

Our story begins in 2018, when Zambia faced significant challenges in its political landscape. Public anger from the elections two years earlier was sowing seeds of chaos. The government's oppressive and aggressive nature stifled democratic processes and marginalized the voices of the youth. More than 70 percent of the population was under age 35, yet youth only held four of the 156 seats in parliament—and none were held by young women. Youth representation was severely limited.

Zambia had no space for youth to discuss their political ambitions. Voter apathy was prevalent, and they were disillusioned with the political system. Tensions between youth from different parties escalated, leading to detrimental conflicts that resulted in violence and death.

The country needed a way to unite the youth, to channel them toward contributing to society. They could be a voting bloc that would change the dominance of tribalism and division. We needed a movement dedicated to building the capacity of youth politicians and providing campaign support. Without it, aspiring young leaders would not have the necessary resources and guidance. And so, we started a movement, which we named Youth4Parliament (Y4P).

Many people came on board and joined us. We established campaign teams and offered tailor-made capacity building for candidates. We provided materials and human resources. As a result, youth were elected to positions of power, and there was a strong network of young politicians joining hands across party lines.

The 2021 general election was a historic moment. Y4P members were engaged in the campaigns of youth candidates running for the seats of councilors, council chairpersons, mayors, and MPs. About 60 percent of those who we supported won their elections. Afterward, youth who gained seats in parliament established the Youth Parliamentary Caucus. For the first time, Zambia now had a platform for youth and MPs to advance youth agendas. This marked a profound shift in the