

MALAWI YOUTH MANIFESTO

2025-2030





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Acronyms And Abbreviations

ACB	:	Anti-Corruption Bureau
AFORD	:	Alliance for Democracy
AGCOM	:	Agriculture Commercialization Project
ASM	:	Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining
CDSSs	:	Community Day Secondary Schools
CSOs	:	Civil Society Organizations
DC	:	District Councils
DPP	:	Democratic Progressive Party
DYOs	:	District Youth Officers
EGENCO	:	Electricity Generation Company (Malawi) Limited
ESCOM	:	Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi (ESCOM) Limited
GBV	:	Gender-based violence
ICT	:	Information and Communication Technology
IFA	:	Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen
IPRSE	:	Institute for Policy Research & Social Empowerment
MACODA	:	Malawi Council for Disability Affairs
MACRA	:	Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority
MCP	:	Malawi Congress Party
MDAs	:	Ministries, Departments, and Agencies
MERA	:	Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority
MIP-1	:	Malawi 2063 First 10 Year Implementation Plan
MW2063	:	Malawi 2063
NAP	:	National Action Plan
NCHE	:	National Council for Higher Education
NEEF	:	National Economic Empowerment Fund
NEET	:	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NfYD	:	Network for Youth Development
NGOs	:	Non-Governmental Organisation
NYCOM	:	National Youth Council of Malawi
NYS	:	National Youth Service
PP	:	People's Party
PPPs	:	Public-Private Partnerships
SMEDI	:	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Institute
SMEs	:	Small and Medium Enterprises
SRHRS	:	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights Services
TEVET	:	Technical, Entrepreneurial, and Vocational Education and Training
TITC	:	Technical Instructor Training College
UDF	:	United Democratic Front
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
UTM	:	United Transformation Movement Party
VAWG	:	Violence against Women and Girls
YACFs	:	Youth Anti-Corruption Forums
YAS	:	Youth and Society
YC	:	Youth Centres
YDC	:	Youth-Decide Campaign
YFHS	:	Youth-Friendly Health Services
YONECO	:	Youth Net and Counselling
YPU	:	Young Politicians Union

Message from the Youth-Decide Campaign Secretariat

It is with immense pride and a deep sense of responsibility that I present the 2025–2030 Youth Manifesto—a collective declaration of the hopes, demands, and vision of Malawi's young people for the next five years. This document is more than a set of aspirations; it is a bold, strategic blueprint for the future envisioned by the youth of Malawi, and a powerful call to action for all stakeholders to ensure that young people play a central role in shaping our nation's development.

Reflecting on the 2019–2024 period, we acknowledge the strides made in response to the previous Youth Manifesto. There have been notable efforts to expand access to education, promote youth entrepreneurship, create jobs, and enhance youth participation in governance. We commend the government's commitment to youth-centred policies, skills development programs, and certain economic reforms aimed at widening opportunities for young Malawians.

Yet, despite these commendable initiatives, the challenges that confront the youth remain vast and deeply entrenched.

Today, Malawi's young people—who make up over 60% of the population—continue to bear the brunt of social and economic hardship. Many remain unemployed or underemployed, despite possessing qualifications and potential. Access to affordable, quality education remains out of reach for many, with financial barriers forcing countless students to abandon their dreams. In agriculture, young farmers face a perfect storm of volatile markets, high input costs, and policy instability. Meanwhile, endemic corruption, political impunity, and weak governance systems continue to erode trust and frustrate efforts toward sustainable development—deepening the sense of disillusionment among the youth.

As we approach the General Elections on September 16, 2025, young people must not remain passive observers. The frustrations of

the past must ignite a renewed determination to demand more: better policy implementation, inclusive governance, ethical leadership, and a government that genuinely prioritizes youth empowerment. We must reject the narrative that elections are "*kutaya nthawi*" (a waste of time). Instead, we must view them as an opportunity to choose visionary leaders—leaders who are committed to transformative change and to placing youth at the centre of national progress.

The 2025–2030 Youth Manifesto is a renewed social contract between the youth of Malawi and the incoming government. It captures our collective voice and presents clear, actionable demands across critical areas: economic empowerment, education and skills development, digital transformation, climate action, and governance reform. Through this Manifesto, we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to ensuring that youth voices are not only heard, but translated into meaningful policy and lasting impact.

To all young people across Malawi: this is your moment. Organize, mobilize, and engage. Step into the political and policy arenas that define our future. And to political leaders, public institutions, development partners, and civil society: recognize young people as essential allies in development. Work with us—not for us—to turn these aspirations into reality.

The road ahead demands courage, unity, and a shared sense of purpose. Let us hold our leaders accountable. Let us rise together.

This is our moment. This is our future. Let's take charge.

