



Boosting an Industrious Young Africa

9-11 October 2019 - Kigali, Rwanda



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.





Boosting an Industrious Young Africa



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Abbreviations & Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
AU	African Union
AU-YVC	African Union Youth Volunteer Corps
AUC	African Union Commission
CFTA	Continental Free Trade Area
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
MINIYOUTH	Ministry of Youth
YCA	YouthConnekt Africa

Introduction

Africa's greatest resource is arguably its nearly 420 million youth. Yet, this tremendous asset is relatively untapped. This is largely due to limited access to education, mentorship, finance, employment opportunities and health required to meaningfully participate in the continent's socio-economic transformation and realize the economic dividend.

The YouthConnekt program is a multifaceted youth empowerment model Initiated in Rwanda in 2012 to focus and leverage youth employability, entrepreneurship and civic engagement through innovation. Building on its positive impact in Rwanda, the programme has been embraced as a high-impact solution for African countries to realize the demographic dividend. To date, sixteen countries have already launched YouthConnekt and many others are in the process of implementing the model under the YouthConnekt Africa umbrella. YouthConnekt Africa is projected to empower at least 1.2 million African youth entrepreneurs and leaders annually.

The inaugural YouthConnekt Africa Summit, took place from 19 -21 July 2017 in Kigali, Rwanda and was hosted by His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda. It brought together international government leaders, multinational business executives, youth entrepreneurs, artists and youth opinion leaders to tap into Africa's enormous potential by connecting youth with the skills, education and opportunities needed for building a new generation of problem solvers. The Summit resulted in the following three key recommendations:

1. Scaling up of the YouthConnekt initiative to the regional level beyond the current 6 countries.
2. The establishment of the YouthConnekt Africa Hub, based in Kigali-Rwanda to provide regional support to national youth programs.
3. The establishment of the YouthConnekt Empowerment Fund, which will seek to finance youth empowerment initiatives across the continent. The Hub and the Fund will support the expansion of the programme to other countries as well as South-South Cooperation and knowledge sharing.



YouthConnekt Africa Summit 2019



“ YouthConnekt means a lot of things. It means individual young people, irrespective of gender, religion, borders, coming together to do what is important for them and for society and for our countries.

H.E. Paul Kagame - President of the Republic of Rwanda



“ Events such as YouthConnekt Summit bring together great, young and eager minds from diverse nations and different experiences seeking to solve key common issues that affect us and our continent.

H.E. Jeannette Kagame - First Lady of the Republic of Rwanda



” YouthConnekt Africa Summit provides a platform for all partners involved in youth development to synergize around policies, programmes and partnerships that will connect youth to continental transformation.

Hon. Rosemary Mbabazi - Minister of Youth and Culture, Republic of Rwanda



” I genuinely believe that if each one of you creative, talented, smart, enterprising young people leaves here after these three days with a commitment to take the lead in creating the Africa we all want and believe possible, we will own the 21st century

Ahunna Eziakonwa - Assistant Secretary General and Director of UNDP Africa Bureau

Summary of Sessions

Designing the Future: Youth Driving SDGs



Africa is the youngest continent in the world, with 226 million young people. It is anticipated that the number will increase by 42% by 2030 & 50% by 2055. To pave the way for prosperous Africa, youth must be encouraged to lead the process of change and developing their own ways to contribute in sustainable development. Considering the youth bulge that various African countries are facing ; this plenary session highlights the role of youth in achieving Africa's SDG goals. It will facilitate discussion on how African youth can serve as a driving force to identify innovative solutions to local problems.

This session engaged young entrepreneurs, youth volunteers, policy experts, community leaders, and youth-led organizations to exchange experiences, skills, inspiring stories, and innovative programmes contributing to scale-up the SDGs. It created and harnessed partnerships, provided policy recommendations to educate, empower, and support youth-led initiatives that positively impact Africa's SDG mandate.

A particular emphasis was put on 3Ps: People (recognition of those who are influencers and give them the stage through platforms such as African Influencers for Development (AID); Platforms to connect with those who can help each other (i.e. YouthConnekt Africa); and Products: Africa business map; the digitization of opportunities, as well as 3Es: Education, especially for the girl child; Entrepreneurship and job creation, how they are created by the youth without waiting for help; and Empowerment: courage that empowerment can drive something to fruition.

