

Youth Line Forum (YLF) Strategic Plan 2025–2030

List of Acronyms

AGYW	Adolescent Girls and Young Women
AU	African Union
DD	Demographic Dividend
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEDI	Gender, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
GNI	Gross National Income
MOGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
NDP	National Development Plan
NYM	National Youth Manifesto
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PIAP	Programme Implementation Action Plan
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIGs	Special Interest Groups
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
YCED	Youth Coalition on Electoral Democracy
YLF	Youth Line Forum

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Youth Line Forum (YLF) is a youth-led, non-profit organization based in Kampala, Uganda. Youth Line Forum (YLF) is dedicated to empowering young people to become transformative leaders in their communities. Established in 2014, YLF operates with the vision of fostering a generation of inspired and empowered youth who actively contribute to community development.

1.1 Mission and Focus Areas

YLF recognizes the critical role of youth in societal advancement and focuses on:

- **Youth Empowerment** through equipping young people with economic, social and life skills to lead responsible and dignified lives.
- **Civic Engagement** by providing platforms for youth to participate in governance, hold leaders accountable and address community challenges.

- **Human Rights and Education** through promoting awareness and advocacy for human rights and educational opportunities.
- **Climate Change Awareness:** Engaging youth in environmental sustainability initiatives.

2.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

This situational analysis takes the form of a landscape analysis to understand the i) key national, regional and development priorities unto which this strategic plan is anchored; ii) donor priorities and shifts in the aid industry globally and nationally as well as iii) demographic analysis to support this strategy's imperative to enable Uganda achieve a demographic dividend.

2.1 Landscape Analysis

The process for landscape assessment was designed by the Youth Line Forum (YLF) Strategy Steering Committee together with youth leaders from universities and slum communities with the consultant acting as a facilitator for the process. Inputs for the landscape analysis focused on evaluation data from the previous strategy and a secondary review of existing data sources on key youth facing indicators and targets in the AU Agenda 2063, Sustainable Development Goals, Vision 2040 and the 4th National Development Plan (NDP). The analysis also identified key government priorities for each of the outcomes using the Programme Implementation Action Plans (PIAPs), Sustainable Development Goals monitoring information and other relevant policy documents. The patterns and trends emerging from the data sources helped in identifying key gaps and ultimately providing information to guide the selection of the outcome areas for the new strategy in the context of economic, political, social, religious and environmental factors existing within the country.

2.2 Donor and Aid landscape Analysis

Uganda is heavily dependent on international development assistance, which is threatened by factors like corruption and the response of development partners such as the World Bank, United States and others to the passage of the Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA) in 2023. At a global level, donor funding is also being diverted towards the war in Ukraine and Gaza and this puts additional strain on the government of Uganda's ability to provide critical services.

The adoption of aid austerity measures and nationalistic policies by countries in the global north also critically cripples the aid sector further suffocating the funding space for Non Governmental Organizations. It should be noted that at the time of writing this strategy, the United States, which is the biggest donor in nominal terms, had terminated 90% contracts of USG funded projects. The United Kingdom had announced that it was cutting Official Development Assistance from 0.5% of GDP to 0.3% in 2027 in order to increase its defense spending to 3.5% while the Kingdom of Netherlands had announced cutting aid to International Organizations to USD 400 million from USD 1.5 billion in 2026 with further measures in 2028 including stopping operations in the Great Lakes Region and a drop in the ODA/GNI from 0.69 in 2024 to 0.44 in 2029.

2.3 Demographic Landscape Analysis

Uganda's population is characterized by a 2.9% growth rate and a total fertility rate with an average of 5.8 children per woman and that is among the highest globally. According to the 2024 National Housing and Population Census, Uganda's population stands at 45.9 million people with a significant percentage below the age of 18.

Broken down by age group, Ugandans in the age bracket of 18-30 years are 10,769,151 or 23.5% of the total population while those aged 15-24 years account for 21.2% of the population or 9,751,311 people. This makes Uganda a very

youthful country with projections of retaining a youthful population up to the year 2100.