Charles Kajoloweka
Executive Director
Youth and Society (YAS)
YDC Secretariat

Preface

A consortium of 40 youth-focused civil society organizations in Malawi continues to champion the Youth Decide Campaign (YDC). Founded in 2018, this campaign aims to harness the energy, potential, and agency of Malawian youth to shape the country's development and governance agenda through the 2025 electoral cycle and beyond.

Building on the successes and lessons learned from the 2019–2024 Youth Manifesto, the 2025–2030 Youth Manifesto represents a renewed Social Contract between Malawi's youth and the incoming government. It consolidates the governance and development priorities of Malawian youth, articulating their collective aspirations and policy demands for the next five years. The Manifesto is also in line with the youth centric national agenda, the Malawi 2063(MW2063) and its implementation framework, the MW2063 First 10 Year Implementation Plan (MIP-1), reflecting some of the strategic actions within the pillars and enablers of the vision.

The development of this Manifesto followed an inclusive and participatory process, engaging young people from across all regions of Malawi. Consultations were conducted through national-level workshops, stakeholder engagements, and policy dialogues facilitated by the Youth Decide Campaign. Young people voiced their priorities in key policy and programmatic areas, including:

1. Quality, Accessible, and Relevant Education
2. Youth Employment and Vocational Training
3. Land Acquisition and Utilization
4. Youth Leadership in Politics and Civic Life
5. Youth in Conflict with the Law and Access to Justice

6. Youth and the Anti-Corruption Drive
7. ICT and Infrastructure Development
8. Physical Violence and Sexual Abuse of Young Men and Women
9. Accessible Health Services
10. Environment and Climate Change
11. Culture and the Arts
12. Youth with Disabilities and Other vulnerable Youth Groups

The voices and views gathered from these consultations were consolidated during a National Youth Consultative Workshop held in Lilongwe. This workshop brought together youth representatives, civil society organizations, District Youth Officers (DYOs), media, independent youth leaders, and political party representatives from MCP, UDF, DPP, PP, UTM, and AFORD. The process was further refined with technical support from the Institute for Policy Research and Social Empowerment (IPRSE) and the National Planning Commission (NPC).

The Youth Decide Campaign expresses sincere gratitude to the Federal Government of Germany through the Zivik Foundation, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for their financial support in developing this Manifesto. We also acknowledge the technical and logistical contributions provided by IPRSE and National Planning Commission, respectively. Special thanks go to our Youth Decide Campaign partner organizations, and all the young people who actively participated in this process.

Above all, we commend Youth and Society (YAS), secretariat for the YDC, for its exceptional leadership and coordination in ensuring that the voices of Malawian youth are authentically and meaningfully reflected in this Manifesto.

Preamble

We, the young people of Malawi, from all regions, of diverse cultures, beliefs, backgrounds, and abilities, in both rural and urban areas—united in our diversity and taking a non-partisan stand;

Inspired by the vision of an inclusive, accountable, and responsive system of governance and socio-economic transformation in our country;

Recognizing the deep social, economic, and political challenges affecting young people in Malawi;

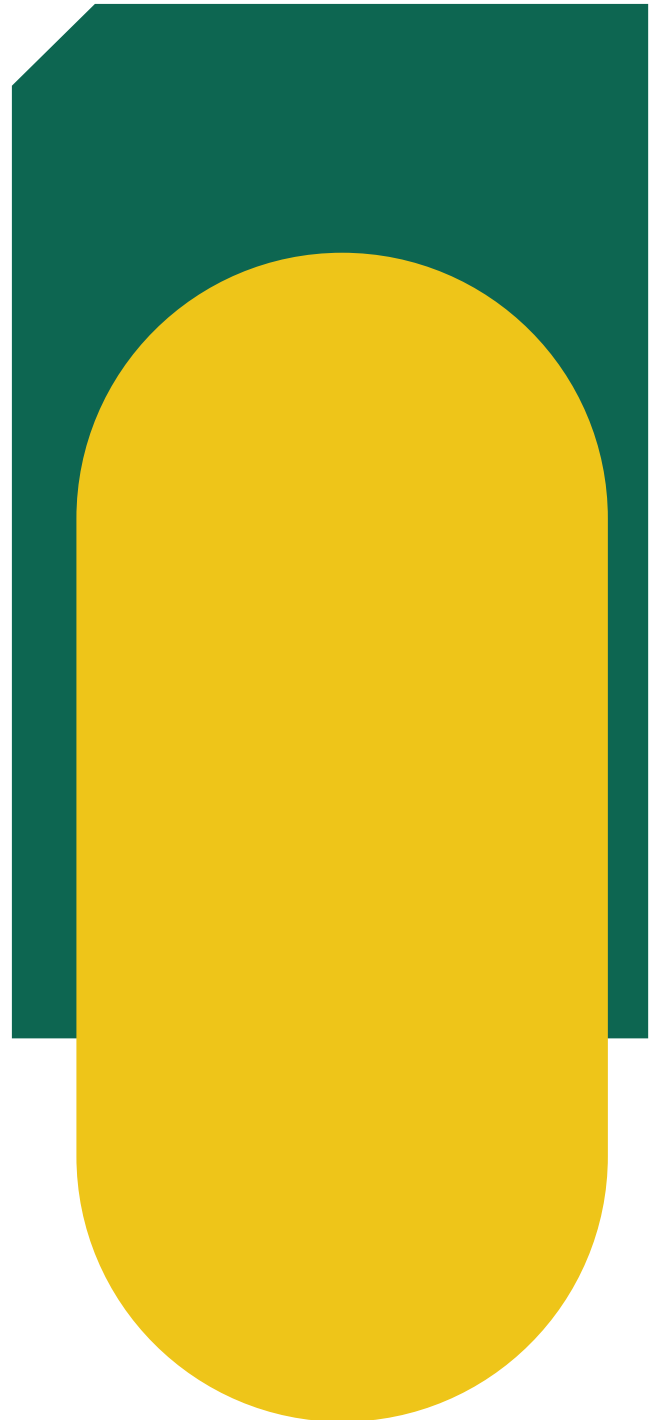
Noting the absence of a comprehensive youth-driven national youth agenda to guide meaningful youth participation in national development;

