



THE 2024 NATIONAL STATE OF THE YOUTH REPORT:

Assessing Government Investment in Young People



Published by

Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (UPFYA)

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P. O. Box 109447 Kampala
Tel: 0392612979
www.wavemediagraphics.ug

Place and date of publication

Kampala-Uganda, 23rd November 2024

The Civil Society in Uganda Support Programme (CUSP) is co-funded by the European Union and the Federal Republic of Germany. GIZ has been commissioned to implement it as part of the Strengthening Governance and Civil Society Project by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).



Co-funded by
the European Union

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Its contents are the sole responsibility of GIZ and SRHR Alliance, BRAC Uganda, AHF Uganda Cares, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, National Youth Advocacy Platform, Kabarole Research Center and Restless Development and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EU or the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACF	Agricultural Credit Facility
BFP	Budget Framework Paper
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
FY	Financial Year
HCD	Human Capital Development
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
NYC	National Youth Council
PDM	Parish Development Model
PIAP	Programme Implementation Action Plan
PFI	Participating Financial Institution
RAHU	Reach A Hand Uganda
RHDs	Refugee Hosting Districts
SBRF	Small Businesses Recovery Fund
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
UNSA	Uganda National Students Association
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UPOLET	Universal Post O'Level Education and Training
UPFYA	Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs
USE	Universal Secondary Education
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy

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Message from The Chairperson, UPFYA

It is my pleasure to present to you the 2024 State of the Youth Report.

This report not only assesses government investment in young people but also gives us a sneak view into i) the progress we are making in achieving the demands of the young people as per the 2021/26 National Youth Manifesto and ii) progress being made in realizing the 2021/26 Youth Legislative Agenda which is one of the guiding frameworks for the youth Members of Parliament.

Beyond being an annual report and event of the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (UPFYA), the development State of the Youth Report also serves to redirect our work as the representatives of the young people of Uganda.

The development of this report could not have been possible without the strong support of the various partners of the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (UPFYA). In particular, I wish to convey our gratitude to the GIZ Governance & Civil Society Programme co-funded by the German Cooperation and the European Union for the financial support rendered.

Additionally, great appreciation goes out to other partners like Restless Development and the SRHR Alliance Uganda for both the technical and financial support given towards the development of this report.

I also acknowledge Kabarole Research Centre (KRC), AIDs Healthcare Foundation (AHF)Uganda Cares, Westminster Foundation for Democracy(WFD), BRAC Uganda, Reach A Hand Uganda (RAHU) who facilitated and supported the sub regional consultative meetings with young people, youth leaders and stakeholders in youth programming.

With regard to the five thematic areas of the 2021/26 National Youth Manifesto, health, education and climate change are scoring quite well when juxtaposed to the 2021/26 National Youth Manifesto demands. This is attributed to the robust advocacy by the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs and several youth led and youth serving Civil Society Organizations. However, the demands on youth participation in decision-making are not making great progress. Beyond the demands in the manifesto which are the fulcrum of this assessment, there is noted improvement in getting youth at the decision making table. In particular, we thank His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni for considering young people in political appointments.

As we head into a new electoral cycle, we need to i) embark on an endline assessment of the National Youth Manifesto and kickstart the process for developing a new one and ii) ramp up advocacy for the realization of the policy demands that have not yet been met.

As I conclude, I extend my appreciation to the UPFYA Secretariat, Board and partners for their steadfastness in uplifting the livelihoods of our young people. Realizing the ambitious aims of the ten-fold growth strategy is hinged on how best we tap into the potential of Uganda's youthful population.

For God and My Country



BENARD ODOI, MP

Eastern Region Youth MP/ Chairperson UPFYA.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the preliminary results of the 2024 Uganda National Housing and Population Census, Uganda remains a youthful nation, with over half its population (50.5 percent) children aged 17 and under. The youth demographic (18 - 30 years) constitutes 22.7 percent of the total population, reflecting the country's demographic dividend and the need for targeted youth-centric policies.

Uganda's policy impetus is what is mainly referred to as the "Ten Fold Growth" Strategy whose aim is to grow the economy from USD 50 billion to USD 500 billion by 2040 in line with the goals set out in Vision 2040 of achieving a GDP per Capita of USD 9500. This objective is premised on the four anchor sectors abbreviated as (ATMS);

- Agro-Industrialisation;
- Tourism Development;
- Mineral Development, including oil & gas;
- Science Technology and Innovation (STI) with ICT at the centre.

Youth continue to gain prominence in Uganda's national, regional and international policy commitments. For instance, the Government of Uganda has pledged in the 2024 Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report to "Invest in accelerated human capital development and continue to invest in the education of the young population while also focusing on the quality and relevance of education". In the same 2024 VNR report, government acknowledges that "Significant allocations towards advancing human capital, including services like healthcare and education, are imperative to addressing the needs of the rapidly growing demographic, particularly the youth, who comprise over 78% of the population".

The 2024 State of the Youth Report assesses government investment in young people in the areas of education, access to healthcare, employment and job creation, climate change and youth friendly cities and youth participation in decision-making. The report assesses investment using the lens of policy and legislative action, mainstreaming of youth issues via appropriation and resource allocation in national and district budgets as well as programme interventions designed by government in the Financial Year under review that capture the existential needs and realities of Uganda's youthful population.

1.1. ABOUT THE STATE OF THE YOUTH REPORT

The State of the Youth Report is an annual assessment of the public and private investment in the young people of Uganda, as examined through the prism of young people's aspirations and the government's commitments to addressing the youth issues as stated in the National Youth Manifesto and government policy documents, including the National Development Plan III.

More critically, the report examines the gains and gaps occasioned by government policies in the 5 critical areas of health, education, employment, climate change and, youth political participation in decision making, juxtaposed against the priority areas set out in the annual State of the Nation Address, Annual Budget Speeches, Ministerial Policy Statements, Medium Term Expenditure Framework(MTEF), Parliament's legislative agenda among other policy areas.

Beyond assessing government investment in young people, this report attempts to provide information to young people on existing opportunities created by the various government initiatives, laws, programmes and policies in the short, medium and long term.

The development of the State of the Youth Report is coordinated by the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (UPFYA) and engages different Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Civil Society Organizations and youth representative bodies like the National Youth Council (NYC) and Uganda National Students Association (UNSA).



Photo 1: Validation meeting for the Annual state of the youth report 2024. (Courtesy of ©UPFYA media team)

1.2. METHODOLOGY

This report was developed through a mixed methods approach. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were applied to gather the views of the young people, experts and leaders on development milestones reached, challenges encountered and recommendations made to better improve the welfare of Uganda's young population. Specifically, the following methods were used:

- UPFYA with support from partners like the AIDs Health Foundation (AHF), Uganda Cares, Reach A Hand Uganda (RAHU), BRAC Uganda and Kabarole Research Centre (KRC) conducted sub regional townhalls with youth, youth leaders and district local government leadership to deliberate on the recommendations of the 2023 State of the Youth Report and progress made in fulfilling these recommendations. Views were collected and used for this report. These sub regional townhalls were held in Masaka, Fort Portal, Gulu, Terago and Kapchorwa. The validation meeting converged selected national youth leaders to review the draft report.
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were held with selected District Local Government officials mainly the Senior District Community Development Officers, National Youth Council, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Youth Members of Parliament, Multiparty Youth Platform (MYF), Interparty Youth Platform (IYOP), Uganda National Students Association (UNSA) and youth led Civil Society representatives.
- Focus Group Discussions were held with members of the District Youth Councils at the sub regional townhalls. The main intention of the FGDs was to qualify the quantitative data got from the digital survey and also get expert views on findings from the literature review.
- Rigorous Document review and analysis were undertaken by the consultant. The key documents reviewed included Ministerial Policy Statements, Annual Budget Performance Reports (ABPRs), 2024 Voluntary National Review (VNR), FY 2024/25 National Budget Framework Paper, NDPIV Strategic Direction, Human Capital Development Programme Implementation Action Plan among others.
- A digital survey tool targeting students, CSO representatives and other youth leaders was developed and shared. It generated over 186 responses.

