

THE JOURNEY



GET INFORMED | GET INVOLVED

Our challenge

Politically active youth have over the years been relegated to the periphery where their roles are confined to goons for hire, mobilizers for political parties and personal assistants among other demeaning roles. Despite the numerical power of young people, they still were unable to effectively engage in political processes and manage political parties and the power that comes with it due to colossal hurdles that exist in the Kenyan political environment. There was a need to convert Kenya's politically active youth into formidable interest group that commands respect, recognition and influence. Thus, we were to get them informed so that they can get involved!

Our aim

Through this initiative, we aimed to increase the quality and level of involvement and participation of young people in the political process including peace building and greater involvement within political parties. This ensured that they played a positive role in the events leading to the 2013 elections and beyond. Also, the engagement of volunteer resources into the process through the UN Volunteer modality contributed to dissemination of the core values of volunteerism for peace and development

Our achievements

- Youth Agents mobilised and trained on the electoral process, electoral monitoring as means of conflict prevention and peace building. An additional 6000 youth reached with the same information on maintaining peace through the election period via social media campaign.
- 180 youth volunteers recruited to monitor electoral violence before and after the election period and to advocate for peaceful elections in 42 counties countrywide.
- Capacity of 480 young elected and nominated youth leaders enhanced with skills on legislative procedures, negotiation skills, lobbying, policy development and understanding of youth related issues.
- Commitment by the elected and nominated youth leaders to push the 'youth agenda' through the development and adoption of the Youth Manifesto. This Manifesto details the issues affecting youth and the remedial actions to address them and has acted as a guide to advocating for youth solutions to youth problems.
- Gender mainstreaming entrenched through the building of the capacity of young women county representatives on identification of needs, policy formulation, skills on demeanour and communication skills.
- A strong network of young women county representatives formed to advocate and push for affirmative action issues and the 'youth agenda'.
- The development of a comprehensive survey on the representation and participation of the youth in the electoral and political processes (before and past elections)



Inaugural Activity Under The “Get Informed, Get Involved” Project

The Youth Agenda working in close collaboration the “Get Informed, Get Involved” Project held their first ever activity under the same from 26th to 28th February, 2013 at the Conference Hall, City Hall Nairobi. The forum dubbed “Jihusishe Jitolee Kwa Amani Youth Forum” brought together approximately 180 young people from different counties in Kenya.

The forum preceded the 4th March 2013 General Election which gave every indication that the upcoming elections would be heavily contested and the tension that existed amongst Kenyans could not be understated. The success of the 4th March 2013 general elections was considered critical to the long-term peace, stability and development of Kenya as the violence that ensued after the 2007 elections led to more than 1000 deaths and more than 350,000 internally displaced persons. It is against this backdrop that Youth Agenda with the support of the UNVs sought to have a training of youth as agents of peace building and conflict prevention especially

since the role of the youth in helping people understand the electoral process and to maintain peace and calm during the electioneering process is considered very critical.

The forum purposed to bring together youth from different counties in Kenya to build their capacity and share experiences on the electoral process, youth involvement and volunteerism in peaceful elections. Further, it aimed at providing skills based training for youth in peace building and conflict prevention. After the forum, the youth were to be linked to the existing peace committees in their various localities and expected to respond in good time in providing early warning information and responses for conflict prevention.

The UNVs assisted in facilitation of the training, demonstrated the role of volunteerism in peaceful political processes, and shared best practices as well as success stories. The 3-day forum involved an array of activities which included presentations, role plays, group and plenary discussions, film screening, brain-storming and buzz groups. The facilitators guided the youth through the principles and concepts of volunteerism for peace, while engaging them in discussions, training games and exercises. They were also engaged in practical sessions on how various themes contributed to the peace agenda. Such themes included human rights, gender, conflict prevention, reconciliation and civic education.

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) was well represented by Commissioner Milly Lwanga Odongo who in the company of their Legal Officer took the participants through hate speech, what it amounts to and the penalties thereof. The CEO of Youth Agenda, Susan K. Mwongera talked to the youth about the electoral system and process. This shed a lot of light on most of the queries the youth had on issues related to the elections. The forum also included a screening of a documentary on peace and the need for cohesion amongst young people. This was crucial as in the 2007 general election youth had been influenced to perceive other communities as their enemies.

Best practices were shared by Meshack from Progressive Alliance. He emphasized the need for youth to volunteer in various initiatives in their societies especially peace so that development could be achieved. The popular group “One Tribe” also graced the participants with their presence as they gave their account of how their journey in volunteerism began and what modes they have used to spread the peace message. At the end of this session the participants gave their various experiences of volunteerism and shared suggestions on how they could do it better.