Acknowledging the vital role that young people must play in building the future of our country; Holding firm to the belief that the present and future development of Malawi is a responsibility we must embrace;

Exercising our inalienable right to participate fully in the civic and political life of our nation;

Affirming our collective commitment to shape the development of our country;

Do hereby present this Manifesto as an articulation of our aspirations for democratic governance and socio-economic transformation in Malawi—expressed through concrete policy and programmatic demands to advance youth development and ensure the meaningful contribution of young people to national progress.



Methodology for developing the 2025-2030 Youth Manifesto

Participatory engagement

The development of the 2025-2030 Youth Manifesto was done using participatory methods of research and consultation processes. In the first phase, a total of 3 consultation workshops were conducted in the center, north and south. In the final phase, a validation workshop was held in order to authenticate the final draft manifesto, before its approval and launch.

National and regional consultation process

The first workshop took place in all the regions of the country beginning with the central region in Lilongwe at Golden Peacock Hotel. This was followed by the second consultation workshop in the northern region in Mzuzu at Chatonda Lodge, and a third one with participants from the southern region in Blantyre at Crossroads Hotel.

Inclusive youth and stakeholder representation

The workshops involved participants from key political parties, particularly youth directors, representatives of relevant government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), non-state actors, academia and other key stakeholders representing the youth constituency in the country.

Drawing lessons from the 2019-2024 Youth Manifesto

In the Lilongwe workshop, a report on the evaluation of the 2019-2024 youth manifesto was presented, from which key lessons were drawn out to inform the development of this predecessor manifesto. In all the workshops, participants analysed the status of implementation of the demands made in the just ended manifesto in order to determine demands that were fully met, those that were partially met

and those that were not met at all.

Validation of the Youth Manifesto

The final draft Youth Manifesto was presented to key stakeholders for validation at Lifestyle Hotel Boutique in Lilongwe on 16 June 2025. Participants commended the draft Youth Manifesto and made some observations, among them, the need to prioritize and cut down on the thematic areas.

Criteria for Prioritization of Themes and Demands

Initially the manifesto identified a total of fourteen thematic areas, following the structure of the 2019-2024 Youth Manifesto. It was however deemed necessary to reduce the number and prioritize the themes or merge some of them where possible. A prioritization of the themes was therefore done based on the ease of implementation, level of impact and whether the thematic area was youth centered, refer to the table below.

THEME	EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION			LEVEL OF IMPACT			YOUTH CENTREDNESS		RECOMMENDATION
	High	Med.	Low	High	Med.	Low	Yes	No	

Based on these criteria (a combination of ease of implementation being high; high level of impact; and being youth centred), recommendations were made to have eleven thematic areas in the 2025-2030 Youth Manifesto. Furthermore, demands under each thematic area were seen to be too many (300), and therefore not feasible to implement in the next 5 years. Thus, a decision was made to reduce the number of demands per thematic area to a more focused and realistic number, and prioritizing the most critical and urgent demands for the youth in the country.



1

**THEME ONE: QUALITY,
ACCESSIBLE, AND
RELEVANT EDUCATION – A
PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

Ideal Outcome: To establish a comprehensive and equitable education system in which all learners have access to high-quality primary, secondary, and tertiary education—ensuring not just broad access at every stage but sustained improvements in learning outcomes.

Problem Analysis: Despite some progress by the government—such as recruiting more teachers and lecturers, improving teacher welfare through salary adjustments and rural allowances, and providing housing—significant challenges remain that prevent many Malawian youth from accessing quality education.

