



AFRICA  
YOUTH  
TRUST



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JUNE - DECEMBER 2024

# Welcome Reader!

As we bring 2024 to a close, this edition of our newsletter provides a glimpse into the activities and milestones that defined the second half of the year. From transformative initiatives centered on empowering young people to strengthening community-driven responses and advocacy, we are proud of the meaningful impact achieved through collaboration and a focus on youth.

This has been a year of growth and resilience. We have partnered with communities and stakeholders to continue fostering innovation and encouraging youth active participation in decision-making spaces. The stories within these pages reflect the collective strength and determination of all who work tirelessly toward creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

As we prepare for the opportunities and challenges of the coming year, we celebrate the progress made and look forward to continuing this journey with you. Thank you for being a part of our mission to empower youth and inspire change.

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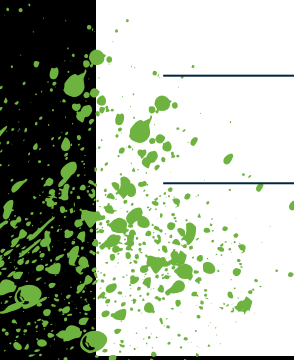
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# REFLECTING ON 2024

## Africa Youth Trust Welcomes New Team members

As we reflect on our progress, we are excited to introduce new team members who joined us in 2024. This year also marked the strengthening of our presence in Mombasa County, where our team is leading impactful work in the region.

Keith Muhati joins us as a Project Officer in Mombasa. He plays a central role in coordinating and implementing AYT's projects in the county. With a strong background in economics and sociology, Keith brings expertise in project management, data analysis, and policy advocacy. His dedication to empowering youth ensures that AYT's programs remain responsive to the needs of young people in Mombasa.

We are also grateful to welcome Nancy Nyaboke, our new Assistant Project Officer in Mombasa. Nancy supports AYT's growing initiatives focused on good governance, gender equality, and women's empowerment. As a passionate Human Rights Defender, she works to promote women's leadership and advocate for gender-responsive public services. Her efforts are instrumental in ensuring that AYT's programs in Mombasa foster inclusivity and amplify the voices of marginalized groups.

Saidi Kingi, serving as the Trainer of Trainers (ToT) Coordinator in Mombasa, leads capacity-building programs designed to equip trainers and community members with practical, hands-on skills. With extensive experience in finance, accounting, and budgeting, Saidi ensures that our training sessions are both impactful and technically sound. His collaborative and dynamic approach empowers trainees to become catalysts for change within their communities.

In Nairobi, we are pleased to welcome Levi Juma as a Project Officer. Levi is currently focused on the Young Urban Women Project, where he works closely with young women from the Young Urban Women Movement Network. Through his efforts, Levi supports the implementation of this critical initiative, ensuring its activities run smoothly and effectively while actively engaging and empowering network members.

We are sincerely grateful to our volunteers for their invaluable contributions, particularly during the second half of the year; Noreen Khaleji has been instrumental in supporting our Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) work, ensuring that our programs are impactful and data-driven.

In the communication department, we have been fortunate to have the support of Kelvin Njai and Zachaeus Obonyo, who are contributing their expertise in communication and IT, respectively.

Additionally, Mwatha Mugane has been part of the youth and good governance pillar, supporting our advocacy efforts and engaging young people in governance processes.

We also warmly welcome Eunice Kamau, who has joined us as an Assistant administrator. Eunice's organizational skills and commitment to service have been vital in supporting the administrative functions that keep our projects running efficiently

Their passion, skills and dedication have been vital in extending AYT's impact and enhancing our ability to serve communities. We extend a warm welcome to Keith, Nancy, Saidi, and Levi, and we sincerely thank Noreen, Kelvin, Zachaeus, Eunice and Mwatha for their invaluable contributions.



**Keith Muhati**  
Project Officer



**Nancy Nyaboke**  
Assistant Project Officer



**Saidi Kingi**  
Trainer of Trainers (ToT) Coordinator



**Levi Juma**  
Project Officer

# Advancing Gender Equality and Social Change Through Sports

Sports are not just about competition, they're a platform for social change. This was evident at the 7th Annual Ruben FM Football Tournament, which concluded in October 2024, with a thrilling grand finale at Ruben Grounds, Mukuru Kwa Njenga. Spanning two months, the tournament brought together 40 teams, 32 men's and 8 women's, highlighting the remarkable talent and community spirit of all participants. Supported by organizations such as Africa Youth Trust (AYT) and ActionAid Kenya, the event transcended sports to champion gender equality and raise awareness about gender-based violence (GBV).

## Championship Highlights

In the women's final, St. Joseph Ladies triumphed in a tense penalty shootout against Desert Venom, demonstrating the strength and resilience of women in sports. The men's championship was equally dramatic, as Wilson Aviators FC from Kibera outlasted FC Creative Hands from Mukuru in an electrifying match that stretched into extra time and penalties.

The grand finale drew a crowd of over 7,000 spectators, with hundreds of thousands more tuning in via Ruben FM's live broadcast. This wide-reaching platform amplified the event's powerful message of empowerment, advocacy, and community transformation.

