth representation on different committees was an agreed policy standard with Tanzanian local government which existed as a result of the CVA process. Youth have been highly active in holding the government accountable for improved service delivery at the community level. The youth in some villages have ensured that the village leaders have been providing quarterly reports for income and expenditure. The village executive officer's and the committee of planning and development are responsible to present reports for Income (revenue, tax collection) and expenditure to show how revenues and tax collected have been used for development of the communities. This was not happening in most of the villages, but currently with the presence of the youth in village committees the Village Executive Officers are now providing the reports.

"Increased knowledge and questioning has made government leaders and professionals to be more responsible because if one is asked a question then they will share questions for help with colleagues and work together more" District Youth Officer for Korogwe District commented

*"The youth are a great army if used well, we can do a lot"* Peter Manongi SAUTI TOT Korogwe District

"The CVA model was a very nice model that empowers the youth in the whole personal mindset change. The changes were very clear, SAUTI youth participation in the village meetings has led to change in the meeting agendas within the 8 villages in Handeni. Environment has been one of the permanent agendas for the meetings. We have seen the youth confidence in public speaking, they are now capable of speaking in any kind of audience. The government has also seen that these youth groups are very organised, and the government has decided to support them by giving them interest free loans to undertake their entrepreneurial activities and increase their income. Because of SAUTI, the government has trusted the youth because they have been doing SAUTI work voluntarily with no pay. I am very proud to see the mindset change of the youth because I know if you change how somebody thinks of an issue, the changes will stay forever in the community. The youth have seen, they have understood, and they are ready to continue making the changes in their lives in regard to climate change and I am so proud of this." Napoleon Mlowe District Natural Resources officer for Handeni District Council Tanzania

The youth have taken on the new found empowerment and are using it to make positive change in their communities. They are aspiring for a greater future in leading their communities as expressed below by the youth

*"I have been asked with communities and my fellow youth to compete for the position of Village chairman for the coming election in 2024. They are conversing every time, I feel myself that I can compete and am waiting for that"* Sakina SAUTI Youth Tanzania

*"we now have laws that favour us as youth for example climate committees should have 50% of members as youth and this is a really good advantage for us to advocate for the environment"*, James SAUTI Youth Tanzania

*'Among us here, most of the youth are now leaders in their communities and we are very proud'* SAUTI youth Tanzania

*“Our district council has 29 wards among these Myuzi and Ugweno wards where SAUTI is implemented are leading on environmental conservation” Micheal Mhina Ward councillor Ugweno*

*“It has helped us bring together government, religious leaders and youth on one round table” Christina Fundi SAUTI focal Point, Tanzania*

*“The project has added value to the youth here as many of us are involved on committees in our communities including having leadership positions” SAUTI CVA focal point Tanzania*

As shown in the evaluation findings the youth agreed building a good and open relationship between local government authorities and the public in Tanzania enabled SAUTI-Youth groups to pursue a focused climate action agenda. This relationship was seen in the support that the SAUTI youth were getting at all levels of the local government structures the support. Having this local government support was crucial to the implementation and success of the project with 46% (IICRD, 2023) of interviewed youth in Tanzania reporting that they perceived their local government authorities to be deeply interested and ready to commit to a climate action. Local government authorities have also shown that they believe in youth participation and thus the drive for youth participation.

*“We have not inherited this world from our fathers rather we have borrowed it from our children” “This is the future of our country, the young generation” Minister Kindamba Head of Tanga Region*

*“If the future is now, I believe it’s the youth that are responsible for this to happen” Napoleon Mlowe Natural Resource Officer Handeni District*

*“We will keep an eye on the youth so that they use the acquired knowledge to train other villages. It’s convenient to use the youth in finding solutions to the effects of climate change because they are capable of reaching many people’ Saiti Zelothe, Habdeni District Commissioner*

*“SAUTI project is a clear example of how youth can make a significant impact at local level on issues of international importance. We want the SAUTI project to leave a lasting legacy of social accountability and climate change” Mildred Nzau Youth Expert EU/AU Youth hub*



SAUTI youth at CVA learning conference in Korogwe October 2023

## Policy influences

SAUTI-Youth equipped the youth with a systematic way to engage with local Government Authorities in Tanzania which resulted in young people pioneering community action, such as the implementation of proposed by-laws which were previously not being implemented. This has led to tangible results including 5 climate policies agreed and now being implemented in Handeni and Korogwe districts and several by-laws have been put in place.

