



# Generation Unlimited Trust Fund 2024 Consolidated Report



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# Executive Summary

Globally, the green and digital transitions are unfolding before our eyes. No longer are notions confined to some far-off future, they are transforming how we live and work, today. Both the climate crisis and burgeoning demand for new technologies are rapidly redefining the skills that today's young people will need as the leaders, entrepreneurs and workforce of tomorrow.

Today, around 1.3 billion young people aged 15-24 are working to build their skills for a better future, but many continue to face disproportionate challenges and struggle to find decent livelihoods. For young people living in lower-middle-income countries, the challenges are further compounded by limited access to quality education, economic instability, and climate change.

A staggering 60% of young people are projected to lack essential skills by 2030. The long-term impacts of this skills and employment crisis threaten to ripple through our economies, communities, and societies, deepening inequality and locking young people out of the opportunities they need to build a better life. At the same time, the twin digital and green transitions present significant opportunities for youth employment and entrepreneurship, and for harnessing young people's creativity and passion to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. While young people are 25% of the world's population, they are 100% of its future and their ambition, passion & ingenuity will fuel solutions to the world's biggest problems.

Generation Unlimited (GenU) – the world's first global Public-Private-Youth partnership – was created to ensure young people, especially young women have skills, tools and resources to have sustainable livelihoods and contribute to circular economies. Never has there been a more critical time to (up)skill the world's 1.3 billion young people and connect them to employment, entrepreneurship, and social impact opportunities. The Generation Unlimited Trust Fund, established in December 2019 and hosted by the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, is a mechanism to catalyse impact for youth in countries and advance the GenU mission through a Public-Private-Youth partnership.

Thanks to the generous support of the Government of the Netherlands and Foundation Botnar, programmes are being implemented in Kenya and Niger with public, private and youth partners to teach twenty-first century skills while also supporting young green entrepreneurs and agripreneurs in their quest to help their communities and our world mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The programmes supported by the MPTF achieve targets and impact for young people on various levels of the results hierarchy including skilling/ re-skilling and upskilling young people, establishing learning to earning pathways, ensuring livelihood outcomes including employment and entrepreneurship, youth empowerment as well as indirect impact within communities of these young people impacted.



Across all programmes approx. 99,000 youths receive training in various fields, including digital skills, agribusiness, and entrepreneurial activities. As of December 2024, Youth Agency Marketplace (Yoma) operates in eight African countries, primarily providing implementation support, with lighter implementation in the Philippines. The platform has registered users from over 180 countries worldwide and has facilitated access to new opportunities for 476,700 individuals. Additionally, more than 63,000 certificates have been issued, validating job-relevant skills and enhancing employability. A total of 16,888 young people were trained in food systems through the Engaging Kenyan Youth in Agriculture and Nutrition (EKYAN) program in Kenya. In Niger, more than 10,688 youth completed courses, training or internships or were connected to business opportunities through P2E. Establishing livelihoods is another key component of the BeGreen programme. BeGreen has trained more than 8,000 youth (green entrepreneurs and enumerators) and the 485 young green entrepreneurs who receive seed funding will create at least 2,000 jobs and generate \$6.8 million revenue.

In Kenya the EKYAN programme (Engaging Kenyan Youth in Agriculture & Nutrition) provides young people, with a particular focus on young women, with skills and digital for employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in agribusiness, while building regenerative agriculture models that promote circular economies in predominantly rural areas. Leveraging schools and digital infrastructure, the programme aims to improve the perception and engagement of young people in agriculture and contribute towards improving economic livelihoods, food systems and nutritional status. The partnership between the Governments of Kenya and the Netherlands, Kenyan youth, Kuza Biashara, SNV, a private sector company and the World Bank has equipped 16,888 young people with the regenerative agriculture skills. In 2024, a total of 56 schools, 14 Centers of Excellence, and 42 satellite schools were engaged as

learning and demonstration hubs. Moreover, 112 young Agripreneurs were equipped with entrepreneurial mindsets, agribusiness acumen, digital proficiency, and community engagement capabilities necessary to serve as last-mile service providers. 71% of Agripreneurs reported income increases of over 50%, with an average monthly gain of KES 18,000 (~USD 120). These young Agripreneurs have trained more than 2,700 students in collaboration with 100+ teachers and agriculture extension officers. Additionally, young Agripreneurs have trained and provided extension services to 17,873 farmers, 65% female and 11,800 under the age of 35. Training content



focused on climate-smart regenerative agriculture and value chain-specific practices related to the county's four priority commodities: tomato, dairy, poultry, and avocado. In addition, nutrition-sensitive agriculture was integrated into the sessions, encouraging farmers to diversify their crops and improve household dietary diversity. According to a farmers survey, 80% of farmers reported improved yields due to better farming techniques and soil management, 97% implemented at least one climate-smart technique such as zai pits, agroforestry, and organic fertilizers,



and 27% accessed new markets/ products/ services. EKYAN facilitated engagement with over 10 private sector partners, including firms in seed production, animal feeds, crop protection, mechanization, and digital agri-services. An emerging area of collaboration is the co-design of value-added bundles—integrated packages that include inputs, training, and market access support. Additionally, 2,275 NEET youth were trained and have started a mentorship programme providing young people with the opportunities to start their own agribusiness or find decent employment in the agriculture sector.



Niger, with the world's youngest population—60% under age 15—faces immense pressure on its education and employment systems, especially in rural areas where access is limited, particularly

for girls. Many young people lack education, skills, and job opportunities, and 90% of the 500,000 who enter the job market annually are unqualified, contributing to high unemployment. In response, the Passport to Earning (P2E) program was launched to bridge the skills gap through digital and innovative approaches in collaboration with public and private sectors. Despite implementation challenges, 2024 saw significant progress with over 3,100 youth registering on the platform, of which 1,317 individuals completed courses. These in turn completed 3,500 courses, hence each young person completed nearly 3 courses each. Additionally, over 64,000 youth engaged in employability discussions, 346 career advisors were trained, nearly 9,000 received counseling or business guidance, and training partnerships and job connections met or exceeded targets, with 28 youth centers now supporting distance learning.

Funding was also used for BeGreen, an innovative pilot programme transforming economic development through youth-led green entrepreneurship. BeGreen is implemented by UNICEF/ GenU and the Tony Elumelu Foundation with support from the Government of the Netherlands in South Africa, Nigeria, and Senegal as well as by the IKEA Foundation in Kenya. The two-year pilot programme represents a pioneering approach to confronting the double crisis of youth unemployment as well as the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion. BeGreen provides a comprehensive support structure to young green entrepreneurs, including a bespoke, gender-sensitive green entrepreneurship training which was co-created with young green entrepreneurs and peer reviewed by the University of Botswana, initial seed capital investment of USD 5,000 per entrepreneur, mentorship opportunities, as well as access to professional networks and other financing options.

Out of the 8,000 applications received across all countries, more than 4,600 young aspiring entrepreneurs completed the



business management training and more than 2,700 the in-depth gender-responsive green entrepreneurship training with strong waste management focus. Thereof, more than 1,400 green entrepreneurs submitted a business plan. All business plans were reviewed by an independent consulting firm and entrepreneurs received in-depth individualized feedback. Entrepreneurs who were successfully verified, were invited to in-person pitching events in Kenya, South Africa, and Senegal (Nigerian entrepreneurs submitted a pitching video). Business plan assessments combined with the pitching scores were the basis for shortlisting 524 entrepreneurs to receive seed funding across the four countries. Thereof, at least 485 aspiring green entrepreneurs (120 waste entrepreneurs in Kenya) should receive \$5,000 in seed funding, after successfully passing an audit process. The provision of more than \$2.4 million in seed funding aims to support entrepreneurs in generating \$6.8 million revenue and creating at least 2,000 jobs within two years. The pilots in the four countries will generate valuable insights that will inform the scaling of the initiative. Additionally, more than 4,059 young enumerators completed a comprehensive training programme, and

107 were selected to conduct verification visits as micro-gigs, receiving stipends for their work.

Finally, Yoma continued to empower youth aged 16-24 globally by offering impact tasks and learning opportunities, building a verifiable digital profile YouthID (YoID) which serves as a verified track record of completed opportunities and acquired skills for the young person. As of December 2024, Yoma operates in eight African countries, primarily providing implementation support, with lighter implementation in the Philippines. The platform has registered users from over 180 countries worldwide and has facilitated access to new opportunities for 476,700 individuals. More than 10 opportunity providers, including atingi, Umuzi, GLEAC, and Accenture, have been on boarded, offering over 190 learning programs, micro-tasks, and impact-driven opportunities. Young people have benefited from free online opportunities that foster skill development, community engagement, and employment prospects. Additionally, more than 63,000 certificates have been issued, validating job-relevant skills and enhancing employability.



# Purpose

Nearly 90 per cent of these young people live in developing countries, where they make up a large proportion of the population. One in four young people have NEET (Not in employment, education, or training) status, with young women twice as likely as young men to be in NEET, reversing 15 years of progress due to the global pandemic. Of those young people who are employed, about 126 million remain in extreme or moderate poverty. The vast majority (96.8 per cent) of young workers in developing countries have jobs in the informal sector.

Young people today face many economic, social, and cultural challenges. Education systems are outdated and fragmented. The types of skills needed in the labour market are changing. Technological innovation such as artificial intelligence is making many jobs vulnerable to automation, and a large portion of job creation is driven by entrepreneurs and small businesses.

Generation Unlimited (GenU) was devised to respond to these challenges. Launched at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2018, GenU aims to skill the world's young people and connect them to employment, entrepreneurship and social impact opportunities. To achieve this, GenU brings together partners from different sectors with a shared agenda to transform education, work and entrepreneurial outcomes for young people, with programmes in 89 countries since its inception.

At the global level, we identify innovations that have the potential to address youth challenges across multiple countries  
– and build partnerships

and secure investment to scale them. Youth are equal partners in this mission: they co-develop our programmes, influence our strategic direction, and drive purposeful action. Leveraging UNICEF's extensive field presence and the convening power of our Public, Private, Youth Partnership (PPYP), GenU has reached more than 365 million young people across 80 countries over the course of four years – improving digital connectivity, building young people's skills, and facilitating greater access to opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship, and social impact.





# PPYP

GenU skills young people and connects them to opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship, and social impact, contributing towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. To prepare young people for the world of work and active citizenship, GenU have remained hyper-focused on our mission to skill and connect the world's young people to opportunities, seizing new prospects in the digital and green sectors while prioritizing young women and adolescent girls. We focus on equipping young people with the skills and mindsets required for success and well-being, and connecting them to employment, entrepreneurship, and social impact opportunities, including through career guidance, internships, volunteering, and apprenticeship programmes. As both education and work increasingly occupy the digital sphere, it is imperative that all young people – especially the most disadvantaged – can access the internet to make full use of the available education and employment solutions and opportunities.

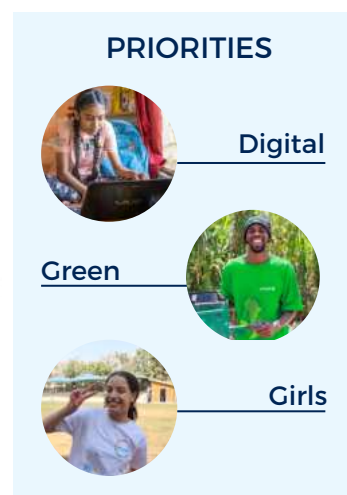
In line with the current Generation Unlimited Strategy, our innovative programmes focus on the most disadvantaged young people, especially young women. Programmes impact

areas target cohorts that are at least 50 per cent female. Digital and green skills and solutions are emphasized to ensure that young people are fully prepared for the



evolving world of work and GenU can empower young people by investing and providing them with access to cutting-edge skills and opportunities for jobs to thrive in this new era.

## GenU Mission: Skill & connect the world's billion youth to opportunity

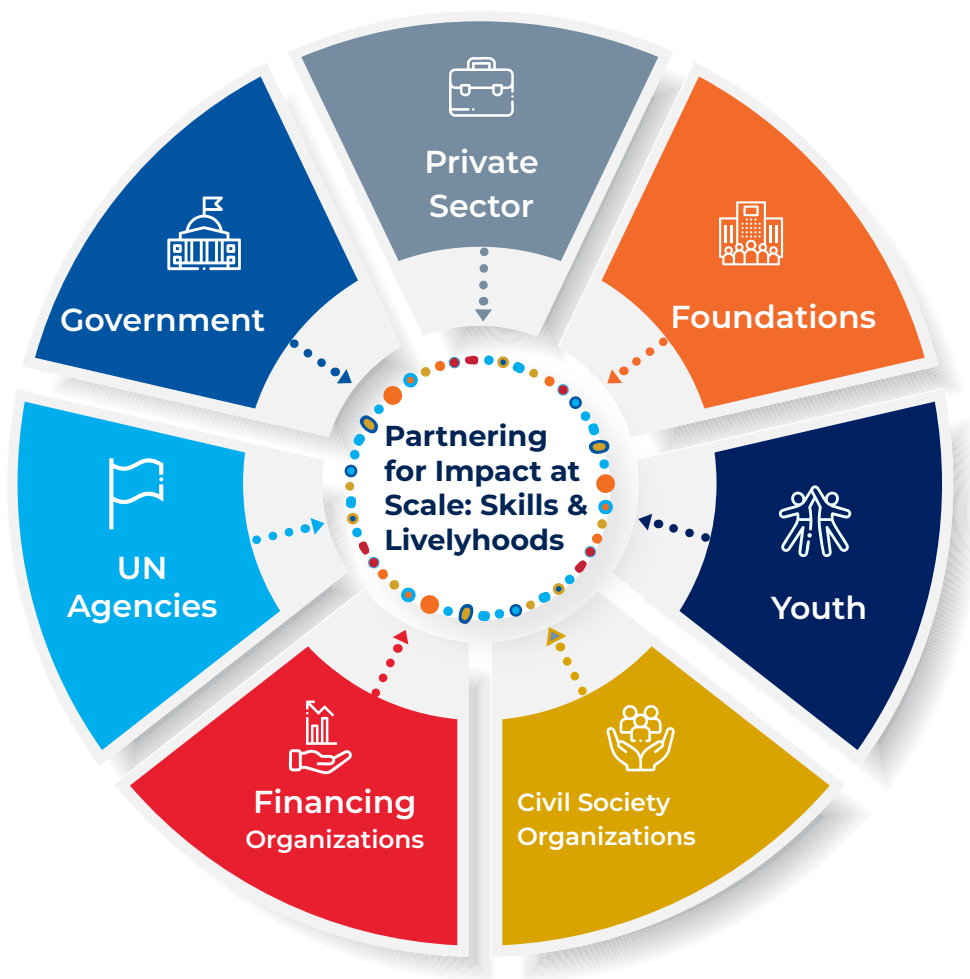




A unique value of the Generation Unlimited partnership is its ability to bring public and private sector organizations together, with young people, to develop and scale up programmes that equip young people

with market-relevant skills and connect them to opportunities. GenU does this at both global and country levels, leveraging UNICEF's extensive footprint and influence in countries.

## Delivering impact through Private-Public-Youth Partnership (PPYP)



# Youth Powered Impact

Young women and men are engaged as equal partners in GenU through the dynamic Young People's Action Team (YPAT) to meaningfully engage youth in UNICEF programmes at the national, regional and global level. It's more than 70 young leaders and worldwide youth network guide the global partnership; it serves as a sounding board for everything that GenU does. YPAT members provide invaluable insights that influence regional research and programme guidance in various thematic area such as climate changes, and transition to decent works. Further, GenU constantly reviews and updates the ways in which the partnership engages and mobilizes youth, including by:

- elevating youth voices by enabling youth to self-organize as advocates and providing them with a platform to be heard (both online and offline) and to effect change in policy and programming;
- supporting youth leadership via mentorship, training and access to resources, and participation in GenU governance and staffing at the global and local level; and,
- fostering youth action by co-creating initiatives with young people, investing in youth-led solutions, and partnering with youth-led organizations to advance the GenU mission.





# GenU Trust Fund

The Generation Unlimited Trust Fund was established in 2019 to facilitate the scale-up of GenU initiatives in countries that provide skilling, employment, entrepreneurship, and social impact opportunities for young people in line with the GenU mission. The Trust Fund plays a key role in the GenU partnership as it catalyses in-country resources to help take programmes to scale.

The United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office administers the Trust Fund and acts as its trustee. The Generation Unlimited Board is the global partnership's primary oversight body. Chaired by the Chief Executive Officer of SAP, the GenU Board comprises leaders from the United Nations, global businesses, foundations, government ministers and civil society organizations. It also includes two youth representatives. Board duties include providing strategic direction, reviewing progress against priorities and assessing impact, monitoring the financial health of GenU and approving Trust Fund allocations.

The Government of the Netherlands has been an invaluable partner to GenU since its inception. We entered into a partnership agreement together to transform lives through GenU programmes to skill, empower and prepare young people for the future of work with a generous contribution to the

GenU Trust Fund of USD 11,235,954 over a five-year period (2020–2024), with 50% of this sum earmarked for programmes in Kenya and Niger. In addition, in 2024, Fondation Botnar contributed the remaining \$424,188 to the GenU Trust Fund for Yoma (as part of a broader \$5.3M two-year commitment) to improve the relational wellbeing of youth through the establishment of strategic and contextualized learning to earning pathways for youth to succeed, grow and thrive.

In line with GenU's current Strategy, funding has been used to scale up skills development and youth entrepreneurship and agripreneurship in Kenya and Niger, including through digital means. Support from the Trust Fund was also used by the Yoma initiative to begin the development of specific thematic pathways for youth (digital, green), and technology upgrades and research (AI matching algorithm, a data-lite solution, blockchain, and crowdsourcing) with a hypothesis that youth can effectively collaborate to design community initiatives leading to local social and environmental progress. What follows is an outline of progress and results from 1 January to 31 December 2024, in line with the GenU Trust Fund reporting cycle.



# Kenya EKYAN

Kenya's population has increased significantly (growing from 11 million in 1970 to 39.5 million in 2011) and, at the current rate of growth, it will be reaching 81 million by 2039.

According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, 35.7 million Kenyans (75.1 percent) are under 35 years old. Given this, the development of skills for employment, entrepreneurship, and social impact are critical. Although the overall unemployment in Kenya is at 12.7 percent, Youth (15–34 years old), who form 35 percent of the Kenyan population, have the highest unemployment rate of 67 percent. Over one million young people enter the labor market annually without the necessary skills, some having either dropped out of school or completed school and not enrolled in any college (Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) 2022).

60-70% of youth in the East African community are unable to attend secondary school due to financial hardship and barriers to access. Of this figure only 1 out of 20 rural girls complete secondary school. This has been further exacerbated by the pandemic, which has deepened inequalities and limited employment opportunities experienced by young people—especially young women and girls. In Kenya alone, women make up between 42% and 65% of the agricultural labor force (World Bank, 2014), in addition to their traditional domestic responsibilities.

