

Vijana Twaweza!
Nothing For Us Without Us

National Youth Manifesto

Our 5E's Demands

EDUCATION



ENTREPRENEURSHIP



ENGAGEMENT



EMPLOYMENT



EMPOWERMENT



The USAID Mulika Initiative is a faith-based/civil society-led cohesion and election oversight programme with a purpose of improving accountability and transparency in electoral and democratic processes; promoting peace and cohesion in the country; enhancing citizen structures to monitor deter and respond to humans rights Violation and GBV; and enhancing citizen resilience against political manipulation.

The USAID funded project is being implemented by a consortium led by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), with Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), Election Observation Group (ELOG), Kenya National Commission for Human Rights (KNCHR) & Independent Medical and Legal Unit (IMLU) as implementing partners.

This National Youth Manifesto has been developed under Objective 4 of USAID Mulika Initiative: To build the capacity of Kenyan citizenry, particularly the youth, to set the agenda for issue-based campaigns, and to resist political incitement and elite manipulation.

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VISION

A united, peaceful, and secure country where we the youth have all the opportunities we need to lead empowered, dignified, happy, healthy, and sustainable lives.

THIS MANIFESTO

The welfare of the youth and the contribution they make to the wellbeing of the entire society cannot be ignored, considering that as per the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, 75% of the Kenyan population is below the age of 35. The youths aged 18 – 35 years constitute 36% of the population. As such, pre-emptive steps are urgently required to manage this youth bulge, else it will be a curse to the nation instead of being a blessing.

In a Youth Fragility Survey conducted by the NCCK in December 2020, it was revealed that youth in Kenya are not actively involved in governance and decision-making processes. Despite the Constitution giving provisions for public participation at different levels, they also feel that they are not given opportunities to assume positions of leadership and responsibility. The limited opportunities for skills development and training for appropriate livelihoods, consigns the youth to a perpetual life of poverty. This makes them amenable to manipulation by political and business actors so that they act as both perpetrators and victims of violence in the society.

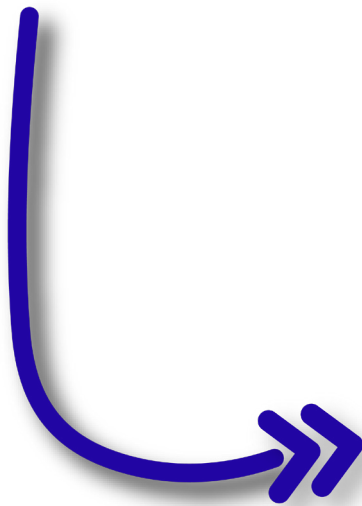
To remedy this, the USAID Mulika Initiative project has as part of its objectives set out to transform the nation by empowering the youth to develop a youth-designed, youth-owned, and youth-implemented vision of a better Kenya. This is being achieved through development of Youth Manifestos that outline the current life of the youth, the life they wish to have, and how to get there. It is in this context that in February 2022, youth in colleges and institutions of higher learning; youth in the faith structures and networks; and youth in the informal sector were coordinated to develop this National Youth Manifesto. In total, 1,500 youths participated in the process.

The primary goal of this Manifesto is to be the voice of the young, the basis of their engagement with political leaders before, during and after the 2022 General Elections.

OUR 5E's DEMANDS

Youth engagement, participation, security and sustainability must be valued and supported, among other things, through: the creation of a youth-friendly environment; training and mentorship opportunities; effective implementation of policies; and financial investments. Young people refuse to merely be observers of policy and leadership. The society must enable us to responsibly and effectively play our role in society.

Our demands are therefore as follows:



Education

Entrepreneurship

Engagement

Employment

Empowerment

1. EDUCATION



We demand truly free basic education, subsidized higher education, relevant and industry-informed training courses at university and technical colleges, and identification and promotion of non-academic talents and skills.

Towards this, our specific demands are as follows:

