

YOUTH PERSPECTIVES: LEADERSHIP

YouthMap, a program of the International Youth Foundation, is a four-year initiative to assess youth circumstances and support promising youth development programs and practices in eight countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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The International Youth Foundation (IYF) invests in the extraordinary potential of young people. Founded in 1990, IYF builds and maintains a worldwide community of businesses, governments, and civil-society organizations committed to empowering youth to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. IYF programs are catalysts of change that help young people obtain a quality education, gain employability skills, make healthy choices, and improve their communities.

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THIS BRIEF HIGHLIGHTS YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVES ON LEADERSHIP IN mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar, based on findings from the YouthMap assessment report. It discusses youth aspirations, challenges, and experiences while outlining leadership opportunities at local and national levels.

This research is supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through a cooperative agreement with the International Youth Foundation (IYF). YouthMap is a four-year program designed to assess youth circumstances and to support promising youth programs in up to eight countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Tanzania, IYF conducted the assessment in partnership with Restless Development.

METHODOLOGY

A total of 367 young people (referred to as YouthMap participants) and 118 stakeholders across 12 districts in the six target regions participated in the assessment. YouthMap participants represented all research locations and consisted of 118 in-school youth, 125 employed youth, 114 inactive youth, and 10 positive role models. Stakeholder participants included public, private, civil society, and donor organizations. This purposive sampling strategy was employed in order to better understand the condition and concerns of youth participants from their own unique perspectives, as well as insight from relevant stakeholders.

CONCEPT OF LEADERSHIP

Young people described leadership by referencing older adults in their communities. They feel that these elders possess qualities, such as confidence and strength, that cannot be taught. Young people overwhelmingly feel that they do not have the chance to lead, and that they would not be prepared to do so if such opportunities existed.

As YouthMap participants in Kilolo, Iringa Region, stated, "We do not feel confident to manage the responsibilities of leadership. We do not have adequate education, and corruption is everywhere." While youth understand the qualities of a good leader, they feel hindered from taking up leadership positions and by default do not solicit or request leadership opportunities in their communities.

YouthMap participants shared a concern that if they were engaged as leaders, they did not want to be co-opted (or appear to be co-opted) into a system where leaders, especially politicians, often put their own economic gain in front of the needs of the people.

YOUTH VOICES

- We want **transparent management of public resources**.
- We want to **share power**.
- We want leaders who treat us with **fairness and respect**.
- We want leaders who are **role models**.

YOUTH POLITICAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Youth participation in political and civic activities represents an opportunity to build young people’s leadership capacity. Sixty-four percent of all YouthMap participants said they are engaged in civic activities, and 43 percent were involved politically, with fairly equal distribution of participation across gender. Figure 1 and Figure 2 show the participation rates for engaged youth respondents, many of whom engage in multiple activities.

Across all research locations, voting is the primary expression of youth political participation. Sixty-eight percent of eligible YouthMap participants reported voting in the last election, and more than 93 percent stated that they plan to vote in the 2015 election. With respect to civic participation, community volunteering (e.g., environmental activities and public health awareness campaigns on HIV/AIDS) and religious activities serve as the primary forms of youth involvement. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate the narrow scope of current youth political and civic involvement; for example, less than five percent of youth participants are engaged in the constitutional reform process. This narrowness indicates a need to promote leadership development, and YouthMap participants have expressed a desire to shape their country’s future. With such critical upcoming country milestones (i.e., elections and constitutional review), YouthMap participants expressed a desire to be involved in youth councils, improve access to information to hold the reform process leaders accountable; and engage in forums to express their concerns and priorities—provided they have the opportunities.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRAINTS

Cultural and political structures in Tanzania limit youth civic and political participation in volunteering or voting. In Zanzibar in particular, young people experience major cultural and socioeconomic barriers to participation and leadership development. Young people there noted that institutional limitations at the Shehia level restrict them from participating in civic activities.¹ Culturally, young people are not allowed to speak in front of older adults;