On 23rd September 2022, during President William Ruto's inauguration speech, he highlighted the challenge of 800,000 youth joining the workforce annually with over 600,000 unable to find work. With the growing jobless economy and bulging youth population, the government is advocating for the 'bottom-up economic transformation agenda' (BETA). BETA seeks to promote investments and financial instruments to the numerous unemployed young small-scale traders, farmers, fishermen, informal

sector workers and entrepreneurs and financially empower them.

Agriculture is the backbone of the Kenyan economy contributing to approximately 33% of Kenya GDP and another 27% of GDP indirectly through linkages with other sectors. The sector accounts for 65% of export earnings, and provides livelihood (employment, income, and food security needs) for more than 80% of the Kenyan population. Agricultural production is considered the main source of money and security for most households in Kenya, and arable land is highly valued and sought after.

The agriculture sector offers excellent opportunities to employ young people and to ensure food security, while combatting climate change. This is especially important at a time when food systems have been heavily disrupted first by Covid and then by the Ukraine war, resulting in severe repercussions on the prices of food and fertilizers, rising inflations and increasing food insecurity. However, the sector remains largely unattractive to youth. Young people have a negative perception about agriculture, as they associate it to subsistence farming, high risk and low income, hence they cannot see it as a profitable business nor as a career option. Moreover, the education system does not adequately prepare youth with the appropriate knowledge and skills needed to take advantage of job opportunities in agribusiness.





To make the agribusiness sector more economically viable and attractive, particularly for female out of school youth, UNICEF/Generation Unlimited has come together with young agripreneurs, the governments of Kenya and the Netherlands, a private sector partner, Kuza Biashara, and SNV to implement the Engaging Kenyan Youth in Agriculture and Nutrition (EKYAN) programme. Moreover, the World Bank has provided support for the mapping of farmers which is leveraged by the EKYAN programme and has expressed its desire to collaborate further on this initiative.



EKYAN revolutionizes agri-business by empowering young agripreneurs to provide smallholder farmers with advanced tools, knowledge, and market access, driving sustainable agricultural development, and job creation for women and youth in the sector.

EKYAN is a pilot programme co-created with the UNICEF Kenya Country Office, implementing partners Kuza and SNV, and young people. EKYAN aims to provide young people, especially young women, with the

skills, tools and resources for employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in agribusiness. The programme is built around the principles of regenerative agriculture models that promote circular economies in predominantly rural areas. Leveraging schools as demo centres and low-tech digital infrastructure, the programme is changing the lives of young people in agriculture, getting them to participate and contribute towards improving economic livelihoods, food systems and nutritional status in the country. By the end of 2025, EKYAN will provide more than 5,000 young agripreneurs with the opportunity to earn a decent livelihood – particularly young women from out-of-school settings. Young Agripreneurs will provide support to 50,000 farmers to improve their economic livelihoods within a sustainable and climate smart manner and train 10,000 young people on food systems.

The EKYAN model specifically targets impact on rural young women and girls in Kenya, who face challenges securing employment or engaging in entrepreneurship due to gender-based barriers and discrimination. The model employs a gender-responsive approach, embedding gender equity through all stages of the programme implementation. Due to individual and national resource constraints, only half of youth in East Africa are attending academic secondary school. Girls and young women, in particular, face unique and greater barriers to success. In rural areas of East Africa, as few as 1 in 20 girls are on track to complete secondary school. Young women, especially those who were unable to complete a traditional secondary education, need the tools to improve their livelihoods and drive development in local communities. The model delivers impactful skill building experiences to young women, many of whom are young mothers, equips them with the entrepreneurial and employability skills to engage and grow within Kenya's economy and local agricultural sectors.

In response to evolving needs, the program has enhanced its training and engagement model. The following key elements were

introduced during implementation:

- Increased emphasis on regenerative agriculture to counter climate change effects and improve soil health.
- Integration of digital tools to enhance market access, financial management, and decision-making for agripreneurs and farmers.
- Increased hands-on training opportunities, allowing youth agripreneurs to gain practical experience through real-world agribusiness activities.
- Facilitated peer-to-peer learning networks where young agripreneurs share knowledge, experiences, and best practices to improve their agribusiness ventures.
- Broader engagement with the private sector, ensuring access to quality inputs, technology, and markets.

## Summary of Key Results in 2024



Demonstration plots have been set up in **14 school centers of excellence**. School centres of excellence (CoEs) serve as agricultural one-stop-shops for youths and farmers in local communities. CoEs function as well-equipped learning hubs, promoting digital literacy and offering training in climate-smart and regenerative agriculture. Public schools are chosen to host the CoE learning unit because of their willingness to host learning communities and their accessibility to a broad audience.



**112 young agripreneurs participated in business training combined with bespoke agricultural value chain training.** Moreover, they were provided with digital tools to transfer knowledge and connect youth and farmers with the agrifood industry.

- **100% Agripreneurs reported improved economic livelihoods**
- **71% of Agripreneurs reported income increases of over 50%, with an average monthly gain of KES 18,000 (~USD 120)**

The story of Grace, one of the young agripreneurs is available here: [Planting Roots of Resilience: Grace's Journey as a Young Agripreneur in Kenya | Generation Unlimited.](#)



**Young agripreneurs trained 2,733 young learners aged 15 and above (49% female) from 53 schools on the food system and nutritious food production.**





**Also, young agripreneurs trained 17,873 smallholder farmers** on climate-smart agriculture, regenerative practices, and the nutritional value of African Leafy Vegetables and other relevant value chains (of whom 65% are female and 11,800 under the age of 35)

- **80% of farmers reported improved yields** due to better farming techniques and soil management
- **27% of farmers accessed new markets/ products/ services**
- **97% of farmers implemented at least one climate-smart technique** such as zai pits, agroforestry, and organic fertilizers



In addition, **2,275 out-of-school and unemployed young people** (62% women), including persons living with disabilities and young mothers, have been trained and are about to commence a mentorship programme enabling them to set up an agribusiness or find employment in the agriculture sector.



#### **Private sector engagement:**

- **10 private sector partners** engaged across inputs (seeds, agrochemicals, animal feed), irrigation (drip kits), poultry, and mechanization services
- **Business transactions:** 2,141 transactions recorded (input sales, farmer services, and aggregation deals)
- **Value of business transactions:** KES 2.00 million (~USD 15,500).

## **Engagement with Youth Agripreneurs**

EKYAN successfully incubated 112 agripreneurs (46% female) in 2024, equipping them with technical, financial, and entrepreneurial skills.

The EKYAN Agripreneur Incubation Program, part of the broader effort to engage youth in agriculture and nutrition, has been



designed to provide youth agripreneurs with a holistic set of skills required for sustainable agribusiness success. This program spans multiple facets of business development, technical farming knowledge, digital literacy, and mentorship, ensuring that participants are fully equipped to not only improve their own agribusinesses but also contribute to the agricultural sector's broader growth. The incubation program includes 15 weeks of leadership training through the Kuza Leadership Academy, practical demonstrations at the Centers of Excellence (COEs), mentorship from both county extension officers and peers, and exposure to key digital skills, all of which culminate in the empowerment of agripreneurs to lead the way in modern agriculture. The Agripreneur incubation programme had the following components:

### **1. Agripreneur Incubation Sessions**

The mentorship sessions through the Kuza Leadership Academy serve as the cornerstone of the agripreneur

incubation process. Over the course of 15 weeks, agripreneurs are immersed in a comprehensive curriculum that focuses on business and financial management, equipping them with the essential skills

needed to build and scale sustainable agribusinesses. The program was divided into five key stages, each focusing on a crucial phase of business development:



Through this rigorous training, agripreneurs acquired the foundational knowledge and practical skills needed to manage their agribusinesses effectively. They are equipped not only to enhance their

financial management practices but also to make informed business decisions, ensuring their ventures are both profitable and sustainable.

## 2. Practical Demonstrations at Demo Plots in the Centers of Excellence (COEs)

In conjunction with theoretical training, agripreneurs were provided hands-on learning through practical demonstrations at the Centers of Excellence (COEs). These COEs acted as living laboratories where agripreneurs applied regenerative agricultural practices and demonstrated their impact on farming productivity. The integration of demo plots into the program provided a platform for both agripreneurs and the farmers they engage with to learn, experiment, and adopt innovative farming practices.

### Focus Areas in Demonstrations:

- **Regenerative Agriculture:** Agripreneurs were introduced to sustainable farming techniques such as soil fertility

management, water conservation methods, composting, and crop rotation. These methods are designed to improve soil health and reduce environmental impact while ensuring that the land remains productive for future generations.

- **Practical Application of Crop Management:** The demonstration plots showcase best practices for managing the key value chain - african leafy vegetables, which included kales, spinach, amaranthus, spider plant, night shade, cow peas, and pumpkin leaves, which not only have commercial but also nutritional value. Agripreneurs learned





how to optimize yield through improved agronomy practices such as integrated pest management, proper irrigation techniques, and animal husbandry practices.

- **Engagement with Farmers and Students:** Beyond the demonstrations, agripreneurs actively engage with local farmers and students from surrounding schools, introducing them to these techniques and encouraging them to adopt sustainable farming practices. This knowledge-sharing helps spread regenerative agriculture techniques and ensures wider community impact.

By linking theory to practice, agripreneurs did not only gain critical skills but also served as agents of change within their communities, spreading sustainable farming practices among local farmers and contributing to long-term agricultural transformation.

### 3. Mentorship by County Extension Teams on Agronomy Practices

The agripreneurs also benefitted from direct mentorship by county extension teams that specialize in agronomy extension (crop & livestock). The County extension team also provided tailored guidance and expert advice on best farming practices specific to the value chains under focus, such as tomato, avocado, poultry, and dairy farming.

#### Key Focus Areas:

- **Crop and Animal Health:** Extension officers provide critical guidance on the prevention and management of pests, diseases, and other challenges faced by farmers in these key value chains.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Agripreneurs were guided to ensure that they are not only applying the right farming techniques but are also focused on sustainability, helping farmers adopt regenerative practices that not only increases yield but also improves soil health or biodiversity.

- **Market Readiness:** Agripreneurs were provided advisory on how to prepare for market access, training them to meet quality standards and enhance product appeal to buyers.

**Outcomes and Impact:** This mentorship enables agripreneurs to refine their farming practices and ensures that they have the expert support needed to overcome technical challenges, improve productivity, and increase profitability.

### 4. Peer-to-Peer Mentorship among Agripreneurs

A key element of the incubation process is the establishment of peer-to-peer mentorship. Agripreneurs were paired with one another to share experiences, successes, and challenges. Monthly group mentorship sessions further promoted this collaborative learning environment, where agripreneurs benefited from each other's expertise, discuss common challenges, and exchanged innovative solutions.

#### Focus Areas in Peer Learning:

- **Knowledge Sharing:** Agripreneurs shared practical solutions to common agribusiness challenges, such as market access, supply chain management, pricing strategies, and customer acquisition. They also exchanged insights on how to effectively manage business operations, negotiate with suppliers and buyers, and implement cost-effective marketing strategies. This collaborative environment allowed agripreneurs to learn from each other's



experiences, refine their business models, and enhance their overall competitiveness in the market.

- **Business Strategies:** Discussions on farmer engagement strategies enabled agripreneurs to learn from others' successes and avoid common pitfalls.
- **Collaborative Innovation:** These sessions encouraged collaboration between agripreneurs exploring opportunities for partnerships that can amplify their impact. **Outcomes and Impact:** Through peer mentorship, agripreneurs have been able to expand their knowledge, gain new perspectives on their challenges, and form long-lasting professional relationships that support their growth and the growth of their businesses.

## 5. Digital Skills Training and Career Counseling



Digital literacy is an essential part of modern agribusiness, and agripreneurs are equipped with critical digital skills to enhance their marketing efforts and increase business visibility. ICT skills training, including social media marketing, website creation, and branding, were provided to enable agripreneurs to reach

a broader market and effectively promote their products.

### Key Digital Skills Covered:

- **Social Media Marketing:** Agripreneurs were trained on how to use digital platforms to engage with customers, build their brand, and increase sales.
- **Business Registration and Online Presence:** Guidance was provided on how to legally register businesses, create websites, and build a strong online presence to attract and retain customers. Additionally, agripreneurs participated in career counseling

sessions led by experts, focusing on key entrepreneurial qualities: creativity, resilience, consistency, & discipline. These sessions also covered time management, and resource allocation, ensuring agripreneurs have leadership skills needed to successfully manage

### Kuza Agribytes

Agribytes is Kuza's digital platform designed to equip Agripreneurs with comprehensive, modular agronomic training content tailored to various value chains.

Currently, Agripreneurs have access to Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) content across four value chains in Swahili. This innovative approach allows Agripreneurs to enhance their technical expertise at their own pace and convenience, leveraging the flexibility and accessibility of digital learning.



Agribytes was conceived as a solution to the growing need for accessible, high-quality video based training material for Agripreneurs working in diverse agricultural ecosystems. Recognizing the challenges faced by smallholder farmers, Agribytes was designed to empower Agripreneurs with the knowledge and skills to bridge gaps in traditional extension services. The digitized value chain-specific Good Agricultural Practices, Agribytes ensures that Agripreneurs can offer timely, relevant, and actionable insights to smallholder farmers, fostering trust and collaboration.

### The Learning Path and Modular Design

The Agribytes learning content is structured in a modular format, covering the complete spectrum of the agricultural value chain—from land preparation to post-harvest handling for crops, and corresponding stages in livestock production. Unlike traditional learning models, Agribytes



offers a flexible and need-based approach. Agripreneurs can engage with the content in a non-linear manner, accessing specific modules as and when required, without being bound to a fixed schedule or progression path. This modular design not only caters to the diverse learning needs of Agripreneurs but also ensures that they are equipped to address real-time challenges and provide targeted solutions to the farmers they serve.



## Practical Application and Value Addition

Agribytes goes beyond theoretical learning by enabling Agripreneurs to actively use the digital content to engage with smallholder farmers. By leveraging the app, Agripreneurs can:

1. **Provide Extension Services:** Train farmers on Good Agricultural Practices tailored to their specific needs, earning their trust and building lasting relationships.
2. **Supplement Training with Bundled Services:** Offer additional value through bundled services such as inputs, equipment rentals, or post-harvest solutions, creating an integrated support system for smallholders.
3. **Achieve Sustainability through Commission-Based Models:** Generate income by earning commissions from service provision while contributing to improved yields and productivity for smallholder farmers. This practical approach positions Agripreneurs as trusted advisors and service providers

in their communities, enhancing their reputation and business viability.

## Impact on Agripreneurs and Smallholder Farmers

By empowering Agripreneurs with Agribytes, the platform creates a ripple effect of knowledge transfer and improved agricultural outcomes. Agripreneurs can now: 1. Build technical competence in key value chains. 2. Strengthen their relationships with farmers through personalized, high-impact training. 3. Drive improvements in yield, productivity, and income for smallholders. In turn, smallholder farmers benefit from

### Overview of Training on Dairy, Poultry, Tomato, and Avocado Value Chains

The EKYAN agripreneurs received specialized training on four key value chains—Dairy, Poultry, Tomato, and Avocado—facilitated by the County Department of Agriculture and Livestock. These value chains were selected based on their economic importance, market potential, and ability to create employment opportunities for youth agripreneurs in Kirinyaga.

### Training Focus:

- The training sessions covered essential technical skills, market linkages, and value chain development strategies, equipping agripreneurs with practical knowledge to improve production, quality management, and profitability. Key topics included:



- **Tomato Production:** Soil fertility management, pest and disease control, water-efficient farming techniques, and post-harvest handling to reduce losses and improve yields.
- **Avocado Farming:** Grafting, orchard management, pest control, and market requirements for local and export sales.
- **Dairy Farming:** Proper livestock management, feed formulation, disease control, and milk handling to enhance productivity and market access.
- **Poultry Farming:** Breed selection, vaccination, housing, feeding, and business strategies for maximizing profitability in egg and meat production.

### Importance of These Value Chains in Kirinyaga

These four value chains are critical drivers of economic growth in Kirinyaga county, supporting income generation, food security, and agribusiness sustainability:

- **Tomato Production** is a high-value crop with multiple harvest cycles, making it a profitable agribusiness for small-scale farmers, especially with improved post-harvest handling.
- **Avocado Farming** offers export potential, particularly with Hass and Fuerte varieties, positioning Kirinyaga as a key supplier to global markets.
- **Dairy Farming** provides a steady income through daily milk sales, benefits from high local demand, and contributes to household nutrition and employment.
- **Poultry Farming** is a low-cost, high-return enterprise, offering quick income generation and addressing the growing demand for poultry meat and eggs.

Through this training, agripreneurs are now better equipped to improve their agribusiness operations, train farmers, and contribute to sustainable agricultural development in Kirinyaga.



### Agripreneur Testimonials

#### Beatrice's story: Market linkages & soil

EKYAN equipped Beatrice with the business skills, agronomic knowledge, and access to a network of agricultural service providers, enabling her to turn her agricultural passion into a viable agribusiness. Through EKYAN, she built trust with local farmers, integrating herself into **six farmer groups** where she now offers training, advisory services, and access to essential agricultural products.

As part of EKYAN, Beatrice partnered with MIADI, a private sector service provider, to **offer soil testing services on a commission basis**. By helping farmers understand their soil health, she empowered them to **make informed decisions on fertilizer use and crop selection**, leading to better yields and sustainable land management.

Also, Beatrice partnered with the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) to work as **certified seed multiplier for Nyota Beans**, a high-iron variety critical for nutritional improvement in rural communities. By **selling quality seeds** at a subsidized price of Ksh 250 per kilo— compared to the market rate of Ksh 500—she ensures that more **farmers have access to affordable, high-quality seeds**, improving both productivity and food security.

Beatrice also tapped into strategic partnerships with leading agricultural input suppliers such as Seedco, Amiran, and ETG. Through **collective bulk purchasing with other agripreneurs**, she **secured discounted rates on high-quality seeds and fertilizers**, making farming more cost-effective for smallholder farmers.



