

TRANSGENERATIONAL CONVERSATIONS

the Quest for Political Decency
and Accountability in Kenya

2024



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NCIC Publication No. 1/2024

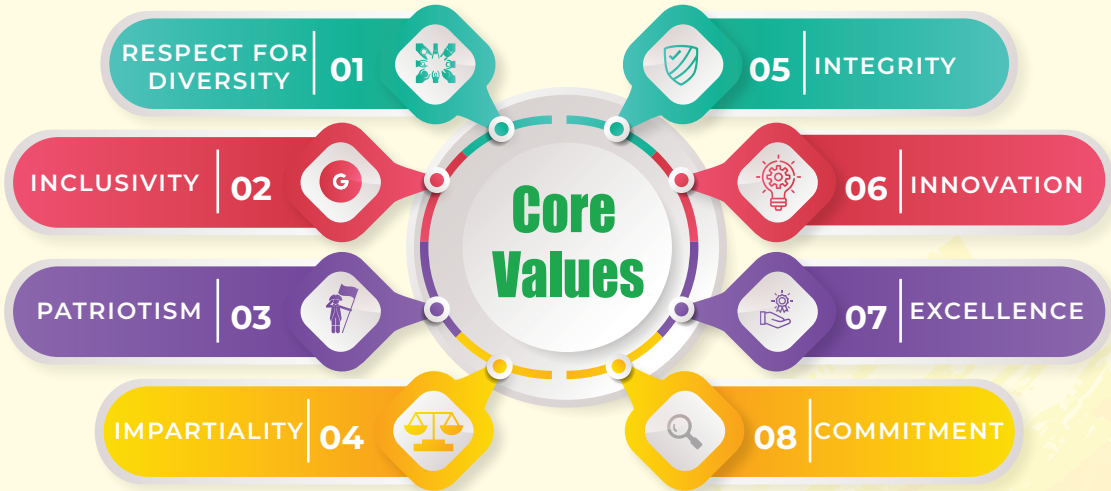
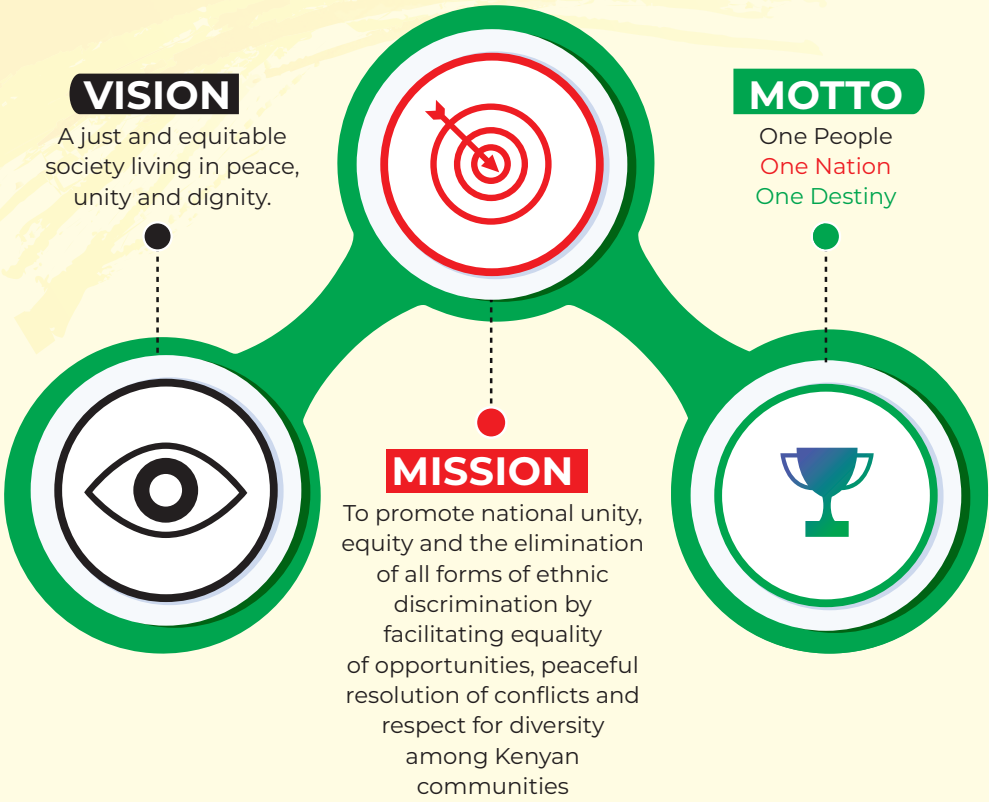
Published by National Cohesion and Integration Commission

ISBN No.

ISBN 978-9914-9894-4-1



9 789914 989441



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BETA	Bottom up Transformation Agenda
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
EACC	Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission
EU	European Union
GEMA	Gikuyu Embu Meru Association
Gen-Zs	Generation Zoomers
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KTWA	Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association
MSME	Micro Small and Medium Enterprises
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NCCK	National Council of Christian Churches
NCI Act	National Cohesion and Integration Act
NCIC	National Cohesion and Integration Commission
NFD	Northern Frontier District
NYC	National Youth Council

CONTENTS

Abbreviations and Acronyms	iv
Foreword	vi
Acknowledgement	ix
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.1.1 First Generation of Resistance: Pre-Colonial Era.....	2
1.2.1 Second Generation Resistance: Laying the Foundation of Political Independence	2
1.2.2 Third Generation of Resistance: Mau Mau, the First Liberation.....	2
1.2.3 Fourth Generation of Resistance: Towards Negotiated Independence.	3
2.0 The Generation Zoomers.....	6
2.1 Gen-Zs: The Catalysts of Change in Kenya	6
3.0 Rationale.....	9
4.0 Objective.....	10
5.0 Impediments to a Peaceful Kenya.....	11
5.1 Lack of trust.....	12
5.2 Degradation of Kenya’s Social Fabric	12
5.3 Bad governance	12
5.4 Intergenerational tensions	13
5.5 Structural Inequalities	13
6.0 Transformative Framework	14

PREFACE



Effective nation-building requires meaningful participation of all the citizens. Through well organised platforms, people from different stations in life can come and reason together about their common future. In view of the recent occurrences, it is clear that Kenya's future depends on our ability to harness the collective strength and wisdom of all generations. Certainly, as a resilient country, we have witnessed reflective transformations; from resistance to colonialism, to the struggles for independence, to the dynamic changes brought by younger generations. Yet, despite our rich history of resistance, struggle and resilience, we continue to face challenges that necessitate new strategies and renewed commitment.

