



# Evaluating the Implementation of the 2007 National Youth Development Policy in Tanzania: Theories, Outcomes, and Policy Recommendations for Youth Economic Empowerment

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**Abstract:** *This study assesses the implementation and impact of the National Youth Development Policy (NYDP) of 2007 on youth economic empowerment in Tanzania. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 2,130 youth across 14 regions and triangulated with key informant interviews, document reviews, and structured observation. The findings reveal notable successes, including increased access to concessional loans (from TZS 2.3 billion in 2015 to TZS 72.82 billion in 2022), the creation of over 217 youth-led enterprises, and the allocation of 274,091.33 acres of land to youth economic ventures. Despite these gains, challenges persist and youth unemployment remains high at 12.2%, youth participation in agriculture and ICT remain low, and policy coordination is weak due to the absence of a formal implementation strategy. The study applies Community Youth Development, Positive Youth Development, and Humanistic theories to analyse the structural, social, and motivational dimensions of policy effectiveness. Recommendations include revising the NYDP to align with Agenda 2063 and SDGs, developing a robust implementation framework, investing in digital and agricultural ecosystems, and mainstreaming youth participation in planning. The paper concludes that a reformed, inclusive, and evidence-driven policy is necessary to unlock Tanzania's demographic dividend and drive sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** *Youth Economic Empowerment, National Youth Development Policy (2007), Tanzania, Policy Implementation, Community Youth Development, Digital Inclusion, Employment*

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## 1. Introduction

Youth represent one of the most dynamic, ambitious, and yet vulnerable population segments worldwide. According to the World Bank (2023), there are now over

1.8 billion young people aged 10 to 24 years, marking the largest youth population in history. Youth today are more educated, digitally connected, and socially conscious than ever before, positioning them not merely as beneficiaries of development but as essential drivers of economic growth, innovation, and social transformation (UNDP,

2014). Recognizing this potential, the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underscores the centrality of youth in achieving global progress, particularly through goals focused on quality education (SDG 4), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and reducing inequalities (SDG 10) (UN, 2015). Across Africa, the youth demographic represents both a potential economic dividend and a development challenge. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020), approximately 21.9% of youth in sub-Saharan Africa are not in employment, education or training (NEET), with female youth disproportionately affected. Additionally, over 72 million youth in Africa are unemployed or underemployed (ILOStat, 2021). In response, the African Union introduced the African Youth Charter (2006), urging member states to ensure full integration of youth in all spheres of socio-economic and political development. Regional frameworks such as the East African Community (EAC) Youth Policy also provide commitments towards youth empowerment (EAC, 2017).

Tanzania is no exception to these demographic dynamics. The 2022 National Population and Housing Census reported that 34.5% of Tanzania's population falls within the youth bracket of 15 to 35 years (NBS, 2022). This demographic group is the backbone of the nation's labour force and has the potential to significantly contribute to economic transformation. However, a significant proportion of Tanzanian youth remain engaged in low-productivity informal work or are unemployed. Youth unemployment, estimated at 12.2% in 2021, is nearly double that of adults and remains a major socio-economic concern (ILFS, 2021).

In recognition of this challenge, the Government of Tanzania launched the National Youth Development Policy (NYDP) in 2007. The policy was designed as a cross-sectoral strategy to empower youth socially, economically, and politically. The vision of the policy is to have empowered, well-motivated, and responsible youth capable of participating effectively in the development of society (URT, 2007). The policy's objectives span from promoting youth access to employment, entrepreneurship, and education, to ensuring youth participation in governance and leadership, and strengthening youth-friendly services and infrastructure (PMO-LYED, 2022).

The NYDP (2007) reflects Tanzania's commitments to international and regional obligations, aligning itself with the UN SDGs, the African Youth Charter, and the EAC Youth Policy. Among the notable interventions implemented under the policy include the establishment

of youth development funds, support for youth-led enterprises, promotion of life skills training, and decentralisation of youth services through local government authorities (URT, 2019). Councils have been mandated to allocate 10% of their internal revenues to women, youth, and persons with disabilities, further institutionalising financial inclusion at the grassroots level (PMO-LYED, 2022).

