



AIMI & YOOSUF'S VISION 2050



Picture this: A vibrant group of young Maldivians gather to brainstorm, dream and discuss their vision for 2050. This is their story, told through the lives of Aimi and Yoosuf, two 17-year olds* who represent the average Maldivian youth today.

Through the experiences of Aimi and Yoosuf, we explore the hopes and aspirations for Maldives in 2050, identifying key areas where policy changes are essential to achieve these collective goals.

This manifesto is a product of the 'Vision 2050 Workshop' held from 1-3 July 2024, where young people aged 18-30 from across the Maldives came together to share their ideas and dreams for the future.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all participants* for their invaluable contributions. A special thanks to our partners at Ministry of Housing, Land and Urban Development and Maldives Bureau of Statistics for their unwavering support and collaboration. Their expertise and resources were instrumental in shaping the insights and recommendations presented in this manifesto.

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*The average for Aimi and Yoosuf's characters were determined using data from the Census 2022 and extensive surveys conducted with young people in the Maldives.

ECONOMY

Meet Yoosuf, an exceptional 17-year old from the bustling city of Male'. Like 91% (2,604) of his peers, he has completed secondary school but finds himself in the 59.8% (1,686) who didn't pursue further studies¹. Yoosuf dreams of turning his talents into a sustainable income, attracting both local and international clients to achieve financial independence and afford his own place.

In the Maldives, the **heavy reliance on tourism and limited support for the informal sector means opportunities for economic diversification are scarce**². This affects the entire population, including Yoosuf and is reflected in labour market participation rates.

Currently, only **34.3% of women** participate in the labour market compared to **67.5% of men**. Inequality in employment, pay gap and loss of employment due to the absence of a safety net, given women's reproductive and care role have sustained the gap in the formal labour force³.

Although women and men spend almost the same number of hours at formal jobs, surveys show that women spend twice as much time on daily household work and three times more on unpaid domestic and care work compared to men⁴. **This disparity further limits women's economic participation, highlighting the need for policy changes to support a more balanced and inclusive workforce.**

HOW CAN WE HELP AIMI & YOOSUF?

- **Skill Development and New Industries:** Development of skills and promote industries such as art, music and crafts to create various income opportunities and policies that facilitate such opportunities. Encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation among young people can lead to the creation of new industries and economic opportunities.
- **Support for SMEs:** Offer online programs on maintaining balance sheets and basic marketing and branding in a Maldivian context.
- **Informal Sector Support:** Development of the informal sector to include pension schemes and benefits. Introduction of seasonal employment as well as facilitating and mainstreaming opportunities to work from home.
- **Women's Economic Participation:** Special measures to increase women in management roles in the tourism sector and general participation in the labour market. Create affordable childcare options to make childcare more accessible. Encourage women in leadership and productive work by facilitating a family friendly environment and encourage men to engage in care work.



EDUCATION

Meet Aimi, a remarkable 17-year-old young woman growing up in the beautiful Maldives, who aims to challenge gender norms and create equal opportunities for other young women. Passionate about learning, she is enrolled in further studies alongside 51.3% (1,363) of her co-graduates. However, 210 young women her age have migrated to the Greater Male' area for work due to limited opportunities for further education and the need to earn a living in an increasingly expensive country⁵.

The Maldives faces a crucial challenge: providing high-quality education and meaningful job opportunities⁶. The traditional education system's **lack of holistic skill development inhibits students' readiness for diverse workplace demands and societal contributions.**

Education is key to unlocking the full potential of young people like Aimi and Yoosuf. Investing in skills development, including life and soft skills, is essential for creating a proficient workforce that drives economic advancement, boosts productivity and fosters innovation⁷.



WHAT CAN WE DO FOR AIMI & YOOSUF?

