



# THE 2026–2031 NATIONAL YOUTH MANIFESTO

YOUTH AS DRIVERS OF A MODERN  
AND PROSPEROUS UGANDA



**AUGUST 2025**

**“Our Future, Our Voice, Our Uganda.”**

Supported by:

Netherlands Institute for  
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## Foreword



The 2026–2031 National Youth Manifesto is crucial for Uganda. It aligns with the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV). This plan focuses on human capital, governance, and security. These areas support the African Union's goal of utilizing the youth bulge to create a demographic dividend.

For Uganda, young people must be central to national progress. Vision 2040 aims for an economy of USD 581 billion and a per capita income of USD 9,500. To achieve this, we must unlock the potential of our youth. This requires investment in education, skills, health, jobs, and civic empowerment. A large youth population can only be a strength if their talents are utilized.

Evidence shows that countries benefit from demographic dividends through inclusive policies. Uganda needs an environment that gives youth access to quality education, healthcare, social protection, and job opportunities. By addressing unemployment and adopting digital technologies, we can ensure youth voices shape governance.

The government will collaborate with partners, civil society, and youth groups. Together, we will pursue the goals of this Manifesto. Young people will remain at the heart of national development.

Hon. Eyeru Jacob  
Chairperson, National Youth Council

## JOINT ENDORSEMENT BY POLITICAL PARTIES

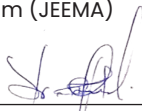
We, the undersigned youth league leaders representing the various political parties of Uganda, under the Inter-Party Platform for Youth (IYOP), Multi-party Youth Forum (MYF), and other platforms; affirm our endorsement and collective support for the National Youth Manifesto 2026–2031.



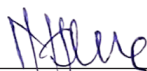
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## Preface

Uganda's future is written in the faces of its young people. With more than 73.5% of the population under the age of 30, Uganda stands at a crossroads: either unlock the power of this generation to build a modern, prosperous nation, or lose the opportunity of a lifetime.

The National Youth Manifesto 2026–2031 rises from that promise. It is bold, not because boldness is fashionable, but because the moment demands it. This Manifesto is designed as a living tool—rooted in evidence, shaped by the voices of young people from every region and background, and aligned to the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV) and consequently to Uganda's Vision 2040.

What makes this effort distinct is the adoption of a systems approach, with education, health, jobs, governance, climate action, and digital transformation not treated as isolated issues but as interconnected levers of progress. When they work together, Uganda can turn its youthful population into a true demographic dividend.

We extend our deepest appreciation to the partners who made this process a reality. We acknowledge UNICEF, the National Secretariate for Special Interest Groups and the National Youth Council (NYC) for providing the U-Report platform, which enabled nationwide consultations with young people. We are equally grateful to the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) for facilitating dialogues with youth in political parties, The National Youth Advocacy Platform (NYAP) for supporting online consultations, Youth for Tax Justice Network (YTJN) for advancing discussions on fiscal policy, Uganda National Young Farmers Federation (UNYFA) for supporting consultations on agribusiness, Teens Uganda for their role in shaping consultations on natural resources and climate justice and Open Space Center, Action Aid Uganda for supporting the Launch, Validation and other key processes. Special thanks go to the individuals who dedicated their time to guide young people during thematic consultations, including Hawa Kimbugwe, Rashida Namulondo, Edward Lubega, Nabwire Rose, Shadrack Kuteesa, Clive Kyazze, Dr. Ahmed Hadji, and Andrew Kaggwa. In the same vein, we extend utmost gratitude to African Youth Development Link (AYDL) for hosting the YCED secretariat, which has been pivotal in coordinating and supporting the process.

We also appreciate the valuable contributions of government institutions and ministries that participated in the whole process, as well as youth organizations and coalitions, civil society actors, private sector stakeholders, and development partners who believed in the power of consultation and co-creation.

Above all, we honor the thousands of young Ugandans who shared their lived realities, aspirations, and demands. Their voices are the true foundation of this Manifesto. This document is not an end but a beginning. It is a rallying point for accountability, for issue-based politics, and for inclusive leadership. We call upon political parties, government institutions, and all stakeholders to take these priorities seriously, resource them adequately, and deliver on them faithfully. Because the truth is clear: Uganda's future is young, and the time is now. No decisions about us, without us.

**Otim Ivan**  
Coordinator, YCED

# Executive Summary

## 1) Why this manifesto, why now?

Uganda's young people are the country's greatest asset and its most urgent responsibility. This manifesto turns the youth bulge into a youth dividend by moving beyond siloed interventions to a systems approach that connects education, health, jobs, governance, climate action, and digital transformation.

It is grounded in broad-based consultations with young people across regions and experiences, and aligned with national priorities under Vision 2040 and NDP IV. The message is simple:

***"Invest in youth capability and voice, for Uganda to accelerate towards a modern and prosperous future"***

### What makes this manifesto different?

- **Youth-designed and evidence-led:** distilled from nationwide surveys and targeted dialogues with youth, including out of school, rural, peri urban, and refugee hosting communities.
- **Systems-thinking lens:** links reforms across human capital, governance, climate/green jobs, and digital transformation for compounding impact.
- **Policy-entry points:** each ask is actionable, measurable, and tied to existing government programmes, laws, and policy windows.
- **Accountability architecture:** annual Youth Manifesto Scorecard, youth budget tagging, and procurement reservations to ensure delivery.