AYT played a key role in making the tournament a success. Thomas the Ruben FM Station manager highlighted our contribution, stating:

“

AYT's involvement was instrumental not only in providing financial support but also in educating the community about GBV. Their staff engaged directly with players and fans, leading to dialogue on this critical issue.

”

Teresah Monchari, AYT's Access to Justice Project Officer, took the stage to address the energetic crowd, introducing the 21094 SMS platform, a lifeline for GBV survivors to report cases and access support services anonymously. Teresah's message emphasized the importance of accessible systems in addressing GBV and empowering survivors.



Engaged spectators watch the game unfold at Ruben Grounds, with the Africa Youth Trust (AYT) banner prominently displayed in the foreground.



St. Joseph's Starlets pose for a team photo at the start of the 7th Edition Ruben FM Tournament, where they went on to be crowned Ladies Champions, showcasing their exceptional talent on the field.



AYT Project Officer Teresah Monchari pictured at the 7th Edition Ruben FM Tournament, representing Africa Youth Trust's commitment to empowering communities through sports and advocacy.

## Transforming Sports into Advocacy

The tournament proved how sports can serve as an effective tool for advocacy and change. Merging competitive matches with conversations on pressing social issues like GBV, the event fostered unity, awareness, and action within Mukuru Kwa Njenga and beyond.

Significantly, the tournament also provided a unique platform to engage the male population in the community, as a large number of spectators were men. This created an opportunity to challenge societal norms, raise awareness about GBV, and encourage men to play an active role as allies in creating safer and more equitable spaces.

As the Ruben FM Football Tournament continues to evolve, it has demonstrated how effective collaboration can be in addressing issues like GBV within the community. The tournament provided a unique opportunity to engage the community in a comprehensive way, reaching potential allies and partners in the fight to end GBV while creating a safe space for women and girls.

This year's edition also showed that sporting events can serve as platforms for advocacy on serious issues affecting the community. They can inspire meaningful conversations and help drive positive change within communities.



# Bridging Justice Gaps: Free Legal Aid Clinic at Ruben Grounds

Access to justice remains a cornerstone in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV). In November, Africa Youth Trust (AYT), in partnership with ActionAid Kenya, Huduma Center, Ruben FM, the Judiciary (Makadara Law courts), and the County Government of Nairobi, held a transformative Free Legal Aid Clinic at Ruben Grounds, serving over 300 community members.

The clinic provided a lifeline for those seeking justice, particularly GBV survivors. Pro bono lawyers and representatives from the Makadara Law Courts offered expert guidance on navigating legal processes. Huduma Center representatives demystified critical administrative hurdles, such as obtaining national ID, birth certificates, ensuring that even the most marginalized community members had access to essential services.

Thomas Ochieng, Station Manager at Ruben FM, reflected on the event's significance:

“ This has been a very crucial event, giving a platform to community members to interact with experts on sexual gender-based violence. They have been educated on different forms of GBV, the right places to report cases, and provided with experts to follow up and ensure justice is served. The biggest gap in the Mukuru community has been the mishandling of cases. With this kind of sensitization and awareness, I think we are winning as a community and are on the right track. ”



AYT staff and stakeholders gather for a group photo, celebrating the collaborative effort that made the Free Legal Aid Clinic at Ruben Grounds a success.



Huduma Center employees assist community members during the Free Legal Aid Clinic at Ruben Grounds, providing essential information and support on accessing government services.



Mukuru kwa Njenga Chief Evan Munene addresses a crowd during the roadshow for the Free Legal Aid Clinic at Mukuru Kwa Ruben, rallying the community to access vital legal support services.

For attendees like Esther Njeri, the clinic was life-changing,

“ I was struggling to get a birth certificate for my youngest child. Thanks to the Huduma Center team, I now know the steps to take, and they even helped me start the process. ”

Similarly, James Omondi, who had been grappling with a pending legal case, expressed his gratitude,

“ The lawyers here guided me step by step, and I feel hopeful that justice is within reach. I'm grateful for this initiative. ”

Irene, a representative of the Judiciary, from Makadara law courts underscored the importance of proper legal procedures and urged community members to trust the justice system. She emphasized,

“ Let the courts hear your case, no matter how small you think it is. Justice is your right, but it starts with following the proper procedures. Seek guidance, report cases through the right channels, and avoid shortcuts, that's the path to fair outcomes. ”

## **A Collective Step Toward Justice**

This was the first free legal aid clinic under the Access to Justice and Security Project, for AYT it marked a significant step toward supporting communities affected by GBV. The day's success showed the importance of the value of collaboration in bringing information and assistance to vulnerable populations.

Moving forward, through the program, we plan to organize more clinics and involve additional stakeholders to offer their services and strengthen community support. Equipping the communities we serve with the knowledge and resources needed to navigate complex systems and seek fair outcomes remains at the heart of our mission.

# Young Urban Women Movement in Kenya: Rising Against Inequality

In Kenya's urban spaces, young women are navigating immense challenges; unstable jobs, the heavy weight of unpaid care work, and the ever-present threat of gender-based violence (GBV). For many, these struggles are compounded by limited access to education, healthcare, and opportunities to thrive. Despite their resilience, these women often find themselves silenced and sidelined.

