

COUNTRY FACTSHEET

UGANDA

Supporting climate change adaptation

Contributions of civil society to climate policies in Uganda

2019

Uganda – supporting climate change adaptation

Uganda is strongly affected by climate change yet its climate policy is only in its initial phase. Uganda’s civil society is mainly focused on development cooperation but there are many small environmental and climate change organizations on the local and regional level. Dialogue between the government and civil society takes place although it is rather superficial.

Climate policy of Uganda

Uganda’s share of greenhouse gas emissions is among the lowest worldwide. Yet, is already affected by climate change: Since 1960 the average temperature of Uganda has increased by 1.3°C¹ and the amount of hot days

<u>Climate policy Uganda</u>	
Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI 2019)	
• Overall value	No data
• National climate policy	No data
Civic space	
• CIVICUS monitor	repressed
• Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2017	
Freedom of expression	5 of 10
Civil society traditions	5 of 10
Civil society participation	6 of 10
Association/ assembly rights	5 of 10

and nights has increased by 20% and 37%, respectively.² This does not just affect people’s health but also their income as e.g. coffee cultivation is predicted to become nearly impossible if temperature increase by 2°C.³

Thus, Uganda’s NDCs prioritize adaptation over mitigation measures. Above all, Uganda aims at promoting climate resilience of the vulnerable population. Sustainable land management as well as *Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA)* are supposed to ensure people’s livelihood on a long term. Still, Uganda also intends to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 by 22% in comparison with a BAU scenario. These improvements are mainly conditional on foreign financial support.⁴

There are no climate related targets among Uganda’s seven strategic priority goals.⁵ Also, the ministry in charge, the Ministry for Water and Environment, only includes climate change issues in its focus area resource protection and does not refer to it anywhere else.⁶ Nonetheless, the Climate Change department

¹ Republic of Uganda (2015)

² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2012)

³ OXFAM (2008)

⁴ Republic of Uganda (2015)

⁵ State House of Uganda

⁶ Ministry of Water and Environment of the Republic of Uganda

currently outlines a roadmap to a climate legislation. However, it is not yet clear whether civil society will be allowed to participate in this or not.⁷ Also, when the *Change Advisory Committee* was installed as a technical advisory board chaired by the environmental minister important actors and groups were not included in this committee.⁸

Climate-driven civil society

Repressed freedom of expression and assembly rights could last be observed during presidential elections in 2016, which coincided with increased police violence and ongoing attacks on local and international media.⁹ In the very same year the *NGO-Act* came into effect, restricting civil society actions and allowing government agencies to block accounts as well as to shut down NGO offices.¹⁰ In contrast to human rights organizations environmental and climate organizations seem to be less affected by this. According to the Bertelsmann Stiftung political participation possibilities have further decreased since 2016. Yet, civil society participation in political processes was assessed more positively as there are visible efforts to include different actors in political events. However, president Museveni seems to rather ignore propositions from the civil society.¹¹

Ugandan organizations depend on foreign funds which are primarily granted for development cooperation and rather less for climate protection. These funds are often inaccessible for smaller NGOs due to complex restrictions. However, some well-established organizations seem to have access to state budgets and their funding is ensured by the respective ministries.¹²

With regard to climate policy issues Uganda lacks participatory mechanisms for civil society actors as the responsible environmental committees on the district level are often inactive. Therefore, the inclusion of stakeholder ideas and opinions was neglected in the readjustment of the INDCs and NDCs. This could have promoted greater transparency and a higher ambition level. Further, the creation of a functioning funding environment has failed so far although emission reductions are supposed to be financed to 70% by external funds.¹³

In spite of the dependence on foreign funds and the limited funds available for climate protection many small organizations seem to engage in climate relevant issues. This assumption is based on the member list of the *Climate Action Network Uganda (CAN-U)* and on-site interviews. This list included many small

⁷ Interviews for the final report of the project *Strengthen Civil Society for the implementation of national climate policy*

⁸ See PELUM (2017)

⁹ CIVICUS Monitor

¹⁰ Interviews for the final report of the project *Strengthen Civil Society for the implementation of national climate policy*

¹¹ Bertelsmann Transformation Index (2018)

¹² Interviews for the final report of the project *Strengthen Civil Society for the implementation of national climate policy*

¹³ *ibid.*

and a handful of larger organizations that engage in climate protection on a national and international level. These organizations have different backgrounds as e.g. ECO which is a Christian organization and Friends of the Earth NAPE which has a background in environmental protection. However, most organizations cover climate change as a cross-cutting issue only and awareness for the NDCs is consequently rather low within the population.

