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# The impact of government initiatives in addressing challenges facing youth graduates in Zanzibar: A case study of Zanzibar Youth Council

Khamis Salum Abdi<sup>1</sup>,

[khamisabdi9@gmail.com](mailto:khamisabdi9@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup>School of Education, The State University of Zanzibar, Zanzibar, Tanzania.

Aley Soud Nassor

[aley.nassor2@gmail.com](mailto:aley.nassor2@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>School of Natural and Social Science, The State University of Zanzibar, Zanzibar, Tanzania

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## Abstract:

The study examined the impact of government initiatives in addressing the challenges facing youth graduates in Zanzibar. The focus of this study was Zanzibar Youth Councils (ZYCs). Specifically, it examined the roles and powers of Zanzibar Youth Councils and their impact on addressing challenges facing youth graduates in Zanzibar. In doing so, it also proposed measures to improve and promote the role of ZYCs in addressing the challenges of youth graduates in Zanzibar. The study was conducted in Urban West Region of Zanzibar and targeted youth graduates who are members of ZYCs and other youth stakeholders. The study used qualitative research approach and data were collected through interviews and Focus Group Discussions. The sample size of the study comprised 45 respondents. The study found the roles and powers of ZYCs are to advise the Government on matters related to youth, advocate for youth rights in Zanzibar, to connect and networking youth on different programs, to approve and endorsement youth programs. Furthermore, the study identified impact of ZYCs in addressing challenges facing youth graduates in Zanzibar include creation of employment opportunities through projects of youth empowerment such as agriculture, fisheries, poultry, tailoring and carpentry projects. Lastly, the study suggests measures that may be taken in order to improve the working of ZYCs in addressing challenges facing youth graduates in Zanzibar. These include mobilization of more resources from various sources and enhancement of capacity building programs for both staff and members of councils at all levels.

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**Keywords:** Zanzibar, Youth Council, Youth, Graduates, challenges

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## 1. Introduction

Today's world appears to have the most youthful population in history. It is estimated that nearly 1.8 billion, or nearly 90% of the youth population, live in developing countries, where they make up a large proportion of the population (Belmonte & McMahon, 2019). Africa is the continent whose a

majority of its people are youth. In 2015, the number of youth inhabitants in the Africa aged between 15 and 24 years was estimated to be 229.6 million, accounting for 19.4% of the total population, with children under the age of 15 accounting for the remaining 40.9% (486 million). The African youth population is rapidly growing in comparison to other parts of the world where the number of youth populations is declining. The youth population in Africa between the ages of 15 and 24 is expected to increase to 331.4 million, or 19.7% of the continent's population, by 2030. As it is well known that this population contributes significantly to the labor force as well as the continent's development prospects (Nana Akua Anyidoho, 2016). Likewise, Tanzania's youth population is expected to be 35% of the total population by 2020. Unluckily, this huge number of youth, which can be used as a huge benefit and resource for the country's economic growth and development, is largely unemployed (Mtebe, Kissaka, Raphael, and Stephen, 2020). From this perspective, it indicates that youths including graduates are being excluded from their demands and needs as compared to other remaining groups. these needs include education, employment and financial needs (Kinsella, & Philips, 2005). The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar has made concerted efforts to initiate different programs and projects for youth development in all key aspects including social, political and economic development. These initiatives include, introduction of Youth development policy which provides key frame work and youth focus in all development sectors, the establishment of a Ministry which is responsible for youth development, the establishment of the Zanzibar Youth Councils as centers for youth programs and projects, the presence of Zanzibar Higher Learning Loans Board for proving education loans for youth, the establishment of Zanzibar Youth Employment Program 2019/2020 for youth economic empowerment, the presence of youth economic funds through Municipal Councils (4% of revenue collection is allocated funds for youth).

Youth councils are supposed to be given the roles and powers to have a permanent impacts or outcomes on both individuals and communities by establishing different projects and programs. Youth councils can also promote an intergenerational dialogue and improve the image of youth in the eyes of policymakers (Augsberger, Collins, & Gecker, 2018).