## 2) What's changed since 2021–2026.

Over the last cycle, a number of youth relevant advances were recorded: new or reformed legal frameworks (e.g., mining and local content), apprenticeship/graduate volunteer schemes, climate and green finance facilities, strengthened IP enforcement for creatives, TVET policy implementation, and a sharp rise in sports financing.

At the same time, binding constraints persist: slow school to work transitions, mental health gaps, uneven creative and sports infrastructure, the high cost of internet, and limited youth influence in governance.

The next five years must therefore prioritise scale, affordability, and inclusion, backed by clear metrics and annual review.

## Lessons to carry forward.

- **Focus on delivery at scale:** expand what worked (skills, sports, creative economy, SRHR) with predictable financing and local capacity.
- **Price and access matter:** internet costs, insurance coverage, and access to finance decisively shape youth opportunity.
- **Voice and agency:** resourcing youth structures and civic participation improves policy uptake and accountability.

## 3) Five Big Asks (2026–2031).

### A. Invest in Human Capital.

1. **Education for employability:** expand secondary enrolment, mainstream digital learning and rights, scale TVET/entrepreneurship in every district, and align tertiary curricula with labour market demand.
2. **Youth health and wellbeing:** dedicate budget to mental health services (including staffing critical gaps), expand youth friendly SRHR, and fast track national health insurance to grow coverage.
3. **Jobs at scale:** catalyse a 24 hour urban economy, expedite the Startups law and supportive tax measures, formalise the jua kali sector, and operationalise procurement reservations for youth associations.

### B. Expand Youth Voice in Governance.

1. **Finance participation:** ring fence a share of public party funding for youth leagues; adequately resource District Youth Councils.
2. **Civic capability:** sustained voter education beyond electoral cycles; a national policy on civic engagement; campaign finance reforms.
3. **Justice that works for youth:** fast-track alternative dispute resolution, strengthen anti-corruption delivery, and adopt youth-centred community policing.

### C. Catalyse Agro Industrialisation & Green Jobs.

1. **Finance and risk sharing:** scale youth access to agriculture finance, insurance, and contract farming; expand post-harvest and agro-processing facilities.
2. **Youth farm estates:** utilise public land for irrigated, year-round youth farm schemes with on-site agronomy support.
3. **Green growth now:** adopt a National Green Jobs Policy and a coordination secretariat; accelerate renewable energy entrepreneurship and circular e-waste systems.



## D. Power the Digital Generation.

1. **Affordable access:** reduce dedicated internet costs and extend last mile connectivity; remove distortionary taxes that raise data prices.
2. **Digital skills & 4IR:** integrate coding/AI/robotics from primary to tertiary; expand innovation hubs and ICT BPO job pipelines.
3. **Digital state capacity:** accelerate e government and interoperable digital ID for service delivery and youth friendly programmes.

## E. Make It Stick (Accountability & Finance)

1. **Youth Budget Tagging:** under Programme Based Budgeting, tag and publish youth relevant allocations and outputs across MDAs and Local Governments.
2. **Youth Manifesto Scorecard:** annual, public review co led by youth coalitions, Parliament youth caucus, MDAs and independent watchdogs.
3. **Smart financing & integrity:** streamline tax incentives, curb illicit financial flows, and implement procurement reservations for youth, women, and PWDs.

## 4) What success looks like by 2030.

- **Education & skills:** secondary enrolment rises; digital learning mainstreamed; TVET access in every district; stronger school industry pathways.
- **Youth health:** mental health coverage increases with staffed services at regional hospitals; youth-friendly SRHR is widely available; insurance coverage expands.
- **Jobs & enterprise:** higher survival of youth startups; expanded night-time economy in major cities; youth-led firms winning reserved public contracts.
- **Creative & sports ecosystems:** national creative economy policy in force; regional hubs operational; upgraded sports facilities and certified coaches across regions.
- **Green transition:** more insured young farmers; climate smart agriculture scaled; growth in youth led renewable enterprises and circular e waste ventures.
- **Digital transformation:** lower internet costs; expanded last mile connectivity; more youth in ICT BPO and tech entrepreneurship.
- **Governance & justice:** resourced youth structures; ongoing civic education; ADR mainstreamed; improved anti corruption delivery.
- **Accountability:** public Youth Budget Tagging dashboards; annual Scorecard guiding mid course corrections.

## 5) Delivery architecture (who does what).

- **Government (MDAs & Local Governments):** align sector plans to the manifesto's Big Asks; publish youth tagged budgets and results; enforce reservation schemes; integrate climate and green jobs across programmes; scale e government and digital ID for access.
- **Parliament & oversight bodies:** enact enabling laws (e.g., startups, ADR, creative economy), conduct annual hearings on the Youth Scorecard, and strengthen anti corruption and value for money oversight.
- **Private sector & finance institutions:** offer apprenticeships, co invest in hubs and sports/creative infrastructure, and expand youth friendly financial products (including agricultural and green finance).
- **Youth coalitions & civil society:** mobilise participation, co design local delivery, lead citizen feedback loops (U Report, scorecards, social audits), and publish independent performance briefings.
- **Development partners & academia:** de risk youth investments, back national training standards, fund evidence systems and learning networks.

## 6) Risks and mitigations.

- **Implementation gaps:** mitigate via quarterly delivery reviews and a public Scorecard; publish corrective actions.
- **Financing shortfalls:** sequence reforms, crowd in blended finance, and repurpose underperforming incentives.
- **Digital exclusion & inequality:** subsidise last mile access and devices; inclusive design for gender, disability, and rural youth.
- **Governance slippage:** reinforce transparency (open data on budgets, procurement, and results) and whistle blower protection.