Sustainable development and gender issues are usually connected to climate change issues in Uganda. The well-known environmental protection organization *NAPE* is one of the organizations dealing with climate issues and focusing on women as well as younger people for mobilization and awareness rising.

On a national level a rather superficial dialogue takes place between the national government and civil society actors. This is most often located at conferences and congresses held by civil society groups as an institutionalized cooperation is still missing.

Climate-driven civil society activities in Uganda

The *Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (UCSD)* in cooperation with organizations from other African countries submitted an input for the Talanoa Dialogue in 2018, which was one among very few African contributions. The input points at the connection between poverty reduction and sustainable development. It also contains a Call for Action for the implementation of the NDCs¹⁴ and identifies sharing information on the NDCs with the population as a first implementation step. However, there is no hint that the Talanoa input was coordinated with other climate-driven NGOs from Uganda. This Talanoa contribution emphasizes the many educational activities of environmental NGOs in Uganda sharing climate-relevant knowledge with the local population and decision makers. Among others, there exist climate resilience trainings and technical support for local NGOs provided by *ECO*.¹⁵ There is also the Sustainability School in two Ugandan regions funded by German foundations or *NAPE*'s sensitization campaign, which lead to the foundation of a youth organization working on climate issues.

Above all, *NAPE*'s work demonstrates that Ugandan NGOs do not just spread knowledge on recent climate policies but also preserve and propagate traditional knowledge to improve climate resilience in the population, e.g. the knowledge on traditional, adaptive seeds. It can be concluded that *NAPE* focuses its climate adaptation work on capacity building to enable citizens to pose problems and to defend their positions in negotiations. This led to the rejection of oil production in the district of Hoima and to the implementation of local agricultural projects.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development (2018)

Although national organizations have not campaigned for climate issues on a national scale, the *Uganda Community Green Radio*, a jointly organized radio station, raises awareness for climate change in the population. Yet, financing for its continuance has not been secured until now.¹⁶

Attempts by civil society groups to influence the Ugandan climate policy mainly take shape in the organization of conferences and congresses by civil society itself, e.g. the *Strategic Dialogue on Achieving Uganda's Climate Goals* in June 2017.¹⁷ These events are attended by various political and economic stakeholders but due to their irregularity it can be assumed that they can only lead to a very limited improvements regarding the consideration of civil society interests in climate policies.

