

Can Youth-Led Networks Take Development to Scale in Kenya?

Developing a Learning Agenda



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CONTRIBUTORS

Authors: Rachel Surkin, IREX, Nina Oduro, IREX, and Melizza Mugenyi, IREX

Contributors: Akili Dada, Ashoka, Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs, Association of County Wide Hubs, Association of Microfinance Institutions, Brighter Monday, CAP Youth Empowerment Institute; Citi Foundation, Colleges and Institutes Canada County Governance Watch, Ford Foundation, Future First Kenya, GSMA, IBM, IREX, Kenya Association of Manufacturers, Kenya Girls Guide Association, Kenya Women Microfinance Bank, Mandela Washington Fellows (Solafrique, Matthew Magare Advocates, Jiwo Paro, Pesa Savvy), Online Platform Workers Association, Right Track Africa, Sote Hubs, Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority, The Lela Consulting, United States Agency for International Development, University of Nairobi.

I. Executive Summary

Through decades of supporting young leaders to develop and make positive change in their communities and countries, IREX has learned that networks play a pivotal role in creating positive impact for people, communities, organizations, businesses, and governments. While frameworks to capture and accelerate network impact exist, there are gaps in both global and local evidence about the value proposition of networks in the international development sector. This document proposes a set of **learning questions** to help youth-serving networks, organizations, and donors better understand the value proposition for investing in networks to create social change.

We recently embarked on a journey to unpack and answer our guiding question: **How can youth-led networks strengthen development outcomes for youth?** We convened youth and adult stakeholders working on youth-led networks in Kenya to share their lived experiences of network impact, brainstorm the characteristics of high-impact youth-led networks, propose approaches to network development, discuss strategies for building equity through networks and help hone our learning questions. We then reviewed a set of frameworks for network impact and carried out a comparative analysis with the lived experiences to develop a learning agenda.

The lived experiences provided anecdotal examples of network impact which demonstrated that people, organizations and institutions, and communities benefit from networks. In some cases, the benefits occur at multiple levels of society simultaneously.

This document shares our colleagues' inputs and reflections in the following areas:

- **What kinds of impacts do Kenyan youth-led networks create?**
- **What constitutes a high-impact youth-led network in Kenya?**
- **When do networks reinforce equity gaps and when do they address equity?**



[Networks] create or open up opportunities for youth through advocacy and lobbying for policy change to enhance inclusion and creation of youth friendly services.

Priscilla Gathiga, Kenya Girl Guides Association



Recommendations

In order to better understand the role of networks in creating positive impacts, we identified key frameworks and approaches within network development literature. Several concepts from our reading informed our thinking around network impact, including **social capital, generative impact social networks, collective impact, and theory of aligned contributions**. Our analysis of the frameworks and approaches as well as high-impact network and network equity discussions surfaced actionable recommendations.



Understand the differences between networks and social movements and what each can achieve. We recognize that networks are not social movements, but they can play an important role in social movements. Convening participants recommended that we create mechanisms to mobilize youth networks into movements when appropriate.



Dynamic (young) leaders are critical for networks and organizations, but they do not operate in a vacuum. Unlike the hierarchical traditional leadership models of the past, the network leadership model is more aligned with current youth needs. We recommend that youth-serving organizations and donors support 'new' leaders in achieving their network goals by helping identify those with potential, supporting their personal and professional growth, helping create favorable conditions in the enabling environment, taking a long-term view to change, then getting out of the way.



The time is ripe in Kenya to invest in networks for social impact. Kenya has a wide range of networks across the country with youth leaders who are deeply committed to positive social change. Yet, not all youth are able to access and participate, therefore, donors should consider investing in pilot *collective impact* initiatives to **explore** and **measure** how intentionally networked stakeholders can ‘move the needle’ and produce benefits at the population level.

Characteristics of High Impact Youth-Led Networks in Kenya



Involvement

Strong leaders, connections to adults as mentors, advisors, or financial sponsors.



Purpose and Goals

Identified by the network, not external bodies



Youth Agency

Youth members envision how participation enables individual and community level gains.



Youth Mindset

A servant leader mindset, adaptive and responsive, focused on receiving benefits and giving to others.



Linkages

Work toward their goals by fostering and maintaining links to other networks, especially adult networks, to overcome structural barriers.



Activities

That serve young people’s desire to socialize and enjoy their time with peers, as well as capacity-building and networking.

A Way Forward: Our Learning Agenda

To take the discussion further, we propose learning questions, products, and next steps to address: **How can youth-led networks strengthen development outcomes for youth, especially vulnerable youth, in Kenya?**

Learning questions:

- What kind of impact do networks create?
- Who benefits and how?
- When does systems or population-level change occur?
- How do we ensure that networks (online or real life) do not reinforce opportunity gaps (social and economic inequalities)?
- What types of network support provide the most value and benefit to the end beneficiaries (e.g. vulnerable youth)?



We look forward to working with partners and collaborators to continue this journey.

II. Introduction

The world's complex challenges require people who can lead transformative change. At IREX, we have for decades invested in developing dynamic young leaders to make positive change in their communities, governments, organizations and businesses. We believe that young leaders have the ability to create change that disrupts systems in positive ways, if they have access to the right support and networks.

The leaders we support report that the networks of diverse but like-minded peers they develop as a result of their participation in programs is one of their most valuable assets. Our [Approach to Developing Dynamic Leaders](#)¹ maps network development as a crucial ingredient in developing transformational leaders, with relationship-building as a core competency. Similarly, our [Approach to Youth Development](#) identifies networks as an important support for youth in order to provide opportunities and increase their abilities. Through our work, we gather data about leaders' abilities to strengthen their individual impact, about the capabilities, and the density and richness of the networks that they build.

Why a learning agenda: As a learning institution we continuously pose questions to ourselves, colleagues, collaborators and the leaders we work with. Among them are - how can we most effectively help the young leaders we support to strengthen and multiply their social impact? What types of investments will provide the most sustainable and lasting return for the most people, and for those who need support the most? Who is best positioned to provide these services directly and most effectively, and how can we help them improve and expand the services they provide? What role do networks play in these efforts, and how can we elaborate on the **value proposition** for investing in networks for change?

As we look for answers to these questions, we have discovered gaps in research and evidence, both globally and locally, on the value proposition for networks, particularly in the international youth development sector. These gaps mean that organizations supporting youth leaders, and the donors we partner with, do not have the information needed to make the case for investing in networks to create change. In Kenya for example, there are thousands of youth-serving organizations and other efforts providing innovative solutions, but still millions of youth remain disconnected from civic, social, and economic opportunities.

Researchers who first wrote about **collective impact** (see p. 12) shared the genesis for their approach in a 2016 blog post. After analyzing the question "what is the single most important obstacle to social progress" each came to the conclusion that **fragmentation of effort** was the central problem, and that it existed across non-profits, governments, and the private sector. In short, too many players addressing social issues work alone.² In our work, we have seen this phenomenon numerous times and look to networks as a part of the solution.

