



Generation Unlimited

**Trust Fund 2025
Consolidated Report**



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01

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.

Over the next 10 years, 1.2 billion youth will enter the labor market, however, faced with only 420 million jobs being created. Africa is emerging as a youth powerhouse; by 2050, 1/3 of the world's young people will live in Africa. Many continue to face disproportionate challenges and struggle to find decent livelihoods and see a global youth unemployment rate that is three times higher than for adults. Young women are further disadvantaged with two out of three NEET (Not in Employment Education or Training) youth being female. 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 75% of youth lack the skills needed for employment, 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. Up to 40% of global jobs could be impacted by automation and entry level jobs usually taken by young women and men face the highest risks. 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 the young 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 catalyze impact for youth and advance the GenU mission through a Public-Private-Youth partnership.

Thanks to the vision and generous support of the Government of the Netherlands and Foundation Botnar, programmes are being implemented in Kenya and other African countries 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.

Approx. 522,000 youths received training in various fields, including digital skills, agribusiness, and entrepreneurial activities across all programmes throughout the full project period across all years. As of March 2025, 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 50 African countries

and has facilitated access to new opportunities for 445,000 individuals. Additionally, more than 31,000 certificates have been verified, validating job-relevant skills and enhancing employability. As of December 2025, a total of 68,000 young people were trained in food systems through the Engaging Kenyan Youth in Agriculture and Nutrition (EKYAN) program in Kenya and BeGreen has trained more than 9,000 youth and 590 young green entrepreneurs have received seed funding and on average created 5.8 additional jobs per enterprise or more (based on data of the first BeGreen cohort).

In Kenya the EKYAN programme (Engaging Kenyan Youth in Agriculture & Nutrition) equips Kenyan youth—especially young women—with agribusiness skills, digital tools, and regenerative agriculture training to improve livelihoods, food systems, and nutrition. Supported by the Governments of Kenya, the Netherlands, and Canada, as well as a private sector company, and in collaboration with Kuza Biashara and SNV, EKYAN has trained 68,000 youth in climate smart regenerative agriculture. By 2025, 256 schools, 64 Centers of Excellence, and 192 satellite schools served as learning hubs. A cohort of 512 young Agripreneurs became last mile service providers, all reporting income growth with 62% having at least doubled their income in 2025. They trained 10,700 students, provided extension services and/ or training to nearly 74,000 farmers (65% women; 75% under 35). Training covered regenerative practices and priority value chains such as tomato, dairy, poultry, and avocado, alongside nutrition sensitive agriculture. As a result, in 2025, 78% of farmers reported improved production, 77% increased income, and 62% adopted nutrition sensitive crop production (an independent evaluation is under way). EKYAN also built market linkages with 40+ private sector partners across the agricultural value chain. Additionally, 5,570 out of school youth, including young mothers and persons with disabilities, received training, mentorship, and starter kits; An external evaluation of the SNV model confirmed that 80% launched agribusinesses, increasing their income by 21% on average.

Funding was also used for BeGreen, an innovative pilot programme transforming economic development through youth-led green



entrepreneurship, addressing rising youth unemployment and the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion. BeGreen 1.0 was implemented by UNICEF/ GenU and the Tony Elumelu Foundation with support from the IKEA Foundation and the Government of the Netherlands across Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, and Senegal. A second iteration, supported by the Governments of the Netherlands and Canada and delivered with the Tony Elumelu Foundation and Umuzi, builds on lessons from the first phase.

The programme offers a comprehensive support package: gender-sensitive green entrepreneurship

training co-created with young entrepreneurs and peer-reviewed by the University of Botswana, business-plan development, design sprints, pitching preparation, mentorship, access to networks and finance, and USD 5,000 seed capital. An independent evaluation is underway, but early monitoring of the first programme iteration shows strong results: annual run rates already exceed

the USD 10,000 target in all countries, and job creation surpasses the 2.6-job benchmark, with 5.8 jobs added per entrepreneur in Kenya, 5 in South Africa, and even higher in Senegal and Nigeria. An assessment by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, confirmed significant livelihood gains, with 74 Kenyan enterprises that were assessed creating 700 jobs.



02 Purpose

Nearly 90 per cent of young people live in developing countries, where they make up a significant proportion of the population. One in four young people have NEET 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 of young workers in developing countries—estimated at over 75 per cent globally and as high as 96.8 per cent in low-income contexts—are engaged in the informal sector. These jobs are typically characterized by low productivity, unstable incomes, and limited social protection, and commonly include smallholder and subsistence farming, casual agricultural labor, street vending, petty trade, domestic work, transport services (such as motorcycle taxis), and work in micro and small unregistered enterprises. Many young people are also self-employed or engaged in unpaid family work, particularly in rural areas.

Young people today face many economic, social, and cultural challenges. Education systems are outdated and fragmented. The types of skills needed in the labor 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.

UNICEF's 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 opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship. 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.



03 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 60 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.

Generation Unlimited Mission:

To skill the world’s youth and connect them to opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship.

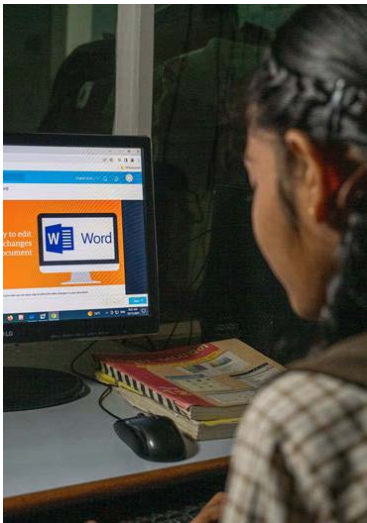


Generation Unlimited is focusing on three cross-cutting priorities with an ongoing emphasis on girls

and young women and prioritizing digital and green opportunities wherever relevant.

Generation Unlimited Priorities: Double Down on Digital, Green, Girls

GenU will remain industry-agnostic, guided by local market realities, but will prioritize digital and green skills and opportunities where relevant, and will focus on girls and young women.



 **Digital**

World Bank: Digital sectors in developing economies are growing 4.2x faster than traditional economic sectors

- Digital Skills Training & Job-Readiness: Foundational & advanced digital literacy (data analytics, AI) & recognized certifications
- Work-Based Learning in Tech Sector: Apprenticeships, internships for real-world experience
- Digital Entrepreneurship: Support to scale digital and tech-driven innovations and businesses.



 **Green**

ILO: By 2030, 100 million “green” jobs could be created

- Green Skills Training & Job Readiness: industry aligned skills (e.g. renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, circular economy, climate resilience), and skilling through volunteering opportunities
- Work-Based Learning in Green Economy: Apprenticeships & internships in green companies, start-ups and government agencies
- Green entrepreneurship: Support to scale green ventures, e.g. in agri-business, waste management, climate smart solutions



 **Girls**

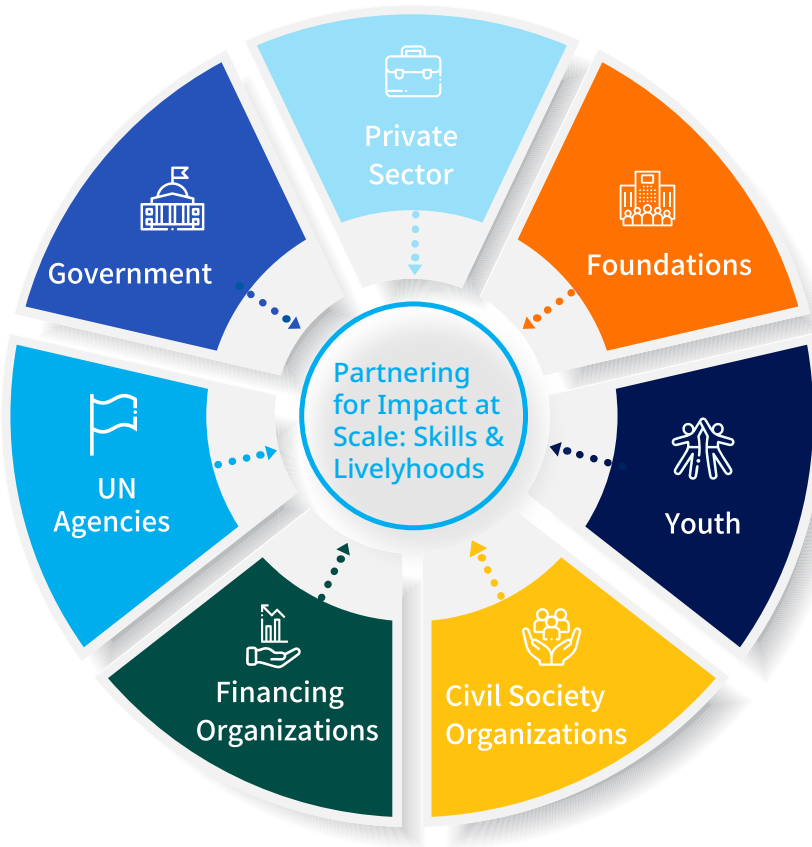
ILO: Of 259 million young people NEET, 67% are young women.

- Future-ready skills and jobs in non-traditional, high growth sectors; prioritization in work-based learning
- Women-friendly financial services, seed funding & grants; access to female role models and mentorship networks
- Support to young mothers & those most disadvantaged: Flexible learning and work models, digital and community-based programs, & advocacy for supportive social protection policies

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.

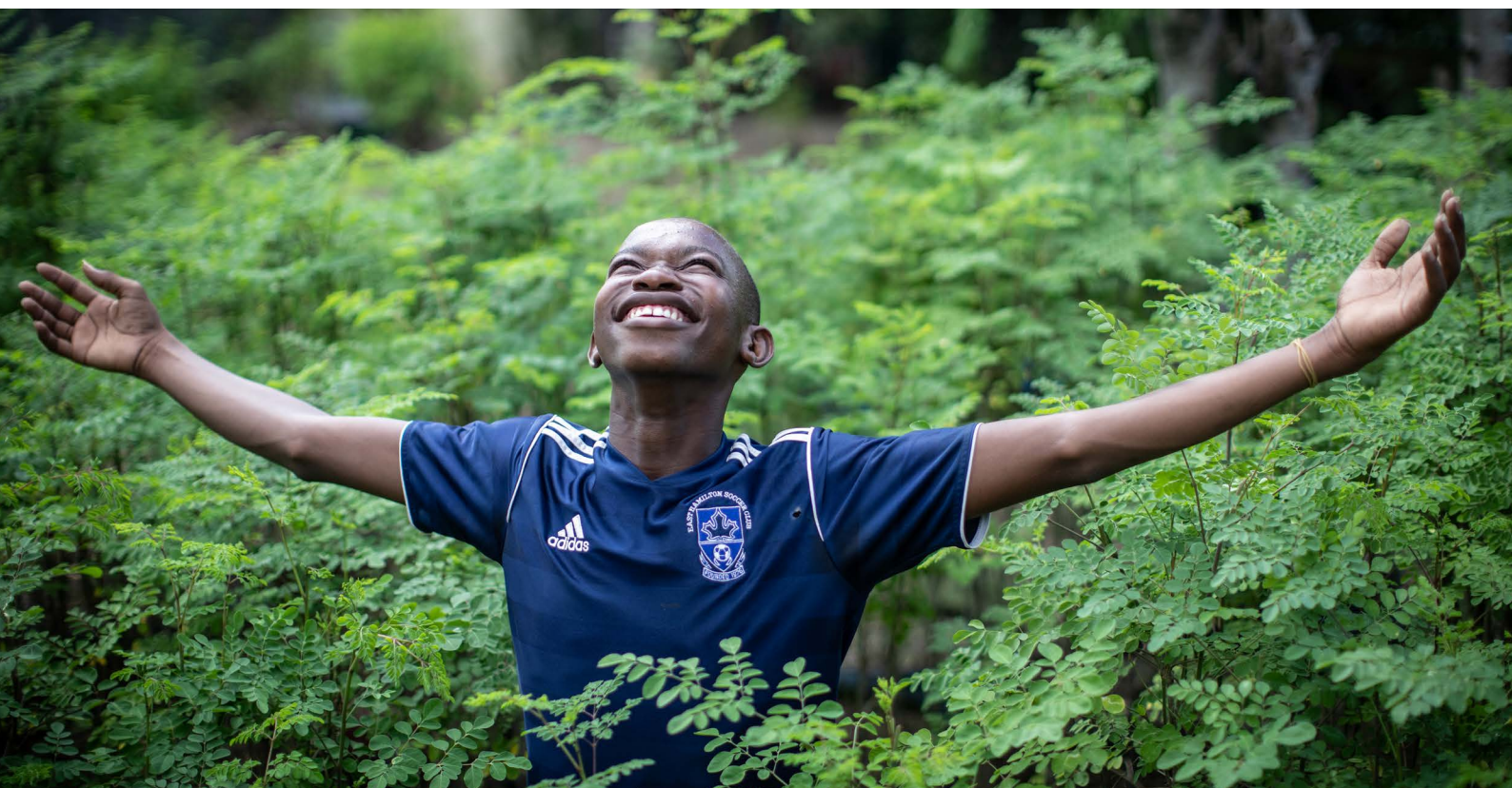
Drive Impact through Public-Private-Youth Partnership, anchored in UNICEF



With public, private & youth partners, develop & scale global & national programmes

Global Programmes: Designed with global public, private & youth partners, often with bespoke resources, & locally contextualized in countries.

