

CONCEPT NOTE AND AGENDA

PROMOTION OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL PARTY LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES AND ELECTIONS

CROSS-PARTY DIALOGUE

Crossroads Hotel
Lilongwe

26
JULY 2024

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INTRODUCTION

For political systems to be representative, there is need for all parts of society to be included. One of the key groups are the young people that also represent the population majority. When this group of people is not engaged in political processes, it implies a significant portion of the population has little or no voice or influence in decisions that affect their lives. It is imperative for young men and women to be engaged in formal political processes and have a say in formulating today's and tomorrow's politics[1].

Political parties are a key stakeholder that play a pivotal role in the facilitation of meaningful political participation of young women and men in party leadership structures, decision making processes as well as elected positions. There are a number of processes and platforms through which political parties can enhance participation of these young people in party leadership structures including elective conferences as well as nomination of candidates to stand for elections at both the local and national levels.

[1] ACE Project,
The Electoral Knowledge Network

Malawi's legal and policy framework is generally supportive and progressive for youth and women in politics. However, the uptake remains low and slow due to persistent patriarchal and traditional norms and values. Youth political representation remains under 10% at both district and parliamentary levels. Continued traditional socio-cultural norms and stereotypes that support age discrimination, low levels of education, and lack of economic empowerment undermine equal access and inclusion.

Despite constituting the majority, youth participation in political party structures and electoral processes in Malawi remains limited, with few young people ascending to leadership positions through elections. In the 2019 general elections, a total of 6.8 million voters registered for the presidential, parliamentary, and local elections. Of these, 3.7 million were youth, representing 54% of the total registered voters. This included 2.1 million females and 1.6 million males. Although the youth significantly influenced electoral outcomes due to their sheer numbers, not many were elected to leadership positions.

It is against this background that Democracy Works Foundation (DWF) in collaboration with Youth and Society (YAS) have organised a cross-party dialogue under the theme: “Promotion of youth participation in Party structures Leadership Positions and Elections” that seek to provide a platform for discussing the barriers that hinder meaningful political participation of the youth and to collectively identify solutions that would lead to greater inclusivity in political parties and political process.

This dialogue will bring together key political parties that are represented in parliament including the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD), Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), Malawi Congress Party (MCP), Peoples Party (PP), United Democratic Front (UDF) and UTM Party.

The primary objectives of this Dialogue are as follows

1

To reflect on the state of affairs with respect to participation of youth in leadership positions in party structures: Challenges and Opportunities

2

To jointly reflect political parties can enhance youth participation in political party leadership and beyond

3

To reflect on the role of assistance providers in contributing to youth political participation: Initiatives and partnerships.



AGENDA

Time	Activity	Lead
Moderator: Ms Tadala Chumachiyenda		
8:30am – 9:00am	Walk in Registration	DWF
9:00am – 9:10am	Welcome and Introductions	Ms Tadala Chumachiyenda, Regional Coordinator, DWF
9:10am – 9:35am	Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DWF • YAS 	Dr Augustine Magolowondo, Regional Director/COP, DWF Mr Charles Kajoloweka, Executive Director, Youth and Society
9:35am – 9:45am	Statement of Support	Nanise Saone-Qaloewai, Head of Governance, UNDP
9:45am – 10:30am	Youth Participation in Political Party leadership structures: State of affairs, Challenges and Opportunities	Associate Prof, Dr Boniface Dulani, University of Malawi/Director of Surveys, Afrobarometer
10:30am – 10:45am	Plenary	Ms Tadala Chumachiyenda, Regional Coordinator, DWF
10:45am – 11:15am	Group photo and Tea break	
Moderator: Dr Augustine Magolowondo		
11:15am – 11:45am	Perspectives from young people: Issues, questions and concerns affecting young aspirants for leadership and elected positions in Political parties	Mr Charles Kajoloweka, YAS
11:45am – 12:15pm	Enhancing youth participation in party leadership structures and beyond – Regional experiences	Ms Fannie Nthakomwa, Deputy Regional Director/DCOP, DWF
12:15pm – 12:30pm	Plenary	Dr Augustine Magolowondo
12:30pm – 01:30pm	Lunch	
Moderator: Ms Julie Mkandawire		
01:30pm – 02:00pm	Group discussion – The role of political parties in promotion of youth participation in leadership structures	Ms Julie Mkandawire, Programme Associate, YAS
02:00pm – 02:30pm	Report back and plenary	
02:30pm – 03:00pm	Role of assistance providers in promotion of youth inclusion in party leadership structures and political processes: Initiatives and Partnerships	Dr Augustine Magolowondo, DWF Mr Charles Kajoloweka, YAS
03:00pm – 03:15pm	Plenary	Ms Julie Mkandawire
03:15pm – 03:30pm	Next steps and Vote of Thanks	All Political parties YAS DWF
03:30pm	End of Dialogue Session/Teas & Refreshments	