2. DEMOGRAPHIC TRAITS OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

The sub regional townhalls had over 354 participants as shown in the table below:

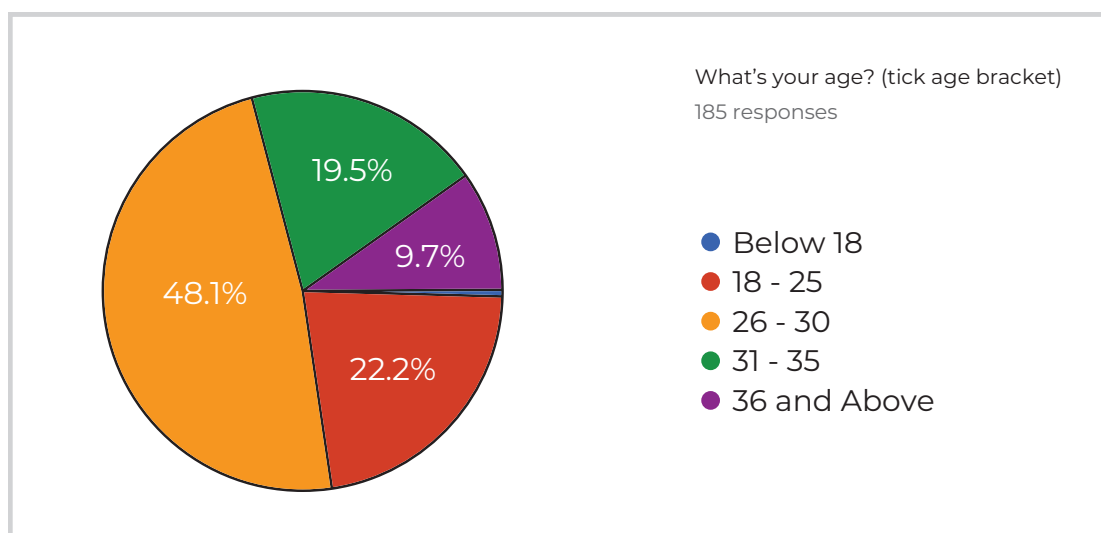
Table 1: Breakdown of study participants by region and sex

SUB REGION	DISTRICT	FEMALES	MALES	TOTAL
Rwenzori	Fort Portal	51	86	137
Buganda	Masaka	8	17	25
Acholi and Lango	Gulu	14	17	31
West Nile	Terego	52	49	101
Sebei	Kapchorwa	23	37	60
Total		148	206	354

Another group of young people were consulted digitally. The digital survey tool had a total of 186 participants of which 67.8% were male. Overall, more male youth participated in the study than their female counterparts.

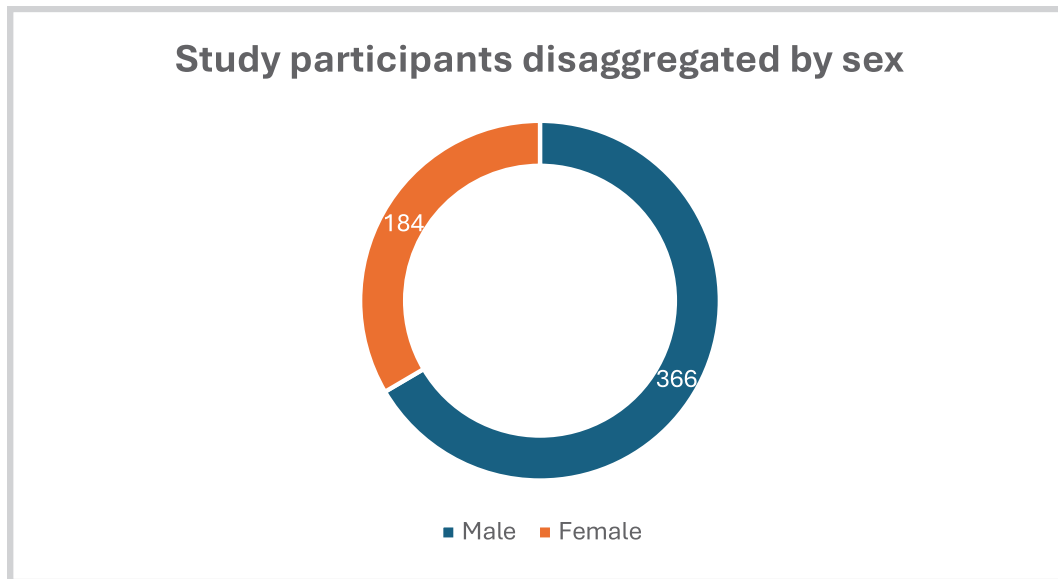
2.1. AGE OF RESPONDENTS

The study had more respondents in the age bracket of 26-30 years at 48.1% followed by those between the age of 18 and 25 years at 22.2% as shown below:



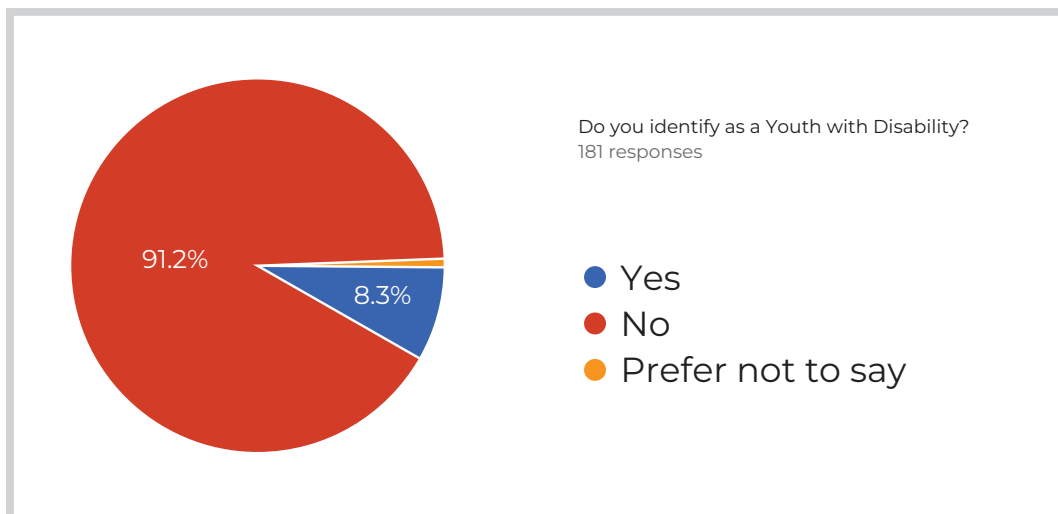
2.2. DISAGGREGATION BY SEX AND DISABILITY STATUS

There were more male youth at 67% participating in the study as respondents than females as shown in the chart below:



This response rate was spread across board in the townhalls and the digital survey and it is the considered view of the consultant that there is still a lot to be done to bring more females into the decision making spaces. Creating and reserving leadership positions for females without breaking socio-economic barriers to their political participation is not enough in itself.

When asked about their disability status, most the respondents answered in the negative at 91.2% as shown in the chart below:



3. ASSESSMENT OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2023 STATE OF THE YOUTH REPORT

The report was launched on 4th December 2023 and made policy recommendations on youth employment, climate change, affordable healthcare, education and youth participation in decision making.

The Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (UPFYA) used the State of the Youth Report recommendations to engage government during the drafting and passing of this year's national budget. Positions were raised and we have been able to realize a lot of policy wins- Osborn Turyasingura, Coordinator UPFYA

The consultant also analysed key documents to verify, attribute and qualify these achievements from the 2023 State of the Youth Report recommendations. They are summarized below:

3.1. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLING

- In FY2024/25, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and the Budget Committee has set aside UGX 5bn to cater for the operationalisation of the National Apprenticeship and Graduate Volunteer Scheme. This is a great step in the right direction as far as advocacy for a National Graduate Scheme Act is concerned.
- MoFPED has availed UGX 7bn to support the Jua-Kali Entrepreneurs to transition into the formal economy. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development will use this fund to support the "jua kali" sector through inter alia providing 150 Jua Kali groups with business startup toolkits and green technology as well as monitoring and providing technical support supervision on enterprise implementation in 90 beneficiary districts to 552 Jua kali groups.
- Government has taken up the proposal to provide funding for skilling. To this aim, UGX. 19.48n has been provided to NSTEI to enable them Operationalize the skilling Centers in the FY 2024/25.
- Youth MPs have lobbied Parliament's Budget Committee to avail UGX 32 billion to Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to reinstate its flagship programmes of the Ministry like Youth Venture Capital Fund, YLP, Special Grant for Persons with Disabilities, creation of green jobs. The Youth subventions had been collapsed to pave way for Parish Development Model but they are now back starting FY2024/25.
- Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has issued PPDA guidelines that require government tenders below 100m to be reserved for young people. This followed wide engagement and lobbying by UPFYA.



Photo 2: H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni inspecting the exhibitors at the National Youth Business Forum 2023 at Kololo Independence grounds. (Courtesy of ©UPFYA media team)

3.2. EDUCATION

- The student loan scheme had been collapsed and was part of the proposed government merger. With lobbying based on recommendations of the report, 6.7 billion under Higher Education Students' Financing Board (HESFB) has been provided to support the student loan scheme. This will benefit over 1200 youth access tertiary education.
- Cabinet finally approved the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) policy to provide for foundational learning and improve learning outcomes
- The National School Feeding Policy is awaiting approval by cabinet after a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) was completed. This will improve nutrition and help retention in the education system.



Photo 3: A student making a presentation at the National Youth Business Forum. (Courtesy of ©UPFYA media team)

3.3. CLIMATE CHANGE AND YOUTH FRIENDLY CITIES

- The government through UDB is launching a UGX50 billion climate finance facility intended to promote a green economy by financing investments in the sectors of climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy, sustainable waste management, climate resilient infrastructure, low carbon industry, and ecotourism.

3.4. YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

- The recent cabinet reshuffle saw the appointment of the youngest minister. Honourable Phiona Nyamutooro, former UPFYA chairperson is the youngest minister in Uganda and the average age of cabinet reduced from 67 years at the time of the last report to 53 years with more youthful politicians coming into the fold such as Hon. Phiona Nyamutooro, Hon. Lillian Aber among others.
- Parliament has taken up electoral reforms to minimize the cost of politics and consultations are ongoing on electoral reforms.



Photo 4: Students making presentations at the National Youth Business Forum 2023 at Kololo Independence Grounds. (Courtesy of ©UPFYA media team)

3.5. AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE

- A revised cabinet memo on the National Health Insurance Scheme Bill has been prepared and presented. UPFYA will keep lobbying for a law that provides universal health coverage in Uganda.
- Due to increased advocacy for prioritization of SRHR, the Ministry of Health now lists “Provision of high-quality sexual and family reproductive health and rights services in order to achieve optimal health for the adolescents, mothers, new-born and infants” as a priority for FY2024/25.
- UPFYA and partners have engaged National Planning Authority to prioritize Family Planning interventions in NDPIV and the draft NDP is deliberate on mainstreaming family planning in Uganda’s policy and programme priorities.
- Ministry of Health, through its FY2024/25 Ministerial Policy Statement, has also committed to the “Establishment of a National e-Health Infrastructure (digitization) to facilitate service delivery through Telemedicine, eHealth Management Information System, Community Health Information System, including tracking of medicines and health workers’ performance”.

4. ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN YOUNG PEOPLE AS PER THE NATIONAL YOUTH MANIFESTO THEMATIC AREAS

This analysis is based on the five thematic areas which are contained in the 2021/26 National Youth Manifesto and its legislative framework known as the Youth Legislative Agenda. The thematic areas are:

- i) Jobs and Employment Opportunities,
- ii) Access to affordable health care,
- iii) Climate Change and Youth friendly cities,
- iv) Education that drives growth and
- v) Youth Participation in Decision Making.

4.1. JOBS AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Uganda has one of the youngest and most rapidly growing populations in the world with a 3.7% population growth rate and 78% of Uganda's population being under the age of 30. With more than one million young people entering the job market each year, the youth unemployment challenge is one that the government of Uganda should prioritize to addressing through equipping youth with vocational skills, increasing the competitiveness of youth within the labour market, building capacities of national institutions to mainstream youth employment, and supporting youth-led enterprises to pilot innovative ideas.

QUALITY OF JOBS CREATED

Our calculations show that there is USD 13,117 invested for one direct or indirect job created in Uganda compared to the global figure of USD 30,000 invested for one direct job. This raises questions about the quality of jobs created through Foreign Direct Investment.



Photo 5: Youth consultation meeting in greater Masaka supported by AHF Uganda cares. (Courtesy of @UPFYA media team)

Government highlighted establishment of industrial parts as one of the magic bullets to reduce unemployment and create jobs. By June 2024, the following industrial parks were operational: Namanve Park (with 190 companies operating); Liao Shen Park in Kapeeka (19 companies); SinoUganda Industrial Park in Mbale (18 companies); Luzira Park (11 companies); Bweyogerere Park (8 companies); MMP in Buikwe (6 companies), Jinja, Soroti, Kasese, Mbarara, and Tian Tang-Mukono Industrial Parks. So far, over USD 3.5 billion have been invested in these parks in the form of Foreign Direct Investment with an estimated 266,812 direct and indirect jobs being created. USD 13,117 invested for one direct or indirect job created.

Gender gaps in educational attainment and paid employment – accompanied by occupational sex segregation – exclude young women from higher-skill and higher-profit jobs and enterprise ownership. Moreover, many the inequalities have been increasing over past five years, and at an accelerated rate during the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, these gender gaps constrain not only young women’s economic empowerment, they also choke off opportunities for them to push the economy forward in its transformation out of subsistence agriculture and into an industrialized society with greater wealth for all.

4.1.1. Youth in ICT

The 2024 Voluntary National Review (VNR) report notes that “there has been a steady decline in the use proportion of youth and adults (15-24 years) with Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills across several segments. In the year 2020, most users were individuals who utilised computers for copying and transferring files (72%), and the least was a mere 6% of individuals who employed computers for the purpose of creating computer programmes using specialised programming languages”. This corroborates findings of the Technology and Innovation Report 2023 where Uganda ranks 138th out of 166 economies in the 2022 Readiness for Frontier Technologies Index, with a total score of 0.22. This score puts Uganda among the ‘low score group’.

These statistics indicate that there is a significant gap to be bridged in terms of R&D investment, innovation support and ICT infrastructure development to boost the country’s competitiveness in the global ICT landscape. A breakdown of each indicator score is detailed below:

Table 2: Uganda’s ratings in the global ICT landscape

CATEGORY	RANK	
	2021	2022
ICT	125	133
Skills	131	137
R&D	89	91
Industry	110	120
Finance	137	147
TOTAL	128/217	138/218

Source: UNCTAD 2023 Report.

To bridge these gaps and boost the country's competitiveness in the global ICT landscape, there is need to increase investment as advocated for in the 2021/26 National Youth Manifesto (NYM). For FY 2024/25, only Shs 246 billion has been allocated to the ICT sector.

- Further expansion of internet connectivity and digital infrastructure across the country;
- Continuing the rollout of digital services across Government to improve efficiency of service delivery, transparency and accountability
- Leveraging Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and ICT to create employment opportunities for the young people;
- Digital skilling to increase adoption of the digital services; and
- Cyber security, data protection and privacy.

