



YOUTHMAP CONFERENCE REPORT

Overview

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) organized a conference on youth with the objective of sharing learnings from YouthMap assessments, disseminating best practices from YouthMap Innovation Fund activities, and identifying opportunities to scale programs for African youth.

YouthMap country assessments were conducted in the DRC, Mozambique, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Innovation Fund projects discussed included: the YouthMap internship project focused on employability of disadvantaged Ugandan youth; the *Jeunes Agriculteurs* agribusiness project, which delivered comprehensive training to young Senegalese entrepreneurs in the agriculture value chain; and the SET Africa Fellowship, part of IYF's YouthActionNet® fellowship program, which provided leadership training and ongoing support to a network of young social entrepreneurs from across Anglophone Africa.

IYF consulted with young people, local partners, and USAID in designing the agenda to ensure relevancy, utility, and engagement. Youth input and participation were particularly important to the conference design and facilitation of group sessions and activities. Leveraging creative and interactive methods from IYF and other youth partners to maximize the engagement of all participants, the conference combined keynote speeches, panel discussions, and working group sessions. Three individuals from each country who could contribute to the conversation traveled to Kampala to participate, including representatives from the YouthMap assessment research firms, youth research assistants, Mandela Washington Fellows, and beneficiaries from the YouthMap Innovation Fund projects. Attendance exceeded 100 people (see Annex A) over the two days including high-profile participation from U.S. Ambassador to Uganda Scott DeLisi, USAID/Uganda Mission Director Leslie Reed, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (MGLSD) Pius Bigirimana, Assistant Commissioner for Youth at MGLSD Kyateka Mondo, and Member of Parliament Jacob Wangolo.

IYF is proud to report a strong youth presence throughout the two days, with approximately 75 percent of participants under 35, including youth beneficiaries from YouthMap Innovation Fund projects, Mandela Washington Fellows, and other youth representatives from government, civil society, and the private sector. Youth voice was critical, with young people playing key roles as Master of Ceremonies, facilitating sessions, and sharing their personal success stories. Sessions culminated in participants developing recommendations to ground the issues in programming realities. Key recommendations developed over the course of the conference fell into three categories: Create youth-targeted opportunities for young people to engage economically and politically; facilitate networking and provide guidance that translates into action; and prioritize skills development that supports young people's confidence to take initiative.

Content including agendas and PowerPoint presentations can be found on the IYF conference [webpage](#).

Participant Recommendations

Participants discussed and developed recommendations and best practices through speeches, panels, and small working group activities, informed by outcomes from the YouthMap assessments and pilot Innovation Fund projects. The recommendations were captured on flip charts and shared in feedback sessions or gallery walks, and primarily fell into three categories outlined below. In sum, youth are yearning for opportunities to engage with formal social structures/institutions, which are often inaccessible, and therefore lead to frustration and ultimately the status quo. Exceptions are the positive role models who stand out by finding ways to overcome barriers through proactive actions/initiatives.

1) **Target Youth:**

Create opportunities to address barriers young people face/experience, so they can more easily engage in training, employment, and entrepreneurship

Example Recommendations	Description
Establish a revolving scholarship fund	Entrepreneurial graduates can “pay it forward” since many people have creative ideas for innovation, but don’t have the resources to get the skills they need.
Scale successful sanitary pad programs	Limited access to cost-effective sanitary pads is often a cause of young women dropping out of secondary school and training programs. Youth participants from multiple countries referenced successful programs.
Incentivize youth to become trained teachers	Many young people want to pursue a teaching career but it is not feasible economically due to low or no wages. Education quality is very much influenced by the teachers and how motivated they are so there is a need to focus on training with the right skill set, and show that they are valued.
Facilitate access to youth friendly financial services	Lack of collateral for accessing finance continues to be a large barrier to youth starting or formalizing their businesses, with banks and MFIs needing support in developing youth-friendly products.
Encourage a more enabling policy environment for entrepreneurship	Supporting policy which makes it easy/cheap/quick for youth to register businesses and raising awareness about what the policies and regulations are will increase the percentage of youth registering their business.
Identify and fund entrepreneurs with highly scalable projects/ventures	Not everyone can be a great entrepreneur, but investing in the great entrepreneurs to scale up their ventures can employ more of the non-entrepreneurs.