Many schools and universities still lack essential infrastructure such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, hostels, and proper sanitation facilities, creating environments unconducive to learning. Limited resources—textbooks, computers, laboratory equipment, and projectors—combined with outdated curricula and overcrowded classrooms due to a shortage of qualified educators continue to undermine teaching and learning.

Financial hardship forces many students, particularly girls, to drop out or withdraw from school due to lack of fees, high uniform costs, or the need to contribute to household income. Long distances to school exacerbate dropout rates.

Teachers and lecturers also face serious challenges—low salaries, poor working conditions, limited professional development, and high turnover, which all negatively affect the quality of education.

While demand for university education continues to rise, capacity remains low. Only 10.4% of students who qualify gain access to public universities. Most rural and low-income youth cannot afford the high fees at private institutions. Additionally, public universities face technological challenges—unreliable internet connectivity, outdated IT infrastructure, and a lack of technical support—which limit the quality

of instruction and research. These issues perpetuate a digital divide, further isolating Malawi from global academic discourse.

Demands:

- 1 Recruit more qualified teachers and lecturers to meet a teacher-pupil/student ratio of 1:60.
- 2 Improve salaries and benefits for educators, including housing and healthcare, to boost morale and retention.
- 3 Strengthen inclusive education by training teachers and providing resources for learners with disabilities.
- 4 Expedite the construction of 10,000 classroom blocks nationwide and rehabilitate existing infrastructure, ensuring adequate sanitation.
- 5 Complete the implementation of the Equity with Quality and Learning at Secondary (EQUALS) Project, upgrading 103 secondary schools, particularly CDSSs.
- 6 Increase bursary funding and improve selection mechanisms to reach more deserving secondary students.
- 7 Construct at least one conventional secondary school in every district.
- 8 Promote Public-Private Partnerships to construct and expand universities as well as provide opportunities for industrial internships.
- 9 Provide and install adequate ICT and other relevant skills development infrastructure in public universities to support online learning.
- 10 Expand eligibility for student loans through the Higher Education Students Loans and Grants Board, including non-generic students.
- 11 Institutionalize a 10-year curriculum review cycle to ensure relevance to the labour market and industry needs.
- 12 Advance the introduction of high-quality free public secondary education



2

THEME TWO: ACCESS TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Ideal Outcome: To create a vibrant, inclusive economic environment where youth can access decent jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities, supported by vocational training and business development programs aligned with market needs.

Problem Analysis: While Malawi's overall unemployment rate has decreased to 5.4%, youth unemployment remains high—27.5% among those aged 15–24 and 23.0% among those aged 15–34. The labor market remains inhospitable to young people, who struggle with a lack of marketable skills and limited job opportunities.

Although the government has raised the minimum wage to MK90,000 and claims to have created over 1.3 million jobs since 2020, the 2.5 million job target remains unmet. Youths continue to face barriers to meaningful employment due to the limited reach and capacity of technical colleges and vocational training centers. Many centers are poorly equipped, and the MSCE requirement for enrollment excludes large numbers of rural youth.

Even graduates from technical programs struggle to start businesses due to lack of capital, equipment, business skills, and mentorship. Access to finance is limited, with banks demanding collateral and credit histories most youth lack. Bureaucratic red tape, inconsistent policies, weak infrastructure (electricity, roads), and limited access to markets further discourage youth entrepreneurship—especially in rural areas.

Demands:

1. Enforce mandatory retirement for public servants in accordance with the law to create room for youth employment.
2. Abolish restrictive entry qualifications for vocational training; introduce flexible training pathways for youth without formal education.
3. Simplify business registration procedures and reduce bureaucratic barriers to starting and running businesses.
4. Enhance market access by developing infrastructure, strengthening trade linkages, and supporting e-commerce.
5. Invest in rural infrastructure, especially electricity, transportation, and internet connectivity.
6. Expand agricultural education and training in modern farming, technology use, and agribusiness management.
7. Construct at least one fully equipped technical college in every district.





3

THEME THREE: MINING, LAND ACQUISITION AND UTILISATION

Ideal Outcome: To ensure effective mining governance and establish an equitable and transparent land governance system that guarantees youth access to land for agriculture, housing, and entrepreneurship, thereby promoting inclusive and sustainable development.

