Stakeholders Roundtable on National Youth Council REPORT

Theme: Build a better and stronger National Youth Council

Radisson Blu Hotel Nairobi Arboretum. | **4th April 2025**



Background

National Youth Councils have emerged in many parts of the world. They play a crucial role in facilitating the coordination of youth work for youth organizations while serving as a key resource for governments on expertise related to youth issues and concerns. In Kenya, some of the key functions of the National Youth Council include: promoting the inclusion of youth agendas in the formulation of policy by public institutions and organizations; acting as a voice and bridge to ensure that the government and other policymakers are kept informed of the views and aspirations of the youth.

The National Youth Council in Kenya is a state corporation domiciled under the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy, and Sports. It was established after developing the National Youth Policy (NYP) in 2007 and the enactment of the National Youth Council (NYC) Act in 2009. Some of its functions are to promote relations between youth organizations and other bodies both nationally and internationally with similar objectives or interests; promote the inclusion of youth agenda in the formulation of policy by public institutions and organizations and act as a voice and bridge to ensure that the Government and other policymakers are kept informed of the views and aspirations of the youth.

The following engagements, including surveys and stakeholders' roundtables, are part of the follow-up to the National Youth Council election, scheduled to take place from February 7 to February 21, 2025. This initiative aims to enhance youth engagement nationwide. The elections present a significant opportunity for young people in Kenya to elect their leaders and influence the policies that directly affect their lives and the nation. By participating in these elections, they can play a central role in government decision-making, providing a platform to shape policies and advance their agendas. The initiative also seeks to empower youth to take on leadership roles and actively contribute to building a better Kenya.

Organizational engagements on the National Youth Council.

i. The Youth Congress.

The Youth Congress is a youth-serving non-governmental organization founded in 2007 with a mission to provide a platform for youth to improve their status and realize their full potential and a version of an inclusive society in which the youth enjoy all rights and apply their agency. It organizes its work around three programs

- Youth, Governance, and Leadership
- Youth Economic Empowerment and
- Institutional Development.

ii. Kenya Red Cross Youth

The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), founded in 1965 under the Kenya Red Cross Society Act, is the only National Red Cross Society in Kenya and is recognized by the government as a voluntary aid organization working with public authorities

The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) emphasizes youth engagement through its Youth Development Department. This department aims to empower young people to create positive community change, focusing on governance, economic empowerment, peacebuilding, health protection, and climate action.

KRCS aims to develop strong young leaders as role models for positive change in governance. The Youth Livelihood and Economic Empowerment initiative enhances young people's ability to support themselves and includes training in conflict resolution and advocacy for peacebuilding and conflict prevention. The Kenya Red Cross Youth Development Department has structured across in 47 Counties than can be leveraged in engaging youth.

iii. National Youth Council

The National Youth Council is a State Corporation formed under the National Youth Policy (2007) and the National Youth Council Act (2009). It was officially recognized in 2010 through Kenya Gazette Notice No. 88 and became operational in December 2012 after a nationwide election. The National Youth Council's mandate is to promote transformative youth empowerment, focusing on employability, life skills, and the development of talent and entrepreneurship.

The National Youth Council election was announced by the former Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports to be held from February 7 to 21, 2025 and unveiled the teams that to oversee the long-overdue National Youth Council elections (for the first time in 12 years). This includes a steering committee and advisory board. These elections present a monumental opportunity for youth in Kenya to choose their leaders and influence the policies that directly affect their lives and development. The election regulation 2022 was developed in effort to have NYC elections.

The representative of the National Youth Council gave the background of the council and expounded the importance of the council giving example of vibrant council e.g. in Algeria.

Politicians seem to be affair for youth election-giving young leaders' popularity and political platform to change them.