Our guiding question:

How can youth-led networks strengthen development outcomes for youth?

Drawing from a February 6, 2020 convening in Nairobi, Kenya, this document summarizes our collective learnings about youth-led networks and the impact they can produce. It proposes a **learning agenda**, or a roadmap outlining a set of learning questions, activities, and resources. We hope these will guide our own learning and inspire others as we continue adapting to increase the effectiveness of our work.

1 <https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/node/resource/irex-leadership-approach-dynamic-leaders.pdf>

2 <https://www.fsg.org/blog/developing-collective-impact-framework>

III. What we learned in Kenya

A significant proportion of Kenya’s 18 million youth (aged 15-35)³ are grappling with economic exclusion - with 39% of them recorded as unemployed. Political and social exclusion is systemic, further inhibiting their ability to realize their potential and contribute towards improved development outcomes for the country. Given the scale of the challenge, actors working in the youth development space in Kenya equally seek solutions at scale.

On February 6, 2020 in Nairobi, we convened youth and adult stakeholders to share and analyze their experiences working with youth-led networks across Kenya. They I) came from institutions that represented groups or individuals with shared interests, II) were members of formal networks⁴ III) had played a role in designing these networks, and/or IV) had an explicit interest in tapping into networks to further their own work. These included leaders and funders working across the private sector, university, vocational and training education, innovation and entrepreneurship, adolescence and girls’ rights spaces.

Our hypothesis was the following: **IF youth-led networks thrive in reaching their own goals, and if they are linked around broader social change, THEN they have the potential to create greater impact.** We loosely defined impact as positive changes for individual youth and the communities, organizations, and institutions around them, including policy change.

We reviewed a set of frameworks for network impact, shared lived experiences of network impact, brainstormed the characteristics of high-impact youth-led networks in Kenya, proposed approaches to network development, discussed strategies for building equity through networks, and helped to hone our learning questions. Below is a snapshot of our discussions, followed by our analysis as compared to the literature.

a. Lived experiences of network impact in Kenya:

Given the Kenyan context, we asked: **How can youth-led networks in Kenya strengthen development outcomes for Kenya’s youth?**

To answer our guiding question, we asked the following framing questions:

1. What kind of impact do networks create? Who benefits and how?
2. How do we ensure that networks (online or real life) do not reinforce opportunity gaps (social and economic inequalities)?
3. What types of network support provide the most value and benefit to the end beneficiaries (e.g. vulnerable youth)? We addressed these questions through group discussion and collected written inputs from attendees prior to and following the session through a survey link. A sampling of the responses is below, and a full list is in Appendix 2.



We note that these examples are meant to be anecdotal and impressionistic. We conducted a loose analysis to paint a picture of what is currently happening, recognizing that this is not meant to be a comprehensive study. We further note that we did not explore the question of attribution.

Examples of network impact for people. These include stories that demonstrate the value of *social capital* in helping individuals advance their goals – especially for youth network members themselves.

3 The population of 15-35 year olds in Kenya as of the 2019 census is 17.92 million. <https://open.africa/dataset/9b94fe50-9d75-4b92-be00-6354c6e6cc88/resource/74e1e4d8-24d5-4e4f-8fba-cc29f1c85a8e/download/volume-iii-kphc-2019.pdf>

4 **Formal networks** are those that are organized and supported by a backbone organization, such as the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) or the Kenyan Association of Manufacturers (KAM).

- Entrepreneur and Mandela Washington Fellow⁵ (MWF) alumnus [Juliet Odhiambo](#) self-published a religious journal but struggled to expand her clientele beyond friends or connect with publishers. She leveraged the broader MWF network and was able to connect with a publisher in her industry.
- When MWF alumnus [Matthew Magare](#) started his own law firm, his initial clients hailed from his MWF network. As he helped more peers and their friends register their ventures, his client base further expanded through word of mouth. Matthew reports that “these relationships are paying a dividend on an annual basis.”
- [CAP Youth Empowerment Institute](#) (CAPYEI) offers employability and skills training to vulnerable youth throughout Kenya. Executive Director Ndungu Kahihu noted that their Business Mentor Network has the dual impact of linking youth to jobs through business mentors and helping these mentors source talent.
- [Sote Hub's](#) CEO David Ogiga - an ICT and innovation hub and member of the [Association of Countrywide Innovation Hubs](#), shared that innovation networks enhance social capital opportunities. From his experience in the sector, “young people who are using the right connections and networks have higher success in employment, entrepreneurship and meeting their personal goals.”

Examples of network impact for organizations and institutions. These show how leveraging *social capital* can benefit and strengthen institutions.

- [Future First](#) is a nonprofit championing alumni engagement in Kenyan Schools and learning institutions. It establishes alumni associations for secondary schools. In one instance, its alumni network raised a 250 million Kenya shillings endowment fund for targeted schools.
- The [Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs](#) (ANDE) is a global network of organizations that propel entrepreneurship in emerging markets. Their recent study on the Uganda Entrepreneurial Ecosystem discovered that older entrepreneurs with prior experience working as employees of another business were more successful than younger entrepreneurs. The factors leading to this finding included having past experience helping to run a business, more greater savings and /capital, and more extensive networks.

Examples of network impact for communities and society. These demonstrate changes that improve conditions for people, organizations, and institutions, and enable social change such as economic growth.

- **Example of policy change:** For 60 years, the [Kenya Association of Manufacturers \(KAM\)](#) has built a network of businesses including a strong focus on women in manufacturing, MSMEs and start-ups. The joint power of this network has produced highly successful lobbying efforts, including reduced taxes, levies, and user charges for manufacturers as well as a 30% quota within Access to Government Procurements for youth and women and 40% local content, which benefits local manufacturers.
- **Example of shifting norms and inclusion in government.** Restless Development, Tanzania through the support of the [Ford Foundation](#) created youth networks to support Youth Accountability Advocates and build leadership skills in young female participants in Tanzania. By intentionally leveraging networks to build youth leadership and develop awareness of civic rights and responsibilities at the community level, more young people are assessing diverse leadership opportunities including in the recent local government elections in Tanzania.
- **Example of advocacy and policy change.** At nearly 100 years old, the Kenya Girl Guide Association is the largest network of female students in Kenya, developing leadership skills for girls by training teachers and linking adult mentors to students for mentoring. KGGA joined the advocacy and lobbying efforts of civil society and others around the 1/3 gender rule in Kenya, requiring one-third of all government positions to be held by women.
- **Example of Awareness building and economic empowerment:** According to MWF Fellow, [Akinyi Awora](#) of Jiwo Paro Kenya, the Young African Leaders Initiative Kisumu campaign against gender-based violence not

5 The [Mandela Washington Fellowship](#) is the flagship initiative of the US Government Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI).

only created awareness about gender-based violence in the community, but also created an economic empowerment platform for young women.