National Programmes: Conceptualized, developed, resourced, and implemented with public, private & youth partners in country. Can become Global Programmes if replicable & scalable in other contexts.



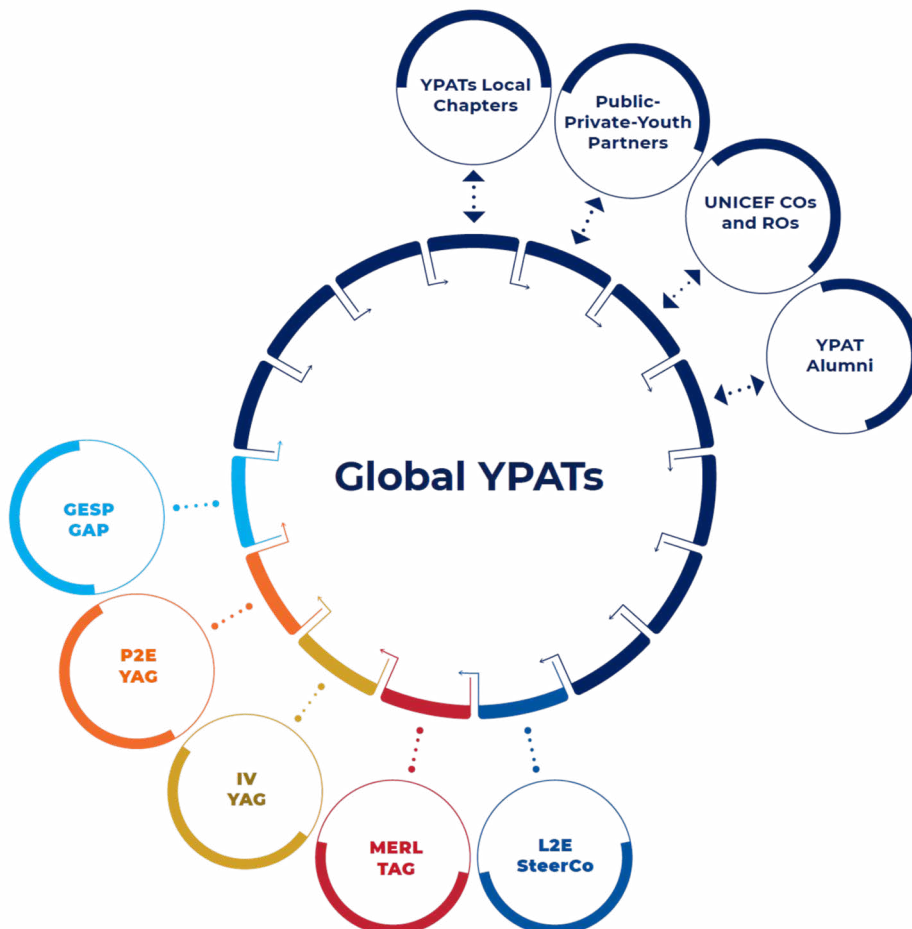
04 Youth Centrality

GenU embeds youth centrality across programme design, rollout, and delivery at global, regional, and country levels, positioning GenU as a trusted partner for public, private sector, and multilaterals.

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. The third cohort of YPAT consists of more than 70 young leaders who guide the global partnership; it serves as the youth sounding board for everything that GenU does. YPAT members provide invaluable insights that influence regional strategy and programme guidance in various thematic areas such as climate change, and transition to decent work. 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.



Core features of the infrastructure:

- Youth influence priorities, programme design, and strategic decision-making
- Structured, fit for purpose engagement mechanisms at every stage
- Participation grounded in established standards (e.g., Hart’s Ladder)

Global Young People’s Action Team (YPAT):

- Primary youth governance and sounding mechanism
- 67 young people from 38+ countries (68%+ young women & adolescent girls)
- Young people nominated through 50+ Public Private Youth partners



05

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 catalyzes 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 and it also includes 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.

In line with GenU's current Strategy, in 2025 funding has been used to scale up skills development and youth entrepreneurship and agripreneurship in Kenya, 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. The following is an outline of progress and results from 1 January to 31 December 2025, in line with the GenU Trust Fund reporting cycle.



06

Kenya: Engaging Kenyan Youth in Agriculture and Nutrition (EKYAN)

Kenya's population has increased significantly over the past decades, rising from about 11 million in 1970 to 47.6 million in 2019. Recent estimates indicate that the population reached approximately 58.6 million in 2026, based on United Nations projections, reflecting continued rapid growth. At this pace, Kenya's population is expected to approach 75–80 million by the early-to-mid 2040s, maintaining pressure on jobs, services, and natural resources.

Kenya remains a highly youthful country, with around 70–75% of the population under the age of 35, making it one of the youngest populations globally. This demographic structure presents both an opportunity and a challenge, as the development of skills for employment, entrepreneurship, and social impact remains critical.

Although overall unemployment in Kenya is relatively low—estimated at about 5–7% in recent years—youth face disproportionately high labor market challenges. Recent data shows youth unemployment at roughly 8–12% (depending on age definition and source), but this figure understates the problem, as a large share of young people are engaged in informal, low-paying, or unstable work. Indeed, only about 10% of jobs are in the formal sector, highlighting the scale of underemployment and job quality issues. Each year, an estimated 800,000 to 1 million young people enter the labor market, many without adequate skills or access to quality employment opportunities.

Access to education has improved significantly over the past decade, with the majority of young Kenyans now completing at least primary education and a growing share attending secondary school. Recent survey data indicates that around 80% of youth have secondary or post-secondary education, although disparities persist in rural areas and among girls. Despite these gains, challenges remain in completion rates, quality of education, and alignment with labor

market needs, contributing to a persistent skills mismatch.

Agriculture continues to be the backbone of Kenya's economy. The sector contributes roughly 30–33% of GDP directly and employs over 60% of the population, particularly in rural areas. It also plays a crucial role in food security, employment, and export earnings. However, the sector is increasingly affected by climate variability, including droughts and floods, which threaten productivity and incomes.



The agriculture sector presents significant opportunities to absorb young people into productive employment, particularly through agribusiness and value-added activities. However, a significant “vulnerability gap” exists for young people in agriculture, particularly for young women. While women make up a large share of the agricultural labor force, they typically have less access to land ownership, extension services, credit, inputs, and markets, which limits productivity and income potential (Food and Agriculture Organization; World Bank). Young people face additional constraints, including limited start-up capital, weak links to value chains, and inadequate technical and business skills.

Agriculture in Kenya presents a significant yet underutilized opportunity to absorb young people into productive employment, particularly through agribusiness and value-added activities. Despite its central role in the economy—employing the majority of the rural population and contributing substantially to GDP—the sector remains largely unattractive to youth. It is widely perceived as low-income, high-risk, and tied to subsistence farming rather than as a viable pathway to economic advancement. This perception is reinforced by education and training systems that do not adequately equip young people with the technical, business, and digital skills required to succeed in modern, market-oriented agriculture.

This reflects a broader structural paradox. While agriculture underpins rural livelihoods, it continues to fall short in providing sustainable incomes, ensuring reliable nutrition outcomes, and maintaining the natural resources—such as soil health and water—on which future productivity depends. These challenges are rooted in systemic gaps in how knowledge, services, inputs, and market access reach smallholder farmers, as well as in how young people are positioned within rural economies.

Youth disengagement from agriculture is therefore less about lack of interest and more about lack of opportunity. Many young people in rural areas are familiar with farming and willing to engage but lack credible pathways to participate as economic actors. Without access to skills development, advisory services, markets, finance, and networks, agriculture is seen as a sector of limited potential. This not only constrains youth employment but also weakens the

human capital and innovation needed for the sector’s transformation.

At the same time, smallholder farmers face increasing pressure from climate variability, including erratic rainfall, declining soil fertility, and rising pest and disease risks. Although awareness of improved and regenerative practices is growing, adoption remains limited due to insufficient access to practical training, inputs, and reliable extension services. Public systems are overstretched, widening the gap between farmer needs and available support.

The link between agriculture and nutrition further underscores the importance of transformation. In many rural households, dietary diversity and food quality are directly shaped by what is produced on farms. When farming systems are low in productivity and diversity, nutrition outcomes suffer. Addressing this challenge requires not only increasing production, but also promoting diversified, nutrition-sensitive agriculture and strengthening awareness of the relationship between farming practices and household diets.

In response to these challenges, the government of Kenya, under President William Ruto, continues to promote the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), which aims to expand access to finance and investment for small-scale farmers, informal workers, and youth entrepreneurs. This approach seeks to address unemployment, reduce inequality, and unlock the productive potential of Kenya’s large youth population.

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, the Netherlands, and Canada, 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 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, digital tools and resources for employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in agribusiness. 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 was conceived as a response to the constellation of interconnected challenges: the limited economic pathways available to rural youth, the weak reach of advisory, the market systems for smallholder farmers, growing climate pressure on agricultural production, and the persistent link between fragile farming systems and poor household nutrition outcomes, not by treating them as separate programmes competing for attention and resources, but by recognizing that they share a common root in the absence of a functioning local agricultural ecosystem. The programme’s central insight is that when youth agripreneurs, public schools,

farmers, and market actors are connected within a shared learning and service environment, each component strengthens the others. Agripreneurs need farmers as customers, collaborators, and the foundation of viable rural enterprises; farmers need agripreneurs for knowledge, services, input access, local troubleshooting, and stronger market linkages; markets need agripreneurs as trusted intermediaries who organize supply and demand at community level; schools need agripreneurs to make agriculture practical and relevant; and young people need both schools and agripreneurs to experience agriculture as a field of possibility, one that offers a credible pathway to enterprise, income, innovation, and leadership.

EKYAN operationalized this vision through a five-dimensional ecosystem comprising agripreneurs, schools, young learners, farmers, and private sector actors. Each dimension plays a distinct role, but the programme’s value lies in how these roles interact.

AGRIPRENEURS

- Deliver training to farmers/youth
- Engage farming community around school.
- Establish links between young people and markets.
- Create awareness/linkages with digital agtech innovators and their services (e.g. soil testing, drones spraying, weather forecast and information etc)
- Share nutrition information on value chains with farmers and youth

FARMERS

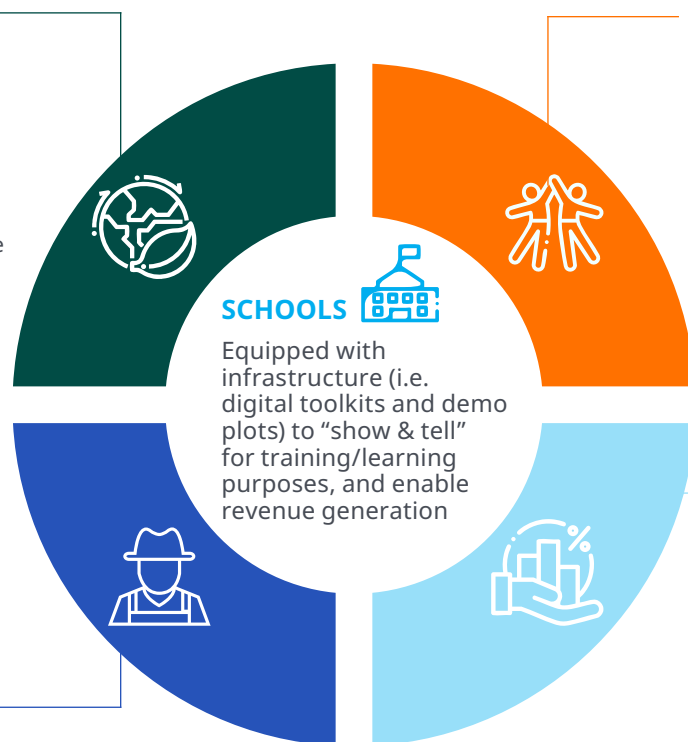
- Receive digital extension services and nutrition information from agripreneurs
- Buy and sell products leveraging the digital ecosystem

YOUTH

- Connected through schools curriculum and clubs and to agripreneurs facilitating their link with the agri-food industry for employment and entrepreneurship opportunities

PRIVATE SECTOR

- Sponsor demo plots
- Provide employment/ internships/ mentorship/ coaching to young people.
- Access to markets and inputs for agripreneurs



Within this ecosystem, each actor plays a distinct but connected role. Schools provide a practical entry point for learning & demonstration. Young learners are introduced early to agriculture, nutrition, and enterprise as relevant parts of their future. Agripreneurs serve as the bridge between knowledge & practice, helping translate ideas into action for both learners & farming communities. Farmers provide the real-world context in which technologies, practices, and services are applied. The private sector helps ensure that production and training are demand driven and connected to markets, inputs, services, and long-term economic opportunity. The County government serves as the institutional anchor of this ecosystem, providing public oversight, coordination, and legitimacy to ensure that the interests of all stakeholders are aligned and protected. What makes the model work is not any one component on its own, but the way these actors interact through a shared platform for learning, engagement, and enterprise growth.

