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## Yes Youth Can! - Central (YYC-C)

First Annual Report  
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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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ACK	Anglican Church of Kenya
AYT	Africa Youth Trust
AOTR	Agreement Officer Technical Representative
CBF	County Bunge Forum
CBO	Community Based Organization
CES	Civic Engagement specialist
COP	Chief of Party
DO	District Officer
DC	District Commissioner
DYO	District Youth Officer
GoK	Government of Kenya
ICC	International Criminal Court
ID	Identification document/card
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organization
MC	Mercy Corps
MCI	Making Cents International
MoGCSD	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development
MoYAS	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NYC	National Youth Council
NYF	National Youth Forum
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
PEV	Post-election Violence
PM	Program Manager
PO	Program Officer
TOT	Training of Trainers
TSU	Technical Support Unit
USAID	United States Aid for International development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VSL	Village Saving and Loans
YADEN	Youth Art Development & Entrepreneurship Network
YDCs	Youth Development Coordinators
YEETs	Youth Economic Empowerment Trainers
YVTs	Youth Village Savings & Loans Trainers
YYC-C	Yes Youth Can – Central
YYC-N	Yes Youth Can – National

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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Yes Youth Can! (YYC) is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Its main objective is to strengthen the capabilities of youth organizations in Kenya's Central Province to be agents of positive change in their communities. The program empowers young people and grassroots youth organizations to achieve a greater voice in national policy making and create new livelihood opportunities. YYC takes an integrated approach that includes community mobilization, civic engagement, and economic development.

To achieve this goal, Mercy Corps and our partners in Central Province have developed a series of integrated activities that work towards four objectives:

- 0) Mobilize youth into village Bunges;
- 1) Support youth to exercise a greater voice in local and national affairs;
- 2) Increase youth productivity, employment opportunities, and income; and
- 3) Increase young women's access to social, political, and economic opportunities.

The original Yes Youth Can – Central (YYC-C) Cooperative Agreement covered just two out of the 29 constituencies in Central Province: Juja constituency in Kiambu County and Gatanga constituency in Muranga County. Following discussions with USAID, the program was expanded to 15 constituencies covering Kiambu and Muranga counties.

During the reporting period, Mercy Corps held discussions with key stakeholders in the province that included the Provincial administration, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS), and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development (MoGCSD), who were to play an important supporting roll out of the program. However, the program's initial introduction most youth and other leaders was accompanied by a lot of misinformation, due to earlier comments that it was a revolution to overthrow the government. During the first year, the program focused on building confidence and understanding among youth and other stakeholders while also changing perceptions of the program.

In order to promote partnerships with local institutions, Mercy Corps entered into a sub-agreement with YADEN (Youth Arts, Development and Entrepreneurship Network), a local organization with youth networks in the region, to facilitate the implementation of YYC activities in Juja and Gatanga constituencies.

### **Program progress**

Central Province contains 500,000 at-risk youth, out of a total youth population of 759,216 youths aged 18-35 years, spread across an estimated 1,882 and 1,462 villages in Kiambu and Murang'a counties, respectively. To establish a constituency for the program, objective zero was introduced to mobilize and establish village structures for youth empowerment. Mercy Corps and its partner have directly reached 78,205 youth through YYC-C activities, and a further 163,000 more "at risk" youth have been reached indirectly through *barazas*, outreach campaigns, radio shows, sports tournaments, and other youth activities, bringing the total number of youths reached this year to 241,205. Of the number directly reached, a total of 31,171 have joined 1,128

## Village Bunges.

To legitimize their operations and to tap into existing opportunities created by the government and the private sector, registration with the MoGCSD for the Bunges was necessary. However, due to the negative publicity the program received early on, the Bunges were not popular with the registration office and the process started on a very low note. Stakeholder meetings with the relevant offices eased the process.

In December, Mercy Corps organized two County Bunge Forums (CBFs). A total of 994 youth attended the two CBFs: 537 youth in Kiambu, and 457 youth in Murang'a. The purpose of the CBF was to elect a CBF board that is representative of the village Bunges in terms of gender balance, ethnic balance, persons with disability and regional representation. These bodies have played a crucial role in mobilizing fellow youths and taking initiative to strengthen the operations of the Village Bunges. The county boards elected their executive officers and nominated a youth per each constituency to form the financial review committee, which will work closely with the Yes Youth Can – National (YYC-N) Tahidi Fund.

Mercy Corps' mentorship program continued to involve Bunge members on civic issues that included development of advocacy plans, resource mapping and action plans. To date, 770 Bunges have developed action plans to influence their community and local government decision making. A number of Bunges have initiated advocacy campaigns and community service projects, some without support from Mercy Corps. Through advocacy campaigns, Bunges can influence duty bearers on resource allocation to youth programs and accountability of public funds, among other issues. We conducted training needs assessments to establish learning opportunities for the county boards, revealing various capacity building needs such as leadership skills, resource mobilization, good governance, media engagement, and civic education.

Under objective 2, Mercy Corps completed the labor market and youth skills assessment for Central Province. Focus group discussions used a modified market research approach: a total of 36 youth participants engaged in targeted discussions in four separate consultative sessions around youth challenges, relevant curriculum content, training methodologies, and training implementation. The findings have informed our programming in ensuring the right activities to meet the needs of the youth in livelihood development. Furthermore, Making Cents International trained 19 "Bright Spots" to train Bunge members in each county on entrepreneurship and life skills. The bright spots have so far conducted over 300 trainings on entrepreneurship for Village Bunges, reaching 1,872 youths in the two counties. Negotiations for apprenticeships for the youth started this year in March 2012 and are ongoing

Under objective 3, we conducted a gender assessment in Gatundu North, Kigumo, Juja and Maragwa constituencies in Kiambu and Murang'a counties to assess the challenges and opportunities that young women face to access economic and political spaces. Focus group discussions were conducted with youth in Bunges and those not in Bunges, as well as elder people. Under the same objective we conducted a female mentorship forum with young women leaders from the Bunges. The forum targeted 40 young women who are members of the County Boards and the financial review committees. The young women formed a core group that will be critical in carrying out mentorship forums to link female mentors with young women in Bunges.

To achieve the above, Mercy Corps needed the support of government officials and other stakeholders. To build close working relationships, we organized four stakeholders meetings in the two counties. After we shared the program and the strategies with the stakeholders, most of them were impressed and are cooperating with us. There is still a need to strengthen these relationships though. We have continued to build partnerships with other USAID-funded initiatives like KSCP and Aphia Plus, as well as private companies like Sygenta, Veggro Kenya, Wilma flowers and Africa harvest. We are linking the Bunges to them to support their interests, especially in agribusiness.