Our analysis of these examples demonstrates that beyond achieving impact at each of the levels identified above, **networks often create impact on multiple levels.**

- **CAPYEI's** Business Mentor Network (BMN) has become a reliable pipeline of new employees for business mentors. Here, CAPYEI as the backbone organization provides credibility and is trusted by employers, allowing the network to provide value on multiple levels including the youth job seekers, the organizations, and the community which benefits from the impact of youth participation in income generating activities.

b. Brainstorm: Characteristics of high-impact youth-led networks in Kenya:

Event attendees felt strongly that high-impact youth-led networks are important for achieving development outcomes.⁶ To learn what local practitioners valued most about networks and what, based on their experiences, were necessary to high-impact networks, we asked: **what constitutes a high-impact youth-led network in Kenya?** In Kenya, these networks are either open or closed⁷ and engage youth meaningfully for positive outcomes for themselves, their peers or the broader community. They have the following characteristics:



Involvement High impact networks have strong leaders that help them work toward their goals. They are also connected to adults - individuals or groups - that support them through mentorship, advice or financial sponsorship.



Purpose and Goals Members of high-impact networks identify both short and long-term goals themselves as opposed to having them defined by external bodies, in particular adults.



Youth Agency High-impact networks allow youth to envision how their participation enables individual and community level gains.



Youth Mindset High impact networks foster a servant leader⁸ mindset, meaning that youth understand their role within a network is not only to receive but to give something to others. In addition, members adopt adaptive and innovative approaches in order to be responsive to youth needs as well as the rapid pace of change in the environment around them.



Linkages High-impact youth-led networks work effectively toward their goals by fostering and maintaining links to other networks, especially adult networks. This is primarily because youth-led networks sometimes face structural barriers that impede their ability to reach desired goals.



Activities Along with activities that contribute to achieving network goals, high-impact networks include elements that serve young people's desire to socialize and enjoy their time with peers. They incorporate capacity building activities, including leadership development exercises and roles that enhance skills and help members access opportunities. Additionally, activities that enable co-creation and knowledge exchange among youth are important for them to obtain the resources and support they need to grow.

6 We note that event attendees were selected because of their connection and linkages to Kenyan networks working towards youth outcomes and are likely a biased sample.

7 **Open networks** refer to networks that may or may not have criteria for membership, but do not require a formal process for inclusion. **Closed networks** refers to networks that have selective processes for membership and require specific criteria for inclusion.

8 **Servant leadership** emphasizes that leaders be attentive to the concerns of their followers, empathize with them, and nurture them. They put followers first, empower them, and help them develop their full personal capacities.

When these characteristics are present in a network, Kenyan network supporters and leaders believe that they are better able to contribute to development outcomes.

When networks don't work:

These discussions also surfaced important insights for when networks do not work and do not create impact for youth.

Networks which reinforce inequity⁹. In Kenya there are multiple ways that networks reinforce inequity and may widen opportunity gaps. Participants cited the following examples:

- Many networks, especially closed networks, are **limited to elite youth**. The benefits that they provide, including strengthening social capital, may further accelerate opportunities for network members and leave youth outside of the network further behind.
- **Online networks** by nature exclude youth who cannot access affordable smart devices and internet¹⁰. Online networks therefore automatically perpetuate inequality.
- Networks that seek to enhance job opportunities focus largely on the formal sector and **ignore rural, agricultural value chain activities and the vast informal job space** in Kenya. This is despite the majority of youth residing in rural areas, and many being engaged in the informal and agricultural sectors.¹¹

Networks are not effective when they do not meet a specific felt need of members. In addition to its high-impact BMN network referenced above, CAPYEI created an alumni network for its graduates. A 2011 tracer study however showed that alumni engagement was significantly lower than anticipated. Ultimately, members' primary need was accessing a job, and the BMN network offered this through guidance from mentors and potential employers.

Networks lack effectiveness when their leaders lack capacity, experience, and social capital. Funders at the convening described a common experience supporting youth-led organizations whose young leaders are “determined to go it alone” and ultimately fail. A fitting analogy was diving into the deep end of a swimming pool and struggling to stay afloat, where external adult stakeholders are offering a lifejacket. In another example, Market Engagement Manager - Mobile For Humanitarian Innovation, Africa at GSMA and MWF alumna [Jaki Mebur](#) described the massive structural and policy challenges faced by vulnerable youth who are unlikely to affect change alone. She referenced the example of young refugees and internally displaced people who require influential and experienced external stakeholders with capital or clout to advocate for them to become documented - for instance - in order to access jobs.

c. Strategies for building equity in networks

Our concerns about the potential for networks to reinforce inequality were confirmed by event attendees. They shared specific strategies to help address, build, or reinforce equity through networks.

- **Target the most vulnerable youth** – Targeting the most vulnerable youth in society means that youth-led

9 In a recent blog, LinkedIn affirmed that networks can reinforce the opportunity gap. “More than 70% of professionals get hired at companies where they already have a connection. And on LinkedIn, applicants who are referred to a job by a current employee are nine times more likely to get hired. <https://blog.linkedin.com/2019/september/26/closing-the-network-gap>

10 From a 2017 Pew Research Center study, which found that approximately 80% of Kenyans owned mobile phone, with 30% of adults owning smartphones and the remaining 50% percent owning standard cellphones. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2018/10/09/majorities-in-sub-saharan-africa-own-mobile-phones-but-smartphone-adoption-is-modest/>

11 A 2017 ‘Youth Employment in Kenya - Literature Review’ showed that “rural youth in Kenya primarily earn their living in informal jobs within the agriculture sector”(Page 4) and “Kenya’s dual, but intertwined, economy is characterised by an informal sector that provides 83 per cent of all current employment opportunities – formal and comparably well-paid wage employment is only available for very few of Kenya’s youth” (Page 5); October 2017 (British Council, Samuel Hall, UKAID).

networks can focus on their specific needs and address them adequately. CAPYEI uses this strategy, with the understanding that solutions that work for vulnerable youth can also work for the non-vulnerable.