*“EKYAN gave me the shift - from observing problems to becoming part of the solution. Today, when a farmer tells me their yields improved because of a decision we made together - like testing their soil or planting Nyota beans - that’s the real reward. It’s not just about business; it’s about changing lives. Including mine.”*

— Beatrice



### Felista’s story: Digital agribusiness

*“EKYAN helped me see the power of my phone not just as a communication tool—but as a business accelerator. Through social media, I now reach thousands of customers directly and sell over 100kg of rice weekly.*

*But more than that, I’ve connected 290 farmers to fair-priced inputs, trained them on climate-smart practices, and created jobs along the way.*

*This is what digital agribusiness looks like when youth lead.”*

— Felista Nyakio, Agripreneur & Digital Marketer, Mwea West



*“Before EKYAN, I had an agrovet and ambition—but not the systems to scale. Through the program, I learned how to manage inventory, plan strategically, and expand into veterinary services, aggregation, and seedling distribution. Now, I serve over 400 farmers and my dream is to create a full agribusiness hub where farmers access everything they need—from inputs to markets to advice.”*

— Stephen Kilonzo, Agripreneur & Agrovet Owner, Kirinyaga East

*“EKYAN didn’t just improve my business—it completely transformed my mindset. I began to see agriculture not just as farming, but as a platform for leadership, mentorship, and innovation. Through the program, I built stronger business systems, took on soil testing contracts, and even secured a farm management deal outside my county. But what means the most is mentoring young people and seeing students in schools get excited about agribusiness. That’s the real impact—when your growth becomes a reason for others to rise too.”*

— Kelvin Gatimu Warugu, Agripreneur, Mentor & Soil Testing Consultant, Mwea East

## Key Findings from Surveys and Interviews

(Sample size: 112 agripreneurs):

- **85% are 'confident' or 'very confident' in applying what they have learned, compared to 35% before**
- **100% Agripreneurs reported improved economic livelihoods**
- **71% of Agripreneurs reported income increases of over 50%, with an average monthly gain of KES 18,000 (~USD 120)**

## Establishment of Demo Plots & Regenerative Practices at CoEs

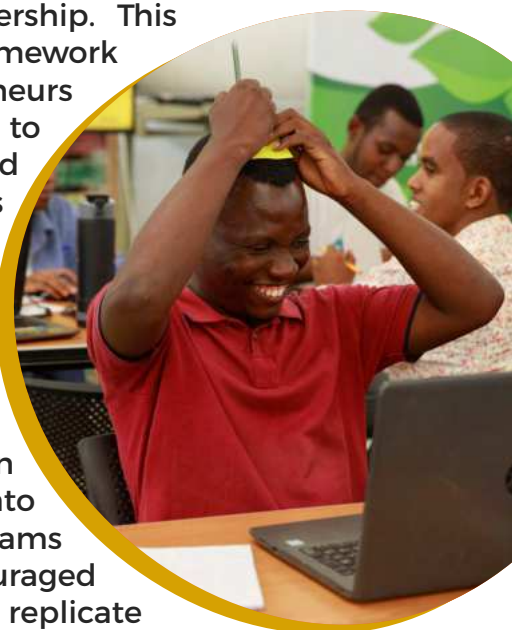
The establishment of demo plots under the EKYAN program served as the foundation for delivering practical, hands-on training to learners and farmers on climate smart regenerative agriculture and nutrition. These plots, set up across 14 Centres of Excellence (CoEs) and proactively adopted by several satellite schools, were designed not only as teaching tools but as learning & demonstration hubs for climate-resilient and nutrition-sensitive farming. The demo plot design was informed by a framework developed by Kuza emphasizing six core principles: Scalable, Profitable, Regenerative, Innovative, Nutrition-focused, Transformative (SPRINT)(R). Each practice selected had to meet these criteria to ensure it was context-relevant, easy to replicate, and impactful across both school and farm settings.

Core regenerative practices implemented included:

- Zai pits for moisture retention & soil fertility in dry areas
- Fertility trenches for soil conditioning and nutrient recycling
- Raised beds & double dug beds for intensifying production and improving drainage

- Vertical garden to maximize space & demonstrate household production models
- Composting for organic nutrient replenishment and waste management
- Intercropping and crop rotation to improve soil health and reduce pest cycles
- African leafy vegetable (ALV) production to link agriculture with nutrition and dietary diversity
- Nursery beds to teach propagation and transplanting techniques

The plots were established through a collaborative effort involving Kuza mentors, agripreneurs, school management, learners, and Ward Agricultural Officers (WAOs). Where applicable, WAOs provided technical oversight, while mentors, teachers and agripreneurs guided learners in layout, planting, and maintenance. In several schools, plot maintenance continued during holidays under supervised sessions, ensuring uninterrupted learning and reinforcing ownership. This regenerative framework allowed agripreneurs and learners to observe, test, and refine practices based on local soil, climate, and crop responses. It also laid the groundwork for integrating school grown produce into feeding programs and encouraged households to replicate techniques through kitchen gardens and home demo plots. The demo plots served a dual role: they were living laboratories for learners and community engagement points for farmers. This practical exposure extended the reach of EKYAN's training far beyond the classroom and anchored the model in everyday school





and community life. While the Centres of Excellence (CoEs) served as the primary learning & demonstration hubs under EKYAN, the Satellite Schools (SSs) benefited significantly through structured peer learning and direct knowledge transfer. Agripreneurs and agriculture teachers at CoEs hosted field visits, hands-on demonstrations, and mentorship sessions for learners and staff from neighboring SSs. One compelling example was the visit by Good Samaritan Secondary School, a satellite school in Mwea West, to the demo plot at Wamumu Rehabilitation Center, a CoE. During the visit, students explored regenerative practices such as double dug beds, zai pits, raised gardens, nursery beds, and eco-friendly pest control, all facilitated by agripreneurs from both schools. Inspired by this experience, learners from Good Samaritan went on to establish their own demo plot back at their school. This example highlights how CoEs functioned as catalysts for replication, enabling Satellite Schools to adopt proven techniques, strengthen their agriculture clubs, and build local ownership of sustainable practices.



challenges such as limited land availability, water scarcity, climate variability and security concerns. They however demonstrated resilience willing to leverage on available resources, partnerships, and community support to overcome these obstacles. Overall, the learnings from various stakeholder engagements underscore the importance of adopting a holistic approach to agricultural education for school kids, fostering community engagement, and empowering stakeholders at all levels to drive sustainable development in the agriculture sector.

In order select school centers of excellence and satellite schools, which will be leveraged for demo plots and training of farmers led by youth agripreneurs, a comprehensive assessment process with close engagement of the Kenyan county government was carried. The assessment was based on a set of selection criteria, such as availability of land and water, openness of school management, as well as strategic alignment with UNICEF's giga school connectivity programme (a programme to connect every school in the world to the internet), social policy or nutrition and education work. Out of the approx. 60 schools that were assessed in detail, 14 Centers of Excellence across the 14 wards in Kirinyaga County as well as satellite schools were determined in quarter one of 2024. The programme will leverage 4K clubs and Young Farmers Clubs in schools, which are important platforms to further the programme goals and are recognized by Ministry of Education and Ministry of Agriculture.



## Engagement with Schools

The project team carried out several field visits to schools, focus group discussions with farmers, agriculture teachers, head teachers of public and private schools as well as held meetings with various stakeholders including government officials representing the Ministry of Agriculture, Education, Environment, Youth and Gender. Noteworthy findings from the engagements with schools include innovative projects like vertical gardens, regenerative agriculture, and scouting activities fostering environmental awareness. Some schools faced common

### Key results:

- Teachers rated curriculum alignment at 94% with an average satisfaction score of 4.9/5.

- **High Student Satisfaction:** Learners across COEs rated their agri-nutrition experience highly, with an average satisfaction score of 4.8/5, driven by demo plots and agriprenneur-led sessions.
- **Youth Perspective Shift:** Young people increasingly see agriculture as viable and exciting—driven by practical exposure, digital tools, income potential, and mentorship from relatable role models (agripreneurs).

### Testimonial from a Young Learner

#### Amina from Kiamutugu Satellite School (Kirinyaga East)

*Amina, a young learner, took initiative after just a few weeks of EKYAN's training. She organized her peers to create a small kitchen garden behind their classroom using leftover seedlings from the school demo plot. With support from the agripreneurs and her teacher, Amina's group now grows spinach, cowpeas, and amaranth, which are used in home science lessons. She has become a peer educator, sharing knowledge on nutrition and food groups with her classmates and encouraging other girls to join the 4K Club. Her enthusiasm has challenged gender stereotypes around farming and leadership. "I used to think farming was for boys," Amina says. "Now I know it's for people who want to make change." Her mother has now started a kitchen garden at home, inspired by her daughter's efforts. "Through EKYAN, I discovered I don't just enjoy farming - I enjoy leading and helping others find solutions. I want to become an agriprenneur, start my own business, and support other girls to do the same."*

### Testimonial from Teachers

*"Before EKYAN, agriculture was just another subject on the timetable. Today, it's alive in our school garden, in our learners' homes, and in the curiosity of every child who plants a seed and watches it grow. The agripreneurs didn't just train students—they inspired them. EKYAN has made agriculture practical, meaningful, and full of purpose."*

— Mrs. Esther Kimani, Head Teacher  
Kerugoya School for the Deaf

### Engagement with Farmers

The Farmer engagement formed a core pillar of the EKYAN program, with agripreneurs serving as the primary link between smallholder farmers and access to knowledge, services, and markets.

The approach was built on the principle of localized, consistent, and practical support, designed to increase adoption of regenerative agricultural practices, strengthen climate resilience, and improve household nutrition outcomes. Each agriprenneur was assigned to mobilize and train a minimum of 120 farmers, structured into approximately 8 farmer groups of 15 members. These groups were engaged through scheduled fortnightly sessions - covering both technical training and interactive discussions - complemented by one-on-one farm visits for personalized support. Over the course of implementation, 17,873 farmers were trained across the five sub-counties (65% women and 11,849 are under the age of 35).





Training content focused on climate-smart regenerative agriculture. Farmers were also trained on value chain-specific practices related to the county's four priority commodities: tomato, dairy, poultry, and avocado. In addition, nutrition-sensitive agriculture was integrated into the sessions, encouraging farmers to diversify their crops and improve household dietary diversity.



A key feature of EKYAN's farmer engagement strategy was the use of demo plots within Centres of Excellence, which served as a live learning & demonstration environment where farmers could observe, participate in, and validate regenerative techniques before applying them on their own farms. This practical exposure accelerated adoption and built confidence among farmers who were previously hesitant to shift from conventional practices.

To enhance knowledge retention and ensure relevance, agripreneurs conducted over 3,000 in-farm visits, providing real-time diagnostics, input advice, and field-level mentorship. These visits also enabled agripreneurs to introduce farmers to digital tools, record-keeping practices, and links to private sector service providers. Close collaboration with the County Extension Teams (SCAOs and WAOs) strengthened the relationship between the Agripreneur & the Farmer groups.

Over time, agripreneurs began to establish trust based long term relationships with farmer groups, supporting market linkages, input aggregation, and income diversification strategies. In several instances, farmers initiated their own mini-demo plots, indicating ownership and readiness to scale regenerative practices beyond EKYAN's initial footprint. This multi-layered engagement approach—combining structured training, practical demonstrations, in-field support, and mentorship—has contributed to tangible

improvements in farming practices, environmental stewardship, and livelihood resilience across participating communities.

### Key results:

- Training of 17,873 farmers (65% female), 11,849 are under the age of 35.
- 80% of farmers reported improved yields due to better farming techniques and soil management
- 27% of farmers accessed new markets/ products/ services
- 97% of farmers implemented at least one climate-smart technique such as zai pits, agroforestry, and organic fertilizers.

### Martha Murimi, Kirinyaga

#### Young Farmer Profile

Martha is a young farmer in Kirinyaga. She cultivates spinach, strawberries, and lettuce on her farm. Through the EKYAN programme, she learned innovative techniques such as corn gardening and raised bed farming. "From the training I received, it has made my work easier. Now I spend less time than before," Martha explains. Selling her produce in the local market, Martha has seen significant growth in her income and farm productivity as a result of the training. Martha's experience demonstrates that, through the knowledge gained from EKYAN, young farmers can adopt modern techniques that not only simplify their work but also lead to financial stability and productivity. She strongly encourages other farmers to take advantage of similar opportunities to transform their agricultural practices and livelihoods.



*“Before I got the training, I was earning around 2,000 or 3,000, but now I can make 10,000 to 20,000. In a week, I can make 10,000.”*

## Private Sector Engagement

The EKYAN program placed a strong emphasis on building meaningful linkages between youth agripreneurs and private sector actors—positioning agripreneurs as the last-mile delivery agents for agricultural products, services, and knowledge.

These partnerships not only have the potential to increase agripreneurs’ income opportunities but also deepening access and impact for both smallholder farmers and private sector players. As trained and embedded service providers, agripreneurs have begun supporting last-mile distribution of inputs such as seeds, agrochemicals, fertilizers, poultry starter kits, irrigation and technologies. By working directly with local farmer groups and schools, they are helping companies penetrate underserved rural markets efficiently and cost-effectively. This model also ensures that smallholder farmers gain timely access to trusted inputs and advisory services in their own communities.

Over the course of implementation, EKYAN facilitated engagement with over 10 private sector partners, including firms in seed production, animal feeds, crop protection, mechanization, and digital agri-services. These partners participated in Farmer engagement sessions, product demonstrations, and mentorship forums to introduce agripreneurs to real-world value chain opportunities. Through these sessions, agripreneurs gained exposure to business practices such as bulk ordering, retailing, payment terms, and commission

structures—equipping them with both market insights and operational strategies.

Private Sector Partners engaged: SeedCo, Amiran Kenya, Continental Seeds, Osho Chemicals, Syngenta, ETG, KALRO, Kenchic, Isinya Feeds, Bradegate, Agitech.

- SeedCo is actively engaging agripreneurs on the ground to support farmers with improved seed varieties.
- Continental Seeds and Amiran are providing agripreneurs with access to certified seeds and technical support for better crop yields.
- Other private sector partners are engaging agripreneurs individually at the local level, supplying essential inputs directly to farmers to enhance production efficiency.

Private sector actors also provided mentorship to agripreneurs, offering practical guidance on sales strategies, product bundling, and how to structure service offerings that meet farmer needs. These discussions went beyond product promotion and focused on how agripreneurs could build sustainable agribusinesses by combining input supply with services like soil testing, brooding, spraying, and aggregation.

This three-way partnership model is creating shared value:

**1** Agripreneurs are gaining new income streams, business exposure, and credibility through structured partnerships and training.

**2** Farmers benefit from improved access to quality inputs, after-sales support, and advisory services—delivered locally and affordably.

**3** Private sector partners reach new markets, reduce distribution costs, and gain customer insights from the ground through agripreneur feedback loops.



## Impact of Private Sector Engagement on Agripreneurs and Farmers

- **Market Linkages Strengthened:** Agripreneurs are working closely with private input suppliers, creating a smoother supply chain between farmers and agro-dealers.
- **Increased Agribusiness Opportunities:** By working with seed and agro-input companies, agripreneurs diversify their business streams, earning commission based incentives from product sales while helping farmers access essential inputs. Through these linkages, agripreneurs can establish supply agreements and explore reselling opportunities within their networks.
- **Enhanced Knowledge Transfer:** Agripreneurs were introduced to innovative products such as soil conditioners and improved seed varieties that can enhance productivity. Agripreneurs train farmers on the proper use of seeds, fertilizers, and crop protection methods, ensuring improved yields and farm productivity.
- **Access to Affordable and Quality Inputs:** With direct engagements, farmers reduce dependency on middlemen and benefit from fair pricing and quality assurance. Private sector partners offered insights into potential discounts and bulk buying opportunities to reduce costs.

An emerging area of collaboration is the co-design of value-added bundles—integrated packages that include inputs, training, and market access support. These bundles enable agripreneurs to deliver a holistic service to farmers, rather than isolated transactions. For example, a poultry bundle that is currently being designed includes day-old chicks, starter feed, vaccinations, training, and access to offtake markets. This integrated approach enhances trust, increases repeat business, and improves farmer outcomes.

Through this engagement, agripreneurs are not only learning how to operate in real-world market conditions but also developing the confidence and competence to become micro-enterprise leaders within agricultural value chains. The model demonstrates how inclusive, youth-led last-mile networks can become the backbone of future-ready rural economies—anchored in partnerships, powered by technology, and sustained through entrepreneurship.

### Key results:

- EKYAN facilitated engagement with over 10 private sector partners, including firms in seed production, animal feeds, crop protection, mechanization, and digital agri-services: SeedCo, Amiran Kenya, Continental Seeds, Osho Chemicals, Syngenta, ETG, KALRO, Kenchic, Isinya Feeds, Bradegate, Agitech.
- **# business transactions:** As of March 2025, **2,141 transactions** were recorded through the Kuza One platform. These included **input sales, farmer services, and aggregation deals**.
- **Value of business transactions:** The total value of recorded transactions currently stands close to **KES2.00 million** (~USD 15,500). This figure reflects only the digitally logged transactions and is expected to grow as more agripreneurs adopt digital record-keeping.



## Advancing the Nutrition Agenda

By embedding nutrition across all components—school learning, farmer engagement, agripreneur services, and community activities—the program advanced a food systems approach that linked production directly to consumption.

- In schools, demo farms in Centres of Excellence and satellite schools were used to grow nutrition-sensitive crops like African leafy vegetables, legumes, and orange-fleshed sweet potatoes. These contributed to school feeding programs, hands-on nutrition education, and the development of lifelong healthy eating habits among learners.
- Young learners and teachers participated in weekly sessions co-led by agripreneurs and teachers, emphasizing food diversity, school garden-to-plate connections, and gender-inclusive nutrition practices that also influenced household behaviors.
- Agripreneurs were trained to incorporate nutrition into their service delivery—promoting nutrient-dense crops, educating farmers, and supporting household-level food security through bundled offerings and advisory services.
- Farmers and rural households were supported to grow diverse, balanced crops for home consumption. Training sessions highlighted the value of nutrition-sensitive farming, particularly for women and caregivers of young children.
- Private sector partners and communities were engaged in building nutrition-oriented value chains, including starter packs, fortified food products, and local agro-processing innovations. Community field days further amplified awareness on nutritious local recipes.

This integrated approach ensured that nutrition was not an add-on, but a foundational pillar that shaped how

agriculture was taught, practiced, and promoted across the EKYAN ecosystem—delivering lasting value to learners, farmers, schools, and communities alike. As EKYAN scales, its integrated approach to nutrition offers a replicable model for advancing food system transformation. By positioning nutrition as a shared responsibility across schools, farms, households, and private actors, the program strengthens the foundation for healthier communities—proving that agricultural development and dietary improvement can, and must, go hand in hand.



## Engagement of NEET Youth

Another key component of EKYAN is to provide thousands of out-of-school and unemployed young people (including persons living with disabilities and young mothers) with the opportunity to start an agribusiness or find employment in the agriculture sector. Activities started with the launch and stakeholder Mapping workshops in Samburu, Kisumu, Busia and Kirinyaga. After the project introduction, SNV conducted a baseline and GESI analysis in Samburu, Busia and Kisumu.



Trainer of Trainees (ToT) trainings were held in Samburu and in Busia for both Kisumu and Busia trainers, and subsequently the trained trainers have started training youth in cohorts of 25 at ward-level. The Human Centred Design Research started in March 2025.

