

# YOUTH-LED ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT:

## Lessons from the Urban Youth Fund



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Youth-Led Economic Empowerment: Lessons from the Urban Youth Fund is the sixth report in the Global Youth-Led Development series. This report presents findings on the impacts of the Urban Youth Fund projects on youth-led grantees and end-youth beneficiaries, as well as on the communities in which the projects were implemented. In contrast to previous Global Youth-Led Development reports, this report focuses on youth-led entrepreneurship and employment creation projects—projects funded to enhance youth livelihood and economic opportunities—between 2009 and 2012. The report uses evidence from good and promising projects in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean to assess the meaning and power of youth-led economic empowerment through the eyes of the Urban Youth Fund.

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## FOREWORD

This report is the sixth volume of the Global Youth-Led Development Series, a collection of themed papers created to expand 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 unique in the UN system, was created to support youth-led initiatives globally. In contrast to many other programs, the Urban Youth Fund partners not with individuals, but rather with youth-led organizations at the grassroots level. Those individuals who are trained as part of the Urban Youth Fund program are representatives from their organizations with a special responsibility to bring back their knowledge and share this with other members in their organizations. The Urban Youth Fund is designed to serve three purposes: 1) To provide opportunities for youth-led groups with no or low access to finance; 2) To serve as a laboratory for testing and identifying innovative and effective practices for youth-led empowerment; and 3) To provide input to UN-Habitat’s normative work on youth empowerment and sustainable urban development.

To inform 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 6<sup>th</sup> in the series, presents findings on the impacts of the Urban Youth Fund projects on youth-led grantees and end-youth beneficiaries, as well as on the communities in which the projects were implemented. In contrast to previous Global Youth-Led Development reports, this report focuses on youth-led entrepreneurship and employment creation projects—projects funded to enhance youth livelihood and economic opportunities—between 2009 and 2012. The report uses evidence from good and promising projects in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean to assess the meaning and power of youth-led economic empowerment through the eyes of the Urban Youth Fund. It contributes to international development planning policy and practice in youth-led development, youth-led economic empowerment

programming, youth entrepreneurship and employment creation, sustainable youth-led livelihood interventions, and sustainable urban development planning and management. It has practical and policy implications for mainstreaming youth, gender and informal economies in sustainable urban development planning and management in low-income and largely informal urban economies.

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 governments 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 as well inspiring people to action. In the end, this series aims to contribute new insights to the emerging global dialogue on youth-led development.

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## PREFACE

Throughout modern history, urbanization has been a major driver of development and poverty reduction. However, there is a growing consensus that the form and functionality of cities and towns has to change as societies and their demography change. Parallel to the movement towards urbanization is the increase in the number of youth globally where, in absolute numbers, there are more people under the age of 25 today than ever, totaling nearly 3 billion or half of the total global population. These youth live, by and large, in cities and towns; the cities of the developing world account for over 90% of the world's urban growth and youth account for a large percentage of those inhabitants. It is estimated that as many as 60% of all urban dwellers will be under the age of 18 by 2030 (Ragan, 2013).

These two trends combined with technology advances, globalization, and lack of attention to youth-centered development have, among other context-specific factors, contributed to an increased level of youth unrest, spanning from the Middle East and North Africa, to Latin America and Europe. The increased presence of youth demonstrating in the streets and public squares can be regarded as manifestations of the multilayered challenges facing youth in urban settings, including lack of inclusion in governance, meager economic prospects, the battle for access to public space and land, and inadequate security and safety.

At the policy level, the past decade has witnessed a change of approach to the issue of youth, locally, nationally and internationally. The understanding has moved from regarding youth as a vulnerable client group to one in which youth are valued as an asset and a resource with the commensurate right to participate and influence decision making. The current approach considers the value of youth's contributions not solely as an investment in future adulthood, but also as a means to improved living standards and quality of life for youth and their communities, through ensuring youth voices are heard in economic and policy development and decision making at all levels.

The Urban Youth Fund gives support to youth-led organizations for one year and has multiple goals. First, it serves as a gate opener for youth-led organizations with low or no access to finance. Second, it acts as a laboratory to test out or identify innovative and promising strategies and mechanisms for youth empowerment. Third, it provides input to UN-Habitat's normative and policy-oriented work. These are big goals for a Fund with a global outreach but with limited resources, provided from the Government of Norway.

Youth should be viewed and treated as development partners and not only as a target group or beneficiaries of development projects. In the majority of situations, youth identify and know the challenges and problems in their local community better than outsiders and international institutions. By giving youth groups access to financial and human support through grants, training, and capacity-building programs and mentor support, development initiatives become truly bottom up and sustainable. It is very important to couple financial support with human support; grants alone will never be a sustainable solution. Yet, as one can read in this report, there are big challenges with youth-led development even with both financial and human support. This should be a signal to all development actors involved in sustainable development and particularly those involved in youth empowerment. More resources are needed in the field and different programs should target youth-led organizations at the various stages of the life cycle.

Youth have a right to be included in all aspects that affects their life. With many countries experiencing a so-called youth bulge, the question about directing resources to this age group has significant weight. Youth, defined as a transitional life phase, constitute a significant proportion of the population of regions like Africa and Asia. However, demographics alone are not enough to justify a massive re-distribution of resources to young people. It is important to get the actors in the international development community all the way down to local authorities and municipalities to stop regarding youth as a problem, and start looking at youth as strategic partners for solving the range of economic, environmental, political and social challenges that the world faces today.

Participation in political processes should be a right also enjoyed by young people. Equally important as participation in political processes is participation in economic life through which one establishes a sustainable livelihood and becomes an independent economic actor. This report studies the impacts and lessons from Urban Youth Fund projects in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean with an economic focus. This is defined broadly to include different perspectives, approaches and contexts, but all projects have a core focus on improving the livelihoods of youth beneficiaries.

As part of the effort to increase the global knowledge on youth-led development, UN-Habitat partners with young researchers and research institutions and gives them full access to our data and network. This report is part of the Global Youth-Led Development Series and I encourage the reader to become familiar with the other reports in the series as well as our State of the Urban Youth report series, and to contribute to the global discourse on youth-led empowerment.

**Ahmad Alhendawi** | *UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth*

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADEL	Agência de Desenvolvimento Econômico Local
AFAS	Asociación Femenina de Acción Social
AFCIG	Action Foundation Common Initiative Group
ASONVIPRONYJ	Asociación Nueva Vida Pro - Niñez y Juventud
BCI	Bright Idea Community
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
COSI	Community Self Improvement Foundation
CYEP	Community Youth Empowerment Project
CYM	Community Youth Mobilization
EYA	Endurance Youth Association
FITZ	Family In-Need Trust of Zimbabwe
FLEP	Friends in Life Education Peer Club
FOH	Friends of the Habitat
GJPS	Grameen Jankalyan Evam Punarjara Samiti
GYE	Green Young Entrepreneurs
G2Mi	Girls to Mother Initiative
HIPO	Help Initiatives for People Organization
HUONY	Helping Urban Opportunity Neglected Youth
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
ILO	International Labor Organization
IYED	Initiative for Youth Employment and Development
IUYD	Integrated Urban Youth Development Project
KHCS	Kaswasha Housing Cooperative Society
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFIs	Micro Finance Institutions
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
ORGIIS	Organization for Indigenous Youth Initiatives and Sustainability
SMEs	Small and Medium Scale Enterprises
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STEP-UP	Seamstresses Training Enterprise Project for Upper East Region
TAPEV	Tears Arts and Peace Empowerment Village
TGK	Tears Group Kenya
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Program

UYF	Urban Youth Fund
YAI	Youth Action International
YHFG	Youth Harvest Foundation Ghana
YOP-CAM	Youth Outreach Program Cameroon
YPPD	Youth Partnership for Peace and Development
YSOs	Youth Serving Organizations

## INTRODUCTION

In most developing cities, youth have long been viewed as rebels and/or victims ill-prepared to chart their own life and livelihood trajectories. The United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat)'s Urban Youth Fund challenges the incomplete view of a passive youth waiting for external aid by embracing a youth-led development approach that acknowledges the creativity and innovation of low-income youth, and places them at the center of employment creation and sustainable urbanization.

Youth-led development, focused in this report on community and business programs and projects designed and implemented by young people, has been seen as a potentially effective means for on-the-job training and is considered one of the most effective strategies for passing information, knowledge, and skills to young people (United Nations Industrial Development Organization & Youth Employment Network, 2011). Increasingly, youth-led development has been viewed as an integral part of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Given adequate funding, youth-led development could translate into a bottom-up approach enabling the creation of viable businesses and social enterprises, ensuring self-sustainability, fostering peer-to-peer support, and strengthening social capital and trust, a vital element in sustainable youth employment creation. Youth-led social enterprises can help alleviate unemployment while simultaneously benefiting the entire community.

One of UN-Habitat's primary mechanisms for advancing youth-led development is the Urban Youth Fund, which has been funding youth-led development initiatives throughout the world since its launch in 2008. The Urban Youth Fund embraces the following principles of youth-led development:

1. Youth define their own development goals and objectives;
2. Youth have a social and physical space to participate in development and to be regularly consulted;
3. Adult mentorship and peer-to-peer mentorship is encouraged;
4. Youth act as role models to help other youth engage in development; and
5. Youth are integrated into all local and national development programs and frameworks.

Genuine youth-led development puts youth at the center of development projects that impact their lives. Even though youth-led development is still a relatively new concept, there is emerging evidence that youth are capable of initiating and leading successful projects, especially in the area of youth employment creation and entrepreneurship.

While youth-led development can effectively draw on the untapped creativity, enthusiasm and energy of youth, the effectiveness of youth-led development is often hindered by youth-led organizations' limited financial and technical capacity. These financial and technical limitations call upon adults and funding agencies to support youth as leaders and to offer full technical and financial support to youth-initiated and youth-directed interventions.

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## SECTION 1: BACKGROUND ON THE STUDY AND THE ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDED

### **About This Study**

This report offers youth project coordinators and youth beneficiaries an opportunity to share project experiences including accomplishments, challenges, hopes for the future, lessons learned, and recommendations to improve youth economic empowerment policies and practices. A central part of the global youth-led development agenda is the need for active and full youth participation in development projects from inception to implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Given that youth-led development is still an emerging concept, it was important to evaluate and document not only the positive project outcomes but also the challenges and lessons learned from the perspective of youth-led organizations and low-income youth entrepreneurs.

This study relied on both qualitative and quantitative data, collected through interviews, surveys, and document analysis of UYF grantee reports and other archival records, which included newsletters, press releases, completed application forms, grantee and project summaries, managerial information, and evaluation documents related to the UYF program and funded projects. Semi-structured interviews and email surveys with project coordinators provided detailed information about the views and project experiences of grantees and youth beneficiaries, as well as providing an "insider's" insight into the social, economic and political context in which grantees and youth entrepreneurs operated. The relatively small sample size for this study limited systematic statistical analysis, but the findings reported in this document were strengthened through the use of multiple sources of evidence, as outlined above.

In preparing this report, final project reports submitted by 41 grantees to UN-Habitat were reviewed and analyzed along with secondary survey data collected from 60 youth entrepreneurs who graduated from various skills training projects. Additionally, in-depth Skype interviews with 28 youth project coordinators were conducted and analyzed together with survey data from 66 youth-led organizations, including 28 grantees and a comparison group of 38 eligible but unsuccessful applicants to the Urban Youth Fund.

### **About the Urban Youth Fund Grantees Included in This Study**

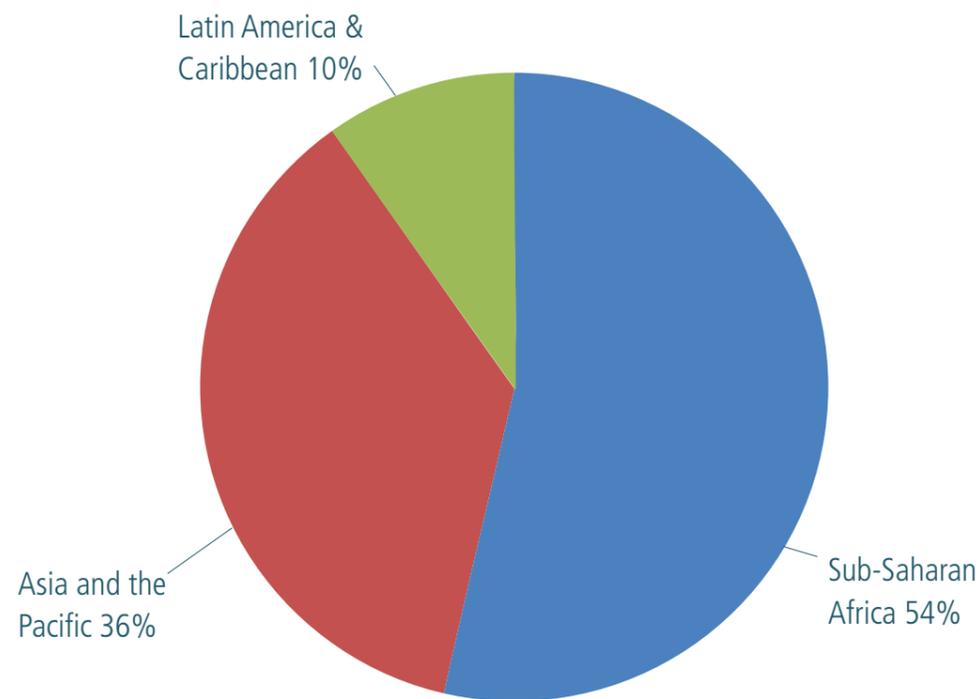
Youth-led economic development projects included in this study focused on broader youth livelihood goals implemented through various ways: entrepreneurship and employment creation,

vocational skills training, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) training, recycling and environmental entrepreneurship training, young women empowerment, and urban agricultural skills training, among others. Some projects were specifically focused on enhancing the livelihood skills of young women and disabled youth.

In total, 41 UYF grantees were included in this study. Annex 1 presents the complete list of grantee names and locations, project names and focus, grantee size and project outcomes. As shown in Annex 1, the projects were characterized by broad youth livelihood enhancement goals. There were projects that promoted youth livelihoods through community waste management and recycling, vocational skills and on-job training, environmental entrepreneurship, energy services, water and sanitation, and urban agriculture. A central component in all projects was training on youth entrepreneurship skills; grantees created youth microenterprises and income-generating opportunities for young men and women.

As shown below, 54% (22) of the grantees were from sub-Saharan Africa, 36% (15) were from Asia and the Pacific, and 10% (4) were from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

Figure 1: Urban Youth Fund grantees included in the study by region



The 41 grantees in this study were selected from a longer list of 173 organizations that benefited from the UYF from 2009-2011. All of the 41 organizations had a central goal of promoting youth entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities. Project selection was also based on the availability of end of project data and reports. The grantees selected for the study had proposed projects addressing youth employment and entrepreneurship through skills training in areas such as urban agriculture, environment, water and sanitation, energy services, arts, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), and miscellaneous services. Four of the grantees proposed projects that specifically targeted young women and two grantees focused on economic empowerment of disabled youth. Table 1 shows the proportion of grantees selected from each application cycle, and Table 2 presents the full list of countries where these projects are located.

Table 1: Urban Youth Fund application year and grantees

Application Year	Total number of grantees selected	Grantees included in the study
2009	63	16 (25%)
2010	51	7 (14%)
2011	59	18 (31%)
Total grantees	173	41 (24%)

Table 2: Location of Urban Youth Fund projects by region and country

Region	Project location countries	Total number of projects from region
Sub-Saharan Africa	Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe	22
Asia and the Pacific	Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Yemen	15
Latin America and the Caribbean	Brazil, El Salvador, Bolivia, and Peru	4
Total projects reviewed	41	

The youth who benefit from livelihood opportunities generated through the UYF are mainly under-educated, unemployed or underemployed young women and men who live in low-income communities, urban slums and informal settlements. They live and work in informal urban economies where they face precarious working conditions with long hours and low pay,

lacking in adequate social protection, tenure security and rights.

In this study, these end beneficiaries are the 1,368 youth entrepreneurs who secured income-generating activities soon after graduating from the business and skills training opportunities offered by UYF grantees. About 30% (1,368) of total youth trained (4,576) by grantees included in this study had a job at the official conclusion of the 41

projects mostly implemented during a 12-month period.