- **Support communities** – While directly supporting youth-led networks can be effective, providing support to communities can help youth-led networks thrive. Future First Kenya suggested that by helping community schools through allocating human and financial capital, they can indirectly strengthen youth-led networks by enabling strong educational gains for youth. Future First studies show a correlation between learning outcomes and school governance yet most schools in Kenya do not have access to skilled Boards of Management. Future First Kenya mobilizes and supports young people to serve in school boards and management committee of their old schools and management committee. This improves school governance and contributes to improved learning outcomes.”
- **Leverage physical spaces** – online spaces are often exclusionary for youth without access. As a result, there is a need for youth-led networks to provide physical spaces or opportunities for youth to connect in-person. Thelela Consulting intentionally uses physical spaces when working with youth entrepreneurs, citing that “they value the in-person conversation and learning which is richer than online.” However, when technology is used or deemed necessary, careful planning and financial resources are needed to provide access for youth that do not have access.
- **Engage families, schools, communities, the private sector, and government:** Cultural and structural barriers – such as cultural norms around female participation or stigma around people with disabilities – may contribute to exclusion of vulnerable or marginalized groups. Networks, and their youth members, must consider and engage stakeholders in the enabling environment to increase equity. [Ashoka](#) is an international organization that promotes social entrepreneurship. They work with networks of Ashoka Fellows, Changemaker Schools, Universities, Ashoka Young Changemakers and other aligned partners that share the changemaker identity as a vision. These individuals and institutions support the creation of a barrier-free and equal opportunity society for many disadvantaged groups, among them the youth.



IV. Frameworks that inform our thinking

Over IREX's decades of training, supporting and providing on-going professional development for transformative leaders and changemakers¹², we have reviewed and been informed by several different theories and approaches on networks. Below, we outline a few of these concepts.

Social capital refers to resources that reside in a network of relationships and are available through personal and business networks (Baker, 2000). These resources may include information, ideas, leads, business opportunities, financial capital, power and influence, emotional support, even goodwill, trust, and cooperation. What is important about social capital is that resources aren't 'owned' but exist within relationships. That is, both who you know and who they know. These relationships and their assets are productive: they help us create value and get things done.

Some examples of how social capital assets create impact:

- “The hard evidence shows that most people find jobs through personal contacts; they find better paying, more satisfying jobs than the ones available through formal channels; and they stay at these jobs longer.” (Baker, 2000)
- “1 connection at a company makes you 6 times more likely to get a job there. A formal referral from that person makes you 9 times more likely to get the job.” (<https://blog.linkedin.com/2019/september/26/closing-the-network-gap>)
- Seventy-five percent of start-ups and new businesses find and secure financing through the “informal investing grapevine”—the social networks of capital seekers and investors.” – *US Small Business Administration Survey* (Baker 2000)
- [Entrepreneurship support] programs with more emphasis on exposing entrepreneurs to one another ultimately were associated with higher financial growth.” – *Global Accelerator Learning Initiative* (Accelerating Start-Ups, 2017)

Generative impact social networks identified by Plastrix et al in 2014 are defined as networks of individuals or organizations that aim to solve a difficult problem in society by working together, adapting over time, and generating a sustained flow of activities or impacts. They are designed for multiple outcomes and ongoing change as opposed to a single outcome, and they work towards social good. Plastrix et al identified **three types of social impact networks**: connectivity, alignment, and production networks.

- **Connectivity** networks provide linkages, information exchange, learning, and other social capital benefits to individuals or organizational members.
- **Alignment** networks allow members to create and share a set of ideas, goals and strategies around an overarching and specific goal. *Alignment networks are often the engine for change in the 'collective impact framework' detailed below.*
- **Production** networks enable members to create change by producing or testing innovative policies, strategies, or approaches, creating evidence and learning and even advancing public policy proposals.

Collective impact is the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. For collective impact to occur, a key group of community leaders must “abandon their individual agendas in favor of a collective approach” to a shared goal. Unlike collaboration, collective impact requires certain conditions to achieve results, including (1) a centralized infrastructure (2) a dedicated staff and

12 As outlined in IREX's Approach to Developing Dynamic Leaders, our model for dynamic leadership draws on the social change model of leadership, and transformational leadership, and is informed by the needs of people seeking to create positive change in their communities. The social change model includes a framework of individual, group, and community values.

(3) a structured process that leads to a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities among all participants. Crucially, the structures and incentives in the donor and non-profit sectors reward individual impact, or “isolated impact”, with donors seeking to fund a single organization with the greatest effects and looking to multiply or extend those effects. This approach puts non-profits and other social change organizations at odds, competing and further fragmenting our work. Furthermore, donors and non-profits are generally isolated from the public sector and market forces, which are required for lasting change at scale (Kania & Kramer, 2011).

- A **collective impact program** in Baltimore created a network of local leaders and organizations to address the problem of poor early childhood preparedness for school. **Result:** Two years after the program was initiated in Baltimore, the number of children entering school ready to learn had **increased from 35% to 58%**. - *Anne E Casey Foundation, Leadership in Action*
- **Shape Up Somerville** took a networked approach to addressing childhood obesity across the city, engaging government, schools, businesses, and parent associations. **Result: A statistically significant decrease in body mass index** among the community’s young children between 2002 and 2005. -*Kania and Kramer. Collective Impact. SSIR 2011.*

The **Theory of Aligned Contributions (TOAC)** draws on the collective impact framework, and is based on the belief that community-level changes are most likely to occur if a core group of multisector, cross-agency leaders not only respond to a call to action but also take aligned actions at the appropriate scope and scale toward a community result. It predicts how population-level results will accelerate when leaders from across different sectors have the right skills and commitment, commit to be publicly accountable for a result to a specific population group and take “aligned actions at specific scope and scale”. TOAC identifies the importance of identifying a “critical mass of leaders” and the “specific skills that they need.” The skill set includes the following competencies: results accountability competency; race, class, and culture competency¹³; collaborative leadership competency; and leading from the middle competency. (Pillsbury).

Literature on what factors can help **social movements** to succeed also informs our thinking on how to strengthen and support networks so that they can achieve social change. Social movements, while even larger, more disparate, and messier than networks, must leverage networks and networked structures to be effective. In 2018, Leslie Crutchfield and her team studied a range of large-scale US-based social movements, including the anti-smoking movement, the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) movement, and less successful or not yet realized movements, such as the Women’s March. Through this research, they found that all successful social movements include the following elements:

- **Organize, seed and grow vast networks of individuals around a common cause.** This approach validates the important role that networks must play in achieving population-level social change and provides a range of examples for how to manage the networks. Research finds that social change today is never achieved if grassroots networks are not empowered to lead change.
- **Work with ‘grass-tops’ organizing in networked leadership structures.** Research found that social change requires organizing the leaders of grassroots stakeholders in networked leadership; and movement leaders who recognize they need to forge pathways so all the players around them can collaborate rather than compete.
- **Build networked leadership approaches** that share power, authority and limelight, lead from behind, and embrace a long-term view. The researchers talk about the importance of putting ego aside and empowering a broad network of leaders to pursue solutions that work in their context.

13 According to Pillsbury and Goddard-Truitt race, class, and cultural competency refers to the ability to engage in constructive dialogue about race, class, and culture, that enables leaders to take action to address disparities.

Each of these approaches share a common set of best practices that can help us understand how networks may create impact and how to support them to do so. A few themes stood out to us.