**Stakeholder mapping** workshops were held in Samburu, Kisumu, Busia and Kirinyaga to identify youth opportunities, key value chains, market players and wards of focus in each of the counties. During the workshop we had representatives from a wide range of county government departments, private sector and civil society organizations including youth and Person with Disability representatives. In Samburu County, the main value chains that were identified were Poultry, Livestock production, Crops especially maize, beans and potatoes, green leafy vegetables, apiculture and aquaculture. In Kisumu, the main value chains identified were Poultry, Dairy, Green Leafy Vegetables and Fish. In Busia, project activities will focus on the following value chains: Fish, Soybean, Poultry and African Leafy Vegetables. In Kirinyaga county, the main value chains that were identified were: Horticulture (Tomatoes, Onions, African leafy vegetables, French beans), Poultry, Dairy cows and goats, Fruit trees (avocado, macadamia) and aquaculture. Key market players were identified who could potentially engage the youth through direct employment or provide a reliable market for raw materials produced by the youth Agripreneurs.

A **baseline** was carried out using quantitative study design, collecting data from a sample of youth using simple random sampling across three counties. Baseline study questions were structured according

to OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria to evaluate project relevance and coherence.

The **GESI analysis** was conducted at the same time as the baseline using the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion framework of SNV looking at access, agency, voice, resilience / wellbeing and enabling environment. The primary data collection included key informant interviews with county representatives and focus groups discussions with groups within the geographical scope of the project. In total 17 focus group discussions have been held amongst the three counties, 8 in Samburu, 5 in Kisumu and 4 in Busia. The groups consisted of youth groups, women groups, groups for person with disabilities, and mixed groups. Most were engaged in one of the selected value chains by the project, others aspired to work on one of the selected value chains but were not operating yet. Some came together as a group to support each other socially and for joint savings and loaning – table banking or Village Saving Loan Association (VSLA).

## Trainer of Trainees Trainings

The EKYAN Training of Trainees (ToT) Programme based upon SNV's Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Curriculum, were held in quarter 1 in 2025, to equip trainers with the necessary skills to mentor youth in entrepreneurship, green business, employability, and digital literacy. This initiative was developed to ensure that trainers not only gain knowledge but also acquire practical facilitation techniques to effectively transfer skills to young people. A total of 47 participants from Samburu, Busia and Kisumu were trained of which 35 Trainers of Trainees (including young mothers and persons with disabilities) to support EKYAN youth trainings at ward-level. The programme aimed to empower trainers with comprehensive knowledge in business development, financial literacy, sustainability, and social skills, ensuring that they are well-prepared to guide youth in navigating the complexities of the

modern job market and entrepreneurial landscape. By integrating climate-smart approaches and innovation-driven business models, the training emphasized the need for sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Furthermore, the ToT programme incorporated modules on resilience, leadership, and critical thinking, enabling trainers to foster problem-solving abilities among the youth. Trainers also explored digital literacy, understanding how technology can enhance business operations and employability. Through hands-on activities, group discussions, and real-world case studies, participants developed actionable strategies to implement effective training sessions in their respective communities, ensuring long-term impact and economic empowerment for young people.



## Youth Trainings

After the ToT trainings, the trainers started the youth trainings at ward-level. Each youth training had a target of 20 - 25 youth and each trainer training an average of four youth cohorts. Trainers also ensure youth selected included 50% women and other vulnerable groups like young mothers and youth with disabilities. By the end of March 2025, a total of 2,275 youth were trained, thereof 61% young women and 114 persons with disability.

Summary				
County	Samburu	Busia	Kisumu	Total
No. of Training	52	20	17	89
Total	1333	500	442	2275
Male	490	217	158	855
Female	811	283	294	1388
PWD	61	11	42	114
Care-takers	32	54	36	122

## Regenerative agriculture

Trainees are being encouraged to adopt organic farming as a move away from the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, especially in vegetable farming. This has come about in the curriculum from the topic on Climate Change and youth employment where one of the causes of climate change frequently mentioned is excessive use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Use of organic farming will bring with it additional youth employment opportunities through activities such as Black Soldier Fly (BSF) farming and vermicomposting. In areas where there is limited rainfall, especially in Samburu, the agripreneurs are encouraged to adopt innovative climate smart techniques like use of Zai Pits, sunken beds and Half Moons which enhance crop growth in those regions. They are also encouraged to embrace crop rotation and diversify crops grown in Samburu. Growing a variety of crops will enhance soil health, manage pests naturally, and create additional income streams. We are planning to conduct on-farm training that will equip the agripreneurs with technical skills in regenerative agriculture.

The curriculum includes two sessions on nutrition and nutrition in business which have been included in both the ToT and youth trainings.

Participants will be able to improve their diet making it more nutritious  
Overall outcomes:  
Participants understand the opportunities for business development / value added in nutrition.





## Human Interest Story

### Margaret Leleshep from Samburu

At 27, Margaret Leleshep from Samburu County is a mother of three young children, aged six, four, and ten months. She began studying community development and social work in college but had to put her education on hold due to financial constraints. Marriage and motherhood soon followed. Determined to support her family, Margaret turned to farming, growing vegetables like kale, spinach, and tomatoes, alongside maize for household consumption. Through EKYAN's training, she envisions launching a poultry business, applying the skills they have gained. "The skills we have learned will be invaluable not just for poultry farming but also for my future business," she shares with optimism.



## Challenges, Lessons Learned, Best Practices

### Challenges

- Limited access to financing** – Agripreneurs and farmer groups struggle to secure funding due to high loan requirements, limited financial literacy, and lack of collateral. Schools also face budget constraints in maintaining demo plots and expanding climate-smart agriculture initiatives
- Climate variability and slow adoption of regenerative practices** – Erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts, and rising temperatures continue to threaten productivity, while the adoption of climate-smart techniques remains slow due to knowledge gaps and lack of incentives
- Market access barriers** – Agripreneurs who are key in linking farmers to off-takers, face **unstable markets, price fluctuations, and unfair pricing**, limiting their effectiveness. As a result, farmers struggle with **post-harvest losses and reduced income**, highlighting the need for stronger market linkages and negotiation power.
- Weak value chain integration** – Youth agripreneurs struggle to transition from training to business operations due to a lack of capital and business development support. Many remain disconnected from structured supply chains, limiting their long-term sustainability
- Policy implementation gaps** – Despite supportive policies, enforcement remains weak, with slow coordination among various stakeholders leading to inefficiencies in execution
- Variation in school schedules and calendar disruptions**: School holidays and exam preparations occasionally limited access to learners and teachers. The program adjusted by re-aligning agripreneur activities to focus on active schools and increased support to demo plot maintenance during these periods.
- Environmental constraints and water access**: In some locations, demo plot establishment was affected by limited



access to water or poor soil quality. Agripreneurs helped schools adapt techniques such as raised beds, zai pits, and mulching to overcome these barriers.

- Capacity gaps and varied learning curves: Agripreneurs came from diverse backgrounds, resulting in different learning speeds and comfort levels with digital tools and farmer engagement. Ongoing group mentorship, peer-to-peer learning, and support from sub-county mentors helped bridge these gaps.
- Early-stage market linkages: While private sector engagement began to take root, some agripreneurs faced challenges translating relationships into consistent sales. Business mentorship and bundling approaches are helping strengthen this pipeline for long-term viability.

## Lessons Learned

- **Hands-on engagement accelerates youth participation** – Practical learning through demo plots and real-world agribusiness exposure has significantly improved youth interest and retention in agriculture.
- **Strong market linkages drive sustainability** – Programs that connect agripreneurs directly to buyers, aggregators, and industry players ensure better pricing, increased incomes, and reduced dependency on intermediaries.
- **Climate-smart practices enhance long-term resilience** – Schools and farmers who implemented regenerative techniques, saw better yields
- **Public-private partnerships strengthen agribusiness ecosystems** – Engaging county governments, private sector players, and other partners ensures better mentorship, training and agri business opportunities for youth agripreneurs.

- **Youth-focused financial models are needed** – Many young agripreneurs struggle with financing, highlighting the need for tailored financial products such as low-interest loans, grants, and microfinancing to support their business growth.
- **CoEs and demo plots as a scalable model** – Centers of Excellence (CoEs) and demo plots efficiently unite agripreneurs, farmers, and young learners, fostering hands-on training, mentorship, and market linkages. They enhance value chain connections, accelerate regenerative agriculture adoption, and equip youth with agribusiness skills, making this a scalable and sustainable model for agricultural education and market-driven development.

## Best Practices



Integrated models work best when aligned early: EKYAN's success stemmed from its multi-layered design—connecting youth, schools, farmers, county systems, and private sector partners. Early and coordinated onboarding of all stakeholders—including schools, extension officers, and community leaders—is essential to build trust, ensure shared understanding, and align expectations.

**Proximity and accessibility matter:** The distance between Centres of Excellence and Satellite Schools impacted the ability to transfer knowledge and facilitate learner visits. Future programs should select schools based on proximity and education zones, not just administrative boundaries, to improve access and engagement.







**Demo plots are powerful learning tools—but require timely setup:** Demo plots greatly enhanced practical learning, especially for young learners and farmers. To maximize impact, plots should be established early, with short-duration crops planted before holidays, and with participatory planning to ensure local ownership and continuous care.



**Youth agripreneurs need clear guidance and structured mentorship:** Agripreneurs are central to the model, but they require continuous support through clear training plans, in-person mentorship, and well-structured feedback loops. Peer-to-peer learning forums proved highly effective and should be scaled further.



**Community entry and trust-building is foundational:** Early engagement with chiefs, local committees, and CDDCs (Community Driven Development Committees) helps reduce suspicion, supports mobilization, and ensures smoother program rollout—especially during politically sensitive periods.



**Nutrition must remain a cross-cutting theme:** Embedding nutrition in farmer training, school sessions, and crop selection strengthened household food security and learner health. Demo plots focused on African leafy vegetables and other nutrient-rich crops helped reinforce nutrition education. Future programs should maintain this integration and include school feeding where possible.



**Private sector engagement holds great promise:** Agripreneurs acting as last-mile agents opened new income streams and brought services closer to farmers. Future programs should deepen co-design of product/service bundles, and foster more consistent mentorship from market actors.



**Representation of Vulnerable Groups in Leadership:** Selecting youth with disabilities and young mothers as ToTs empowers diverse voices and promotes inclusive leadership within agripreneurship ecosystem.

# Niger (P2E)

Niger has the youngest population in the world, with 60% under the age of 15. This highlights great pressure on the education system and requires investment to offer young people the opportunity to access a skilled workforce and contribute to economic growth and social cohesion. However, gaps exist in education, nutrition and health, and many young people are neither employed nor in school nor in training. Young people in rural areas, especially girls, have less access to education.

Conflict and insecurity in certain regions have highlighted the need for a digital educational platform to help young people acquire skills. Every year, 500,000 young people enter the job market, but 90% of them have no qualifications, and unemployment is high due to the mismatch between jobs and skills. Furthermore, Niger needs productive human resources to achieve its Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, the Passport to Earning (P2E) programme aims to support the development of skills and employability, with a focus on innovative and digital options, in partnership with the public and private sectors.

## Key Progress

Despite environmental operating challenges which delayed the implementation, major progress transpired in 2024, in some cases already achieving the target, and progress/ results achieved are described below:

- 3,134 (30 per cent female) youth registered on the P2E platform
- 1,317 of these registrations completed one or more courses (44% of the target)
- A total of 3,535 courses were completed, hence for each young person who completed a course, she/he completed 2.7 courses
- 64,371 (322 per cent of the target-30 per cent female) youth participated in regular polls on P2E skills and employability agenda through direct interactions and U-report platform
- 346 (119 per cent of the target) learning and career advisors were trained and able to deliver holistic support to enhance employability
- 8,825 (44 per cent of the target-32 per cent female) youth received career counselling or business plan guidance (target: 20,000)
- 51 (100 per cent of the target) organizations, networks, or enterprises/ start-ups connected to P2E program provide trainings/internship
- 546 young people completed training/ internships (target: 400)
- 100 youth connected to job and business opportunities (target: 100)
- 28 youth centers supported to provide distance learning opportunities





## Next Steps

Considering the effectiveness of the P2E program for acquiring job related skills and the interest of young people and civil society, UNICEF plan to continue and expand its deployment across the country. Below are the key steps for the future:

- Achieve target of 3,000 young people having course certification on P2E. Strategically engage with 29 youth centers to deliver blended programme and empower pedagogical facilitators to track and support the learning journey of the young participants more effectively. UNICEF Niger will also work in partnership with Airtel to improve internet connectivity in the centers, ensuring consistent access to the platform and its content.
- Evaluate and scale up the P2E program: Assess the first phase in Niger to evaluate this impact and effectiveness, integrate key recommendations to expand the program to other youth centers and regions. The second phase should ensure that modules tailored to local realities, alignment with labor market needs etc.
- Resource mobilization: Mobilize additional funding to continue the implementation of P2E and therefore offer job skills opportunities to young people. This implies strengthening partnerships such as with UN agencies (UNDP) through the Sahel flagship programme, the Joint SDG fund and other potential donors, for securing both external funding and domestic resources to sustain and scale up the programme.
- Enhance internet access and support: Improve the service quality by partnering with alternative provider, leveraging satellite solutions such as starlink, and advocacy with the authorities for the



establishment of public Wi-Fi hotspots and digital hubs in youth centers for greater accessibility and affordability.

- Establish a support system for youth business plans: Engage with authorities working on entrepreneurship to provide mentoring and have access to start-up funding to develop viable ideas.
- Enhance the capacity of the P2E Platform: Strengthen the optimization of the platform with the integration of new modules adapted to the context of Niger, addressing local needs and relevant skills development. Additionally, improve the platform's branding to align with local culture, increase its attractiveness to users and for a more user-friendly, intuitive experience for consistent engagement.

## Purpose

Since the launch of GenU, UNICEF has collaborated with public and private partners and youth to support youth engagement, employability, and skill development programmes in Niger. Within the context of GenU the Country Office contributes to providing young girls and boys with equal access to training opportunities, empowering them and making them actual changemakers in their communities. Despite the political changes in Niger in 2023, all GenU-related activities are closely linked to the following key policies and strategies:

**Youth National Policy** which has the ambition that: (1) Young women and men have continuous, increased, and non-discriminatory access to knowledge and opportunities to learn and develop their specific skills; (2) The commitment and participation of young people in the



promotion of good citizenship, and the democratic exercise of political and social leadership at all levels are strengthened; (3) Young people are better integrated into economic channels.

**Niger Girls' Education Strategy** which focuses on 'development of ICT competencies', 'the improvement of girls' employability', and the 'prevention and reduction of girls' dropout from school' among other priorities.

**United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSCDF) Niger** aspires that by 2027, populations, in particular women, children, adolescents, young people (men and women) and vulnerable groups, have inclusive, equitable and enhanced access to quality basic social services, to decent employment, social protection, and protection from harmful practices.

**Niger's Economic and Social Development Plan (PDES) 2022-2026**, highlights the need to strengthen youth engagement and distance learning (page 81 and 82).

**UNICEF's Country Programme Document (CPD) 2023-2027.**

- Outcome: By 2027, girls and boys will have access to equitable quality education and training and acquire fundamental skills to develop their full potential, their commitment, and their active participation in their communities.
- Output 3: In the area of intervention, private sector and civil society actors have the capacities and means to offer adolescents and young people opportunities for better participation and employability, in the development and humanitarian context.



## Results

### Outcome 1

By 2023, young women and men aged 15 to 24 will have opportunities to develop job-relevant skills through the skills and professional development content, courses, and trainings.

UNICEF worked in close collaboration with Mobile Network Operators, Civil Society Organization (ONG Garkua), and Youths to offer to 3,134 young women and men opportunities to develop job relevant skills through the P2E platform.

UNICEF initiated the first version of the Niger P2E platform based on the outcome of the poll launched through U-Report in 2023 to understand the youth's needs in terms of skills, employability and entrepreneurship. Of the 4,930 young people surveyed, 96% said they were interested in vocational training (offline 57%; online 43%) for the following three main reasons: acquiring new skills (32%), learning a trade (23%) and obtaining a diploma (20%). 42% of respondents are interested in training related to ICT, communication and marketing. The P2E team within UNICEF Niger CO collaborated with GenU colleagues at UNICEF HQ to co-develop the P2E Niger platform, which is now available and can be consulted at this link: Niger

To inform, sensitize and engage young people on distance learning and the use of the P2E platform, a Communication Plan and Youth Mobilization Strategy were developed. These plans aim to finalize and optimize communication strategies to promote the use of the digital training platform among young Nigeriens. This activity was of crucial importance in the project implementation process, as it made it possible to align the different actors on the messages, media and dissemination methods to be adopted, thus ensuring the effectiveness and impact of the communication plan.



Based on these plans, advertisements on the benefits of the project and call for leaders of youth structures to register on the platform, tutorials on how to access the platform were produced. Posters, banners, flyers, kakemonos, t-shirts, caps and vests were also made with the contribution of UNICEF experts. These communication tools were disseminated on the website of Garkua, the Facebook pages of the project and other pages of influencers (Aladin, 100 heads, business age 227), as well as WhatsApp groups, U-Report and the national youth council network).

As a result, tremendous progress was made and a total of 3,134 young women and men registered on the P2E platform. 1,317 of these registrations completed one or more course. A total of 3,535 courses were completed, hence for each young person who completed a course, she/he completed 2.7 courses. To facilitate the monitoring and the access to the platform, 267 learning advisors and 79 young supervisors (identified among the U-Reporters) were capacity built to ensure the supervision of young people enrolled onto the platform and using youth centers for their learning on the platform.

Poles were deployed on a regular basis on the U-Report platform to amplify youth voices. The results were used as discussion points for the focus groups organized at regional and local levels. 64,371 youth participated in regular polls on P2E skills and employability agenda. There were 9 surveys with an average of 7,152 respondents per survey.

The U-Report Niger Muryar Matasa platform played a key role in establishing youth networks around Skilling pillar and GenU networks across the country. As of

now, the U-Report community grown up to 89,248 adolescents and young people (30 per cent female), an increase of over 41% compared to year 2023. Through U-report, more than 45,000 (32% girls) adolescents and young people have taken part in skills-building and/or civic engagement programmes. Activities can be classified into three categories:

- **Skilling and Employment:** capacity-building workshops for adolescent girls and young girls were held in 6 regions of Niger. They enabled 4,271 girls to strengthen their skills in six themes: community management, e-mailing, WhatsApp Business and Facebook management for micro-business development, blogging and professional photography.
- **Entrepreneurship:** 150 young people, including 31 girls, have been trained in the regions of Tillabery, Dosso and Diffa in sustainable aquaculture (see Annex for Case study).
- **Social Impact:** 182 U-Reporters, including 69 girls, led back-to-school initiatives in 4 regions (Maradi, Tillabery, Diffa and Tahoua). They cleaned up schools, repaired desks and repainted blackboards before classes resumed in October 2023.

## Outcome 2

**By 2023, public, private, and civil society partners at regional and local levels will have enhanced capacities to support skills development and employability of adolescents and young people.**

Meetings were conducted at national level to share information on the project with different actors including key private sector actors: (Mobile Network Operator); and the Civil society (the National Youth Council of Niger, U-Report Muryar Matasa communities, and other youth networks). The different actors worked together in the

same spirit as a Steering Committee. Their role was to ensure quality control of the activities and to facilitate the engagement of other possible stakeholders.

