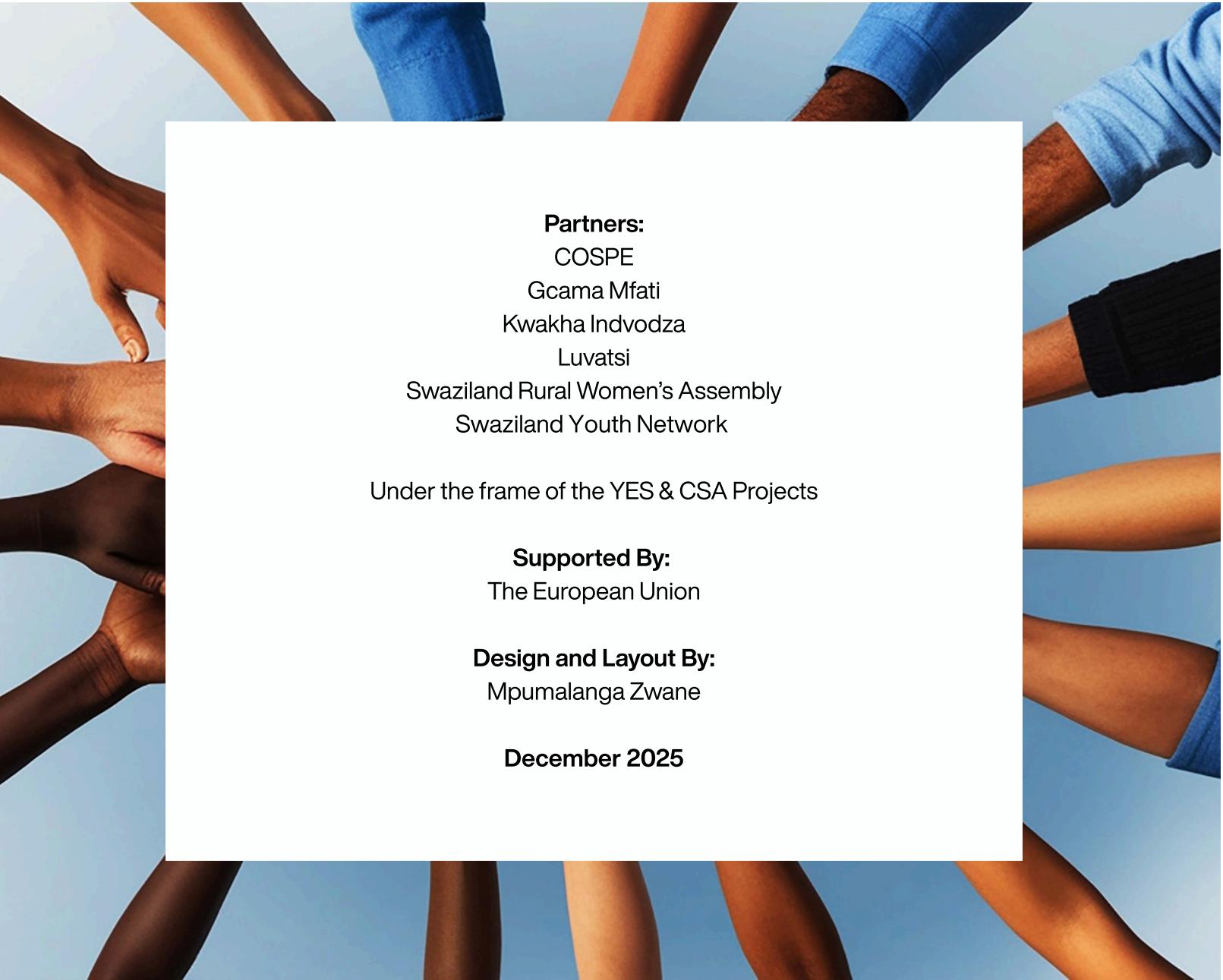




The National



YOUTH AGENDA



Partners:

COSPE
Gcama Mfati
Kwakha Indvodza
Luvatsi
Swaziland Rural Women's Assembly
Swaziland Youth Network

Under the frame of the YES & CSA Projects

Supported By:

The European Union

Design and Layout By:

Mpumalanga Zwane

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The Yes Projects

Output 1:

CSOs operating for women and youth rights, inclusion and empowerment are more structured, coordinated, and able to operate.

Output 2:

CSOs and Community groups promote an enabling environment for the promotion of women and youth rights, inclusion and active participation in the decision-making processes in rural and urban areas.

Output 3:

CSOs and local groups active in promoting women and youth socio-economic inclusion and empowerment.

The YES Project

This Agenda is one of the accomplishments of the YES “Youth and Women Empowerment and Support” project that is co-funded by the European Union, implemented by COSPE, in partnership with Swaziland Rural Women Assembly, Gcama Mfati, Luvatsi, Kwakha Indvodza, in 16 rural communities and 2 Municipalities in Eswatini.

The project’s objective is to “Strengthen capacities and opportunities of civil society and grassroots organizations to promote women and youth social inclusion, empowerment and rights” through the implementation of actions in the frame of three main pillars:

Results 1:

Transformative capacity building and hubs of competencies to develop Organizational Development Plans, sustainability plans, and Training-of-Trainers; operational and governance sub-grants (FSTPs) to 34 CSOs and 34 CBOs.

