

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY SECRETARIAT



**A Report on Youth Engagement in the East African
Community Integration Process**

**EAC Secretariat
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List of abbreviations

AU	African Union
CDF	Consultative Dialogue Framework
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
EAC	East African Community
EALA	East African Legislative Assembly
EACYAP	East African Community Youth Ambassadors Platform
EAYN	East African Youth Network
EACYP	East African Community Youth Policy
IUCEA	Inter University Council for East Africa
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEACA	Ministry of East African Community Affairs
NYC	National Youth Council
PSO	Private Sector Organisations
REC	Regional Economic Community

Chapter 1: Importance of East Africa's Integration Agenda

1.1 Brief Introduction and Background

Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are considered key drivers for economic and political development. The importance of RECs was re-emphasised at the May 2013 commemoration of the African Union's 50th Anniversary when the Commission launched the Solemn Declaration and Agenda 2063. The main objective is to encourage pan-Africanism, sense of unity, self-reliance, integration and solidarity.

The East African Community (EAC) was established in 1967 but collapsed in 1977, after ten years. At establishment, it was envisioned that it would have a customs union, a common external tariff, common currency and postal services; deal with common services in transport and communications, research and education; and eventually become a political federation. In 1999, the EAC was re-established as an intergovernmental initiative to steer the cooperation between the Republics of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda and eventually Rwanda and Burundi to greater socio-economic and political development. To steer cooperation between the Partner States, the EAC Secretariat was established and its operations guided by the EAC Treaty with a vision for *a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa*. The Mission of the EAC is to *widen and deepen Economic, Political, Social and Culture integration in order to improve the quality of life of the people of East Africa through increased competitiveness, value added production, trade and investments*. The principles of the Community, under Article 7 (1)(a) is to ensure that it is "people-centred and market-driven cooperation".

While the administrative system of the EAC integration process has been figured out, stakeholders critique that the process is too focused on systems and processes, with inadequate input from the citizens in the Region. In particular is the question of sustaining conversations beyond the present generation of bureaucrats, private sector or civil society. East Africa is one of the sub-regions in Africa in which an estimated 60% percent of the population are youth, described in the EAC Youth Policy as those aged between 15 and 35 years old. As the EAC integration widens and deepens there is growing need to bring the youth, present and future leaders, on board to engage with them on issues pertinent to regional integration. Recognizing that youth are a crucial asset and an important key resource in social economic and political development of the community the EAC has been undertaking various initiatives to promote continuous dialogue among the youth and incite their interest in advocating for regional integration.

1.2 Justification for the Study

Young men and women are the main stakeholders and beneficiaries of EAC Initiatives. This is acknowledged by stakeholders in the EAC, by virtue of the high youth population as well as the fact that the future and success of the EAC integration rests with the present generation of youth.

The EAC Secretariat has over the years invested in enhancing youth participation and involvement in the EAC integration process. Working in collaboration with non-state actors and development partners, the EAC has incrementally increased the engagement with young people and youth organisations. It is now time to take stock of the interventions and their results.

This report presents a review of the extent to which youth participation in EAC integration initiatives have contributed to the Integration agenda, and recommends further steps stakeholders can take to enhance the participation of a large and important demographic in whose hands the future of the East African Federation rests.

1.3 Purpose of this Report

This report documents youth involvement initiatives in EAC Integration processes, provides a chronological and comprehensive portrait of the initiatives undertaken by the EAC Secretariat to involve and engage youth in general and at the university level in particular, in EAC integration activities.

In Chapter 1 is a brief introduction on the EAC and purpose of the report;

While Chapter 2 reviews documentation and literature on whether and how the EAC Partner States have placed the role of young people in the integration process;

Chapter 3 offers and describes youth involvement in regional integration, within the framework of existing structures and processes at EAC and assesses the results of the different youth involvement efforts; and

Finally Chapter 4 gives recommendations on how the EAC can broaden its reach and engagement with diverse groups of young people in the Region as well as deepen their involvement in regional integration.

Chapter 2: A Review of Intention for & Implementation of Youth Involvement in Regional Integration

The EAC as an intergovernmental initiative to steer the cooperation is established under the principle to ensure that cooperation of the five Partner States is people-centred and market-driven. This is enshrined in specific policy positions and establishment of various platforms for engagement with non-state actors. Evidently, this is to ensure that errors of the past which led to dissolution of the EAC in 1977 are not repeated. In that time, failure was attributed in part to the lack of engagement of citizens, private sector and civil society. Under this new arrangement, the EAC would not just be an understanding of the Governments but would be the engagement of the region's people for shared prosperity.

2.1 Policy Position

The details of how the EAC will fulfill the core principle of being a people-centred and market-driven cooperation is described in Articles 120 (c), 121, 122, and 127 which provide for enhancing the role and participation of vulnerable groups (including youth); and role of women in decision making processes at policy formulation and implementation levels; creation of an enabling environment for the private sector and civil society to take full advantage of the community through continuous dialogue; participation of entrepreneurs in improving policies and activities; among others. Further, the EAC Treaty mandates Partner states to promote the creation of an enabling environment for participation of civil society in the development of activities that encourage integration. The Secretary General is mandated to provide a platform for consultation between the private sector, civil society organisations and other interest groups and appropriate institutions in the Community.

Whereas subsequent sections of the Treaty in Articles 128 and 129 detail how to work with the private sector, including strengthening the private sector and promote cooperation among business organizations and professional bodies; and Article 130 describes the development of relations with other regional and international development partners, the Treaty does not cover as elaborately the engagement with civil society organizations. Furthermore, the mandate of how the EAC works with key social groups is not as well detailed as for its engagement with women. Youth, the elderly and persons with disability are considered disadvantaged and vulnerable groups for whom the Partner States will cooperate to develop and adopt a common approach to work with them.

