

Roots & Rights Our Earth. Our Rights. Our Future.”

**A Practical Toolkit for
Young Eco-feminists to
advocate for Climate Justice**



Resource partners

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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

Abbreviations & Acronyms

UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
NEA	National Environment Agency
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SMART	Specific (or Significant), Measurable (or Meaningful, Motivational), Attainable (or Achievable, Acceptable, Action-oriented), Realistic (or Relevant, Reasonable, Rewarding, Results-oriented), and Time-bound (or Timely, Tangible, Trackable)
UN	United Nations
NCCA	National Coastal Condition Assessment
NCCP	National Climate Change Policy
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
YOUNGO	Youth And Children Consistency
G4CA	Girls for Climate Action

Hey Eco-Feminists!

The Young Eco-Feminists Advocacy Toolkit is created to empower young women and girls to know, claim, and defend their environmental rights.

Our work is grounded in the principles of eco-feminism, climate justice, and human rights, recognising that the health of our planet and the rights of women and girls are deeply connected

Uganda's Constitution, environmental laws, and climate policies recognise the right to a clean and healthy environment for every citizen. This toolkit equips young women and girls with the knowledge, skills, and strategies to advocate for these rights in their communities, in policy spaces, and beyond.

All rights to land, water, and natural resources are interconnected, and no right is more important than another. This toolkit ensures that young women are not just seen as beneficiaries, but as leaders, decision-makers, and changemakers in the climate and environmental space.

The climate crisis is one of the greatest challenges of our time. In Uganda, women, girls, and youth are not only feeling the brunt of its impacts – from food insecurity to loss of livelihoods – but also hold the keys to solutions.

This toolkit is for YOU – the young eco-feminist leaders ready to influence policies, lead local action, and make your voice impossible to ignore. Whether you're stepping into your first advocacy space or already mobilizing communities, this guide will help you speak up, organize, and win change.



At the end of this toolkit, Eco-feminists will gain:

- Simple explanations of Uganda's climate and environmental laws
- Step-by-step guidance to plan your advocacy
- Practical worksheets to make your ideas real
- Examples of young eco-feminists creating change
- Tools to keep your campaign safe, visible, and impactful







It's especially for changemakers at the grassroots, where climate change hits hardest and where women and girls carry the heaviest burdens but also hold the most powerful solutions.

Because policies are still leaving gaps. Women and youth are too often framed as “vulnerable” rather than as leaders. Decision tables are missing young women’s voices. We’re here to change that.

“Climate justice is not possible without gender justice.”

Who is the Toolkit for?

This toolkit is for young women and girls who refuse to stay silent. It's for those ready to raise their voices, defend their communities, and protect the planet. Whether you're a youth climate activist, an eco-feminist advocate, a community leader, part of a women-led organisation, or an ally who stands for gender equality and environmental justice — this is your guide.





Climate change is not gender-neutral. Across Uganda and globally, women and girls—especially those from vulnerable and marginalized communities—are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and climate shocks. This toolkit equips you with the knowledge, strategies, and tools to demand inclusion, equality, and justice in climate policies and actions.

How was the Toolkit Developed!

The Toolkit is the result of a co-production process with adolescent girls and young women between the age of 14-30 years and an advisory committee that comprised of 10 girls. The tool kit was also based on the policy analysis of the climate and environmental laws and policies of Uganda looking at how young women and girls are engaged in the policy processes.



UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE



Before you start campaigning, it's important to know the playing field.

Uganda has several climate and environmental frameworks:

- National Climate Change Policy (2015) – Recognizes women's vulnerability but not their leadership role.
- Climate Change Act (2021) – Legally enforces climate commitments but lacks provisions for young women's participation or SRHR (sexual and reproductive health and rights).
- National Environment Act (2019) – Governs natural resources but has weak enforcement of gender quotas.
- Land Act (1998) – Grants women's rights on paper, but customary practices undermine equality.
- Water Act (1997) – Covers access and ownership but misses gender and health linkages.

“Right to a Clean and Healthy Environment Guaranteed under Article 39 of Uganda’s Constitution. Every person has the right to live in a safe and healthy environment.”