Traditionally, each age group between late teens and mid twenties is set to be

advocates for changes against forces that threaten justice, peace and cohesion in the society. The history of Kenya is characterised by resistance and struggle led by different generations against oppression, subjugation and repression. From pre-colonial time to the declaration of Kenya as a British colony in 1920, to colonial and post-colonial times, each generation stood for requisite liberation with the concomitant price. At every situation, some paid the ultimate price, while others were detained and still others maimed. Their marks of liberation, both physical and psychological are visible for all to see. In some cases such as the Mau Mau liberation struggle, there are many unsung heroes and heroines.

As a voice of reason and conscience of the nation, NCIC has remained true to our mission of promoting national cohesion and integration by addressing conflicts, advocating for civic values, and encouraging dialogue among diverse communities. It is becoming clearer as we negotiate the complexity of contemporary Kenya that closing the generational divide is indispensable to accomplishing our shared objectives.

In the run up to the 2022 elections, the NCIC Elections Bila Noma process included appeals to the younger generations to register as voters and to actually vote. But there was such voter apathy among the youth that over eight million of them who reached the majority age neither

registered to vote nor voted come 2022 elections. That represented more votes than what was garnered by either of the two leading presidential candidates, H.E William Ruto (the winner), and the Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga. It is therefore more encouraging to see that come year 2024, the youth who were apathetic only two years prior, stormed the national stage and occupied it both physically and figuratively. The Generation Zoomers, Gen-Zs have achieved in a short two months what all political parties and civil society organizations could ever have achieved in years, if at all. Among the most significant achievements of the Gen-Z is the awakening of the conscience of the nation. This implies good governance including political decency, accountability, honesty and integrity. There is every reason for the society to build on this achievement. In order to consolidate their gains, the Gen-Z will do well to consider a more structured approach as the next stage in the process. The NCIC welcomes the Gen-Z to the Transgenerational Conversations as one possible platform for engagement.

The advent of the Gen-Z as a formidable force in our country presents a golden opportunity to reflect on the future of Kenya. They are setting the national agenda and shaping our country's future. This generation is distinguished by its need for authenticity, global perspective, and familiarity with modern information technology. Their ambitions and strong voices must be taken into


consideration and included into the national conversations. As leaders and citizens, we must actively and positively interact with them in order to create a society that is a reflection of our shared goals and values. Equally, the Gen-Z will benefit immensely from conversations with the older generations whose achievements during their time is no mean feat in comparison.

Therefore, this strategic framework dubbed Transgenerational Conversations: the Quest for Political Decency and Accountability in Kenya is intended to address pertinent issues hindering our progress, while creating a conducive environment where dialogue between generations can thrive. By focusing on trust-building, inclusivity, and effective governance, we aim to foster a culture of mutual respect and collaboration. Our goal is to create a platform where both the young and old alike can come together to discuss, learn, and work towards a common understanding and vision for Kenya. Each generation's story needs to be told because it is a significant building block for a better Kenya; and successive generations stand on the shoulders of the predecessor generations.

As a people, we have a difficult but worthwhile task ahead of us. It demands patriotism, courage, bravery, compassion, and a dedication to sincere involvement. We invite all Kenyans to participate in this crucial undertaking as we implement these strategies. Encouraging collaboration, bridging

gaps, and creating a Kenya that radiates harmony, peace, and prosperity are all within our grasp.

Together we can make our dreams and aspirations come true and transform our obstacles into possibilities. With optimism and resolve, let us proceed, knowing that our combined efforts will open the door to a more just, peaceful, politically stable, socially cohesive and economically prosperous nation for the benefit of the present and future generations.



Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia CBS
COMMISSION CHAIRMAN.

Acknowledgement



The successful development of the Transgenerational Conversations Framework is a collective achievement made possible through the invaluable contributions of numerous individuals and institutions.

First, may I acknowledge the outstanding leadership provided by the Commission Chairman, Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia CBS, towards the development of this groundbreaking Framework. Your foresight and commitment to fostering national cohesion and understanding in the country has been a constant inspiration to the entire team. The tireless efforts of Commissioner Dr. Danvas Makori who shepherded the task force deserves special recognition. Under his guidance, the task force worked diligently to develop a Framework that addresses the critical challenges facing our nation. May I also express my sincere gratitude to the NCIC Vice Chair Ms. Wambui Nyutu OGW, and all the other Commissioners for their expertise and guidance that has shaped this document into a comprehensive and effective tool for promoting cohesion in Kenya.

We particularly recognise the importance of the partnership we developed with experts from various fields including politics and governance, economics, youth affairs, researchers and policy analysts. Your expertise and insights have significantly enriched this document. We are particularly indebted to the young minds of Gen-Zs whose fresh perspectives and understanding of contemporary issues have been invaluable in making this Framework relevant and impactful.

We express our sincere appreciation for the invaluable support from our development and diplomatic partners as we embark on the implementation of the Transgenerational Conversations Framework. We look forward to a fruitful collaboration with the European Union (EU) Mission, and partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the UWIANO platform for peace, as we collectively strive to foster national cohesion and understanding in Kenya.