In subsequent initiatives, it has been recognized that it is important to enhance the participatory engagement of young men and women in the EAC integration, at decision-making levels and processes – not just recipients of social interventions. These initiatives include various processes and decisions between 2008 and 2013 that moved towards more elaboration on EAC Secretariat engagement with civil society and especially marginalized groups, including women and youth. The EAC Forum of Ministers responsible for social development made recommendations to the Council of Ministers which resulted in significant decisions on youth involvement. First, the establishment of the Sectoral Council on Gender, Youth, Children Social Protection and Community Development (EAC/CM21/Decision75); the Sectoral Council then directed the EAC Secretariat to develop an EAC Policy on Gender Equality, Youth, Children, Social Protection and Community Development (EAC/CM25/Directive24). In July 2013, the EAC Secretariat presented the EAC Youth Policy to the

Sectoral Council on Gender, Youth, Children, Social Protection and Community Development. The Sectoral council passed the Youth Policy which was subsequently adopted by the 27th Council of Ministers in August 2013. This youth-specific policy was the second and most significant decision to promote youth involvement in EAC integration. Subsequently, the EAC Secretariat developed a strategic plan for youth involvement. However, the review of the 3rd EAC Development Strategy cited inadequate participation of citizenry (civil society, women, youth and the private sector). The Director of the Department attributed this to limited resources available. In this strategic period also, the EAC did not report initiatives in support of youth to take advantage of the opportunities. In part this may be attributed to the challenges indicated in the review, specifically the inadequate institutional infrastructure and funds to implement the sector plans and programmes.

The EAC Youth Policy is the second most significant decision to promote youth involvement in EAC integration. Subsequently, the Strategic Plan developed provides a roadmap for policy implementation, as well as roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat and for young people. These two critical tools have been the missing links for the EAC Secretariat programming and perhaps will address the challenges of youth involvement identified in the 3rd EAC Strategy.

2.2 General Platform for Non-State Actors

2.2.1 Consultative Dialogue Framework

The EAC Secretariat has been keen to strengthen popular participation in the East African Community and developed a sensitization guide to EAC structures and processes for non-state actors. The guide is to assist non-state actors deepen their knowledge and therefore be well-informed in their engagement with EAC policies and programmes, decision-making processes, and EAC institutions and organs based on their respective roles and responsibilities. During this process, the EAC Secretariat developed an EAC-PSO-CSO Consultative Dialogue Framework (CDF) approved by the 26th Council of Ministers in November 2012 (EAC/CM26/DECISION06). The Dialogue Framework ensures continuous dialogue in accordance with the EAC calendar of activities and an annual forum is convened by the Secretary General of the EAC. The meeting is organized collaboratively based on an agenda agreed upon between the private sector, civil society, other interest groups and the EAC Secretariat. The design of the Dialogue Framework envisions CSOs, PSOs and other interest groups working together on general and thematic issues on areas of mutual interest. For efficiency and effectiveness, the private sector organizes under the East African Business Council (EABC) at regional level, and civil society organizes under the East African Civil Society Organizations' Forum (EACSO). Membership to each respective regional body is voluntary.

2.2.2 Formally Recognised Organisations

Non-state actors have created opportunities to lobby for their increased participation in the EAC integration processes and to be recognized as important stakeholders. There are a number of non-state actors recognized by the EAC and active at regional level, keen to ensure the effective participation of citizens. These include professional associations, women's organisations, special interest groups, private sector organisations, research and policy think tanks. The organisations recognized by EAC Secretariat are listed in a publication that serves as an EAC guide to structures and processes.

Specifically these include: the Association of Professional Societies of East Africa (APSEA), Africa Women Economic Policy Network (AWEPON), East African Business Council (EABC), East African Communities Organization for Management of Lake Victoria Resources (ECOVFC), East African Centre for Constitutional Development Forum (Kituo cha Katiba), East African Human Rights Initiative (EAHRI), East Africa Law Society (EALS), and the East African Magistrates and Judges Association (EAMJA), East African National Networks of AIDS Services Organisations (EANNASO), East African Support Unit for NGOs (EASUN), Society for International Development – Office of East Africa (SID), East African Sub-Regional Support Institute for the Advancement of Women (EASSI), Southern and Eastern African Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI), and East African Local Government Association (EALGA). Others are interest-based regional level fora that include Investment Forum, the Women in Business Forum, among others¹. From this list it is evident that youth organisations do not work effectively at regional level to receive formal recognition.

At the East African Community Youth Summit on EAC Integration and Development Processes held in Arusha, Tanzania on November 2 and 3 2007, precedent was set for increased youth participation in the EAC integration. With the theme “Networking to realize the role of youth in East African Community integration and development process”, the Summit acknowledged that information and education on regional integration and development is fundamental for enhancement and sustainability of integration. Then, the youth called upon the EAC Secretariat to engage young people as partners to reach out to their peers on issues of EAC Integration and processes which would empower high-level skills needed to drive national and regional development. The Summit was hosted under the umbrella of the East African Community Youth Organization (EACYO) which also sought recognition as a partner to reach young people on EAC issues and processes and be accepted as one of the key institutions for the promotion of EAC integration and in future provide the organization with the observer status to the EAC upon fulfilling the requisite requirements. There is no record that this recognition was ever received or formalized by the EAC Secretariat. EACYO sought to fill a gap on how the EAC engaged with young people as key stakeholders. While EACYO did not receive the formal recognition it sought, the broader goal of the important role of young people in the EAC integration and development process through different avenues have increased since then.

It is evident that in the past five years, the EAC has actioned the statement that “...the EAC integration process is people-centred”. Amid challenges of time and capability to engage broad categories of stakeholders, the EAC has progressively set the stage for engagement with young people in a way that sees them as stakeholders and not as passive beneficiaries of the “goodies” of regional integration.

However, there is room for additional action to ensure that there is space for young people to voice their interests and concerns, and have their efforts recognized as a strategy to boost regional integration.