Despite these efforts, implementation gaps persist. Studies and stakeholder reviews indicate that youth policies often lack coherence in execution and monitoring. While policy frameworks are in place, many youths are unaware of their existence, and the mechanisms for holding duty bearers accountable remain weak (Anyidoho & Omolo, 2016). Moreover, youth participation in national planning and budgeting remains limited, and access to economic opportunities is hindered by barriers such as limited access to capital, land, markets, and digital tools (GIZ, 2021).

Furthermore, the education system continues to produce graduates with skills misaligned with labour market demands, further compounding youth unemployment (NBS, 2021). Female and rural youth are particularly disadvantaged, experiencing higher levels of exclusion and vulnerability. The emergence of new economic domains such as the gig economy, digital work, and climate-resilient green jobs calls for a policy shift that is adaptive and future-oriented.

The lack of a formal implementation strategy for the NYDP (2007) further complicates the ability of government and non-government actors to synchronise efforts and assess impact effectively. This fragmentation has created a gap between policy intent and actual outcomes. Considering the 2024 review of the Youth Development Policy, it is crucial to assess the successes, shortcomings, and opportunities presented by the 2007 version.

Therefore, this study seeks to assess the implementation of the National Youth Development Policy (2007) with specific emphasis on youth economic empowerment in Tanzania. It examines whether the policy has translated into tangible benefits for young people and explores factors that have facilitated or impeded its implementation.

**The study is guided by the following specific objectives:**

1. To examine the extent to which the National Youth Development Policy of 2007 has been implemented in Tanzania.
2. To identify the factors and challenges that have facilitated or hindered the implementation of the policy.
3. To evaluate the impact of the policy's implementation on various aspects of youth economic empowerment.
4. To assess the roles and contributions of key stakeholders (government agencies, NGOs, youth organizations, etc.) in executing the policy.
5. To propose actionable recommendations for strengthening the implementation of the youth development policy and enhancing youth economic empowerment in Tanzania.

By situating the Tanzanian experience within global and regional youth development discourse, the study seeks to contribute evidence-based insights for policy reform and programme strengthening. The next section presents a theoretical foundation, review relevant literature, and provides an in-depth analysis of findings.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Overview of the Literature Review

The literature surrounding youth development policy and economic empowerment spans multiple academic disciplines, including economics, education, sociology, and public administration. In developing countries such as Tanzania, the urgency of aligning youth development policy with implementation realities has been widely discussed. This section provides a critical synthesis of the theoretical and empirical literature relevant to the National Youth Development Policy (NYDP) of 2007. The review begins with an analysis of applicable theories that inform youth empowerment policies, followed by empirical studies drawn from global, continental, regional, and national contexts. The final section highlights the knowledge gaps identified in previous studies and connects them to the research problem, thereby justifying the relevance of this study.

### 2.2 Theoretical Literature Review

This study is guided by three complementary theories: Community Youth Development (CYD) Theory, Positive Youth Development (PYD) Theory, and Humanistic Theory. Together, these frameworks offer a robust lens for analysing youth economic empowerment policies, as

they emphasize structural, relational, and psychological dimensions of youth development.

Community Youth Development Theory argues that sustainable youth development requires active youth involvement within community systems. Checkoway and Richards-Schuster (2003) define CYD as a framework that integrates youth development and community development by positioning young people as both beneficiaries and contributors to community change. The theory assumes that inclusive community structures—such as local government authorities, NGOs, and grassroots organizations—are critical in promoting youth empowerment through participatory governance and equitable resource allocation. According to Perkins et al. (2003), CYD posits that youth are empowered when communities invest in capacity-building and foster supportive environments. However, critics argue that the model sometimes underestimates broader structural and economic barriers, especially in resource-constrained settings where local institutions lack capacity or funding. Despite these criticisms, CYD is directly relevant to this study because it reflects the structure of Tanzania's NYDP (2007), which mandates local councils to allocate land, training, and financial support to youth through decentralized platforms.

Positive Youth Development Theory provides a strengths-based perspective that views youth as assets capable of contributing to society. As articulated by Lerner et al. (2005), PYD revolves around five key competencies: competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring, which collectively promote the development of a sixth outcome—contribution. PYD assumes that youth development is optimized when individuals are provided with skill-building opportunities, mentorship, and civic engagement platforms. It also posits that interventions focusing on the holistic development of youth yield better socio-economic outcomes. Nonetheless, PYD has been criticized for focusing too heavily on individual agencies, sometimes neglecting structural inequalities such as poverty, gender, and rural-urban disparities (Lerner et al., 2005). Still, PYD is highly applicable to this study because the NYDP (2007) emphasizes entrepreneurship training, financial literacy, and educational life skills of which align with the core components of PYD.

