



YALI REGIONAL
LEADERSHIP CENTER
EAST AFRICA • NAIROBI

Issue 6

THE LEADING EDGE

An Update for Partners and Stakeholders





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Art Planet Academy:

Improving food security through
climate-smart agriculture

By Ahumuza Ignatius,
Uganda (Cohort 14)



Born in a large family of 18 children in a small poverty-ridden village in Masindi, Uganda, my family depended on peasant farming for our livelihood. This automatically made my siblings and me farmers by birth, leaving us with no other career choices.

This however turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Backed by my past experiences as a son of a peasant farmer, I was inspired to start the Art Planet Academy in 2015 when I was just 19 years old. By then, the Academy was simply an initiative that promoted agriculture within educational institutions through embracing waste recycling. As such, learners used to recycle waste like sacks and car tires into planting material by filling them with soil and using decomposable waste such as kitchen refuse recycled to form manure.

My admission to the YALI program was an eye opener to the importance of passion in one's career path. The YALI effect after attending the program evolved Art Planet Academy into something bigger and better!

The systematic arrangement of the YALI activities and syllabus prompted me to self-reflect not only about my life, but also about my organization and therefore devise means of improving each of these aspects. The key lessons from the training I received at the Center that I always infuse in my business is to create solutions with my beneficiaries and following up on my commitments. Equipped with this knowledge from the YALI Program, we were able to re-model, form a strong team and realize real impact.

Before joining YALI, I had a group of 12 trainers from one university and was working with only 18 schools, training 50 children per school every 3 months. This meant a total of 2700 learners a year. After joining YALI, I realized the importance of forming reliable teams, networking and forming partnerships. It's upon these lessons that when I came back to Uganda, I strengthened my team by forming partnerships with one more university, which increased the number of volunteer trainers to 40. Through these volunteers, we've been able to reach 44 schools training 6600 learners in just 10 months. We are now considering to recruit high school leavers as interns so they can become our volunteer trainers during their vacations. This is so due to their availability and reliability.

To date, Art Planet Academy has grown into an agricultural college and hub that creates climate smart agricultural innovations, tests them at the center of agricultural innovations and then incorporates them into a practical agriculture training curriculum. This curriculum is used to train people in the usage and application of climate-smart agricultural practices at the center.

Because of this continued self-motivation, early this year, I was nominated as one of Africa's top 15 young entrepreneurs by the Anisha Prize which is Africa's premier award for her youngest entrepreneurs run by the African Leadership Academy and the MasterCard Foundation. Of these 15 entrepreneurs, I was awarded as the best agricultural entrepreneur and my company won the award of the best Agricultural Enterprise in Africa.

Bailab:

Providing Financial Literacy to Entrepreneurs



By Marius Gnaliss-Rafai

Central Africa Republic
(Cohort 3)

The history of Be-Africa Innovation Lab (Bailab) cannot be told without mentioning the YALI Regional Leadership Center East Africa.

In 2007, I was appointed as Loan & Risk Analyst at the Commercial Bank Centrafrique (CBCA). During my four years with the bank, I reviewed thousands of loans requests, interacted with small and medium business owners and felt their motivations, their frustrations and their experiences. Through these interactions, I came to realize that informal management without any record keeping is one of the biggest hurdles of having optimal experience of accessing funding and dealing with the financial management and other important business stakeholders.

I later joined the National Program to Fight Malaria under the Global Funds to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria grant. As the financial and accounting manager, I also realized that the main cause of project failures and misunderstanding between the Local Fund Agent of the grant and the project team was the data recording and reporting.

Being admitted into the third cohort of the YALI Regional Leadership Center East Africa program in November 2015 was a golden opportunity to advance my entrepreneurship aspiration of helping other young people to succeed in their own business. My YALI RLC EA experience transformed this budding desire into Be-Africa Innovation Lab (Bailab), a consulting business providing entrepreneurial and financial literacy support to business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. I was mostly motivated to begin this initiative after the Design Driven Entrepreneurship and the pitch classes. So far, 11 businesses have benefited from our services.



When I decided to dive into entrepreneurship, my purpose was about seizing opportunities to make money. Today, I am driven by a higher purpose, a vision toward a legacy for my community, for Central African Republic, for Africa. That is one of the amazing paradigm shifts in my daily life since my experience in the Center.