- **Invest in connections and relationships:** Each approach emphasizes the importance of relationships, or connectivity, and of investing intentionally in creating and strengthening relationships based on trust, shared priorities and interests.
- **Identify a shared goal or outcome.** Those networks that intend to create large-scale social change require that members align around a shared and specific goal or outcome and share measurement or metrics.
- **Avoid the trap of ‘collaboration’.** Collaboration without intentionality will not necessarily lead to stronger individual or social outcomes.



V. Analysis and Reflections

a. Analysis of impact stories against the literature:

Through our consultative learning event, we gathered nearly 20 stories and examples of network impact. These stories provide instances of positive change resulting from networks that happened for individuals, organizations and communities.

We captured their examples and organized them based on a network frame with the following categories – social capital (SC), generative impact social networks (collaboration: GSIN-C; alignment: GSIN-A; production: GSIN-P), collective impact (CI), or aligned contributions (AC). See Appendix 2 for the full list of 26 vignettes and how each is coded.

Social Capital	Generative Social Impact Networks	Collective Impact	Aligned Contributions
16	GSIN-C: 7 GSIN-A: 14 GSIN-P: 2	5	0

This analysis shows that the network supporters and leaders at our convening generally focus on **social capital**, benefitting youth members’ individual needs and outcomes, or **generative social impact alignment**, helping members to achieve common goals and strategies. Examples of social capital range from leveraging networks to benefit an individual’s economic, civic, or social goals to building intentional networks to help individuals, such as marginalized youth, reach specific goals, such as building skills and securing employment. Examples of generative social impact-alignment networks include organizational outcomes, such as securing financial resources for a school, or providing social impact services, such as sourcing thousands of mentors for adolescent girls.

In limited cases, those common goals and strategies led to **generative social impact production** and/or **collective impact**, or population-level results, such as new government policies supporting local small businesses, increased income for nearly 1 million women, or increased seed funding for micro- and small businesses outside of Nairobi. Each circumstance where **collective impact** was achieved involved an anchor, or backbone organization or association that intentionally focused network members on a common goal.

Further analysis of these and other examples could (1) uncover additional commonalities between the **collective impact** examples to inform future planning for collective impact; (2) identify which of the **generative social impact alignment** examples would be most ready to advance towards collective impact at the population level; and (3) uncover the most valuable elements of **generative social impact collaboration** that best translate to individual and organizational **social capital**.

In the group discussion, attendees agreed that **collective impact** was the ultimate goal of networks, particularly youth-led and youth-serving networks in Kenya. They also felt that **aligned contributions**, or intentionally collaborating in service of population-level results, was difficult in their context and with their resources.

b. Analysis of the high-impact youth-led network discussion:

Convening attendees described high impact networks based on how they are organized, how effectively they engage youth, and the **social capital** that they provide. In their description captured in Section 3 above, we noticed that the conversations did not focus on what kind of lasting impact the networks created. As we re-reviewed the literature, we found it interesting that our colleagues did not necessarily think of networks in terms of what type of social change they create, but more in terms of what connectivity and results they can offer individual members.

In other words, experiences with youth networks in Kenya showed several effective examples and lessons learned around *social capital* and *connectivity networks*, but minimal examples of *collective impact*, *alignment networks*, or *production networks*.

c. Analysis of the network equity discussion:

Convening attendees felt strongly that different networks were necessary to serve different purposes, and that it was appropriate for some networks to be *closed*. But do all networks need to be equitable? There may be an inherent bias to consider, since whether a network is open or closed, its location and goals affect who is involved, how they engage both within and outside that network and what they accomplish. For donors or backbone organizations striving to achieve *collective impact* or *aligned contributions* at a population-level outcome, they must be selective around which networks are aligned with desired outcomes and best positioned to reach targeted beneficiaries. However, network partners can elevate or prioritize equity strategies and - for elite networks in particular - can intentionally leverage social capital to benefit vulnerable youth. Ultimately, while the inclusion considerations that make youth-led networks equitable may vary based on context, it is important for these networks to strive to be equitable in their operations and activities in order to contribute to developmental outcomes that benefit all youth.

d. Reflections

Based on this analysis, we have developed a set of reflections that will guide recommendations for a learning agenda in Section 5. We note that support for many of our recommendations exist in the wider literature around network impact. Similarly, a literature review would reveal contrary points of view. Our recommendations stem from our specific hypothesis and are drawn from the practical experience of selected actors who were convened for the purpose of exploring this hypothesis in their context.



Understand the differences between networks and social movements and what each can achieve.

Convening attendees felt strongly that distilling values to bring youth together can be powerful. One attendee remarked that "...we must cut across socio-economic divides to bring youth together. Consider a football match. Half the fans at the stadium are supporting the same team, irrespective of whether one fan arrived in a four-wheel drive or walked to the match." Another attendee posed the question "...there are 18 million youth and 16,000 youth organizations in Kenya, but their efforts are fragmented primarily because of their inability to create a united front. How can we mobilize, say 6 million youth towards a set of agreed goals?" To this, youth attendees responded that not all networks should necessarily have the same goals; "[do] not consolidate efforts of individual networks, but rather integrate their efforts. Networks should focus on their own goals, yet align on broader social outcomes."

From the literature, we can draw a clear distinction.

Networks are not social movements, but networks have a crucial role to play in social movements, in that successful social movements leverage decentralized network strategies and networked leadership effectively. While youth-led networks may have goals that align with a social movement, they should be clear in their unique network goals as well as how their goals align with a broader movement.

Actionable recommendation: Convening participants recommended that we create mechanisms to mobilize youth networks into movements when it's appropriate.



Dynamic (young) leaders are critical for networks and organizations, but they do not operate in a vacuum. The 21st century is the age of networks, and traditional leadership models that operate in rigid hierarchies simply cannot keep pace with today's complex problems, technology and information flows, and rapidly changing systems. Large-scale change requires *networked leadership*, or collaborative leaders who can put ego aside, share power, create pathways for authentic

collaboration, and lead with inclusive, values-based vision. This leadership model is quite different from the hierarchical leadership model of the 20th century, and is counter-intuitive for many, young and old, who have only experienced a hierarchical leadership model in which power and influence is consolidated in a few leaders at the top of a pyramid.

Actionable recommendation: Supporting these ‘new’ leaders requires identifying those with potential, purposefully supporting their personal and professional growth, helping to create favorable conditions in the enabling environment, taking a long-term view to change, and then getting out of the way. Donors and international organizations can help facilitate this process, address structural constraints, share knowledge, social capital, and financial resources, and provide leeway for youth networks to see their own agendas.



The time is ripe in Kenya to invest in networks for social impact. Kenya has tremendous assets, with a wide range of networks operating in the farthest reaches of remote counties and thousands of dynamic young leaders who are deeply committed to positive social change. Millions of young Kenyans, however, are still left behind. While networks are linking youth and producing tangible benefits for individuals and communities, the potential to expand these impacts to broader populations remains largely untapped.