Humanistic Theory, based on the works of Maslow (1943) and Rogers, underscores the importance of psychological well-being, dignity, and personal growth in human development. Maslow's hierarchy of needs posits that individuals must have their basic physiological and safety needs met before they can pursue self-actualization. Applied to youth development, this theory implies that

effective empowerment programs must go beyond economic inputs and address emotional, educational, and social needs. Humanistic Theory assumes that self-motivation and fulfillment are essential for sustainable youth development. Its relevance to this study is evident in the NYDP's approach to supporting youth dignity and self-efficacy through entrepreneurship and ICT inclusion initiatives. Nonetheless, the theory faces criticism for its individualistic orientation, which may not account sufficiently for socio-political inequalities and the limitations imposed by institutional environments (Brück, 2009). Despite this, Humanistic Theory remains pertinent to the holistic evaluation of youth empowerment outcomes in Tanzania.

Together, these three theories are not mutually exclusive but rather reinforce one another. CYD provides a structural framework for community engagement and policy implementation; PYD adds a relational dimension by focusing on capacities, networks, and mentorship; and Humanistic Theory addresses intrinsic motivations and psychological well-being. These theories form a multidimensional basis for assessing the effectiveness of youth development policies like the NYDP in Tanzania.

## 2.3 Empirical Literature Review

At the global level, literature affirms the critical importance of investing in youth as a strategy for long-term development. The World Bank (2007) highlighted youth inclusion as a prerequisite for economic transformation and equitable growth. International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020) data indicate that over 72 million young people in Sub-Saharan Africa are unemployed or underemployed, with approximately 21.9% categorized as NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). These statistics reflect the widespread and persistent challenge of youth marginalization, which demands targeted, multisectoral interventions. UNDP (2014) has argued that integrated approaches to youth development—those combining education, employment, health, and participation—tend to be more effective than fragmented initiatives.

Regionally, the African Union adopted the African Youth Charter in 2006 to urge member states to institutionalize youth development strategies. Despite this policy framework, implementation remains uneven across countries. Anyidoho and Omolo (2016) found that many African countries, including Tanzania, face challenges related to limited budgets, low youth participation, and ineffective coordination. The East African Community (EAC, 2017) introduced the EAC Youth Policy to

harmonize regional efforts, but evidence suggests that practical localization of the policy has been slow.

In Tanzania, several studies have attempted to assess youth policy implementation, but most are fragmented and focus on isolated components such as training, loans, or employment schemes. Kimaro (2017) examined youth employment programs and found that skill mismatches and a lack of industry linkages continue to undermine youth employability. GIZ (2021) identified weak monitoring systems and limited awareness among youth regarding available policy benefits. Although URT (2022) reported achievements such as the increase in youth loan disbursements and the establishment of youth-led enterprises, these claims are primarily based on administrative data without independent validation. Moreover, access to land, despite being a core provision of the NYDP, remains uneven across regions, with rural youth and young women facing the most significant barriers (NBS, 2021; OWM-KVAU, 2022).

A critical empirical milestone includes the allocation of 274,091.33 acres of land to youth by 174 councils (OWM-KVAU, 2022). However, land utilization remains suboptimal due to infrastructural challenges, lack of irrigation support, and limited extension services. Only 38.2% of stakeholders reported satisfaction with the accessibility and quality of financial services provided through youth-specific funds, citing low financial literacy and exclusion of rural youth (NBS, 2021). Other studies have failed to explore how these interventions perform at scale or how effectively they align with global frameworks such as Agenda 2030 or continental strategies like Agenda 2063.

## 2.4 Summary and Knowledge Gap

The reviewed literature reveals that while the theoretical underpinnings of youth empowerment are robust and multifaceted, their practical implementation remains a challenge—especially in low-income countries. Existing empirical studies in Tanzania offer insights into sector-specific outcomes but do not comprehensively assess the holistic implementation of the 2007 NYDP. Moreover, limited evidence exists regarding the effectiveness of coordination mechanisms, youth participation in planning, and the inclusivity of policy outcomes across diverse youth groups. This study seeks to fill these gaps by providing a rigorous, mixed-methods evaluation of the NYDP's implementation from 2007 to 2022, with particular attention to economic empowerment indicators such as access to finance, land, training, ICT, and employment.

