

REPORT 7

YOUTH-LED DEVELOPMENT

REPORT SERIES

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

PROGRESS & SUSTAINABILITY IN YOUTH-LED DEVELOPMENT:

A Baseline and Follow Up Study of the UN-Habitat Urban Youth Fund



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Progress and Sustainability in Youth-Led Development is the seventh report in the Global Youth-Led Development series. This report presents results from several, related studies on the youth-led organizations in Africa and the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific that received Urban Youth Fund (UYF) grants between 2009 and 2011. It also compares their experience in implementing youth programs with comparable youth organizations that were not funded by the UYF. Through a baseline study and a follow-up study conducted two years later, it is able to examine the experience of the selected youth-led organizations over multiple years. The report looks at their programs and how they operate; the challenges they face; the strategies they develop to meet those challenges; their hopes and plans for the future; and the benefits they accomplish for youth, their youth organizations, and the larger community.

All reports in the series are available at <http://issuu.com/unhabitatyouthunit>

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FOREWORD

This report is the seventh volume of the Global Youth-Led Development Series, a collection of themed papers created to expand the knowledge in the area of youth-led development. Youth-led development (YLD) as a concept reflects a faith in the power of young people to contribute constructively to the good of society. YLD places youth at the center of their own and their communities' development, moving youth from passive receptors of development, to agents of positive change.

In 2005, UN-Habitat published a report leading up to the World Urban Forum in Vancouver, which explored how YLD agencies can become more than the sum of their parts through collective action, and became part of the basis for UN-Habitat's development of new YLD programs, supported by the Government of Norway. UN-Habitat continued to develop innovative YLD programs with the launching of the Urban Youth Fund in 2008. The Fund, one of the first of its kind and still a unique model in the UN, was created to support youth-led initiatives globally. The Urban Youth Fund operates today as a comprehensive program with different components, such as grants, project management trainings, e-learning in social enterprise development, a mentorship program and general capacity-building support. The establishment of the various program components has been a result of research and feedback from participants in the Urban Youth Fund program. The Urban Youth Fund is designed to serve three purposes: 1) to provide opportunities for grassroots youth-led groups with no or low access to finance; 2) to serve as a laboratory for testing and identifying innovative models and mechanisms for youth-led empowerment; 3) to provide data for the normative and policy work of UN-Habitat in the field of sustainable urban development.

To inform the operations of the Fund a number of research projects have been undertaken, further exploring the role, contexts, functioning and capacity of youth-led initiatives in development. This report, which is the 7th in the series, presents results from several, related studies on the youth-



led organizations in African and Arab States, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific who received Urban Youth Fund grants between 2009 and 2011. It also compares their experience in implementing youth programs with comparable youth organizations that were not funded by the UYF. Through a baseline study and a follow-up study conducted two years later, it is able to examine the experience of the selected youth-led organizations over multiple years. The report looks at their programs and how they operate; the challenges they face; the strategies they develop to meet those challenges; their hopes and plans for the future; and the benefits they accomplish for youth, their youth organizations, and the larger community.

Together, the Global Youth Led Development series of papers forms a mosaic that sheds light on the myriad of ways that youth are positively impacting their community. This report series emphasizes how youth can be assets to their communities, and how local, national and international decision-makers can both engage and support youth and youth-led initiatives. Research for each paper in the series draws on cutting edge research in this newly acknowledged area of youth development. Lessons from this series provide a knowledge base from which youth and those interested in working with youth can develop programs and policies that assure youth's meaningful engagement in community development. The series seeks to demonstrate the complexities of youth-led development, while also inspiring people to action. In the end, this series aims to contribute new insights to the emerging global dialogue on youth-led development.



INTRODUCTION

As the seventh volume in the Global Youth-Led Development Series, this report looks at youth-led development initiatives funded by UN-Habitat's Urban Youth Fund¹ and explores how these initiatives operate, the challenges they encounter, the strategies developed to overcome those challenges, and their experiences with the implementation of the project itself.

The report draws from data collected over several years, including data from the first cohort to receive grants from the Urban Youth Fund (2009), along with data from 2011 grantees and a matched comparison group (implementing youth-led development projects, but without UYF support).

The Urban Youth Fund program involves reporting requirements on the part of the grantees, and these reports from the youth leaders themselves—detailing their experiences—inform the research in significant ways. In particular, as part of the conditions of the support, grantees complete and submit to UN-Habitat mid-term and final reports that describe their work and achievements, their challenges, and the lessons they've learned through the process. In addition, using Skype, it was possible to conduct interviews with representatives of 20 grantee organizations, after completion of the projects for which they received financial and non-financial support. The research was further complemented by survey data gathered in the fall of 2010 through a study of 2009 UYF-beneficiaries and analyzed by the *Children, Youth and Environments Center for Community Engagement (CYE)* at the University of Colorado. Taken together, in combination, those data provided a limited but useful basis for assessing the experiences of youth-led organizations that received support from the Urban Youth Fund in 2009.

A second study examined more complementary data and more detailed information gathered from 2011 beneficiary organizations and a matched comparison group. The youth-led organizations among the grantees and comparison group were strikingly similar, which allowed for some interesting and important comparisons.² Analysis of baseline data collected from both groups enabled a more valid method of assessing the impacts of UYF-grants when combined with analysis of outcomes for both groups after project completion. A follow-up survey was conducted in spring 2014, two years after collection of the baseline data. During this period, sufficient time

¹ Officially known as the Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-Led Development, this grant program is more commonly referred to—as it is in this report—as the Urban Youth Fund (UYF).

² The comparison group was drawn from the group of unsuccessful applicants in the same year who had gone through the eligibility check verifying they were suitable for support (but were not selected for support).

passed for any project impacts to manifest themselves.

The data collected before and after project completion for both the grantees and the organizations in the control group make it possible to determine how effective grantee organizations have been and how success is linked to organizational characteristics. One question that remained, however, was whether these organizations would have been more or less effective *without* participating in the UYF program. In order to assess impacts of the UYF program, it was important to examine the experiences of a control group, consisting of organizations that applied for support, but did not receive it (i.e., eligible but unsuccessful applicants). The two groups were comparable in most respects, except that organizations in one group did receive support, whereas those in the control group did not. Thus, an additional component of this study sought to answer critical questions about the impact of the Urban Youth Fund: Do the experiences of organizations in these two groups differ? Are those that received UYF support more effective? If they are, this finding would provide a justification for the award program. If they are not more effective, it becomes important to ask questions about the program's operations and implementation.

The sections that follow present the findings from these analyses, and the implications of those findings for supporting the work of these youth-led initiatives within and beyond programs like that of UN-Habitat's Urban Youth Fund.



RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This study integrates three separate, but related, research projects focused on the Urban Youth Fund grantees and comparison groups. These projects included: a study of the 2009 UYF grantees (the inaugural year of the Urban Youth Fund); a baseline study of 2011 UYF grantees and a comparison (non-funded) group; and a follow up study of the 2011 UYF grantees and the comparison group. Baseline data from both 2009 grantees and 2011 grantees looked specifically at the Urban Youth Fund grant process and project implementation process. Taken together, these studies provide a profile of the work, results, needs, and opportunities for youth-led development initiatives. All of these research efforts provided Urban Youth Fund beneficiaries the opportunity to give important feedback on their experiences implementing youth-led development projects, as well as their experiences with the Fund itself.

For the study of 2009 UYF grantees, feedback was gathered through web-based surveys, which grantees were invited (multiple times) to complete. Among these 2009 grantees, completed surveys were received from 46 beneficiaries, representing a response rate of 73%. In Appendix 2, a quantitative analysis of these grantees—including numbers of youth reached and the costs per project—is presented as background information. Questions on the survey asked grantees about, among other things, the application process, the frequency and quality of interactions with UN-Habitat staff, the performance of the funded program in terms of outcomes for participating youth, developing partnerships, acquiring additional funding, and the challenges they faced. In addition, Skype interviews were conducted with 20 Urban Youth Fund grantees that received grants in the 2009 round—15 of them from Africa and 5 from the Asia and the Pacific region. The key results of these findings, taken in concert with results from the other data, are also discussed later in this report.

For the baseline study of the 2011 grantees and a comparison group, feedback was also gathered through an online survey to grantees and organizations in the comparison group. For the grantees, representatives of the organizations provided their responses during one of several weeklong intensive training events, organized and delivered by UN-Habitat to prepare the grantees in areas such as general project management, financial management, M&E and reporting, risk assessment, and stakeholder analysis. These trainings were held November 2011 through February 2012 in Zanzibar, Mauritius, Mexico City, and Cairo. During these trainings, UN-Habitat staff assisted grantees in completing the online survey instrument. The organizations in the comparison group received an initial email and several reminders sent at one-week intervals. The questionnaire for the comparison group was much shorter than that of the grantees, in order to

encourage participation and achieve an adequate response rate. Both questionnaires were made available in English, French and Spanish. Finally, a follow up survey was conducted with these organizations in spring of 2014, which allowed a comparison with the baseline data from two years earlier. During this period, sufficient time passed for short-term project impacts to manifest themselves.

To better understand the how the UYF benefited the grantee organizations, their communities and the participating youth, and the difference these grants made to youth-led initiatives compared with unfunded youth-led initiatives, the study used a comparison group that was strikingly similar to the group of grantees. The sampling procedure was intended to produce a comparison group with a regional distribution that would mirror the regional distribution of the grantees. To that end, all eligible applicants were categorized, minus the grantees themselves, into the three regions used in the UYF-selection process: African and Arab States, Asia Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Within each of these regions, a systematic random sampling was used with set intervals determined by dividing the sample size for each region into the number of eligible applicants in that same region.

Considering that organizations in the comparison group had little incentive to participate in the survey (a randomly selected organization would receive an iPod), a sample size twice the number of UYF-grantees was identified, anticipating that a 50% response rate would yield a comparably sized group. This plan worked very well to achieve the latter goal (UYF-respondents numbered 48, while the size of 47 for the comparison groups was nearly identical). In the regional distribution, the proportional representation for organizations in African and Arab States was identical (45%) among participating UYF-organizations and comparable organizations that were not funded. In the Asia Pacific region, the proportion of comparable organizations (38%) closely resembled the percentage of applications from that region (35%). The number of organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean in the control group (17%) fell in between this region's representation among all applications (9%), on the one hand, and the representation among UYF-respondents (34%), on the other (see Table 1).