### **Planned activities for the upcoming year**

In the next reporting year, Mercy Corps will partner with the County Bunge board members to continue with mobilization of youth to form Village Bunges and increase their membership. We will concentrate on issuing the advocacy grants, the community grants, and the youth enterprises small grants, as well as increasing young women's opportunities to benefit from YYC. We will launch the campaign on "My ID My Life" in all the counties, encouraging youth who do not have ID cards to register ahead of the general elections. We will continue to conduct capacity building of the county boards in various aspects like leadership, resource mobilization, good governance and media engagement as well as civic education. At the end of the year the CBFs will hold their second annual general meetings in all counties after ensuring village Bunge elections have taken place. The local implementing partner will be terminated in year two with the two CBFs assuming the partnership.

Finally, in the last quarter Mercy Corps will work with the county boards and stakeholders to close out or transition the program in a smooth and professional manner, while also documenting successes.

## **I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

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Youth were at the center of the 2007/2008 post-election violence (PEV), both as direct perpetrators and as victims. Although analysis of PEV has identified politicians as the force and organizers behind the large-scale terror, killing, arson, rape, and destruction, youth were the agents. The fact that almost two million youth (15-30 years) are out-of-school, and that the great majority of them have no regular work or income, makes them particularly vulnerable to recruitment for pay into political campaigns and criminal gangs.

The youth empowerment program Yes Youth Can! provides an opportunity for the youth between 18-35 years to find their voices, elect leaders from the village and hold them accountable in service to their communities, and engage in livelihood activities. The goal of YYC-C is to strengthen the capabilities of youth and youth Bunges to be agents of positive change in their communities. Mercy Corps is supporting this goal by pursuing four related objectives: 0) Mobilize youth and form youth representation structures at the sub location level; 1) Support youth to exercise a greater voice in local and national affairs; 2) Increase youth productivity, employment opportunities, and income; and 3) Increase young women's access to social, political, and economic opportunities. Our flexible and responsive approach to implementation is based on the principles of putting youth squarely in the driver's seat to determine their own future, identifying young leaders or "bright spots" to champion the potential of their peers, and ongoing market analysis to identify sustainable economic opportunities.

## II. PROGRAM PROGRESS

### A. Cumulative Progress Overview

Indicator	Overall targets by EOP	This quarter	Cumulative	% to date
Goal: To strengthen the capabilities of youth & youth Bunges in the Central province to be agents of positive change in their communities				
Goal: % change in the level of youth who feel confident to contribute positively to the community	BV+50%	0	0	0%
Goal: % change in number youth who take action to contribute positively to the development of Kenya	BV+50%	0	0	0%
Goal: % change in youth who report engaging in or approve of political violence.	BV-25%	0	0	0%
Objective 0: Form youth representation bodies at village and County levels				
0.1 USAID PS 6.1: # of people from 'at-risk' groups reached through USG-supported conflict mitigation activities;	500,000	52,796	241,205	48.2%
0.2a # of Village Bunges formed and registered	2,000	683	1,128	56%
0.2b # of County Forums formed and registered	2	2	2	100%
Objective 1: Support youth to exercise a greater voice in local and national affairs				
Objective 1 Indicator: # of youth Bunges who have action plans in place to influence their community and local government decision making	1,000	499	770	77%
Objective 1 Indicator: Number of youth who attend Bunge meetings	5,000	4,756	23,378	468%
1.2a USAID GJD 4.1: # of youth members of Bunges who have completed USG-assisted civic education training programs	5,000	242	479	9.6%
1.2b # of community service projects implemented by Bunges	500	4	6	1.2%
1.3a # of youth members of Bunges who attend County youth leadership conferences	96	994	1085	1,130%
1.3b % change in youth who interact across ethnic lines	BV+40%	0	0	0%

1.4a USAID GJD 2.3: # of local mechanisms supported with USG assistance for citizens to engage with their sub-national government.	28	0	0	0%
1.5 # of Bungenes involved in youth-led advocacy campaigns targeted towards policy and public investment decisions.	300	25	39	13%
<b>Objective 2: To increase youth productivity, employment opportunities and income</b>				
Objective 2 Indicator: # of Bunge members achieving greater economic independence	625	1,825	1,825	292%
2.1a # of young people who participate in comprehensive value chain assessments	40	0	37	93%
2.2a USAID EG 6.3 # of young persons completing USG-funded workforce development programs	2,500	1,508	1,825	73%
2.3a # of youth entrepreneurial groups who develop business plans	80	50	0	62.5%
2.3b # of small grants issued for microenterprises	50	0	0	0%
2.3c % of youth entrepreneurial groups raising additional investment capital.	25%	0	0	0%
2.4a # of youth that gain on-the-job experience through private sector apprenticeships	150	0	0	0%
2.4b USAID EG 6.3 # of people gaining employment or better employment as a result of participation in USG-funded workforce development programs	500	16	16	3%
<b>Objective 3: Improve young women's access to political, social and economic opportunities.</b>				
3.1 # of County forums held to disseminate gender assessment findings	4	0	0	0%
3.2a # of public outreach campaigns conducted on the civic engagement and livelihoods	24	0	0	0%
3.2b % change in people who understand the importance of female civic education and livelihoods	BV+25%	0	0	0%
3.3a # of mentors paired with young women	16	0	0	0%
3.3b % change of young women who report a greater diversity of economic opportunities.	BV+50%	0	0	0%
3.4a # of stories performed and disseminated on the radio and through multimedia	10	0	0	0%

## **B. Program Interventions**

Mercy Corps and its partner, YADEN, have established a structure whereby field officers work in partnership with youth volunteers, while the county boards mobilized and sensitized youths for action. The program's youth-led, youth-owned and youth-managed approach has resulted in youths taking a lead role in forming and managing the village Bunges, as well as garnering support from various stakeholders to initiate their own activities and engaging those stakeholders in youth initiatives. This is clearly evidenced by the seven community service projects that Bunges have already undertaken without MC support, and by the eleven advocacy events that Bunges have initiated with support from stakeholders other than MC.

### **Objective 0: Form youth representation bodies at village and County levels**

<b>Summary of Objective 0 Outcomes</b>
0.1 500,000 youth aware of Yes Youth Can program
0.2 Youth representation structures formed in the Kiambu & Murang'a Counties

#### *Outcome 0.1 500,000 youth aware of Yes Youth Can! – Central Program*

Mercy Corps partnered with the MoYAS to hold mobilization meetings from the lowest administrative units, like the sub-locations and villages, to attract more youth and share information. Youth bright spots with leadership and coordination skills emerged during these meetings. They mobilized fellow youth for the program.

During this year, a total of 241,205 youths were sensitized about the program through outreaches, sports activities, local media and other informal meetings. YYC information materials were distributed during these forums, helping the youth to better understand and internalize the Bunge concept. After forming the county boards, the chairs conducted live shows with the local FM stations to disseminate the YYC information to more youth throughout Central Province. This has sparked the interest of youth in the other three counties that are not currently covered by YYC, and led to the formation of more Bunges.