### 3. Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the National Youth Development Policy (NYDP) of 2007, specifically its contribution to youth economic empowerment in Tanzania. The methodology complies with the Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education (JRIIE) guidelines by clearly outlining the research design, sampling, data collection, and analysis techniques while adhering to ethical standards and validity principles.

#### 3.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional descriptive design was employed to investigate the current status and experiences of youth in economic development programs linked to NYDP-2007. A mixed-methods approach allowed for the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data, thereby strengthening the study's credibility and robustness. Qualitative data provided contextual and experiential insights, while quantitative data offered measurable indicators of policy implementation.

The use of both approaches also aligned with the JRIIE's emphasis on methodological rigor and multidimensional data interpretation. Quantitative findings were presented using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were coded thematically to identify trends and patterns in stakeholder responses.

#### 3.2 Sampling Design and Population

The study used purposive multistage sampling to ensure diverse regional representation while maintaining feasibility. Tanzania was stratified into eight geographic zones: Lake Zone (Mwanza, Kagera), Western Zone (Kigoma, Tabora), Central Zone (Singida, Dodoma), Northern Zone (Arusha), Coastal Zone (Tanga), Southern Highlands Zone (Mbeya, Rukwa), Southern Zone (Ruvuma, Mtwara), and Eastern Zone (Morogoro, Dar es Salaam).

From these zones, 14 representative regions were selected. Each region contributed approximately 150 youth respondents, yielding a targeted sample of 2,100 youth. However, the final dataset included responses from 2,130 youth aged 15–35 years. The inclusion criteria specified that participants be either permanent or

temporary Tanzanian residents living in rural or urban areas.

The rationale for zone-based sampling was informed by the assumption that youths within the same geographic clusters would exhibit similar demographic, economic, and social attributes. Therefore, data gathered from one region within a zone was presumed reflective of adjacent regions. For example, Mwanza was sampled on behalf of the entire Lake Zone, thus omitting Mara due to proximity and demographic similarity.

#### 3.3 Data Collection Methods

To collect robust and reliable data, the study employed multiple tools and techniques:

(a) Document Review: The research team conducted a comprehensive desk review of national policies, youth development strategies, published academic literature, and statistical bulletins. This provided a foundational understanding of the policy landscape and guided the development of field tools.

(b) Observation Checklist: A structured observation instrument was used to validate the physical presence and functionality of youth economic empowerment interventions, such as youth centres, loan desks, and agricultural demonstration plots.

(c) Structured Questionnaires: The primary tool for quantitative data collection was a paper-based, structured questionnaire. It was translated into Kiswahili and piloted in one non-participating region to ensure contextual validity and linguistic clarity. The tool comprised both closed- and open-ended questions and was administered to the youth sample.

(d) Key Informant Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were held with selected stakeholders, including Regional Administrative Secretaries (RASs), District Youth Officers, leaders of youth-led organizations, and NGO representatives. Interviewees were chosen using purposive sampling to reflect varied institutional and experiential insights.

#### 3.4 Enumerator Training and Field Supervision

A total of 42 enumerators and supervisors were selected based on their previous experience in field surveys, familiarity with youth development issues, and fluency in

Kiswahili. A two-day training workshop was conducted in Morogoro from November 3 to November 6, 2023, covering essential topics such as research ethics, field protocols, interview techniques, and tool administration. The training ensured methodological consistency and prepared the field team for high-quality data collection across all selected regions. During fieldwork, each region was assigned to a supervisory team comprising national-level researchers and regional facilitators. Daily debriefing sessions were held to address logistical challenges and ensure methodological consistency. Team leaders provided on-the-spot coaching and quality checks during data collection.

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted in accordance with ethical standards outlined in JRIIE’s author guidelines. Ethical clearance was granted by the Prime Minister’s Office – Labour, Youth, Employment and Persons with Disabilities (PMO-LYED). Administrative approval was obtained through a formal letter addressed to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG), who further instructed RASs and District Administrative Secretaries (DASs) to facilitate data collection.

Participants were informed about the study’s purpose, their voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Confidentiality was guaranteed, and all information was anonymized. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation, both orally and in writing.