- Make basic education truly free, so that there are no hidden costs passed on to parents. Additionally, consider secondary education as a basic and include it as a free service to all young people in Kenya.
- Subsidize the cost of tertiary education
- Ensure that the Education programmes are reviewed periodically to make them relevant to position young people to transition to the job market upon completion of their studies
- Strengthen partnerships between academic institutions and different industry sectors to provide mentorship, coaching and skills development in entrepreneurship
- Empower the National Employment Authority and other agencies to play their role at the National and County levels in facilitating young people to secure employment opportunities
- Reform HELB and position it as a key state agency that finances education beyond universities and technical institutions
- Invest in documenting and disseminating indigenous knowledge and communal approaches on youth development to young people
- Facilitate intercounty and intercommunity exchange programmes to empower young people to appreciate other cultures, with the aim of building cohesion.
- Strengthen and mainstream the National Youth Service programme to instil discipline, the culture of public service as well as do more to empower young people beyond the current programmes and initiatives
- Address the rampant disruptions in schools by partnering with parents, students, professional counsellors, the community, and other stakeholders to deal with the root causes of the problems young people are facing.
- Create an environment that reduces young people's addiction to drugs and engagement in risky behaviour. This includes working effectively with state agencies to support and appropriately confront young people
- Establish collaborations with partners to establish and maintain scholarship programmes that support needy students
- Enhance access to vocational training for the youth to acquire technical skills and empower them to be self-reliant

2. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

We demand for focused and practicable programmes to equip the youth with skills to innovate, start and manage businesses. We demand the creation of a supportive environment for these Cottage, Small and Medium Enterprises to flourish, including the provision of affordable financing as well as market opportunities for our goods and services.



Towards this, our specific demands are as follows:

a) Infrastructure – Roads, Energy, Trade & Industry

- State agencies integrate young people in the rollout of their programmes to improve infrastructure. This should come with adequate training, awarding contracts and employing the youth
- Support technical institutions to develop skills and expertise of young people to exploit opportunities available in the renewable energy sector
- Work closely with the all the agencies investing in green energy and ensure that young people are integral to the plans and initiatives
- Lighting of our towns and centres to improve security and facilitate 24-hour economies which mainly favour young people and attract growth
- Attract investments in different sectors including value-addition in different value chains to attract employment and spur growth as young people are adequately trained on how they can exploit these opportunities

b) Agriculture

The agricultural sector is the backbone of the economy, contributing approximately 33 percent of Kenya's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Agriculture dominates the Kenyan economy, accounting for 40% of the overall workforce (70% of the rural workforce) and about 25% of the annual workforce.

- Lower the cost of farm inputs to enhance farm productivity
- Initiate programmes that are aimed at making farming affordable, rewarding and attractive to young people by enhancing its productivity
- Work closely with the National and County Governments to enhance farmable zones to design appropriate agricultural programmes for each with the aim of improving food security
- Introduce new commercial crop varieties to empower farmers and educate young people on such opportunities
- Invest in value addition initiatives to increase earnings for farmers and ensure that young people are integral in the process
- Facilitate young people with start-up capital to enable them to engage in contract farming in different areas of the country

c) Sports, Culture and the Performing Arts

The culture of Kenya is diverse. There are more than 40 tribes each with their own traditions and customs. The Kenyan culture, which has evolved over the centuries, is rich and can be seen in the visual arts, applied arts, Kenya food, music, dance, sports, fashion, literature, theatre and the Kenya people. To preserve the culture, explore the creativity of the young people in art and sports, we demand the following:

- Establish high-altitude training camps to nurture and develop athletic talents
- Construct and equip multi-media studios in all counties with state-of-the-art equipment to nurture talents and enable producers and filmmakers to record their productions at affordable rates
- Profile and market talented artists and transform them to make their ventures profitable
- Establish annual sports leagues and fixtures that will form the basis of constituency teams to enter to national and international competitions.

3. ENGAGEMENT



We demand to be included in governance, leadership, agenda setting and decision making both at the national and county levels. We must be given opportunities to assume leadership positions at all levels, both elective and appointive to implement our agenda.

Towards this, we ask the following:

a) Governance, Leadership and Direction Setting

- Ensure that there is inclusive governance in the formation of government at the National and County levels. To this end, women, youth, and persons with disabilities must proportionally be represented.
- Appoint young people to senior positions in government at the National and County levels.
- Strengthen political parties and ensure that they are well institutionalised to articulate the issues of all people, well.
- Political parties should nominate youthful aspirants to vie in places where the parties are strong.
- Political parties should create opportunities for youth to be involved in the party's leadership and operations.
- Uphold the rule of law by ensuring all people are covered and protected by the law.
- Deal firmly with the corrupt and law offenders.
- Strengthen the opposition and facilitate it to play its oversight role at the national and county level and thus foster accountability.
- Empower and support accountability institutions like OAG and COB to facilitate proper accountability for public funds.
- Ensure that the independence of the judiciary and other independent institutions is not undermined, and are facilitated with adequate support and budget allocations for service delivery.
- Promote and uphold meritocracy in government appointments.
- Ensure that people's views are respected and considered when given through the public participation forums.
- Implement the provisions of Chapter 6 of the constitution so that the country can get servant leaders who are genuinely interested in advancing the welfare of the people.
- Implement the Kenya Vision 2030.
- Convene regular meetings for different cadres of leadership to update the public on progress and impact of work (report cards and feedback sessions)
- Implement programmes to educate the public on corruption, which is the root of all our problems)