3.0 Strategic Goals and Objectives (2025–2030)

In the period 2025-2030, YLF will focus on three Thematic Areas. This is intended to provide greater clarity on the programmatic focus of the organization while also positioning it to serve our clients better. These Thematic Areas and Initiatives are detailed below:

3.1 Civic Engagement

Strategic Goal: Strengthen youth participation and leadership in democratic processes and community governance.

3.1.1 Objectives

- Equip youth with civic knowledge and leadership skills in the areas of human rights, electoral processes and advocacy.
- Create platforms for youth voices in policy dialogue at local, national and international levels.
- Promote peaceful and informed youth engagement in elections and governance.

3.1.2 Key Initiatives

To realize the strategic goal of strengthening youth participation and leadership in democratic processes and community governance, YLF will undertake the following interventions:

- **Digital Democracy Training:** Conduct trainings and bootcamps on digital literacy, media analysis and peacebuilding such as pre-election bootcamps so young people become “gatekeepers of truth” and agents of peaceful civic dialogue.

- **Intergenerational Dialogue Forums:** Organize community town-halls and “Fireplace Conversations” where youth discuss issues with political and technical leaders.
- **Youth Policy Forums:** Reinstate YLF’s position as a founding member of the “National Youth Parliament” and support the annual organization of the National Youth Parliament to draft policy briefs on topics like education, governance and rights. This builds confidence and ensures youth input in decision-making.
- **Public Interest Litigation** by establishing and running a legal aid clinic to support promotion of human rights in Uganda and offer legal support to student activists and human rights defenders.
- **Voter Mobilization Campaigns:** Launch nationwide “Ready2Vote” social-media and community campaigns in election years to register and educate young voters about their civic rights. YLF will also renew its membership in the Youth Coalition on Electoral Democracy (YCED), participate in the development of the National Youth Manifesto (2025-2030) and also support the annual assessments of government investment in young people through the annual State of the Youth Reports.
- **Student and Youth Activism:** Continue offering support to university and student chapters through solidarity platforms to build a vibrant student movement. YLF will also champion the Young Leaders’ Academy to train and equip young people into leadership.

3.2 Climate Change and Environment

Strategic Goal: Empower youth to lead climate adaptation and mitigation efforts for resilient communities.

3.2.1 Objectives

- Build the capacity of young people and their associations in climate science, advocacy and local green entrepreneurship.
- Support youth-led environmental projects that reduce carbon footprints and enhance resilience.
- Advocate for youth inclusion in national climate policies and international lobby and advocacy forums.

3.2.2 Key Initiatives

To achieve the strategic goal of empowering youth to lead climate adaptation and mitigation efforts for resilient communities, Youth Line Forum will undertake the following interventions:

- **Green Ambassadors Program:** Partner with schools/universities to train “Climate Ambassadors” among students, focusing on sustainability, renewable energy and ecosystem restoration. Youth Line Forum will mobilize young people from flood-prone zones in Uganda’s slum areas to demand accountability from polluters and inclusion in environmental policy.
- **Community Action Projects:** Support micro-grants for youth groups to implement local projects (tree planting, waste recycling, clean energy demos). YLF will engage in hands-on initiatives that combine environmental cleanup with education.
- **City Green Initiatives:** Work with partners on urban greening such as youth-led community gardens, urban tree planting on World Environment Day to ensure linking local action to city resilience plans.
- **“Youth for Policy” Workshops:** Convene workshops where youth learn to analyze and influence Uganda’s Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) on climate. Participation in global events like COP will be pursued to amplify activism for stricter plastic bans, climate education in schools and “climate hubs” for training.

- **Gender-Responsive Adaptation:** Ensure all climate programs address the needs of young women and marginalized groups. Evidence shows young women in Uganda are disproportionately affected by climate impacts but underrepresented in decision-making . YLF will partner with women's climate networks to center female youth leadership.