For example in Korogwe, the District Commissioner collaborated with communities and ward leadership to revise regulations on forest harvesting, with involvement of young people not only engaged the community's management of its forestry, but also and arguably more importantly set an example of healthy youth participation for the future (IICRD, 2023) as shown below;

Community leaders from the village and district levels have also worked closely with the SAUTI youth to ensure the natural forests, reserved forest and unreserved forests are protected from unauthorized tree cutting. Youth Focal points have worked with AMANI nature reserve to ensure that the improper cutting of trees is prevented and also to ensure water sources are protected by participating in cleaning and planting trees alongside them. SAUTI Youth Focal points have also engaged in widespread tree planting campaigns with more than 24,000 trees been planted at community level and in other to institutions like schools and SAUTI youth group plots.

The youth have continually engaged local leaders and district level leaders on the protection of the reserved natural forests in their communities, especially for the youth groups in Mnyuzi, Ngomeni, Kwamzindawa and Shambakapori who are monitoring the AMANI natural reserve forest. The youth has questioned the leaders on the processes of tree harvesting procedures which is granted at the district level. They questioned the leaders at the Department of Natural Resource and Environmental Protection on the monitoring mechanisms which are in place for the allotment of permits to harvest trees in line with environmental conservation best practices.

According to the National Environment policy in Tanzania, the tree harvesting permit is provided at the district level by the District Commission. Once granted, there had been reports of misuse of the tree-harvesting permits, for example a person with a permit for harvesting 5 trees would harvest more than the permitted amount.

As a result of SAUTI-Youth project, the government has revised the processes of providing the permit. The revised regulation process now states that before a person goes to request a permit from the District Commissioner, he/she should have discussed with the Village Environmental Committee and visited the proposed harvesting site alongside representatives of the committee have to inspect the trees that the person wishes to harvest. The environmental committee will assess the suitability of the trees and the surrounding landscape for harvesting and will agree the number of trees which should be harvested with the permit seeker, they must then monitor that the amount of trees which are harvested is as per the number permitted in the permit.

*"It was new and challenging to us because the youth can escalate the issues to higher authorities with technologies"*  
Napolean Mlowe, Handeni District Natural Resource Management Officer

*"So many people were arrested at this time for illegal tree cutting but now we no longer have those cases"* Richard SAUTI youth

James SAUTI youth Tanzania *"in many nations in Africa we have very, very good laws at the national level but those laws are hard to be implemented and there is no one to say; "Where is this law?" and so by us as youth, having been empowered by education on climate change, we have played a vital role in making those laws and by-laws be*

implemented in our area. So many laws about environmental conservation were properly handled and were implemented during the SAUTI project”.

“We need to capacitate youth with skills and techniques to curb climate change to ensure the environment continues to benefit the current and future generations” Professor Dosantos Silayo



### Galway Youth Climate Assemblies

With the introduction of Ireland’s Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act (2021) Ireland is now on a legally binding path to net-Zero emissions no later than 2050, and to a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030. The act requires all local authorities to prepare a Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP) which runs for 5 years to meet national emission reductions targets and develop resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Through the four years of continuous community advocacy and youth mobilisation, Youth Work Ireland Galway and SAUTI-Youth groups were well-recognised locally for their work on youth mobilisation in Galway City and County. As a result of their learning through the project, YWIG developed the concept of youth-led local climate conferences that would give local youth the opportunity to have their voices heard and valued. The aim of the Youth Climate Assemblies is to provide a space for Galway Secondary schools and youth organisations to gather to discuss climate action and to provide young people with the opportunity to inform local government policies.

SAUTI Youth collaborated with YWIG, Galway National Park City, National University of Ireland Galway, Atlantic Technological University and Galway Education Centre to host the first Youth Climate Assembly in Galway City. 56 youth attended the first assembly in Galway City in November 2022 with the event being deemed a big success in creating a community network to support youth engagement in climate action.



Building on the success of this event, SAUTI-Youth partnered with Galway County Council to host the Galway County Youth Climate Assembly on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 in Athenry with over 57 students from 13 secondary schools attending. Youth were given the opportunity to engage directly with the county Climate Action Coordinator, the Biodiversity Officer, the Environmental Awareness Officer and other council officials. Youth were offered a deeper understanding of the County Councils work which was extremely important, as youth reported feeling more connected to the local authority and empowered by being able to directly contribute to policy.

Cathaoirleach (Chairperson) of Galway County Council, Cllr Michael “Mogie” Maher, noted that *“the decisions, made now at national and local levels, are going to greatly impact the future of young people. It is so important, therefore, that their ideas and suggestions are taken into consideration when climate strategies are developed and implemented.”*

In November 2023 [Galway County Council’s Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029](#) was circulated for public consultation; with SAUTI-Youth referenced in the report as a case study for youth engagement (pg. 37) *“the feedback from the event was gathered into a report and their ideas were incorporated into this plan.”* The plan also directly recognise the support of SAUTI *“In Galway, our ability to engage with young people has been significantly enhanced through the work of SAUTI-Youth (Sustainable Accountability Uniting Tanzanian and Irish Youth)”*.