Finally, may I acknowledge the unwavering support and patience of our staff who worked diligently under demanding circumstances to bring this Framework to fruition. To the Director of Research and Knowledge Management, Ms. Millicent Okatch, and the entire team including Jescah Otieno, Olive Metet, Wycliffe Mwatu, Mary Kabiru, Nancy Mulu, James Wanyande, Richard Nderitu, Rosemary Were, Regina Mutiru, Gilbert Onyango, Steve Juma, and Phenny Akinyi, your dedication and commitment are commendable!

CPA Harrison Kariuki

Ag. COMMISSION SECRETARY/CEO

1.0 Introduction

Established under the National Cohesion and Integration Act CAP 7N, the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) in Kenya plays a critical role in promoting peace, unity, and dignity. The objective of establishing the NCIC was to have a national institution that could rally Kenyans towards a common national identity culminating in national cohesion and integration.

The Commission is tasked with various responsibilities aimed at fostering national cohesion and integration¹. Her key roles and functions in promoting peace, integrity, unity and dignity through peaceful resolutions of conflict and mediation efforts to address and mitigate tensions. This often involves facilitating dialogue and reconciliation between conflicting parties. The constituting Act also obligates NCIC to promote national identity and values, which is achieved through civic education and celebration of cultural diversities. Since inception, the Commission has had significant impact on various areas including fostering inter-community dialogue, and raising awareness about the importance of peaceful coexistence, national cohesion and integration among and between the different communities across the country.

Among the youth, NCIC has been at the forefront of fostering peace and cohesion through a multifaceted approach including through conducting intergenerational dialogues that have created spaces for

youth and elders to share experiences and perspectives. The Commission has also mainstreamed peace and cohesion in learning institutions through the establishment of Amani Clubs in schools, thereby investing significantly in cultivating a culture of peace among the next generation. For the youth out of school, NCIC has trained them on peace and cohesion at the grassroot level, invested in music, drama, and sports, to promote understanding and tolerance, thus establishing peace ambassadors across the country. These initiatives have been instrumental in addressing the root causes of conflict by empowering youth to be agents of positive change within their communities.

1.1 Background

Kenya's journey to independence and subsequent liberation has been marked by several significant stages, each characterised by the efforts of different generations who fought against various forms of oppression. From early resistance against colonial rule to the struggle for democratic governance and the continued efforts by younger generations, Kenya's history is a demonstration that the citizenry have always stood by what they believe in².

1.1.1 First Generation of Resistance: Pre-Colonial Era

Kenya's struggle for liberation dates back to the pre-colonial times where various Kenyan ethnic groups resisted foreign encroachment on their lands and way of life. Notable examples include the Nandi Resistance led by Koitalel Arap Samoei (1895 to 1905) and the Giriama Uprising led by Mekatilili wa Menza (1913 to 1914)³. While unsuccessful in preventing colonial rule, these early uprisings laid the groundwork for future resistance movements. They embodied the spirit of defiance and the desire for autonomy that would continue to fuel Kenya's struggle for independence. Other notable groups included the Young Kikuyu Association, led by Harry Thuku that was a critical precursor to later movements, advocating against oppressive colonial policies, such as forced labor and heavy taxation.

The Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association (KTWA) and the Kikuyu Association were also pivotal in mobilising different ethnic communities and addressing their specific issues, such as land alienation and lack of political representation. To these groups, individual acts of resistance also played a significant role. For instance, Mary Muthoni Nyanjiru led a bold demonstration in front of today's Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) and the Norfolk Hotel in 1922⁴, demanding the release of Harry Thuku. Her actions underscored the vital role of women in the struggle for independence and

highlighted the broad-based nature of the resistance. Scores were killed by colonial police forces who shot at the peaceful demonstrators.

1.2.1 Second Generation Resistance: Laying the Foundation of Political Independence

The early 20th century saw the rise of Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association (KTWA) influenced by figures like Jonathan Okwiri, who challenged colonial exploitation. He brought a new level of consciousness and organisation to the resistance movement, tapping into the grievances of the masses. The movement increasingly targeted economic policies and practices, such as land alienation and forced labour, as key drivers of colonial oppression. This second wave of resistance laid the groundwork for the liberation movement that led to Kenya's independence in 1963 through creating a global network of support. While peaceful protests and civil disobedience remained important, the movement also adopted more militant strategies such as strikes, boycotts, and armed resistance in some cases.

1.2.2 Third Generation of Resistance: Mau Mau, the First Liberation

The growing African nationalist sentiment ultimately culminated in the declaration of the state of emergency by Governor Evelyn Baring to deal with the Mau Mau rebellion, an armed uprising against

British colonial rule that lasted from 1952 to 1960. The Mau Mau, primarily composed of Kikuyu, Meru and Embu fighters, resorted to guerrilla warfare in response to the British government's repressive policies, including the forced relocation of Africans and the use of detention camps. The Mau Mau liberation struggle weakened the British colonial government, which eventually agreed to a negotiated independence for Kenya.

1.2.3 Fourth Generation of Resistance: Towards Negotiated Independence

In the early 1960s, Kenya moved towards self-governance and independence. In 1962, a coalition government was formed between the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). This paved the way for open elections in 1963, which KANU won, with Jomo Kenyatta becoming the first Prime Minister of the newly independent Kenya. Kenya officially gained independence from the United Kingdom on December 12, 1963 and became a republic a year later, with Kenyatta as its first President. The long struggle for Kenyan independence, marked by various generations of resistance, had finally come to fruition⁵.

Post-independence: The Unfinished Task of Genuine Liberation

The Lancaster House Conferences, held in London in 1960, 1962 and 1963, while instrumental in securing Kenya's

independence, were marked by a profound irony. The very individuals who endured unimaginable suffering in the forests and others in detention camps for years on end; the genuine Mau Mau freedom fighters who sacrificed everything for freedom, were conspicuously absent from the negotiating table. Instead, the conference halls were populated by a new breed of African elites, often Western-educated and far removed from the brutal realities of the armed struggle. It was within these halls that deals were struck, compromises made, and the stage set for an independent Kenya. However, for the true heroes of the revolution, the foot soldiers of the Mau Mau, the fruits of independence proved to be a bitter harvest. The land reforms they envisioned, the economic justice they craved, remained elusive, their sacrifices seemingly forgotten in the rush to embrace a new era. There was disillusionment among the true freedom fighters, as their aspirations were compromised in the pursuit of peace and stability⁶. This constituted a betrayal of the worst order.