## 7) Call to action (2026 launch window).

- **Government & Political Parties:** adopt these Big Asks in party manifestos and sector plans; publish time bound commitments in the first 100 days.
- **Youth & Communities:** use this manifesto as a civic tool—organise, engage your leaders, and track delivery.
- **All partners:** invest in youth capability and voice. No decisions about us without us.

## YOUTH MANIFESTO 2026–2031: FIVE BIG ASKS

1

### Invest in Human Capital.

**Evidence:** Secondary enrolment <40%; 1 in 4 youth face mental challenges; unemployment >60% among youth.

**Priority Asks:** Expand secondary & TVET, mainstream digital, budget for mental health, youth SRHR, national insurance, scale jobs & startups.



2

### Expand Youth Voice in Governance.

**Evidence:** District youth councils underfunded; low youth voter turnout; corruption weakness trust.

**Priority Asks:** Finance youth councils, civic education beyond elections, campaign finance reforms, youth-centered justice.



3

### Catalyse Agro-Industrialisation & Green Jobs.

**Evidence:** 70% of youth in agriculture face low incomes & climate risks; limited agro-processing & insurance.

**Priority Asks:** Finance for youth farming, post-harvest & agro-processing, green jobs policy, renewable energy & circular economy.



4

## Power the Digital Generation.

**Evidence:** Internet costs among highest in region; digital skills gap; limited innovation hubs.

**Priority Asks:** Reduce data taxes, expand connectivity, integrate coding & AI in curricula, scale innovation hubs & e-government.



5

## Make it Stick “Accountability & Finance”

**Evidence:** Youth budgets not transparent; weak monitoring of delivery; corruption drains resources.

**Priority Asks:** Youth Budget Tagging, annual Youth Scorecard, smart financing, enforce procurement reservations.



# Section 1: Why This Manifesto Matters

## Introduction

Uganda is at a critical moment in its history, standing at the intersection of a vast youth bulge and the promise of a demographic dividend. Today, over 78% of the population is under the age of 30, and more than 23% are between 18–30 years old, the very age group this Manifesto speaks for. This generation represents both the present and future of Uganda – its workforce, innovators, leaders, and citizens. Yet, if neglected, this youth bulge could easily become a demographic burden, marked by unemployment, exclusion, and vulnerability.

78%

of the population is under the age of 30

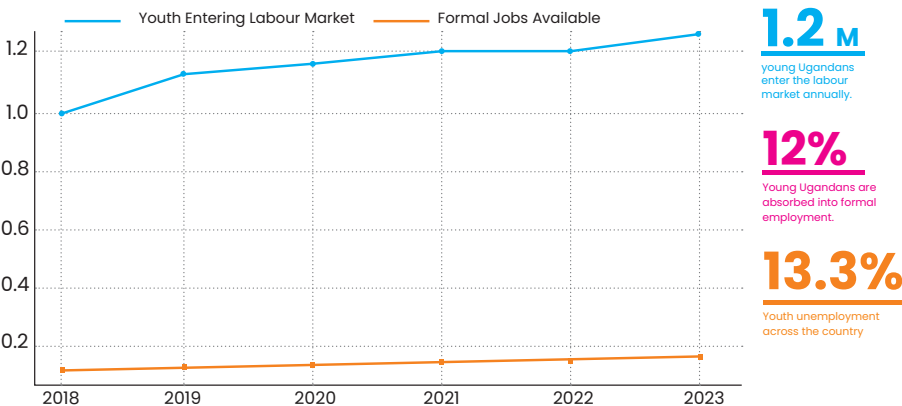
23%

are between 18–30 years old

## Youth Unemployment.

Every year, an estimated 1.2 million young Ugandans enter the labour market, yet only 12% are absorbed into formal employment. The rest find themselves in informal, vulnerable, or underpaid jobs, with youth unemployment standing at 13.3% nationally and much higher in urban areas (over 20% in Kampala and Wakiso). This mismatch between the youthful labour force and available decent work opportunities is a central concern.

Figure 1: Youth Employment vs Labour Market Demand in Uganda (2018 – 2023)



In Figure 1, the blue line represents the number of young people entering Uganda's labour market each year, on average about 1.2 million youth between 2018 and 2023.

The orange line shows the number of formal jobs created annually, which has only ranged between 120,000 and 145,000 over the same period.