However, so far, there is no sufficient research to explain the impact of the Youth Councils through their different programs and initiatives in addressing challenges facing youth graduates in Zanzibar. Hence, this research reports the impact of government initiatives in addressing challenges facing youth graduates in Zanzibar.

## **2. Materials and methods**

The study was conducted at Urban region Unguja, Zanzibar archipelago. Zanzibar is located off the coast of Tanzania mainland in East Africa on the Western Indian Ocean. The archipelago consists of the islands of Unguja and Pemba which form the isles of the United Republic of Tanzania. As of the last Population and Housing Census conducted in 2012, the population of Zanzibar is approximately is 1,303,569, of whom 896,721 inhabit Unguja and 406, 8 inhabit on Pemba (NBS, 2014).

The sample of this study comprised 45 respondents including 2 Retired National ZYC Leaders, 2 current National ZYC Leaders, 6 Respective District ZYCs Leaders, 1 Director of Youth Development, 2 Private Stakeholders representatives from NGOs (ZAFAYCO and ZYF), and 1 representative from UNFPA, and 1 Youth from the Youth of The United Nations and 30 members of ZYCs who are youth graduates from their respective districts.

The 2.1 provides detail of respondents based on gender

**Table 3. 1: Distribution of respondents based on gender**

Category of respondent	Male	Female	Total
Member of ZYCs	14	16	30
ZYC District Leaders	4	2	6
ZYCs current leaders	2	-	2
ZYCs retired leaders	1	1	2
Representatives from DPs	1	1	2
Representatives from NGOs	2	-	2
Director of Youth Development	1	-	1
<b>Total by gender</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>45</b>

Field data (2022)

Interview schedules was arranged to collect data from two retired ZYC National leaders, 2 current ZYC National Leaders, 6 ZYCs district leader, 2 from each district of urban west region, Director of Youth Department, Representatives from NGOs (ZAFYCO & ZYF), Development Partners (UNFPA & YUNA). Also, Focus Group Discussions were employed to the ZYCs members from District levels. Three (3) FGDs were conducted. Each group comprises 10 ZYCs members from each District. Specific issues discussed according to researcher needs based on the research plan. The discussions took about 45 minutes to an hour. A respondent got adequate time to contribute their views on specific issues under discussion.

Data were managed by research team to ensure security and storage. To ensure security of the data, only research leader has a direct access to the data and the collected data can only be used for academic research purpose. The data from respondents were collected using interviews and FGDsand analyzed by using thematic analysis. Data analysis was guided by six (6) steps as suggested by Maguire and Delahunt (2017). These steps include familiarization with data, generating initial codes, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining themes and finally writing of the final report.

### 3. Results and Findings

#### A. 3.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The study involved 45 respondents. These were; Retired National ZYC Leaders (2), Current National ZYC Leaders (2), Respective of District ZYCs Leaders (6), Director of Youth Development (1), Private Stakeholders from NGOs representatives dealing with youth development (ZAFAYCO and ZYF) 2, and representatives from Development Partners UNFPA (1) and Youth of the United Nations

(1) and 30 members of ZYCs who are youth graduates. Out of these respondents members of ZYCs were involved at FDGs and the rest 15 youth stakeholders participated in interviews.

#### *4. Roles and powers of ZYCs in addressing youth graduates' challenges in Zanzibar*

The primary goal of the study was to examine the roles and powers of ZYCs in addressing youth graduate' challenges. In Zanzibar, Youth Councils are legally recognized and given their powers and roles through the Act No. 16 of 2013 in section 6. These roles include; to advise and make consultation with the Ministry in all youth issues and development programmes, to advocate for the youth rights in Zanzibar and expansion of sustainable youth development mechanisms including policies, regulations, laws, principles and programs; to initiate, operate and manage programs in support of youth social and economic development as it deems fit. Also, among the powers of ZYCs include invest or deal with any money; receive donations or gifts in money or other property from any person or body for the furtherance's of its objective; publish, from time to time, such professional or other information as it deems necessary or expedient for the promotion of the objects of the Councils, approve and endorse youth programs.