From the onset, the Kenyatta government was confronted by demands for land redistribution. He grappled with the revolt in the Northern Frontier District (NFD) from the Somali Muslims, forcing the government to place the province under emergency laws that were lifted only in 1997. As a result, the Somali and other nomadic groups were denied educational opportunities and other rights. Although there were constitutional amendments brought about by the Constitution of

Kenya amendment Act No. 28 of 1964 that gave the president certain powers, these brought about ethnic rivalries and authoritarianism, which had earlier been sowed by the colonial administration.

The Swynnerton Plan, a colonial agricultural blueprint implemented in 1954, laid the foundation for Kenya's enduring land crisis. Designed to uplift Kenyan farmers through financial support and agricultural training, the plan was, in reality, a calculated strategy to create a landed gentry and landless peasantry. By prioritising credit for those with larger landholdings, the plan accelerated land consolidation and dispossession, paving the way for a wealthy elite. Ironically funded by the World Bank and British government, this policy exacerbated existing inequalities. Subsequent attempts to redress these imbalances, such as Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, failed to dismantle the structural inequities entrenched by the Swynnerton Plan⁷, instead reinforcing the ethnic disparities it had created. The stated vision of the state to eradicate poverty, disease and ignorance was abandoned, instead ethnic politics taking precedence - perfecting the corrupt patronage of ethnicised parastatals and government departments.

The second president of Kenya, Daniel arap Moi's single party rule stifled dissent and encouraged authoritarian rule, the process reaching its apex after an attempted coup in 1982. Moi sought to contain Gikuyu, Embu, and Meru Association (GEMA's) economic

prowess, further fragmenting elite-ethnic factions. Stadia, hospitals, bridges, schools, avenues and a host of public infrastructure were named after him. His regime saw the Constitution of Kenya Amendment, Act No. 4 of 1988 providing legal backing to repression by allowing the police to detain suspects for 14 days before presenting them in court - resulting to the arrest, detention and death of over 500 people in torture chambers⁸.

Multi-partism and the New Constitution: the Second Liberation

To ensure his regime's survival, Moi undertook calculated constitutional amendments necessitating a winning candidate to garner 25% of votes in a minimum of five electoral provinces. This was followed by state organised violence in 1992 that led to the deaths of more than 1,500 people and displacement of 185,000 others⁹. By mid 90s, more than half the population lived below poverty line. The church, known for its moral voice that could challenge the state, together with internationally funded civil societies (CSOs) began to conduct civic education programs. They boldly spoke about police violence, land alienation, and the need to resolve the squatter crisis, forming an alliance of the religious sector (Catholic Church and the National Council of Christian Churches, (NCKC) and CSOs, most of whose leadership were former detainees and victims of state violence¹⁰. The two organisations later opted to engage and confront the

state directly, mobilising society for mass action and ultimately causing the Moi state to begin to wither away. At the same time, the mass media was replete with messages that reforms would be instituted if Moi left office.

The clamor for political reforms in Kenya during the Moi era was a courageous and protracted struggle against a repressive regime. Civil society, including academics and professionals, was effectively repressed under the weight of the single-party dictatorship. University professors were snatched from classrooms and taken straight to detention; but the spirit of resistance persisted. Students defied state brutality and kept the democratic ideal alive.

The formation of the Young Turks, a group of young professionals, marked a turning point, igniting widespread protests and civil disobedience. Their activism, which often resulted in detention and torture at the basement of the infamous Nyayo House, ultimately forced President Moi to concede to pressure for democratic reforms, culminating in the repeal of Section 2A of the constitution and the reintroduction of multiparty politics in 1991. But power struggle among the leadership of the newly formed political parties and lack of well-coordinated and structured strategy, handed Moi another two five-year terms as president. He ran under the KANU ticket and won the elections of 1992 and 1997 thanks to the unwillingness of the leaders of the opposition to field one candidate.

By 2002 when the state held its third

multi-party elections, it had begun drifting towards the process of state collapse. This is evident from the proliferation of armed groups and militia such as the Mungiki that took the responsibility of restoring law and order. Moreover, the focus of civic education prevented Moi from imposing Uhuru Kenyatta as his possible successor. Open resistance spread across the country. For example, the Luhya community rejected president Moi despite awarding one of their own a vice president position. The ideology of ethnicity around which he had built his empire begun to work against him. The political order drastically changed, with teachers joining the civic education movement, which saw Mwai Kibaki win the presidency as the candidate of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) in 2002.

The Mwakenya movement led by students and activists culminated in the fight for a new constitution, which enshrined greater freedoms and protection for Kenyans' opinions. In 2010, Kenya promulgated a new constitution that introduced significant political reforms, including the Bill of Rights, the devolution of power to county governments and the establishment of a more robust system of checks and balances. This marked a significant step forward in Kenya's democratic development and the ongoing struggle for greater political and social freedoms.

2.0 The Generation Zoomers

The Generation Zoomers (Gen-Zs) comprise individuals born between 1997 and 2011, who grew up during the Great Recession¹¹. Gen-Z also known as post-millennials, digital natives, the iGeneration, centennials, and zoomers, is the demographic cohort following the Millennials. They draw their names from formative experiences including technological and social trends. A significant facet of this generation is its immense usage of the Internet from a tender age. Gen-Zs are often characterised by their innate tech-savviness, with a significant portion of social interaction occurring through social media platforms.