2) **Develop skills:**

Prioritize skills development that provides youth with the confidence to take initiative

Example Recommendation	Description
Incorporate universal life skills into education and training programs	Promoting personal development through life skills training – allow for self-discovery, self-awareness, learning about strengths and interests that could lead to entrepreneurship and quality employment
Bridge the gap between academia and	Incorporate private sector influence in government

business (theory vs practice)	curriculum development in order to align the curriculum to the long term development priorities and labor market
Introduce business skills at all levels of education	In addition to life skills, business skills can be introduced earlier to improve young people's ability and begin to shift the attitude that prioritizes formal sector employment
Support the development and implementation of demand led and market based TVET qualification	TVET needs to meet the quality and standards of the private sector, what employers are looking for and where the market opportunities are going forward. Private sector, TVETs, and youth need to consult each other to make sure there's a match between the skills being taught and the skills in need in the workplace
Support business hubs	Business hubs can be a place where youth can learn life skills, establish their goals and vision, have space to run their organization, be identified, and interact with positive role models.
Provide technical assistance to young entrepreneurs, especially around business processes and tax benefits	Train entrepreneurs on efficiently managing the policies and regulations, which can discourage many young business people.

3) **Build Networks:**

Facilitate networking and provide guidance that encourages goal-setting

Example Recommendation	Description
Raise awareness and track progress of youth led clubs	Many countries have youth-led organizations but not functioning associations or platforms for information sharing, since many miss opportunities to collaborate.
Introduce career and mentorship programs in schools	Encouraging goal-setting is critical, and providing access to role models, especially those from the business community, can encourage positive choices while expanding networks.
Promote youth success stories in priority fields	Youth targeted teacher success stories, for example, would help encourage young people to become teachers, and guide them on how they can best plan their career in that field. Likewise, successful youth in the agriculture value chain can encourage others to explore the sector.
Establish a database of all the unemployed for better planning	Better match the needs of unemployed youth and employers – leveraging technology, even on a local scale, might mitigate this challenge.
Use multimedia to reinforce positive behaviors	ICT and media (TV, radio, Facebook, Whatsapp) must be leveraged to engage young people in political and civic causes. It can also be utilized for peer-education on making use of available resources, and can be used to disseminate business and financial information to young people. Fairs, roadshows, etc. were also cited as favorable ways to inform youth at scale.
Build business hubs (incubators, networks, integrated life skills)	Business hubs are also critical for networking between young entrepreneurs, not just within a country but also across countries. Many people are working in isolation.

Day 1 – YouthMap Assessments

Summary

The [first day](#) brought together YouthMap assessment contributors and select stakeholders from the six assessment countries: Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mozambique, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Presentations and activities focused on sharing analysis of YouthMap findings across countries and critical sectors, i.e., education, healthy behaviors, employment, civic/political participation. Common challenges identified in the assessments were used in a systems thinking exercise in thematic groups to explore the themes and identify commonalities across YouthMap countries that can be applied more broadly and inform future youth programming.

Sessions

Youth Expo

The Youth Expo took place in the venue foyer for the first hour of the day as participants registered and awaited the opening remarks. The open set-up allowed conference participants, including Ambassador DeLisi, to directly interact with young people and discuss their initiatives. On this day, six fellows from the SET Africa program presented their projects on posters and displayed their products. YouthMap internship graduates also presented findings from the Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) research that they had conducted for USAID/Uganda.



Opening Session

Master of Ceremonies Regina Mtonga, the cofounder of Asikana Network in Zambia and a SET Africa Fellow, welcomed everyone for the day and introduced the opening panel. William Reese, President and CEO of IYF gave opening remarks on the state of youth development and positive programming trends. Pius Bigirimana, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, then gave remarks on youth initiative and the Government of Uganda’s activities regarding youth. US Ambassador Scott DeLisi followed with passionate [remarks](#) about the US Government’s commitment to youth development in Uganda.