Results 2:

Development of six Thematic National Agendas (women’s rights, climate justice, LGBTIQ+ inclusion, youth inclusion, socio-cultural-economic rights, PLWD rights), guided by ToTs and National Agenda Working Groups, and provision of FSTP for agenda-driven interventions

Results 3:

Advocacy and policy engagement through regional/national events, media and arts-based advocacy (led by Yini Loku), shadow human-rights reporting, and participation in national and SADC-level platforms.

The Partners

COSPE

COSPE, an Italian NGO with a branch in the country, focused on promoting CSOs role and capacities with strong human rights based approach, has been supporting HRs and rural development programs since 1999.

The Youth Empowerment Networking (Luvatsi)

Luvatsi, youth-led organisation with 13 groups located in rural areas of 100-300 members each, supports the participation of youth through positive creative thinking and self-empowerment, respect for human rights, voluntary service to society, promoting sustainable livelihoods approaches.

Gcama Mfati

Gcama Mfati, a rural women association of 380 women based on 19 grassroots groups at community level, is engaged in women and girls' empowerment through advocacy, economic and GBV activities.

Swaziland Rural Women's Assembly (SRWA)

SRWA is an active member of the Rural Women's Assembly, which is an alliance of national rural women and farmers movements across eight SADC countries. SRWA supports women's projects by building their capacity on self-help projects and income generating initiatives. SRWA also lobbies and advocates for policies that promote and protect women and girls' rights.

Kwakha Indvodza

Kwakha Indvodza (KI), male mentoring CSO, has developed innovative Youth Social Strengthening projects, focusing on social protection, GBV and economic empowerment.

Swaziland Youth Network (SYN)

SYN is a youth coalition with over 20 member organisations. They aim to integrate socioeconomic issues affecting young people and to build youth capacity to engage meaningfully in development. The network provides a platform for youth-led organisations to collaborate, coordinate, and influence policy for sustainable development work.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funding Partner

The EU Delegation to Eswatini is responsible for managing and promoting friendly relations between the EU and the Kingdom of Eswatini. These relations cover diplomatic and political relations, development cooperation, economic and trade relations as well as other areas of mutual interest between the two partners. The central objective of this partnership is to eradicate poverty through sustainable development, the progressive integration of Eswatini into the world economy and the promotion of the rule of law, democracy and human rights.

For the period 2021 – 2027 EU development cooperation with Eswatini under the EU Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) focuses on the priority area of Human Development and Social Inclusion with the goal of assisting the country's youth. Concretely, the MIP focuses on empowering the disadvantaged youth and women with skills, income generation and employment through a series of interventions to improve access to formal and non-formal education and the quality and relevance of the TVET (technical and vocational education and training) system.

Current Milestones in Eswatini

The Kingdom of Eswatini has been proactive in establishing institutional frameworks for youth representation and advocacy, focusing on empowering its young population to actively participate in national development. One significant effort is the establishment of the Eswatini National Youth Council (ENYC), which serves as an umbrella body representing various youth organizations. This Council is instrumental in advocating for youth issues and collaborating with both government and non-governmental entities to influence policy and decision-making processes.

With regards to socio-economic justice and education, the government has implemented several initiatives aimed at reducing poverty and enhancing educational opportunities. The implementation of the Free Primary Education (FPE) program has been a notable step in ensuring access to basic education for all children, thus laying a foundation for youth empowerment. Additionally, programs focused on entrepreneurship and skills development have been launched to provide young people with the tools needed for economic independence. Noteworthy is the Youth Enterprise Fund, which facilitates access to capital for young entrepreneurs, thereby promoting economic self-reliance.

Digital literacy and skills training have become a priority in Eswatini, as the government recognizes technology's critical role in modern society. Collaborations with private organizations and educational institutions have led to the establishment of initiatives like the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy, which aims to integrate digital literacy into the national curriculum. This strategy also includes the provision of ICT facilities in schools to enhance digital learning. Furthermore, partnerships with international bodies, such as UNICEF, have

supported digital skills camps and hackathons that encourage youth innovation and entrepreneurship.

Health support systems in Eswatini encompass both government and non-governmental efforts to improve the health outcomes of its citizens. The Ministry of Health has been instrumental in rolling out comprehensive healthcare services and has established clinics across the country to ensure accessibility. The implementation of programs like the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) demonstrates efforts to improve public health. Moreover, the presence of NGOs, such as the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, has enhanced the provision of specialized health services, including HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs, thereby complementing government efforts and expanding reach. These different approaches highlight Eswatini's commitment to fostering an environment conducive to youth development and well-being across various sectors.

High-Level Policy Influence Solutions

Health support systems in Eswatini encompass both government and non-governmental efforts to improve the health outcomes of its citizens. The Ministry of Health has been instrumental in rolling out comprehensive healthcare services and has established clinics across the country to ensure accessibility. The implementation of programs like the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) demonstrates efforts to improve public health. Moreover, the presence of NGOs, such as the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, has enhanced the provision of specialized health services, including HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs, thereby complementing government efforts and expanding reach. These different approaches highlight Eswatini's commitment to fostering an environment conducive to youth development and well-being across various sectors.