Figure 1: Political Participation

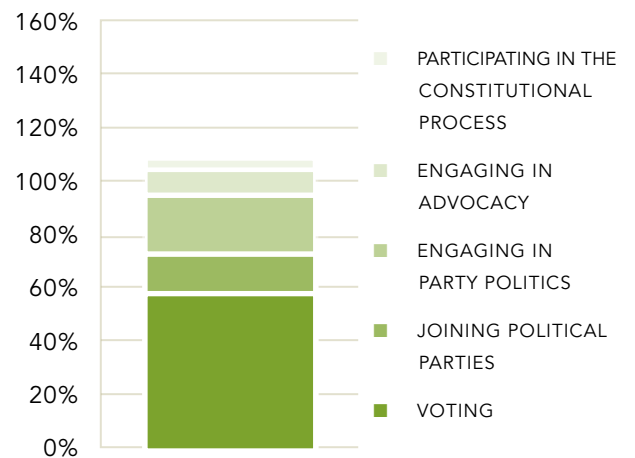
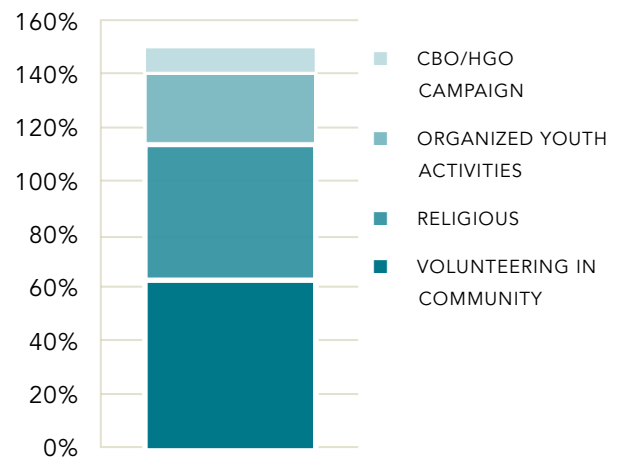


Figure 2: Civic Participation



therefore, they choose not to participate in decision-making processes. This social norm limits young people’s opportunity to contribute to discussions at Shehia meetings, as well as their ability to learn and develop their leadership skills through an existing community outlet.

The formality of the Shehia also creates a contentious relationship between older adults and youth, limiting avenues to prepare youth for leadership positions. As one key YouthMap participant stated in Zanzibar, “It is very difficult to mix youth and older people to speak at the same level, and for youth to speak without fear. It is a cultural issue.” Other key informants in Zanzibar noted

1. Shehia is one of the local governance structures within districts in Zanzibar.

that to engage youth effectively in civic matters, there is a need to advocate for change that allows meaningful youth membership and participation at the Shehia level. A stakeholder in Zanzibar also noted that there was a dearth of formal leadership training opportunities for youth. He shared his frustration that even if youth were able to gain leadership opportunities, they would be hindered due to lack of exposure to quality leadership models from older adults or those trained as leaders. Therefore, stakeholders believe that the spirit of “this is my country, and I am the one who can change it” needs to be further inculcated and effectively cultivated through targeted training for youth.

Based on discussions with young people in mainland Tanzania, it appears they are eager to lead and contribute to overall development efforts. Many YouthMap participants shared their deep desire to help build good relationships in the community and participate in the future development of their community and country.

HOW CAN WE EMPOWER YOUTH?

Young people feel they can contribute to change and development, yet existing channels for participation are extremely limited. To be truly empowered, YouthMap participants expressed a desire for the following action:

- Extension of skills development programs (24 percent of the participants in Zanzibar; 44 percent of the participants in mainland Tanzania); and
- Expansion of participation channels (34 percent in Zanzibar; 42 percent in mainland Tanzania).

RECOMMENDATIONS

YouthMap participants and key stakeholders all recognize the constraints around skills development and creation of leadership opportunities for young people in Tanzania. However, there is a shared enthusiasm and recognition for young people’s potential to become the country’s next generation of community and political leaders. To expand and enhance youth leadership and meaningful youth civic and political participation in Tanzania,

YouthMap makes the following recommendations:

- Promote leadership awareness and skills training so that youth are knowledgeable, equipped, and encouraged to take up leadership positions at the community level and in the political arena. The government, youth, and stakeholders should cooperatively design programs that encourage skills development and mentoring initiatives for young people in order to encourage them to engage in leadership activities. Leadership role models should be identified and supported as youth mentors.
- Create culturally sensitive and relevant leadership skills training materials and integrate them within public and private training institutions, with programs targeting marginalized youth.
- Take policy action to attract youth to leadership positions at the community level. This work should include review of the Political Parties Act to encourage participation of less advantaged members of the community, including youth.
- Strengthen the National Youth Council and introduce youth councils at the local levels to encourage youth engagement in Tanzania’s growth and development. The institutional arrangements at the Shehia level should also be reviewed to allow youth representation in development committees and participation at meetings. Existing participation activities such as volunteering and religious opportunities should be encouraged and expanded further to integrate leadership skills development.
- Identify young Tanzanian role models such as entrepreneurs, musicians, and athletes to serve as ambassadors who can promote the youth agenda.
- Engage Zanzibari government and business leaders to create a platform to discuss ways to lower barriers and promote youth entry into leadership positions.

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