



CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND MIGRATION ASSISTANCE(CEMA)

Project Implementation Report

May 2024 – May 2025



Empowering Rwenzori Youth for Peace and Climate Action

PROJECT AREA

Rwenzori Region (Bundibugyo, Kasese, Ntoroko, and Fort Portal City)

TARGET GROUP

Refugee and host community youth (aged 18–30), with 50% female

FUNDING PARTNER(S): ICGLR
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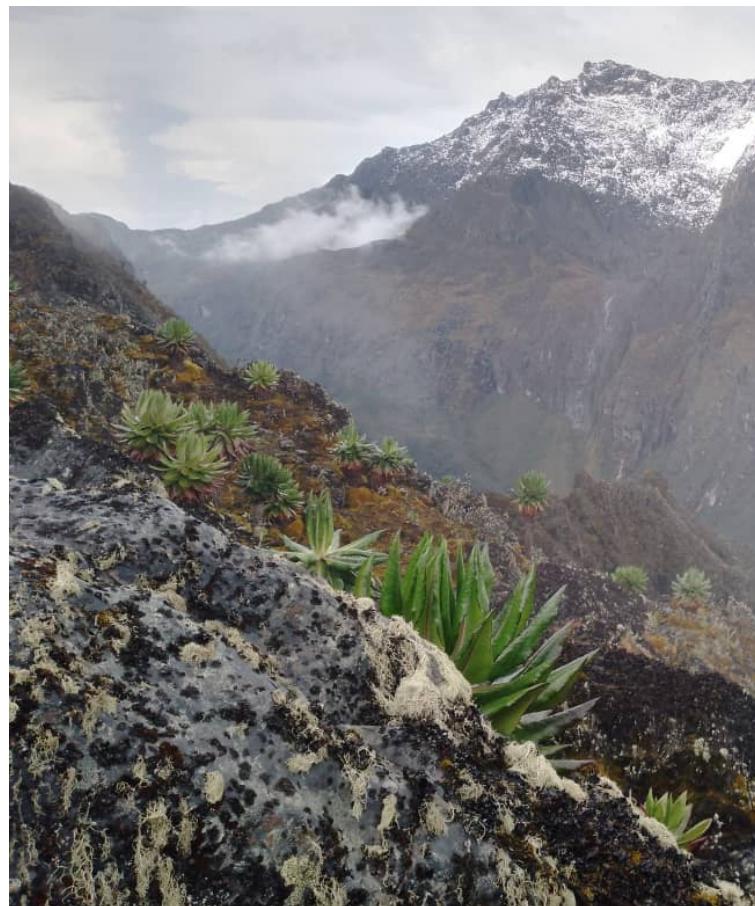
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1. Project Background

The Rwenzori region of Western Uganda is increasingly vulnerable to climate-induced disasters such as flash floods, mudslides, prolonged droughts, and ecosystem degradation. These environmental challenges have intensified due to deforestation, unsustainable agricultural practices, and climate variability, putting pressure on local livelihoods and natural resources. The impacts are especially severe for rural and marginalized communities, including youth and women, who often lack access to climate education, adaptive tools, or representation in environmental governance.



Flood-damaged homes and displacement – In the Kasese district of the Rwenzori region, communities have been devastated by flash floods, sweeping away houses and livelihoods—a direct consequence of climate-induced instability



Shrinking glaciers and water insecurity – With Rwenzori's iconic glaciers receding by nearly 90% in the last century, communities now face erratic water flows—another layer of environmental stress

Despite being the largest demographic group, young people in the Rwenzori region remain underrepresented in climate discourse and excluded from decision-making processes. This lack of inclusion has resulted in limited awareness and civic participation in environmental protection efforts. Moreover, the spread of misinformation and false climate narratives—fueled by limited access to credible information—has undermined public understanding and delayed urgent action on climate risks.

To address these challenges, the *Empowering Rwenzori Youth for Peace and Climate Action* project was initiated, with a strong emphasis on youth-led civic engagement. One of

its flagship components—Civic Monitoring and Storytelling—was designed to build youth capacity in identifying, documenting, and communicating local environmental issues through digital media, community forums, and grassroots advocacy.