#### *Outcome 0.2 Youth representation structures formed in Kiambu & Muranga County*

In order for these formed village Bunges to legitimize their operations and to tap into existing opportunities created by the government and the private sector, registration with the MoGCSD was necessary. So far, 520 Bunges are registered as self-help groups.

In order to promote youth representation at the county-level, Mercy Corps organized two County Bunge Forums (CBFs). A total of 994 youth attended the two CBFs: 537 youth in Kiambu, and 457 youth in Murang'a. All 15 constituencies were represented. The forums provided the young people with opportunities to network, adopt their own constitutions, and elect county board members. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) led the elections and guided the youths (most of whom have not participated in national elections) through the voting procedures that were strictly observed in all the counties. The stakeholders present during the forums included government representatives, elders, religious leaders, the IEBC, media, APHIA

plus, and Africa Youth Trust. They all encouraged the voters to keep up the spirit and maintain peace.

<b>Bunge formation and membership by constituency, county</b>							
<b>County</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Total youth population</b>	<b>Youths in Bunges</b>			<b># of Bunges formed</b>	<b>Average youths per Bunge</b>
			Female	Male	Total		
Muranga	Gatanga	47,799	1,401	919	2,320	109	21
	Kandara	41,347	634	1,905	2,539	64	40
	Kangema	20,380	674	928	1,602	51	31
	Kigumo	33,203	517	910	1,427	46	31
	Kiharu	49,174	1,162	2,047	3,209	105	31
	Maragwa	41,231	730	851	1,581	56	28
	Mathioya	22,826	521	657	1,178	44	27
Kiambu	Gatundu North	27,359	421	699	1,120	53	21
	Gatundu South	63,020	796	1,116	1,912	65	29
	Githunguri	44,574	691	895	1,586	57	28
	Juja	144,250	3,051	3,901	6,952	252	28
	Kabete	99,901	664	793	1,457	63	23
	Kiambaa	60,425	278	378	656	24	27
	Lari	20,592	755	1,189	1,944	71	25
	Limuru	43,135	757	931	1,688	68	25
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>759,216</b>	<b>13,052</b>	<b>18,119</b>	<b>31,171</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>28</b>

The two elected boards are independent bodies that have been registered as Community Based Organizations. CBF officials will serve for one calendar year as stipulated in their constitutions. Since the launch, the CBFs have elected executive office bearers drawn from all the constituencies. They have also met to decide their counties' priorities, which Mercy Corps will support in the upcoming year.

### **Objective 1: Support youth to exercise a greater voice in local and national affairs**

<b>Summary of Objective 1 Outcomes</b>
1.1 YADEN measurably strengthens organizational capacity
1.2 Youth Bunges actively engaged in civic issues
1.3 Central Province youth networked to foster cooperation and understanding
1.5 Youth-led advocacy efforts strengthened to influence policy and public investment decisions.

#### *Outcome 1.1 YADEN measurably strengthens organizational capacity*

Based on the organizational capacity assessment carried out in May last year, specific training needs had been identified for YADEN to strengthen its organizational capacity in finance and sub-grant management. Its overall internal systems and policies have improved greatly and resources management has streamlined. However, despite numerous training sessions and on-

the-job mentoring, YADEN as an organization could not take up the challenge of ensuring a youth led, owned and managed program delivery.

In the second year, Mercy Corps will build the capacity of the County Boards as institutions that represent the Bunge structure. The CBFs will take up mobilization for more Bunges and youth, coordinate village bunge activities and implement their county' work plans as developed by them. It is envisioned that after the first phase of the program, the CBFs will take over the management of the program with implementers as facilitators.

### *Outcome 1.2 Youth Bunges actively engaged in civic issues*

During this first year of implementation, we trained 194 Trainers-of-Trainers, who in turn worked with 211 Bunges at village level. These Bunges received mentorship with asset/resource mapping and action plans, as well as organizing advocacy campaigns on individual Bunge-level issues.

So far, Bunges have organized 39 advocacy events involving roughly 4,340 youths. This advocacy has attracted the attention of community members as well as the local media. It also involved a number of stakeholders such as the provincial administration, district youth officers, area councilors, and, in the case of health issues like Ihiga-ini youth Bunge, staff of the sub-district hospital in the area. Most of these advocacy events also served as opportunities to increase the number of youth in the village Bunge as well as form new Bunges in adjacent villages.

It is important to highlight how this engagement with civic issues has helped to change the negative perceptions that older generations have of the youth. In one case, the village Bunges in Mugoiri and Murarandia divisions of Kiharu constituency organized an advocacy event for the "My ID My Life" campaign. The event aimed to encourage youth who are 18 years and over to apply for and collect identity cards. 199 youth from those two village Bunges participated in the forum. In a period of a week, 599 out of the 641 IDs were collected. Most of the youths without IDs requested the relevant authorities to facilitate the distribution of registration forms at the chief's office which is closer and accessible to many youth as opposed to the District level.

### *Outcome 1.3 Central province youth networked to foster cooperation and understanding*

With the formation of the 1128 Bunges, youths in Central have been networked through County boards. These are representative bodies for all the Bunges formed in each county, with a mandate to spearhead Bunge formation and operations in their respective counties. The constitutions of the county boards were approved in 15 constituency forums, at which each formed Bunge was represented by two officials. It was a unique opportunity for youth to meet and discuss youth issues at the constituency level for the first time. These forums also discussed and adopted the constitutions that would govern the County Bunge Forums in the region.

To legitimize their work, Muranga county board has already registered as a CBO at the MoGCSD, while the Kiambu board has registered as an Association with the registrar of organizations. These networks have developed their plans and strategies for action to foster cooperation at the constituency, county and national levels.

*Outcome 1.4 Local government responsiveness to issues important to youth increased*

Several activities have increased local government’s recognition and acceptance of the youth structures formed, as well as its attentiveness to the socio-political concerns that youths express. For example, Mercy Corps organized two stakeholders’ forums, each bringing together District Officers from the MoGCSD and MoYAS. This resulted in greater support and led to increased registration of Bunges. Bunges also worked closely with the provincial administration, especially the chiefs and sub chiefs, who assisted them in mobilization of their peers. Finally, Mercy Corps held a meeting with the Provincial Commissioner to share the gains realized in the province, discuss ways to promote youth participation, and address challenges in program implementation.

The MoGCSD in particular has been keen to support youth initiatives. The Deputy Provincial Gender and Social Services officers from the ministry attended the ToTs on entrepreneurship trainings and County Bunge Forums as key guest speakers.

*Outcome 1.5: Youth led advocacy efforts strengthened to influence policy and public investment decisions*

So far, Bunges have organized 39 advocacy events involving roughly 4,340 youths. This advocacy has attracted the attention of community members as well as the local media. It also involved a number of stakeholders such as the provincial administration, district youth officers, area councilors, and, in the case of health issues like Ihiga-ini youth Bunge, staff of the sub-district hospital in the area.