Problem Analysis: Malawi is endowed with high value natural resources that could support socio-economic transformation of the country. However, the country is unlikely to benefit from its high value natural resources because of a weak policy, legal and institutional framework for natural resource governance. Among other things, it condones loss of revenue to the state through under-declaration of taxable revenue and transfer mispricing; artisanal and small-scale mining are left unregulated; Government's ability and willingness to bring order to the sector and maximise revenues from the resources for Malawi's development are undercut by badly negotiated contracts with companies and inability to deploy effective monitoring due to lack of skilled personnel. The revenues that accrue to Government from mining projects are far too low and are managed with questionable prudence and a lack of accountability

Further, young people in Malawi face structural barriers in acquiring land. Socio-economic inequalities, patriarchal norms, and outdated legal frameworks limit access to land ownership. Youths often depend on informal arrangements, which lack security and hinder investment in agriculture and business. High population density and growing land demand, coupled with limited financial resources to purchase land, disproportionately affect rural and low-income youth. Land tenure insecurity and the absence of youth voices in land governance structures further compound the problem.

Demands:

- 1/ Ensure a minimum of 60 percent local share ownership in all mining projects
- 2/ Introduce a skills development programme through which bright young people will be awarded scholarships by the Government of Malawi to study relevant subjects and disciplines at undergraduate and postgraduate levels to develop a pool of knowledgeable and skilled human resources to work in the field of natural resource exploration and
- 3/ Amend the Land Act to ensure youth representation in all land committees and decision-making processes.
- 4/ Empower local government councils to identify and allocate land for youth development projects, including community centers and recreational facilities.
- 5/ Enforce the Land Acquisition Law to prevent the unchecked sale of land to foreign entities.
- 6/ Strengthen community land tribunals to protect the land rights of young people, particularly in rural areas.
- 7/ Implement the Urban Land Youth Development Plan, incorporating sustainable housing and business infrastructure





4

THEME FOUR: YOUTH LEADERSHIP IN POLITICS AND CIVIC LIFE

Ideal Outcome: To establish a strong institutional framework that empowers youth to actively participate in politics and civic life, and to champion a comprehensive youth development agenda.

Problem Analysis: Youth in Malawi face significant barriers due to weak and fragmented institutional frameworks for youth development. Poor coordination among ministries, departments, and NGOs leads to duplication of efforts and inefficient resource utilization. Capacity constraints—including understaffed institutions tasked with youth programming—further hinder effective implementation.

A lack of inclusive and well-coordinated governance structures, particularly the current configuration of the National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM), undermines youth empowerment. NYCOM, operating directly under the Ministry of Youth and as a membership-based organization, often excludes individual youth and remains vulnerable to political interference.

Cultural norms that prioritize elders' voices and youth exclusion from program design and implementation contribute to political apathy and distrust. Despite rising interest in leadership, politics is still perceived as a last resort, deterring youth from meaningful civic engagement.

Demands:

1. Reform NYCOM to a 'National Youth Commission' with autonomy and a clear mandate for youth development coordination.
2. Enforce 30% minimum youth quota in all governance structures
3. Promulgate and amend laws to reinforce meaningful youth participation and inclusion in decision making and governance structures
4. Create formal participatory mechanisms—such as youth advisory councils at national and local levels—to ensure youth voices inform policy.
5. Introduce training programs in transformative and inter-generational leadership, to be led by the new National Youth Commission.
6. youth representation at community, district, and national levels.
7. Encourage political parties to establish structured pathways for youth mentorship and leadership development.





5

**THEME FIVE: YOUTH
IN CONFLICT WITH
THE LAW AND
ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

Ideal Outcome: To ensure that all youth in conflict with the law have equitable and timely access to restorative justice systems that prioritize rehabilitation, protect their rights, and reduce recidivism.

Problem Analysis: Youth offenders in Malawi often face severe systemic challenges, including the absence of juvenile justice systems. Many are tried in adult courts and detained in adult facilities, exposing them to abuse and neglect.

There is a lack of legal representation due to poverty and an under-resourced pro bono sector. Slow judicial processes, inadequate rehabilitation programs, and limited awareness of child-friendly justice principles worsen the problem. Minor offenses often lead to prosecution instead of diversion, denying youth the opportunity for reintegration.

Demands:

1. Establish child-specific detention centers staffed with trained professionals in child psychology and juvenile law.
2. Expand community-based diversion and rehabilitation programs with age-appropriate services in education, vocational training, and counselling.
3. Train law enforcement and judiciary personnel on child rights and international juvenile justice standards.
4. Promote child-friendly justice principles in legal proceedings and public institutions.
5. Guarantee immediate access to legal representation for all youth from the moment of arrest through appeal.
6. Expedite Judiciary reforms to enhance access to justice





6

**THEME SIX: YOUTH AND
THE ANTI-CORRUPTION
DRIVE**

Ideal Outcome: To empower youth to lead anti-corruption efforts through stronger legal frameworks, institutional transparency, and civic education, ultimately fostering a culture of integrity.

Problem Analysis: Corruption continues to deprive youth of opportunities in education, employment, and entrepreneurship. Nepotism and bribery often outweigh merit, eroding trust in institutions. Youth lack resources and platforms to challenge corrupt practices effectively.