This component focused on equipping young people with tools and training in digital storytelling, climate fact-checking, and environmental monitoring, enabling them to become active agents of change. It also

2. Objectives of the Component

The Civic Monitoring and Storytelling component of the *Empowering Rwenzori Youth for Peace and Climate Action* project was designed as a transformative pillar to bridge the gap between youth, information, and climate governance. Its objectives were strategically crafted to foster a more informed, engaged, and proactive youth population capable of leading climate awareness and advocacy efforts across the Rwenzori region. The core objectives included:

Strengthen youth capacity in climate communication, fact-checking, and environmental documentation.

This objective aimed to equip young people with practical skills in environmental journalism, digital storytelling, and investigative documentation. Through structured workshops and mentorship sessions, youth participants were trained to collect credible data, verify climate-related claims, and translate scientific information into accessible narratives for diverse audiences. The component emphasized skill-building in photography, video documentation,

established channels for youth voices to influence policy and community responses, promoting evidence-based, inclusive climate action while countering the spread of misinformation.

In doing so, the project aimed to not only strengthen climate resilience in the Rwenzori region but also cultivate a generation of informed and empowered youth leaders committed to peacebuilding and sustainable development.

podcast production, and social media advocacy as tools to capture local environmental realities and debunk false narratives circulating within communities.

Promote community awareness and dialogue on climate realities and misinformation.

Recognizing that misinformation about climate change often breeds apathy and resistance to adaptation efforts, this objective focused on facilitating intergenerational and inter-community conversations around the lived impacts of climate change. Youth leaders were supported to organize community dialogues, storytelling forums, and school-based climate clubs where they could present evidence, share lived experiences, and encourage collective reflection on sustainable solutions. These activities were designed to foster trust, improve local climate literacy, and counteract harmful myths or misconceptions.

- *Amplify youth voices through local media, storytelling platforms, and digital publications.*

A critical part of this component involved creating platforms for young people to share their stories, research findings, and advocacy messages with wider audiences. Youth-generated content was featured on community radio stations, social media pages, blogs, and newsletters to increase visibility and influence. Strategic partnerships with local journalists and media houses helped integrate youth perspectives into mainstream coverage of climate issues, elevating their role as credible communicators and watchdogs for environmental justice.

- *Establish a grassroots model for civic monitoring and public climate accountability.*

To ensure sustainability and long-term impact, the component also focused on building a replicable, community-led model for civic environmental monitoring. This included the formation of youth civic monitoring teams responsible for regularly tracking ecological changes, policy gaps, and community responses to climate threats. The model emphasized transparency, evidence-based reporting, and accountability, linking grassroots observations with local authorities and national climate action frameworks. In doing so, it aimed to institutionalize youth participation in climate governance and foster a culture of proactive, accountable leadership from the ground up.

3. Key Activities and Outputs

3.1. Youth Training in Environmental Monitoring and Misinformation Detection

A cornerstone of the *Civic Monitoring and Storytelling* component was the direct engagement and capacity-

building of youth through immersive, skills-based training. The project organized four intensive 5-day bootcamps in key districts of the Rwenzori region—Kasese, Bundibugyo, Fort Portal, and Ntoroko—all of which are climate-vulnerable zones experiencing significant environmental challenges and information gaps.



Participants pose for a group photo after a training workshop on Environmental Monitoring and Misinformation Detection at Kalya Courts Hotel in Fort Portal

Training Overview

Each bootcamp brought together a diverse cohort of young participants, with a total of 120 youth trained, of whom 52% were female, reflecting a strong commitment to gender inclusion and youth leadership. The

bootcamps were designed as practical, interactive spaces combining technical instruction with real-world field exercises, peer learning, and mentorship from experienced environmental communicators and media professionals.



