STUDENTENERGY

YOUTH IMPACT FRAMEWORK

INITIAL FINDINGS

NOVEMBER 2022

YOUTH IMPACT FRAMEWORK | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With more than half of the global population now under the age of 30, it is imperative for youth and industry leaders to collaborate on climate and energy solutions. Student Energy and the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM) have begun research to create a Youth Impact Framework designed to showcase measurable impacts of youth-led initiatives.

Initial findings indicate a desire for both youth and industry stakeholders to collaboratively engage on climate and energy issues. This report breaks down insights from our initial interviews, and provides several preliminary recommendations, including:

(i) Sharing and refining indicators with climate and energy actors

(ii) Tracking and progress reporting of the impact of youth-led initiatives

(iii) Raising awareness of the opportunities around youth, climate, and energy

Following an initial report launch at COP27, next steps include further stakeholder and youth dialogues, research, and data analysis. A full report will be published in 2023.

INITIAL FINDINGS

Young people play an integral role in contributing to progress in the climate and energy movement, ranging from directly implementing climate solutions to advocating for policy and behavioral change. Despite their active leadership, youth continue to face significant challenges in accessing resources to support and scale their work, and are largely disenfranchised from decision-making processes (Ho, Clarke, Doughtery, 2015).

In partnership with the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM), with support from the University of Melbourne, Student Energy is leading the Youth Impact Framework research project. The Youth Impact Framework is a tool and set of indicators that aims to measure and give language to the impact of youth-led contributions to climate action, and to give stakeholder organizations a framework to better support the impact of youth-led initiatives.

With the final report launch planned for 2023, research is being conducted in four phases:

1. **Literature Review**: Exploring existing impact measurement frameworks and research on youth-led initiatives

2. **Stakeholder interviews:** Interviews with 20+ government, NGO, energy industry, and philanthropic organizations to better understand how they measure impact, and the role of impact measurement in funding and strategic decisions
3. **Youth interviews:** Interviews with leaders of 20+ youth-led initiatives, to understand barriers to accessing resources and approach to impact measurement
4. **Synthesis:** Insights from the literature review, stakeholder interviews, youth interviews, and Student Energy's experience facilitating youth-led initiatives will be synthesized in a final report in early 2023

Get Involved

We invite **organizations** who currently or in the future plan to engage young people to join the project as key stakeholders and be among the first to receive the report and provide input on the impact framework.

We invite **young people**, 18-35, who are currently leading or are involved in a climate or energy related initiative that has been in operation for more than one year, to participate in the project by completing the research survey here.

To get involved, please contact **aarisha@studentenergy.org**

Literature Review Summary

Our initial review explores 17 examples of impact measurement frameworks ranging from impact measurement frameworks developed in academia, to frameworks developed and used by larger development agencies such as the SDG Global Indicator Framework, Inter-American Development Bank, and Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN), to name a few. We discovered that most existing frameworks measuring climate impact consider **GHG emissions, employment, energy access, health, gender equity, waste diversion, air, water, and soil quality**. Building on climate-focused indicators, social impact measurement frameworks such as the Gender Equality Toolbox and research by Ho, Clarke, and Dougherty propose methods to measure improvements in additional metrics like **social change, increased empowerment, and agency.**

Building on this review, we have proposed an initial list of **15 Impact Indicators**, grouped in 4 categories: Energy Transition and Climate Change Mitigation, Social Impacts, Policy Advocacy, and the Water, Food, Climate, Energy (WFCE) Nexus.

View the full list of proposed indicators here. The indicators can also be found in the Appendix.

Finally, there appears to be limited research on measuring the impacts of youth-led initiatives, especially in terms of their contributions to emissions reductions, policy advocacy, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and in tackling intersectional issues such as food security in the context of energy and climate. There is even less research directly involving young people or presenting youth perspectives, which is a key gap this project aims to address.

