

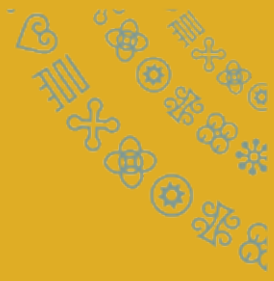


REPORT 2021





R REALIZING AFRICA'S
YOUTH POTENTIAL
**REINFORCING COLLABORATION
ON YOUTH SOCIO-ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES
ACROSS THE CONTINENT**



H.E. Paul Kagame
President
Republic of Rwanda

Leaders cannot lead countries alone. They can only set the tempo and raise the level of ambition by involving the public directly.

This is a key reason why, in Rwanda, we spend a great deal of time investing in, and engaging with young people.

The goal is to make them more self-reliant, confident and innovative than previous generations. Otherwise, there is no way to secure the gains that our country has made in the past 25 years.



**H.E. Nana Addo
Dankwa Akuffo - Addo**
President
Republic of Ghana

Demographic dividends do not come automatically; they have to be earned. To realize the dividend, the African countries have to invest in the empowerment, education and employment of our young people.

With over 40 percent of its working population between the ages of 15 and 24, Africa is the youngest continent in the world. This represents a staggering amount of human capital, and according to the African Economic Outlook, this number is set to double by 2045. Yet too many of them are trapped in poverty with few opportunities for them to learn and to earn a decent living.

Africa's economy is on the edge of a breakthrough, but only if there are systematic investments in human capital.



Hon. Rosemary Mbabazi

Minister of Youth and Culture, Rwanda
Chair of the YouthConnekt Africa

Your generation builds on incredible strides that the continent has made over the last couple of decades. Regional integration is stronger today more than ever, and the Africa Free Trade Area Agreement is at the pinnacle of our accomplishments because its implementation will reveal the true force that Africa is. The realization of One Africa aspired for through this agreement will only be achieved when young people unlock it.

As the generation that is more educated, empowered and connected than previous, it is important that you lead Africa into its next level of growth leveraging innovation, entrepreneurship and collaboration.



Mme. Ahunna Eziakonwa

UNDP Assistant Administrator and
Director, Regional Bureau for Africa

Through our collective resolve to move the continent to a place of empowered lives – for people and nations, we can truly commence a journey that manifests an Africa Beyond Aid.

The Youth Connekt Africa 2021 Summit reminded us that it is possible to change the reality and destiny of this vibrant continent through engaging with each other in a new way.

FOREWORD

The year 2021 was a pivotal moment in quest of furthering the mission and vision of YouthConnekt Africa. Harnessing the demographic dividend through investment in the youth for a socio-economic transformation is near and dear to our hearts. 2021 was an action year, where the vision of establishing a regional knowledge development secretariat for YouthConnekt Africa's initiatives was realized through our partnership with the Government of Rwanda, under the Ministry of Youth and Culture and the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa.

I would like to recognize the visionary leadership of Minister Rosemary Mbabazi, and Mrs. Ahunna Eziakonwa, Assistant Secretary General-Director of the Africa Bureau of UNDP, in their roles of Chair and Co-Chair of the YouthConnekt Africa Steering Committee, for their invaluable support and leadership in steering the YouthConnekt Africa Hub into an impactful and sustainable pan-African youth Hub. They believe in the vision of an interconnected Africa for young people and have dedicated their time and resources to its realization. I'm grateful.

This past year, the YouthConnekt Africa network grew to 25 countries with the joining of Botswana, Gabon, Tchad, Mauritania and Niger. During the year, in an effort to strengthen knowledge development, the YouthConnekt Africa Hub initiated formal engagements with all the member states, acting as a connector of all stakeholders in countries to identify opportunities for development, harmonization of tools, identification of technical and financial resources, sharing of best practices and scaling up efforts.

Additionally, the YouthConnekt Africa launched popular mobilization programs targeted at identifying and supporting Africa's emerging entrepreneurs to take advantage of regional trade leveraging the AfCFTA; through a partnership initiated a regional youth mental health and sexual and reproductive health program; launched an assessment on youth policies and strategies; and co-organized the six edition of the YouthConnekt Africa Summit. We are grateful for the leadership of the Government of Ghana, under H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo Addo for hosting the first post-COVID19 YouthConnekt Africa Summit, which convened over 3000 people in Accra, including 22 Ministers of Youth from various parts of Africa. Our partnership with KOICA, and UNDP contributed significantly to this realization. The Minister of Youth and Sports of Ghana together with the Ghanaian National Youth Council were instrumental in the successful delivery of the 2021 Summit in Accra.

We are also thankful to the Government of Senegal, under H.E. Macky Sall, who hosted the first YouthConnekt Sahel Forum in West Africa. From November 30 to December 2, 2021, about 1000 youth in person and 12000 online from the 10 Sahelian countries gathered in Dakar to participate in the premiere YouthConnekt Sahel Forum under the theme "Connecting Sahelian Youth for Peace and Prosperity". The YouthConnekt Sahel network will be supporting the mission of YouthConnekt Africa to strengthen collaboration with UNDP country offices in the Sahel region in enhancing integrated and inclusive development agenda, which keeps Youth at the centre of SDGs realization. The plan is to engage the Youth Connekt initiatives in each of the 10 Sahel countries to follow up on the key actions emanating from the call to action for implementation.

Another extensive part of our work has been ecosystem building, we set off to ambitiously connect Africa's Changemakers driving the various private sector and civil society initiatives that are addressing the challenges of young people. We are grateful to fruitful partnerships we have established in 2021, including – UNDP West and Central Africa Hub, UNESCO, GGGI, Snake Nation, Imbuto Foundation, Digital Opportunity Trust, ONE Campaign, SDSN Youth Network, Digital Africa, SMART Africa, SDG Centre for Africa, The Prince's Trust International, to name a few.

As we begin this new year, we are excited to announce that the next YouthConnekt Africa Summit will be hosted in Kigali, Rwanda, and will be a greater opportunity to convene, learn, share and commit to delivering better for Africa's Youth. Stay tuned for more information on this year's YouthConnekt Africa's Summit 2022.



Mrs. Oulie Keita

**Executive Director
YouthConnekt Africa Hub**

THE YOUTHCONNEKT AFRICA GENESIS AND STORY



YouthConnekt was inspired by the visionary leadership of H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, who sought to create a Government led platform for young people to contribute to policy dialogues, co designing and informing decisions on the investments and programs aimed at empowering them.

In 2012, for the first time, YouthConnekt platform convened young people, civil society, development partners, private sector to deliver a nationwide innovation and entrepreneurship challenge, and a Meet the President Dialogue, both efforts which since birthed many new initiatives co-created by young people and various stakeholders.

Inspired by the YouthConnekt Rwanda initiative that won the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa Innovation Award in 2013, a number of African countries and UNDP Country Offices demonstrated an increasing interest in establishing a similar model.

In 2016, following recognition by the UNDP, five other countries adopted the YouthConnekt model: The Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Liberia, the Republic of Congo, the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Republic of Uganda.

In 2017, the Government of Rwanda, in partnership with UNDP and UNCTAD, organized the first YouthConnekt Africa Summit which was hosted by H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda.

1. Scaling up of the YouthConnekt initiative to the regional level beyond the six initial countries (Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Uganda);

2. The establishment of a YouthConnekt Africa Hub and offering regional support to national youth programs, and

3. The establishment of a YouthConnekt Empowerment Fund, which would seek to finance youth empowerment initiatives across the continent.

Championed by the Ministry of Youth Rwanda, which was appointed chair of the YouthConnekt Africa Steering Committee, the motion to endorse the YouthConnekt Africa Initiative as a model implementation framework of the Africa Youth Charter was presented and adopted, at the Alger African Union Specialized Technical Committee which convened between October 21st – 25th, 2018.

Following this, the African Union Executive Council, in February 2019, endorsed the YouthConnekt Africa as a model initiative to be scaled and supported the establishment of the YouthConnekt Africa Hub, an independent secretariat to support the scaling of the YouthConnekt Africa initiative.