The Young Urban Women (YUW) Programme is changing that narrative. Focused on economic rights and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), this initiative empowers young women to reclaim their voices, demand justice, and drive change in their communities.

## **The Baseline Survey: Understanding the Realities**

Imagine being a young woman in an informal settlement. You wake up at dawn to care for your siblings, prepare meals, and clean the house before leaving to find work. When you do, the options are often precarious and poorly paid. You might face harassment or exploitation at work, on the street, or even at home. Meanwhile, access to healthcare and safe spaces feels like a distant dream.

This is the reality for countless young women in Kenya. A Baseline Survey on Life Choices and Livelihoods, conducted in 2023 by ActionAid Kenya, revealed the depth of these struggles. The findings showed that many young women are stuck in a cycle of economic insecurity, burdened by unpaid care work and exposed to systemic violence. The survey also highlighted the persistent gaps in access to quality education, healthcare, and SRHR services, factors that further entrench inequalities and rob young women of opportunities to grow.

## **Building Solutions Through the YUW Programme**

The YUW Programme is built to respond to these challenges. Using a human rights-based approach to development, it places young women at the centre. By rejecting harmful economic systems and fostering feminist alternatives, the programme advocates for dignity, equality, and justice. Rooted in grassroots activism, the programme supports young women in organizing into movements and driving collective action. Through forums, workshops, and advocacy campaigns, they address issues like:

- Economic rights: Challenging systems that exploit their labor and pushing for decent work, fair wages, and opportunities to thrive.
- Sexual and reproductive health: Ensuring access to critical information and services that allow women to make choices about their bodies and futures.
- Gender-based violence: Creating safe spaces for women to share their experiences and advocating for accountability and justice.



YUW in Mombasa, alongside other civil society organizations, submitting their memorandum at the County ADP public forum for the financial year 2025/2026, held at Kicocode Ziwa la Ng'ombe.



AYT team, ActionAid Kenya team, representatives from the Young Urban Women Movement in Kenya, and partners come together for the launch of the Young Urban Women (Phase II) Project in Nairobi.



Ladies from the Young Urban Women Mombasa Chapter march against femicide in November, marking the conclusion of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign.

Through these initiatives, the programme continues to demonstrate how young women, united in movements, can advocate for systemic change and drive progress in their communities.

## **Translating Insights into Action**

This isn't just talk, the YUW movement is driving real, visible change; In Mombasa, YUW members participated in the County Annual Development Plan (ADP) public forum, presenting recommendations on how the county can prioritize women's needs in budgeting and planning. This action placed young women at the decision-making table, ensuring their voices are heard where it matters most.

During the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV, YUW chapters joined peaceful marches and held dialogues to highlight the rise in femicide and demand accountability. These events drew attention to the urgent need for stronger protections for women and girls, despite challenges like police violence during the Nairobi march.

The movement in Nairobi also hosted forums to address the impact of neoliberal policies on young women, sparking conversations on feminist economic alternatives that prioritize well-being over profits. One participant shared, "Before joining, I didn't believe my voice mattered. Now, I'm organizing in my community, advocating for change, and pushing back against injustices."

## **Creating Lasting Change**

The YUW movement not only addresses immediate challenges but also builds pathways for systemic change that foster equality, justice, and dignity. By mobilizing young women into movements and amplifying their voices, it creates safer, fairer, and more equitable spaces for young women to thrive. To young women seeking a platform to grow, advocate, and make a difference; Join or support a movement that's creating real change and empowering the next generation of leaders.



# Championing Digital Pathways for Kenya's Coastal Youth

Kenya's digital transformation holds boundless opportunities for young people, but for the coastal youth of Mombasa, access, skills, and tools often remain out of reach. In August, Africa Youth Trust (AYT) joined Mombasa's vibrant youth to mark International Youth Day under the theme "From Clicks to Progress: Youth Digital Pathways for Sustainable Development." The celebration called for investments in digital inclusion to unlock the full potential of Kenya's coastal youth.

## **A Celebration of Innovation and Collaboration**

The day kicked off with an energetic procession from Mapembeni to SwahiliPot Hub, a symbolic walk of unity and purpose. The SwahiliPot Hub, a renowned center for innovation in Mombasa, buzzed with activity as organizations, including AYT, showcased programs aimed at empowering youth and bridging the digital divide.

For AYT's recently established Mombasa office, this was an opportunity to listen, engage, and connect with young people directly. Coastal youth shared their experiences navigating barriers to digital resources, while AYT staff introduced initiatives designed to strengthen governance, economic empowerment, and digital literacy.

## **Voices of Leadership: A Shared Vision for Coastal Youth**

Leaders at the event echoed a shared commitment to empowering youth through access, opportunity, and digital innovation. Mombasa Governor Abdulsamad Nassir emphasized the role of local government in creating enabling environments for young entrepreneurs and innovators.

The Principal Secretary for Youth Affairs and the Creative Economy Ismail Maalim urged young people to make informed decisions,

“Information is power. Seek accurate, reliable information from trusted platforms and government offices. Don't let misinformation hold you back from opportunities.”

Meanwhile, YEDF CEO Josiah Moriasi underscored the Fund's commitment to supporting young entrepreneurs through mentorship, loans, and business incubation programs.