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**Objective 2: To increase youth productivity, employment opportunities and income**

Summary of Objective 2 Outcomes
2.1 Comprehensive labor market, youth skills and value chain assessments completed
2.2 Youth employability increased through life/job skills and entrepreneurship training
2.3 Youth income increased through micro and small enterprise development
2.4 Youth obtain employment in the public and private sectors

*Outcome 2.1 Comprehensive Labor Market, youth skills and value chain assessments*

Mercy Corps completed the labor market and youth skills assessment for Central Province in July 2011. The methodology used focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews. Focus group discussions in each region used a modified market research approach: a total of thirty-six youth participants engaged in targeted discussions in four separate consultative sessions around youth challenges, relevant curriculum content, training methodologies, and

training implementation. This is expected to form the basis for subsequent assessments, ensuring the validity of our data and acknowledging the dynamic nature of the labor market.

The findings identified high-potential sectors and local businesses with viable opportunities for youth employment and self-employment. It was evident that for youth to start businesses, they required start-up capital, which was difficult to raise as individuals. To meet this need, Mercy Corps has started a pilot VSL scheme to help Bunges raise internal resources, which members can borrow and then pay back as their businesses thrive. The report has been published and shared with stakeholders.

Other findings include:

- Continue Youth-led Market Research: As evidenced through the surveys, 23 percent of surveyed employers do not believe that youth have realistic expectations of the world of work. By empowering young people to identify and meet with local businesses, youth gain first-hand experience with various types of working environments and conditions. This exposure enables them to understand the realities of the local market, as well as the workforce they are about to enter. To implement the findings, we are holding meetings between employers and youth to sharpen their skills in work discipline and etiquette.
- Promote and Develop Life Skills: Both youth and potential employers identified life skills as critical, given that they are transferable to any labor market and resilient against economic shocks. Specifically, 33 percent of local employers highlighted interpersonal skills as the most important criteria they consider when hiring. These skills are often not developed within the formal education system. During the youth skills assessment dialogues, youth identified networking and communication skills, presentation skills, customer care, public relations, discipline and professional ethics as important skills for both employment and self-employment.

Based on these findings, Making Cents International (MCI) modified the “Rise Up, Lift Yourself with Business and Life Skills”™ curriculum to ensure that these topics are appropriately covered. All the 1,782 youth trained in entrepreneurship have received life skills training.

- Explore Opportunities in Agriculture: The agricultural sector, largely subsistence-based, employs 60 percent of Central Province’s total labor force. However, during the FGDs, young people did not frequently list agriculture as a form of self-employment. Across all FGDs, youth expressed little enthusiasm or interest in this sector. They also mentioned complications with acquiring and accessing land. The agricultural sector presents many opportunities for young people, but YYC youth remain largely disinterested in this work. To bridge this gap, the training toolkit used value chain modules to present youth with the different levels they can engage in other than production. We are also holding discussions with Sygenta and Vegro Kenya, which are willing to give seeds, train the youth in horticulture, and later buy the products. More and more youth are getting interested.

- Bridge the Perceptions Gap: One of the most startling findings of the assessment was the vast gap in perceptions between young people, employers, and the larger community. While youth largely believe themselves to be intelligent and positive leaders, they believe that the community, their family members, and private and public sectors perceive them as negative influences on society. Youth feel mistrusted by the community. They believe that their employment and entrepreneurial efforts are often not supported, as they feel others in the community do not view them as leaders. However, as evidenced by the employer survey, businesses believe that youth are hard-working, skilled, and reliable workers.

We are encouraging young people to use the assessment findings as a tool for generating dialogue on the societal perceptions of young people. Public forums with parents, potential employers, elders, and local government officials will help to bridge the gap in perceptions and enable the community at large to view youth as valued, productive members of society. We will support such dialogues under objectives zero and one, above.

- Enable Effective Entrepreneurship: Young people have many ideas for starting businesses but feel that they face nearly insurmountable barriers in achieving these goals. They often mentioned lack of capital and understanding of money management as hindrances to following an entrepreneurial pathway. Young people also mentioned tough competition and weak moral support from parents and the elder community as barriers.

The program is ensuring that all youth participating in Objective 2 activities receive entrepreneurship training, in addition to basic life skills development. Additionally, youth should continue to use the tips and tools gained in the YYC assessment process and share this knowledge with their peers. Finally, in addition to financial literacy training, we have started pilot VSLs to fundraise resources from the youth and later link them to other financial providers and the Tahidi Fund.

- Acknowledge and Address the Gender Divide: Although surveyed employers noted no significant preference in hiring males versus females, youth feel that there are gross differences for men and women in the Kenyan workforce. Sexual harassment, especially for young women, was repeatedly mentioned as a major issue. In several FGDs, young females mentioned that prostitution was a common means for young women to pay for college and university. While young women feel that they are often taken advantage of in the workforce (in the form of sexual harassment, lower pay, and harsher working environments), some young men also noted that it is easier for females to obtain employment. During the gender assessment, we included a question on the same to explore these issues further and design appropriate responses.

*Outcome 2.2 Youth employability increased through life/job skills and entrepreneurship training*

During the reporting period, a total of 16 Youth Economic Empowerment Trainers (YEETs) were recruited and trained by Mercy Corps using the Making Cents International-developed “Rise Up, Lift Yourself with Business and Life Skills”™ curriculum. Consequently, youth Bunge trainings were rolled out in four targeted districts within Juja and Gatanga constituencies: Thika-West, Thika-East, Ruiru and Gatanga. The 16 youths were initially paired up to create room for peer-learning as they jointly trained the first cohort of Bunges. As a matter of practice, Mercy Corps program staff met the trainers at the beginning of each month to debrief and plan for the new month ahead.

### **Life skills and entrepreneurship curriculum**

*Session I: Financial Literacy.* Exposes participants to the importance of managing money for both personal and business purposes. It explores the importance of savings and how to make better decisions around money.

*Session II: Exploring Entrepreneurship.* Demystifies what entrepreneurs and business people do by understanding that successful business people are problem solvers.

*Session III: Seizing Opportunities in the Value Chain.* Provides participants a broader understanding of the value chain, how to assess the market, value addition, reading market signals, and costing.

*Session IV: Business Skills.* Focuses on developing business skills by giving participants the opportunity to learn good planning, financial management, pricing, negotiation, and risk management.

During the reporting period, a total of 1,782 youths from 200 Bunges were trained and equipped in various aspects of small business start-up and management. This translates to 420 youth trained in each month since we launched the enterprise trainings in December 2011. Another important issue to point out is the fact that we managed to pilot the curriculum on an expanded scale and fine-tuned it.