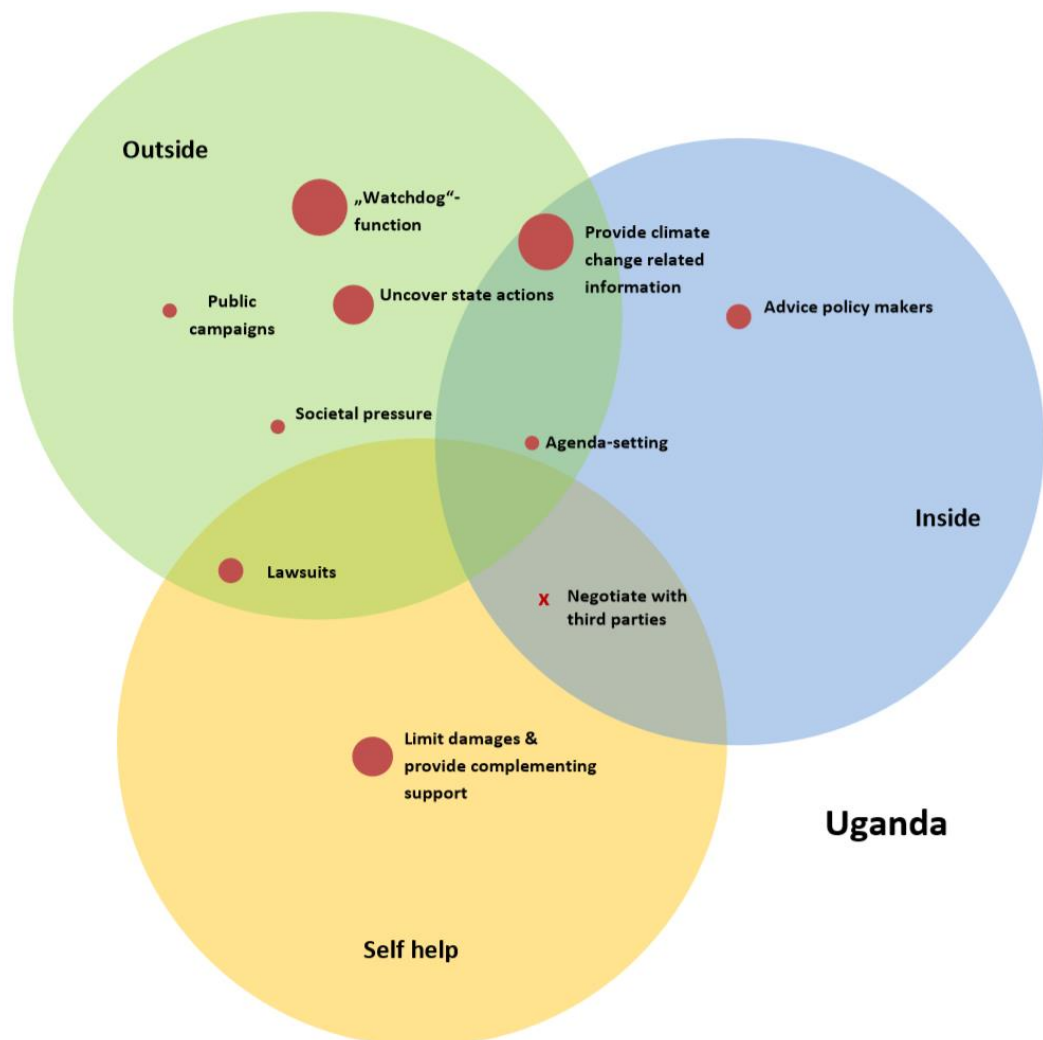


Figure 1: Activities of the climate-driven civil society in Uganda. The larger the dots the more important the respective activity. (own source)

¹⁶ Interviews for the final report of the project *Strengthen Civil Society for the implementation of national climate policy*

¹⁷ NDC Partnership (2017)

Methodologies and definitions

In order to clarify the scope of this research, this chapter gives a definition of the key terms and the indicators used to analyse climate-driven civil society groups in different countries. The indicators were chosen based on a literature research. Also, it shortly introduces the central activities and capacities of civil society groups to advocate their interest, and the way they have been analysed in the examined country contexts.

Definition of terms

In contrast to the United Nations which define NGOs as all non-governmental actors,¹⁸ this analysis mostly refers to NGOs as all (sub-)national organizations that are organizationally structured, refrain from violence, act in alignment with human rights, make moral claims and claim to represent universal societal interests. In doing so, these publicly acting non-profit-organizations aim to influence political decisions on climate change and climate change adaptation¹⁹ but have not been initiated by government initiatives. Consequently, trade associations, commercial associations and labour unions are excepted from this definition.^{20,21} The analysis thereby focuses on cross-organizational structures, whereby important groups and tendencies within the climate-driven societies – if existing – were considered as well.

The term **climate-driven civil society (groups)** comprises all environmental organizations that deal with climate change. This includes NGOs primarily dealing with climate change related issues as well as environmental organizations covering climate change as a cross-cutting issue or as one independent issue among others.

Civic space refers to the conditions enabling civil societies to act. To assess the civic space, the preservation of civil rights, such as freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, and the facilitation of their exercise are taken into account as well as the restriction of bureaucracy, excessive regulation and state control of foreign funding. Also, regarding civil society engagement on climate change related topics, the existence and promotion of, as well as access to (official) participatory processes dealing with climate policies is relevant for the assessment.²² This includes climate policy committees as well as possibilities to participate in planning committees for climate relevant policies of other line ministries.

For the comparability of civil society activities in different countries, several indices have been used. The respective scores can be found in the country fact sheets at the end of this report.

