

AYANA INTERNATIONAL AND NEVER AGAIN RWANDA

Youth Innovation Toolkit

*Empowering youth to be actively involved in their
Communities' sustainable development.*

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*Young people must be included from birth, a society
That cuts off from its youth, servers its lifeline.*

- KOFI ANNAN -

Young people constitute an estimate of 1.2 billion people in the world. In Africa 65% of the population is below 35 years, making it a youthful continent. The growing youth population in Africa presents myriad reasons for concern. Young people have remained marginalized and excluded and yet have the potential to be a great impetus for Africa's development. Young people are excluded from decision making, lack opportunities and have insufficient education. Poverty and unemployment have also affected many youth in Africa. As a result of the above problems the youth feel disillusioned and emasculated from decision making in national political institutions. These young people are more often than not are in search of an identity and belonging. Young citizens are often viewed as a source of instability and, as a result, are often marginalized from mainstream society.

Rwanda has a uniquely young population; over 70% of the populations are under the age of 35 years, with 29% between the ages of 16-30. The youth in Rwanda lack meaningful opportunities to engage in decision making. Conditions affecting the youth include poverty, employment, productivity and economic empowerment, lack of education and training, health, access and utilization of Information Communications Technology (ICTs). Though Rwanda has made strides in youth development and participation, the youth are affected by social marginalization, policy neglect, exclusion and limited influence in decision making.

The youth remains the sole and main resource of the country. Young people are the future and tomorrow's leaders. Young people need to be nurtured and empowered. Young people support peaceful, democratic political processes; they promote recovery, development and peaceful and inclusive societies. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda recognizes that young people are critical to achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable development for present and future generations. Given the opportunity, the youth would rather be peacefully engaged in society rather than be violent, and be proponents for change rather than suppressors of dissent. Democracy is at risk without sustainable peace and security.

Youth are the strength for any nation and when their potentials are harnessed they positively contribute towards development of their societies. It is important for youth to come together to participate in constructive actions which contribute to the development of the country, this will also bring tangible change to the areas where different youth live.

Never Again Rwanda empowers young people to be positive change agents in their communities by training them in critical thinking, peacebuilding and human rights. As, young leaders of tomorrow this equips them with the skills that are necessary to participate in decision making processes, influence policy and to tackle challenges bedeviling their communities. Including

young people in development ensures that no one is left behind and that it is development that is inclusive and meets the needs of the future generations.

This toolkit will provide the necessary resources for young people to be more involved in their communities. It is a useful tool that young people can use to address challenges in their communities. It is a step by step process to empower young people to be problem-solvers and advocates. Young people have the opportunity to be the change they want to see by participating in the implementation of the sustainable development goals. This toolkit will strengthen their problem-solving capacities and enhance creativity and innovativeness. Young people everywhere need to be active in the development of their communities.

About Never Again Rwanda

Never Again Rwanda (NAR) is a peace building and social justice organization that arose in response to the 1994 genocide perpetrated against Tutsis. Guided by a vision of a nation where citizens are agents of positive change and work together towards sustainable peace and development, NAR aims to empower Rwandans with opportunities to become active citizens through peacebuilding and development. NAR places a particular emphasis on the youth as the future of a peaceful society. NAR is one of the leading national peacebuilding organizations with over 13 years of experience building a cornerstone for peace.

Vision: A society that enjoys sustainable peace and development driven by creative, active and critical-thinking youth and citizens.

Mission: To enhance citizens' capacity to analyze the root causes of conflict, facilitate dialogue and appreciate diversity among citizens in order to generate ideas and activities that work towards sustainable peace and socioeconomic development.

About AYANA

AYANA is an international nonprofit initiative dedicated to harnessing the power of any community's most valuable resource: its youth. AYANA works with partnering NGOs in developing countries to customize and implement Youth Innovation Lab programs, weeklong workshops designed to empower youth to create solutions to benefit their local communities using design thinking to analyze a specific issue and understand the population which it affects. The projects are then funded to impact lives in the local community.

Vision: A global impact of youth innovation in countries across the globe; a world in which every young person is aware of their innate potential to create change and is given every opportunity to harness this potential.

Mission: To empower youth with the skills to apply the innovative process of design thinking in their local communities, allowing for critical problems in developing nations to be addressed with long-term, sustainable solutions.

Introduction

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is development that meets human needs. The overall long-term goal of sustainable development is stability of the economy and environment. This is achievable through integration of the economy, environments, and social concerns throughout decision making. Concerted effort is needed towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for the people and planet.