Overview of YouthMap

Matthew Breman, IYF’s Africa Regional Director presented an [overview of YouthMap](#) including the origin of the program, the assessment methodology, and general trends identified across the reports in the priority sectors. Key common challenges and opportunities identified across countries can be seen in the table below.

Theme	Challenges	Opportunities
Education	Youth (esp. young women), are not accessing secondary education The quality, relevance, and value of formal education is leaving young people unprepared for work	Youth prioritize formal education and access for girls is improving at the primary level Space to include practical skills/life skills, increasing linkages to private sector in formal education; and develop non-formal, vocational, and entrepreneurship training as viable alternatives

Employment	High youth un/under-employment reflect barriers to youth employment and entrepreneurship	Growth sectors in each country present opportunities, and entrepreneurship is appealing to youth
	Young people’s skills do not match employers’ demands	Room for youth, employers, and training providers to better understand skills mismatches
Health	Health and family planning services are often not accessible or youth-friendly	Youth want better access to SRH services and youth-friendly health information
	Young women face high risk environments at all levels of society	Positive role models demonstrate how to close the gap between knowledge and action
Political and Civic Engagement	Youth feel disconnected from government and exploited for votes	Youth want to participate in their communities and nations, still voting in high numbers
	Youth experience barriers to decision making and leadership roles	Youth are engaging civically through volunteering and religious activities

Thematic Working Groups



The participants self-selected into four working groups based on the themes: education, employment, health, and political and civic participation. Each group was facilitated by a young person in the systems thinking process. The groups selected a challenges/problem which was identified in the assessments and mapped the causes and detrimental factors. They then looked at entry points among those causes, creating recommendations, which have been incorporated in the Recommendations section

above. The selections of each group are as follows:

Theme	“Problem”	Sample Factors/Entry-points
Education	The quality, relevance, and value of formal education is leaving young people unprepared for work	Inappropriate curriculum (e.g., lacking life skills) and poor implementation of the curriculum by teachers
Employment	A high number of youth are unemployed or underemployed	Education system not linked with development plans or market needs
Health	Youth face significant negative risk factors driving young people to unhealthy decisions	Multimedia Education and social factors as sub-points
Pol/Civic Participation	Youth are not engaging politically beyond voting	Poor networking and lack of information

YouthMap Country Perspectives

This session convened a diverse panel representing each of the six YouthMap counties. The conversation covered multiple issues facing youth in the panelists' countries, including the gap between education and livelihood opportunities, limited awareness of opportunities, and the need for mindset change among young people. Panelists also discussed examples of successes in their countries, including ICT hubs in Tanzania, sharing entrepreneurship success stories in Senegal, and child parliament in Mozambique.

Promising Practices Working Group

Following the panel, people divided into three regional groups: Mozambique and Zambia; Senegal and DRC; and Uganda and Tanzania. A young person was designated to facilitate each group, leading a discussion on how successful initiatives can be applied in the context of each country. They then developed recommendations, synthesized above. Standing in a circle, each group presented their recommendations, which have been integrated into the Recommendation section above.

Day 2 – YouthMap Innovation Fund Projects

Summary

The [second day](#) of the conference invited a larger audience (approximately 100 attended) to discuss programmatic responses to the issues identified through the assessments. The day's activities were structured around the three IYF Innovation Fund pilot projects to understand what was useful for the beneficiaries and further explore the programming for youth on employability, entrepreneurship, and leadership.

Sessions

Youth Expo

The Youth Expo took place again for the first hour of the day as participants registered, but this time included a larger number of panel presentations. On this day, sixteen fellows from the SET Africa program presented their projects on posters in the foyer. YouthMap internship graduates from both cohorts presented findings from the Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) research that they had conducted for USAID/Uganda. The research reports were on youth perceptions of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Agricultural employment. A table at the expo also included YouthMap interns who started a business following their training and mentoring using the Build Your Business (BYB) curriculum.

