

THE AMPLIFIER

Amplifying The Youth Voice



FOR FUTURE

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Yvone Ndambuki

In Kenya, with over 70% of the population under 35, young people are central to national development. Three major events in August—National Youth Week, International Youth Day, and the Devolution Conference—highlighted their leadership and potential. These milestones showcased how local action is powering Kenya’s journey toward inclusive growth and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

National Youth Week and International Youth Day provided direct platforms for youth to engage with leaders, showcasing youth-led innovations and reinforcing that young people are not just future leaders but leaders today. The Devolution Conference further affirmed that youth empowerment and local action go hand-in-hand, placing young people at the heart of county-level planning for governance, climate action (SDG 13), and entrepreneurship (SDG 8), promoting civic participation and peace (SDG 16), supporting education and mentorship (SDG 4), or safeguarding Kenya’s cultural heritage (SDG 11), young people proved to be indispensable partners in development.

Across all platforms, the creativity and aspirations of Kenyan youth were undeniable. This progress wasn’t a solo effort; it was powered by partnerships with government, the private sector, and youth organizations. These collaborations are proving that with unity and determination, Kenya’s youth, supported by their partners, are making the country’s transformation unstoppable.



Youth at the Table: A Defining Moment of IYD 2025



A defining moment of IYD 2025 was the Fireside Chat between President William Samoei Ruto and the youth. In this interactive setting, young people directly raised pressing concerns and offered actionable recommendations to address these challenges.

Key highlights included:

1. Calls for a homegrown funding model for CBOs and YSOs, reducing overdependence on international donors.
2. A request for the government to create inclusive job opportunities beyond the construction sector, with recognition that other industries will be scaled as the economy grows.
3. Calls for more constructive citizen-police relations, fostering peace and trust across communities.

In response, the President reaffirmed the government's commitment to creating 1million jobs annually through the Affordable Housing Project, which already employs over 320,000 youth. He also assured that more sectors would gradually open up to accommodate diverse skills and aspirations.

This dialogue reaffirmed one thing: when young people are given a seat at the table, their voices and ideas can shape national priorities.

LET'S TAKE A DEEP DIVE INTO THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK AND INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY CELEBRATIONS



From 6 th to 11 th August 2025, the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports, in partnership with the National Youth Council, alongside key stakeholders and partners, successfully implemented the National Youth Week 2025 in various parts of the country.

This annual build-up to the International Youth Day is designed to celebrate, empower, and amplify the voices of young Kenyans.

The 2025 celebrations were officially launched on 6 th August at Pwani University in Kilifi County by the Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Prof. Kithure Kindiki.

But that was just the start: The celebrations spread to other counties like; Nairobi and Kakamega, making sure young people across the country felt included.

At the same time, other key stakeholders, including youth-serving organizations from across Kenya, hosted their own activities in different counties to commemorate the NYW celebrations.

This year's National Youth Week sought to:

The 2025 NYW and IYD Celebrations sought to:

1. Push for meaningful youth participation in governance and decision-making, in line with the SDGs..
2. Showcase youth-led innovations and community-driven solutions.
3. Spark cross-sector partnerships to scale youth-driven development initiatives.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK

Exhibitions:

NYW wasn't just about conversations; it was a platform for the youth to showcase innovation, talent, and youth-driven solutions.

Young entrepreneurs and innovators had the chance to set up displays to exhibit their innovations and entrepreneurial ventures.

Government agencies and development partners also joined in, setting up booths to share programs and opportunities available for youth empowerment, bridging the information gap that often limits access.



National Youth Prayer Day

On 10th August 2025, the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports, together with the National Youth Council and the International Youth Fellowship, hosted the National Youth Prayer Day at the International Youth Fellowship Headquarters in Nairobi.

This gathering gave young people a chance to come together in prayer, unity, and thanksgiving, a powerful reminder of the role of spirituality and collective faith in nation-building.

One of the big takeaways from the day was the spotlight on youth mental health. Religious leaders, mental health advocates, and young people opened up conversations on why safe spaces and spiritual grounding are essential in helping the youth navigate the pressures of modern life.



International Youth Day

On 12th August, Kenya joined the global community in commemorating International Youth Day (IYD) at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kakamega County, under the theme "Local Youth Actions for the SDGs and Beyond."

