

Youth Green Manifesto

Our World , Our Planet

We, the youth and youth workers of Kenya, convened by the Organization of African Youth (OAY) under the Erasmus+ **“Our World Our Planet”** Project, affirm our collective commitment to advancing climate justice, gender equality, and inclusive governance.

This manifesto is informed by participatory consultations, capacity-building initiatives, and collaborative engagements conducted between 2024 and 2026, including Erasmus National Youth Forum (March 2026), 1st National Youth Climate Action Youth Innovation Summit (August 2025), and Just and Sustainable Urbanization Platform (JSUP) Harmonized Survey Report (May 2025). With contributions from over 3,000 youth and youth leaders from 60 youth organizations, it reflects the lived experiences, priorities, and aspirations of Kenyan youth across diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts.

This manifesto presents a set of targeted, actionable, and evidence-based policy recommendations developed through youth-led consultations and multi-stakeholder engagement processes. We seek sustainable, inclusive growth that ensures shared wealth without compromising our planet. We want shared prosperity, but one driven by eco-conscious development.

Policy Pillars and Recommendations

We call upon national and county governments, state departments, development partners, civil society, private sector actors, and all relevant stakeholders to adopt and implement the following policy actions.

Pillar 1: Climate Justice for Youth; Resourcing and Financing Youth-Led Climate Initiatives

Kenya should strengthen and expand youth-responsive financing to support climate action, green innovation, and sustainable livelihoods. Although several funding programmes exist, many young people face barriers such as complex application processes, limited awareness, restrictive eligibility criteria, and inadequate institutional support. This accessibility gap persists despite Kenya’s low ranking of 143rd in the 2023 Commonwealth Global Youth Development Index and severe default rates in existing debt-heavy public models, such as the Youth Enterprise Development Fund losing KSh 2.09 billion to defaults and the Uwezo Fund seeing a low 43% repayment rate by mid-2024. Persistent challenges in youth development and high loan default rates in public financing schemes highlight the need for more accessible, grant-based, and capacity-building approaches instead of debt-heavy models. Emerging investments, including the FLoCA County Climate Resilience Investment Programme, the NYOTA grassroots financing programme for over 100,000 youth businesses, and the proposed KSh 5 trillion National Infrastructure Fund—offer a critical opportunity to successfully reposition youth as leaders in climate resilience and green economic transformation.



Executive Summary

Kenya is grappling with an escalating climate crisis characterized by cycles of severe droughts and catastrophic flooding that threaten local food systems, livelihoods, and infrastructure. These challenges are compounded by governance gaps that limit the participation of youth and marginalized groups in climate decision-making, inadequate support for youth-led innovation, persistent gender inequalities, and digital barriers that restrict access to climate data, technology, and safe online spaces.

Together, these factors hinder inclusive climate action and the development of locally driven, sustainable solutions.

What the Youth Want

1. Establish a National and County Youth Climate Fund

- The National Treasury and Economic Planning should establish a dedicated, ring-fenced, and multiyear National Youth Climate Fund under FLoCA and related climate financing frameworks to directly finance youth-led climate adaptation, mitigation, and green enterprise initiatives.
- Financing mechanisms should prioritize grants, low-interest financing, technical assistance, mentorship, and business incubation support for youth-led enterprises and organizations.
- The Government should simplify access requirements, decentralize application processes, and institutionalize transparent public reporting on allocations, beneficiaries, and impact.

2. Create Accessible Small-Grant Facilities for Youth-Led Organizations

- The National Treasury, FLoCA, and development partners should establish simplified small-grant facilities tailored to youth-led community-based organizations and grassroots innovators.
- Funding frameworks should reduce administrative barriers that currently prevent youth groups from accessing climate finance opportunities available through large-scale international financing mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund.

3. Expand Youth Participation in Green and Circular Economy Financing

- County Governments should establish carbon credit and circular economy programmes in waste management by transforming open dumping sites and waste streams into revenue-generating environmental assets.
- County Governments should fully domesticate and implement the Sustainable Waste Management Act (2022), including strengthening county by-laws on waste segregation, recycling, and enforcement mechanisms.