¹East African Community (2012) *Strengthening Popular Participation in the East African Community: An EAC Guide to Structures and Processes*

Chapter 3: Avenues for and Character of Youth Involvement in EAC Integration

The East African Community has several structures through which various actors and agencies participate in the EAC integration process. These include having Observer Status where organizations have an opportunity to attend meetings of the Organs of the Community; through Memorandum of Understanding non-state actors can engage with the EAC Secretariat to supplement efforts of the EAC at local, national and regional levels; the East African Court of Justice gives opportunity for litigation and interpretation of the Treaty as well as arbitration; through the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) non-state actors have the opportunity to input to the legislative process; and through Expert Working Groups persons with specific expertise or information on particular fields can be invited by EAC organs and institutions to inform policy formulation. Other avenues are through advocacy to exert influence on the EAC policy and decision-making processes, debates or public meetings for discussion issues affecting the people and presented to the EAC Secretariat; and cross border initiatives.

3.1 Avenues for Engagement

Young people and youth organizations have been involved in EAC integration processes through some of these recognised structures over the past few years. The major achievement of youth involvement in EAC integration has been to systematically build rapport between young people, youth serving organizations and the EAC Secretariat or other relevant organs of the EAC. In the analysis below, it will be noted that in many instances what exists so far is only a foundation for more structured engagement by young people and youth organisations in the Integration process.

(i) EAC-CSO-PSO Consultative Dialogue Framework

The culmination of the Consultative Dialogue Framework activities is the EAC Secretary General's Forum (EAC-SG's Forum), which is an annual event to increase stakeholders' role in promoting regional cooperation and accelerating integration, guided by the principles of cooperation for mutual benefit, trust, goodwill, active and constructive participation, inclusivity and respect for diverse views. Stakeholders meet with the SG to discuss progress made and prioritize their respective interests

The first SG's Forum was held in December 2012 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Youth views were represented by EAC Youth Ambassadors from Kenya and Tanzania who presented a paper on "Promoting Employment of Youth through Partnerships with Business Community and Industries". The presentation called on the private sector to play a role in addressing youth unemployment in the Region, through initiatives that would provide decent work (opportunities) for young people. The Ambassadors also indicated that adults (the private sector) should not assume that young people are unmotivated, but to understand that they are often frustrated by the challenging economic circumstances they find themselves in.

At the second SG's Forum held in October 2013 in Nairobi - Kenya, under the theme "The EAC We Want", there was a full session that focused discussion on "Youth and the Challenges of Unemployment". The Forum recommended the creation of a robust

mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of commitments signed by EAC Partner States on youth issues, such as the Youth Exchange Programme, and more specific recommendations to address training, skills building and incentives for the private sector that encourages creation of opportunities for young people and design programmes that enhance job creation. Further recommendations focused on the structural mechanisms for youth engagement in the EAC integration process, to strengthen the EACYAP, as an important avenue to create awareness, identify issues of youth interest and inform youth of available opportunities.

During the third SG's Forum held in 2014 in Entebbe - Uganda, the issues of youth were not as prominent as in the previous years. This may in part be attributed to the fact that the EAC Youth Policy had been adopted and the development of an Action Plan in progress that will constructively guide youth involvement and how to address youth issues. Youth representatives included the EAYN coordinator, members of the EAYN Steering Committee from Uganda and Rwanda and the EACYAP.

In effect, the SG's Forum under the CDF has provided the space for young people, as EAC citizens, to participate in decision and policy making space of key issues on EAC integration. Young people have taken advantage of this opportunity to lobby for issues that directly affect them to be addressed.

There is evidence that the questions raised on the skills and competencies of graduates from learning institutions to fit the market needs were critical issues to address and common in Partner States. The IUCEA took this issue on board and in collaboration with the East African Business Council (EABC) and EAC Secretariat convened a stakeholders' forum to promote closer relations between the private sector and institutions of higher learning in the region to link demand and supply. The youth voice was heard through the EAC Youth Ambassadors or university student guild representatives and different meetings. The youth representatives however did not have a structured input or feedback system to share the debates, outcomes or achievements of this process with their peers.

In general however, there is no evidence that the recommendations of the first and second fora on youth employment have been addressed by the EAC Secretariat or the private sector stakeholders at regional or national levels.

(ii) Memorandum of Understanding

In 2008, The EAC Secretariat signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Africa Youth Trust. The partnership sought to promote the participation of young people specifically through the adoption of policies that would enhance the role of youth in the EAC integration process.

The Africa Youth Trust (AYT) is an independent, non-partisan youth development and advocacy organization. Founded in 2005, and registered in Kenya under the provisions of the Trustees (Perpetual Succession) Act (Cap 164), AYT seeks to guide youth energies and enthusiasm towards peace, equity, and prosperity within and across communities.

Under the banner of the “Mashariki Youth Campaign” AYT was keen to promote youth engagement for sustainable EAC integration and to enhance their role in the region in accelerating the integration process. In this project, AYT collaborated with youth organizations in the five Partner States under the banner of the East African Youth Network (EAYN). The organisations include: La Collectif pour la promotion des Associations des Jeunes (CPAJ) – Burundi, National Youth Sector Alliance (NYSA) – Kenya, Rwanda Youth Network (RYN), Tanzania Youth Coalition (TYC) and Uganda Youth Network (UYONET). Through national-level sensitization meetings between 2012 and 2013 EAYN reached over 1,000 young people across the Region.

For the five year period of the MOU, collaboration between AYT and the EAC Secretariat was an effective learning processes for both youth and youth organizations and for the EAC Secretariat. For young people and youth organizations, this provided direct access to the EAC Secretariat staff and other policy and decision makers including representatives of the Partner states Ministries of East African Community Affairs, Ministries for Youth Affairs or the equivalent. The MoU gave young people *locus standi* with these various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). This helped young people to better understand the structure of engagement in the EAC integration process.

For the EAC Secretariat, the engagement with youth organisations has provided opportunity to appreciate that young people are key stakeholders in the integration process and not simply recipients of the benefits which Integration proffers at present and in future. Young people have offered significant and valuable insights on how to engage them in the Integration process as well as raised issues and perspectives that decision-makers ought to be aware of. Some have been handed over to relevant agencies, such as the great concern for access to education financing and university education or credits across national borders; while others have been incorporated in the Youth Policy for further action.

