



YOUTH UNSTUCK

Social Innovations
Transforming Livelihoods
and Leadership in Africa

SOCIAL INNOVATION GUIDE - EXCERPT

A collaboration between:



FIGURE A

Six Paradigm Shifts for Transforming Youth Employment and Leadership



Social Innovators: Tackling the Root Causes of Youth Unemployment

The planners of youth employment interventions frequently consider the large macro-economic forces that inhibit a significant percentage of young people's access to productive, long-term and meaningful work in Africa. These interventionists encourage foreign direct investment, believing that it is a lack of capital that explains why formal job creation is slow and inconsistent. Some of their interventions focus on training programs to meet the needs of private sector employers who complain of a lack of skilled talent.

These are all meaningful interventions, but the ineffectiveness of existing employment policies, the systemic

cultural, social and political barriers preventing young people from engaging meaningfully in their own development, and the persistent mismatch between education and the job market were the most commonly flagged societal challenges cited by the network engaged for this innovation guide. The following pages offer lessons learned from interviews and case studies of over 45 leading African social innovators in 17 countries, with an increased emphasis on models. Each was convened through the Ashoka Future Forward network, and learnings were further gathered through engagement and listening sessions among a broader network of leaders at youth serving organizations spanning 43 of the 54 African countries (Fig. B-D).

FIGURE B.

Map: Future Forward Innovation Network in Africa

Social entrepreneurs, program managers, and school leaders in over 43 countries have received awards or attended collaboration events dedicated to discovery and supporting transformative efforts for solving youth employment challenges. Models with notable scale and impact are cited more frequently from South Africa throughout the guide given Ashoka's first presence in Africa was in South Africa.

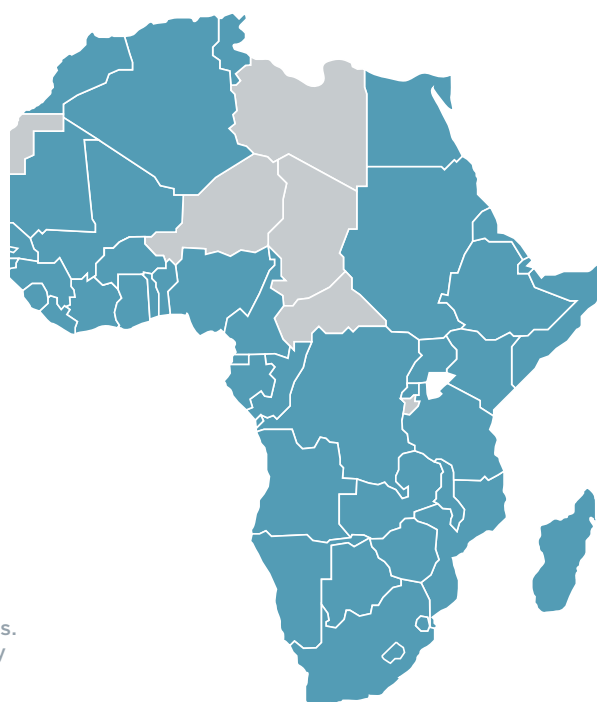


FIGURE C

Future Forward Innovation Network by Sub-Region

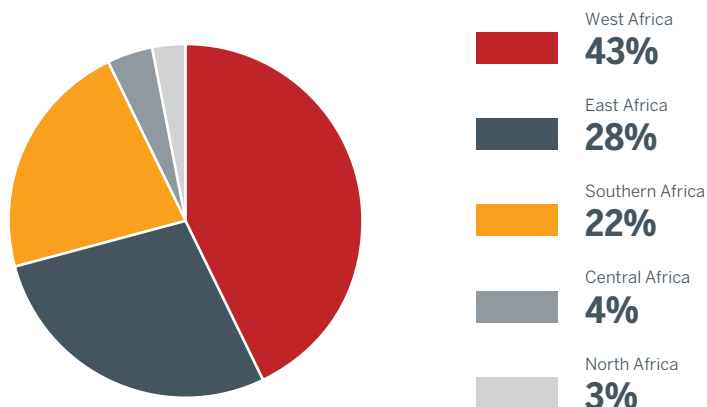


FIGURE D

Future Forward Innovators in Focus: Sectorally Diverse

The following chart features the sectoral focus of 324 social entrepreneurs within the network, particularly those elected as Ashoka Fellows that focus on youth development in Africa.