This ecosystem is further strengthened by a digital and advisory backbone. AI-assisted advisory through Ask Nia, digital learning and business tools such as Kuza Academy, Agribytes, and OneNetwork, and the integration of nutrition-sensitive & climate-responsive agriculture practices help make the

model more continuous, scalable, and responsive. Together, these elements ensure that EKYAN is not only building awareness, but also enabling action, reinforcing behavior change, and linking participants to practical opportunities over time. It is from this ecosystem logic that the programme's design framework emerges: Inspire, Skill, Connect. These are not separate pillars operating independently. They represent progression through which participants move, and through which the wider ecosystem becomes stronger.

The programme is built around the principles of regenerative agriculture models that promote circular economies in predominantly rural areas. The EKYAN model delivers targeted, practical, gender-sensitive and market-relevant opportunities to rural young people – especially women. It equips participants with entrepreneurial, financial, and employability skills tailored to local economic opportunities, particularly within the agricultural and agri-business sectors. By strengthening capabilities, improving access to income-generating opportunities, and addressing structural barriers, the model enables young women to build more resilient livelihoods and contribute to inclusive economic development within their communities.



Summary of Key Results across All Programme Phases 2023 - 2025¹ :

- EKYAN applied a **gender-transformative approach having ensured above 60% participation of young women** across all target groups (young agripreneurs, farmers, students) and increasing their engagement in higher-value and value-added activities in 2025. This addresses the “vulnerability gap,” where young women are disproportionately engaged in precarious, unpaid, or informal agricultural work.
- Engagement of **256 schools**, thereof 64 centers of excellence (COEs) and 192 satellite centers. School centers 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. Demonstration and learning plots have been set up in all COEs and majority of satellite centers.
- **512 young agripreneurs were incubated** and provided with digital tools and skills to advance their agribusiness and provided with digital tools to transfer knowledge and connect youth with agrifood industry. In 2025, 100% of Agripreneurs reported improved economic livelihoods with 62% having at least doubled their income. Additionally, 63% of the 400 agripreneurs incubated in 2025 created new jobs with about 1.6 jobs each. Value of business transactions: KES 100 million.
- Young agripreneurs trained more than **10,700 young learners/ students** on food systems and balanced diets with 95.8% of the 8,008 participating students in 2025 now viewing agriculture as a viable future opportunity.
- Also, young agripreneurs trained and/ or provided extension services to nearly 74,000 smallholder farmers leading to improved economic livelihoods in a sustainable and climate-smart manner. In 2025,
 - 78% of farmers reported increased their yield.
 - 77% of farmers reported increased their income.
 - 99% of farmers report an improved ability to cope with climate challenges such as drought, declining soil health, erratic rainfall, and climate-linked crop losses. The strongest reported shifts are in soil and water conservation, adopted by 79.8% of farmers, and nutrition-sensitive crop production at 62.0%, both of which strengthen resilience while also supporting productivity and household food security.
- In addition, by the end of 2025, **5,570 out-of-school and unemployed young people**, including persons living with disabilities and young mothers, have been trained and provided with support such as mentorship, access to markets and starter kits enabling them to set up an agribusiness or find employment in the agriculture sector. More than 80% of NEET young people have started their own agribusiness after being part of the training and 10% found a job in agriculture. They have increased their income by 21% on average as of December 2025. In total, 64% are earning a decent livelihood as agripreneurs and/or agri-related job opportunities.²
- EKYAN facilitated engagement and market linkages with over **40+ private sector partners**, covering the upstream and downstream sides of the agricultural economy including agro-dealers, farm input suppliers, fish and poultry suppliers, irrigation-related actors and mechanization providers, credit and financing partners, aggregators, traders, processors, millers, off-

1. Based on self-reported data. An independent external evaluation is ongoing.

2. Based on an external evaluation.

Agripreneur Engagement



Agripreneur incubation is a central pillar of the EKYAN model, serving as the primary mechanism for translating youth engagement into practical capability, enterprise development, and local service delivery. Rather than offering stand-alone training, the programme provides a structured incubation pathway that combines entrepreneurship development, technical skills, digital learning, mentorship, practical field exposure, and ecosystem linkages. This approach positions agripreneurs not just as participants, but as emerging rural service providers—training farmers, supporting schools, managing demo plots, and building viable agribusinesses.

A key foundation of this model is the Kuza Leadership Academy, which delivers core business and professional development. It equips agripreneurs with skills in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, planning, record-keeping, customer engagement, communication, and leadership, helping shift mindsets from subsistence farming to agriculture as a business and service opportunity.

This is complemented by Agribytes, a flexible digital learning platform focused on agronomy and value chain development. Agribytes enables agripreneurs to engage with technical content in accessible, modular formats that can be revisited over time, reinforcing knowledge on topics such

as crop management, regenerative agriculture, climate-smart practices, and nutrition. By supporting continuous learning beyond one-off training sessions, Agribytes strengthens knowledge retention and allows agripreneurs to apply learning more effectively in real-world contexts.

The incubation model is further reinforced through ongoing mentorship, peer learning, and structured feedback loops, which are critical for building confidence and strengthening performance over time. It is also grounded in practical, field-based learning. Through engagement in school demo plots and farmer training, agripreneurs gain hands-on experience in crop and livestock management, regenerative practices, and real-time problem-solving. The involvement of county technical experts ensures that training remains aligned with local agro-ecological realities and public extension systems, while also reinforcing programme legitimacy and coordination at community level.

Overall, EKYAN's agripreneur engagement model is a blended, system-oriented approach that integrates human, digital, technical, and institutional support. This combination enables young people to progressively build skills, apply knowledge in practice, and establish themselves as credible economic actors within local agricultural systems.

Digital and AI Tools

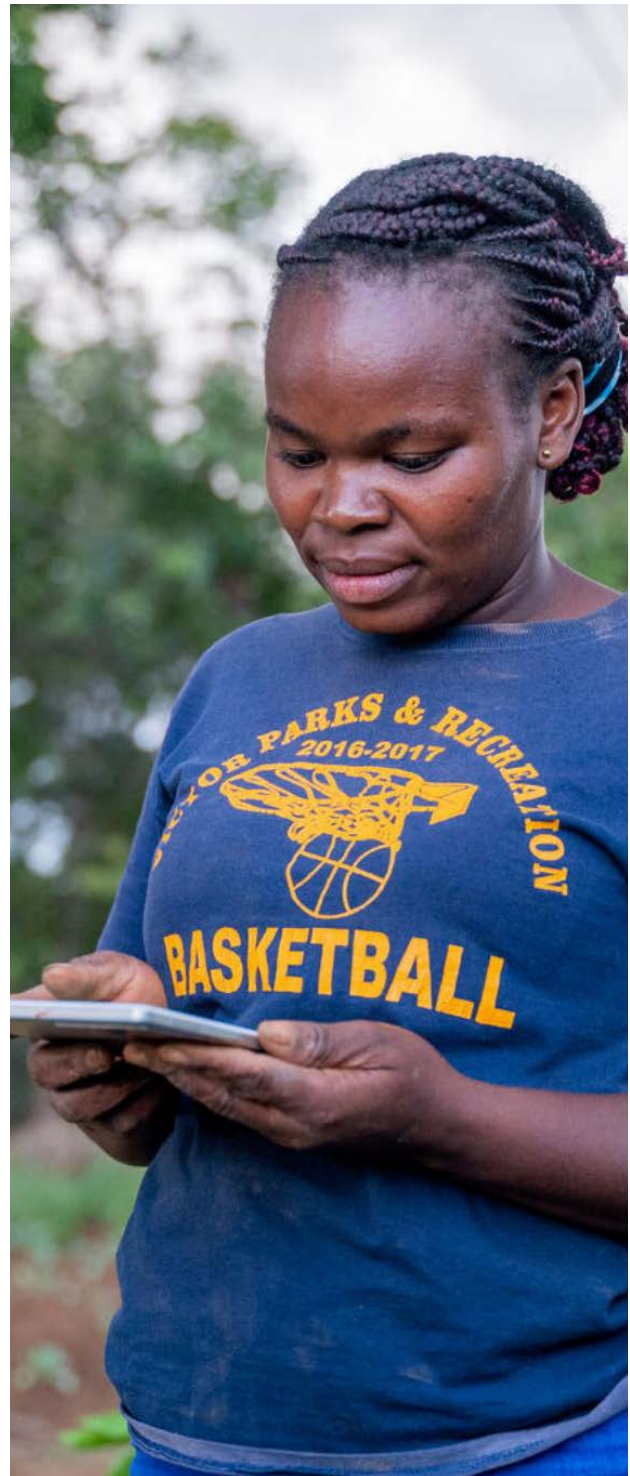
Digital and AI-enabled tools are embedded across the EKYAN model to strengthen learning, advisory services, and market engagement. For agripreneurs, these tools support operational functions—such as record-keeping, communication, and transactions—as well as continuous learning through platforms like Agribytes and the Kuza Leadership Academy.

A key component is the Kuza Digital Toolkit, which includes portable projectors and devices that enable video-based training in schools, demo plots, and farmer group settings. This makes learning more visual, practical, and engaging, while also improving the consistency and clarity of technical messaging. It is particularly effective for demonstrating complex practices such as poultry management, crop establishment, and climate-smart techniques.

Complementing this is Ask Nia, an **AI-enabled advisory tool** that enhances real-time, field-level support. While digital content and training provide foundational knowledge, Ask Nia enables agripreneurs to respond quickly to emerging challenges by offering symptom-based guidance and actionable recommendations. This is particularly valuable in poultry production, where timely decisions are critical and farmers frequently face issues such as disease outbreaks, parasites, poor growth, feeding challenges, or sudden mortality. By helping agripreneurs interpret symptoms and recommend appropriate responses—such as biosecurity measures, vaccination, hygiene improvements, and feeding adjustments—Ask Nia strengthens the responsiveness and relevance of advisory services. It also enables agripreneurs to move beyond general training toward more targeted, problem-specific support at farm level.

Together, these tools create a more integrated and adaptive support system. Digital platforms improve knowledge dissemination and standardization, while AI enhances real-time problem-solving and decision-making. Importantly, EKYAN demonstrates that technology is most effective when it complements—not replaces—community-based delivery.

Agripreneurs remain central as trusted, local actors, while digital and AI systems enhance their efficiency, reach, and service quality, the foundation for more scalable, data-driven agricultural extension and youth livelihood models.



Key Results

In 2025, more than 1,700 young people applied to be part of EKYAN, signaling a strong appetite among rural youth for agriculture-linked opportunities. From this pool, 400 young Kenyans were selected into the programme. They now operate multi-stream agri- businesses, generating over KES 100 million in documented economic activity & training thousands of farmers in regenerative and climate-smart practices. The Agripreneur Incubation & Youth Entrepreneurship programme was built on a clear premise: that lasting agricultural transformation requires investing in the people who drive it.

Young agripreneurs’ median monthly income rose from KES 13,000 to KES 30,000, a **130.8% median income increase**. Among agripreneurs, 62% at least doubled their earnings, while 100% reported an improved economic situation. Beyond income, 80.5% reported improved household food security and 75.6% reported healthier diets and living habits, reflecting a programme model that treated nutrition, livelihoods, and enterprise development as interconnected outcomes rather than separate workstreams.

One of the clearest signs that EKYAN’s agripreneurs were moving beyond self-employment and into enterprise growth is the extent to which they began creating work opportunities for others. Out of the 400 agripreneurs captured in the dataset, 253 reported that they had created new jobs in their agribusinesses since joining the programme. This means that 63.3% of respondents had already translated their business growth into employment for other people.

In total, 253 agripreneurs reported creating 403 jobs. This is a strong result for a cohort made up largely of small and still-growing rural enterprises. It shows that EKYAN did not only help young people improve their own livelihoods but also enabled many of them to start generating employment within their communities. On average, agripreneurs who created jobs generated about 1.6 jobs each, while across the full 400-respondent cohort this works out to roughly one job created for every agripreneur.



Five Structural Insights

1. Multi-service rural business hubs

Agripreneurs are not running single-commodity farms, they are operating as rural business hubs. A typical agripreneur combines advisory services, on-farm inputs, mechanical or spraying services, produce aggregation, and their own production enterprises. This diversification is both a risk management strategy and a value capture mechanism, allowing them to earn across multiple stages of the agricultural value chain rather than depending on any single activity or season.