Show Me Waste Cooking Oil and I'll Make You Soap!

By Joseph Ngugi Nyambura

Kenya (Cohort 7)



Being a professional psychologist, I started by interning with Kenya Probation Services at Milimani High Court, Nairobi. I quit later to follow my desire of promoting entrepreneurial culture among youth as a tool to eradicate unemployment in Kenya.

This desire was given a big boost by my training at the YALI RLC East Africa. I have also been so fortunate as to attend the Mandela Washington Fellowship and reap the full benefits of the larger YALI initiative.

I am the founder and CEO of Cleanstar Limited, a soap manufacturing company. We manufacture soap from waste cooking oils collected from hotels. Previously these oils had been disposed of in the sewer system and to water streams and soil. Cleanstar has come in to preserve the environment by converting the waste oil into raw material for high quality soap which has the ability to form lather easily with hard water. It is affordable to low income earners and for multipurpose use. The company is incubated at the Chandaria Business Incubation and Innovation Center.

Before joining YALI Cleanstar was doing a cold process manufacturing by using steel made trays. I used to make 45 bars in a day, serving about 70 retail customers. I had no single employee and not even a production site. Everything was happening in the office.

The YALI experience was terrific! Being in the Business and Entrepreneurship track, I gained skills on pitch development, market research, being an effective person, design thinking and establishing long lasting partnerships. The YALI RLC opened my mind and changed my way of doing business.

Five months after graduating from the YALI RLC, I successfully applied for the Mandela Washington Fellowship, with the sole target of networking with even greater connections from outside East and Central Africa. I not only achieved my networking agenda, but I also learned how business is run from successful American companies and by interacting with senior managers and hearing their stories in business growth.

The breakthrough

YALI training wholesomely transformed my business. After the training, I appreciated the need for research in business and so I engaged in intense market research to clearly understand the needs of my customers. YALI made me realize I was selling to customers what I thought they needed, as opposed to what they actually needed! After understanding the needs of my customers, I developed products meeting those needs.

I then used the YALI expedience to polish my pitching skills which helped me to secure an investor in the business, enabling me to buy a soap plodder machine which has scaled production from 45 bars a day to 5 tons in 8 hrs. This has helped me to expand market, to serve over 9000 customers, up from only 70! I have also been in a position to apply leadership skills to manage my team of six employees and accelerate growth.

MWF enabled me to make great networks putting me in a position to consult with leading experts from SEED SPOT in Washington DC. I have also secured a grant from USADF from DC which I intend to use it in scaling production. It will be used to purchase packaging machine, doing the packaging of the products, branding, marketing and advertising.

After the RLC and MWF training, Cleanstar Ltd is now growing beyond Kenya. We are currently pursuing partnerships with YALI alumni from countries like Malawi, Tanzania and Zanzibar to export our multipurpose soap.

Thanks to the YALI program, I am more than determined to use Cleanstar Ltd to impact people's lives as I grow the business to even greater heights.

Ajira Academy:

Tackling skills gap in Democratic Republic of Congo.



By Pascal Mulindwa Bukuru,

Democratic Republic of
Congo (Cohort 2)

Since a young age, I have been passionate about youth and how they can be change makers in their communities. I have been involved in coaching them on how to start, grow and scale social ventures. I started the Jenga Miradi Hub startup to promote this passion. I also worked with the German-funded Social Innovation Academy in Uganda, supporting the team to design, test and iterate

the incubation model that they use. In addition to being a trainer of the academy's mentors, I have supported 25 of their projects in the ideation process, business/financial modeling, customer development and investor readiness. Currently, I remotely support the academy mentors to develop the skills and mindsets that help them to manage, sustain and evaluate the business incubation.

My encounter with YALI would change my dreams and passion! Not completely change, but rather propelling them to a whole new level. The experience, the robust curriculum that tackles important skills and tools that one needs in order to succeed in their change-making and leadership journey, the active learning and learner-centered approach used by the center, and the networking with like-minded young people from different countries is just invaluable.

With 14 nationalities in the class, we had some brilliant minds of young African leaders bring in their transformational stories, perspectives and heated intellectual debates and critiques that the RLC's facilitators leveraged so well to prepare us for leadership in the different contexts of our countries. I learned the value of radical but constructive feedback, emotional intelligence for leadership and management of team dynamics, and human-centered design amongst many other important tools. The training at the Center built my project management skills, the process of crafting ideas, and my entrepreneurial zeal.