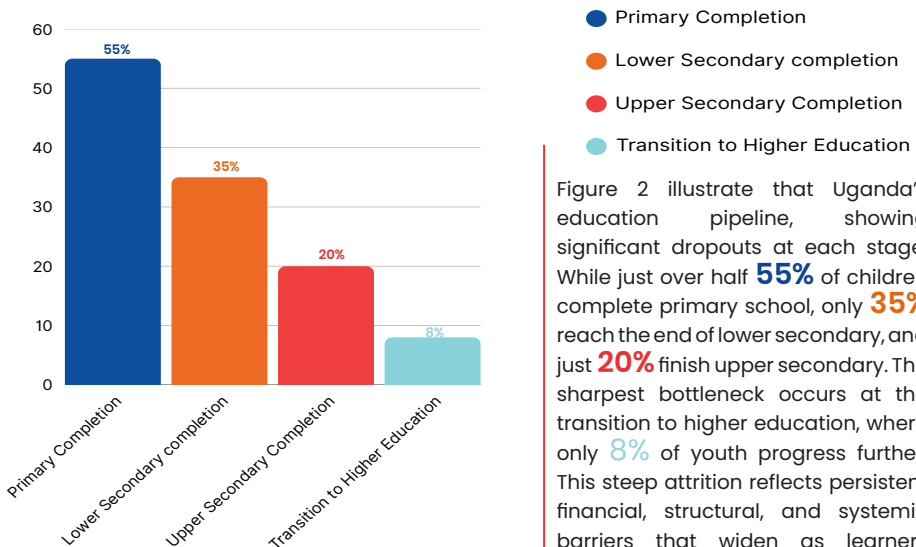
This stark contrast highlights a persistent employment gap of over one million young people every year. The majority of these youth are unable to find formal work and are instead absorbed into the informal sector, where incomes are low, working conditions are often insecure, and long-term career prospects are limited. This same phenomenon is noted in a paper by the Open Space on youth transition to work which requires more strategic investments.<sup>1</sup>

The evidence strongly underscores the need for policy reforms and targeted investments in job creation, youth transition to work, entrepreneurship and skills development to bridge this widening gap.

## Education–Double-Edged Reality.

Education remains a double-edged reality. While Uganda has made gains through Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE), challenges of quality, relevance, and completion persist. For example, only 57% of children who enroll in P1 complete primary school, and fewer than 30% transition to advanced secondary or tertiary education. Even among graduates, the lack of alignment between skills taught and labour market demands worsens the crisis of educated but unemployed youth.

Figure 2: School Completion and Transition Rates in Uganda.



<sup>1</sup>Open Space Center (2025) *Youth transition to employment and government youth interventions in Uganda: Policy issues and options paper*. Kampala: Open Space Center.

## Health and Well-Being – A Concern for Young People.

Health and well-being form another area of concern. Young people face high rates of teenage pregnancy (25% of girls aged 15–19) (see figure 3), limited access to sexual and reproductive health services, and rising vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS. Mental health challenges arising from drug and substance abuse though underreported are increasing, fueled by unemployment, poverty, and limited psychosocial support structures.

Figure 3: Prevalence of Teenage Pregnancy in Uganda (Ages 10–19).

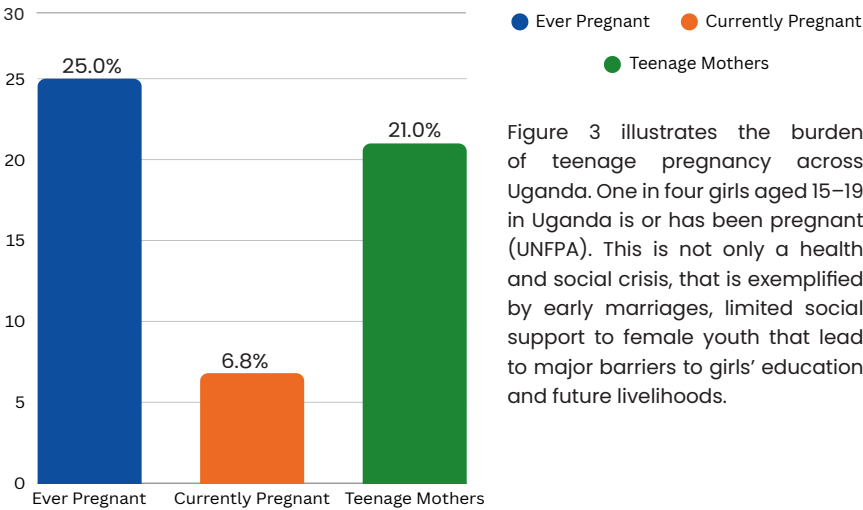


Figure 3 illustrates the burden of teenage pregnancy across Uganda. One in four girls aged 15–19 in Uganda is or has been pregnant (UNFPA). This is not only a health and social crisis, that is exemplified by early marriages, limited social support to female youth that lead to major barriers to girls’ education and future livelihoods.

## Tokenistic Inclusion of Young People in Governance.

The governance space also reflects systemic exclusion. Despite constitutional guarantees, youth participation in decision-making remains tokenistic. For instance, while five youth representatives sit in Parliament, this remains a fraction of the overall youth population. Local government structures provide some entry points, but limited funding and weak enforcement hinder effective youth engagement.

Further, youth engagement in elections shows both potential and exclusion. While many participate as voters, mobilizers, or campaign agents, only 60% are registered and just 4% contest as candidates – mainly due to high costs, weak voter education, and systemic barriers facing young women and youth with disabilities. Disillusionment with monetized and mistrusted processes further undermines meaningful participation.<sup>2</sup>