At local level, UNICEF partner's GARKUA met the local authorities to share information on the project and agree to assess the existing youth centers where P2E can be deployed. The assessment revealed that there are diverse centers used by youth including libraries, youth promotion centers, schools of arts and culture which can welcome the platform. The needs of these centers were identified to ensure a smooth deployment of the platform. Thus, equipment, hardware and internet were availed to the selected 28 youth centers: a total of 254 tablets, 31 computers, 73 projectors and 424 modems and 282 Sim cards were handed over to these centers. 32 routers were distributed to carry out monthly top-ups of the packages to sufficiently cover the needs of the centers. These materials allowed the 3,134 young women and men to access to the platform and job specific learning

opportunities.

275 learning advisors (92 female and 183 male) were trained with the support of "la Maison de l'Entreprise" and independent consultants on facilitation techniques, use of the platform and development of business plans. The training has made it possible to build a well-distributed group of advisors, ready to accompany the young people in the use of the P2E platform and the development of business plans. In addition to the support provided to young women and men enrolled on the P2E platform, learning advisors organized career guidance sessions on business plans for 8,825 young people.

Across the 4 target regions, capacity building workshops were organized for members of youth associations, students, and start-ups on the use of the digital platform. A total of 100 young people (35 female and 65 male), or twenty-five young people per region from 53 structures were trained. In addition, 4 regional forums were conducted in universities in the regions of Dosso, Agadez, Diffa and Zinder. The forum focused on the promotion of entrepreneurship and local innovation as a driver of youth development. Employers, researchers and experts in professional development and business attended the forums. These activities contributed to raise awareness among young people of local entrepreneurial opportunities and support mechanisms; create a space for exchange between young entrepreneurs, mentors, experts and support structures; identify the challenges and opportunities for entrepreneurship in the regions; and promote the networking of young entrepreneurs for a local collective dynamic. Commitments were made by the actors to support the entrepreneurial initiatives of young people.

A skills mapping was conducted in the regions of Agadez, Diffa, Dosso and Zinder, identifying promising professions and developing an advocacy guide to promote these skills. Below is the summary table.





**Table 1. Promising professions summary table**

Region	Market/Industry	Modules to be developed
Agadez	Leather goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finishing techniques.</li> <li>Mixed marketing and labelling techniques for manufactured products</li> </ul>
	Processing of local products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hygiene and sanitation in the processing of local products.</li> <li>Mixed marketing and labelling techniques for manufactured products</li> </ul>
Diffa	Market gardening (peppers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pepper drying and conservation techniques in French and the Kanuri language.</li> <li>Packaging techniques for peppers and related products;</li> </ul>
	Fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Production of fish feed.</li> <li>Techniques for preserving fresh fish</li> </ul>
Dosso	Agriculture (Arachide, manioc)	Techniques for drying and preserving cassava and groundnuts in French and in the Zama and Hausa languages;
	Transport (Kabou Kabou)	Civic-mindedness and responsible citizenship; First Aid Techniques
Zinder	Two- and three-wheel mechanics	Assembly and repair of engines of new brands of motorcycles
	Cooking /Catering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hygiene and sanitation in the kitchen and catering professions</li> <li>Catering Marketing Technique and Diversification</li> </ul>

The skills mapping revealed that the priority modules to be developed for the four (4) regions are:

- Hygiene and sanitation techniques for food processing.
- Techniques for preserving fresh and processed local products.
- Mixed marketing and labelling techniques for manufactured products.
- Culture of civic-mindedness and citizenship.
- The modern cut in women's and men's couture.
- Maintenance of machines and tools.

Modules are being developed based on these results and will be uploaded on P2E platform for adaption of the Niger context. In addition, an advocacy guide and plan were developed and will be strategic tools to enhance the skills of young people, with a view to promoting their professional integration and their access to economic development opportunities.



## Communication and Partnerships

Communication and partnerships played a pivotal role in the success of the P2E programme. A communication and youth mobilization strategy was developed to inform, engage, and guide young people, with outreach efforts including WhatsApp groups, social media campaigns, influencer engagement, and regional youth networks. Materials such as posters, banners, and tutorials were disseminated through Garkua, Facebook, and U-Report, contributing to strong youth registration and participation on the platform.



Partnerships with private sector actors, notably Microsoft for the platform and Airtel for connectivity, were instrumental in supporting access to digital learning. Coordination with civil society (Garkua), national institutions (ANPE), and youth-led groups ensured localized implementation and trust. These collaborations also enhanced visibility, resource mobilization, and alignment with national youth and education strategies.

Building on this foundation, the next phase of the programme will aim to strengthen platform branding, broaden media and partner engagement, and deepen co-leadership with youth organizations.

## Main Challenges

Overall, the implementation of the P2E program has been delayed for the following reasons:

- The allocation of funds in October 2022 coincided with the annual closing and finalization of the 2023-2027 Country Programme Document.
- The socio-political change that occurred in July 2023 brought Niger's entire program to a halt and no disbursements

could be made for several months

- Difficulties related to Airtel tax issues prevented the connection of the 28 youth centers hosting the P2E platform.

To ensure the implementation of the program despite the challenges, UNICEF took mitigation measures including working with the Civil Society Organization (Garkua), advancing funds to implementing partners using available resources, engaging with the donor to secure a no cost extension and procuring a router with pre-paid internet connectivity. These measures contributed to the achievement of the programme's results.

## Next steps

Considering the effectiveness of the P2E program for acquiring job related skills and the interest of young people and civil society, UNICEF plan to continue and expand its deployment across the country. Below are the key steps for the future:

- Achieve target of 3,000 young people having course certification on P2E. Strategically engage with all 29 youth centers existing in the country to deliver blended programme and empower pedagogical facilitators to track and support the learning journey of the young participants more effectively. UNICEF Niger will also work in partnership with Airtel to improve internet connectivity in the centers, ensuring consistent access to the platform and its content.
- Evaluate and scale up the P2E program: Assess the first phase in Niger to evaluate this impact and effectiveness, integrate key recommendations to expand the program to other youth centers and regions. The second phase should ensure that modules tailored





to local realities, alignment with labor market needs etc.

- **Resource mobilization:** mobilize additional funding to continue the implementation of P2E and therefore offer job skills opportunities to young people. This implies strengthening partnerships such as with UN agencies (UNDP) through the Sahel flagship programme, the Joint SDG fund and other potential donors, for securing both external funding and domestic resources to sustain and scale up the programme.
- **Enhance internet access and support:** Improve the service quality by partnering with alternative provider, leveraging satellite solutions such as starlink, and advocacy with the authorities for the establishment of public Wi-Fi hotspots and digital hubs in youth centers for greater accessibility and affordability.
- **Establish a support system for youth business plans:** Engage with authorities working on entrepreneurship to provide mentoring and have access to start-up funding to develop viable ideas
- **Enhance the capacity of the P2E Platform:** Strengthen the optimization of the platform with the integration of new modules adapted to the context of Niger, addressing local needs and relevant skills development. Additionally, improve the platform's branding to align with local culture, increase its attractiveness to users and for a more user-friendly, intuitive



## Provide employment opportunities for young people through practical internships in public and private structures

### Case Study

**Top level results:** As part of the P2E program, 100 young people from the regions of Dosso, Agadez, Zinder and Diffa have been integrated into professional life through placements and internships in companies or structures. This practical internship opens job prospects for these young people, particularly in various sectors according to their skills acquired from the training received.



Young women receiving certificate of participation  
© GARKUA, Niger 2025

**Background:** In Niger, about 500,000 young people enter the labour market every year. Job opportunities are influenced by labour market imbalances and skills mismatches that pose a threat, not only to young workers themselves, but also to the national economy and social cohesion. The problem of unemployment and underemployment is the first difficulty that young people, especially girls, face when trying to find a job. The mismatch between training and the skills sought after on the labour market has contributed to aggravating the situation, causing an unemployment rate of 23.7% for young people aged 15 to 29. This phenomenon delays the transition of many young people to financial independence. According to data from the Integrated Regional Survey on Employment and the Informal Sector (ERI/ESI 2017), the combined unemployment rate and the

potential labour force of people aged 15 and over in 2017 was 47.8%, with wide regional disparities. The regions of Zinder (42.3%), Maradi (52.3%), Tillabéri (54.8%) and Dosso (65%) are the most affected. 69% of young people aged 15 to 24, i.e. nearly 7 out of 10 young people, are “neither in employment, education nor training”. This rate hides a significant disparity between young men (56.4%) and young women (78%).

**Rationale:** with the free training offered by the P2E platform and continuous support for the professional integration of young people through the implementation of an internship placement process in public and private structures with the support of the National Agency of the Employment Promotion (ANPE), 100 young people according to their specific skills, young people aged 15 to 24 will have opportunities to integrate into professional life.

**Strategy and implementation:** The project’s strategy is to create a conducive learning environment for young people through the equipment of youth promotion centres that have been equipped with tablets, projectors, routers, computers, furniture and the Internet. The project also strengthened the capacities of young people by training them on topics such as the development of business plans, job search techniques, and CV writing through the P2E platform. The young people also benefited from the support of specialized firms or structures such as Incubator Center for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (CIPMEN), the entrepreneurship house (Maison de l’Entreprise) and the regional directorates of the ANPE. Finally, a follow-up and supervision of the young people was organized through selected learning advisors and supervisors. The latter were

trained on their role and responsibility, to accompany the young people in the choice of modules according to the skills sought and to monitor their progress in the courses in or outside the youth centers.

Once the individual lessons of a module have been completed and the related assessment has been successfully completed, the P2E platform generates a certificate. With this certificate, young people can be enrolled in the placement and support process through internships. An agreement has been signed between the trainees, Garkua and the youth centres and the ANPE, which has the mandate to place young people in internships in the country. ANPE conducted consultation at regional level to identify companies and sign agreement for youth internship. As of the result, 100 interns were placed in the companies for two months.



*Meeting ANPE and companies identified to receive the interns © GARKUA, Niger 2025*

**Resources:** Funds provided through the MPTF were instrumental to achieve these results as well as UNICEF’s technical assistance and oversight for the implementation of the intervention both at central and regional levels.

**Progress and results:** The implementation of the planned system (youth promotion center, equipment of these centers, supervision, internet connection of the centers) by the project has made it possible to mobilize young people in favor of activities and to achieve important results. Thus, from



the implementation of this project, we note that 546 young people have been trained on various themes, 5471 young people have received orientation sessions on employment; 51 structures are connected to the opportunities offered by the P2E platform and 100 young people (25 young people per region) have found internships in various public and private structures in the country.

*Young people from Agadez discussing contribution of digital technology to youth entrepreneurship*  
© GARKUA, Niger 2025



**Moving forward:** While funding for the second phase of the project remains limited, UNICEF remains committed to supporting young people in the regions of Dosso, Zinder, Agadez and Diffa and beyond by leveraging valuable lessons learned and best practices to sustain efforts. UNICEF is exploring alternative funding and advocacy to leverage domestic resources.



# BeGreen

## BeGreen Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Senegal

BeGreen Africa is an innovative programme transforming economic development through youth-led green entrepreneurship. BeGreen is implemented by UNICEF/ GenU and the Tony Elumelu Foundation with support from the Government of the Netherlands in South Africa, Nigeria, and Senegal as well as by the IKEA Foundation in Kenya. The two-year pilot programme represents a pioneering approach to confronting the crisis of youth unemployment as well as the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion.



BeGreen provides a comprehensive support structure to young green entrepreneurs, including a bespoke, gender-sensitive green entrepreneurship training which was co-created with young green entrepreneurs and peer reviewed by the University of Botswana, initial seed capital investment of USD 5,000 per entrepreneur, mentorship opportunities, as well as access to professional networks and other financing options. In South Africa, Nigeria, and Senegal, the program works with all types of green entrepreneurs from various green sectors, whereas in Kenya, the BeGreen initiative is specifically targeting waste management businesses. The Netherlands is supporting additional BeGreen pilots in Nigeria, South Africa, and Senegal. The Tony Elumelu Foundation is also funding additional green entrepreneurs in Nigeria. Across the four countries, 485 aspiring green entrepreneurs (120 waste entrepreneurs in Kenya) will receive \$5,000 in seed funding

(at least 50% women). The provision of more than \$2.4 million in seed funding aims to support entrepreneurs in generating \$6.8 million revenue and creating at least 2,000 jobs within two years.

The BeGreen methodology builds on the following four pillars:

- **Training & Skill-building activities:** Provide a critical mass of young aspiring green entrepreneurs with foundational entrepreneurial and 21st century skills through a mixture of online/ blended learning approaches.
- **Seed funding and incubation support:** Provision of USD 5,000 seed funding and incubation support to setup and grow sustainable green/ waste enterprises led by young people that generate employment and drive economic development.
- **Evidence generation:** Build a body of knowledge around green and digital entrepreneurship impact and contribute to broader green ecosystem and policy work.
- **Youth partnerships & engagement most marginalized young people:** Youth partnerships shape the programme at every stage (programme development, green curriculum development, ongoing project governance).

## Summary of results

- **Application drive:** More than **8,000 youth people across the four countries (Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Senegal)** submitted applications to join the BeGreen initiative (57% male and 43% female), 58% were from entrepreneurs from Nigeria, 28% from Kenya, 10% from South Africa and 3% from Senegal.
- More than **4,600 candidates**



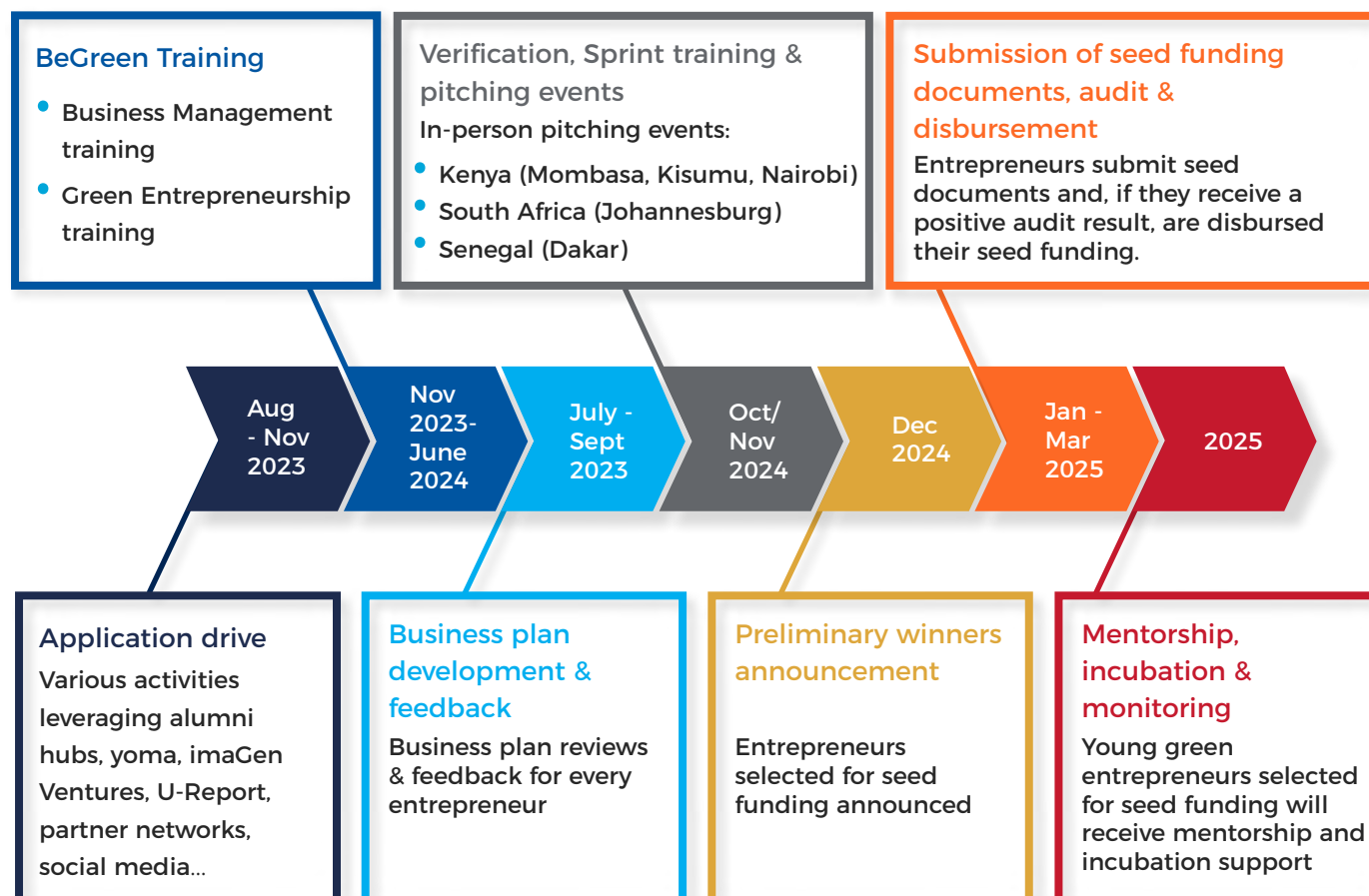
**successfully completed the business management training and approx. 2,700 completed the in-depth green entrepreneurship training with a waste management focus.**

- **More than 1,400 young people submitted a business plan** for their green business or waste management enterprise across the four countries. An independent expert consulting firm reviewed all business plans & financial documents, scored them as well as categorized them according to investment readiness and entrepreneurs have also received comprehensive feedback including recommendations on how to strengthen their business plans and close potential gaps. Entrepreneurs were supported through a series of master classes and training sessions (e.g., financial literacy) to develop and improve their business plan and financial documents.
- In October/November 2024, in-person pitching events were held across three locations in Kenya, as well as single events in South Africa and Senegal, which were attended by representatives from the government of the Netherlands, local governments, as well as other stakeholders and potential partners. **Nearly 1,300 green entrepreneurs pitched their business/ idea in-person or virtual via a pitching video.** Ahead of the pitching events, young green entrepreneurs participated in bespoke preparation programmes including in person workshops to work on gaps and weaknesses pertaining to their business plans to prepare for pitching events.
- At end of 2024, a total of 523 ambitious green enterprises were shortlisted to receive seed funding. The aim is for at least 485 to receive \$5,000 each in seed funding and are projected to generate revenue of \$6.8 million and create approximately 2,000 jobs over the following two years. A comprehensive audit process of the entrepreneurs selected to receive seed funding is being carried out and entrepreneurs who've successfully passed due

diligence, receive the seed funding transfer on their business account. Most businesses have already received funding in February/ March 2025 with some still receiving payment in April 2025. Depending on the investment readiness of entrepreneurs' business plan and their pitch performance, some entrepreneurs receive seed funding in full whereas others receive it in tranches based on achievement of milestones.