Slow progress and perceived inefficacy of anti-corruption bodies, such as the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), contribute to cynicism. A normalization of corruption threatens to perpetuate it into future generations.



Demands:

1. Enforce implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy
2. Strengthen the capacity and independence of anti-corruption institutions and enforce laws rigorously.
3. Integrate anti-corruption education into primary and secondary school curricula.
4. Empower youth through civic education and engagement in grassroots anti-corruption movements.
5. Support youth-led anti-corruption initiatives through funding and technical support.
6. Redirect recovered public assets for social services
7. Create anonymous, digital whistleblowing platforms tailored for youth.
8. Implement the Public Sector Reforms report of the Public Service Systems Review Taskforce





7

**THEME SEVEN: ICT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
DEVELOPMENT**

Ideal Outcome: To ensure affordable and inclusive access to ICT infrastructure and digital skills, thereby expanding employment and innovation opportunities for Malawian youth.

Problem Analysis: Access to ICT remains limited, with high internet costs and slow connectivity due to reliance on satellite-based networks. Malawi's lack of a national fiber-optic backbone exacerbates digital exclusion.

Urban-rural disparities in access to connectivity persist, restricting rural youth from online markets and learning platforms. Most schools lack ICT labs, leaving youth without the digital literacy necessary in the modern economy.

Demands:

1. Introduce ICT lessons in primary and secondary schools, Teacher Development Centers (TDCs), and teacher colleges with proper infrastructure.
2. MACRA must ensure nationwide network coverage, including underserved rural areas.
3. Provide affordable digital devices and internet services for young people including tax-holidays on smart phones.
4. Expedite the rollout of national fiber-optic broadband infrastructure.
5. Ensure mobile coverage along all major roads and public facilities.
6. Promote Public-Private Partnerships to establish tech hubs in all districts for digital skills training, entrepreneurship, and innovation.
7. Repeal laws that restrict digital freedoms.





8

**THEME EIGHT: PHYSICAL
VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL
ABUSE OF YOUNG MEN
AND WOMEN**

Ideal Outcome: To eliminate gender-based and youth-targeted violence by strengthening protection mechanisms, supporting survivors, and promoting economic empowerment to break cycles of abuse.

Problem Analysis: Gender-based violence is widespread. 1 in 5 women experience sexual violence in their lifetime, and 42% of girls face physical violence before 18. Harmful practices such as early marriage remain prevalent, with 28% of girls aged 15–19 married.

Young men are also affected, often as unrecognized victims of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. Cultural stigma and toxic masculinity prevent them from reporting. Violence during childhood increases the likelihood of future intimate partner violence (IPV).

Demands:

1. Make schools safer and more gender-responsive environments.
2. Introduce anonymous reporting systems for abuse, including cyber-violence and authority figures.
3. Promote community-led efforts to challenge harmful norms and end cycles of violence.
4. Conduct awareness campaigns targeting both youth and duty-bearers about violence, laws, and available redress mechanisms.
5. Partner with NGOs and CSOs to deliver survivor-centred support services.





9

**THEME NINE:
ACCESSIBLE
HEALTH SERVICES**

Ideal Outcome: To ensure all young people have access to youth-friendly health services, including sexual and reproductive health, mental health, and substance abuse prevention, supported by inclusive health financing.

Problem Analysis: Barriers include stigma, inadequate youth-friendly facilities, limited mental health services, and increasing drug and alcohol abuse. Youth from poor families struggle with healthcare costs, and youth-specific insurance schemes are virtually nonexistent.

There is a shortage of trained healthcare providers for young people, and very few facilities offer confidential services tailored to their needs.

Demands:

1. Gradually increase government funding for Youth-Friendly Health Services (YFHS) and SRHR.
2. Expand community-based youth clubs to offer family planning education and services.
3. Establish youth-friendly spaces in all health facilities.
4. Enforce existing drug and substance abuse laws.
5. Enforce liquor sales regulations under the Liquor Act and National Alcohol Policy.
6. Recruit and train more mental health professionals.
7. Integrate mental health into primary healthcare and YFHS.
8. Ensure all health facilities have trained counsellors for youth.
9. Build at least one rehabilitation centre in each district.





10

THEME TEN: ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Ideal Outcome: To empower youth to lead climate adaptation, promote sustainable energy use, and drive green innovation and environmental protection for long-term resilience.

Problem Analysis: Youth livelihoods are threatened by environmental degradation. Deforestation, erosion, and climate change reduce agricultural productivity, forcing youth into unsustainable practices like illegal charcoal production. Enforcement of environmental laws remains weak, and youth lack access to financial and technical support for green initiatives.

Waste management is poorly regulated, and young people will bear the long-term consequences of today's environmental inaction.