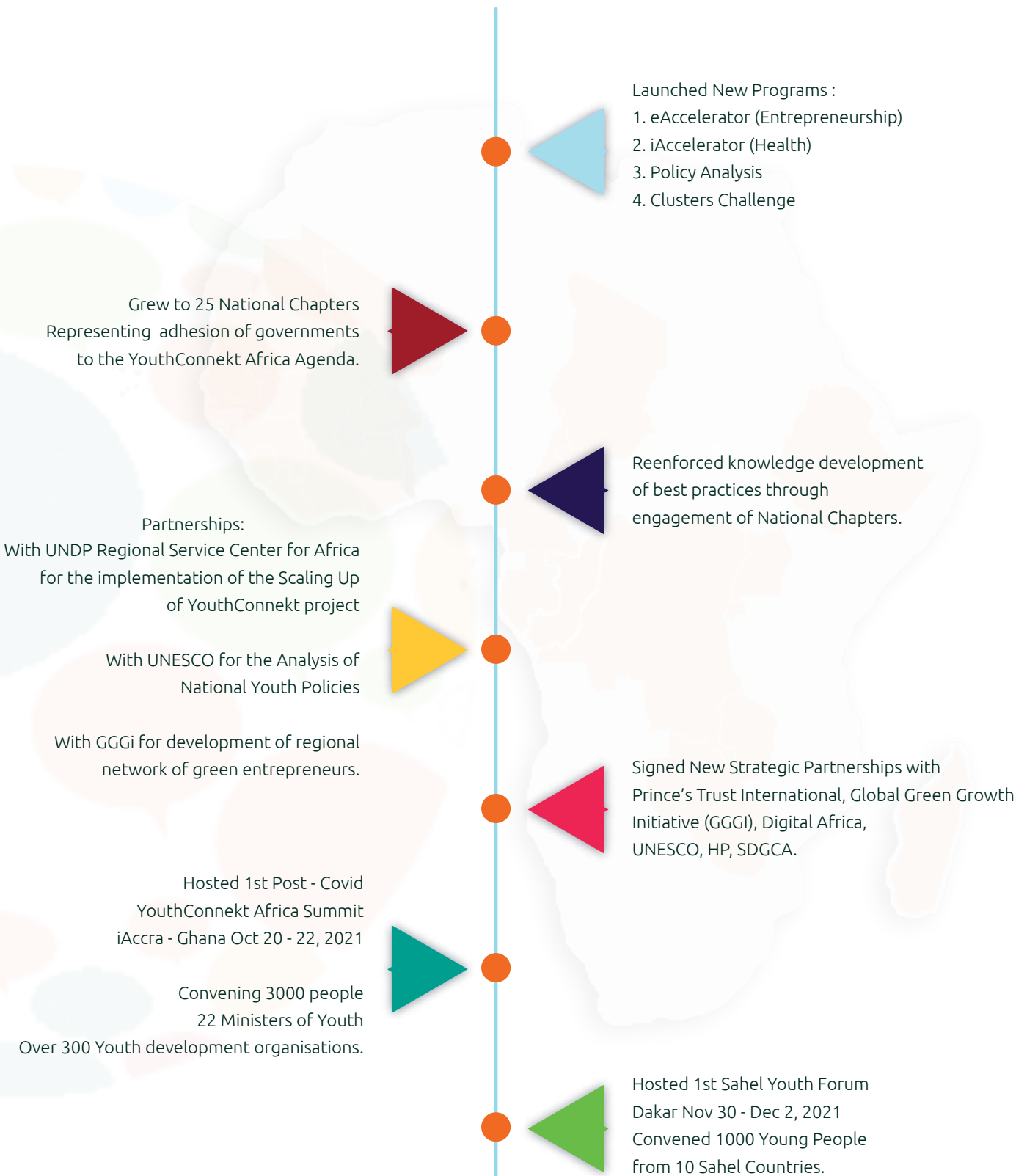
To date YouthConnekt Africa counts 25 member states. The YouthConnekt Africa (Hub) was operationalised in 2020 and is based in Kigali, Rwanda.

YouthConnekt Africa Chapters



1. The Republic of Botswana
2. The Republic of Tchad
3. The Republic of Mauritania
4. The Republic of Mali
5. The Republic of Gabon
6. The Federal Republic of Ethiopia
7. The Republic of Cape Verde
8. The Republic of Sao Tome
9. The Republic of Ghana
10. The Republic of Madagascar
11. The Republic of Cameroun
12. The Republic of Zimbabwe
13. The Republic of Guinee
14. The Republic of Burkina Faso
15. The Republic of Gambia
16. The Republic of Togo
17. The Republic of Senegal
18. The Democratic Republic of Congo
19. The Republic of Congo (Brazzaville)
20. The Republic of Liberia
21. The Republic of Zambia
22. The Republic of Uganda
23. The Republic of Sierra Leone
24. The Republic of Rwanda
25. The Republic of Niger

A YEAR IN REVIEW AT YOUTHCONNEKT AFRICA HUB



YOUTHCONNEKT AFRICA HUB PROGRAMMES



The very objective of this challenge is to amplify the work of national YouthConnekt programmes and co-design impactful activities to empower young people. All member countries were invited to join different clusters based on the strengths of the national YouthConnekt Programme,

current youth development priorities, and overall scope of the initiative in the respective country. A small grant (USD 10,000) would be awarded to member countries to pilot activities under the cluster. This financial support would be a "matching grant" where member countries would also contribute through financial or in-kind contribution

Initially, for 2021 YCA will be supporting 10 flagships initiatives in following clusters:

1. Youth Entrepreneurship
2. Empowering Startups
3. Peace, Security & Resilience
4. Girls in Innovation
5. Leadership and Civic Engagement
6. Green Jobs, Climate, and Circular Economy
7. Youth driving AfCFTA
8. Digital Skills for Future
9. Innovation for SDGs
10. Digital Inclusion

Evaluation Criteria :

The cluster challenge application was evaluated based on the following 6 criteria

1. Partnerships
2. Sustainability
3. Young people benefiting
4. Quality of workplan and proposal
5. Mode of funding
6. Capacity to manage funds

Following a call for proposal applications were received from the following countries:

Botswana, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea, Congo DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Chad, Cameroon, Uganda

Winners of first Cohort:

Botswana - Green Jobs, Climate and Circular Economy

Burkina Faso - Youth Entrepreneurship

Guinee - Girls in Innovation

Sierra Leone - Digital Skills for Future /Innovation for SDGs

Cameroon - Youth in Agriculture

Ghana - Youth driving AfCFTA and Innovation for SDGs



YOUTHCONNEKT AFRICA HUB PROGRAMMES



In 2021, YouthConnekt Africa along with its network of partners set off to launch a regional Export Accelerator program, to accelerate the participation of youth owned enterprises in the new regional marketplace.

The African Free Trade Area Agreement is a groundbreaking policy framework that brings together 54 African countries merging them into a single market of 1.3 Billion people and is expected to create an economic bloc with a combined GDP of USD 3.4 Trillion.

The program would deliver over a period seven months' various services to support these entrepreneurs including: export strategy and access to facilitated new market entry, strengthening of company operations, production efficiency, preparation for growth funding. The Export Accelerator will support entrepreneurs to develop capacities and competences to trade effectively across borders, grow their production capacities, attract financing to sustain this opportunity and will be facilitated with initial engagement to support market access.

Following a two-month call for applications, we received 149 applications, of which 17 were selected based. The entrepreneurs participated in a boot camp alongside the October 2021 YouthConnekt Africa Summit to kick start the program.



The YouthConnekt Africa Hub as a regional ecosystem partner that supports Governments and national ecosystems, is mandated to support in an advisory capacity with the modelling and adaptation of policies that meet the changing demands and contexts of nations.

Through working with national chapters, the YouthConnekt also develops knowledge from emerging best practices and successful programs that have demonstrated saleable solutions to the issues pertaining youth socio-economic transformation in Africa. To date, the YouthConnekt counts 25 national chapters namely: Niger, Botswana, Mauritania, Tchad, Liberia, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, Zambia, The Gambia, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Guinea (Conakry), Madagascar, Sao Tome, Ethiopia, Mali and Rwanda.

It is against this backdrop that YouthConnekt Africa is endeavoring to conduct an analysis on national youth strategies. This national youth analysis will contribute to the development and implementation of policy reforms, institutional capacity building, monitoring and evaluation and resource mobilization. Initial finding of our policy work is shared in the report under the section – Shaping National Youth Strategies.

YOUTHCONNEKT COUNTRY PROGRAMMES ENGAGEMENT

The YouthConnekt Africa started a country engagement Programme to amplify the work of national YouthConnekt programmes, improve communication, and collaborate to co-design activities with its national programmes. In the first quarter, five countries have been engaged to document the various components of YC model being replicated in the field. The details of the engagement are as under:

YOUTHCONNEKT RWANDA

Rwanda is a pioneer of the YouthConnekt Model, has been leading the youth employment creation, civic engagement, and supporting youth innovations in Rwanda.

Focus area: Youth Entrepreneurship, Green Jobs, Civic Engagement, Health

Components: (1) Awards (2) Champions (3) Mentorship (4) Convention (5) Dialogue (6) Hangout (7) Month and Holidays

Achievements:



893 Young entrepreneurs empowered

+25,399 Jobs has been created

640 Young Entrepreneurs have been mentored



11,590 Environment activists trained and engaged through Eco-Brigade programme

2,427 Vulnerable Youth including teen mothers, people with disabilities and youth center trainees, forming 38 groups.

90 Youth Refugee were trained and financially supported



24K Policy advocates have actively participated in policy dialogues and civic engagement discussions –YouthConnekt Convention.

4 Million Youth activists impacted their communities through hands-on activities under the YouthConnekt Month and holidays programme.



70 Innovators in SRH Supported under i-Accelerator programme

70 Artists were trained and are being mentored under Art Rwanda

YOUTHCONNEKT DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

YC DRC is a vibrant programme that promote innovations and partnership for development popularization of youth initiatives and entrepreneurship in Democratic Republic of Congo.