Furthermore, coming of age during the Great Recession is often cited as a factor contributing to this generation's feelings of uncertainty and instability¹². They are the most populous generation globally, with approximately 2 billion inhabitants. This cohort is not merely shaping the future it is defining it. Having been born into an era marked by terrorism, economic recession, and climate change, Gen-Z has matured during a period of significant global upheaval. In Kenya, this generation is equally dominant, with 18,378,493 inhabitants, representing 33.42% of the population. Millennials are 12,123,453 representing 22.05%, with both generations making up 55.47% of the Kenyan populace¹³.

Known for their creativity and experimentation, the Gen-Zs perceive, learn, and understand the world through

a unique lens, unafraid to express their individuality. Having experienced the COVID-19 pandemic first hand and witnessed the economic struggles of their parents, this generation is shaped by resilience and a strong sense of community. As digital natives, they are highly connected, informed, and globally minded. Benefiting from the late H.E. President Mwai Kibaki's free primary and affordable secondary education policies introduced in 2002, the Gen-Z represent a highly educated and sophisticated group. They wield influence far beyond their years.

Encompassing tweens, teens, youth, and young adults, they are the cultural pulse of our global society. Early adopters, brand influencers, and social media pioneers, they are a force to be reckoned with¹⁴. Consequently, they make no distinction between online and offline friends and can easily connect and mobilise around causes and interests that they identify with. As such, they want immediate feedback, as they are accustomed to feedback through likes and comments online.

The Gen-Z have redefined communication, relying heavily on technology. A survey of 249 Gen-Z individuals revealed that 43% had participated in online protests, with this figure surging to 60% during recent Kenyan protests against the controversial Finance Bill 2024¹⁵. This digital fluency, deeply ingrained in their lives, distinguishes them from previous generations. If technology was a

hallmark of Millennials, it is undeniably an intrinsic part of Gen-Z's identity.

Worth noting is that the Gen-Zs crave flexibility and freedom to innovate. Their work environment is largely shaped by their jaded upbringing among a recessionary economy, rising healthcare costs and mounting student loans. Consequently, they seek direct engagement with their leaders to foster an environment that they can triumph socially and economically free from perceived bottlenecks that stifle their efforts. Kenya's MSE Tracker Survey established that 65.1 percent of youth between the age of 18-25 years uphold that their businesses would perform better if favourable government policies among others are effected proficiently¹⁶.

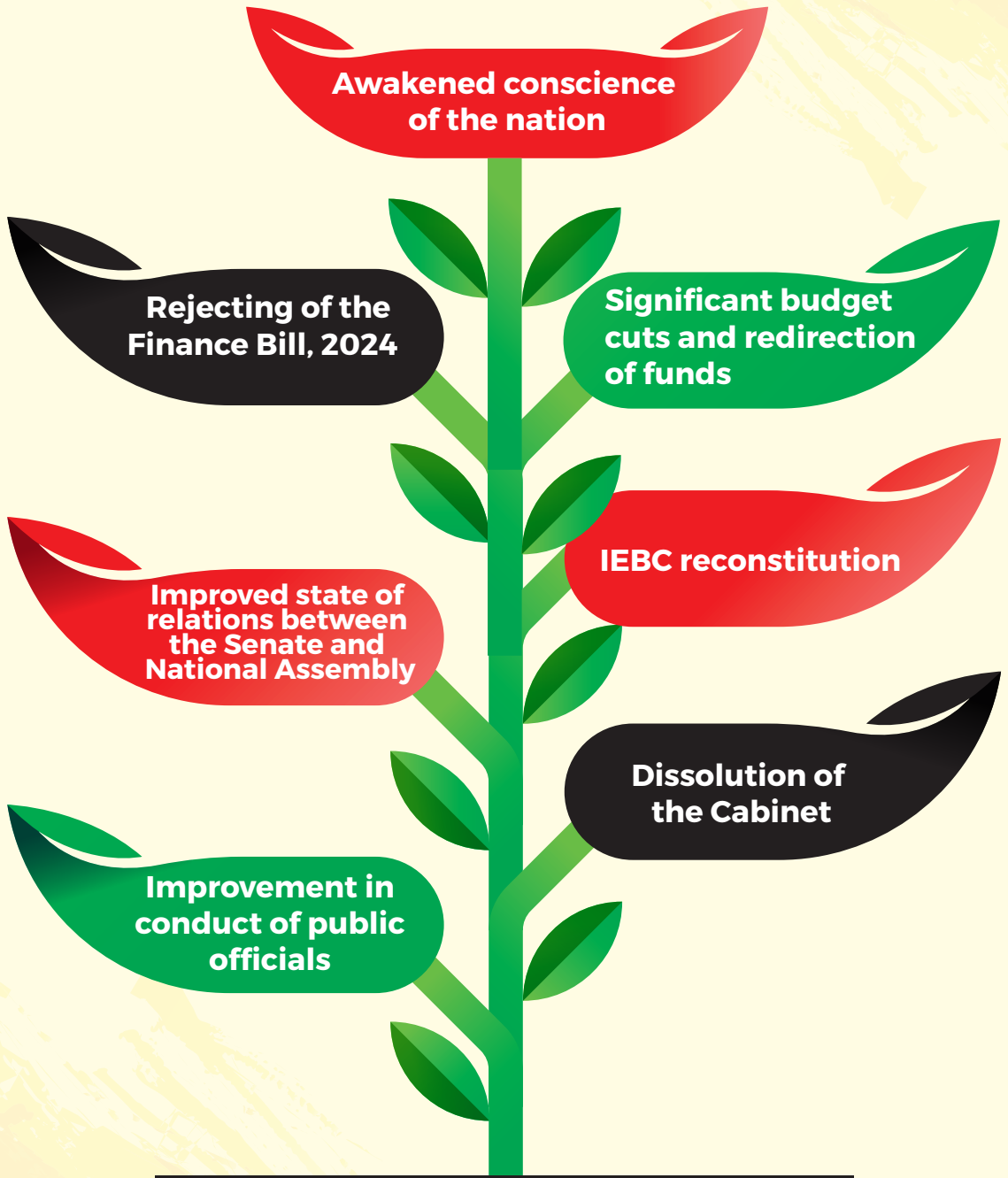
On the contrary, the Finance Bill of 2024 threatened these aspirations when numerous taxes such as digital content taxes, taxes on day-to-day household commodities among others were introduced. The contentious bill served as the final catalyst for widespread public opposition, culminating in mass protests against the government in June 2024. Disillusioned with a myriad of issues including high unemployment rates, a perceived lack of responsiveness by the Government administration, and rising inequality, the Gen-Z are determined to see a country that upholds social justice, economic opportunity, and zero corruption beyond the ethnic lenses.