Table 1 – Regional representation of 2011-UYF applicants, selected projects, grantee survey respondents and comparison survey respondents

	Region		
	AAS	AP	LAC
Percent of applicants	55	35	9
Percent of awards	49	29	23
Percent of grantee respondents	45	20	34
Percent of comparison group respondents	45	38	17

For the follow up study of the 2011 grantees and comparison group, the same groups that had been invited to participate in the baseline study were asked to complete online surveys. To enable comparison of responses, the questionnaire for the follow-up survey was identical to the one used for the comparison group baseline survey. It consisted of 23 questions, supplemented by open-ended questions asking about, among others, the benefits of the grant (if awarded), lessons learned from project implementation, and recommendations for UN-Habitat. The questionnaire was made available in English, French and Spanish.

The follow-up survey experienced some attrition compared with the baseline survey carried out two years earlier. The number of grantee organizations participating in the follow-up survey declined from 48 to 38, but retained a high proportion of the original respondents (79%).

The follow-up survey asked about:

- Focus areas of work
- Staff training
- Roles of partners
- Responsibilities of youth, women, and volunteers
- Space used
- Support received
- Programs offered
- Program impacts
- Organizational needs and priorities
- Program benefits
- Lessons learned

The number of participating comparison group organizations decreased from 47 to 28 (see Table 2). In spite of the decline, these are still relatively high numbers of repeat respondents, particularly given the lack of incentive for taking part in the follow-up. This attests to the strong interest among youth-led organizations in sharing information about their practices, and their desire to learn about the practices of other organizations, a theme that repeats throughout the study.

Table 2 -Design of Evaluation for 2011 Grantees and Comparison Group

	Grantees	Comparison Group
Baseline (2012)	N=48	N=47
Follow Up (2014)	N=38	N=28

Table 3 shows, by percentage, the regional distribution of all 2011 applicants, the awards given, respondents to the baseline survey for the 2011 grantees and the comparison group, and the respondents to the follow-up survey for both of these groups. In comparison with the baseline survey, the regional distribution of the follow-up survey respondents shows relatively minor changes, mostly restricted to the comparison group. Among the latter, there are relatively fewer respondents from Africa and Arab States (down to 32% from 45%) and more from Asia Pacific (up to 54% from 38%), while the number of respondents from Latin America and the Caribbean remained constant (14% vs. 17% in the baseline study). These percentage shifts reflect relatively minor variations in the absolute numbers, and overall, the regional distribution of the follow-up survey respondents closely resembles that of the baseline respondents (see Table 3).

Table 3 – Regional representation of 2011-UYF applicants, awards given, grantee baseline and follow-up survey respondents and comparison baseline and follow-up survey respondents (%)

	Region		
	Africa and Arab States	Asia Pacific	Latin America and the Caribbean
2011 applicants	55%	35%	9%
2011 awards	49%	29%	23%
2011 grantee respondents baseline	45%	20%	34%
Comparison group respondents baseline	45%	38%	17%
2011 grantee respondents 2014 follow up	45%	26%	29%
Comparison group respondents 2014 follow up	32%	54%	14%

The baseline study found that 47 eligible applicant organizations that *did not* receive an Urban Youth Fund award in 2011 were strikingly similar to the 48 applicant organizations that *did* receive grants. Any differences that were observed were relatively minor and likely reflected

The relatively high number of repeat respondents attests to the strong interest among youth-led organizations in peer-to-peer networks and support, including sharing information about their practices and learning about the practices of other organizations.

small variations in the regional composition of the two groups. None of the organizational characteristics asked about in the baseline survey indicated that the grantees formed a select group that stands out. One difference between the grantees and the comparison group was in the size of the grant for which they applied: the latter much more often applied for large grants. Only 3% of grantees applied for grants between US\$ 20,001 and US\$ 25,000, compared with 44% of the comparison group organizations. Among this group, another 28% applied for even larger grants, compared with 0% of the grantees (See Table 4).³



³ This difference likely explains why many applications in the comparison group were not awarded. The available funding is insufficient for many large grants, and program rules exclude grants over \$25,000.

Table 4 – Amount of grant applied for by 2011 grantees and comparison group organizations

What was the amount of the grant your organization received/ applied for in 2011 from the Urban Youth Fund (in US dollars)?	2011 Grantee		Non-Grantee		Overall	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
\$12,500 or less	N=6	20%	N=0	0%	N=6	13%
\$12,600 to \$15,000	N=11	37%	N=2	11%	N=13	27%
\$15,100 to \$17,500	N=6	20%	N=0	0%	N=6	13%
\$17,600 to \$20,000	N=6	20%	N=3	17%	N=9	19%
\$20,100 to \$25,000	N=1	3%	N=8	44%	N=9	19%
More than \$25,000	N=0	0%	N=5	28%	N=5	10%

The remainder of this report focuses on a comparison of the grantees and the comparison group in the follow-up survey. It examines responses to the same set of questions used in the baseline survey to determine whether the similarities found two years earlier still prevailed and, if not, what changes occurred in the interim. The report then examines any changes that have taken place over time in either the grantees or the comparison group organizations. In addition, it analyzes responses to open-ended questions asked in the follow-up study, and identifies emerging themes related to program participants and their communities, their ongoing work and organizational priorities, and lessons learned.

EMERGING THEMES

Looking across the multiple studies described in the overview of the research, and across the multiple data sources used in these studies, a number of patterns and themes emerge related to the programs and their operations, the challenges they face, the strategies they develop when faced with challenges, and the future directions of the youth-led initiatives involved in the studies.

The findings discussed below draw from these multiple data sources, including survey data from the baseline and follow-up studies, interviews conducted using Skype, and mid-term and final reports (which grantees are required to prepare and submit to UN-Habitat to apprise the agency of their progress in the implementation of the project for which funding was received).

To better understand the how the UYF benefited the grantee organizations, their communities and the participating youth, and the difference these grants made to youth-led initiatives compared with unfunded youth-led initiatives, the study used a comparison group that was strikingly similar to the group of grantees. Throughout the discussion of findings, this section also draws from the comparison study to review the similarities and differences among key aspects of both the grantee and comparison groups.



Program Focus and Implementation

The projects of the 2009 Urban Youth Fund grantees who were interviewed focused on a wide range of youth development programs, including recycling, piggery farming, ICT skills, youth participation in urban settlements, creative arts, young women empowerment, entrepreneurship, vocational skills and youth employment, peace promotion, and environmental and sustainability education.⁴

⁴ A key principle enshrined in the Urban Youth Fund and its youth-led approach, is that the youth groups themselves identify the challenges in their societies that they want to tackle; further, it is the youth groups themselves that formulate and design the projects. UN-Habitat works with the selected youth groups to improve the project design as part of the capacity-building program, but all core elements are always within the control of the youth group.

Likewise, reports submitted by grantees cover a wide array of programmatic initiatives. These initiatives can be categorized into five areas, a few of which overlap, as described below:

- **The environment** | Environmental projects included latrine rehabilitation (which simultaneously was also a community health issue), the collection of polythene bags and the reduction of garbage, the observation of International Youth Day, a Seminar on Environment and Solid Waste Management, and workshops on eco-ovens.
- **Employment and economic development** | Employment-related projects included computer-skill training, entrepreneurship training, student/artisans making products for sale, training in affordable housing material, and production of proto-types. Other projects focused on training in business plans and proposal writing.
- **Community health** | Community health issues addressed included food anti-contamination methods, HIV/AIDS prevention, drug abuse counseling sessions, raising the general standard of living (e.g. improving sanitation), providing drinking water, and – per the eco-ovens mentioned above – addressing cooking-related illnesses (e.g. lung diseases in women, eye irritability, and throat problems).
- **Education** | Projects in this category included, for example, classes on life skills, self-esteem, character formation, arts-related disciplines, and literacy. Support for higher education, such as the provision of related fees, was also part of these projects.
- **Collaborative spirit** | These types of projects concerned themselves with and resulted in collaborations between different groups, including mobile street food vendors and the municipal authorities, city owners' association for Environmental Youth Paralegals, doctors, and lawyers.

A comparison between the grantee and comparison groups found that these organizations focus their efforts in comparable areas. However, some noteworthy differences exist. While job training and skill development are the top priority for both groups, a larger proportion of grantees are involved in this area (86% vs. 57%), which is consistent with their greater involvement with entrepreneurship (64% vs. 43%). On the other hand, grantees are relatively less active in programs aimed at empowerment of women (39% vs. 57%) and health (18% vs. 30%) (See Table 5).

Table 5 – Project focus areas of grantees and comparison group (2014)

What were the focus areas for the project for which you requested funding in 2011? (Select all that apply)	2011 Grantee		Non-Grantee		Overall	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Environment	N=10	36%	N=8	35%	N=18	35%
Job training and skill development	N=24	86%	N=18	57%	N=37	73%
Entrepreneurship	N=18	64%	N=10	43%	N=28	55%
Empowerment of women	N=11	39%	N=13	57%	N=24	47%
Health	N=5	18%	N=7	30%	N=12	24%
ICT and communications	N=5	18%	N=4	17%	N=9	18%
Housing	N=3	11%	N=1	4%	N=4	8%
Water and sanitation	N=2	7%	N=1	4%	N=3	6%
Other	N=3	11%	N=0	0%	N=3	6%

Note: Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

From the follow up in 2014, job training and skill acquisition remained the primary area where grantees focus their efforts. As shown in Table 6, among grantees, 86% indicated they are active in this area, up from 77% in 2012. Closely related, entrepreneurship is another priority area for grantees (64%). Also getting major attention was women's empowerment (36%) and the environment (36%). The comparison group reported similar priorities, the main difference being their greater involvement in women's empowerment (57%).



Table 6 - In what areas does your project focus? (2012/2014)

	Grantee (%)	Comparison (%)
Job Training and Skill Development	77/86	73/57
Entrepreneurship	72/64	57/43
Empowerment of Women	77/39	71/57
Environment	47/36	37/35
Health	28/18	45/30
ICT and Communications	30/18	24/17
Housing	9/11	16/4
Water & Sanitation	21/7	35/4
Number of respondents	43/38	51/28

Looking at changes over time, it is clear that in 2014 youth-led organizations are active in fewer focus areas than in 2012. This decrease holds for both groups. Women’s empowerment shows the greatest decline, particularly among grantees, as well as water and sanitation in the comparison group. The only area showing noticeably increased involvement is jobs and skill training among grantees. With the exceptions of health and women’s empowerment, grantees are consistently more active or as active as the comparison group organizations. Without more in-depth information, it cannot be said that the UYF-grants are solely responsible for the higher level of involvement among grantees. It is possible that their involvement was greater to start out with. The UYF-grants may have further strengthened an initial ability to engage in more focus areas.