Actionable recommendation: We encourage donors to consider investing in pilot *collective impact* initiatives to **explore** and **measure** how intentionally networked stakeholders can ‘move the needle’ and produce benefits at the population level.



VI. Recommendations for a Learning Agenda

Through the convening with network supporters and leaders, our literature review, and reflections, it is evident that more research and evidence is needed in Kenya and globally on the value proposition for youth-led networks. While the evidence we obtained demonstrated gains at multiple levels of society, there are still gaps in evidence that could help us understand if and how investment in networks can lead to achieving population-level results.

As local and international organizations work to support youth-led networks in creating civic, social, and economic change, a learning agenda will help to fill the current gaps in knowledge. Based on our analysis, we propose the following learning questions, activities, and products to tackle our question: **How can youth-led networks strengthen development outcomes for youth, especially vulnerable youth, in Kenya?**

Learning Questions	Sub-Questions
<p>What kind of impact do networks create?</p> <p>Who benefits and how?</p> <p>When does systems or population-level change occur?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How should ‘impact’ be defined? ● What is the best approach for analyzing the impact of youth-led networks in Kenya? ● What are the characteristics of successful examples of youth-led network impacts (including social capital, collective impact, generative social networks, and aligned contributions) in Kenya? What factors led to success? ● Which development challenges (eg. improving health outcomes, advancing economic opportunity, strengthening youth participation in governance and improving policy) achieve the most gains through these supports?
<p>How do we ensure that networks (online or real life) do not reinforce opportunity gaps (social and economic inequalities)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which types of networks (open/closed) are most successful at achieving equity and providing benefits to diverse youth, and why? ● What network characteristics are most effective at engaging and benefiting vulnerable youth?
<p>What types of network support provide the most value and benefit to the end beneficiaries (e.g. vulnerable youth)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What types of youth -led network support from youth-serving organizations, donors, governments, and private sector result in developmental gains? ● How does collaboration among youth-serving organizations, donors, governments, and private sector affect the achievements of youth-led networks? Which collaborations result in the most effective development gains? ● To what extent are youth-led networks measuring community-level impacts, and what support do they need to do so more consistently and effectively?
Suggested Learning Products	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collection and analysis of youth-led network impact case studies ● Convening of youth-led network leaders and supporters (youth-serving organizations, donors, public sector, private sector, and youth-led network leaders), followed by learning products such as a compilation of results and recommendations 	

Next Steps. We believe that the right people and organizations are committed to building an actionable evidence base around how youth-led networks can create real change in Kenya, and look forward to collaborating with stakeholders to build this evidence base for the field.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Learning event agenda

Youth-led Networks: The Drivers for Scaling Development in Kenya



TODAY we hope to:



Advance our shared understanding of **network impact**, with a focus on youth-led networks. *How can youth-led networks strengthen development outcomes for youth?*

To do this, we will:



Review a snapshot of existing evidence and illustrative Kenyan experiences



Develop and hone a learning agenda

Q: What is the single most important obstacle to social progress?

A: The central problem is fragmentation of effort



Examples of Impact through Networks

AGENDA

1. Welcome!
2. Presentation of Evidence on Networks
3. Network Impact Examples from Kenya - Lightning Talks
4. Defining a High-Impact Network
5. Characteristics of Kenya's Youth-Led Network Evidence - Small Group Discussion
6. Stakeholders in Youth-Led Networks Group Discussion
7. Closing



What do we know?

What Networks Require for Impact

- **Social capital:** resources that reside in a network of relationships, that are available through personal and business networks.
— Baker, Wayne. *Achieving Success through Social Capital*. 2000
- **Collective impact:** the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. — Kania & Kramer. *Collective Impact*. SSRN, 2011
- **Aligned Contributions:** community-level changes are most likely to occur if a core group of multisector, cross-agency leaders respond to a call to action AND take aligned actions at the appropriate scope and scale toward a community result. — Pittsbury. *Theory of Aligned Contributions*. 2016



Strengthening small businesses...

75% of new businesses find secure financing through the "informal investing grapevine"- the social capital seekers and investors.
— US Small Business Administration

"Programs with more emphasis on exposing entrepreneurs to one another ultimately were associated with higher financial growth."
— Global Accelerator Learning Initiative

"Peer learning improves firm performance, and firms learn best from those that are slightly more advanced."
— ANDE



Finding jobs

LinkedIn's research found that:

- ✓ 1 connection at a company makes you 6 times more likely to get a job there.
- ✓ A formal referral from that person makes you 9 times more likely to get the job.

Research shows that over 70% of professionals get hired at companies where they have a contact.

A compilation of research on social capital states:

The hard evidence shows that most people find jobs through personal contacts; they find better paying, more satisfying jobs than the ones available through formal channels; and they stay at these jobs longer. IREX

Extending reach and engagement...



Rights for people with disabilities in Ghana: activating a network resulted in policy change for local airlines.



Engaging youth in local governance: National Youth Bunge Association formed a national network in Kenya to support an effective model of youth engagement.



Customized skills training for youth: IREX offered its Youth Essential Skills (YES) training of trainers to youth leaders from 12 countries, who customize and offered the training to youth 273 diverse groups of youth across Africa.



For Youth-Led Networks in Kenya...

We need to know more about:

- How do network strategies produce development impact in Kenya? How could they have more impact? (Note: Minimal evidence available globally)
- Are youth-led networks unique, and what specific supports create the most value for them?
- What role should donors and youth programs play in creating, supporting, and sustaining youth-led networks



LIGHTENING TALKS EXAMPLES FROM KENYA

Equity and social impact...

A collective impact program in Baltimore created a network of local leaders and organizations to address the problem of poor early childhood preparedness for school.

Result: Two years after the program was initiated in Baltimore, the number of children entering school ready to learn had increased from 35% to 58%.

—Anne E. Casey Foundation, Leadership in Action

Shape Up Somerville took a networked approach to addressing childhood obesity across the city, engaging government, schools, businesses, and parent associations.

Result: A statistically significant decrease in body mass index among the community's young children between 2002 and 2005.

—Kania and Kramer, Collective Impact, SSIR 2011.



Opportunity Gap / Network Gap ...