The AYT and ultimately EAYN enhanced the role of youth in the EAC integration process. One of the achievements was youth-led sensitization on EAC and the adoption of the EAC Youth Policy. The growing relationship with the EAC that is enjoyed by the EAYN is as a result of the work carried out under the MoU. At the 1st East African Community Youth Conference, members of EAYN played an important role in the coordination of the event, hosted by the EAC Secretariat in Arusha, Tanzania.

(iii) East Africa Legislative Assembly (EALA)

EALA's General Purpose Committee is credited to providing support to youth engagement in the EAC integration process.

For the youth, this provided insights on the legislative processes of the EAC, including the fact that there was no framework for youth engagement that existed or a policy to guide on youth priorities. As a result, young people and youth organisations built a rapport with their national representatives to the EAC. Some *strong* relationships and support to youth are specifically reported from Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya.

For example, in January 2013 there was a roundtable between EAYN and the EALA General Purpose Committee, with the involvement of the EAC Secretariat. The meeting sensitized

EALA on youth issues that needed to be addressed in the EAC. During the EALA plenary session held in April 2013 in Kigali, Rwanda, Hon Susan Nakawuki from Uganda who was among EALA members present in the roundtable meeting asked a Priority Question to the Council of Ministers on what actions have been undertaken to address youth issues in the region. Hon. Nakawuki has been championing for the youth in the region and during the presentation of the EAC 2013/2014 budget she noted that the youth sector was among those underfunded despite the youth constituting the largest percentage of East African population. She also noted that the formation of youth councils were long overdue and required support from the EAC².

While no additional budget allocation was made to youth issues, it is important that this was presented in EALA for consideration by other members. Armed with the EAC Policy, youth organisations have opportunity to advocate and lobby for greater resource allocation with support of their allies in the Assembly.

(iv) Advocacy

Youth organisations were active advocates for the development of the EAC Youth Policy. Working closely with the EAC Secretariat Social Sector Department and lobbying support from the Sectoral Council and EALA. The Policy document is a major milestone and creates a framework for advocacy on issues of importance to young people.

The Policy acknowledges the need for full engagement of young people in the EAC integration process in its vision statement for “an integrated East African Community where its youth are empowered to fully participate and benefit in all facets of the region’s development”. The EAC Youth Policy aims at ensuring that youth issues are reflected in all sectors of national development at both micro and macro levels, within the public, private sectors and in civil society. It re-affirms that youth are a distinct stakeholder group whose participation is vital for national development and EAC integration; and promote youth participation in democratic and decision-making processes as well as in community and civic affairs while ensuring that programmes are youth-centred.

EACYP recognizes the need for a common mechanism to address youth issues at EAC level, to coordinate initiatives better and minimize duplication; and to consolidate impact with the aim to “institutionalize youth focused programming within the EAC development and integration processes.”³ Thus, it creates a clear structure for youth involvement in EAC integration processes and assigns roles and responsibilities to the organs and institutions of the EAC. These include the EAC Secretariat, EALA, the EAC Sectoral Council and the EAC Youth Council.

The formation of the EAC Sectoral Council on Gender, Youth, Children, Social Protection and Community development was a breakthrough, to focus on the issues of vulnerable groups and ensure ownership by responsible Ministers as they presented proposals to the Council of Minister. This Sectoral Council’s role with regard to youth takes effect once the policy comes into force. The Council’s role is to facilitate the strengthening of institutional arrangements at

² AYT “Mashariki Youth Campaign” project report

³ EAC Youth Policy, August 2013 p.3

EAC level with clear linkages with institutions in the Partner States through MEACAs. The Council is subject to direction by the EAC Council of Ministers and has among other roles to propose a comprehensive implementation plan, and monitor implementation.

To date several issues have been identified by young people which require legislative and policy action including education, health, (un)employment, housing, among a host of others. Subsequently, the Youth Policy provides a clear framework for youth engagement in advocacy based on priorities identified therein and hence a role for EALA.

Within this framework is the recognition of non-state actors promoting youth interest, such as the East African Youth Network (EAYN). The Network, previously a loose network of national youth organisations from all five Partner states, shall as a forum facilitate holistic youth involvement by advocating for the entrenchment of youth issues in the agenda of the East African Community.

Formally launched in December 2014, EAYN has an 11-member Steering Committee. The membership includes five (5) focal point organisations (CSO youth network organisations), one (1) representative from youth with disabilities, one (1) representative from the EAC Youth Ambassadors Platform and National Youth Councils of Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda. EAYN has set itself a clear mandate to promote the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes aimed at addressing well-being of youth within East Africa; advocating for a culture of good governance and observance of human rights as essential components for East African integration; and promote continuous dialogue between youth and the organs of the EAC. Visibility of youth as resources for regional integration has been demonstrated through EAYN members' engagement with various organs of the EAC in recent years.

As EAYN takes on its important mandate, there needs to be clear feedback mechanisms by national representatives to young people in the Partner States to promote accountability. As it is there are questions raised by other youth organisations on the selection process for members to the Steering Committee. Thus the important responsibility to sensitise their peers on the mandate and representations made on their behalf.

(v) Debates/Public Meetings

This has been the avenue for *most active participation of the highest number* of young people. This includes youth development sector specific meetings, meetings with specific groups of young people, and public meetings led by young people.

(a) Sector meetings

The EAC Directorate of Social Sector Development through its Department of Gender and Community development has been engaged with young people and youth organisations. The meetings and discussions have resulted in a platform for direct engagement between youth and the EAC Secretariat through this Directorate.