2.1 Gen-Zs: The Catalysts of Change in Kenya

The recent surge in civic engagement, particularly among Gen-Z, has ushered in a new era of political consciousness in Kenya. Since the galvanizing protests against the Finance Bill, this generation has demonstrated an unprecedented level of political agency. Their collective voice has been instrumental in the historic rejection of the bill, a testament to their power to influence policy decisions. Moreover, Gen-Z's unwavering demand for electoral integrity in Kenya prompted the President H.E Dr. William Samoei Ruto, to consider the prompt reconstitution of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), underscoring the potency of youth activism in shaping the nation's trajectory.

The Gen-Z's relentless pursuit of accountability has fostered a new era of inter-governmental cooperation between the Senate and the National Assembly. This newfound synergy has empowered these legislative bodies to hold key institutions to account, marking a significant step towards good governance. Furthermore, the pressure exerted by young people has compelled the President to dissolve the cabinet, a bold move that signifies a shift in the dynamics of power. The subsequent formation of a revamped cabinet underscores the administration's recognition of the youth's influence. As a result of this heightened public scrutiny, there has been a noticeable improvement in the conduct of public officials, with a

decline in reckless driving and the misuse of sirens. It is evident that the Gen-Zs have ignited a spark of change that is transforming the political landscape of Kenya.



3.0 Rationale

The discernment of a trajectory of resistance since colonial period continues into 2024 - the common denominator being the search for a just, equitable and accountable society in which people and institutions are accountable, and resources shared equitably among Kenyans as espoused in Article 10 and Chapter six of the Constitution. The Gen-Z have chosen to remain obdurate, choosing to be faceless, with their motto being, 'Tribeless, Leaderless, and Partyless'. This slogan likely stems from the realities faced by this generation, who seamlessly conduct cross-border work and transactions via smartphones, driven by trust rather than tribal affiliations.

Highly educated and globally connected, they inhabit a virtual, borderless world centered around their smartphones. Professional and social interactions occur primarily online, with job performance measured by deliverables. Exhibiting a high degree of trust in this digital realm due to the increased presence and use of X, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok amongst other platforms, Gen-Zs are inclined to be their own 'boss' - they are an opportunity entrepreneur.

The government's Bottom up Transformation Agenda (BETA) envisages Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) as a catalyst in creation of employment and source of livelihood opportunities, particularly for the poor and marginalised groups. While 85.6% of small businesses in Kenya are

increasingly leveraging technology to run their operations, more so among young people between 18-25 years, only 30.6% have received credit for their businesses (FinAccess, 2023)¹⁷. It behoves the government to create an enabling environment for Gen-Zs to thrive. Faced with limited options - employment, entrepreneurship, crime, or dependence - young people are increasingly compelled to seek alternative means of livelihoods. There is need to recognise that fostering a business-friendly climate is not merely an economic imperative, but a social necessity. By creating opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship, the government can effectively deter youth from engaging in criminal activities and alleviate the burden on social safety nets. Ultimately, capitalising in Gen-Zs' economic empowerment is an investment in the nation's future stability and prosperity.

The recent protests, underpinned by deep-seated structural inequalities, underscore the fragility of social cohesion in Kenya. The search for a panacea to the current problems emerges as a key rationale for the direction of this strategy, with NCIC imperative in preventing these fissures from deepening and escalating into violence. It is crucial to recognise that the Gen-Zs are not inherently antagonistic towards the government; rather, they are grappling with systemic challenges. Having achieved a lot within a short period, the Gen-Z have contributed immensely

to awakening the conscience of the nation. By forging a partnership with the youth, the government can transform these challenges into opportunities. Against this complex backdrop, the Commission as the custodian of Article 10 of the Constitution strategically seeks to create an enabling environment for Gen-Zs to acquire the capacity to be agents of change while addressing the fundamental issues within society.

Transgenerational conversations are imperative for charting Kenya's path to a just, participatory, and sustainable future. The need to transcend mere reforms and embark on a transformative overhaul that addresses deep-rooted historical and structural injustices cannot be

overemphasised. While Gen-Z's righteous anger is understandable, it is crucial to channel this energy into constructive dialogue rather than destructive impulses. This generation, with its achievements, holds immense potential to catalyse change, but leadership requires humility and collaboration. It is essential to acknowledge the shoulders upon which the current generation stands and resist the urge to dismantle what came before them. Instead, they should build upon the past, and learn from its mistakes to forge a new era. NCIC's platform for transgenerational conversations provides a critical space for this essential conversation, inviting all Kenyans to participate in shaping Kenya's destiny.

4.0 Objective

The overall objective of the NCIC transgenerational conversation strategy is to empower diverse peace actors to initiate and sustain initiatives aimed at fostering common understanding, conflict resolution, and social cohesion within Kenyan communities. If handled wisely, Kenya has an opportunity to bring hope to its people as different generations must find a way to come and reason together and cooperate in the noble task of nation building.