The event was graced by H.E. President Dr. William Samoei Ruto, PhD, CGH, and brought together over 2,000 young people, youth-serving organizations, and stakeholders.

It featured a vibrant program:

1. **Exhibitions** : spotlighting youth-led enterprises and innovations.
2. **Conversation** : addressing youth inclusion in governance, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development.

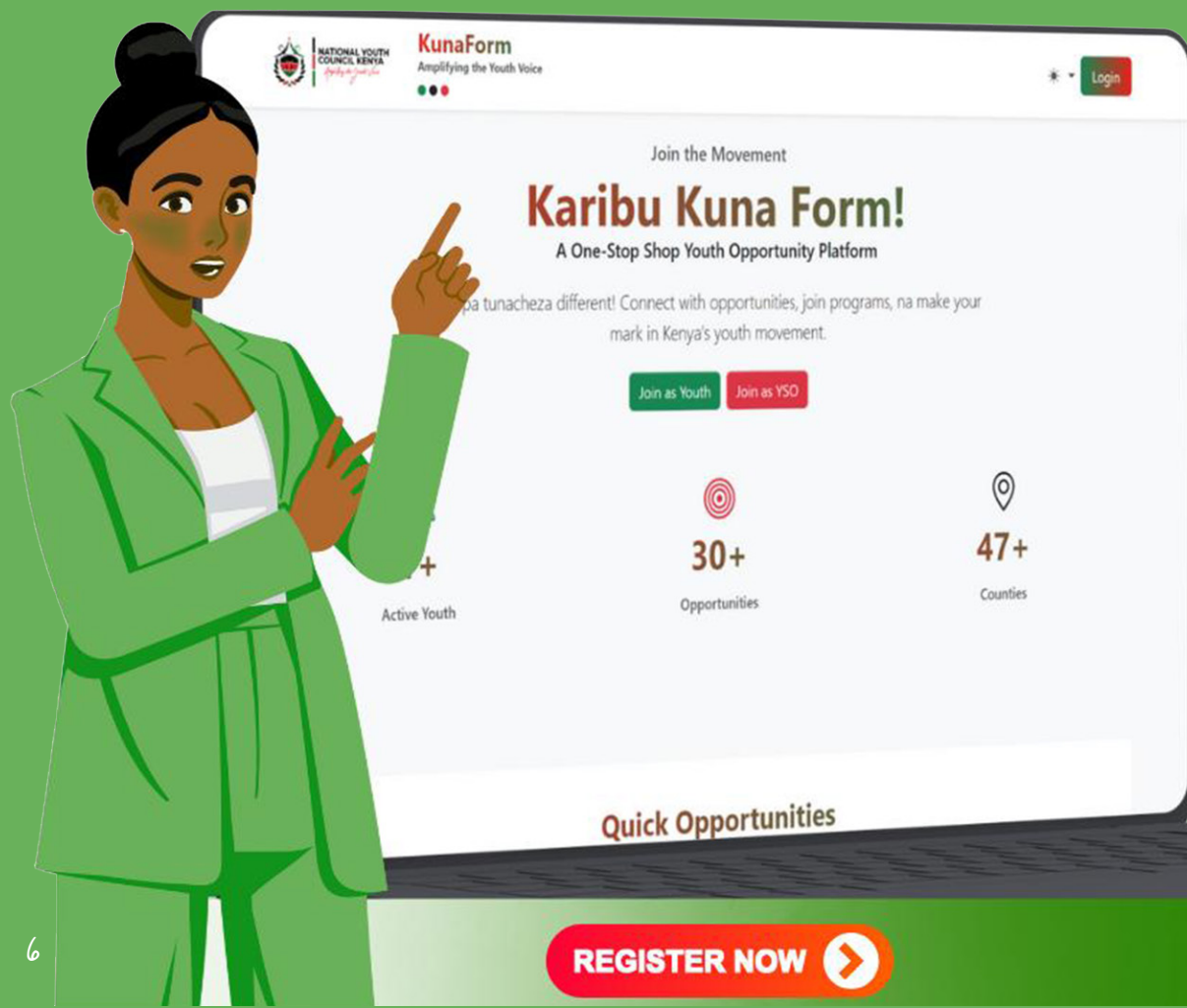


Launch of Kuna Form

Another major milestone of the IYD celebrations was the official launch of the Kuna Form Portal by the President. Spearheaded by the National Youth Council (NYC), this flagship initiative is set to be a game-changer for youth empowerment in Kenya.