## **Advancing Solutions for Digital Inclusion**

While the celebration spotlighted youth potential, AYT and partners took the conversation a step further by identifying tangible solutions to address digital gaps. Working alongside the YSO Consortium Coastal Cluster, AYT led the drafting of a



TOT Saidi Kingi engages a stakeholder at the AYT stand during International Youth Day, showcasing programs designed to empower youth



An energetic procession from Mapembeni to SwahiliPot Hub during the celebration of International Youth Day in Mombasa.



AYT Project Officer Keith joins the YSO Consortium Coastal Cluster during the presentation of the position paper to the Mombasa County Department of Youth, Gender, Sports & Social Services.

position paper that outlined key strategies for fostering digital inclusivity. The recommendations included expanding digital hubs, improving access to reliable internet, and creating pathways for youth innovation and entrepreneurship.

The consortium convened a meeting in October with the Mombasa County Department of Youth, Gender, Sports & Social Services. Chaired by Chief Officer Mr. Khamis Kurichwa, the discussions tackled issues critical to youth empowerment, including equitable access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO), improved digital infrastructure, and transparency in youth-focused government programs.

Mr. Kurichwa pledged to provide key data to inform interventions, signaling a collaborative approach to addressing these challenges. His words resonated with optimism:

“We cannot talk about sustainable development without investing in the potential of our youth. Digital tools and access must be the foundation of this effort.”

## **Youth at the Forefront of Change**

Youth in Kenya's coastal regions deserve access, opportunities, and investments to thrive in the digital economy. No young person should be left behind; instead, they must be equipped to lead innovation and drive sustainable development. In the words of one participant;

“The future belongs to us, but we need the tools to build it. Digital inclusion is not a privilege, it's a right.”

The focus now is on creating more pathways for progress, one click, one idea, and one empowered youth at a time.



# From the Soccer Field to Entrepreneurs: How the Small Tigers Transformed Their Future

What began as a humble soccer team in Magodzoni Village, Kwale County, has blossomed into a powerful story of resilience and growth. The Small Tigers, once grappling with limited funds and support, have transformed into a vibrant collective of young entrepreneurs. Their journey, fueled by determination and the Shared Future program in partnership with Africa Youth Trust (AYT), is a testament to how structured support and training can unlock potential and change lives.

Originally formed to foster community peace and steer youth away from harmful behaviors like drug abuse, the Small Tigers transitioned into a certified youth group. Their goal was to create sustainable opportunities for themselves and their peers. "We wanted to do more than play soccer," said Juma Rashid, a group member.

“

We saw many of our peers wasting away, and we decided to use soccer as a way to pull them in and integrate them into something positive.

”

The turning point came when the group participated in AYT's entrepreneurship and employability training through the Shared Future program. Ndarro a group member narrates,

“

The training made us believe we could be entrepreneurs, we learned skills that helped us move from just ideas to actual business plans.

”

Post-training, the group identified the motorbike spare parts business as a viable venture. Recognizing the boda boda (motorbike taxi) trade's popularity, they launched the Small Tiger Shop, a business specializing in motorbike spares and assembly. "The boda boda industry is big here, and we saw an opportunity to support it while creating jobs for our members," said Rashid.

The shop has become a beacon of success in the community, providing employment to group members and offering vital services to boda boda operators. With AYT's support, the group connected with local officials, gaining access to funds like the Uwezo and Youth Funds to expand their venture. Rashid further explains,

“

We are no longer idle," said Rashid. "Each of us has something productive to do, whether it's working in the shop or running other personal businesses. We're proud of what we've built together.

”

The Small Tigers now aim to expand their business by opening additional spare shops in neighboring villages and mentoring other youth groups. Their journey shows how young people, with the right support, can overcome challenges and create meaningful change for themselves and their communities.



A member of the Small Tigers hard at work fixing a motorbike, a skill that has become a cornerstone of their entrepreneurial journey.



AYT TOT Saidi Kingi and Project Officer Keith Muhati engage with members of the Small Tigers during a monitoring and evaluation visit for Shared Futures project grant beneficiaries.



A glimpse into the Small Tigers' motorbike repair shop, a business built with dedication and support from the Shared Futures project.

# Empowering Youth Voices at the EAC Youth Policy Review Forum

In November, Africa Youth Trust (AYT) joined over 200 youth leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders at the East African Youth Forum to review the East African Community (EAC) Youth Policy. Held at the East African Legislative Assembly Chamber in Arusha, Tanzania, as part of the YouLead Summit 2024, the forum was themed “Empowering Youth Voices for the Future of the East African Community.”

The gathering provided a platform for youth from across the region to engage directly with policymakers and contribute to shaping a policy that aligns with their aspirations. It marked a significant step toward amplifying the role of young people in regional integration and development.

## **AYT's Contribution to the EAC Youth Policy**

Africa Youth Trust has long been at the forefront of youth advocacy in East Africa. During the initial drafting of the EAC Youth Policy, AYT played a pivotal role in providing input that shaped the policy's strategic priorities. These efforts emphasized the importance of harmonizing definitions of "youth" across member states and promoting youth-led participation in governance and policy processes.

