



Executive summary

The narrative focuses on exploring and analyzing the impact of Youth in Action's (YiA) mentorship strategy and how it has contributed to youth business development in rural areas of Africa. Key findings in this work include:

Support from community gatekeepers ensures smooth program implementation and minimizes program challenges: Parents can play a key role in mentorship programs, including monitoring mentorship relationships and serving as mentors themselves. Community stakeholders can also play a key role, including selecting mentors, verifying suggested mentors, and ensuring the safety of the youth.

Inclusive gender intervention is significant for the success of mentorship relationships: Gender is a vital consideration in youth livelihood programming. Intentionally designing and implementing mentorship programs with gender lenses is most likely to yield positive results. YiA findings show that access to both female and male mentors in a livelihood program creates an opportunity where youth can access positive role models within their communities to help them succeed in their businesses.

Peer-to-peer mentorship motivates and sustains youth's business drive: Peer-to-peer mentorship is a unique approach that provides added benefits as compared to singular adult business mentorship. Peer-to-peer mentorship was reported to be more popular and successful by many YiA youth.

Ensuring mentor competencies is key for program quality: Evidence from YiA shows that training of mentors is one of the key ingredients for the success of the mentorship relationship. Mentors need to be trained before they are matched with the youth and the programs should provide refresher trainings.

Monitoring is a key ingredient of successful mentorship: Monitoring mentorship relationships is vital because it ensures that commitments between mentors and youth are kept.

Successful mentorship relationships continue to exist after graduation: Findings show that there is a strong likelihood that YiA mentorship relationships continue after graduation.