The Ajira Academy www.ajiraacademy.com is an early-stage startup contributing to solving the youth unemployment challenge through a one year hands-on postgraduate career preparation program that aims to equip young graduates with employability and career readiness skills. We basically package them to become highly effective, adaptable and productive employees. The program consists of: (a) year-long internship contract, (b) four intensive boot camps taking place in four different East African countries every three months, (c) quarterly robust feedback from the internship host organization, and (d) career/life coaching, among other benefits. Graduates finishing our program are therefore better placed not just to compete in today's demanding job market but also to positively impact the organizations that employ them because they embody skills, experience, values and virtues that pushes them to pursue excellence in their chosen career.

Up to now, we have trained 50 young people in a curriculum testing program. We are now satisfied that the curriculum is working and will roll out "the Ajira Experience" in April 2018. We will have cohorts of 75-100 participants. Applications open from November 27th 2017 to March 10th 2018. At the moment we are targeting applicants from DRC, Uganda, Rwanda & Kenya but we shall expand to other African countries in subsequent cohorts. To apply, visit our website www.ajiraacademy.com from 27th November and click on the APPLY button. We can be reached on email: info@ajiraacademy.com

We are currently looking for partners in this work to ensure that DR Congo is changed for good.

Personally, I forever remain grateful for the opportunity to learn at the YALI RLC EA and the continued support the Center and its partners extend to the alumni.



Making Rwandese children look fabulous!

By Priscilla Ruzibuka,

Rwanda (Cohort I I)



By the time I joined the YALI Regional Leadership Center East Africa for the life-changing leadership training, I was already running a children's clothing brand Ki-pepeo (the Swahili word for butterfly.). You'd wonder why I chose butterflies; they start as ugly caterpillars that go through lots of life transformation to become beautiful and rare creatures! This is how I saw my business transform the lives of the women I work with and all the others that will join us in the years to come, impacting their lives beautifully and permanently.

The YALI Impact

Several of my peers had been telling me about the YALI RLC EA, so I decided to submit an application. I was selected as a participant in the Business and Entrepreneurship track where I learned how to strengthen my leadership skills, how to build an innovative business, how to think creatively and how to communicate with my customers, investors, and staff. The recent success I have had in pitching for my business can be attributed to the training I had at the Center, where I learned how to develop an effective pitch for my business.

The YALI training helped me shift my focus to use the Ki-pepo brand to transform and empower women in Rwanda by giving them a place to grow, earn and support their families while making kids look fabulous.

I am very passionate about women's empowerment and creating sustainable employment. I love kids and this is what probably led to what I am doing currently. My greatest achievement to date is putting my long desire to create into action. I dreamt and talked about creating a children's clothing brand.

I remember the time I was on my way back home to Kigali after the YALI program, I sat next to a potential investor and had the opportunity to tell him about my business. It worked! I landed a second meeting, and I am now working to set up a partnership agreement with the investor, all thanks to the skills I got from YALI.

I recently won the US African Development Foundation \$10,000 grant, money I am using to expand my business into an international quality children's clothing brand with roots in East Africa.

My journey has taught me one thing: It is the role of every young African to build the Africa we want. Reshaping our continent needs collective efforts and this can be done by getting started. Young Africans should step out of our comfort zones and start creating solutions to the everyday challenges that surround us instead of waiting for our leaders and governments to do so. Young Africans can take initiative in reshaping the African legacy by joining forces, working together, forming collaborations across borders, engaging our communities and getting involved as individuals and groups to work with policy makers and governments to build the Africa we want. African youth should dare to dream and put their dreams in motion!

Getting Behind 'Stories Behind Success'



By Darlene Keza,

Burundi (Cohort 17)

I never thought I could be unemployed for a long time after my university graduation. Like many students in my country, I used to think I was going to have a prestigious job until I applied more than 20 times without any success. I was disillusioned and discouraged. In fact, I wasn't really aware of the reality of unemployment in my country. Sometimes, we need to get into a specific situation to know how painful it is.

I discovered during this time how many young people in Burundi were discouraged from being unemployed. Some had resorted to drug and substance abuse, among other terrible behaviors. I had gotten a job in a local Burundi radio station, which closed soon after due to the governance crisis in the country. Disillusioned and downcast, I was chatting with my friend on what to do next. I clearly recall her words "The passion for communication and journalism is what lies in your heart; it is not only about radio or TV stations. Why can't you record some video interviews with your phone and share it with the world through social media? Start small. Create something different! Dream big."

