



PEOPLE'S NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY: OUR VOICES FOR A YOUTH-INCLUSIVE GHANAIAN SOCIETY



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FOREWORD

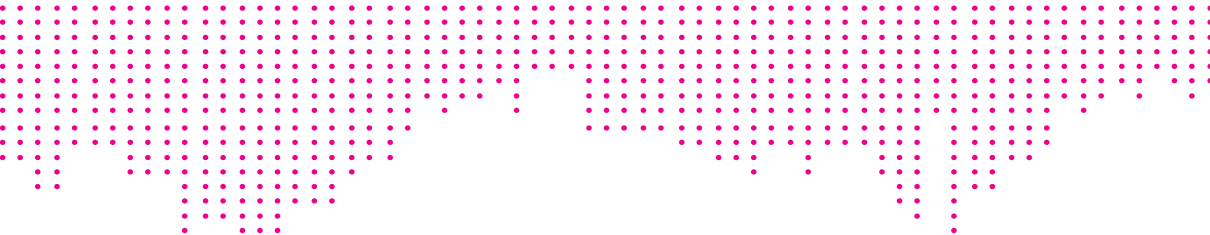


Ghana is a country of policies. There are policies for almost every aspect of our national development. However, when it comes to youth policy, somehow, we cannot boast of a strong record of accomplishment as a nation. Since independence, it was only in 2010 that the first national youth policy was successfully launched. Despite its technical shortcomings, that policy was generally hailed as an important first step for the youth policy domain in Ghana. Seven years on, however, there is little evidence of implementation of that policy, thereby prompting many young people and stakeholders in the youth sector to amplify their call for a review of the policy to pave way for the development of a new one.

The absence of a youth policy over the years, and the non-implementation of the 2010 policy created an atmosphere of disorganisation, with various actors in the youth sector facing different directions with their programming. Government itself churned out several ad hoc, uncoordinated and incoherent youth programmes that had no basis in youth policy. Among them, the Skill Training and Employment Placement (STEP) Programme, the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) which transitioned severally into the current Youth Employment Agency (YEA), and the Youth Enterprise Support (YES). As is expected, these scattered efforts have not achieved any meaningful results.

The advent of a new government led by His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo provides an important window of opportunity to pursue a new momentum for youth policy in Ghana. The new government needs to demonstrate that youth are a priority by initiating a broad base, systematic,





youth-led process for youth policy review that will result in the drafting of a new policy. The process must be multi-sectoral to ensure that youth policy outcomes are in tandem with various sectors of the Ghanaian economy. Most importantly, the process for the review of youth policy and the development of a new one must leave no youth behind.

Fortunately, the Voices of Youth Coalition has taken the lead by developing the Peoples National Youth Policy – a comprehensive compilation of youth policy options and process guidance for the review of current youth policy and the development of a new one. Developed entirely by young people themselves with technical guidance from key experts, the People’s National Youth Policy constitute young people’s voices captured in a way that can be immediately adopted for national youth policy.

The Voices of Youth Coalition therefore avails this People’s National Youth Policy to government and all stakeholders. With over 500 youth organisations reaching more than half a million young people in all ten regions of Ghana, the Coalition is also willing and able to engage actively at all levels in any process leading to the development of a new national youth policy.

#LeaveNoYouthBehind

Emmanuel Edudzie


Convenor, Voices of Youth Coalition

Executive Director, Youth Empowerment Synergy



DECLARATION

We, young women and men aged 15 and 35, hailing from all ten regions of Ghana, of diverse backgrounds, from different faiths and beliefs, from cities and villages alike, with varying abilities and challenges, and altogether constituting the Voices of Youth Coalition – a nationwide network of over 350 youth groups altogether reaching over 500,000 individuals;



Having been actively involved in the 'Voices of Youth' project initiated by the Youth Empowerment Synergy through which we have built our capacities for effective participation in national development processes;

Inspired by the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, the African Youth Charter, and the United Nations World Programme on Youth all of which recognise the importance of young people's participation in poverty reduction and development;

Appalled by the conditions of poverty and hardship, deprivation and exclusion of rural and urban poor, the majority of which are young people;

Concerned about the insufficient attention to youth issues in national development policy and the lack of structures for effective youth participation in the various sectors of Ghana's development;

Noting the central role of youth in the economic, social and political development in Ghana and our potential to contribute as current and future leaders;

Recognising that as young people we have a responsibility to position ourselves as





formidable and trusted actors in the development process;

Working in unison to place youth issues more prominently on the national development agenda by offering concrete alternative policy options;

Rededicating ourselves to the struggle for a just, independent, democratic, peaceful and gender-equal society;

Pledging to uphold the values of integrity, responsibility and respect for diversity;

Determined to support inclusive national development initiatives as basis for effective political and economic change in Ghana;

Confident that with organisation and fortitude we can make a difference to the situation of the current and future generations alike;

Hereby adopt this People's National Youth Policy in furtherance of maximising the contribution of youth to the inclusive, gender-equal, democratic rights-based development of our homeland Ghana.





