

# YOUTH DEMOCRACY DIALOGUE

## WHITE PAPER

### The Tanzania Democracy We Want



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DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA

# ABSTRACT

## INTRODUCTION

YouLead Africa, a joint initiative of the MS Training Centre for Development Cooperation and the East African Community with financial support from US Embassy, successfully organized and delivered Youth Democracy Dialogues (YDDs) across five regions in Tanzania and two dialogues in Zanzibar. The project encompasses six targeted regions in Tanzania; Dar es salaam, Zanzibar, Lake region, the Kilimanjaro region, the Southern Highlands region and Southern region. These dialogues were conducted in collaboration with YouLead's consortium, composed of 10 youth-led and youth-serving organization: Voice of Youth Tanzania (VOYOTA)- Arusha, Mwanza Youth and Children Network (MYCN)- Mwanza, Empower Youth Prosperity (EYP)-Mbeya, Bethany International Service Incorporation Foundation & Tunaweza - Songea, Kijana Hai Foundation & Pamoja Youth Initiative- Zanzibar, ActionAid, African Youth Transformation (AYT), Tanzania Youth Vision Association (TYVA).

The dialogues gathered sights on kind of system of governance youth feel is best suited to achieve their aspirations. Further, these dialogues provided a crucial platform for young people to actively engage in discussions about democracy, their involvement in civic affairs, thereby fostering a more informed and participatory youth demographic in the country's governance and decision-making processes. The dialogues theme was "The Tanzania Democracy We Want".

In addition, the Youth Democracy Dialogues (YDD) were conducted in series, starting with the Arusha YDD, which took place immediately after the YouLead Summit in 2022 and after the project culmination, the consortium is working to organize the final Youth Democracy Dialogue, the National High Level Youth Democracy Dialogue is expected to be occur on 15th August 2023 (One YoungTanzania, Concept note, 2023). The summit seeks to share a comprehensive analysis of Tanzania's democratic status and socio-political dynamics, providing insights into the current landscape participation.

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## FINDINGS

Youth democracy dialogues are crucial for the sustainability and vitality of any democratic society. Based on the conducted analysis, we showcase the results on different areas, as outlined below:

### Is Tanzania a Democratic Country?

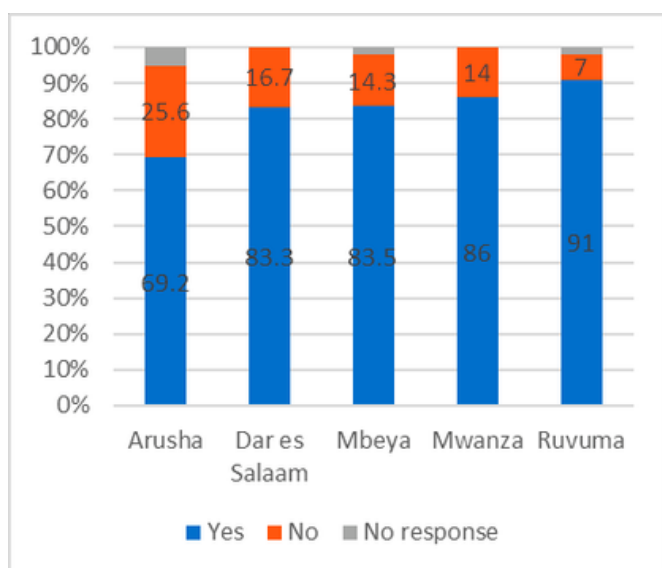


Figure 1: Youth views on Tanzania being a democratic country

Youth believed that Tanzania is a democratic country. On the other hand, (as shown in Figure 1 above) youth disagreed with Tanzania being a democracy and raised concerns about

1. The Presence of human rights breaches, inadequate protection and prioritization of human rights by the government and leaders, and discriminatory practices in implementing certain rights deemed as not being characteristic of a democratic system.

*".....But the violations of these rights have increased. The right to assembly, expression and media freedoms have been violated by security organs, which tend to react with excessive force, particularly in politically motivated contexts. Cases involving threats and intimidation from security organs, abductions, assassinations and assassination attempts, extrajudicial executions, and the forced disappearances of human rights activists, and politicians, have continued to occur in Tanzania".* This was reported in Arusha Dialogues.

2. Some youth feel it is not their duty and responsibility. This was highly reported in Mwanza (11%), followed by Ruvuma 5%.

3. Another reason mentioned was "not free and fair elections". This was highly reported by youth from Mwanza (19%) and Arusha 5%.