I can say that this discussion was the origin of Stories Behind Success, SBS, a social business that seeks to impact the lives of Burundians through the SBS Blog, SBS magazines, SBS Talk (production of videos shows), and SBS conferences. Educating youth is our first mission. As Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

My training at YALI has been a driving force ever since I stepped into the Center. Through different courses, facilitators and fellows, I discovered the purpose of my life. Courses like the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People have strengthened my personal development. From this course, I committed myself to control my emotions and to work on being proactive rather than reactive. From Design Thinking, I learnt to take into consideration the expectations of the end users towards our products and services, instead of working on assumptions. From Design Driven Entrepreneurship, I learnt that we need to add and accentuate the value proposition of our business: "Why should customers buy our products instead of others?" The skills I took with me from YALI have helped me a lot in my entrepreneurship journey. I now prioritize the will of my audience, empathize with my followers on our platform, and I try to understand what they want because we exist for them.

From YALI, I extended my network and now we have different followers on the SBS platform from East and Central Africa. Our target market is now not only Burundians anymore but East and Central African youth, and very soon we will launch a TV station of our own!

Increasing Market Access for Marginalized Farmers

By Owen Okoko,

Republic of Congo
(Cohort 5)



I am born to parents who are very dedicated to education. Out of their dedication, I grew up knowing that going to school is one of the steps to build a better society. I thus worked hard in school and earned a degree from Marien Ngouabi University in Brazzaville and a transport pilot license in Brussels. I have worked as an electronics technician, ground controller at the airport, and as a junior pilot for a national airline.

In mid-2012 I got a dream offer from a national airline in Congo for a pilot training and a job opportunity at the end. I however lost the opportunity later in 2013, something that was a blow to my professional and financial life. I struggled with this reality for almost a year before getting over it and starting to work on my passion for youth mentorship.

Losing my opportunity with the national airline led me to think about my purpose in life, something that became clear when I got a chance to train at the YALI RLC East Africa. I learned more about YALI in mid-2015 when the Alumni Chapter of Republic of Congo held a youth seminar which I did not attend but followed the discussions remotely. I learned of the application dates and was fortunate to be admitted in Cohort 5, the second time I was applying.

My experience with YALI was so wonderful. The training opened a new world for me and today I am training and mentoring more than 1,000 young men and women in Republic of Congo to employ themselves through their passion, which they are turning to businesses in different sectors.

Thanks to YALI, I am committed to change my country through innovation in the agriculture sector to increase market access for marginalized farmers. I provide training and sustainable production techniques to farmers in my country. I believe that the solutions to African problems will be solved by Africans. I want to be part of the journey of transforming Africa..



Mimi Ni Nani:

Raising Transformed Generations of Africa leaders

By Falecia Massackya,
Tanzania (Cohort II)



The beginning of 2016 took me into major career shifts. I had started a new path as an assistant lecturer in economics at Ardhi University in Tanzania officially and I had started Mimi Ni Nani, a social enterprise that invests in African children and youth through leadership development so as to raise a generation of ethical, visionary, innovative and entrepreneurial leaders who will disrupt the status quo.

These tasks required a lot of tact and leadership skills to be effectively executed. I remember one day just as I was about to walk out of the office, I saw one of my friends in the next office sharing the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People with his team members. I asked to join in for few minutes and I ended up staying for the whole session in which I found to be so interesting and engaging, even though I had read the book before. This friend's way of sharing inspired me greatly and when he told us that it was all from the YALI RLC EA, I decided to apply for the program.

The whole package of YALI RLC East Africa program was an added value to my life as it compelled me to become a better person, a change maker and a servant leader. I also got a better understanding of Africa in a more personal way that stirred me to be responsible. Additionally, through my experience I made friends who have turned into family over time. This network is my net worth for I am already exploring and benefiting from their resources in one way or another, and I am looking forward to doing business, projects and create stronger connections together.

All of what I do today and every other day is getting better because of some ingredients from my experience, such as training on business strategy and getting access to business mentoring and coaching, things that are quite useful to Mimi Ni Nani and to me personally.