At the forum, AYT's representative, Ms. Irma Maringo, shared success stories of youth engagement in policy development. She highlighted how partnerships, collaborations, and the use of existing platforms have helped bridge the gap between youth and governance structures. Ms. Maringo's insights underscored AYT's commitment to fostering meaningful engagement and advancing inclusive governance.



Youth delegates at the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania, during the Youth Policy Consultation Forum.



Inside the auditorium at the EAC Secretariat in Arusha, Tanzania, where youth voices took center stage during the Youth Policy Consultation Forum

## **Key Contributions and Suggestions from Participants**

The 200 participants, representing diverse backgrounds and regions within the EAC, contributed valuable recommendations to ensure the revised youth policy reflects the realities and aspirations of young people. Some of the key suggestions included:

- **Climate Action and Environmental Conservation:** Participants called for the integration of youth-led initiatives in addressing climate change and promoting sustainability within the region.
- **Mental Health and Well-being:** The forum emphasized the need to prioritize mental health, particularly among young people, and to include it as a key focus area in the revised policy.
- **Urban Agroecology and Food Security:** Youth leaders advocated for innovative solutions to enhance food security and encourage urban agriculture as a way to address unemployment and urban poverty.
- **Strengthened Economic Opportunities:** The establishment of a youth trade desk at the EAC Secretariat was proposed to improve access to regional trade opportunities and economic empowerment initiatives.
- **Youth Representation in Governance:** Participants stressed the importance of having dedicated youth representation in decision-making bodies, including the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), and the creation of platforms for sustained youth engagement.

## **Why Youth Representation Matters**

Youth make up the largest demographic in the EAC, making their involvement critical to driving regional integration and sustainable development. However, gaps in awareness and advocacy have limited their engagement with existing policies. The forum emphasized the importance of bridging these gaps by equipping young people with the tools, skills, and platforms needed to influence decision-making.

The revised EAC Youth Policy aims to align with global frameworks like the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Africa's Agenda 2063, ensuring that youth in East Africa can compete, innovate, and thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

As the EAC marks 25 years of integration, the revised youth policy presents a transformative opportunity to build a more inclusive and youth-centered future. We will continue shaping policies that address youth needs, promoting partnerships to amplify regional impact, and advocating for inclusive governance.



# Youth Center Stage at the 7th Annual EAC Secretary Generals' Forum

"Towards a Resilient and Fully Integrated East Africa" was the clarion call at the 7th Annual East African Community (EAC) Secretary Generals' Forum, held in Nairobi, Kenya. The event brought together regional leaders, youth representatives, and stakeholders to envision a stronger, more united East Africa.

## **A Vision for a United East Africa**

The forum, inaugurated by Hon. Felix Kosgei, Kenya's Head of Public Service, emphasized the importance of collaboration over competition in building a resilient and integrated East African Community.

“EAC countries must understand that they are not competitors, they should complement and support each other in trade, education, and policy. Collaboration is key”

Denis Londo, Tanzania's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation.

Themed "Towards a Resilient and Fully Integrated East Africa: Overcoming Challenges and Harnessing Opportunities," the forum highlighted initiatives such as the introduction of the East African e-passport (EA e-pass), which promises seamless mobility across the region, fostering greater integration and economic cooperation.

## **Youth and Women at the Forefront**

One of the forum's significant milestones was the announcement of a dedicated position for youth and children within the EAC Commission. "The establishment of this role ensures that the concerns and aspirations of young people are formally represented at the regional level," noted Denis Londo, Tanzania's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation. Africa Youth Trust (AYT), in collaboration with the East Africa Youth Network (EAYN), amplified the call for a Youth Desk at the EAC Secretariat. This proposed initiative would institutionalize youth participation in policy development and ensure that regional policies prioritize the needs of young people.

During the forum, Douglas Wanja from the University of Nairobi and the Data for Governance Alliance highlighted the growing optimism among young people about the EAC's role in fostering integration. Later in a tweet he noted;

“...the Afrobarometer data shows that 55.5% of Kenyans agree and strongly agree that their needs and benefits are addressed by the decisions of the EAC. Our current Secretary General can only ensure that the rest of the eight member states feel so.”

Youth representatives from across East Africa showcased innovative ideas and projects to potential donors, proving the transformative power of youth-driven initiatives. Bruce Sakindi, Rwanda Coordinator for EAYN, issued a challenge to the EAC Secretariat to join a roundtable discussion with youth networks to implement recommendations and incorporate technology in Africa's development agenda.

"This is a chance to ensure that the energy and ideas of young people are not just heard but acted upon," he said, underscoring the critical role of technology in fostering progress.



Partners with the EAC Youth Network, including AYT Executive Director Winifred Okumu and Head of Programmes Irma Maringo, pose for a group photo at the 7th Annual EAC Secretary Generals' Forum, showcasing unity in advancing regional integration.



EAC Secretary General Ms. Veronica Nduva delivers her closing remarks at the 7th Annual EAC Secretary Generals' Forum, urging swift action on the forum's recommendations to ensure a resilient and integrated East Africa.