Specifically, it seeks to:

1

Spearhead a national trust building process between the youth and key government agencies mandated with safeguarding the constitution

2

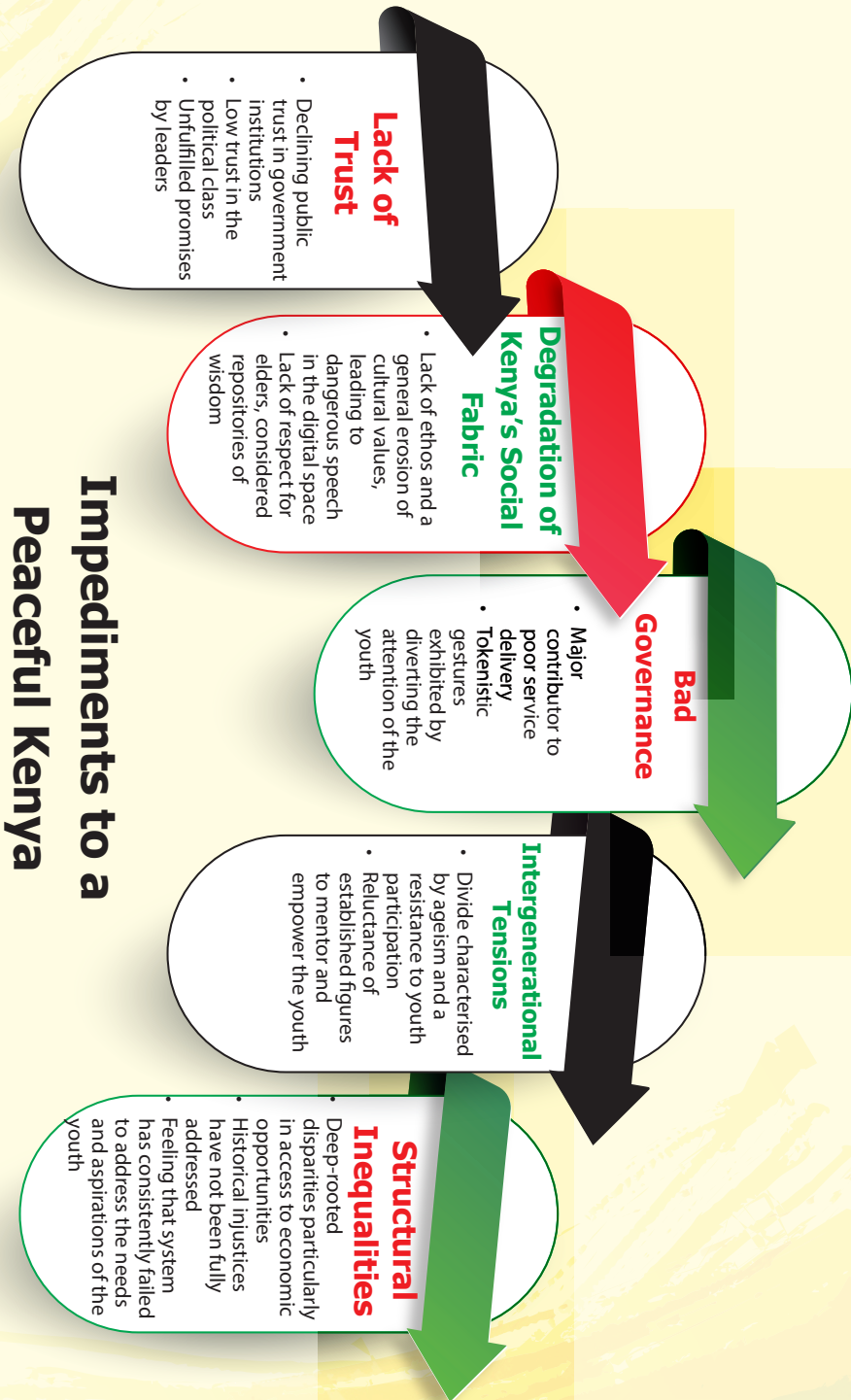
Establish a framework to facilitate a national transgenerational conversation

3

Create a supportive environment for change by advocating for policies and programs that promote inclusivity, respect and understanding between different generations in Kenya

5.0 Impediments to a Peaceful Kenya

NCIC identifies five key impediments to a peaceful Kenya, currently perceived as the most pressing. These include:



Impediments to a Peaceful Kenya

5.1 Lack of trust

The Gen-Z, a generation deeply immersed in a digital world, has redefined trust in the transactional sphere. Their professional lives often unfold virtually, demanding unwavering reliance on colleagues and clients they may never meet in person. This foundation built on trust, however, contrasts with the prevailing climate in Kenya. They struggle with a government caught up in a crisis of confidence, plagued by corruption, inefficiency, and broken promises. In fact, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) ranks corruption as the most pressing problem after unemployment and poverty (EACC, 2021)¹⁸, further eroding trust. The youth's low trust in the government's ability to deliver, as evidenced by the Youth Pulse research, has exacerbated youth skepticism towards government promises. The youth are increasingly questioning the government's commitment to addressing their concerns, with 20% of the youth interviewed expressing outright distrust (Shujaaz, 2024).

5.2 Degradation of Kenya's Social Fabric

The nation is grappling with a growing concern: a decline in civility and respect - manifesting in various forms including the rampant use of derogatory language, blatant disregard for elders, and a general erosion of cultural values. The lack of ethos, ubiquitous in the Kenyan

society, not only undermines personal relationships but also erodes the fabric of the society. The proliferation of social media platforms has exacerbated the problem, creating a breeding ground for the use of dangerous speech. While this is a societal issue, the actions and conduct of public figures can significantly influence public behavior. It is crucial that leaders model the kind of respect and civility they wish to see in the nation. By fostering a culture of respect for elders and for one another, Kenya can become a more harmonious and united society.

5.3 Bad governance

Bad governance is a major contributor to poor service delivery in Kenya, with young people increasingly demanding for accountability in the management of public affairs. Although there are various legal instruments and watchdog institutions such as parliament to regulate and monitor the ethical conduct of public officials, the deterioration of ethical standards in the public service continues unabated. The extravagance and opulence exhibited by a select few within senior officials in the Kenyan government has widened the divide, particularly between politicians and the youth, creating a scarcity of relatable role models for the youth. A renewed emphasis on **political decency and accountability** is crucial to bridge this divide.