According to the evaluation feedback that we normally receive at the end of Bunge trainings, participants have greatly appreciated the depth and quality of material delivered by the trainers. Further evaluation of the trainings’ impacts will be carried out in the course of the new program year, beginning in April 2012.

### *Outcome 2.3 Youth income increased through micro and small enterprise development*

In the course of rolling out business skills training, Mercy Corps program staff included a module on business planning. This enabled the youth to write business plans to secure business grants under the program. The training also had the effect of reinforcing the skills of those already engaged in small business.

Additionally, youth Bunges identified possible businesses enterprises through resource-mapping activities. Most applications revolve around agri-business (services, horticulture and poultry). A total of 48 business plans were received and reviewed, with 20 short-listed for further scrutiny and funding in the month of April 2012.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, the program liaised with the YYC National program to look at the possibility of carrying out two youth trade fairs in Kiambu and Muranga Counties. Plans are already afoot

with Kiambu being the first one. A youth planning team under the direction from YYC-N staff is already on the ground preparing for the mid-April 2012 event.

Towards the end of the quarter, Mercy Corps organized an agri-business forum bringing together various actors in the FINTRAC-managed Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness (KHCP) Project in Thika Town. The event brought together KHCP partners, Mercy Corps, the Muranga and Kiambu County Board members as well as other youth Bunge representatives. Mercy Corps shared the YYC profile as the KHCP partners shared more information on existing agricultural value-chains that the youth could participate in. It was also an opportunity for the youth to have Q&A sessions regarding the value-chains on offer. The idea and planning for this activity was triggered by a crucial need several USAID-funded programs had for youth participation that was not easy to come across. It is hoped that quite a number of youth Bunges will be linked with these and other organizations and individuals that can help them improve production, obtain and expand markets, develop skills, gain experience, and more.

In response to the need for enhanced youth participation, Mercy Corps initiated a pilot Village Savings & Loans (VSL) sub-component in all the 15 constituencies of Muranga and Kiambu. This began with a Mercy Corps program staff training where 13 participants went through a VSL orientation. This was quickly followed by a Youth VSL Training-of-Trainer's workshop that saw initial 13 youth bright-spots being given an intensive training. They will work in 13 constituencies and will be directly supervised by MC staff and supported with program resources to carry out their work in the first 12 months. MC is testing these two approaches so as to expand outreach and balance it with cost-effectiveness. It is expected that VSL will become a major economic empowerment strategy to hold most of the youth Bunges together and create a platform for future programming.

#### *Outcome 2.4 Youth obtain employment in the public and private sectors*

During the reporting period, MC program staff made contacts with key stakeholder organizations with the mind of hosting a major employer's forum in April or May 2012. Among them, the Thika and Ruiru Chambers of Commerce were contacted and offered support through their chairperson. The planned event will bring together the key actors in the formal education, vocational training, private sector, civil society, and related sectors for two reasons. First, MC will disseminate the Labor Market & Youth Skills Assessment Report. Second, the event will create a platform for soliciting support to provide qualified youth with opportunities in attachments, apprenticeships, internships, job placements, and the like. We are strongly of the opinion that this activity, combined with the life skills knowledge that the 16 YEETs have shared with youth Bunge members in the two constituencies of Juja and Gatanga, has increased their employable skills. We expect that placements will start in April 2012, and expect to see an initial group of 60 youth linked to employers.

### **Objective 3: Improve young women's access to political, social and economic opportunities.**

Summary of Objective 3 Outcomes
3.1 Gender assessment completed to identify challenges and opportunities for young women
3.2 Community understanding increased of importance of female education, literacy and

civic engagement
3.3 Young women in village Bunges mentored by female role models on economic opportunities
3.4 Young women develop leadership and advocacy skills through storytelling initiative

*Outcome 3.1 Gender assessment completed to identify challenges and opportunities for young women.*

A gender assessment was carried out in January 2012. Four constituencies were sampled in Kiambu and Muranga counties in order to cater to rural and urban/semi-urban populations within the predominantly rural area. The four constituencies were: Gatundu North, Kigumo, Juja and Maragwa. Focus group discussions were conducted with youth in Bunges and those not in Bunges, as well as elder people and community leaders, to assess the challenges and opportunities to access of economic and political spaces for young women. The data analysis is currently in progress.

*Outcome 3.2 Young women in village Bunges mentored by female role models on economic opportunities*

During the last quarter of the year, we engaged two female mentors and held a 2-day mentorship forum with young women leaders from the Bunges. The forum targeted 40 young women who are members of the County Boards and the financial review committees. The young women interacted with two female mentors, who are leaders in various fields. Some of the issues that were addressed included the challenges young women face in accessing leadership and entrepreneurship, as well as the contribution of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) of young women to this. The young women who were reached in the forum formed a core group that will be critical in carrying out mentorship forums to link female mentors with young women in Bunges. More forums will be held in the first and second quarters of the year. Young women will be linked with female mentors from their communities who will mentor them on economic engagement and leadership. The young women will identify role models from their communities who have made impact in entrepreneurship, leadership and other public roles.

*Outcome 3.3 Community understanding increased of importance of female education, literacy and civic engagement*

During the implementation of the YYC objectives, the importance of female education, literacy and civic engagement has been addressed. The linkage between literacy and civic engagement has been noted by the youth and community members. Education and exposure contribute to the young women's confidence in accessing public spaces and engaging in civic duties, including community leadership. During the first and second quarter of the implementation period, the youth will be supported to carry out advocacy on this in order to sensitise their communities on importance of female education and impact of school drop-out on women/girls and men/boys. The mentorship forums will also be used to sensitise and put emphasis on the same.

### **III. Constraints and Challenges**

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Several constraints and challenges arose during the first year of program implementation:

- During the initial stages of the program, most of the traditional youth leaders – who have always aligned themselves to the political system – felt that the YYC mobilization process was providing a forum for other youth to challenge their legitimacy as representatives. They used the National Youth Council elections to shun the YYC program. The popularity of the YYC structure, which incorporates youths who have otherwise never been in groups, has diluted the popularity of the traditional leaders.
- Central province has always been perceived as a rich province, so it has attracted very few NGOs. The operations of others has made the youth so dependent on the handouts for youth to participate in their programs. The YYC program attracted high expectations among the youth who had been made to believe that YYC was giving money to individual youth. The involvement of youth leaders in program planning and meetings has made them realize this is an opportunity and that they have responsibilities.
- Suspicion from the political class and local administration was a big challenge. Initially they perceived YYC as a program for inciting youth against them and other leaders. However, the popularity of YYC among the youth has left politicians with no option but attempts to infiltrate through their networks.
- There is still only lukewarm government support, especially in registration of village Bunges. Most of the government ministry officials have a misconception about the YYC program and have insisted on a letter from the permanent secretary in the MoGCSD.
- Most Bunges are willing to register their Bunges, but it actually takes time for youths to collect registration fees from the members. The pilot VSL is paving way for the youth to mobilize their resources, which the boards have used to raise money for their registration.
- Bunge formation is still very low in some constituencies, like Kiambaa, where youth still have a “wait and see” attitude. Very few Bunges have been formed there. We are using the Board representatives to mobilize the youth in that constituency.
- While the young women have increased in number in YYC activities, they rarely take up public roles even within the Bunges. We have paid special attention to encouraging their participation and mainstreaming gender. This included guiding the elections process to have considerations for gender representation in the county forums.
- The local implementing partner had challenges in adopting the Youth led strategy and putting the youth in the driver’s seat as an implementing strategy. This led to the termination of their agreement.