Hands-on Instruction with Digital Tools: A bootcamp session in Kasese where participants learnt to use computers, GPS-enabled smartphones, and open-source tools for Storyboarding and Multimedia Production and fact-Checking Climate-Related Claims on Social Media

Core Training Modules

Identifying and Documenting Environmental Degradation

Participants were equipped with skills to observe, assess, and record key signs of ecological damage in their communities. Training topics included mapping and reporting illegal activities such as sand mining, deforestation, charcoal burning, and wetland encroachment. Youth learned how to collect evidence using smartphones, GPS tools, and structured observation checklists, emphasizing the importance of local knowledge and ecological sensitivity.

Fact-Checking Climate-Related Claims on Social Media Using Open-Source Tools

Given the widespread misinformation about climate change on social platforms, the training included a comprehensive module on digital

literacy and verification. Youth were introduced to open-source tools such as Google Reverse Image Search, InVID for video verification, and platforms like Africa Check. Practical exercises involved debunking misleading posts, verifying weather anomalies, and tracing the origins of viral climate content.

Storyboarding and Multimedia Production (Photography, Video, Blog Writing)

To transform raw data and field experiences into compelling narratives, participants were trained in storytelling techniques, scriptwriting, and multimedia content creation. They practiced how to plan, storyboard, and produce short documentaries, photo essays, and blog articles on climate issues. This module emphasized visual storytelling as a powerful tool for awareness, advocacy, and civic engagement.



Field-based Digital Skills: Participants practicing digital documentation—video, photography, and data collection—in real learning spaces.

Ethical Reporting and Protection of Digital Civic Space

Ethical considerations were a cross-cutting theme throughout the training. Youth were sensitized on the importance of consent, privacy, source protection, and responsible

reporting, particularly when documenting sensitive environmental conflicts or community struggles. They also explored digital security measures to safeguard their content and protect themselves against online threats or censorship.

Outcome of the Trainings

By the end of each bootcamp, participants developed individual or group projects, including climate photo series, mini podcasts, and short environmental videos, which were later featured on community platforms. Many youth expressed increased confidence in their ability to speak out on environmental issues and serve as peer educators and climate monitors within their communities.

These trainings laid a strong foundation for the subsequent implementation of civic monitoring activities, youth-led campaigns, and storytelling initiatives that advanced the goals of peacebuilding and climate resilience across the Rwenzori region.

3.2. Civic Monitoring Campaigns

Building on the skills and enthusiasm cultivated during the training bootcamps, the project launched a structured Civic Monitoring Campaign led by the trained youth participants. This component aimed to translate training into action by enabling youth to observe, document, and report on climate risks and misinformation in real-time. It served as both a community engagement and accountability mechanism, while also feeding valuable grassroots data into local climate discourse.

Formation of Youth Climate Watch Groups

To operationalize this campaign, the project established eight (4) Youth Climate Watch Groups—one in each of the four target districts (Kasese, Bundibugyo, Fort Portal, and Ntoroko). Each group was composed of 10-15 youth who had completed the earlier training, ensuring diversity in age, gender, and geographic representation.

These groups continue to function as grassroots civic monitoring units tasked with tracking and reporting on two critical areas:

- Environmental hazards, particularly flood-prone zones, illegal logging areas, and observable patterns of deforestation and wetland encroachment.
- Climate misinformation, especially misleading or harmful narratives circulating on community WhatsApp groups, Facebook pages, and local radio programs.
Examples of debunked misinformation included:
 - “*Trees cause rainfall blockage and should be cleared.*”
 - “*Solar energy disrupts human fertility and livestock behavior.*”
 - “*Floods are divine punishment and not linked to environmental degradation.*”



Kasese Youth Climate Watch Group members walk through a hillside sector of Rwenzori Mountains, during their periodic environmental patrols in Kasese District to assess flood-prone and deforested zones



As a project outcome, Ntoroko Youth Climate Watch Group established a tree nursery bed contributing to community reforestation efforts

Reporting and Verification Mechanism

Each group designated focal youth reporters who submitted weekly field monitoring reports, including geo-

tagged photos, anecdotal accounts, and online misinformation screenshots. To ensure accuracy, credibility, and consistency, these reports were reviewed and verified by a regional editorial panel made up of

trained mentors, including journalists, environmental scientists, and digital literacy advocates involved in the project.