Tokenistic gestures exhibited by diverting the attention of the youth through sports and entertainment, have only served as temporary distractions rather than substantive solutions. These tactics have further eroded trust between the government and the citizenry. The youth, exhibiting a thirst for involvement and participation in governance issues, have vocally articulated their grievances, pointing to rampant corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, poor service delivery, and a growing disparity between a highly educated yet unemployed populace and a privileged elite. This disconnect has fueled a sense of desperation, disillusionment and frustration among the youth, who are increasingly demanding accountability and meaningful participation in governance. In their words, *'there is nothing else to lose. My parents sold their only piece of land to take me to school, and as an educated jobless youth, I already lost my inheritance'*.

5.4 Intergenerational tensions

Kenya's socio-political landscape is marred by an intergenerational divide, characterised by ageism and a resistance to youth participation. Despite their maturity and capacity for critical thinking, the youth are often relegated to the periphery of decision-making processes, with the older generation maintaining monopoly over money and resources. Often manifesting as a power struggle, older generations sometimes perceive younger counterparts as a threat. This

dynamic is exacerbated by the reluctance of established figures to mentor and empower the youth, creating a barrier to entry into key sectors of the economy and society. Such a hierarchical structure perpetuates inequality, as evidenced by the unequal access to capital. For instance, individuals from families with a history of entrepreneurship such as Indians often enjoy preferential treatment in securing loans, while those from less privileged backgrounds face significant hurdles - sometimes referred to as 'high risk'. This disparity underscores the deep-rooted challenges young people encounter in their pursuit of economic independence and social mobility (UN, 2020)¹⁹.

5.5 Structural inequalities

Structural inequalities have laid the groundwork for the current social unrest among the Gen-Z population in Kenya. Deep-rooted disparities particularly in access to economic opportunities have fueled feelings of injustice and alienation, creating a marginalised and disenfranchised youth. This is further compounded by the lack of upward mobility and the perception of a rigged system that has contributed to a growing sense of hopelessness among young, highly educated citizens, increasingly turning to demand for change.

Economic disparity in Kenya resulting from the concentration of wealth in the hands of a privileged few has exacerbated these inequalities, further

fueling transgenerational tensions. The feeling is that the system has consistently failed to address the needs and aspirations of young people, highlighting a need for systematic reforms. These bedrock inequalities of a structural nature are deep-seated and have persisted over generations, shaping the opportunities and life chances of individuals and communities. In Kenya, structural inequality takes various forms including access to land, regional policies and barriers, marginalisation, and weak governance, anchored in the country’s history. Although there have been attempts to correct the mistakes of the past mainly through the promulgation of the 2010 constitution, the implementation of some solutions has been slow, others counterproductive, and still others such as the implementation of the TJRC report simply ignored. These structural issues merit sustained effort to correct them as they are deep-rooted and may be prone to resistance to corrective measures.

6.0 Transformative Framework

The Commission will implement five transformative strategies that underpin its framework for spearheading transgenerational conversations. These strategies (*outlined in the Framework below*) aim to create a platform for conversations on the *the Quest for Political Decency and Accountability in Kenya*. Although the situation may seem bleak, there is, nevertheless, hope to whose achievement NCIC will significantly contribute. The Commission’s strategies are grounded in the belief that fostering open and honest transgenerational dialogue is crucial for addressing Kenya’s challenges and building a more cohesive and resilient nation.



Framework for Transgenerational Conversations

Strategy	Output	Intervention	Period	JULY - SEP '24	OCT - DEC '24	JAN - MAR '25	APR - JUNE '25	JULY - SEP '25	OCT - DEC '25	JAN - MAR '26	APR - JUNE '26
	Profiling and Co-creation										
Strategy 1: Enhance the capacity of NCIC and other peace actors to respond effectively to the current scenario	Output 1.1: Improved knowledge and understanding on attitudes, opinions, and trends to inform strategic planning	Stakeholder mapping to identify key stakeholders and their roles									
		Social listening through strategic partnerships (X spaces, other partner's forums)									
		National profiling and co-creation with the youth									
		Regional profiling and co-creation with the youth									

Early Warning and Early Response						
Strategy 4: Support Conflict Early warning and rapid response	Output 4.1: Increased timely and adequate response to conflict eruption	Establish and AI-integrate an NCIC EWER system				
		Train field officers on the use of the EWER tool				
		Establish EWER Situation Room and communication collection points for early warning				
		Establish inter-linkages between the traditional EWER system with the novel systems				
		Enhance EWER through collaboration with like-minded partners				
		Sensitize communities on the use of EWER tools				

Long-term Transformation							Monitoring and Evaluation
<p>Strategy 5: Promote a level playing field across social, political and economic spheres</p>	<p>Output 5.1: Reengineered mentalities through socialisation</p>	Interrogate the mainstream educational curriculum to speak to current realities					
		Revamp Amani Clubs across the country to entrench national values and ethos in educational, cultural and religious settings					
		Undertake ethnic audits of the public service					
		Undertake a study on cohesion index					
		Spearhead implementation of the recommendations of the TJRC report					
		Government policies (Develop policy briefs, Review and lobby for implementation e.g Start-ups Bill, NCI Act, CGA, NYC bill etc)					
		Advocate for free TVET education to close the literacy gap					

Endnotes

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Britam Tower, 17th Floor, Hospital Rd,
Upper Hill

P. O. Box 7055-00100 Nairobi

Telephone Contacts

0702 777 000

+254-20-2585702

info@cohesion.go.ke

complaints@cohesion.go.ke

Toll free SMS : 1547

Facebook: National Cohesion and Integration Commission

Twitter: NCIC_Kenya



9 789914 989441