## **Addressing Historical and Regional Challenges**

Participants also reflected on the region's colonial legacy and its impact on integration. "Africa remains shaped by its colonial past. True liberation will begin when Africa decides to write its own history," noted Denis Londo, highlighting the need for systems that prioritize all citizens' voices. The forum also tackled critical issues like youth unemployment, the skills mismatch, and the need for inclusive systems that promote resilience and shared prosperity.

## **Looking Ahead: A Borderless East Africa**

In her closing remarks, EAC Secretary General Ms. Nduva urged swift action on the forum's recommendations to ensure a resilient and integrated East Africa. she stated;

“Unity and action are the keys to realizing the vision of a borderless region”

For Africa Youth Trust, the forum was an opportunity to champion youth inclusion and advocate for policies that create tangible opportunities. The 7th Annual Secretary Generals' Forum concluded with a renewed commitment to fostering integration, resilience, and inclusivity in East Africa. By amplifying the voices of youth and women, the EAC can ensure that all citizens thrive in a united, borderless future.



# Feminist Approaches to Fighting Corruption: Launching "Ugatuzi na Usawa: Bila Ufisadi"

“Corruption doesn’t just drain resources, it deepens inequality, and women often pay the highest price”

In July, Africa Youth Trust (AYT), in partnership with the Global Fund for Women and Collaboration of Women in Development (CWID), took a bold step to challenge this reality. At a gathering in Mombasa, stakeholders, leaders, and advocates came together to launch the groundbreaking “Ugatuzi na Usawa: Bila Ufisadi” project.

With a focus on combating corruption at the county level through feminist approaches, the project seeks to empower women, foster transparency, and promote accountability in local governance. It’s about tackling corruption where it hits hardest, marginalized communities, while elevating women and youth as agents of change.

The meeting brought together participants from civil society and government, creating space for collaboration and dialogue while calling them reimagine leadership, challenge systemic power imbalances, and pave a new path toward inclusive and equitable governance.

## Why Feminist Approaches Matter in Anti-Corruption Efforts

A presentation on “Feminist Approaches to Anti-Corruption” dispelled misconceptions about feminism, linking it to promoting equality and reducing corruption. It emphasized how marginalized groups, particularly women, are the hardest hit by corruption due to reduced access to quality services and infrastructure.



A stakeholder shares their reactions and insights following the presentation at the launch of 'Ugatuzi na Usawa: Bila Ufisadi'.



AYT Executive Director Winifred Okumu delivers her closing remarks, expressing gratitude to all attendees for supporting the launch of 'Ugatuzi na Usawa: Bila Ufisadi'.



Stakeholders gather for a group photo during the launch of 'Ugatuzi na Usawa: Bila Ufisadi', a bold initiative promoting feminist approaches to fighting corruption

The discussion emphasized the role of women in leadership, noting their focus on social welfare and transparent governance. It also underscored the importance of instilling accountability and transparency in all government officials. Addressing power imbalances and empowering women and youth emerged as essential strategies for combating corruption and promoting inclusive governance.

## The Three-Pronged Approach

The project focuses on creating systemic change through three key pillars:

**Awareness and Agency Building** equips women and youth with the knowledge and confidence to demand accountability. Through workshops and forums, they are empowered to act as watchdogs against corruption.

**Access to Resources and Services** tackles systemic barriers by advocating for equitable access to essential services like healthcare, education, and administrative systems, reducing vulnerabilities and strengthening accountability.

**Legal and Policy Reform** drives sustainable governance by pushing for gender-responsive policies and engaging decision-makers to prioritize transparency and inclusivity.

This comprehensive approach tackles corruption at individual, community, and systemic levels, placing women and youth at the forefront of the fight against corruption while building pathways for equitable governance.

## Youth and Feminist Leadership in Governance

The inception meeting sparked meaningful discussions among stakeholders, who expressed their enthusiasm for the project and its objectives.

Mercy, a representative from Transparency International Kenya, shared her organization’s dedication to the project’s goals, stating:

“We are committed to working across all three strategic objectives and look forward to further engagement as we strengthen accountability mechanisms.”

Similarly, Mr. Obiero from Ajenda Kenya invited deeper collaboration in their area of operation, emphasizing the importance of strong partnerships:

“We are eager to work with Africa Youth Trust to advance legal and policy frameworks that promote good governance and ensure that women and youth are at the center of these efforts.”

The collaborative spirit at the meeting underscored a shared vision for transparency, accountability, and gender equality. Partners pledged their support to AYT, recognizing the transformative potential of feminist and youth-led approaches in combating corruption at the county level.

AYT’s Executive Director, Winifred Okumu, emphasized the importance of youth inclusion in governance:

“It is important to have youth at the table of decision-making to ensure their concerns are included in the processes and outcomes.”

This sentiment was echoed by participants, who highlighted the need for robust youth and women-led efforts to combat corruption and champion inclusive governance.

# Pan-African Youth Forum Urges Educational Innovation and Inclusion

The Pan African Parliament Youth Forum on Good Governance concluded today, wrapping up three days of insightful discussions and forward-thinking resolutions on the theme of good Governance and the Democratization of Education for African Youth in the 21st Century. The event brought together youth leaders, policymakers, parliamentarians and stakeholders from across the continent to discuss revolutionizing African education systems through digital learning and strengthening youth participation in governance.

