



An Earth4All as Envisioned by the Youth in Kenya



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Background

During the African Climate Week, Earth4All, the Youth Resilience Partnership and the 50 Percent engaged with Kenyan youth to address the need for systems transformation to combat climate change. The African Climate Week workshop, held at Ubunifu Hub on the 25th August, 2023, focused on climate change and system change. The second workshop took place at the Local Conference of the Youth Kenya event held at Africa Nazarene University on 5th October 2023. It focused on critical turnarounds to build a liberated future.



*The team present at Ubunifu Hub pose for a picture

African Climate Week workshop

28 AUGUST 2023

A pre-engagement was held at the Ubunifu hub, a free and fun open youth space in Nairobi where young people can share skills, receive training, hold meetings, workshops and brainstorm about climate justice. The space provides a platform for Kenyan youth from diverse social backgrounds to expand their knowledge, birth ideas and actualise them.

Local Conference of the Youth Kenya

4 OCTOBER 2023

LCOY is an event under the umbrella of YOUNGO, the official youth constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Its aims are to be a space to boost youth climate action locally and create an input into the international conferences.



Maxwell

"I envision a Kenya fortified by economic, political, social, and environmental security. In pursuit of economic security, Kenya must create a suitable environment for businesses to thrive, and decision-making on economic matters should involve more local voices. Kenya must prioritize political security and a corruption-free country. Active participation of young Kenyans in decision-making processes is paramount. Social security hinges on addressing the rising challenges of poverty, depression, and mental health issues in the country. Lastly, environmental security necessitates a concerted effort to combat the climate change crisis, reduce carbon emissions, and tackle deforestation issues."

"I hope to see Kenya investing in wetland ecosystems and expanding blue spaces. Kenya needs to realize the importance of an increased presence of blue spaces in our nation and wetland restoration. While the government, through the Ministry of Forestry, has committed to planting 15 billion trees, there is a glaring absence of specific targets for the crucial preservation of wetland ecosystems."

Benson

"In the future, I would like to see a Kenya that has invested in capacity building for the youth, equipping them with the skills to earn a living and to continue building the nation."

Mary

Introduction

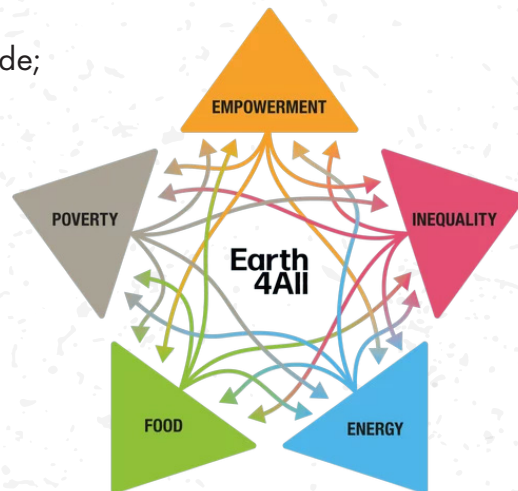
Earth4All, an initiative by the Club of Rome, has modeled two possible scenarios for the future. The first scenario, "Too Little Too Late," envisions a continuation of the current trajectory, raising concerns about reaching irreversible tipping points in Earth's climate and exacerbating social tensions due to escalating inequality.

The second scenario, "Giant Leap," is more optimistic, proposing a shift towards sustainability by 2050. This scenario explores the potential for fundamental changes in economies, energy, and food systems to address climate change, enhance societal resilience, and achieve goals such as ending extreme poverty and ensuring universal access to a healthy diet, quality education, and healthcare.

During the forums, Kenyan youth discussed strategies towards global equity on a healthy biosphere through the lens of Earth4All's five extraordinary turnarounds. Through the application of systems thinking, they highlighted several actionable insights that can help the country effect systematic changes and get on a new path to a sustainable country by 2050 (the "Giant Leap") and avoid the worst of climate change impacts.

The five extraordinary turnarounds include;

- Eliminate poverty
- Reduce inequality
- Empower women
- Transform food systems
- The energy turnaround



To fully engage with the systemic nature of climate change related issues, participants in the forums split up into groups that represent five critical stakeholders to tackle the five extraordinary turnarounds. Through this exercise, participants were able to share their priorities and strategies if they were a member of that stakeholder body.



Communities



Government



Universities



Farmers.



Businesses

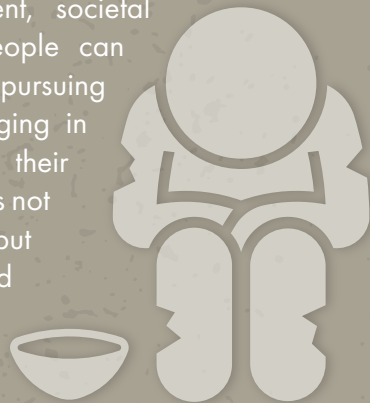
Stakeholders groups.