FIGURE E

Benefits to Youth for Discovering Purpose

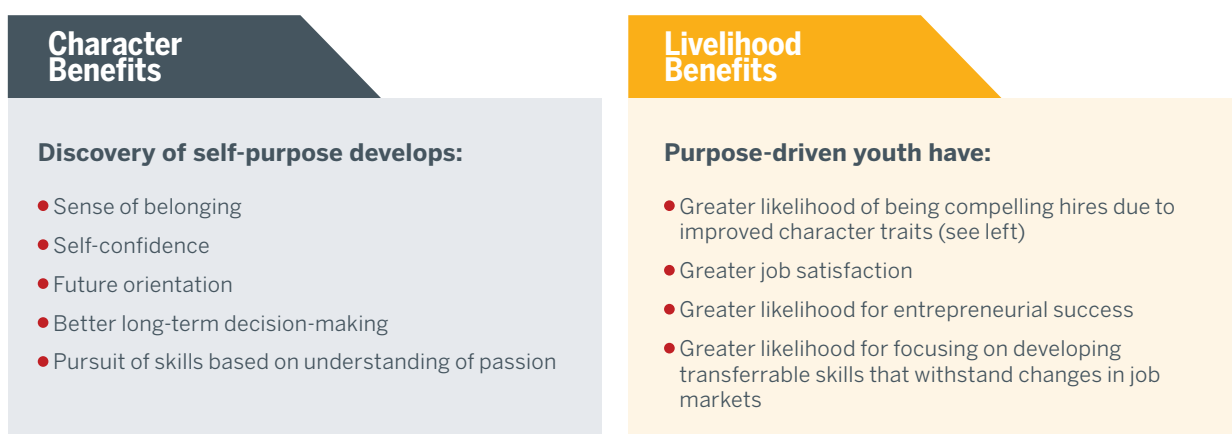


FIGURE F

Framework for Transformative Youth Leadership

The following four interrelated components are common across social innovators' models that excel at achieving employment and entrepreneurship outcomes and are explicitly designed to trust youth to lead.



YOUTH LEADERSHIP ROLES

Youth leadership must move beyond young people being given token positions. Being youth ambassadors and sitting on boards, for instance, are good positions to have, but the most effective Youth Leadership Roles create opportunities for youth to make real decisions such as on resources, strategy, and policies, have their voices heard consistently, and engage as active and meaningful contributors to their communities. One common approach to making this possible: cross-generational or peer-to-peer teams that work together to solve concrete issues.



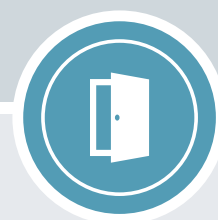
ADULT CHAMPIONS

Being an effective Adult Champion is a delicate dance. Youth need to be given supportive structures without having their independence crushed, guidance that isn't just lectures, and encouragement to explore new careers without feeling forced. Adult Champions are those who carefully craft opportunities for youth to practice leadership, trust them with responsibility, and expect and welcome youth's mistakes as teachable moments.



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

It's the new, old way of learning: experience. Experiential Learning brings education to life by providing real-world opportunities and hands-on projects. It ensures that what youth are learning is truly relevant to market and community needs, and that it sparks youth's discovery of how they want to contribute to the world as professionals. The best types of experiential learning opportunities are also designed to accommodate additional support to underperforming students and adjust for differing levels of learning.



ADULT APPROACHABILITY

If you're not speaking the language of passion and energy, you're not speaking the language of the youth. Cultural relevancy, emotional literacy, flexible timing, and energetic engagement are all needed for adults to be truly accessible to youth. Accessibility does not have to mean one adult that meets all these needs nor do adults have to be on call 24/7, but it does mean that youth feel comfortable engaging adults at the times that they are struggling the most, and especially when they are struggling with non-academic pressures.

FIGURE G

Youth Trusted to Lead: Examples Across Every Age Group



Early Education

■ **Uganda Rural Development & Training Program (URDT) Girls Primary School, Uganda**

- students identify issues to tackle outside of school, develop action plans to work on during the holidays and define accountability.

■ **Solid Base Private Schools, Nigeria**

- A parliament is led by a new student speaker each year. Students participate in decision making, including in how their school runs as a whole.

■ **Imhoff Waldorf School, South Africa**

- students manage the school's 100% solar power-run energy system.

■ **Kairos School of Inquiry, Southern Africa**

- students utilize a school currency, Kairosses, to initiate mini-businesses with each other, an idea created by the learners themselves.

■ **Equal Education, South Africa**

- High school students have a leading role in research-based advocacy for education reforms.

■ **Cool Clubs, Zimbabwe**

- Students in two schools in each of ten provinces design, launch, and operate community-based responses to environmental problems, including income-generating opportunities.

■ **MOMI (Model Mission Assistance) Africa, Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana, Gabon, and Cape Verde**

- organizes young people into cohorts around a particular vocation that interests the entire group. Group members work with the organization to design their curriculum, tailoring the training to their interests and geographical context.

■ **2020 Microclinics Initiative, Kenya**

- trains and employs youth to provide technical support in health clinics, aiming to ensure the health system operates at 90% optimal levels.

Out of School or Post-Graduate Youth

■ **Africa Yoga Project, Kenya**

- identify and enroll the communities for health classes and facilitate classes within contributes to each student's 200-hour requirement, and is a powerful way to develop leadership skills among students to prepare for their launch as independent professionals.

■ **Village Energy, Uganda**

- youth are trained as solar technicians and supported to set up their own businesses to boost access, affordability, and trust in solar energy via a retail shop network to fix and sell solar products in rural Uganda.

Higher Education

■ **Maharishi Institute, South Africa**

- students manage the campus, mentor younger students, and provide support services to the community, including teaching.

Secondary Education



A5. Acknowledgements

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