As per above roles and powers of ZYCs, Zanzibar Youth Graduates were supposed to stand a good chance to benefit from services of the Zanzibar Youth Councils and be able to address many of their challenges. During data collection through Interviews and FDGs, the respondents were requested to evaluate the role and power of ZYCs in addressing youth graduates' challenges.

The findings from FDGs indicate that (27 out of 30) which equal to (90%) of ZYC members agreed that ZYCs perform important role and have adequate power to tackle challenges facing youth graduates. Some of them provided the number of examples to support their opinion.

Members also, identified that ZYCs are able to organize and network Youth graduates from different districts in order to participate fully in different sectorial activities; including activities like agriculture, ICT, business, entrepreneurship, policy formulation on different matters regarding youth issues. ZYCs also support in provision of employment to the youth graduates in Zanzibar, provision of special loans to youth graduates, provision of education on matters related to youth development; they also provide financial support to different youth NGOs in Zanzibar, for example ZARDEO, MAARIFA MEDIA etc. In addition to that, ZYCs implement different development projects and programs in order to connect youth with both public and private Institutions to foster their development and to strengthen unity and solidarity among youth and create awareness on different issues related to youth development.

In the course of FDG with ZYCs members, they insisted the important roles played by ZYCs and adequate powers possessed by them in addressing youth graduates' challenges as one member said:

*ZYCs have the role and mandate to solve different challenges facing youth graduates' in Zanzibar including getting loans from Financial Institutions such as Banks and Government Empowerment Funds as it is recommended and stipulated in the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar Regulations. Therefore, the councils have*

*important role in addressing youth challenges especially financial challenges as it seems to be important in the life of youth and community at large. (Source: ZAFAYCO, on 19/06/2022)*

The above opinion of R1 concurs with the expression provided by another member who argued:

*As we know that Youth council is a youth platform in helping youth on different matters. So, ZYCs have the role and power to network youth graduates in different opportunities in relation to their professionals and talents such as Information and communication technology networking, business network, entrepreneurship network and other business as youth in Zanzibar need to be linked with different sectors for their benefit as they can solve their challenges and their family and country at large. [source: member from ZYC on 08/07/2022]*

Also, findings collected from both the retired and current ZYCs Leaders and Director of Youth who were interviewed almost similar with those collected from the ZYCs members. All four leaders and the Director of Youth Development emphasized that ZYCs play very important roles and have adequate powers in addressing challenges facing youth graduates. They mentioned that ZYCs coordinate programmes and projects to support youth development to both graduates and non-graduates.

To find more information on this objective, development partner working in Zanzibar was interrogated. Although her views on the role of ZYCs are almost similar with other respondents, she somehow hesitated to agree that ZYCs have adequate powers to address challenges facing youth graduates, especially when it comes to the issue which needs the Government involvement:

*The main role of ZYCs is to advise the Government on matters related to youth in Zanzibar. These include the youth agenda for better health, better education, better life, better and safe place for living as well as to get decent jobs for youth development but ZYCs have no power to push the Government to take actions of any youth agenda. The Government is not obliged to take any action to support ZYCs. It acts only on its own will. [source: Development Partner 1 on 13/07/2022]*

The above responses indicate that ZYCs play important roles and have adequate powers in addressing youth graduates' challenges, including networking the youth graduates in different sectors like agriculture, ICT, business, entrepreneurship, policy formulation on different matters regarding youth issues, provision of education on matters related to youth development, supporting different youth NGOs in Zanzibar, establishing different youth projects and programs, connecting youth with public and private Institutions for youth development, strengthening unity and solidarity among youths and creating awareness on different issues related to youth development.

### 5. *The impacts of Zanzibar Youth Councils in addressing challenges facing youth graduates in Zanzibar*

The next goal of this research was to examine the effects of ZYC's in addressing the challenges that young graduates face in Zanzibar. Previous studies have observed several impacts that youth councils have on youth and society at large. Martin *et al.* (2007) observed that youth councils in countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kenya, and Uganda contain a broad range of impacts regarding the projects, including cleaning the streets and latrines and other societal changes like increased youth self-esteem and the development of youth policies. Also, Zaalishvili (2019), in his study on youth councils in European countries like the Czech Republic and Denmark found that the youth councils as well as other young people's organizations have direct impacts on addressing challenges facing communities like climate change and making decisions among their own youth societies. They are involved in programs where young people join forces and successfully participate in ordinary political administration processes.