Solutions

To address the different issues articulated in the youth national Agenda document, Eswatini requires a comprehensive, integrated policy approach that go beyond individual programs and focuses on systemic change. The following high-level policy solutions are proposed to influence and guide national action:

1 Enact and Enforce Comprehensive Youth Empowerment Legislation:

Mandate Youth Quotas and Participation:

- Mandate Youth Quotas and Participation: Implement a practical legislation requiring a minimum percentage of youth representation in all decision-making bodies, including parliament, local councils, corporate boards, and public service commissions. This policy should be accompanied by clear enforcement mechanisms and accountability frameworks.

National Leadership Development Act

- Institutionalize leadership development programs, preparatory schools, and structured mentorship initiatives for youth, ensuring sustained funding and integration into the national education and workforce development strategies.

2 Systemic Educational and Skills Reform for Future Readiness:

National Education Modernization Policy:

- Overhaul the national education curriculum to embed vocational training, entrepreneurship, coding, financial literacy, life skills, and digital education from early grades. This policy must include a long-term strategy for teacher development and well-being, focusing on practical, inclusive, and future-oriented pedagogies.

National Education Modernization Policy:

- Enact legislation to ensure affordable, secure, and widespread internet access across all regions, particularly rural and underserved communities. This policy should mandate the provision of affordable digital devices and integrate digital literacy programs as a core component of the national curriculum and adult education.

3 Cross-Sectoral Youth Employment and Economic Inclusion Strategy:

Youth Economic Empowerment Fund Act:

- Reassess the legislated national youth entrepreneurship fund, to accessible through simplified application processes, offering significant loans, grants, and technical support through high amount cash injection. This policy should include provisions for setting aside public procurement quotas for youth-led enterprises and promoting innovation.

Market-Responsive Skills Development Policy

- Implement a policy that continuously aligns education and training programs with current and future labor market demands, including those of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This requires robust labor market information systems and incentives for private sector engagement in skills development and job creation.

4

Inclusive Governance and Human Rights Protection Framework:

Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Act:

- Enact comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation to protect all vulnerable groups, including youth, women, and LGBTQIA+ individuals, from age-based, gender-based, and other forms of discrimination. This policy should include mechanisms for independent oversight, human rights education, and legal aid.

Civic Engagement and Freedom of Expression Policy

- Develop a national policy that safeguards constitutional guarantees of religious freedom, freedom of expression, and association for youth. This includes promoting intergenerational dialogue, supporting youth advocacy platforms, and reforming any restrictive laws that stifle civic space and participation.

5

Systemic Educational and Skills Reform for Future Readiness:

Integrated Youth Health and Well-being Strategy:

- Formulate a comprehensive policy that prioritizes adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) education, mental health services, and substance abuse prevention. This policy must mandate youth-friendly health services, integrate psychosocial support into schools and communities, and address the specific health needs of young people with disabilities.

Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Policy:

- Integrate climate change education and adaptation strategies into national development plans, education curricula, and youth employment initiatives. This policy should empower youth to lead in climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy, and green industries, fostering resilience against environmental shocks.



The National Youth Agenda

Eswatini

The National Youth Agenda

The National Youth Agenda

Eswatini

The National Youth Agenda



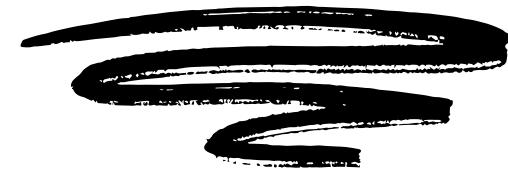
Eswatini

The National Youth Agenda

Eswatini



Youth Representation in Decision-Making



YOUTH REPRESENTATION IN DECISION-MAKING

DEFINED ISSUE

The systematic exclusion of young people in Eswatini from decision making and leadership positions is a multilayered phenomenon rooted in cultural norms, institutional barriers and a lack of robust political commitment of youth empowerment.

This exclusion is further worsened by age-based discrimination, which is deeply rooted in societal perception that view the youth as inexperienced and incapable, thereby hindering their meaningful inclusion in governance and policy processes.

The absence of structured mentorship programs and leadership development initiatives significantly limits the preparedness and access of young people to influential roles, thereby ensuring the continuity of the cycle of exclusion. Existing political and institutional systems are not designed to increase youth voices resulting in limited access to information about electoral rights, inadequate legal and policy frameworks supporting participation and the marginalization of vulnerable groups such as youth with disabilities.

SOLUTIONS

Institutional Reforms: Institutionalize youth representation by establishing youth quotas in decision-making bodies to ensure consistent inclusion in governance.

Capacity Building: Provide leadership development programs and preparatory schools to equip young people with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed for effective leadership.

Structured mentorship programs: Establish structured mentorship programs linking experienced leaders with youth to promote guidance, skills transfer, and confidence-building.

Strengthen Youth leadership networks: Establish youth leadership networks at community and regional levels to foster engagement, collaboration, and peer learning.

Development of Youth participation hubs: Develop youth-friendly spaces and innovative participation platforms to encourage active involvement and creative expression.

STAKEHOLDERS

Foundation for Socio-Economic Justice (FSEJ): Focuses on youth education, conducts research and analysis, and uses shadow budgeting as an advocacy tool to influence inclusive youth policies.

Eswatini National Youth Council (ENYC): Creates platforms for youth to express their views and participate in national development initiatives.

Youth Chamber of Commerce (YCC): Serves as a proxy organization that provides business training and mentorship to young entrepreneurs.