It is crucial to harmonize three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. These elements are interconnected and are all crucial for the well-being of individuals and societies. Hence the Sustainable Development Goals have 17 global goals which harmonize these 3 principles. To achieve sustainable development, it is crucial to bring on board those who will lead the future development, not only to get involved in the process of creating positive impact in their communities but also to develop a sense of ownership of different developmental initiatives.

Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, made these remarks on International Youth Day August 2015,

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In this landmark year, as leaders prepare to adapt a bold new vision for Sustainable Development, the engagement of youth is more valuable than Ever. At this critical moment in history I call upon young people to demand And foster the dramatic progress so urgently needed in our world.

To achieve this, AYANA International and Never Again Rwanda designed this Youth Innovation Toolkit to support young people to play a major role in sustainable development of their communities.

The purpose of the toolkit is to empower youth to analyze and identify problems, and prioritize them according to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Youth will learn how to engage their peers in the community in order to bring about an inclusive way of changing the community's welfare.

NAR and AYANA believe that this toolkit will be an instrument to support young people to independently organize activities that bring solutions to their communities. This in the long run will bring both economic and behavioral change driven by innovative young minds.

A training of trainers on the use of this toolkit will be conducted and thereafter, youth will go back to engage their communities. This will be done through youth group meetings to identify the issues, priorities them and make activity plans. Youth will organize town hall meetings and engage local leaders to present their ideas to raise awareness of their interventions in the community.

Every year in July, youth will organize Global Umuganda to contribute to the development of their communities. On the International Day of Youth, young people from the community will engage their peers around the world by sharing photos and stories on AYANA's and NAR's website and social media.

Why is it important for you to get involved?

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Many of the challenges facing humankind, such as climate change, Water scarcity, inequality and hunger, can only be resolved at a Global level and by promoting sustainable development.

There are growing fears that current levels of economic development are not sustainable. Our planet is quickly running out of resources due to exploitation, and our social and economic challenges are growing on a daily basis. Poverty has increased, for example, 700 million fewer people lived in extreme poverty conditions in 2010 than in 1990. Youth are the best resource for their communities and the world. In 20 years, it will be the young generation in positions of power, creating the future of the world. When young people start getting involved in their communities sustainable and innovative solutions are fostered. Involvement of young people in their communities strengthens decision making processes, by making them more inclusive, transparent, responsive and youth-centered. Young people are energetic, dynamic and creative. Now more than ever, is for young people to be involved in their communities.

As a young person, you do not need to wait on those who are older to be the driving forces of change. As a young person, you have the resources around you that you can utilize to transform the future of your community. Not only will your name be placed among those who played a role in changing their community, but your involvement will enable you to grow with the changes that you bring into your communities.

How to use this toolkit?

All it takes is one person to mobilize others. We suggest you read this through, taking notes along the way, and then use our resources to involve other youth to create great impact. Our goal is for you to be able to, use this toolkit, identify and solve issues in your local community.

Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals

ACTION FOR INSPIRATION, INNOVATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION

About the Process

During the first stage, you should understand your chosen area(s) of the Sustainable Development Goals. You should study the UN Sustainable Development Goals descriptions and the action steps the global community plans to take. You will also identify and learn more about

the problems affecting your community directly. Then, you will create a solution that effectively solves this problem and prototype (implement) it in your local community.

Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable Development Goals are part of the wider 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals include no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, and more.



A diagram listing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_Development_Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The goals are interconnected – often the key to success on one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with another.

The SDGs work in the spirit of partnership and pragmatism to make the right choices now to improve life, in a sustainable way, for future generations. They provide clear guidelines and targets for all countries to adopt in accordance with their own priorities and the environmental challenges of the world at large. The SDGs are an inclusive agenda. They tackle the root causes of poverty and unite us together to make a positive change for both people and planet.

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Poverty eradication is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, and so is the commitment to leave no-one behind

d. The Agenda offers a unique opportunity to put the whole World on a more prosperous and sustainable development path. In many ways, It reflects what UNDP was created for.

- UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner -

Source: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

Among the above goals, which are the top three which connect with your community?



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Observe the Problem in the Community

Using a piece of paper, answer the following questions to really understand the problem. You will need to do some research (read books, talk to a teacher or community member, research online) to find the answers.

1. What is the major problem that exists in your area?

2. What are the main causes of this problem?

3. Who are the key stakeholders in this issue?

4. How long has the problem existed?

5. What population/which people are affected?

Developing a Point of View

It is important to formulate a point-of-view statement for the beneficiary population. What are the five questions you can ask people whom you interview to better understand their struggles, so that you can be equipped to create an effective solution?