Stakeholder Interview Insights

By consulting stakeholders from various sectors, including academia, NGOs, UN-affiliated organizations, and philanthropy, we gathered insights on how these organizations perceive and value youth-led projects, and which kinds of impact they prioritize. Summarized below are emerging themes from initial conversations with representatives of 10+ organizations:

Sector	Emerging Themes
Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)	NGO respondents generally prioritize gender equality and energy mitigation with intersections of policy advocacy. They also are interested in indicators related to youth empowerment and well-being overall. There is a need to capture small-scale impacts to highlight the work of grassroots and youth-led initiatives to maintain longevity of youth-led initiatives.
Energy Sector	Respondents from the energy sector see high importance in the role of youth in clean energy, especially in the realms of policy advocacy and creating good quality jobs. They also place a focus on gender, especially young women in training and mentoring opportunities.
Intergovernmental Organizations	Respondents from intergovernmental organizations place a big focus on technology transfer in the just transition, especially adopting alternative technologies to clean cooking and energy access. Involving youth in the decision making process and training programs are seen as a big opportunity for energy transition. They also raised importance on defining energy transition with relation to energy and work resilience.
Research & Academia	Building young people's capacities, confidence, civic literacy, knowledge and relationship with local authorities is highly relevant. Respondents from Research & Academia also suggested redefining the impact of youth-led initiatives as a story of change since some

	projects are difficult to quantify. There is also a need for value-based approaches when securing funding.
Government	Stakeholders in government are interested in youth's unique contribution to policy advocacy, energy poverty, mitigation, and adaptation. They suggest capturing indirect impacts which are a result of youth's influence at a policy level.

Selected quotes from stakeholder interviews:

"*I would love to see this project packaged in a way where it is really accessible for local governments, and really compelling. I think it would be great to have a package there where you talk about why youth-led initiatives are important in a really accessible way. Indicators and metrics would be great to put in front. Policymakers need that. They need to be realistic indicators as well, potentially having suggested data sources for that stuff.* " ***(Interviewee from cities-focused governmental organization)***

"Perhaps having something publicly accessible to many organizations overall, in general, that can also give visibility to youth-led initiatives because there is a gap there and the youth engagement is missing." ***(Interviewee from cities-focused NGO)***

"[Having] language that multiple people are using is really useful and having similar base indicators is so good because if funders are looking at different kinds of initiatives and they are sort of saying different things with different language, that's fine. But if they're trying to say the same thing and using different language, it can be really confusing…usually unfortunately more marginalized people in our community because of systemic injustices." ***(Interviewee from NGO supporting youth-led work)***

Youth Insights

Simultaneously, we are interviewing youth (18-35) who are project leaders to better understand the barriers and challenges they encounter in measuring their impact. Each youth-led initiative will be treated as their own case study to honor their unique experiences and expertise. Summarized below are key factors that youth think are important to consider when building the Youth Impact Framework:

Types of Youth-led Initiatives	Emerging Themes
Non-profit organizations	There is a critical need to view impact from a justice lens, and to emphasize the human element in climate justice movements. People feeling inspired by their work has an impact, and not all aspects of youth-led initiatives are quantifiable. Most grassroots organizations will receive less funding because government or funding institutions do not value community issues as important as they would for projects dedicated to GHG emissions reduction.
Entrepreneurial start-ups	Funding and mentorship has been a scarce resource for youth-led start ups. They also face challenges in the market as there is little awareness around climate and energy-related issues. They see a value in creating a framework that measures youth-led initiatives so it is easier for them to communicate their impact to larger funding institutions. Youth entrepreneurs are also driven by community values to create direct impact on the ground.
Non-governmental organizations	There is a general theme in tokenizing youth in policy advocacy and there is an urgent need of meaningfully inviting youth to decision making spaces and ensuring proper implementation of youth consultation. Apart from focusing on mitigation and adaptation, it is also important to highlight resilience as an impact indicator for youth-led projects because marginalized groups are disproportionately affected by impacts of climate change.

Initial Recommendations

While the research, data collection, and analysis are ongoing, dialogue surrounding the Youth Impact Framework to-date establishes a clear appetite for youth engagement–both among youth leading their own initiatives, and expert stakeholders in the industry. Based on the interviews conducted so far, we are presenting a set of indicators through which we can

measurably track growth and progress regarding this engagement. To accelerate collaboration and support from both sides, we need to:

(i) Share and refine indicators with networks focused on climate and energy actions

(ii) Train young people and begin systematic tracking and progress reporting of the impact of youth-led initiatives through relevant indicators

(iii) Raise awareness of the opportunities around youth, climate, and energy engagement amongst cities, local governments, and industry leaders

Next Steps

Student Energy and the Global Covenant of Mayors will officially launch the project at COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh in November 2022, introducing initial findings from the project, and inviting additional organizational and youth stakeholders to take part in the research in coming months.