Training Programs for Youth

As noted above, job and other skills trainings are an important part of the work of both grantee and (to a lesser extent) comparison organizations.

Grantee and comparison group organizations show small differences in the types of training programs they offer youth. Both groups, by far, emphasize job training and skill development over all other programs (96% and 86%, respectively). Grantees more often provide programs in water and sanitation (32% vs. 9%) and slightly more often in job training and skill development, ICT and communications, and “other” programs (See Table 7). Not surprisingly, in both groups, training programs for youth align well with what organizations report as their areas of focus overall.

Table 7 – Training programs offered for youth (2014)

What kinds of training programs has your organization developed for youth? (Check all that apply.)	2011 Grantee		Non-Grantee		Overall	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Environment	N=16	57%	N=11	50%	N=27	54%
Job training and skill development	N=27	96%	N=19	86%	N=46	92%
Empowerment of women	N=19	68%	N=15	68%	N=34	68%
Health	N=11	39%	N=9	41%	N=20	40%
ICT and communications	N=12	43%	N=7	32%	N=19	38%
Housing	N=1	4%	N=0	0%	N=1	2%
Water and sanitation	N=9	32%	N=2	9%	N=11	22%
Other	N=6	21%	N=1	5%	N=7	14%
Have not developed training program	N=0	0%	N=1	5%	N=1	2%

Note: Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

The trainings offered by grantees support youth employment in a variety of job sectors, as discussed in the section below. This is the case for both groups, regardless of whether or not organizations received an UYF-grant. However, some changes can be seen during the two years between the 2012 baseline study and the follow up study in 2014.

Looking at changes of at least 10% since 2012, we see in Table 7 that in 2014 more grantees offer programs to train youth in women’s empowerment (from 56% to 68%) and water and sanitation (from 19% to 32%), but fewer in housing (down from 19% to 4%). Comparison group organizations saw declines in water and sanitation (down from 38% to 9%) and health (down from 57% to 41%).

The combined effect of these developments shows an overall shift in programs offered. In 2012, grantees offered more often training programs in two areas, fewer times in two other areas, and about the same number in the remaining four areas (See Table 8). In 2014, this same balance does not exist: in three areas the grantees offer more often programs than do organizations in the comparison group, while program offerings in the

Grantees offer more programs than organizations in the comparison group.

other five areas are about equally frequent. In no area does a larger proportion of comparison organizations offer training. This change may indicate an increased human capital and greater organizational growth among the grantees, possibly as a result of the financial and non-financial support they received as part of the UYF program.

Table 8 – What kinds of training programs has your organization developed for youth? (2012/2014, %)

	Grantee (%)	Comparison (%)
Environment	50/57	51/50
Job Training and Skill Development	90/96	75/86
Empowerment of Women	56/68	62/68
Health	31/39	57/41
ICT and Communications	46/43	43/32
Housing	19/4	2/0
Water & Sanitation	19/32	38/9
Have not developed training programs	4/0	2/5
Number of respondents	48	47

Youth Jobs after Training

With the exception of recycling, graduates of grantee training programs do not hold jobs in any work sector more often than those in comparison groups. The general pattern shows that an equal or larger number of comparison group organizations see their program graduates employed in water, sanitation, housing construction, ICTs and several other areas. The differences are largest in education (68% vs. 50%), employment-related jobs (73% vs. 43%) and life-skills training (64% vs. 50%) (See Table 9).

An important caveat to this finding, however, is that these figures refer to the number of *organizations* that report on the kinds of jobs their program graduates are holding. They do not speak to the number of *individual graduates* who are thus employed. It is possible that we might see a greater difference if data were collected on the jobs of individual graduates.

Table 9 – Jobs held by program graduates (2014)

What kinds of jobs are youth who completed your training programs doing? (Check all that apply)	2011 Grantee		Non-Grantee		Overall	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Water	N=3	11%	N=2	9%	N=5	10%
Sanitation	N=3	11%	N=4	18%	N=7	14%
Housing & construction	N=1	4%	N=4	18%	N=5	10%
Education	N=14	50%	N=15	68%	N=29	58%
Employment	N=12	43%	N=16	73%	N=28	56%
Entrepreneurship	N=17	61%	N=15	68%	N=32	64%
Life skills training	N=14	50%	N=14	64%	N=28	56%
Computer skills training	N=13	46%	N=12	55%	N=25	50%
Business skills training	N=11	39%	N=10	45%	N=21	42%
Urban agriculture	N=8	29%	N=5	23%	N=13	26%
Recycling	N=6	21%	N=2	9%	N=8	16%
Not applicable	N=2	7%	N=1	5%	N=3	6%

Note: Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.



Program Focus: More than Jobs

Beyond simply focusing on improving the lives and livelihoods of the youth participants, the interviews with grantees revealed that organizations seek broad community development goals rather than adopting an exclusively “youth for youth” approach often wrongly attributed to youth and youth-led organizations. Urban Youth Fund projects aimed to positively transform communities in a variety of ways, including strengthening local cultural practices and norms; promoting productive and decent youth livelihoods; promoting young women’s empowerment and gender balance; and promoting peace and tolerance among youth from diverse cultural backgrounds. For example:

AISEC Senegal’s Green Young Entrepreneurs Project and Greenzoom Youth Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Education both sensitize youth on environmentally-friendly jobs and entrepreneurship through social entrepreneurship, environmental educational campaigns and youth mobilization.

The Youth Partnership for Peace and Development in Sierra Leone likewise sought to promote youth employment and peace in a post-conflict society, extending its work beyond immediate youth beneficiaries.

Youth Partnership for Peace and Development in Sierra Leone trained young people to tailor favorite local clothing styles for sale in the Makeni region and neighboring countries.

Tears Group Kenya aims to create employment opportunities for slum youth to shift the image of the group from victims to that of active agents in community building.

Pakistan’s Aware Girls Micro-Entrepreneurship and the Fisherwomen Alternative Livelihood Project, sought to promote gender balance in youth employment creation and decision-making processes in male-dominated communities.

The Himalayan Agricultural Youth Association, initiated by Team for Nature and Wildlife graduates, seeks to promote environmentally-friendly livelihoods for youth.

Moreover, grantee and comparison organizations alike recount specific examples of the kinds of services they provide to the community. The services that both types of organizations report providing to their communities most often are related to life-skills training (73%) and education (71%), followed by entrepreneurship (63%), employment (61%), and training in computer skills (57%) and business skills (57%). The largest difference between the grantee and comparison group organizations is in employment-related services, which is mentioned by 86% of comparison groups (vs. 43% of grantees). This finding may reflect more success in finding jobs among their program graduates. Grantee organizations more often report providing community services related to business skills (64% vs. 48%) and recycling (25% vs. 5%) (See Table 10).

Table 10 – Services provided to the community

What services has your organization provided or assisted in providing to your community? (Check all that apply.)	2011 Grantee		Non-Grantee		Overall	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Water	N=4	14%	N=5	24%	N=9	18%
Sanitation	N=8	29%	N=7	33%	N=15	31%
Housing S construction	N=3	11%	N=2	10%	N=5	10%
Education	N=20	71%	N=15	71%	N=35	71%
Employment	N=12	43%	N=18	86%	N=30	61%
Entrepreneurship	N=18	64%	N=13	62%	N=31	63%
Life-skills training	N=22	79%	N=14	67%	N=36	73%
Computer skills training	N=15	54%	N=13	62%	N=28	57%
Business skills training	N=18	64%	N=10	48%	N=28	57%
Urban agriculture	N=10	36%	N=6	29%	N=16	33%
Recycling	N=7	25%	N=1	5%	N=8	16%
Not applicable	N=1	4%	N=0	0%	N=1	2%

Note: Total may exceed 100% as respondents could select more than one answer.

In the follow up study, this trend towards working toward broad community development goals continued to be a strong theme. In an open-ended question, grantees as well as organizations in the comparison group were both asked about the benefits accruing from their activities. The question distinguished between benefits to the organizations themselves, to the youth participating in its programs or receiving its services, and to the community in which they were located. While the responses do not lend themselves to quantification, they begin to shed further light on positive outcomes seen to arise from the programs that these organizations undertake.

At the **organizational** level, responses often referred to benefits related to the ability to carry out the project for which the UYF-grant was awarded. Without the grant, these projects would

For organizations, the most common benefits of grants are their ability to carry out needed projects and training of their staff.

not have been possible, or they would have been delayed, reduced in scale, or otherwise diminished. Another commonly cited organizational benefit was training provided by UN-Habitat, which improved the ability of staff to manage finances, manage projects, and gather information to monitor their implementation. Several organizations also mentioned enhanced standing in the

community, and increased capacity for networking and youth engagement. The increased organizational capacity and human and political capital are very important to the sustainability of these youth organizations, as it increases their ability to approach other donors and carry out additional—and larger—programs. Given its impact on medium and long-term results, the importance of this increased organizational capacity should not be underestimated.

For **youth program participants**, the benefits mentioned most often included the acquisition of employment-related skills through vocational training and informal education. Youth gained skills in, for example, soap making, urban agriculture, tailoring, and ICTS. These new skills are reported to be conducive to the earnings capacity of youth, who may form small, cooperative groups that start new entrepreneurial activities. The programs are also seen to increase the confidence and self-esteem of participating youth, who also gain life skills and are more inclined to volunteer in their communities.

For youth program participants, the most common benefits of grants are their acquisition of employment-related skills and improved earnings capacity prospects.

At the **community level**, organizations mentioned the breaking down of stereotypical, negative

For communities, the most common benefits of grants are the breakdown of negative youth stereotypes and greater acknowledgement of youth contributions to the community.

views of youth as juvenile delinquents, causing crime and violence, and participating in substance abuse and prostitution. Instead, communities are reported to develop increased awareness of the positive contributions that marginalized youth can make if provided with guidance and minimal resources. Communities are also seen to benefit from youth who participate in, for example, recy-

cling and environmental protection programs, nutrition and public health initiatives, and community gardening. These activities may contribute to increased household income and reduction of poverty. At the same time, organizations also report that many youth have positive outlooks that inspire them towards volunteering in community-based activities.