The other issues highlighted by the legal officer, were

- Cs presented a memo to the cabinet
- Terms of the Council-three years renewable once
- Having youth sector working groups
- Need funding for civic education -luck of budget(13m-35m).
- Leveraging platforms like TikTok to mobilize youth.
- Campaign in registration in sectors-50 YSO in every county -registered according to sectors of interest.
- Kijani-environment and climate change.
- Ajira digital
- Youth Development Fund
- Uzalendo
- Lobbying on youth inclusion in decision making
- Harnessing youth voices
- Policy and advocacy

iv. The Youth Agenda

The Youth Agenda (YAA) is a youth-led and youth-serving organization founded in 1996. It was sparked by the evident exclusion of youth in various spheres of life and fueled by a passion for a 'total youth'. It works;

- To strengthen capacities/capacity building, particularly in the western region.
- Influenced policies, e.g., working on the review of the East Africa Policy.
- Governance and Leadership.

v. Siasa Place

Siasa Place is a youth-led and youth-focused civic technology organization that builds the confidence, skills, and competencies necessary for meaningful and dignified participation of young people in politics, governance, and civic life.

- People dialogue festival
- civic engagement/civic tech
- Surveyed the National Youth Council
- Leverage Facebook and TikTok to disseminate information and engage youth
- Supported 20 community champions-creating awareness.
- ID drive-micro site where people share experiences and challenges.

vi. Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association

A caucus for the young parliamentarians in Kenya to promote inclusive fiscal policies and improved oversight in the management of public resources through enhanced capacity of young legislators in Kenya

Three main info-briefs on the National Youth Council were shared with the stakeholders; these were

a. The findings about the National Youth Council survey conducted by The Youth Congress (three key findings about the National Youth Council survey).

b. The National Youth Council (established through an Act of Parliament in 2009 to serve as the official voice of youth in Kenya).

c. A-Z of the National Youth Council Elections.

a) The Youth Congress survey in the National Youth Council

Three key findings about Kenya's National Youth Council in the survey

(A National Youth Council survey by The Youth Congress, a premier youth-serving organization in Kenya, was published on February 28. The survey collected data from young people between 18-35 years across the country.

Note From February 11 to 27, 2025, the Youth Congress conducted a nationwide survey on the National Youth Council focusing on three primary areas.

1 Whether youth know about the National Youth Council's existence and operations.

2 Whether youth know about and have participated in National Youth Council programs and events.

3 Whether youth know about and intend to participate in the proposed National Youth Council elections.

The findings of the focus areas on the National Youth Council survey were;

1. **Many young people know about the National Youth Council, but they are not familiar with its operations.**

The survey results indicated that 60.3 percent of young people are aware of the National Youth Council, while 33.3 percent are not aware, and 6.4 percent are unsure; however, most lack knowledge about its functions.

The concept of establishing the National Youth Council was commendable; however, the council has proven to be largely ineffective, despite its functions being clearly outlined in the National Youth Council Act of 2009. The council was created to serve primarily as the official voice of the youth in Kenya. Spelled out and anchored in the National Youth Council Act of 2009. The body was established to primarily act as an official voice of the youth in Kenya.

2. **Most youth do not know about and have not participated in the National Youth Council programs and events**

   The survey results indicate that 76.2 percent of young people are unaware of or have not participated in the programs and events organized by the National Youth Council, while only 23.8 percent have engaged with these activities. This reveals a concerning lack of involvement among youth in the National Youth Council's initiatives. The result reveals that the engagement of youth and the National Youth Council has been dismal.

   The drafters of the National Youth Council Act of 2009 aimed to establish a formal mechanism and structure to address the inadequate engagement that youth say contributes to their minimal participation in national affairs.

   The low engagement between the youth and the National Youth Council also means ineffective representation. Drafters of the National Youth Council Act of 2009 envisaged by strengthening the administration of youth programs through meaningful participation at all levels, strong youth-focused policies would finally be channeled out.