Demands:

1. Launch a National Youth Green Energy Innovation Challenge with funding and mentorship.
2. Establish youth-led catchment restoration public works programs.
3. Scale up youth-led climate mitigation efforts focusing on preparedness and sustainability.
4. Promote youth-led waste management programs (recycling, composting, waste-to-energy).
5. Expand reforestation programs with sustainable youth-led components.
6. Enforce logging laws through active youth and community participation.





11

**THEME ELEVEN:
SPORTS, CULTURE,
AND ARTS**

Ideal Outcome: To empower youth to participate meaningfully in sports, culture, and arts—creating opportunities for personal development, social cohesion, and economic empowerment.

Problem Analysis: Despite investments, youth lack access to quality sports facilities, professional training, and support for grassroots talent development. Cultural erosion, inadequate preservation of traditional knowledge, and the dominance of harmful cultural practices also hinder progress.

Museums and cultural institutions are limited, reducing youth access to their own heritage and history. Harmful traditions continue to normalize gender inequality and undermine the rights of women and children.



Demands:

1. Construct and stock one cultural center or museum per region for the development, documentation, preservation and dissemination of culture.
2. Introduce cultural studies in primary and secondary schools focusing on the cultures of the people of Malawi to encourage tolerance and promote diversity.
3. Abolish by law, all cultural practices that amount to infringement on people's human rights.
4. Every school must have minimum, basic, functional sports facilities and equipment for all the learners to develop their talents and live healthy lives.
5. Re-introduce Physical Education (PE) classes in primary and secondary schools to identify students' sporting talents.
6. The government should fully establish a national arts council with a mandate to regulate and promote the creative arts.
7. Government should ensure that arts and crafts are part of the curriculum in all primary and secondary schools, with a focus on both urban and rural schools.
8. The government should create a grant and loan package specifically designed for young artists, with training in entrepreneurship.
9. The government should increase funding for national arts competitions, focusing on talent identification and development, with regional outreach programs.



12

THEME TWELVE: YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND OTHER VULNERABLE YOUTH GROUPS

Ideal Outcome: To ensure the full inclusion of young people with disabilities and other vulnerable youth groups in Malawi's social, economic, and political life through deliberate, equity-driven policies and self-empowerment interventions.

Problem Analysis: Young people with disabilities in Malawi are often overlooked, marginalized, and excluded from strategic youth programming. While the country has adopted relatively progressive legal and policy frameworks, their implementation has fallen short, leaving youth with disabilities facing a wide range of systemic barriers.

Due to their physical, sensory, or intellectual conditions, many struggle to access quality education and vocational training, severely affecting their employability and long-term economic prospects. Disability-inclusive bursaries and affordable, accessible skills training opportunities remain limited or unavailable.

In the health sector, access to essential services—including mental health care, HIV and AIDS prevention and treatment, assistive devices, and comprehensive sexuality education (including SRHR services)—is inadequate. Youth with disabilities are also routinely excluded from youth-friendly health services and empowerment programs.

Politically, there are no deliberate mechanisms to support their active participation in public life, political processes, or elections. There is a lack of financial inclusion, limited access to entrepreneurial support, and ineffective government financing for disability-inclusive development. In short, youth policy implementation has not adequately addressed the needs of this vulnerable group.

Other marginalized youth—such as young refugees, sexual minorities, and youth living in extreme poverty—continue to suffer exclusion, discrimination, exploitation, and violence. These groups remain invisible in both policy and practice. A bold and targeted legislative and strategic response is urgently needed.

of instruction and research. These issues perpetuate a digital divide, further isolating Malawi from global academic discourse.

Demands:

1. The government and its partners must introduce targeted interventions to support the education and economic empowerment of youth with disabilities through dedicated bursary schemes, inclusive vocational training, and financial inclusion programs.
2. Roll out disability-inclusive youth sexuality programs that address the specific SRHR and HIV/AIDS needs of young people with disabilities.
3. Promote the active participation of youth with disabilities in political, electoral, and public life through strategic inclusion at all levels—including within political parties, local development structures, and national electoral systems.
4. Establish concrete disability-focused youth measures to ensure the effective implementation of the National Youth Policy (2023–2028) and the National Disability Policy (2025–2030) across all levels of governance.
5. Embed a strong disability-inclusive focus within the National Social Protection Policy (2024–2029), supported by detailed implementation guidelines that ensure meaningful youth inclusion.
6. Mandate the collection of disability-disaggregated data in all youth empowerment and development programs, including the implementation of Malawi 2063, to enhance visibility and inclusion.
7. Expedite the review of the 1989 Refugee Act to align it with the Malawi Constitution and international human rights standards, ensuring robust protection for young refugees—particularly refugee girls and young women.
8. Guarantee the full protection of youth sexual minority groups by enacting policies and laws that safeguard their personal safety, ensure non-discrimination, and promote equal participation in public life.
9. Strengthen legal and policy frameworks to protect young people living in extreme poverty from all forms of exploitation, abuse, and neglect.
10. Guarantee and uphold rights and freedoms of all vulnerable youths

STATEMENT ON COLLECTIVE ACTION

The Role of the Consortium

To drive the implementation of the 2025-2030 Youth Manifesto, the consortium will take a coordinated and inclusive approach, engaging all key stakeholders in developing a robust implementation plan. The consortium will build the capacity of Youth Champions, equipping them with the necessary skills to lobby and advocate for the Youth Agenda at all levels of governance.