Roles of Youth, Women and Volunteers

In the implementation of their projects, grantees and comparison groups both portray the roles of youth and women as important, with volunteers also playing a significant but somewhat less important role, particularly for comparison organizations. Without exception, all of the grantee and comparison group organizations stated that youth are very important to fulfilling their goals. Grantee organizations more often indicated as very important the roles of volunteers (61% vs. 41%) and women (89% vs. 71%). The last two findings may suggest that grantee organizations tend to have a larger human resource base to support their work.

Organizations were also asked about the primary responsibilities of youth in their work. There were only very small differences between the grantee and comparison group organizations.

In both groups, the most frequent primary responsibilities related to program delivery and management as well as administrative tasks. In the follow up study, the organizations in both groups showed several changes (See Table 11). Among grantees, remarkably more organizations indicate youth involvement in management (from 75% to 93%), program delivery (from 69% to 93%), and mentorship (from 28% to 48%). It is possible that the UYF-grant enabled more awardees to support youth participation. However, we see similar increases for organizations in the comparison group in these same areas: management (from 66% to 91%), program delivery (from 67% to 95%), and mentorship (from 23% to 32%). It is possible, therefore, that organizations in both groups have gone through a maturation process in which greater youth participation was a goal. Fewer organizations in both groups report youth involvement in fundraising. It is possible that this decrease is due to the increased involvement in other areas. If the number of active youth is more or less constant, it stands to reason that simple availability and time constraints create limits to their involvement. It is also possible that organizations are discovering that fundraising is more effectively done by an older age group, better networked with the adults who often control allocation of funds and other resources.

In 2014, upwards of 80% of organizations report youth involvement in administration, management, and program delivery.

Table 11 - What are the primary responsibilities of the youth involved with your organization? (2012/2014, %)

	Grantee (%)	Comparison (%)
Administrative	81/81	79/86
Management	75/93	66/91
Program delivery	69/93	79/95
Mentorship	28/48	23/32
Fundraiser	65/41	55/45
Board member	71/67	68/55
Number of respondents	48	47

Challenges

During project implementation, grantees discussed a number of challenges they faced that impacted their work in community. These challenges can be sorted into several—sometimes overlapping—categories: resources; political context; time commitments; and forces of nature.

CHALLENGE 1: RESOURCES

Financial Resources | Grantees and the comparison groups both experienced challenges with various types of resources that they needed to implement and sustain their programs. Financial resources, not surprisingly, came up as a challenge in different ways. Grantee organizations reported problems related to, for example, an increase in the cost of supplies over the

Of the 18 youth-led organizations that report budget changes since 2012, 15 indicated funding increases (83%).

course of the project and an inability of potential participants to pay the required program fees. In another instance, vendors increased the amount of their prior quote after hearing that the project was being funded by UN-Habitat. Grantees also described challenges that resulted because of a delay in receiving UN funds.

Interestingly, when looking at budgetary changes between the baseline survey and the follow up survey in 2014, most organizations that experienced changes during this period reported increased budgets (See Table 12). More funding was reported by 9 out of 11 grantees and 6 out of 7 organizations in the comparison group (or a combined 15 out of 18, that is, 83%). An

additional 14 organizations reported no change. These seemingly favourable changes must be interpreted with some caution, however, because 34 organizations (about half of the organizations in the follow-up) did not answer the budget question.

Table 12 – Budget changes 2012-2014, grantees and comparison group organizations

	Grantees	Comparison group	Total
Increased funding	9	6	15
Decreased funding	2	1	3
No change	10	4	14
Total	21	11	32

Space | Linked to the issue of costs, several grantee organizations pointed to fundamental challenges related to access to working space and start-up capital for their operations and for youth participants in their programs, hindering youth self-employment and entrepreneurship. Access to urban land is limited for most youth organizations because it is usually very expensive, particularly in productive locations.

Some organizations used their offices as training venues, thus limiting the number of youth who could be trained at any given time. Others rented houses to conduct training. In a few cases, partner organizations or local authorities donated land for training purposes. However, effective partnerships for land access are lacking in most situations. Yet, a few exceptions provided examples of how partnerships for land can work well, such as the Concerned Youth Organization (Malawi) where a strong partnership with the Blantyre City Council led the Council to donate a venue for training and to offer financial administration and capacity building.

Family and community connections can play a vital role in facilitating youth beneficiaries' access to urban land for self-employment activities. Where families still own large tracts of land in urban areas, youth may be able to acquire this land for their projects; however, acquiring land ownership certificates from the government is, according to some grantees, cumbersome.

Access to land may be facilitated through sub-city government units (for example, Ethiopia), Ward Councilors (for example, Zambia), or voluntary youth networks, organized youth groups, collaborative initiatives with local NGOs, or local foundations (for example, Pakistan). Still, in places where youth do not have the right to own land because of constitutional restrictions

on land ownership (for example, Pakistan), this renders the majority of the youth population landless. Restrictive land rights policies thus work against youth entrepreneurship and youth self-employment.⁵

Youth graduates often work in groups to offset the cost of renting urban land for entrepreneurship and self-employment activities. Even so, most beneficiaries still work as individuals because it is difficult to coordinate activities given the challenges with transportation. Where program graduates face expensive land rentals, they may have no choice but to use land held through in-

formal and insecure arrangements in slum areas. In some contexts, grantees reported that cultural restrictions confine young female entrepreneurs to home-based enterprises, as only males can legally set up enterprises in public city areas and markets.

Additional data from grantees and comparison organizations, related to this challenge of workspace, show similar patterns in response to a question asking about the types of spaces in which they work. About one-half of both groups own their own space. The rest are split fairly evenly across options such as sharing space with another organization, borrowing space, using several spaces, or having no space at all (See Table 13).

Looking at changes over time, through the follow up study, it appears that access to space is relatively stable. The situation in 2014 was nearly identical to what it was in 2012. Among grant-

ees, there's a small change in that fewer organizations report borrowing space (down from 29% to 14%), while the number of organizations reporting that they have several spaces grew from zero to 10%, perhaps an indication of program expansion and greater organizational viability.



⁵ Challenges related to youth and land rights are dealt with more comprehensively in upcoming research by UN-Habitat and the Global Land Tools Network (GLTN).

Table 13 – Workspace of grantee and comparison group organizations (2012/2014)

	Grantee (%)	Comparison (%)
Shared space with another organization	15/17	17/17
Borrowed space	29/14	13/13
Your own space	52/48	49/57
Several spaces	0/10	15/9
We have no space	4/10	6/4
Number of respondents	48	47

Start up capital | In addition to the challenge of accessing working space, several grantee organizations also highlighted a similar challenge of accessing start-up capital needed to support youth self-employment and entrepreneurship. In fact, youth organizations pointed out the uselessness of training youth in the absence of start-up capital upon graduation. Because youth organizations do not have enough money to provide loans to program participants after graduation, most graduates have been forced to work in groups that pool their financial resources. It has also been difficult for many youth to access loans from banks due to their limited collateral as well as negative perceptions by lending institutions. Some organizations sought to address this challenge by developing partnerships with banks and conducting outreach programs to market their training programs to banks and micro-finance institutions.⁶

Management Training | Grantees and comparison group organizations were also asked about another important type of resource for their work: management training. A significant number of both grantees and comparison organizations listed staff training and capacity building as one of their top three organizational needs (75% and 65%, respectively). Grantee organizations report more often than comparison group organizations that their management has received leadership training (86% vs. 65%). By contrast, ICT is the area in which management staff has been trained least often, particularly among grantees (21%). A majority in both groups has received training in administration. However, it is important to note that 22% of the comparison group management has received no training at all (see Table 14).⁷

⁶ There are, however, several grantees in the Urban Youth Fund program that have successfully addressed this challenge by incorporating a seed capital component in their UYF-funded programs. One example is the YWOP/YMOP youth group from Jamaica where the youth group trained 50 young entrepreneurs, and provided seed capital to the 14 best ideas, in addition to providing mentorship and other non-financial support activities.

⁷ This has led to the development and incorporation of the e-learning program into the Urban Youth Fund program components. The e-learning consists of different modules related to social and business enterprise development and management, tailored for youth and youth-led organizations.

When looking at changes over time, the most striking trend is that fewer organizations report training of their management staff. This pattern is consistent for both groups and in all areas of expertise. One in five organizations report that their management has not received any training at all. These declines are surprising, as one might expect that simply the passage of time alone would result in more trained staff. An explanation may lie in the possibility that the two interim years were a period of staff turn-over, with new, less trained personnel taking over from more experienced, better trained predecessors.

Table 14 – Training of management staff (2012/2014)

	Grantee (%)	Comparison (%)
Administration	81/71	77/65
Leadership/management	94/86	92/65
Finance	69/50	62/57
ICT	42/21	53/43
Entrepreneurship	63/39	57/48
No training received	4/0	9/22
Number of respondents	48	44

CHALLENGE 2: POLITICAL CONTEXT

Grantees reported a number of varied challenges related to the political context in which they operated. In some cases, these challenges were associated with the laws, rules, and bureaucracy that existed in the locations where they worked. Examples of problems in this area tended to be highly project specific. For example, they included constraints on developing working relationships with sex-workers in a brothel, navigating university bureaucracies, issues related to the legal procedures of a local city council, and the death of a city leader.

In other cases, the challenges were associated with suspicion and corruption within the larger political context. Problems encountered by organizations in this regard were quite common. For example, one grantee mentioned hesitancy among survey respondents to participate because they were concerned about possible personal repercussions and surveyors who did not return completed questionnaires. Others referred to an expectation among youth that they should be paid to mobilize as part of the program and to families enrolled in the program that did not get along. Additional problems included political instability, and disappointment among potential

clients in previous training programs that carried over into the program funded by UN-Habitat.

CHALLENGE 3: TIME COMMITMENT

Grantees noted several challenges related to the time commitment required for the project. These included: an urgency among program participants to get back to their clients; difficulties with long-term monitoring of participants; and training periods that took away time from paid employment.

