



VoiceUp

by OAYouth Kenya

SEPT 2024



STAY AHEAD

Discover the Latest Updates, News, and Inspiring Stories





CLIMATE CHANGE

Our Planet, Our Responsibility

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues of our time, affecting every corner of our planet.

Extreme weather conditions, and shifting ecosystems impact both our environmental, social and economic issues. As stewards of our environment, we are dedicated to promoting sustainable practices and raising awareness about the urgent need for climate action. Below, we highlight two of our major climate change initiatives, Sikiliza Sauti Yetu: Dunia Inaita! and the WORLD Project.

WORLD Project

The WORLD Project involves youth from different countries in advocating for effective climate change solutions with a gender perspective, using Virtual Exchange methodology and online people-to-people interactions. Financed by the European Union Erasmus+ Programme, the project is being implemented in Italy, Austria, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. WORLD facilitates cross-border interactions and knowledge sharing among youth from diverse backgrounds, it promotes climate action solutions that consider gender-specific impacts and contributions, and engages youth in global dialogues and collaborative efforts to address climate change.

Sikiliza Sauti Yetu: Dunia Inaita! (SSY)

SSY, aims to strengthen Kenyan civil society's capacity to address climate change. This project focuses on empowering youth and women-led organizations by strengthening their capabilities through training and workshops, enhancing their influence in climate policy dialogues, and engaging them in practical activities such as waste management. It also sets the eyes on raising climate change awareness and fostering community participation in climate action.

SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS

Breaking Barriers to Sexual Reproductive Health Rights.

Access to sexual reproductive health rights is essential for the well-being and empowerment of young people. However, many face significant barriers in accessing the information and services they need. At OAY, we are committed to advocating for comprehensive sexual education, access to contraceptives, and the protection of reproductive rights.

Our programs are designed to equip young people with accurate information about their bodies, relationships, and health. We conduct inclusive and respectful workshops in schools and communities, covering essential topics such as puberty, contraception, sexually transmitted infections, and consent. These workshops address the needs of all young people, including those with disabilities and from marginalized communities.

Access to contraceptives is a critical aspect of reproductive health. We partner with healthcare providers to ensure young people can access a range of contraceptive options without stigma or judgment. Our advocacy efforts aim to make contraceptives affordable and accessible, and we work to influence policy changes that support reproductive rights.

In addition to education and services, we focus on breaking the silence around reproductive health. Stigma and misinformation that often prevent young people from seeking the care they need. Through media campaigns, peer education, and community dialogues, we are fostering a culture of openness and support. Our goal is to ensure every young person can make informed decisions about their health and futures, free from fear and discrimination.



STRENGTHENING NUTRITION AND GENDER EQUALITY EFFORTS

OAY has intensified efforts in supporting the Scaling Up Nutrition Youth Network by facilitating coalition members' presence in decision-making places and supporting their contributions to Kenya Nutrition Action Plan (KNAP) through memo development.

We participated in the Kisumu County stakeholders' consultative meeting on the Gender and Equality Bill 2023. Women's access to reproductive health services is affected by gender social norms and power to influence decision making. We supported the need for a gender needs assessment to improve infrastructure, supply, quality, and demand for integrated reproductive, maternal, new-born, child, and adolescent health and nutrition services. Together, we are making strides towards a healthier, more informed, and empowered youth community.



SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Transparency and accountability are cornerstones of a thriving democracy. Without these, corruption flourishes, resources are misallocated, and public trust erodes. We are committed to holding our leaders accountable and ensuring that social and political systems work for the benefit of all citizens. Our advocacy efforts focus on promoting good governance, fighting corruption, and empowering citizens to actively participate in the political process. We conduct civic education programs that teach citizens about their rights and responsibilities, the workings of government, and how to engage in advocacy. These programs are designed to demystify the political process and encourage informed participation.



Empowering young people is a key part of our strategy. We provide training in leadership, advocacy, and community organization, equipping the next generation with the skills they need to drive change. Through youth networks and forums, we create spaces for young people to voice their concerns, propose solutions, and hold their leaders accountable. Our vision is a society where every citizen has the power and opportunity to shape their future.

PROTESTS AGAINST THE FINANCE BILL, OUR STAND

Recently, Kenyan Youth were on the streets protesting against the finance bill 2024 that would adversely affect essential health services. The proposed increases in taxation on sanitary towels, diapers, and cancer treatment posed significant challenges, particularly for vulnerable populations.

The increased taxation on sanitary towels would directly impact menstrual health, making it harder for many to afford these essential products. This adds to period poverty, forcing many girls and women to miss school or work, and increasing the risk of health issues from using unsafe alternatives. Menstrual health is a critical aspect of gender equality and human rights, and we stand firmly against policies that undermine it.

Similarly, the increased taxation on diapers placed an undue burden on families, particularly those with young children. Access to affordable diapers is essential for the health and well-being of infants and young children. Higher costs can lead to the use of unsafe or unsanitary alternatives, with serious health implications.

The proposed taxation on cancer treatment was equally troubling. Cancer is already a devastating disease, both emotionally and financially. Increased costs for treatment means the difference between life and death for many patients. Access to affordable cancer care is a fundamental right, and we are committed to fighting for policies that ensure everyone can access the treatment they need.

We stood with those who were advocating for fair and just policies that prioritize the health and well-being of all citizens. The protests were aimed at influencing policy changes that support the most marginalized members of our society.

**Organization of African Youth-Kenya | +254 115 579 971 |
info@oayouthkenya.org | kenya@oayouth.org**

LONAK BUSINESS CENTRE, KASARANI ROAD, NAIROBI, KENYA