RIGHTS MUST BE RESPECTED, PROTECTED AND FULFILLED



Right to Access Natural Resources

Land, water, and forests must be used sustainably and equitably.

Women's right to access and control these resources is protected under Land Act and National Environment Act, though often undermined by customary practices.

Right to Participation in Environmental Decision- Making

Communities have the right to be consulted on projects and policies affecting their environment. Includes participation in Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and climate governance committees.

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Right to Seek Legal Remedies

"People can take legal action against polluters or authorities failing to protect the environment. Enabled by the National Environment Act and public interest litigation provisions."

"Uganda's climate and environmental laws and policies are legally binding, including those related to women, girls, and communities affected by climate change. These commitments are reinforced by Uganda's ratification of international and regional agreements, which also carry legal force. If the government fails to fulfil these obligations, individuals and groups — including eco-feminist advocates — can use advocacy, legal action, and public accountability processes to demand compliance and protect environmental rights."
Katushabe Christine, Young Eco-feminist

Uganda's policy and legal frameworks for climate change, environment, land, and water governance demonstrate clear commitments to adaptation, sustainability, and community resilience. However, **their current design and implementation fall short of delivering on gender-transformative outcomes, particularly for young women, girls, and indigenous communities.** Across the frameworks, gender is often treated as a cross-cutting theme without binding targets or enforcement mechanisms. SRHR critical to adaptive capacity remains absent from climate and environmental policy. Indigenous and local knowledge is acknowledged but rarely operationalized, and environmental sub-committees lack defined gender and youth representation.

"By building your advocacy plan, you will identify the major barriers facing women, girls, and marginalized communities in your area that prevent them from fully enjoying their environmental rights, accessing resources, and participating in climate decision-making."



What is Advocacy

Advocacy is the process of building support for a specific issue or cause and influencing others to take action in order to achieve policy change

Youth-led advocacy is about supporting children and young people to speak up and helping them actively take part in the decisions that affect their lives. This toolkit will give you the skills and information you need to stand up for what is important to you.



Meaningful Youth Engagement

■ **Meaningful participation is** when young women, girls, advocates are:

■ **Informed** — They have access to all the necessary information, in a language and format they can understand, about the issues, policies, and decisions that affect them.

■ **Included Early** — They are brought into the process from the start, not just consulted after decisions are already made.
Able to Influence Outcomes — Their views are not just heard but seriously considered and acted upon in policy and programme decisions.



■ **Represented in Diversity** — Participation reflects different backgrounds, including rural, indigenous, refugee, and marginalised communities.

■ **Supported to Participate** — Barriers like cost, transport, language, and scheduling are removed so that young people can attend and contribute fully.

■ **Safe and Respectful Spaces** — They can express themselves freely without fear of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation.

■ **Given Feedback** — They are told how their input was used and what changes resulted from their contributions.



Let's Start Our Advocacy Journey.



As we start, Let's have this in Mind

1

Figuring out what needs to change and deciding on a plan to get there,

2

Making sure as many people as possible know about the problems we're looking to tackle so that they can support us,

3

Understanding who has the power to make the change, and how we can convince them to do that

1

DEFINE YOUR ISSUE.

- What eco-feminist challenge do I want to solve?
- Who is affected? How?
- What rights are being violated?
- *Choose one gap you want to address (e.g., lack of women in district climate committees, absence of SRHR in adaptation plans).*

2

BUILD EVIDENCE & STRATEGIZE

- Identify **root causes** (laws, customs, lack of resources).
- Gather facts, stories, and community voices/lived experiences. Use policy excerpts to show the gap
- Match each cause to a **solution** (turn it into a *Solutions Tree*).
- Identify decision-makers (Target Analysis Grid) — who can make the change? Who influences them?
MAP OUT ALLIES

3

ACT

- Write **key messages** for each audience (leaders, media, community).
- Choose **tactics** (dialogues, petitions, art installations, radio talk shows, protest walks).

