

youthplus

Young People Active in the Community



Strategy 2020-2030

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Background and Context

There is a deepening gap in supporting and mentoring youth involvement in the development process in Uganda. The system in Uganda is not fully developed immersed into the livelihoods of Uganda's youth. young people are left vulnerable to a system that isn't able to meet them where they are or ensure there are clear pathways of support that they can easily access.

Uganda has one of the youngest populations of the world. It has a total population of around 45 million with half of it below 15 years. It is estimated that over a million young Ugandans enter the job market each year. There is high unemployment especially amongst the youth because there are no decent employment opportunities to absorb the new workers each year.

Most youth are employed in the informal sector either as workers or entrepreneurs, which by a large extent is driven by necessity, rather than opportunity. This includes rural communities that are characterised by mostly smallholder farmers involved in subsistence farming and do not run their farms as a business.

COVID-19 has truly changed the world and has negatively impacted on the livelihoods of the youth in Uganda.

Youth need more support and guidance in the face of the triple crises of poverty, climate change and COVID-19.

There is need for recovery programs that have impact and lasting positive impact on the livelihoods of the youth

Challenges facing the Youth in Uganda

Uganda has a population of over 30 million youth and they are certainly the future and anchor for Uganda's growth and development. Uganda is experiencing a phenomenon where the youth are more vulnerable than ever to issues such as poverty, sexual exploitation, grooming and gender-based violence.

Young people are also more likely to be exposed to negative and risky activities, with increasing reports of youth engagement in gang activity, anti-social behaviour, negative online activity, substance misuse and risk-taking behaviours that have lasting negative impact on their sexual and reproductive health rights and lives.

This is partly due to the fact that youth in Uganda are experiencing challenges in accessing safe and reliable employment and are therefore suffering from the financial consequences of this.

Uganda's national unemployment rate is 9.2%. The unemployment rate for youth aged 18 – 30 is 13.3% and the rate is higher in cities and towns. Urban youth are more likely to be unemployed than rural youth, young women are twice as likely to be unemployed as young men, and youth who have completed tertiary education are more likely to be jobless than those with only primary education because they do not want to take on low income informal jobs that the economy is ready to provide.

There is a general lack of systems and facilities across board that can act as anchors and compasses to guide youth. Uganda needs to develop a critical mechanism of support for youth through a well-coordinated multisector response. It could be a good catalyst for the socio-economic transformation of the youth and society in general.

Uganda is also a destination and source of youthful refugees and both face challenges that need to be addressed with a whole-of society approach with the youth taking centre stage in addressing these problems.

It is because of this background that YOUTHPLUS in the next decade would like to contribute to 4 priority areas that will ensure better outcomes for the youth in Uganda.

Challenging Inequality

The next 10 years of Youthplus will focus on building dialogue and understanding between youth and decision-makers as an integral part in community transformation.

We will direct the youth in developing solutions, facilitating dialogue, policy shift and knowledge management on challenging inequality on the following sub-themes.

Health—Migration— Unemployment— Climate Change—Participation and Governance

These issues affect the youth in all communities across Uganda in different ways. The next 10 years will be a chance for us to look at these. Our knowledge management, catalysing solutions, leadership development and policy work will in particular provide plenty of opportunities for the youth and stakeholders to explore these themes in depth.

Key Priority Areas for this Strategy

1. Engagement, Participation and Advocacy - Amplify youth voices for the promotion of a peaceful, just and sustainable Uganda

YOUTHPLUS will mobilise and empower the youth to advocate for key stakeholders including government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), local governments, and the donor community to transform the way in which they engage young people nationally and locally, and apply the principles of meaningful and sustainable youth participation in their work.

2. Informed and Healthy Livelihoods - Support youth access to quality education and health services in Uganda.

Advocate for quality education to ensure universal access to quality education; develop and deliver quality and inclusive education for youth that is learner-centered, adopts a lifelong learning approach, is relevant to their lives and the social,

3. Economic Empowerment through Decent Work - Support youth access to decent work and productive employment

4. Protect and promote the rights of young people and support their civic and political engagement

YOUTHPLUS will strengthen knowledge production and management systems; inspiring and cultivating leaders, policy engagement and catalysing solutions.

We want to be a credible source of expertise on youth development and engagement; and facilitate evidence-based awareness on the realities and needs of the youth in Uganda.

YOUTHPLUS will achieve this through

- **Building a comprehensive data tool** for monitoring national progress in youth development using NDPIII, National Youth Strategy, SDG, WPAY, and other indicators, with continued efforts to expand the availability of disaggregated data.
- **Online knowledge platform:** Develop a repository with easy access to all youth-related knowledge and programmes in Uganda; this will be a clearinghouse of good practices, case studies, research material.
- **Youth Academy:** We will organize an annual Youth Academy bringing together diverse stakeholders to discuss youth realities, trends and prospects while sharing knowledge and experiences.
- **Building a Youth research agenda:** We will mobilise the youth to identify subjects of interest in research, including challenges and potentials of youth in Uganda.
- **Youth Innovation Labs:** Drawing on accurate diagnostics, convene multi-stakeholders working group at the country-level to reflect on innovative solutions to existing challenges.
- **Youth-led innovation:** Provide targeted and enabling support to youth-led pilots new models and interventions for solutions. We will disseminate results widely
- Organise **policy forums** and facilitating dialogue between the youth and government

What we will achieve by 2025

We will work together with partners to:

- Ensure that youth have access to sustained funding and quality development programmes and services.
- Bring leaders and youth together to share, grow expertise and solve key issues. Grow the evidence base of what works; working with others to embed learning and scale service provision.
- Enable a nationwide ecosystem that supports youth.
- Youth development content/experiences are high quality and led by the recognised needs of youth through youth led decision making.
- There is effective collaboration and problem solving between young people, policy makers and the sectors working with young people.