

Zimbabwe's AY4SF Initiative Positions Youth at the Centre of a Six-Year Climate Project

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Zimbabwe has launched a \$30 million, multi-year climate programme designed not just as a funding initiative, but as a structured, outcome-driven project focused on resilience, skills development and economic transition.

The Adolescents and Youth for a Sustainable Future (AY4SF) programme brings together public, private and multilateral stakeholders to deliver a coordinated response across six high-risk districts. Its design reflects a clear shift from policy ambition to project execution.

A multi-phase project with defined outcomes

At its core, AY4SF is built as a six-year implementation programme with three primary delivery pillars:

- **Green livelihoods:** training young people in sustainable agriculture, renewable energy and waste management
- **Community resilience:** supporting youth-led adaptation projects that protect ecosystems and water resources
- **Governance and influence:** embedding youth participation in climate decision-making at national and global levels

This structure ensures the project moves beyond training alone, linking skills directly to employment pathways, local implementation and policy influence.

Funding aligned to delivery

The project's \$30 million funding model is clearly structured:

- \$25 million from the Green Climate Fund
- \$3 million from Save the Children
- \$2 million in-kind support from the Government of Zimbabwe

This blended financing approach supports both programme delivery and institutional alignment, reducing fragmentation and improving accountability across stakeholders.

Targeted geographic execution

Rather than a broad national rollout, AY4SF is concentrated in six climate-vulnerable districts: Binga, Bulilima, Umguza, Beitbridge, Shurugwi and Kwekwe.

This targeted approach allows for:

- More controlled implementation
- Stronger measurement of outcomes
- Replicable models for future scaling

The ambition is clear; turn these regions into demonstrable hubs of sustainable innovation rather than diffuse impact across the country.

Scale and measurable impact

The project sets defined impact targets:

- 240,000 direct beneficiaries, including 80,000 young people
- Over 3 million indirect beneficiaries

Crucially, the focus is not just reach but capability; equipping youth with the tools to design, implement and sustain climate solutions within their own communities.

A delivery model built on partnership

AY4SF operates as a multi-stakeholder project, integrating government ministries, NGOs, youth-led organisations and private sector partners.

Key delivery partners include:

- Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development
- Environmental Management Agency
- Climate Change Management Department
- Youth and women's ministries
- Local organisations such as Action 24 and Green Hut

This layered governance structure is designed to ensure both top-down alignment and bottom-up execution.

From advocacy to implementation

What distinguishes AY4SF is its origin. The programme builds on years of youth-led climate advocacy in Zimbabwe, translating that momentum into a funded, operational project.

“This project gives us hope because it recognises that we are part of the solution,” said Pindirai, a 17-year-old representative from Binga.

That shift—from voice to delivery—is central. The project does not position young people as beneficiaries alone, but as active contributors to execution and decision-making.

Strategic relevance

Zimbabwe's exposure to climate risk, including droughts, floods and extreme weather events, makes project-led adaptation essential. Agriculture, a core economic sector, remains particularly vulnerable.

By linking youth employment, climate resilience and sector modernisation, AY4SF aligns closely with national development priorities while addressing immediate environmental pressures.

A replicable project model

AY4SF reflects a broader trend in climate programmes: moving from high-level commitments to structured, place-based projects with defined timelines, funding, and measurable outcomes.

If execution matches intent, it offers a model for how youth-led climate initiatives can be operationalised at scale; grounded in local delivery, backed by international finance, and aligned with long-term economic resilience.