Summary of Sessions

Alternatives for Youth

Emerging Industries



Around the continent, young people are nearly three times more likely to be unemployed than adults and continuously exposed to lower quality of jobs, greater labour market inequalities, and longer and more insecure school-to-work transitions. The high level of youth unemployment and underemployment is an acute problem. With the majority of unemployed young people living in developing countries. In addition, the high share of youth in precarious and non-decent jobs is alarming. Recognition of this problem and implementation of different programs is aimed at enhancement of youth's ability to make informed life and work choices.

From the 2014 World Bank report, Only 4.5 per cent of the region's working age population is unemployed, with 60 per cent employed. However, rather than indicating a well-functioning labour market, this is because many workers have no choice but to take poor quality work, lacking security, decent pay and social protection. The labour force is projected to expand by more than 14 million per year. Economic growth rates until 2020 are expected to be too low to create enough quality jobs for this fast-growing labour force

The complex challenge to boost productive youth employment can be achieved through a combination of improved employment and economic policies, education and training, labour market policies, promotion of entrepreneurship, and labour rights. This session brought together leading Sectoral Experts, Economists, Business Entrepreneurs, Industrialist, Chambers of Commerce to discuss and guide the youth on exploring alternative and emerging sectors within African economies to create decent jobs, improve exports, develop good human capital, and create economic forward and backward linkages.

Summary of Sessions

Skills for the Future

Aligning Education, Skills and Development



In 2018 Sub-Sahara Africa will be home to the largest working-age population globally (AfDB 2018) and count almost a billion young people. Combined with the relatively low employment elasticity of growth in African countries, this brings with it the challenge to equip the workforce with the right skills for the demand of the labour market as well as with the capacity to create their own jobs through entrepreneurial activity. The 4th Industrial Revolution and increasing automation of work, calls for highly specific skills. It has the potential to create a significant positive impact on the development and increase of productivity of key sectors of growth.

This session discussed which skills are required for the new technologies to achieve that positive impact, where do African economies stand and what are some best practices that can guide in this process. Among the best practices and recommendation discussed is the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, poised to allow the increase of volume and movement of goods and services made in Africa; the establishment of new TVET institutions (e.g: over 150 new TVET institutions with state-of-the-art equipment established across Kenya) that are responding to skills gaps; and the provision of scholarship/bursaries to students in higher learning institutions including TVET institutions.

Among policy recommendations and key actions raised is to re-imagine the education system to make the curriculum problem-solving and equip students with skills that respond to the need on the market (employment and self-employment, increase partnership and collaboration between developed countries and developing countries in data sharing, and a call to Government to support YouthConnekt program and its strategies as well as conceive similar initiatives to create as many opportunities as possible for young Africans.

Summary of Sessions

Turning Passion Into Profit



Promotion of entrepreneurship is essential for a healthy economy, however for sustaining economic prosperity, increase economic efficiency, and improve competitiveness require diversification in entrepreneurial base. In developing countries, entrepreneurship has become one dimensional due to rapid technological advances, ease to access, and promotion of ICT as prioritize sector by the Governments. Resultantly, there is limited integration of Art and Sport, as entrepreneurial activity. Whereas some countries like China and Qatar seeing sport to address socio economic issues, there is little evidence that African countries are about to replicate the same approach.

Globally, Art and Sport entrepreneurship are rapidly emerging areas of entrepreneurship which have direct effects on other sectors including education, tourism, travel, hospitality. It also gives alternative options to create youth employment.

Notorious champions and celebrities such as football legend Didier Drogba, NBA's Amadou Fall and professional athlete Yolanda Ngarambe took part of this session emphasizing thought their success stories that being at the top requires faith, determination and hard work. Droba further highlighted that passion combined with skill and dedication can transform passion into a source of living, "My first challenge was my dad who never wanted me to play football and at that time, no one believed that football can be a source of living. Another thing was the several injuries that affected me often at a young age," he said. On the other hand, Yolanda Ngarambe stated that "Most of the success stories aren't linear, because at times you have to go through challenges. But you need to have people around you for support, and make sure you work hard, be patient and believe in yourself,"

Summary of Sessions

Pathways to Development

Civic Engagement and Volunteerism



Civic engagement and volunteerism are sustainable pathways to development. Mostly the contribution and work of young people is driven by volunteerism and altruistic passion to transform the planet as a better place. Through volunteer efforts, young people across the world complementing their governments in achieving SDGs by delivering basic health care, education, water and sanitation services to under-served populations. Beyond extending improved community services and responding in crisis, they also build strong social capital, exchange new skills, knowledge, and improve cross-cultural understandings.