2. Farmer trust drives the economy

The relationship between agripreneurs and the farmers they serve is not transactional in the conventional sense. Knowledge transfer through training, demonstration, and ongoing advice becomes the foundation for sustained economic relationships. Farmers who trust an agripreneur's technical judgment return as paying customers for inputs, services, and aggregation. Trust, built through competence, is the engine of repeat business.

3. Fragmented markets, aggregated demand

Many rural smallholders require the same services but operate too small a scale to attract commercial providers individually. Agripreneurs solve this by aggregating demand, coordinating groups of farmers to make service delivery viable and cost-effective. What is uneconomical to serve at the individual farm level becomes a sustainable business at the community level.

4. Market linkages as income level

Access to markets is not a passive benefit, it is an active income lever. By aggregating produce, agripreneurs negotiate better prices, reduce post-harvest losses, and create reliable supply relationships with buyers. Farmers who previously sold at farm-gate prices gain access to better-paying markets through the agripreneur, while the agripreneur earns a margin that rewards the coordination work they perform.

5. Youth-led businesses anchor rural economies

Rural youth migration is typically framed as an economic inevitability. These agripreneurs represent a different proposition: young people who have built businesses sufficiently viable and connected that staying is the rational choice. Rather than leaving in search of opportunity, they are creating it, and in doing so, anchoring rural economies with enterprises that link farmers to services, inputs, and markets they could not otherwise access.

Agripreneur Testimonials



Sylvia Anyango Odhiambo, young agripreneur from Busia

Before joining EKYAN, Sylvia had completed secondary school but lacked a stable income pathway and was facing financial pressure as a young single mother in a low-income farming household. Through the programme, she gained practical skills in poultry production, regenerative agriculture, business planning, and digital tools, enabling her to transition into agribusiness.

Today, Sylvia co-manages a growing enterprise with a fellow youth partner, investing in poultry production (two flocks of 200 chicks), vegetable farming on one acre, and sunflower cultivation to reduce feed costs. She also produces organic fertilizer and uses her farm as a learning site for others. Through this work, she has reached 188 farmers, created 2 additional jobs, and generated KES 156,175 in transaction value.

Her monthly income has increased by 337%, rising from approximately KES 8,000 to 35,000. With the support of the AI-enabled Ask Nia tool, she is now making more informed decisions on flock management, feed strategies, and enterprise scaling—moving from basic production to more structured, data-driven agribusiness management.

Gladys Napunyu, 24-year-old agripreneur from Samburu

Before joining EKYAN, Gladys was already concerned about hunger, poor nutrition, and climate stress in her pastoralist community, but lacked the practical tools and platforms to effectively mobilize women and youth. Through the programme, she gained access to structured training, projector-based learning tools, and hands-on exposure to regenerative agriculture practices.

She now uses her farm as a demonstration and learning site, growing maize, beans, and vegetables using organic and water-efficient methods. She has mobilized and retained a group of 26 women who are adopting practices such as sack gardens, zai pits, and container gardening to improve household food production and nutrition. Beyond her farm, she also contributes to broader community resilience through her role on the ward climate change planning committee, supporting initiatives like tree planting and water harvesting.

As a result of her engagement, Gladys has worked with 153 farmers, created 1 job, and increased her income by 75%, strengthening both her own livelihood and her role as a local leader in climate-smart agriculture and community nutrition.

Public Schools as Regenerative & Climate Resilience Learning Hubs

Public schools formed the backbone of EKYAN's community learning model, serving as trusted, accessible hubs that connect learners, teachers, agripreneurs, and farming households. Their existing presence within communities made them highly effective entry points for demonstrating agriculture not just as a subject, but as a practical pathway for livelihoods, resilience, and local problem-solving.

At the core of this model were demonstration plots established across 50 Centers of Excellence and 115 Satellite Schools in 2025 (65 CoEs and more than 256 schools across all phases). The Centers of Excellence functioned as primary learning sites, where agripreneurs delivered regular, hands-on training to students, farmers, and community members. These plots enabled participants to engage directly with land preparation, crop management, soil health improvement, water-use practices, and regenerative agriculture techniques—bringing climate-smart agriculture to life in real conditions. Satellite Schools expanded this reach, creating a distributed network

of learning sites that extended practical exposure across diverse local contexts without requiring new infrastructure.

Beyond learning, these school-based sites also played a critical role in building agripreneur capacity. Through establishing and managing demo plots, agripreneurs gained hands-on experience in agronomy, facilitation, and real-time problem-solving. The involvement of county technical staff further strengthened this process by ensuring alignment with local practices and providing practical, field-based expertise.

Overall, schools became locally embedded platforms where young people could engage with agriculture in a more practical and aspirational way, agripreneurs could build skills and confidence, and communities could access visible examples of climate-resilient farming. In doing so, the model effectively linked education, community learning, and agricultural resilience within a shared local ecosystem.



Key Results



In 2025, EKYAN reached 8,008 young learners (50% female) across 200 public schools—comprising 50 Centers of Excellence and 150 Satellite Schools—creating practical learning spaces where students could engage directly with food production, regenerative agriculture, and nutrition. By embedding hands-on agricultural education at a formative stage, the programme addressed early perceptions of farming as unappealing or irrelevant. At baseline, although 87% of schools reported some agricultural activity, engagement was limited and attitudes were largely negative: 47% of learners found agriculture boring, 31% saw it as just another subject, and 18% associated it with poverty or old age.

By the end of the programme, this picture had shifted significantly. Participation became more consistent, with 89.1% of learners engaging in agricultural activities weekly. Understanding improved almost universally (99.8%), and 99.6% of learners reported seeing agriculture as a future opportunity. Schools also contributed 4,591 kilograms of produce to school meals, reinforcing the link between agriculture and nutrition.

Importantly, the impact extended beyond the classroom. Teachers (97%) observed that learners were sharing knowledge at home, influencing parents and triggering wider community-level behavior change. This ripple effect highlights the programme's ability to amplify impact beyond direct beneficiaries.

Sustainability is reflected in both intent and behavior. Schools expressed strong willingness to continue activities independently, supported by ongoing teacher engagement, learner interest, and adoption of practices at household level. Rather than creating dependency, the programme built practical capacity and local ownership.

Ultimately, the most significant outcome is a shift in mindset. With 95.8% of learners now viewing agriculture as a future opportunity and 90.9% of teachers reporting it as a relevant life skill, EKYAN has moved beyond knowledge transfer to reshape how young people perceive agriculture, food systems, and their own economic futures.

Testimonials

Risper Amoit, young learner from Busia

Risper is a 17-year-old Form Three student at St. Bridget Akoret Senior School for the Deaf, a Centre of Excellence in Amukura Central Ward. As a deaf learner, she thrives in hands-on environments and has actively participated in school demo plot activities from the outset, contributing to both the establishment and management of the gardens. Inspired by the success of the school's vegetable production, Risper sought support from an agripreneur to replicate the model at home. During the December holidays, she established vertical (conical) gardens in a small space behind her family's kitchen. With this initiative, R has enabled her household to access a steady supply of fresh vegetables from a very limited area. Her parent expressed pride in her efforts, noting that the garden now consistently feeds the family—something they had not thought possible on such a small plot. As a result, the household is saving approximately KES 2,500 per month on food, demonstrating both the practical and economic impact of her learning.

Brian Omondi, young learner from Kisumu

Before participating in EKYAN, Brian, a Form 3 student at Urudi Secondary School, had limited exposure to practical regenerative agriculture beyond classroom learning. Through the programme, he began receiving weekly agriculture and nutrition training from agripreneurs, combined with hands-on experience at the Centre of Excellence at Urudi Primary School, where he and his peers actively manage a demonstration farm.

Through this practical engagement, Brian has developed a deeper understanding of agriculture as a usable skill rather than just a subject. He has been closely involved in cultivating sweet potatoes using ridging—an approach well suited to Urudi's semi-arid conditions. From this, he has learned how ridging improves moisture retention, simplifies weed management, and supports better crop yields, while also providing additional benefits such as vines for household consumption and livestock feed.

Inspired by this experience, Brian has introduced ridging at home, planting sweet potatoes with his parents and applying climate-smart practices learned through the programme. His story illustrates how EKYAN is enabling learners to translate school-based knowledge into real-world application, strengthening household resilience and positioning agriculture as a viable pathway for nutrition and future opportunity.

Engagement with Farmers – Training and Bundled Services

Farmer engagement under EKYAN was structured around a bundled service delivery model that combined training, demonstration, advisory support, and access to inputs and markets, recognizing that knowledge alone is insufficient to drive sustained adoption. Agripreneurs were positioned as local service providers who could bridge this gap by working directly with farmers through group-based training anchored in demonstration plots. These practical sessions replaced classroom instruction with hands-on learning, allowing farmers to observe and test regenerative and climate-smart practices such as soil moisture conservation, intercropping, and integrated pest management under real field conditions. To strengthen uptake, training was intentionally linked to follow-on services, enabling farmers to access seeds, animal health products, feed, crop protection inputs, and services such as

spraying, aggregation, post-harvest handling, and market linkages depending on local needs and agripreneur business lines. This was reinforced by a responsive advisory layer delivered through farm visits, digital tools, and AI-enabled support such as Ask Nia, which helped farmers address real-time challenges related to pests, diseases, spacing, feeding, and soil management. By integrating learning with practical support and market access, the model reduced the gap between knowledge and implementation, while shifting farmer engagement from one-off training to an ongoing, relationship-based service system. Over time, this approach also strengthened local feedback loops, enabling agripreneurs to adapt their services more closely to farmer needs and emerging production challenges, creating a more responsive and demand-driven agricultural support ecosystem.

Key Results

In 2025, EKYAN reached 55,685 unique farmers, of whom 62% were women, through bundled extension services delivered by agripreneurs embedded within their communities. The results indicate strong and consistent improvements in livelihoods and resilience: 77.7% of farmers reported improved production, 76.7% reported increased income, 99% reported improved climate resilience and coping capacity, and 98.7% noted positive effects on household wellbeing. These outcomes are reinforced by early evidence of behavior change, with nearly 80% of farmers adopting soil and water conservation practices and over 60% growing nutrition-sensitive crops, demonstrating tangible shifts in on-farm practice rather than intent alone. A key feature of the model is its self-reinforcing learning dynamic, where knowledge begins to spread beyond direct programme participants: a large share of trained farmers is already sharing practices informally with others in their communities, indicating that learning is beginning to diffuse organically. This emerging peer-to-peer replication effect suggests that EKYAN is not only delivering extension services but also

building a locally sustained system of knowledge transfer that increases reach, reduces marginal delivery costs over time, and strengthens the long-term scalability of the approach.



Irene Anyango, a 27-year-old farmer from Busia

Irene's journey shows how EKYAN strengthens youth livelihoods through practical, regenerative agriculture solutions. A 27 year old poultry farmer from Busia County, she struggled with high feed costs and early chick mortality, making it hard to keep her 200 bird enterprise profitable.

After working with an EKYAN agripreneur, she improved vaccination practices and early stage chick management, sharply reducing losses. Her biggest breakthrough came from adopting azolla as a low cost, home grown feed supplement, cutting reliance on expensive commercial feeds while maintaining healthy weight gain in her flock.

Today, she runs a more resilient and cost efficient poultry business with higher survival rates and greater confidence. She has also diversified into vegetable farming, applying the same regenerative, practical mindset. What once felt risky and expensive now feels manageable, profitable, and full of possibility for her future as a young farmer.

Strengthening Nutrition Outcomes & Food Systems

Nutrition in EKYAN was embedded across agriculture, schools, and communities to strengthen how food is produced, accessed, and consumed. School demonstration plots integrated nutrient dense crops—African leafy vegetables, legumes, fruits, and vegetables—linking production directly to dietary diversity and school meal programmes. Students applied this learning at home, influencing household food choices, while schools became community entry points for nutrition sensitive agriculture.

Among farmers, nutrition was integrated into regenerative agriculture training, emphasizing that crop diversification improves both resilience and diets. This was critical given low baseline knowledge—over half of agripreneurs had never received nutrition information before the programme. After engagement, strong shifts were observed: widespread adoption of nutrition practices, improved dietary diversity, and increased consumption of vegetables and protein rich foods.

Overall, nutrition became a cross cutting outcome of EKYAN—strengthening agricultural practices, learning environments, and household decision making, and contributing to healthier, more resilient food systems.



Private Sector Engagement

Private sector engagement under EKYAN was designed as a core system function to connect training, production, and enterprise development with real market opportunities and service delivery. Rather than treating private actors as external partners, the programme embedded them within the agripreneur model to strengthen both sides of the agricultural ecosystem: improving farmers’ access to quality inputs, services, and markets, while enabling agripreneurs to operate as commercially viable rural service providers. For agripreneurs, these linkages provide access to input suppliers, buyers, off-takers, aggregation networks, mechanization and advisory services, as well as business relationships that strengthened their credibility and enterprise growth pathways. For farmers, private sector engagement helped close a critical gap between knowledge and implementation by linking training on improved practices with the actual inputs, services, and market channels needed to apply them effectively.