The final Youth Impact Framework report is planned to be launched in early 2023, featuring a revised set of Impact Indicators, qualitative insights from global youth leaders and organizations, and a concrete list of recommendations on how to better recognize and support youth-led initiatives to continue scaling their work.

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APPENDIX

Proposed Impact Indicators

Energy Transition & Climate Change Mitigation				
	Impacts	**Outcomes** *(or 'Activities')*	**Indicators**	**Sources**
1	Reduction or Avoidance of GHG Emissions	Closing of a fossil fuel generation or extraction source Reduced overall/per capita carbon footprint of households or city Decarbonizing buildings, transport, industrial processes	Metric tonnes of CO_2e reduced, captured, or avoided	GHG Calculator[1]
2	Improvement in Energy Efficiency and/or Energy Conservation	Installing new technology or retrofit that reduces energy use Households or buildings with reduced energy demand	Reduced energy use compared to baseline, in kWh or GJ Reduction in energy required to provide service, in kWh	Efficiency Calculator[2]
3	Increase in Clean Energy Supply	Installation of clean energy generating facility Households switched to primary reliance on clean energy	Generation capacity installed, in kWh Definition: *Clean energy refers to any source of energy that is produced from a renewable source.*	SDG 7 Tracker[3]
4	Switch to Clean Cookstoves or Cooking Fuels	Clean cookstoves installed	Number of clean cookstoves installed	N/A
Social Impacts				
	Impacts	**Outcomes** *(or 'Activities')*	**Indicators**	**Sources**

[1] US EPA, O. (2015, August 28). *Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator* [Data and Tools]. https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator
[2] *Efficiency Calculator*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 3, 2022, from https://www.omnicalculator.com/physics/efficiency
[3] *Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy - SDG Tracker*. (n.d.). Our World in Data. Retrieved October 3, 2022, from https://sdg-tracker.org/energy

5	Increase in access to decent work, and jobs created	Job opportunities for youth, by gender, and for historically excluded communities	Number of jobs (full time & part-time), disaggregated by gender, youth (18-35), ethnicity, and region	Measuring Job Creation GIIN Report [4] ILO Definition of Decent Work[5]
		Effective re-skilling programs, transition programs, or opportunities for communities reliant on fossil fuel sector	Number of people who changed jobs from fossil fuel to clean energy or other sustainable jobs; collecting data from employment history questionnaire	N/A
6	Improved Energy Access, Reduced Energy Poverty	Households, community facilities and other buildings electrified, with clean and reliable energy	Number of households or buildings newly electrified or with improved reliability, since launch of initiative	World Bank Data Country-Level[6]
		Households or communities spending less money, or lower percentage of income, to meet basic energy needs	Amount of spending, pr %, reduced per household or community	
7	Progress toward Gender Equality	Increased funding for women-led initiatives	Dollar value of funding given to women-led projects and initiatives	Gender Equality Toolbox[7]
		Increased participation of women in clean energy training programs, energy sector, and in energy governance	Number of women participating in clean energy initiatives and renewable energy training programs; number of women in senior positions in energy sector	
		Equitable pay for all genders	Dollar value of wage compensation; disaggregated by race, age, disability, education, length of time in position, relative to region	

[4] *Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) Impact Measurement in the clean energy sector.* The Impact Program. Retrieved September 3, 2022, from https://thegiin.org/assets/FINAL_GIIN_cleanenergyreport_PRINTREADY_singles_nocropsFINALFINAL.pdf

[5] *Employment and decent work*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 7, 2022, from https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/sustainable-growth-and-jobs/employment-and-decent-work_en

[6] *World Bank Open Data | Data*. (n.d.). Retrieved September 29, 2022, from https://data.worldbank.org/

[7] *Gender Equality Toolbox.* What gets measured matters: a method note for measuring women and girl's empowerment. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Retrieved September 3, 2022, from https://www.gatesgenderequalitytoolbox.org/wp-content/uploads/BMGF_Methods-Note-Measuring-Empowerment-1.pdf