The Kuna Form Portal is a digital platform that serves as a consolidated one-stop hub for youth opportunities across government and the private sector, enabling the youth to identify, apply for, and benefit from diverse empowerment initiatives with ease.

Since its rollout, more than 12,000 young people have registered, with numbers growing daily. This uptake highlights not only the demand for centralized information but also the power of technology to transform how youth connect with opportunities.





DEVOLUTION CONFERENCE

The Devolution Conference is Kenya's premier governance forum, bringing together leaders, policymakers, practitioners, development partners, the private sector, academia, and citizens to reflect on the progress of devolution, exchange ideas, and chart a way forward. Its primary goal is to evaluate how devolution is transforming governance and service delivery, while generating actionable recommendations to enhance equity, inclusion, and social justice.

The 2025 Devolution Conference was held from 12th to 15th August in Homa Bay County, under the theme: "For the People, For Prosperity: Devolution as a Catalyst for Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice."

This year's conference focused on assessing the role of devolution in advancing equitable development and inclusion, and on bridging socio-economic gaps between counties. It provided a platform for robust dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and joint problem-solving by both state and non-state actors.



NYC AT THE DEVOLUTION CONFERENCE

The Youth Pavilion

For a long time, the Devolution Conference has been perceived as a forum dominated by the ‘big wigs.’ This year, however, things felt different. The National Youth Council (NYC) introduced something fresh, the Youth Pavilion, a designated space that gave young people their own platform at one of Kenya’s biggest national forums. It was more than just a physical space; it was a hub of energy, conversations, and opportunities

The Pavilion was made possible through the support of partners who shared in this vision. Safaricom curated the games corner and opportunity corner, where young people could relax, network, and at the same time interact with stakeholders like Ajira Digital and the NYC, who informed them of the opportunities and programs designed for their empowerment.

The Zero Malaria Campaign Coalition sparked conversations through a dynamic social media activation featuring Abel Mutua (Mkurugenzi), Liz Ntoraji, and other champions. This session got young people talking, not just about hashtags, but about how their voices can drive the fight against malaria.

The Pavilion also created space for meaningful conversations on mental health and youth leadership. Led by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), the Organization of African Youth(OAY), TI-NADA, and the National Heroes Council, the sessions highlighted the importance of supporting youth mental health and preparing young people to step confidently into leadership roles.

The Youth Pavilion proved that when partners come together to create intentional spaces, young people don’t just show up; they engage, lead, and inspire. It marked a shift from symbolic presence to meaningful participation, reminding everyone that the voices of youth are not just important for the future, but essential for Kenya’s progress today.



SPOTLIGHT

Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) Youth Side Event

Youth at the Centre on Transforming Kenya's Food

Over at the Youth Side Event, the spotlight shifted to agriculture, and it was far from just another panel of speeches. Co-hosted with the NYC, the side event placed youth at the center of the conversation on transforming Kenya's food systems.

Through an interactive hackathon, young people took the mic to speak about the real challenges they face in the agricultural sector, from limited financing and market access to the slow uptake of digital solutions. But they didn't stop there. They also brought forward fresh, practical ideas and engaged policymakers directly, ensuring that their lived realities and bold innovations were reflected in the national food systems agenda.

The side event also brought together notable leaders, including H.E. Kenneth Lusaka, Governor of Bungoma County and Chair of the Council of Governors' Agriculture Committee, and H.E. Dr. Julius Makau Malombe, Governor of Kitui County, alongside government representatives, development partners, and private sector stakeholders.

At the heart of this event was the message that with the robust integration of technology in agriculture, the sector can attract more young people, strengthen food security, and unlock new job opportunities for the youth.