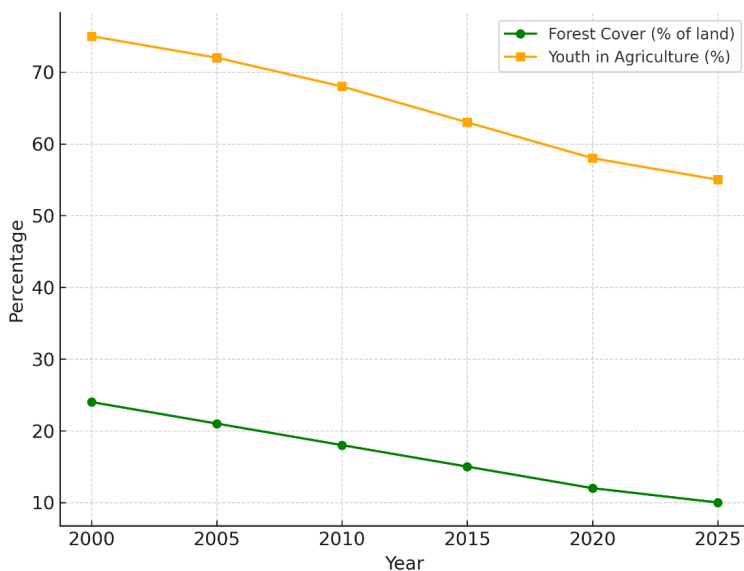
<sup>2</sup>Open Space Center (2024) *Empowered voices? Examining youth participation in Uganda’s elections*: Research report. Kampala: Open Space Center.



## Climate Crisis as a Generational Challenge.

The climate crisis presents a generational challenge. Uganda loses over 80,000 hectares of forest cover annually, and youth, especially those in rural areas, bear the brunt of climate-related shocks such as floods, droughts, and food insecurity. However, this also offers a green jobs opportunity, particularly in renewable energy, wastemanagement,andclimate-smartagriculture,ifbackedbystrategicinvestment.

Figure 4: Deforestation and Climate Impacts on Youth Livelihoods.





Digital transformation is reshaping economies globally, but Uganda risks being left behind. Although mobile phone penetration stands at 67% and internet use continues to grow, the digital divide remains significant between rural and urban youth, as well as between men and women. Harnessing ICT for innovation, education, and entrepreneurship is therefore crucial to bridging inequality and unlocking opportunities.

## **What the Evidence Means – In a Nutshell.**

In short, the rationale for a Youth Manifesto is anchored in the stark reality that Uganda's demographic dividend is at risk of becoming a demographic burden unless urgent, evidence-based policy interventions are made. Youth are not asking for charity but for strategic investments in education, jobs, health, governance, and innovation. The manifesto therefore provides a roadmap for transforming the youth bulge into a driver of sustainable, inclusive development.

Past manifestos and national strategies have acknowledged the importance of youth but often fallen short of delivering practical, measurable outcomes. Many young people feel that political promises have not translated into real opportunities for decent work, quality education, affordable healthcare, or meaningful participation in governance. This Manifesto seeks to be different. It is built on evidence, on the lived realities of Uganda's young people, and on their aspirations for a more secure and prosperous future.

Importantly, the Manifesto aligns with Uganda's long-term development blueprints and global commitments. It situates youth priorities within Vision 2040, the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV), Agenda 2063 of the African Union, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By doing so, it ensures that youth demands are not isolated or aspirational wishes, but integral to Uganda's broader agenda for inclusive growth, human capital development, and global competitiveness.

This document is also rooted in consultation and collective voice. Across districts, communities, and social groups, youth were engaged in shaping its content.

In the next five years, with the right policy choices and political will, Uganda can unlock the potential of its youth. This Manifesto outlines how — by addressing education, employment, health, climate resilience, governance, and social justice. It is a call for transformation, for leadership that places young people at the center of national priorities, and for a future where Uganda's greatest resource — its youth — is empowered to drive sustainable growth.

## 1.2 Principles of the Manifesto.

The Manifesto is guided by three principles:



**1. Youth as Rights Holders:** Young people are entitled to quality education, decent jobs, health care, and meaningful participation in governance.



**2. Youth as Partners in Development:** Recognizing young people as agents of change, innovators, and entrepreneurs whose contributions can strengthen national development.



**3. Youth as Leaders of Today and Tomorrow:** Building pathways for youth leadership across political, civic, and economic spheres.

***This Youth Manifesto is a practical roadmap,  
not a statement of grievances.***

It highlights eight priority areas education, health, jobs, creativity and culture, governance, climate change and green jobs, digital transformation, and infrastructure where urgent policy action is needed. These priorities are supported by data and concrete asks that are both achievable and aligned with Uganda's development frameworks, including the National Development Plan IV and Vision 2040.

In presenting this Manifesto, Uganda's youth extend a clear message: investing in young people is not optional it is the most strategic choice for Uganda's sustainable and inclusive development.

## Section 2: Looking Back: Achievements & Gaps (2021–2026).

### 2.0 Introduction.

The 2021/26 National Youth Manifesto laid a strong foundation for youth advocacy and accountability in Uganda. Through annual State of the Youth Reports led by Youth MPs under the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs, and a midterm review, young people have been able to track government action step by step. These assessments documented real progress, showing that youth voices can shape policy and unlock opportunities.

As we now move into the next phase of the Youth Manifesto, we build on these achievements with renewed energy. The matrix below highlights the demands we made, the actions government has taken, and the gaps that remain. It is a reminder that when young people speak with one voice, change happens — and with this new manifesto, we are determined to go further, faster, and deeper in securing the future we deserve.