Youth Portfolio Committee (YPC): Plays an oversight role on legislative matters affecting youth development and empowerment.

Regional Administrators: Coordinate meetings with chiefdoms to strengthen collaboration and ensure youth inclusion in local governance and development programs.

YOUTH REPRESENTATION IN DECISION-MAKING

DEFINED ISSUE

Furthermore, traditional spaces for youth expression including art and cultural platforms are increasingly being suppressed, thereby reducing opportunities for collective mobilization and advocacy. This suppression not only limits the creative expression of young people but also undermines their ability to engage in meaningful civic participation and hold leaders accountable.

The consequences of such exclusion are far reaching, resulting in the underrepresentation of young people in decision making spaces, the silencing of their voices and their exclusion from sharing the nations development agenda. This in turn leads to missed opportunities for innovation, inclusion governance and sustainable national progress.

SOLUTIONS

Strengthen Youth Civic Engagement: Promote civic, political, and human rights education, including awareness of the Constitution and international frameworks, to empower informed participation.

Youth Advocacy: Strengthen advocacy and accountability mechanisms to identify, amplify, and address youth concerns effectively.

Youth Parliament: Launch a Youth Parliament and build regional youth networks to influence policy and reform systems at national and regional levels.

Strengthen intergenerational engagements: Encourage stakeholder lobbying and intergenerational collaboration to ensure youth perspectives shape national development agendas.

Fair leadership recruitments: Assign leadership and decision-making positions based on merit rather than age to promote fairness





Cultural & Societal Norms Excluding Youth/Women

CULTURAL & SOCIETAL NORMS EXCLUDING YOUTH/WOMEN

DEFINED ISSUE

In Eswatini, traditional, patriarchal, cultural, and religious beliefs intersect to exclude young people, especially women, from leadership roles and decision-making processes. The age-based power structure, characterized by a concentration of authority among older generation, represes intergenerational collaboration, innovation and critical thinking.

The resultant effects include:

Continuation of gender inequality: reinforcement of social ladders and limitation of opportunities for women.
Suppression of youth voices: traditional understandings of faith justify the suppression of young people, discouraging alternative views.

Disillusionment and disengagement: The youth feel marginalized and silenced, leading to disconnection from civic and religious life, feeling silence and undervalued

SOLUTIONS

Capacity Building: Implement gender-sensitivity and inclusive leadership training programs to challenge patriarchal mindsets and promote equitable representation of youth and women in leadership and decision-making.

Gender Equality Programs: Strengthen initiatives that amplify women's voices while also engaging men through empowerment programs to create a balanced and holistic approach to gender equality.

Civic & Human Rights Education: Introduce comprehensive civic and human rights education, including awareness of cultural and religious norms, to encourage critical reflection, inclusivity, and respect for diversity.

Intergenerational Engagements: Engage in continuous intergenerational dialogue to bridge the gap between older and younger generations, fostering common respect, knowledge-sharing, and collaboration in leadership spaces.

STAKEHOLDERS

Ministry of Arts and Culture: Promotes cultural education and awareness to strengthen social cohesion and inclusiveness.

DPM's Office / Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration: Develops and enforces inclusive community-based policies that ensure equal participation for all.

Regional Administrators and Councils: Educate chiefs and traditional authorities on cultural preservation and the importance of inclusiveness in governance.

Media Platforms: Use print and digital media to disseminate information, raise awareness, and promote inclusive cultural values.

ArtRial Network: Supports creative platforms and initiatives that foster cultural expression and social inclusion through the arts.

Eswatini National Youth Council (ENYC): Promotes youth engagement in cultural and community development initiatives.

CULTURAL & SOCIETAL NORMS EXCLUDING YOUTH/WOMEN

SOLUTIONS

Dialogues: Promote structured dialogue with faith leaders to encourage progressive, youth-inclusive interpretations of religious teachings that uphold dignity, equality, and participation.

Interfaith & Intercultural Programs: Establish interfaith and intercultural programs that provide platforms for positive engagement across different beliefs, reducing stiff divisions and fostering mutual understanding.

Promote religious broad-mindedness and respect for individual beliefs, ensuring young people can freely practice their faith without discrimination or pressure.

Safeguard constitutional guarantees of religious freedom and strengthen accountability mechanisms to protect youth from exclusionary or discriminatory practices.

Review and reform traditional and cultural practices that suppress participation, ensuring they evolve in ways that align with human rights and inclusive governance principles.

Encourage community-based initiatives and uniting activities including those that promote inclusion of the LGBTQI+ community to foster tolerance, empathy, and stronger social cohesion.

STAKEHOLDERS

Faith-Based Organizations: Facilitate dialogues and empowerment workshops to address religious barriers and promote tolerance.

Human Rights Commission: Trains religious and community leaders on human rights principles and inclusive practices.

ECOT (Eswatini Council of Traditional Leaders): Encourages traditional leaders to adopt and support inclusive ideas within community governance structures.

Educational and Skills Development Challenges



EDUCATIONAL AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

DEFINED ISSUE

The education and skills development system in Eswatini is faces serious challenges that hinders the personal growth, employability and socio economic contributions of young people. The key issues include:

- Inadequate career guidance: insufficient counselling services in school's delay student's ability to make informed decisions about their educational and career path, resulting in skills mismatches and low aspirations.
- Socio economic disparities: poverty restricts access to quality education, particularly in rural areas where infrastructure and resources are inadequate, this continues the effects of inequality and exclusion.
- Outdated education system: the curriculum remains overly theoretical, disconnected from labor market needs, and fails to provide practical, entrepreneurship or digital skills essential for the modern economy.