ELIMINATE POVERTY

Two-thirds of Kenyans live in poverty, making less than \$3.20 per day and have since Kenya's independence.[1] There is a large gap between the rich and poor, with approximately 70 percent of Kenyan families chronically vulnerable due to poor nutrition, food insecurity, and preventable diseases.[2] Addressing poverty is crucial in tackling climate change and liberating the future of the country. The forum provided several suggestions to address elimination of poverty in Kenya.

Government needs to ensure citizens have access to fundamental needs like healthcare, education, food, and housing. By addressing these basics, individuals are freed from constant worry, allowing them to focus on creating additional income streams and contributing to societal progress. Ensuring basic needs are met acts as a catalyst for personal development, societal advancement and innovation. People can invest time in acquiring new skills, pursuing entrepreneurial ventures, or engaging in creative endeavors when their fundamental needs are secured. This not only benefits individuals but contributes to the overall growth and prosperity of the nation hence eliminating poverty.



Corruption is a severe detriment to the nation, particularly evident in the top five counties on Kenya's poverty index, primarily situated in the Arid and Semi-Arid Northern regions. In Kenya, the highest poverty levels are in the northern pastoralist districts - in some areas 95% of people fall below the poverty line.[3] The statistics reveal a distressing correlation between extreme poverty and elevated corruption levels in these areas. It is imperative to eradicate corruption to ensure that funds designated for development are utilized appropriately, thereby paving the way to eliminate poverty.

Kenya possesses abundant land in the ASAL (Arid and Semi-Arid Land) areas, comprising 80% of the country. To combat poverty, both the government and private sector can strategically invest in agriculture within these regions. The Kenyan government, alongside private entities, has the potential to alleviate poverty by tapping into sustainable farming initiatives. This investment not only creates employment opportunities but also enhances food security, contributing significantly to the ongoing fight against poverty.

Education plays a vital role in poverty elimination by fostering empowerment through the integration of sustainability and economic empowerment into the curriculum. In Kenya, a positive step is The introduction of the new Competence-Based Curriculum which focuses on developing learners' abilities and skills rather than solely on academic content, It aims to provide students with practical skills and knowledge that are applicable in real-life situations, fostering a more holistic and well-rounded education. There is a need for further enhancements to ensure the development of a truly empowered generation that will be well equipped to fight poverty.

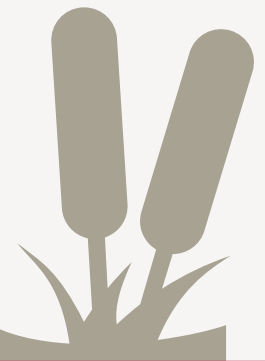
To foster a more inclusive job market, it is imperative for both governments and the private sector to actively reduce unnecessary barriers, such as unrealistic years of experience, that impede the entry of young professionals into the workforce. Additionally, universities should integrate practical experience into their curricula, ensuring that a four-year course equips students with four years of relevant experience. Moreover, currently, many young people are acquiring skills that lack marketability or relevance to the economy. Given that the government shapes the curriculum, there should be a willingness to generate opportunities directly tied to these courses. To enhance this process, it is crucial to employ qualified and competent lecturers and ensure that education systems remain accurate and up-to-date and

actively work on creating an economic environment that values and utilizes these skills thus aligning with the goal of eliminating poverty through improved employment opportunities for graduates.

When it comes to poverty elimination through green initiatives and the expansion of blue spaces, the government's approach should involve equipping communities with ecopreneurship skills, facilitating the pursuit of sustainable projects that offer income-generating opportunities, such as beekeeping and seaweed farming. Engaging communities in pilot projects should establish successful models for sustainability, including initiatives like paludiculture and the preservation of swamps. Replicating of these projects will foster both economic growth and environmental well-being

The government and the private sector should collaborate to empower youth entrepreneurship by providing seed capital and loans for startups and existing businesses through banking channels. Initiatives should include business exchange programs for experiential learning, the establishment of incubation hubs and startup accelerators like the iBiz Lab at Strathmore, and capacity-building workshops to enhance essential entrepreneurial skills. Moreover, the government should reduce taxes, acknowledging the potential hindrance they pose to businesses striving to contribute to poverty alleviation.

Paludiculture: farming and agroforestry systems designed to generate a commercial crop from wetland conditions using species that are typical of (or tolerant of) wetland habitats.



REDUCE INEQUALITY

Inequality is a significant issue affecting countries in most regions in the world. The gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen, with 10% of the population in most countries consuming 40% of natural resources. In Kenya, the gap between the rich and poor continues to widen, with 0.1% of the population (8,300 people) owning more wealth than the bottom 99.9% (more than 44 million people). [4] Also, Kenya has the fastest growing number of super-rich people in the world, with figures putting it at 80% over the next 10 years. [5] The major causes of inequality include tax evasions, lack of public participation, and lack of accountability.