### 3.6 Data Quality Assurance

To ensure data validity and reliability, a rigorous quality control protocol was observed. This included:

- Daily data reviews and spot-checks by supervisors.
- Real-time data entry using Microsoft Excel and SPSS, followed by daily cleaning.
- Verification of questionnaires for completeness and consistency.
- Routine communication between zonal teams and the central coordination office in Morogoro.

Enumerators were instructed to immediately report inconsistencies or data-related issues. Re-interviews were conducted in instances where responses were incomplete or ambiguous.

## 3.7 Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data was processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25.0. Analysis focused on frequencies, percentages, means, and cross-tabulations to explore relationships across regions, gender, age, and economic activity.

Qualitative data collected through interviews and open-ended questions were transcribed verbatim, translated into English where necessary, and subjected to thematic content analysis. Coding was conducted manually and cross-validated by multiple researchers to minimize subjectivity.

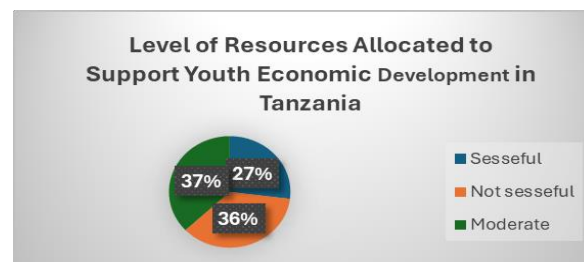
Emerging themes were grouped under categories aligned with the study objectives—such as access to resources, employment, financial services, and agriculture—to facilitate comparative analysis and triangulation with quantitative findings.

This integrated methodological design ensured that the research captured a nuanced and accurate picture of youth economic empowerment under the National Youth Development Policy of 2007. The mixed-methods approach strengthened the reliability of findings and provided an evidence base for the policy recommendations presented in the study.

## 4. Results and Discussion

This section presents findings from the study structured around the key thematic areas aligned with the research objectives. The data, derived from field assessments, secondary sources, and stakeholder interviews, is interpreted within the broader socio-economic and policy context of youth development in Tanzania. The presentation adheres to APA 7 formatting and the JRIIE manuscript submission guidelines.

### 4.1 Access to Land and Economic Resources



Youth's access to productive resources such as land, credit, and infrastructure is fundamental to their economic empowerment. According to Figure 1, 27% of stakeholders reported that youth access to land and resources was successful, while 36% considered it moderately achieved. These figures suggest positive progress, but also underscore persistent inequalities (URT, 2022).

The Tanzanian government has initiated commendable actions including the allocation of 217,882.36 acres of land to youth across 111 Local Government Authorities (OWM-KVAU, 2022). Youth-targeted loan disbursements grew significantly—from TZS 2.3 billion in 2015 to TZS 28.2 billion in 2020. However, access to land remains constrained, especially among rural youth and women who encounter legal, cultural, and institutional obstacles (World Bank, 2022).

To close this gap, the study recommends gender-responsive land reforms, local-level administrative reforms, and targeted support to marginalised youth in both urban and rural settings.

## **4.2 Youth Employment Trends and Policy Impacts**

Employment creation is a strategic pillar of the National Youth Development Policy (2007). As per the Prime Minister's Office (2022), over 584,333 employment opportunities have been created and 28,390 youth trained in entrepreneurship. Informal sector employment has risen significantly, from 16% in 2007 to 30.5% in 2021 (NBS, 2021).

However, unemployment remains an issue, particularly among urban and female youth. In 2021, the overall youth unemployment rate stood at 12.2%, with urban youth (17.9%) and young women (16.1%) disproportionately affected (ILFS, 2021). Causes include rural-to-urban migration, skills mismatches, and limited private sector absorption (Kimaro, 2017). Compared with regional counterparts like Mozambique (42.7%) and Namibia (45.5%), Tanzania performs relatively better (UN, 2018).

Addressing these challenges requires reforms in vocational training systems, industry linkages for skill application, and active youth labour market policies to address underemployment.

## **4.3 Youth Entrepreneurship and Company Ownership**

Entrepreneurship among youth has expanded. Youth-owned companies rose from 129 in 2015 to 305 in 2022. The number of youths trained in entrepreneurship and business management grew from 5,250 to 34,714 in the same period (OWM-KVAU, 2022).