A key element of this approach was the deliberate mapping and engagement of a broad service-provider ecosystem to support agripreneur operations. In 2025, the programme identified and profiled a wide range of service providers spanning input suppliers, agro-dealers, irrigation and mechanization services, livestock and poultry inputs, aggregation and trading actors, processors, millers, and institutional off-takers. These actors covered multiple value chains including maize, rice, sorghum, soybeans, horticulture, African leafy vegetables,

dairy, poultry, and fish, reflecting the diversity of local production systems. This ecosystem approach helped position agripreneurs within a structured network rather than as isolated trainers, enabling them to link production needs to upstream services and connect surplus production to downstream markets.

Geographically, the engagement combined local service providers with regional and national market actors, creating both a day-to-day operational layer and a broader commercial linkage layer. This ensured that agripreneurs could respond to immediate farmer needs while also accessing larger aggregation, processing, and market opportunities over time. In practice, this strengthened the functionality of the agripreneur role by giving them clearer pathways to source inputs, provide services, and facilitate market access depending on farmer demand and value chain dynamics.

Overall, private sector engagement under EKYAN functioned as an enabling market and service infrastructure around the agripreneur model. By structuring and strengthening these relationships, the programme enhanced the economic viability of agripreneur-led service delivery and improved the practicality of farmer adoption. This helped move the model beyond training and extension into a more integrated system where learning, services, and markets are connected, reinforcing sustainability and creating stronger foundations for local agricultural economies.

Engagement dimension	What was covered
Provider categories	Input retail and distribution, livestock/poultry/fish supply, irrigation, mechanization, aggregation, trading, processing, milling, off-taking, institutional demand
Value chains represented	Horticulture, rice, ALVs, dairy, fish, poultry, beans, greengrams, finger millet, groundnuts, maize, sorghum, soybeans, peas
Geographic spread	Kisumu, Busia, Samburu and wider regional and national market centres including Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret, Kakamega, Bungoma, Meru, Siaya, Chuka, Marimanti, Naivasha, Nyahururu and Bondo
Programme relevance	Strengthened the linkage base through which agripreneurs could connect farmers, schools and producer groups to services and markets

Building Bankability & Creditworthiness of Agripreneurs

EKYAN's private sector and financial ecosystem engagement has played a catalytic role in shifting agripreneurs from informal actors to visible, investable rural enterprises. A key development has been the use of Kuza OneNetwork to digitally capture agripreneurs' transactions, farmer engagements, services delivered, and income streams, effectively creating structured business histories where none previously existed. This has begun to change how financial institutions and capital providers assess risk, moving from reliance on collateral-based lending toward performance-based credit assessment. Partners such as Sevi, 4G Capital, Pepea Capital, and others are increasingly exploring the use of these digital records to evaluate creditworthiness based on business activity, consistency, and market linkages. As a result, agripreneurs are gradually gaining access to working capital for inputs and enterprise expansion, with early examples of input financing arrangements already emerging through ecosystem partnerships, where agripreneurs have accessed credit limits to procure agricultural inputs through structured supplier relationships. At the same time, EKYAN has strengthened the broader service provider ecosystem by identifying and linking agripreneurs to a network of input suppliers,

technical service providers, aggregators, processors, and buyers across key agricultural value chains. This has not only improved farmers' access to inputs and markets but has also enabled agripreneurs to anchor their own enterprises in real commercial demand, including agrovet retail, poultry production, aggregation, and post-harvest services. Together, these shifts point to an emerging rural enterprise system where digital visibility, service provider linkages, and financial access reinforce each other, gradually laying the foundation for a more inclusive and performance-based rural credit and agribusiness ecosystem.



Cross-Sectoral Collaboration with County Governments

EKYAN functioned as an integrated county-level platform that brought together agriculture, education, health and nutrition, youth inclusion, social development, and cooperative development into a single, coordinated implementation framework. Rather than operating as a standalone intervention, the programme was embedded within existing county systems, reflecting the reality that rural development challenges are interconnected and require cross-sector responses. Each county department contributed a distinct but complementary role that strengthened both delivery and sustainability. The agriculture departments provided technical grounding, extension support, and validation of climate-smart and regenerative

practices, ensuring field credibility and alignment with county priorities. The education departments enabled school participation by facilitating access to Centres of Excellence and satellite schools, mobilizing teachers and institutional structures that made large-scale school-based learning possible. Health and nutrition departments reinforced the link between agriculture and dietary outcomes, helping production systems as pathways to improved household nutrition and food diversity. Youth, gender, and PWD structures supported mobilization and inclusion, ensuring meaningful participation of young people, women, and persons with disabilities. Livelihoods and social development teams strengthened community entry and group

mobilization, connecting the programme to existing social structures such as women's groups and community organizations. Cooperative development departments supported the market-facing dimension by linking farmers and Agripreneurs to aggregation systems, producer organization, and more structured market participation. Together, these contributions created a multi-layered implementation environment where technical delivery, institutional access,

inclusion, nutrition outcomes, and market systems were reinforced through coordinated county action. This cross-sector collaboration not only improved programme effectiveness but also increased the likelihood of sustainability, as activities were aligned with county priorities and embedded within existing government structures that can continue supporting them beyond the programme period.

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 included training, mentorship sessions, provision of market linkages and financial inclusion/ inclusive finance as well as access to starter kits.

Youth Training

The EKYAN programme delivered an integrated youth training model combining business and social skills, technical agribusiness training, and business coaching to build both entrepreneurial capability and practical agricultural competence. Using a phased approach, youth first received foundational training in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, leadership, and employability through the SNV Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship curriculum, followed by hands-on technical training across key agricultural value chains such as poultry, crops, aquaculture, African leafy vegetables, apiculture, dairy, and agro-processing. These sessions were delivered in collaboration with county technical officers and lead farmers to ensure strong linkage between theory and real-world practice.

The training was further strengthened through structured business coaching, where youth developed business model canvases, business plans, and pitch decks, enabling them to translate skills and technical knowledge into viable agribusiness enterprises. Across all components, the programme reached thousands of young people, including young women, persons with disabilities, and young mothers, with strong emphasis on inclusion and practical application.

Overall, the training model successfully bridged the gap between learning and enterprise creation by equipping youth with a full pathway—from mindset and skills development to technical agribusiness capability, to structured business planning and investment readiness, positioning them to actively participate in and benefit from local agricultural value chains.



Mentorship Sessions

Mentorship sessions were conducted across youth groups to strengthen enterprise sustainability and deepen the application of skills gained through the YEE curriculum. A key focus was on improving market linkages and supporting the use of the Chomoka platform to digitize and manage Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), enhancing transparency, savings discipline, and financial inclusion.

The Training of Trainers (ToTs) provided continuous coaching and technical backstopping, regularly engaging with groups to review agribusiness performance, identify operational gaps, and offer practical guidance on production, management, and value chain development. This included support in improving farming practices, strengthening group enterprises, and identifying new market

opportunities and potential off takers to enhance income generation and sustainability.

Mentorship sessions also reinforced broader thematic areas such as nutrition-sensitive agriculture, climate-smart practices, and financial literacy, while supporting groups to strengthen record-keeping, governance, and cohesion. Across counties, the approach combined structured learning with on-site follow-up, ensuring that mentorship remained responsive to the evolving needs of youth enterprises.

Overall, the mentorship component played a critical role in bridging training and implementation, helping youth groups transition from learning to more structured, market-oriented, and sustainable agribusiness operations.

Market Linkages

To strengthen market linkages for youth enterprises, EKYAN supported participation in external market events and organized dedicated matchmaking forums where youth engaged directly with buyers, financial institutions, input suppliers, government

agencies, and private sector actors. Across locations, youth showcased and sold products—poultry, eggs, fish, honey, African leafy vegetables, and value added foods—while receiving guidance on standards, taxation, financing, and enterprise formalization.

Each forum had a distinct focus: some emphasized structured value chain actors, others financial inclusion and digital savings tools, and other livestock and honey markets, resulting in both formal and informal buyer relationships. Follow up efforts worked to strengthen these connections, responding to youth reports of inconsistent market access by facilitating more predictable off take arrangements, including agreements on quality, quantities, and delivery timelines.

Overall, EKYAN’s market linkage work is evolving from informal and semi formal interactions toward more structured relationships where aggregation and processing systems exist. Youth are increasingly accessing diverse channel cooperatives, institutional buyers, physical markets, and digital platforms—indicating growing commercialization of their enterprises.



Financial Inclusion/ Inclusive Finance

The project piloted the digitization of youth savings by introducing the Chomoka platform as an extension of earlier VSLA strengthening efforts. A local trainer built the capacity of Trainers of Trainees (ToTs) through blended in person and virtual sessions, enabling them to support youth groups in shifting from manual to digital record keeping, including onboarding, contribution tracking, and loan management.

ToTs and the Chomoka trainer then introduced the platform to youth groups, with adoption increasing as usability improvements were made. Despite early technical constraints, integration of Chomoka

into ongoing VSLA sessions sustained momentum. Multiple youth groups are now actively using digital savings tools, reporting more efficient record recordkeeping, stronger transparency, and real time accountability.

Selected groups were also linked to financial institutions and youth enterprise officers, helping them explore formal loan products and financial pathways. Overall, the pilot shows strong potential for scaling digital VSLAs to improve financial management, trust, and enterprise readiness among youth groups.

Access To Starter Kits

Access to starter kits was strengthened through a structured and phased selection process designed to support youth groups in transitioning from training into practical agribusiness implementation. In the reporting period, a comprehensive starter kit guideline was developed, including eligibility criteria, application tools, and approval procedures, and was subsequently used to guide Trainers of Trainees in supporting groups through the application process. Across successive calls for applications, youth groups were preselected based on agreed criteria, and applications were jointly reviewed by technical

and project teams to ensure transparency and alignment with programme objectives. Approved groups progressed to procurement and received in-kind starter kits to support enterprise initiation and expansion across priority value chains. Additional rounds were introduced to accommodate newly trained cohorts, ensuring continued inclusion and uptake. Overall, the process established a clear pathway from training to enterprise activation, with a cumulative set of approved starter kits supporting youth-led agribusiness start-up and scaling.

Example: Soya value chain

Seven (7) groups received starter kits under the soya value chain. The items provided focused on value addition and processing, helping youth move beyond primary production. Among the equipment distributed were soya oil extraction machines, soya grinding machines, pelletizers, baking equipment and accessories.



Representatives of Nasira group receiving the soya feed pelletizer



Alupe B Youth group representatives received part of the starter kit items

Regenerative Agriculture

Regenerative agriculture was a core technical focus of EKYAN, embedded across training and demonstrations to strengthen climate resilience, productivity, and sustainability in youth led farming systems. In ASAL areas like Samburu, youth learned climate smart practices such as sunken beds, mulching, organic manure use, fast maturing seed varieties, and water efficient systems like vertical and conical gardens—enabling vegetable production even in low water environments.

Livestock value chains integrated regenerative principles through fodder conservation, improved breeds, and better herd management to reduce overgrazing while maintaining income. Across

regions, ToTs reinforced circular production systems including composting, manure use, and by products like black soldier fly and azolla for poultry and fish feed. Innovations such as solar powered irrigation and storage further improved resource efficiency.

Emerging results show strong benefits: most farmers report improved soil fertility, higher yields, and lower input costs, demonstrating that regenerative practices are driving both ecological restoration and better economic performance. Overall, EKYAN is enabling a shift toward more efficient, lower input, climate resilient farming systems that strengthen youth livelihoods.

Key Results

By the end of 2025, **5,570 out-of-school and unemployed young people** including persons living with disabilities and young mothers, have been trained and provided with support services as described enabling them to set up an agribusiness

or find employment in the agriculture sector. More than 80% of young people have started their own agribusiness after being part of the training and 10% found a job in agriculture. They have increased their income by 21% on average as of December 2025.



Testimonials

In Busia Town, Linet Akinyi (27), a young mother and chairperson of the Ujamaa Women Youth Group, has seen firsthand how agriculture can become a reliable source of income for young women. Before joining EKYAN, the group relied on informal activities such as a car wash business, which generated unpredictable and inconsistent earnings. “We would work, but you can’t really plan with that kind of income,” she explains.

Their transition began through engagement with EKYAN and participation in a Village Savings and Lending Association (VSLA), which enabled members to save regularly and access small loans. Using these funds, the group strengthened their vegetable farming, adopting more structured approaches to planning, crop management, and production cycles. Today, they harvest every two weeks, earning approximately KES 10,000 per harvest—up to KES 40,000 per month—making it their most consistent income stream.

Building on this, the group invested in poultry farming as a complementary enterprise. The integration of these activities has been key: poultry waste is used as manure to improve soil fertility and reduce input costs, while vegetable sales provide regular cash flow and poultry generates larger, periodic returns. For example, a single poultry cycle during the December season yielded around KES 50,000 in profit, which was reinvested into the business.

