



Executive Summary: Activities of Youth Engagement and Empowerment by the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya (IRCK)

30th May 2025

In the last two years, the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya (IRCK) has remained at the forefront in empowering youth through interfaith and civic-led initiatives that build on peace, resilience, and security. The Council imagines youth as a central constituency towards the search for sustainable peace and disarmament. It has prioritised inclusive youth participation through structured platforms such as the Interfaith Youth Networks at national and county levels. Through these platforms, youths have been actively involved in conversations on peaceful living, social cohesion, and addressing the causes of violence, such as radicalisation, unemployment, and exclusion.

IRCK youth empowerment initiatives have been highly concentrated on innovation and online engagement this year. IRCK has trained youth on using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and social media as tools for digital peacebuilding and countering violent extremism. Youth developed counter-narratives to extremist ideologies and practised intergenerational dialogue, resisting hate speech, misinformation, and radicalisation on the internet. Mental wellbeing and health are also included in IRCK's youth engagement agenda, with psychosocial support and awareness programs that address trauma, identity crisis, and the psychosocial dimensions of youth exposure to conflict.

Environment conservation is central to IRCK's youth work and part of the green economy and climate justice agenda. Through reforestation campaigns, clean-up activities, and climate action public awareness sessions, youth have been put at the centre as stewards of sustainable development. Not only do these move the effects of environmental degradation, a primary cause of conflict, anymore, but also open avenues for economic empowerment. Youth have been empowered with green business models, entrepreneurship, and sustainable livelihoods, further entrenching them as peacebuilders and agents of socio-economic transformation.

IRCK outreach has also expanded to civic education and advocacy, where young people have been activated to participate in policy discussions, elections, and governance dialogue forums. The Council has enhanced their participation in national peace and security programs by educating the youth about their rights and duties. These efforts have translated into peacebuilding at a grassroots level, and youth take the lead in local initiatives on interfaith living, protection of children, and prevention of gender-based violence. Through these interventions, young people are seen as recipients and leaders in constructing secure, equitable, and inclusive communities.

Recommendations: Youth Engagement in Disarmament, Security and Non-Proliferation

To best utilise youth in disarmament and non-proliferation, their participation must be institutionalised at local, national, and international levels. Youth should be formally represented in peace and security platforms and should participate in setting security and disarmament policies.

Specific disarmament education among youth must be provided with a budget and included in school and religious education curricula, and internet spaces must be utilised to raise mass awareness.

Further, youth peace clubs and networks must be helped to design and implement localised disarmament activities, including community sensitisation, small arms monitoring, and post-conflict reintegration programs.

Last, national and global actors must build long-term funding mechanisms and mentorship for youth-led innovations in security and disarmament, where young individuals are not only participants but leaders of worldwide peace and non-proliferation campaigns.

About the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya

The Inter-Religious Council of Kenya (IRCK) is a coalition of all major faith communities in Kenya that works together to deepen interfaith dialogue and collaboration among members for a common endeavour to mobilise religious people's unique moral and social resources and address shared concerns.

IRCK members include Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK), National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), Organisation of African Instituted Churches OAIC, Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), Seventh Day Adventist (SDA), Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), National Muslim Leaders Forum (NAMLEF), SAAJ and Hindu Council of Kenya (HCK). Each religious coordinating body has a national coverage with structures that ensure reach at the grassroots level. IRCK has formed the Kenya Women of Faith Network and the Kenya Interfaith Youth Network to ensure that the perspectives of women and youth are included in its operations and activities.

Contact

Linus Nthigai

ed@irck.or.ke