In the following sections, this report describes the results that grantees accomplished through their projects, as well as the impacts of the projects on the youth and others involved in the projects. In addition, throughout this report, "highlighted projects" are presented as specific examples of successful youth-led economic empowerment projects. These projects exemplify the basic characteristics of successful projects and the approaches that they used to achieve ambitious goals, including the following:

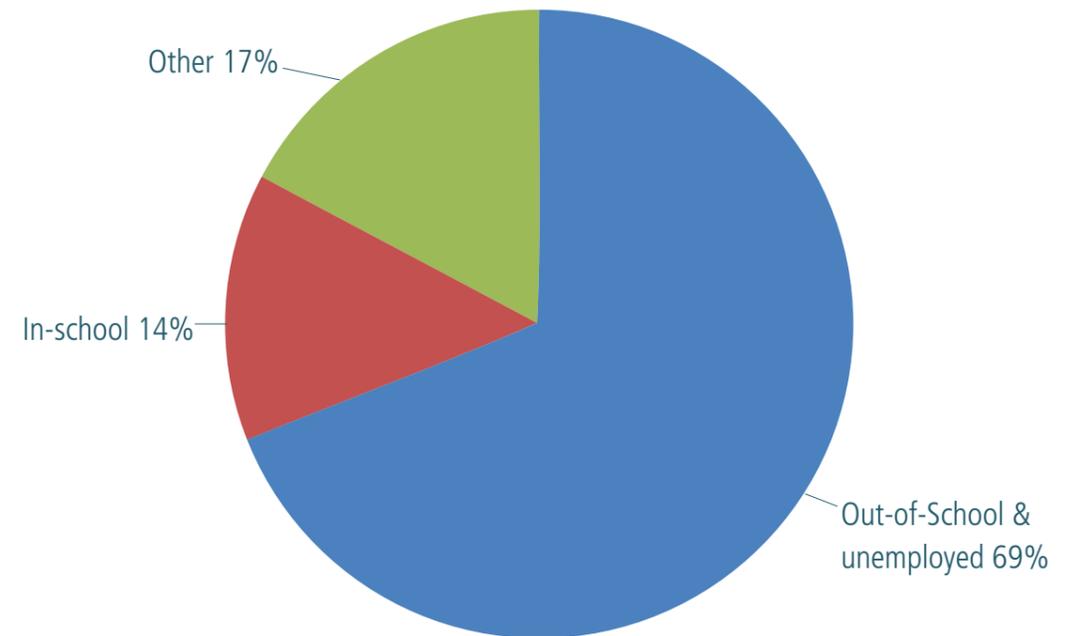
- They offer entrepreneurship, and various skills training opportunities for young men and women;
- They focus on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable youth in slum and informal communities;
- They attempt to facilitate youth access to working space and start-up loans for youth-led businesses;
- They develop financial and technical partnerships with local and international organizations; and
- They focus on project sustainability through the involvement of community members in resolving land access and product marketing challenges.

About 30% (1,368) of total youth trained (4,576) by grantees included in this study had a job at the official conclusion of the 41 projects implemented during a 12-month period.

## The Youth Beneficiaries Included in This Study

Data revealed that the youth beneficiaries who were targeted for the grantee programs were youth who were in need of educational and economic opportunities. These beneficiaries were more focused on achieving independence and self-reliance through creating their own businesses and securing permanent income generating opportunities. Further, beneficiaries shared that, prior to joining the project, 69% (40) said they were out-of-school and unemployed, 14% (8) were still in school, and 17% (10) were involved in other activities including farming, self-and informal employment, and community development work. These figures are in line with previous observations that youth unemployment is a serious problem for out-of-school youth in sub-Saharan Africa. The challenge has always been that formal education systems train youth for formal employment opportunities that do not exist (UN-Habitat, 2013). Figure 2 presents the activities of the UYF beneficiaries before the training.

Figure 2: Activity before the project started (N = 60)



Comparing females and males, 58% of females were unemployed school leavers compared to 42% of males. This is, unfortunately, not a surprising finding. When it comes to opportunities for economic empowerment, young females are particularly disadvantaged because they often have lower educational levels compared to young men (UN-Habitat, 2013).

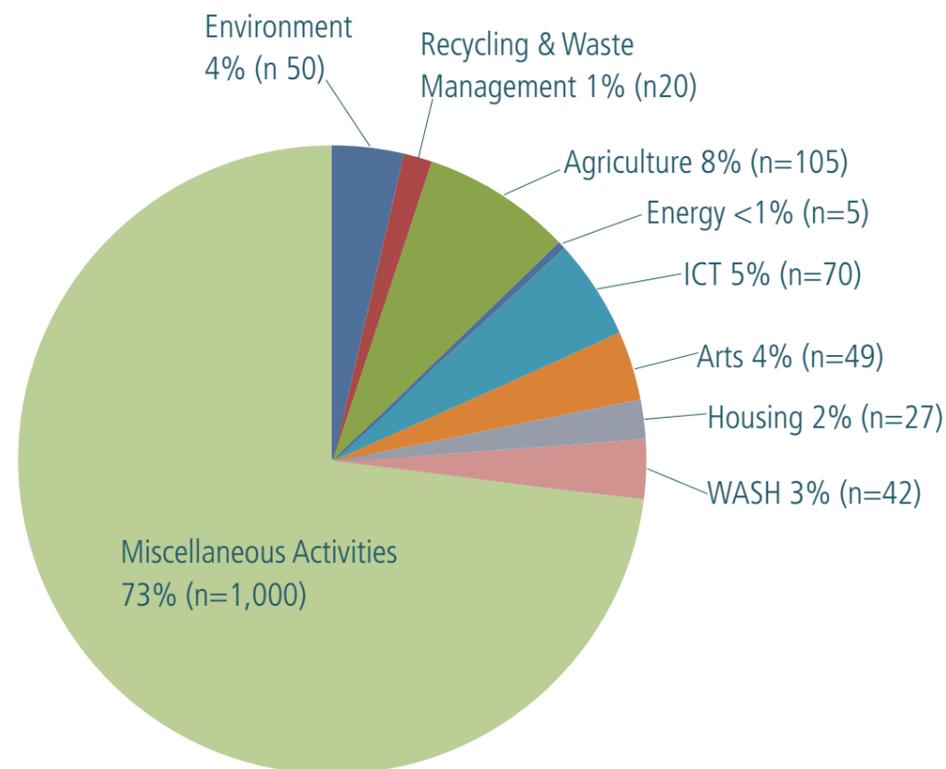
## What the Grantees Accomplished

The Urban Youth Fund offered opportunities for unemployed youth to receive the practical skills training necessary for them to create microenterprises and self-employment opportunities, through the work of the grantee organizations. This section explores what the grantees accomplished with the funding and other support they received as part of the UYF program, beginning with a focus on job creation, followed by an analysis of the cost effectiveness of the jobs created through the projects.

### SECTORS OF JOB CREATION

The youth who participated in the UYF-funded projects engaged in entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities in diverse sectors of the urban economy including agriculture, housing, environment, recycling and waste management, water and sanitation, ICTs, arts, energy services, and miscellaneous sectors. Figure 3 presents an overview of the main sectors of entrepreneurship and job creation through these Urban Fund Projects.

Figure 3: Sectors of job creation through Urban Youth Fund projects  
Total number of jobs created post-project = 1,368



## COST EFFECTIVENESS

To assess cost effectiveness among grantees, the grant amount was weighed against the number of youth trained and the number of jobs created among the 41 grantees, both in total and divided by regions (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean). The numbers were computed using self-reported final project reports, Skype interviews with project coordinators, published data, and survey data from project coordinators. Cost effectiveness data was constrained by the absence of data on whether or not the jobs created were part-time, full-time or seasonal jobs and by the absence of fieldwork to confirm the self-reported job numbers. Absence of reliable data on youth earnings before and after the project also limited cost effectiveness analysis.

ALL GRANTEES	ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
Total amount granted: \$647,532 (37 grantees)	Total amount granted: \$238,210 (13 grantees)
Total youth trained: 4,576	Total youth trained post-project: 2,217
Average cost per trainee: \$142	Average cost per trainee: \$107
Total jobs created post-project: 1,368	Total jobs created post-project: 329
Average number of jobs created per grantee: 37	Average number of jobs created per grantee: 25
AFRICA	LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN
Total amount granted: \$338,322 (20 grantees)	Total amount granted: \$71,000 (4 grantees)
Total youth trained: 2,161	Total youth trained post-project: 198
Average cost per trainee: \$157	Average cost per trainee: \$359
Total jobs created post-project: 886	Total jobs created post-project: 153
Average number of jobs created per grantee: 44	Average number of jobs created per grantee: 38

One interesting finding from the analysis of the grantees was the absence of a direct relationship between grant size and the number of youth trained or jobs created. This suggests that organizations that receive smaller grants can potentially create economies of scale.

Even with these limitations, the data showed that most grantees, in collaboration with youth graduates, succeeded in creating diverse income-generating activities. One important finding from the analysis of the grantees was the absence of a direct relationship between grant size and the number of youth trained or jobs created. This suggests that organizations that receive smaller grants can potentially create economies of scale, where they maximize impact by training a larger number of youth and creating more employment opportunities even on a tighter budget.



## SECTION 2: RESULTS FROM RESEARCH

### Overview of Project Impacts

Results from this study highlighted a range of positive project outcomes for Urban Youth Fund grantees, youth beneficiaries, and for the wider community, ranging from increased technical and financial capacity and enhanced employment opportunities at the individual level, to strengthened collaborations at the organizational and/or community level. The study also surfaced a number of fundamental challenges that hindered the capacity of youth-led organizations and their participants in their work to address youth employment challenges, suggesting a number of issues where attention and action is needed. The sections below explore these project outcomes and challenges.

### PROJECT COORDINATORS' ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

Project coordinators, as those most centrally involved in project design and implementation, were asked to reflect on the outcomes they had observed through the implementation of the project, and the impacts of the project on themselves, other youth, and the community.

The immediate impact of the UYF grant was capacity building for the youth-led organizations and expanded working space for some grantees. Much of the capacity building was attributable to the project management training for project coordinators offered by the UYF program. Intermediate outcomes centered on skills training through entrepreneurship, self-employment opportunities, job creation and young women empowerment skills training projects. Through job creation and entrepreneurship projects, grantees created revolving funds, and youth ran micro-enterprises, resource centers, cooperatives and working groups. The youth-led micro-enterprises and groups created new employment opportunities for youth beneficiaries who subsequently employed other youth members from the community and produced goods and services that benefited their families and community members. The recognition of productive youth graduates led parents and community members to appreciate the youth-led projects—and the youth themselves. In some cases, increased community appreciation fostered community cooperation and mobilization towards sustainable youth employment creation. In the process, some grantees secured external funding to train even more youth. Local and national organizations including city councils, national governments and NGOs were also motivated to collaborate with UYF grantees in a variety of ways. The broad outcome of many UYF projects was the creation of decent and sustainable youth livelihoods for community poverty reduction. These outcomes are described in more detail below.

## I. ACCESS TO WORKING SPACE, LAND, MATERIALS, AND EQUIPMENT

Project coordinators expressed that the UYF program allowed their organizations to acquire land and working space for project implementation. Studies have shown that urban land is a central physical asset for sustainable livelihoods in low-income countries (Brown, 2006). Some grantees received land donations, whereas others used the UYF grant to expand their workspace. In some cases, as described by Friends of the Habitat (FOH), Nigeria below, the grantees acquired land for their projects through partnerships with city council and/or community leaders:

*The community leader who is also the district head of the community played a major role in determining the choice of the viewing centre for use as the training site. The main reason for the choice of the centre was to shorten the travel distance to the site and proximity to the workshop of the master trainer. We did not have to pay anything for the site. This is because of the perceived importance of the project by the community who then decided to seek for the Local Government's permission for us to use the centre for free.*

In addition to allowing youth organizations to acquire land and workspace for their projects, the UYF grant also allowed some trained youth beneficiaries to access secure working space for self-employment activities before and after graduation. For example, through Endurance Youth Association (EYA)'s project called HUONY (Ethiopia), youth beneficiaries accessed workspace with assistance and permission from small units of government in Addis Ababa called WORDAs. The WORDAs prepared small working spaces that were then given to youth who graduated from the HUONY project. The youth groups who acquired land with the assistance of WORDAs paid much lower monthly rental rates compared to those who acquired working space from private landowners. More significantly for sustainable urban livelihoods, the WORDAs also assisted youth to acquire trading licenses from Addis Ababa City Council, and then marketed youth products to community members.

The acquisition of materials and equipment by grantees and youth beneficiaries was another reported outcome of the Urban Youth Fund. Through the UYF program, some youth organizations bought training materials and equipment and offered various skills training programs to youth. Some organizations such as Youth Action International (YAI)-Uganda reported that the UYF project allowed them to receive training equipment from other international organizations, as the Project Coordinator describes:

*Tool Aid UK donated sewing machines, typewriters, kit sewing machines, and wood carving machines to the centre and these were used to set up a tool bank,*

*which is used by the beneficiaries. We recruited a total of 47 more students as a result. We also bought eight sewing machines and other training materials for the different project activities.*

Access to physical capital in the form of workspace, materials and equipment was a challenge for youth entrepreneurs, a challenge that was partially met by the UYF grants. In addition, only a few grantees approached their city council—a potentially strategic partner—to facilitate youth access to land. This suggests the need for two types of support: for provision of materials, and for assistance with developing strategic partnerships.

## II. CAPACITY BUILDING IN JOB CREATION

All the project coordinators interviewed indicated that they had received project management training from UN-Habitat and that the training equipped them with the knowledge and skills to implement projects successfully. The project management training also included monitoring, evaluation and implementation, report writing skills, and financial management. Through the various UYF projects, grantees then shared their business creation and management knowledge with youth beneficiaries, as well as integrating other skills components into trainings, such as creativity, innovation, technology skills, and specialized/technical skills linked to the project goals.

The Organization for Indigenous Youth Initiatives and Sustainability (ORGIIS) project coordinator in Cameroon felt that their organization gave valuable recycling knowledge to those youth that they trained:

*We shared knowledge on basic business development in the recycling sector. We explored opportunities for financing enterprise development plans. They (youth) have acquired key and basic skills on how to go about establishing and managing a business appropriately. They have also been adequately furnished with information on existing micro-finance institutions, how to obtain micro-credit for their business, and how to ensure and monitor the successful evolution of their business.*

Some grantees integrated computer training into overall skills training projects. The Kaseshwa Housing Cooperative Society (KHCS) project coordinator in Kenya explained the impact of their project as follows:

*Kaswasha Resource Center has become a very important asset to the people of Nairobi east. Over the last nine months, the Center assisted many youths who would have otherwise not been able to access basic information technology training. The Center has been able to provide disadvantaged youth with useful educational opportunities to help reduce the digital divide and enhance the capacity of youth from poor households to be successful participants in a knowledge-based society.*

The above comments suggest that, at the organizational level, the UYF grants and training resulted in enhanced project management skills and capacity building among project coordinators. At the level of the beneficiary youth, the grantees leveraged the UYF grant and their newly enhanced project skills to train youth in various soft and hard skills. Among other things, the knowledge gained by youth included business creation and management skills; practical skills included housing construction, agriculture, and computer maintenance.

### **III. CREATIONS OF REVOLVING FUNDS AND YOUTH MICROENTERPRISES**

Access to finance is one of the core challenges for youth and youth groups. Economic or financial capital is one of the most important livelihood assets in the context of informal urban economies. In low-income communities, young people engage in multiple income-generating activities as a means to increase their economic assets (Chinguta et al, 2005). Access to economic assets in the form of cash or savings often facilitates access to all other livelihood assets. One of the goals of the Urban Youth Fund is to boost the financial capacity of youth-led organizations in low-income countries. Some grantees used part of this UYF grant to offer business startup loans and cash loans to youth beneficiaries who then used the loans to set up small enterprises. In setting up small enterprises, the youth not only generated self-employment opportunities but they also employed other youth.

Through the HUONY project, for example, 25 young women beneficiaries received business startup loans through the Responsive Scholarship Seed Fund (RSSF). Apart from the revolving loans from the project, the HUONY beneficiaries were introduced to a micro finance bank where they received short-term loans of up to just over US\$1000, depending on collateral. The HUONY project coordinator explained how the revolving fund changed the lives of beneficiaries:

*Youth are making profit from their businesses and returning the loan and 52 youth benefited from the Responsive Seed Fund. A woman's hair salon group received the loan and they are doing very well and have since repaid the loan. In*

*addition, the RSSF directly assisted 10 youth groups that created their own jobs and made their dreams come true. At this point, the lives of the beneficiaries have been changed since they are self-employed. Their status has been changed and this helps the community at large. When youth are unemployed, it destroys the community, but these HUONY groups have respect from the community where they live.*

According to HOUNY project coordinator the coffee-making group members doubled their income within two years. They started with a \$2,500 seed fund from the organization in 2010; their capital reached \$5,500 in 2012, and they repaid 98% of the RSSF loan.

Despite the creation of revolving funds and emerging partnerships with local banks, access to credit was still a challenge for many youth beneficiaries. The credit amounts provided through revolving funds was inadequate. Banks also demanded collateral levels that were beyond the reach of many youth. However, in many cases, Urban Youth Fund grantees could establish strong financial partnerships with local banks to facilitate youth access to credit. Particularly for young women, the establishment of microcredit and savings schemes also boosted their access to credit.

### **IV. SELF-EMPLOYMENT, YOUNG WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND INDEPENDENCE**

Urban Youth Fund projects promoted youth self-reliance and financial independence. Youth self-reliance resulted from the self-employment opportunities that arose after graduating and receiving business loans. The project coordinators felt that the UYF promoted youth appreciation from the community members.

Self-employment served to enhance youth's confidence, strengthen their independence, and promote young women's empowerment. The UYF also helped to empower young women financially, as explained by the Friends of the Habitat (Nigeria) project coordinator:

*Even during the training, some that are very good and fast in catching up were contracted by members of the communities to prepare cakes and meat for naming and wedding ceremonies. This has tremendously increased their incomes even before they completed their training.*

Most project coordinators expressed that the youth who graduated from the projects were mostly self-employed and that an insignificant number secured formal employment in the private or

public sectors. The skills training that the youth received allowed them to generate income to meet basic needs and, in some cases, set up savings accounts, or use earnings to return to school after launching successful livelihood initiatives.