The quality of Mimi Ni Nani work and products is also getting better every day. I utilized the methodology on how to run a group discussion from the trainings and went on to apply it with our kids in school. It worked really well and kids enjoyed it too. My pitching skills have also grown a lot especially after my YALI experience. We just had our first pitch presentation in an event recently and it was well put, on time, and given great feedback.



Through the knowledge and skills I got from YALI, Mimi Ni Nani has strategized its approach and now aims to disrupt the traditional education system and the gap of mentoring.

Creating More Leaders by Empowering Women in Somalia



By Amoun Adan Ismail,
Sudan (Cohort 10)

Despite having a first degree in Health Sciences, my passion for good leadership and community work has pushed me to pursue trainings and certification in disciplines such as project management, good leadership, and personal development.

Thanks to the power of social media, one day I saw a post on Facebook about the YALI RLC EA program call for applications. I clicked the link provided and then first took time to read extensively on the website to understand the program. I then applied and was fortunate to be admitted in Cohort 10.

The YALI program was an eye-opener to me. The skills I gained have helped me build on my community work, helping me interact better with the women I empower to become better leaders. I am currently involved in gender advocacy issues and motivating young women to take up challenging opportunities to transform their communities.

I have now specialized my advocacy work on efforts to end Violence Against Women, specifically female genital mutilation (FGM). My advocacy work is aimed at saving young girls in Somalia from the jaws of FGM so as to be able to pursue their dreams in life. I also provide mentorship to these young girls to support them in their life journey.

Besides my advocacy work, I have also started an online business for selling African outfits in order to promote and showcase the brand Africa. My business has grown in revenue and I have now provided employment to five Somali young women, by using skills acquired during the YALI RLC EA training.

My theme in life since my experience at the Center has been “I choose to be strong and empower women to lift up other women.” I believe that a true leader does not just create faithful followers, but molds other leaders.





Water and Gender in Sudan

By Amna Omer,

Sudan (Cohort 10)

I grew up in Sudan witnessing severe water scarcity and developed a keen interest in the sector to try and bring a lasting solution to my country. This pushed me to study Civil Engineering, specializing in Water Engineering, and pursuing a Master's Degree in Integrated Water Resources Management.

My passion later became a motivation to support my country achieve Sustainable Development Goal No. 6, ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

My initial work never considered gender issues, but it took me less than a year to realize that women in my country did not have enough opportunities to participate in sustainably providing water for their communities. In Sudan, not very many women take up leadership roles in providing lasting solutions to the numerous challenges that face their communities. This is the reason I started thinking of what to do to open the sector for women.

The first step towards realizing the dream of providing solutions for the water sector in Sudan with a gender lens was my selection to represent Sudan at the 2015 World Youth Parliament for Water (WYPW). I established a national chapter for the WYPW in Sudan, but then realized my leadership skills were a bit wanting. This is when I learned about YALI RLC East Africa through a friend who had gone through the Center. I applied and was successful in July 2016 to participate in Cohort 10, and to date, I can say this was the best thing to have ever happened to me! The training built my confidence and made me believe in my ability to establish the Sudan Youth Parliament for Water (SYPW), which I established in January 2017 as a network of youth acting for water around Sudan and with the mission to develop, support and promote the potentials of Sudanese youth to contribute in the application of the Sustainable Development Goal No.6 in Sudan.



In less than one year, SYPW built a network of more than 130 active members aged 18 to 35 years, 56% of them being women.

As the SYPW president, my plan is to continue advocating for youth participation in the water-related decision making processes and discussions. I also aim to reach all the regions in Sudan that are facing water problems and work together with the youth to achieve SDG 6 in those regions.

As a young Sudanese woman, establishing Sudan Youth Parliament for Water (SYPW) was not an easy task for me, but I think I have proved that Sudanese youth have the ability to do a lot in the water sector in Sudan. I wouldn't have been able to do this had I not gone through the training at the YALI RLC EA

Promoting Social Inclusion for Persons Living With Disabilities



I am a 26 years old currently studying for a master's degree in the Cultural Foundations of Education, majoring in Disability Studies at Syracuse University in New York.

Before my YALI RLC EA experience, I was involved in promoting Disability Inclusion in Ethiopia. I was working as Project Coordinator at the Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development, a pioneering organization in promoting disability inclusion and development in Ethiopia. The projects that I engaged in focused on inclusive education and employment which saw me play a great role in improving the livelihood of persons with disabilities in Ethiopia. I had a great achievement in establishing the Ethiopian Business and Disability Network (EBDN) which addresses disability issues from a business perspective, by comprising companies and other employer organizations as its members. EBDN is a member of the International Labor Organization's Global Business and Disability Network (GBDN).