SOLUTIONS

Transform Eswatini's Education system through comprehensive overhaul and modernization: Overhaul and modernize the education system to make it inclusive, relevant, and future-ready. The curriculum should integrate vocational training, entrepreneurship, coding, financial literacy, life skills, sports, and digital education to prepare learners for the job market and the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Introduce early aptitude and skills assessment tools (SDS tests): This will guide students' development and inform curriculum design using data-driven insights.

Ensure fair, transparent, and inclusive scholarship award processes: This should be managed by competent and accredited boards, offering equitable access to local and international opportunities for all Emaswati, including marginalized groups.

STAKEHOLDERS

Ministry of ICT: Launch national digital literacy programs and support grassroots digital initiatives.

ESCOM / EPTC / ECB: Fund digital literacy programs starting from lower grades; capacitate educators; provide training on cybercrime and data privacy; offer youth-friendly data bundles (in collaboration with MTN and Swazi Mobile); ensure inclusiveness of students with disabilities; expand rural internet connectivity.

Royal Science and Technology Park (RSTP): Provide training on digital literacy and business mentorship for youth and educators.

Artificial Intelligence Academy: Deliver specialized training on digital literacy and emerging technologies.

Wanderport: Support schools and communities through Wi-Fi router donations and connectivity infrastructure.

Teachers Service Commission (TSC): Promote diversity in hiring; advocate for inclusive teaching practices; hire teachers with technical know-how and experience in inclusivity.

EDUCATIONAL AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

DEFINED ISSUE

Digital Divide: limited access to digital tools, poor infrastructure and insufficient investment in technology and innovation hinder meaningful participation in the digital economy.

These challenges are further worsened by Cultural and societal attitudes: education is undervalued, particularly for vulnerable groups and learners with disabilities, continuing exclusion and inequality.

Inadequate government programs: initiatives like free primary education lack strategic coordination, innovation and inclusivity, reflecting a broader systematic neglect of youth development.

SOLUTIONS

Expansion of free education: Expand free education to high school level and establish after-school clubs and extracurricular programs that teach practical skills not covered in the classroom.

Institutionalize accountability mechanisms: This will ensure that government complies with educational commitments, supported by independent monitoring and evaluation bodies inclusive of parents, civil society, and education stakeholders.

Strengthen teacher development and support systems: Ensure that in-service training does not disrupt learning, and focus on teacher well-being and conducive teaching environments as part of holistic educational reform.

Strengthen monitoring systems: Implement monitoring tools for educator accountability and develop early-stage evaluation models to identify learners' capacities, challenges, and special needs.

Promote inclusive digital access: Provide affordable devices, introduce community ICT hubs, and early digital literacy education in all schools.

Internet access

STAKEHOLDERS

UNICEF: Track and evaluate education and digital literacy funding; support inclusion and monitoring mechanisms.

National Curriculum Centre (NCC): Develop a modern, inclusive, and skills-oriented curriculum that reflects current and future workforce needs.

Swaziland Schools Project: Provide funding for school infrastructure and furniture.

Ministry of Education and Training (including Special Needs Unit): Ensure inclusivity for students with disabilities; build user-friendly schools; hire competent guidance and counseling teachers; introduce vocational skills and Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) education in the curriculum.

ECESWA / Ministry of Labour & Social Welfare / ESHEQ / NCC: Design programs to improve student performance; standardize exam fees; review retirement systems for educators; make assessments more practical and competency based.



Socioeconomic Opportunities

SOCIOECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

DEFINED ISSUE

The youth face significant socio-economic challenges such as high unemployment and high poverty rates which are all stemming from interconnected structural and systematic issues. Key factors contributing to this reality include:

Skills mismatch and limited access to capital: inadequate skills training and limited access to financial resources hinder youth's ability to participate in labor markets or start their own business.

Weak Job creation policies: insufficient job creation initiatives and inadequate labor markets policies fail to address the needs of the growing youth population.

Limited integration of youth economic empowerment: youth economic empowerment programs are not adequately integrated into national development strategies, resulting in a lack of sustainable pathways for growth and development.

SOLUTIONS

Establish youth entrepreneurship funds as a catalyst for youth economic empowerment: Establishing youth entrepreneurship funds, job creation programs, and increase grant opportunities for youth businesses. This will promote sustainability and innovation. The government should set aside a quota to support youth-led enterprises while also implementing entrepreneurship programs in schools to instill a culture of self-reliance early on.

Increase youth access to loans: Creating micro-finance institutions dedicated to providing loans and grants for young people, with reviewed criteria that emphasize individual rather than group access, this would make support more inclusive and accessible.

Retiring individuals should be documented and gradually retrenched to open space for young professionals, while also engaging them in in-house mentorship and workplace training for skills transfer.

STAKEHOLDERS

Junior Achievement Eswatini: Provides youth-friendly percentage loans and supports entrepreneurship programs to empower young innovators.

Kwakha Indvodza: Offers business plan training, vocational skills development, and guidance on CV and proposal writing for youth.

Community Leaders: Review and adjust land access policies, allocate land to youth, and relax land requisition processes to encourage youth-led development.