Youth attending a Youth Climate Assembly in Galway

## What we learned

This section serves as a comprehensive synthesis, drawing from a collection of valuable lessons derived from workshops, conferences, research reports and the final evaluation of the SAUTI youth project.

**Increased Youth and Community Awareness:** In both Tanzania and Ireland, young people working through World Vision Tanzania and Youth Work Ireland Galway respectively noted an increased awareness of their local and national climate-related public policies. This follows significant orientation and education shared with them as part of the ‘Enabling Citizen Engagement’ phase of the CVA process. As a consequence, young people have gone further to also increase awareness to other people within their communities

**Youth Investing in Sustainable Businesses:** In Tanzania, the youth are actively engaging with the local government by demanding accountability for climate actions whilst also investing in sustainable businesses. Due to a lack of local job opportunities, many young people migrate into the cities to seek work. To provide an alternative, environmentally friendly income-generating activities have been initiated.

Through support from local government, several youth groups have been able to access financing to start sustainable businesses such as setting up tree nurseries and bee-keeping enterprises.

**Youth Inclusion in Decision-Making:** The close relationship that World Vision Tanzania has fostered with government authorities in Tanga District has supported substantial early accomplishments. For instance, noting that local level environmental committees are legally required to include youth in their composition, youth involved in the project have successfully demanded for their inclusion within the Village Environment Committees. SAUTI-Youth group members also joined the Tanzania National Environmental Council in marking the National Tree Planting Day in Tanzania, leading to the planting of over 10,000 trees in Handeni and Korogwe Districts, Tanzania. In Galway, young people have been involved in consultations on the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 providing their views and opinions towards the management of their city.

**Invest in Building Trust with Local Government:** Building trust with local government, administrators and front-line service providers is absolutely crucial in aiding meaningful youth participation in local climate governance. A relationship built on trust can aid access to information, transparency and promote youth relationship between World Vision Tanzania and the Tanga District administrators has made it possible for young people to engage across multiple pathways such as access to financing for investment in sustainable businesses, invitation to on-going public policy development processes spearheaded by the National Environmental Management Council, and inclusion on various village, environment and development committees. In Galway, the Local Government has been less responsive, often seeing the project as an add-on to its already existing range of relationships and engagements. In this instance, more initiative should be directed towards explaining what youth-led CVA is – especially to government officials who may not be familiar with the approach.

**Limits of Virtual Engagement:** The SAUTI-Youth project commenced at the height of the COVID-19 restrictions to face-to-face gathering in both Ireland and Tanzania. Whilst some of these restrictions were lifted in Tanzania and project activities were able to proceed, the restrictions in Ireland (which are more stringent) continued throughout the first year-and well into the second year of the project. Although various interventions such as the web-based self-paced CVA training were adapted and were undertaken virtually, subsequent activities witnessed decreased youth enthusiasm.

**Exploit the Use of Creative Art:** Art provides a powerful and provocative tool to communicate at scale. In Ireland, YWIG reached greater audiences by organizing art and climate activism tours. In Tanzania, members of various youth groups exploit various opportunities and use art to send messages to the wider public. These groups have been invited to various platforms to perform drama or music, which they use to advocate for various climate actions.

**At the individual level, secondary objectives (IGA, climate action) superseded the primary objective for the core beneficiaries, and that is okay.** Governance, accountability, and institutional strengthening comprised the project's primary objective, but the LGA and youth perceived SAUTI-Youth as a climate action initiative. Climate change and IGA served as appealing entry points that not only successfully engaged young people throughout the lifetime of the project but was also highly pertinent to their daily lives. **Leveraging such a powerful secondary objective to achieve the primary objective qualifies as a just strategy.**

**Exchange trips may be more than a one-time, costly exercise, but a significant value-add.** Although costly and logistically complex, bilateral exchange was one of the most effective means of achieving AU-EU partnership, far beyond the YE support and the digital app. Such a high-cost trip—or a well-facilitated remote congregation—may be what is required for meaningful partnerships.

**'Youth' does not automatically equate to 'digital' and vice-versa.** In designing a project, determine the parameters and requirements strategically, in linkage with broader policy agenda, social goal, etc. If a digital

component should be required, define the specific gap it is filling and mandate a maintenance plan for sustainability or a handover or exit plan for clear expiration.

## Recommendations

### Provide Greater Opportunities for Youth Engagement:

**Enhance Youth Engagement Opportunities:** It is crucial to consistently empower young people by providing them with the necessary skills, tools, and platforms for active participation in governance processes. Inclusion in decision-making communicates the value placed on their opinions and voices across all levels of governance. To achieve this, local and national governments should create more avenues for meaningful youth engagement, such as involving them in committees, extending invitations to relevant workshops, and allowing input into policies and legislations.