3 distinct factors contribute to the network gap: where you grew up, where you went to school, where you work. (LinkedIn)

A LinkedIn member in a zip code with a median income over \$100K is nearly 3x more likely to have a stronger network than a member in a lower-income zip code. -LinkedIn

A LinkedIn member at a top school is nearly 2x more likely to have a strong network. - LinkedIn

A LinkedIn member who works at a top company is almost 2x more likely to have a strong network. - LinkedIn

IREX's MWF Social Analysis Network showed that men reported more connections of any type than women. - MWF-RAB Social Network Analysis (2014-17)



What the literature tells us:

Collective impact:

- Requires a **common agenda and common goals:** common definitions and understanding of the problem, a shared approach to the solution.
- **And shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, constant communication, and backbone support organizations.**

— Collective Impact, SSIR, 2011

A network mindset includes:

- **Network weaving:** intentionally linking people to strengthen bonds, expanding network reach, influence, and innovation.
- **Doocracy and self-organizing:** people feel authorized to take action on their ideas
- **Continuous learning and risk-taking**

— Leadership Learning Community, 2012

Youth-led networks in Kenya (Speakers)

Juliet Odhiambo – Founder, Pesa Savvy (Youth Leader)

Emmanuel Mutuma – CEO, Brighter Monday

Lois Wambui Gicheru – CEO Solafrique (Youth Leader)

Matthew Magare – Managing Partner, Matthew Magare Advocates (Youth Leader)

Ndung'u Kahihi – Executive Director, CAP Youth Empowerment Institute



GROUP DISCUSSION

GROUP EXERCISE: DEFINE HIGH IMPACT NETWORKS

- WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF A HIGH-IMPACT NETWORK?
- WHAT BENEFITS DO THEY DELIVER?

For us: Stakeholders in Youth Networks

We Know: Most programs do not have the financial resources and mechanisms in place to follow-up on progress made by fellows/participants in the medium to long term.

In addition, most programs do not have mechanisms in place to measure how their participants who have gone through their programs contribute in their different leadership areas over time

– Deloitte, Mapping, Strengthening, Partnerships and Investments on Youth Leadership Programs in the Eastern Africa region, 2019

1. How do we (donors, youth programs, and youth) nurture, expand, strengthen high-impact networks?
2. How do we (donor, youth programs, and youth) measure if networks are “working”?

DEFINITIONS

Network – a set of relationships that are characterized by both strong and weak ties. Strong ties are characterized by high levels of trust, reciprocity, and sense of community, whereas weak ties cross boundaries and are a source of new ideas, information, and resources.

Network Impact – the outcomes of individual or collective ideas and actions that result from relationships built with elements of trust, reciprocity, and sense of community.

Network Mindset- a term used to describe the patterns of thought that enable us to become aware of how what we say and do connects with others and creates ripples through an ecosystem.

Collective Leadership- the process of many people working together and aligning their efforts to achieve greater impact on significant social issues

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Impact (Group 1)

What kind of impact do networks create? Who benefits and how?

Equity (Group 2)

How do we ensure that networks (online or real life) do not reinforce opportunity gaps (social and economic inequalities)?

Support (Group 3)

What types of network support provide the most value and benefit to the end beneficiaries(e.g. vulnerable youth)?

Appendix 2: Stories of Network Impact

The vignettes below have been coded as follows:

- **Social capital:** SC
- **Generative social impact networks:** collaboration (GSIN-C); alignment (GSIN-A); production (GSIN-P)
- **Collective impact:** CI
- **Aligned contributions:** AC

Vignettes:

1. This is Juliet Odhiambo's personal story – she had just published a Christian spiritual journal and her initial clientele comprised her immediate circle of friends. She tried to get it stocked by distributors without much luck. After reaching out to her fellowship network, she was introduced to a distributor in the industry. This is a story about social capital. Juliet – MWF Fellow and Entrepreneur. **SC. Juliet Odhiambo – MWF Fellow and Entrepreneur. SC**
2. Lois Gicheru is a Future Energy Leader (FEL)- one of 100 members from across the world. Despite this coverage, FEL recognizes that there are many more leaders in country that have much to contribute to the energy agenda. In response, Fellows have been empowered to create Chapters in their own country. Her story provides an example of global networks catalyzing local networks. **Lois – MWF Fellow, Future Energy Leader and CEO Solafrique. GSIN-A**
3. Matthew Magare began his law firm and while he had mapped out potential partners, his initial clients turned out to be his fellow network. He helped them to register their ventures, etc. In effect, the pipeline created a pipeline of clients from peers. This was despite the purpose of the network not intentionally being established to achieve this. For Matthew, this relationship is paying a dividend on an annual basis. **Matthew – MWF Fellow and Lawyer. SC**
4. CAPYEI focuses on employability and skills training. Their Business Mentor Network provides opportunities for young people to transition into entry level opportunities. Here, employers and business mentors are keen to engage CAPYEI graduates as the organization has built trust in that it is seen as instilling specific values in its graduates. **Ndungu Kahihu – CEO, CAPYEI. SC, GSIN-C**
5. Networks have to offer a sense of identity and a shared vision. For Ashoka Fellows, the identity as leading social entrepreneurs and changemakers makes a huge difference and they view the vision of building a world where everyone is a changemakers as invaluable in giving them unconditional acceptance. **Vincent Odhiambo – Regional Director Ashoka East Africa SC, GSIN-C**
6. ANDE recently conducted a study on the entrepreneurial ecosystems in Uganda and discovered that older entrepreneurs with experience of past employment working for someone else were more successful than younger entrepreneurs. This was because they had the experience of running a business, had more networks than youthful entrepreneurs and more savings. **Maryanne Ochola – East Africa Chapter Head, ANDE. SC**
7. Jimmy Kimutai Kosgei, an IBM representative, calls Sote Hub CEO his mentor dating back to his time at university. They share a passion and an interest in software and remain in touch. Jimmy has learned and grown from this relationship, and their relationship facilitated a professional partnership between IBM and Sote Hub. **Jimmy Kimutai Kosgei - Technical Lead for IBM Skills Initiatives. SC**
8. Sote Hub is part of Afrilabs - an association of hubs and incubators in Africa. This platform has enabled Sote Hub to access free training content, resources and the latest info around private equity funds. Our young innovators have been able to tap into this reservoir and benefited from funding and sound business strategies. **David Ogiga – CEO, Sote Hub. SC, GSIN-A**

