



YOUTH IN ACTION PATHWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY



Why work with rural out of school youth in Africa?

Africa is home to the world's youngest population; to seven of the ten fastest growing economies, globally, and to an emerging movement of entrepreneurs. There are now 600 million people under the age of 25. By 2045, that number is expected to double.

Rural Youth in Africa and around the world have aspirations and dreams of who they want to be within their communities and in the future. However, many of them are out of school and have significant responsibilities with their families and communities. Coupled with limited socio-economic opportunities and investment, young people often lack access to opportunities to build foundational skills, knowledge, attitudes and financial services that could support them to find pathways out of poverty and to be agents of change.

What is Youth in Action?

Youth in Action (YiA) is a six-year learning and livelihood program. In partnership with The MasterCard Foundation, YiA aims to improve the socio-economic status of 40,000 rural out-of-school girls and boys between the age of 12 to 18 in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda; and support them to find safe and viable livelihoods, mostly in the agricultural value chain.

During the key transitional period to adulthood, YiA invests in building and enhancing young men and women's foundational skills, social assets and knowledge. The program facilitates their action in livelihoods opportunities, and builds key partnerships to address barriers to young people's participation in their economies and communities, such as gender barriers. To achieve this, YiA's holistic approach is built on three core pillars: **Youth Learning, Youth Action** and **Access to Markets**, with **Participation** and **Partnerships** cross-cutting these pillars.

At the same time, the program generates robust learning and research opportunities that will serve the youth economic development sector by creating an evidence base of effective program interventions from its tested approaches. Save the Children works with international partners and academic research fellows in order to advance the learning and research agenda.

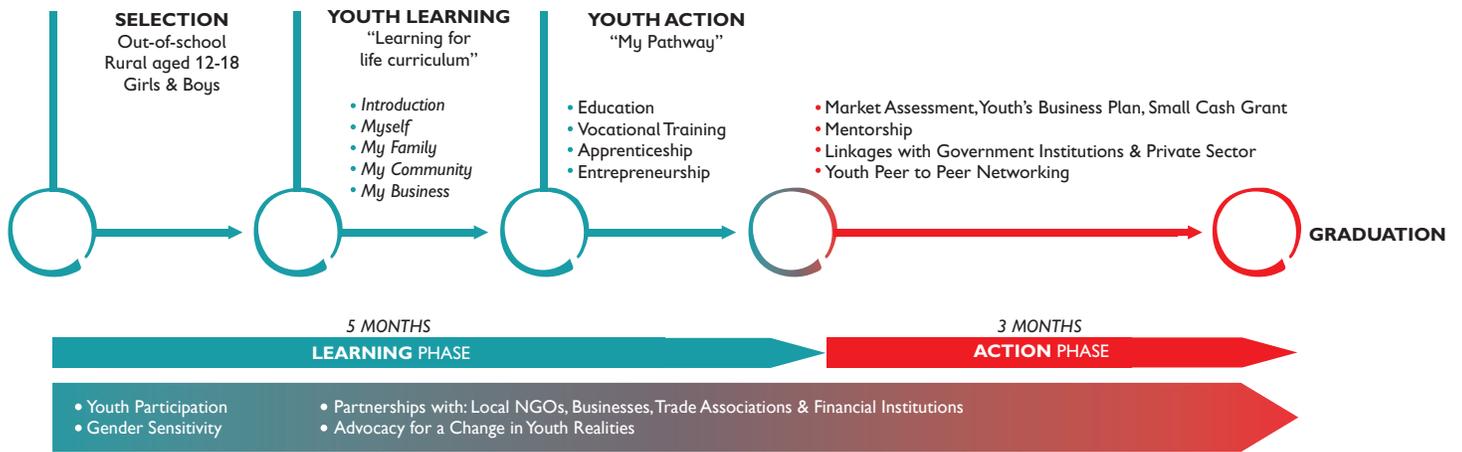
Save the Children is the world's leading independent organization for children, delivering programs and improving children's and youth's lives in more than 120 countries worldwide. We help them fulfil their potential. Save the Children is committed to do whatever it takes to reach the most excluded children and youth, and tackle the barriers that prevent them from learning, developing and thriving.



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Youth in Action Model



Youth Learn: Young people selected into the program participate in a five-month learning phase. Using Save the Children’s **“Learning for Life”** curriculum, youth build on their own knowledge, perspectives, and experiences to shape their learning and entrepreneurial experiences around five key foundational concepts **literacy, numeracy, financial literacy, work-readiness, and market analysis skills**.

Youth Act: At the end of the learning phase, participants choose a pathway to apply their learning in an income generating livelihood initiative, such as a small enterprise or an apprenticeship/vocational training. Some youth choose to return to school with support from YiA. Also, each participant receives a small cash grant to support their choice. During this three-month phase, youth receive peer-to-peer and community-based mentorship.

Youth Connect: YiA facilitates youth linkages to a number of services available to them locally to better embed them and their livelihoods initiatives in the local market and community. To support this, we conduct market assessments (some of which are youth-led) to understand the formal and informal networks in the agricultural value chain and what potentially viable opportunities exist. We promote savings and access to credit where appropriate, engage with financial service providers (such as banks, Micro-Finance institutions, Village Savings and Loan Associations, etc.) to make their services available to youth. YiA also engages community members, agriculture affiliated institutions, and employers (from formal and informal sectors), to connect youth with experts and local artisans, and invite community members to participate in advisory groups of the program.

Youth Participation: Youth under 18 years of age are often excluded from the design or implementation of youth employment policies and programs. However, the key to successful youth livelihood development is the active participation of youth and their ownership of the process. YiA’s approach includes encouraging youth to participate in all activities, make their own decisions, and act on them independently. The youth are also given structured support through advisory groups, peer-to-peer support networks, youth-led market assessments and procurement of business supplies. Through these activities, the youth are able to make informed decisions about their future livelihood options.

Partnerships: YiA works to create partnerships at different levels to facilitate youth engagement and advocate for systemic changes in each of the program countries. YiA partners with:

- Families and community members to recruit, select and mentor youth through livelihood options, and advocate for youth who face specific barriers to participation, such as girls.
- Local NGOs in each country to deliver the program, build capacity and support them to leverage their organizational strengths.
- Local businesses, trade and business associations, and financial institutions to help the youth become more active in their local markets.
- Government ministries to promote the rights of youth to decent livelihoods and promote sustainability of the program.

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

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