In this study, all categories of respondents were involved in seeking opinions on the impacts of the youth councils in Zanzibar in addressing challenges facing youth graduates. Interviews and FGDs were the methods used to collect data for this objective.





A number of programs and initiatives implemented and conducted by ZYCs were identified to have a direct impact on youth graduates in Zanzibar. These programs include the establishment of small-scale projects for youths with the aim of promoting their well-being and creating job opportunities so as to reduce the youth unemployment rate in Zanzibar. The projects, such as agricultural projects, poultry projects, tailoring projects, and fisheries projects, were identified by respondents as having been initiated. Also, with the same goal, companies such as cleaning companies have been established with the support of the ZYCs and have had a positive impact in fighting against unemployment for youth graduates. These projects were mentioned by respondents during interviews and FGDs. For example, West A District Councils have cleaning projects, tailoring projects, and welding projects; West B District Councils have horticulture projects, cleaning projects, fisheries projects, ICT projects, and tailoring projects; and in Urban District Councils, the leading projects are cleaning, poultry, and horticulture. These projects involve both youth graduates and non-youth graduates.

During the interviews and FGDs, majority of all categories of respondents 36(80%) though some of them had minor reservations on effectiveness of some of the program initiatives, agreed that the ZYCs initiatives have significant impacts in reducing unemployment and promoting the well-being of youth in Zanzibar. As in the course of interview with leaders of ZYCs one of them was of the opinion that.

*We as a leader of the ZYCs, are making efforts to connect our members including youth graduates with other street youths to engage in various activities including agriculture projects, tailoring, cleaning projects and animal husbandry. We believe that youth graduates have got knowledge in the Universities and colleges but street youths have practical applications and skills on different projects. Therefore, when we combine together all groups we can get good products and results that can make them all happy and enjoy their life by solving their problems especially financials problems' [Current Leader 1 on 01/07/2022]*

Another ZYC leader concurs with his colleague as he added that.



*ZYC is an important organ that connects the youths including graduates in the Government Institutions and departments and other Development partners like UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, USAID as we believe that these partners play an important role in helping youth on different projects like education projects, Financial projects, health projects as well as investment projects that can help them in addressing their challenges [Current Leader 2 on 01/07/2022]*

The opinion of ZYCs leaders was also supported by youth graduate who are members of ZYCs. One of them said the following during FGDs.

*ZYCs give us opportunity in different programs including training, especially entrepreneurship skills. We also remember that in 2019 through the Projects from the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, the projects called ZAYEP which is the Zanzibar Youth Employment Project; many youths almost 660 both from Unguja and Pemba have been supported on different sectors like tailoring, carpentry, driving as well as welding programs [Member of ZYC 5 on 09/06/2022]*

However, when it comes to respondents from Development partners Organizations and NGOs their views on impacts of those initiatives implemented by ZYCs in addressing challenges facing youth graduates, they slightly differed with those of other categories, although they agreed with other respondents that the ZYC initiatives have significant impacts to youth in Zanzibar, they added that the initiatives are inadequate and not effective as expected. One respondent from Development partners Organization went further by arguing that:

*ZYCs continue to support youth graduates but it is not as much as it was expected according to their roles which seemed to be very broad and with objectives focusing on addressing youth challenges. For example, there is still a big problem of unemployment and many youth graduates suffer from this problem, also there is the challenges of capital as well as working experience among the graduates in Zanzibar [Development Partner 1 on 13/07/2022]*

Apart from the initiatives and projects during the data collection, the respondents indicated that ZYCs facilitate accessibility of credit facilities to organized youth groups and organize capacity buildings training program on entrepreneurship and leadership skills. The aim of these training programs is not only to address issues relating to youth unemployment but also enhancing working experience and address the problem of skills mismatches among youth graduates in Zanzibar.