- **BeGreen entrepreneurs who receive seed funding will be participating in a comprehensive incubation programme** including mentorship over the next couple of months, commencing in April 2025. Best performing enterprises in Kenya (in terms of revenue and job creation) will receive acceleration funds.
- **BeGreen is also providing skilling and micro-gig opportunities to a larger number of young people in Kenya.** More than 4,000 young people completed a comprehensive training to be eligible for verification and monitoring visits. Thereof, more than 100 young people were hired to visit a waste entrepreneur and verify entrepreneurs' IDs and business locations, and more opportunities will be available as part of the monthly monitoring activities.





## BeGreen Training

BeGreen entrepreneurs have successfully completed a two-pronged training approach consisting of a (1) foundational entrepreneurship training and (2) an in-depth green entrepreneurship training with a strong waste management focus.

1. Entrepreneurship training: TEF's proven entrepreneurship training was "greened" meaning that case studies throughout the modules were adapted and replaced with case studies from the waste management sector. Moreover, a green angle was added to concepts/theories discussed across the following modules:

- Module 1: Starting your Business
- Module 2: Business Ownership
- Module 3: Leadership & Business Growth
- Module 4: Business Management Fundamentals

- Module 5: Implementing a Marketing Plan
- Module 6: Building an Enduring Brand
- Module 7: Developing a Business Plan
- Module 8: Elevator Pitch
- Module 9: Raising Capital and Structure to scale

The training contains pre-/ post assessment questions as well as exercises, additional reading material and multiple-choice questions per module.

2. In-depth green entrepreneurship training with a waste management focus:

A fully animated in-depth, gender-responsive green entrepreneurship training was developed in collaboration with young green entrepreneurs, industry experts, and academia (University of Botswana). Co-creation with young green entrepreneurs was





crucial to ensure the content addresses the challenges they face, is appropriate for the target demographic of youth the training is designed for and is context specific. The green entrepreneurship training with waste management focus has the following modules:

1. Introduction to Green Entrepreneurship
2. Waste management and circular economy
3. Gender and Entrepreneurship
4. Green Technologies and Innovation
5. Green Business models and Business plan
6. Green Finance and Funding Opportunities
7. Legal and Regulatory Framework
8. 8. Marketing and Sales for Green Businesses
9. Gender-sensitive mentoring and networking
10. Green Leadership and Ethical Considerations
11. Measuring impact and scaling up
12. Pitching

Pre/Post assessment and Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs) to measure learning outcomes:

- Pre/ post training assessment: Entrepreneurs had to answer 20 pre and 20 post assessment questions, which were randomly selected from a pool of questions (10 questions for each of the 11 modules). Every entrepreneur had different pre/post questions randomly selected from the question pool. One limitation was that random selection could not be set up in a way to ensure that questions would cover all modules.
- MCQs: Training participants answered 10 questions after each module. These

10 questions were randomly chosen from a set of 30 questions per module. Entrepreneurs could take the MCQs twice.

The BeGreen Business Management Training (BMT) commenced on the 24th of November 2023 and ended on the 11th of February 2024. The in-depth Green Entrepreneurship training (GET), with a heavy waste management focus was launched on 19 April and closed on 07 July 2024.

More than 4,600 young aspiring entrepreneurs completed the business training (53% male and 47% female) and approx. 2,700 completed the in-depth green entrepreneurship training with a waste management focus (52% male and 48% female).

## Youth Voices



**Mohammed Athman Chai, Rafiki Peps**

*“The financial training was particularly useful – before the training I was struggling with my personal finance management.”*

Rafiki Peps enterprise implements a comprehensive waste segregation system that categorizes waste into recyclables, organic matter, and non-recyclables.



**Veronica Kanidi, Furies Enterprise, Mombasa**

*“I use the BeGreen training materials to train other young entrepreneurs.”*

Furies Enterprise has developed and sells an educational game to schools, empowering change to clean up oceans and protect biodiversity.



**Deacon Philmatt  
Otiene, Philmafaith,  
Nairobi**

*"I was inspired by a BeGreen video to develop a clean cooking stove."*

Philmatt's company Philmafaith turns agrowaste such as coffee grounds and rice husks into affordable energy via pellets, organic fertilizer, and briquettes.



**Thabo Mazibuko,  
Solar Energize, South  
Africa**

*"Participating in the BeGreen programme has been transformative for Thabo. "BeGreen helped me a lot in refining my idea. Initially, I thought I was just another solar installation company. It helped me to refine my company. Through the training, I learned how to define my target customers. Before, I was targeting everyone. I need to start with a target market and grow from there," he shares. The programme also inspired him to explore other renewable sectors and clean energy markets in the future."*

## Business Plan Development and Review

Entrepreneurs who successfully completed the 2-phased training approach, were invited to submit a business plan and financial documents between end of May until 07 July 2024. More than 1,400 young people submitted a business plan for their green business or waste management enterprise across the four countries, thereof

72% from Nigerian entrepreneurs, 23% from Kenyan entrepreneurs, 4.4% from South African entrepreneurs, and 2% from Senegalese entrepreneurs.

**The following initiatives were undertaken to support entrepreneurs in developing their business plan and financials:**

- Virtual masterclass sessions to support entrepreneurs in developing their business plans and financial documents
- In-person training sessions in Kenya in Nairobi (240 participants) and Kisumu (108 participants) provided young waste management entrepreneurs with peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Past beneficiaries of UNICEF/ Generation Unlimited's imaGen Ventures programme shared their experiences, including scaling businesses like a sanitation waste enterprise that now employs over 30 youth. These sessions highlighted key lessons: the value of persistence, adaptability, and resilience in business success; the necessity of navigating regulations and market demands; and the critical role of funding through grants, investors, or reinvestment. Hearing directly from peers who turned ideas into sustainable enterprises provided practical insights and motivation for aspiring entrepreneurs.
- Like training completions, delays in submitting business plans were exacerbated by the floods and political tensions in Kenya. Therefore, extensions in training completion and business plan submissions were granted to allow ample opportunity to complete and upload all requested documents.





## Business Plan Review (July – Sept 2024)

An independent expert consulting firm based in Kenya, reviewed all business plans & financial documents, scored them as well as categorized them according to investment readiness and provided detailed individual feedback to entrepreneurs.

While the entrepreneurial spirit and innovation were strong, most business plans indicated significant improvement potential with regards to financial planning, market research, risk analysis, and scalability strategies. Thus, further support in business model development, market validation, and financial structuring was part of the incubation phase and pitch preparation phase.

## Entrepreneurs' Voices



**Brian Amenia, Kiambu County, Kenya**

*"The green business training helped us gain different insights for green businesses in Kenya. Creating a viable business plan was a highlight for me. It really helped me in refining what I knew into creating a plan for investors and funders."*



**Muna Elmi, Ecoleather Waste Solutions, Kenya**

Muna Elmi's favorite part of the BeGreen experience was developing a business plan. *"It's a roadmap from where I was with an idea to where I want to go. I really put a lot of work into it,"* Muna notes. The training provided her with the skills to create a comprehensive business plan, which has been crucial in advancing her project."



**Nonkzimulo Ngcobo, Azana Muse Botanicals, South Africa**

Before joining the BeGreen programme, Nonkzimulo had a business plan but lacked a clear financial strategy. *"The programme helped me project financials and better plan for my business,"* she explains.

## Business registration & tax advice support

The UNICEF Kenya team provided comprehensive support to entrepreneurs to register their business and receive tax advice support. We saw a strong uptake of this offer. A total of 218 entrepreneurs from Kisumu, Nairobi, and Mombasa participated in the business sprint sessions, resulting in 95 businesses being successfully registered.

## Verification, Design Sprint & Pitching (Aug – Nov 2024)

### Verification (August/ September 2024)

As part of the program's transparency and accountability process, a beneficiary verification activity was carried out. The aim was to validate the identities of all entrepreneurs who submitted a business plan and confirm the accuracy of information provided to ensure they are eligible for the next programme steps (pitching and selection for seed funding). The scope of work included identity verification, business registration checks, and assessment of alignment with submitted business plans. Verification in Kenya and Nigeria was carried out in person whereas in Senegal and South Africa verification was carried out via phone.

In Kenya, young enumerators were recruited via the Yunitok platform, meeting eligibility criteria that included training in data protection, business computing, and communication. Out of 6,714 applicants,

4,059 completed the comprehensive training programme, and 107 were selected to conduct verification visits as micro-gigs, receiving stipends for their work. The verification process involved confirming entrepreneurs' addresses, conducting physical site visits, and assessing business legitimacy through the TEF Verify platform. Of 318 entrepreneurs contacted, 252 were reachable, and 225 were successfully verified, with 219 passing the process.

In Nigeria, the physical verification process was conducted for 141 BeGreen programme applicants. Enumerators conducted physical verifications of the entrepreneur's businesses by visiting their businesses site for those whose business is currently existing and their home address or other suitable locations for those who are still in idea stage or haven't setup an office space yet. Results show that 137 out of 141 applicants successfully passed all verification criteria while 4 failed the verification due to different reasons such as entrepreneurs being unreachable or not able to provide congruent information.

In South Africa and Senegal, the verification process was conducted via video calls for 90 BeGreen programme applicants in Senegal and South Africa. The scope of work included identity verification, business registration checks, and assessment of alignment with submitted business plans. Results show that 64 out of 66 applicants in South Africa and all 24 in Senegal successfully passed all verification criteria.

Key successes of the pitching phase were notably the effective use of micro-gigs, which engaged young people as enumerators, contributing to both meaningful learning experiences and income generation. The online selection, training, and verification processes enhanced program efficiency and credibility, helping dispel misconceptions about funding eligibility. However, challenges arose during business verification and data collection, including unresponsive entrepreneurs, location changes, incomplete contact details, technical issues with the verification platform, and difficulties verifying entrepreneurs at

the ideation stage. Safety concerns were addressed by pairing enumerators for home visits. Lessons learned emphasized the importance of validating participant information in advance, replicating the micro-gig model for future monitoring and evaluation, uploading verification photos as evidence, and prioritizing safety by pairing enumerators and assigning female enumerators to female participants when appropriate.



## Youth Voices

**Mwanajuma** is the lead coordinator in Mombasa, managing the young people who support in verifying BeGreen entrepreneur businesses and coordinate engagement.



**Yunitokers Liz Nyaberi (left) and Nancy Oluoch (right)** are youth advocates and Yunitokers. For Nancy, the Yunitoker based in Kisumu, following the growth journey of BeGreen entrepreneurs has inspired her to consider applying for the next round of the programme.

## Pitching (October/ November 2024)

As part of the program's process of selecting participants for seed funding, in person pitching events were held in Kenya across three locations in Kenya (Mombasa- 22-23 October, Kisumu - 24-25 October, and Nairobi - 29 - 30 October), in South Africa (Johannesburg) and Senegal (Dakar) in October/ November 2024.



The pitching events comprised of two days each: one day of pitch preparation and one day for the actual pitching event. Entrepreneurs pitched in front of a panel of two to three experts as well as their peers. Three minutes of pitching per entrepreneur were followed by a 3-minute Q&A session as an opportunity for judges to ask questions as well as for peer to pose questions as well. Judges also used the Q&A time to provide feedback and recommendations.

Judges assessed all entrepreneurs according to a standard set of criteria (profitability, business model, market opportunity, job creation, environmental impact, innovation) and assigned a color rating (Red/Yellow/Green). A standard excel tool was used to capture individual judges' results (pitching score and color code). Results of the individual judges were consolidated for combined pitching scores and color rating. Both business plan assessments as well as pitching results were the basis for the final seed funding disbursement decision.

In Nigeria, entrepreneurs submitted a pitching video in addition to their business plan both, the video and the business plan, were the basis for the investment-ready assessment and subsequent seed funding decision.

The BeGreen pitching phase revealed both significant successes and key challenges. A major issue was the uneven playing field, where entrepreneurs with higher education levels or more advanced businesses tended to perform better, while early-stage and disadvantaged entrepreneurs at times struggled to present compelling pitches due to limited resources or language barriers. However, the phase succeeded in building entrepreneurial skills—thanks to structured preparation, pitch deck guidance, and expert feedback. In-person events fostered networking, mentorship, and collaboration.



**Clinton Otieno,  
Kisumu, Kenya**

*"I was inspired by a BeGreen video to develop a clean cooking stove."*

Philmath's company Philmath turns agrowaste such as coffee grounds and rice husks into affordable energy via pellets, organic fertilizer, and briquettes.



**Getrude Muyeshi,  
Vihiga, Brildage  
Enterprise, Kenya**

*"I've gained the skills of pitching, articulating my idea, and understanding what it means to break even in business."*



**Katlego  
Gaedigwe,  
Ortune Group,  
South Africa**

He credits BeGreen with teaching him essential skills like drafting business plans, pitching, and managing finances. He also values the connections he made through the programme, saying, "I met great people, maybe we can support each other's businesses and grow friendships." The programme further helped him diversify his product offerings and look for sustainable ways to grow his business.

## Youth Voices

## Seed Funding Disbursement Announcement (December 2024)

BeGreen winners were selected in a thorough process that entailed successful completion of the 2-step training programme, assessment of their business plans and financial documents, and results from entrepreneurs' pitching performance. Business plan assessment scores/ ratings and pitching scores together were the basis for the final selection of entrepreneurs to receive seed funding. Depending on their investment-readiness and risk profiles, entrepreneurs were clustered into "green", "yellow", and "red" categories. Entrepreneurs in the green category receive seed funding in full as one tranche, while entrepreneurs in the yellow category will receive the seed capital in two tranches: 60% for the first tranche and 40% for the second tranche.

Preliminary seed funding recipients' announcements were made in December 2024. Payments are contingent on entrepreneurs' submission of their seed funding documents and positive audit assessment. The audit process consists of two steps: A first-level review by the TEF Entrepreneurship Programme team ensuring all documents were submitted by the requirements followed by a thorough second-level review of the TEF audit team to validate authenticity and validity of the documents.

Out of the 523 entrepreneurs shortlisted to receive seed funding, 158 are from Kenya, 289 from Nigeria, 52 from South Africa, and 24 from Senegal. Payments to entrepreneurs who successfully pass the comprehensive audit process will be made latest by quarter one in 2025. The aim is for at least 485 entrepreneurs to pass the audit and receive seed funding either in this iteration of the



programme or as part of the next iteration later in 2025.

Depending on the investment readiness of entrepreneurs' business plan and their pitch performance, some entrepreneurs receive seed funding in full whereas others receive it in tranches based on achievement of milestones. Entrepreneurs receiving seed funding will participate in a comprehensive incubation programme consisting of mentorship, sector-specific expert advice, prototyping and market testing support (for early-stage businesses), peer-to-peer support, access to markets, further funding and other services.

## Challenges, Lessons Learned, and Best Practices

### Challenges

- **Balancing programme duration & retention:** Longer cycles allowed for deeper learning and training completion particularly among disadvantaged youth however also led to participant dropouts among other demographics.
- **External influences:** such as floodings in Kenya influenced the programme and caused delays.
- **Customized learning journeys:** While the training content was designed to cater for entrepreneurs across multiple sectors - especially the waste management sector- there is need to further customize the learning journey according to entrepreneurs' stages (ideation, early-stage, growth).
- **Additional support for ideation phase:** Entrepreneurs in the ideation stage faced specific challenges in terms of accessing resources to be able to prototype and obtain proof of concept
- **Gender gaps:** Women's participation remained below the 50% target despite efforts such as a gender-sensitive curriculum and outreach calling for further gender-affirmative action.

## Lessons Learned

- **Customized learning journeys:** Segmenting support by business stage and offering personalized, flexible learning increases effectiveness and reduces dropouts.
- **Enhanced pitch & business development:** Structured pitch preparation, financial literacy, and sector-specific mentorship improve outcomes.
- **More practical, hands-on learning:** Real-world business challenges, expert workshops, peer learning, and community support drive deeper engagement.
- **Inclusivity:** Gender-sensitive curriculum and outreach were best practices however barriers need to be addressed even more systematically (such as local mentorship moving forward).
- **Data-informed adaptation:** Continuous feedback and robust data systems are essential for tailoring support, improving accuracy, and refining program design.

## Best Practices

- **Micro-gigs & youth engagement:** Employing youth as enumerators provided learning, income, and program monitoring benefits.
- **In-person support & bootcamps:** Pitch bootcamps, peer support, and one-on-one coaching significantly boosted performance.
- **Dynamic program adaptation:** Responsive adaptations (e.g., masterclasses, financial literacy sessions, Google forms) bridged gaps in real time.
- **Strategic partnerships:** Collaborations with innovation hubs, youth ministries, and UN agencies enhanced access and sustainability.
- **Tailored incubation & mentorship:** Categorizing entrepreneurs by business stage and risk enabled more targeted support and funding models.





# Youth Agency Marketplace (Yoma)

## Executive Summary

Since its establishment in 2020, Yoma has been dedicated to empowering and transforming the lives of young people aged 16-24 worldwide. The platform actively engages youth in social impact tasks and provides learning-to-earning opportunities. As youth engage in these opportunities, their activities are recorded on their profile. This allows them to build a verifiable digital profile with trusted credentials. Moreover, their efforts can be rewarded with the platform currency, a digital token that can be spent in the Yoma marketplace in exchange for goods and services such as data and e-commerce vouchers.

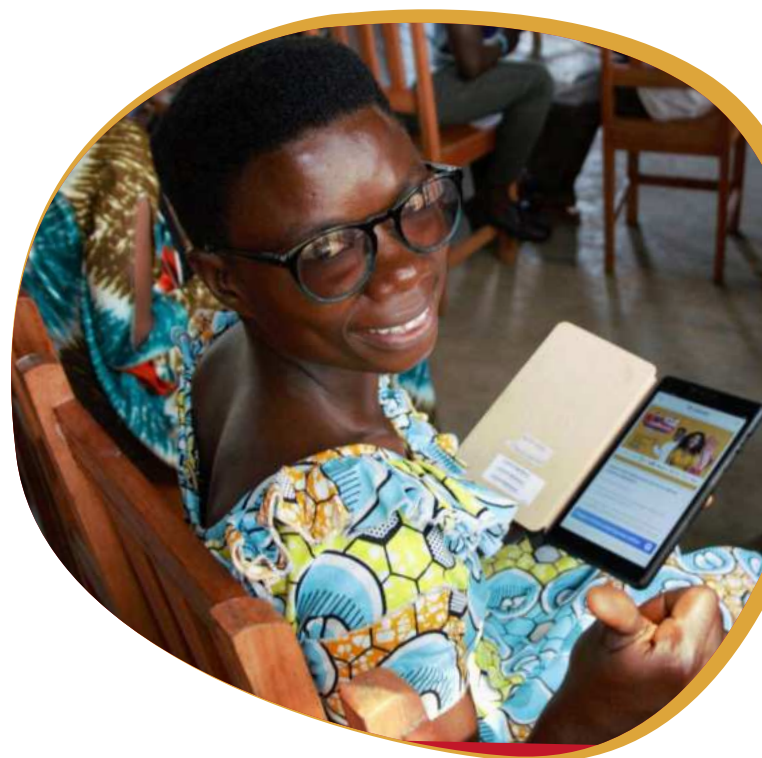
As of December 2024, Yoma operates in eight African countries, primarily focusing on providing implementation support within these countries, with additional light implementation efforts in the Philippines. Furthermore, Yoma has registered users from over 180 countries globally. The platform has facilitated opportunities for 476,700 individuals to access new opportunities. Over 10 opportunity providers, including Atingi, Umuzi, GLEAC, and Accenture, have been onboarded, providing >190 learning, micro-tasks and impact opportunities. Young people have benefited from free online opportunities promoting skill development, community engagement, and employment prospects, with 63,000+ certificates validating job-relevant skills, enhancing their employability.