4

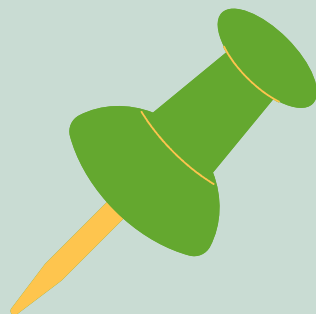
EVALUATE

- Track progress , monitor and **Celebrate wins!**



Step 1: Explore - Define your issue

Before you start campaigning, it's really important you get to grips with what is causing the problem. You'll need to explore all of the causes and the effects of the problem to figure out what you can do to best solve it. Any one problem may have many different causes and effects, some of which may not be obvious at first.



DRAW YOUR OWN

Begin at the centre of the tree: This is the issue you have decided to change.

Example: Women farmers lack access to climate funds → low crop yields → higher poverty rates for female-headed households.

Example: "Women farmers in our district can't access climate adaptation funds."

Add questions: Why does this matter? Who else is affected? What rights are being violated?

Use *Problem Tree* to link climate & gender causes and effects.

The roots of the tree are the causes. Get to know the Rootcause. This is an important part in the problem solving process

The leaves of the tree represent what happens as a result of the problem. Try to think about multi-layered effects, or 'the effects of effects' – so when you come up with a result, ask yourself 'then what happens?'

Ask yourself:

- What eco-feminist challenge do I want to solve?
- Who is affected? How?
- What rights are being violated?

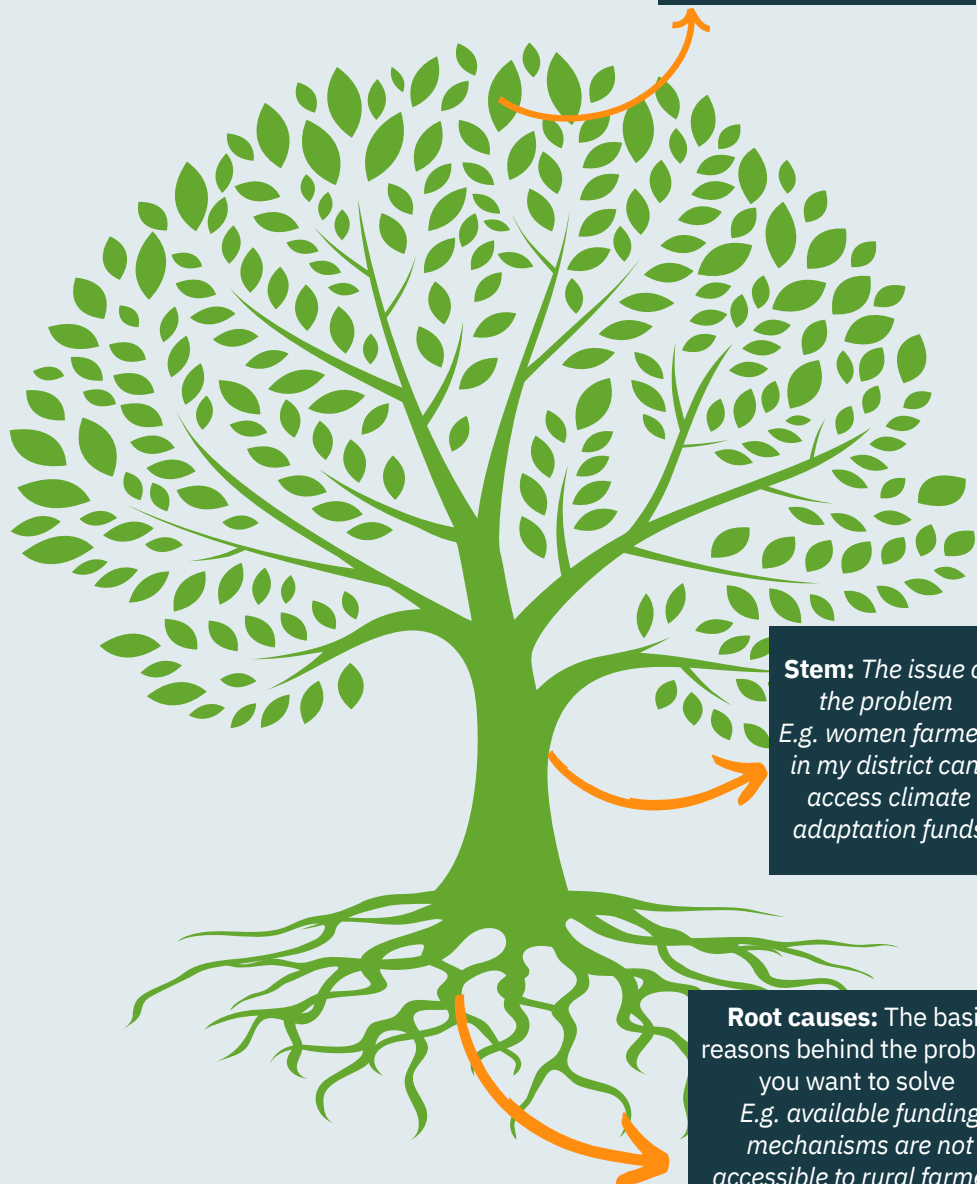
Choose one gap you want to address (e.g., lack of women in district climate committees, absence of SRHR in adaptation plans).