### 2.1 Achievements & Gaps (2021–2026) Matrix.

| Youth Demand.  | Government Action Taken.   | What's Still Needed.   |
|--|--|--|
| Youth participation in mining & extractives              | Mining & Minerals Act (2022) replaced the 2003 law, improving regulation & value addition            | Clear entry points for youth jobs, internships, and businesses in mining |
| National Graduate Scheme                                 | UGX 5bn allocated (FY 2024/25) to operationalise Graduate Volunteer & Apprenticeship Scheme          | Fast rollout so all graduates access meaningful work experience          |
| Youth inclusion in wealth creation & post-COVID recovery | UGX 200bn released to SMEs (youth & women focus); UGX 351bn disbursed by UDB to strategic industries | Ensure youth-owned enterprises are prioritized in financing              |

| Youth Demand.                                   | Government Action Taken.   | What's Still Needed.  |
|---|--|---|
| Local Content Plan                              | Local Content Act (2023) requires prioritisation of Ugandans in procurement & resource use                 | Strong monitoring so youth-led businesses benefit                       |
| Cultural Capital Fund for arts & libraries      | Museums & Monuments Act (2023) allows PPPs in culture & arts; URSB (2025) set up Directorate for Copyright | Direct funding to support youth creative spaces and innovation          |
| Agribusiness incubation & green economy support | UDB launched UGX 50bn Climate Finance Facility for climate-smart agriculture & green sectors               | Expand access to modern agri-equipment & advisory for rural youth       |
| Investment in sports & talent                   | National Sports Act amended; 480% increase in sports budget  | Expand grassroots sports facilities & youth talent development programs |
| School feeding policy                           | Policy developed & awaiting Cabinet approval   | Speedy approval & rollout of free school meals nationwide               |
| Skills training access (TVET/UPPET/BTVET)       | TVET Policy developed, approved, & being implemented   | Greater awareness and accessibility for youth                           |
| School ICT/digital learning                     | Digital Agenda developed   | Provision of affordable/free laptops & internet for every student       |
| Youth-friendly health (SRHR, RMNCAH)            | Funding for SRHR increased to UGX 25.4bn (2024/25); RMNCAH Plan II adopted (2021)                          | Scale up adolescent-friendly services in schools & communities          |
| Youth-led climate action                        | Climate Change Act (2021) passed; NDCs revised (2022); commitments to restore wetlands & plant 15m trees   | Ensure youth are central in climate jobs, restoration & monitoring      |

## 2.2 Lessons Learned

From the experience of the 2021/26 Youth Manifesto, three clear lessons emerge:

- **What Worked:** When reforms were backed with real financing — like climate funds and sports investments — young people saw tangible opportunities and accountability was stronger.
- **What Didn't Work:** Initiatives without enough funding or sustained follow-through — such as some graduate schemes — struggled to deliver meaningful results.
- **Why: Weak institutional capacity,** fragmented implementation, and limited youth involvement in monitoring reduced the impact of otherwise good policies.

These lessons show that while progress has been made, **Uganda must act with urgency and ambition in the next five years.** Only then can the country turn its youthful population into a true demographic dividend.



## Section 3: Our Policy Priorities (The Core).

### 3.0 Priority Issues for Uganda's Youth.

Uganda's young people are not asking for charity — they are demanding fair access to opportunity, dignity, and leadership. The next five years must be about translating Uganda's youth bulge into a demographic dividend. This requires bold policy choices, evidence-driven investments, and mechanisms for accountability. Below are the issues as youth experience them, the evidence that supports them, and the request that makes them actionable.

### 3.1 Human Capital Development Priorities.

#### A. Education



- **The Issue:** Too many learners go to school hungry, drop out before finishing, or graduate without digital or practical skills. Digital learning is out of reach or rural and poor communities.
- **The Evidence:** Only 12% of secondary schools have internet; 2 in 5 children lack meals at school; and TVET enrolment remains below 10%.
- **The Ask:** Roll out digital literacy in every school, expand TVET programmes nationwide, and implement a universal school feeding programme by 2026.

#### B. Health



- **The Issue:** Mental health struggles, teenage pregnancies, and lack of affordable health cover are major barriers for youth.
- **The Evidence:** 1 in 4 youth report depression or anxiety; teenage pregnancy rates are still above 18%; and health insurance covers less than 2% of young Ugandans.
- **The Ask:** Integrate mental health and SRHR services in every health centre and expand insurance coverage for young people, including informal workers.

#### C. Jobs & Work



- **The Issue:** Young people work hard, but most remain stuck in informal or precarious jobs. Startups struggle with taxes and financing.
- **The Evidence:** Over 70% of Uganda's workforce is informal, and youth unemployment remains above 13%.
- **The Ask:** Operationalise a 24-hour economy to expand jobs, formalise startups and jua kali enterprises, and introduce a youth-friendly tax regime to incentivise business growth.



## D. Creativity & Sports.

- **The Issue:** Young artists, innovators, and athletes remain underfunded and lack infrastructure to thrive.
- **The Evidence:** The creative sector contributes 3% of GDP, yet 80% of artists lack copyright protection. Uganda's sports budget increased by 48%, but grassroots access remains weak.
- **The Ask:** Adopt a National Creative Economy Policy, establish regional innovation hubs, and expand sports facilities and talent programmes from parish to national level.

## 3.2 Governance & Security.



### A. Participation.

- **The Issue:** Young voices are underfunded and under represented in formal governance.
- **The Evidence:** Youth are 70% of Uganda's population, but less than 10% of government structures have youth-specific financing.
- **The Ask:** Guarantee funding for youth councils and wings, expand voter education campaigns, and enact campaign financing reforms to reduce exclusion.