In October 2012, the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) and the East African Business Council (EABC) hosted the East African Higher Education Forum in Arusha,

Tanzania. AYT recommended participation of three young people from Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi to attend the meeting. The aim of the meeting was to discuss and strategise on how to develop effective Higher Education/Academia Systems in East Africa that effectively respond to industry needs for the promotion of sustainable socio-economic development and regional integration for the community. A steering committee was appointed in which the youth are represented. Subsequently, IUCEA began a reform process for higher education in East Africa that addresses concerns of young people for access to education in any part of the region, ease of access to transfer credits, and fees for East Africans outside their home country.

(b) Youth Learning Exchange Programmes

The Department of Political Affairs and in collaboration with the Directorate of Social Sectors have engaged youth on issues pertaining to the integration process through youth platforms, dialogues, exchange programmes and sensitization fora under the EAC Nyerere Centre for Peace Research. Between 2011 and 2013 over 90 students from East African universities have benefited from the exchange training programmes in Peace and Conflict Resolution, Good governance and human rights. These programmes have young people with skills and confidence to eventually play an active role in the integration process as well as offer a platform for young people in institutions of higher learning to learn more about the Region.

(c) The Annual EAC University Students Debate

Since 2012, the Department of Political Affairs has hosted the EAC University Students Debate on Regional Integration every year. This event has provided a regional platform to promote dialogue among university students and youth, and interest them in advocating for regional integration. In preparation for the Debate, the university students submit essays that express their perspectives on the EAC integration process. Samples of these are included in Annex 1 of this report. The Debate demonstrated the extent of interest and knowledge of university students on East African integration their national positions and youth views on the integration process.

To deepen reach and impact of this process, post-Debate activities include the selection of EAC integration champions, well performing debaters to return to their countries and learning institutions to share their views and learning, referred to as EAC “Youth Ambassadors”. In a bid to ensure the continued engagement of university students in accelerating integration through knowledge and experience sharing, the EAC Youth Ambassadors Platform was launched in September 2013 to serve as a forum for current and alumni Ambassadors and representatives of the EAC clubs that they form in universities at national level. At national level the Ambassadors have worked in close collaboration with national chapters of EALA, and ministries of East African Affairs.

The University Students Debate also has a unique approach for youth inclusion. In the subsequent years since 2012, the EAC Secretariat has sought the views of EACYAP to improve on the debate structure, to publicize and mobilize submissions, as well as on how to strengthen and increase the value and role of young people. In this way, it increases ownership

not just of the event but on the partnerships between adults and young people for the integration agenda.

The EACYAP has enabled the EAC Secretariat reach a broader audience with the message of the political federation, the role of the EAC Secretariat, and the responsibilities and opportunities for young people in the regional integration agenda. Through national-level sensitization and education activities the EAC Youth Ambassadors reached students and university administrators in 25 universities, and approximately 5,724 young people directly and indirectly, through electronic and other media, between September 2013 and July 2014 across the five Partner States. They have formed 30 EAC youth clubs which continue to sensitize students on progress on integration long after the Ambassadors have left. The EAC clubs are self-sustaining entities with their own leadership structure, and some are formally recognized by the University as an important student body.

The clubs increase young people's enthusiasm among the youth and heighten support for the EAC integration as they engage in constructive dialogues on the integration process. For example, the position of Tanzania as being anti-integration was among the issues addressed by the Ambassadors from Tanzania to their peers, as well as within their own country. The Ambassadors feel a sense of accomplishment in countering cynicism on EAC integration in their discussion with young people on the challenges as well as the opportunities available for Tanzania.

The EAC Secretariat has developed the capacity of the EACYAP as (potentially) strong regional leaders. The Secretariat has provided the platform for young people to deepen their understanding of leadership and governance systems and processes in East Africa and the World. For instance, in March 2013 the EAC Ambassadors participated as EAC Elections Observers to the Kenya General Elections, mandated to observe and submit a report on how the election in Kenya was conducted and supervised at all levels. EACYAP has received formal recognition and is invited to AU fora as representatives of youth in the Region; in October 2013 some EAC Ambassadors were selected to participate at the AU Youth Consultative Forum in Senegal. For the individual youth ambassadors, their commitment to the EAC integration agenda is cemented. They form a cadre of citizens who will promote regional integration and perhaps ultimately be leaders in a federated region. This bodes well as a sustainability strategy and lives up to the vision of being "people-centred".

The EAC Youth Ambassadors all feel more confident in their roles as leaders in their (university) community and among their peers. They have built relationships and networks with adults and have been able to negotiate for their spaces. In addition, the youth are building interest, skills and competencies for representation of EAC youth views and aspirations.

This is evident in their description of engagement with university administration to be able to host meetings, negotiation with officials at the respective Ministries of East African Affairs, and in some cases how they have reached out to and convinced EALA members to support their work. In some cases, the Ambassadors indicated their challenge in access to either MEACA or EALA representatives and sought the intervention and support of either the EAC Secretariat or the national youth organization in their country. In order to be more effective in their

ambassadorial role, the youth felt that they should have had access to more financial resources; while this posed an overall challenge they also acknowledged that it pushed them to be more innovative and seek partnerships with other organisations in order to achieve the targets set.

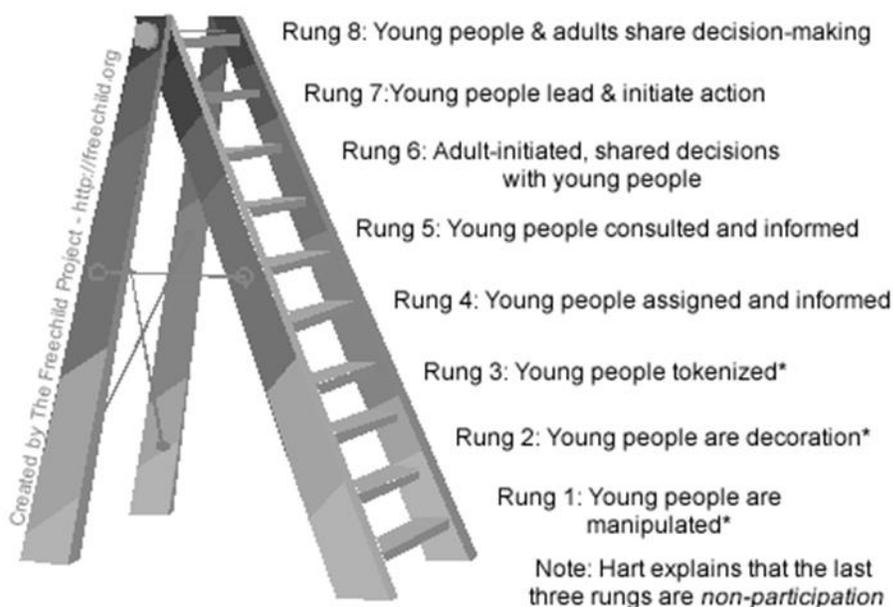
3.3 Identifiable Gaps in Youth Involvement