3.3 Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

Strategic Goal: Improve youth access to comprehensive SRH information and services while reducing stigma around sexual health.

3.3.1 Objectives

- Increase youth knowledge and demand for SRH services through peer education and community outreach.
- Strengthen youth-friendly health service provision and policy for adolescents.
- Combat stigma and harmful norms mainly in the areas of child marriage and contraception through education.

3.3.2 Key Initiatives

To realize the strategic goal of improving youth access to comprehensive SRH information and services while reducing stigma around sexual health, YLF will design programs with the following interventions:

- **Peer Education Networks:** Train and deploy youth peer educators in schools, universities and community groups to deliver age-appropriate SRH information with priority focus on sexual consent, contraception and HIV prevention in a safe and respectful manner. Programs will focus on addressing issues such as early marriage and coercion highlighted in national data.

- **Youth-Friendly Clinics:** Partner with health centers to designate “Youth Clinic Days” where services are tailored to young people’s needs (confidentiality, affordable care). YLF will facilitate trainings for health workers to respect youth privacy and autonomy. YLF will also step up advocacy for establishment of youth friendly centres in all health centres in Uganda.
- **Community Dialogues on SRH:** Convene discussion forums with parents, religious and community leaders to address taboos and myths around sexual health and promote open communication about SRHR.
- **Advocacy and Policy Engagement:** Work with national SRH advocates such as Reproductive Health Uganda to push for youth and gender-sensitive policy changes. Focus will be on comprehensive sex education in schools and lowering barriers to contraception. YLF and partners can form a youth SRH coalition to present unified policy recommendations to the Ministry of Health and Parliament.

4.0 Relevance of the YLF Strategy and Alignment with key National and Global Frameworks.

The YLF 2025-2030 Strategy is clearly aligned at indicator and outcome levels with the fourth National Development Plan (NDPIV) and the United Nations Agenda 2030 or the Sustainable Development Goals as shown below:

Strategic Objectives	Alignment to specific SDGs	Alignment to NDPIV outcomes
Strengthen youth participation and leadership in democratic processes and community governance	 	Strengthened citizen participation in governance and accountability processes

Empower youth to lead climate adaptation and mitigation efforts for resilient communities.	   	Enhanced resilience to climate change impacts through adaptation and mitigation strategies.
Improve youth access to comprehensive SRH information and services while reducing stigma around sexual health.	   	Enhanced access to quality SRHR services to improve health outcomes and harness the demographic dividend

4.1 Positioning and Branding Strategy

Since 2018, there has been no visible leader of the youth civil society space. This has been worsened by the shrinking donor space, lack of trust in youth led CSOs to implement big donor projects and compounded by the transitional nature of youth. During the period of 2025-203, YLF will be positioned as the **leading youth advocacy hub** by articulating a distinctive brand identity.

To achieve this, this strategy will drive a strategic shift in YLF's programming, make it lean and fit for purpose, ensure more clarity on its role and areas of focus and undertake purpose driven a compelling brand narrative around empowerment and

change.¹ The organization will undertake a rebranding exercise to ensure that visual branding (logo, color palette, website design) reflect energy and inclusivity.

To position YLF as a leader in the sector, specific focus will be put on **highlighting its youth-led nature and successes** – for example by featuring alumni of its Young Leaders Academy or stories of youth and youth associations who co-implemented projects with YLF.

YLF will also leverage social media and the digital platforms to personalize and amplify its outreach. It should actively engage on digital platforms popular with Ugandan youth (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp) by regularly posting compelling content: testimonials from young beneficiaries, infographics on civic and health facts, short videos of climate projects, etc. Leveraging hashtags (e.g. #Ready2Stand, #ClimateActionUG, #YouthHealth) can build community. In all communications and partnerships, emphasis will be on transparency, accountability and impact – key values that build trust with donors and youth alike. Collectively, these steps will position YLF as an authentic, relatable brand and the go-to platform for Ugandan youth issues.

