

## YOUTH AGENDA

Bonchari constituency prides itself in having more than 60% of its population below 50 years. It has a very vibrant youth that engage itself in various sporting activities such as football, and athletics. To date there are a few football clubs in the constituency that compete against each other. Plans should be made to support existing clubs so that they can be able to produce national players. Almost all the youths have undertaken the basic primary education and indeed quite a big number are indeed 'O' level graduates.

Others have undertaken tertiary education in various fields of trainings. Majority of the youths, however, are unemployed and this has in turn led to their engagement in drug abuse and criminal activities such as petty theft and mugging. Of concern also is the increase in HIV, Aids and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) infections among the youth. There is need for practical and deliberate programmes that can change youth attitude towards self-employment and HIV and Aids.

Revival of the polytechnics will engage the youth in development and increase job opportunities. Moreover the creation of the Kisii South District has ensured that the employment centre for all government agencies now is within Bonchari constituency. Resources should be made available for construction of a youth empowerment centre. The centre will provide a library and training facilities that will empower the youth and offer sports and recreation facilities.

Limited youth participation in political process and leadership has largely been fueled by lack of democratic space for able and talented youth, high level of political patronage by the wealthy class, handout syndrome among the youth as a result of unemployment and adverse poverty and lack of affirmative action to promote the vulnerable group in participating in the development processes have also been challenges. These have resulted into limited or no engagement of youth in civic or electoral process, economic drawback due to lack of investor confidence, high voter apathy, nepotism, massive corruption and insecurity. The new system of devolved government decentralizes power and resource to counties for equitable distribution of resources; however, this change process may experience various hitches related to limited experience and capacity to the youth and other local leaders to manage their own affairs. At present, the capacity of local development committees is relatively weak while majority of youth are neither aware nor involved in the prudent management of devolved resources. There is limited participation and awareness of the youth and local communities in these reform processes hence the need for

intensive civic education and engagement. This plan aims to create a robust forum that inspires, informs and empowers youth socio-economically for improved livelihood and civic engagement. The economic situation of Bonchari Constituency has suffered from high un-employment amongst the youth, partly due to lack processing industries in the constituency. There is also in general a high cost of doing business in Bonchari due to poor infrastructure. Other related challenges among the youth include increasing crime rate, drug and substance abuse, prostitution, HIV/Aids, lack of saving culture and limited innovative capacity.

This proposal aims to sensitize community members on comprehensive civic education, encourage youth to be involved in leadership through civic engagement, play their democratic right of electing visionary leaders by registering as voters and play key role in business opportunities brought about by the East African Common Market Protocol (EACP). Bonchari is a patriarchal society and key assets and resources such as land, trees, and domestic animals are owned and controlled by older men rather than the youth. The new constitution has recognized the need for gender equality in all aspects of social life and leadership. The national employment policy advocates for opportunity for all. However, lucrative and well-paying opportunities are dominated by the wealthy and senior elites that accounts for below 20% of national population due to unequal opportunity for learning in the past. This plan underscores the challenges and hopes to tighten Bonchari's economic empowerment policy for job and wealth creation among the youth.

The ICT infrastructure is rudimentary; there is for instance inadequate or no access to computers in most rural based learning institutions. Majority of youth and local leaders are still computer illiterate and resort to manual ways of conducting their operations. Improvement of infrastructure has the potential to stabilize the region, improve security, and strengthen its integration within the region and with the rest of the country.

The needs of the youthful population in Bonchari Constituency can be summarized as follows:

- Need for scholarships and financial support for those in tertiary institutions of learning
- Need to create employment opportunities for the unemployed
- Need for mentorship and career planning counseling for the young professionals
- Need to nurture talents through various talent activities and programs

- Need to build the capacity of those in business through facilitating access to credit, insurance and entrepreneurship training
- Need to set up business incubation centres for the youth
- Need to provide exposure for them so they learn from experiences of others
- Need to provide relevant infrastructure such as ICT platforms which they can tap into for self-employment
- Need to provide support for young families through marriage counseling
- Need for safety nets for those who lose jobs and the unemployed
- Need to expand facilities at youth polytechnics
- Need to provide special support to youth with special needs e,g PWDs

## **Priority sectors**

### **Youth Agenda**

Considering the caseload of the youth problems to be handled, the interventions of other stakeholders as well as the appreciation that the government cannot do everything is of the essence.