4. Support Youth Participation in Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Systems

- The National Environment Management Authority to implement inclusive Take-Back Schemes under the Extended Producer Responsibility Guidelines by partnering with youth groups to establish waste aggregation centres, collection systems, deposit-refund mechanisms, and end-of-life product recovery initiatives.
- Regulatory agencies to streamline and harmonize licensing requirements that currently limit youth participation in the waste management and recycling value chain engagement, and infrastructure development.

5. Allocate Infrastructure and Public Procurement Opportunities to Youth

- Parliament should mandate that a significant proportion of the proposed KSh 5 trillion National Infrastructure Fund directly supports youth-owned and youth-operated enterprises within the green and digital economy transition.
- At least 5% of the Fund to be reserved specifically for youth-led climate innovation, renewable energy, sustainable transport, digital infrastructure, and circular economy initiatives.
- The Government should strengthen the implementation of AGPO provisions to ensure youth meaningfully benefit from public procurement opportunities linked to climate adaptation, renewable energy, waste management, and infrastructure development.



Pillar 2: Institutionalize Meaningful Youth Participation (MYP) and Representation in Climate Governance

Despite having strong constitutional pillars and an active National Youth Council, Kenya's youth encounter major implementation gaps and high financial barriers—such as travel and accreditation costs—that limit their role in climate governance to tokenistic, consultation-only forums. To maximize their impact on policy formulation, budgeting, and accountability, Kenya must transition toward institutionalized, transparent, and fully funded frameworks. This institutional evolution will bridge existing policy gaps, move engagement beyond symbolic listening sessions, and firmly establish young people as equal, decision-making partners in national and global climate action. Youth participation in National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) should be increased. These are affirmed in Articles 10(2), 1(2), 118(1)(b), 196(1)(b) of the Constitution.

What the Youth Want

1. Operationalize Climate-Focused Youth Engagement Platforms

- **County Governments:** Operationalize County and Sub-County Environmental Committees with permanent representation for youth, women, and persons with disabilities, ensuring active roles in climate policy and oversight.
- **National Government:** Fully operationalize the National Climate Change Council, including appointing a youth representative to strengthen youth participation in climate governance. Parliament: Amend the Climate Change Act to enhance the Council's effectiveness through shared leadership with the Deputy President and the Chairperson of the Council of Governors.
- **National Government:** Finalize and operationalize the National Youth Council electoral process, strengthen county structures, increase funding, and establish a Climate Change Sector Working Group.

2. Institutionalize Inclusive Representation in Climate Governance

Ministry of Environment: Ensure mandatory representation of youth, women, and persons with disabilities in all climate governance bodies and international delegations.

National Youth Council: Lead and coordinate youth participation and accountability in national and county climate governance.

Public Benefit Organizations Regulatory Authority: Strengthen youth-focused climate forums and support youth-led climate networks and coalitions.

3. Establish Transparent and Continuous Engagement Mechanisms

- Institutionalize continuous public engagement through youth advisory councils, digital participation platforms, public consultations, and participatory budgeting.
- Enhance transparency by publishing regular reports on climate commitments, financing, public participation, and implementation progress.
- Integrate climate governance, civic engagement, and environmental leadership into education, training, and youth empowerment programmes.
- Amend the Political Parties Act to require political parties to incorporate climate action, ecological sustainability, and intergenerational equity into their governance and electoral manifestos.



Pillar 3: Youth Digital Climate Advocacy and Innovation

Young people in Kenya are driving digital climate advocacy, innovation, and green entrepreneurship. However, their participation in the digital green economy is constrained by gaps in climate literacy, technical skills, financing, infrastructure, and policy support. According to UNICEF, less than half of interested young people feel prepared for green careers, with major training deficits persisting in climate technology, renewable energy, and data analysis. Despite these structural challenges, Kenya expanding e-mobility, circular economy, and waste management sectors offer immense potential for job creation. Forward-looking state frameworks like the National Strategy on Green Skills and Jobs (2025–2030) and the Climate Work Programme establish a baseline for youth inclusion. Ultimately, maximizing this potential requires Kenya to aggressively invest in digital infrastructure, distribute comprehensive climate data, and scale up targeted training to cultivate a resilient generation of green innovators



What the Youth Want

1. Promote Technology and Innovation and Data Access in Circular Economy Expand A

- County Governments to adopt digital technologies (AI, route optimization, monitoring systems) to improve waste management efficiency, accountability, and reduce leakage.
- Governments to support youth-led circular economy enterprises through financing, technical assistance, and market access.
- Publish open, accessible, machine-readable climate and environmental data to enable youth-led innovation and evidence-based policymaking.
- Establish public digital climate information portals with data on climate risks, adaptation, and environmental performance.
- Strengthen data transparency and interoperability to support locally driven climate solutions.
- Promote innovation hubs and green technology incubation centres for circular economy and environmental entrepreneurship.