01

THE CASE FOR A NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY


Young men and women represent a significant portion of Ghana's population, with about 60% of the population under the age of 25 and 35% between ages 15 and 35¹. They constitute a unique group within society. While they are often considered one of the most vulnerable groups within the social fabric, they are also regarded as the greatest source of hope for the nation's future. Mobilising the creativity and passion of youth, and recognising the unique perspective of youth on their current and future needs have become national and international priorities.

Today, there is global acceptance of the value of committing time and resources to the formulation of national youth policies and action plans. Governments are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that adequate legislation and policies are needed to respond to young people's concerns, aspirations and demands. According to the State of Youth Policy Report 2014², of 198 countries studied, 169 either have a national youth policy or are in the process of reviewing a previous one.

¹2010 National Housing and Population Census - Summary Report Of Final Results:

http://www.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/2010phc/Census2010_Summary_report_of_final_results.pdf

²The state of youth policy in 2014: http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/2014_State_Youth_Policy_2014_En.pdf



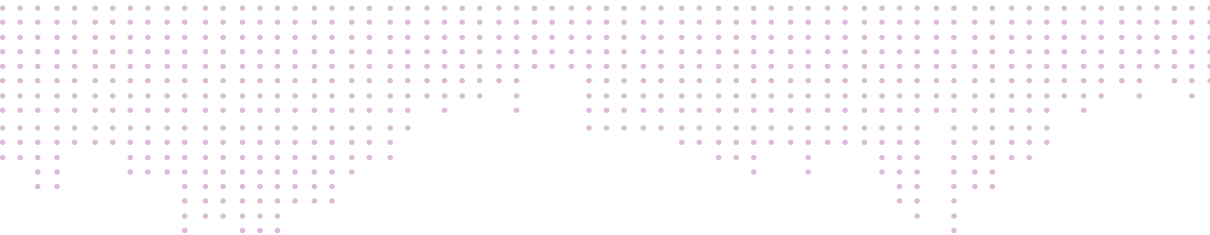
This overwhelming response is attributable to efforts by various global and regional youth processes and frameworks to highlight the need for national youth policies. Among them, the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth, the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes, the Baku Commitment to Youth Policies, and the the Africa Youth Charter.

In Ghana, the National Youth Council Act - 1974 (NRCD 241) and its successor, the National Youth Authority Act 939, have mandated the Authority to formulate policies for youth development in the country. The Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda 2010 – 2013, a recent medium term development framework also called for a comprehensive framework to guide youth development in the country.

A national youth policy is a declaration for youth development, a practical demonstration that youth are a priority, a framework for galvanising political action, and a blueprint of the status, rights, responsibilities and roles of young people. When done right, a national youth policy can empower, enable and encourage youth, thereby maximising their participation in the development process. It can serve as a realistic guideline and offer timelines and a framework for government, private sector and other partners to work together for youth development.


In the same vein, national youth policy demonstrates the distinctive and complementary roles of youth development partners and youth themselves and provides a framework of common goals and the development of a spirit of cooperation and coordination. For example, a national youth policy can stimulate opportunities to mainstream youth policies into other sectoral policies and programmes, thereby enabling all ministries and departments of government to promote youth needs and responses. Such agencies will thus be able to undertake youth-inclusive strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.





A national youth policy will also provide a rallying point, a much-needed means of challenge and appeal to young people to mobilise and participate effectively in national development. Youth participation in development peaks when young women and men can engage in the decision-making processes of the nation through active participation in the process of formulation and implementation the national youth policies.

In the context of growing concerns about inequality and vulnerability, a national youth policy provides the basis for the equitable distribution of government resources to meet youth needs, in pursuit of achieving the provisions of the globally accepted Sustainable Development Goals. Aside government resources, a national youth policy can serve as point of attraction for investment from the private sector and foundations towards critical areas of youth development. This exemplifies national youth policy as a framework of common goals for collective action and coordination of strategies and action for youth development across various stakeholder boundaries – be it governmental or non-governmental.






02

THE STATE OF YOUTH POLICY AND PROGRAMMING IN GHANA

Since Ghana returned to democratic rule in 1992, successive governments have paid lip service to the subject of national youth policy. Despite the rhetoric of government's commitment to youth development in the country, it was only in 1999 that a first draft policy document emerged and soon became the basis for youth policy power play by subsequent governments. Successive governments have been quick to throw out content introduced by their predecessors but failed to complete or ratify the revised version. This situation thrived because there was and still is no legal requirement for government to present youth policy to Parliament, thus making it easy to abandon.


It was not until 2010, almost two decades into Ghana's new era of democracy that the first national youth policy was launched. That Ghana finally had a youth policy was commendable. In fairness, the policy does correctly diagnose the structural drivers responsible for perpetuating youth poverty and inequality. It identifies the lack of genuine voice and political consciousness, the inability to access an empowering basic education and the lack of employable skills as some of the challenges facing Ghana's youth in a modernising economy. The youth policy is also tall on rhetoric when it comes to acknowledging the potential of the youth and about fostering youth influence and access to facilitative assets such as a good education, skills and financing. Nevertheless, the policy process and implementation have not fully lived up to expectation.