The following section elaborates the specific program and other focus areas chosen and the basis of the same. The choices include:

1. **Youth in leadership and Governance:** This program area shall focus on peace, youth civic education and engagement, as well as nurturing good/focused leadership. The program although focusing on the entire community shall center on the youth, women and (local) leaders including elders, religious and political leaders.
2. **Quality healthcare and Environmental Protection:** This program shall address issues related to quality healthcare; environmental conservation and protection; HIV/IDs scourge; child motility; lack of health information among the youth; drug and substance abuse among the youth. This will be implemented through constituency youth *groups*.
3. **Livelihood Enhancement:** This program focus area shall address issues related to youth unemployment and poverty; lack of business and technical skills; poor health care services and other social amenities, HIV/IDs scourge; insecurity; poor infrastructure; lack of safe water and

sanitation and over-population due to rural urban migration and lack of information among the youth; The program will focus on vulnerable youth through constituency youth *groups*. The Forum plans to support the women and youth socioeconomically to reduce poverty index in the region.

### **Overall Strategies**

1. Policy lobbying and advocacy
2. Social media engagement for mobilization and activism for social change
3. Work with key stakeholders in resolving conflicts and enforce relevant laws and regulation
4. Cooperation/collaboration with the local administration and other stakeholders.
5. Use local structures e.g. elders, religious leaders etc in conflict resolution and management
6. Use sports as an avenue for enabling community cohesion/trust building
7. Facilitate/promote interaction between youths and key community leaders
8. Facilitate identification and resolution of grievances which trigger inter-communal conflict, such as political representation, access to resources etc
9. Embracing modern technology to reduce poverty and vulnerability amongst youth in Bonchari Constituency while promoting peace
10. Promoting networks and collaborations with relevant development partners in areas like environmental clean ups, community policing, peace building and HIV awareness creation.

### **Key Challenges**

- High level of unemployment and youth idleness, especially in the shopping centres
- Lack of recreation facilities within the constituency
- Drug and substance abuse among the youth

**Objective 1:**

To empower the youth socially, politically and economically

**Interventions/Strategies**

1. Provide the youth with a strong voice in decisions that affects them, the opportunity to pursue their dreams and a chance to join a new generation of leadership to shape the future of Bonchari.
2. Initiate a County Youth Endowment Fund (CYEF) to disburse soft loans and grants to the youth for Income Generating Activities (IGAs) and facilitate the formation of youth Investment Clubs as vehicles of resource mobilization and easy access to the funds from the CYEF.
3. Promote the establishments of relevant agro-based light industries to realize value addition on farm produce and create employment opportunities for the youth
4. Establish a county talent and Cultural Centre for the identification and nurturing of youth talent in areas such as ball games, athletics, martial arts, drama and music, as well as to create cultural awareness and promote social cohesion.
5. Organize periodic investment workshops for the youth in order to instill financial discipline and inculcate entrepreneurship spirit.
6. Advocate for the allocation of at least 20% of all government contracts in the county to the youth and youth groups.
7. Advocate for the establishment of a well-equipped middle-level Technical Training Institute in the sub county to absorb school leavers and enable them acquire essential skills for sustainable livelihood. These can be youth empowerment or vocational centres with adequate staff centres complete with libraries, ICT and gym.
8. Plan to establish and equip an industrial park so that trained youth can be financially empowered by various funds

**Objective 2:**

To minimize the social factors that affect the youth such as drug and alcohol abuse

**Interventions/Strategies**

1. Plan to set up a rehabilitation and counseling centre that is affordable
2. Development of guidelines on alcohol consumption and their implementation
3. Plan to build a sporting stadium and have a yearly calendar of various sporting activities to engage the youth
4. Initiate and support youth peer clubs to tackle socio-economic issues related to reproductive health, HIV/Aids, education, life sustaining skills and Income Generating Activities
5. Encourage the youths within the county to start various common and atypical income generating activities like poultry – eggs and chicken; Cow – beef and milk; pig products – pork; bee keeping – honey; Vegetables, and Jua Kali – cottage industries

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