In the EAC integration process, the involvement young people is still in the nascent stages. The key youth actors have indicated that it has been a growth and learning path – to understand the structure and decision making organs, to build allies in the various relevant organs, and to appreciate the need for a policy and legislative framework for formal engagement at regional level as key stakeholders in the integration process. The number of youth actors so far involved has come from the Partner States, primarily based on the initiative of youth organisations. To its credit, the relevant Department specifically and the Secretariat in general has been open to the engagement with these youth actors.

There remains much to be done to increase the number and extent of youth involvement in regional integration. There are various tools of analysis to measure effective youth participation in any process. Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation gives a good summary.

The involvement of young people in EAC integration process is between Rungs 4 and 5: young people are informed on the integration agenda, assigned a role, understand the decision-making process, and informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of adult decisions. To a great extent, the actions have been adult-initiated and decisions shared with young people. Youth are not yet in the space where the actions they initiate are accepted at the various organs of EAC. The goal is to be at Rung 8 in which decision-making is shared between youth and adults working as equal partners.

Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Some specific gaps in involvement of young people or contribute to limited involvement in the EAC integration process includes:

- **Communication:** The EAC Secretariat hosts a robust website with regular updates on different activities of the Secretariat and other organs of the EAC. However, there is little information which relates to young people. First, information on how integration affects or benefits this high demographic population; or on initiatives of the EAC for youth engagement on EAC issues, or a platform access by young people that is in youth-friendly format. The EAYAP have not been successful in publicizing their events or promotion of youth participation in general in the EAC beyond their niche audience within each university campus (or target community) to increase general awareness on the integration process and role of young people. Since September 2014, there have been efforts to express view on EAC integration. This followed the EAC brand survey that showed that youth and unemployed East Africans access information online. The Facebook Page increased membership (Likes) from 2,900 in September to 3,300 in December, view posts and comments from all five Partner States. The topics discussed so far were on Youth Opportunities in EAC, Peace and Security and Education in the region. The discussion on Youth Opportunities received the highest viewership of 5,000. There are many other platforms that must be explored to reach the millions of young people in East Africa, including radio which has the widest reach, as well as possibly through public primary and secondary schools.
- **Language barrier:** For most countries, English is one of the official languages. French is still predominantly spoken in Burundi. This requires that communication and meetings must be bilingual, and conducted in French if hosted in that country. This poses a barrier for closer involvement of Burundian youth in the integration process as typically there are costs associated with translation of discussions and documents. In order to reach the majority of young people in Tanzania and many of Kenya's rural areas, it is key for the proceedings and documents to be available in Kiswahili. The dissemination of the youth policy for instance is an important document that would need popular versions in English, French and Kiswahili. There needs to be resources, both human and financial, towards this effort. Notably, there will be need for an amendment to the Treaty for the recognition of French as an official language, as Burundi and Rwanda were not members when the Treaty was originally penned. The EAC Secretariat is establishing the Kiswahili Commission to promote the use of Kiswahili in the Region.
- **Lack of Inclusiveness:** The engagement with and of youth so far has taken this as a homogenous grouping. At national level, there is need to be sensitive to special interest groups of young people such as those with disability, as well as inclusion of groups that specifically target young women. As the process of engagement deepens, there needs to be greater inclusion in national level initiatives to involve the broad spectrum of young people which includes those organized within the faith-based structures, all income groups and socio-economic status perhaps with special focus on those living in border towns.

Chapter 4: Recommendations on Broadening and Deepening Involvement of Youth in EAC Integration

The EAC must show its viability to citizens in the region, and to the World that it can face up to the challenges of consolidating political, economic and socio-cultural strengths for the benefit of citizens of its Partner states, the Africa region and the World. To do so, it must engage citizens and draw their commitment to the EAC.

In building on the foundation laid in the past few years, implementation of the following recommendations would enhance youth involvement in the regional integration process:

4.1 Increased Level of engagement

The EAC Secretariat can facilitate youth participation in sector specific dialogue and processes. Young people should have the opportunity to voice their interests, issues and concerns within the sector-based platforms such as the East African Business Council where issues on trade and employment are discussed; or sector dialogue on health issues. Other areas of interest include ICT, education, urbanization and infrastructure especially housing, roads and rail transport. Thus they can give feedback to the youth movement and deepen understanding of the pertinent discussion issues. The participation in sector-based platforms can be based on the areas prioritized in the EAC Youth Policy.

To promote youth involvement, young people's organisations should research and understand the various legislative processes in the EAC such as motions, bills, and resolutions; how they work and their different purposes and levels of implementation in the EAC. This will broaden spaces for youth engagement and involvement in the EAC either as observers or develop the ability to support the submission of private member's bills in EALA as well as at other levels.

At national level, the coordination of youth involvement in EAC integration through specific initiatives based on their interests should be formalized through a tripartite working taskforce between the ministry responsible for Youth Affairs, MEACA and the EAC Secretariat. This will ensure greater reach with information about the process but also about the opportunities available, and enhance learning across the Region.