Even though I had had earlier experience in working outside Ethiopia and with diverse groups, my experience with the Center was very dynamic. Being able to engage all the diverse groups harmoniously by bringing a common goal was something I was very impressed by. Meeting outstanding young leaders from East and Central African countries made me learn more about their countries and their experiences in leadership and development journey.

I found the leadership training at YALI RLC EA very intensive and the best way to bring young African leaders together for innovative solutions on issues of Africa. As the training was participatory, it helped me improve my leadership, creativity, networking, and public speaking skills. I also learnt how to design people-centered and innovative projects in Design Thinking. The Center did its best to create an inclusive environment and to ensure my full participation in all aspects of the training by removing disability barriers.

It pushed me a step forward to my personal and professional development. I was able to self-realize and explore my potential. After my experience, I never let myself miss opportunities and this has made me shine in every aspect of my life. Professionally, YALI RLC EA has made me more passionate and enthusiastic about my career and think beyond my community and my country, and go further to Africa and the world. Thus, I am much more motivated and engaged to fight for the inclusion of persons living with disabilities not only in Ethiopia and Africa, but also globally.

Book Caravan:

Promoting Education for Sustainable Development

By Fathia Hassan Moussa,

Djibouti (Cohort 12)



As an SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Youth Ambassador of Djibouti, I am very passionate about the promotion of quality education among young people, especially women and girls.

This passion motivated me to co-found Book Caravan, an association that promotes reading and writing among young people. To this end, we have conducted book caravans at two international festivals - the 10th edition of the Hargesia International Books Fair in Somaliland and the 10th edition of Story Moja Festival in Nairobi.

Life is an open book and every day is one more lesson. My experience at the YALI RLC EA helped me learn more from other young people from different African countries and find solutions to some of the challenges we deal with in our communities.

Due to the importance of education in realization of the sustainable development goals, I strive to use the Book Caravan to strengthen basic education and re-evaluate it for the future generation in my community. Book Caravan collects books, creates libraries in rural zones, visits different schools and trains them on the importance of reading and writing, and promotes creation of house editions of books to encourage more young writers by supporting them in editing and publishing their books. So far I have reached 9 villages in my community with this project, impacting around 3000 people ranging from parents, teachers, young people, and community leaders, among others. I have 5 girls I am mentoring, giving me a great satisfaction when I see them grow into responsible people passionate about their community.

I love to spend my free time in the municipal library where I read stories to the children to give them a taste for reading and sensitize them on the importance of education and the preservation of the environment.



Impacting Tanzanian Young Entrepreneurs through Leadership Foundations

YALI partnership with The Aga Khan Foundation

The YALI Regional Leadership Center East Africa is constantly getting into partnerships with like-minded organizations to impact communities by working with young leaders in those communities.

Recently, the RLC was invited by The Aga Khan Foundation to facilitate a workshop session on Leadership Foundations in Tanzania during the Tanzania National Scale-up Forum that targets young entrepreneurs. The forum brought together more than 100 participants, mainly young entrepreneurs, from across the country to discuss and share experiences in entrepreneurship.

Our facilitation was aimed at equipping the participants with viable tips and practical skills on excellent leadership concepts for upscaling social impact in Tanzania and the African continent.

Leadership Foundations is one of the courses the RLC offers to its participants. It is an intense leadership development course which is innovative, inspiring, experiential and impactful.

The program is designed to:

- Foster a greater culture of collaboration and networking, including facilitating the exploration of the Young Leaders' personal value system and mission
- Enhance creative problem solving, leading innovation skills and building the Young Leaders' capacity to influencing others
- Stretch the participants' risk taking capacity, build courage, overcome fear and generally push the leaders to step out of their comfort zones
- Enable the participants to map out their leadership trajectory while drawing up clear leadership and personal development plans, clarifying their leadership legacy and understanding their leadership roles right from the beginning of any engagement.

Speaking at the forum, the RLC Learning and Curriculum Director, Mr. Francis Wamwangi, challenged the young entrepreneurs to develop their technical competencies, build their confidence, and reach out to like-minded partners who will enable them to grow their businesses.