TIMIZA YOUTH INITIATIVE:

In Kilifi County, Timiza Youth Initiative, in partnership with TICA, hosted a cultural dialogue and deep-canvassing session with Kaya elders. Inspired by the Thome traditional mentorship model, the dialogue focused on blending indigenous knowledge with modern rights-based approaches to strengthen Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). A key highlight was the co-creation of an Age-Appropriate Sexuality Education Guide, with Kaya elders contributing to ensure it reflects both scientific standards and cultural wisdom. The session also addressed modern challenges facing youth, including harmful digital content, peer pressure, and poverty-driven exploitation, while exploring solutions such as reviving mentorship structures, integrating elders into schools, and promoting responsible technology use. This initiative strengthened intergenerational dialogue, revived mentorship traditions, and linked cultural knowledge with the SDG agenda.



MAKUENI YOUTH NETWORK CBO:

In Makueni County, the Makueni Youth Network CBO, in collaboration with the County Youth Sector Working Groups, celebrated IYD with a vibrant youth awareness walk in Wote Town, drawing public attention to the role of young people in advancing the SDGs. The celebrations culminated in a town hall meeting attended by over 200 young people, county officials, and development partners. The dialogue focused on how youth-led initiatives can be prioritized and funded within Makueni County's budget process. A key outcome was the decision to compile youth priorities into a memorandum to be submitted to the County Department of Finance for adoption in the Annual Development Plan (ADP), a step toward institutionalizing youth voices in county planning and decision-making.

Cereal Growers Association & Vijana in KilimoBiz

In counties such as Kakamega, Turkana, and Tharaka Nithi, the Cereal Growers Association and Vijana in KilimoBiz Project mobilized youth to participate in activities aligned with the SDGs. In Kakamega, young agripreneurs visited Irene Oduor's oyster mushroom farm, gaining hands-on insights into sustainable agriculture and entrepreneurial strategies, directly contributing to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Other initiatives promoted environmental conservation (SDG 13) and food security through fruit tree planting, echoing efforts toward agro ecological transformation.



Rachuonyo West Hub

In Homa Bay County, the Rachuonyo West Hub facilitated intergenerational dialogues between young leaders and elders. These conversations broke down cultural barriers, fostered collaborative leadership, and reinforced the idea that youth are not merely beneficiaries of development but active partners in policy and decision-making.

Green Land Youth Network Kenya CBO

The Green Land Youth Network Kenya CBO placed a special focus on empowering young women and marginalized groups. Through digital literacy workshops and entrepreneurial training, the initiative worked to ensure inclusivity and that no one is left behind in the sustainability journey.

Youth in Climate

Youth in Climate used storytelling and creative arts to amplify their voices. They produced short films and digital content showcasing youth contributions to the SDGs. Shared widely on social media and at local screenings, these stories highlighted how youth are localizing global goals through community-driven solutions.

International Rescue Committee

The International Rescue Committee, in collaboration with the Nairobi City County and the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports, together with partners such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), National Employment Authority, Amani Counselling Centre, SDI Kenya, Finnish Church Aid, and HESED Africa, hosted an International Youth Day 2025 celebration in Nairobi. The event brought together young people from across sub-counties including Westlands, Dagoretti, Kibra, Embakasi, Roysambu, Mathare, Kasarani, Kamukuni, and Starehe. The conversations zeroed in on the realities facing Nairobi's youth today, from limited access to jobs and mentorship to mental health concerns, inclusion of refugees, and the need to align skills with market demands. Youth also called for more transparency in government programs, representation of persons with disabilities, and stronger grassroots engagement beyond office spaces. Alongside these discussions, the day featured creative performances, exhibitions, and showcases from partners, highlighting the resilience, innovation, and cultural pride of Nairobi's young people.

GALLERY



DEVOLUTION CONFERENCE PARTNERS



MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS,
CREATIVE ECONOMY AND SPORTS



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF DENMARK
Denmark in Kenya



AJIRA
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Call To Action

We encourage all young people across Kenya to register on the Kuna Form Portal via kunaform.nyckenya.go.ke

This one-stop hub connects you to youth opportunities, programs, and event. Don't miss out, be part of the movement!

And that's not all, The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has launched the "We Are Nature: Youth Biodiversity Challenge," which will roll out in Kenya and South Africa between July and September 2025.

This initiative uses innovative technology to empower young people; including indigenous youth and youth from local communities, to initiate, sustain, and scale biodiversity projects that align with the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Youth interested in getting involved are encouraged to find more information at:

<https://www.unep.org/we-are-nature-youth-biodiversity-challenge>

