
Youth Policy Priorities for Inclusive Growth, Jobs, and Civic Participation

Kenya's youth are the country's greatest demographic asset and its most underutilized. Through national youth dialogues, community forums, and grassroots organizing across urban and rural counties, young people have articulated a clear set of policy priorities required to unlock opportunity, dignity, and economic participation. **The Youth Agenda 2025** consolidates these demands into a focused framework for government, counties, and development partners to act.

WHY THIS AGENDA MATTERS

Without deliberate policy action, Kenya risks turning its demographic dividend into a crisis. Youth face structural barriers to skills recognition, finance, mental health support, digital access, and civic inclusion. The Youth Agenda responds directly to these barriers with actionable, youth-defined policy priorities that strengthen national development while centering dignity, equity, and participation.

KEY OUTCOMES

- Increased youth access to certified skills and decent work
- Expanded youth enterprise participation in formal markets
- Stronger youth voice in policy, budgeting, and governance

75%

of Kenya's population is under the age of 35

1m+

Every year, 1 million+ youth enter the labor market with limited pathways to formal work

Reps?

Youth representation remains largely non-binding



This agenda reflects lived experience, not theory.

Each priority was identified and validated by young people across counties, sectors, and lived realities. Scan the QR code to explore the full document and its development



The Youth Agenda

SKILLS, JOBS, AND ENTERPRISE

Youth demand systems that recognize existing skills and connect training to real economic opportunity.

- Fully operationalize Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) with fee waivers for low-income youth
- Align TVET curricula with market demand, apprenticeships, and digital skills
- Simplify business registration and taxation for youth-led MSMEs
- Expand access to startup capital, grants, and affordable youth finance

ECONOMIC INCLUSION AND PUBLIC SYSTEMS

Youth face exclusion from systems meant to serve them.

- Enforce the 30% youth public procurement quota with transparent monitoring
- Guarantee universal access to National IDs through mobile registration and fee waivers
- Expand youth access to Universal Health Coverage, removing upfront payment barriers

MENTAL HEALTH, DIGITAL ACCESS, AND VOICE

Opportunity requires wellbeing, connectivity, and representation.

- Integrate mental health services into schools, training institutions, and community centers
- Expand digital infrastructure and youth hubs, prioritizing underserved wards
- Institutionalize permanent youth councils at national and county levels with resources and mandates



From Barriers to Demands: A Youth Voice

Kevin Otieno is 24 years old and lives in Nairobi. Like many young Kenyans, Kevin did not follow a straight path through formal education — but he did not stop learning.

After finishing secondary school, Kevin trained himself in electrical installation and basic solar work, picking up skills through informal apprenticeships and short-term jobs. Over time, he became highly competent. Contractors trusted his work. Neighbors relied on him. But without formal certification, Kevin remained locked out of stable employment, government contracts, and access to affordable finance.

“I could do the job,” Kevin says. “But every opportunity asked for papers I didn’t have.”

Without certification through Recognition of Prior Learning, Kevin could not formalize his work. Without startup capital, he could not grow beyond casual jobs. Delays in accessing key documentation made it harder to open a bank account

or register a business. The pressure of constant uncertainty — work today, nothing tomorrow — took a toll on his mental health.

Kevin’s experience is not unique. It reflects the reality of millions of young people whose skills, energy, and ambition are excluded by systems that reward credentials over competence and connections over potential.

Through youth dialogues and community forums, Kevin joined other young people to articulate what must change. Their demands were clear: recognize informal skills, expand access to youth-friendly finance, enforce youth procurement quotas, strengthen mental health support, and ensure young people have a real voice in decisions that shape their futures.

“The problem is not that youth are unprepared,” Kevin says. “The problem is that the system is not built for us.”

The Youth Agenda brings together these lived experiences into a unified call for action. It is not a request for special treatment, but a roadmap for inclusive growth — one that treats youth not as beneficiaries, but as workers, entrepreneurs, and citizens whose participation is essential to Kenya’s future.



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