An individual's assessment of whether a project or training is worth the required commitment of time is a subjective one, which may be influenced by community or family perceptions of the value of the project. In fact, issues of time and time commitment may be part of a larger problem that emerged through the interviews with grantees, in which grantees described how negative community perceptions can and do discourage youth participation in projects. Interviewees commented that vocational training and entrepreneurship training programs are generally considered inferior to formal education training. As such, some youth-led organizations struggled to recruit youth into their training programs. Convincing parents and community members on the efficacy of informal skills training programs was a challenge for them. Parents still prefer that their children go through formal education in preparation for respectable civil service employment. However, civil service employment opportunities are quite limited, and most educated youth are now self-employed or work for others in the informal economy. Targeted slum youth are already working in the informal economy, earning an income to support their families and for their own survival. Therefore, it is difficult for many slum youth to join Urban Youth Fund training programs if they do not receive any stipend. Because of this, financial constraints may force those who join a training to drop out before they complete the program.

CHALLENGE 4: FORCES OF NATURE

A unique, but important challenge surfaced among some grantees in reporting of their experience of project implementation: forces of nature. While these were challenges that could not be foreseen, and in many cases, could not be addressed except by delaying the project, they were still important factors to consider. In one case, floods precluded communication with potential program participants. In another project, the program had to be postponed because, by the time funding was received, the monsoon season had set in.

Strategies for Addressing Challenges

While the grantees shared numerous challenges that they had faced during the implementation of their projects, many of which made the work much more difficult to accomplish, they also shared a variety of solutions that they had developed in response. These strategies—categorized into four main groups, some of which overlap—were developed in response to the specific problems that arose during the start-up and implementation of the program for which they received funding.

FINANCIAL ISSUES AND COST SAVINGS

A delay in receiving grant funding was quite common among UYF grantees. For those organizations where this was the case, it presented significant problems. However, organizations came up with creative solutions for addressing this challenge. These solutions included, for example, using existing products and supplies, marketing products that program participants created, and borrowing money from a “sponsoring” organization. Other approaches involved finding new funding sources to address the shortfall, renegotiating prices, and buying necessities on credit.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

“People skills” was another strategy used to address challenges, and these came into play in various ways. For example, grant recipients forged new networks. They also encouraged “disagreeing” parties to sit down and work through differences. Some organizations mentioned the value of having been able to communicate with UN-Habitat staff in order to work through logistic or financial difficulties.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Given the challenge of time and time management experienced by some grantees, it is understandable that organizations would develop strategies to address these kinds of issues. Some organizations addressed problems they encountered by reconfiguring project schedules and timelines; in some cases, they cautioned participants that schedules could change (because of, for example, political unrest). There was also mention that, by being sensitive to the needs and concerns of program participants, they solved many time-related problems.

CHANGE IN RULES

Likewise, in response to challenges relating to rules or processes, some grantees developed workable solutions. In a few cases, organizations changed existing rules. For example, one organization amended its rules regarding the registration of vendors. In another case, the organization changed its methods for distribution of a survey to solve a problem related to rules that impacted its processes.

Plans for the Future

As the multiple studies, and the multiple data sources used in these studies, looked at the future plans among both UYF grantees and the comparison organizations implementing youth-led initiatives, many of these future plans related to partnerships and resource needs. Each of these themes is described below.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

One of the most significant themes, which emerged from grantee surveys, from interviews, and from the comparison group study, was the idea of collaboration and partnership. Several of the grantee organizations mentioned that they plan to start or continue to collaborate with professionals whom they met through their UYF-award projects. One organization said it plans to organize graduates of the program it offered into ‘cooperative societies’ in order to make them more attractive to banks and other funders when they need to access finance to start new businesses. Another organization referred to “...the creation of a network of youthful businesses and talking with the Ministry of Coordination and Productivity in order to include micro-enterprises in the Network of Businesses that this Ministry has.” Another organization described the value of the contacts that youth participants had made for expediting current and future projects.

Likewise, interviews with leaders of youth-led organizations highlighted the importance of partnerships. Many organizations expressed the belief that effective partnerships are vital for project success and sustainability. Yet, in most cases, strategic partnerships for project sustainability are much needed but completely missing. In terms of the partnership with UN-Habitat in particular, the relationship between grantees and UN-Habitat ceased once the project ended, and most organizations expressed a need for continued UN-Habitat follow ups, communication, monitoring, evaluation, and funding beyond the stipulated one-year project cycle. For example, one organization wanted to continue with its project (exploring land use-related projects such as

urban agriculture) but did not know how to proceed once the Urban Youth Fund grant ended.

At the individual youth beneficiary level, participants are compelled to work in groups to share skills, experiences and financial and land resources necessary for project sustainability. In most cases, such collaboration allowed youth beneficiaries to secure some working space and business loans. However, contact with training agencies for capacity building has usually been weak.

In the data on grantee and comparison organizations, partnerships—and the potential support offered by partners—continued to show up as an important theme. In order to implement their program goals and realize their potential for scaling up their efforts, both grantee and comparison group organizations reported that they seek to work with partners.

It is noteworthy that early on, with the project still in progress and while awaiting additional payment of their grant, a high proportion of grantee organizations rated their results as “excellent” (27%) or “good” (45%) in developing

partnerships. In interviews conducted *after* project completion the prevailing self-assessment of the actual experience was much less positive. Nonetheless, Urban Youth Fund grants appear to foster partnership development, since only 4% report *not* having developed new partnerships after receiving the grant. Most of the new partnerships are with other NGOs (74% of beneficiaries), local

government (64%) and businesses (38%).

Youth-led initiatives from both grantee and the comparison groups look for support from their local, regional and national governments, as well as the private and non-profit sectors. Such support may come in the form of funding, materials or goods, advice, and technical assistance or training. Table 15, below, summarizes key findings from the follow-up survey. With negligible differences between the two groups, it shows that the most common source of *support from partners*, by far, are NGOs (96%), followed at some distance by the private sector (70%) and local government (63%). Only about one-half of the organizations report receiving support from the national government (55%) and regional government (44%).

The only noteworthy differences between the two groups are that grantees more often receive technical assistance and training from national governments (39% vs. 16%), while NGOs also more often provide them with financial support (73% vs. 55%).

During the period of the UYF-funded project, 96% of the youth groups developed new partnerships; out of these new partnerships, 64% were with local authorities.

Examining how the results of the 2014 follow up study were different from the baseline results two years earlier, several changes were noteworthy. For example, there were clear declines in the support provided by national and by regional government. In both groups, these declines were in the 20% range. A smaller decline can be seen in support given by local government. Overall, during the two years between the baseline and follow up study, there appeared to have been a decline in public sector support at all levels of government that was consistent across grantees and organizations in the control group (See Table 15).

The last two years show that national, regional and local government funding for youth-led organizations decreased, but support in the form of advice, technical assistance, and training has increased.

A more detailed analysis reveals interesting additional insights. Strikingly, further scrutiny of the data showed that behind the overall decline of public sector support is a tendency for *decreasing* support in the form of funding, materials and goods, but *increasing* support in the form of advice, technical assistance, and training.

Table 15 – Support from partners (2012/2014)

Source of support	Grantees (%)	Comparison (%)
NGOs	94/100	87/90
Private sector	79/70	74/71
Local government	79/62	79/65
National government	71/57	74/53
Regional government	62/43	66/47
Number of respondents	48/38	47/28

The partnership between grantees and UN-Habitat was also examined. Baseline data from both 2009 grantees and 2011 grantees suggested that grantees appreciated and found useful the communications from UN-Habitat staff with respect to assistance and training from UN-Habitat for using the grant and running their program. 74% rated their communications with UN-Habitat as “good” or “excellent.” Similarly, 64% of grantees were satisfied with communications about UN-Habitat’s expectations for the work of the grant beneficiaries.

However, regarding communications about what other beneficiaries are doing, 42% of grantees rated it as “fair” or “poor.” This reflects a theme that emerged from other sources as well, related to the youth-led organizations’ interest in hearing about and learning from other youth doing similar work in other parts of the region or world. In surveys, for example, some comments related to the grantees’ future plans included requests to be able to share experiences so that beneficiaries could learn from the experiences of other organizations. Because partnerships and collaboration was such an important theme for both grantee and comparison organizations, this could be an important area for more focused attention during early stages of a grant process, as well as in the development of programs or policies to support youth-led development initiatives.

FUNDING (AND OTHER NEEDS)

Not surprisingly, funding and fund management were themes that emerged among grantees when asked about future plans. As seen in other findings throughout this report, securing additional resources during the project to supplement the grant, or after the project to sustain the organization’s work, was a significant topic for discussion. More than one-fourth of the beneficiaries reported that they had raised additional funding after receiving the Urban Youth Fund grant and 82% said it is somewhat or very likely that they would be able to do so in the coming months. Not surprisingly, therefore, a large majority believed it is “somewhat” or “very likely” that they would be able to continue without UN-Habitat funding (80%) and without UN-Habitat technical assistance (92%). These results suggest that the Urban Youth Fund grants serve to catalyze activities but are not essential to the survival of beneficiary programs.



These findings notwithstanding, money does not flow easily to beneficiaries. In fact, a majority stated that finding additional sponsors remained a “moderate” or “major challenge,” as described earlier during the discussion of challenges facing youth-led organizations. Cost issues and other resource limitations were also highlighted in interviews, during which participants linked their plans for expansion and replication (and the challenges of sustaining or replicating the work) to the need for continued funding support.

In most cases, the Urban Youth Fund projects slowed down after the contractual one-year funding cycle or they ceased completely once funding dried up. Project coordinators reported difficulties in expanding or replicating projects in the absence of continued funding from UN-Habitat. Limited organizational budgets and weak strategic partnerships also hindered project continuation. Organizations that halted their projects recommended that UN-Habitat should fund successful projects beyond one year. For many of these organizations, one-year funding has been inadequate given the need to expand and replicate the projects. Some organizations also mentioned that they needed to offer youth graduates start-up loans and equipment but did not have enough funding to do so. Still, ongoing projects are continuing at a very slow pace with restricted enrollment and brief training sessions. These projects are sustained by external donor funding, self-financing from beneficiary loan repayments (revolving funds), and limited financial assistance from local partner organizations. Overall, most 2009 Urban Youth Fund grantees struggled to continue with projects after the UN-Habitat grant.