Key Outputs and Achievements

- 110 field reports were compiled, many of which included photo and video evidence of degraded sites, early flood alerts, and misinformation case studies. These were archived and mapped using open-source GIS tools to visualize trends and patterns across the region.
- A prototype visual tracker of climate misinformation was developed and hosted on a dedicated project microsite. This tracker aggregated misinformation examples, included verified counter-narratives, and provided educational tips on identifying false climate claims. The tool is being used in ongoing youth awareness campaigns and discussions with district environmental offices.
- The campaign exposed three (3) viral local disinformation

3.3. Storytelling and Public Dissemination

To bridge the gap between grassroots climate realities and public discourse, the project placed a strong emphasis on youth-led storytelling as a tool for civic engagement, advocacy, and community education. After being equipped with skills in multimedia production, climate communication, and ethical reporting, the trained youth developed and disseminated

Multi-Platform Dissemination of Youth Stories

- **Community Town Halls**

A total of six (6) community town

The panel provided editorial support, fact-checking guidance, and mentorship to improve reporting quality and support timely community responses.

campaigns, prompting urgent corrective action. Working through the editorial panel and project partners, the Youth Climate Watch Groups successfully engaged community radio stations and local leaders, resulting in the broadcast of correction notices, public clarification messages, and increased collaboration with trusted information sources.

Impact

These campaigns significantly enhanced community vigilance and opened up new avenues for youth to be recognized as credible contributors to environmental governance. They also strengthened community resilience against climate misinformation, fostering a more informed and proactive civic culture in addressing the region's environmental challenges.

stories that reflected both the environmental challenges and community-driven solutions in the Rwenzori region.

These stories were shared through a range of interactive platforms, ensuring they reached diverse audiences—from remote villages to policy actors—thereby contributing to more inclusive climate dialogue and action.

halls were organized across the target districts. These forums served as

interactive platforms where youth shared their climate stories directly with local leaders, elders, teachers, students, and representatives from local government and CSOs. Stories were presented through spoken word, digital exhibitions, short films, and

panel discussions. The town halls also featured Q&A sessions, allowing for feedback, intergenerational dialogue, and joint problem-solving on pressing climate issues like deforestation, flood management, and sustainable farming.



Community engagement in action: A youth-led town hall session in Bundibugyo in November 2024, featuring interactive dialogue & storytelling on a range of climate issues including deforestation, flood management, and sustainable farming.

Print Media Publication

In collaboration with local media outlets, nine (9) youth-authored articles were published in widely read newspapers such as the *Rwenzori Times*, *Kasese Weekly*, and *Daily Monitor*. These articles highlighted topics such as changing rainfall patterns, youth activism against

illegal logging, and the impact of misinformation on climate adaptation. The visibility provided by print media not only validated youth voices but also helped local policymakers and educators understand the lived experiences and perspectives of young climate actors.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Daily Monitor website. At the top, there's a banner with the text "SEAL THE DEAL WITH MSC THERMAL LINER" and a "LEARN MORE" button. Below the banner, the word "MONITOR" is prominently displayed in large white letters. Above the main menu, there are links for "Africa Edition", "Kenya Edition", "Uganda Edition", and "Tanzania Edition". The main menu includes "ePaper", "Search", "Subscribe", and "Login". Below the main menu, there are categories: News, Business, OpEd, Special Reports, Magazines, Sports, Lifestyle, Jobs, Audio, and Puzzles. A small flag icon is also present.

Youth Raise Voices against Climate Crisis in Rwenzori Region

Tuesday, November 26, 2024



By Ruth Kansiime

Kasese, Uganda – In the heart of Western Uganda's picturesque Rwenzori Region, a youth-led movement is taking root—one that is defying environmental silence, challenging climate misinformation, and rekindling community dialogue through storytelling, civic monitoring, and digital activism.