The highlight of the “Jihushe Jitolee Kwa Amani Youth Forum” was marked by lighting

of candles by the youth and singing of the famous Candle Song by gospel artist Chris Rice. This symbolized a deep desire and commitment amongst the youth to promote and maintain peace during the election period and to live together as brothers and sisters in our beloved motherland Kenya. At the end of the forum the youth were assigned as volunteer election monitors/ observers for the general elections and their role entailed informing the UNVs of the situation on the ground prior to, during and after the elections.



YOUTH LEADERS

VALIDATE MANIFESTO FOR CHANGE

After a long protracted battle March 4th 2013 was the defining day for the 3000+ youth who were successfully nominated by their parties to run for public office, finally the public would decide their suitability by marking their names on the ballot paper.

The 'D' day came and passed and in the end, the youth emerged out of the battle victorious: 1 Governor, 3 Senators, 22 Members of National Assembly, and a staggering 441 County Representatives, all elected by the people of Kenya. In addition to that, more victories for young people came along when 8 youth were nominated to Senate, and 5 to the National Assembly.

In celebration of this unprecedented fete, the Youth Agenda in partnership with UNDP and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV's) endeavoured to host the First National Elected & Nominated Youth Leaders Forum; and on 17th May 2013, whose theme was Celebrate, Learn and Strategise. We played host to 480 youth leaders from across the country at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC). At the beginning of the meeting many of us were disappointed as the newly elected Members of County Assembly picked from their counterparts the Members of National Assembly and started complaining about their salaries and how the Salaries and Remuneration Commission should be disbanded and their salaries increased.



Figure 1: the young elected and nominated leaders sing the national anthem during the meeting.

After being cooled down the leaders were taken through the various responsibilities and challenges that lay before them. Youth Agenda also presented to them a youth manifesto titled youth problems | youth solutions, which contains a proposal from young people from all over Kenya. The youth whose proposals were in the manifesto cited a number key challenges that continue to threaten their human dignity. They include; non responsive education and training to the market needs, weak institutional responsible for youth development, low involvement, participation and representation of youth in decision making processes and limited access to health facilities.

The young people now have entrusted the young political leaders that they have elected to be stewards of the youth manifesto as they are the guardians of the development of the counties and constituencies they represent. Young people's greatest need now is to have credible and accountable leaders that can manage the available resources for their economic benefit and enjoyment of their constitutional rights. The young elected and nominated

leaders validated the youth manifesto and resolved to come up with an action framework of what they hope to achieve in terms of gains for the youth by the end of their 5 year tenure in office.

Some of the leaders had this to say about the meeting.

"Youths are ready and they are ready to embrace this youth Agenda initiative because it is very strong and this time round this country has elected a big number of young people and now the ball is in our court to serve the citizens."

Evanson Kanithi a Member of County Assembly from Kiambu



Nominated MP Hon. Isaac Mwaura (right), Outgoing YAA Board Chairperson Hussein Mohammed with CEO YAA Susan Mwongera

Nominated member of parliament Hon. Isaac Mwaura stressed that "if we are to address youth issues they must be well funded we must ensure that the resources at both the National and County level are allocated to specific needs of young people".

Stephen Kamau Thuo Member of County Assembly Nairobi had this to say "When a youth is in the senate, when the youth is in the National assembly and the county assembly they are able

to articulate what are the youth issues."

David Mabong Member of County Assembly Bungoma stated "What unites us is not that we come from the same community or rather because we come from the same tribe or political party but because of the issues of young people. So if we can have a platform that we can run away with that will be very important for us. "



ADVOCATING FOR PEACE IN THE MATHARE SLUMS

By Gladwell Wambui

The Get Informed Get Involved Project was aimed at getting the youth empowered with information, and with that information get them involved in the processes of governance and participating as key stakeholders in the future of this great nation. The Youth Agenda, together with the United Nations Volunteers attached to this project took the peace message to the heart of the Mathare slums.

On arrival, there were two youth groups waiting patiently for us, the Maji Mazuri Youth Organization and The Mathare Roots Youth Organization. This was my first time to go to the Mathare slums and despite the poor living conditions; I was extremely humbled by the zeal and positivity of these young people.

After introductions and short speeches by their leaders and our team leader, we started the discussions on how the youth can be involved in peace processes during and after elections. We were divided into groups and the task was to identify the causes of the post election violence in 2007/2008, its impact on the society and come up with strategies of avoiding a repeat of the violence. I was in a group full of brilliant and talented youth from the Mathare slums. I must say that I was very impressed by their intelligence and their motivation to see a peaceful and developed Mathare and Kenya as a whole. It was



Figure 1: Wambui - UNV Attached To Youth Agenda Has A Moment With Her New Friends

also inspiring and encouraging to see these young people so passionate about preaching peace and fighting against tribalism in Kenya.