Youth Revolving Fund: Expands access through decentralization, simplifies application procedures, and broadens loan eligibility for youth entrepreneurs.

Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs: Reduces the cost of developing business plans and simplifies access to grants through the Regional Development Fund (RDF).

SOCIOECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

DEFINED ISSUE

Brain Drain and Vulnerability: many young people are forced to migrate into SADC and International countries in search for better opportunities whilst those who remain are vulnerable to crime, poverty and dependency.

These challenges ensure the continuation of the cycle of poverty and exclusion, limiting the potential of Eswatini's youth to contribute to the country's development.

SOLUTIONS

Strengthen Digital Skills for youth: This will Promote remote work opportunities and equip youths with digital skills including AI literacy, and strengthen their digital empowerment which will further ensure that young people are not only competitive locally but also able to tap into global job markets.

Provide Personal Skills training: Creation of NGO's that will provide trainings on personal skills

STAKEHOLDERS

MTN, Banks, EPTC, EEC: Provide funding and support for youth entrepreneurship while decentralizing information about grants and business services.

Microprojects Programme: Builds and rehabilitates business centers, delegating management to youth groups to enhance local enterprise development.

Ministry of Labour and ESPERC: Develops youth employment schemes and aligns education programs with current market needs.

ENACTUS Eswatini: Promotes entrepreneurship and innovation among tertiary students through experiential learning and business competitions.



Health and Wellbeing



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

DEFINED ISSUE

Weak Healthcare systems: Eswatini's health care systems is in crisis, failing to meet the needs of its young people and compromising their overall well being. The systems inadequacies have severe consequences for the youth's physical, sexual reproductive health and mental health.

Poor Healthcare infrastructure: Health facilities are characterized by poor infrastructure, understaffing, unmotivated and unsupportive health workers, and lack of inclusive services particularly for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

Lack of Youth friendly healthcare services: Youth-friendly services are limited, and barriers such as unfriendly attitudes from healthcare workers, language gaps, lack of specialized adolescent care, and unaffordability of services prevent many young people from accessing timely and appropriate care.

SOLUTIONS

Strengthen SRHR Education: Integrate comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) education into school curricula and community programs to equip youth with accurate knowledge about their rights and health.

Strengthen access to health services for youth: Expand access to youth-friendly health services, including free or subsidized contraception, mobile clinics in rural and underserved areas, and decentralized healthcare facilities with inclusive infrastructure.

Capacity Building for health service providers: Train healthcare workers on adolescent- and youth-friendly service delivery, including mental health care, SRHR, harm reduction therapy, and disability-inclusive practices. Introduce interpreters, sign language as a national third language, and digital platforms or apps to provide confidential support.

STAKEHOLDERS

Ministry of Health: Coordinate and fund health sector programs; delegate nurses and social workers for mental health services; monitor healthcare delivery and performance.

Ministry of Education: Collaborate in training healthcare workers on inclusive education; integrate health education into school curricula.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Technical Working Group: Develop youth-centered SRHR programs; create youth representation platforms; implement monitoring and feedback systems.

Eswatini Nursing Council: Evaluate performance and accountability of nurses and healthcare workers.

NERCHA / CANGO: Program design, implementation, and evaluation within the health sector.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

DEFINED ISSUE

Poor Health Education: Adding to these structural issues is a critical lack of health education, including comprehensive sexuality education and mental health awareness, leaving youth uninformed about their rights and vulnerable to teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, gender-based violence, and preventable deaths.

High Mental Health challenges: Mental health challenges are escalating due to stigma, insufficient counseling services, limited mental health institutions, and the absence of open dialogue at home or in schools, driving some youth toward substance abuse, depression, or suicidal ideation.



SOLUTIONS

Improve working conditions for health service providers: Improve healthcare working conditions by ensuring fair pay, adequate staffing, motivation, and accountability through codes of conduct, performance monitoring, and sustainable management models.

Strengthen Legal and Policy Reforms: Legal and policy reforms should recognize SRHR and healthcare as fundamental rights, including the legalization of abortion with full, informed education on the pros and cons, and mandatory documentation (e.g., DNA registration at birth) to improve access and accountability.

Strengthen Mental Health Services: Expand mental health services through accessible counseling centers, regional mental health facilities, and 24/7 anonymous helplines. Increase the number of qualified practitioners and integrate psychosocial support into local clinics and tertiary institutions.

STAKEHOLDERS

Youth Peer Educators / Reproductive Health Mentors (RHMs): Conduct youth-focused health outreach and education at the community level.

Microprojects Programme: Support the development and maintenance of health infrastructure.

SANU / Police Academy / FODSWA: Train healthcare workers on inclusive education and disability mainstreaming.

Traditional Institutions: Advocate and support culturally sensitive health education and practices.

Parliamentary Portfolio Committees / Parliament: Oversight of health policies; decentralization of psychiatric and mental health services; address gender-based violence (GBV) issues.

REPS (Reproductive Health Service Providers): Address GBV and SRHR concerns among youth.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

DEFINED ISSUE

Poor Healthcare Monitoring Systems: The absence of feedback mechanisms and accountability in service delivery further silences youth voices, preventing improvements in healthcare responsiveness. Collectively, these systemic, social, and informational gaps place the well-being of Eswatini's youth at serious risk, undermining their potential to thrive and contribute meaningfully to society



SOLUTIONS

Engage families and communities in promoting mental health awareness, fostering open dialogue, and creating social support networks to reduce stigma and encourage healthy coping mechanisms.

