



Framing Youth Climate Activism in Uganda on Social Media

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Introduction

- Climate activism rising globally since 2018 – but research focuses on Global North.
- Uganda: vibrant youth climate activism despite restricted civic space.
- Social media = key tool to connect local struggles with global movement.

Research Question:

How do Ugandan youth climate activists frame climate change and their activism on social media?

Methodology

- Cross-platform analysis: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram.
- Sample: 5 leading activists + 3 youth climate organisations
- Timeframes: COP27 (Nov 2022) & Africa Climate Summit (Sep 2023).
- Method: Qualitative framing analysis (climate change, emotions, collective action)



Climate activists call for climate reparations at COP27



Ugandan climate activists at COP 27

Implications

- Social media = critical space for activism under repression.
- Activists circumvent local restrictions by addressing global leaders.
- Ugandan movement is both locally rooted and globally connected.

Key Findings

Framing overlaps with Global North:

- Climate change = moral issue.
- Conferences = opportunities to spread message.
- Calls for action framed as hopeful, motivational.

Differences in Ugandan activism:

- More personal testimonies of climate impacts.
- Strong injustice & political struggle framing.
- More anger & fear compared to Global North activists.

Target audiences:

- Primarily international, not Ugandan government.
- Especially on sensitive issues like EACOP pipeline.
- Greater freedom online than offline – but still limited.

Collective identity:

- Strong solidarity with African & Global South activists.
- Shared demands: fossil fuel phase-out & loss & damage fund.

Conclusion

- Ugandan youth climate activists creatively use social media to frame climate change as both a moral and justice issue.
- Their activism highlights how digital tools expand political opportunities in restrictive regimes.
- Calls for further comparative research across Africa & Global South.

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