It should be noted that the emergence of disruptive technology and evolving economic landscapes, compounded by geopolitical and sociocultural disruptions, has revolutionized industries and transformed businesses resulting in profound labour market transformations (UNDP, 2024). Technological breakthroughs such as generative artificial intelligence (AI), Cloud and Blockchain, Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR) have created new avenues of growth – reshaping the way organizations operate. Digital transformation has also created boundless opportunities and demand for new skills paving the way for innovative careers and entrepreneurial ventures in emerging sectors such as cybersecurity, data science, renewable energy, and creative arts.

The digital backlash against young women and girls is a growing issue that reflects deep-seated gender biases and inequalities in the online world. This backlash takes multiple forms and has significant consequences for women's safety, mental health, and participation in digital spaces.

To combat this digital backlash requires a concerted effort from governments, private, and civil society organizations. Policies that enforce stricter regulations on online abuse and hold perpetrators accountable are critical. Additionally, tech companies must enhance reporting and moderation processes to ensure women can engage in digital spaces safely.

For government to tap into these vast opportunities, we recommend thus:

- We recommend a policy on AI and blockchain technology to be drafted, adopted and implemented as part of Uganda's Digital Transformation Agenda. The proliferation of digital media and online platforms has also increased demand for content creators, digital marketers, UX/ UI designers, and multimedia specialists.
- Establishing innovation hubs and technology parks to nurture young innovators and tech entrepreneurs is a key strategy to harness the creativity and potential of the youth. A 2023 report by the World Economic Forum posits that AI, machine learning (ML), big data analytics, climate solutions and environmental management technologies, as well as encryption and cybersecurity, are expected to be the biggest drivers of job growth. Equipping youth with these digital competencies not only enhances their employability but also empowers them to contribute meaningfully to fostering peace and inclusive development.
- Government should pursue the e-government policy and implement it beyond service provision and procurement. Digital technologies have enabled remote work and freelance opportunities, allowing youth to work for global companies or start their own business from anywhere in the world. E-governance could enable youth reap into such opportunities.

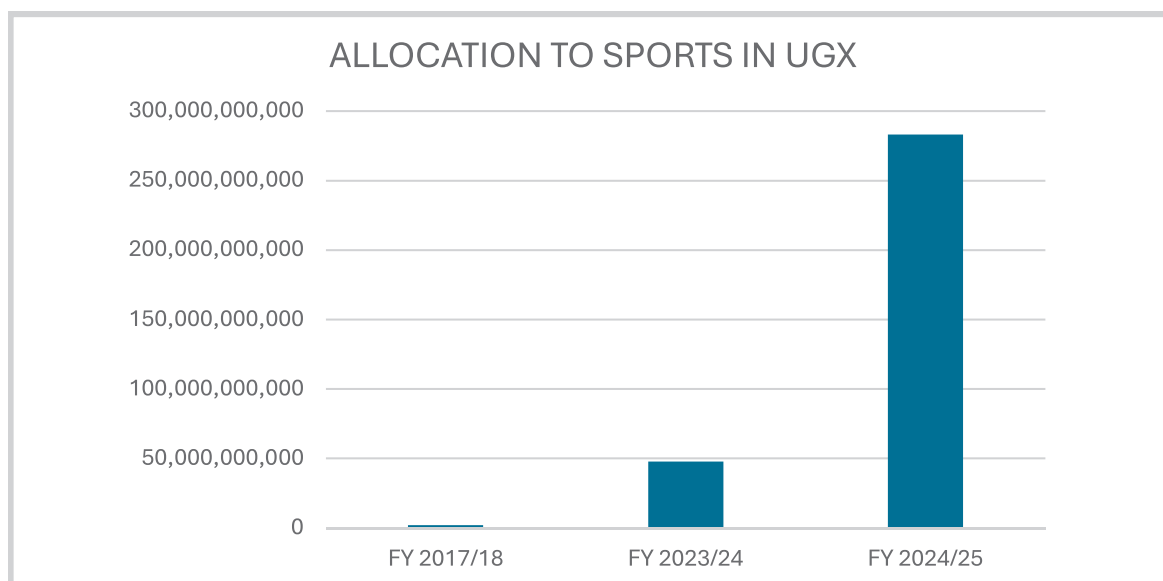
- There is need for more investment in Information Communications Technology infrastructures, Business process Outsourcing (ICT- BPO) because of its potential to boost growth of the economy through attracting investment and increasing employment. ICT-BPO is one of the key catalysts for establishing knowledge-based industries in Uganda, thereby creating higher-value jobs for Uganda’s youthful population and enhancing economic growth. It is estimated that the ICT-BPO industry will create more than 100,000 jobs (direct and indirect).

4.1.2. Sports and Creative Arts

The creative economy has also emerged as a transformative force, offering youth avenues for economic empowerment, cultural expression, and societal enrichment. A case in point is Nigeria’s film industry – Nollywood which has gained prominence as a beacon of creativity, storytelling prowess and economic opportunity contributing an estimated USD \$600 million to the Nigerian economy annually and employing 300,000 people directly and up to 1 million indirectly (UNDP, 2024).

In terms of economic performance, the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation sector is one of the most growing sectors in Uganda having risen from -8.1% in FY 2019/20 to 12% in FY2023/24 and this reflects the general growth in the services sector which grew to 6.4% in FY2023/24 from 5.9% registered in FY2022/23. It is worthwhile arguing that integrating the creative economy into youth skilling initiatives can play a vital role in fostering innovation, promoting cultural diversity, providing economic opportunities, and strengthening social cohesion.

During FY2023/24, Government successfully won hosting rights for the 36th edition of the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2027, under the East Africa joint Pamoja Bid. This has led to a substantial increase in the budget allocations to sports due mainly to the need to support the construction of sports facilities for the tournament as shown below:



Source: Author’s calculations based on the Background to the Budget FY2024/25.

It is worthwhile noting, however, that this growth in allocations to the sector is driven by the infrastructural need to build stadia and training grounds ahead of AFCON 2027. There is minimal investment in sports management, marketing and other software needs of the sector to drive growth, job creation and investment.

4.1.3. Youth Empowerment Programmes and Access to Capital

There is a commitment from Government and Bank of Uganda relax the requirements to ensure increased uptake of the Small Business Recovery Fund (SBRF) to support SME growth. Following Government's decision to revise the requirements for SMEs to access credit under the SBRF by the end of Q3 FY2023/24, Shs15.9 billion had been approved and disbursed to 1,365 beneficiaries through Participating Financial Institutions (PFIs). This has facilitated the creation of 17,444 jobs across sectors of construction (3,159), education (1,872), trade and commerce (12,051) and hospitality (352). In addition, Shs1.2 billion had been recovered by December 2023, while the total number of pipeline projects approved for financing stood at Shs5 billion (MOFPED, 2024).¹

In addition, government has established and continued capitalization of the following Youth Empowerment Programs (YEPs).

Table 3: Youth Employment Programs in Uganda

PROGRAMME NAME	STARTED	ENDED	OBJECTIVE	TARGET GROUP	STATUS ON IMPLEMENTATION	IMPLEMENTING ENTITY(IES)
Parish Development Model (PDM)	2021	Ongoing	Boost household income and improve Ugandans' quality of life by transforming subsistence households (on- and off-farm, rural and urban) into the money economy	Women (30%), youth (30%), PWDs (10%), older people (10%), and men / the general population (20%)	As of March 2024, Shs1,094.5billion had been absorbed by 1,083,097 beneficiaries.	Ministry of Local Government
Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP)	2014	Ongoing	Improve the income structures of the country's unemployed and under-privileged youth in all districts	Unemployed and poor youth aged 18-30	started in FY 2013/14 with an approved budget of: UGX. 347.572bn, out of which UGX 241.45bn was released by FY2023/24. UGX 185.306bn of this disbursed to a total of 23,315 projects, benefiting 265,237 young people (143,508 male and 265,237 female). Cumulatively, UGX 40.520bn has been recovered	The MoGLSD, local governments, and Kampala Capital City Authority
Presidential Initiative on Skilling the Girl Child	2017	Ongoing	Girls between the age of 17 to 35 years	Providing young girls with hands-on skills that will enable them to create jobs and generate wealth		State House and Office of the President