In one project, the beneficiaries were reported to have earned enough income from street hawking that they have shunned risky temptations such as street prostitution and premarital sex. In another, the beneficiaries started 30 small enterprises and were earning an average monthly income of \$100 to \$500. This was significant considering that the World Bank considers the poor to be those living on less than \$ 1.25 per day (World Bank, 2013).

The project coordinator of Youth Harvest Foundation-Ghana indicated that their beneficiaries were satisfied with the income that they earned from their livelihood activities:

*The beneficiaries work with high motivation and enthusiasm. I think it is because the project earns money directly to them. There have been dramatic changes in income levels. Those who used to earn 100 Cedis (\$50) a month now earn an average of 300 Cedis (\$150) a month. That is more than double.*

However, not all project beneficiaries earned enough income to open up savings accounts. For example, YAI-Uganda Project Coordinator said, “At the moment, most of our beneficiaries are able to put food on the table, send their children to public school and also clothe their families.” This suggested that their beneficiaries were only earning enough to meet basic needs.

As noted in the preceding section, access to credit was a challenge for most youth graduates. As a result, this limited youths’ access to self-employment and income-generating opportunities. The self-employment opportunities created through UYF projects enhanced youth access to basic income that was enough to cover daily needs but only a few grantees reported that their youth beneficiaries had opened savings accounts using income from projects.

## **V. DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH NETWORKS, DISCUSSION FORUMS, GROUPS, AND RESOURCE CENTERS**

Project coordinators clearly felt that the creation of micro-enterprises, youth groups, forums, cooperatives, and youth resource centers through the UYF boosted youth access to social capital. UYF projects created these cooperatives, youth business groups, and micro-enterprises to enable

youth beneficiaries to meet and share ideas, network, and collaborate. The youth-run enterprises attracted community and parental attention, cooperation, and mobilization focused on sustainable youth employment creation.

Some project coordinators appreciated the fact that their projects trained youth beneficiaries who in turn engaged in peer-to-peer training in their communities. Some also felt that by conducting peer-to-peer training, youth graduates acted as role models toward positive community change. In the words of the Project Coordinator at Girls to Mothers Initiative:

*When you train women you train a family. Women are role models—their families and children look up to them and more needs to be done to help them. Young women are ready and bring change. They need direction and leadership. Being a young female, I can bring light wherever I go.*

Urban Youth Fund projects also created powerful information and discussion forums and resource centers for youth to discuss and share information on a variety of topics, from youth development, to employment creation and business practices, to reproductive health. Most of the grantees organized youth into working groups before and after graduation to facilitate knowledge sharing, access to working space, and access to credit. The ORGIS project coordinator clearly illustrated the benefits of having youth graduates work in groups:

*This model of group work is very efficient both for the youths and sustainability of the projects. First, in groups they can auto control themselves, the group serves as a shock absorber, control mechanism and insurance for those who alone will be very vulnerable and readily give up in the face of adversities. For the project, the group serves as a guarantee for success, collateral for the loans, easy traceability, monitoring and up-scaling.*

A World Bank study found that low-income youth often rank social networks and relationships as the most central livelihood resource in their quest for sustainable development, and that access to these networks facilitates youth access to income from friends and family members during difficult times (Betcherman et al, 2007). As the UYF grantees likewise highlighted, these social networks provided a variety of benefits for individual youth and for the group; in many cases, the networks also helped to mobilize youth and bring community members together to learn and collaboratively tackle youth employment and broad community challenges.

## VI. COMMUNITY COOPERATION, COLLABORATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Community cooperation, mobilization, and development were generally broad outcomes from the UYF projects. Project coordinators perceived that the Urban Youth Fund benefited youth and their communities in many ways beyond direct job creation for immediate project beneficiaries. Even though some community members did not appreciate the projects initially, community attitudes shifted after noticing project results. The result, as most project coordinators indicated, was sustained community mobilization and cooperation in support of UYF projects and the creation of youth employment opportunities. As UYF youth beneficiaries became productive members of the community and began to support themselves and their families, they received wide appreciation from parents and community members, as the two project coordinators describe below:

*The project has received acceptance and goodwill from both the community and especially by the beneficiaries. For us as an organization, we did not expect the tremendous goodwill that followed the execution of the planned activities. Many parents and community members who did not initially appreciate the project began encouraging their children and especially female youth to join the project. (Project Coordinator, FOH). The appreciation from parents and friends of participants in the form of letters and phone calls indicate that this project brought relief to families and communities and has significantly reduced unemployment. (Project Coordinator, FLEP-Club)*

In some cases, the project facilitated the development of networking skills, as well as building actual networks with community leaders and other youth development stakeholders. These networks helped youth in a range of ways, including the identification and renting of their project site, or mentoring and monitoring youth trainees before and after graduation. Some youth graduates engaged in volunteering activities and strengthened community ties and development efforts. The youth volunteered activities such as civic education and social mobilization on various social issues affecting their surroundings.

Urban Youth Fund projects created youth resource centers and discussion forums that brought together diverse youth and community members. In the process, UYF graduates acted as role models to other community youth, offering peer-to-peer skills training to friends and family members. As a result, parents and community members began appreciating UYF projects and youth more and more. Project coordinators appreciated the added visibility that the resulting community mobilization gave to their projects and organizations.

## VII. ENHANCED PARTNERSHIPS AND EXTERNAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Project coordinators revealed that partnerships initiated by the UYF added visibility to their organizations and projects. This project recognition and the popularity of the organizations opened up new external funding opportunities that sometimes allowed for project replication and expansion. For example the Project Coordinator from Action Foundation Common Initiative Group-Cameroon (AFCIG) shared:

*This project has increased AFCIG's opportunities to seek and acquire grants from funders in this domain through the experience gained during project implementation. Through this project, AFCIG has created long-lasting partnerships with other organizations and networks for present and future collaborations.*

Other grantees had similar successes. After launching the Green Young Entrepreneurs Project, AISEC-Senegal met an advisor from the Ministry of Environment and forged an internship exchange partnership with AIESEC-Morocco. The HUONY project also fostered partnerships between the EYA, governmental bodies and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Ethiopia. Through their project, the Tears Group Kenya attracted a technical partnership with Hewlett Packard (HP) through United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and Micro Enterprise Acceleration Institute (MEA-I). The Love Planet project coordinator shared that the UYF project improved their relationship with the Nigerian Government.

The UYF grant opened new partnership and funding opportunities for youth-led organizations. External funding opportunities from foundations, international development organizations, and/or governments were also opened up for a number of projects, which organizations used to replicate or expand their projects. The partnerships that were created through UYF projects strengthened the capacity of youth-led organizations to better address youth livelihood challenges. If these partnerships continue, they may play an important role in project sustainability through expansion and replication activities.

## VIII. CREATION OF SUSTAINABLE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

To assess the extent to which the Urban Youth Fund created decent employment and livelihoods for youth, this study used the basic goals of the ILO's decent work agenda for youth, women and low-income residents. These basic goals include training the most disadvantaged youth and women living in slum and informal areas; and the extent to which the projects facilitated access to secure working spaces and rights for self-employment activities (ILO, 2002; ILO, 2005).

The decent work agenda also encompasses issues of active youth participation in urban livelihood activities, including youth’s right to operate informal enterprises free from harassment and evictions.

Most projects funded by the Urban Youth Fund targeted those they considered the most disadvantaged—youth and women who lived in informal and slum areas—with the aim of creating decent employment opportunities for them. There were several specific examples of decent and sustainable youth employment initiatives:

- In Kenya, the TAPEV project offered entrepreneurial and business development training to 49 informal youth workers who engaged in street hawking in Nakuru slums.
- In Liberia, three young women and one man who had graduated from the NAYA project secured formal employment jobs. The three women worked as community secretaries and the man became an internet café assistant.
- In Nigeria, 14 graduates from the FLEP-Club project secured employment through the state government recruitment’s initiative.
- The CYM provided credit to 40 youth who subsequently employed 35 other youth in their businesses. The CYM graduates secured land for their livelihood activities with the assistance of Ward Councilors and the Community Youth Mobilization.

While some project coordinators were able to identify specific examples of sustainable youth employment initiatives, others highlighted the efforts that had partially, if not completely, led to sustainable employment: capacity building; access to monthly income; access to social networks; and access to land, startup capital, materials and equipment. Not all projects fully achieved sustainable employment, but most were able to highlight positive movement in that direction.

## Youth Participants’ Assessment of Results

Like the Project Coordinators, the youth who participated in training were asked for feedback on the outcomes of the UYF-funded project, with a special focus on the benefits that they, personally, had gained from their participation. Specifically, 60 youth participants completed quantitative pre- and post-assessments of their trainings. Their feedback complements the views from the project coordinators and strengthens the conclusions of that analysis.

The youth trained by the projects perceived similar outcomes and benefits as those outlined by the project coordinators, including capacity-building related to employment and general life skills; access to working capital; and creation of employment opportunities. When asked how participation in the Urban Youth Fund project has impacted their lives, 37% (22) of the beneficiaries indicated that the training improved their life and social skills; 33% (20) appreciated the business development skills and start-up capital they received; and 23% (16) said they acquired computer, Information and Communication Technology, and practical job skills. Other beneficiaries cited financial independence and self-employment opportunities as benefits of the practical skills training, as indicated in Table 3 below:

**Table 3: How has participation in the UYF project impacted your life (N = 60)?**

Response Category	Percentage
Improved life and social skills	37%
Offered business development skills and start-up capital	33%
Acquired computer, ICT and practical skills	27%
Made me financially independent	17%

Youth responses revealed that most youth felt that the projects helped them to acquire technical skills such as computer skills and maintenance. They indicated that they had nothing to do after graduating or leaving school and that skills training allowed them to open new businesses or gave them hope to start such businesses given start-up capital. In line with the views from project coordinators, there was a frequent reference to group business creation opportunities following participation in Urban Youth Fund projects. Youth beneficiaries also acknowledged networking and access to financial capital and business marketing opportunities facilitated through UYF projects. Some female voices also pointed out that the project allowed them to acquire life skills and income to support their families and in some cases advance their education.

# YOUTH VOICES

Youths' perspectives on how participation in the Urban Youth Fund project has impacted their lives

"It has given me the courage to face the challenges of a female youth from a poor background in the technology world." – 22 year old female

"The project has also helped me in that, I now use my time to do something that is profitable to me – read. I am able to invest quality time on the farm for a shorter period because I have all the inputs I need... The training the organization offered me in market gardening and record keeping has equally helped me greatly. I am now able to keep farm records. I detail when I sprayed my crops, when it flowers, and all the little changes I see." – 22 year old male

"After the training, I was asked to draw up an action plan for a small scale income generating activity. We did not need to think of borrowing money for anything because all we needed was with us! Since that day, my husband consults me on everything we do. He now sees that I can initiate my own actions and they yield fruits! If not for me and the support we got from [the project], I do not know what would have become of my family. More so, the respect I get from my husband, I probably would never have earned it!" – 27 year old female

"The training helped me to know how to save and invest my profits... come see how my business has grown,"  
– 22 year old female

"They gave me training, that is personal development, business development training, and financial handling training. And they gave me 45000ETB as credit for small business start-up capital." – 24 year-old male

"It has given me a smooth ground to grow to be a community leader and a role model and that it is possible for a female youth to become a technician and trainer." – 22 year old female

"It has given me the power to use my talent to change the life of young people and make them realize their potential."  
– 22 year old male

"It has given me the networking skills. Through the internet, I can meet many people and a lot of information on research." – 20 year old male

"Now am a volunteer with a community-based organization in computer maintenance. ... It has removed me from a dependent to somebody with an income of my own." – 28 year old female

## IMPACT ON EARNINGS

While project participants felt they had benefited from the project, some of the youth also indicated that they were not earning as much as they expected after the training because they did not have a permanent job. When youth beneficiaries were asked whether or not they were earning enough income after the project training, 83% (39) said they were not, and 17% (8) said that they were earning enough income. Youth graduates indicated several reasons as to why they were not earning enough income after graduating from UYF projects. Some reasons cited included that they did not have a permanent job; they were informally employed; they worked part-time; they worked outside the city; their job was not satisfying; they were still in school; and/

After the project, the average salary was approximately the same at \$63 per month for male and female beneficiaries. The fact that the average monthly income of young women and men was approximately the same after the project suggests that young women benefit more from Urban Youth Fund projects.

or that they needed to advance their education to earn more. Since most of the youth beneficiaries indicated that they were not making enough money because they did not have a permanent job, it is possible that low earnings are associated with a lack of permanent or formal employment opportunities, and that having a permanent job is considered a source of higher income.

One interesting benefit for female participants was the equalization of salaries. After the project, the average salary was approximately the same at \$63 per month for male and female beneficiaries. Young women generally earn lower than young men, as young women tend to be concentrated

in low-risk informal activities or home-based enterprises that pay little to no income (ILO, 2002; ILO, 2005). The equalization of salaries among project beneficiaries after the project suggests that young women benefited more from Urban Youth Fund projects. Even though the sample size was small, it is encouraging to see that young women are benefiting economically from UYF projects. Decent work for youth entails closing income inequalities between men and women and the UYF shows positive signs in this direction.

In sum, access to decent work and income was something that the youth had not achieved but clearly hoped for. The challenges they describe highlight some of the fundamental barriers to youth access to decent work and income in low-income communities.

## RESULTS FROM ANALYSIS OF GRANTEE AND COMPARISON GROUPS

To further explore the impact of the UYF program on participants' access to decent and sustainable livelihoods, an analysis was conducted with survey data from 31 grantees that received UYF funding between 2009 and 2011, and a comparison group including 38 eligible but unsuccessful applicants to the 2011 UYF grant. The use of a comparison group—matched with the grantees according to basic characteristics such as project focus areas and goals—helps determine whether project outcomes are a result of the project or whether they are potentially attributable to other intervening factors.

The following differences between UYF grantees and comparison group organizations were observed:

- UYF grantees created slightly more employment opportunities for young women than did the comparison group;
- UYF youth beneficiaries paid slightly more per month for the working space that they used compared to comparison group youth;
- UYF youth beneficiaries earned slightly more per month after graduation compared to comparison group youth;
- UYF grantee cooperatives had an average number of youth members almost double those in comparison group created cooperatives;
- Grantees significantly provided cash loans to youth beneficiaries compared to comparison group organizations;
- Grantee youth beneficiaries significantly secured credit and loans through microcredit schemes compared to comparison group organizations;
- Grantees significantly provided youth beneficiaries with the materials and equipment that the youth needed to start businesses through the project;
- Grantee beneficiaries significantly used shared space with other youth compared to compar-

ison group beneficiaries. Grantees also significantly forged workspace provision partnerships compared to comparison group organizations;

- Grantees focused significantly on entrepreneurship training, resulting in youth beneficiaries who were better prepared to create new businesses and self-employment opportunities after graduation. Comparison group organizations tended to focus on reaching large numbers of youth through inexpensive entrepreneurship advocacy and awareness campaigns;
- Comparison group organizations significantly partnered with national government after their projects were not funded (50% of comparison group organizations partnered with national government compared to 19% of grantees), perhaps due a need among comparison groups that had already been met for grantees through the UYF grant. Interestingly, 37% of comparison group organizations were able to secure funding from other sources, suggesting that they may have been equally capable of creating jobs for youth beneficiaries.

Overall, the above grantee-comparison group findings revealed that UYF grantees had a noticeable impact on youth access to working space, materials and equipment, and the credit and loans for youth-run micro-enterprises. However, access to working space for youth resulted in youth graduates paying higher rentals than those in the comparison group who relied mostly on free vacant lots and public spaces. The use of shared space by UYF beneficiaries did not necessarily lower the costs of land rentals for youth as desired.

Grantees also frequently organized youth beneficiaries into working groups to facilitate access to workspace. As a result, most grantee beneficiaries worked in groups because they created joint microenterprises and acquired workspace from city councils with the assistance of grantees and community members. Inadequate funding may have hindered the ability of comparison group organizations to forge workspace partnerships with community members and city councils. Given that access to workspace is a central physical asset for the urban poor (Brown, 2006; Rakodi & Llyod-Jones, 2002), and that the success of youth entrepreneurs depends on their ability to access secure land and workspace for self-employment activities (Schoof, 2006), the role of the UYF in facilitating this access is an important finding of this research, one that deserves further investigation.

## Challenges Faced by Sample Urban Youth Fund Grantees: Perspectives from Project Coordinators

The concept of youth-led development is a relatively recent one, and as such, the practice of youth-led development is still “under construction” as those in the field continue to learn the most effective strategies and practices, and to identify challenges and the ways to overcome them. The Urban Youth Fund grantees experienced challenges in all phases of their projects: **before** the project started or during the beneficiary recruitment, **during** the project implementation, and **after** the project officially ended. A better understanding of the challenges can help funding agencies find ways to address these challenges in collaboration with youth-led organizations and other stakeholders.

### BEFORE THE PROJECT

#### 1. Negative youth and community attitudes towards projects

The most common challenge faced by most of the grantees before the training started was related to beneficiary recruitment. Project coordinators explained that negative community attitudes toward projects sometimes made it very difficult for them to recruit or reach the intended youth beneficiaries. Youth also sometimes lacked interest in unpaid training offered through UYF projects. Many community members and parents were also ignorant about the proposed projects and how they were to benefit youth. Most of the parents preferred that their children went through formal education and employment as opposed to informal training and self-employment.

Project coordinators explained that negative community attitudes toward projects sometimes made it very difficult for them to recruit or reach the intended youth beneficiaries.