9. Future First creates alumni associations for high schools. One alumni association spearheaded an endowment fund to the tune of 250 Million Kenya shillings. From the CEO's perspective, these associations quickly develop and take root once they are able to meet the needs of the diverse age groups of their members. *Pauline Wanja – CEO, Future First. GSIN-A*
10. Kenya Women Microfinance Bank (KWFT) has 0.8 Million clients spread across 241 offices in 45 counties. The client base is largely derived from groups and networks of women and youth, based on friendship, community and referrals. These groups grow financially, and as a result the organization has grown in stature and portfolio. Continuity has been a key element here, facilitated by the different age cohorts building mentorship relationships between themselves. *Elsie, Njeru - Social Performance Manager, KWFT. SC, GSIN-A, CI*
11. The Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) has been in existence for 60 years and attracts members who share a vision and have a purpose of continuity. Members have enabled KAM to lobby the government to reduce registration fees for manufacturers and also secure a 40% quota of the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities for local manufacturers. *Samuel Mutisya - Regional & Devolution Affairs Manager, KAM. GSIN-A, GSIN-P, CI*
12. The Ashoka Fellows reach, engage, and train students in school and colleges. Target youth are carefully identified and then they are connected to Ashoka fellows for training. These teens then recommend other teens to join, reaching marginalized and remote communities. Teen/peer connections are important for teens' perception and engagement in social networks. *Bryan Chesoli Wanyama, Youth Program Lead, Ashoka East Africa. SC, GSIN-C, GSIN-A*
13. Ashoka's youth focused program (Youth Year's Program) engages young people through convening, boot camps and partnerships with youth-serving (championing) organizations. By sharing tools aimed at shifting their mindset, and creating spaces for young people to learn about changemaking, collaborate and co-create solutions, we are ensuring that they get to know about the change maker skills - empathy, new leadership, teamwork and change making itself. *Bryan Chesoli Wanyama, Youth Program Lead Ashoka East Africa. GSIN-C, SC*
14. David Ogiga co-founded Sote Hub which trains cohorts of 200-500 entrepreneurs and chairs the Association of Countrywide Innovation Hubs that has membership of 20 hubs in Kenya. The Association's mandate is to promote activities and programs of innovation hubs outside Nairobi and supporting their vision of testing and building impactful businesses across Kenya. In the innovation space, donors are attracted to large urban centers and the Association creates visibility and gives a voice to hubs outside these urban centers. This is an example of a network striving to help partners increase their impact and achieve synergies. *David Ogiga – CEO, Sote Hub. GSIN-A, CI*
15. The Kenya Girl Guides was created 99 years ago and is a member of the largest global association of students/girls. The association offers mentorship in leadership, linking adults to youth. The Association achieves sustainability by training teachers and participants drawn from schools and government pays for public schools to participate. The Association benefits schools, education system and the girls participating in the association. KGGA training programs are designed to catalyze the girls and young women's' potential, based on the five guiding values of the Association, namely: dignity; integrity; spiritualism; servant leadership; good citizenship. *Priscilla Gathiga, Kenya Girl Guides Association. GSIN-A*
16. [Networks] create or open up opportunities for youth through advocacy and lobbying for policy change to enhance inclusion and creation of youth friendly services. In addition, KGGA joined the advocacy and lobbying efforts of civil society and others around the 1/3 gender rule in Kenya, requiring one-third of all government positions to be held by women. *Priscilla Gathiga, Kenya Girl Guides Association. GSIN-P*
17. We provide mentorship to young girls in schools and out of school in various areas/fields e.g career choices, entrepreneurship, investments, training and exchange programmes. We have some young girls who have started small businesses and improved their economic status (Hawkers market). Some of the young girls

and young women have got opportunities to work outside Kenya withing the global guide network – employment opportunities. Several girls have benefited from training scholarships. *Priscilla Gathiga, Kenya Girl Guides Association SC, GSIN-C*

18. Most young people from Public schools do not have the social capital to support them with transitions from schools to the world of work and they lack access to upward mobile adults to provide inspiration. Meeting former students helps to change this, boosting young people’s confidence and motivation, and helping to transform their life chances. *Pauline Wanja – Future First (CEO) SC, GSIN-A*
19. Future First Studies show a correlation between learning outcomes and school governance yet most schools in Kenya do not have access to skilled Board of Management. Future First Kenya mobilizes and supports young people to serve in school boards and management committee of their old schools and management committee. This improves school governance and contributes to improved learning outcomes. *Pauline Wanja – Future First Kenya (CEO). GSIN-A*
20. Future First Kenya mobilizes alumni as a resource base for providing relatable roles models, mentorship, career guidance, professional expertise, and sponsorship to students. By fostering the spirit of volunteerism, the networks are beneficial to students and alumni themselves as well as strengthening the public education systems by unlocking much needed social, governance and financial capital. Last year FF’s alumni network mentored approximately 100,000 students and conducted 136 alumni-centred activities and raised 1.7 M USD to support their old school. *Pauline Wanja – CEO, Future First Kenya. SC, GSIN-A*
21. Creating a network of mentorship in the online and future work space has helped to create awareness and open the minds of online workers to the opportunities around internet dependent ways of working. It is demystifying myths and perceptions around online work and demonstrating the various available pathways for them. This may be through applying their existing skills, learning new skills or exploring online business opportunities. *Frida Mwangi – Board Member, Online Platform Workers Association. SC, GSIN-A*
22. Restless Development, Tanzania through the support of the Ford Foundation supported Youth Accountability Advocates (YAA) to build their own accountability networks, skills and capacity in civic issues and political processes. These networks have shown evidence of leading change and responding to the challenges facing young people. Approach used: through YAA, young people identified issues of engagement and owned the process. Youth networks were created and gave an opportunity to young people to practice and demonstrate their leadership skills in their community. As a result, 13 young people were elected in the recent local government elections in Tanzania. Participation of girls - The adaptation was made in order to increase girls’ participation in the project for achieving gender equality has also shown success. YAAs conducted girls-only civic education sessions to make girls feel more comfortable to share their thoughts and aspirations. The increased awareness of civic rights and confidence in expressing themselves, enabled the girls to take leadership roles and are active members of the youth networks.” (This information is derived from a report the organization shared with us.) *Margaret Mliwa – Program Officer, Ford Foundation. GSIN-A, CI*
23. Impacts [of networks]:
 - 1) Co-creation which brings efficiency gains in projects
 - 2) Knowledge exchange among the youth in important and technical areas like finance, products development, opportunities available for young persons.

As the saying goes, your networks is your net worth, the young persons who are using right connections and networks have higher success in getting jobs, business and personal goals met.” *David Ogiga, Sote Hub. SC, GSIN-C*

24. According to MWF Fellow, Akinyi Awora of Jiwo Paro Kenya, the YALI Kisumu campaign against gender-based violence not only created awareness about gender-based violence in the community, but also created an economic empowerment platform for young women. *Akinyi Awora - Jiwo Paro Kenya GSIN – A*

- 25. The Women Business Clubs, a network for women entrepreneurs run in association with Jiwo Paro works to ensure equitable involvement by stakeholders from the entire business ecosystems within which our entrepreneurs operate. The network does not exist outside the ecosystem but rather integrates the different parts in. This ensures that network does not reinforce the same inequalities it is built to counter. *Akinyi Awora - Jiwo Paro Kenya CI*
- 26. Peer learning has been a very effective tool in our networks. For young women the mirror effect of peer learning is a compelling tool for social change especially with young entrepreneurs. Understanding that peers from similar environments have been able to effectively build up towards a different social direction is validation that change can be actualized. *Akinyi Awora - Jiwo Paro Kenya. SC, GSIN - C*



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