What the Youth Want

2. Expand Green Digital Infrastructure and Climate Education

- The Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy to expand affordable and reliable internet access in rural areas, informal settlements, libraries, schools, and youth centres to ensure equitable participation in digital climate advocacy and innovation ecosystems.
- The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development should mainstream climate change education, green entrepreneurship, and sustainability competencies across all learning levels and training institutions.
- Technical and vocational institutions to establish specialized programmes in renewable energy systems, climate technology, electric mobility, waste management, sustainable agriculture, and green enterprise development.

3. Establish Financing Mechanisms for Youth Digital Innovation

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports to establish transparent and accessible grant schemes to support youth-led digital climate platforms, green technologies, research initiatives, and climate innovation enterprises.
- Public financing institutions and development partners to establish innovation challenge funds, incubation programmes, and blended financing mechanisms tailored to youth-led green enterprises.

4. Protect Civic Space and Climate Action Recognition

- The Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy to strengthen legal and institutional protections for digital rights, including freedom of expression, online safety, data privacy, and protection against cyber harassment targeting climate advocates and environmental defenders.
- The Kenyan Heroes Council and the National Climate Change Council should establish a Kenya Climate Action Youth Awards and Grant Scheme to recognize, celebrate, and support outstanding youth contributions in environmental protection, innovation, and climate justice.

5. Strengthen the Electric Mobility Ecosystem for Youth Employment

- Strengthen skills and workforce development by linking the Ministry of Labour, education institutions, industry, and innovation hubs to deliver targeted upskilling and certification in electric mobility, green technology, and renewable energy, including integration into programmes like Ajira Digital, NYOTA, and KENIA.
- Accelerate implementation of the National Electric Mobility Policy to expand infrastructure, promote market competition, support local manufacturing, and scale renewable energy integration across the value chain.

- Regulate predatory financing practices in the electric mobility sector, particularly affecting motorcycle riders and gig economy workers facing high-interest lending and unfair asset repossession.
- Establish national interoperability and safety standards for batteries, charging systems, and digital tracking through the Kenya Bureau of Standards to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance sustainability.
- Promote renewable-powered charging infrastructure through incentives for solar charging systems, battery storage, and off-peak tariffs in partnership with Kenya Power.

7. Expand Youth Employment in Renewable Energy and Green Industries

- The Government to formalize and strengthen youth employment opportunities within renewable energy distribution, solarization, clean cooking technologies, waste management, sustainable agriculture, and circular economy industries.
- National and county governments to increase investment in wind energy, sustainable urban development, green manufacturing, regenerative agriculture, and climate-smart rural enterprises as part of Kenya's green industrial transformation agenda.
- Public and private sector actors to prioritize youth employment, skills transfer, and enterprise development within emerging green economy sectors to ensure an inclusive and just transition.

Pillar 4: Gender Equality and Inclusion in Climate Action

Climate action in Kenya requires a gender responsive and inclusive approach grounded in social justice to address the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation on women and girls. Structural inequalities, limited decision-making roles, and inadequate planning currently undermine the sustainability of climate interventions. This disparity is starkly evident in resource access; only about 60% of Kenyans have safe drinking water, leaving women in rural areas and informal settlements to bear the heavy, unpaid burden of water collection. Furthermore, a widespread reliance on firewood, charcoal, and paraffin drives deforestation while exposing women and children to severe indoor air pollution and health risks. While Kenya has initiated progress through frameworks like the National Gender and Climate Change Action Plan, systemic gaps in urban infrastructure and governance still leave marginalized groups highly vulnerable to climate shocks

What Women Want

1. Expand Women's Access to Green Economic Opportunities

- The Government to strengthen gender-responsive policies and financing mechanisms that support women's participation in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, waste management, circular economy enterprises, environmental conservation, and green entrepreneurship.
- The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry and County Governments, to establish targeted programmes that provide women with green skills training, access to finance, market linkages, business incubation, and affirmative procurement opportunities.
- Public procurement systems to prioritize women-led green enterprises and strengthen implementation of affirmative action provisions under the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) framework.