Laying the Foundation for Successful Small Businesses in East Africa



Citibank, Deloitte and KCDF BSI partnership

YALI Regional Leadership Center East Africa, in partnership with Deloitte and the Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) received a grant of \$110,000 from Citi Bank in 2016 for a capacity building and technical assistance program to support youth entrepreneurs in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The program, titled Business Skills Immersion (BSI), aims to equip selected alumni who run small businesses with Business Development Services (BDS), coaching and mentoring in the three countries.

Young people face numerous challenges in starting and growing successful business and enterprises. Some of these challenges include basic understanding on how to navigate the business environment, stay compliant to regulatory laws, negotiate markets, break even and stay afloat.

The BSI has two components:

- Provision of Business Development Services (BDS): a demand-driven and purposely designed training based on assessed needs, conducted over a 4-6 month period. The BDS training is building on the leadership training provided to the business owners at the RLC, and delves more deeply into the more practical operational issues that business owners face. The training covers business planning, practical/real life problem solving; practical sales and marketing; financial management; site visits to similar businesses; peer learning and networking; and funding and going to scale. The training is anchored on one big question: if young entrepreneurs are provided with the requisite business skills and pointed in the right direction, would they succeed in their businesses?
- Business coaching for female business owners: This component is anchored on the question “If young women entrepreneurs are provided both with BDS skills, coaching and mentoring, would they do just as well as their male counterparts in business?” The project therefore looks to address the unique needs of women business owners based on collected data; interaction and networking and matching of the alumnae with successful women business mentors; site visits to women-owned businesses; and identification of women business associations for the young women leaders to join.

In 2016, Deloitte conducted a BDS needs assessment among all YALI RLC EA alumni who own and/or run small businesses in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, the result of which revealed a high need for support in navigating the how-to's of doing business in the region.

Subsequently, Deloitte packaged a unique BDS toolkit that equips the alumni in business with requisite skills in starting and running a successful small business. Termed the Entrepreneurship DNA, the toolkit provides the participants with high-caliber training on the business contexts in their respective countries, links them to successful local young entrepreneurs who provide real-life testimonies on their entrepreneurship journeys, the ups and the downs, the successes and the failures.

The Center is continuously reaching out to like-minded partners who are keen to invest in the next generation of African leaders. If you would like to forge a partnership with the Center, please contact Annie Murimi (amurimi@deloitte.co.ke) for more information.

Impact that Matters

On September 22, 2017, the Center held its 19th commencement ceremony. The RLC now has 1,641 alumni spread across 14 countries in East and Central Africa. These young African leaders continue to make a significant impact in their respective communities and the following are just a few vignettes of accomplishments achieved by our alumni recently.



Silvia Museiya,
Cohort 13, Kenya,



has been nominated to the Nairobi County Assembly to represent women. Silvia had vied for the position of Deputy Governor of Laikipia County but lost in the party primaries.



Owen Okoko,
Cohort 5, Republic of Congo,



has joined the Peace Revolution project (www.peacerevolution.net) which encourages people to develop their inner peace so they can be at peace with others for a sustainable world peace (Peace In + Peace Out = Sustainable World Peace).



Fred Nasubo,
Cohort 4, Kenya



has teamed up with fellow alumni Winnie Mukami, Musa Wangalwa and Oliver Jemuge to form a new company, Growth Bridge Innovations Ltd, targeting 100 Small and Micro Enterprises (SMEs) with a continuum of technical support that include business development services and market linkages. Fred and his colleagues are packaging market-ready solutions for the SMEs using the design thinking approach, enabling them to not only grow, but also create employment for other youth. Fred and his team are carefully guiding SMEs on the path to prosperity.



Christian Mwijage,
Cohort 5, Tanzania,



is recycling plastic waste in Dar es Salaam into building materials, and contributing toward reducing the garbage choke in the city. Through his young company, EcoAct Tanzania Ltd, he is using an innovative plastics extrusion technology called “Waxy II Technology” to recycle and transform post-consumer waste plastic into durable and environmentally friendly plastic lumbers. Plastic lumber is an affordable alternative to timber, reducing the need for building material manufactured from wood, helping to preserve forests, cut down on deforestation rates and mitigating climate change. Plastic lumber made from recycled waste plastics are an ideal product for building, construction, fencing and furniture making.



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