¹ Background to the Budget FY2024/25 accessed on <https://budget.finance.go.ug/sites/default/files/National%20Budget%20docs/BACKGROUND%20TO%20THE%20BUDGET%20FY%202024-25.pdf>

Youth Apprenticeship Programme	2013	Ongoing	Improve the employability and skills of unemployed youth by providing opportunities to work (via volunteering) with micro and small-scale businesses	Fresh graduates and Unemployed youth	N/A	Uganda Investment Authority (UIA), Vantage Communications Limited (VCL), the Directorate of Industrial Research, and the MoES
The Uganda Youth Venture Capital Fund	2013	Ongoing	Provide venture capital debt financing to viable projects proposed by young entrepreneurs and enable youth to benefit from associated mentoring services from participating banks	All youth eligible	Total capital investment of UGX 25bn (Government of Uganda contributing UGX12.5billion and 12.5bn from the initial three commercial Banks). Total cumulative disbursement by May 2024 was UGX 195,746,335,421 to 56,252 beneficiaries of whom 36.6% were female youth	Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development
Uganda Women Empowerment Programme (UWEP)	2015	Ongoing	Empower women for economic development	Women aged 18-65, survivors of GBV, women with disabilities, women living with HIV/AIDS, women heads of households, and women slum dwellers	UGX 134.215bn, to 20,556 projects, that have benefitted 225,641 women and cumulative recovered UGX 35.667bn.	MOGLSD, KCCA, District Local Governments
The Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job creation (Emyooga)	2019	Ongoing			Total investment of Shs 480 billion of which a total of Shs 268 billion has been disbursed to 6,810 Emyooga SACCOs. The beneficiaries have been able to save Shs 85 billion to further grow their SACCO funds. As a result, 607,636 individuals across the country have benefitted from the Emyooga funds, and Shs 80.28 billion has been recovered from the first-round beneficiaries	Office of the President and Microfinance Support Centre (MSC).

Source: Author's computations from various sources.

Interviews with youth, youth leaders and stakeholders indicate that there is a deep-felt appreciation to government for initiating the Youth Empowerment Programmes. The study however notes that there are program-related implementation gaps which are mainly: design gaps, coordination gaps, and poor monitoring and evaluation frameworks and follow-ups to ensure programs are implemented in accordance with their initial design. One member of the District Youth Council opined thus:

There are also challenges in term of the timely release of funds, especially for those programs that involve granting beneficiaries access to financing, and failure to adhere to the originally designed selection criteria- DYC member in FGD iii.

Another Key Informant Interview (KII) participant intimated that whereas government has come up with various programs to provide capital to young people, various challenges still abound:

The government programs face several implementation challenges, such as the delayed release of program funds to beneficiaries, inadequate preparation of selected beneficiaries before program implementation, favoritism/nepotism in the selection of beneficiaries, and the misuse of program funds by both beneficiaries and some program implementers.

It is worthwhile appreciating that these gaps affect the effectiveness and efficiency of the programmes and in turn, their intended objectives. They need to be quickly addressed to ensure the programs achieve their desired targets.

4.2. EDUCATION THAT DRIVES GROWTH

There is increasing recognition by the government of Uganda, Civil Society Organizations, thinktanks and Development Partners that the education sector is one of the key drivers to spur long term economic development in Uganda. This is because quality education not only empowers individuals and communities but also lays the foundation for a skilled workforce that can contribute to the country's growth and prosperity hence Uganda's policy focus on Human Capital Development (HCD) in National Development Plan III. The 2021/26 National Youth Manifesto avers that through investment in quality, relevant and affordable education, Uganda can create a more equitable society where all individuals can reach their full potential and contribute to the country's development.

4.2.1. Government Investment in Access to Education

In FY2024/25, the allocation to education is 8% of the total budget. The 5.85 trillion shillings allocation to education represents a 5.2% from the 5.56 trillion shillings that was given in FY2023/24. This is commendable.



Photo 6: H.E President Museveni inspected the stalls of exhibitors at the National Youth Business Forum 2023 at Kololo Independence grounds. (Courtesy of @UPFYA media team)

Table 4: Government funding to education FY2024/25

FY2024/25 FUNDING TO THE CRITICAL EDUCATION PRIORITIES	
i.	UGX 4bn towards grant aiding of 38 primary schools.
ii.	UGX. 11.28bn for grant aiding 46 Secondary Schools.
iii.	UGX 14.3bn towards renovation and expansion of facilities in 36 Secondary schools.
iv.	UGX 27.52bn towards the Higher Education Students Financing Board for a new cohort of about 1,200 students for FY2024 /25 and to support the about 3,500 continuing students.
v.	UGX 4.9bn for procurement of instructional materials for Lower Secondary Curriculum for 8 core subjects of S.1 and 2.
vi.	UGX 362bn for the construction of 60 seed schools in sub-counties without secondary schools and the expansion of 61 existing government secondary schools
vii.	UGX 28.43bn towards TVET Trainers' Research and Innovation for Training
viii.	UGX 48bn for the National Council of Sports to support federations international competitions.

4.2.2. Progress in fulfilling Youth Demands in the education sector

The table below gives an update on government action towards fulfilling Youth Demands set out in the 2021/26 National Youth Manifesto:

Table 5: Assessment of NYM demands on education

DEMAND IN THE 2021-26 NATIONAL YOUTH MANIFESTO	GOVERNMENT ACTION SO FAR
The Ministry of Education and Sports should adopt a comprehensive School Feeding Policy to provide free meals to learners to enhance adequate learning.	Consultations for the National School Feeding Policy have been completed and it should be adopted soon.
The Ministry of Education and Sports should adopt and implement a Menstrual Health Policy for Girls in Primary and Secondary School; including provisions for providing free sanitary pads to all deserving girls.	A total of 404 senior male and female teachers were mentored focusing on the provision of Adolescent and Youth Friendly Responsive Services. The senior male and female teachers from districts such as Kamuli, Luuka, Buyende, and Butaleja gained enhanced knowledge & skills in Adolescent & Youth Friendly Health Services.

The Ministry of Education and Sports together with the Directorate of Industrial Trainings should popularise the free skills training opportunities available through UPPET and BTNET institutions.	The TVET Policy was developed, approved and is being implemented.
The Ministry of Education and Sports should adopt and implement a schools ICT policy through which each student at secondary school level should receive a free laptop.	Ministry of Education and Sports developed the Digital Agenda. Provision of free laptops not yet achieved.
The ministry should also increase a share for enrolment of students with disabilities in the public Universities through the National Disability Scheme to promote access to equitable education.	No information available.

4.2.3. Recommendations

Uganda's per capita public education spending has been consistently low in recent decades, falling below international benchmarks and other East African countries.

Table 6: Uganda's investment in education vis a vis international commitments

What we have observed from our analysis	Government spending on education has consistently missed international targets, below the 5% of GDP Incheon Declaration and the 20% of Total Budget Dakar declaration.
	At 2.2% of GDP, the level of spending on Education in Uganda falls short of 5% of GDP of Total Budget Dakar declaration.
	Though per capita spending on Education has been steadily increasing, it still remains very low at USD50.50 per child per year.
	Education spending falls behind governance, security, and infrastructure in terms of prioritization.

To address this, we recommend a phased increase in public spending on education in the national budgets for NDPIV to achieve its goals while keeping pace with population growth as households still take a disproportionate share of the burden of education financing. By end of NDPIV, education spending should have hit 5% of GDP in line with the Incheon Declaration and 20% of total budget expenditure in line with the Dakar Declaration commitments.