Opening Session

The Master of Ceremonies, Brian Mulondo, a presenter on NTV welcomed the audience and gathered reactions from the previous day's activities. Commissioner Kyateka Mondo, who is in charge of the youth portfolio at the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, delivered opening remarks. He highlighted the government's programs and made a case for more investment in youth programming for national development.

YouthMap Voices

This session convened a panel of young people from each of the three YouthMap projects: Victor Joseph Mnyawami, a Tanzanian fellow from the SET Africa leadership project; Doreen Nasuuna, an internship graduate from the Uganda internship project; and Fatou Sambe, a Senegalese entrepreneur from the

Jeunes Agriculteurs project. Each young person told their back story and how the project helped them achieve their goals. Victor described how the SET program helped build his skills, especially those around teambuilding, management, and systems thinking. Upon his return to Tanzania, he began applying systems thinking to explore what problems he could solve. Doreen described how mentorship has been integral to her success. Although she wasn't retained at her internship placement, she refined her CV and transferred those skills to a future position at Barclays Bank. Fatou told how she found particularly helpful the entrepreneurship program's life skills, entrepreneurship skills, and business plan training. The business plan competition at the end of training motivated Fatou and her business partners to succeed.

Breakout Sessions

Each theme was explored through the learnings of the individual projects. The three tracks ran concurrently and were repeated, so conference participants could attend two of the three presentations.



Employability

Restless Development Uganda [presented](#) an overview and findings from the internship project. Six months following completion, 75 percent of graduates found formal sector employment. Key programmatic elements included the foundation training and the intentional access to networks (employers and peers). Two project graduates shared their stories and experience, and took questions from the audience. Participants then broke into groups, discussing what was learned and developing recommendations for employability programs.

Entrepreneurship

Synapse Center led a [presentation](#) of the agribusiness project in Senegal. The presentation included program objectives, youth perceptions of agriculture, value chain opportunities, and programmatic outcomes. Event participants then had small group discussions on the issues of youth entrepreneurship and the challenges and opportunities for young people to earn a livelihood in agriculture.

Leadership

Makerere University Business School (MUBS) [presented](#) on the SET Africa regional leadership institute hosted in Kampala, including background on the young people supported by the initiative and the SET Africa approach to social entrepreneurship and leadership development. Fellows from the SET Africa program shared their stories about the social ventures they founded and their experience in the program, and the audience discussed challenges and possible solutions for young people who want to create change in their communities.

YouthMap Partners

This panel brought together stakeholders to respond to what they heard from the discussion activities and respond to youth questions. Representing the key sectors of development, the panel comprised of: Betty Ajilong, HR and Training Manager with Aramex; Mark Meassick, Deputy Mission Director with USAID/Uganda; William Reese, President and CEO of IYF; and Honorable Jacob Wangolo, Ugandan Member of Parliament. Dr. Charles Batte, a YouthActionNet® fellow, provided a youth voice to facilitate the conversation. There was limited time for questions from the audience, yet each panelist provided their perspectives on systemic challenges and areas of opportunity with respect to employability, entrepreneurship, and leadership.

Closing Session

USAID/Uganda Mission Director Leslie Reed closed the conference with remarks regarding the importance of investing in young people. She commented on the number of youth in the room and applauded the youth-led event.

Links to Assessments

DRC: <http://library.iyfnet.org/library/youthmap-drc-congolese-youth-assets-opportunities>

Mozambique: <http://library.iyfnet.org/library/youthmap-mozambique-voices-next-generation-assessment-youth-mozambique>

Senegal: <http://library.iyfnet.org/library/youthmap-senegal-youth-assessment-road-ahead>

Tanzania: <http://library.iyfnet.org/library/youthmap-tanzania-assets-opportunities>

Uganda: <http://library.iyfnet.org/library/navigating-challenges-charting-hope-cross-sector-situational-analysis-youth-uganda>

Zambia: <http://library.iyfnet.org/library/youthmap-zambia-cross-sector-analysis-youth-zambia>