8	Increased Youth Empowerment	Inclusive and accessible capacity-building or training programs geared towards youth Active inclusion and consultation of youth in programs and decision-making spaces	Change in youth perception of control over their own future, personal freedom, access to resources, inclusion in decision-making, before and after participating in initiative (collected through youth opinion surveys)	Measuring Empowerment[8]
9	Improved Awareness & Skills	Programs and campaigns designed to inspire cultural and behavioural change, contribute to social movements	Number of new youth-led or locally led projects since the launch of initiative	N/A
		Programs and resources for learning and building new skills	Number of youth employed, or otherwise utilizing skills, as a result of training	
Policy Advocacy				
	Impacts	**Outcomes** *(or 'Activities')*	**Indicators**	**Sources**
10	Increased Civic Engagement	Initiatives or campaigns to increase civic engagement at the individual, household, or community level	Number of people participated in or interacted with referenda, elections, or petitions Number of people reached to provide access to voting resources and support to vote Increase in attendance or level of participation in community decision-making events (council meetings, committees)	Measuring Advocacy & Policy[9]
11	Greater Youth Influence on Policy and Strategy	Active inclusion of youth voices in decision-making processes through representatives, councils, vote	Number of youth participating in decision making spaces and in policymaking	N/A

[8] Goedhuys, Grimm, Meysonnat, Nillesen, Reitmann. (2021, October) *Measuring Youth Empowerment: An Illustration Using the Example of Tunisia.* IZA Institute of Labour Economics. Retrieved September 29th from: https://docs.iza.org/dp14760.pdf

[9] Reisman, Geinapp, Stachowiack. (2007). *A guide to measuring advocacy and policy.* Organizational Research Services.

		Programs or campaigns to increase youth focus and youth inclusion in existing climate and policy plans	Specific mentions of youth and youth involvement in climate policies and pledges	N/A
			Climate policies (institutional, local, national) implemented or influenced by youth advocacy	N/A
Water, Food, Climate, and Energy (WFCE) Nexus				
	Impacts	**Outcomes** *(or 'Activities')*	**Indicators**	**Sources**
12	Reduction in Food-Related Emissions, Food Waste, Increase in Food Security	Initiatives that facilitate shifts toward planet-friendly diets for households, organizations, or through governments	Reduced ecological footprint (ha) , fresh water use (litres), and $CO2_e$, at per capita or community level	Measuring Food Security[10] Metrics of Food Security[11]
		Initiatives that improve physical and/or economic access to healthy, sustainable, affordable food	Household Expenditure Survey Method (HESM)	
		Initiatives that reduce or repurpose food waste	Amount of food waste diverted from landfill	
13	Increased implementation of natural climate solutions	Projects that conserve and protect existing forests and oceans, or new reforestation and rewilding	Area of land rewilded; Area of forest protected or number of trees planted; Number or size of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) created;	N/A
14	Reduced Plastic, Solid, Industrial Waste	Initiatives or campaigns that reduce waste at the household, community, or industry level Projects that directly recycle or upcycle waste products	Mass of waste (tonnes) diverted from landfill since the launch of project initiative	Measuring Waste Reduction, Reuse & Recycling[12]
15	Improved Water	Initiatives or campaigns that	Water Quality Index - pH,	Water Quality

[10] Bashir, M. K., & Schilizzi, S. (2012). Measuring food security: Definitional sensitivity and implications. *AgEcon Search*.

[11] *What Are We Assessing When We Measure Food Security? A Compendium and Review of Current Metrics | Advances in Nutrition | Oxford Academic*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 3, 2022, from https://academic.oup.com/advances/article/4/5/481/4557948

[12] Visvanathan. C. (2013). *Measuring Waste Reduction, Reuse, and Recycling through Industrial Symbiosis.* Institute for Global Environmental Strategies

	Quality	reduce water pollution through policy change, clean-up, or technological change	dissolved oxygen, salinity, and nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous)	Indicators[13]

References:

1. Ho, E., Clarke, A., & Dougherty, I. (2015). Youth-led social change: Topics, engagement types, organizational types, strategies, and impacts. *Futures*, *67*, 52–62. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2015.01.006

[13] *Ecosystem health indicators.* (2003, July 9). Department of Environment and Science. Retrieved from: https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/management/water/health-indicators