3. **Most youth do not know of the impending National Youth Council elections, but are willing to take part**

   According to the survey, 57.1 per cent of youth are not aware of the elections that were scheduled to take place from February 7 to 21st, 2025. Although most youth are not aware of the impending election, about 50.8 per cent are willing to take part if and when the election happens. Only 12.7 percent are unwilling to participate in the National Youth Council elections. About 36.5 percent are not sure if they would take part in the national youth council elections- undecided.

   The uncertainty of electing youth in the executive has left the council almost dysfunctional. The first and only elections were held in 2012. Most of the NYC members have transitioned and are no longer youth, leaving the institution without steam or strategy, despite its broad mandate.

   On November 20, 2024, the Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy, and Sports, Hon Kipchumba Murkomen, appointed a steering committee to oversee the election of the National Youth Council, which is long overdue. The NYC was to be held from February 7-21,2025. The election was last conducted in 2012. The NYC elections were to be held every three months as per the National Youth Council Act 2009, making the current delay a significant breach of the law. These elections present a monumental opportunity for youth in Kenya to choose their leaders and influence the policies that directly affect their lives and development.

Recommendation by the youth on the National Youth Council.

- Youth expect a well-operated NYC that can mobilize young people from the ward to the national level to address various youth challenges. Additionally, without a structured mechanism, youth will not be able to participate meaningfully in decision-making and development.
- It's imperative to have a body such as the National Youth Council to help articulate debate and shape the narrative of how to mainstream the country's development.
- The youth want elections for the National Youth Council to be held as soon as possible and transparently to strengthen the body's ability to carry out its mandate. There is also strong persuasion to make the National Youth Council more inclusive.

Summary of the main findings of the survey.

- 60.3% of respondents know that the National Youth Council exists, although most are unaware of its functions.
- The majority of the respondents (76.2%) have never participated in any of the National Youth Council's events or initiatives.
- Even though 57.1% are aware of the proposed council elections, only 50.8% intend to participate, and a substantial proportion (36.5%) appear to be undecided about their involvement in the proposed National Youth Council election.





b) The National Youth Council (NYC).

Established by an Act of Parliament in 2009, it serves as the official voice of youth in Kenya.

Year	Description
2009	National Youth Council Act No.10 of 2009, assented on 31st December 2009, commenced on 6th January 2010. The National Youth Council Act was adopted to establish the National Youth Council, to provide for its incorporation, powers, and functions, and for other related purposes. The NYC Act stipulates that polls are held every three years.
2011	National youth elections were held as per the National Youth Council Election Guideline 2011(Legal Notice No.7 of 2011).
2012	The National Youth Council Act of 2009 was operationalized in December 2012 following the nationwide youth elections.
2019	Kenya National Youth Development Policy was formulated to, among other things, ensure youth representation through the strengthening of the National Youth Council.
2021	Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs formulated the National Youth Council (Election of certain Council Members) Regulation, 2021. Intended to revoke the 2011 guidelines.
2023	National Youth Council (Amendment), 2023(National Assembly Bill No.1 of 2023). The Bill seeks to amend sections 2,3, and 6 of the National Youth Council Act No. 10 of 2009 and align the Act with Article 260 of the Constitution of Kenya by referencing the terms "Cabinet Secretary" and "Principal Secretary."
2024	The Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy, and Sports calls for immediate action to address the long-overdue National Youth Council (NYC) elections, which were last held in 2012.

The A-Z of National Youth Council Election.

The National Youth Council (election of certain council members) regulation 2021, set out the manner of electing and nominating youth members to the National Youth Council under section 5 (1) (g) and (h) of the National Youth Council Act (No 10 of 2009).

The National Steering Committee is appointed by the Cabinet Secretary to coordinate the National Youth Council elections at all levels.

National Youth Council elections shall commence six months before the third anniversary of the date when the Cabinet Secretary publishes the names of the elected and nominated members of the National Youth Council in the Kenya Gazette.

The youth registered as voters within a ward shall elect six ward delegates from the ward delegates elected in that ward to represent the respective wards as voters at the constituency youth elections.