Across the districts of Kasese, Bundibugyo, Fort Portal, and Ntoroko—areas increasingly battered by flash floods, prolonged droughts, and deforestation—a new generation of climate champions is rising. Armed not with political power or state machinery, but with smartphones, notebooks, cameras, and a deep sense of

urgency, these young people are documenting environmental degradation, exposing false climate narratives, and sparking conversations that once remained buried in the mudslides and dry riverbeds of rural Uganda.

The Climate Crisis at Their Doorstep

Local newspaper-Daily Monitor features youth-authored stories on climate change, spotlighting their activism, field monitoring, and efforts to combat misinformation across the Rwenzori region.

Digital Newsletters

The project produced and distributed 24 bi-weekly digital newsletters over a 12-month period. These newsletters showcased youth-generated stories, field reports, interviews with local climate champions, and updates on civic monitoring activities. Reaching

over 2,500 subscribers, the newsletters were circulated to schools, local NGOs, media houses, environmental agencies, and youth networks, amplifying youth insights and facilitating cross-sector engagement.



Centre for Environment and Migration Assistance (CEMA)

➊ Rwenzori Climate Voices

Issue #13 / July 2024

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter of Youth-led Climate Action and Civic Monitoring in the Rwenzori Region

■ FEATURE STORY

Youth Turn Smartphones into Tools for Climate Justice

In Bundibugyo, a team of young civic monitors recently used mobile phones and open-source GIS tools to document illegal charcoal kilns operating deep in community forests. Their detailed field report—with mapped evidence and interviews with elders—prompted immediate attention from the district forestry office.

➌ “We’re not just reporting—we’re reclaiming our future,” said Irene, 20, a youth climate reporter in the region.

➲ [Read the Full Story on CEMA's Blog]

■ MULTIMEDIA SPOTLIGHT



How riverbank encroachment and plastic waste have transformed a once-thriving waterway into a seasonal flood zone.



➲ [View the Photo Essay]

⌚ FIELD REPORT SNAPSHOT

Field Report #76 – Fort Portal East

- **Submitted by:** Kasese Youth Climate Watch Group
- **Focus:** Wetland encroachment due to roadside expansion
- **Action Taken:** Findings presented to sub-county officials and used in a town hall meeting on local development planning.
- **Status:** Awaiting follow-up inspection from environmental office

A snapshot of the 13th Issue of bi-weekly digital newsletters showcasing youth-generated stories, field reports, interviews with local climate champions, and updates on civic monitoring activities

Social Media and Multimedia Dissemination

Youth-produced content—particularly short videos, infographics, and photo stories—was shared through the social media platforms of the Centre for Environment and Migration Assistance (CEMA), including Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. With an

average of 3,000 views per video, this content resonated especially well with youth audiences and diaspora communities. Posts were often accompanied by fact-checking tips, calls to action, and community challenges (e.g., “Plant a Tree, Tell a Story”) to encourage offline impact and participation.

Impact of Storytelling Efforts

These diverse storytelling and dissemination efforts contributed significantly to the project’s overarching goals by:

- **Creating inclusive, community-wide dialogue** around local climate impacts, resilience strategies, and the role of accurate information.
- Elevating youth voices and building their credibility as local climate reporters, advocates, and civic leaders.
- Challenging misinformation by replacing myths with well-researched, emotionally resonant, and visually compelling content.
- Engaging marginalized groups—particularly women, schoolchildren, and rural communities—who are often excluded from formal climate conversations.
- Building public demand for evidence-based decision-making

and accountability in environmental governance.

The storytelling and public dissemination component helped shape a more informed, connected, and action-oriented civic climate space in the Rwenzori region.

4. Outcomes and Impact

The *Civic Monitoring and Storytelling* component of the Empowering Rwenzori Youth for Peace and Climate Action project yielded measurable and transformative results. The component exceeded or met nearly all of its core targets, reinforcing the effectiveness of youth-led civic engagement in addressing environmental degradation, climate misinformation, and community awareness. The outcomes demonstrate the potential of grassroots digital action to influence public discourse, promote accountability, and empower young people as agents of change.