In her closing remarks, Hon. Laila Dahi, President of the Pan African Parliament Youth Caucus and a representative of Morocco, called for swift action to amend outdated education policies, emphasizing the urgent need for reforms to empower African youth.

“

We cannot overlook the remarkable policies and projects being implemented by CSOs to strengthen democracy and ensure that youth voices are heard, their work is essential in fostering inclusive governance and addressing the needs of our societies.

”

She also further encouraged young people across the continent to remain actively engaged in advocating for their rights and shaping their future. “Your voices are the cornerstone of a strong African Union. When we raise African voices collectively, we build a brighter future for our continent,” she added.

The forum centered on the need to rethink and transform African education systems. Hon. Dahi highlighted the importance of democratizing education to align with Africa-centric values and aspirations, stressing that a paradigm shift is necessary to address existing inequalities and create systems that serve all. Virtual learning was identified as a key innovation that can bridge gaps in access to quality education, particularly in underserved regions.



Listening attentively at the Pan African Youth Forum (from right to left): Hon. Euclides Jorge Varela da Silva (Cabo Verde & PAP MP), Professor Margaret Kamar (Kenya Senate MP & PAP), and Hon. Ben Salah Aymen (Tunisia & PAP MP)



Panelists at the Pan African Youth Forum (from right to left): Irma Maringo (Africa Youth Trust), Lawrence Muli (AU-EU Youth Lab), Douglas Wanja (University of Nairobi), Ms. Brenda Moore (Founder & Executive Director of Kids' Educational Engagement Project - KEEP), and Peter Quest (Kenya School of Government), they shared valuable insights on youth development in Africa.



Delegates at the Pan African Youth Forum, attentively listening to the discussions unfolding on stage, focused on key issues affecting youth across the continent.

Delegates urged African governments to prioritize investments in infrastructure that support digital and e-learning platforms. Such efforts, aligned with Africa Agenda 2060, were highlighted as crucial for improving the quality and accessibility of education. They emphasized that embracing these innovations would equip Africa's youth with the competitive edge needed to excel in the global economy.

The pressing issues of youth unemployment and economic challenges, which affect millions of young people across the continent, were also addressed. Delegates urged governments to implement inclusive policies that create opportunities for job training, entrepreneurship, and employment, ensuring no youth is left behind in Africa's development agenda while fostering a favorable business environment.

Speakers emphasized that youth empowerment and inclusion must be at the heart of governance and development strategies. Collaboration between governments, CSOs, and private sector players was underscored as vital in addressing structural challenges and fostering economic growth.



# Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in East Africa

Africa Youth Trust, in collaboration with other partners, organized the East African Community (EAC) Youth Symposium on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). This event brought together young leaders, policymakers, health professionals, and advocates to address a critical challenge in the region: ensuring that youth have access to comprehensive and equitable SRHR services.

Set against a backdrop of cultural diversity and varying legal frameworks, this one of its kind symposium served as a transformative platform for dialogue, collaboration and a call to action.

## **A Youth-Centric Agenda**

With a focus on inclusivity and empowerment, participants engaged in thought-provoking discussions about the barriers young people face in accessing SRHR services, which range from stigma and inadequate funding to gaps in legal protections.

Youth leaders emphasized the importance of owning their narratives and shaping the policies that impact their lives. The event provided a safe space for the young leaders to share their experiences, challenges and innovative solutions, reminding all stakeholders that youth are not just beneficiaries of SRHR programs but essential drivers of change.

## **Key Themes for Action**

The symposium addressed several critical themes:

- 1. Policy Reform and Advocacy:** Participants called for the harmonization of national SRHR policies across East African countries to align with global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Youth Charter. Legal reforms that ensure youth-friendly services and protections against stigma were also prioritized.
- 2. Access and Equity:** Access to SRHR services remains uneven across the region. Discussions highlighted the need for innovative delivery models, including mobile clinics and digital platforms, to reach underserved communities. Integration of SRHR into broader healthcare systems was also seen as vital to expanding access.
- 3. Education and Awareness:** The symposium made a strong case for comprehensive, age-appropriate sexual education tailored to local cultural contexts. Such education equips young people with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.



Executive Director, Winifred Okumu, delivering an address on advancing youth empowerment in East Africa, highlighting gender-responsive policies and economic empowerment to tackle unpaid care work.



Participants of the symposium gathered for a group photo, celebrating a day of impactful discussions and learning.



After an insightful panel discussion on harnessing social media tools to drive change, the panelists posed for a group photo

- 4. Gender and Inclusion:** Participants highlighted the intersection of gender-based violence (GBV) with SRHR challenges and the importance of addressing these issues in tandem. Inclusivity was a recurring theme, with a specific emphasis on ensuring marginalized groups, such as LGBTQ+ youth and adolescents with disabilities, have access to tailored services and programs.
- 5. Regional Collaboration:** The symposium reinforced the value of regional partnerships in addressing SRHR challenges. By sharing data, resources, and best practices, East African countries can create a united front to tackle systemic issues and improve youth outcomes across the region.

## **A Shared Commitment**

While the symposium celebrated progress, it also laid bare the significant work that remains. Persistent stigma, limited funding, and gaps in data collection continue to hinder effective programming.