Despite the generic claim that youth across the country participated in the development of the youth policy, many youth and youth-serving organisations have expressed little knowledge of how the policy was developed. At the time of launching the policy, many youth had no idea who had represented them in the formulation process or how the youth representatives were selected. To date, many youth are not familiar with the provisions of the youth policy to facilitate their access to a fair share of the national cake. This confirms the perception that youth representation in government policy processes tend to be scanty and selective, determined without broad consultation and is almost exclusively limited to young males and those in Accra. Yet, the overwhelming majority of Ghanaian youth – and especially the most impoverished – live in the rural hinterland.

It is not surprising then that there is little awareness of the youth policy and scanty evidence of its implementation. No information currently exist of how the policy is being rolled out or how effective it is proving to be. This is fuelled by the non-existence of a credible youth policy action plan from the outset. Although the youth policy was launched in 2010, an action plan for its implementation was only unveiled in 2014. Thus, four years into the life of the policy, no tangible government actions could be traced to it. The youth policy implementation plan that was launched in 2014 was meant to cover a period of four years. But in 2017, there is no evidence to suggest that much had changed regarding the important drivers of youth development anchored on the national youth policy. In short, the 2010 national youth policy did not survive beyond the fanfare that birthed it.

In recent years, government introduced a range of programmes to offer possible employment and livelihoods improvement opportunities to the youth. These include the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP), which metamorphosed into Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency (GYEEDA) and subsequently the Youth Employment Agency (YEA). Others include the Youth Enterprise Support (YES) which has



been replaced in 2017 with the National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Plan (NEIP). A general theme that runs through these programmes and interventions is an understanding of the link between training and employment. It is also generally understood that youth programmes, when properly designed and implemented, can reduce community change by addressing the vicious cycles of poverty, unemployment and other social vices such as crime, violence and destitution.

However, there has been little evidence of effectiveness of the above-mentioned programmes. In fact, the view among many active stakeholders in the youth development space is that most of these government programmes have been poorly designed and unproductive. Young people themselves have argued that the lack of consultation and involvement of youth in the formulation and design, coupled with the absence of a strong policy basis, have been major contributory factors to the failure of these interventions. In fact, these interventions have proved to be unsustainable because of flawed policy development.

The situation is worsened by the fact that different governments have embarked on their own initiatives, often without any coordination with previous interventions. Consequently, the policy landscape has become littered with scattered youth programmes that are characterised by overlapping and sometimes conflicting objectives with the consequence that no effective policy implementation is achieved.

Fortunately, the 2010 national youth policy provides for reviews, at least once every five years. Therefore, now in its seventh year, it is only appropriate that a comprehensive review is undertaken with the view to achieving a broad-based, youth led policy framework that response to the needs and aspirations of youth in a modern Ghanaian economy.



03

A NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY FIT FOR PURPOSE

Although there is no unified framework that guides the design, implementation and evaluation of youth policies, there is a growing consensus around a set of principles that should guide the development of youth policies, the assessment of their fitness for purpose, and ultimately the evaluation of their performance. Consequently, there is global consensus that a youth policy is fit for purpose when it is democratic and participatory, cross-sectorial and transversal, coherent and coordinated, researched and evidence-based, fairly budgeted and fairly financed, competent and professional, monitored and evaluated, open and freely accessible. These principles were reiterated at the First Global Forum in Youth Policies held in October 2014 and captured by the Youth Policy Lab³:

- **Democratic and participatory**

A national youth policies will be effective when legitimised through the democratically elected Parliament, in addition to the inclusion and full participation of actors such as youth professionals, civil society, youth

³ Youth Policy Working Paper 1 (March 2016) <http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/documents/youth-policies-from-around-the-world-international-practices-and-country-examples-youth-policy-working-paper-no-1/>


organisations and movements as well as young people. Participation in the design but not in the implementation of policy, or vice versa, are often seen limitations, as discussed in the previous section. There must therefore be a participatory model to address the genuine sharing of power between government and young people. Crucially, the delivery of youth policies, programmes and services needs to be inclusive of the range of entities that can support young people from the state, private and non-profit sectors.

- **Cross-sectional and transversal**

In order to address the full range and depth of issues that affect the lives of young people, youth policy must cut across all policy domains, and go beyond typical youth issues such as education, employment or leisure. A truly cross-sectoral policy must include all 'adult' policy fields whenever relevant, and adopt a holistic approach to the development of young people, seeing all issues as often interlinked and interdependent. In order to achieve this, policymakers should recognise the diversity of backgrounds, experiences, needs and aspirations within the "youth" demographic, through the participation and empowerment of young people – especially those from minority background – throughout the policy process.

- **Coherent and coordinated**

Youth policies are often aspirational in terms of the future for youth; however, policies should not become a "wish list" of those writing them. Policies that do not consider what is viable in the current political context are unlikely to be implemented effectively - particularly when a cross-sectoral nature requires many policy domains to collaborate. A clear framework, based on rights, needs and well-being will ensure




consistency from central government to city council, from civil servants to young professionals, and from youth laws to youth clubs. The coordination of policy needs to be inclusive, multi-level and multi-stakeholder.