Example Interview Questions: How does this problem affect you? Is the rest of your family affected? How would your life improve if there was a solution?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Space for Interview Notes

(Use a piece of paper to record this interview.)

Ideate a Solution

1. What (if anything) is being done right now to combat this?

Is it working (circle one)? Yes No

Why or why not?

2. What are the three (3) potential solutions you can think of?

A.

B.

C.

3. Pick your most preferred solution. Why is it the ideal one?

Tell the Story

Define the problem:

→ Why is it happening?

→ Why is that?

→ What is the solution?

Implementation

Now that you have an understanding of the issue and a well-developed solution to the problem, it's time to get moving and actually create change in your community! Here are our tips for getting started.

Assemble a team and create a plan. Include different steps to success (see below) and assign them to different people. Allow as many youth in your community to collaborate to create real change in the community.

EXAMPLE: ACTION STEPS FOR PROJECT TO EMPOWER GIRLS

1. Workshop on girls empowerment
2. Find volunteer youth facilitators
3. Get food and drinks for workshop
4. Set up community center
5. Set date and invite participants
6. Conduct the girls empowerment workshop
7. Get feedback from participants
8. Report of the activity

Getting Your Community Involved

Getting your community involved in creating change is always important for long-term sustainable solutions that benefit everyone. Below are some of the ways to get the community involved:

Town Hall Meetings

A wonderful way to get your community involved in identifying shared struggles and issues is having a town hall meeting with community members and local government officials. First contact local government representatives with this idea, find a venue, and create a list of questions to ask. Make sure there is an even distribution of diversity - men and women, young and old people.

Youth Advisory Council

Both AYANA and NAR believe in the power of youth; often times young people are excluded from decisions that affect them, their families, and/or their schools. Contact your local government if you would be interested in starting one. Make sure to do your research and plan this out thoroughly. You will need to gather at least 10 youth to get this started. Meetings would involve both government officials and the youth as they come together to discuss prevalent issues, provide insight and solutions.

Global Umuganda

Umuganda is about coming together to improve our communities. We strongly believe that local service has a global impact, and hope that your service will inspire you to learn more about your community. Choose one community activity to carry out on Global Umuganda on Saturday/Sunday before the International Day of Youth. Examples of activities include: coming together as a youth group/club to plant trees, cleaning the neighborhood, doing community volunteer work and building a house for a chosen poor family. To organize Global Umuganda in your community you can simply follow the following steps:

1. Set your plan, outcome and the goal you want to achieve.
2. Lead the organization and implementation at your local community.
3. Send invitation letters to the decision makers (local elected officials).
4. Market the Global Umuganda activities through social media.
5. Create and provide a hashtag (#) to use for the for Global Umuganda.
6. Carry out your event of the day. Write short notes on your activity.
7. Include quotes from youth on how this activity inspired them.
8. During the Global Umuganda organize an interactive session with all participants about one chosen Sustainable Development Goal and try to bring new ideas that can create development in your area.

International Youth Day

On 17 December 1999, in its resolution 54/120, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed the recommendation made by the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (Lisbon, 8-12 August 1998) that 12 August be declared International Youth Day.

International Youth Day is an awareness day designated by the United Nations. The purpose of the day is to draw attention to a given set of cultural and legal issues surrounding youth. It happens on August 12. This day will be your opportunity to engage young people in your community. Please see the steps below on how you can organize International Youth Day in your community.

- Take action by organizing events in your community.
- Engage your community by organizing a public meeting, panel discussion or a debate to engage them on finding innovative ways to support youth at the local, national and international level.
- Build partnerships through networks with members of your community
- Spread the word by sharing information about young people's efforts.
- Engage the media by contacting community radio stations to request a slot for a discussion with well-known officials.

- Invite your local musicians and use a variety of fun activities to encourage your community to promote peacebuilding through activities such as song, art, dance, games and plays.
- Organize an event with high level officials such as the Minister of Youth and discuss ways of supporting youth efforts for greater impact.
- Schedule a meeting with policy-makers to discuss how they can involve youth in decision-making processes

Conclusion

We believe that this Youth Innovation Toolkit shall enable youth in their local communities to become not only active but also provide solutions to different challenges that are rising in the current society. In this world where many young people are still struggling to find their job or creating their own income generating activities this guide is designed for you. It will help you to put into practice sustainable development goals (SDGs) closer to your community.

Youth participation in this program, will enable their communities to voice their concerns and develop solutions to some of the issues that their communities are facing. Youth will become contributors to their community, develop a sense of leadership and responsibility as they share with the rest of the community their work and ideas.

The use of this toolkit will be a guide and an important instrument that will allow most young people to increase their networks and experience hence becoming influential members of their community.

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