4.2 Organization Structure and Organogram

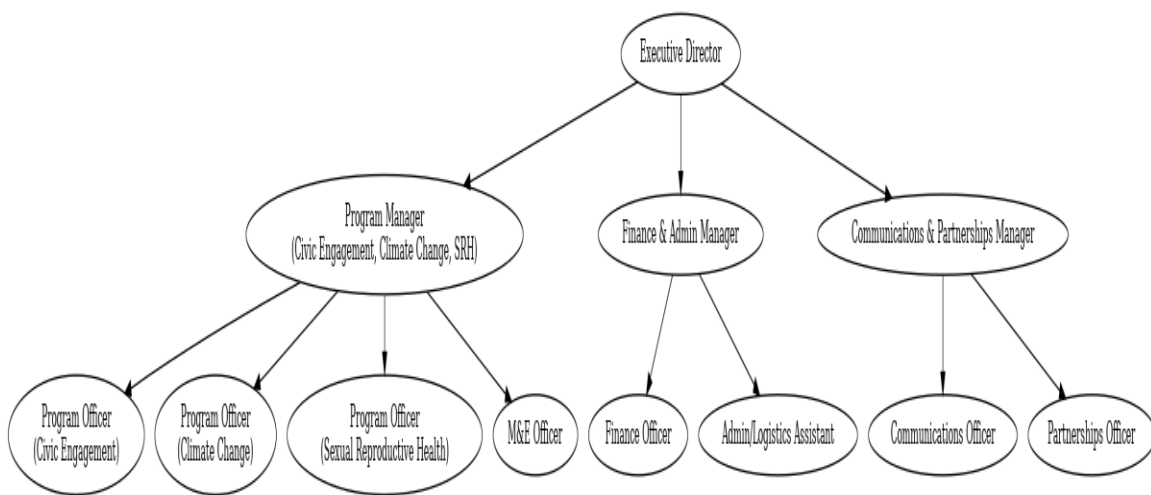
YLF will maintain a lean but effective structure. At the top is the **Board of Directors** (volunteer oversight). Day-to-day operations are led by a **Team Leader**, who reports to the Board.

- **Team Leader:** Coordinates all programmatic work and oversees monitoring/evaluation. Reports to the Board.
 - *Civic Engagement Officer* (leads democratic participation initiatives)
 - *Climate Action Officer* (leads environmental projects)

¹ The consultant recommends a tagline like “Your Voice, Our Future” or “Youth Leading Change” can convey empowerment.

- *SRH Officer* (leads sexual and reproductive health programs)
- **Finance & Admin Coordinator:** Manages budgeting, accounting, HR and compliance. Reports to the Team Leader.
- **Communications & Partnerships Coordinator:** Handles branding, media relations, digital presence, and fundraising outreach. Reports to the Team Leader.

This hierarchy keeps YLF agile and fit for purpose as the program officers focus on delivery, while managers (Programs, Finance, Comms) ensure compliance, coordination and support.



YLF will admit and leverage interns and volunteers to support events, research, programs and outreach, keeping core staff numbers low and costs sustainable while also transferring skills and experience to the interns and volunteers. To operationalize this, YLF will develop a Graduate Internship Program (GRIP) to offer recent university graduates a chance to gain hands-on experience in development work while making a difference. The program, open to individuals passionate about serving the vulnerable, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, will run annually. GRIP aims to build a pool of development professionals and enhance the employability of participants, potentially leading to future entry-level positions.

5.0 External Environment Analysis

This analysis tends more towards achieving organizational health and deviates from the traditional SWOT analysis (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and focusses on external factors in opportunities and threats.