- **Researched and evidence-based**

Research needs to be an integrated aspect of youth policies, not seen as simply evaluation, and should include objective and subjective measures to ensure a richer level of understanding. The lives and realities of young people are fluid and changeable, and as a result ongoing, consistent, independent youth research is required to ensure policies reflect the needs, challenges and ambitions of young people. The research community requires long-term documenting of developments and changes, skilled researchers and a body of national knowledge on youth sociology. Policymakers need to work with the findings of youth research and ensure that programmes and services are respondent to the evidence, rather than perceptions, ideology or historical precedence.

- **Fairly budgeted and financed**

It is said that a youth policy without sufficient budget allocation is not a youth policy. Budgets are required for each dimension of youth policy and should be accessible to the entire youth sector – free from political manipulation. The independence of youth and youth focused organisations is required to ensure that they can disagree with the government or the policy without fear of financial retribution. The allocated resources need to match the objectives of the policy and the demands of young people. Additionally, youth sector professionals should expect to be remunerated in return for a high quality standard of work.



- **Competent and professional**

Directly working with young people requires an extensive list of competencies and skills, and frequently professional development is essential through initial educational programmes and on-the-job training for staff and volunteers. Quality standards for youth work and youth sector professionals exist, notably at a global level, and should exist at a national level to provide the architecture for investment and resources for a strong youth sector.


- **Monitored and evaluated**

On-going measurement of policy performance is required to provide accountability, learning and development of staff, managers, policymakers and politicians. Monitoring mechanisms need to ensure developments in the lives of young people are responded to and that services and programmes have the ability to react and change accordingly. The incorporation of youth-led research is as vital as the organisational and institutional feedback and learning processes. National and local indicators can exist to measure the success of policies. The inclusion of external, independent evaluators may offer alternative and insightful perspectives. Monitoring and evaluation processes are only effective if the conclusions instigate changes, and are not seen as simply a validation mechanisms or punitive tool through which to punish people.


- **Open and freely accessible**

Youth policies are subject to frequent changes, revisions in strategies and plans for the short, medium and long-term. Decision-making processes, particularly the renewal of policies, should be announced in





advance, with decision-makers available for questions and discussions. The participation of young people, experts and stakeholders is needed, and they should be able to realistically influence decisions and processes fairly. Transparency is needed, with all decisions, budgets and evaluations publicly held and available, meetings and decisions well documented and beneficiaries – particularly those of funds - publicly traceable. Both are crucial in the development of trust between young people, the youth sector and the relevant authorities on youth policy.





04

YOUTH POLICY PROPOSALS

I. Promote the economic enfranchisement of young people

- a. Engage with the education sector and with the private sector to increase access to education, vocational training and soft skills to meet the needs of the labour market.
- b. Integrate entrepreneurship, savings and investment education into the education system at appropriate levels.
- c. Promote and support an integrated approach to self-employment, micro-enterprise and credit schemes, including:
 - the creation of incentives to agencies and private sector partners engaging in micro-enterprise development for youth;
 - the creation of policies that support micro-credit and financing for youth enterprise;
 - the promotion of partnerships of key stakeholders to manage these schemes;
 - the development of youth-led associations for youth enterprise; and
 - the identification of resources for operating and replicating successful micro-financing schemes.
- d. Research and develop poverty alleviation and employment programmes for marginalised young people including young women and men in deprived areas, indigenous youth, rural youth and young people at risk.

- e. Formulate appropriate policies to address such issues as the age and experience criteria that facilitate the entry of young people into productive employment.
- f. Establish and/or expand national schemes and apprenticeship/internship programmes to enable young men and women to acquire a range of skills they will need to be employable.
- g. Provide support to young people in gaining access to land, as a means of building their economic and social base.
- h. Review and assess macroeconomic planning and trade regimes, and address their impact on young people while seeking to mainstream youth development across all sectors of the national economy.

II. Strengthen social support systems and collaboration between key stakeholders in youth empowerment

- a. Establish and/or strengthen national support for young women and men in the areas of: youth health issues and reproductive health; emotional health and well-being; the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- b. Establish and/or strengthen national programmes for youth peer education and networking for healthy lifestyles.
- c. Consider the allocation of social sector investment in each of the areas of health, education and social welfare, to meet the needs of young people.
- d. Promote the integrity of the family unit and the strengthening of nuclear and extended family networks.

- e. Create innovative partnerships between governments, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs and the private sector to increase the availability of social support systems.

III. Strengthen Ministries, Departments and legal frameworks for Youth Affairs

- a. Review and update existing youth policy and corresponding action plan based on the assessment of their impact on youth empowerment.
- b. Formulate and implement sectoral policies and strategic action plans that are integrative of the agenda for youth empowerment.
- c. Develop and promulgate a comprehensive overarching National Youth Law that sets the legislative framework for youth development in Ghana, including the institutional and technical frameworks for the promotion of youth rights, responsibilities, and structures.
- d. Create or a stand-alone Ministry of Youth Affairs and sufficiently resource it to oversee the many components of the national youth development agenda, including arrangements for effective consultations with young people.
- e. Build national capacity to collect and compile socio-economic data on the youth cohort in a timely and accurate fashion as a function of effective planning, target setting, monitoring and evaluation.
- f. Integrate planning, implementation and coordination of youth development with national development planning, including the collection and disaggregation of youth data.