Outcome Performance Table

Indicator	Target	Achieved
Youth trained in civic monitoring and digital storytelling	100	120
Community members reached through town halls	600	780
Social media misinformation narratives documented	30	41
Articles and newsletters published	15	33
Verified cases of misinformation corrected by local media	2	3

Narrative Summary of Key Outcomes

1. Enhanced Youth Capacity and Leadership

The project trained 120 youth (20% above target) in environmental monitoring, digital storytelling, and climate misinformation detection. This increase reflects strong demand and enthusiasm for the bootcamps, particularly among young women (who made up 52% of participants). The skills acquired have not only enabled youth to monitor and report local environmental issues but also empowered them to advocate for climate justice within their communities.

2. Deepened Community Engagement and Dialogue

Through six town halls and continuous storytelling activities, the project reached 780 community members—including elders, students, teachers, local leaders, and informal opinion shapers. These forums fostered intergenerational knowledge exchange and stimulated collective reflection on environmental protection, resilience-building, and the need to counter harmful narratives about climate change.

3. Amplified Misinformation Monitoring and Correction

Youth-led monitoring efforts documented 41 distinct misinformation narratives, surpassing the original target of 30. These included widely circulated falsehoods about renewable energy, rainfall, and ecosystem functions. Significantly, the project facilitated the correction of three high-impact misinformation cases by partnering with local radio stations and media houses, resulting in on-air clarification messages and

increased community trust in verified information sources.

4. Expanded Media and Publication Reach

The project generated **33 published outputs**—including youth-authored newspaper articles and digital newsletters—more than double the initial target. These publications not only amplified youth voices but also became valuable advocacy tools, shared with over 2,500 stakeholders across the Rwenzori region, including local CSOs, media, schools, and government actors.

5. Strengthened Grassroots Accountability Mechanisms

The success of the eight Youth Climate Watch Groups and the development of a prototype visual misinformation tracker mark an important step toward establishing a community-based climate monitoring system. These tools have laid the groundwork for longer-term environmental vigilance and digital civic action at the grassroots level.

Broader Impact

The project has contributed to:

- A shift in community narratives from climate apathy and myths to awareness and data-driven engagement.
- A visible increase in youth civic participation, especially among young women, in local environmental governance.
- Stronger community-media linkages, where youth content is now informing local journalism and radio broadcasts.

These outcomes demonstrate that youth, when meaningfully equipped

and supported, can lead efforts to build climate-conscious, misinformation-resilient, and peace-oriented communities.

5. Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

While the Civic Monitoring and Storytelling component made

significant strides, the implementation process encountered several challenges that required adaptive and context-sensitive responses. Addressing these obstacles was essential to maintain momentum, ensure inclusivity, and safeguard the credibility of youth-led climate action efforts.

Challenge	Response / Mitigation Strategy
Poor internet connectivity in remote sub-counties	The rural nature of many sub-counties in the Rwenzori region posed significant barriers to consistent online communication and digital reporting. To overcome this, the project distributed offline media kits, including USB flash drives loaded with training materials, video content, and story templates, as well as printed handouts to youth groups and local hubs. Additionally, an SMS-based alert system was implemented to facilitate timely sharing of urgent updates and misinformation alerts without requiring internet access. This ensured continuous engagement despite connectivity gaps.
Hesitancy among youth to report misinformation due to fear of backlash	Many youth expressed concerns about potential social or political repercussions when exposing false narratives or criticizing powerful local interests linked to environmental degradation. To mitigate this, the project integrated digital safety and responsible storytelling sessions into training modules. These sessions equipped youth with strategies for protecting their privacy, anonymizing sensitive reports, and communicating safely online. Moreover, the project fostered peer support networks and mentorship groups, which provided emotional and strategic support, encouraging youth to share information confidently while minimizing risks.
Mistrust in youth-generated information by older leaders	Initial skepticism and mistrust from community elders, traditional leaders, and teachers toward youth-led reports threatened to limit the impact and uptake of monitoring findings. To bridge this generational divide, the project actively involved respected elders and educators as “story allies”—trusted intermediaries who helped validate youth reports and facilitated intergenerational dialogue. By engaging these influencers in joint storytelling events and editorial review panels, the project built greater legitimacy,

respect, and trust for youth-generated information within local governance and social structures.