### B. Peace & Security.

- **The Issue:** Youth are often seen as security threats instead of peacebuilders.
- **The Evidence:** 65% of the armed forces are under 35, but few youth lead peace negotiations or security strategies.
- **The Ask:** Scale up community policing programmes, fund youth-led counter-extremism initiatives, and recognise youth as peacebuilders in national and regional security frameworks.



### C. Justice & Rule of Law.

- **The Issue:** Corruption and weak justice systems deny young people access to fair opportunities.
- **The Evidence:** Uganda loses UGX 9.7 trillion annually to corruption; youth debt stress is rising due to predatory loans.
- **The Ask:** Enforce anti-corruption reforms, pass the ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) law, and adopt debt justice frameworks that shield young borrowers and enterprises.

### 3.3 Agro-Industrialization.

- **The Issue:** Youth dominate farming but face barriers in financing, land, and technology.
- **The Evidence:** 70% of youth are engaged in agriculture, but less than 3% access formal financing and most depend on rain-fed farming.
- **The Ask:** Expand youth agribusiness financing, scale up irrigation-based youth farm schemes, promote contract farming for stability, and provide training in agritech, business management, and value addition.

### 3.4 Climate, Green Jobs & Renewable Energy.

- **The Issue:** Climate change threatens livelihoods, yet green financing and jobs rarely reach youth.
- **The Evidence:** Uganda loses 5% of GDP annually to climate-related disasters; youth unemployment remains stubbornly high.
- **The Ask:** Scale up climate-smart agriculture, operationalise a Green Jobs Policy and Secretariat, and support renewable energy entrepreneurship — from solar manufacturing to e-waste recycling.

### 3.5 Digital Transformation.

- **The Issue:** Internet costs are among the highest in the region, shutting out rural youth.
- **The Evidence:** Only 29% of Ugandans use the internet, with rural penetration below 15%.
- **The Ask:** Guarantee affordable, universal internet, integrate AI, coding, and robotics into school curricula, and expand ICT hubs, BPO jobs, and youth-friendly tax reforms in tech.

### 3.6 Infrastructure & Services.

- **The Issue:** Infrastructure development rarely creates lasting skills or safety for young people.
- **The Evidence:** Uganda loses 10,000+ lives annually to road accidents; most infrastructure projects lack youth training components.
- **The Ask:** Ensure skills transfer for youth on all infrastructure projects, expand road, rail, water, and air networks, and implement youth-focused road safety campaigns.



### 3.7. Cross-Cutting Priorities.

Youth demand that every policy and investment be anchored in fairness, accountability, and inclusion. The following are non-negotiable, cross-cutting principles that must guide implementation:

#### A Youth Budget Tagging.



- Issue: Youth allocations are often buried within broader sector budgets, making it nearly impossible to track how much is truly invested in youth-specific programmes.
- Evidence: Uganda's economy faces a dual challenge — while the GDP expanded to UGX 202.1 trillion in FY 2023/24, there are no clear disaggregations for youth spending across ministries. This lack of transparency makes monitoring and accountability difficult.
- Ask: Introduce a transparent “youth budget tag” in all national and sector budgets, enabling breakdowns of expenditure for youth-focused initiatives and empowering young people to track and demand accountability for investments.

#### B. Tax Transparency.



- Issue: Complex tax structures and hidden exemptions burden small and youth-led enterprises, stifling their growth and competitiveness.
- Evidence: Although UBOS doesn't currently publish a breakdown of youth-targeted tax incentives, NEET figures — 42.6% of youth aged 15–24 are not in employment, education, or training — suggest that small youth enterprises face barriers to operating sustainably and profitably.
- Ask: Mandate public reporting of tax incentives and exemptions; design youth-sensitive tax regimes that facilitate startup growth and entrepreneurship across sectors.

#### C. Debt Justice.



- Issue: Uganda's rising debt levels threaten the fiscal space available for youth-targeted programmes.
- Evidence: Servicing debt absorbs resources that could otherwise fund youth sectors such as education, health, and agriculture, while young entrepreneurs also face predatory lending.
- Ask: Establish debt justice mechanisms that ringfence financing for youth sectors, ensure transparency in debt contracting, and curb exploitative lending to youth businesses.



#### D. Mainstream gender, disability & rural inclusion.

- **Issue:** Youth are a diverse group; intersecting identities gender, disability status, and rural location often result in systemic exclusion and marginalization.
- **Evidence:** Uganda's demographic profile is overwhelmingly youthful: according to the 2024 Census, 22.7% of the population (about 10.4 million people) are youth aged 18–30 years.
- **Ask:**
  - Gender: Enforce policies addressing patriarchy such as equitable land rights and financial inclusion to ensure young women and girls can access opportunities on an equal footing.
  - Disability: Mandate accessibility in all programmes, public services, infrastructure, and digital platforms so youth with disabilities can fully engage.
  - Rural Youth: Prioritize investments in rural schools, health centres, ICT hubs, and agribusiness incubation to enable rural youth to thrive within their communities—reducing the urban migration pressure.



## Section 4: A Call to Action – Solidarity with Young People.

This manifesto is a living tool for transformation. To make it count, every actor must rise to the moment:

### 4.1 To Government.

The government must go beyond rhetoric. This means:

- Mainstreaming youth priorities in NDP IV and the national budget, with clear budget lines and timelines.
- Establishing a public reporting mechanism where ministries brief the country annually on progress.
- Creating feedback spaces where young people directly shape policies that affect them.
- Government action should match the urgency of the demographic moment.