Focus area: Youth Entrepreneurship, Innovations, Civic education, and social cohesion

Components: (1) Civic Education and Social Cohesion (2) Platform YouthConnektRDC (3) Youth Entrepreneurship (4) YouthConnekt Generation

Achievements:



+15 Zoom conferences held on the platform (April-August 2020)

Partnerships & exchanges for the development of youth entrepreneurship through provincial WhatsApp groups.

Organization of the 2nd Fintech edition (Inclusive finance and digital innovation) in December 2020



+100 winners in the TEF 2019 competition after coaching participants within the YouthConnekt DRC network

YOUTHCONNEKT ZIMBABWE


YC Zimbabwe is using innovative approaches to create jobs, enhance skills, provide seed funding, and develop sustainable initiatives and policies that reduce gender inequality.

Focus area: Entrepreneurship- Seed funding/capital for innovative entrepreneurs


Components: (1) Start Up Tour Bus (2) Job Placement (3) Community engagement on national TV and radio

Achievements:




 1,200+ youth reach


 14 Youth Entrepreneurs

 50 Incubants are under incubation process with Ibhuh. Impact –improved income and livelihoods, employment opportunities.



 12 partners have partnered with YC-Zimbabwe particularly private sector partnerships and getting buy-in



 Knowledge sharing with other regional offices (SA chapter)

YOUTHCONNEKT LIBERIA

YC Lb is enhancing economic, social, civic leadership and sustainable livelihoods opportunities; promote peace and reconciliation for Liberian youth through YouthConnekt Liberia initiatives. Further, it aims to increase access to finance and technical assistance for scalable youth-led ventures and innovative youth empowerment initiatives. YC-Liberia prioritizing implementation of following activities.

Decentralization of YCL activities across the 15 Counties through the Youth Centres.
Equipping the centres with logistics
Building YCL staff/team with the right set of HR and skills
Mobilizing resources for YCL Post COVID-19 Work Plan

Focus area: Youth Entrepreneurship, Innovations, Civic education, and social cohesion

Components: (1) I-Forum (2) Ámouwolu (Let's Talk) (3) E-CAMP (4) Youth Month (5) President Young Achiever Awards (PY2A) (6) National Assembly

Achievements:



 Go To Goals Summit

 I-Forum Digital Literacy Program

 Young Entrepreneurship Boot Camp

 Digital Marketing Forum

 Agribusiness Tech Summit

 Digital Marketing Summit

 TEF Entrepreneur Program



YOUTHCONNEKT BURKINA FASO

Burkina Faso is a pioneer of the YouthConnekt Model in West Africa, has been leading the youth employment creation, civic engagement, and supporting youth innovations. The YouthConnekt Burkina is a platform whose general objective is to help improve the employability of 165,940 young people and their civic participation in development per year. The YouthConnekt Burkina is working on following specific objectives:



strengthen the patriotism, volunteering, conscience, and citizen participation of at least 153,600 young people in the work of national construction per year.



develop the entrepreneurial culture of 11,040 young people per year.

strengthen the leadership, dialogue and “living together” of 1,300 young people per year and radio.

YOUTHCONNEKT MADAGASCAR

since its launch in 2020, the YC Madagascar has remain an innovative programme that mobilize actors, mainly national public institutions as the sectorial ministers, private sector (financial institutions, successful businessmen, etc.) and development partners, to collectively and comprehensively address the problem of youth unemployment and their potential to contribute to the economy in Madagascar. The YC Madagascar connect young people with economic opportunities, mainly entrepreneurial skills that lead to business development, access to finances to implement their projects.



UNDP Madagascar proposed the implementation of Youthconnekt to TRAC 2 grant - Budget: 400 000 USD

50 Young entrepreneurs were sponsored to TEF program.

Capacities of 30 young entrepreneurs in Androy were enhanced.



Re-lifting Youth ministry website with Youthconnekt tab to facilitate information access for youth.



Two young delegates from Madagascar took part in the YouthConnekt Summit in Kigali.

A girls' summit was organized by Youth First and supported by UNDP and other partners aiming to foster young girls' leadership.

Support for youth entrepreneurship as part of the response to COVID-19/Informal sector (250 000 USD / 150 beneficiaries)



Youth capacity building and coaching in transforming biodegradable waste into green coal” (50000USD/ 100 beneficiaries)

Informal sector recovery and resilience through green and blue value chain development” (on pipeline)



INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: MICRO ASSESSMENT OF THE YOUTHCONNEKT AFRICA HUB

In 2021, the YouthConnekt Africa Hub underwent a Financial Management Micro Assessment as a UN Implementing Partner. This is an important process to becoming a reputable organization that can partner with various organisations. YouthConnekt Africa Hub was assessed to be Moderate Risk for its financial management capacity.

The assessment identified key areas of institutional capacity strengthening on which the YouthConnekt Africa will act on in 2022 and going forward to build a stronger, competent and transparent organization.

IN PHOTOS :

YOUTHCONNEKT AFRICA HUB FORGING PARTNERSHIPS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Oct 2021: Mrs. Oulie Keita, YouthConnekt Africa Executive Director and H.E Wamkele Mene, Secretary General of AFCFTA at AFCFTA Secretariat



Jun 2021: Mrs. Oulie Keita, YouthConnekt Africa Executive Director and UNDP RSCA Office



Jun 2021: Mrs. Oulie Keita, YouthConnekt Africa Executive Director Meets with H.E Monique Nsanzabagana, Deputy Chair of the African Union



Dec 2021: YouthConnekt Africa & Digital Africa Teams at MoU signing ceremony



Oct 2021: Youth Ministers and Senior Government Officials at the YouthConnekt Africa Summit



Oct 2021: (In the steering committee meeting) Hon. Rosemary Mbabazi with Mrs. Oulie Keita

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SHAPING STRONGER NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGIES



While YouthConnekt Africa is founded on the principle of reinforcing regional collaboration and knowledge development on youth development issues, we believe that implementation is done and should be reinforced at local and national levels.

Following the adoption of the AU Youth Charter, in 2006, African member states were called to undertake the necessary steps, under their constitutional processes to adopt the legislature and other measures to put the charter into effect.

The AU Youth Charter recommends, amongst other things, the adoption of comprehensive national youth policies in consultation with youth people, establishment of mechanisms in national development planning that address the issues of development concerning youth and coordination mechanisms that ensure continued participation of youth in policy development and implementation.

In 2017, the African Union developed a roadmap for Africa to realize and harness its demographic dividend. This roadmap would serve as an accountability framework to assess national and regional progress to youth empowerment. The framework is presented under four pillars: (1) Employment and Entrepreneurship, (2) Education and Skills Development, (3) Health and Well-Being, and (4) Rights, Governance and Youth Empowerment

Informed by this, and the various recent consultations that the YouthConnekt platform has held, we present five key lenses through which we recommend Governments and other stakeholders to consider in reviewing how well we are delivering for youth.

Africa in 2021

Key Considerations

Billion
1.3

Africa is becoming the world single largest free trade area, deepening Africa's integration into regional and global markets.

Years
19

Median age in Africa

40%

is aged 15yrs and younger as opposed to 26% globally.

4/10

Africans are connected to the Web

Millions
450

Africa is home to over 450 Million young people aged 15 - 35 years.

Millions
468

Estimated Urban Population

5 KEY LENSES FOR THE ANALYSIS NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGIES



Youth access to infrastructure and new technologies
Youth skilling and employment
Youth entrepreneurship and access to markets
Youth leadership and representation
Youth Well Being

YOUTH ACCESS TO INFRASTRUCTURE AND NEW DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Within the last 25 years, the development of the internet has revolutionized the world, making it a more connected village, and breaking barriers to access of information and services. Africa has been on a journey of developing the infrastructure required to make this new gold accessible to its people.

In 2020, it was estimated that 43% of Africans (Statista, December 2020) have access to the internet, with mobile penetration reaching 46% of the population (GSMA, 2020).

Additional to this, is the need to access electricity, for which the World Bank estimates that 54.3% of Sub-Saharan Africa was yet to have access to this fundamental infrastructure.

With technology becoming a bedrock for access to skills, markets and public services, it is important to evaluate how existing policies are inclusive of youth access to digital skills, infrastructure (electricity, internet) and devices that ensure they are not left behind by this revolution. Social media, and other digital platforms are making possible to reach people at an unforeseeable scale with skills, connection to local, regional and global digital markets for entrepreneurs, and various public services.

Young people stand to benefit from this revolution, by accessing without limits to opportunities, and by innovating and creating new platforms relevant to their markets. In light of emerging trends and the global COVID19 pandemic, it is eminent to revisit youth policies and programs on the continent to ensure its adaptability and relevance to date.

YOUTH SKILLING AND EMPLOYMENT

Africa is the only region globally recognised for the exponential and rapid expansion of its labor force. At the heart of every government and development stakeholder in Africa is the concern of creating sustainable employment for young people.