### **IV. Lessons Learned**

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Several lessons have been learned in the program so far. The most important were:

- Constant sharing of information and correct messages with government officials to address bottlenecks (e.g. with Bunge registration) is critical to the success of the program. In as much as the officers expressed their support for the program, some of them rely only on their superiors for approval, which is hard to obtain.

- There is a need to diversify activities of the youth Bunges in order to reduce the likelihood of group disintegration. We need to engage Bunges in advocacy activities, community service projects and investment projects – all at the same time – so we give all Bunge members with diverse talents a chance to participate in YYC.
- Mobilizing youth into Bunges in Central province was more difficult than anticipated. This is because youth have been disillusioned in the past by people who wanted to organize them for their own gains. It thus requires a lot of confidence building among the youth, while making them appreciate the gains of coming together and exploring the opportunities that are open to them.
- Youth and youth networks from Nyeri and Kirinyaga counties have consistently requested for expansion into their counties. YYC-C is considering taking the program to one of the counties, if more resources are made available by the donor.

## **V. Planned activities for next period**

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March 11, 2012 to March 10, 2013

Mobilization of youth to form Village Bunges and increase their membership will continue targeting an additional 872 new Bunges. During this period, the CBFs will be strengthened to ensure mobilization of more youths and strengthening of the Bunge activities. Mercy Corps will issue the advocacy grants, community grants, and youth enterprises small grants, as well as increase young women's opportunities to benefit from YYC. We will work with the county board structure to ensure equitable mobilization across all constituencies.

The Bunges will continue with civic engagement, raising issues in their localities as well as attending public forums and policy meetings. The advocacy and community projects identified through their resource mapping, when viable, will be funded on a first-come-first-served basis. Capacity building sessions for the boards on advocacy and networking, the Central Province annual Bunge Conference, and a Rift Valley province exchange visit will be facilitated for youth to network. We will increase our efforts to involve the local government through meetings and public forums as a way of bridging the gap between the government and the youth. Plans are at advanced stages to have many community projects reviewed and funded, since Mercy Corps has already secured environmental review waivers.

On increasing youth productivity, employment opportunities, and income, the rollout trainings for life skills and entrepreneurship will continue in the four focus districts. We will also upscale VSL trainings to Bunges. We aim to see increased productivity, market access, skill acquisition, and other improvements. In addition, we will also be giving Bunge enterprise grants from the business plan competition and placing the first group of Bunge members in internship/apprenticeship.

We expect to complete the gender assessment and finalize the report on the two project counties within the first quarter of year two. After this is done, we will hold town hall meetings to share gender assessment results. Utilizing the report findings, outreach campaigns on female civic education, livelihoods and mentorship will be conducted through the Bunges considering cultural and social issues affecting young women. We will endeavor to document stories collected from

Yes Youth Can beneficiaries and widely disseminate them with interests to increase young women participation in village Bunge activities.

From December 2012 we will embark on program closeout activities to ensure proper transition with at least a 90 days transition period. During this period, all program activities will be completed, all documentation organized, contracts and sub-contracts closed out, and plans for final progress and financial reporting made. The programmatic transitioning will happen throughout year two where the youth through the structures of village Bunges and CBF boards increasingly get involved in implementation. We will hand-over all documentation to the CBF boards and other stakeholders. We will also administer any training required for the transition to take place. Together with the youth and stakeholders, we will celebrate our accomplishments for the two years and, if there will be a second phase, plan the continuation together.

Additionally, the Mercy Corps M&E manager will conduct quarterly visits to each of the program sites to monitor progress towards targets. All of these data will be submitted in quarterly reports and annual reports as per our agreement with USAID and indicator data will be entered into the Yes Youth Can database. We also will conduct environmental compliance assessments on all small business grants.

<b>Yes Youth Can Central Work Plan</b>														
<b>12 Months</b>	Person responsible	<b>Year 2</b>												
<b>Activities</b>		<b>M</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>J</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Project Administration, M&amp;E and close-out</b>														
Annual workplans	COP													
USAID Yes Youth Can Database input	M&E													
Financial reports	COP													
Quarterly Report	COP													
Annual Reports	COP													
External Mid-Term Evaluation	M&E													
Environmental compliance of community grants	M&E													
Non federal audit	Finance													
Programmatic and administrative close-out deliverables discussed with CBFs and stakeholders	COP, PM													
Formal partnerships (sub-grantees) close-out scheduled	COP, PM													
Program team determination for transition	COP,HR													
Lessons learned documented	Comm, M&E													
Final program and financial report submitted to the donor	COP													
Final stakeholders celebration and transition meetings	PM, CBFs													
Complete program file submitted to the County Director	COP													
External Final Evaluation	M&E													
<b>Objective 0: Form youth representation bodies at village and county levels</b>														
Outcome 0.1: 500,000 youth aware of YYC program														



Life skills training	STA, PO																			
Entrepreneurship training	STA, PO																			
Milestone: 5000 youth trained in lifeskills and entrepreneurship	STA, PM																			
<b>Outcome 2.3: Youth income increased through micro and small enterprise development</b>																				
Business plans and grant applications	STA, PO																			
Grant application evaluations	STA, PO																			
Small grants issued to youth enterprises	STA, PO																			
Milestone: 80 small business grants awarded	STA, PO																			
<b>Outcome 2.4: Youth obtain employment in the public and private sectors</b>																				
Apprenticeship programs negotiated with employers	STA, PM																			
Stakeholders forums conducted with potential employers	STA, PM																			
Youth centers provide career counseling	STA, PM																			
Youth linked to USAID and other donor programs	STA, PM, PO																			
<b>Objective 3: Improve young women's access to political, social, and economic opportunities</b>																				
<b>Outcome 3.1: Central gender assessment completed to identify challenges and opportunities for young women</b>																				
Gender assessment in Kiambu and Murang'a	GTS, youth																			
Validation meetings with youth	GTS, M&E																			
Town Hall meetings to share gender assessment results	GTS, CBF																			
<b>Outcome 3.2: Community understanding increased of importance of civic engagement and enterprises</b>																				
Outreach campaigns on female civic education, entrepreneurship and leadership	CES, GTS, CBF																			
Advocacy campaigns on cultural and social issues affecting young women	GTS, CBF																			
<b>Outcome 3.3: Young women champions engaged to work with young female Bunge members on economic empowerment</b>																				
Mentorship forums for young women Bunge leaders in Kiambu and Muranga	GTS, PM																			
Mentors identified from all the 15 constituencies	GTS, CBF																			
Constituency mentorship forums on economic empowerment	GTS, CBF																			
<b>Outcome 3.4: Young women develop leadership and advocacy skills</b>																				
Stories collected from Yes Youth Can beneficiaries	GTS, CBF																			
Results of story-telling initiatives widely disseminated	GTS, CBF																			
Young women participate in Youth Leadership Forum	GTS, CBF																			