Additionally, youth identified areas where Tanzania's democracy could be improved, providing widespread civic education to reach a broader segment of the population and including engaging youths in dialogues. These insights gathered during the YDDs provide valuable feedback and perspectives that can inform efforts to strengthen and advance democracy in Tanzania, making it more inclusive and responsive to the needs and aspirations of its citizens.

## Youth Involvement in Democratic Processes - Voting

Findings reveal that youth consider voting as a significant aspect of democratic governance. More than 65% of the youth from five regions reported having ever voted, indicating a strong recognition of the importance of participating in the election process.

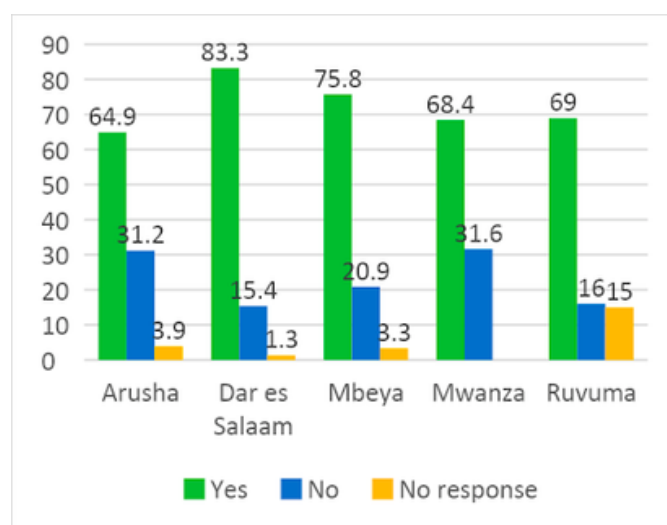


Figure 2: Youth Participating in Democratic Process, voting .

A significant minority of the youth participants reported not voting in previous elections. The common reasons cited for not voting included "Lack of Trust in the System," "Disillusionment with Politics," "Lack of Interest in Politics," "Inconvenience of Voting," "Belief in Ineffectiveness," and "Other" reasons.

Addressing these concerns and barriers to voting among the youth is essential to encourage greater engagement and participation in the democratic process. Policymakers and stakeholders may use this information to develop targeted strategies and initiatives aimed at promoting trust in the electoral system, enhancing political interest and awareness, and addressing perceived ineffectiveness in the democratic process.

## Youth Views On Free And Fair Elections in Tanzania

The findings reveal that the majority of youth participants in the dialogues (50%) from all regions responded affirmatively, expressing their belief in the fairness and freedom of elections in the country. However, notable variations in opinions were observed, with a higher percentage of youth in Dar es Salaam (44.9%) and Arusha (35% in the pre-event survey and 31.5% in the post-event survey) expressing disagreement. The findings emphasize the need for ongoing initiatives to promote awareness and understanding of democratic values and principles among the youth in Tanzania.

## The Tanzania Democracy We Want

Youth to recognise the will of President Samia Suluhu Hassan to improve political and economic institutions as well as legal election reform during dialogues. Under her 4Rs philosophy which includes; Reconciliation, Resiliency, Reforms, and Rebuilding they believe it is a prerequisite and a necessary tool in addressing the contemporary issues affecting the country's social, political, and economic systems. Yet during the discussions, youth identified gaps and came up as follows:

### Reconciliation

The majority of youth felt that there was no clear mechanism to encourage the adoption of reconciliation. Some even claimed that this philosophy is primarily targeted at senior political officials and excludes the youth (YDD Mbeya report, 2023).

Despite the emphasis of the constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania (1977) on the rights and freedoms of citizens to actively participate in decisions that impact their lives, communities, and the nation as a whole, youth echo their limited contribution to the decision-making process.

All IPs reported that youth urged on laws, bylaws, policies, rules and regulations, which hinder efforts to achieve the desired outcomes. Such laws, bylaws policies, rules and regulations mentioned are; Article 39(1) of the 1977 Constitution requires candidates for president to be Tanzanian citizens by birth, at least 40 years old, exclude directly youth from running for present seat; Local government act 1982 article 32(7) 55 requires every village assembly to consist of every person who is ordinarily resident in the village and who has attained the apparent age of eighteen years. Further, all IPs reported that youth echo the lack of a youth representative in parliament and the lack of youth councils in Tanzania's Mainland.

Therefore, the youth emphasized on reform of the country's constitution, policies and laws for the benefit of present and future generations. The following statement was quoted from a narrative report generated from YDD conducted in Ruvuma.