Various studies claim that Africa needs 12 - 15 million new decent jobs every year to meet the demand. In 2019, the International Labor Organisation estimates that 34 million people were unemployed in sub-Saharan Africa, and that 1 in 5 young African was neither in employment, education nor training.

Closely tied to the issue of meeting the demand for jobs, is skilling young people to meet the expectations of 21st century jobs. It is imperative that Africa leads through local and national actors to quickly turn the tide by enabling a faster and more effective skills development that corresponds to the current and future job market.

Generation Unlimited, in a recent report recommends that countries can more effectively align education with relevant skills by being mindful of the digital future, developing technical skills that are coupled with essential life skills: creativity, communication, critical thinking, and problem solving.

Agile and evidence based policies are required, in addition to bringing all stakeholders to the table, most importantly the private sector and academia.

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ACCESS TO MARKETS

Entrepreneurship is seen as one sure way to enable Africa to leapfrog some of its development challenges whilst also creating new avenues for Africa's youth employment and boost economic growth. Entrepreneurship, however, requires the right policies to be in place in order to be successful. A significant portion of Africa's youth participates today in the informal sector, estimated to generate 85.6% of all employment, ILO, 2018.

Like never before, youth development and employment policies should look at enabling access to markets and services for entrepreneurs, reaching even the informal sector to thrive. Additionally, Africa should unlock the potential of emerging digital economy opportunities that promise income and employment for Africa's youth. Africa can untap great value from engaging the skills and workforce of young people in Agriculture and its value chains.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

One of the founding principles of the YouthConnekt Africa is the fundamental ideal that young people should be represented in decision making, policy making and design of programs that are invested for them. With young people 15 - 35 years constituting over a third of Africa's population, estimated at 1.3 Billion in 2021, those under 35 represented over 995 Million in 2020 (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2020) - making the continent the youngest in the world.

It is imperative therefore that local, national and regional decision making bodies reflect this, in the number of young people who are in decision making capacity, and the efforts made to continuously engage youth.

Today Africa is challenged in some regions by political instability, and the onset of infiltrating terrorist groups. Young people should be empowered to shift this development, by knowing the role they can play to reset their nations and the region to stability.

The YouthConnekt promotes further regular policy consultations of young people that can inform effective and timely reviews of policies, programs and investments that affect them. This is done addressing practical issues such as policies addressing access to land, input and services that affect the agriculture sector, access to employment, financing and markets for entrepreneurs. This also engages them in having veto in the decisions affecting development priorities, and their engagement and participation in designing more sustainable and green development plans.

YOUTH WELL BEING

Young people's health is key to ensuring that they are productive members of society. Young people in Africa are affected by substance abuse, HIV infections, STIs and unplanned early pregnancies.

An increasingly alarming concern that policy makers should be drawn to is youth mental health.

To attain several of the set national and regional development outcomes, it is crucial to address several of the issues related to mental health, which include poor mental health literacy, high levels of stigma, insufficient knowledge on available mental health services, and limited capacity of the mental health system.

The issue of dedicated policy, programs and investments made to ensure young people can access education and services affecting their Sexual Reproductive Health, and mental health is essential in evaluating how well young people in the various countries are served and empowered to make the right choices.



**ECOSYSTEM BUILDING
AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES
OF PRACTICE ON YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA**

Today the YouthConnekt Africa prides itself in being a network that counts 25 African Memberstates, representing the commitments of Government to collaboration in increasing opportunities to young people. YouthConnekt Africa is also building an ever growing network of over 300 non-governmental organizations that are working directly with young people, and creating data that inform

With a fast growing young population, Africa is expected to be home to 332 Million youth aged 15- 24 by 2030, over 450 Million by 2055. Africa's population in 2021 is expected to have crossed the 1,3 Billion mark, with a median age of 19 years. Africa's youth is the continent's most important demographic representing over a third of its population, and its most important resource.

As such it is within our mandate to develop knowledge and disseminate best practices. This section of the report, the first of its kind, shares an update on partnerships secured in 2022 and brief highlights on practices of various organizations which joined our efforts in 2021. In 2022 and beyond we will explore how to create more opportunities for more knowledge sharing and knowledge development around the practices of youth development



The ambitious targets of YouthConnekt will only be reached if the initiative is able to bring key partners, donors, and stakeholders on board. While member states play an important role in the implementation to the programs, the success of YCA is driven by its ability to build impactful partnerships and link them with its country chapters across the continent. YCA owes its success to its close collaboration with its partners. Since its establishment, the YCA Secretariat was cognizant that partnerships are critical for the success of the YouthConnekt initiative. As such, the Hub is focused on identifying, engaging, and working with experienced and prominent partners at every stage for the implementation of the initiative as well as for every component.

PARTNERSHIP & RESOURCE MOBILIZATION STRATEGY

YCA developed a new Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy (PRMS) aimed to develop new partnerships and strengthen existing ones, as well as to mobilize additional resources to support its activities across the continent. The goal of the 2021 PRMS is to ensure that YouthConnekt continues to have impact aligned with its vision and increase awareness and commitment for its continental blueprint for youth empowerment and transformation.

Partnership with GGGI to promote and advance green entrepreneurship in Africa: YCA is joining force with the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) to promote green entrepreneurship, drive responsible environmental leadership and identify innovative solutions to enhance agricultural productivity, agro-industrialization, and environmental conservation efforts.

Partnership with UNFPA to promote youth health and wellbeing across Africa: YCA is partnering with the United Nations Populations Fund to scale-up the iAccelerator Programme, which focuses on adolescents and youth issues, more specifically on youth-friendly services, and youth participation and leadership. Collaboration aims at identifying and disseminating of policies aimed at addressing youth challenges related to sexual and reproductive health, family planning, maternal health, and others.

Partnership with Snake Nation to improve young Africans access to the creative and digital economy: Snake Nation, a disruptive FinTech and Media company based in Atlanta, GA and Cape Town, South Africa and focused on connecting millennials to the creative economy. The YCA-SN partnership will focus on bringing creative economy access to the forefront of economic impact programs for youth across the continent, including incubating and accelerating young Africans in the content (e.g. poetry, short film, photography etc.) and technology sectors.

Partnership with SDSN Youth to advance the SDGs through policy work and youth-led action: YCA is partnering with SDNS Youth to capture, document and share successful youth policies and assess their impact; capture, document and share successful youth policies; and promote volunteerism and its contribution to community and national development.

Partnership with UNDP West and Central Africa in advance the youth development agenda in the Sahel region: the YCA-UNDP partnership in the region will supporting the Sahel Youth Programme, through programmes to provide youth with education, skill development and entrepreneurship/employment, and civic participation opportunities.

Partnership with SMART Africa to accelerate the development of vibrant innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems that enable job creation for African youth across YouthConnekt National Chapters.: This partnership will support member states to understand priorities and opportunities for development of digital ecosystems and business models, and deliver tech enabled education and employment readiness opportunities for young entrepreneurs.

Partnership with the SDGs Center for Africa to support in the piloting of the SDG education programmes for young African entrepreneurs on selected SDGs through YCA network across Africa; provide technical advice and capacity building of countries across Africa to design integrate SDGs component in their programmes; and promote and share continental-wide progress on the SDGs and how youth can accelerate this process.

Partnership with UNESCO to Identify and assess the level of implementation of national youth strategies in countries across Africa; enhance the indicator and monitoring framework to better guide decision making and increase holistic impact; and to advocate for best practices, knowledge management and sharing. The partnership also aims to enhance collaboration on activities related to youth elections and civic participation.

Partnership with NEPAD to explore collaboration with the NEPAD 100,000 MSMEs initiative and leverage their Digital Academy for upcoming YCA innovation and entrepreneurship programs, as well as collaborate on policy work surrounding youth economic empowerment and civic policy.

Partnership with Digital Africa to extend virtual learning opportunities to young African entrepreneurs through the Digital Africa Academy, develop innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems in various African nations and to organize the participation of young entrepreneurs at the Africa France Summit in 2021.



THE GHANA NATION BUILDERS CORPS

Launched in May 2018 by H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, the Nation Builders Corps programme (NABCO) is a major government initiative aimed at addressing graduate unemployment. The focus of the initiative is directed at bringing about efficiency in the delivery of certain services within the public and private sectors. Among them are health, industry, education, agriculture, governance, technology, and revenue mobilization.

The distinguishing element is its concentration on addressing the growing phenomenon of unemployment and disillusionment among young people leaving tertiary institutions. The Programme was open to all Ghanaians who at least have a post-secondary diploma to a degree in any discipline;

and have completed their national service. Graduates apply virtually, with shortlists made based on set criterion. Once successful, an applicant receives a three-year contract, training and posting as a Nation Builder. They receive GH¢700 (~ USD120) stipend every month for a period of 3 years. The trainees are distributed to each of the 275 Constituencies in Ghana. Altogether 100,000 graduates were enrolled for the program.