b) National Cohesion & Security

- Consolidate national unity and ensure that young people are part of national programmes on integration
- Empower state agencies responsible for championing cohesion and national values to do their job effectively so that we stop being victims of conflicts we did not start
- Deal decisively with incitement by the political leaders and elite as they contribute to loss of lives and displacement of lives with the young people being the major casualties
- Ensure that the public service and public appointments reflect the face of Kenya.
- End police brutality and extra judicial killings
- Ensure that there is coordination and partnership between government and partners working to champion unity and cohesion
- Discourage ethnic-based politics that disenfranchise young people
- Institute value-based mentorship programmes in schools and institutions of higher learning
- Reward and celebrate values-based leadership through a National Award System
- Provide sustainable solutions for rising cases of cattle rustling that is common in the Northern parts of the country that disenfranchise young people in pastoralists communities.
- Foster partnership with the media to promote national unity, stability and responsible reporting during and after elections
- Invest in educational programmes that empower citizens to be the champions of cohesion and national unity.
- Partner with FBOs to address radicalism, violent extremism, religious harmony and diversity/tolerance.
- Implement the recommendations of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC Report 2013)

4. EMPLOYMENT

The cost of living in Kenya is very high. Coupled with high levels of unemployment and dependency rates, young people are relegated to live below the poverty line. We demand for the creation of a friendly environment where businesses and industries prioritize the employment of young people in their companies and favourable labour laws are enforced.



Towards this, our specific demands are as follows:

- A reduction of taxes
- Establishment of subsidies for families that have been adversely affected by the status of the economy; and strengthening of cash transfer programmes to reach the most needful cases
- Review of the social protection programmes to ensure that they are sustainable and empowering. Ensure that they benefit vulnerable, caregivers and the most deserving cases
- Firm action against corruption
- Create entrepreneurial incubation hubs in urban areas that are equipped with internet access for young people to access opportunities on online platforms

5. EMPOWERMENT



We demand for an environment where we are enabled, at all levels of society, to effectively take charge of our wholistic wellbeing (physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually), in order to have a transformed consciousness (through our beliefs, values, and attitudes) to thrive in the 21st century and improve our access to opportunities around us.

Towards this, our demands are as follows:

a) Health

- Affordable health care across the country through well-funded and fully equipped health care facilities at all levels
- Priority be given to the mental health and wellness of the youth through increased budgetary allocation and effective programmes by the National and County Governments
- Rollout of a programme that targets young people and their families to be enrolled as members of the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF)
- Promote access to emergency and reproductive health care services in rural areas to help young mothers to access healthcare services
- Improve access to care and treatment services for persons living with HIV and eliminate mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS, while championing for the recognition and protection of the rights of PLHIV to protect them against stigma and discrimination while ensuring that they access care and treatment including household support
- Promote screening of Non-Communicable Diseases at grassroots levels to ensure early detection, and invest in and promote healthy lifestyles and recruit young people as ambassadors and champions at the community level (health volunteers)

a) Family Life

- Adopt and operationalize the Family Policy
- Establish a fully-fledged Ministry of Family Affairs
- Address Gender Based Violence and provide support for victims at the family and community level
- Promote Alternative Dispute Resolution on issues arising in families
- Partner with FBOs in the rollout of programmes on family strengthening
- Strengthen state agencies that are responsible for supporting families
- Invest and facilitate intergenerational learning and knowledge and values transfer. This can be achieved by setting up functional mechanisms to bridge the gap between a distinct generational difference among the people. Careful transition and inclusion in leadership roles pillared to promote mentorship to enable a nexus between experience (from the old) and the young

CONCLUSION

Young people have made significant contributions to make Kenya what it is today. They represent the future and there are examples of nations that have transformed themselves by investing in young people. It is imperative that being the majority of the populace, government programmes be directed towards providing sustainable solutions towards their challenges and problems.

A prosperous nation is a nation that Educates, Equips, Emboldens, Empowers, Elevates and Engages its youth.

This Manifesto is a product of young people and if these demands are implemented, the fortunes of the young people in Kenya will be transformed.

THE YOUTH...

... are a resource – they can make this nation achieve its highest potential

... but if neglected – they have the potential to destroy it

A PROSPEROUS NATION

... Educates, Equips, Empowers, Elevates, and Engages its youth

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