Drawing lessons from other regional communities such as the European Union, there are broad opportunities that EAC can facilitate to further involve young people in the integration process. In addition to structures such as the EU Youth Parliament, the EU also seeks to support young people cooperate with regions outside Europe and be more involved in global policy processes on issues identified as important to the Union such as climate change, the MDGs and human rights. This raises the global awareness among young people, including the positions and actions of their own national governments and regional body; gives opportunity for young people to exchange views with policy makers on global issues; and fosters mutual understanding among young people from around the World through dialogue. The establishment of a fund for inter-regional projects for youth is a possible goal for Partner States to aim towards.

The recognition of the African Union of such regional bodies as the EAC Youth Ambassadors Platform as a voice of young people in the region is a step towards how young people cooperate with other regions, outside East Africa on important issues. However, this engagement needs to be scaled up beyond just youth specific forums to opportunities for engagement with policy makers at the AU level.

Further, the EAC youth representatives should have the responsibility, with support of the EAC channels, to feedback the agreements reached to their counterparts in East Africa. In this way, the EAC integration process is deepened as this raises debate on how the Partner States respond to pressing continental issues.

4.2 Actualize the EAC Youth Policy

The adoption of the East African Community Youth Policy is widely celebrated. Yet, this is where the work begins. The next step of implementation is the real test of commitment for all stakeholders. The EAC Secretariat has been mandated with clear and specific responsibilities to see that the policy comes to fruition. The development of the action plan to guide the Policy's implementation should continue with the practice of a participatory process that involves young people.

The engagement by the EAC Secretariat with young people in the interim will be through the East African Youth Network (EAYN). EAYN has established a representative Steering Committee with participation from Partner States and youth with disability. The challenge for the Steering Committee is on mechanisms for effective reach to young people in each Partner state. The representation on the Steering Committee is strategic but limited; the EAC should establish a strong accountability framework to monitor feedback on the integration process and its impact in the lives of young East Africans.

Some specific actions towards actualizing the EACYP would include:

- (a) Recruit competent staff responsible for Youth Affairs at EAC;
- (b) Allocate financial resources for implementation of the policy, and the Strategic Plan;
- (c) Ensure national governments establish the national youth councils in Tanzania and Burundi; as they are key connectors of youth to government in each country and to the EAC;
- (d) Give youth organisations Observer Status;
- (e) Promote youth involvement in the Expert Working groups in particular those of interest detailed in the Policy;
- (f) Develop strong monitoring and evaluation system to monitor implementation and measure impact of the interventions; and
- (g) Broaden the reach of sensitization and awareness campaigns as well as enhance the participation of the 21 target youth categories as listed in the Policy.

4.3 Building a Knowledge Repository & Documentation

There will always be young people. Youth is not a permanent situation for anyone. Thus, the importance of a chronological account of events towards regional integration and the role of young people is critical. Expectedly too, there will be staff turnover in government departments, at national and regional level, this is a reality at the EAC Secretariat. This is also true for non-state actors, including youth organizations. Thus, it is important to keep a paper trail, which would include copies

of important documents such as memoranda of understanding and reports of engagements between young people and stakeholders and the decisions made. This can be quickly found, and updated on agreements reached with predecessors. Eventually, history will seek to review how youth negotiated spaces within the EAC and contribution towards making the dream of an East African Federation a reality. The information should be widely and easily accessible in appropriate forms. This would be an important resource for active participants in EAC integration, researchers, youth leaders and curious young people seeking to learn more.

4.4 Public education and awareness

The need to scale up the education and awareness initiatives on regional integration cannot be gainsaid. Regional-level campaigns and national-level activities of youth organisations, and the work of the EAC Youth Ambassadors in tertiary institutions will be to create a critical mass of well-informed citizens who buy into and own the East African federation dream.

There should be broad strategies for outreach to ensure all categories of young people are engaged and contribute to the dialogue on integration. The EAC Youth Policy identifies twenty-one target groups. Therefore, EAC Secretariat-led initiatives must reach beyond youth in schools/training institutions. Comments from youth indicate that there is a need to demonstrate better how ordinary citizens will benefit from EAC integration which is currently seen as beneficial mostly for big businesses.

This can be achieved through partnerships with youth-led and youth-serving organisations who can include discussions on the EAC integration agenda in programmes especially those involved in programmes on livelihood, entrepreneurship, civic education, citizenship and those similar especially now as the Community moves towards a Common Market.

There are several strategic sub-regional and regional organisations with whom partnerships can be established; while their work may not focus on regional engagement their geographic coverage and programmatic initiatives make possible outreach to more diverse groups of young people. These include non-state actors like the Scouts Movement, the Girl Guide's Association, Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Duke of Edinburgh/Presidential Award Scheme, the Red Cross and several faith based organisations including the All Africa Conference of Churches Africa Interfaith Youth Network, among a host of others with regional presence.

4.5 Consolidating recommendations and actions for youth engagement

Efforts should be made to collect and collate the recommendations of commitments from regional meetings that require action of Regional Economic Communities (RECs). For instance, at the 4th Ordinary Session of the African Union Conference of Ministers in Charge of Youth (COMYIV) in September 2012 agreed that member states and RECs would operationalize the AU Policy Framework on Institutionalization on Youth Volunteerism in Africa. This links well with the priorities of the Nyerere Peace Centre Exchange Programme and can be expanded and focused on young people as a strategy for greater inclusion in the integration process as well as building skills among young people.

At the same meeting, it was agreed that member states and RECs would operationalize and apply AU Policy advisory notes and toolkits in the process of mainstreaming youth in fiscal planning and ensuring youth responsive monitoring and evaluation.

Other actions include the ratification of the Africa Youth Charter by member states which include a requirement in part of the establishment of national youth councils. The EAC Partner States are at various stages of compliance with the Africa Youth Charter. Action by youth actors, the EAC Secretariat and Partner states to consolidate agreements and resolutions are important to forge ahead.

A structured and formalized feedback mechanism ought to be put in place by EAYN. Youth representatives who participate in consultative stakeholder meetings, policy dialogue processes or other events should be charged with the responsibility to share outcomes and/or key commitments made. This shall enhance accountability among young people, enable follow-up by EAYN or other specific interest groups as a means to ensure that commitments made for and to young East Africans are fulfilled.