Step 1: Explore - Define your issue (Illustration)

Effects: The results of the problem : low crop yields , high poverty rates among female headed homes



Stem: The issue or the problem
E.g. women farmers in my district cant access climate adaptation funds

Root causes: The basic reasons behind the problem you want to solve
E.g. available funding mechanisms are not accessible to rural farmers



Step 2: Build Evidence and Strategize

- Identify root causes (laws, customs, lack of resources).
- Gather facts, stories, and community voices/lived experiences. Use policy excerpts to show the gap
- Match each cause to a solution (turn it into a Solutions Tree).
- Identify decision-makers (Target Analysis Grid) — who can make the change? Who influences them?

Solution Tree

The Solutions Tree is the positive mirror of the Problem Tree.

You place your main goal/vision in the centre, then list the solutions below that address each root cause, and the positive results above that will come from those solutions.

For example, if the problem is that women farmers lack access to climate funds, the solutions could include reforming climate finance policies to be gender-responsive, simplifying application processes, and training women farmers on funding opportunities. These solutions lead to positive outcomes such as higher crop yields, stronger climate resilience, and reduced poverty among female-headed households.



Having a vision is only the first step! *Now that you've decided the issue that is most important to you, it's time to do some research so you can get a better idea of what needs to be done and how.*

1

To begin your research, explore where you first learned about the issue – did you read about it online or in a newspaper? Was it on the news? Is it something that was discussed at your school or workplace or talked about with your friends or family?

2

Start there and go back to that first source to think about where else you might be able to find the information – if you learned about it in school, college, university or work – could someone there provide reading materials?

3

Use the resources you already have – your local community leaders; when doing internet research, remember to access a mix of sources including academic journals, news articles and opinions pieces

4

As you are reading, begin gathering evidence: evidence can include case studies of other people who have been affected by or campaigned on the issue; this will help you show how important your issue is.

TIP

“If you can't find evidence while doing research, think about speaking to people who have been affected by or campaigned on this issue can you conduct surveys or interviews with them? Are they able to offer advice? Which organisations are working on your issue? Can they provide information or resources?”





1. What do I know?	2. What do I need to find out?	3. What are the causes?	4. What are the consequences?	5. Who is working to tackle the problem?
6. What are they doing?	7. Is it working? Why? Or why not?	8. What's not working? What needs to happen?	9. Who do I need to talk to?	10. Who or what can help with my research?



*Filled in the table above?
Good Job! We can only learn
by practicing!*

Objectives

TURNING VISION INTO MEASURABLE CHANGE

How to write strong objective

A good objective answers:

- What will change?
- Who will benefit?
- By when will it happen?

Why objectives Matter.

- They keep your actions focused.
- They make it easier to track progress.
- They help convince allies and funders to support your cause.