To overcome these challenges, the symposium concluded with a series of actionable recommendations:

- Governments must prioritize the development and funding of youth-friendly SRHR policies.
- Healthcare providers should receive training to deliver non-judgmental, inclusive care.
- Communities must be engaged to create supportive environments where SRHR is normalized.
- Regional collaboration should be strengthened to ensure consistency and resource sharing.

# Team-Building and Recognition Event Wraps Up the Year

In a vibrant and spirited celebration, Africa Youth Trust (AYT) marked the end of the year with a memorable team-building event held at a serene hotel in the leafy suburbs of Runda. The day-long activity brought together all staff members, fostering comradeship, creativity, and teamwork in an engaging and relaxed atmosphere.

The team participated in a variety of activities, from singing games to ball-rolling challenges, designed to inspire collaboration and innovative thinking. The event underscored the organization's commitment to promoting work-life balance, a much-needed break in today's dynamic workplace environments.

A highlight of the event was the recognition and celebration of outstanding staff members for their exceptional contributions in 2023 and 2024. Ms. Teresa Mochari, awarded as the Employee of the Year 2023, was lauded for her exemplary project implementation, which garnered praise not only within the organization but also from external donors. Reflecting on her success, Ms. Mochari credited her team for their unwavering support, stating,

“ I attribute this success to my incredible team. Our hard work was recognized by donors, who ranked us among the top-performing funded organizations. This achievement is a collective effort. ”

The Employee of the Year 2024, Mr. Keith Muhati, was commended for his leadership and impact at AYT's coastal region office. Ms. Winfred Okumu, AYT's Executive Director, applauded his resourcefulness and dedication, stating,

“ Your efforts in establishing meaningful partnerships and building our organization's reputation, even with limited resources, are remarkable and set a standard for all of us to emulate. ”

Mr. Muhati encouraged his colleagues to continue fostering growth and collaboration, emphasizing that collective success was key to maintaining the organization's esteemed reputation.

The celebration also included a special moment to honor Ms. Noreen Khaleji, who recently earned her master's degree. This further emphasized the organization's culture of recognizing and celebrating personal and professional milestones.

The event concluded with a renewed sense of unity and purpose, as the team left with stronger bonds, improved collaboration skills and a shared commitment to advancing AYT's mission in the coming year.



From left: AYT Executive Director Winfred Okumu, Employee of the Year 2024 Keith Muhati, Employee of the Year 2025 Teresah Monchari, and Head of Programmes Irma Maringo during the end-of-year team-building event.



Ms. Noreen Khaleji (center) cuts her cake in celebration of her graduation during the end-of-year team-building event.



AYT staff engage in a group activity during the end-of-year team-building event







AYT field team at the 16 Days Of Activism Nairobi County Edition launch at Mukuru Kwa Ruben Centre, partnering with ActionAid Kenya and Nairobi County to champion the fight to end GBV.



AYT Mombasa team engages potential partners at the Annual Economic Summit at Tononoka Social Hall. Organized by the Manyatta Foundation, the event explored innovative solutions to economic challenges facing youth in the region.



Project Officer, Keith Muhati, speaking during a panel discussion at IACD 2024 in Mombasa, where he highlighted the critical role of youth in tackling corruption, particularly in the health sector.



Ms. Irma Maringo, AYT Head of Programmes, speaks at the Pan-African Parliament Commemorative engagement on fostering parliamentary engagement through youth participation. The session emphasized initiatives to enhance citizen engagement.



Participants, including AYT Executive Director Winifred Okumu, gather for a group photo during the inaugural EAC Youth Symposium on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). The event focused on advancing youth empowerment, gender-responsive policies, and tackling unpaid care work across East Africa.



Access to Justice Project Officer Teresah Monchari Project receives a certificate after participating in FIDA Kenya's PLEADII training. This initiative empowers justice actors and partners to enhance access to justice for marginalized women.





Representatives from partner organizations of the Shared Futures project, including AYT's Saidi Kingi (far right), during a courtesy visit to the office of the Likoni Assistant County Commissioner in Mombasa to discuss Phase 3 activities. The discussion centered on areas for collaboration and received strong support from the Assistant County Commissioner.



Various CSOs, including AYT, during a planning meeting for the Annual Economic Summit held at Tononoka Social Hall. The summit served as a platform to tackle the economic challenges faced by youth and explore innovative solutions.



AYT field officers pose for a photo during their debrief session at Karura Forest, embracing nature for reflection and mental wellness. Prioritizing team well-being ensures a healthier and more impactful approach to empowering communities.



AYT Project Officer, Teresah Monchari, alongside Ruben FM staff and a community member (in blue) during a roadshow announcing the Free Legal Aid Clinic at Ruben Grounds.




Africa Youth Trust team and ActionAid Kenya team, during a courtesy visit to the Chief Officer - Gender and Inclusivity, Nairobi County, Ms. Maryam Dahir. They engaged in fruitful discussions on potential areas of collaboration.





Project Officer, Levi Juma, speaking with the KTN News team during the launch of the Baseline Survey Report for the Young Urban Women - LIFE CHOICES AND LIVELIHOODS PROJECT, highlighting AYT's commitment to promoting equity and equality.



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