4.6 Capacity building of youth and other actors

Capacity building of youth participants is critical. The aim of capacity building is to enhance young people's understanding of integration as a process and develop skills for engagement with the different organs of the EAC. These skills include leadership, communication (writing, presentation, negotiation, self-representation, oral, and media engagement), policy development, advocacy and lobbying, monitoring and evaluation. The skills development may be directly by the EAC Secretariat and her partners or can involve a Training-of-Trainer approach targeting strategic national youth-led and youth-serving organisations and the EACYAP. Further, the capacity building approach may involve the development of a training programme that can be used in institutions of learning in Partner states (high schools, colleges and universities) or by youth groups in communities. For instance, youth interested in promoting a health agenda would access the training be able to develop a strong policy document and be able to present and debate it confidently within the appropriate organ of the EAC.

Other actors involved in the EAC integration process need to become better able to engage with young people on sector-based issues. They should be prepared to engage with young people and be sensitive to their aspirations and persuasions; as well as understand youth priorities and competencies during engagement with large numbers of youth and youth groups.

5 Conclusion

The EAC Secretariat's key mandate is to coordinate ideas, policies and legislation for implementation at national level, that promote the regional integration process. In this role, the EAC Secretariat works with a diverse set of stakeholders who share in the vision for a strong East African Community and eventual political federation.

Young people in the EAC make up almost half of the active population. Thus, the success of the EAC lies squarely in their hands. In the present generation, it is important to understand the political dynamics and factors that inform decision making. Moreover, it is important that a critical mass of young people take ownership for a strong EAC.

The current state of youth involvement is low. However, there have been efforts by the EAC Secretariat as well as a few youth organisations to increase awareness about the EAC integration process and to mobilise the participation of young people in crucial debates and discussions among themselves as young people, as well as with various organs of the EAC. For the few who have been involved, the process is encouraging and empowering; yet, there is much room for further involvement in the EAC and integration process that is deeper and reaches more young people.

The adoption of the EAC Youth Policy is a critical milestone for the involvement of young people in the EAC integration process. The evident challenge is in the implementation of the policy. The EAC Secretariat has a heavy duty in the present time to ensure that the future of the community is secure. Yet, the resources are limited and in particular for the Social Sector where youth is bulked with other groups that include women, children, persons with disability and other vulnerable groups; there is no staff member with the specific responsibility to give the policy life nor a budget allocation to ensure that the EAC Secretariat and Partner States remain vigilant on the involvement of young people.

For effective youth involvement in the EAC, young people and youth organisations must begin discussions and engagement at national level in the sectors of interest. For instance, for young entrepreneurs and youth-led businesses to draw benefits and have a hearing at regional level they first need to subscribe to membership in national private sector bodies. The EAYN has an important responsibility to identify and promote the engagement of knowledgeable young people and sector specific youth organisations in the areas of interest for young people. Without this, the generalist comments made at regional fora will not translate to action in the interests of young people.

Indeed if the East African Community is to secure the future then it is critical that the commitment made through the Policy is followed through with the necessary resources to involve this critical mass. Various sustainable and inexpensive strategies can be put in place to educate the masses of young people through various institutions that work directly with them. These organisations must be invited to engage first at local and national level on the implications of integration.

Young East Africans want to feel and be seen as relevant in the EAC social, political and economic development. Young people need to see that the current actions are indeed in their best interests. Even with the present challenges, the EAC Secretariat should lobby and advocate for the needed resources from Partner States to address the needs and interests of young people individually and collectively; and to see them as a critical resource base for achievement of the dream of an East African Federation.

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Key documents

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Relevant Reports

- Concept note for the EAC Youth Ambassadors Platform
- 3rd EAC University Students Debate on EAC Integration 4 – 5 September 2014 by EAC Nyerere Centre for Peace Research
- Report on the EAC Youth Ambassadors Platform, July 2014
- Report and recommendation of the Conference of the African Union Ministerial in Charge of Youth Development, 12 – 14 September 2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia by the African Union
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Key Informants

1. Mrs. Mary Makoffu – Director, Social Sectors, East African Community Secretariat
2. Mrs. Isabelle Waffubwa – Political Affairs, East African Community Secretariat
3. Ms. Rosemary Mbabazi – Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Youth and ICT, Government of Rwanda
4. Ms. Magdalene Wanjugu- Deputy Executive Director, Africa Youth Trust, Kenya and East African Youth Network Coordinator
5. Mr. Emmanuel Kitamirike – Executive Director, Uganda Youth Network and EAYN member
6. Mr. Cyrus Nkusi – Executive Director, Governance in Africa, Rwanda and EAYN Member
7. Mr. James Tayebwa – EAC Youth Ambassadors Platform(Uganda), Chairperson
8. Ms. Effie Omondi - EAC Youth Ambassador (Kenya), current Vice-Chair EAC Ambassadors Platform
9. Focus Group Discussion with EAC Youth Ambassadors 2012 and 2013
 - (a) Uganda: Appuli Babigumira, Michael Mayambala
 - (b) Tanzania: Bertha Tamara, Alice Musetti
 - (c) Rwanda: Sandra Mukesha, Dorice Mutoni
 - (d) Kenya: Effie Omondi, Charles Mwangi
 - (e) Burundi: Yves Nduwayezu, Josiane Nganinka
10. Mr. Petro Magoti – Member, Chama cha Walemavu (CHAWATA) Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
11. Mr. Fredrick Ouko – Executive Director, Action Network for the Disabled (Kenya) and EAYN member

12. Mr. Davis Chepkwony – Secretary for Special Needs, Students Organisation Nairobi University (SONU)
13. Mr. Michael Baingana – East African Business Council
14. Mr. Eric Ngilangwa – Moderator, Youth Online Platform, EAC Nyerere Centre for Peace Research
15. Ms. Violet Ayoub – Executive Director, Vision for Youth - Tanzania