6. Lessons Learned

The implementation of the Civic Monitoring and Storytelling component provided valuable insights into the dynamics of youth-led climate advocacy and community engagement in the Rwenzori region. These lessons offer guidance for future initiatives seeking to empower youth as climate communicators and fact-checkers in similar contexts.

6.1. Youth as Effective Agents in Combating Misinformation and Linking Digital-Offline Spaces

Youth participants demonstrated remarkable capacity to monitor misinformation in both digital and physical community spaces, effectively acting as bridges between online networks and offline populations. Their familiarity with social media platforms combined with local knowledge enabled them to identify false narratives spreading through WhatsApp groups, community gatherings, and even informal conversations. This dual awareness is essential in rural settings where internet access may be intermittent but misinformation still travels widely through word of mouth. Youth-led civic monitoring can thus serve as a vital frontline defense against climate misinformation.

6.2. The Power of Creative Storytelling Combined with Civic Education

Integrating multimedia storytelling techniques with comprehensive civic education empowered youth not only to report facts but to craft compelling narratives that resonate emotionally and culturally within their

communities. Storytelling proved an effective tool to engage diverse audiences, from elders to schoolchildren, fostering empathy and dialogue around complex environmental issues. This combination strengthens community ownership of climate challenges and builds grassroots momentum for fact-based advocacy and behavior change.

6.3. The Importance of Local Media Partnerships in Amplifying and Validating Youth Voices

Collaborations with local newspapers, radio stations, and digital media outlets were crucial in amplifying youth stories beyond immediate peer groups. These partnerships helped validate youth contributions by positioning them as credible sources within the wider public discourse, increasing their influence on policy discussions and community attitudes. Local media also played a key role in correcting misinformation when youth-led investigations exposed falsehoods, demonstrating how media can act as both a megaphone and a gatekeeper for trustworthy climate information.

6.7. Sustainability and Next Steps

Ensuring the longevity and growth of the Civic Monitoring and Storytelling initiative is a key priority. The project has laid a strong foundation for sustained youth engagement in climate advocacy, misinformation monitoring, and community dialogue through structured networks, institutional partnerships, and strategic expansion plans.

Establishment of the Youth Climate Correspondents Network

Building on the momentum from the initial training and civic monitoring campaigns, the project successfully established a Youth Climate Correspondents Network. This network brings together trained youth monitors and storytellers across the Rwenzori districts into a vibrant, self-sustaining community of practice. Members continue to produce climate stories, monitor misinformation, and share verified reports on digital and offline platforms. The network facilitates peer mentorship, continuous skills development, and coordinated advocacy efforts, serving as a catalyst for ongoing youth-led climate engagement beyond the formal project timeline.

Integration into Local and National Climate Governance Platforms

To enhance institutional support and amplify youth influence, CEMA is actively working to integrate these youth groups into district-level climate forums and relevant national youth climate policy platforms. This strategic engagement aims to formalize the role of youth climate correspondents as recognized stakeholders in environmental decision-making processes. Through

Sustainability will be further supported by continuous capacity-building, strengthening partnerships with local governments and media, and mobilizing resources to maintain digital platforms and communication infrastructure. The ongoing

this integration, youth voices will have increased access to policymakers and government officials, strengthening the feedback loop between grassroots observations and formal climate adaptation planning. It also ensures that the civic monitoring efforts feed directly into broader climate governance mechanisms, enhancing accountability and responsiveness.