The Organization for Indigenous Youth Initiatives and Sustainability, for example, conducted community outreach and educational campaigns before the project but it was often not very helpful, as described by their project coordinator:

*Despite the preliminary sensitization at the start of the project, some individuals who had the potential to benefit from the project were reluctant to do so on the grounds that they were unsure about the source of the grants. Others thought it was a means of eventually extorting money from them.*

In some cases, youth could not understand the proposed projects at first. This was the case with AISEC-Senegal's Green Young Entrepreneurs Project. Dakar youth doubted that they were capable of launching a successful environmental entrepreneurship project since they had not seen such a project before. The additional time needed for recruitment came at the expense of training time, which had to be decreased.

In short, Urban Youth Fund grantees' ability to recruit the most disadvantaged youth was hindered by uninterested youth and parents' negative perceptions. It was difficult for low-income youth to forgo informal income-generating activities in favor of unpaid training sessions. On the other hand, parents preferred that their children attend respectable formal education as opposed to what the parents considered informal education and less esteemed training through the UYF projects. Extensive educational campaigns by some grantees boosted the recruitment drive but the campaigns unexpectedly required a lot more time than the grantees had anticipated.

## DURING THE PROJECT

### II. Access to land and workspace

Grantees also cited fundamental challenges related to access to urban land or working space for their organizations and youth beneficiaries. Access to urban land was limited for most youth organizations due to high rental charges.

For instance, Youth Partnership for Peace and Development underestimated the costs of renovating its training center and its project was delayed as it awaited funding release to complete the renovations. Even after receiving the UYF grant, it was unable to finish the renovations because it was more expensive than initially budgeted.

Grantees also cited fundamental challenges related to access to urban land or working space for their organizations and youth beneficiaries.

Some organizations used their offices as training venues, which limited the number of youth they could train at any given time. Others rented space to conduct training activities. In some cases, partner organizations donated land for training purposes. However, effective partnerships in land access were lacking in most cases. Access to secure working space was a major challenge also for the youth beneficiaries. The Endurance Youth Association project coordinator described how access to land issues impacted their youth groups:

Access to space has been difficult and expensive for most youth and so far six youth groups haven't been able to secure working space. The six groups are renting expensive working space from private landowners. It is very difficult to have land in Addis and renting a place for business is very expensive. In order to address this problem, we are working with local administration to get a place with a small price from the government in the form of rent.

Clearly, limited access to land and workspace prevented grantees from training all the youth who needed training because they did not have enough space. In addition, youth graduates struggled to launch viable microenterprises because access to urban land was difficult and expensive. In the absence of strong workspace and land partnerships between grantees, city councils, and youth entrepreneurs, access to land will remain a major obstacle to youths' access to decent work.

### III. Irregular youth attendance

Many youth beneficiaries expected a stipend to attend training sessions regularly but often such stipends were not in the budget. Urban Youth Fund projects mostly targeted informal youth pre-occupied with income-generating activities and it was not always realistic for them to attend lengthy unpaid training sessions. The project coordinator of Youth Partnership for Peace and Development explains:

*Some trainees had to drop out completely after being told (contrary to their expectations) that stipends were not budgeted for during the training period. Many trainees who were recruited for the project initially thought that they would be given monthly stipends to sustain them during the training. When later they discovered that this was not to be, some dropped out while others were reluctant to attend regularly. This posed some constraints on the trainers who had to revisit topics covered in their absence just so absentees would catch up. The issue of stipends to trainees remains a challenge because occasionally some trainees have to leave the Centre in search of a living. Sometimes they would be absent for up to two days, causing them to miss out on what is taught at the Centre.*

### IV. City council and community disruptions

City councils were also blamed for disrupting some projects. For example, the metal containers proposed by one project suddenly became illegal in accordance with a new Municipal Assembly by-law. This required a lengthy negotiation process with the council before an alternative site for the project was acquired. In another site, the demolition of slum areas by the government was a major

challenge, especially during beneficiary recruitment.

Unusual challenges also occurred during the implementation of some projects. For instance, ethnic-related community violence disrupted one project, and in another, the beneficiaries ran away with project funds. Harsh weather conditions also negatively impacted one project by reducing the beneficiaries' productivity and sales.

#### **V. Difficulty of working in groups**

Cultural differences among trainees made it difficult for some grantees to train youth from diverse ethnic backgrounds, or from different sectors (such as government and university authorities). These comments from two different project coordinators illustrate this challenge:

*The challenge was that most youth did not want to work in groups, but we expected them to do so in order for them to share resources. It was challenging to convince them to do so. Most of the time the groups quarreled each other and we had to give them conflict management training to avoid this, but still it was challenging.*

*The young female beneficiaries needed to work in groups to improve their business, but they all came from different communities and did not have the capacity to form strong partnerships: only two of the 15 females who got US\$100 start-up loans worked together. Getting the brothel-based commercial sex workers to form quorum was a major setback at the initial stage.*

Forming groups for training or follow up was also difficult because of transportation and lack of connections. In some cases, inadequate public transportation services hindered travel to a common business location. In other cases, there was a lack of connections that would have allowed entrée into informal market associations, thus limiting opportunities for collaboration. All of these factors contributed to the difficulty of working in networks or groups.

### **AFTER THE PROJECT**

#### **VI. Inadequate project funding**

Project coordinators concurred that inadequate funding and business start-up loans hindered youth self-employment and empowerment after the training. The coordinators pointed out that it was not very helpful to train youth when they would be faced with an absence of business start-up capital after graduation. Grantees did not have enough money to provide loans to youth

beneficiaries after graduation.<sup>1</sup> As a result, many beneficiaries worked in groups as a means to pull financial resources together.

In most cases, Urban Youth Fund project activities slowed down after the one-year project cycle or ceased completely once funding ended. Project coordinators reported difficulties in expanding or replicating projects in the absence of continued funding from UN-Habitat or other external sources. As the project coordinator of Endurance Youth Association pointed out:

*Addis Ababa is a very big city and addressing the problem at city level requires a very big intervention. EYA is working only in three WORDAs out of 119. But the HUONY project has really benefited the youth in those WORDAs.*

The one-year funding rule was thought to be inadequate and unsustainable given the need for project expansion and replication. Several projects reported continuing to receive applications after their projects ended because of increased awareness among new youth after the first group of youth graduated. However, they did not have the funding needed to expand the projects as their business model was not self-sustainable.

Some grantees also felt that they needed to offer youth graduates start-up loans and working tools but did not have enough funding to do so. A few projects were still ongoing but with restricted enrollment and brief training sessions. In such cases, projects continued with external donor funding, self-financing from beneficiary loan repayments and limited financial assistance from local partner organizations.

#### **VII. Limited access to start-up capital**

For youth beneficiaries, the major challenge after training was their ability to access loans from banks due to limited collateral and negative perceptions by financial institutions and the community in general.<sup>2</sup> Some grantees sought partnerships with banks and conducted outreach programs to market their projects to community members, banks, and micro-finance institutions, but the impact of the outreach and marketing activities remained to be seen. In some cases, strategic partnerships for project sustainability were completely missing. Access to finance was also a challenge because banks sometimes did not trust youth, and similarly, youth sometimes did not believe enough in themselves, as noted by one project coordinator:

<sup>1</sup> In contrast, several projects budgeted for this, in those cases where the project coordinator and the rest of the core team in the youth group included this as a line item in the project design and accompanying budget.

<sup>2</sup> Research shows that access to finance remains one of the key challenges for young entrepreneurs globally, not only grassroots youth like Urban Youth Fund beneficiaries.

*Banks also don't trust youth and are concerned that youth will use any loans from banks for other things not related to their projects. There is some sense that youth don't have adequate training to manage financial resources and implement projects effectively. Sometimes even after receiving all the training they need, young people also still don't trust themselves—they start something but they can't implement it fast enough.*

In one case, the organization encouraged families and friends to offer collateral to their youth graduates, but most families and friends did not have the minimum collateral required by banks. And even though some grantees gave loans to youth graduates, the loans were still inadequate for some youth businesses:

*The \$2,500 RSSF start-up loan was enough for some businesses such as hair salon and coffee making but it was not enough for woodwork, metalwork and large-scale dairy businesses. Woodwork, metalwork and dairy farming required expensive machinery and inputs. For the dairy business, the RSSF was only enough to buy three cows. We encouraged metalwork and woodwork groups to buy used materials.*

Some reported that it was difficult for youth to repay loans after graduation especially when their businesses were not doing well or when they needed to allocate large percentages of earnings to cover land or space rental costs.

**VIII. Weak capacity for business registration, marketing, monitoring and evaluation**

Some grantees were unable to register, monitor, evaluate, or market their graduates. In response, some graduates worked in informal market areas because it was expensive for them to register their businesses. In many cases, the grantees had insufficient monitoring and evaluation capacity, including a lack of technical skills and knowledge, as well as a lack of time and resources needed to follow up with beneficiaries. This prevented them from being able to track the ongoing activities and impact of the training and job creation efforts.

Overall, most Urban Youth Fund grantees struggled to continue with projects after the UN-Habitat grant, due primarily to insufficient funding. Where projects continued, activities were at a much slower pace due to the decrease in financial resources.

**Project Sustainability Plans and Aspirations**

Despite the challenges to the projects outlined above, including the funding challenges that have slowed grantees' plans, feedback from the project coordinators revealed clearly their aspirations to continue with the projects through expansion, replication, and capacity building. In fact, most project coordinators had ambitious plans to continue with UYF projects despite funding challenges. From the data, it is evident that grantees aspired to expand projects by organizing youth entrepreneurs into cooperatives; collaborating with UN-Habitat; acquiring materials and equipment; fundraising; expanding training centers; employing former graduates; replicating projects; strengthening partnerships and self-financing; strengthening the capacity of youth entrepreneurs for project sustainability through monitoring, evaluation and consultancy services; focusing on specific training programs and components; sourcing external funding for project expansion and replication; and embarking on social entrepreneurship initiatives for project sustainability.

Youth beneficiaries were also asked about their aspirations for the future, related to economic empowerment. Their responses are summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4: Aspirations of Urban Youth Fund beneficiaries**

Aspiration	Percentage (%)
Open own business	48.1
Expand business	11.5
Be self-employed	9.6
Need further training	9.6
Look for a permanent job	7.7
Manage myself	7.7
Support family	3.8
Repay loan	1.9

As illustrated in Table 4, most youth beneficiaries aspired to open their own businesses. However, many of these youth did not have enough startup capital to create viable businesses and self-employment opportunities. This suggests that the need for startup capital, as recommended by project coordinators, deserves a careful consideration by youth-led agencies and stakeholders.

Previously, youth cited the lack of a permanent job as one of the main reasons as to why their incomes after the project were below expectation. The youth aspirations reflect that the creation and expansion of their own businesses, and self-employment, are youth's most preferred ways to enhance their income in the future. For youth-led organizations, this may mean focusing more

on youth entrepreneurship and business management skills training projects. These youth will need adequate entrepreneurship training opportunities for them to create successful businesses and self-employment opportunities.

Comments from project coordinators highlight their future aspirations following the end of their UYF grants:

“No cooperatives have been formed but there is a plan to introduce them as a group to the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Youth Empowerment as a result of an earlier post-workshop advocacy on youth policy. Computer training shall continue to be offered in the computer laboratory because of demand for computer skills from the youth in the project area.”

“UN-Habitat is an organization we would love to work with over and over again; they empower less privileged youth & give hope to the hopeless. We really appreciate their effort...”

“Our project is still ongoing but we have not yet replicated it to other areas; we still want to enlarge the centre to acquire bigger space and also introduce more skills programs such as candle making, soap making, cosmetology, welding, juice and bead making.”

“The project implementation is still on-going. Some of the participants are quite good and will be retained to provide training for the next batch. We are still looking for funding support for the next batch. This will be only a limited amount because the training centre is fully equipped and will not need much money to keep the project going.”

“We intend to continue with the project activities and scale up all its activities to other districts. The project will be self-financed as its credit facility can support its operational costs. However, due to high demand, we will contact other donors who may be interested in seeing its services reach other youth who are in need of its support services.”

Based on the feedback from both grantees and youth beneficiaries, one of the results of the UYF process seems to be that by receiving assistance and experiencing successes, the youth involved develop or sustain hope. This hope is manifested in the plans and aspirations for the future, as shown in the survey results and the comments above: they hope to open new businesses and create self-employment opportunities that would generate income to support their families and repay business loans. Some of them aspired to advance their education, using income from self-employment. The data revealed that the UYF projects, overall, increased youth access to human, financial and social capital in the short-term. In the long term, youth aspired to increase their income by opening and expanding businesses, becoming self-employed, securing permanent jobs and advancing knowledge through further education.

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## CONCLUSIONS

Youth entrepreneurship was the central component of the Urban Youth Fund projects included in this study, and was the focus of this investigation. The youth-led organizations included in this research received one-year grants from UN-Habitat's Urban Youth Fund, as well as capacity-building assistance in the form of project and business management training for project coordinators.

The grantees then offered comprehensive skills training to youth in the form entrepreneurship training, vocational skills, life skills, and on-the-job training. Along with the knowledge and practical skills, youth entrepreneurs also received materials, equipment, startup tools, business management training and mentorship from the grantees. The most common goal of these trainings was the creation of youth employment through the establishment of youth microenterprises and cooperatives. Typically, the grantee organized youth into working groups or cooperatives after graduation. The youth micro-enterprises and cooperatives largely promoted self-employment creation by and for youth, reflected in the fact that few UYF graduates secured formal employment opportunities.

Overall, this study revealed important results and multiple benefits for grantees, for youth entrepreneurs, and for the larger community.

### Grantees

For the most part, grantees were able to overcome the barriers to training and proceeded to offer entrepreneurship skills training, vocational training, and on-the-job training to unemployed and underemployed urban youth. Typically, the grantee also included young women's empowerment as a major component of the training. The youth entrepreneurs trained by grantees worked either in groups or as individuals after the training, depending on training requirements and local circumstances. Grantees often created youth cooperatives that allowed youth beneficiaries to create joint microenterprises and self-employment opportunities.

Successful youth microenterprises and self-employment opportunities often led to project recognition and community appreciation, which in many cases yielded external funding opportunities and partnerships. However, challenges with access to land, materials, equipment and startup loans meant that some youth were unable to start their own businesses or could not work in groups. In that case, they went back to informal employment and home-based enterprises

or remained unemployed. As a result of expensive rental in prime urban locations, many UYF beneficiaries engaged in home-based and informal employment activities after the training.

### Youth Beneficiaries (Youth Entrepreneurs)

For youth entrepreneurs, this study showed that the path to decent livelihood opportunities was lengthy and complicated. Before and during the training, the unemployed and underemployed youth, students, farmers, and self-employed youth experienced fundamental challenges: negative parental and community perceptions; gender biases that discriminated against young women; lack of transparency and miscommunication from grantees; and limited access to land, startup finance, materials and equipment. As previously described, limited access to land and startup finance persisted even after the training. It was expensive for youth to rent workspaces and land for self-employment and joint livelihood opportunities. Access to business loans and credit was difficult for youth entrepreneurs because bank collateral requirements were unrealistic for low-income youth largely drawn from urban slum areas.

The common solution to these challenges around land access involved youth entrepreneurs working in groups, home-based enterprises, and informal employment in undesignated zones. Grantees also sought partnerships with banks, local NGOs, local and national governments and international organizations to enhance youth access to land and financial capital. However, working space and financial partnerships were not enough to facilitate youth access to land and startup finance.

Despite the challenges that they faced, most youth completed the training and engaged in promising income-generating activities. Those youth who did not have an income during and after the training still had high hopes for their future. The major benefits from the training were perceived to be practical training and new knowledge; access to income and financial independence; improved social life; and high hopes for a better life and job.