5.1 Opportunities

- **Youth Demographics:** Uganda is one of the youngest countries globally – 75% of the population is under 35. This “youth bulge” means a large constituency of potential members and volunteers. A youthful population creates demand for youth-focused programs and a pool of energy to mobilize.
- **Policy Support:** The 1995 Constitution and National Development Plans emphasize youth empowerment, education, and health. Uganda’s government has a National Youth Policy and has made commitments such as Vision 2040 that intersect with civic education, climate resilience and public health. This offers alignment points for YLF’s advocacy.
- **International Agendas:** Global frameworks (SDGs, Paris Agreement) prioritize inclusive governance (SDG 16), climate action (SDG 13) and health (SDG 3). Donor agencies and UN bodies often fund projects in these areas, providing synergy and legitimacy to YLF’s themes.
- **Funding and Partnerships:** There is growing international investment in youth and climate. For example, the UN Capital Development Fund’s YouthStart program in Uganda partners with banks to finance young entrepreneurs. The Mastercard Foundation runs a large Uganda portfolio supporting youth employment and education. Equally, the increased interest in localization with entities like UNCDF, Mastercard, USAID, EU, International NGOs seeking local NGOs to implement grants. Moreso, private companies in telecom, banking or energy sectors such as MTN, Airtel, Stanbic, Centenary Bank often have CSR funds for community

development. There are also active youth networks and coalitions such as the Youth Coalition on Electoral Democracy (YCED), Uganda Democracy Academy (UDA) among others for potential collaboration.

- **Technology and Media:** Mobile phone penetration and social media use are high among Ugandan youth. Digital tools make it easier and cost effective for YLF to disseminate information, conduct virtual trainings, and engage media. At the same time, the youth-oriented “Gen Z” demographic is passionate about social justice campaigns which YLF can harness.

5.2 Threats

- **Regulatory Restrictions:** Uganda’s NGO Act (2016) imposes strict rules on civil society and states that NGOs must be nonpartisan and **cannot campaign for or against any political party or candidate**. This limits YLF’s advocacy tactics. Proposed amendments of 2024 could further increase oversight with suggestions of banning foreign NGOs from “affecting internal politics” and requiring onerous financial disclosures-failure of which could lead to penalties including deregistration. Compliance will require YLF to maintain meticulous records and frame its civic work carefully.
- **Funding Volatility:** Heavy reliance on external donors is risky. Global economic shocks, shifting political priorities occasioned by donor fatigue for democracy programs and aid cuts due to adoption of nationalistic policies by the Global North could reduce available grants. A competitive funding environment also poses a risk hence calling for a well designed and meticulous fundraising strategy by YLF.
- **Social Barriers:** Deep-seated norms can undermine YLF’s programs. For example, stigma around premarital sex and contraception remains strong in parts of Uganda, limiting youth SRH uptake. Gender inequality (e.g.

barriers facing young women in leadership or land ownership can marginalize half the youth population unless explicitly addressed.

- **Misinformation and Polarization:** Digital platforms are double-edged. The rise of disinformation as seen in recent election cycles can undermine civic education efforts. Similarly, climate change denial or skepticism could fuel resistance not only from donor countries where climate denial is prevalent but also from Ugandans who view climate change as a foreign import.
- **Environmental Risks:** Climate-related disasters (floods, droughts) are not only advocacy points but also obstacles. For instance, severe droughts could disrupt community projects or displace youth populations. YLF will enhance flexibility within programs to adapt to such shocks.

By monitoring these factors, YLF intends to position itself to plan strategically by leveraging opportunities such as aligning a project with new priorities with the fourth National Development Plan (NDP) to attract government buy-in and mitigate threats by ensuring program activities stay within legal advocacy bounds and diversifying funding sources.

6.0 Resource Mobilization and Partnerships

YLF will pursue grants from major youth, democracy, health, and environment funders. Potential partners include:

- **Bilateral Agencies:** USAID (youth leadership, civic engagement); FCDO/UK (governance, SRH); EU (European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights – EIDHR and climate funds); Swedish SIDA (gender/climate).
- **UN Agencies:** UNICEF (youth participation programs); UNDP (good governance and youth entrepreneurship); UNFPA (adolescent sexual health); UN Women (gender & climate initiatives).