- g. Promote young people's awareness of international human rights agreements, including the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- h. Take action to eliminate the exploitation of young people, including the total abolition of child prostitution and child labour in general.
- I. Implement international agreements on the elimination of violence against women.

IV. Promote the participation of young people in decision-making

- a. Establish achievable targets for young men and women to participate in political leadership at various levels of government, from community level through to parliament. This should be supported by citizenship education and consultation programmes.
- b. Support the creation of an independent national umbrella body of youth-led organisations and associations to serve as the fulcrum for youth voices and youth input into the national decision-making processes. Support the decentralisation of the national youth umbrella body to the regional and district levels.
- c. Strengthen and provide opportunities for the youth-led process to integrate with global youth networks.
- d. Build young people's decision-making capacities through volunteering programmes.
- e. Encourage young people to register to vote.

- f. Review and lower the minimum age for political office, including election as President and Member of Parliament.
- g. Support civil society organisations that practice youth active citizenship.
- h. Strengthen young people's participation in family and community decision-making.

V. Promote positive role models and foster young people's self-esteem

- a. Encourage the promotion of indigenous images and role models in the media, and the cross-cultural exchange and sharing of such.
- b. Take action to curb negative stereotypes of young people in the media, and provide young people with opportunities to propagate alternative images.
- c. Develop sporting and cultural models that appeal to young people and that encourage cultural identification and indigenous self-expression.
- d. Develop award schemes for achievement in youth development.
- e. Promote inter-generational exchange of knowledge through mentoring programmes.
- f. Promote awareness on civic pride and responsibility for nation building.
- g. Encourage the protection of natural resources and environmental heritage.



VI. Take action for equality between young women and young men, and for youth in special circumstances

- a. Ensure that data on which public policy is developed are disaggregated according to gender, age, ability/disability, socioeconomic status and ethnicity.
- b. Adopt an equal employment opportunities policy and encourage the private sector to do the same.
- c. Conduct impact assessments assessing the effects of policies, legislation, administrative procedures and regulations on specific social sectors.
- d. Provide training for young people in gender sensitisation and awareness raising.
- e. Mainstream education and employment opportunities for disabled people.

VII. Promote peaceful and democratic environments in which human rights flourish

- a. Provide training for young people in good governance, human rights and democratic practice.
- b. Provide training in peace building, negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution; include such training in school curricula and promote its implementation by youth groups in civil society.
- c. Ensure that young people are fully informed of their human rights and are able to exercise their rights freely.



- d. Involve young people in the monitoring and implementation of human rights instruments, and free and fair elections.
- e. Promote the practice of such positive values as equality, tolerance, cooperation and respect for diversity.
- f. Take steps to ensure the rights of young people are upheld by the criminal justice system.

VIII. Provide quality education for all

- a. Prioritise basic education and literacy programmes, ensuring the participation of rural youth and those in special circumstances.
- b. Review educational curricula to include components of enterprise, life skills, conflict resolution, culture, human rights and the environment, as appropriate.
- c. Broaden access to secondary and higher education, making use of cost-effective means such as distance learning.
- d. Promote knowledge transfer through volunteering and mentoring opportunities, including promotion of indigenous knowledge.

IX. Improve access to information and communication technology (ICT)

- a. Promote the inclusion of ICT in school curricula.
- b. Incentivise private sector development of ICT infrastructure.
- c. Train young people in the use of ICTs.

- d. Establish public telecentres and other community programmes that provide access to ICTs.
- e. Encourage girls and women to make use of ICT through targeted programmes.

X. Promote health, development and values through sports and culture

- a. Promote sport and culture as an investment in national development, using sport and culture at local and regional levels to engage young people in team building, leadership and healthy living.
- b. Integrate drama and sports education with other programmes for basic and/or informal education on environmental awareness; health and well-being (including diet and nutrition, sexual and reproductive health, substance abuse); and human rights.
- c. Promote sporting and cultural contacts and exchanges at the national, regional and international levels to foster tolerance, understanding and cooperation.
- d. Encourage young people's artistic and cultural expression through festivals, competitions and other means.
- e. Promote national identities and national heritage at local, national and international levels in ways that recognise and celebrate diversity.
- f. Ensure that sport and cultural programmes are gender-aware and seek to increase the participation of young women.

XI. Engage young people to protect the environment

- a. Engage young people in awareness raising on climate change and other pressing environmental issues.
- b. Tap the knowledge base of young people and their grassroots organisations as part of environmental monitoring and scientific data gathering.
- c. Engage young people in technology transfer and uptake issues, including for example youth participation in “citizens' juries.”
- d. Train young people in natural disaster preparedness and relief.
- e. Stimulate ethical consumerism among young people as an entry point to environmental awareness.
- f. Mainstream environmental education and debate as part of school curricula.

