

# THE YOUTH AND GOVERNANCE IN THE MALAWIAN CONTEXT

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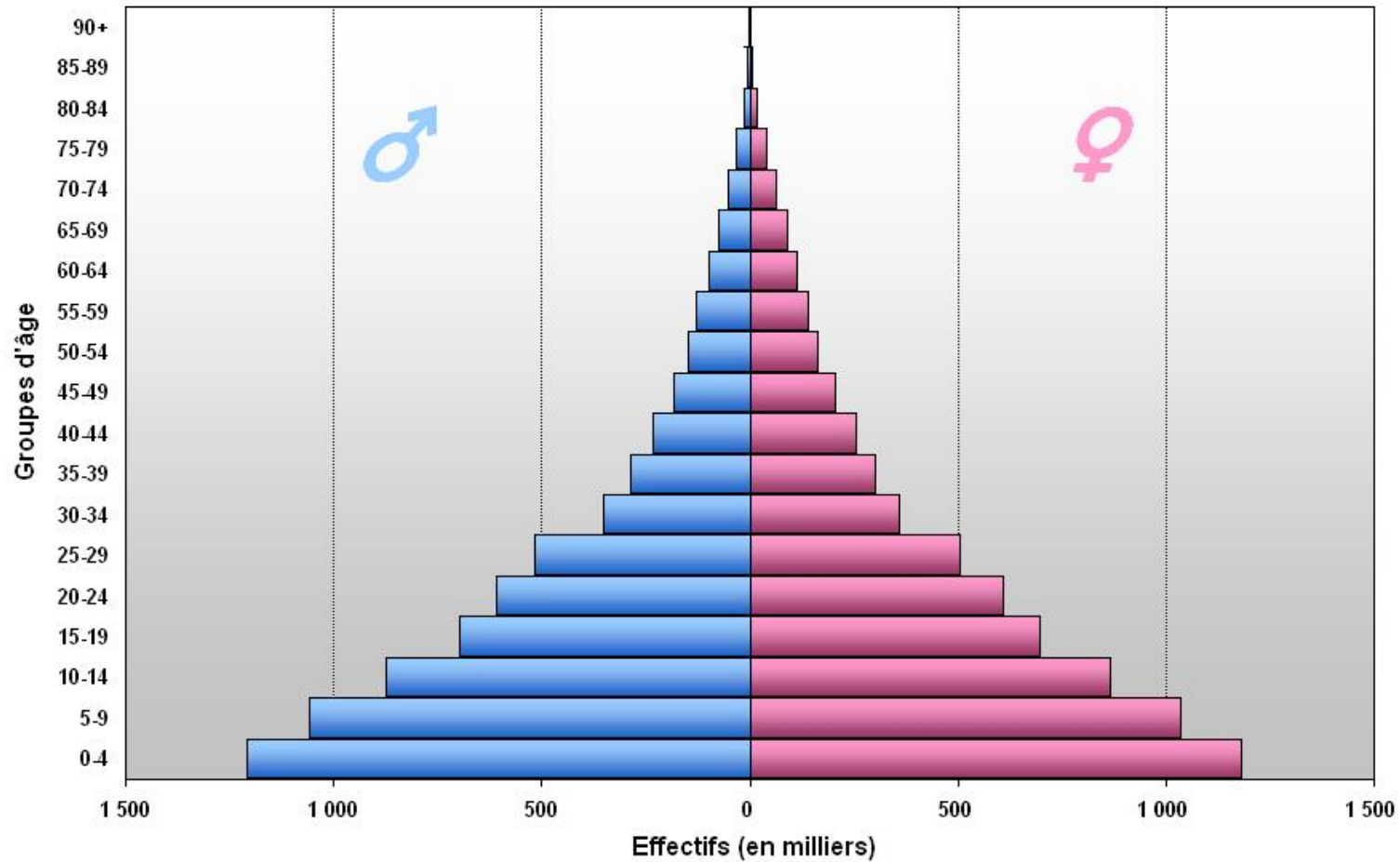
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# WHO IS A YOUTH?

- ▶ For Malawi “Youth” are defined according to the UN definition which is persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years
- ▶ However the age bracket of 10 to 35 years is under some circumstances used as it is the definition stipulated in the Malawi National Youth Policy 2013

# MALAWIAN POPULATION PYRAMID

Pyramide des âges, Malawi, 2005



Source: Organisation des Nations Unies (World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision)

# NOTES

- ▶ Using the Malawi National Youth policy, a clear understanding of the pyramid is that Malawi has a youthful population.
- ▶ Thus it would only make sense if much of our governance structures were youth incorporative..
- ▶ It is these facts that lead us to the question of..

# WHAT IS GOVERNANCE

- ▶ Governance in some literature has been defined as the persons or the bodies that are involved in administrative works e.g. in schools, government or communities.
- ▶ At the same time : “Participatory Governance is defined as the ‘sphere of public debate, partnership, interaction, dialogue and conflict entered in to by local citizens and organizations and by local government’ (IIED, 2011)

# Current situation in Malawi On Youth involvement in Governance

- ▶ Malawi at the moment is been on several campaigns that are suggesting that perhaps the youth need to be involved some more.
- ❖ One success story at the moment is that some positions in Malawi have been assumed by the youth, e.g. One of the most influential chiefs for an influential tribe is a youth (Inkosi Ya Makosi)
- ❖ Secondly a few youth have also risen to take up political positions and the local word for them is 'Ung'ono Ung'ono' to mean the young ones.
- ❖ So many youth at the Moment are heading their own organisations that further development in both rural and Urban areas.
- ❖ Furthermore, in the drafting of the National youth Policy, several youths from every district in Malawi were involved to input.
- ❖ Youth are also the very life of a government as they boost its morale and this has been so even form our first presidents era.

# CHALLENGES

- ▶ However All the above does not refute the fact that youth in Malawi are under represented in governance issues and below are some of the challenges they face.
- ❖ **Transparency and Openness** : the youth in Malawi are often times left in the dark about budgets and other crucial documents as such they cant be as effective as they need to. For Example youth have to struggle to get the City plans from the councils that are meant to serve them, and this goes all the way to affect their education among other things.
- ❖ **Youth Involvement in development projects** : often times developmental Projects do not make any provision on how the youth can benefit let alone be a part of it thus most youth just detach themselves from projects

# Challenges cont....

- ❖ **Funding constraints:** most times youth initiatives in governance are frustrated due to lack of funds. Furthermore this is a very big problem as most companies/organisations that work with the youth only want to engage them on voluntary basis. Even when they are still struggling to meet basic needs.
- ❖ **Misunderstanding and narrow vision of youth needs:** The needs and issues concerning youth are usually envisioned narrowly as they are addressed by the civil society organizations who have very low youth numbers in them. Thus they often times come up with innovations that are not relevant to the youths.



# CONCLUSION/ RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ There is need to **further the percentage of youth in all forms of governance** not only For the Fairness of it but For the sustainability of it.
- ▶ There is need to **address Legal and policy constraints** as often times it refers to the youth as ‘other interested parties’ and not ‘key stakeholders’ which now hinders them from effective council-youth engagement.
- ▶ **Advocate for the setting up of youth forum at council level**, so that the you are given a voice
- ▶ **Strengthening formal youth representation:** this would help give the presence of the youth in governance forums of meaning and not just as seat warmers we are taken to be.

THANK YOU