



THE 5TH COHORT OF THE JASIRI YOUTH CHAMPIONS INITIATIVE



**INFLUENCING CHANGE THROUGH
KNOWLEDGE & ACTION THE JASIRI WAY**





Sometimes, it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.

Nelson Mandela



Youth is described as between the ages 18 and 35 years. A tumultuous time for many when they are at their strongest and most vibrant and are ready to take on the world and impact change. This however is also a time that is shrouded in misinformation and lack of information. This strong willingness to do something without really knowing where to start can be very disheartening.

The **5th Cohort of the JASIRI Youth Champions bootcamp** by Pathways Policy Institute, an initiative that is rooted in the ability of informed and empowered youth to impact change at the grassroots level, was held from February 12th to 15th, 2024, in Nanyuki, Laikipia. A significant milestone for PPI in empowering young people to advocate for Population, Health, Environment and Climate Change related issues at the grassroots level. The training aimed to equip youth with the knowledge and skills needed to drive positive change in their respective counties.



JASIRI - /ʃasiri/

Pronunciation - /j-aa-s-ee-r-ee/

The rigorous but fun training saw 28 youth from different counties namely; **Laikipia, Isiolo, Nakuru, Samburu, Nyeri, Narok, Marsabit, Nairobi, Kirinyaga, Nyandarua and Kajiado**, selected from a pool of **916 applicants nationwide**, participate in a 3 day training that focused on **SMART advocacy**, Understanding the SMART approach to advocacy and using it to address everyday issues that affect the community, Budget advocacy; Making sense of county budgets, the budget cycle, and how to develop a memorandum, SRHR and FP Advocacy, Climate Justice advocacy, Stakeholders mapping and Communication.



The large number of applicants highlighted the overwhelming interest and commitment of young people everywhere to advocate for change. The diverse cohort, comprising **14 males** and **14 females**, brought together perspectives from different counties, enriching discussions around advocacy and fostering a sense of collective purpose.



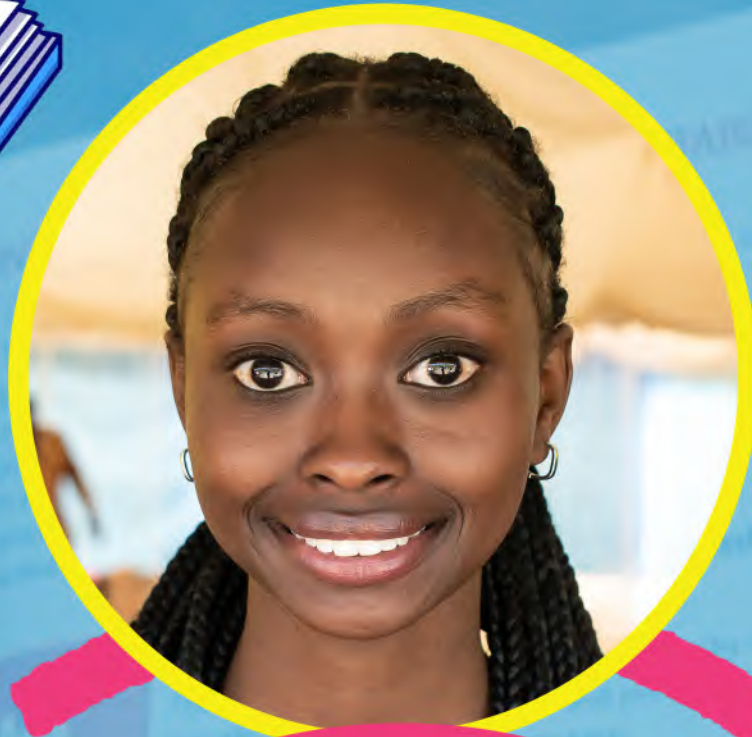
With a great call to action, Solomon Kibue, a board member- Pathways Policy Institute, set the tone for the training by urging the fellows to hold governments accountable to their commitments.

This allowed for the training to commence with a comprehensive overview of Pathways Policy Institute projects and engagements followed by an in-depth introduction into what SMART advocacy is. This foundational understanding provided participants with insights into PPI's mission and objectives, setting the stage for discussions on how the youth can be involved in real and concrete advocacy. The youth were also able to witness first hand from 5 champions from the previous cohort how meaningful engagement and SMART advocacy can yield results for the community through detailed PowerPoint presentations.



Throughout the 3-day training, different facilitators including Peter Wagutu, Nelson Maina, Zacharia Kahwai and Joseph Njuguna skilfully guided the participants through the intricacies of advocacy, social accountability and the county budget cycle highlighting its role in ensuring transparency and accountability in government actions and decisions and emphasizing the importance of defining SMART objectives and crafting clear, actionable requests for policymakers and stakeholders. The youth expressed that their biggest challenge is being able to clearly articulate their needs. This session led to a light-hearted debating session as the champions tried to understand the difference between advocacy and activism.