XII. Monitor and evaluate progress in Youth Development

- a. Collect quantitative and qualitative data on youth development, including on youth specific indicators.
- b. Engage young people in participatory monitoring and evaluation of youth programmes.
- c. Synthesise findings into periodic reports.
- d. Develop a national Youth Development Index as a measuring tool.
- e. Collaborate with international development agencies to share best practices, including the United Nations, Africa Union, and the Commonwealth.



05

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

Collaboration among Stakeholders

Only with the commitment of all stakeholders will youth policy be more than a statement of intent. Political leadership is intrinsic to the process of marshalling support for partnerships that work to fulfil the vision of such policy. While government should lead the implementation of policy proposals contained in this People's National Youth Policy, the proposals are designed to engage all stakeholders. Sustained government involvement in youth development should complement the capacity of other actors, such as civil society organisations involved in youth programmes, to avoid duplication, fragmented actions or initiatives with insufficient capital or human resources.

Inclusive policy planning to implement youth policy requires more than just consultation with young people and other relevant stakeholders. Government should consider reforming structures and institutions so that policy makers can maintain communication with national and local actors and establish the means to engage communities and listen to their views. When looking at institutional reform it is necessary to refrain from simply appending youth onto existing efforts; profound change for youth is dependent on altering organisational frameworks.

The following principal partners are identified as important actors in the youth policy space. While this is not an exhaustive list, it is expected that the actions of



these stakeholders will have direct implications for how far the nation goes with its youth development effort.

Parliamentarians

Parliamentarians and other elected officials are leaders in society. They have the mandate, moral obligation and public trust to act in the interests of their constituents and they bear a special responsibility to set examples that spur others into action, especially young people. They enact laws, mediate conflicting interests and engage in debate to establish priorities. Legislative control over national resources and the power to set agendas and determine budgets needed to secure progress underscore the imperative of political leadership.

Parliamentarians therefore have a vital role to play in providing a supportive national framework to encourage and enable both central and local authorities to efficiently administer policies that are responsive to the challenges and aspirations of youth.

National Youth Authority, Government Ministries and Agencies

The National Youth Authority, together with government ministries, departments and agencies carry the ultimate responsibility for administering policies and programmes that affect youth. To do this, they must develop tools to support data collection, opinion polls and other reporting systems on youth and the fulfilment of their rights and opportunities. Their research capacity and ability to conduct needs assessments and to monitor and evaluate the impact of existing legislation and policies are essential to effective programmes. It is also important for government ministries and agencies to have the structures in place to translate a national youth policy to the local and regional levels. This can be achieved through the structures of the proposed Ministry of Youth Affairs and the independent umbrella body of youth associations.



Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs)

MMDAs are closest to the neighbourhoods and communities in which their citizens live and are often the most visible to youth. They therefore have an indispensable role in fostering the inclusion of young people into society. MMDAs should be immediately responsible for upholding the rights of youth, ensuring community cohesion, a healthy environment, a good quality of life, and sustaining social and economic development. They must provide political leadership and a vision for the future for both individuals and civil society organisations. They also need to encourage the participation of youth not just in municipal policy making but also at the family, school and local community levels.

Media

Media, whether new or traditional, help us to understand and interpret the world, communicate with one another, and participate in public life. Consistent with freedom of expression, the media should ensure widespread dissemination of information on issues that affect youth with the aim of raising their awareness. For example, media campaigns have shown striking successes in providing young people with vital HIV prevention information. Day-to-day contact with accurate and independent reporting is part of the informal education of young people.


National and community media is crucial to the infrastructure of public life and, when shaped by high quality research, truly represents the public interest. Often, issues important to youth are absent from reporting even though media continue to target youth in terms of advertising and entertainment. New media such as the news outlets on the Internet have, however, proved to be powerful in increasing the visibility of youth in policy making, representing diverse viewpoints, facilitating youth connectivity and creating innovative youth-owned communications. As youth are not passive consumers of news, the media



enhance the ability of youth to enter a national discussion and be active members of their society.

Civil Society

Civil society comprises the multitude of associations around which society voluntarily organises itself. Independent from the State, it represents a wide range of interests and ties, from ethnicity and religion to shared professional, developmental and leisure pursuits, and to issues such as environmental protection and human rights.




Either membership-based or formed to produce a public benefit, civil society includes women's groups, business associations, elders, religious leaders, intellectuals, community associations, cooperatives, NGOs and, of course, youth organisations – associations set up and managed by individuals in the youth age bracket – which make up a vital part of civil society. Youth organisations themselves engage in a unique dialogue where they learn from their peers, share information, and act collectively.

Civil society can be a force for scrutiny of government or the market, can mitigate conflict, and inspire policies for change with the power to mobilise and inform. Existing separately from organs of the government, military, or the private sector, civil society plays an indispensable role in developing an overall system of enabling mechanisms to fulfil the objectives of youth policy. The three general functions of civil society may be summed up as articulating citizens' interests and demands, defending citizens' rights, and directly providing goods and services.