Under NABCO, tertiary graduates are offered a range of training and orientation to equip them with the requisite work tools. They are deployed around the country to render service to critical public sectors and government initiatives. Additionally, some private sector organisations onboard NABCO trainees.

IMPACT TO DATE

Launched In

2018

Absorbed

100,000

In Trainees

44%

Hired by
Government parastatals

THE SEVEN GHANA NABCO MODULES

EDUCATE GHANA

Placement in the basic education sector

HEAL GHANA

Healthcare delivery in deprived and rural communities. (Nurses and other healthcare workers)

FEED GHANA

Agricultural extension services to farmers

REVENUE GHANA

Implementation of tax reform program to increase revenue generation

DIGITIZE GHANA

Digitization of Government services

ENTREPRISE GHANA

New industry Development

CIVIC GHANA

District and Constituency level services

THE ART RWANDA – UBUHANZI INITIATIVE

Addressing youth unemployment through Art



Championed by H.E. Jeannette KAGAME, The First Lady of the Republic of Rwanda and the Chairperson of Imbuto Foundation, ArtRwanda –Ubuhanzi initiative aims at identifying and supporting talented young creatives age between 18 to 35 to use their talents and turn them into a viable business assets.

The program targets in and out of school youth with talents in the following art disciplines:

- Plastic arts (painting, sculpture, drawings)
- Dance & music
- Fashion
- Acting & drama
- Cinematography & photography
- Literature

The Initiative launched in 2018, is a collaboration between Imbuto Foundation and key stakeholders namely the Ministry of Youth and Culture, UNDP and KOICA

IMPACT TO DATE

Launched In
2018

2400
Young
Creatives Auditions

68
Incubated

Over
\$100,000
Generated from
sales of Artwork

567
jobs created

The initiative is implemented in the following phases:

NationWide Roadshow Auditions

1 Month Nationwide Roadshow;
The auditions are setup with modern technologies and it broadcast on the national TV;
Experienced artists are on the various panels reviewing art;
Artists are supported to get to audition centres and receive various services on arrival.

Incubation

Once selection is complete artists undergo incubation underwhich tailored training programs are made available to them program;
Artists get matched to industry leaders for mentorship and feedback sessions on their creations;
An emphasis is placed on enabling them to develop business acumen;
6 months incubation program at the ArtRwanda Centre.

Access to Market

Artists leverage ArtRwanda modern and centrally located selling points and digital webstore to introduce their products to the market.
Biannual exhibitions and conferences to showcase art creation and nurture international partnerships

DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY TRUST: SPEAKING OUT, REACHING OUT



During the height of COVID-19, Digital Opportunity Trust mobilized their channels of youth in Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda, and Uganda to conduct a unique youth-led investigation into the impacts of the pandemic,

and into the remarkable examples of resilience exhibited through the creativity and innovation of youth. DOT captured the experiences and perspectives of over 1,500 young people, youth focused organization and other stakeholders. Bringing forward youth perspectives to the forefront of community development at a time when the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized must be made visible. The findings formed the conclusion and recommendation for youth serving stakeholders.

- Youth Serving community organizations highlighted a need for mental health services, particularly for the most vulnerable youth.
- Youth entrepreneurs urgently need financial support to help their businesses survive as well as business training and coaching to help them address immediate challenges and prepare for post pandemic growth.



SPEAKING OUT, REACHING OUT

YOUTH-LED RECOMMENDATIONS

- Design with us, not for us: Involve young women when planning and designing pandemic recovery efforts.
- More organizations need to meaningfully support and engage with the leadership youth are taking in their communities.
- We need networks and support that strengthen our skills, abilities, and capacity for resilience.
- Trust that when youth have access to capital, we will invest it back into our communities.
- Organizations that support youth need to coordinate efforts. There are gaps and overlaps that mean we aren't always well-served.
- The digital divide is very visible to us, among us, and in our communities. Access to digital opportunities is unequal and must be addressed.

Digital Opportunity Trust

DOT is a youth-led movement of daring social innovators who have the tools, knowledge, and networks to create opportunities and transform their own communities. DOT supports youth to become innovators and leaders, and to create and apply digital solutions that have positive impact in their communities.

INCUBATING SOCIAL IMPACT ENTREPRENEURS



Segal Family Foundation (SFF) seeks to promote the strength and impact of social enterprises in Sub-Saharan African countries. SFF believes that there is an opportunity to draw on the efforts of the government, private sector, local organizations, social entrepreneurs, INGOs, funders and investors to build a robust response to the continent's most pressing challenges.

The foundation also has confidence in the abilities of local visionary leaders to design and implement effective solutions tailored to the needs of the communities they serve. This core belief has led to the establishment of the Social Impact Incubator in Burundi in 2013. Since 2016, the Social Impact Incubator has expanded the program in Malawi and partnership with Robert Bosch Stiftung since 2018. In May 2019, Segal Family Foundation and Robert Bosch Stiftung launched the Social Impact Incubator in Rwanda and in Tanzania.

Segal Family Foundation launched the first cohort of the Social Impact Incubator in Burundi in 2013, and the pilot was tested with 12 organizations at the time. The incubator ran in Burundi for three years, and, as a result of the program, nearly \$2 million USD has been invested in the SII champions, manifesting a wave of leveraged funding amongst various funders active in the Burundian ecosystem. The first successful pilot in Burundi inspired SFF to start the incubator program in Malawi, Rwanda and Tanzania where, through its convening power, the Foundation has been able to attract more funding and investments towards the enterprises to support their growth and scale. Currently, there over 100 Social Impact Incubator alumni champions who are impressively shaping their communities and beyond.



The Social Impact Incubator serves as a catalyst creating an environment for innovators to amplify and grow their impact, by providing tools, building networks, and connecting them to investment. We believe that supporting visionary leaders builds strong and stable organizations and enterprises that create a more cohesive ecosystem for young social entrepreneurs to be successful.

Segal Family Foundation is a private philanthropic foundation begun by Mr. Barry Segal in 2008. Mr. Segal's first trip to Rwanda inspired him to devote all his remaining wealth to supporting visionary organizations in Africa working across different sectors including health, education, technology, agriculture, climate resilience and circular economy to name a few. Segal Family Foundation now supports over 200 partners across 20 countries, funding over \$100 million dollars in grants to date. Our grantee partners are visionary social entrepreneurs finding scalable solutions to Sub-Saharan Africa's most pressing challenges.

THE ROLE OF PEER TO PEER MODELING IN THE AGE OF INCREASED SOCIO-ECONOMIC PRESSURES AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE



Our flagship program, Barcamp Ghana, is building a network of changemakers, doers and entrepreneurs. Since December 2008, we have organized over 150 Barcamps - free networking forums - in Ghana, impacting over 16000 participant

A BarCamp is a user-generated conference (or unconference). It is an open, participatory work shop-event, whose content is provided by participants. They bring together for an event of learning, sharing, networking and mentoring. They happen on Saturdays and participation is about 100-400 based on location.

The goal of the Barcamps are to help Ghanaians learn about the issues that affect them, generate ideas for development, network and partner with others who have similar interests and improve or start businesses and projects. we ensure as many participants to inform, educate and inspire others.

STRENGTHENING YOUNG WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURES AND EMPLOYABILITY



With the aim of strengthening youth employability, and knowing that young women are generally more affected by unemployment and underemployment. YouthConnekt for Women, an initiative of YouthConnekt Guinee aims at supporting women entrepreneurs through training, access to financing, access to new markets and mentorship.

Realizing that no single stakeholder alone can address the issue of creation of employment. Therefore, entrepreneurship is a key pathway.

The training helps the women learn key skills applicable to their business for better management and for growth. The training also seeks to encourage them to aspire for growth, building their confidence to seek financing for growth.

In this photo:

Safi Emma Diakate, of Emma Afro Fashion is a beneficiary and a 2021 Export Accelerator Entrepreneur

The program has so far trained 600 women entrepreneurs in rural Guinee, supported by 40 mentors. The program is supported digitally. The program’s initial aspirations were exceeded by the demand of services during the training roadshow that found women in their home towns for training.

In addition to this important intervention YouthConnekt Guinee has launched a series “**Café des opportunités**” to increase networking and access to information for young women seeking to access employment and growth in their careers.



EMPOWERING STUDENT UNIONS IN AFRICA FOR PRODUCTIVE ACTIVISM



The All-Africa Students Union is the umbrella student organization for all students in Africa and of African descent. Established in 1972, AASU has been at the forefront of fighting against all manner of injustices, especially those against democratic processes and infringements on the right to access education at all levels. AASU has membership across all the 54 African countries. Thus, it can mobilize at grassroots level by working directly with its member Unions who are spread out across the African region. It is important to note that the histories of these member unions inspire the work and direction of the All-Africa Students Union.

To protect the education of boys and girls on the continent during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, AASU ran a campaign, as part of the Coalition's Gender Flagship under the auspices of UNESCO, to ensure that the education of particularly African girls is protected. Already, we knew of the widening inequalities that existed in education especially for young girls who have been subjected to early child marriages and have suffered deliberate exclusion from education.