2. Promote Safe and Gender-Responsive Mobility Systems

- The Government to enforce public transport regulations that guarantee safe, predictable, accessible, and harassment-free mobility systems for women and girls, including within the electric mobility sector.
- The National Electric Mobility Policy to integrate mandatory gender-responsive safety standards and inclusive transport planning measures that address barriers affecting women's participation in electric mobility industries and public transport systems.
- County Governments and transport authorities to strengthen "first and last mile" safety infrastructure, including street lighting, safe public transport corridors, digital safety reporting systems, and inclusive Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems.

3. Ensure Equitable Access to Productive Resources and Climate Opportunities

- The Ministry of Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development, together with County Governments, to strengthen legal and administrative systems that guarantee women's access to land ownership, water resources, climate technologies, agricultural inputs, and financial services.
- Government agencies to simplify land registration procedures, strengthen legal protections for women's property rights, and expand access to climate-smart agricultural technologies and affordable green financing.
- The Government to allocate designated spaces within major environmental restoration and urban regeneration programmes for youth- and women-led green enterprises, eco-tourism initiatives, recycling centres, and Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs).

- County Governments to guarantee and enforce at least 30% allocation of county procurement opportunities to youth- and women-led enterprises within water management, environmental services, and climate-related sectors.

4. Strengthen Climate Resilience in Informal Settlements and Urban Planning

- Climate Interventions: County governments and the Housing Ministry will upgrade informal settlements with flood control, drainage, sewers, resilient housing, waste management, and clean water.
- Urban Governance: National and county levels will enforce the Urban Areas and Cities Act and Integrated Urban Development Plans for sustainable growth.
- Planning Policies: New and existing urban areas must include green spaces, resilient infrastructure, pedestrian pathways, and youth innovation and content creation zones.
- Water & Waste Modernization: The government will update old water systems and expand community models like Material Recovery Centres and Direct Meter Management kiosks in underserved areas

5. Strengthen Protection and Safeguarding Systems

- The State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action, in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and National Administration and County Governments to institutionalize gender-responsive emergency response systems for climate-related disasters and environmental emergencies.
- National and county disaster response frameworks to mainstream gender-responsive safeguarding standards across all climate adaptation and humanitarian response interventions.

6. Strengthen Gender-Responsive Climate Data and Research Systems

- The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry and the State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action, to establish a national gender-responsive climate data framework that institutionalizes the collection, analysis, and publication of gender-disaggregated climate data.
- Research institutions, universities, and public agencies to prioritize gender-responsive climate research and strengthen collaboration with women-led and youth-led organizations in climate monitoring and policy development.

Our Commitments

As young people, we commit to:

- Advancing sustained advocacy, civic engagement, and accountability initiatives that promote practical, inclusive, and justice-oriented environmental action.
- Engaging political parties, public institutions, and electoral candidates to integrate the principles and commitments of the Green Youth Manifesto into their governance agendas and 2027 election manifestos.
- Designing, implementing, monitoring, documenting, and celebrating innovative youth-led climate solutions and community-driven environmental initiatives

Cost of Inaction and Why This Matters

Failure to act will deepen socio-economic inequalities, increase climate-related disasters, and undermine Kenya's sustainable development ambitions. Exclusion of youth and women from climate governance and financing will limit innovation, weaken resilience, and increase unemployment and poverty. Inadequate investment in green skills, digital infrastructure, and inclusive urban planning will further widen vulnerability, particularly among marginalized communities. Without urgent and coordinated action, Kenya risks losing its demographic dividend, weakening social cohesion, and falling behind in the transition toward a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable green economy.

Conclusion

This manifesto is a collective call to action for inclusive, equitable, and youth-driven climate governance in Kenya. Achieving climate justice requires sustained investment in youth leadership, gender equality, digital innovation, and participatory governance systems that place communities at the centre of climate action. An inclusive green transition is not optional; it is essential for building a resilient, sustainable, and socially just future for present and future generations.

This Manifesto has been Endorsed by;