The *Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)* was used for an assessment

¹⁸ See Brunnengräber, Achim (2011)

¹⁹ See Brunnengräber et al. (2005)

²⁰ Roth, Roland (2005)

²¹ See Brunnengräber, Achim (2011)

²² Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung et al. (2016)

of the current climate policies of each country. This index assesses the NDC's ambition levels in addition to climate policy developments on a national scale.²³

The *CIVICUS Index*²⁴ as well as the *Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI)*²⁵ categories "Freedom of expression", "Civil society traditions", "Civil society participation" and "Association/ assembly rights" were drawn on to assess the civic space of each country examined. Countries not included in any of these indices were marked accordingly. Significant discrepancies between the indices' ratings and the authors' evaluation based on interviews or personal experience were explained in more detail in the texts.

Some sources used in this paper refer to the final report of the project *Strengthening civil society in the implementation of national climate policy* as well as to interviews conducted as part of it with experts in the field of climate policy and civil society and with representatives of the climate-driven civil society.

Activities of climate-driven civil society groups

Civil society organizations engage in different ways to make their voices heard by decision makers. Their climate policy related work includes the following

- Observation and definition of climate change related problems
- Provide civic education on climate polities
- Provide public information on and transparency in climate change related topics
- Control state compliance with its commitment on climate action

²³ The Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) assesses and compares the climate protection performance of 56 countries as well as member states of the EU. Based on the analysis of 14 indices evaluating greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energies, energy use and climate policies the climate protection performance is categorized as very high, high, medium, low and very low and ranked accordingly. Here it is important to note that no country's climate protection performance was ranked very high and the top three ranks were left vacant in order to raise awareness for the generally low performance. The subcategory national climate policy comprises the latest political climate protection activities and was scored between 0 (no climate protection activities) to 100 (maximum performance) by experts of local NGOs. For further information see: <https://www.climate-change-performance-index.org/>

²⁴ The CIVICUS Index evaluates the scope of action for civil societies in different countries and categorizes these in descending order as open, narrow, obstructed, repressed or closed. Thereby, CIVICUS mainly analyses to what extent the government and government institutions attend to their duty to guarantee assembly rights, association rights and freedom of expression. The index is mainly based on expert evaluations and the latest data from the respective countries. For further information see: <https://monitor.civicus.org/methodology/>

²⁵ The Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) assesses the status of the political transformation towards democracy and the transformation management of different states according to 10 categories and 38 subcategories. A score from 1 to 10 differentiates between total Autocracies (1) and Democracies in consolidation (10) in the category Democracy Status, and between failed, weak, moderate, good and very good in the Governance Index. The subcategories used in this study are those connected to civil society work. These are also scored from 1 to 10. 1 indicating a lack of tradition of civil society organizations, no assembly or association rights and no possibilities for civil society participation. Whereas 10 indicates diverse, longstanding civil society traditions as well as extensive possibilities for civil society participation and guaranteed assembly and association rights. For further information see: <https://www.bti-project.org/>

- Campaign work
- Exert societal pressure by demonstrations and the unification of individuals and groups with the same interests
- Limit harm in case of state failure
- Lawsuits
- Provide expertise and advocacy by directly cooperating with decision makers

Roth et al. (2005) differentiate these activities between (1) partly institutionalized, legal ways of participation in cooperation with decision makers or legal forms of criticism such as demonstrations (“**Inside**” according to Roth et al. (2015), also Inside-Strategies) and (2) spaces for political discourse and critical reflection on climate policies or civic education on climate policies (“**Outside**”, also Outside-Strategies). Another compilation of political activities “**Self help**” (3) was introduced by Müller et al. (2014). Self help comprises measures to improve the situation of those affected by climate change or reduce negative effects on them. In

For the analysis of the activities of climate-driven civil society, we have focused on the activities listed above, while we categorized them in consideration of the work of the authors listed above. The figure resulting from this categorization was used to summarize and to display the climate policy related activities in the surveyed countries. In the country factsheets, the activities related to each category are represented by a red dot. The size of the red dots indicates the amount of work taking place in that specific field. The results are based on scientific publications as well as interviews with experts and representatives of the climate-driven civil society of the respective countries. Thus, the score is to a certain degree subjective and can only serve as orientation.