4.3. CLIMATE CHANGE AND YOUTH FRIENDLY CITIES

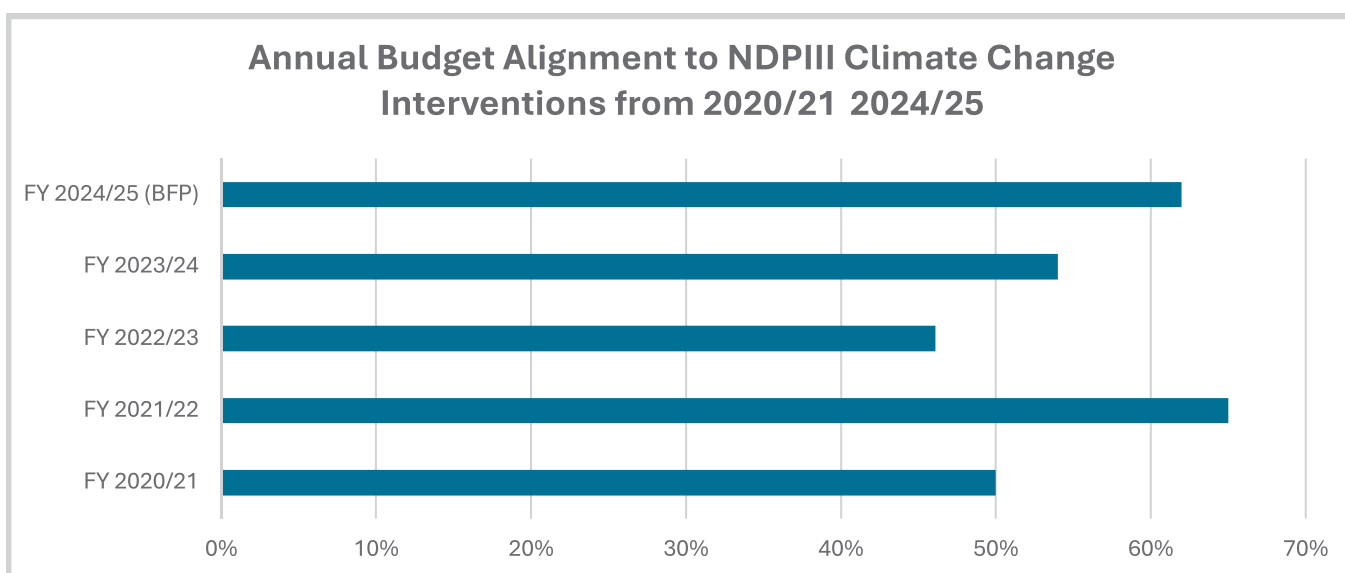
This analysis will be divided into i) climate change and ii) policy impetus towards youth friendly cities.

4.3.1. Climate change

Uganda increased its ambition to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from 22 percent to 24.7 percent in the new climate change plans i.e. the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in fulfillment of the aspiration of the Paris Agreement. According to the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative 2021, Uganda globally ranks 13th in climate change vulnerability and number 160 in terms of preparedness. The NDP III (2020/21-2024/25) views climate change as a major development challenge and thus integrates climate interventions across all its twenty programs.

It is therefore crucial that there is effective alignment of national budgets with these climate commitments in order to foster resilience and sustainable development, particularly for vulnerable groups. According to a 2024 study by ACODE and the National Planning Authority shows a inconsistencies in terms of alignment of the national budgets to climate change commitments set out in NDPIII as shown below:

Figure 1 Annual Budget alignments to Climate Change FY2020/21-FY2024/25



Source: ACODE and NPA Report.

A further analysis shows that NDPIII Programmes with a strong component of climate change mitigation like Integrated Transport Infrastructure Services are more likely to score higher in compliance than those programmes which are oriented towards climate change adaptation like manufacturing as shown in the table below:

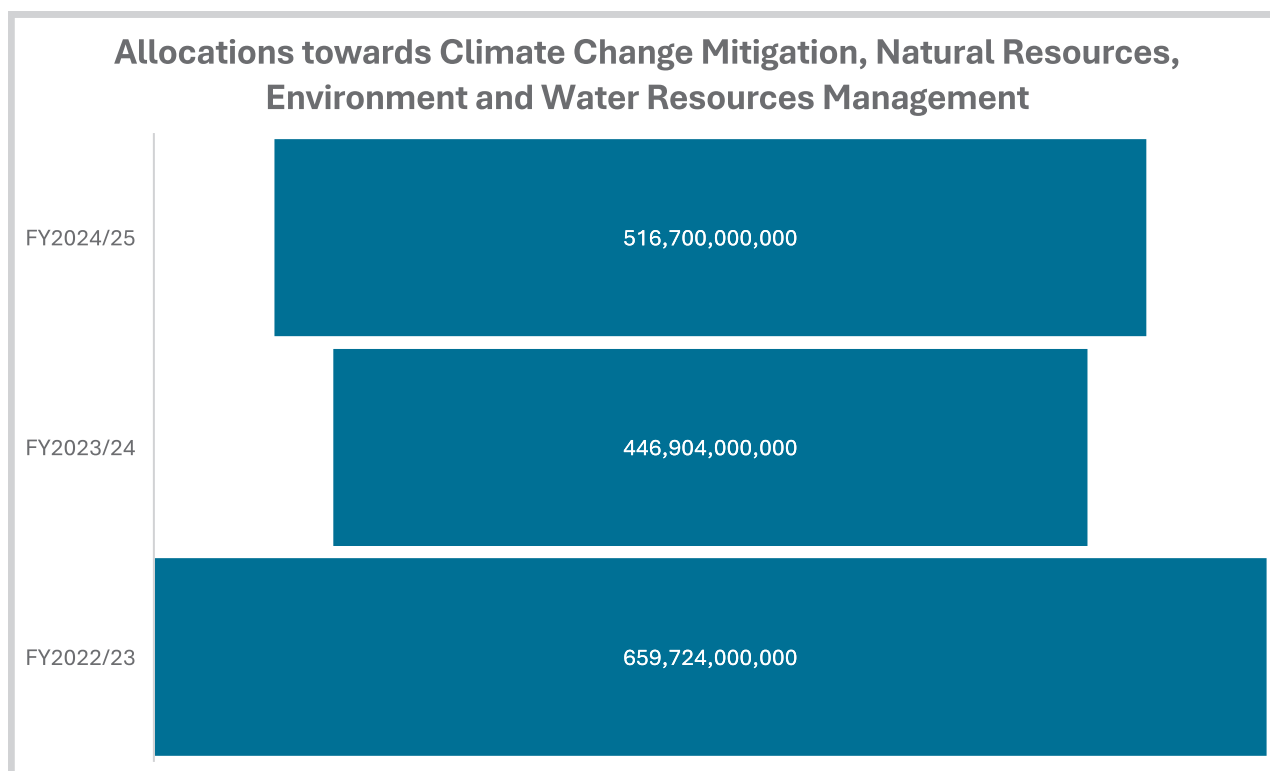
Table 7 Summary of Climate Change Assessment Results

S/N	PROGRAMME	FY 2023/24	FY 2024/25 (BFP)
1.	Private Sector Development	60%	35%
2.	Development Plan Implementation	66.7%	80%
3.	Regional Development	69.2%	67.7%
4.	Agro-Industrialization	52.6%	60%
5.	Sustainable Urban Development	34.1%	31.1%
6.	Manufacturing	34%	33.3%
7.	Tourism Development	50%	60%
8.	Sustainable Energy Development	33.3%	80%
9.	Integrated Transport Infrastructure Services	71.1%	78%
10.	Sustainable Development of Petroleum Resources	93.3%	83.3%
11.	Mineral Development	33.3%	80%
12.	Natural Resources, Environment, Land and Water Management	53.3%	54.7%
13.	Human Capital Development	56.4%	66.7%
Average score		54%	62%

Source: ACODE and NPA (2024)

In terms of financing, Shs 516.78 billion was allocated towards climate change mitigation, natural resources, environment and water resources management in FY 2024/25. Analysed with alignment to climate change commitments, it shows a big relationship between increased funding and increased alignment to the NDPIII targets as shown in the chart below:

Figure 2: Analysis of budget allocations to climate change



Source: Author's calculations based on NBFPs and Background to the Budget Papers.