## Objective 0: Form youth representation bodies at Village and county levels

### Outcome 0.1: 500,000 youth aware of Yes Youth Can program

Mercy Corps will continue to raise awareness among youth of the Yes Youth Can program in partnership with the formed CBF boards. The CBF boards and village Bunges will organize outreach campaigns based on their developed communication strategies. In addition, we will host quarterly stakeholders' forums to explain the program to potential new participants. In collaboration with the YYC National program, we will develop materials, including brochures

and radio ads to raise awareness of the program. We also will continue to encourage youth representatives to constantly explain the program to their networks, adding to the cadre of youth ambassadors from year one who go to new youth Bunges to explain Yes Youth Can. We will support outreach campaigns using sports and theatre, organized by village Bunges to recruit more youth. The quarterly CBF board meetings will review their communication strategy for recruiting more youth and reach out to constituencies or regions with low youth in Bunges. Youth representatives also will use the local FM stations to recruit youth who are not in Bunges to join, and we will use organized events like church services, weddings and funerals.

*Outcome 0.2: Youth representation structures formed in the 2 counties*

To ensure that the Yes Youth Can program meets the needs and involves youth throughout program implementation, we will continue to form structures at the village level with elections of interim officials who will guide the youth in adopting a constitution and by-laws and later to register as youth self-help groups. So far, we have formed more than 1,300 village Bunges. We organized county forums and CBF board elections in two counties. These village Bunges and CBF boards have become important partners for Yes Youth Can.

In the second year, the registered CBF boards will hold their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting, plus elect new board members for the next term. The Bunges will engage in asset/resource mapping and develop action plans that stipulate what advocacy issues the Bunge can take up in the locality, such as a community service project or a business enterprise. Mercy Corps will regularly consult with the village Bunge leaders and CBF board on important issues facing youth from the county level to the village, identify successes and challenges in program implementation, and monitor the pulse of young people with regards to the program, the political environment, and the general election campaigns.

**Objective 1: Support youth to exercise a greater voice in local and national affairs**

*Outcome 1.1: Local partners' organizational capacity strengthened*

The Kiambu and Muranga CBF boards were constituted in December 2011 with the aim of coordinating Bunge activities in their respective regions. The board members are drawn from grassroots village Bunges who have limited skills in areas like group development, civic engagement, resource mapping, and resource mobilization. We will conduct initial training needs assessments with the boards, followed by tailor-made capacity enhancement trainings to address the gaps identified.

*Outcome 1.2: Youth Bunges actively engaged in civic issues*

Yes Youth Can Central will continue to provide opportunities for young people to build and demonstrate their leadership abilities, advocate for change, influence government officials, and develop relationships that cross ethnic and geographic boundaries, in addition to helping form a national Kenyan identity. All of these counter negative and violent influences. The TOTs who were trained in year one will be supported to roll out Bunge trainings to sensitize Bunges on other civic engagement topics, including healthy behaviors, peacebuilding, negotiation and communication, volunteerism, democracy and governance, and advocacy with support from

Grassroots Soccer. As part of the training, village Bunges will conduct community service campaigns to put their new skills to use as well as raise their profile in their communities.

As the country gears towards the general elections, there are over six million youth without ID cards across the country. In collaboration with the national registration bureau, youth will use the village Bunges to rally their fellow youth without IDs to register and, for those who have registered, to collect their IDs. They will have ready registration packs and distribute them to where the youth are, as opposed to youth walking long distances to seek the registration materials. After registration they will roll out the voter registration campaign to ensure that youth will make their political choice heard through the ballot.

*Outcome 1.3: Central youth networked to foster cooperation and understanding*

With the two CBF boards in place, Mercy Corps will work with the youth structure to enhance networking and coordination of Bunge activities. The CBF board constitutions provide for an annual CBF to be attended by two members of each registered Bunge. The two CBFs are scheduled for December 2012. This will be followed by a Central province Bunge conference where the renewed CBF boards' officials will meet and strategize on working together in the province. In collaboration with YYC National, all the CBF boards will meet to form the National Bunge Association, which creates a platform for youth from six Kenyan provinces to engage. They will come up with national priorities to be implemented across the counties in addition to the regional priorities.

Mercy Corps also will support exchange/learning programs for the CBF board members and some village members to foster networking within the counties and with youths in other regions, such as the Rift Valley province. Central and Rift Valley provinces have been traditionally viewed as political and social enemies due to land issues. The youth must change this perception and improve relationships between their peers to avoid future violence.

*Outcome 1.4: Local government responsiveness to issues important to youth increased*

Mercy Corps recognizes that to focus on building youth civic engagement skills (supply), but not to work on government's openness to youth input (demand), we will only increase youth frustrations. Therefore, throughout the Yes Youth Can Central program we will continue to engage local government officials to address youth issues. Mercy Corps will conduct regular meetings with government officials informing them of Yes Youth Can activities and explaining the benefits of youth and government working together, especially under the new constitution. Once a quarter we will host public forums for youth and government to explain their concerns to each other. We also will encourage youth to attend public planning meetings to influence the allocation of government resources, such as the Local Authority Transfer Fund, Youth Enterprise Development Fund, Women Enterprise Fund, and Constituency Development Fund.

*Outcome 1.5: Youth-led advocacy efforts strengthened to influence policy and public investment decisions*

To help young people have more influence in policy and public decision making that affects their lives, we will work with the constituency and county representatives to utilize the advocacy

skills developed under Outcome 1.3. Individual Bunges and CBF boards will identify and develop advocacy campaigns at grassroots and county levels, and will access the advocacy kitty from Mercy Corps for these campaigns.

*Outcome 1.6: Community Investment Fund/Micro-Grants Program*

We will support the village Bunges to implement projects supporting community initiatives that not only define the roles of the youths at the community level, but also offer income opportunities for Bunge members.

**Objective 2: Increase youth productivity, employment opportunities and income**

*Outcome 2.1: Youth engage in existing value chains and roll out of Village Savings and Loans in 15 constituencies*

The labor market and youth skills gaps assessments were completed in year one with outcomes used to reshape the program. Starting March 2012, the economic empowerment team is working with the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other implementing partners in the counties to find opportunities for youth in the value chain processes. They have identified value addition in different areas like agricultural business, service industry, and micro franchising which can ensure more youth are actively engaged in livelihood projects.