Strengthen Advocacy: Promote grassroots advocacy and community-based interventions, such as dialogues through sports, to raise awareness of health rights and reduce stigma around mental health and sexuality.

Support entrepreneurship and SME training for youth as a complementary strategy to improve economic wellbeing and access to healthcare resources.

Strengthen health monitoring systems: Establish sustainability and accountability mechanisms to monitor the quality, inclusivity, and responsiveness of health services, ensuring youth participation in policy formulation and service design.

STAKEHOLDERS

SWAGGA: Provide counseling services and health education.

Ministry of Labour: Monitor and inspect healthcare worker well-being and working conditions.

Phumelela Project: Provide free counseling and psychosocial support.

UNFPA / MSF / FLAS / World Vision / UNAIDS: Fund, support, and share programs related to SRHR services, youth health, and community outreach initiatives



TAKE ACTION NOW!



TAKE ACTION NOW!

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

DEFINED ISSUE

The youth of Eswatini are disproportionately susceptible to adverse effects of climate change, which exacerbates existing socio-economic challenges and undermine their resilience. Key factors contributing to this vulnerability include:

- Limited Adaptive capacity: insufficient awareness and ineffective adaptation strategies hinder young people's ability to cope with environmental shocks and stressors.
- Poverty and resource constraints: household and community level poverty limit the availability of resources to respond to climate disasters increasing vulnerability. The government also does not provide adequate and accessible support and resources to address such shocks and effects.
- Gaps in Disaster risk reduction: inadequate disaster risk reduction measures and their mismanagement compromises the effectiveness of interventions further increasing vulnerability. These challenges have gross impact on youth livelihoods and well-being.

SOLUTIONS

Establish Community Resilience programs: Such programs can empower young people to actively participate in disaster preparedness and response, strengthening local capacity to withstand environmental shocks.

Strengthen Climate Smart Agriculture: Promoting climate-smart agriculture ensures that farming practices are sustainable, productive, and resilient to changing weather patterns, helping to secure food supplies.

Diversify Youth Employment Opportunities: Create opportunities in areas such as waste management, renewable energy, and other green industries to provide alternative livelihoods while promoting environmental stewardship.

Increase access to renewable energy: Making renewable energy more affordable through subsidies or price breakdowns would increase access and encourage youth engagement in sustainable practices.

STAKEHOLDERS

COSPE: Supports community-based climate resilience projects and promotes sustainable development initiatives.

Ministry of Agriculture: Engages farmers on climate-smart agriculture and develops strategies for sustainable food security.

Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs: Facilitates policy engagement and shares environmental updates to guide national adaptation efforts.

Eswatini Environmental Authority (EEA): Oversees environmental licensing, regulation, and monitoring to ensure compliance with sustainability standards.

Ministry of Education: Integrates climate change and adaptation topics into the national curriculum to build awareness from an early age.

Ministry of Natural Resources: Conducts environmental assessments and ensures responsible use of natural resources.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

DEFINED ISSUE

Food insecurity: youth face food insecurity due to the erratic weather patterns which affect agricultural productivity.

Health Risks: Youth face intense health risks due to food insecurity and climate sensitive diseases. The youth are also faced with long term consequences of climate change which threatens future opportunities and their livelihood ensnaring them into the cycle of poverty

SOLUTIONS

Climate Change Education: integrating climate change education from lower grades would instill awareness and knowledge. This would also equip future generations with the skills and mindset needed for adaptation and mitigation of the effects of climate change.



STAKEHOLDERS

Women Farmer Foundation / PELUM: Promotes climate-smart agriculture and empowers farmers, especially women, to adopt sustainable practices.

Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC): Ensures biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of natural heritage.

National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA): Coordinates national disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation measures.

Ministry of Economic Planning and Development: Integrates climate resilience and sustainability into national development planning and policy formulation.



Political Intolerance, Shrinking Civic Space, and Social Exclusion

POLITICAL INTOLERANCE, SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE, AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

DEFINED ISSUE

Youth in Eswatini face challenges exercising their rights despite constitutional guarantees. Restrictive laws limit their freedom of expression and participation. The restrictive environment is characterized by

- Culture of fear and surveillance: young people operate under a climate of fear where monitoring and profiling on digital platforms suppresses dissenting voices and limits dialogue.
- Restrictive laws and political intolerance: Laws such as The Suppression of Terrorism Act restrict freedom of expression and assembly, while political intolerance and social pressure limits opportunities for youth engagement.
- Marginalization of Vulnerable Groups: LGBTQ youth face deep seated cultural and religious stigma, undermining their rights and safety and limiting their ability to express their identities and advocate for inclusion.

SOLUTIONS

Advocate for Law Review: Advocate for the alignment of national legislation with constitutional and international human rights standards to protect freedom of expression and association. This includes decriminalizing same-sex relations, enacting anti-discrimination laws, and allowing the registration of LGBTQIA+ organizations to promote equality and civic inclusion.

Establish Youth Civic Education Programs: Introduce civic education programs that empower young people to understand their rights, responsibilities, and avenues for participation in national discourse. These programs should also include digital human rights education to promote safe, responsible, and informed online engagement.