The first three males and the first three females to garner the highest numbers of votes shall be deemed to have been elected as ward delegates.

A total of eight thousand seven hundred ward delegates shall thereafter be elected nationally to represent the one thousand four hundred and fifty wards in Kenya.

The ward delegates in each constituency shall, at the constituency youth election of their National Youth Congress delegates, elect one male and one female from among the number to represent their respective constituencies at the National Youth Congress.

The National Youth Congress shall elect eight members from amongst its membership.

Engaging NYC moving forward

Q1. What would you advise youth-serving organisations on matters National Youth Council?

- Reach out to their constituents on the basics (e.g., what is NYC and the importance of having an effective NYC).
- Conduct advocacies/evidence-based advocacy.
- Youth engagement in civic matters.
- Documenting the NYC-having a data base -informed engagement.
- Pushing for sector working groups

Q2. What is the best way to put pressure on the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy, and Sports to hold National Youth Council elections?

- Convening of CSO, to develop and submit a communique to the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and sports demanding for National Youth Council elections.
- Building allies-reaching out to young Members of Parliament and Members of County Assembly to push the youth agenda and NYC elections.
- Public litigation and petitioning for NYC Elections

Q3. How can we strengthen the relationship between Youth Serving Organisations and National Youth Council?

- Share the brief info/info-graph (e.g. why the National Youth Council, what are the functions of NYC) with the constituence.
- Develop and share catalogue of National Youth Council success stories
- Have some joint actions and activities.

Other Partners/actors

No	Organization/Institution
1	Inter Party Youth Forum
2	SHOFCO
3	Royal Embassies
4	Inter Region Forums
5	Media
6	Content creators

Q4. What are some of the strategies to improve relations with NYC?

- Joint advocacies between youth serving organisations and the National Youth Council.

Q5. What are some of the lessons from history that can be considered to strengthen NYC?

- Investing in technology to have as many people voting online, to make participation convenient.
- The registration for be hybrid (online and in person)
- Publicity and media engagement -call to action.

ANNEX I: PROGRAMME

Stakeholders Roundtable on National Youth Council
Radisson Blu Hotel Nairobi Arboretum, Friday, April 4, 2025

Time	Activity	Facilitator/ Responsibility
8.30am – 9.00am	Arrival	
9.00am – 9.10am	Welcoming Remarks/Opening Remarks (setting agendas for the stakeholders' Roundtable)	Henry Ogola The Youth Congress
Agenda I: Updates from Organizations on their Work Concerning NYC and Impending Elections.		
9.10am – 10.00am	Organizational engagements on the National Youth Council	Representatives from the organization
10.00am – 10.30am	Health Break	All
Agenda II: Youth and the National Youth Council		
10.30am – 10.50am	Presentation of the findings of the Youth Congress survey in the National Youth Council	Raphael Obonyo The Youth Congress
10:50am - 11:10am	Questions, Answers, and Comments	All
Agenda III: Strategies to engage the National Youth Council moving forward		
11:10 am-12:00 pm	Discussion on ways to engage NYC moving forward	Raphael Obonyo/ Henry Ogola
Noon-	Lunch and Departure	All

ANNEX 2: PARTICIPANT LIST

No	Name	Organization	Title
1	Antony Buluma	Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association	Chief Executive Officer
2	Brian Sageli	Youth Agenda	Programs Lead
3	Christine Atieno	The Youth Congress	Finance Officer
4	Halima Hanii	The Youth Congress	Program Officer
5	Henry Ogola	The Youth Congress	Programs Coordinator
6	Isaac Khalema	National Youth Council	Research Officer (AIDE)
7	Isaac Ogodo	The Youth Congress	Social Media Manager
8	Maureen Amuhinda	Kenya Red Cross Youth	Program Officer
9	Raphael Obonyo	The Youth Congress	Convenor
10	Tabitha Oluoch	Siasa Place	Communication Officer
11	Victor Malombe	National Youth Council	Legal Officer