**Integrated Approach to Youth Empowerment:** Whilst increasing youth civic competencies and participation in local climate governance is in itself a noble goal, several young people from Tanga District, Tanzania observed that a more intentionally integrated approach that merges civic and economic empowerment would have been more contextually appropriate in Tanzania – where economic challenges such as high unemployment rates often push young people to turn to unsustainable practices such as charcoal burning. It is in this spirit, that World Vision Tanzania and the local administrators have linked youth groups to access loans provided by the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) of which 10 percent targets women, youth and people with disabilities. This complementarity increased youth motivation to pursue climate actions in a manner that builds on civic responsibility and economic empowerment.

“Kwa Pamoja Tunaweza” Youth group is the best union of change-makers. They have been planting trees and selling them to add to their income, and the money they have been receiving has been used to help their members in solving various issues”.

**Influence National-level Policy Processes:** In addition to the promising local level youth engagements in influencing climate actions in Galway, Handeni and Korogwe, significant attention should be given to providing opportunities for youth to influence national level policy making and implementation processes. Youth can deploy evidence of systemic policy gaps and failures gathered through local CVA processes to influence national policy and decision-making processes. Such engagement platforms can also contribute to the development of context-specific and evidence-based policies.

### Systemic level

**Sustain and Expand SAUTI-Youth Impact:** Initiatives like SAUTI-Youth are important in creating systemic changes, such as youth participation, local governance, and climate action. Donors should continue to fund projects for systems strengthening, and organizations like WV, WVT, and YWIG should seek resources and capacity to build on the pathway paved by SAUTI-Youth.

- Even if SAUTI-Youth as a project may not continue, capitalize on the human capacity cultivated through SAUTI-Youth and facilitate their integration into national and local initiatives (e.g., the ongoing tree planting initiative, government consultations, etc.).
- Promote practice and institutionalization of youth participation in public processes, such as changes in the local governance structures (e.g., 25 percent of the committee must be youth) and periodic public consultations on new regulations, city plans, etc.

### Community level

**Be more meaningful in servicing target populations.** In the case of SAUTI-Youth, one of the subpopulations of participants consisted of farmers, for whom the impacts of climate change were imminent and alternative livelihoods through IGA proved highly relevant and impactful. A similarly customized approach for the other target sub-populations of female youth and individuals with disabilities that may facilitate their 'just transition' to climate change adaptation may be worthwhile.

Continue to build on the approach used by SAUTI-Youth, using participatory, youth led approaches and creation of safe spaces, to build youth capabilities in climate and in working with government, to drive forward youth engagement in climate action.

Build the capacity of the wider community and local government on the importance of youth engagement in climate action and youth voice. This can help build support and remove restrictive social norms, especially important for female youth in Tanzania.

In Tanzania build climate resilience into any weather dependant income generating activities as well as consider including non-weather dependant activities to enhance climate resilience. In Ireland, discuss and agree appropriate timings for youth and local government meetings outside of school hours, to further support youth engagement.

Consider the external access difficulties facing people with disabilities e.g., limited transport options to meetings. Factor in additional support to help remove these barriers to enhance their participation in the project.

Source financial resources for a more long-term programme to further build youth buy in and sustainable long-term relationships and platforms working with government.

Develop guidance documents to support scale up across World Vision and supporting partners on CVA for youth and climate action. Include more interactive learning activities e.g., games and role plays, and ensure language is youth-friendly if engaging younger users (12 years or below).

Youth organizations must exhibit resilience with strong leadership, responding to disruptive changes while incentivizing long-term capability building for both young individuals and their institutions. Beyond being participants, youth should serve as organizers, policymakers, researchers, climate champions, writers, managers, and coordinators, engaging at local, national, and global levels for effective climate response policies (IIED, 2022).

### **From youth themselves**

- *'Policies related to youth should be written in a simplified language so we can understand and engage.'*
- *'Climate lessons should be incorporated into our education system as part of the school curriculum. Otherwise, the knowledge disappears with the ending of SAUTI.'*
- *'Prioritize girls in these projects and empower them with the skills needed for active participation.'*
- *'Explore alternative approaches for implementing Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA)'*
- *'Incorporate environmental considerations into all projects, recognizing it as a pervasive issue.'*
- *'Involve governments, particularly the Irish government, across all project stages—initiation, implementation, monitoring.'*
- *Ensure that project budgets allow for regular youth meetings.*
- *'Connect economic integration with advocacy projects to sustain youth interest as they earn a living'*

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