- **Foundations and Trusts:** The Mastercard Foundation has youth development programs in Uganda; the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (family planning and health); Ford Foundation (democratic participation, climate justice); Open Society Foundations (SRH and civic rights); Global Fund for Women (gender-climate justice, as in their support for Girls for Climate Action).
- **Multilateral Funds:** The Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund (for climate resilience projects); GAVI or Global Fund (for health interventions targeting youth).

In addition, YLF believes that engaging Ugandan partners can unlock domestic funding and resources:

- **Corporate and CSR:** MTN, Airtel and other telco foundations; banks like Stanbic/Stanbic More than a Bank; consumer brands (Coca-Cola, Pepsi) and energy companies with CSR programs. These often fund youth skills training or community health. Approaching them for project sponsorships or joint programs (e.g. mobile health campaigns) is worthwhile.
- **International and National NGOs:** YLF will pursue partnerships with established NGOs (Oxfam, Plan International, Save the Children, Reproductive Health Uganda) with a view to sub-awards and in-kind support through co-funding events and sharing training resources.
- **Academic and Community Partners:** Collaborating with universities (Makerere, Kyambogo) and youth networks (National Youth Council, Uganda National Student Association) can provide low-cost technical expertise, volunteers and access to youth audiences. YLF will also engage local governments and city authorities to support community-based activities (e.g. providing venues or linking to youth councils).
- **Digital Fundraising:** YLF will develop an online fundraising strategy (crowdfunding campaigns, partnerships with diaspora associations, social

media drives). Uganda's vibrant diaspora community in North America and Europe is a potential source of donations and advocacy.

7.2 Partnership Strategy

YLF shall formalize a few strategic partnerships to amplify impact. For example, working with environmental groups (like the Uganda Climate Action Network) could bolster climate programs, while linking with youth rights coalitions ensures broader advocacy reach. Co-designing programs with youth volunteers and beneficiaries will also strengthen local buy-in and reduce costs. In all cases, YLF shall highlight mutual benefits such as exposure for a corporate partner, technical support for a governmental ally to build lasting collaborations..

8.0 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Framework

YLF will implement a results-based MEL system to track progress, ensure accountability and enable adaptive learning. Key elements include:

- **Theory of Change & Indicators:** For each focus area, YLF will define clear outcomes with both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Baseline assessments will be conducted before each major project launch.
- **Data Collection:** YLF will employ and use mixed methods to collect data and these will be tailored to various thematic areas. For civic activities, pre- and post-training surveys will be used to assess knowledge and confidence. For SRH and climate projects, attendance records, service delivery stats such as clinic visits, materials distributed and media/social media analytics will be the primary sources of data. Digital tools such as mobile surveys, kobo toolbox will be employed to facilitate real-time monitoring. YLF MEAL team will also undertake regular focus groups or "learning cafes" with youth participants in order to capture nuanced feedback.

- **Periodic Reviews and Reporting:** Quarterly reviews of key metrics will inform management decisions. Annual evaluations will assess outcomes and impact. YLF will produce an annual report with indicators and stories of change to share with stakeholders. All findings will feed into strategic learning as successes will be documented for replication and challenges will be examined collaboratively to adjust intervention strategies.
- **Learning Culture:** The organization will institutionalize learning by holding regular internal MEL workshops, encouraging staff and youth leaders to reflect on what works. YLF will maintain a lessons-learned log and case studies archive. Stakeholder feedback (from beneficiaries, partners and funders) will be solicited to continuously refine approaches.

By systematically tracking activities and outcomes, YLF ensures transparency to donors and demonstrates impact to constituents. Importantly, learning loops will allow the strategic plan to evolve ensuring success in Uganda's uncertain and ever shrinking civic space.

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