In addition, government has committed to

- i) restoration of 42,450 hectares of degraded wetlands;
- ii) demarcate a 750-kilometre boundary with concrete pillars along the following wetlands Kibimba, Tochi, Sezibwa, Mayanja, Muzizi, Awoja, Mpologoma, Ishasha, Kandekye-Ruhorobero, Nchwera, Chambura, Kiruruma and Naigombwa;
- iii) procurement and distribution of 15 million seedlings of assorted tree species to individual farmers in several districts, as well as to refugee-hosting communities in the Albertine region and in West Nile, as well as individual farmers in FY2024/25.

We commend government for its steadfastness in integrating climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies as recommended by the 2021/26 National Youth Manifesto. We also make the following recommendations:

- There is need to increase awareness on government programs that support resilience and mitigation to climate shocks. For example, the Uganda Agricultural Insurance Scheme (UAIS) provides insurance coverage to roughly 150,000 farmers reaching less than 2% of estimated 8 million people active in the agricultural sector. This safety net can be widened through increased capitalization of the scheme and raising awareness about its existence and how young people can benefit from its services.
- We also need advocate for adherence to the provisions of the 2015 Public Finance Management Act on the Contingency Fund. It is concerning that the budget for the Contingency Fund for FY 2024/25 is only UGX 169 billion against the required UGX 263.7 billion, which is 0.5% of the previous financial year. To ensure better response to natural and man made disasters, it is crucial that proper allocations to the Contingency Fund are made.

4.3.2. Youth Friendly Cities.

The 3rd National Development Plan (NDP III) has among its 21 programmes the Sustainable Urbanisation and Housing Programme whose aim is to attain inclusive, productive and livable urban areas through an urbanization process that fosters green growth, resilience and contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No.11 which intends to promote sustainable cities and communities.

The Sustainable Urbanization and Housing Programme has two main objectives which are i) promotion of Green and Inclusive Cities and Urban Areas and ii) promotion of Urban Housing Market and Providing Decent Housing for All.

One of the key outcomes of the 28th Conference of Parties (COP28) was the elevation of Cities as key partners in climate action: The final COP28 Agreement reflected growing understanding of cities as critical climate battlegrounds and partners for action with a fitting recognition since 70 percent of Carbon dioxide emissions come from urban areas.

The National Youth Manifesto recommended a 24 hour economy that is propelled by cities and urban centres. The 2024 Uganda census preliminary results showed that the total day time population within the eleven cities of Uganda stood at 5.5 million persons with Kampala recording the highest daytime population at 2.5 million persons, followed by Arua City at 440,540 persons as shown below:

Table 8 National Census figures on day time populations

Cities	Visitors (Day)	Census night	Daytime
Kampala	627,340	1,875,834	2,503,174
Mbarara	63,318	261,656	324,974
Gulu	91,165	232,723	323,888
Masaka	42,976	285,509	328,485
Hoima	48,633	141,442	190,075
Lira	57,620	246,437	304,057
Mbale	81,685	289,941	371,626
Jinja	70,748	292,386	363,134
Arua	59,716	380,824	440,540
Fort Portal	41,292	135,702	176,994
Soroti	86,924	133,774	220,698
Uganda	1,271,417	4,276,228	5,547,645

Source: Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2024)

The assumption for the day time population is that on average, over 1.2 million people go to urban areas for work and business. If the cities are designed for 24 hour economic model, that would translate into an additional 1.2 million jobs created in only the 11 cities. It is therefore our recommendation that the Urban Development Policy by the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development mainstreams proposals for a 24 hour economy, sets incentives for investors and creates the requisite security and governance infrastructure needed for a 24 hour economy.

According to FY2025/26 Background to the Budget, over 6.8 million people reside in slums in urban areas in Uganda and most of them are young people. This denies them their basic rights to decent and secure housing, safe environments as most of them especially young women are exposed to harassment while others are exposed to a life of crime among other vagaries of life. We therefore recommend that Ministry of Housing and Urban Development fasttracks the Urban Development Policy to mainstream infrastructure development in urban areas.

4.4. ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE

In FY2024/25, Government allocated UGX 2.9 trillion or 4.1% of the National Budget towards health. This allocation, which is far below the 15% allocation recommended by the Abuja Declaration, will focus on high-impact interventions for the prevention, control, and elimination of communicable and noncommunicable diseases; the provision of high-quality sexual and reproductive health rights and services; the strengthening of the national ambulance system; the provision of strong primary healthcare and community health services; the construction and rehabilitation of health infrastructure and the provision of medical equipment; and increasing the availability of a skilled health workforce.



Photo 7: Members of Parliament and SRHR Alliance on a field monitoring visit on the issues of SRHR in Terego district. (Courtesy of ©UPFYA media team)

4.4.1. Youth focused programmes and policies in Health

In FY 2023/24, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBoS) finalized the development process the Gender Based Violence (GBV), Sexual and Reproductive Human Rights (SRHR), Demographic Dividend (DD) Indicator. This is critical for measuring of youth focused healthcare provision and also human capital development with a view to harnessing the Demographic Dividend (DD).

One of the areas of focus for the Ministry of Health in FY2024/25 is provision of high quality sexual and reproductive health and rights services in order to achieve optimal health for the adolescents, mothers, new born and infants. This is progress in the right direction in as far as integration of SRHR issues is concerned in Uganda

The health sub programme focus on establishing a National e-Health Infrastructure (digitization) to facilitate service delivery through Telemedicine, eHealth Management Information System, Community Health Information System, including tracking of medicines and health workers' performance is a welcome development.

4.4.2. Funding towards youth priority issues per the National Youth Manifesto

On mental health, Butabika hospital remains greatly unfunded or underfunded as follows:

Table 9: Funding gaps for Butabika Hospital

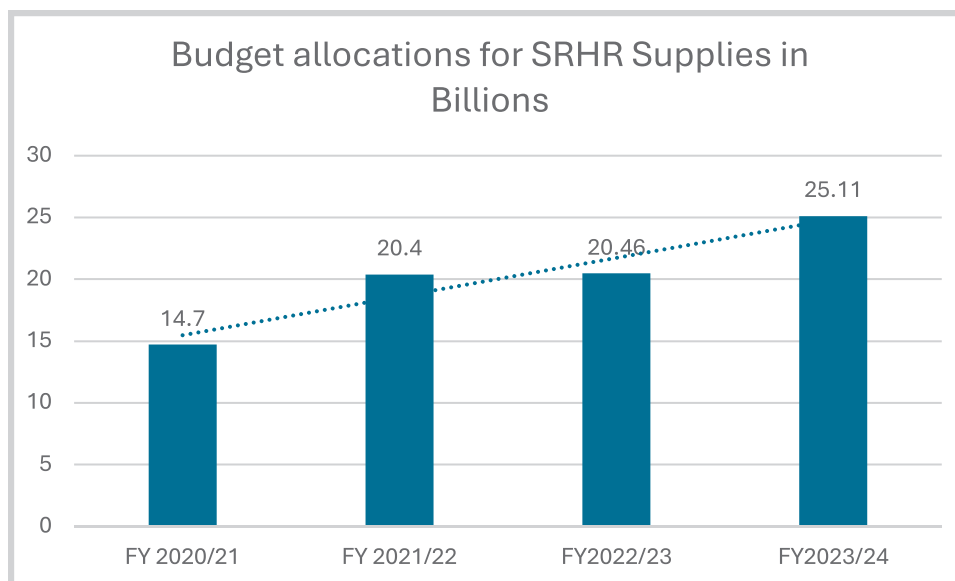
Priority	Total Required	Total provided	Funding Gap	Effect
Staff recruitment	24.43 billion	9.58 billion	14.9 billion	Of the approved e 823 staffing positions, only 321 are filled leaving the facility overwhelmed
Food provision	4.7 billion	2.439 billion	2.2 billion	The hospital has a bed capacity of 550 but averages 1200 daily inpatient admissions.
Medicines and supplies	1 billion	0	1 billion	With increasing numbers of patients, service delivery is grossly affected.