As some members of ZYCs argued during FGDs that:

*ZYCs give some materials to youth like tailoring machines, welding equipment, cleaning facilities, and carpentry equipment that require their projects to focus on entrepreneurship especially through the project called Zanzibar Youth Employment Program (ZAYEP) which has been focusing on addressing some youth challenges. In some cases, Youth councils also facilitate the availability*

*of loans from commercial banks such as CRDB and others [Member of ZYC 5 on 09/06/2022]*

Even representatives from NGOs agreed that on facilitating credit facilities to youth, ZYCs are playing significant roles to make sure the facilities are easily accessible to youth and reach as many youths as possible. As in the course of interviews one NGOs representative suggested that;

*ZYCs are trying to provide different entrepreneurship skills as well as motivating and directing youth to apply different Government and Private loans and funds though there are still some challenges especially on planning and management of the said funds and loans. Therefore, we recommend ZYCs to have good strategic plans as well as implementation plan on financial aspects so as to help youth graduates and other ZYCs members in addressing their challenge [Source: Zanzibar Youth Forum, on 19/06/2022]*

From the above observations it can be noted that ZYCs have a significant impact on youth development in addressing youth graduates' challenges. ZYCs implement different projects such as agriculture, tailoring and cleaning projects. ZYCs members have been trained and connected with the Financial Institutions including Banks and Zanzibar Economic Empowerment Fund located under the Ministry of Empowerment in the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. The councils have mobilized youth graduates to establish their enterprises and linked them with financial Institutions for further support including credit facilities and loans.

6. *Measures to promote the working of ZYCs in addressing challenges facing youth graduates in Zanzibar*

Several studies have been conducted seeking to put in place measures to enhance working and performance of youth councils and other youth organizations in promoting the well-being of their members and their respective communities at large. Cushing, et al.; (2017) who conducted a research on youth councils in Australia and Indonesia suggests that the councils can be more proactive in promoting positive changes if the Government and other stakeholders would channel their youth development supports through the councils. The Councils can work more closely with marginalized and less privileged youths to promote inclusion and policies which may tackle youth challenges more effectively and efficiently. On his side, Camarin (2019) has highlighted on the importance of enhancing coordination system within the youth agencies and strengthening institutional capacity building of youth networks as a key component to archive more positive outcomes of youth councils in dealing with challenges facing youths.

In this study, the study participants were required to express their opinions on the measures to be in use so as to develop ability and promote working of the ZYCs in addressing challenges facing youth graduates in Zanzibar. Using interviews and FGDs, the following measures were employed to guide respondents in identifying appropriate measures to be considered which could enhance and promote working of ZYCs. These include increasing resources availability which include financial, human and material resources, capacity building programs, enhancing power enshrined to ZYCs, and

enhancing inclusiveness. The findings reveal that overall; all the measures pointed out above were found very essential in enhancing effective working of ZYCs in addressing youth challenges. Table 4.1 below displays detailed opinions of respondents on the measures to be taken to enhance working of the ZYCs.

**Table 6. 1: Respondents' opinions on measures to enhance working of ZYCs**

S/No.	Measures	No. of Respondents (45)	Percentage (%)
1.	Increasing resources availability		
a)	Financial Resource	45	100
b)	Human Resource	42	93.33
c)	Material resource	40	88.88
2.	Capacity building programs	35	77.78
3.	Enhance Powers Enshrined to ZYCs	32	71.11
4.	Enhance inclusiveness	30	66.7
5.	Others	07	15.55

Table 6.1(Field data 2022)

The data in Table 6.1 suggest that overall almost all respondents from all categories in one way or another were of the opinion that among the factors which hinder the effective working of the ZYCs are inadequate resources which include financial, human and material resources. And in order to make them more effective in addressing challenges facing youths, including those graduating from academic Institutions, it is imperative to increase resource availability to them.

Comparatively, however, financial resources seem to be more concerned with respondents as all 45 respondents which is equal to 100% when they were requested to provide their opinion on the issues during the interview and FGDs identified financial resources as the most important element to be considered to enable the councils realize their objectives. It was suggested that the financial resources may not be sourced from the Government alone but also other arrangements must be made to ensure other stakeholders such as Development Partners, NGOs and financial Institutions contribute to the availability of the resource. With more resources, ZYCs will be able to have more useful and effective projects and also be able to reach more youths both in urban and remote areas.