In her opening remarks, H.E. Jeannette Kagame, the First Lady of the Republic of Rwanda highlighted the importance to ⁸discuss and exchange ideas on increased civic engagement and volunteerism, walk away with a stronger sense of the role and responsibility of each one of us towards the transformation of our respective countries, and the need to give time, space and support to youth, as the foremost civic engagers and volunteers.

During this session, panelists told their stories. James, a VSO Volunteer, went back to his community and established a computer room for girls who used to travel to Nairobi. Isabelle, the Founder of Solid Africa and recipient of CYRWA and Africa Women leader enjoyed going to hospitals, talking to the patients to understand their needs, and distribute meals to the patients. Up-to-day she has distributed over one million meals. Brown, a volunteer living with disability trained teens about Family Planning and Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Healthy. Finally football legend Didier Drogba shared his story, relating to volunteering to take action, where he used his fame and experience in football where he divided to start raising funds for people in need.

Summary of Sessions

Connected Girls

Sparkling the Her-Volution in STEM : What it takes



Today, the world economies are depending on new technologies where innovations are backed by science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). In Africa, more educated, higher-income and younger men are more likely to go online, own a mobile phone, own a smartphone, and use social media websites. These are all lost opportunities for women. For positive and fast change to happen, it is paramount to put women in control of educating and empowering themselves, starting at a young age, to take action on key issues that affect their lives and become change-makers today. Young women need interventions beyond discussions to influence their empowerment and enable them to be an integral part of today's digital economy.

Among the key policy actions and recommendation of this sessions is for African governments to bring then gender gap by increasing women's access to STEM education to bridge the gender gap in STEM employment, enhance awareness of STEM education for girls and women, create and develop girls and women's mindsets and confidence around technology and STEM subjects and provide role models that girls can be linked to as successful industry examples; Shifting the conversation from policy, to community; Including traditional parents and governments in the conversation; Retaining women in the STEM work force; and increase resources and support to increase girls and women confidence in pursuing STEM education and employment paths.

This session also marked the celebration of the International Day of the Girl Child, and the registration of football legend Didier Drogba as a HeforShe, a solidarity campaign for the advancement of gender equality initiated by UN, joining the coalition of strong men who support women empowerment.

Summary of Sessions

Youth Well-Being & Economic Growth

Unpacking the links between a healthy, youthful society and economic growth



Africa is on the march towards a more prosperous future in which all its citizens are empowered to realize their full potential. A future with healthy, well educated people living in robust and developed economies. With 60% of Africa's population currently 24, investments made today in the youth, Africa's greatest asset, will determine the development trajectory of Africa over the next 50 years and position the continent towards realizing the 'Africa We Want,' a strong, united and influential global player and partner as envisioned in Agenda 2063.

The extent to which African governments are able to transform education and skills development, health and wellbeing, empowerment as well as employment and entrepreneurship, lies at the heart of this march towards progress, sustainable peace and development. In addition to the fact that there is an intrinsic value of health and that health is a human right, the panel will argue about the economic case for investing in health, in particular Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, focusing on what harnessing the Demographic Dividend really means, population dynamics, health human resources and important investments in the social determinants of health.

Among the key policy recommendations of this session is that the political commitments especially on Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health (ASRH) should be addressed so that more adolescents can receive information on SRHR; All the government in African countries should commit to equip with law on Gender Based Violence (GBV) including child marriage as it is still absent in 24 countries; Governments of African countries should establish health insurance system so that even the most vulnerable people can access to health system; and as the health sector itself cannot resolve the challenges, joint collaboration with different ministries should be done and the government should invest in health to align with Abuja declaration.

