



# YOUTH IN ACTION BURKINA-FASO



## Why work in Burkina Faso with rural out-of-school youth?

Burkina Faso is home to 19 million people, 70 % of them live in rural areas, 60% are under 20 years of age, and 65.4% of those unemployed in Burkina Faso are less than 24 years old.

## Rural Youth in Burkina Faso

and around the world have aspirations and dreams of who they want to be in the future and within their communities. Many out-of-school rural youth in Burkina Faso have potential and seek to work in the agricultural sector. However, coupled with limited socio-economic opportunities, they also lack access to opportunities to build the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes as well as financial services that could support them to realize their dreams and to be agents of change.

## What is Youth in Action?

Youth in Action (YiA) is a six-year youth livelihood program. In partnership with The MasterCard Foundation, the program aims to improve the socio-economic status of approximately 40,000 out-of-school girls and boys, aged 12 to 18 in rural Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda.

**Youth in Action in Burkina Faso** was launched in 2012 with the goal to reach up to 4,500 young people aged 15 to 18 living in the rural communities of Boucles de Mouhoun, les Cascades, and Hauts Basins in the western region of the country. During this important transitional period to adulthood, YiA works with key actors, including local communities and government to invest in building and enhancing rural young people's foundational skills, social assets and knowledge to create an enabling environment to facilitate the youths' action in their livelihoods opportunities. We also build meaningful partnerships to address barriers to young people's participation in their livelihoods activities and communities, such as gender-based barriers.

## How does YiA achieve this?

YiA uses a holistic approach built on three core pillars: **Youth Learn**, **Youth Act** and **Youth Connect**, while **Participation** and **Partnerships** cross-cut these pillars.

## Youth Learn

Young people selected into the program participate in a 3-5 month learning phase. Using Save the Children's youth-centred and contextualized "Learning for life" curriculum, youth build on their own knowledge, perspectives and experiences to shape their learning experiences around foundational skills (literacy, numeracy, financial literacy, work-readiness, and market analysis skills). Through this phase, the activities are focused on encouraging the participants to explore their environments, and learn about themselves, their families, their communities, and the livelihoods opportunities in their local economies.



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



## Youth Act

At the end of the learning phase, participants choose a pathway to apply their learning in an income generating initiative. They can choose to receive vocational training or apprenticeship or to establish their own small enterprise. At this time, each participant receives a small seed cash grant or materials to support their choice, as well as peer-to-peer and community-based mentorship.

## Youth Connect

YiA fosters linkages for the youth to a range of services available to them locally that will better embed them and their livelihood initiatives in the local market and community. Youth are also supported in the process of responsibly using these monetary or in-kind resources. This includes:

- Facilitating youth's access to health, education, training, and business services to support their livelihood initiatives.
- Promoting savings and access to credit by working with financial service providers (such as banks, Micro-Finance Institutions, Village Saving & Loan Account, etc.) to make services available to youth.
- Connecting youth with experts and local artisans, and inviting community members to participate in advisory groups of the program
- Helping youth build networks within their communities and local markets

## Participation and Partnership across the Journey

**The Active Participation** of youth and their ownership of the process is key to successful livelihood development. YiA's approach includes encouraging youth to participate in all activities, make their own decisions, and act on them independently. Youth are also given structured opportunities through advisory groups, peer-to-peer support networks, youth-led market assessments and procurement of business supplies. Through these activities youth can strengthen their engagement in their own social and livelihood development and make informed decisions about their future.

**Partnerships** are essential to foster an enabling environment for youth, which involves:

- Families and community members select and mentor youth through livelihood options and advocate for youth who face specific barriers to participation, such as girls and give financial and material contribution.
- Local NGOs deliver the program and build capacity. Save the Children works with one national partner: GRAAP (Support and research group for self-promotion of populations).
- Local businesses, trade and business associations and financial institutions help youth be more active in their local markets.
- Government ministries promote the rights of youth to decent livelihoods and promote sustainability of the program.



## Results by June 2017:

- In total, 3,122 youth graduated from the full program, 76% among them have established their own enterprise, 24% of them completed an apprenticeship.
- 51% of youth were supported financially by their families with an average of support for girls of \$ 30.74 against \$ 34.45 for boys.
- 77% of young people, including 38% of girls, have benefited from land support (between ¼ hectare and ½ hectare per youth).
- The program has contributed to delaying the marriage of some of the girls until graduation and establishment of businesses with agreement with their parents and community members.
- The strategy of disbursing the cash through the mothers of the program's participants works well. This allowed the mothers to support their children in helping them to manage their grant and even enhanced the relationship between mothers and children. Managing cashflow is key for a successful enterprise.

For more information, visit <http://youthinaction.savethechildren.ca/>

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