This diversified model has brought greater stability and resilience. With more predictable income, the group can plan, save, and reinvest, reducing reliance on a single livelihood source. Beyond increased earnings, the shift is also mindset-driven—moving from short-term survival to longer-term business thinking.

Linet’s experience reflects a broader change: with the right skills, financial tools, and support systems, agriculture can evolve from an uncertain activity into a structured, profitable, and sustainable enterprise that creates lasting opportunities for young people.

“Before, we could not depend on our income, but now we harvest regularly and earn consistently. It has brought stability to our homes and confidence in what we do.” — Linet Akinyi



Challenges, Lessons Learned, Best Practices

Challenges

Access to finance and enterprise growth constraints

Limited access to affordable and youth-friendly finance remains a major bottleneck. Agripreneurs and farmer groups face high collateral requirements, low financial literacy, and weak linkages to formal financial institutions.

Input access as a key adoption barrier

Farmer willingness to adopt improved practices is increasingly constrained not by awareness, but by unreliable access to quality inputs at the right time, quantity, and price. Weak last-mile distribution systems hinder uptake.

Market access and value chain weaknesses

Unstable markets, weak buyer relationships, and price volatility continue to limit agripreneur profitability. Early-stage aggregation models exist but remain underdeveloped, resulting in post-harvest losses and inconsistent income streams.

Climate variability and adoption of regenerative practices

Erratic weather patterns, water scarcity, and poor soil conditions affect productivity. Knowledge gaps, risk perception, and limited incentives need to be addressed to accelerate adoption of climate-smart and regenerative practices.

Uneven learning curves

Agripreneurs demonstrate varied levels of readiness, particularly in business management, digital tools, and farmer engagement. Customized training models are crucial.

Gender and inclusion barriers

Young women face structural constraints including land access, limited decision-making power, and under-recognition of their roles in agriculture. Youth with disabilities (YwDs) face heightened inclusion barriers.

Operational constraints in school-based delivery

School calendar disruptions, resource limitations, and environmental challenges (water, soil quality) affect the consistency and sustainability of demo plot implementation.

Lessons

Demo farms and CoEs are high-impact learning platforms

Well-managed demo farms function as powerful, experiential learning hubs that integrate youth, farmers, schools, and private sector actors. They accelerate skills acquisition, trust-building, and adoption of innovations.

Hands-on and continuous learning drives retention and capability

Practical engagement combined with modular, continuous learning models is far more effective than one-off training—especially for business and value chain development.

Post-training support determines success

The transition from training to enterprise success depends heavily on structured follow-up, including mentorship, coaching, market linkage support, and incubation.

Market access is central to sustainability

Clear and reliable market pathways—through aggregation, off-taker relationships, and digital platforms—are essential for sustaining production gains and improving incomes.

Input Access is the missing link between knowledge and action

Even well-trained farmers cannot act without timely access to inputs. Agripreneur-led distribution systems are critical to closing this gap.

Digital tools and AI enhance scale and efficiency

Digital platforms improve advisory delivery, record-keeping, and market coordination. Expanding AI-enabled advisory across value chains can significantly increase reach and consistency.

Nutrition integration strengthens household resilience

Embedding nutrition into crop choices, training, and school feeding reinforces both agricultural and health outcomes, improving food security at household level.

Youth thrive as economic actors

Positioning agripreneurs as service providers—trainers, input suppliers, aggregators—creates stronger identity, income opportunities, and long-term engagement.

Gender-responsive and inclusive design is essential

Tailored approaches are necessary to address systemic barriers facing young women and YwDs, ensuring equitable participation and benefit.

Best Practices

Establish formal incubation and mentorship systems

Embed post-training incubation with advanced business coaching, peer learning, and market linkage facilitation as a core programme component.

Strengthen last-mile service delivery through agripreneurs

Position agripreneurs as local service hubs delivering bundled solutions: inputs, advisory, aggregation, and market access.

Integrate digital and climate-smart solutions into one offering

Bundle digital advisory, AI tools, and regenerative agriculture practices into farmer-friendly, climate-smart service packages.

Build strong and early strategic partnerships

Engage public and private partners from programme inception across training, finance, and market systems—including co-financing models.

Develop youth-centered financial pathways

Pilot tailored financial solutions and create graduation pathways from informal savings groups to formal finance.

Design for inclusion and gender equity

Implement targeted strategies addressing land access, leadership opportunities, accessible training formats, and tailored support for women and YwDs.

Strengthen market systems and value addition

Invest in aggregation models, buyer relationships, contract farming, and various value addition models beyond sole production.

Contextualize delivery models

Adapt interventions to county-specific realities (e.g., literacy levels, agro-ecological conditions, market maturity) rather than applying a uniform approach.

07

BeGreen

BeGreen Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Senegal

BeGreen Africa is an innovative programme transforming economic development through youth-led green entrepreneurship. BeGreen Africa supports economic development through youth-led green entrepreneurship. The 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.

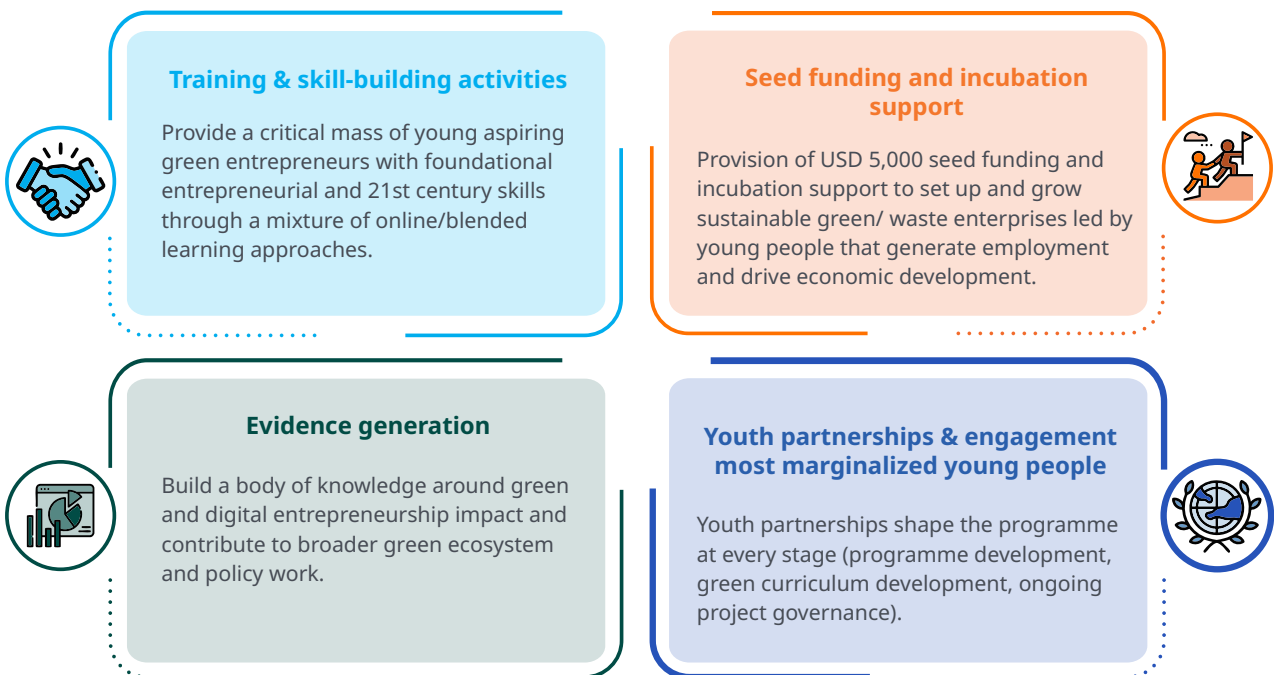
The first iteration of BeGreen was implemented by UNICEF/ GenU and the Tony Elumelu Foundation with support from the IKEA Foundation and the Government of the Netherlands across four countries. In Kenya, the programme focused on waste management and the circular economy, while in Nigeria, South Africa, and Senegal, entrepreneurs across all green sectors were supported. As second iteration supported by the governments of the Netherlands and Canada is being implemented in partnership with the Tony Elumelu Foundation and Umuzi based on the learnings from the first one

programme cycle.

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, business plan development and feedback, design sprints, pitching preparation, as well as an initial seed capital investment of USD 5,000 per entrepreneur, mentorship opportunities, as well as access to professional networks and other financing options.

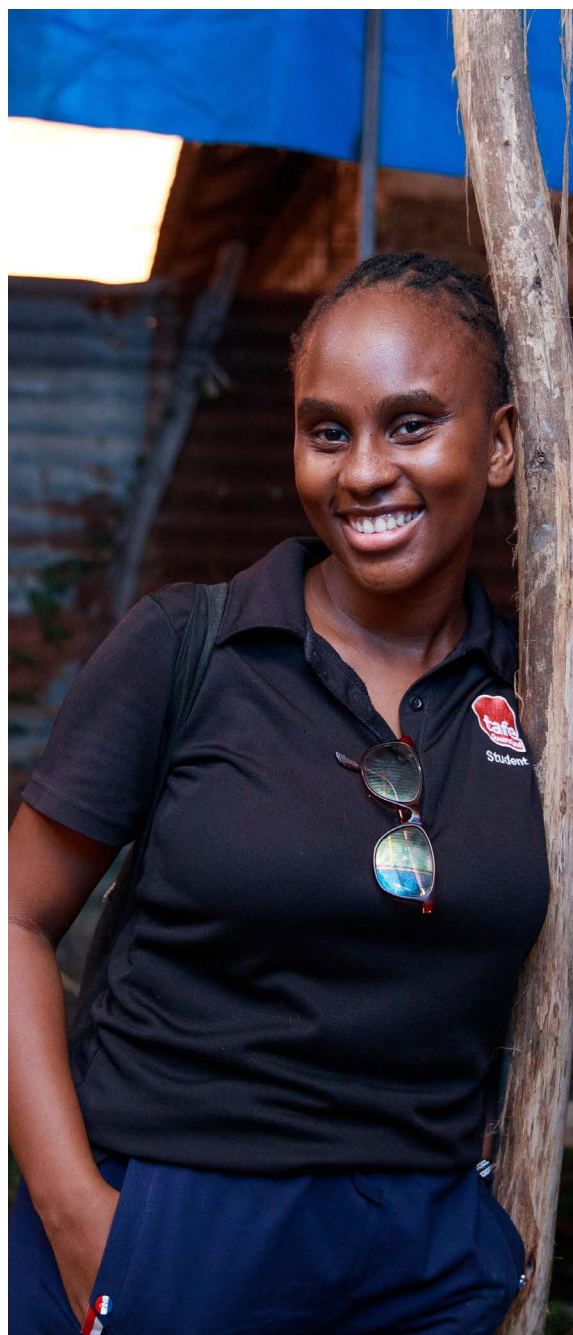
BeGreen Africa comprises a gender-responsiveness training curriculum and emphasizes results for the most disadvantaged young people, especially young women, to ensure that the programme is inclusive and that it addresses gender, disability, and social inequality.

The BeGreen methodology builds on the following four pillars:



Summary of Results for Both BeGreen Iterations³

- **Application drive:** More than **13,000 youth people across the four countries (Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Senegal) submitted applications** to join the BeGreen.
- **9,000+ young people successfully completed green training opportunities.**
- More than **1,500 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-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. 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. An online pitching event was held as part of the second BeGreen iteration involving expert judges from private sector, universities and also government partners such as from the government of the Netherlands. **More than 1,500 green entrepreneurs pitched their business/ idea in-person or virtual via a pitching video.**
- A total of **590 green entrepreneurs** across Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Senegal across both programme phases receive \$5,000 each in seed funding. A comprehensive audit process of the entrepreneurs selected to receive seed funding was carried out and entrepreneurs who've successfully passed due diligence received seed funding transfer on their business account. 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. All entrepreneurs received seed funding in two tranches as part of the second iteration.



3. An independent external evaluation is ongoing.

- **BeGreen entrepreneurs who received seed funding participated in a comprehensive incubation programme** including mentorship. Best performing enterprises in Kenya (in terms of revenue and job creation) also received acceleration funds in 2025.
- BeGreen has also provided **skilling and micro-gig opportunities to a larger number of young people in Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa.** More than 4,000 young people completed



comprehensive training to be eligible to support verification and monitoring visits. Thereof, more than 150 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 1.0 impact:** Monitoring results show encouraging results approximately half a year past seed funding disbursement⁴:
 - Job creation: Average additional jobs created per entrepreneur exceed the target of 2.6 jobs created per entrepreneur per year across all countries with **5.8 additional jobs created** per entrepreneur on average in Kenya, 5 in South Africa, 7.2 in Senegal and even higher in Nigeria. An assessment by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, confirmed significant livelihood gains, with 74 Kenyan enterprises that were assessed creating 700 jobs.
 - Revenue generation: **Average annual run rates surpass the average \$10,000 revenue target** in all countries with \$11,316 in Kenya, \$10,356 in Nigeria, and even higher rates in South Africa and Senegal.
 - Environmental impact: Although BeGreen did not set explicit environmental or climate indicators, participating enterprises in Kenya collectively reported reducing, recycling, or managing **30 million kgs of waste** to date (39% plastics, 60% organic waste and other waste).