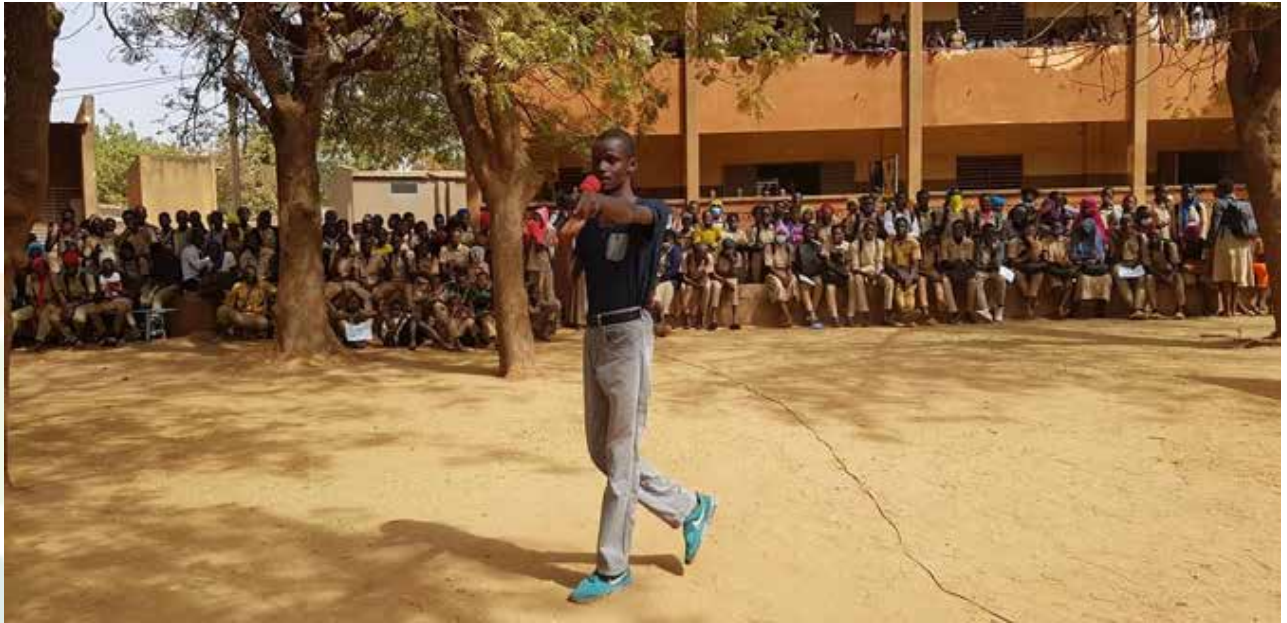
In partnership with UNESCO and the 100 Million Campaign, we launched the Africa Girls Back to School Campaign in 2020 which engaged over 60 youth and student activists across Africa. The campaign included writing petitions to community leaders and decision makers, social media engagements, awareness creation and multi stakeholder engagements. This was to ensure that governments and other actors take intentional actions to protect girls and their education.

Key successes were recorded in Kenya and Uganda where decision makers committed to act to protect the education of girls. Awareness was also created in the local communities to ensure that parents insist on the education of their girl child.

50 percent Fee-Reduction Campaign

With the outset of the COVID 19 pandemic, economic hardships affected many families, which meant a struggle to feed and even fund the education of their children. Thus this campaign was to ask governments to cut fees down by 50 percent to ensure that students from such backgrounds remained in school. Our major success was recorded in Cape Verde where the government agreed on the same

THE ROLE OF CIVISM IN YOUNG PEOPLE FOR STRONGER AFRICAN SOCIETIES.



Each year, YouthConnekt Burkina Faso organises nationwide camps called the Burkina Youth Days. These camps aim at creating spaces of dialogue and exchange on experiences in order to increase young people's engagement at citizens and to strengthen their employability.

In 2021, 600 young people in 13 different regions of Burkina Faso participated in the Burkina Youth Days. The young people are mobilised through the National Youth Council, representing the various regional youth councils, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Civic Education, the City Council of Ouagadougou and regional offices for youth entrepreneurship development.

These engagement address the following:

- 🌍 Dialogue on the country's history and cultural values, addressing values for peace, tolerance, patriotism especially in light of regional insecurity.
- 🌍 Strengthening of national unity and solidarity
- 🌍 Exchange on opportunities for youth entrepreneurship shared by youth entrepreneurs.

The national chapter also conducts a roadshow in schools where it hosts Theatre Forums under themes such as – Civism, Citizenship, respect of public good, patriotism and promotion of peace.

Through these theater shows, that are played by young people, various educational and sensitization messages are transmitted. Young people learn about how to live in society, how to live out patriotism under various circumstances, conflict resolution, and building aspirations for nation's peace and prosperity. The theater shows, have proven very effective in engaging young people.

TALENT4STARTUPS – A DIGITAL AFRICA INITIATIVE



After analyzing carefully all issues which innovative entrepreneurs are confronted with, Digital Africa came to the conclusion that project financing, while essential for any project to survive, is not enough: it is necessary to adopt a holistic approach and leverage all aspects that are essential to the development of digital entrepreneurs.

How it works

Digital Africa is set to launch a scholarship program focused on developing young Africans to work in tech and digital jobs. The trained youth will then be matched with startups actively recruiting to ensure employability. This program should also enable digital education organizations to better evaluate the impact and effectiveness of their programs.

In practical terms, the aim of this pilot phase is to:

- 🍌 Provide 250 scholarships for young people per year, in 12 countries: Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Cameroon, DRC, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, Rwanda
- 🍌 Involve 5 key partners - code schools, boot camps, master classes and committed digital pure players
- 🍌 Achieve a target of 70%+ placement rate

Talent 4 Startups is a program co-funded by Make It and the German government.

Launched in 2018 with the mission to equip African tech entrepreneurs with capabilities to design and scale-up ground-breaking innovations for the real economy, Digital Africa is now a € 130 million initiative bringing together various partners - startups, academia, incubators, institutional financiers, venture capitalists, technology clusters - and all committed to African digital entrepreneurs.

Digital Africa's model is similar to that of a super-aggregator of data, capacities and opportunities - thanks to a unique ability to multiply financing, training and support for entrepreneurs, or even sensitization activities. Developing skills, creating knowledge-based communities, contributing to the emergence of a regulatory environment conducive to innovation in Africa, offering technical assistance, financing projects and businesses, or easing access to market: our value proposition, which is unique to the African tech ecosystem, is precisely this ability to activate all the relevant levers.

INCLUSIVE FINANCING OF AFRICA'S BOURGEONING ENTREPRENEURS



With business operations turned upside down around the globe, with by the global COVID19 pandemic, the African Entrepreneur Collective have revised their service offerings. In both format and content, entrepreneurs needed – and received – new services to push beyond the new economic challenges of COVID-19.

In the past 18 months, the African Entrepreneur Collective and partners worked together to create new financial products – COVID Relief Grants, Islamic banking products, and refinanced loan terms – to ensure capital flowed where needed. Prioritizing financial inclusion in a year of constrained resources led to positive impact for African Entrepreneur Collective entrepreneurs and their communities.

African Entrepreneur Collective developed digital tools and expanded access to technology, making it possible for clients everywhere to continue receiving services with digital training, a new loan app, and smart phone distribution.

African Entrepreneur Collective offers access to affordable capital at the right time to ensure that businesses can grow. The organization has grown to become the largest lender to refugee entrepreneurs in Africa, and provide Islamic banking products to ensure that we are inclusive of all the communities we serve. With a 97% repayment rate, they are unlocking capital for those who need it most.

African Entrepreneurs Collective (AEC) supports entrepreneurs with micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises including refugee entrepreneurs across East Africa. From idea stage businesses to established companies, we meet entrepreneurs where they are.

Currently operating in 13 offices across Rwanda, Kenya and Ethiopia, our team of over 180 staff have served over 32,929 entrepreneurs who have in turn been able to create over 23,954 jobs over the last 10 years with over \$48 million revenue growth.



Snake Nation is setting up creative society in universities as we believe that universities have a key role to play in promoting the creative economy - fosters economic growth, job creation and export earnings while promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development.

Africa is witnessing a spike in Gender Based Violence (GBV) related offences and femicide, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and nation-wide lockdown. Sexual violence has been a long-standing issue. Similarly, there have been students actively challenging this violence from as early as the 1980s.

Female students don't feel safe behind the campus walls, Snake Nation X CPUT GBV hackathon was produced with the aimed of finding digital solutions to fight the scourge of gender-based violence (GBV).

- Gender-based violence is a shocking reality for so many women in South African
- 51% of women in SA say they've experienced GBV, with 76% of men saying they've perpetrated GBV at one stage in their lives (2010 Gauteng sample). A similar study revealed that one in five women report that they have experienced violence at the hands of a partner.
- In 2019/20, 53 293 sexual offences were reported, an average of 146 per day, up from 52 420 in 2018/19. Most of these were cases of rape. Of this the police recorded 42 289 rapes in 2019/20, up from 41 583 in 2018/19, an average of 116 rapes each day (SAPS Crime Stats).
- In 2019/20, a total of 2 695 women were murdered in South Africa. This means a woman is murdered every three hours. Femicide is five times higher in South Africa than the global average, with South Africa having the fourth-highest female interpersonal violence death rate out of the 183 countries listed by the WHO in 2016.