Private Sector

Youth are an integral part of the private sector either as consumers, employees of large cooperatives, corporations or small family-owned businesses, or as entrepreneurs and innovators themselves. With its own set of resources and



expertise, an innovative private sector develops distribution links, provides needed products and services, creates employment and stimulates income growth; it can also integrate young people into the labour market, develop infrastructure and bring information technology to young people. The private sector, with its interest in a healthy, well-educated population of consumers and workers living in a stable society, should engage in partnerships that touch on every area of youth policy to support national development.


International Community

The international community refers to the nations of the world and their inter-governmental associations. While it plays multiple roles in the lives of youth, an essential role for the international community is cooperation in promoting conditions conducive to the implementation of national youth policy, including through assisting the government to translate the policy proposals into specific plans, targets and law. The international community should also provide a platform for exchange of good practices, information sharing and building a community of practice.

Specialised agencies of the United Nations, bilateral and multilateral institutions, and other international donors are encouraged to promote national youth policy through the incorporation of its goals into their plans, to undertake comprehensive reviews of the progress achieved and obstacles encountered, and to identify options for further action.

Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians (including extended family) play many roles in young people's social networks. Despite many on-going changes in the structure of families as an institution, parents remain vital for the socialisation of children. Parents are also educators and can fulfil this role by openly discussing issues and concerns with their children.




The dialogue they conduct with their children should be a two-way street where youth feel comfortable to speak with their parents without fear. Parents also have the power to direct the behaviour, capacities and intellectual and emotional character of their children. The investment of parents and guardians in youth, in terms of time and resources spent on their general care, is not limited to early childhood and their influence should not be underestimated; despite the independence of youth, they often inherit their parents' perceptions of the world.

Parents transfer physical assets (such as capital or a home) as well as intangible qualities, such as their values, to their offspring. Ideally, they are engaged in the process of the human development of youth throughout their lifetimes. When their children are youth, parents can serve as educators and can reinforce messages their children learn in the classroom by openly speaking about health concerns, relationships and social behaviour. When young people may be at risk, parents and guardians should know when and how to intervene.

Youth

Youth participation is crucial to realising the objectives of national youth policy and should be seen as a process through which young people influence and share control over the decisions, plans and resources that affect them. Involving young people in this process is empowering to them though it is up to the other stakeholders, who often act as gatekeepers in policy formation, to involve youth and youth organisations in the interventions that affect their lives.

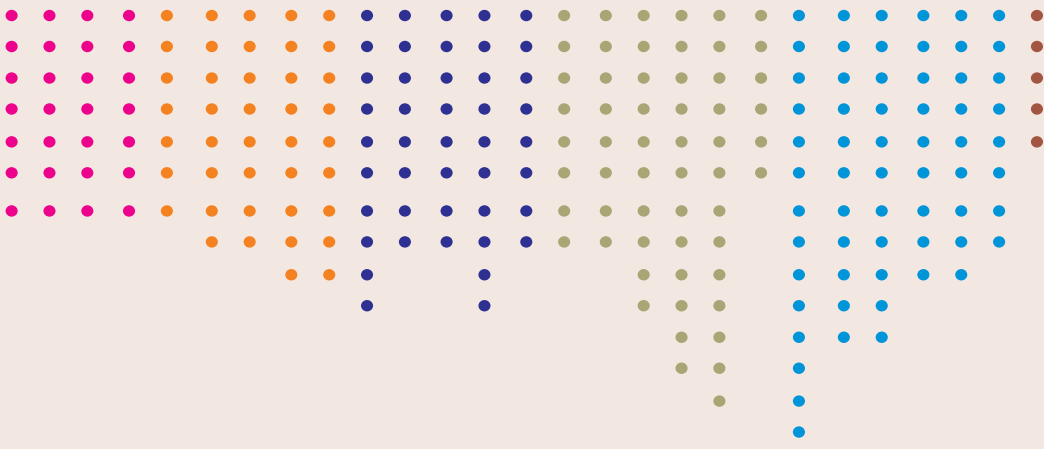
Empowering young people means allowing them to make informed decisions that affect their lives. Empowerment is more than the opportunity to influence policy; it is a process of capacity building that includes and often requires access to education, employment, health, and resources. If youth are encouraged and given the tools to fully participate in society, they will become more



knowledgeable about their rights, more responsible citizens, and often more self-confident. Young people should be given the platform to take an active role in addressing key questions, such as what capacity deficiencies exist that are preventing effective local development and good governance. Enhancing opportunities for youth participation builds their skills and knowledge base and serves to better cultivate policies that affect their lives.







APPENDICES






APPENDIX A: HOW THE PEOPLE'S NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY WAS PREPARED

The People's National Youth Policy is the product of a fifteen-month effort of the Voices of Youth Coalition with the active support and participation of key stakeholders, including representatives of civil society, United Nations and international development agencies, the academia, relevant government agencies, and the media. It emerges out of a coordinated process of building a broad constituency and developing individual and group capacities.

A series of capacity building and training workshops were held for members of the Voices of Youth Coalition. These include a Youth Action Research Workshops, a Data Analysis and Presentation Workshops, and a Youth Advocacy Training Workshop altogether reaching over 100 young researchers from all ten regions of Ghana.