".....We as youth must make sure that the 'Mabaraza ya Vijana'<sup>1</sup> in wards and councils are available to ensure that resources that are allocated touch youth according to described policies".

## Resiliency

In the context of democracy, a resilience philosophy emphasizes the importance of building and maintaining robust democratic systems that can endure and thrive even in the face of various pressures and threats. The following were discussed:

**Adaptability and learning.** During dialogue discussion youth in Unguja emphasized on developing accessible online platforms for political discussions, conducting voter education campaigns through digital channels, and leveraging technology to promote transparency and accountability in democratic processes.

**Civic Society Engagement.** The findings reveal that in all regions (100%) where dialogues are conducted, youth emphasizes on integration of civic education in comprehensive education curricula in schools and institutions, ensuring young people understand their rights, responsibilities, and democratic processes.

**Inclusivity and Diversity** (considering persons with disabilities). By valuing the perspectives of different communities and ensuring equal representation, a democracy can better address the needs of its entire population and prevent the marginalization that can lead to unrest.

*However, the following gap was identified during the discussion: ".....In our region, there is a lack of representation in many youth organizations, and the implementation of policies and laws remains on paper. People with disabilities in political parties are merely used as symbols of democracy, especially for individuals with disabilities. The government should seriously address this issue to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against."* Katija Mbarouk, Member JUWAUZA

## Reforms

Youth echo the need for constitution and policy reform to reflect the youth's needs and aspirations which align with 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, EAC Vision 2050 and AU Agenda 2063.

During the discussion, youth expressed the need to review and update youth policies, such as the Zanzibar Youth Development Policy- 2005, the National Youth Development Policy 2007 and the United Republic of Tanzania constitutions (1977) to address unlimited service years for Members of Parliament. Youth argued that unlimited time forbade them to be selected for a Member of Parliament seat. Additionally, youth argued that the constitution document does not have the word "youth" which implies no recognition for them.

## Rebuilding

Youth debated on rebuilding philosophy has left them out of the loop considering the increase in the unemployment rate for youth in Tanzania. The reasons mentioned were skills mismatch, lack of entrepreneurship and life skills education, and lack of access to capital. Youths call for policy change in the education system to ensure that students graduate from the primary level with skills to engage in economic activities.

1. Mabaraza ya Vijana- National Youth Council



Further youth recommended policy reform to enhance the accessibility of capital for youth and pressure the design of youth employment strategic plan to ensure youth access the opportunities early.

Furthermore, some youth acknowledged a few trends executed by some politicians to engage youth in political issues i.e. the “*chawa wa mama*”<sup>2</sup> complaint. On the other hand, some youths from the other 5 regions pleaded to differ and claimed that those complaints enhance unemployment since youth want to be “*chawa wa mama*” and not work. This was further confirmed by Mbeya Regional Commissioner, Hon. Juma Zuberi Homera during YDD when he officially encouraged youth to take an active role in the democratic process, Hon. Homera strongly rebuked the youth’s current popular trend of kowtow (UCHAWA) towards political leaders in anticipation of gaining favours. Hon. Homera emphasized on youth engagement in the existing friendly political traditions

## Conclusion

The Youth Democracy Dialogues facilitated constructive discussions among youth from different regions, both Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar allowing them to voice their perspectives on democracy and governance. Therefore:

1. The dialogue highlighted the importance of civic education and political awareness among young people. Youth recognized the need for comprehensive civic education curricula in schools and institutions to equip youth with the necessary knowledge and skills to actively participate in democratic processes.
2. The dialogue emphasized the significance of promoting freedom of speech, assembly,

and association, as well as creating an enabling environment for youth to engage in political discussions and decision-making at all levels.

3. The dialogue emphasized the importance of empowering young people, leveraging technology, promoting youth representation, and addressing the needs of marginalized groups. It provided a platform for stakeholders to identify challenges and opportunities, share best practices, and to collaborate on strategies to enhance youth democracy in Zanzibar.

Therefore, the YDDs were a significant step toward promoting meaningful youth participation in democracy. The event provided a platform for youth to express their ideas, contribute to the democratic discourse, and propose solutions to enhance democratic governance in Tanzania.

## Recommendation

The findings recommend the following:

1. Strengthen data collection and research on youth democracy
2. Enhance civic education and political awareness.
3. Advocate for increased youth representation in governmental bodies, enabling young individuals to contribute directly to policy-making processes.
4. Advocate for the establishment of a national youth council.

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2. Chawa wa mama- kowtow; act in a subservient manner to political leaders