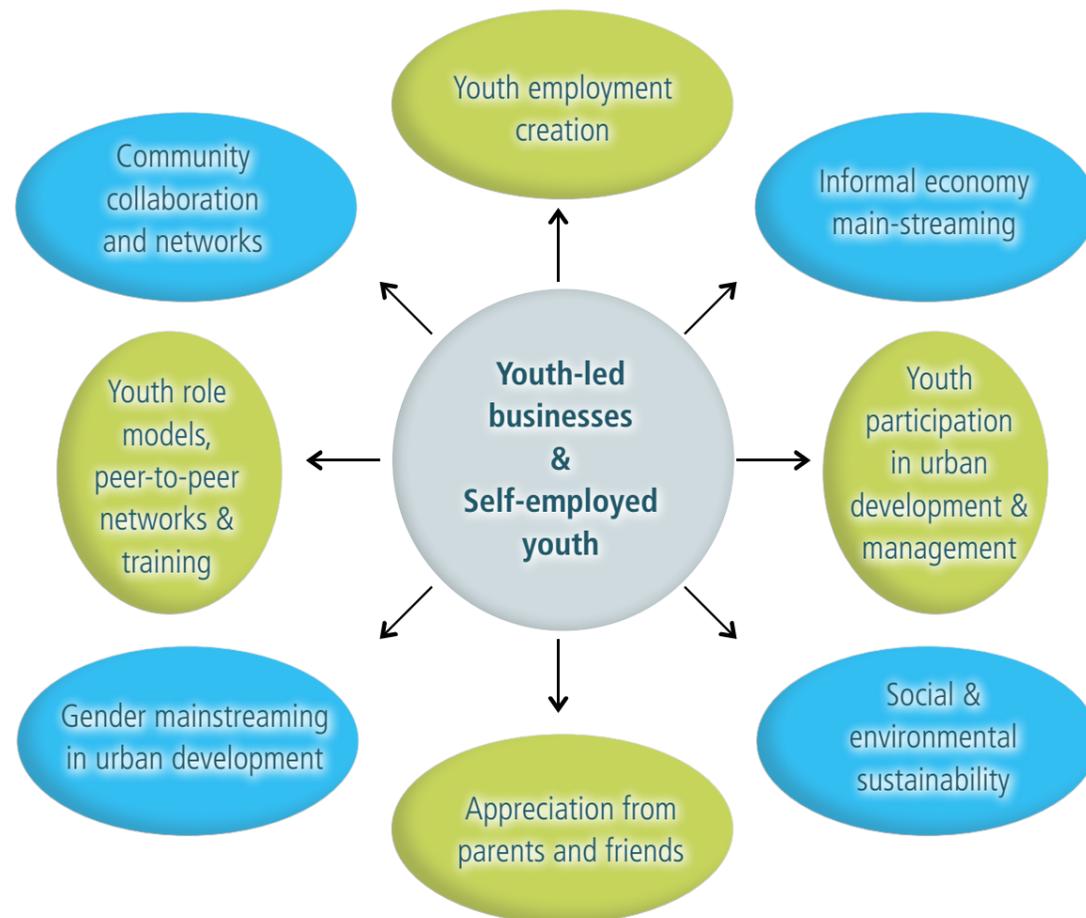
### Community

Youth-led businesses and self-employment opportunities benefited communities in many ways. UYF projects created youth employment opportunities for slum and low-income youth who were previously perceived as being unproductive. Young women previously segregated in training programs also received entrepreneurship, life skills, and vocational skills training. Previously, the youth did not have a decent and reliable source of income and the training was a source of financial independence for them. They previously engaged in precarious informal livelihoods and

often depended on their parents. The UYF projects created decent income-earning opportunities that allowed youth to support themselves and their families. As a result, they received appreciation from parents and friends. In the process, the youth entrepreneurs acted as role models for other community youth.

Just as important, youth-led businesses contributed to urban development through recycling, waste management, housing construction, and agricultural activities. The youth businesses generated community collaboration in youth employment creation as they brought together community members, youth organizations, public and private sectors, local and national governments, and international development organizations. Urban Youth Fund projects also promoted environmental entrepreneurship and sustainability in degraded urban slums and low-income communities. Typical community-level impacts of an UYF project and associated youth-led businesses are depicted in Figure 4 below:

**Figure 4: Typical community-level impacts of an UYF project**  
(based on interviews, final project reports, archival records, and youth voices)



## Challenges

In spite of the grantees’ and youth entrepreneurs’ accomplishments, the path to formal youth employment creation was generally not a smooth or easy one. There were common challenges that challenged the effectiveness of UYF projects. These challenges include:

### NEGATIVE YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

Beneficiary recruitment was a common challenge faced by grantees. Targeted beneficiaries were unable to participate in projects that did not immediately benefit them financially. They were already working in the informal economy where they earned basic income to meet everyday needs. Those who joined the trainings sometimes dropped out halfway, due to financial challenges and general lack of interest. Youth beneficiaries’ parents also preferred formal education to informal entrepreneurship and vocational skills training. A successful beneficiary recruitment drive typically involved an UYF grantee working in close collaboration with youth, parents, and community members. Gender biases also worked against young women’s path to decent livelihoods. Cultural biases favored the education of boys over girls, and some parents strongly opposed the participation of girls in projects. The parents needed extensive educational and awareness campaigns beyond what the grantee resources permitted.

### INADEQUATE LEVELS OF TRAINING

During the training, some youth found out that they needed extensive training beyond what the grantees could offer. As a result, they were not adequately trained to start their own businesses or compete in the job market with formally educated youth. This was particularly true for beneficiaries who received computer and ICT skills training—the grantees only offered them basic training and yet the job market required them to have advanced computer and ICT skills. This complicated their path to decent employment as they acquired basic computer skills that potential employers considered inadequate for a permanent full-time job.

### LIMITED ACCESS TO WORKSPACE AND LAND

Because they did not have enough space to conduct their trainings, most organizations were prevented from recruiting enough beneficiaries. This was a common challenge for UYF grantees based in large urban centers. When land was generally available, the process to acquire land certificates could be long or impossible. Typically, grantees did not own the space that they used for training, but instead used rented private spaces, borrowed spaces, shared spaces, or

space donated by local government. Some organizations also used their office spaces as training venues, which limited the number of trainees they were able to accommodate at any given time. By contrast, grantees that received land donations from local government did not report any challenges in access to land and workspace.

#### **INADEQUATE MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT AND STARTUP CAPITAL**

The materials and equipment used during the training were commonly inadequate because of inadequate or delayed project funding. Access to materials and equipment was a problem both during and after the training; trainees commonly worked in groups to share the materials and equipment. Some grantees received materials, equipment, and startup donations from external sources. Still, access to startup capital was a major challenge faced by youth entrepreneurs. Banks did not trust youth beneficiaries to succeed, and they often required collateral beyond the reach of many beneficiaries. Many youth collaborated to raise the required collateral but they still could not secure enough business loans and credit. Some youth entrepreneurs secured collateral from their parents but those were a privileged minority. Limited access to startup capital also meant that youth entrepreneurs found it difficult to purchase the equipment and startup tools that they needed to create decent self-employment opportunities.

#### **INADEQUATE AND/OR EXPENSIVE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

Low-income people depend heavily on public transportation to and from places of employment (Mbara & Maunder, 1997), but according to many of the participants in this study, transportation to and from project sites was a major challenge. Inadequate and expensive public transportation prevented youth entrepreneurs in some places from working together to offset the challenges of access to land and startup capital. As a result, the path to a decent income and employment became complicated and slow for young entrepreneurs in the absence of reliable public transportation.

#### **WEAK CAPACITY FOR PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Most grantees did not have adequate training in project monitoring and evaluation. They also did not have adequate funding and transportation to track project beneficiaries scattered across a wide geographical space. The common solution was either to track only those that were readily available, or to abandon efforts for monitoring and evaluation altogether. Grantees, themselves, identified this as an area needing attention and recommended strengthened project monitoring and evaluation.

### **Youth access to livelihood resources**

The principal aim of this research was to study the extent which the Urban Youth Fund facilitated youth access to financial, human, physical, social, and natural capital in informal urban economies, and to assess the extent to which youth-led livelihood programs created decent and sustainable youth employment opportunities in low-income urban communities. Part of the study's aim was also to assess the challenges that hinder youth access to livelihood assets and decent employment opportunities. From this analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

At the grantee level, **access to financial capital** was the fundamental benefit gained through the UYF program, even though, in most cases, the grant was not enough to meet the overwhelming demand for training and did not match the level of training that illiterate and under-educated youth needed. In some cases, grantees sought additional external funding to increase youth enrolment and to offer extended training when it seemed necessary. Some grantees succeeded in securing external funding opportunities, but most did not. As a result, most grantees recommended that UN-Habitat should provide long-term funding.

At the youth beneficiary level, grantees assisted youth in securing employment and entrepreneurship opportunities during and after the training. Some youth-led businesses also employed other community youth and created income-generating activities for non-beneficiaries as a result. In the process, youth gained access to monthly income and financial independence. Many youth beneficiaries secured startup finance and loans through revolving funds and cooperatives. However, a majority of youth beneficiaries also lost income during the training, given that they were previously self-employed but could not continue with income-generating activities while they attended unpaid training sessions. After the training, it was also difficult for youth to access business loans from banks because they lacked adequate collateral. Some grantees formed partnerships with commercial banks and others created revolving funds that offered startup capital to youth entrepreneurs, but these efforts were not enough.

At the grantee level, **access to physical capital (land and workspace)** was mostly enhanced through expanded workspaces, access to urban land, and project materials and equipment. Through the UYF, most youth-led organizations expanded their workspaces to accommodate training activities and to allow their offices to be used as incubators for youth-led business after the trainings. However, as the analysis repeatedly shows, access to workspace and land was a serious challenge for most grantees. Strategies such as accessing land through local government donations, sharing space with other organizations, borrowing space, and renting private spaces did not completely eliminate this challenge at the grantee level.

At the youth beneficiary level, grantees collaborated with community members and local governments to facilitate youth access to land. Youth beneficiaries from major cities such as Port Harcourt, Nairobi, Kampala, Bamenda, and Freetown, experienced land and workspace access challenges the most. As a result, some of them went back to informal economic activities and home-based enterprises (which were most often associated with female beneficiaries). Access to materials and equipment was also a challenge because grantees did not have enough funding to supply enough materials and equipment to meet the demand. Most youth shared the materials and equipment during the training and shared startup toolkits after the training. Youth beneficiaries also addressed the problem by forming working groups that allowed them to share working tools and equipment. However, transportation challenges often hindered the extent to which beneficiaries could work together. Inadequate public transportation facilities prevented some beneficiaries from working in groups.

At the grantee level, **access to social capital** was initially promoted through training workshops that brought youth-led organizations together. However, networking among grantees was not evident beyond the workshops initiated by UN-Habitat. As a result, most grantees desired more exchange and networking opportunities. They felt that exchange experiences could provide unique opportunities to learn about external funding opportunities and potential partners for their projects, and they recommended that UN-Habitat promote international exchange experiences to allow them to learn from other youth-led organizations.<sup>3</sup>

At the youth beneficiary level, access to social capital was facilitated through grantee- and youth- initiated microenterprises and cooperatives. Some grantees organized youth into working groups to facilitate access to land, materials, equipment, startup tools, and bank loans. They also organized youth into working groups to facilitate the sharing of ideas, and as a result, they boosted youth social capital. For some grantees, organizing youth into working groups was not possible, either because youth rejected the idea due to cultural differences, or because logistics did not allow for these working groups. But in the cases where grantees were successful, the youth cooperatives and enterprises brought youth from diverse backgrounds together and strengthened cultural ties and friendships in the process.

At the community level, youth-led businesses brought together community youth, youth organizations, NGOs, international organizations, and private and public actors. The youth businesses acted as a meeting point for community members, which enhanced community networking. In some cases, youth-led businesses motivated local and national governments to collaborate with

<sup>3</sup> Programs with this goal have been initiated since the grantees included in this study concluded their projects.

youth-led organizations in the area of entrepreneurship and employment creation. However, youth projects and businesses were often disrupted by community and political unrest. There were also city council-initiated evictions that disrupted youth businesses. These negative factors destroyed social ties and networks, and hindered youth access to social capital.

## **Youth access to decent and sustainable employment opportunities**

*Decent work* for youth implies that youth are engaged in permanent full-time employment with freedom of association, rights, social protection, and adequate income (ILO, 2002; ILO, 2005). Decent work for youth also implies that youth employment activities are conducted freely without fear of harassment and eviction. The Urban Youth Fund targets grassroots youth groups, offering skills training to youth in informal settlements and under-educated youth, including youth who are not employed in decent work, but rather are engaged in insecure, low-paying, part-time, seasonal, and intermittent informal jobs. In addition, these youth do not have strong social networks to boost livelihood initiatives and fight for better wages and working conditions.

Through the UYF, youth beneficiaries received practical skills and business creation knowledge; access to monthly income and financial independence; access to social networks and acquaintances; and access to land, startup capital, materials, and equipment. Even those who did not have decent income during and after the project still had high hopes for a better job, income, and social life. Over 75% of youth entrepreneurs expected a full-time and permanent job through self-employment and microenterprises. As a result, decent work was something most youth did not have, but clearly hoped for. The analysis has shown that a typical youth entrepreneur's path to a decent and sustainable livelihood opportunity was complicated and long, but not impossible.

This study has shown that Urban Youth Fund grantees and youth entrepreneurs are positively moving towards decent employment opportunities. In spite of the challenges, there were promising partnerships in the area of land access and financial capital. In addition, the creation of cooperatives brought diverse youth and community members together. However, the role of the cooperatives and microenterprises in doing more than simply meeting the immediate needs of youth entrepreneurs was not evident. Decent and sustainable youth employment implies the full participation of youth in local and national economic decision-making processes. This study found no concrete evidence suggesting that youth cooperatives, groups, and microenterprises played a significant role in this regard. If the trend continues, the path to decent employment and livelihoods will remain incomplete. An encouraging finding was that most youth expected a higher income in future through permanent and full-time employment. There is no question that

this could be achieved, but the potential hindrance from the fundamental challenges discussed throughout the study should not be underestimated.

As this study has shown, youth entrepreneurs have the innovation, enthusiasm, and determination to achieve decent and sustainable employment at any cost. International development organizations, community members, public and private sectors and NGOs are uniquely positioned to harness and scale up youth initiatives towards productive and decent employment opportunities. UN-Habitat has clearly shown that this is possible; other international organizations, private and public sectors must now follow suit. The evidence presented in this research suggests possibilities for youth livelihood development stakeholders to craft evidence-based policies and programs in this direction.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADVANCE YOUTH-LED DEVELOPMENT

### Part I: Recommendations from Project Coordinators

Through the process of this research, grantees had the opportunity to reflect on their projects—both successes and challenges—and through that process, to develop recommendations for other youth-led organizations. Project coordinators shared strategies they had used, or would use in the future, to overcome some of the significant challenges they faced in implementing youth livelihood projects in low-income contexts, and revealed important “lessons learned” for other youth-led organizations planning to implement similar projects. These lessons learned are outlined below.

#### I. CONDUCT DETAILED PRE-PROJECT STUDIES

One important lesson suggested by project coordinators for other youth-led organization was the need to conduct detailed pre-project studies to avoid duplication and to also fully determine the resources that the project will require. In addition, grantees felt that a pre-project analysis could prevent some of the challenges experienced during the implementation of the projects. As one project coordinator recommended: “Young people should always carry out needs assessments before planning begins and young people must be involved in every step of project development.”

One example of how a pre-project assessment contributed to the success of a UYF project was that of Family-in-Need Trust of Zimbabwe (FITZ). FITZ launched its integrated urban youth-led development project after a thorough review of youth development challenges in the City of Mutare. During the baseline survey, they discovered that most youth were not participating in the housing and construction sector and most urban development projects. They obtained data from council showing that only 2% of the youth population in city was on the housing waiting list. Equipped with enough data and knowledge, FTZ made housing construction by and for youth a major component of its study. It also engaged in extensive educational programs educating youth about housing and unemployment challenges in the city and the need for youth-led action to address the challenges.

#### II. HAVE A SOLID BENEFICIARY RECRUITMENT PLAN

Another important lesson that emerged from discussions with project coordinators was the need

for youth-led organizations to have a clear beneficiary recruitment plan. This was considered important in making sure that the proposed project would actually benefit those who were the intended beneficiaries. Many grantees considered that a clear recruitment plan was necessary given the negative youth and community attitudes towards projects. As noted by one project coordinator, community leaders sometimes interfered with the beneficiary recruitment process in the absence of a concrete recruitment plan:

Grantees should be careful in the selection of beneficiaries particularly when they are assisted by community leaders who would like to influence the selection of less qualified beneficiaries because they are related to them. Procedure for selection should be clearly indicated before selection starts to avoid imposition of unqualified people for training. Otherwise attempts may be made to sabotage the project.

Grantees incorporated a variety of strategies in their recruitment plans, including: public announcements on a community radio followed by in-person visits to slum areas where targeted youth lived; parent and youth education/information programs; community announcements and distribution of applications; and counseling sessions for potential youth participants. Getting parents involved not only supported youth participation in the training, but in one case, the organization found that these parents were then more likely to act as bank loan guarantor for young people after graduation.

### **III. BE SENSITIVE TO YOUNG WOMEN'S NEEDS**

Project coordinators also suggested important lessons for youth livelihood projects targeting young women. For example, given young women's segregation and the nature of husband-wife relations in some developing countries, coordinators suggested that projects targeting young women should work closely with community leaders. As one coordinator suggested:

Young women are engaged with the permission of their husbands. We approached some of the community members to allow us to train their women in confectionery making to which they agreed. Community members, especially the elders who participated in monitoring and evaluating the confectionery training have also approached us to train their women who have no livelihood skills in baking cakes.

Others suggested that youth organizations should focus more on projects that seek to promote gender equality, and should address the fact that women are often confined to home-based enterprises because of cultural practices that restrict women's access to public spaces.

### **IV. DEVELOP STRONG TECHNICAL, FINANCIAL AND BENEFICIARY PARTNERSHIPS**

Another important lesson was the need for youth organizations to develop partnerships, especially with local authorities, Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) and established organizations for technical and capacity strengthening. One project coordinator advised youth organizations to avoid unhealthy competition:

Our advice to other youth groups or youth led is specialization to areas of their strengths and avoid unhealthy competition and undercutting. Partnership and collaboration is the way to success and bigger impact.

Grantees also mentioned partnerships with relevant stakeholders, partners, and youth beneficiaries, and they encouraged other youth to be persevering, open-minded and to carefully listen to the needs of beneficiaries. One coordinator suggested:

If possible, form a planning group for the project that includes representatives of the key stakeholders and let this group stay throughout the project, meeting to review from time to time. This also comes with costs and should be budgeted for.