Three learning-to-earning pathways have been established. Umuzi and the African Coding Network collaborated to develop a **digital livelihood pathway** in Africa, focusing on upskilling and providing industry-relevant training. The partnership aims to enhance the skills of young individuals, enabling them to access new job opportunities and entrepreneurial endeavors. The initiative utilizes local partners to reach remote youth, offering

additional in-country support, including language-specific assistance. Through SAP Educate to Employ pathway (Foundational Skills, Critical Skills & Exam) 14,844 youth applied to complete digital skills Google.org and Coursera courses.

Through the **ambassadorial pathway**, Yoma connects young people globally, fostering a network of like-minded individuals. This network facilitates idea exchange, collaboration, and valuable connections, supporting personal and professional growth. Goodwill organized online challenges across Africa to enhance participants' knowledge, skills, and employability, encouraging entrepreneurship and community engagement. 8,200 young people exchanged ideas, collaborated on projects, and established valuable connections that can further support their personal and professional growth.

The **Green pathway** focuses on skills relevant to the green economy, promoting youth-led advocacy on climate change and incentivizing environmentally friendly actions. Participants are encouraged to



engage in activities like reforestation, plastic waste reduction, and water quality monitoring. The green pathway is active in South Africa and Nigeria to train youth as citizen scientists on their green 'learning to earning' journey. The 'Enviro-champs' project in South Africa, for example, has trained over 1 000 youth in water monitoring techniques, showcasing how youth



are upskilled to enter the labor market and contribute to environmental causes.

In Nigeria, a youth-led project for gathering citizen science data about water resources called DonateWater was developed by a team of Nigerian students through a global SDG innovation competition for youth called the Open17 Challenge with the support of the European Crowd4SDG project, coordinated by the University of Geneva. The project was then deployed in Nigeria with the support of the Yoma Operational Research (OR) project, also coordinated by the University of Geneva. The DonateWater team was able to develop their project, with the help of the Yoma OR consortium, in particular the Citizen Science Africa Association, to the stage where UNICEF is currently considering integrating this approach in their next report on water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH).

### Fair Chance Program

In the Tongogara refugee settlement, the Fair Chance program empowered displaced youth through targeted skills development, entrepreneurship support (including microfinance), and climate action. By integrating virtual challenges on Goodwall with further learning opportunities on Yoma, the program addressed immediate livelihood needs while promoting long-term social integration and self-reliance. The Fair Chance Tongogara program went beyond its primary goal of empowering youth by promoting entrepreneurship, supporting

climate action, and fostering innovation within the Tongogara Refugee Settlement. With 1,492 youth participants, the program achieved significant outcomes, including the hiring of 5 interns, the collection of over 30,000 plastic bottles, the acceleration of 5 youth-led project ideas, and the recognition of more than 80 winners for their contributions.

### Technology Developments

Yoma has undergone several upgrades, culminating in V3 in April 2024. The new version features a redesigned homepage showcasing Yoma's core value proposition and key partner solutions, along with the Yoma ID (YoID) and a digital passport that stores youth credentials on the blockchain. The team conducted in-person and online user testing, integrating feedback into the platform. Yoma currently offers Single Sign-On (SSO) with partners such as atingi and Goodwall, and is developing deeper Self-Sovereign Identity (SSI) integration to embed YoID into platforms like [SA.youth.mobi](#), [UReport/RapidPro](#), and [FunDoo](#). The SSI system prioritizes data privacy and gives youth control over their credentials. With V3, Yoma also upgraded its Partner Portal, providing real-time reporting and monitoring of opportunities. Partners can generate "magic links" for participants upon opportunity completion, enabling easy credential claiming and efficient verification.

### Design Workshop and Impact Marketplace

To align with youth aspirations, Yoma held a design workshop with the D-School in early 2024, focusing on impact-gigs. Participants expressed strong interest in community- and environment-focused opportunities that also provide a sustainable livelihood. Therefore, in September 2024, Yoma partnered with IXO to develop the Yoma impacts marketplace, to pilot





three use cases with Greater Stellenbosch Trust, Duzi-uMngeni Conservation Trust (DUCT), and Harambee. The design sprint introduced mechanisms for “impact certificates,” allowing youth to apply for tasks, submit evidence, and receive verified payments. While no impact certificates have been generated yet, this feature is planned for the second phase in 2025. IXO has already gathered experience in outcome-based funding together with UBS Foundation in India. The team also have an existing business model built into the platform where 10% of all claims processing fees originated through the impact-gig platform accrue to Yoma as the platform operator.

### Operational Research

In collaboration with a University of Geneva-led consortium, Yoma conducted operational research on its token economy, AI matching algorithms, citizen science, and relational well-being. The findings were documented in an Operational Research Report Narrative.

### External Review and Governance

Rather than pursuing a developmental evaluation, Yoma commissioned Accenture to conduct an external review of its progress, effectiveness, and alignment with goals. This review offers lessons learned and recommendations for the next three years. In parallel, the University of St. Gallen reviewed Yoma’s governance framework and business model to ensure long-term sustainability. Discussions around a Foundation to channel youth engagement are ongoing with ecosystem partners.

## Purpose

Youth Agency Marketplace (Yoma) catalyzes young people’s creativity and taps their ideas to address systemic challenges facing social sectors in Africa and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at multiple levels. It promotes well-being and mental health (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), foster economic growth and decent work (SDG 8), reduces inequality (SDG 10) and supports climate action (SDG 13). Yoma matches the global demand for SDGs impact with the capabilities of youth within their communities. The platform facilitates access to volunteering opportunities (impact tasks), which are rewarded with tokens and complemented by action learning, enabling youth to enhance their CVs with essential portable skills that will increase their employment prospects. This partnership aims at improving youth relational well-being through the establishment of strategic and contextualized learning to earning pathways for youth to succeed, grow and thrive. This is achieved by developing multiple pathways such as the digital, green and ambassadorial pathway, leveraging technology advancements and closely monitoring progress. By prioritizing those interventions, Yoma provides youth with opportunities that align with their aspirations, potential and the demand market. Specific strategies and interventions are prioritized to address limitations faced by marginalized young people such as rural youth, young women and youth on the move.





## Results

With valuable support from the Botnar Foundation, Yoma contributed to improving the relational well-being of young people through the establishment of strategic and contextualized learning to earning pathways for youth to succeed, grow and thrive. Specifically, Yoma expanded access for 90,000 youth to free online opportunities that promote skills development, community engagement, and employment prospects in 2024. This report provides an overview of the main achievements in 2024 in the program implementation. Most of the indicators were achieved in year 2 of implementation of the grant, and this report highlights key achievements made during this period.

### Output 1

**Develop Yoma together and green pathway and engage youth through ecosystem**

This output was achieved, as Yoma connected young people with their peers in their communities and across the world, fostering a network of like-minded individuals who share similar aspirations. This global network enables youth to exchange ideas, collaborate on projects, and establish valuable connections that can further support their personal and professional growth. Goodwill organized 3 online monthly challenges and three case studies for youth across Africa to expand their knowledge, skills, and become a part of the Yoma community. These included #NewYearNewGoals, #EntrepreneurialMindsNG, #BeTheChange, #ClimateSense, #BeyondthePodium, #BeyondBarriers, #YomameetsAI, #YouthSpeakMDG, #YouthInnovateMDG, #YouthTalkMDG, #YouthActMDG and #YomaCreators which centered on developing and showcasing youth media creation skills. The challenge embraced the creation of videos in English, French, and Swahili. These challenges provided

youth with the opportunity to increase their skillset related to content creation, AI, climate change and entrepreneurship resulting in over 3.8 million impressions and ~2,000 youth submitting their ideas. Overall, there have been more than 5 million engagements from young people on Yoma related activities to date.

Some of the green pilots conducted through the green pathway include:

### Scaling Enviro-Champs to Mozambique with [ENABEL-Belgian Development Agency](#)

Through Yoma ecosystem partner [IWMI](#) (International Water Monitoring Institute), the green pathway is expanding the work of the Enviro-champs around the Limpopo Basin in Southern Africa. The Limpopo Basin is shared by 4 countries; South Africa, Mozambique, Botswana and Zimbabwe. This project funded by ENABEL (The Belgian Development Agency) sees young people in surrounding communities using citizen science to collect data related to water quality monitoring and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) infrastructure through various citizen science tools.

The collected data will then be stored on a [Digital Twin](#)- Developed by IMWI- will then be used by [LIMCOM](#). LIMCOM is the Limpopo Basin Commission, which heads the transboundary management of the Limpopo Basin.

This project involves many stakeholders and Yoma will act as the integration tool for young citizen scientists to:

- Find the training training materials needed to be competent in water quality monitoring
- Be incentivised for their contribution through “Zlto” tokens and other learning and impact opportunities
- Obtain a Digital CV and a “YoID” for



all their completed learnings and environmental impact tasks can be verified and added to their profile through blockchain technology.

This ongoing project with IWMI includes a [MDII](#) (Multidimensional Digital Inclusiveness Index), also developed by IWMI, which measures the digital inclusiveness of all citizen science tools and platforms involved in this project, including Yoma. **SDGs Targeted: 6, 10, 12, 13, 14**

### Crop Observe- South Africa



This Pilot project, funded by the UNICEF South Africa Office Innovation fund, engaged young citizen scientists, residing in townships Eastern Cape Province (South Africa) to conduct groundthruthing activities on farms using the [Crop Observe](#) app developed by [International Institute for Applied System Analysis \(IIASA\)](#).

Youth used theCrop Observe app over a 5-week period and filled in surveys related to agricultural crops such as: crop type, plant height, and to report on any damage/disease on crops, etc. thus allowing for valuable knowledge exchanges between farmers and programme participants with regards to agriculture. **SDGs Targeted: 2, 8, 13, 17**

### IWMI- Agricultural Data collection in Ethiopia

Yoma implemented a data collection challenge through the ecosystem partner **Goodwall**, where African Drone and Data Academy ([ADDA](#)) graduates in Ethiopia posted geotagged videos, photos and completed filled out surveys related to

available crop irrigation in crops around Ethiopia. This project was conducted to gain insight on available irrigation in Ethiopia for a targeted approach to find sustainable solutions to crop irrigation around Ethiopia. **>700** Data points collected, and the top **3** data collectors received **250 USD, 200 USD 120 USD** respectively. **SDGs Targeted: 2, 17, 3**

As connectivity remains a challenge for young people across Africa, UNICEF Burundi is implementing a group functionality on the YOMA ecosystem allowing one group member having a digital device and internet to access and share opportunities with the team. That strategy will help to address quite a number of challenges like lack of digital devices and internet connection that complicate access to opportunities and group members rewarding using systems like Zlto. A platform named Digital Financial Registry (DFR) powered by Blockchain technology has been developed and launched in 2024 and the pilot phase is planned to finish at the end of 2025. DFR will allow the group's members first to change how they record their financial transactions using VICOBA from a paper-based system to a more secure platform. Secondly, it will allow them to more easily access different services offered by financial institutions including bigger loans. The next phase will be to leverage Yoma and DFR platforms to deploy a rewards system for group members.

### Output 2

**Develop and implement digital livelihoods pathway**

### Partnering for growth in Africa:

This output progressed as planned and has demonstrated positive results. Umuzi and the African Coding Network (ACN) worked together to further develop and implement digital livelihood pathways for youth in Africa. Their work focused on upskilling and providing industry-relevant training to youth. The goal is to enhance the skills

and capacities of young people, enabling them to tap into new types of jobs and entrepreneurial activities emerging across Africa. This partnership established by Umuzi and the ACN is an asset for the Yoma program. They leverage local partners to access hard-to-reach young people, and in return, they offer additional in country support to their learners, sometimes in the home language of those learners if different from English.

### Learners engaged in digital upskilling:

Through Umuzi 1,306 learners were engaged in digital learning opportunities supported by Botnar in 2024. These learners were given access to Coursera licences that covered a full pathway of courses in their selected stream. Learners were able to complete multiple courses and professional certificates throughout the course of the year, all of which were related to their stream.

Learners were able to join one of the following pathways:

- Data Analytics
- Project Management
- AI & Machine Learning
- Cybersecurity
- Business & Entrepreneurship
- Development
- Mobile Development

Furthermore, Umuzi has strived to upskill

learners with the necessary and in-demand skills to successfully apply for jobs at the end of programmes and additionally, Umuzi is supporting learners as much as possible by providing CV support, interview upskilling, SAP specific networking opportunities and contacting of prospective employers to get our successful learners into jobs. Umuzi co-created and built the SAP Educate to Employ programme. This programme is a comprehensive 'learn-to-earn' programme designed to equip marginalised individuals with the skills necessary for the digital economy. This programme and Umuzi's support led directly to 5 learners getting placed into jobs requiring their acquired SAP skills. Umuzi has also implemented its first impact gigs. The first iteration of the impact gig was launched to SAP Educate to Employ alumni. This gig was centred around learners verifying submitted course credentials or proof of course completion of current learners. Each participant was allocated a certain number of certificates to verify in the space of a week and we paid per certificate verified. For this impact gig in particular, 40 alumni participated and were paid. As a result, Umuzi has found employment opportunities for or provided paid impact gig opportunities to 52% of SAP Educate to Employ programme completers in Year 2. Umuzi also recognises that learners may find employment along the pipeline, but we won't necessarily be aware of all unreported employment updates from each learner.

Additionally, ~6,000 young people have completed other digital skills courses available on Yoma through other opportunity providers eg atingi and CISCO.





### Output 3

#### Marketplace for youth to engage with impact opportunities

This output was achieved. With the launch of stabilized Yoma version 3 in April 2024, youth got an opportunity to engage with impact opportunities uploaded by opportunity providers and can redeem the token earned on Zlto marketplace for goods and services. 4,002 NYSC corps members through Yoma were equipped with digital and pedagogical skills to deliver effective teaching and learning using Nigeria Learning Passport (NLP) in the classroom in Adamawa (1,000), Kano (1,000), Kebbi (1,000) and Yobe (1,002) states. Corps members were trained in job-specific and life skills, including digital teaching and learning skills and NLP deployment and use. The outcome was to reach more children in underserved primary and secondary schools develop foundational learning skills through digitally supported quality teaching and learning. 558 underserved schools were reached in Adamawa (102), Kano (150), Kebbi (165) and Yobe (141) states. This has a profound impact by bringing targeted educational support to schools that lack the necessary resources to provide quality literacy instruction. 203,096 students were reached in Adamawa (14,155), Kano (39,784), Kebbi (83,823) and Yobe (65,334) states. This has supported the broader goal of reducing educational inequality and fostering a more inclusive education system.



### Output 4

#### Develop the first version of the impact portal, AI matching algorithm, low resource solution and impact verification/ evaluation tools

**Impact portal:** The impact portal has been designed and the integration with UReport implemented as the first low tech solution based on SMS technology. The impact verification is still done via the R Labs Zlto solution on a manual basis. The Yoma ecosystem is currently exploring ways to automate impact assessments, for example using the impact experience portal as a key stepping stone towards impact funding/ financing.

**AI matching algorithm:** Under the leadership of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) which is a member of the OR consortium, followed three activities to tackle this research question: 1) Data analysis. The team analysed data from Umuzi resulting from their aptitude tests. They identified the missing data that Umuzi should collect to build an AI tool that predicts the probability of success of an applicant in a programme. 2) Development of a first pilot to recommend learning pathways with YOMA courses. The pilot recommended a young person the learning pathway, composed of YOMA courses, that makes them more employable for a target job. 3) development of a new version of the pilot (as a web app) with courses from multiple providers (SAP, GLEAC, Atingi, etc.). The pilot targeted a focus group of YOMA users and will have multiple goals: (i) have youth use the web app and learn what the pathway will look like (assess if this app itself is valuable or interesting for youth); (ii) assess if they would indeed commit the doing the pathway (ask what barriers stand in their way- Such balancing time commitment, opportunity cost, cost of data, lack of self-motivation etc.); (iii) gain a better understanding of what jobs roles youth aspire to; (iv) outline where gaps in the current YOMA content offerings are



needed to get to the target end goal.

The pilot was conducted in three phases to explore youth career preferences and develop personalized learning pathways. In Phase 1, data was collected through the #Jobsafari Goodwill challenge using a behavioral questionnaire, gathering 440 responses. Analysis revealed diverse career interests, with Social and Welfare, Health Therapies, and Marketing among the most preferred fields. Additionally, video feedback from 50 participants showed that 88% found the career recommendations aligned with their interests. Phase 2 focused on analyzing how well available learning opportunities matched these career preferences. Using machine learning, courses from platforms like OpenSAP and The ODIN Project were mapped to occupational skills, revealing that ICT, Business, and Management fields had the best coverage, while other career interests remained underrepresented.



In Phase 3, a web application was developed to generate personalized learning pathways based on career preferences and study availability. An internal pilot with 86 participants tested the prototype, with 52% completing a feedback survey. Results showed that over 82% were highly interested in the recommended learning pathways, and 78% intended to pursue at least one suggested career field. Additionally, 67% were willing to follow the learning paths, and 84% preferred shorter pathways requiring less than 20 hours of effort. The experiment's findings contributed to an

article on learning pathway algorithms, currently under review in the Annals of Operations Research, where initial feedback from reviewers has been positive, indicating potential publication after revision

**Low resource solutions:** The Yoma team is working on an adaptation of the Yoma platform for low resource settings. Currently, the participation of youth in the Yoma platform requires at least internet connectivity and a basic smartphone. It thus excludes a significant number of marginalized young people who do not have access to these resources. Over the next two years, the Yoma team would like to adapt the platform and the operating model to address this equity issue. Initial solutions were tested in Burundi allowing for group functionalities (only requiring one group member to have digital access). Additionally, there are continuous conversations to create a WhatsApp solution or to integrate with FunDoo - a life coach chatbot built by UNICEF India. FunDoo is based on UReport and equips young people with 21st century and employability skills preparing them for their future. The Yoma tech team integrated Yoma and UReport in Nigeria in June 2023, significantly boosting registrations on the Yoma platform due to the low-data usage. A two-pager of the initial pilot in 2024 in South Africa can be found [here](#). Acknowledging that UReport has 800k users in South Africa (and 28 million across the world) and is active in many other Yoma target countries, the Yoma team has identified UReport/FunDoo as a strategic partner for integration and aims to fully complete integration in 2025.