I participated in the 5th JASIRI boot camp training held by Pathways Policy Institute. The training was an enriching and impactful experience. I had the opportunity to engage in learning activities and interact with experts in the field and peers. The interactive sessions and group activities allowed me to interact with fellow champions, fostering a dynamic learning environment. I found the topics engaging and relevant; SMART Advocacy, SMART communication and MEMO writing empowering me with new knowledge and new perspectives. I also had the opportunity to network with professionals and experts in the field, allowing me to exchange ideas, learn from others, and build potential collaborations. The training honed my critical thinking skills and helped me gain confidence in articulating my ideas. The training was a positive experience, and I am grateful for the support and mentorship.

Christine Muthoni
5th Cohort JASIRI Champion



“ It always seems impossible until it's done.”

Nelson Mandela



Another pivotal session was on Climate Justice, led by Susan Sindani, a Build PHED young leaders fellow, who underscored the interconnectedness of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) with climate action. The JASIRI fellows got to learn from a fellow youth and gain a deeper understanding of the effects of climate change on the health and well-being of youth and their communities. This session allowed for the champions to come up with approaches they feel every community member could employ to mitigate climate change effects even as they advocate for intervention and change.

The training also provided a platform for the participants to share their engagement stories and experiences, many sessions involved group discussions, interactive presentations, quiz games and questions and answer sessions that ignited healthy debates and testimonials around different ways to deal with different human rights issues.

PPI believes in the power of evidence-based advocacy and to emphasize this had the fellows engage in real and hands on memo writing group work sessions that were meant to articulate real issues from the fellows' communities. This saw the different youth challenge each other to clearly explain the issues in their communities, Laikipia County focused on the increase of the Family Planning budget, Nakuru County focused on mental health, while Kajiado, Marsabit, and Isiolo jointly tackled the pressing issue of reducing and eradicating Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Nyeri County prioritized Gender-Based Violence (GBV) while Nairobi County addressed Menstrual Health. These SMART objectives reflected the diverse range of challenges facing communities and youth across Kenya.





Just to emphasize to the youth that decision-makers are approachable and reachable the training received special guests, the Laikipia County Deputy Governor H.E Reuben Kamuri engaged participants offering insights into youth opportunities and strategies for engagement, he emphasized on the importance of the youth embodying the JASIRI spirit which means being courageous in all they do thus driving positive change for their communities.



The Director- Public Participation Mr. J.M. Mathenge, also engaged the youth, explaining the importance of attending public participations. He explained that the youth are the only ones who can best articulate their concerns and that most of the time the youth are forgotten since they do not involve themselves in county proceedings. The Laikipia county RH coordinator Madam Alice Gachigi too presented the county's RH indicators to the youth, she reminded the youth that advocacy without evidence to back up any asks is equivalent to not asking at all. The youth were very thrilled to meet and interact with these key duty-bearers and plant a tree together to mark JASIRI 5.

Participants then learned the importance of tailoring messages to specific audiences and delivering compelling elevator pitches. Through role-playing and practical exercises, champions honed their communication skills, The fellows further learned how to navigate advocacy landscapes and engage with decision-makers. A highlight session was the roleplaying sessions where the fellows had to engage pretend decision makers which left all the participants either clapping in admiration or rolling with laughter from the mock interactions.





Attending the 5th Cohort of the JASIRI Youth Champions Boot Camp as a junior facilitator was an exhilarating experience that allowed me to transition from a participant to mentor. I stepped into the role of guiding and supporting fellow advocates in their journey towards SMART Advocacy, and it felt incredibly rewarding. I will forever be grateful for the opportunity to share insights gained from my previous participation & the work I had been doing since then. This added depth to the discussions and fostered a collaborative learning environment. What I enjoyed more, was serving as a junior facilitator, it not only reaffirmed my passion for advocacy but also empowered me to inspire others to amplify their voices for positive change.

Lauryn Maina
3rd Cohort JASIRI Champion



To climax the day-time sessions, the participants took part in fun swimming and team-building activities that ended in bonfire conversations, where they openly discussed the challenges affecting the youth in their communities and shared personal experiences. These candid exchanges that took place every evening, touched on different topics from, what love and relationships mean to the youth, to how the youth can better contribute to fostering AYSRHR in their counties.

As the training concluded on Valentine's Day, the youth had a love-themed dinner that allowed them to enjoy music and dance and admire their just received certificates for having completed the JASIRI SMART advocacy boot camp. As they danced the last night away a renewed sense of purpose and determination to drive positive change within their communities was being cemented in their spirits. Armed with the knowledge and skills gained from the training, they were poised to

become agents of change in the fight for environmental sustainability, social justice, and community well-being back in their respective counties. Keep an eye out for the JASIRIs!!!





Media Corner



https://youtu.be/x0ZxSaRU-e8?si=Nj4_QlXo_uCCsiCx



https://www.youtube.com/live/EJEtEfnK_5U?si=uoHcyjion6g4Avao4

<https://youtu.be/MyHSopcp8co?feature=shared>

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