### **V. ADDRESS PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES EARLY AND THROUGHOUT**

Coordinators stressed that youth-led organizations should pay particular attention to project sustainability from start to finish. This might involve the replication of projects to maximize their impact. As another project coordinator suggested, sustainability might also involve paying more attention to the strengthening of businesses in the project proposals:

My recommendation to organizations implementing similar projects especially those from the developing world, where fundraising is a handicap, is that they should ensure that funding for business empowerment forms part of the initial project funding request. This will go a long way in sustaining the interest and performance of trainees for maximum impact.

### **VI. BE INNOVATIVE, ENTREPRENEURIAL, SELF-RELIANT AND PROACTIVE**

A powerful lesson—and rather general youth-led development recommendation—came from one coordinator who urged youth to be innovative, entrepreneurial and proactive for them to achieve sustainability in their projects:

As young people, we need to know how to face the world issues and that there are many ways to find solutions. The surest way to accomplish our objectives is to identify and implement innovative projects. Youth must give more attention to identify the best way to help us face world issues. The most important thing to know today is youth must be engaged, proactive, and develop an entrepreneurship spirit. Be an entrepreneur if you want to make positive impact in your society. Entrepreneurs must be the ones responsible for the forward progress that we make as society. The world needs more projects and that's why we need more youth entrepreneurs. And the best way to use money efficiently is to make a big positive impact with a small amount of money. If we want to impact sustainability, we must think globally and act locally.

Many projects developed innovative solutions to the challenges they faced during implementation, which resulted in reaching more youth and/or having a greater impact with the youth trained. This innovative and proactive approach to problem solving is a skill that must be nurtured.

## **Part II: Recommendations from the Research**

In addition to the input and recommendations from project coordinators, this study was also able to examine the process of developing and implementing youth-led economic empowerment activities from multiple perspectives and in multiple regions. This section presents recommendations that were derived from the analysis of this larger base of data.

The funding that UN-Habitat provided to the 41 grantees included in this study allowed youth-led agencies to impart vital practical, technological, and life skills; business creation skills; and startup capital. Having acquired the practical skills and business knowledge they needed, about 30% of youth graduates opened up new businesses and became self-employed, or secured formal employment in public and private sectors. Even though others were not yet employed, they had high hopes for a better and well-paying permanent job. The 60 beneficiaries surveyed had plans to open new businesses and self-employment opportunities that would generate income to support their families and help them repay startup loans. A few others aspired to advance their education using income from self-employment and to secure permanent full-time employment in the long-term.

What some of these grantees may need now is additional finance to allow them to expand projects, replicate, and scale successful interventions. A fraction of the 41 grantees are already expanding previously funded projects but they have been constrained by limited financial resources. It has not been easy for grantees to secure external funding opportunities even though funding opportunities may exist for youth with the most innovative ideas.

Other youth-led organizations and funding agencies should now consider replicating and scaling up the projects that these youth-led groups have started with funding from UN-Habitat's Urban Youth Fund. Immediate partnerships with banks or Micro-Finance Institutions (MFIs) and local governments remain crucial in the creation and sustainability of more—and more youth-led—businesses.

This research also showed that most Urban Youth Fund grantees created youth networks, discussion forums, and cooperatives to facilitate youth entrepreneurship and employment creation. These networks and cooperatives have an important role to play in facilitating youth participation in urban economic development and sustainable livelihoods. There is limited evidence suggesting that this is already happening. Urban development planners and managers must engage youth networks and representative NGOs to integrate the interests of youth entrepreneurs in land use planning processes. Special committees can be set at the local government level to represent the interests of informal youth in urban development and management. At the policy level, national and local governments and youth-led organizations have an important role to play in promoting a positive view of youth in community development.

These networks may be the key to overcoming many of the challenges that emerged in this study, including financial needs, issues of access to land and workspace, participation, and negative community attitudes. They may also be effective strategies for responding to the recommendations provided by grantee organizations, outlined above. Specifically, results from this study suggest that the actions related to networks and partnerships, recommended below, may address some of the most salient challenges facing youth-led economic empowerment initiatives.

### **I. INVEST IN BENEFICIARY RECRUITMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

Findings from this study suggest that youth organizations should involve parents and community members to ensure that the most disadvantaged youth are identified to benefit from projects. Community involvement proved important in facilitating youth access to land in the UYF projects. The support from community members also ensured that youth-led businesses were culturally acceptable and that community members acted as reliable customers for youth products. Gaining full community support demands extended entrepreneurship education and project awareness campaigns targeting parents and youth beneficiaries.

## II. DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN WORKSPACE AND FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

Youth organizations should aim to partner with local governments and city council especially if their projects promote youth entrepreneurship and self-employment, all of which require youth entrepreneurs' access to secure land or workspace during and/or after the training. In some cases, access to land or working space for UYF beneficiaries was facilitated by sub-city government units or was negotiated with municipal authorities.

## III. LINK YOUTH GROUPS, ASSOCIATIONS AND COOPERATIVES TO WIDER DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND NATIONAL LEVEL

Youth organizations act as important avenues for youth voice in community development processes. Sustainable livelihood interventions imply that micro-level processes are linked to macro-level processes to ensure that higher policy making is informed by local realities and projects. For example, one project linked their youth groups to local banks to facilitate access to financial capital. The same linkages should be promoted at the local and national government level to promote youth participation in youth livelihood policies and programs. Workers—including youth—in informal economies in urban Africa and elsewhere are increasingly organizing themselves to defend their right to decent livelihoods (Chigunta et al., 2005; Hansen & Vaa, 2004; Kamete, 2010). The UYF projects included in this study created microenterprises and cooperatives, which have the potential to enhance youth access to banking and microfinance institutions. Grantees have an important role to play in linking youth groups and cooperatives to wider institutions at the local and national level.

## IV. IMPROVE URBAN PLANNING THROUGH INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES

Rapid informal and youth economic activities have many implications for planning practice. In countries and regions where customary land tenure systems persist, planners must work with community members and chiefs to promote harmonious urban development and management. Planners must educate community members and chiefs about existing land use regulations and policies to ensure that developers and entrepreneurs receive development permits before construction begins. The ability to work with community members demands flexibility on the part of planners in terms of land use and zoning regulations. Zoning regulations allowing mixed-use developments could, therefore, minimize land use-related conflicts by allowing informal economic activities in residential, commercial and industrial areas. Spatial planners should also upgrade informal economic activities as a means to integrate them into the mainstream urban economy.

## V. ADVOCACY FOR YOUTH-LED DEVELOPMENT

Youth in general, and youth in informal economies and settlements in particular, are often viewed as rebellious elements in society who are bent on breaking the law. As a result, youth entrepreneurship is rarely supported by local and national governments. Youth-led organizations, agencies such as UN-Habitat, and other stakeholders must therefore continuously advocate for the institutionalization of informal youth activities. This can be done through partnerships in urban basic service provision such as recycling and waste management, and can start as an informal arrangement between city authorities and youth entrepreneurs. For example, models exist in which city authorities informally delegate door-to-door waste collection and recycling in informal settlements to informal youth waste collectors, who engage in door-to-door waste collection in slum areas and deliver the waste to a central location for formal city council collection (see, for example, Katusiimeh et al., 2013). Full recognition of informal economic activities requires continued advocacy and awareness campaigns by youth-led agencies, UN-Habitat and other stakeholders. Youth-led development advocacy should also focus on the need to upgrade successful youth economic activities, micro-credit provisions, formal-informal arrangements, and long-term alliances between youth entrepreneurs and formal urban service delivery systems.

At the community level, local and international NGOs must educate community members and parents about young people's creativity and potential. From the experience of these UYF projects, evidence showed that:

- NGOs can launch advocacy campaigns to educate parents about the value of youth economic opportunities in poverty reduction and community development efforts;
- Projects can invite community members to graduation ceremonies to promote a positive view of youth among community members;
- Community education programs can convince many parents to allow girls to enroll in skills training projects; and
- Alumni networks that offer skills training to community youth and parents may result in community members viewing the program's graduates as role models for other youth.

These recommendations, including the development and nurturing of strategic networks and partnerships, can not only foster more positive perceptions of youth at the community level, but in so doing, can support the youth-led initiatives for economic empowerment and the broader goal of sustainable urban development.

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## SUMMARY

Findings show that youth entrepreneurs implemented youth-led businesses that positively transformed youth organizations, youth members, families, and communities. Informal youth entrepreneurs received business creation skills that allowed them to create youth-run enterprises and cooperatives. In setting up small enterprises, the youth not only generated self-employment opportunities but they also supported family members financially, employed other youth, and created avenues for youth participation in urban economic development. The Urban Youth Fund generated self-employment opportunities, promoted youth self-reliance and financial independence, enhanced youth confidence, and yielded appreciation from parents, friends and community members. The creation of youth-led microenterprises, groups, forums, cooperatives, and youth resource centers boosted youth access to social capital by providing a forum for youth entrepreneurs to share ideas, network, and collaborate. The youth-run enterprises also attracted community mobilization in the area of sustainable youth employment creation, urban service delivery, and community development. Some youth entrepreneurs also acted as role models for positive community change by working as community volunteers and offering informal skills training to friends, family members, and peers.

Financial and non-financial support from UN-Habitat clearly fostered youth creativity and innovation, but positive youth livelihood outcomes were sustained when youth entrepreneurs collaborated with parents, community members, and local governments. Sustainable youth-led livelihoods resulted from positive interactions between youth entrepreneurs and trainers, families, peers, community leaders, and local government officials. Youth-led agencies imparted knowledge and business creation skills that youth needed to confidently create self-employment opportunities; family members and friends provided the moral support needed to succeed in youth skills training and self-employment opportunities; peer support networks acted as a forum for young people to come together to discuss community challenges, and as a platform for youth role models to educate other youth on pressing youth development challenges; and local governments provided important income-generating resources such as land.

Youth-led livelihood projects enhanced youth access to land, practical and social skills, networking, and financial resources that boosted entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities. Innovative, enthusiastic, and dedicated youth entrepreneurs collaborated to overcome many barriers and launch youth-led microenterprises that brought together youth, community members, and private and public actors.

However, challenges remain: negative youth and community attitudes, inadequate funding, and limited access to land, workspace, and startup capital all hindered youth access to decent livelihood opportunities. Potential youth beneficiaries and community members held negative views on projects and that discouraged many youth from participating in training. Other youth beneficiaries were also preoccupied with day-to-day survival issues and found it hard to attend training sessions regularly. Those who graduated from programs found it difficult to secure working space for decent livelihood activities and often lacked adequate collateral to secure bank loans. Similarly, grantees struggled to continue with the projects after the UYF support ended, due to limited internal and external funding opportunities. Ongoing projects proceeded much slower than expected and with minimum enrollment considering the overwhelming demand; in other cases, some projects had ended completely.

Youth-led agencies must develop and strengthen partnerships with city governments to enhance youth access to land and workspace. They should also link youth entrepreneurs to wider community decision-making processes to promote micro-macro linkages for integrated poverty reduction efforts. Sustainable youth-led economic empowerment also demands accountability through constant monitoring and evaluation of funded projects to promote learning and evidence-based policy-making. Further, urban planners and managers must harness youth innovation and creativity through policies that enhance rather than diminish youth livelihood assets.

In general, findings depict promising youth-led economic empowerment projects but they also underscore the importance and urgency of multilevel, collaborative, long-term funding for project expansion, replication, and sustainability. Sustainable youth-led livelihood interventions demand that funding agencies, youth organizations, community members, and youth entrepreneurs work together to identify and implement poverty reduction initiatives, and that these initiatives tap into the potential of public and private policies and programs to facilitate, rather than hinder, positive youth-led action and development.

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## ANNEX 1: FULL LIST OF URBAN YOUTH FUND GRANTEES AND PROJECTS INCLUDED IN THE ANALYSIS

### Africa Region

Grantee Name & Location	Project Name	Project Focus	Grant Size	Total Youth Trained Post-Project	Total Jobs Created Post-Project
Endurance Youth Association (EYA), Ethiopia	Helping Urban Opportunity Neglected Youth (HUONY), Addis Ababa	Employment, entrepreneurship, youth women empowerment	\$18,328	53	53
Community Youth Mobilization (CYM), Zambia	Community Youth Empowerment Project (CYEP), Kabwe	Employment, entrepreneurship, youth women empowerment	\$6000	120	48
Tears Group Kenya (TGK), Kenya	Tears Art and Peace Empowerment Village (TAPEV), Nakuru	Theatre and arts, Employment, entrepreneurship youth women empowerment	\$8,000	161	49
Kaswasha Housing Cooperative Society (KHCS), Kenya	Kaswasha Youth and ICT for Development, Nairobi	ICTs, jobs and skills training, employment, environment	\$20,000	200	70
Sustainable Development for All-Kenya (SFA-Kenya)	Use Solar Save Lives	Energy	\$20,000	250	No data
Youth Action International –Uganda (YAI-Uganda), Uganda	Mengo Youth Vocational Skills Training, Kampala	Employment, entrepreneurship, youth women empowerment	\$5,000	200	80

Youth Partnership for Peace and Development (YPPD), Sierra Leone	Sustainable Livelihood For Peace and Development (SLPD), Freetown	Vocational skills training, Employment, entrepreneurship, youth women empowerment	\$25,000	40	40
AISEC-Senegal	Green Youth Entrepreneurs (GYE), Dakar	Environmental awareness/education, Employment, entrepreneurship	\$4,500	97	50
Organization for Indigenous Youths Initiatives and Sustainability (ORGIIS), Cameroon	Recycling of Used Car Tyres for Job Creation, Bamenda	Recycling, waste management, job creation, entrepreneurship,	\$5,000	50	20
Youth Outreach Program Cameroon (YOP-CAM), Cameroon	Initiative for Youth Employment and Development (IYED), Bamenda	Employment, entrepreneurship, youth women empowerment	\$18,000	50	18
Friends of the Habitat (FOH), Nigeria	Sustainable Youth Empowerment, Maiduguri	Employment, entrepreneurship, youth women empowerment	\$22,544	81	60
Girls to Mothers Initiative (G2Mi), Nigeria	The Girls to Mothers Project (G2M), Port Harcourt	Young women empowerment, advocacy and awareness, entrepreneurship	\$13,750	20	15
Action Foundation Common Initiative Group (AFCIG), Cameroon	Abakwa Urban Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (ABU-YES), Bamenda	Employment, entrepreneurship, youth women empowerment	\$20,000	96	96
Love Planet, Nigeria	Poverty Alleviation among Disabled Youth, Kano	Vocational skills training, Employment, entrepreneurship, youth women empowerment	\$12,000	30	30

National Youth Action, Inc. (NAYA), Liberia	Good Girls Co-operative Pastry Project, Buchanan	Young women empowerment, employment, entrepreneurship	\$21,000	120	No data
Youth Harvest Foundation Ghana (YHFG), Ghana	Seamstresses Training Enterprise Project for Upper East region (STEP UP Project).	Employment, entrepreneurship, youth women empowerment	\$20,000	25	25
Action for Sustainable Development (AS-UDEV), Ghana	Youth in Micro-Enterprise for Change (Y-MEC)		\$23,000	86	25
Friends in Life Education Peer Club (FLEPC-Club), Nigeria	Arise for Better Life Youth Turning Point Project in Owerri.	Employment, entrepreneurship, youth women empowerment	\$4,700	100	23
Forum for Community Change and Development (FOFCOD), South Sudan	Youth and Skills Development Project, Juba	Entrepreneurship & Employment Creation	\$18,000	120	35
Family-In-Need Trust of Zimbabwe (FITZ), Zimbabwe	Integrated Urban Youth Development Project (IUYD), Mutare	Employment, entrepreneurship, job creation, job and skills training, youth participation, governance, best practices	\$15,000	140	30
Bright Concepts Initiatives (BCI), Nigeria	Creating an Enabling environment for youth of Gwandu	Employment, entrepreneurship,	\$18,500	42	42
Help Initiatives for People Organization (HIPO), Zimbabwe	Sustainable Youths Empowerment Project, Harare	Employment, entrepreneurship, youth women empowerment	\$20,000	80	77

## Asia and the Pacific Region

Grantee Name & Location	Project Name	Project Focus	Grant Size	Total Youth Trained Post-Project	Total Jobs Created Post-Project
HOPE'87, Bangladesh	Technical/vocational training for employment of disadvantaged urban youths, Dhaka	Vocational skills training and employment creation	\$22,500	400	35
JAAGO Foundation, Bangladesh	FILL IN THE GAPS, Dhaka	Skills training and entrepreneurship	\$24,190	460	23
SAO SARY FOUNDATION, Cambodia	The People's Kitchen Chba Morn	Skills training and entrepreneurship	\$10,000	60	15
Empower Pacific, Fiji	Income Generation and Capacity Building for Youth Sex Workers in Fiji, Lautoka	Skills training and entrepreneurship	\$14,500	15	14
Community Development Centre (CDC), India	Promotion of Micro Concrete Roofing [MCR] Tiles through skill training of Youths, Balaghat	Environment, Housing, and Entrepreneurship	\$15,200	40	7
ROSI FOUNDATION, India	Empowerment of urban Dalit/saltpan workers youth in livelihoods for assuring social and economic security, Vedaranyam	Skills Training – ICT and young women empowerment	\$22,000	300	No data