***“A youthful population is Uganda’s greatest opportunity, not its burden”***

### 4.2 To Political Parties.

Parties must stop seeing young people as mere voters and start seeing them as partners. This means:

- Translating youth demands into funded commitments in their manifestos, not vague pledges.
- Actively nominating and supporting young candidates for leadership positions.
- Opening up party structures and finances so that young people can engage meaningfully, not just during campaigns.

***“A party that ignores the youth vote ignores Uganda’s future”***

### 4.3 To Youth and Student Movements.

This manifesto is a tool for youth power. Youth must:

- Use it to track government promises and expose gaps in delivery.
- Shift from personality politics to issue-based organizing and accountability.
- Leverage digital tools, student unions, and community networks to mobilize and demand action.

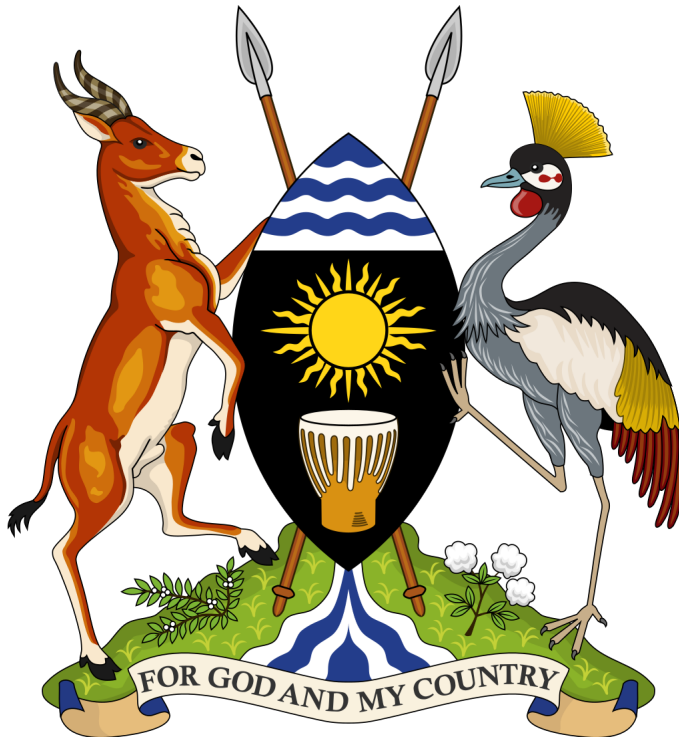
***“Policy change doesn’t come by waiting — it comes when young people organize, question, and push for policy results”***

## 4.4 To Civil Society and Private Sector.

Partnership is critical. We call on civil society and the private sector to:

- Support youth-led accountability initiatives such as budget monitoring, social audits, and civic education.
- Invest in innovation, entrepreneurship, and green jobs to create pathways for youth livelihoods.
- Use their platforms to amplify youth voices in national and international policy debates.

***“When young people thrive, so do businesses and communities!”***



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## List of members of the Youth Coalition on Electoral Democracy (YCED) in Uganda.

1. 256 Platform Uganda
2. Action for Fundamental Change and Development
3. Action for Youth Development Uganda
4. Africa Youth Peace Initiative
5. African Youth Development Link
6. Alpha Action for Social and Economic Development
7. Ateker Museum
8. Bugisu NGO Forum
9. Centre for Electoral Justice & Research
10. Change Lead Agency Social Support
11. Community Empowerment for Transformation of West Nile
12. Community Path Network for Development
13. Creation Forum Africa
14. Girls to Lead Africa
15. Grassroot Alliance for Rural Development
16. Hatua Uganda
17. Initiative for Development
18. Inter-party Youth Platform
19. International Foundation for Recovery and Development
20. Kapchorwa Civil Society Organization
21. Karaka Humanitarian Initiative Limited
22. Karamoja Go Green
23. Karamoja Human Right Network
24. Kayunga Youth Network
25. National Youth Advocacy Platform (30)
26. National Youth Organization for Development (NAYODE)
27. Nebbi Youth Initiative for Community Empowerment
28. Network for Active Citizens
29. Ngabo Youth Friendly Service Center
30. Noble Youth Foundation Uganda
31. One by One Initiative for Vulnerable Communities
32. Open Space Center
33. Pallisa Civil Society Organizations' Network
34. Prospect Initiative (UMDF)
35. Rakai Youth Initiative Link
36. Recreation for Peace and Development
37. Rwenzori Peace Bridge for Reconciliation
38. Sensitize Uganda
39. Show Abilities Uganda
40. Smart Girls Foundation
41. Smart Youth Network Initiative
42. Sustainable Community Initiative for Empowerment
43. Tadoba Youth Foundation
44. TAU Uganda
45. Teens Uganda
46. Teso Youth Network
47. Umbrella for Kasese Journalist Association
48. Vijana Corps
49. Vision for Children & Youth Forum
50. Vision International Actors
51. West Nile Youth Empowerment Network
52. YADENT
53. YCED Members
54. Young Farmers Champion Network
55. Youth After School Initiative (YASI)
56. Youth Empowerment Solution Uganda
57. Youth Environment Service
58. Youth Line Forum
59. Youth Tax Justice Network
60. Youth Vision for Development

## PARTNERS

1. Action Aid Uganda
2. Julius Nyerere Leadership Institute
3. National Youth Council
4. Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
5. Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs
6. UNFYA
7. Woord en Daad

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