Furthermore, the consortium will work to ensure that government institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector, religious and traditional leaders, and the general public are actively involved in advancing youth development. Media engagement will be prioritized to enhance public awareness and visibility of the National Youth Manifesto, ensuring that youth issues remain at the center of national discourse.

To strengthen accountability and transparency, the Youth Decide Campaign will develop a Youth Manifesto Implementation Tracker. This tool will be used to monitor how the government—through MDAs—as well as development partners are implementing the demands outlined in this Manifesto.

Additionally, the consortium will hold annual review meetings with stakeholders to assess progress on implementation, identify challenges, and refine strategies for achieving the Youth Agenda. These reviews will serve as a platform for constructive dialogue between young people, government, political leaders, development partners, and non-state actors including civil society, ensuring that commitments translate into measurable actions.

In support of youth entrepreneurship and agribusiness development, the Youth-Decide Campaign will conduct a national business

profiling exercise across all districts to identify and promote youth-owned enterprises. Additionally, to strengthen youth participation in politics and civic life, the campaign will carry out a mapping exercise to identify and create strategic spaces where young people can engage meaningfully in governance and decision-making processes.

The Role of Political Parties, Political Candidates, and Duty-Bearers

The success of this Manifesto depends on the collective commitment of all stakeholders, particularly political actors. We call upon political parties, candidates, and duty-bearers to integrate the youth agenda into their policies, governance strategies, and electoral manifestos to ensure youth-centered development and inclusive leadership.

Political Parties & Candidates

- I Political parties should **incorporate the Youth Agenda** into their party manifestos and governance frameworks.
- II Candidates—especially those vying for elected positions—must be **well-informed and actively committed** to addressing youth development priorities.
- III Parties should **nominate, support, and empower young aspirants** to contest for leadership positions at local, regional, and national levels.
- IV Political actors must **promote youth participation** by creating **inclusive platforms** for youth engagement in governance and policy discussions.

Duty-Bearers & Elected Officials

- I Those in positions of power must **champion policies and programs** that prioritize youth empowerment across all sectors.
- II Elected officials should **ensure meaningful youth representation** in decision-making bodies and governance structures.
- III Government leaders must **implement youth-centered policies and allocate sufficient resources** for youth programs.
- IV Strengthening **accountability mechanisms** will ensure that youth-related commitments translate into tangible actions.

By working together, political actors can create an enabling environment where young people are empowered, included, and equipped to lead and contribute meaningfully to national development.

The Role of Government

The government that will be formed following the 2025 General Elections will play a critical role in translating the aspirations of young people into tangible actions and policies. We expect the government to:

- I **Adopt and act upon the demands outlined in this Manifesto** by creating an enabling environment for youth development.
- II **Strengthen youth-focused policies and legislation**, ensuring effective implementation through sustained dialogue and collaboration with the National Planning Commission and other relevant institutions.

- III **Commit to genuine youth engagement**, ensuring young people are not just beneficiaries but active participants in governance, economic development, and social transformation.

As young people, we will remain vigilant, persistent, and proactive in advocating for the realization of the Youth Agenda, holding the government accountable for its commitments.

The Role of the Youth

The success of this Youth Manifesto depends on the unity, agency, and collective action of Malawian youth. Every young person has a responsibility to:

- I **Advocate for the implementation** of the aspirations outlined in this Manifesto.
- II **Engage actively** in governance and leadership roles at all levels.
- III **Hold elected officials and policymakers accountable**, ensuring that youth development remains a national priority.

Young people must rise to the challenge of leadership, organizing themselves into strong networks and movements that demand transparent, accountable, and youth-inclusive governance.

CONCLUSION

This 2025-2030 Youth Manifesto represents the collective aspirations and commitments of Malawian youth. We call upon all stakeholders—government, political parties, civil society, the private sector, and development partners—to actively support its implementation.

Investing in the Youth Agenda is investing in Malawi's future—a future defined by democratic governance, patriotism, socio-economic transformation, and sustainable development. The time for action is now. Together, we can build a Malawi where young people are empowered, included, and lead.



YOUTH DECIDE CAMPAIGN

Democracy in Young Hands



YAS
YOUTH AND SOCIETY

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