Source: Parliament of Uganda (2024).

This underfunding means that the government has not done well on the proposal by the youth for the Ministry of Health to “enhance mental health care services for young people within regional referral health care systems/networks through target financing by 2 percent to provide for prevention and rehabilitation programs or services”.

On youth access to SRHR commodities and services, products worth UGX 9.2bn of the UGX 25.11 billion were spent on reproductive health items, family planning and safe delivery kits MAMA KITS and distributed to all health facilities by the first quarter of FY2023/24. We note an increase in budget allocations to SRHR supplies as shown in the figure below:

Figure 3: Funding allocations towards SRHR Commodities



Source: Author’s computations based on Annual Budget Performance Reports.

With the closure of the Uganda Reproductive Maternal and Child Health Services Improvement Project-(URMCHIP), funding for SRHR is likely to be affected. We recommend:

- Ministry of Health engages more Development Partners (DPs) to provide off budget support towards SRHR service provision, awareness raising and wage requirements of the health workforce.
- It is our considered view that output level interventions and activities are included for better tracking of progress of service delivery. our analysis has revealed that SRHR is only talked about at outcome and indicator level in the Human Capital Development (HCD) programme, National Budget Framework Papers and the Ministerial Policy Statements.

4.5. YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 target 16.7 aims to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision making at all levels. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights under Article 21 states that ‘Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his/her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives’. This is also substantiated by Article 8(2) of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) which obligates state parties to “adopt legislative and administrative measures to guarantee the rights of women, ethnic minorities, migrants, people with disabilities, refugees and displaced persons and other marginalized and vulnerable social groups”. Article 1 of the 1995 Constitution states that power belongs to the people and the constitution of Uganda has several provisions on political participation by all.

4.5.1. Amendment of the National Youth Council Act

The National Youth Council Act was amended as part of the Rationalization of Public Expenditure (RAPEX) policy which is intended to inter alia “restructure and re-organise agencies and departments of Government by eliminating bloated structures and functional ambiguities in Government agencies and departments”. In the amendment, the NYC Secretariat was folded into Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MOGLSD).

According to the Certificate of Financial Implications (CFI) made in accordance with Section 76 of the 2015 Public Finance Management (PFM) Act, the justification for the merger is as follows:

Table 10: Savings Breakdown for the NYC merger

CATEGORY	FY 2024/25	FY 2025/26
Saving	0.801	0.801
o/w Wage	0.556	0.556
o/w NWR	0.245	0.245
Board Expenses		
Costs		
Number of staff affected	05	
o/w Terminal benefits	0.059	
Net savings	0.742	0.801

Source: Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (2024).

It should however be appreciated that the youth councils are still operational and youth participation through these structures goes on unabated.

4.5.2. Implementation of National Youth Manifesto Demands

The 2021-2026 National Youth Manifesto made demands to amend the National Youth Council Act to i) provide for Two (2) Youth MPs per region, one of which must be female; ii) abolish the Youth Electoral College System and have Youth MPs elected through adult suffrage; iii) provide for a clear electoral structure for representatives of Youth with Disabilities from the village to the national Level and iv) appoint a Cabinet Minister for Youth Affairs. These proposals, apart from the one on election of youth with disabilities, have been overtaken by events and appear untenable given the current political context. For instance, the government policy on rationalization, cutting public expenditure and the public outcry for reduced in wage share of the national budget mean that any proposal to increase the size of government is not welcome.

It is therefore the considered view of the consultant that the next National Youth Manifesto sets realistic and measurable demands on youth political participation such as a functional National Youth Council that provides strategic and political leadership to youth among others.

4.5.3. Proposed Electoral Reforms

The 2021-26 National Youth Manifesto called for electoral reforms through amendments to the Presidential Elections Act, Parliamentary Elections Act and the National Youth Council Act among others. These reforms were envisioned to increase youth participation in decision making through among others reducing the cost of politics and regulation of campaign financing.

The youth demand was that these proposals are initiated by government, mainly the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. At the time of writing this report, little or no effort had been shown by the government.

However, there is a raft of constitutional proposals by a Private Member- Nyendo Mukungwe Legislator Hon Mathias Mpuuga Nsaaba to amend the constitution, the Presidential Elections Act and Parliamentary Elections Act. These proposals include introduction of the concept of proportional representation in Uganda's body politick which can build on the various affirmative action policies already introduced to further increase youth participation in decision making by eliminating the First Past the Post (FPTP) method currently used.

4.5.4. Recommendations.



Photo 8: Members of Parliament attending the Annual State of the youth report 2024 validation meeting at Golden Tulip Hotel. (Courtesy of ©UPFYA media team)

- i. UPFYA should undertake a review of the electoral reform bills sponsored by the Hon Mathias Mpuuga and identify areas of interest to the youth of Uganda as far as youth participation in decision making is concerned.
- ii. With the folding of the NYC Secretariat, the National Youth Council should consider realigning its priorities and modus operandi. To survive and be relevant in this fast changing world, the NYC should take on technical roles to enable it provide strategic and political leadership to the youth of Uganda. One such role could be NYC transitioning into a one stop centre for youth related information, policies, regulation, government programs and budget appropriation.
- iii. There is need to increase youth participation in the coming 2025-26 General elections as both voters and candidates. To begin with, there should be robust mobilization to get youth into the NYC elections as par the Electoral Commission Roadmap right from the grassroots as opposed to focusing on national positions which leaves a lot of unopposed candidates.
- iv. Government should invest in setting up a pad bank for girls. Young women continue to suffer with hygiene challenges, especially during their menstruation period. A pad bank should be provided together with disposal management measures to facilitate clean sanitation and good health outcomes. Government should also wave tax on sanitary pads and make them accessible for girls in schools.
- v. Members of parliament need to be self-educated about issues of young women's rights, sexual reproductive health and gender intersectionality to ably defend discussions on the floor of parliament and design interventions from an informed point of view.

- vi. Initiatives by non state actors to get youth into public participation such as the National Youth Parliament, Uganda Democracy Academy among others should be supported. This is because opportunities for youth to engage in governance and participate in political and decision-making processes depend largely on the political, socio-economic, and cultural contexts where social norms in many parts of the world result in multiple forms of discrimination against young women. Therefore, any initiative that supports participation at whatever level goes a long way in enabling the entry of young into political spaces.
- vii. With the incoming 2025/26 General Elections, it is recommended that UPFYA should mobilize partners to encourage young people to offer themselves for leadership at the local government level. Research has shown a fixation with national level positions leaving the Local Council posts uncompetitive. In order to create a Uganda that works for and serves everyone, youth should take keen interest in the running of local government and use the platform to rise to national politics.

5. CONCLUSION

As the recently National Census has shown, Uganda is greatly blessed with the gift of its youth. This gift, if well utilized, can spur Uganda to a first world country because youth are a very creative force, a dynamic source of innovations, and they have undoubtedly, throughout history, participated, contributed, and even catalyzed important changes in political systems, power-sharing dynamics and economic opportunities. History has shown that where policies and programmes have been developed to respond to a youth bulge, countries have reaped a demographic dividend as is the case with the famous Asian Tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan) and Ireland which has come to be known as the Celtic Tiger. Research shows that the contribution of the youth bulge to these countries' near miraculous economic transformation was averaging 25%.

Fate has presented Uganda with a similar chance and turning Uganda from a peasant to a developed nation as per the aspirations of Vision 2040 rests greatly on how well the creative potential, energy, dynamism and skills of its young population are harnessed. This requires out of the box policies, laws, programs and interventions. Uganda will have to reduce its dependency on aid, suppress debt and redirect the money to high tech skilling, make government more efficient and fit for purpose by stopping leakages and duplicity of mandate and channel the resources to creating high wage jobs that harness technology, increase ability to save, pay tax and other ripple effects in the ecosystem. The youth are the present and future of this nation and government as well as private sector interventions need to be designed to harness this present and future.

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