The strategies proposed to address inequality and alleviate economic system problems include adopting a community-oriented sustainable development approach. This involves actively involving the public in decision-making processes, recognizing community insights, and creating environmentally friendly and socially responsible economic structures. Public participation is crucial, empowering individuals and promoting a sense of ownership.





Funding for community participation in Kenya should be redirected from non-essential projects to crucial ones, addressing immediate community needs. Prioritizing resources for the benefit of the majority is emphasized.

Influencing budgets in Kenya involves addressing flaws in the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) process, focusing on accountability, transparency, and competence. Policy reforms, institutional changes, and a commitment to good governance practices are necessary. Improved oversight and consequences for fund misallocation are also proposed.

Donor funding is identified as a contributor to inequality, with conditions and power imbalances impacting recipient countries. A more equitable approach requires addressing power dynamics, systemic issues, and fostering collaboration for sustainable economies. Inequality in careers in Kenya is acknowledged, with a call for an inclusive environment providing accessible opportunities for education and employment across all sectors. Government accountability, particularly in addressing corruption, is emphasized. Redirecting seized funds back into the treasury for county activities is proposed, contingent on accountable leadership.

Shifting the narrative from aid dependency to collaboration within Africa is deemed essential for addressing systemic inequalities. Empowering Africans involves recognizing abundant resources within the continent.

Individual and collective accountability is crucial, extending beyond policies to effective implementation. Rejecting participation in activities that compromise accountability is emphasized, particularly by the youth who possess the power to influence sustainable development.

The government must adopt a comprehensive strategy to address both inequality and climate change. This involves empowering local and indigenous communities through education on diverse funding sources, policies, and green income-generating activities. Encouraging community participation in eco-friendly initiatives, such as carbon credit

projects, and providing education on effective advocacy, ensures their role as impactful change-makers.

Additionally, the government should promote and regulate the transition of businesses towards environmentally sustainable practices, emphasizing pollution control and social equity for a holistic approach to combating climate change.



TRANSFORM FOOD SYSTEMS

The last fifty years have witnessed an astonishing turnaround in food security, dramatically reducing the number of deaths due to famine. Progress has, however, come at a cost. The progress towards food security in Kenya has resulted in environmental degradation, contributing to climate change.

To transform its food system, Kenya needs to harness its indigenous knowledge and adopt smart agriculture practices that are sustainable and regenerative. This means using already available resources, such as arable land, water, and seeds, without harming the environment or exceeding ecological limits.

It also means empowering small-scale farmers, the backbone of the country's agriculture, with capacity building, extension services, and crop diversification. By doing so, Kenya can achieve food security, reduce the import of primary crops, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.



In the pursuit of transforming food systems and mitigating climate change, the government should actively engage universities as crucial research pioneers. These institutions are formulating research strategies to ensure food security. By fostering collaborative partnerships with key entities such as the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) and the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), the government can leverage both data and financial resources. This collaborative approach is essential for effectively addressing issues related to food security through well-informed research and the promotion of sustainable practices.

Participants expressed a need for the government to address unsustainable agricultural and business practices adopted by farmers such as use of substandard fertilizers and pesticide, price gouging and hoarding, which not only negatively impact other Kenyans, but also contribute to environmental challenges associated with climate change. While recognizing that businesses naturally seek to maximize profits, stopping unfair practices is crucial for fostering a more equitable agricultural landscape and mitigating climate-related risks.

Kenya, with 80% of its land being arid and semi-arid [6], should practice land reclamation. Drawing inspiration from countries that have successfully utilized idle arid land through mechanized farming and irrigation, Kenya has the potential to enhance agricultural productivity. Implementing such practices can contribute significantly to ensuring sustainable food security in the country.



Other strategies proposed by Kenyan youth included promoting sustainable agriculture by training young farmers on modern farming practices, supplying supplements such as seedlings and fertilizers, and providing grants and capital. Community-based organizations have the opportunity to collaborate with farmers in advocating climate-smart agriculture by leveraging their expertise. They can engage with the government through proper channels to advocate for the adoption and acceptance of these methods among farmers.

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THE ENERGY TURNAROUND

Kenya is a country that has made significant progress in increasing its access to electricity, with over 80% of its power coming from renewable and clean sources. [7] However, it still faces the challenge of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, while ensuring energy access for all its population.

One of the barriers is the high cost and low availability of renewable energy technologies, such as solar and batteries, which make them inaccessible for many communities.

Another barrier is the reliance on traditional fuels, such as firewood and charcoal, which negatively impact the environment and health.

To overcome these barriers, participants advocated for Kenya to invest in developing and deploying diverse, affordable, and efficient renewable energy solutions and promote behavioral change and awareness among its citizens. By doing so, Kenya can transform its energy system and contribute to the global fight against climate change.

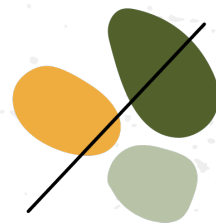


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