A Writing and Coordination Taskforce comprising 13 competitively selected youth leaders from among the youth researchers was created to oversee drafting of the People's National Youth Policy from start to finish with support from other members of the Voices of Youth and staff of Youth Empowerment Synergy (YES-Ghana). Specifically, the Taskforce developed a framework, format and processes for collecting input from youth and other stakeholders, and actually drafted thematic summaries of the inputs received based.

Based on the capacities developed in earlier workshops, the youth researchers were deployed through various mediums to collect inputs from young people and stakeholders at the community, district and regional levels in an all-inclusive manner. Local community forums in over 150 locations provided entry points for many unreached youth to speak and be heard. Through the project website and social network platforms, many young people and other members of the



Ghanaian society who have access to the internet contributed their own input in very creative ways. Altogether, these activities yielded thousands of inputs mainly in written form, either as individual responses based on a special input collection template developed by the project team, or as activity reports indicating youth positions and recommendations. The project team therefore developed a database of all inputs received.

Based on all the inputs received, the Writing and Coordination Taskforce prepared thematic summaries, clustering the inputs under twelve thematic issues before developing a first draft. Young people through various platforms subjected this initial draft to thorough review, including an online consultation. This led to the development of a second draft which was presented to a team of experts and development practitioners to provide technical advice for shaping the document. Experts from the United Nations, civil society, research and academic institutions, and private sector reviewed the draft document's conformity to international frameworks and processes, thematic cohesion, among others. Based on the outcome of this review, the draft document received further fine-tuning, leading to a third draft.


A final step in the process was the gathering of all stakeholders at a validation workshop at which members of the Taskforce, members of the Voices of Youth Coalition, and some technical experts, as well as an editor and a designer did a thorough content analysis of the final draft before approving the document for press.

APPENDIX B: YOUTH RESEARCHERS

1. Abdul Hanan
2. Abigail Opoku Ayeh
3. Adam Saeed
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10. Hephzi-Bah Larweh Richards Narh
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12. Ken Herbert Hans
13. Margaret Osei
14. Stephen Kwaku Nhyira Okyere Nyarko
15. Rahama Yakubu
16. Pearlvis Tornu
17. Linda Madjitey
18. Samuel Gordor
19. Oko Armah Francis
20. Cecil Ato Kwamena Dadzie
21. Nana Abena Korkor Addo
22. Gado Sakina
23. Genevive Amponsah
24. Sarah Mintah
25. Sherifa Adams
26. Bernald Kwofie
27. James Anquandah
28. Alfred Adjabeng
29. Priscilla Offeibea Asamani
30. Emmanuel Nomafo




APPENDIX C: WRITING AND COORDINATION TASKFORCE

1. Alfred Adjabeng
 2. Doreen Avi
 3. Rahama Yakubu
 4. Angelina Kumi Akakpo
 5. Ebenezer Nii Martey
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 8. Emmanuel Nsobila
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 10. Pearlvis Sefakor Tornu
 11. Abdul Hanan
 12. Margaret Osei
 13. Stephen Kwaku Nhyira Okyere Nyarko
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APPENDIX D: THE VOICES OF YOUTH COALITION



The Voices of Youth Coalition is a youth-led platform for advocacy and action for youth participation in shaping the development agenda in Ghana. Given rising concerns over insufficient attention to critical issues affecting youth in Ghana and the lack of structures for mainstreaming youth into national policy-making, the Coalition provides an opportunity for youth to articulate their concerns and to make policy input.

Formed in January 2012 as the main mechanism through which the flagship Ghana Youth Manifesto was developed, the Voices of Youth Coalition comprises young people and their organisations from all ten regions of Ghana, including local groups, student associations, and youth NGOs. The Coalition also benefits from the support of a pool of active stakeholders, including UN and international development agencies, civil society organisations, and the private sector.

Based on its flagship product, the Ghana Youth Manifesto, the Coalition is continuously engaging policy makers and development partners through appropriate channels, with the view to integrating the recommended actions of the Manifesto into national youth policy. Over time, the Coalition will use the Youth Manifesto as yardstick for measuring progress in specific areas of youth policy and national development. Thus, youth policy advocacy remains an on-going activity of the Coalition.

Coalition members have regular access to training opportunities, allowing them to reach their highest potential as change-makers. On-going training and capacity building activities focus on governance and participatory democracy (including the challenges for youth in governance), tools for effective youth



participation, active citizenship, advocacy and lobbying, coalition-building, tools for youth civic engagement, communications, networking and coalition building, among others. Training sessions are carefully planned to provide a platform for youth leaders to share experiences and especially build friendships, synergies and collaboration towards a long-term networking and advocacy effort. The Coalition also offers international, regional, and local speaking and publicity opportunities at prominent conferences and events.

Building the evidence base for our advocacy is an important aspect of the Coalition's work. We seek to commission research into various aspects of youth development and publish the findings. We pay particular attention to ensuring that all our research work involves youth as part of the research team. Through Policy Briefs, Newsletters, social media channels and other youth-friendly documentation mechanisms, we hope to make research findings more accessible to wider youth audiences and stakeholders.

visit us: voicesofyouthgh.org

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