This growth is partly attributed to local economic empowerment initiatives, including subsidised training programs and improved access to municipal funds. However, many youth-led enterprises remain micro in scale due to limited capital, lack of collateral, and minimal access to markets (NBS, 2021).

To scale up impact, decentralised business incubators, market linkage support, mentorship platforms, and tax incentives should be mainstreamed into youth economic empowerment strategies.

## **4.4 Youth Participation in the Informal Sector**

The informal sector serves as a major employment avenue for youth. It accounts for 31% of youth employment nationally, with 60% of urban youth engaged in informal economic activities (ILFS, 2021; IMF, 2017).

Table 1 data reveals that 26% of stakeholders perceived informal sector promotion as successful, while 39.2% rated it moderate. This suggests that 65.2% of stakeholders believe the efforts are at least moderately effective.

Despite this, barriers remain. These include difficulty transitioning from informal to formal sector, lack of legal protection, insecure business premises, and poor access to business information (Workforce Survey, 2021). The Youth Development Fund and other institutional financing schemes have provided support, yet more needs to be done in terms of legal frameworks and simplified business registration systems.

## **4.5 Financial Services and Poverty Reduction**

The 2007 Youth Policy emphasised accessible credit services to reduce youth poverty. By 2022, over 9,500 youth will be able to obtain TZS 8.1 billion in loans through the Youth Development Fund (YDF).

Additionally, under the Local Government 10% scheme, councils disbursed TZS 73 billion to youth, women, and persons with disabilities (OWM-KVAU, 2022).

Despite this progress, only 38.2% of stakeholders considered the financial services highly successful. Barriers included low financial literacy, gender bias in loan allocation, and limited banking access in rural areas (NBS, 2021). Compared with countries such as Burundi, which allocated TZS 87.5 billion to youth activities in 2021/2022 (Statistica, 2022), Tanzania's public funding levels remain modest.

Lessons from Malawi—where youth were linked with Opportunity International Bank for affordable loans—highlight the need to integrate youth finance with broader financial inclusion strategies (RED, 2018).

## 4.6 Youth Engagement in Agriculture and Livestock

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of youth employment in Tanzania. According to the 2021 Labour Force Survey, 61.67% of youth are engaged in agricultural activities, highlighting its critical role in absorbing the young labour force (ILFS, 2021). Moreover, stakeholder assessments from this study reveal that 72.5% acknowledged either moderate or high levels of youth participation in agriculture, underscoring the sector's significance not only in employment generation but also in policy prioritization. These findings affirm that agriculture continues to serve as a vital economic avenue for youth, particularly in rural areas where alternative livelihoods are limited. Government efforts include tax waivers, training at centres such as Morogoro and Mkongo, and strategic partnerships with agricultural cooperatives (URT, 2022). Furthermore, policies such as the National Strategy for Youth Involvement in Agriculture (2016–2021) aimed to expand youth engagement along the agricultural value chain.

Nonetheless, youth face substantial obstacles: lack of irrigation infrastructure, limited land access, minimal extension services, and financial constraints. The removal of 105 taxes and fees between 2015–2019, while beneficial, must be complemented by access to modern farming tools and agribusiness value chain opportunities (Dercon & Gollin, 2014; African Union, 2011).

To ensure sustainability, agricultural transformation should be youth-inclusive, climate-resilient, and supported by public-private partnerships focused on value addition, agritech innovation, and land-use reforms.

## 4.7 Overall Assessment

Overall, the implementation of the 2007 National Youth Development Policy has achieved notable progress in promoting youth economic empowerment across sectors. However, several gaps persist in the areas of coordination, implementation strategy, monitoring, and inclusive policy design. For Tanzania to fully benefit from its youth demographic dividend, these gaps must be addressed through a comprehensive policy and institutional reform agenda grounded in inclusive, data-driven, and participatory approaches.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This section presents a comprehensive synthesis of the study findings and articulates a set of policy and programmatic recommendations to strengthen youth economic empowerment in Tanzania. The conclusions and recommendations follow JRIIE manuscript standards and are aligned with the study's thematic focus areas.