- **Holistic Skill Development:** Introduce ethics, financial literacy, and life skills sensitization in schools and universities.
- **Industry Experience:** Encourage immersive learning and mandatory extracurricular activities. Chosen extracurricular activities of their choice allow students to develop necessary information and skills to succeed in the workplace and to move away from purely academic achievements.
- **Community Service:** Integration of community service into school curricula.
- **Inclusive Education:** Ensure the introduction of both soft and hard skills at all educational levels.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Students are connected with people involved in traditional and indigenous crafts in the islands to preserve Maldivian heritage and arts.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Aimi and Yoosuf live in a nuclear household, which is typical in today's Maldives. The country is **undergoing a demographic transition** with declining birth rates and an ageing population. By 2054, the population aged 65 years and above is projected to constitute 14% of the resident Maldivian population, compared to just 5% in 2014⁸.

The current urbanisation style in the congested city of Male' **undermines community connectivity**. As the gap between generations widens, there is an urgent need to **redesign housing models and spaces that foster intergenerational unity**.

Integrating nature with food security into spatial planning for public and residential areas can make these spaces enjoyable and accessible to the population. In addressing climate urbanisation, we must **create cities that are not only environmentally sustainable, but also resilient and socially inclusive**, better equipping them to face the challenges posed by climate change⁹.

HOW CAN WE HELP AIMI & YOOSUF?

- **Housing Models:** Redesign housing and multipurpose spaces for intergenerational unity.
- **Green Spaces:** Integrate nature and food security in spatial planning.
- **Public Transport:** Promote efficient public transport and rent-a-bicycle schemes.
- **Climate-Resilient Infrastructure:** Develop infrastructure that is resilient to climate change and socially inclusive.
- **Disability Accessibility:** Ensure public spaces are pedestrian and access-friendly.



HEALTH & SOCIETAL WELLBEING

Aimi, a compassionate individual who cares deeply about her community and the wellbeing of those around her, and Yoosuf, who maintains an active lifestyle through sports, both understand the importance of health¹⁰. They recognize that **sustaining a healthy and active lifestyle** is crucial for improving both mental and physical health and reducing health risks¹¹. To support this, it is crucial that **whole foods are made affordable** and that restaurants and commercial food practices **offer healthier alternatives**.

Health workers play a vital role in guiding preventive measures, especially as extreme weather conditions directly and indirectly impact health outcomes¹².

Aimi is concerned about the potential adverse effects of extreme weather on her future health, particularly if she decides to have children. Evidence shows that increased frequency and severity of heat waves can affect fertility and contribute to maternal health issues such as anaemia, eclampsia, low birth weight and preterm birth and miscarriage¹³.

Furthermore, limitations within the health system regarding **accessibility and response to emerging health patterns**, coupled with challenges in sustaining services and supplies during emergencies pose significant obstacles. Effective healthcare access, community engagement and stress management are essential for improving overall societal wellbeing and health outcomes.



WHAT CAN WE DO FOR AIMI & YOOSUF?

- **Community Health Workers:** Deploy health workers to guide prevention measures.
- **Accessible Healthcare:** Implement travelling doctors or clinics with a booking and scheduling system to provide healthcare services to atolls and islands.
- **Inclusive Facilities:** Create spaces like movie theatres and game hubs for de-stressing.
- **Support Nutritious Choices:** Create dedicated spaces for community food growth and promote changes in restaurant and commercial food practices.
- **Active Lifestyle Support:** Facilitate environments that encourage an active and healthy lifestyle.
- **Support for Emerging Health Issues:** Make whole foods affordable and offer healthy alternatives in restaurants.

¹⁰The Adolescent Health Indicators Recommended by the Global Action for Measurement of Adolescent Health. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2024

¹¹National Mental Health Policy 2015-2025 – Ministry of Health, Health Protection Agency, World Health Organization

¹²World Health Day 2023- Maldives Bureau of Statistics (MBS)

¹³UNFPA (2024) Navigating Megatrends: The ICPD Programme of Action for a Sustainable Future ICPD30 Brief: The Future of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.

GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Aimi and Yoosuf actively volunteer with youth-led organisations that **advocate for meaningful youth participation, good governance, greater representation and inclusivity.** Despite the efforts of many, **women continue to face significant barriers in decision-making positions,** with only 22% holding management roles¹⁴. Challenges include being filtered out during party primaries, lacking political connections, facing economic and financial constraints and ensuring social and cultural negative attitudes from family, along with insufficient family support. It is vital to promote civic education to aid citizens make better informed decisions regarding electoral reforms.

To address these issues and **enhance digital inclusion,** it is vital to provide information and support on digital safety. Ensuring **accountability in digital spaces** can help overcome barriers and promote greater participation and representation for all¹⁵.



HOW CAN WE HELP AIMI & YOOSUF?

- **Representation and Inclusivity:** Increase representation, inclusivity and diversity.
- **Safe Digital Space:** Ensure accountability and transparency.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure:** Invest in sustainable public and social infrastructure.
- **Public Service Efficiency:** Promote civic education and electoral reforms.
- **Community Engagement:** Encourage inclusive policy formulation and community engagement.

Aimi and Yoosuf face considerable climate anxiety. What was then referred to as “**climate change**” has evolved into today’s “**climate crisis**” which is now recognized as an existential threat of our time. Modernization of the global food system has increased food production but has come at **significant costs**, including biodiversity loss, land degradation, freshwater depletion and increased pollution, particularly from pesticides and fertilisers used in nutrient-deficient soils¹⁶.

Reducing carbon emissions can be achieved through **proximity food supply chains and reliance on local crops**¹⁷. Additionally, macro- and micro nutrient deficiencies and undernutrition among pregnant women, compromise their chances for a healthy pregnancy and a healthy newborn. Water shortages during pregnancy further exacerbate these risks, such as dehydration.

ENVIRONMENT & FOOD SECURITY

The Maldives is one of the countries most vulnerable to the impacts of the climate crisis: rising sea levels, mass coral reef bleaching, coastal erosion, and food and water shortages are all likely to be locally exacerbated by global emissions in the coming years¹⁸. Recent research estimates¹⁹ the total economic loss to the Maldives’ economy from climate change will be on average 2.3% of Gross Domestic Product by 2050²⁰.

Ecotourism offers a solution by ensuring activities have **minimal ecological footprints and lower carbon emissions** while supporting climate action through **sustainable resource management**. Such practices are essential to preserve our biodiversity and natural habitats²¹.



WHAT CAN WE DO FOR AIMI & YOOSUF?

- **Zero Waste:** Promote zero waste practices.
- **Shore Protection:** Implement shore protection measures.
- **Sustainable Tourism:** Maldives to be an ecotourism destination in harmony with nature and people by developing sustainable tourism practices.
- **No Land Reclamation:** Advocate for a circular green economy.
- **Ocean Preservation:** Preserve biodiversity and natural habitats.
- **Food Security:** Enhance food security through sustainable farming and making farmers markets rely on locally and proximity food culture. Promote local crop growth and provide necessary devices and materials for island agricultural sustainability.
- **Energy Security:** Ensure energy security through sustainable practices and investment in renewable energy.

¹⁶UNFPA (2024) Navigating Megatrends: The ICPD Programme of Action for a Sustainable Future ICPD30 Think Piece: The ICPD and Climate Action
¹⁷UNFPA (2024) Navigating Megatrends: The ICPD Programme of Action for a Sustainable Future ICPD30 Think Piece: Demographic Change and Sustainability MBS (2019) Agriculture Survey 2019 for Selected Islands | ¹⁸Maldives Tourism Climate Action Plan - Ministry of Tourism | ¹⁹Maldives Climate Risk Profile ADB - World Bank 2021
²⁰UNDP (2023) Loss and Damage and Climate Litigation: How can the Maldives and other Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Position for Greater Climate Action
²¹Ecotourism Framework and Roadmap (2024) - Ministry of Tourism Maldives and Maldives Roadmap for Environmental-Economic Statistics (2024) - MBS



Endorsed by Maldives Bureau of Statistics