Grameen Jankalyan Evam Punarjara Samiti [GJPS], India	Promotion of Nature Friendly Low Cost Housing Techniques, Balaghat	Environment, Housing, and Entrepreneurship	\$5,000	20	20
Bright Idea Community (BIC), Gunung kidul, Indonesia	Kampong Biogas a Village Energy Independent as a Professional Firm by Urban Youth Citizen	Energy, skills training	\$14,500	60	5
YPMMD West Celebes Majene, Indonesia	Entrepreneurial Opportunities for School dropouts	Skills training and entrepreneurship	\$12,000	40	10
PA "Disabled Youth Movement", Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	Urban employment agency for young people with disabilities	Skills training and employment creation – youth with disabilities	\$9,500	150	35
Paschim Paaila, Kathmandu valley, Nepal	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Led Youth Empowerment in Two Urban Poor Communities of Kathmandu Valley	Water and sanitation, skills training and employment creation	\$16,000	162	42
Rising Youth Forum, Gujranwala, Pakistan	Empowerment of youth through establishment of entrepreneurship in dawn market	Skills training and entrepreneurship	\$13,000	30	23
Association of Locally-Empowered Youth in Northern Mindanao (ALEY-NM), Dipolog City, Philippines	Disadvantaged Urban Youth Entrepreneurship, Organic Vegetable Production, Food Processing and Marketing Project	Agriculture, skills training and entrepreneurship	\$20,000	400	70

Community Self Improvement Foundation for Technical Cooperation (COSI)	Entrepreneurship for better Livelihood of Urban Youth, Kurunegala	Health, skills training and entrepreneurship	\$15,000	50	None—project improved the quality of 50 existing jobs
Youth Development Organization (YDO), Taiz, Yemen	Youth Economical Empowerment	Skills training and entrepreneurship	\$24,820	30	30

### Latin America and the Caribbean Region

Grantee Name & Location	Project Name	Project Focus	Grant Size	Total Youth Trained Post-Project	Total Jobs Created Post-Project
ADEL, Pentecoste, Brazil	Youth Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Urban Agriculture	Urban agriculture and entrepreneurship	\$17,500	80	35
Asociación Nueva Vida Pro-Niñez y Juventud (ASONVIPRONYJ), El Salvador	Promoting social and labor business ventures Youths Paleca Neighborhood, Ciudad Delgado	Entrepreneurship, self-employment, youth networks	\$19,000	20	20
FUNDACION ICHURI, La Paz, Bolivia	Entrepreneurship education and training for disadvantaged youth	Education and training, entrepreneurship	\$16,000	50	50
Asociación Femenina de Acción Social (AFAS), Juliaca, Peru	SAYARI WAYNA	Entrepreneurship and employment creation	\$18,500	48	48

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## ANNEX 2: ABOUT THE URBAN YOUTH FUND

Globally, 85 percent of the world's young people live in developing countries. An increasing number of these young people are growing up in cities. In many cities on the African continent, more than 70 per cent of inhabitants are under the age of 30. Young people, especially girls and women, are the most vulnerable to social problems caused by unemployment and poverty. With more than 200 million youth living in poverty globally, there is a clear need to meaningfully engage and support youth.

UN-HABITAT, which regards youth as a major force for a better world, supports young people in the drive to alleviate poverty. The Habitat Agenda commits governments and UN-HABITAT to work in partnership with youth and empower them to participate in decision-making in order to improve urban livelihoods and develop sustainable human settlements. Governments that oversee UN-HABITAT in 2007 adopted a resolution to establish the UN-HABITAT Urban Youth Fund to promote the poverty reduction aims of Millennium Development Goals. The Fund's goals are to:

- Mobilize young people for better youth-related policy formulation;
- Help governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and private-sector organizations better understand and respond to youth concerns;
- Support youth information networks;
- Pilot and demonstrate new ideas on employment, governance, adequate shelter, and secure tenure;
- Share and exchange best practices;
- Promote vocational training and credit mechanisms for entrepreneurship and employment;
- Promote gender mainstreaming in all urban youth matters.

The Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-Led Development, as it is officially called, was launched on 4 November 2008 at the fourth session of the World Urban Youth Forum in Nanjing, China. The Fund directly targets registered youth-led NGOs, CBOs, youth welfare or support groups, and

student organizations run by and for youth aged 15-32 years, working in urban settings (defined as towns and cities with at least 10,000 inhabitants) in developing countries. These competitive grants are open to youth-led organizations from all parts of the world, including Africa and the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Through grants and other types of support such as training and mentoring, the Fund develops the capacity of urban youth-led organizations to implement community projects that contribute to sustainable urbanization and economic prosperity. Since inception, the Fund has supported close to 300 youth-led projects in at least 65 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Through this work, the Fund also aims to increase awareness among policy makers and donors of the need to mainstream youth in development policies and strategies. By undertaking research on best practices in youth-led development, the Fund is also working to create a greater awareness of the urgent need to ensure that youth concerns are integrated into national and local development policies and strategies.

## ANNEX 3: SELECTED PROJECT PROFILES

### **Agência de Desenvolvimento Econômico Local (ADEL), Pentecoste - Brazil**

#### **PROJECT PLAN**

Name of the Project: Youth Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Urban Agriculture

Grantee Size: \$17,500

Partnership: Federal University of Ceara—its public school teachers, researchers and professors collaborated in the setting up of a Horticultural Center in the Urban Agriculture Center's experimental farm. The professors and teachers shared agricultural skills and knowledge with ADEL trained youth entrepreneurs.

Project idea: Training of 80 young people in urban agriculture, agro-ecology, cooperatives, associations, entrepreneurship and strategies for performance in regional networks. Establishment of a technical support center for urban agriculture in Pentecoste. Technical assistance for productive groups of 40 young rural entrepreneurs. Creation of a regional association of young urban farmers to organize a local cluster of production and marketing by youth groups.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Challenges: Mobilization of low-income young men and women in the suburbs of Pentecoste and Apuiaries was a time-consuming process. The most severe drought in 58 years in the Brazilian semiarid regions lowered incomes and yield for small-scale farmers. A planned agricultural fair had to be postponed due to poor harvests.

#### **SUCSESSES**

This project allowed and motivated the creation of the first regional association of urban young farmers in the region. The alliance and the approximation of university students, professors and researchers with local young farmers was another positive outcome from the project as the Horticultural Center is strategically located inside the experimental farm of the Federal University of Ceara.

#### **PROJECT RESULTS**

Project Coordinator/Manager: Francisco Wagner Gomes de Sousa

Beneficiaries: 80

Jobs created: 35

Description of jobs: Vegetable production, an earthworm culture and solid waste composting.

Monthly income: No data

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY**

Adel is implementing the Veredas Fund. It is a private fund, created and managed by Adel to provide micro-loans to rural young entrepreneurs in the region, so they can start and improve their rural businesses. Those young farmers that were served in this project have access to loans to develop their business plans – developed during training workshops, with assistance from Adel's technical team. Adel has built partnerships to go on and expand its Rural Youth Entrepreneurship Program. And urban young farmers will be participating in the program along with other young entrepreneurs from the region. ADEL will manage the Horticultural Center as an important focal point for farmers' training and development of solutions to enhance farming techniques in the region. The Center's management will be managed in collaboration with the Federal University of Ceara.

## Association of Locally-Empowered Youth in Northern Mindanao (ALEY-NM), Dipolog City - Philippines

### PROJECT PLAN

Name of the Project: Disadvantaged Urban Youth Entrepreneurship, Organic Vegetable Production, Food Processing and Marketing Project

Grantee Size: \$20,000

Partnership: Water, Agro-forestry, Nutrition and Development Foundation (WAND)— provided logistical, training and office support. Local government units and line agencies of the government such as the department of agriculture and the department of technical education also provided much needed technical assistance.

Project idea: Promoting entrepreneurship among 400 youths in urban slums in Dipolog City using the Competency-based Economics Formation of Entrepreneurs or CEFE and focusing on producing organically-grown vegetables using vermin-compost as fertilizer and then food processing and marketing for neighborhood markets.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Challenges: No major challenge experienced—dedicated project partners facilitated smooth implementation.

### SUCSESSES

A 2,000 square meter vegetable seed production area was established in Canibungan, Dipolog City with the aim of self-sufficiency in vegetable seed production using local seed sources. Various vegetables are being grown including vegetable seeds of legumes, okra, tomato, eggplant and moringa. Funding for vegetable production and marketing was set aside from the original project grant.

### PROJECT RESULTS

Project Coordinator/Manager: Jed Christian Sayre

Beneficiaries: 400

Jobs created: 70

Description of jobs: Gardening, vegetable production and marketing

Monthly income: No data

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

ALEY-NM has expanded the project to the province of Leyte particularly in Ormoc City, promoting urban gardening with Typhoon Haiyan survivors. The expanded project has reached almost 2,000

youth beneficiaries and their families promoting vegetable gardening as food security measure after 98% of farming activities were wiped out during by Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013. ALEY-NM is tapping local youth survivors as volunteers/barefoot vegetable technicians.



Right: Beneficiary family receive vegetable seedlings in Leyte Province after Typhoon Haiyan  
Left: Recyclable seedlings trays ready for distribution

### ALEY-NM VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION



Above: ALEY-NM volunteers distributing seedlings to Typhoon Haiyan Ormoc City

*"This initiative is proving to be a huge success. Our plan now is to establish a small training center farm for vegetable seed production in Leyte Province."-- Jed Christian Sayre, Executive Director and Project Coordinator*

© ALEY-NM

## “Paschim Paaila,” Kathmandu Valley - Nepal

### PROJECT PLAN

Name of the Project: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Led Youth Empowerment in Two Urban Poor Communities of Kathmandu Valley

Grantee Size: \$16,000

Partnership: Environment and Public Health Organization (ENPHO)—signed a MOU with paschim paaila and youth clubs to establish a revolving fund for youth in Chayasal and Pathivara. Provided technical assistance in project monitoring and evaluation.

Project idea: Addressing youth empowerment through the water, sanitation and hygiene promotion and waste management in two urban poor communities of Kathmandu Valley. households. About 400 youth targeted.

### IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Unfavorable monsoon weather conditions delayed the installation of rainwater harvesting system. It was also difficult community for youth and volunteers to commit themselves to the project during school days. Upgrading WASH status at community level was a challenge because of deteriorating sanitary conditions, and government-directed evictions disrupted some planned activities towards the end of the project

### SUCSESSES

Installed rainwater harvesting and ground water recharging system has reduced water scarcity in Chayasal. In Pathivara, rainwater harvesting with bio-sand filter installation enhanced the quantity and quality of water. Establishment of safe drinking water zones and hand washing encouraged hygienic practices among students. A revolving fund was established in both communities to facilitate youth access to business loans for WASH-related entrepreneurial initiatives. One Biosand filter with two taps was constructed for safe drinking water at school including one tap for hand washing allowing around 120 students to have access to safe drinking water and hand washing.

### PROJECT RESULTS

Project Coordinator/Manager: Giri Raj Khatri

Beneficiaries: 162

Jobs created: 42

Description of jobs: Vermin-composting, water management, installation of rain water harvesting system after the training, and plumbing.

Monthly income: No data

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

Empowered youths from Pathivara Squatter community organized Deusi/Vailo program (traditional cultural program played in Tihar festival) to raise funds to install a Biosand filter in the community. They raised NRs. 170, 000 (\$1700) and installed a Biosand filter with a capacity of 2000 liters with technical support from Paschim Paaila.

The youth have also formed a drinking water consumers committee to manage the water distribution system. More than 150 households are benefiting from this initiative and getting safe drinking water. In the process, Paschim Paaila supports the institutionalization of the water distribution system and raising NRs. 55 per household every month for biosand filter maintenance and filtered water distribution

*“While implementing the project we realized that just working for one year is not sufficient for a healthy community. However, it creates clear steps and show the way for making a healthy community.”— Project Coordinator*

### PASCHIM PAILA YOUTH-LED WASH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM IN PICTURES



Left: 2000 liters Biosand filter at Pathivara Community

Right: Clear view of the installed 2000 liters biosand filter

*"We were compelled to drink unsafe and bad smelled iron contaminated water, these days I must say that we are getting safe drinking water after installation of this filter"- Mr. Binod Subba, youth beneficiary from Pathivara Community*



Youth beneficiaries singing informative songs during Deusi Vailo fund raising program

*"This is just one example and still there are a lot to be done as these kinds of problem exist in many places of Kathmandu valley. Paschim Paaila is always committed for the development of the positive initiation of the youth." -- Buddha Bajracharya, Paschim Paaila Network Coordinator*



Youth performing cultural Dance during deusi /vailo Fund raising Program

© Paschim Paaila

## HOPE'87 Bangladesh, Dhaka - Bangladesh

### PROJECT PLAN

Project Name: Technical/vocational training for employment of disadvantaged urban youths

Grant Size: \$22,500

Partnership: None

### PROJECT IDEA

Providing vocational and entrepreneurship skills training to 612 disadvantaged urban youth in Dhaka including supporting self-employment opportunities for 50 vulnerable youths. Skills training would include computer operation, electrical work, car driving, carpentry, welding, and tailoring. It planned to facilitate entrepreneurship by providing seed grants. The plan was also to enhance youth employment creation through internships, youth networking and collaborative workshops with private and public stakeholders.

### IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

- Driving and carpentry classes could not be conducted because most students were not interested in taking the classes.
- Frequent power cuts disrupted some training sessions.
- Scheduled meetings with government, NGOs, public and private actors could be carried because of conflicting schedules and political unrests in Dhaka.

Successes:

- 400 urban youth and students completed various skills training courses.
- A youth network was formed for trainees and graduates to network and share experiences .

### PROJECT RESULTS

Project Coordinator: Mr Ekram Ullah

Beneficiaries: 400

Jobs created: 35

Description of jobs: computer repairs, tailoring and sewing

Monthly income: No data

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

The project was officially implemented from 2010-2011. Following the project's conclusion HOPE' 87 has sustained the same project. Skills training has continued: 210 trainees completed the computer course in 2012 and 2013; 73 trainees have completed the electrical house wiring

course in 2012 and 2013; 209 trainees completed the sewing operating course in 2012 and 2013; and 11 trainees completed the welding course in 2012 and 2013. A total of 503 youth graduated from the various skills training courses as a result. Financial support was received from Austria to meet some project expenses in 2012.

From the 503 graduates in the 2012/2013 period, seed money was given to 6 successful unemployed urban youth. Two out of the six trainees have used the seed money to open a small tailoring shop, two others opened a small electric house wiring shop, and the remaining two opened a small computer shop. Four graduates from the welding course have secured employment in the Middle East. HOPE' 87 also recently organized various youth events, including an art and painting competition, and mobilized youth participation in International Youth day and International Disaster Day

#### HOPE'87 BANGLADESH PROJECT IN PICTURES



Computer training in progress



Trainees' art compilation



Trainee working at dockyard



Cleaning campaign, International Youth Day 2013

© HOPE'87 Bangladesh

### Empower Pacific, Lautoka - Fiji

#### PROJECT PLAN

Name of the Project: Income Generation and Capacity Building for Youth Sex Workers in Fiji

Grant Size: \$14,500

Partnership: The Pacific Rainbow\$ Advocacy Network—received support from Empower Pacific to encourage and strengthen the delivery of services for sex workers, by sex workers.

#### PROJECT IDEA

Employment and skills development support to young sex workers including interview and business skills; access to business loans; and employment support through CV writing, job applications, and networking with employers and companies.

#### IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES:

No challenges reported

#### SUCCESES:

- 14 youth sex workers were given loans to establish a small business. All of the recipients also received business skills training and ongoing support to establish their businesses. The young women received educational support and training from Empower Pacific Field Officers in Sekoula to complete the skills training and secure employment after the training.
- Empower Pacific facilitated the registration of the sex worker group Pacific Rainbow\$ Advocacy Network as a Youth Club under the Fiji Ministry of Youth and Sports, have registered a Tax Invoice Number and have opened their first bank account.

#### PROJECT RESULTS

Project Coordinator/Manager: Kim Tilbury

Beneficiaries: 15

Jobs created: 14

Description of jobs: Produce and poultry farming, canteens, and market stalls

Monthly income: No data

#### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

The Pacific Rainbow Advocacy Network has been successful in three funding applications for which they have written and applied for independently. Funding to expand the project has been secured from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), and Mama Cash Fund – Red Umbrella Fund.

## Bright Idea Community (BIC), Gunung kidul - Indonesia

### PROJECT PLAN

Project Name: "Kampong Biogas" a Village Energy Independent as a Professional Firm by Urban Youth Citizen

Grant Size: \$14,500

Partnership: Yayasan Bakti Insan Mandiri

Project idea: Optimizing cattle manure's potential by building 13 complete biogas unit installations to directly benefit up to 60 villagers. This biogas installation would act as a complementary source of energy for cooking instead of gas tanks and firewood. The waste from biogas installation is used to fertilize plants and enhance farming activities.

### IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES:

It was sometimes difficult to convene all villagers together because of conflicting schedules. This was complicated by limited time BCI had to fully communicate project ideas and plans to potential beneficiaries. There were also transportation challenges and lack of commitment by some beneficiaries, some of whom were students committed to finishing their studies. Frequent rains also slowed down outdoor biogas installations

### SUCSESSES

Five local citizens were trained in biogas installation, maintenance and troubleshooting. The five skilled team members provide technical assistance and troubleshooting to villagers after the project ended. After the project ended, the demand for biogas installations by villagers was very high and some of them were willing to pay up to 3 million rupiah for one installation which was higher than the 1.5 million rupiah prize for a single biogas installation.