Thereafter, there were presentations from each group; the energy and passion the youth from Mathare slums was incredible! They made wonderful presentations - Many of them gave their personal experiences after the post election violence and how their lives had changed since then. They wanted to see a peaceful Mathare where tribalism was a rumour and all Mathare people, despite of their, age, colour, tribe, gender, class, and religious beliefs would be united in brotherhood. They did not appreciate the fact that politicians had manipulated and incited many young people into violence in the last elections! One of the youth leaders gave a very interesting practical example. He urged his fellow youth not to result into violence because judging from the many children from top politicians after the post election violence, it

clearly implied that while the youth were busy causing chaos, killing one another and throwing stones on the streets, these politicians were busy making merry at home. This made a great impact on these young people and they all agreed that it was not worth taking justice in their own hands while the people they are fighting for do not care about them. All I can say is that I left there transformed!

YOUNG WOMEN COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES EDUCATED ON NEW ROLES

Following our endearing commitment to enhancing the capacity of young women in the leadership voyage, we hosted the newly elected and nominated county women legislators to a retreat in Mombasa, where they were able share amongst themselves what they hope to achieve in their positions of leadership.

The session was opened by the esteemed HE. Hazel Katana, Deputy Governor of Mombasa County; she welcomed the women to the county and encouraged the ladies to be the best versions of themselves and to take time to educate themselves on their new roles so as to be the best representatives of their people from their various counties.



Figure 1: The Young Women Pose For A Group Photo With H.E Hazel Katana Deputy Governor Of Mombasa County.

The women were also mentored by the greats that went before them; Hon. Racheal Shebesh who is also an alumnus of Youth Agenda's Political Leadership Development Program took the women through

how to command presence on the floor of the house and how to present themselves as legislators with substance. She also explained to the ladies how to sponsor a private members bill and to lobby for bills the bills to turn them into a law.



Figure 2: Rachael Shebesh Takes The Women Through A Session On How To Conduct Themselves On The Floor Of The Assembly.

Her confidence and pizzazz was not lost on the ladies as the discussion was prolonged to tea time where they sat down and shared experiences. The ladies were also to share the presence of Nairobi's finest duo when Nairobi Senator Gideon Mbuvi 'Sonko' turned up to pay them a courtesy visit.



Figure 3: Some Of The Ladies Pose For A Photo With Hon.gideon Mbuvi The Nairobi Senator Who Paid Them A Courtesy Visit.



I think am so lucky to be in this group because I'm much better than I was before, I feel renewed. When do we meet again?

Penniah Kaburu

Member of County Assembly
Kirinyaga County



"I just want to say thank you so much for your commitment to young people and especially young women, I'm so thrilled with these sessions, I have so much that I can take back to the county Assembly."

Nancy Kibaba

Member of County Assembly
Bungoma County



"I kindly thank you all. I have learnt lot!"

Meymuna Ali

Member of County Assembly
Wajir County



"Thank you for these wonderful sessions, they were so insightful, at least I can confidently say I understand how these processes of devolution works"

Joy Wanga

County Representative
Vihiga County



"On behalf of all the young women leaders here, I just want to sincerely say thank you to the Youth Agenda for championing young women's quest for political leadership, we have learnt so much; we can confidently say that we can prepare effective motions and bills and present them on the floor of the house and legislate on issues that will shape the agenda of this country. We have been mentored and learnt from the best and for this, we want to say thank you for taking a keen interest in us."

Eunice Muriithi

County Assembly Representative
Nakuru County

"Hope you are all keeping well since we last saw each other at the coast. The forum was very educative and I gained a lot from it....."

.....I have identified 10 young ladies to be in a committee that shall spearhead the Kajiado County Young women Forum, each county is represented by two ladies and from this group we will choose a chair, secretary and a treasurer. There are some challenges in logistics as some of them have to travel from far places to attend the meetings. Communication is sometime a problem as there are some areas with no network. This forum will be the first one in our county that will bring young women together, we want it to be a success as we would want to find ways on how young women can be empowered both socially, politically, economically so we can have more women in leadership areas and employment positions. We believe that as women, we understand more the problems we face and hence the solutions lie with us. We had several women contesting for political positions although one woman became the first MP in the County. Our culture is a major hindrance for women as we still do not have freedom of expression and making decision, men control all family property which prevents girls from inheritance....

...I was included in the speakers panel in our county assembly, we are also in Sectoral committees and we have a committee that deals with education, youth and gender although I'm not a member, we will work together. My humble request is that, when you have another forum for young women I would like to have more women from our county and other marginalized areas to participate in future, so they can learn and share with others."

Elizabeth Sopiato.

Member of County Assembly
Kajiado County

EXPANDING THE SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM TO KIBERA YOUTH

The Youth Agenda and UN Volunteers team decided to go out of their daily activities to visit Kibera in KCODA (Kibera Community Development Agenda) offices to brain storm on challenges facing youth in slums. Out of the many issues raised it came out that youth have minimal access to proper information on the constitution and how well devolution works. The team took responsibility to shed light and capacity build the 16 members of the group on the constitution. As a way of making the youth appreciate devolution the UNVs opted to train the KCODA members to act a play on devolution. Since April Youth Agenda together with the UNVs have been frequenting Kibera to fine tune the play which has come out to be very educative and interesting. The team is now trying to find opportunities for these young people to empower and train others to understand devolution.