However, funding is not the only need that youth-led development programs experience. As both grantees and comparison groups look to the future of their operations, they suggest other needs that must be met in order for them to reach their goals. While all youth-led organizations would welcome additional funding, money is merely a means to an end. Funding must not be a goal in and of itself, but must be seen as instrumental to attaining larger goals, some of which may be realized through means other than funding increases. For this reason, grantees and comparison organizations were asked about their top three needs, aside from money (financial capital). The highest priorities for both grantee and comparison group organizations overall (about 70%) were staff training and capacity building (human capital), as well as materials and equipment (physical capital). In fact, the need for additional training of program participants (typically focused on vocational job skills and life skills) was also mentioned by about one-third of the grantees in their grant reports. The lowest priorities were networking and volunteers. The only significant difference between the grantee and comparison groups is partnerships with government, which is a top-three need for just 7% of the grantees vs. 35% of the comparison group organizations (See Table 16). This finding may reflect that more grantees already have partnerships with government that serve their needs adequately.

Table 16 - Top three needs of youth-led organizations, aside from money (2012/2014)

Non-Monetary Needs	Grantee		Comparison Group	
	%	(n)	%	(n)
Staff Training and Capacity Building	90/75	(43/21)	96/65	(45/13)
Materials & Equipment	40/71	(19/20)	70/70	(33/14)
Office and Training Space	35/43	(17/12)	34/50	(16/10)
Transportation	25/46	(12/13)	11/48	(5/8)
Partnership with Government	19/7	(9/2)	6/35	(3/7)
Networking	17/25	(8/7)	23/35	(11/7)
Volunteers	8/29	(4/8)	4/20	(2/4)

Considering how these needs have changed over time (from 2012 to 2014), and considering the decline in material and financial support, observed above, it is not surprising that materials and equipment in the follow up study were at or near the top of the three most urgent nonmonetary needs listed by respondents. Foremost in this category are office equipment—particularly computers, printers, cameras and other digital technology—as well as furniture. Some organizations mention transportation-related needs (e.g., motorcycle, van) or equipment needed for vocational training (e.g., welding and tailoring). Over 70% of grantees listed materials and equipment as a top-three need, compared with 40% two years ago. High on the list are also transportation, and office and training space, each accounting for about 50% of organizations in both groups. The priority of staff training and capacity building was lower than it was two years earlier, but most organizations still mentioned it as a top-three need, listing, for example, the need for training in fund raising, proposal writing, information technology, lobbying, and project management (See Table 16).

The most important non-monetary needs, for both grantees and organizations in the comparison group, are staff training and capacity building, and materials and equipment.

LESSONS LEARNED (BY THE YOUTH)

Through their participation in the study, organizations had the opportunity to reflect on their experiences doing their work in community. Organizations in both groups shared many lessons they had learned from the implementation of their proposed projects, often regardless of whether or not it was funded by the UYF program. Some of these lessons included:

- The need to work with youth on their terms, recognizing they may have different priorities and aspirations and may face constraints related to, for example, transportation, family responsibilities, and/or gender;
- The recognition that marginalized youth are capable of making positive contributions to their communities when given guidance and minimal resources;
- The need to accommodate unrealistic expectations from youth who are impatient to see improvements without realizing that progress often is slow in becoming visible;
- A realization that peer-to-peer interactions are often the most effective approach to engaging youth;
- The importance of post-program guidance and consultation; and
- The effectiveness of networking with key stakeholders, including local authorities and other civil society organizations.

While organizations in the comparison group list some of these same lessons, often their responses are more specifically framed in relation to having been denied an Urban Youth Fund grant to fund their proposed project. Some of the lessons that non-grantees report having learned resulted from introspection on the organizations' own processes. For example, one organization indicated that it learned the importance of maintaining up-to-date records in order to be able to complete a grant application. Several other organizations reported that they learned how to make adjustments so that they could still undertake the project by, for example, relying more on volunteers or reducing the project scope.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In addition to revealing some important lessons about how these youth-led initiatives operate, how they accomplish benefits for youth and the community, and what obstacles or challenges they face, this study also revealed a need for more data and future investigations that can augment our understanding of youth-led development and improve the effectiveness of efforts to support this work, like that of the Urban Youth Fund.

Gender

While the application form for the UYF program clearly asks about the roles of young women in the applicant organization and the award criteria clearly articulate consideration of gender, more data needs to be collected from the selected grantees on the ongoing roles of, and benefits to, young women in the project. Moving forward, it will be important to learn more about the benefits and responsibilities for women and their involvement in the operations and management of the organizations themselves and the programs and projects they run. To do this, additional data will need to be collected throughout the UYF program cycle—for example, through midterm and final reports submitted by grantees.

Outcomes

More data in general is needed to test the findings discussed in this report and to link outcomes data reliably to characteristics of the applicant organizations. For example, more consistent and more thorough grant reporting from youth-led initiatives could provide better data to investigate outcomes of these initiatives across organizations, contexts and project characteristics. Such information would be very useful in guiding future award decisions so that allocations could target those applicants that have the greatest probability of success, based on their similarity to past grantees with known effective performance. Future research should also include a comparison of outcomes between grantee organizations and a matched group of eligible applicants that did not receive grants, to better understand how selection criteria can lead to a more targeted selection of organizations who are best positioned to leverage the grant support in the accomplishment of urban development goals.

In addition, the research found that youth-led organizations that receive larger awards do not necessarily reach more participants, and that there are likely several levels of interaction between outcomes and the types and cost of projects. Further study is needed to better understand the

relationship between investments, particularly in certain kinds of (costlier) programs, and the outcomes that those investments yield.

A focus on collecting more thorough and consistent data about these youth-led initiatives could also serve another important function, related to the sustainability of youth-led development. The UYF program makes a strong statement about the importance of empowering and enabling young people in the developing world to attain sustainable livelihoods. However, relative to need, the available resources fall far short. It is reasonable, therefore, to see the main value of the UYF not in meeting quantifiable goals as measured by number of youth trained and number of jobs created, however valuable those outcomes are in and of themselves. Rather, the value of the UYF must be seen in the ways that it can support pilot projects and identify promising practices that lend themselves to scaling up. Doing so will require more attention to monitoring and evaluation. These tasks of monitoring and evaluation are critical to inform future policies and programs. They must be carried out with full involvement of grantee organizations as a condition of the award and in partnership arrangements that include institutions from the developing world. This, in turn, requires capacity building and the development, acceptance, and use of shared methodologies in order to arrive at multiple studies whose conclusions can be compared. Such systematic comparisons will provide a stronger basis of evidence to guide future decision making related to the support of youth-led development.

Partnerships

The programs of youth-led organizations will be more sustainable if these organizations can form mutually supportive partnerships such that the whole of their collaborative efforts is greater than the sum of their individual efforts. Working together, they can pool resources and create synergies not otherwise available. As discussed above, leaders of these organizations, themselves, expressed a strong desire for partnership and collaboration, and a strong belief that the development and continuation of these partnerships are critical for their success.

At the same time, this study also found that grantee organizations had considerable difficulty developing effective partnerships, in spite of the optimism they had expressed earlier in the process that they would do so. They also indicated that they would like to have more communication with other youth-led organizations to exchange experiences and learn lessons from each other. UN-Habitat, and other funders of youth-led initiatives, should consider the ways they can support these organizations in developing partnerships, for example, through providing technical assistance and training.

CONCLUSION

This report reviews findings from a study of youth-led organizations that applied for an Urban Youth Fund grant between 2009 and 2011. The study included a baseline survey conducted in 2012 and a follow-up survey, conducted in 2014. The organizations surveyed fall into two groups. The first group comprises all organizations that were successful in their application and received a grant to fund the projects they had proposed (the “grantees”). The second group consists of organizations whose applications met the UYF-program’s eligibility criteria, but which were not awarded with a grant (the “comparison group”). Organizations in this second group were selected by systematic random sampling and were proportionally matched to mirror the regional distribution of the grantees.

When the experience of the Urban Youth Fund grantees is examined over several years, and through multiple data sources, it becomes evident that youth-led development initiatives are addressing a wide range of urban and community development issues, not only issues that are solely youth-focused, but broader, community- (or country-) wide issues as well. Many of these initiatives involve job training and skill development, but they also include environmental, gender, health, peace building, and other community development goals.

Within these organizations—particularly those selected to be part of the UYF program—youth are playing significant leadership roles. Not only are they managing the programs and delivering programs, they are also playing roles in administration and governance (i.e., board membership) at very high levels.



However, the challenges faced by youth-led organizations, the data showed, are by no means insignificant. The challenges most discussed by youth leaders included: resources (including financial, material and human resources); the political context (including laws and rules, as well as issues of corruption and suspicion); time commitments (including the value that participants and community members place on informal education, and the difficulty in taking time away from paid work for an unpaid training); and forces of nature (with unpredictable but powerful impacts on program implementation). Both grantees and non-grantees typically have insufficient funding to pursue their goals to the extent they deem necessary. Additionally, both grantees and non-grantees seek to continue project activities and tend to maintain on-going activities, although lack of sustained funding can bring an end to programs that were successful as long as grant money was available.

Beyond strictly financial support, though, grantees expressed a strong desire for post-award support that may take several forms: financial (e.g., extending funding for more than one year), technical assistance and capacity building (e.g., help with fundraising and grant writing, facilitating of partnerships), and networking (e.g., venues and platforms for sharing information with other youth-led organizations).

Yet, in the face of these challenges, the data also showed that these youth-led organizations were creative in developing strategies that would address the challenges that arose. Organizations reported finding financial solutions to funding shortfalls; tapping into human resources creatively to solve problems, and working through a myriad of logistical issues, such as rules and regulations, scheduling, and others.

In addition, the follow up survey found that non-grantees do not usually abandon the projects they proposed. More typically they stick with their projects, but defer the start or make other adjustments such as working more with volunteers, reducing the scope of the project, or reducing the number of beneficiaries. Organizations that were not successful in their applications not uncommonly search for and find alternative sources of funding. Non-grantees report similar benefits as those of grantees, possibly on a smaller scale, but the scale of this study does not permit a quantitative comparison.

In fact, when **both** grantees and non-funded youth-led organizations were asked whether they were continuing on the project for which they applied for UYF-funding, many indicated some on-going activity, regardless of whether or not the organization received funding from the UYF. One organization, for example, was able to launch a cooperative restaurant, which continues to

generate revenues after the project ended. Several other organizations reported entrepreneurial types of activities that continued after project completion, apparently financially viable. Others

Many youth-led organizations report on-going activities.

described continuing benefits of physical capital acquired with grant moneys, in the form of tools, which are still being used for training in carpentry, sewing, or soap making. Additional examples include on-going cultivation of a community garden, the formation of new businesses by youth who

graduated from programs funded through the UYF program, development of a manual to guide future programs, and program improvements thanks to feedback from youth participants.