The language that the media chooses to employ while reporting rape and sexual violence can heavily influence the way its audience views gender-based violence. It can determine whether an incident of rape is viewed in a way that reproduces victim blaming narratives and rape culture, or in a way that affirms the agency of women and girls, and their right to safety and freedom from violence. How the media chooses to frame gender-based violence has direct ramifications on how society understands the phenomenon.

Snake Nation joint Forces with Cape Peninsula University of Technology asking students to explore ways of making campuses and communities safer, investigate how best to respond to threats, and produce tech ideas that could save lives. Using both technology for creating tech solutions and creating content to drive awareness.

CPUT students were given 24hours to build solutions to fight GBV - on a GBV Hackathon, Creatives and media students participated on a creative content challenge, the winner from the competition showcased her work at the State Theatre in Tshwane (the largest theatre complex in Africa)

ACCELERATING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL TRADE (FEATURE YOUTHCONNEKT CARAVAN)

The YouthConnekt Mentorship - Caravan, initially called the YouthConnekt Innovators' caravan, is an annual trade facilitation mechanism that identifies ready for growth and export youth-owned companies and supports with new market exploration and exchange of knowledge between entrepreneurs in the same industry by the Ministry of Youth and Culture, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

The first edition was held in Nairobi, Kenya from 15th - 21st June 2019. The second edition took place following the successful ratification of the aFCFTA, at a time when different countries were gradually reopening their borders following successful COVID19 vaccination campaigns, alongside the fourth (4th) edition of the YouthConnekt Africa Summit held in Accra, Ghana.

Following the successful first edition that brought 50 YouthConnekt Awardees (in different categories and editions), the second edition that gave opportunity to 30 young innovators travel to Accra, Ghana to learn and share experience with their peer entrepreneurs and other industry actors.

Objectives

- Instill export capabilities among Rwandan young entrepreneurs.
- Encourage innovation and creativity aligned to intra-Africa trade opportunities.
- Create new business and investment opportunities for Rwandan entrepreneurs across Africa.
- Establish Intra-Africa Trade and cooperation among African young entrepreneurs.



AN ALIGNED ECOSYSTEM IS PERTINENT IN SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURS



Without the right environment, entrepreneurs are at a great disadvantage. The presence of strong policy frameworks derived from national strategies is key in the establishment of a supportive ecosystem for entrepreneurs. This environment is a collection of efforts from many actors including the government, development partners, entrepreneurial support organizations and financial institutions.

To support this, ESP has built its business model around enabling SMEs directly while also working as strategic advisors to key institutions and stakeholders in the ecosystem which has allowed for a clear understanding of the direct effect of strong, evidence-based national strategies on entrepreneurship. Strong national strategies with clear priorities shape not only policy but also financing opportunities. Aligning SME support efforts with these strategic priorities ensures entrepreneurs are benefiting from an optimal operating environment.

Each of these players serve a unique purpose in the establishment of this environment. Whether it's the provision of financial support or the establishment of a robust policy framework, when these stakeholders are aligned, entrepreneurs and their communities alike benefit a great deal.

In the past decade, ESP has leveraged this approach in supporting over 1000 entrepreneurs working across sectors such as Agriculture, Service and Manufacturing across over 20 countries in Africa.

ESP is an advisory and investment group working across Africa with regional offices and operations in Ivory Coast and Rwanda. It is organized into two practice areas to deliver on varied aspects of our mission. ESP believes that when entrepreneurs are provided with intelligent capital; the right mix of technical and financial support they can start and scale their businesses and they are able to directly impact their communities through job creation.

YOUTHCONNEKT AFRICA SUMMIT
FROM OCTOBER 20 – 22, 2021
ACCRA, GHANA

“

**AFRICA BEYOND AID:
POSITIONING THE YOUTH FOR THE
POST COVID ECONOMY AND AfCFTA
OPPORTUNITIES**

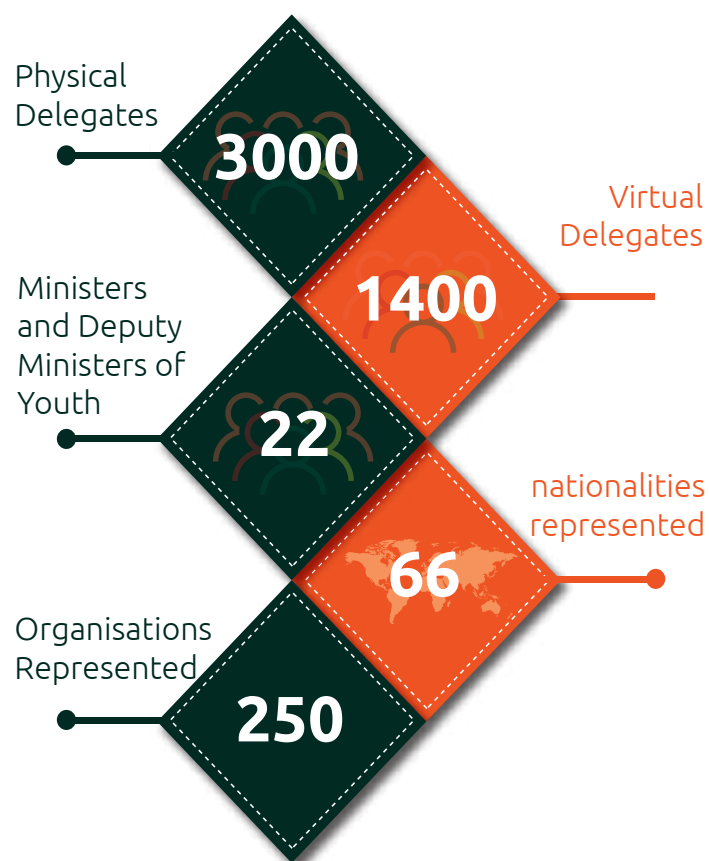
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THE 2021 YOUTHCONNEKT AFRICA SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS

The YouthConnekt Africa Summit is an annual convening that connects youth from across the continent and beyond with policy influencers, political and industry leaders, as well as public, private and development sector institutions to engage, design, and accelerate youth empowerment efforts at the continent level.

The 2021 edition of the YouthConnekt Africa Summit is the first large continental convening focused solely on drawing stakeholders together to address the most pressing youth development demands within this post COVID19 pandemic period which has not only Africa through the loss of human life, but also set back the continent's thriving economies.

Hosted by H.E. President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the 2021 YouthConnekt Africa Summit was themed: Africa Beyond Aid: Positioning the Youth for Post COVID Economy and AfCFTA Opportunities.



The Summit aimed to deliver on the following objectives:

- Deliver a high-level intergenerational dialogue for Africa's youth mandate in steering Africa's next level of growth ~Africa Beyond Aid.
- Explore youth inclusive quick-win interventions that can accelerate post COVID19 economic recovery.
- Showcase tested cross-sector policy mechanisms that support emerging youth employment pathways.
- Identify the structures, mechanisms and investments required to accelerate youth participation in regional trade supported by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) framework.
- Encourage multi-stakeholder collaborations to accelerate youth socio-economic transformation.

The summit served as a platform to discuss and share good practices driven by the Youth to build our resilience to the many challenges caused by the pandemic.



H.E. Alhaji Dr. M. Bawumia
Vice President
The Republic of Ghana

Africa's education policy must be gender sensitive, only when we create a future where every youth has the opportunity to reach their potential, then can we say we are creating a bright future for all.



Hon. Mustafa Ussif
Minister of Youth & Sports
The Republic of Ghana

It should be noted that the youth are key development agents who must be included in the government development planning activities. Changes in the demographics, technology, economics and politics, among other factors affecting young people globally.



Hon. Pius Hadzide
CEO National Youth Authority
The Republic of Ghana

The legacy of this summit will be that it sowed the seeds which ushered our continent into the age of industrialization and retired the notion of Africa as a pool of poor.

SUMMIT COMMUNIQUE

THE YOUTHCONNEKT AFRICA 2021 SUMMIT DELIBERATED ON THE FOLLOWING

Youth Participation in Regional Trade

- That the adoption, promotion and operationalisation of an additional protocol on youth and women in the AfCFTA should be prioritised;
- That opportunities be created for young people to lead in economic integration policy making and deal breaking;
- That trade financing for young entrepreneurs to participate in the larger Africa market should be mobilised;
- That states should invest in women's capacity building for their leadership and championing as entrepreneurs and job creators;
- That we should invest in building logistics infrastructure and systems that enable young entrepreneurs to quickly jump onto the opportunity created by the African Continental Free Trade Area;
- That we should make Africa Beyond Aid a reality and not a mere statement through intra Africa collaboration across sectors;
- That we should encourage youth to create production corridors along value chains of Africa's commodities and services
- That the harmonization of accreditations for different professions across Africa and the promotion of industry relevant education should be prioritised

Youth Inclusion and Leadership:

- That a Youth Advisory Council should be creation at the YouthConnekt Africa level
- That there should be an increase in budget allocations to Ministries and Agencies responsible for Youth, as they are serving a large demographic that needs to be accompanied to become independent and productive members of society.

