

This book was written by the founders and core team of the Youth4Parliament movement in Zambia, eight activists under age 35 who have spent years striving to make their country a place that represents the interests of all young people. And they have been remarkably successful.

Youth4Parliament was founded by Thompson Luzendi and Nawa Sitali, two friends belonging to opposing political parties. They had a vision to create a space for disagreeing young people to have meaningful conversations about politics and to implement a movement that would launch the careers of youth politicians.

At the time of this writing, the core team is comprised of Muleta Kapatiso, Given Musanya Kapolyo, Andrew Machila, Mary Mwaba, Chimwemwe Zakeyo Mwansa, and Nalishebo Sinyama. Several of them have been organizing with Y4P since it started taking shape in 2018. Joined by Thompson and Nawa, each of them has shared their memories and insights from the first three years of the movement. Their individual writings have been woven together into a single narrative. Occasionally, the specific experiences of a particular activist are told, and their names are shared in those moments.

We can all learn a lot from Youth4Parliament. A movement—and the future it is fighting for—must be qualitatively different from the institutions that maintain the status quo. The vision of tomorrow must inform the mechanisms of change. Lasting resistance does more than swap the seats in the palaces of power. Instead, it returns power to the people. Those entrusted with governance must be servants of all, not their masters. Any movement that seeks to build a world like this must first enshrine these values in their own governance.

Youth4Parliament has demonstrated what can happen when youth leaders are consistent and uncompromising with their values. They have shown us how people once violently opposed—and oftentimes still disagreeing on specifics—can work together to make society and government function better.