And their efforts to address challenges and promote their initiatives' sustainability are, in many cases, paying off. Based on the information gathered through this study, grantees consistently report benefits as a result from having being part of the Urban Youth Fund program. They describe benefits to the organizations, themselves, to the individual youths participating in their programs, and to the communities in which they are located. These benefits are often in the form of human and political capital, as distinct from the financial and physical capital referenced above.

As the youth-led organizations look toward the future, the data showed that they shared a common focus on building partnerships and developing collaborations, and on identifying new sources of funding and other resources. Not only did the youth-led organizations feel that partnerships—with a wide range of organizations—were critically important to the achievement of their goals, they also expressed a strong desire to work more collaboratively with other youth-led organizations by finding opportunities to learn from and share with each other. How, and under what conditions, these collaborations can be developed and maintained to support the long-term sustainability of the youth programs is an area that needs further investigation.

In terms of funding and other organizational needs, it is clear that securing adequate resources for programs is an on-going struggle. Besides money, the organizations need a range of resources to be able to replicate and sustain the programs they develop and implement. However, this study could not establish how future support could best be allocated with a view to longer-term sustainability or scaling up of the grantees' programs. These questions are important, but will require more in-depth research, including site visits to organizations known to have developed promising practices that may serve as models for other youth-led organizations.

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APPENDIX 1: BACKGROUND ON THE URBAN YOUTH FUND

In April 2007, the UN Governing Council called for the establishment of a special fund within the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, to be designated the “Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-led Development” (Urban Youth Fund).⁸ The Urban Youth Fund was launched on November 4th at the 3rd World Urban Forum (WUF) in Nanjing, China. Targeting urban youth-led non-profit organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia-Pacific, and African and Arab States, the Fund’s goals are broad in both substantive and geographic terms, relative to the resources available for implementation of activities to attain them. As per its establishing documents, the Fund seeks to support initiatives in:

- Mobilizing young people to help strengthen youth-related policy formulation;
- Building capacities of governments at all levels, non-governmental and civil society organizations, and private-sector entities to better respond to the needs and issues of young people;
- Supporting the development of interest-based information and communication-oriented networks;
- Piloting innovative approaches to employment, good governance, adequate shelter, and secure tenure;
- Sharing and exchange of information on best practices;
- Facilitating vocational training and credit mechanisms to promote entrepreneurship and employment for young women and men, in collaboration with the private sector and in cooperation with other United Nations bodies and stakeholders;
- Promoting gender mainstreaming in all activities of urban youth.

⁸ Through Governing Council Resolution 21/6, para 1. Later, revision of the wording of priority areas have been mandated by the Executive Director to take into account changes of UN-Habitat’s work and mandate.

Further, the Urban Youth Fund is designed to serve three purposes:

1. to provide opportunities for grassroots youth-led groups with no or low access to finance;
2. to serve as a laboratory for identifying innovative models and mechanisms for youth-led empowerment; and
3. to provide input to UN-Habitat’s normative and policy work in the field of youth empowerment and sustainable urban development.

More than one-half of the awards made in 2009 went to organizations in African and Arab States (57%). A little over one-fourth (31%) went to organizations in the Asia Pacific region, while 12% went to applicants in Latin America and the Caribbean (see Table 17). Two years later, in 2011, relatively fewer awards were given to organizations in Africa and Arab States (49%), and applicants in Latin America and the Caribbean region received twice as many awards (23%) than in 2009, while those in Asia Pacific remained stable (29%). As clearly seen in Table 17, the allocation of 2011 awards across regions does not reflect the regional distribution of eligible applications, but was influenced by a selection process that produced a somewhat more even distribution across regions. For example, while applications from organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean made up just 9% of all 756 eligible applications, they constituted 23% of all 2011 awards made.

Table 17- Urban Youth Fund awards by region, 2009 and 2011 (number of projects funded and grant amounts)⁹

	AAS	AP	LAC	TOTAL
# of projects 2009	38	21	8	67
# of projects 2011	34	20	16	70
% of projects 2009	57%	31%	12%	100%
% of projects 2011	49%	29%	23%	100%
% of applicants 2011	55%	35%	9%	100%

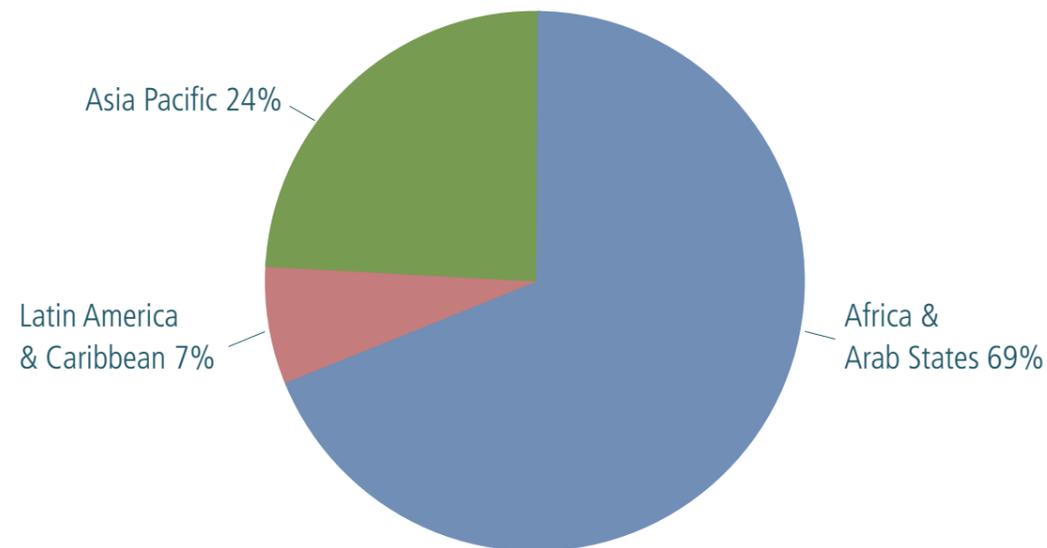
⁹ Table compiled from 2009 data provided by PYB. *Report on the processing of applications for the first deadline of the Opportunities Fund* (nd) and *Report on the processing of applications for the second call to the UN-HABITAT Urban Youth Fund* (nd). Subsequent to the initial award decisions, several projects were found to be ineligible, reducing the total number of awards made in 2009 to 64. No information was available on how these changes affected the award amounts and geographical distribution shown in the table. Data for 2011 come from *Report on the Youth Fund Applications for 2011 and 2012*.

APPENDIX 2: 2009 URBAN YOUTH FUND GRANTS BY THE NUMBERS

In order to assess award outcomes quantitatively, data from 2009 grantees were analyzed to compare project costs and the numbers of participants reached, and to analyze those against regional differences, project type, and grant size. Roll-up data were not available for all 2009-award recipients. However, 39 grantee organizations provided information that makes it possible to arrive at a limited quantitative assessment of award outcomes.

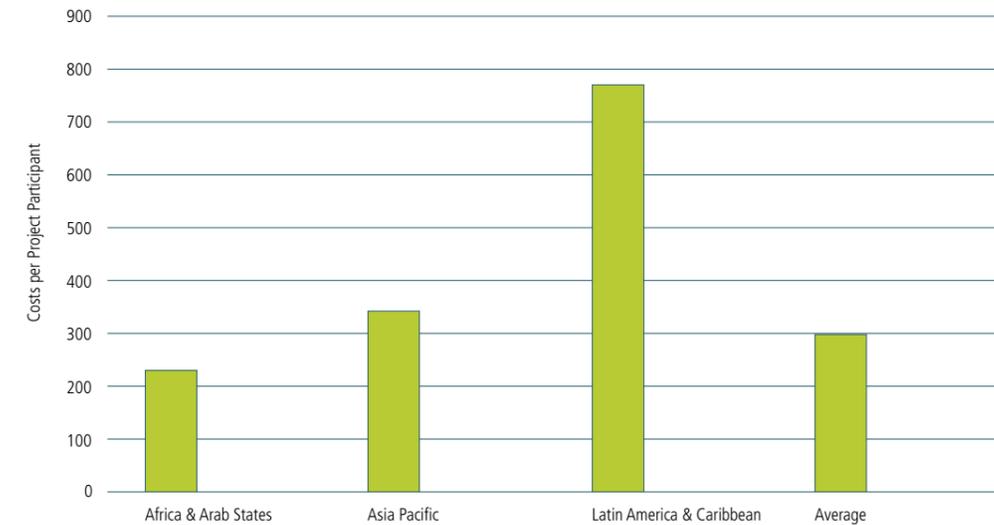
To begin with, when comparing the dollar amount distribution with the number of participants reached by region, we see that organizations in the African and Arab States reached relatively more project participants (69% of all participants) than their share in the total of funds awarded (54%), while beneficiaries in the Asia Pacific region reached proportionally fewer participants (24% of all participants vs. 28% of the total awards) as did organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean (7% of all participants vs. 18% of total grants awarded).¹⁰ See Figure 1. Accordingly, it is not surprising that average project participant costs were lowest in Africa, highest in Latin America, and in between in Asia Pacific. Figure 2 shows these differences.

Figure 1 - Number of Participants Reached by Region



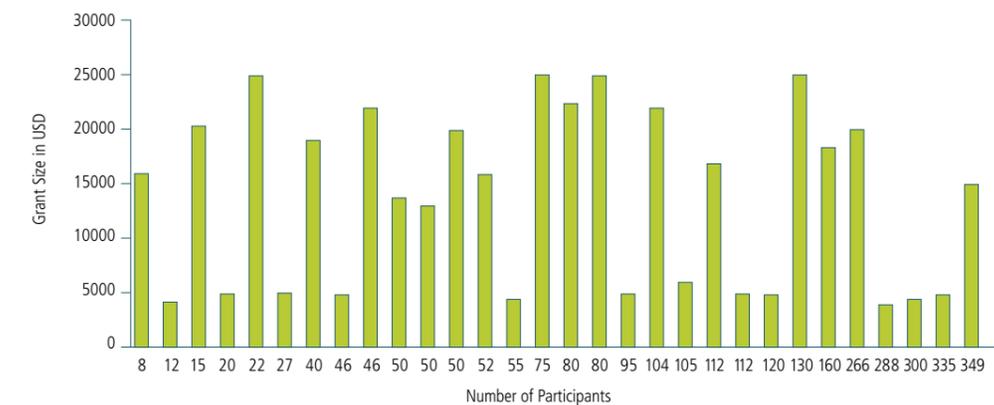
¹⁰ In this calculation and others in this section of the report, as is often done in statistical analysis, we purposely omitted an extreme outlier that would have skewed the results. By necessity, we also omitted organizations with missing values on selected variables.