Youth Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Employment:

- That we should improve ecosystem approaches for a stronger and more equitable pipeline of innovations at national and continental level;
- That we should ensure equitable and transparent processes in connecting entrepreneurs to the requisite financing for growth;
- That we reinforce national skills database platforms that identify and connect existing expertise to employment opportunities in new and emerging sectors regionally;
- That we reinforce programs that impart market-oriented capacities to youth for increased competitiveness on the continental and global job market
- That governments create enabling environments for youth entrepreneurship through greater access to public infrastructure, education and internet;
- That Private Sector and Development Organisations recruit young people through internships, fellowships, volunteering and direct employment.
- That mechanisms and investments be put into place to empower youth in the creative industries
- That better and conducive financial instruments to fund youth in agripreneurship be created;
- That improved access to information on the different resource hubs for social entrepreneurs be made available

Youth Mental and Sexual and Reproductive Health:

- That we improve discourse and awareness of youth mental health and youth sexual reproductive health;
- That we design and implement better mechanisms that support youth recovery from mental health challenges and building their resilience

Knowledge Development on the Practice of Youth Development:

- That states should conduct M&E at national level for impact of YouthConnekt Initiatives to be captures and sharing of best practices;
- That a Knowledge Management mechanism of the YouthConnekt that leverages technology for communities of practice should be created;
- That YouthConnekt be institutionalised in Government for sustainability;
- That stronger mechanisms for Resource Mobilisation for Youth Development programs be created.



In Photos: YOUTHCONNEKT AFRICA SUMMIT



YOUTHCONNEKT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Traditionally, the YouthConnekt Africa Summit serves as a platform to reengage national chapters through the technical committee meeting and the steering committee meeting. As such on 19th October 2021, the YouthConnekt Africa hosted a Technical Committee meeting, facilitated by Entrepreneurial Solution Partners, that engaged YouthConnekt implementing countries with the following objectives:

- Discuss priorities, programs, plans for the year 2022
- Engagement with YC implementing countries
- Discuss the performance of the YouthConnekt Country Programs
- Documentation of lessons learned, and seeking of strategic guidance
- Propose agenda for the Steering Committee meeting

The following are key takeaways that emerged from the engagement:

Youth employment and entrepreneurship:

Members envision YouthConnekt serving as a platform that supports the creation of job opportunities for young people and an enabling environment for the youth. The underlying factors stressed here included the importance of skills development as a pertinent part of both employment and entrepreneurship. Additionally, targeted financial and technical assistance for specific sectors such as agriculture was mentioned.

Scaling information access:

Members highlighted that they envision YouthConnekt serving as one-stop-shop for information on opportunities across the continent. They also mentioned that digitalization would serve as a key conduit for information sharing across the continent.

Inclusion and storytelling:

Members pointed to the YouthConnekt mantra of 'leave no one behind' and highlighted that they envision a platform that fosters inclusion for all youth especially youth living with disabilities as well as uneducated youth. Secondly, they pointed out that they foresee YouthConnekt Africa playing a key role in changing Africa's narrative across the world.

Market access and networking:

Members envision the establishment of supportive trade policies that enabled entrepreneurs to trade regionally and across the continent. They also envisage YouthConnekt serving as a networking platform for youth across Africa

Leadership development:

Members see the YouthConnekt serving as a platform that supports the development of leaders who are able to serve in the public sector and civil society.

Resource mobilization:

As a general theme, members believe that an established mechanism for resource mobilization is pertinent to creating impact among the youth at scale.

YOUTHCONNEKT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

On October 20th 2022, the YouthConnekt Africa hosted the annual Steering Committee meeting, that was attended by Ministers, Senior Government officials, UNDP Representatives, and Executives of Regional Youth Development Partners in attendance to the Summit. The Steering Committee was chaired by Hon. Minister Rosemary Mbabazi, Minister of Youth and Culture, Government of Rwanda – also Chair of the YouthConnekt Africa, and Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa, UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa Director – also Co-Chair of the YouthConnekt Africa.

The meeting featured a presentation by the YouthConnekt Africa Executive Director on ongoing and upcoming initiatives of the YouthConnekt Africa Hub, and received submission of updates from Ministers of Youth present. The meeting also featured the awarding of the Export Accelerator entrepreneurs – nine of which were present at the Summit.

The meeting resolved that there shall be:

- Creation of a Youth Advisory Council at the YouthConnekt Africa
- Monitoring and Evaluation exercises at national chapter level for learning of the impact of YouthConnekt initiatives and emerging best practices
- Creation of a Knowledge Management Mechanism at the level of YouthConnekt Africa
- Institutionalization of YouthConnekt in Government for Sustainability
- Creation of Stronger mechanisms for resource mobilization.





**In Photos:
YOUTHCONNEKT STEERING COMMITTEE
MEETING**



**YOUTHCONNEKT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
MEETING**





YOUTHCONNEKT
SAHEL FORUM 2021
FROM 30 OCTOBER - 2 DECEMBER
DAKAR, SENEGAL

“

CONNEKTING SAHELIAN YOUTH
FOR PEACE & PROSPERITY

”



Hon. Mamafatou Nene

Minister of Youth
The Republic of Senegal



Notre légendaire culture sénégalaise de la teranga, qui signifie l'hospitalité, devrait inspirer la jeunesse sahélienne lors de ses réflexions et discussions à l'occasion du forum #YouthConnektSahel.



Mr. Njoya Tikum

UNDP
West Africa Regional Manager



Our intention is to create an ecosystem of entrepreneurs, community leaders and changemakers that will become the face of the Sahel we want. UNDP will accompany the youth to make sure they have the right tools, for instance through UNDP's Accelerator Labs and the national YouthConnekt chapters, both of which are present in all 10 countries in the Sahel.



Hosted by H.E. the President of Senegal, Macky Sall, and the Honourable Minister of Youth in Senegal, with support from UNDP and Generation Unlimited, the first annual YouthConnekt Sahel Forum provided a platform for exchange of ideas among youth and leaders in the Sahel towards peace, prosperity and resilience in the region and harnessing the abundant natural, cultural, and human resources therein. Under The theme “connecting Sahelian youth for peace and prosperity” the forum brought together over 500 physical participants and over 1000 virtual participants towards changing the Sahel narrative into a land of opportunities and investment. The forum came several weeks after the YouthConnekt Africa Summit in Accra, Ghana, building on the call to action challenging youth in the Sahel to think inwards and engage with leaders towards the socio-economic and political transformation in the region. The forum offered over 3 days a combination of plenaries, panel discussions, keynote speeches, an innovation challenge award, music and arts, and many more.



Overall the YouthConnekt Sahel Forum deliberations resulted in the following key recommendations:

Peace and security in the Sahel

- That regional forums are organized more frequently within the Sahel connecting stakeholders on issues related to peace-building, regional and national stability and social cohesion;
- That young people are effectively engaged in national peacebuilding processes.

Youth inclusion in decision making processes:

- That young people are included and adequately represented in government and formal decision-making process including in ministries that are not traditionally classified as youth;
- That concrete actions are taken to advance equitable access to socio-economic and political opportunities to persons with disabilities;
- That policies on gender equality and women empowerment are reviewed and systematically implemented with quotas to ensure practical and effective application and inclusion of women in key parts of government.

Capacity development of youth:

- Systematically introduce reforms in the education system to ensure youth (especially women) are adequately skilled for current and emerging employment opportunities;
- That investments are made in infrastructures and services (such as IT) required for young entrepreneurs to succeed in a conducive and enabling environment.

Economic empowerment through employment and entrepreneurship

- That systematic interventions are made by government towards strengthening private and informal sector which account for majority of youth economic activities;
- That we should ensure equitable and transparent processes in connecting entrepreneurs to the requisite financing for growth;
- That attention is paid to quality of jobs held by youth rather than quantity through regular and targeted needs assessment and monitoring processes;
- That gender equality is effected in value chain processes towards improved economic inclusion of women;
- That on- the-job training opportunities are provided to young people through an effective school to work transition process;
- That government formulates programmes that support development and incubation of youth-led enterprises towards their inclusion in trade and global markets;
- Increase investment in production systems for economic viability/incentive of agricultural sector.

Climate and reforestation of the Sahel

- That reforestation policies that leverage community action are instituted towards greening of the Sahel;
- That policies and economic incentives are provided to private sector which support green investment, production, and recycling.

Youth sexual and reproductive health

- That increased awareness activities, access to information, and counseling services are provided to young men and women.

In Photos:

YOUTHCONNEKT SAHEL FORUM



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