Youth from KCODA group presenting their play before UNVs and guests



Youth from KCODA group presenting their play before UNVs and guests . we have Mary Ondiek a UNV appreciating the group and giving pieces of advice to the youth.



Mary Ondiek a UNV appreciating the group and giving pieces of advice to the youth.



Mr. Wanjare a UNV giving more tips to the KCODA group members in Kibera.



YOUTH AGENDA COLLABORATES WITH THE UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS TO REACH YOUTH IN NAIROBI COUNTY

For six months, the United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) teamed up with the Youth agenda's great team to reach the community youth at the wards in Nairobi county, creating awareness of the devolved governments and engaging them in discussions on ways of initiating income generating activities.

The UNVs offered technical support in running the activities of the Youth Agenda, by engaging Nairobi County Youth in county governments planning. With their long time experience in mobilising youths at the community the UNVs were able to freely interact with the youth at the wards providing them with the know how in participating in county governments planning and obtain other sources of livelihoods. They were also key in providing networks and linkages with youth networks on the ground and other interested groups in the county.

Youth at the wards freely interacted with the UNVs, allowing them to share experiences and ideas to create employment. For instance a group of youths from Kibera Constituency, named "KCODA"(Kibera Community Development Agenda), trained by the UNVs has been able to perfect their art of poetry on the devolution topic, some of which they presented during the launch of the Nairobi County Youth Plan. Another group in Mukurweni is publishing a newspaper for the Constituency which they hope to have circulated in the rest of the Nairobi County, and later nationwide.

The collaboration with the Youth Agenda and UNVs culminated in the development of the Nairobi County Youth

Plan – a document that highlights key areas for policy and programmatic interventions by the Nairobi County Government and gives recommendations derived following prioritization of the issues raised from the various platforms. This was a great success for the youth of Nairobi County who sought commitment from the county governments in addressing various issues. The achievement has sparked interest in other youth from other counties to have Youth Agenda facilitate similar initiatives to develop their county youth plan that commits their county governments to prioritise youth issues when developing county plans.



Figure 1: The Youth Agenda C.E.O launches the Nairobi County Youth Plan together with other young leaders from Nairobi County.

The UNV's collaboration with the Youth Agenda therefore remains in the books of the organisation as one partnership that will always be sought after in future, in order to reach and impact more youth in the country like has happened in Nairobi.

CELEBRATING THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

For this year's International Youth Day, the Nairobi City County decided that they would hold a youth week to precede the youth day; During this week, they would train hundreds of youth on the available opportunities for them in the county and how they could tap into the

county's resources available to the youth for their own profitability as well as nurturing of talent in arts, sports and culture. As Youth Agenda, the International Youth Week was part of our agenda as we partnered with the county government. The Youth Agenda and UNV's team went out of their way to

make this week happen with great success, as part of the steering committee for the events during the week, they also went ahead to plan the International Youth Day Festival, which was a first for the County of Nairobi. This year's theme for the International Youth Day was Youth & Migration, this was particularly resounding in Nairobi County where the Youth Week was held since most of the youth from Nairobi believe that home is where your parents come from; the week encouraged them to view home as where they have grown up, continue to live and work. The purpose of the youth week was to foster inclusiveness of the youth into the social fabric.

As part of the steering committee the Youth Agenda and UNV's team took up various responsibilities; they were in charge of mobilizing the youth to participate in the county government's youth week training on the opportunities available to them in the county. They also were involved in creating awareness for the youth week and the concluding youth day festival; they took

these responsibilities up with great zeal as they gave interviews on national media and participated in neighbourhood activations. On the Youth Day festival, the week came to a splendid culmination as hundreds of youth turned up to participate and showcase their talents on stage through dance, song and comedy. Even more lined the streets with their innovations and a display of the projects they were undertaking. The day also attracted youth sports teams such as the national skaters' team, Disabled Volleyball team and various soccer teams representing various areas of the city.

The week and the festival were a great success, youth attended the festival in the thousands and we had a great showcase from the youth. All the stage performances were made by the youth and sports and innovations were showcased all around the city to show what the youth are capable of and what they are doing for themselves. The team truly demonstrated the spirit of true volunteerism.

Figure 5: The Disabled Volley Ball Team Showcased Their Talents During The International Youth Day Festival





From Left To Right: Young People Display What They Do To Earn A Income, A Good Display Of Marshall Art Skills, Singing Was Also Done Well And The Djs Were On Hand To Keep The Festival Lively.



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