



United  
Persons with  
Disabilities

2024 Migration Summit

# DELIBERATION AND THE CIVIC MISSION OF YOUTH-LED ORGANISATIONS

ACTIVITY REPORT  
2024



With funding support from



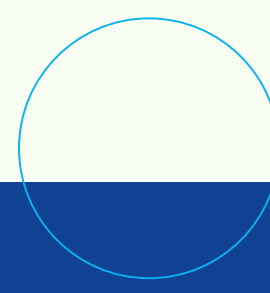
Emerging  
Talent



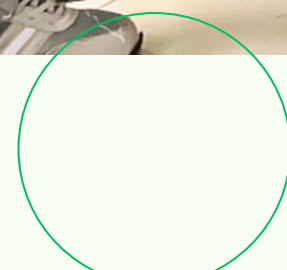
Na'amal



KARAM



"This report documents our workshop commemorating the 2024 Migration Summit. With 30 diverse participants—including youth with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, women leaders, and social entrepreneurs in Uganda—we pondered how controversial issues such as immigration and dignified work can be 'named' and 'framed' in ways that are more conducive to deliberation than adversarial politics." —Harunah Damba



# Introduction

Worldwide, youth-led organizations have traditionally played a key role in driving civic action and change within their communities. These organizations provide a crucial environment for young, emerging leaders to be exposed to diverse perspectives, engage with others across differences, and make meaningful decisions about addressing the complex challenges they face.

With funding support from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Emerging Talents, Na'amal, and the Karam Foundation, this workshop brought together 30 participants, including youth with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, women leaders, and social entrepreneurs from central and eastern Uganda. The objective was to unite diverse perspectives to identify shared values and actionable steps as we explored the theme "*Unlocking and Engaging Talent: Pathways for Dignified Work.*"

During the workshop, we discussed the decision-making experiences of young people and reflected on how democratic practices—such as naming, framing, and deliberation—can prepare young leaders for respectful civic discourse on the contentious issues they face.



# Process Overview

*“It was very interesting to engage in such a meaningful discussion, and I am glad that we were able to use the National Issues Forums guide to see how best to conduct the conversation.”*

*—Patrovas Gabriel Okidi*

The workshop employed a structured listening approach to facilitate deliberation on the theme: *Unlocking and Engaging Talent: Pathways for Dignified Work*, using the adapted National Issues Forums guide, *“Youth and Opportunities.”* Rather than debating or arguing, the structured listening approach encouraged participants to engage in deliberative dialogue, exploring different viewpoints, discussing the potential consequences of various action points, and seeking common ground.

The discussions began with presentations on case studies of successful youth-led initiatives that use dialogue as a form of respectful civic discourse, especially when addressing extraordinarily divisive issues. We were honored to have presentations from Ms. [Dorcus Asiimwe](#), Program Manager of Michigan Fellows Africa Initiatives (MFAI), and Mr. [Denis Ouma](#), Head of Training Programs at United Persons with Disabilities. Their presentations prepared and motivated participants to engage in deliberative dialogue.

After the presentations, we transitioned into experiencing deliberative civic engagement firsthand, using the National Issues Forum guide. The issue guide presented different perspectives, possible trade-offs, and questions for consideration, helping participants understand the nuances of each action point. This session was facilitated by Mr. [Patrovas Gabriel Okidi](#), a student representative at the Talloires Network of Engaged Universities.



Ms. **Dorcus Asiimwe** delivering a presentation on successful youth-led initiatives, drawing on her experience with the [Michigan Fellows Africa Initiatives](#) (MFAI). Her presentation highlighted initiatives that have enhanced the ability of young people to engage with and act on social issues democratically and deliberatively, enabling them to make decisions that solve problems their communities face.

# Discussion Process

*“It is independent living for everybody irrespective of whether they are immigrants or nationals, so if we have the necessary appropriate systems and support in place, we can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live with dignity.”*

—Denis Ouma

**FOR YEARS**, Uganda has been a home for nearly 1.7 million refugees and asylum seekers who come in search of a better life, escape from wars, flee from persecution, or seek refuge from economic hardship.

The steady influx of newcomers has helped diversify the cultural landscape and contribute to the nation's economic growth, but it has also raised a lot of questions as to how best to integrate these individuals while addressing concerns about resources, and employment.

The set up of the workshop was designed to help young leaders deliberate together and establish common ground on how to address the challenges faced by immigrants and nationals, fostering equitable opportunities for dignified work. The workshop created a balanced platform to gather insights from diverse perspectives and foster dialogue to understand issues that do not have simple answers.



## Using the National Issues Forums Guide

The workshop utilized the National Issues Forums guide, "*Youth and Opportunities*," which presented three options: 1) Equip everyone to succeed, 2) Give everyone a fair chance, and 3) Focus on economic security. Each option suggested actions we might take, along with trade-offs we would need to accept. The information in this guide raised crucial questions for which there were no easy answers:

- Will the next generation be able to build an economically secure future, or will it face unprecedented challenges that undermine its prospects?
- Should present-day priorities take precedence over our obligations to future generations?
- Is the next generation receiving the education and support it needs to succeed?
- Are there disparities that we should address today to enable future generations to prosper tomorrow?

Addressing these challenges required us to consider choices that cut across conventional partisan lines and generational differences. We needed to deliberate on which course of action should be a priority as we plan for the future.

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## Outcomes: Common Grounds

The discussions led to the establishment of several common grounds aimed at enhancing educational and employment prospects for young people. Below is a summary of the key agreements reached:

### **Equip Everyone to Succeed**

- Proposal: Increase the availability of student loans to support higher education.
- Additional Measure: Forgive loans for students who complete a year of National Service in underserved communities within Uganda.

### **Give Everyone a Fair Chance**

- Proposal: Increase funding and resources allocated to young progressive leaders to foster effective grassroots initiatives that address youth concerns.
- Additional Measure: Create independent committees to monitor and evaluate the impact of youth funds and programs.

### **Focus on Economic Security**

- Proposal: Encourage self-employment among young people to create jobs, stimulate innovation, and foster economic independence.
- Additional Measure: Provide tax exemptions for businesses led by or employing people with disabilities to incentivize their inclusion in the workforce, promote entrepreneurship, and ensure equal opportunities for economic participation.

# Conclusion

The workshop concluded with a call to action for all participants. Emphasizing that "the future is now," it encouraged everyone to contribute to creating inclusive and equitable communities. The discussions highlighted the importance of unity, respect, and intentional efforts to support one another, ensuring that no one is left behind.





# Deliberation and the Civic Mission of Youth-led organizations

(With MIT Emerging Talent, Na'amal and Karam Foundation)

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July 19, 2024

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