Figure 2 - Cost per Project Participant by Region



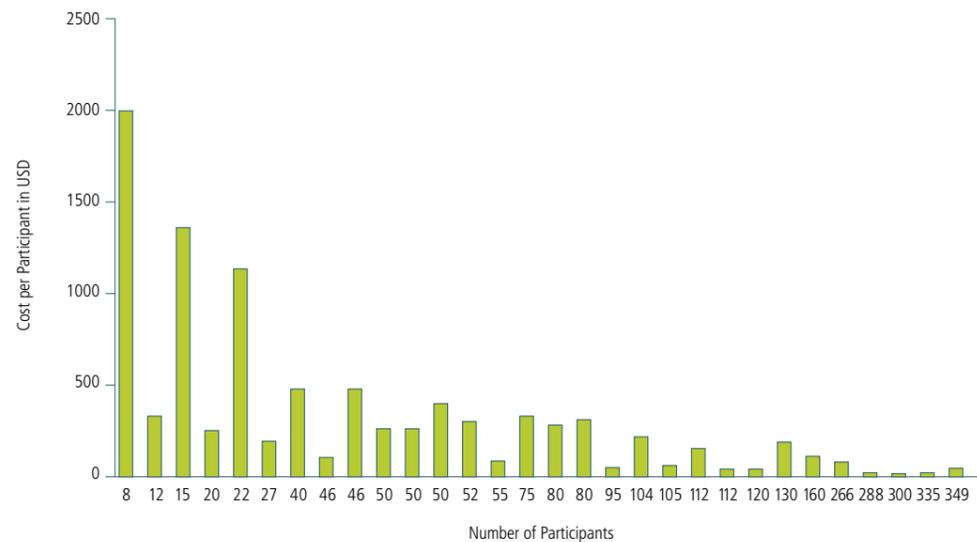
Since average grant size differed by region (See Table 1), it is useful to find out if larger grants are associated with a larger number of participants. That is, if organizations received larger grants, did they use the money to finance projects or programs that reached a greater number of participants? Surprisingly, this does not appear to be the case. Figure 3 fails to show any relationship at all between the size of the grant received and the number of participants reached. Organizations that receive larger awards do not necessarily reach more participants.

Figure 3 - Number of Participants Reached by Grant Size



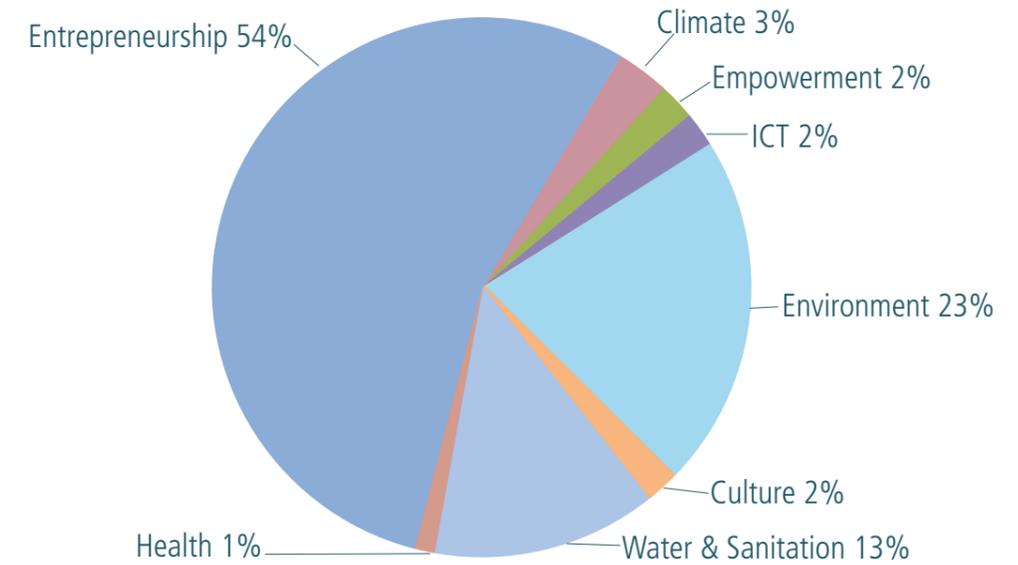
More importantly, if we calculate the cost per participant, the organizations that received larger grants tend to be more expensive than those organizations that received smaller grants. Figure 4 shows a clear relationship in this regard, suggesting smaller grants get “more bang for the buck.” At the same time, it must be emphasized that cost per participant is only one indicator of program cost (and a narrow one at that). It is also better seen as a measure of program, rather than an assessment of program output.

Figure 4 – Cost per Participant Reached by Number of Participants per Project



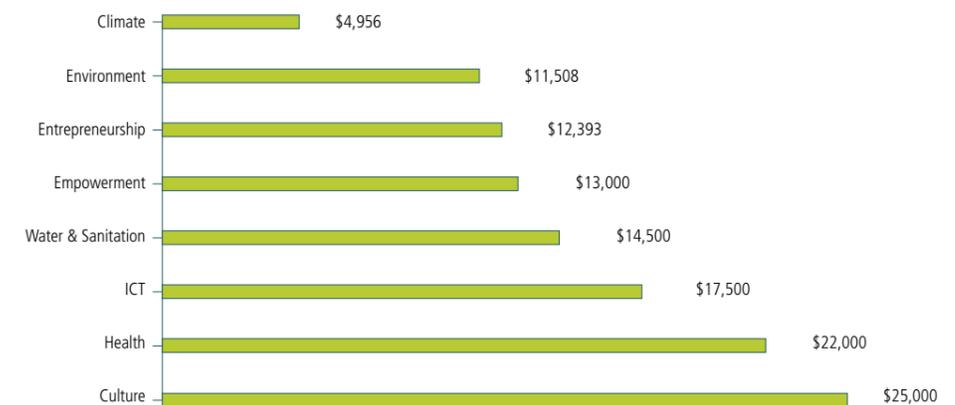
A further perspective is provided by an examination of data by project type. Figure 5 shows that projects that focused on entrepreneurship made up the bulk of all projects, accounting for 54% of them. Environmentally-oriented projects made up 23%, and water and sanitation projects another 13%, with smaller proportions for projects related to climate change, information technologies, empowerment, and culture.

Figure 5 – Cost per Participant by Project type, % (N=3,204)



The average award made to organizations differed considerably according to the type of project or program for which they requested funding. Most expensive were projects in the areas of culture (US\$ 25,000), health (US\$ 22,000), and information technologies (US\$ 17,500). Least costly were projects related to entrepreneurship (US\$ 12,393), the environment (US\$ 11,508), and climate change (US\$ 4,956). See Figure 6.

Figure 6 – Average Cost (USD) of Project per Organization by Project type



However, projects differ in the number of participants they reached. It may be more informative to consider the average participant costs (i.e., the size of the project grant divided by the number of project participants) by type of project. Viewed this way, the data paint a somewhat different picture (See Figure 7). The least costly programs, as measured by average cost per participant, are those related to climate change (US\$ 52), water and sanitation (US\$ 69), and the environment (US\$ 79). The costliest were those related to information technologies (US\$ 729), health (US\$ 478), and culture (US\$ 333), while programs focused on empowerment and entrepreneurship fell in between (respectively, US\$ 260 and US\$ 121).

When interpreting these figures it is important to bear in mind two important factors. First, the absolute number of projects is very small and not an appropriate basis to generalize. These findings can be useful mainly by raising questions that can be examined with better data in future rounds of UYF-grantees. Second, costs per participant data tell us nothing at all about outcomes. The cost figures are input data and their merit must be seen in relation to program output. Do larger investments in certain kinds of (costlier) programs yield more significant outcomes? The available data on 2009-UYF grantees did not enable us to develop conclusions in this regard, suggesting the need for additional research on this question.

Figure 7 – Average Cost (USD) per Participant by Project Type



APPENDIX 3: LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS INTERVIEWED, PROJECT NAME, AND LOCATION

Organization Name	Project Name	Country
1. Endurance Youth Association	Helping Urban Opportunity Neglected Youth	Ethiopia
2. Community Youth Mobilization	Community Youth Empowerment Project	Zambia
3. Tears Group Kenya	Tears Art and Peace Empowerment Village	Kenya
4. Kasweshya Housing Cooperative Society	Youth and ICT in Community Development	Kenya
5. Youth Action International -Uganda	Mengo Youth Development Link	Uganda
6. Concerned Youth Organization	ICT for Youth Development Project	Malawi
7. Tanzania Development Forum for Youth	Establishment of Online Youth Information and Discussion Forum	Tanzania
8. Youth Partnership for Peace and Development	Sustainable Livelihood For Peace and Development	Sierra Leone
9. AISEC-Senegal	Green Youth Entrepreneurs	Senegal
10. Organization for Indigenous Youths Initiatives and Sustainability	Recycling of Used Car Tires for Job Creation	Cameroon
11. Victorious Youth Movement	Alleviation of Youth Poverty through Piggery	Cameroon
12. Youth Outreach Program Cameroon	Initiative for Youth Employment and Development	Cameroon
13. Friends of the Habitat	Sustainable Youth Empowerment	Nigeria
14. Girls to Mothers Initiative	The Girls to Mothers Project	Nigeria
15. Southern African Youth Movement	Youth Participation in the Urban Settlement	South Africa
16. Aware Girls	Micro Entrepreneurship for Young Women	Pakistan
17. Sindh Community Foundation	Youth Empowerment Through Knowledge in Hyderabad Slums	Pakistan
18. Participatory Development Initiatives	Fisherwomen Alternative Livelihood Project	Pakistan
19. Team for Nature and Wildlife	Youth Empowerment for Green Job/City	Nepal
20. Greenzoom	Youth Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Education	Vietnam



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