Apart from financial resource, respondents also put weight to human resources and material resources in which 42 (93.33%) and 40 (88.88%) of respondents respectively suggested measures to be taken to increase capable manpower and physical infrastructures to the Councils.

Human resource plays a very important role in any organizations set up. They are employed to serve organizations (Youth councils) in order to make them more efficient and effective and diligent in the process of carrying out their functions.

In the course of interviews one current leader of the council urged that;

*Let's be honest, if the Youth Councils capacity is to be enhanced, sufficient resources in terms of staff, equipment particularly computer facilities and office equipment need to be made available to them. Adequate funding which is a perennial problem should also be solved immediately. It is not sufficient to*

*merely have councils which cannot function properly due to the lack of resources [Current Leader 2 on 01/07/2022]*

The above opinion concurs with the observation made by a representative of NGOs who observed that:

*One of the missing components in the Youth Councils resource base is capable members of staff who could help the councils to implement their routine activities effectively and efficiently and mobilize fund raising programs. Indeed, with capable staffs the problem of insufficient funds could be solved significantly [Source: Zanzibar Youth Forum, on 19/06/2022]*

Similar views were observed from the representative of NGOs who added that;

*...In a real sense, ZYCs are still doing small projects which do not reflect their objectives as it was stipulated in their Act. Therefore, ZYCs are required to capacitate their staffs or change them and bring others who can work effectively and efficiently according to the needs of their members including Youth graduates in Zanzibar... [Source: ZAFAYCO, on 19/06/2022]*

Furthermore, the respondents almost in the same weight identified the issue of enhancing power and inclusiveness in the working and practice of the councils. Data indicate that 35(77.78%) and 32 (71.11%) of all respondents mentioned the need to enhance powers and inclusiveness respectively in order to promote efficiently the effectiveness of ZYCs.

In the course of interviews one retired leader of a Youth Council testified that;

*Youth Councils are trying their best and somehow successfully by being able to fulfill their responsibility including finding solutions of challenges facing youth including graduates. However, their effectiveness is constrained by lack of adequate powers to make their own decisions. In some cases, they rely on decisions made by Senior Officials from the Ministry and the Government. To make them more efficient and effective, this tendency should stop and the council be given more power and autonomy to make their own decisions on their agenda and programs related to the benefit of their members. Also, they will be able to provide equal access of opportunities and services to all youths including the excluded and marginalized ones and hence be able to promote inclusiveness [Member of ZYC 1 on 09/06/2022]*

In addition to the above-mentioned measures majority of respondent pointed out that, there were some few actions which were indicated though by a limited number of respondents<sup>07</sup> (15.55%). These actions are mentioned as important as others in promoting working performance of ZYCs specifically in addressing challenges facing youth in Zanzibar. The actions include creations of youth networks so that they can play more effective roles in the youth development process and increase transparency in the working of Youth councils in order to enhance accountability and trust worthiness and honesty.

## 7. Conclusion

This study has explained that the Zanzibar Youth Councils are playing significant roles and have adequate powers to address challenges facing youth graduates in Zanzibar. These roles and powers are clearly stipulated in Zanzibar Youth Council Act No. 16 of 2013, which provides for the establishment of youth councils at all levels in Zanzibar. Also, during the study, the respondents demonstrated how these roles and powers are translated into actions by the councils to promote the development and well-being of youth in Zanzibar. The councils have had a significant impact on youth by addressing the challenges that young graduates face in Zanzibar. Youths, specifically those graduating from higher learning institutions, have benefited from various projects and programs that are either directly implemented by the councils or, with the initiatives of the councils, are implemented by other institutions like financial institutions and development partner organizations. However, it was noted that the councils sometimes find themselves ineffective and inefficient due to the lack of adequate resources, including financial and capable human resources.

The youth councils are suggested to mobilize more resources from various sources, including the government and other stakeholders, and enhancement of capacity-building programs for both staff and members of the councils at all levels. The process of building capacity will improve institutional capability, which is the ability of the councils to carry out their functions more effectively. Once again, this can only be possible if the councils are provided with sufficient resources.

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