Summary of Sessions

Urban YouthConnekt

Youth Innovations as Drivers of Urban Peace and Resilience in Africa



The 2019 Urban YouthConnekt Session provided a platform for partners involved in urban youth development to synergize around policies, programs and partnerships that connect urban youth for continental transformation. The 2019 Urban YouthConnekt session provides a deliberate urban youth perspective that will focus on youth innovations in fragile states towards peace and resilience in cities. UN-Habitat's policy and programming in Somalia, South Sudan, Rwanda, DRC and Kenya among other countries with various stakeholders is/has been at the forefront of urban resilience transformative models in Africa as a best practice that resonates to this year's summit theme "Boosting a Young Industrious Africa."

Among opportunities and best practices of this session is that South-South Cooperation can provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning, exchange, and knowledge and skills sharing. An example is that of cooperation between youth from South Sudan and youth from Latin America, brought together to exchange on what makes them resilient and to find out which strategies each group is using to cope; the need for building capacity of National Youth Councils for learning and share best practices and models of engagement with government while also representing youth needs in their country's context; and the need of additional innovative financing mechanisms to support young people dreams, passions such as crowdsourcing is needed in Africa.

During this session, the panelists also emphasized the need of platforms through which best practices can be drawn by learning from youth councils/other youth civil societies in different countries; the integration of economies in specific sectors, enabling learning from other countries that share similar social or economic conditions; and the formalization and recognition of the creative economy.

Summary of Sessions

Agripreneurship

Engaging Youth in Agricultural Value Chains



Cultivating youth entrepreneurship in agricultural value chains is critical to economies in Africa, but the world over. Increasing the participation of young people in agri-food sector value chains could be a vital means of creating jobs, improving productivity, modernizing agriculture, slow down rural-urban migration, and reducing dependency on imported food. It also provides real lift to the rural economy and empowerment of rural youth.

In this session, young Agriprenuers shared their journeys from farm to enterprise. Along with inspiring young entrepreneurs, the session engaged experts from public, private, and development sector to have informed discussion on development of food and agricultural value chains and how youth can be engaged.

Among the topics discussed is the need to start a youth focused department within the ministries of Agriculture; support startups to go beyond the first five years (most startups do not survive the first year, let alone the first five years); create sustainable, long lasting enterprises that big companies and ministries need to support; Provide youths with start-up kits and easy access to finance even when they lack collateral. The diversity within the youth population also calls for the creation of alternative pathways and diversity within the agricultural sector and create opportunities for youths to meet with Agri-investors.

Summary of Sessions

Youth and the Digital Economy



With Africa's digital economy taking off exponentially, the youth must ready themselves to maximize the potential dividends of new technologies. Many developing countries have taken leaps towards achieving full potential of economic growth by combining transformative power of technology and youth. Many African countries have already started on the path toward a digital economy. Senegal has set a target of generating 10 percent of its GDP from the digital economy, Rwanda has rolled out 4G and fiber connectivity to deliver online e-government. Kenya has been a pioneer in mobile money and is exporting its model and has recently launched a Digital Economy blueprint. Regardless of the numerous benefits of the digital economy, these cannot be attained without tapping into Africa's youth. The cost of infrastructure, e-commerce, digital transactions and connectivity must be made attainable.

This session sparked conversation among young entrepreneurs, policy makers, digital evangelists, technologists, AI experts, futurists and representatives from the tech industry from across Africa and beyond. The discussion also explored the needs of digital economy and Africa's global positioning in the tech economy and prepare young people to access employment opportunities in the fourth industrial revolution.

Among the actions and recommendations of this session is that those who have faced digital trap should join vocation trainings to acquire the basic digital skills for them to fit in this pace environment driven by digital means; identify ways of communicating to young people should be changed that is using social media platforms other than using TV (Television) channels; and lastly African countries should promote made in Africa, made by Africans and consumed by Africans.