Once you've defined your strategy, you need clear objectives to guide your actions. Objectives are the specific, measurable changes you want to see that will move you closer to your goal.

Write your objectives on another sheet and make them

SMART:



S

Specific Be clear: who needs to do what?

M

Measurable How will you track progress?

A

Achievable Is this possible to achieve?
Be realistic

R

Results-based Will your objective help you achieve your vision? How?

T

Time-bound Set a deadline

Example objectives for eco-feminist advocacy

By December 2026, at least 50% of seats in district climate committees will be held by women, including 20% young women.
By mid-2025, the Ministry of Water and Environment will integrate SRHR measures into the National Climate Change Policy implementation plan.



Advocacy in Action: Njeru Community vs. Industrial Pollution

For years, Buikwe District has hosted long-standing industries whose arrival promised development through infrastructure, job creation, and increased tax revenue. While these benefits are recognized, the hidden costs have been severe—industrial wastewater, air, and noise pollution have disrupted daily life.

In Njeru, women report that polluted streams—once teeming with silver fish—are now lifeless, affecting both food sources and livelihoods. A village health team leader recounts that at least two women suffered miscarriages linked to extreme environmental conditions, while respiratory illnesses among children have risen sharply.

Despite reporting the violations to authorities, responses have been slow, and peaceful protests have faced threats. Undeterred, local women have continued to advocate for urgent action, emphasizing their constitutional right to a healthy environment and protecting their children's health. Their persistence demonstrates the power of grassroots voices in demanding environmental justice.





Know your allies

Influencers.

These are the other people who can help you convince your targets – such as local schools, the general public, community organisations or local media.

TARGETS

Who has the power?

Now that you've made a list of targets and influencers, think carefully about them:

Who are they?

Do they support your issue or are they against it?

What else do they care about?

Who can help you reach them? Who do they

To move your campaign forward, you will need to identify key people who have the power to help with your issue – the 'decision-makers'. These are the targets whose mind you need to change or influence to bring your vision to life.

What do you need them to do?
How can you convince them to do it?

Remember, you can't reach everyone so you'll need to decide on two or three targets who you really think you could influence.

To help decide which targets you should focus on, complete the Target Analysis tool below.



	Difficult to Influence High Impact Reach out to these people and try to find ways to get their attention but keep in mind it may not be easy	Easy to Influence High Impact Focus on these people! They are your main targets
	Difficult to Influence Low Impact Remember these people in case they become easy to influence or more powerful in the future but don't focus on them for now.	Easy to Influence Low Impact Get in touch with these people right away. They may be able to help you reach your targets or give you important information for your campaign.



STEP 3: ACTION - TURN STRATEGY INTO ACTIONS

- What do you need to say?
- What do you need to do?
- Risks and challenges

1. Write **key messages** for each audience (leaders, media, community).
2. Choose **tactics** (dialogues, petitions, art installations, radio talk shows, protest walks).

What do you need to say?

The message you're going to send to your targets is the driving force behind your campaign.
Your message needs to be clear and easy to communicate – it has to capture people's attention and convince them to support you.
Think about a campaign you liked – what caught your attention? That is the key message.



Your **key message** should appeal to the **heart, head and hands** of your target:

Heart (Emotions & Values) ❤️

Appeals to people's feelings, hopes, and sense of justice. Helps your audience care about the issue.

Head (Logic & Evidence) 🧠

Uses facts, research, and laws to show the issue is real and urgent.

Hands (Action & Solutions) 🙌

Gives your audience something they can do right now to help.
Turns sympathy and understanding into concrete steps.

Why it works:

The **heart** makes them feel.
The **head** makes them believe.
The **hands** make them act.



Key Messages

Step 1

Keep these points in mind when writing

Your campaign's key message:

- The problem
- Evidence (Facts, Stories, Statistics)
- Why is this important?
- What needs to happen to make the change?
- The audience

Step 2:

Look back at your two to three main targets.

Can you write a specific key message for each of them?

Step 3:

Finally, test your message! Talk to the people who are involved in working on this issue or your friends and family, and ask them for feedback; are the facts clear and correct? Did the message move and persuade them?