Scaling and Replication in Refugee-Hosting Districts

Recognizing the model's effectiveness in the Rwenzori region, CEMA is developing a comprehensive proposal to scale and adapt the civic monitoring and storytelling framework to other refugee-hosting districts including Yumbe, Arua, and Isingiro. These areas face similar climate risks compounded by misinformation and low youth participation. Scaling will involve customizing training materials to local contexts, building partnerships with regional media, and establishing new youth correspondent groups. The proposal includes plans for leveraging digital tools optimized for low-connectivity settings and integrating refugee youth as active participants, thereby expanding the project's impact on climate resilience and social cohesion.

7. Looking Ahead

commitment from CEMA and its partners reflects a long-term vision where empowered youth serve as critical watchdogs, educators, and advocates in the fight against climate change and environmental misinformation.

8. Project Funding and Budget Overview

8.1 Funding Source

The *Empowering Rwenzori Youth for Peace and Climate Action* project was generously supported by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) through a 12-month grant aimed at enhancing youth participation in climate governance and combating environmental misinformation in Uganda's Rwenzori region.

8.2 Total Budget

The total approved project budget amounted to **USD 47,500**, allocated across key components to support direct youth engagement, capacity building, field activities, and communication outputs.

8.3 Budget Allocation and Use

Budget Line	Allocated (USD)	Actual Expenditure (USD)	Variance
Youth Bootcamps (Training, Travel, Materials)	12,000	11,750	-250
Storytelling and Multimedia Equipment	6,000	6,100	+100
Community Town Halls and Local Dialogues	4,500	4,350	-150
Print and Digital Media Production	3,000	3,000	0
Youth Climate Watch Groups (Operational Support)	5,000	4,800	-200
Staff and Facilitator Fees	7,500	7,500	0
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting	2,500	2,550	+50
Communications and Internet Access Support	2,000	2,250	+250
Administrative and Overhead Costs (10%)	5,000	5,000	0
TOTAL	47,500	47,300	-200

8.4 Notes on Budget Performance

- The project was implemented efficiently within budget, with a minor underspend of USD 200, which was reallocated to bolster internet/data access for remote youth participants.
- Equipment purchases (e.g., smartphones, tripods, portable microphones) slightly exceeded projections due to currency fluctuations and market prices, but remained within acceptable variance limits.
- All training activities, dissemination events, and operational support were executed as planned without any major financial or logistical disruptions.

8.5 Leverage and In-Kind Contributions

- **In-kind support** was received from local government offices, schools, and CSOs in the form of venue space, facilitation time, and

media airtime, estimated at **USD 7,500**.

- Youth volunteers contributed over 1,200 hours of unpaid civic work, including field reporting, content creation, and event mobilization, further demonstrating strong local ownership and cost-efficiency.

9. Conclusion

The Civic Monitoring and Storytelling component of the Empowering Rwenzori Youth for Peace and Climate Action project has successfully demonstrated the power of youth-driven initiatives in advancing climate accountability and combating misinformation in Uganda's fragile settings. By equipping young people with practical skills in environmental monitoring, fact-checking, and multimedia storytelling, the project fostered a new generation of informed, ethical, and proactive climate advocates.

Youth participants not only enhanced their technical capacities but also emerged as credible voices capable of bridging generational divides and engaging diverse community stakeholders—including elders, local leaders, teachers, and media practitioners. This engagement has cultivated a more truthful and inclusive climate dialogue, marked by increased community awareness, critical reflection on misinformation,

and collective commitment to environmental stewardship. The outcomes underscore the value of integrating creative storytelling with civic education and institutional partnerships, as these elements proved essential in amplifying youth voices and reinforcing their legitimacy in public discourse. Moreover, the establishment of a Youth Climate Correspondents Network and integration efforts into district and national platforms ensure that these gains will be sustained and scaled, creating pathways for continued youth leadership in climate resilience. In essence, this component has laid a robust foundation for future climate action—not only within the Rwenzori region but also across other vulnerable and marginalized areas of Uganda. By empowering youth as vigilant monitors and communicators, the project contributes meaningfully to building resilient communities that are better equipped to face the escalating challenges of climate change and environmental misinformation.

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