Summary of Sessions

YouthConnekt Africa Awards

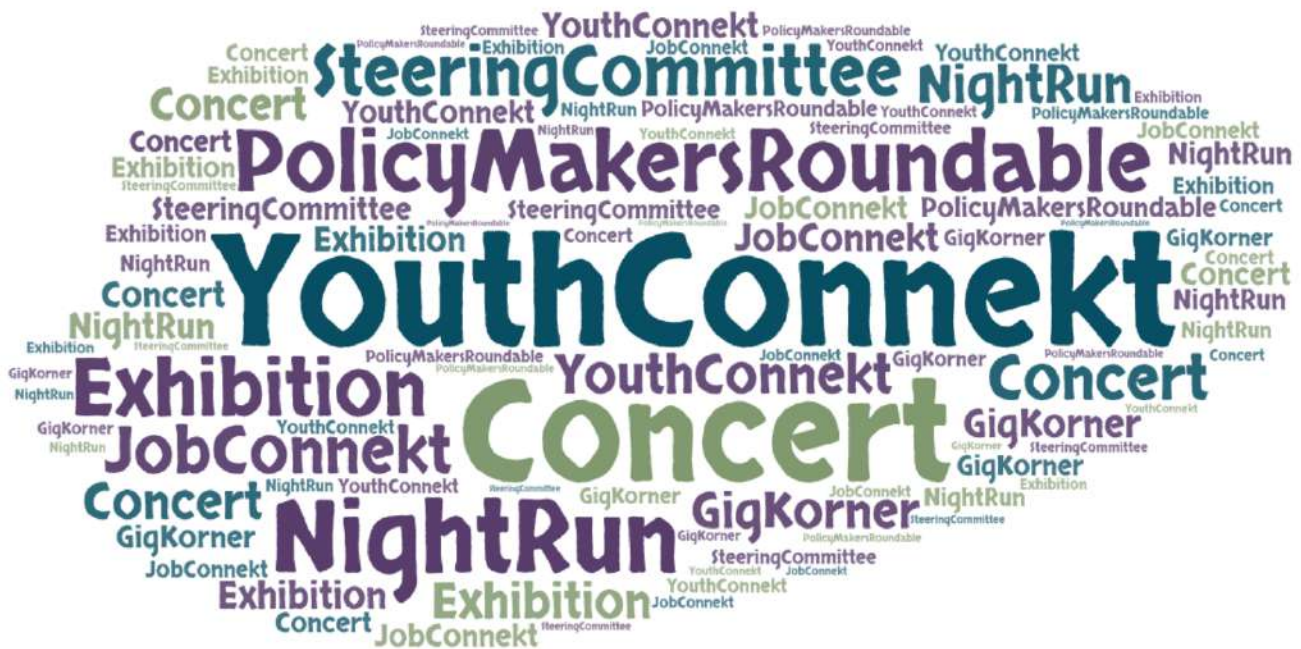


The **2019 YouthConnekt Africa Awards** was organized under the 2019 YouthConnekt Africa Summit that occurred from 08th to 11th October in Kigali. The YCA Awards aimed to honor outstanding achievements by young African innovators. Awards were presented during the closing ceremony of the Summit;. The four categories were; i) Innovative Female Contribution (Girls in Innovation Award), ii) Access to technology, innovation, and ICT (Digital Inclusion Award, iii) Economic Development (Pioneers for Prosperity Award) and iv) Social Development (Social Innovation Award) with corresponding Awards:

A call for nominations was circulated for youth across the continent to apply or be nominated. In total 730 nominations/applications from 47 AU Countries were received (208 females, 508 males and 14 non-specified). A team of 16 evaluators from 13 Partner Institutions have been involved in the evaluation process to select 5 finalists in each category (20 in total), 12 Young innovators (4 females and 8 males) from 9 Countries {3 Kenya, 1 Zimbabwe, 1 Uganda, 1 Cameroon, 1 Chad, 1 Senegal, 2 Rwanda, 1 Tanzania, 1 DR Congo} were selected and invited for the YCA Awards Bootcamp in Kigali.

At the Boot Camp a team of seasoned facilitators from partner from DOT Rwanda and Maarifa Africa prepared the finalists for the final pitching and awarding ceremonies. On 8th October 2019, a team of 11 judges were involved to judge the and selected the winners and the runs up of the 2019 Youthconnekt Africa Award. Under the guidance of MINICYOUTH and UNDP, Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) Rwanda was the overall coordinator of the youthconnekt Africa Award and was backed by BDF. Key highlights of the 2019 Youthconnekt Africa Award that attracted 730 youth (208 females, 508 males and 14 non-specified) from 47 AU countries.

Others Sessions & Activities





Our Partners





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