After having gone through a two-phased BeGreen training programme (business management and in-depth green entrepreneurship programme), business plan development and improvement based on customized feedback, sprint training and pitching events, due diligence and disbursement of seed funding, the following activities were carried out in 2025 as part of the first BeGreen iteration:

4. Monitoring data is primarily self-reported by participating youth and enterprises, complemented by verification exercises carried out in selected cases. To deepen evidence on outcomes, an external evaluation is ongoing, scheduled for completion 12–18 months after seed funding disbursement. This evaluation will assess programme impact, focusing on long-term job creation and revenue generation.

Targeted Incubation Support

Incubation support was milestone-based and sector-specific (e.g., prototyping, customer validation, market linkages). The support structure included training, networking mixers, co-working space, access to regulators, and partnerships with research institutions. Training covered 11 key areas such as digital marketing, tax compliance, patenting, and climate opportunities. Six Communities of Practice

Mentorship

Entrepreneurs collaborated with their mentors in six keyways. First, in financial management and fundraising, mentors supported bookkeeping, budgeting, fundraising skills, investor pitching, and provided tools for better financial tracking. Second, in marketing and branding, they guided entrepreneurs on sales strategies, social media use, website development, and maintaining consistent brand visibility. Third, through networking and partnerships, mentors connected entrepreneurs to investors, customers, institutions, and government agencies, while also enabling peer learning,

Learning assessment in collaboration with the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS)

In terms of the creation of a strong body of evidence, we have collaborated with the Kenya National Statistics Bureau who developed an external in-depth learning and assessment report, which confirms that BeGreen Africa is delivering meaningful livelihood gains for young people entering the green economy. KNBS evaluated 74 enterprises that collectively created 700 jobs in Kenya, and monitoring shows that an average of 5.8 jobs per business were added during the BeGreen programme.

KNBS is Kenya's principal government agency responsible for the collection, analysis and dissemination of official statistics, established under the Statistics Act of 2006 and mandated to coordinate the national statistical system. As the custodian of official statistics, KNBS develops national sampling frames, conducts large scale surveys and censuses. UNICEF Kenya works closely with KNBS on data and evidence for children and young people. Due to this mandate and technical capacity, KNBS plays a key role in ensuring the credibility and reliability of

were established across waste management value chains, identifying challenges (e.g., BSF construction costs, briquette equipment barriers, WASH water scarcity) and proposing collective solutions. Pre/post assessments showed statistically significant knowledge gains across all sessions, with the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) training yielding the highest improvement.

benchmarking, and collaborations. Fourth, in business strategy and operations, entrepreneurs refined action plans, improved business processes, navigated policies and compliance, and developed scaling strategies. Fifth, in product development and technology, mentors supported prototyping, digitization, and innovative tools for record-keeping and production efficiency. Finally, in personal growth and leadership, mentorship-built confidence, resilience, problem-solving, and accountability, particularly empowering female entrepreneurs.

data used for national planning and development monitoring and routinely collaborates with government institutions and development partners. UNICEF collaborated with KNBS for this learning assessment due to the Bureau's strong credibility as Kenya's official national statistics agency and its established role in supporting government evidence generation for policy and advocacy.



Marginalization

Drawing on data and insights from the learning work, youth marginalization was measured using a composite indicator that captured both structural and experiential exclusion. Scenario analyses provided a layered view of how marginalization shifts when factors such as education, housing, minority status, limited language fluency (Swahili vs. local

languages), disability, safety, access to amenities, and healthcare are considered. Results highlight both the persistence and compounding nature of these barriers. Across scenarios, marginalization ranged from 78.5% of all participants (74.3% of funded youth) to 88.6% of all participants (82.4% of funded youth who dropped out before receiving seed funding).

Second BeGreen iteration

The programme began with wide scale recruitment and skills based assessments, after which selected participants entered foundational training in green entrepreneurship. Those who advanced then deepened their sector knowledge and developed their ventures through practical exercises, design thinking, and pitch preparation. A live pitch event followed, where entrepreneurs presented to judges and the top performers progressed to an incubation phase. In this final stage, participants received advanced training in leadership, digital marketing, AI, and business growth, and they developed full business plans that were reviewed for seed funding eligibility. 100 entrepreneurs were selected for seed funding.

Based on learnings from the successful first programme iteration, the second iteration of the BeGreen Africa programme was refined to be even more agile, targeted, and impact driven. It featured a shorter programme cycle and a more customized approach, with separate tracks for early-stage and established businesses, as well as tailored learning blocks aligned to specific green sub-sectors. The programme introduced milestone-based micro-grants and flexible funding to better support innovation and prototyping, alongside strengthened gender inclusion efforts. Additionally, AI was integrated as part of the updated training curriculum.



Mary Nyambura Njeri, Founder of Eco Charge Ltd

Mary Nyambura is the founder of Eco Charge Ltd, a women-led clean energy company in Kenya that produces sustainable biomass briquettes as an alternative to coal and firewood, helping to reduce deforestation and carbon emissions. Through Eco Charge Ltd, Mary is driving economic empowerment in her community by creating green jobs, particularly for women. The company currently employs 40 people, 70% of whom are women, and recycles 200 tonnes of waste every month.

Watch Mary's story [here](#).

Faith Kang'utu, Sea Ventures

Sea Ventures is a blue economy startup based in Mombasa, Kenya, specializing in upcycling fish waste into high-quality, organic animal feeds and fertilizers. Through our circular economy model, Sea Ventures work with local fisherfolk to collect and process fish by products into sustainable feeds for poultry, fish, pigs, and pets. Our mission is to reduce waste, provide affordable feed solutions, and empower coastal communities, particularly women and youth.

The company was able to boost the production from 3 tonnes to more than 10 tonnes after investments through seed funding and through the purchase of new machinery they are pushing the tonnage to 30 to 60 tonnes a month. Sea Ventures currently employes 7 staff members. Watch Faith's story [here](#).



Challenges, Lessons Learned, Best Practices

Challenges

Balancing programme pacing and participant capacity

While shorter, more intensive cycles improved efficiency and less dropouts, some participants would have required more time to complete training.

Customization at scale

Delivering highly tailored learning pathways across multiple green sub-sectors and business stages (ideation, early-stage, growth) required significant coordination and resources.

Early-stage business support gaps

Entrepreneurs in the ideation phase continued to face barriers in accessing prototyping resources and achieving proof of concept, despite the introduction of milestone-based micro-grants.

Strong female participation with persistent structural barriers

The second iteration saw higher participation from women than men, reflecting the success of gender-affirmative measures and wraparound services. However, structural and socio-economic barriers continue to affect sustained engagement and equitable access to opportunities.

Platform fragmentation and user experience

The use of multiple digital platforms led to inefficiencies and participant fatigue, highlighting the need for more integrated, user-friendly systems.

External disruptions

Contextual factors such as extreme weather events (e.g., flooding in Kenya) affected timelines and programme delivery.



Lessons Learned

Targeted and flexible programme design is critical

Segmenting participants by business stage and sub-sector, combined with customized targets and learning pathways, significantly improves relevance, engagement, and outcomes.

Structured mentorship enhances impact

A formalized mentorship framework—with consistent, accountable engagement—strengthens the translation of learning into tangible business growth.

Practical, human-centered learning drives results

Emphasizing human-centered design, foundational skills, and real-world application leads to stronger business models, especially for early-stage entrepreneurs.

Milestone-based funding is effective

Linking micro-grants to clear business milestones (e.g., prototyping) improves accountability, progress tracking, and resource utilization.

Clear communication and streamlined systems matter

Transparent timelines, simplified administrative processes, and consolidated digital platforms are essential for maintaining trust and reducing participant burden.

Continuous feedback enables adaptation

Regular feedback loops and strengthened impact measurement systems allow for real-time programme improvements and more responsive delivery.

Gender inclusion requires sustained, systemic approaches

While higher female participation was achieved, continued efforts are needed to address structural barriers and ensure long-term engagement, retention, and equitable outcomes.

Best Practices

Customized, stage-based incubation

Differentiated support tracks (ideation, early-stage, growth) combined with sector-specific learning blocks ensure relevance and maximize impact.

Integrated mentorship and peer learning

Combining one-on-one mentorship, peer-to-peer exchanges, and communities of practice fosters collaboration, accountability, and sustained learning.

Blended and experiential learning approaches

In-person bootcamps, learning visits, and hands-on workshops complement digital tools and enhance knowledge retention and application.

AI-enabled programme delivery

Leveraging AI for training, business planning, and running of the programme such as the selection processes while ensuring QA carried out by the project team, improves efficiency, decision-making, and scalability.

Ecosystem and partnership approach

Strong collaboration with public, private, and youth stakeholders—alongside policy engagement—enhances programme sustainability and systemic impact.

Gender-responsive programming

Targeted outreach, wraparound support services, and inclusive programme design have proven effective in increasing women's participation.



08

Youth Agency Marketplace (Yoma)

Executive Summary

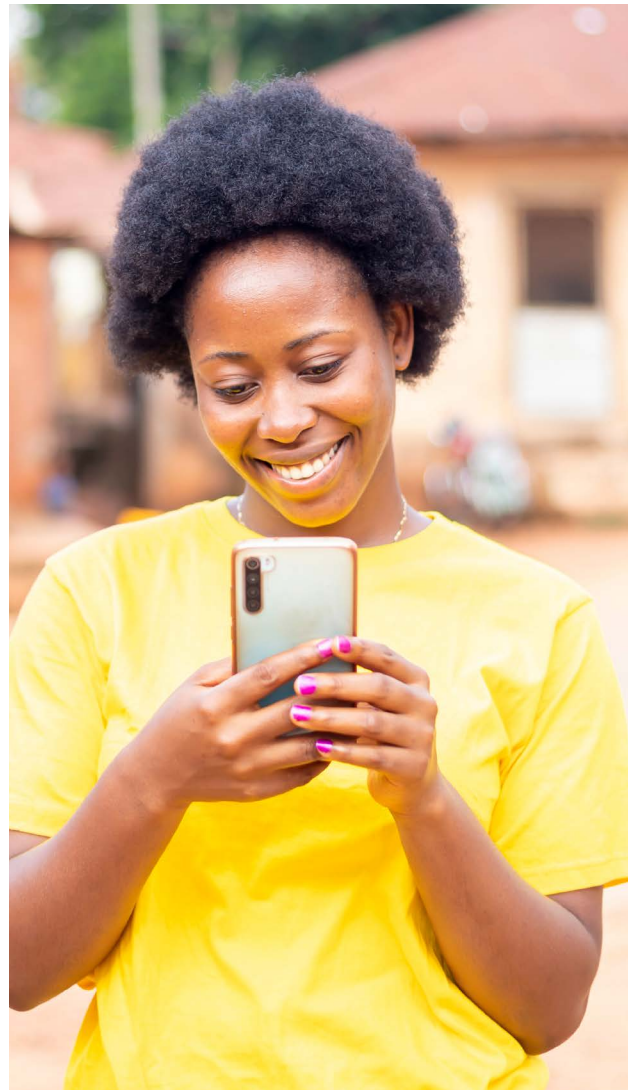
Since its establishment in 2020, Yoma has been dedicated to empowering and transforming the lives of young people aged 16-24 worldwide. The platform actively engages youth in social impact tasks and provides learning-to-earning opportunities. As youth engage in these opportunities, their activities are 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 March 2025, 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 50 African countries and has facilitated access to new opportunities for 483,000 individuals. Additionally, more than 31,000 certificates have been verified, validating job-relevant skills and enhancing employability.

Between January and March 2025, activities were focused primarily on foundational support to country offices to enable the rollout and operationalization of Yoma. This included technical guidance and coordination with country teams to align implementation approaches, onboard priority partners, and preparation for platform deployment. Support was also provided to ensure that Yoma was embedded within country-level planning processes, including integration into annual workplans and alignment with broader Youth Force and national priorities.

In parallel, the period was used to strengthen the strategic and operational groundwork required for scale. This involved working closely with country offices to refine delivery models, clarify roles and responsibilities, and identify priority pathways for

youth engagement across learning, earning, and impact opportunities. While direct activity delivery was limited during this quarter, these efforts contributed to sustained platform growth, reflected in cumulative results as of the end of December 2025, including 1 million youth registrations, 587,000+ YoID issuance, and 342,000+ verifiable credentials earned. These results demonstrate that the initial focus on systems, partnerships, and country readiness played a key role in enabling scale and uptake of Yoma across the ecosystem.