In March 2012, Mercy Corps will have recruited and trained 15 youth ambassadors to support the roll-out of Village Savings and Loans (VSL) on a pilot basis within the 15 constituencies of Kiambu and Murang'a counties. Youth in Central province are generally entrepreneurial and at times held back by inadequate financial resources. VSL is intended to support resource-mobilization among youths both for personal consumption and business use. It is planned that a total of 20,000 youth will be reached through this innovation.

*Outcome 2.2: Youth employability increased through life/job skills and entrepreneurship training*

The "Rise Up, Lift Yourself with Business and Life Skills"™ training is still ongoing among youth Bunges. Youth Economic Empowerment Trainers are scheduled to increase their outputs to reach between 600 and 800 youth trained per month. The objective is to reach a minimum of 2,500 youth with entrepreneurship skills but it is clear that we will surpass that target. In March 2012, we shall have the first forum in partnership with the Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Program (KHCP) where the KHCP partners will show-case their activities to representatives of various youth Bunges. The aim of the partnership is to link Bunges already trained in entrepreneurship with business opportunities in agriculture and along the flower, dairy, passion fruits and banana value chains.

*Outcome 2.3: Youth income increased through micro and small enterprise development*

After youth successfully complete the entrepreneurship training, they will be invited to develop simple group/Bunge-based business plans and compete for business start-up grants of

approximately \$500-\$1,000. The call for applications will be quarterly, with the first one occurring in March 2012. It is expected that a total of 80 enterprise grants will be made.

We have developed an easy application process that allows for fast review while also ensuring that activities feed into the overall project strategy and have a strong chance of success. Successful plans will assess market demand, potential income, likely expenses, cash flows, financing required, and any hiring potential. So far we have received 45 applications in one month.

Throughout the business development process, potential grantees will be mentored in groups to allow them to share ideas and collaborate, thus increasing business linkages and creating a supportive network. We will provide feedback to those Bungees that are unsuccessful and link them to other funding options, such as financial institutions with youth-friendly products, the Yes Youth National Tahidi Youth Fund, the USAID-funded FIRM project, and government funding including the Youth Enterprise Development Fund, the Women Enterprise Fund, and the Constituency Development Fund.

#### *Outcome 2.4: Youth obtain employment in the public and private sectors*

For youth better suited for employment in the public and private sectors rather than entrepreneurship, we will connect them to various employment options. In April 2012, we will have our first stakeholders' forum to bring together all interest groups in the formal education, vocational training, corporate business, agri-business, civil society and other sectors in Central province. A key highlight of the forum will be the dissemination of the Labor Market & Youth Skills Assessment Report. The forum is expected to generate opportunities for youth in apprenticeships, internships, and attachments. Discussions with key stakeholders are already afoot.

Additionally, and as outputs from the assessment report, we will identify industries and institutions looking to expand, especially in the industrial town of Thika and farms around Kiambu and Muranga, where added workforce is needed and we will negotiate placements for youth. The first group of apprentices will be placed in May 2012, following the stakeholders' forum. At the same time, we will work with youth centers to increase information about employment options and link youth graduates with other USAID and donor youth employment programs, such as the World Bank Youth Employment Program. It is expected that a total of 300 youth will be recruited under the employment categories described.

### **Objective 3: Improve young women's access to political, social and economic opportunities.**

#### *Outcome 3.1: Central gender assessment completed to identify challenges and opportunities for young women*

In March and April 2012, Mercy Corps conducted a gender assessment to identify the impacts of the PEV, cultural barriers and illiteracy on relations between women and men, and specific constraints facing young women in participating in economic and civic activities. The assessment included a literature review and field work in sampled constituencies, including key informant interviews and focus group discussions to understand the specific issues in Central

province that affect young women's involvement in civil society, local decision-making, and economic activities.

The assessment was youth-led, with young women and young men collecting and keying in the data. We will analyze the data and generate a report in the month of April 2012. We will hold forums with the youth to validate the data and also forums with youth and other stakeholders to disseminate and receive community reflection.

*Outcome 3.2: Community understanding increased of importance of female education, literacy, and civic engagement*

Linked to the Community Service Projects under Outcome 1.2, we will mentor young women to develop advocacy initiatives led by young women and men to highlight the importance of education, literacy, civic engagement, sexual and reproductive health, and employment of women. Additionally, to improve young women's ability to engage in civic activities, we will work to improve young women's literacy. Groups will also be able to apply for micro-grants for their outreach activities under the Community Investment Fund.

*Outcome 3.3: Young women champions engaged to work with young female Bunge members on economic empowerment*

In year two, Mercy Corps will collaborate with Bunge leaders and CBF boards to identify approximately 10 women from each of the 15 constituencies to provide economic empowerment mentorship for young women in Bunges. County-wide mentorship forums will be held with 40 female Bunge leaders. The female leaders will form a core group to organize constituency-wide mentorship forums for young women in Bunges. We will engage with the mentors on how to share their skills and reflect regularly with each other and YYC project staff.

*Outcome 3.4: Young women develop leadership and advocacy skills.*

During the third and fourth quarter of year two, YYC will develop a young women's storytelling initiative where project beneficiaries will team with women's leaders in the political, civic, and private sectors to create a series of 10 success stories on women's empowerment. Stories will be disseminated through print media, local radios, and social media. Toward the end of the project, we will hold a competition among project beneficiaries to identify the top five stories, which will be showcased during the second annual general meeting of the CBF boards.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

In March 2012, we will cooperate with USAID to conduct an external mid-term evaluation. In April 2012, we will submit the first year annual report with subsequent quarterly reports. We will work together with USAID on the end-of-program external evaluation in February 2013.

Additionally, Mercy Corps' M&E Specialist will conduct quarterly visits to each of the program sites to monitor progress towards targets. All of this data will be submitted in quarterly reports and annual reports, as per our agreement with USAID, and indicator data will be entered into the YYC database. We also will conduct environmental compliance assessments on all grants.

Starting in December 2012, we will embark on the program closeout activities to ensure proper transition with at least a 90-day transition period. During this period, all program activities will be completed, all documentation organized, contracts and sub-contracts closed out, and plans for final progress and financial reporting made. The programmatic transitioning will occur throughout year two: through the structures of village Bunges and county boards, the youth will increasingly become involved in implementation. We will hand over documentation to the county boards and other stakeholders, and provide any training required for the transition. Together with the youth and stakeholders, we will celebrate our accomplishments for the two years and, if there will be a second phase, plan the continuation together.

## **VI. List of sub-grantees**

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Youth Arts development and Entrepreneurship Network (YADEN)