Tactics Bank:

- Social media campaigns
- Policy dialogues
- Community story walls
- Climate art shows & eco-fashion
- Radio talk shows
- Petition drives
- School debates



Reminders

These are just some ideas for how to take action, but you can come up with your own. Always keep in mind what you want to achieve and be creative!



Don't forget to follow up:

Very Crucial

Make sure to phone or email new supporters and thank them for getting involved.

Keep them updated on your campaign throughout!

If you have a social media page or website, it's a good place to keep your supporters informed but remember, **not everyone uses the internet.**




Key Advocacy Messages (From Policy Analysis)

- “Climate justice is gender justice — integrate SRHR into Uganda’s climate policies.”
- “Guarantee 50% women’s representation, with quotas for young women, in climate governance.”
- “Secure women’s land and water rights through legal reforms.”
- “Integrate indigenous knowledge into climate adaptation.”
- “Ensure transparency in district-level climate finance.”
- “Reform land and water laws to guarantee women’s governance rights.”
- “Include Eco-feminist principles of equity and equality into local and international climate action plans.”

RISKS AND CHALLENGES IN ECO-FEMINIST ADVOCACY

Advocating for climate justice and gender equality is powerful, but it can also come with risks.

Being prepared helps you stay safe, resilient, and effective.



Constantly confronting climate and gender injustices can be emotionally exhausting.

- Set realistic goals and celebrate small wins.
- Share the workload in your team.
- Take regular breaks and prioritise mental well-being.

Examples of some Risks

Social and Cultural Pushback

Risk: Challenging patriarchal norms or calling for women's leadership can cause backlash from community leaders or even family members.

Example: Being told climate governance is "men's work."

How to respond:

- Use respectful dialogue and frame advocacy in ways that connect to shared values.
- Engage local elders, faith leaders, and women's groups early.

Political and Legal Risks

Risk: Advocacy that challenges government policies or powerful companies can attract scrutiny, intimidation, or legal threats.

Example: Protesting against a polluting factory could lead to police questioning.

How to respond:

- Know your rights under the Constitution of Uganda and relevant laws.
- Work in coalitions to reduce individual exposure.
- Document all interactions with authorities.

Online Harassment and Misinformation

Risk: Social media activism can attract trolling, threats, or the spread of false information.

Example: Personal attacks on female activists' credibility

How to respond

Strengthen your privacy settings.

Keep evidence of online abuse and report it to platform moderators.

Use secure communication tools for sensitive organising.

Key Tip!

Before starting any campaign, carry out a Risk Assessment:

- Identify possible risks.
- Rate their likelihood and potential impact.
- Plan how to prevent or reduce them.

Staying Safe in Advocacy

- Work in pairs or groups when attending public events.
- Have a safety contact who knows your movements.
- Use privacy settings online.
- Avoid sharing personal details on public platforms.

Advocacy Plan

What needs to change?

The problem:

What steps do we need to take?

Objectives:

What can we say to convince them?

Key messages for each target:

What do you want to happen?

Our vision:

Who has the power?

Who can make it happen?

Targets:

**What does the general public
need to know?**

What do we need to do?

TACTICS TO DO

BY WHOM

BY WHEN

Who else can help us make it happen?

Influencers and key supporters:

What are the risks and challenges?

1.

2.

3.

How will we manage the risks and challenges?

What will success look like?



STEP 4: EVALUATE

- What changed? Who did we reach? What's still missing?
- Document stories and results to use in future campaigns.
- Did decision-makers respond?
- What can be improved next time?

Celebrate your wins —
however small.



Accessible Language & Rights Framing

Frame eco-feminist advocacy in terms of human rights, environmental justice, and gender equality.

Connect to CEDAW, Paris Agreement, negotiation documents and Uganda's own laws (from your policy analysis).

Keep the tone motivational but not overly formal.

Beyond the Toolkit
Keep your advocacy alive by:

- Joining district and national consultations
- Participating in Africa COY and COP processes
- Applying for youth climate leadership fellowships
- Mentoring younger eco-feminists