Technology Developments

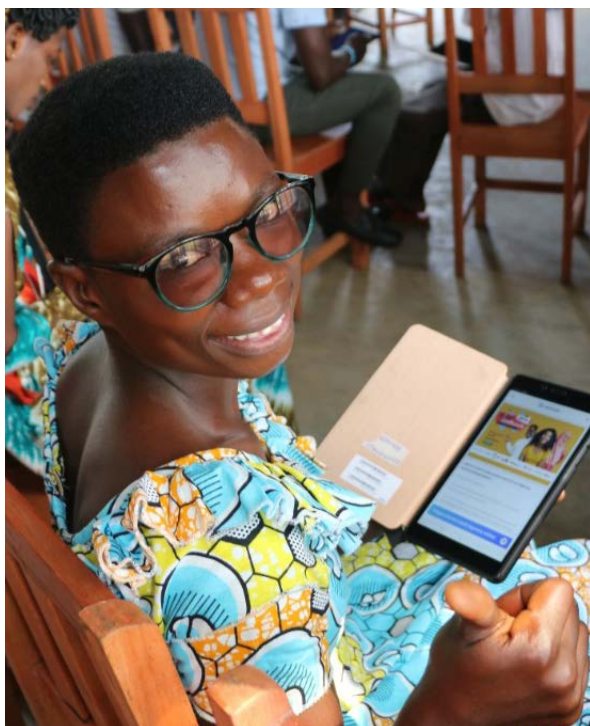
Yoma has undergone several platform upgrades, culminating in the release of Version 3 (V3) in April 2024. This version introduced a redesigned homepage that more clearly presented Yoma’s core value proposition, alongside featured partner solutions and pathways for youth engagement. A key enhancement was the integration of the Yoma ID (YoID) and a digital passport, enabling youth to securely store and manage their credentials using blockchain technology. The development process included both in-person and virtual user testing, with feedback systematically incorporated to improve usability and overall experience.

During the January to March 2025 reporting period, efforts focused on strengthening integrations and preparing the platform for scale. Yoma continued to support Single Sign-On (SSO) with partners such as atingi and Goodwall, while advancing discussions on deeper Self-Sovereign Identity (SSI) integration. In particular, there was significant progress in engagement with FunDoo, with advanced discussions on integration to enable youth to access Yoma services via conversational interfaces, including the potential to create YoIDs, access opportunities, and earn verifiable credentials directly through chat on [SA Youth](#), [U-Report](#), and [Fundoo](#).

Purpose

Youth Agency Marketplace (Yoma) catalyzes young people’s creativity and talents to address systemic challenges facing social sectors in Africa and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). 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), reduce 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 ‘work-based learning’ opportunities (impact tasks), which are rewarded with tokens and complemented with skilling, CV building, improving 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

	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
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			
Indicator: Percentage of young people reporting increased level of confidence (currently & about the future) Baseline: Planned Target Y1: Target Y2: 80	80	N/A	Accenture review exercise
Output 1.1 Develop and implement YOMA together and green pathway and engage youth through the ecosystem			
Indicator 1.1.1: Green YOMA proof of concept pilots established with youth Baseline: 0 Planned Target Y1: 1 Target Y2: 3	3	N/A	Report of the Water Monitoring Project in South Africa Wells for Zoe Concept Note
Indicator 1.1.2: Youth incentivization for climate action piloted in target countries Baseline: 0 Planned Target Y1: 1 Target Y2: 3	3	N/A	Report of the Water Monitoring Project in South Africa Report on Donate Water Project in Nigeria
Indicator 1.1.3: Revolving impact fund conceptualized Baseline: 0 Planned Target Y1: 1 Target Y2: 3	3	The Yoma team is collaborating with the Liechtenstein banking association, IXO and the University of Liechtenstein 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 The Yoma Fund (First Internal Draft)

	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
Indicator 1.1.4: Learning and impact certificates distributed Baseline: 0 Planned Target Y1: 20,000 Target Y2: 60,000	84,700 learning and impact certificates distributed	N/A	YOMA dashboard
Output 1.2: Develop and implement digital livelihoods pathway			
Indicator 1.2.1: Youth trained in digital skills Baseline: 0 Planned Target Y1: 466 Target Y2: 624	1,306 youth trained in digital skills	N/A	Umuzi dashboard
Indicator 1.2.1: # Alumni facilitators employed to deliver training Baseline: 0 Planned Target Y1: 1 Target Y2: 3	Umuzi has offered 8 young people employment opportunities after completing their completing learning programmes with the ACN & Yoma.	N/A	Umuzi report
Output 1.3: Marketplace for youth to engage with impact opportunities			
Indicator 1.3.1: # youth upskilled through volunteer programs in South Africa and Nigeria Baseline: 0 Planned Target Y1: 7,000 Target Y2: 22,000	20,400	N/A	COs reports
Output 1.4: Develop first version of the impact portal, AI matching algorithm, low resource solution and impact verification/ evaluation tools			

	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
<p>Indicator 1.4.1: Matching algorithm developed, functional and live on YOMA platform Baseline: 0 Planned Target Y1: 1 Target Y2: 1</p>	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>	<p>Report</p>
<p>Indicator 1.4.2: Amount of token awarded in USD Baseline: 0 Planned Target Y1: 250,000 Target Y2: 400,000</p>	284,662 USD	<p>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.</p>	Zlto reports
Output 1.5: New YOMA management entity and improved overall experience on the YOMA platform			
<p>Indicator 1.5.1: YOMA management team operational Baseline: N/A Planned Target Y1: - Target Y2: -</p>	Management Team operational	N/A	Report
Output 1.6: Prepare and implement the operational research			

	Achieved Indicator Targets	Reasons for Variance with Planned Target (if any)	Source of Verification
<p>Indicator 1.2.1: % learnings of operational research contributing to YOMA improvement Baseline: 0 Planned Target Y1: 30% Target Y2: 80%</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<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"> • Content & 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. • 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. • 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. • Rewards (2.9/5): The rewards system, particularly Zlto, excites users, but many feel the available rewards do not fully meet their immediate needs. • Organization Branding (3.8/5): Opportunities from well-known organizations like Cisco increase engagement, as users trust their relevance to career growth. • Learning Hours (3.0/5): Flexible learning is appreciated, but some courses are seen as too lengthy, and youth suggest more diverse opportunities. <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>	<p>Accenture review</p>
<p>Indicator 1.2.1: Development of evaluation Baseline: 0 Planned Target Y1: 0 Target Y2: 1</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>Same as above</p>	<p>Yoma review report</p>

Challenges, Lessons Learned, Best Practices

Challenges

Transition from engagement to livelihoods

While platform engagement continues to grow, translating participation into tangible livelihood outcomes (jobs, income, apprenticeships) remains a key challenge. Bridging this gap requires stronger employer linkages/partnerships, clearer pathways, and more structured transitions from skilling to earning.

Data integration and interoperability

Integrating data across multiple partner platforms remains complex. Differences in systems, standards, and data-sharing protocols can limit seamless tracking of youth journeys and outcomes, particularly across ecosystems where Yoma is not the primary platform.

Sustained user retention

Maintaining consistent engagement over time is challenging, especially when opportunities are not continuous or clearly sequenced. Drop-off between initial registration and completion of opportunities highlights the need for stronger user journeys and incentives.

Partner readiness and capacity

Not all partners are equally equipped to integrate technically (e.g. SSO, YoID) or to deliver opportunities at scale. This can slow down implementation and affect the consistency and quality of offerings across countries. Onboarding processes are still quite slow and difficult.



Lessons Learned

Pathways matter more than standalone opportunities

Isolated opportunities are less effective than structured pathways. Youth engagement and outcomes improve when learning, earning, and impact experiences are connected into clear progression routes.

User experience drives adoption

Simple, intuitive user journeys significantly affect uptake and retention. Reducing friction—whether through easier onboarding, fewer steps, or mobile-first design—directly impacts platform growth

Data is essential for decision-making

Access to real-time, reliable data (including gender-disaggregated insights) is critical for identifying gaps, improving targeting, and demonstrating impact to partners and funders.

Best Practices

Blended access models (Online + Low-Tech channels)

Combining digital platforms with low-tech channels (e.g. WhatsApp, SMS, community-based support) helps reach a broader and more diverse user base, particularly those with limited connectivity.

Co-Creation with youth

Actively involving young people in the design and testing of features and opportunities leads to more relevant solutions and higher engagement. Continuous feedback loops improve both usability and impact.

Standardized partner integration frameworks

Developing clear and simplified integration standards (APIs, SSO, credentialing processes) helps to streamline onboarding of partners and ensure consistency across the ecosystem.

Phased scaling approach

Prioritizing depth over breadth by focusing on a few countries or sectors first allows for stronger implementation, clearer evidence of impact, and more sustainable scale over time.

09

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 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 integrates a gender-responsive training curriculum and places a strong emphasis on reaching the most disadvantaged young people—particularly young women—to ensure the programme is inclusive and actively addresses gender, disability, and broader social inequalities. The second iteration demonstrated this commitment, with higher participation from women than men, reflecting the effectiveness of targeted outreach and wraparound support. At the same time, the programme recognizes that green entrepreneurship is not gender-neutral; processes and innovations can have differing impacts

on women and men. Without deliberate action, subconscious biases and unaddressed gender-specific needs can limit equitable outcomes. As such, BeGreen Africa continues to embed gender-responsive approaches across all stages to promote inclusive and balanced participation and impact.

In Kenya, the EKYAN model places a strong emphasis on advancing gender equality by intentionally targeting rural young women and girls, who continue to face structural barriers to employment and entrepreneurship—including limited land access, constrained decision-making power, and under-recognition of their roles within agricultural value chains. The model adopts a gender-responsive and increasingly gender-transformative approach, embedding equity considerations across the full programme cycle—from design to delivery and implementation.



EKYAN provides practical, hands-on skills development through demo farms and agribusiness training, equipping young women—including young mothers—with the technical, entrepreneurial, and digital capabilities needed to participate meaningfully in local agricultural economies. Beyond skills, the programme strengthens women’s

positioning as economic actors by supporting their roles as agripreneurs, service providers, and market participants.

Dedicated gender-affirmative measures have been integrated to reduce participation barriers and improve retention, including the provision of childcare during training sessions, tailored financial literacy and business coaching, and flexible, context-sensitive delivery models. The programme also recognizes the importance of addressing systemic constraints by promoting women’s leadership, supporting access to productive resources, and encouraging more equitable role recognition within households and communities.



As a result, EKYAN has not only met but exceeded its gender participation targets—for instance, women comprised 65% of farmers trained—while also contributing to more inclusive and resilient local agribusiness systems.

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. By lowering barriers to entry through digital access, flexible learning, and diverse opportunity pathways—Yoma enables more young women to engage in skilling, earning, and impact activities that may otherwise be out of reach. Increasingly the Yoma is creating more targeted supports/opportunities for adolescent girls and young women.

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 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.



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Conclusion and Way Forward

Building on EKYAN's success, and a further three years of funding through Global Affairs Canada Digital Initiative, the programme will scale across Kenya and to additional countries, aiming to support 5,000 young agripreneurs—particularly out of school young women—who will in turn enable 2 million farmers to improve their livelihoods through sustainable, climate smart agriculture by 2028. The scale strategy focuses on strengthening the systems that help agripreneurs move from participation to sustained productivity and enterprise growth. Core priorities include expanding structured agripreneur incubation with greater emphasis on value addition and business development and improving last mile input access through stronger distribution networks and supplier relationships.

On the demand side, the programme will build more reliable market pathways by deepening off taker partnerships, aggregation systems, and digital market infrastructure. Digital and AI enabled tools—including the expansion of Ask Nia, digital transactions, demand forecasting, and buyer seller coordination—will be central, alongside advanced technologies such as predictive analytics and precision agriculture to support data driven farm decisions. To unlock growth, the strategy prioritizes tailored finance solutions such as micro loans, revolving funds, and digital finance models for youth agribusinesses. Sustainability will be reinforced through formalized government partnerships and alignment with county development plans. Expansion will be evidence driven, targeting diverse agro ecological zones—including arid, coastal, and highland areas—to ensure adaptability while maintaining quality and impact.

BeGreen will continue to support and monitor green entrepreneurs funded. An independent external

evaluation will be carried out in 2026 to gain further insights and continue to strengthen the programme. A third BeGreen cohort will be launched in 2026 supported by the government of Canada through their Green Rising initiative and the Jobs Fund in South Africa.

Overall, and throughout 2025, Yoma expanded its vision to the 'Youth Force', focusing on specific technology offerings, partnerships and operational models. The idea is through these enablers; the Youth Force can build and scale a talent pipeline and a robust youth (work) force across different sectors. This shift is aligned to UNICEF's New Strategic Plan (including a focus on livelihoods) and to the new UNICEF/GenU Africa Strategy, supporting human capital development.

At the global level, the Generation Unlimited continue mobilizing resources for Yoma through partnerships such as Standard Chartered Bank, SAP, Accenture, Capgemini and the government of Canada to 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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