Establish Effective and Independent Human Rights Safeguarding structures: Establish independent oversight institutions such as an ombudsman office to safeguard civil society actors, whistleblowers, and activists from intimidation or political persecution. Proper enforcement of the Cybersecurity Act should prioritize the protection of digital freedoms rather than their restriction.

STAKEHOLDERS

Human Rights Commission: Enforces laws to end victimization, investigates cases of abuse, and advocates for inclusive policies that protect all citizens.

Ministry of Labour: Ensures the welfare of students and young workers is protected and acts on violations of their rights.

ESCOM (Eswatini Communications Commission): Strengthens and enforces the Cybercrime and Cybersecurity Act to protect digital rights and prevent online victimization.

Media: Promotes accurate, unbiased reporting, raises awareness on human rights issues, and provides a platform for diverse voices and civic dialogue.

United Voices for Diversity: Documents human rights violations, advocates for legal reform, and supports marginalized communities.

POLITICAL INTOLERANCE, SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE, AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION



SOLUTIONS

Conduct Nationwide Awareness Campaigns: These would assist to challenge stigma, stereotypes, and discrimination—particularly against marginalized groups like the LGBTQIA+ community. Promote intergenerational and interfaith dialogues to build empathy, tolerance, and social cohesion.

Ensure Media Independence: Strengthen independent media institutions to ensure fair, accurate, and unbiased reporting that encourages public accountability and informed civic participation. Provide spaces and resources for youth-led advocacy organizations to amplify diverse voices and contribute to policymaking.



STAKEHOLDERS

Ministry of Justice: Upholds and enforces constitutional rights, ensuring all citizens have access to justice and protection under the law.

Religious Bodies: Foster interfaith dialogue, promote tolerance, and help challenge stigma and discrimination within communities.





Discrimination against people with disabilities (PWD)

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

DEFINED ISSUE

Youth with disabilities (PWDs) in Eswatini encounter significant barriers to participation in society due to pervasive discrimination, social exclusion, and stigma. These challenges are multifaceted, affecting various aspects of their lives including the following:

- Education: limited accessibility and accommodation in schools coupled with inadequate resources and lack of awareness about disability needs hinders their educational attainment.
- Social Activities: stigma, poor accessibility, and limited acceptance from families and communities restrict their involvement in sports, social activities, and community life.
- Healthcare: inadequate resources and lack of training for healthcare professionals limit access to quality healthcare services for PWDS.
- Employment: Youth with disabilities face high rates of unemployment and are often disqualified from job opportunities due to their impairments.
- Social Inclusion: Bullying, labelling, and social marginalization are common experiences reinforcing feelings of isolation and exclusion.

SOLUTIONS

Enforcing Inclusion & accessibility laws and Policies: Enacting and enforcing strong inclusion and accessibility laws and policies is crucial to ensure that public spaces, schools, workplaces, and healthcare facilities are designed to accommodate all individuals.

Awareness Raising: Disability awareness campaigns can help reduce stigma by educating families, communities, and institutions about the rights and capabilities of persons with disabilities.

Implementation of Inclusion Programs: Deliberate inclusion programs spanning education, employment, sports, and leadership are necessary to guarantee equal opportunities and meaningful participation.

Integrating disability considerations into the education curriculum and infrastructure planning ensures that inclusivity is embedded across all sectors.

Defining and implementing special programs tailored to different categories of disabilities allows for personalized responses that address specific needs, whether physical, sensory, or intellectual.

STAKEHOLDERS

Ministry of Education and Training: Ensures inclusive infrastructure and trains more teachers to support learners with disabilities.

DPM's Office: Oversees and coordinates efforts to address the needs of persons with disabilities.

Municipality: Ensures public infrastructure and facilities are accessible and disability-friendly.

Ministry of Labour: Promotes inclusive hiring practices and protection from workplace discrimination.

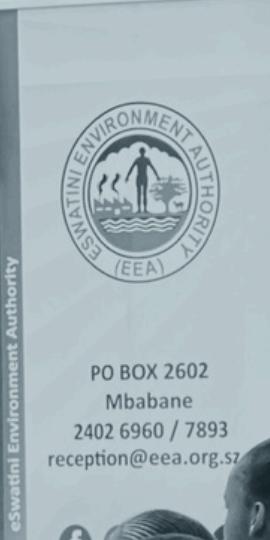
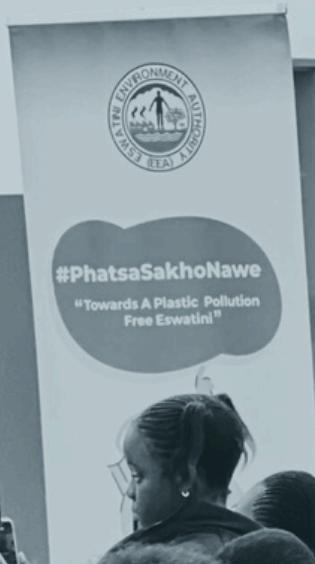
Media Houses: Raise public awareness and combat stigma against persons with disabilities.

FODSWA: Advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities and intervenes in cases of violations.

Business Eswatini: Encourages inclusive employment and supports disability-friendly corporate practices.

Commercial Amadoda: Promotes entrepreneurship and mentorship opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Community Leaders (Chiefs): Advocate for inclusion and protection of persons with disabilities within communities.





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