## Output 5

**New YOMA management entity and improved overall experience on the YOMA platform**

The block grant for RLabs contributed to strengthening Yoma's operations. A total of 8 team members form the Yoma operations team in South Africa. The team covers the following areas:



Communications, Validation/Credentialing, Customer Support, UI/UX Design. A young Yoma Operations Manager oversees the operational team and RLabs supports the team with general office management, HR, administration and executive coaching.

Yoma has undergone several upgrades, culminating in V3 in April 2024. The new version features a redesigned homepage showcasing Yoma's core value proposition and key partner solutions, along with the Yoma ID (YoID) and a digital passport that stores youth credentials on the blockchain. The team conducted in-person and online user testing, integrating feedback into the platform (see consolidated feedback here). Yoma currently offers Single Sign-On (SSO) with partners such as atingi and Goodwall, and is developing deeper Self-Sovereign Identity (SSI) integration to embed YoID into platforms like SA.youth, mobi, UReport/RapidPro, and FunDoo. The SSI system prioritizes data privacy and gives youth control over their credentials. With V3, Yoma also upgraded its Partner Portal, providing real-time reporting and monitoring of opportunities. Partners can generate "magic links" for participants upon opportunity completion, enabling easy credential claiming and efficient verification. The Yoma team also conducted in-person and online user testings and collected user feedback via the Yoma platform. The youth provided positive feedback, with 70% of surveyed users expressing satisfaction with the platform, highlighting its improved usability, security, and ability to showcase their achievements.

## Output 6

### Prepare and implement the Operational Research (OR)

At the end of the operational research period, the team compiled reports addressing the hypothesis and key research questions, some of which led to published research outcomes in peer-reviewed journals. The

OR report and published papers will be shared separately.

The research was divided into three main research areas: 1) Research around connecting youth with the focus on AI and relational wellbeing, 2) Research on the Token Economic System and 3) Research on Validating Personal and Environmental Impact. The plan centred around leveraging digital technologies like AI, blockchain, and crowdsourcing, with a hypothesis that youth can effectively collaborate to design community initiatives leading to local social and environmental progress. The research



aimed to demonstrate that coordinated youth-based action can improve relational well-being, generate valuable citizen-generated data, and be sustained by key stakeholders. It was carried out by five partner research labs in Europe with a range of expertise relevant to the core research questions and coordinated by the University of Geneva. These research partners worked in collaboration with two local partners in Kenya and South Africa, each of which has wider networks across Africa, to collect data and test the central hypotheses through practical small-scale experiments coordinated by local partners.



## Programme Results Framework

	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
<b>Outcome 1: Improved relational wellbeing of youth through the establishment of strategic and contextualized learning to earning pathways for youth to succeed, grow and thrive</b>			
<b>Indicator:</b> Percentage of young people reporting increased level of confidence (currently & about the future) <b>Baseline:</b> <b>Planned Target Y1:</b> <b>Target Y2: 80</b>	80	N/A	<a href="#">Accenture review exercise</a>
<b>Output 1.1 Develop and implement YOMA together and green pathway and engage youth through the ecosystem</b>			
<b>Indicator 1.1.1:</b> Green YOMA proof of concept pilots established with youth <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target Y1: 1</b> <b>Target Y2: 3</b>	3	N/A	<a href="#">Report of the Water Monitoring Project in South Africa</a>  <a href="#">Wells for Zoe Concept Note</a>
<b>Indicator 1.1.2:</b> Youth incentivization for climate action piloted in target countries <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target Y1: 1</b> <b>Target Y2: 3</b>	3	N/A	<a href="#">Report of the Water Monitoring Project in South Africa</a>  <a href="#">Report on Donate Water Project in Nigeria</a>
<b>Indicator 1.1.3:</b> Revolving impact fund conceptualised <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target Y1: 1</b> <b>Target Y2: 3</b>	3	The Yoma team is collaborating with the Liechtenstein banking association, <a href="#">IXO</a> and the <a href="#">University of Liechtenstein</a> to prepare an impact funding pilot enabled by advanced Web3 technologies. Several potential Yoma projects were considered, and the most promising ones were pitched to the Liechtenstein Banking Association and a few market players, which confirmed their interest. The initial ambition is to mobilize more than \$30-50 million in private capital through the financial center of Liechtenstein.	Proof of concept  <a href="#">The Yoma Fund (First Internal Draft) - Google Docs</a>

<b>Indicator 1.1.4:</b> Learning and impact certificates distributed <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target Y1: 20,000</b> <b>Target Y2: 60,000</b>	50,790 learning and impact certificates distributed	50,760 certificates were distributed for skills. These certificates can be shared with potential employers, enhancing the credibility of young people and increasing their employability. Commitments from countries like Nigeria, which has pledged 485,000 credentials, will significantly increase the number of certificates distributed in 2025.	YOMA dashboard
Output 1.2: Develop and implement digital livelihoods pathway			
<b>Indicator 1.2.1:</b> # Youth trained in digital skills <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target Y1: 466</b> <b>Target Y2: 624</b>	1,306 youth trained in digital skills	N/A	Umuzi dashboard
Output 1.3: Marketplace for youth to engage with impact opportunities			
<b>Indicator 1.3.1:</b> # youth upskilled through volunteer programs in South Africa and Nigeria <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target Y1: 7,000</b> <b>Target Y2: 22,000</b>	20,400		COs reports
Output 1.4: Develop first version of the impact portal, AI matching algorithm, low resource solution and impact verification/ evaluation tools			
<b>Indicator 1.4.1:</b> Matching algorithm developed, functional and live on YOMA platform <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target Y1: 1</b> <b>Target Y2: 1</b>	N/A	<p>Under the leadership of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), a series of activities were carried out to explore how to leverage AI on Yoma to match youth with opportunities. Insights from Umuzi's aptitude test identified the missing data that Umuzi should collect to build an AI tool that predicts the probability of success of an applicant in a programme. The research team also developed the first pilot to recommend learning pathways with Yoma courses. The pilot recommended a young person to a learning pathway, composed of Yoma courses, which makes them more employable for a target job. While the concept has been tested it is not functional on the Yoma platform.</p> <p>After careful consideration, given the existence of many excellent matching platforms, Yoma is planning to integrate with one of them rather than custom build one. Some of the potential partners that were engaged include Yenza and Fuzu.</p>	<a href="#">Report</a>

<b>Indicator 1.4.2:</b> Amount of token awarded in USD <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target Y1: 250,000</b> <b>Target Y2: 400,000</b>	284,662 USD	The redemption of Zltos earned has only been possible in South Africa and Nigeria as it was difficult to engage some partners in other countries to provide youth with goods and services in exchange for Zltos earned. However, the team is looking for ways to bring in global partners such as telecom companies to provide airtime and bundles so that youth from other countries in Africa can be able to redeem their Zltos.	Zlto reports
Output 1.5: New YOMA management entity and improved overall experience on the YOMA platform			
<b>Indicator 1.5.1:</b> YOMA management team operational <b>Baseline: N/A</b> <b>Planned Target Y1: -</b> <b>Target Y2: -</b>		N/A	Report
Output 1.6: Prepare and implement the operational research			
<b>Indicator 1.6.1:</b> % learnings of operational research contributing to YOMA improvement <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target Y1: 30%</b> <b>Target Y2: 80%</b>	N/A	<p>Yoma opted to do a review exercise in collaboration with Accenture instead of the developmental evaluation and some of the recommendations were;</p> <p>Yoma to focus on core countries – Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya, as there is willingness, capacity and proof of impact as the initial aggressive country expansion was not feasible.</p> <p>For Yoma’s financial sustainability, a blend of traditional programmatic grant funding and innovative financing is needed.</p> <p>Need to include social and environmental impact across ecosystem partners</p> <p>Young people value Yoma for its accessible, skill-based learning and opportunities but also highlight areas for improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content &amp; Employability (4.0/5): Youth appreciate relevant courses that enhance their personal and professional development, providing 21st-century skills. However, some feel training lacks diversity and is not always tailor-made.</li> <li>• Job Confidence (3.7/5): While most courses align with in-demand job skills, many users have not yet secured jobs through Yoma, and some find certifications less valuable for employment.</li> <li>• Language Relevance (4.3/5): Yoma’s inclusion of multiple languages is well received, making learning more accessible. However, most content is still primarily in English.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Accenture review</a>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rewards (2.9/5): The rewards system, particularly Zlto, excites users, but many feel the available rewards do not fully meet their immediate needs.</li> <li>• Organization Branding (3.8/5): Opportunities from well-known organizations like Cisco increase engagement, as users trust their relevance to career growth.</li> <li>• Learning Hours (3.0/5): Flexible learning is appreciated, but some courses are seen as too lengthy, and youth suggest more diverse opportunities.</li> </ul> <p>Overall, young people recognize Yoma's value but seek improvements in tailored content, job placement, and a more impactful rewards system.</p> <p>The team has incorporated these recommendations in the implementation of Yoma 2024-2026.</p>	
<b>Indicator 1.6.2:</b> Development of evaluation <b>Baseline: 0</b> <b>Planned Target Y1: 0</b> <b>Target Y2: 1</b>	0	Same as above	<a href="#">Yoma review report</a>

## Challenges, lessons learned, and best practices

### Challenges

- **Limited access for marginalized youth** due to **internet connectivity and smartphone requirements**. Currently, participation in the Yoma platform requires at least a basic smartphone with internet access, excluding a significant number of young people who lack these resources. To address this equity gap, Yoma is exploring low-resource solutions to make its platform more inclusive. Over the next two years, the team aims to adapt both the platform and operating model to ensure broader access. Continuous discussions are underway to develop a WhatsApp-based solution or integrate with FunDoo.
- **Scaling:** Balancing the expansion of Yoma's reach with the need to enhance offerings and support in active countries. As Yoma scales across regions,

maintaining quality implementation while introducing new opportunities remains a key challenge. Ensuring adequate resources, localized support, and engagement in existing countries while expanding to new ones requires strategic planning and sustainable partnerships. For this year, Yoma is shifting its focus to only three countries; **South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya** to ensure high-quality implementation. The insights and learnings from these focused efforts will serve as a foundation for scaling to additional



countries in a more structured and effective manner. This approach allows for better resource allocation, deeper engagement, and stronger impact before broader expansion.

### Lessons Learned

- **Strong stakeholder engagement:** Engaging and collaborating with various stakeholders, such as government, academia and civil groups and youth associations, is crucial for the success of digital projects. Building partnerships and involving stakeholders from the beginning helps in obtaining diverse perspectives, leveraging resources, and increasing project impact.
- **Effective communication channels:** Utilizing diverse communication channels, such as WhatsApp forums and online sessions, facilitates regular interaction, feedback, and support for project participants. Creating dedicated platforms for communication and providing opportunities for active engagement enhance project outcomes and foster a sense of community among participants.
- **Localization of rewards:** Implementing a localized system for redeeming rewards, such as mobile phone airtime, data, or merchandise, is effective in motivating and incentivizing youth engagement. Tailoring rewards to meet the specific needs and preferences of the target audience strengthens their connection with the project and encourages continued participation.

### Best Practices

- **Verified Digital Credentials with YoID:** Integrating YoID on Yoma which is a digital passport for tracking and verifying youth engagement. As young people participate in different opportunities on Yoma, their activities are recorded on their YoID profile, creating a verified track record of completed opportunities

and acquired skills. Through YoID, youth collect **verified credentials** that serve as tangible proof of their learning achievements and impact contributions, enhancing their credibility and employability.

- **Seamless User Access with SSO & Empowering Youth through SSI:** Integrating Single Sign-On (SSO) with partners like atingi and Goodwall streamlines user access, making it easier for youth to engage with the platform without the hassle of multiple logins. Expansion to include platforms like SA.youth.mobi and UReport/Rapid Pro/FunDoowill further enhance accessibility. Additionally, Self-Sovereign Identity (SSI) plays a crucial role in ensuring data privacy while giving youth control over their credentials. This combination of SSO and SSI fosters a secure, user-friendly experience, promoting greater trust and empowerment within the Yoma ecosystem.



# Gender Equality

Gender equality is key principle for all of GenU's work. All our programmes adopt a gender-responsive approach, embedding gender equity through all stages of programme implementation. We know the digital divide has a disproportionate impact on women and girls in the Global South, exacerbating existing gender inequalities and limiting their potential as agents of change. The gender digital divide limits girls' and women's access to information and communication. Overall, addressing gender equality issues is critical to ensuring that women and girls in the Global South can fully participate in in the digital transition and to realizing their potential as agents of change. Further, giving women and girls increased access to digital opportunities and resources can play a great role in reducing household vulnerability and building community resilience.



The programmes recognize and address the unique challenges and barriers faced by young women in accessing education, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities. This approach ensures that young women are actively included and supported in the programs.

BeGreen Africa comprised a gender-responsiveness training curriculum and emphasizes results for the most disadvantaged young people, especially young women, to ensure that the programme is inclusive and that it addresses gender, disability and social inequality. Green entrepreneurship is not gender-neutral; processes and innovations can have gender differential impacts. Green entrepreneurship can have unintended impacts on gender equality if subconscious gender biases exist and if gender differences in needs are not accounted for.

In Kenya, the EKYAN model specifically targets impact on rural young women and girls in Kenya, who face challenges securing employment or engaging in entrepreneurship due to gender-based barriers and discrimination. The model employs a gender-responsive approach, embedding gender equity through all stages of design to delivery and implementation. The model delivers impactful skill building experiences to young women, many of whom are young mothers, equips them with the entrepreneurial and employability skills to engage and grow within Kenya's economy and local agricultural sectors. Dedicated gender-affirmative actions were taken as part of EKYAN, for example the provision of child-care services during training sessions or financial literacy training tailored to women's contexts. Overall, the programme exceeded in terms of gender targets. For example, 65% of farmers trained were female.

Overall, Yoma's work on skill development, employment, and empowerment contributes to gender equality by providing equal access to opportunities, enhancing women's participation in the workforce, and promoting their economic independence and agency.

All programmes address gender equality in the following ways:

- 1. Equal Access to Opportunities:** Providing learning-to-earning opportunities that are accessible to all youth, and particularly targeting at least 50% women. By offering free online skill development programs and employment prospects, Yoma for example ensures that young women have equal access to resources and opportunities for personal and professional growth.



**2. Dedicated funding support:** Dedicated seed funding or micro-grants specifically for women-led startups or female entrepreneurs to address funding disparities. Working with financial institutions to improve access to credit for young women, possibly with lower collateral requirements or more favorable loan terms. Including financial literacy training tailored to women's contexts.

**3. Offering support and flexible programming:** EKYAN's for with NEET youth particularly integrates the offering of on-site childcare during training and providing for additional to accommodation for young mothers or caregivers ensuring participation isn't hindered by family responsibilities.

**4. Skill Development:** Through partnerships with organizations like Umuzi and ACN, Yoma offers training in digital skills, project management, data analytics, and more. By equipping young women with these skills, Yoma enhances their employability and economic independence, thus narrowing the gender gap in the workforce. All content across all programmes is strictly gender responsive. A notably example, the targeted #women-in-Tech outreach in Nigeria engaged 80% women applicants for tech training applications compared to 20% when applications were not gender targeted.

**5. Empowerment Through Employment and Entrepreneurship:** Yoma's initiatives, such as the Enviro-Champs program, provide employment opportunities for young women in environmental conservation and citizen science. By engaging in meaningful work and earning Yoma tokens, young women gain economic empowerment and agency over their lives. BeGreen and EKYAN empower young women to establish or grow their green business or agribusiness creating employment for additional women.

**6. Representation and Participation:** All programmes actively engage young women in its programs and initiatives, ensuring their representation and participation in decision-making processes. Within the yoma Initiatives like the Youth on the Move Fellowship and the African Climate Mobility Initiative provide platforms for young women to contribute to global discussions on climate action and drive change in their communities.

**7. Inclusive Partnerships:** All programmes collaborate with a diverse range of partners to address gender equality and empower young women. By leveraging these partnerships, Yoma can develop tailored interventions and support systems that address the specific needs and challenges faced by young women.

# Conclusion and Way Forward

Building on progress made in 2023, GenU programmes in Kenya and Niger are leveraging public-private-youth partnerships (PPYP) to improve young people's lives through skills development, employment, entrepreneurship, and social impact opportunities. Important progress and planning has been achieved and the outlook for 2024 is strong.

By the end of 2025, in Kenya EKYAN will provide more than 5,000 young agripreneurs provided with the opportunity to earn a decent livelihood – particularly young women from out-of-school settings. Young agripreneurus will provide support to 50,000 farmers to improve their economic livelihoods within a sustainable and climate smart manner and train 10,000 young people on food systems.

Building on the success and growing interest in the Passport to Earning (P2E) program, UNICEF plans to expand its reach across Niger by targeting 3,000 certified youth and engaging 29 youth centers with improved internet connectivity through a partnership with Airtel. Key next steps include evaluating the first phase to inform scale-up, ensuring the curriculum is locally relevant and aligned with labor market needs, and mobilizing additional resources through collaborations with UN agencies and donors. Efforts will also focus on enhancing internet access via alternative providers and satellite solutions, supporting youth entrepreneurship with mentoring and funding opportunities, and upgrading the P2E platform with localized, user-friendly features to boost engagement and impact.

Continuing the work in 2024 (training and seed funding provided to entrepreneurs), BeGreen will provide a comprehensive training incubation programme including mentorship, access to networks and financing mechanisms as well as additional acceleration funds. Building on the learnings from this BeGreen implementation phase,

an improved redesign will be implemented by the end of 2025. The provision of more than \$2.4 million in seed funding to 485 entrepreneurs aims to support entrepreneurs in generating \$6.8 million revenue and creating at least 2,000 jobs within two years.

With respect to Yoma, the programme achieved all of its objectives: 1) Have developed the digital livelihoods pathway; 2) Have run four pilots validating the green Yoma pathway; 3) Have developed the Yoma together pathway; 4) Have conducted operational research around relational wellbeing, AI/machine learning matching algorithm, the token economy and the impact verification and evaluation 5) Have developed an impact financing strategy making Yoma partly self-financed. All of this will together has created a more robust offering for young people and improve the relational wellbeing of youth.



At the global level, the Generation Unlimited will direct continued efforts to skill and connect the world's young people to opportunity, with focus on achieving impact for the most disadvantaged by:

- Promoting women's agency - creating systems that promote women's agency in public and private spheres, aligning with Canada's vision of empowering women as drivers of economic growth.
- Building green economy skills - developing targeted programs to equip young women with skills for the green economy, addressing both gender equality and climate action goals.
- Developing Digital Empowerment - enhancing digital skills for marginalized girls, promoting online safety and inclusive platforms for job opportunities.



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