### PROJECT RESULTS

Project Coordinator/Manager: Muhammad D. Aziz

Beneficiaries: 60

Jobs created: 5

Description of jobs: Biogas installation, technical assistance, and troubleshooting

Monthly income: No data

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

BCI expects the project to continue with the demand, support and interest of the local people. The five skilled local people trained through the project will continue to guide villagers in future biogas installations. BCI is planning to replicate the project in other places and to eventually become a consultant organization in renewable energy, especially biogas technology.

## Youth Harvest Foundation Ghana, Bolgatanga - Ghana

### PROJECT PLAN

Name of the Project: Seamstresses Training Enterprise Program in Upper East Region (STEP UP program)

Grantee Size: \$20,000

Partnership: Bolgatanga Municipal Assembly, National Youth Authority, LESDEP, Dressmakers & Tailors Association, National Board for Small Scale Industries

Project idea: Providing entrepreneurial skills training to 25 young seamstresses in Bolgatanga to enable them to set up profitable businesses. Skills taught include basic business and financial skills critical to build the young women's self-confidence and business independence. The 25 young women had previously completed a three-year basic training in dressmaking.

### IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Access to land for the training center and the sales shop was difficult after changes in the by-laws of the Bolgatanga Municipal Assembly prohibited use of containers in the Central Business District. There was also frequent breakdown of machines that needed constant repairs because the girls were not used to electric machines. Four girls dropped out of the training to run independent shops or after securing opportunities elsewhere. Project budget was constrained by inflationary prices and the need to hire expensive external trainers. Some trainees also lacked enthusiasm; others needed unbudgeted accommodation close to the training.

### SUCSESSES

All 25 young can now use electric sewing machines for dress making in place of time consuming manual sewing machines. They can also now operate knitting, embroidery and over lock machines to which they had never had access before. All of 25 seamstresses were gainfully employed both at the Step Up workshop and at the sales centre after the training. Fifteen of the young women were ready launch independent businesses after soon after the training.

### PROJECT RESULTS

Project Coordinator: Abigail Adumolga

Beneficiaries: 25

Jobs created: 25

Description of jobs: The young seamstresses design and clothing and accessories such as handbags, wallets and laptop bags. All products are made with Ghanaian materials that are bought in Kumasi, in the Ashanti region. With these materials, the seamstresses make unique designs in a workshop where machines and other tools are available to transform the materials into all kind

of clothing and accessories. Products are sold across Ghana.

Monthly income: No data

#### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

STEP-UP women have acquired a new training center and sales shop inside a Craft Village in central Bolgatanga. They have remodeled the center, which is being used as workshop and showcase room for visitors. The young seamstresses have also received Reproductive Health and Sexual Rights Training to enhance their family planning knowledge. To enhance their business knowledge, they also visited the Daborin Single Mothers Association—a successful women-led cooperative that harvests, processes, and sells rice and shear butter in Zuarungu.

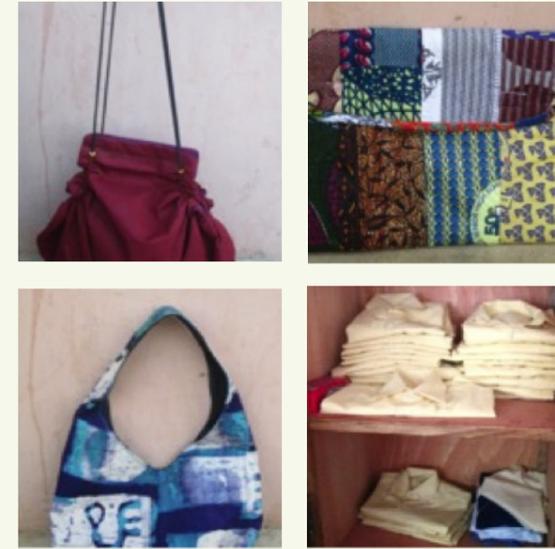
#### STEP-UP PROGRAM IN PICTURES



Remodeling the newly acquired STEP-UP Centre



Seamstresses at work



Sample STEP-UP products



Some Bolga Girls Designs

©Youth Harvest Foundation Ghana STEP-UP Program

## **Endurance Youth Association - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

Project name: Helping Urban Opportunity Neglected Youth

Grantee size: \$18,328

### **CONTEXT**

The Endurance Youth Association (EYA) is a non-profit organization based in Ethiopia whose mission is to empower disadvantaged urban youth. The EYA is determined to create decent livelihood opportunities for Ethiopia's youth, who make up 74% of the total population. With support from UN-Habitat's Urban Youth Fund, the EYA launched the Helping Urban Opportunity Neglected Youth (HUONY) Project to train unemployed youth and support their livelihoods in three of the poorest sub-cities in Addis Ababa. In those three WORDAs, EYA recruited beneficiary youth aged 15-35 years in accordance with the African Youth Charter and the Ethiopian National Youth Policy. The objective of HUONY project was strengthening the capacity of unemployed youth groups through continuous training and capacity building for income generation through the "Responsive Seed Sponsorship Fund (RSSF). The RSSF provided seed money, with flexible repayment arrangement and minimum collateral, to successful micro enterprises initiated by Opportunity Neglected Youth (ONY) groups.

### **PROJECT RESULTS**

The HUONY beneficiaries accessed working space mainly through the assistance and permission of WORDAs. The WORDAs prepared small working spaces or shades, which were then given to organized HUONY youth groups. The EYA collaborated with WORDAs to facilitate access to markets and business licenses for individual and youth beneficiaries. HUONY youth worked mostly in groups and that made it easier for them to get start-up loans from EYA and to share knowledge and skills. EYA gave youth groups \$2,500 business start-up loans through the RSSF and the loan was interest-free. All of the 25 young women beneficiaries have accessed credit from EYA through the RSSF. Eighty youth groups that started in 2010 were repaying the RSSF loan. The coffee making group members had doubled their income within two years. They started with a \$2,500 RSSF in 2010 and their capital reached \$5,500 in 2012 and had repaid 98% of the RSSF.

### **ORGANIZATION CAPACITY AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY**

The EYA linked ONY groups with well-resourced and influential organizations such as governments, CSOs, private businesses, technical and vocational colleges, pro-youth citizens and Ethiopians in the Diaspora. In this regard and through the HUONY, the EYA partnered with Live

Addis, ISD, Emanuel Development Association, and the Ethiopian Department of Transportation. The organizations were all working on various youth issues and they shared experiences, knowledge, and expertise with EYA. The success of the HUONY project saw international organizations such as Cordaid, CIDA, and Finland Embassy funding the project after UN-Habitat. The HUONY has been effective and ongoing since 2009 and the EYA planned to replicate the project to other WORDAs.

Source: Skype interview with Project Coordinator, 2/06/2014

The last three years of HUONY project is really effective and EYA plans to continue at larger scale i.e. reach other WORDAs and increase the number of youth beneficiaries in the coming year.

## Youth Action International, Kampala - Uganda

Project name: Mengo Youth Vocational Skills Training Project in Kampala, Uganda

Grantee size: \$5,000

### CONTEXT

Youth Action International (YAI) is an international nonprofit organization that works to alleviate children and youth poverty in Uganda and other east African countries. It provides education, health care, and economic empowerment for children and young people living in post-conflict settings. In Uganda, the YAI-Uganda works with youth living in slum areas of Kampala, mostly those in the Kisenyi, one of the largest slum areas in east Africa. With funding from the Urban Youth Fund, YAI-Uganda in collaboration with the Mengo Youth Development Link, launched the Mengo Youth Vocational Skills Training Project (MYVST) targeting Kisenyi slum youth aged age 10-32 years. They recruited beneficiaries who included migrant youth from rural areas and other urban centers and others migrated from neighboring countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Somalia, and Eritrea. Some project beneficiaries came from child-headed families, others were orphans or single parents, living in Kisenyi slum.

### PROJECT RESULTS

Through the MYVST Project, they trained youth in wood carving, paper beads making, tailoring, and tie-dye material making. After the training, youth were trained in business skills including business management, marketing, planning and customer care. MYVST graduates were also awarded a UGX150,000 (\$80) business startup loan. YAI and its partner entered into an agreement with youth that required youth graduates to repay a minimum of UGX10,000 (\$5) depending on the viability of their businesses. The project focused more on disadvantaged young women, and 140 young women and 60 young men have since benefited from the project. Of those 120 youth that first graduated from the project in 2010, 40 worked in groups, 10 worked as individuals, 20 were attached to different youth development experts working in various fields, and 10 remained at the centre where they worked as tutors and on product marketing tasks.

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

The MYVST Project has been highly respected and recognized in Kampala and Uganda at large. Recently, YAI-Uganda and its partner launched a soccer training academy that facilitated regional youth networking and collaboration in the youth development field in east Africa. In support of the project the Kampala City Authority gave them UGX3,000,000 (\$1500) to boost the computer training program. The Ugandan Ministry of Youth and Children also embraced and promoted their work and Tool Aid UK donated sewing machines, typewriters, sewing machines, and wood

carving machines to the centre and they used the tools to set up a tool bank that was readily accessible to trainees and graduates.

The MYVST Project was still going even though they were yet to replicate it to other slum areas. They planned to expand the training to increase enrollments and they also expected to introduce new training programs such as candle making, soap making, cosmetology, welding, juice and bead making. They needed supplementary funding from external sources and they were actively engaged in fundraising and local and international networking.

Source: Skype interview with Project Coordinator, 2/15/2014

## Friends of the Habitat, Maiduguri - Nigeria

Project name: Sustainable Youths Empowerment through Skills Acquisition and Advocacy

Grantee size: \$22,544

### CONTEXT

Over 23 million Nigerian youth are currently unemployed and the youth unemployment rate is over 28%. The daily lives of urban youth in Nigeria are characterized by violence, crime and poverty. Frequent strikes by teachers at institutions of higher learning constantly disrupt proper youth education. Despite the unbearable employment and security plight of youth in Maiduguri, most youth continue to engage in multiple livelihood activities. With support from the Urban Youth Fund and in an effort to address youth livelihood challenges, the Friends of the Habitat (FOH) launched the Sustainable Youth Empowerment Project (SYE) in Maiduguri. The project sought to empower young men and women with vocational and livelihood skills that would keep them busy and away from political and ethnic related conflicts.

The SYE Project brought youth from diverse cultural backgrounds in an effort to promote peace, tolerance, and co-existence.

### PROJECT RESULTS

Through the SYE, youth beneficiaries were taught several skills including repairing and servicing small petrol engines; refurbishing old or scrap metal petrol generators for resale; baking cakes, meat pies, doughnuts, and making fruit juices such as mango juice, lemon juice, guava juice and mixed fruit juice. Most of those trained through the project were from the slum areas including five male and nine female orphans. Most of the beneficiaries were former political thugs, who without the skills imparted through the SYE, could have been easily manipulated by politicians back into political and ethnic violence.

Through the project, all trainees and graduates were introduced to a microfinance bank based in Maiduguri and 11 beneficiaries secured loans from the bank. The first loan amount was for up to 10,000 naira (\$63). Upon repayment, the beneficiary could apply for a higher loan amount with given successful business or collateral.

The bank loans allowed many of computer training graduates to create self-employment opportunities that also benefited family members, friends and communities. Some graduates even went back to school using savings from their businesses. Overall, 40 male and 41 female youth directly benefited from the project.

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

The equipment and facilities purchased during the project were all in good shape and that allowed the SYE Project to continue after the UYF grant. They planned to train around 400 youth, at a cost of about \$34 per trainee, for the period 2012-2014 and using the same old and functioning equipment and facilities.

Source: Skype interview with Project Coordinator, 2/20/2014

## Youth Partnership for Peace and Development, Freetown - Sierra Leone

Project name: Sustainable Youth Livelihoods through Vocational Skills Training

Grantee size: \$25,000

### CONTEXT

Youth in post-war Sierra Leone, especially those living in remote areas such as the Makeni region face serious unemployment challenges. Most Sierra Leone youth have little or no education. Those youth with some education, mostly primary education, find it extremely hard to secure any meaningful employment in urban areas. In response to worsening youth unemployment in the Makeni region, the Youth Partnership for Peace and Development (YPPD) launched the Sustainable Youth Livelihoods through Vocational Skills Training (SYLVST) project financed through the UN-Habitat Urban Youth Fund. The SYLVST sought to offer vocational skills training to youth and young women at no charge. Through the SYLVST, several young women enrolled in the training compared to young men (80% female and 20% male). In February 2011, there were 32 young women and eight young men SYLVST graduates. All of the 40 youth who graduated from the project were running their own businesses, mostly in pairs or small groups based on their places of residence. The idea of working in groups was first suggested by youth trainees and YPPD has since embraced the group approach as a means to promote tolerance, facilitate access to loans from microcredit schemes through combined collateral, and to allow youth—old and young, an opportunity to share skills and experiences.

### PROJECT RESULTS

Even though access to working space has been a challenge for youth graduates over the years, YPPD has eased the problem by allowing youth graduates to operate their businesses at the training center as they work in collaboration with YPPD to secure access to land elsewhere. YPPD has also improved youth access to land by inviting community members to graduation ceremonies, which resulted in some community members suggesting and offering workspaces for youth graduates. The YPPD also made recommendations to the Makeni City Council to have the City Hall leased for youth skills training and employment activities after graduation. They reached an agreement with the council that allowed them to use the City Hall for graduation ceremonies and they were hopeful that more council driven land access opportunities for youth were on the way.

Even though it was difficult for SYLVST graduates to access business loans or credit due to stringent repayment requirements, YPPD partnered with organizations such as BRAAC and

Sierra Leone Microfinance Trust (SLMT) to facilitate young people's access to business loans. Through YPPD's partnership with BRAAC and SLMT, some youth secured \$50 start-up loans with flexible repayment arrangements. YPPD also forged partnerships in the Northern Province involving DFID, UNDP and local Civil Society Organizations. They partnered with UNDP in the United Nations Millennium Campaign—an anti-poverty initiative targeting unemployed youth. And they worked with the DIFD and grassroots CSOs through the Stand Up and Take Action Campaign—a worldwide initiative to mobilize and encourage youth to fight poverty in their communities.

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

The SYLVST was ongoing with funding from the Mano Menima Development Foundation. The YPPD also recently launched the "Empowering them for a Lifetime" Campaign as a means to scale up the project, with particular focus on vulnerable young women in post-conflict Sierra Leone. To this end, an online fundraising campaign was launched to raise \$5,000 toward "Empowering them for a Lifetime" campaign.

Source: Interview with SYLVST Project Coordinator, 3/7/2014

## Community Youth Mobilization, Kabwe - Zambia

Project name: Community Empowerment Fund

Grantee size: \$6,000

### CONTEXT

Most youth in Zambia currently work in the informal economy where little or no skills training is required. Through funding from the UN-Habitat Urban Youth Fund, Community Youth Mobilization (CYM) launched the Community Youth Empowerment Project (CYEP) aimed at offering a range of vocational skills training to poor youth working in the informal economy. The CYEP was designed to help youth with zero income. After the training, the incomes of most graduates doubled since they did not have any regular source of income before the project training.

### PROJECT RESULTS

CYEP graduates accessed land for carpentry activities with the assistance of Ward Councilors and CYM. Ward Councilors negotiated with municipal authorities to facilitate youth's access to working and trading spaces. In contrast to adult entrepreneurs who paid \$50 land rental per year on average, youth entrepreneurs trained through the CYEP did not have to pay for the land that they accessed through Ward Councilors. The CYM submitted quarterly reports to Ward Councilors and that improved youth access to working spaces and also CYM's relations with Kabwe City Council. Of all the youth who graduated from CYEP, five working groups have been formed. The youth graduates usually started their businesses as a larger group but split their groups into smaller groups along the way as capital permitted.

Through the CYEP, CYM trained young women in dress making, food production and catering services. They trained young males in carpentry and housing construction. Some young women graduates secured business loans from the Entrepreneurship Support Fund (ESF) ran by CYM. A maximum of \$400 was provided to graduates with the most innovative business ideas after graduation. The \$400 startup constituted about 60% of the required total startup capital requirements and most graduates secured the remaining 40% from other sources easily. The young women who secured business funding through the ESF started tailoring and dress making enterprises, whereas some graduates launched successful housing construction, carpentry and computer training enterprises.

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

CYM partnered with the UK-based Tools for Self Reliance (TSR) to facilitate the shipment of training tools from UK to Zambia. The CYM also partnered with Kara Counseling, which helped

in the various skills training programs. The Zambian National Bank has also partnered with CYM to facilitate business training and opening of bank accounts for youth entrepreneurs. There was also a strong partnership between Ward Councilors and CYM in the area of secure land acquisition, product marketing, and business licensing for the CYEP graduates.

Recently, the CYM expanded the UN-Habitat funded CYEP and the project has since been replicated in two other districts beyond Kabwe. The rapidly growing youth empowerment project was renamed Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) in acknowledgment of the positive impact it had on youth and the Zambian community at large.

Source: Interview with CYEP Coordinator, 3/9/2014



*"After the training,*

*I was asked to draw up an action plan for a*

*small scale income generating activity. We did not*

*need to think of borrowing money for anything*

*because all we needed was with us! Since that day,*

*my husband consults me on everything we do. He*

*now sees that I can initiate my own actions and*

*they yield fruits! If not for me and the support*

*we got from [the project], I do not know what*

*would have become of my family. More so,*

*the respect I get from my husband, I probably*

*would never have earned it!"*

*—27 year old female*

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