

YOUTH & WOMEN DEMOCRACY TALKS SUMMARY REPORT



Background

Imara Leadership Initiative is a Non-Governmental Organization working in Tanzania to promote good governance, health welfare, gender equality and peace and security with country chapter in the Republic of Kenya as part of Partners for Democracy Day celebrations, Imara Leadership Initiative hosted two webinar's on women and youth interchangeably which aimed to provide a platform for experts working in civil society, international organizations, academic institutions, think tanks, philanthropic organizations and the private sector to share their experience on democracy and what works.

Imara Youth Democracy Talks webinar outcomes:

- Youth discontented with politics yet less likely to vie or even vote independent spaces for engagement creating a gap for them to engage in democracy at country level, the webinar speakers drew on the experience from Kenya to reiterate the importance of independent youth councils as platforms for youth political engagement.
- Speakers noted that most of the county youth councils in Kenya, are party supported, thus creating youth apathy against the emergent Kenya National Youth Council that is considered as not politically independent. Rights awareness and access to information: the lack of awareness and understanding of national laws and the regional framework on political participation was identified as a factor in youth disengagement.
- Where most young people have limited access to internalise the country's processes and laws, it reflects poorly on the participation of youth in politics and will reduce the bulge of young people in politics.
- Re-engaging youth within political parties to uphold democracy principles: The common narrative of "The Party comes first" negatively affects youth within political parties as they are required to toe the party line rather than driving the youth and women agenda. Young people are emerging to join several political parties with the aim of driving change this should enable youth to aspire for public office for driving positive social changes and not to aspire for political offices and leadership as a result of being young but instead by the call to serve.

Recommendations

- The session noted the need to improve access to information for young people in democracy, because youth in the rural areas do not have a clear understanding about the rights and how their governments owe them such rights including those to participate in electoral processes.
- Addressing negative perceptions and narratives: Young people's participation in the democratic process is still limited by certain negative perceptions and narratives, moreover the most impacted group is the young women with limited windows to engage in the political processes that is being constrained as the parties side lining them as not aggressive actors in the political arena making the perceptions of young women in politics to be shadowed with a group that is incapable and inexperienced.
- Systematic changes to monetised democratic processes: discussions noted that young people are unable to engage in democratic process as they lack the financial muscle required to run for political office in a context where politics is largely monetised. Monetization of democratic processes creates barriers for the young people who are mostly in the informal and corporate sector to show their interests in the democracy arena.

Imara Women Democracy Talks Webinar

- Speaker's addressed the need for women's representation in Tanzania cabinet remains on average at 37% largely contributed to social economic issues such as roles in the household, women are often not perceived as capable of leading and women who engage in politics are often seen as having deserted their families, in some cases, women participating in political activities without their husbands' consent have faced violence or divorce leading to an increase in violence against women in politics, including online, though is often underreported for fear of retaliation.
- They further urged that women should also play a key role in democratic processes such as monitoring electoral violence targeted to women leaders and to be positive agents of sustainable Peace
- It is observed that most women in the already existing democratic frameworks such as Women Consortia on to strengthen their participation in monitoring public policy performance of government officials, holding them to account and also engaging in democracy advocacy.

Recommendations

- In partnership with democratic focused institutions there is a need to implore democracy trainings to women who are aspiring political candidates within at national level so as to increase women participation in the electoral process.
- Political Parties must include women or nominate them for posts during elections. Their structures and how their finances are being used to empower these women people to take up these posts must be examined. For instance, in Kenya, Article 26(1), of the Political Parties Act provides that 30 percent of the public funding should be used to promote representation in Parliament.

- Political party's nomination procedures should be made more flexible to allow women to stand as nominated candidates for different positions.
- Civil Society Organizations (CSO's) must advance new technologies and online tools which present an opportunity for women to understand and monitor democratic activities.

Final Sessions Agenda

Imara Youth Democracy Talks 19, March 2024 East African Time		
Opening Session: The desirable future for Youth in African Democracies 16:00 – 16:15 pm – Moderator, Ms. Julieth Benjamin – ILI Tanzania		
Speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Chaggu – PhD candidate on Political Science and Public Administration at Maria Curie Sklodowska University • Otim Brian - EAC Youth Ambassadors Platform 	
Questions and Answers		
16:25- 16:45pm Moderator – Ms. Julieth Benjamin – ILI Tanzania		
Presenter	Meaningful democracy requires the meaningful participation of youth	Mr. Henry Mathayo, Member , Imara Leadership Initiative Youth Ambassadors
	Regional landscape for Youth in Formal Political Processes	Ms. Todin Omiyale , Researcher
Closing Session		
Imara Women Democracy Talks 19, March 2024 East African Time		
Opening Session: Women's active participation in Democracy 15:00 – 15:15 pm – Moderator, Ms. GonayaSethora- CEO Business Woman Africa		
Speakers	Addressing the gender targeted violence in democracy – Policy recommendation	Ms. Rebecca Masiko , ARUSO Tanzania
	Role of women's engagement in political process	Ms. Rahma Mwita , OYO Tanzania

	Questions and Answers	
15:25- 15:45 Moderator, Ms. GonayaSethora- CEO Business Woman Africa		
Speakers	Policy recommendations, whats next ? Women in Electoral Process	Tatu Ahmed – CCM political women wing member Masoud Juma – Opposition party wing representative
Closing Session		

The summary report is compiled by Imara Leadership Initiative Team Programmes Unit.