Some sources used in this paper refer to the final report of the project *Strengthen Civil Society for the implementation of national climate policy* as well as to interviews conducted as part of it with experts in the field of climate policy and civil society or with representatives of the climate-driven civil society.

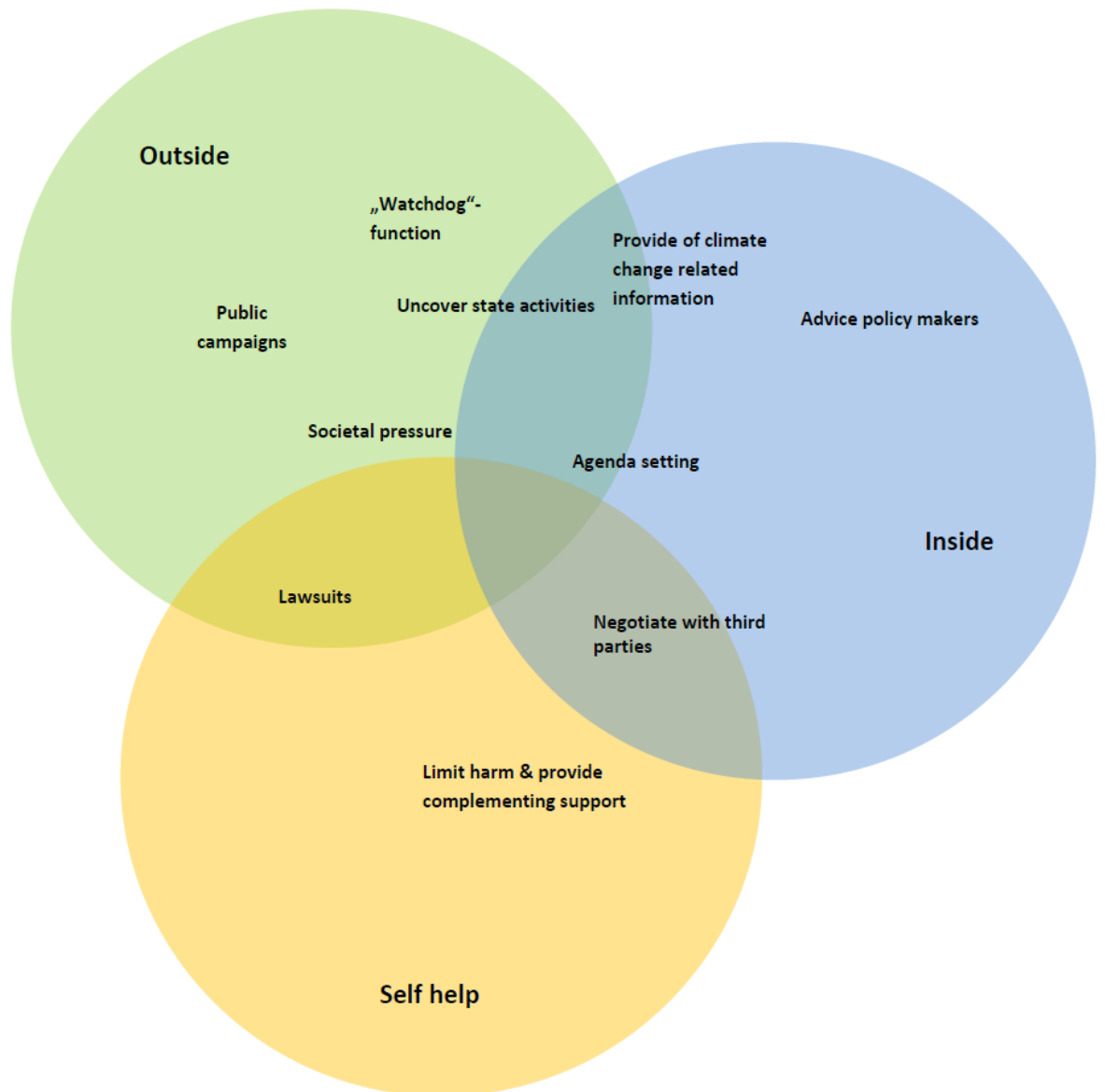


Figure 2: Climate policy related activities of the climate-driven civil society categorized according to the sections Inside, Outside and Self help (own figure).

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