REVIEW OF YOUTH ACTIVISM IN CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

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For decades, activists have demanded local and global environmental actions in programs and policy changes to mitigate climate change.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Goal 13 on Climate Action calls on taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impact.

Today, children and youth have taken to the streets, conferences and their representatives to demand justice for the planet, people, and their own future.

Global Target: Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

Global Target: Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities
Growing national and international youth activism on climate change calls on reviewing the evidence-based knowledge on youth activism in effecting environmental policy changes.

The purpose of this study is to examine evidence-based research on youths’ knowledge and activism in climate justice.
• Using the PRISMA model, this review focused on peer-reviewed studies from 1999 to 2019.
• Reviewed literature from A to Z databases including ERIC, PsychExtra, Academic Search Complete, Social Work Abstracts, PsychInfo, and Google Scholar databases.
• Keywords used “climate change”, “climate activism”, “environmental justice”, “climate justice”, “youth activism”, “advocacy”, “young, climate strike, qualitative and quantitative” for inclusion criteria.
• Exclusion Criteria: Media reports, literature analyzing adult advocacy data, dissertations, grey media, non-English and conceptual papers.
• In general, youth perceive environmental and climate injustices based upon their own generational perceived future risks, while claim solidarity on injustices experienced by other groups in the present.

• Most of the studies were conducted from the developed nations’ perspectives, except for one from Uganda.

• Overall, youth have improved self-efficacy to effect change and youth view of themselves as role models for younger members.

• They are willing to include environmentally supportive activities within regular youth movement activities. In relevance to political generations, age groups interests varied in interests of environmental change activities (Bertuzzi, 2019).

• Youth have partial knowledge of environmental issues and have general understanding of biodegradable material and global warming; however, hold less knowledge about sustainable development and ecological footprints (Goldman, Pe’er, Yavetz, 2019).

• Children and youth enjoy actively participating in family action plans, community action projects, tree planting campaign and community gardens (Trott, 2019).

• Findings suggest that youth awareness and action differed in each country reflective of their lived experiences, knowledge, values, and contexts of their communities (Mugagga, Metternich, Schweizer-Ries, Asiimwe, & Riemer, 2018).
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

• As future leaders in sustainable development, understanding youth knowledge and attitude towards collective action for environmental and climate justice in effecting policy change is important.

• Youth in general require education about factors contributing to environmental changes, environmental injustices, and pathways to effecting solidarity for policy changes.

• We recommend going beyond colonial models of youth activism to include youth and children from the indigenous, minority communities and global south in environmental justice voice research and practice.
REFERENCES