### 5.1 Conclusion

The study assessed the implementation of the National Youth Development Policy (NYDP) of 2007, with a primary focus on youth economic empowerment in Tanzania. The findings revealed substantial achievements, including the increase in concessional loans accessed by youth from TZS 2.3 billion in 2015 to TZS 72.82 billion in 2022, the establishment of over 217 youth-led Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and the training of more than 15,000 youths in entrepreneurship (OWM-KVAU, 2022). Additionally, the policy facilitated the allocation of 274,091.33 acres of land by 174 Councils for agricultural use by youth, and supported the expansion of ICT infrastructure aimed at enhancing digital literacy and entrepreneurship (URT, 2022).

Despite these gains, the study identified critical gaps that hindered the full realization of the NYDP's goals. These include a misalignment between youth education and labour market demands, persistently high youth unemployment (12.2% in 2021), low youth participation in agriculture despite targeted land allocations, and inadequate strategies for digital entrepreneurship (NBS, 2021; ILFS, 2021). Furthermore, the absence of a national implementation strategy under the 2007 policy led to fragmented coordination, limited awareness among stakeholders, and uneven policy outcomes across regions.



The findings point to the urgent need for a reformed and forward-looking youth development framework that is grounded in evidence, inclusive of youth voices, and adaptable to Tanzania's changing socio-economic and technological landscape.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study's conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed to improve youth economic empowerment and policy effectiveness:

1. **Policy Revision and Modernization** The 2007 National Youth Development Policy should be comprehensively reviewed and updated to reflect current realities and align with national development strategies (such as FYDP III), the African Youth Charter (AUC, 2006), and global development frameworks like Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. Emerging economic sectors such as digital economy, creative industries, circular economy, and climate-smart agriculture should be prioritized.
2. **Development of a National Implementation Framework** The revised policy must be accompanied by a robust implementation strategy, outlining roles and responsibilities for different actors (government, CSOs, private sector, development partners), key performance indicators, timelines, and budgetary allocations. Monitoring and evaluation tools should be integrated to ensure accountability and adaptive management.
3. **Strengthening Youth Entrepreneurship Ecosystems** Efforts to promote youth entrepreneurship must address structural barriers such as access to finance, startup capital, market linkages, and tax burdens. Youth-specific incubation hubs, cooperative development support, and public-private partnerships should be expanded. Financial literacy training and credit management education should be incorporated into all youth financing schemes.
4. **Enhancing Youth Engagement in Agriculture** The government should formulate youth-inclusive agricultural policies with a focus on value chain development, agri-business training, mechanization support, climate-smart innovations, and land access reforms. Training centres like Morogoro and Mkongo should be expanded, and youth agripreneurship networks strengthened to increase motivation and peer learning.
5. **Expanding Digital Access and Inclusion** Bridging the digital divide is essential. The government, in collaboration with the private sector, should invest in broadband infrastructure, especially in underserved rural areas. Establish community ICT centres and digital skills programs tailored to youth needs. Promote innovation labs, e-commerce platforms, and virtual training programs to stimulate digital livelihoods.
6. **Establishment of a Multi-Sectoral Coordination Mechanism** A dedicated legal and regulatory framework should be developed to guide inter-sectoral coordination on youth issues. This mechanism should operationalize Section 3.9.2 of the Revised National Youth Development Policy (URT, 2024), ensuring that ministries, regional and local government authorities, and youth-focused institutions work in tandem. Coordination should include data-sharing platforms, joint planning, and integrated service delivery.
7. **Mainstreaming Youth Participation in Policy and Planning** Youth participation should be institutionalized through youth advisory councils, participatory budgeting, and consultative forums at national and sub-national levels. Building the capacities of youth-led organizations will enhance civic engagement and contribute to better policy outcomes.
8. **Targeted Investments in Skills Development** Expand technical and vocational education and training (TVET) opportunities, with curricula that respond to labour market demands. Partner with industries to provide apprenticeships and job placements. Encourage lifelong learning and recognition of prior learning for out-of-school youth.
9. **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy** Implementation must be gender-responsive and inclusive of marginalized youth groups, including youth with disabilities, rural youth, and young women. Affirmative action measures should be applied to reduce inequalities in access to opportunities and resources.

## 5.3 Final Reflection

Overall, while the 2007 National Youth Development Policy laid an important foundation for youth economic empowerment, its implementation has been uneven and challenged by coordination, capacity, and financing gaps. A revised policy must be transformative, evidence-based, and youth-led. With the right reforms, Tanzania can

unlock the demographic dividend and harness youth potential to drive inclusive and sustainable development.

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